Pande Shahov

Saxophone Quartet

2007

Composer's note

Each of the movements is a 'musical postcard' relating to a specific place or experience: the first two to Britain and the third to Macedonia.

The initial theme of *Urban Rains* was inspired by my journeys on the London Underground network: the busy atmosphere at the stations and on the escalators, the crowded platforms, the noisy arrivals and departures of the mighty trains. I have studied several 'train' pieces and I wanted to create one myself. But instead of an onomatopoeic portrayal of the trains themselves, I wanted to capture the urban atmosphere of the everyday life of commuters.

It also occurred to me that as soon as I exited an underground station, I was often greeted by persistent (although not always heavy) rain. Thus, for a while, the working title of the movement was *(T)rains.*

I tried to imagine how mechanical, 'organised' raindrops would sound. This thought influenced the second theme, based on a repeating note. Before this theme starts, there is a short repose (the arrival) and an ascending semi-quaver passage (the escalator!).

In both themes, I explore the flexibility of 6/8 and 3/4 time, often juxtaposing them by using accents and counter-rhythms.

November was inspired by the bleak and mysterious atmosphere of the Surrey countryside on a rainy November day. The initial soprano saxophone melody ascends to the highest register and sounds somewhat optimistic, although is rhythmically hesitant and fragmented. These motifs trigger development in different directions, sometimes establishing a persistent ostinato; at other times just blending timbre with the other three instruments. After many attempts for a longer melodic stretch, a fully-formed melody finally materialises on the baritone saxophone. Heterophonic and organum textures are explored. The harmonic language is sometimes influenced by jazz-voicings. The melancholic timbre of the soprano saxophone returns the movement to its initial contemplative mood; the Autumn is no time for too much drama.

Oro is my own 'version' of the popular Macedonian folk circle dance. This term embraces any dance, performed in circles (holding hands). Irregular rhythms are often used in such dances, challenging dancers to move carefully through some difficult time changes. This movement uses no quotes from an authentic folk dance or song. Melodic sections alternate with sections built on repeated, accented chords. Between these two distinctive sections, there is a process of fragmentation and variation of the motifs. I aimed at creating a fun and optimistic atmosphere, characteristic of wedding parties and family gatherings. The rhythmic groupings should be clearly outlined by the performers and accents should be emphasised.

I. Urban Rains
II. November
III. Oro

In Urban Rains, the initial theme was inspired by my journeys on the London Underground network.
The second theme is a musical representation of the raindrops,
which greated me as soon as left the underground station.

November was inspired by the bleak and mysteryous atmosphere of the Surrey countryside
on a rainy November day.

Oro is my own 'version' of the popular Macedonian folk circle dance,
which usually consists of irregular (aksak) rhythms.

Commissioned by the Macedonian Composers' Association (SOKOM).

Premiered by Saxofonquadrat in March 2008 at The National Gallery (Daut Pashin Amam) in Skopje.

Transposing score.

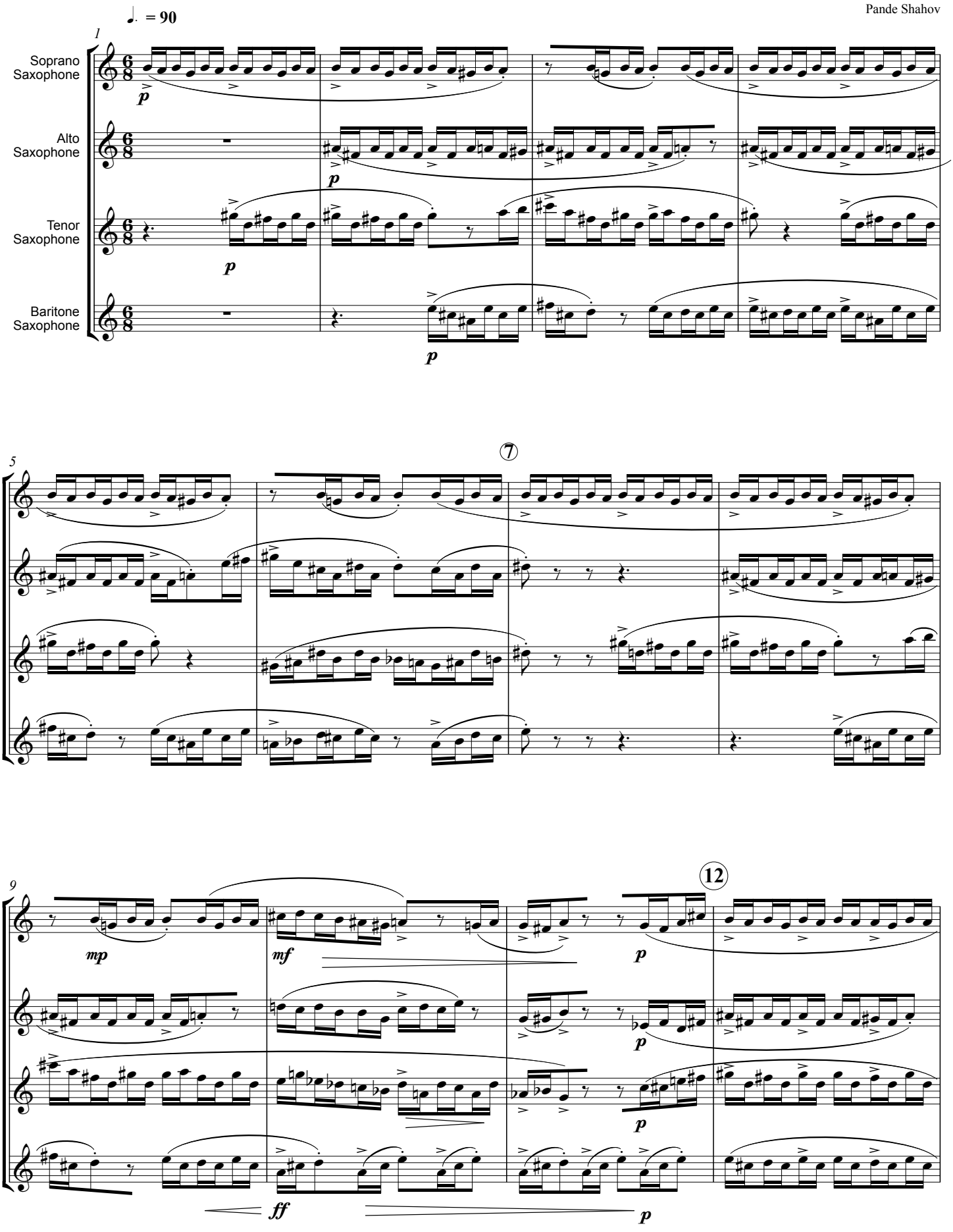
Duration: 16 min.

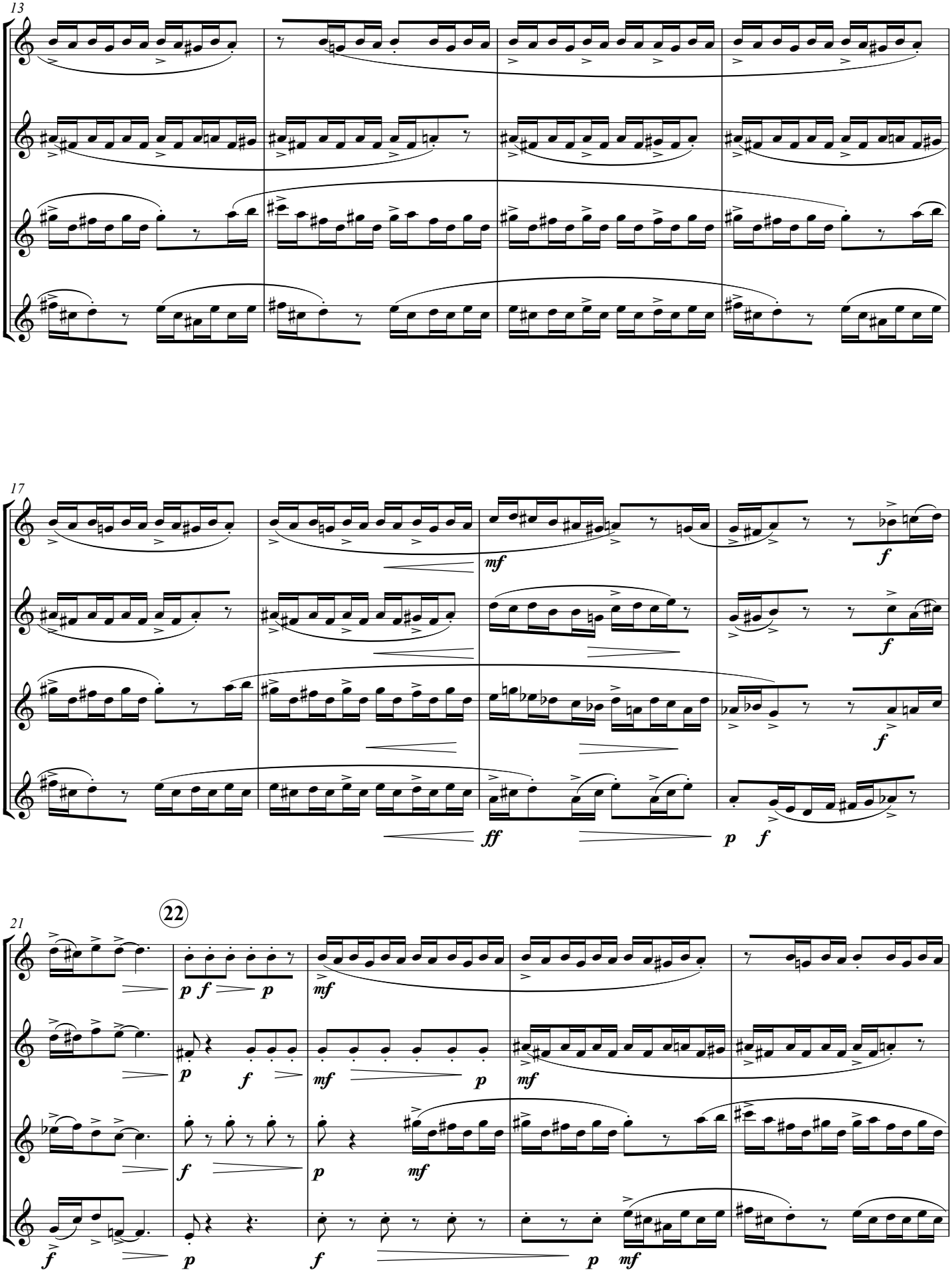
Transposing score

Saxophone Quartet

I. Urban Rains

Pande Shahov

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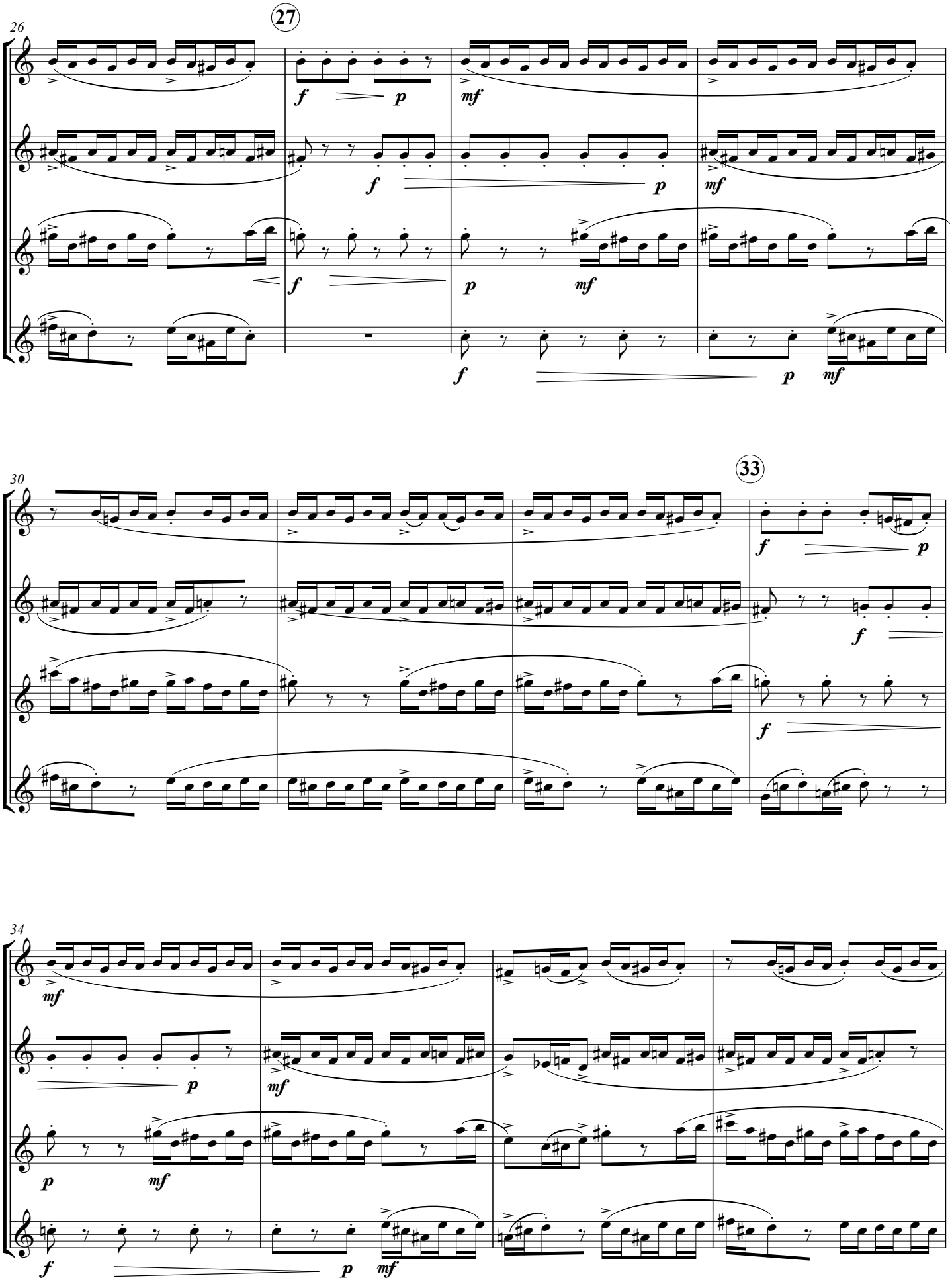
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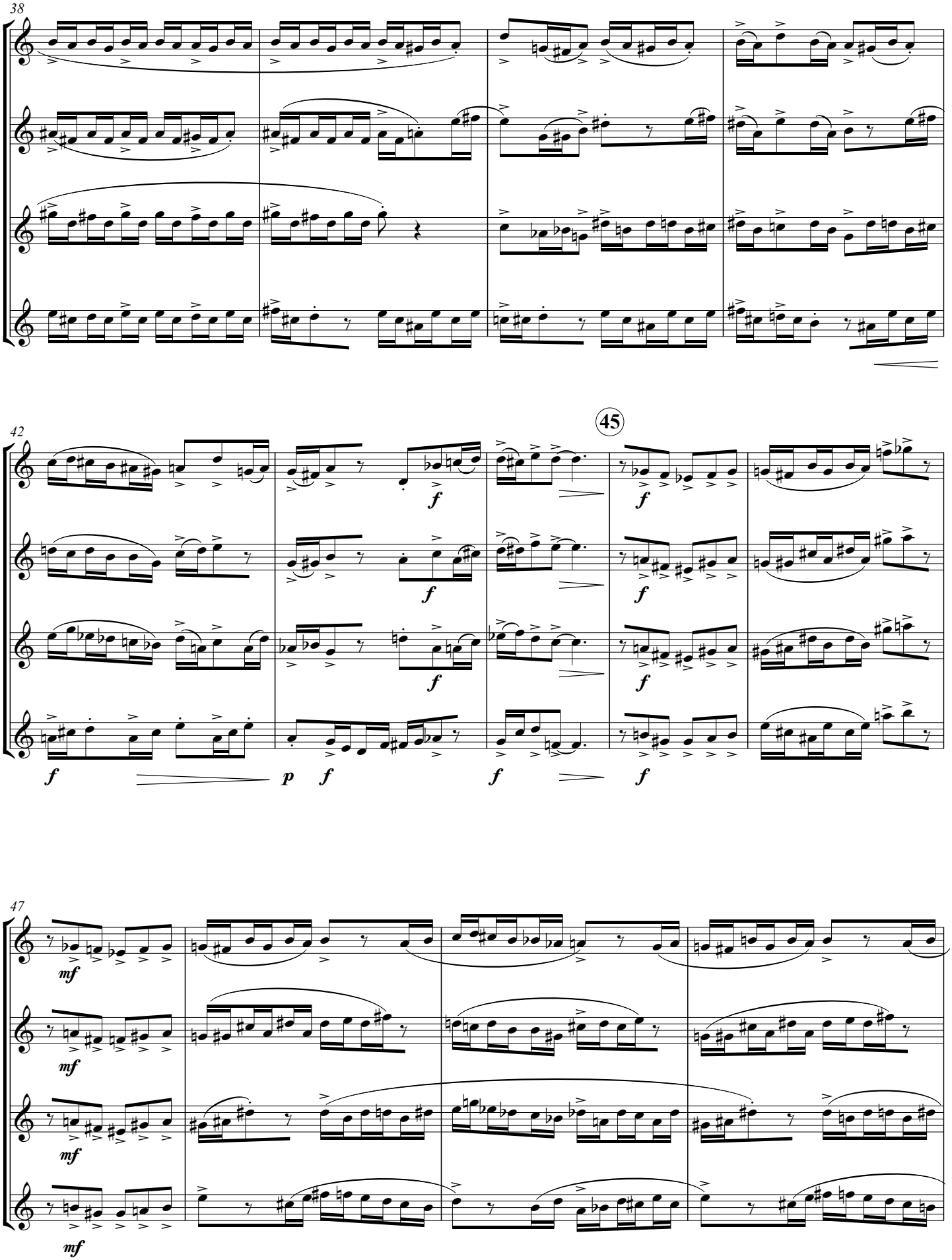
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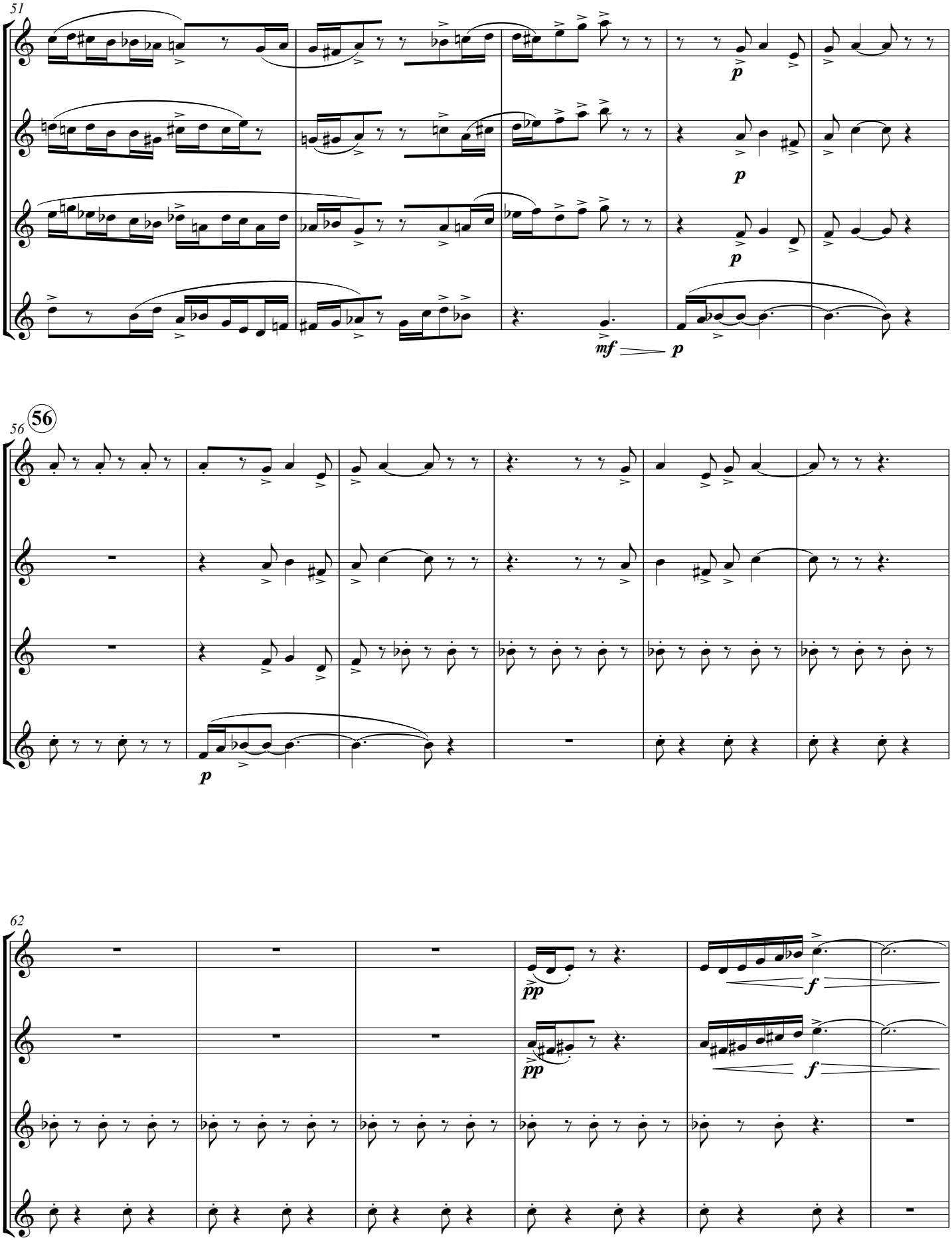
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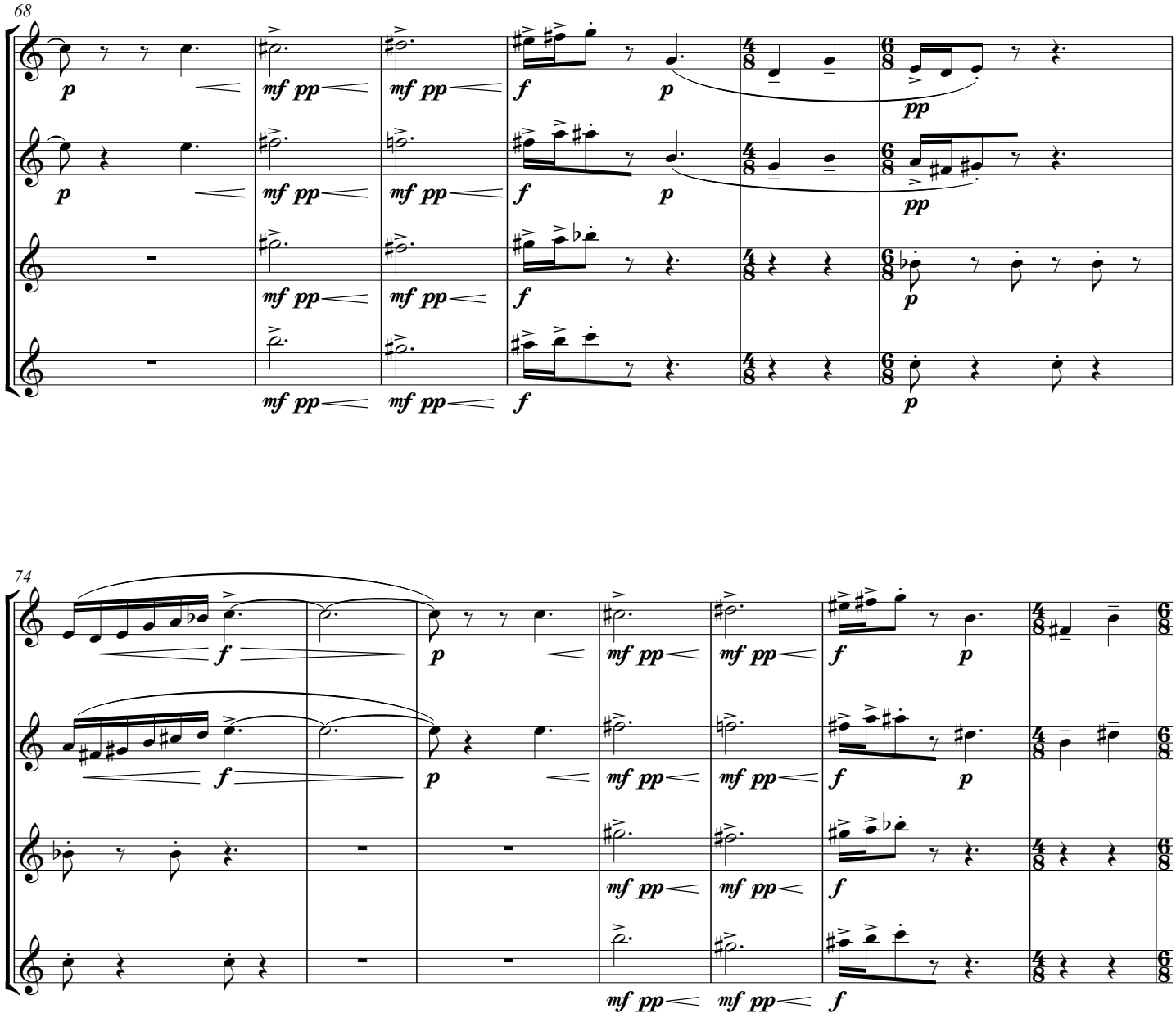
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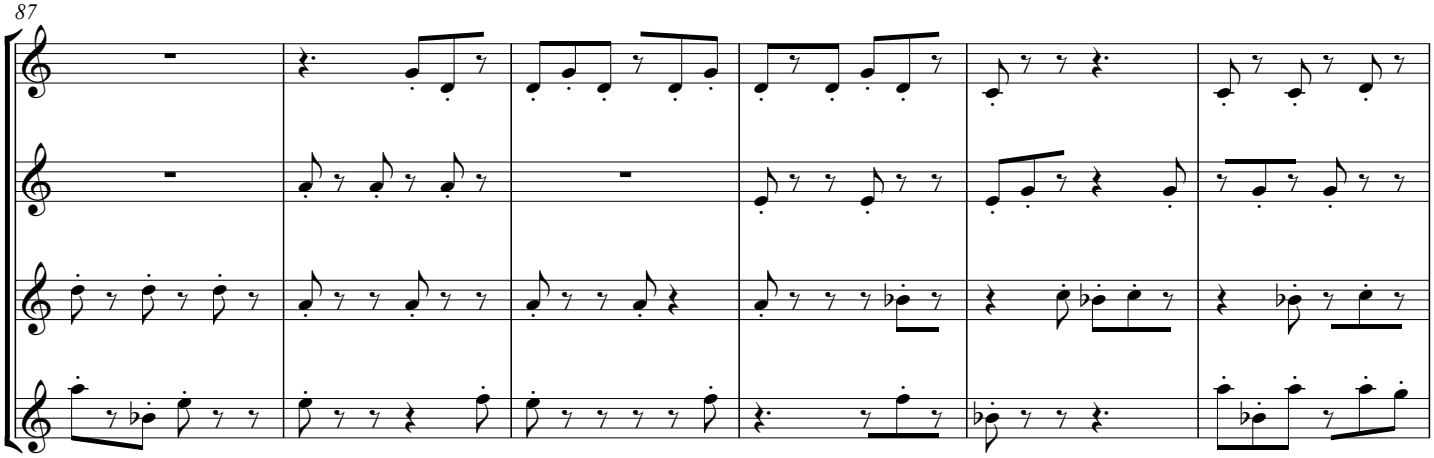

