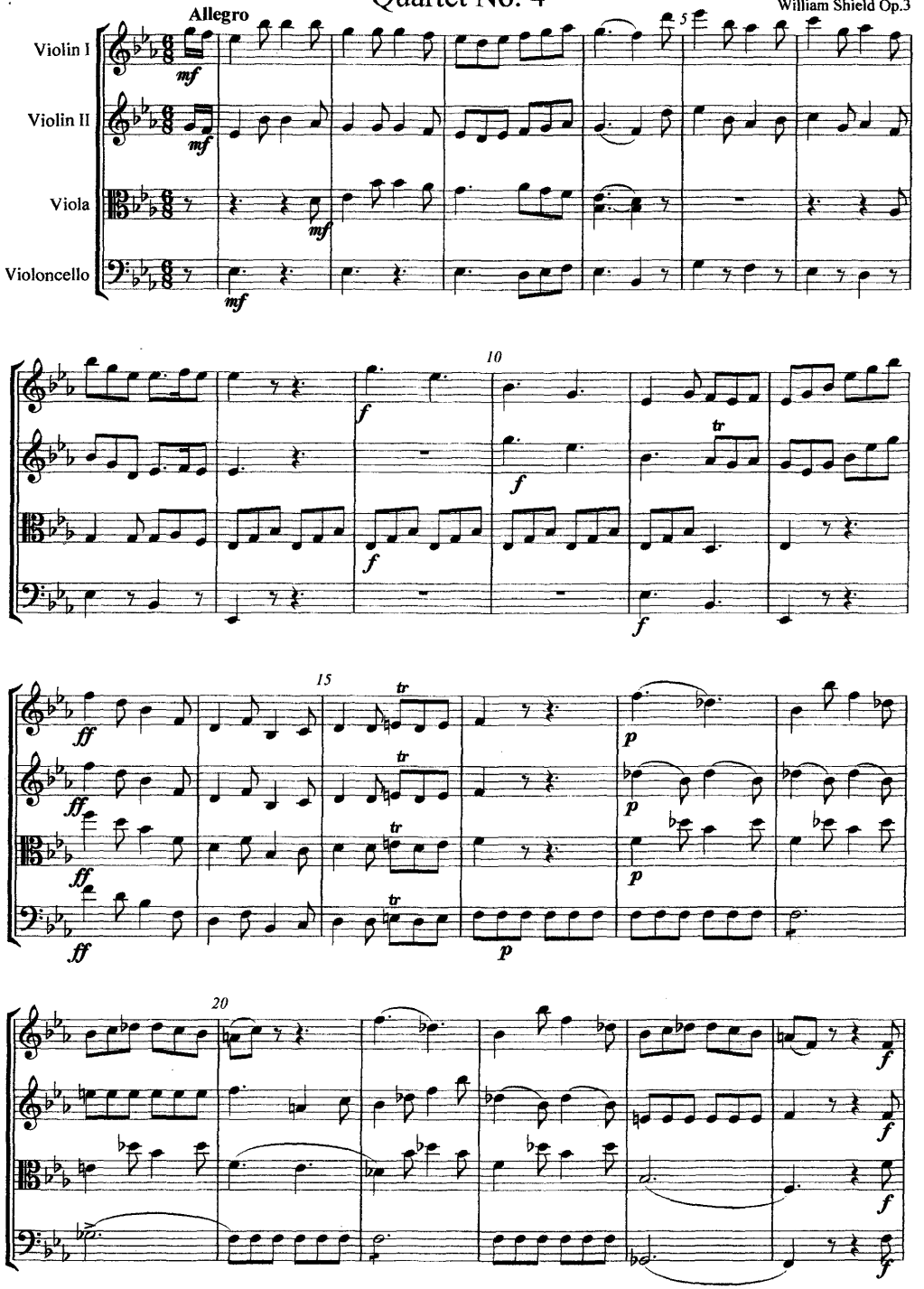
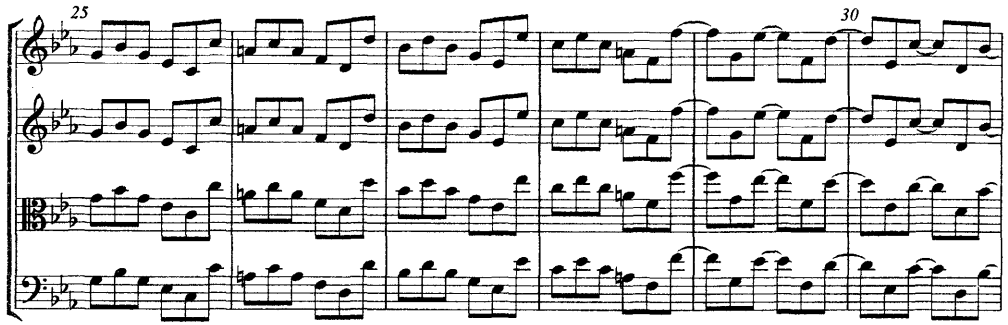
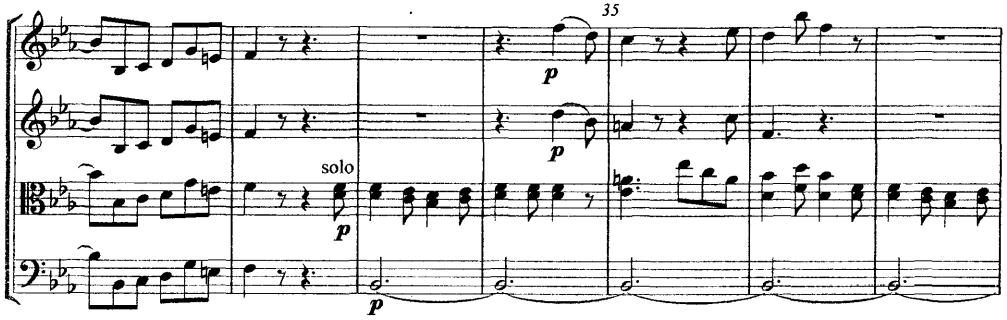
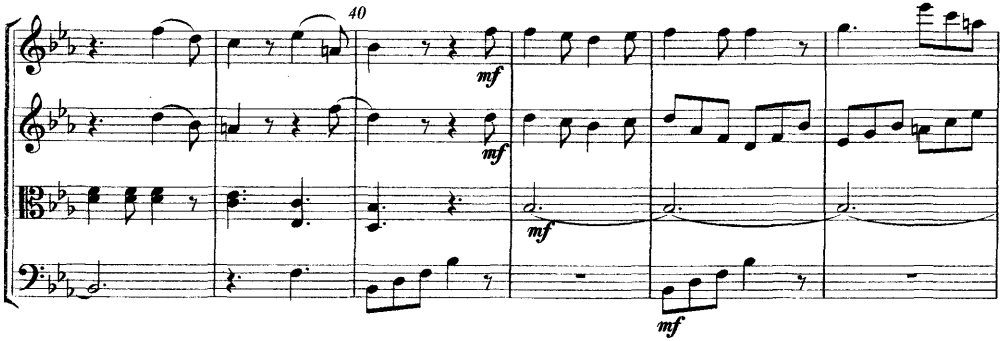
Quartet No. 4

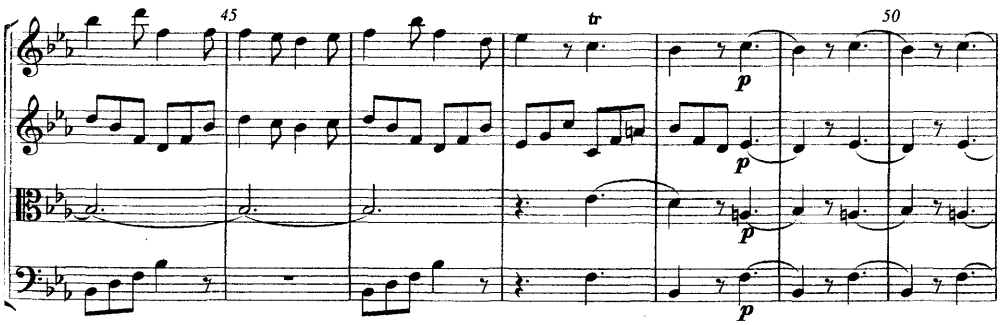
William Shield Op.3

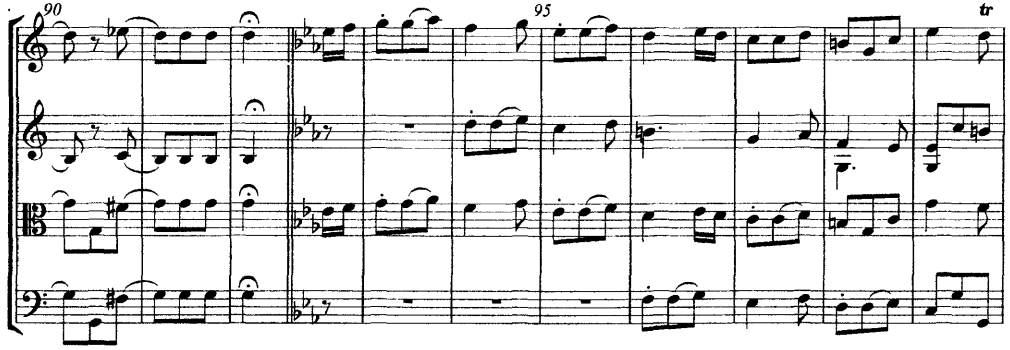


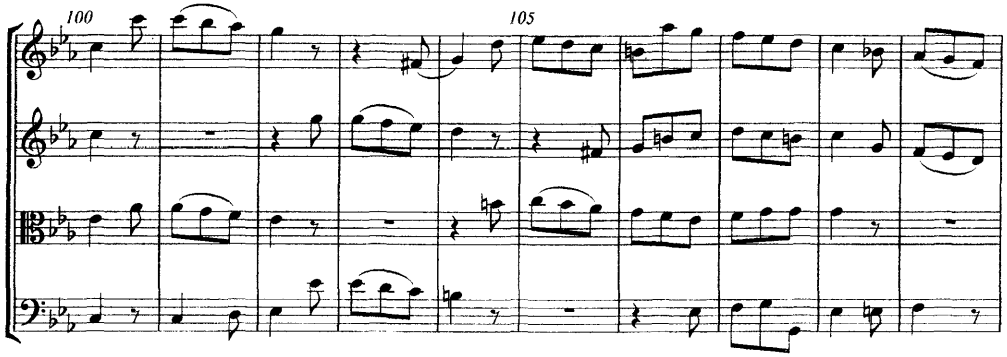


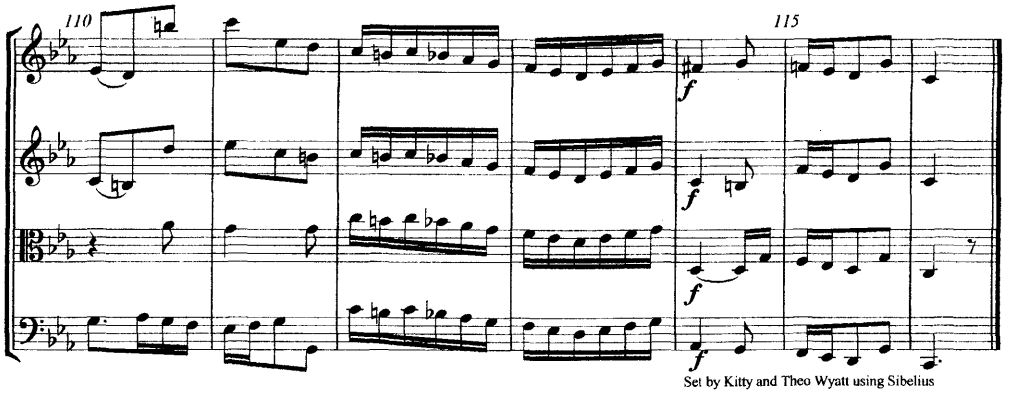




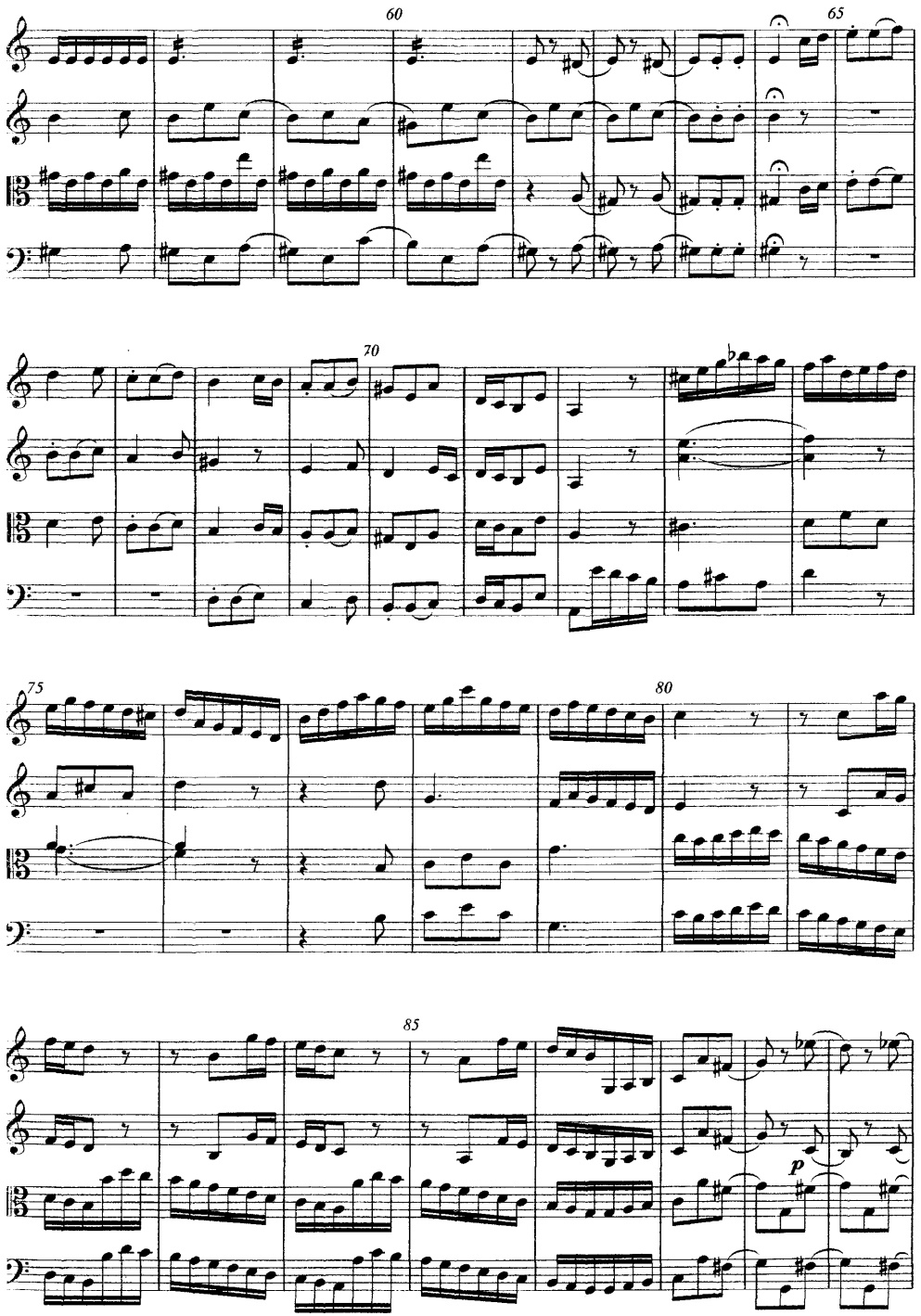








Set by Kitty and Theo Wyatt using Sibelius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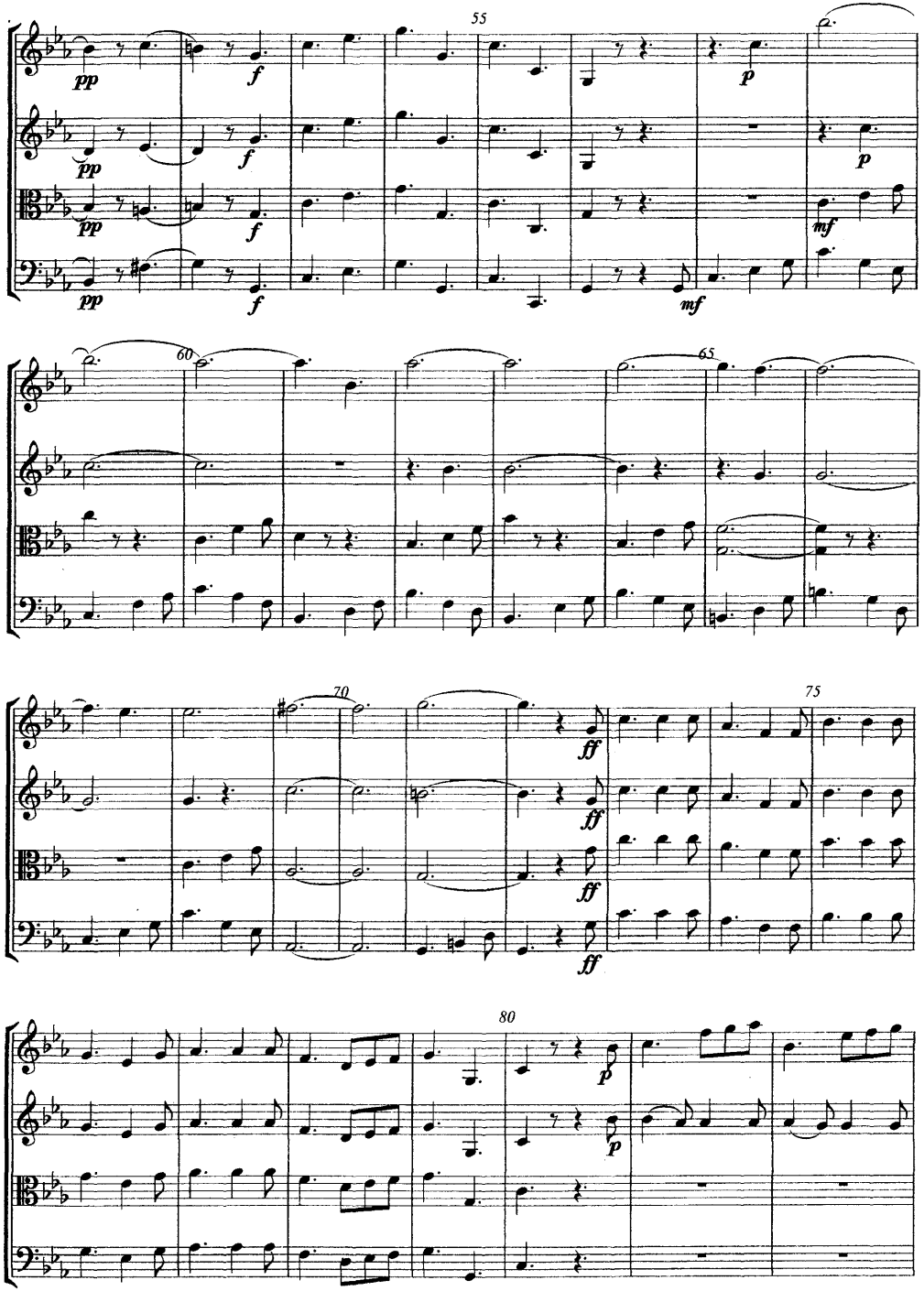
