Texting and Driving

for solo guitar

Aaron Gervais

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for solo guitar

Aaron Gervais

October 2007, rev. April 2008

Duration: 9’00

for Paul Bowman

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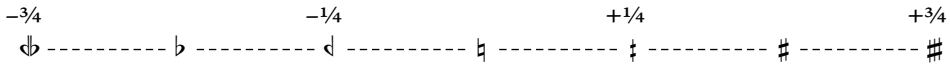
About the Title

Always on. Instantaneous. No down time. Available. Abbreviated. Abuse of exclamation marks. Multi-tasking. Fragmentation. Illegal? Dangerous... In-the-moment. Multiple directions. Too many variables to consider at once. Impatient. Faster. Abstraction. Concrete. Asphalt. Following distance. Reaction time.

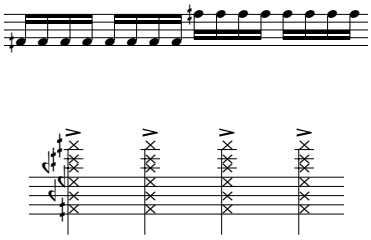
Notation

Accidentals are used in the conventional manner, although cautionary accidentals are added occasionally.

The following chart demonstrates the quartertone notational system used:



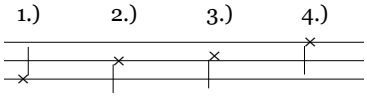
Quartertone accidentals are used in the following two ways:



1.) Create the quartertone by bending the string. In this case, finger an F and bend up to the F♯. The resulting pitch is the same as the notated pitch.

2.) Since these notes are muted, it is not possible to bend them into position. Instead, touch the string halfway between the two frets. In this example, all the strings are barred halfway between XIII and XIV. The resulting pitch is *not* the same as the notated pitch.

In the first movement, a three-line staff is used to denote percussive non-pitched sounds to be played on the guitar:



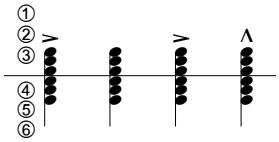
1.) Strike the body of the guitar with the thumb of the right hand, above the sound hole.

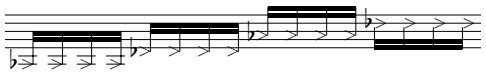
2.) Strike the strings with the fingers or thumb of the right hand, over the sound hole. The choice of whether to use the fingers or the thumb for this stroke is left to the performer's discretion. It will depend on the fingering for the passage immediately preceding/following the stroke.

3.) Strike the strings with the fingers of the left hand, over the fretboard. This stroke is *only* used following stroke (2). After playing (2), keep the right hand on the strings, and then strike the strings with the left hand. This should produce a dull metallic thud. Avoid creating hammer-on or bitone effects. None of these strokes should ever produce a pitched sound.

4.) Strike the body of the guitar with the fingers of the right hand, below the sound hole.

In the third movement, a one line staff is used where conventional notation would be cumbersome. Each notehead represents a string, with the middle line dividing strings ①②③ from ④⑤⑥. In this way, the rhythms and strings are provided, as well as any articulations or dynamics. Pitch is indicated using fret diagrams (described below).

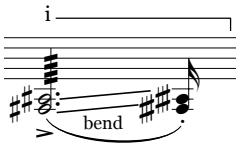




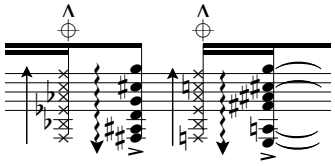
Hammer-ons: These should be noisy pitched attacks. Allow bitones and fret noise to sound.

X-shaped notehead: Mute the string by touching it at the specified location with the left hand. Do not depress the string. Harmonics may sound with certain fingerings, but do not attempt to emphasize them.

Double mute: When the mute sign ⊕ is provided above x-shaped noteheads, place an additional finger(s) on the string, behind the muting finger. This double mute is used to stop harmonics from sounding. The result should be a dull thudding sound.

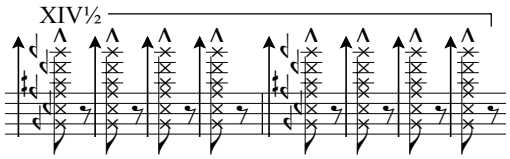


One-finger tremolo: Play the tremolo using one finger (*i* is suggested, but another finger can be substituted). The finger should move back and forth quickly over the strings, creating a rapid tremolo. The resulting sound should be similar to a mandolin tremolo played with a plectrum.

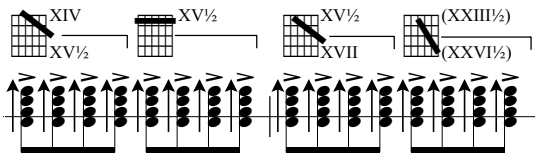


Straight arrow: Fast strum, in the direction of the arrow. All pitches should sound simultaneously.

Wavy arrow: Arpeggio, in the direction of the arrow. Each note should sound individually.



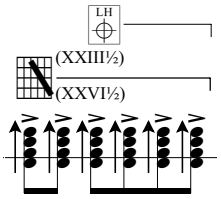
Quartertone fret numbering: Here, the symbol XIV½ is used to show that the strings are to be muted halfway between XIV and XV, as in the second quartertone example above.



Slide-placement fret diagrams (third movement): Standard guitar chord diagrams are used to show the slide position. ⑥ is on the left and ① is on the right of the diagram. The thick dark line shows the placement of the slide on the fretboard. Fret numbers give the starting and ending positions for the placement of the slide. Therefore, in the first diagram shown here, one end of the slide touches ④ at XIV and the other end touches ① at XV½. ⑤ and ⑥ are not used (this is indicated by the four noteheads on the staff).