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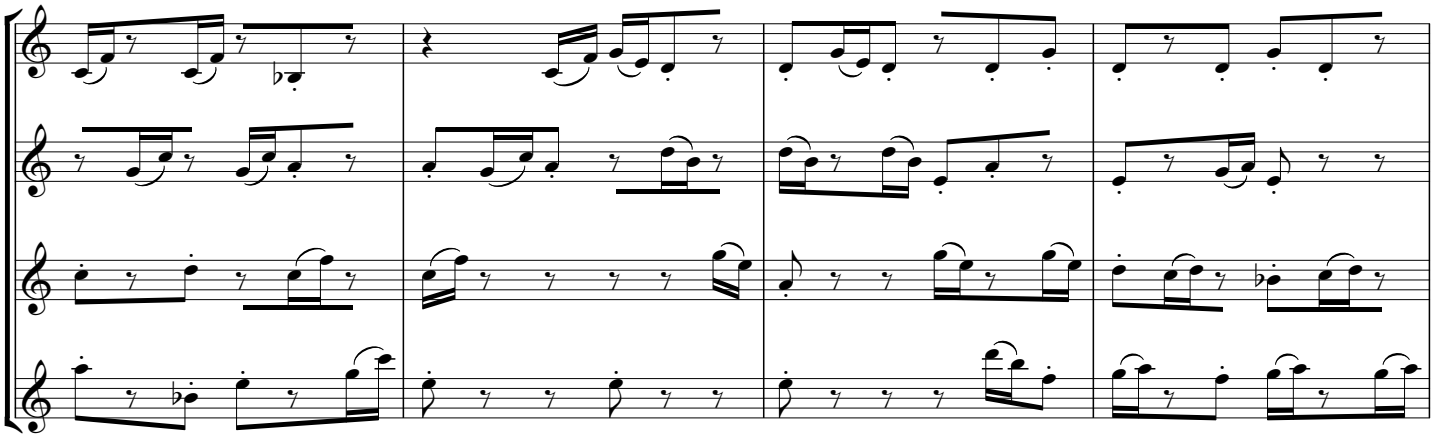

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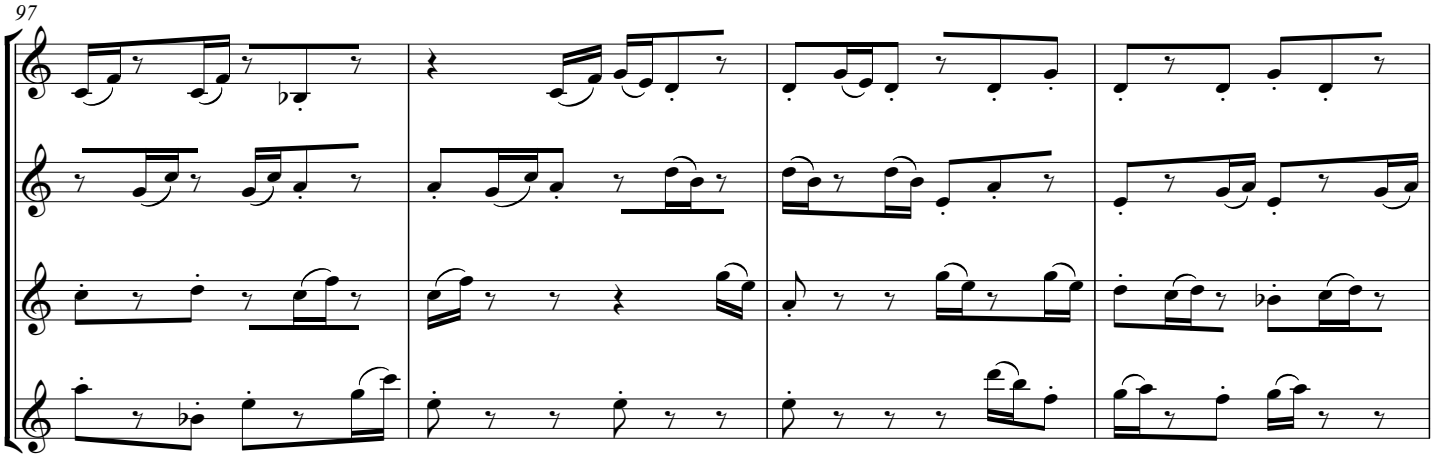

