REIMAGINING BRAHMSIAN INTERPRETATION: FELIX WEINGARTNER AS A HISTORICAL LENS RATHER THAN A MODEL

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A dissertation

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the

Requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Musical Arts

University of Washington

2025

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School of Music

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Abstract

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This study reconsiders the problem of historically informed performance in the symphonic works of Johannes Brahms by focusing on the recordings and writings of Felix Weingartner (1863–1942). Rather than treating Weingartner as an authoritative model, the project positions him as a historically significant interpreter whose proximity to Brahms, philosophical clarity, and recorded legacy provide a meaningful lens for exploring Brahms's aesthetic values. The goal is not to reconstruct a singular "Brahmsian style," but to understand how Weingartner's documented choices, especially in his 1938 recording of the Fourth

Symphony, interact with surviving manuscript annotations, performance traditions, and Brahms's own expressed preferences.

The study begins with an investigation of Weingartner's philosophical writings and professional formation, establishing his position in a transitional generation of conductor-scholars. It then traces the distant but meaningful connections between Brahms and Weingartner, including Brahms's 1895 letter of praise following a performance of the Second Symphony. The middle chapters address broader questions of Brahmsian performance, dismantling the myth of a single "authentic" tradition by analyzing Brahms's contradictory views of other conductors such as Bülow, Richter, and Steinbach. These discussions culminate in a comparative analysis of Weingartner's recording and Brahms's annotated manuscript for the Fourth Symphony, using score-based and aural analysis to evaluate points of alignment and departure.

By resisting the urge to canonize a single interpreter, this dissertation contributes to performance studies by reframing Weingartner not as a prescriptive model, but as a historically grounded perspective from which to understand Brahms's flexible and often self-contradictory approach to interpretation. In an era when performance norms tend toward either strict textual fidelity or exaggerated expressive license, Weingartner's legacy offers a balanced approach that honors structural coherence without suppressing expressive depth. His recorded interpretations, shaped by philosophical conviction and technological limitation alike, invite us not to imitate his style, but to engage with Brahms's music more thoughtfully, more contextually, and more historically.

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AKNOWLEDGMENTS

It truly takes a village to complete a scholarly project like this, and I would like to begin by acknowledging the incredible support and wisdom of my committee. Each member has inspired me not only intellectually but also artistically. I am deeply grateful for your dedication to shaping and preparing future professionals in the most meaningful way.

A special thank you to my chair, mentor, and friend, Dr. David Alexander Rahbee. He has been one of the most influential figures in my academic and artistic journey. His extraordinary musical mind and artistic vision have profoundly shaped my path, and I am sincerely thankful for his mentorship, guidance, and example of work ethic.

I am also grateful to the faculty, staff, and entire community at the School of Music, whose help, advice, and meaningful conversations have had a lasting impact on my career and life. A heartfelt mention to Dr. George Bozarth. His scholarly work on Brahms and a seminar I took with him on 19th-century music inspired me to explore this topic in depth.

To my dear friends Abby, Tigran, Lorenzo, Gaby, James, Tiffany, Gemma, Emily, Chris, and Vijay, thank you for the moral and intellectual support throughout this journey.

A very special thanks to the musicians of the Bainbridge Symphony Orchestra and its wonderful community. I am especially indebted to Sara, DeeAnn, Larry, Tom, Kathy, and Laurie for their life-changing encouragement and support. Without them, my career would not be where it is today.

And finally, most importantly, I want to thank my incredible wife, Jenny. My studies at the University of Washington would not have been possible without her invaluable and selfless support. She has been by my side every step of the way, and I am eternally grateful.

DEDICATION

To Jenny, MarcAndrés, AnaLilibet, and GemaEloise.

Chapter 1

Between Text and Interpretation: Felix Weingartner as Conductor-Scholar

Felix Weingartner (1863–1942) occupies a distinctive position in the history of orchestral music: he was both a practitioner of profound influence and a thinker who sought to articulate the philosophical underpinnings of his craft. A conductor, composer, author, and pedagogue, Weingartner lived through one of the most dynamic periods in Western musical life. He came of age during the final flourishing of Romanticism, witnessed the emergence of Wagnerian dominance, and participated in the early modernist shift toward textual rigor and institutional standardization. While many of his contemporaries cultivated a vision of the conductor as a charismatic interpreter or inspired visionary, Weingartner proposed something more restrained yet equally ambitious: a model of the conductor as an intellectual servant of the music, committed to facilitating clarity, structure, and fidelity.

Yet his legacy is not defined by spectacle or personal ambition, but by a commitment to the integrity of the musical work. This commitment was manifested not only in his performances but also in his writings, which are among the earliest conductor-authored texts to grapple systematically with questions of interpretation, authority, and artistic responsibility. In works such as *On Conducting* and *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, Weingartner advocated for a style of leadership rooted in study rather than spontaneity, and in deference to the score rather than indulgence in personal affect. These texts reveal a musician who saw performance not as an occasion for expression alone, but as an act of translation, one that requires intellectual rigor, ethical restraint, and sensitivity to musical architecture.

Weingartner's place in music history has often been overshadowed by more flamboyant or controversial figures. Yet his contributions have had enduring consequences for how conductors are trained, how scores are studied, and how orchestras prepare. He helped shape the conditions for a new kind of authority in the orchestral world, one that was grounded not in charisma but in preparation, discipline, and philosophical consistency.[1] His approach to interpretation emphasized not only what the music sounds like, but why it must sound that way.

This chapter explores the multiple dimensions of Weingartner's work and thought that contribute to his profile as a conductor-scholar. While rooted in the traditions of the 19th century, his artistic temperament foreshadowed 20th-century priorities such as transparency over theater, score over sensation, and principle over personality. To study Weingartner is not simply to revisit a historical figure, but to reengage with an enduring question in the world of performance: what does it mean to interpret faithfully?

[1] Raymond Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors: The Central European Tradition from Wagner to Karajan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 97.

1.1 Weingartner's Formation and Musical Ideals

Felix Weingartner emerged as a conductor during a transitional moment in European musical life—late enough to benefit from new technologies like recording but early enough to work alongside towering 19th-century figures, including Liszt, Bruckner, and Brahms. Born in 1863 in Zara, Dalmatia (modern-day Zadar, Croatia), then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, Weingartner grew up in a region culturally connected to both Italy and the German-speaking world. His German heritage shaped his educational path and artistic orientation, and his early exposure to music came through domestic and local musical activities in Graz, where he studied piano and theory. The decision to pursue formal music studies was reinforced by both his aptitude and a desire to participate in the wider cultural life of Central Europe. He pursued early studies in Graz before moving on to Leipzig and then Weimar, where he studied composition with Franz Liszt. Although this connection to Liszt placed him squarely within the late Romantic tradition, Weingartner ultimately developed an artistic stance that emphasized balance, restraint, and structural integrity over emotional display.

Liszt's mentorship gave Weingartner both prestige and access to influential networks, yet Weingartner diverged from Liszt's highly personal interpretive style. From the beginning, he seemed to resist the cult of personality that surrounded many conductors of the time, including Hans von Bülow, whose performances were often viewed as overly calculated and performative.[2] Instead, Weingartner adopted an intellectual and disciplined approach to conducting, which he elaborated in his critical and theoretical writings.

Weingartner's intellectual formation was as influential as his practical training. He was not content to be merely a performing artist; he was a conductor-philosopher, contributing

[2] Felix Weingartner, *On Conducting*, trans. Ernest Newman (London; New York: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1906), 33.

significantly to the discourse on performance practice through essays and books. Among his most cited works is *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, where he lays out a vision of conducting based on transparency, architectural awareness, and fidelity to the composer's intentions. In this work, Weingartner asserts: "Even a perfectly correct rendering does not always make the intentions of the master as clear as they become by the reading of the score."[3] This declaration reveals a guiding conviction that interpretation must serve the score, not the performer.

He viewed the conductor's task not as one of self-expression but of illumination—helping orchestras and audiences alike to perceive the logic embedded in the music. In On Conducting, Weingartner laments the rise of what he calls a "senseless mania for nuance" and criticizes conductors who fragment musical works through erratic tempo shifts and exaggerated affectation.[4] He admired steadiness and architectural clarity in music-making, insisting that the conductor's responsibility was to maintain the cohesion of large-scale forms.

Weingartner's philosophy positioned him as a forerunner of 20th-century interpretive ideals: precision of gesture, deference to the written score, and rigorous structural thinking. While still rooted in the Romantic language of expression and gesture, his musical worldview leaned increasingly toward a style of interpretation that emphasized objective realization rather than subjective intervention.

This orientation, however, did not always align with the prevailing expectations for musical leadership at the highest institutional levels. Following the death of Hans von Bülow in 1894, the Berlin Philharmonic, Germany's most prestigious orchestra, sought a conductor who

[3] Felix Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, trans. Jessie Crosland (New York: E.F. Kalmus Orchestra Scores, 1907), 3.
[4] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 17.

could not only interpret the symphonic repertoire but also embody the commanding presence needed to guide a national cultural institution. As Raymond Holden notes, although Weingartner "had proved able in the symphonic repertoire," he "lacked the stature necessary to lead Germany's premier orchestra."[5] His interpretive values, grounded in textual fidelity and architectural coherence, stood in contrast to those of contemporaries like Gustav Mahler, whose emotionally expansive and highly individual performances represented a more theatrical, visionary model of leadership. The tension between these two profiles, between the expressive interpreter and the score-centered facilitator, mirrors a broader shift in the evolving identity of the conductor at the turn of the century.

In addition to his more theoretical work, Weingartner was committed to pedagogy. He taught extensively and shaped a new generation of conductors and musicians who absorbed his structuralist principles. His lectures and public writings reflected his pedagogical rigor and emphasized intellectual responsibility in interpretive decisions. Through his teaching posts, including his time in Vienna and Basel, he advocated for musicians to be literate thinkers—not merely skilled performers. He expressed that his time in Basel "were among the happiest of my rich and varied career."[6] That happiness was due in large part to the success of the large conducting class he led at the conservatory, where he was able to transmit his interpretive ideals to a wide circle of students.

Weingartner consistently championed the idea that meaningful interpretation depended on thoughtful preparation, ample rehearsal time, and the avoidance of arbitrary expressive devices not grounded in the score.[7] A 1904 *New York Times* review of a Philharmonic Society

[5] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 37.
[6] Felix Weingartner, *Buffets and Rewards; a Musician's Reminiscences*, trans. Marguerite Wolff (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1937), 368.
[7] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 116.

rehearsal described his methods as focused and efficient, noting that "there is nothing done for effect upon his audience, everything for the object immediately in view." His beat was "simple, angular, sharp, and decisive," and he was described as "a stranger to all affectation."[8] Similar praise appeared in his obituary in *The Musical Times*, which observed: "Though his gestures were restrained, he was visibly and audibly in control…"[9] These characterizations confirm that Weingartner's approach emphasized clarity, restraint, and fidelity to the composer's intentions—principles he articulated in his writings as well. Though his methods stood in contrast to the more theatrical, personality-driven style of many of his contemporaries, they contributed to a growing shift in professional norms toward a more disciplined, text-driven model of orchestral leadership.

This balance between emotional expression and formal discipline became a defining feature of Weingartner's mature interpretive style. Although he performed the Romantic repertoire extensively, he consistently resisted the theatricality that typified many of his contemporaries' interpretations. He articulated this ethos plainly in his autobiography: "My aim in conducting has been and is to reproduce the work soulfully and with the greatest simplicity and fidelity, while making my own gestures so inconspicuous that the attention of the audience is not drawn to me and away from the music."[10] This philosophy reflects a broader commitment to structural coherence and interpretative humility—values that shaped not only his performances, but his approach to the conductor's role as a whole.

In viewing Weingartner as a conductor-scholar, one also recognizes his prescience. He anticipated many principles of historically informed performance without claiming authenticity in the modern sense. Instead, he modeled a kind of interpretive humility grounded in rigorous

[8] "WEINGARTNER CONDUCTS: The Sixth Rehearsal of the Philharmonic Society. Largest Audience of the Season Listens to the Great German Conductor's Work," *The New York Times*, 1904, 9.
[9] "Felix Weingartner," *The Musical Times* Vol. 83, no. 1192 (June 1942): 192.
[10] Felix Weingartner, *Buffets and Rewards,* 217–218.

study and honest musicianship. These early influences, mentors, and institutional experiences laid the foundation for a musical life shaped as much by intellectual inquiry as by practical artistry.

1.2 Early Conducting Style and Training

Felix Weingartner's early conducting career was shaped by a gradual progression through regional opera houses and municipal orchestras, each offering him a testing ground to develop both the technical and philosophical dimensions of his craft.[11] After studying composition with Liszt and receiving his formal education at the Leipzig Conservatory, Weingartner embarked on a professional path that led him first to Danzig (1884), then to Königsberg, Hamburg, and Mannheim. These early posts offered contrasting challenges—from working with smaller ensembles in provincial theaters to managing increasingly professional and ambitious orchestras in larger cities.

In Danzig and Königsberg, Weingartner took on broad responsibilities, from conducting opera and concerts to training musicians and overseeing repertory. While constrained by modest budgets and limited rehearsal time, he developed habits of efficiency and ensemble coordination that would remain part of his identity. He gave particular attention to clarity of orchestral texture and the precise execution of phrasing and dynamics, establishing a rehearsal ethic that prized coherence over spontaneity.[12]

His appointment in Hamburg brought him into contact with more experienced musicians and more discerning audiences. It was during this time that critics began to take notice of his approach, which emphasized proportion and detail over the expressive theatricality favored by

[11] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 47–48.
[12] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 101.

many of his contemporaries. Weingartner's gestures on the podium were economical, reportedly favoring clarity and subtlety over demonstrative movement.[13] His approach was not without precedent—Hans Richter, for instance, shared some of these values—but Weingartner made them central to his identity as a conductor.

In Mannheim, Weingartner's work with the local orchestra marked a turning point in his professional development. He expanded the symphonic repertoire and brought renewed attention to rehearsal discipline, ensemble cohesion, and interpretative coherence. As Christopher Dyment observes, "although he has nothing of the martinet he obtains perfect discipline. The secret of this is that he speaks very little and wastes no time…"[14] This economy of gesture and clarity of intent exemplified the efficient, respectful atmosphere he fostered in rehearsal. In Mannheim, he also enjoyed greater freedom to program music of his choosing, and he used this opportunity to juxtapose Classical and Romantic works in ways that encouraged audiences to think critically about continuity and contrast in the orchestral tradition. He became known for emphasizing internal balance within orchestral sections and the clear projection of motivic ideas across larger forms.[15]

Weingartner's rehearsal technique favored a collaborative, but no-nonsense approach. He expected preparedness and professionalism from his players and focused intensely on matters of phrasing, articulation, and ensemble precision.[16] He was particularly sensitive to tempo relationships and would insist on modifications only when they were justifiable by the musical

[13] Ibid., 116.
[14] Felix Weingartner and Christopher Dyment, *Felix Weingartner: Recollections & Recordings* (Rickmansworth: Triad Press, 1976), 43.
[15] Holden, 103.
[16] Weingartner and Dyment, *Felix Weingartner: Recollections & Recordings*, 68.

structure rather than convention.[17] This approach gradually set him apart from conductors who prioritized subjective interpretation or treated the score as a mere suggestion.

A key philosophical distinction in Weingartner's early approach lies in his view of the conductor's interpretive role. While he did not eschew expression, he sought to anchor all expressive gestures in the logic of the composition. He believed that the conductor should first and foremost clarify, not reinterpret, the composer's intentions.[18] As Holden notes, Weingartner sought to derive his authority from the score rather than from overt display, setting him apart from the generation of conductors who favored rhetorical expression.[19]

During his tenure in Basel and subsequently in Vienna, Weingartner became increasingly involved in shaping not only the sound of his orchestras but the broader culture of professional rehearsal standards. His methods were notably efficient and detail-oriented, emphasizing ensemble cohesion and textual accuracy.[20] He began advocating for institutional reforms that allowed for longer and more focused rehearsal periods—efforts that aligned him with emerging norms of orchestral discipline. As Holden observes, his administrative reforms in Vienna and Basel set the groundwork for a new model of orchestral professionalism.[21]

This orientation extended into his reflections on tempo and control. While he did not advocate for mechanical execution, he sharply criticized conductors who distorted phrasing through excessive nuance or erratic fluctuations. Reflecting on an older colleague's rigid timekeeping, he wrote: "If I had to choose today between one of those out-of-date automata and a modern super-conductor, who 'individualizes' every crotchet by speeding it up or slowing it

[17] Ibid., 13, 101.
[18] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 18.
[19] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 116.
[20] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 44.
[21] Holden, 110.

down, I think I should prefer the automaton."[22] His preference for restraint over eccentricity echoed throughout his early conducting career.

He also worked to shape public discourse around the role of the conductor. Through articles, lectures, and editorial work, Weingartner presented himself as a mediator between composer and audience, one who could translate the visual language of notation into coherent and illuminating sound.[23] His insistence that the conductor should not stand between the music and its realization further emphasized the philosophical rigor of his approach. Conductors, in his view, should cultivate restraint and self-knowledge as much as technique.[24]

By the end of the 1890s, Weingartner had established himself as a technically adept and philosophically grounded conductor whose early career had refined his interpretative convictions. He had already begun writing about conducting and music in public forums, and was seen as a figure whose integrity and seriousness of purpose stood in contrast to the theatrical image of the Romantic maestro. This reputation would only grow in the decades to follow, but its roots can be clearly traced to the rigorous discipline, institutional experience, and interpretive restraint he developed during his first professional decade.

1.3 Recorded Legacy and the Limits of Early Technology

The advent of electrical recording around 1925 marked a significant turning point in how orchestral performances were captured and disseminated. Unlike the earlier acoustic method—which relied on large recording horns and direct mechanical impressions—electrical recording employed microphones, vacuum tube amplifiers, and electromechanical cutting heads. This

[22] Weingartner, *Buffets and Rewards*, 112–13.
[23] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 17.
[24] Ibid., 56.

allowed for a significantly broader frequency range and greater dynamic contrast, enabling a more faithful representation of orchestral sound. As Mark Katz explains, "The development of electrical recording made it possible to reproduce a much larger spectrum of sound."[25] These technological improvements expanded the reach of orchestral interpretation, allowing performances to be preserved and shared on an unprecedented scale.

Yet despite these advances, early recordings remained constrained by their medium. Prior to the introduction of magnetic tape in the late 1940s, editing was impossible, requiring complete takes and often multiple restarts due to performance errors.[26] The use of shellac discs introduced surface noise and imposed frequency limitations that could obscure subtleties in articulation and timbre. Moreover, many of these limitations dated back to the acoustic era, which required careful orchestral balancing and restricted dynamic range and color. The short duration of recording sides often necessitated adjustments to tempi and phrasing, which shaped not only interpretive decisions but also listeners' perceptions of orchestral music.

Felix Weingartner's significance as a conductor was greatly enhanced by his pioneering role in early orchestral recordings. At the turn of the 20th century, recording technology was in its infancy, transitioning from acoustic to early electrical methods. These early technological advancements offered unprecedented opportunities for conductors to disseminate their interpretive ideals more broadly, but also came with substantial limitations that directly influenced artistic choices. Weingartner, among the first major conductors to embrace recording technology, was acutely aware of both its potential and its constraints.

[25] Mark Katz, *Capturing Sound: How Technology Has Changed Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), 75.
[26] Gordon Mumma et al., "Recording," *Grove Music Online*, 2003.

Weingartner's response to the constraints of early recording technology aligns with broader trends described by Mark Katz, who notes that performers often adjusted their playing to meet the demands of the medium. These adjustments included streamlining musical gestures, tightening rhythms, and modifying phrasing to maintain clarity and balance.[27] As Christopher Dyment observes, Weingartner was initially reluctant to engage with recording, believing that a musical work should be experienced as a continuous whole—something disrupted by the short playing time of early gramophone discs and other technological limitations. Nevertheless, he eventually embraced the medium and developed a practical recording strategy aimed at preserving musical coherence despite its shortcomings.[28]

Weingartner's recorded legacy is particularly distinguished by his complete cycles of Beethoven and Brahms symphonies. His recordings of the nine Beethoven symphonies, initiated in the early 1920s and culminating with a landmark cycle completed by the late 1930s, have become critical historical documents. Similarly, his recordings of Brahms symphonies, made between 1938 and 1940, stand as vital representations of his interpretive approach. Although constrained by the technological limitations of their time, these recordings demonstrate a remarkable fidelity to the composers' texts and a discerning sensitivity to the demands of early recording media. In doing so, they offer valuable insights into interpretive practices that bridge the late Romantic tradition with emerging twentieth-century ideals of textual precision and structural clarity.[29]

Considered more broadly, early sound recordings such as Weingartner's provide essential evidence for reconstructing performance practices of the late nineteenth and early twentieth

[27] Katz, *Capturing Sound,* 30.
[28] Weingartner and Dyment, *Felix Weingartner: Recollections & Recordings*, 21.
[29] Robert Philip, *Performing Music in the Age of Recording* (Yale University Press, 2004), 2.

centuries. While not direct transmissions of the composers' own interpretations, these recordings often preserve stylistic conventions and expressive habits that composers would likely have recognized and endorsed, thereby offering important perspectives on the historical notion of authenticity.

This thesis centers on Felix Weingartner's 1938 recording of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 with the London Symphony Orchestra, produced on February 14 at Abbey Road Studios. Notably, this recording followed a series of concert performances, ensuring a fully realized interpretation prior to entering the studio.[30] By this time, electrical recording technology had matured significantly, particularly with the refinement of microphone design and placement. Unlike earlier acoustic methods that required musicians to cluster around a recording horn, the use of microphones allowed for more natural orchestral spacing and balance. Moreover, advances in microphone frequency response expanded the range of sound that could be captured, mitigating the earlier limitations that had necessitated careful repertoire selection based on technical constraints.

Thus, Weingartner's 1938 recording of Brahms's Fourth Symphony reflects both the new possibilities opened by electrical technology and the persistent constraints that continued to shape interpretive choices. His recordings offer a vivid example of how early twentieth-century conductors preserved stylistic ideals while adapting to the practical demands of the medium.

1.4 Interpretative Principles in Weingartner's Writings

Felix Weingartner was not only a prominent conductor of the early 20th century but also a prolific writer who sought to articulate a comprehensive philosophy of interpretation. His body

[30] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 113.

of published work, particularly *On Conducting* (1895; revised 1896, 1905, 1913, and 1920), *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies* (1906; revised 1916, and 1928), and *The Post-Beethoven Symphonists: Symphony Writers since Beethoven* (1897; revised 1901, 1909, and 1926), demonstrates a sustained concern with fidelity to the composer, disciplined rehearsal, and structural clarity. These texts offer a window into the intellectual foundations of his conducting and remain some of the earliest attempts to codify interpretive ideals from the podium itself.

His 1895 treatise *On Conducting* (*Über das Dirigieren*) laid the foundation for his lifelong interpretative values. In this concise but assertive essay, Weingartner defines the conductor not as a charismatic performer but as a "guardian of the work," whose gestures and interpretive choices must arise from the score rather than personal whim. He expresses frustration with two dominant extremes in contemporary conducting:

"If neither feeling nor intellect is strong enough, then we get, according to the prevailing fashion, either mere metronomic time-beating or a senseless mania for nuance, a mania that chiefly prompted me to write this book."[31] He further argues that great art arises from equilibrium between analysis and passion:

"Art is at its best when that exceedingly delicate balance […] is attained between the feeling and the intellect, which alone can give a performance true vitality and veracity."[32]

For Weingartner, this balance is not intuitive or performative—it must be studied and prepared. He warns against conductors who treat the podium as a platform for self-display: "He must not think, when he takes a score in hand, 'What can I make out of this work?' but, 'What has the composer wanted to say in it?'"[33] And further: "By bad performances, that merely

[31] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 17.
[32] Ibid.
[33] Ibid., 40.

indulge his own vanity, he can only create an atmosphere unfavorable to genuine art."[34] These passages reinforce his insistence that interpretation is a matter of responsibility, not artistic freedom.

In *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies* (1906), he applies this interpretive framework to specific repertoire, critiquing the distortions he believed had become common in Beethoven performances. As he writes: "One of the essential conditions of the style of an execution must be clearness… for even a perfectly correct rendering does not always make the intentions of the master as clear as they become by the reading of the score."[35] Weingartner's conviction that interpretation must clarify rather than obscure led him to oppose arbitrary tempo changes, sentimental phrasing, and excessive rubato. He saw these as violations of both aesthetic integrity and artistic ethics.

In *The Post-Beethoven Symphonists* (1907), Weingartner situates Brahms and Wagner among the most significant musical forces shaping the divergent styles of their time. Although Weingartner was a profound admirer of Wagner's revolutionary achievements, he approaches Brahms's symphonic works with unmistakable respect and careful analysis. He identifies the emergence of "two oppositely opposed styles" at the arrival of Brahms, "the completely abstract musician," and Wagner, "the all dominating" figure.[36] In his appraisal of Brahms's First Symphony, Weingartner describes the C minor work as possessing "sturdy ruggedness" and being "mightily worked out," noting that it corresponds "much more than Schumann's" to his ideal of a true symphony, with orchestration "infinitely more cleverly handled."[37] His admiration

[34] Ibid., 40–41.
[35] Weingartner, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, iii.
[36] Felix Weingartner, *The Post–Beethoven Symphonists: Symphony Writers since Beethoven*, trans. Arthur Bles (London: W. Reeves, 1907), 122–123.
[37] Ibid., 48.

deepens with the Second Symphony, which he considers "greatly superior to the first," praising its "fresh and original" inventive power and the remarkable sonority of its orchestration.[38] Weingartner further emphasizes that Brahms, more than other contemporaries, succeeded in approaching the "energetic plastic expression" of Beethoven, bridging Romantic emotional depth with classical structural integrity.[39] These observations reveal Weingartner's broader interpretative ethos: a conviction that understanding and faithfully realizing a composer's structural intentions—rather than distorting them for personal expression—was essential for a meaningful performance.

Scholarly assessments reinforce this view. Raymond Holden, in *The Virtuoso Conductors*, situates Weingartner as a central figure in the early twentieth-century transition from Romantic subjectivity toward a more score-centered ethos. Holden emphasizes that Weingartner regarded the conductor as a "servant of the composer's intentions," advocating for fidelity to the score over personal expressivity.[40] This perspective placed him in marked contrast to contemporaries such as Mahler and Nikisch, whose conducting styles embraced greater emotional flexibility. Holden characterizes Mahler and Weingartner as representing two contrasting approaches in early twentieth-century conducting, with Mahler prioritizing visionary reinterpretation and Weingartner emphasizing structural clarity and textual precision.[41]

Weingartner's philosophy was also pedagogical in nature. He trained conductors to prioritize historical knowledge, analytical clarity, and ethical responsibility. His belief in the conductor as a *musician-scholar* reinforced his broader vision of musical leadership as an intellectual and moral practice. His influence extended beyond printed words. As a teacher and

[38] Ibid., 49.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors*., 116.
[41] Ibid., 112–117.

director at major institutions in Basel and Vienna, Weingartner enforced standards of preparation, part accuracy, and rehearsal discipline. His legacy in these roles helped formalize the expectations of professional orchestral culture and shaped the rehearsal ethics of many conductors who followed him.

In sum, Weingartner's interpretative writings form a coherent worldview—one rooted in humility, scholarship, and respect for the composer's voice. His insistence on clarity, discipline, and fidelity remains foundational in the evolution of modern conducting. He did not seek to dazzle or reinterpret but to render audible the architecture and intention that lay within the score. His voice, preserved in his prose as well as in his recordings, continues to speak for a vision of interpretation grounded in integrity and restraint.

Chapter 2

The Brahms-Weingartner Encounter

The paths of Johannes Brahms and Felix Weingartner crossed not through close personal collaboration but through a deeper alignment of interpretative ideals. In an era increasingly divided between expressive subjectivity and structural fidelity, Brahms's commitment to architectural clarity and disciplined expression found a receptive interpreter in Weingartner. Although they belonged to different generations and aesthetic contexts, with Brahms shaped by the aftermath of Beethoven and Weingartner emerging during Wagner's dominance, both figures resisted the extremes of mechanical precision and emotional excess that characterized much of late Romantic performance practice. Their encounter, though indirect, illuminates a broader current in the history of interpretation: a striving toward balance, integrity, and fidelity to the musical text. In tracing these affinities, the dialogue between Brahms's aesthetic priorities and Weingartner's conducting philosophy becomes a revealing lens through which to view the evolving ethics of musical performance at the turn of the century.

2.1 Distant Currents: Early Perceptions Between Brahms and Weingartner

Although Johannes Brahms and Felix Weingartner never formed a personal relationship, their musical ideals reflect distant but resonant currents of mutual aesthetic alignment. Felix Weingartner, initially influenced by Wagnerian aesthetics and trained within the traditions of Vienna and Leipzig, nonetheless demonstrated a growing appreciation for Brahms's disciplined structural style. While Wagner and Liszt shaped the expressive language of his early career, Weingartner maintained a critical independence that allowed him to value the contrasting ideals of composers like Brahms.[42] Rather than aligning himself fully with either side of the era's stylistic divisions, Weingartner came to appreciate Brahms's disciplined commitment to musical architecture as a vital counterpart to the expressive expansiveness of Wagnerian music.

The broader musical landscape of the late nineteenth century, sharply divided between advocates of programmatic expression and defenders of absolute form, further shaped Weingartner's developing ideals. Rather than committing himself to either faction, he absorbed the strengths of both traditions, cultivating an interpretive approach that privileged architectural clarity without forsaking expressive depth. This balanced aesthetic would come to define his mature conducting style, distinguishing him among his contemporaries and aligning him subtly with Brahms's own artistic priorities.

Weingartner first witnessed Brahms's conducting in 1886, an experience he later recalled with respect but not undue reverence. Describing the encounter, he wrote: "I was most favourably impressed by his unassuming appearance, his restrained movements and broad conceptions."[43] He contrasted this with Hans von Bülow's conducting—a comparison prompted by the fact that both Brahms and Bülow conducted at the same concert in 1886, with Bülow

[42] Weingartner, *The Post–Beethoven Symphonists*, 123.
[43] Weingartner, *Buffets and Rewards,* 165.

leading performances of Beethoven and Brahms conducting his own works. Weingartner found Bülow's approach to exhibit a "mercurial unrest" that stood in stark opposition to Brahms's steadiness.[44] Although this impression did not immediately lead to a deeper connection, it affirmed qualities that already resonated with Weingartner's own emerging musical identity, characterized by an innate commitment to structural clarity, composure, and disciplined musical architecture.

Early in his career, Weingartner expressed skepticism toward Brahms, writing that while Brahms's music displayed "an admirable technique and an almost unparalleled scholarship," the "creation itself is often marked by a powerless coldness." He further compared the experience of listening to Brahms to "a doctor dissecting a well-built body."[45] However, this critical stance evolved significantly over time. In the 1909 revision of *The Post-Beethoven Symphonists*, Weingartner remarked that he used this opportunity to undertake "a thorough revision" of his earlier assessments of Brahms, recognizing Brahms's intellectual greatness and the depth of his symphonic achievements.[46] While he made important corrections in the 1909 revision, some unfavorable comments about Brahms still remained. It was not until the final revision in 1926 that Weingartner fully struck down earlier criticisms and embraced a highly favorable view of Brahms.

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[44] Ibid.

[45] Weingartner, *The Post–Beethoven Symphonists*, 1901 ed., 58.

[46] Felix Weingartner, *Weingartner on Music & Conducting: Three Essays*, trans. Ernest Newman, Jessie Crosland, and Howard Schott (New York: Dover Publications, 1969), 241.

Weingartner on Music and Conducting is a later publication that brings together the final, practical editions of Weingartner's major scholarly works: *On Conducting*, *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies*, and *The Post-Beethoven Symphonists*. Notably, the last of these includes newly revised commentary on Brahms's music.

Throughout all editions, however, one consistent admiration was his regard for the Second Symphony, which he described as "greatly superior… one can scarcely find any other work of Brahms in which the inventive power has come forth so fresh and original; nowhere has he made his orchestra so sonorous."[47] Weingartner also showed growing appreciation for the First Symphony, particularly highlighting thematic passages that recalled the energetic expression of Beethoven's late period. In contrast, his early reservations about the Third and Fourth Symphonies shifted significantly; what he had once seen as cold or distant he later recognized as embodying profound depth and maturity. This evolution in perspective is epitomized in his later reflection: "Brahms makes it even more difficult for us…to understand the unique character of his musical mind…the listener must dip his cup deep into the spring of the music if he is to enjoy a refreshing drink."[48] In this way, Weingartner's changing views not only mirrored broader shifts in early twentieth-century musical taste but also demonstrated his own deepening understanding of Brahms's symphonic art.

It is widely understood among scholars that Brahms was initially skeptical of conductors closely associated with Wagnerian traditions, which could have included early perceptions of Weingartner. Although direct evidence from Brahms specifically mentioning Weingartner during this early period is scarce, Brahms's general wariness toward conductors who favored expressive liberties aligns with his known preference for clarity and restraint in performance. Thus, any eventual praise from Brahms would likely have been given cautiously and after significant reflection.

This early perception highlights how Weingartner's developing ideals found an echo in Brahms's approach, even without direct personal reinforcement. Weingartner's moderate yet

[47] Weingartner, *The Post–Beethoven Symphonists*, 1901 ed., 49.
[48] Felix Weingartner, *Weingartner on Music & Conducting,* 270.

nuanced style ultimately aligned with Brahms's broader performance values—eschewing both mechanical rigidity and excessive emotional license. In his own writings, Weingartner criticized what he called the "tempo-rubato conductor," referring to those who distorted musical structure through exaggerated flexibility and unnecessary nuance, emphasizing instead the virtues of clarity, discipline, and structural fidelity.[49] In a period increasingly shaped by interpretive extremes, both Brahms and Weingartner stood for a vision of musical performance that prized internal coherence and respect for the integrity of the work itself.

2.2 The 1895 Letter: Praise in Context

The relationship between Johannes Brahms and Felix Weingartner, though distant, found its clearest point of intersection in a significant letter Brahms wrote in April 1895. After attending a concert in Berlin where Weingartner conducted Brahms's Second Symphony with the Berlin Philharmonic, Brahms expressed an unusual degree of approval, a sentiment rarely extended even to conductors he admired. Writing to his publisher Fritz Simrock on April 5, 1895, Brahms remarked, "By far the most enjoyable and best was the second evening under Weingartner, whose healthy and fresh personality was uncommonly appealing. It began with my Symphony, which he conducted from memory and quite splendidly [...] the performance was truly wonderful."[50]

This letter stands out in Brahms's surviving correspondence for its warmth and generosity. Brahms was famously cautious and often critical regarding interpretations of his works, particularly in an era when many conductors, shaped by Wagnerian aesthetics, favored

[49] Weingartner, *On Conducting*, 28.
[50] Johannes Brahms and Styra Avins, *Johannes Brahms: Life and Letters*, trans. Josef Eisinger and Styra Avins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 726.

expressive liberties that could distort musical structure. Although Brahms could tolerate certain interpretative freedoms, especially when applied tastefully, he remained deeply concerned with preserving the fundamental character and architecture of his compositions. As Walter Blume, a key scholar of Brahmsian performance traditions, notes, Brahms expected performers to exercise discretion in modifying phrasing, tempo, and dynamics, provided they remained faithful to the spirit of the work.[51]

That Brahms noted Weingartner's "healthy, fresh personality" and "splendid" memory-based performance suggests more than mere politeness; it implies a deep approval of the interpretative qualities Weingartner brought to the symphony. Moreover, Brahms's letter places Weingartner's performance in direct comparison with other recent concerts in Berlin conducted by Richard Strauss and Felix Mottl.[52] Brahms had attended three concerts—one by Strauss, one by Weingartner, and one by Mottl—and found Weingartner's evening to be "by far the most enjoyable and best."[53] This contrast is significant, given that Strauss and Mottl were highly respected figures of the time. Brahms's preference further underscores Weingartner's alignment with the musical values Brahms most cherished.

It is important to emphasize that Brahms's praise is both personal and professional. The characterization of Weingartner's "healthy, fresh personality" reflects an appreciation not only of the musical execution but also of the artistic spirit behind it. Brahms recognized in Weingartner an interpreter who, despite coming from a generation increasingly shaped by different musical

[51] Fritz Steinbach and Walter Blume, "Brahms in the Meiningen Tradition: His Symphonies and Haydn Variations in the Markings by Fritz Steinbach," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 248.
[52] Robert Pascall and Philip Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music: Understanding Brahms's View of Interpretation in His Second Piano Concerto and Fourth Symphony," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 237.
[53] Brahms and Avins, *Life and Letters*, 726.

forces, could render his work with the structural clarity and expressive balance that he so dearly valued.

Thus, the 1895 letter stands as a rare testament to Brahms's selective approval and provides an essential piece of evidence situating Weingartner within Brahms's aesthetic world. It highlights the intersection of two musical ideals at a moment when the traditions of classical restraint were increasingly being challenged by newer, more expressive trends. In praising Weingartner, Brahms was, in effect, endorsing a vision of performance that prioritized fidelity, clarity, and an unwavering respect for the integrity of the musical text.

2.3 Comparisons with Brahms's Views of Bülow and Richter

Understanding the weight of Brahms's praise for Weingartner requires contextualizing it within Brahms's broader opinions about other major conductors of his time. Among these, Hans von Bülow and Hans Richter stand out as instructive comparisons, offering insight into Brahms's values regarding performance practice.

Brahms's relationship with Hans von Bülow was characterized by a mixture of respect and guarded criticism. While Bülow was a conductor of immense technical skill and expressive force, Brahms was wary of his tendency toward highly personalized interpretations. In a letter to Richard Wendt from the summer of 1887, Brahms remarked, "Bülow's conducting is always calculated for effect. As soon as a new musical phrase begins, he makes a little pause and often slightly changes the tempo. I have seriously forbidden this in my symphonies; if I wanted it that way, I would have written it in."[54] Robert Philip similarly notes that although Brahms appreciated Bülow's enthusiasm and artistry, he was cautious about the liberties Bülow

[54] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 2nd ed., vol. 3 (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1976), 495.

sometimes took, particularly with tempo and phrasing.[55] Clara Schumann also voiced comparable reservations, observing, "He [Bülow] showed this clearly in his interpretation of certain parts of Beethoven's C minor Symphony! Precisely because everything is performed and nothing is felt, so everything is taken to extremes, every stringendo too much, every ritardando too much!" (alle stringendos zu viel, alle ritardandos zu viel!).[56] This wariness is echoed in Brahms's letters, where he occasionally expressed concerns about performances that deviated too far from the structural and rhythmic foundations of his music.

Brahms's view of Hans Richter was similarly nuanced. Although generally appreciative of Richter's abilities, Brahms did not hesitate to voice dissatisfaction when he felt Richter's interpretations fell short. Brahms described Richter's performance of the First Symphony in December 1878 as "really awful." Charles Villiers Stanford recounts an episode during a performance of Brahms's First Symphony by the Vienna Philharmonic under Hans Richter, in which the Andante was rendered with such metronomic stiffness that Brahms, visibly agitated, seized his companion by the shoulder, exclaimed "Heraus!" ("Out!") and abruptly left the concert hall.[57] Richard Heuberger further records Brahms's criticism after hearing Richter conduct the First Symphony in 1878, quoting him as saying, "if they don't want to rehearse seriously, they should leave such things well alone" and noting Brahms's regret that he "could not say all this openly to the orchestra." Reflecting on a later performance in 1895, Brahms lamented, "If my Symphony really were such an insipid thing, so grey and *mezzoforte* as Richter played it for the audience today, then they would be right to speak of 'dull old Brahms's." While

[55] Robert Philip, "Brahms's Musical World: Balancing the Evidence," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 352–355.
[56] Berthold Litzmann, *Clara Schumann, Ein Künstlerleben Nach Tagebüchern Und Briefen*, vol. 3 (Germany: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902), 364.
[57] Charles Villiers Stanford, *Pages from an Unwritten Diary* (Longmans, Green & Co., 1914), 202.

Brahms maintained a professional relationship with Richter, he nevertheless regarded him as one of the conductors who, at times, rendered performances lacking sufficient understanding and depth.[58]

In contrast to his guarded stance toward Bülow and his critical view of Richter's shortcomings, Brahms's approval of Weingartner stands out. Weingartner's conducting did not elicit skepticism but rather genuine admiration for its combination of vitality and structural fidelity. Though younger and less established than Richter at the time, Weingartner demonstrated the clarity, discipline, and deep respect for the composer's intentions.

Through these comparisons, it becomes evident that Brahms consistently favored conductors who preserved the structural and emotional integrity of his works, resisting excessive personal interpretation. In Weingartner, Brahms found not just a capable conductor, but a musician whose interpretations faithfully embodied the artistic values he most esteemed.

2.4 Evidence of Brahms's Preference for Balance and Clarity in Performance

Brahms's aesthetic ideals in performance were firmly anchored in his broader compositional philosophy, characterized by restraint, structural clarity, and textual fidelity, while consciously distancing himself from exaggerated expressivity and superficial virtuosity. Clive Brown highlights how Brahms gravitated toward performers embodying these principles, notably Joseph Joachim. Their partnership was grounded in a mutual aesthetic commitment that opposed the flashy virtuosity prevalent in much nineteenth-century performance practice. Despite occasional personal tensions, Brown notes that Brahms consistently agreed with Joachim's disdain for "the disrespectful treatment of musical masterpieces typical of many virtuoso

[58] Pascall and Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 232–234.

performers," upholding Joachim's conviction that a performer's primary responsibility was the faithful interpretation of the composer's intentions.[59]

Even within highly virtuosic contexts, Brahms maintained a clear emphasis on musical balance and internal coherence. Michael Musgrave observes Brahms's nuanced approach, noting that "the extent of the virtuosity belies the view of him as a highly expressive and powerfully symphonic pianist, yet no virtuoso in the modern, Lisztian sense."[60] Musgrave's insight reveals that Brahms viewed technical brilliance as integral yet subordinate to formal integrity, expressive depth, and structural logic.

Brahms explicitly articulated his nuanced stance on interpretative flexibility and tempo management in correspondence with George Henschel. Responding to a query on tempo markings, Brahms candidly stated, "the metronome isn't worth much," adding, "I myself have never believed that my blood and a mechanical instrument go well together." Despite rejecting mechanical rigidity, Brahms emphasized controlled flexibility, noting, "The so-called elastic tempo is not a new discovery, after all, and to it, as to many another, one should attach a 'con discrezione.'" He further clarified his approach to tempo markings, stressing that he indicated his tempi "without numbers, modestly but with the greatest care and clarity."[61] This statement vividly illustrates Brahms's balanced approach to performance, advocating interpretive freedom that remains grounded in musical discipline and structural clarity.

Walter Blume similarly emphasizes that Brahms expected performers to apply nuanced judgment when modifying phrasing, tempo, or dynamics, provided such interpretative decisions

[59] Clive Brown, "Joachim's Violin Playing and the Performance of Brahms's String Music," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 48.
[60] Michael Musgrave, *The Music of Brahms* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 59.
[61] Brahms and Avins, *Life and Letters*, 559.

remained aligned with the music's spirit.[62] This concept is exemplified in Brahms's encouragement to Joachim regarding the Double Concerto, where he explicitly permitted Joachim to alter passages for his own performance, underscoring the balance between interpretative liberty and compositional integrity.[63]

Brahms's insistence on balanced interpretation is further evident in his criticism of contemporary conductors. Walter Frisch, a distinguished scholar of Austro-German music from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, succinctly summarizes Brahms's position: "what Brahms disliked in performances of his own symphonies…were the far ends of the spectrum—metronomic rigidity and lack of inflection on the one hand, and fussy, overdetermined expressivity on the other."[64] Brahms's dissatisfaction with Hans von Bülow's calculated expressive pauses and Hans Richter's rigid adherence to tempo highlights his sensitivity to interpretative extremes that compromised musical coherence and natural flow.

Within this interpretative framework, Brahms's praise for Felix Weingartner becomes particularly meaningful. Weingartner's conducting style, marked by textual fidelity, balanced expressiveness, and clear structural delineation, resonated closely with Brahms's own ideals. Weingartner's disciplined yet flexible approach avoided both excessive rigidity and overt theatricality, embodying precisely the interpretative ethos Brahms valued. Thus, Weingartner's 1895 performance of Brahms's Second Symphony represented not merely technical proficiency but the fulfillment of Brahms's deeply held aspirations for balanced, clear, and structurally coherent performance.

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[62] Steinbach and Blume, "Brahms in the Meiningen Tradition," in *Performing Brahms*, 248.
[63] Brown, "Joachim's Violin Playing and the Performance of Brahms's String Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 50.
[64] Walter Frisch, "In Search of Brahms's First Symphony: Steinbach, the Meiningen Tradition, and the Recordings of Hermann Abendroth," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 280–281.

Chapter 3

The Myth of a Single Brahmsian Style

3.1 Performance Practice and the "Brahms Problem"

The phrase *"Brahms Problem"* has appeared in critical writing—most notably in the work of conductor and musicologist Will Crutchfield and music critic and composer Gregory Sandow—as a way of describing the tension between emotional depth and formal restraint in Brahms's music.[65] While Crutchfield's use centers on expressive aesthetics, I adapt the term here to articulate a broader set of interpretive challenges that confront scholars, performers and the general public. These challenges vary depending on perspective: for general audiences, *the Brahms Problem* refers to the difficulty of engaging with Brahms's often dense and complex musical language; for practicing musicians, it involves the assumption that modern styles of

[65] Will Crutchfield, "In Praise of Brahms's Songs," *HIGH FIDELITY. FEATURING NEW TECHNOLOGIES*, January 1984, https://www.worldradiohistory.com/Archive-All-Audio/Archive-High-Fidelity/80s/High-Fidelity-1984-01.pdf?

playing resemble those of Brahms's time; and for scholars, it raises deep analytical questions about how to reconcile the surviving evidence—Brahms's writings, performance traditions, and eyewitness accounts—into a coherent understanding of his stylistic ideals. These investigations frequently reveal contradictions regarding tempo flexibility, articulation, dynamic shaping, and broader interpretive preferences.

A central difficulty in reconstructing Brahms's performance style lies in the conflicting assumptions about its character. Bernard D. Sherman observes that while many musicians believe Brahms's style was essentially similar to our own, others argue that it was "fundamentally different."[66] This divergence of opinion reflects a broader uncertainty: although a considerable body of evidence survives regarding nineteenth-century performance practices, it remains fragmented and often contradictory. As a result, scholars and performers alike must grapple with the possibility that Brahms's real performance ideals cannot be easily aligned with modern notions of textual fidelity or stylistic homogeneity. Rather than reflecting a single, codified style, Brahms's circle embodied a rich diversity of tempo flexibility, expressive nuance, and structural interpretation.

An important dimension of this complexity involves the broader changes in performance traditions between Brahms's era and the present day. As Robert Philip notes, "it is now general knowledge that the performing world of the late nineteenth century was significantly different from that of the early twenty-first."[67] This acknowledgment highlights the substantial stylistic differences between Brahms's time and modern performance practices, as well as the complexity performers face in attempting to recreate historically informed interpretations. Performers like

[66] Bernard D. Sherman, "How Different Was Brahms's Playing Style from Our Own?," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–2.
[67] Philip, "Brahms's Musical World: Balancing the Evidence," in *Performing Brahms*, 349.

Hans von Bülow, Felix Weingartner, and Hans Richter, among others, brought different interpretative traditions to Brahms's works, some leaning toward dramatic flexibility and others toward disciplined structural clarity.

Eyewitness accounts further complicate any attempt to define a singular Brahmsian style. Fanny Davies, a pupil of Clara Schumann and an interpreter admired by Brahms, described his piano playing as "free, very elastic and expansive," noting that "the balance was always there—one felt the fundamental rhythms underlying the surface rhythms." She emphasized that "his phrasing was notable in lyric passages" and concluded that "a strictly metronomic Brahms is as unthinkable as a fussy or hurried Brahms in passages which must be presented with adamantine rhythm."[68] In contrast, Felix Weingartner, recalling seeing Brahms conduct in 1886, wrote: "I was more favorably impressed by his [Brahms] unassuming appearance, his restrained movements and broad conceptions"[69]

Despite the wealth of surviving evidence—letters, recollections, early recordings, and performance traditions—the "Brahms problem" resists simple resolution. Disagreements about his true performance ideals are unlikely ever to disappear, given the inherent contradictions among sources and the evolving nature of performance itself. The search for a definitive Brahmsian style must therefore be approached with caution, humility, and an awareness that any attempt to recreate Brahms's sound inevitably involves interpretation and compromise. Rather than uncovering a single, authentic model, the evidence invites us to recognize the richness and diversity of Brahms's musical world—and to accept that any modern realization will be, at best, a thoughtfully informed reflection rather than an absolute restoration.

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[68] George S. Bozarth, "Fanny Davies and Brahms's Late Chamber Music," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 172.
[69] Weingartner, *Buffets and Rewards,* 165.

3.2 Contradictions in Brahms's Writings and Behavior

The search for an authentic Brahmsian performance style is complicated not only by the passage of time but also by contradictions in Brahms's own writings, actions, and musical behavior. Even though we possess considerably more evidence about Brahms's performance practices than we do for earlier composers, the evidence we do have is "less straightforward a matter than we might hope."[70] The existence of these inconsistencies demonstrates that any attempt to define a single, authoritative Brahmsian style misrepresents the complexity of Brahms's compositional and performance practices.

One of the clearest examples of contradiction lies in the disparity between Brahms's teachings and his actual playing. Brahms instructed Florence May—his student and biographer—to avoid spreading chords unless specifically marked in the score, Moritz Rosenthal—a prominent pianist and Brahms's contemporary—reported that Brahms frequently rolled chords even when not indicated.[71] Similarly, although Brahms's scores often seem to favor steady tempos, firsthand accounts suggest otherwise. In performances of Brahms's Piano Trio No. 3 in C minor, Op. 101, Fanny Davies recalled Brahms accelerating the tempo in certain sections by as much as twenty percent.[72] Such evidence shows that Brahms's practical musicianship often departed from the principles he ostensibly espoused.

Brahms's approach to tempo markings further illustrates this tension between theory and practice. His correspondence suggests an attempt to systematize expressions like *tranquillo* and *sostenuto*, distinguishing between lowercase terms (for expression) and

[70] Sherman, "How Different Was Brahms's Playing Style from Our Own?," in *Performing Brahms*, 1.
[71] Ibid., 2.
[72] Ibid.

capitalized terms (for actual tempo changes). Yet as Sherman points out, Brahms himself violated this distinction in practice, with Fanny Davies documenting an instance where Brahms markedly slowed the tempo after a lowercase *sostenuto*.[73] Instrument preferences reveal another layer of contradiction. Although Brahms came to prefer modern pianos like Steinways and Bechsteins for performance, scholars such as Styra Avins show that his compositional style often presupposed the sonic balances of older Viennese instruments.[74] Avins notes that while the differences between these instruments were perhaps less drastic than often imagined, Brahms's musical textures still reflect expectations of lighter, less uniform sound production—qualities less natural on the richer-toned Steinways of his later years.

Brahms's interpretive flexibility complicates matters further. As Sherman recounts, Brahms could praise diametrically opposed interpretations of the same work. After the premiere of his Four Serious Songs, Op. 121, Brahms praised one performance that followed the score's indication to end *diminuendo*, and another performance that concluded *fortissimo*. Likewise, Brahms's admiration for performers as different as Joseph Joachim (who championed a spare, vibrato-less style) and Richard Mühlfeld (whose clarinet playing featured prominent vibrato) suggests that expressive conviction mattered more to Brahms than strict stylistic consistency.[75]

Further contradictions emerge in Brahms's attitude toward published performance materials. Although he often demanded precision from performers, his own first editions frequently contain discrepancies and inconsistencies. As Styra Avins notes, "even Brahms's first editions show discrepancies and uncoordinated details," underscoring the gap between ideal

[73] Ibid.
[74] Styra Avins, "Performing Brahms's Music: Clues from Hi Letters," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 14.
[75] Sherman, "How Different Was Brahms's Playing Style from Our Own?," in *Performing Brahms*, 3.

textual accuracy and the realities of 19th-century publishing and performance practice.[76] Such evidence complicates the assumption that fidelity to Brahms's scores can offer a singular or definitive performance model.

In sum, Brahms's own contradictions deepen the so-called "Brahms problem." While Bernard D. Sherman has been instrumental in identifying these tensions, further research by Avins, and Philip confirms that no single document, recording, or anecdote can define Brahms's true performance ideals. As Brahms himself admitted, "any normal person" would take a different tempo "every week."[77] Rather than seeking a definitive template for Brahmsian performance, we must instead embrace the richness and complexity that his legacy offers—recognizing that true fidelity to Brahms means honoring his spirit of expressive freedom, not enforcing dogmatic rules.

3.3 Who gets to Represent Brahms? The Dangers of Canonizing One Interpretation

The question of who best represents Brahms's interpretive ideals has long preoccupied conductors, scholars, and listeners. In the wake of his death, a handful of names—Hans von Bülow, Hans Richter, Fritz Steinbach, and Felix Weingartner—have each been held up as torchbearers of the "true" Brahms style. While each of these musicians worked closely with Brahms or was publicly praised by him, Brahms's own artistic temperament and documented behavior suggest that no single interpreter should be canonized as normative. Attempts to fix one figure—or one tradition—as the definitive Brahmsian model distort the broader interpretive

[76] Avins, "Performing Brahms's Music: Clues from His Letters," in *Performing Brahms*, 33.
[77] Bernard D. Sherman, "Metronome Marks, Timings, and Other Period Evidence Regarding Tempo in Brahms," in *Performing Brahms: Early Evidence of Performance Style*, ed. Michael Musgrave and Bernard D. Sherman (Cambridge, U.K.; Cambridge University Press, 2003), 123.

range Brahms himself tolerated, appreciated, and, in some cases, encouraged. This subchapter explores that diversity and the risks of reducing it to a single school of thought.

I. Endorsements Across a Spectrum

Brahms maintained close artistic relationships with several major conductors of his era, but his praise was often conditional, and his approval extended to interpreters whose approaches diverged significantly from his own. Felix Weingartner, for instance, received notable commendation for his interpretation of the Second Symphony in 1895. Brahms described the performance as "truly wonderful," and remarked on Weingartner's "healthy, fresh personality" as being "uncommonly sympathetic."[78] As discussed earlier, Weingartner represents a moderating force among contemporary interpreters, navigating a middle path between exaggerated tempo rubato and rigid metronomic precision.

Another figure to whom Brahms entrusted major performances was Hans von Bülow, whose relationship with the composer reveals a more complex mixture of admiration and skepticism. Although no direct letter survives in which Brahms praises Bülow interpretive style, his willingness to collaborate with Bülow, particularly through the Meiningen Orchestra, speaks to a level of professional trust. In a letter to composer and conductor Ferdinand Hiller, Brahms even defended this association, suggesting that Bülow's extraordinary rehearsal standards and orchestral discipline outweighed his personal abrasiveness.[79]

Hans Richter, too, had Brahms's trust—he conducted the premieres of the Second and Third Symphonies—but this did not shield him from criticism. Still, Brahms expressed admiration for particular performances. At Brahms's request, Richter conducted the Viennese premiere of the Second Symphony in 1877. Edward Hanslick remarked that Richter "had studied

[78] Brahms and Avins, *Life and Letters*, 726.
[79] Ibid., 580–581.

the work with loving care and performed it to perfection, which does him full honour."[80] In 1885 Brahms attended a performance of Bach's *Mass in B minor* conducted by Richter and described the experience as "an immense joy in every regard"[81]

Fritz Steinbach served as principal conductor of the Meiningen Court Orchestra from 1886 to 1902, inheriting an ensemble closely associated with Brahms through the earlier leadership of Hans von Bülow. Shortly after taking up the post, he earned the composer's friendship and approval. [82] Although no letters or writings from Brahms himself survive that contain explicit praise, multiple sources attest to the high regard in which he held Steinbach. According to Max Kalbeck, Brahms's most influential biographer, Steinbach stood "equally distant from both the podium virtuoso and the pedantic time-beater," a conductor who "subordinated his personality to the work itself" and "recognized his role model in Brahms." [83] Later writers, such as Walter Frisch, affirm that Brahms regarded Steinbach—alongside Weingartner—as one of the few conductors who exemplified contrasting strengths within the bounds of Brahms's aesthetic preferences.[84]

Even in the realm of soloists, Brahms's praise extended to contrasting styles. He deeply admired both Joseph Joachim and Richard Mühlfeld, despite their vastly different approaches to sound and expression. Joachim championed a restrained style with minimal vibrato, closely aligned with Brahms's notational precision and aesthetic rigor. Mühlfeld, on the other hand, was a clarinetist of great warmth and expressive nuance.[85] That Brahms could endorse both Joachim

[80] Philip, "Brahms's Musical World: Balancing the Evidence," in *Performing Brahms*, 359.
[81] Brahms and Avins, 620.
[82] Pascall and Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 233.
[83] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, 2nd ed., vol. 4 (Tutzing: H. Schneider, 1976), 81.
[84] Frisch, "In Search of Brahms's First Symphony," in *Performing Brahms*, 281.
[85] Sherman, "How Different Was Brahms's Playing Style from Our Own?," in *Performing Brahms*, 3.

and Mühlfeld reveals a crucial insight: technical preferences—such as the use or avoidance of vibrato—were less important to him than the overall expressive integrity of a performance.

Taken together, these endorsements suggest that Brahms did not impose a single ideal of interpretation on those closest to him. Instead, he appreciated a range of musical personalities, provided that their performances communicated conviction, structural awareness, and emotional depth. This breadth of approval cautions against elevating any one interpreter or tradition to the status of definitive.

II. The Posthumous Construction of the Steinbach Tradition

Among the most prominent efforts to fix a Brahmsian performance tradition is the posthumous elevation of Fritz Steinbach. Steinbach conducted Brahms's works extensively with the Meiningen Orchestra, and is often cited as the model of Brahms's intentions. Max Kalbeck claimed that Steinbach consciously modeled his conducting on Brahms's own style.[86] Even Hans von Bülow, in a letter to Brahms in 1884, praised Steinbach and ranked him among "the best orchestra conductors of the younger generation."[87]

The most significant attempt to codify Steinbach's approach came with Walter Blume's 1933 publication *Brahms in der Meininger Tradition*. Based on Steinbach's annotated scores and rehearsal markings, Blume's work was a meticulous preservation of what he considered the true performance style of Brahms's circle. Yet its very existence—its attention to every nuance of articulation and tempo—also represents a desire to solidify a living tradition into a manual. Blume's editor, Alexander Berrsche, would take this further: in a 1916 obituary, Berrsche wrote

[86] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, Vol. 4, 81.
[87] Hans Von Bülow, Johannes Brahms, and Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen, *Hans von Bülow's Letters to Johannes Brahms: A Research Edition*, trans. Cynthia Klohr (Lanham: Md, 2012), 21–22.

that "with Steinbach's death, Brahms has died a second time. A genuine and correct tradition has perished."[88]

Yet this idealization raises questions. Robert Pascall and Philip Weller point out that Steinbach himself sometimes departed from Brahms's explicit instructions, particularly in matters of tempo.[89] Canonizing his style risks overlooking the very flexibility and responsiveness that characterized Brahms's preferred interpreters.

III. Conflicting Evidence in Brahms's Own Responses

Brahms's reactions to conductors often seem contradictory. He condemned Hans von Bülow's exaggerated ritards with a sarcastic quip: "If I had wanted it, I would have written it in."[90] And yet, Bülow once recounted that during a conversation in Bremen—after being criticized for an unorthodox interpretation of Beethoven—he defended himself by saying, "Brahms—known to be the greatest master among contemporary composers—once said to me: 'Bülow, you may play my works however you wish.' How much more, then, may I take such liberty with Beethoven—about whose intentions in many places no one truly knows anymore what he actually wanted."[91] Whether this was flattery, irony, or an acknowledgment of artistic freedom is unclear—but the tension between prescription and permissiveness runs throughout Brahms's remarks.

A further example of conflicting responses appears in Brahms's correspondence with Joseph Joachim regarding the Fourth Symphony. In a letter dated 17 January 1886, Brahms told Joachim, "do the piece however it pleases you best—and I would truly love to assume that you

[88] Frisch, "In Search of Brahms's First Symphony," in *Performing Brahms*, 282.
[89] Robert Pascall and Philip Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 237.
[90] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, Vol. 3, 495.
[91] Hans von Bülow, *Hans von Bülows Leben: Dargstellt Aus Seinen Briefen / von Marie von Bülow* (Germany: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1921), 460.

could do it in a way that you would enjoy!"[92] disclaiming any authority over tempo decisions. Yet only days later, he sent Joachim score and set of orchestral parts with written tempo modifications and a detailed letter explaining his expressive intentions.

IV. Resisting the Illusion of Finality

Brahms's musical legacy was one of aesthetic nuance, flexible interpretation, and evolving standards. While certain conductors received his praise, none should be taken as the sole representative of his intentions. The dangers of canonizing one interpreter are manifold: it narrows the expressive range of Brahms performance, discourages creative engagement, and risks misrepresenting a composer who seemed to prize elasticity and individuality over conformity.

The variety of interpreters Brahms supported—each with their own technical habits and expressive philosophies—suggests that his ideal performance was not a fixed model but a moving target. To perform Brahms well, one must engage with this multiplicity rather than flatten it. Acknowledging this is not only truer to history; it is truer to Brahms.

3.4 Why This Study Focuses on Weingartner as a Lens Rather than a Model

This study does not propose Felix Weingartner as the definitive interpreter of Brahms or suggest that his recordings or writings reveal a singularly correct approach to the symphonies. Rather, it argues that Weingartner offers a particularly valuable lens through which to examine Brahmsian performance practice. His documented relationship with Brahms, his interpretive writings, and his complete recorded cycle of the symphonies form a historically grounded framework for exploring interpretive choices. Brahms's praise following Weingartner's 1895

[92] Brahms Johannes, *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel : V.6*, vol. 6 (Germany: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1922), 202–3.

performance of the Second Symphony—describing it as "truly wonderful" and commending his "healthy, fresh personality" as "uncommonly sympathetic"[93]—is especially significant given how sparingly Brahms offered such praise. Weingartner's subsequent career promoted ideals—clarity, fidelity to structure, and restraint—that align closely with values consistently present in Brahms's aesthetic writings and associations.

His position becomes more compelling when viewed alongside the limitations of other interpreters. Fritz Steinbach, often described as the inheritor of the Meiningen tradition, left no recordings, and the mythologizing of his interpretive style through Walter Blume and Alexander Berrsche complicates efforts to evaluate his musicianship critically. Hans Richter, though entrusted with the premieres of the Second and Third Symphonies, was also the subject of pointed criticism. Brahms described his playing as "grey and *mezzoforte*" and lamented that Richter's reading of the Fourth Symphony was "based on such misunderstanding."[94] Hans von Bülow, known for his discipline and technical control, was similarly faulted for exaggerated ritardandos, prompting Brahms's cutting remark: "If I had wanted it, I would have written it in."[95] These conductors each played a vital role in Brahms's musical life, but none combined personal endorsement with a surviving interpretive legacy as comprehensively as Weingartner.

What distinguishes Weingartner is this dual inheritance: he was both praised by Brahms and left behind extensive recordings and writings that articulate a coherent artistic philosophy. In *On Conducting* (1895) and *On the Performance of Beethoven's Symphonies* (1906), he argues for stylistic fidelity, structural transparency, and the avoidance of interpretive extremes. He warns against both metronomic rigidity and the "mania for nuance," writing that "the secret of

[93] Brahms and Avins, *Life and Letters*, 726.
[94] Pascall and Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 232–234.
[95] Max Kalbeck, *Johannes Brahms*, Vol. 3, 495.

the artistic rendering of musical compositions, and hence the secret of the conductor's art, lies in the style."[96] His emphasis on internal balance and resistance to distortion parallels Brahms's own misgivings about overly personalized phrasing. Weingartner does not merely reflect Brahms's taste—he provides a framework through which that taste can be examined in performance. Importantly, this study does not treat Weingartner's recordings as a model to emulate. Rather, they serve as a point of orientation—tools for interrogating performance choices in light of Brahms's documented priorities. Weingartner's value lies in the intersection of historical proximity, musical philosophy, and recorded evidence. His interpretations offer insight into tempo flexibility, phrasing, and dynamic contour—not as prescriptive rules, but as historically informed possibilities articulated by someone who sought to realize the composer's intentions and preserved that understanding through both text and sound.

Approaching Weingartner as a lens rather than a model reflects a historically responsible stance in performance scholarship. Amid contradictory documents and evolving traditions, his legacy offers not prescriptive answers but a useful vantage point. He does not reveal the single "correct" way to perform Brahms, but brings us closer to hearing the expressive and structural priorities Brahms may have valued.

[96] Felix Weingartner, *Weingartner on Music & Conducting,* 59.

