Ball of Sardines

This version of ‘Ball of Sardines’ is an arrangement of a piece that I am currently writing for gamelan.

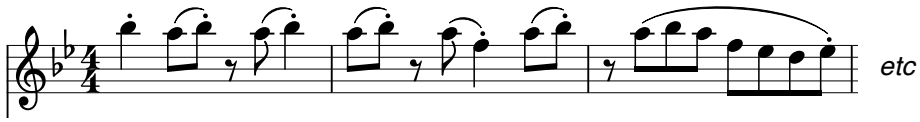
Last year, Gamelan Naga Mas, the Glasgow Gamelan Group, created and performed to great acclaim ‘Gamelan Untethered’, an audiovisual exploration of our place in the cosmos, combining gamelan with western instruments, voice, and video. We are currently working on another show, this time on a theme of the sea: ‘Ball of Sardines’, in it’s gamelan version, is likely to be part of that show. A midi demo of that version can be heard here:

http://jsimonvanderwalt.com/2015/12/31/working-on-new-music-for-gamelan/

Performance notes

The ***kethuk*** is a gamelan instrument: a horizontal kettle-gong, with a dull, vaguely-pitched sound not unlike a cowbell, and with a similar time-keeping function. The conductor is asked to play this instrument instead of beating time. I think this will work fine, although you will need a music stand that can hold five sheets, or a conductor’s page turner. In rehearsal, substitute a cowbell, temple block or similar: for the performance, I can bring a *kethuk* through, or possibly borrow one from the Edinburgh gamelan.

With regard to the **articulation**, I’ve rather gone to town on the tenuto and staccato markings. These are there for the sake of being absolutely clear which notes are short and which are long. If you think of this as being driving straight-eights jazz rock – or better perhaps prog-rock – you won’t go far wrong. I leave it to the players to figure out the best way to actually articulate this on their instrument: the flute, for instance, might play something more like this:



Following jazz practice, the ^ symbol means a **short** accent, not a heavy one.

Probably obvious, but the ***f*** markings (for the trombone and kethuk in particular) need to be taken in context. It’s more in the nature of a stylistic marking: that this is generally loud-and-fast piece. It doesn’t actually have to be *played* that loud.

There are some bars that may seem to have **beamings and groupings** that are eccentric, wrong, or not written in the way that would be easiest to sight read. This is intended to convey the polyrhymic nature of certain passages: the 3/2 bar in particular is like an Indian *tihai*, and should be felt as 2+3+2+3+2 over a steady pulse.

It occurs to me that the flute and violin might like to try **the climactic final four bars** up the octave? Could even busk in an upward rushing scale in b64, rather like what the violin has at b43?

