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I

Developments in My Compositional Practice

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Essay submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements of the University of Glasgow for the award of Master of Music

Music School of Culture and Creative Arts

College of Arts

August 2011

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Finally, this portfolio would not have been possible without the financial and emotional support of my family, in particular that of my Mother and Father who have continuously strove to offer my brothers and I the opportunities in life they themselves did not receive.

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Chapter one, Introduction

The initial issue which led to this portfolio of compositions was of a concern regarding artistic identity. While I had broad questions concerning the role and purpose of a composer in contemporary society my primary concern was with resolving the conflict of aesthetics to which I was simultaneously drawn. The works of my honour's year undergraduate portfolio exhibit contrasting styles and techniques ranging from dodecaphony to a neo-romantic tonal minimalism as well as sound worlds inspired by Messiaen and Stravinsky's Russian period. The most successful of the pieces in my undergraduate portfolio, in regards to marking, was the *Meditation* from *Three Pieces for Violin and Piano.* This work was written with a tonal harmonic language and housed in a "double-arch" form, where the music reaches two climatic points instead of only one as would be the case in conventional arch form.

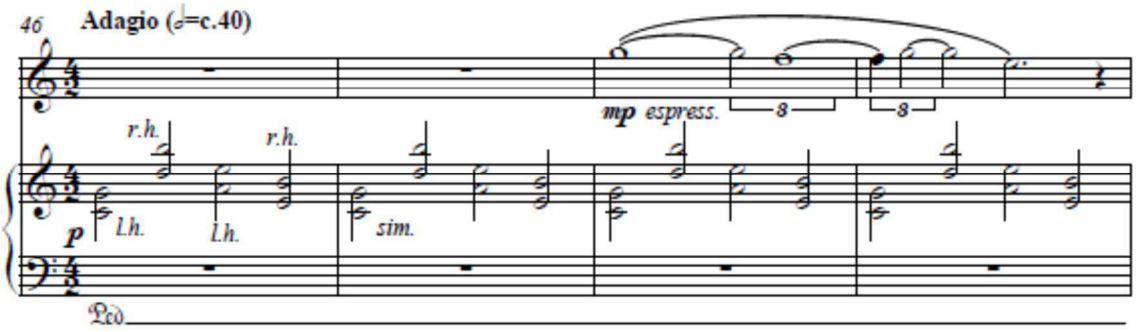

Figure 1. Opening of *Meditation for Violin and Piano*.

The works of the current portfolio demonstrate a developing compositional practice predicated on a progressive move from received forms of writing towards the development of a more personal compositional language characterised by a greater formal, rhythmic and harmonic freedom. This development is neither consistent nor universal throughout the portfolio but is more easily discernable when considered in the context of changes of approach in individual compositional parameters, such as harmony, rhythm and form.

Compositional Values

When embarking upon this portfolio I had felt it important that I regularly reflect upon the values motivating my compositional practice. In doing so I was also keen, through reflection, to learn something of the genealogy of those values. Upon engaging in this process I very quickly became aware of a predilection I possessed towards the sensual and emotive capacity of music to affect one's physical being. The potential for feelings ranging from excited exaltation to lachrymose melancholia was, in many ways, the fundamental source of my engagement with music. This proclivity manifested itself in a strong attachment to the music of Rachmaninoff as well as Liszt and to some of the symphonies of Mahler and Bruckner. The key attractions to this music were often the chromatic twists of harmony and the climatic passages leading to emphatic and majestic restatements of earlier material. Consequently I sought in much of my composing to create similar effects. Techniques employed in pursuit of this goal included the repetition of material with progressively greater forces; a clear distinction between melody and accompaniment; sequential phrasing as a means of developing melody; arch like structures; a quasi-tonal harmonic language; and a general concern with clarity and ease of discernibility for a listener familiar with the popular, classical and romantic repertoire. *Music for Flute and Marimba* demonstrates many of these concerns.

Writing music in an attempt to recreate the superficial effects I enjoyed in other music quickly led to discontent. Using such techniques unweaved the rainbow and led to disenchantment.[1] I began to seek a new motivating ideal to guide the tenor of my compositional practice. A concern with order and structure soon became predominant in my thoughts and I began to seek a means of generating music of the utmost unity. Such values lay behind the composition of *Elegy* from *Music for Flute.* While I was satisfied with the result I did not feel entirely comfortable with the values which motivated my writing of the piece. In a process of self-reflection as an attempt to excavate further

[1] This idea has been discussed by eminent scientists such Richard Dawkins and Richard Feynman. They argue that greater pleasure is to be obtained from a scientific understanding of nature as opposed to one based on superstition and folklore. See Dawkins (1998).

into my prejudices I became aware of the prominent and regulative role played by the organic metaphor at the preconscious level.[2] My almost unconscious fetishisation of this regulative metaphor had been received uncritically. I decided that I would no longer seek any absolutist value system to regulate my compositional practice but would instead embrace contingency with all its attendant dangers and opportunities.

My first attempt at a freer approach in my compositional practice was *Prelude-Impromptu* from *Music for Flute.* In *Fantasy for Piano* this style found its largest expression but it was not until the final compositions of this portfolio, *Fragments for Cello*, that I attained a fuller realisation of the liberated style I had been pursuing. Therefore the following works, presented in chronological order, can be seen as documenting a process of compositional and aesthetic development.

[2] By "Organic Metaphor" I refer to the idea that music should exhibit organic traits i.e. that a composition should be the unfolding and development of a limited number of ideas and that there should be a relation between all ideas. See Ruth A. Solie: 'The Living Work: Organicism and Musical Analysis', *19th-Century Music* 4 (Fall 1980), pp. 147-56.

Chapter two, The Pieces

2.1 Music for Marimba and Flute

2010

Originally performed by Duo X on 9th September 2010 in a workshop at the University of Glasgow.

This piece is based upon the style developed in my undergraduate portfolio and demonstrated most explicitly in *Meditation* from *Three Pieces for Violin and Piano.* There are four essential elements to this style. Firstly there is an opposition between the strict rhythmic control of the marimba and the rhythmically freer flute part. Secondly there is a concentrated melodic line that is predominantly restricted to stepwise motion. Thirdly there is a clear if slightly coloured sense of tonality and fourthly the music is housed in an arch form.

Like *Meditation, Music for Flute and Marimba* makes specific use of a "double-arch" form. The first of the five sections of the piece runs from mm.1-14; the second from mm.15-19; the third from mm.20-24; the fifth from mm.25-33; and the fifth and final section from mm.34-41. Throughout all of the component sections of the piece continuity is maintained throughout the rhythmic and melodic writing, which attempts to generate a subtle tension between the two instruments. While the simple contrast between the two instruments is an obvious factor, the rhythmic writing for marimba attempts to generate tension through a subtle irregularity via a simple expansion of the basic rhythmic idea. The marimba part is developed rhythmically through decoration and ornamentation of the fundamental pattern established at the outset. This elaboration begins in section two at m.15 and continues throughout the following sections until the beginning of section five where the simple pattern of the opening returns.

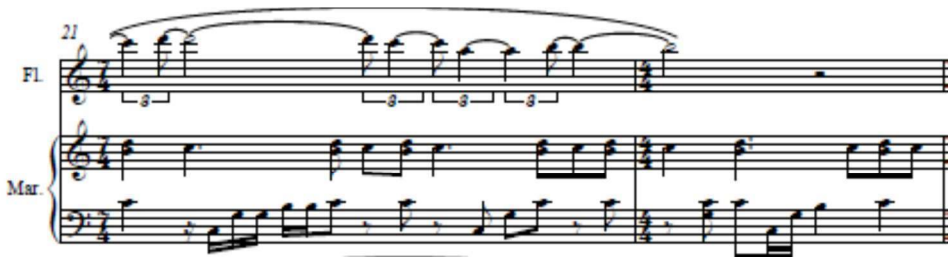

Figure 2. Rhythmic elaboration in mm.21-22 from *Music for Flute and Marimba.*

The general regularity of the marimba part allows the flute to float freely overhead reflecting the influence of jazz and jazz-inspired singers on my melodic writing, such as Billie Holiday and Frank Sinatra, who would frequently sing just ahead or behind the steady beat of the accompanying ensemble.

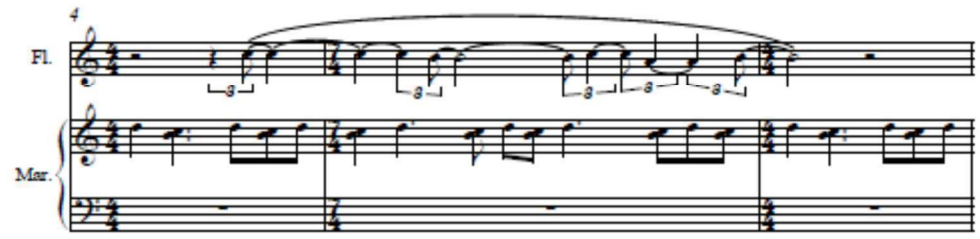

Figure 3. The flute playing "behind the beat" in *Music for Flute and Marimba.*

Harmonically the first section employs simple "white-note" harmony that generates a strong suggestion of C major tonality. The second section begins by suggesting a move to the mediant but this is simply a "passing harmony" that leads to the use of an octatonic collection beginning in the second half of m.16. In mm.17-19 the flute, through the means of an ascending scale passage, unfolds the octactonic collection as the marimba continues in a similar vein to section one though now refracted through an octatonic harmony. The third section is an ecstatic recapitulation of ideas expressed in the first. The fourth section is a development of the ideas expressed in the second section. Harmonically this is achieved through employing a diminished 7th chord for harmonic staging posts. Mm.25-26 are centred on Bb; mm.27-28 on Db; mm.29-30 on E; and mm.31-32 on G. There are two reasons for using the diminished 7th chord. Firstly, the structural use of the diminished 7th

chord references the octatonic collection employed in section two. Secondly, by ending on G and immediately preceding a return of the "white note" C major harmonic world of section one, a veiled perfect cadence is created and offers resolution to the harmonic ambiguity of the preceding music. Like *Meditation*, *Music for Flute and Marimba* concludes as it began and completes the arch.

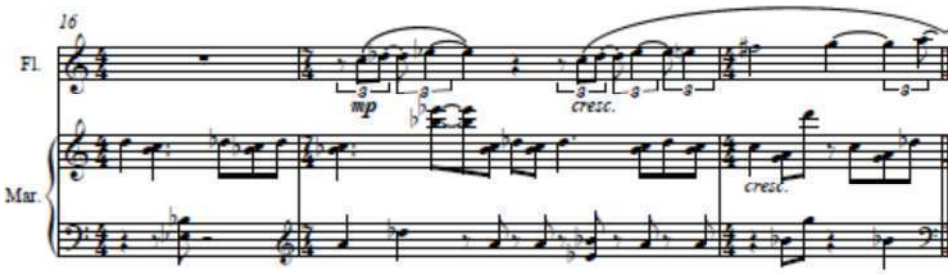

Figure 4. Use of octatonic collection in *Music for Flute and Marimba.*

Meditation was regarded, by the examiners, as the most effective and successful piece in my undergraduate portfolio. I also found *Meditation* to be the most satisfying work I had until that point composed. In writing *Music for Flute and Marimba* I took the decision, predicated on a practical desire to develop my craft, to intentionally imitate, and consequently understand, the intuitive processes that had motivated the composition of *Meditation*. As it was written at short notice, for a workshop, I was also concerned with practical considerations. I wished to hear how the techniques and aesthetic that I had employed would sound in performance; hence I felt it important that piece be short, transparent and technically undemanding. The resultant work is in many respects a précis of *Meditation*.

2.2 Two Pieces for Flute

2010

Two Pieces for Flute represents a significant development in my compositional language. Written after a month's study of aspects of post-tonal theory, both pieces demonstrate a move away from the tonal language evinced in *Music for Flute and Marimba.* There are also developments in the formal and rhythmic aspects of my compositional practice and the emergence of a concern with gesture that adumbrates a significant concern in later works of this portfolio.

For a significant amount of time I had been averse to relying on highly formalised and abstract methods of composition, seeking instead to write intuitively and capture a particular mood or emotion in music. I eventually reached an impasse where I began to feel constrained by the limitations of tonal language but was struggling to write intuitively outside of a tonal medium. This left me eager to learn ways of creating a coherent and consistent non-tonal harmonic world in which I would be free to compose in a relatively intuitive manner. It was from those circumstances that I was motivated to engage tentatively with set-theory and in August of 2010 I made an introductory study of it with through the use of Joseph Straus's *Introduction to Post-Tonal Theory*, 3rd edn. (New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall, 2005). The *Elegy* for flute was the first fruit of those studies.

2.2.1 Elegy for Flute

The *Elegy for Flute* was written shortly after I had familiarised myself with some basic aspects of set-theory. It was also my first composition following *Music for Flute and Marimba.* My primary concern was with the creation of a consistent harmonic world that did not rely on explicit references to common practice tonality.

The primary materials of the piece are an (014) set class and an (0157) set class.

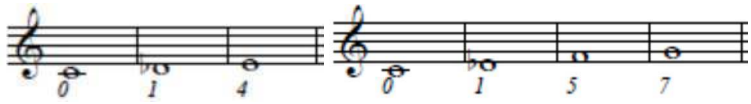

Figure 5. An (014) and (0157) set-class.

All of the material in mm.1-11 and mm.28-44 is derived from (014) while the central section, mm.13-25, is derived from (0157). The exceptions are m.12 and mm.26-27. These measures play a transitional role and hence are of a hybrid nature, being the result of an intuitive mixture of both sets.

One of the techniques heavily employed in the generation of material is the imbrication of a set-class with one of its variations. The first example of this is in mm.5-7. Here there are three collections: G-Bb-F#, F#-G-Eb and Eb-D-F#. This technique allows for a seamless connection and creates a sense of development while maintaining the particular sound world of (014).

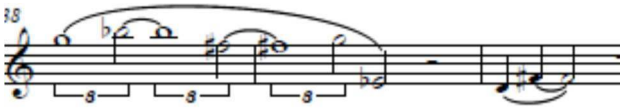

Figure 6. Imbrication of set-class variants. From mm.5-7 of *Elegy for Flute.*

Also of significance to the compositional process in the *Elegy* is the regulative power of the "organic metaphor". One way of achieving this is through the use of the imbrication technique previously discussed which helps to create a sense of natural growth. Another is to present simple gestures which are unpacked and developed later in the piece. Measure eight, for example, opens with what is superficially a decorative flourish. This simple flourish is in fact a summary of the entire piece. It consists of Bb-D-Eb-F#-G which are all of the pitch classes so far employed. It also outlines the Bb-G relationship which prefigures the climax of the piece in mm29-32. Measure eleven, which comes at the close of the first section, contains the first instance of a major 7^{th} interval in the piece, here in the form of C-B. These pitch classes and intervals are again taken up towards the close of the third section in m.27. While all of these simple techniques are employed in an attempt to create a

consistent harmonic world that does not rely on common practice tonality, an ambiguity is intentionally maintained to subtly suggest G minor. This is achieved through the harmonic minor implication of G-F#-Eb and the suggestion of a dominant in the D-F# dyad in m.7 and at the piece's conclusion.

Like *Music for Marimba and Flute*, the *Elegy* is structured in a "double-arch" form, with section one being covered in mm.1-12; section two in mm.13-25; section three in mm.26-28; section four in mm.29-39; and section five in mm.40-44. There are also clear rhythmic similarities in the melodic writing between sections one and five of the *Elegy* and the flute part of *Music for Marimba and Flute.* This is demonstrative of the fact that while the *Elegy* represents an important development in my harmonic language, rhythmically and formally it is still indebted to the world of *Meditation* and *Music for Marimba and Flute.*

As *Elegy* was my first attempt at composing using the basic manipulation of sets, I decided that I would only seek to create a relatively simple emotional world. The work therefore follows a fairly conventional pattern, consisting of sombre music with a lighter central section to provide relief and contrast. As well as reflecting the general mood of the music, Elegy was also the title given to several earlier works I had written in my teenage years.

2.2.2 Prelude-Impromptu

Following the completion of *Elegy,* the opportunity arose to submit a work for consideration for performance at *Sound Thought 2011.* This motivated the decision to write a companion piece for the *Elegy* that would serve as an introductory movement. In writing this piece my primary concern was to move beyond my conservative treatment of rhythmic and formal parameters while continuing to build on the harmonic and melodic elements of the *Elegy.*

As *Prelude-Impromptu* was to be written for the *Sound Thought* music and arts festival, I wanted the piece to acknowledge this in some way. I had long been aware of musical ciphers employed by past

composers such as Bach, Schumann and Liszt, as a means of personalising a particular work, but it was when reading an article by Julian Anderson on the works of Oliver Knussen that I decided to use such a tactic in writing *Prelude-Impromptu.* In his paper, *Harmonic Practices in Oliver Knussen's Music since 1988: Part 1*, Anderson discusses Knussen's use of a cipher in the writing of his *Flourish with Fireworks (1988).* The work was composed for Michael Tilson Thomas's first concert as Chief Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra and "…from this Knussen chose a musical cipher using the letters LSO-MTT – translated into musical notes as a five-note cell A-E flat G-E natural-B".[3] Consequently I made the decision to derive notes from the letters S-O-U-N-D-T-H-O-U-G-H-T. I translated this into musical notes as: **S**-S**O**L-**U**T-**N**I-**D**-**T**I-**H**-S**O**L-**U**T-**G**-**H**-**T**I = Eb-G-C-B-D-B-Bb-G-C-G-Bb-B. Further, given that the cipher consists of a five letter word followed by a seven letter word, the metric structure of the piece consistently moves between five and seven quaver beats per measure. This pre-established metric schema presented me with a canvas upon which to write.

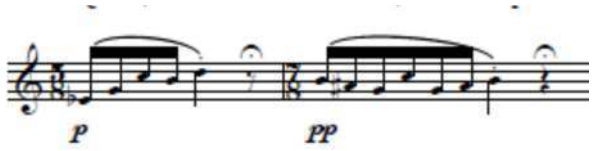

Figure 7. "SOUND THOUGHT" musical cipher from opening two measures of *Prelude-Impromptu.*

From a technical perspective the primary attraction in using the cipher was that it would, by arbitrarily presenting me with pitch material, challenge me to develop other compositional parameters such as rhythm and form and not merely employ them instrumentally for the sustainment of a particular harmonic world that I found intuitively satisfying.

The cipher is presented in the opening two measures. The first three notes of m.2, while part of the cipher, present the opportunity for special treatment as an (014) set class. They receive such treatment in m.6, m.12 and m.16. A key factor in the decision to highlight this feature of the cipher

[3] Julian Anderson: 'Harmonic Practices in Oliver Knussen's Music since 1988: Part I', *Tempo*, New Series, No. 221 (Jul., 2002), p.2.

was to anticipate the prominent use of (014) in *Elegy* and therefore to provide a subtle continuity between the contrasting movements.

Much of the music of *Prelude-Impromptu* is derived from the repetition of material in retrograde and inverted forms. This can be observed clearly if one compares mm.3-4 with mm.13-14 and mm.8-11 with mm.28-31. Other material can be seen to be derived from more basic procedures such as sequence (cf.m.9 with m.8).

The form of the music is looser and less defined than my earlier compositions but the regulative power of the arch has not yet been overcome. The climatic point here is the high Eb in mm.20-22. The decision to have this sustained high note was motivated by a need for contrast and relief from the surrounding frenetic activity.

Rhythmically the piece is inspired by a general impression formed from listening to the hyper-active flourishes and gestures of Be-Bop, evinced in the recordings of such figures as Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie. There has been no attempt to recreate specific patterns or transcribe rhythms from the solos of particular performers. Instead what is presented is my personal reaction to the rhythmic qualities of such music.

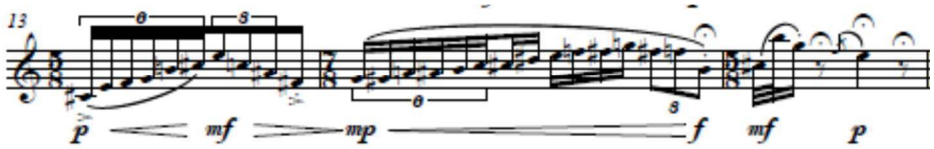

Figure 8. Be-bop inspired flourishes from mm.13-15 of *Prelude-Impromptu.*

The title of *Prelude-Impromptu* was chosen for two reasons. Firstly, the piece functions as an ironic prelude to *Elegy.* In its fast paced activity, designed to sound as if the music is almost falling over itself, the piece attempts to establish an almost breathless and capricious mood which will allows the *Elegy* to stand in marked contrast to it. The "Impromptu" part of the title is designed to remind the performer and listener of the word "prelude" in its capacity as a verb. The tradition of

"preluding" a work in a recital with a short improvisation by the performer may have past, but it is important in *Prelude-Impromptu* that a feeling of spontaneity is maintained.[4]

[4] For an account of the preluding tradition, see chapter four of Kenneth Hamilton's , *After The Golden Age: Romantic Pianism and Modern Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

2.3 Music for Wind Quintet

2010-11

Towards the end of 2010 I began to take an interest in the music of John Adams (1947). His highly personal use of harmony and textures, suggestive of the late romantic repertoire, combined with minimalist procedures, particularly evident in his *Harmonielehre (1985),* prompted me to revisit the impasse I had come to following the writing of *Music for Flute and Marimba.* With the writing of *Two Pieces for Flute* I had begun to explore the development of a "post-tonal" modernist inflected idiolect as a means of progressing as a composer. I now decided to make an attempt at the development of a compositional language that would be an expansion of the tonal language of my earlier works but with the employment of techniques used by Adams. The result of this was *Music for Wind Quintet.*

The piece is housed in a highly conventional binary form with the return of the opening material being too curtailed to constitute anything more than a brief coda. The first section encompasses mm.1-86; the second mm.87-178; and the third mm.179-209. The first section can be broken down further into subsections. From mm.1-24 an arresting rhythmic gesture frames the music that forms the first subsection of section one. Subsection two (mm.25-64) picks up some of the previous ideas and develops them for the most part in the more metrically stable quadruple time as means of contrast. A modified return of subsection one makes up the final subsection of the piece's first section (mm.65-86).

Section two follows a similar structure to section one but with much greater concision of material. The first subsection takes in mm.87-110; the second mm.111-130; and the third mm.131-174. A short linking section in mm.175-178 facilitates a modified return of music from subsection one of section one (mm.179-209) that concludes the piece.

Harmonically the piece is ostensibly centred on a C major mode sonority with a contrasting central section centred on the "dominant" of G. The music is in fact loosely built out of an (02347) collection.

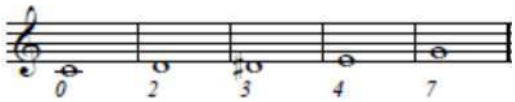

Figure 9. An (02347) set-class.

The attraction to this collection was primarily the ambiguity engendered by the presence of both a major and a minor third if considered in the context of tonality. While there is an ambiguity, conventional procedures such as symmetry are employed in the music's harmonic development - such as the as a move to the flattened mediant in mm.17-19 contrasted with a move to the flattened sub-mediant in the analogous passage in mm.72-73 – in order to highlight the tonal centre of C. Similarly, the restatement of the piece's opening material in mm.5-11 is presented a semitone higher in mm.65-71 and a semitone lower in mm.186-188 to enhance the fundamental significance of C.

The influence of Adams on *Music for Wind Quintet* is to be found primarily in the textures, such as the "out of phase" music of the flute and clarinet in mm.9-11 and their insistent pulsing of one interval in mm.12-13.

