Giovanni Gabrieli
Canzona XII
a due chori

arranged for modern wind ensemble:
2 or 3 flutes, oboe, english horn,
2 clarinets, 2 bassoons,
2 trumpets and 2 horns
by Ernic Kamerich

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Giovanni Gabrieli (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giovanni_Gabrieli) has written several Canzona's, some of them for 4 instrumental voices, some for 2 or 3 groups of 4. The name Canzona may suggest singing, but these are purely instrumental pieces. The present Canzona is for 2 groups of 4 voices. Intent was that the 2 groups would play in different locations, in particular on two balconies in San Marco Cathedral in Venice.
A plausible instrumentation for this Canzona would be:
- Chorus 1: shawm (loud predecessor of the oboe), alto shawm , tenor shawm and bass shawm or bass curtal (renaissance bassoon).
- Chorus 2: cornetto (= zinc), alto trombone, tenor trombone and bass trombone.

This arrangement asks for: 2 or 3 flutes, 1 oboe, 1 cor anglais, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 2 trumpets and 2 horns.

I put the piece one tone higher. With some minor adjustments and fills I processed it as follows:
- Chorus 1: oboe, cor anglais, clarinet, bassoon, often with the first three parts doubled one octave higher by flute 1, flute 2, clarinet. This can be compared to the combination of a 4-foot (octave) organ registry and a 8-feet (normal height) registry. In fact, such canzonas were played on organ as well, possibly on two opposite organs (epistle and gospel organ). An optional third flute part is added, nice for the (short) 4-foot fragment.
- Chorus 2: two trumpets, two horns, with a reinforcement of the bass by a bassoon, sometimes just one octave lower (as a 16-foot register).

Care must be given to the balance: if both choirs play and choir 2 plays at full power, everything that chorus 1 plays is almost lost. A good balance between the two choirs requires moderation of the trumpets and trombones.

In the 16th century, it was stated often that an instrumentalist should imitate singing, even so much that the text of a song could be understood almost, especially by the differences in articulation. Anyhow, the variation in articulation is an important element in the interpretation. In many cases, playing sharp and soft tonguinging alternately works fine. Passages with dotted quarts may best be played sharply, while upbeats and passages with long notes often ask for a softer articulation. The bar lines are often misleading, especially in the 4/2 bars you should ignore the bar lines and feel the rhythm of the melody itself.

The contrast between playing choir 1 or choir 2 or both together is an important effect. But just as important are the lines in each voice, sometimes in a polyphonic structure, sometimes homophone. Each voice has its own sentences that should be interpreted clearly. The end of a sentence often involves a decrescendo, also to give space to other voices then emerging.

A solemn slow performance does not suit the piece, the melodies must have their flow. The 4/2 sizes may even feel as 2/1. The 3/2 parts can be played with one beat per measure and with a rather dancing character.

The piece is very dangerous for the tuning, especially in open chords without thirds, with only octaves, fifths and fourths. Where there are thirds, please, play these as pure thirds, as was usual in music of this time, so the major thirds should be relatively small, significantly smaller than in equal temperament. And in the same way, the minor thirds should be larger than in equal temperament.

Sharps and flats were not always denoted, sometimes there are difficult choices to be made. In bar 31, I made an arguable choice. I've put asterisks at the appropriate notes in the score.

Ernic Kamerich

The music is written in notation program PriMus (http://www.primus-musicsoft.com/).
Thanks to Ulrich Alpers for making available the original score.
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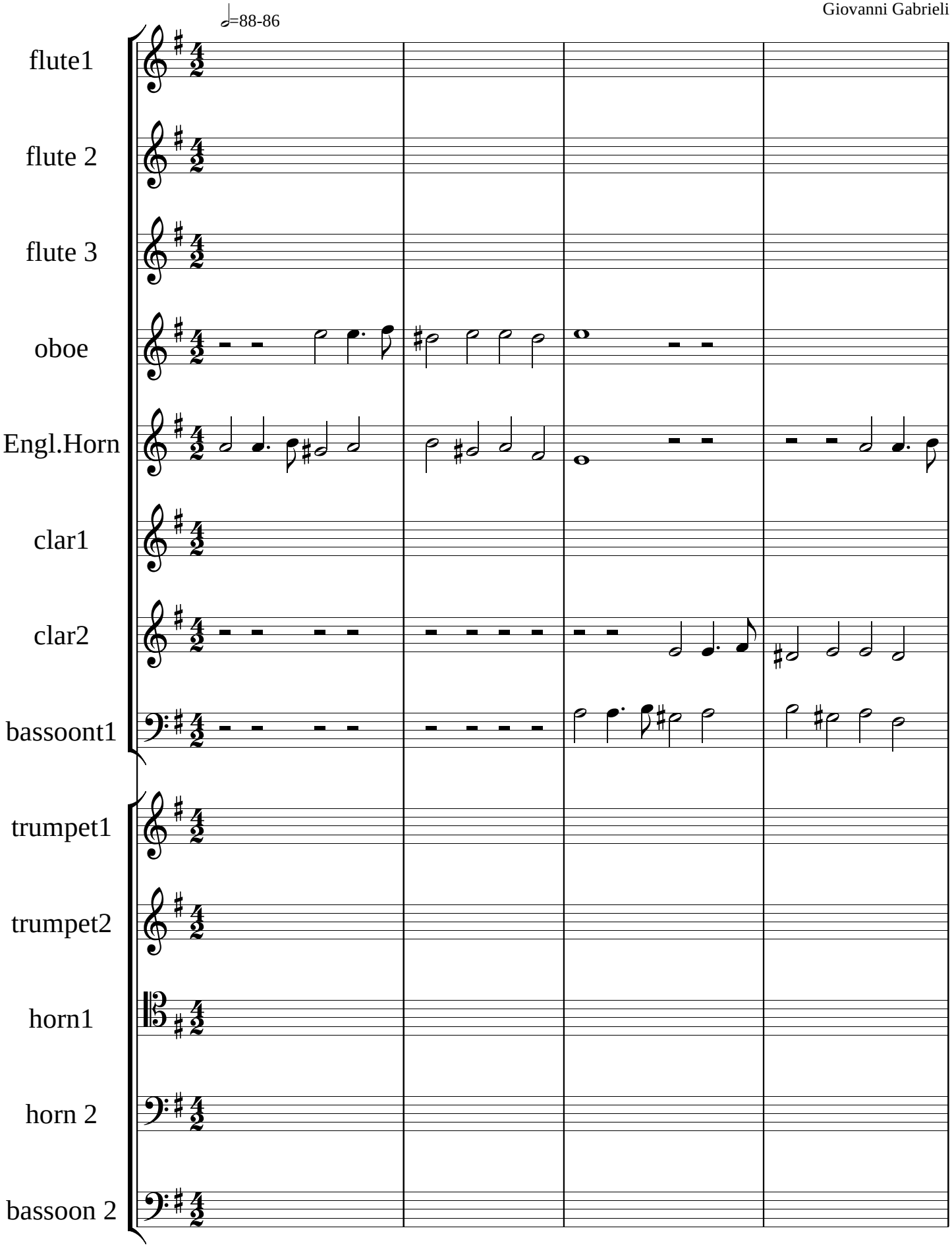
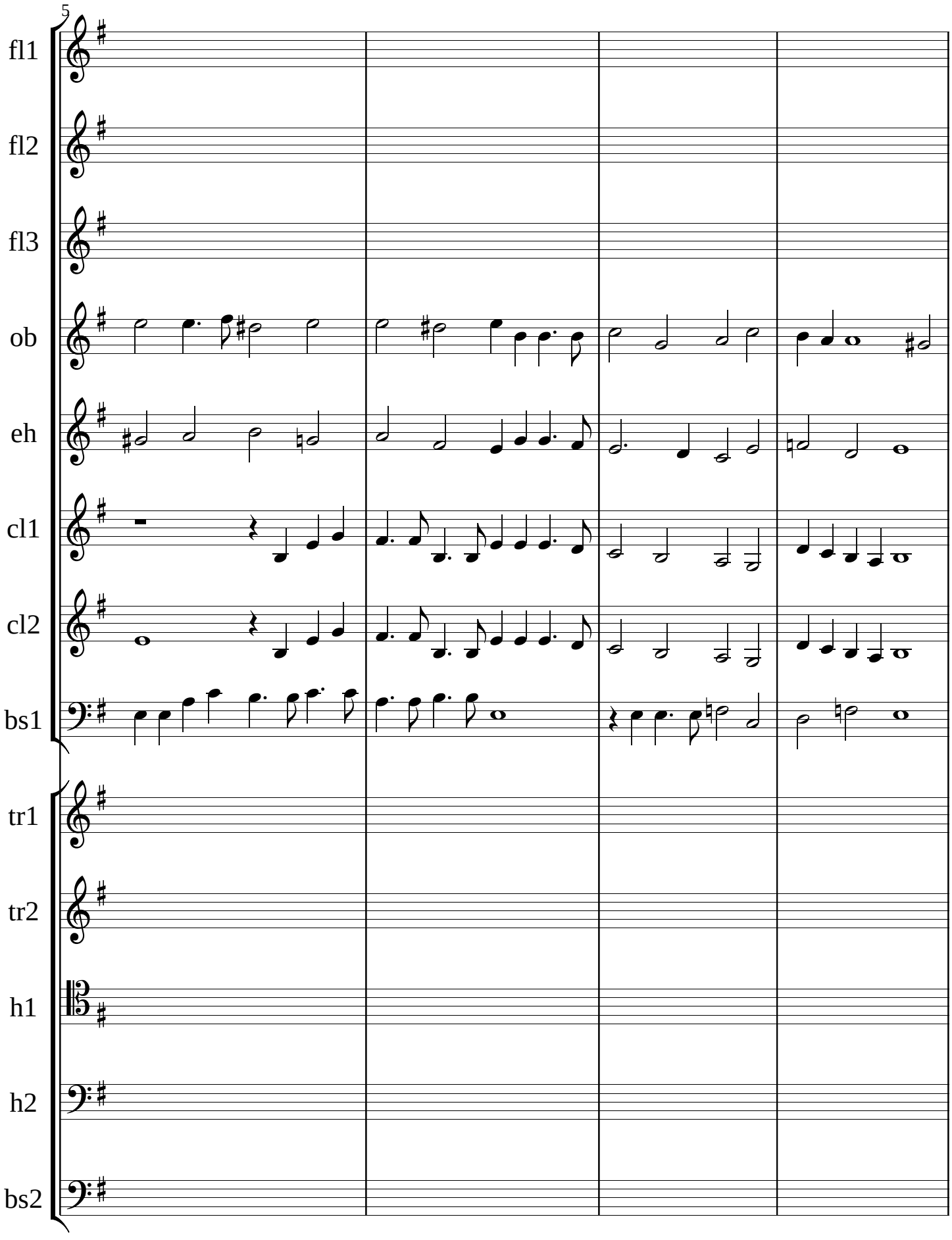
Canzona XII