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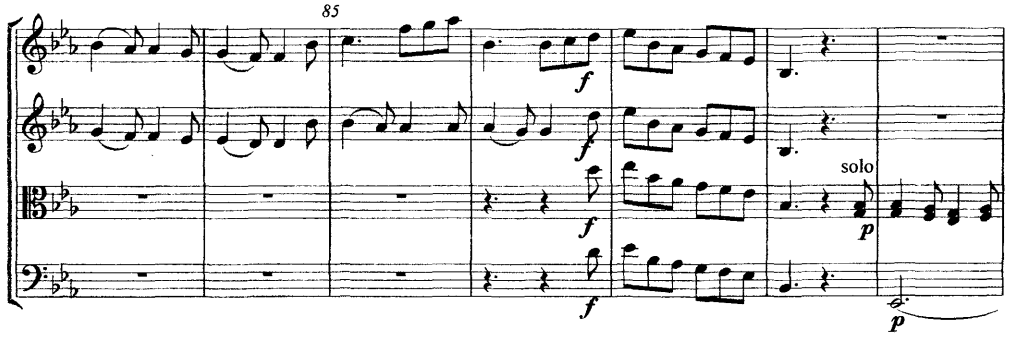
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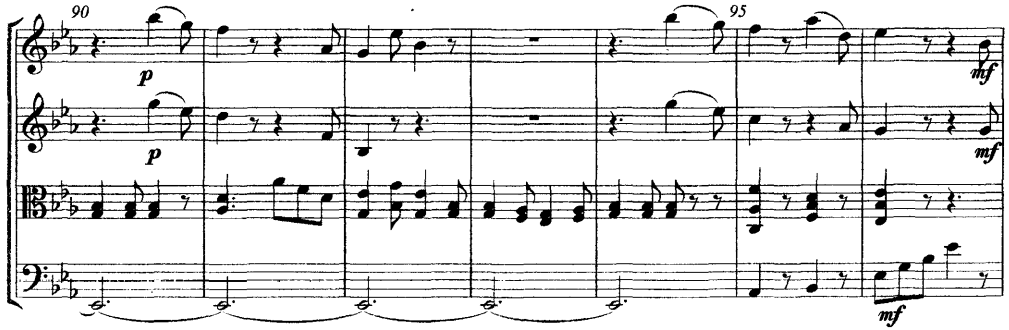
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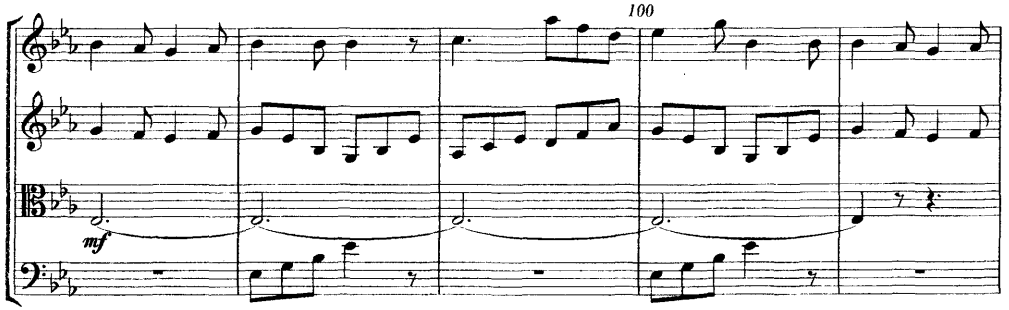
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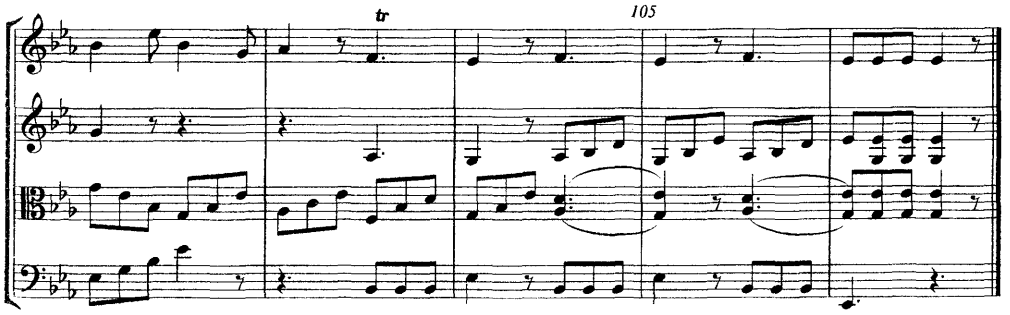
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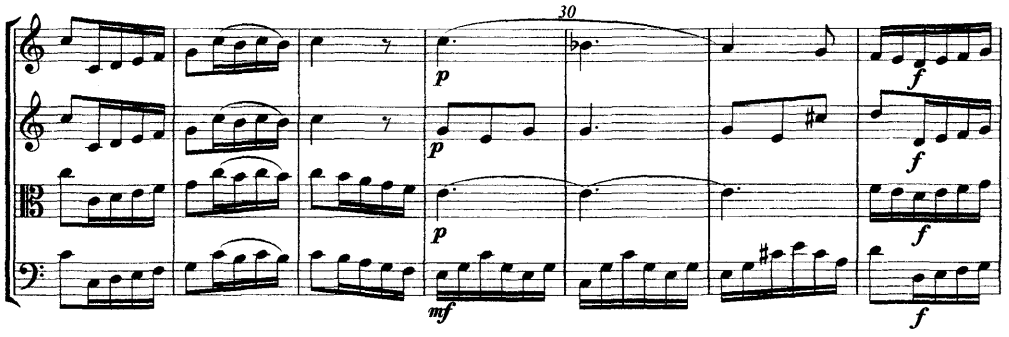
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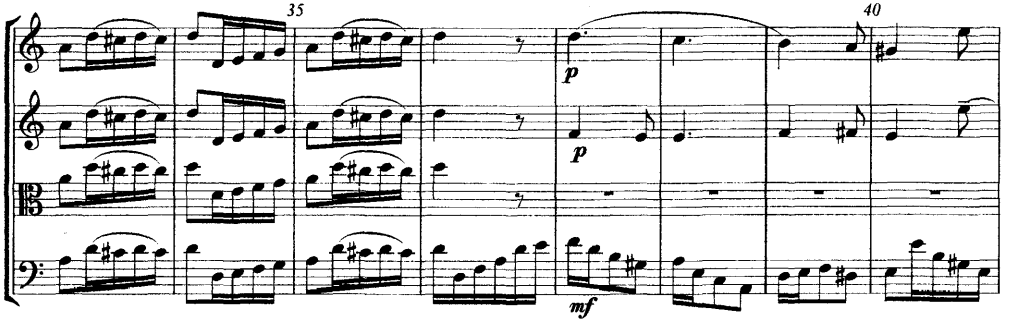
