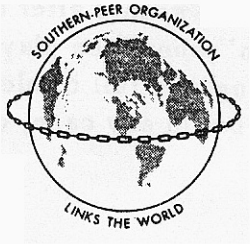
THE UNANSWERED QUESTION

CHARLES E. IVES

FOR CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

(PERFORMABLE ALSO AS CHAMBER MUSIC)



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FOREWORD

The parts of the flute quartet may be taken by two flutes, upper staff, oboe and clarinet, lower staff. The trumpet part may be played by an English horn, an oboe or clarinet, if not playing in "The Answers." The string quartet or string orchestra *(con sordini)*, if possible, should be "off stage", or away from the trumpet and flutes. The trumpet should use a mute unless playing in a very large room, or with a larger string orchestra. If more than four strings, a basso may play with the 'cellos (8va basso). The strings play ppp throughout with no change in tempo. They are to represent "The Silences of the Druids – Who Know, See and Hear Nothing." The trumpet intones "The Perennial Question of Existence", and states it in the same tone of voice each time. But the hunt for "The Invisible Answer" undertaken by the flutes and other human beings, becomes gradually more active, faster and louder through an *animando* to a *con fuoco*. This part need not be played in the exact time position indicated. It is played in somewhat of an impromptu way; if there be no conductor, one of the flute players may direct their playing. "The Fighting Answerers", as the time goes on, and after a "secret conference", seem to realize a futility, and begin to mock "The Question" – the strife is over for the moment. After they disappear, "The Question" is asked for the last time, and "The Silences" are heard beyond in "Undisturbed Solitude."

The flutes will end their part approximately near the position indicated in the string score; but in any case, "The Last Question" should not be played by the trumpet until "The Silences" of the strings in the distance have been heard for a measure or two. The strings will continue their last chord for two measures or so after the trumpet stops. If the strings shall have reached their last chord before the trumpet plays "The Last Question", they will hold it through and continue after, as suggested above. During some of the louder passages of the flutes, the strings may not be heard, and it is not important that they should be. "The Answers" may be played somewhat sooner after each "Question" than indicated in the score, but "The Question" should be played no sooner for that reason. If a large string orchestra is playing, the full treble woodwind choir may be used at the discretion of the conductor, but in any case, only one trumpet plays.

C. E. I.

INSTRUMENTATION

Flute I
Flute II
Flute III (or Oboe)
Flute IV (or Clarinet)