Giovanni Gabrieli

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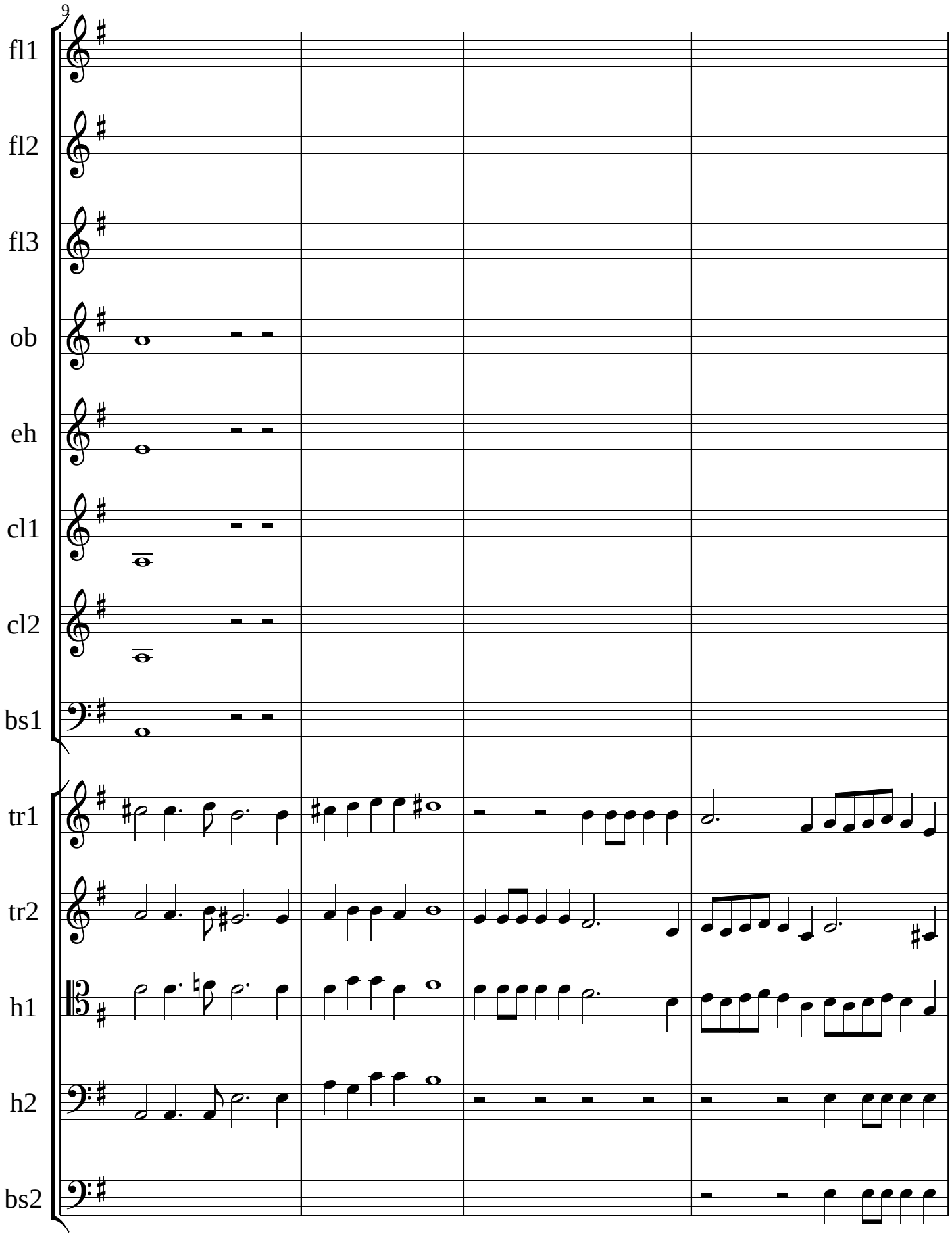
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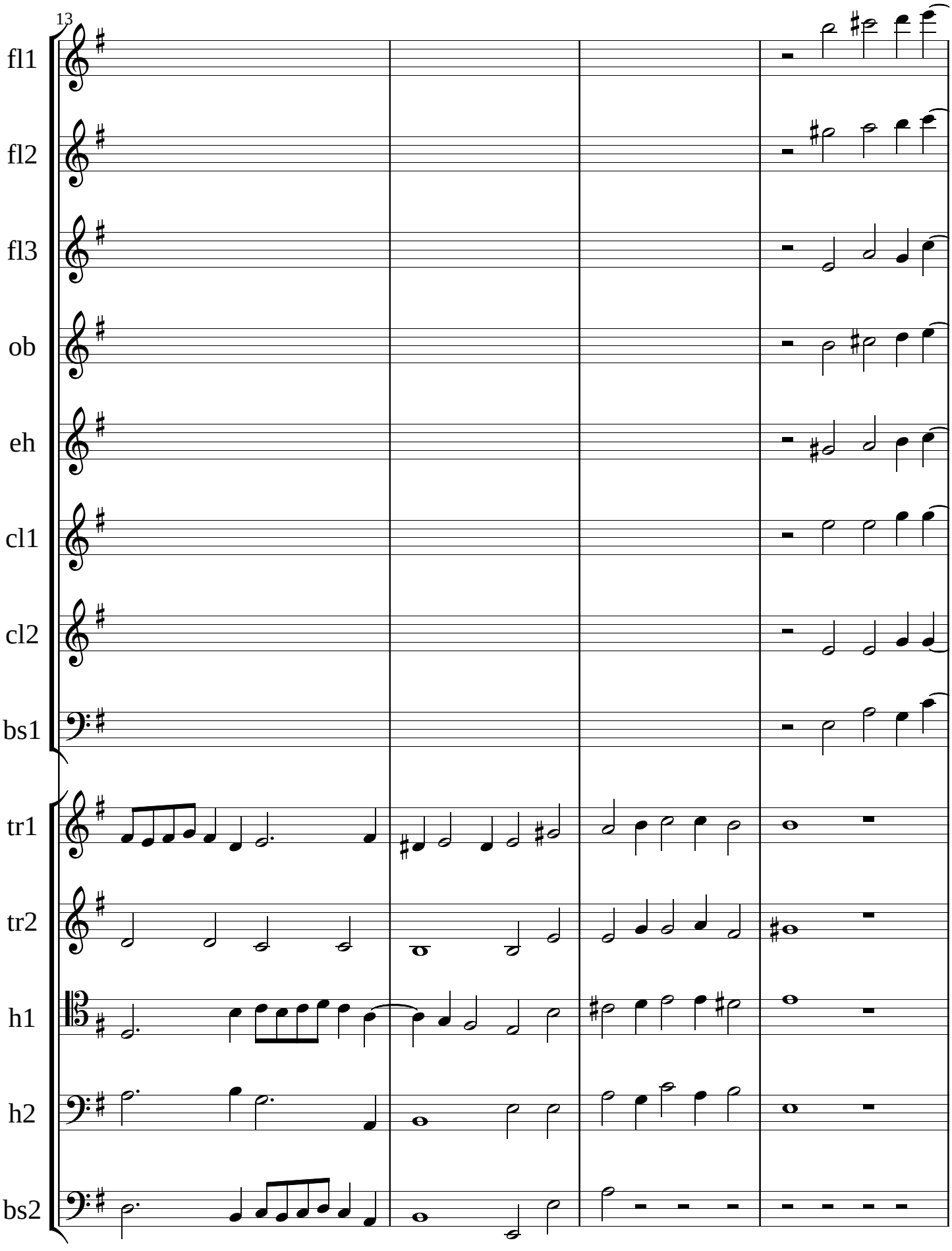
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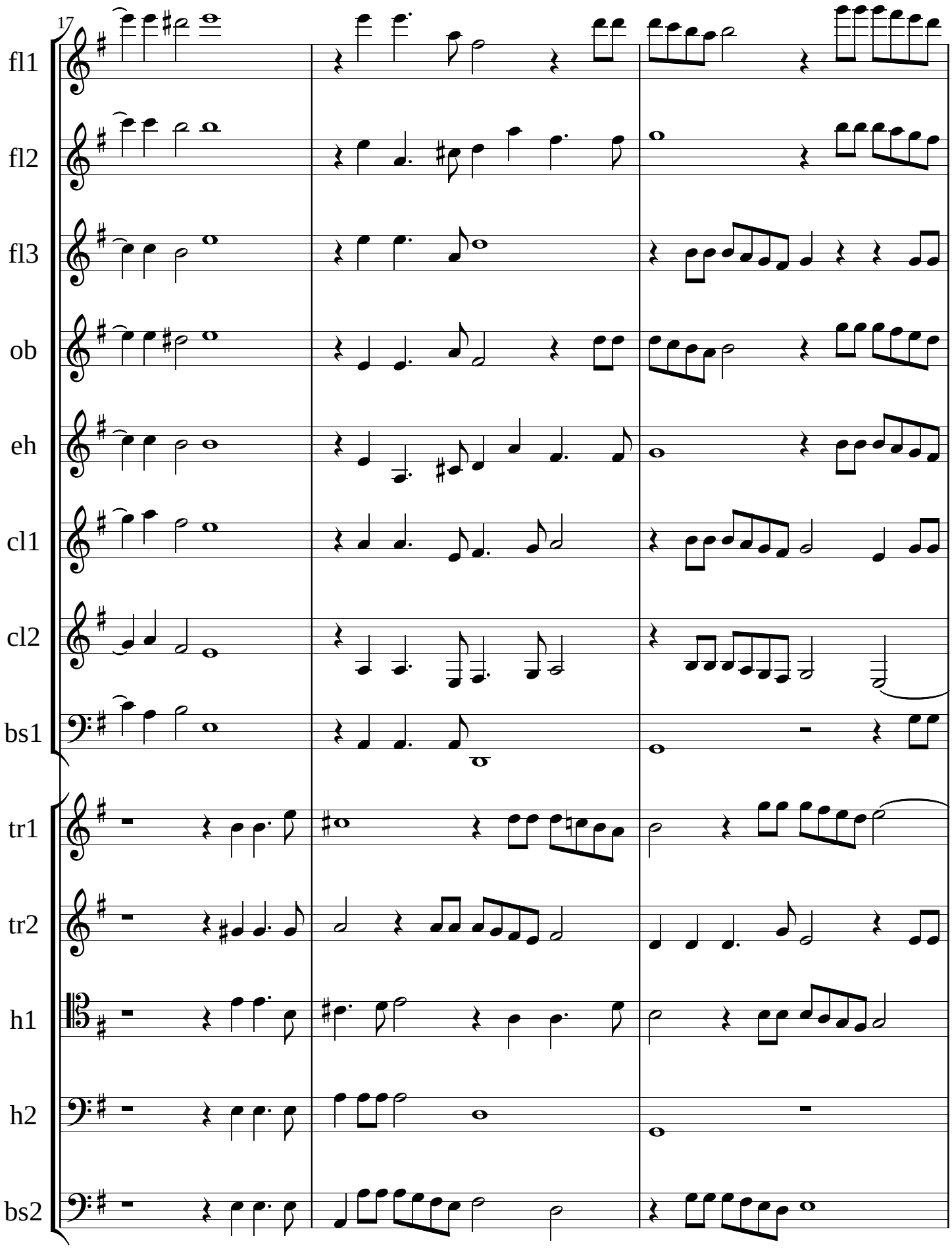
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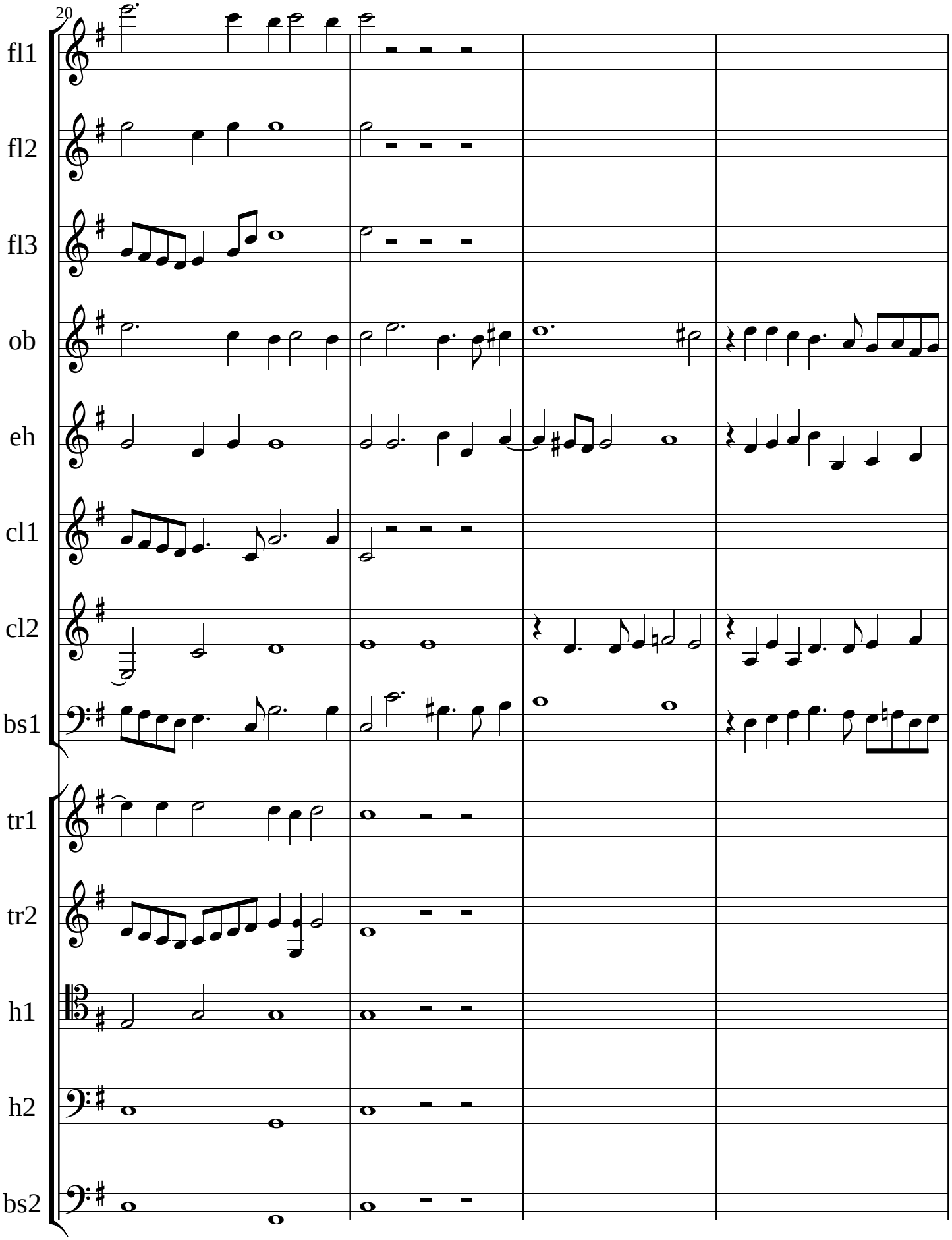
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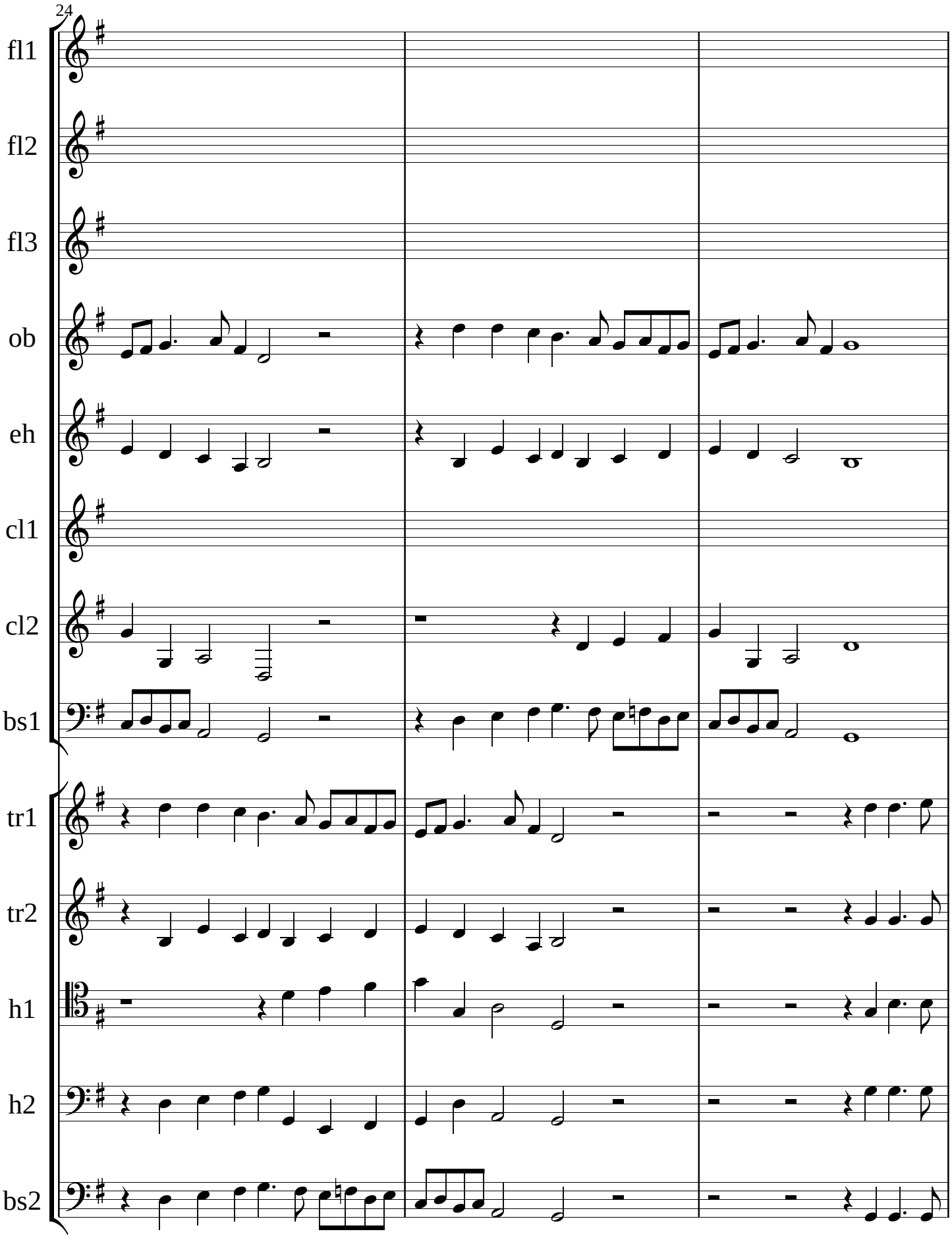
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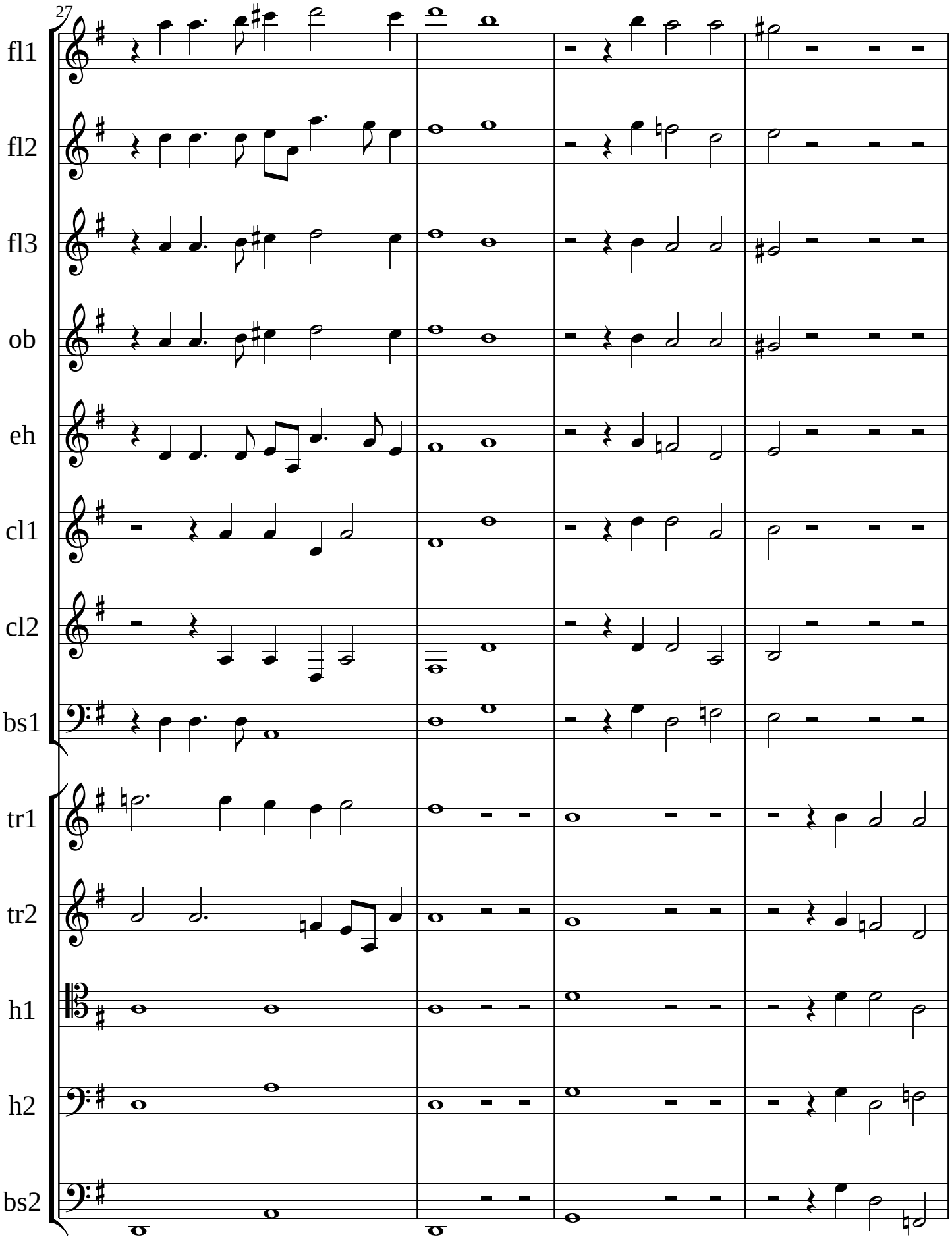
