Metanoia

Music for Instruments

Score in C

Nigel Morgan

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About the piece

Greek METANOEW—"reconsider, be wholeminded" (Mt 3:2); the important term metanoia ("with-mind") thus contrasts with paranoia ("beside-mind"); it does not signify a mere feeling of remorse,

The Greek word *metanoia* captures several qualities - coming to one's senses, repentence, transcendence, inclusiveness, open-endedness, and movement. In Hebrew the equivalent word is *teshuvah* which expresses the concept and possibility of returning, a kind of once-and-all conversion. *Metanoia* is seen as an inclusive movement in which man moves steadily to continually new thoughts.

Metanoia is a composition for a variable ensemble of instruments lasting about twenty minutes. It redefines the whole condition of ensemble performance and returns the musician to a performance practice of earlier times, when so much of what was presented by a composer on a notated score held a more speculative nature than it does today. Yet it makes use of aspects of auditioning, simulation and modeling through digital technologies to enable a score to be reinvented and re-presented for each performance or recording.

The word *metanoia* means a 'turning around of the mind'. The composition *Metanoia* likewise *turns around* contemporary preoccupations with instrumental timbre and dynamic effect towards a concentration on and celebration of the elements of melody, rhythm and the polyphony of voices. The score is written for the most part in four polyphonic lines. There are no accompaniment figures or devices. The music is relentlessly democratic and may be performed by any ensemble of instruments from four players upwards. The orchestration and instrumentation is entirely free.

Metanoia was commissioned in 1986 for Norwich Students Orchestra and performed in the UK and Germany by this ensemble in two quite different versions. It was the first major work of the composer to use micro-computer technology as a direct reference environment for composition. The first London performance, at the City University' Science and Music' Conference in 1987, was of a version by Peter Britton for electric guitars, sax doubling bass clarinet, horn doubling synthesizer, percussion doubling electric keyboard and computer-driven synthesizer.

Metanoia has considerable potential as a work for student musicians, particularly those attached to colleges where fielding the *standard* orchestral forces can be problematic. The composition has been widely performed in such circumstances, often employing large percussion sections, keyboards and guitars, brass band instruments – even recorders. The work also offers student composers and conductors a unique opportunity to experiment with orchestration. Notable student performances have taken place at the universities of Leeds and Bristol and at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester.

In 2006 *Metanoia* was extensively revised. A new digital realisation was commissioned from Phil Legard to replace the original reference recording devised by the composer prior to the first performance in 1988. This new version, available as an MP3 download from the composer's website, can be a valuable aid in the rehearsal and realisation process of bringing *Metanoia* to performance. It may also be used as the basis of an electronic continuo part in a number of specially remixed versions, including one for solo instrument and digital accompaniment.

Notes toward performance

The essential music of Metanoia consists of four voices or lines. These may be realized by any number of players or instruments.

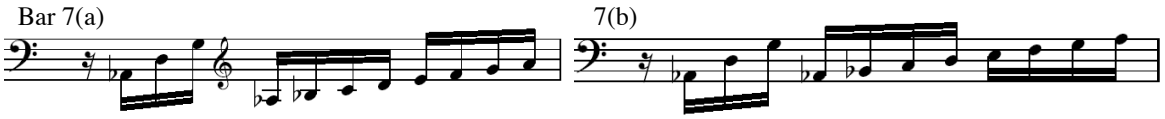
The scoring, dynamics, articulation and phrasing are to be derived as far as possible from the experience of rehearsing and playing the complete score.

In preparing a version for more than 8 players, it is recommended that the conductor/director prepares an initial orchestration scheme. In rehearsals there should be opportunity for instrumental sections and individual players to explore and experiment, gradually contributing more and more detail toward the performing score. Experience with the music can easily facilitate quite radical changes, indeed even encourage an element of extemporization.

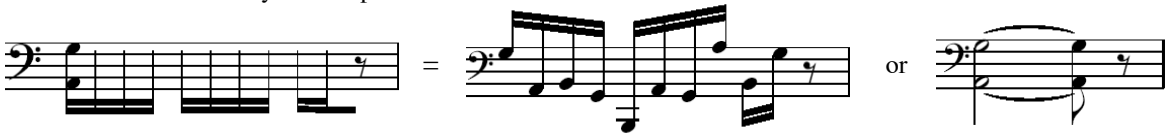
1. Players should endeavour to feel an underlying sixteenth note pulse (no slower than sixteenth = 256)

2a. Octave doubling is allowed in both directions.

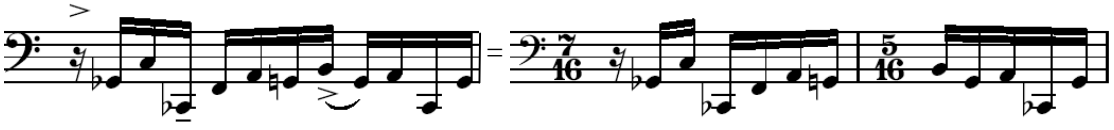
2b. Octave transpositions may occur in every voice in either direction but only for the duration of complete phrases. A musical passage that lies outside the range of a single instrument should be shared between two or more instruments. Example 7(b) below is ***not*** a possible solution for 7(a).



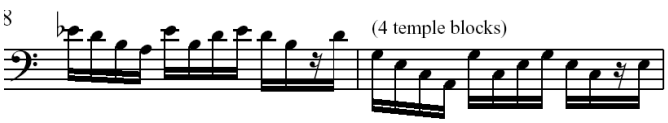
3. Chordal sections may be interpreted thus:



4. There are two accents for rhythmic groupings, and two for dynamics.



5. Where a phrase consists of a limited number of pitches these may be realized by untuned percussion.



6. Particularly in versions for small ensemble, players are encouraged to develop their own improvised interlude or link between sections **M** and **N**. Indeed, even with a large ensemble this could happen amongst a group of soloists keen to explore further potential directions of the material.

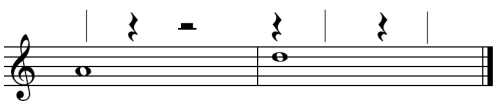
7. From **N** onwards the score is a series of pages, **N, O**, **P** and **Q/R.** These are played in a sequence to be decided by the players or conductor/director. The parts on these pages may be assembled to play a simultaneous texture of up to 12 lines. It is expected that this expanded texture will develop over several repeats; pages and parts gradually coming into play. A standard performance usually involves 4 times 30 bars followed by section **Q/R** played once only.

Each page focuses on a particular musical parameter:

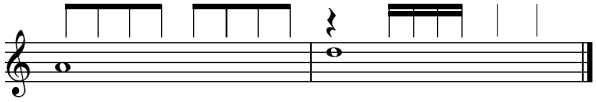
N = *rhythm*
O = *dynamics*
P = *texture*
Q = *harmony*

Lines from the rhythms pages **N** and **N1** should begin the sequence. Some elements of the rhythm pages should be present throughout the sequence.

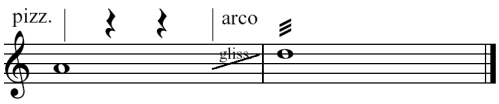
8. In the final *chorale* (sections **Q/R**) each instrument or instrumental group may create their own part, within the framework of thirty chords using some of the devices indicated below.



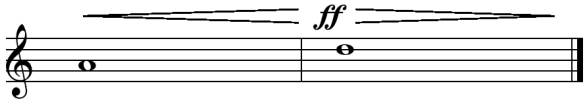
The addition of rests.



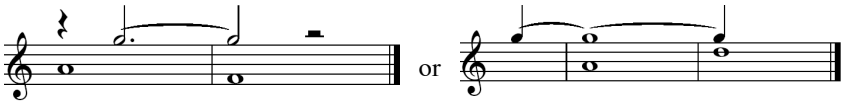
The addition of rhythm/more notes.



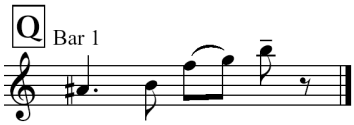
The use of effects.



The use of dynamics.



The use of suspensions.

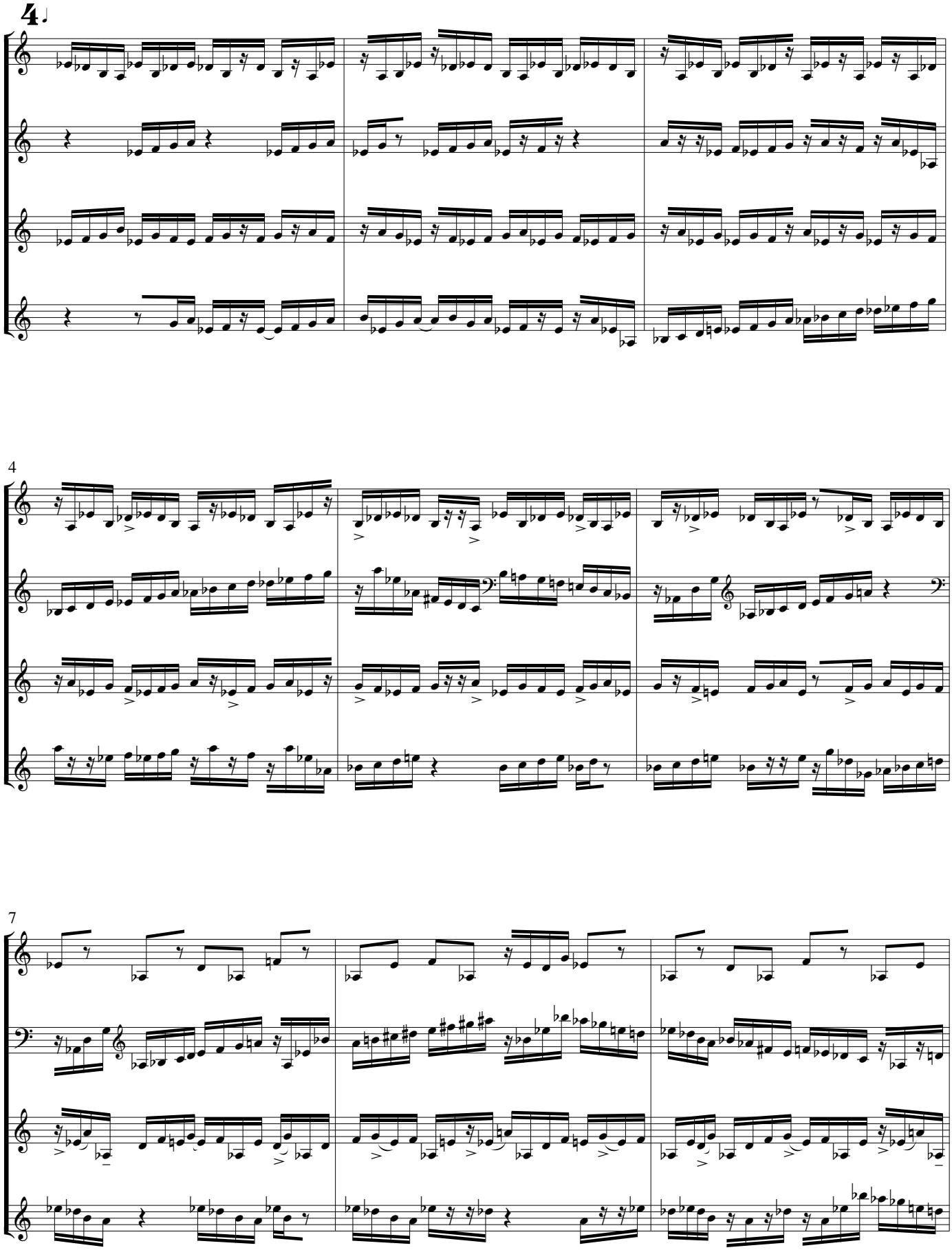


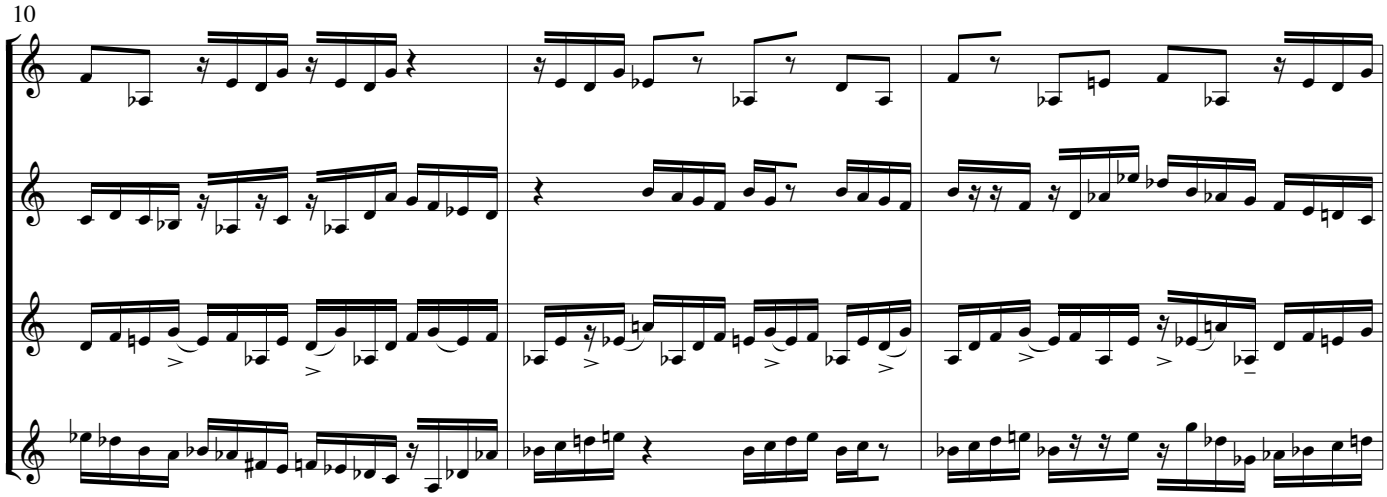
A solo may be improvised or prepared making use of the notes of a particular chord.

At all times there should be an unbroken sustained texture behind the instrumental group solos.