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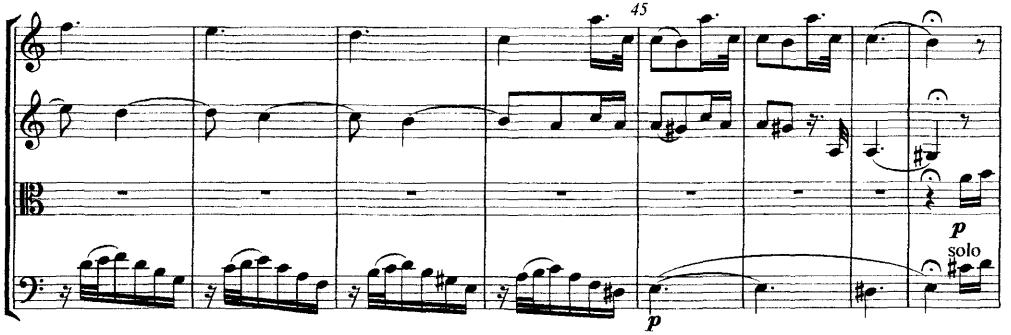
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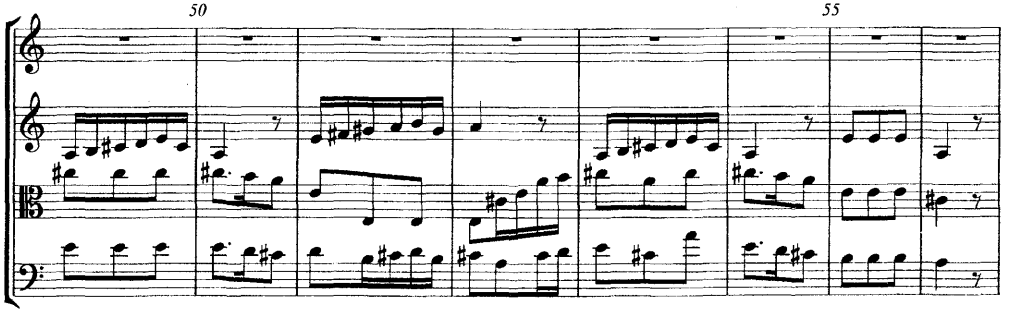
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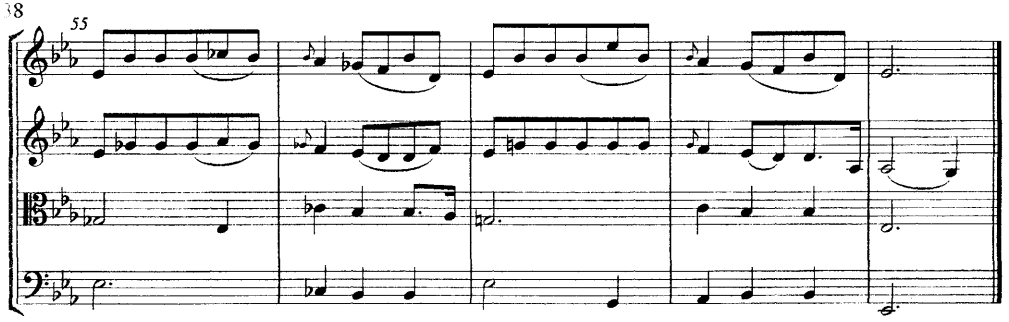

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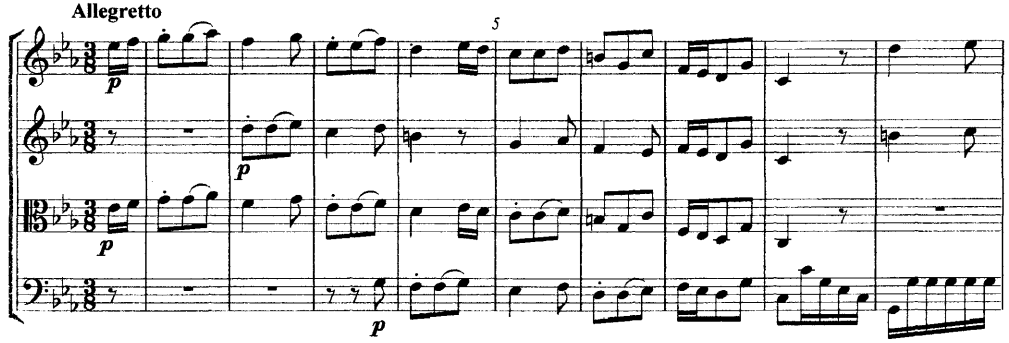

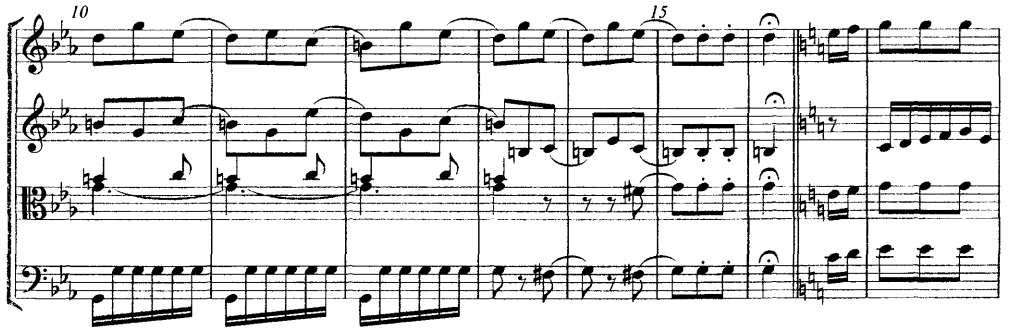

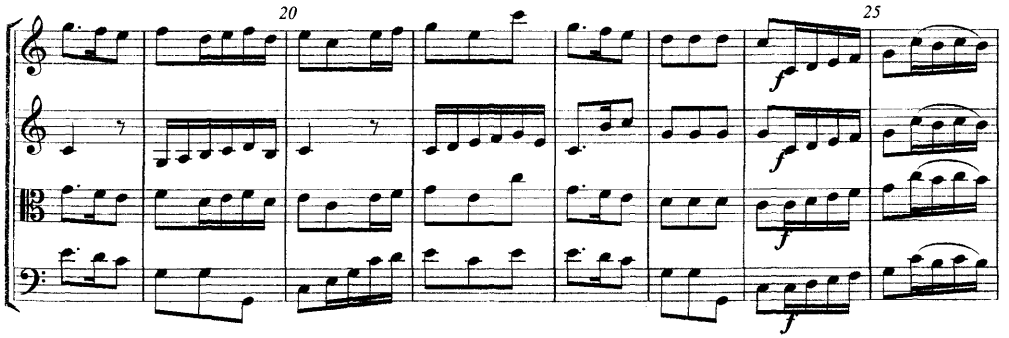

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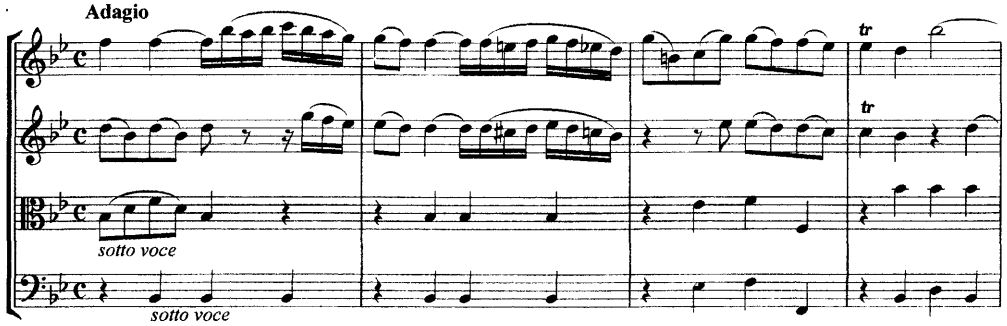

