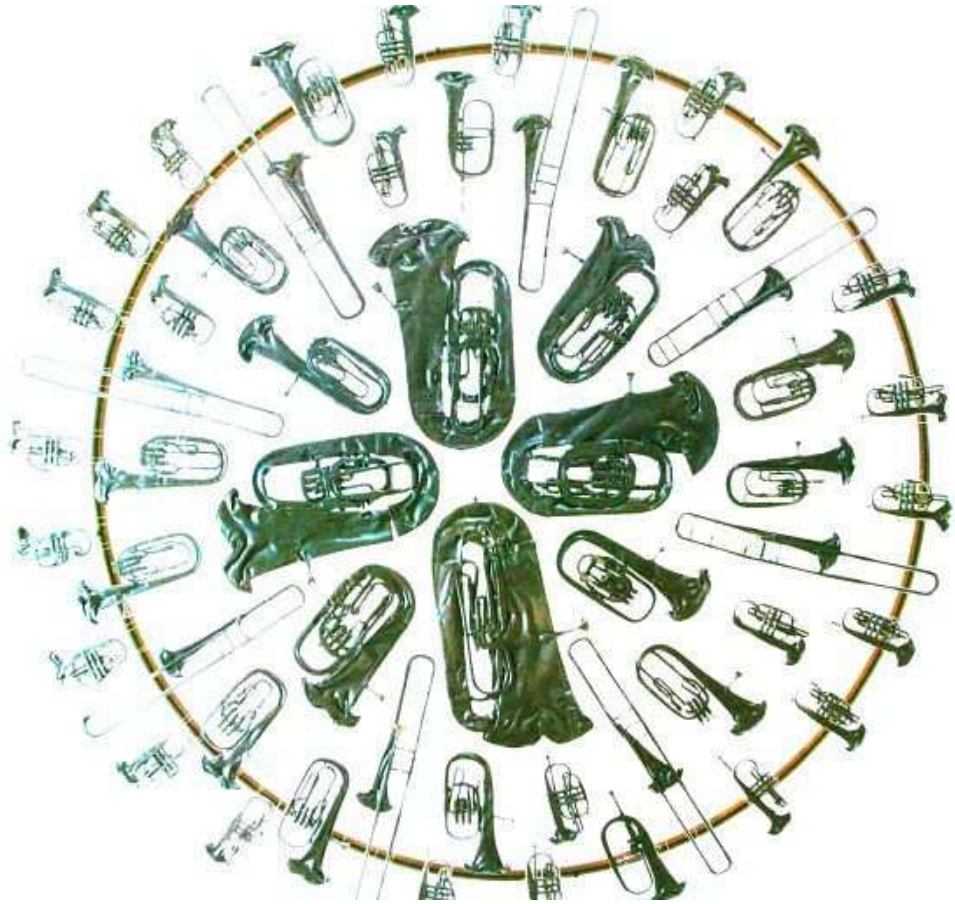
Breathless



For brass quintet

By David Lancaster

Breathless

For brass quintet

2 trumpets in Bb

horn in F

trombone

tuba

It is preferable that the trumpets are seated opposite one other in the quintet. At bar 225 they should move to additional stands at either side of the group, such as in the transepts of a church: standing, facing each other and as far apart as is reasonably possibly (but still within the sight of the audience) for an enhanced stereo separation.

Breathless was composed in the spring of 2016 for Late Music, and was first performed in the Unitarian Chapel, York, by the Orichalcum Brass Quintet.

Duration: 11 minutes

Breathless

For brass quintet

Cornelia Parker's 'Breathless' sculpture hangs in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London, comprising some fifty old brass instruments which have been crushed flat. It was commissioned in 2001 by the V&A trustees on the understanding that brass bands no longer existed and had become part of our history. Parker described that music as 'part of the robustness we used to have' and 'like an anthem which is slowly winding down.'

My quintet is in two movements, reflecting the dualities evident in her art: light/dark, silence/noise, upper class/lower class, North/South, death/resurrection etc.

The movements also mirror the fact that her work (which hangs in a space between two floors) can be viewed from above or below, with polished upper surfaces and tarnished undersides; in my piece the 'musical objects' can be encountered from multiple perspectives – a recurring idea in my work.

Parker's sculpture was designed to hang in a specific location in the museum, just as mine was intended to be played (although hopefully not exclusively!) within a particular space. The first, quick movement is called 'Unit' and the contrasting second is entitled 'Aria'.

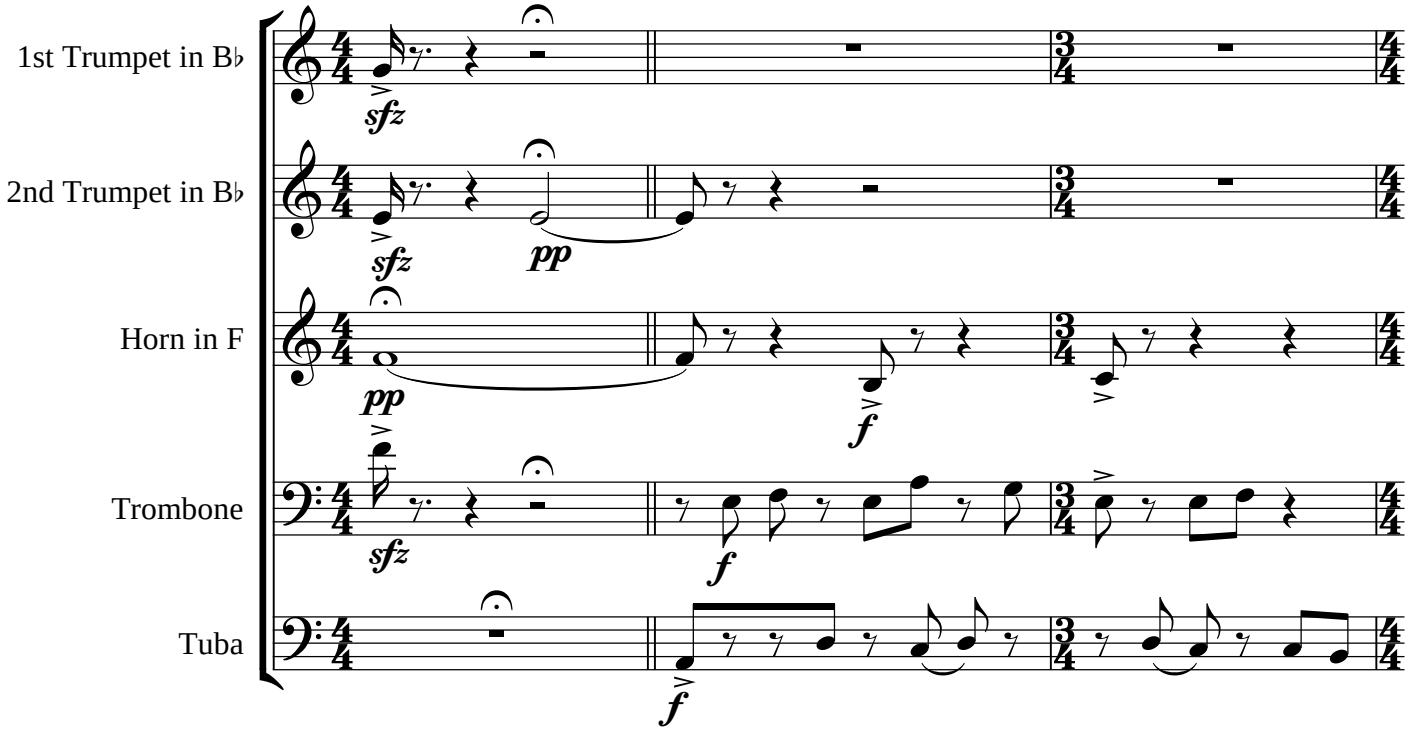
(DL, York and Subang Jaya, May 2016)