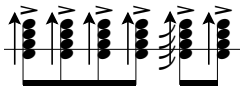
When the slide is straight (barred; as in the second diagram), only one fret number is given, because the slide rests entirely on that fret. (In this case, it rests between two frets.)

When the slide extends beyond the end of the fretboard (fourth diagram), imaginary fret numbers are given in parentheses. In this way, it is still possible to calculate the correct placement of the slide and the resulting pitches by ear.



Left-hand palm mute: In the last section of the piece, the slide is played by bringing the left arm over and around the neck of the guitar, so that the arm is above the fretboard (elbow near the head, hand near the soundhole). Because this passage is played *fff*, the strings will create a loud jangling or buzzing as they vibrate against the slide. This jangling sound is the desired default sound.

When the jangling sound is *not* desired, the left-hand palm mute symbol is employed, as shown here starting on the third eighth-note. While holding the slide against the strings with the thumb and fingers of the left hand, also place the palm of the left hand against the strings so that they do not jangle. The resulting sound will be similar to a ukulele or other small plucked string instrument.



Slide into next sonority: The curved lines before the fifth eighth-note signify a quick glissando from one sonority to another, produced right before the attack of the second sonority.

All other non-standard notation is explained directly in the score.

for Paul Bowman

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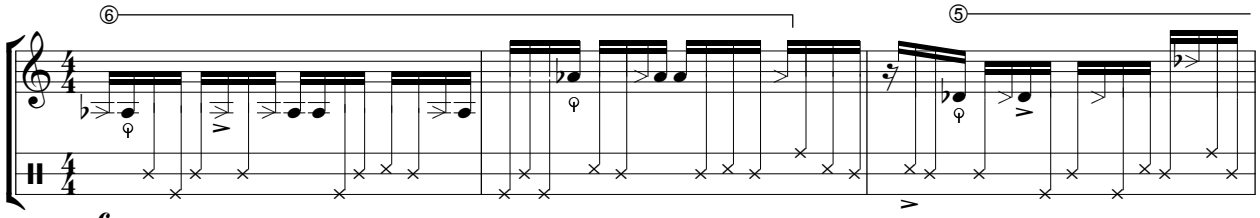
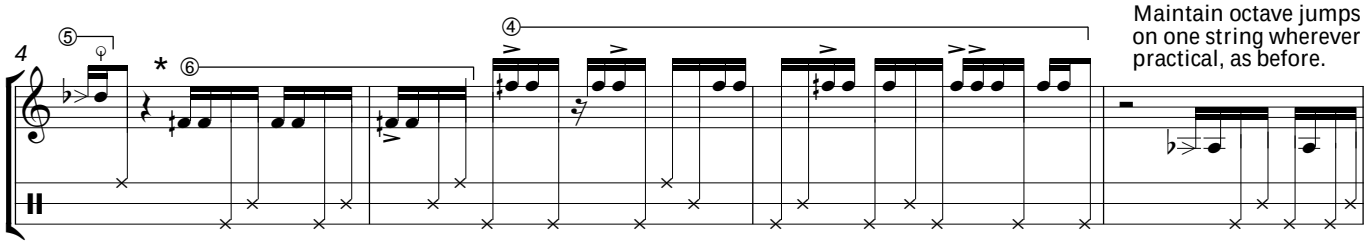
I