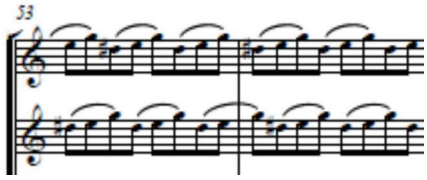

Figure 10. "Out of phase" figure in flute and clarinet part, mm. 53-54 from *Music for Wind Quintet.*

While not directly inspired by Adams, the central section of the piece (mm.87-178) is clearly influenced by minimalist procedures. The music is simply an elaboration of the (02347) collection

with the addition of lydian and mixolydian inflections achieved through considering the music in tonal terms as G major with the addition of a raised fourth (C#) and a lowered seventh (F natural).

To date, *Music for Wind Quintet* represents my last attempt at writing in a consistently (quasi) tonal style. The mechanistic nature of much of the writing in the work results in a rather cool if not clinical aesthetic that I do not find artistically or emotionally satisfying. The value of this work to me is that in composing it I was able learn that it was not the kind of music I wished to write. In doing this I was able to extricate myself from the conflict of stylistic directions in which I had been engaged previously.

2.4 Fantasy for Piano.

2011

Fantasy for Piano brings together many stylistic and technical elements of the previous works in this portfolio and attempts to forge a new compositional direction couched in a more collage-like and fragmented formal structure than I had previously used. Elements present include: improvisation, set-class techniques, repeated cells and quasi-tonal episodes. Also present is the influence of Harrison Birtwistle, some of whose music I had studied prior to writing *Fantasy for Piano.* This influence can be found in the juxtaposition of contrasting units of music as well as the control of pitch material through the use of collections of adjacent pitch-classes and the fact that much of the work's material is derived from an (016) collection (and the tritone interval it contains), a sound world that was resonating in my mind after engaging with Birtwistle.

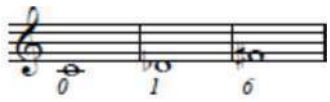

Figure 11. An (016) set-class.

Formally the work can be divided into two broad sections. The first takes in mm.1-139 and the second mm. 140-216. Each of the two sections presents material and develops it but only section two contains material unique to itself. Both of these sections can be seen to contain subsections. Section one opens with an improvisatory gesture that grows and develops obsessively. In writing this I had in mind an anecdote I had heard at an RMA Research Colloquia given by Professor William Sweeney regarding the compositional practice of Janáček, which stated that he would repeatedly play a chord or collection of pitch-classes at the piano for prolonged periods of time in an attempt to hear the possibilities contained within the sounds. This is ultimately the process that occurs in mm.1-24, which constitute subsection one of section one.

The music of mm.25-124 forms subsection two of section one and is designed to offer contrast to the preceding music while consisting of the same fundamental intervallic material. Contrast is achieved through the use of register and rhythm in the context of repeating cells which differs markedly from the work's improvisatory opening.

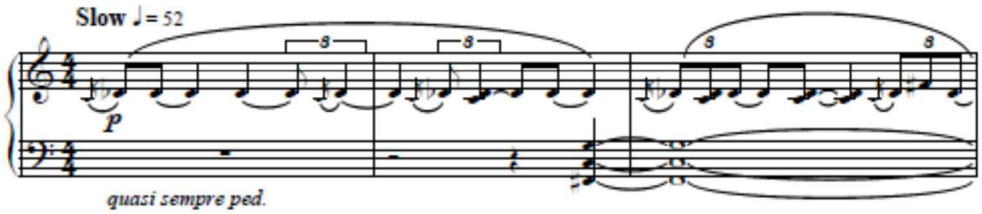

Figure 12. Unfolding of an (016) collection from opening of *Fantasy for Piano.*

Evinced in subsection two is a looser approach to the use of repeating blocks of material that characterises some of the earlier works in this portfolio. Here the material is often interrupted, as in mm.49-60; mm.81-97 and mm.101-108. This process is used to develop new material while maintaining the overall sound world of the subsection and its formal role as a contrasting section to subsection one. The music which follows in subsection three synthesises some of the ideas present in the previous subsections. This achieved through a repetition of the work's opening with the addition of the most prominent rhythmic feature of subsection two.

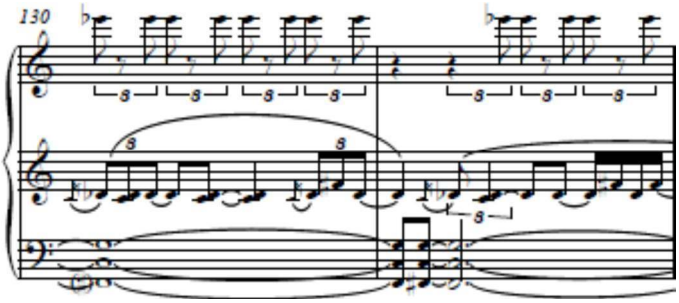

Figure 13. Mm.130-131 from *Fantasy for Piano* showing return of opening combined with rhythmic feature.

The music of the second half of *Fantasy for Piano* is constructed in a collage-like fashion. Portions and fragments of ideas appear and disappear only to turn up later on in the music. Significant fragments include the grand statement in m.142 which is taken up again in the second half of mm.182 and leads to a climatic passage that pays homage to my romantic influences but which is diluted and enfeebled through the fragmented musical discourse. The tolling gesture of mm.142-146 is heard a further three times, acting as an abrupt punctuation mark to various episodes. The idea that eventually triumphs is the choral like passage of mm.161-162 which is taken up on a larger scale in mm.195-203 following the incongruous climatic passages of mm.186-193. The music concludes with a scurrying inversion of the work's opening which quickly finds itself enervated and unable to continue.

The *Fantasy for Piano* is in certain respects an attempt to convey some of the psychological dimensions of the compositional process as I experience it. Ideas are presented abruptly and contrasting material is starkly juxtaposed. The intention is to convey a fantastical character of rapidly changing scenes that are occasionally interrupted by half remembered fragments of earlier episodes and in doing so convey something of the desultory and capricious nature of mental flights of fancy. The hope is that the listener will experience a piece of music trying to find itself, much as the composer tries to find the piece himself in writing it.

2.5 Fragments for Cello

2011

Partly performed in workshop at Sound Thought 2011

The writing of *Fragments for Cello* arose from my participation in a composition workshop with cellist David O'Connell and composer Dr Drew Hammond at *Sound Thought 2011* and at a subsequent workshop at the University of Glasgow in June 2011. The opportunity arose at short notice to write short, technically speculative ideas for the workshop and it was these circumstances that inspired the writing of the first fragment in this collection. The remainder of the collection was composed subsequently and each is inspired by the aesthetic of the opening fragment.

(1)

The primary concern in the opening fragment is the presentation of several fragmentary ideas in a dislocated and non-developmental structure. This builds upon the formal consideration of *Fantasy for Piano* but the collage-like aesthetic is presented in a far more concise and condensed form. The secondary concern was the need for the conspicuous use of novel and challenging approaches to technique as required by the workshop. I made an early decision that this piece should explore some of the musical opportunities made possible through the use of an extended left-hand pizzicato technique. This decision was motivated by an interest in the polyphonic potentialities that the technique engendered. It was in the context of these formal and technical aims that the piece was composed.

The most significant of the regulative devices employed in the selection of pitch-class materials are those of chromatically adjacent pitch-classes and the tritone interval. The pitches C, G, D and A of the open strings on the cello are also important because of the prominent use of left-hand pizzicato. The presence of these devices can be observed throughout the entire piece, particularly in mm.1-34.

The music of mm.35-41, particularly of mm.38-39, is the most adventurous in terms of instrumental technique. The passage begins with a left-hand pizzicato solo following which the right-hand, using the same physical technique as left-hand pizzicato, takes over. The two hands are then combined. This dual-pizzicato technique is used for the generation of a chromatic and heterophonic texture that attempts to exhibit and develop the polyphonic material hinted at earlier in the piece.

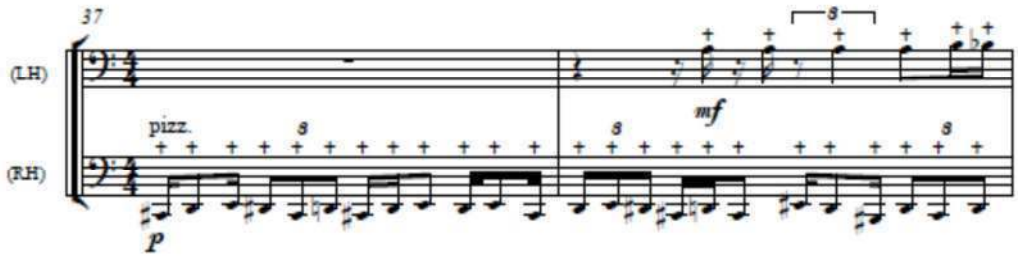

Figure 14. "Dual-pizzicato" technique in mm.37-38 in piece I from *Fragments for Cello.*

I regard the first piece of *Fragments for Cello* as significant in my compositional development. It was written with a new found freedom and aesthetic. While I do not view the work as the epitome of a style I would necessarily like to pursue indefinitely, I value the liberating experience of having written the work.

(2)

The second fragment is an exercise in pizzicato playing generated from an (014) and an (016) set class. The piece freely presents gestures and motivic fragments in a manner characterised by the juxtaposition of moments of calm and near stasis with those of frenetic activity. The aim of this type of writing is to generate a sense of spontaneity and unpredictability, reflecting a significant aspect of how we experience the world in our mental life. The music is not trying to offer a literal representation but is instead concerned with the fragmented, unmotivated and sporadic manner in which life can often appear.

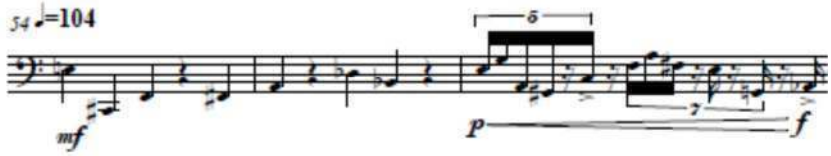

Figure 15. Juxtaposition of contrasts in mm.54-55 in piece II from *Fragments for Cello.*

The coda, which references the pizzicato techniques of the first fragment, attempts to impose some sort of regularity on proceedings but ultimately fails, bringing the piece to its conclusion with a final utterance of an (014) collection.

(3)

The third piece of this collection takes on a role analogous to a minor mode slow movement in a major mode sonata. An attempt is made to generate an almost Bartókian pathos through the use of an octatonic collection. The aesthetic intention here is to provide a lyrical contrast with the other pieces of this collection and to even seem incongruous. This is to undermine any aesthetic unity that the collection may seem to be developing after the first two pieces and therefore extrapolate the aesthetic of contrasting juxtapositions to a higher level.

(4)

The final piece of the collection is built almost entirely from fragments of the preceding pieces and so acts as a sort of summation or collages of collages. The fragmentary aesthetic employed in this collection is therefore most in evidence in the final piece as the listener will be able to clearly discern the various fragments of music already heard.

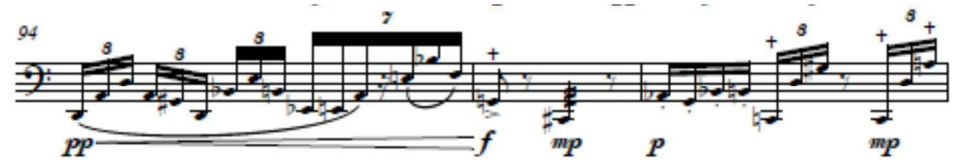

Figure 16. Collage of fragments in mm.94-96 in piece IV from *Fragments for Cello.*

The surface aesthetic of this collection was that of fragmentation but upon reflection I have realised that my underlying interest was of a concern with meaning and music. In writing *Fragments for Cello* I was consciously trying to avoid any sort of teleological aesthetic and instead sought to produce music where there would be no correct way in which to listen it. By presenting an almost chaotic auditory world I wanted to challenge the listener to generate his or her own meaning from the music. For me this reflects a philosophy of existential nihilism in which there are no absolute values. I see this as a great opportunity for humanity individually and collectively to generate our own meaning and not be shackled to tradition and ancient superstitions. This philosophy underpins *Fragments of Cello* and, as such, represents the outcome of this portfolio. I choose to employ certain received traditions such as musical notation and the Cello as an instrument but I also took the decision to present musical fragments and gestures in an impulsive and unordered fashion. This work is therefore a loose collection of ideas shorn of all motivating principles other than that the listener is sovereign.

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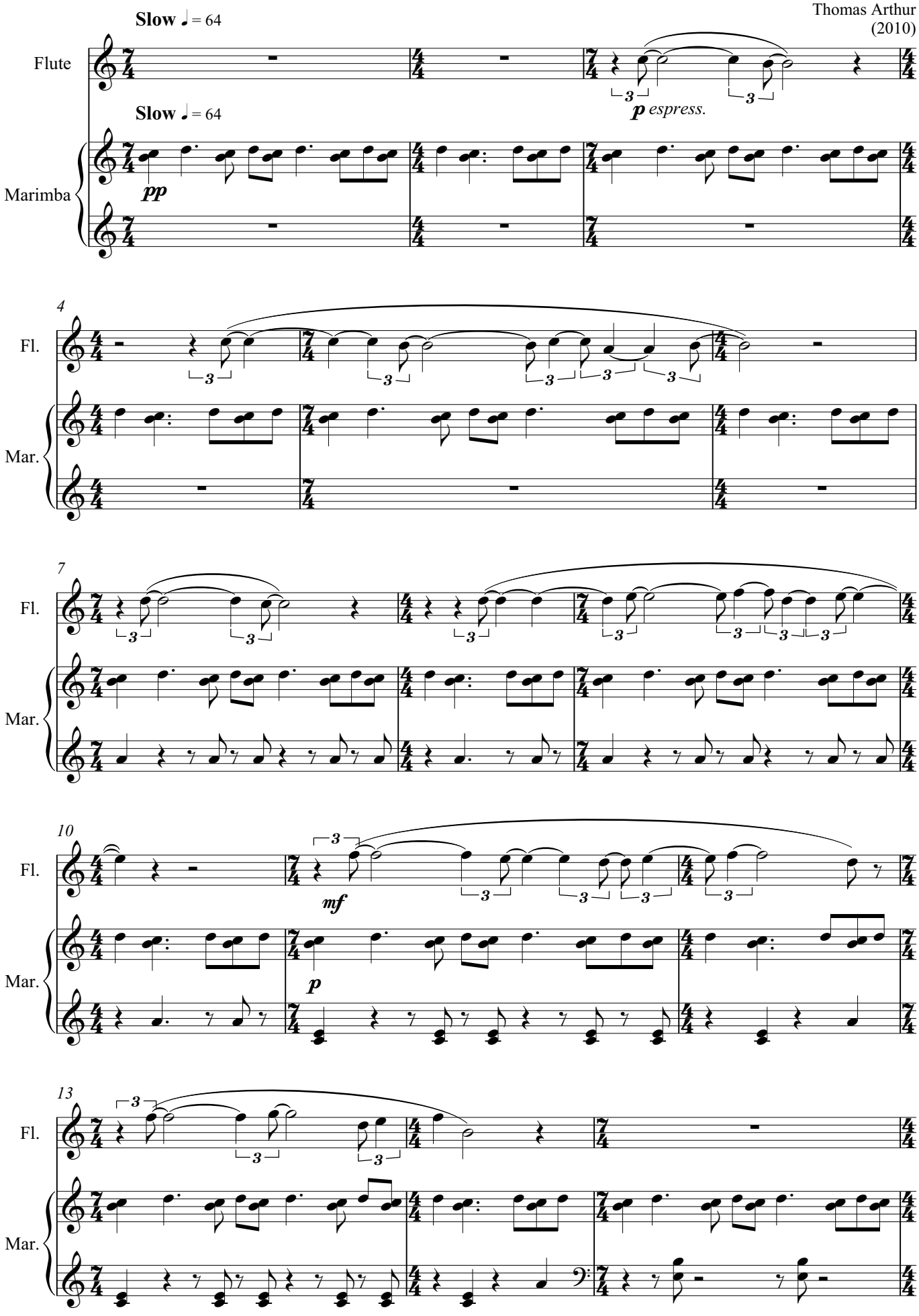
Thomas Arthur

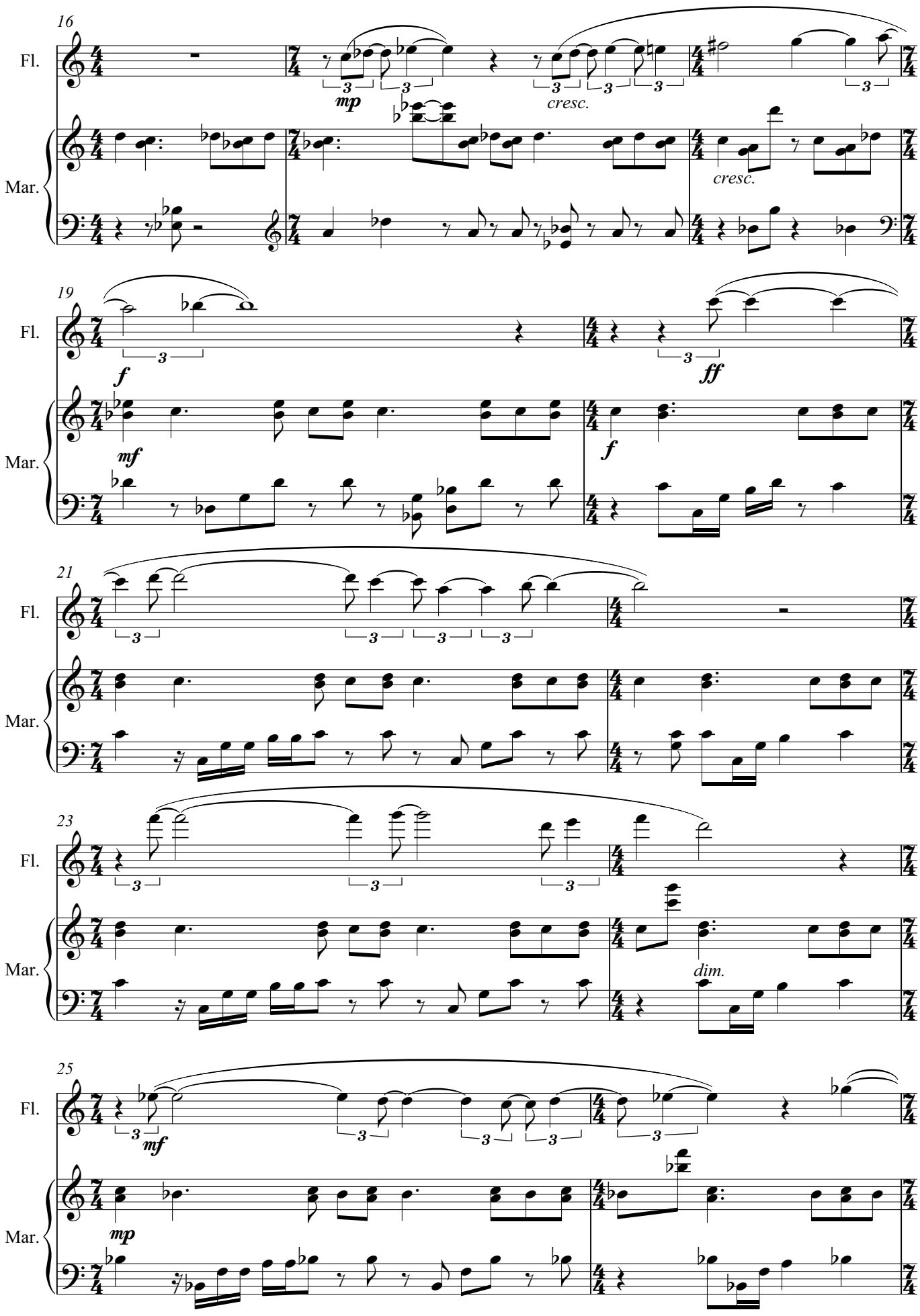
Music for Flute And Marimba (2010)

Performance time approxomately 3 minutes and 30 seconds.

Music for Flute and Marimba

Thomas Arthur
(2010)

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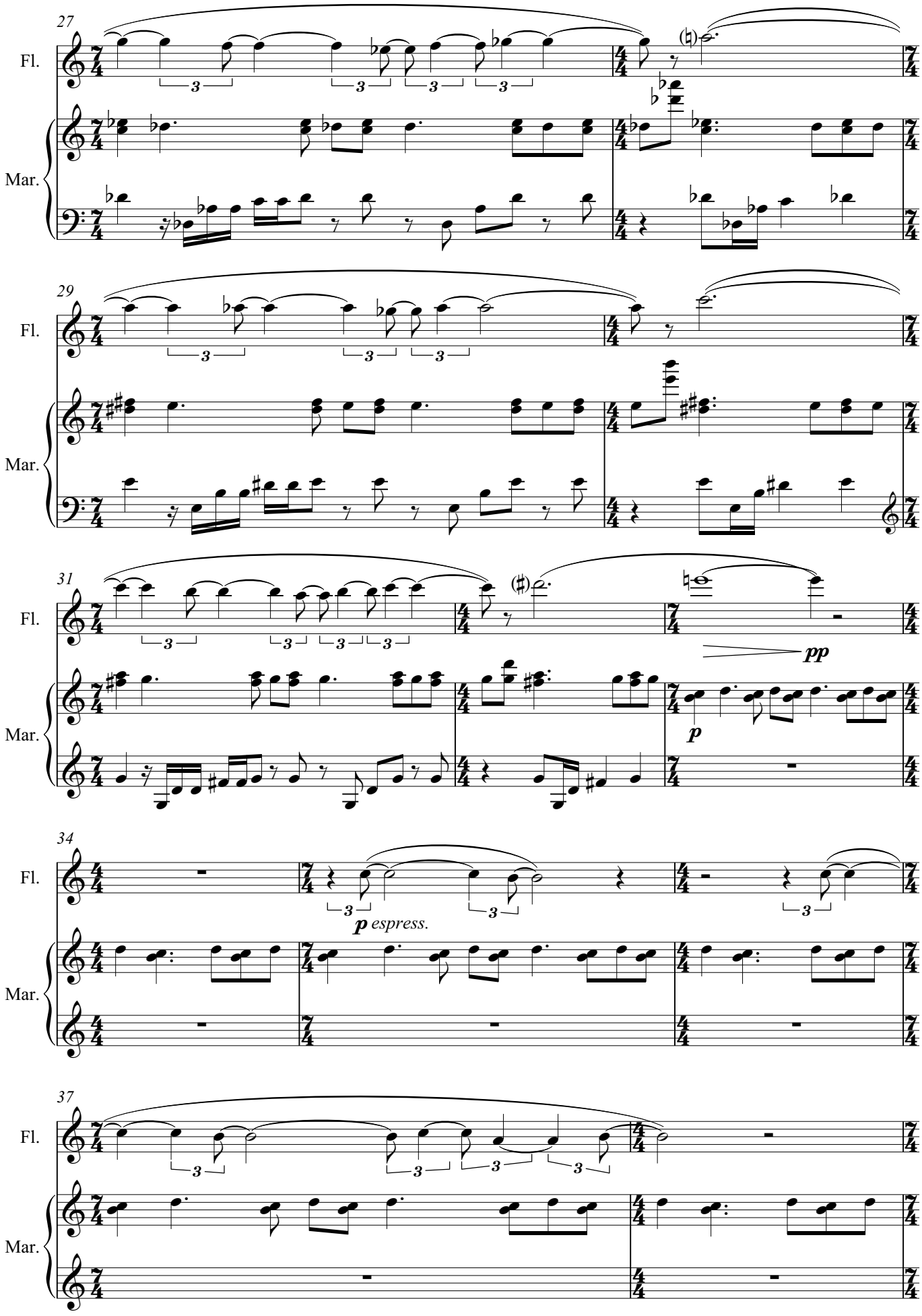
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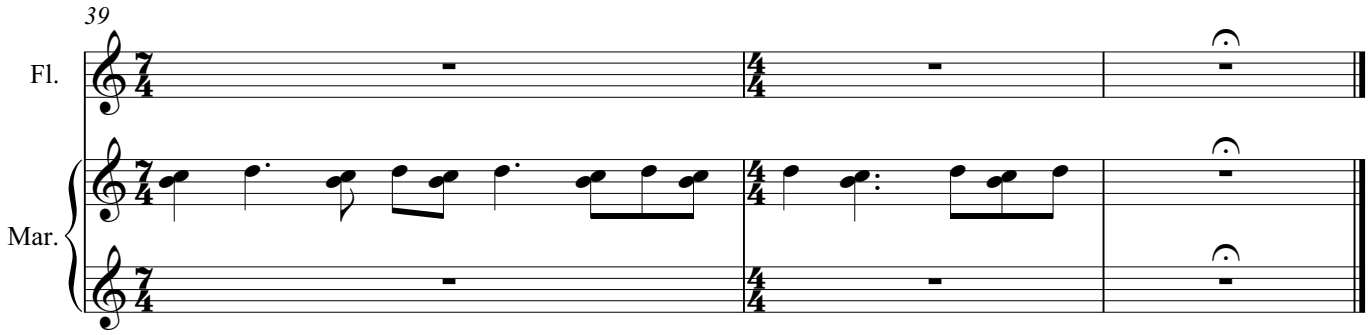
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Mar.