Duration 2’10

J Simon van der Walt
24 Jan 2016

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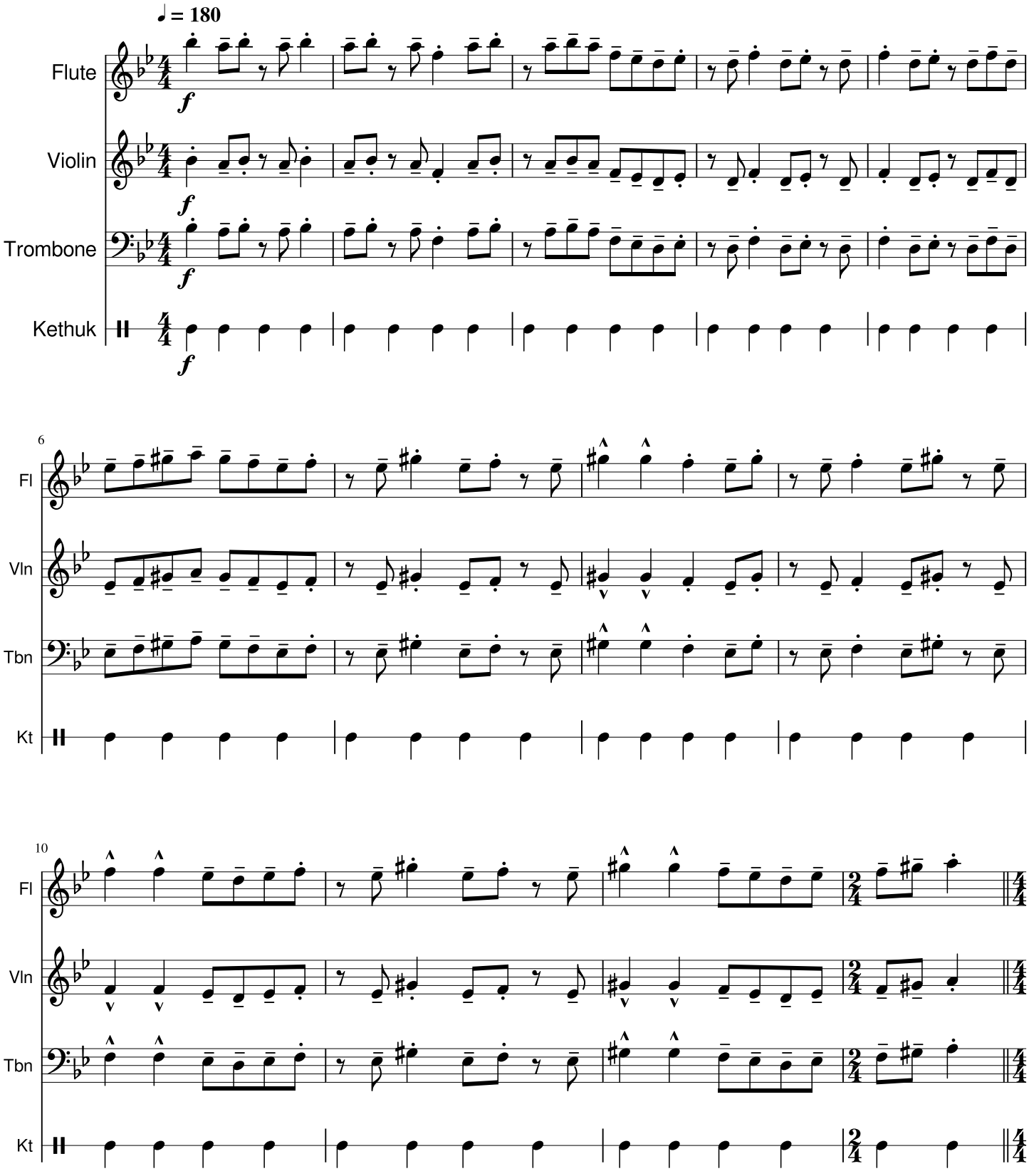
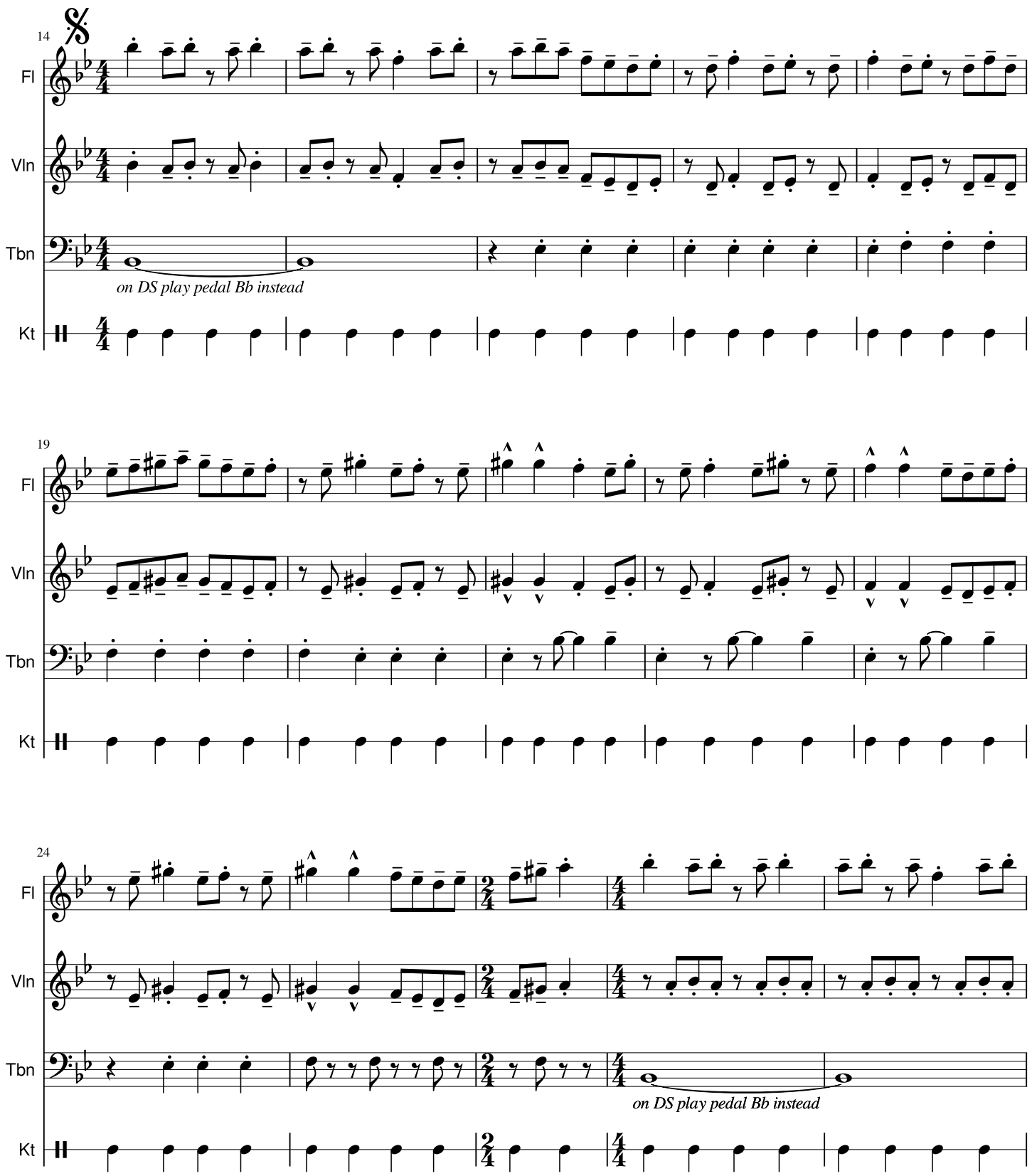
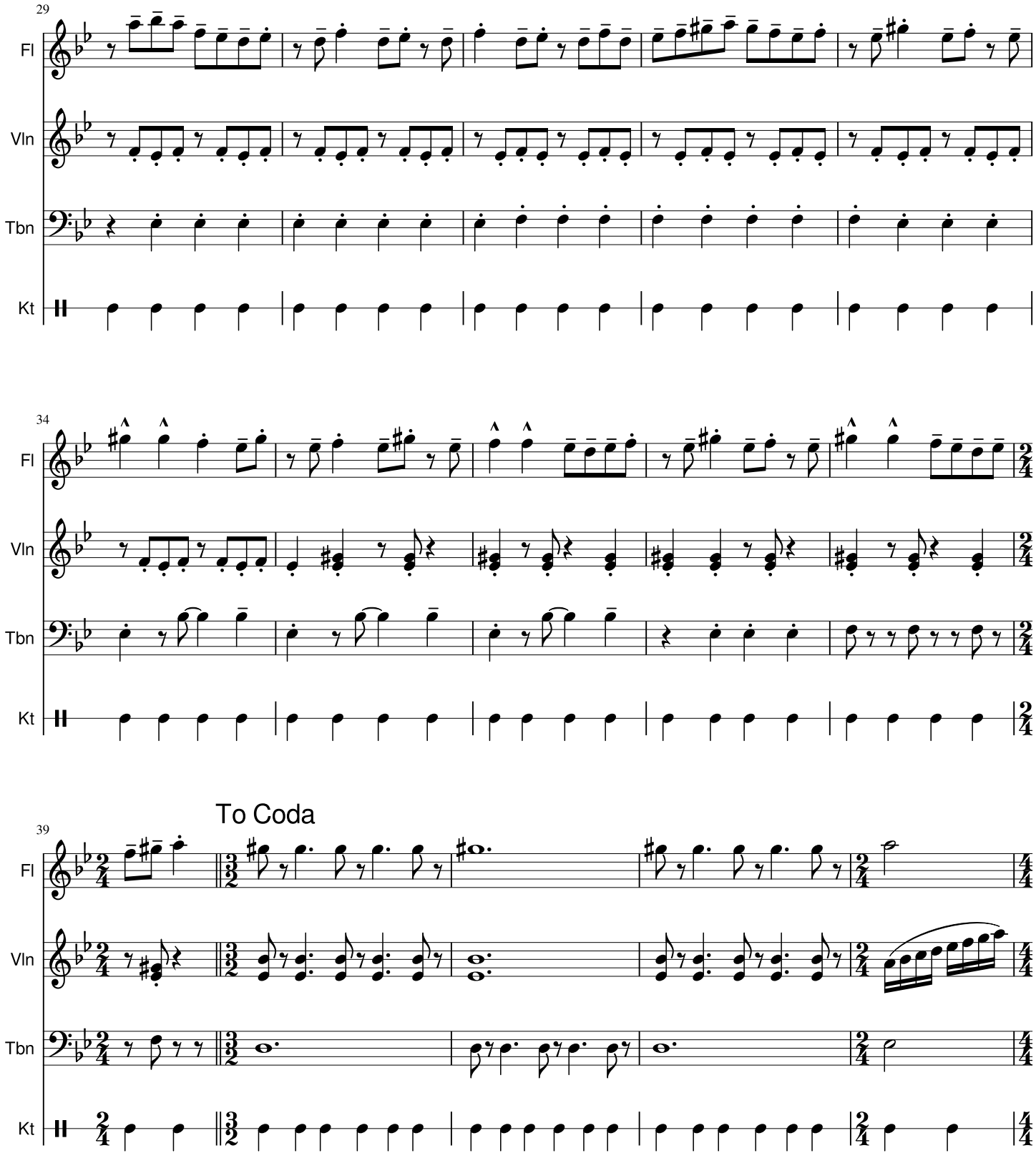