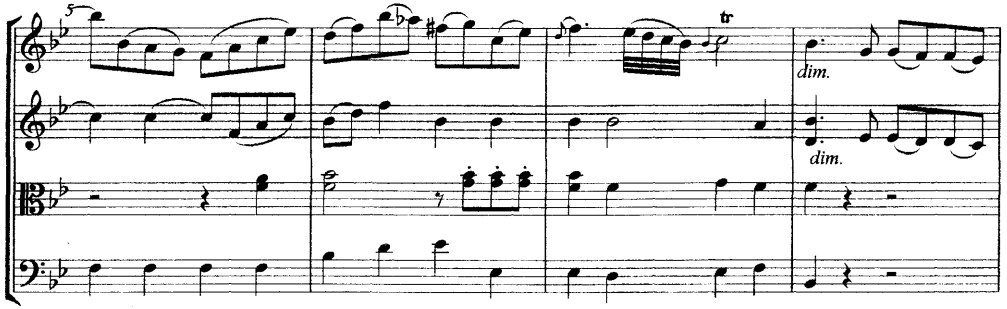

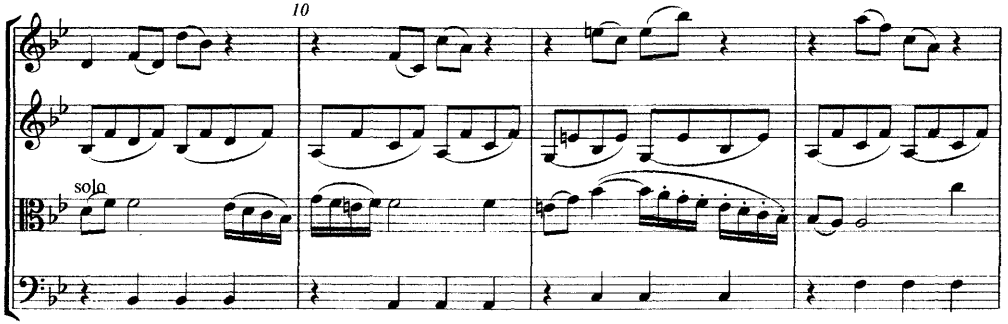

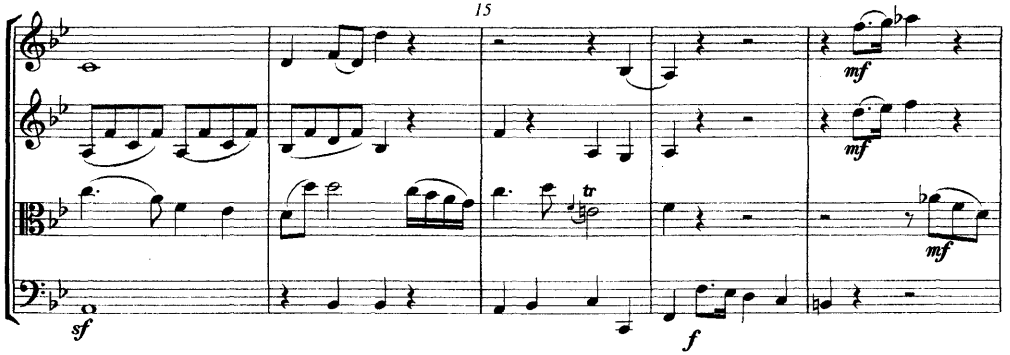

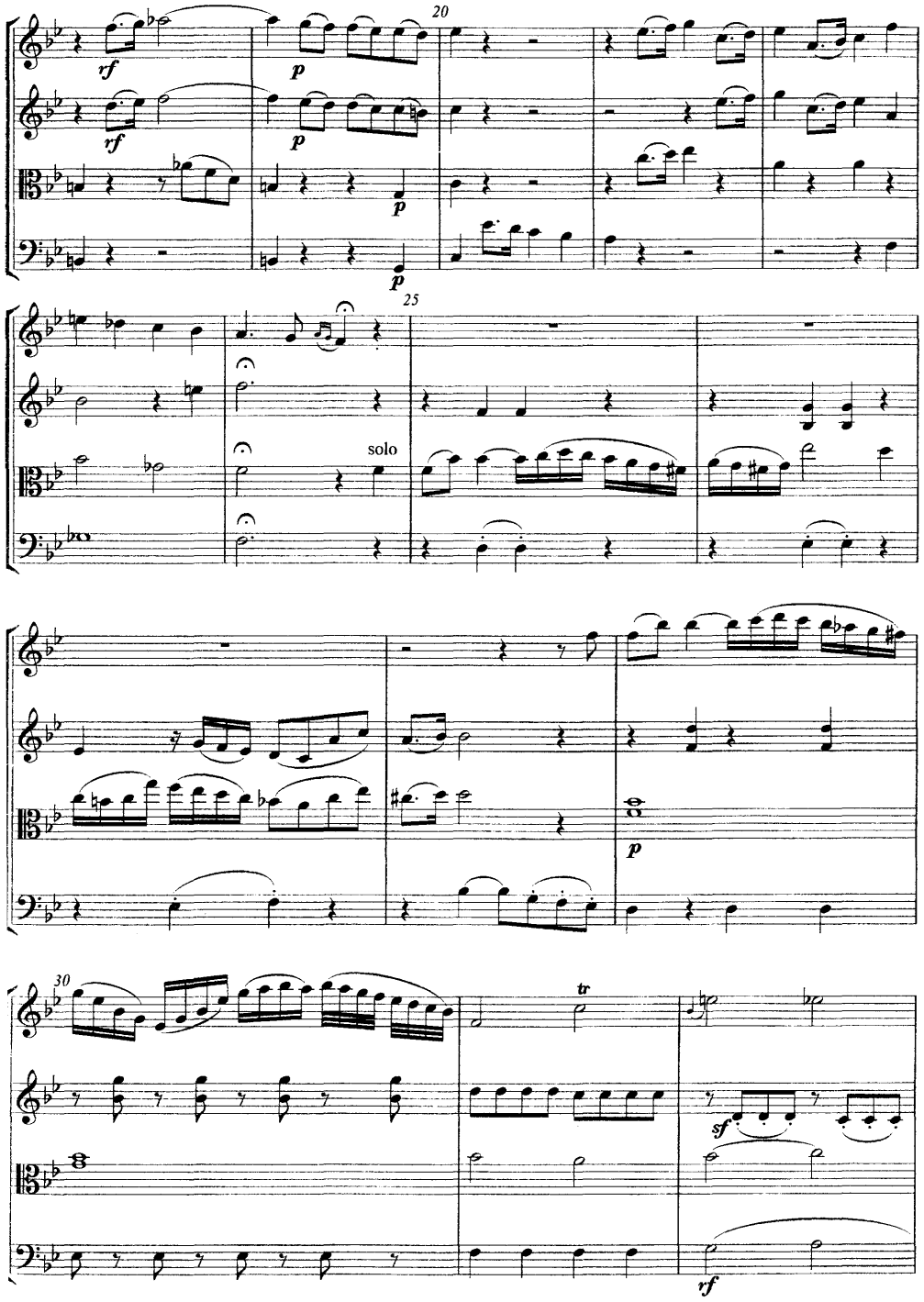
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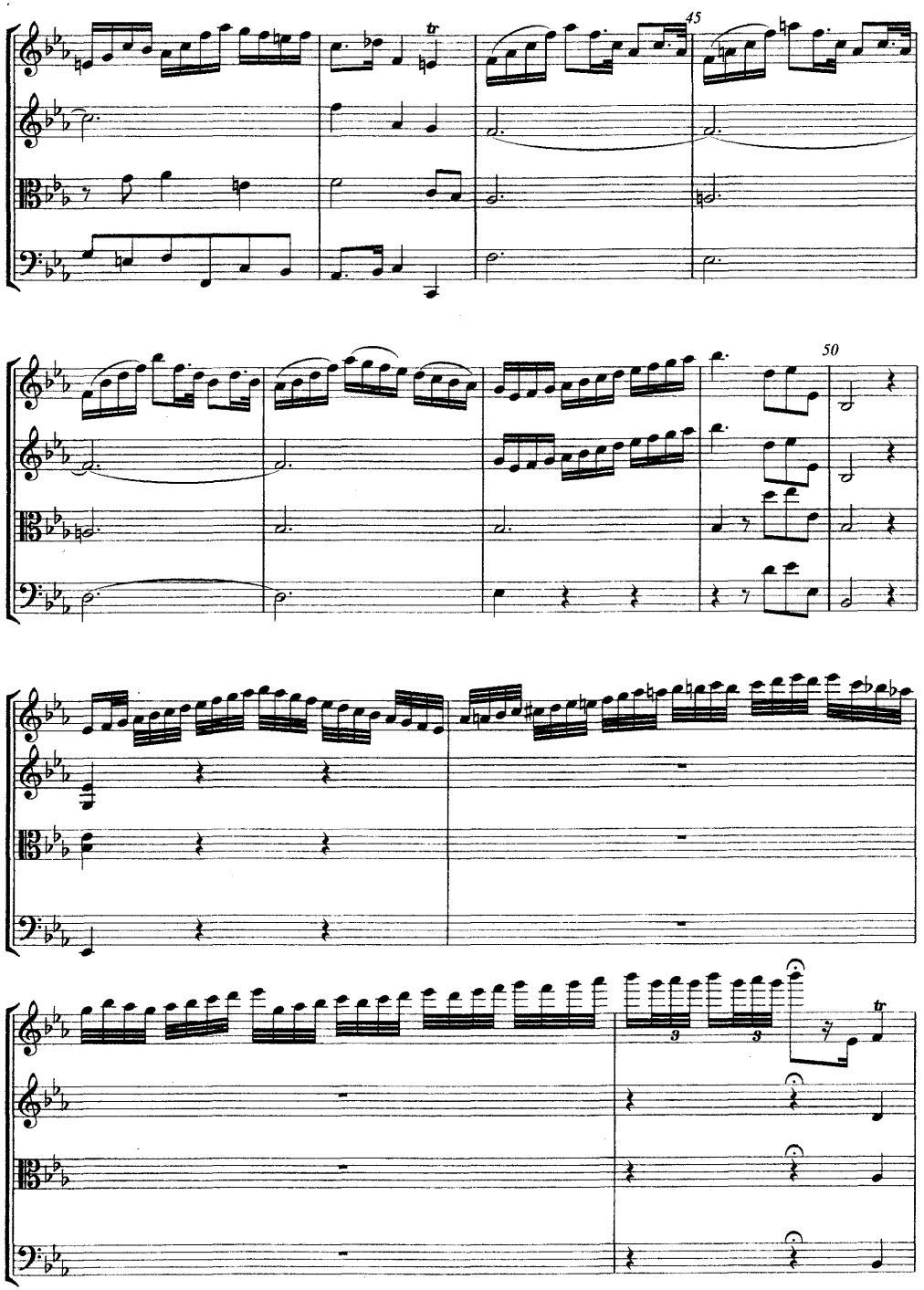
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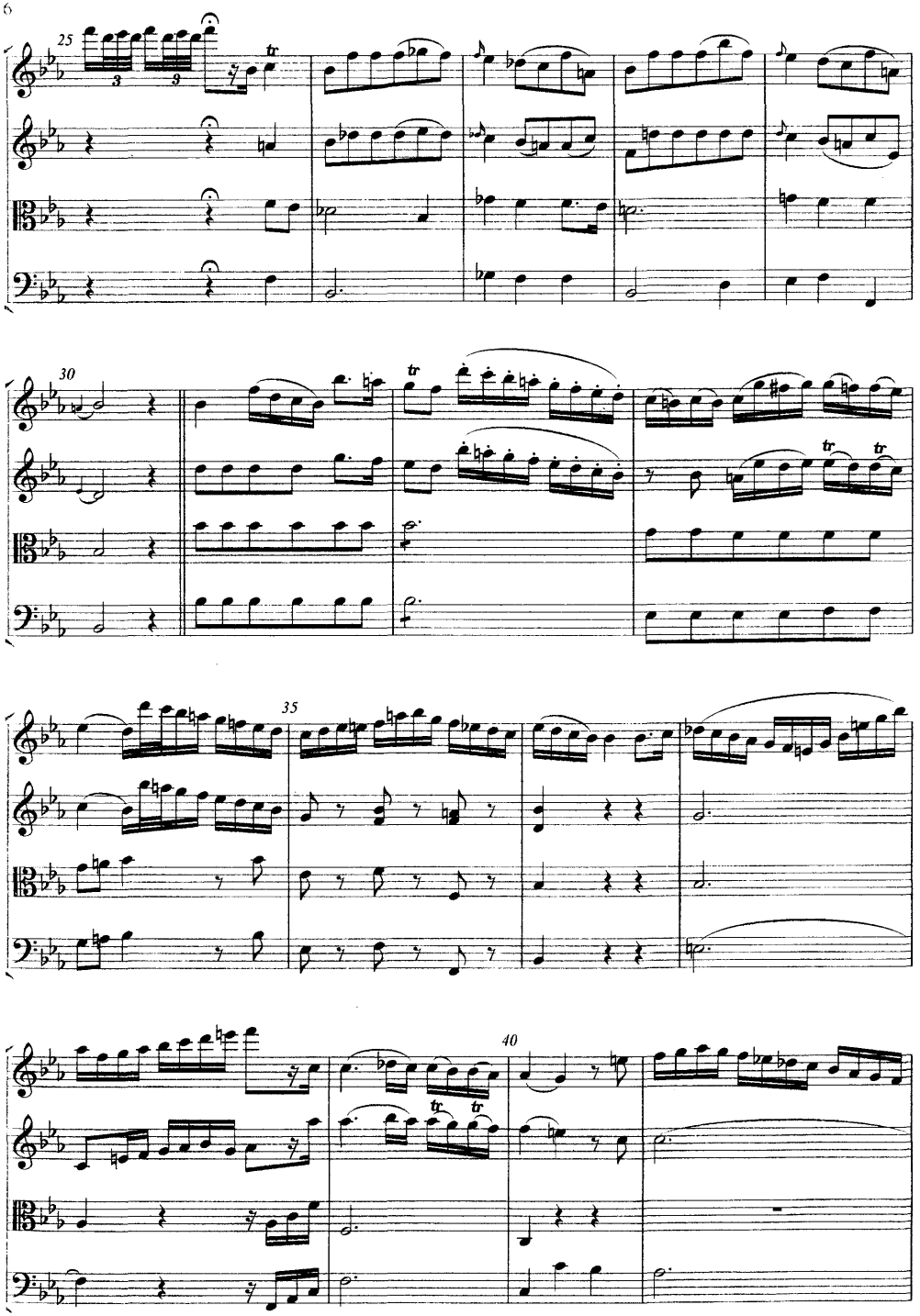
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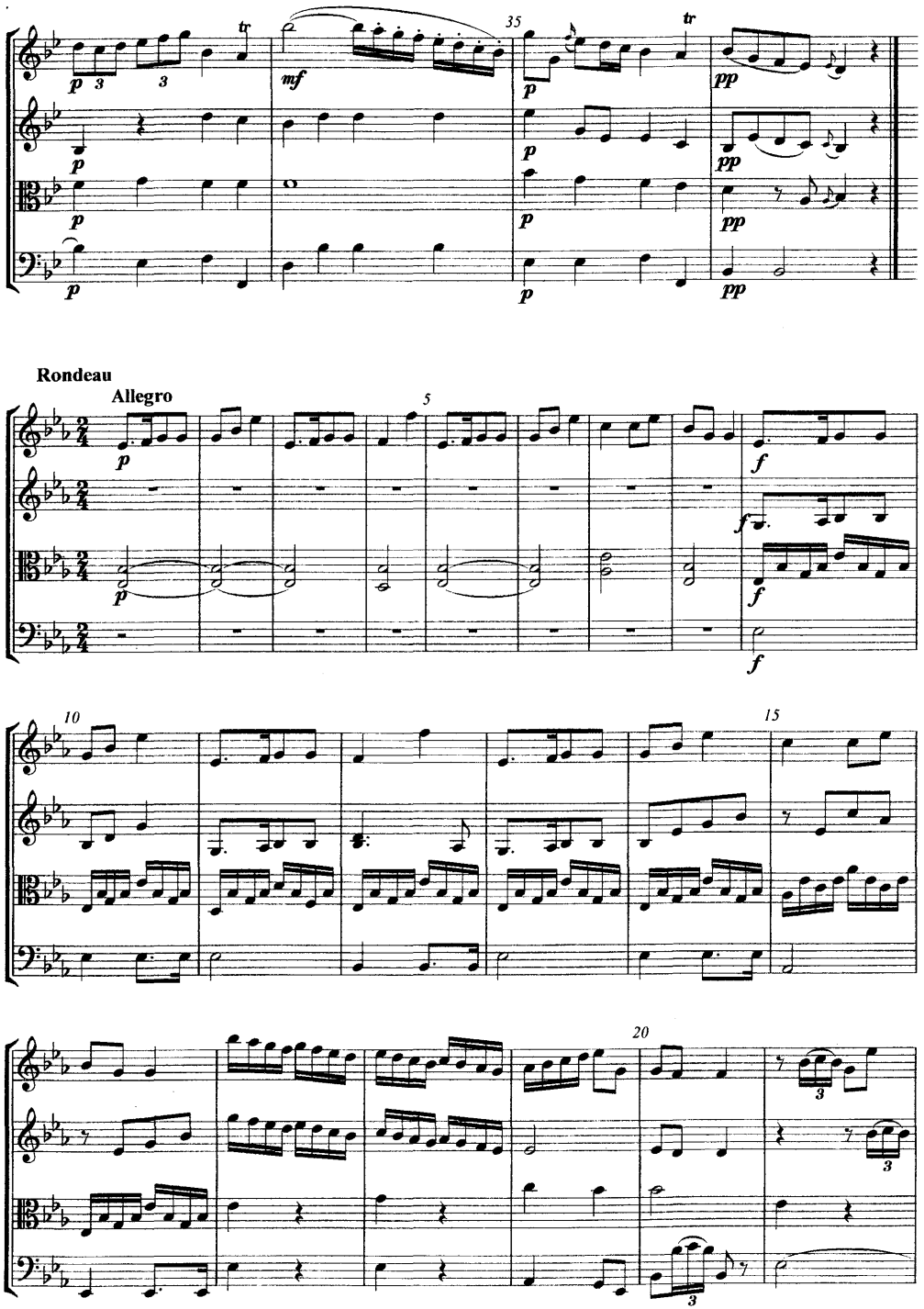
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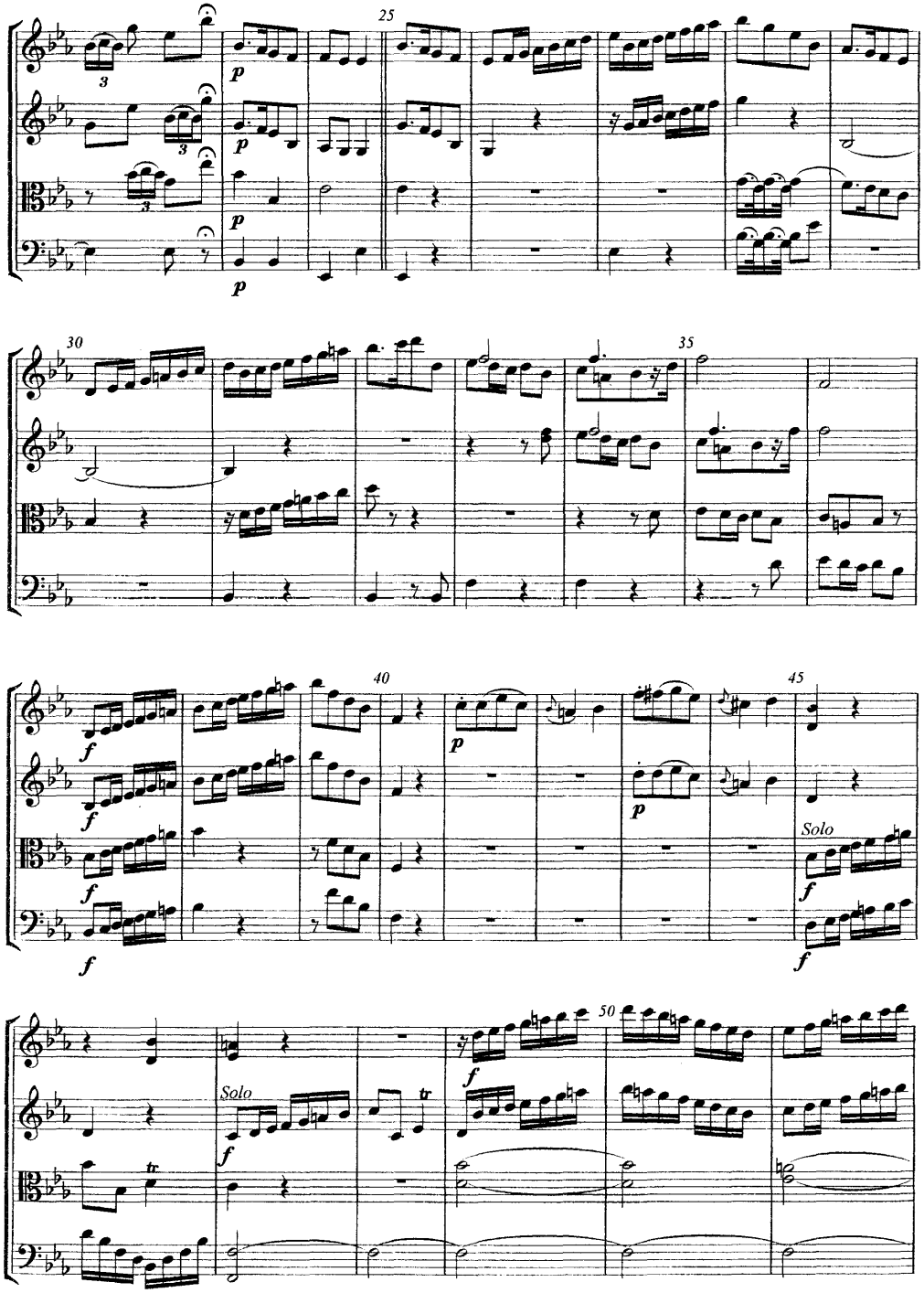