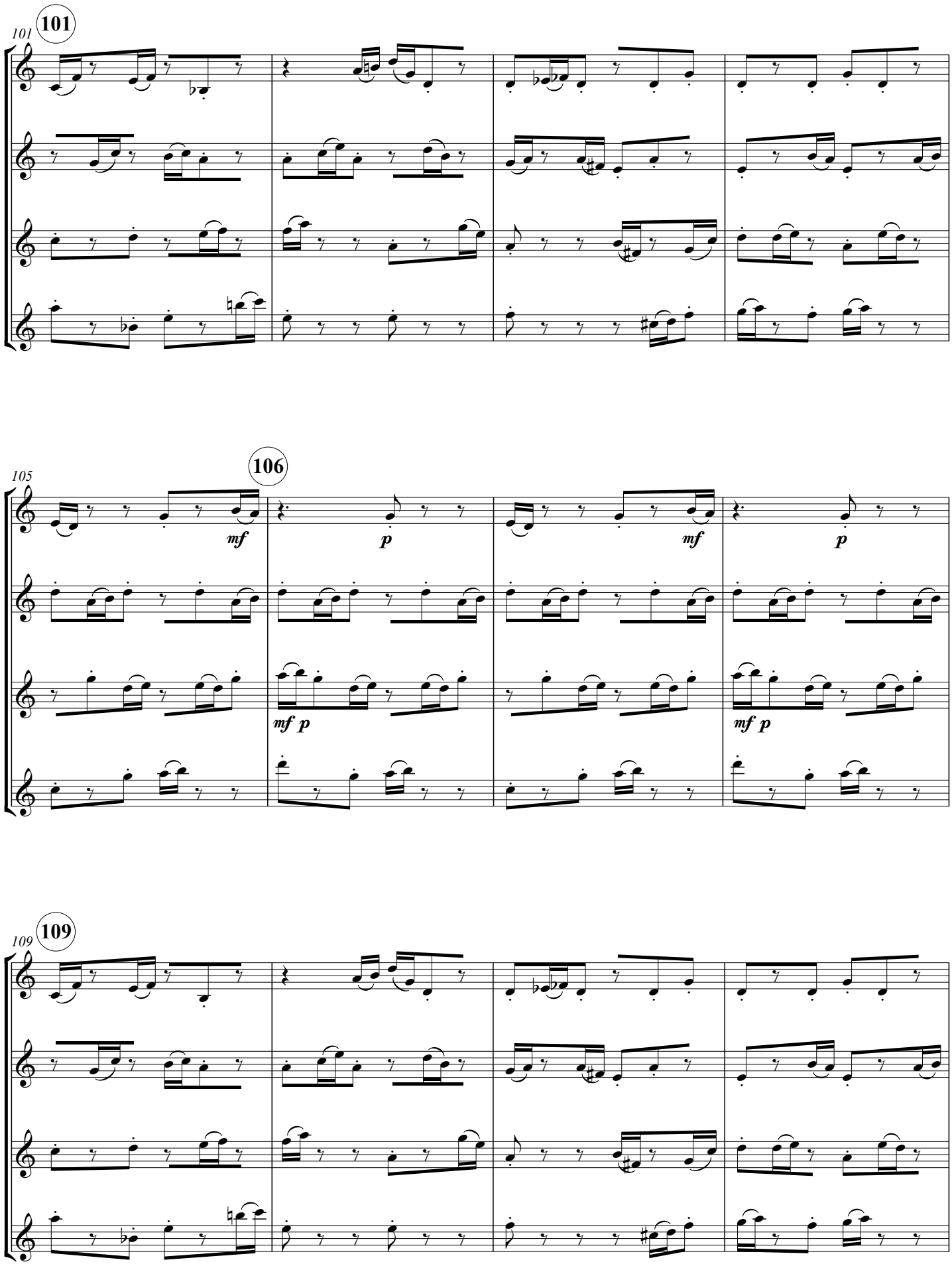
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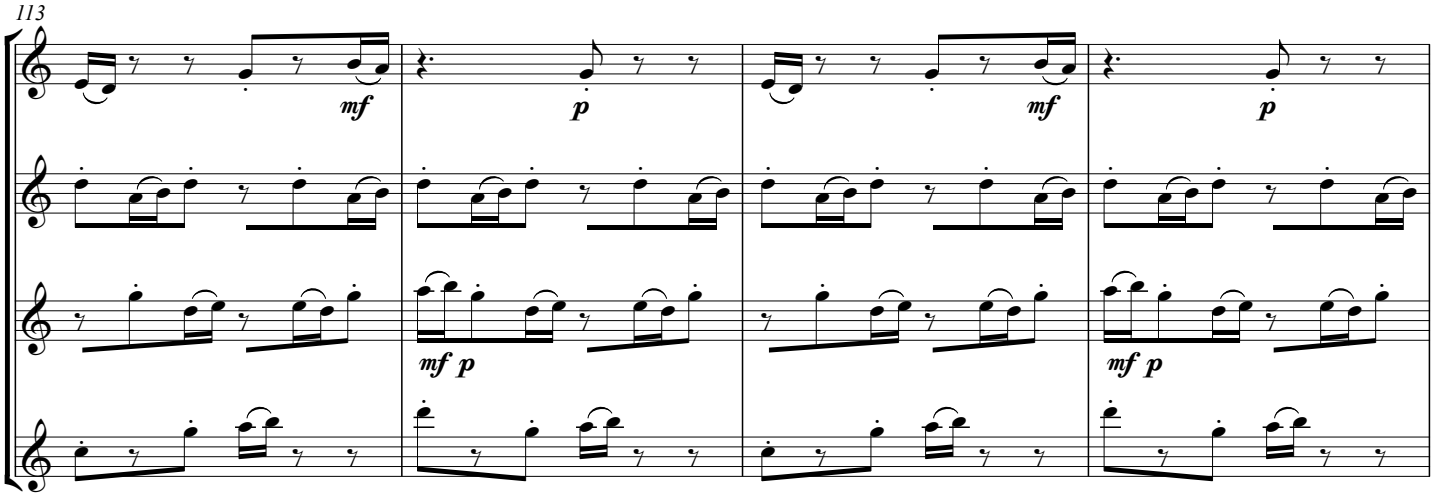
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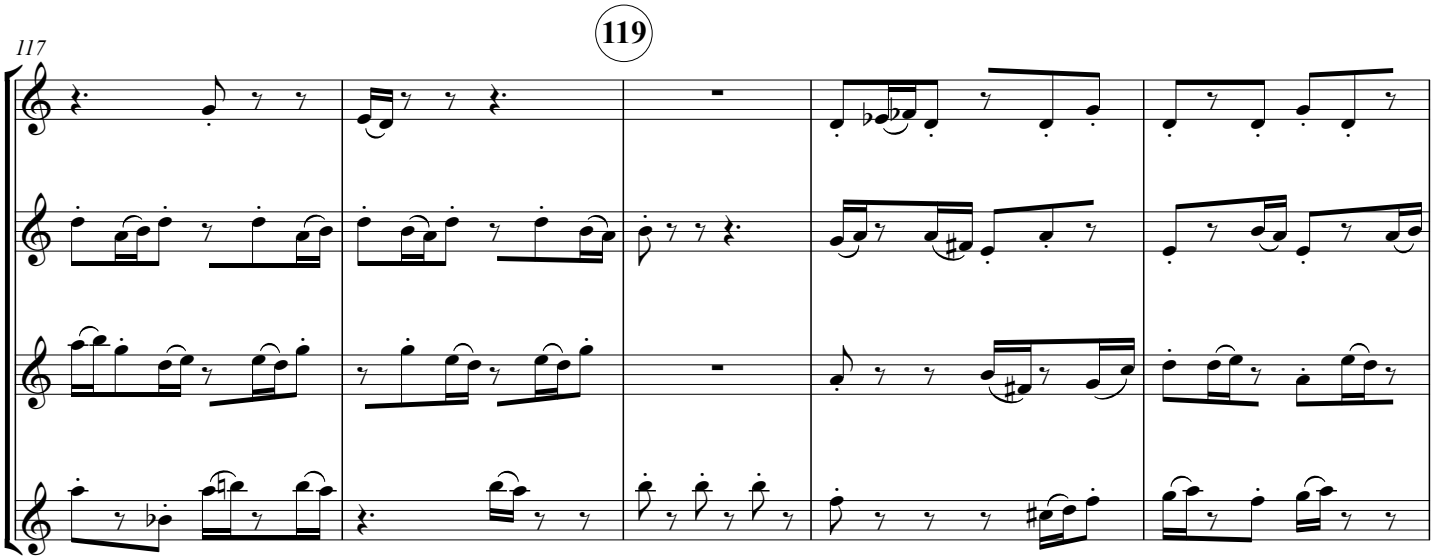
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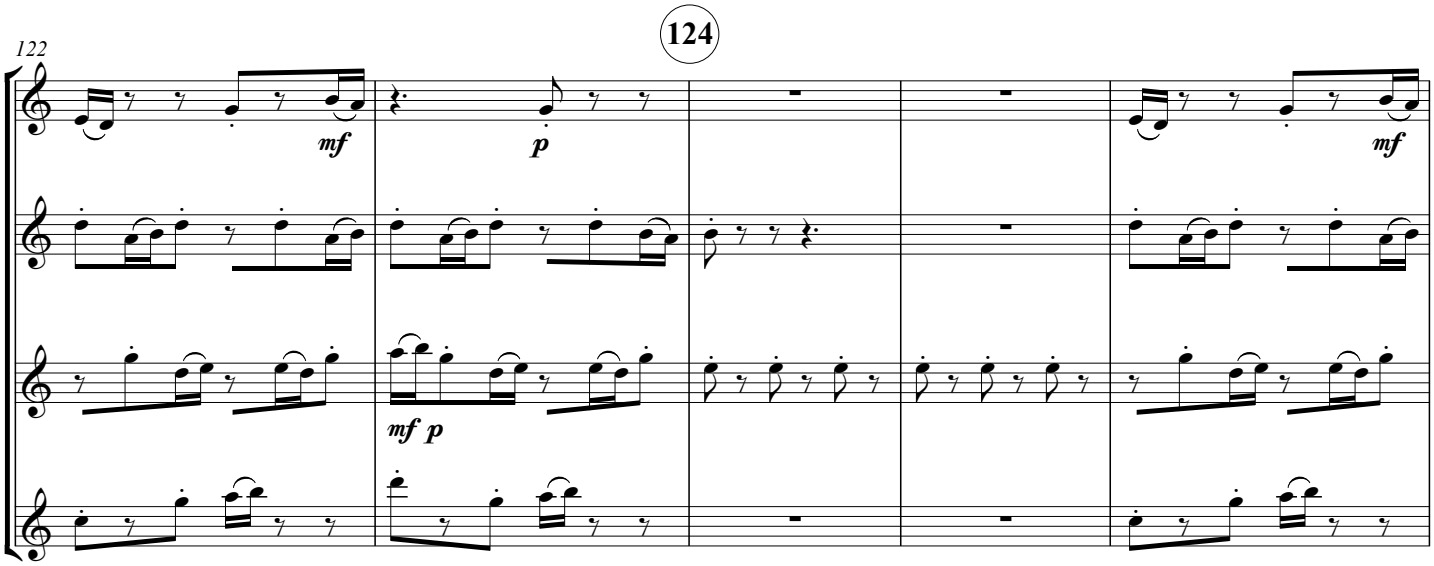
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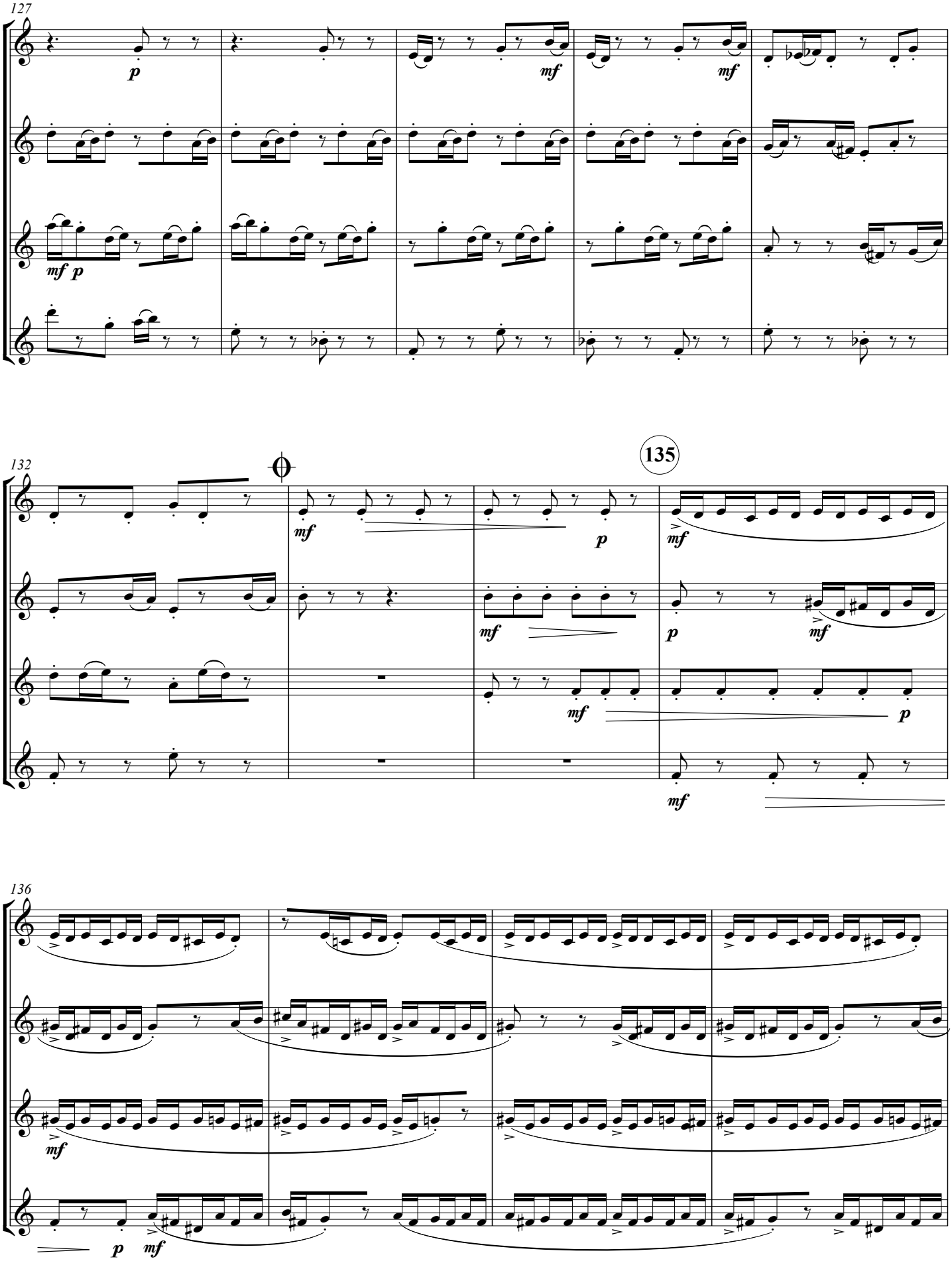
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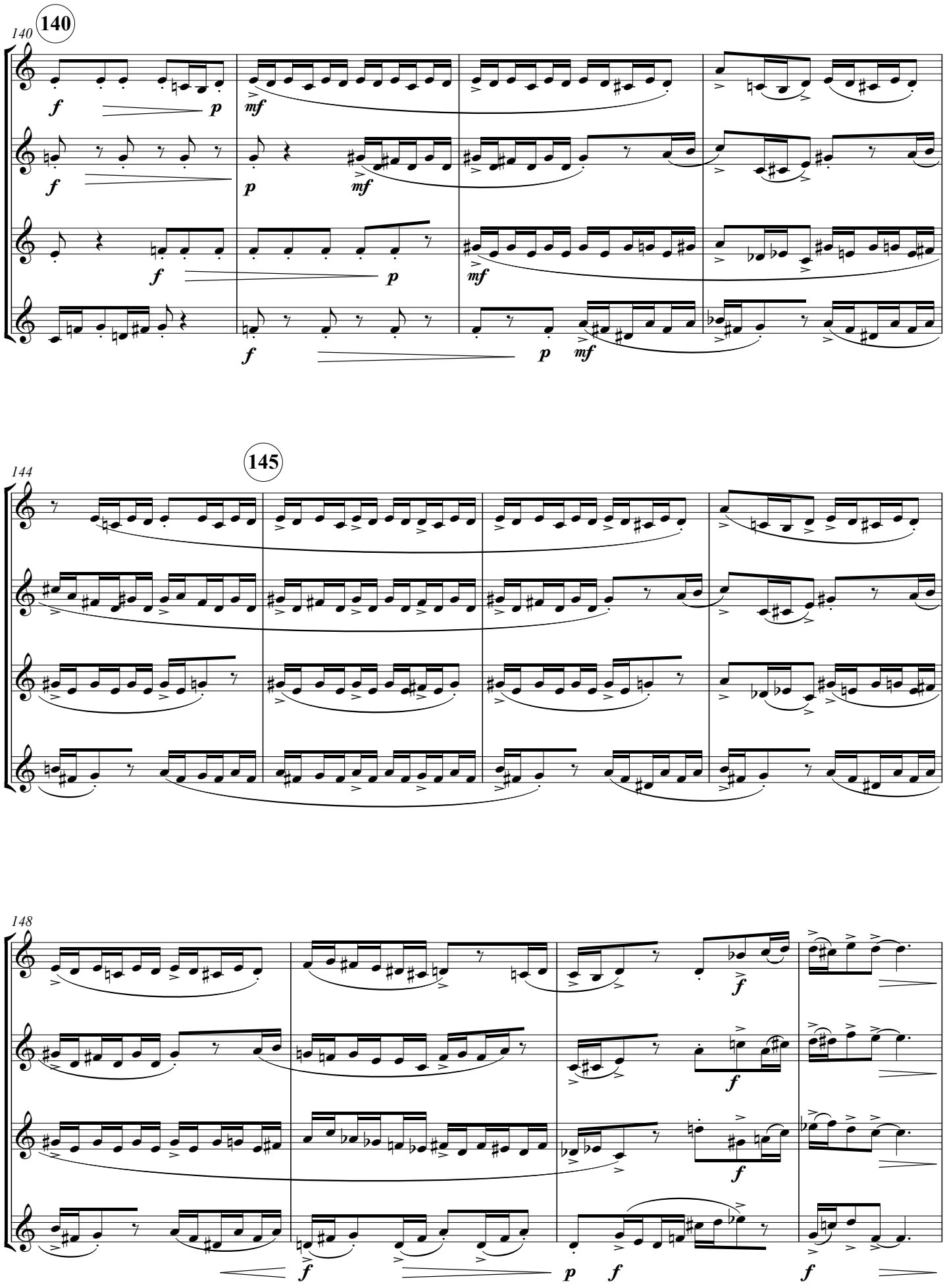
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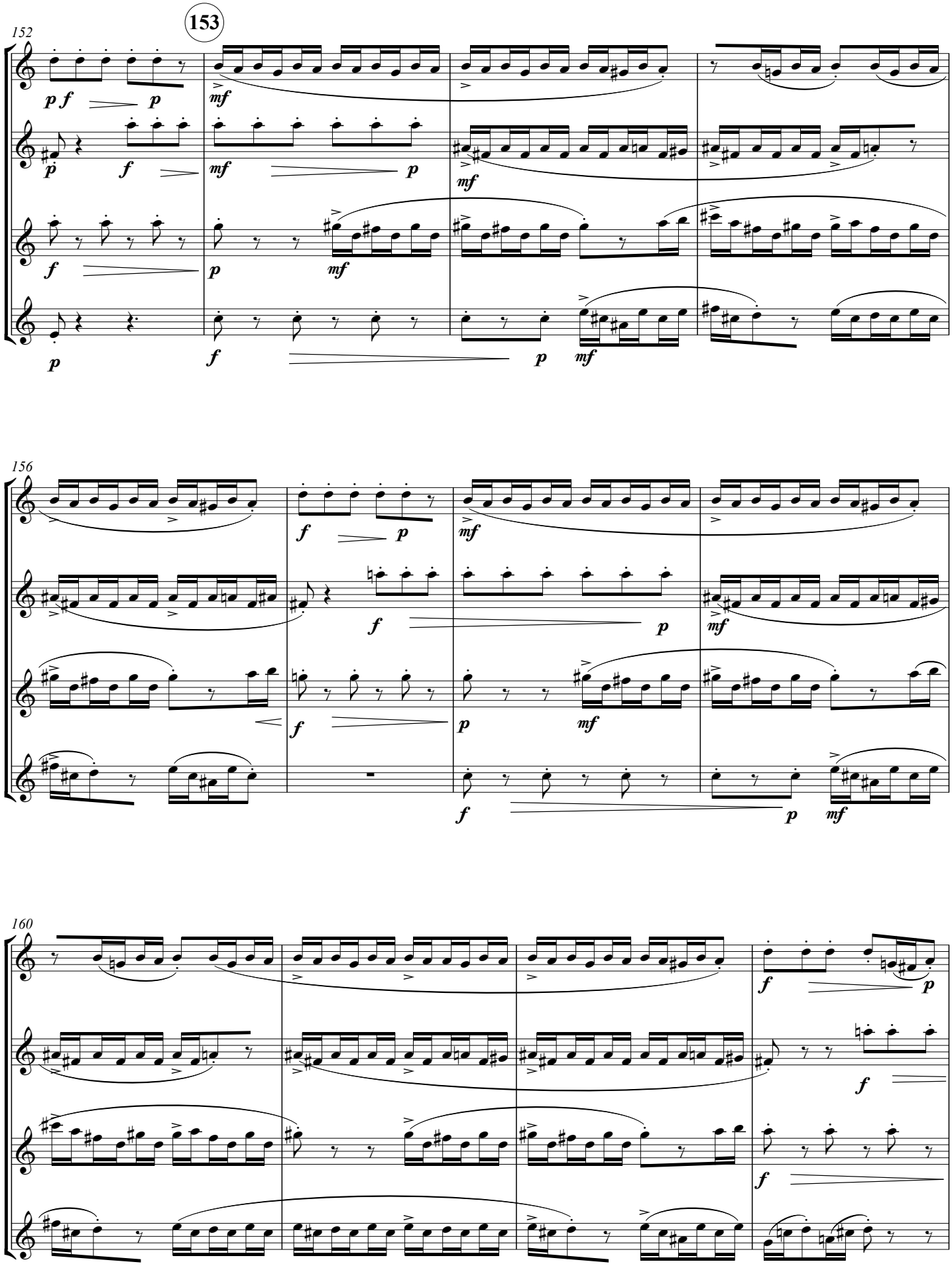
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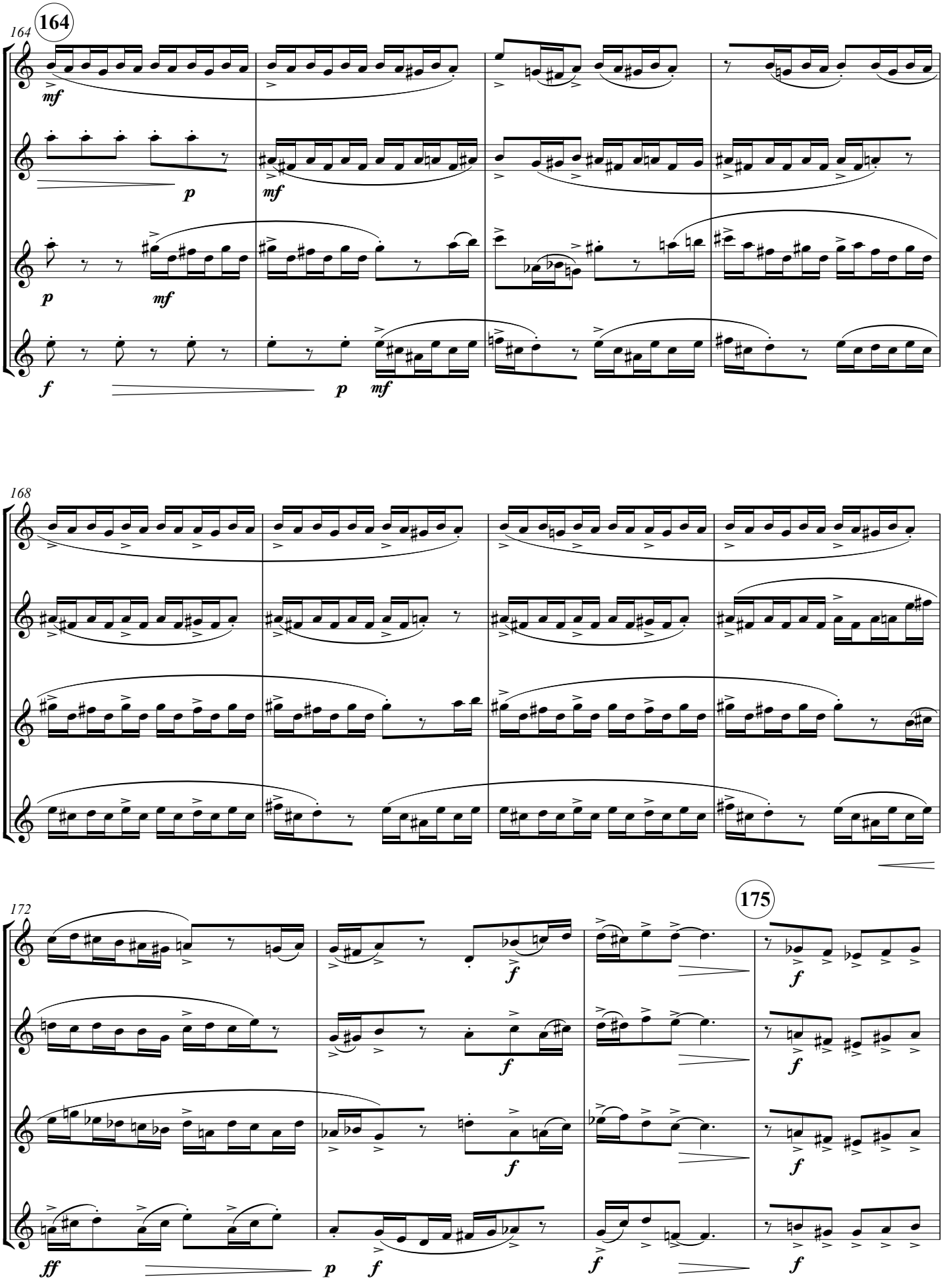
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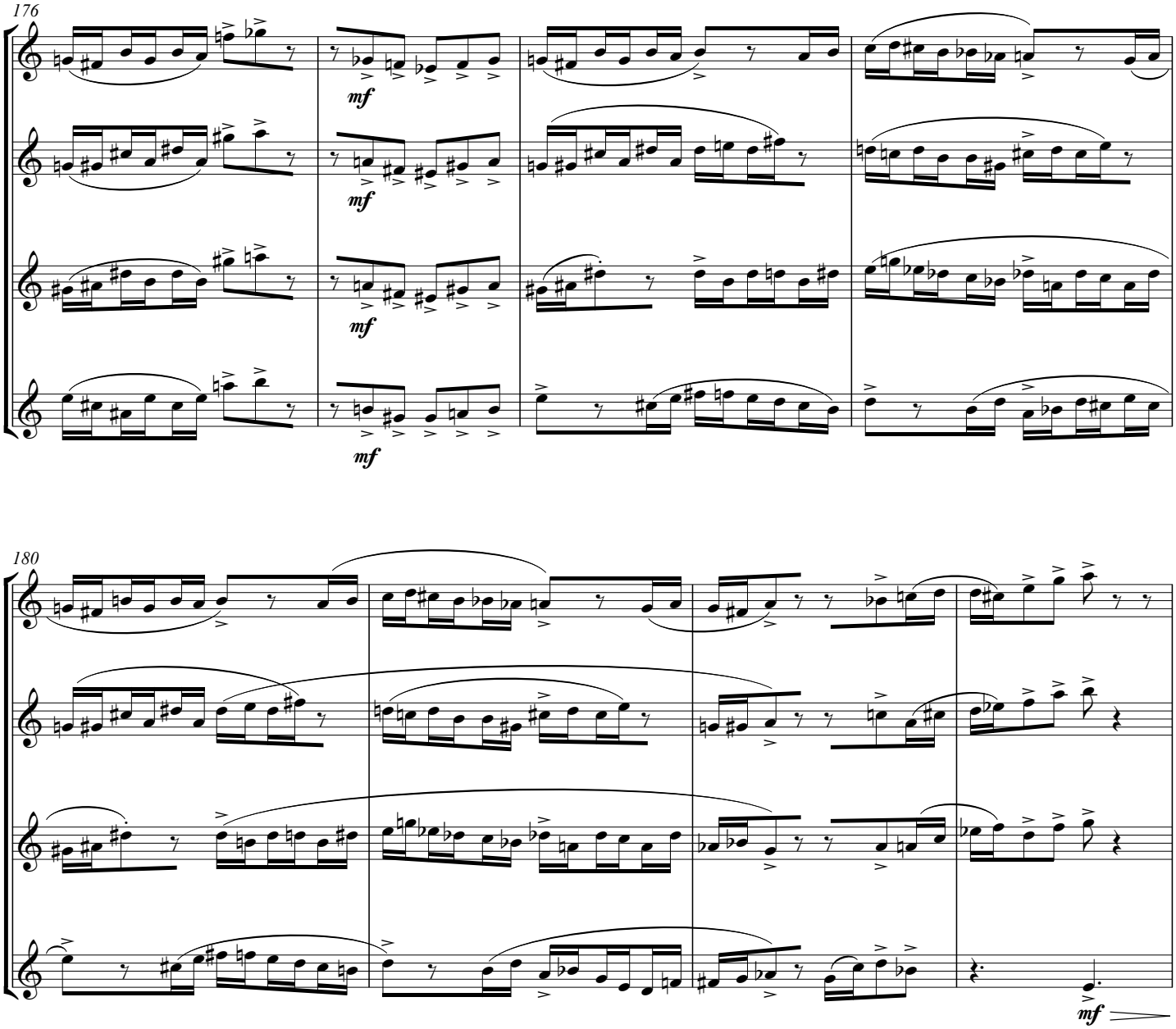
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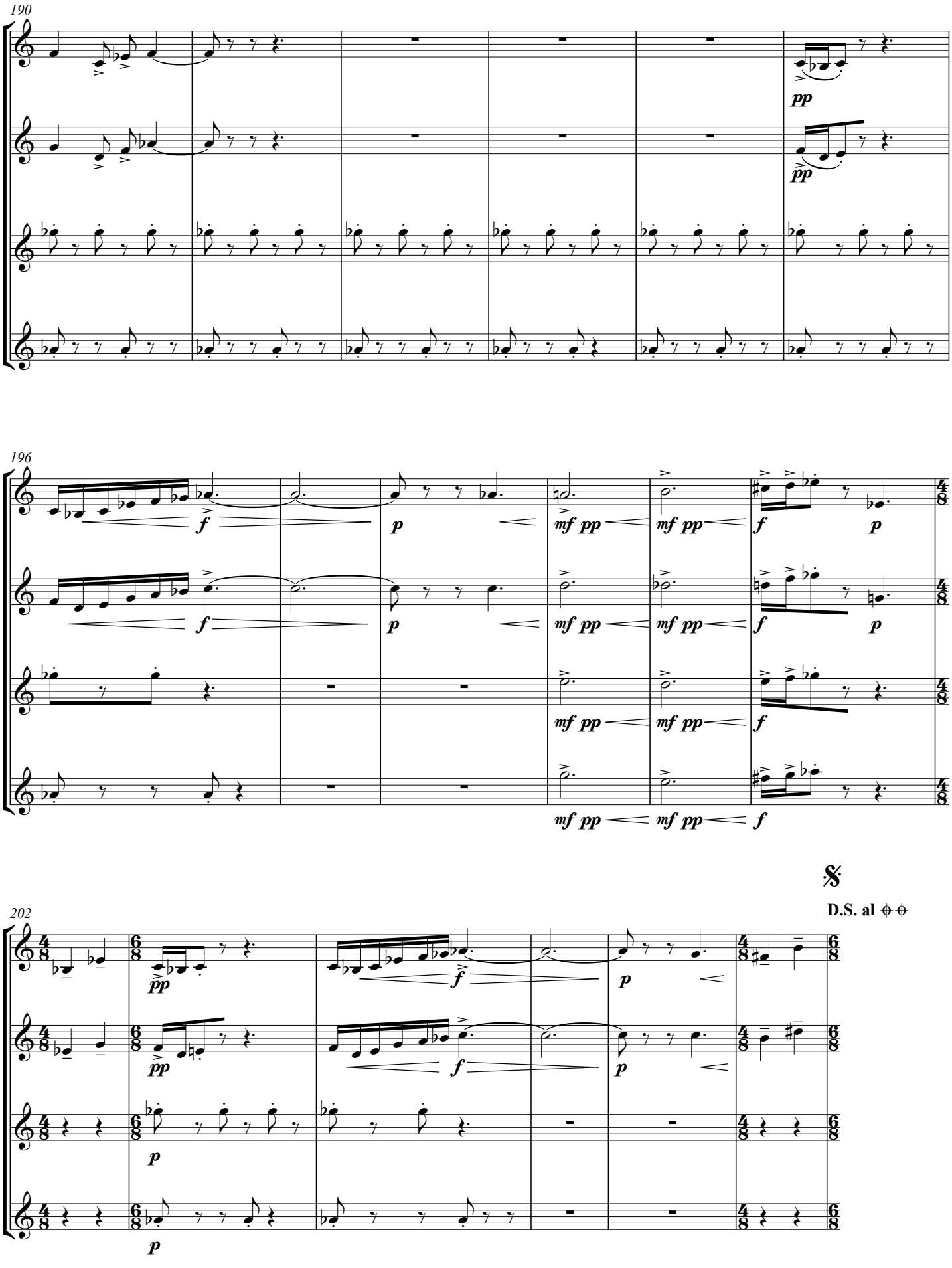
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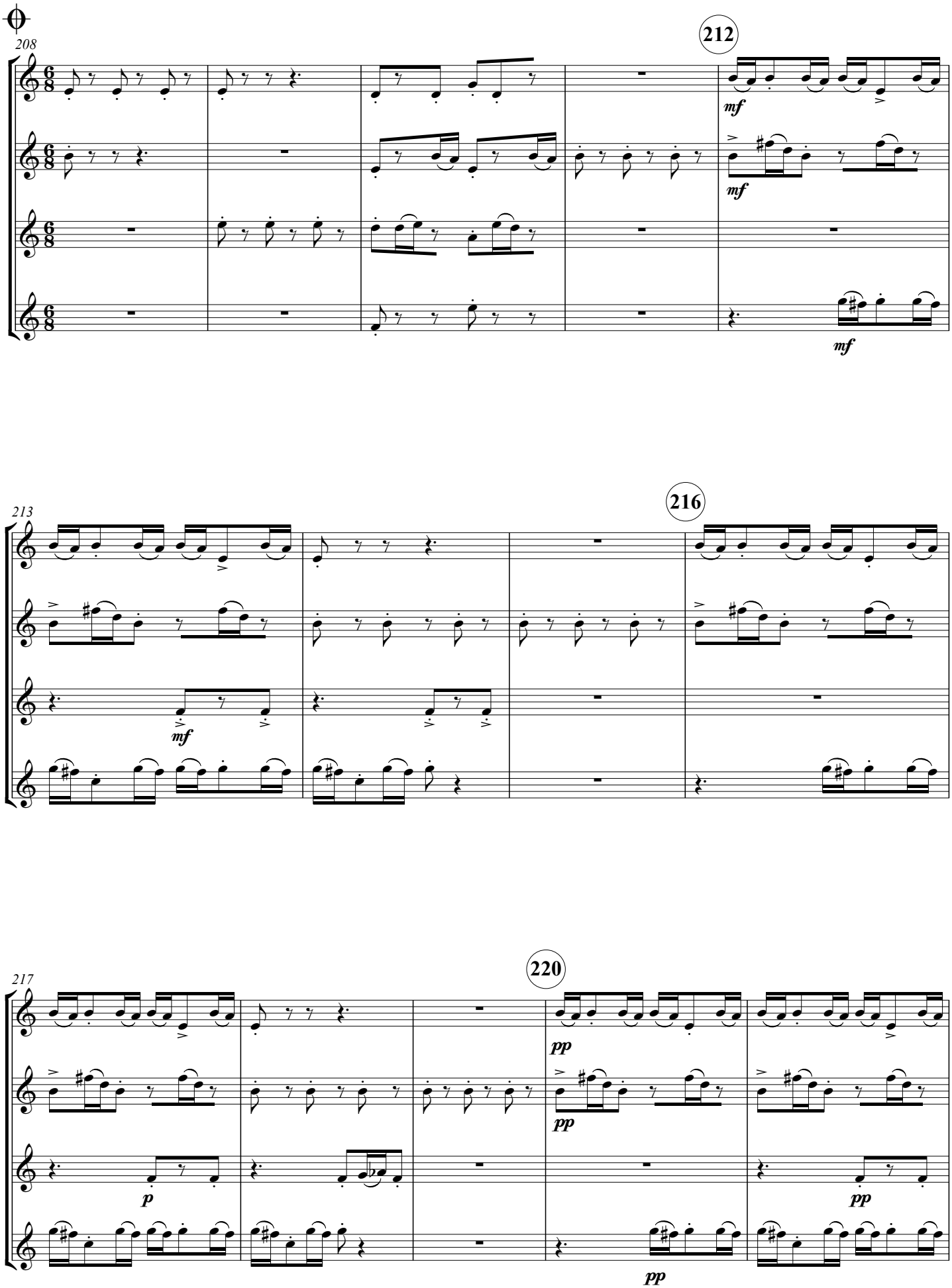