Metanoia

A

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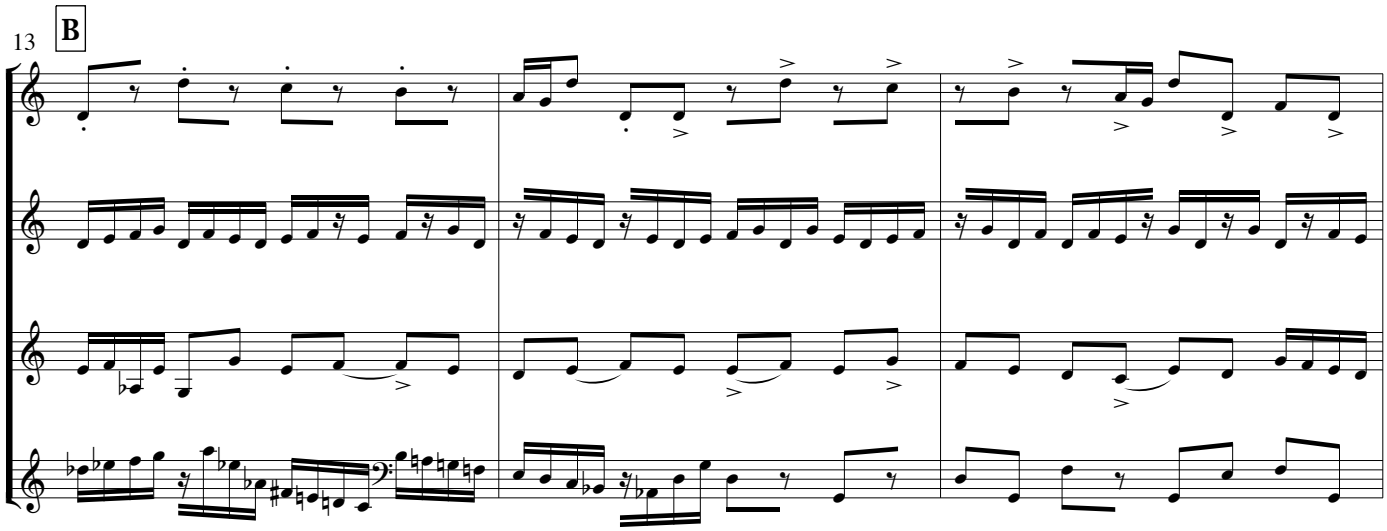
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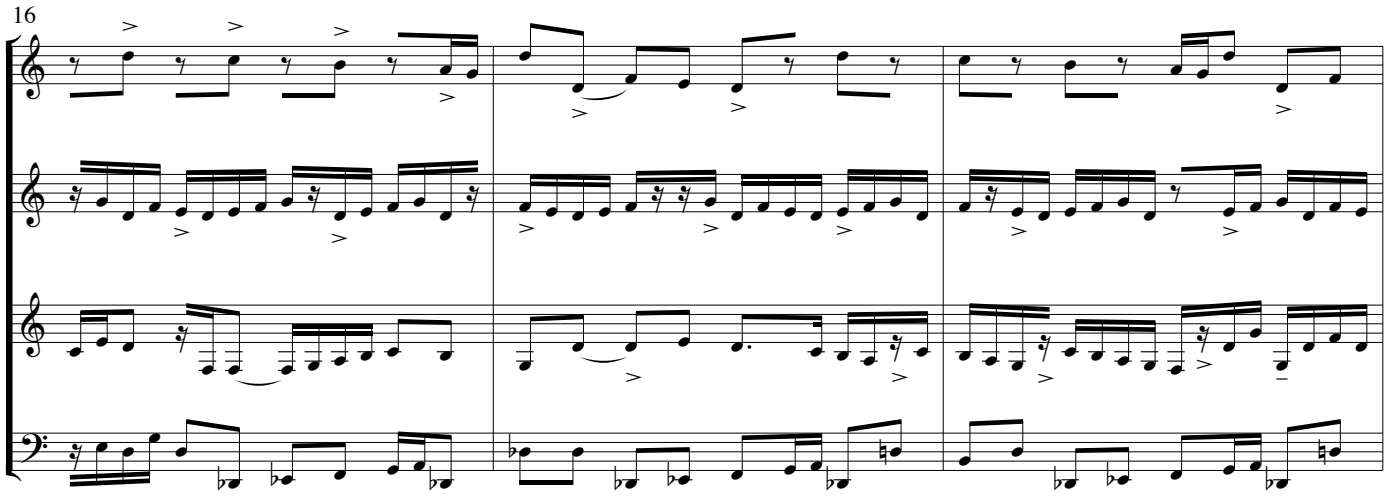
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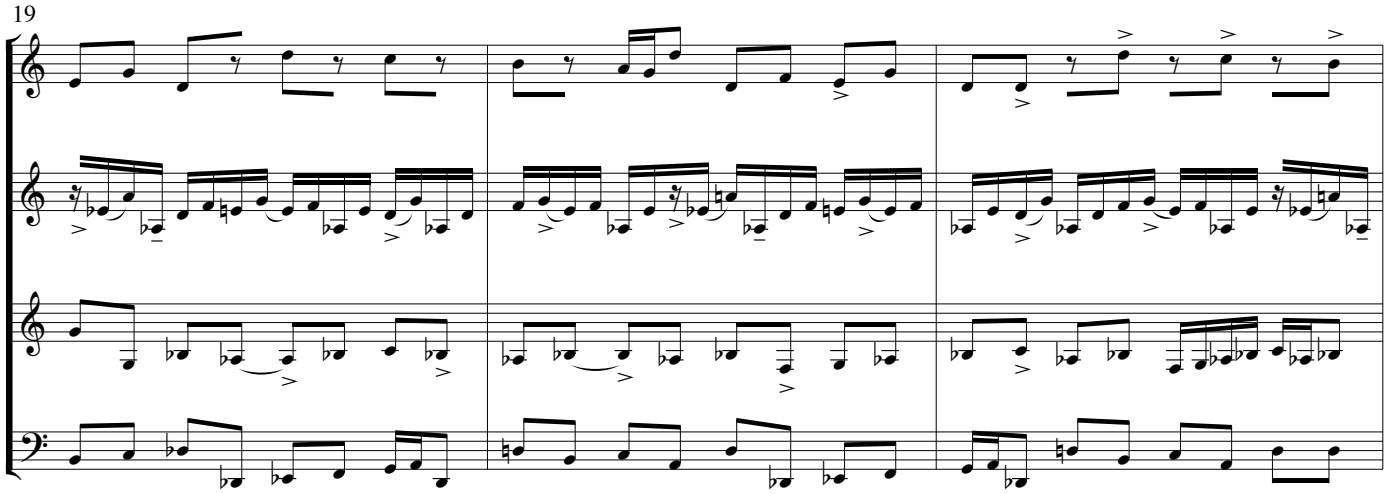
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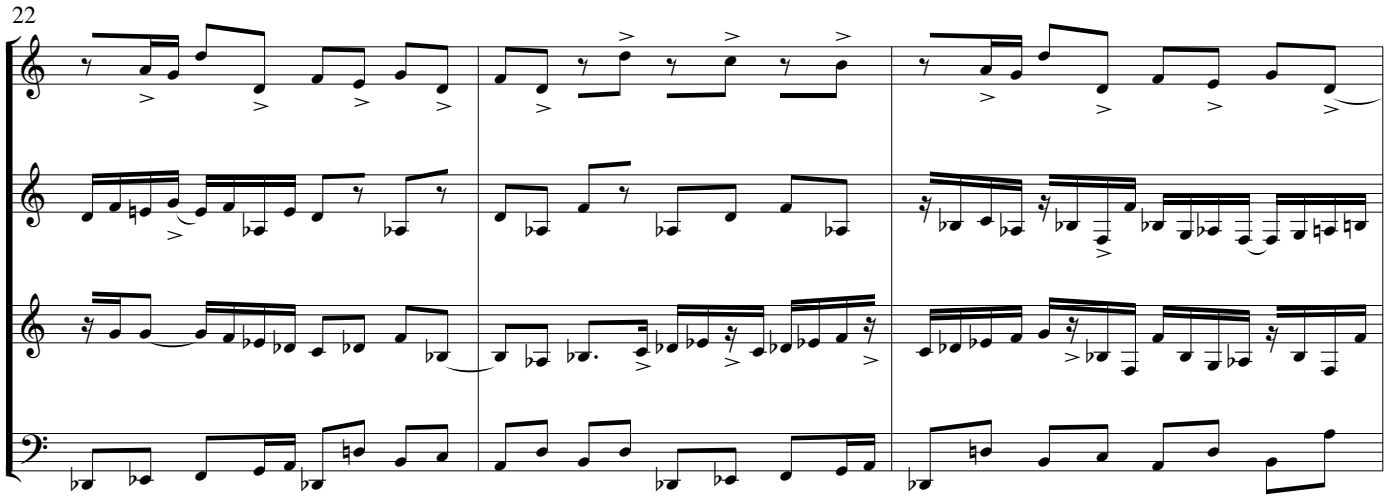
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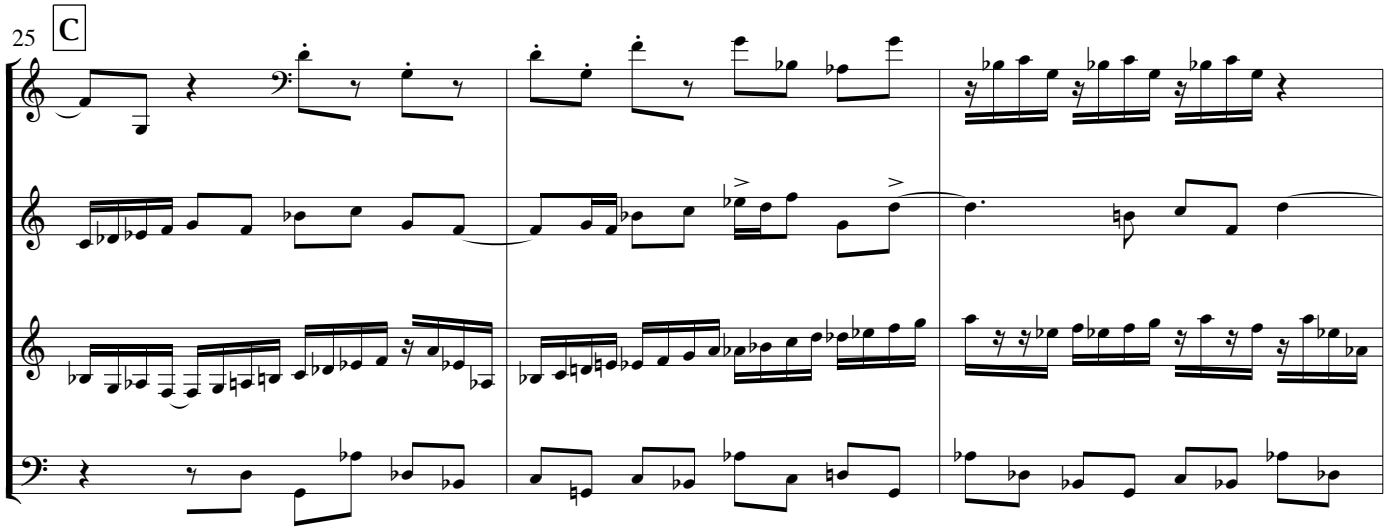
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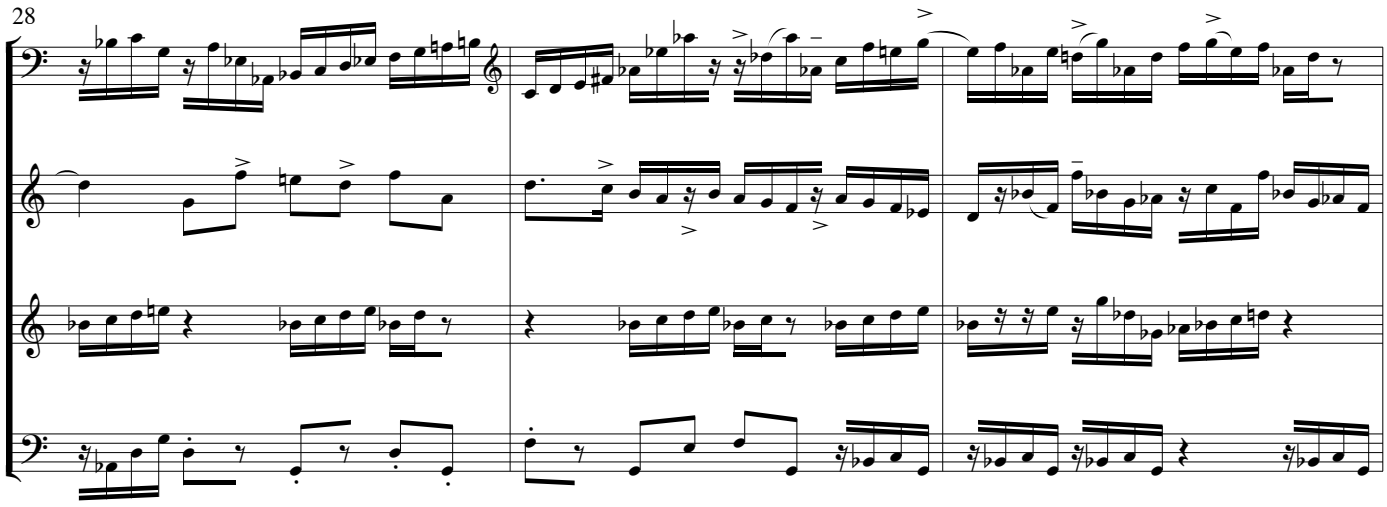
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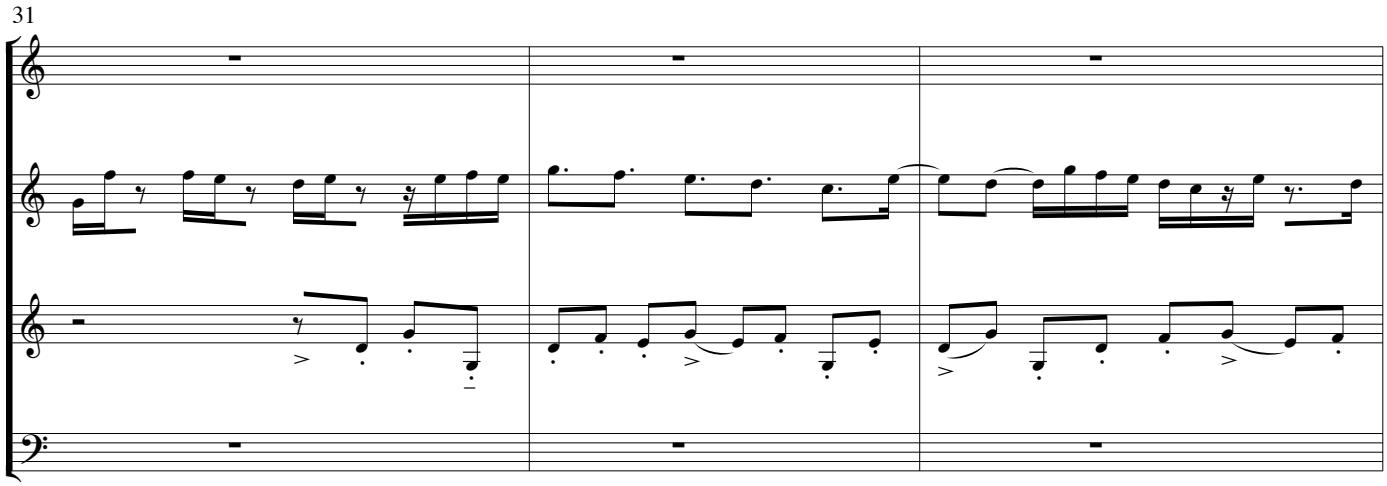
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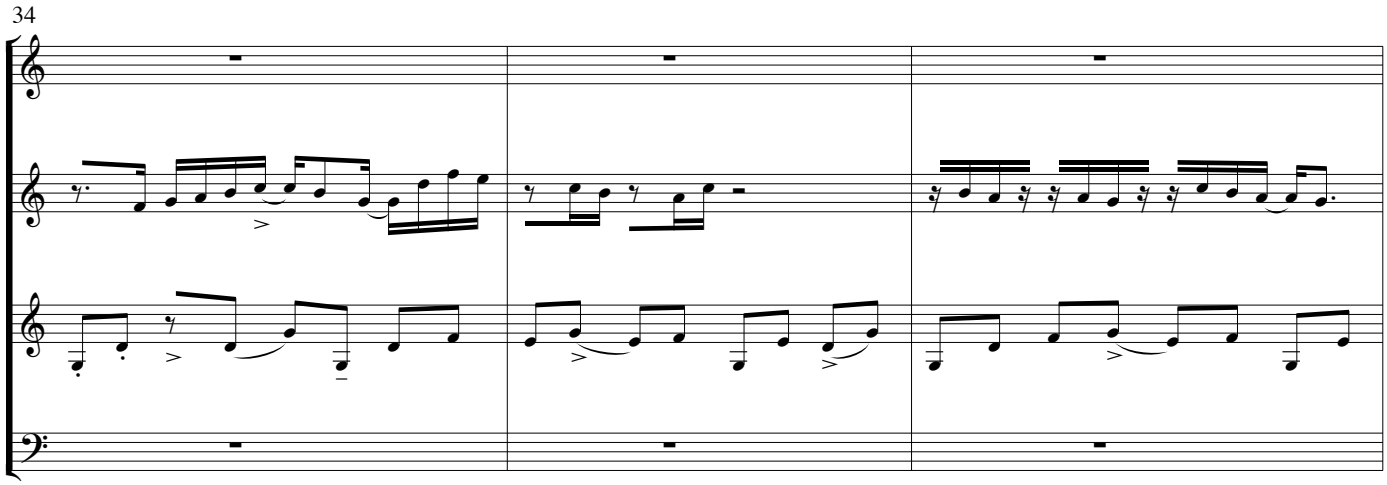
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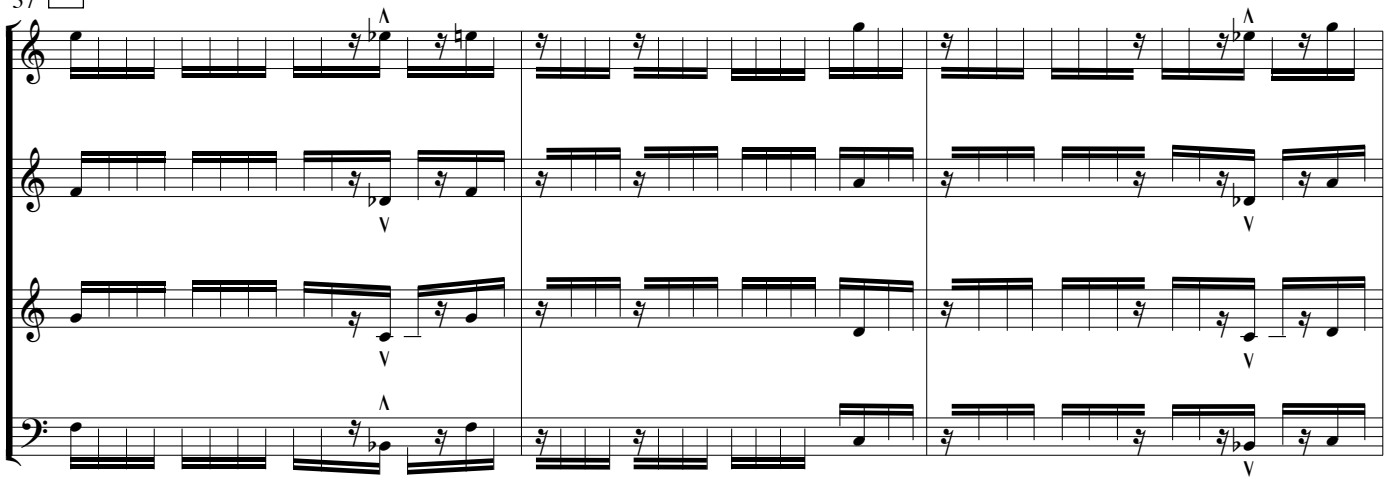

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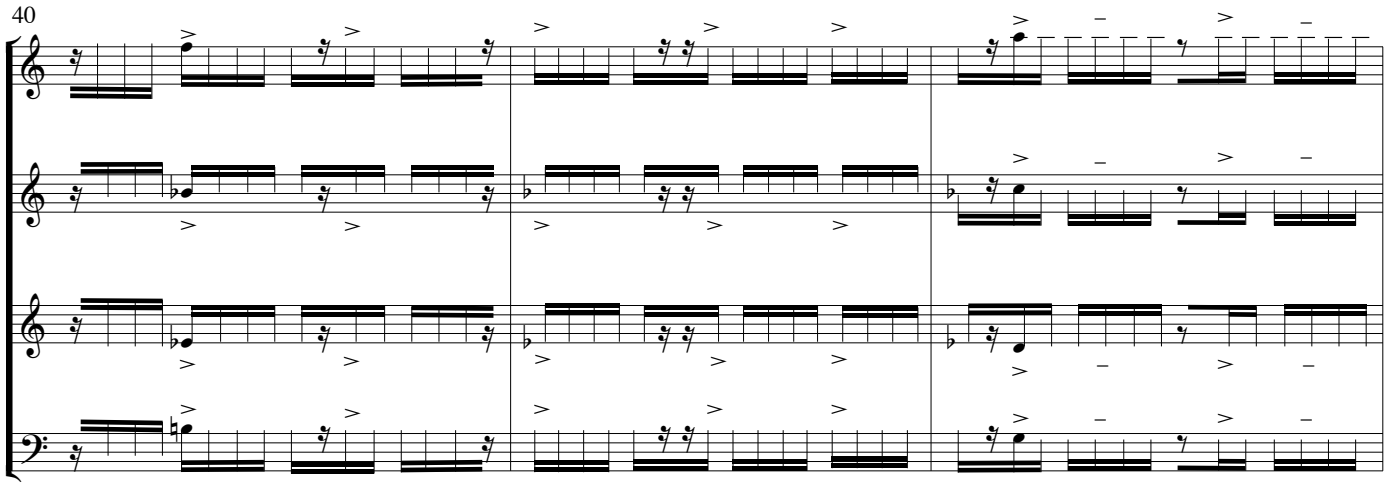

