W. Jay Sydeman

Chaconne

for Violin and Piano
(with optional 2nd Violin)
(1991)

Arts Aeturnum Productions

"The chaconne is a very familiar form to everybody, whether you know it or not, because every piece of popular music ever written is a chaconne...

"The issue for the composer is to make a line on top that is interesting and fluid enough that you might not even know that it was a chaconne. [In this work,] the chord pattern repeats seven times, which sort of restricts the violinist. There is a middle section where both the violinist and pianist can really get into a conversation with one another, and then it drifts back into the chaconne. Of course getting back to something is always the composer's dilemma because it has to sound like it really wants to get back there."

– W. Jay Sydeman, July 2010

W. Jay Sydeman's life mirrors the breadth and variety of his music. Born in New York in 1928 and educated at Manhattan's Mannes School of Music, he quickly became one of the most sought-after and honored composers of his generation, receiving commissions from such prestigious groups as the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Tanglewood Music Center, and the Boston Symphony, which premiered his orchestral work in memory of John F. Kennedy in 1966. "Sydeman uses a whole battery of far out techniques," wrote the New York Times, "but he has an uncanny ability to throw in the whole avant-garde machinery as if it were the simplest, most normal way of making music in the world ... More than many of his colleagues, he seems to know what will sound well, and he works for some remarkably attractive, pure textures. His sounds seem to grow from a physical sense of exactly what material is right."

In 1970, after a heady period that included awards from the National institute of Arts and Letters, the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Library of Congress, Sydeman left New York – and composition – to begin a journey of personal and artistic exploration.

"Around 1980," he has written, "I returned to composition – at first a large number of choral works which reconnected me to the source of all music – the human voice. Out of this new lyric impulse have evolved all of my works since that time – more romantic, more accessible. I create music for the musician."

– Howard Hersh,
Artistic Director of "Music Now"

Sydeman is part of a composers' group in Nevada City annually producing the "Wet Ink Festival of New Music." He now lives in Mendocino and hosts a bi-weekly program on KZYX, "The Mind of a Composer", 10 am to noon on Mondays, introducing and commenting on contemporary music.

Duration: circa 4:15

To contact the composer:
(707) 937-1658
jaysyde@gmail.com
www.williamjaysydeman.com

Edited by Rick Shinozaki and Irene Jacobson, in consultation & collaboration with the composer.
Engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA).

