Full Score

W. Jay Sydeman

Reflections

for Solo Violin, Solo Cello
and String Orchestra
(c. 1993)

Arts Aeternum

Reflections was written in 1993 and first performed on the occasion of my 70th birthday in 1998. The performance took place in Nevada City, CA, where I was living at that time. The soloists, Nancy Hill, violin, and Ray Edens, cello, were members of the community who played in the Music in the Mountains summer festival, making it somewhat of an intimate "family affair."

With a title like *Reflections* one might not expect an elaborately composed contrapuntal piece, but I admit to titling it after completion. Structurally, it is a chaconne – a very elaborate one because not only is the chord sequence repeated but the musical elements within it remain identical, in that case like an *ostinato*. Therefore, the melodies for the violin and cello are obliged to be extremely inventive so the *ostinato* is not heard as such, which for me is pretty boring (despite whatever "minimalistic" music might decree).

The composer's task with a pre-given harmonic situation as this is to make the lines flow and interweave so the background does what a background should, namely recede into the background. I am quite happy with this attempt, and upon reflection decided to call it *Reflections*. I do believe that the soloists will greatly enjoy playing this work. It seemed so at its initial premiere.

– W. Jay Sydeman, November 2013

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.

Instrumentation:

Solo Violin
Solo Violoncello

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Violoncello
Contrabass

Duration: circa 7:30

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707-962-0394
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Edited and engraved by Rick Shinozaki (Albany, CA), consulting with the composer.

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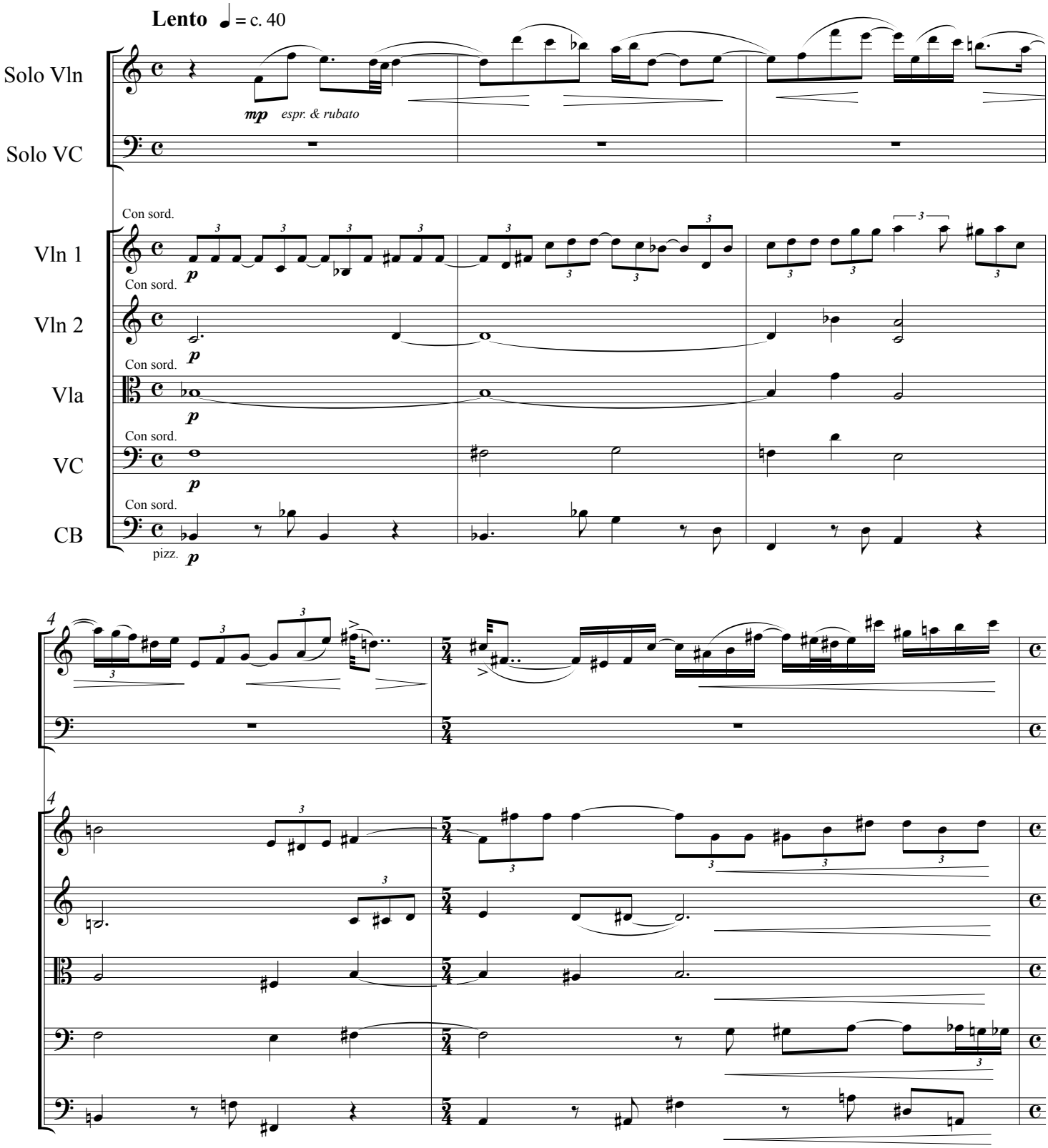
W. Jay Sydeman
(c. 1993)