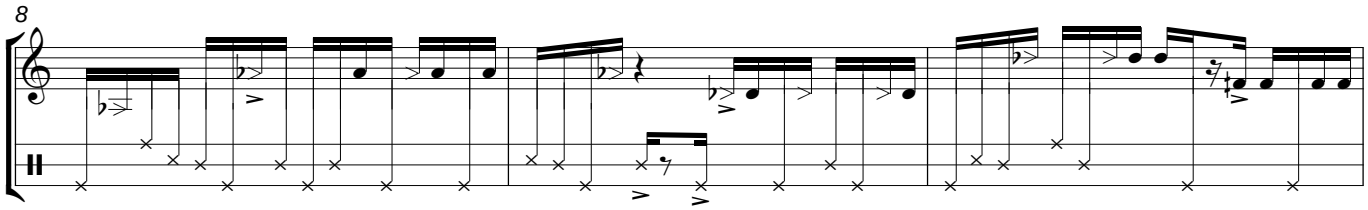
Aaron Gervais

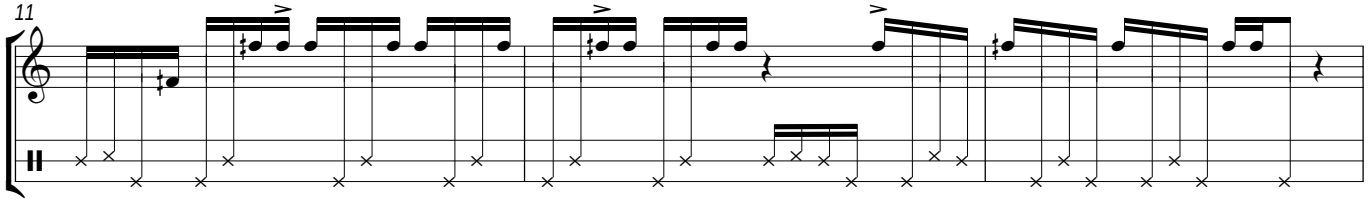
Moderate ♩. = 84-96

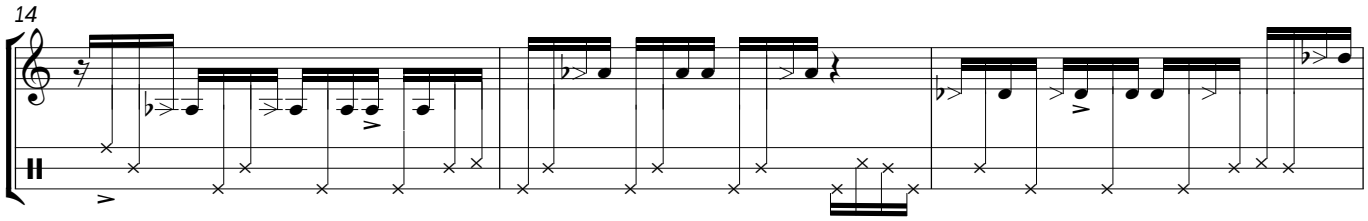


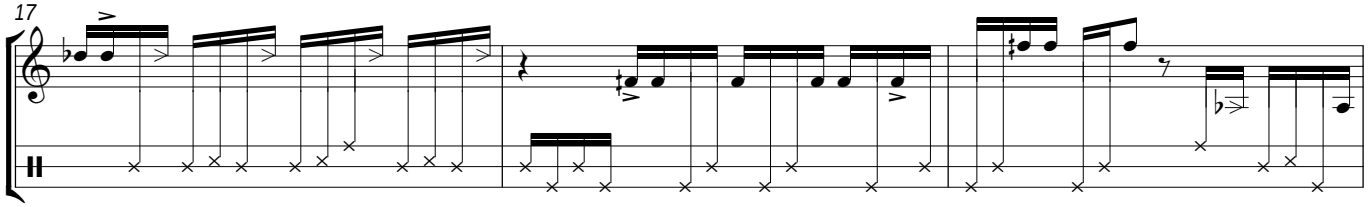
f *blunt, playful*
sempre senza vibrato











* See note in preface on quartertones.