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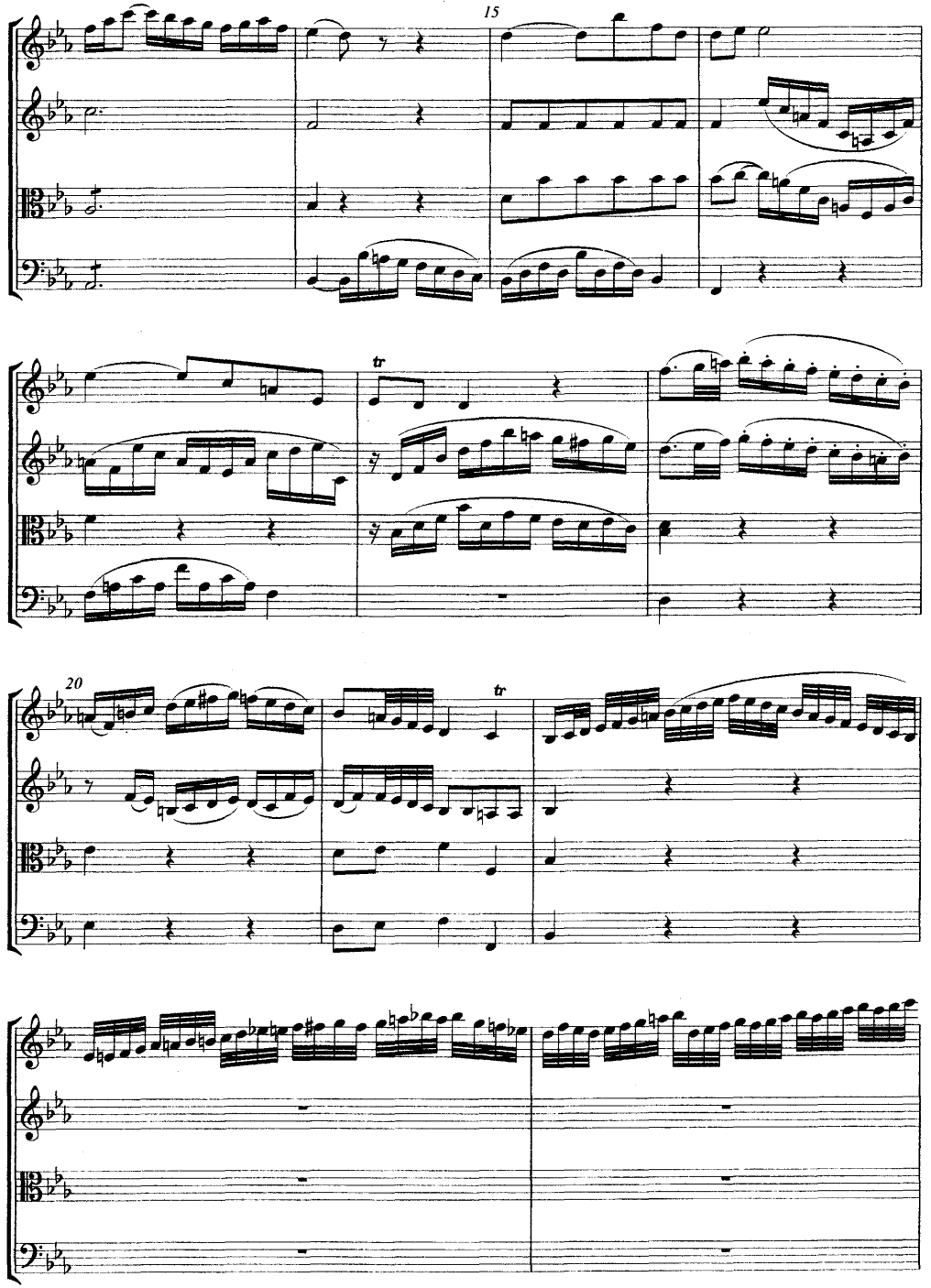
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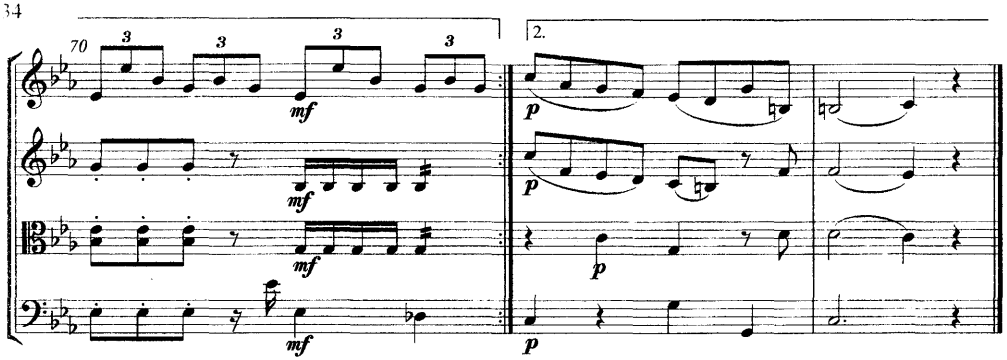
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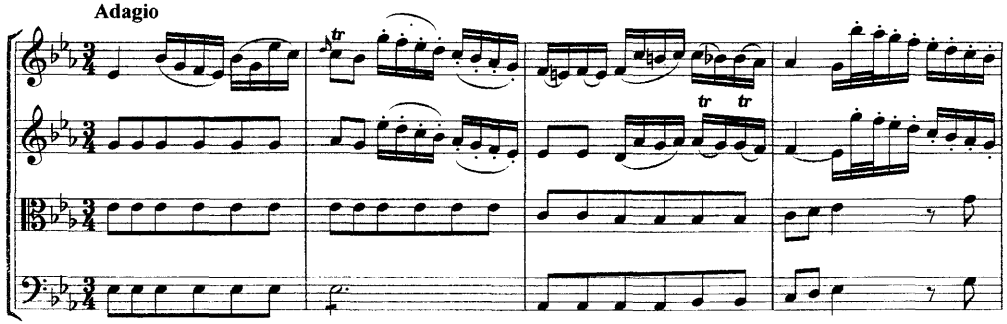
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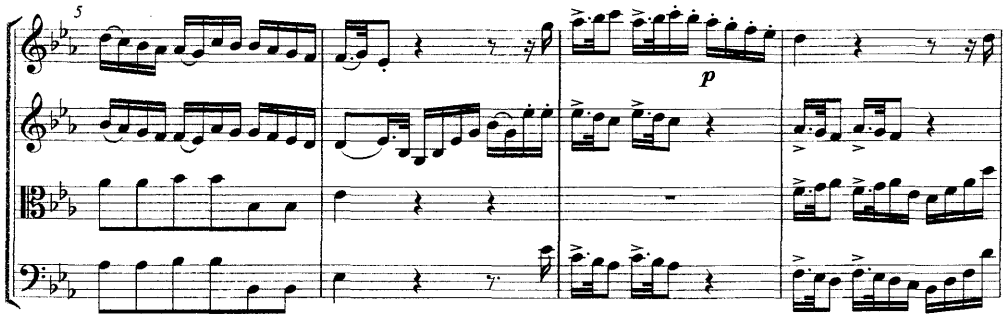
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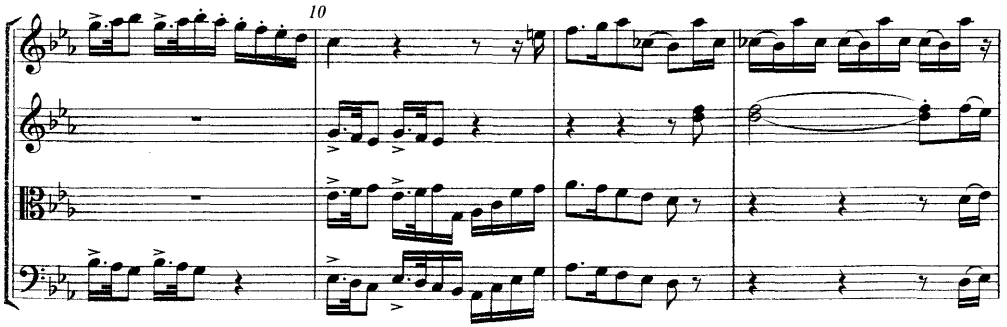
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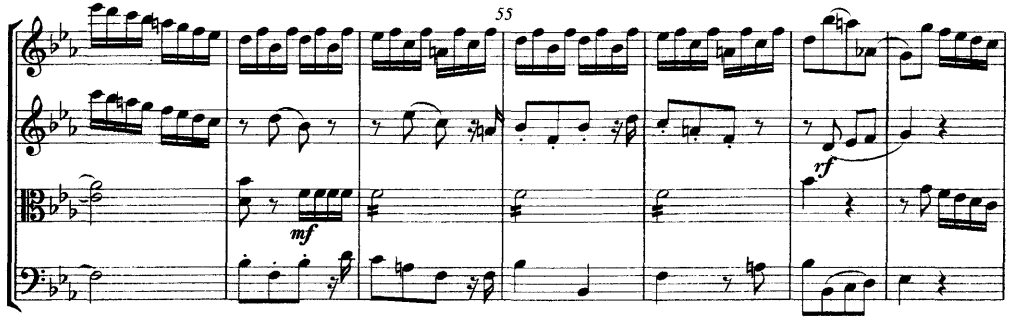
