



QUARTET

from TOUCHED BY MACHINE?

For String Quartet

Violin I

Nigel Morgan

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About the piece

Between 1988 and 1991 Nigel Morgan created a sequence of four works, DUO (trombone/horn and percussion), TRIO (violin, clarinet and piano), QUARTET (string quartet) and EDGE (wind quartet). These pieces, forming a CD-length concert called *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?*¹, were part of a sustained project to explore computer-assisted composition using the tools of the MIDI studio.

QUARTET is the result of interaction with a suite of software tools. Such tools allow music to be assembled in a way that has similarities to the process engaged by some visual artists when creating a series of related images. Once the components of a 'design' have been assembled a free application can begin using practiced and improvised gestures. So too in music composition: the composer can interact with simulated performance and experiment with different aspects, emphasis and structure before creating a notated score. In composing QUARTET the element of pre-composition lies in the preparation of data for the software applications to store, process and then call up on-cue during an improvisation.

In creating QUARTET the composer worked with Emile Tobenfeld's *Programmable Variations Generator* in Movement 1, *Fingers* in the latter parts of Movement III and IV, and *Tunesmith* in Movement V. David Zicarelli's *M* software was used for Movements II and the first part of III. Zicarelli's software is one of the most successful attempts to create a device that enables multi-part composing through improvisation. It has now become part of the IRCAM co-development MAX-MSP.

¹ This title comes from an article by Stephen Travis Pope called *Touched by Machine? – Composition and Performance in the Digital Age*. This text presents responses from composers who were asked the following questions: How have new technologies changed the process of composition and performance? What new possibilities are aesthetically and artistically relevant? How do the new tools allow us to use musical material differently?

Computer Music Journal: vol 19. No.3.
Cambridge MA. MIT Press.

Aside from the technical aspects of QUARTET's composition there is an important extra-musical element to consider. This originates from the composer's interest in the artist Bridget Riley, in particular her ability to engage the viewer actively in her monochrome paintings and then later her work with colour stripes. In these paintings squares, circles and lines are woven together into an optical symmetry that allows the pictorial space to oscillate and 'dance'. Riley has described how the source of this approach came from her mother who was '*. . . a great looker . . . who constantly described everything she could . . . the play of sunlight on a glass . . . the depth of texture in the sea and sky . . .*' In Riley's work the abstract shape becomes a living and vibrating expression of the natural world. It is the viewer's position in, and movement across, the pictorial space that appears to make the image 'move' playfully. The music of all the pieces in the *TOUCHED BY MACHINE?* sequence attempts something of the same, only with sound and the ear rather than the image and the eye. The five movements of QUARTET take their titles from a group of Riley's paintings from the mid 1960s: *Continuum, Shuttle, Fission, Late-Morning, Chant*.

QUARTET was commissioned with funds from the Eastern Arts Association for Sarah Coleman and the Demos Quartet for performance at the Norwich and Norwich Triennial Festival in 1989. It is the third work of a series to focus on professional musicians working in North Norfolk where the composer lived from 1986 to 1990 as Eastern Arts Association Composer in the Community.

Notes for Performance

The nature of this music requires a very particular approach to performance technique and interpretation. This string quartet is viewed predominantly as a democratic community of musicians who work together to create a 'play' of musical elements for the listener to interact with and enjoy. In many parts of the score the music contains long sequences that required a sustained working through of a musical process. Bar 29 to 62 of *Continuum* provides a clear example of such a process. Players are advised to treat such passages with clarity and simplicity of musical expression, focusing on the whole process rather than individual moments. Bowing, dynamics, articulation and expressive markings have been kept to a minimum to give more interpretative space than is usual in a late 20C composition. Such performance indications should be seen as a starting point for rehearsal, no more. That said, the overall sound envisaged for the work is one where lightness and deftness of bow on the string and a minimal use of vibrato common to Early and Baroque music is able to contrast with more expressive modes of playing found in late Classical and Romantic music.