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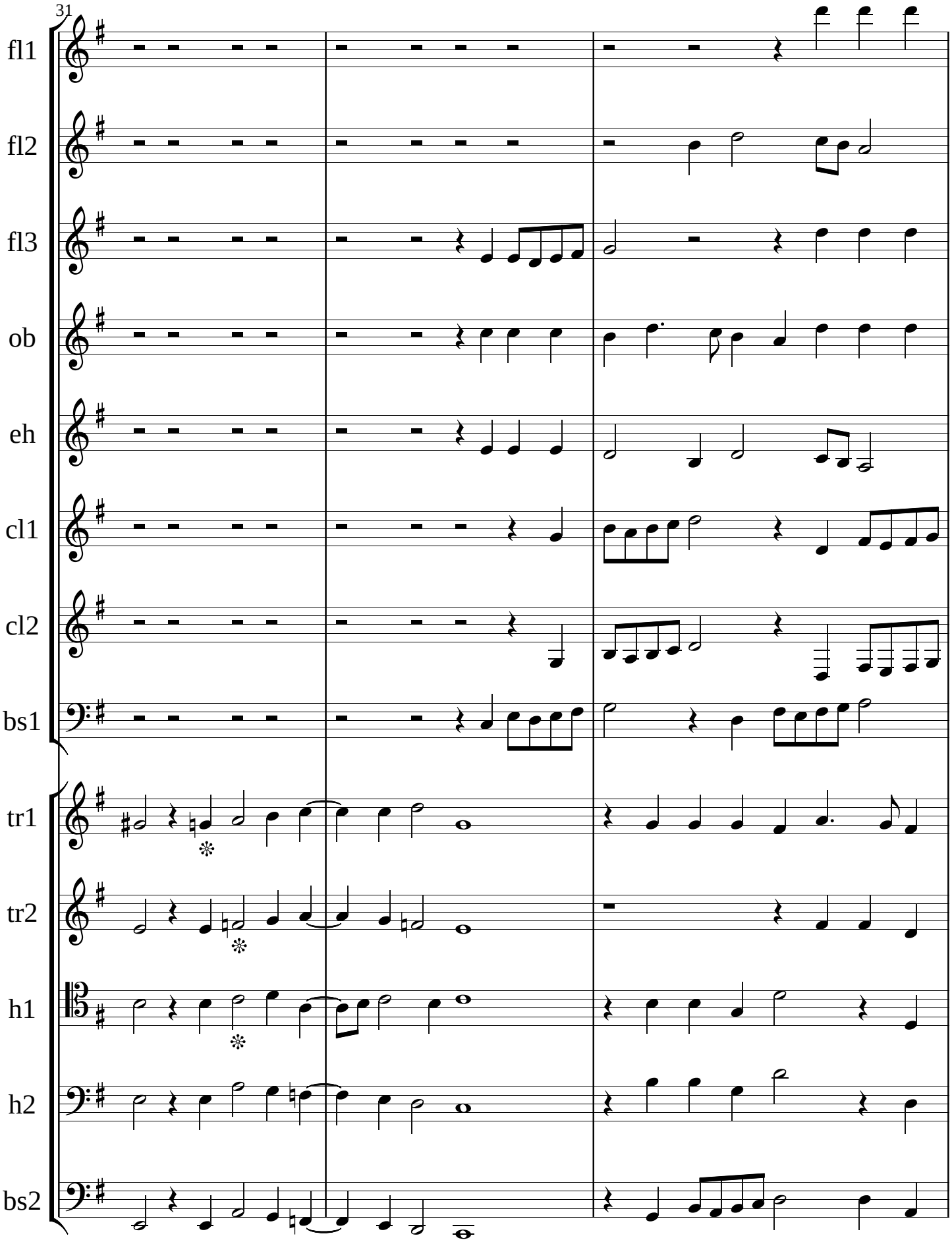
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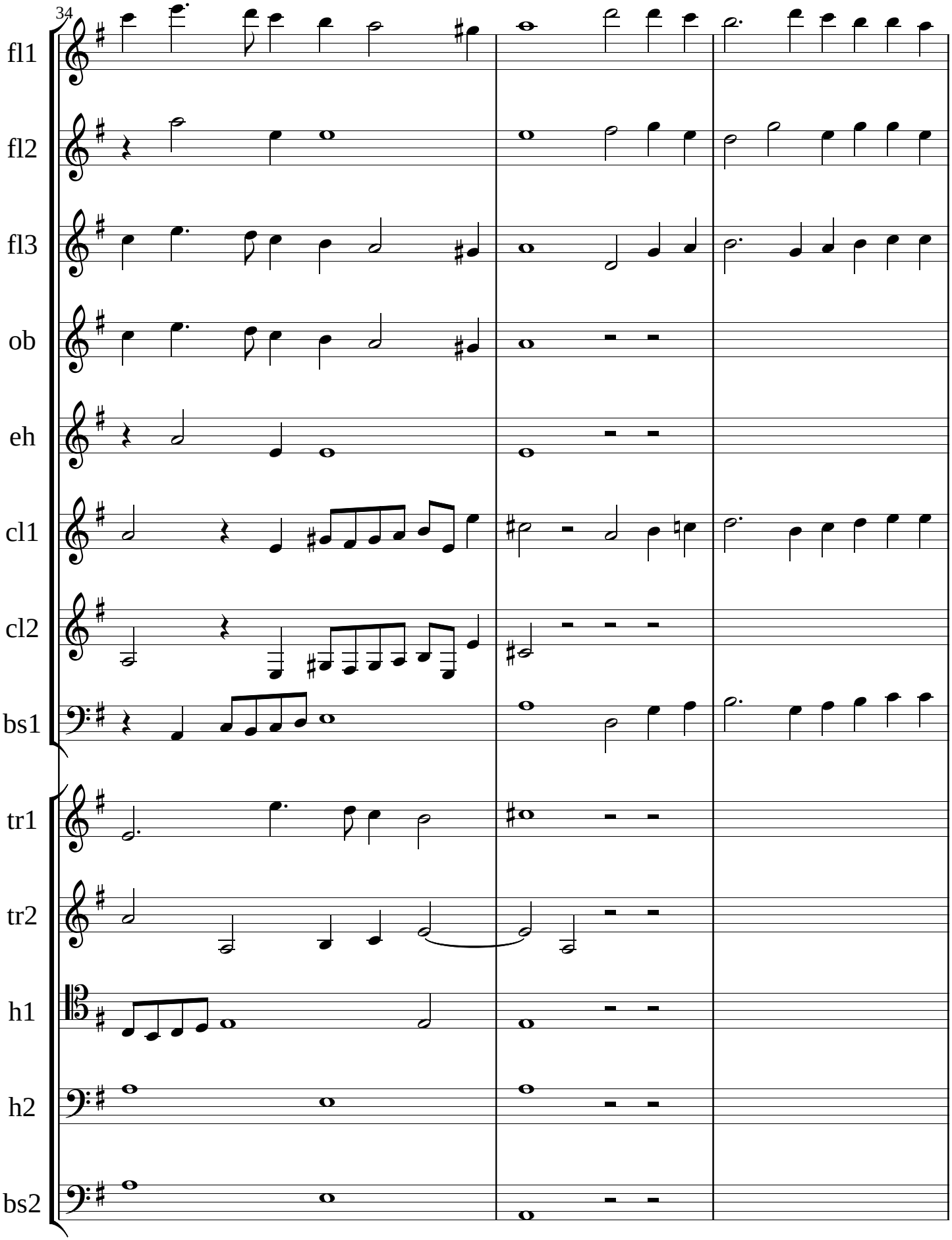
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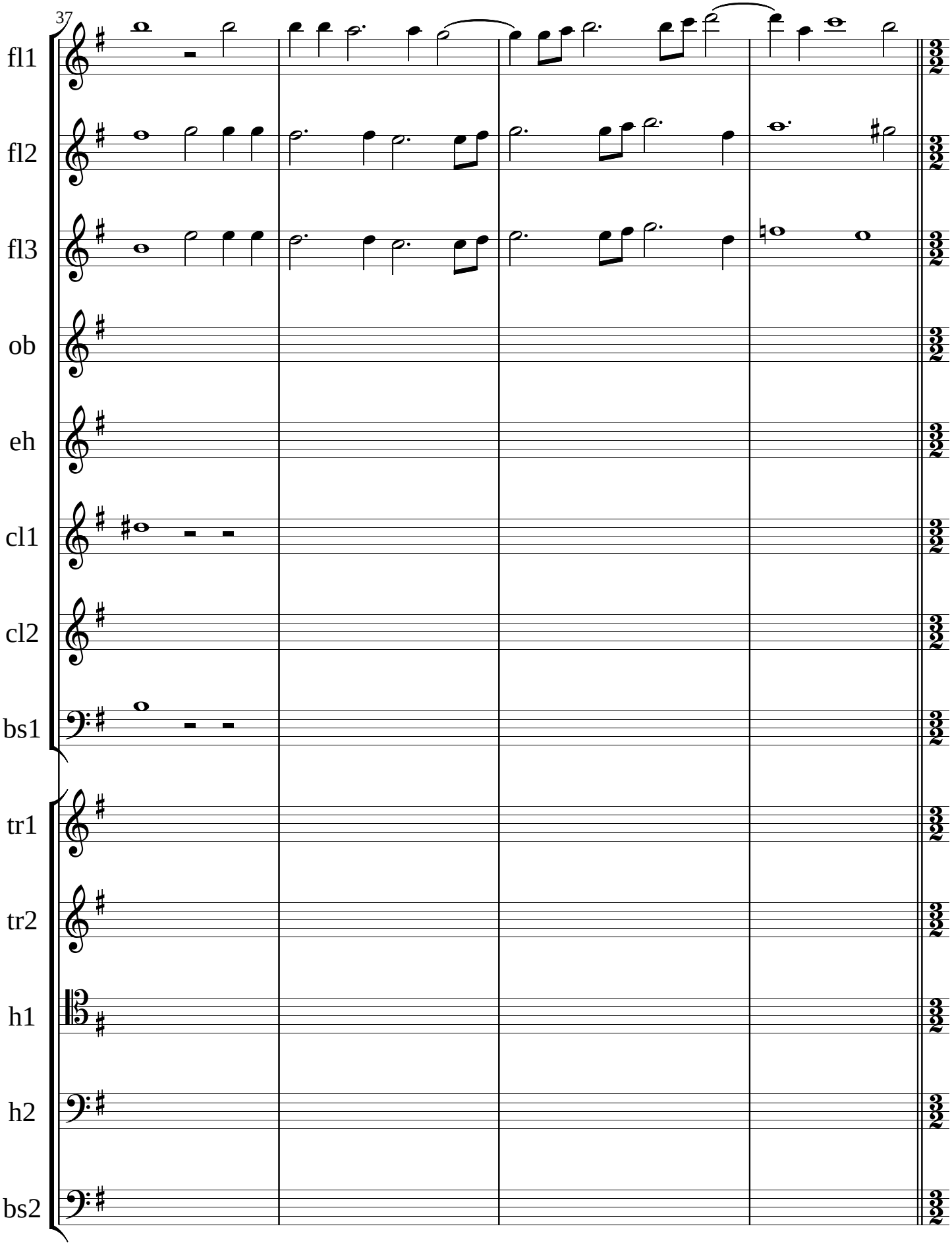
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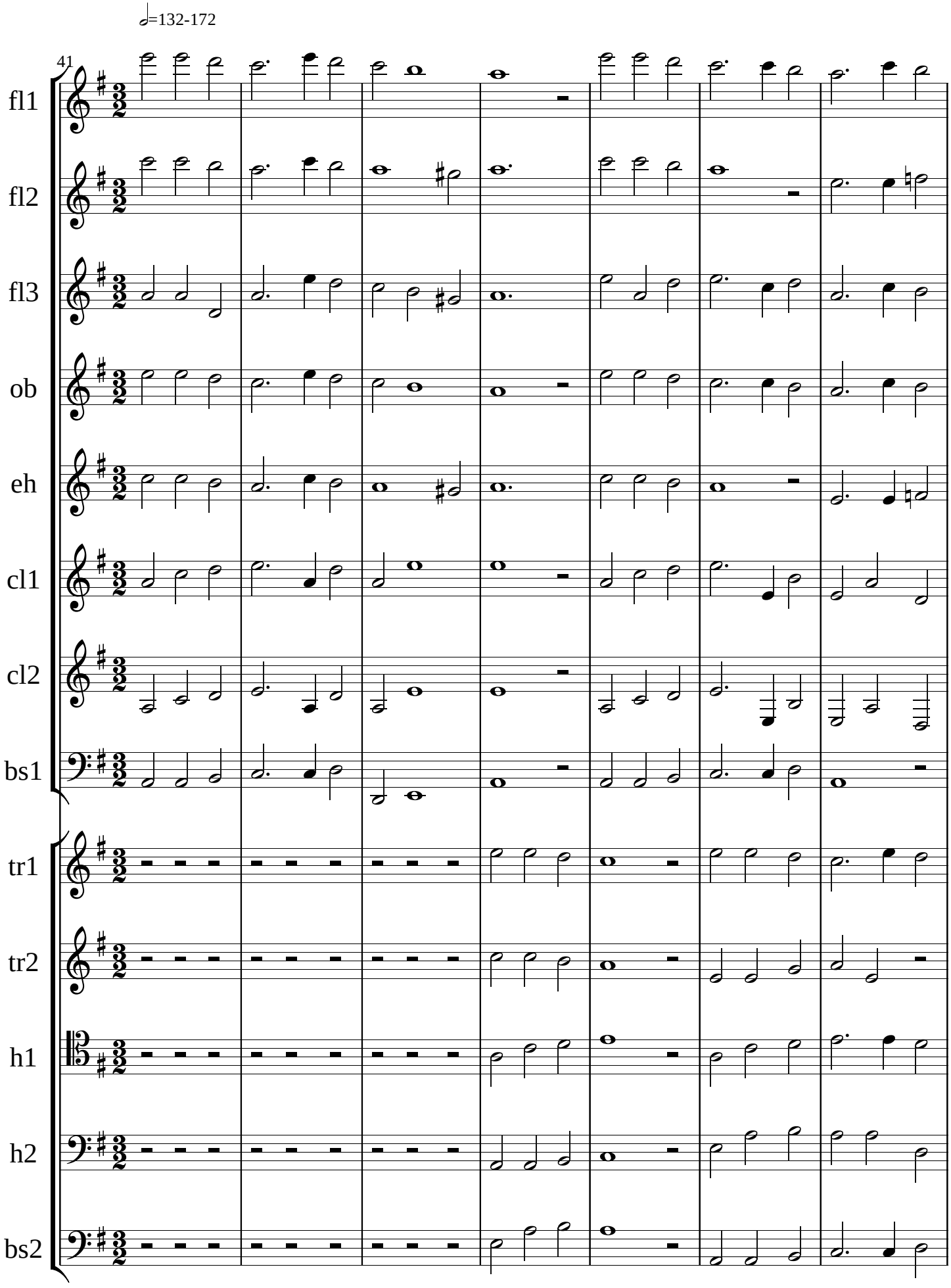
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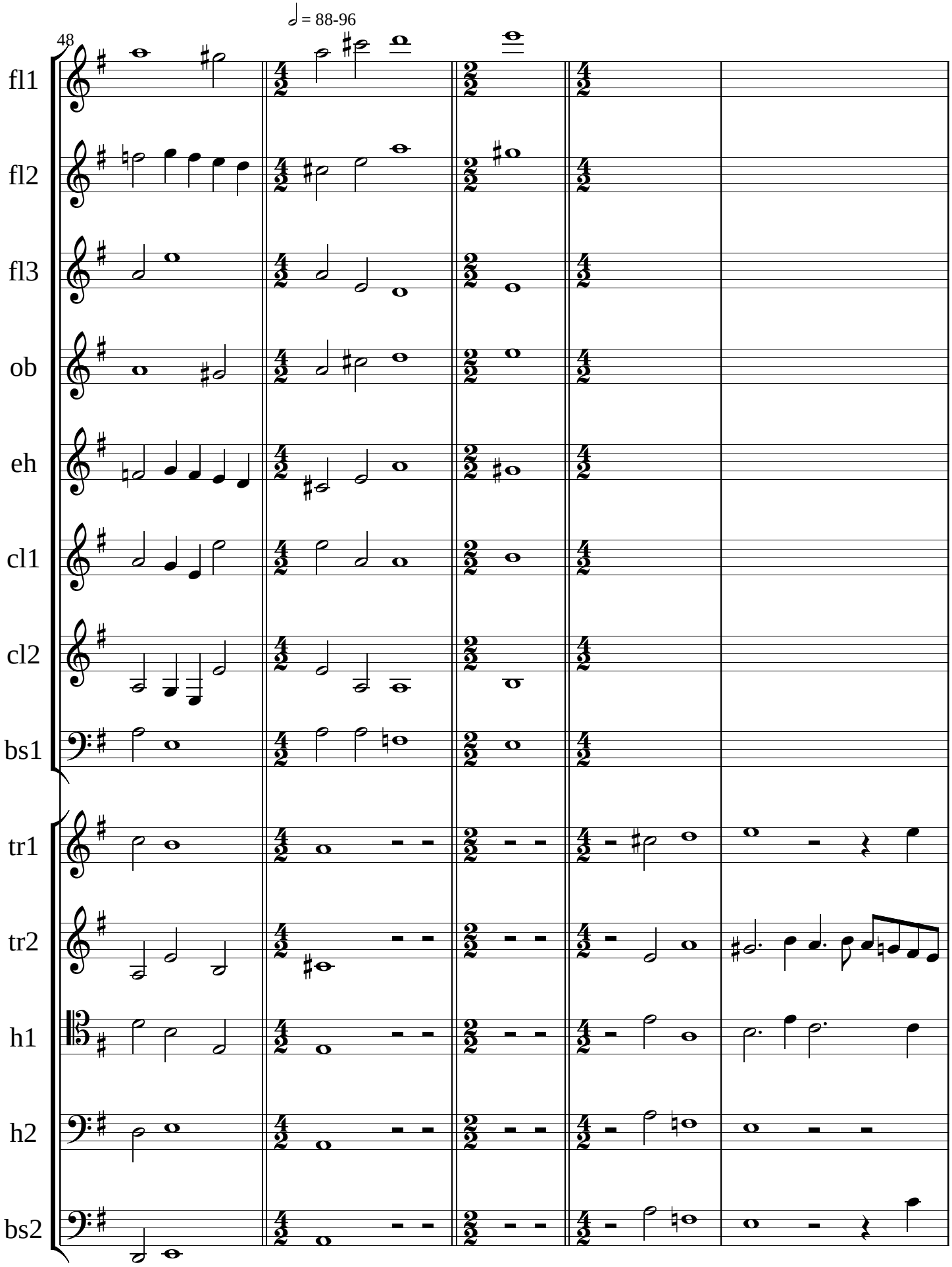
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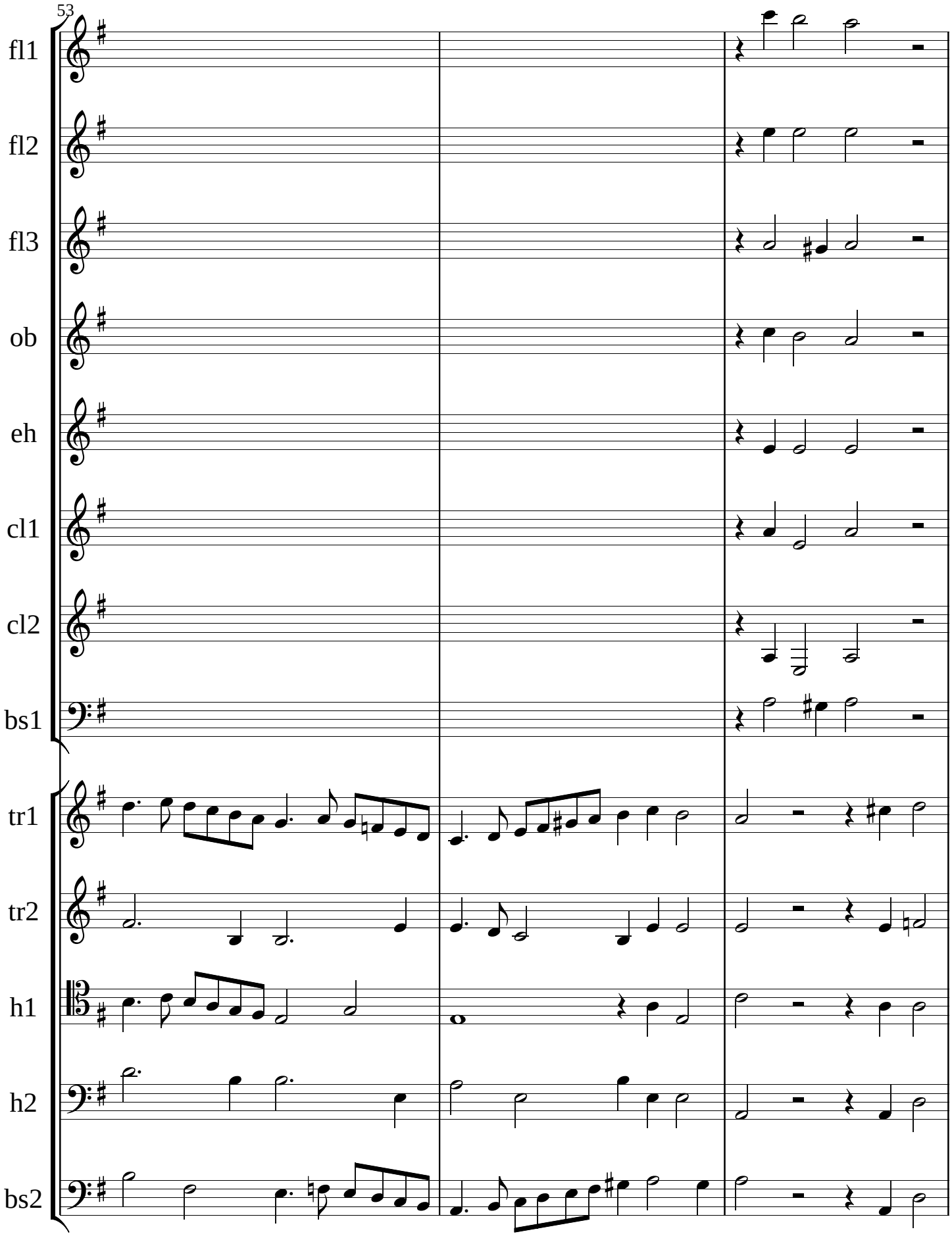