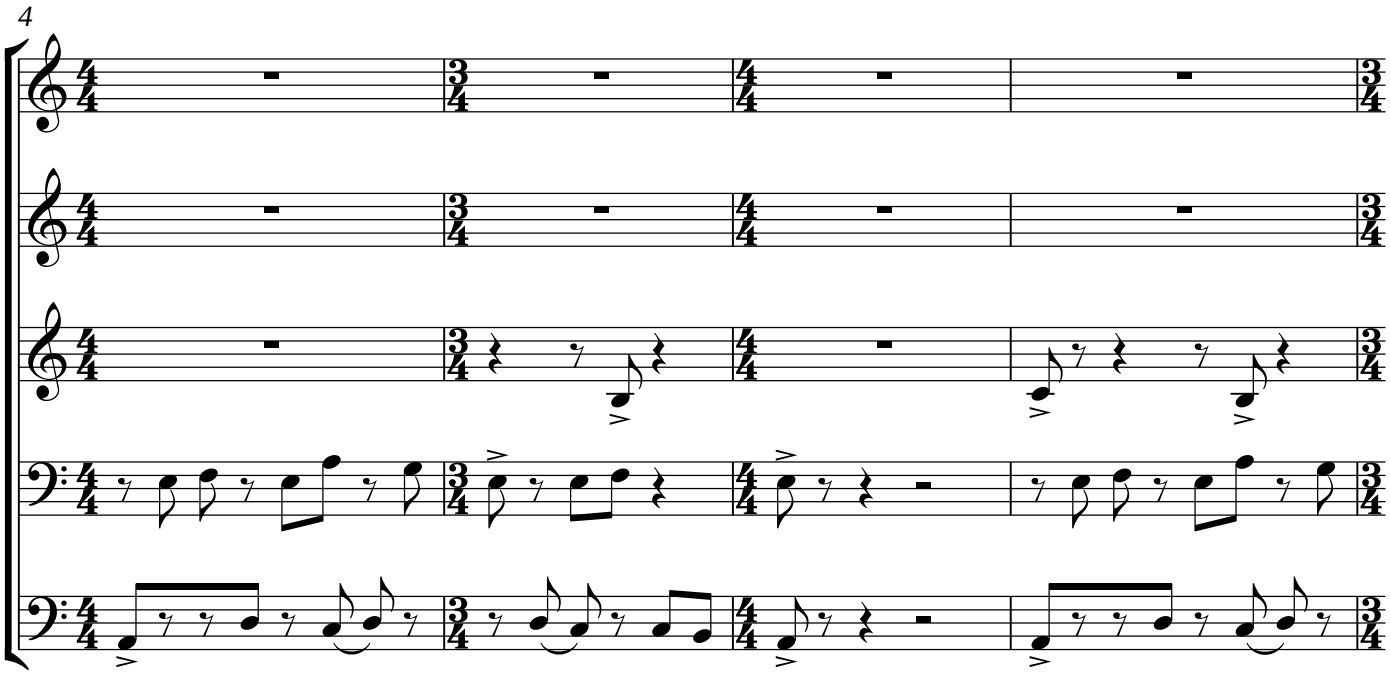
Breathless I

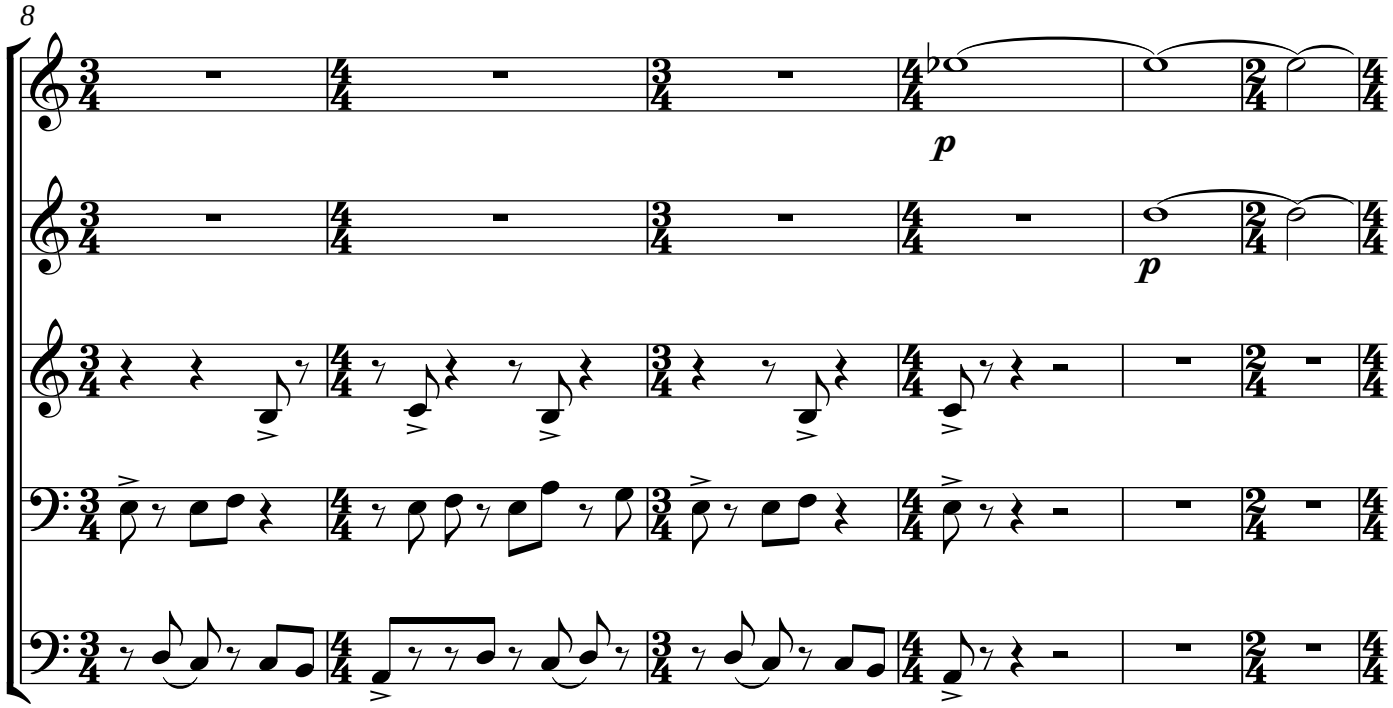
Unit

David Lancaster

Allegro Molto ♩ = 144



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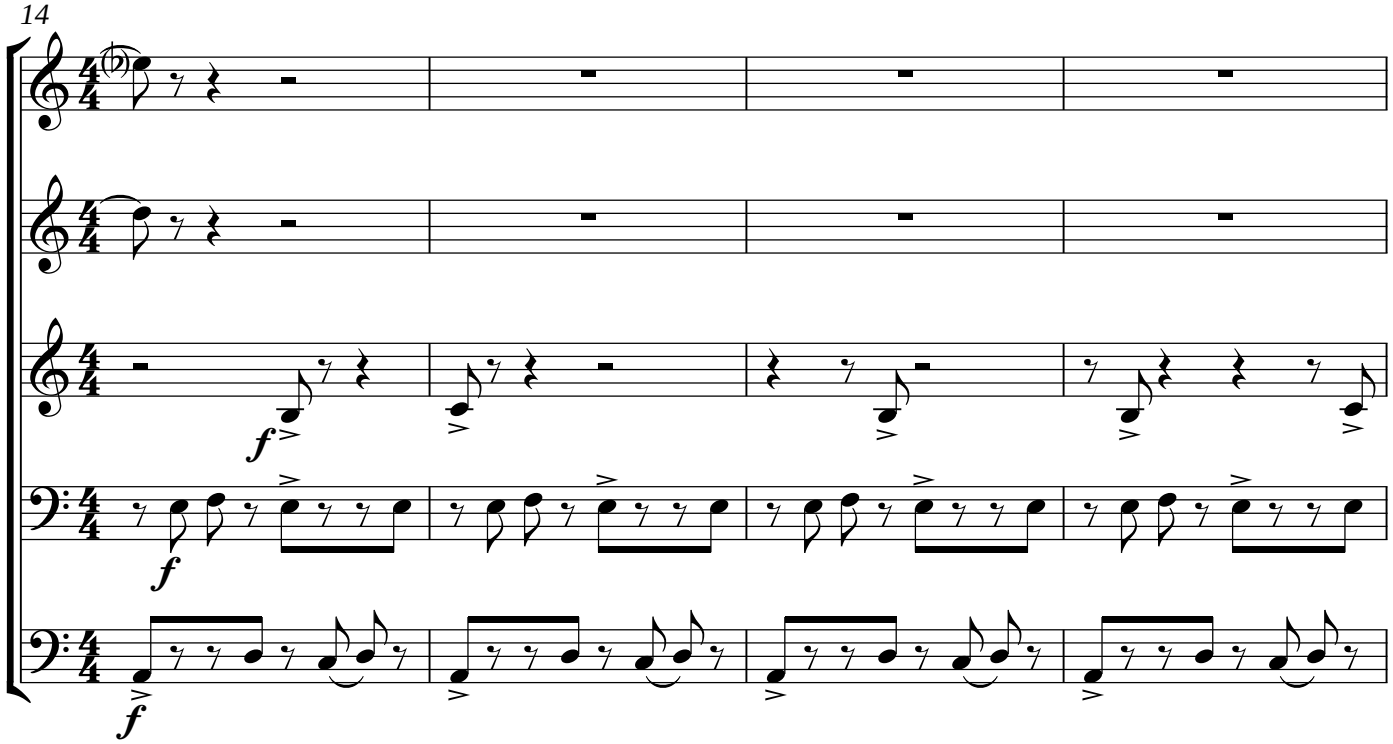
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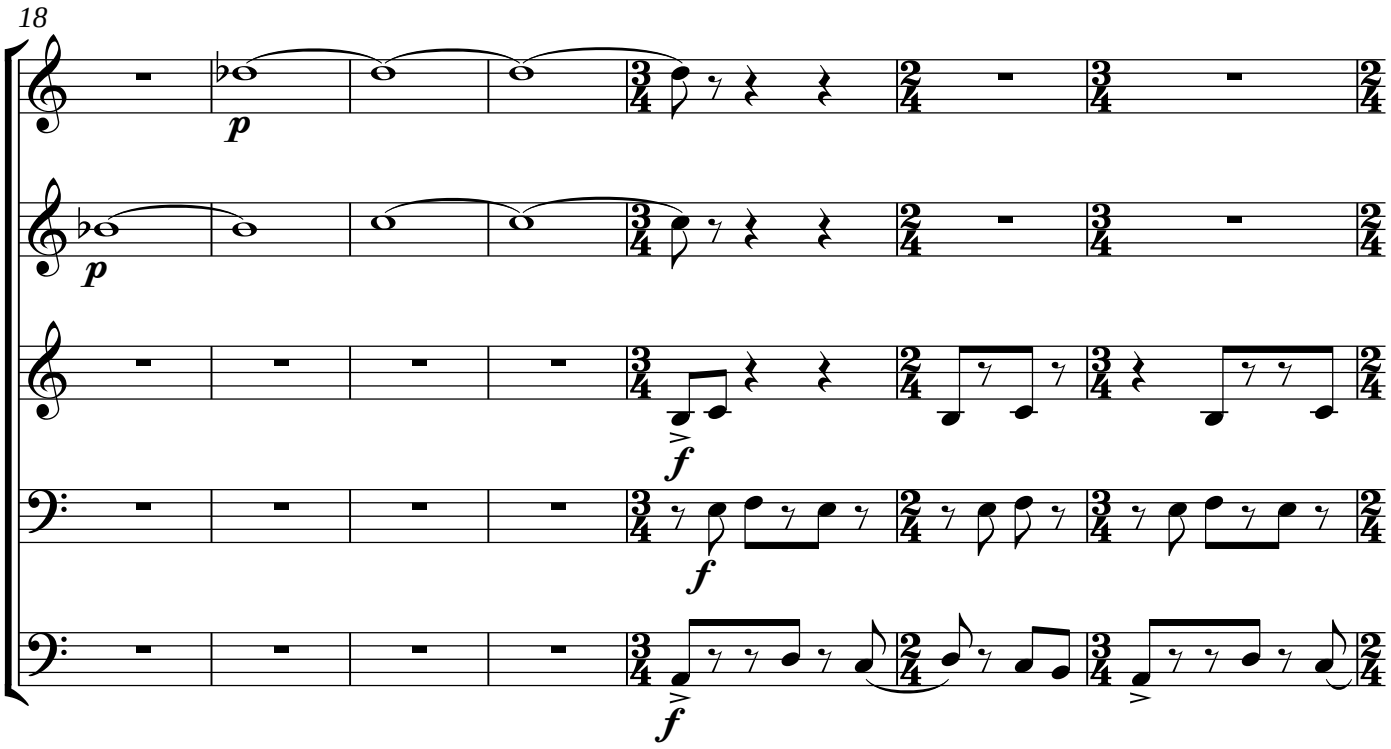
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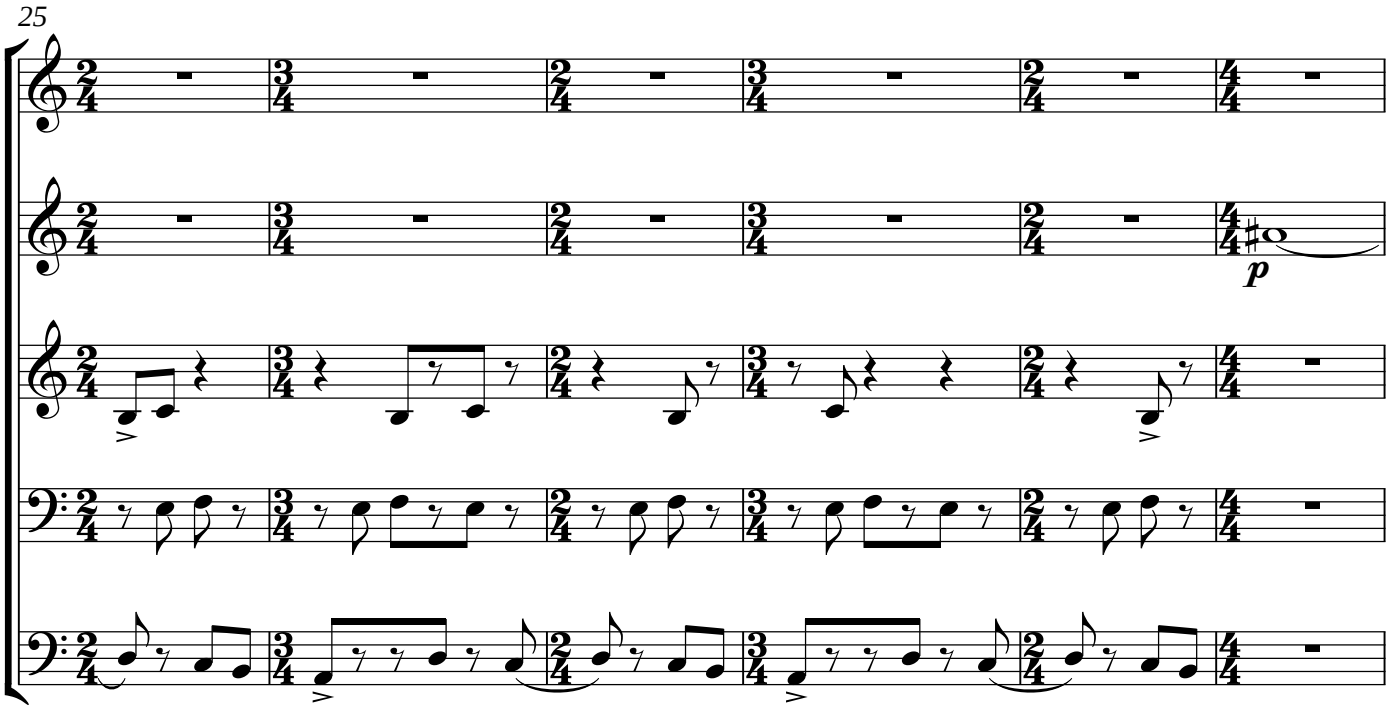
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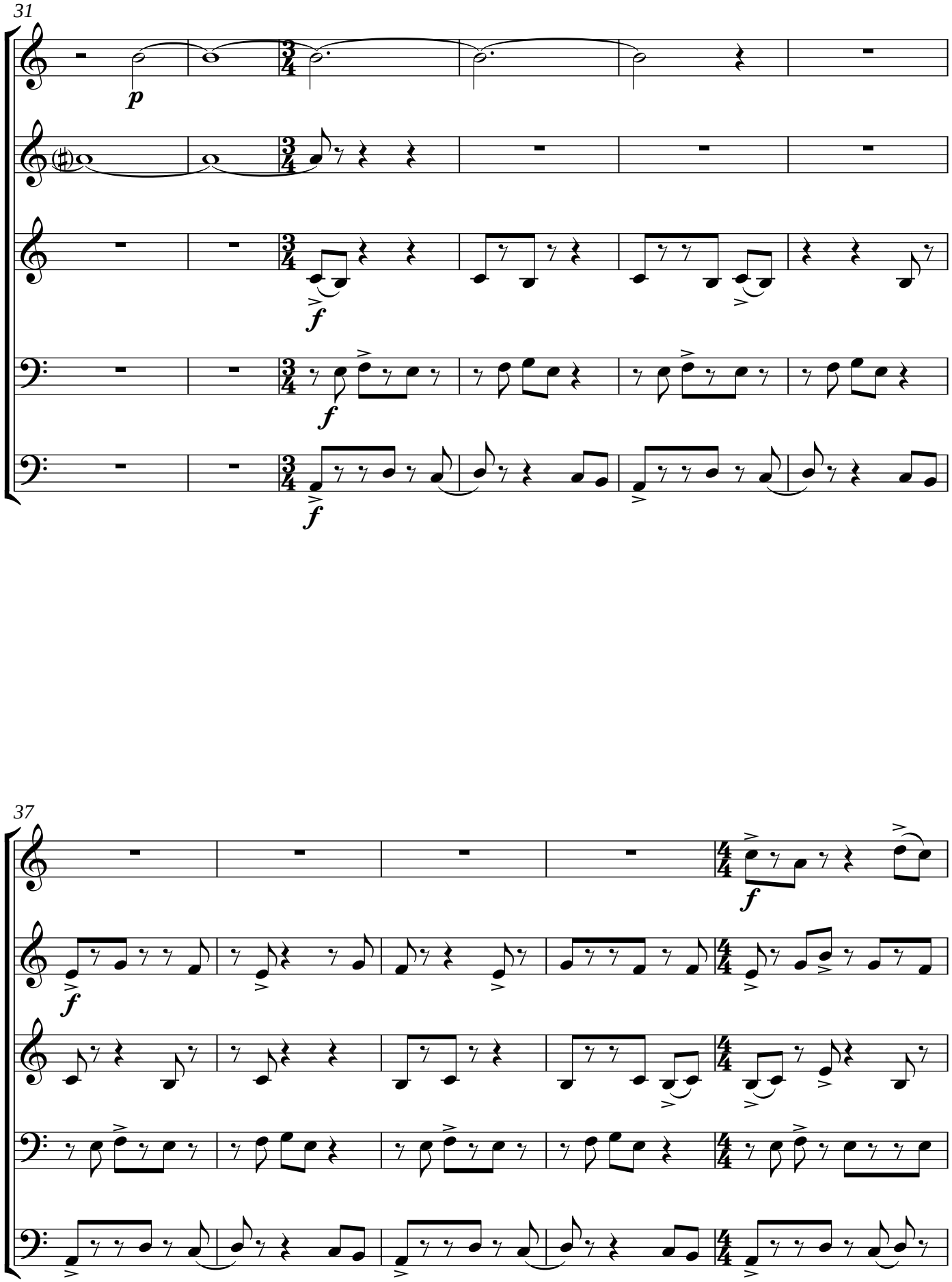
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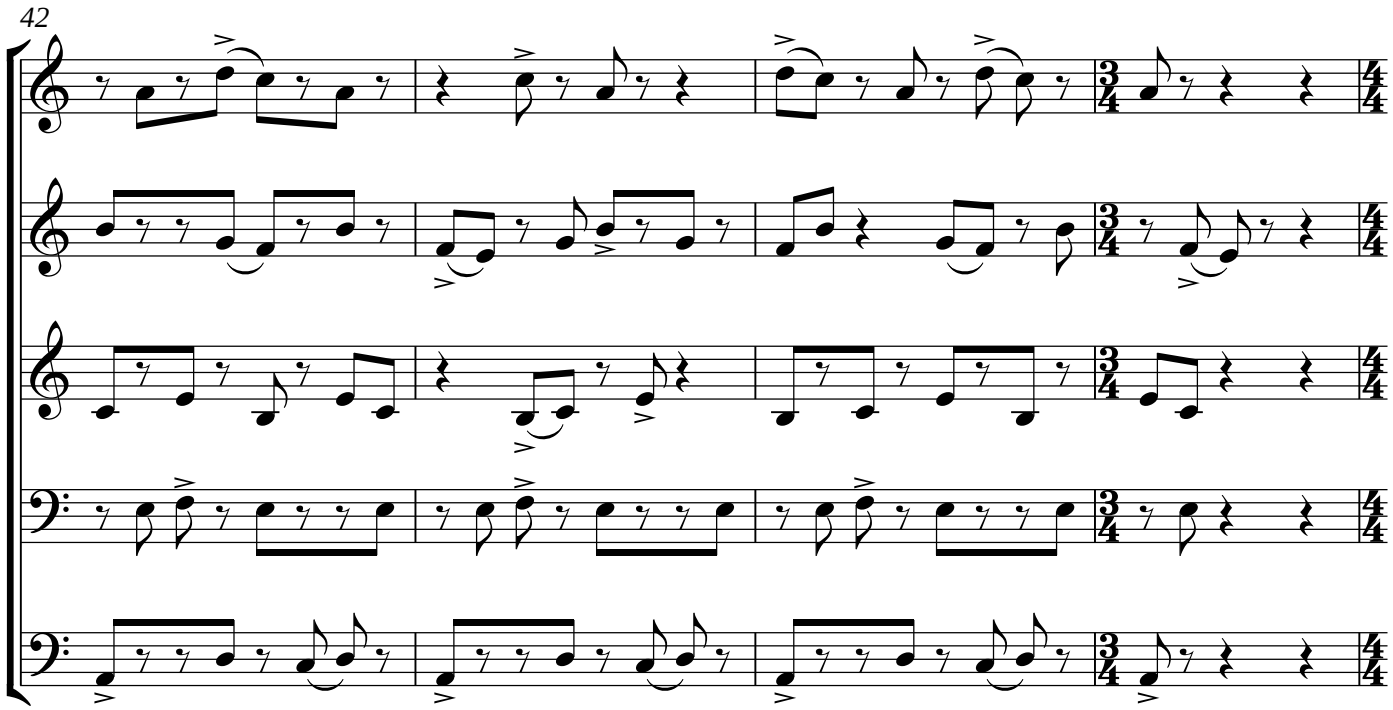
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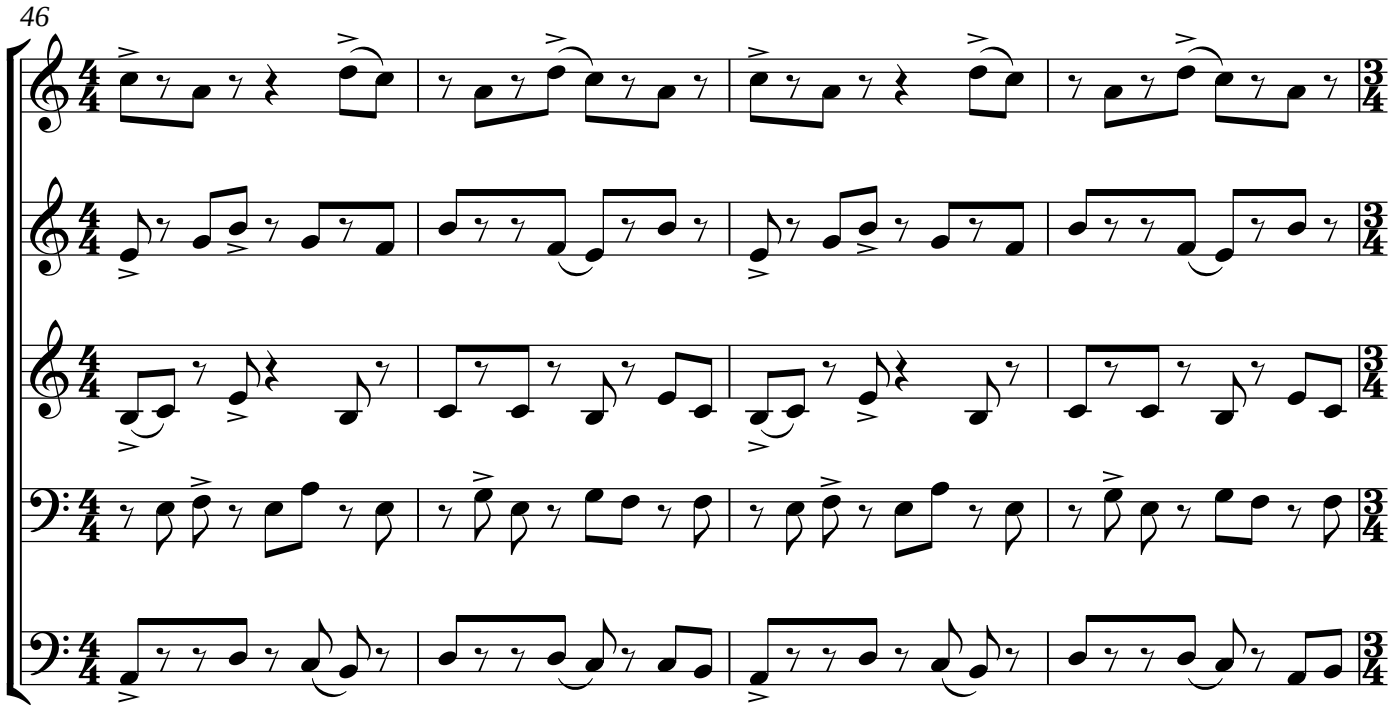
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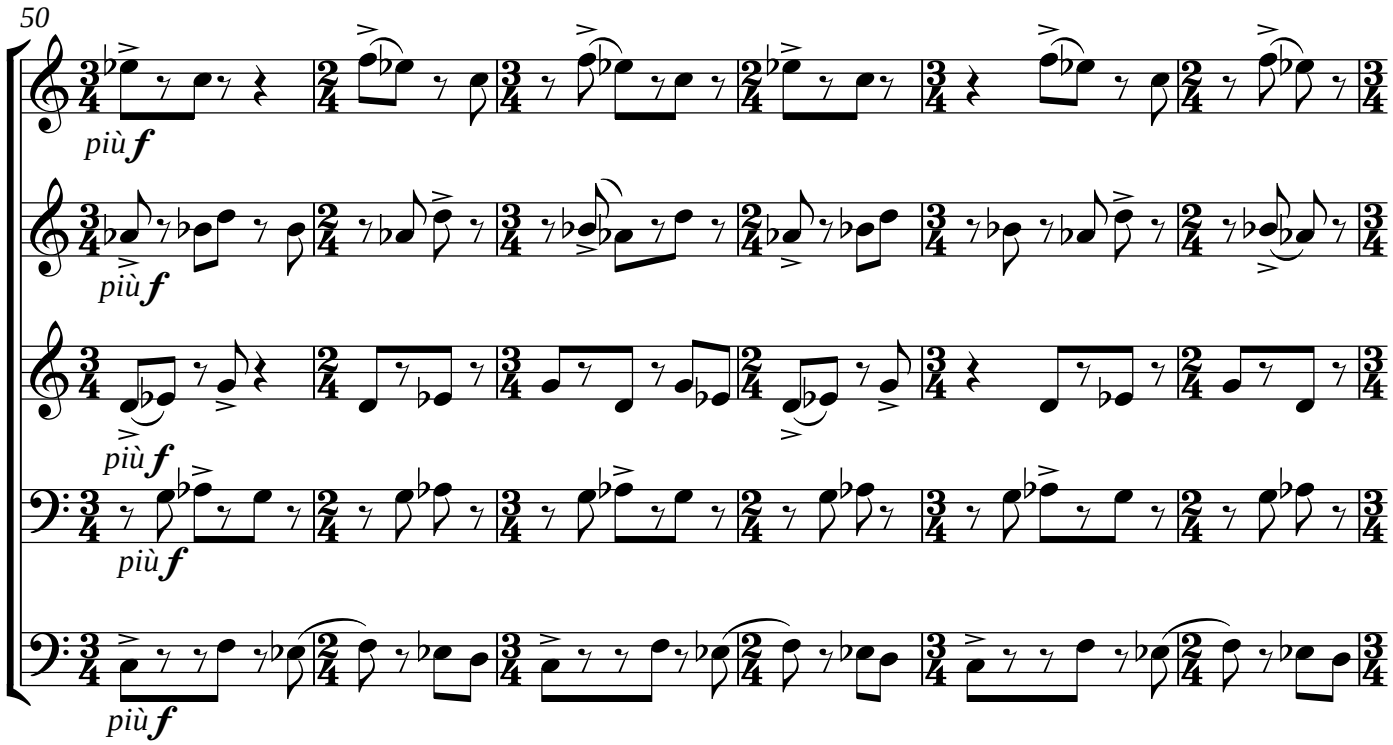
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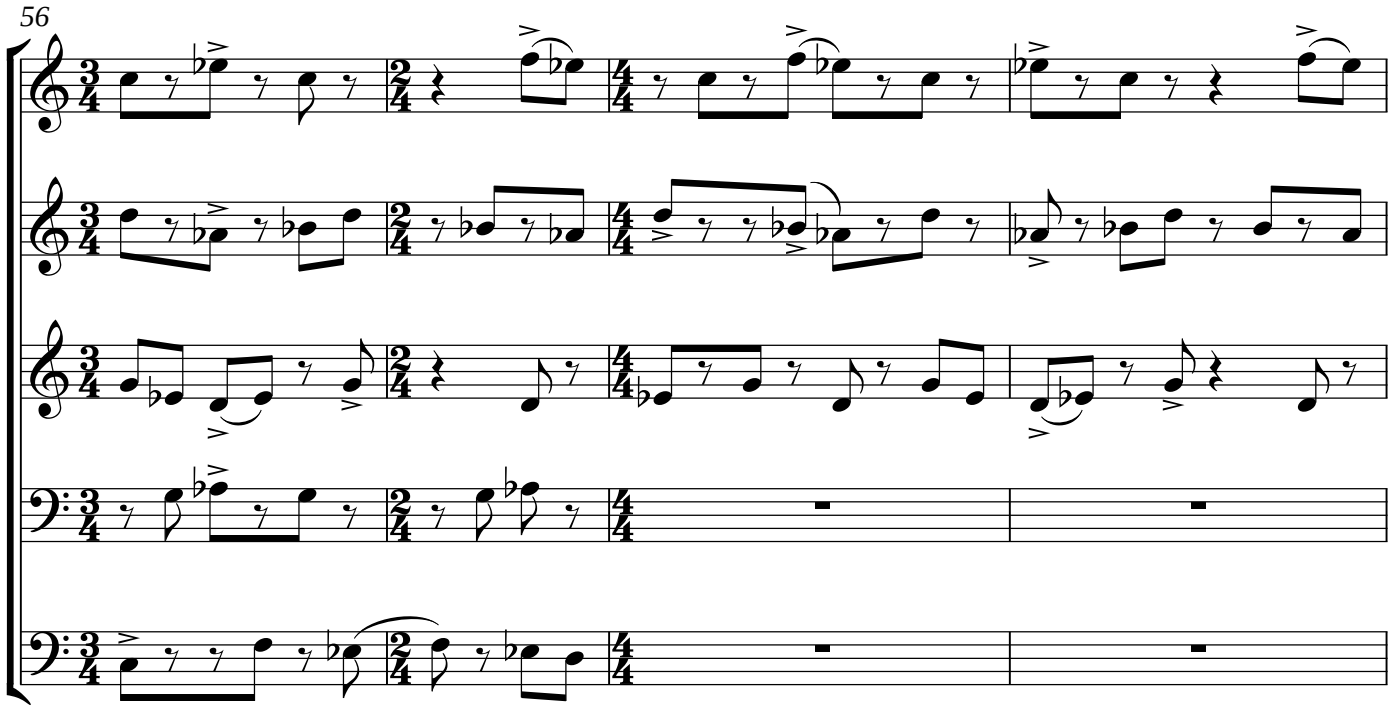
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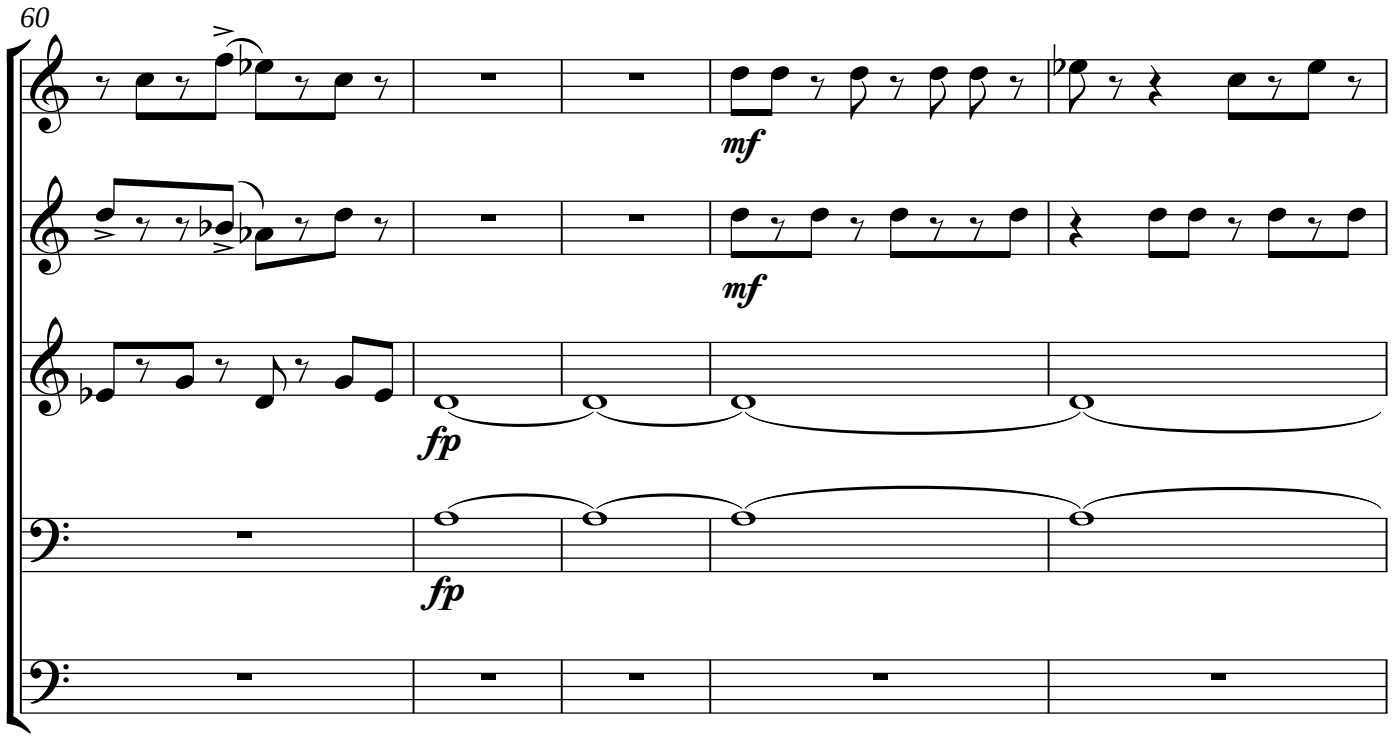
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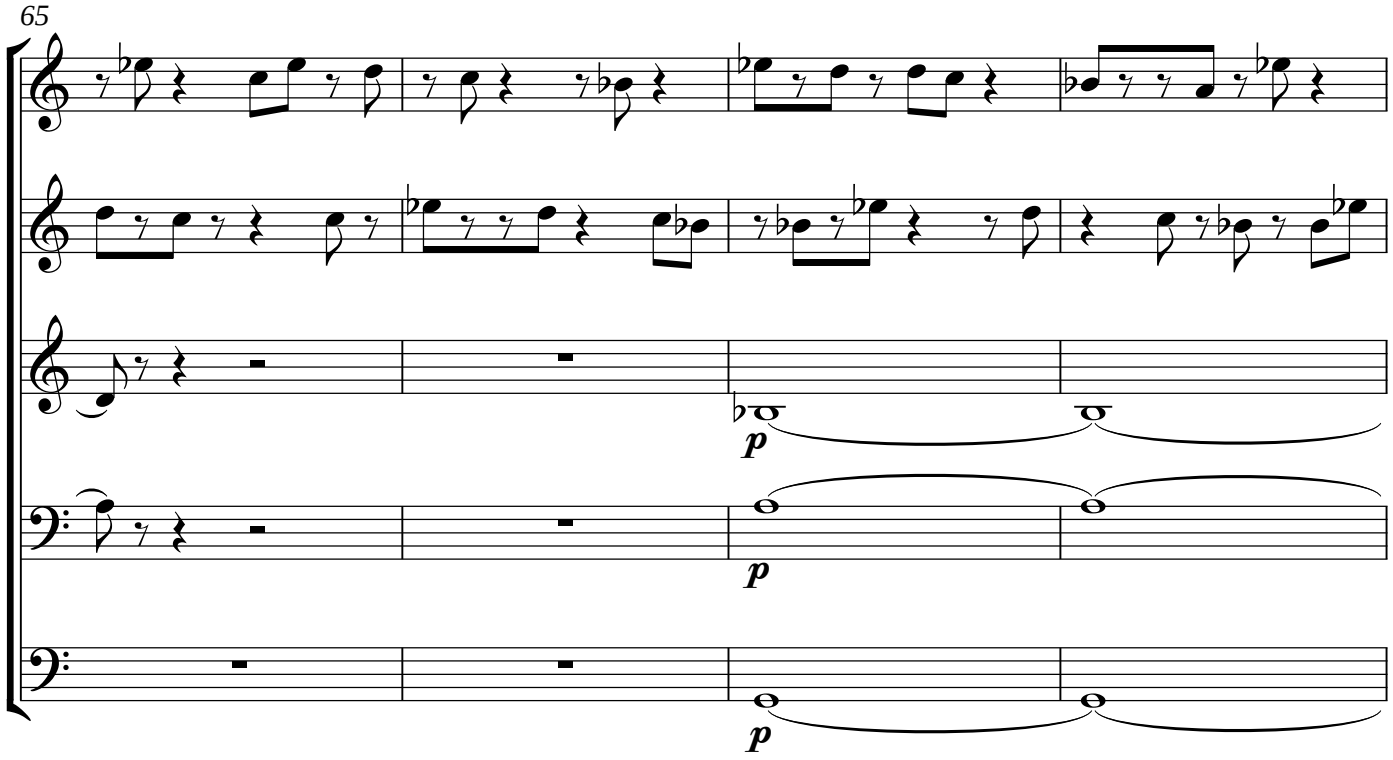
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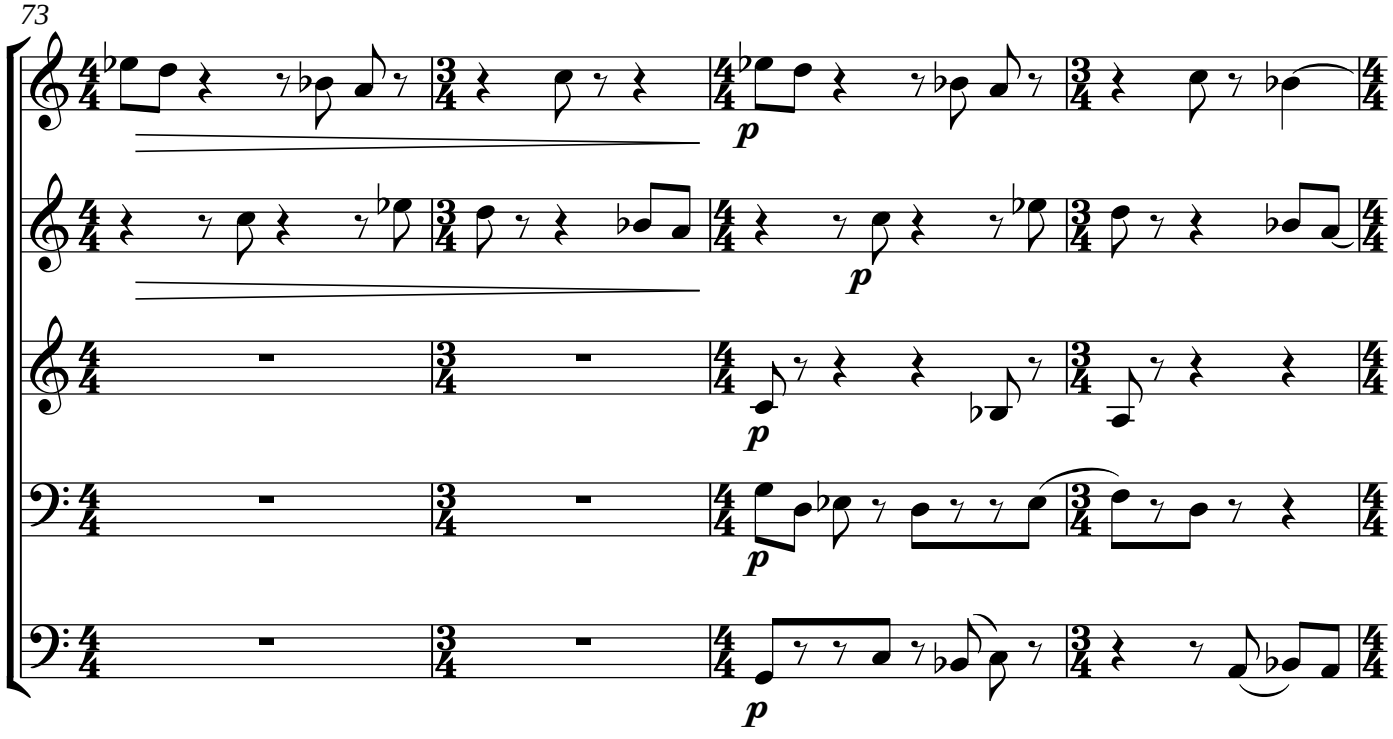