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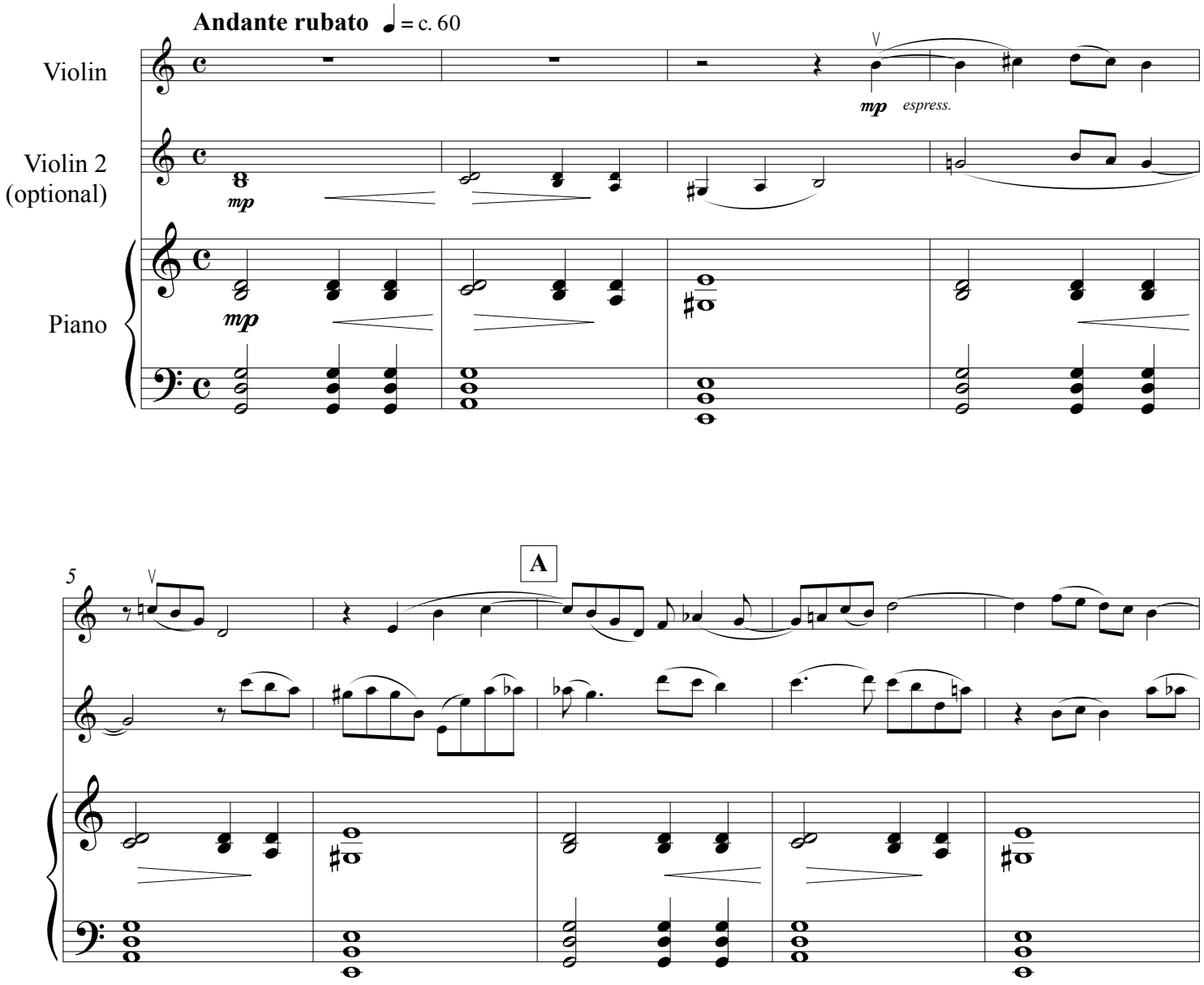
(April 1991)