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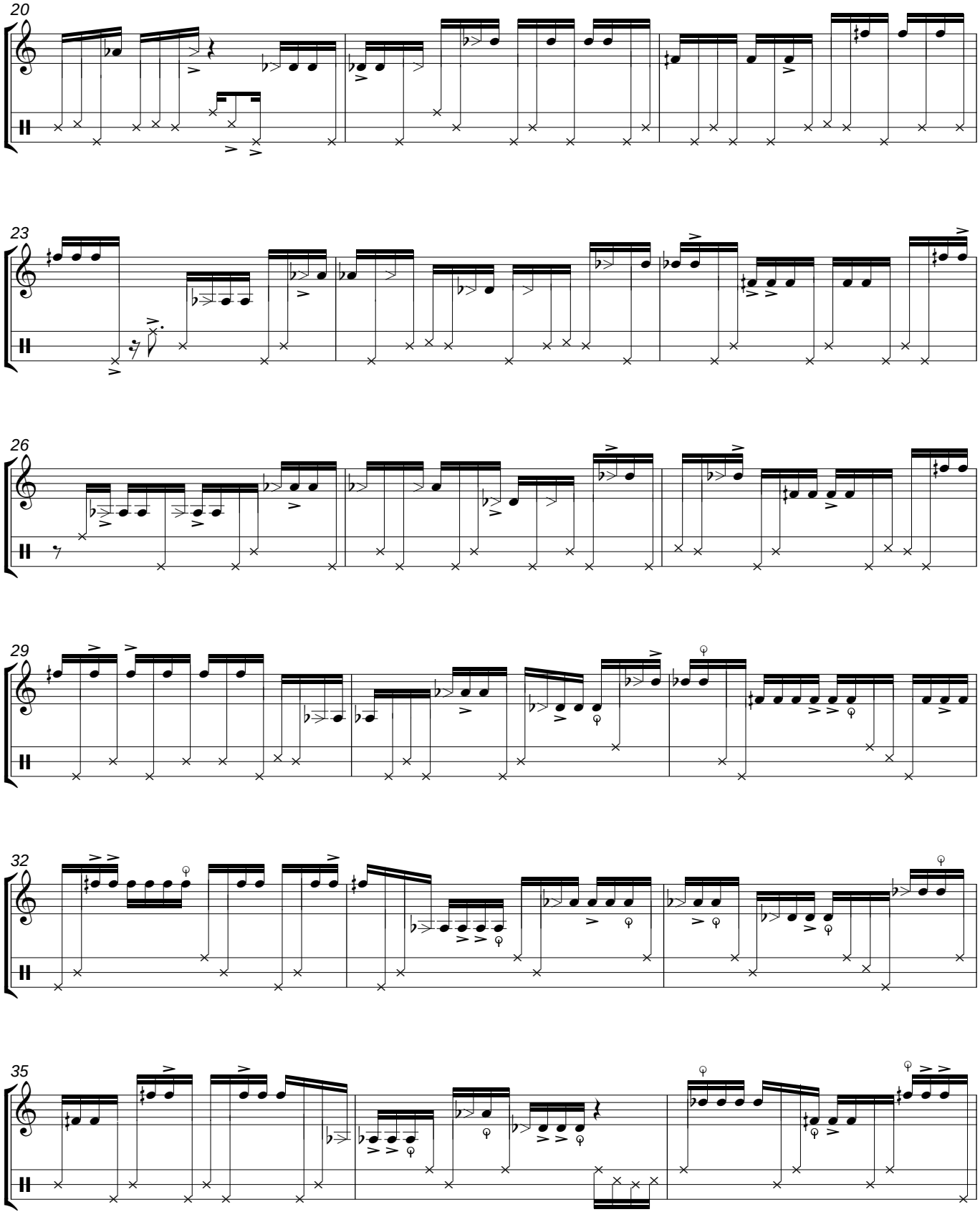