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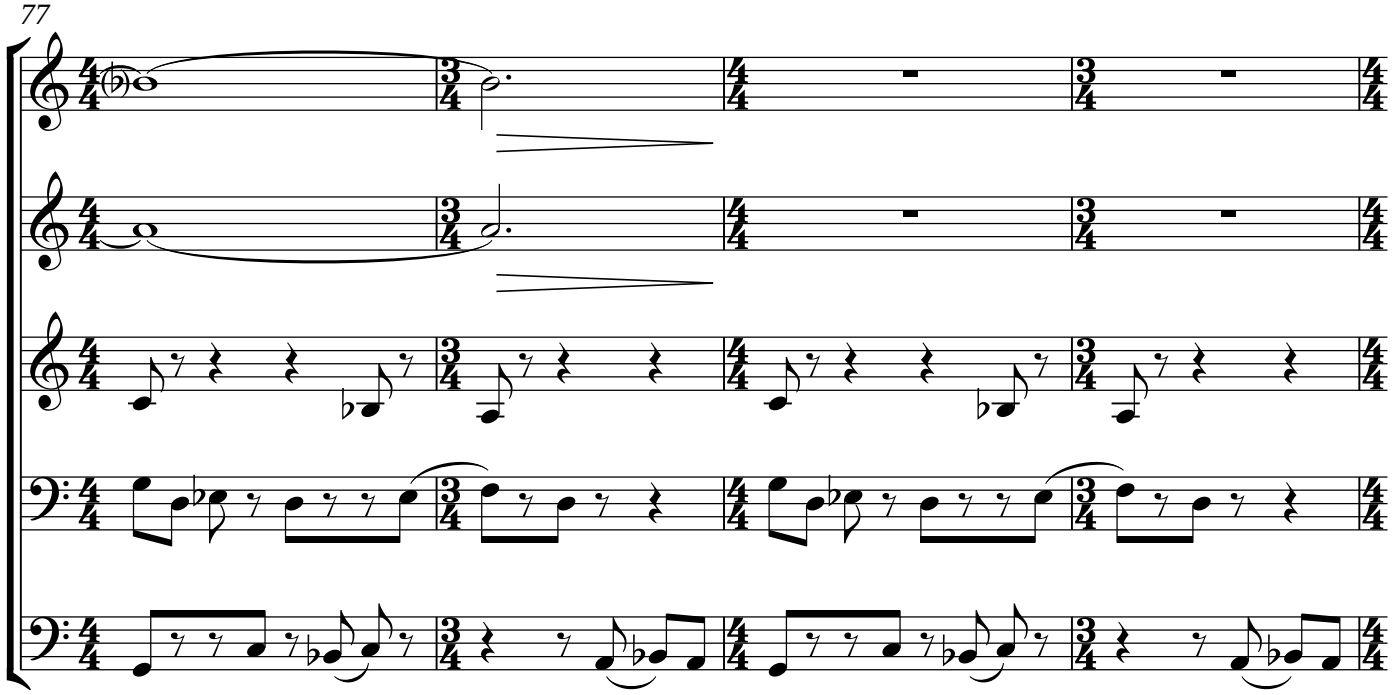

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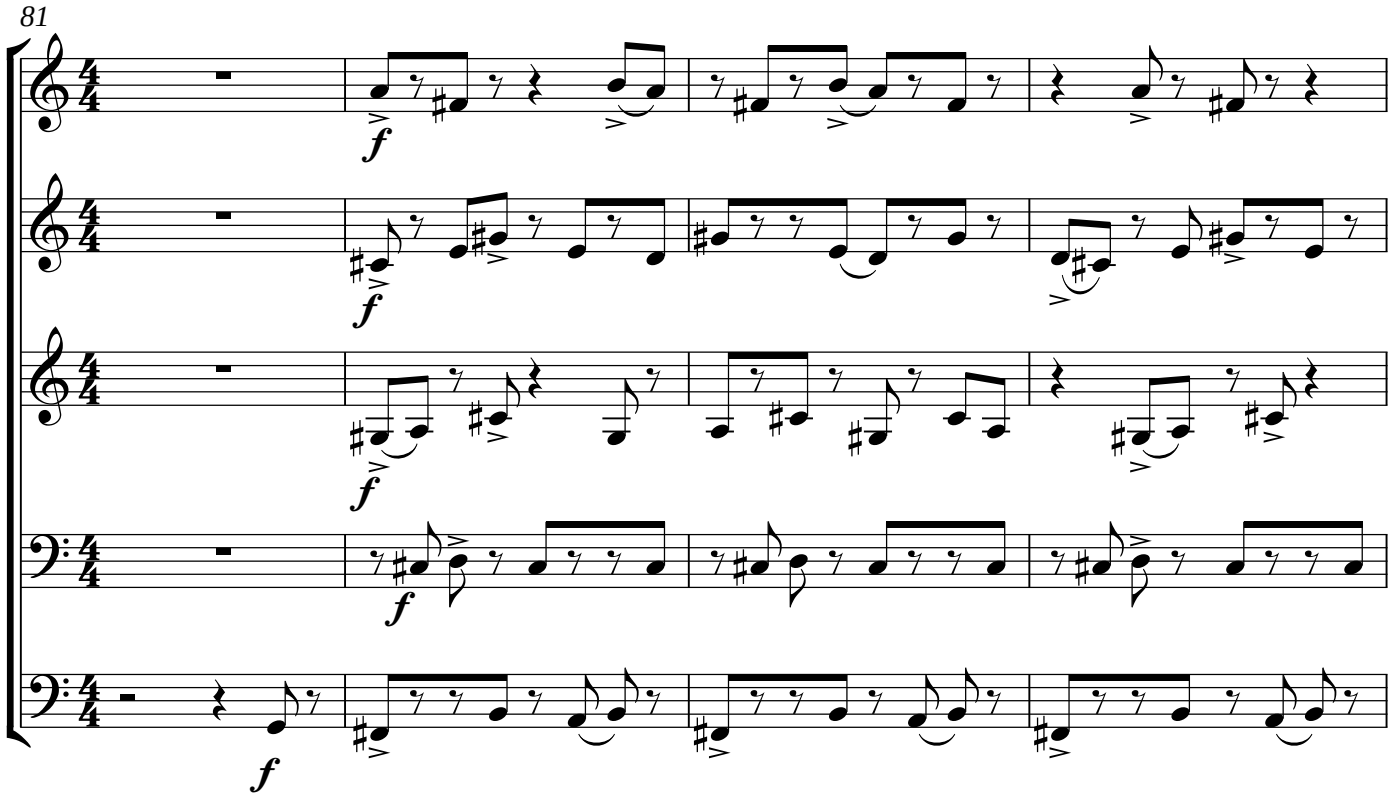

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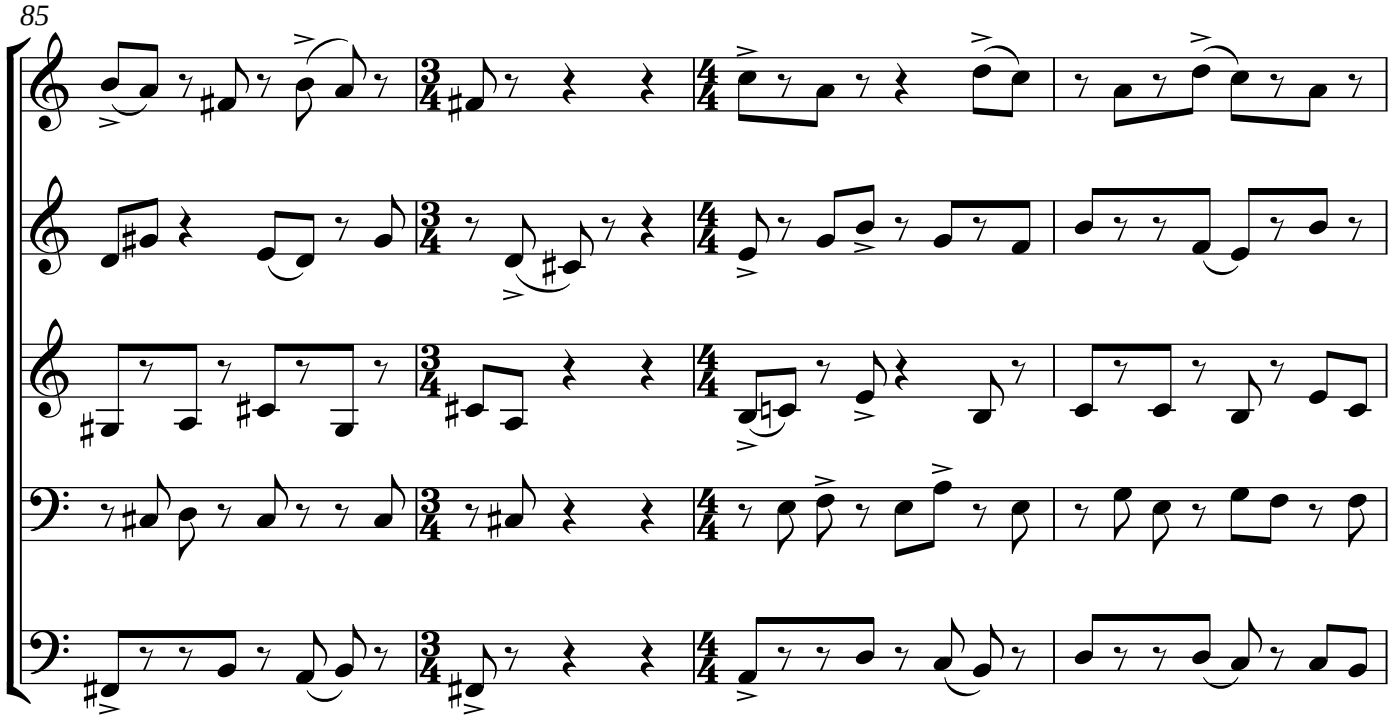

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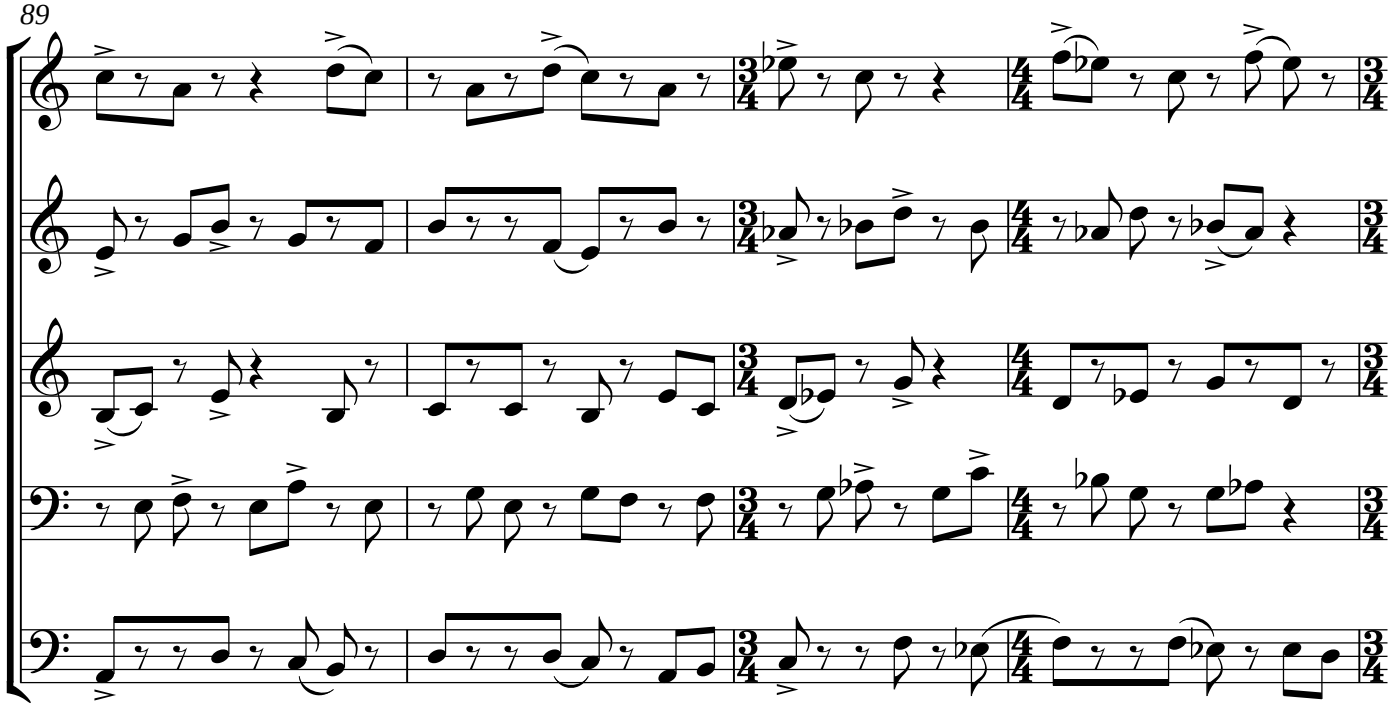

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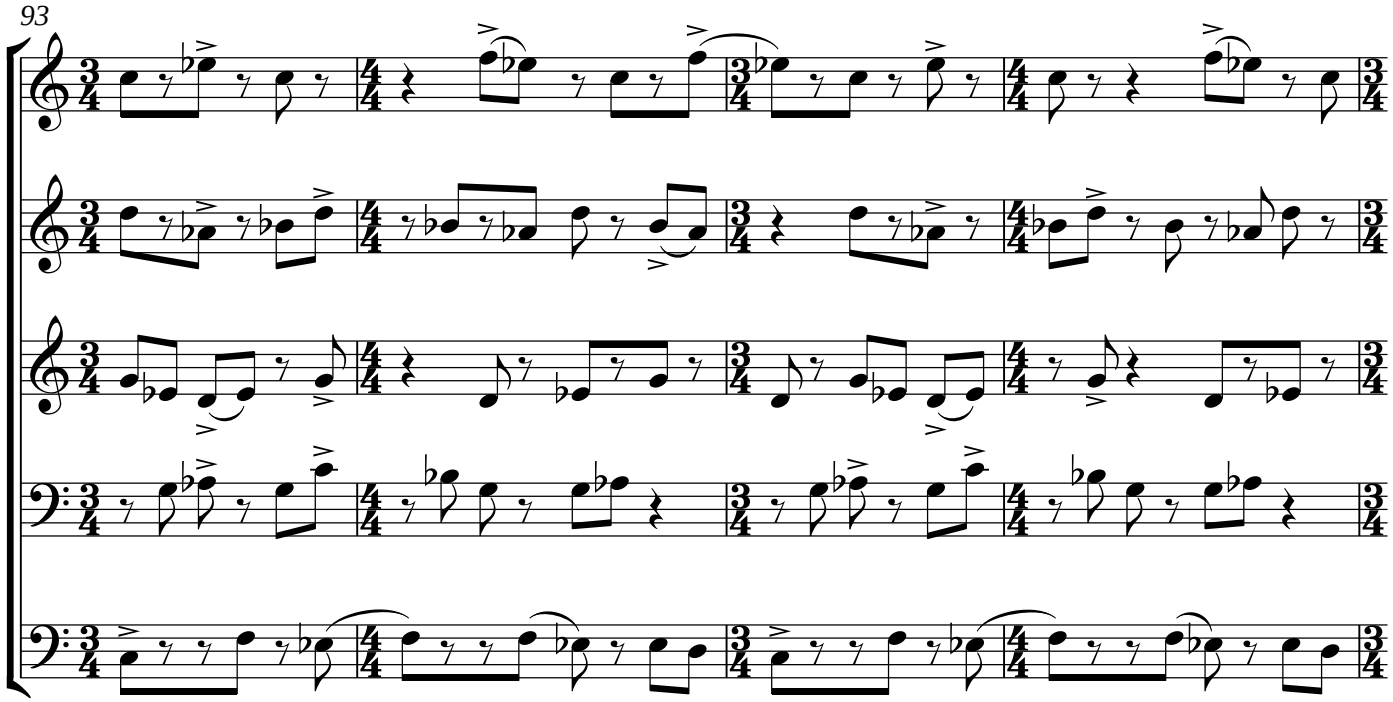