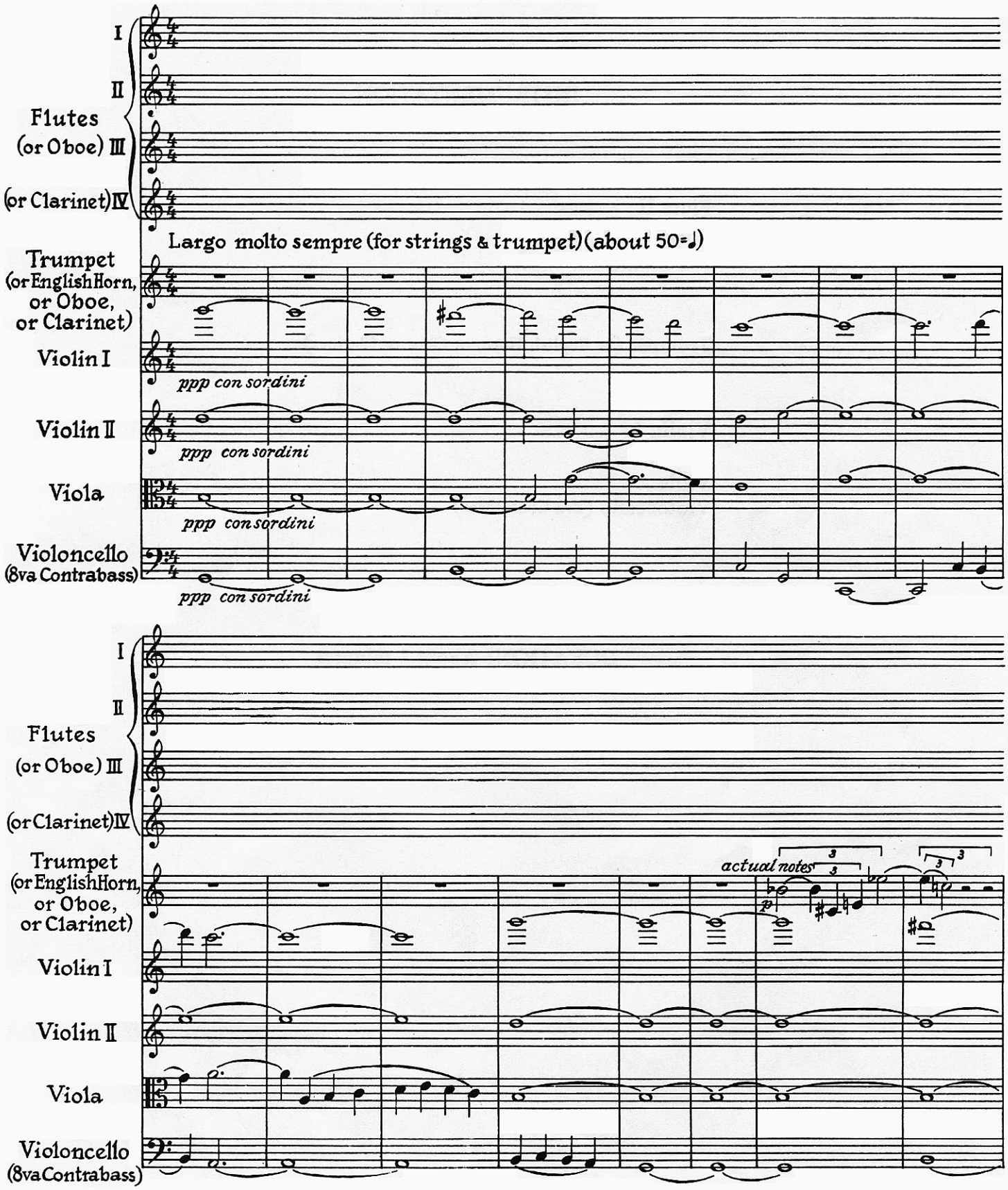
Trumpet (or English Horn, or Oboe or Clarinet)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello (8va Contrabass)

DURATION: About 8 minutes

The Unanswered Question

CHARLES E. IVES
(1908)