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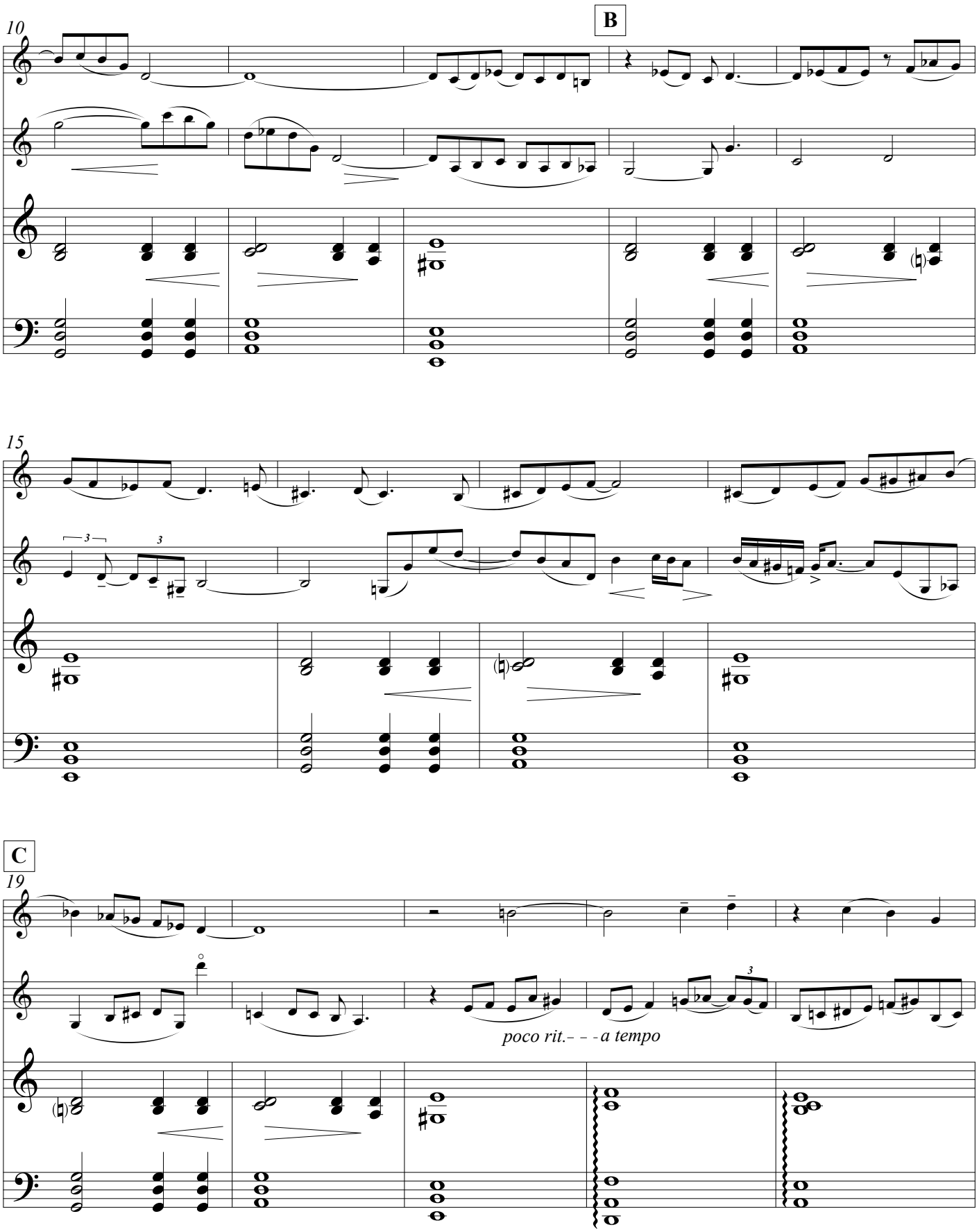
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