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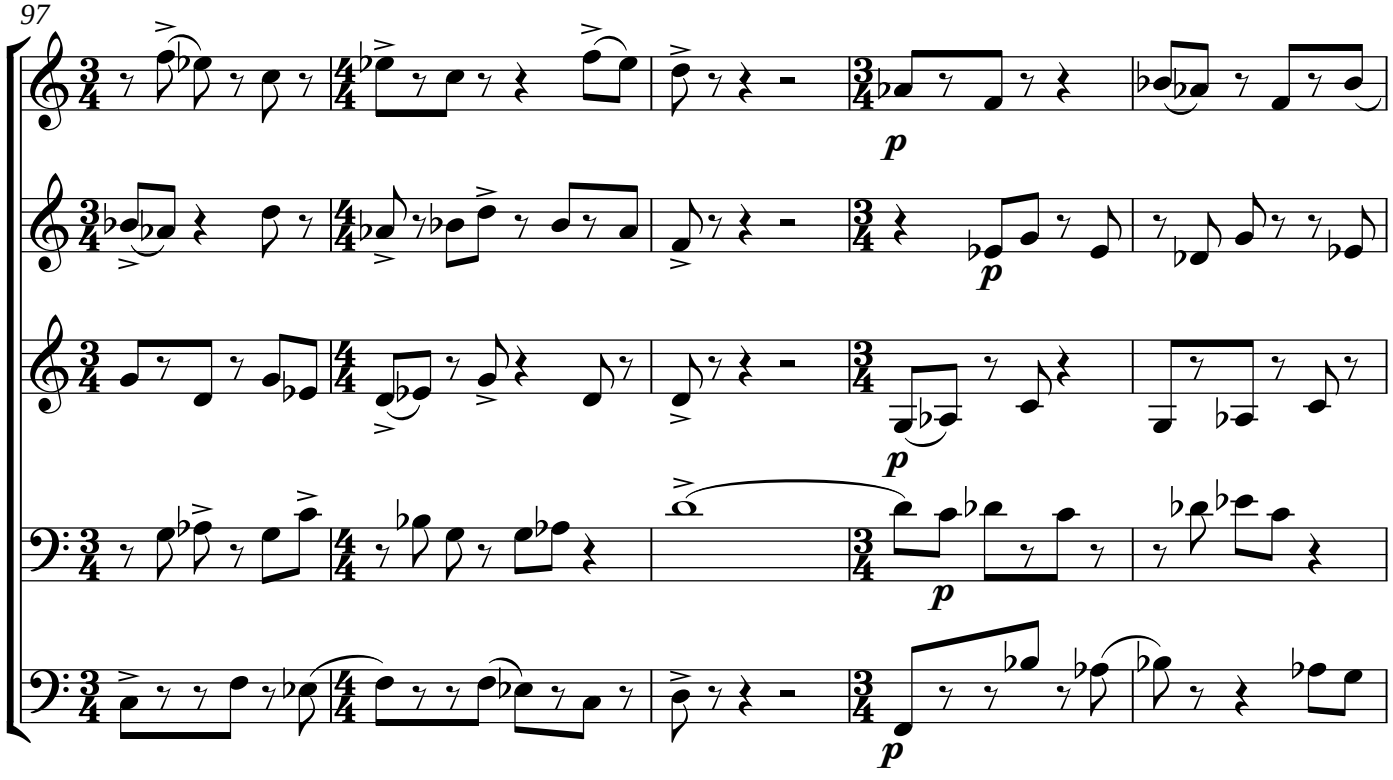

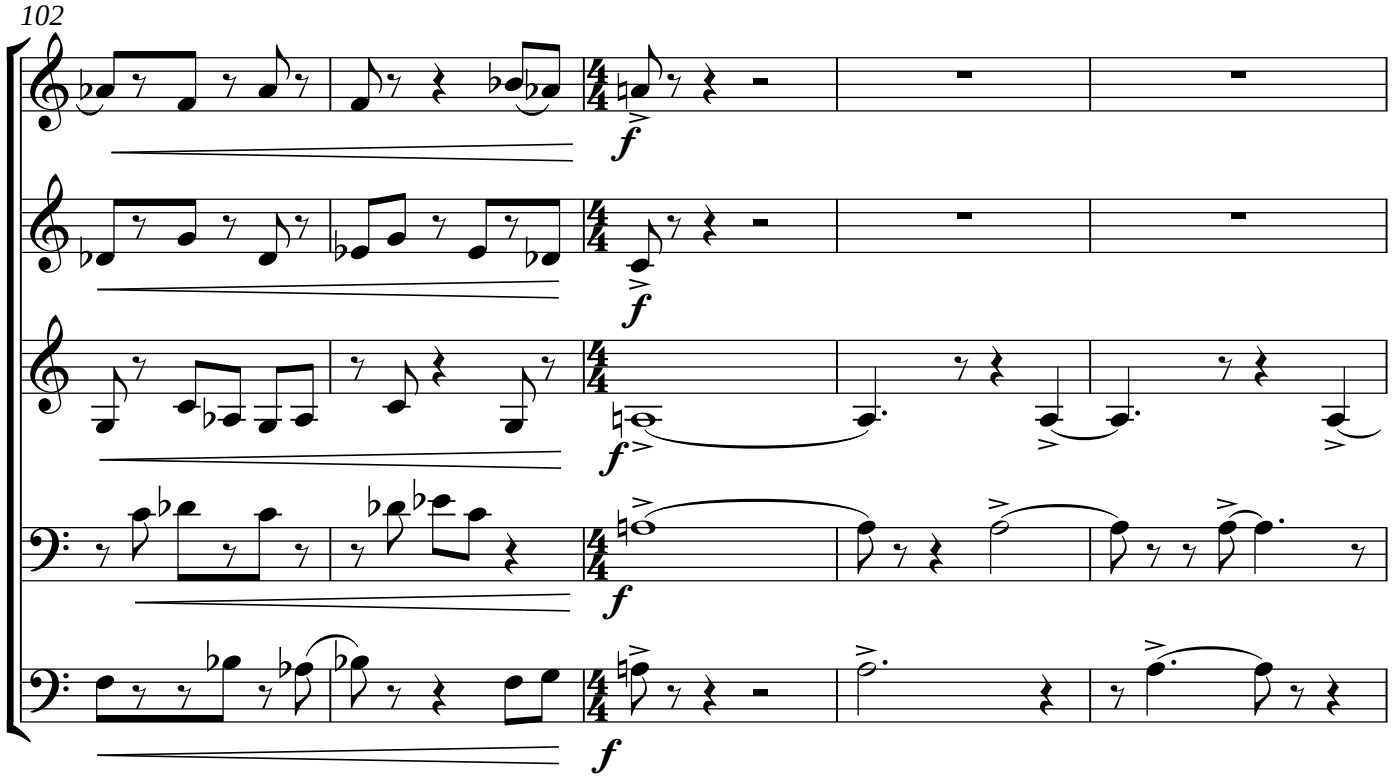
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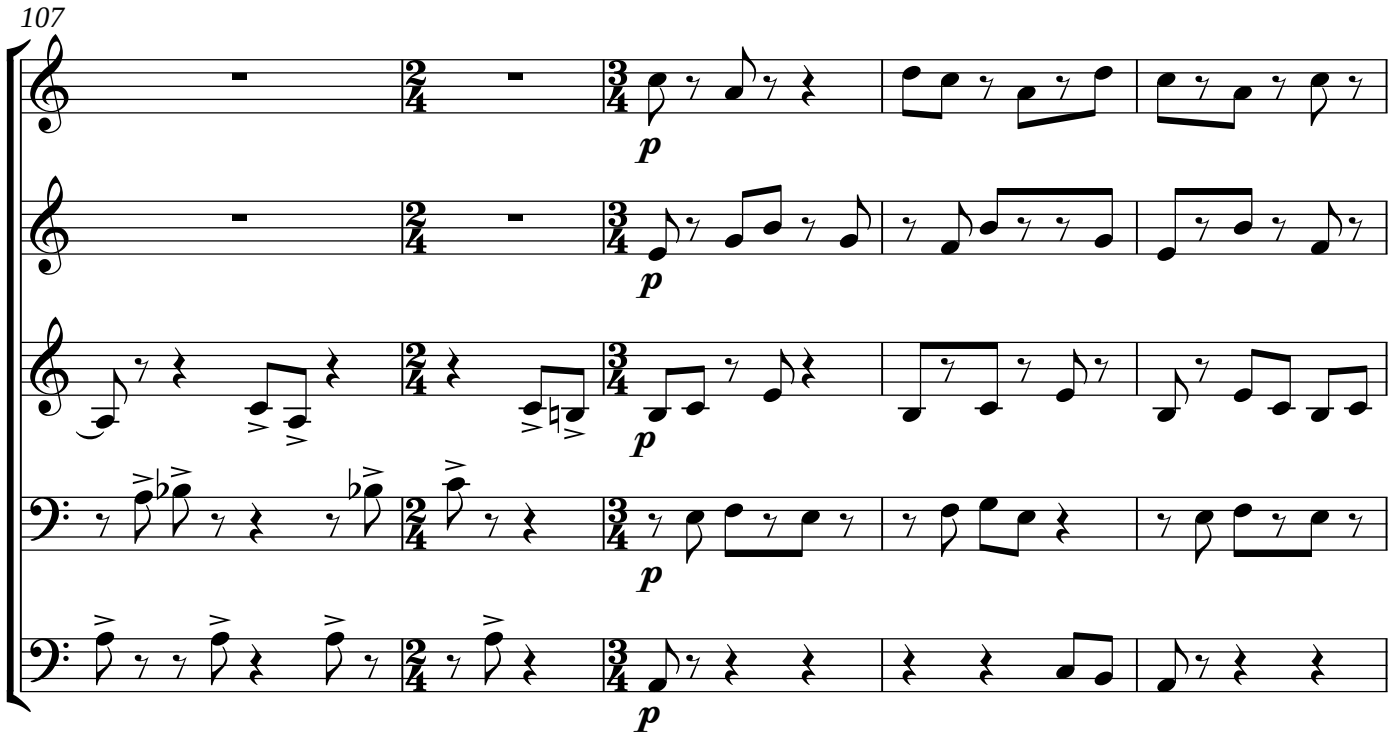
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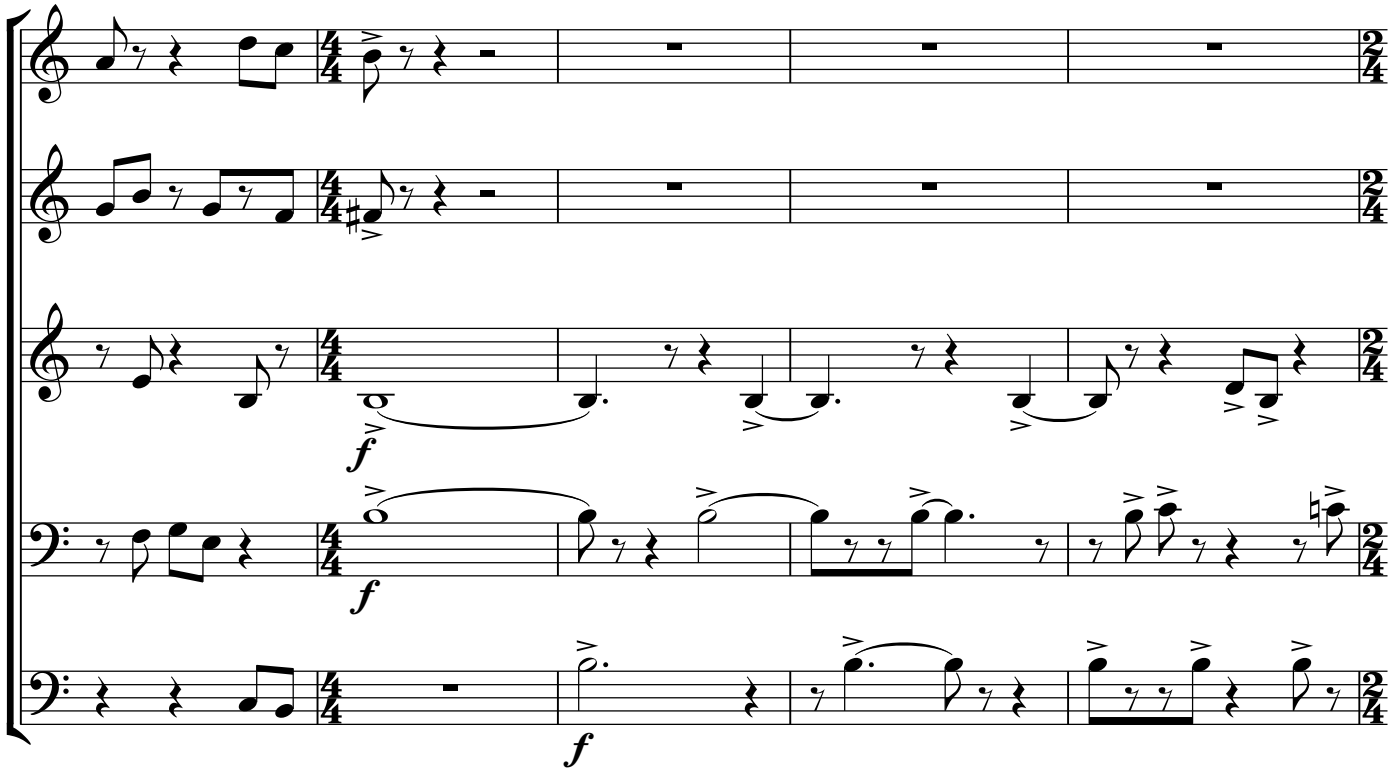

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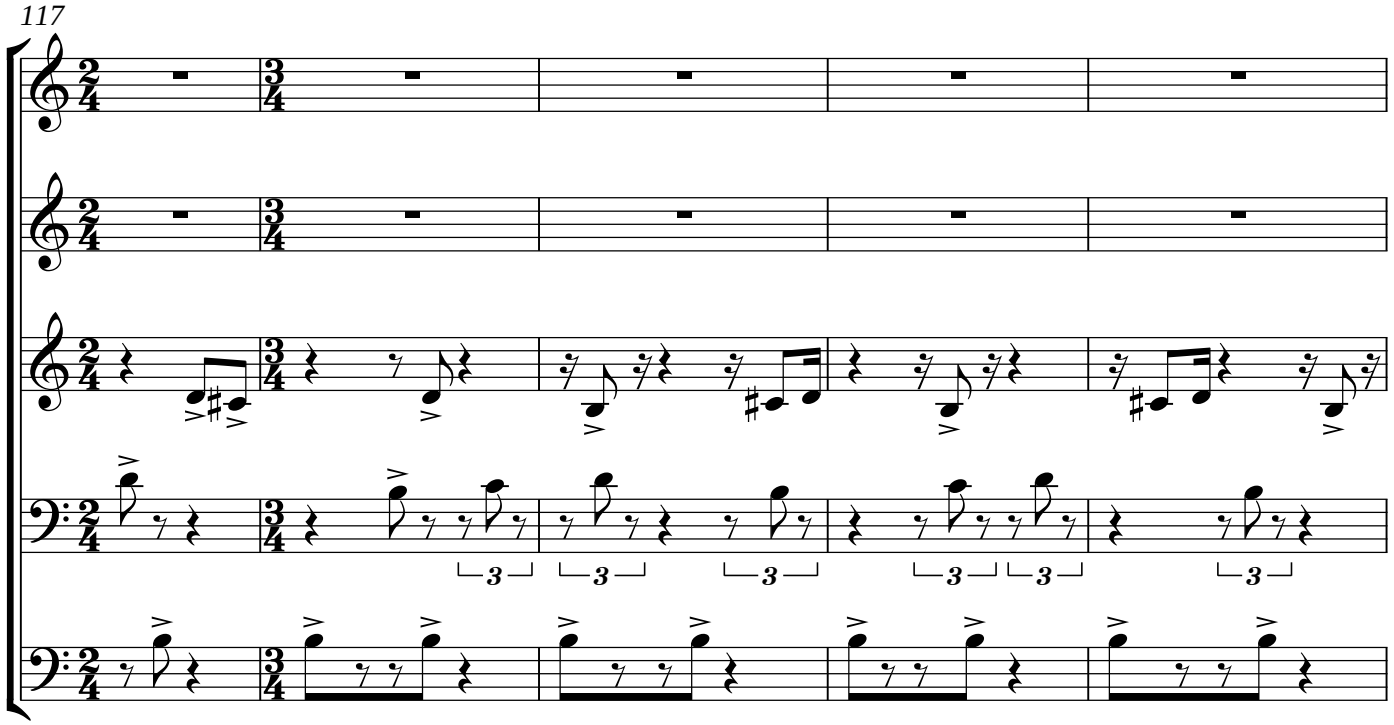

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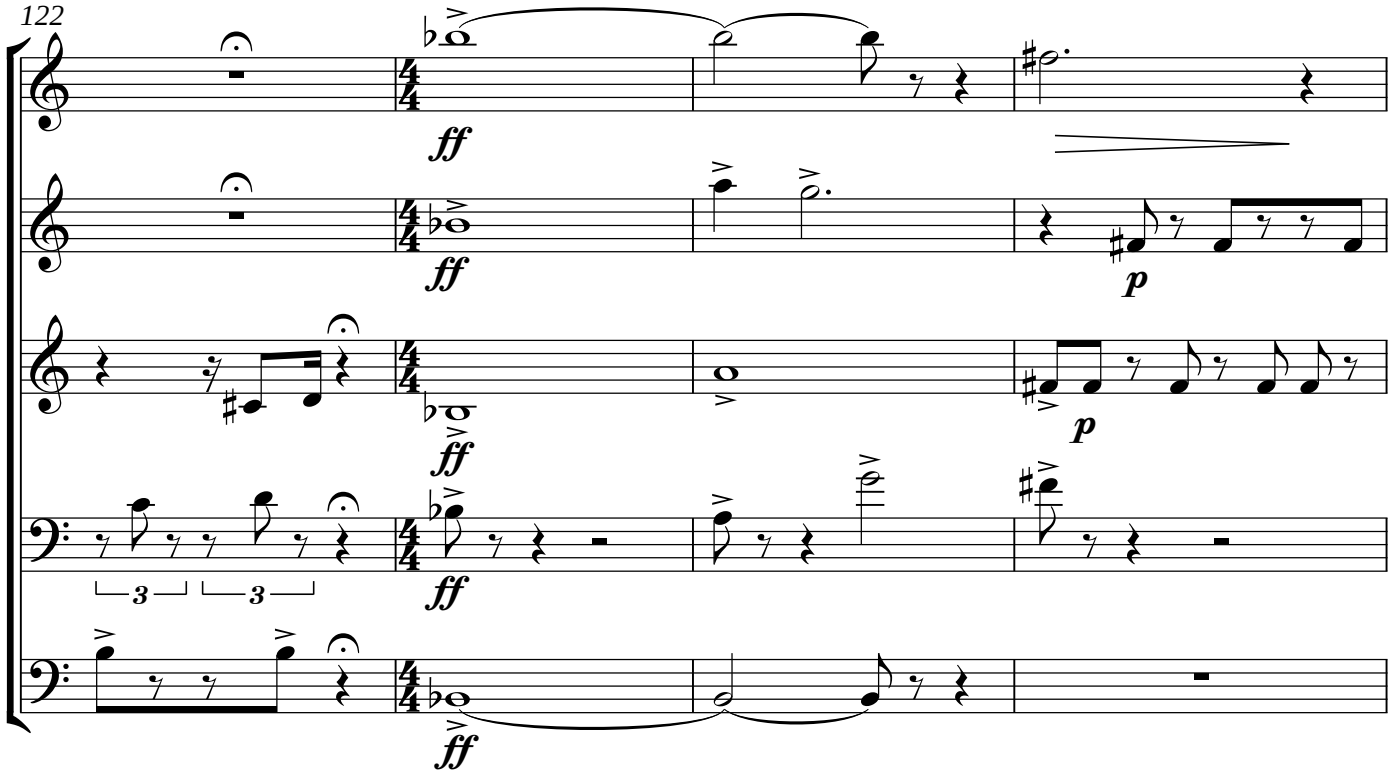