Chapter 4

A Study in Sound and Score: Brahms's Fourth Symphony

The previous chapters established the complexity of interpreting Brahms's symphonic style and explored the value of Felix Weingartner as a historically situated, but not definitive, interpreter. This final chapter turns to a focused case study: the Fourth Symphony in E minor, Op. 98. Through a comparative analysis of Brahms's annotated score for Joseph Joachim and Weingartner's 1938 recording, the chapter examines where interpretive choices align, diverge, or offer insight into the composer's intentions. While many aspects of performance practice could be considered, this study limits its scope to tempo modifications—markings and choices that directly shape the pacing and expressive structure of the work.

The Fourth Symphony provides an ideal testing ground for this inquiry, not only because of the availability of detailed tempo-related annotations, but also because of the philosophical and structural richness of the work itself. At its heart, this chapter is intended to provide practical and historically grounded guidance for young interpreters of Brahms—those seeking to balance fidelity to the score with expressive flexibility. Rather than treating Brahms's markings as fixed commandments, the study aims to highlight how Brahms himself viewed interpretation as fluid, responsive, and deeply context driven. What emerges is not a prescriptive model for

performance, but a reflection on the creative space between text and sound—between what Brahms wrote, what he suggested, and what his interpreters continue to discover.

4.1 The Annotated Manuscript to Joachim

Among the most valuable documents for understanding Brahms's performance intentions is the annotated score of his Fourth Symphony that he sent to Joseph Joachim in early 1886. The annotations were prompted by Joachim's letter of January 10, 1886, in which he wrote, "As a matter of principle, I only consult the metronome when I'm uncertain whether I'm feeling the tempo correctly; but I would ask you to include it in this case, and I would be genuinely grateful for any suggestions you might have for the performance."[97] Brahms replied on January 20 [?], "I have entered some tempo modifications in pencil into the score. They may be useful, even necessary, for a first performance. Unfortunately, such marks—mine and others'—often find their way into print, where they mostly do not belong." He went on to clarify that "This kind of exaggerations are only necessary as long as a work is unknown to the orchestra (or soloist) ... Once a work is fully internalized, I believe such gestures are no longer appropriate. In fact, the further one strays from them, the less artistic I consider the result."[98] Given Brahms's famously restrained approach to interpretive instructions, this exchange—and the markings that followed—offers a rare and candid glimpse into how he envisioned the pacing and character of his final symphony. While the manuscript includes markings related to phrasing and expression, it is the tempo modifications that most vividly capture Brahms's interpretive priorities. These annotations, taken together, offer a rare and revealing glimpse into Brahms's own priorities for

[97] Johannes Brahms, *Johannes Brahms Briefwechsel: V.6*, vol. 6 (Germany: Deutsche Brahms-Gesellschaft, 1922), 202–3.
[98] Ibid., 204–5.

shaping musical flow—providing a valuable context for the interpretive decisions examined in this chapter.

The annotations referenced in this study are based on Robert Pascall's Henle Verlag critical edition of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98, and on his collaborative study with Philip Weller, *Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music*.

Brahms's annotations in the Joachim manuscript reveal a nuanced and flexible approach to tempo, offering both localized expressive suggestions and broader structural guidance. Rather than treating tempo as a fixed parameter, he adapted it to shifts in musical character and formal pacing. Some markings suggest changes in mood—moments of weight, suspension, or urgency—while others facilitate transitions or shape longer arcs. In one instance, he reinforces a *pesante* indication with the instruction *Nicht eilen bis zum Schluß!* ("Do not rush until the end!"), emphasizing restraint and sustained tension. Elsewhere, he combines tempo indications such as *sostenuto*, *largamente*, and *accelerando* with written instructions that clarify how phrases should evolve—whether to hold back, push forward, or flow into contrasting sections. One particularly detailed directive spans several variations and integrates multiple tempo modifications into a continuous arc, demonstrating Brahms's sensitivity to phrasing, gesture, and dramatic timing. To avoid redundancy, these markings will be presented with score examples in Subchapter 4.3, rather than detailed here in full.

The language Brahms employs—particularly phrases such as "do not rush until the end!" or "should be performed with more motion"—is suggestive rather than prescriptive, reinforcing his broader aesthetic of interpretive flexibility. Many of these markings do not appear in the printed score, highlighting the exceptional nature of the manuscript sent to Joachim. Far from representing a general pattern of Brahms tailoring performance directions for others, this

document stands as a rare and deliberate intervention—likely motivated by the importance of the Berlin performance and his close artistic relationship with Joachim. As such, the manuscript should not be viewed as a rigid template, but rather as a revealing record of how Brahms communicated pacing, nuance, and interpretive shape in a specific musical and collaborative context.

4.2 Tempo Modifications in Weingartner's Recording

This section will survey the tempo modifications throughout the entire work as heard in Felix Weingartner's 1938 recording of Brahms's Symphony No. 4 with the London Symphony Orchestra, produced on February 14 at Abbey Road Studios (Studio No. 1). Tempo modifications suggested by Brahms will not be discussed in this chapter, as they will be analyzed in the following subchapter. All the examples in this subchapter and Section 4.3 are drawn from the Hans Gál edition of The Complete Symphonies by Johannes Brahms, originally published by Breitkopf and Härtel, reprinted by Dover Publications.[99]

To ensure clarity in the score examples, each tempo modification by Weingartner will be preceded by his initials FW**.**

I. Allegro non troppo

As seen in Figure 1 on the following page, the first tempo modification in the recording occurs four bars before the second theme in B major. Weingartner broadens the tempo from bars 91 to 94, enhancing the lyrical and fluid character of the passage, which contrasts with the more

[99] Johannes Brahms, *Complete Symphonies*, ed. Hans Gál, Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1926 (Reprint, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1974).

rhythmically articulated pizzicato strings and staccato woodwinds that precede it. This transitional theme is similarly broadened in the recapitulation, from bars 335 to 338.

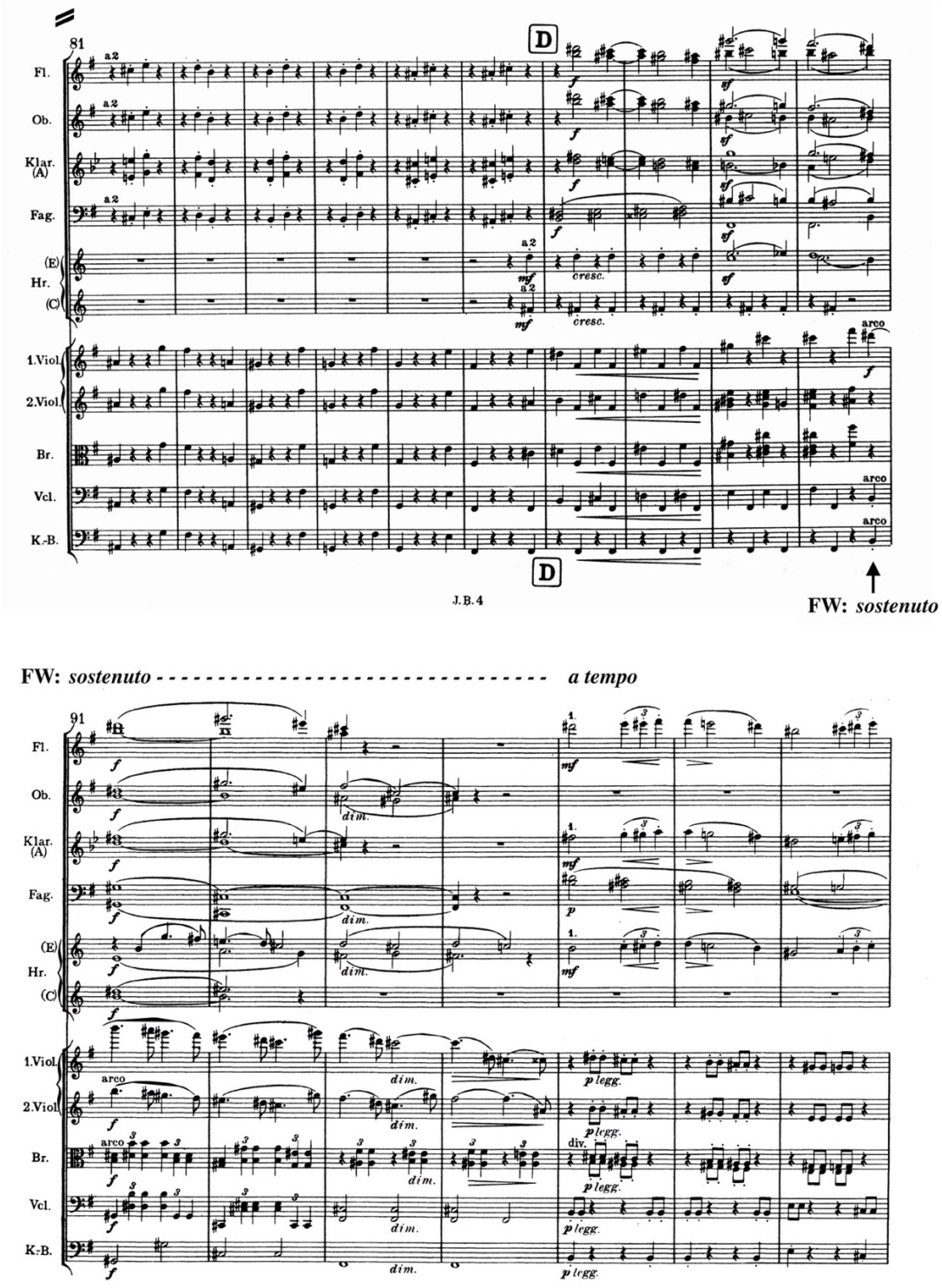


Figure 1. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: I. Allegro non troppo, bar 90[4] – 95[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

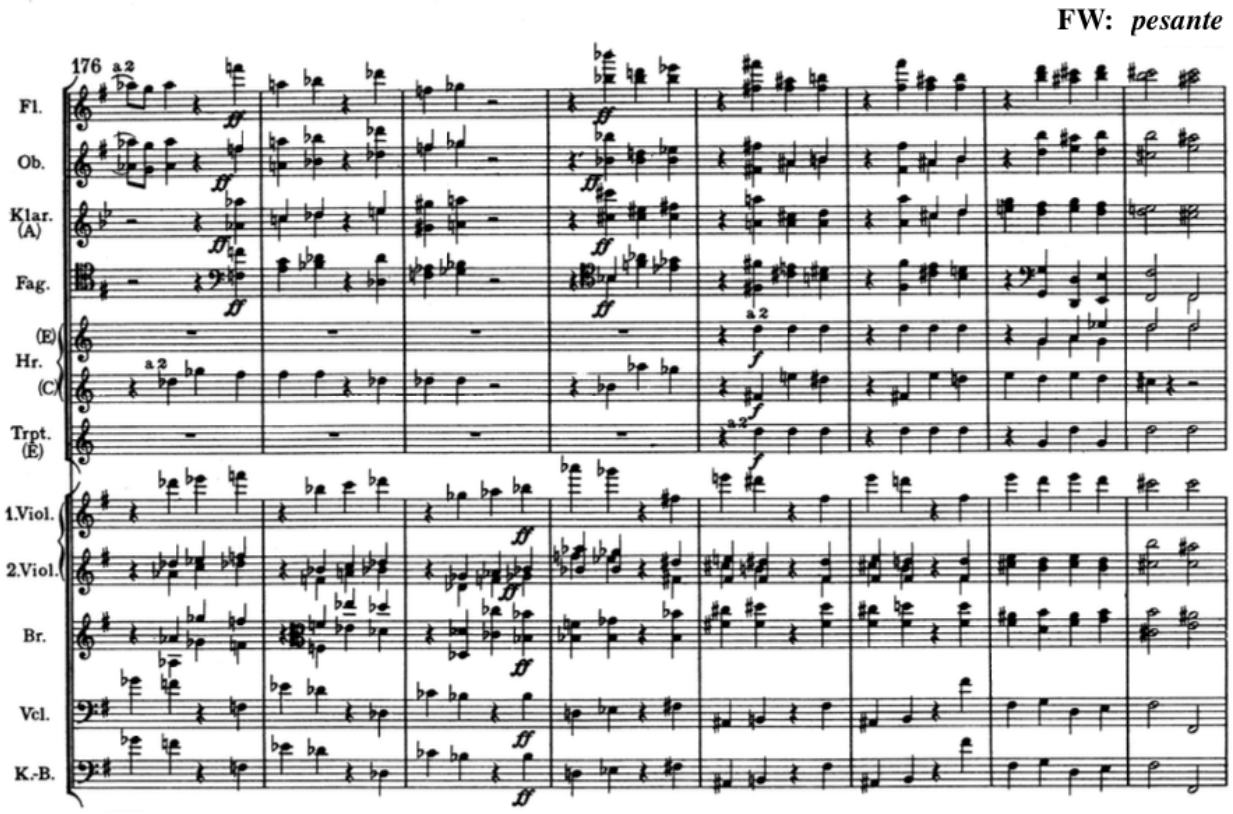


Figure 2. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: I. Allegro non troppo, bar 183 – Weingartner's tempo modification.

In the middle of the development section, at bar 183, Weingartner broadly emphasizes the two half notes, enhancing the expressiveness of the passage. In this case, the gesture supports a deceptive cadence, as the bar leads from an F-sharp major seventh chord in the *pesante* measure to a G major chord on the downbeat of the following phrase (not shown in Figure 2).

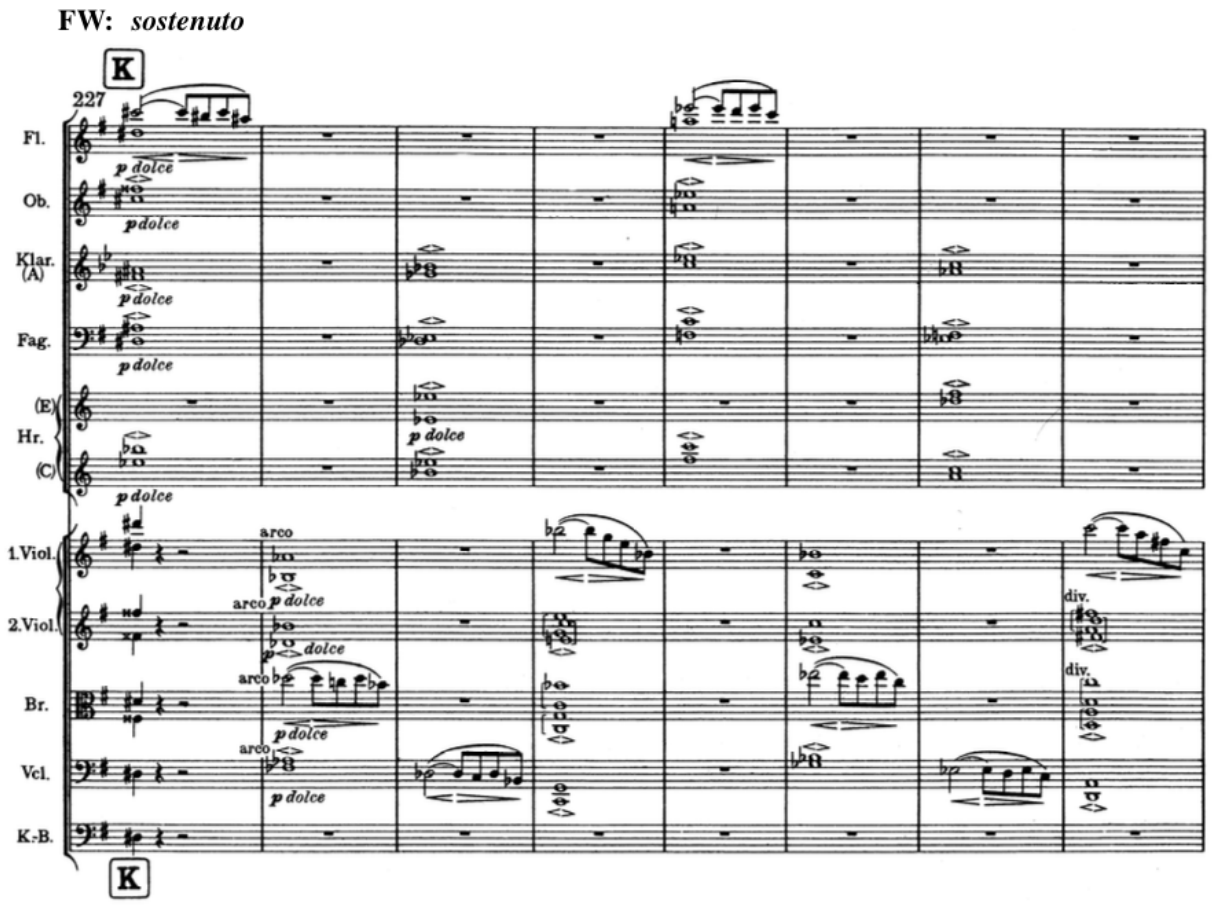


Figure 3. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: I. Allegro non troppo, bar 227 to 249[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

Near the end of the development section, an alternating and serene motive is passed between the woodwinds and strings from bars 227 to 249. Weingartner gently relaxes the tempo, not drastically, but enough to register a clear shift in character. This passage connects directly to the example in Figure 4: at bar 249, Weingartner briefly returns to tempo for three bars, then conveys a *sostenuto* character for the three-note unison motive, before resuming tempo for the final four bars of the development. He maintains this pace into the return of the first theme in the recapitulation.

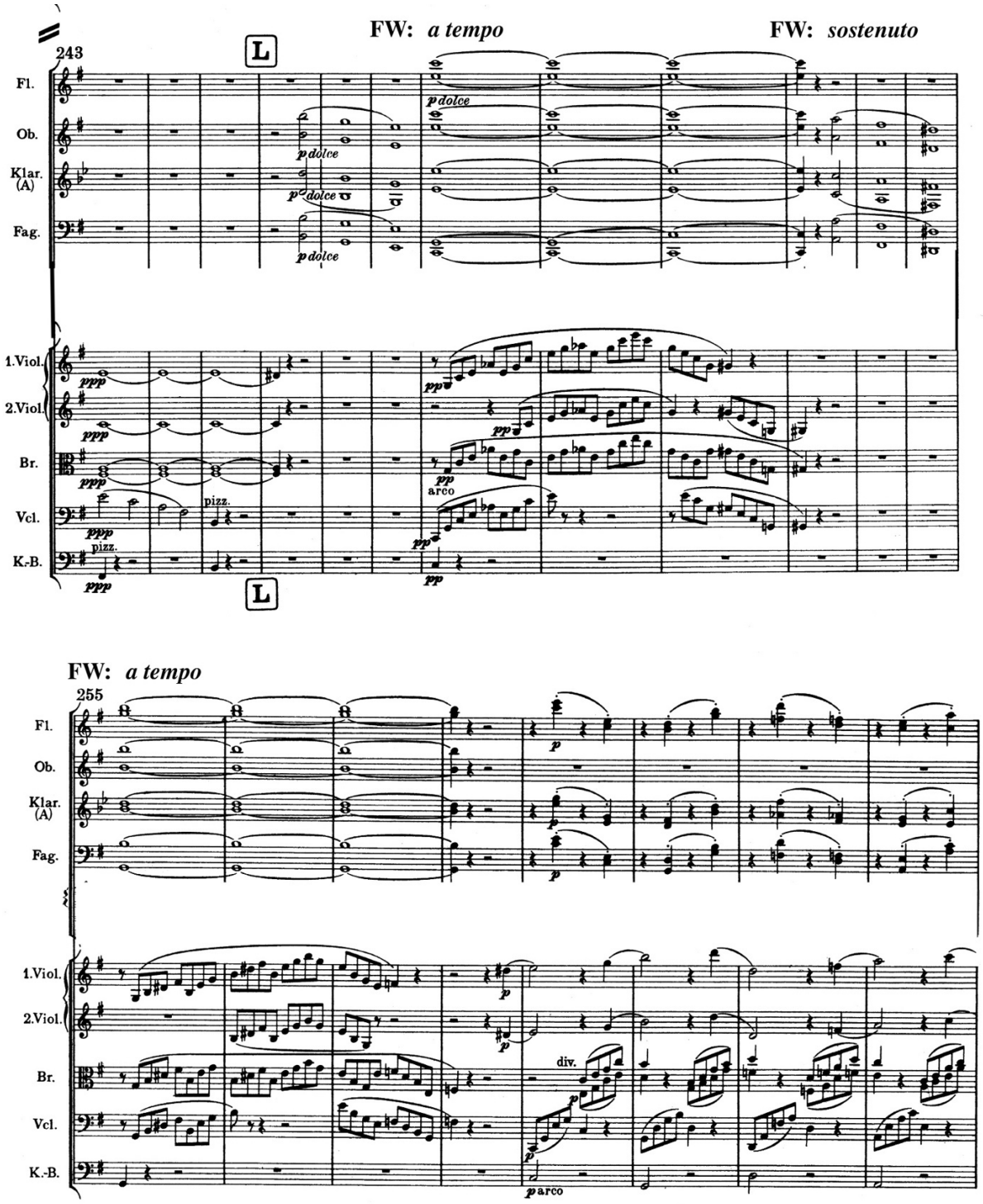


Figure 4. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: I. Allegro non troppo, bar 249 to 255[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

II. Andante moderato

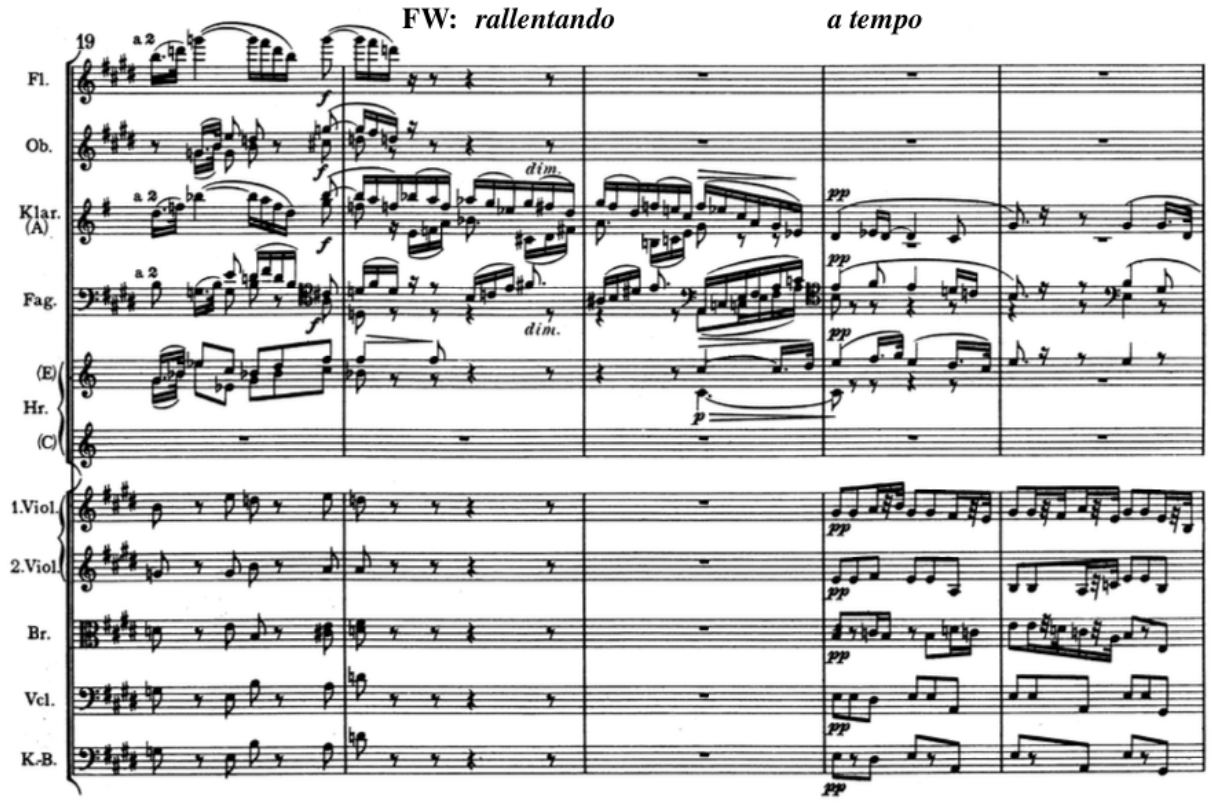


Figure 5. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: II. Andante moderato, bar 20[4] to 22[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

Weingartner's tempo for the second movement is well balanced—neither too fast nor too slow. In the second half of bar 20, he relaxes the tempo gradually before returning to the main motive of the first theme. However, the last thirty-second note of the first French horn will be placed in the tempo of the next phrase.

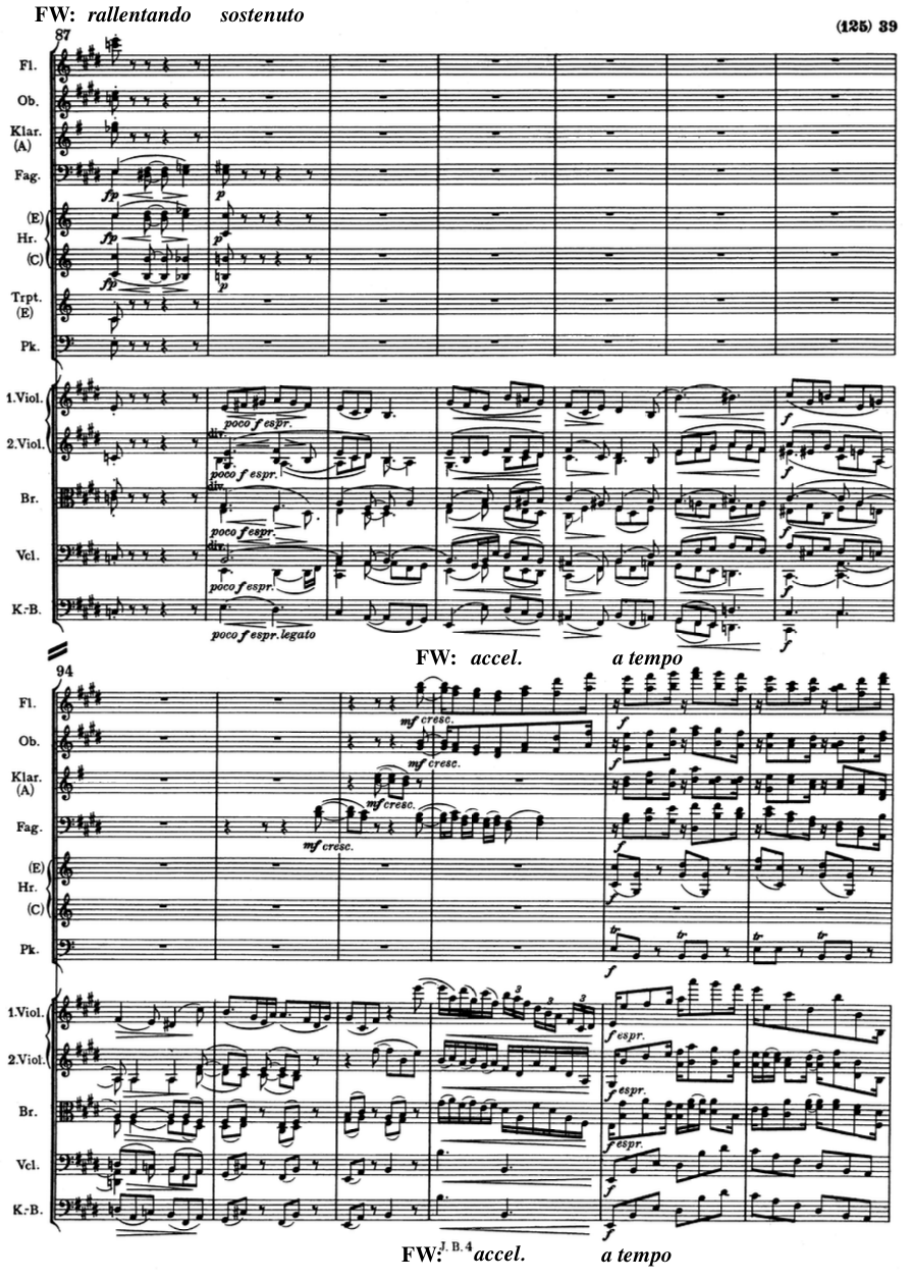


Figure 6. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: II. Andante moderato, bar 87 to 98[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

This passage in the second movement might seem straightforward, as Brahms marks it *poco f espressivo legato*, but Weingartner's control of the pacing brings added expressiveness. He allows the tempo to unfold organically, enhancing the lyrical quality of the theme. A particularly tasteful *rallentando* in bar 87 sets the tone for the expressive character that follows, shaping the phrase with fluidity and nuance.

III. Allegro giocoso

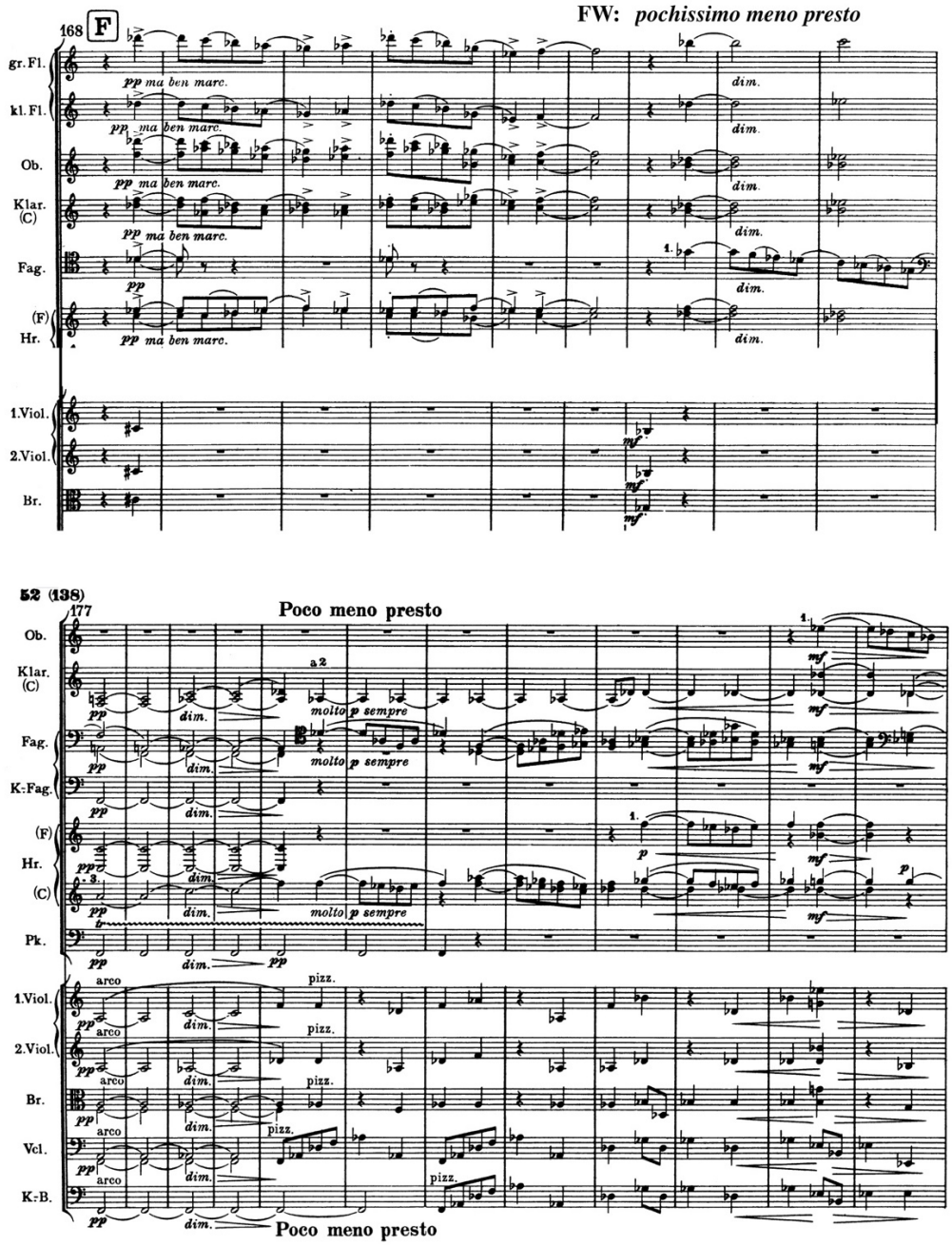


Figure 7. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: III. Allegro giocoso, bar 174 to 181[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

In this lyrical section of the third movement, Brahms marks *Poco meno presto* at bar 181. Weingartner begins preparing the tempo shift approximately seven bars earlier, easing into a slightly less hurried pace.

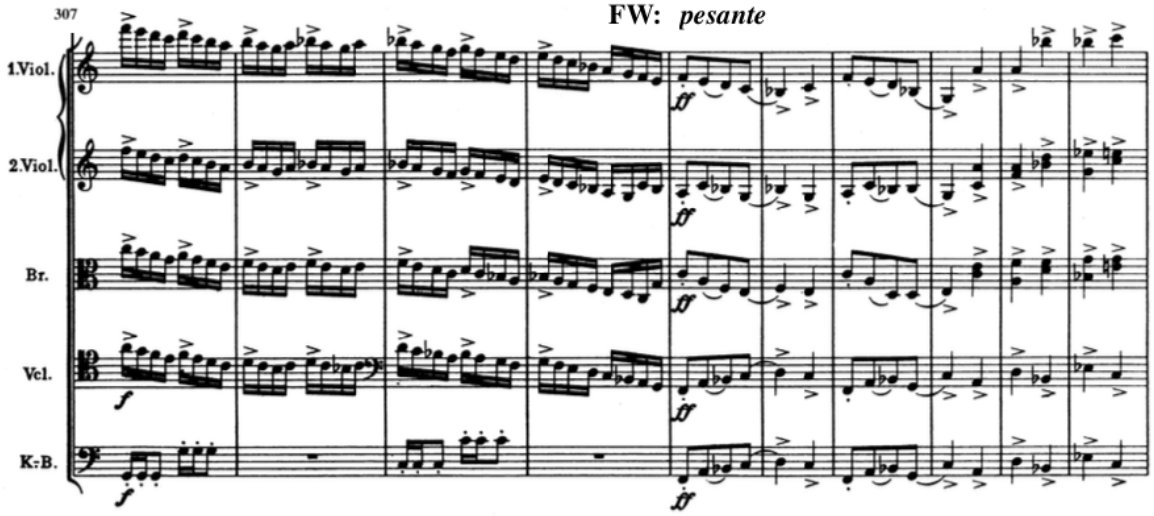


Figure 8. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: III. Allegro giocoso, bar 311 to 317[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

Following the lyrical section in the middle of the movement, the return of the spirited main tempo brings with it a recapitulation and coda written with momentum and energy. However, Weingartner introduces a moment of gravitas by briefly halting the forward motion when the main theme appears in F major. He broadens the tempo just for a few bars, adding weight and contrast, before returning to the original tempo.

IV. Allegro energico e passionato

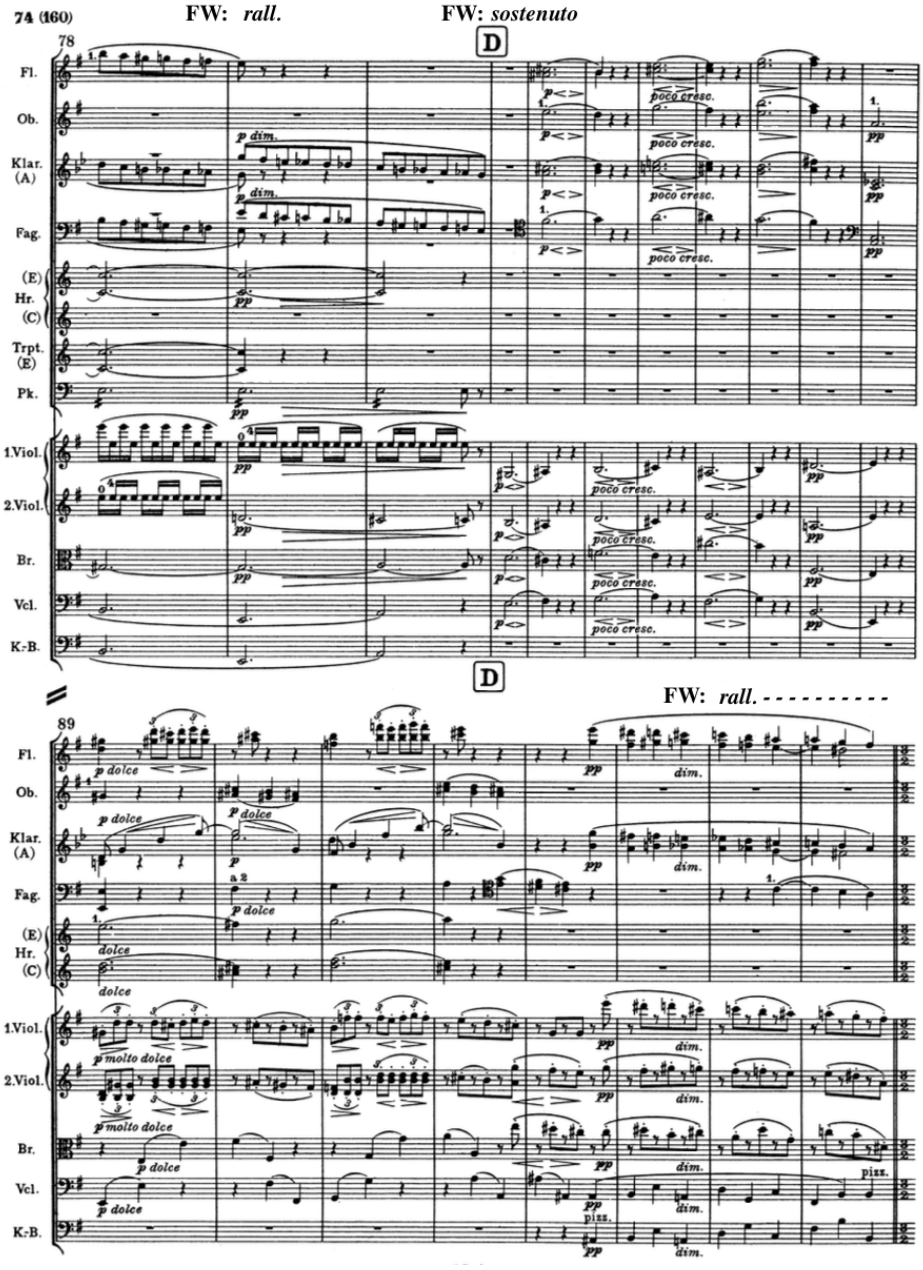


Figure 9. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 79[1] to 97[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

In this section of the fourth movement, pacing is crucial and can easily be overdone if not handled carefully. Weingartner relaxes the tempo in stages: he begins a *poco rallentando* at bar 79, establishing a broad, spacious tempo that he maintains until two bars before the flute solo.

There, he introduces another subtle *rallentando* to transition smoothly into the calmer character of the following passage.

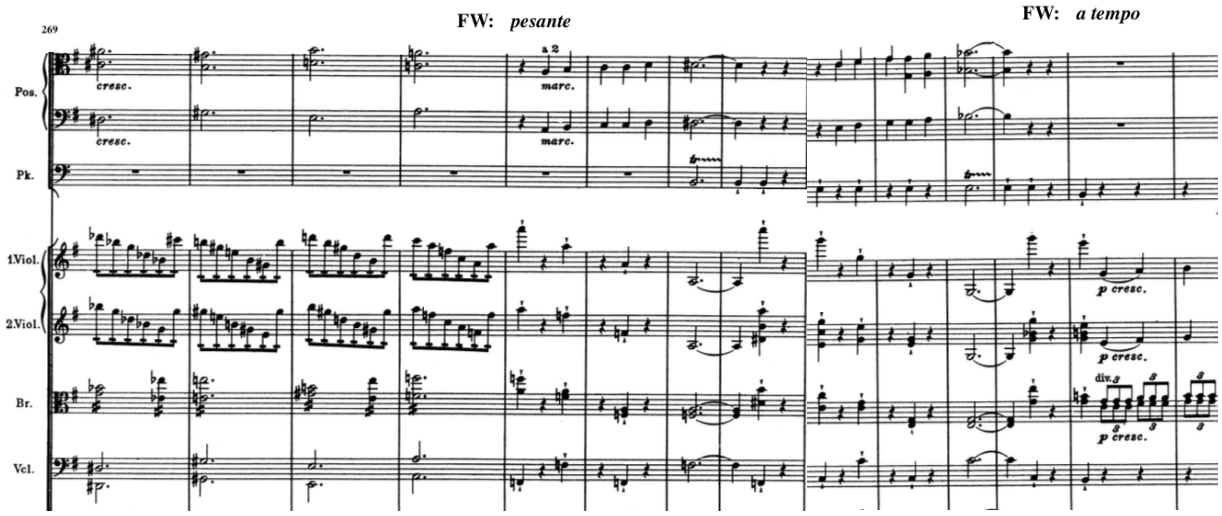


Figure 10. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 273 to 281[1] – Weingartner's tempo modification.

Much like the sudden *pesante* in the third movement shown in Figure 8, this passage evokes a similar effect. Here, in the middle of the coda—just as the music gains momentum and grandeur—Weingartner introduces a *pesante* character at bar 273, sustaining it for the duration of the phrase before resuming the *Piu Allegro* tempo again.

4.3 Concordances and Departures: Reading Brahms Through Weingartner

As discussed in Subchapter 4.1, Brahms's annotated manuscript of the Fourth Symphony—prepared for Joseph Joachim—offers rare insight into his intended tempo modifications. There is no documented evidence that Felix Weingartner had access to this score, and it is unlikely that his interpretations were shaped by its markings. Instead, Weingartner's approach to Brahms was grounded in his own musical philosophy and his understanding of

Brahms's aesthetic principles. His writings, particularly *On Conducting*, emphasize clarity, structural integrity, and fidelity to the composer's intentions.

This subchapter offers a comparative analysis between Brahms's tempo annotations and Weingartner's recorded performance from 1938. The goal is not to assess accuracy or conformity, but to explore how Weingartner's interpretive instincts intersect with—or diverge from—the composer's documented intentions. Each tempo modification marking from Brahms's annotated manuscript will be labeled using the prefix JB.

Concordances

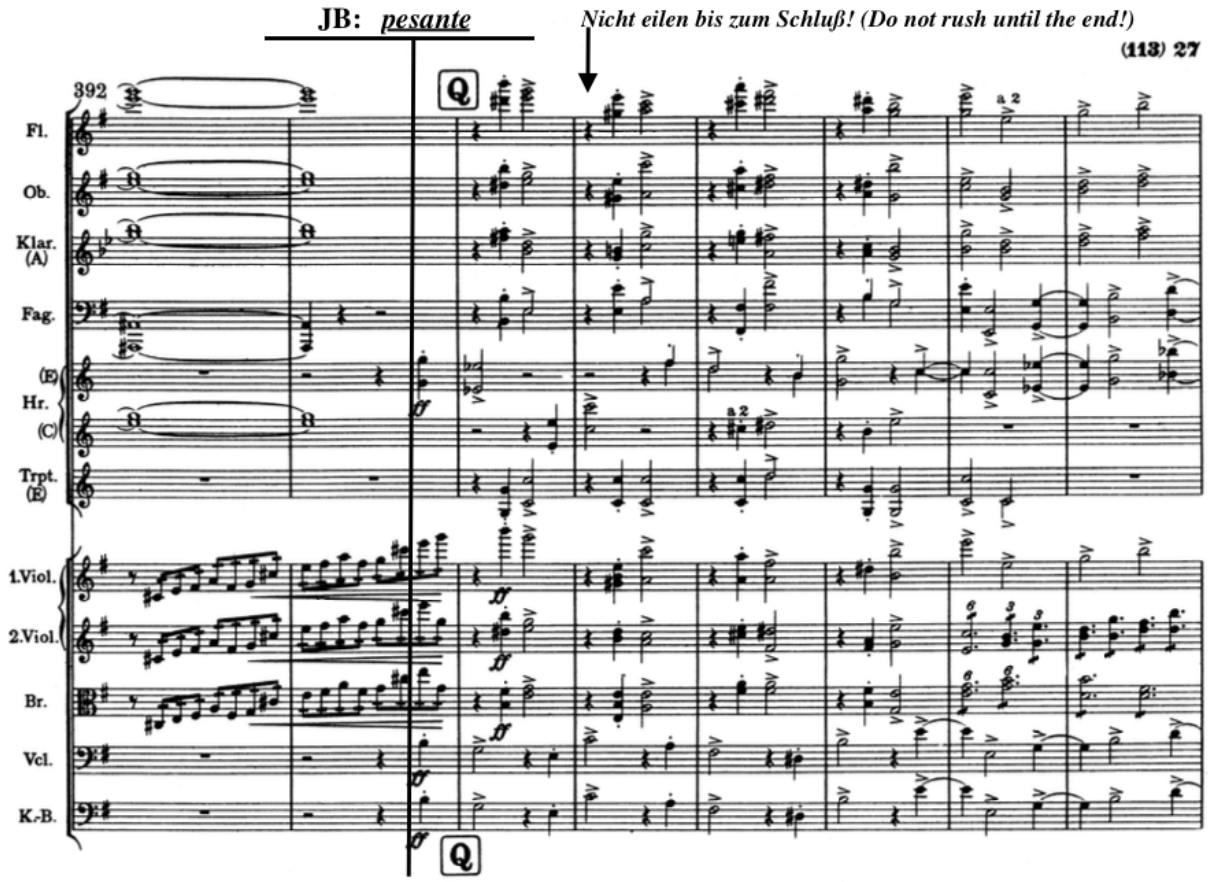


Figure 11. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: I. Allegro non troppo, bar 393[4] – Brahms's pesante annotation.

In the only tempo modification Brahms marked in the first movement—a *pesante*—Weingartner's interpretation not only aligns closely with the composer's intention but is executed masterfully. The sixteenth-note passage in the upper strings remains unaffected by the *pesante*, preserving both the clarity of the articulation and the speed of the passage. Meanwhile, the cellos, basses, and first and second French horns adopt the *pesante* through a coordinated modification of tempo and a clear, uniform staccato articulation. This approach anticipates the character of the material that follows and establishes a model that the rest of the instruments follow in an imitative sequence, alternating with the instruments that introduced the phrase. Moreover, Weingartner sustains the *pesante* character through to the end of the movement, as Brahms emphasized with the marking *Nicht eilen bis zum Schluß!* ("Do not rush until the end!"). While Weingartner slightly increases the pace, he never returns to the previous tempo, maintaining the gravity and weight appropriate to the *pesante* character.

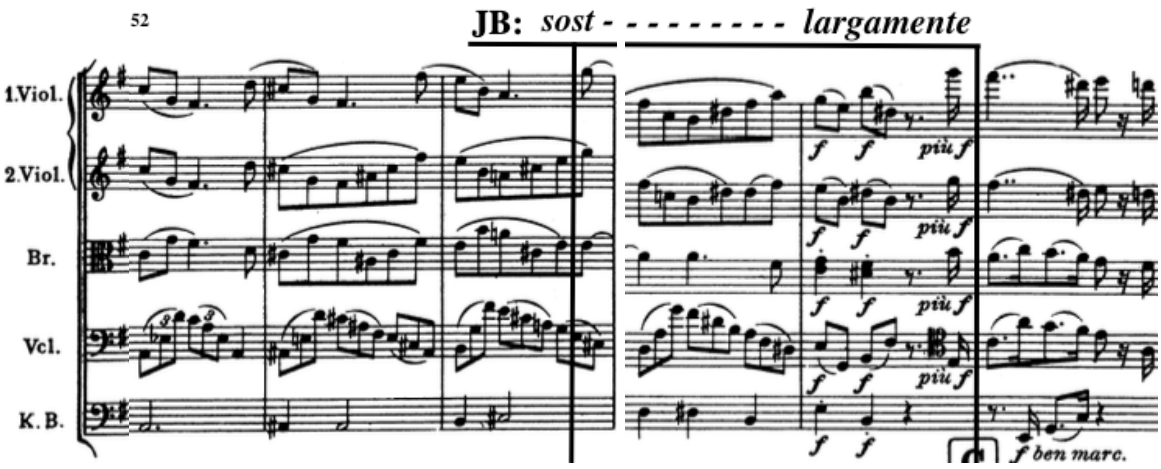


Figure 12. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 54[3.2] to 57[1] – Brahms's sost- - - - largamente annotation on string parts.

This is the first tempo modification that Brahms introduces in the fourth movement, and it includes two indications: *sostenuto* and *largamente*. While Weingartner does not shape this passage with a sudden sense of weight in the recording, he gradually relaxes the tempo leading

into the *largamente* at bar 56. Though not precisely what Brahms suggested, this approach reflects a logical and musically coherent assimilation of the marking.

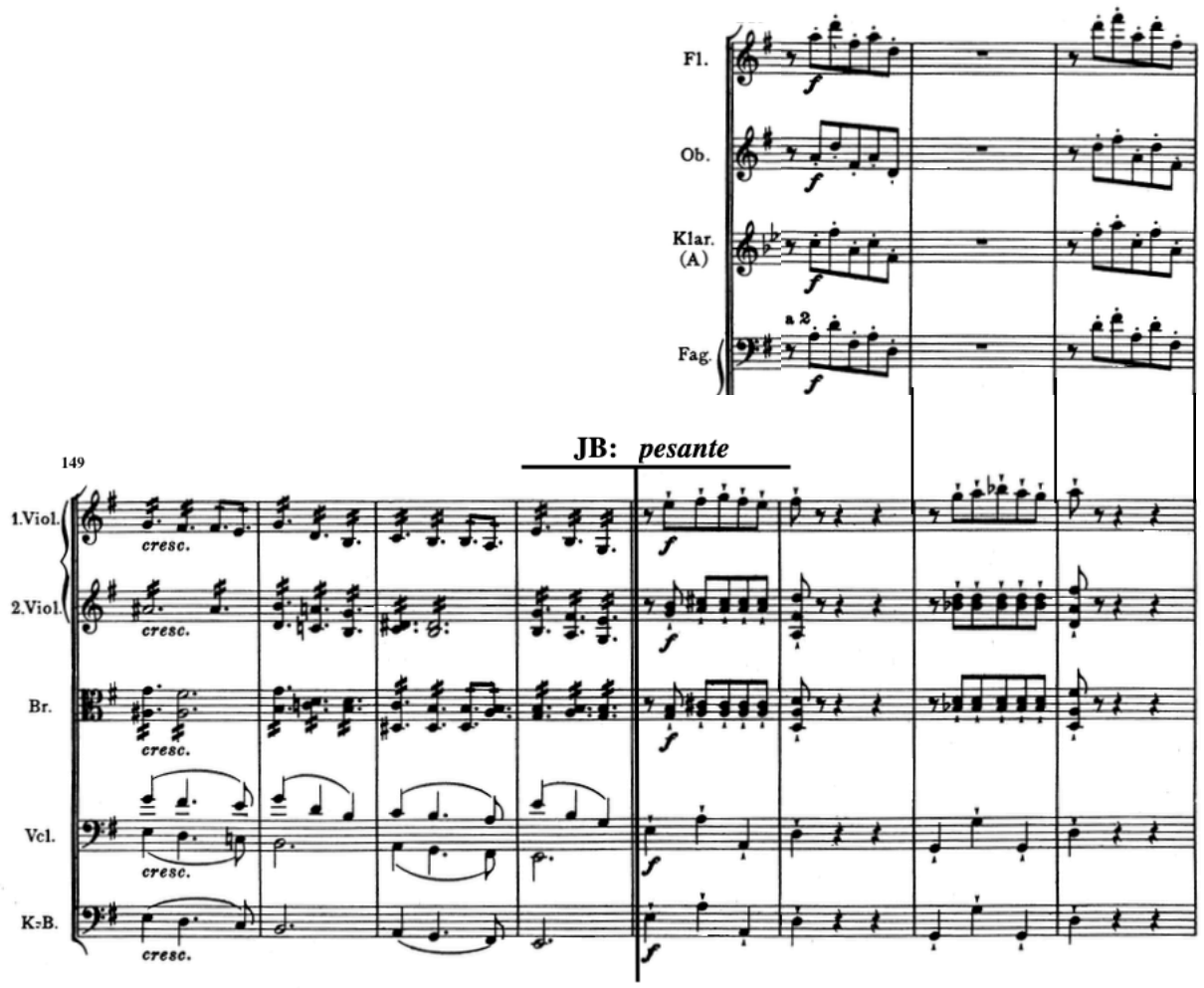


Figure 13. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 153[1] – Brahms's pesante annotation.

At bar 153, Brahms marked a *pesante*—unlike the earlier *pesante* in the first movement, which was reinforced by the instruction *Nicht eilen bis zum Schluß!* ("Do not rush until the end"), this marking stands alone. Weingartner conveys the *pesante* character by closely following the written articulations in bar 153 and slightly slowing the tempo by approximately five metronome marks. He maintains this modified tempo for four bars before gradually returning to a more forward-moving pace.

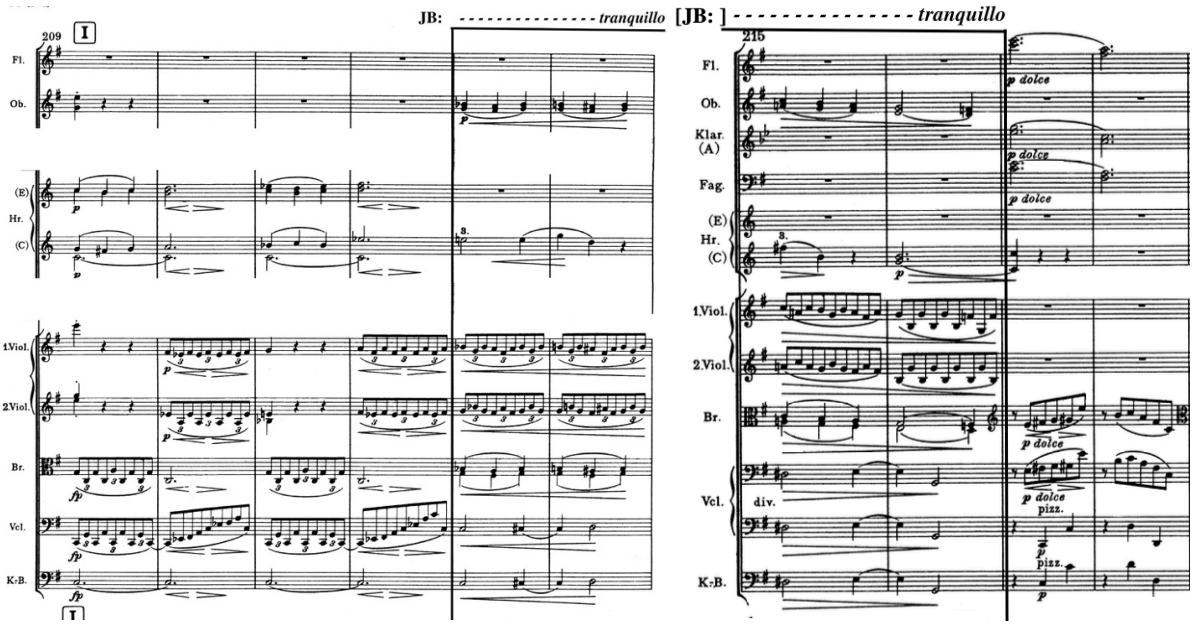


Figure 14. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 213[1] – 217[1] – Brahms's tranquillo annotation.

Brahms indicated a *tranquillo* marking at bar 213, which falls between variations 25 and 27—despite his overall instruction that these variations should be performed with more motion (see the explanations for Figure 17. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, variation 25 – 27 – Brahms's instructions I.and Figure 18 later in this subchapter). Weingartner gradually relaxes the tempo across the four bars marked *tranquillo*, establishing a more subdued pace that carries into variation 27 at bar 217.

Departures

Before turning to the first example of divergence, it is important to acknowledge that Weingartner's interpretative choices, though not always in line with Brahms's explicit markings, were rarely arbitrary. His departures often stem from a well-considered musical logic, prioritizing structural clarity, expressive direction, and overall coherence. In this way, his

approach suggests that fidelity to Brahms may reside less in literal accuracy than in a deeper responsiveness to the work's architectural and emotional intent. By highlighting these departures, I aim to make clear that the goal is not to assert the superiority of one interpretation over another, but rather to explore the range of expressive possibilities available within the bounds of Brahmsian thought.

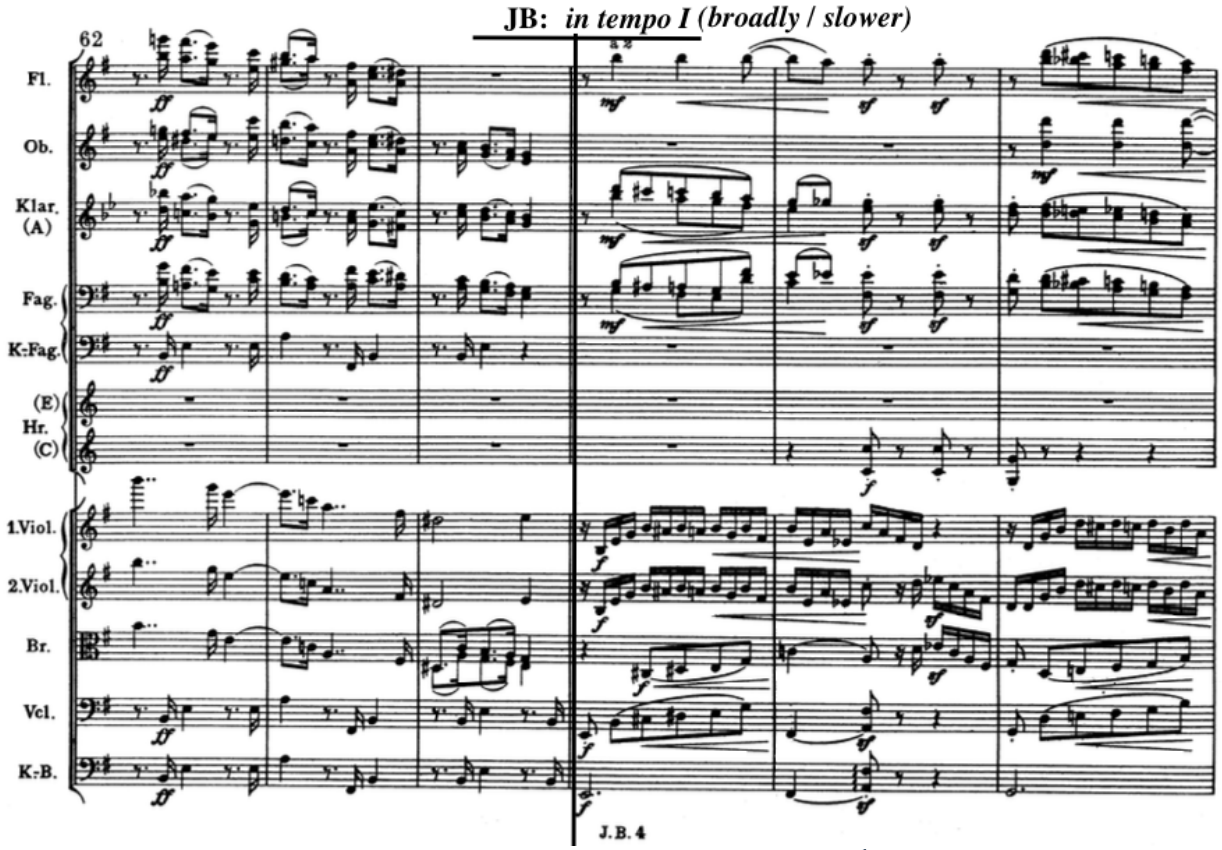


Figure 15. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 65[1] – Brahms's in tempo I annotation.

Brahms marked *in tempo I* at bar 65 and indicated that variation eight of the chaconne theme should be taken more broadly or slowly. Here, Weingartner maintains roughly the same tempo, with only a slight—almost imperceptible—hesitation on the downbeat of bar 65.

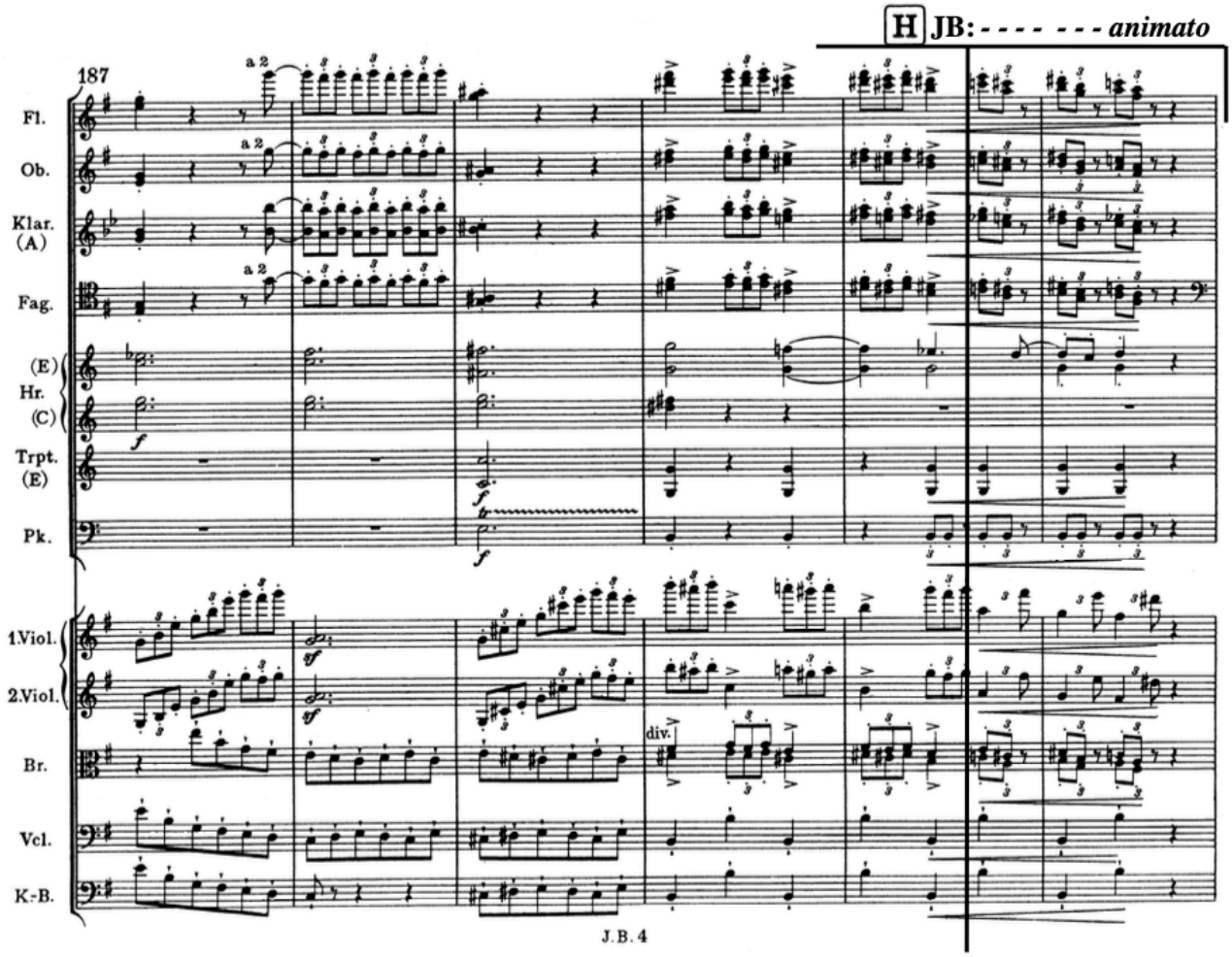


Figure 16. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 191[3] – 193[1] – Brahms's animato annotation.

At bar 191, on the third beat, Brahms marked *animato*, likely intending to drive the phrase forward abruptly and create a more intense pause before transitioning to variation 24—a fully orchestrated passage that recalls variation 1, but with heightened intensity. Weingartner, however, maintains the same tempo through this point and continues at that pace into the following variation. It is worth noting that his tempo at this moment already carries considerable momentum and energy, potentially diminishing the need for further acceleration.