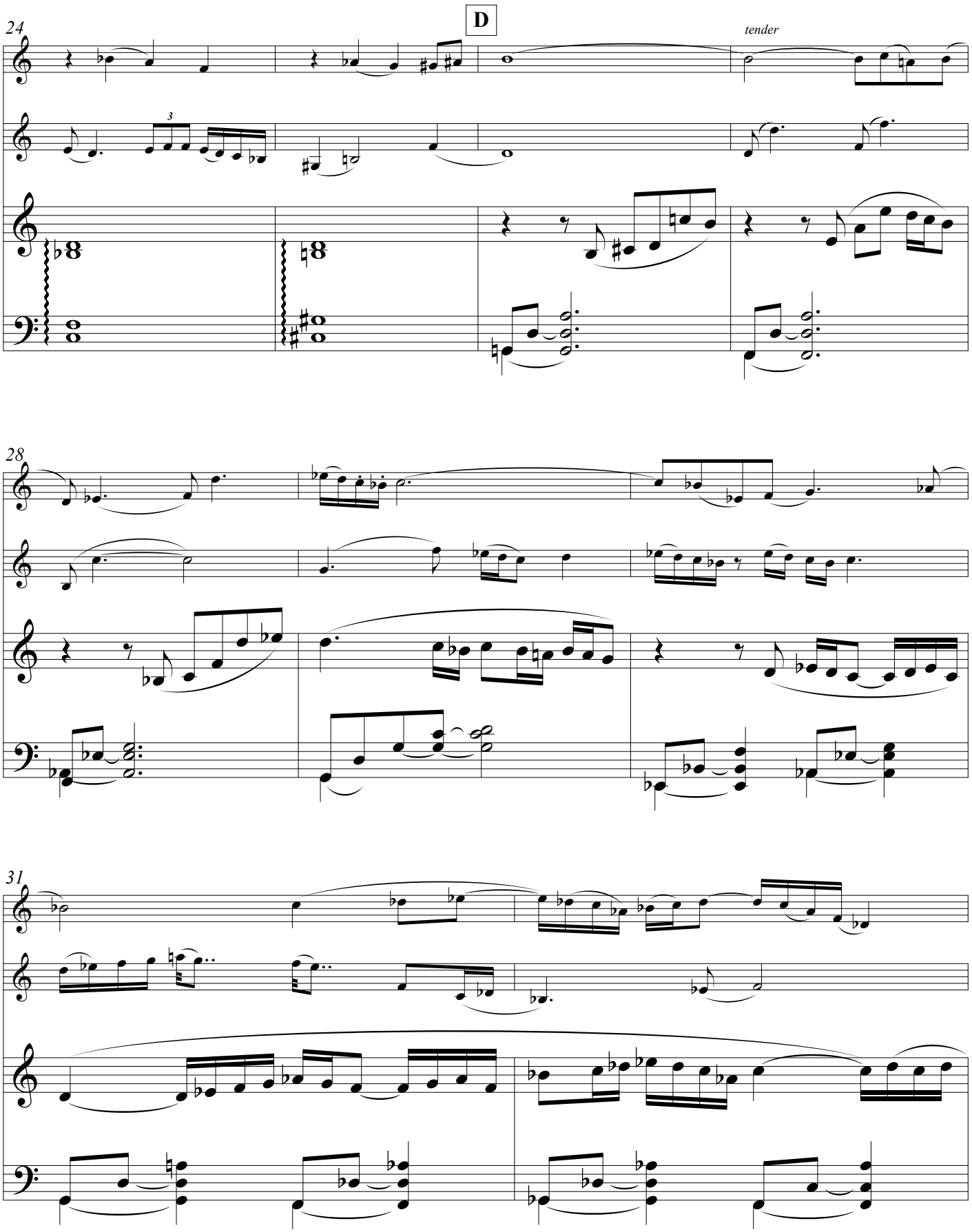
poco rit.- - - a tempo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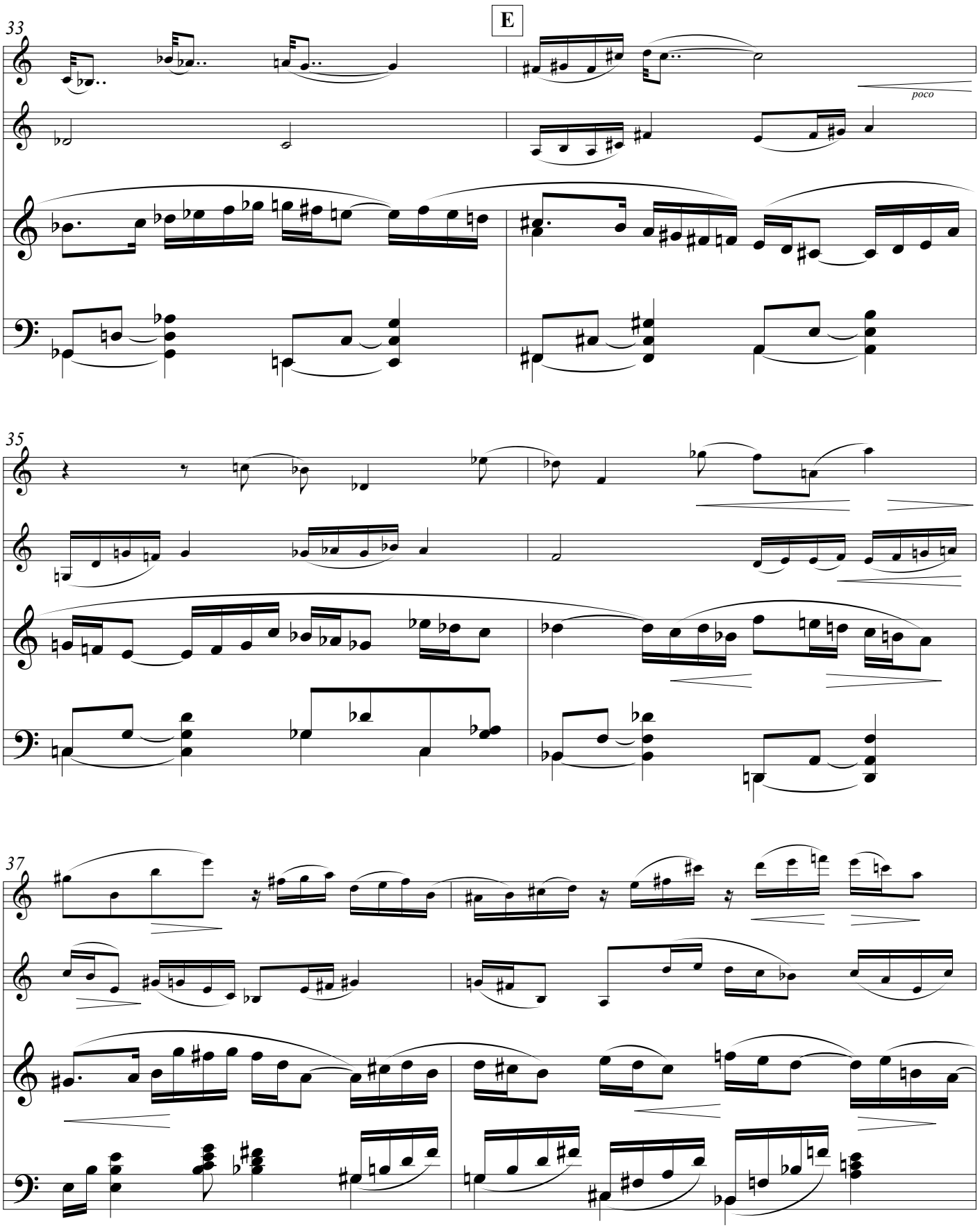