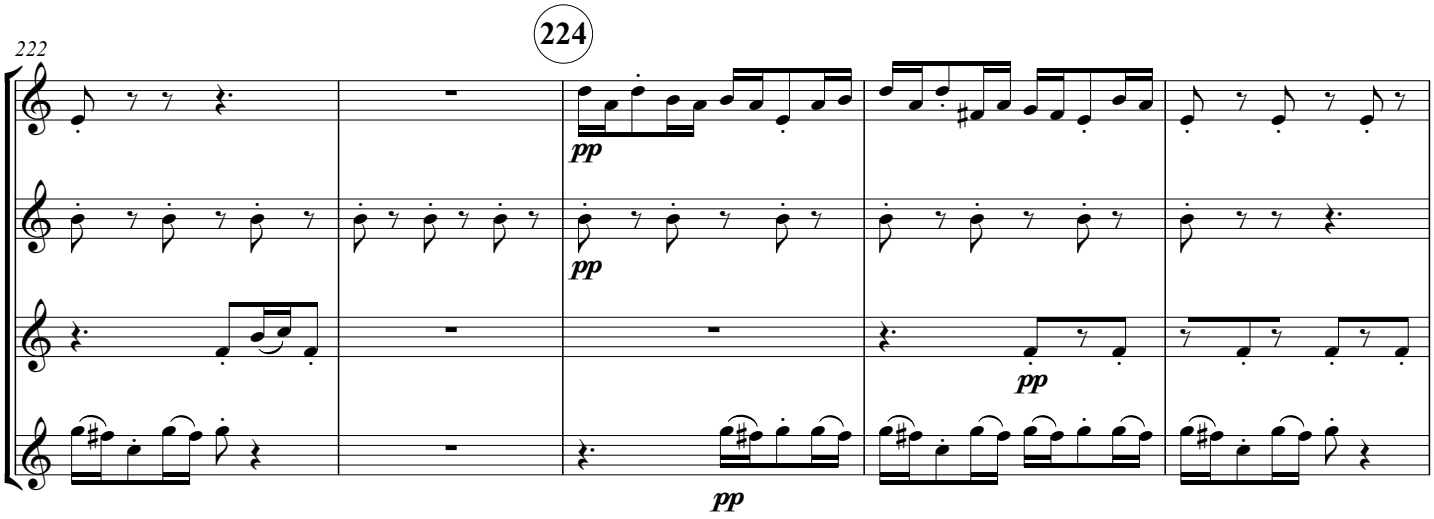
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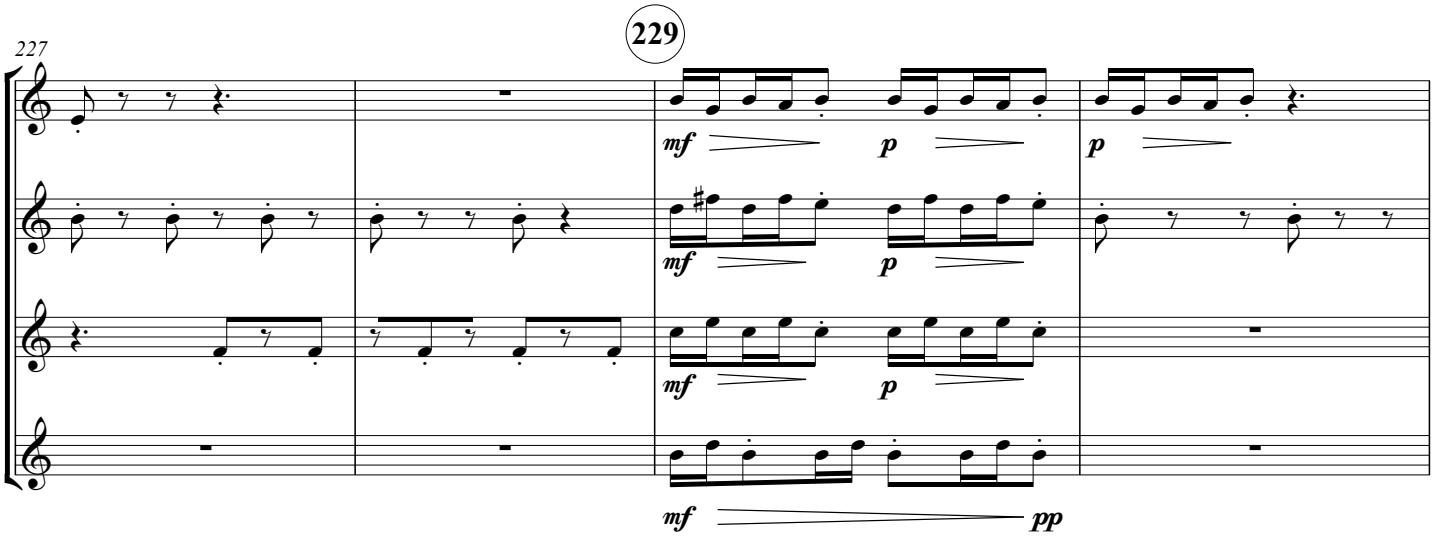
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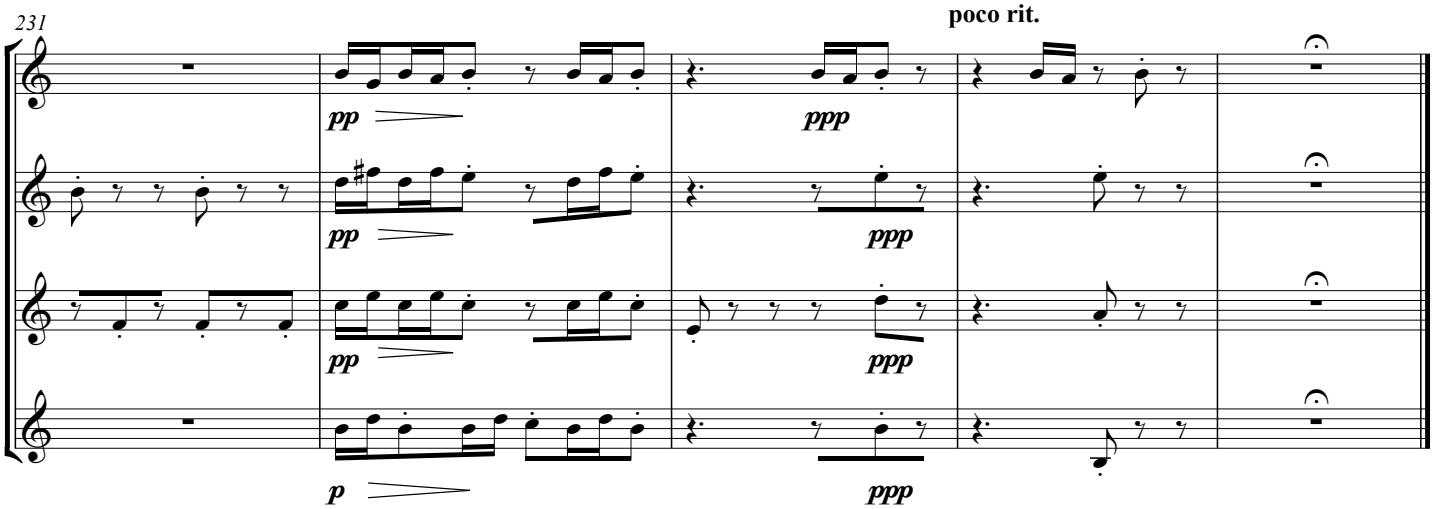
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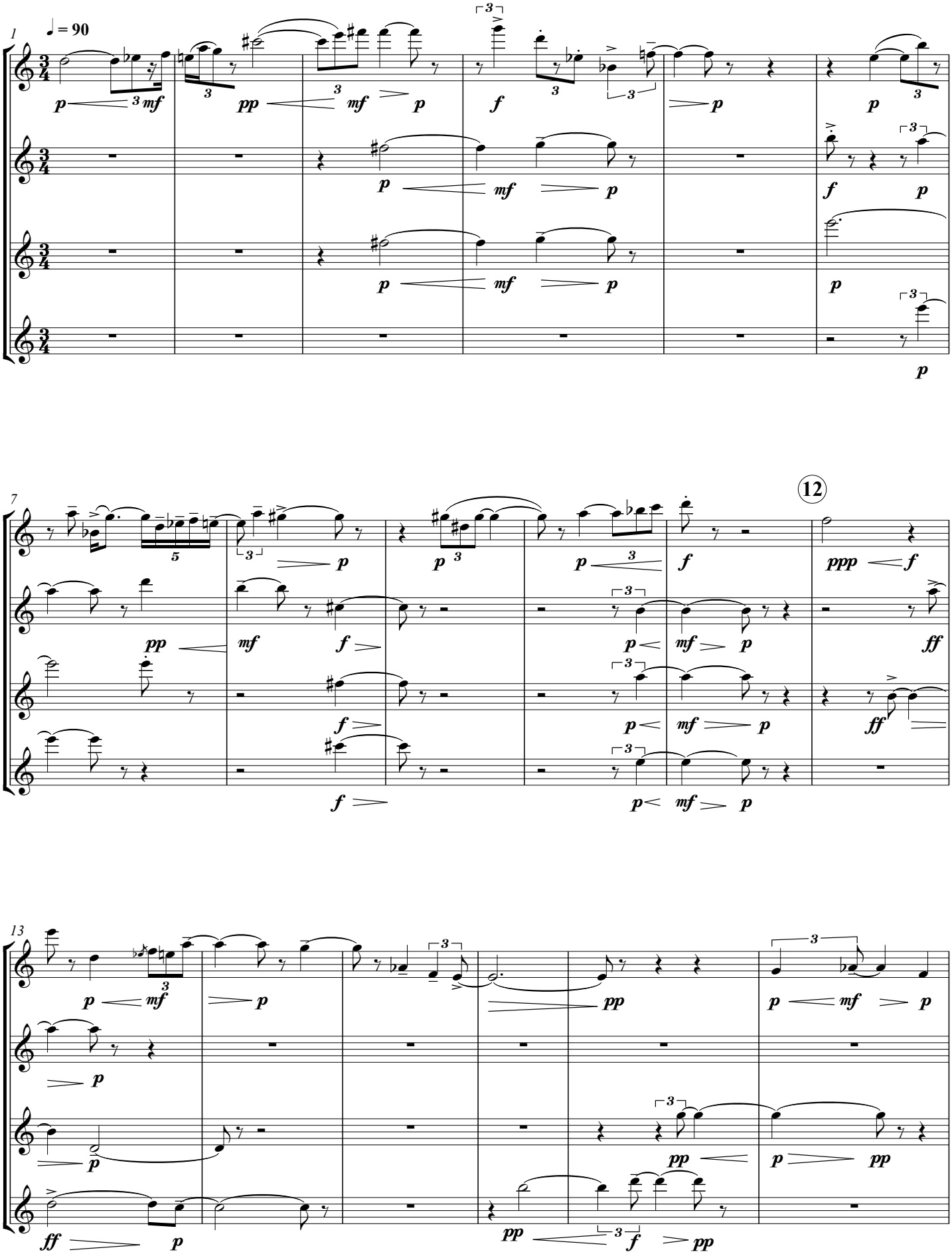
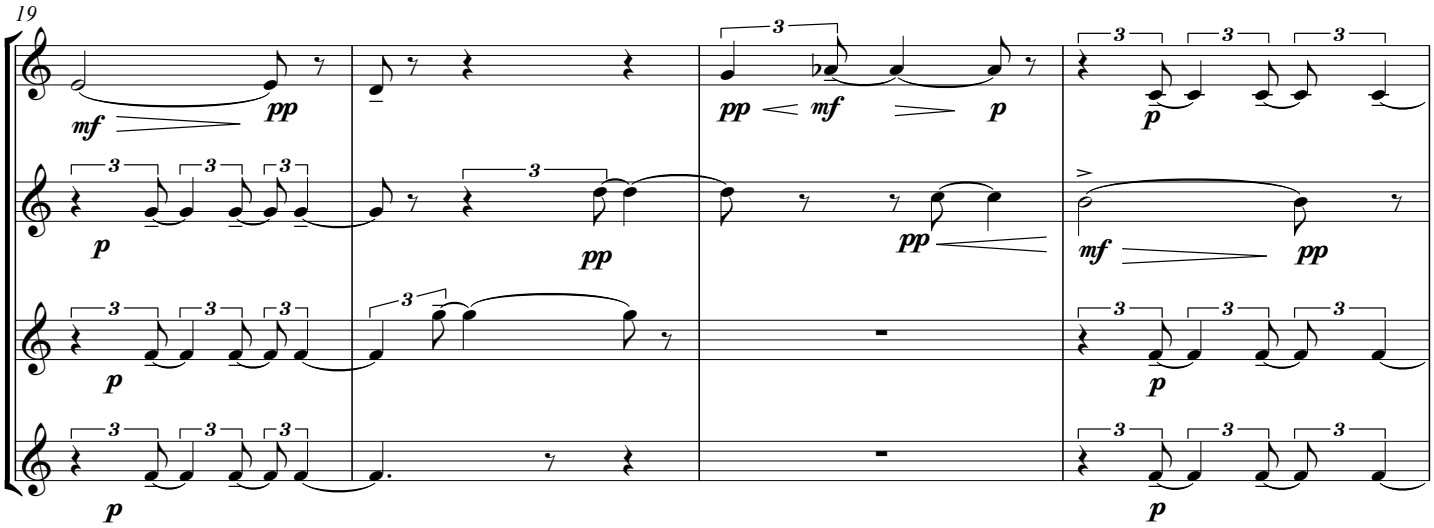
II. November