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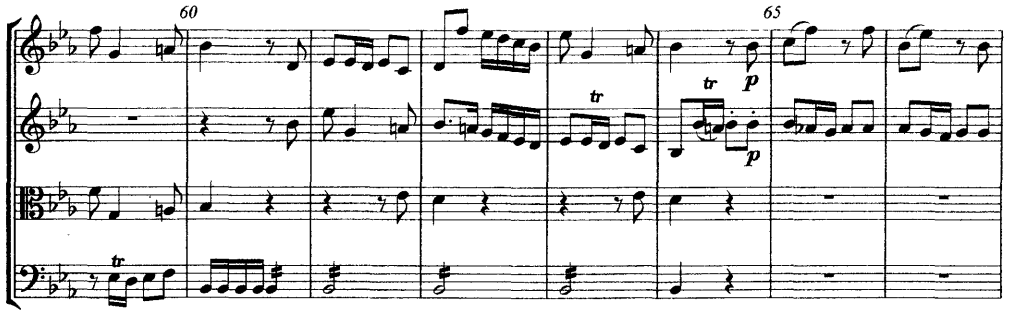
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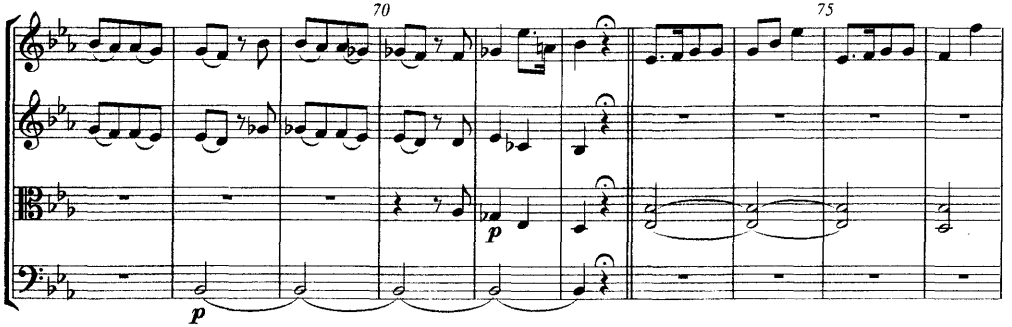
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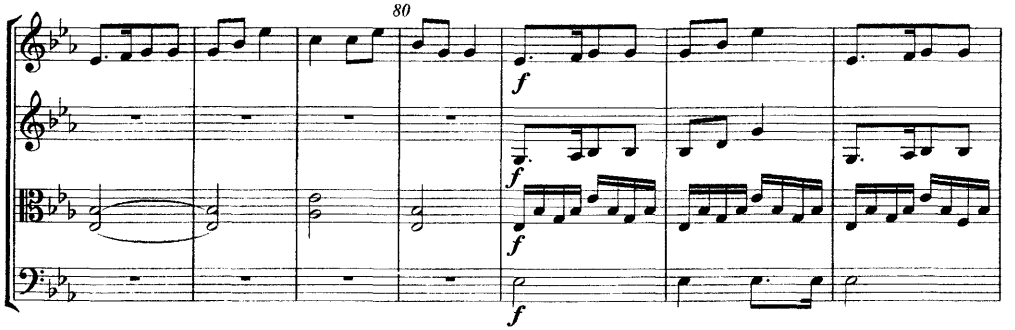
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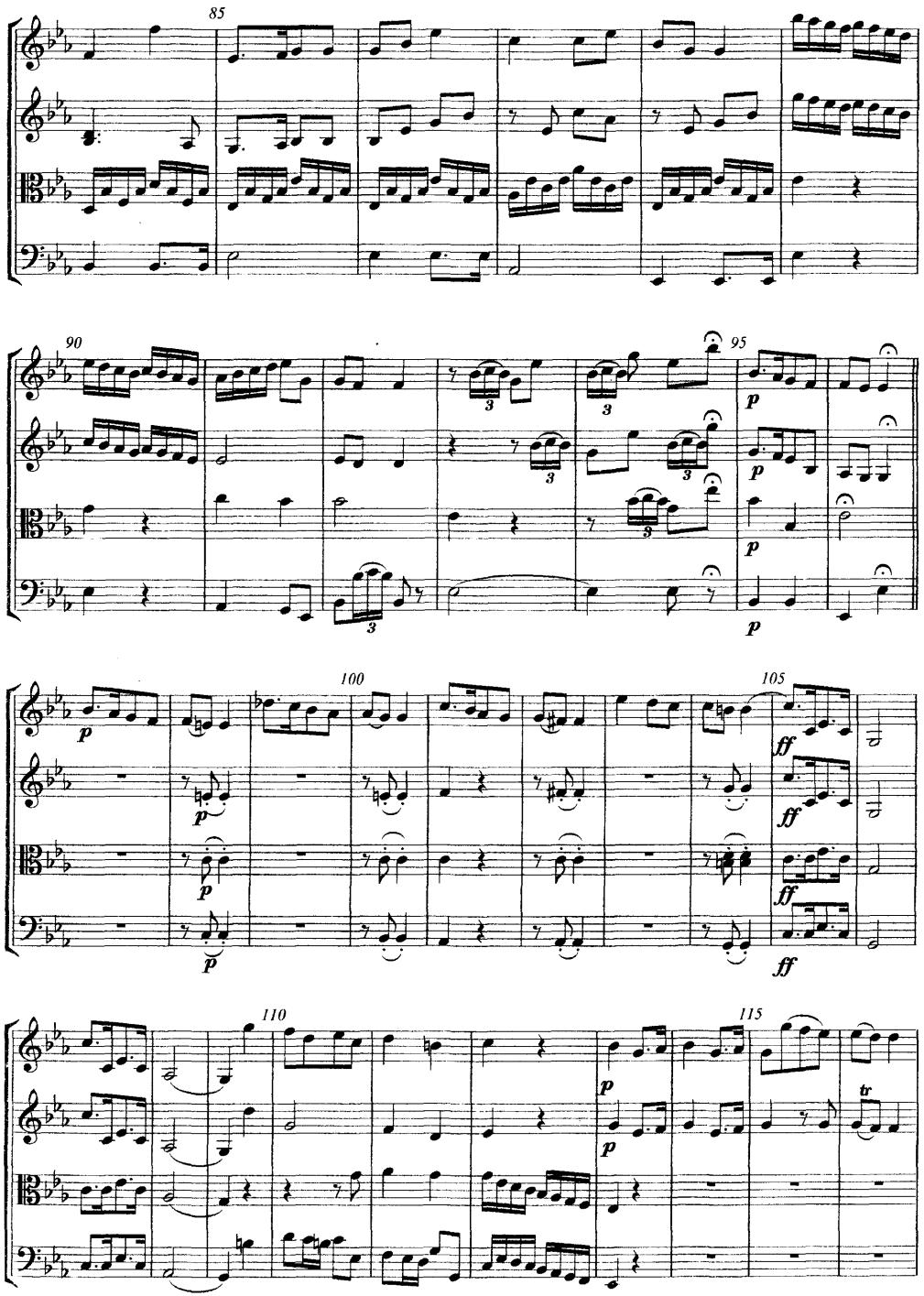
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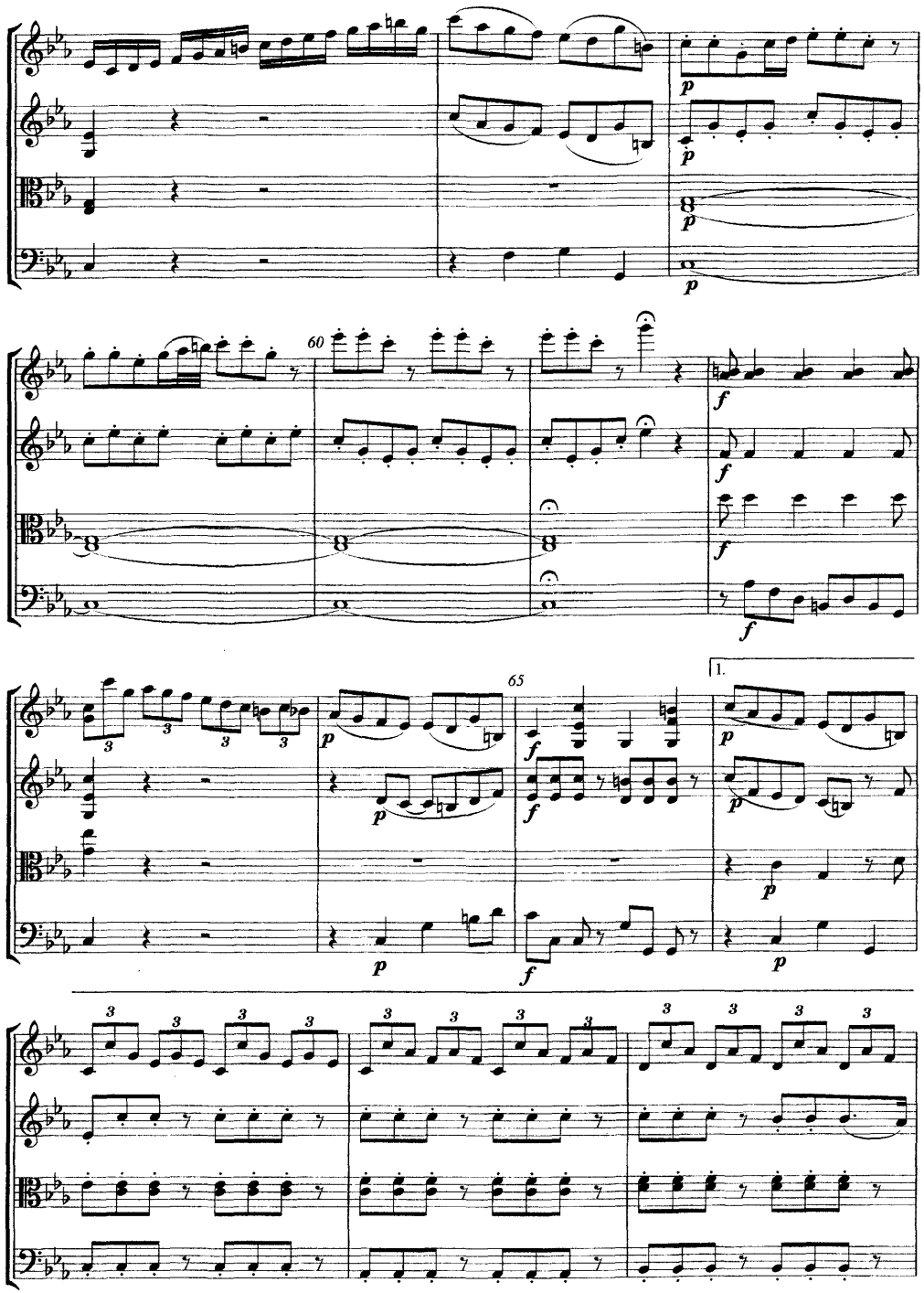
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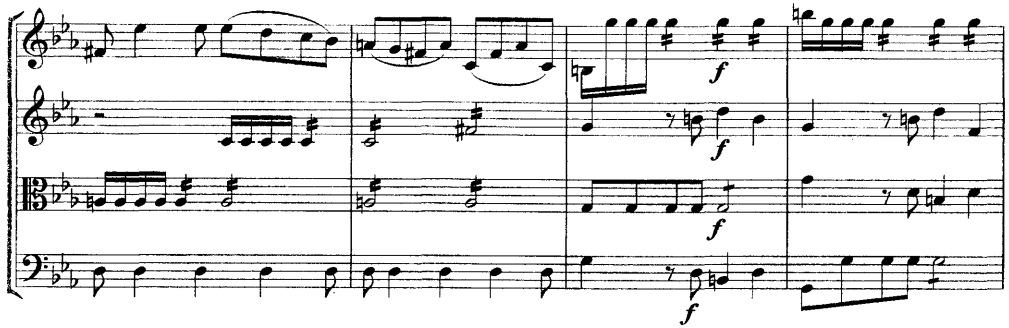