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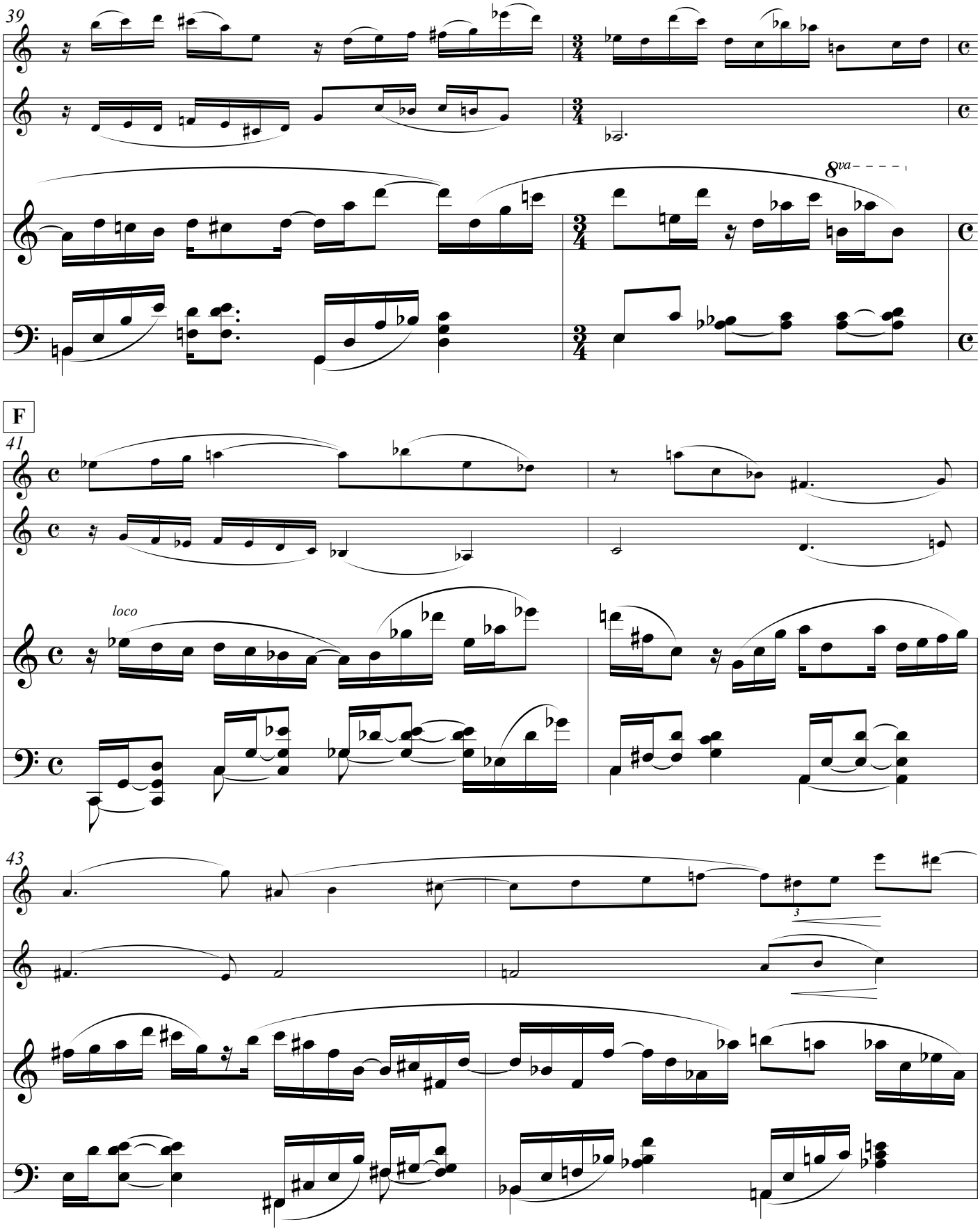
poco
35
37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