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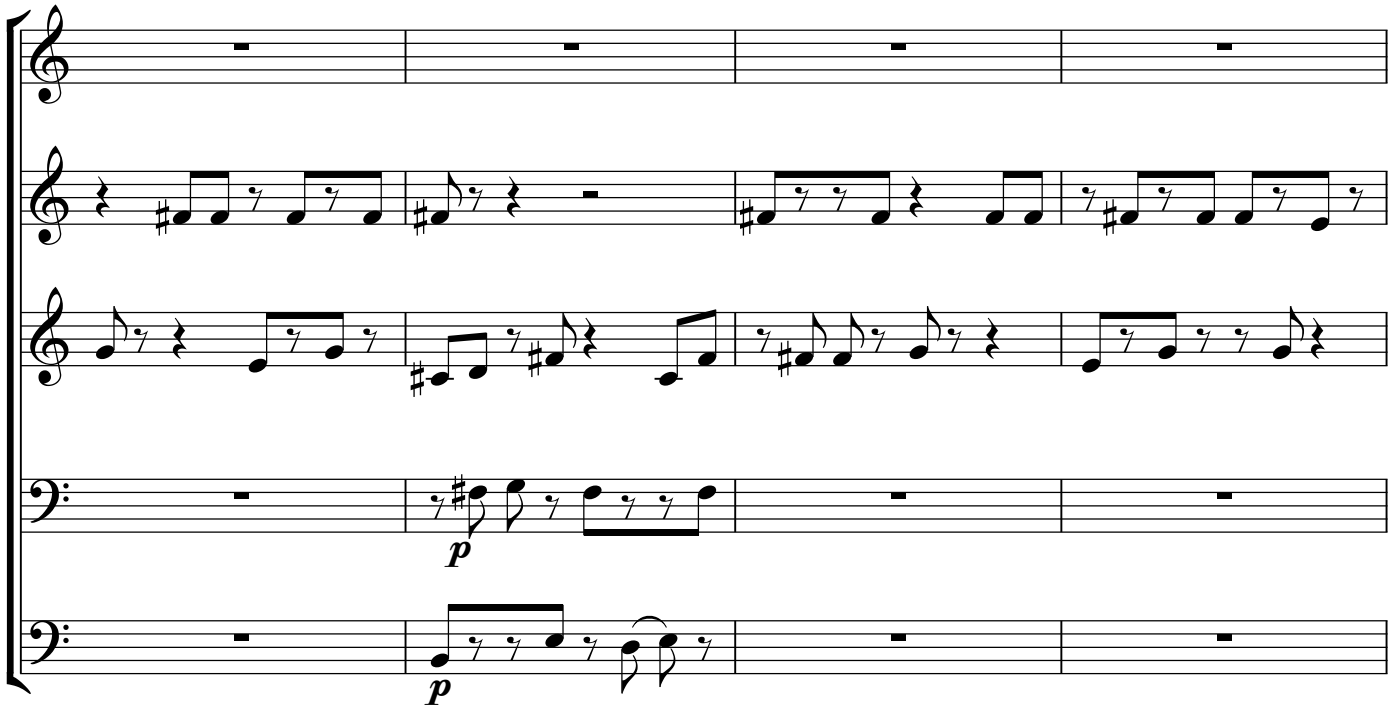

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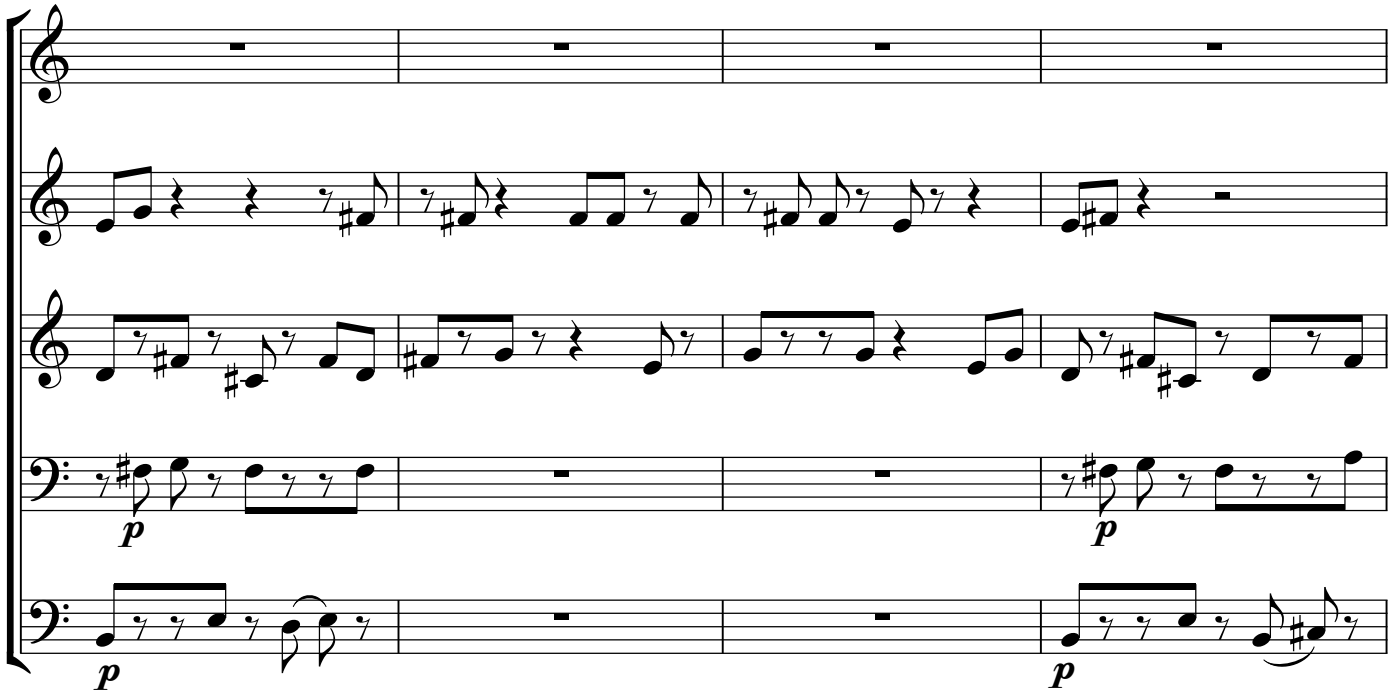

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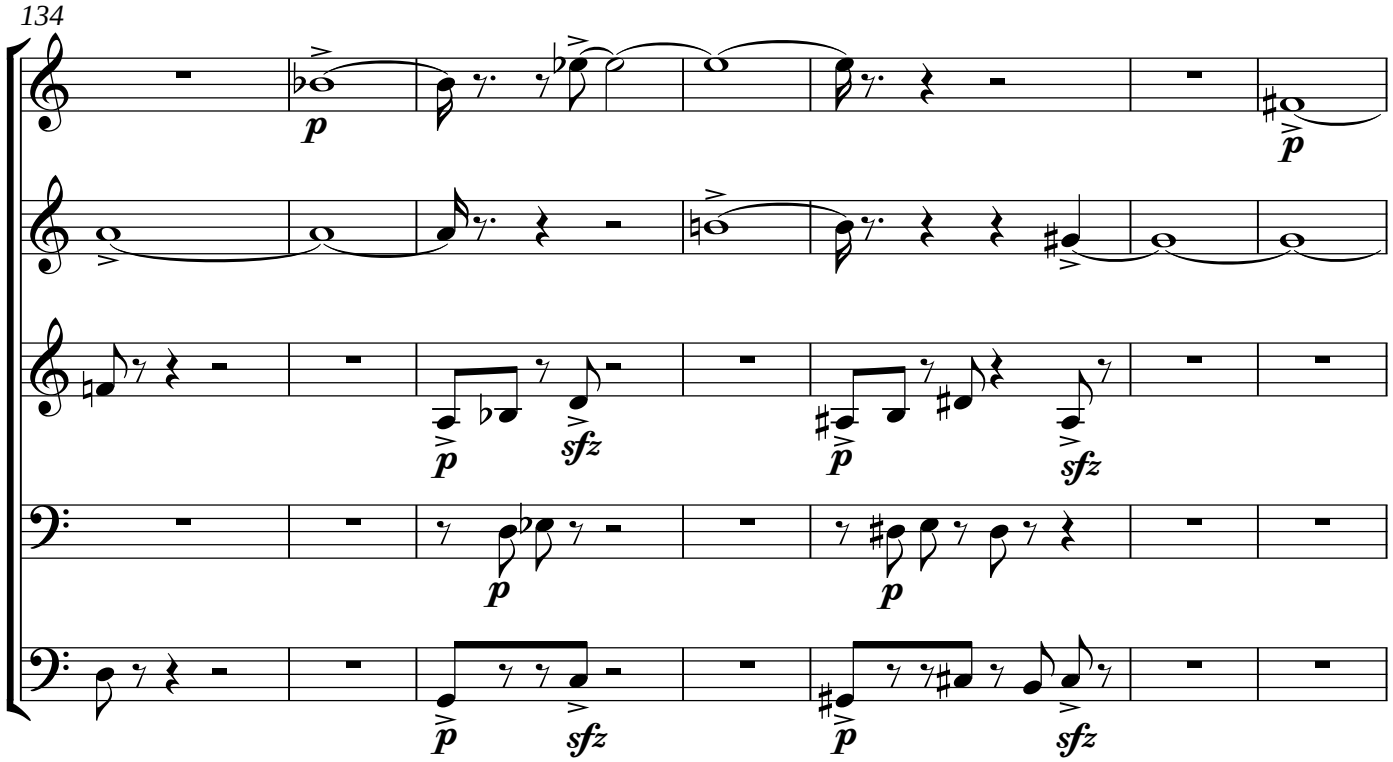

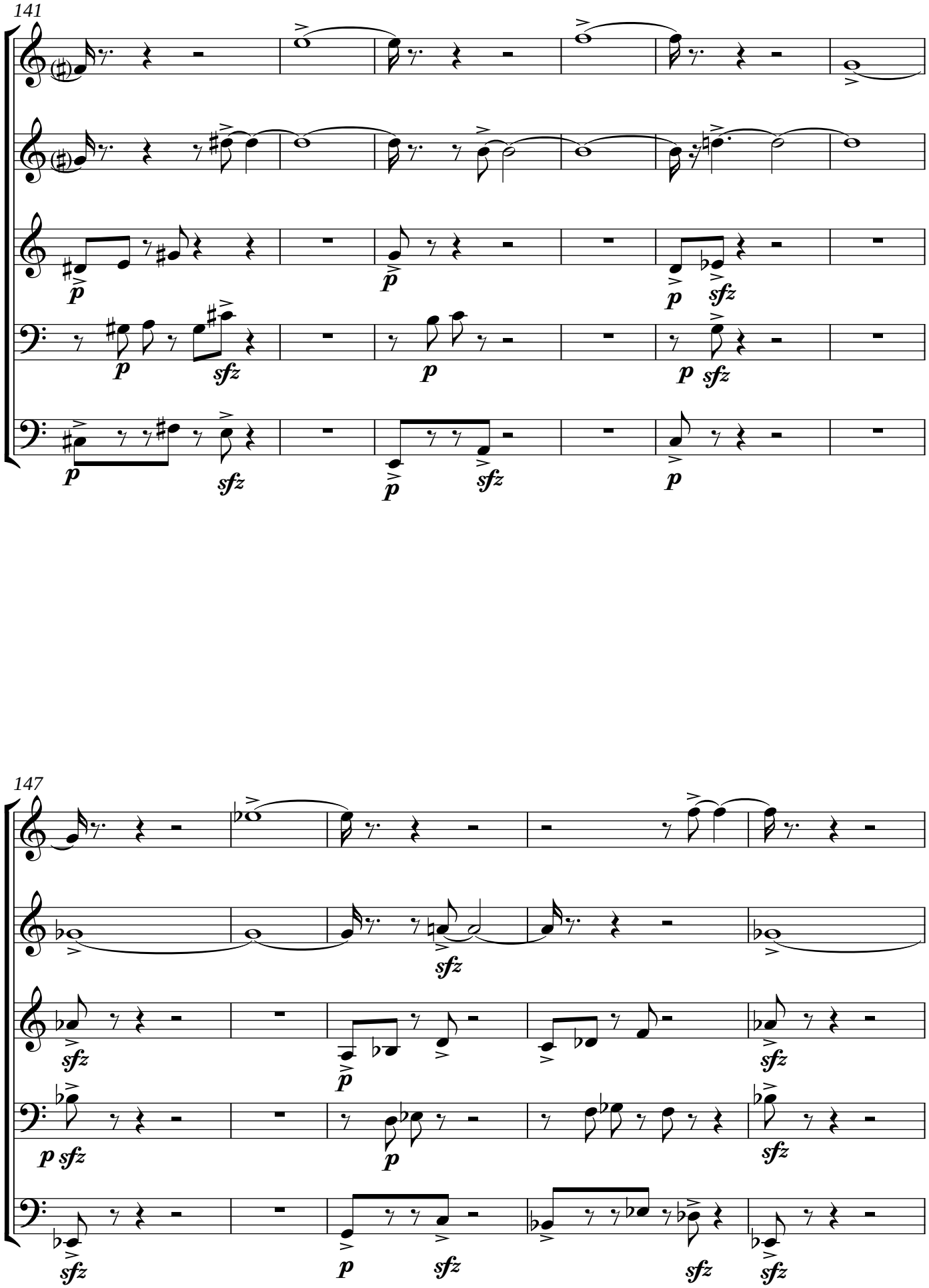
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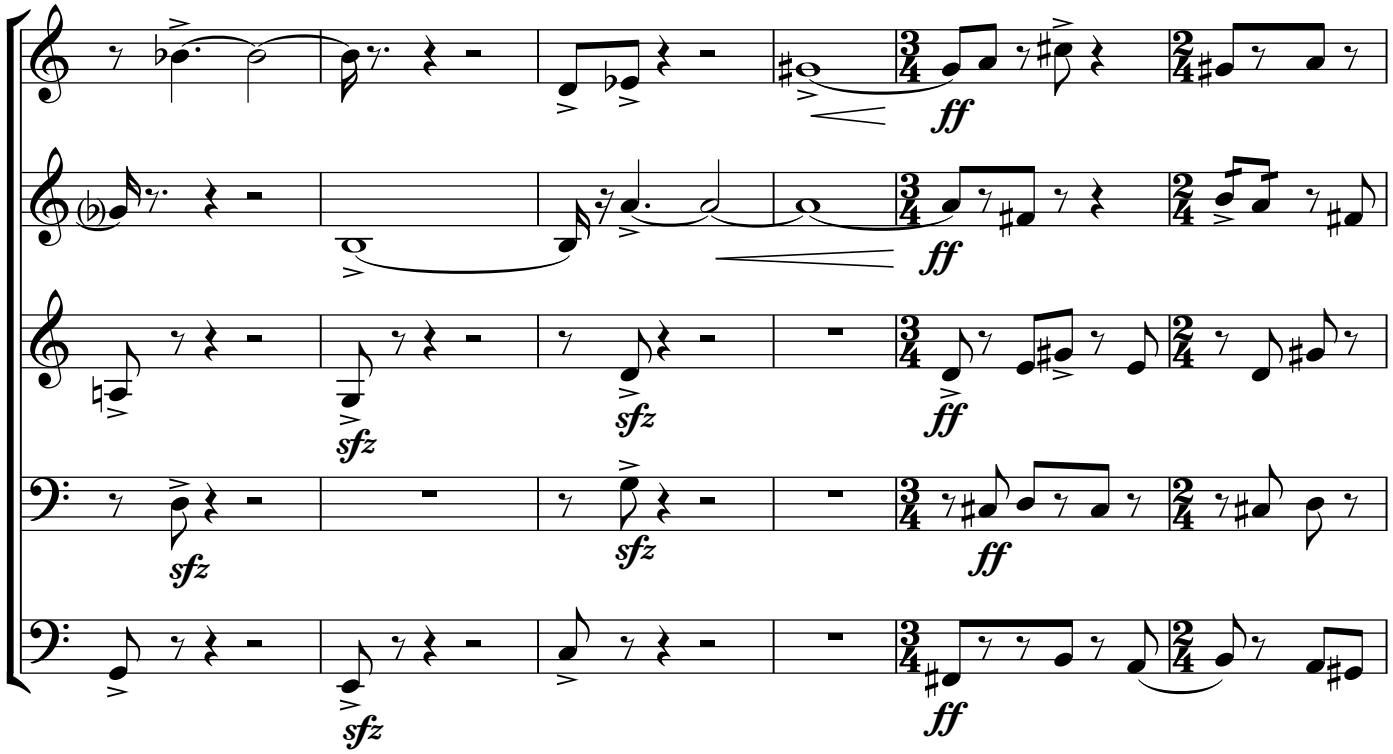

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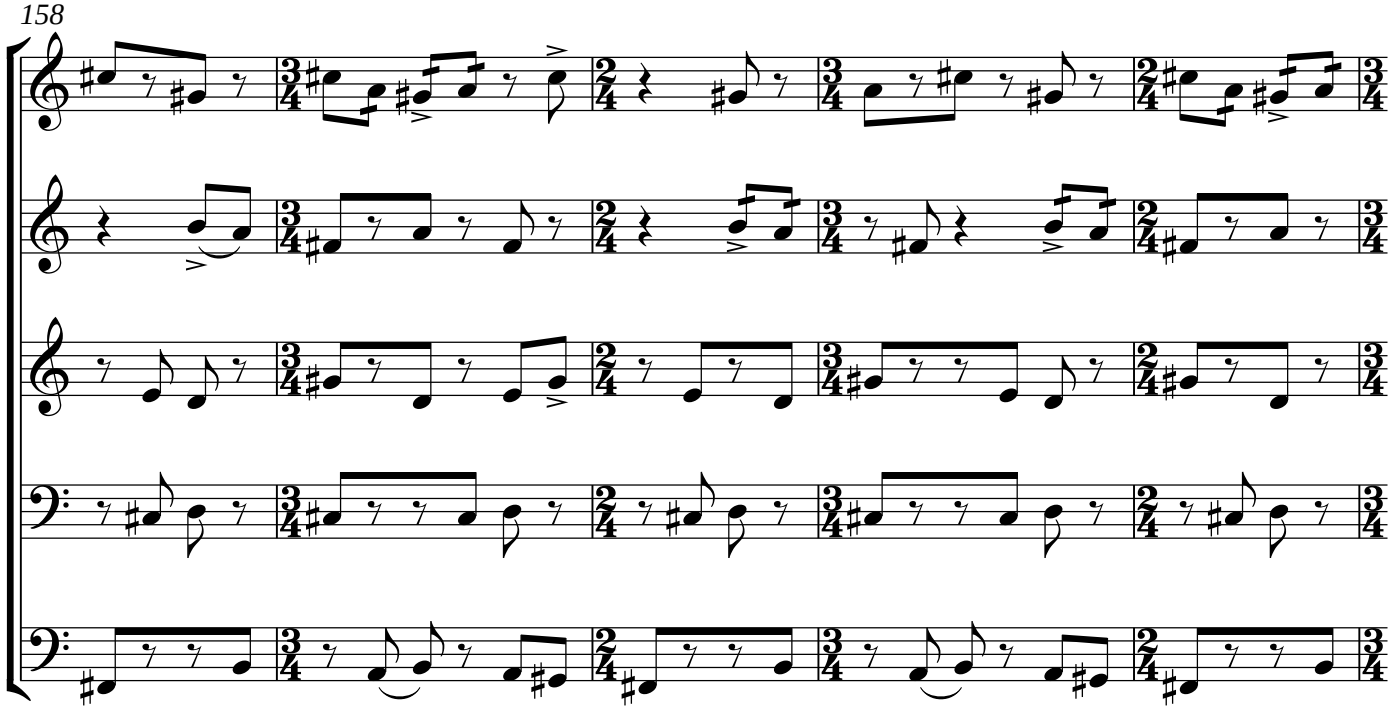