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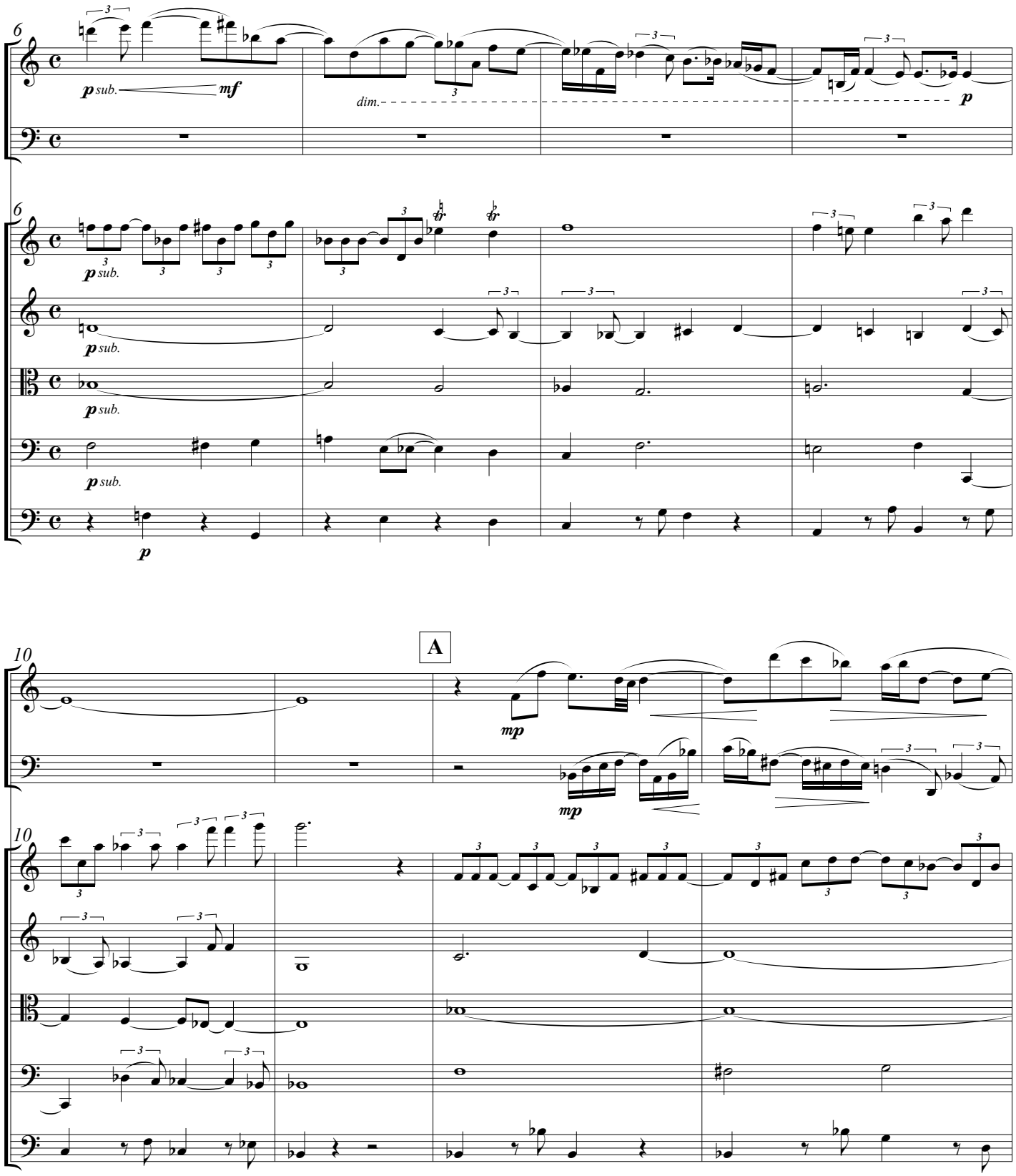
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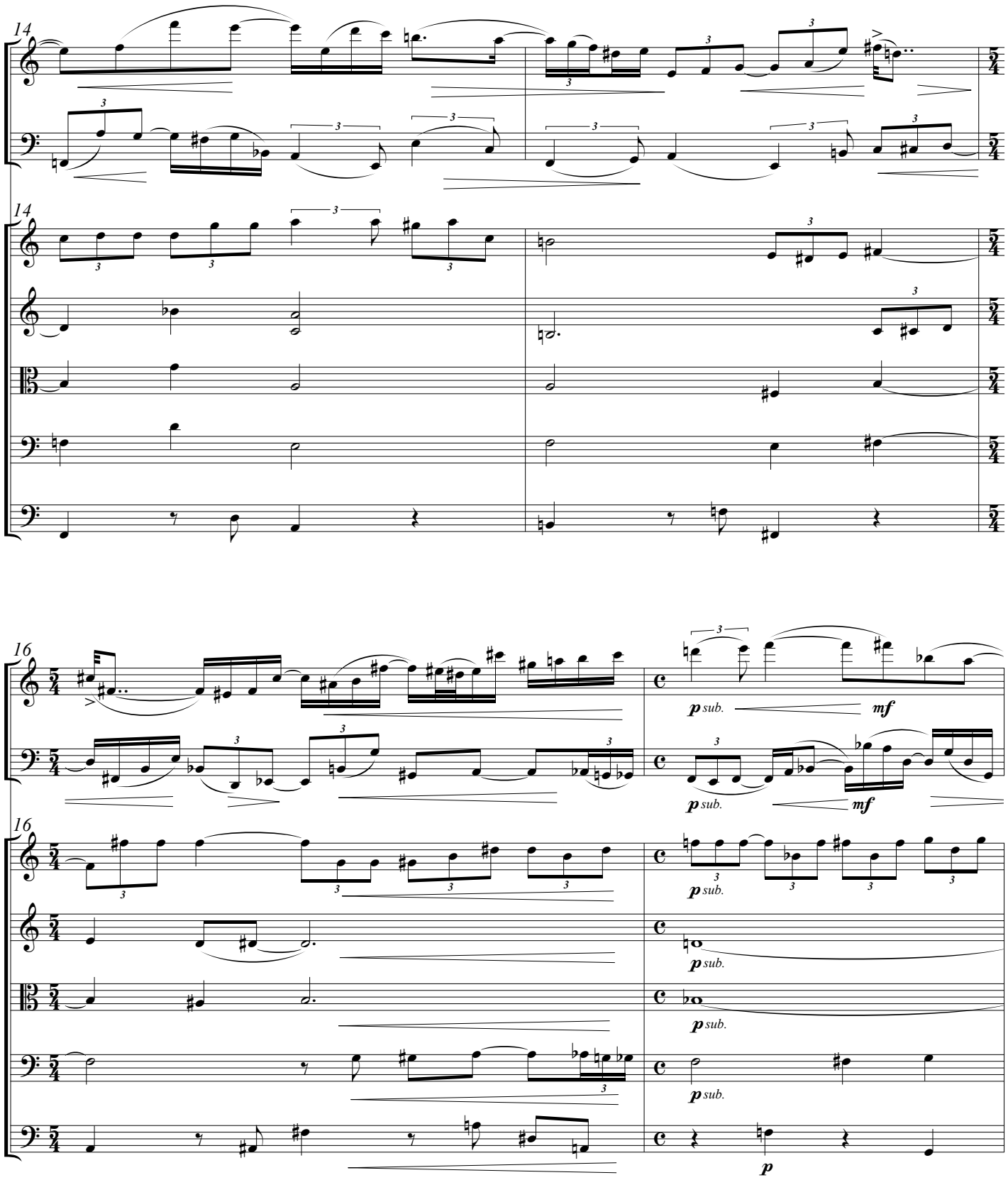
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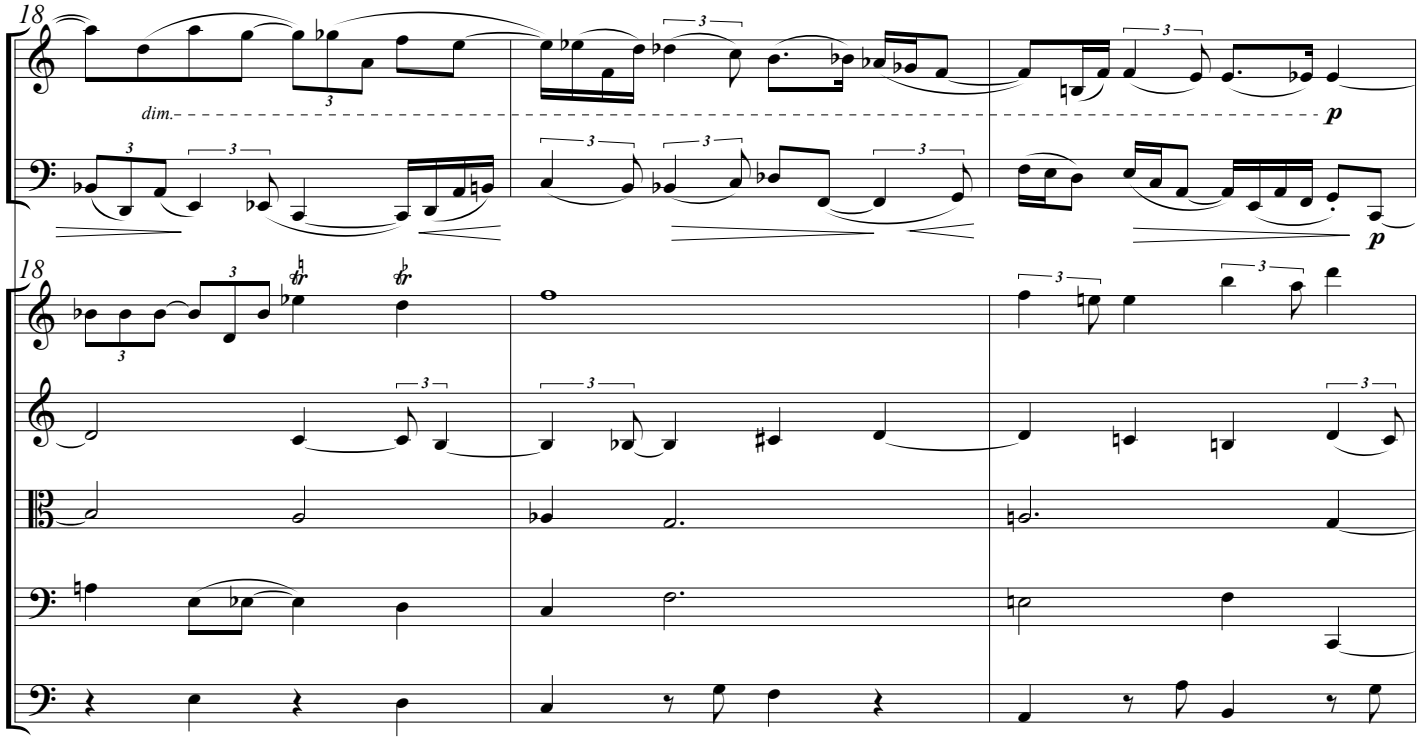