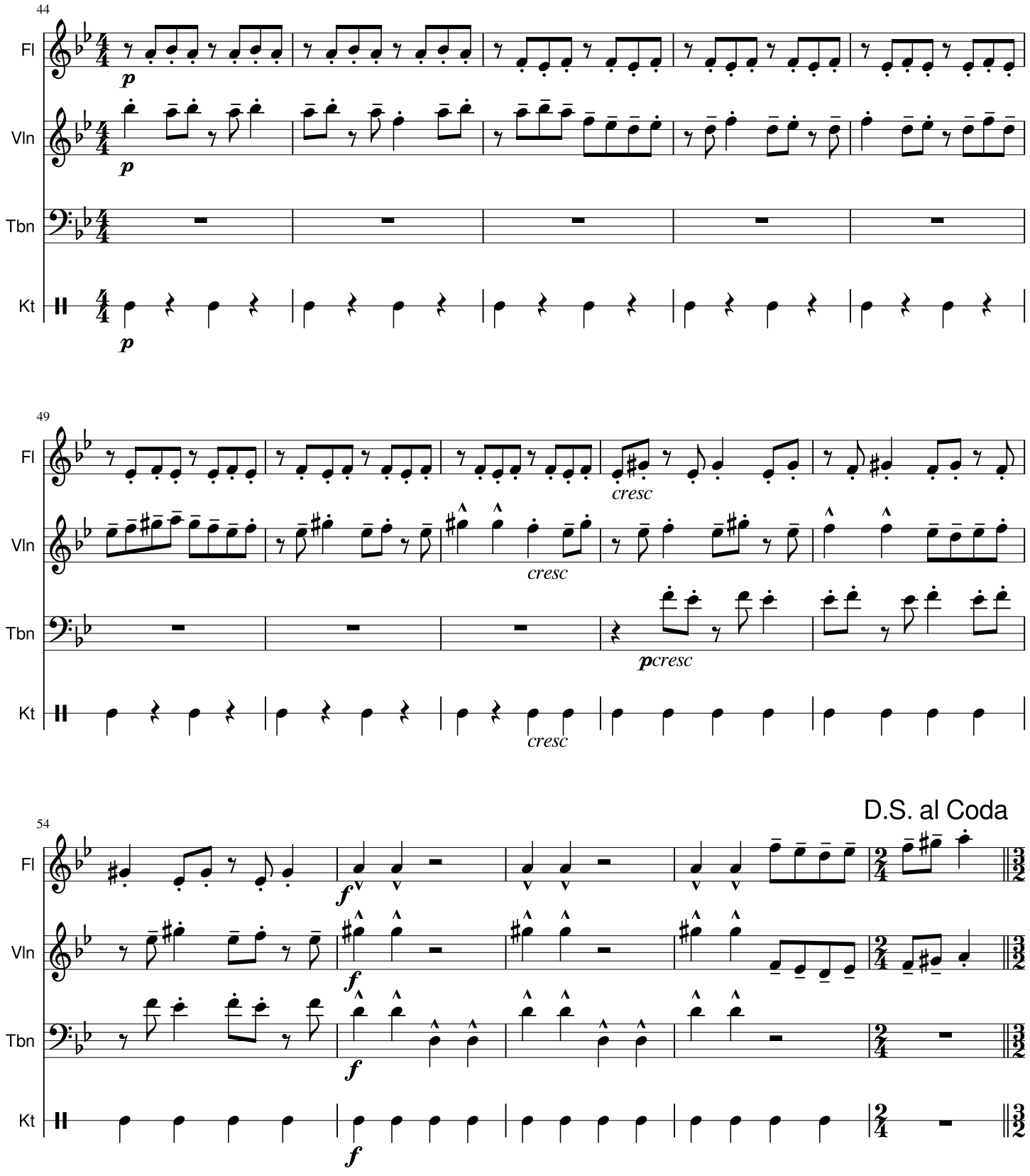
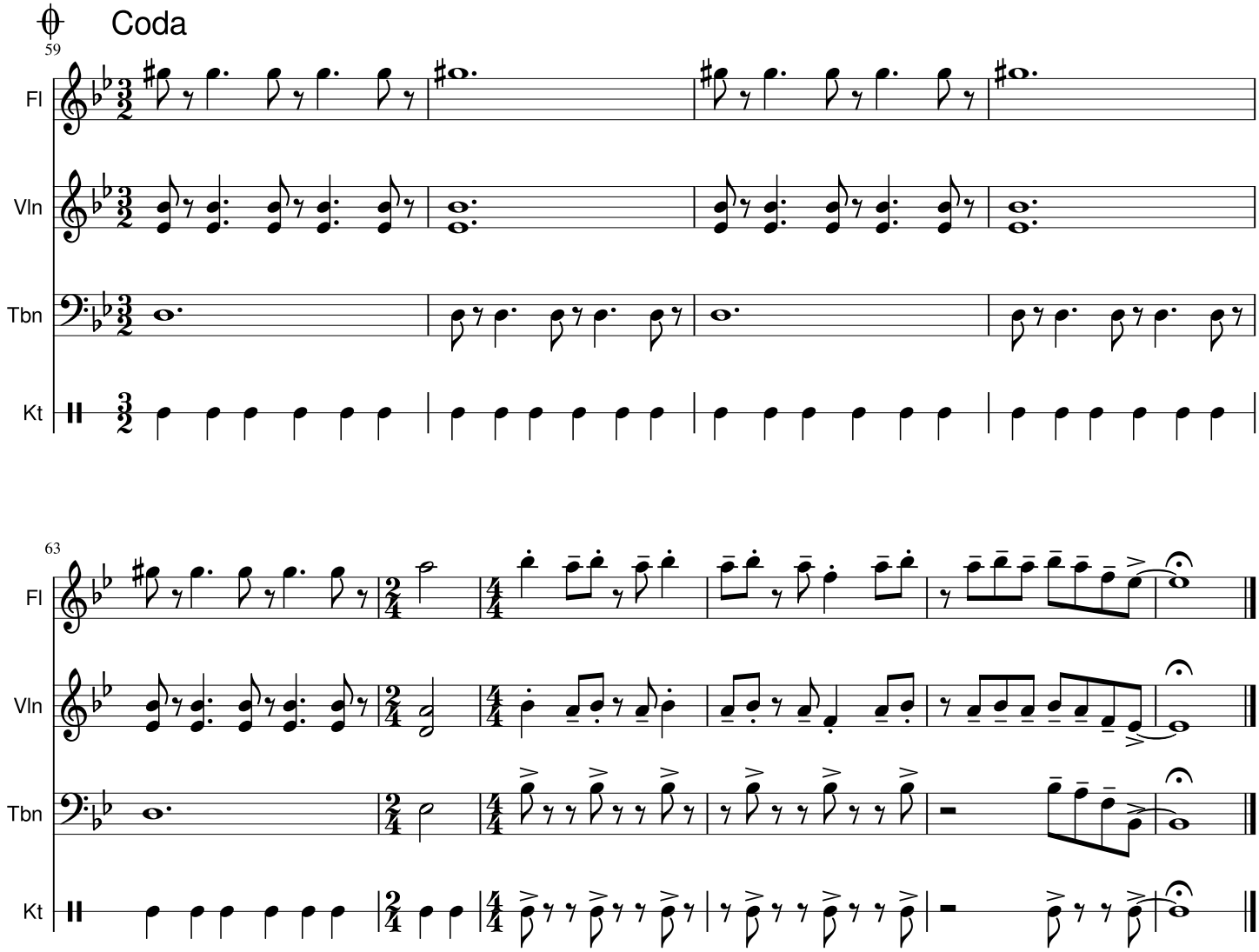



14
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
on DS play pedal Bb instead
19
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
24
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
on DS play pedal Bb instead


29
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
34
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
To Coda
39
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt


44
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
p
49
cresc
pcresc
54
D.S. al Coda
f


Coda
59
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt
63
Fl
Vln
Tbn
Kt