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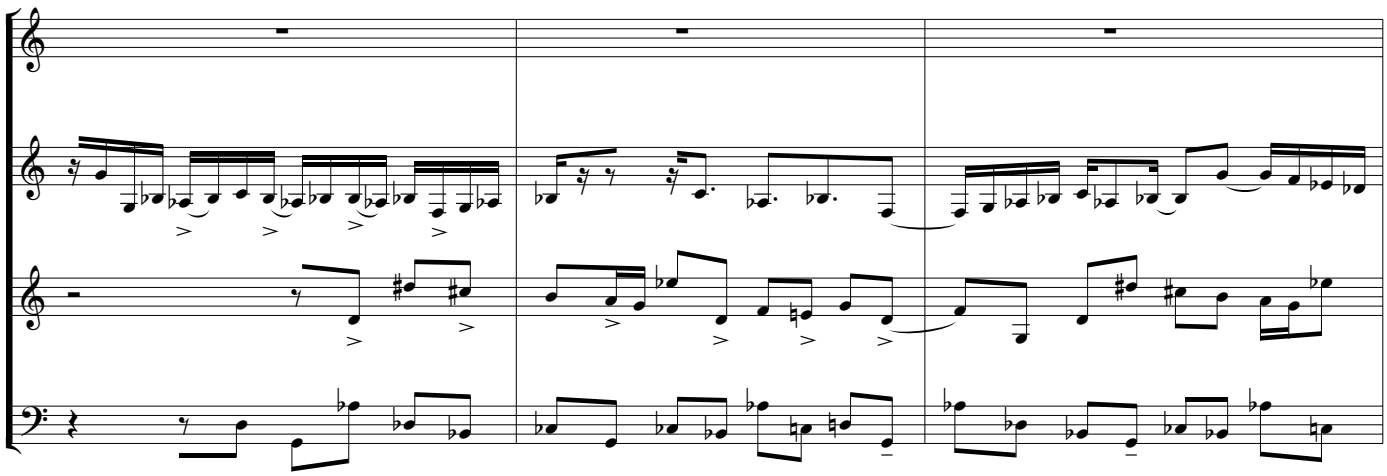

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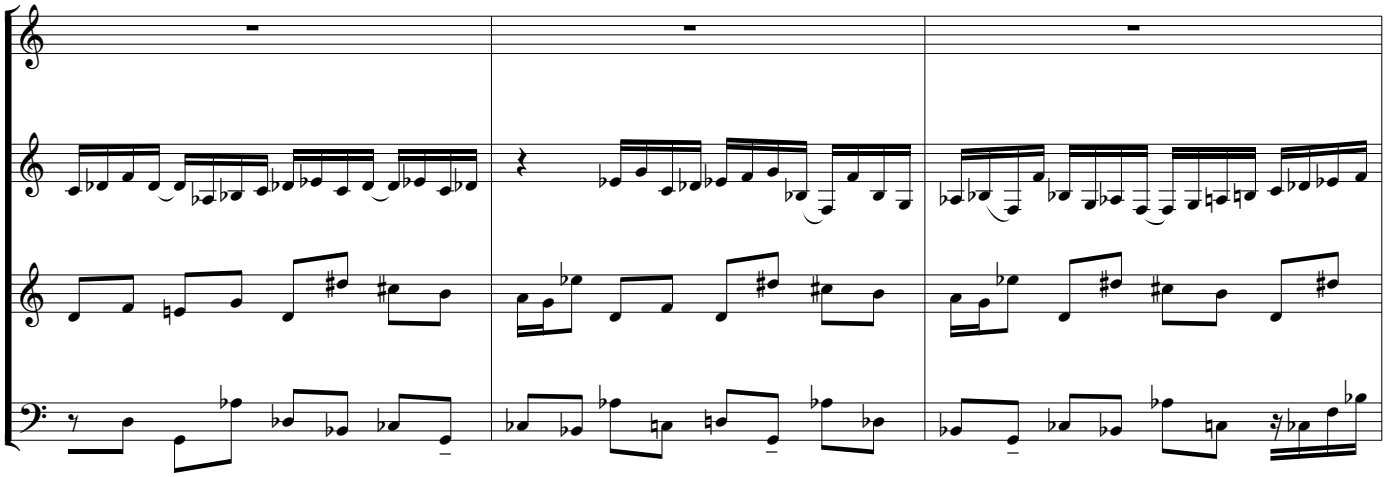

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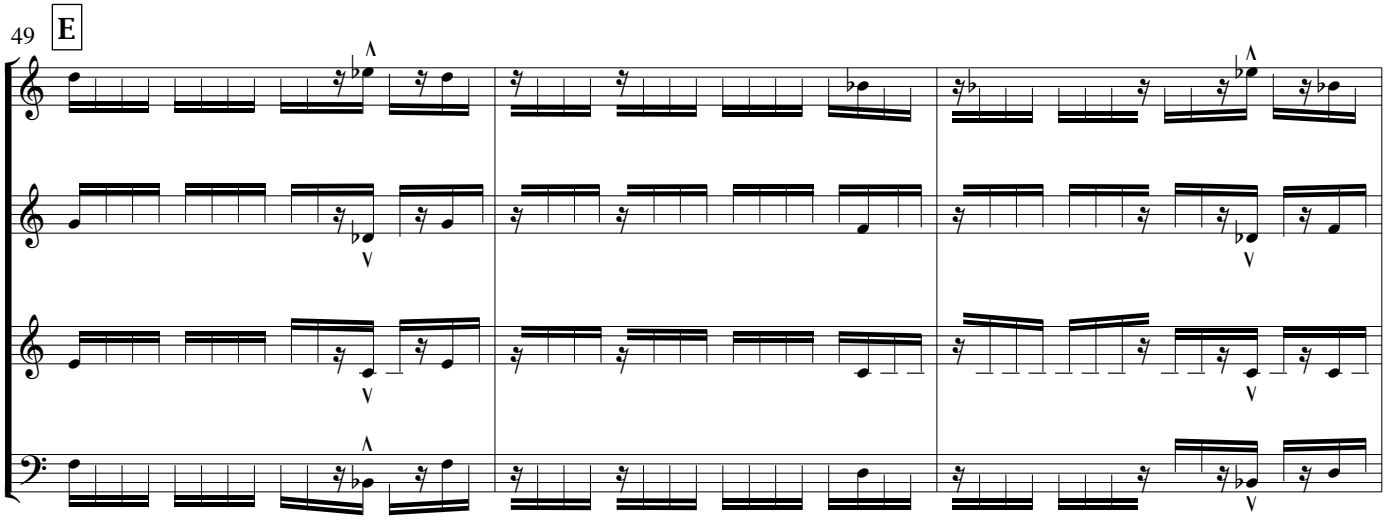

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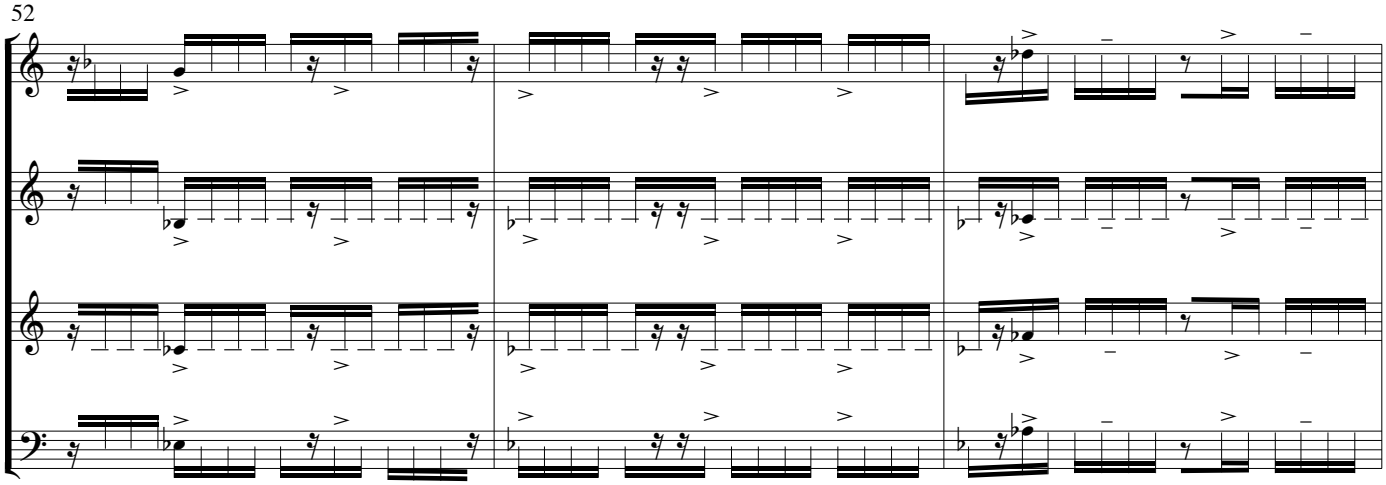