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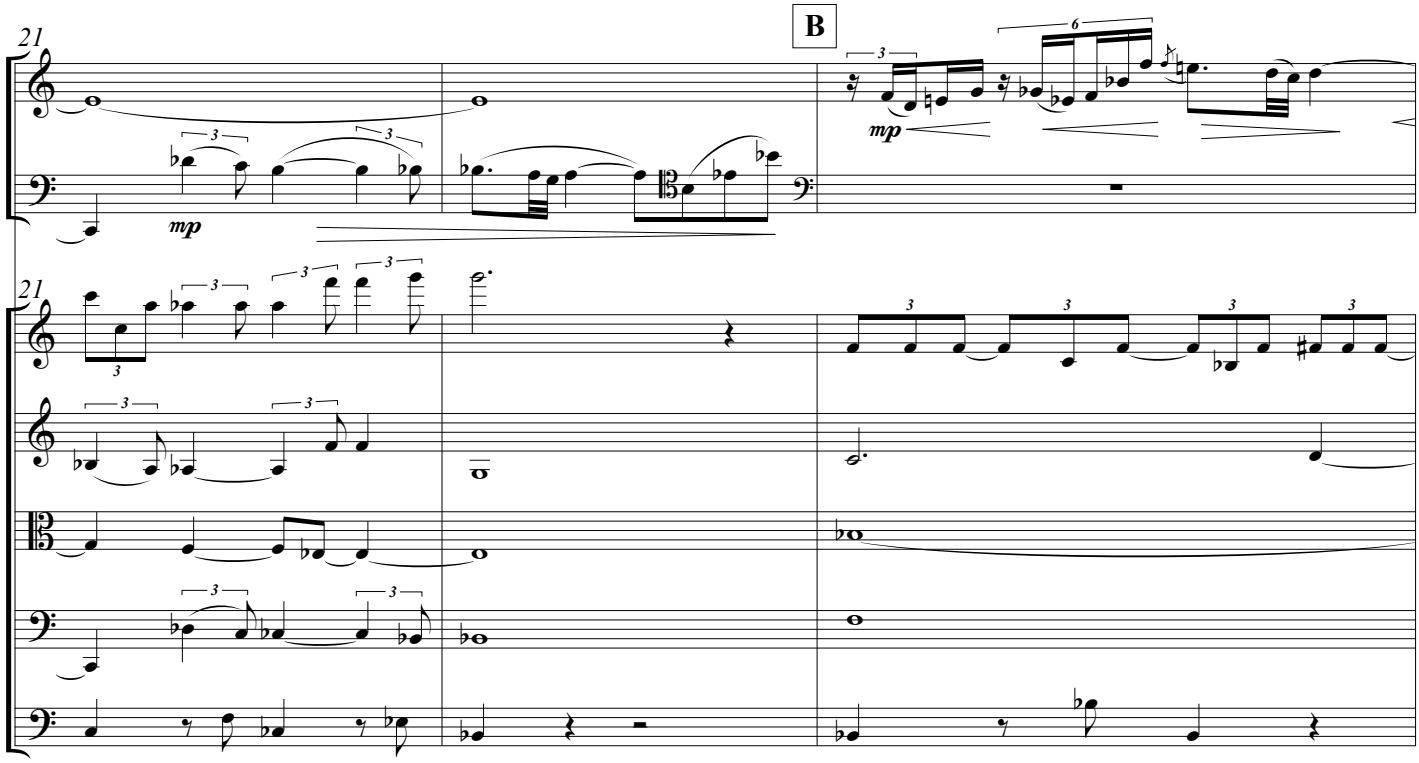
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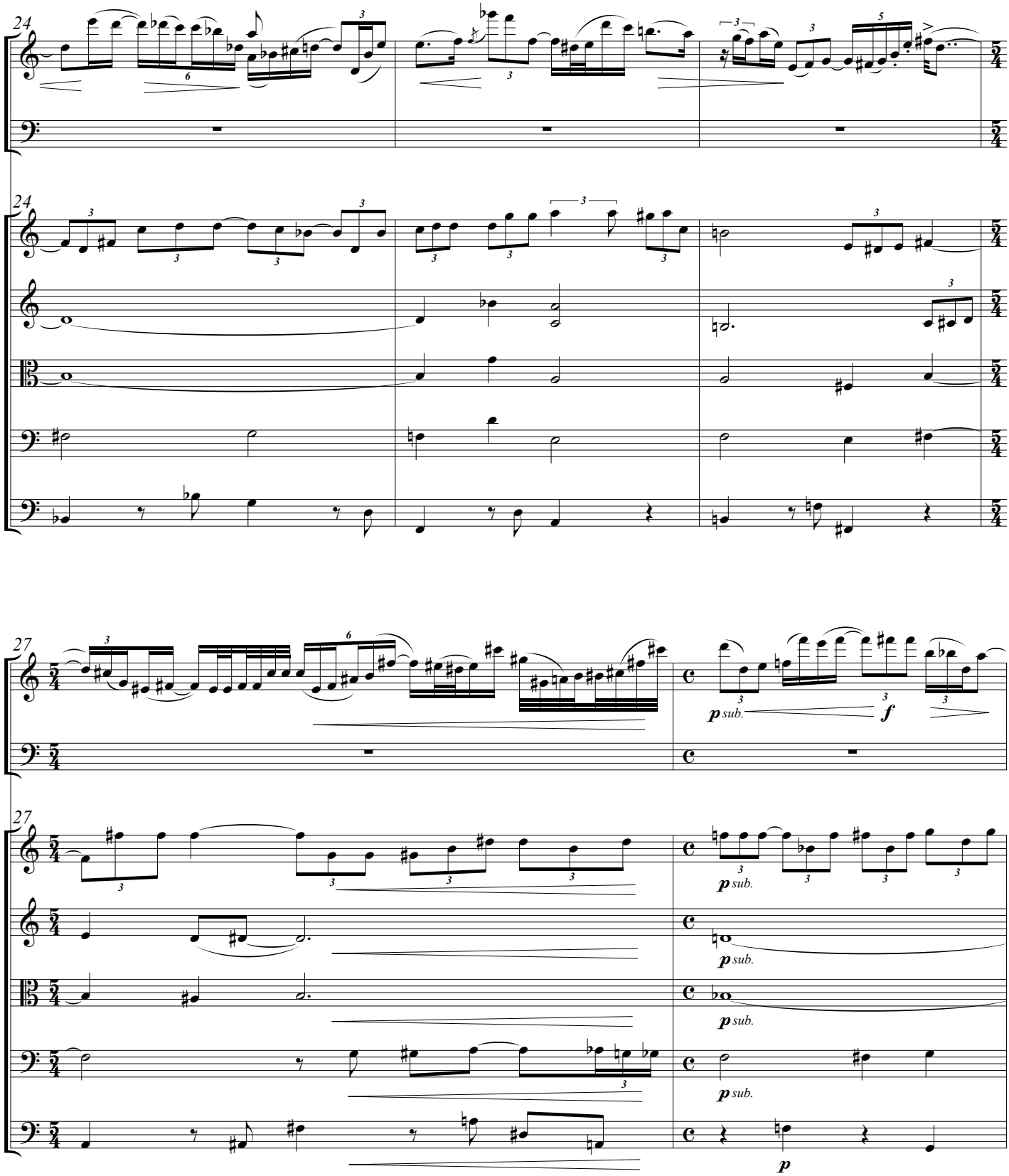
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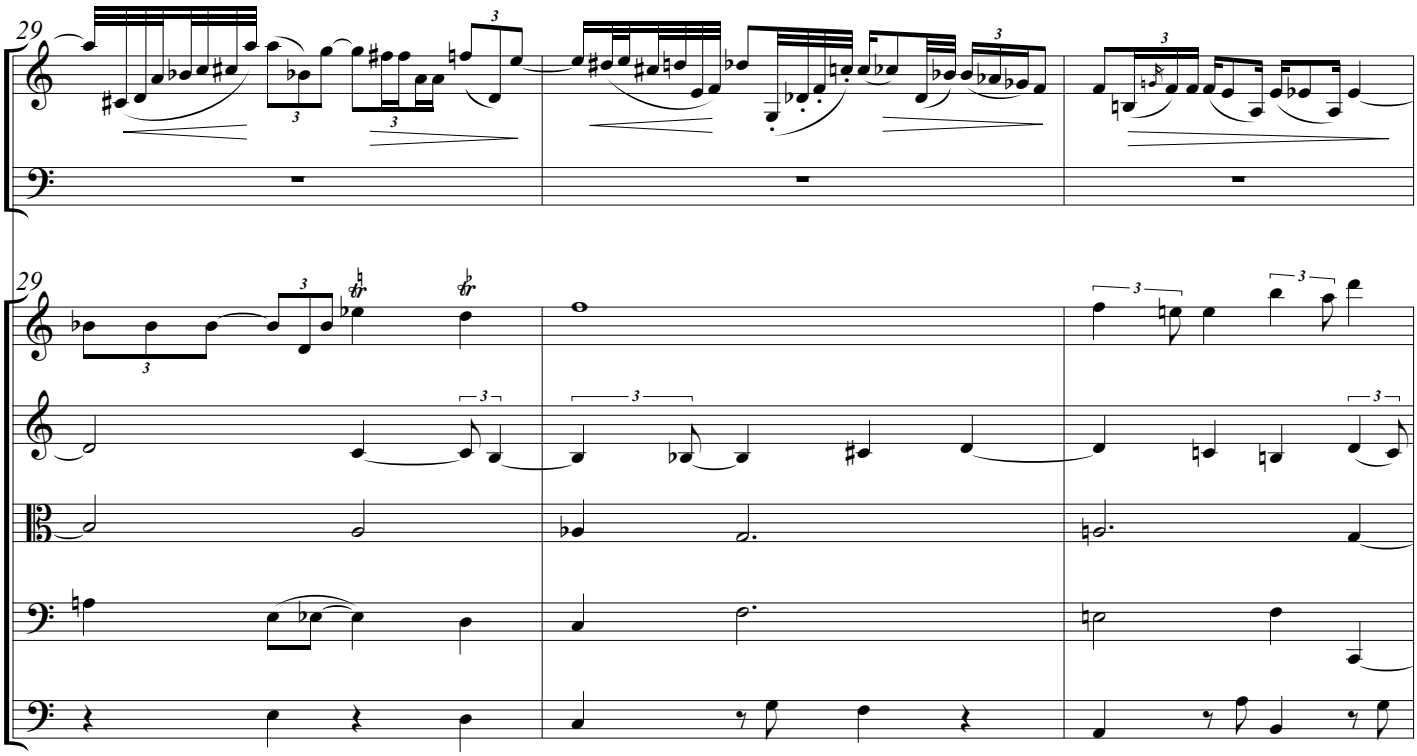