Thomas Arthur

Music for Flute (2010)

Performance time approxomately 3 minutes and 15 seconds.

I

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for solo flute

Thomas Arthur
(2010)

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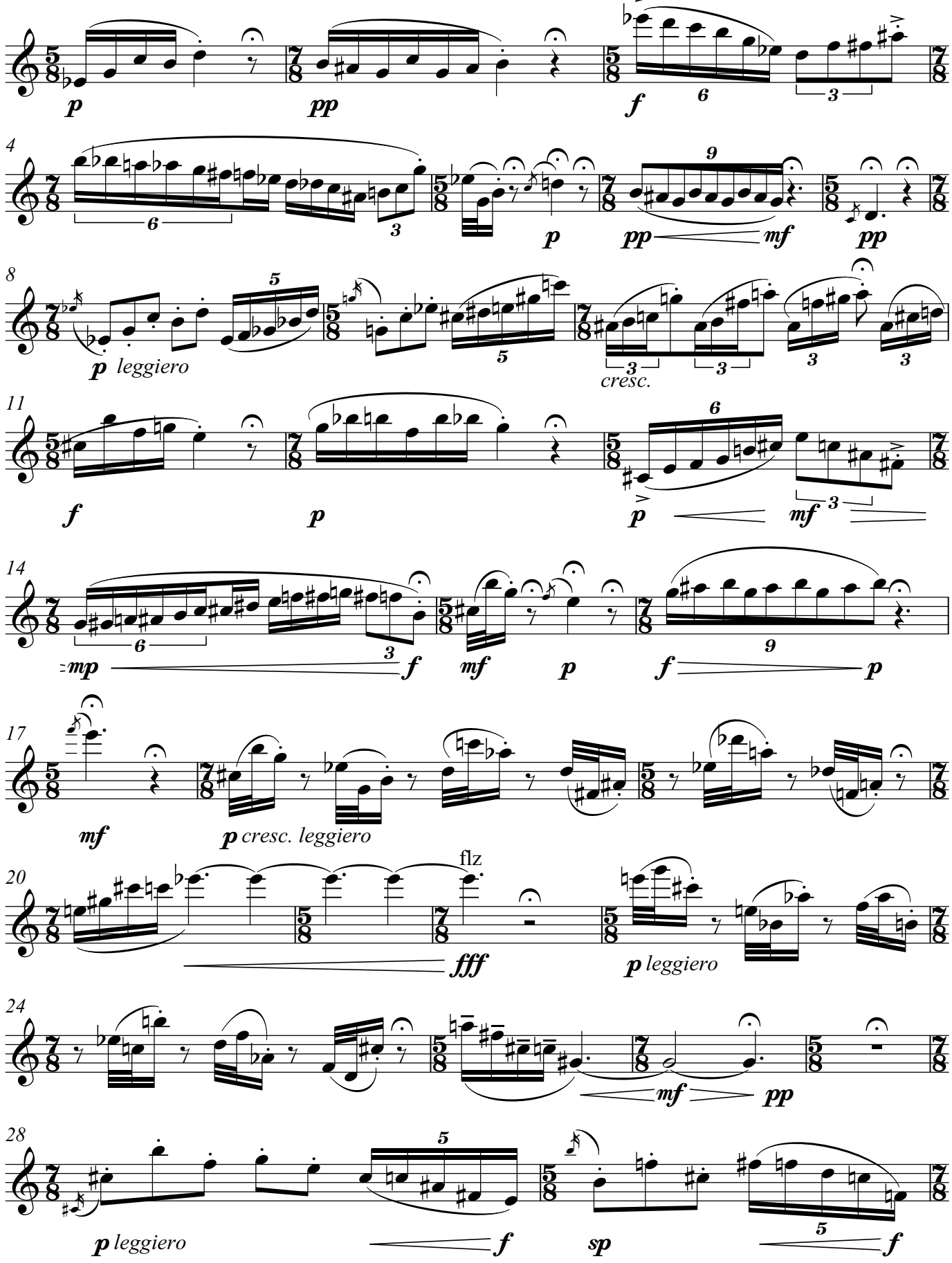

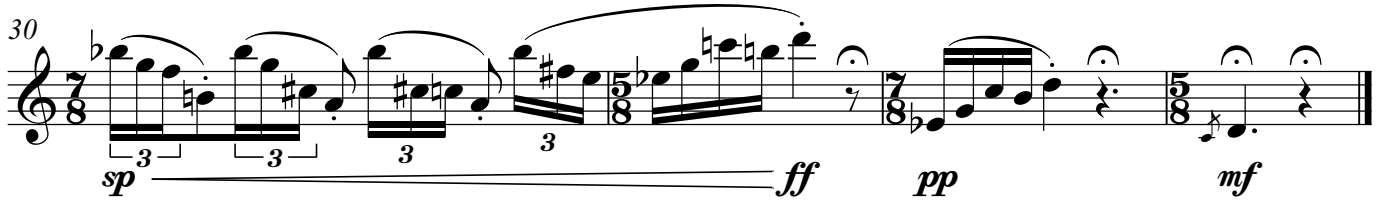
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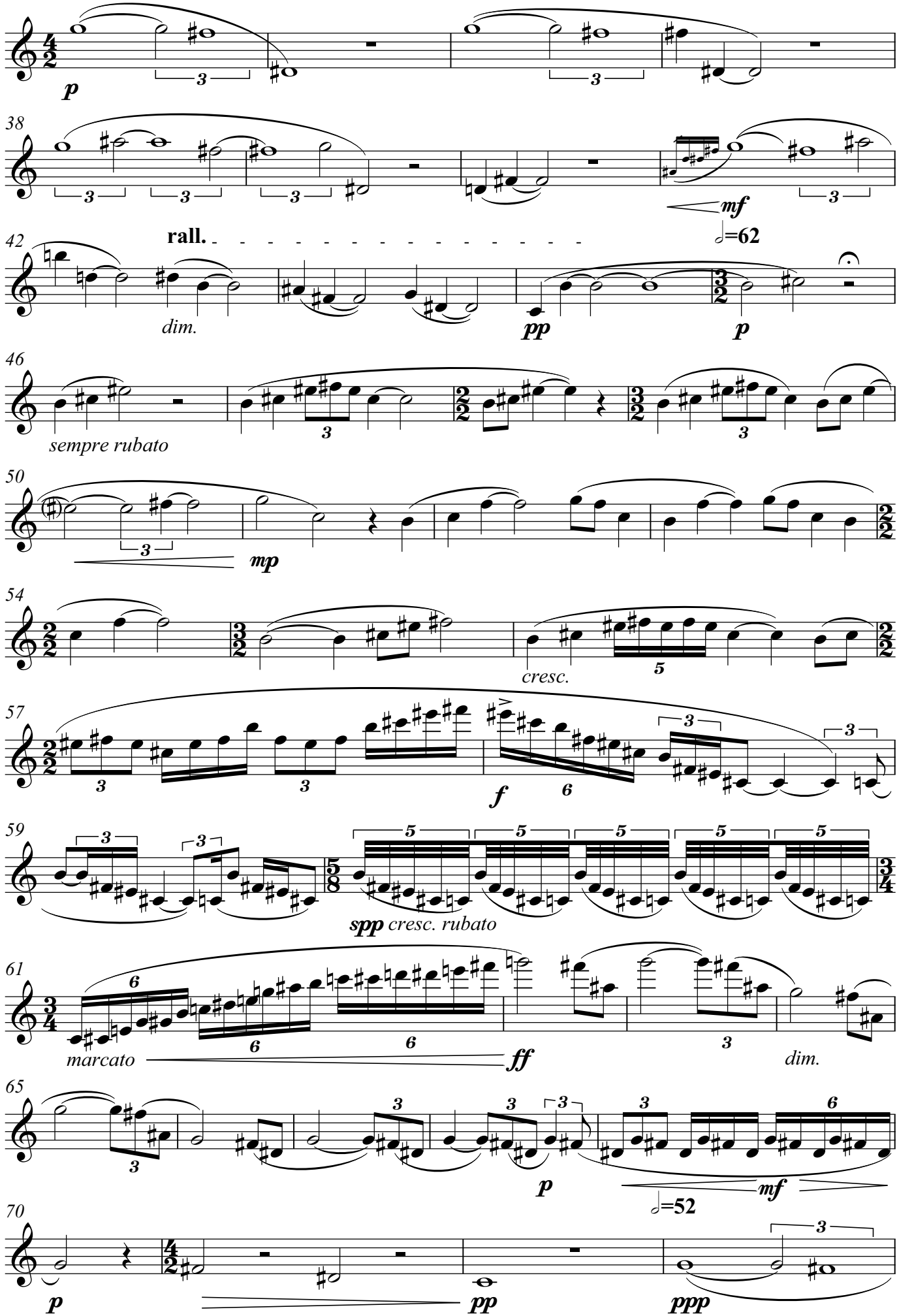
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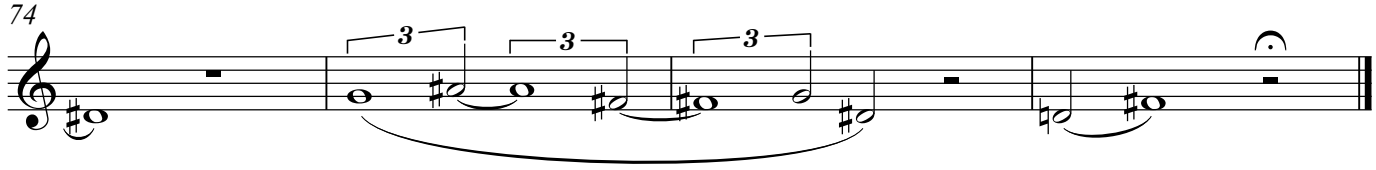
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Thomas Arthur

Wind Quintet
(2011)

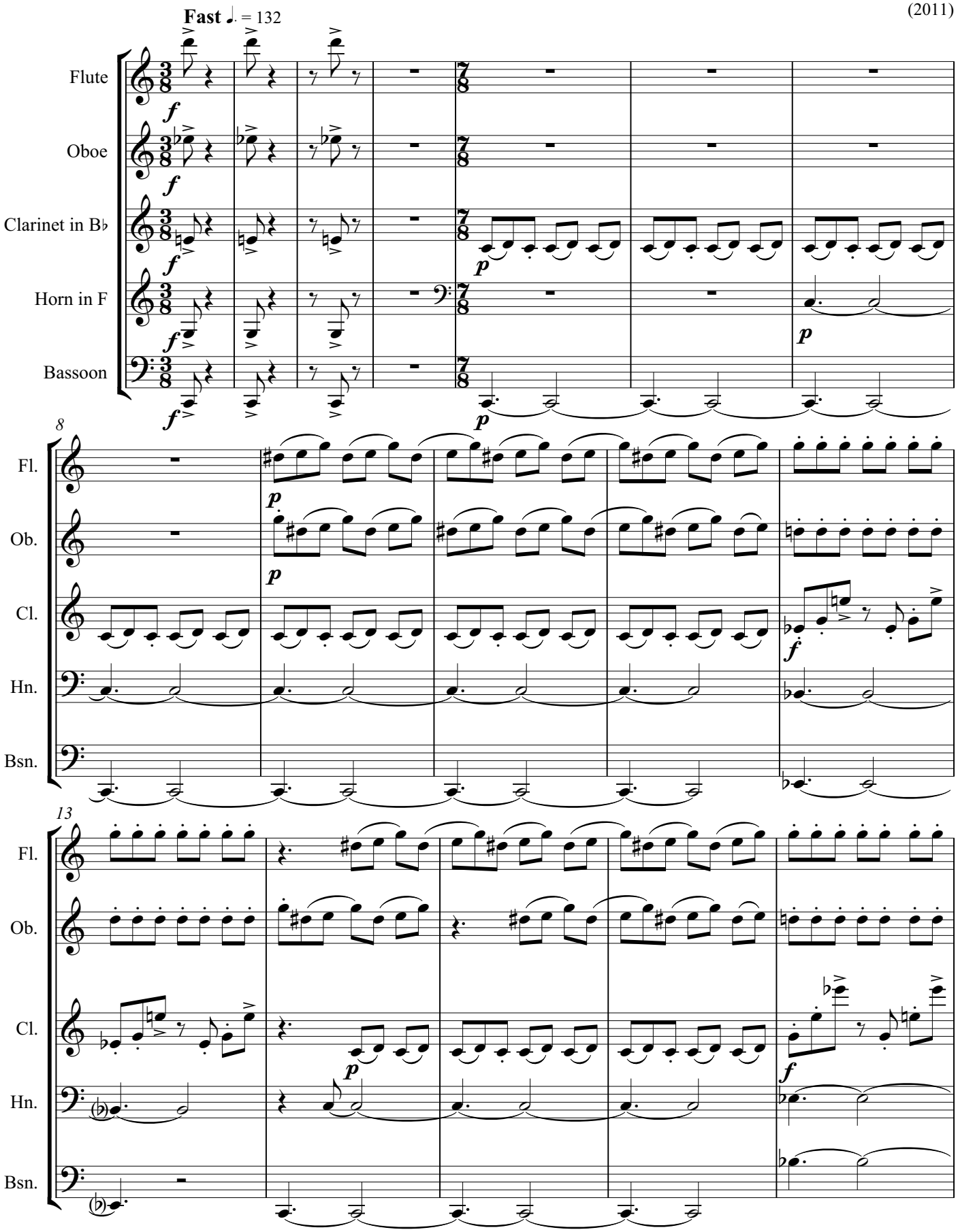
For Flute, Oboe, Bb Clarinet, Horn and Bassoon.

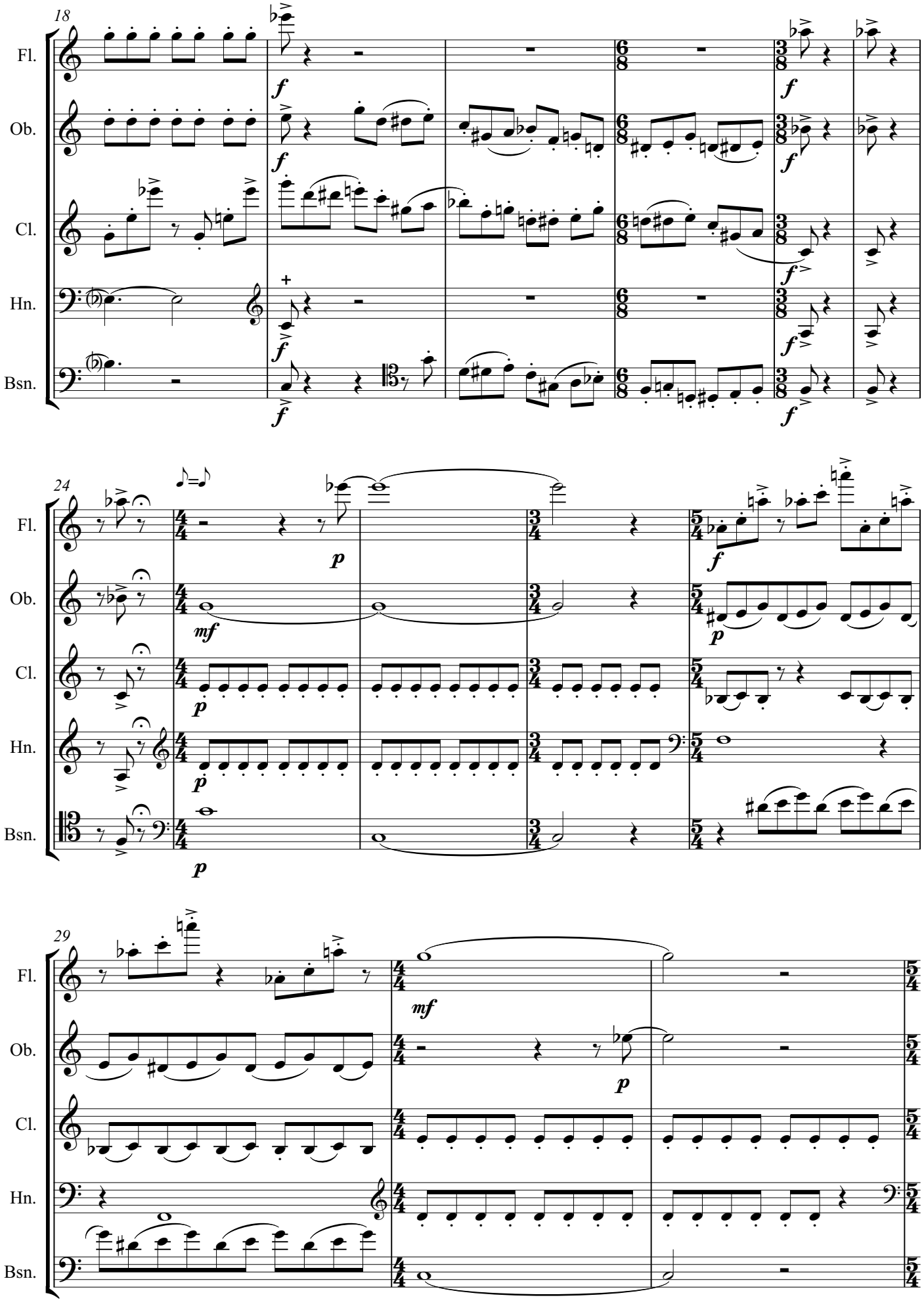
Score in C.

Performance time is approximately 4 minutues and 10 seconds.

Wind Quintet

Thomas Arthur
(2011)