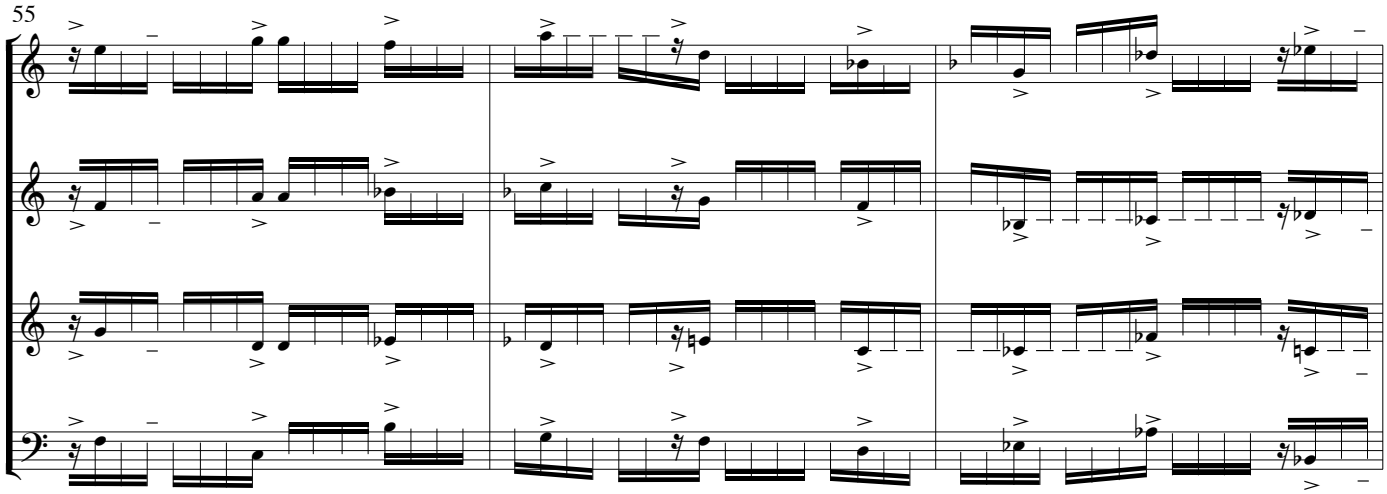
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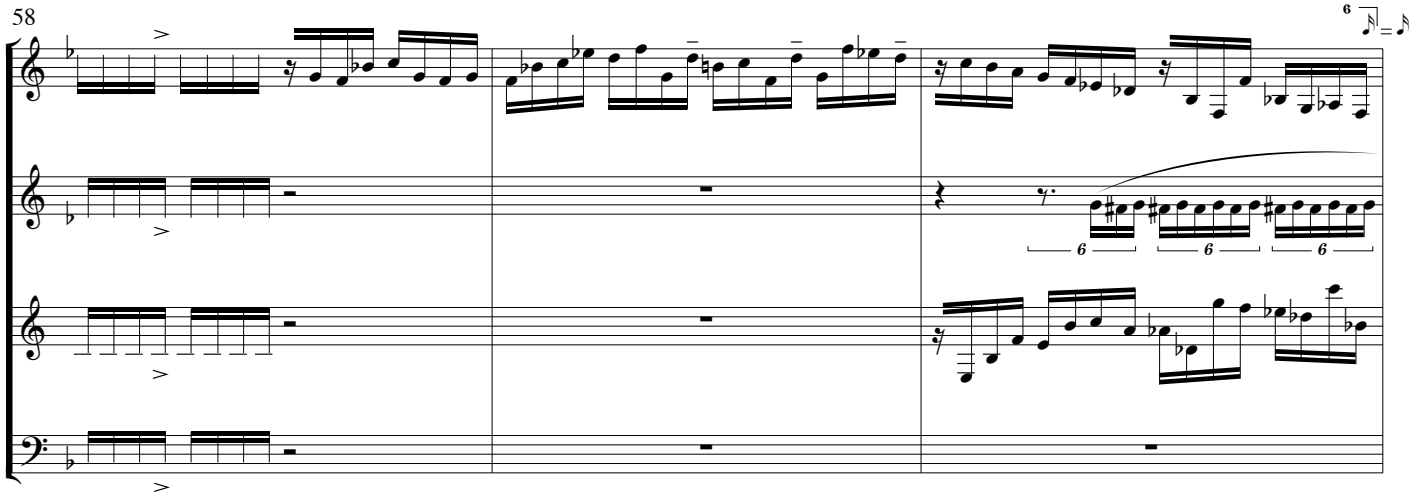
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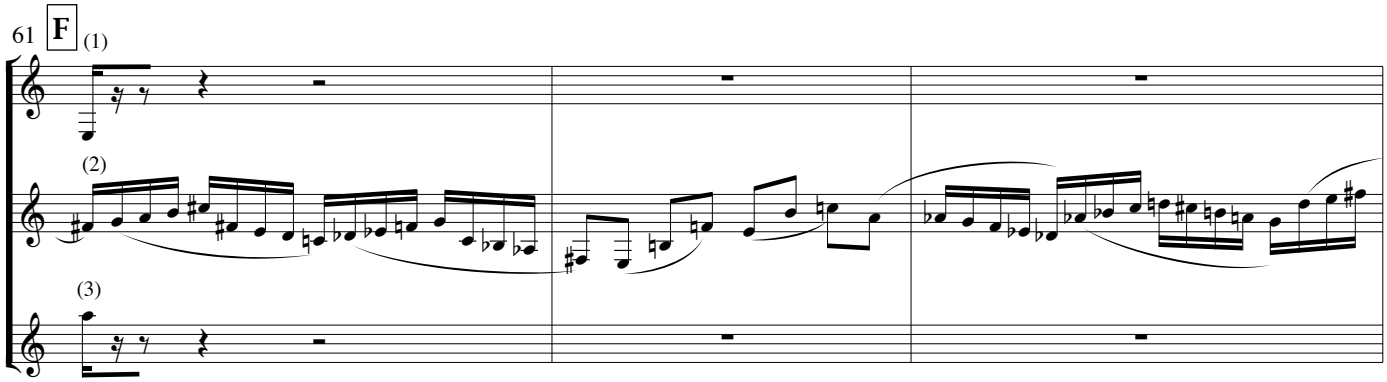
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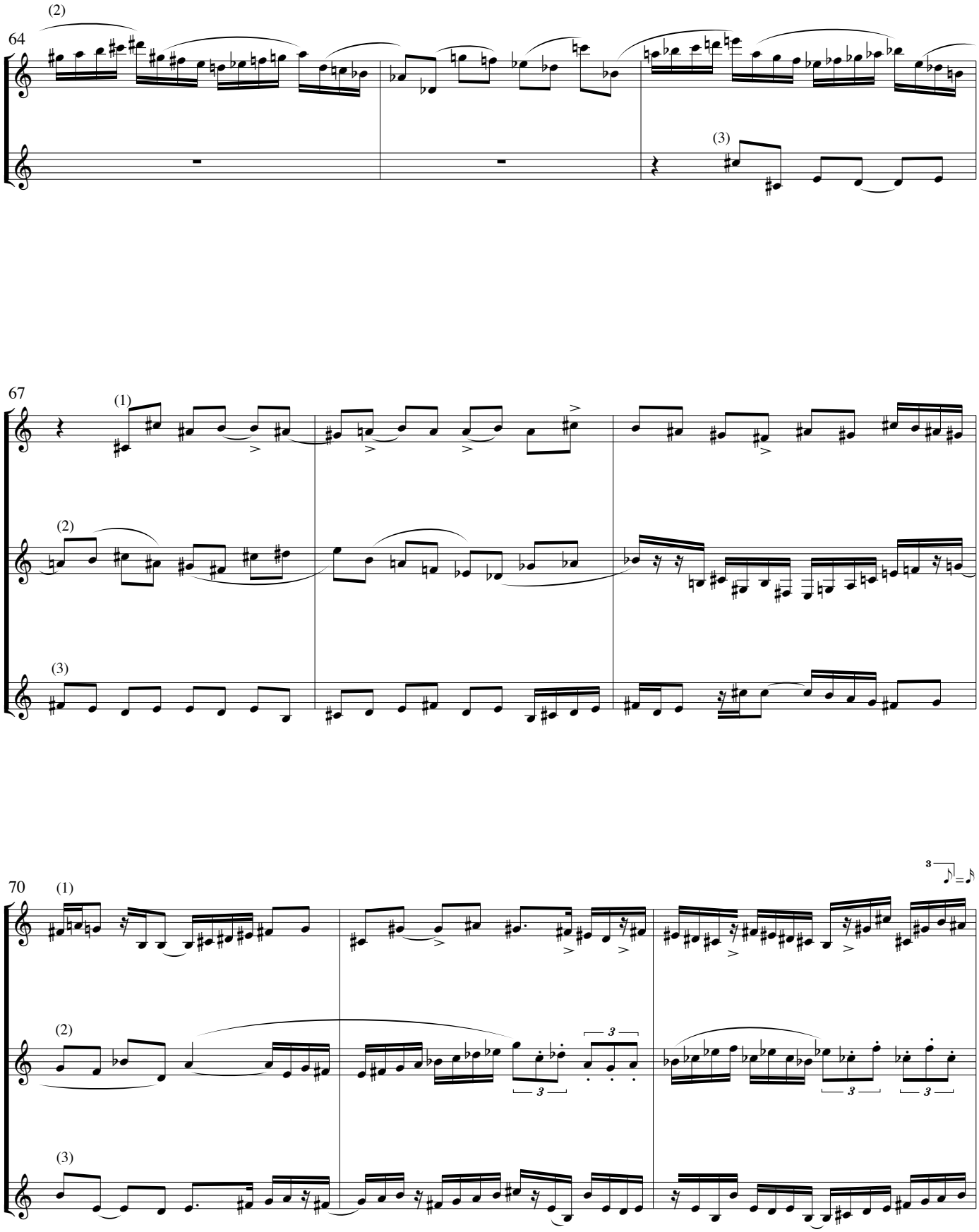
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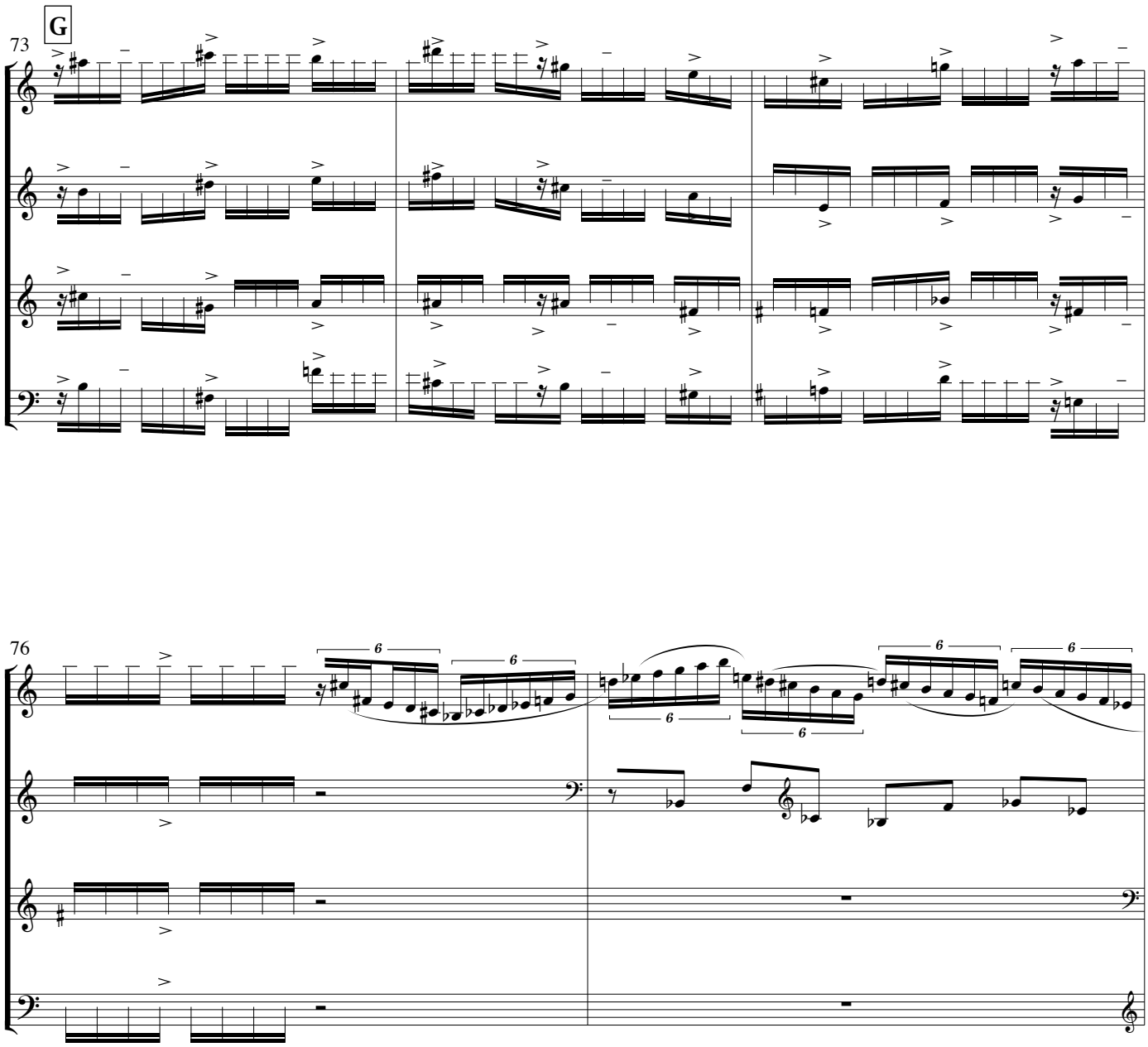
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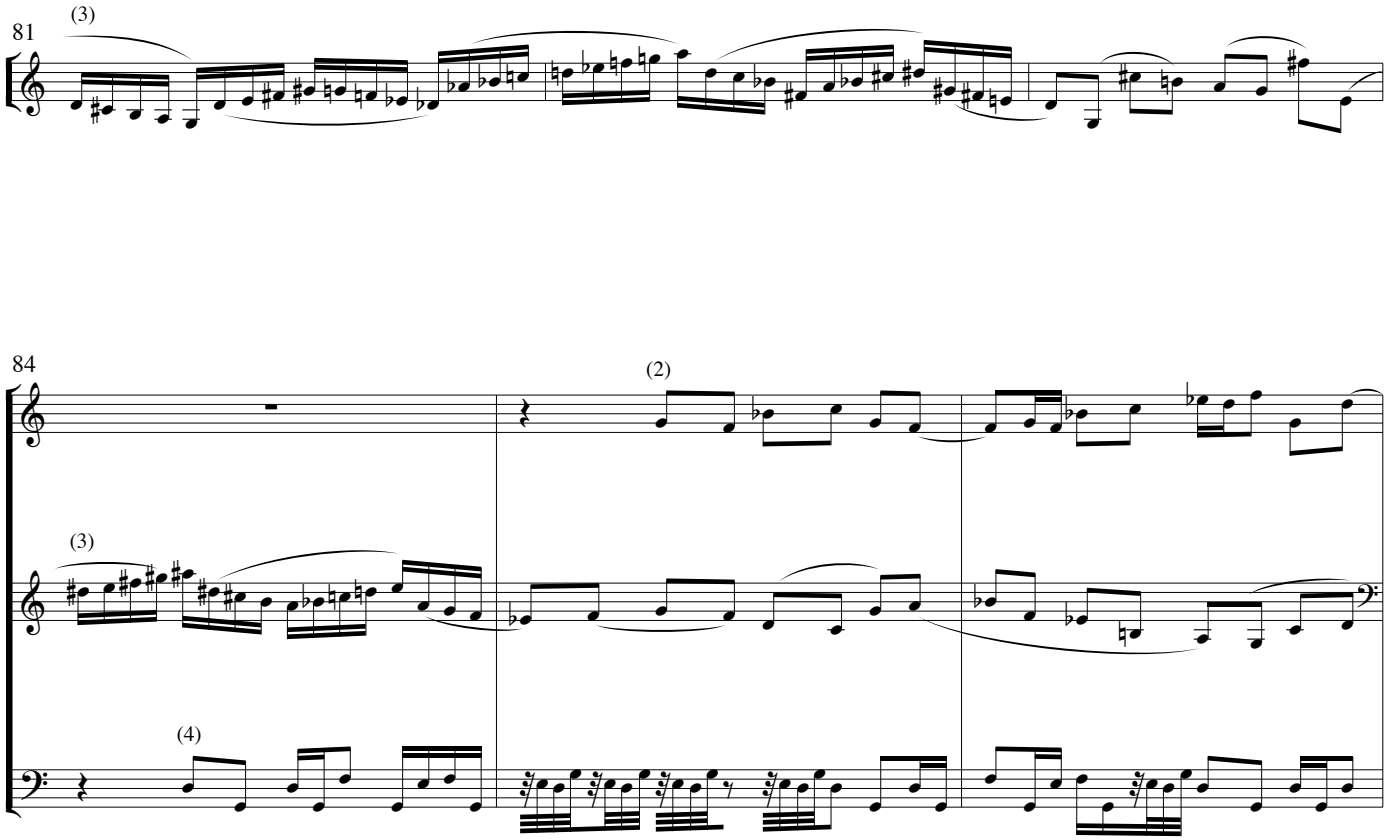
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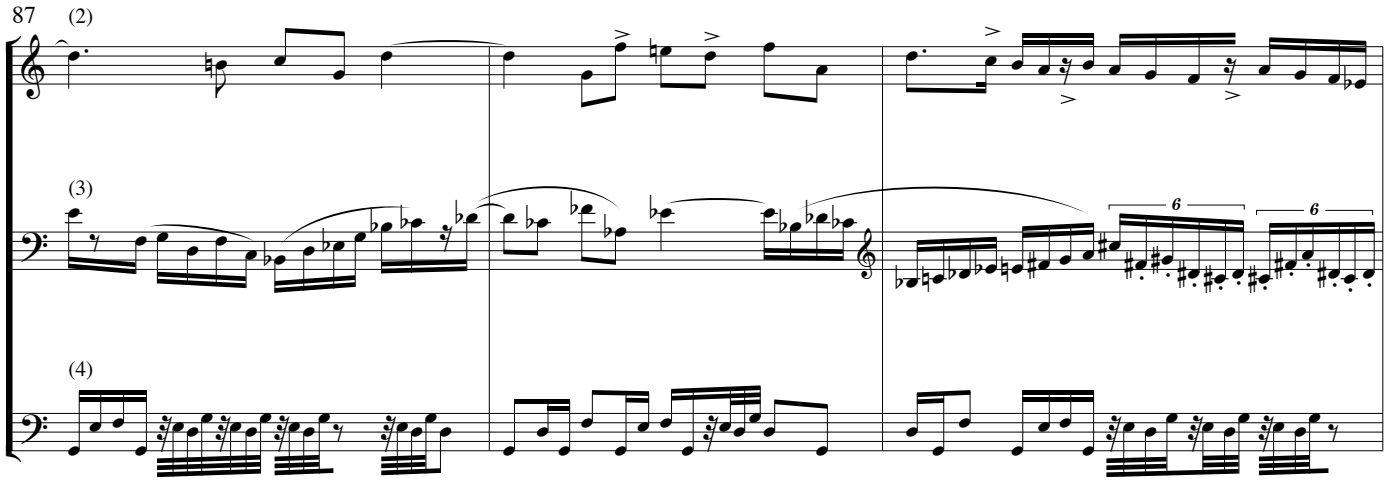
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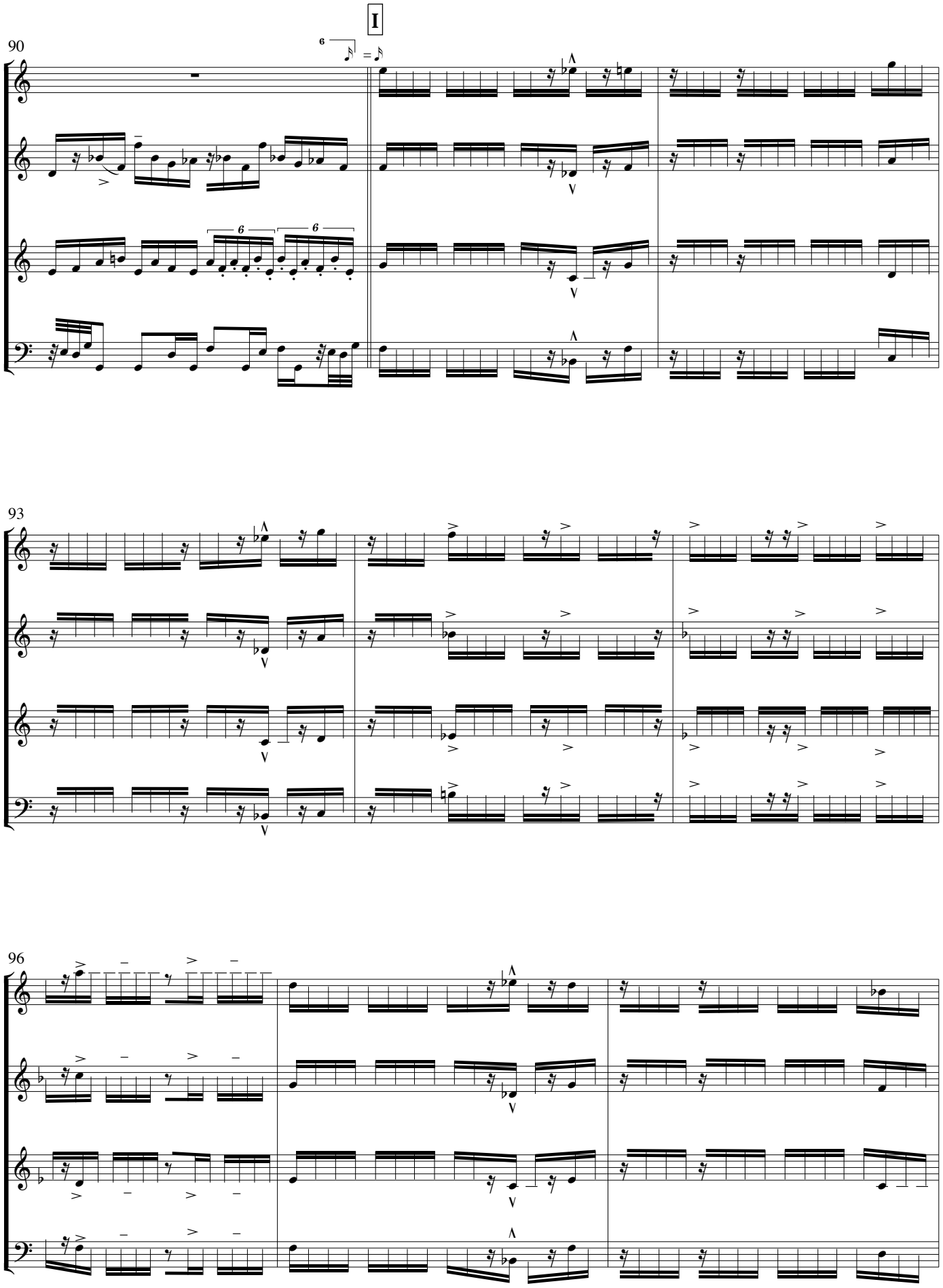
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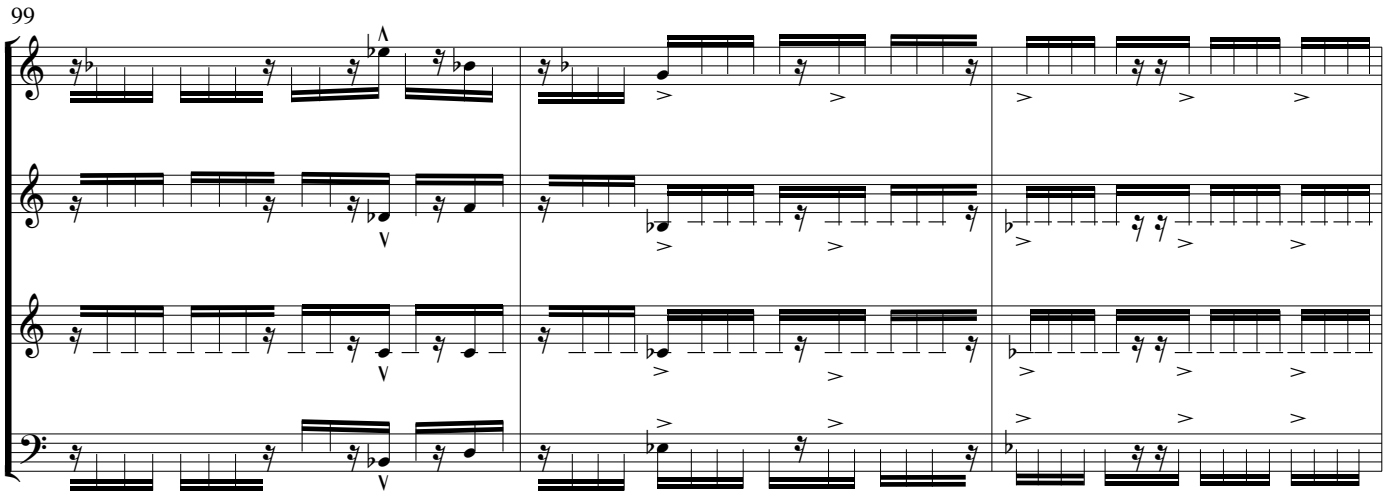
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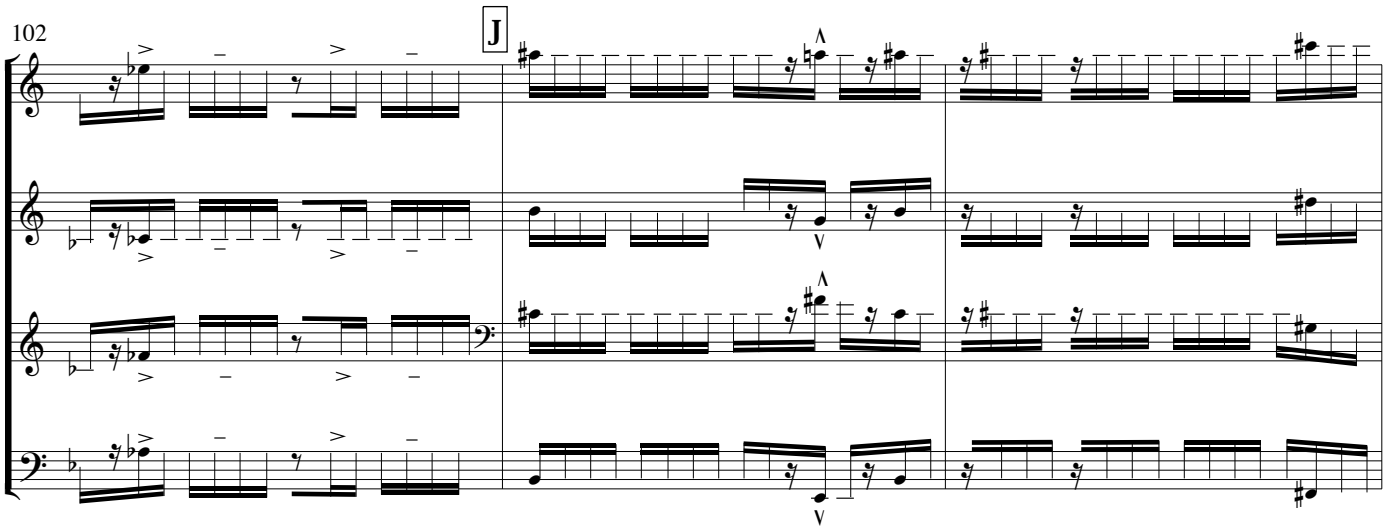
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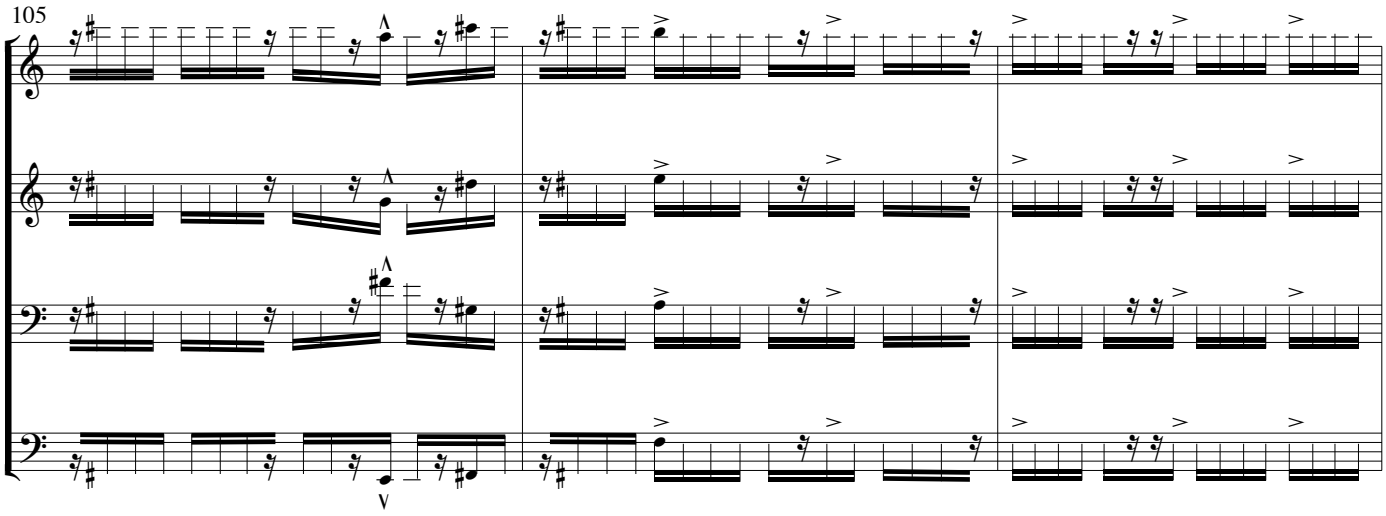
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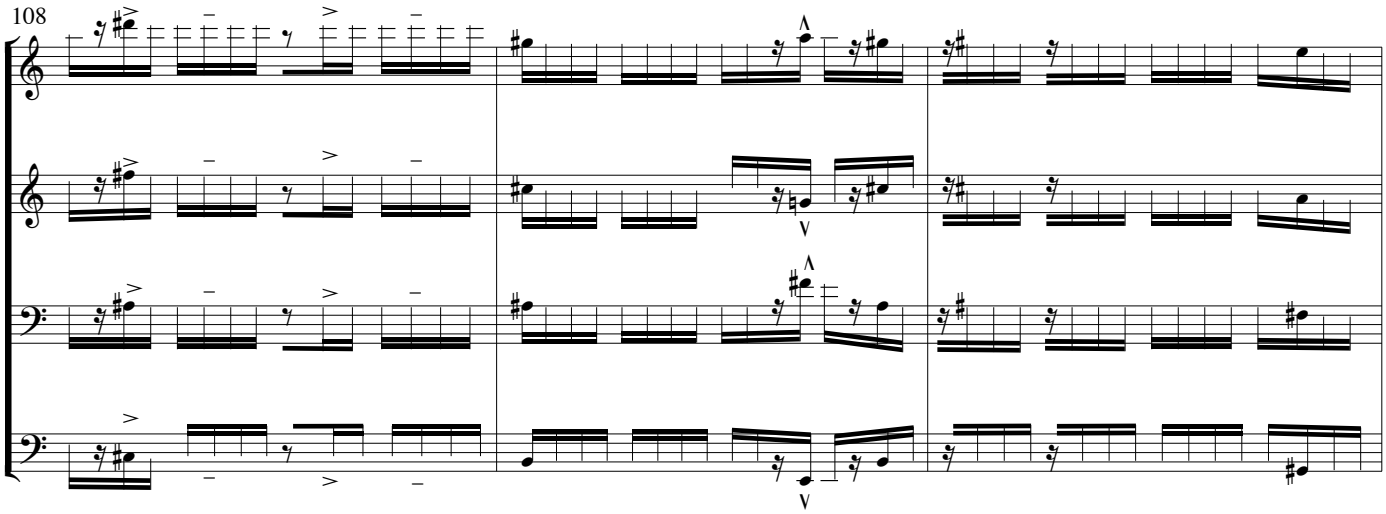
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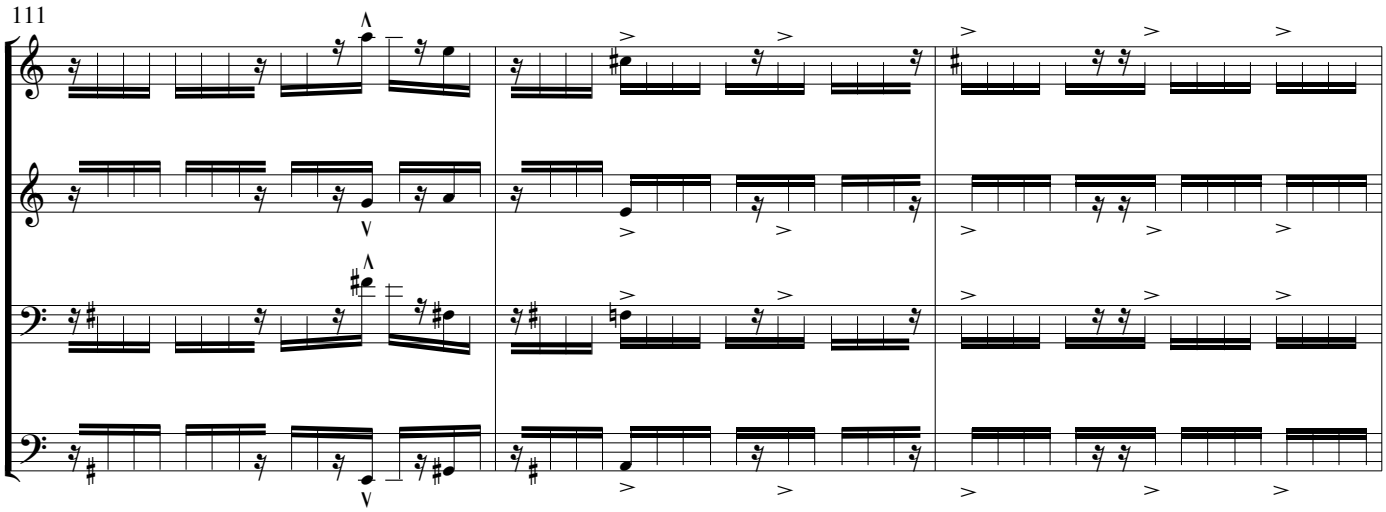
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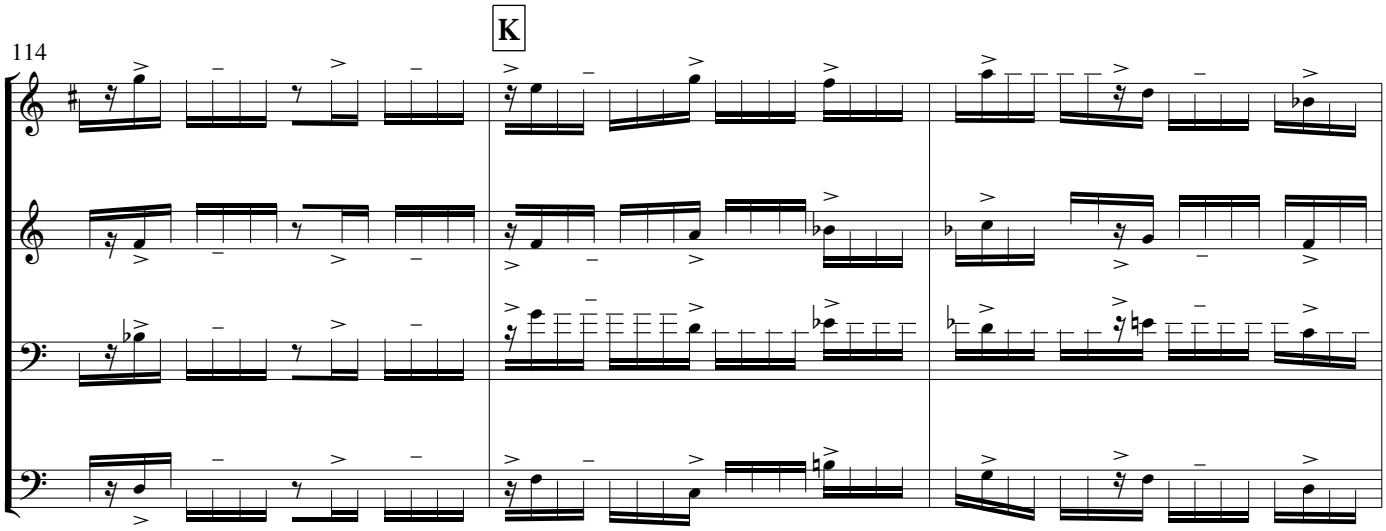
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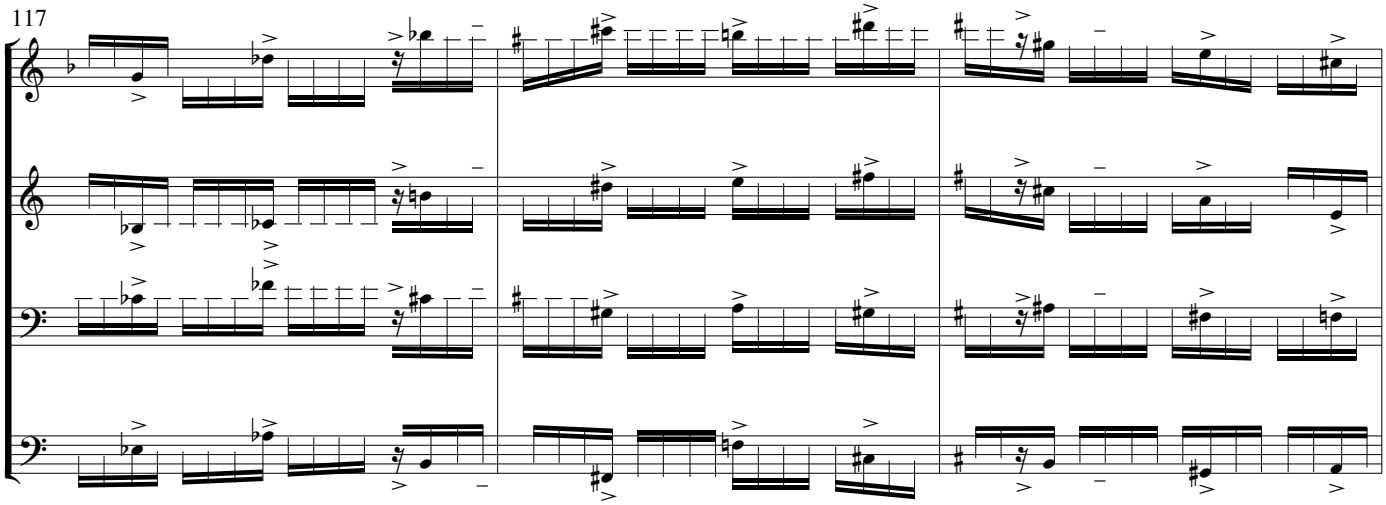
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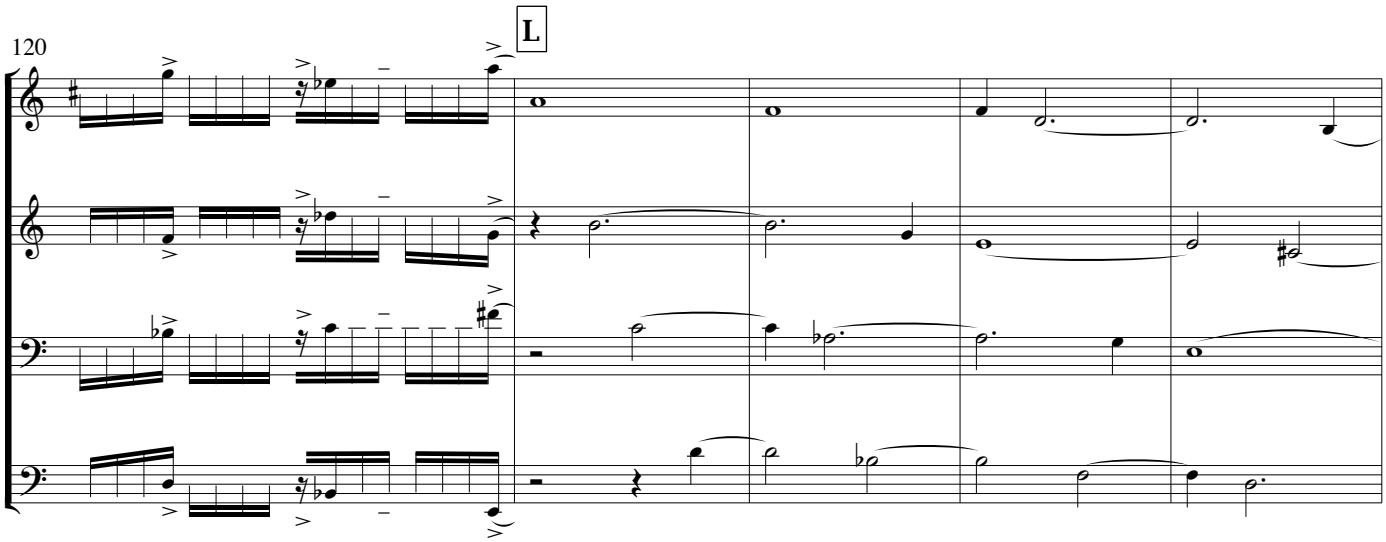
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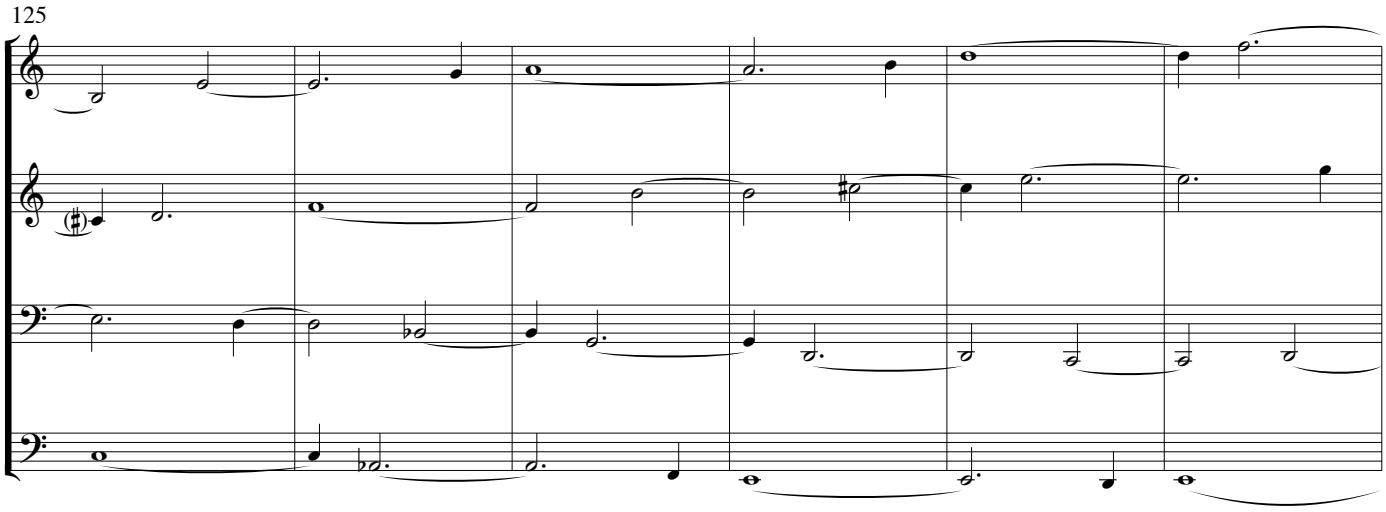
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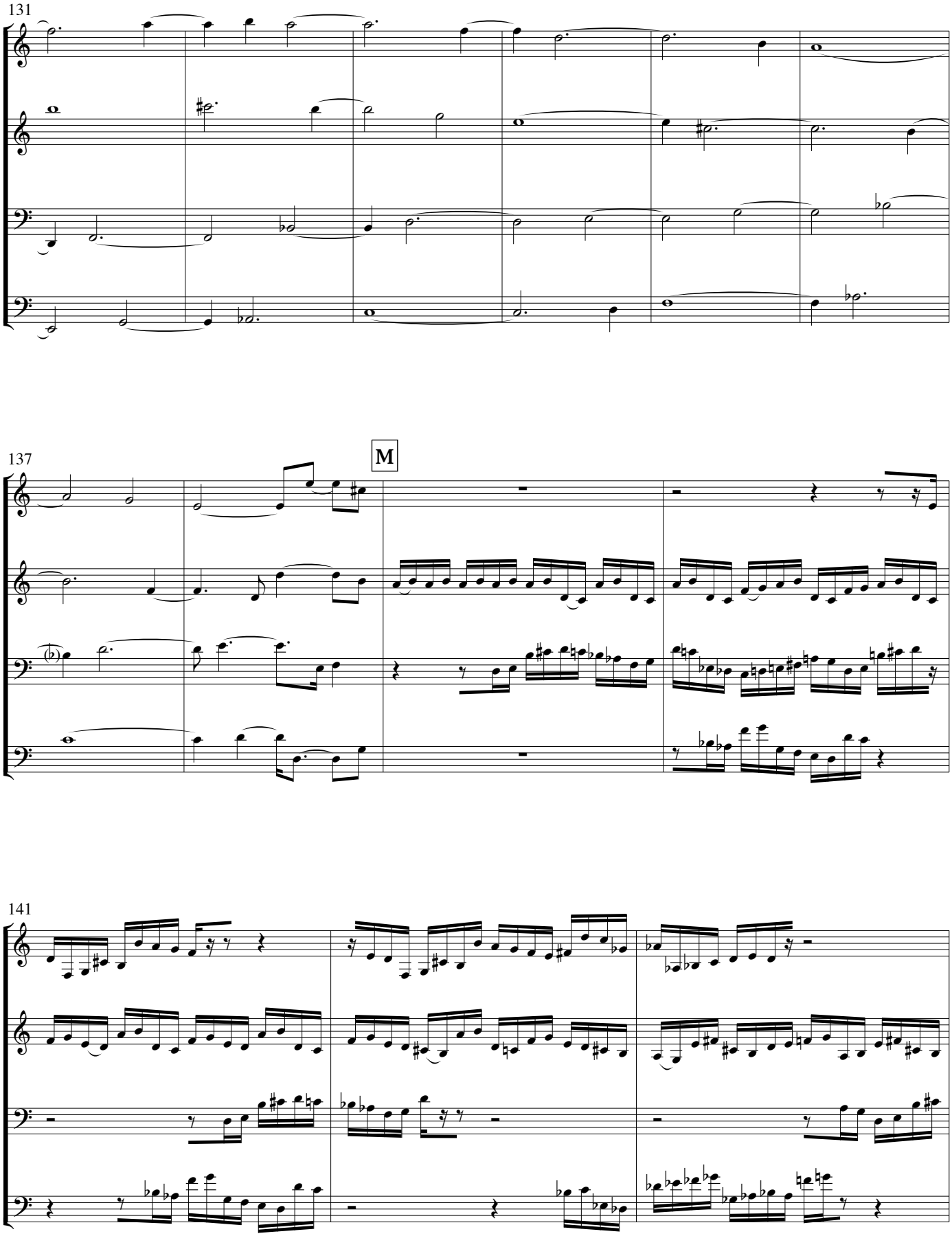
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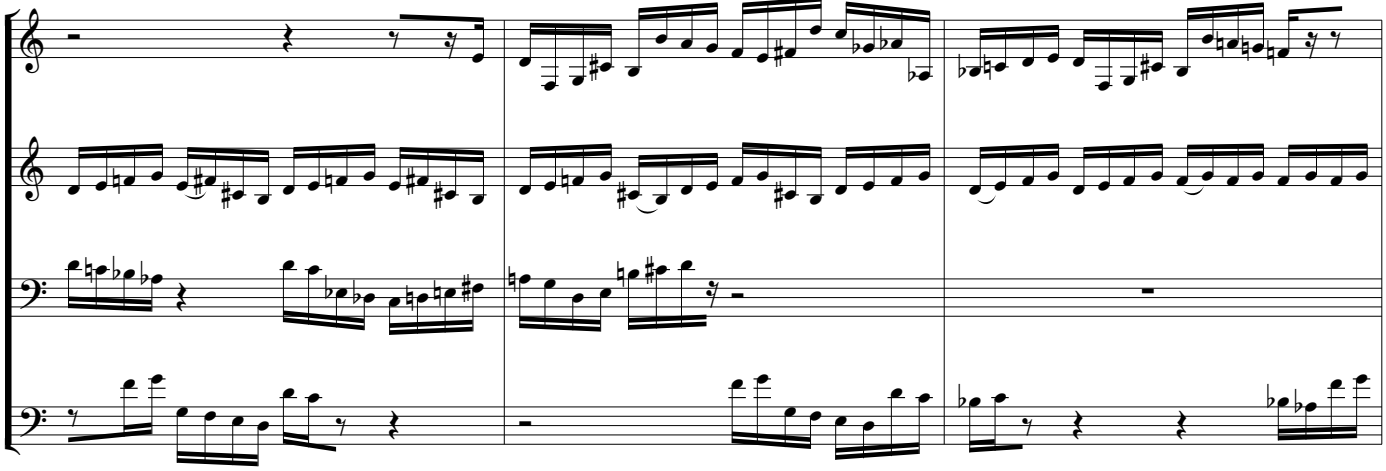