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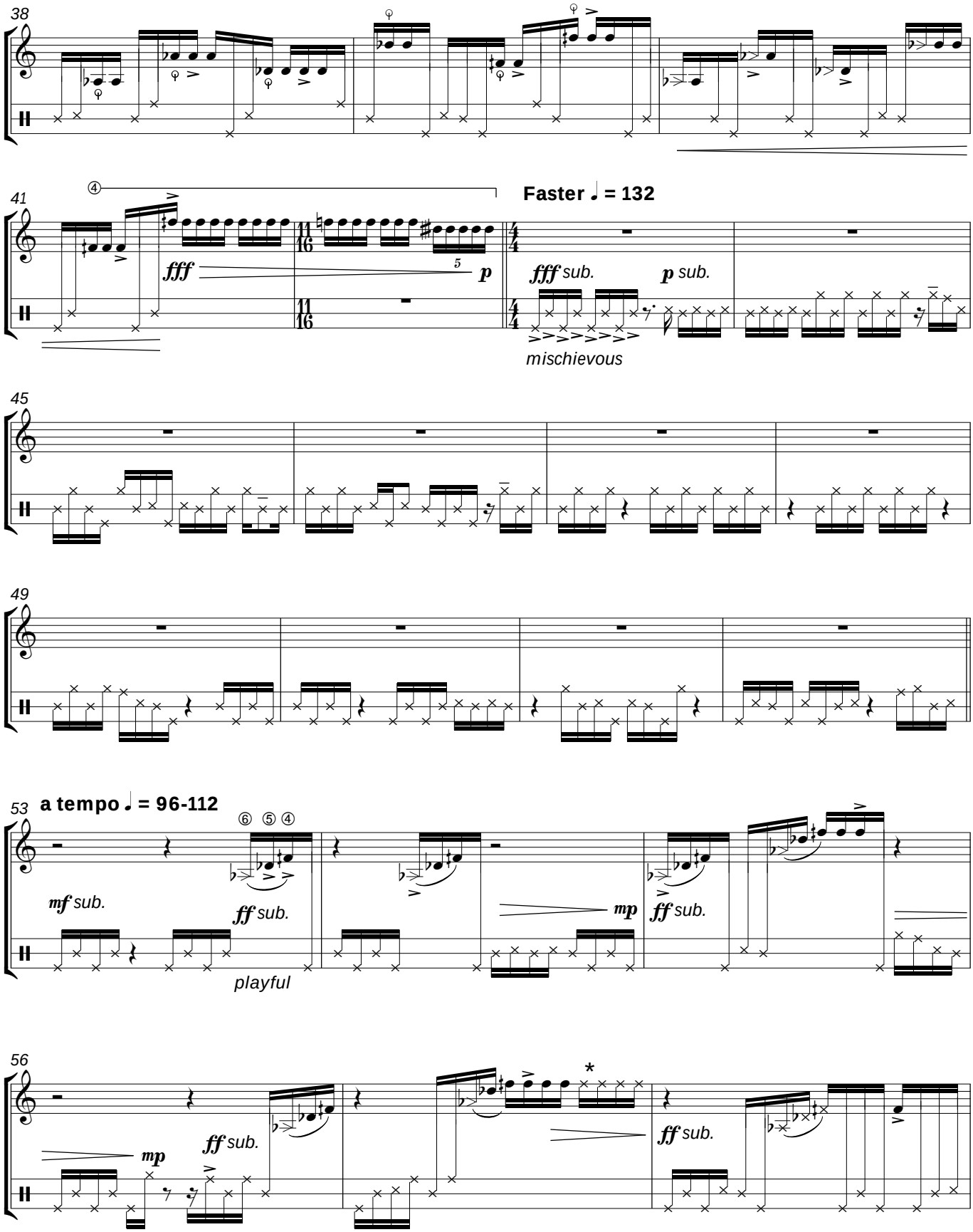