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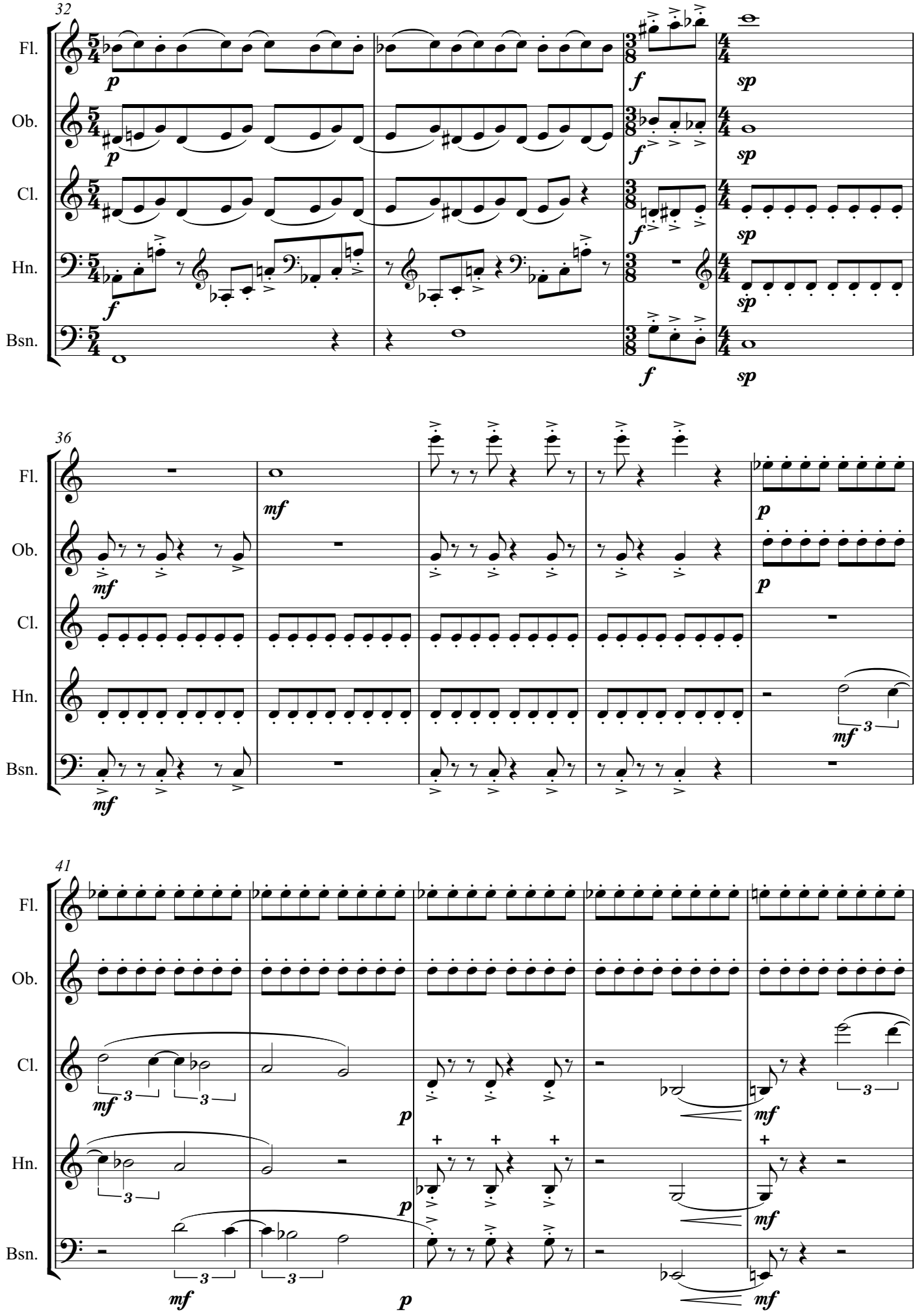
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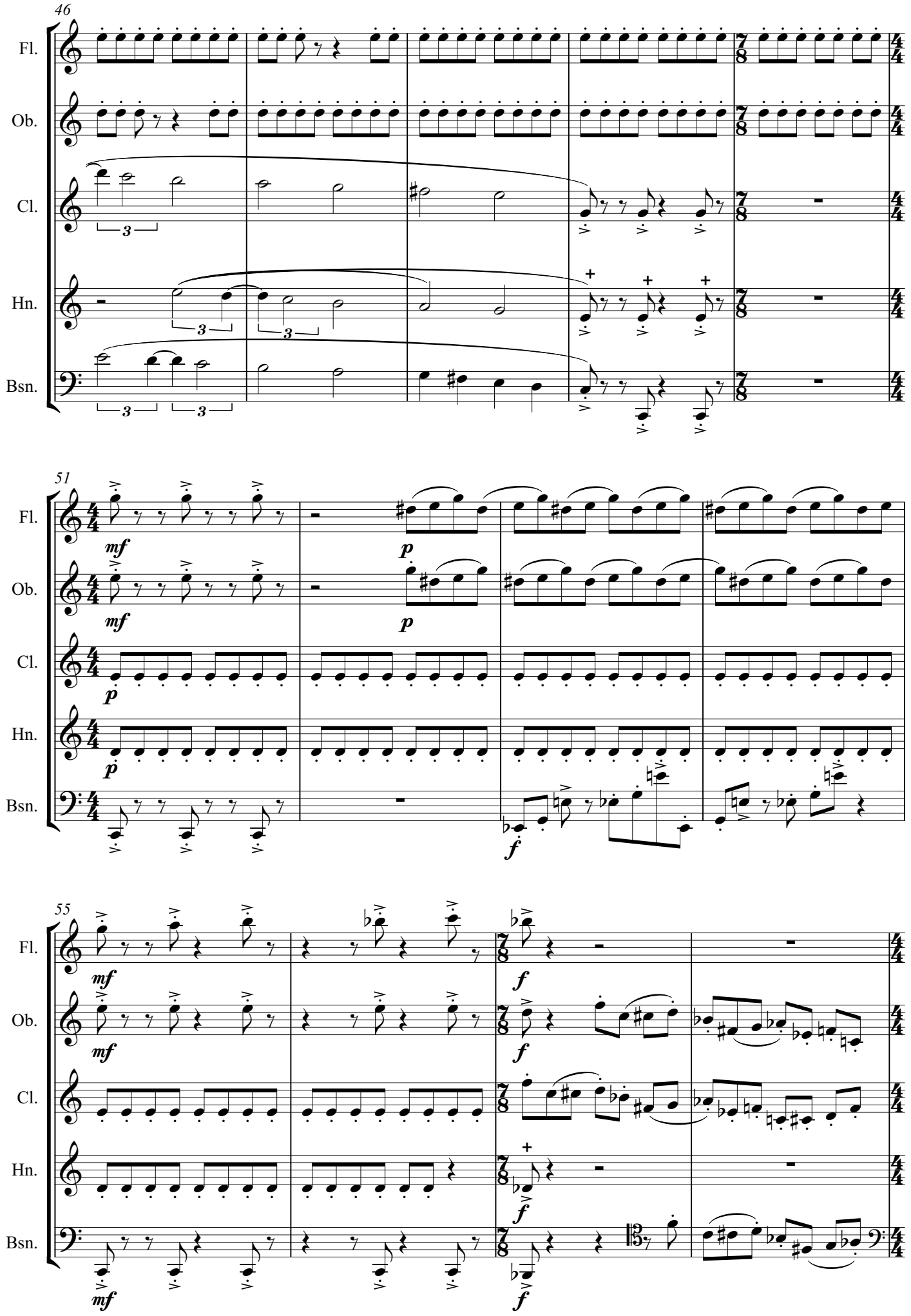
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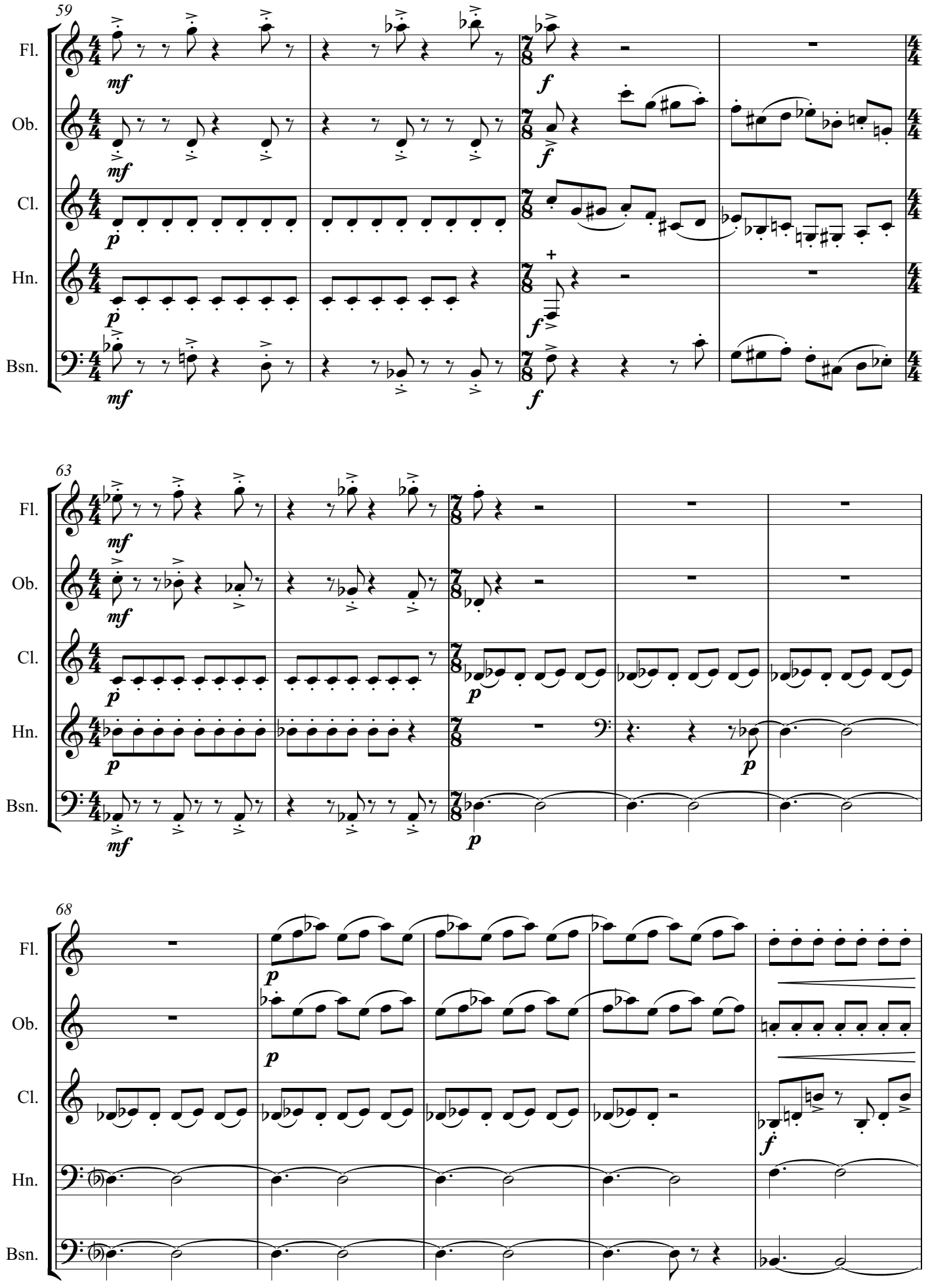
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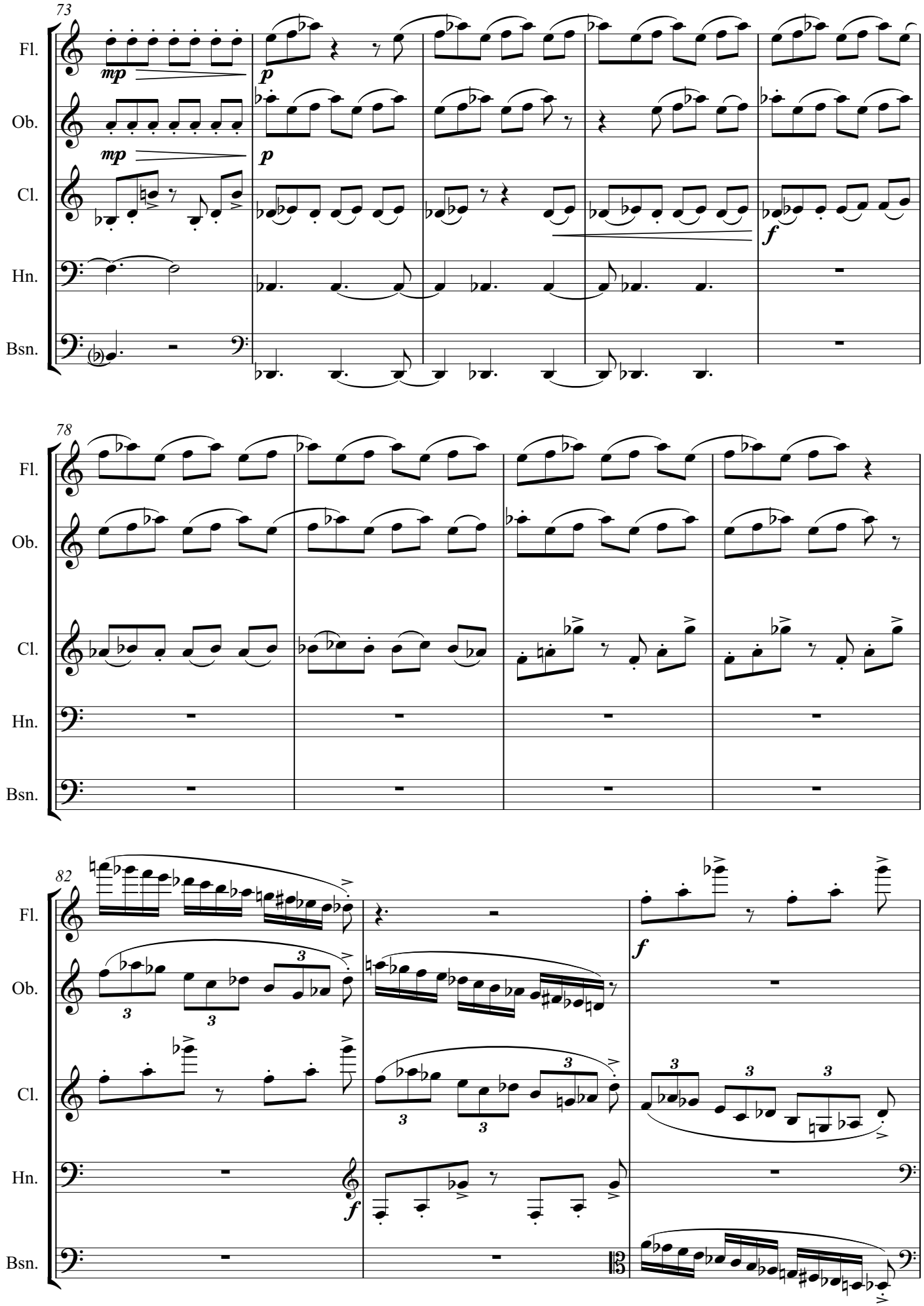
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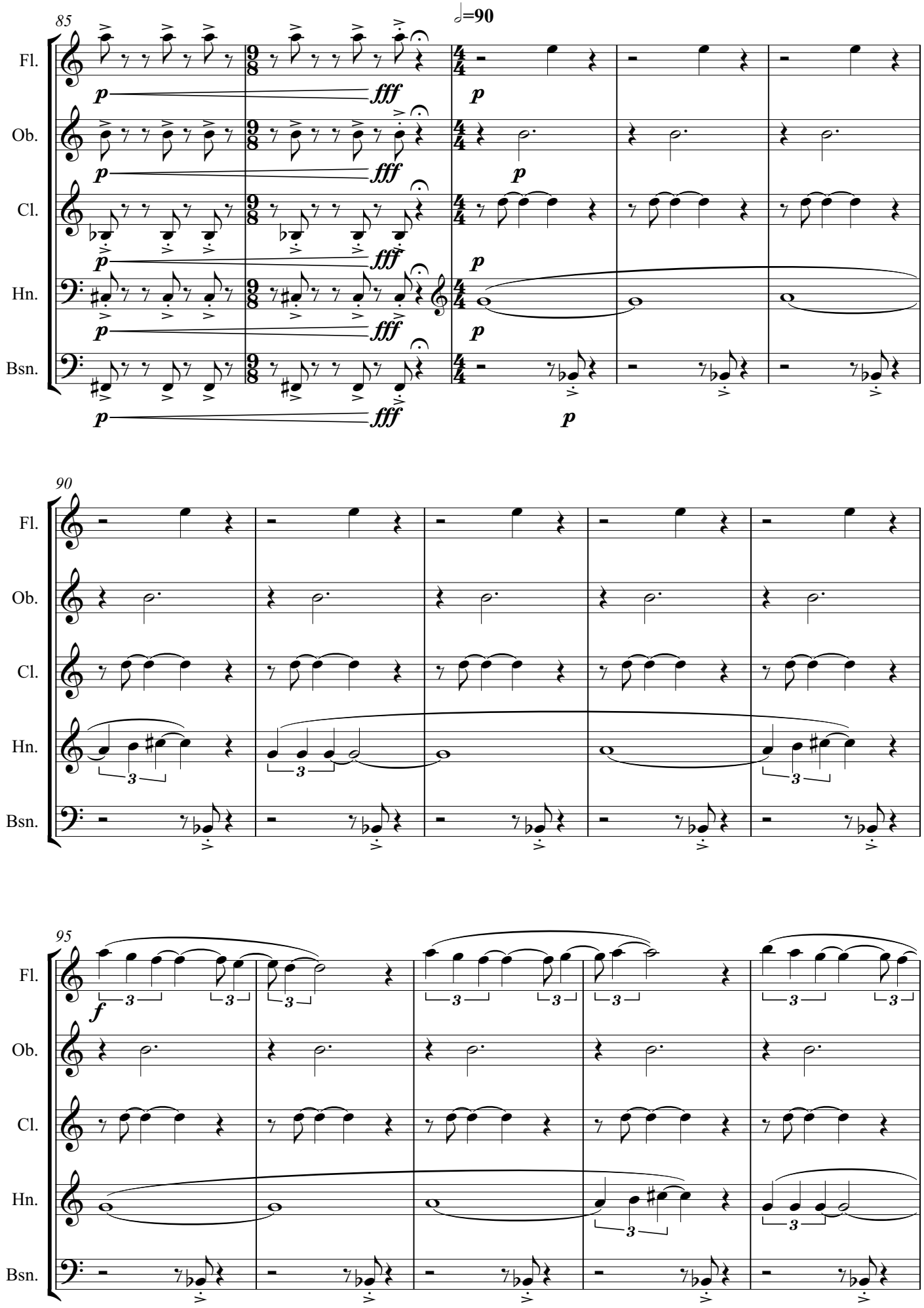
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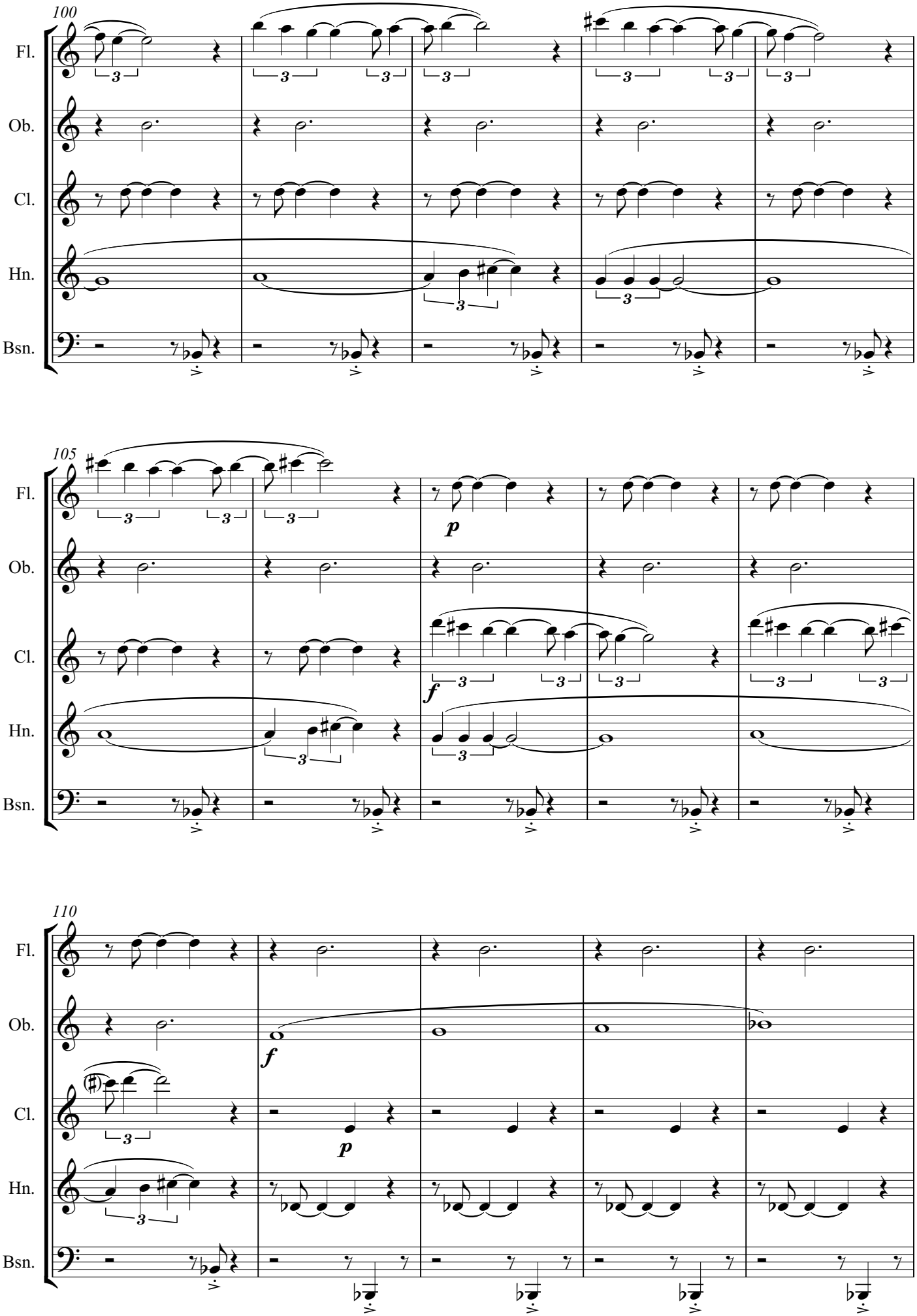
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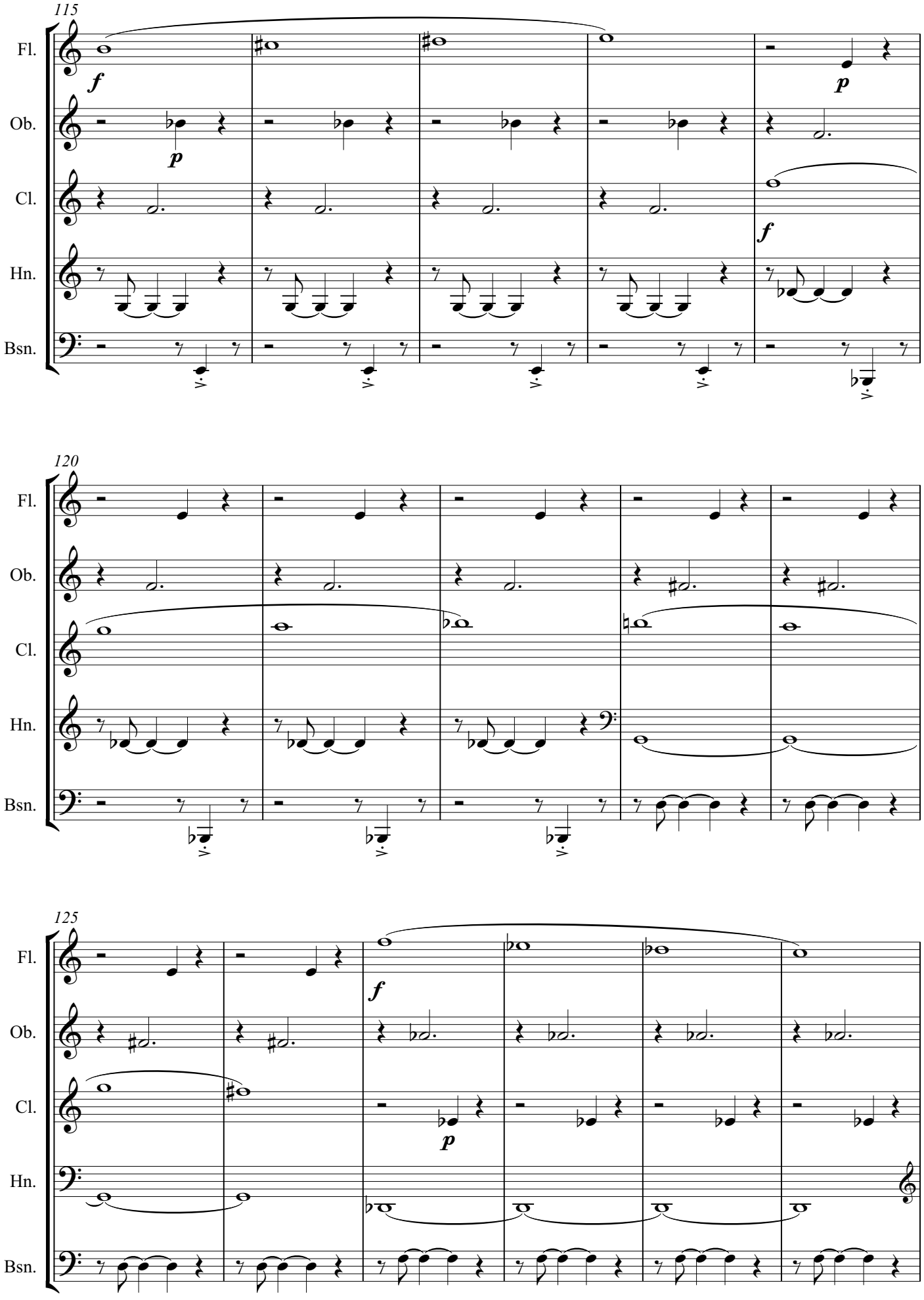
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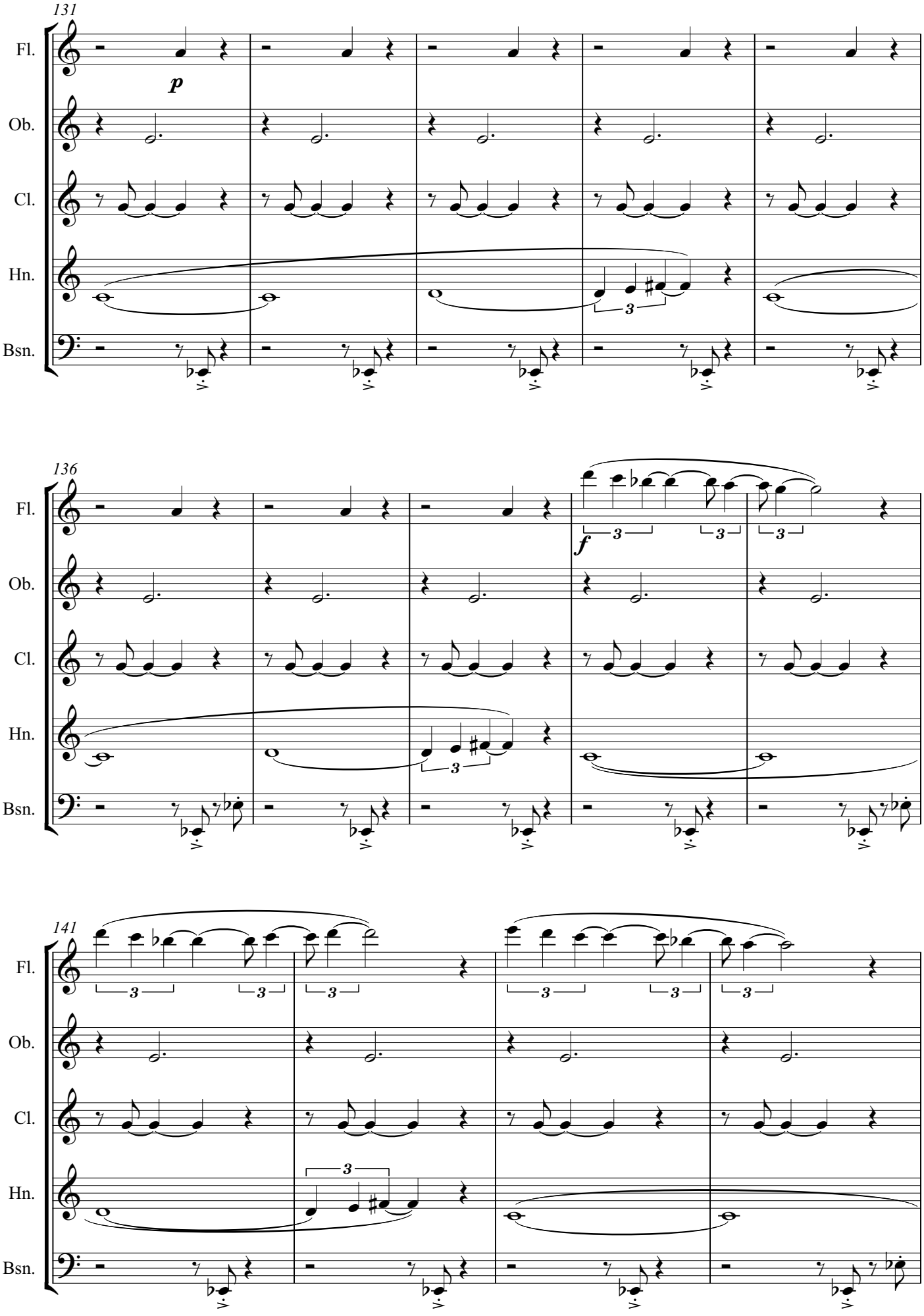
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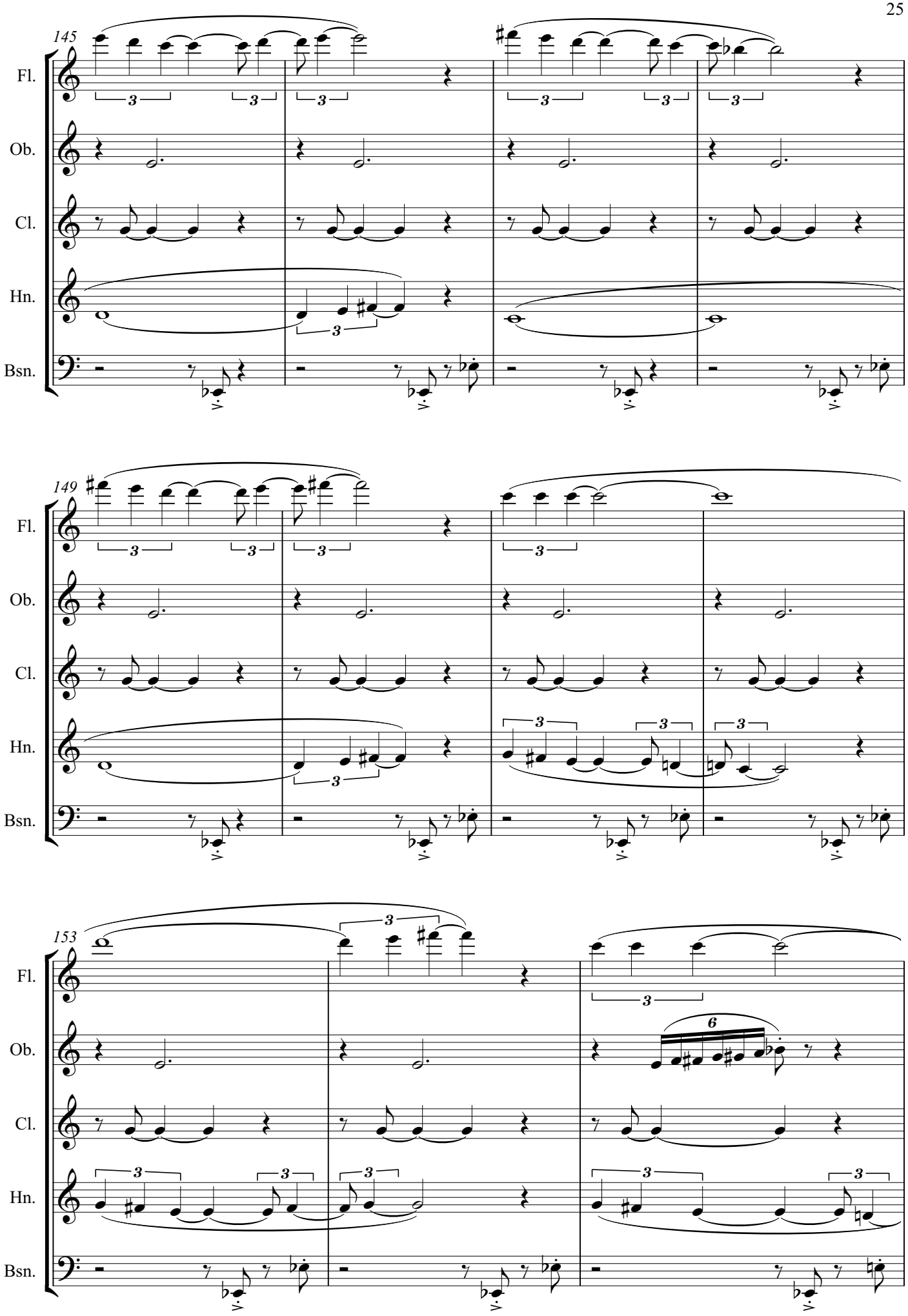
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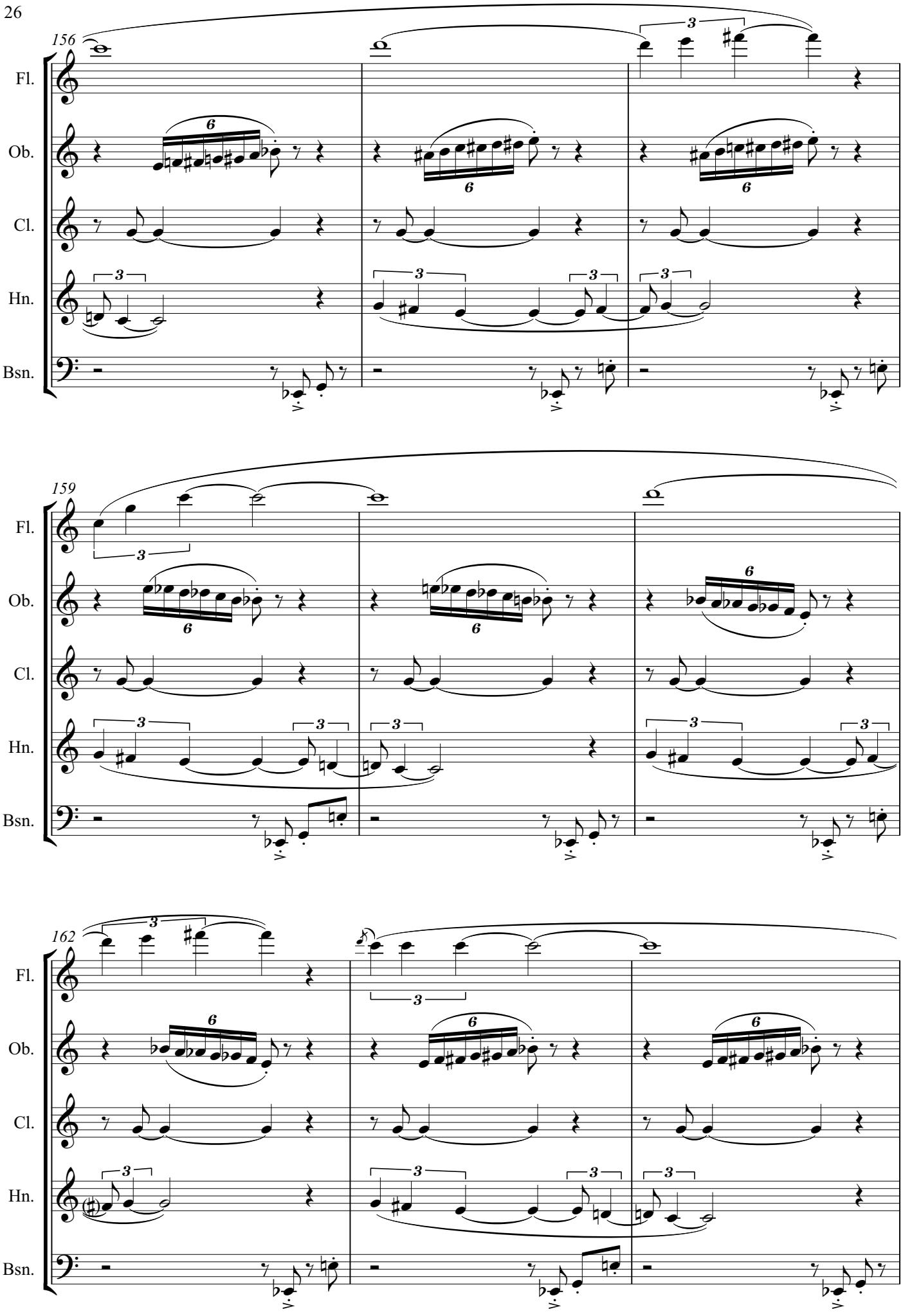
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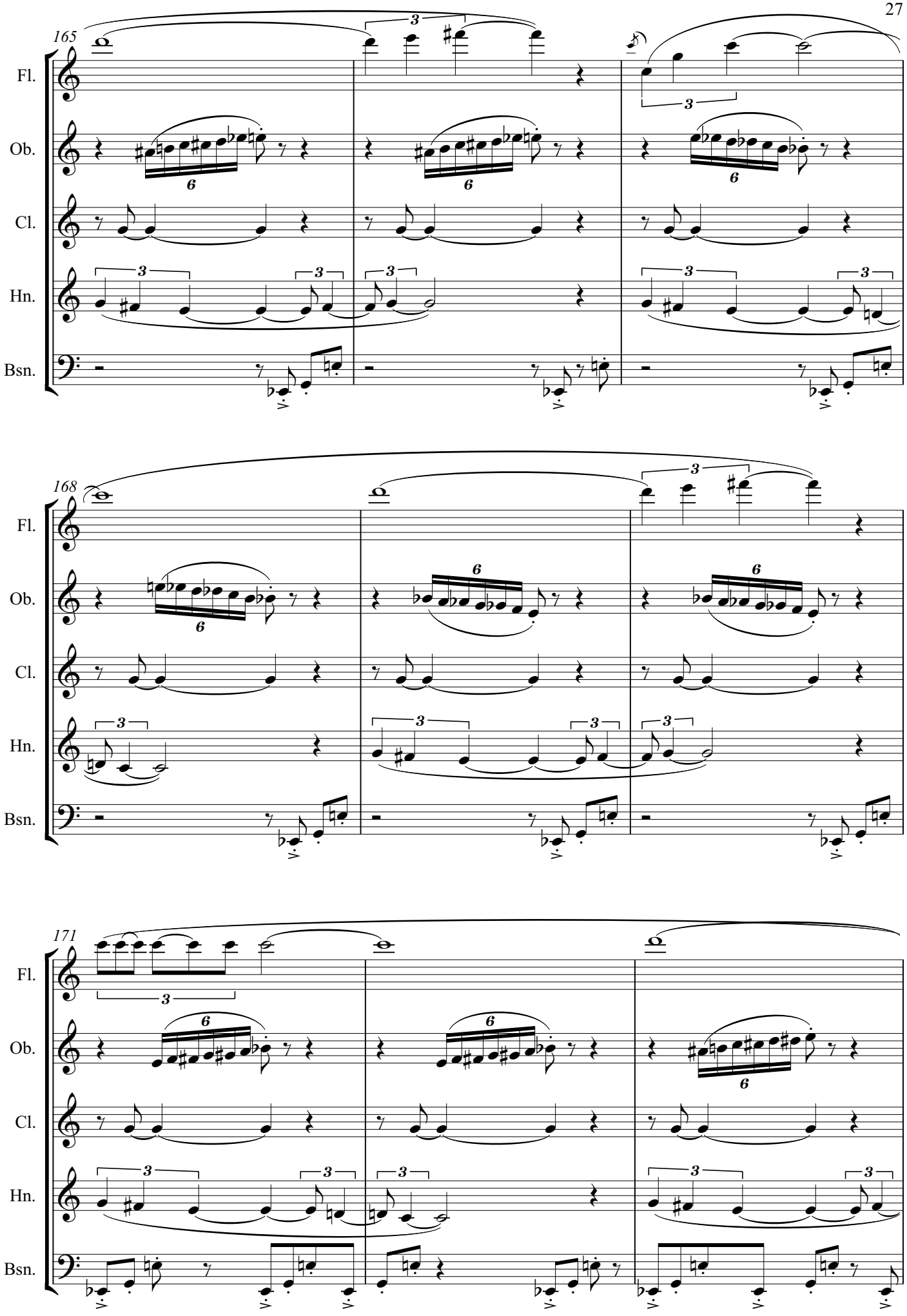
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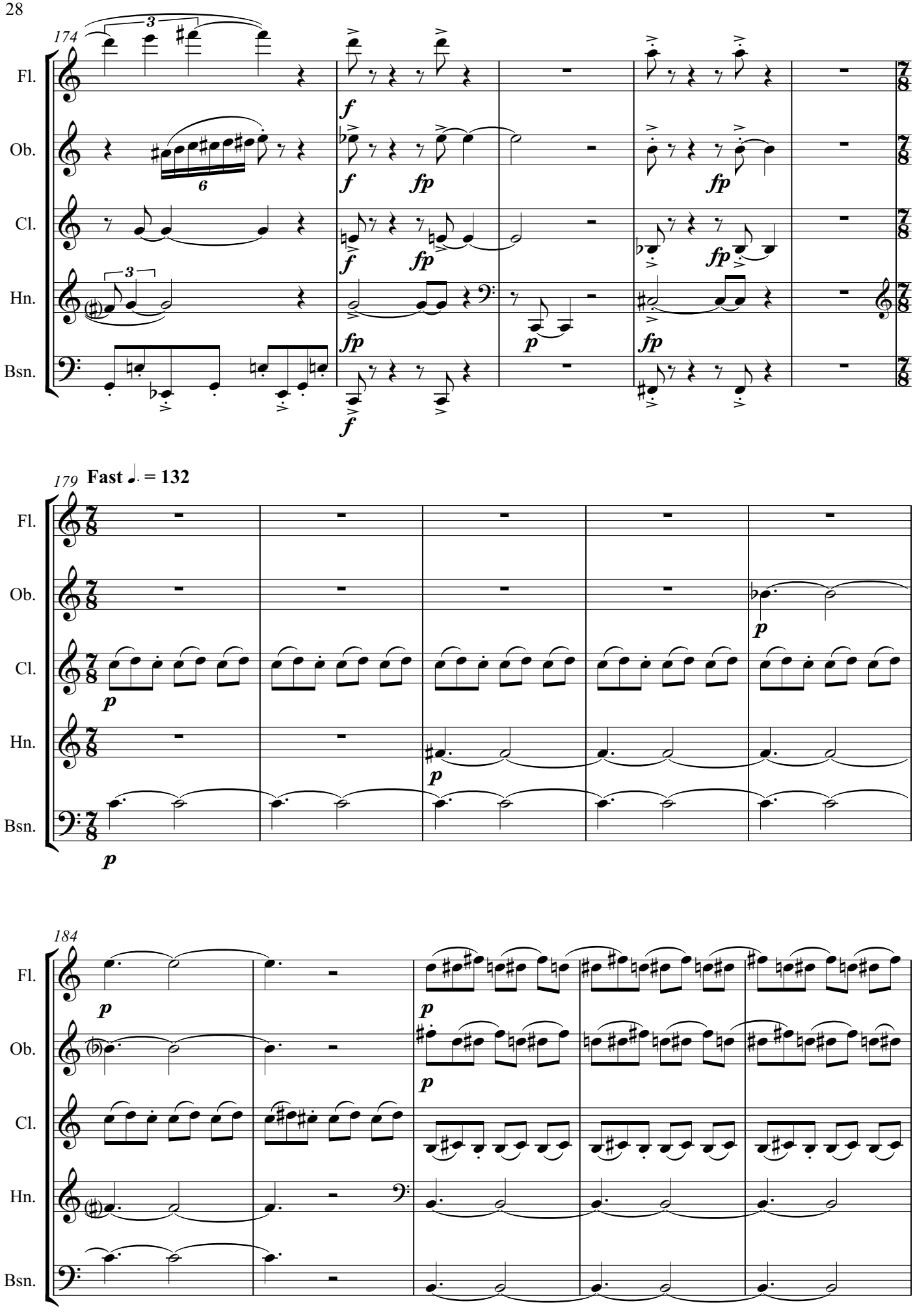
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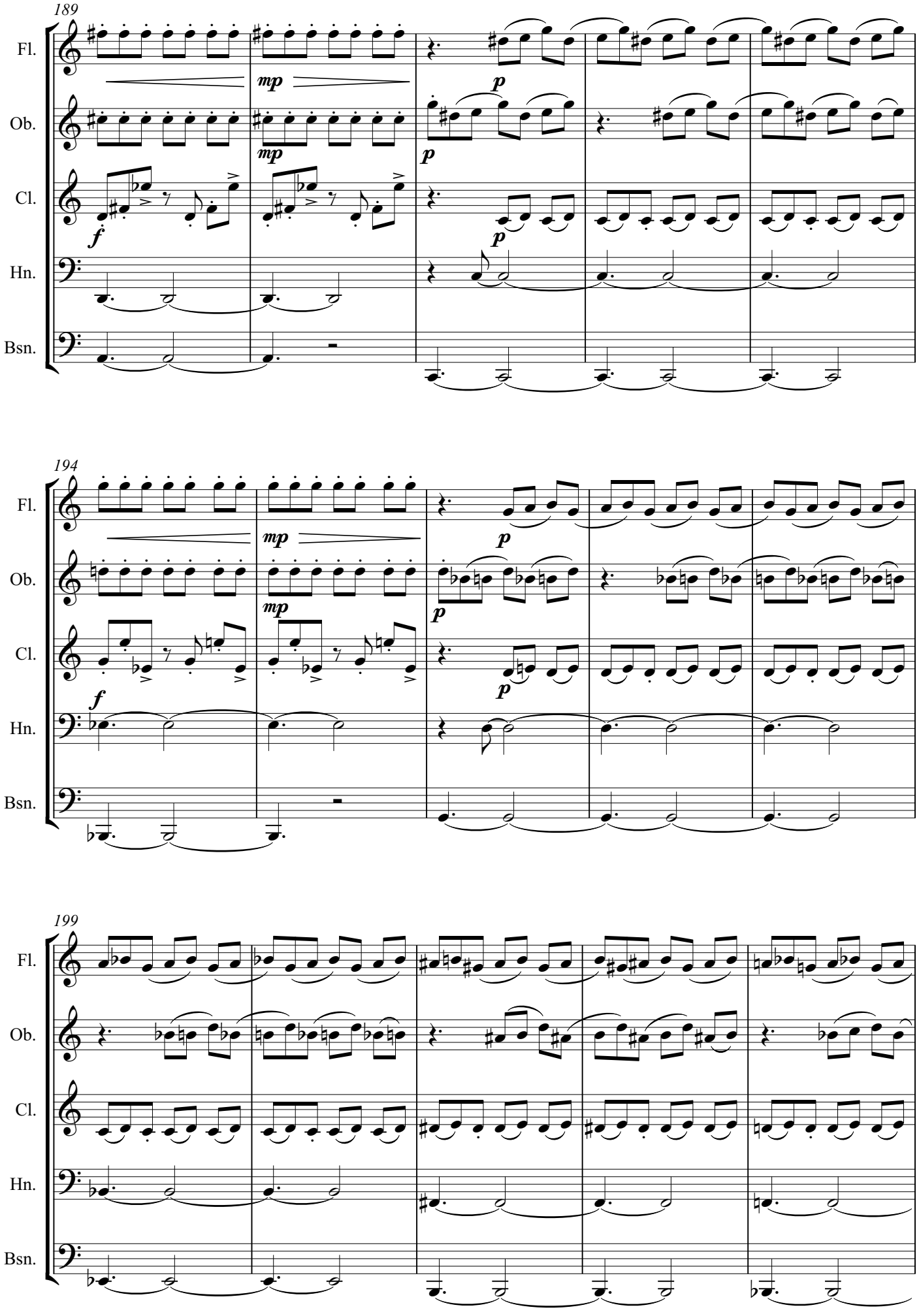
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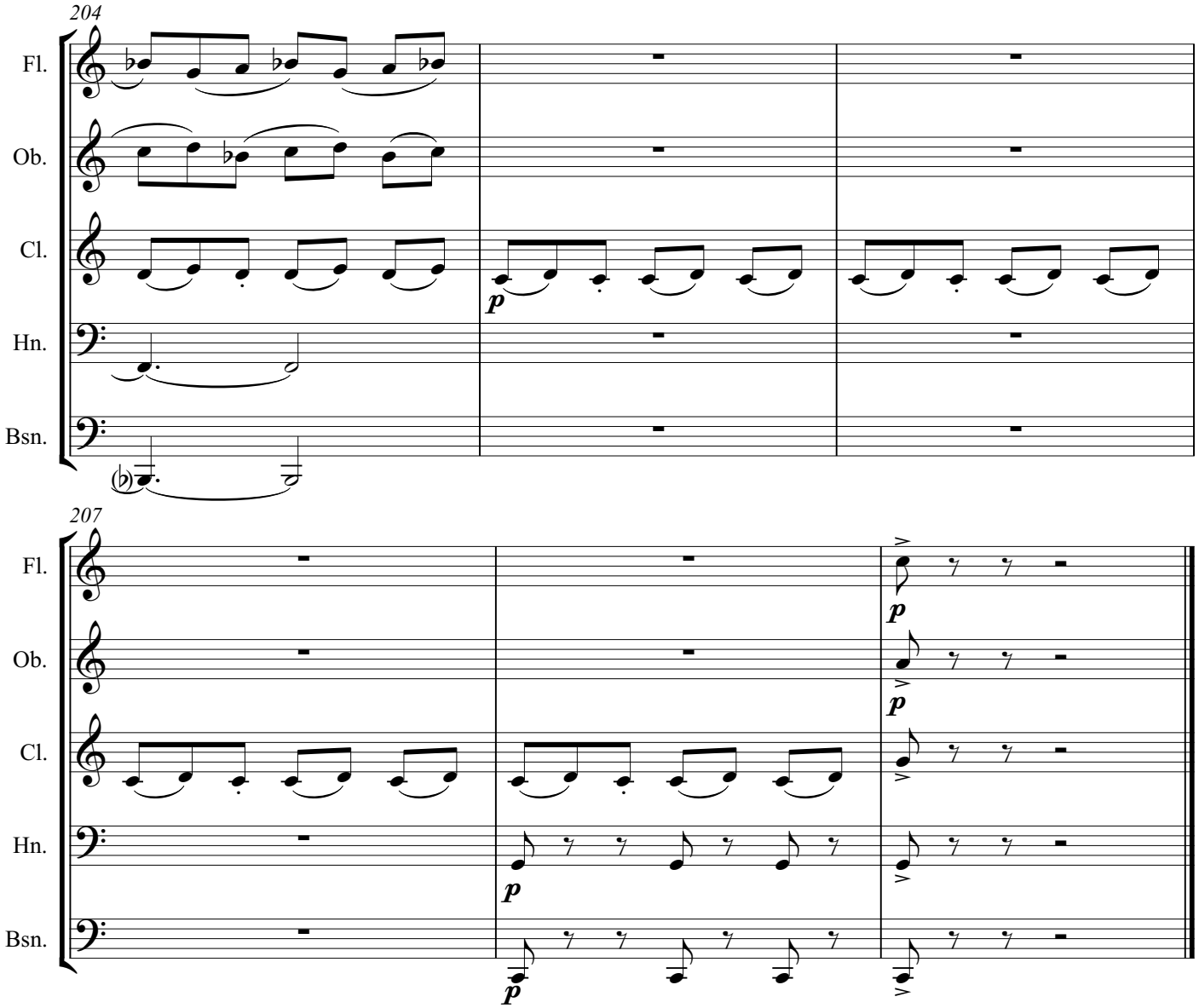
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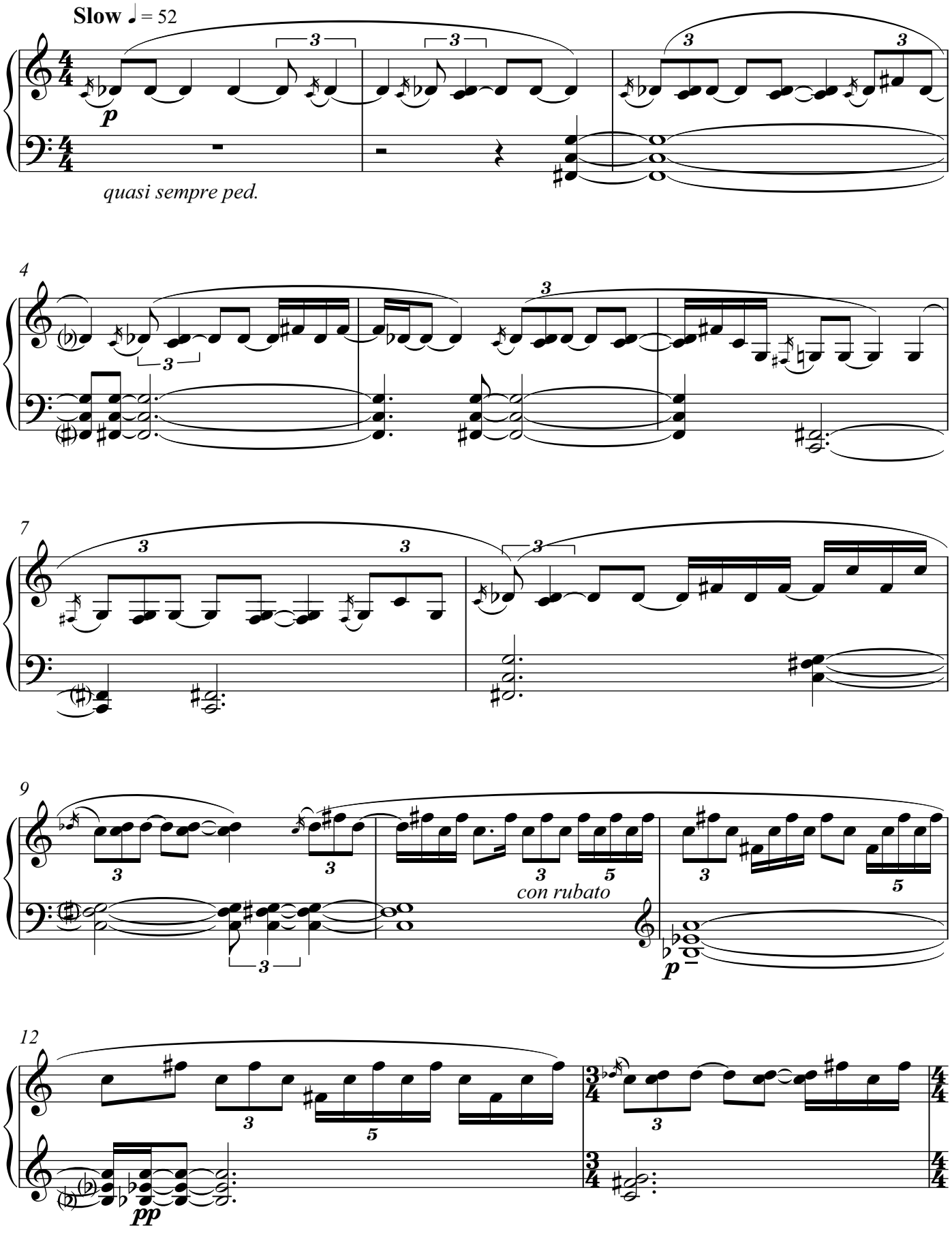
Thomas Arthur