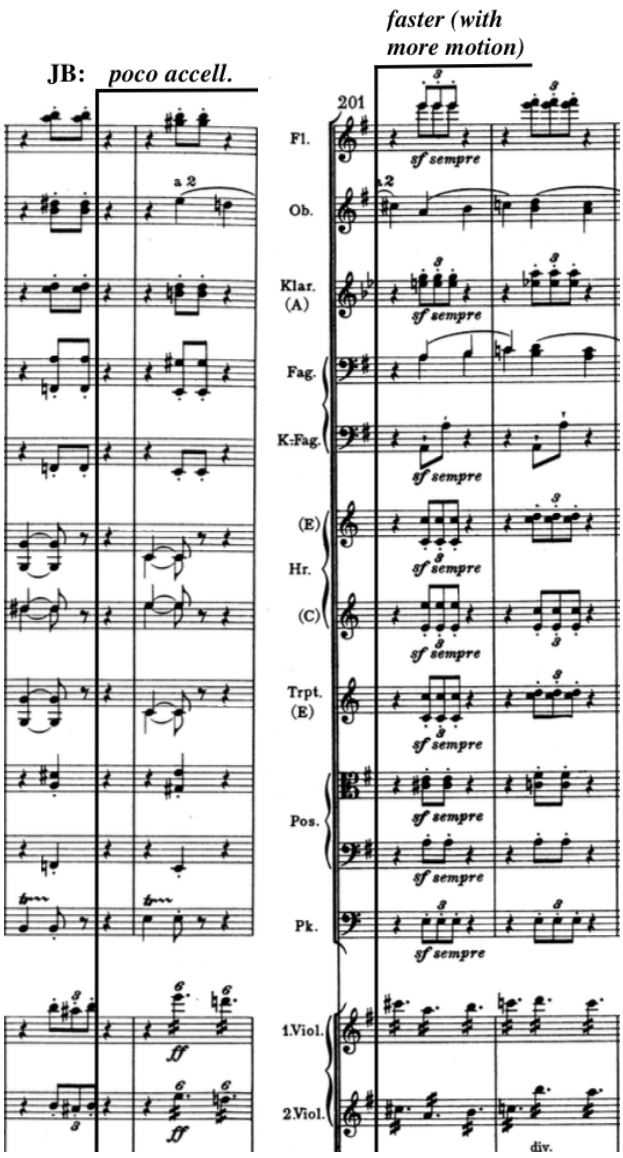


Figure 17. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, variation 25 – 27 – Brahms's instructions I.

Brahms gave the following instructions for this section: "Variations 25 – 27 should be performed with more motion, with a gradual acceleration during the final one and a half bars of variation 24, and a gradual calming over the last 3 – 4 bars of variation 27."[100] Variation 25 begins at bar 201 and is marked with a faster indication, as shown in Figure 17 (above), while the

[100] Johannes Brahms, Gesamtausgabe e.V., and Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in Wien., *Neue Ausgabe Sämtlicher Werke*, *Ser. 1*, vol. 4 (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1996), 138.

"gradual calming" ends at bar 224, the final bar of variation 27, as seen in Figure 18 (below). This is a highly specific instruction, made somewhat complex by the presence of calmer moments interspersed between the more animated material. Weingartner continues at the same energetic tempo he had already established since variation 20. Even if he had received a vivid directive from the composer himself, maintaining clarity in the rapid sextuplets of the first and second violins and viola in variation 25 would have been challenging at the tempo he adopted in the recording.

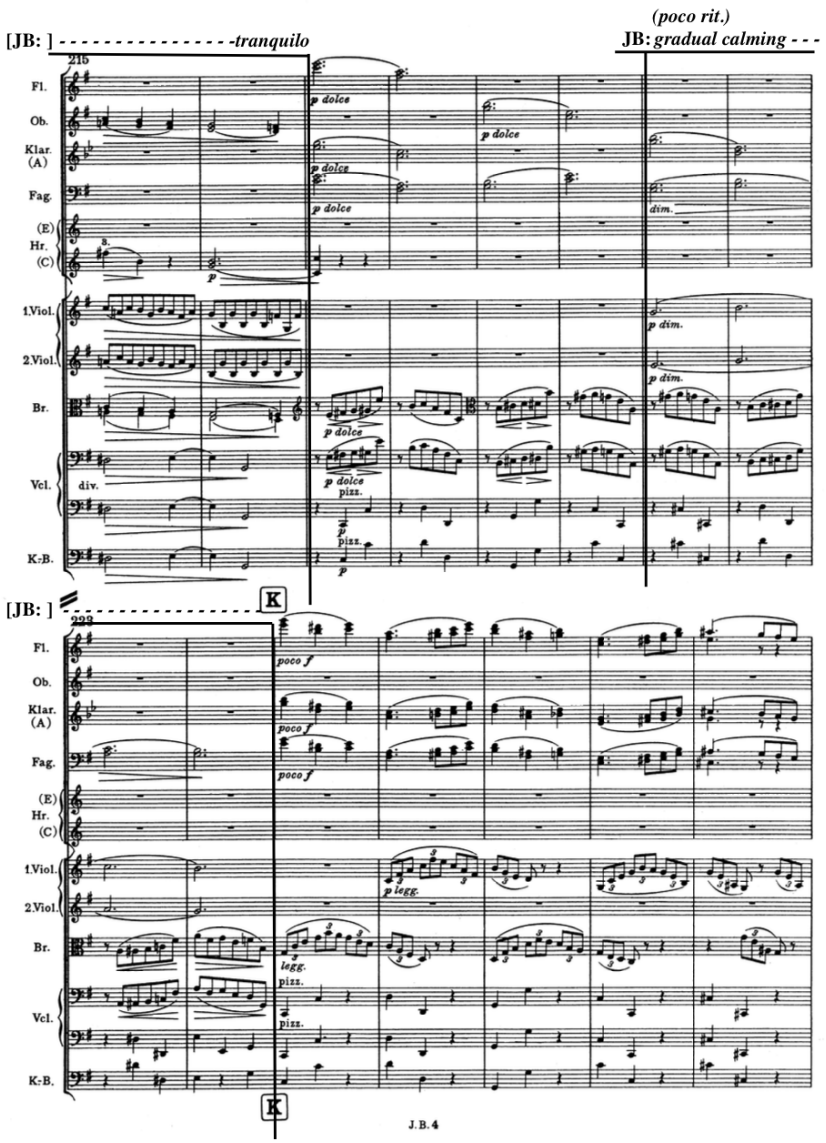


Figure 18. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, variation 25 – 27 – Brahms's instructions II.

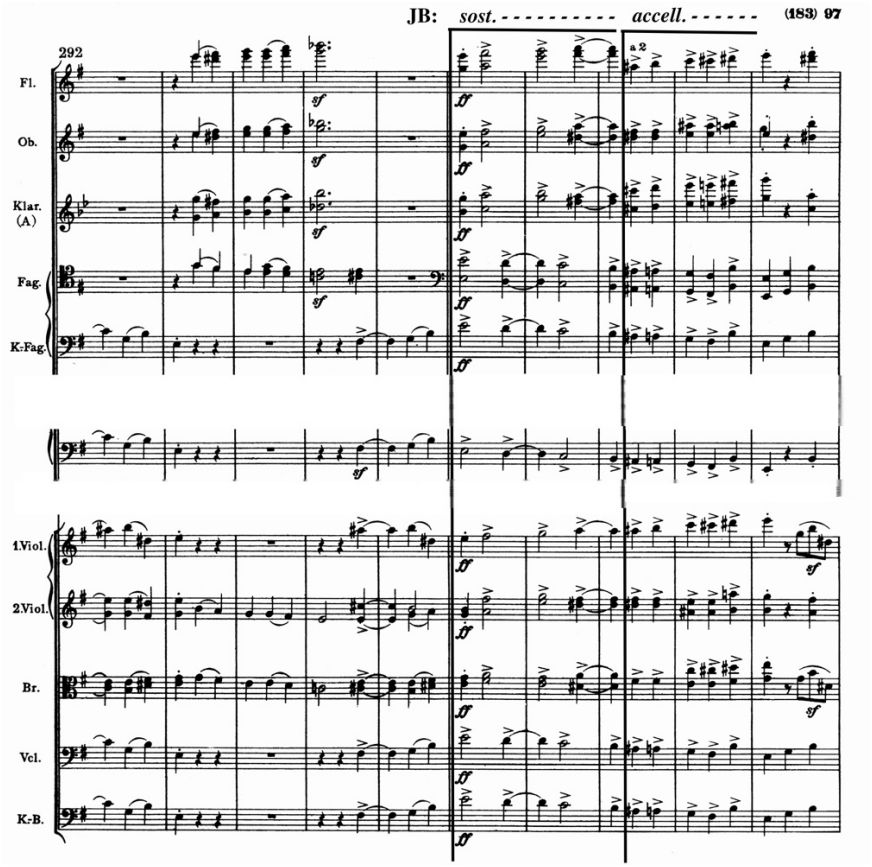


Figure 19. Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98: IV. Allegro energico e passionato, bar 297[1] – 301[1] – Brahms's sost.- - -accell. annotation.

Between bars 297 and 301, Brahms marked *sostenuto* followed by *accelerando*, accompanied by the instructions "The syncopations before the concluding tonic elaboration are to be held back and the elaboration itself to be moved on."[101] Weingartner's interpretation might be described as partial concordance and partial departure. While he does convey a *sostenuto*, he extends it across the full four-bar span, rather than transitioning into an *accelerando* as Brahms suggested. He compensates for the lack of *accelerando* by giving the dominant and tonic chords—the last quarter note of bar 300 and the first quarter note of bar 301, respectively—a more pronounced accentuation, thus emphasizing the resolution with greater weight.

[101] Robert Pascall and Philip Weller, "Flexible Tempo and Nuancing in Orchestral Music," in *Performing Brahms*, 224.

4.4 A Reflection on Interpretation and Intention

The comparative study of Brahms's annotated manuscript and Felix Weingartner's 1938 recording of the Fourth Symphony underscores the fundamental interpretive tension at the heart of historically informed performance. While this study has focused on tempo modifications as a lens into Brahms's expressive priorities, the broader aim has been to interrogate how interpretation mediates between fidelity and creativity, documentation and imagination. The findings suggest that neither composer markings nor historical recordings should be treated as prescriptive templates. Instead, they function as complementary traces—snapshots of intention and realization, each shaped by context, relationship, and artistic philosophy.

Brahms's annotations to Joachim reveal not a system, but a sensibility: a sensitivity to flow, contrast, and character that resists codification. His language, even when specific, is suggestive rather than rigid, inviting collaboration rather than control. In parallel, Weingartner's recorded interpretations—crafted without access to the annotated manuscript—offer a compelling, if personal, reading of the symphony. His choices reveal a performer informed by a broader understanding of Brahms's style and values, filtered through his own aesthetic framework. The intersections between these two sources are not always congruent, but where they align, they illuminate a space of historically plausible interpretation.

This study does not argue for Weingartner as a model to emulate, but rather as a historical witness—a figure who bridges the world of Brahms with the evolving norms of early recorded performance. His legacy reminds us that the search for authenticity must be tempered by humility: the archive is partial, memory is subjective, and sound—once realized—is always ephemeral. For contemporary performers, the value of such a study lies not in reproducing a past performance but in expanding interpretive awareness. By examining Brahms's own interventions

alongside Weingartner's informed responses, this chapter invites future interpreters to inhabit the space between composer and performer with greater historical imagination and musical responsibility.

CONCLUSION

This study began with a question: how might conductors today interpret Brahms's music with historical awareness, without being confined by the myth of a single "authentic" style? Through the lens of Felix Weingartner's recorded interpretations and Brahms's annotated score for the Fourth Symphony, it becomes clear that historical insight offers more than a fixed performance model—it invites a deeper dialogue with the music's expressive logic.

In tracing moments of both alignment and departure, Weingartner's interpretations demonstrate that fidelity to Brahms lies not in literalism, but in maintaining structural coherence, clarity, and expressive intentionality. Even where his choices diverge from Brahms's annotations, they often reflect a compelling musical rationale—one that respects the score's architecture while responding to its expressive needs.

Rather than offering definitive answers, this study hopes to equip conductors and performers with the tools to think critically and imaginatively about Brahmsian interpretation. If Brahms could praise contrasting renditions of his own works, then surely he would have valued performances that, even in their departures, reveal a thoughtful, musically grounded engagement with his art. It is in that spirit of informed freedom—not mimicry—that his music continues to live.

Appendix

Brahms Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op. 98, annotated score[102]

The following score includes both Brahms's original annotations from the manuscript and the tempo modifications observed in Weingartner's recording. Brahms's markings are preceded by the initials *JB*, while Weingartner's tempo modifications are labeled with *FW*.

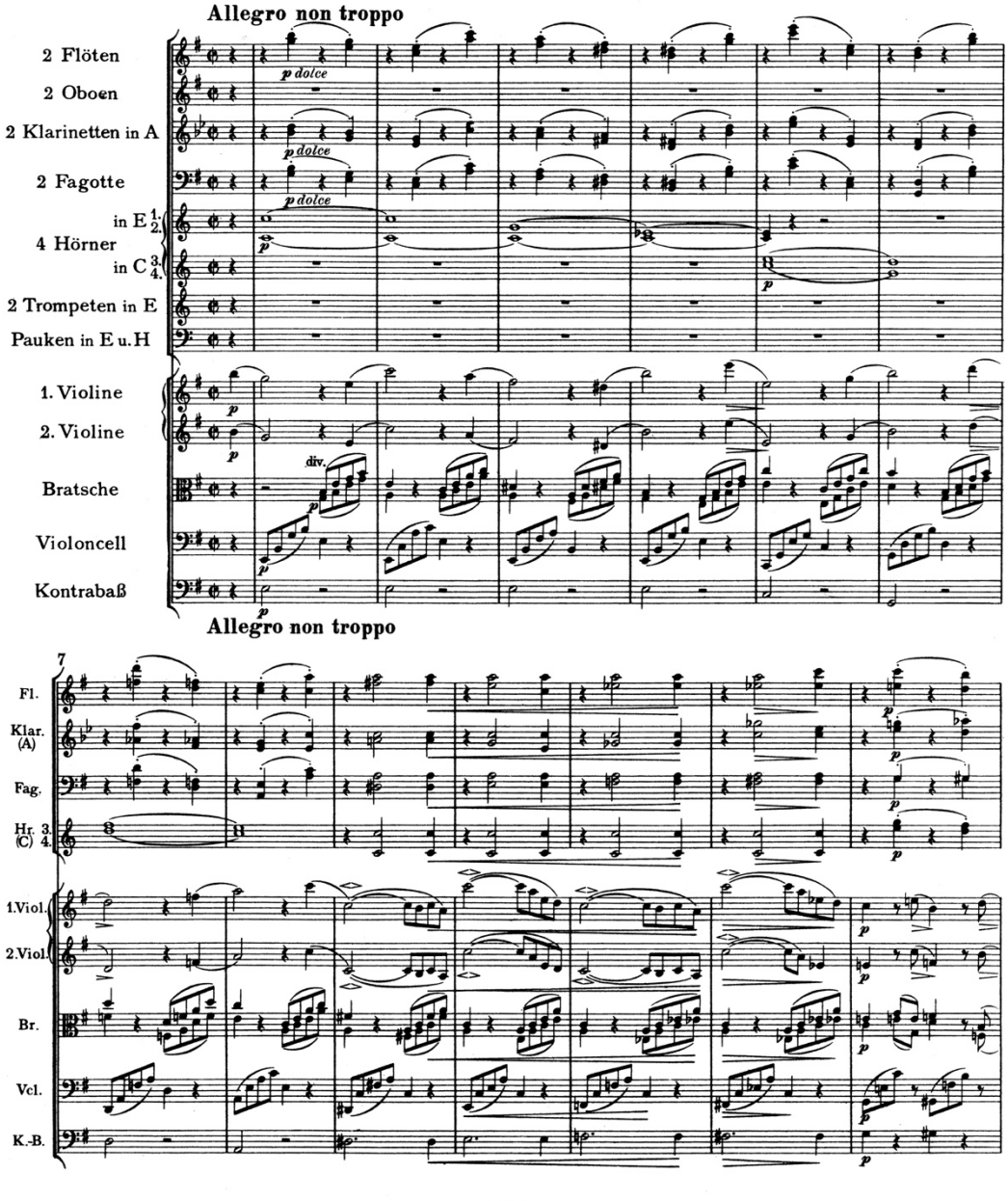
[102] Johannes Brahms, *Complete Symphonies*, ed. Hans Gál.

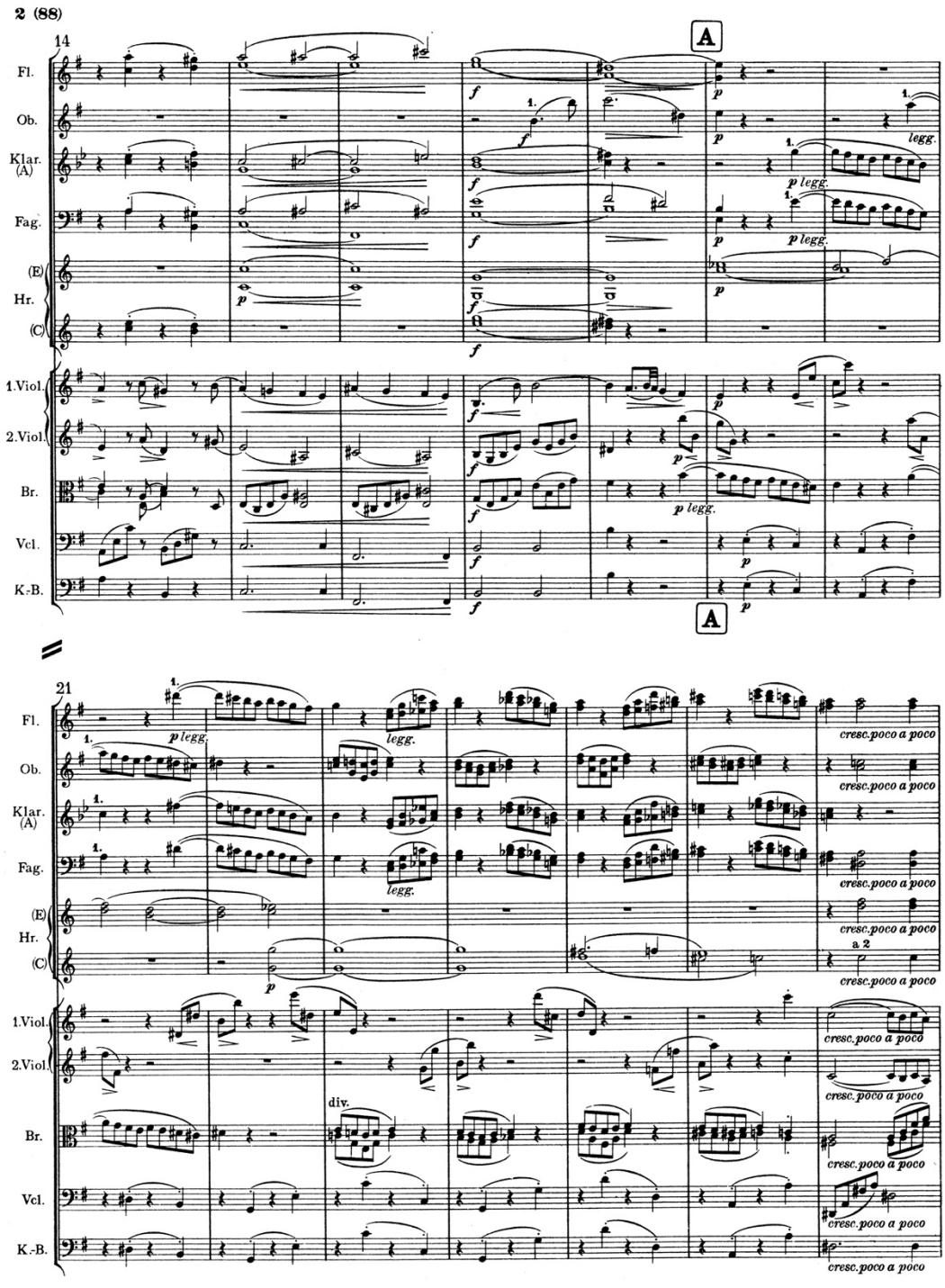
Symphonie Nr. 4

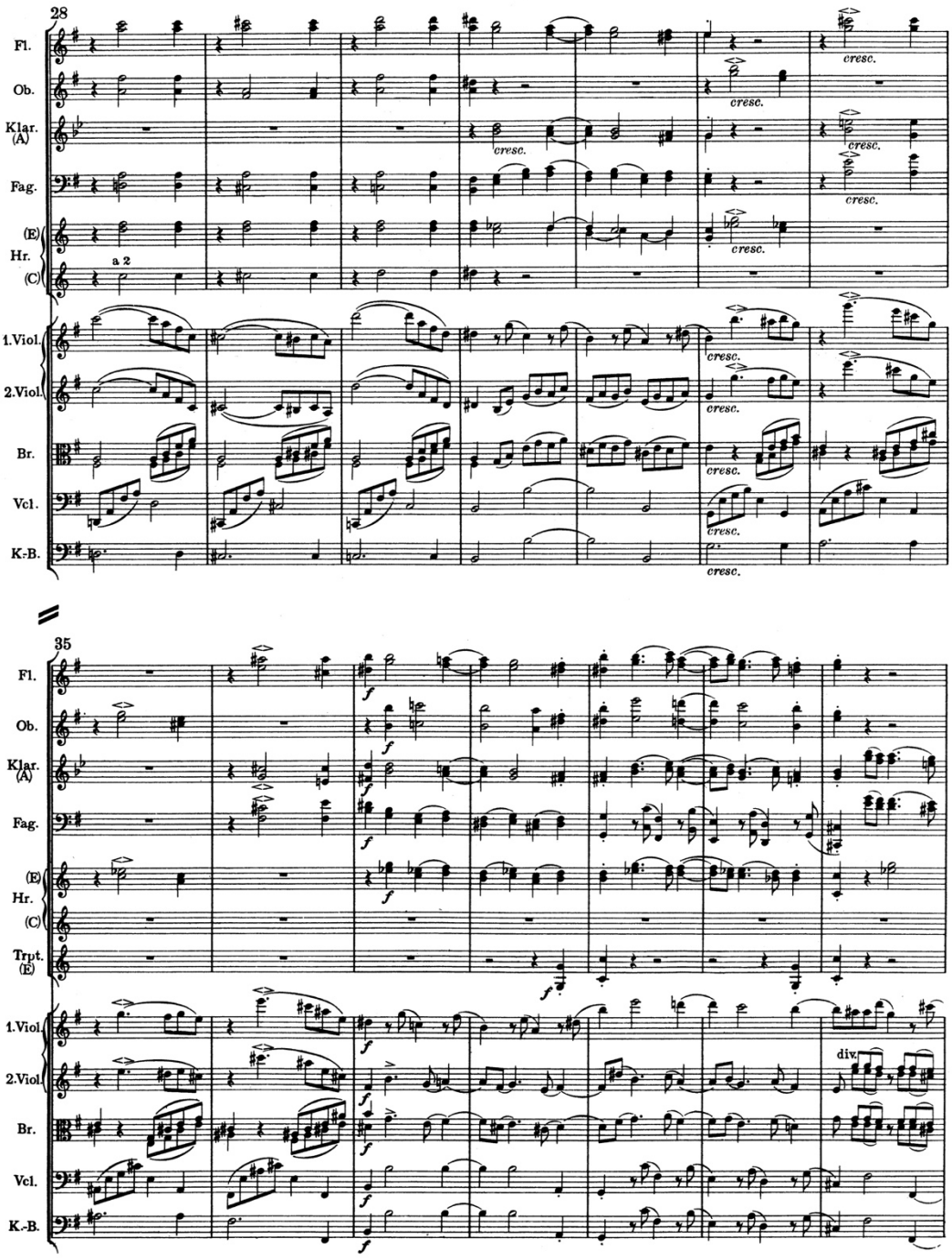
(E moll)

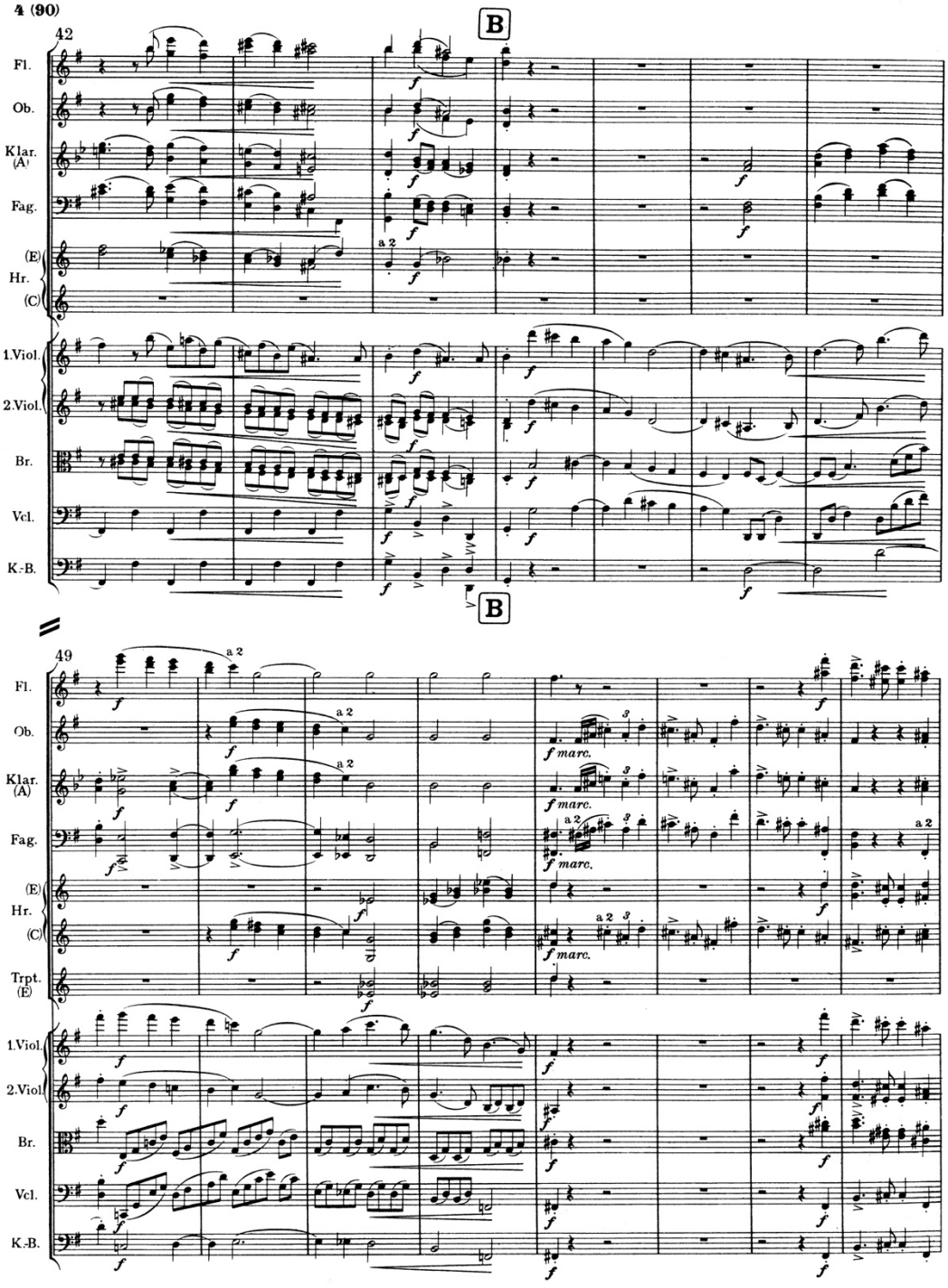
für großes Orchester

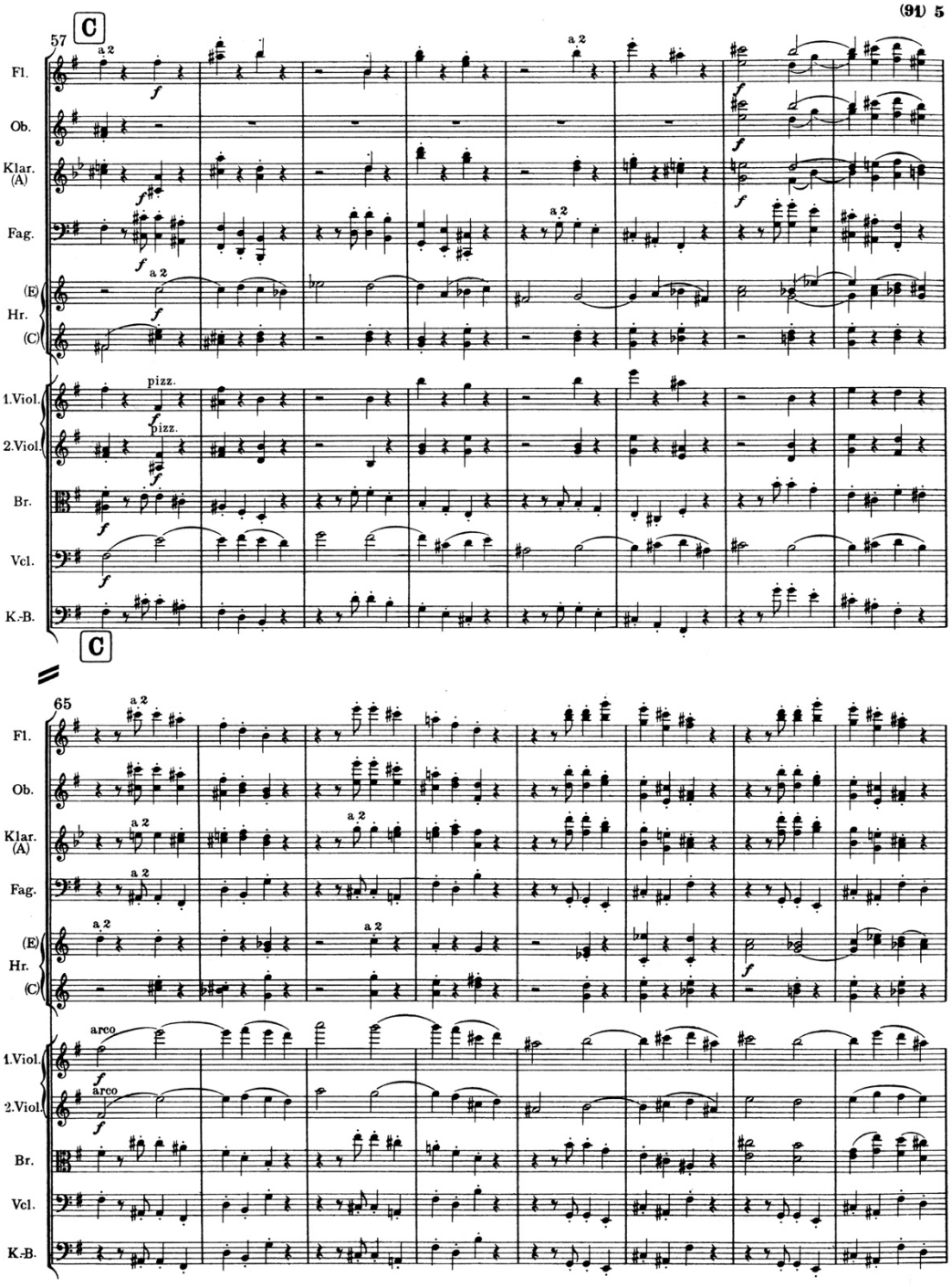
Johannes Brahms, Op. 98
(Veröffentlicht 1886)

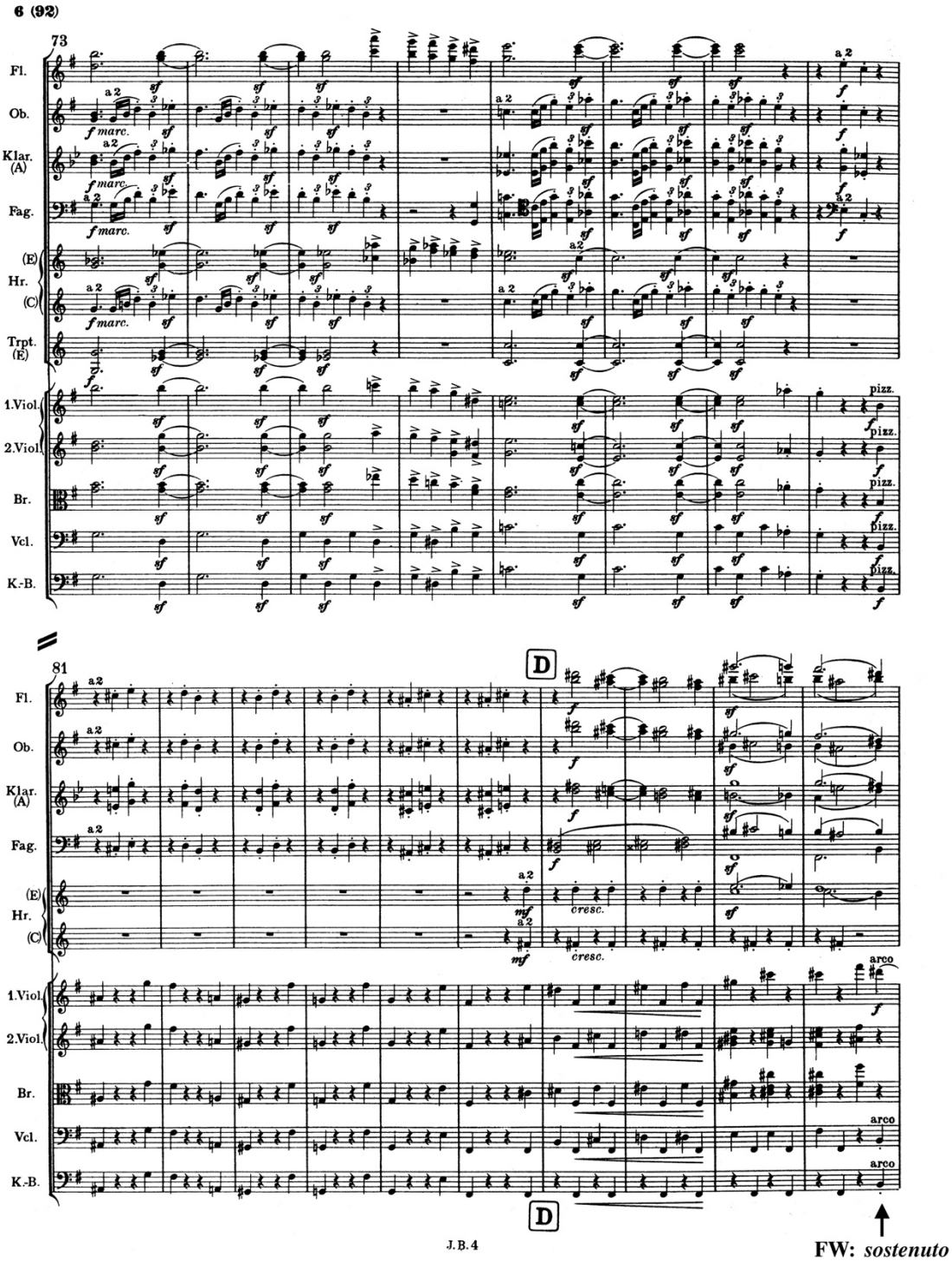



2 (88)
14
A
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
legg.
p legg.
21
cresc.poco a poco
a 2
div.

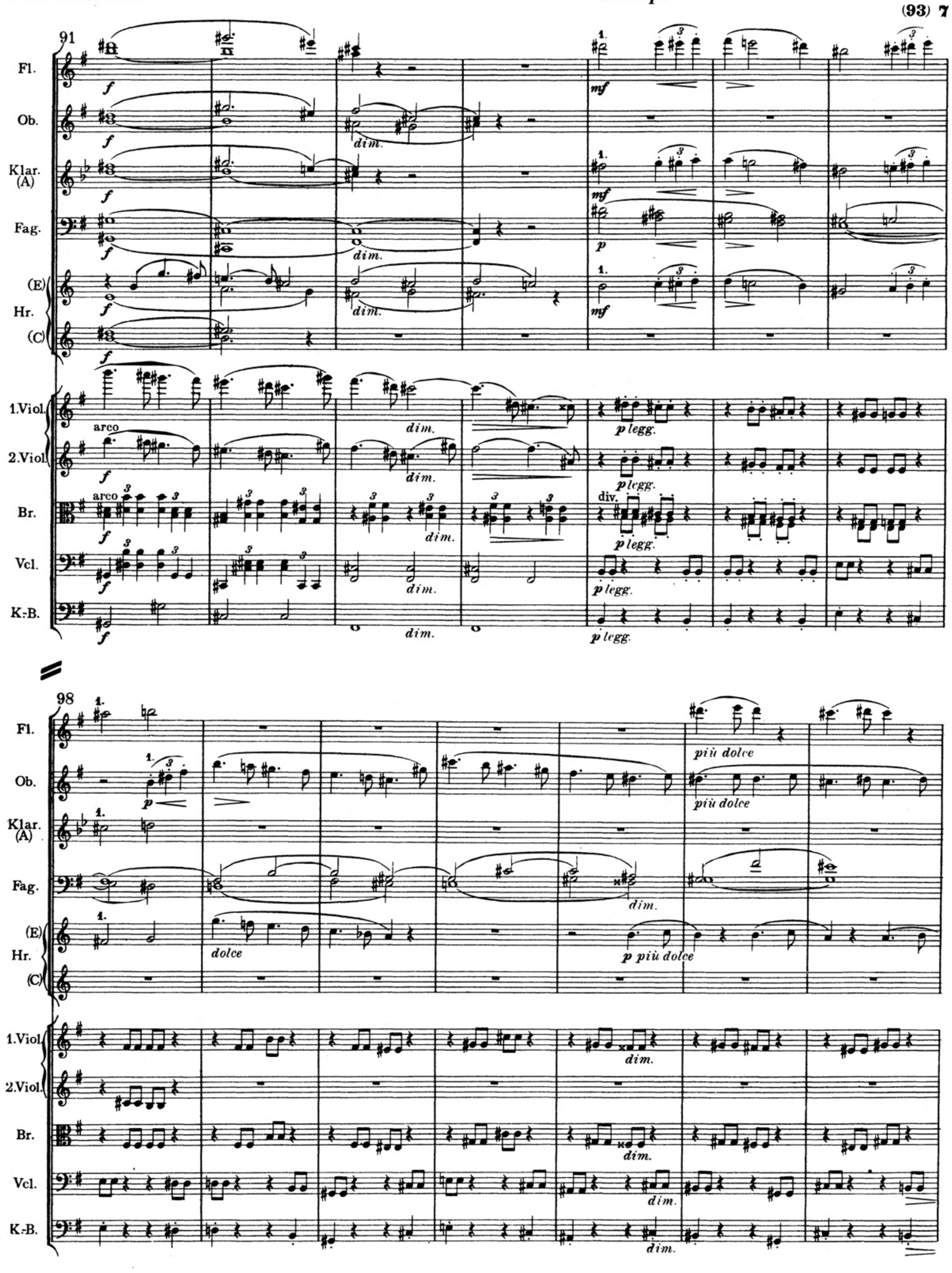

28
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
a 2
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
cresc.
35
Trpt. (E)
div.

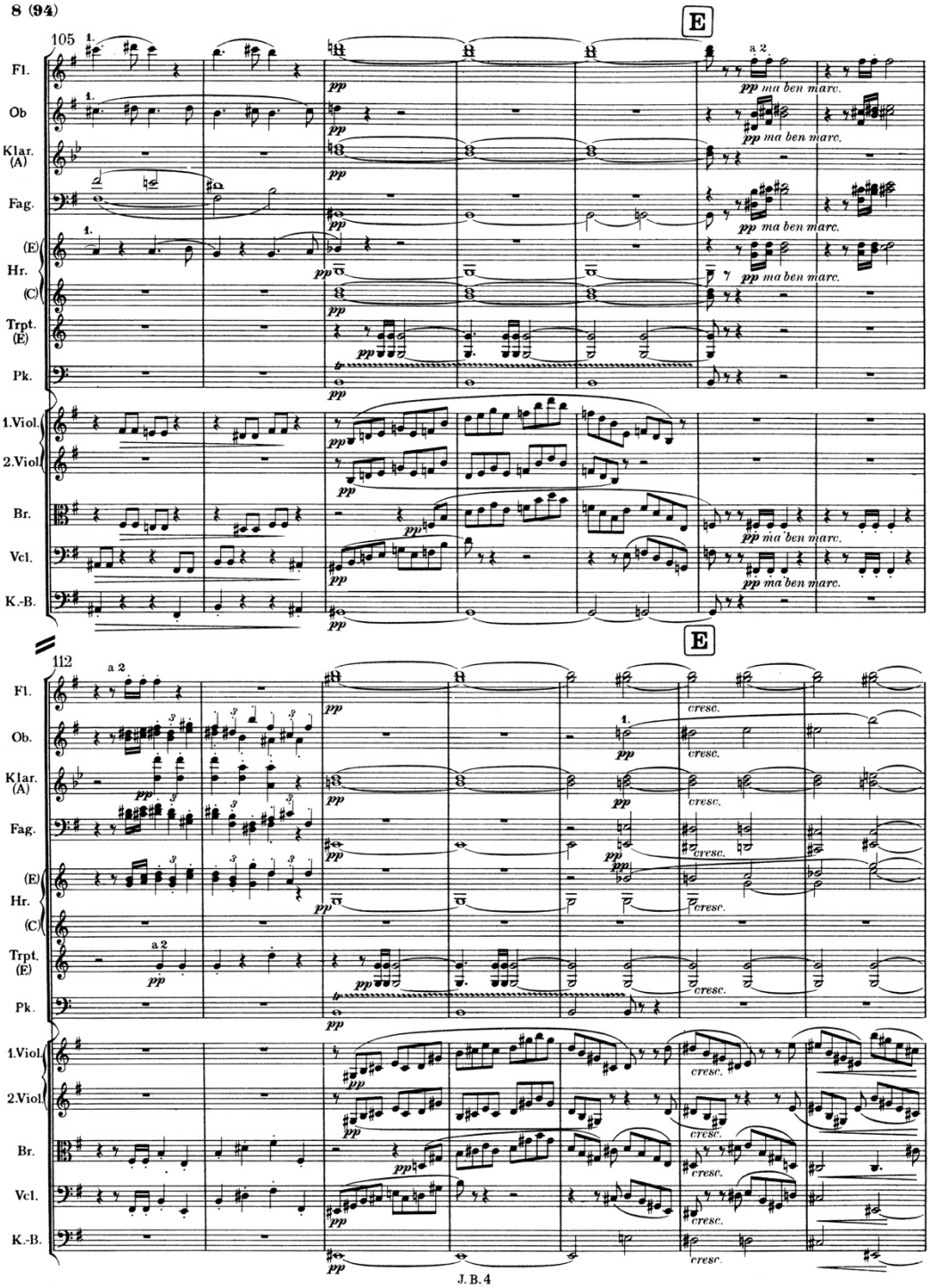

4 (90)
42
B
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
49
Trpt. (E)
f marc.

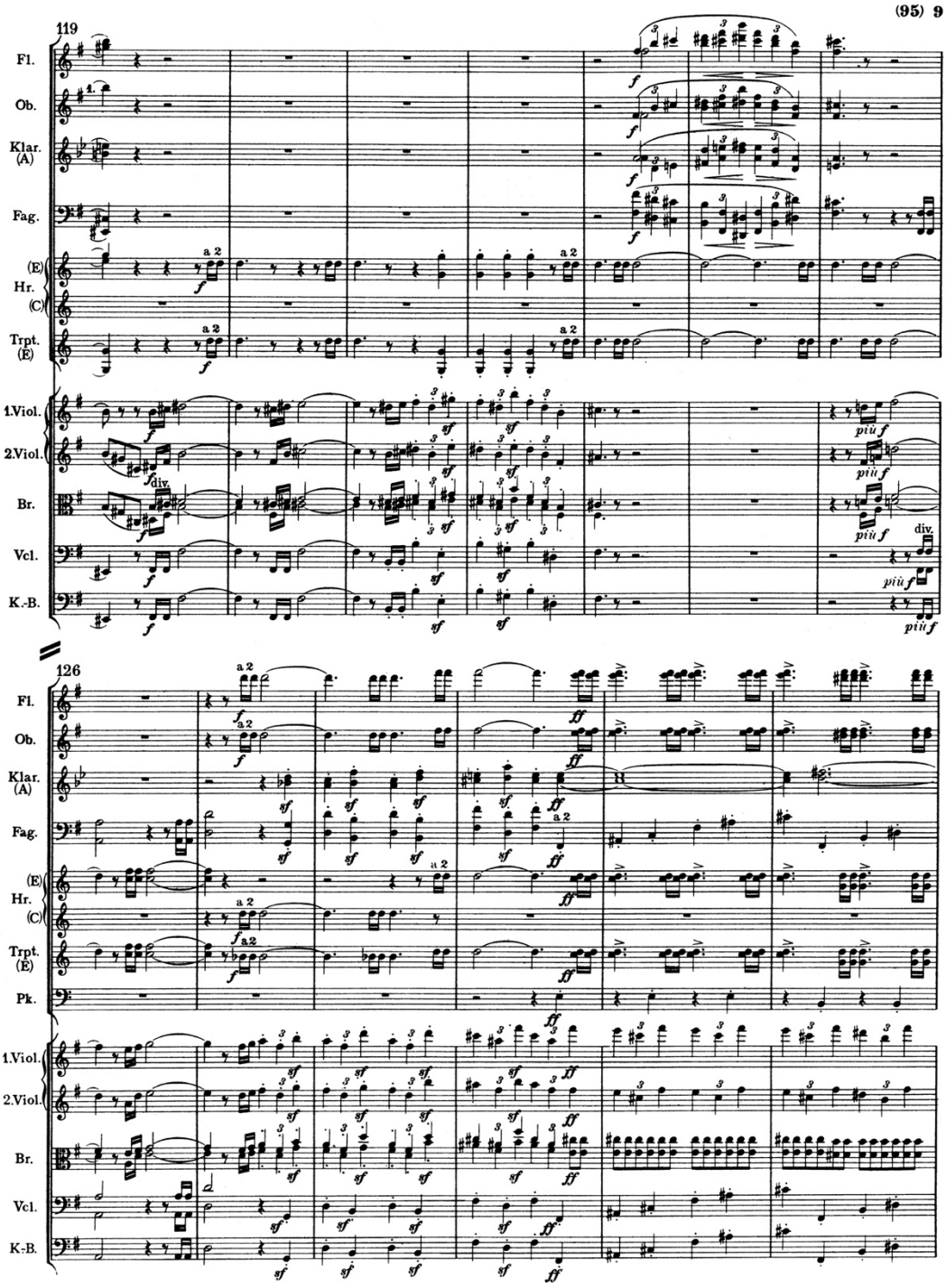

57
C
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pizz.
arco
65

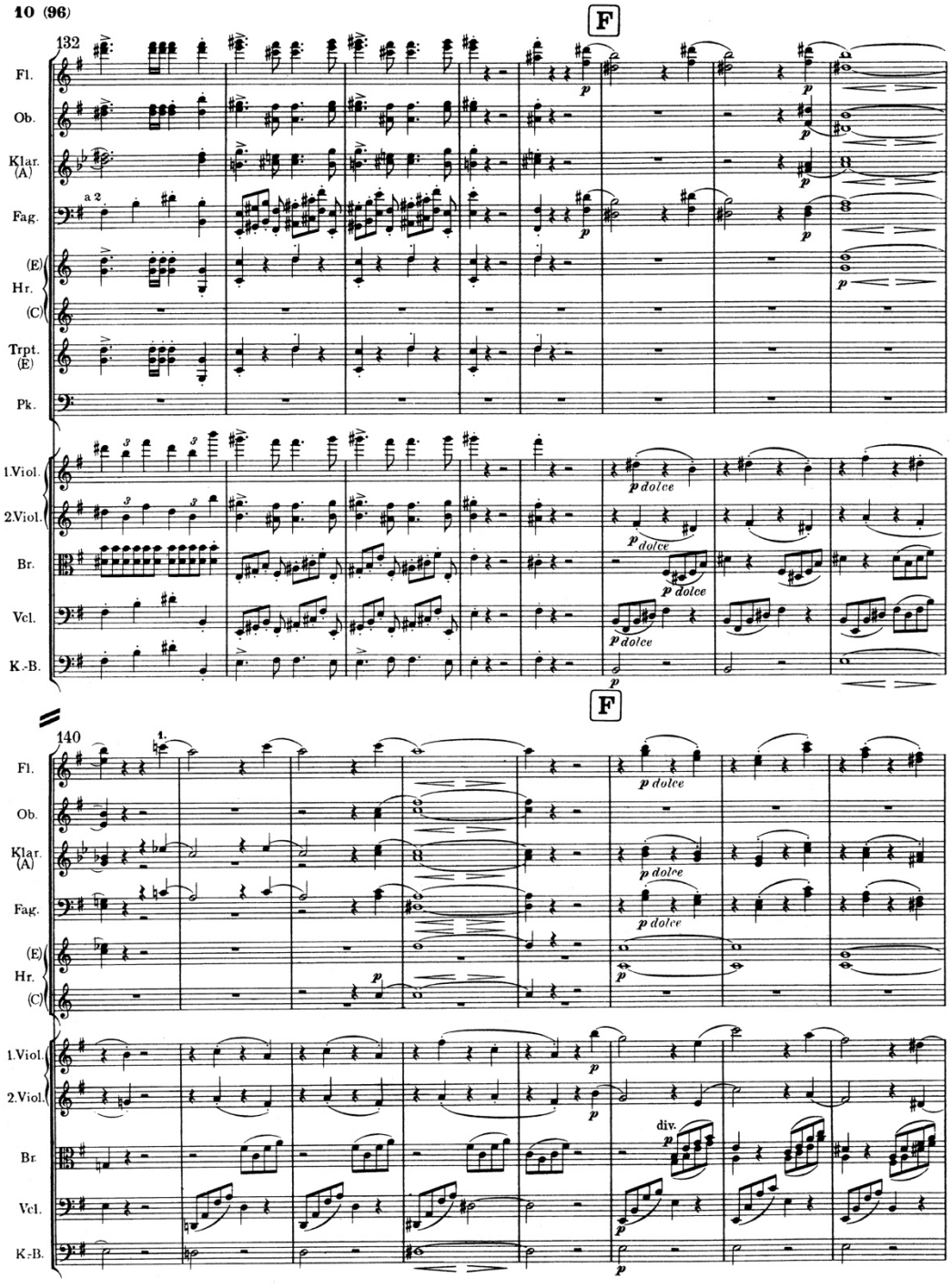

6 (92)
73
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f marc.
pizz.
81
D
cresc.
arco
J.B.4
FW: sostenuto

FW: *sostenuto - a tempo*

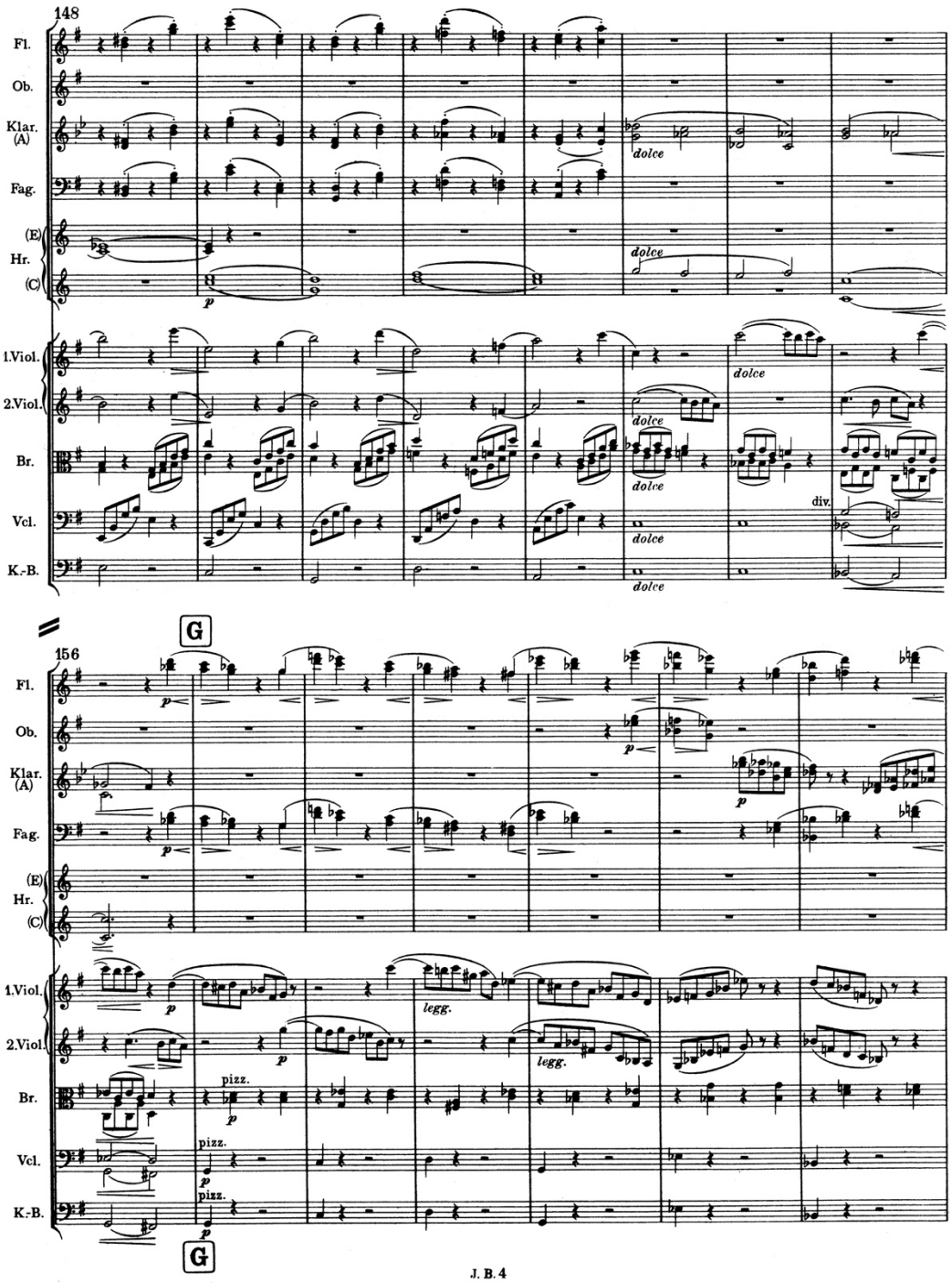


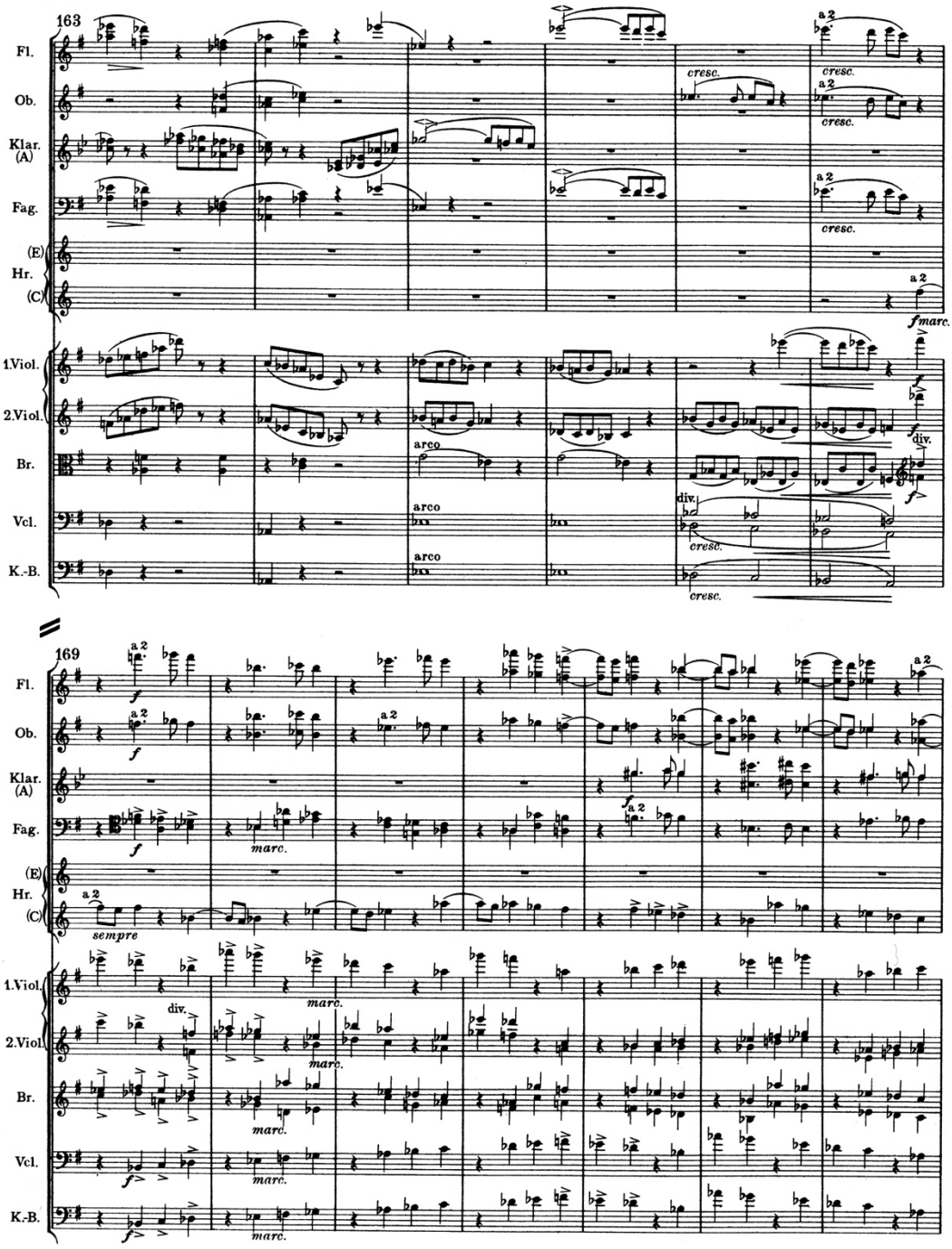

105
E
Fl.
Ob
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2.
pp ma ben marc.
112
cresc.


119
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
div.
più f
126
Pk.

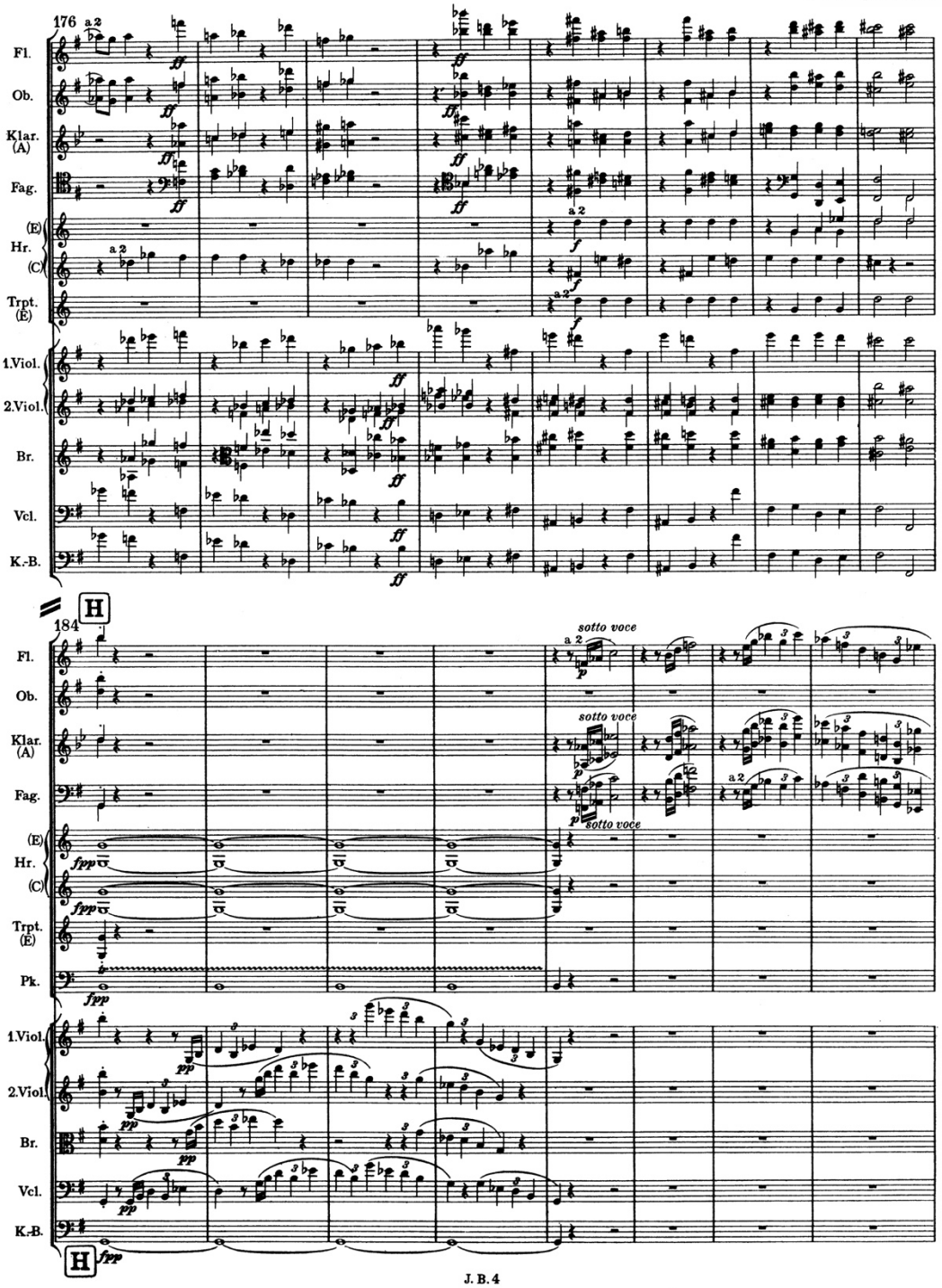

10 (96)
132
F
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
p dolce
140
1.
F
p dolce
div.

