DENVER YOUNG ARTISTS ORCHESTRA

colorado symphony association affiliate

2026-2027

Violin Audition Packet

Orchestras

Young Artists Orchestra (YAO)

The Young Artists Orchestra (YAO), the most advanced of our ensembles, is composed of approximately 70 to 80 members and performs four to six concerts annually, including one side-by-side concert with the Colorado Symphony. Concerts are performed in venues such as Boettcher Concert Hall, area churches, and Gates Concert Hall at The Newman Center. Students receive occasional coachings from Colorado Symphony members or university faculty throughout the season and attend a weekend retreat in September. Recent repertoire includes Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 5, Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition*, Price: Concert Overture No. 1, and Shostakovich: Symphony No. 5.

Placement in the Young Artists Orchestra is determined by audition. Membership is open to musicians between the ages of 12 and 23. YAO rehearses Saturday mornings from 9:00am-12:30pm at the University of Denver's Lamont School of Music (2344 E Iliff Ave, Denver).

Conservatory Orchestra (CO)

The Conservatory Orchestra (CO) is our intermediate ensemble for students who aspire to grow musically towards YAO. Composed of approximately 60 to 70 members, the Conservatory Orchestra performs three to four concerts in conjunction with the String Ensemble and Allegro Strings. Concerts are performed in venues such as Gates Concert Hall at The Newman Center, area churches, and Boettcher Concert Hall. Students receive occasional coachings throughout the season from Colorado Symphony members or university faculty and attend a weekend retreat in September. Recent repertoire includes Arturo Márquez: *Danzón* No. 2, Rimsky-Korsakov: *Capriccio Espagnol*, Sibelius: *Finlandia*, and Mary D. Watkins: *Soul of Remembrance*.

Placement in the Conservatory Orchestra is by audition. Membership is open to musicians between the ages of 10 and 18. Conservatory Orchestra rehearses Monday evenings from 6:30pm-8:30pm at Bethany Lutheran Church (4500 E Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village).

Allegro Strings (AS)

Allegro Strings (AS) is our newest ensemble, having made its debut in the 2024-2025 season. This group is for young string players who are preparing for more advanced orchestral literature and solidifying ensemble playing techniques. Composed of approximately 20 to 30 members, Allegro Strings performs three to four concerts in conjunction with String Ensemble and Conservatory Orchestra. Students receive occasional coachings from Colorado Symphony members or university faculty throughout the season and attend a one-day retreat in September. Recent repertoire includes Still: *Danzas de Panamá* (mvt. II), Holst: *St. Paul's Suite* (mvt. IV), and Saint-Saëns (arr. Hoffman): *Danse Bacchanale*.

Placement in Allegro Strings is determined by audition. Membership is open to musicians between the ages of 10 and 16. Allegro Strings rehearses Monday evenings from 7:00pm-8:30pm at Bethany Lutheran Church (4500 E Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village).

String Ensemble (SE)

The String Ensemble (SE) gives young music students an opportunity to experience the great wealth of string orchestra literature. The ensemble is designed for those who are developing a facility in bowing techniques, reading music, and the use of vibrato. Composed of approximately 20 to 30 members, the String Ensemble performs three to four concerts in conjunction with Allegro Strings and Conservatory Orchestra. Students receive occasional coachings from Colorado Symphony members or university faculty throughout the season and attend a one-day retreat in September. Recent repertoire includes Soon Hee Newbold: *Storm*, Susan Day: *Spirit of Colorado*, and Beethoven (arr. Longfield): "Allegretto" from Symphony No. 7.

Placement in the String Ensemble is determined by audition. Membership is open to musicians between the ages of 7 and 13. String Ensemble rehearses Monday evenings from 5:30pm-7:00pm at Bethany Lutheran Church (4500 E Hampden Ave, Cherry Hills Village).

Audition Requirements

1. Scales:

- **String Ensemble & Allegro Strings**: see the enclosed materials (SE page 4, AS page 5) appropriate to the orchestra for which you are auditioning.
- **Conservatory Orchestra & Young Artists Orchestra**: Prepare 3-octave major and melodic minor scales up to 3 sharps and 3 flats (14 scales in total). Slurring/articulation should be according to your usual practice; consult your private teacher if needed. Judges will select the scales that you will perform at the audition.