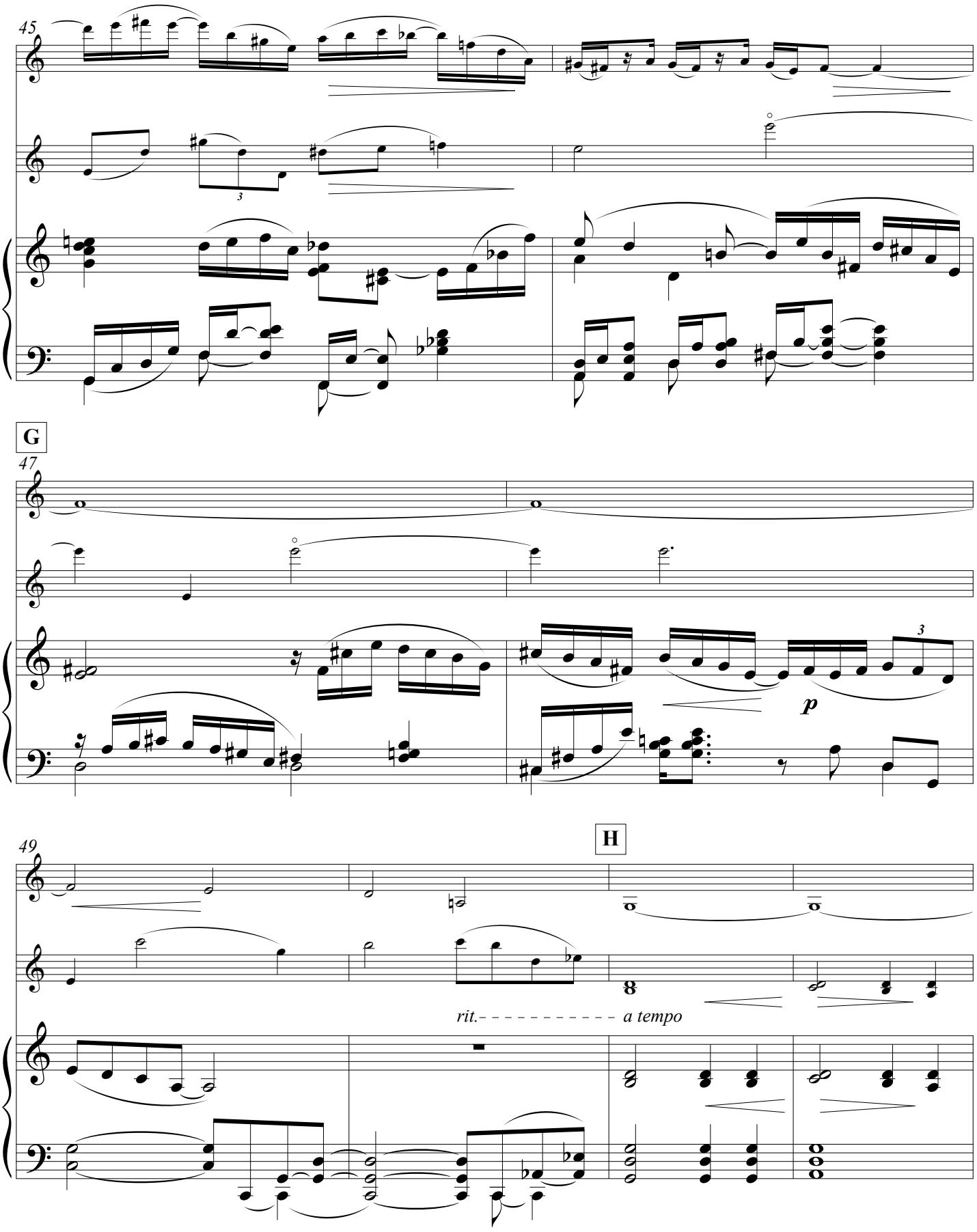
45
3
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47
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49
