W. Jay Sydeman

Two Pieces for Flute Quartet

for Four Flutes

(1991)

Arts Aeternum

There probably is another piece for four flutes, but I never saw or heard one – there was no model for this piece. I always enjoy writing for combinations not heretofore attempted. In this case we hear not two but four, as it were.

It is in two movements, slow and fast as one might expect. The first one is quite pretty, somewhat unusual for me. The parts are pretty evenly distributed, and it is not difficult. The second movement puts the flutes through their paces and is quite brilliant sounding – lots of fast *staccato* notes and some tricky rhythms, all in the service of having a really good time (the performers, that is, and hopefully the audience as well).

– W. Jay Sydeman, August 2012

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: I. Adagio – circa 2:30
II. Poco allegro – circa 1:40

To contact the composer:
Jeanne Duncan, Sydeman Archive Publications
707-962-0394
www.williamjaysydeman.com

Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA), consulting with the composer.

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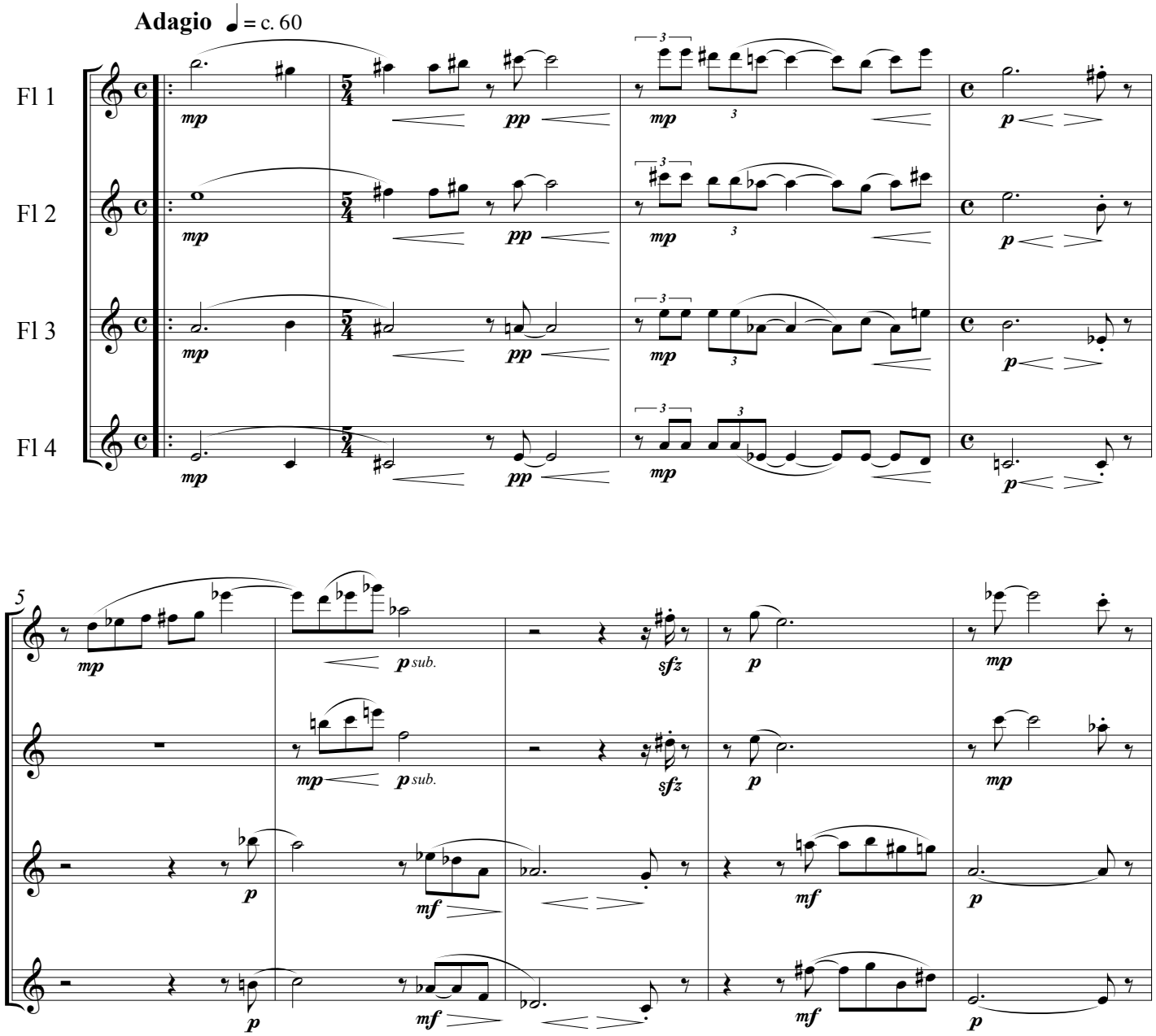
for Four Flutes