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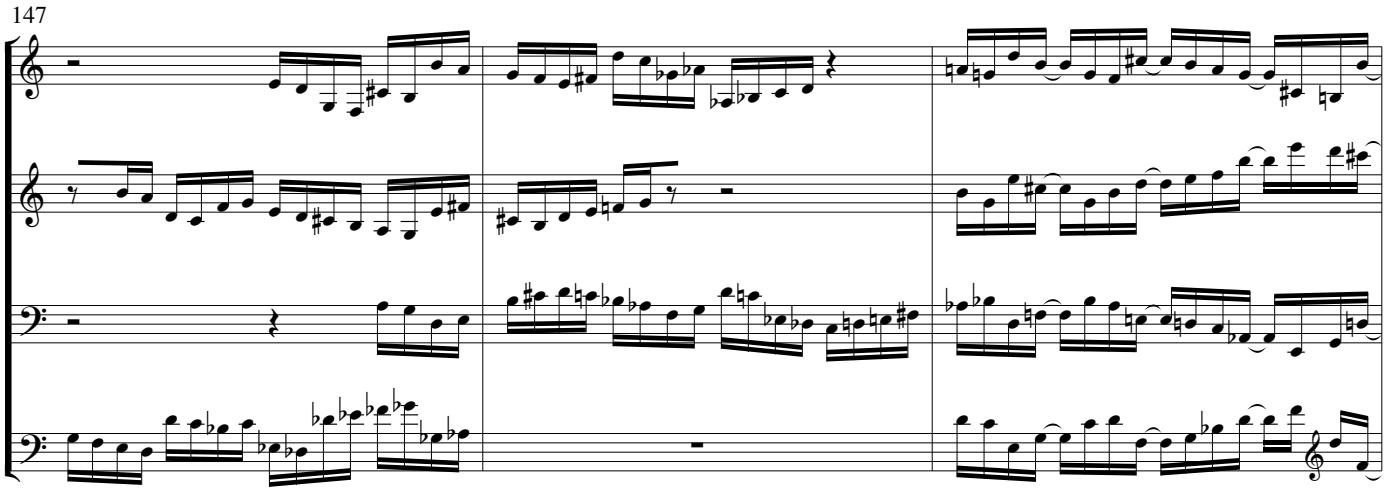