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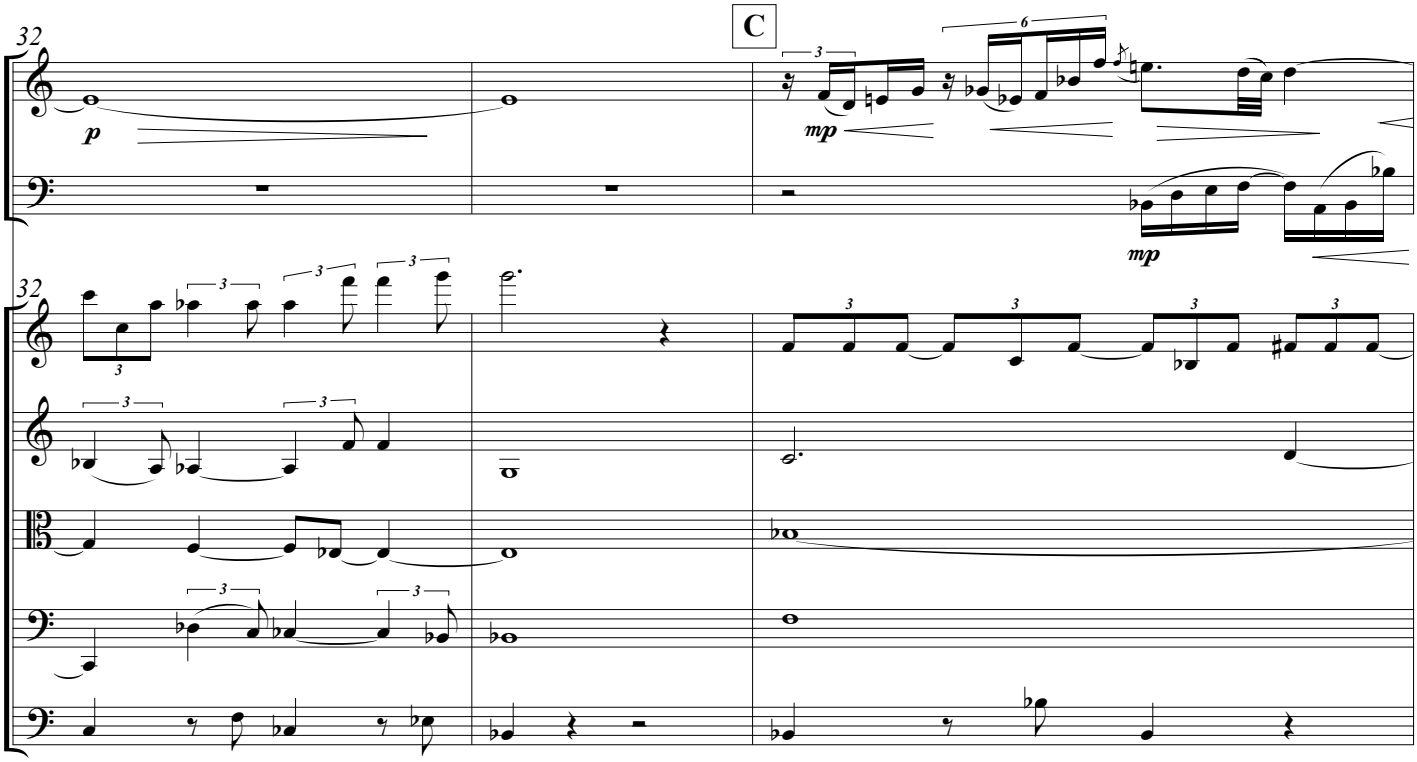
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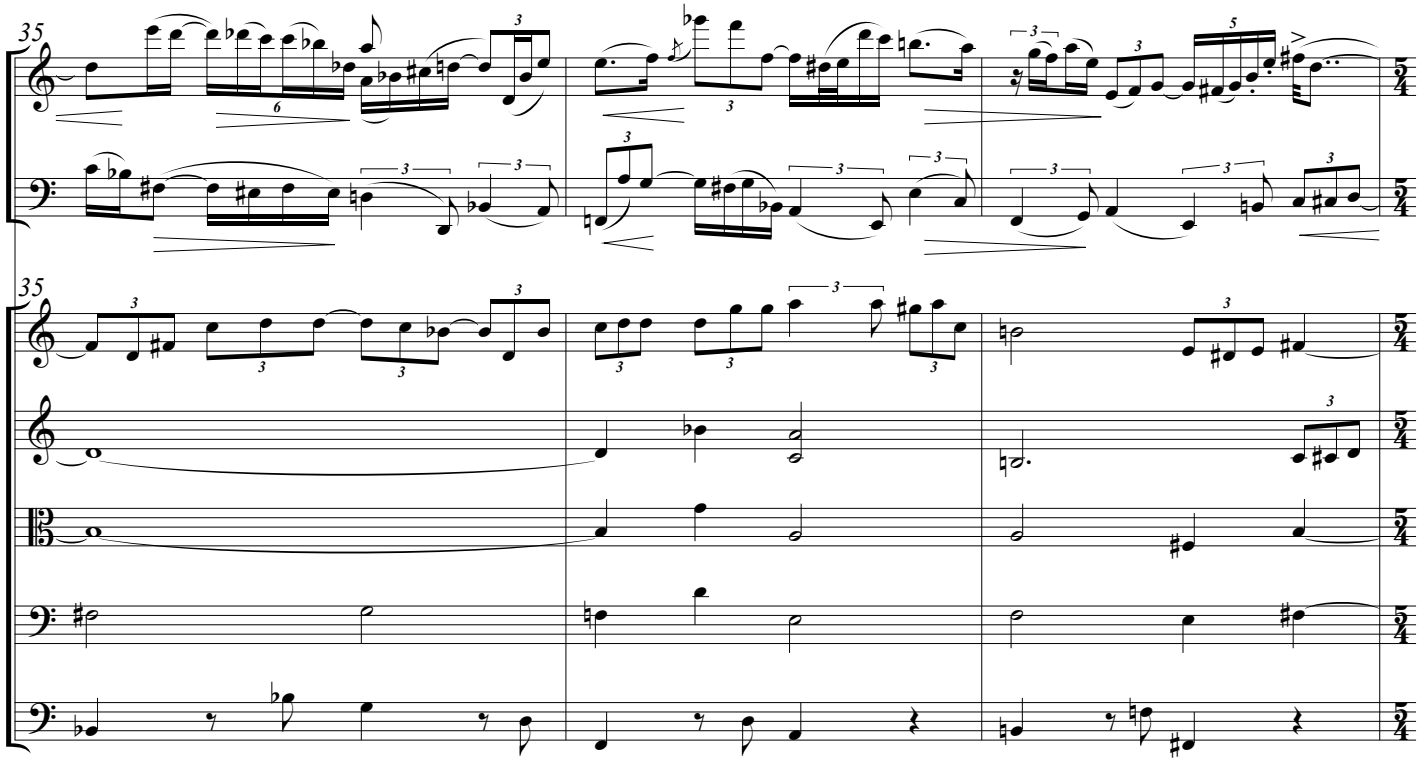
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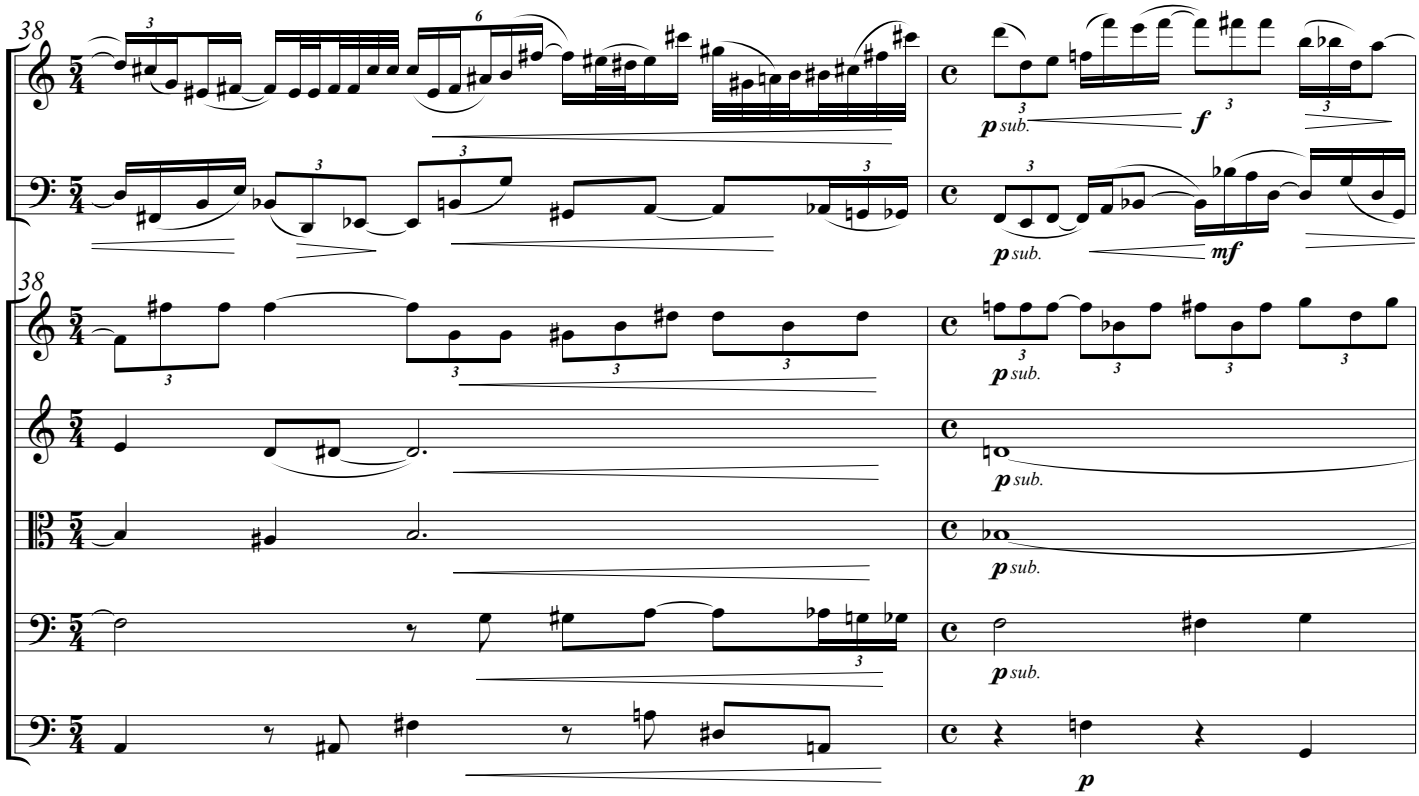