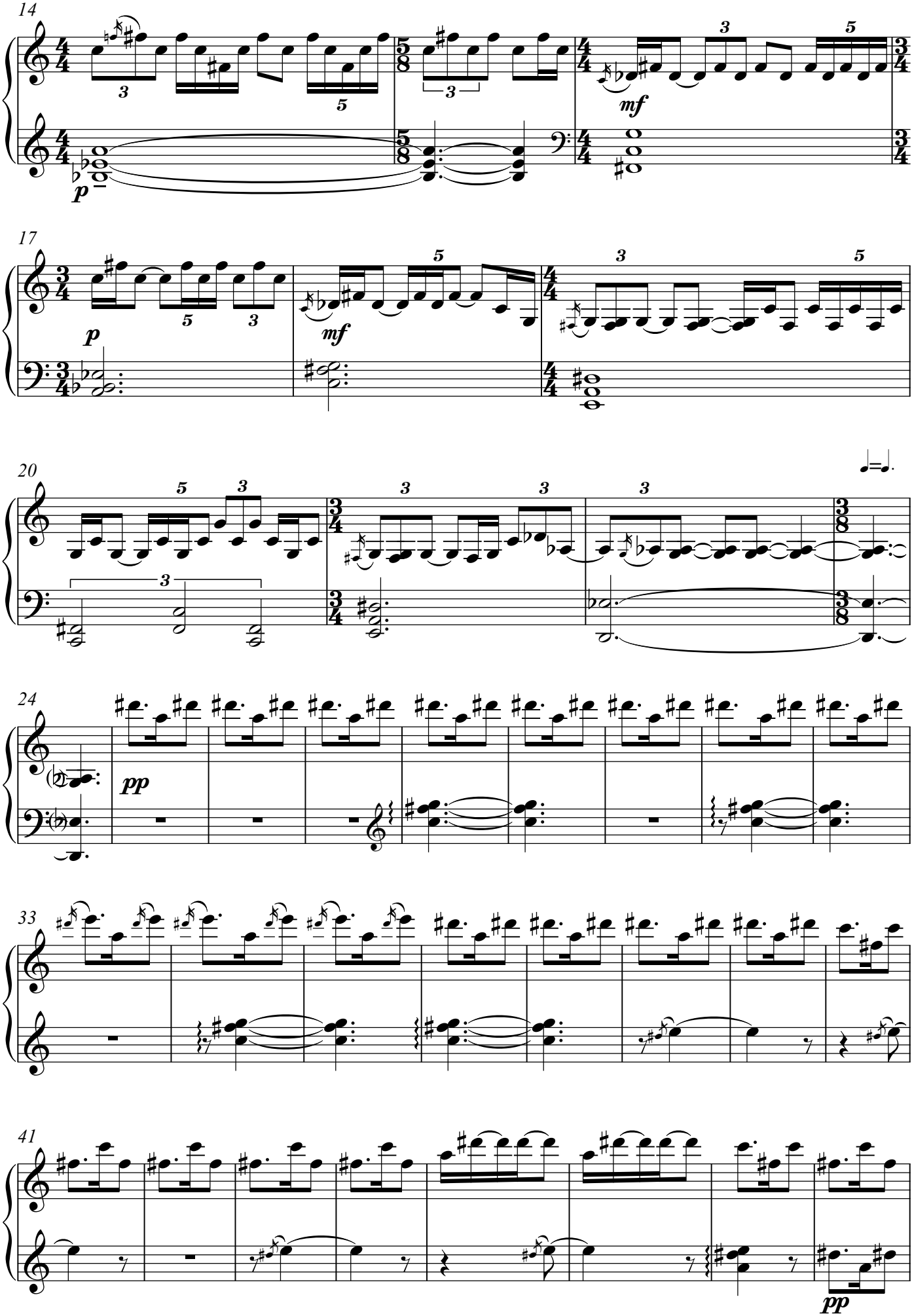
Fantasy for Piano (2011)