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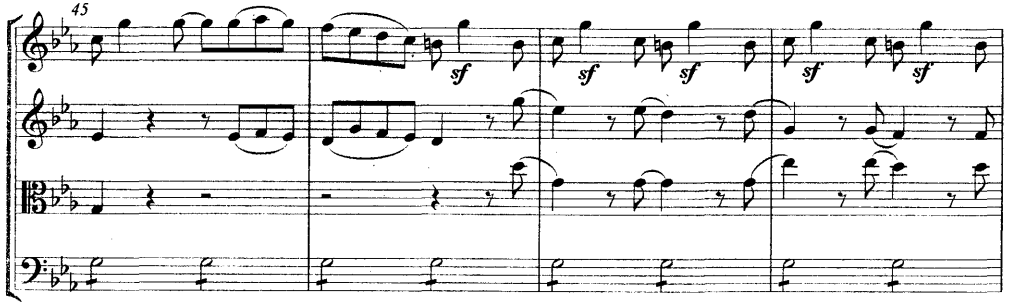
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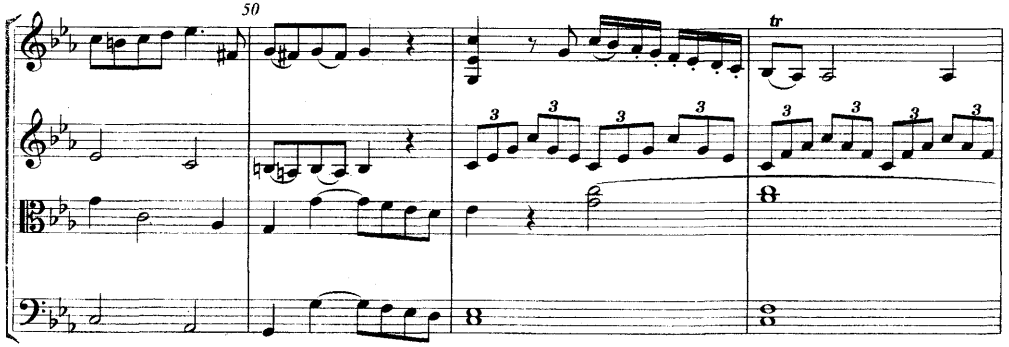
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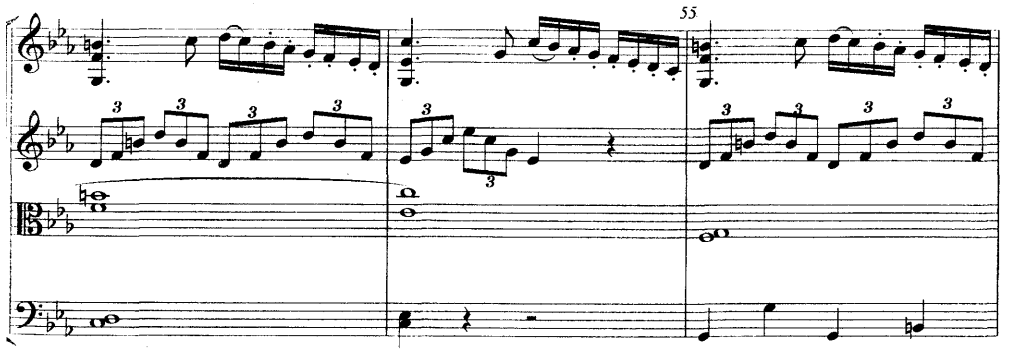
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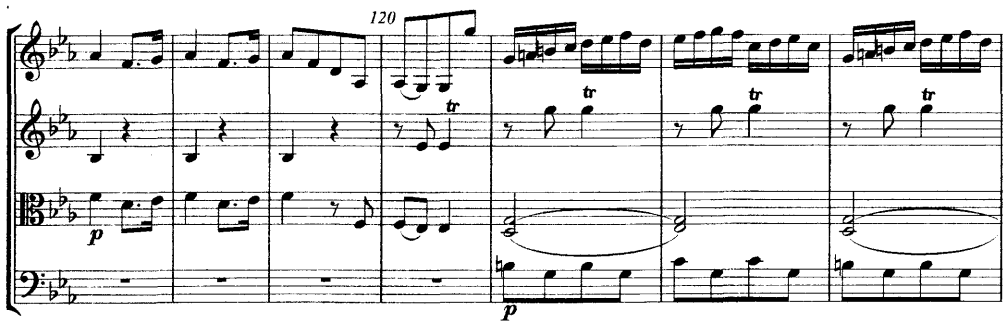
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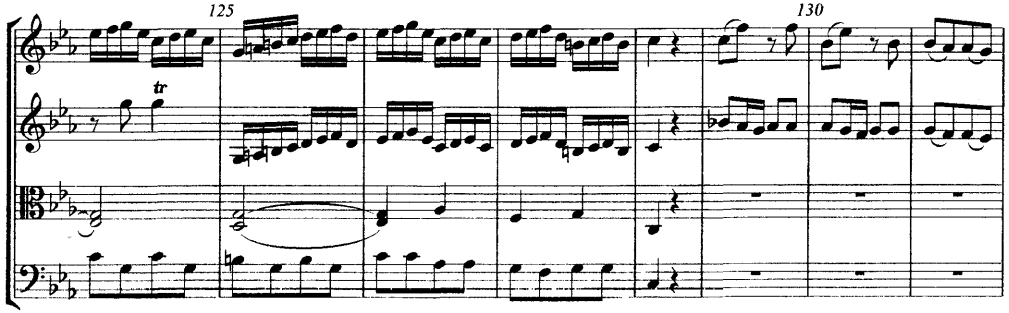
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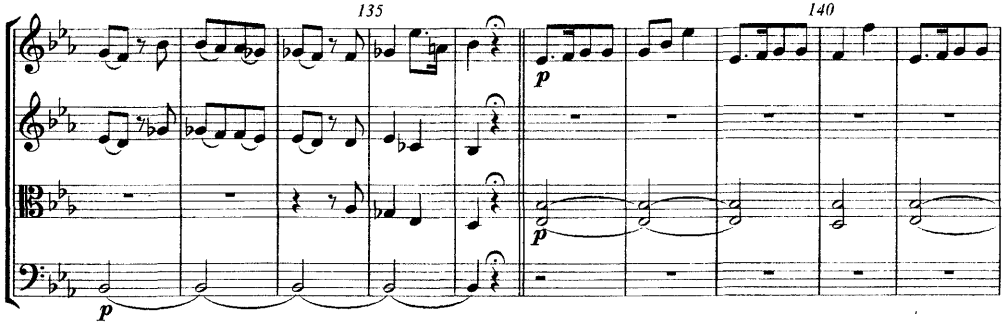