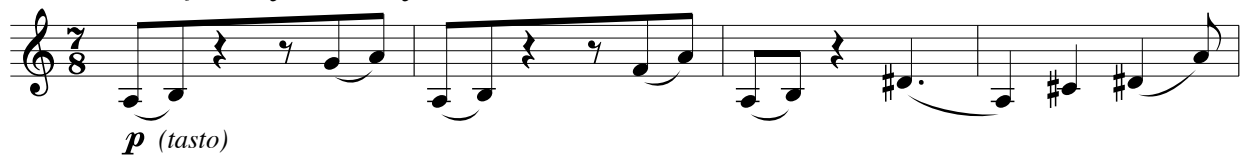
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I. Continuum

allegramente con guistezza ♩ = 80

accelerando from ♩ = 80 *to* ♩ = 160 *at bar 7*

Violin I



5

8 ♩ = 160
a tempo



9



11



14

15



17



21

22



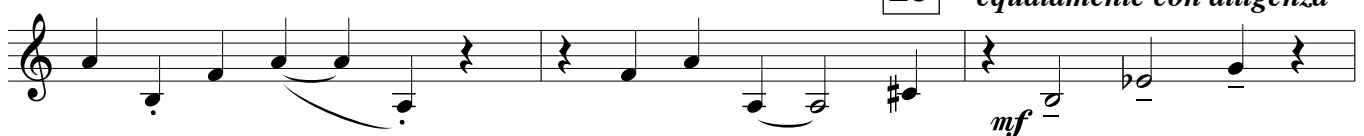
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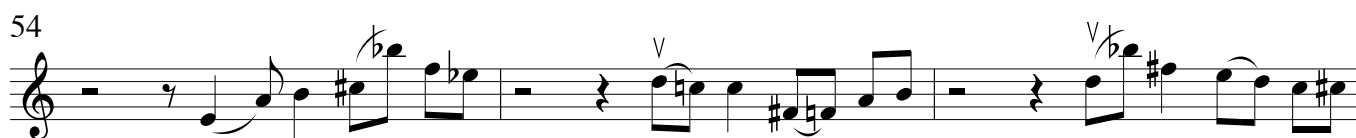


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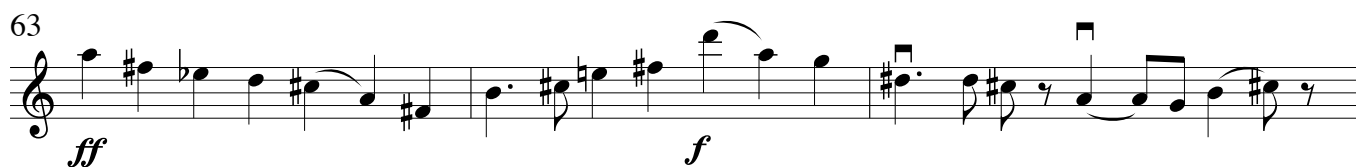
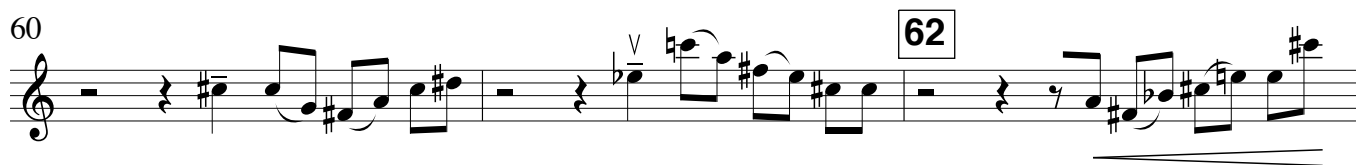
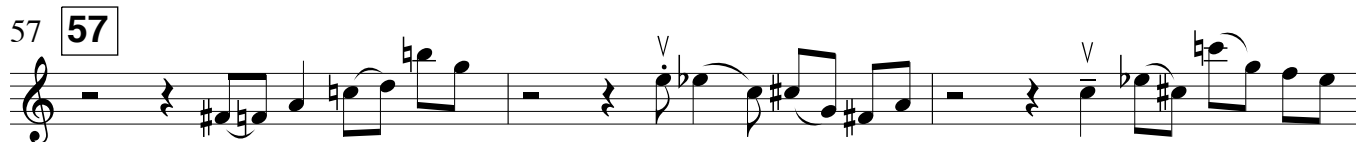
29

♩ = 150
egualmente con diligenza





V.S.