2. A one-minute excerpt of a solo piece or etude showing your highest level of development both technically and musically.

3. Orchestral excerpt(s) as defined below. *Note that any marked bowings are recommendations; alteration will not disqualify candidates*.

- CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR **STRING ENSEMBLE** or **ALLEGRO STRINGS** prepare the enclosed excerpts from:
    - **Britten: *Simple Symphony*, mvt. I, rehearsal 1 to rehearsal 2**
- CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR **CONSERVATORY ORCHESTRA** prepare the enclosed excerpts from:
    - **Smetana: *Dance of the Comedians*, measure 3 to 20 (no repeats)**
    - **Brahms: Symphony no. 4, mvt. III, beginning to rehearsal B**
- CANDIDATES APPLYING FOR **YOUNG ARTISTS ORCHESTRA** prepare the enclosed excerpts from:
    - **Brahms: Symphony no. 4, mvt. II, measure 74 to 101**
    - **Debussy: *La Mer*, rehearsal 19 to 20**

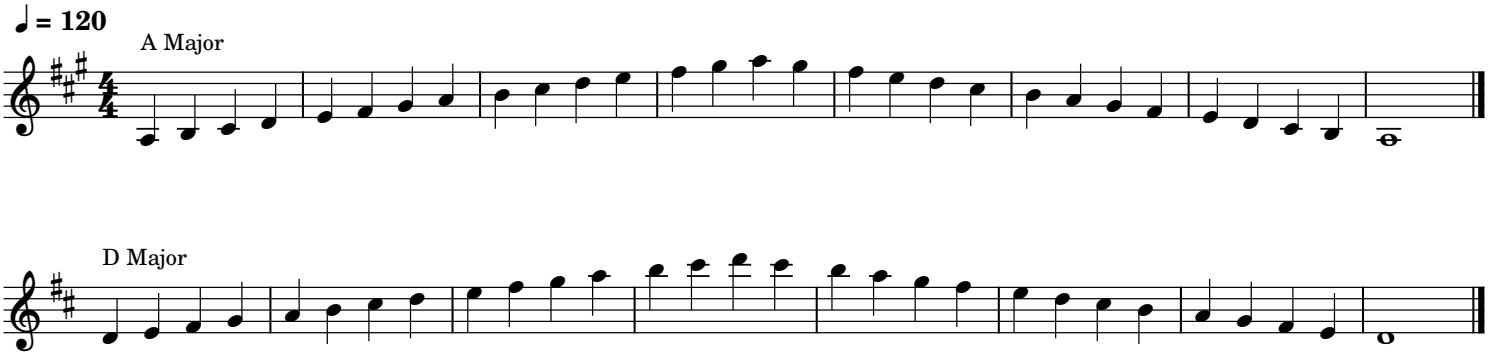
Note: if you are auditioning for more than one orchestra,
please prepare the required excerpts for the higher level orchestra.*