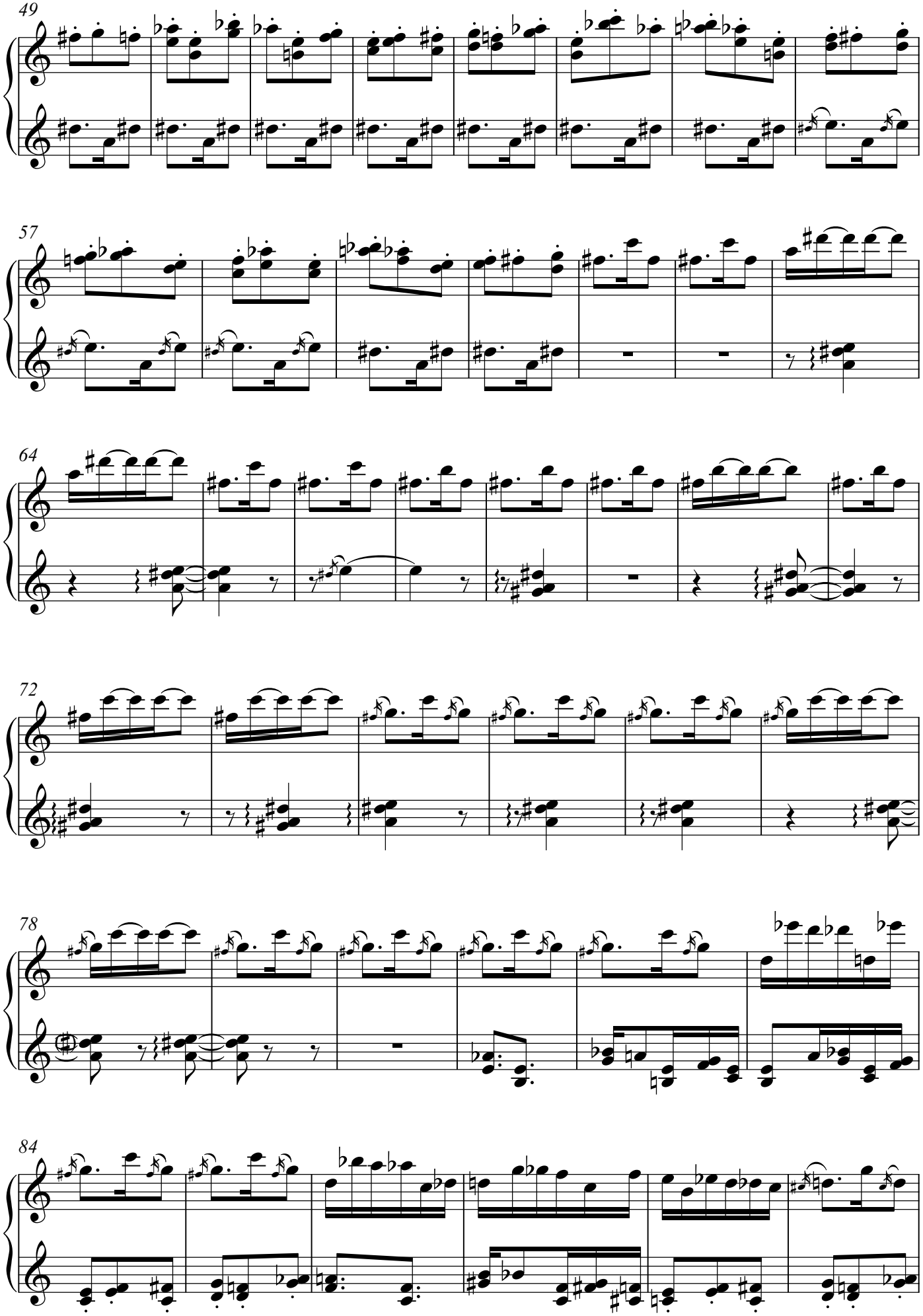
Performance time approximately 10 minutes.

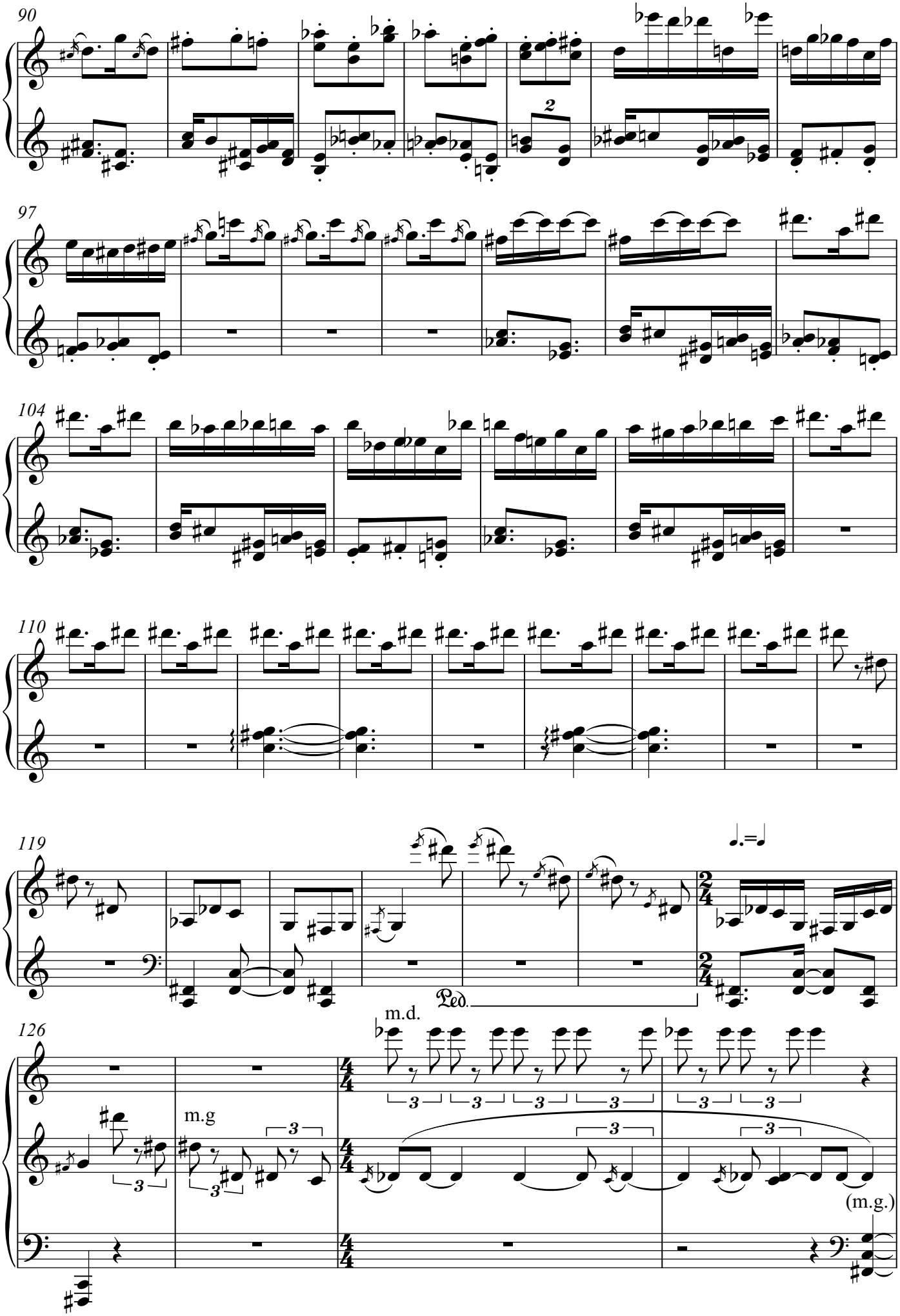
Pedal markings are merely a guide.