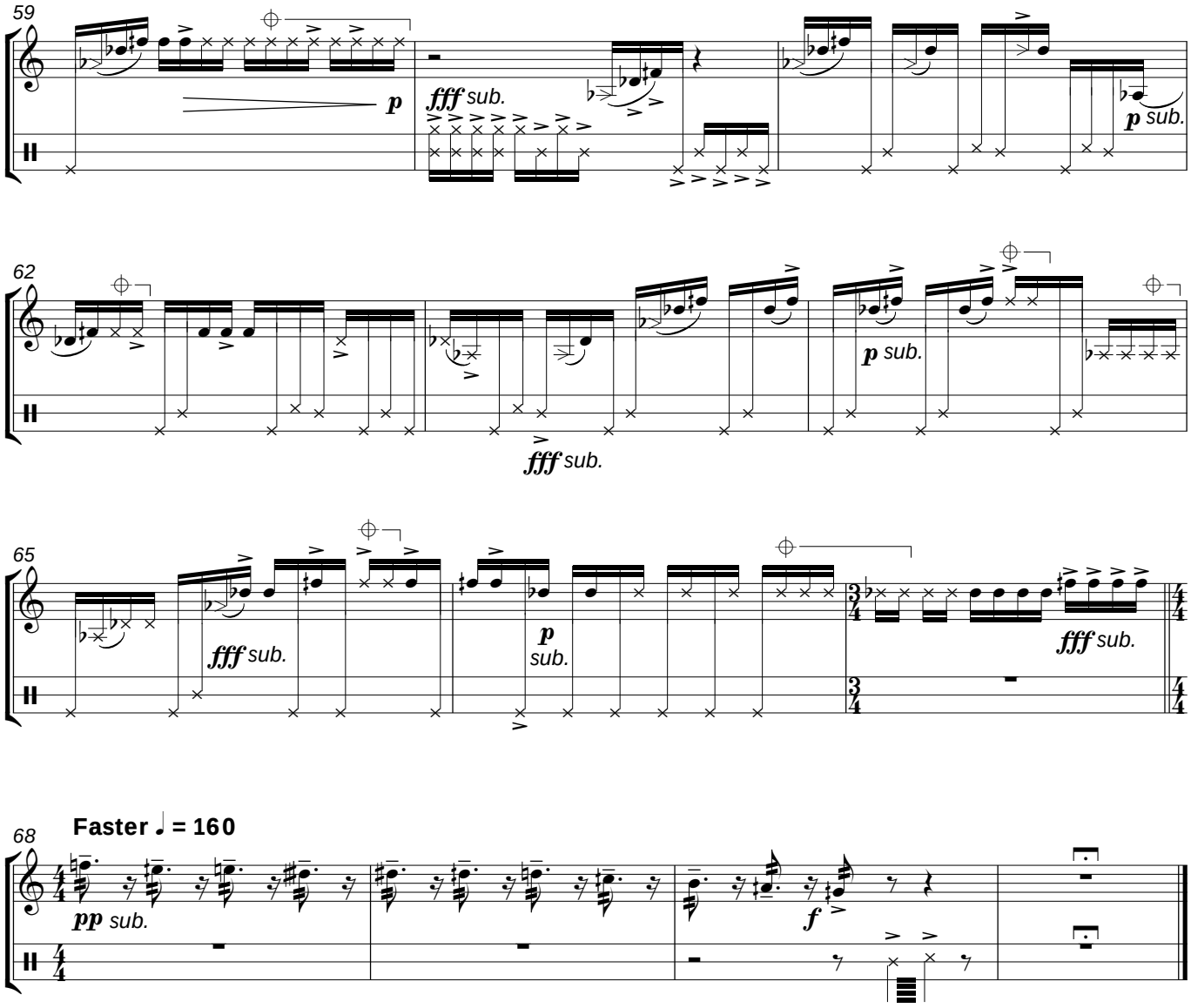
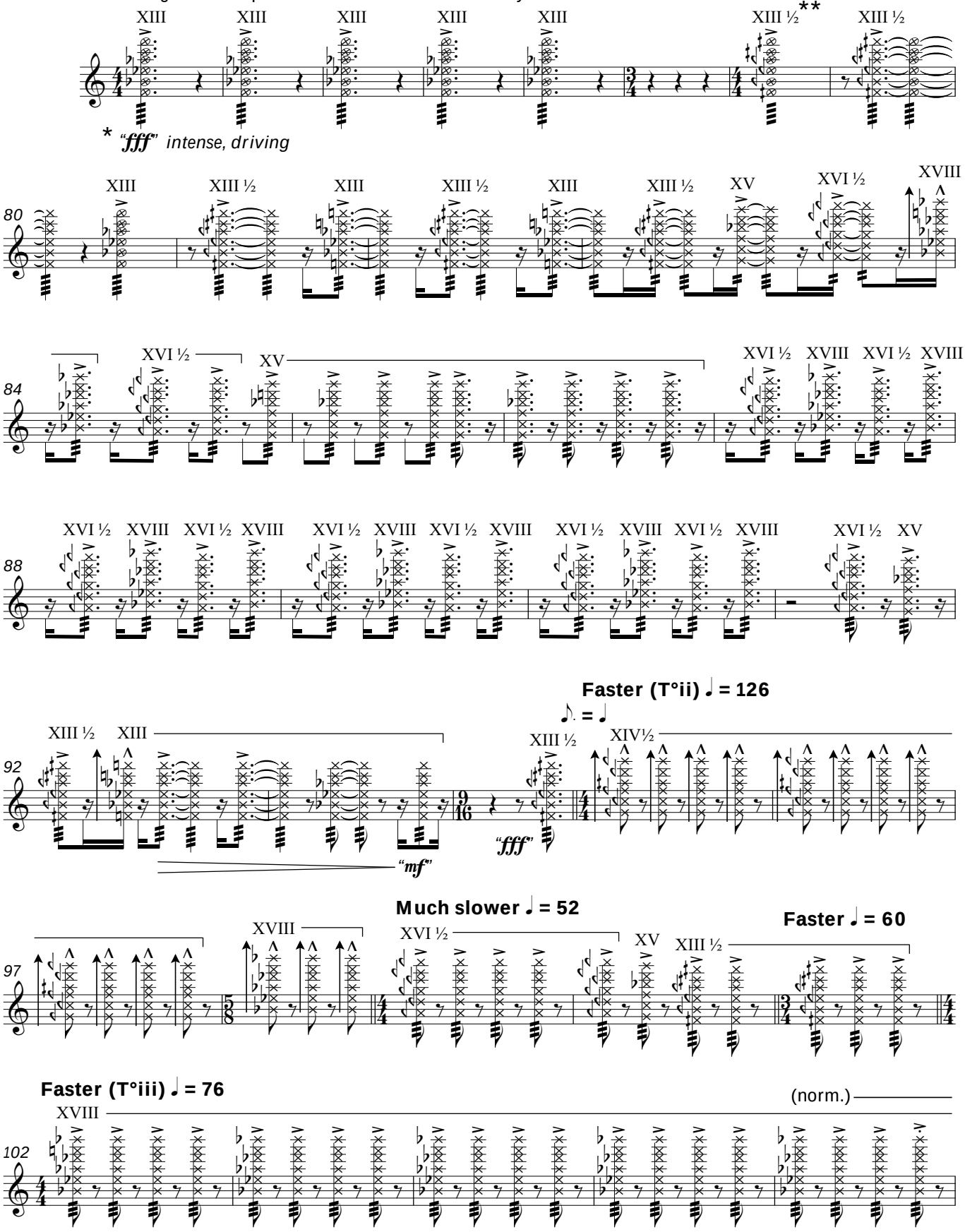