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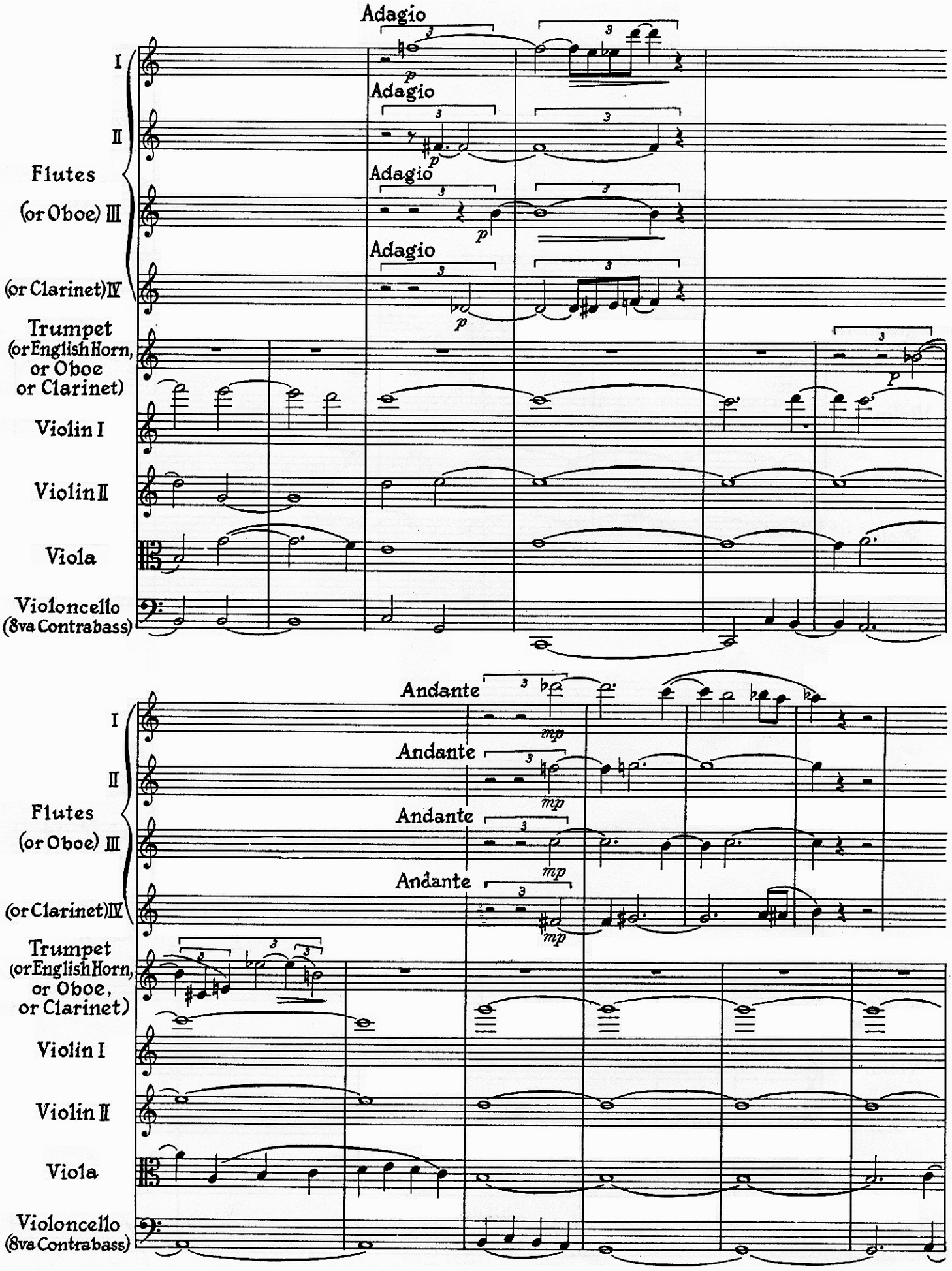
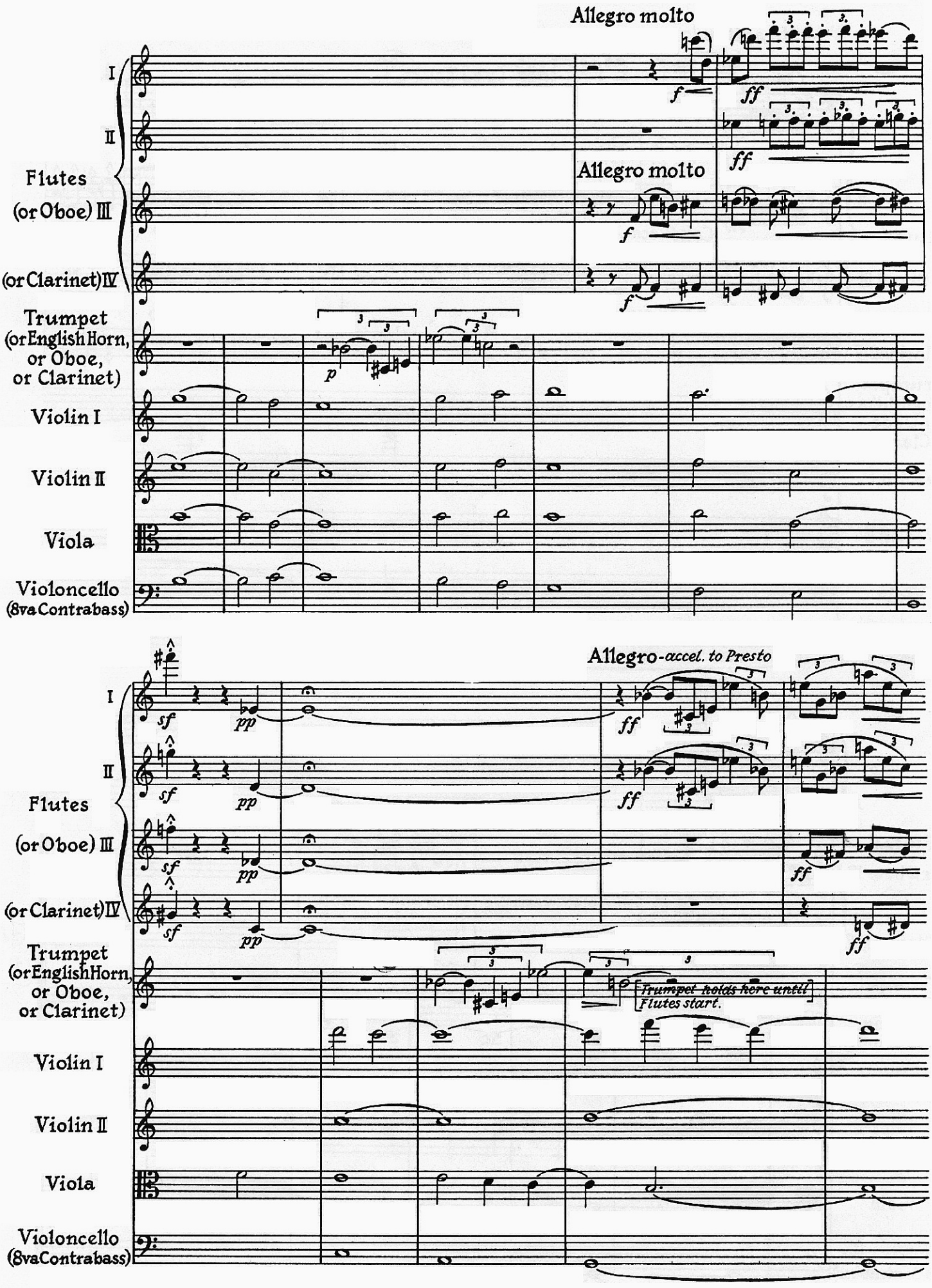
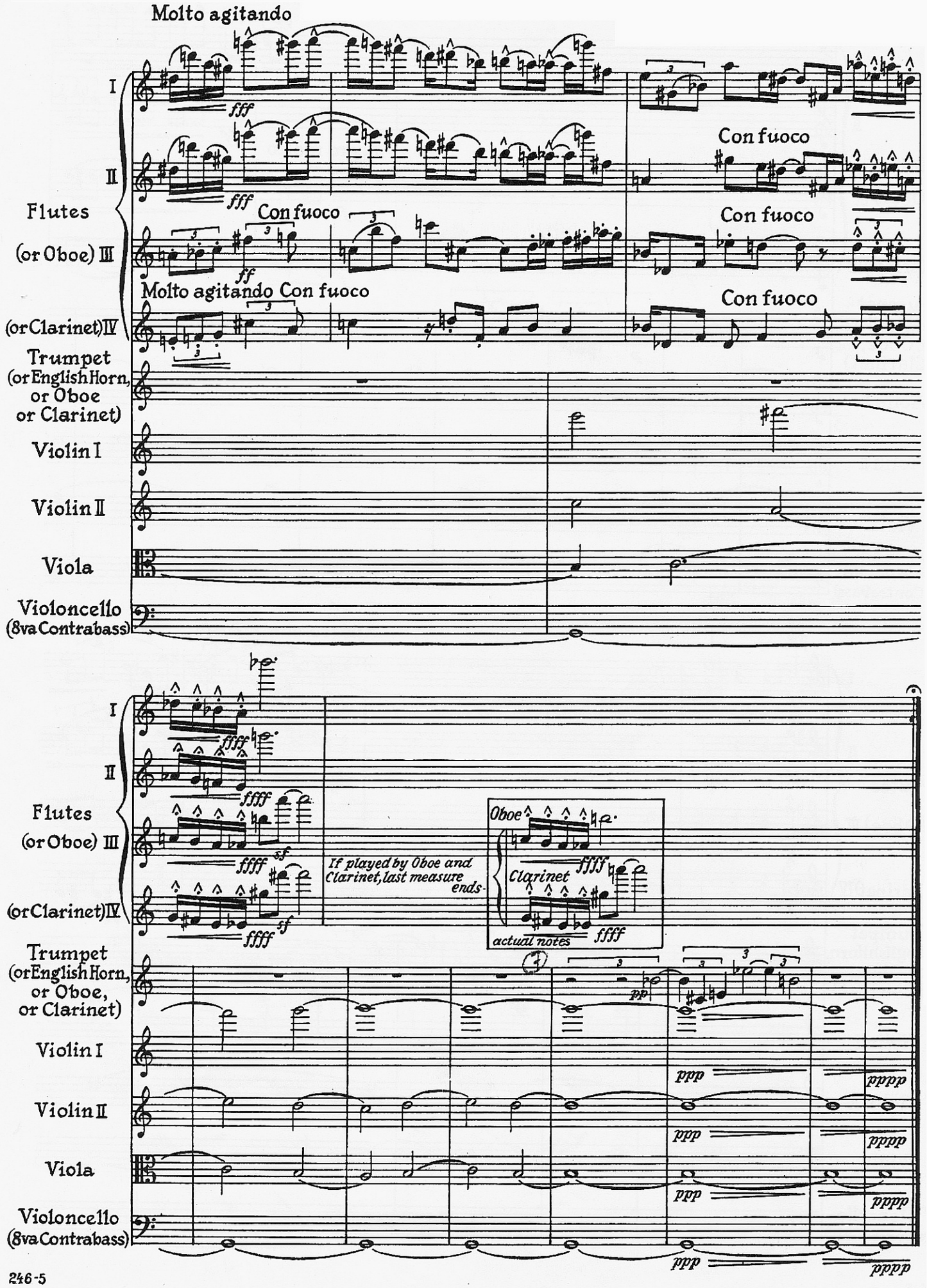

Adagio
Adagio
Adagio
Adagio
I
II
Flutes
(or Oboe) III
(or Clarinet) IV
Trumpet
(or English Horn,
or Oboe
or Clarinet)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
(8va Contrabass)
Andante
Andante
Andante
Andante
I
II
Flutes
(or Oboe) III
(or Clarinet) IV
Trumpet
(or English Horn,
or Oboe,
or Clarinet)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
(8va Contrabass)


Allegro molto
Flutes
I
II
(or Oboe) III
(or Clarinet) IV
Trumpet
(or English Horn, or Oboe, or Clarinet)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
(8va Contrabass)
Allegro-accel. to Presto
Trumpet holds here until Flutes start.


Molto agitando
I
II
Flutes
(or Oboe) III
(or Clarinet) IV
fff
Con fuoco
ff
Molto agitando Con fuoco
Trumpet
(or English Horn, or Oboe or Clarinet)
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
(8va Contrabass)
ffff
sf
If played by Oboe and Clarinet, last measure ends
Oboe
Clarinet
actual notes
pp
ppp
pppp