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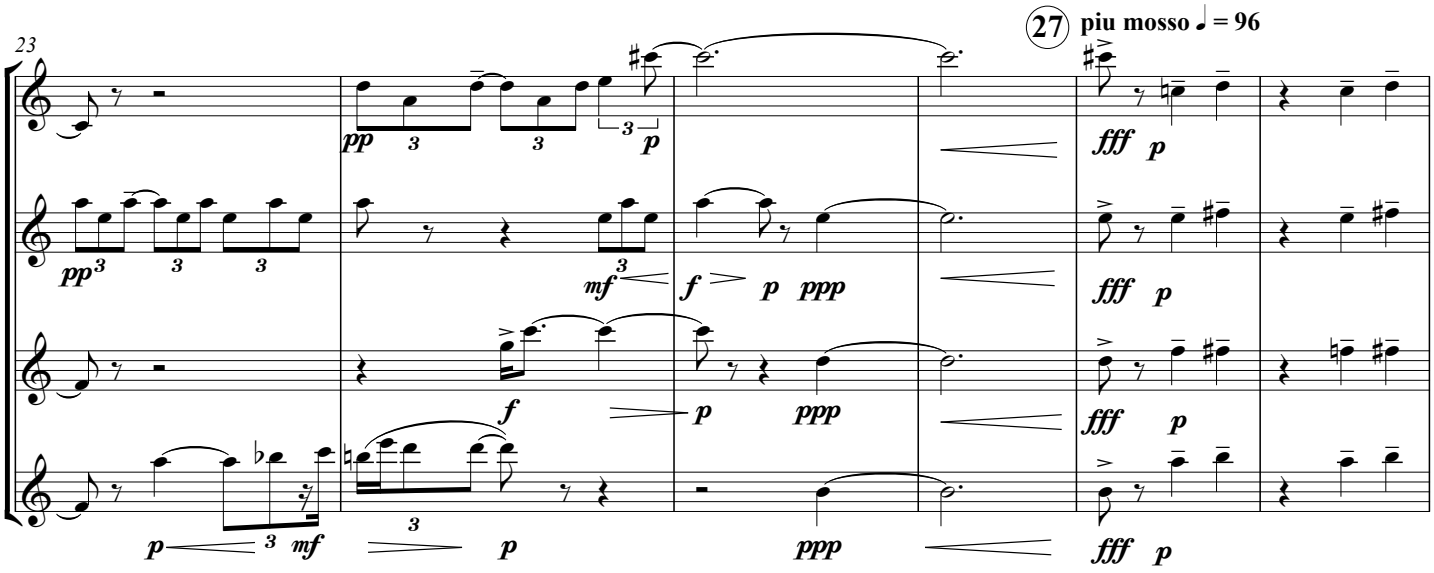
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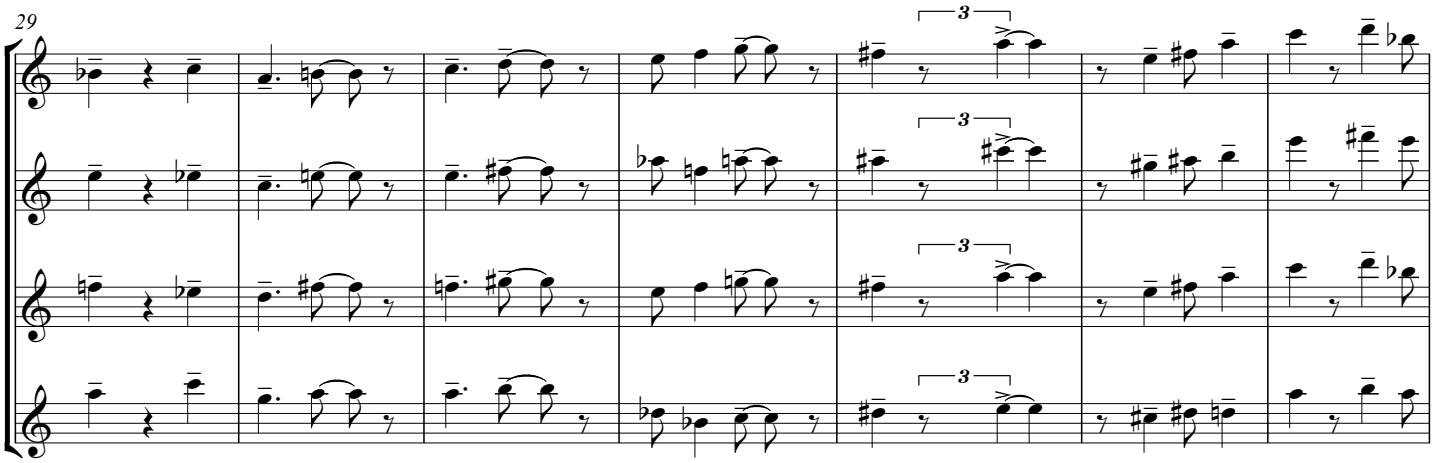
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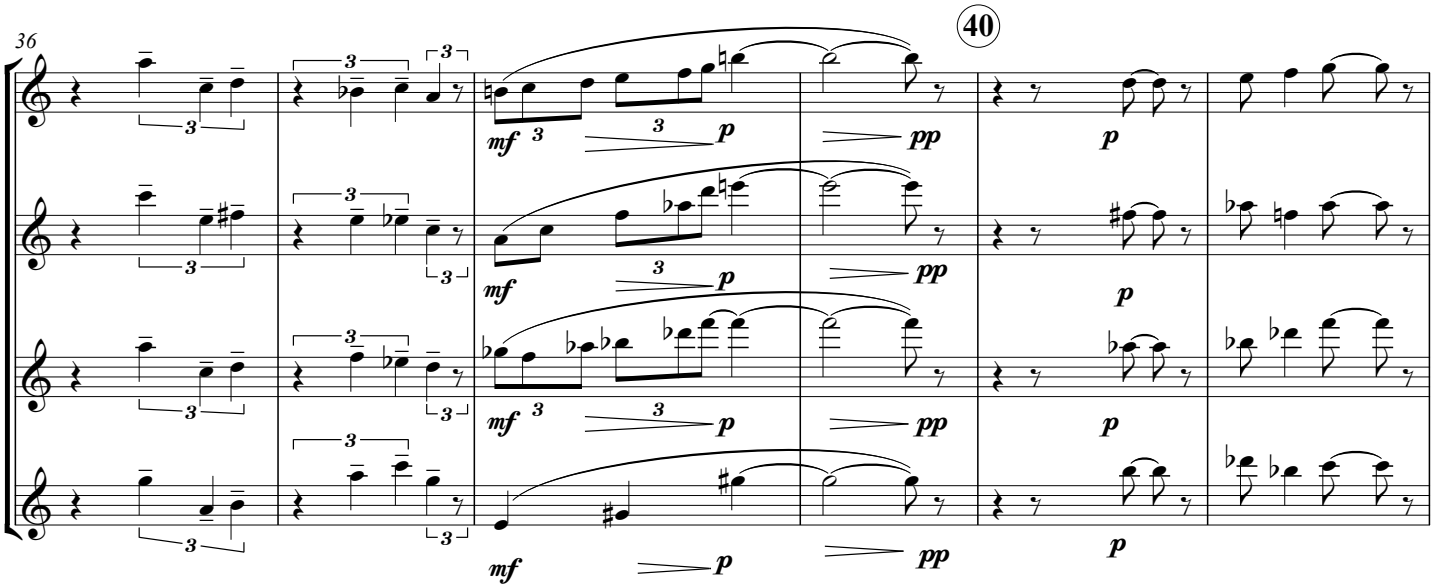
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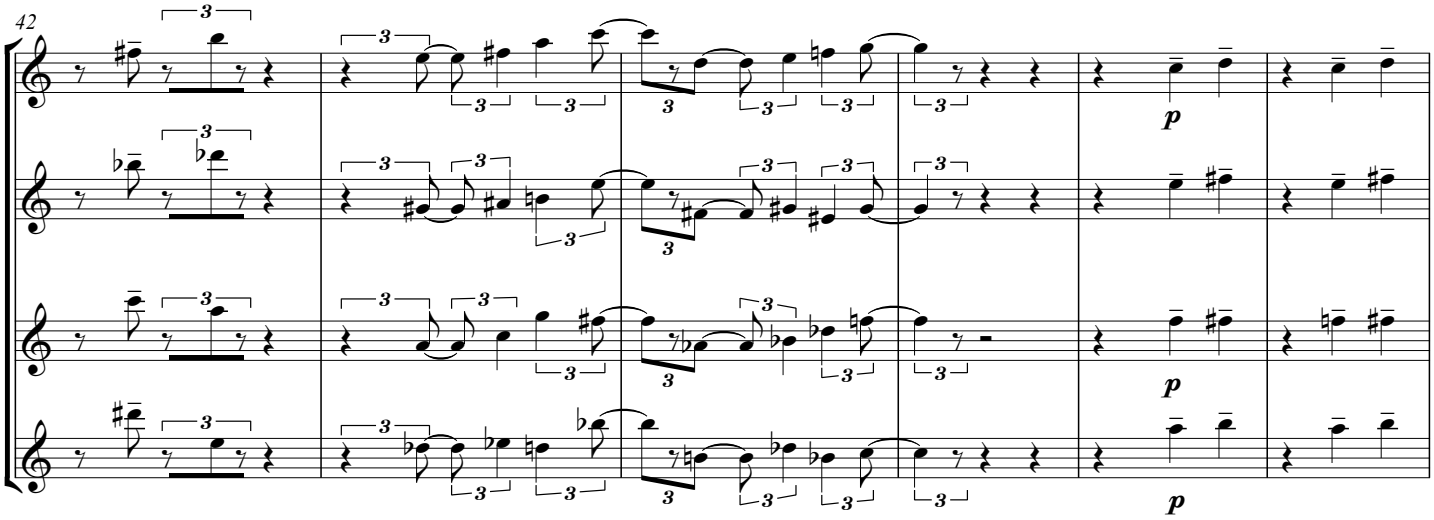
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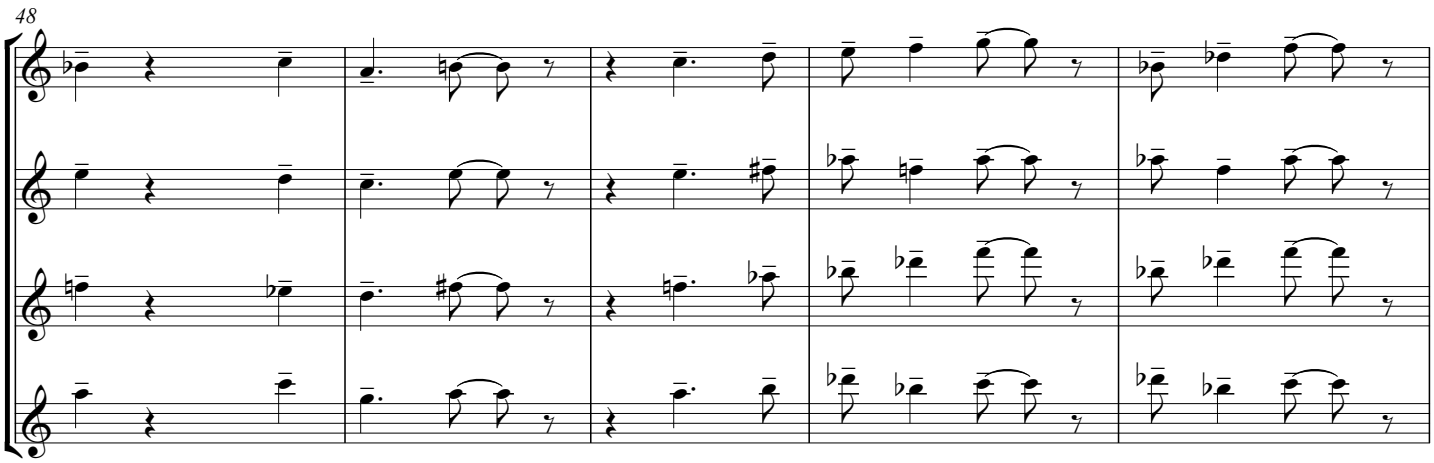
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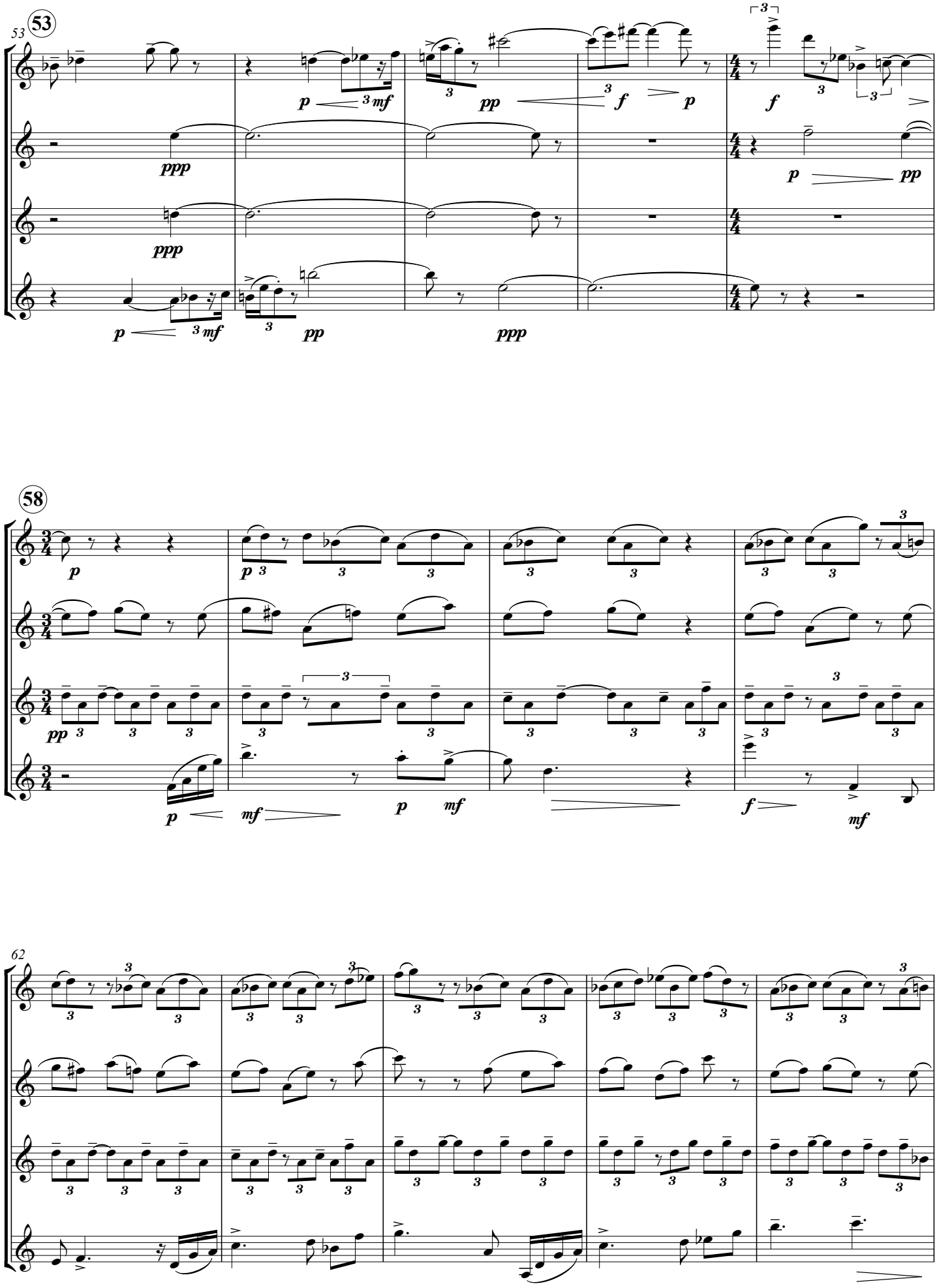
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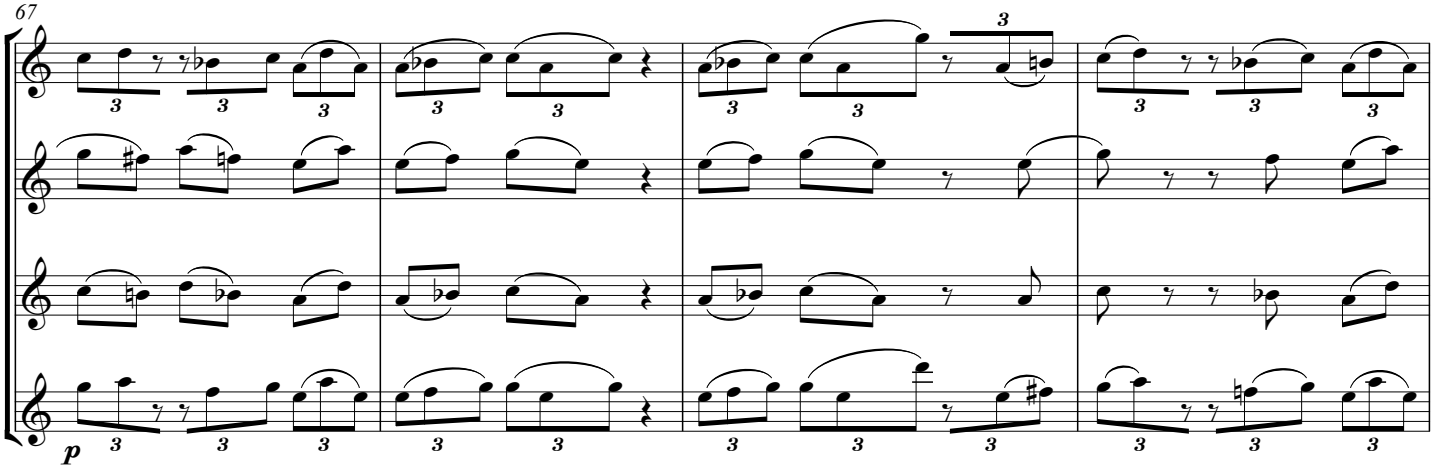
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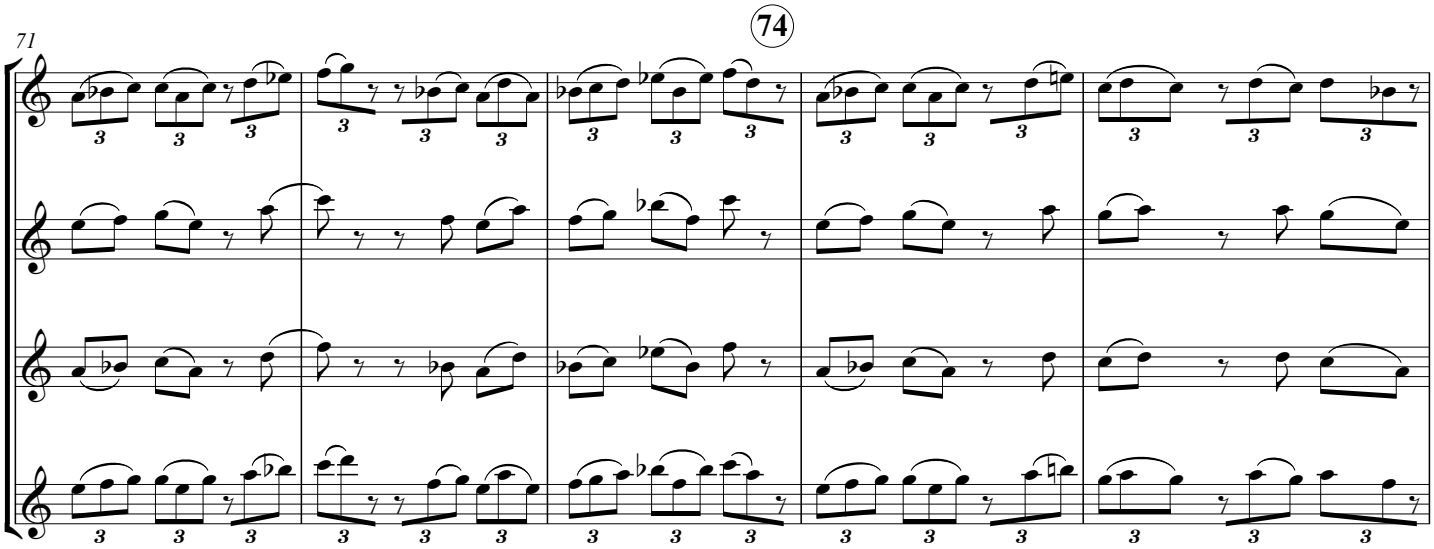
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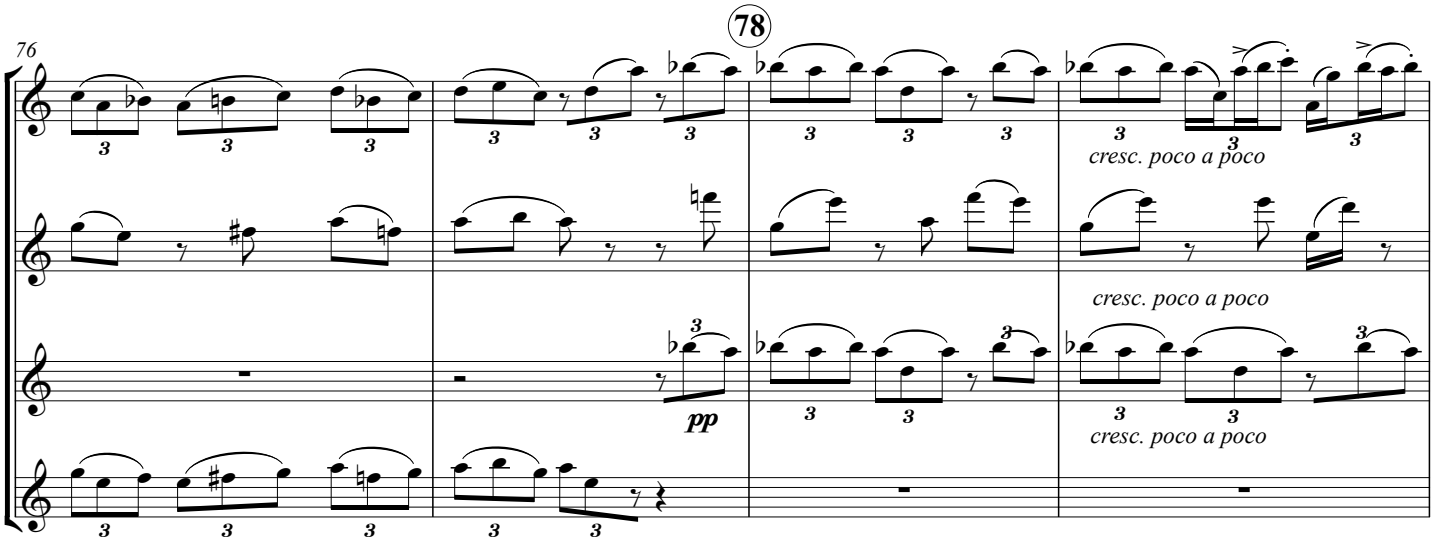
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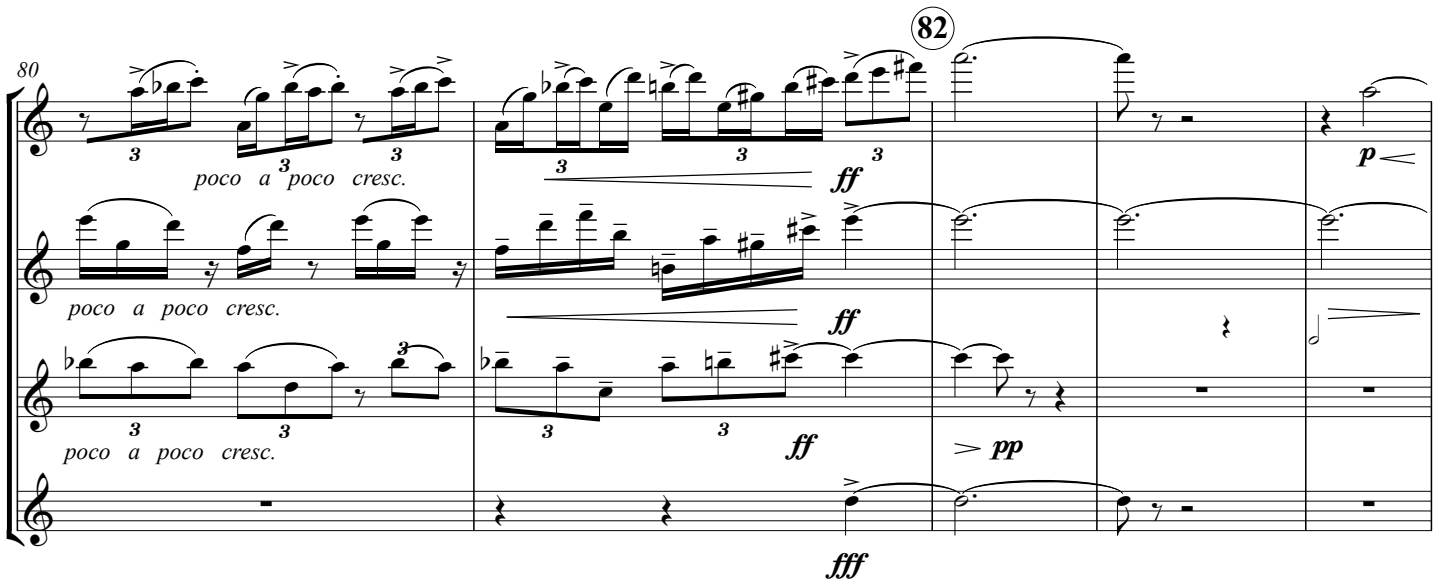
cresc. poco a poco
cresc. poco a poco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poco a poco cresc.
poco a poco cresc.
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ff
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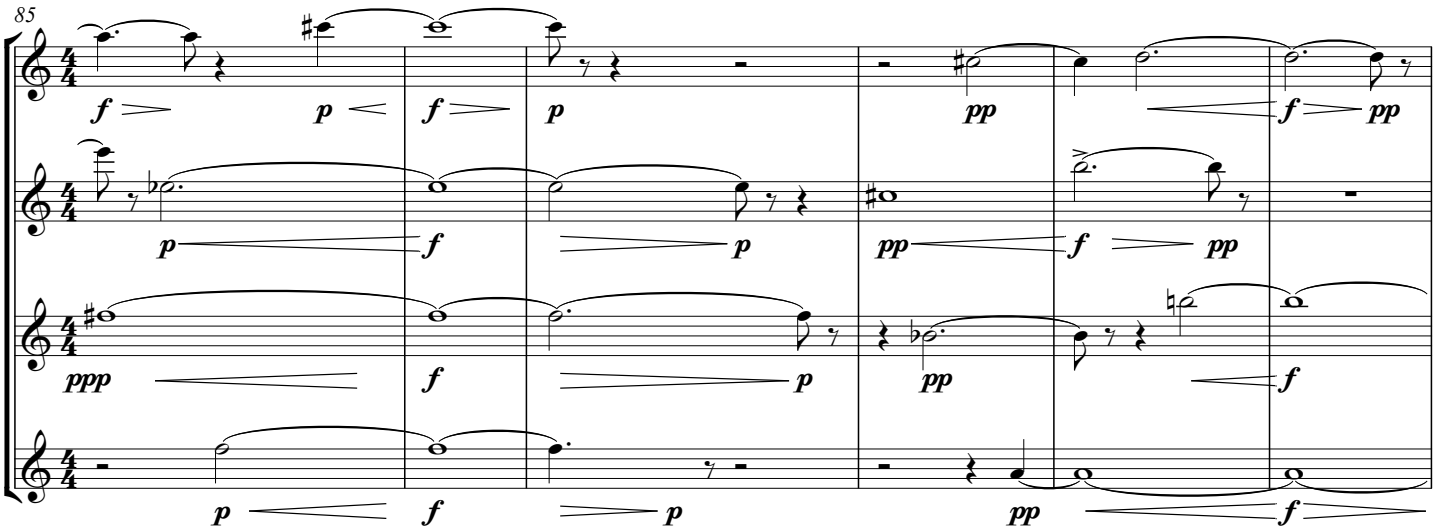
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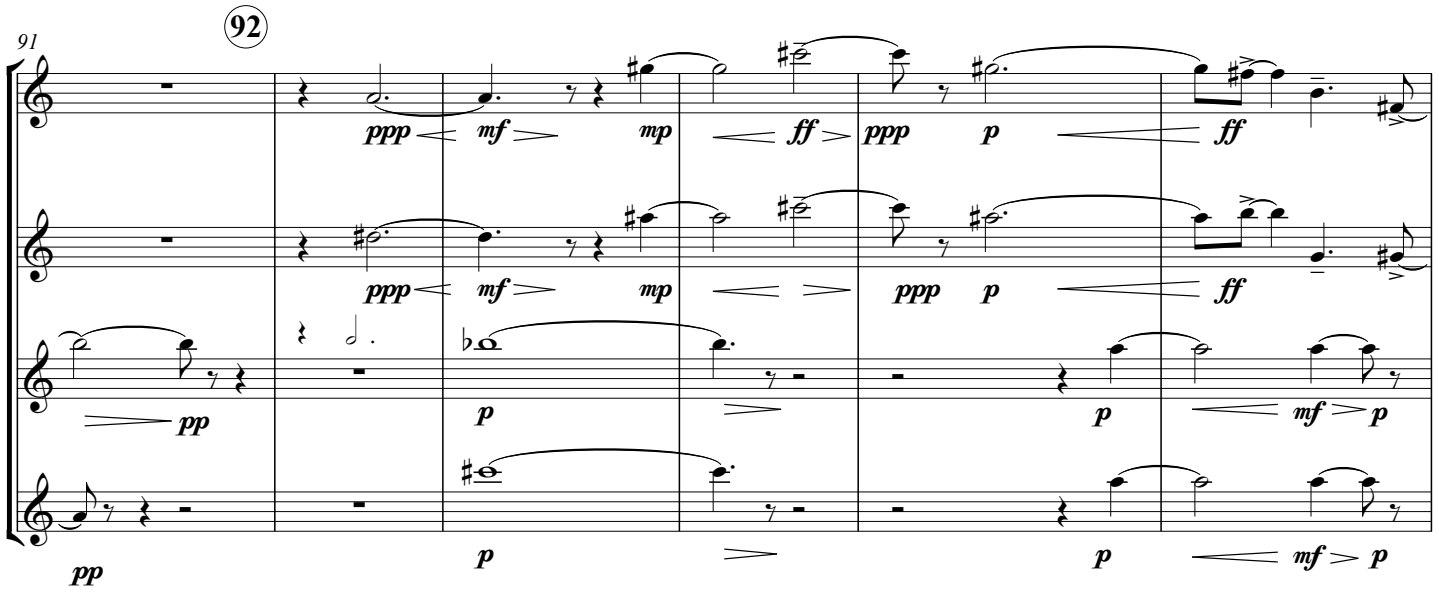
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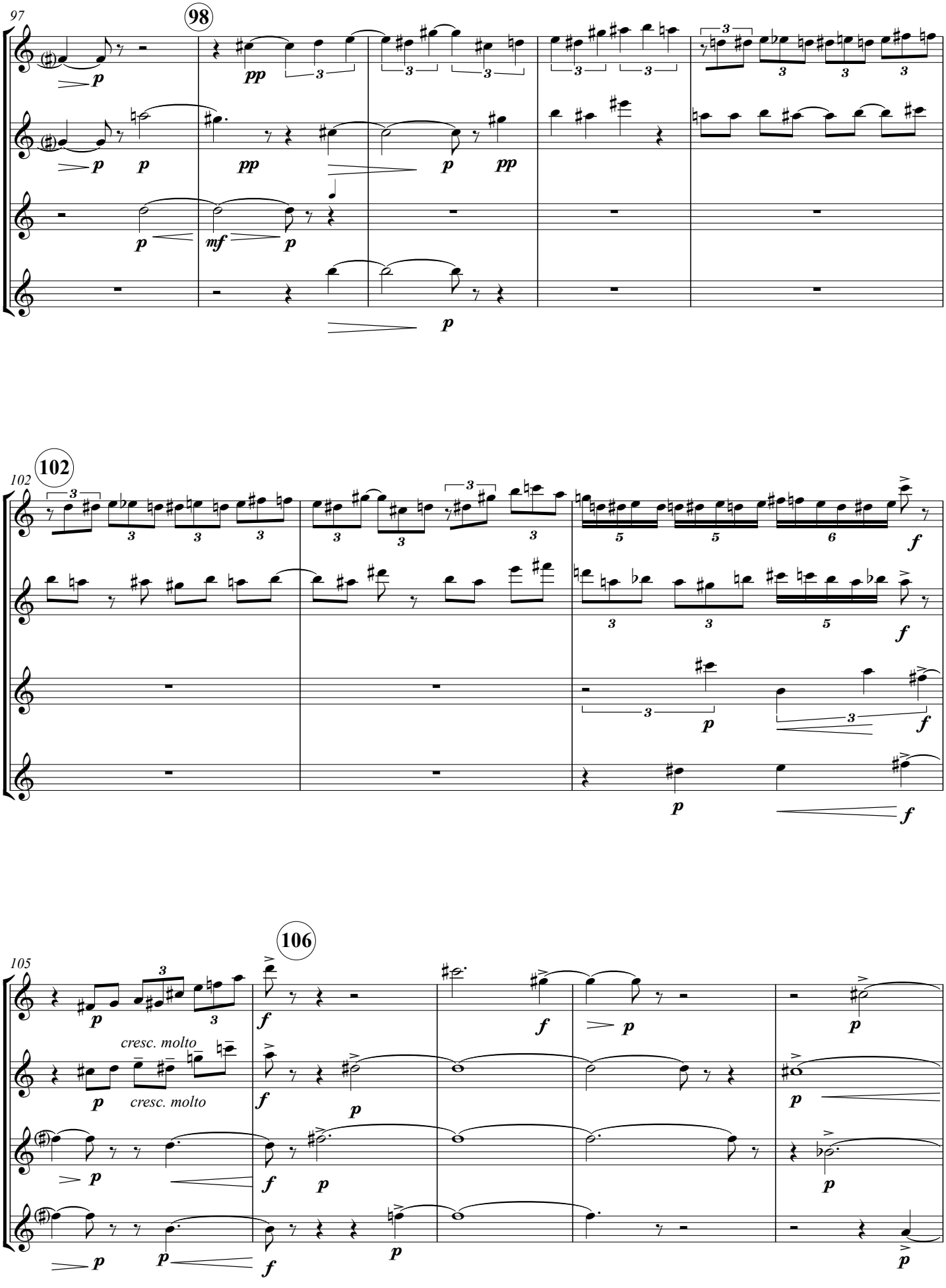
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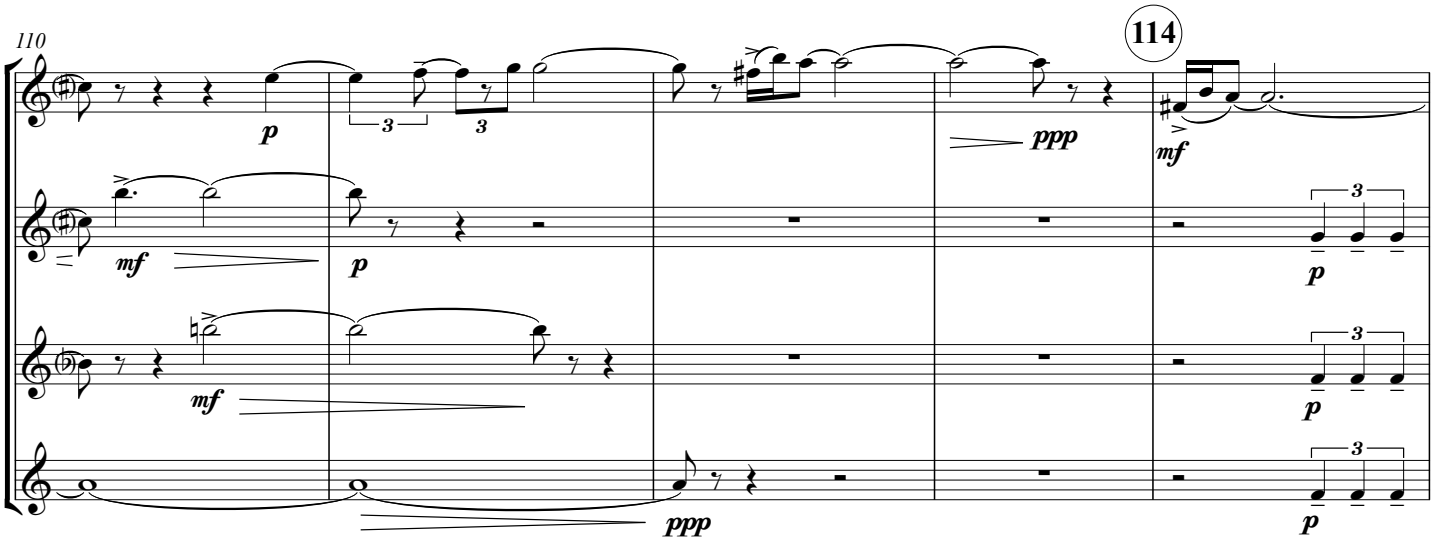
cresc. molto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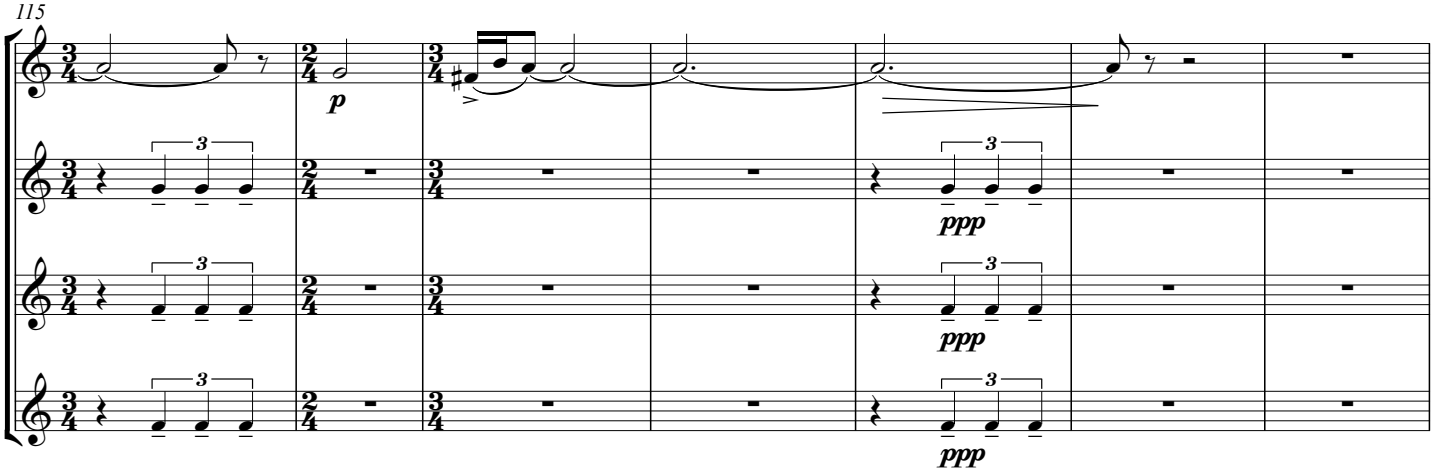
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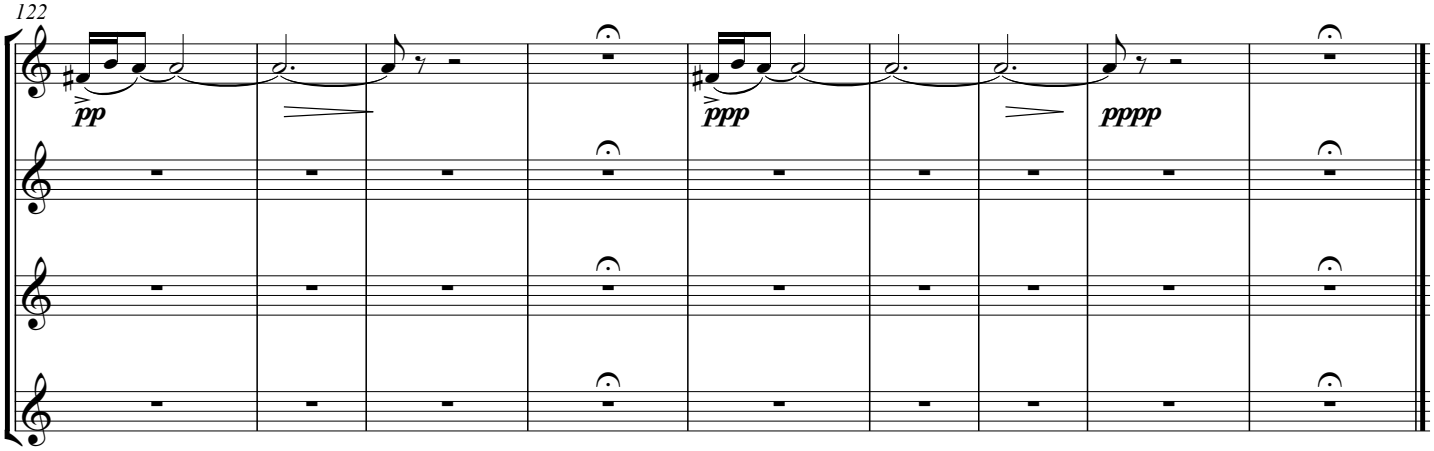
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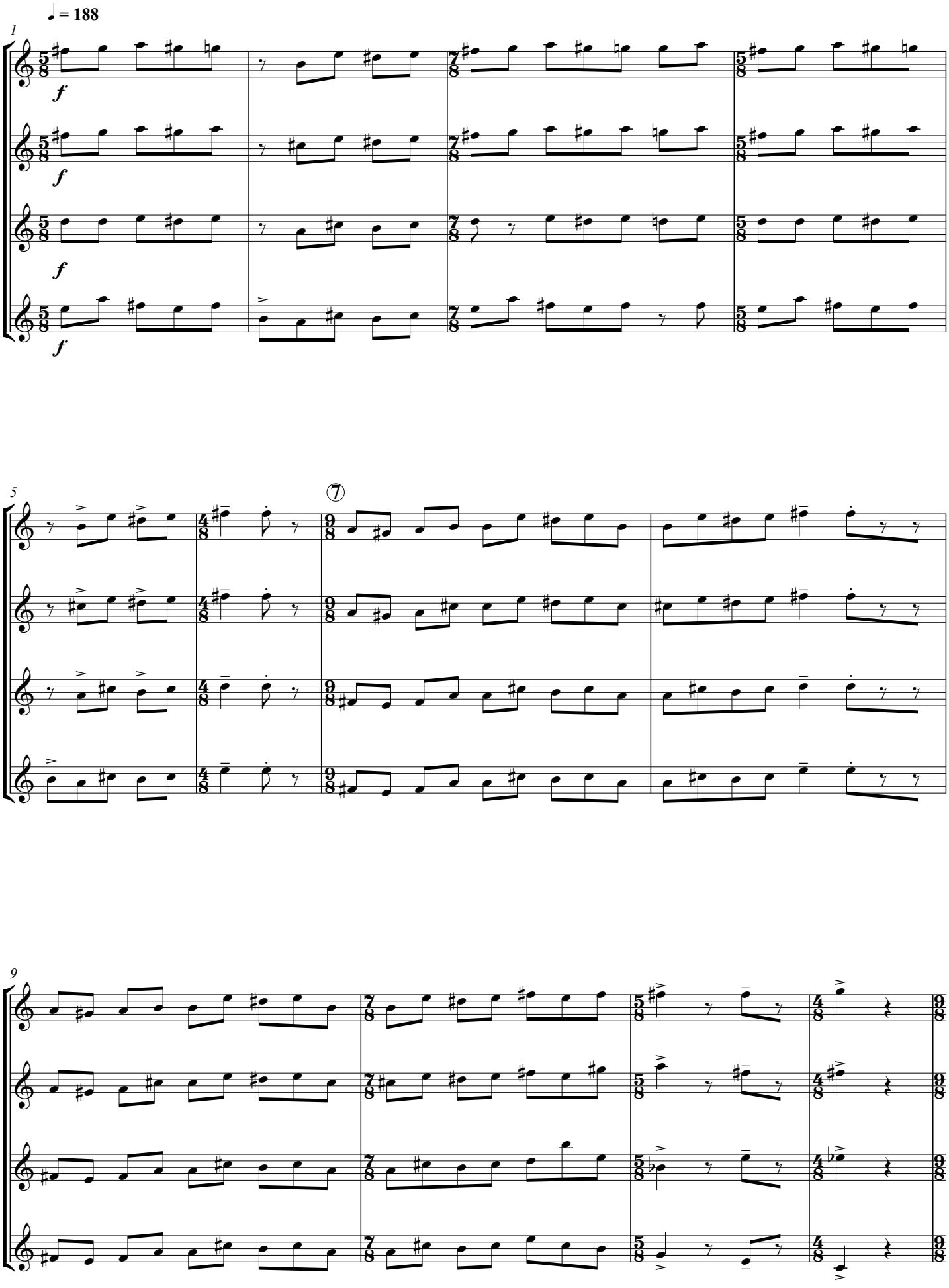
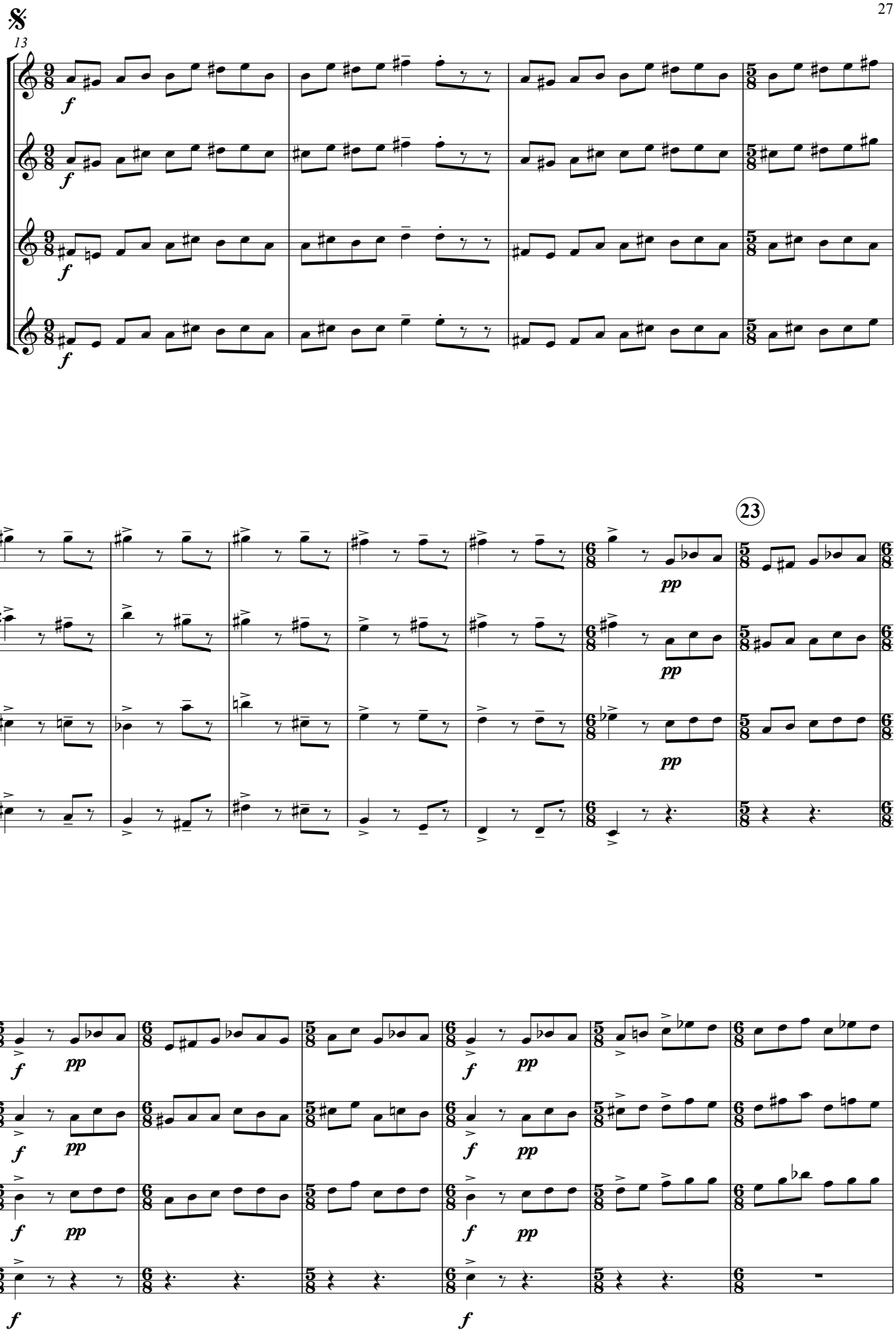
III. Oro