II. Shuttle

risentito da ballo ♩ = 140

Violin I

75 *mf*

80

81

84 *mf* *poco scherzando e staccato*

87

90 *p*

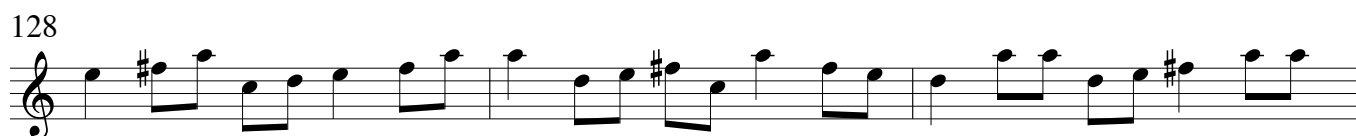
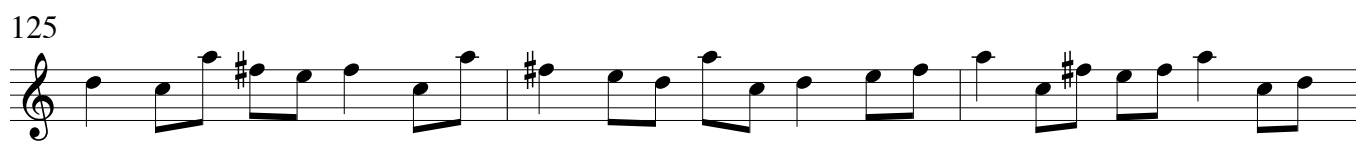
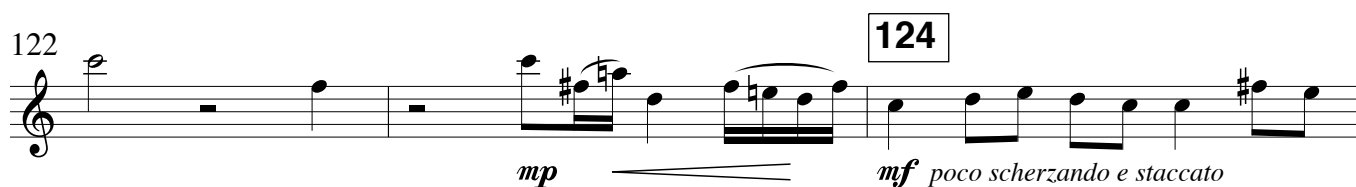
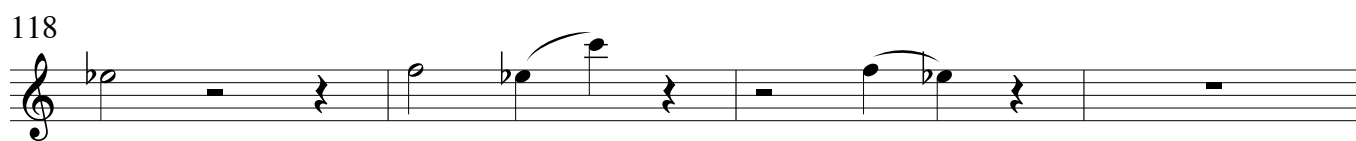
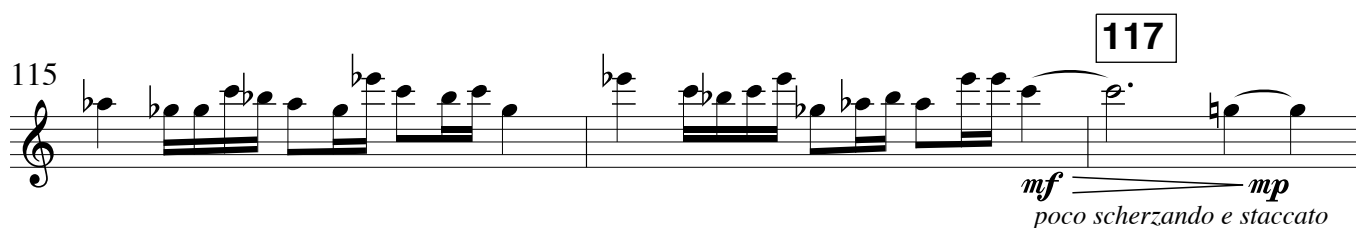
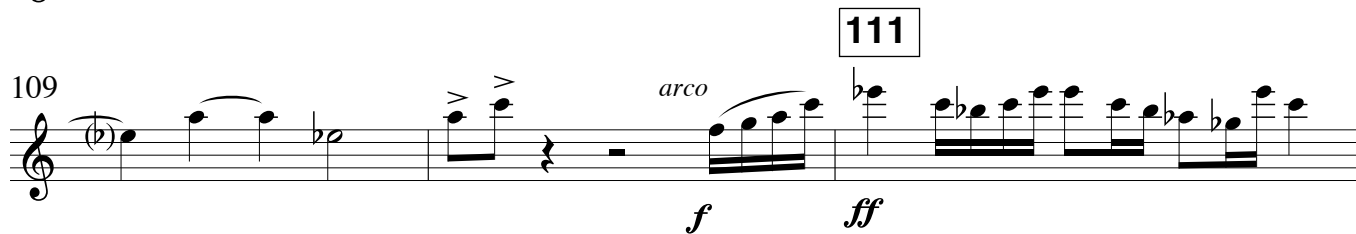
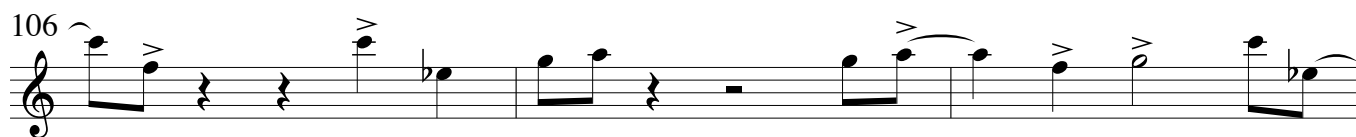
94 *mp* *f* (subito)