4. Possible sight-reading as determined by the audition committee.

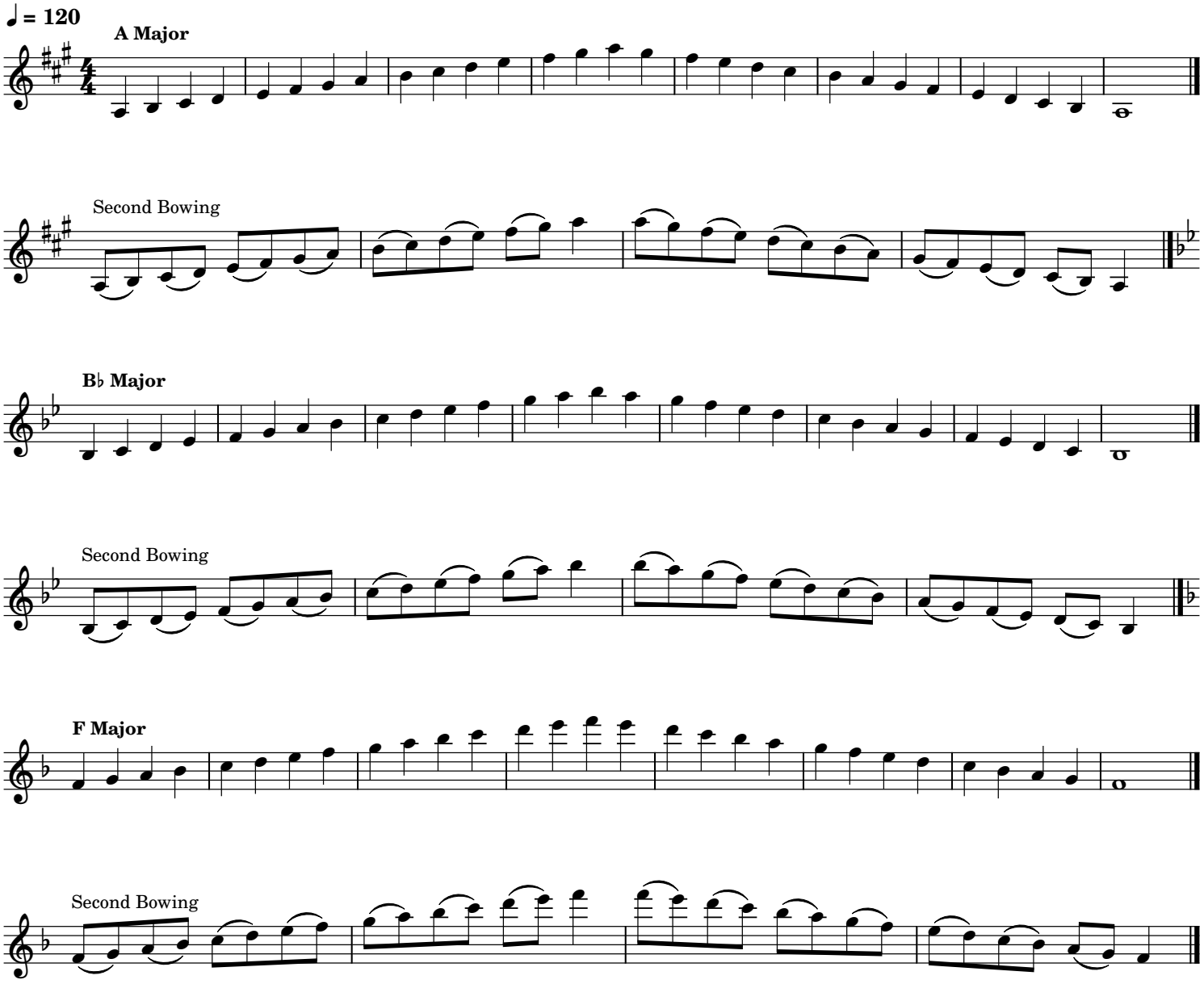
The excerpts are meant to challenge your musicianship. Below are a few suggestions to assist your audition preparation.

- **Play the music in the right tempo:** If tempos are not indicated in your excerpts, please work with your teacher and listen to reputable orchestra recordings to determine the correct speed. Frequently, candidates' tempi are unsteady and often *way too fast*! Judges are not listening to hear how fast you can play; rather, they are listening to see if you can play the piece correctly at an appropriate tempo. Rushing and dragging are things to avoid. Practice with a metronome and record yourself playing these excerpts to ensure accuracy.
- **Play with dynamic contrast:** Often judges comment that candidates ignore dynamic markings, especially the softer end of the dynamic spectrum. Remember that music is more than rhythms and pitches: first and foremost music is sound. Sell your performance!
- **Divisi and rests:** All players should learn **top** divisi/notes unless explicitly noted otherwise. Also, unless otherwise marked, long rests (more than two measures) should be played as unmeasured pauses in the audition.