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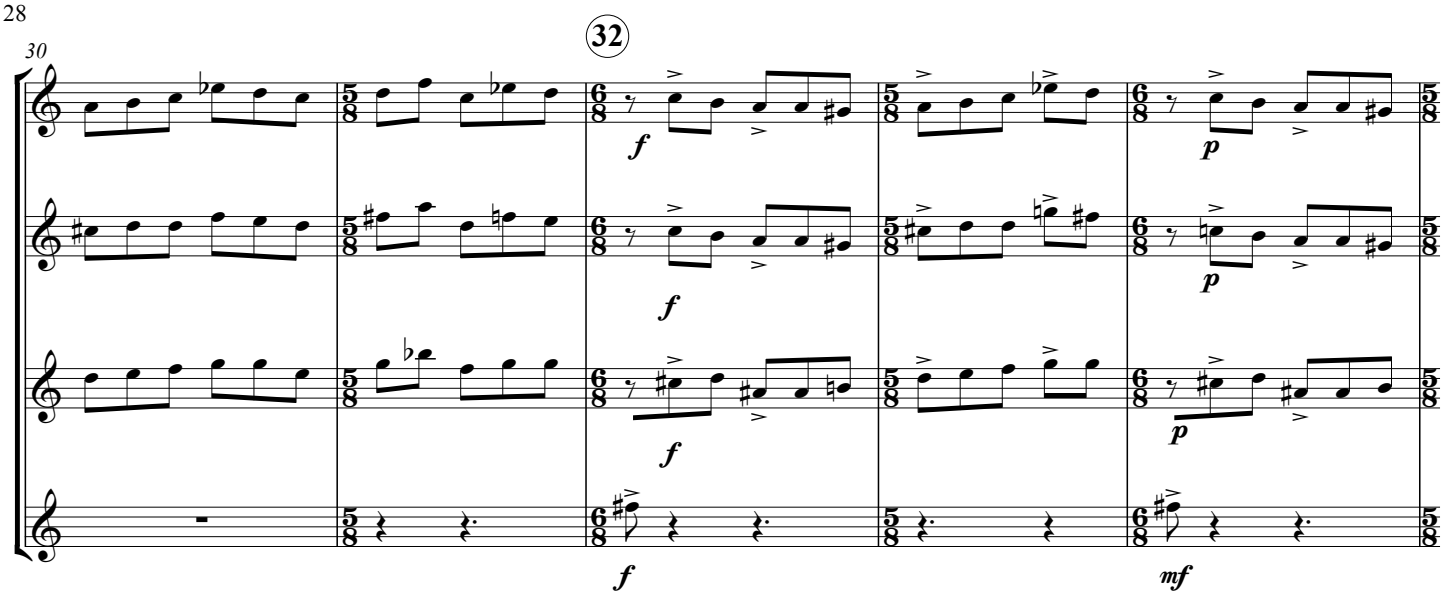
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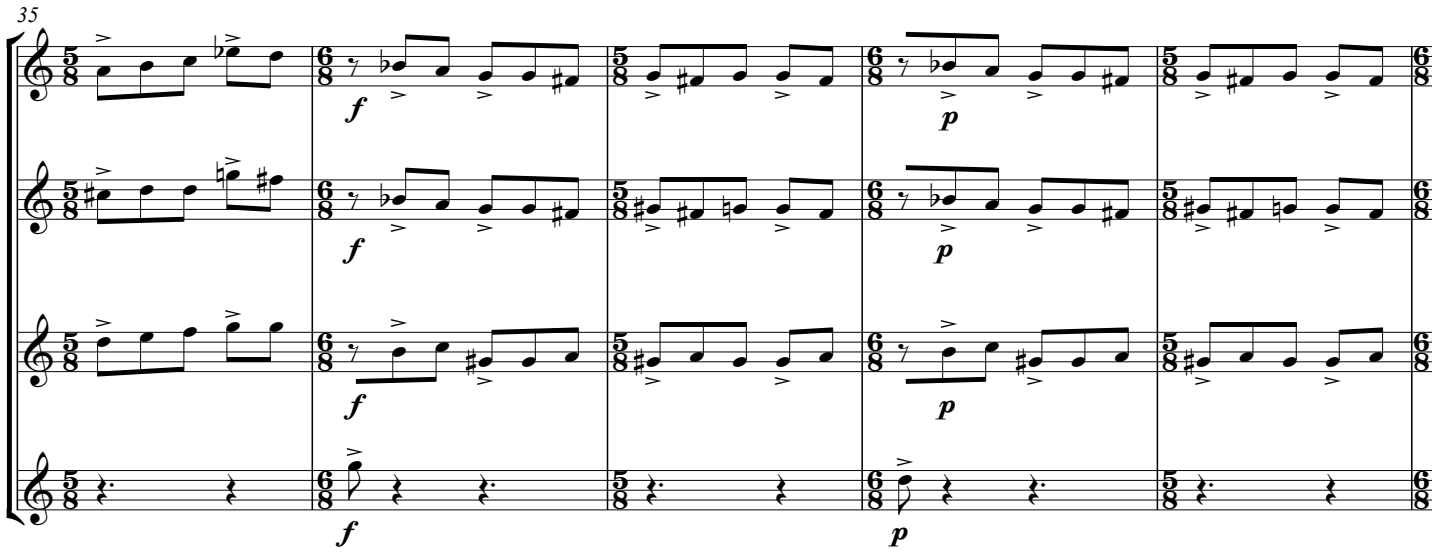
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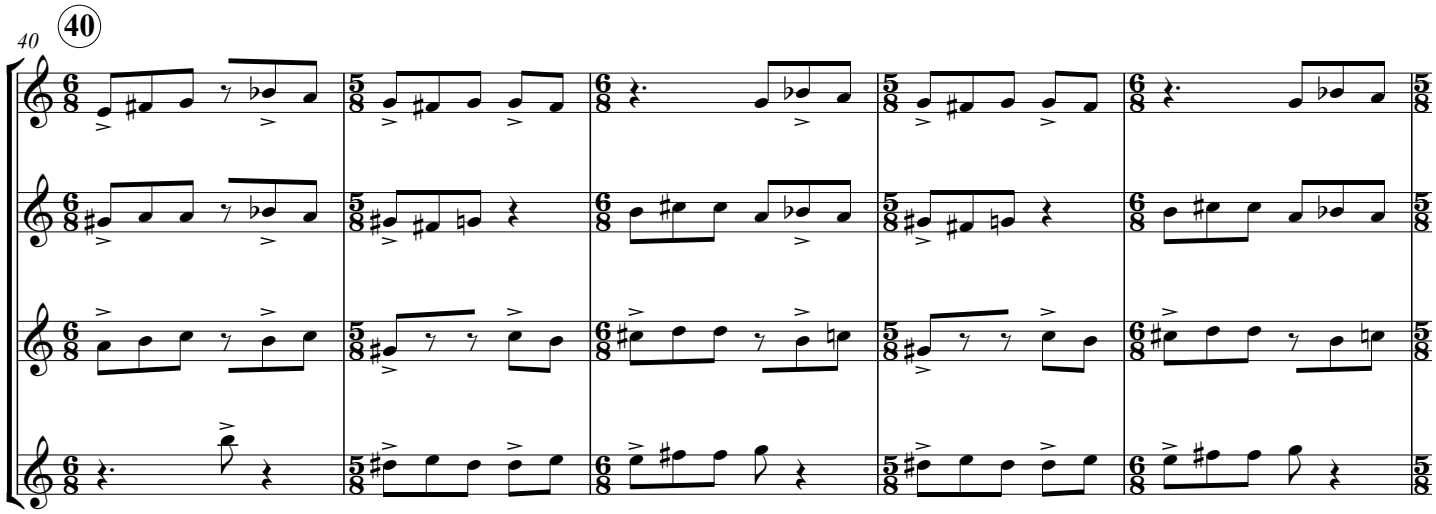
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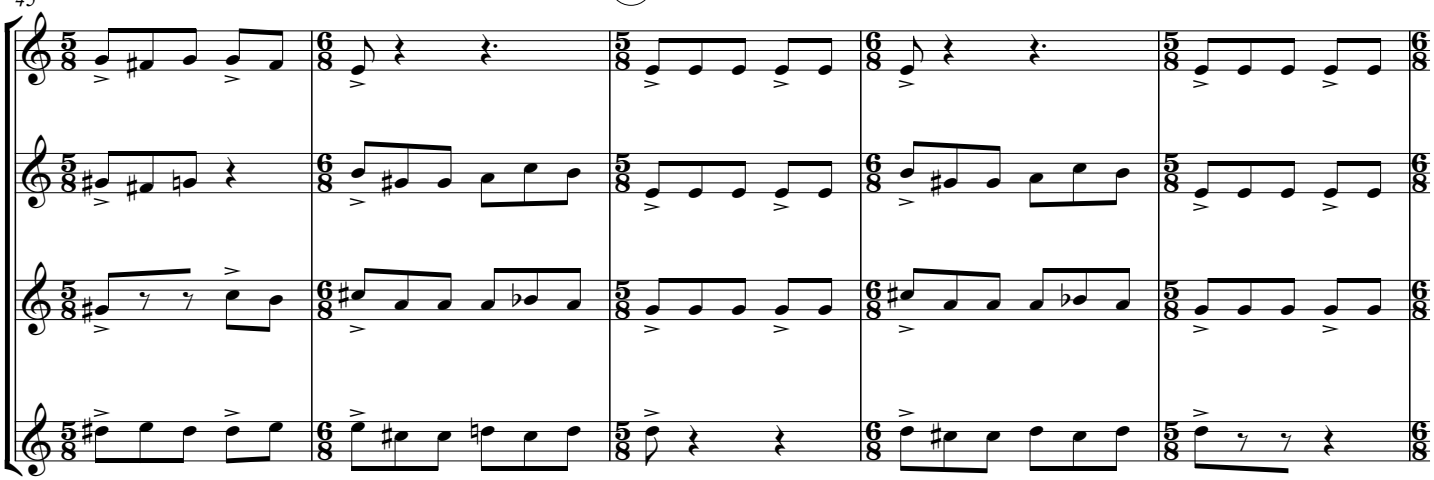