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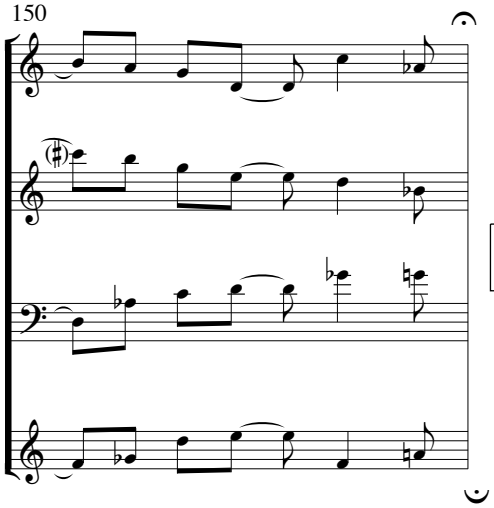

Players are encouraged to develop their own improvised interlude or link between sections M and N.

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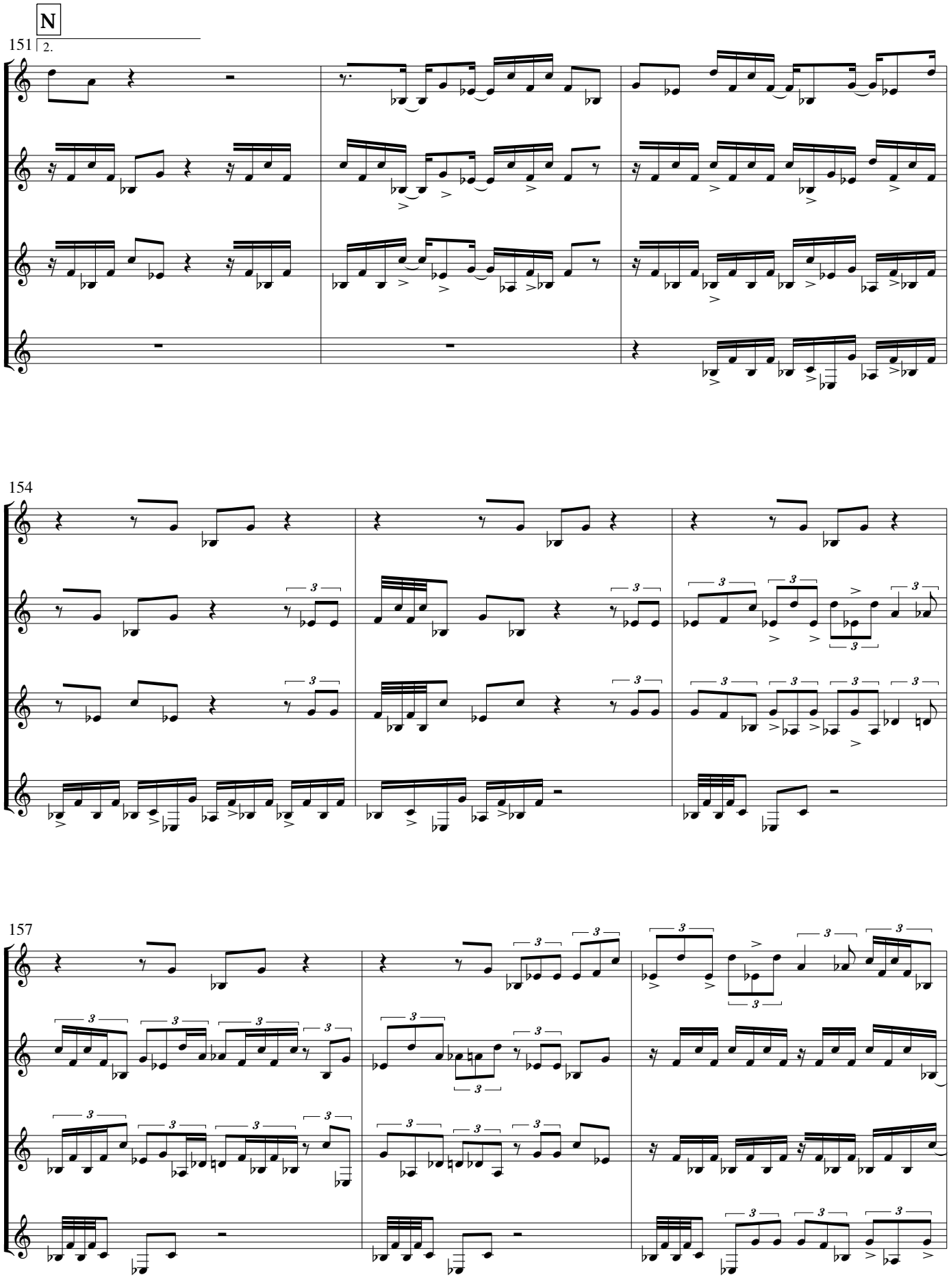
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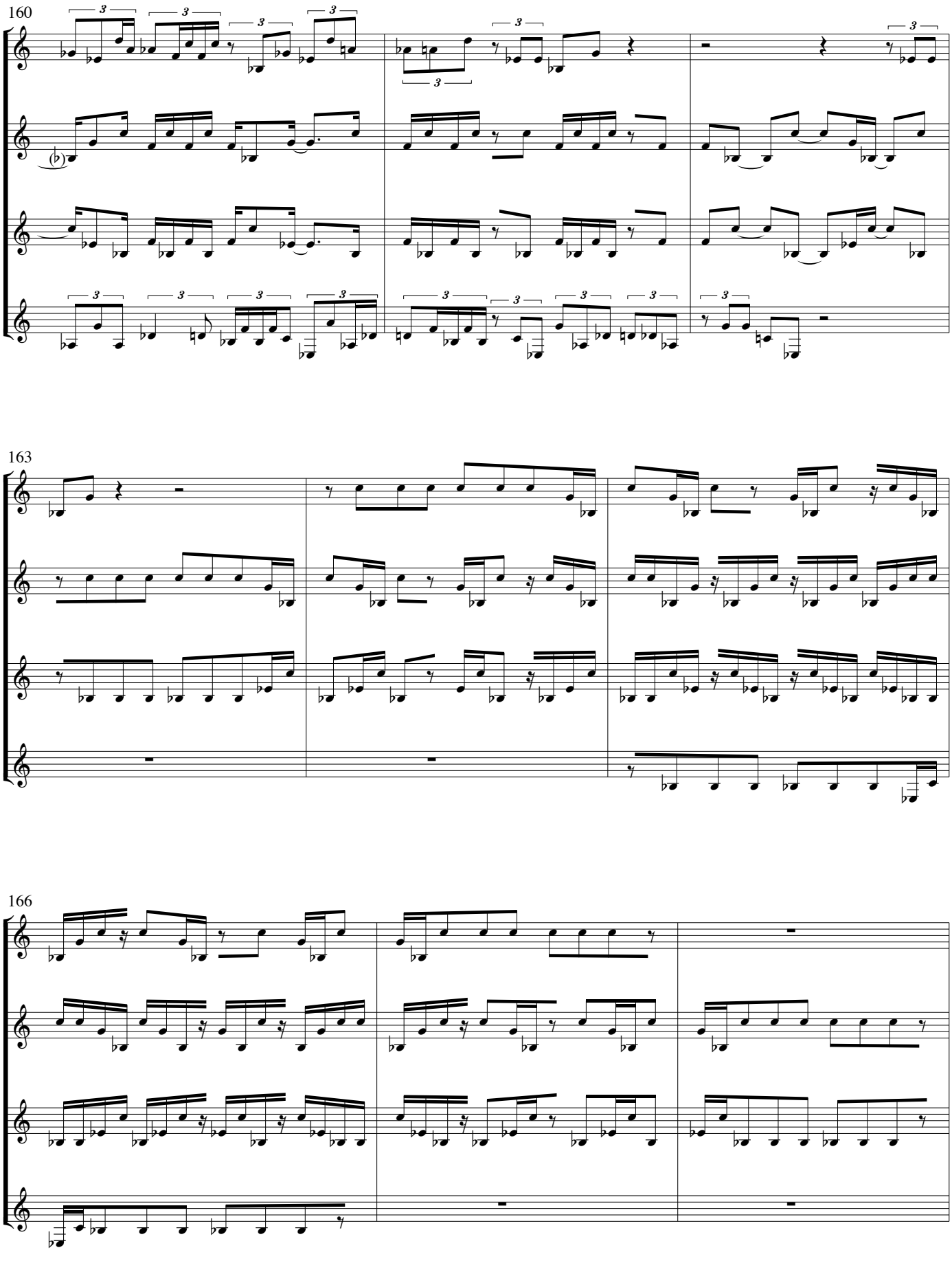
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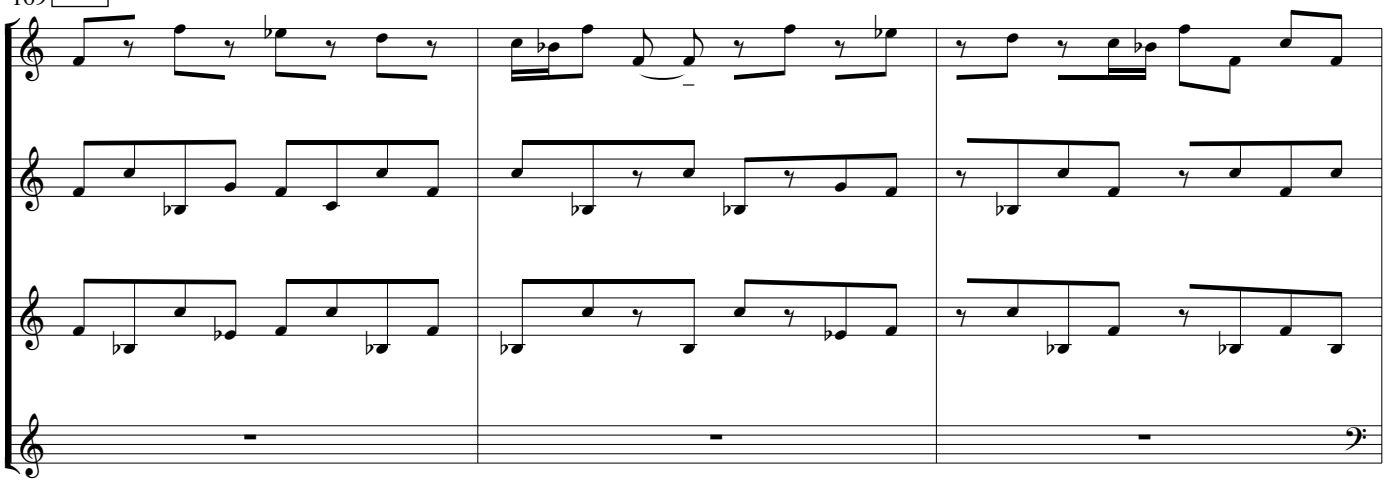
169 **N1**