Scales: **Violin - String Ensemble**

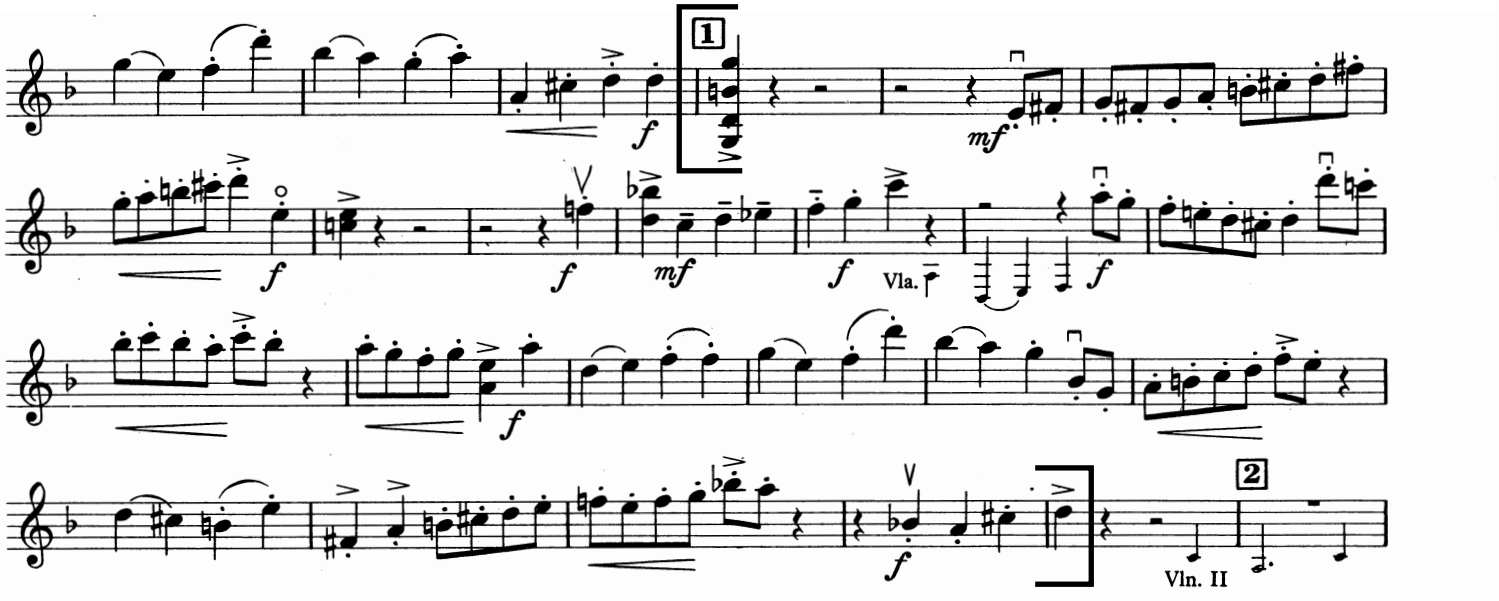
CHOOSE 1

Scales: Violin
Allegro Strings