I.

W. Jay Sydeman
(February 1991)



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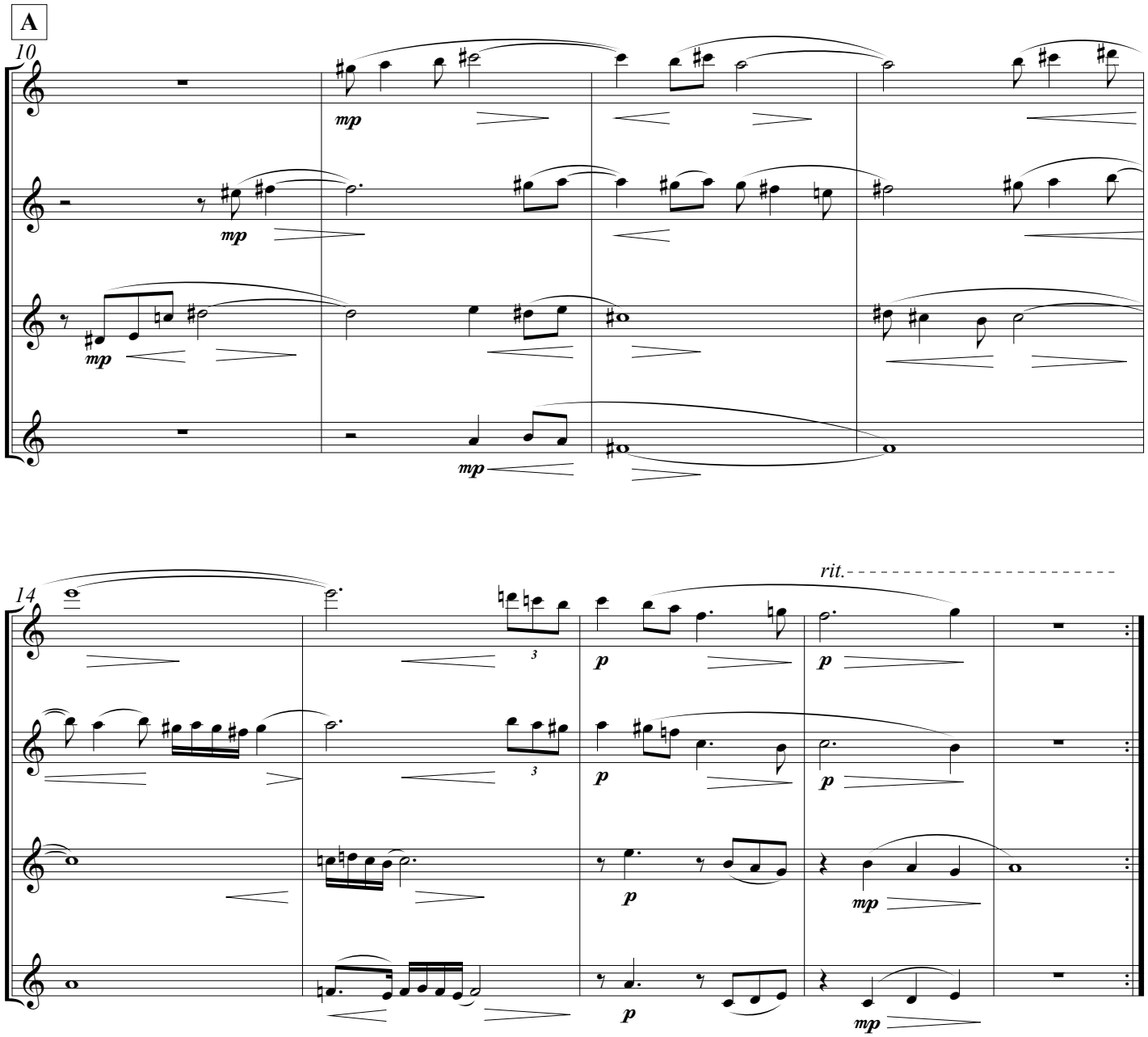
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