* Touch string halfway between XV and XVI. Do not bend string. See preface for more details.


59
p
fff sub.
p sub.
62
p sub.
fff sub.
65
fff sub.
p
sub.
fff sub.
68
Faster ♩ = 160
pp sub.
f

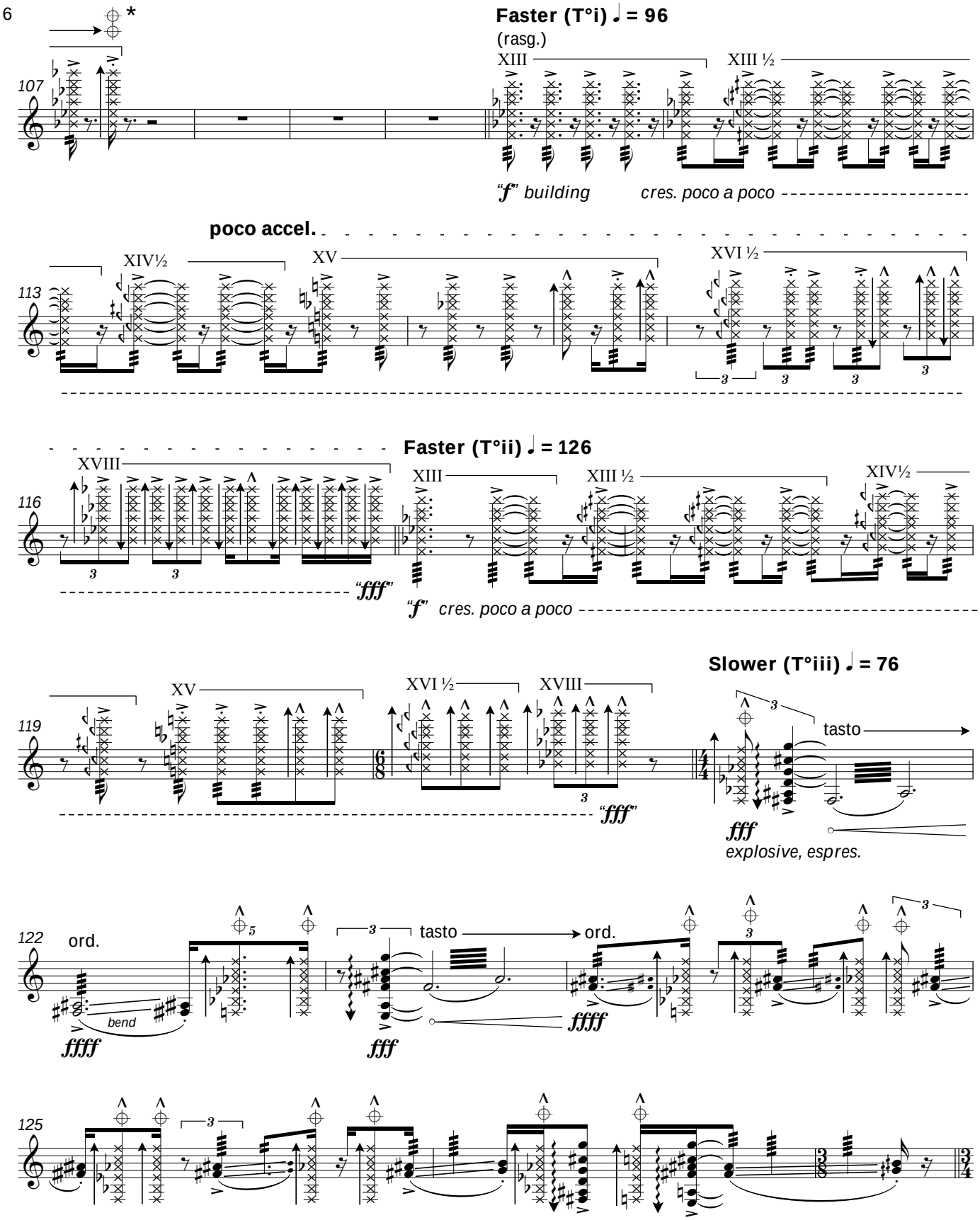
Moderate (T°i) ♩ = 96

rasgueado sempre: maintain a consistent intensity for each duration

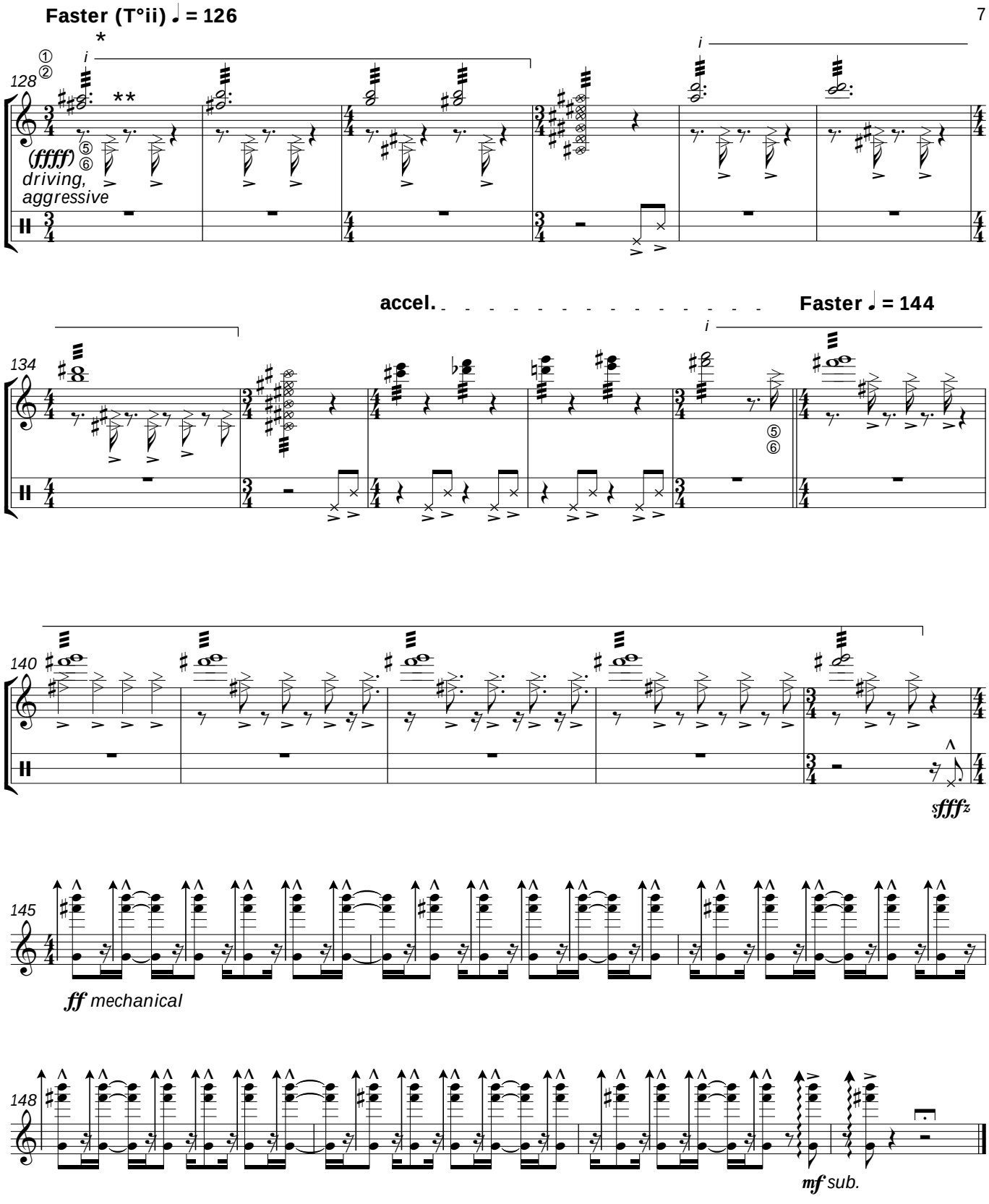


* Play with the effort of ***fff*** although the resulting sound may be much quieter.

** Touch string halfway between XIII and XIV. Do not bend string. See preface for more details.



* Gradually more muted until the sonority is entirely choked by the left hand.



* One-finger tremolo, in order to create the effect of a fast, out-of-tempo rhythm, as opposed to the blur of a rasgueado.

** Do hammer-ons as bars with finger 1. Aim for a percussive sound with little pitch. The hammer-ons should be the foreground material in this section, but the hammer-on pitches are approximate and can be altered for the sake of fingering. The number of strings struck with each hammer-on is not important. Aim for the bottom two, but it is fine to strike more than that.