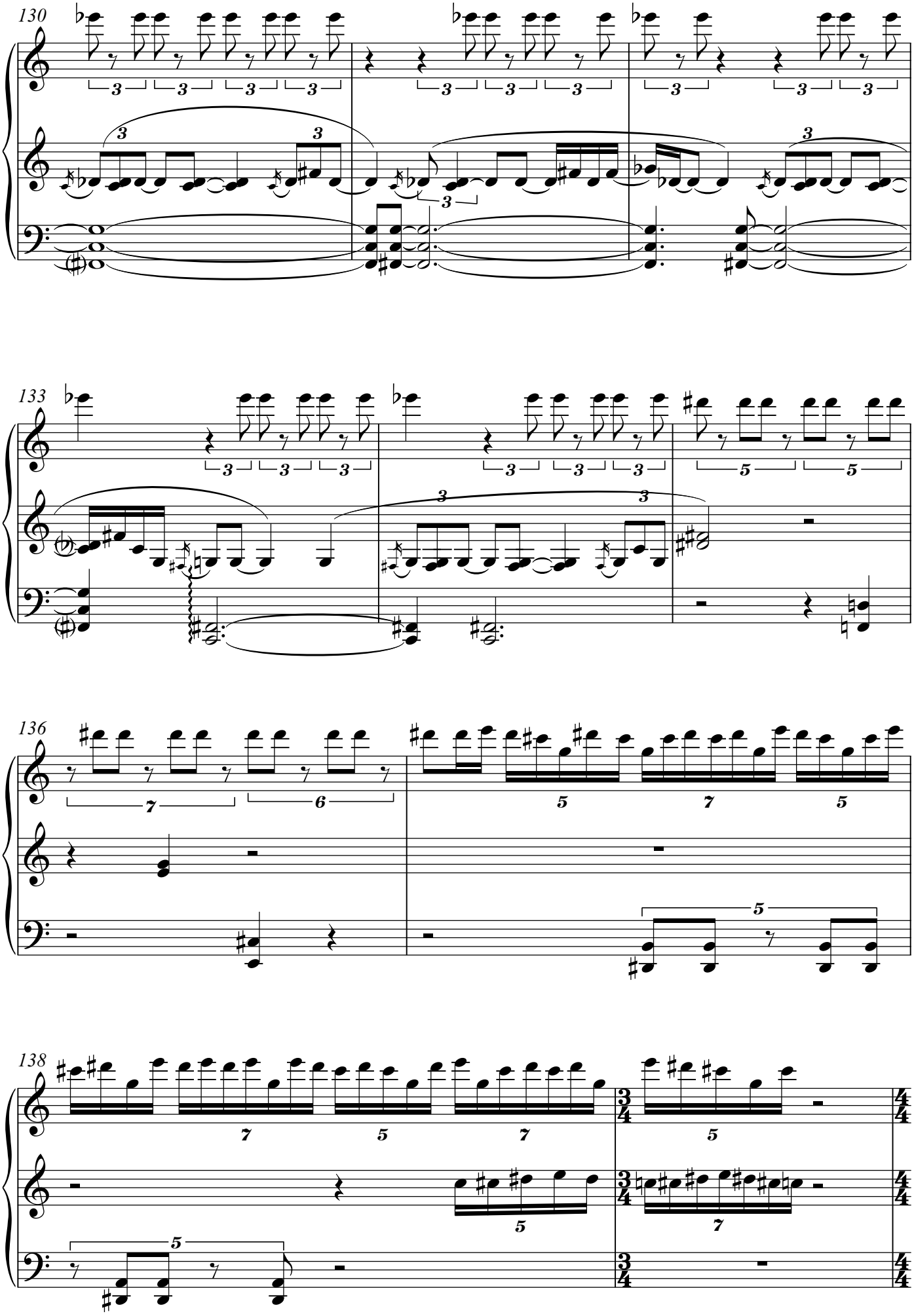
Fantasy for Piano

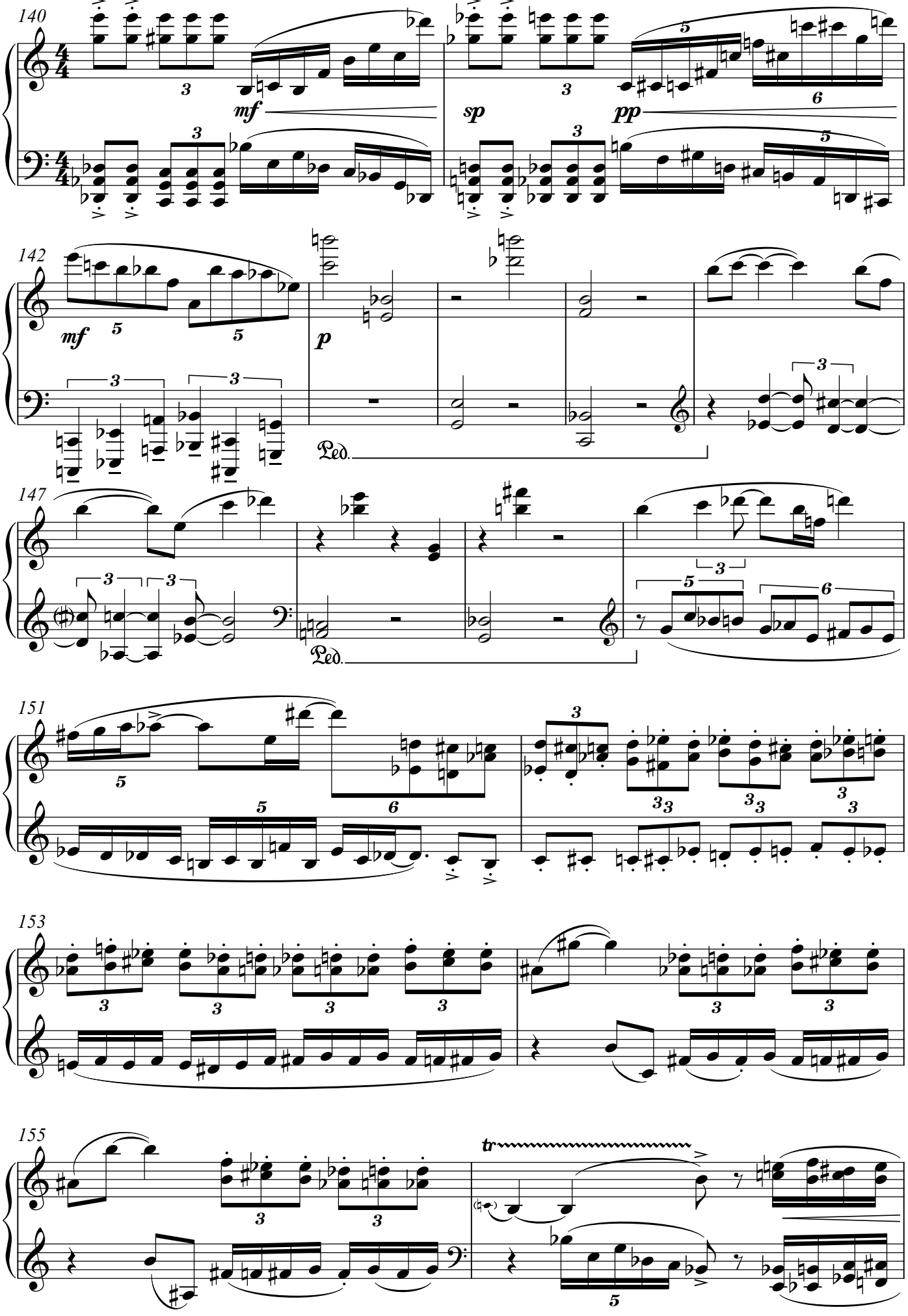


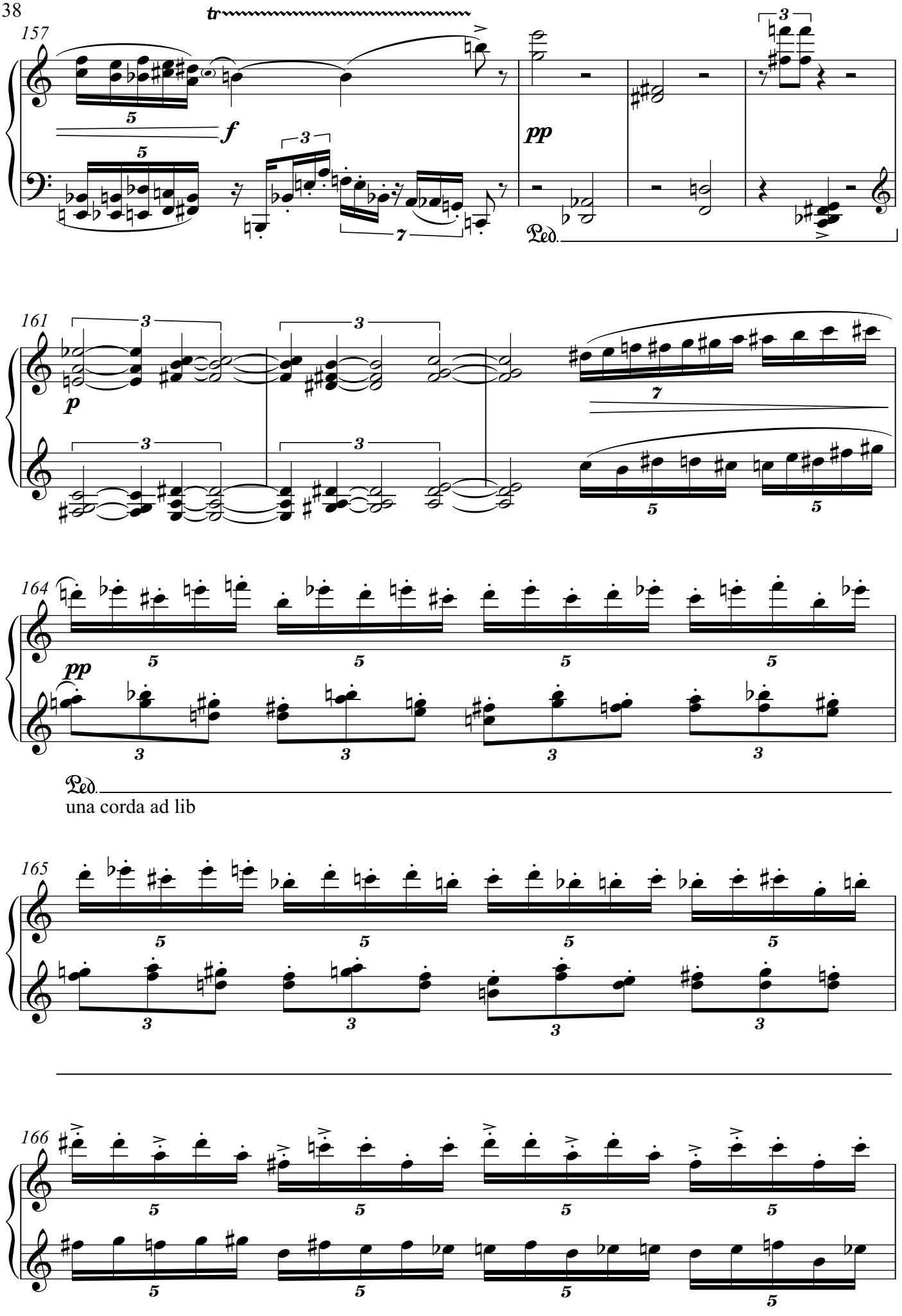

14
p
mf
17
p
mf
20
24
pp
33
41
pp

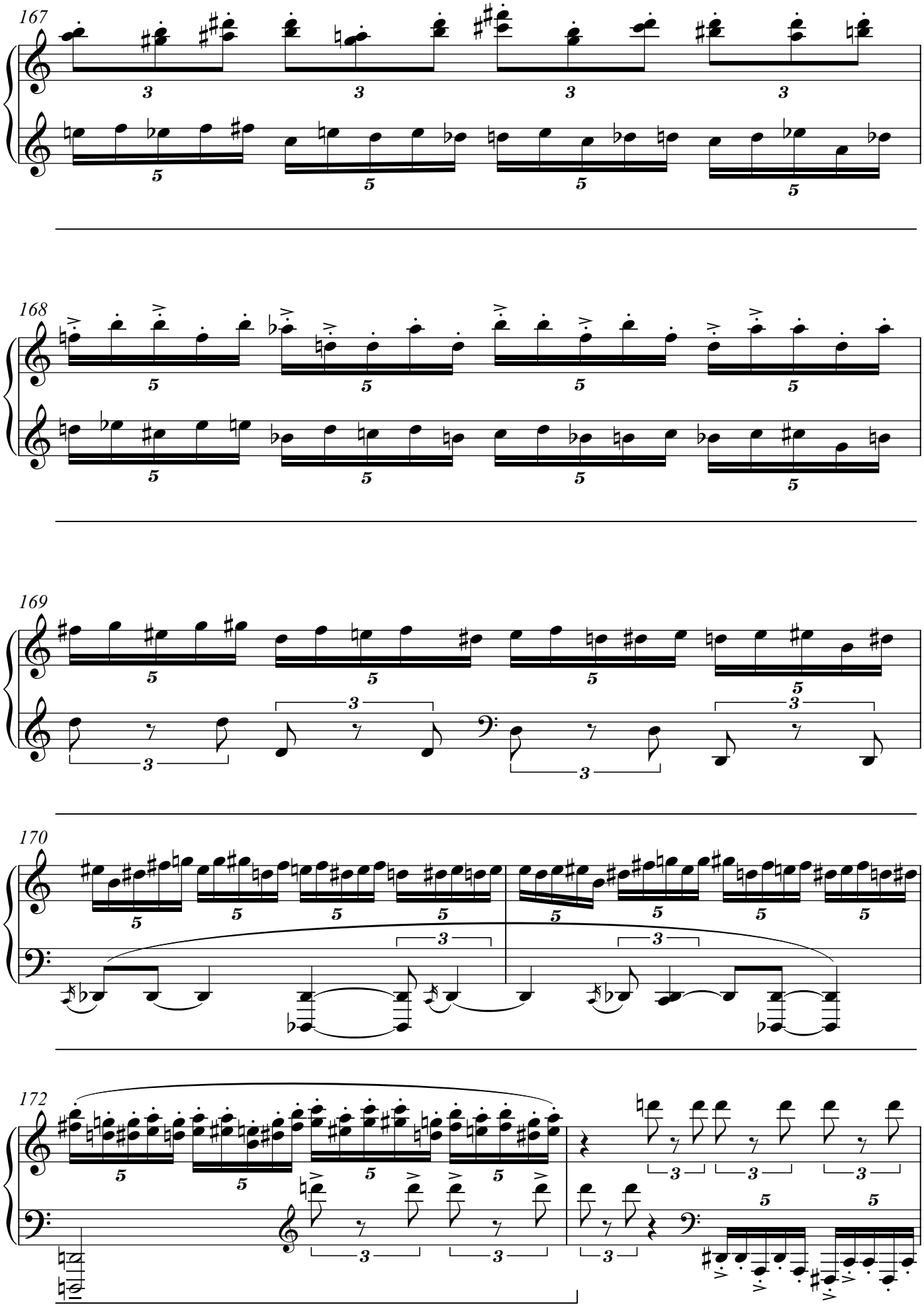

49
57
64
72
78
84

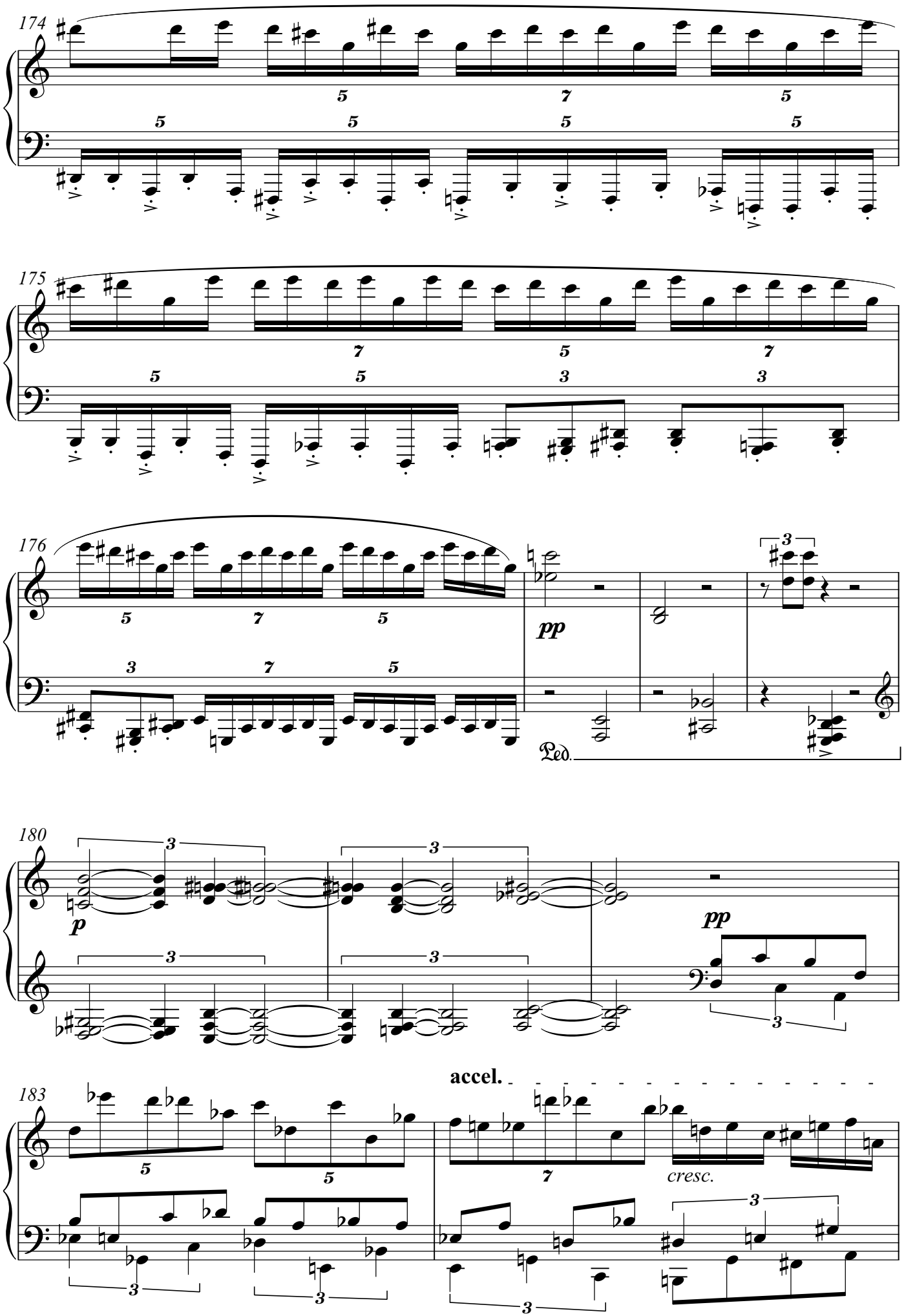

90
97
104
110
119
Ped.
126
m.d.
m.g
(m.g.)

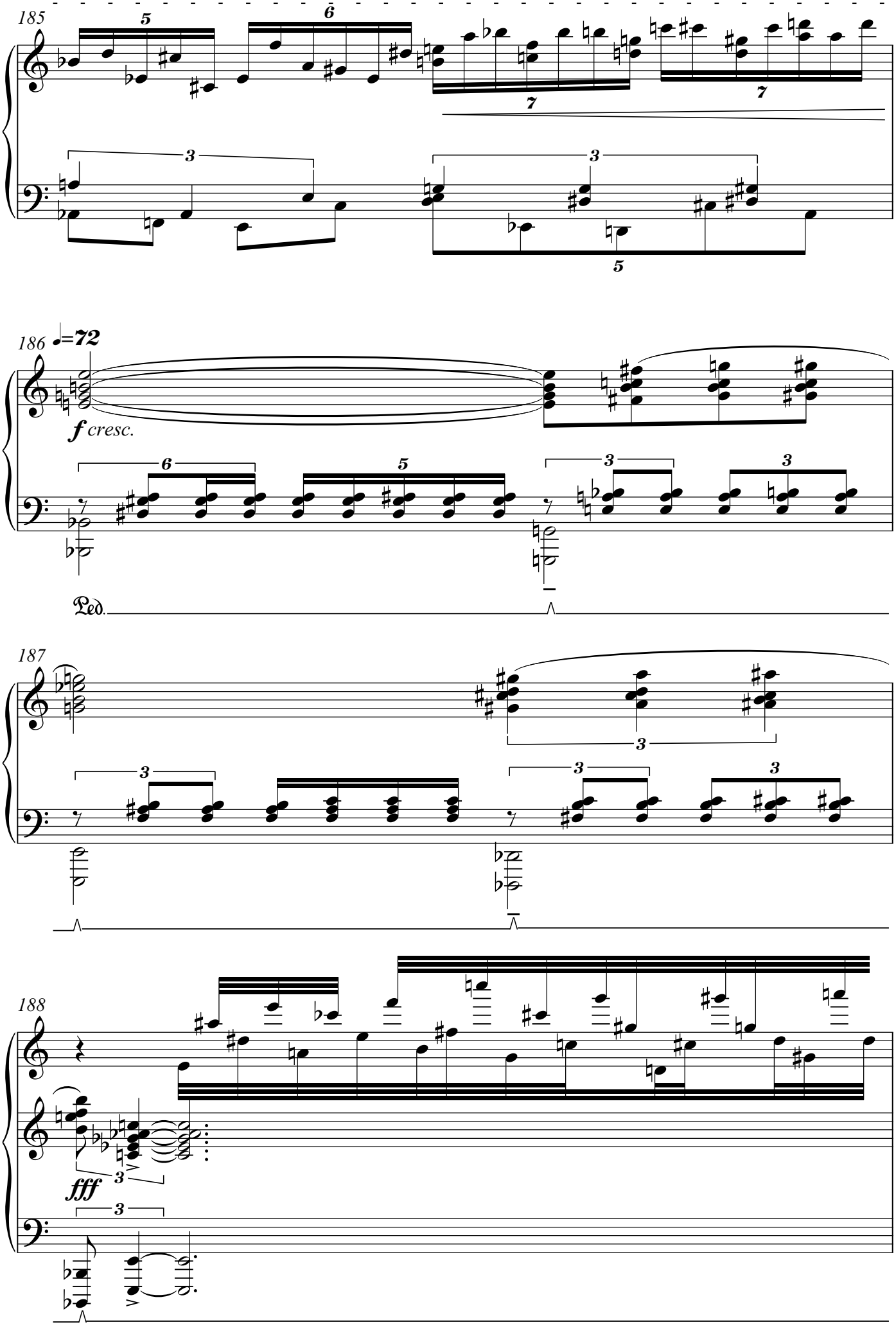

130
133
136
138

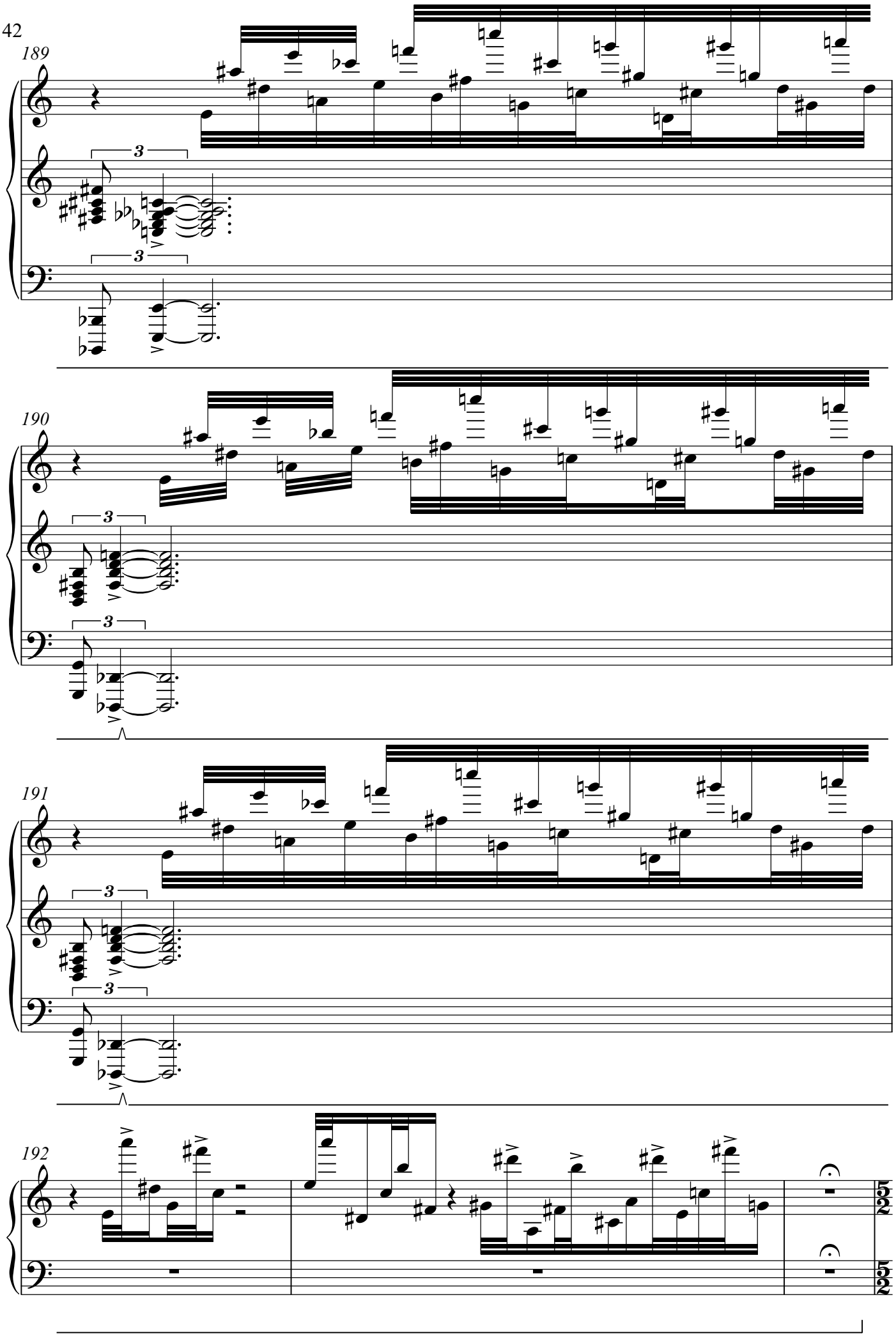

140
mf
sp
pp
142
mf
p
Ped.
147
Ped.
151
153
155
tr

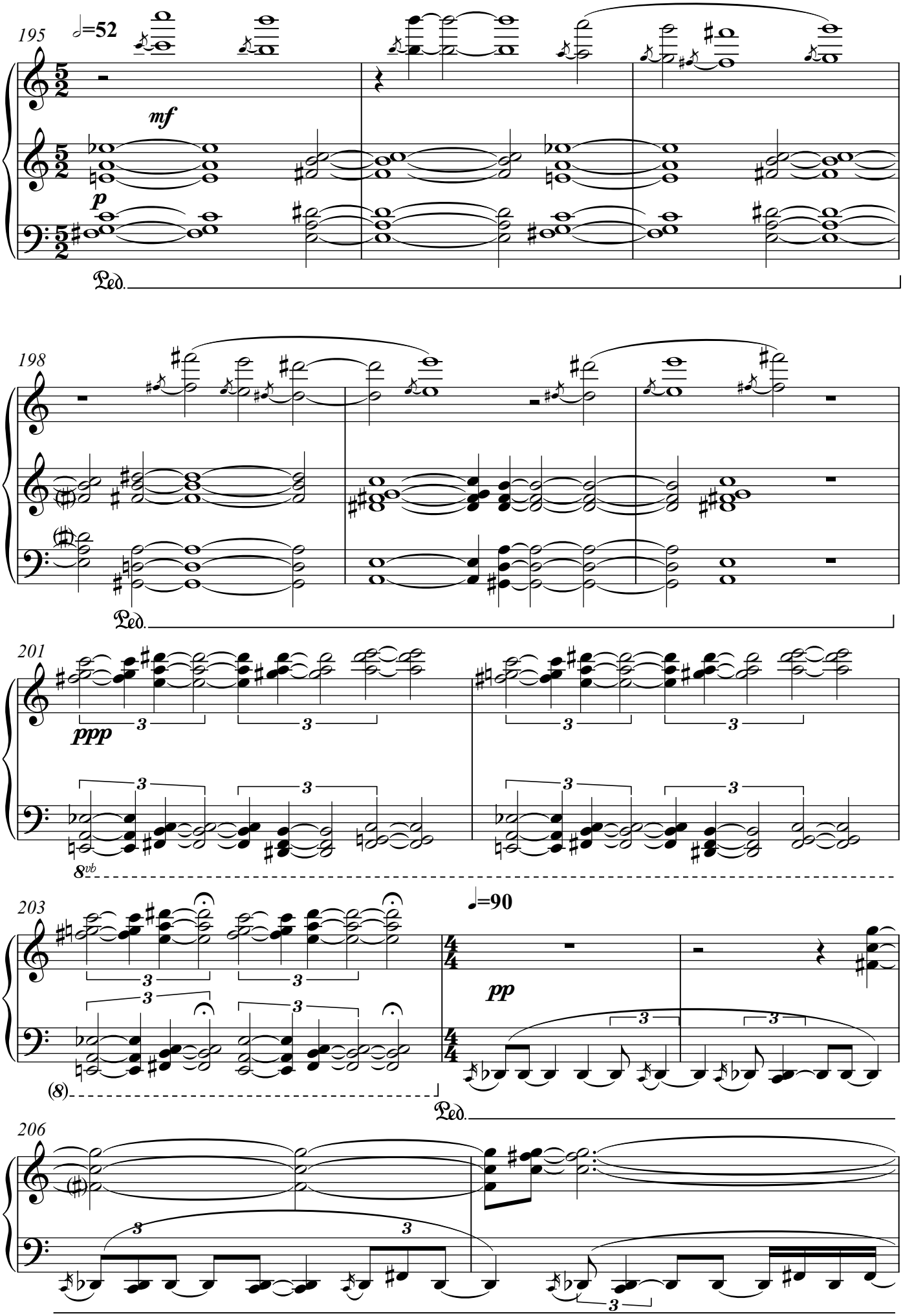

157
tr
f
pp
Ped.
161
p
164
pp
Ped.
una corda ad lib
165
166

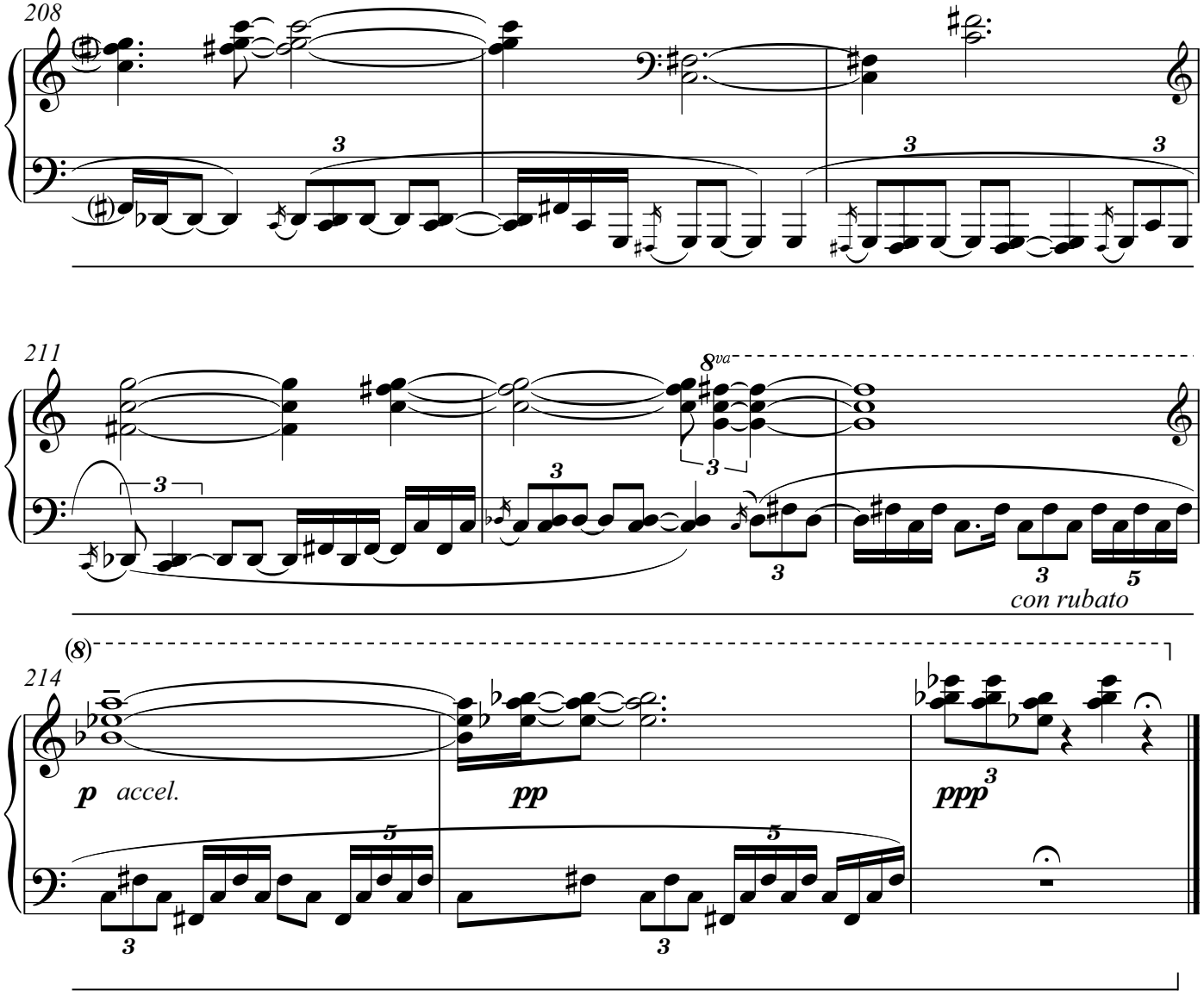

167
168
169
170
172


174
175
176
pp
Ped.
180
p
pp
183
accel.
cresc.