97

101 *pizz.*

100 *mf*

This musical score is for the Violin I part of 'II. Shuttle'. It is written in 5/4 time and begins with a tempo marking of 140 beats per minute. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 75, 80, 81, 84, 87, 90, 94, 97, 101, and 100 indicated. The dynamics range from *mf* (mezzo-forte) to *p* (piano). The tempo is marked *risentito da ballo*. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and staccato markings. The key signature has one sharp (F#).



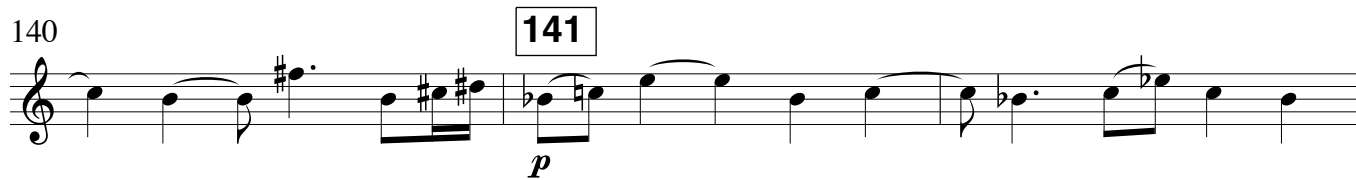
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137



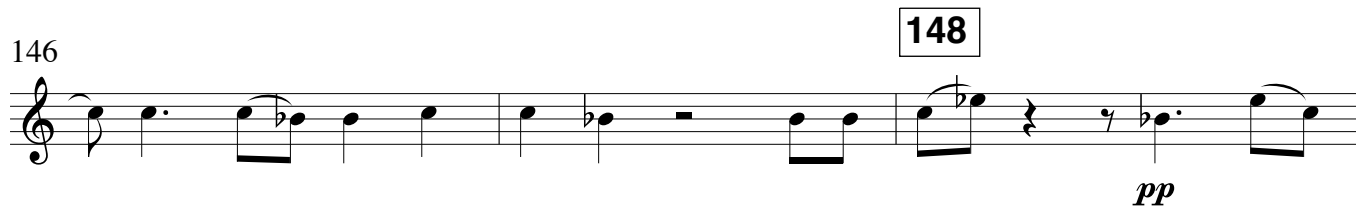
140



143



146



149



152



III. Fission

intimo ♩ = 100

Violin I

154 *con sord.*
mp

158

162

166

170

171

174

piu mosso
mf

176

180

182

intimissimo
mp

184

187

f

188

mf

193 195

193 194 195 196 197

mp

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 193 through 197. It begins in 3/2 time, changes to 7/16 in measure 194, returns to 3/2 in 195, changes to 2/8 in 196, and returns to 3/2 in 197. The music features a melodic line with various intervals and a dynamic marking of *mp* (mezzo-piano) below measure 195.

197

197

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measure 197, continuing the melodic line from the previous staff in 3/2 time.