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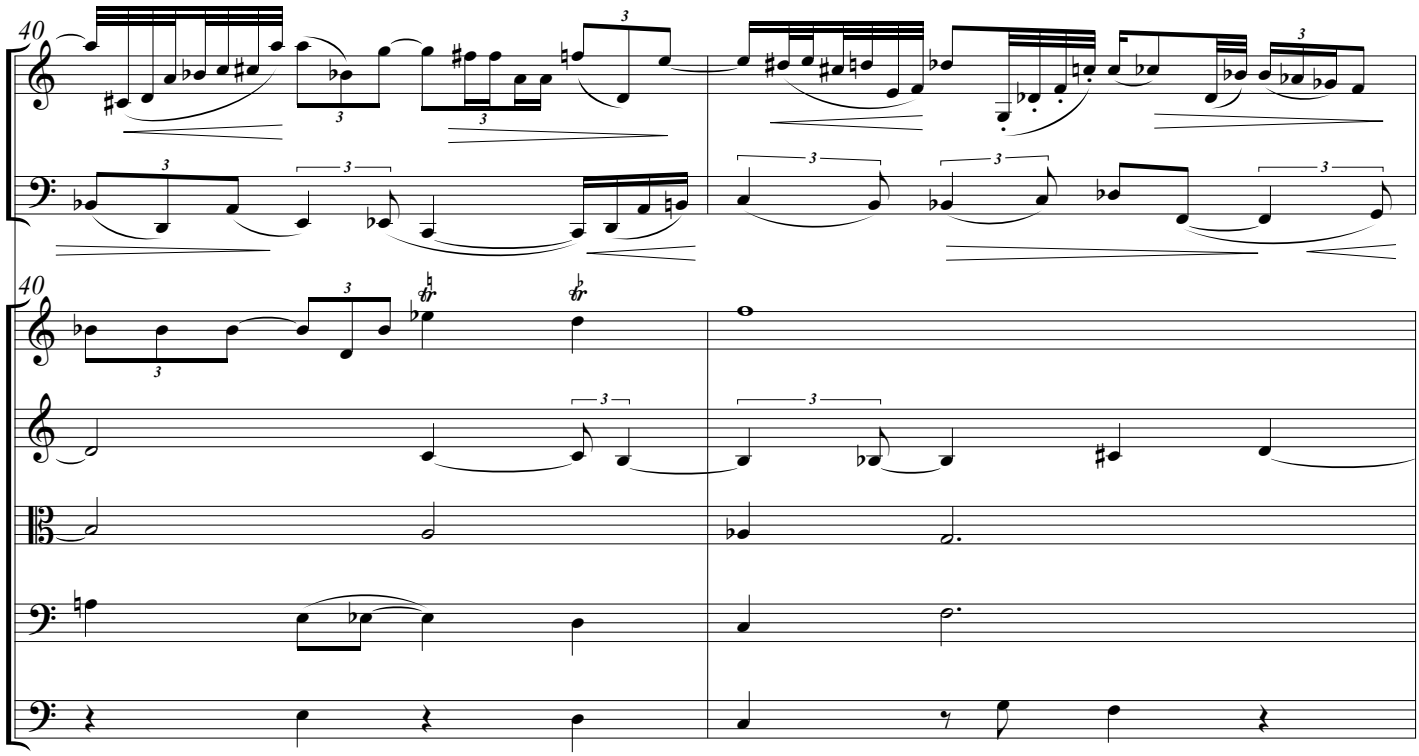
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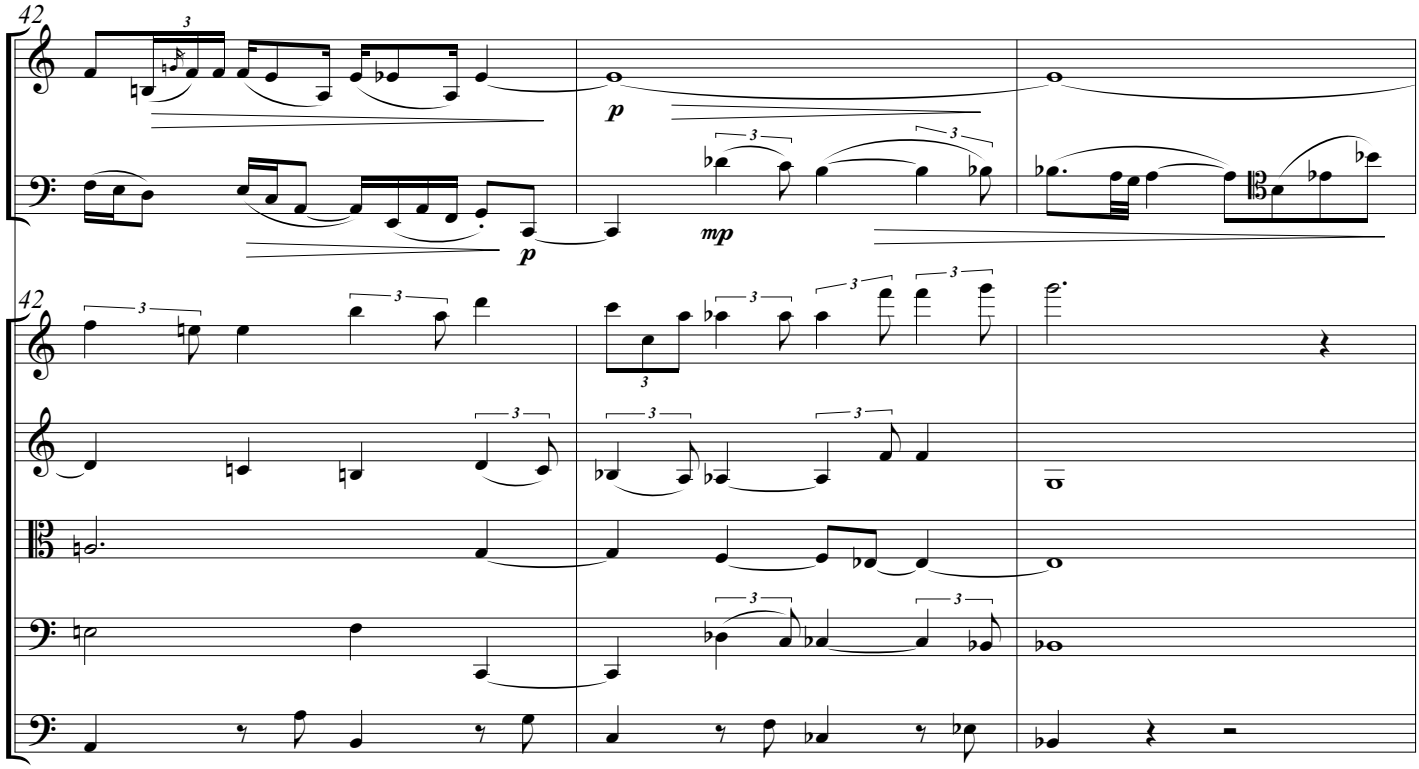
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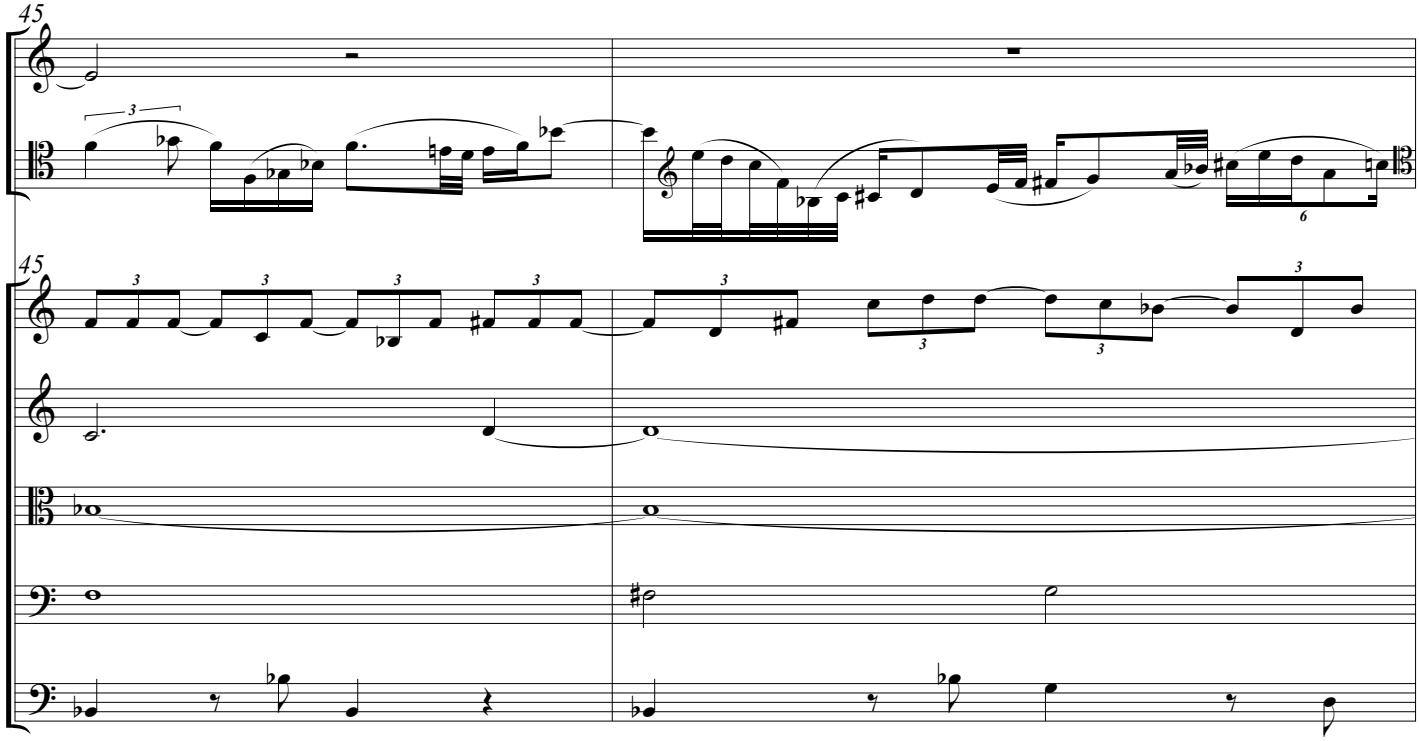