185
186
♩=72
f cresc.
Ped.
187
188
fff


189
190
191
192
3
5/2


195
♩=52
mf
p
Ped.
198
Ped.
201
ppp
3
8vb
203
♩=90
pp
(8)
Ped.
206
3


208
211
8va
con rubato
(8)
214
p accel.
pp
ppp

Thomas Arthur

Fragments for Cello (2011)

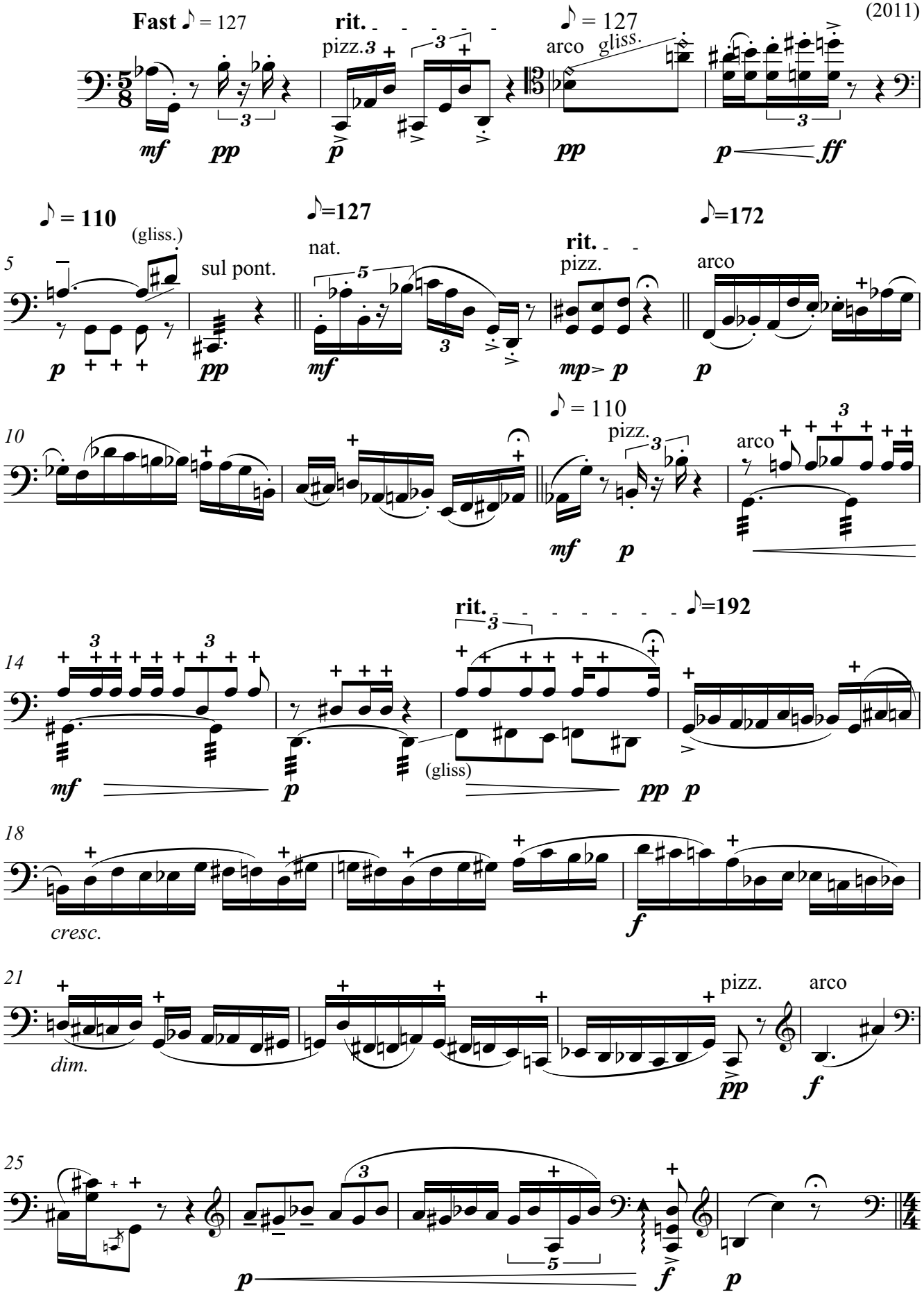
Performance time approxomately 8 minutes

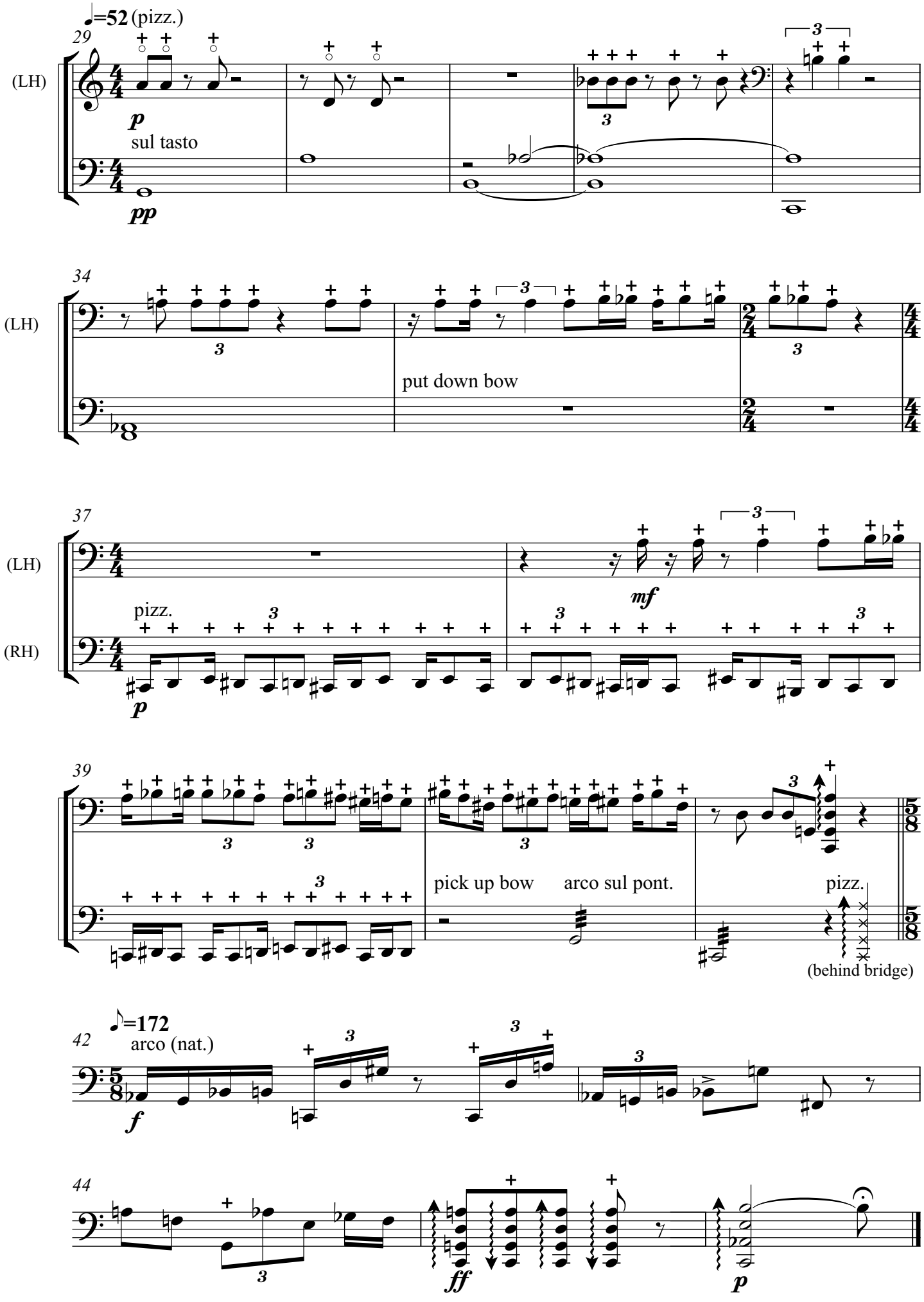
for David O'Connell

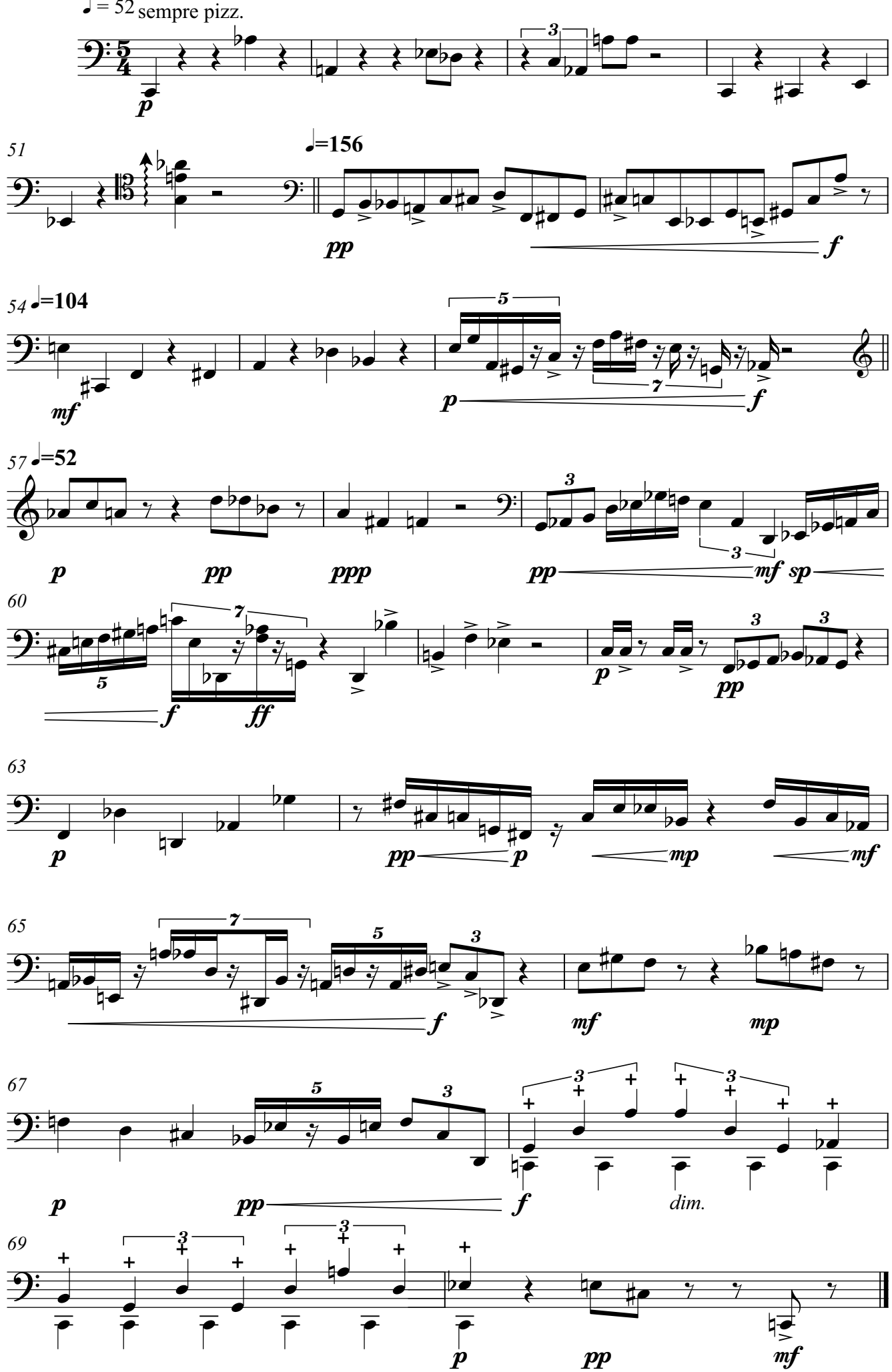
Fragments for Cello

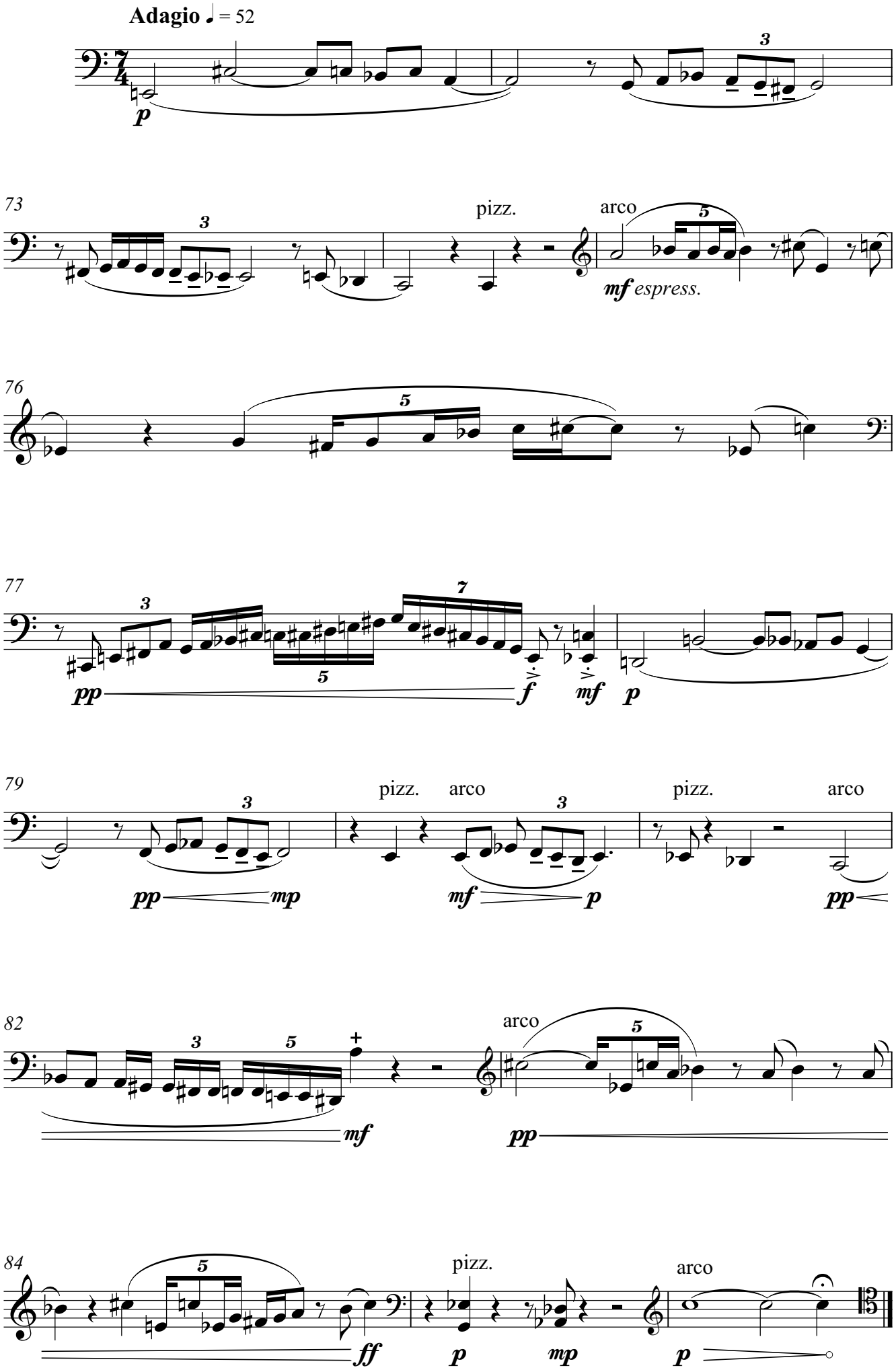
I

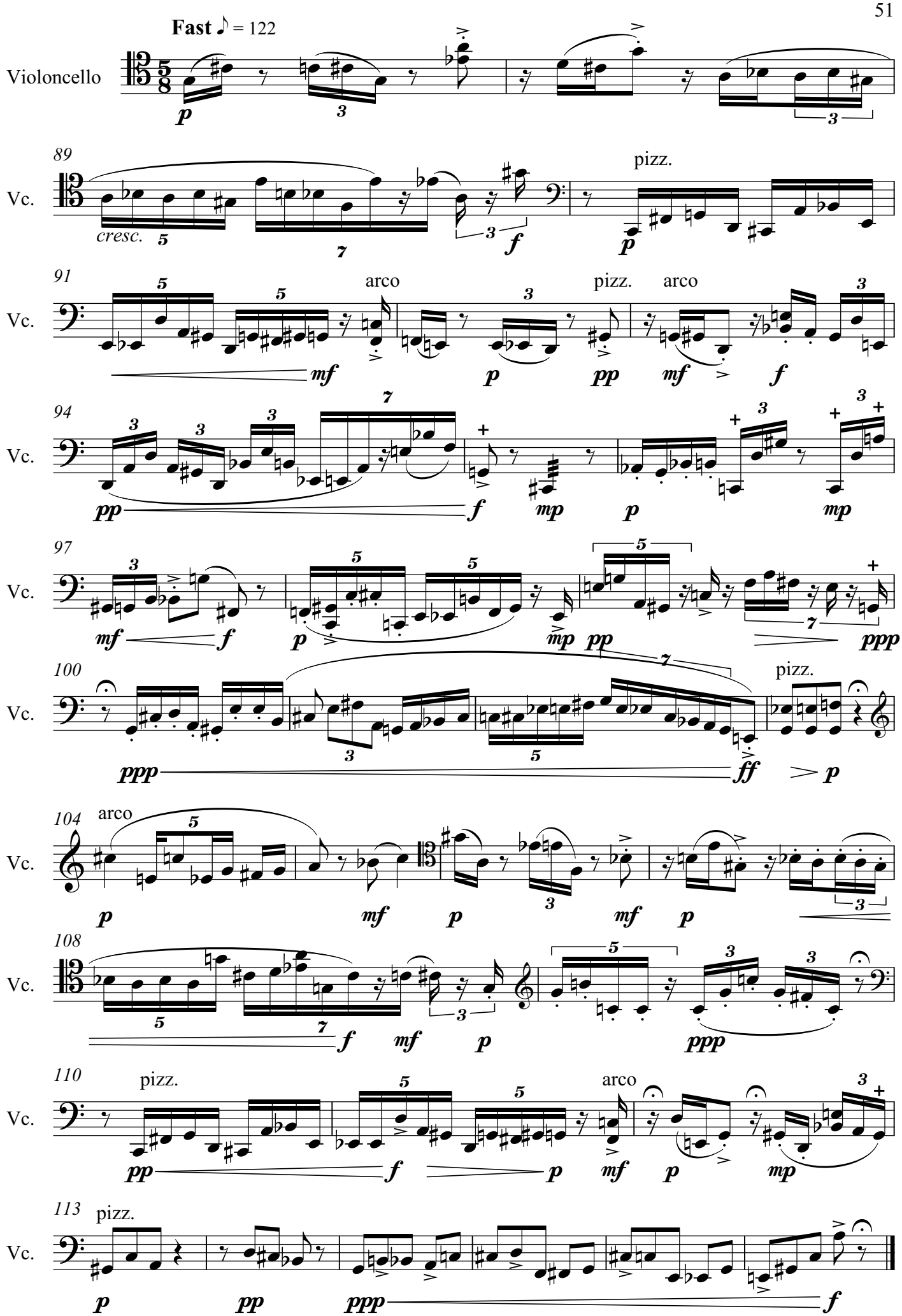
Thomas Arthur
(2011)




♩=52 (pizz.)
29
(LH)
p
sul tasto
pp
34
(LH)
put down bow
37
(LH)
(RH)
pizz.
p
mf
39
pick up bow
arco sul pont.
pizz.
(behind bridge)
♪=172
42
arco (nat.)
f
44
ff
p


♩ = 52 sempre pizz.
p
51
♩=156
pp
f
54 ♩=104
mf
p
f
57 ♩=52
p
pp
ppp
pp
mf sp
60
f
ff
p
pp
63
p
pp
p
mp
mf
65
f
mf
mp
67
p
pp
f
dim.
69
p
pp
mf


Adagio ♩ = 52
p
73
pizz.
arco
mf espress.
76
77
pp
f
mf
p
79
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
pp
mp
mf
p
pp
82
arco
mf
pp
84
pizz.
arco
ff
p
mp
p


Fast ♪ = 122
Violoncello
p
89
Vc.
cresc.
f
pizz.
p
91
arco
pizz.
arco
mf
p
pp
mf
f
94
pp
f
mp
p
mp
97
mf
f
p
mp
pp
ppp
100
ppp
ff
pizz.
p
104
arco
p
mf
p
mf
p
108
f
mf
p
ppp
110
pizz.
pp
f
p
arco
mf
p
mp
113
pizz.
p
pp
ppp
f