H
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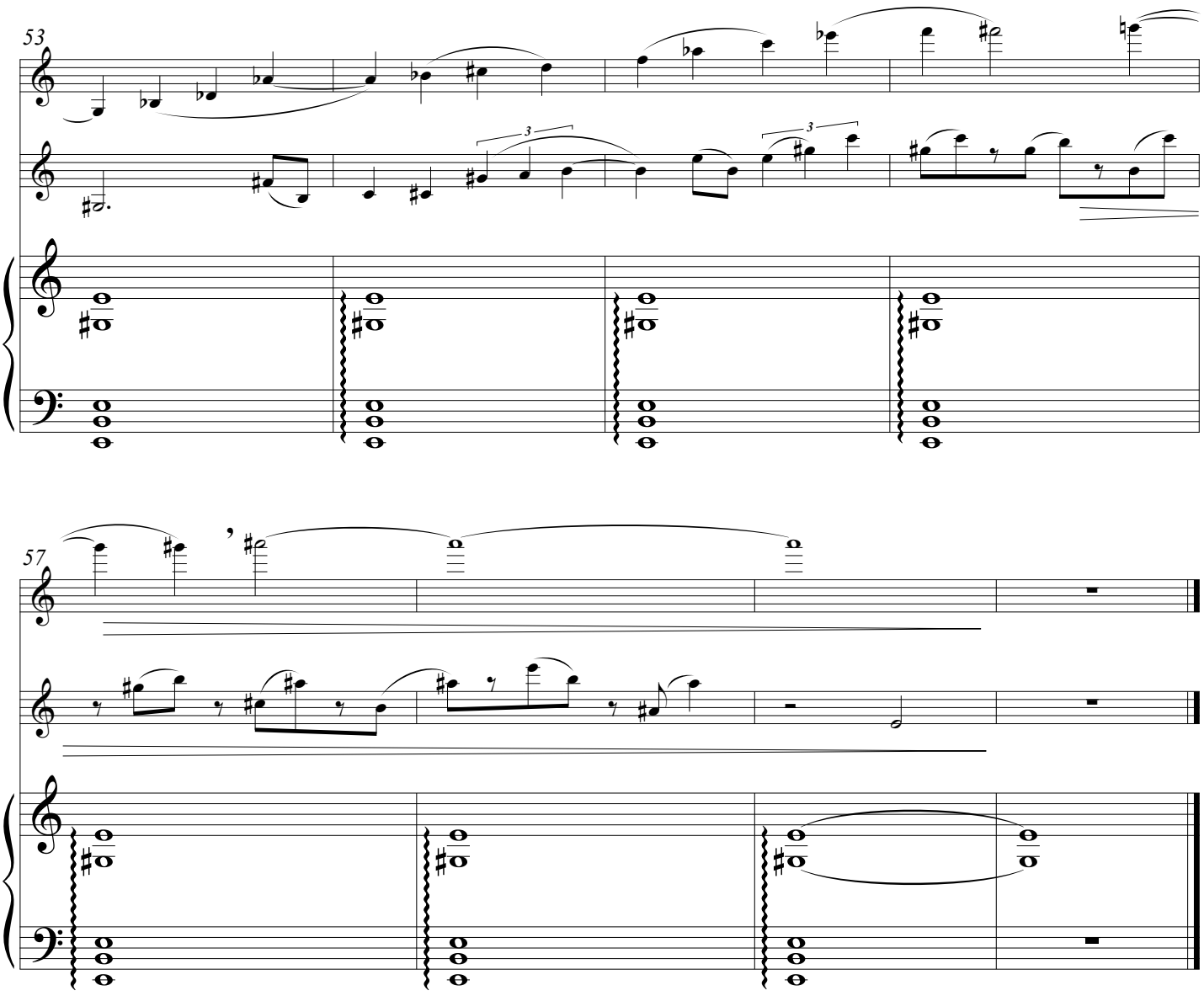
a tempo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