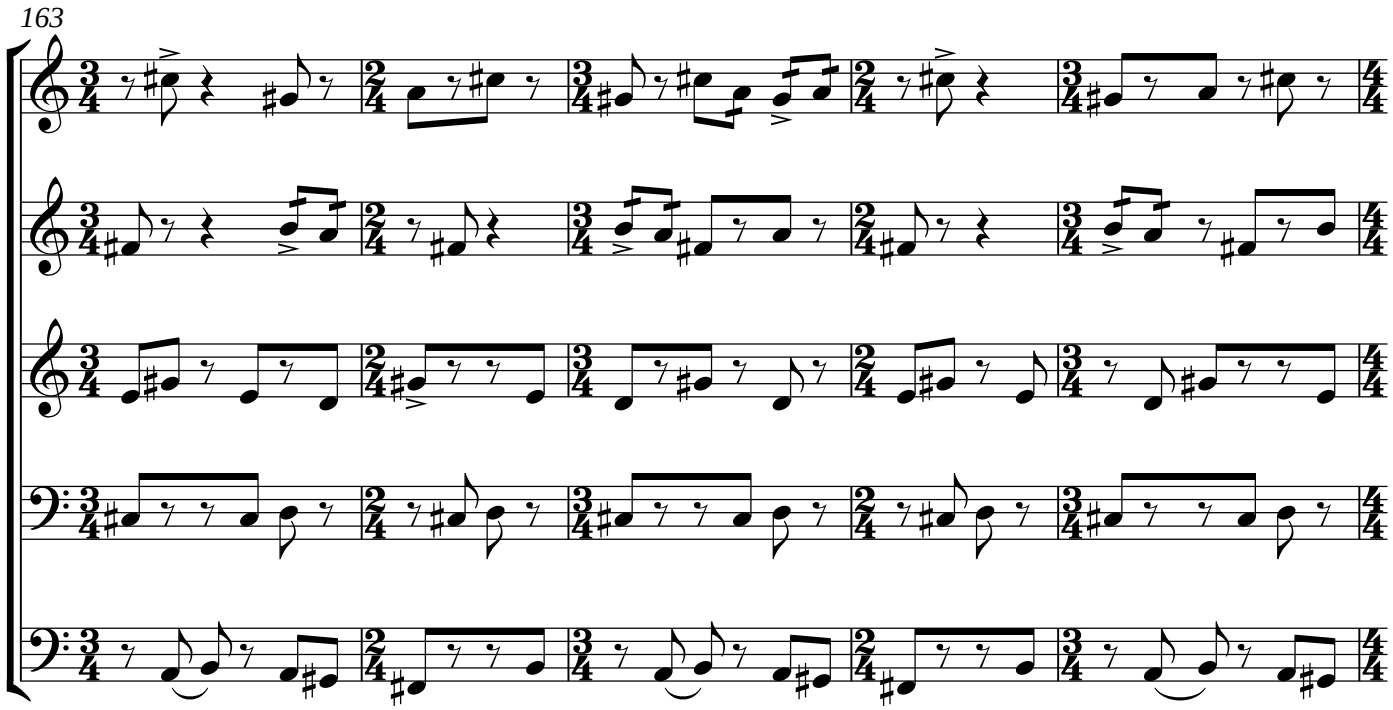
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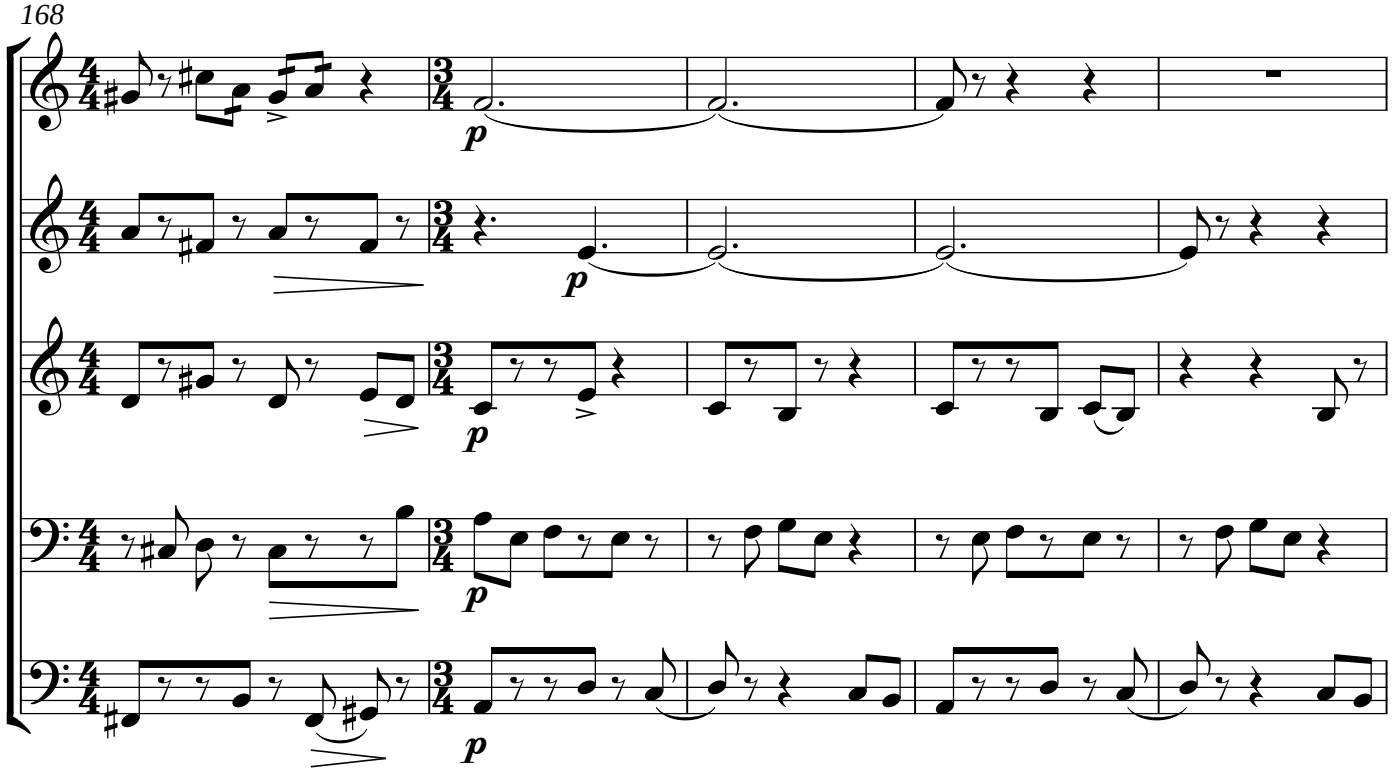
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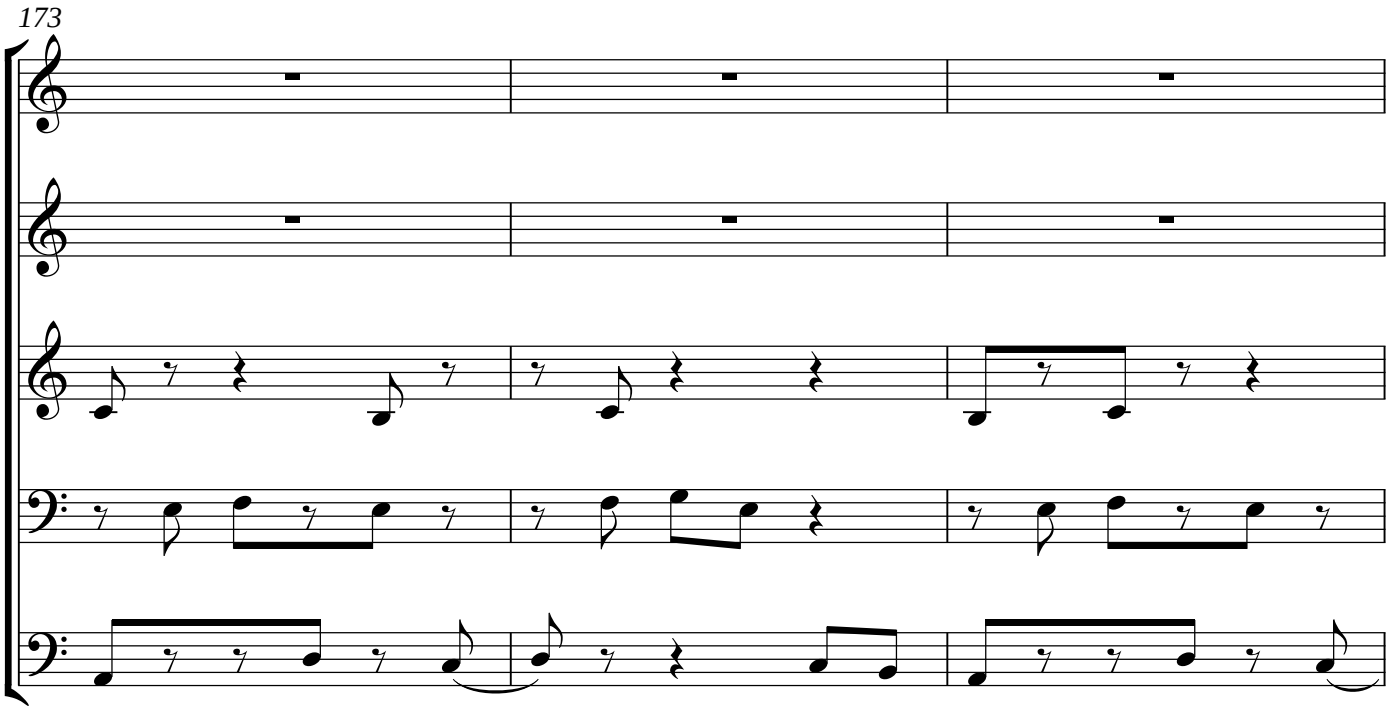
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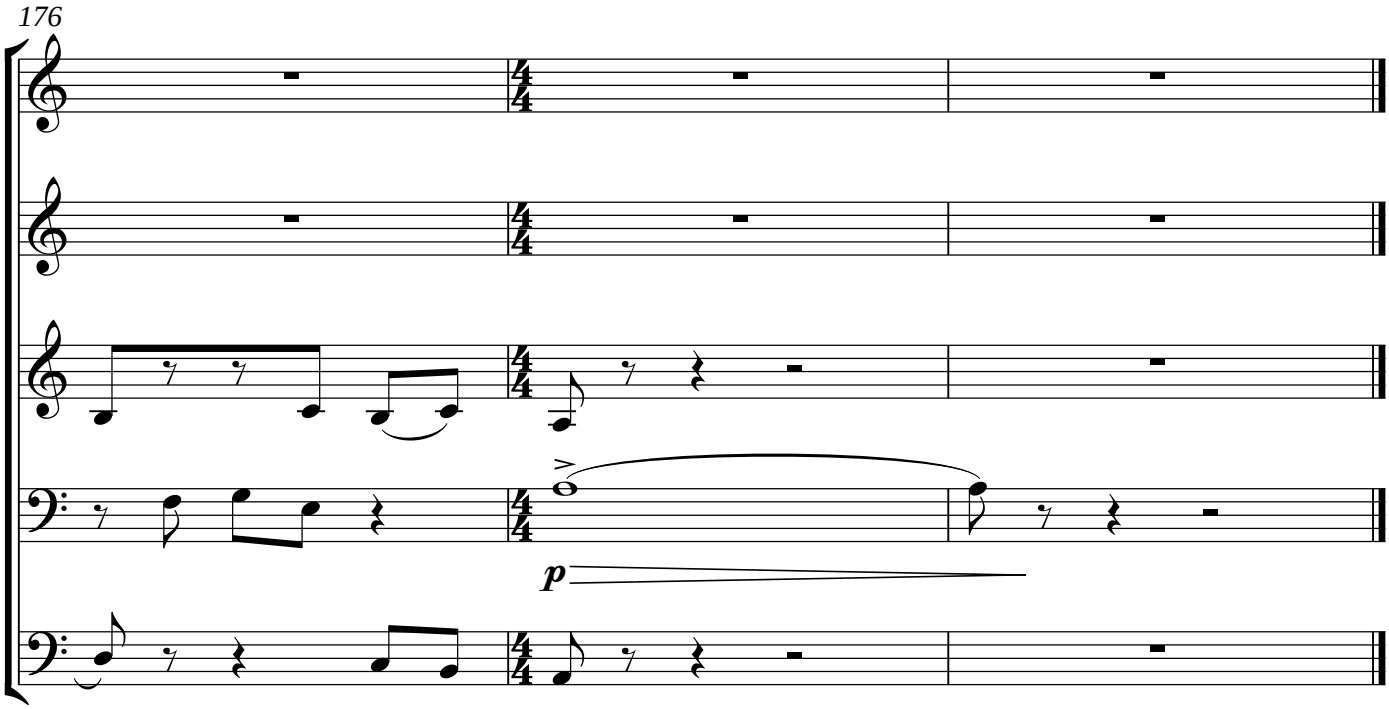
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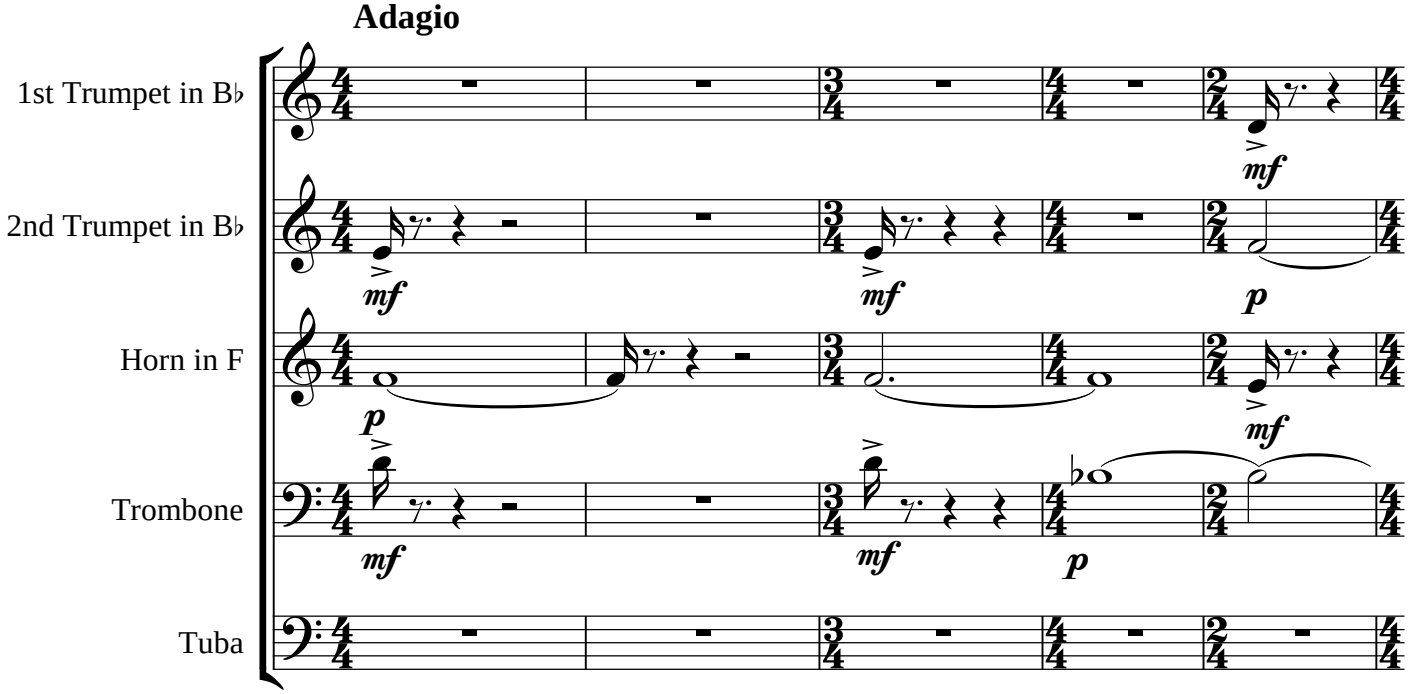
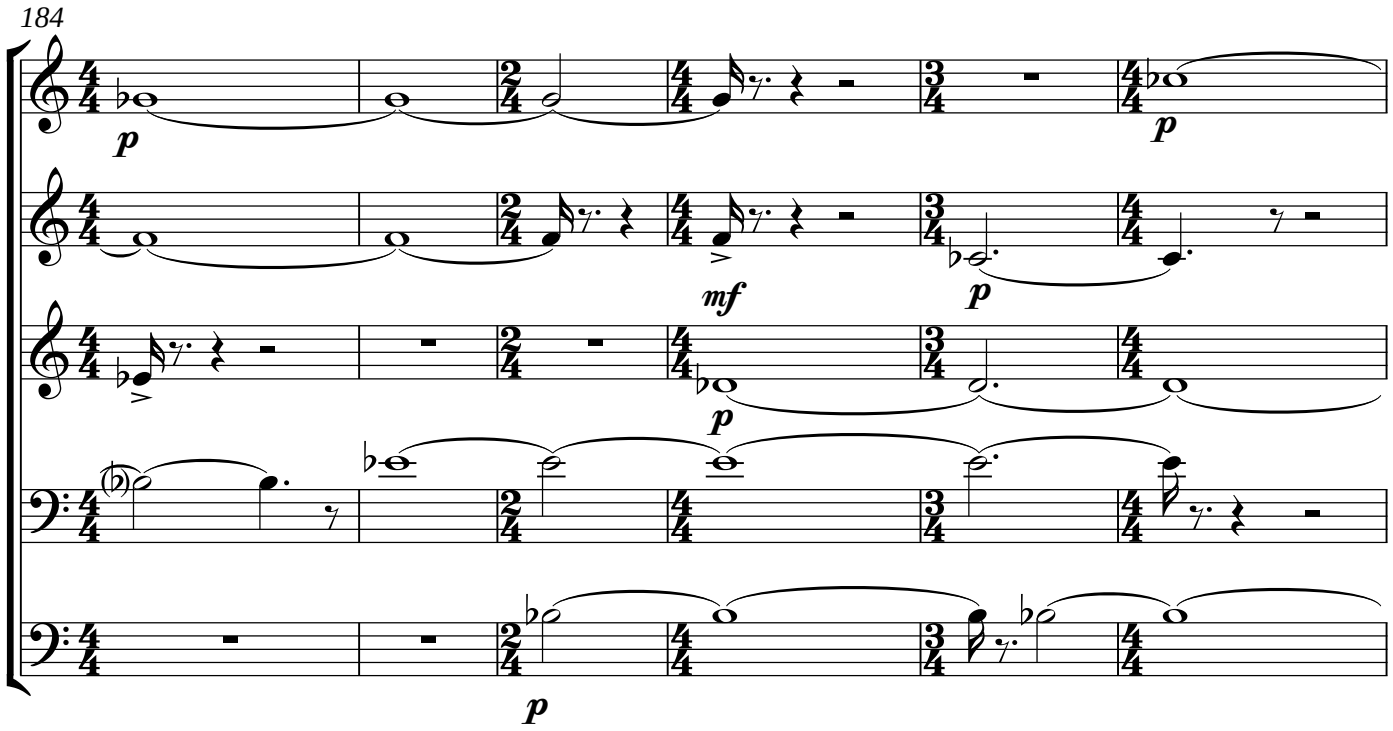
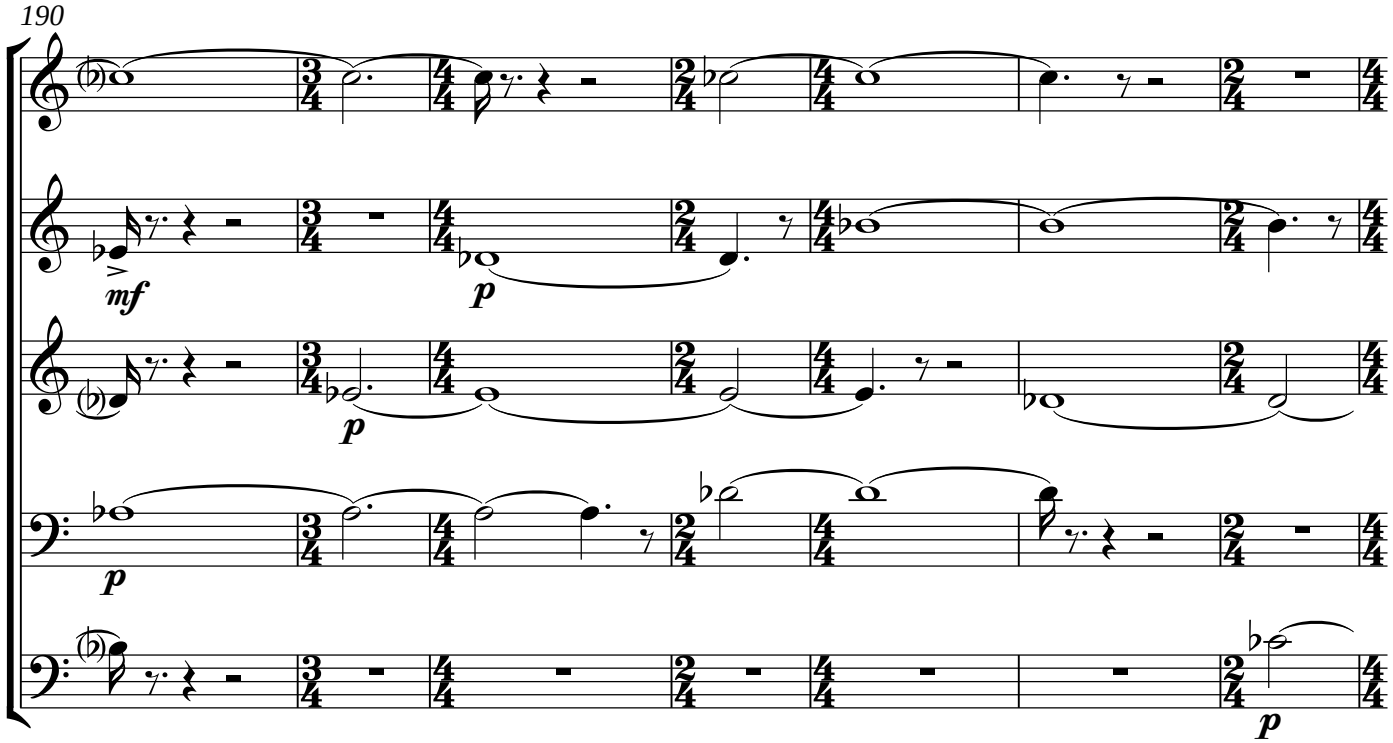
Breathless II