201 *meno mosso*

201 202 203 204

meno mosso

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 201 through 204. It starts in 3/2 time, changes to 3/16 in measure 202, returns to 3/2 in 203, and changes to 3/4 in measure 204. The tempo marking *meno mosso* is placed above measure 201.

205 206

205 206 207 208

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 205 through 208. It begins in 3/4 time, changes to 3/16 in measure 206, returns to 3/2 in 207, and changes to 3/4 in measure 208. Measure 206 is highlighted with a box containing the number 206.

209 *intimo*

209 210 211 212

p

intimo

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 209 through 212. It starts in 3/4 time, changes to 3/16 in measure 210, returns to 3/2 in 211, and changes to 3/4 in measure 212. The dynamic marking *p* (piano) is placed below measure 210, and the tempo marking *intimo* is placed above measure 209.

213 *agiatamente e risentito*

213 214 215 216 217 218 219

mf

agiatamente e risentito

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 213 through 219. It starts in 3/4 time, changes to 3/16 in measure 214, and returns to 3/4 in measure 219. The dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte) is placed below measure 214, and the tempo marking *agiatamente e risentito* is placed above measure 213. Measure 219 is highlighted with a box containing the number 219.

222 233

222 223 224 225 226 227 228 229 230 231 232 233

Va.

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 222 through 233. It starts in 3/4 time, changes to 3/8 in measure 233, and then to 3/4 in measure 234. The dynamic marking *Va.* (Vivace) is placed below measure 233. Measure 233 is highlighted with a box containing the number 233.

234

234

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measure 234, continuing the melodic line from the previous staff in 3/4 time.

243 248

243 244 245 246 247 248 249

Va.

Detailed description: This musical staff contains measures 243 through 248. It starts in 3/4 time, changes to 3/8 in measure 248, and returns to 3/4 in measure 249. The dynamic marking *Va.* (Vivace) is placed below measure 248. Measure 248 is highlighted with a box containing the number 248.

252

258

268 276

(V) (M) Va.

f *mf* (cantabile)

278

284 288

Vc.

f

291

Vn.I

mf

302

V senza sord.

mp

310 310

Vn.II (pizz.) (arco)

mp *f*

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IV. Late Morning

lusingando me articolato ♩ = 120-130

Violin I

317 13 330 10 Vn.I

342 343 *mf*

346

350

354 356

357

361 *f*

365 365 *poco a poco accelerando a*

369 *con esaltazione ed energico* ♩ = 75

ff sempre

Musical staff 369-372: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 369-372 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 372 has a 11/16 time signature change.

373

Musical staff 373-376: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 373-376 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 376 has a 10/16 time signature change.

377 **377**

Musical staff 377-380: Treble clef, 10/16 time signature. Measures 377-380 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 380 has a 3/4 time signature change.

380 **380**

Musical staff 380-389: Treble clef, 3/16 time signature. Measures 380-389 contain eighth notes with accents. Measure 389 has a 3/4 time signature change.

390

Musical staff 390-395: Treble clef, 3/4 time signature. Measures 390-395 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 395 has a 10/16 time signature change.

394 **396**

Musical staff 394-399: Treble clef, 10/16 time signature. Measures 394-399 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 399 has a 3/16 time signature change.

399 **406**

Musical staff 399-406: Treble clef, 2/4 time signature. Measures 399-406 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 406 has a 10/16 time signature change.

407 *molto ritardando*

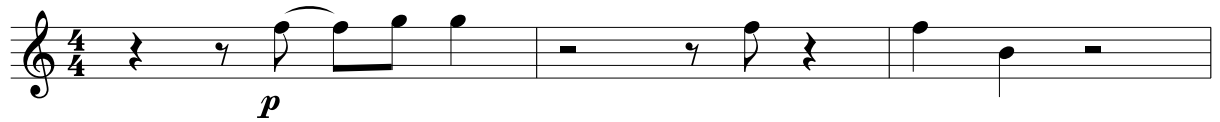
Musical staff 407-410: Treble clef, 10/16 time signature. Measures 407-410 contain eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals. Measure 410 has a 14/16 time signature change and ends with a fermata.