J. B. 4

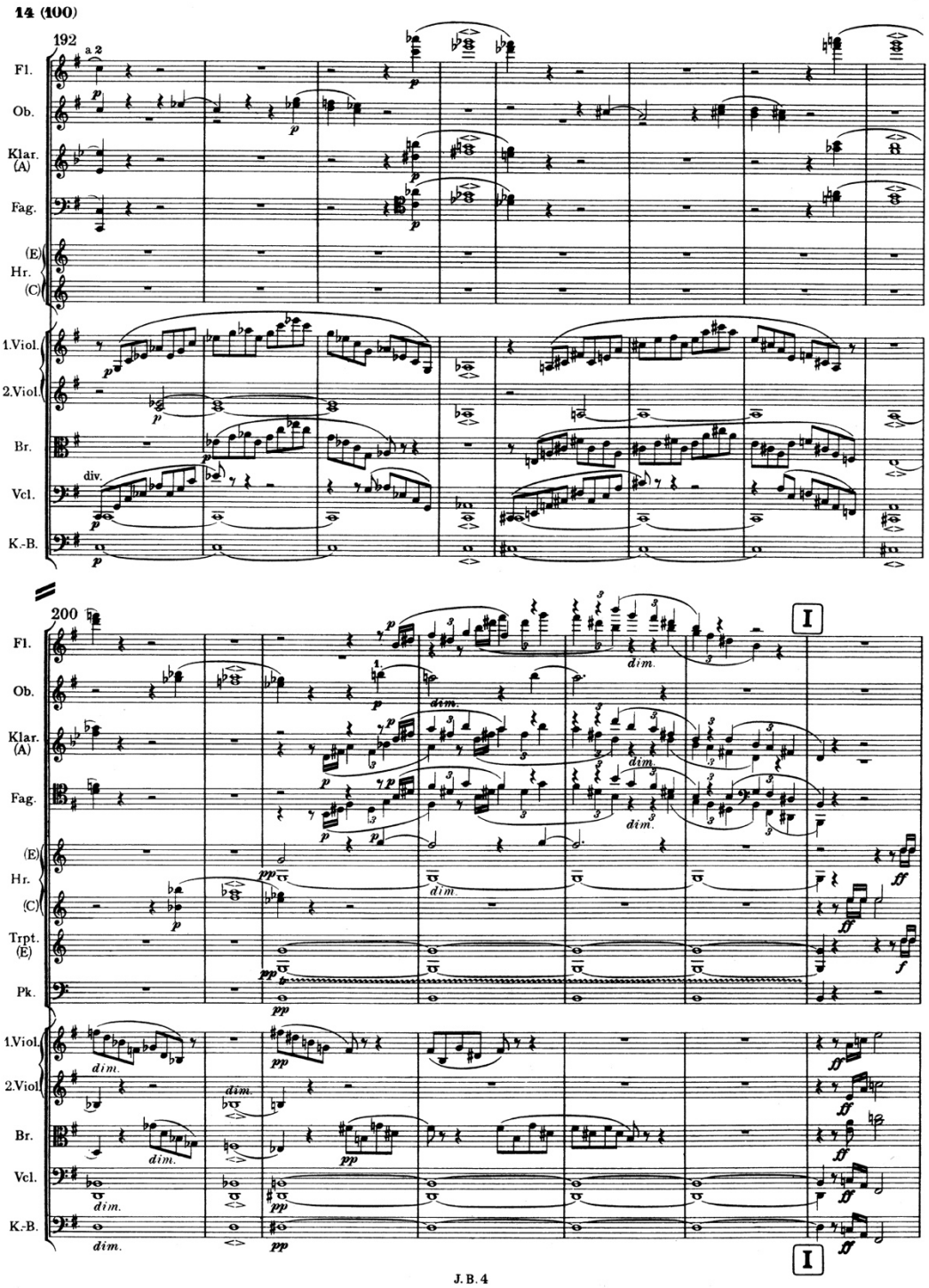

148
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dolce
div.
156
G
legg.
pizz.
G

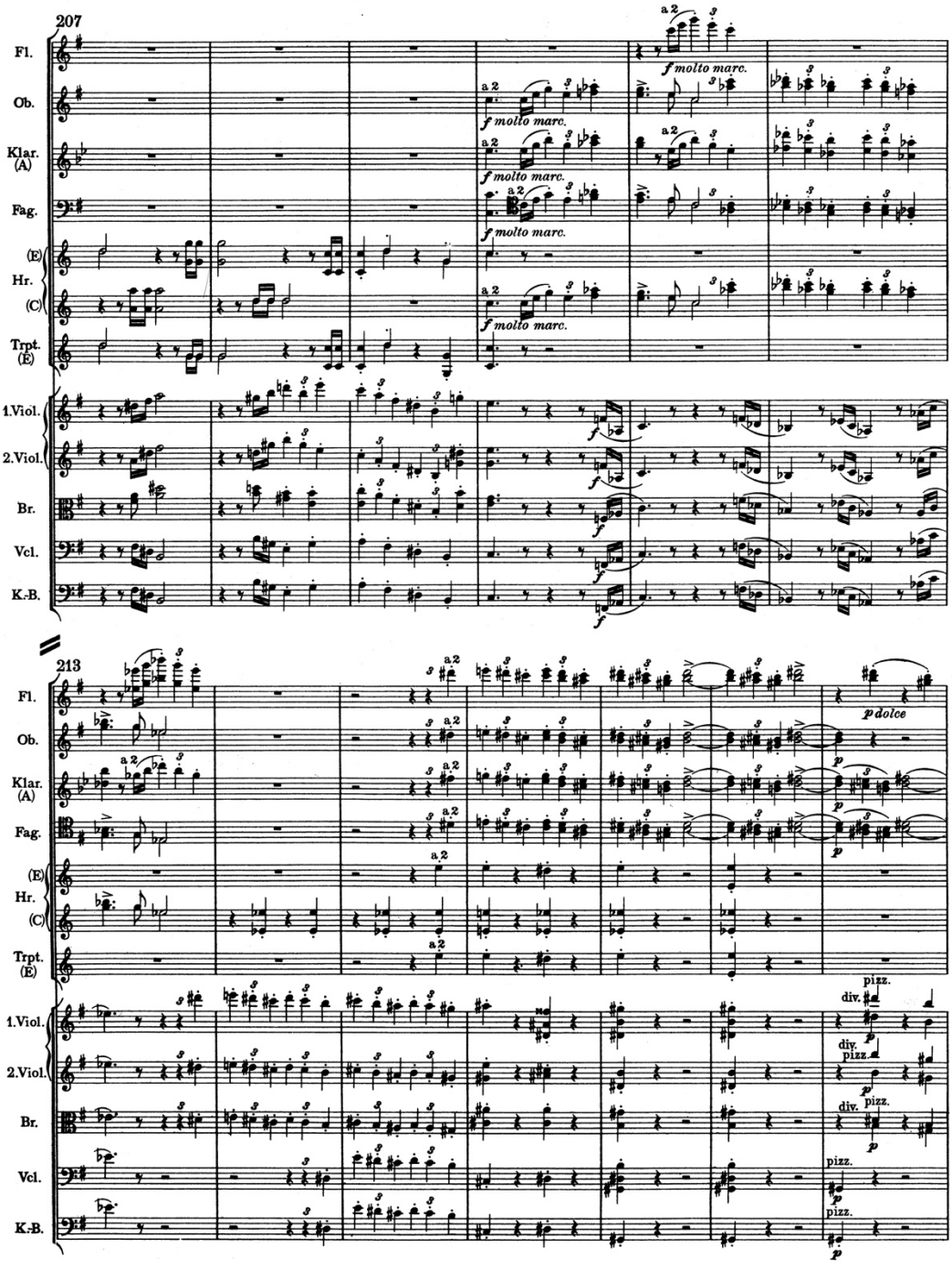

163
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
cresc.
fmarc.
arco
div.
169
sempre
marc.

FW: *pesante*

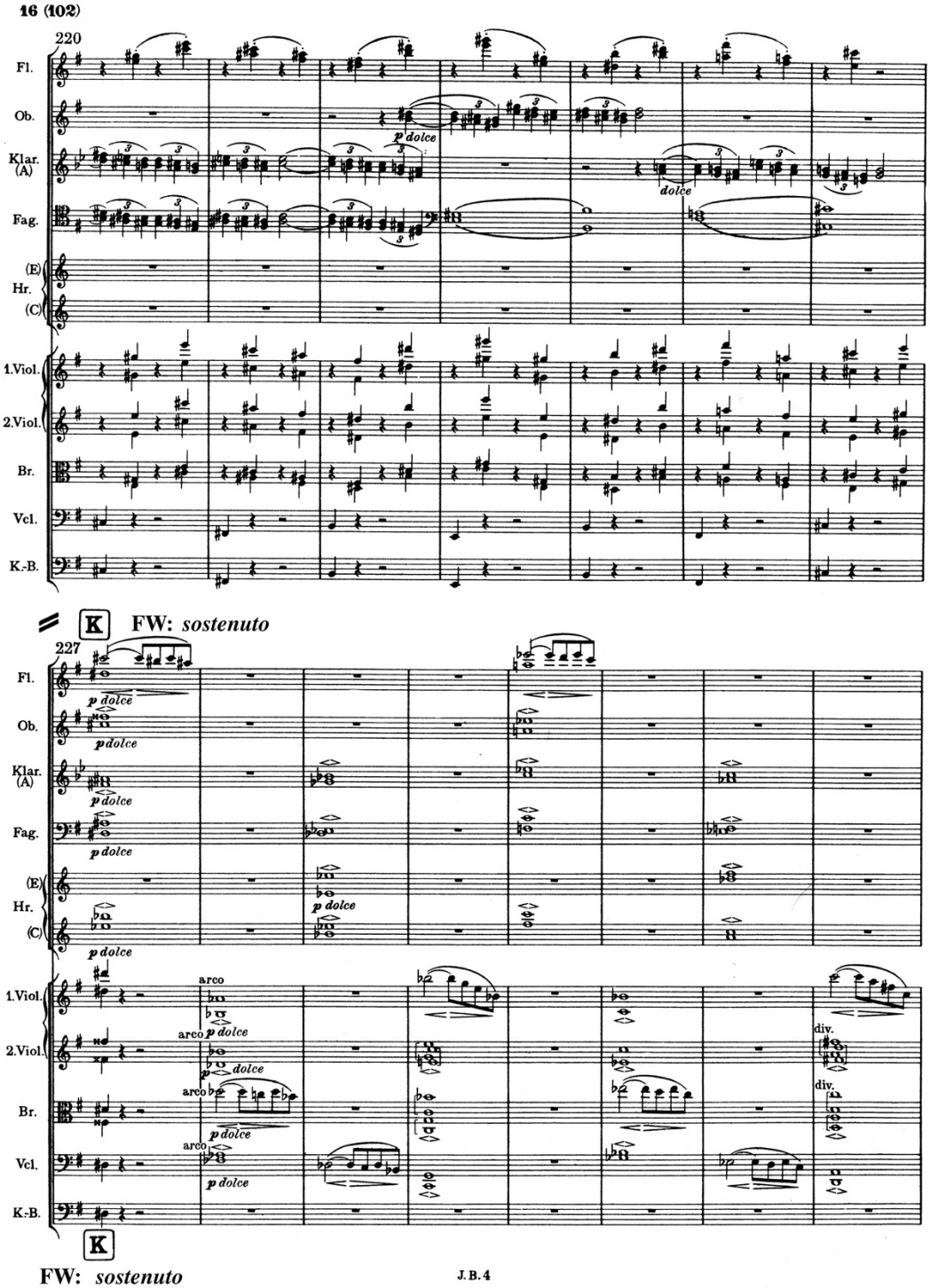


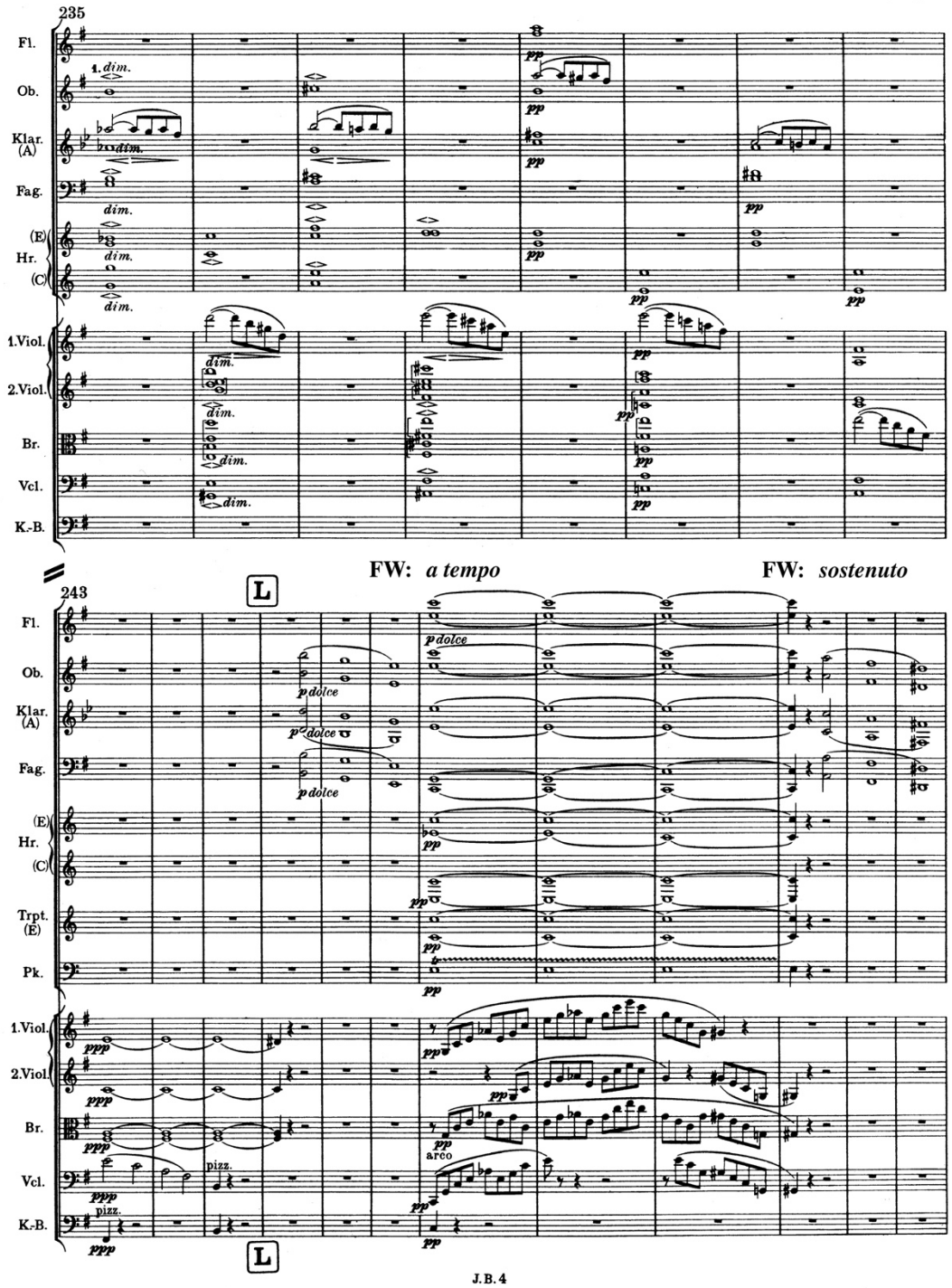
J. B. 4


192
a 2
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
div.
Vcl.
K.-B.
200
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
dim.
pp
ff
I


207
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f molto marc.
213
p dolce
p
div.
pizz.

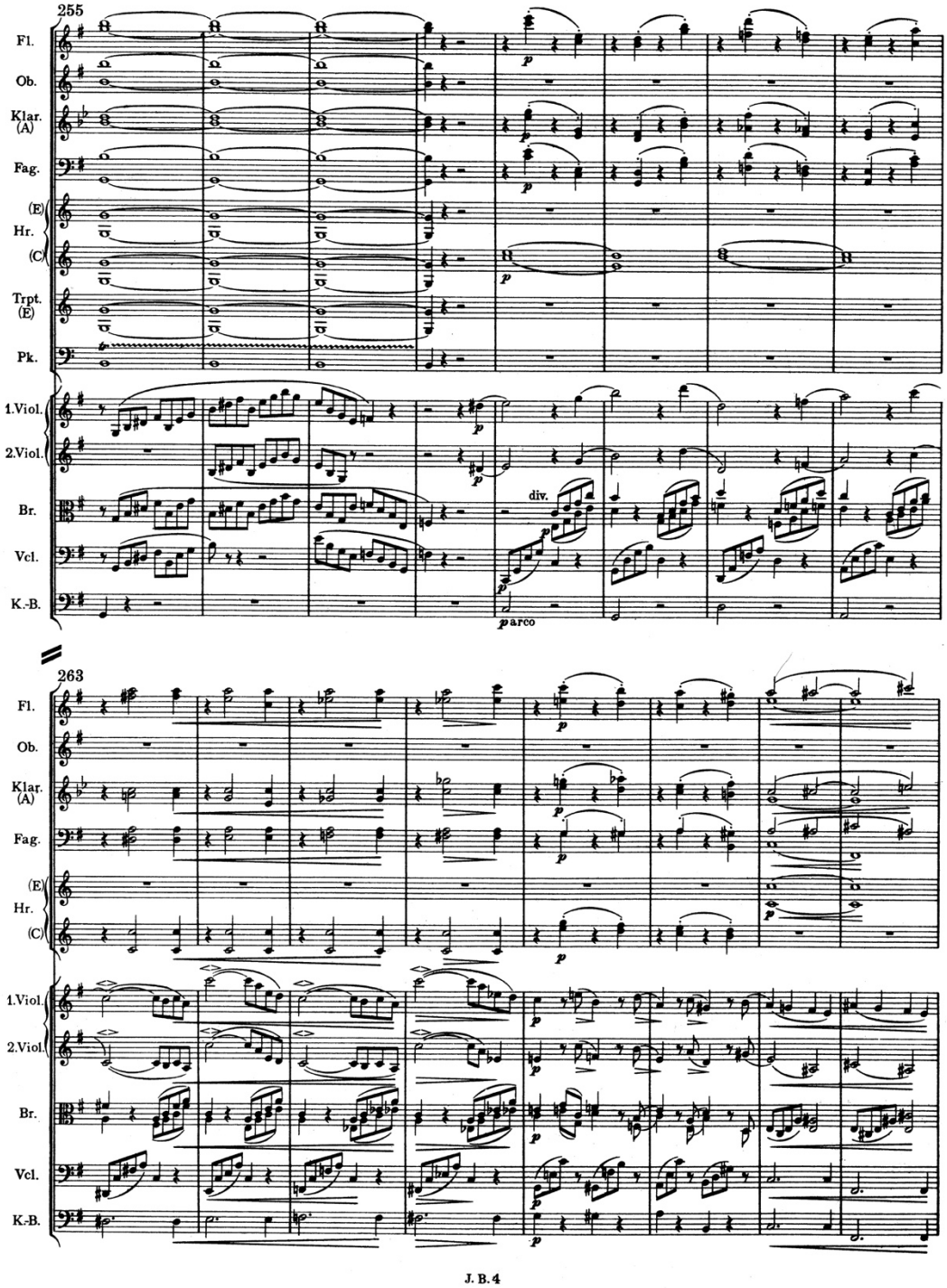
J. B. 4


16 (102)
220
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p dolce
dolce
K
FW: sostenuto
227
arco
div.
FW: sostenuto
J.B.4

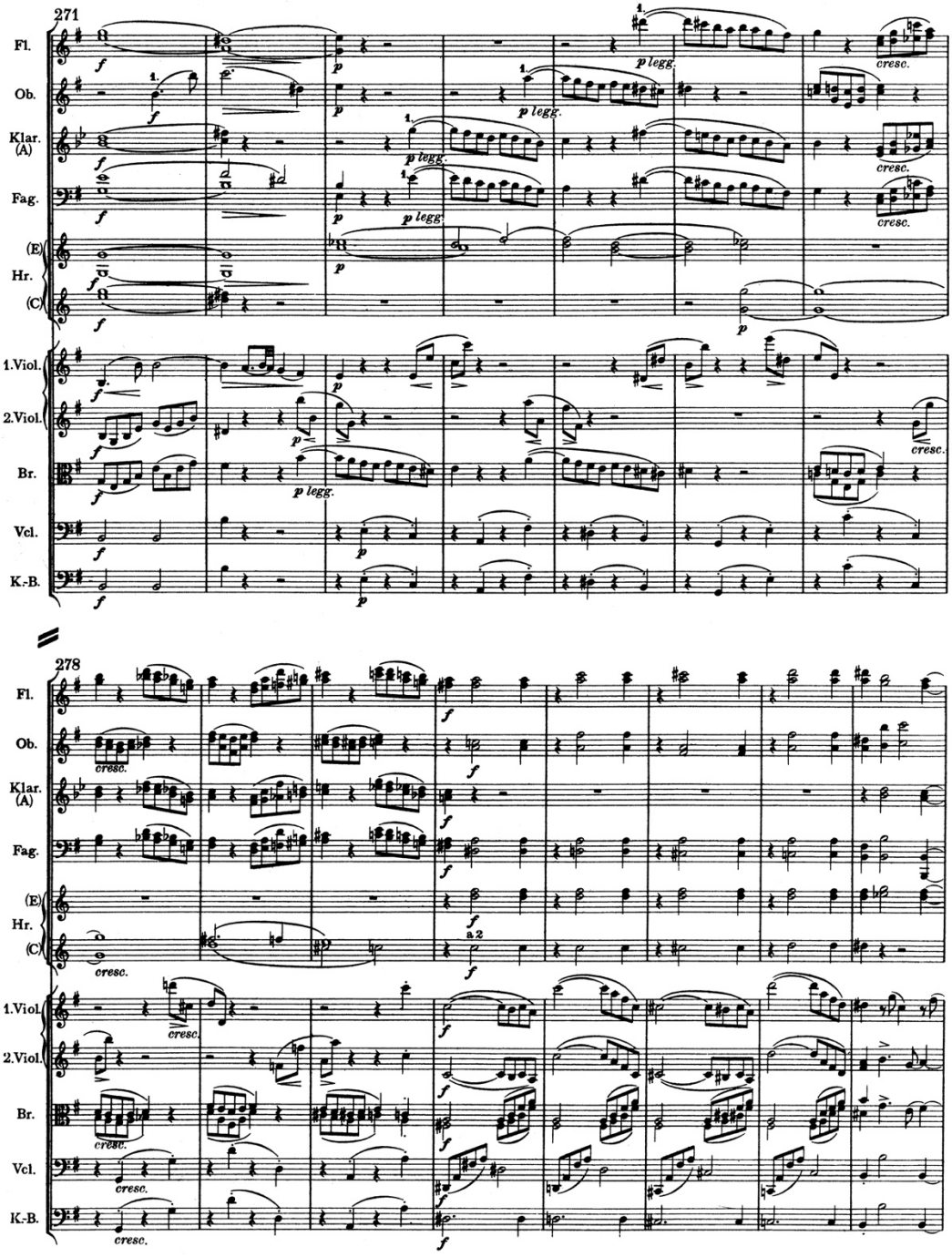

235
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
1. dim.
dim.
pp
FW: a tempo
FW: sostenuto
243
L
p dolce
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
ppp
pizz.
arco
L

J.B. 4

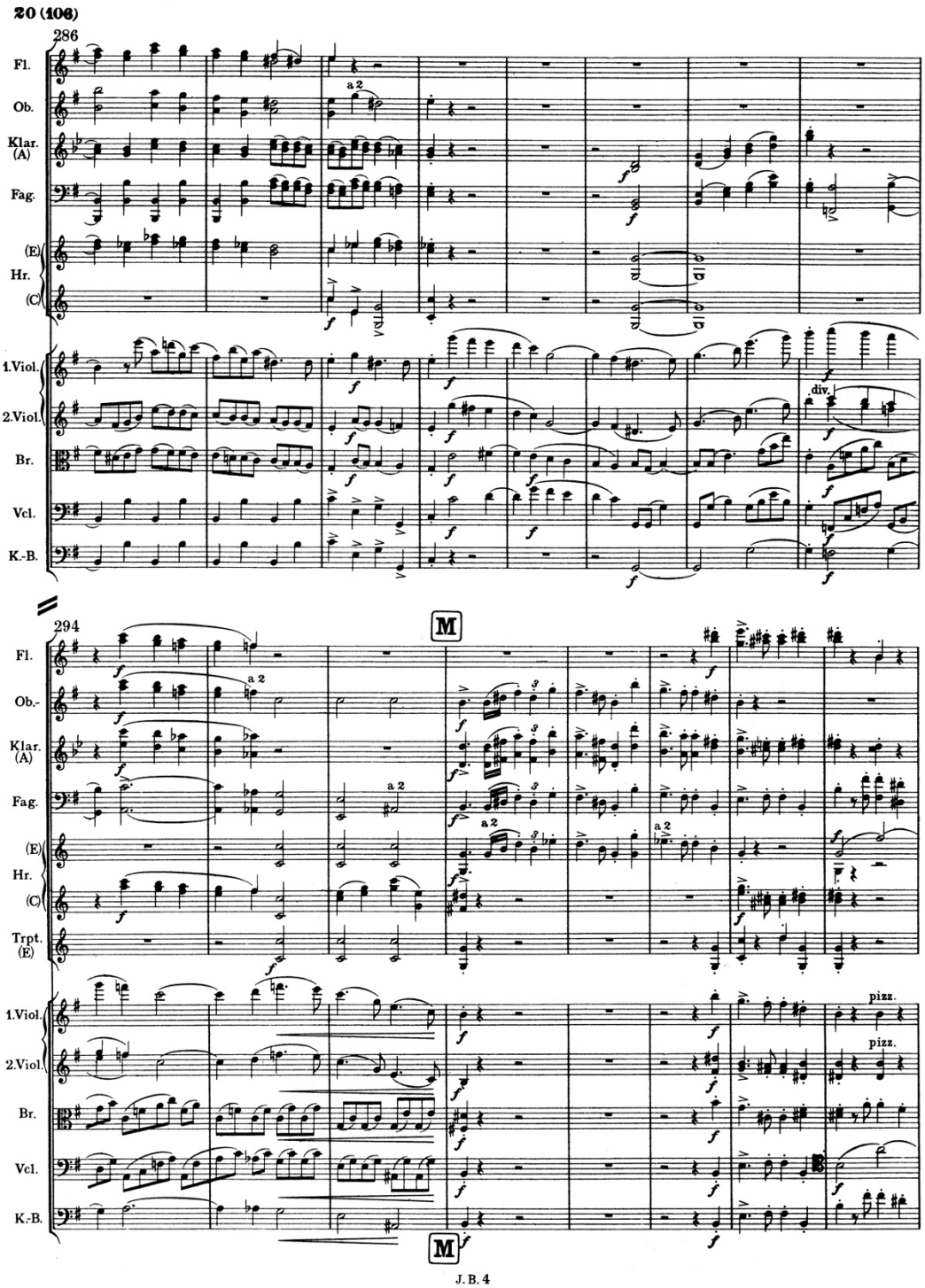
FW: *a tempo*



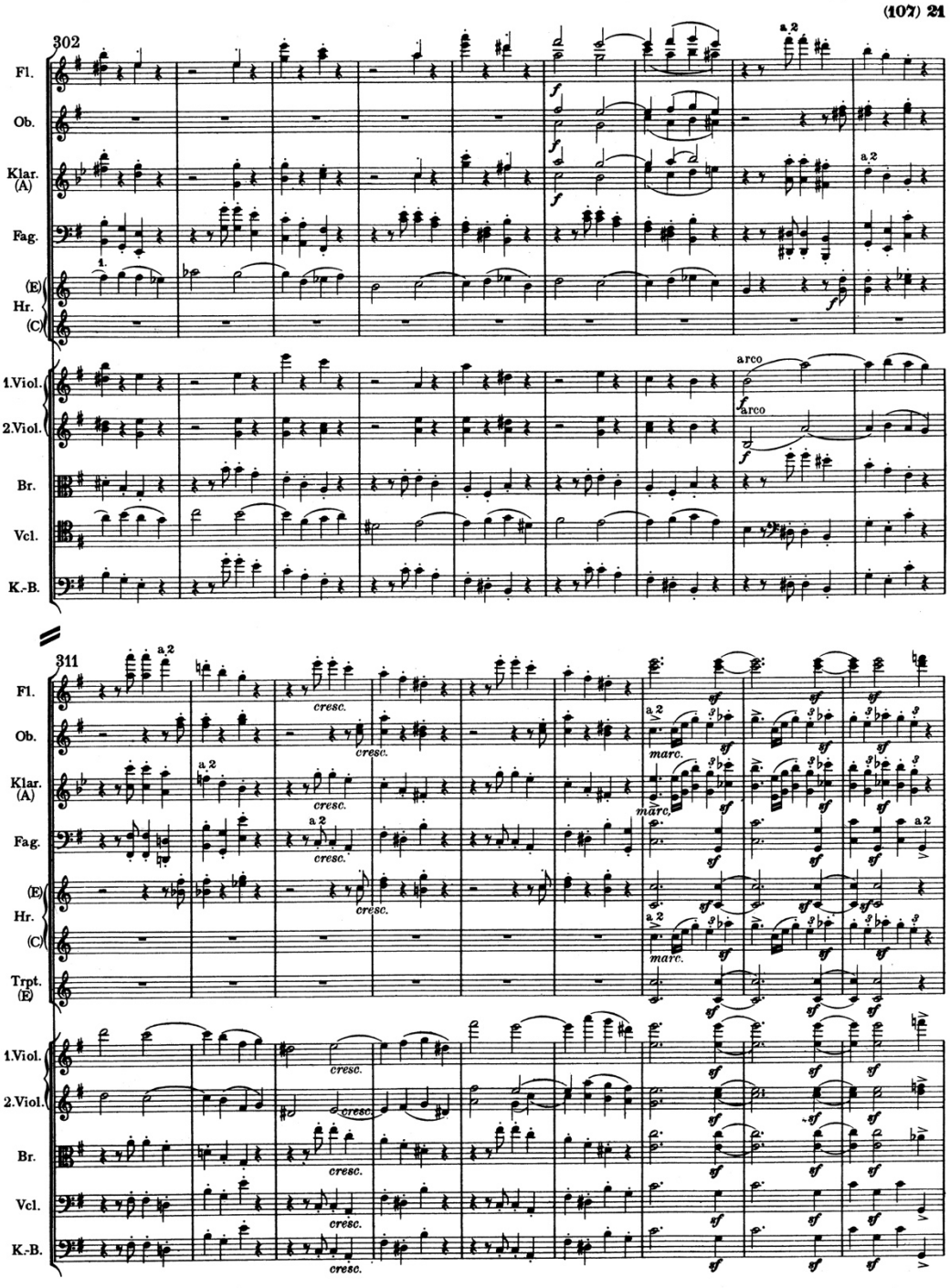
J. B. 4


271
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p legg.
cresc.
278
a 2

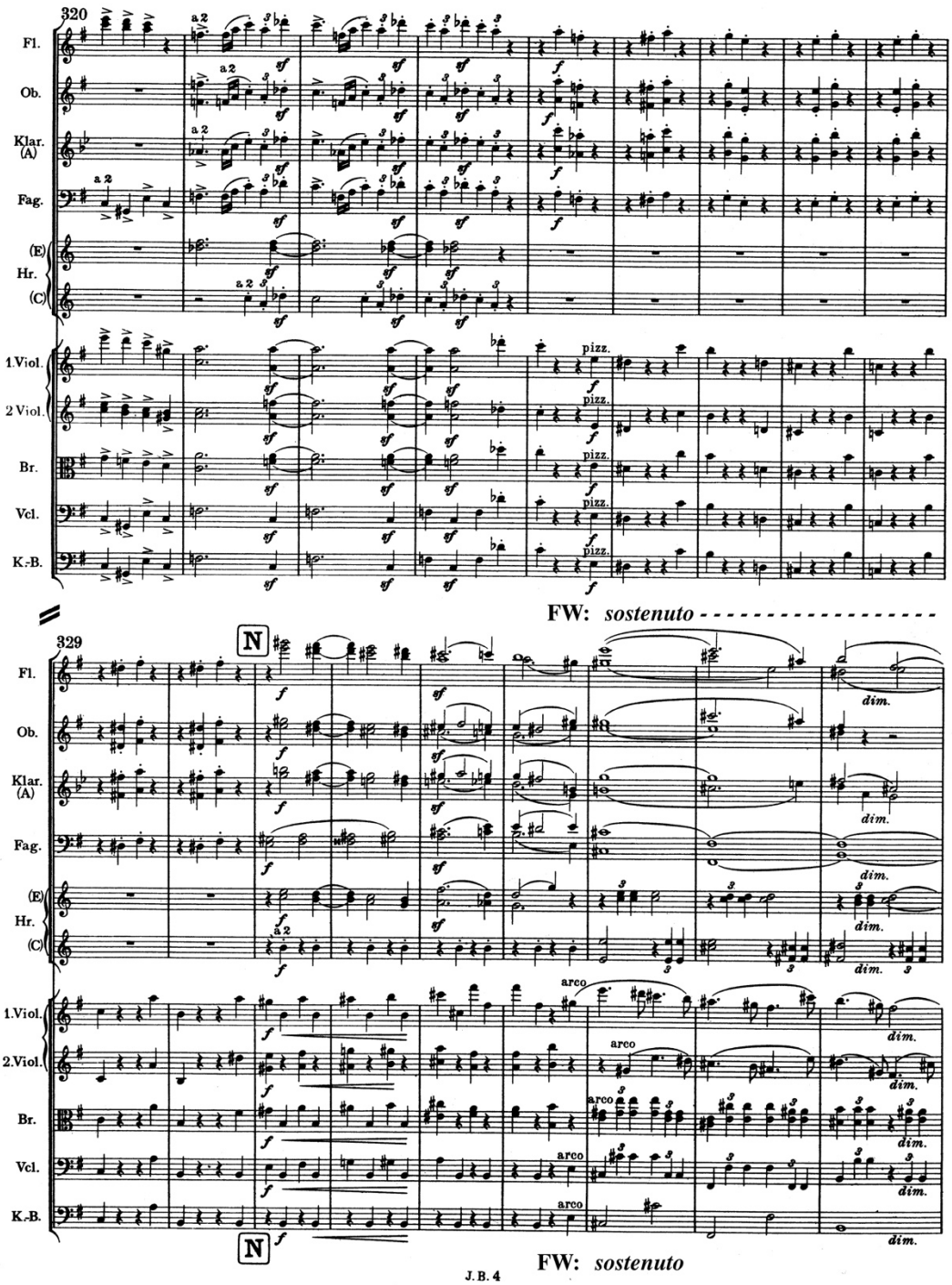
J. B. 4

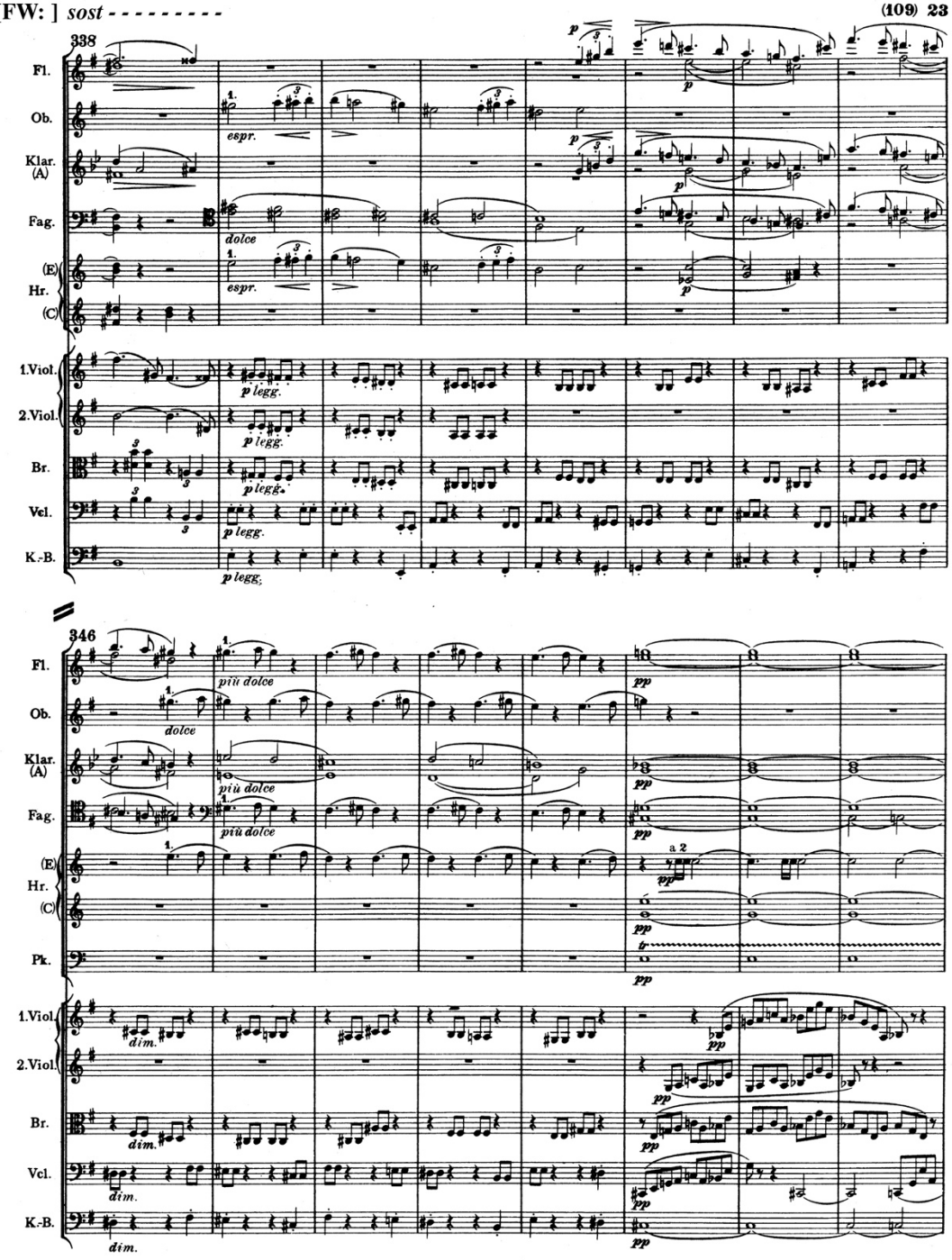

20 (106)
286
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
div.
294
M
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pizz.
M

J. B. 4

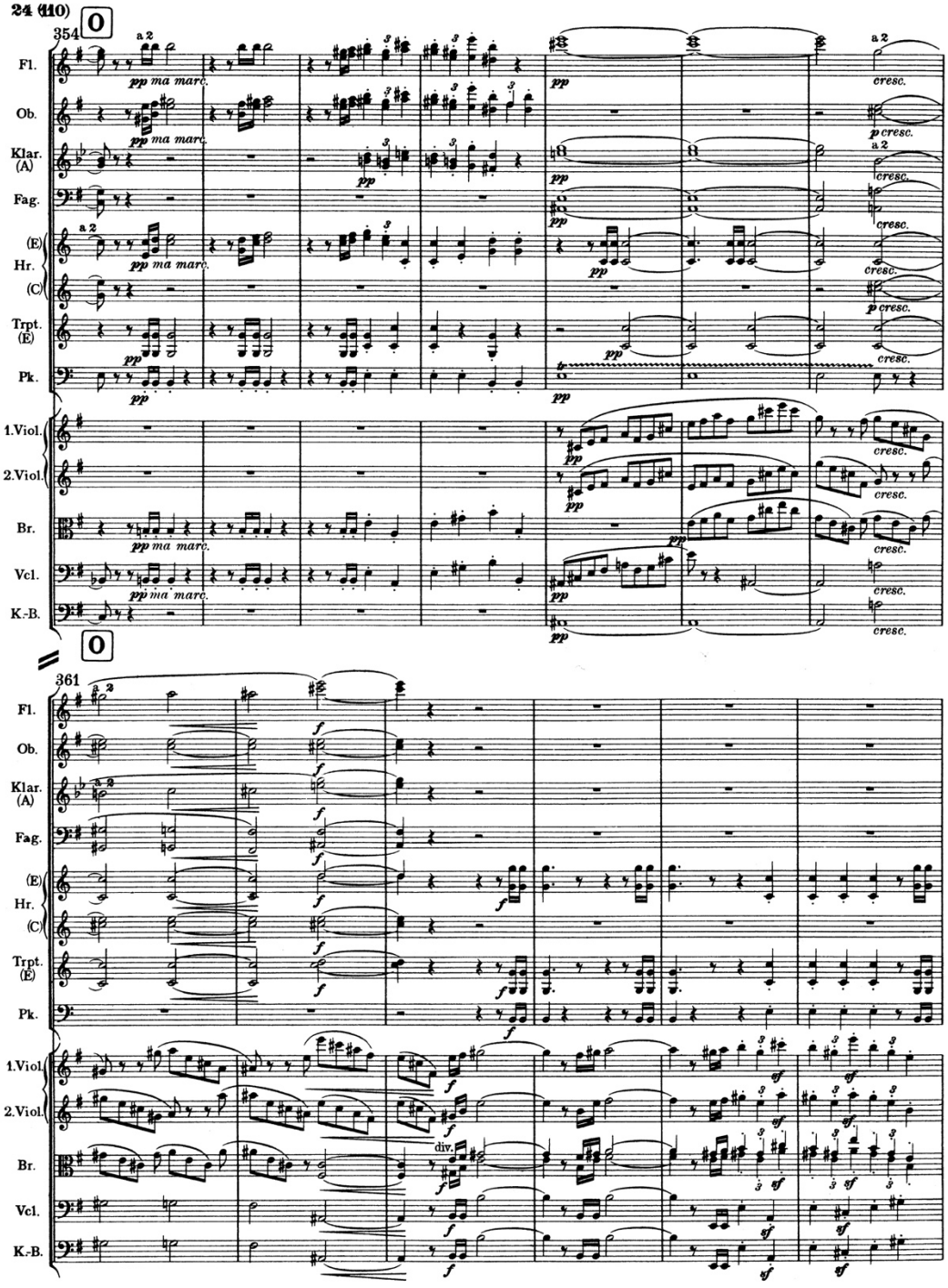

302
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
arco
311
Trpt. (E)
cresc.
marc.

J. B. 4

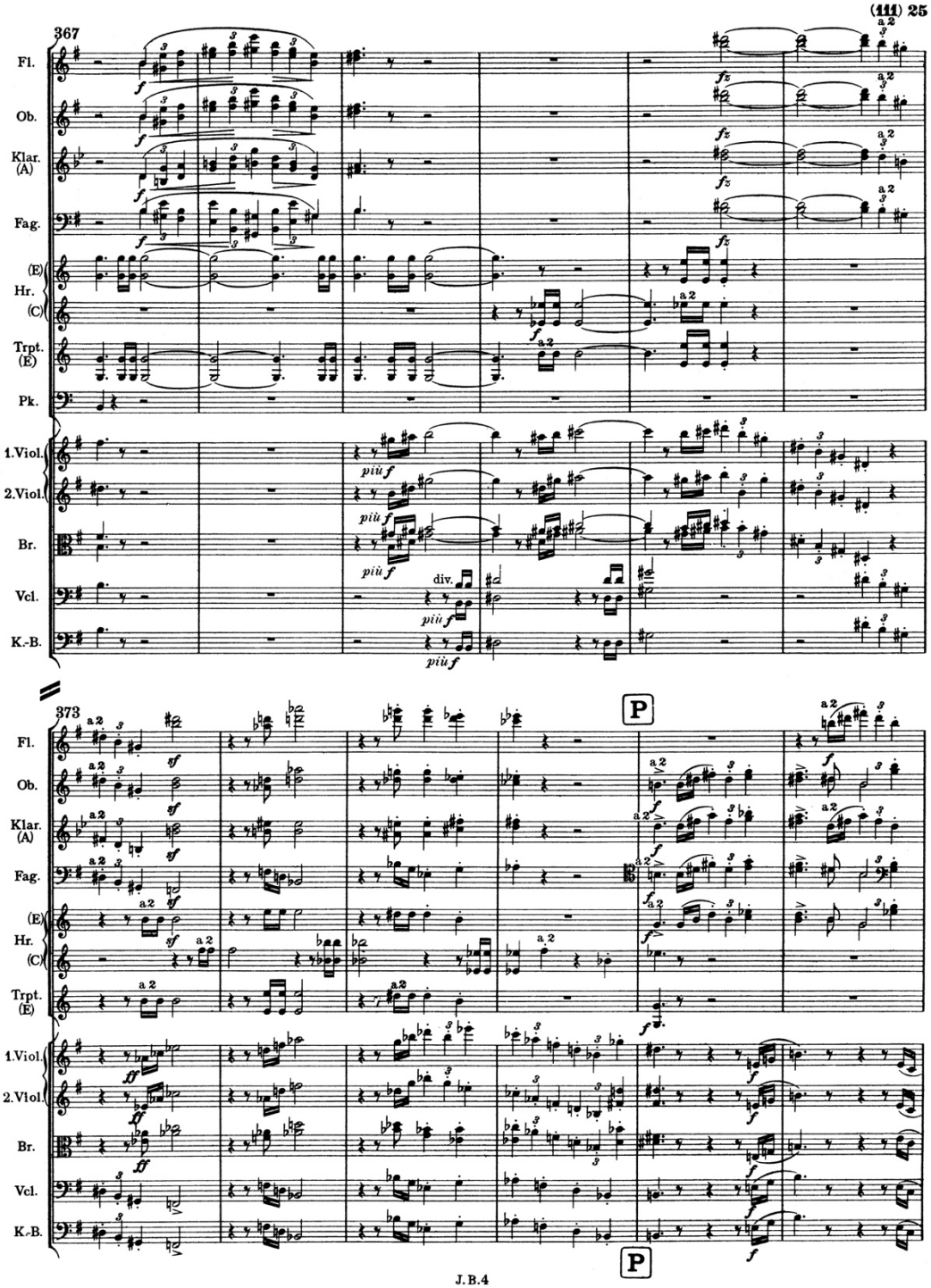

320
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2 Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pizz.
FW: sostenuto
329
N
dim.
arco
FW: sostenuto
J. B. 4

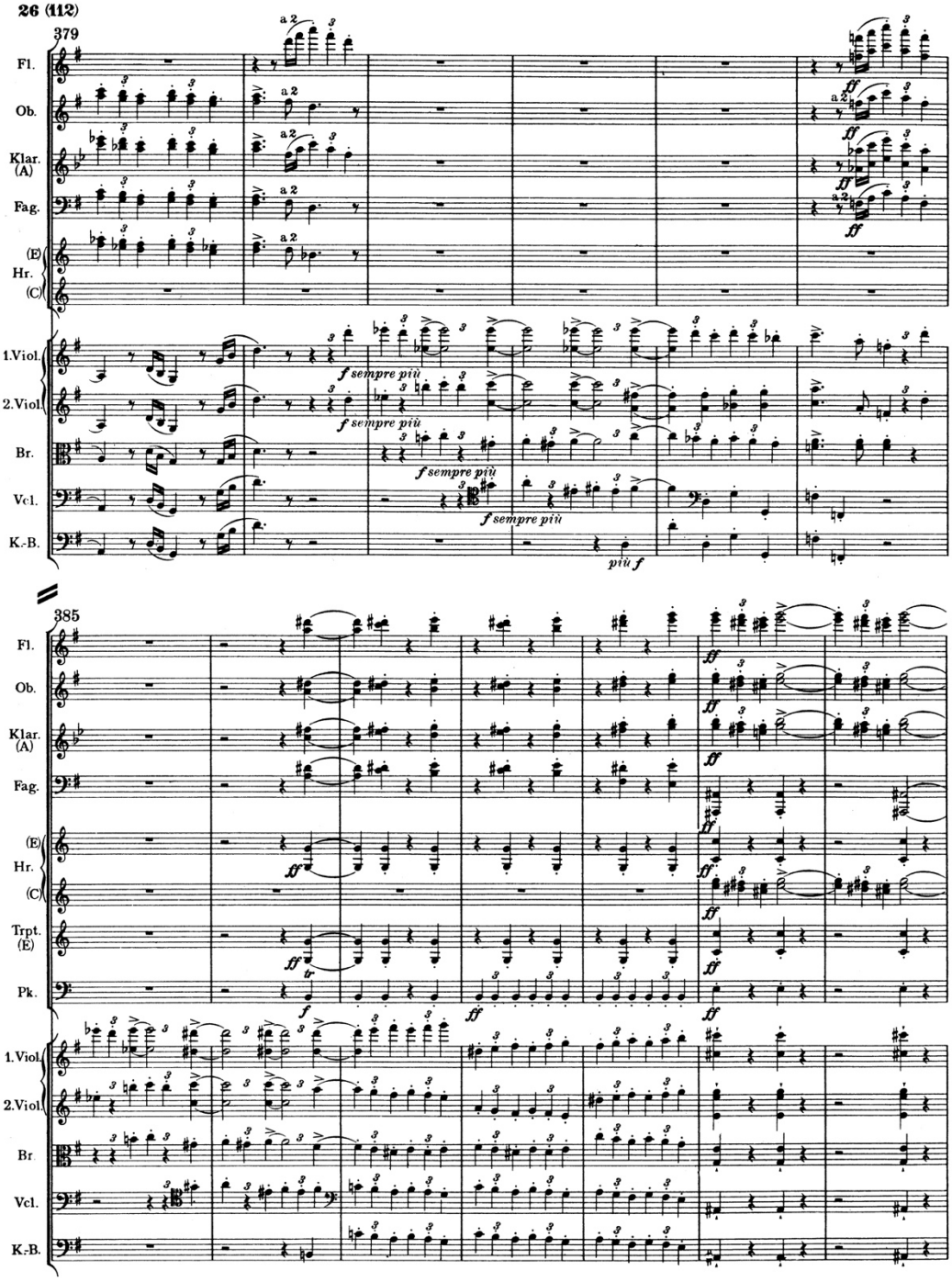

338
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
espr.
dolce
p legg.
346
più dolce
dolce
pp
a 2
Pk.
dim.

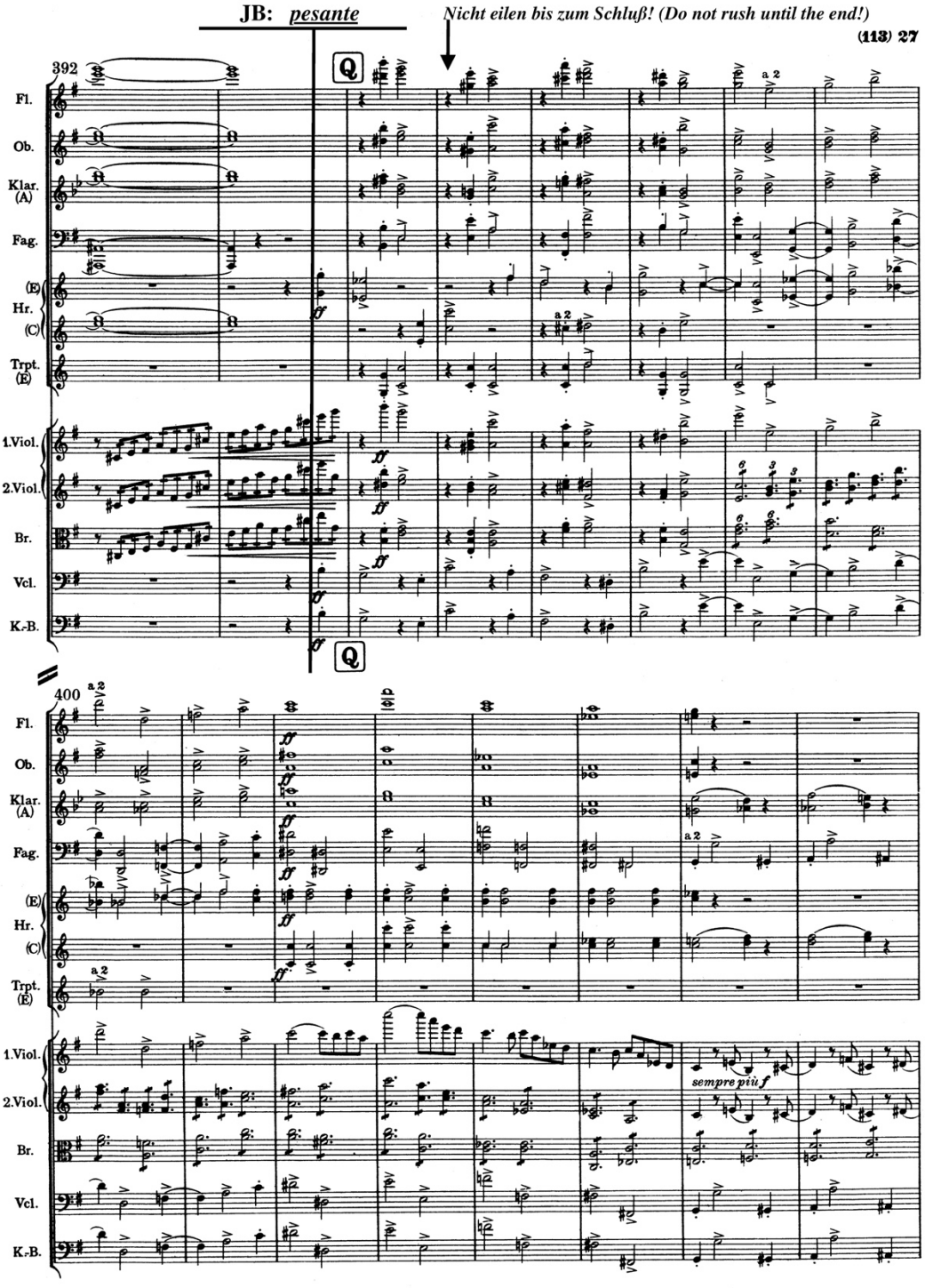
J. B. 4


24 (110)
354
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pp ma marc.
pp
cresc.
p cresc.
361
f
div.
sf

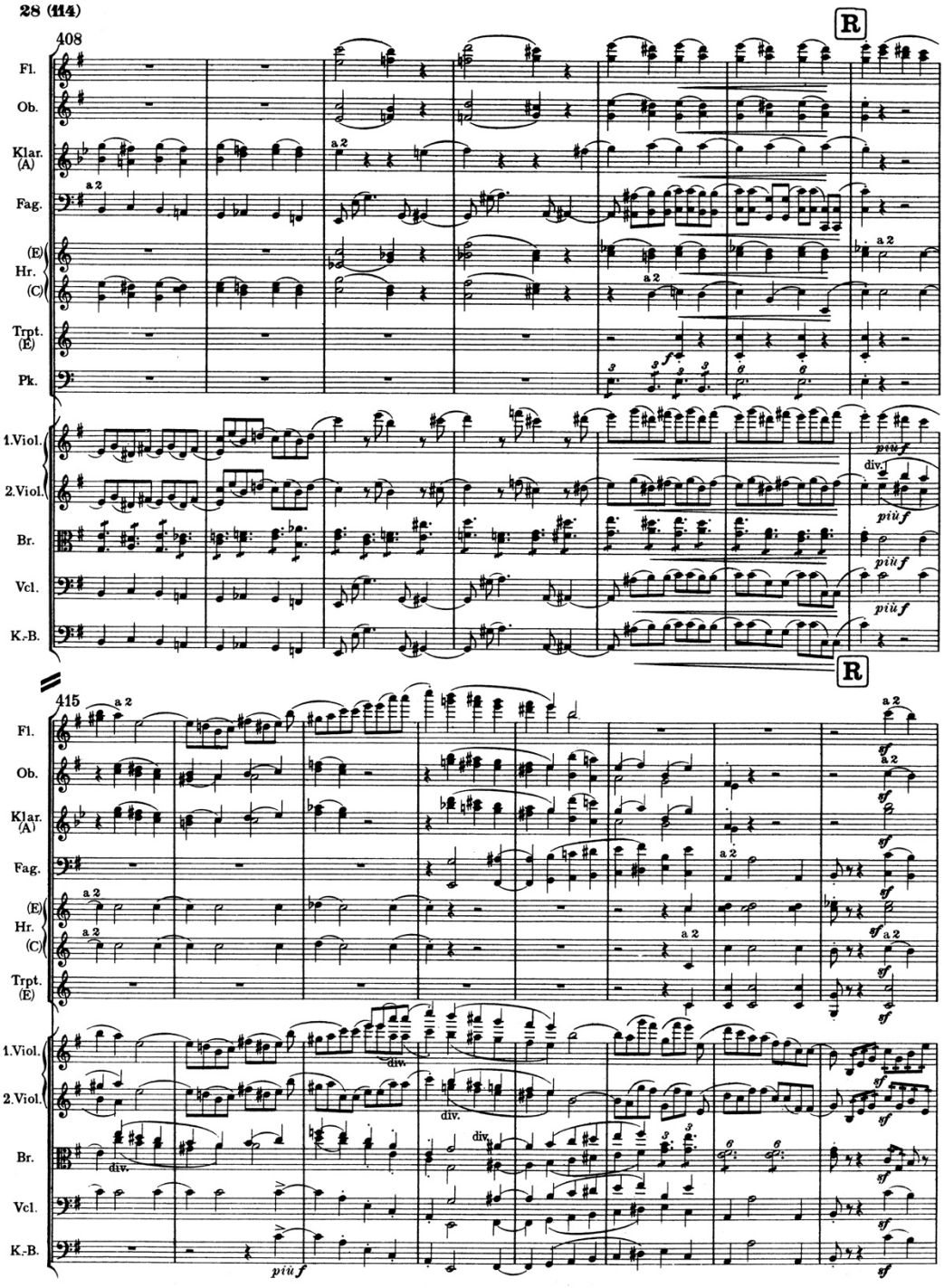
J. B. 4


367
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
più f
div.
373
P
J. B. 4

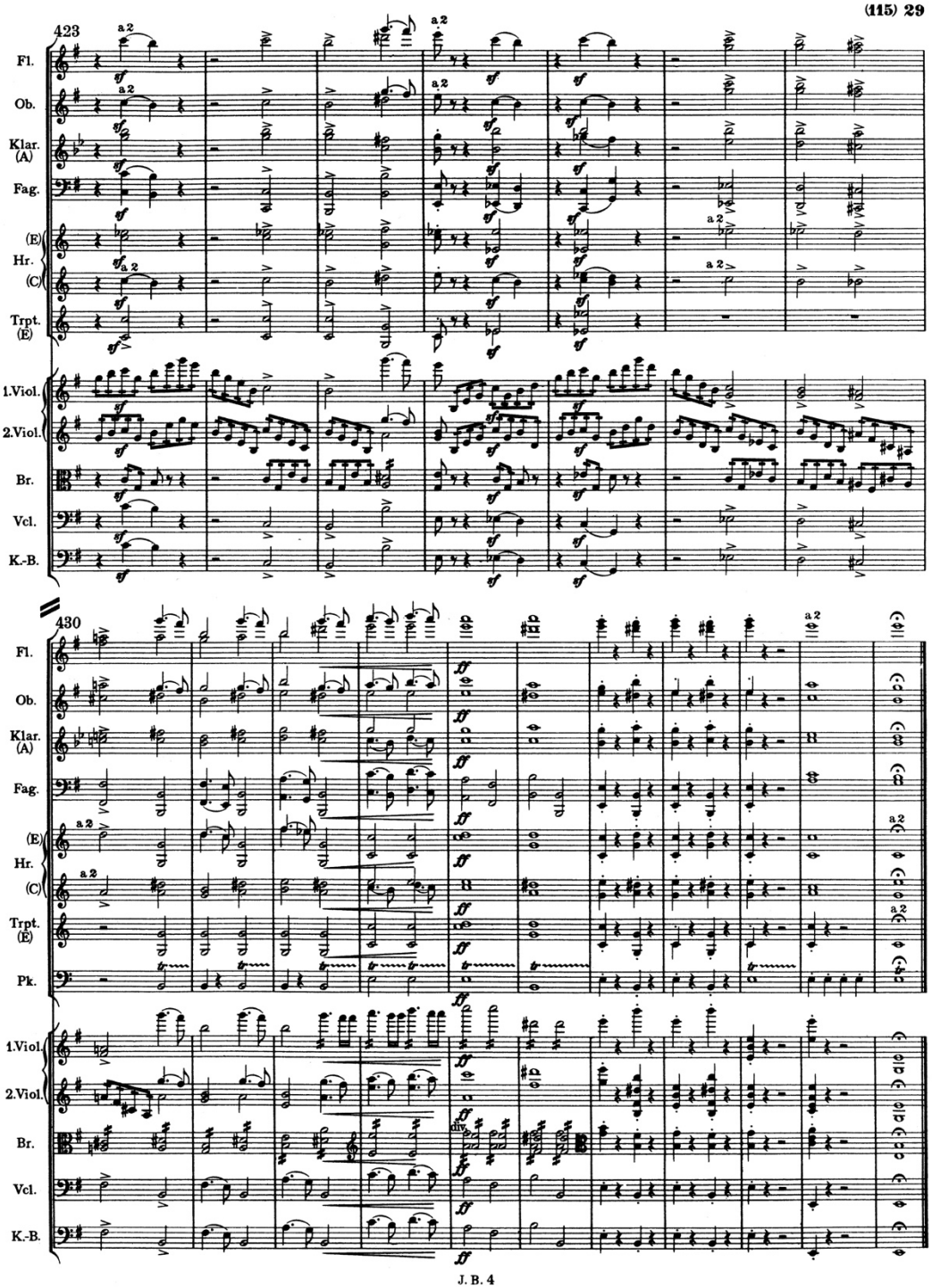

26 (112)
379
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f sempre più
più f
385
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
ff
f

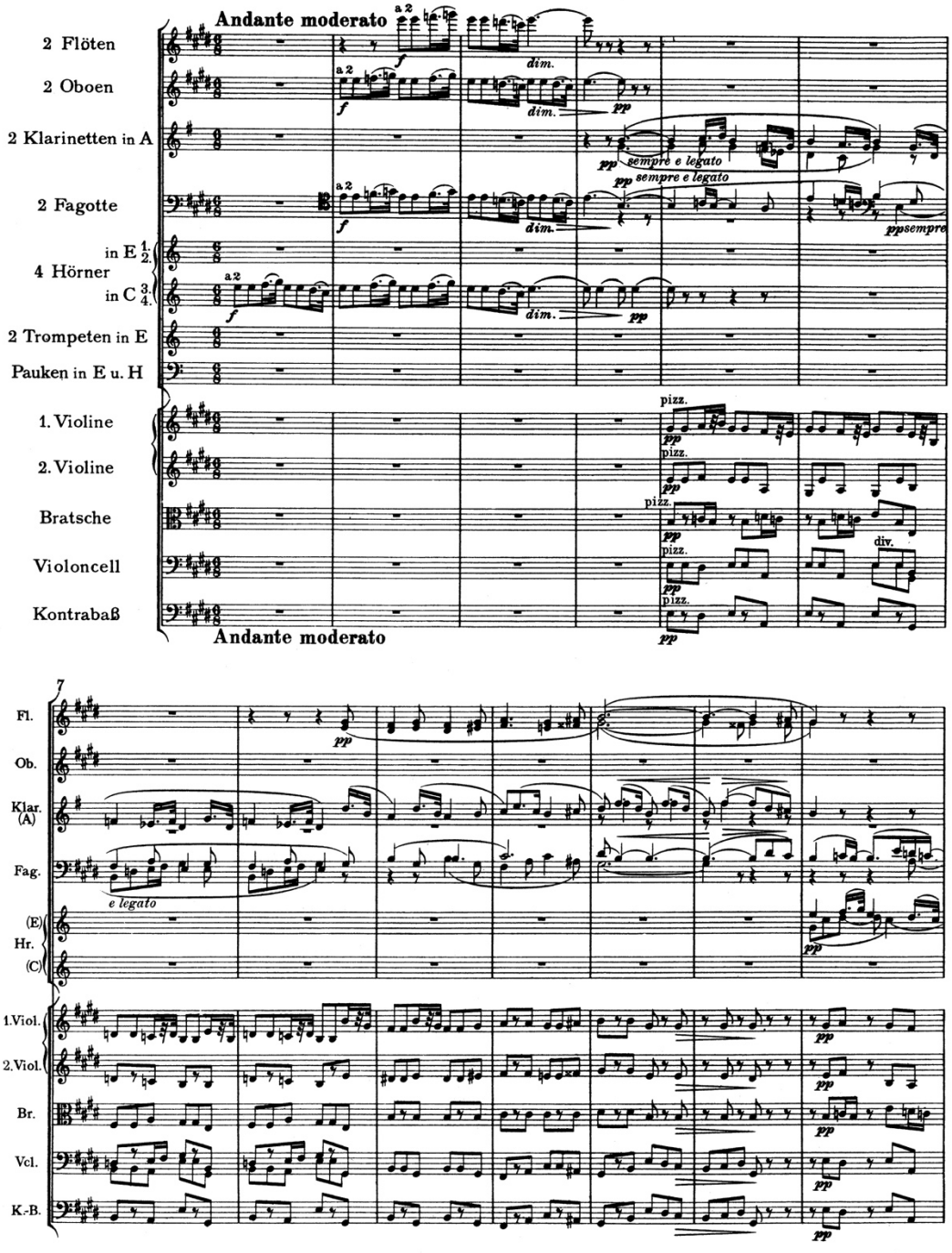

JB: pesante
Nicht eilen bis zum Schluß! (Do not rush until the end!)
(113) 27
392
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
Q
400
a 2
sempre più f

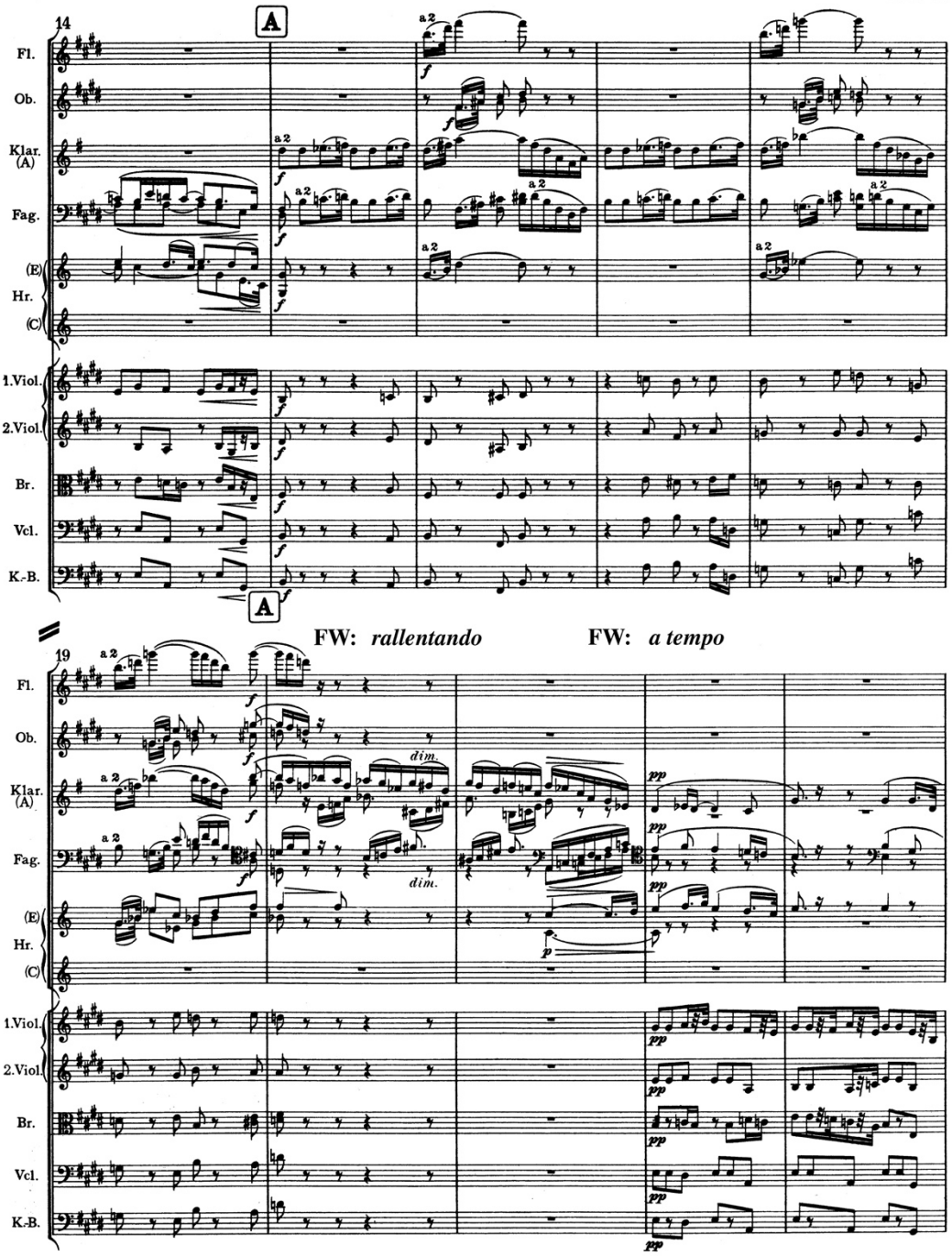
J. B. 4


28 (114)
408
R
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
div.
più f
415
R
sf

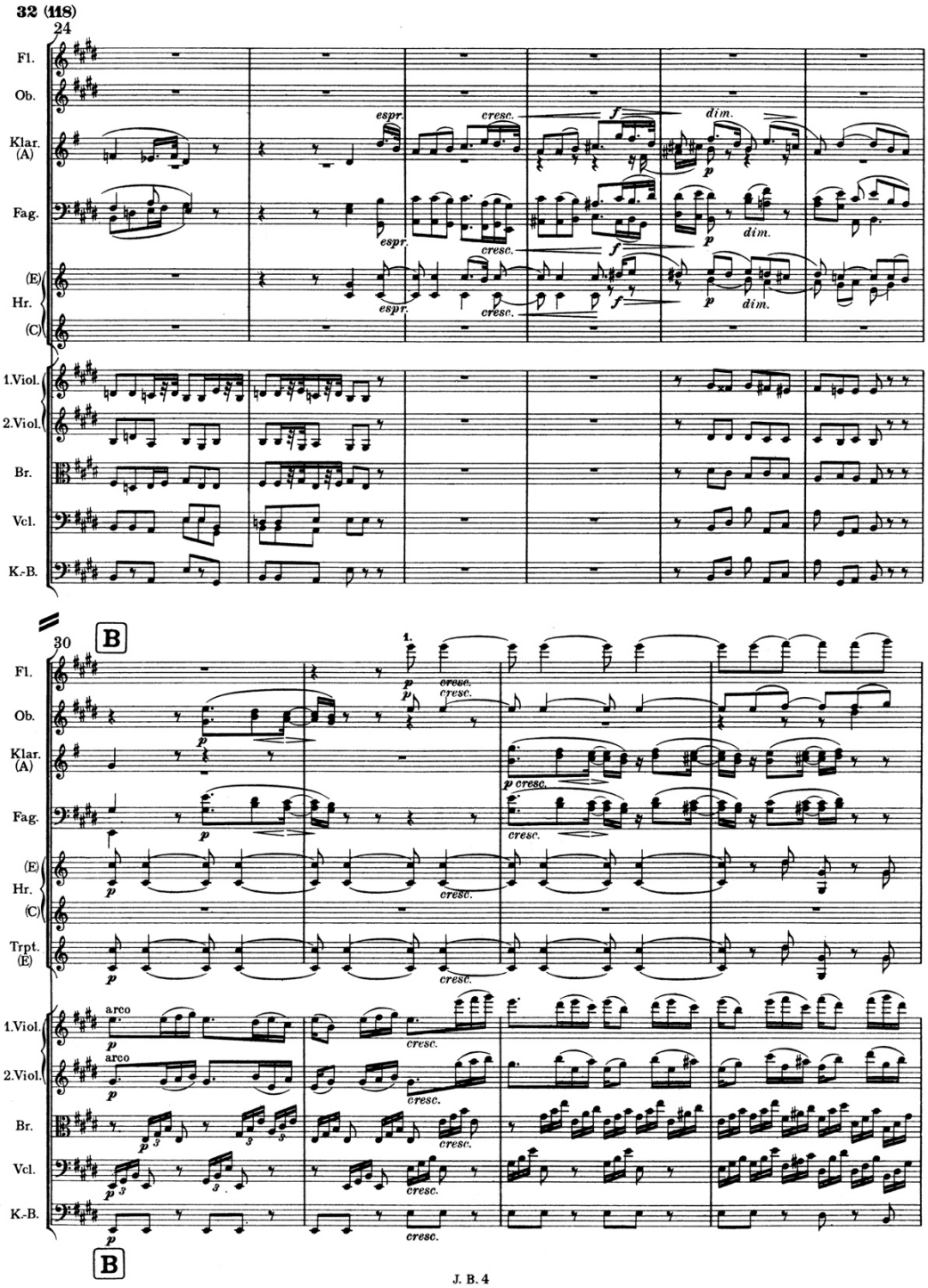
J. B. 4


423
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
430
Pk.