Aria

Adagio



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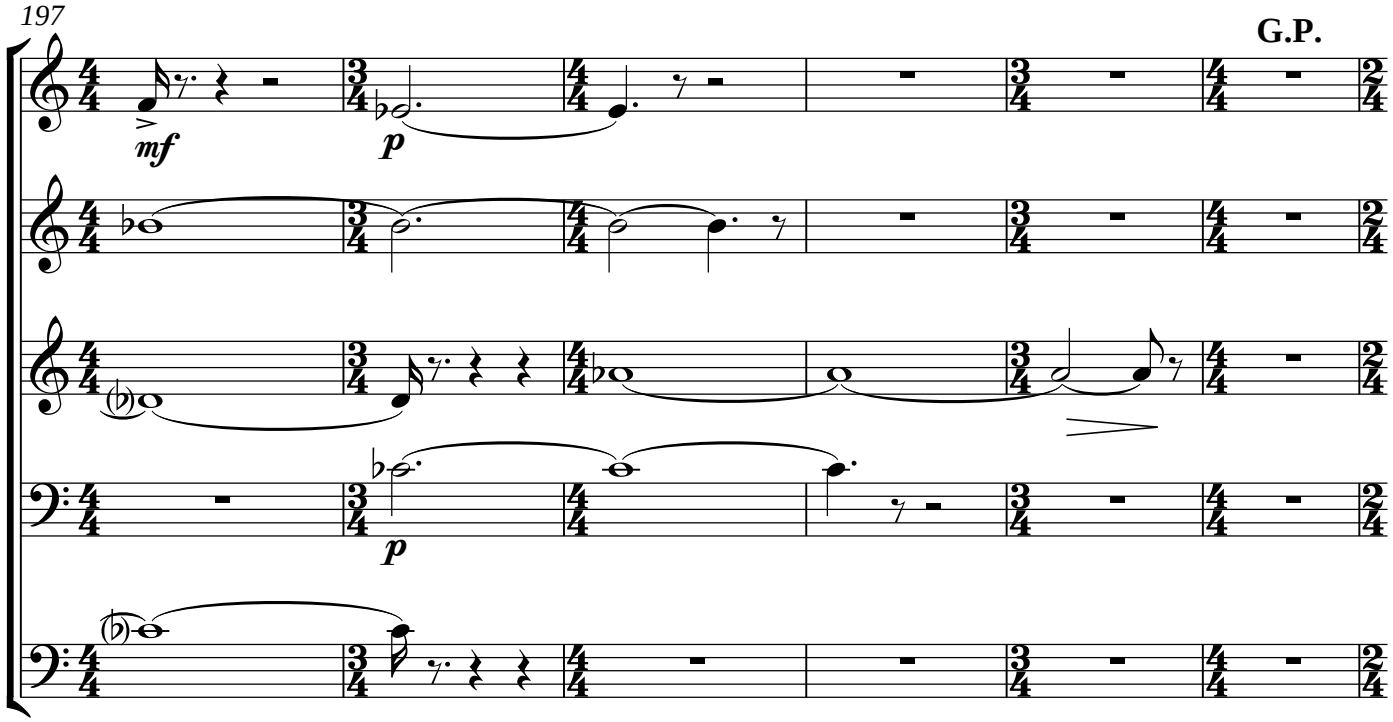
p
p
p
p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G.P.
mf
p
p

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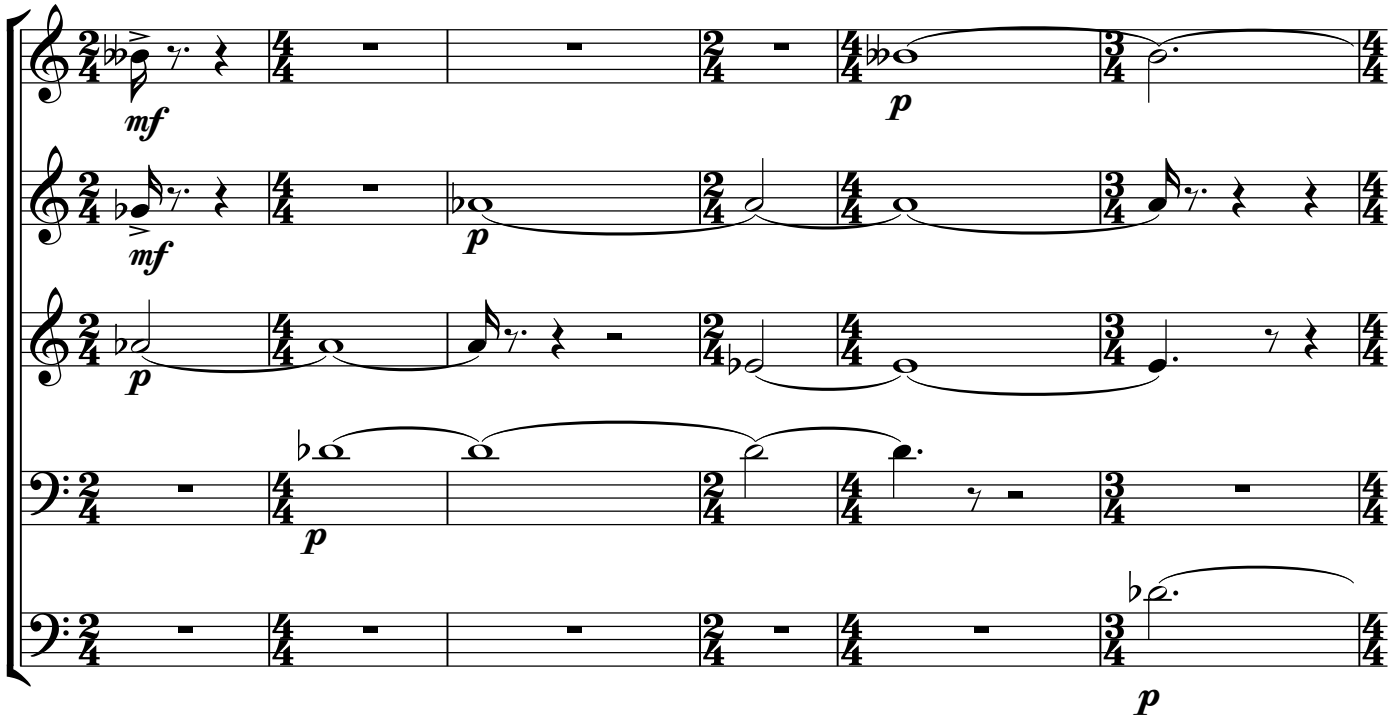

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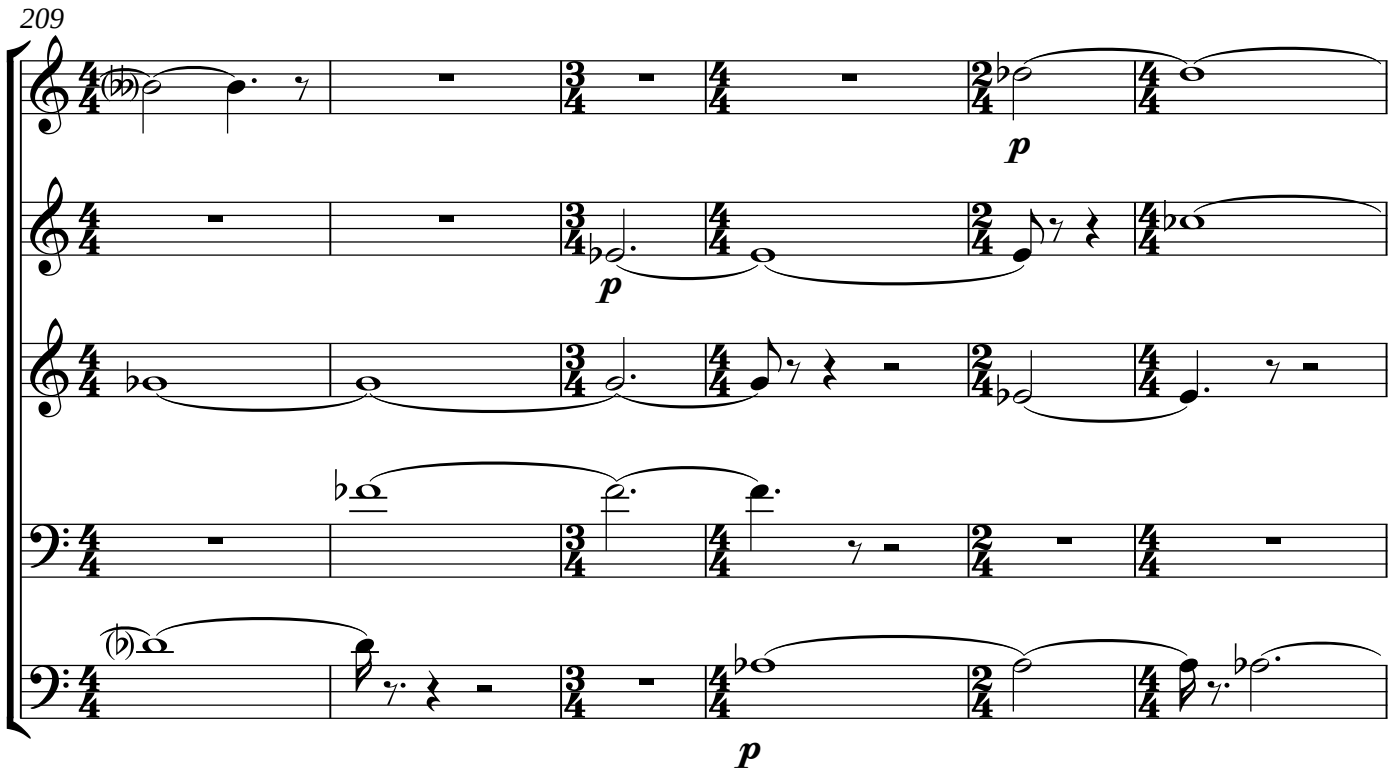

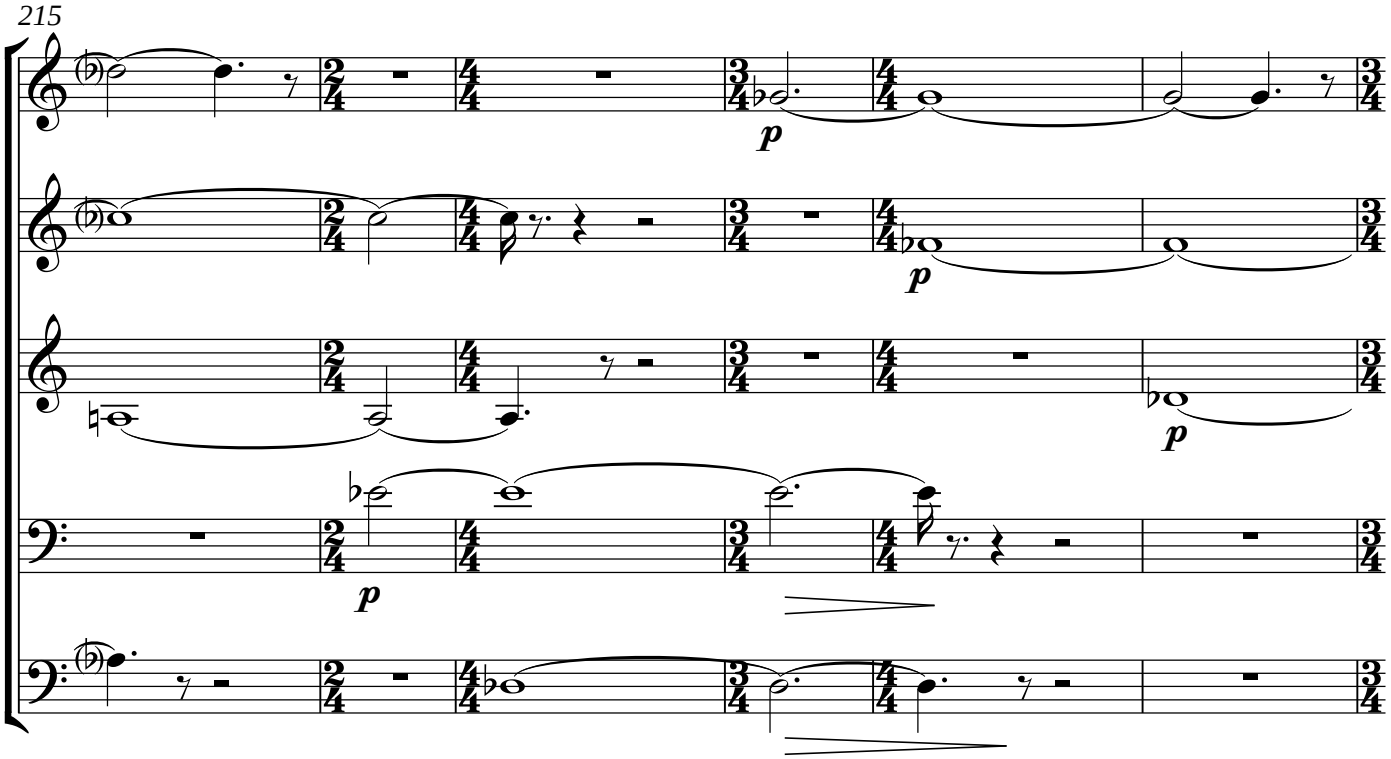
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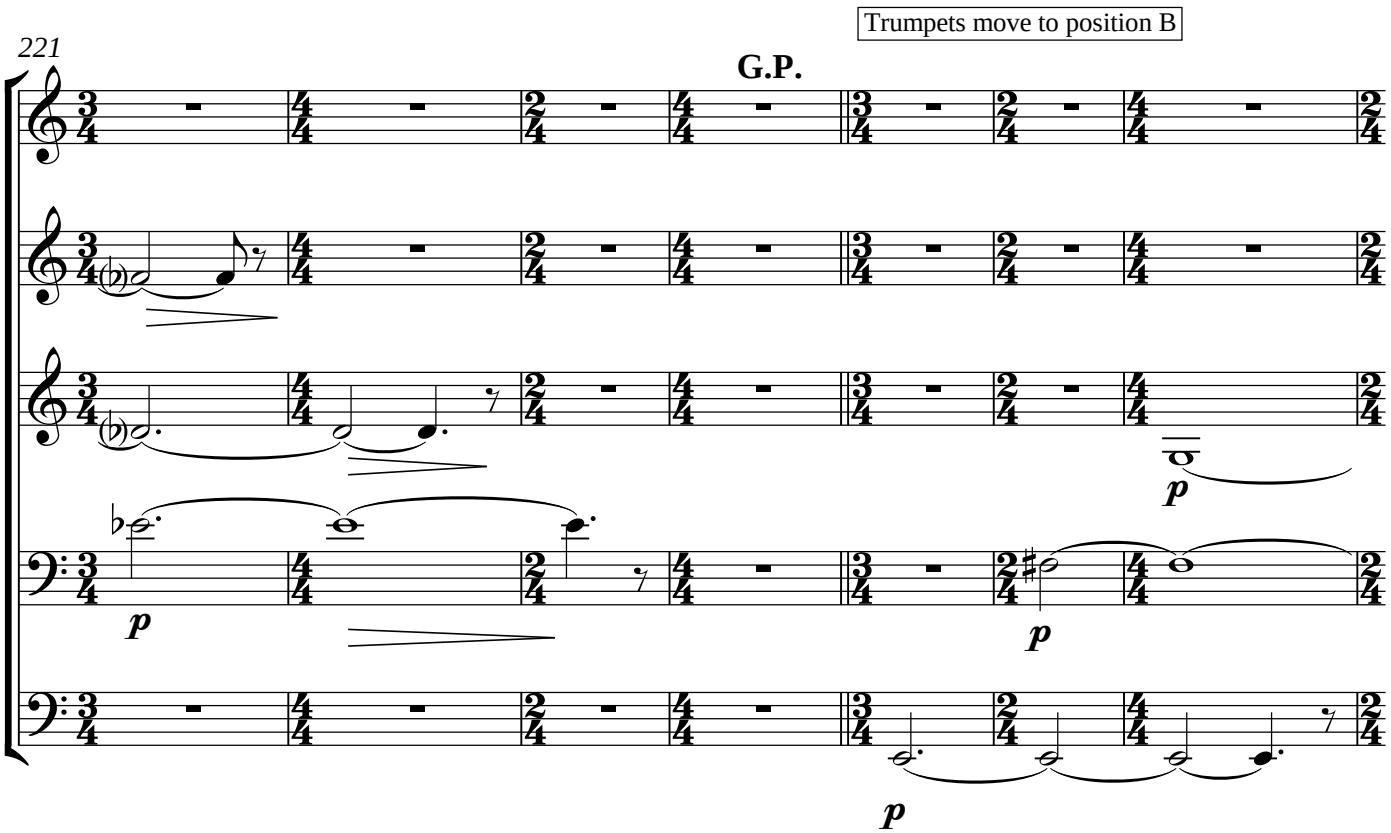

Trumpets move to position B
221
G.P.
p
p
p
p

228

G.P.

p

p

236

poco marcato

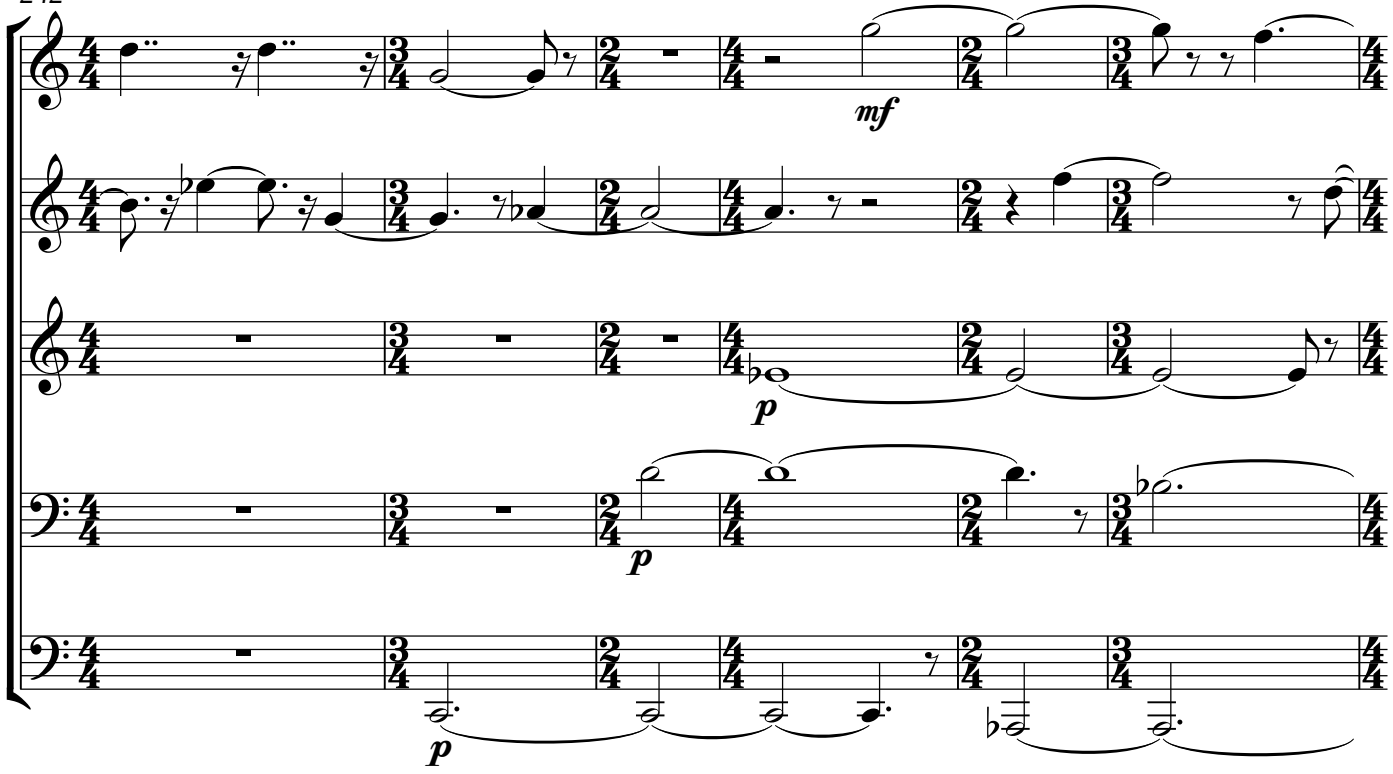
mf

poco marcato

mf

p

242



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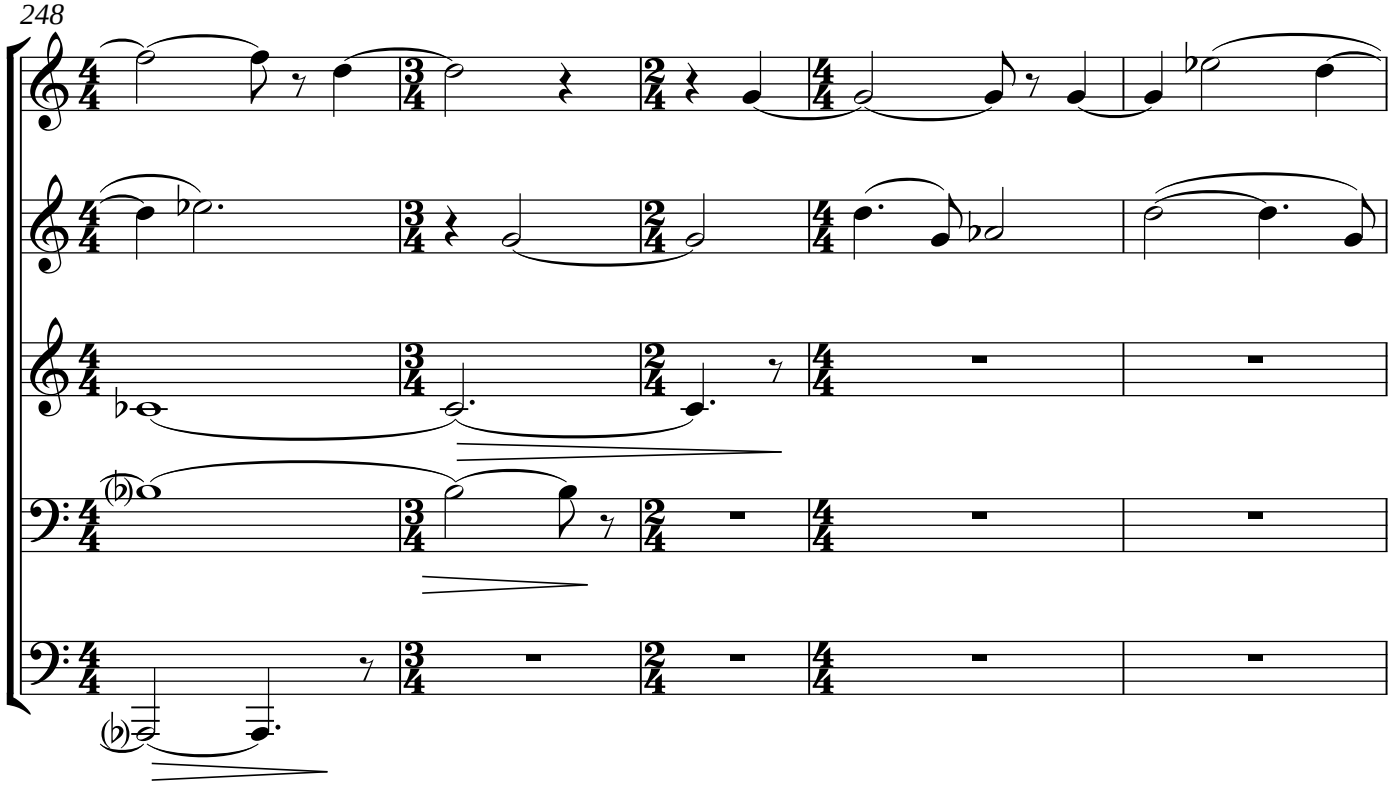