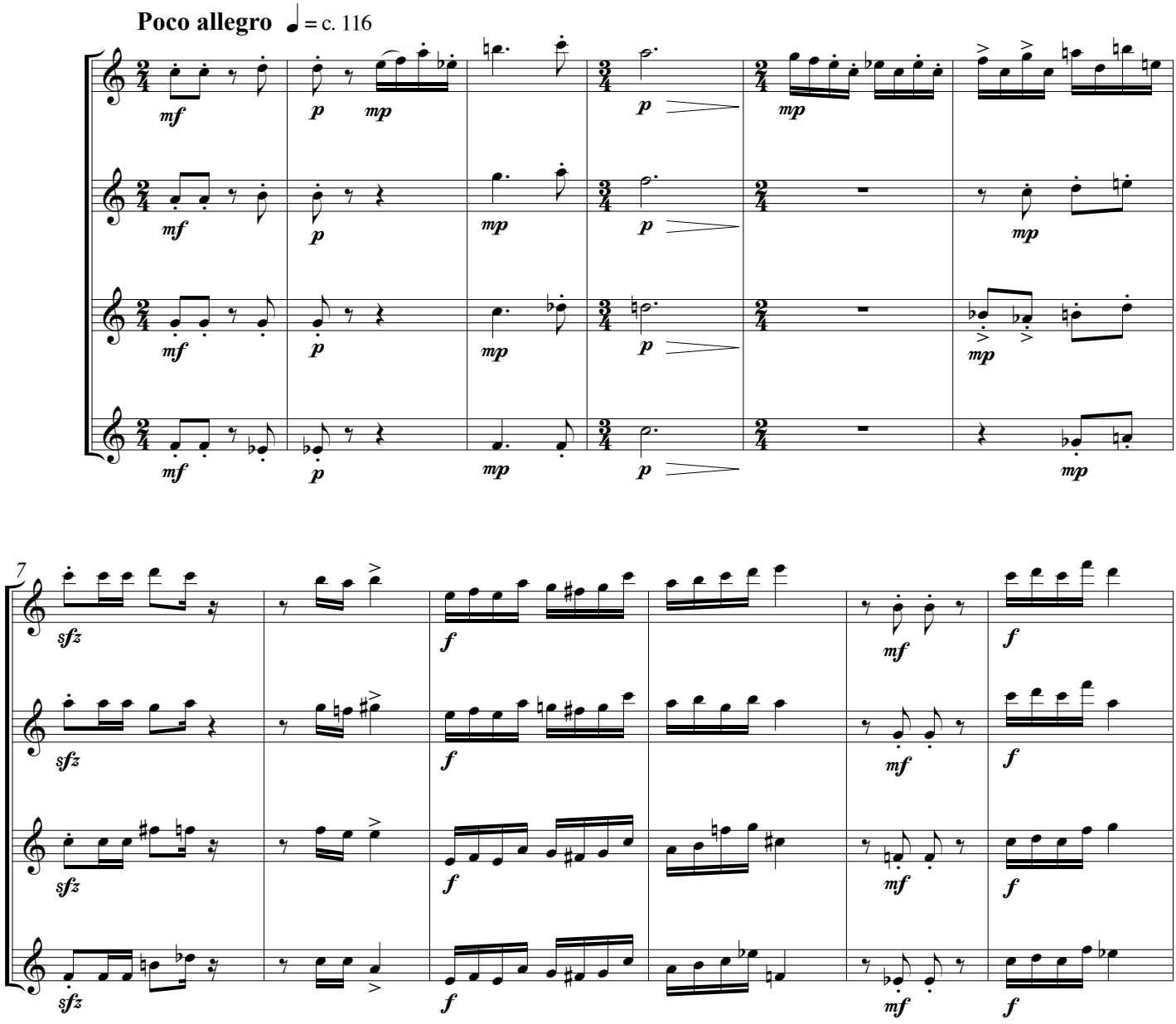
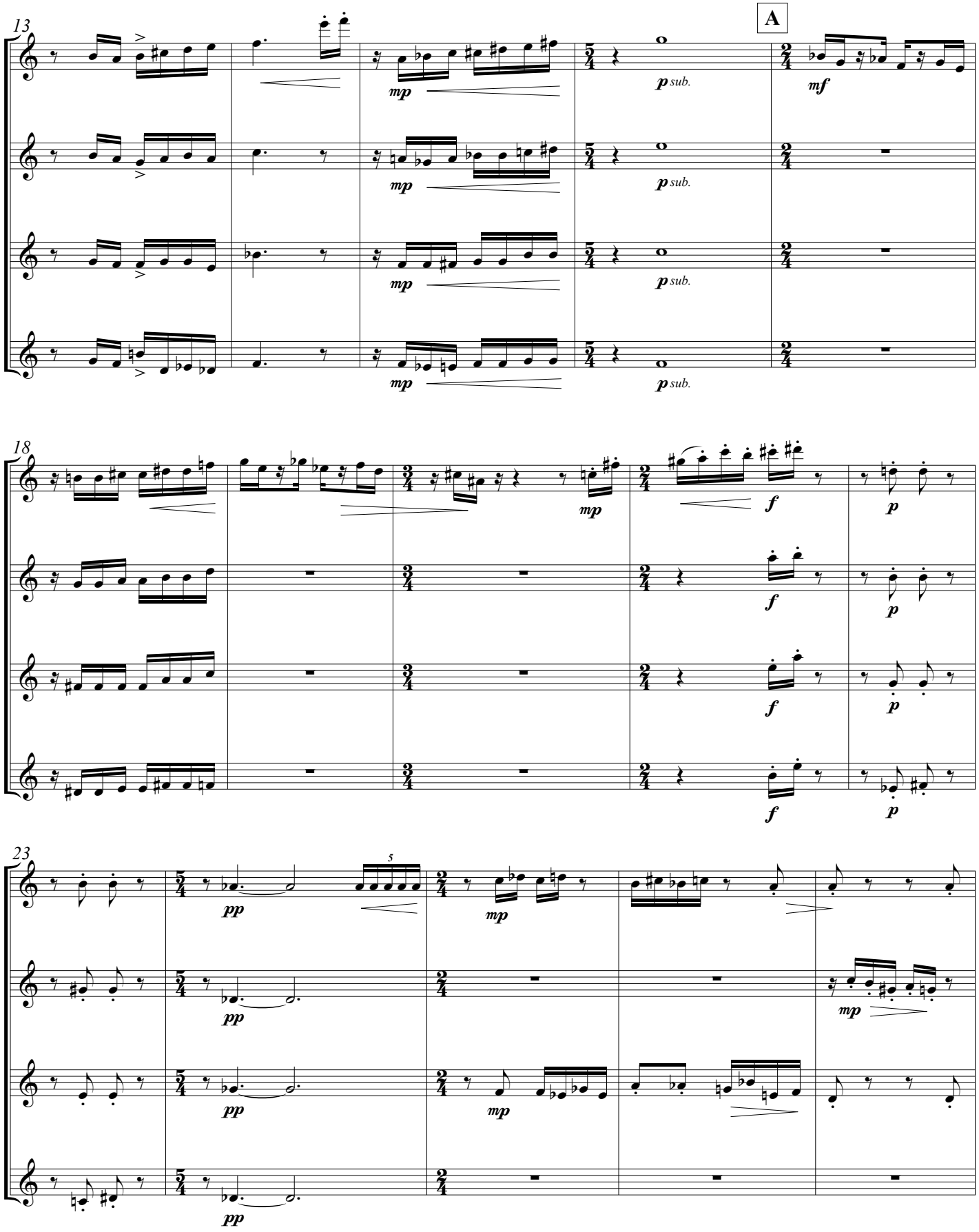
(May 1991)