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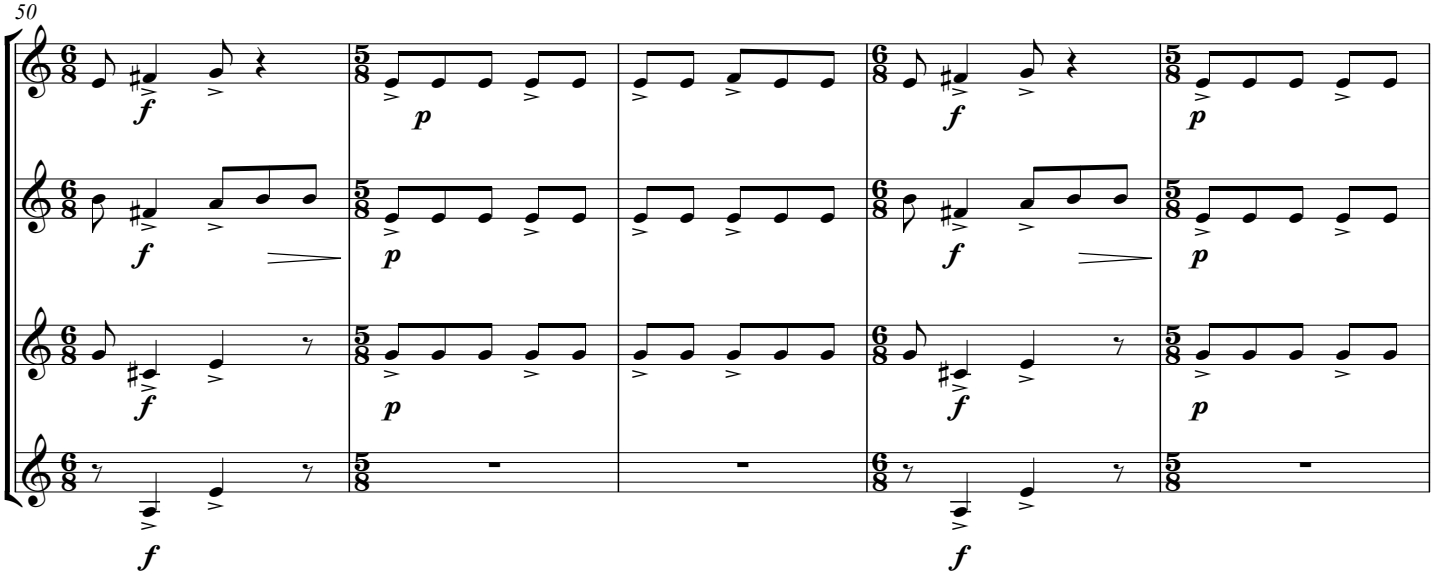