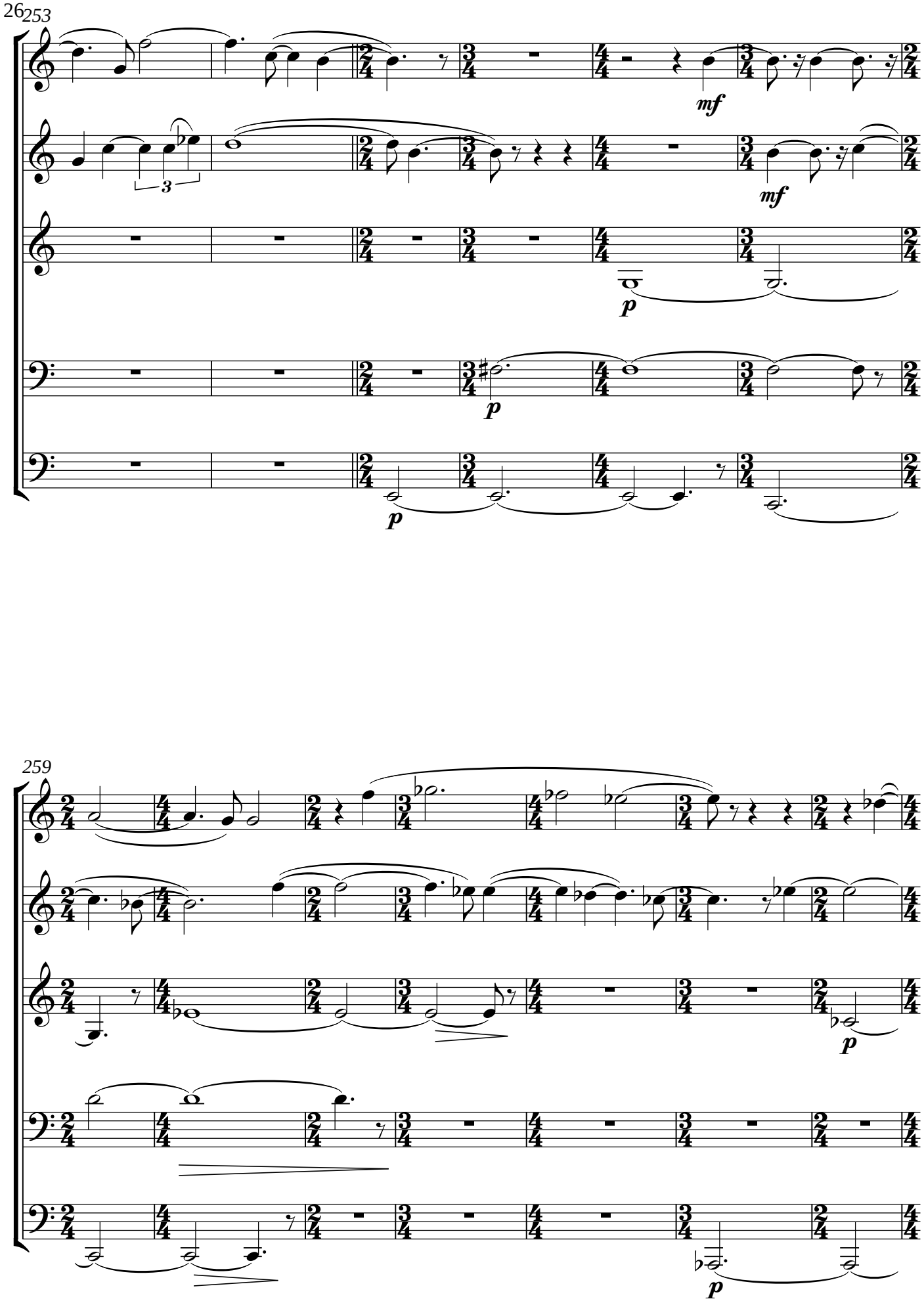
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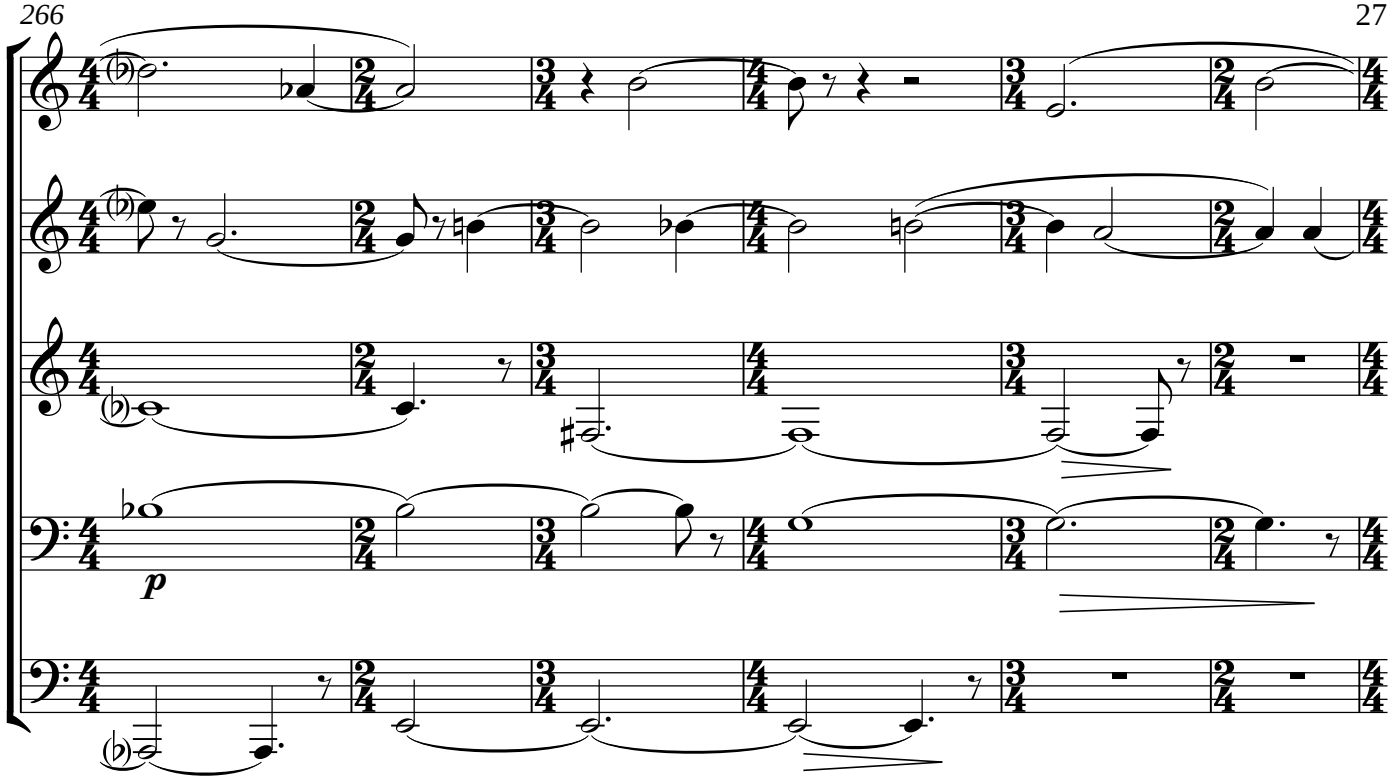
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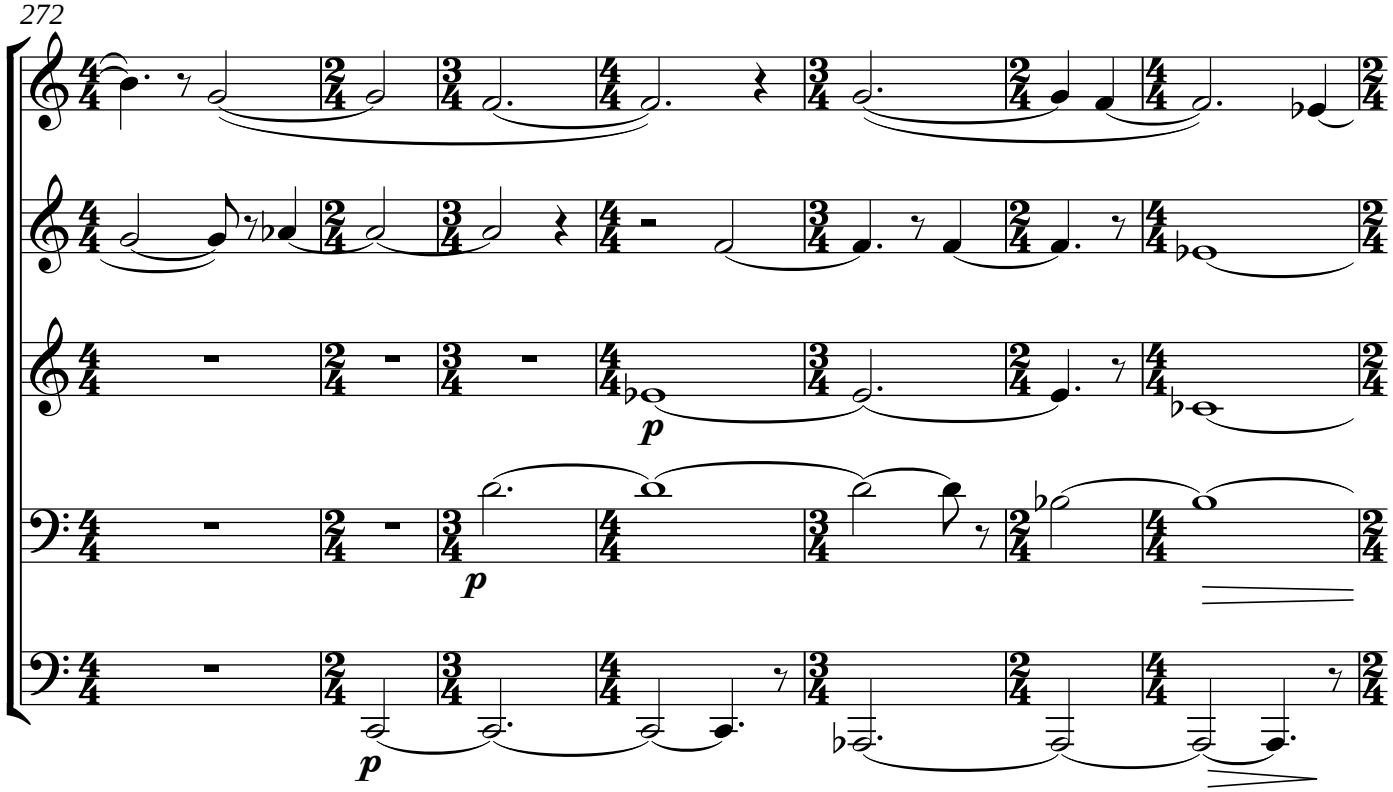
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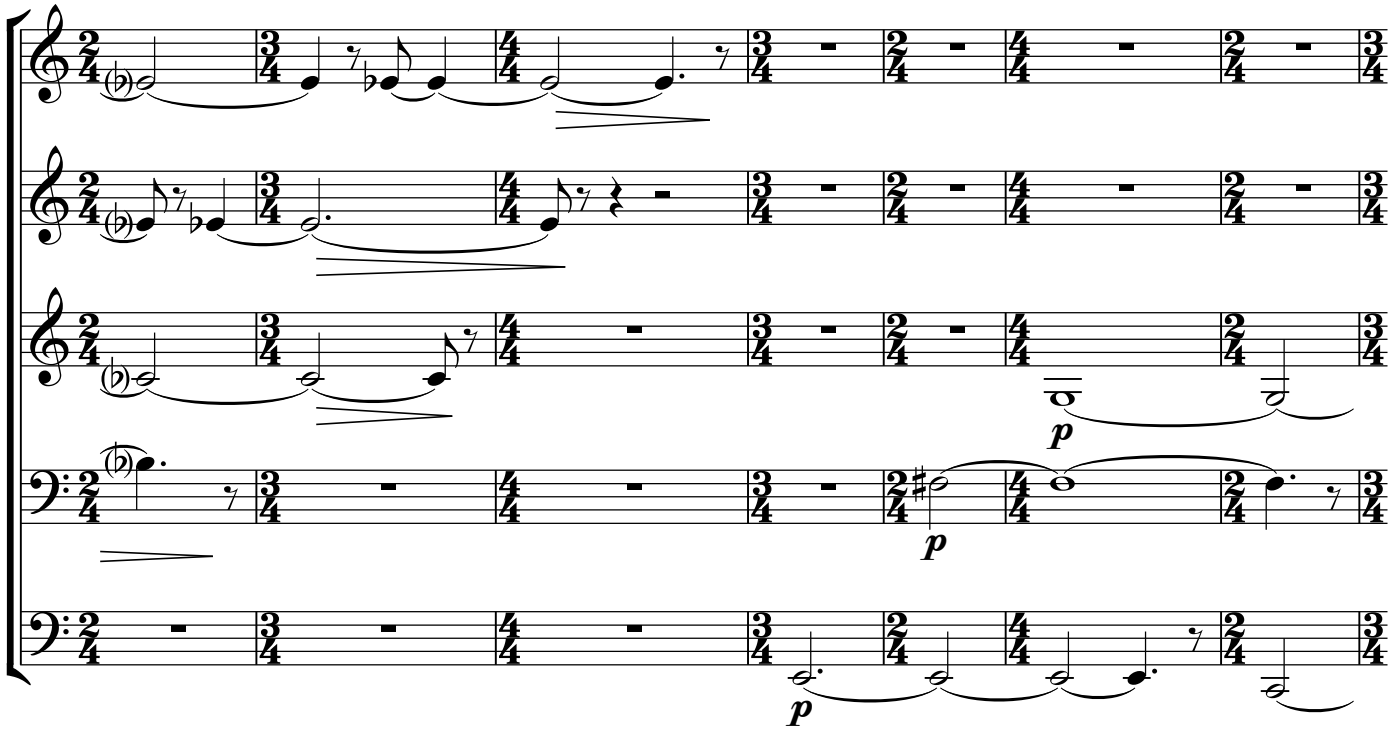

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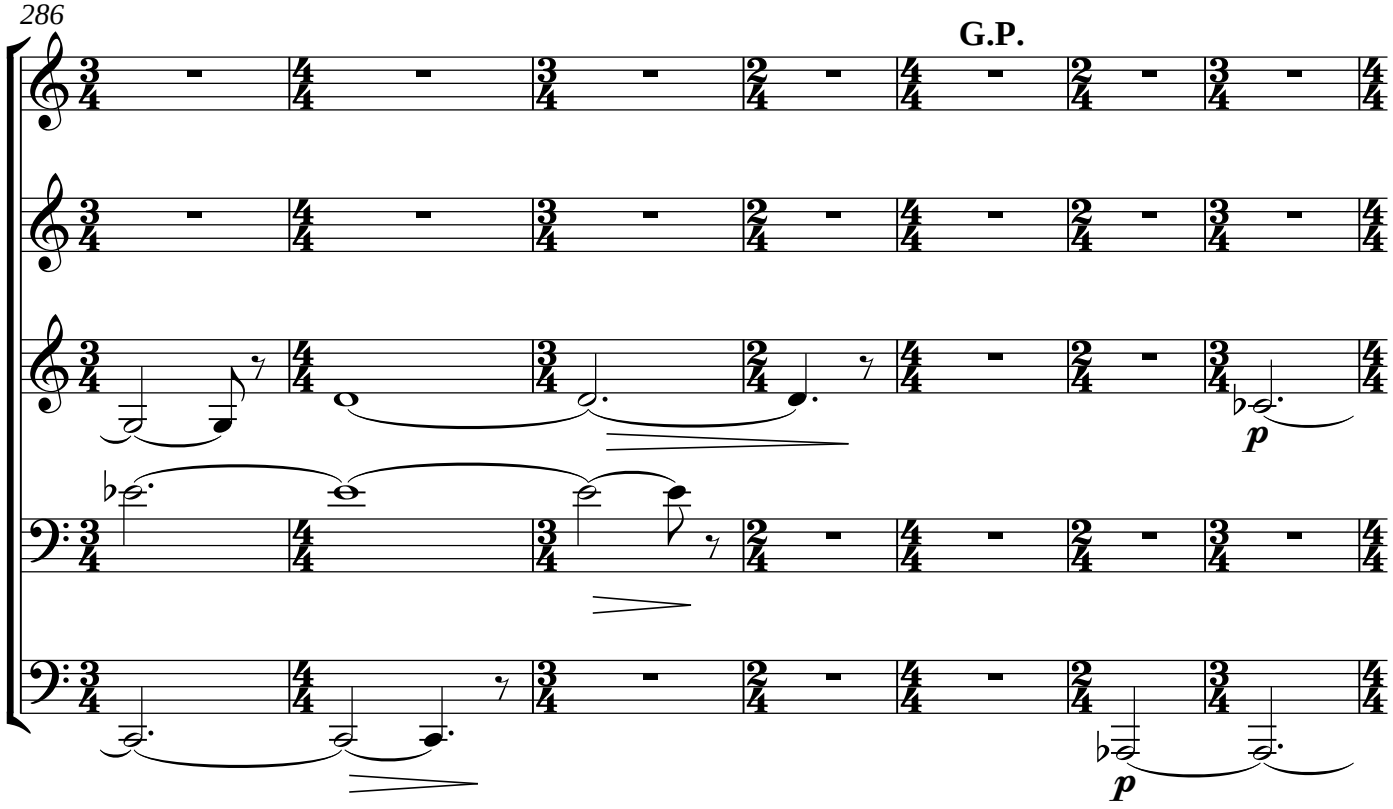
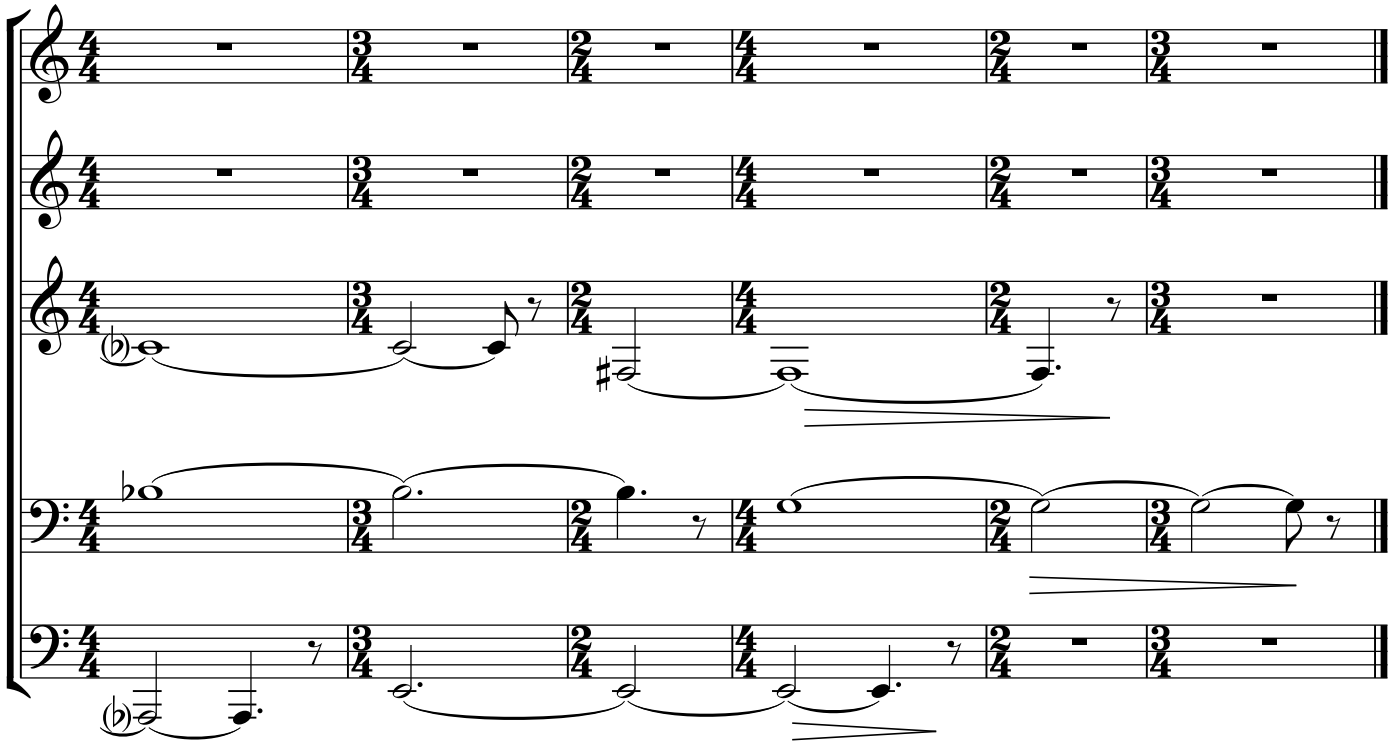
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