Choose 2 scales and perform both bowings for both scales

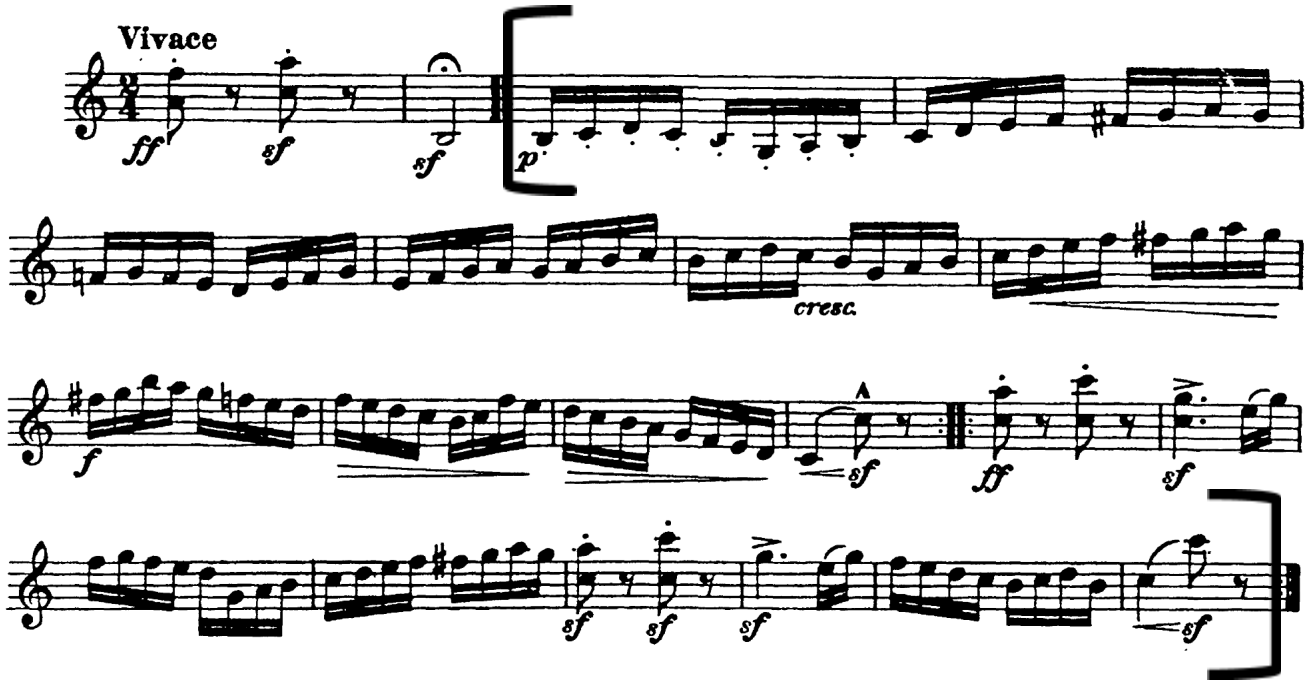


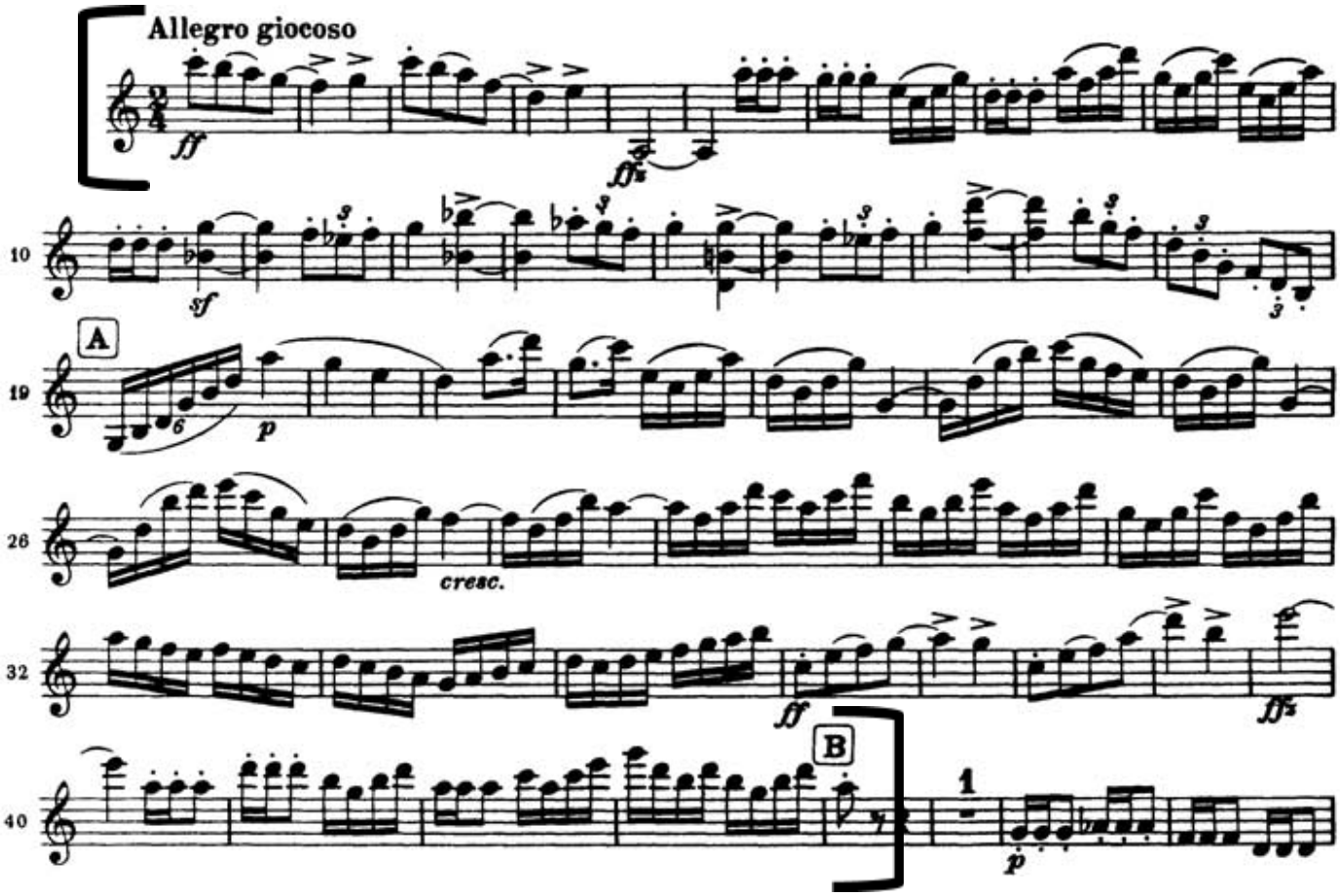
SE and AS:

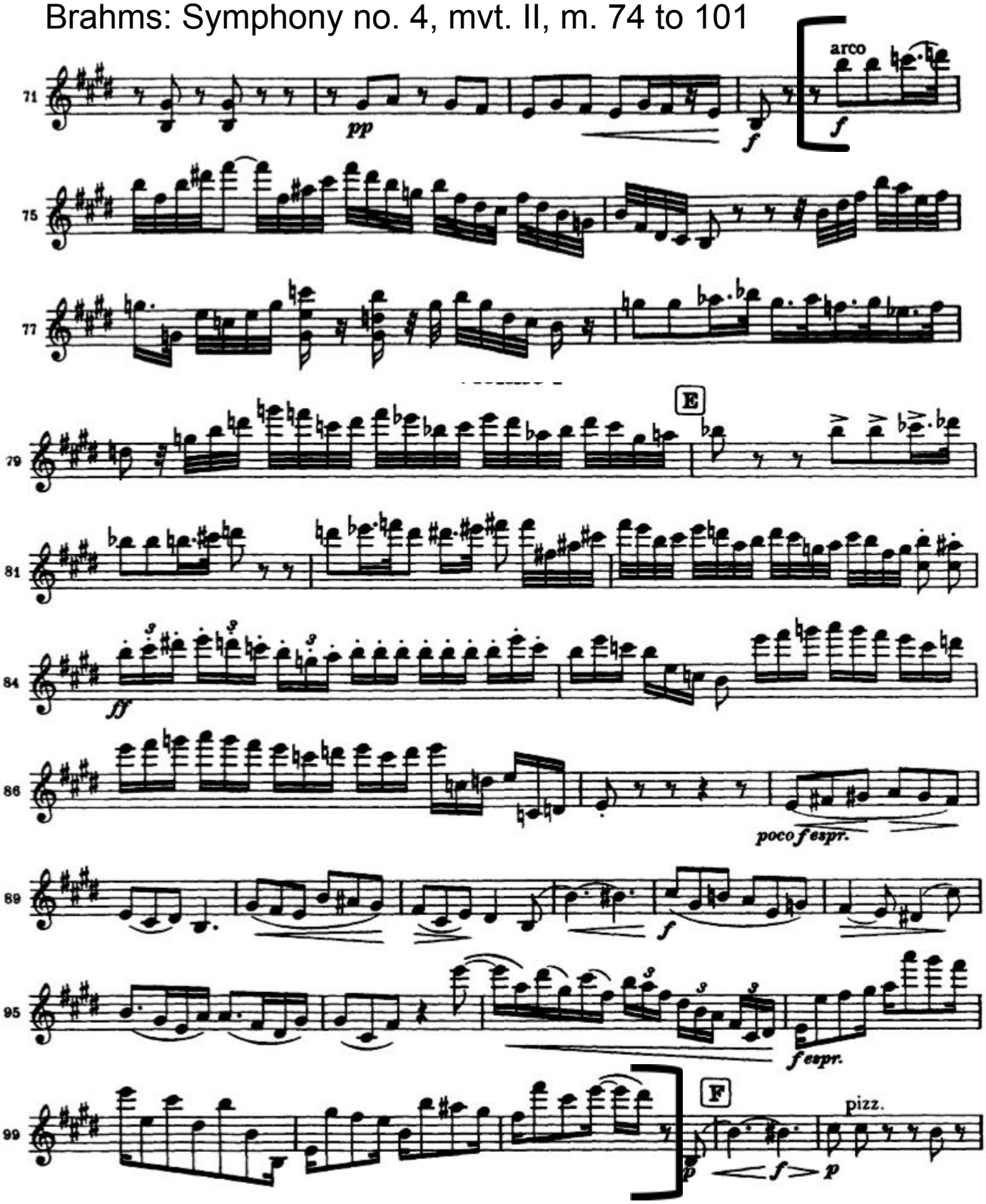
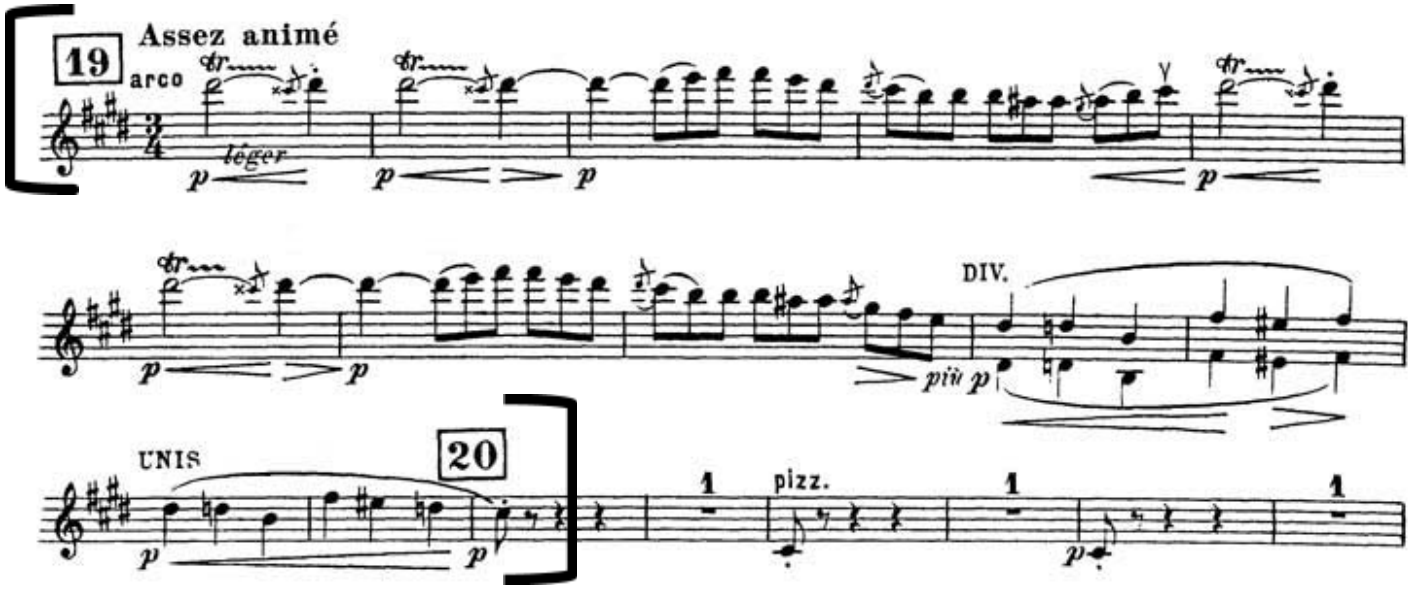
Britten: *Simple Symphony*, mvt. I, rehearsal 1 to rehearsal 2



CO:

Smetana: *Dance of the Comedians*, m. 3 to 20 (no repeats)

CO:

Brahms: Symphony no. 4, mvt. III, beginning to rehearsal B

YAO:

Brahms: Symphony no. 4, mvt. II, m. 74 to 101

YAO:

Debussy: *La Mer*, rehearsal 19 to 20