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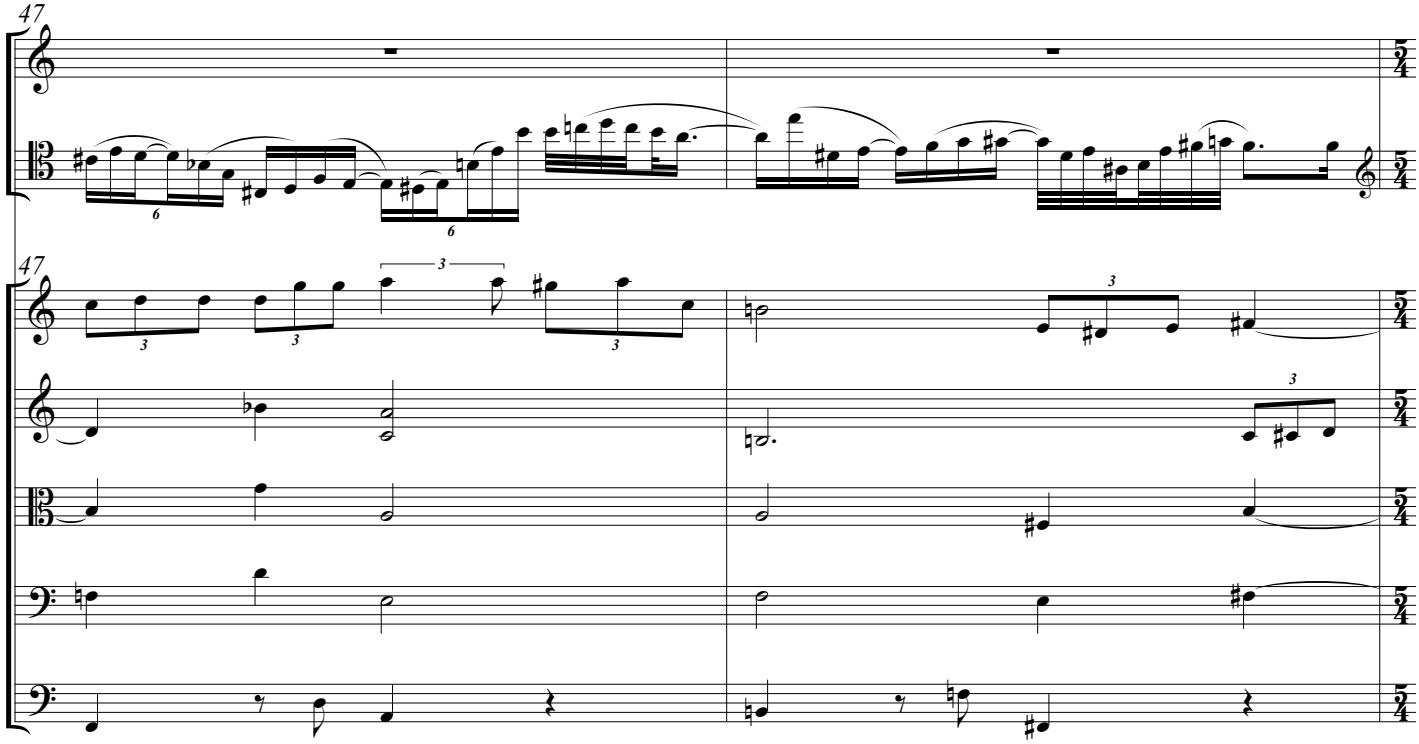