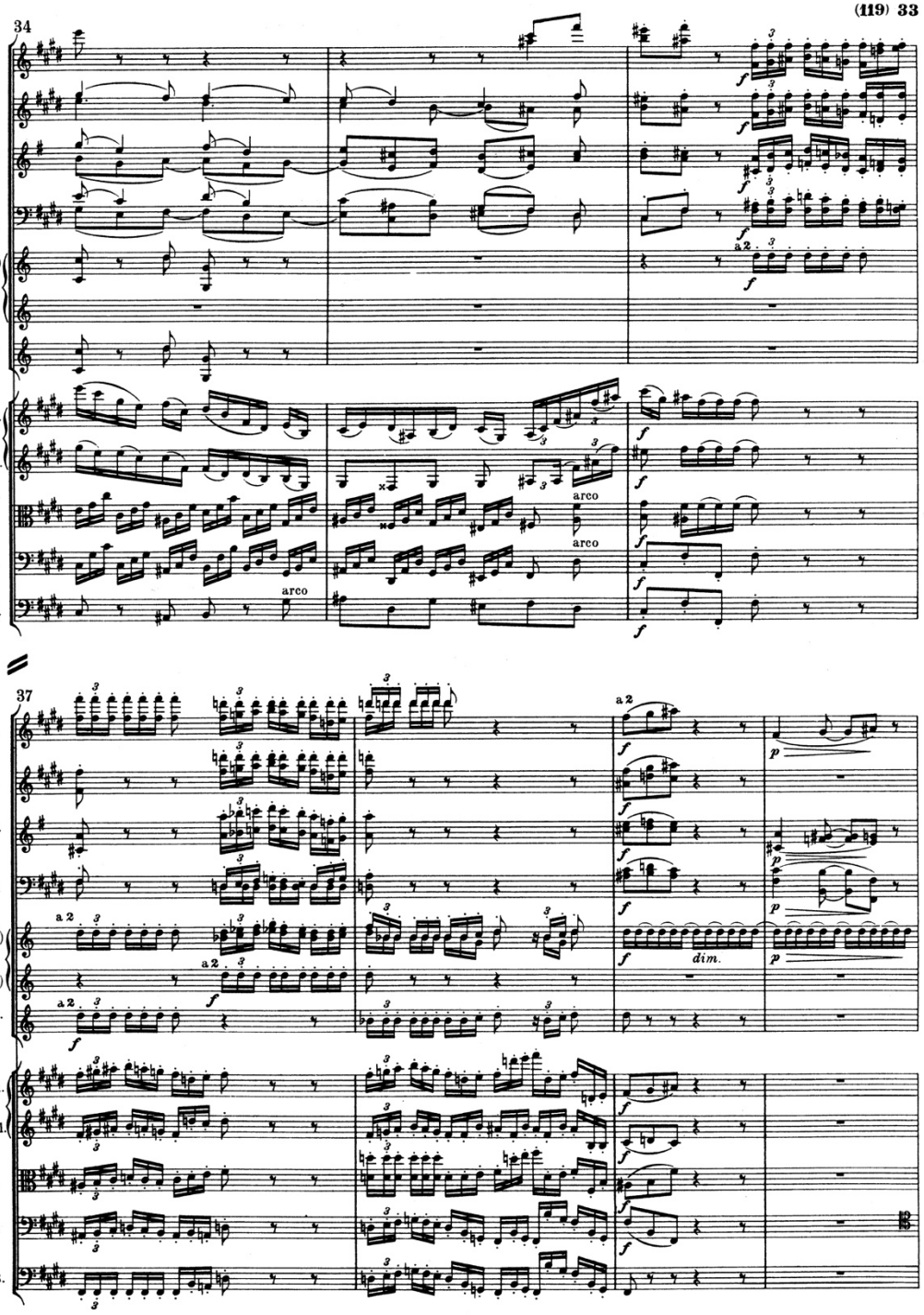

Andante moderato
2 Flöten
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in A
2 Fagotte
in E
4 Hörner
in C
2 Trompeten in E
Pauken in E u. H
1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Kontrabaß
sempre e legato
pizz.
div.
Andante moderato
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
e legato
(E)
Hr.
(C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.

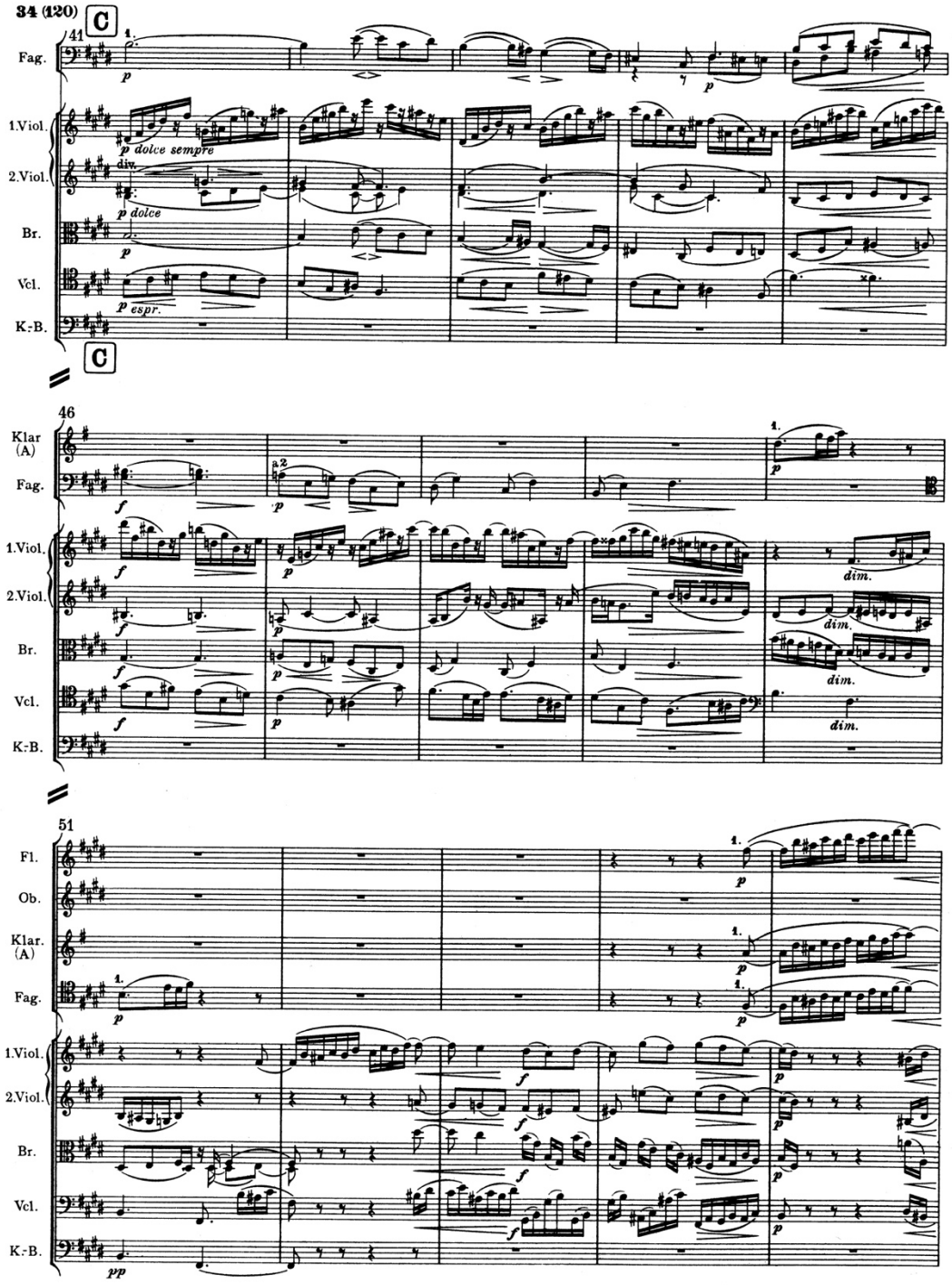

14
A
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f
A
FW: rallentando
FW: a tempo
19
dim.
pp
p

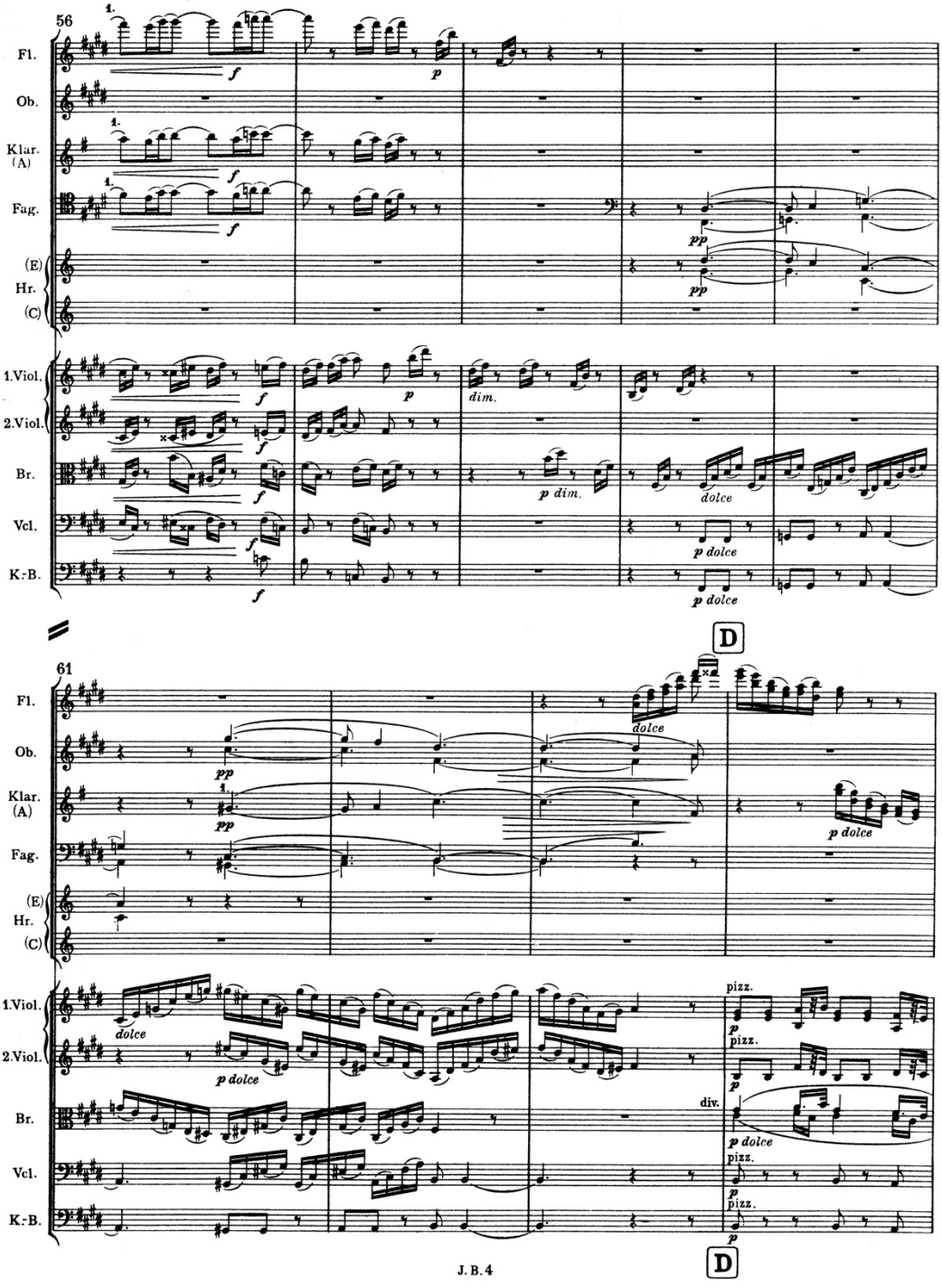
J. B. 4


32 (118)
24
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
espr.
cresc.
f
dim.
p
30
B
1.
Trpt. (E)
arco
pizz.
B

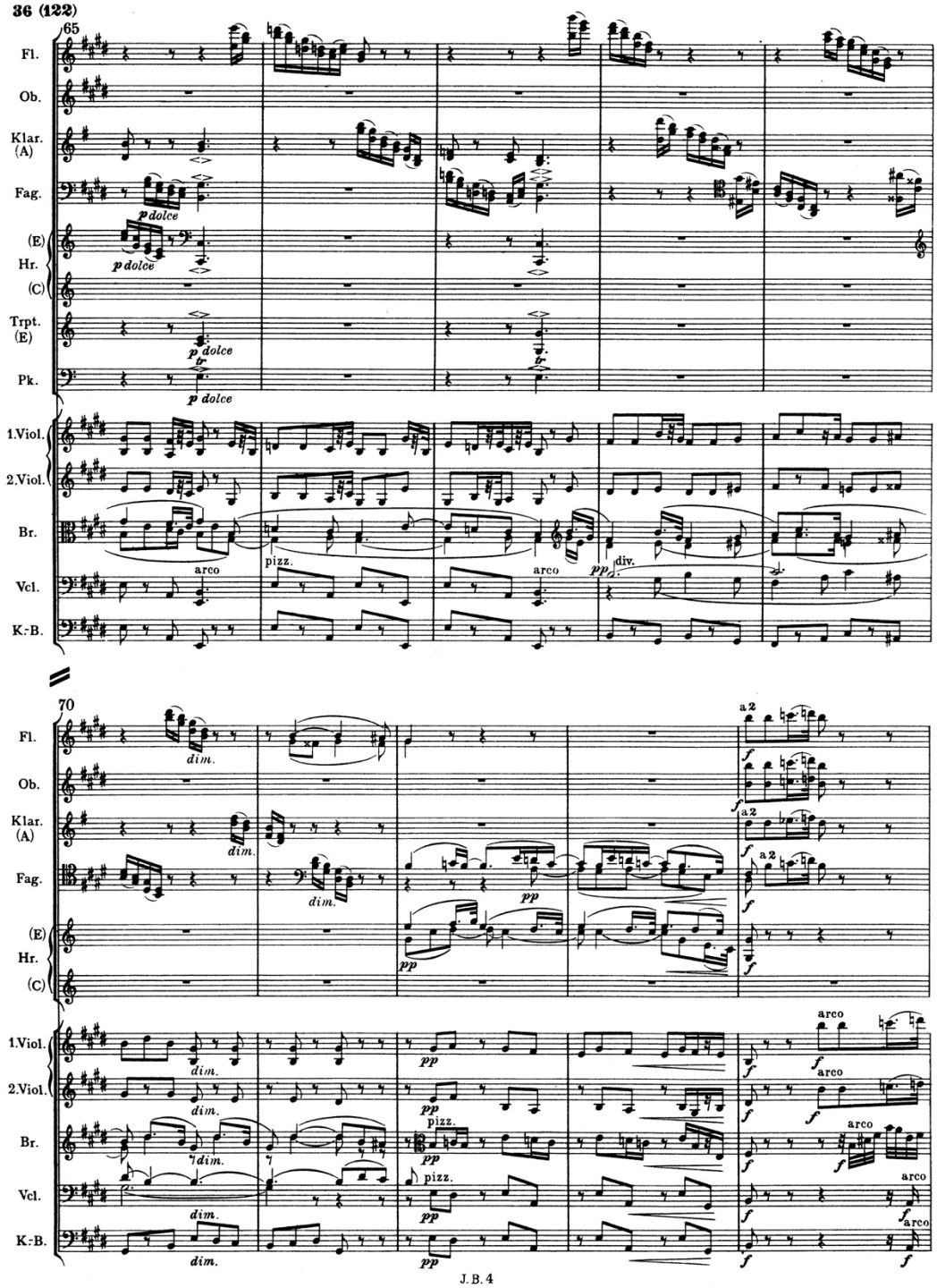
J. B. 4


34
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
arco
37
a 2
dim.

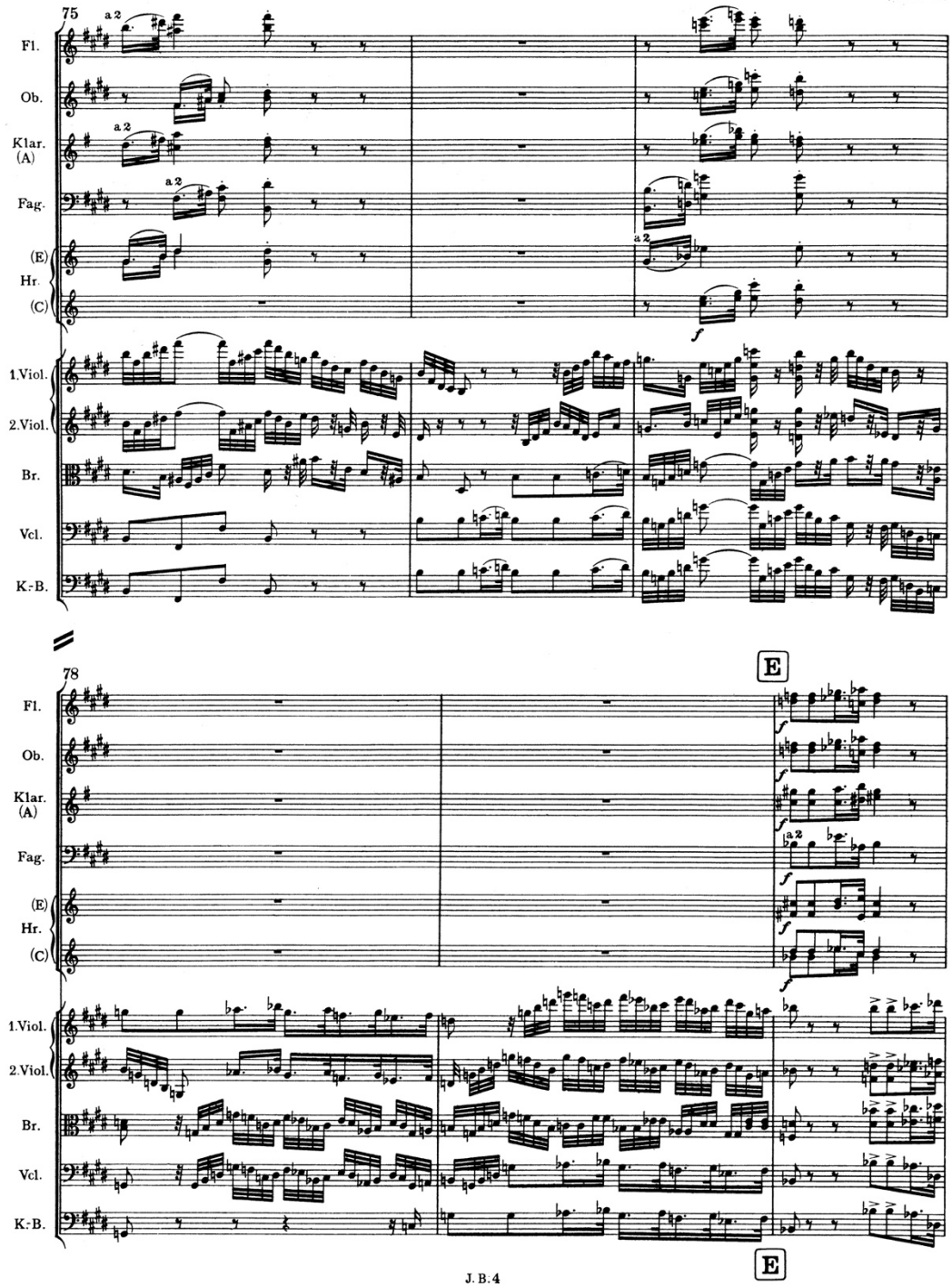

34 (120)
C
41
Fag.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p dolce sempre
div.
p dolce
p espr.
C
46
Klar. (A)
Fag.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dim.
51
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
pp

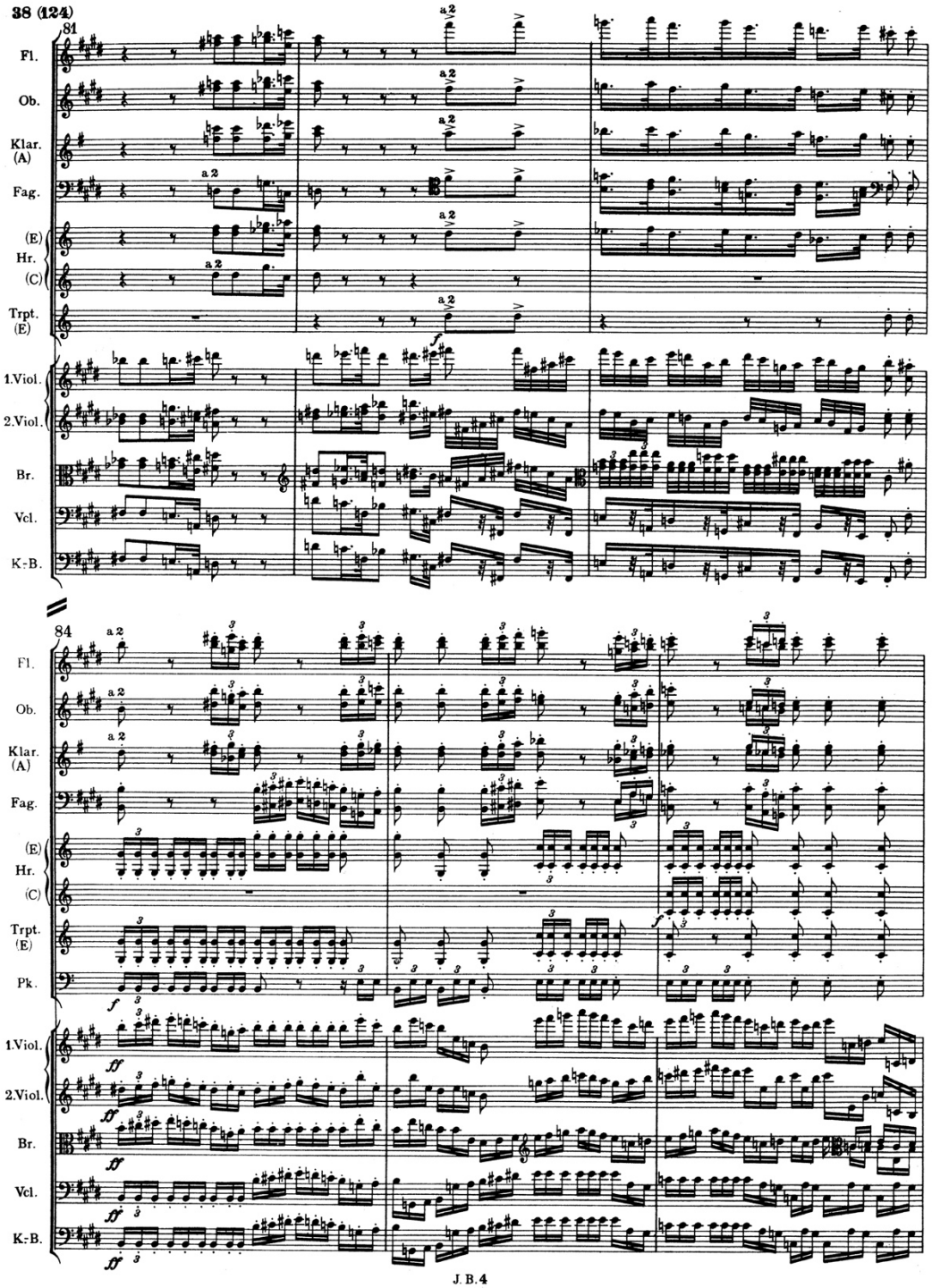

56
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dim.
dolce
61
D
pizz.
div.

J. B. 4

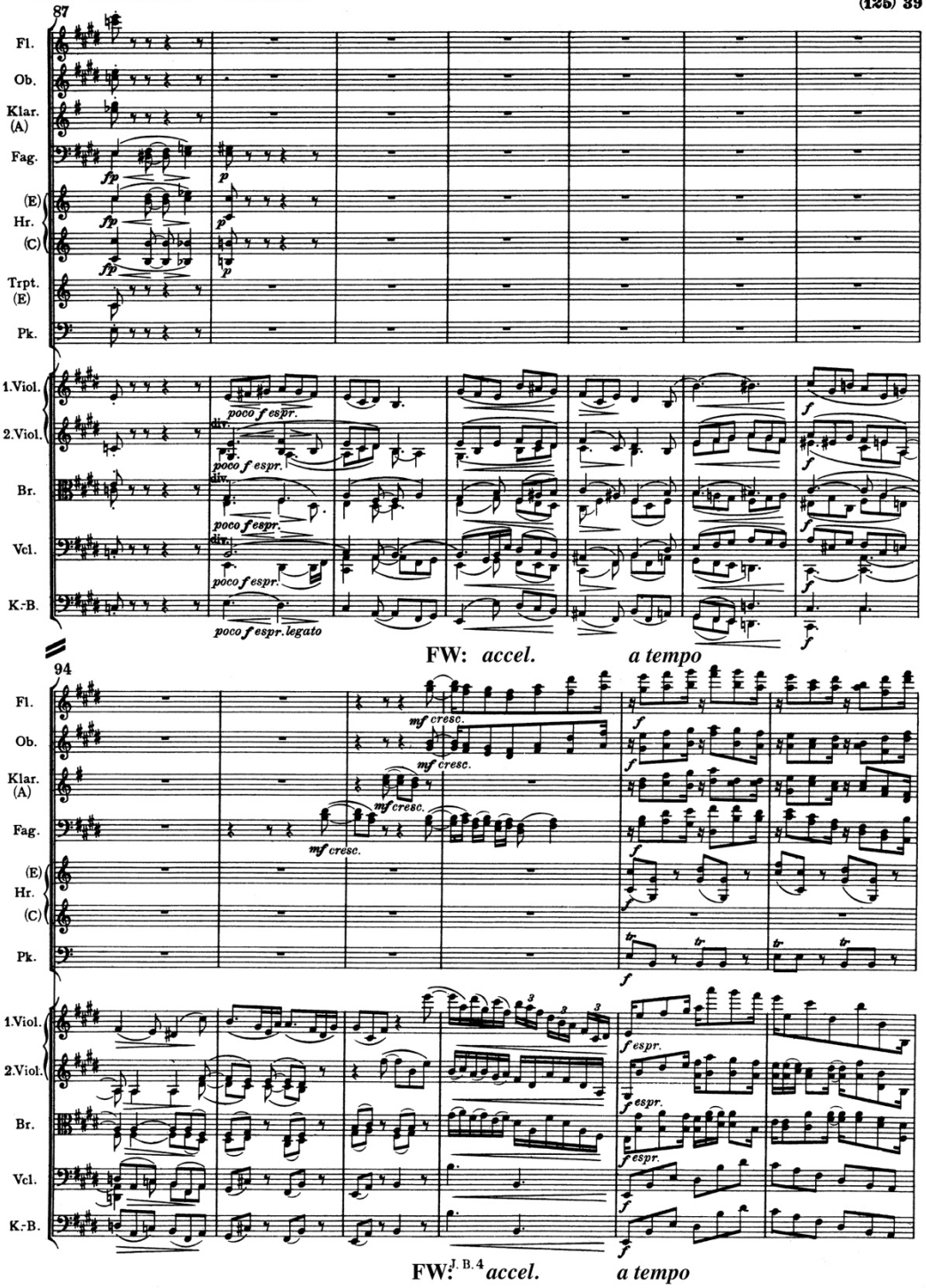

36 (122)
65
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p dolce
pizz.
arco
pp
div.
70
dim.
a2
f
pp
arco
pizz.

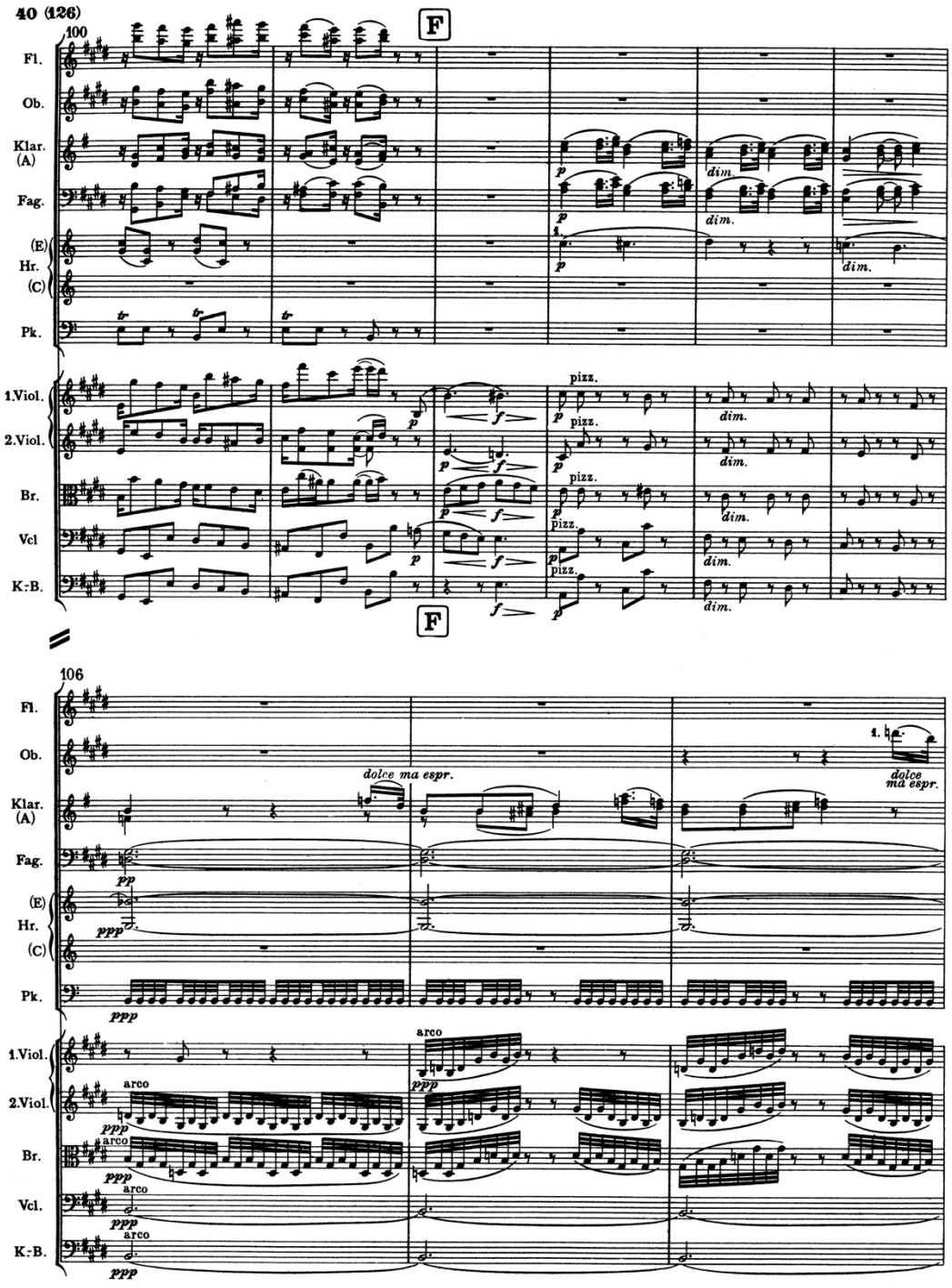
J. B. 4

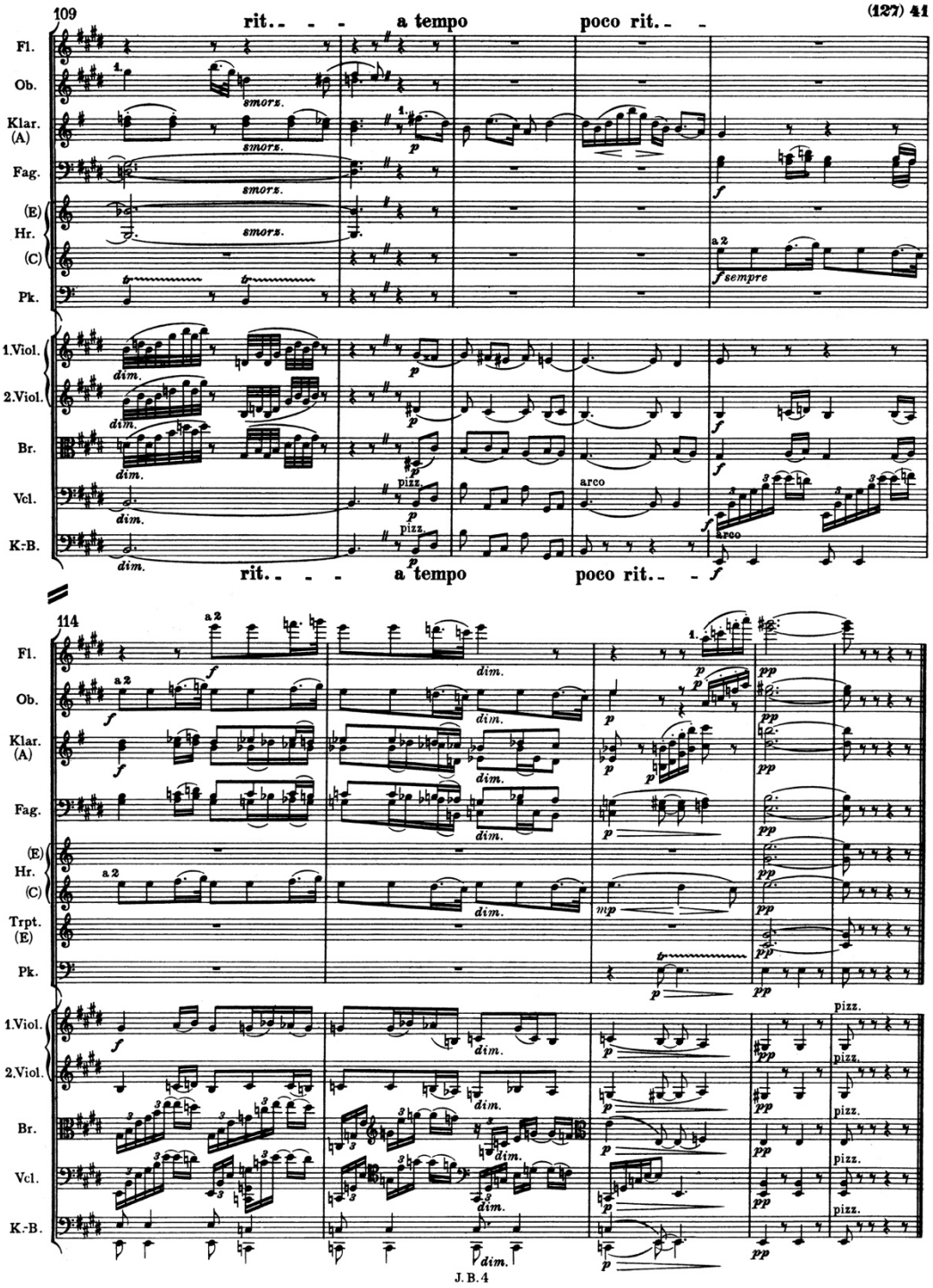

75
a 2
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
78
E
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
E

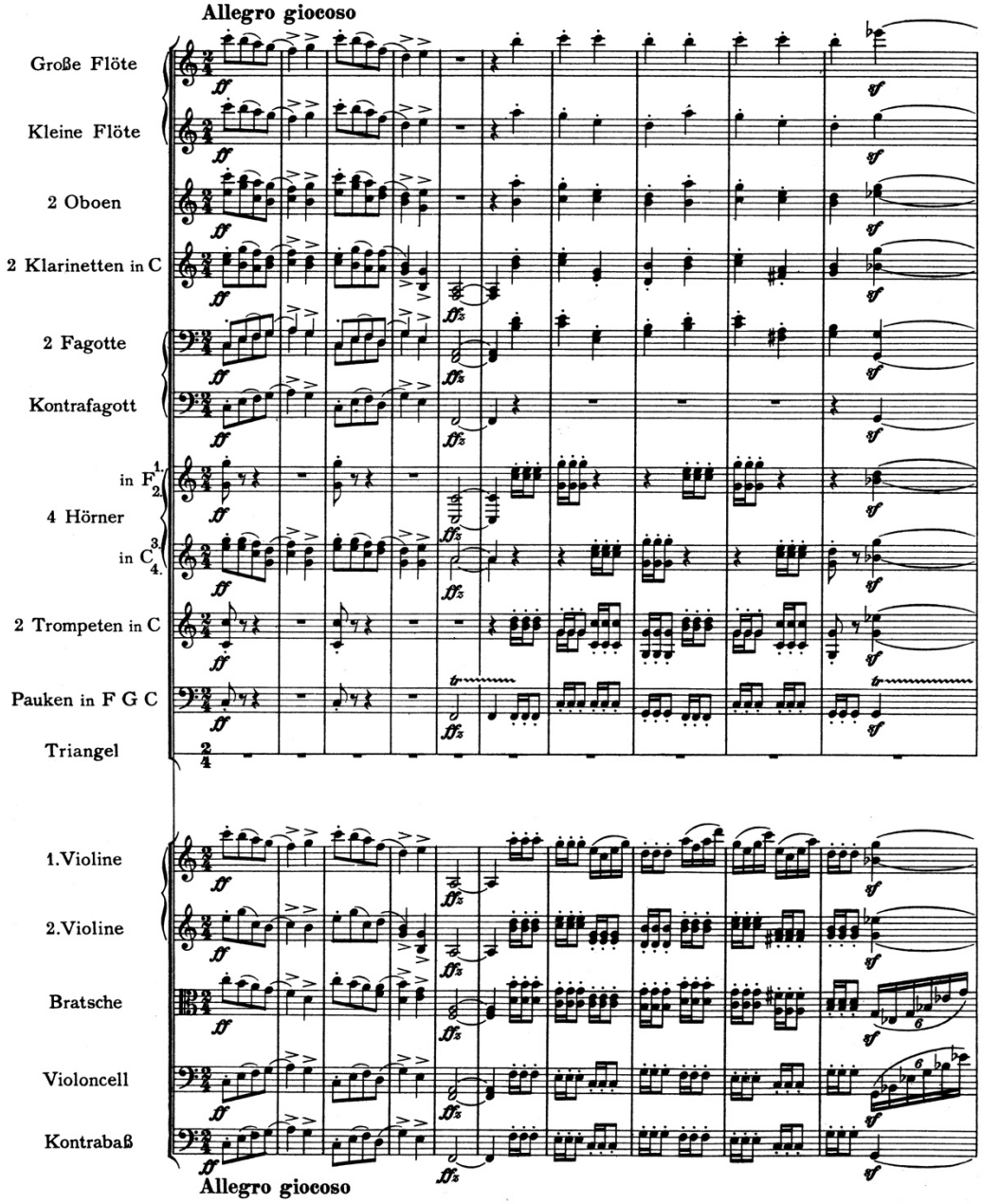

38 (124)
81
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
84
Pk.

FW: *rallentando* *sostenuto*

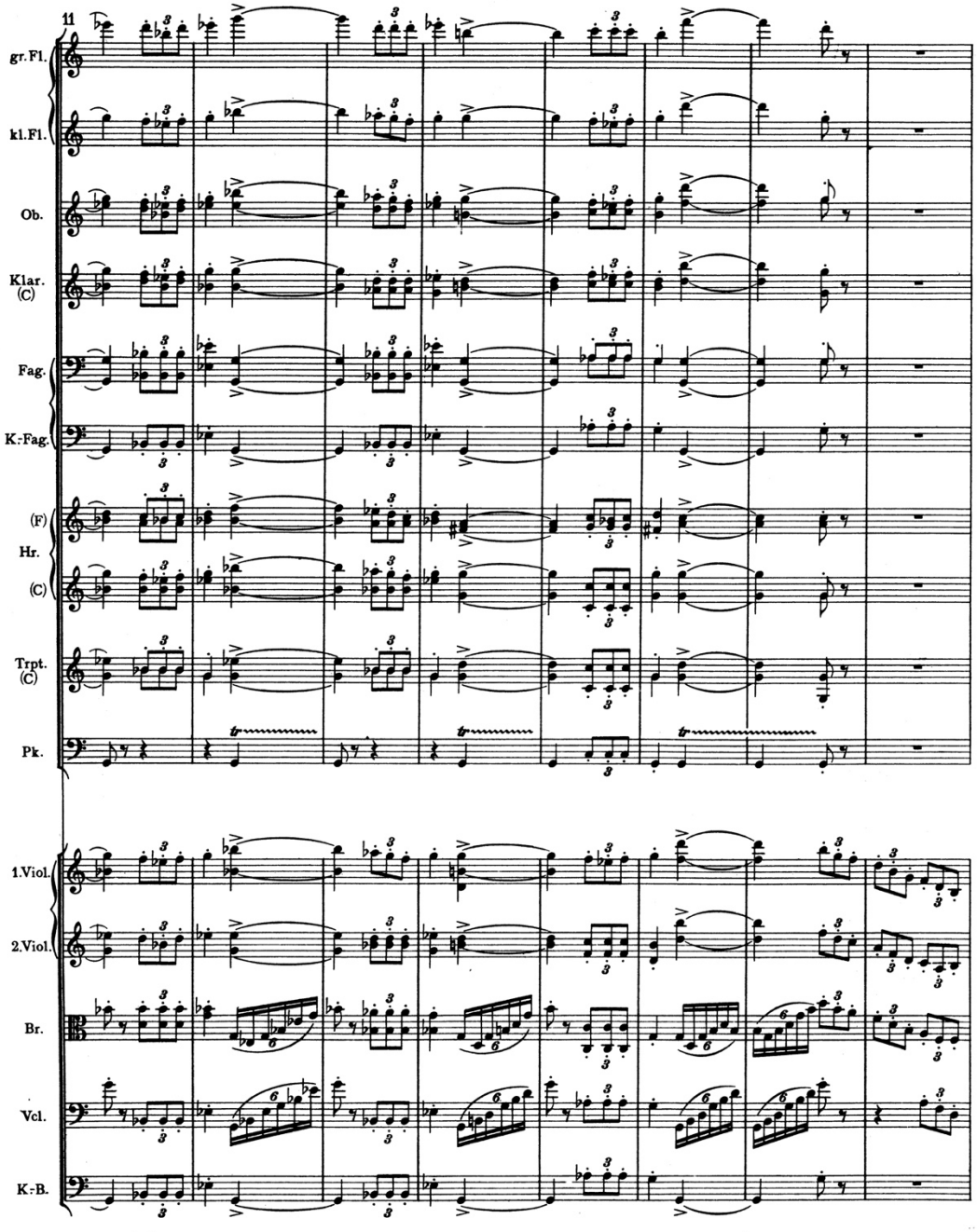


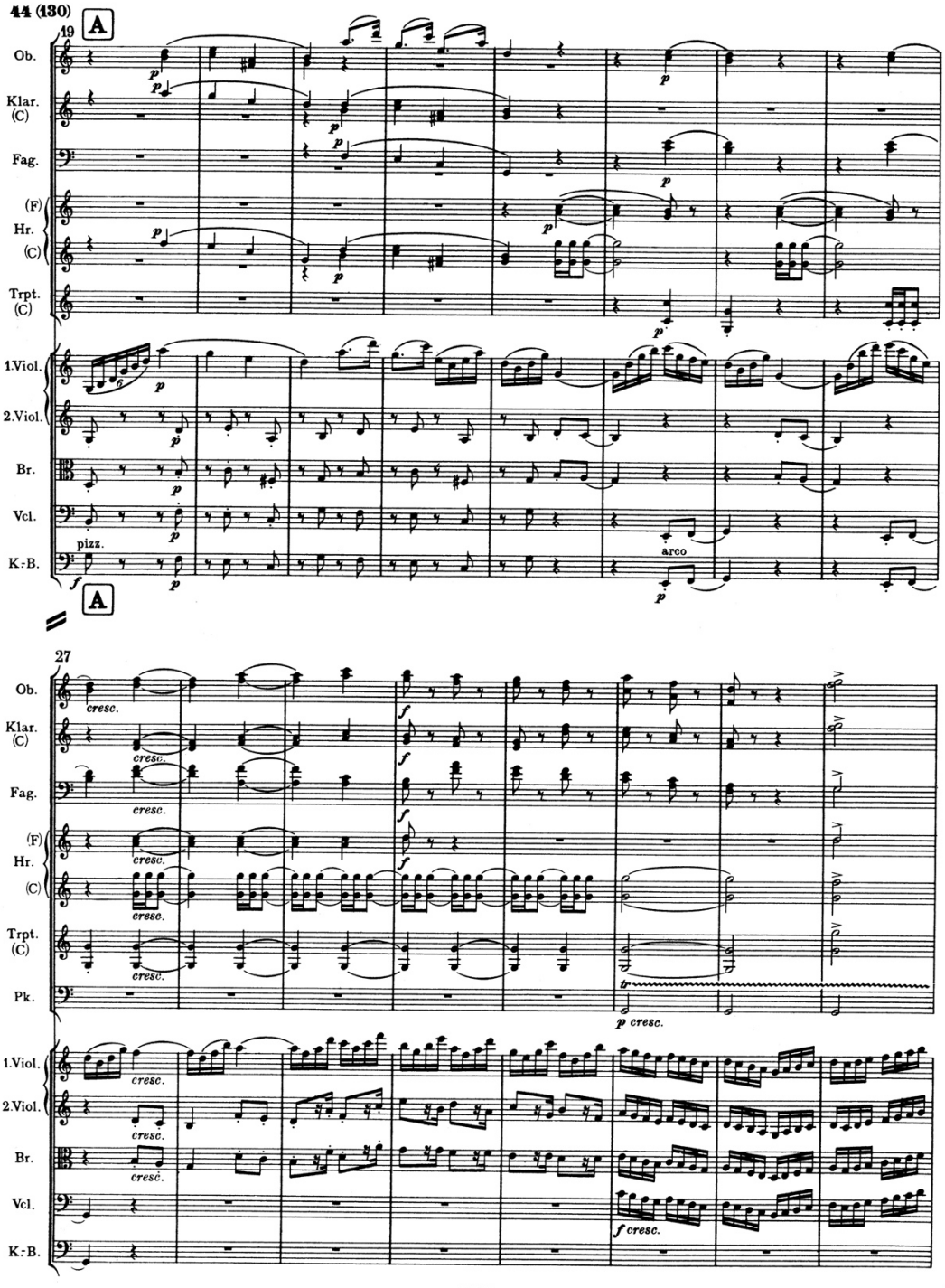

40 (126)
100
F
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl
K.-B.
pizz.
dim.
106
dolce ma espr.
arco
ppp
pp

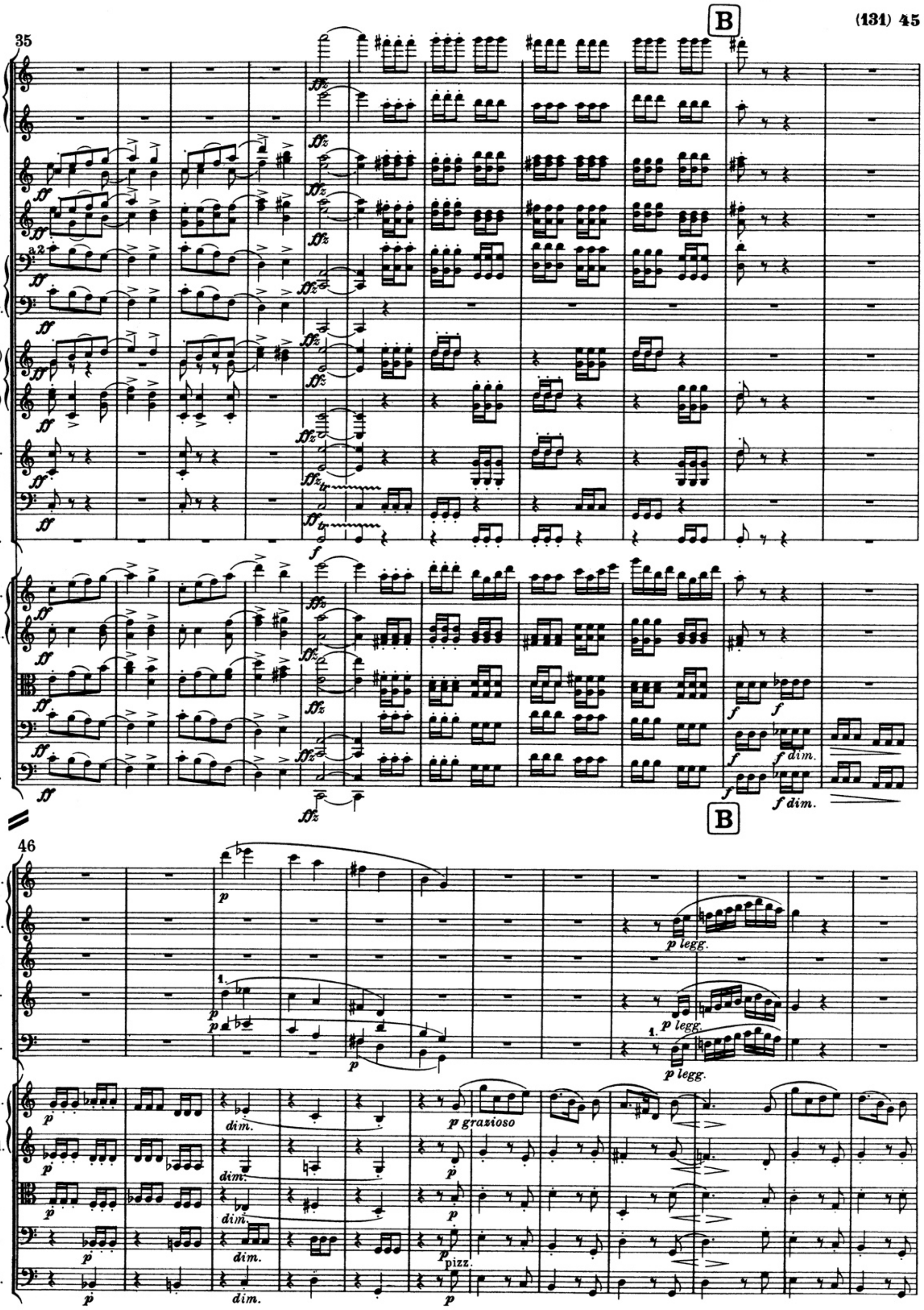

109
rit. - - - a tempo
poco rit. - -
(127) 41
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
smors.
dim.
pizz.
arco
a 2
sempre
114
Trpt. (E)
mp
J. B. 4


Allegro giocoso
Große Flöte
Kleine Flöte
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in C
2 Fagotte
Kontrafagott
in F 1. 2.
4 Hörner
in C 3. 4.
2 Trompeten in C
Pauken in F G C
Triangel
1.Violine
2.Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Kontrabaß
Allegro giocoso

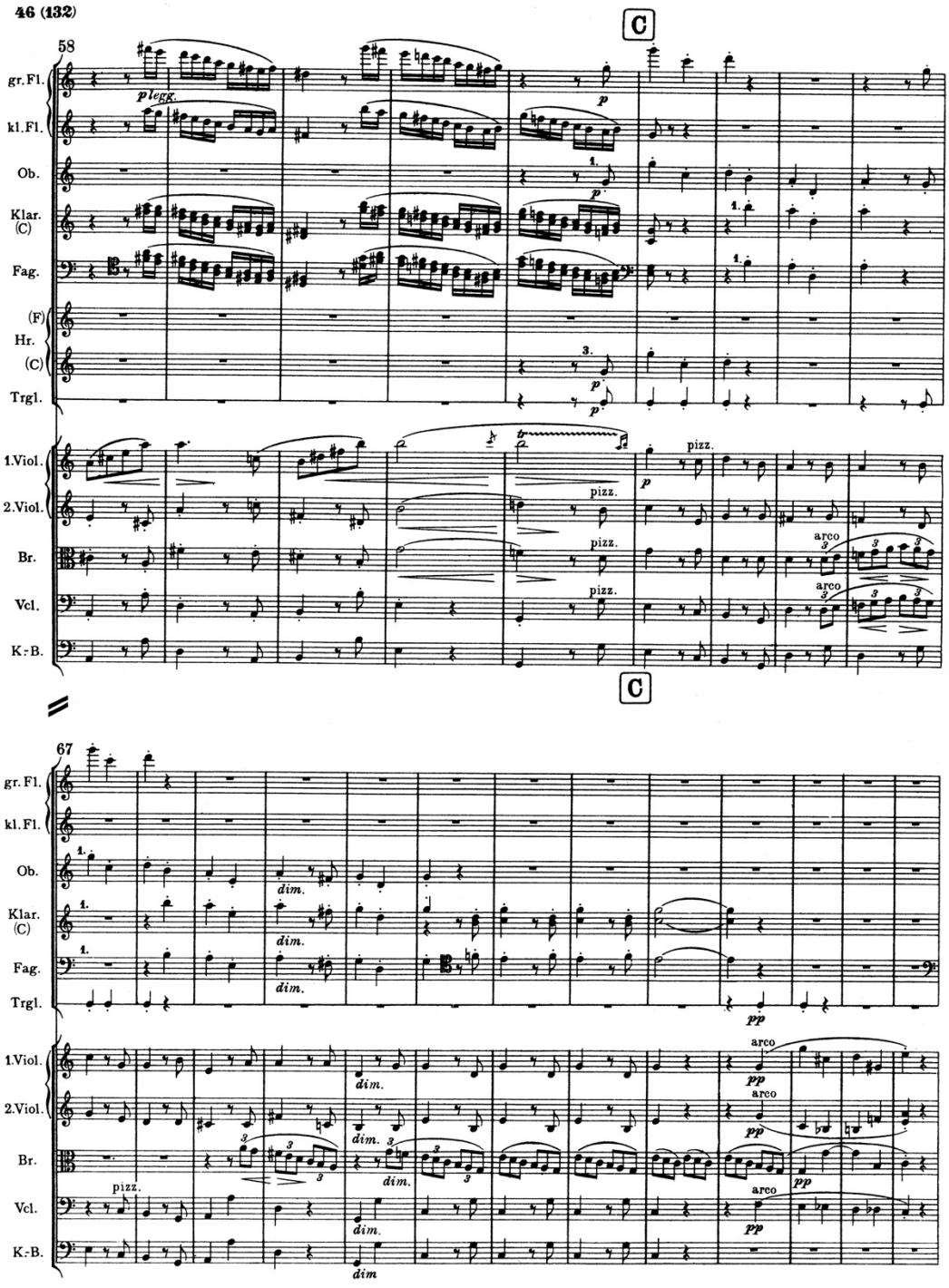
J. B. 4

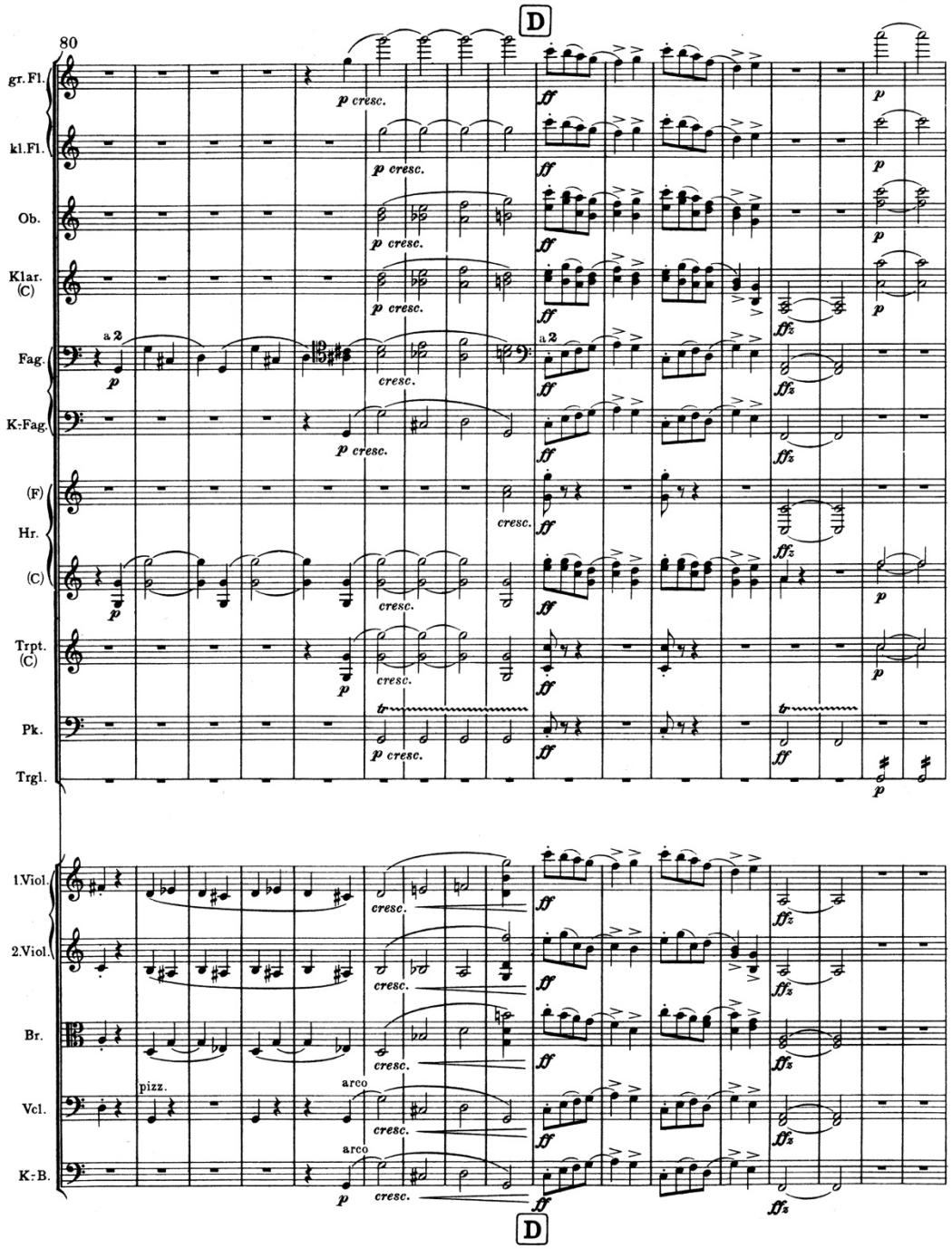

11
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.


44 (130)
19
A
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
pizz.
arco
A
27
cresc.
Pk.
p cresc.
f cresc.