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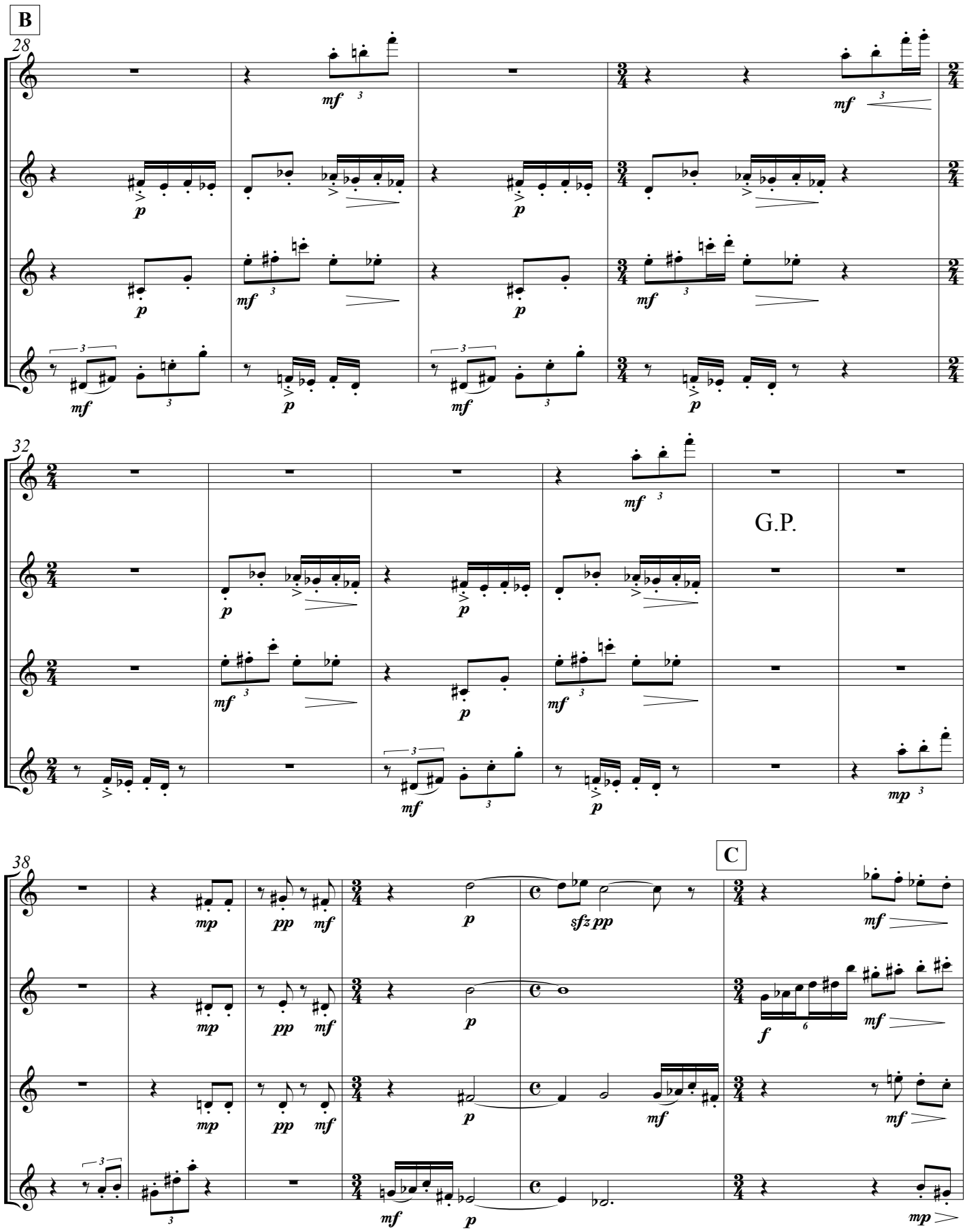