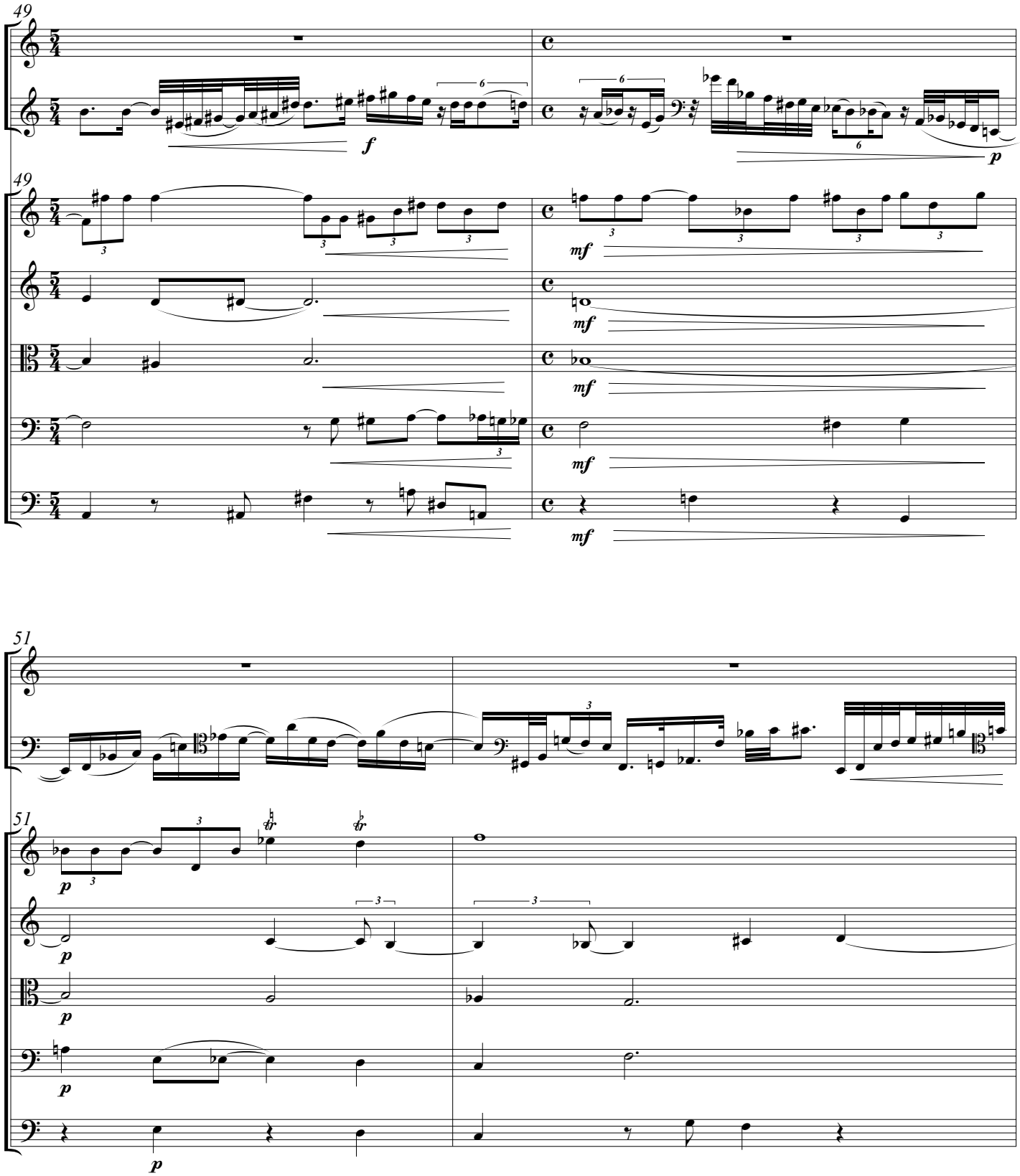
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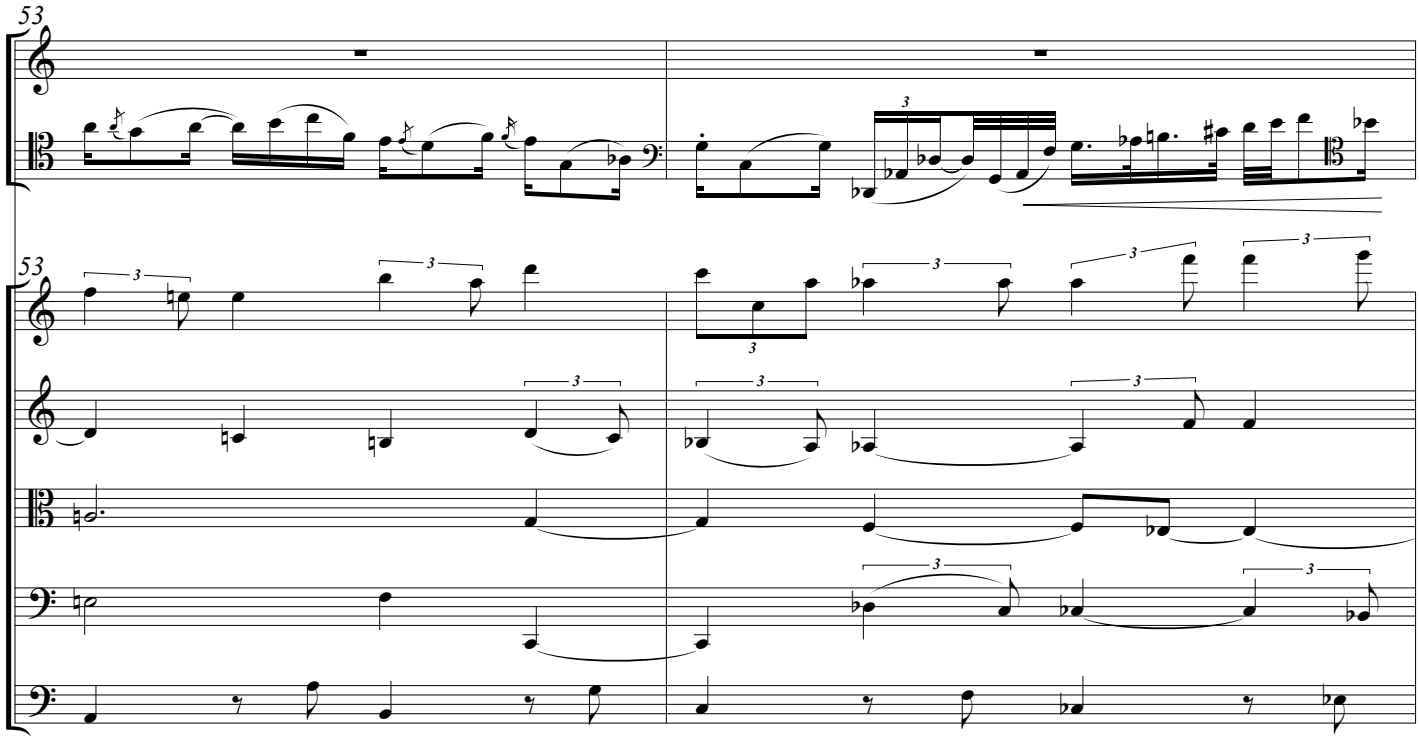
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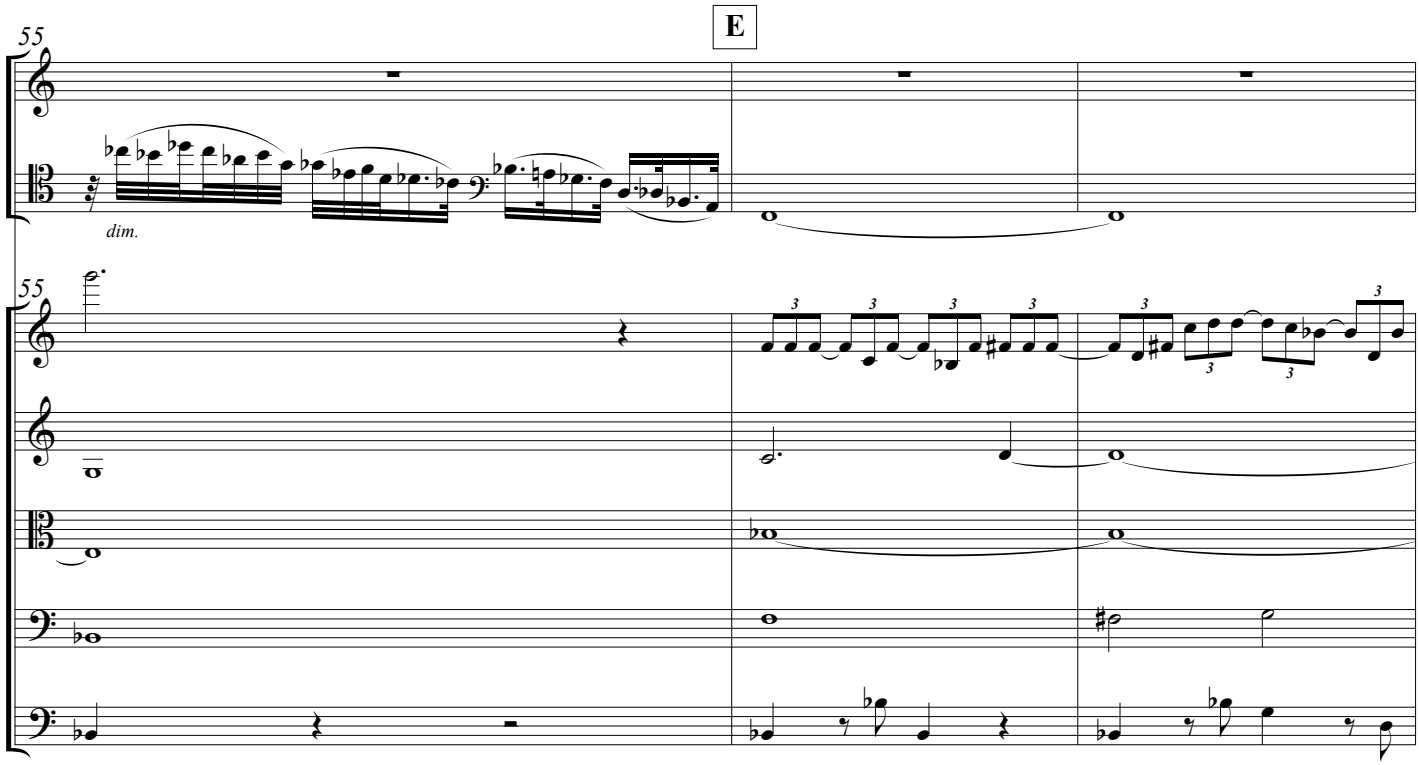
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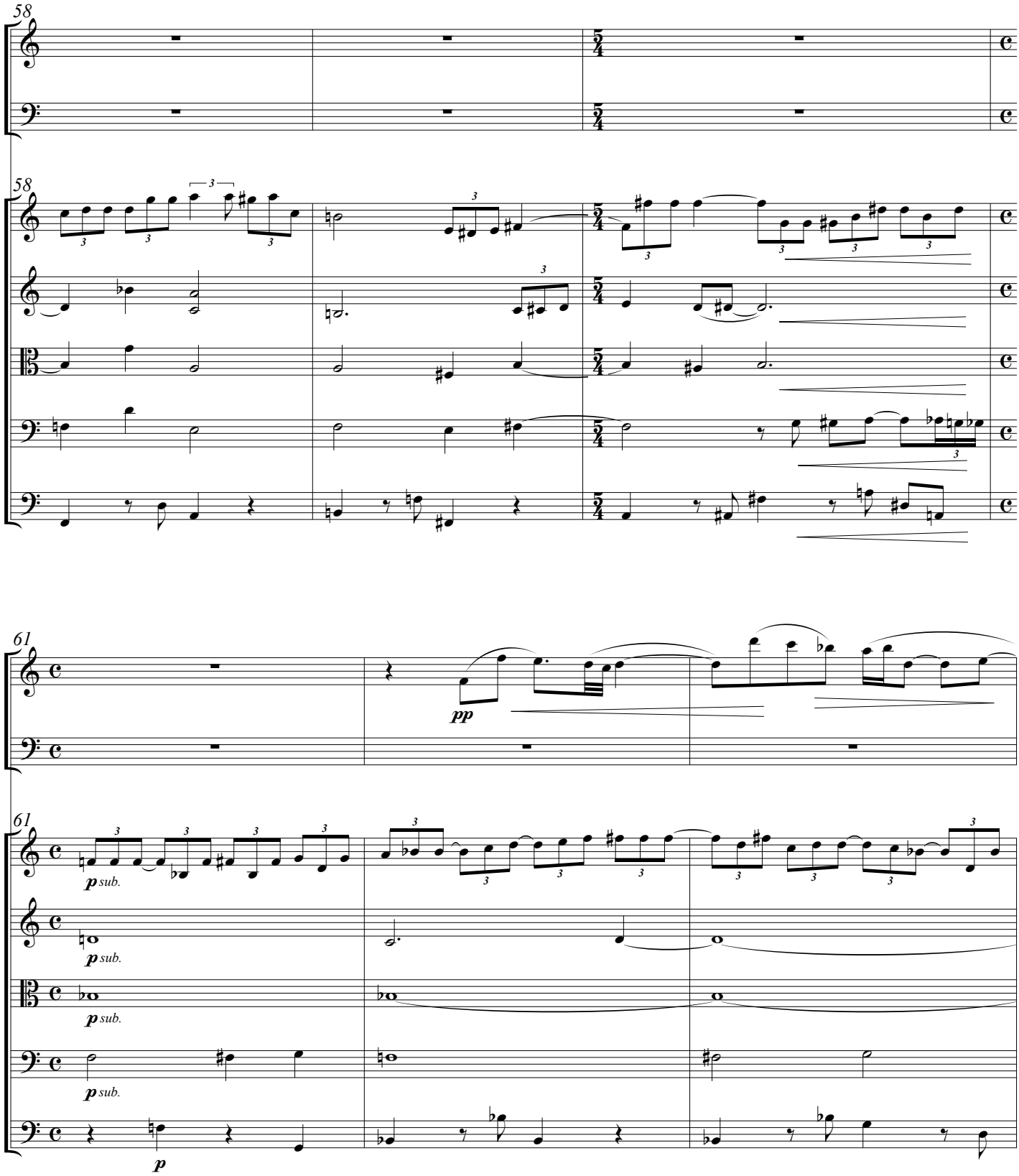