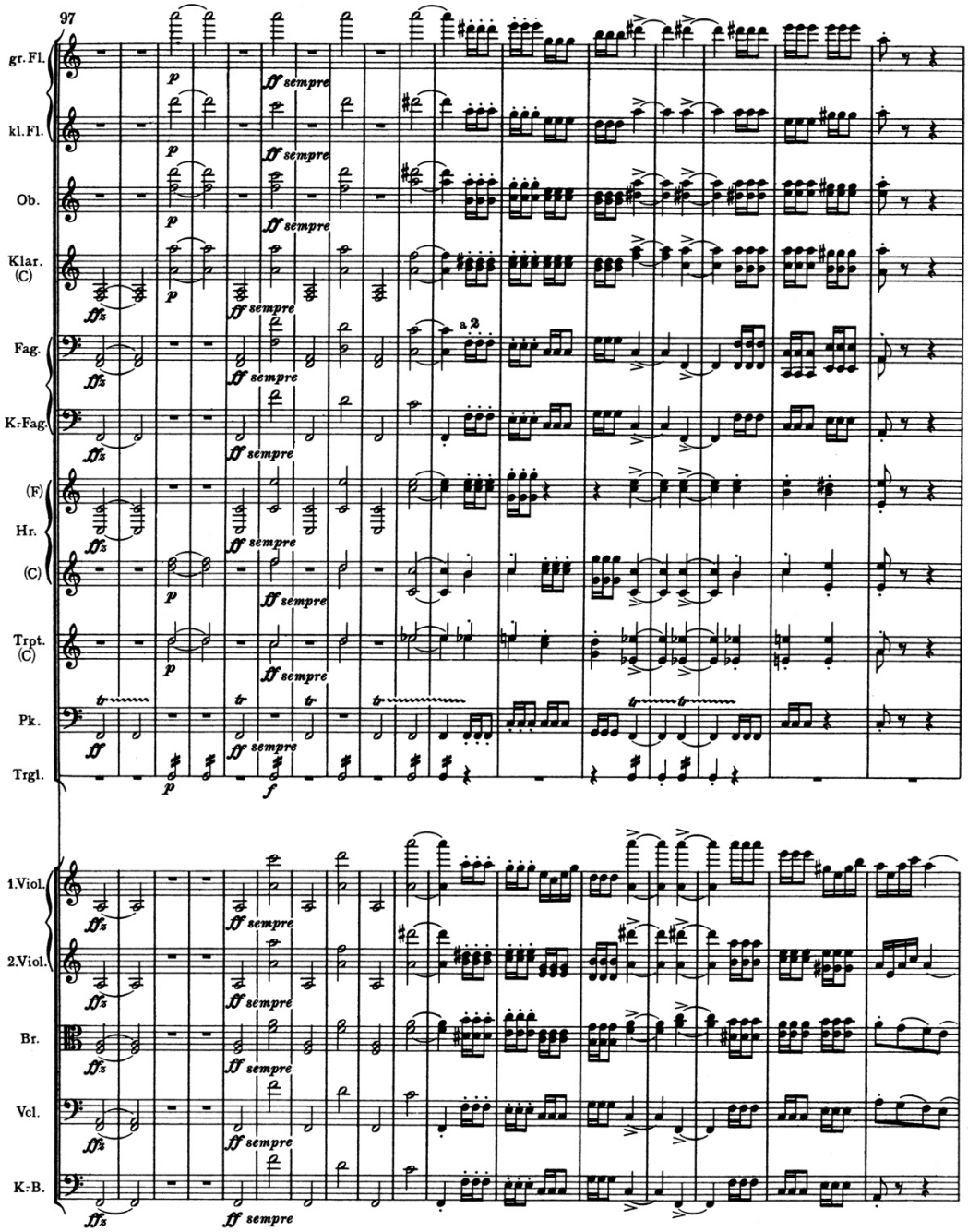

35
B
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
ff
ffz
f dim.
46
p legg.
p grazioso
dim.
pizz.

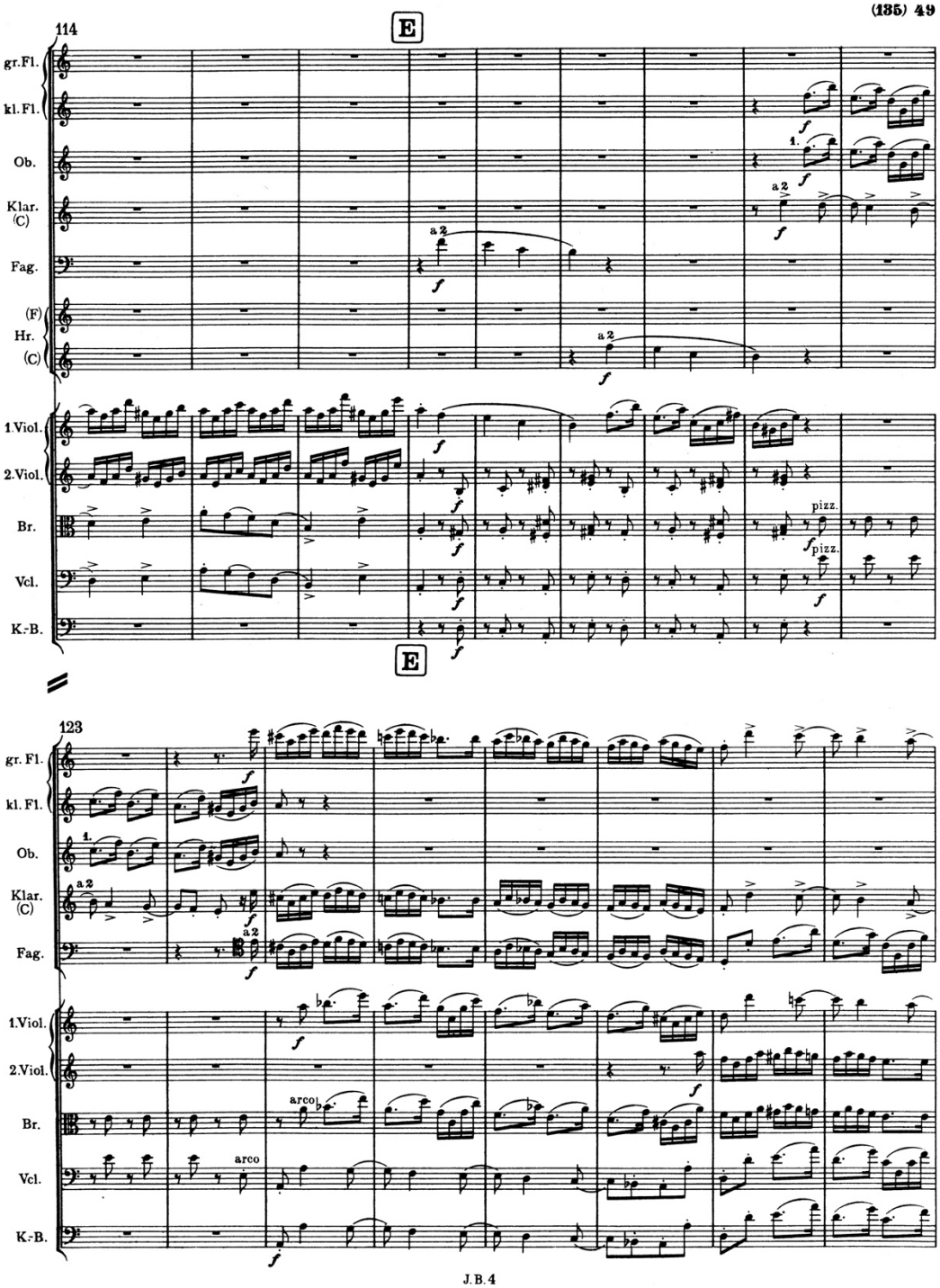
J. B. 4

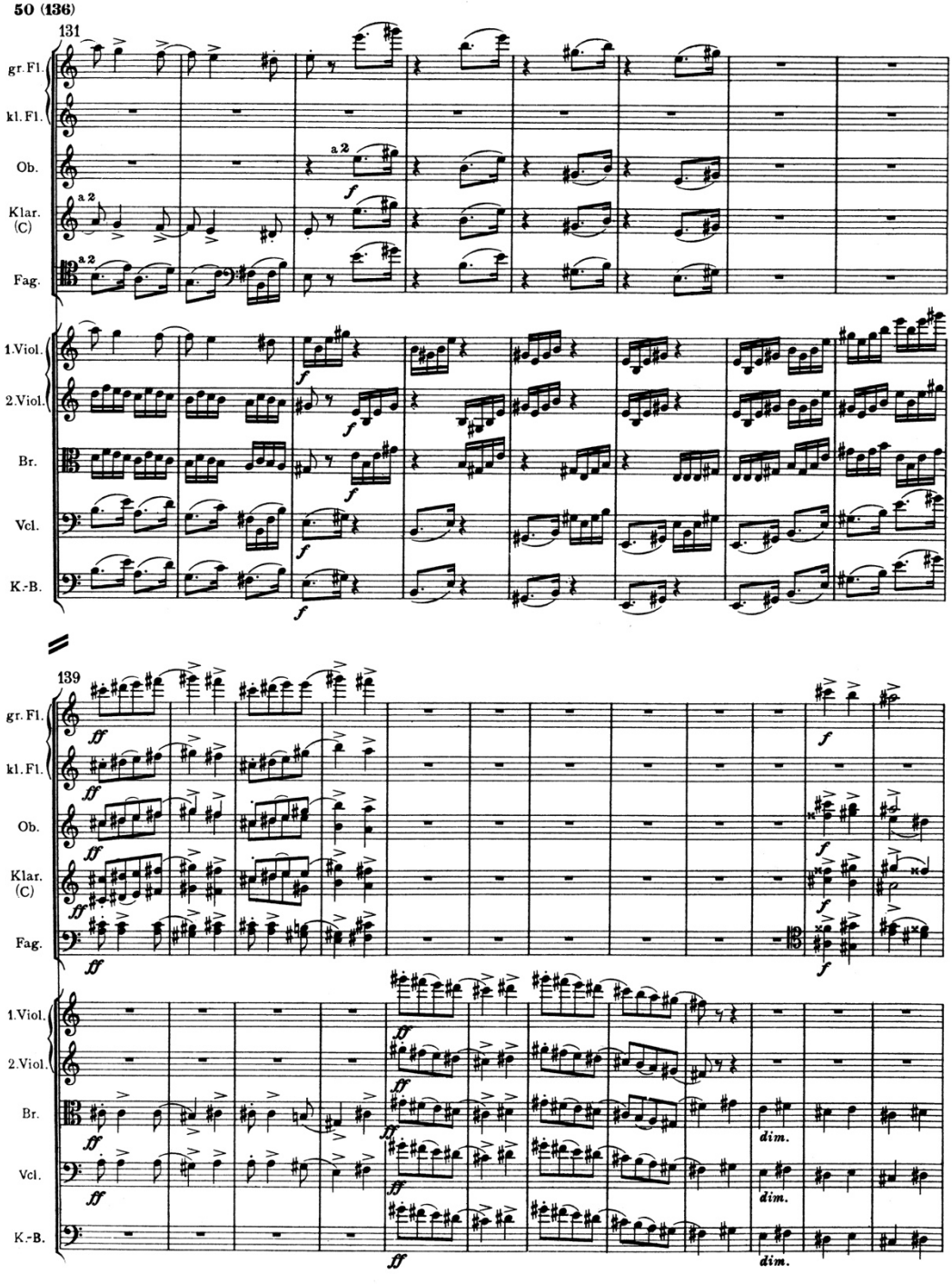

46 (132)
58
C
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trgl.
1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
plegg.
p
pizz.
arco
C
67
dim.
pp
J. B. 4

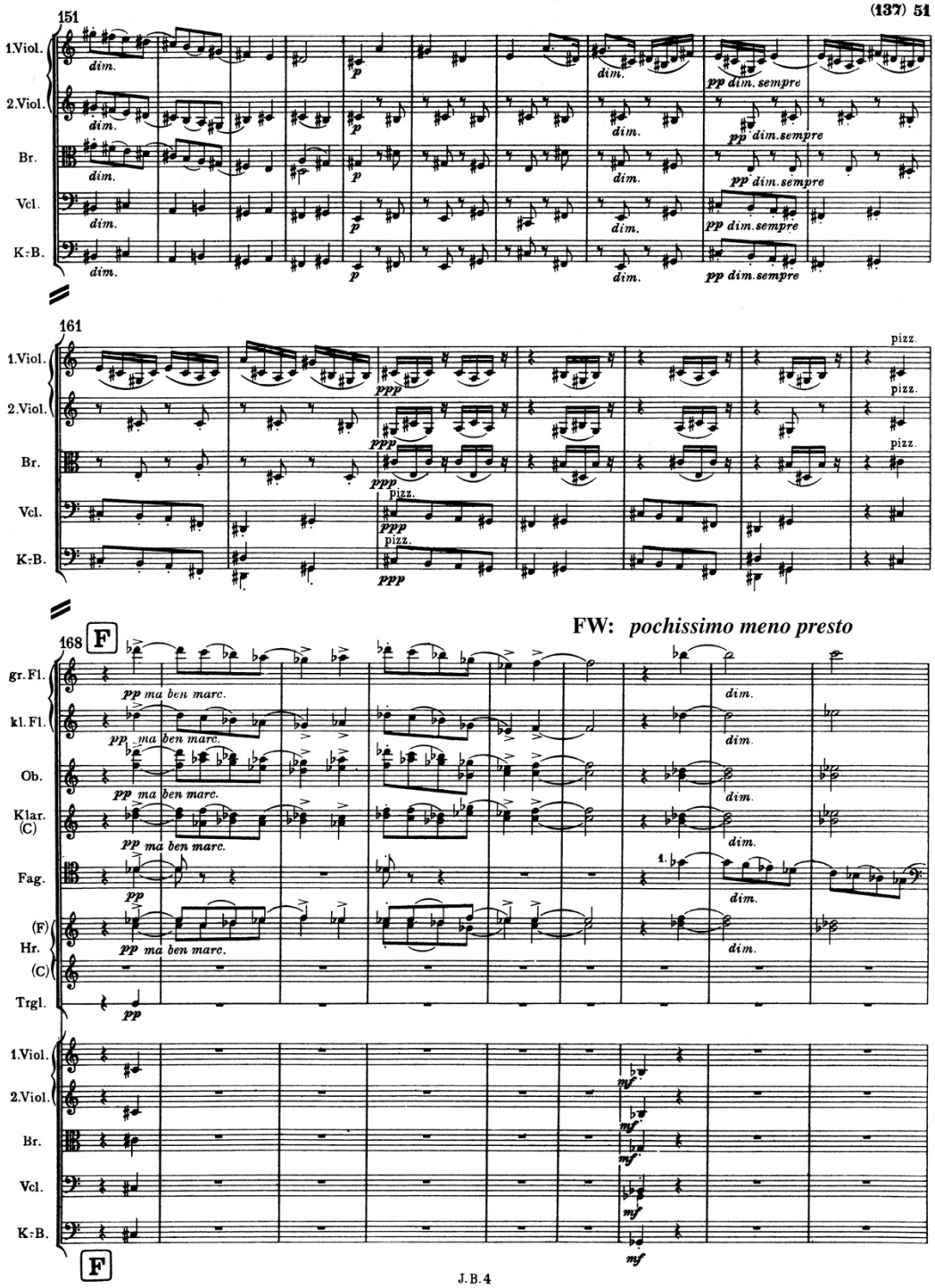

D
80
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(F) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pizz.
arco
p cresc.
cresc.
ff
ffz
p
D

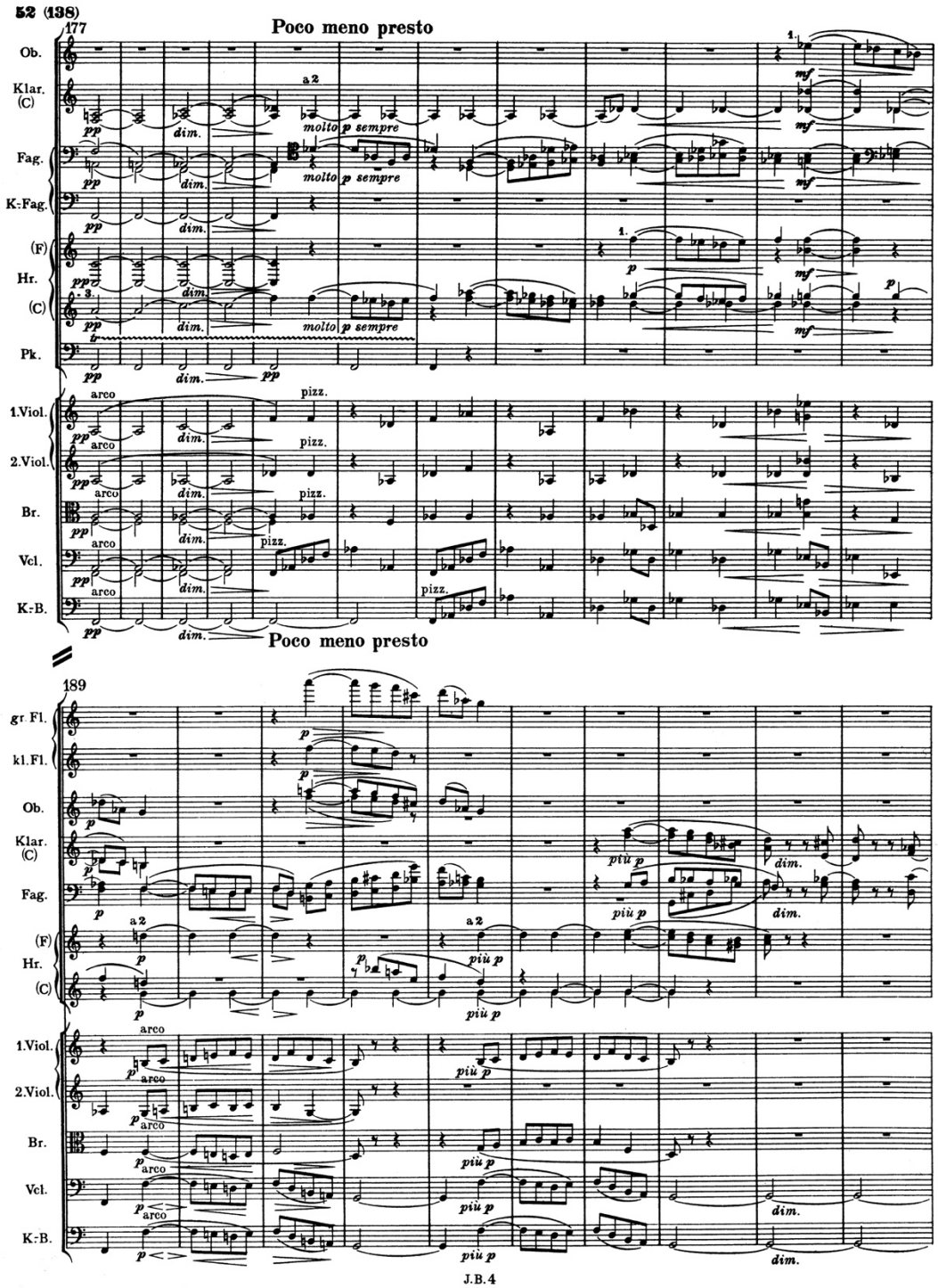
J. B. 4

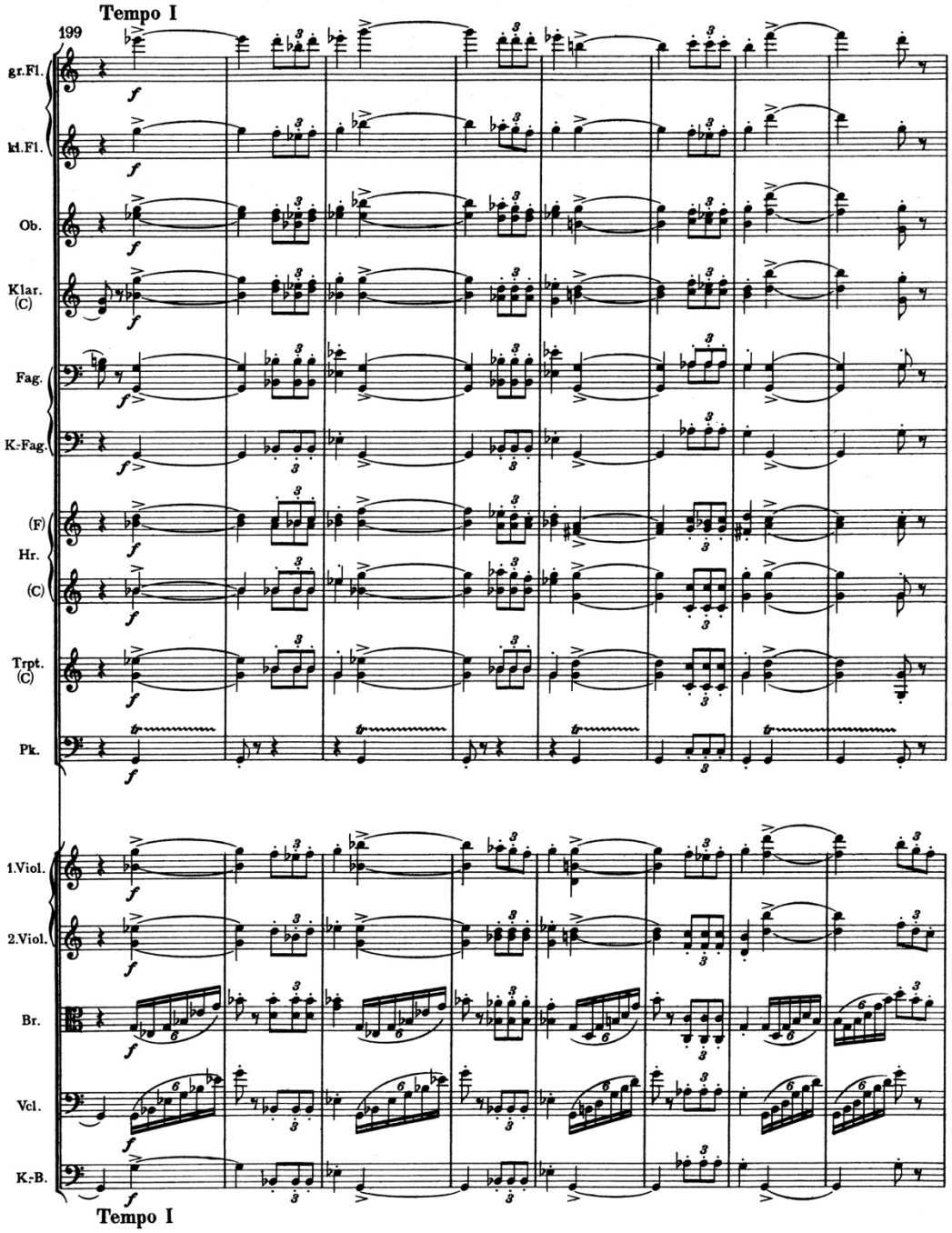

97
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
p
f
ff sempre
fff

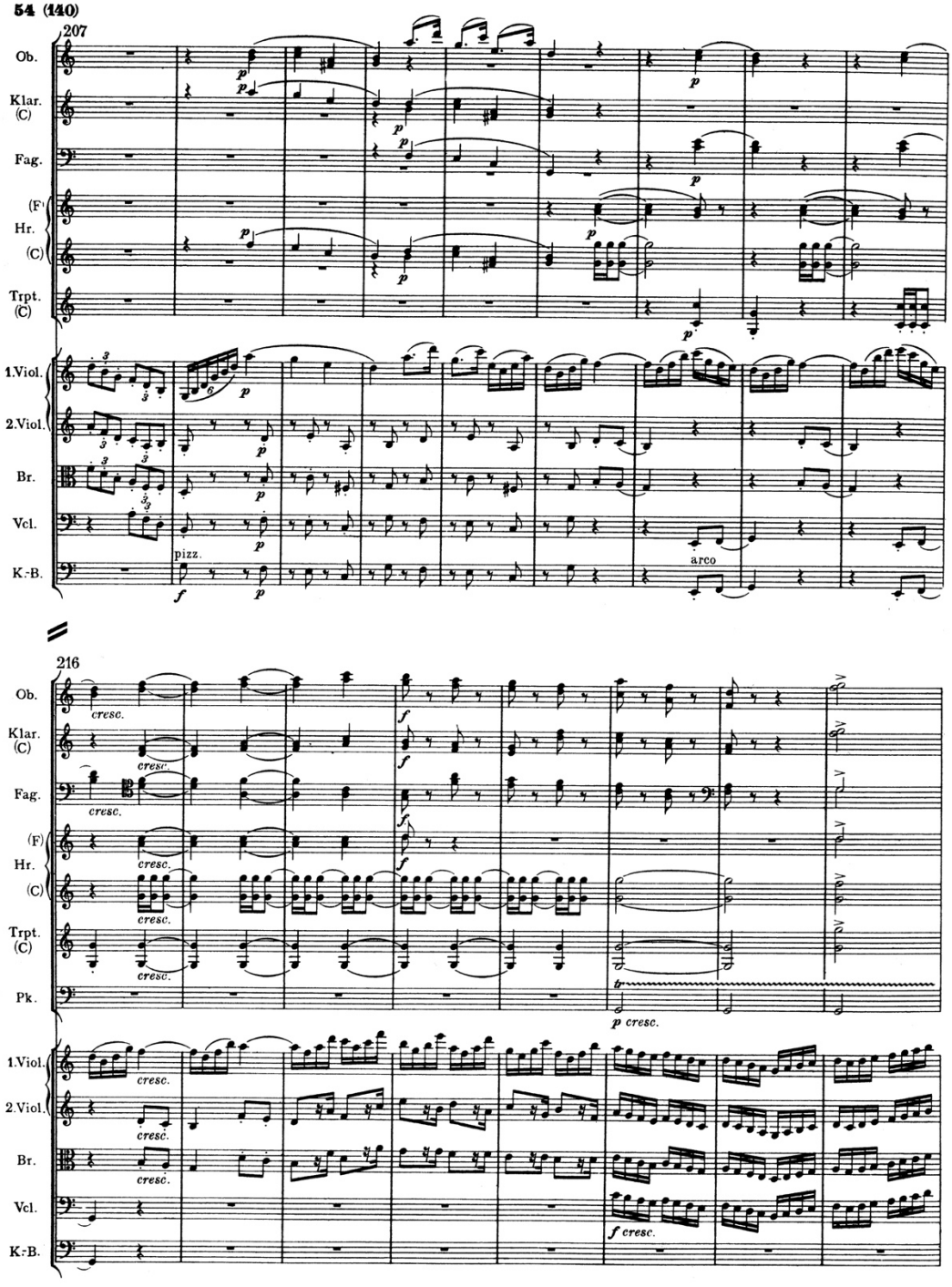

114
E
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
pizz.
123
arco


50 (136)
131
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
1. Viol.
2. Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f
139
ff
dim.

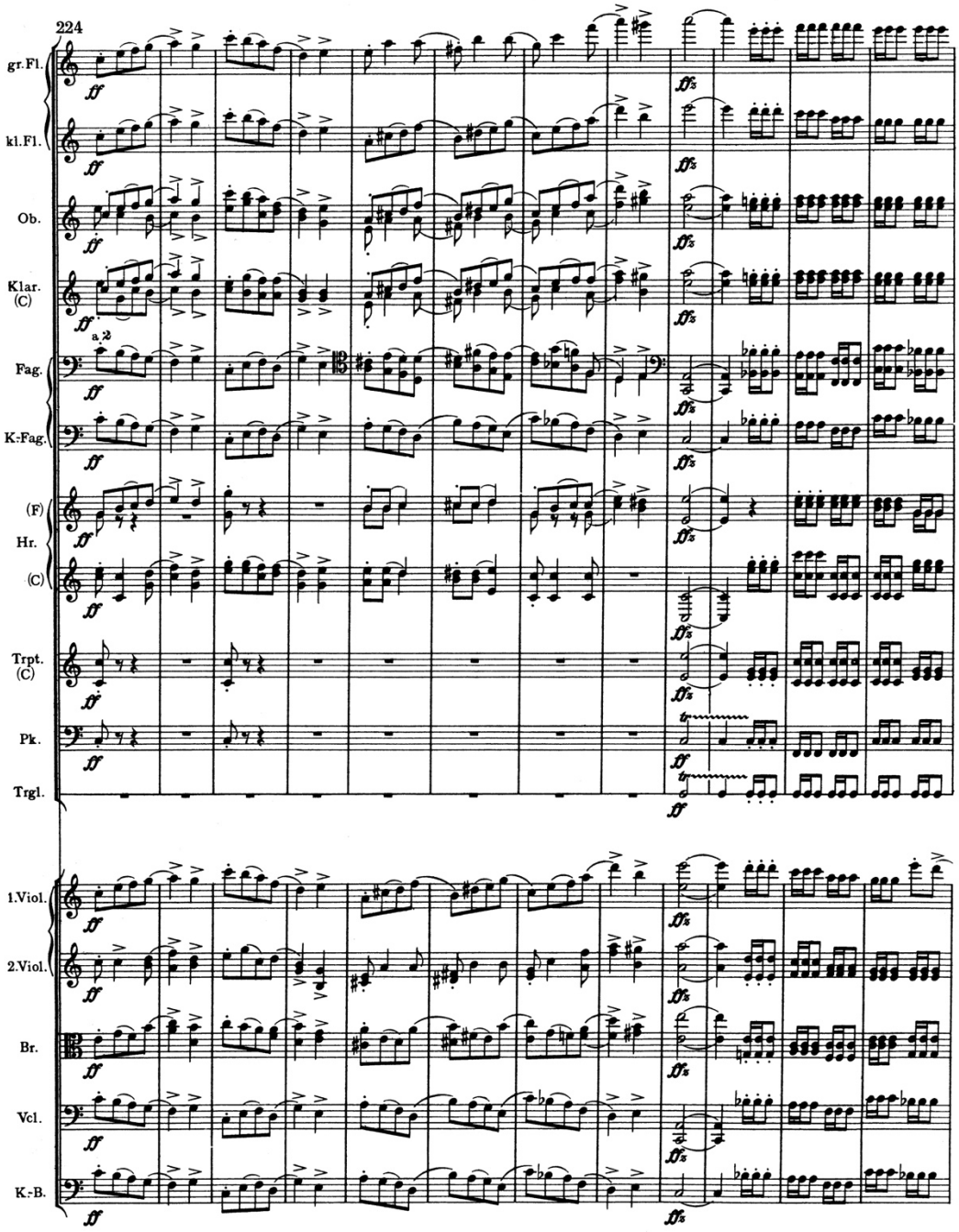

151
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dim.
p
pp dim. sempre
161
ppp
pizz.
168
F
FW: pochissimo meno presto
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trgl.
pp ma ben marc.
mf

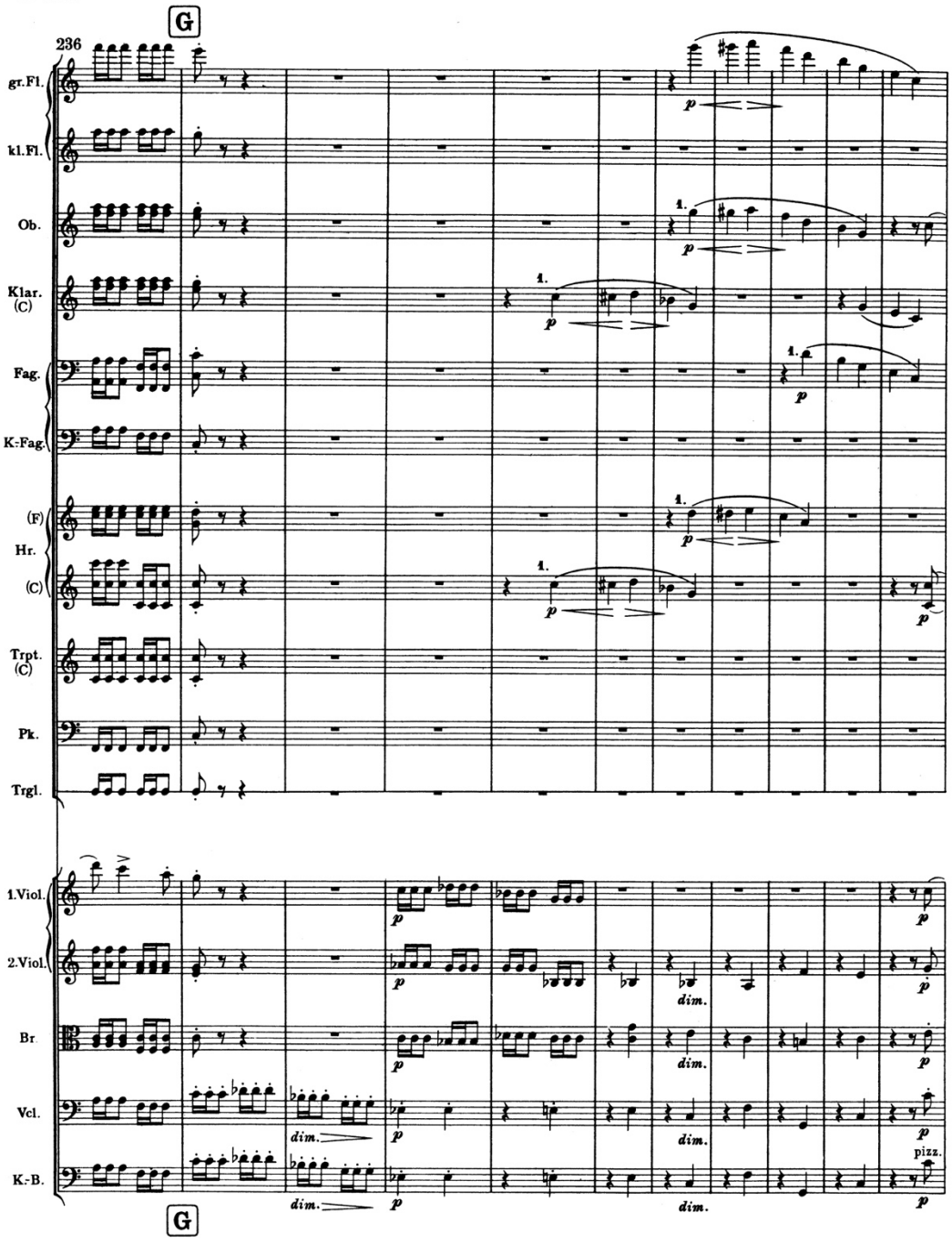

52 (138)
177
Poco meno presto
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
molto p sempre
dim.
pizz.
arco
Poco meno presto
189
gr. Fl.
kl. Fl.
più p

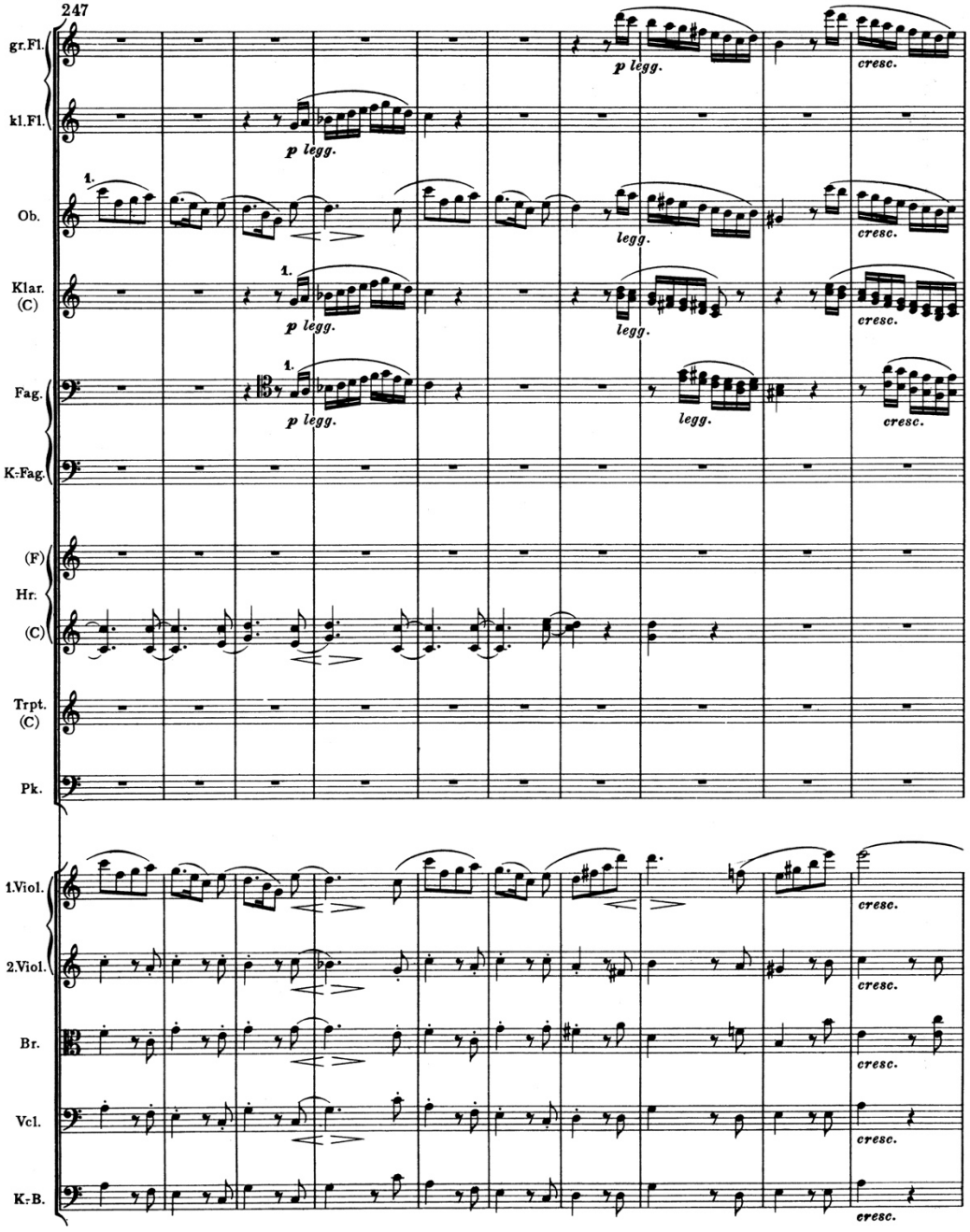

Tempo I
199
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
Tempo I

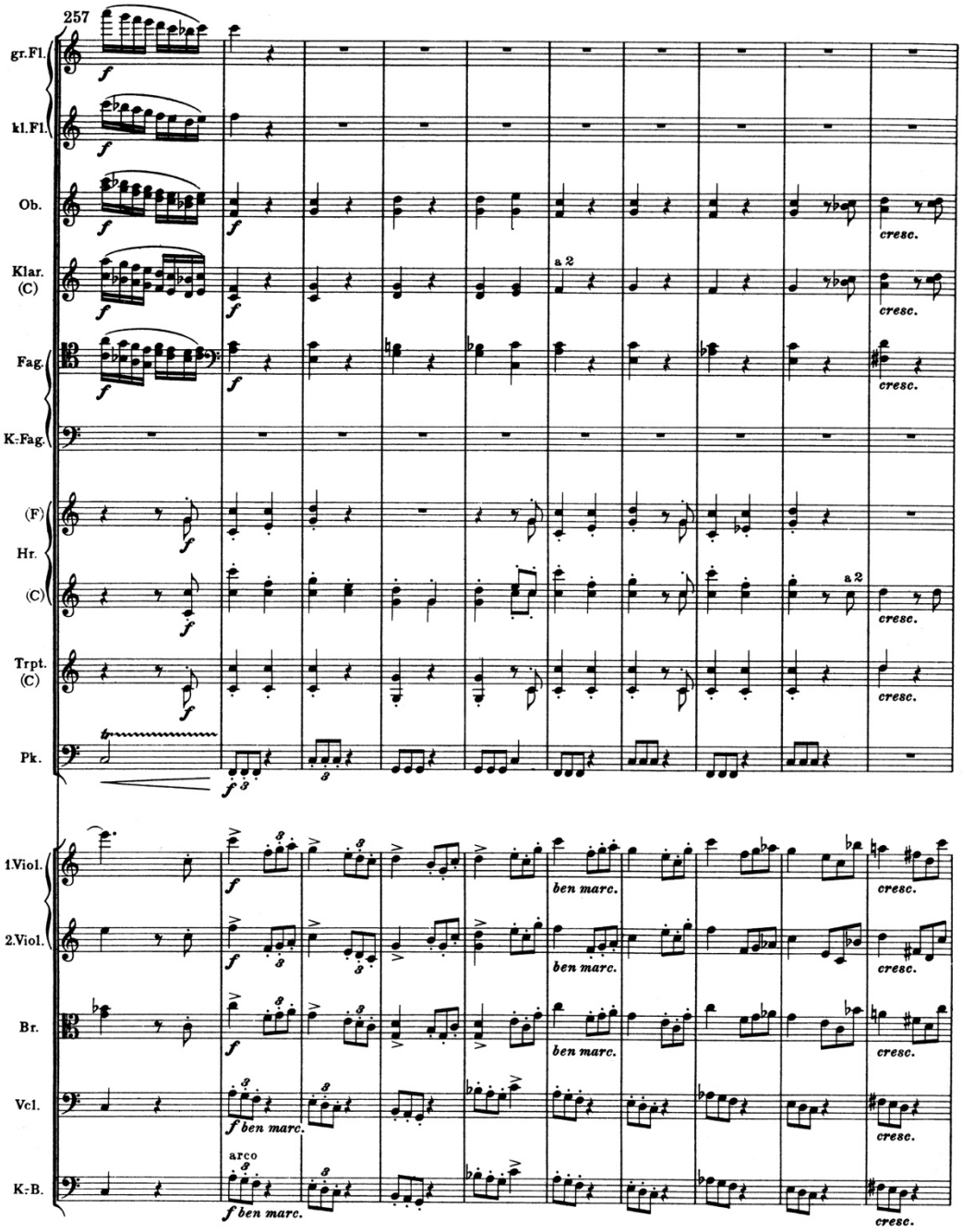

54 (140)
207
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
pizz.
arco
216
Pk.
cresc.
p cresc.
f cresc.

J. B. 4

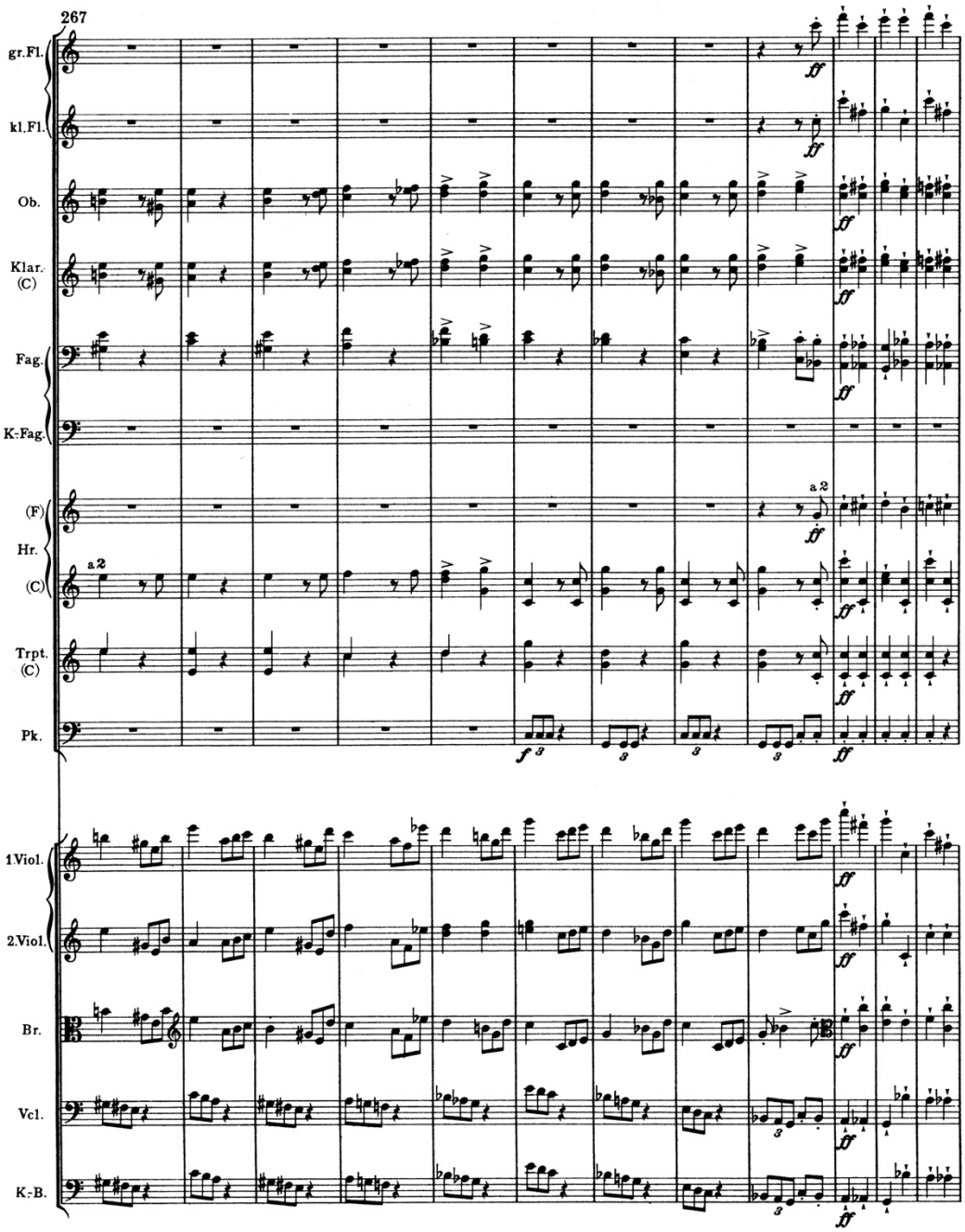

224
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
a 2
Fag.
K:Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.

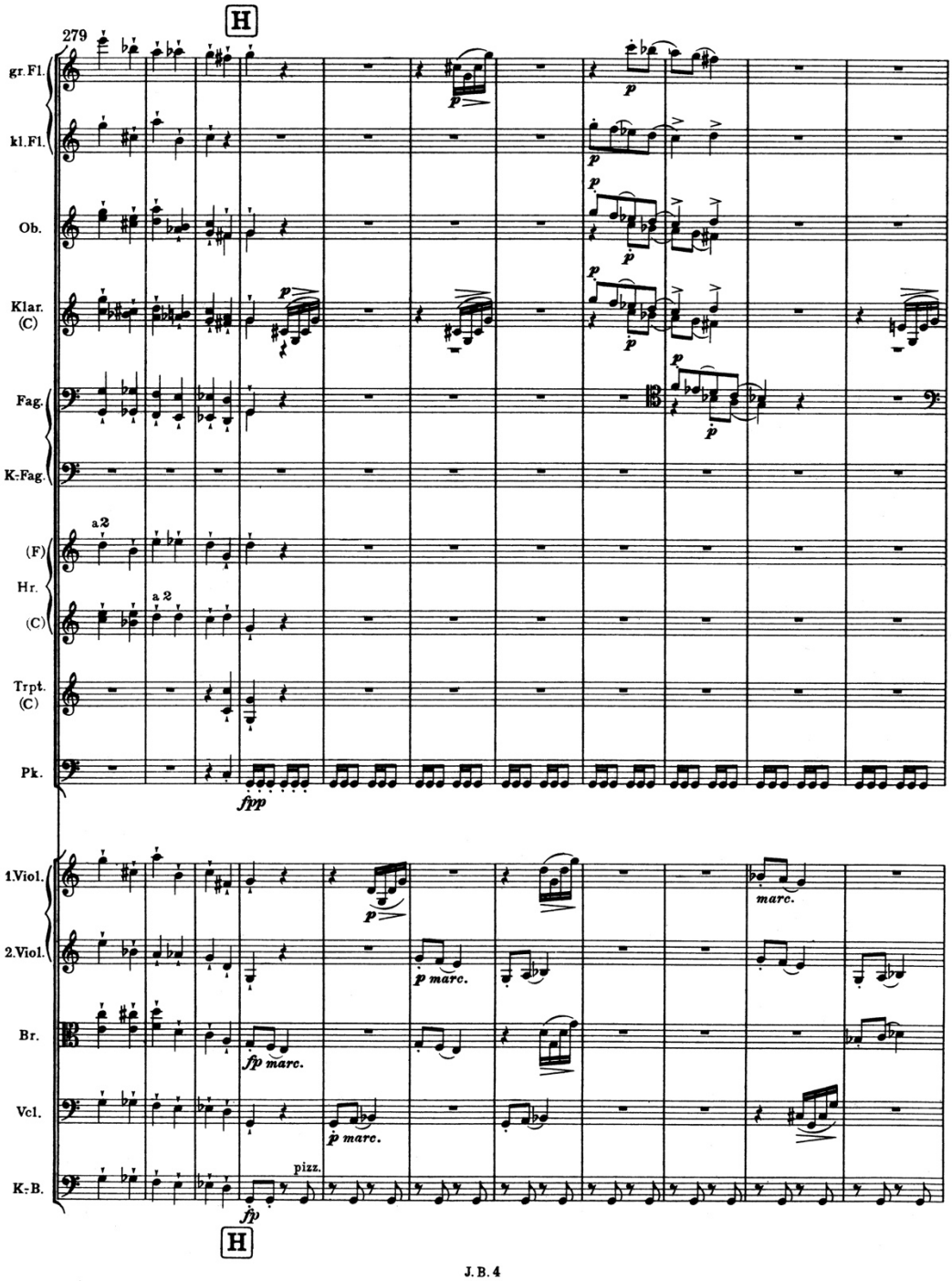

G
236
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p
dim.
pizz.
G

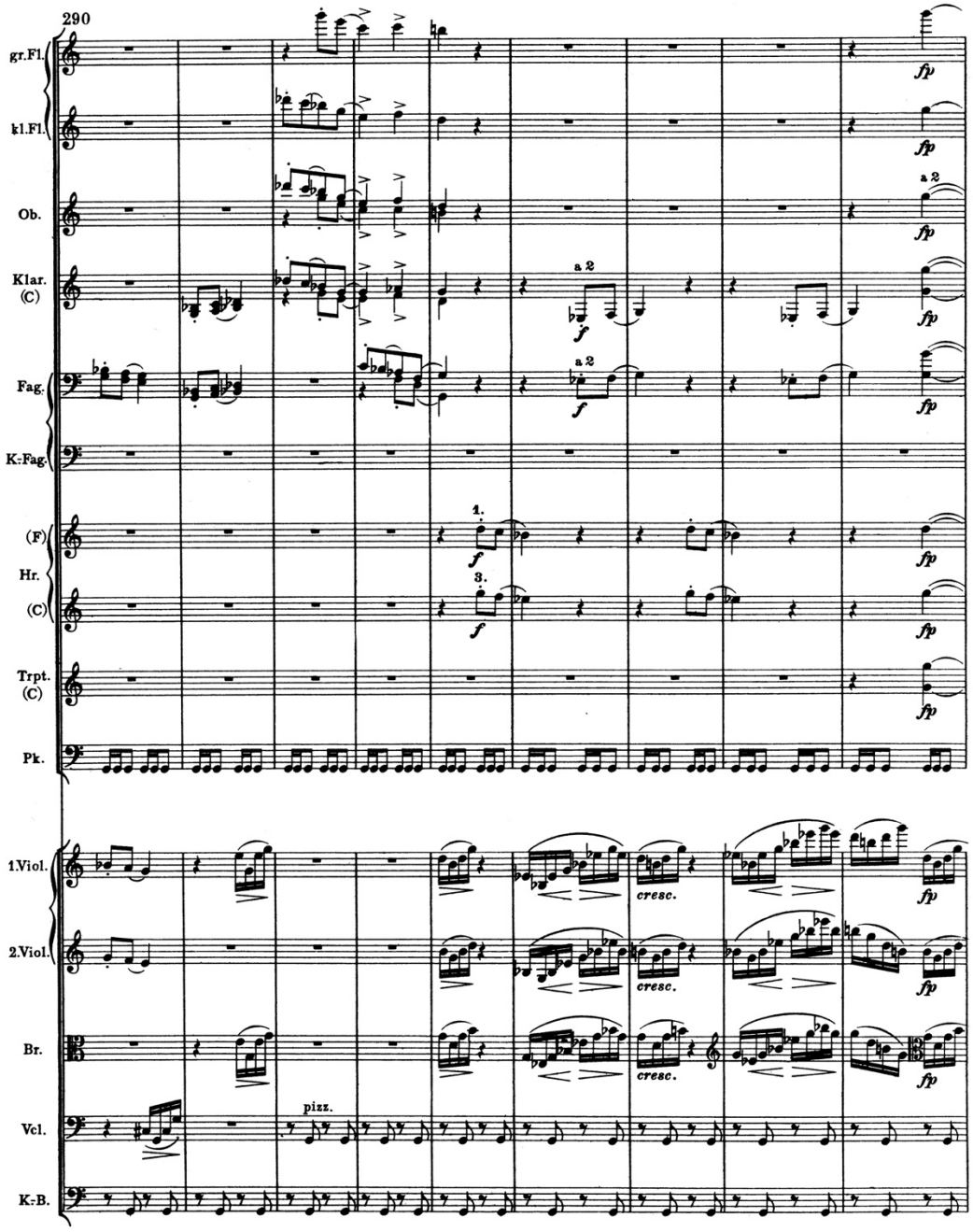

247
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
p legg.
legg.
cresc.

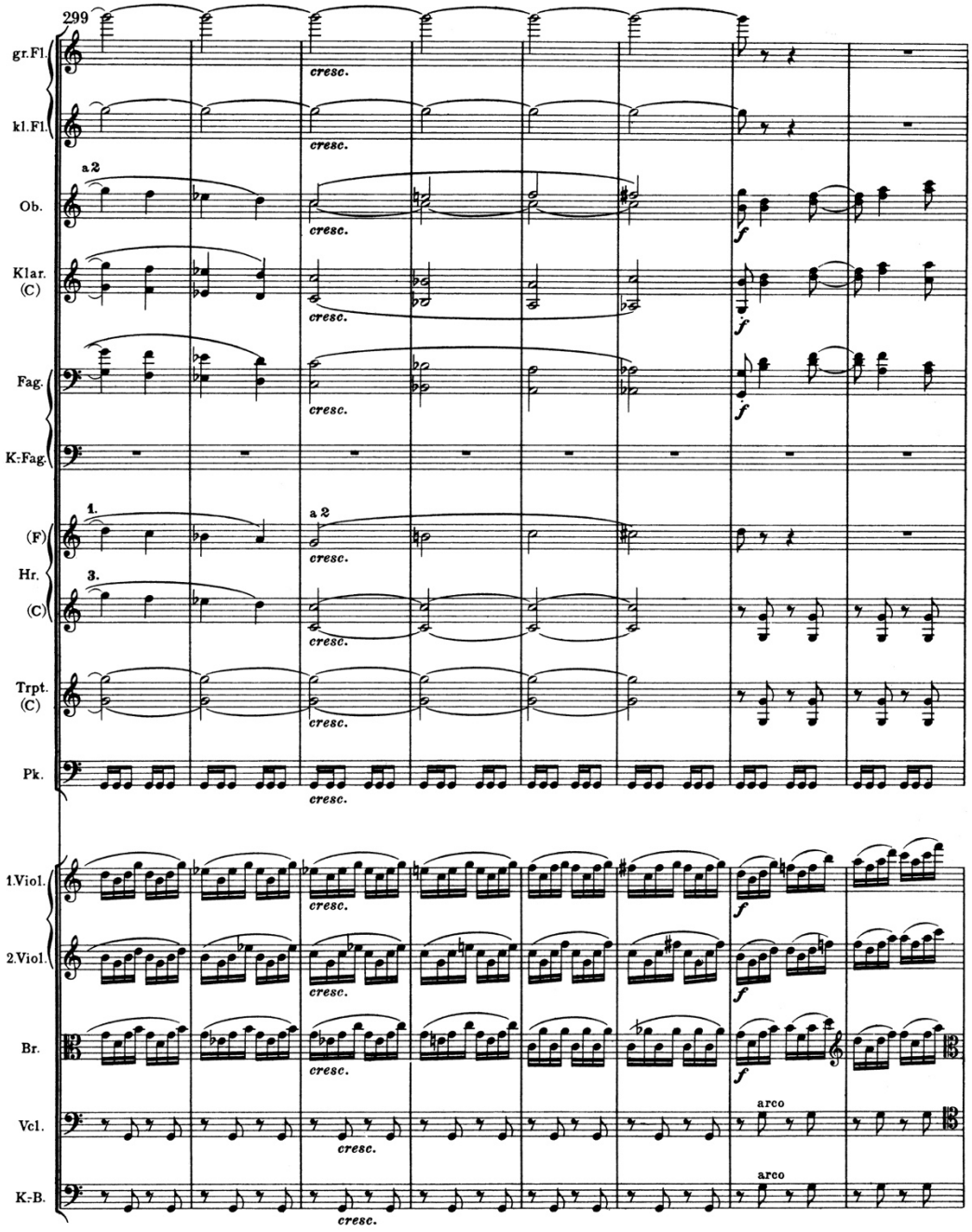

257
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
cresc.
ben marc.
f ben marc.
arco

J. B. 4


267
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
ff
f

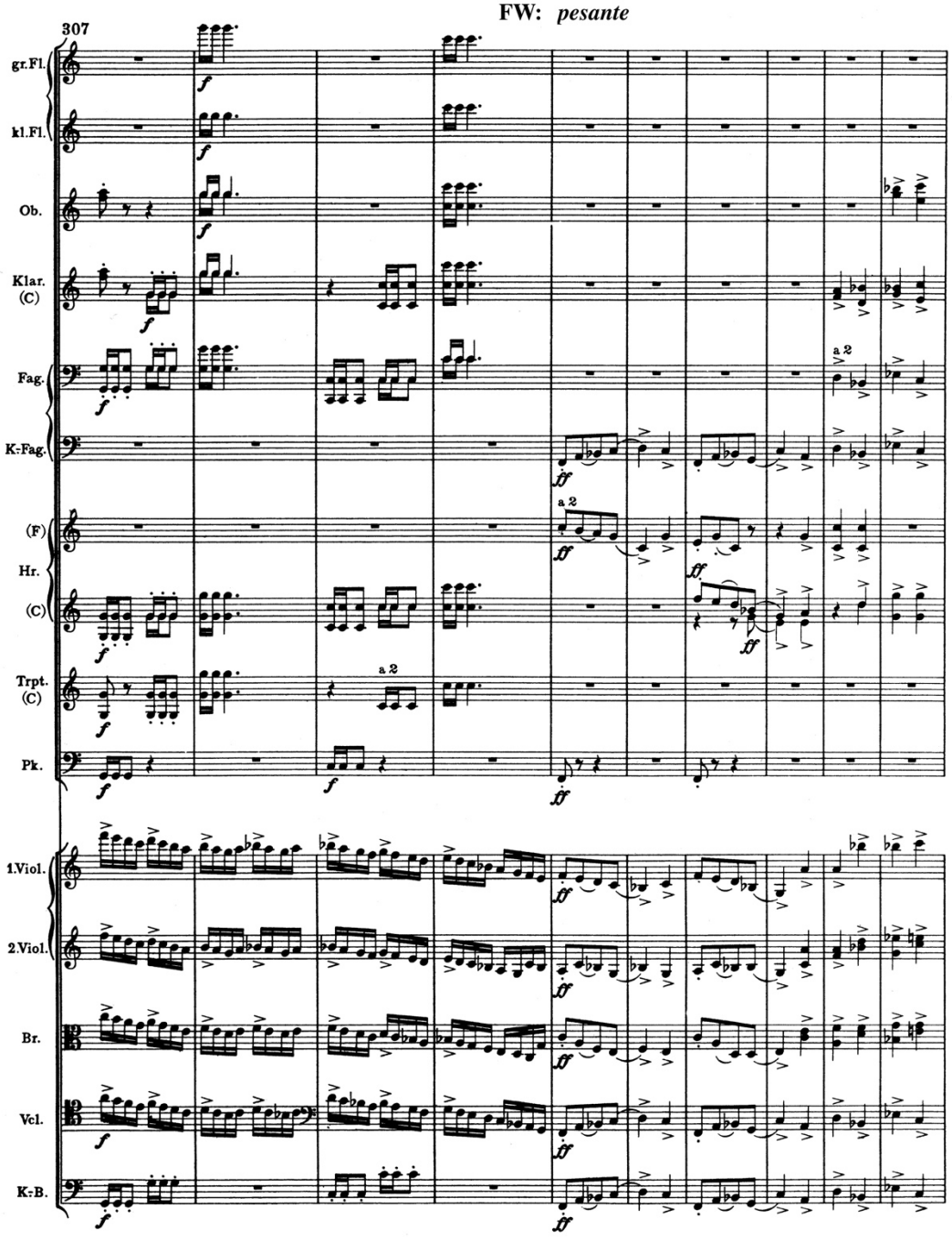

H
279
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K-Fag.
a 2
(F)
Hr.
a 2
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
fpp
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
pizz.
fp
H


290
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
1.
3.
cresc.
pizz.