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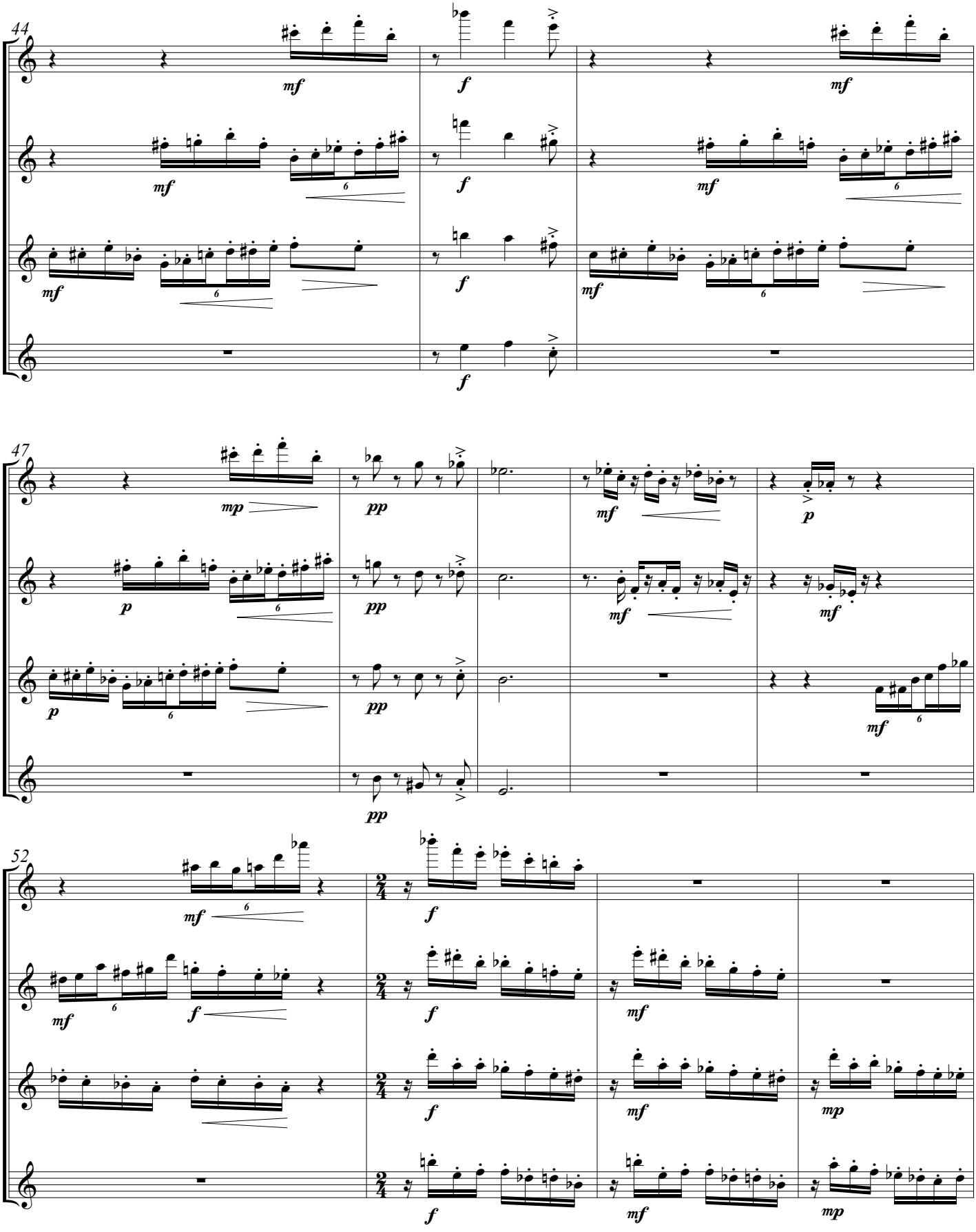
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