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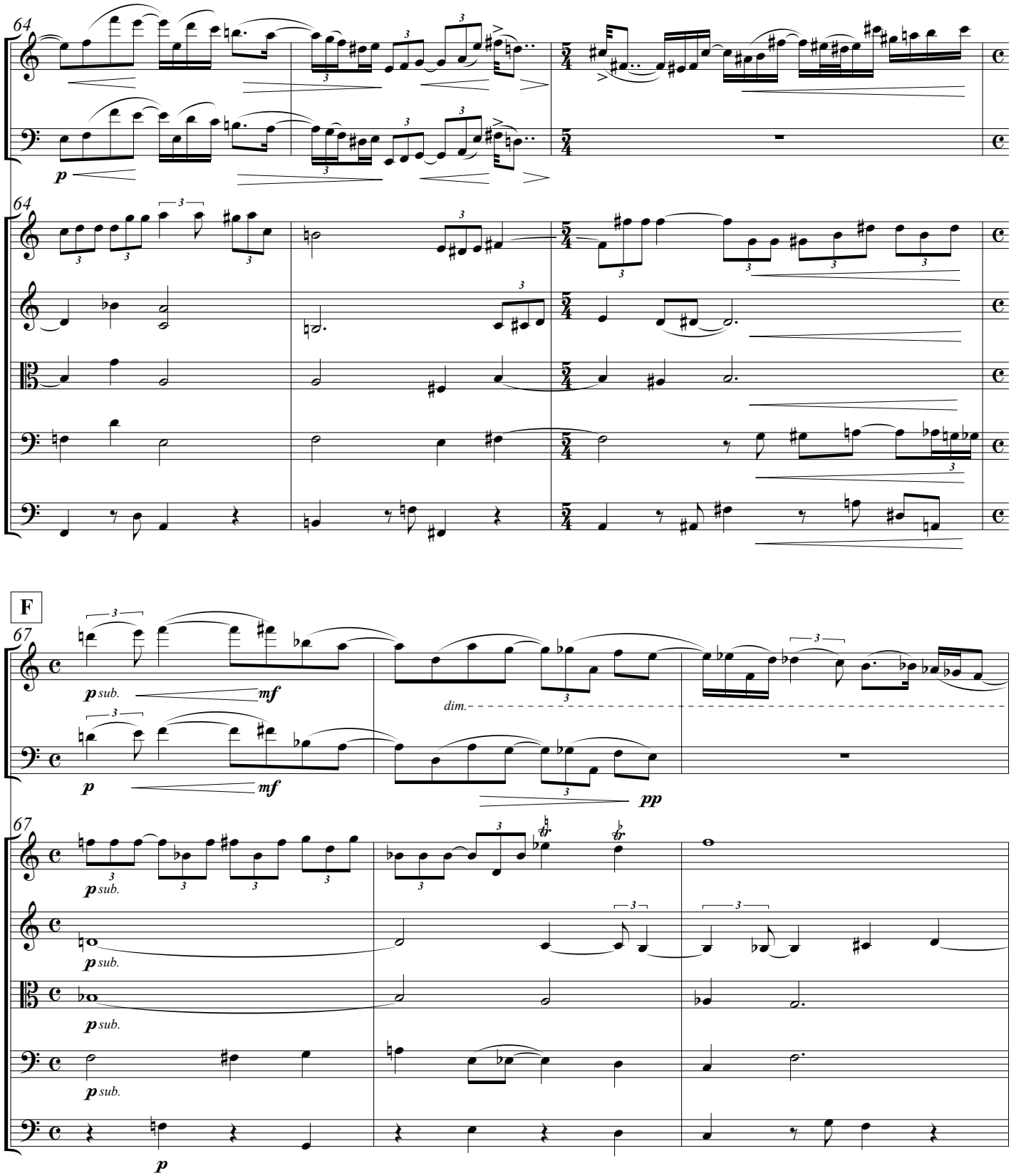
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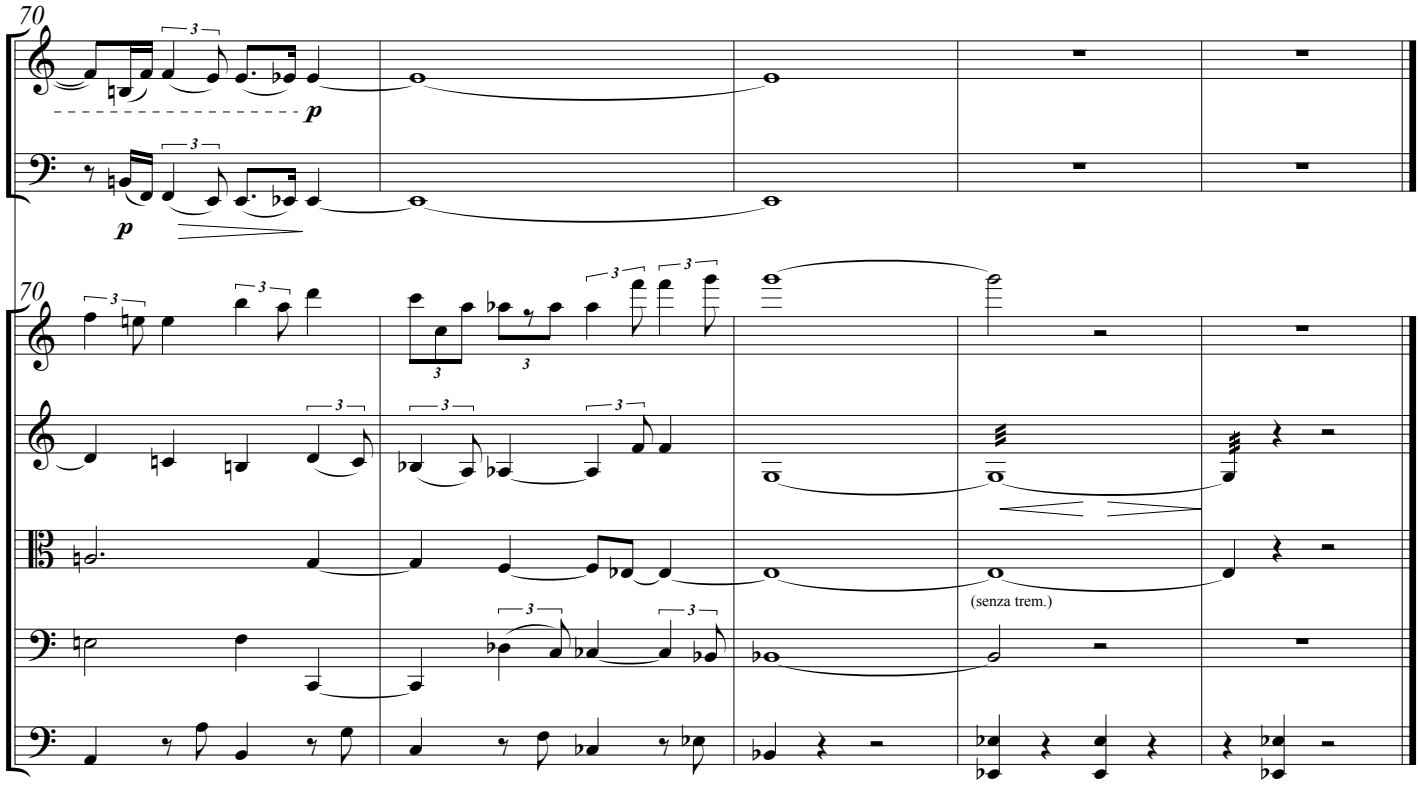
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