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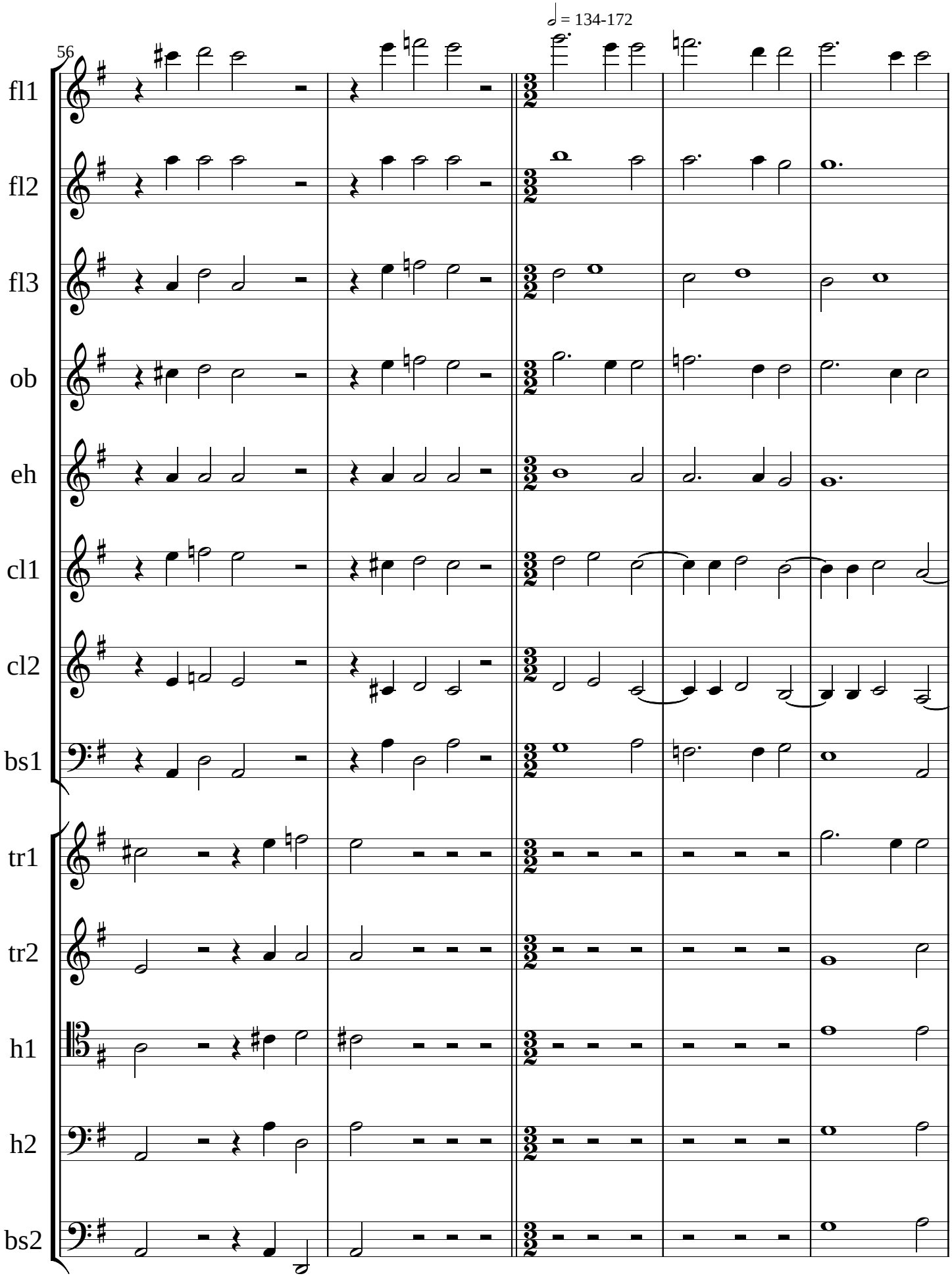
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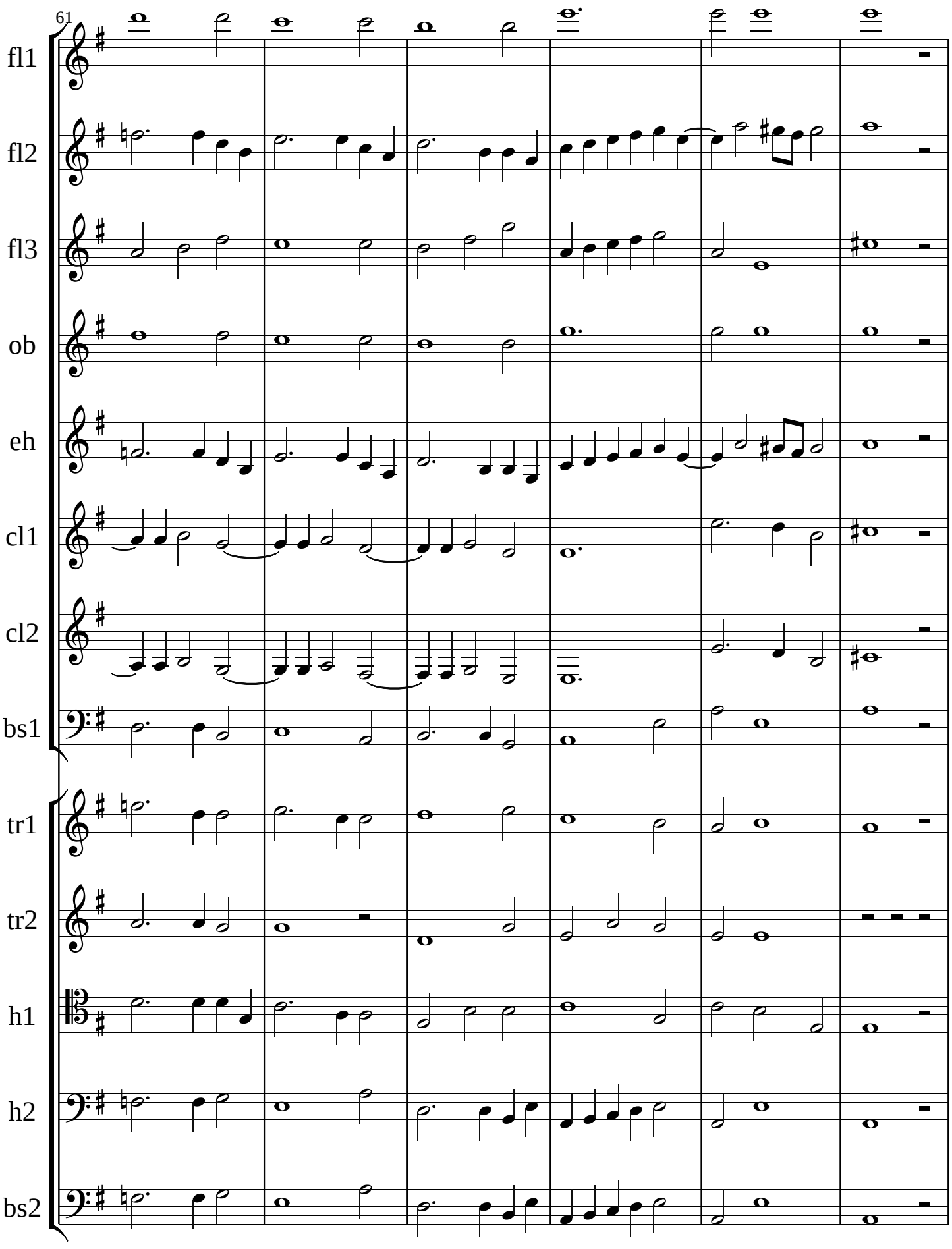
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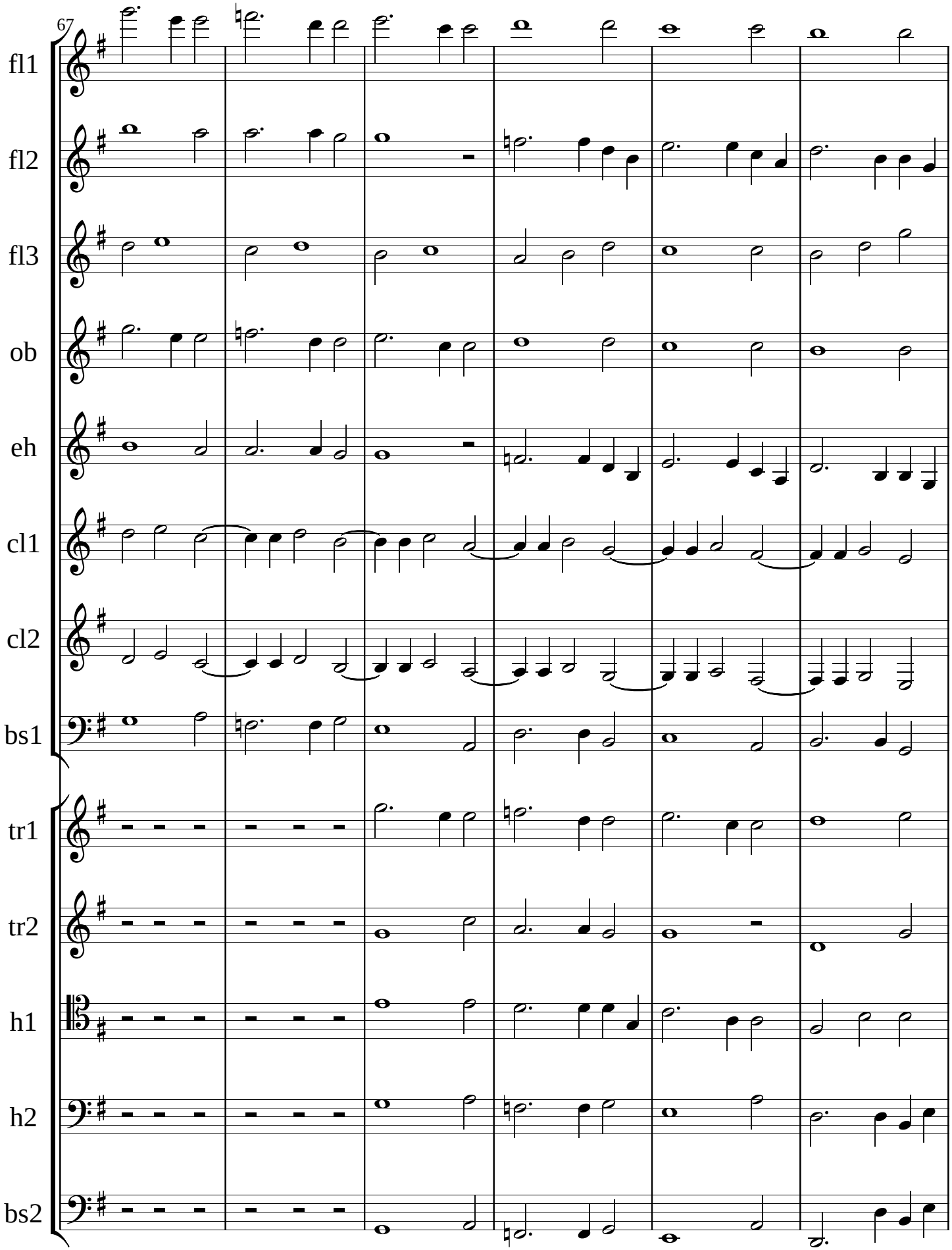
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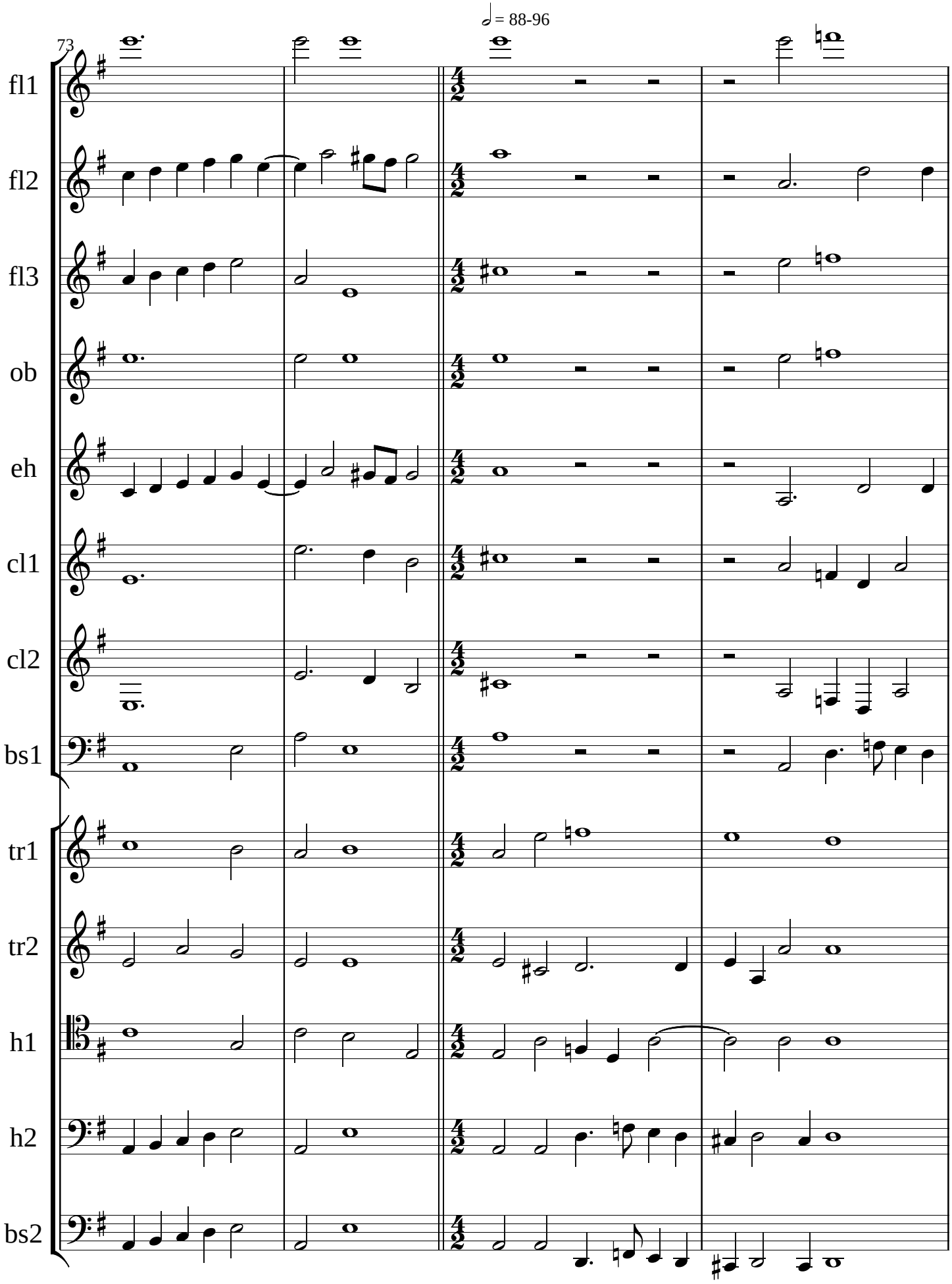
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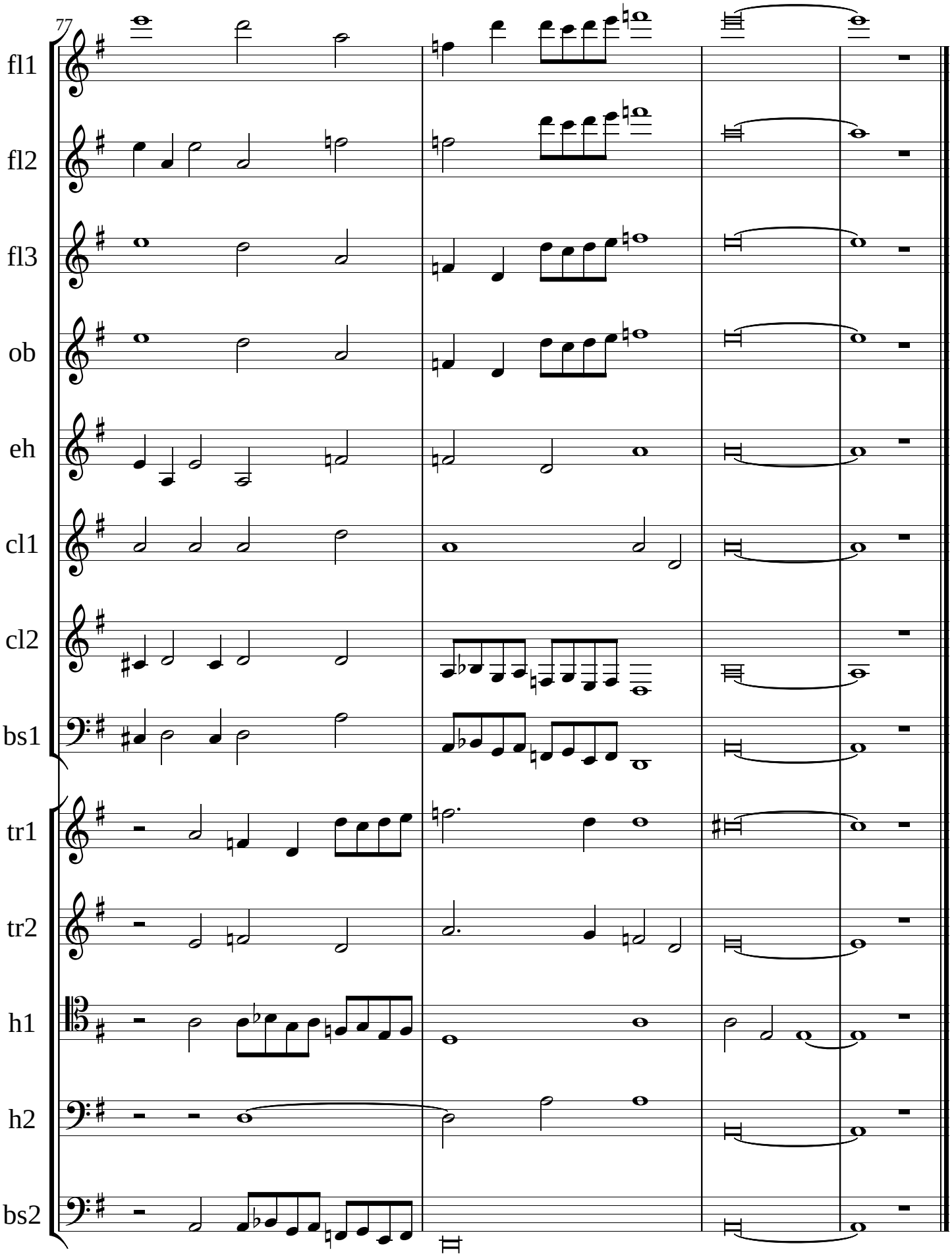
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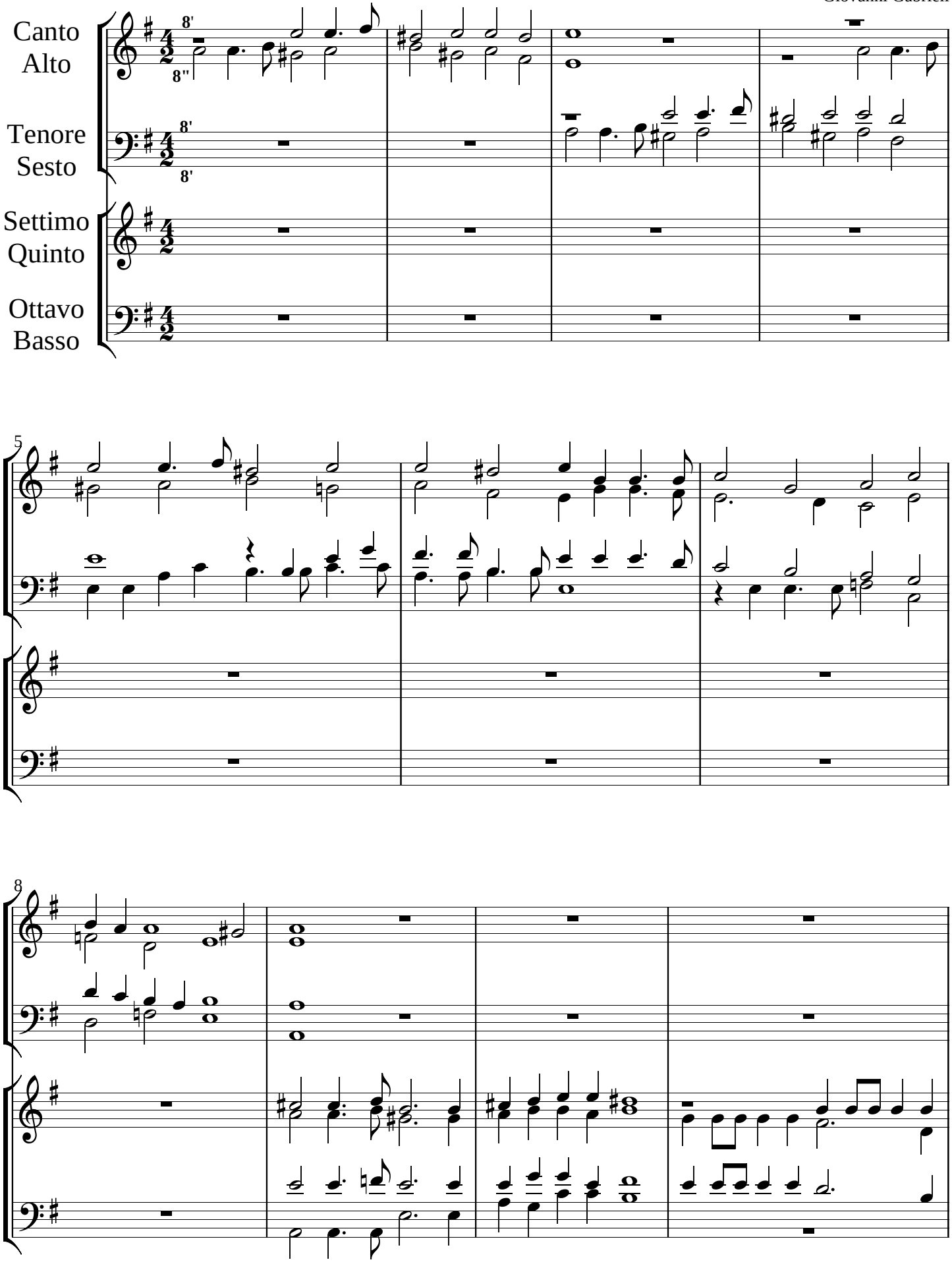
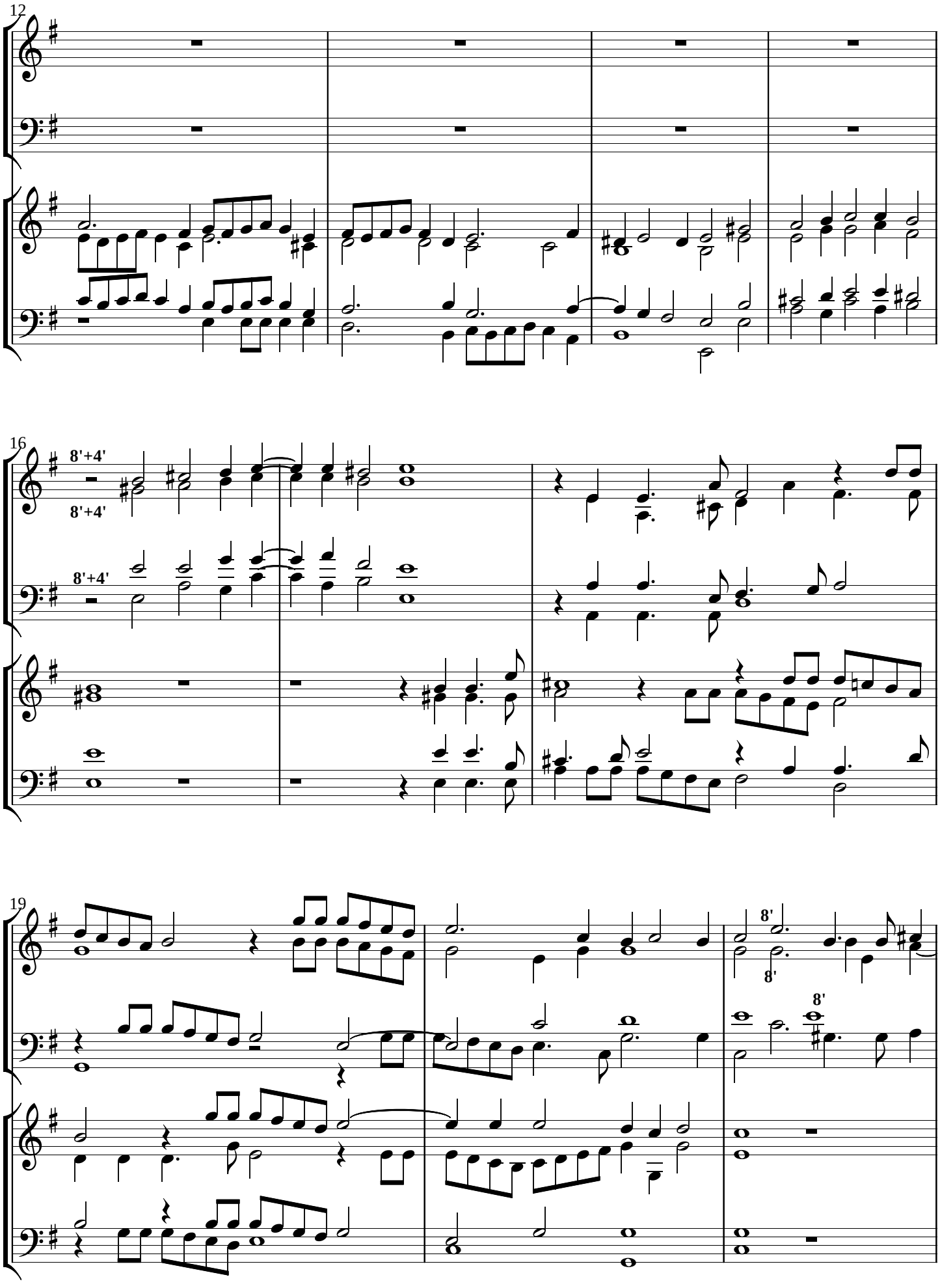
Canzona XII