299
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
1.
3.
cresc.
f
arco

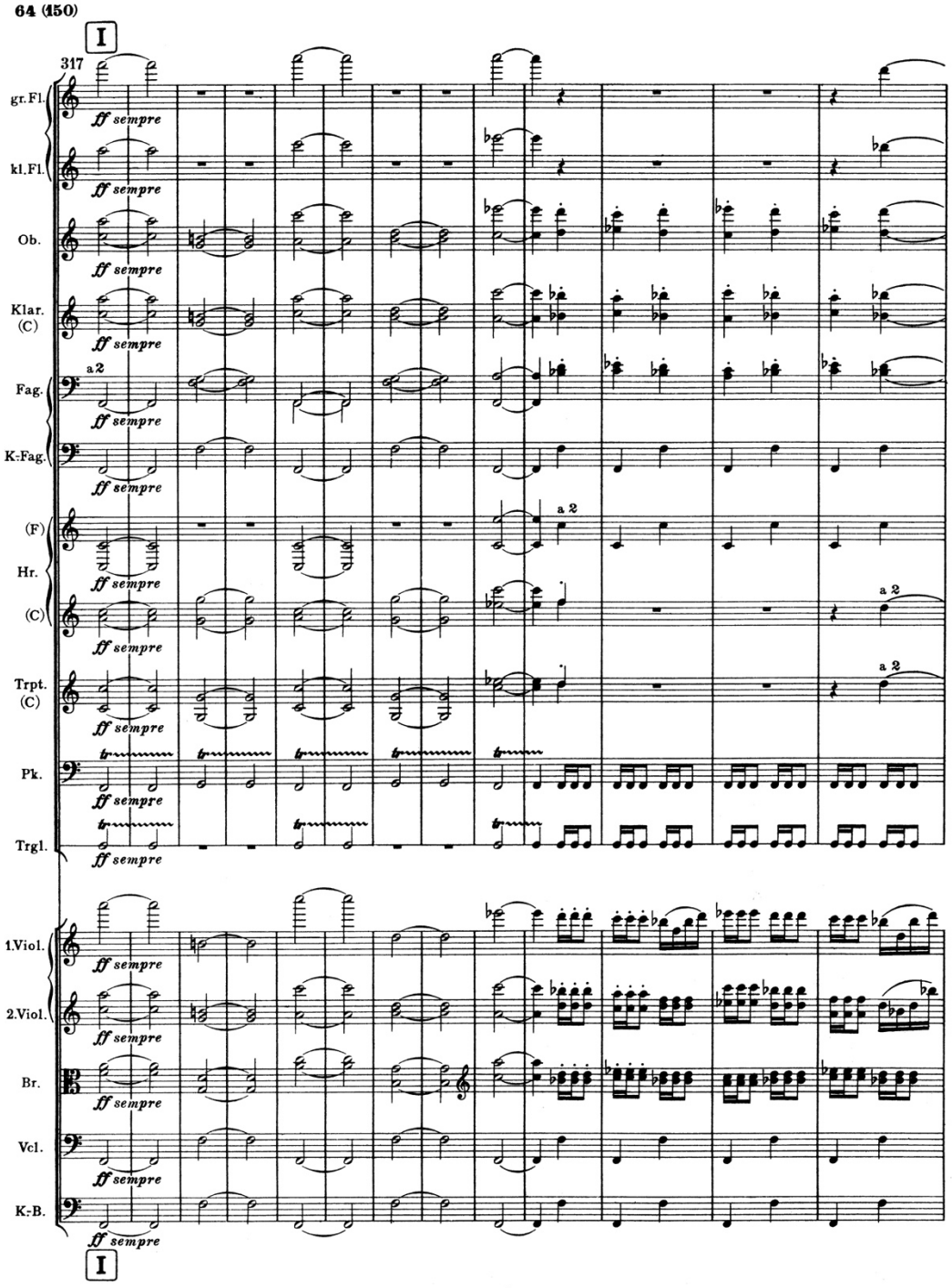
J. B. 4

FW: *pesante*

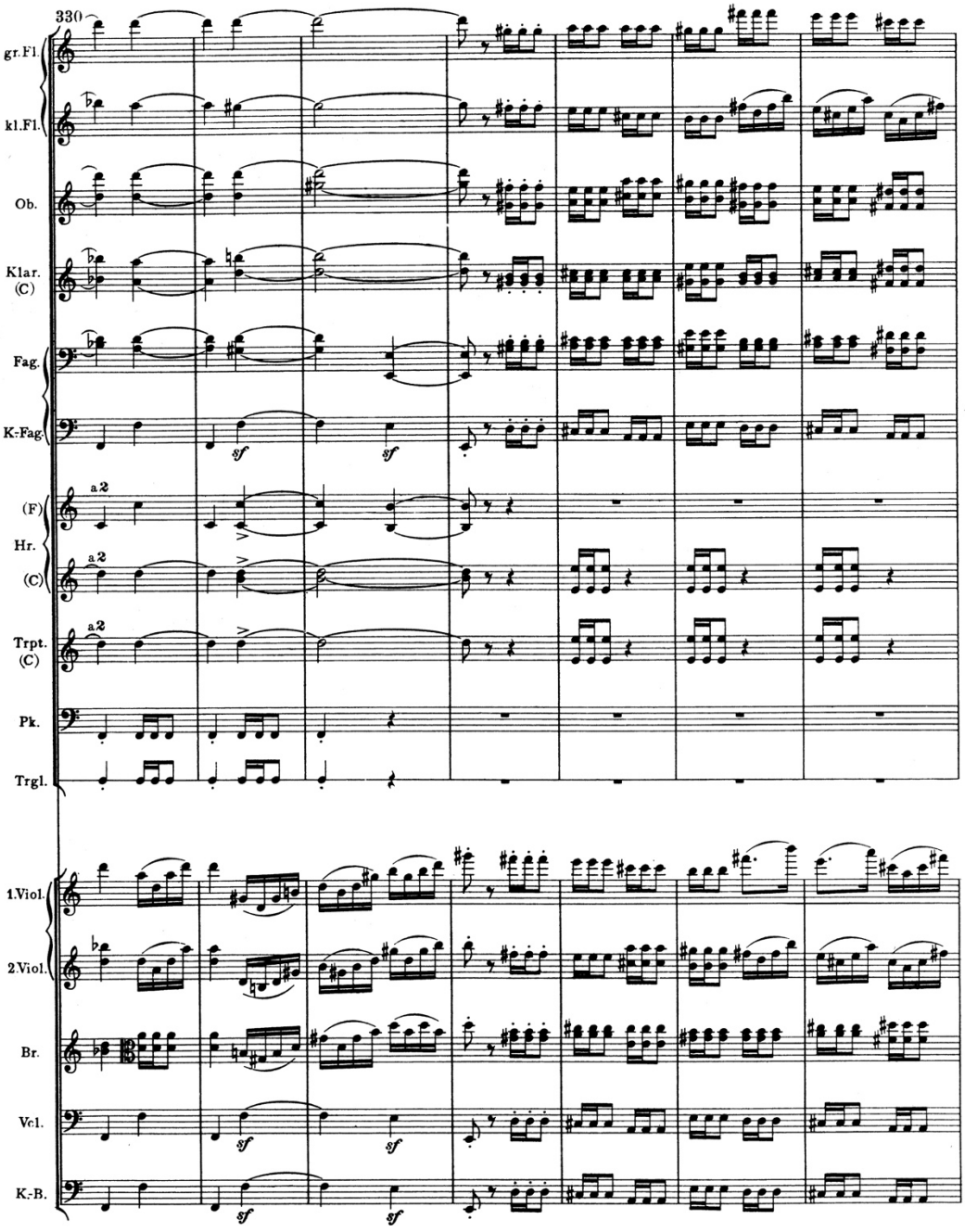

307
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
f
ff

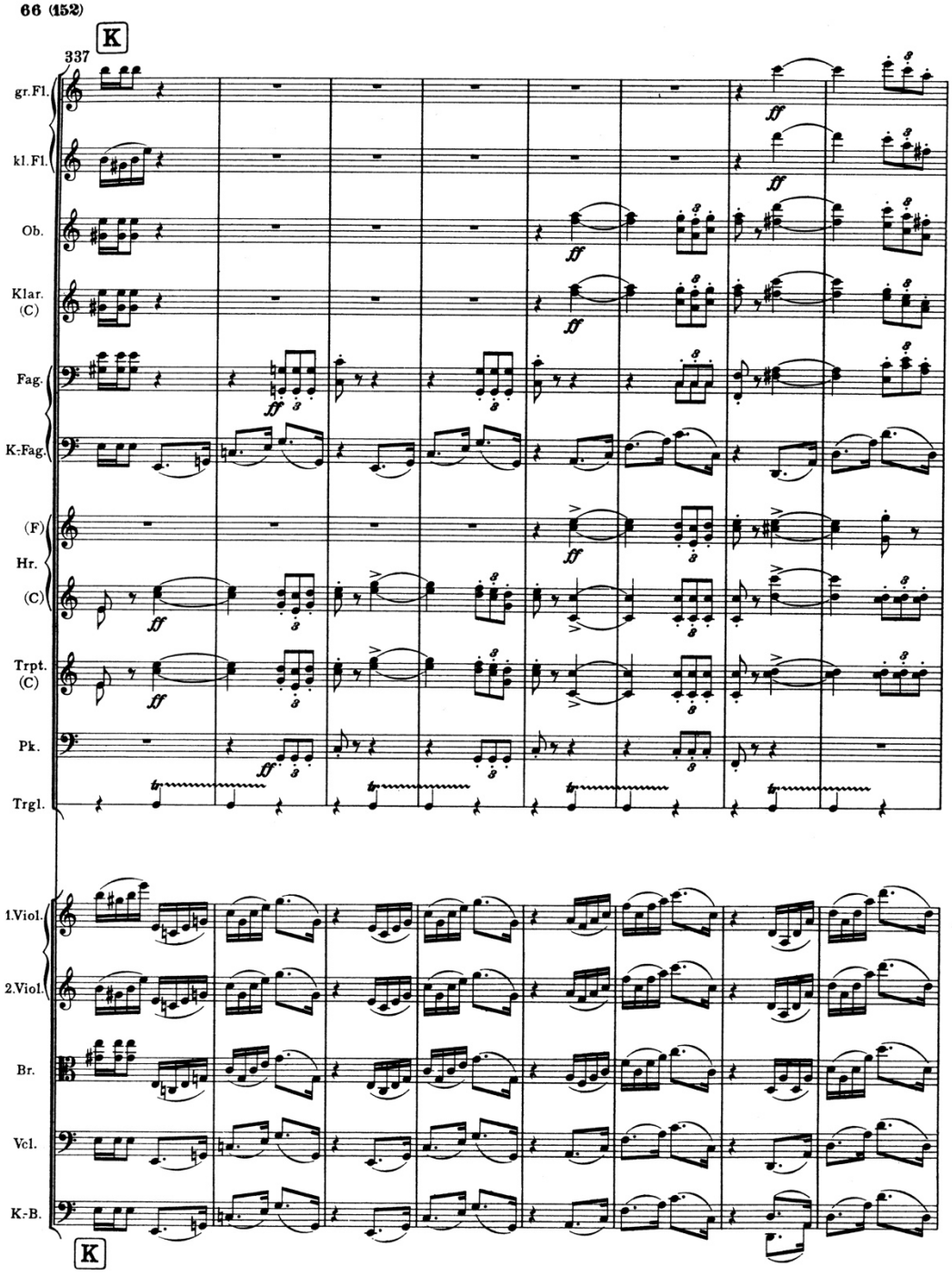
FW: *a tempo*

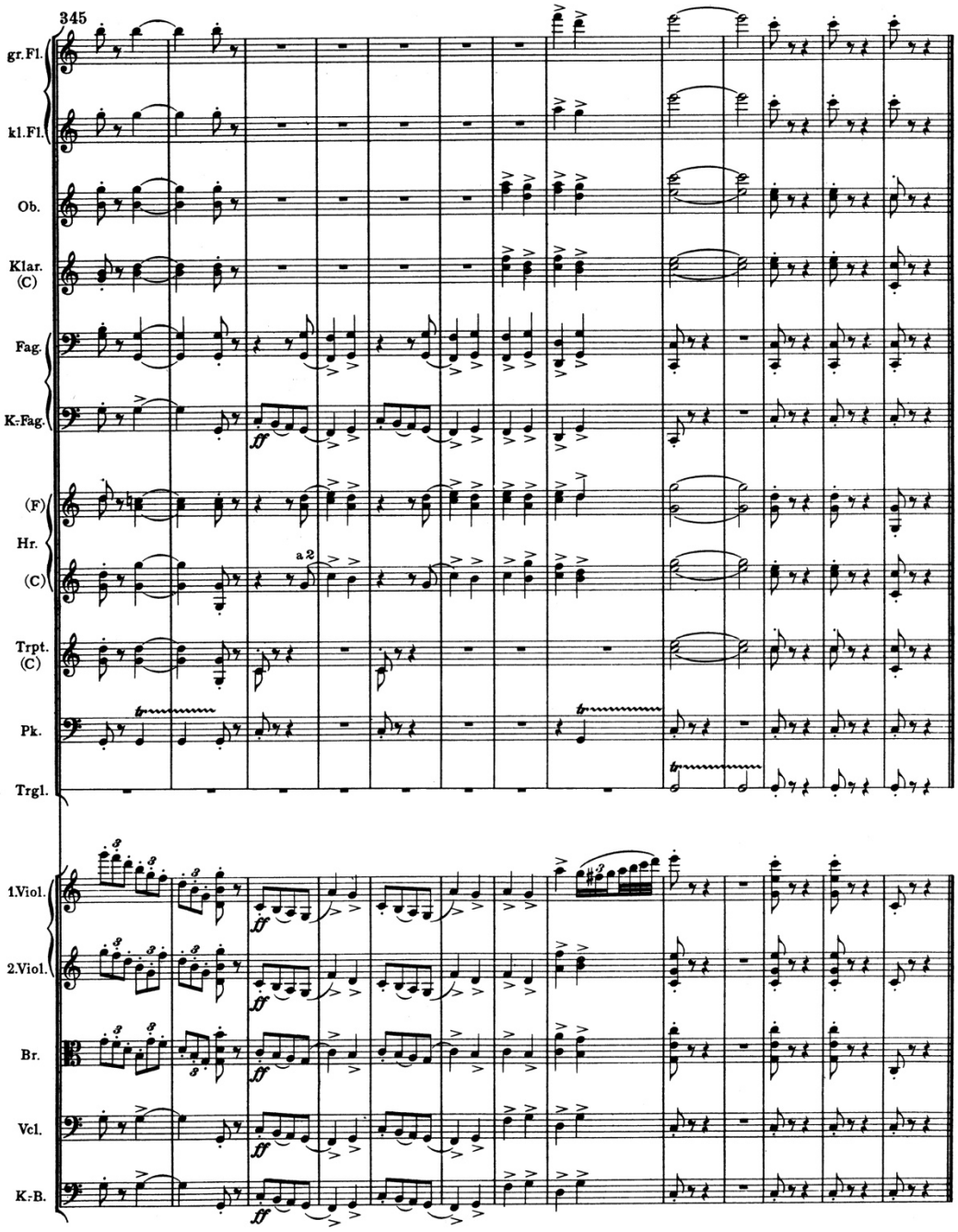
64 (150)

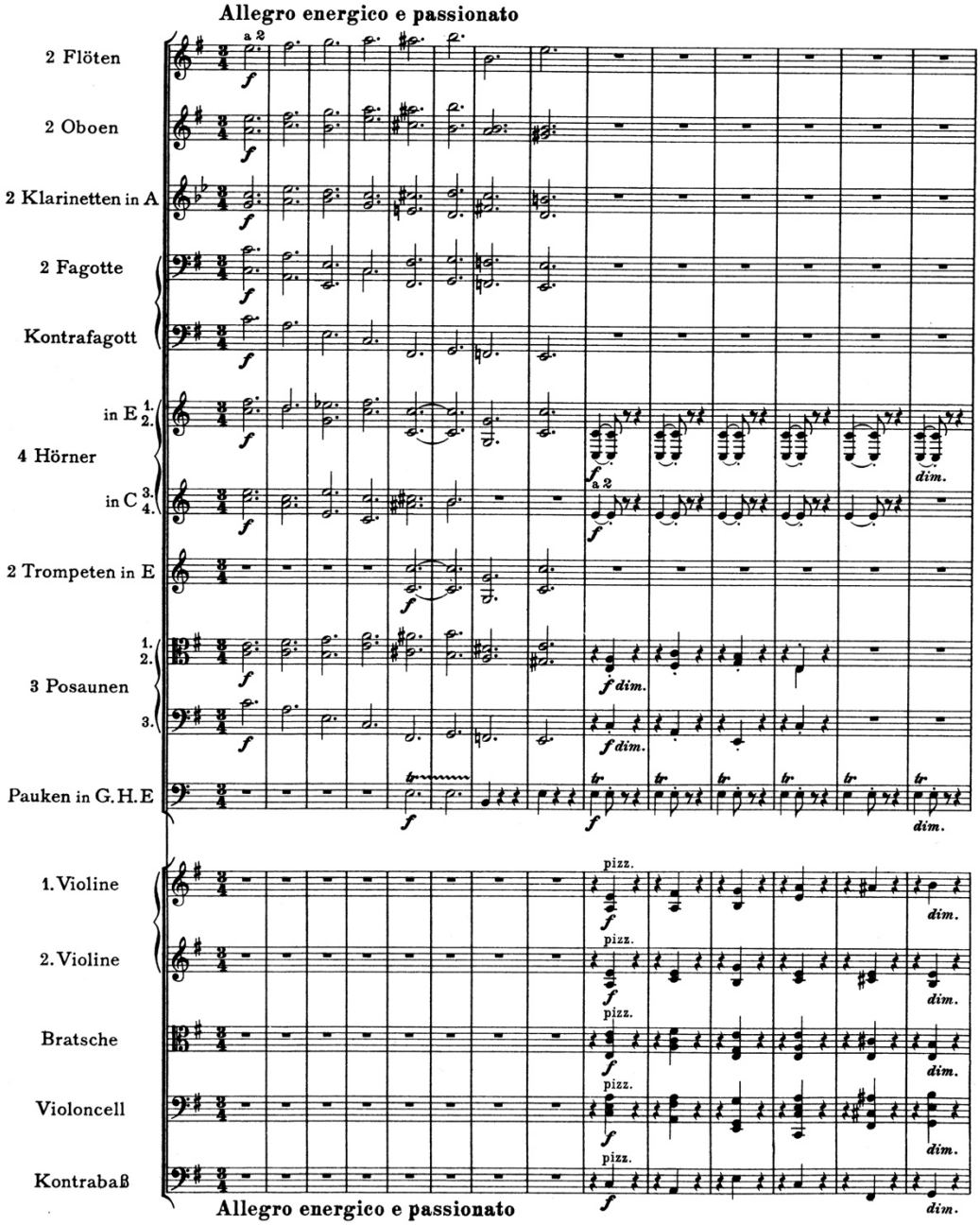


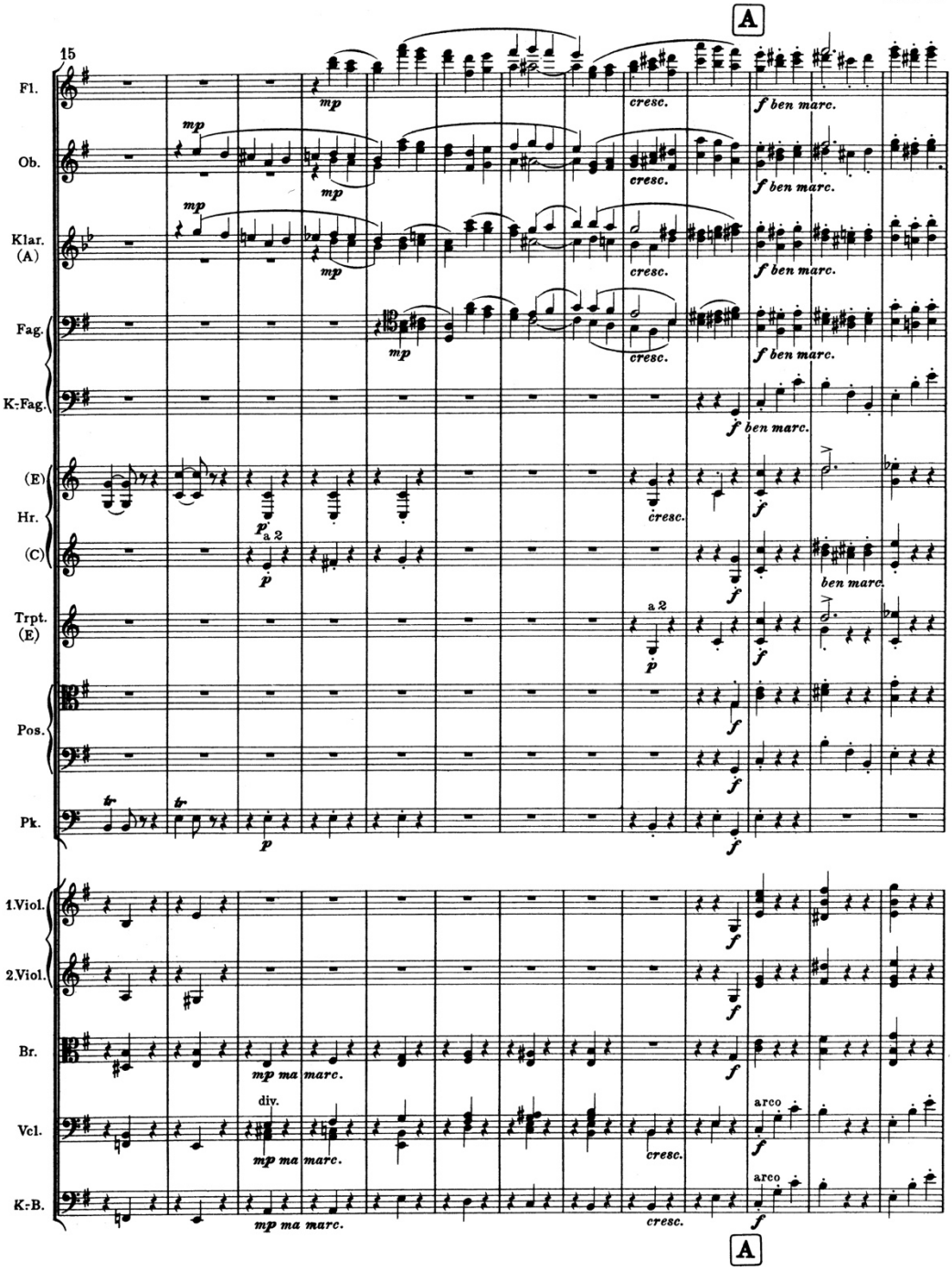
J. B. 4.

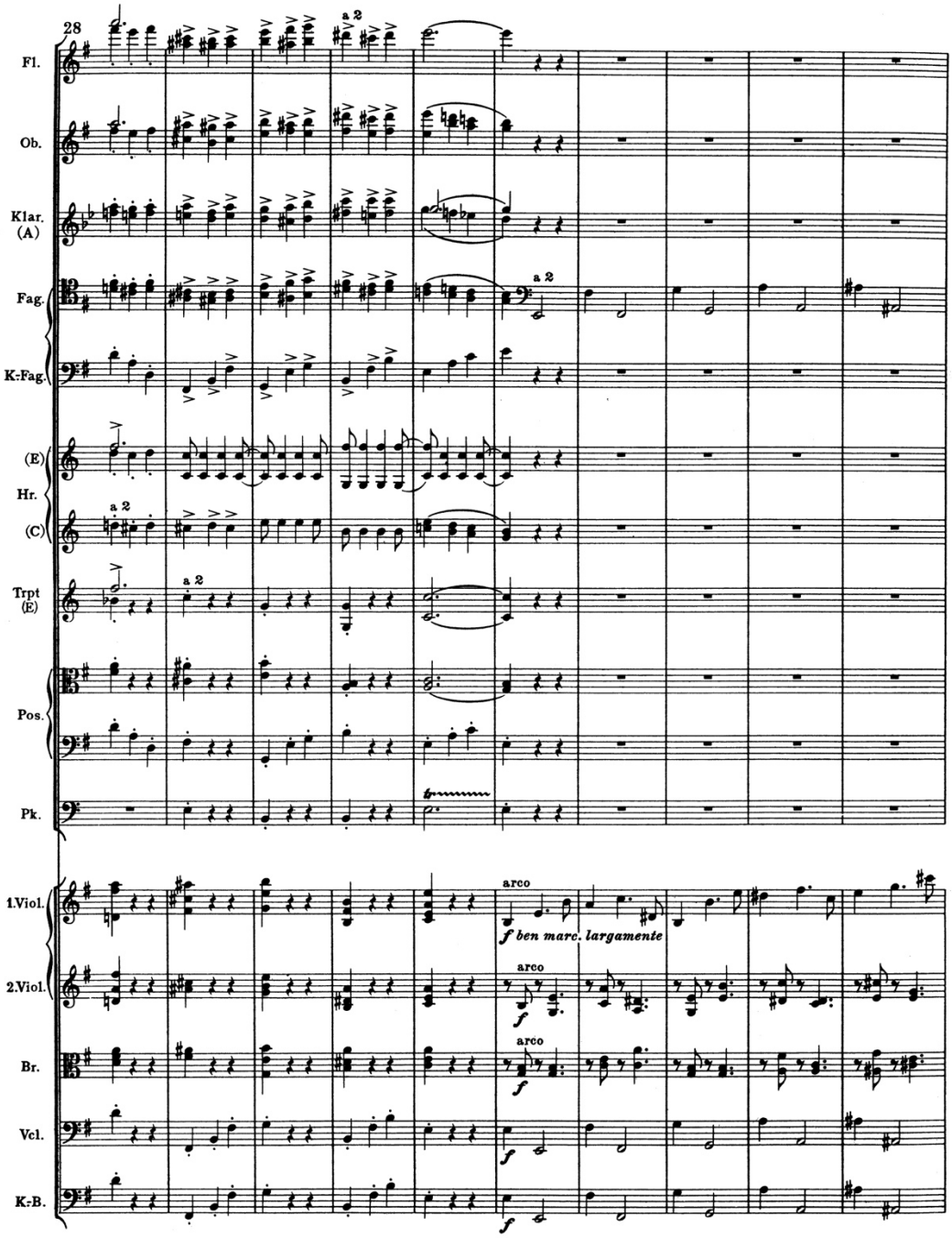

330
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(F) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a2
sf

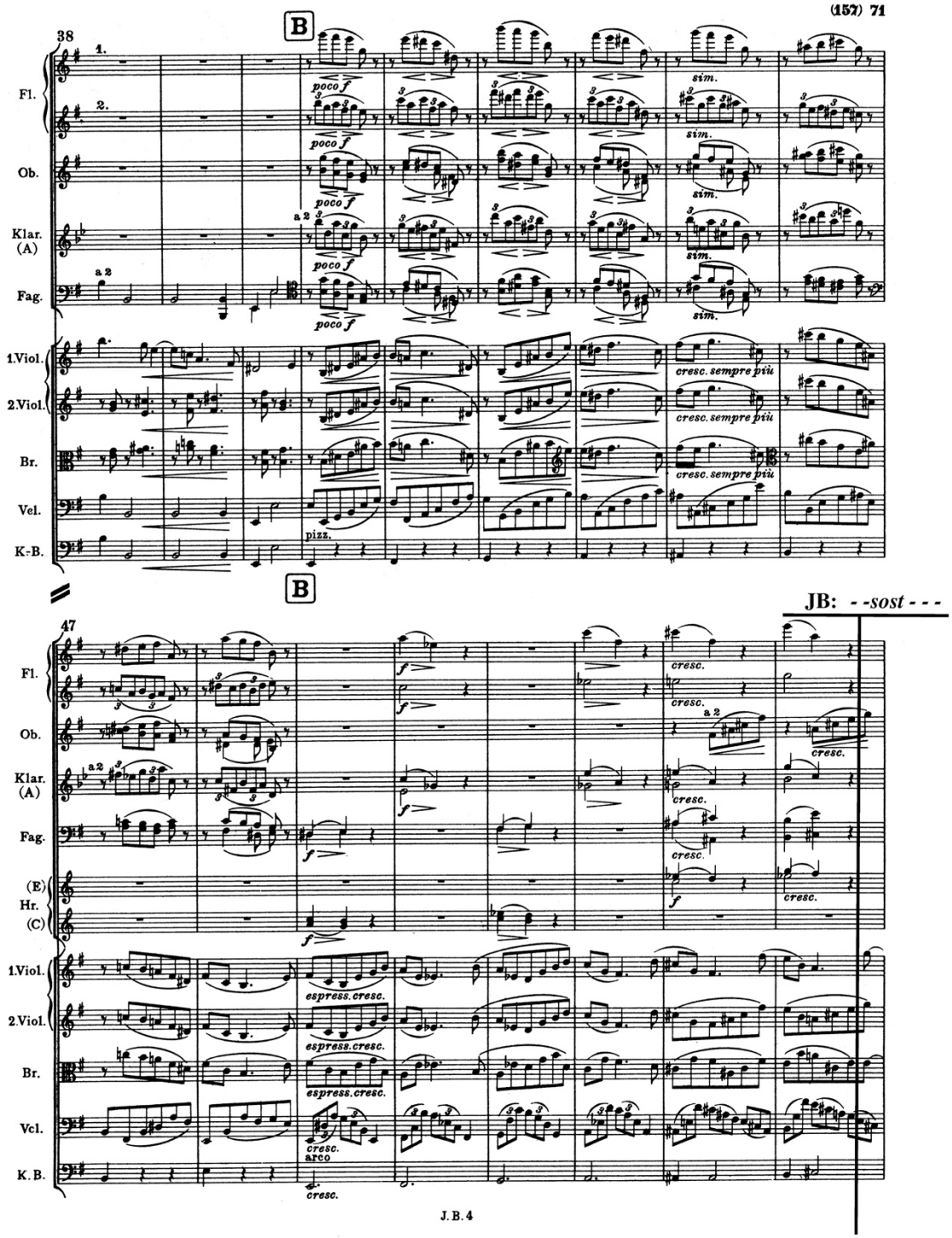

66 (152)
K
337
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
K
J. B. 4

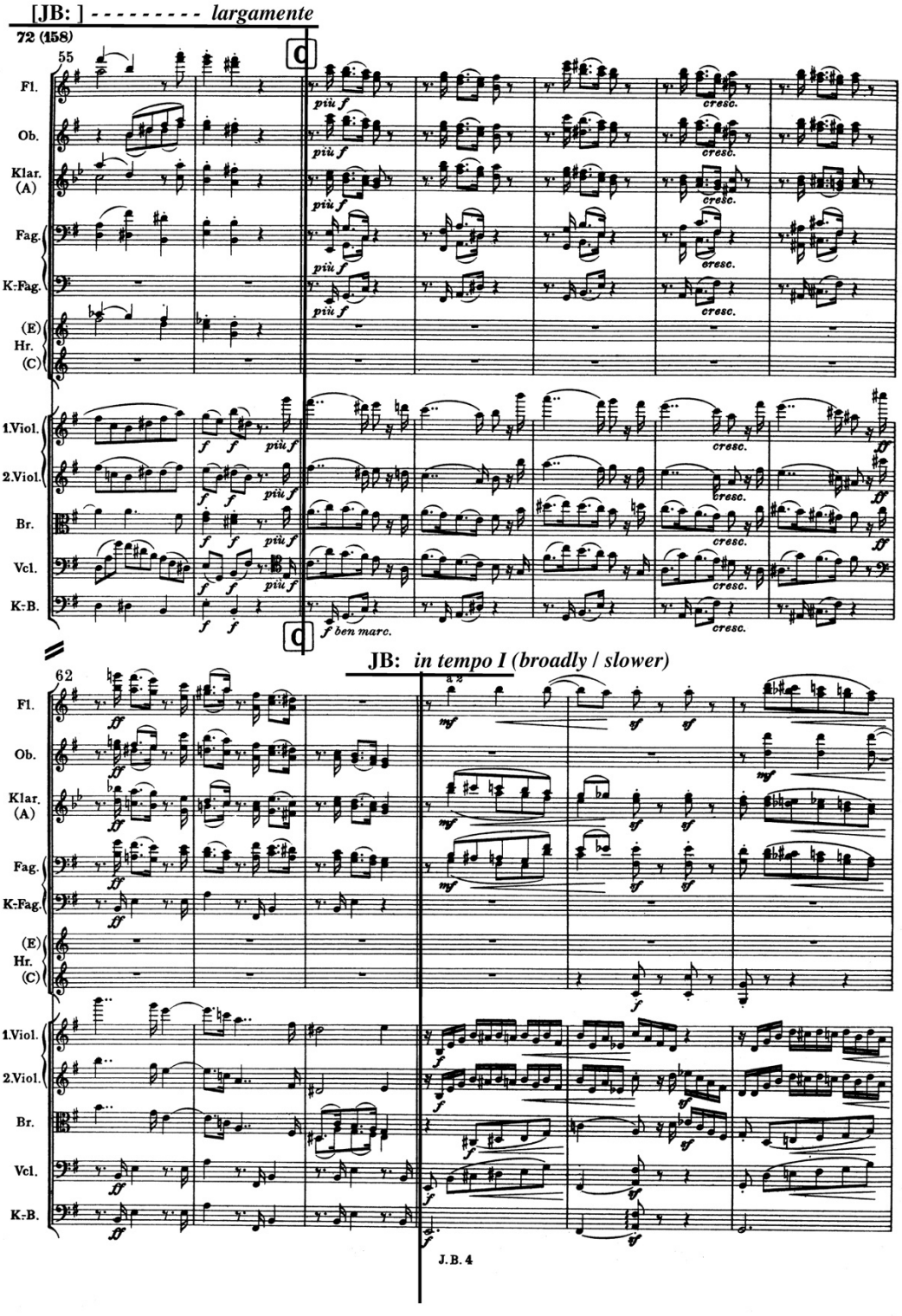

345
gr.Fl.
kl.Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (C)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(F)
Hr.
(C)
a 2
Trpt. (C)
Pk.
Trgl.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
ff

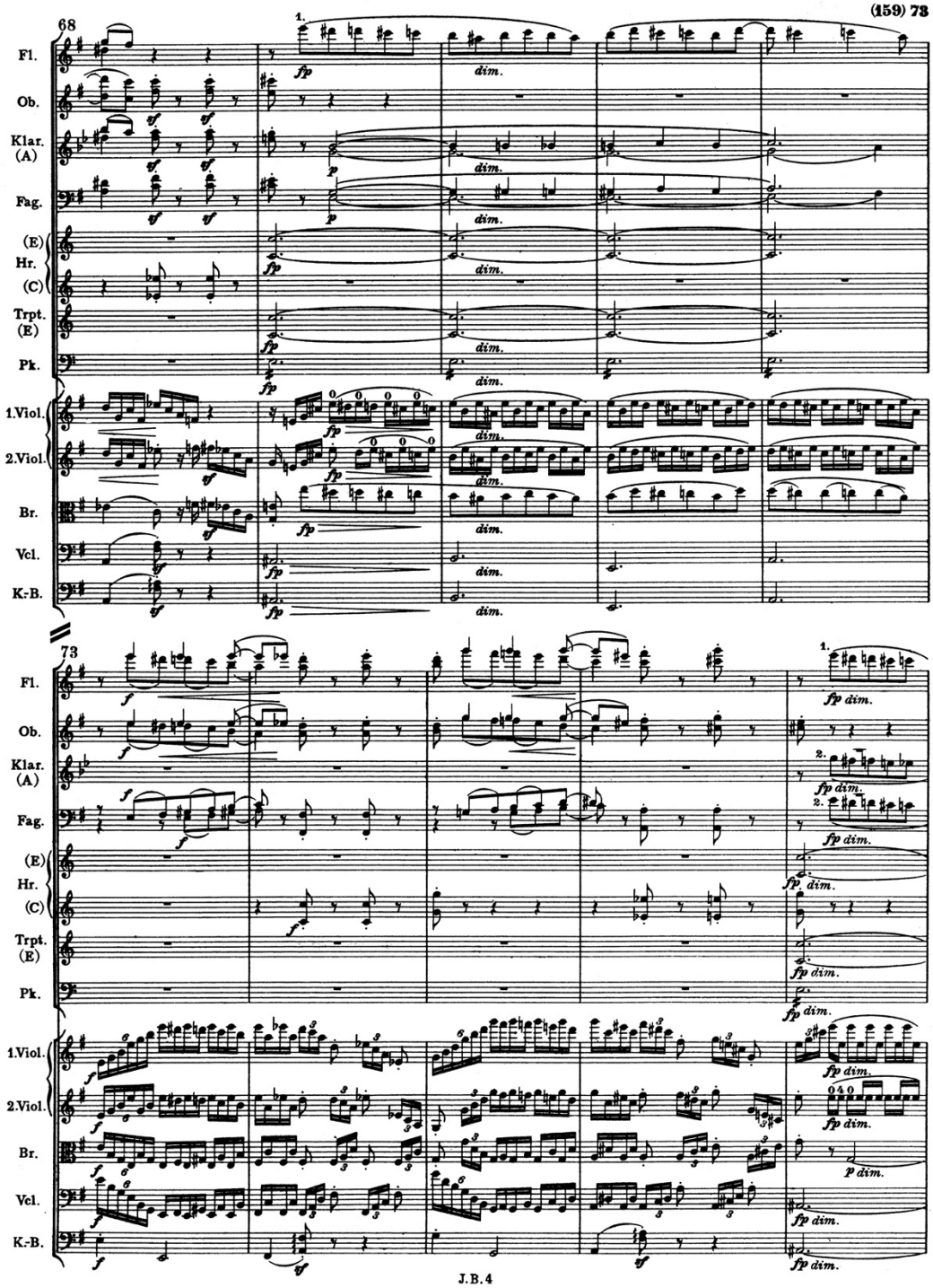

Allegro energico e passionato
2 Flöten
2 Oboen
2 Klarinetten in A
2 Fagotte
Kontrafagott
4 Hörner
in E
in C
2 Trompeten in E
3 Posaunen
Pauken in G. H. E
1. Violine
2. Violine
Bratsche
Violoncell
Kontrabaß
pizz.
dim.
Allegro energico e passionato

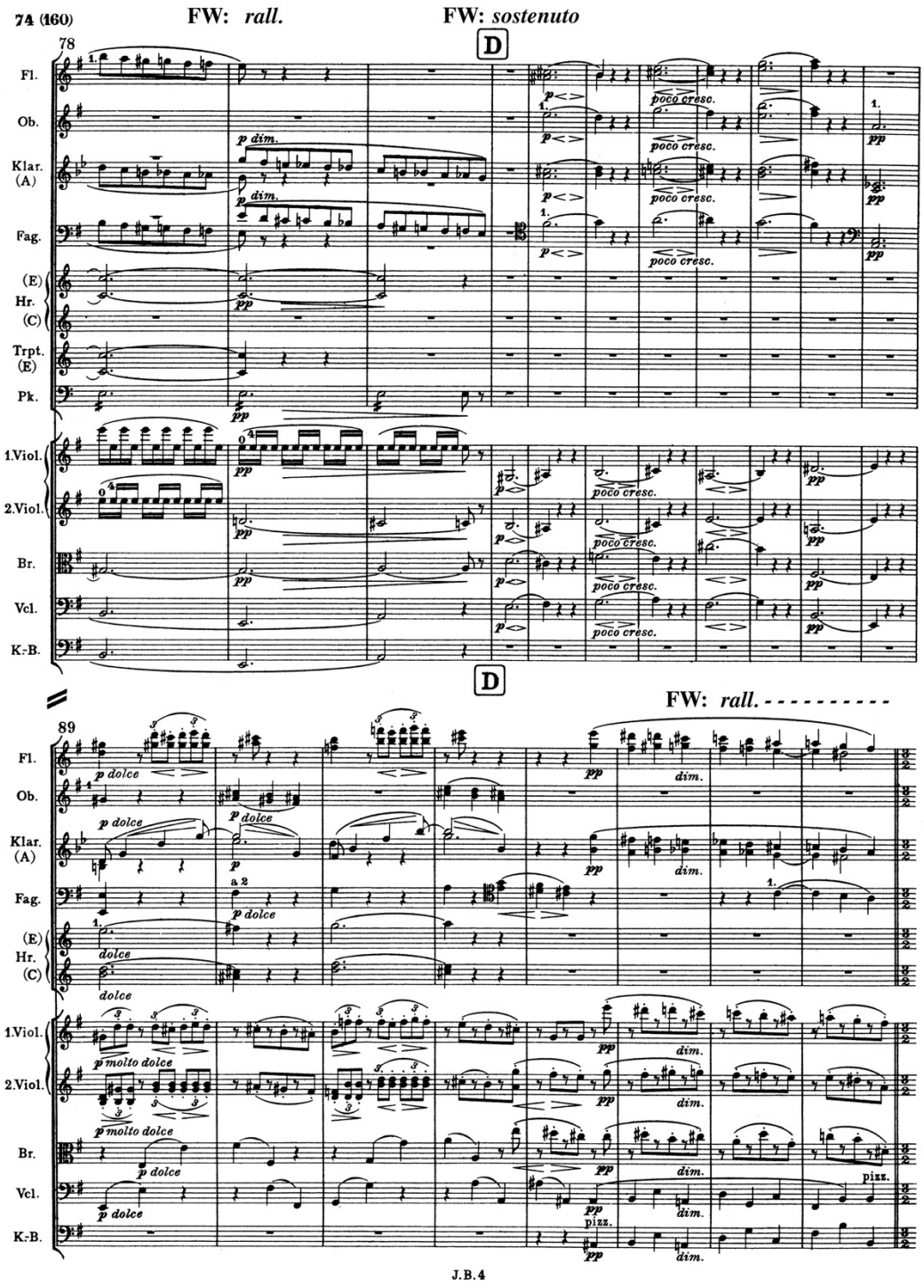

15
A
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
mp
cresc.
f ben marc.
a 2
p
ben marc.
mp ma marc.
div.
arco
A

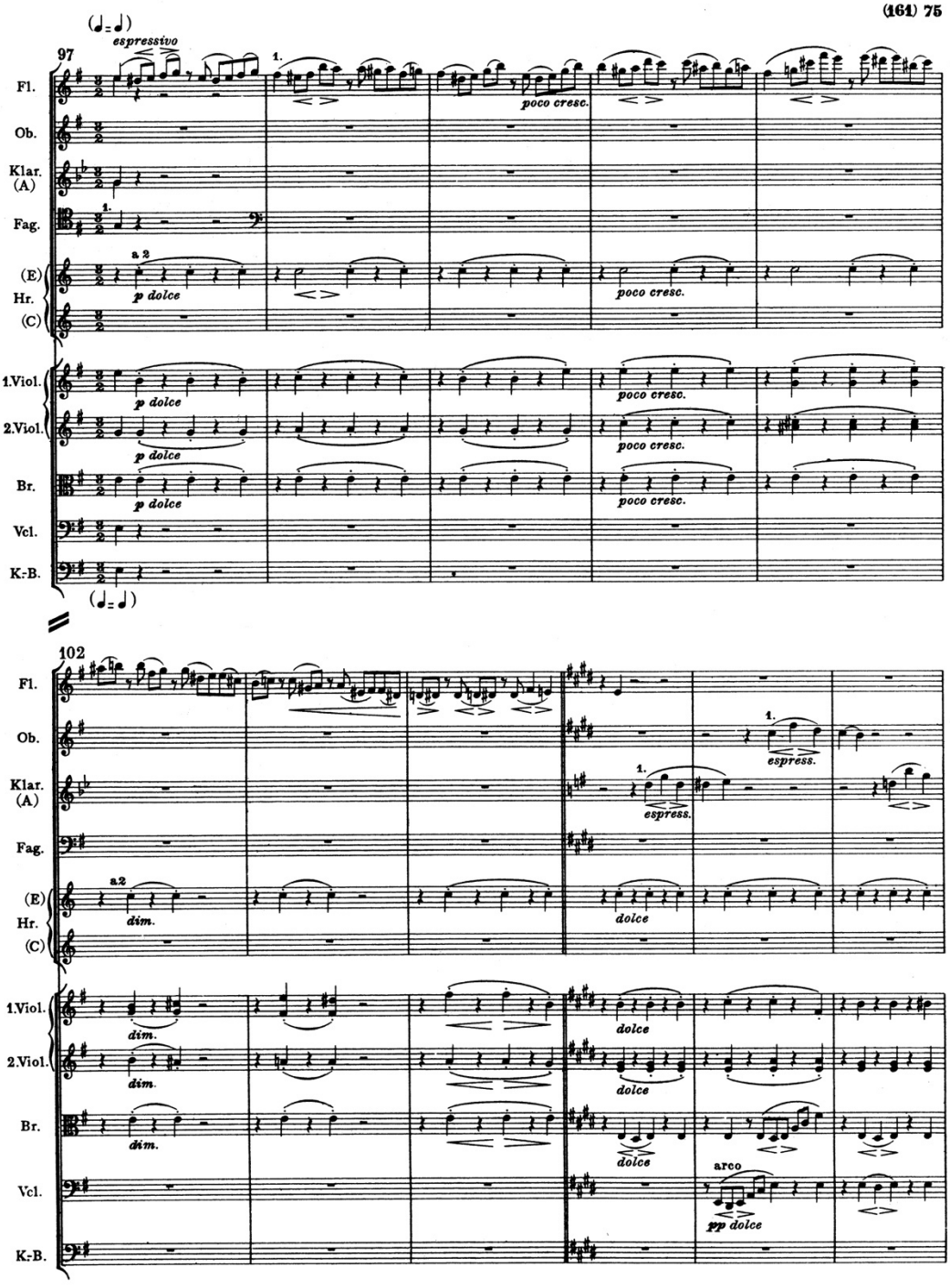

28
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a 2
arco
f ben marc. largamente
f


38
B
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vel.
K-B.
poco f
sim.
a 2
cresc. sempre più
pizz.
47
JB: --sost---
(E) Hr. (C)
espress. cresc.
cresc.
arco
Vcl.
K.B.

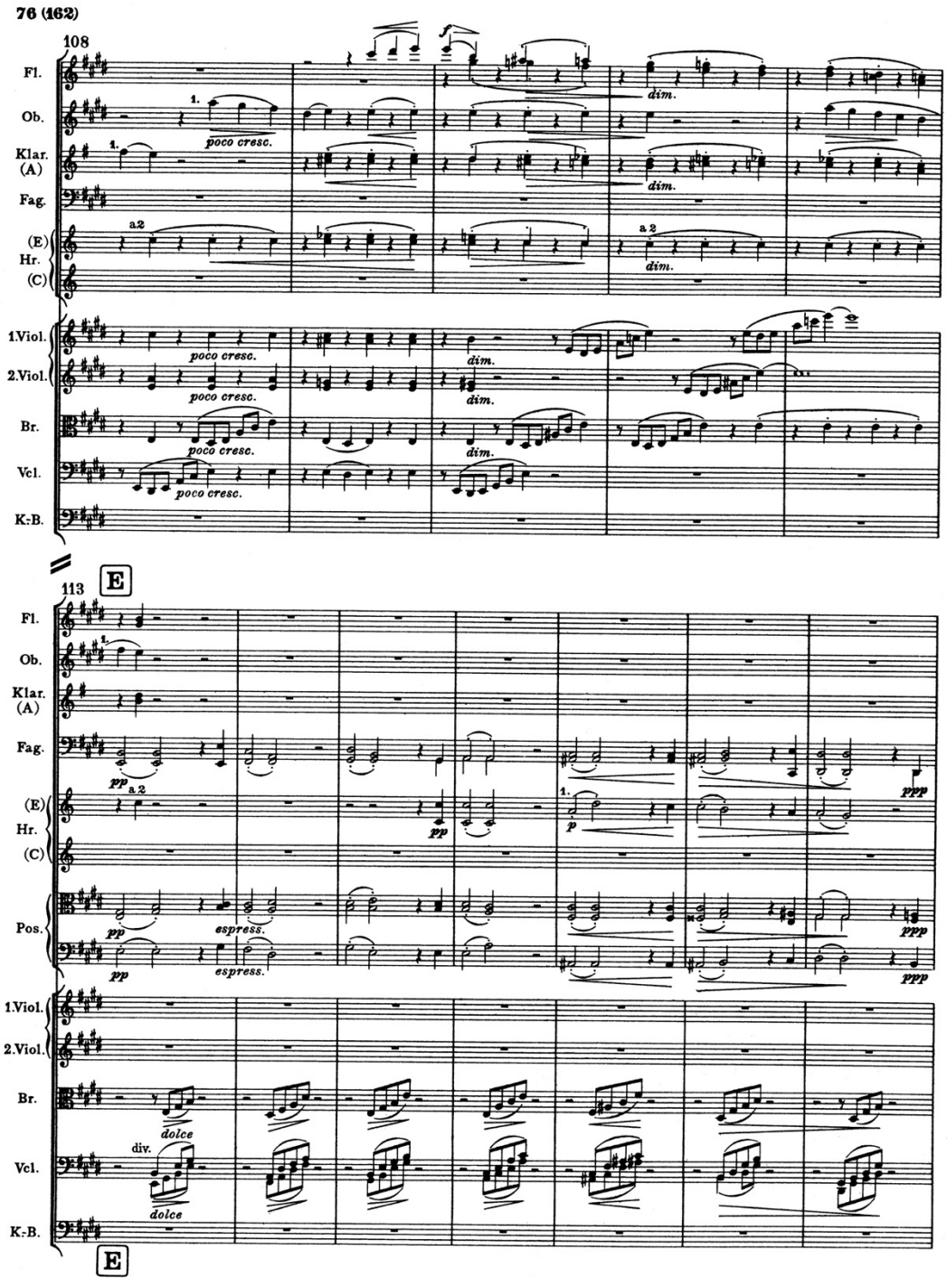

[JB:] - - - - - - - - - largamente
72 (158)
55
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
più f
cresc.
f ben marc.
62
JB: in tempo I (broadly / slower)
mf
J. B. 4


68
73
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
fp
dim.
f
ff
p
fp dim.

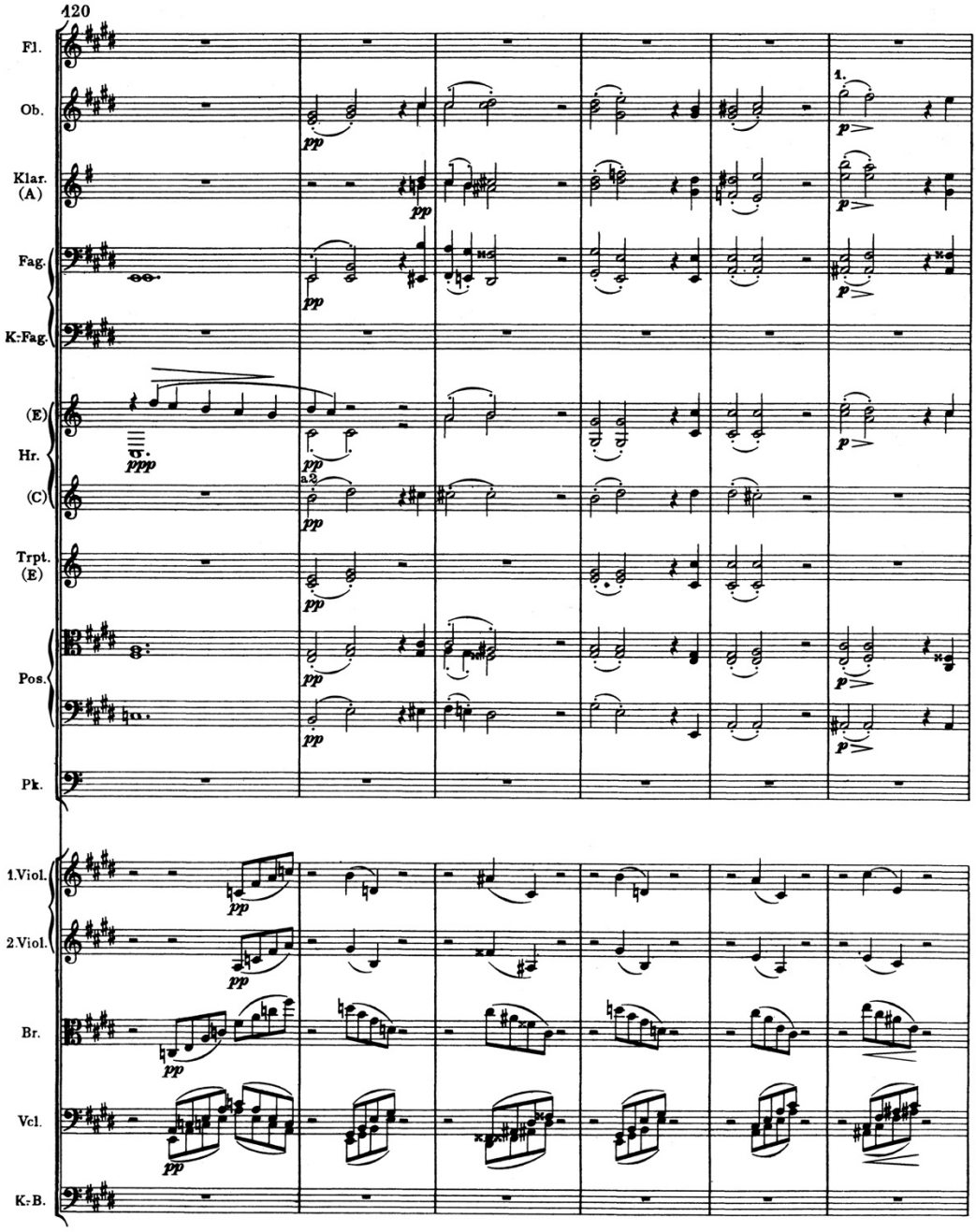

74 (160)
FW: rall.
FW: sostenuto
78
D
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p dim.
poco cresc.
pp
D
FW: rall.
89
p dolce
a 2
dolce
p molto dolce
pizz.
dim.
J.B.4


(♩= ♩)
espressivo
97
1.
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
a 2
(E) Hr. (C)
p dolce
poco cresc.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
(♩= ♩)
102
a2
dim.
espress.
dolce
arco
pp dolce

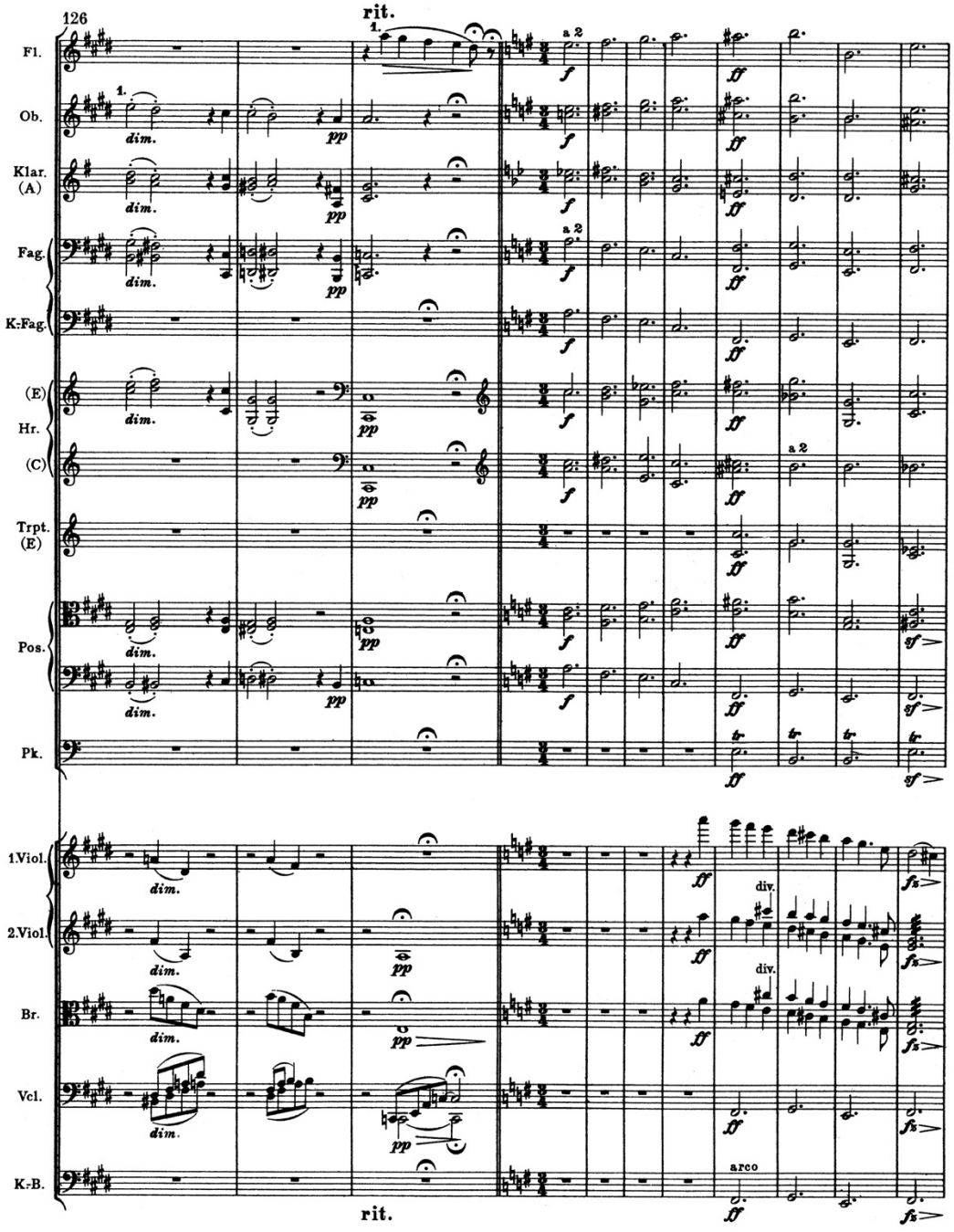
J. B. 4


76 (162)
108
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
poco cresc.
dim.
a2
113
E
Pos.
espress.
pp
ppp
dolce
div.

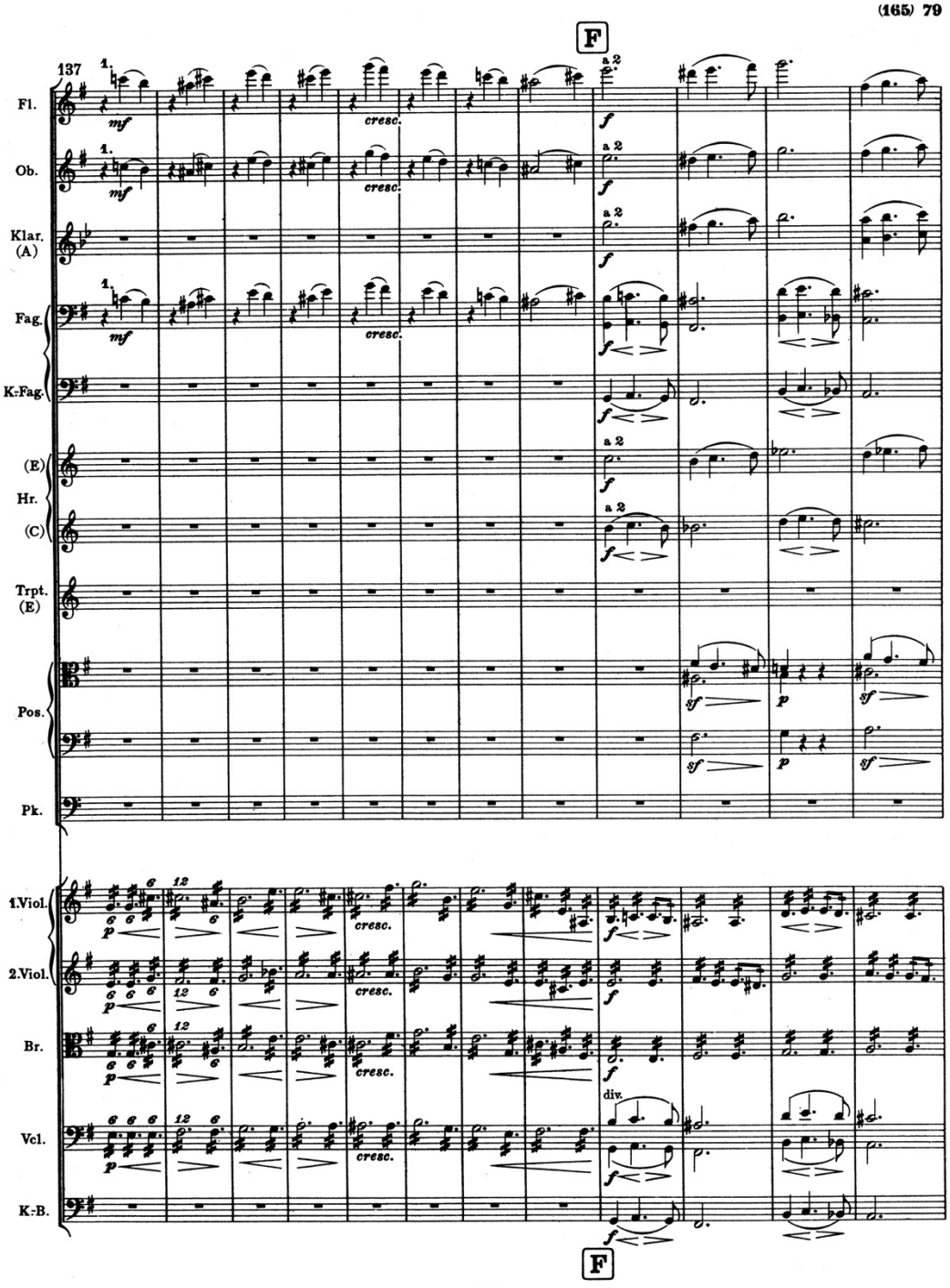
J.B.4


120
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K:Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.B.
1.
pp
p
ppp
a2

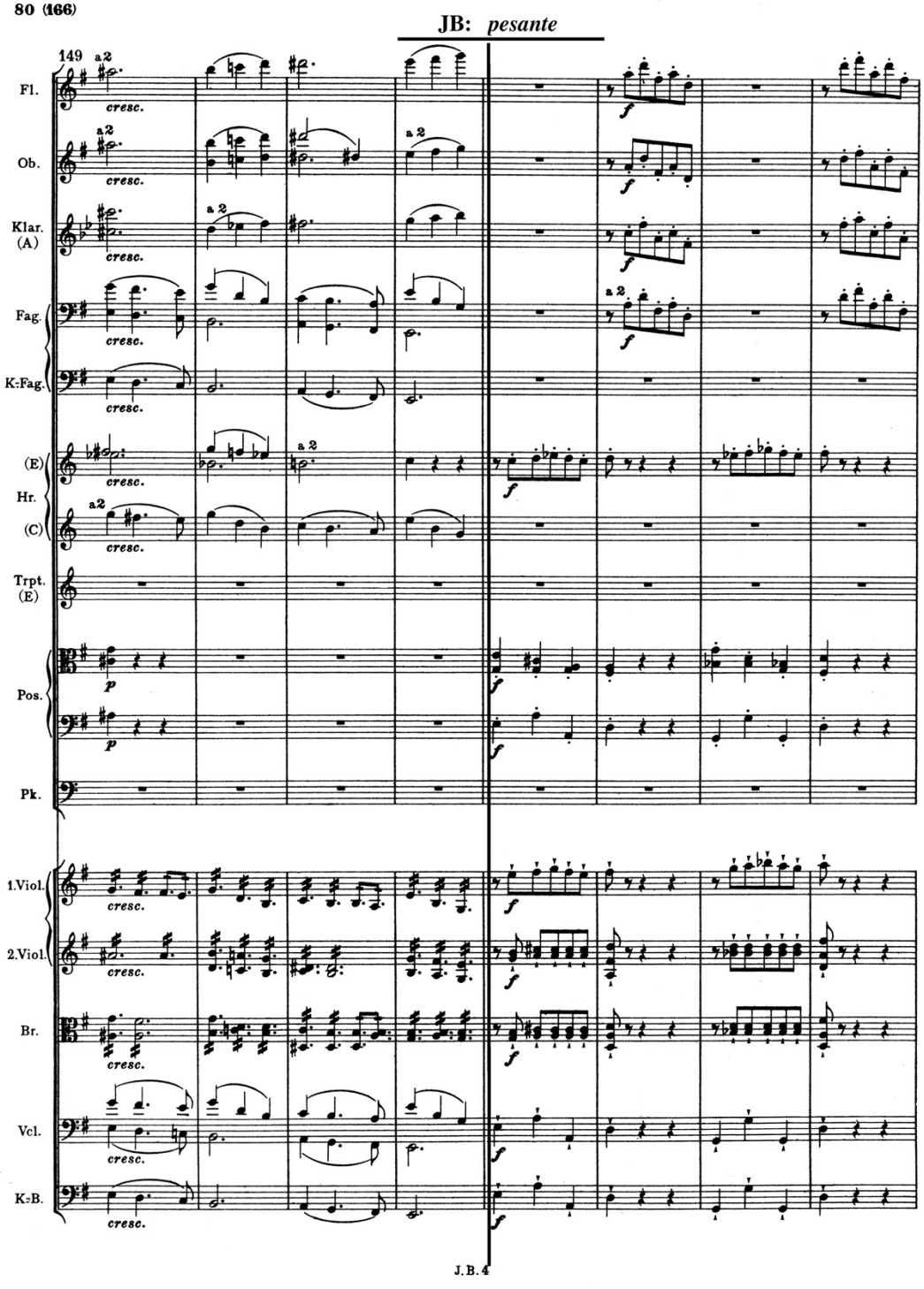
J. B. 4

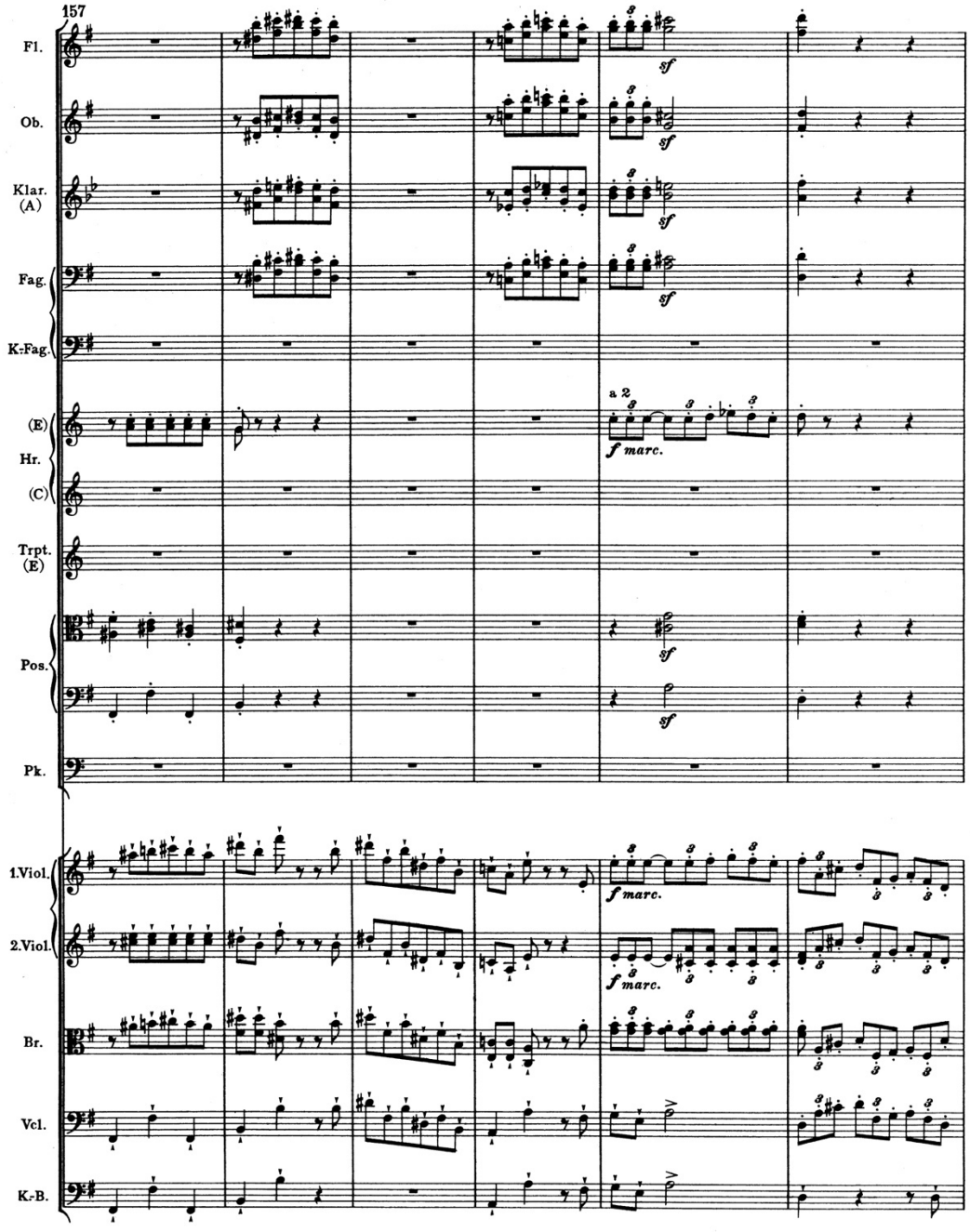

126
rit.
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dim.
pp
f
ff
a 2
div.
arco
rit.