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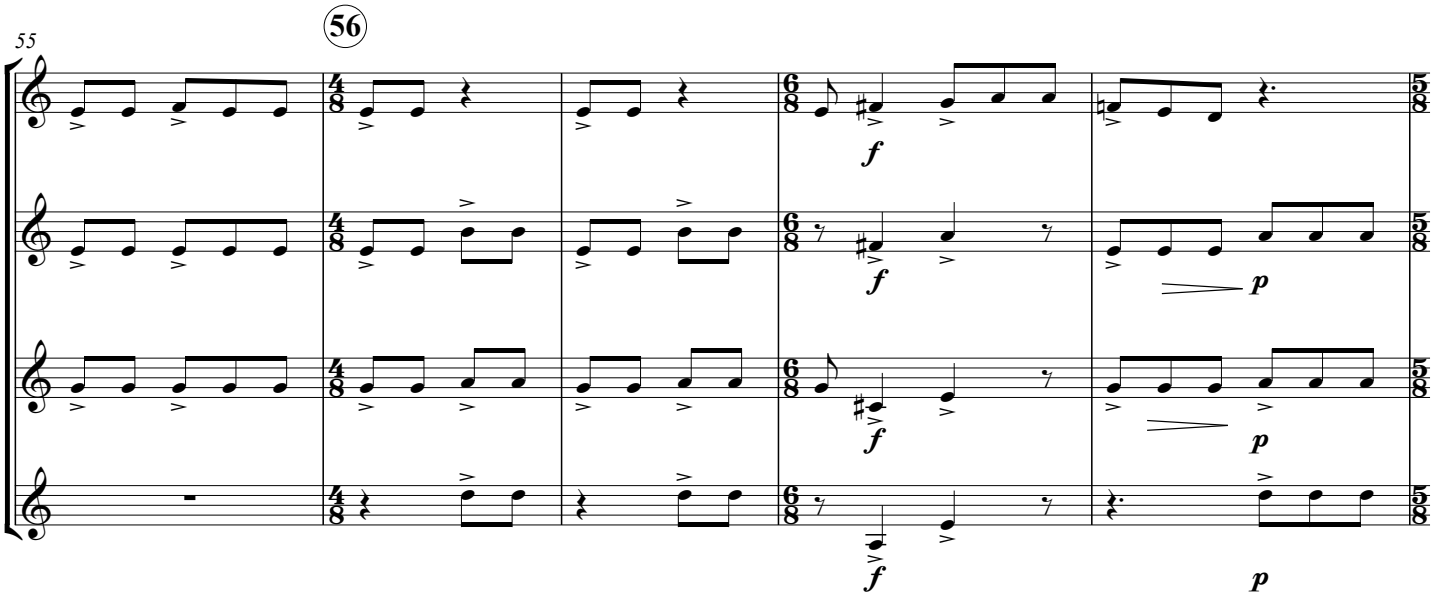

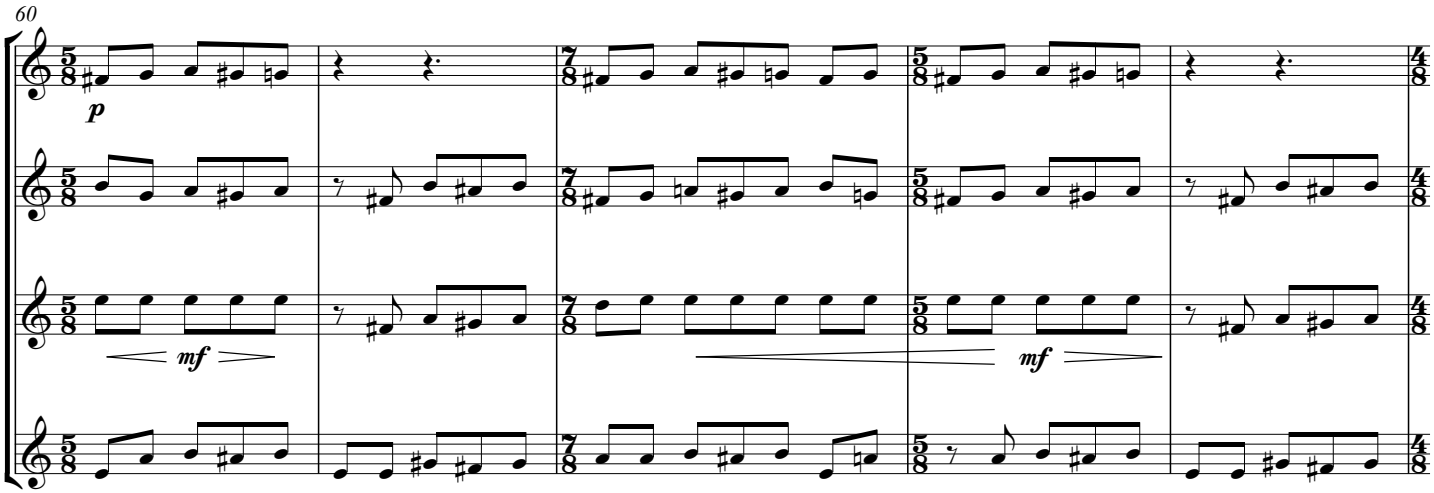
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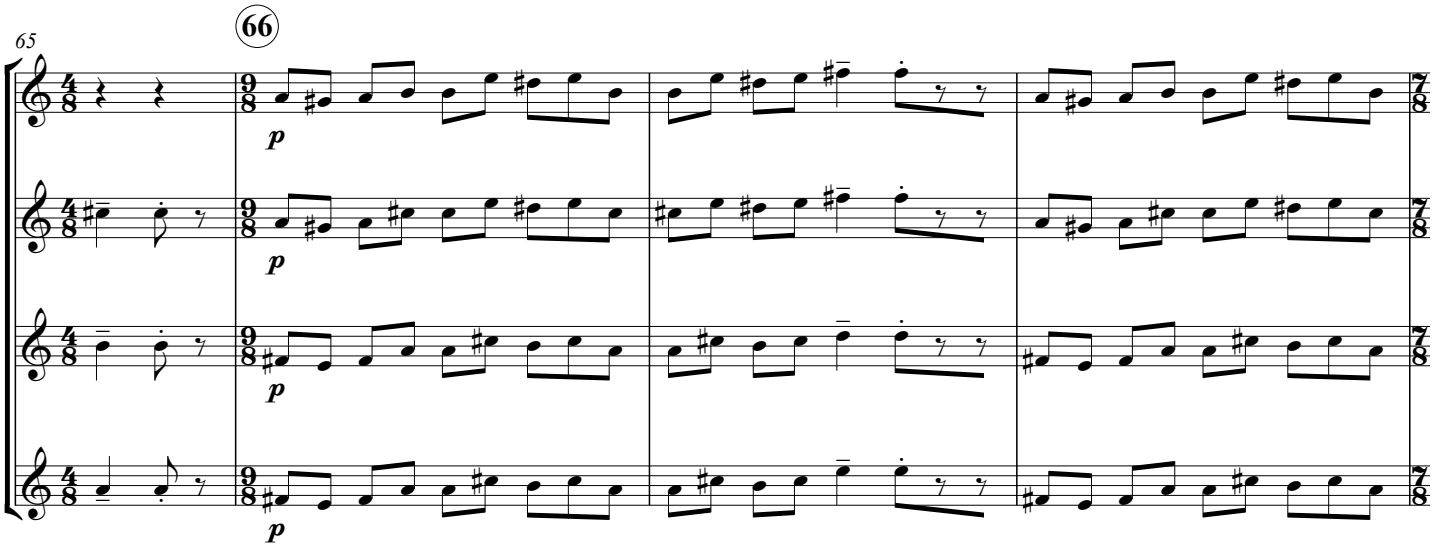
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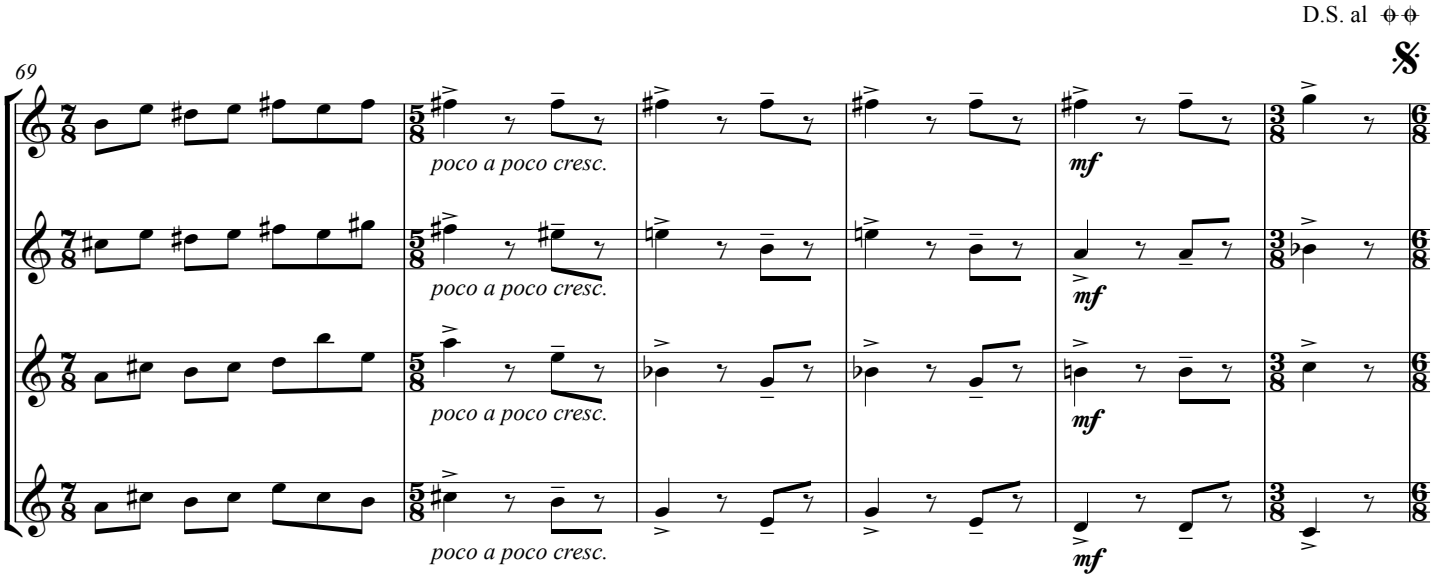
D.S. al
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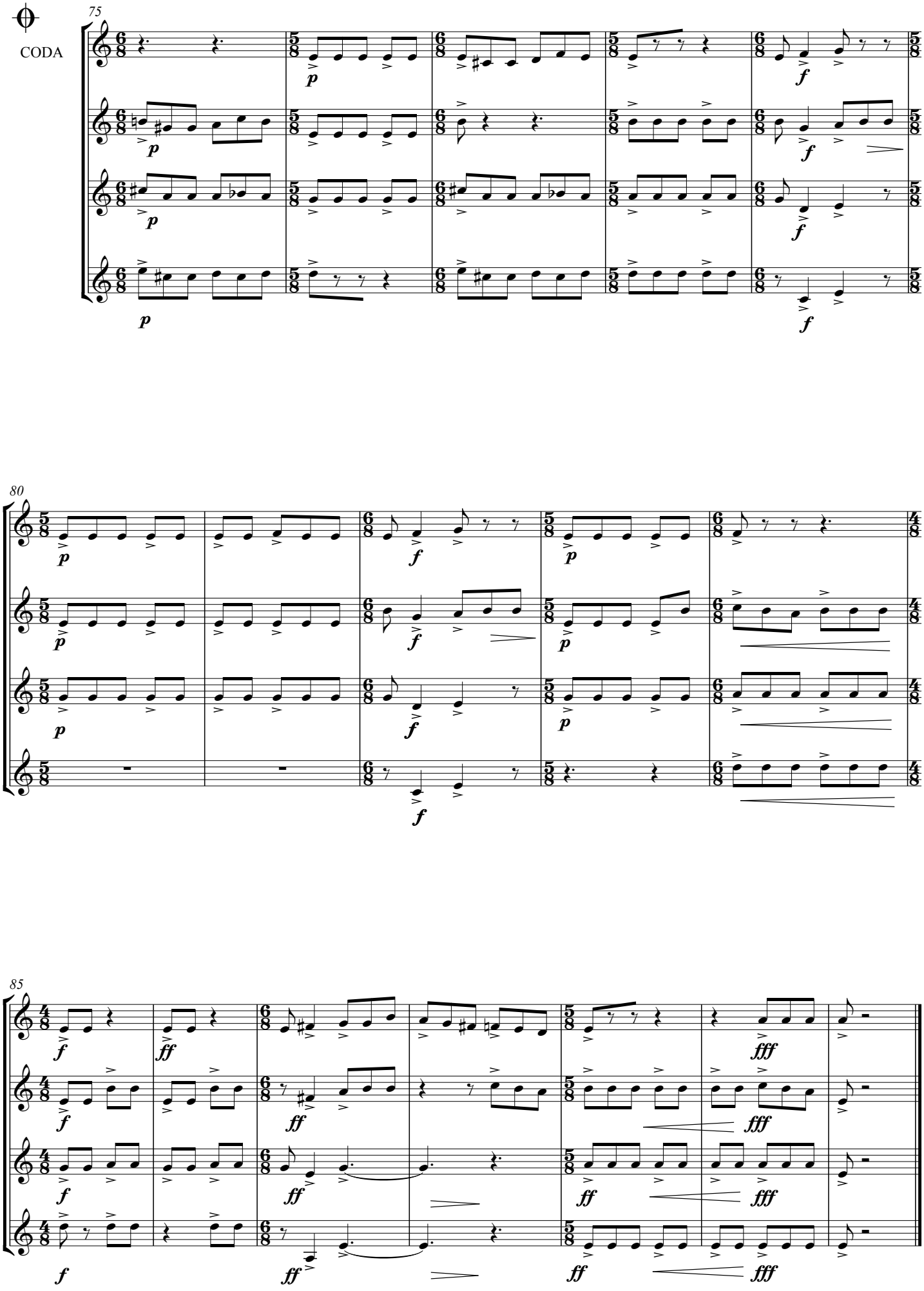
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