Giovanni Gabrieli

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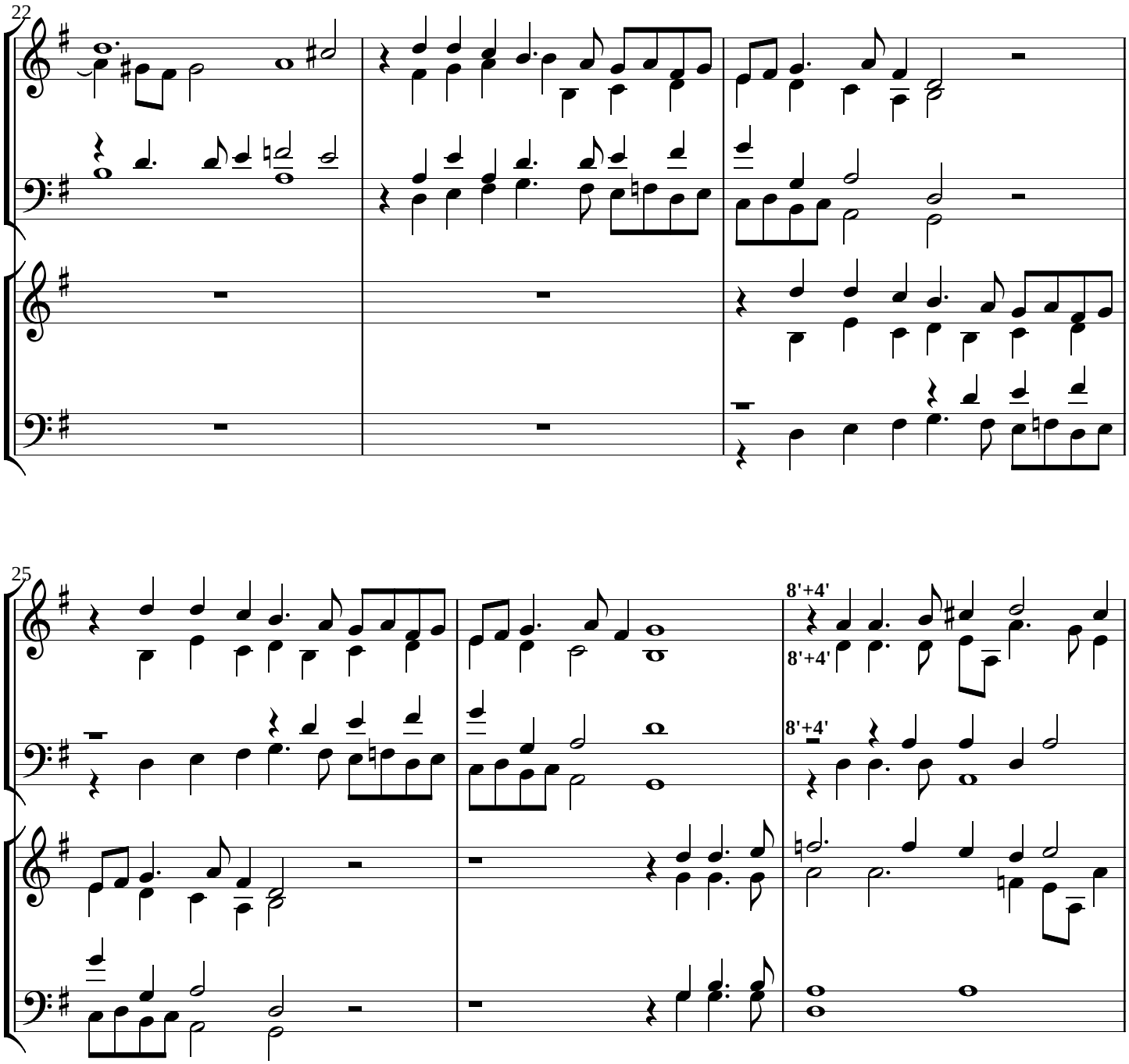
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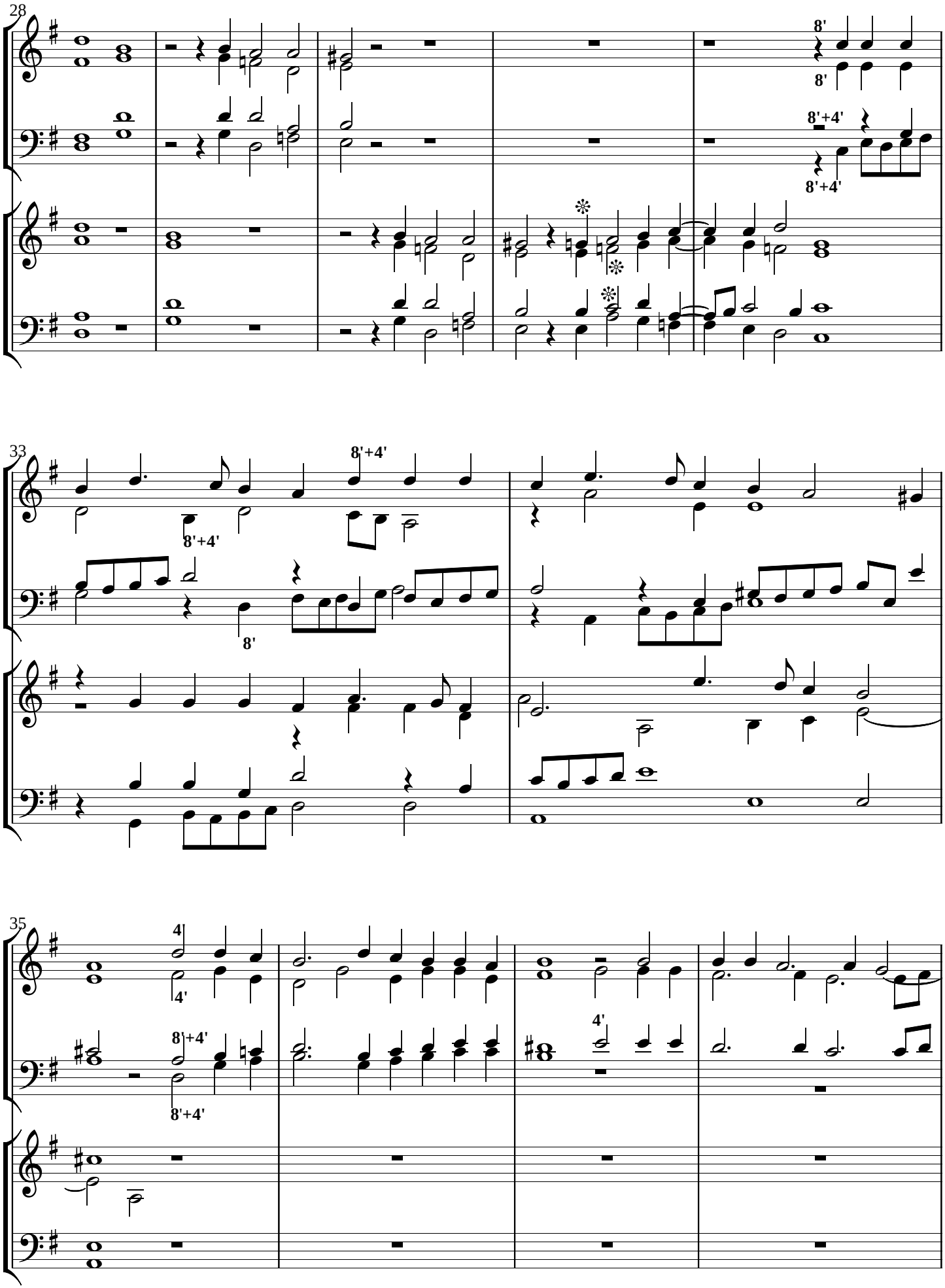
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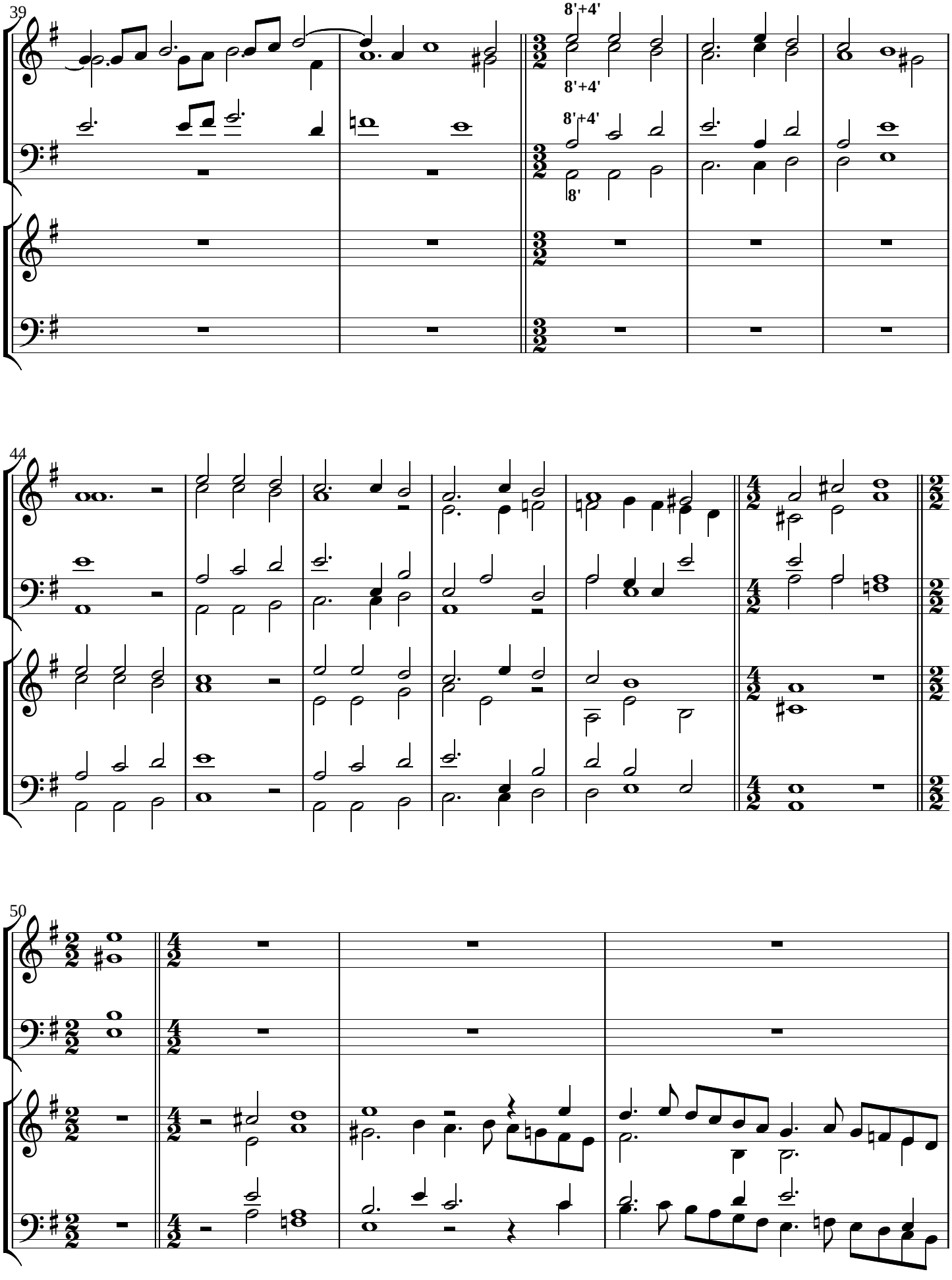
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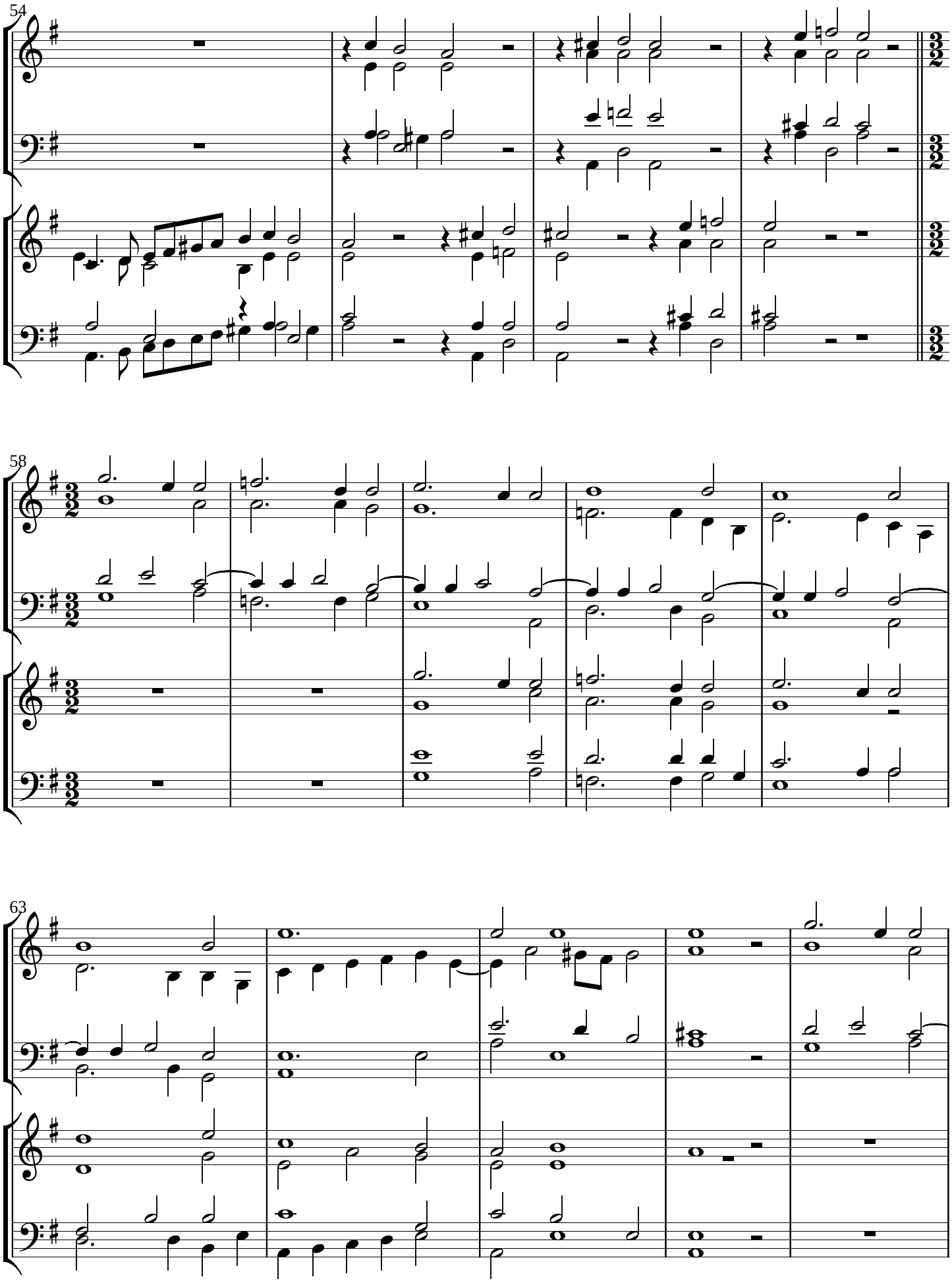
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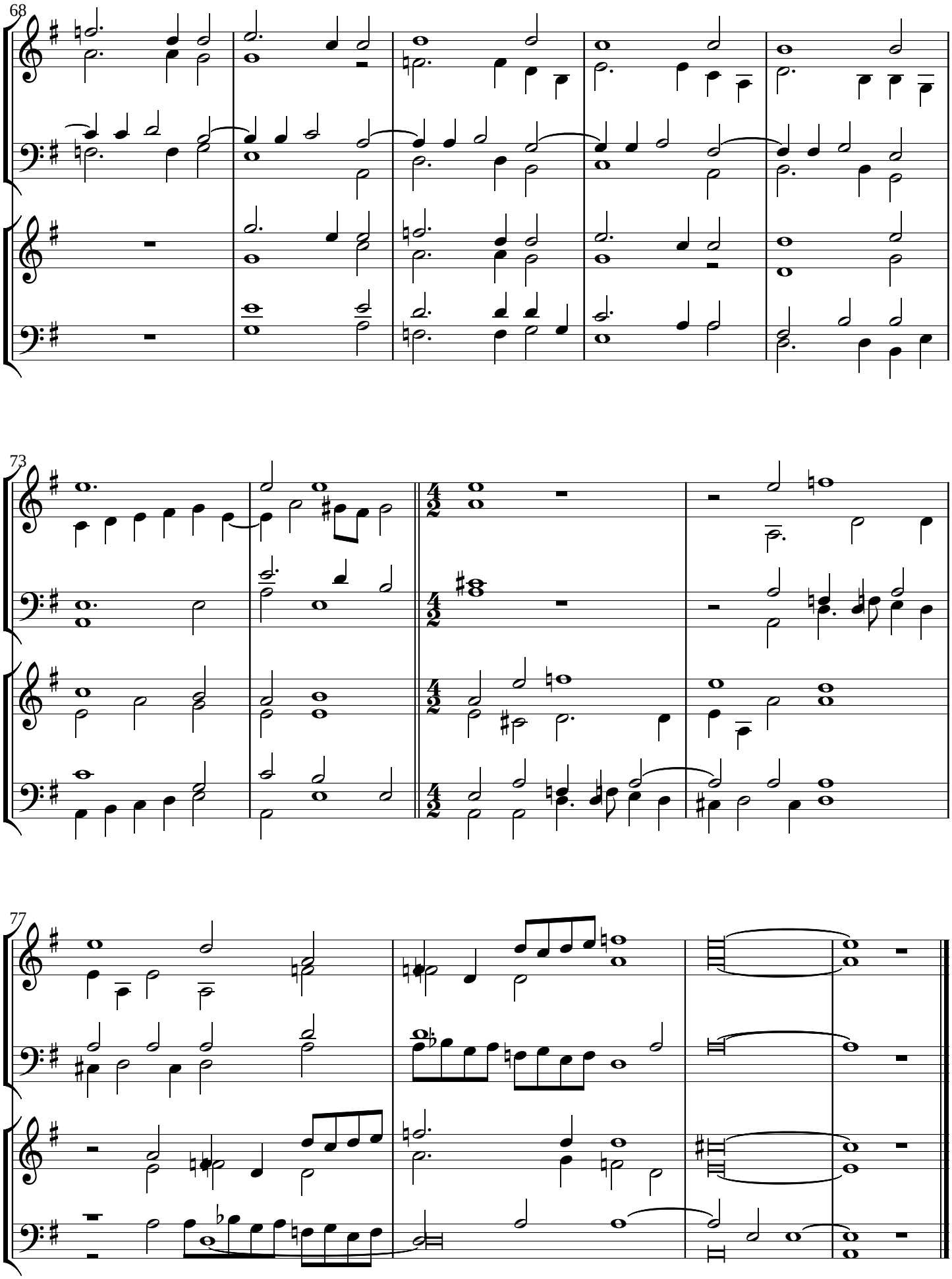
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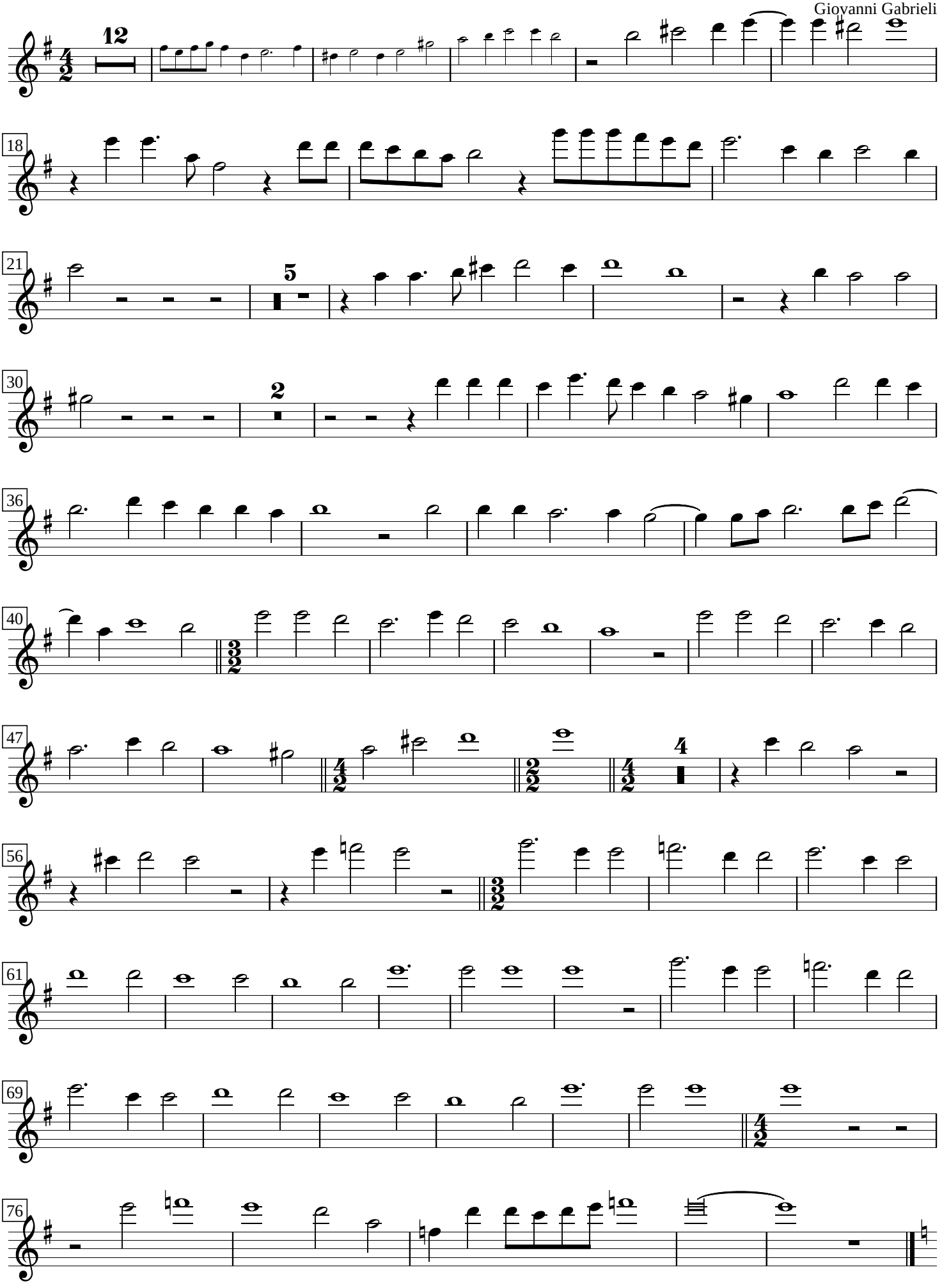
Canzona XII