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V. Chant

410 *piacevole e flautando* ♩ = 120

Violin I



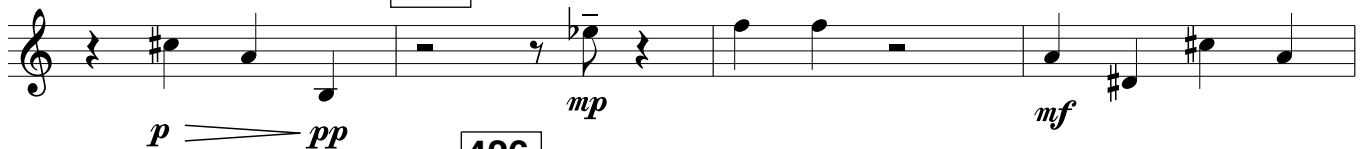
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417



421



425



429



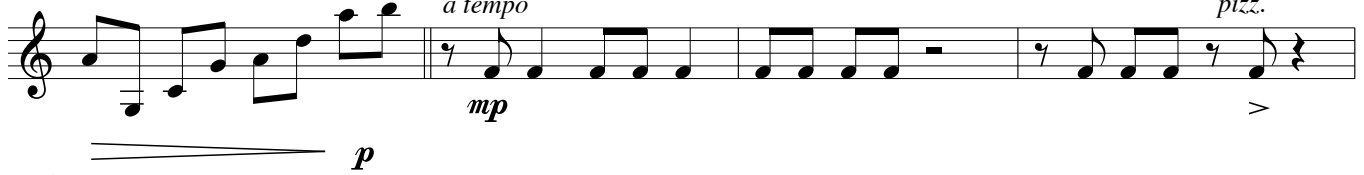
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437



441



445



448



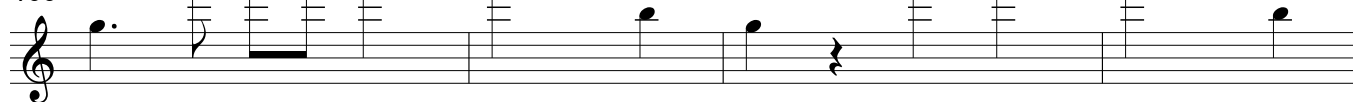
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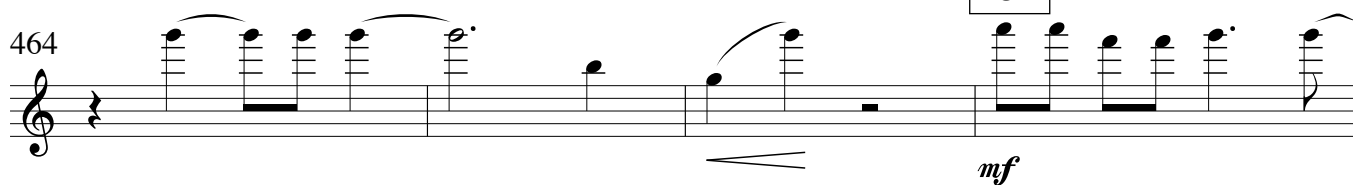
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460



467



468



474



476



482

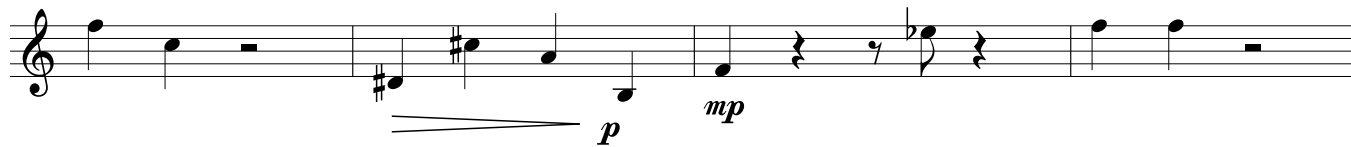


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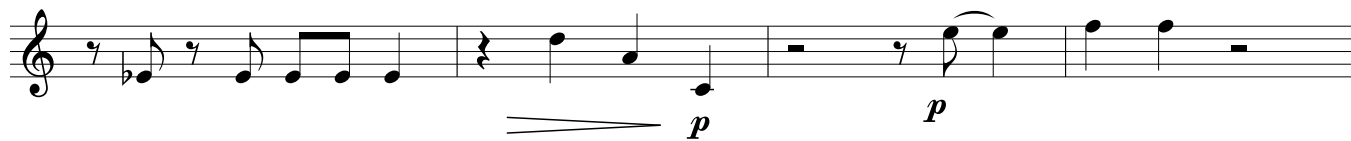


488

490



492



496

ritardando