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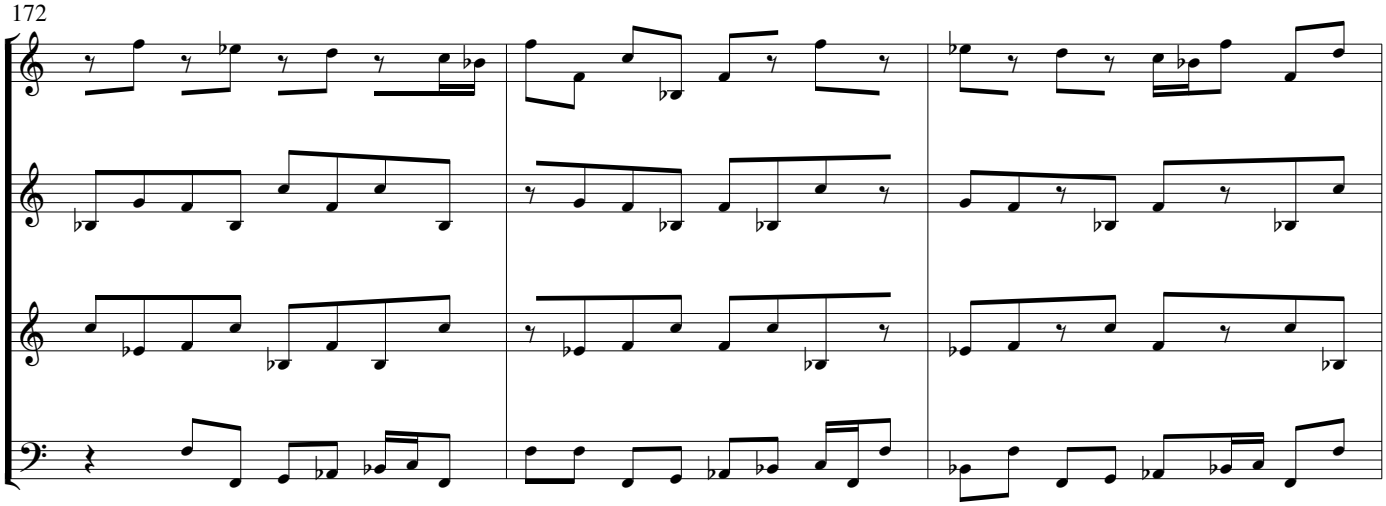

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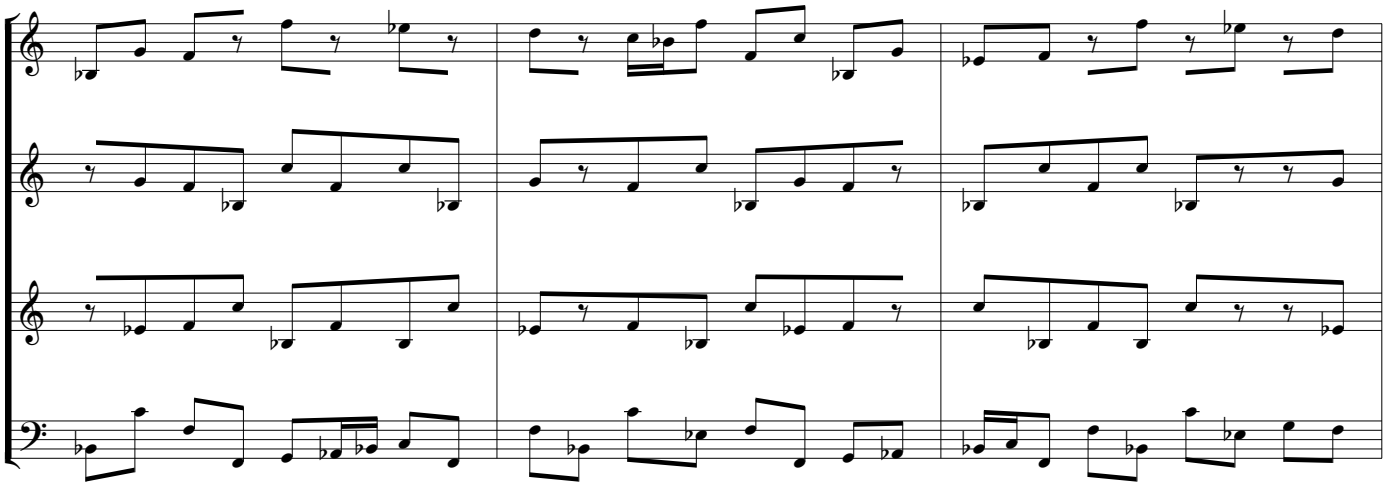

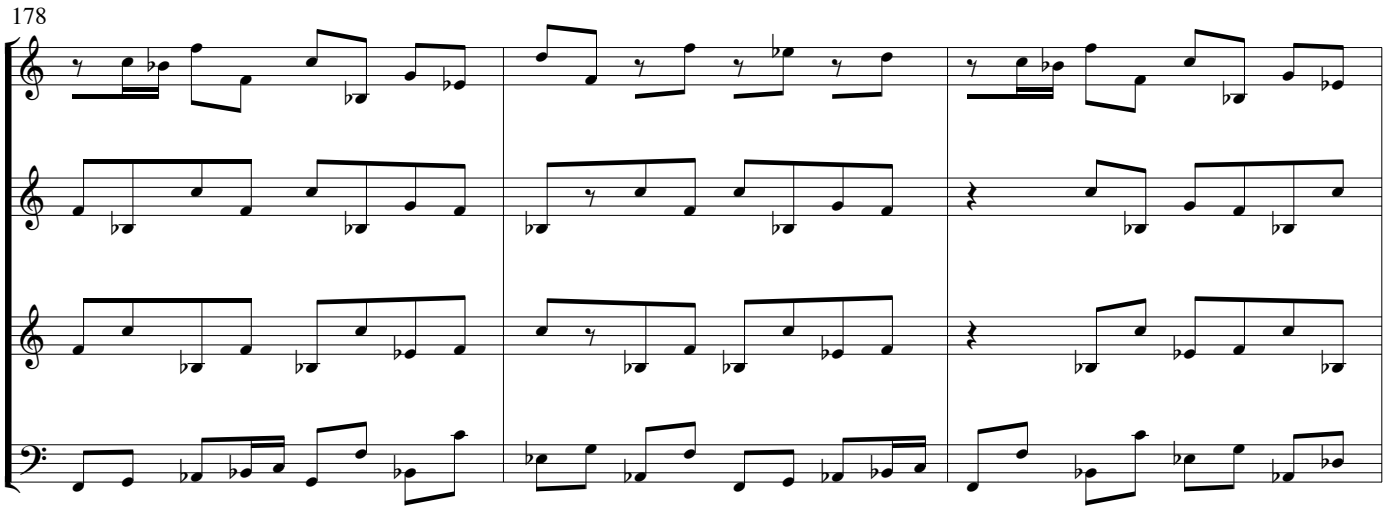
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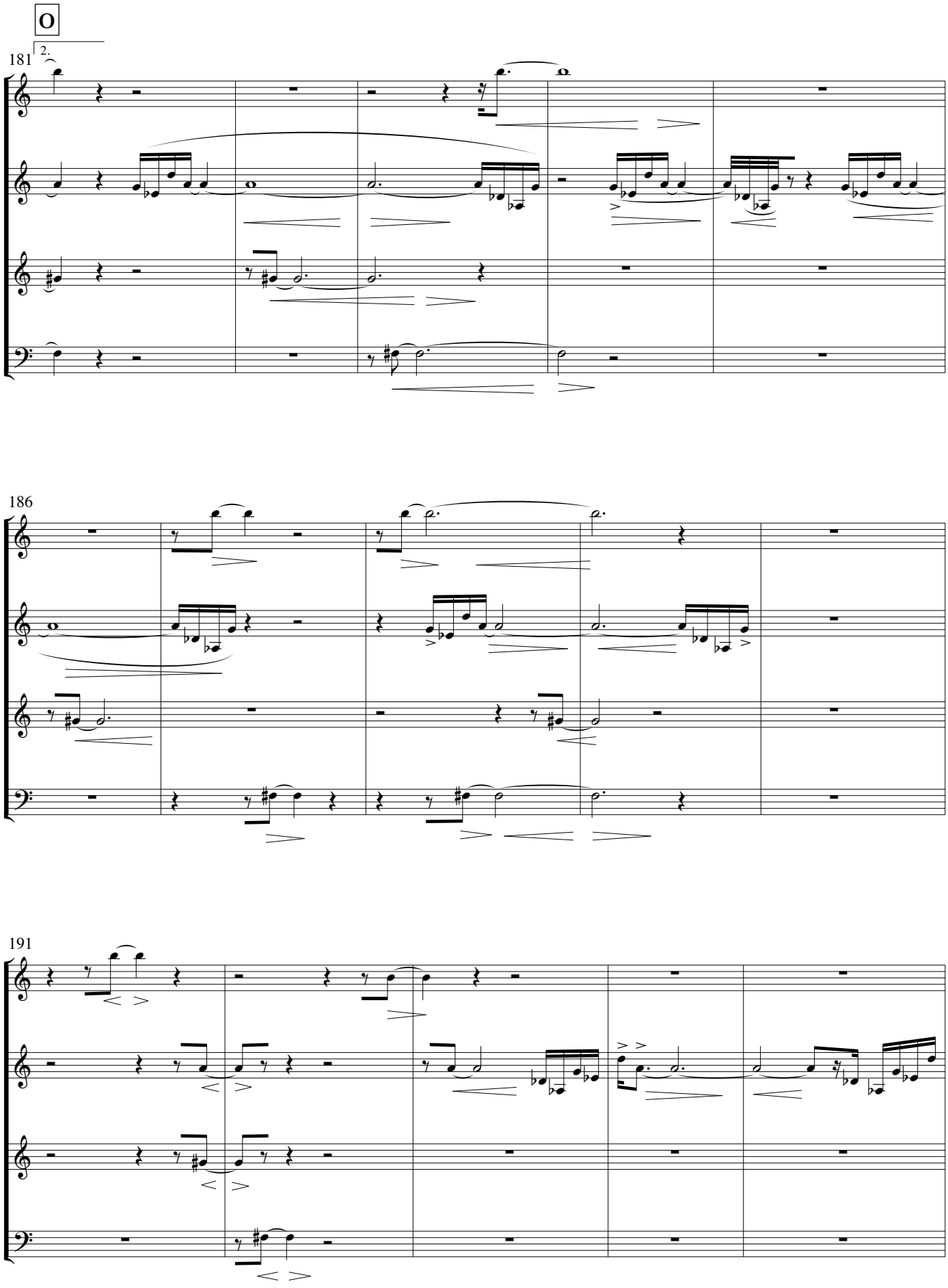
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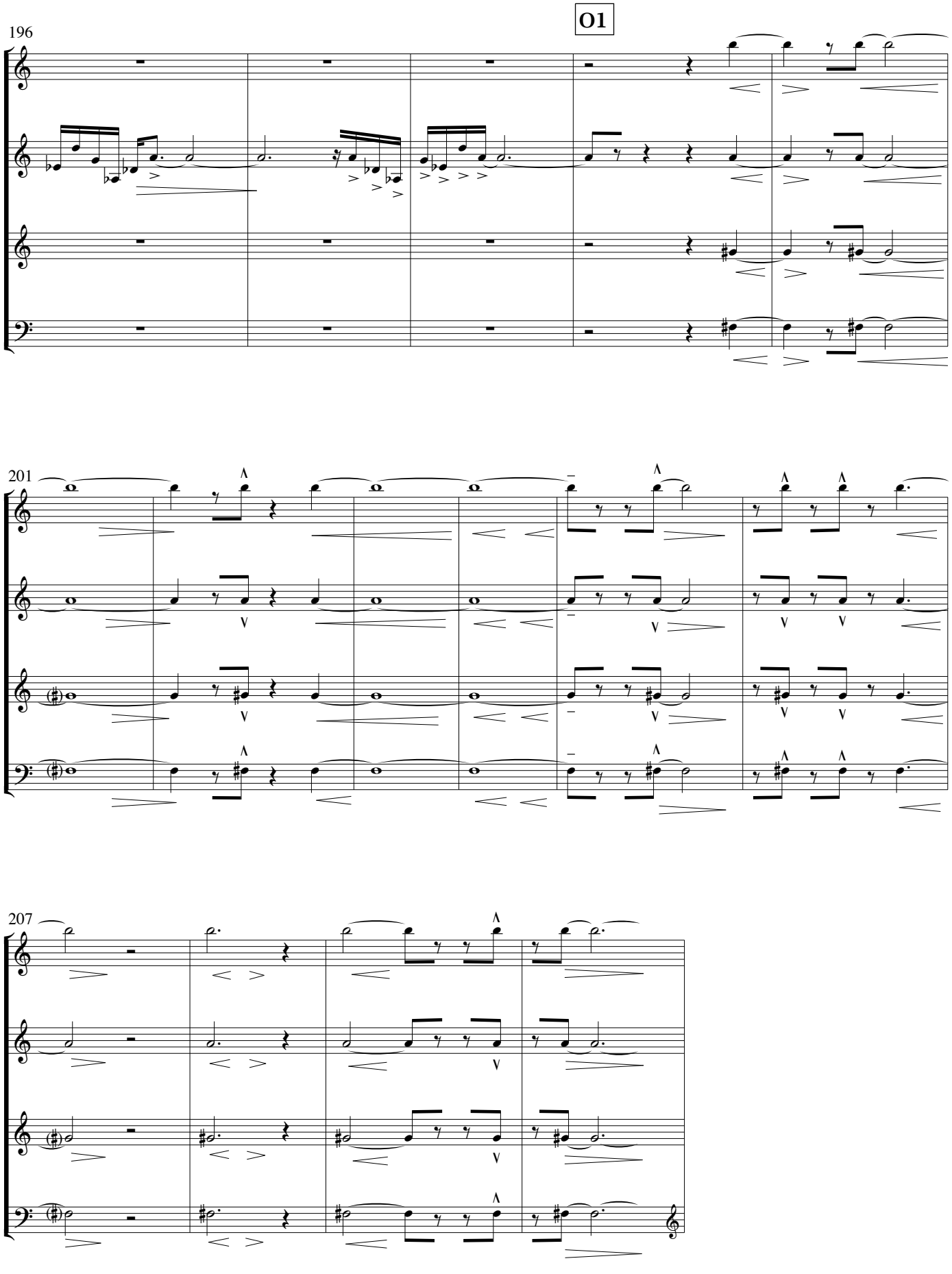
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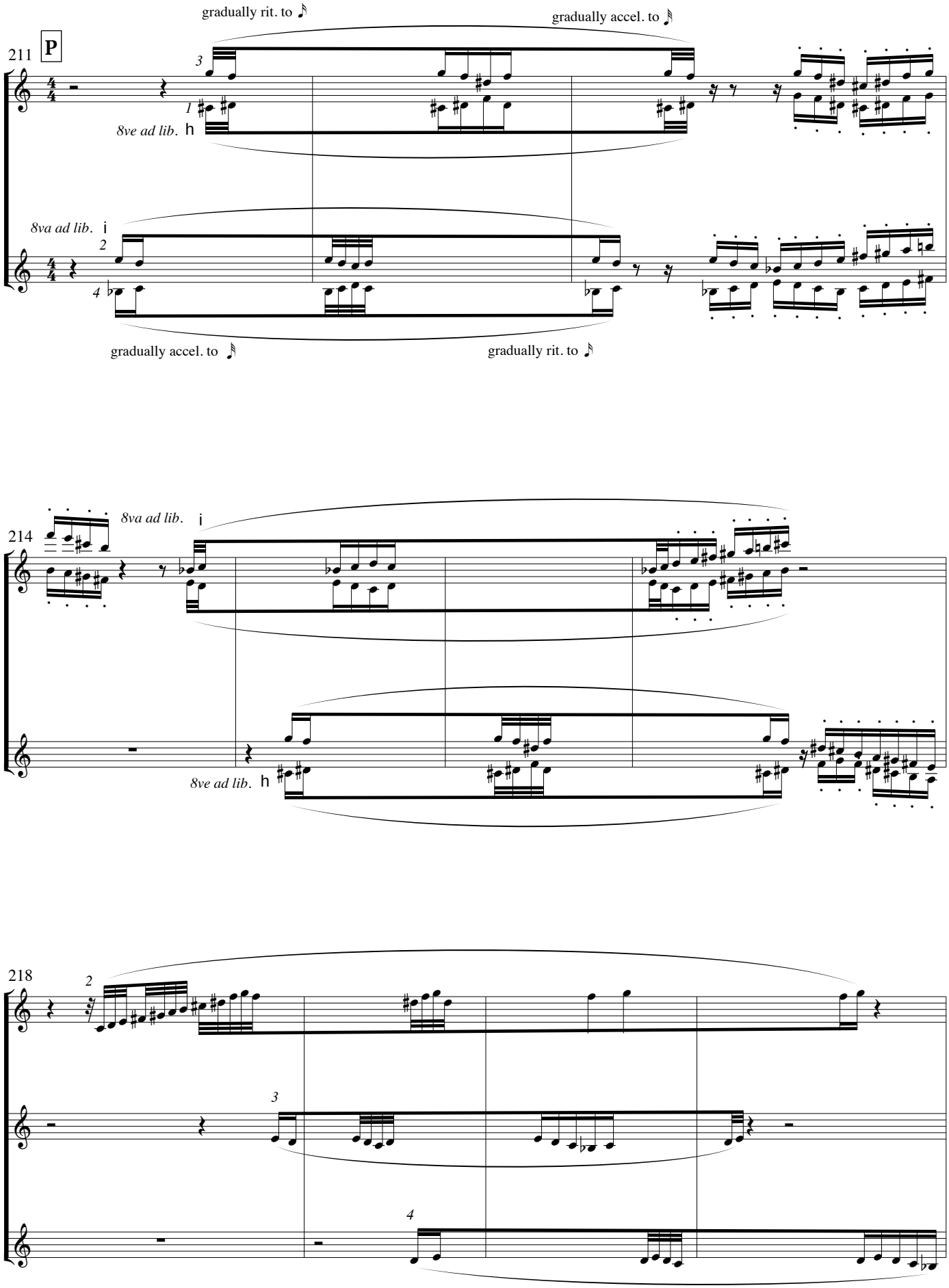
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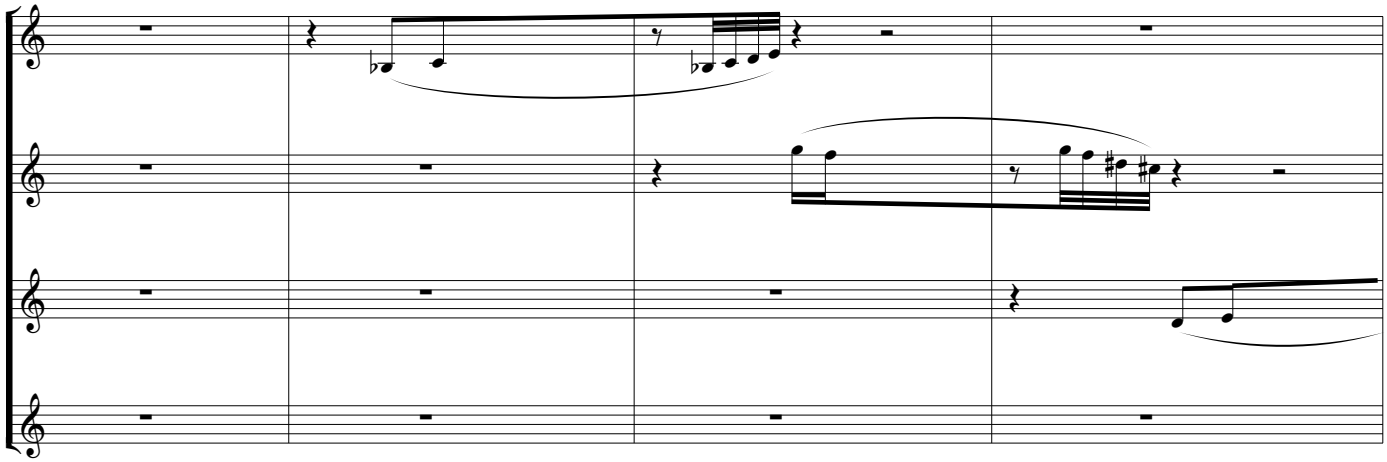