flute 1

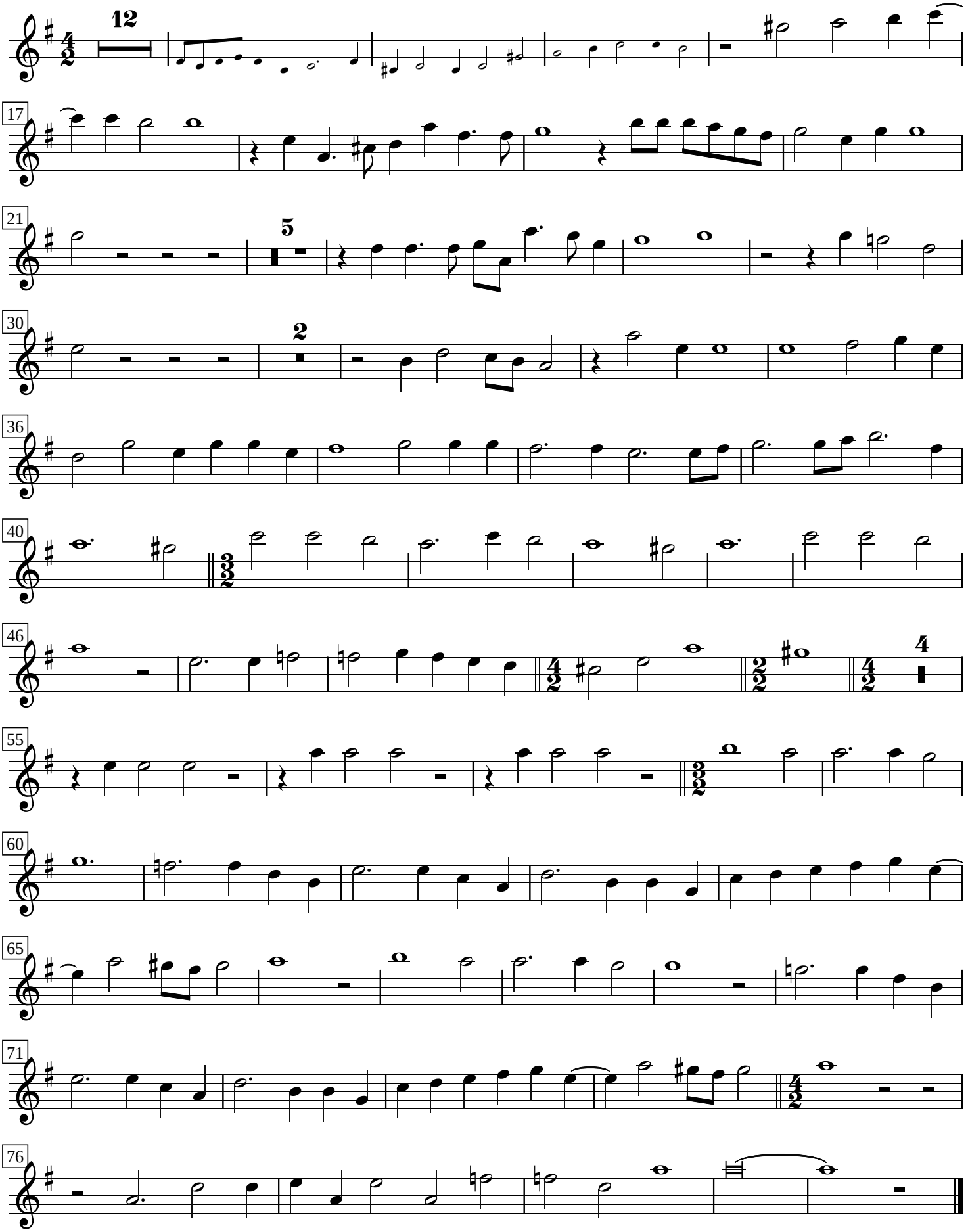
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

flute 2

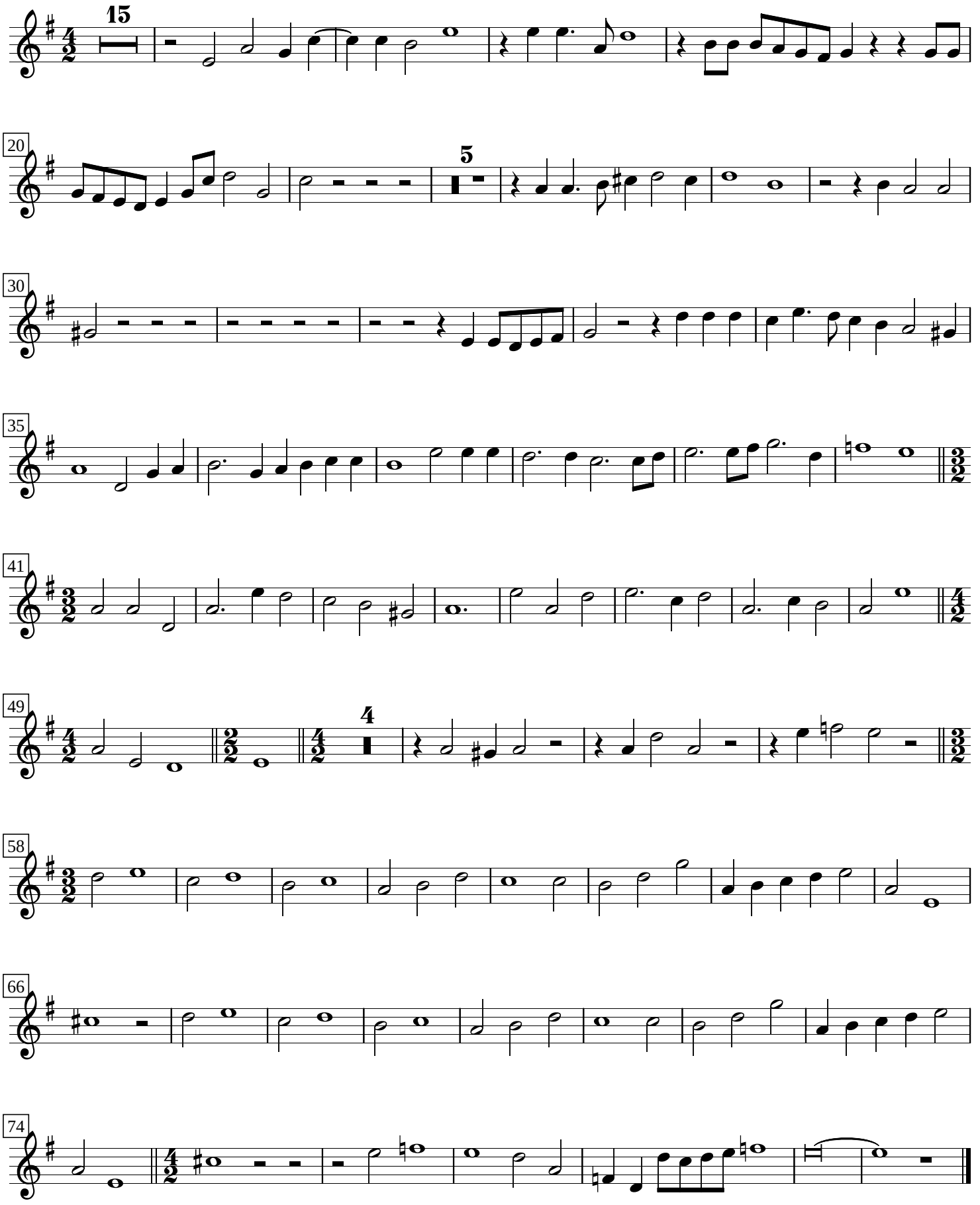
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

flute 3 ad libitum

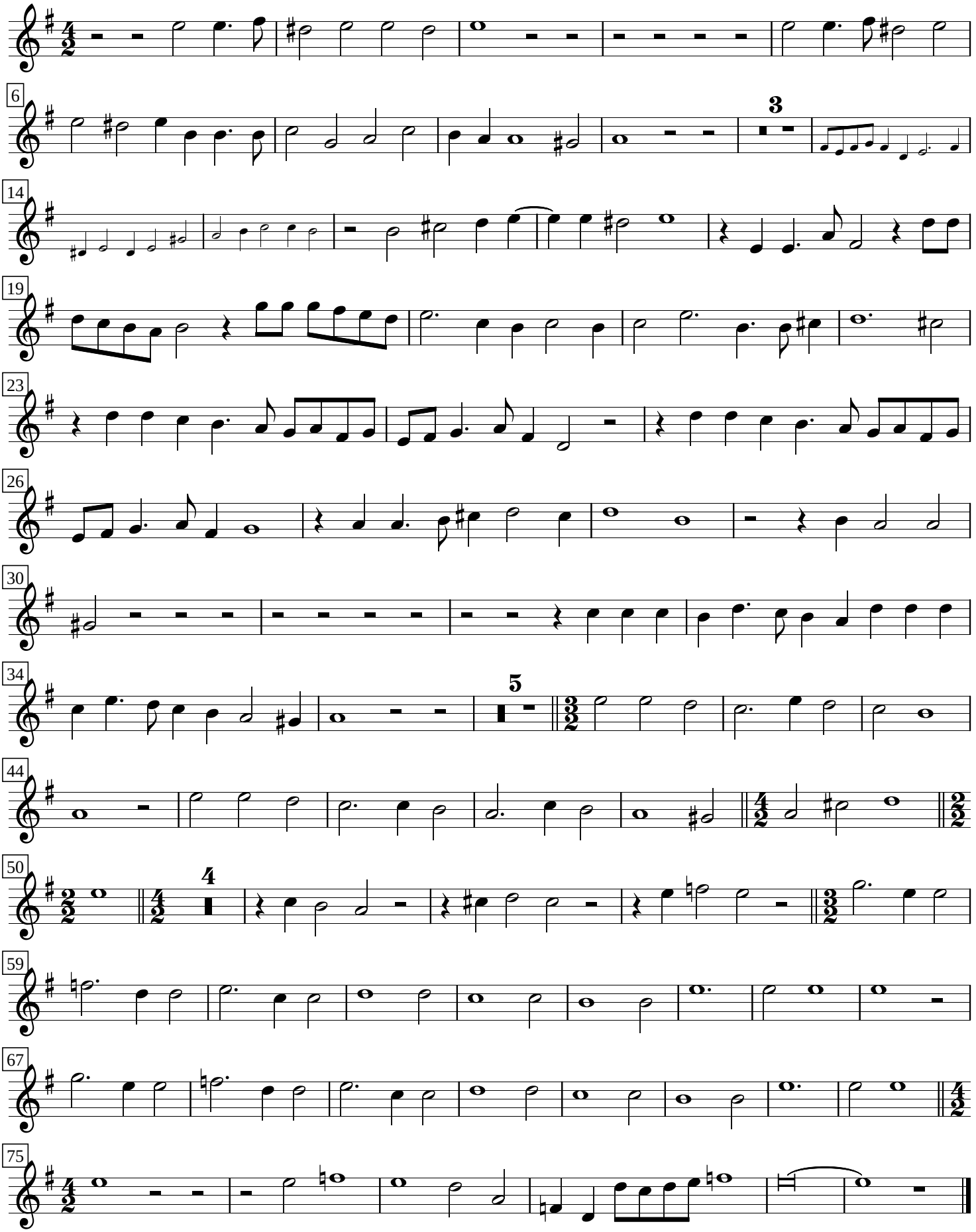
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

oboe

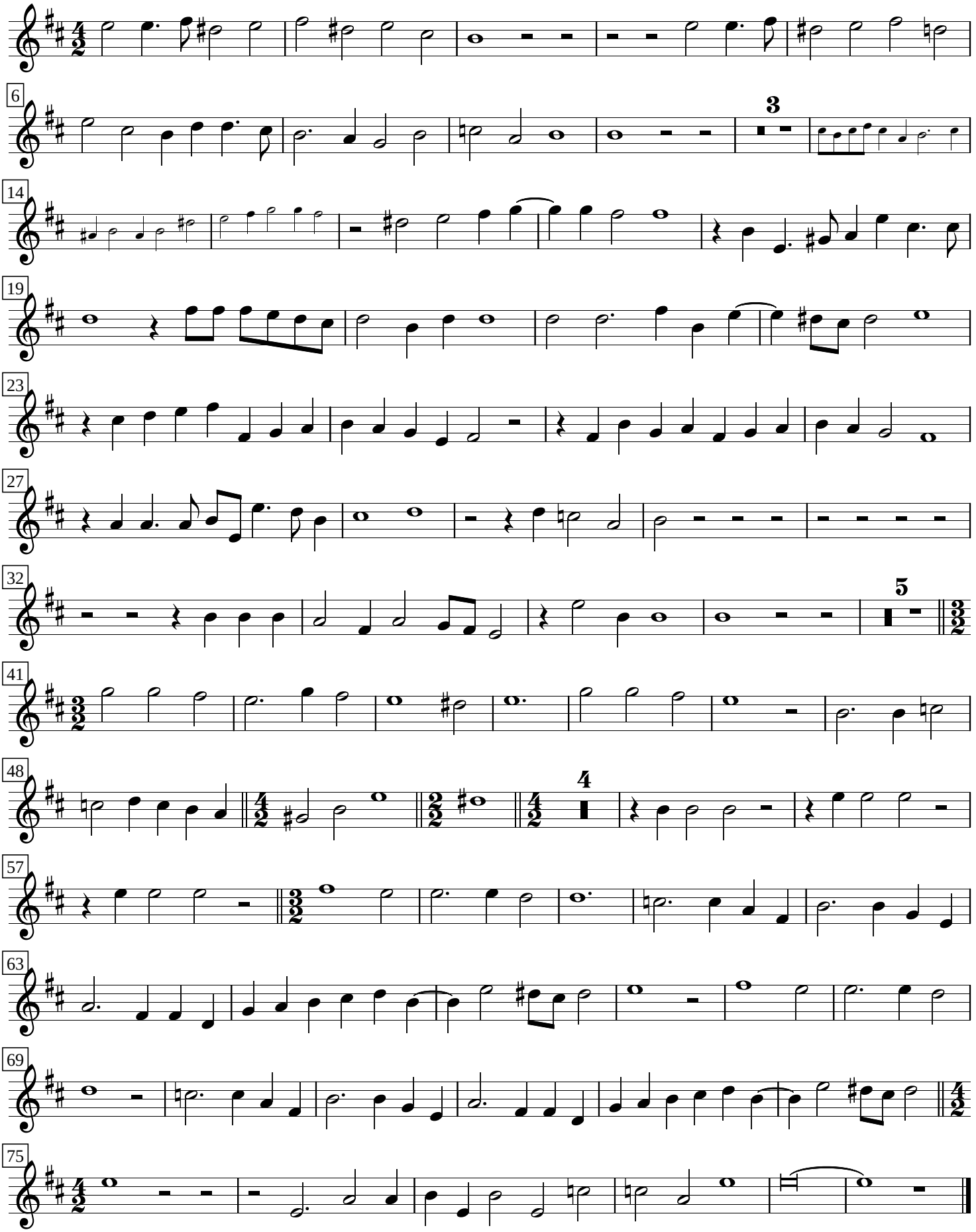
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