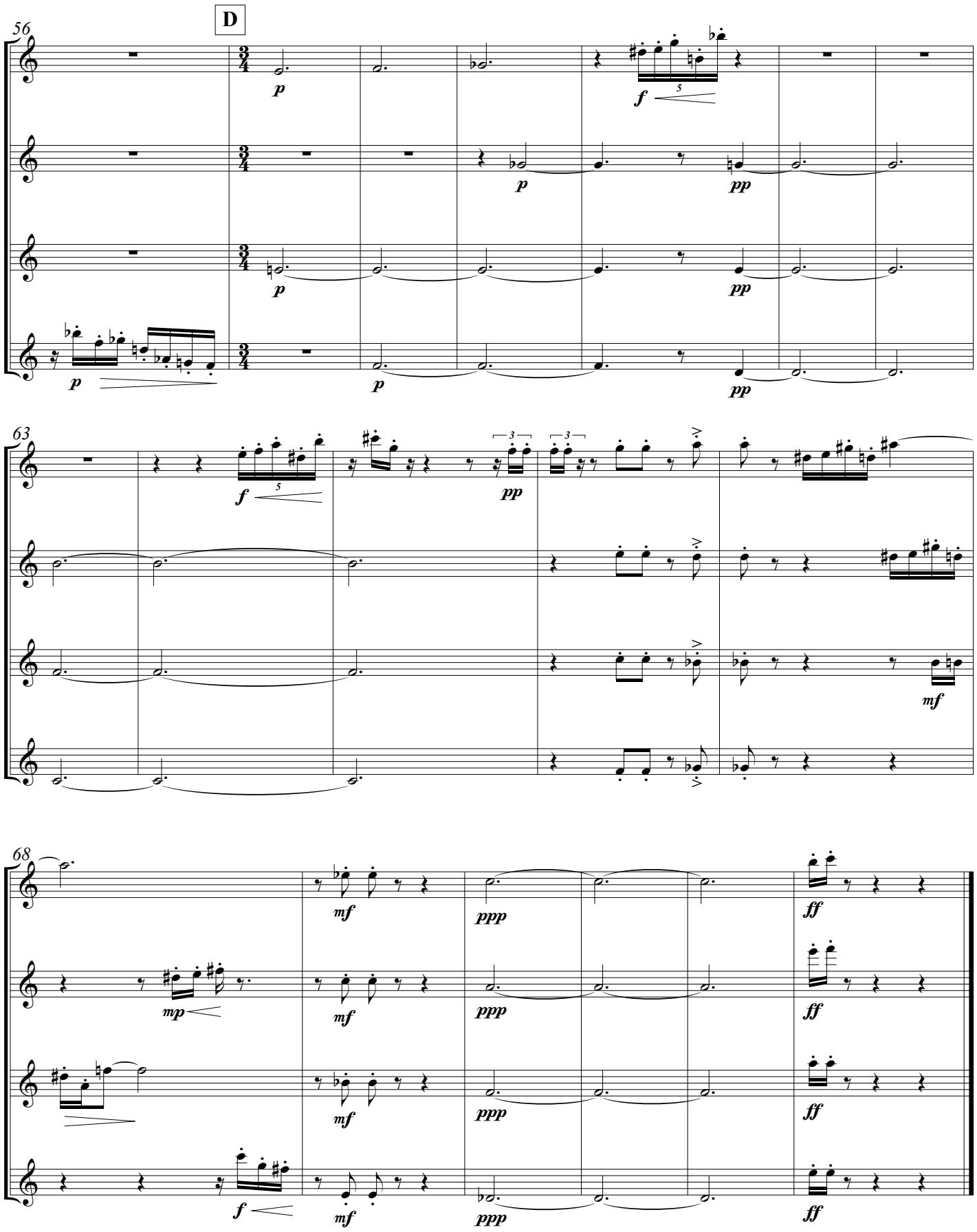
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