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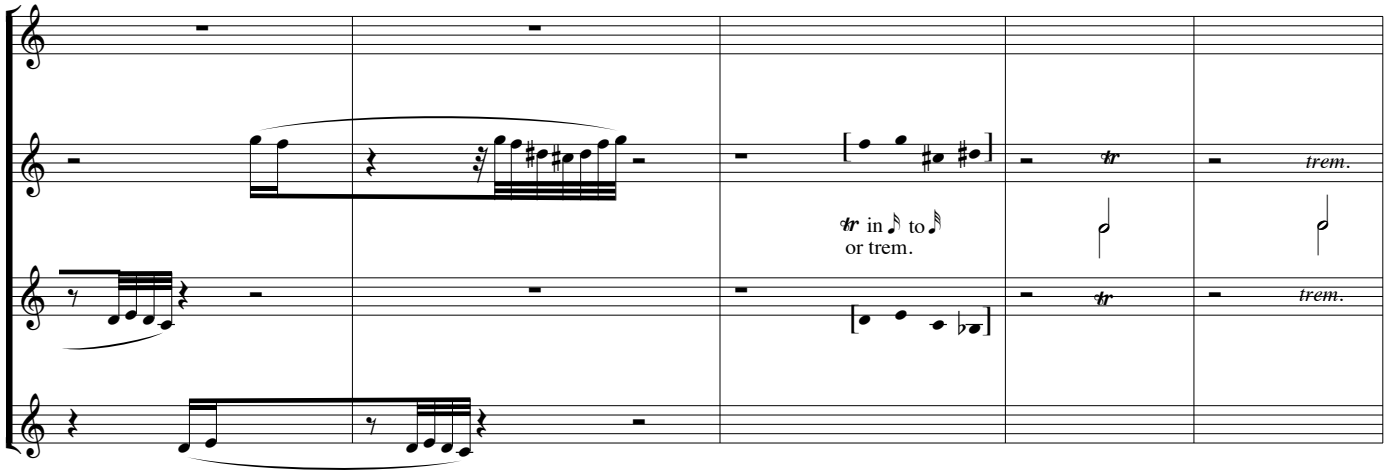

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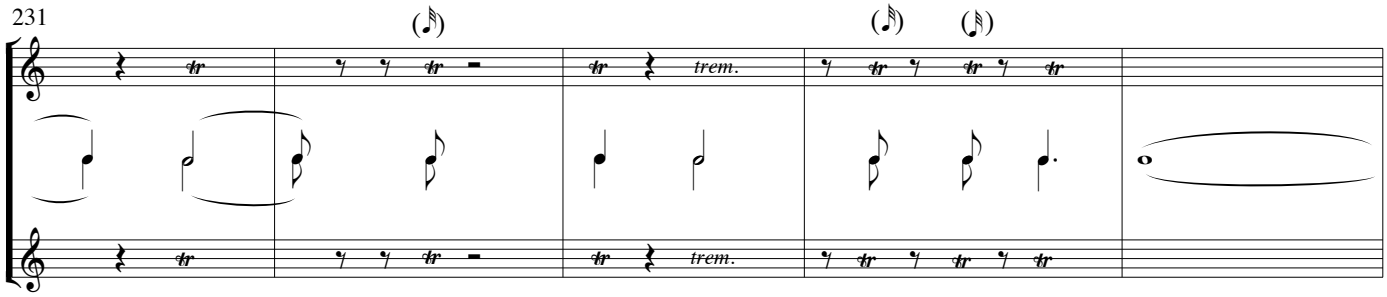

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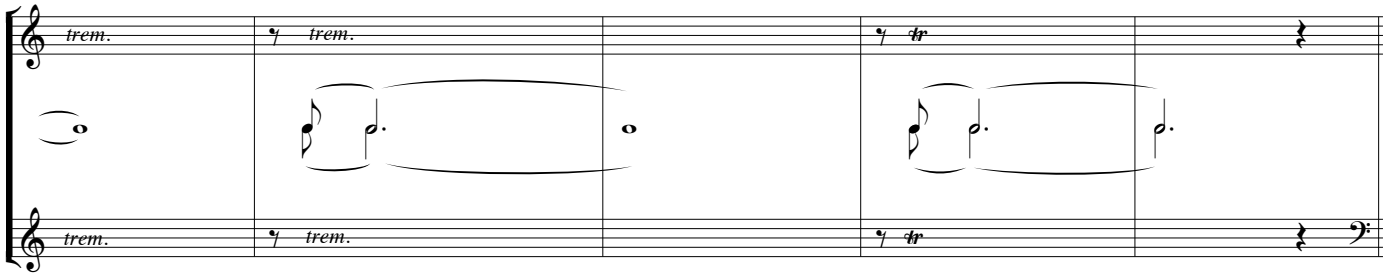

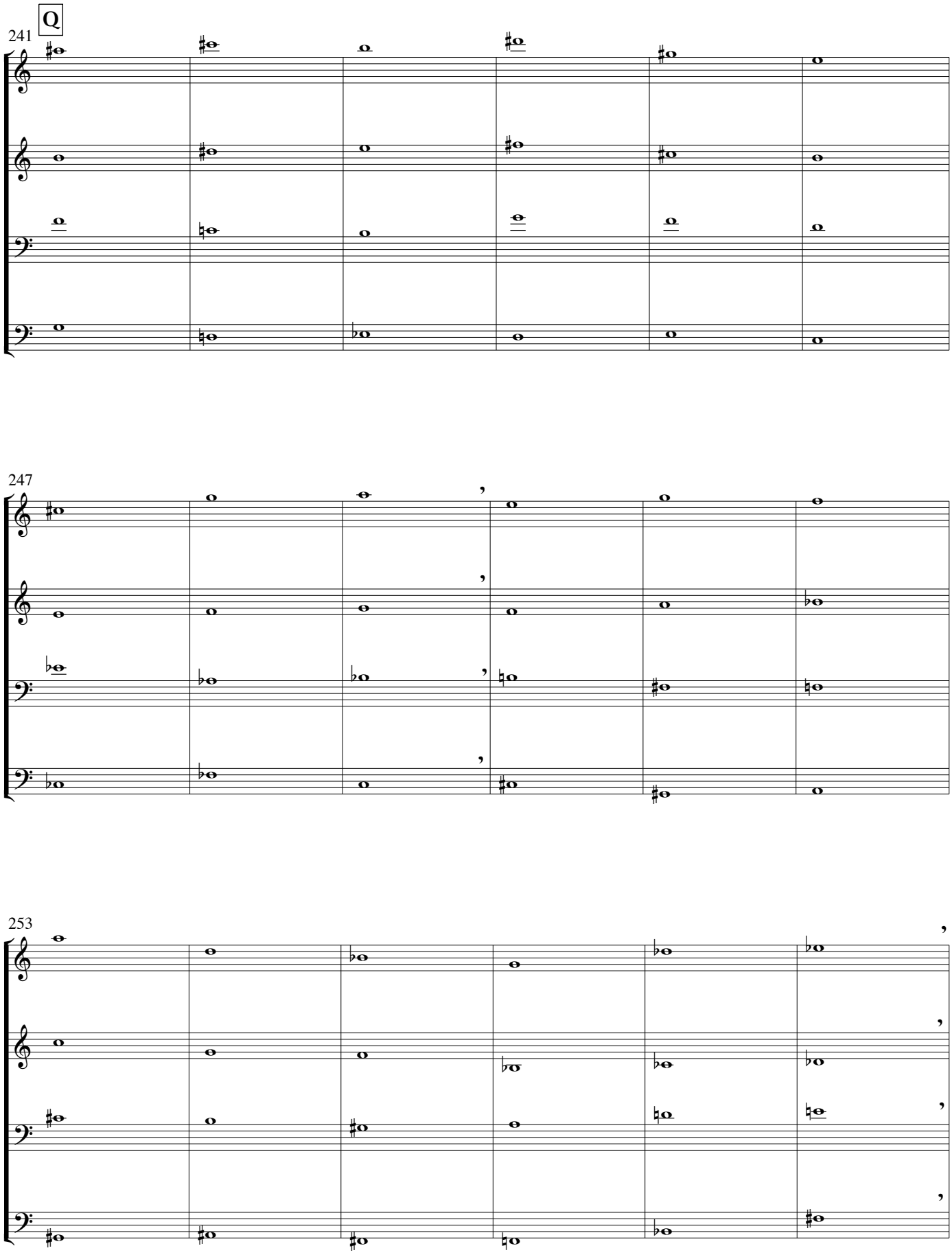
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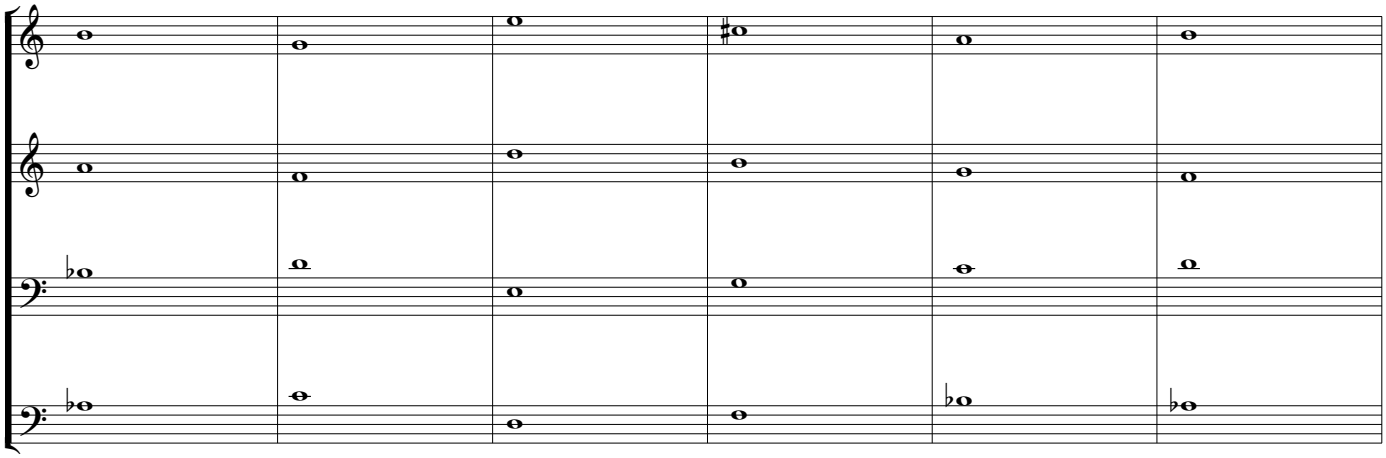
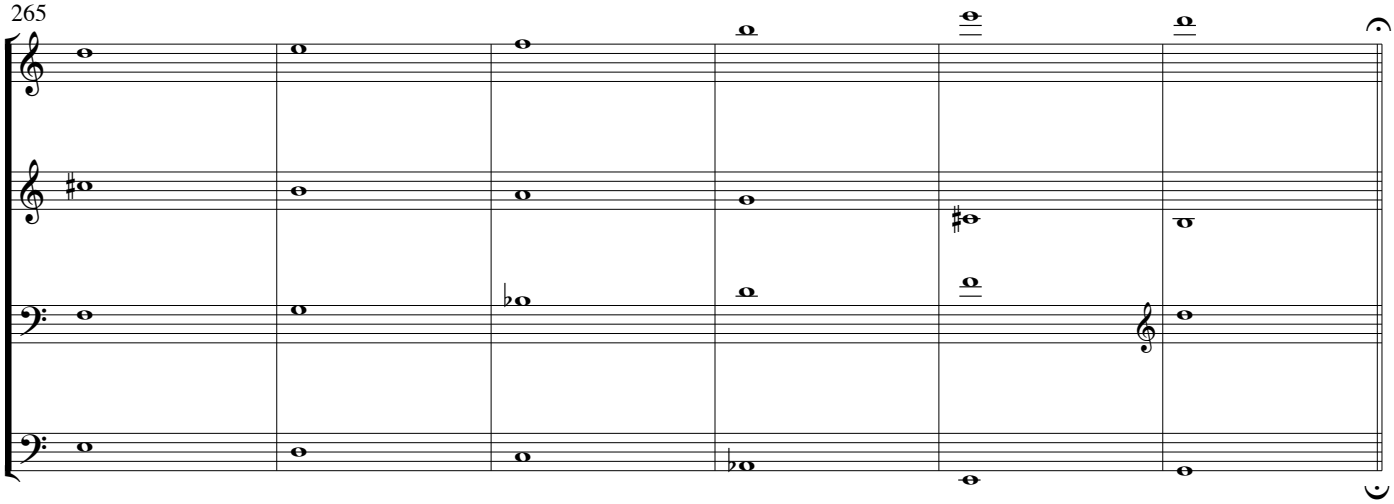
253

259 **R**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