English horn

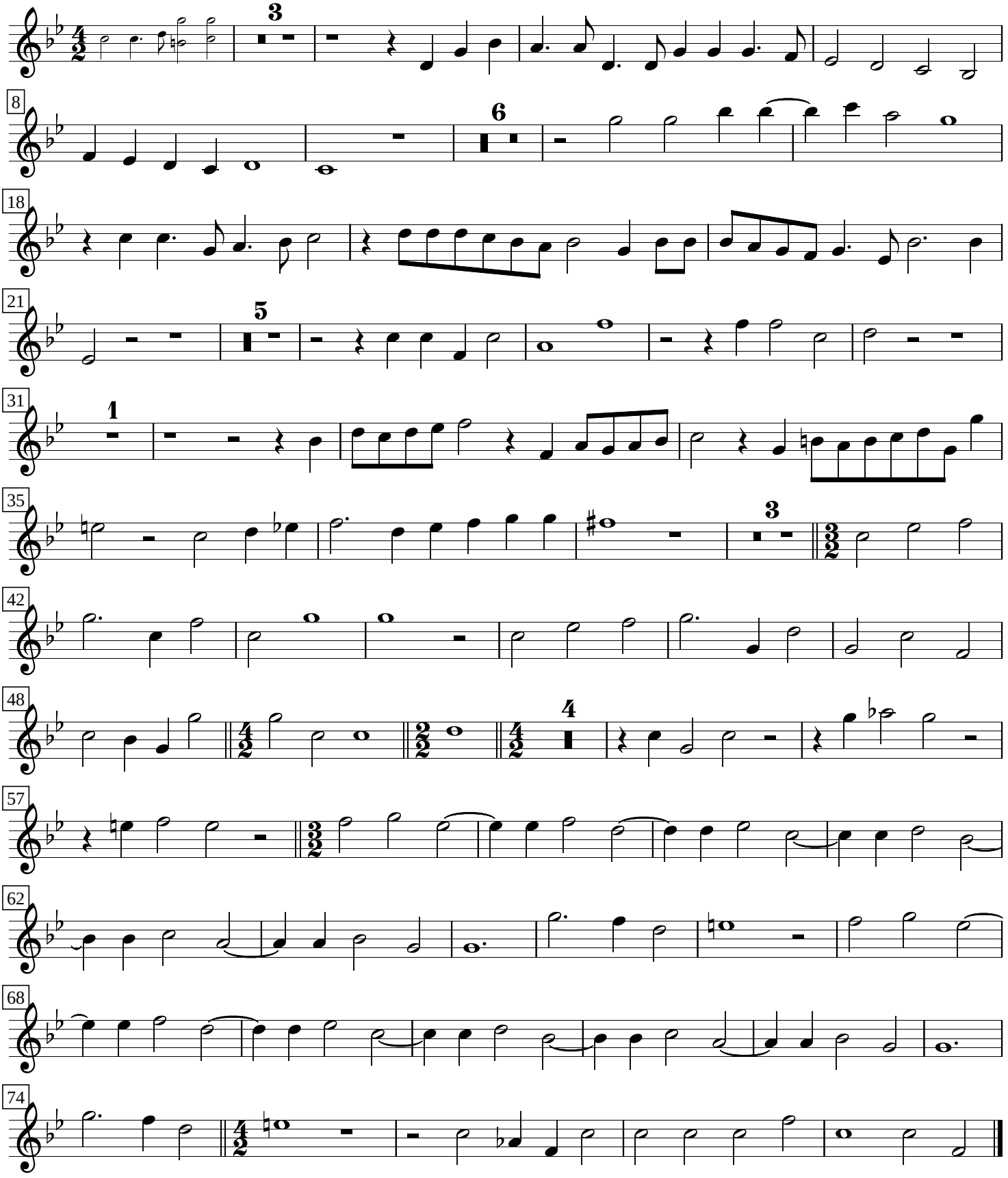
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

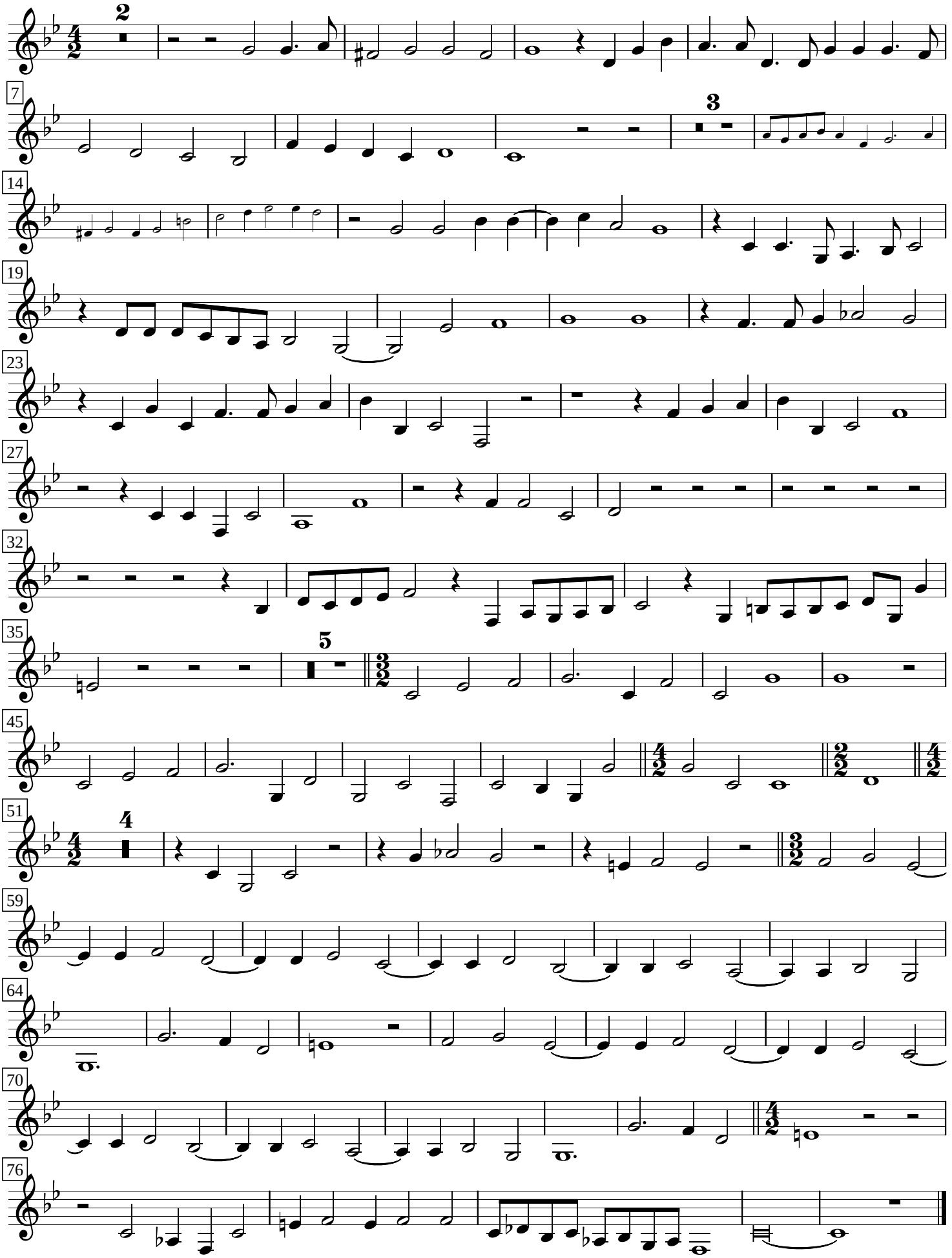
clarinet 1 in A

Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

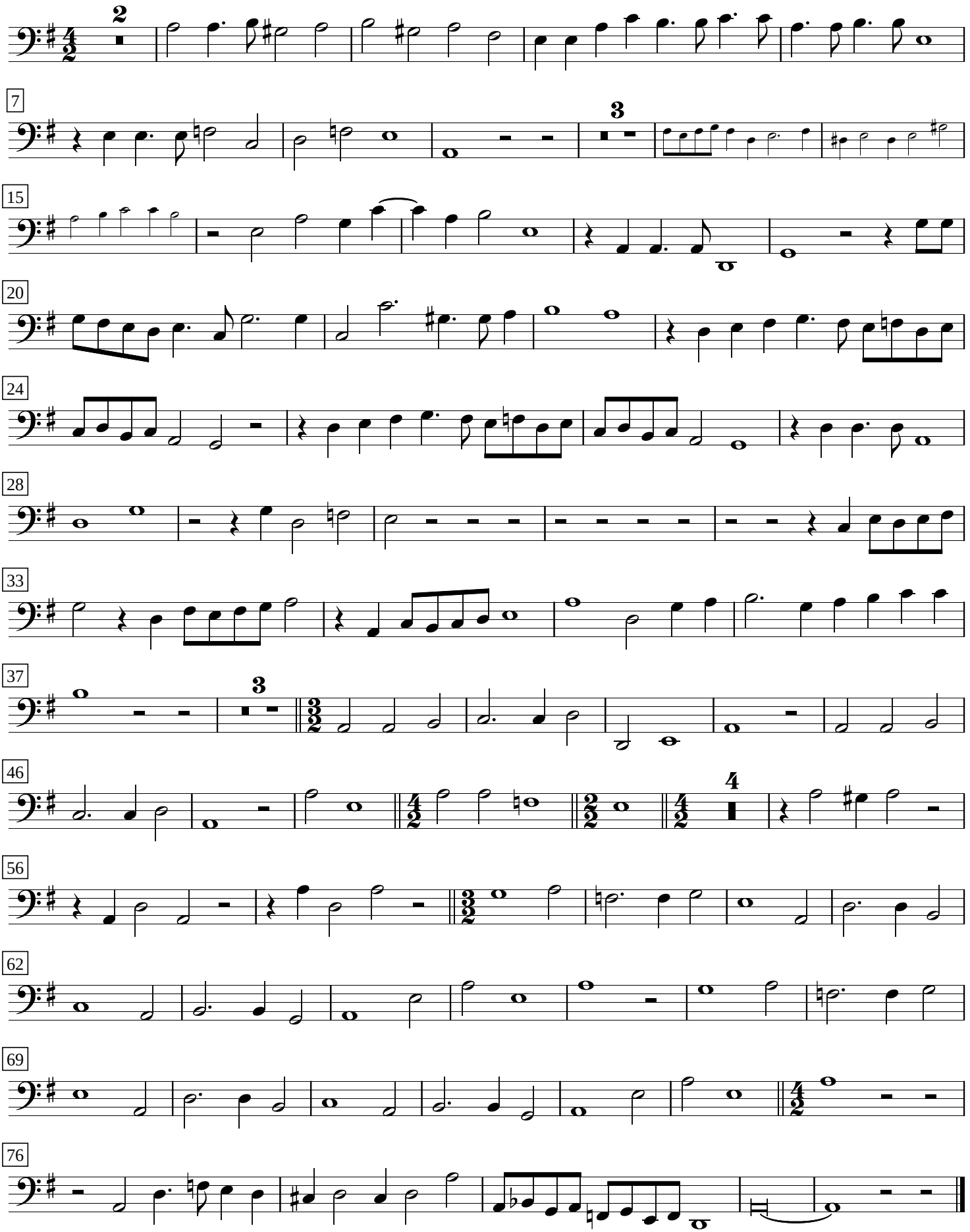
clarinet 2 in A



Canzona XII

bassoon 1

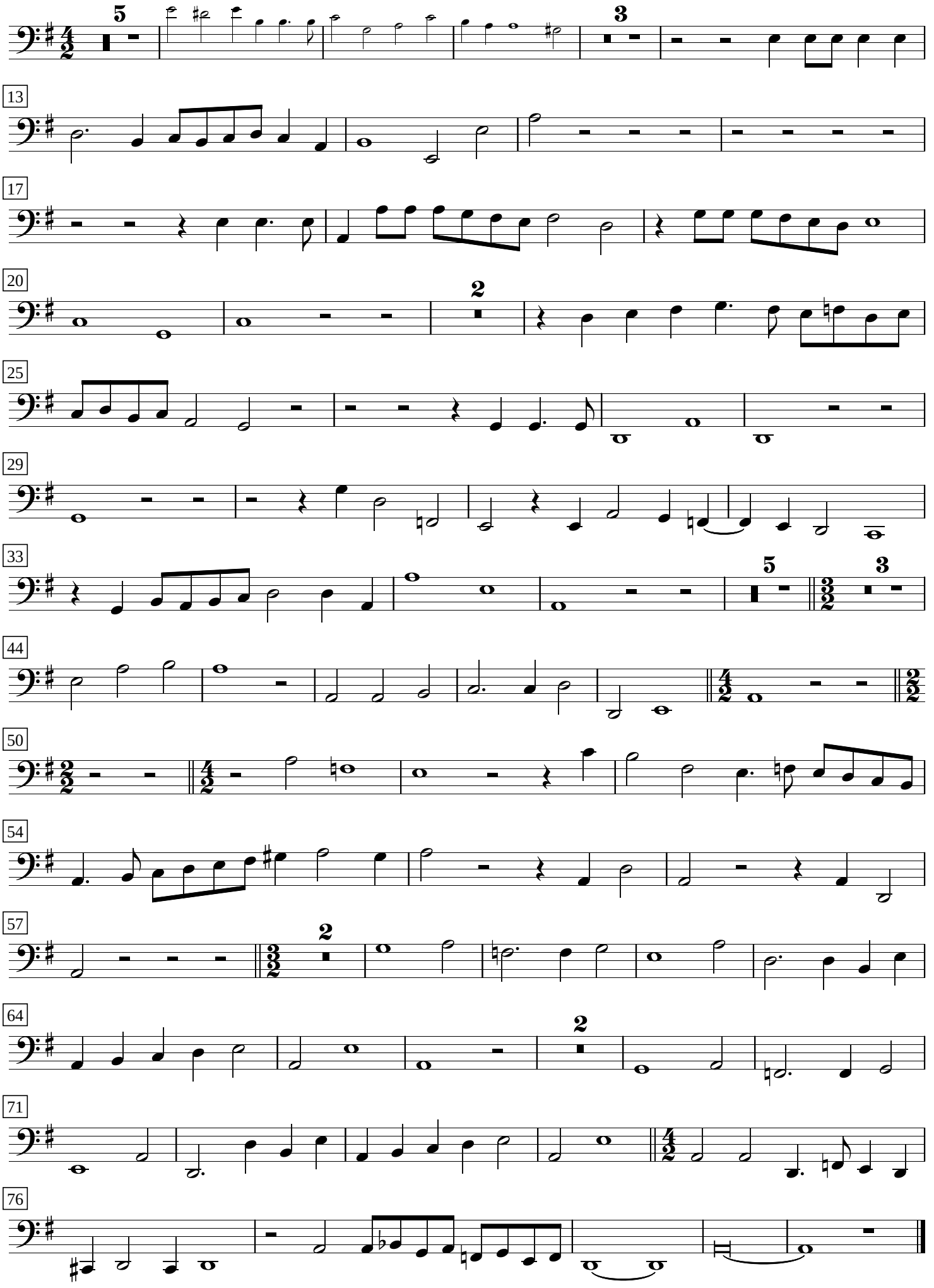
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

bassoon 2

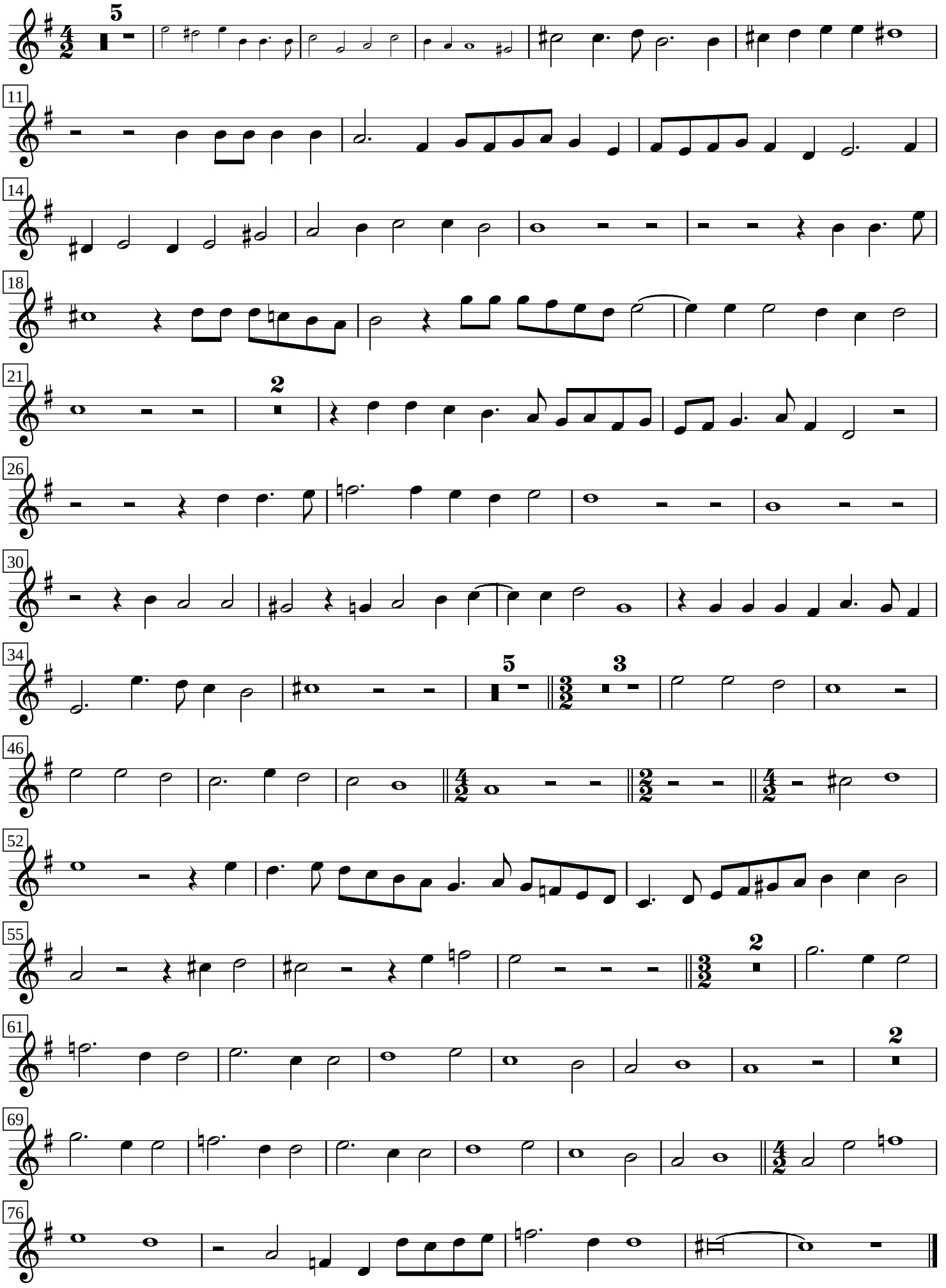
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