III

Fast ♩ = 132

② sul tasto
③ metal slide
④ *

p *light, dancing*

155 metal slide

158 metal slide

161 metal slide

164 metal slide

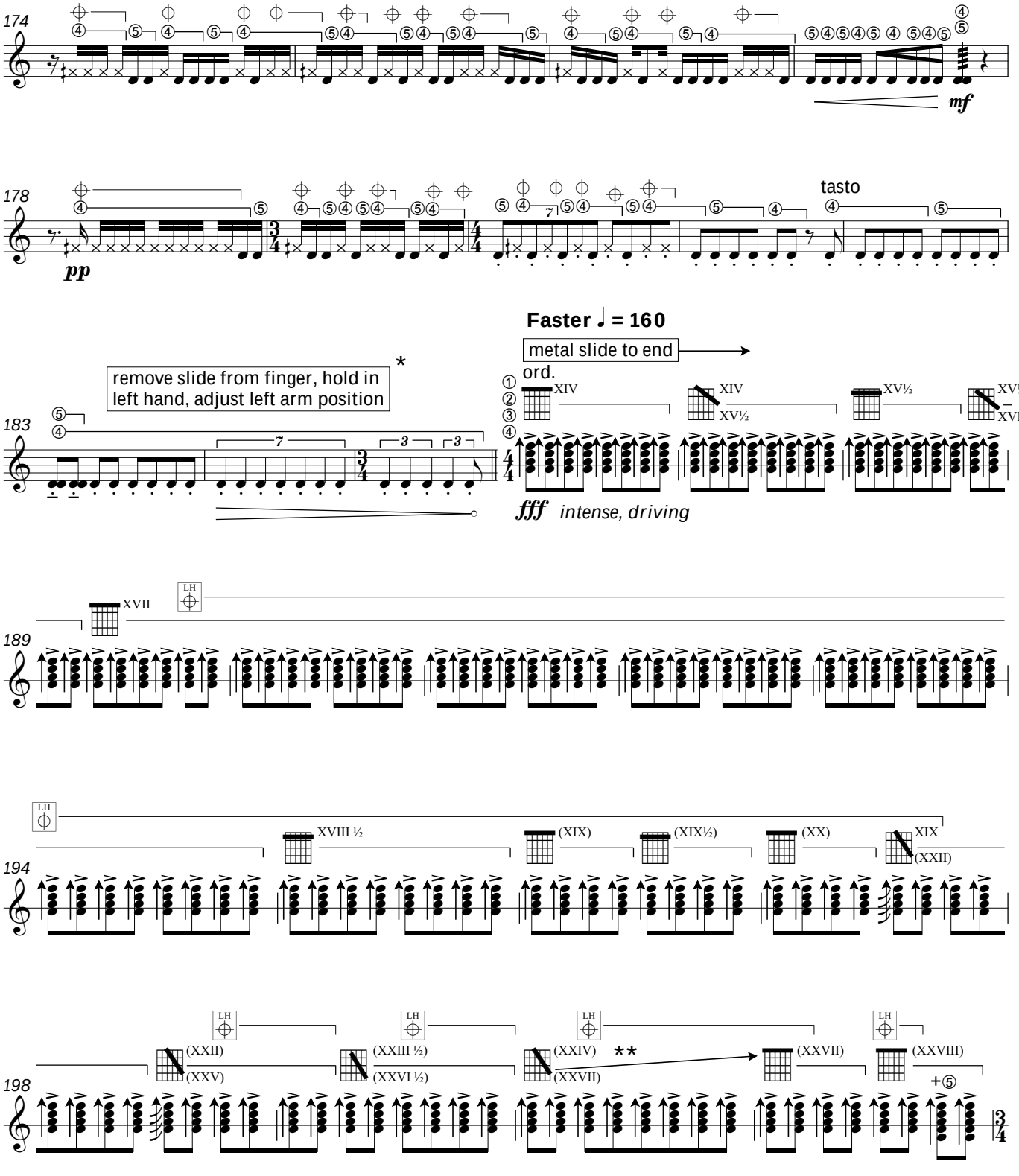
167 (tasto) ① ② ③ ④ ord.
metal slide

mf ***ff*** ***mf*** *playful*

171 ④ ⑤ ④ ⑤ ④ ⑤ ④ ⑤ ④ ⑤ ④

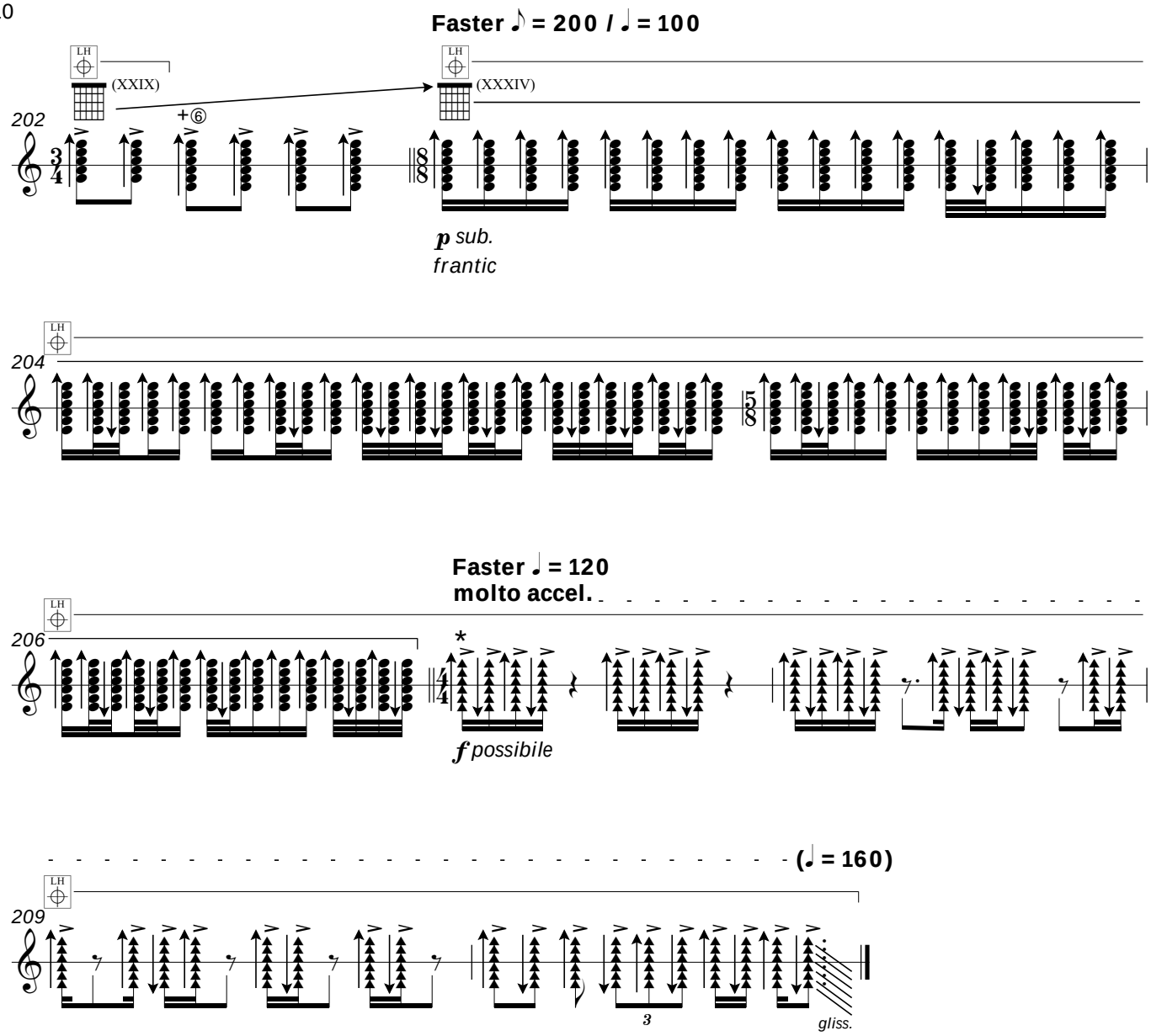
pp *sub.*

* Use the slide to create a slow continuous glissando. Adjust slide pressure to avoid fret buzzing as much as possible. Finger the stationary note with another finger.



* Remove slide from finger and hold with the thumb and fingers of the left hand. Bring the left arm around the back of the neck and over the fretboard, so that the arm is parallel to the fretboard (elbow near the head and hand near the soundhole). The left hand should now be free to place the slide at any angle and at any point along the strings.

** Gradually change from the first slide position to the second one. The result should be a glissando at a different rate on each string.



* Highest note possible on each string.