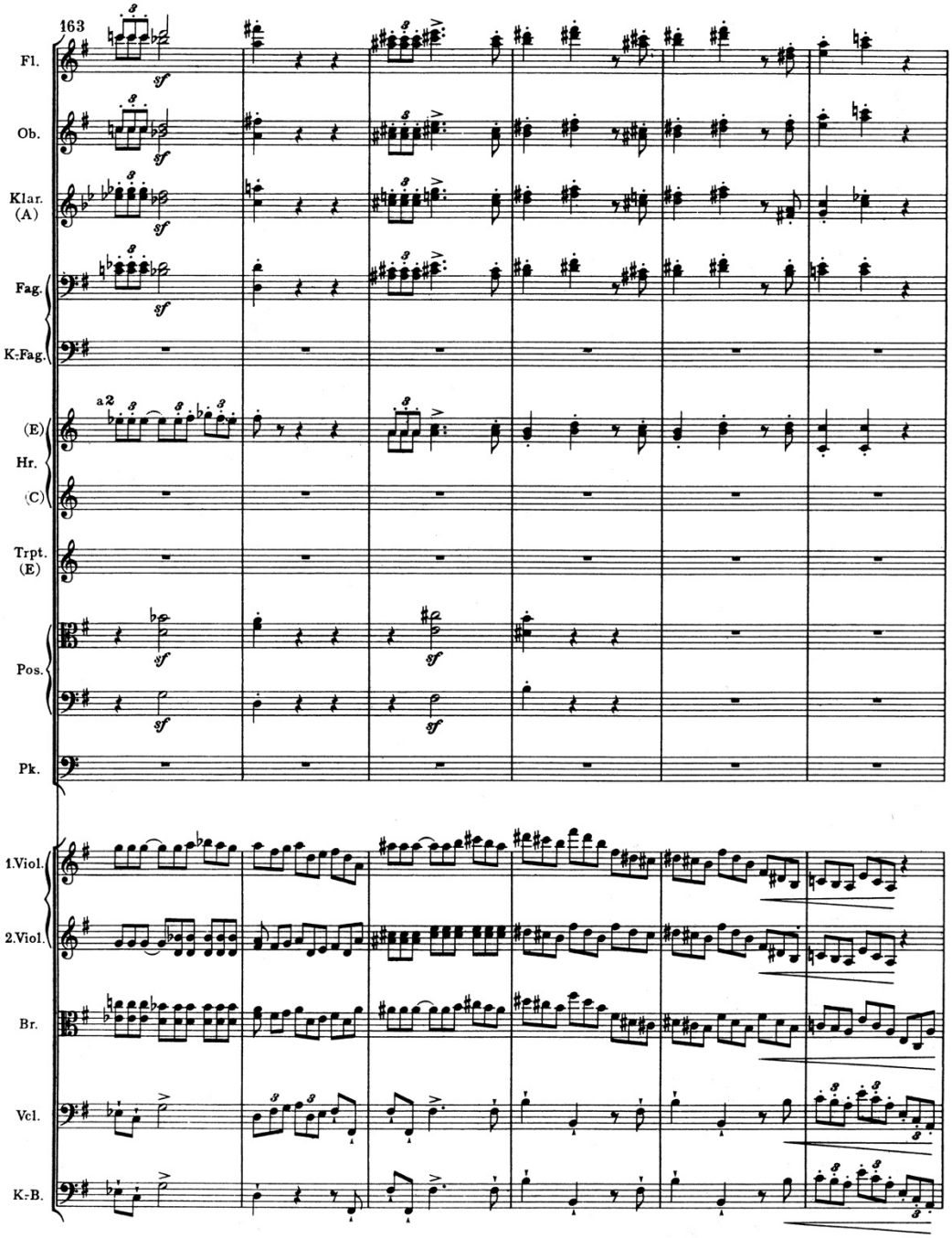
J. B. 4

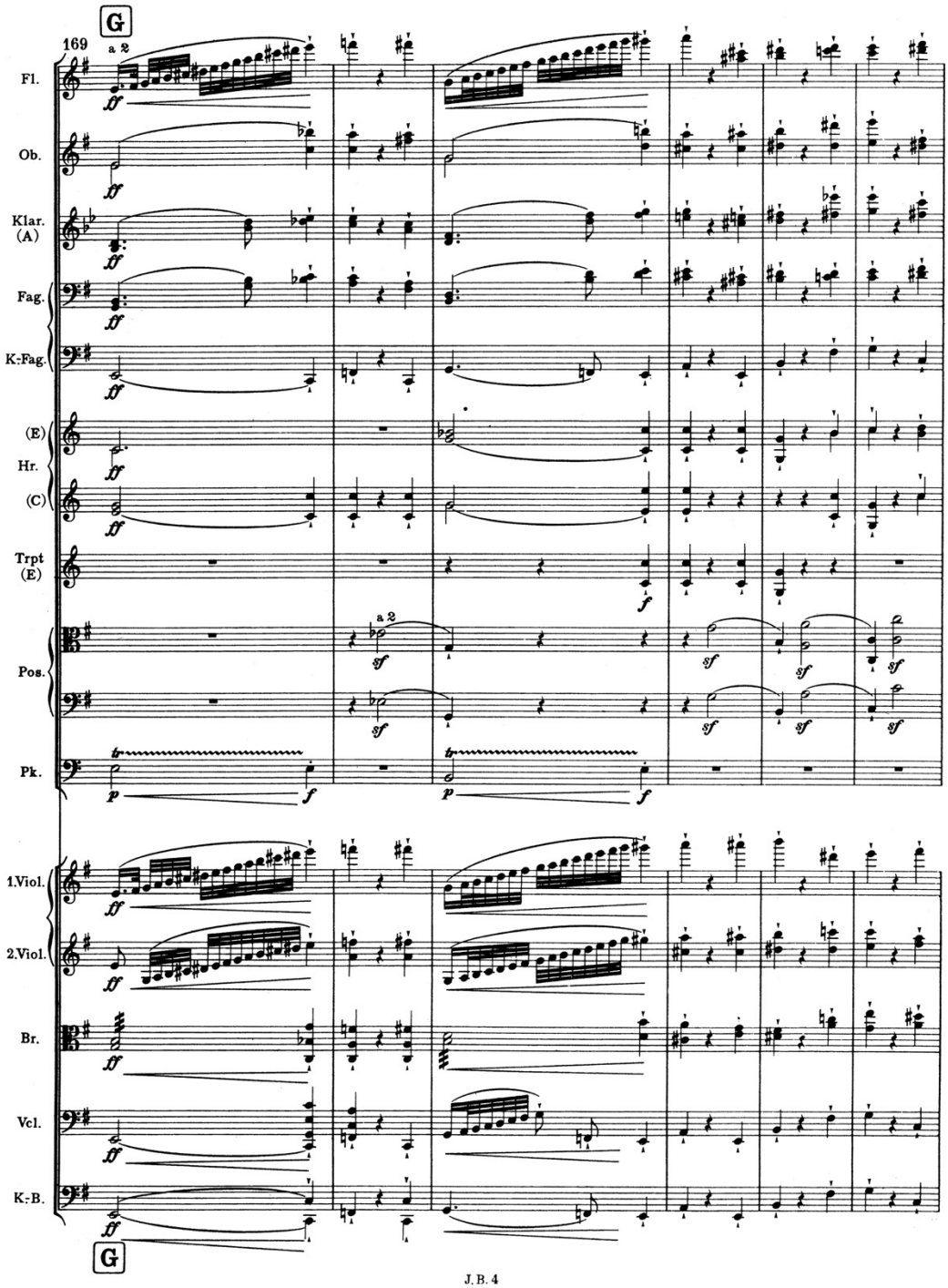

F
137
1.
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
mf
cresc.
a 2
f
sf
p
div.
F

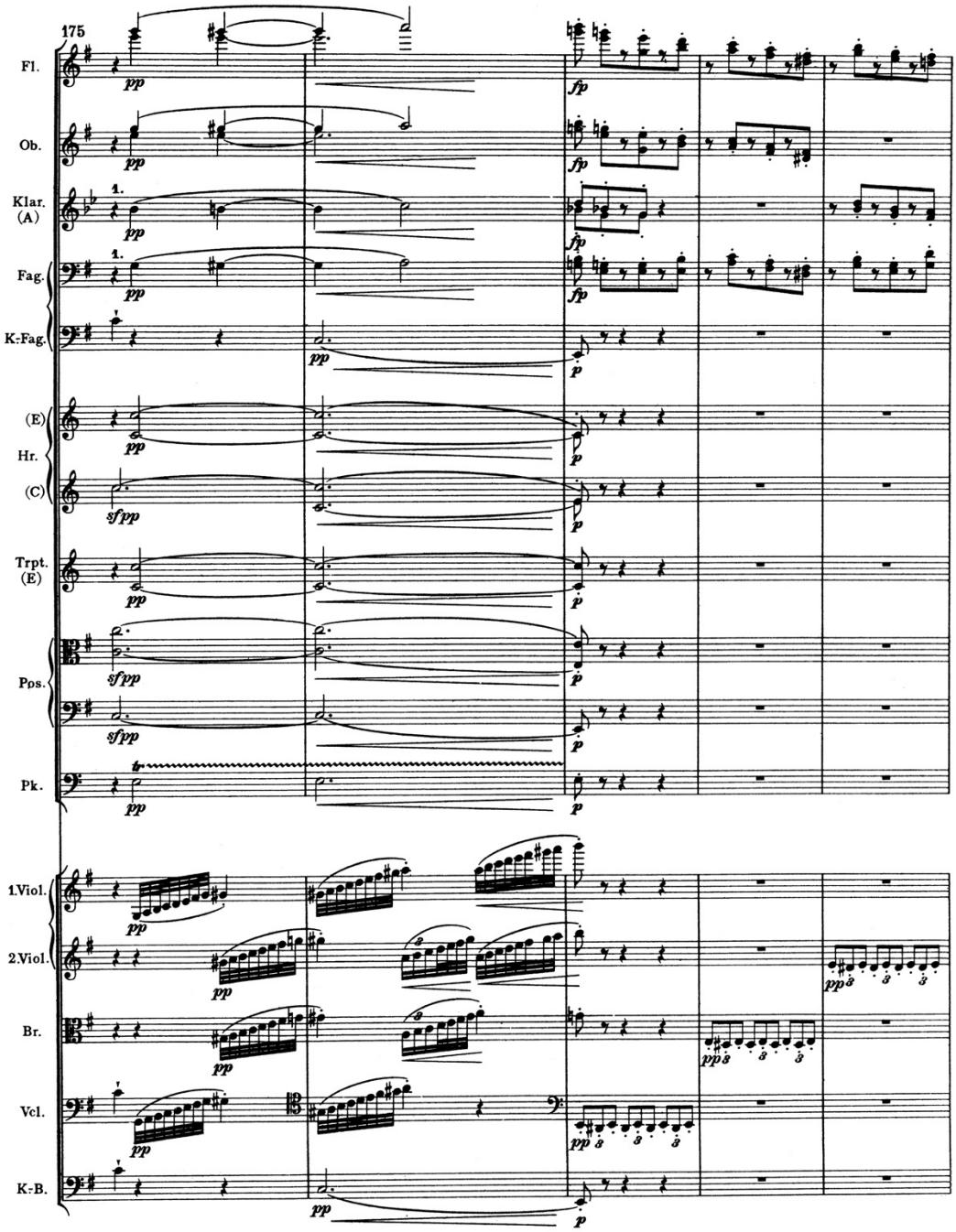
J. B. 4

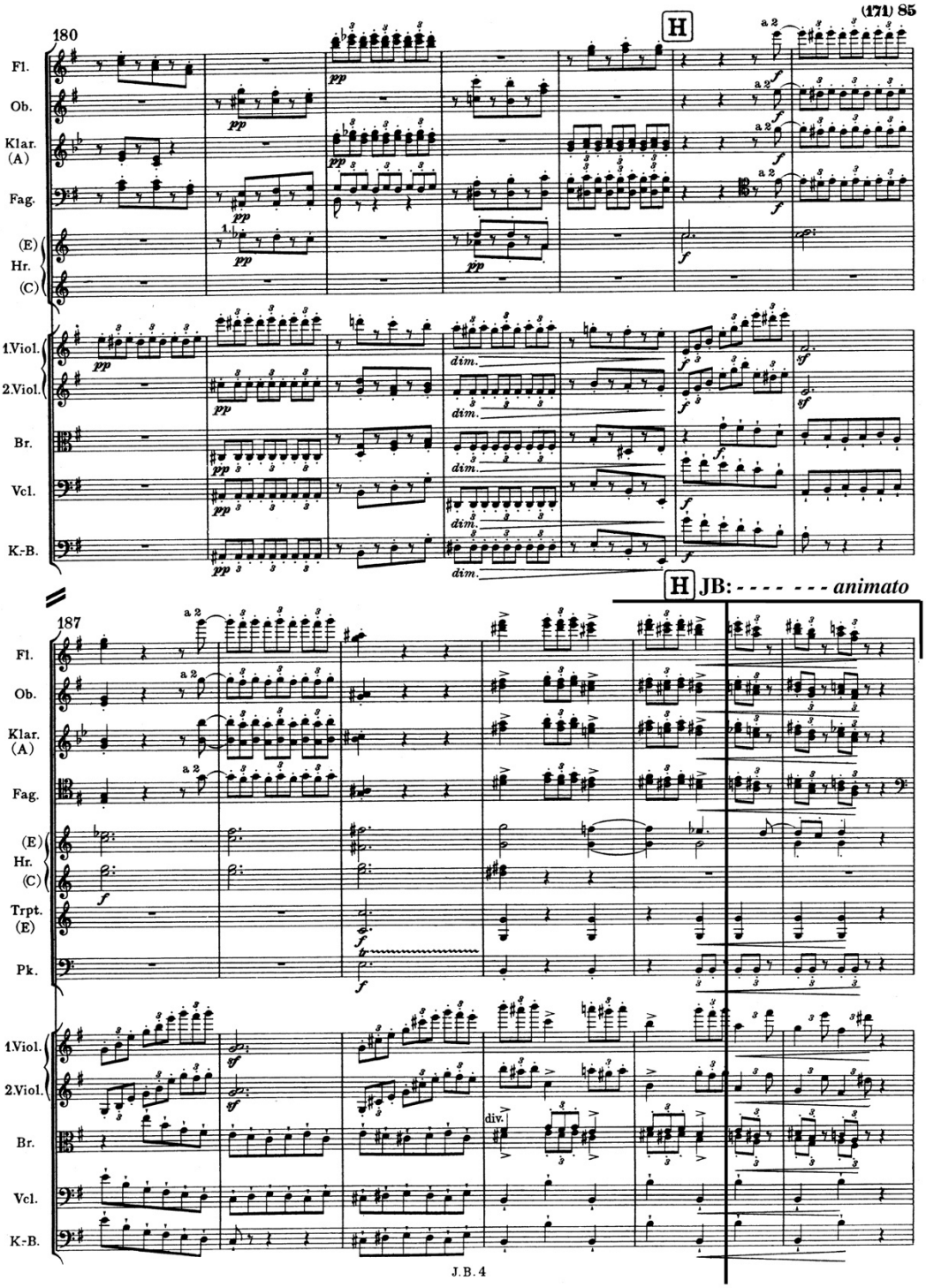

JB: pesante
149
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
cresc.
f
p
a 2
J.B. 4

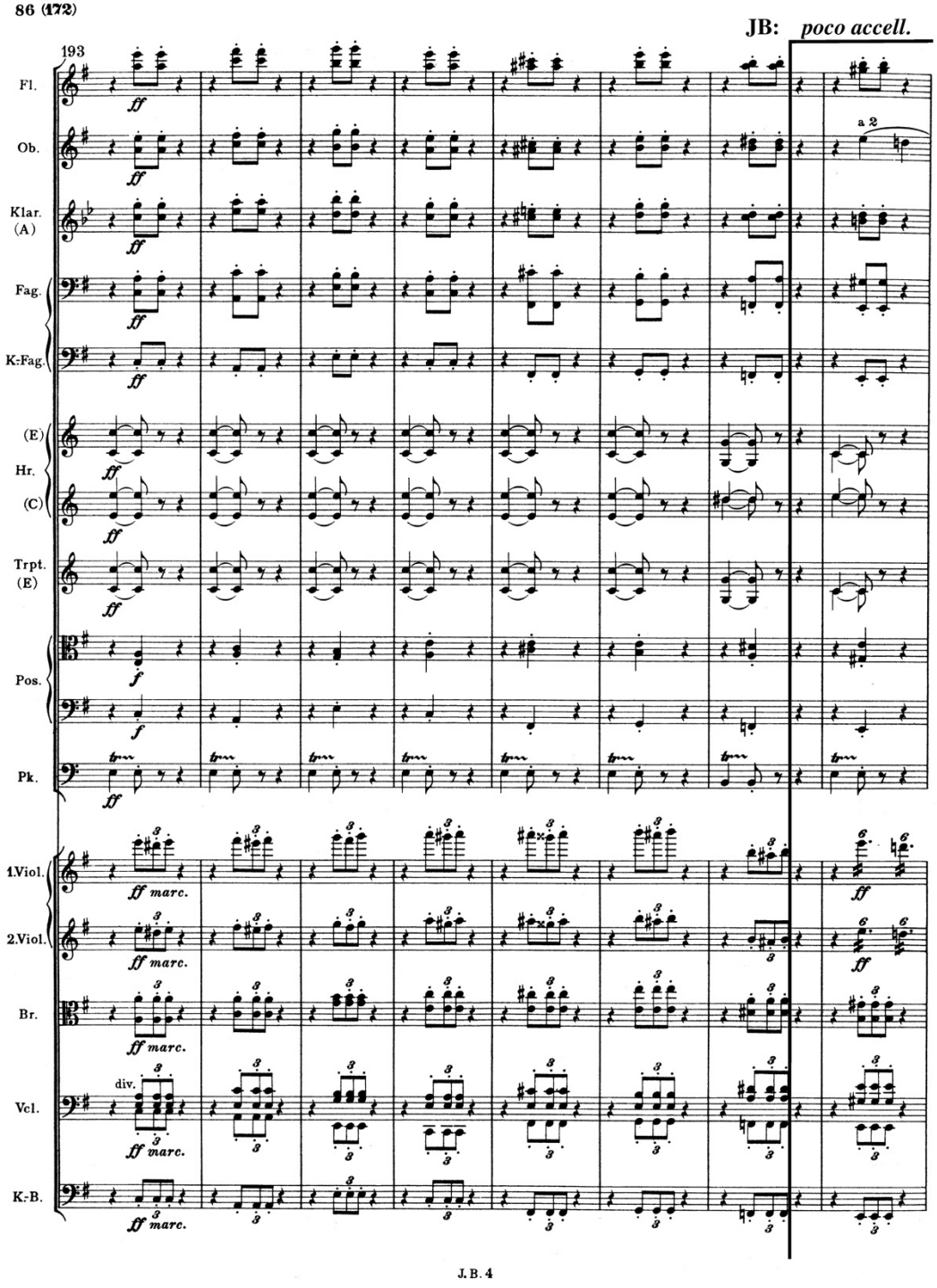

157
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
sf
a 2
f marc.

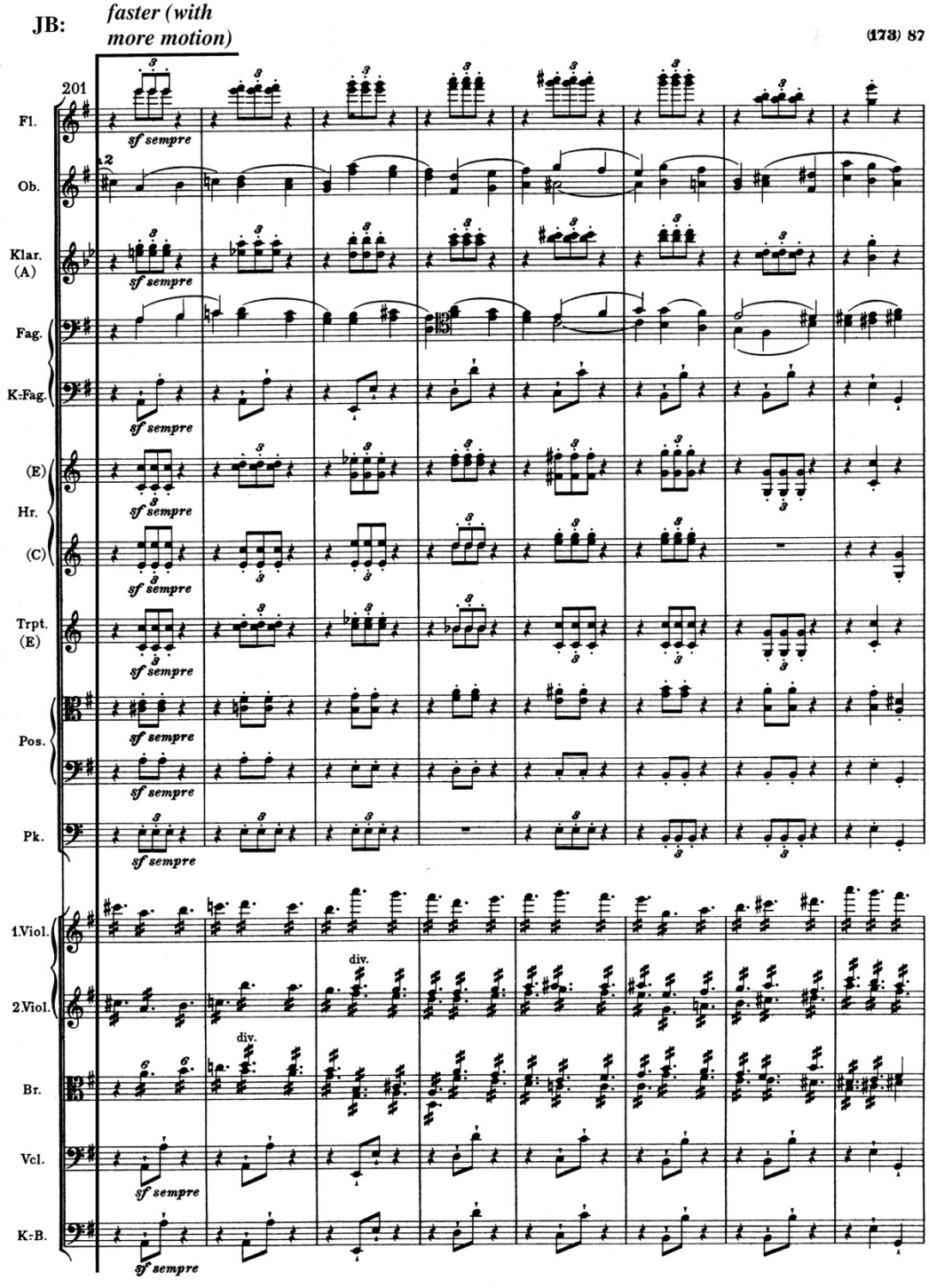

163
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
a2
sf


G
169
a 2
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
G

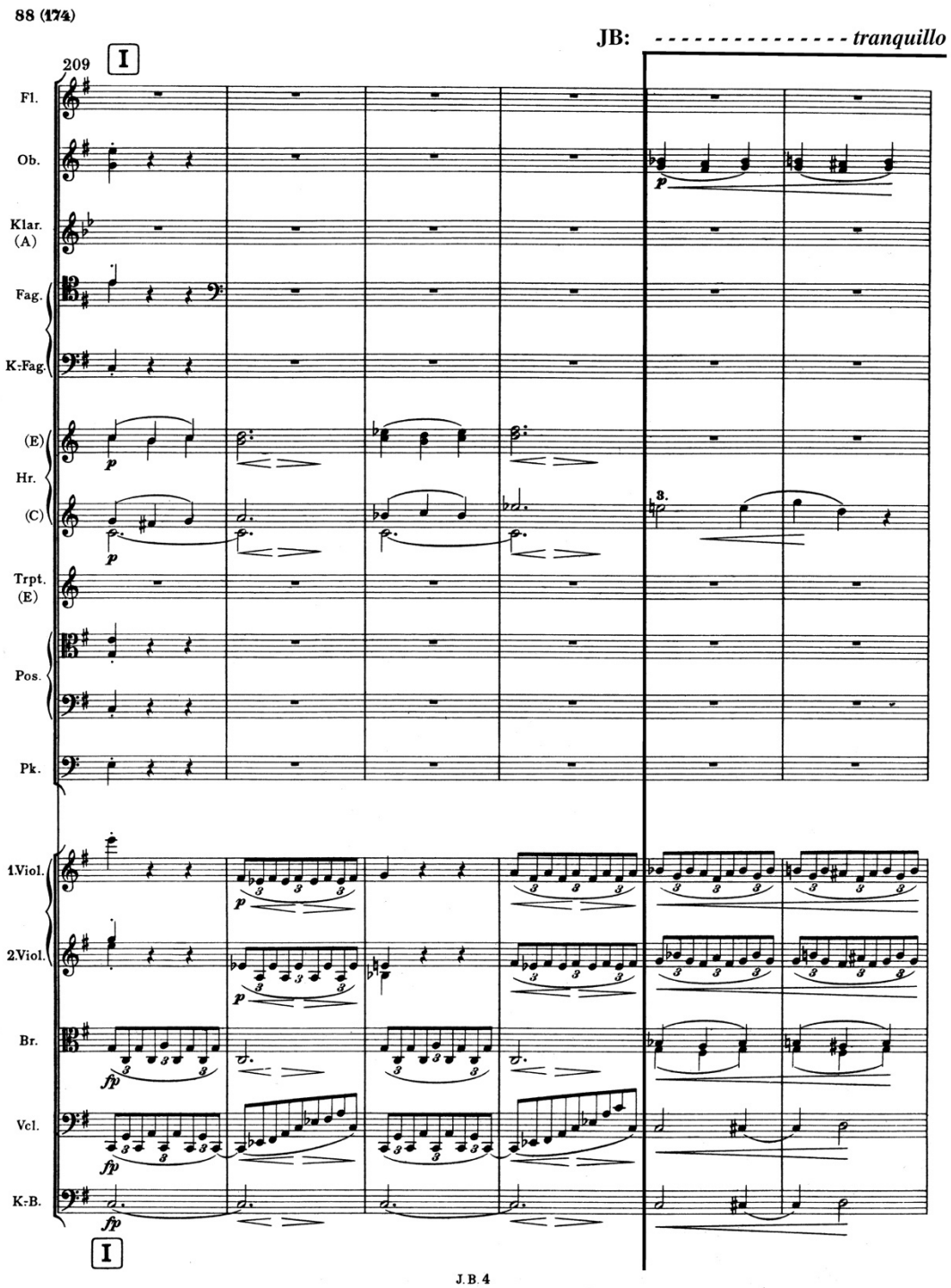

175
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.

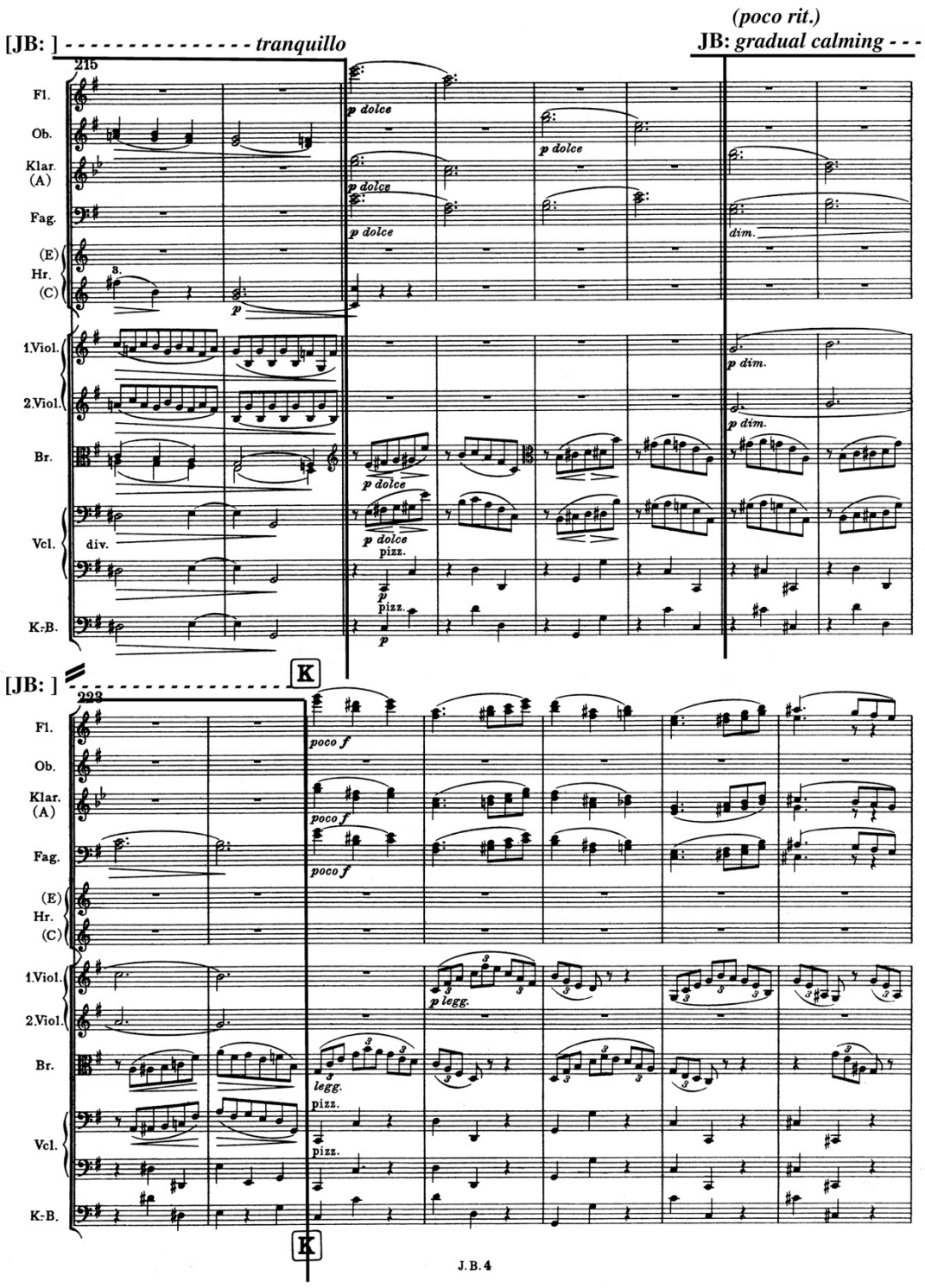

180
H
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
H JB: - - - - - - - animato
187
Trpt. (E)
Pk.
div.

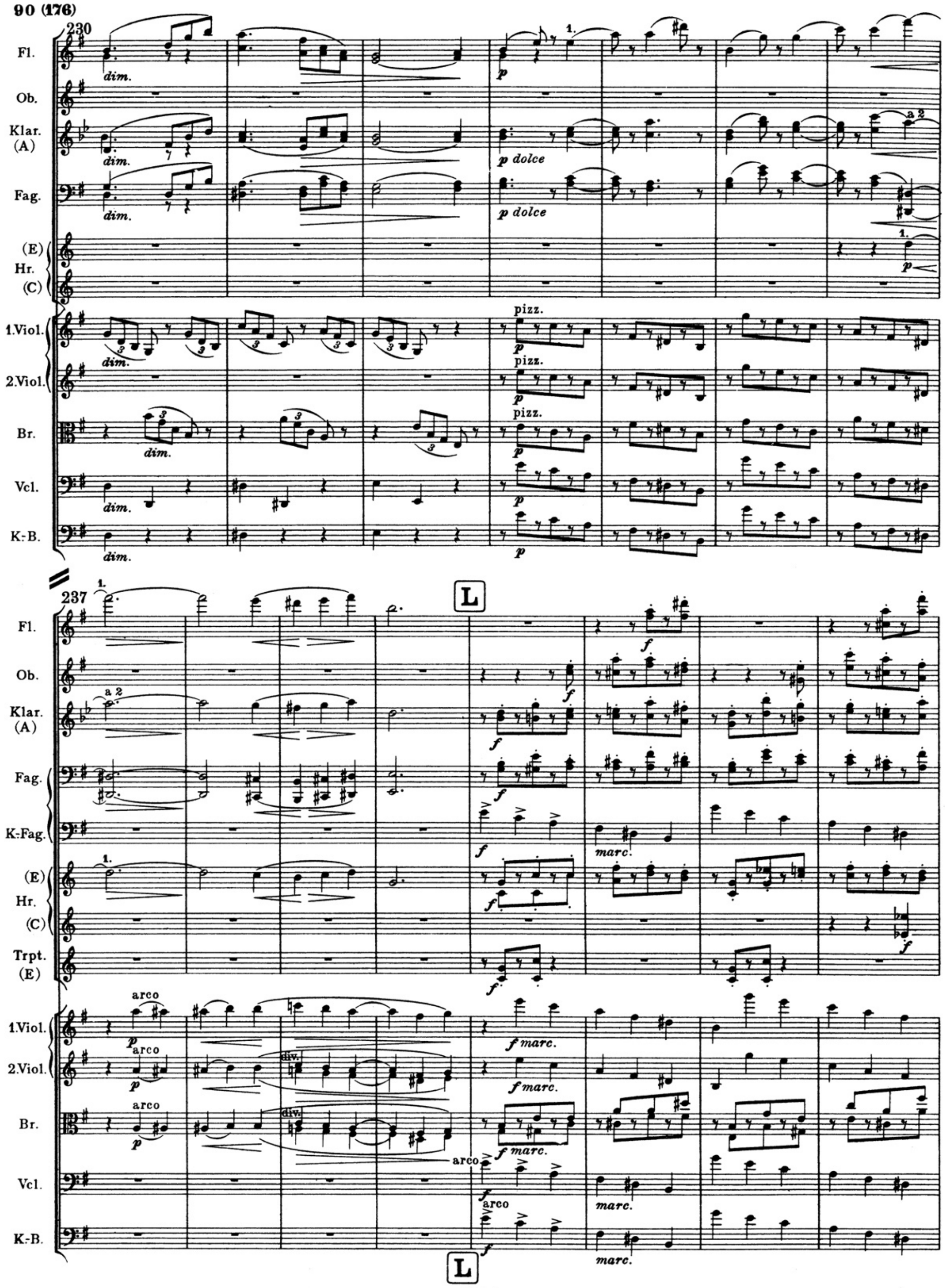

JB: poco accell.
193
Fl.
Ob.
a 2
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
div.
Vcl.
K.-B.
ff
f
ff marc.


JB:
faster (with more motion)
(173) 87
201
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
sf sempre
div.

J.B.4

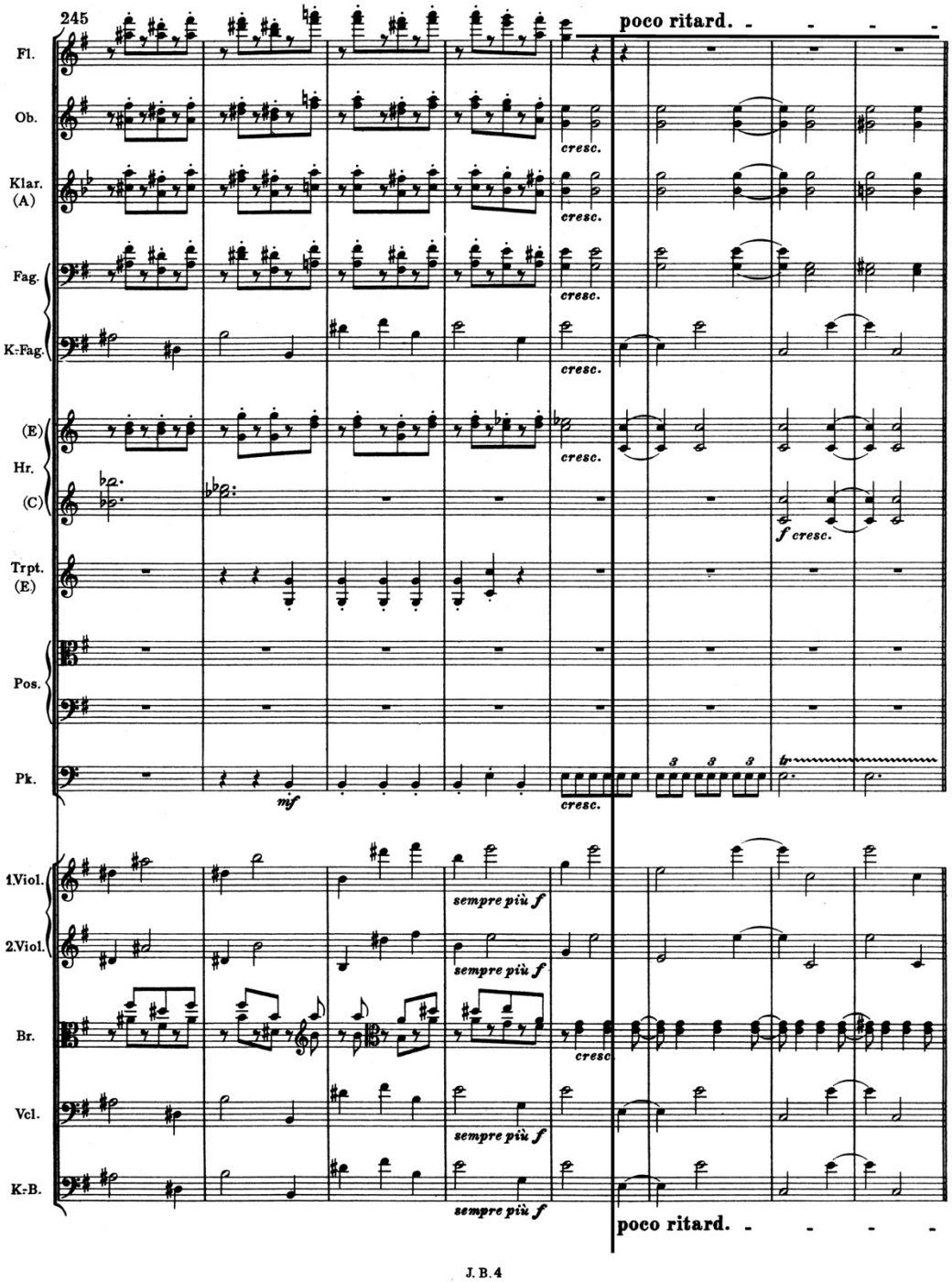

88 (174)
JB: - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - tranquillo
209
I
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E) Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
I
J.B.4


[JB:] - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - tranquillo
(poco rit.)
JB: gradual calming - - -
215
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
p dolce
dim.
p dim.
div.
pizz.
[JB:]
K
223
poco f
p legg.
legg.
J.B.4

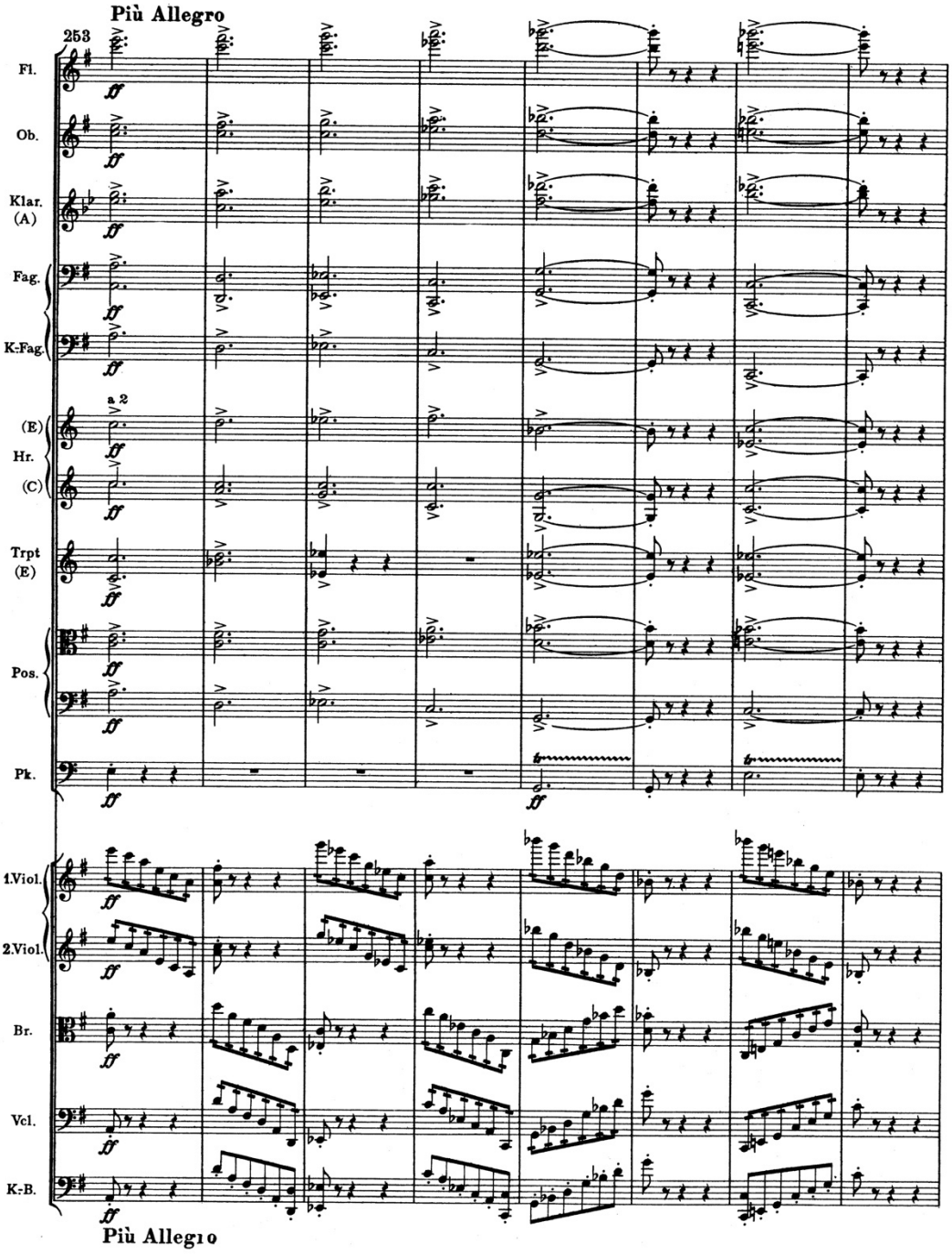

230
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
dim.
p
p dolce
pizz.
a 2
237
K.-Fag.
Trpt. (E)
arco
div.
f
f marc.
marc.
L

J. B. 4

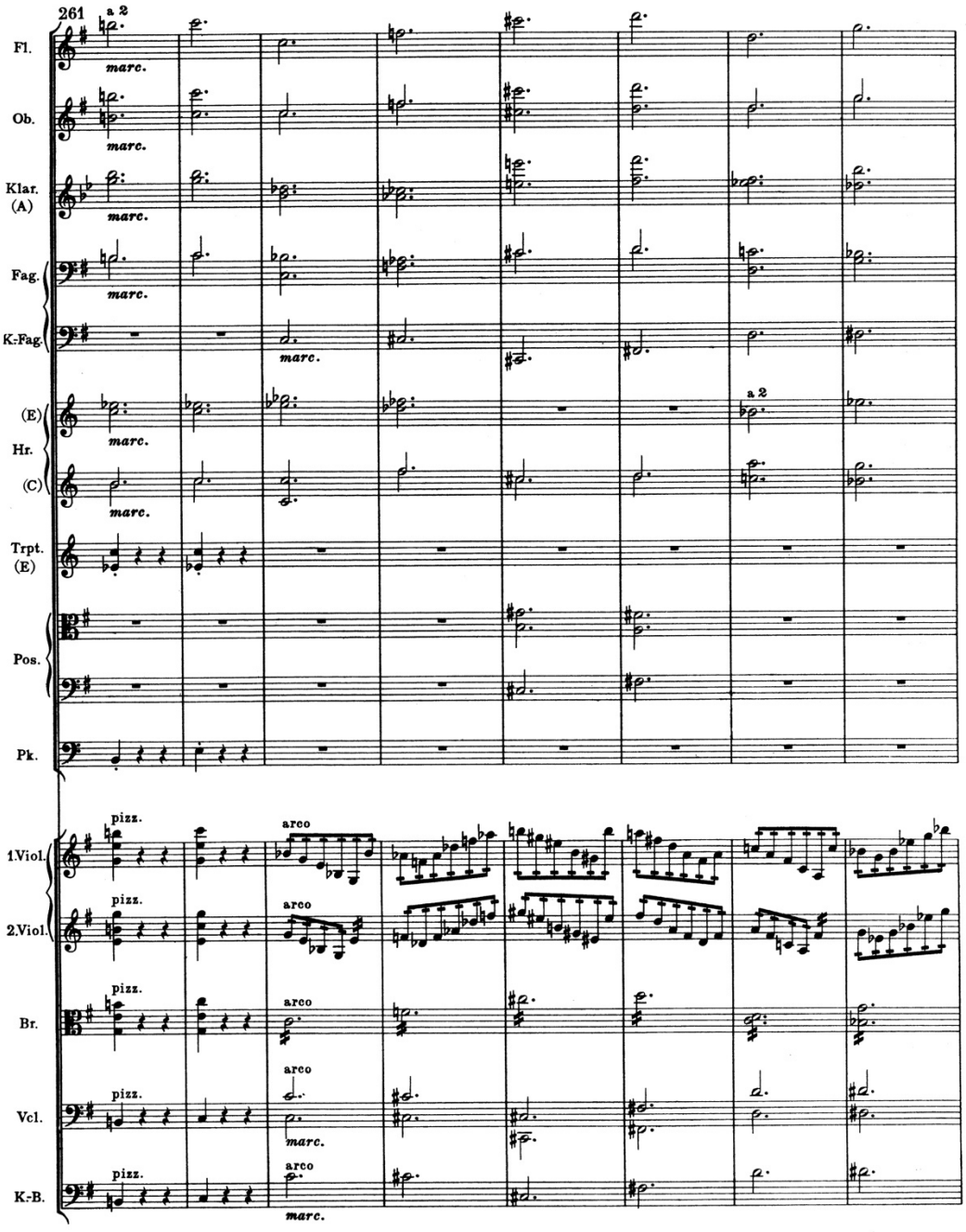
JB: Brahms originally wrote sost. – – – – –, but later replaced it with the marking poco ritard. for publication.



J. B. 4

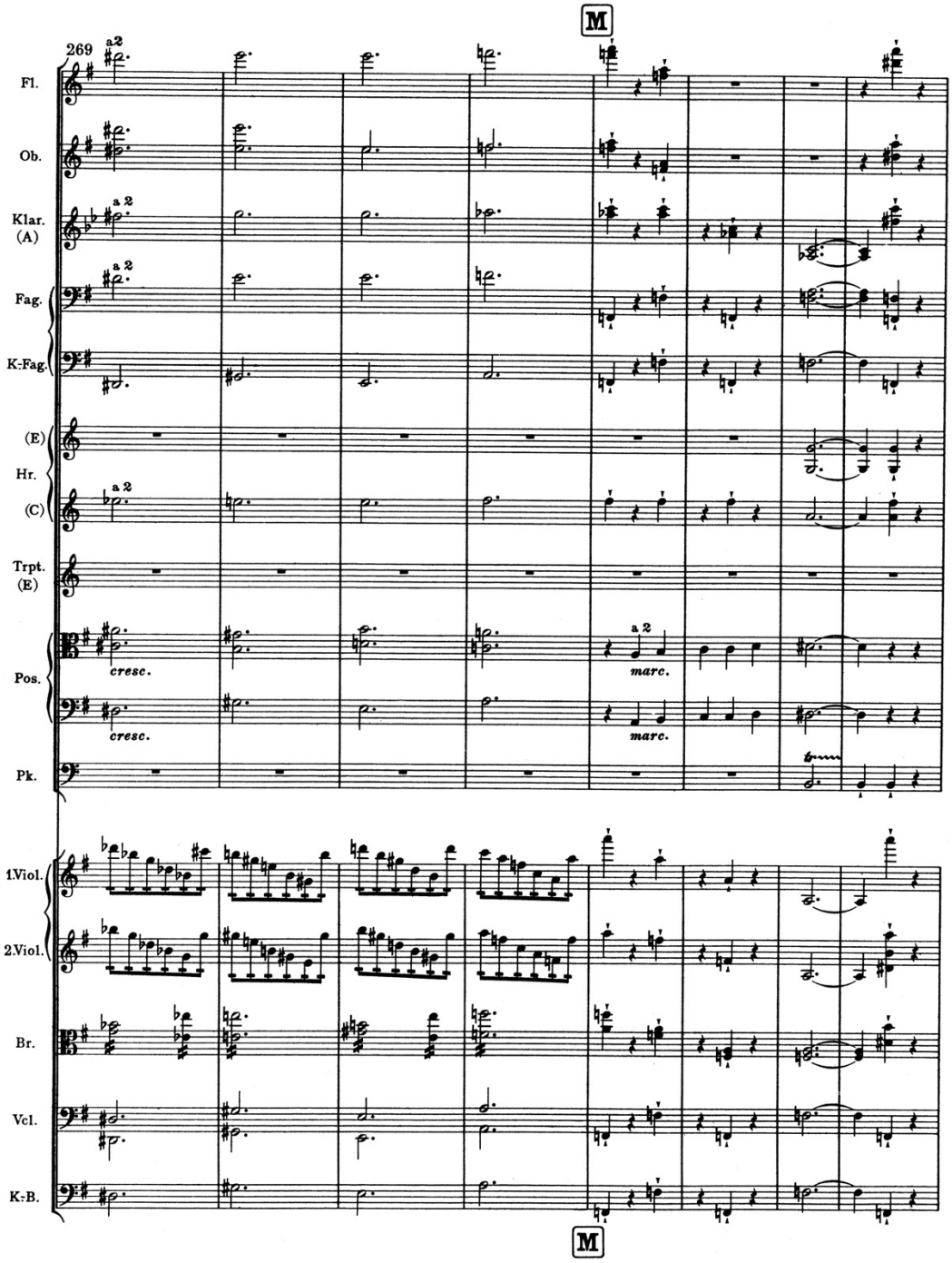

Più Allegro
253
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
a 2
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
Più Allegro

J.B.4

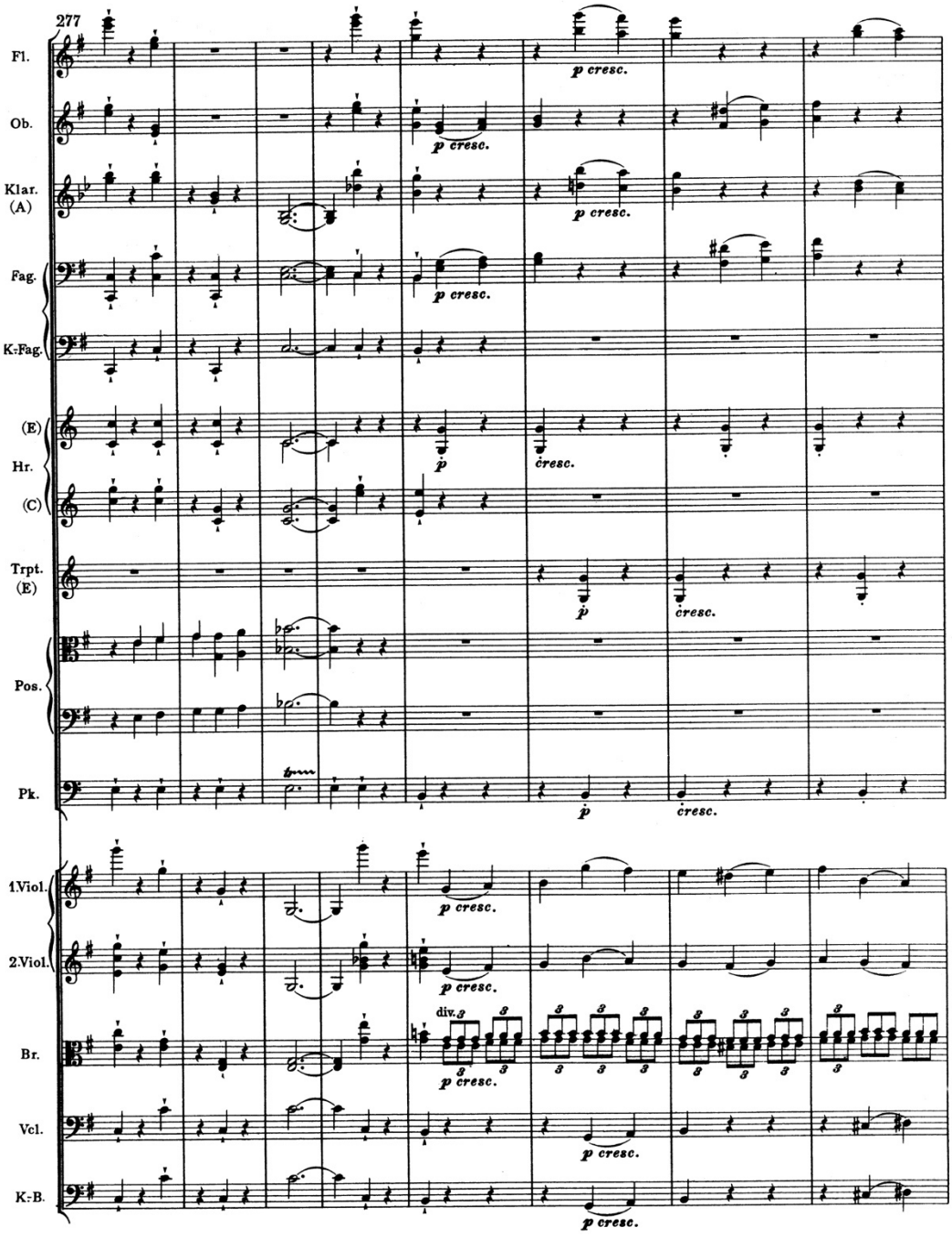

261
a 2
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E) Hr. (C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
marc.
pizz.
arco
a 2

J.B.4

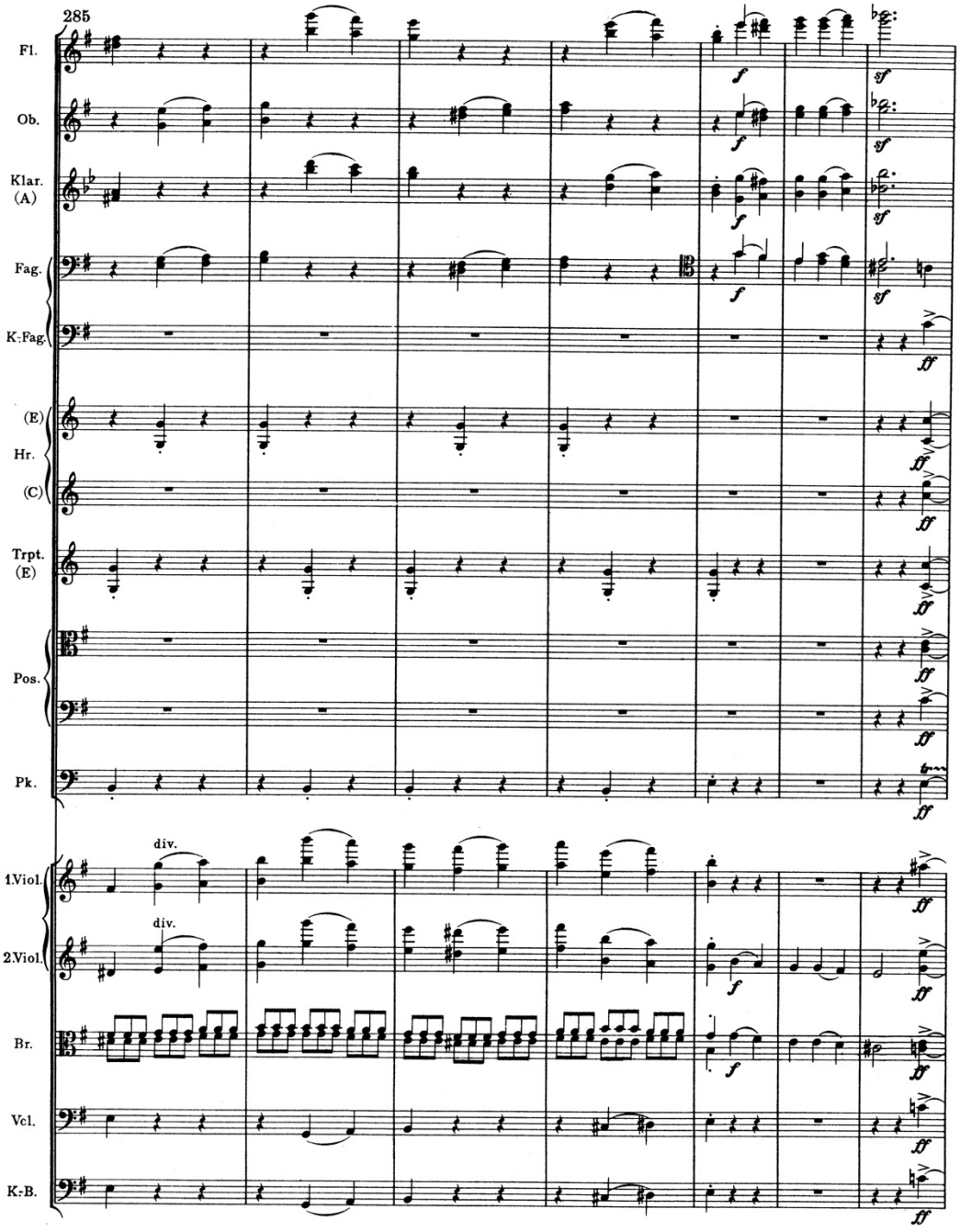
FW: *pesante*

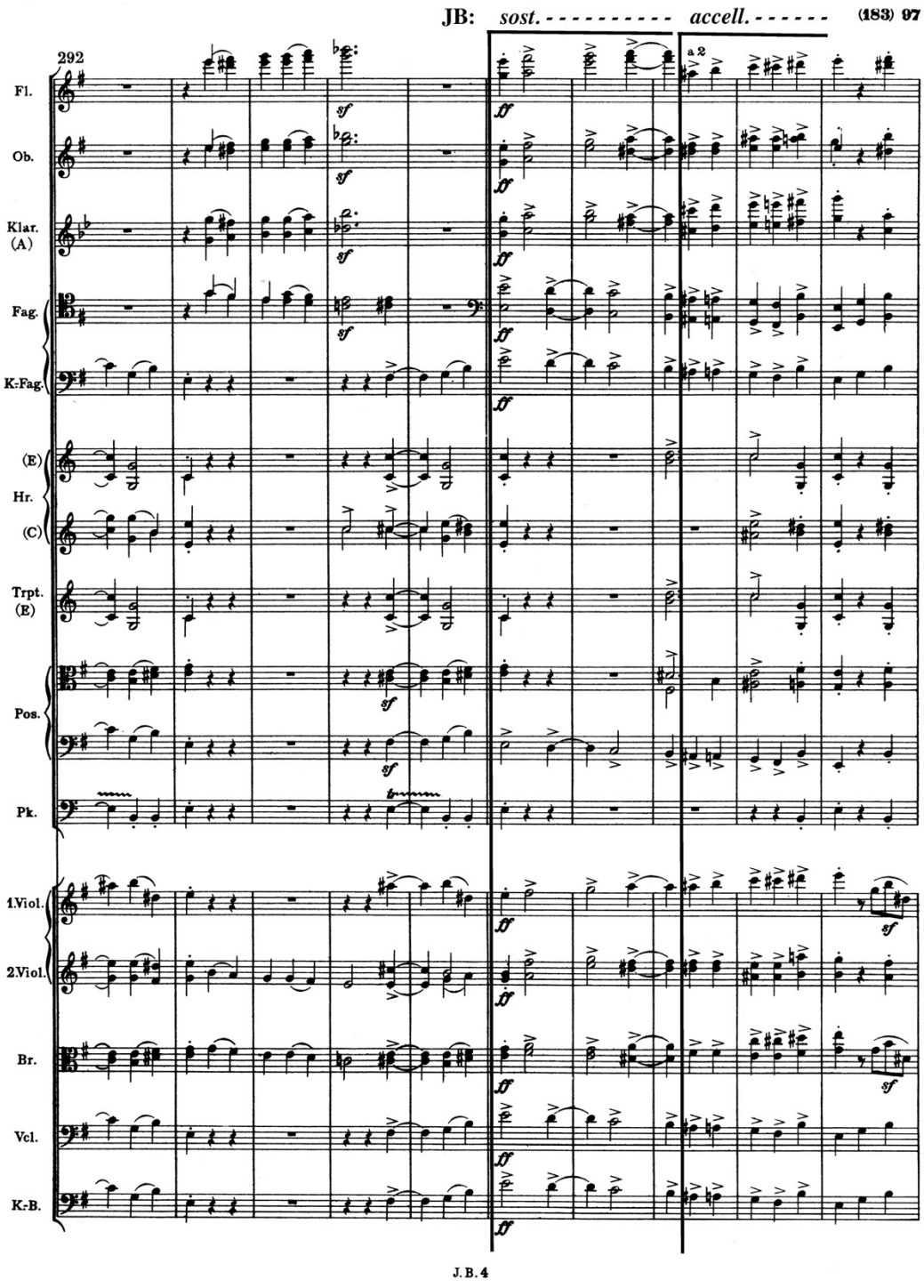

M
269
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K-B.
a 2
cresc.
marc.
M

FW: *a tempo*



J.B.4


285
Fl.
Ob.
Klar. (A)
Fag.
K.-Fag.
(E)
Hr.
(C)
Trpt. (E)
Pos.
Pk.
1.Viol.
2.Viol.
Br.
Vcl.
K.-B.
div.
div.
f
sf
ff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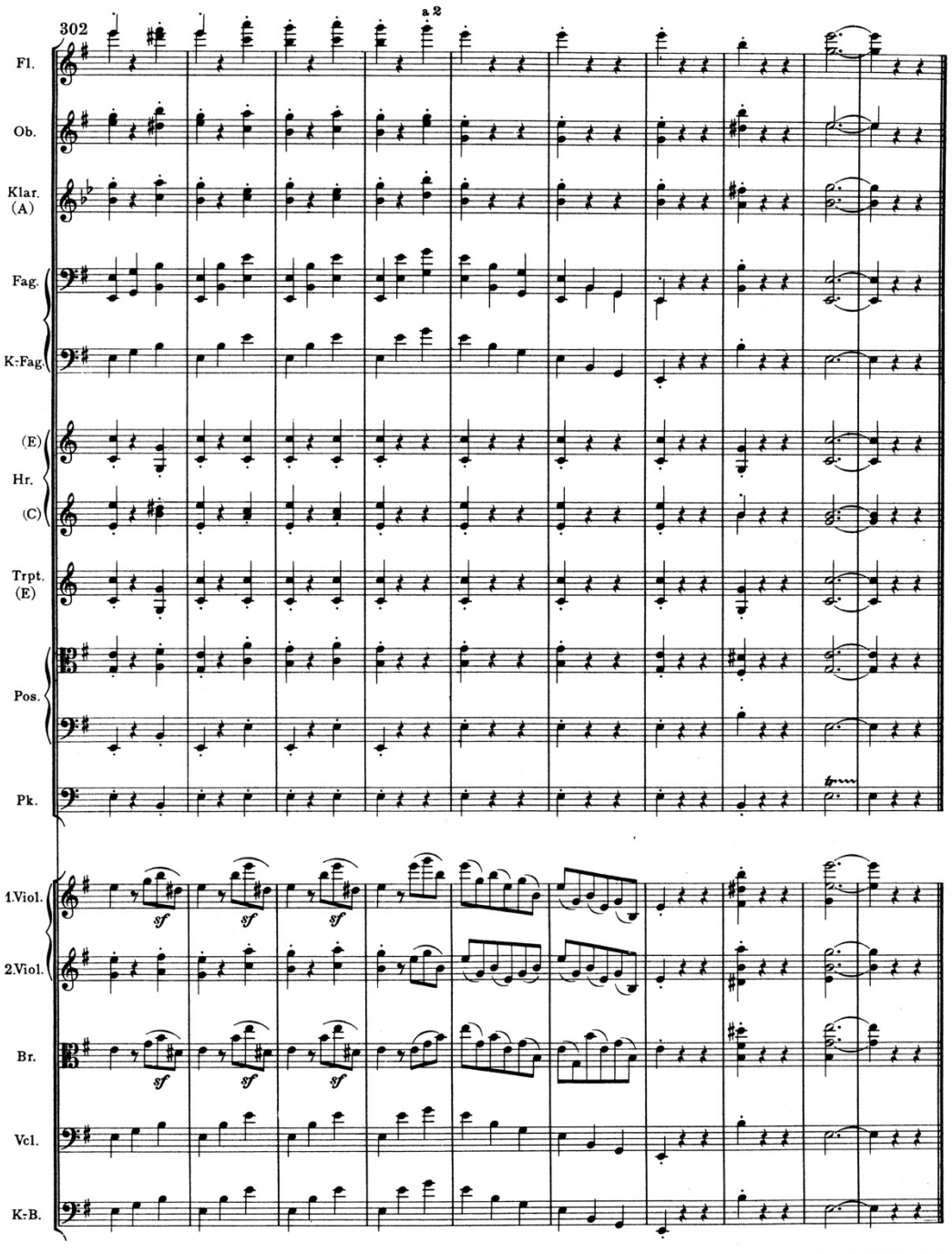

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J.B.4

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