trumpet 1 in C

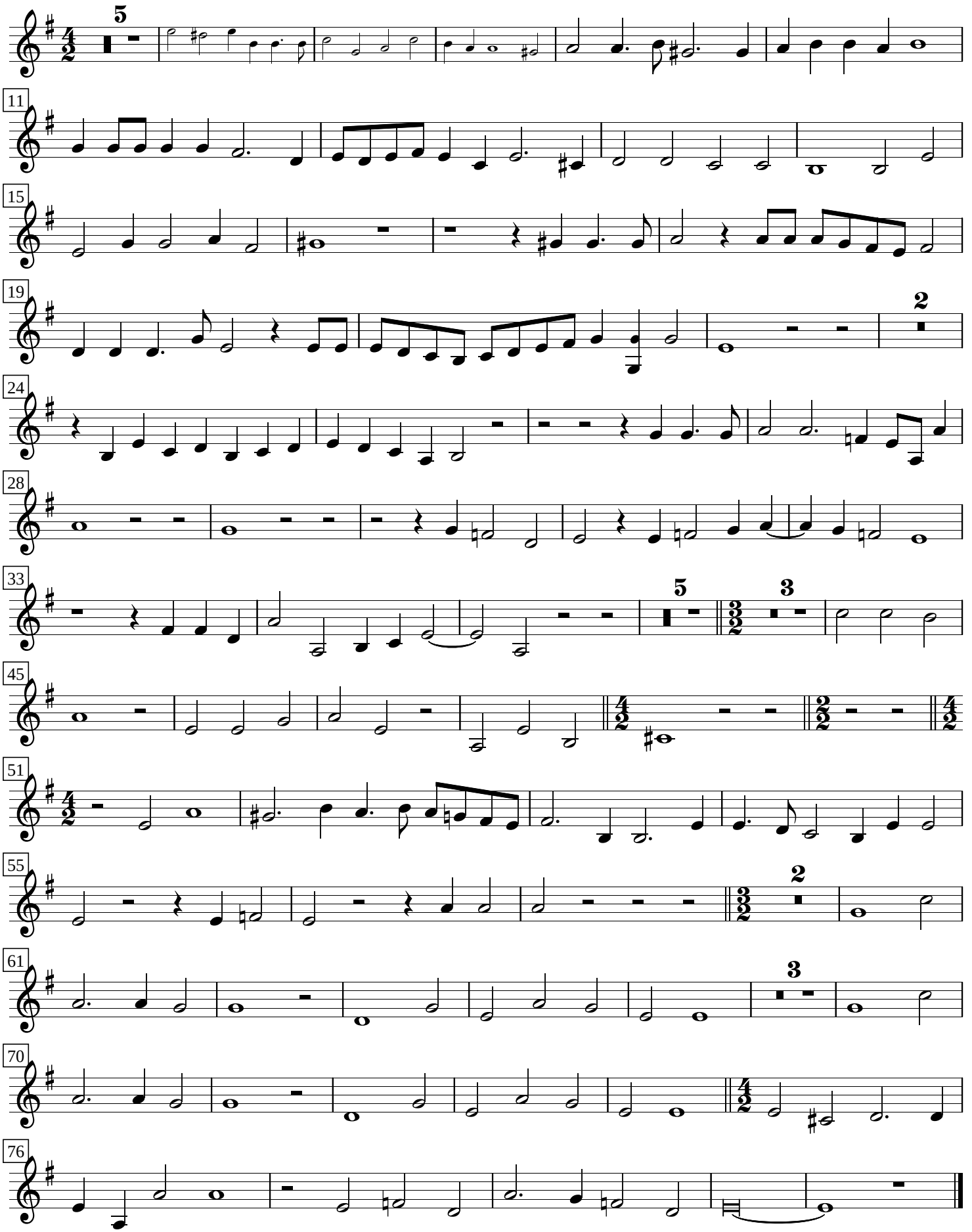
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

trumpet 2 in C

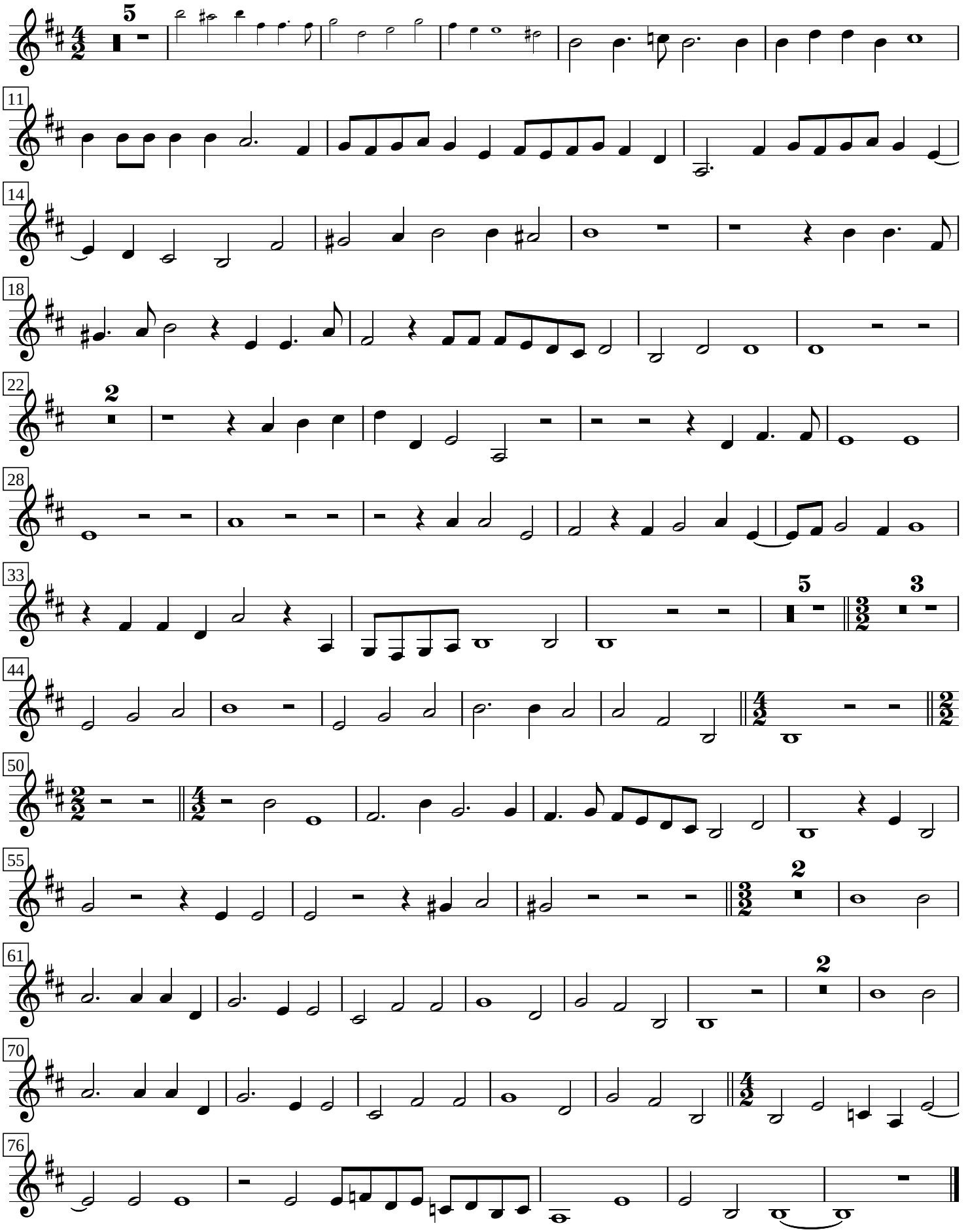
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

horn 1 in F

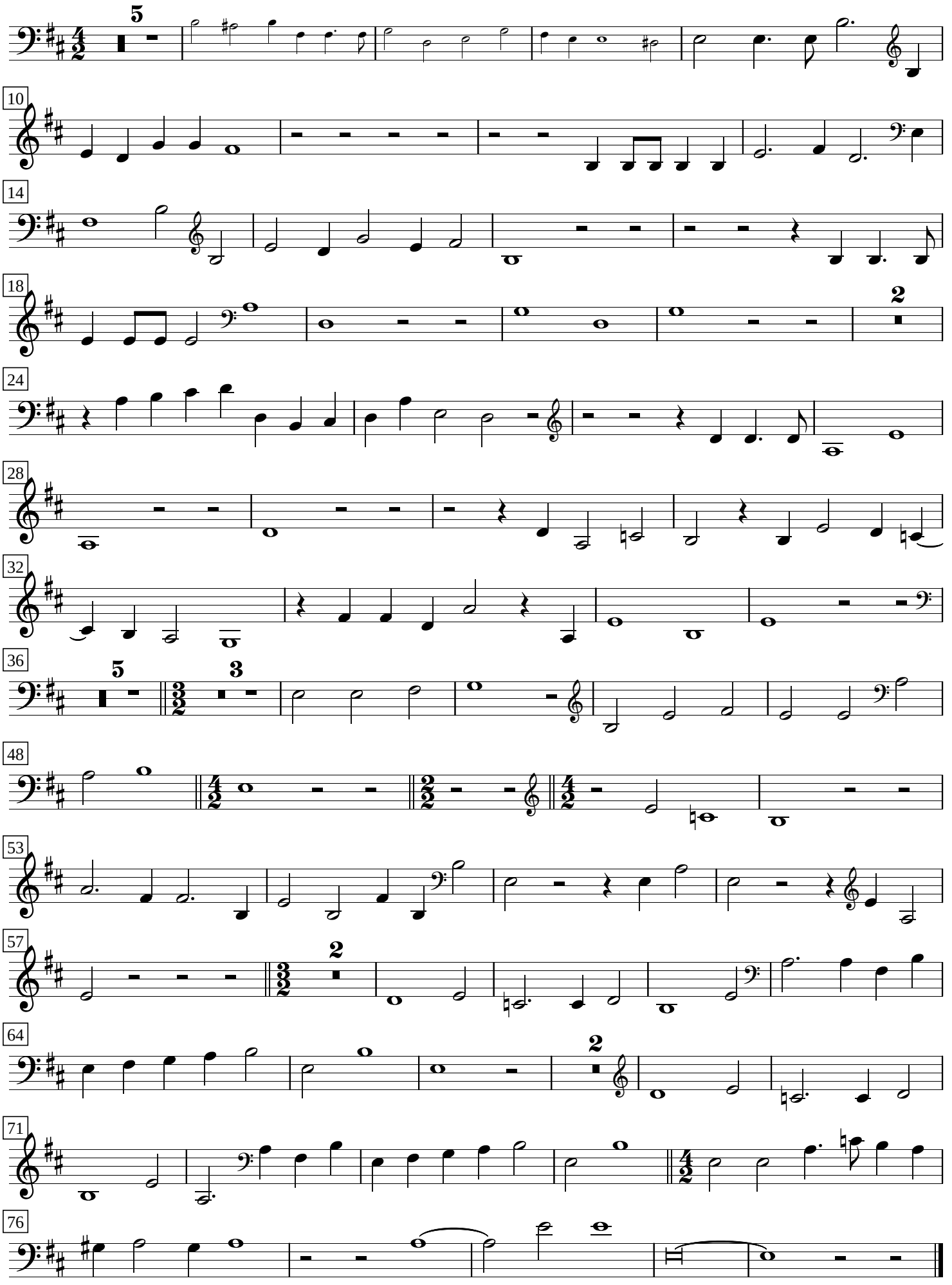
Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

horn 2 in F

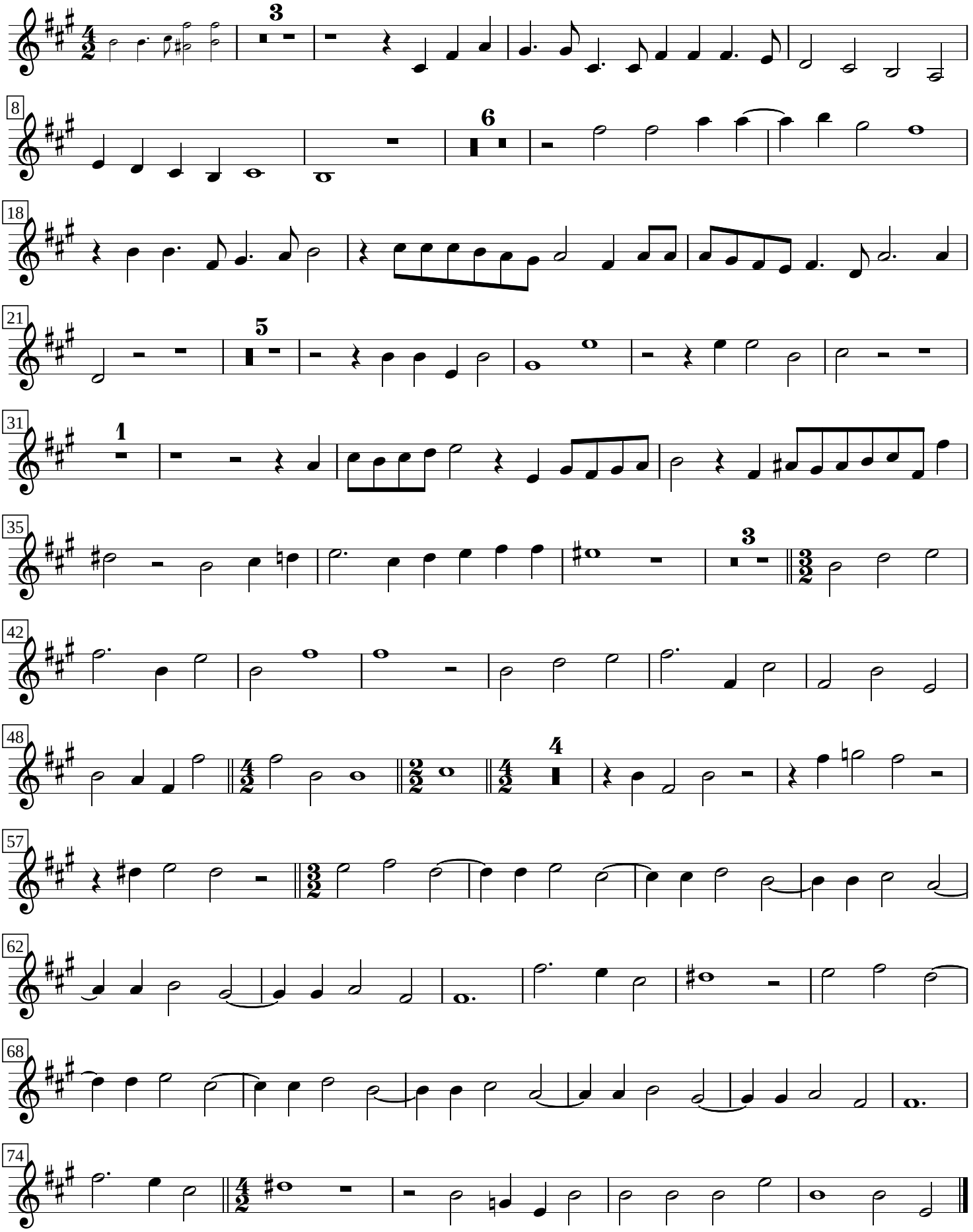
Giovanni Gabrieli

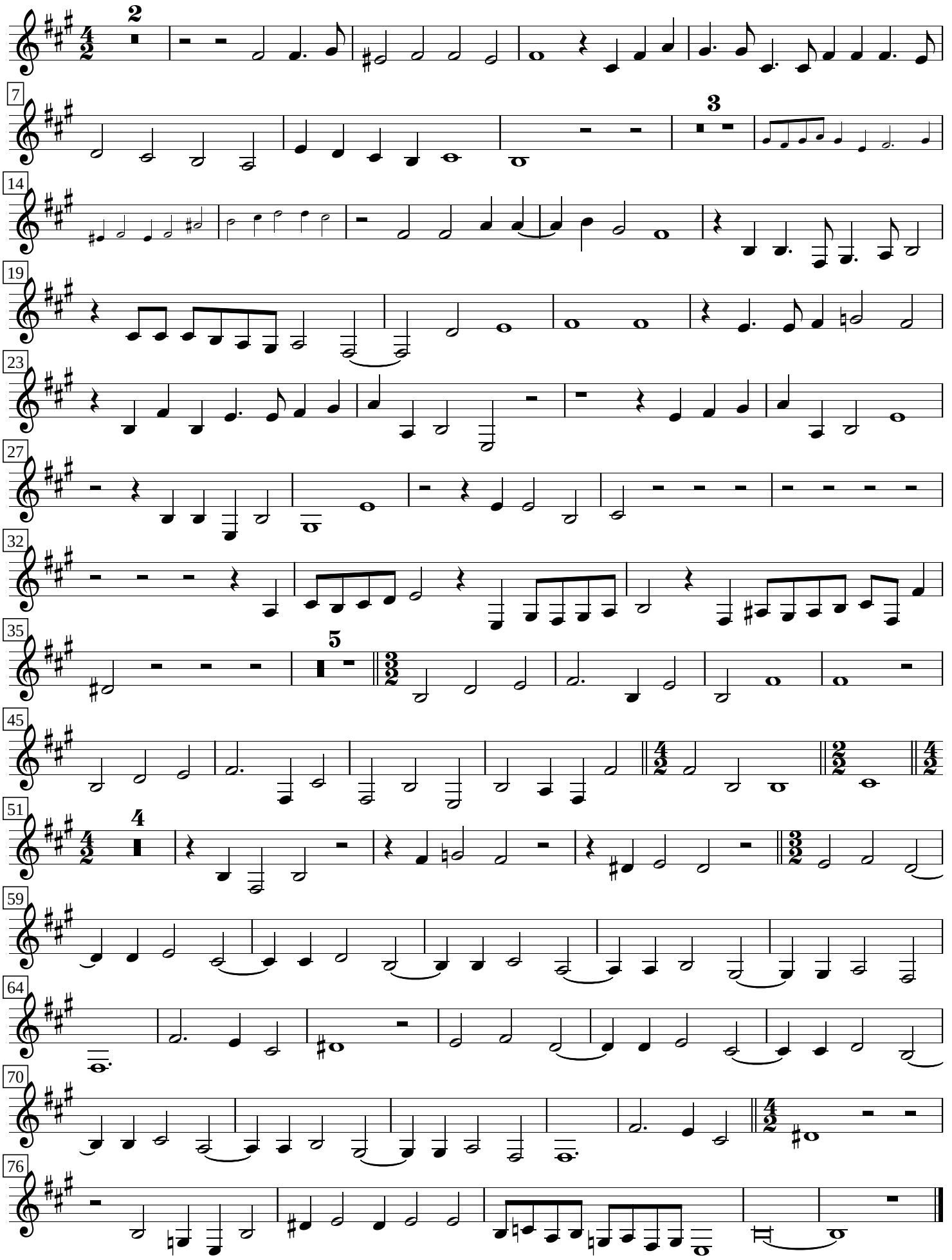


Canzona XII

clarinet 1 in Bes

Giovanni Gabrieli



Canzona XII

clarinet 2 in Bes