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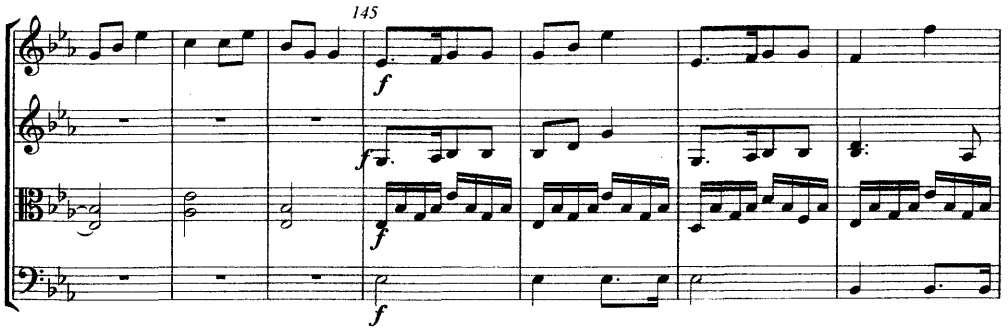
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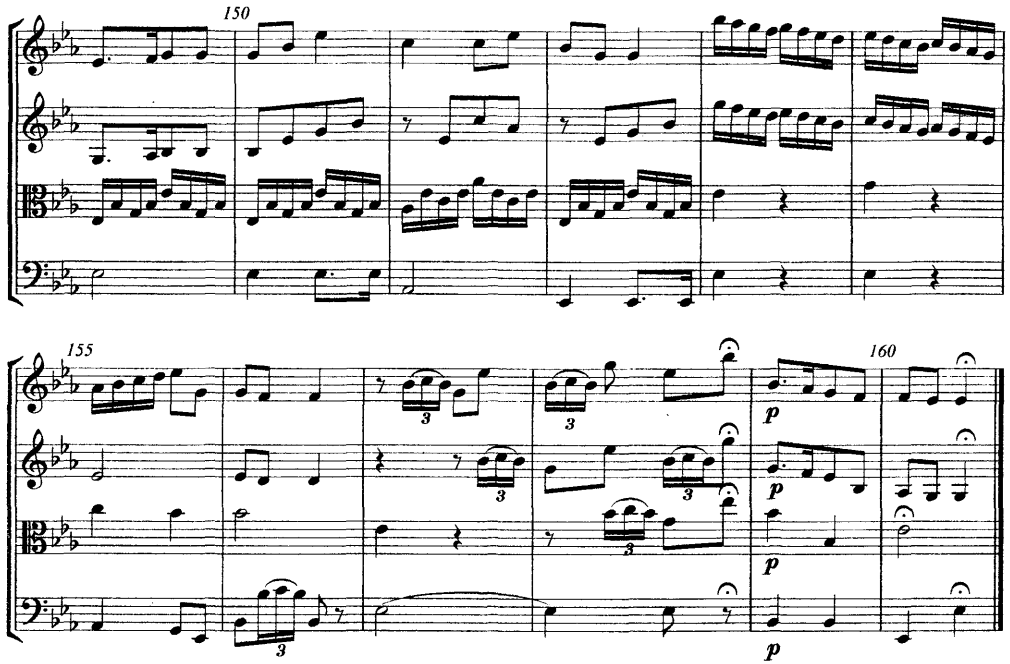
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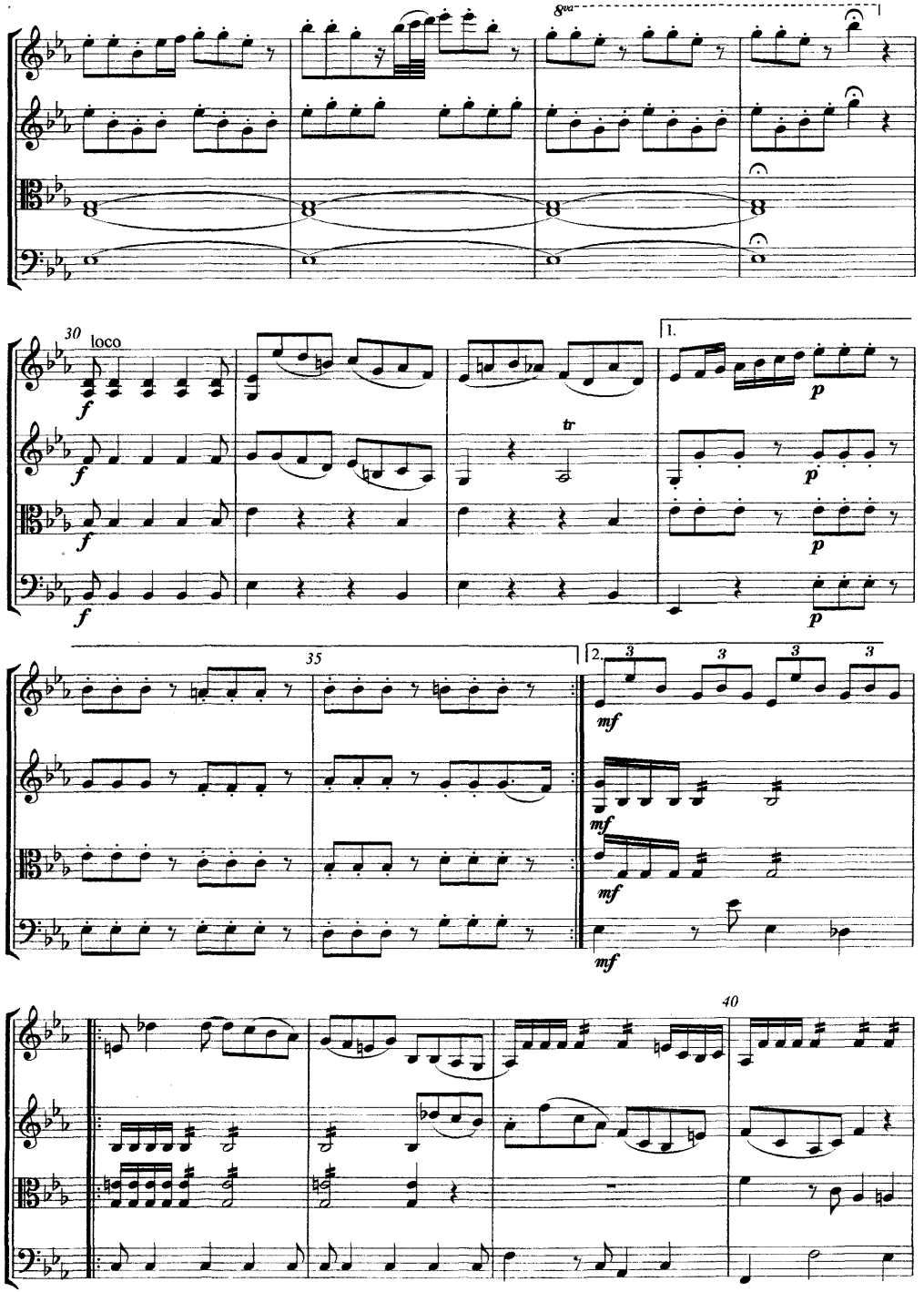
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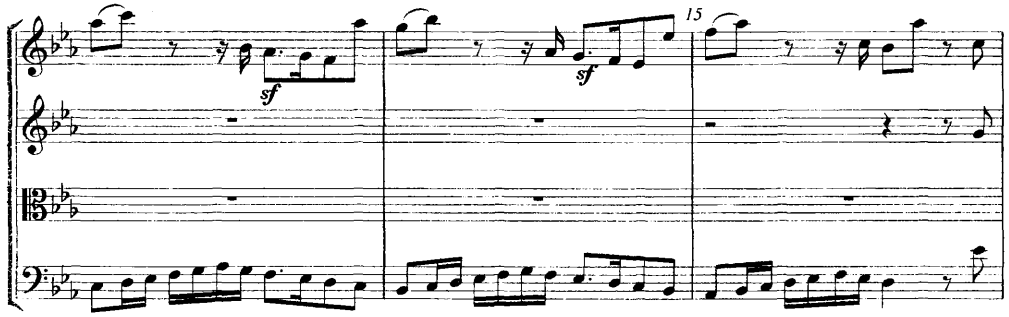
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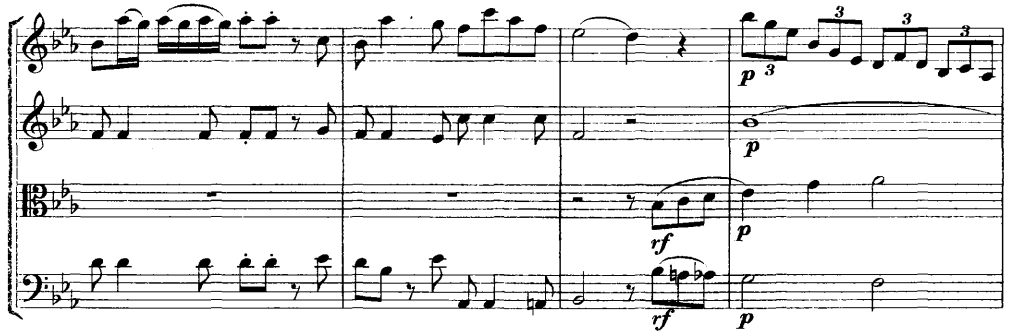
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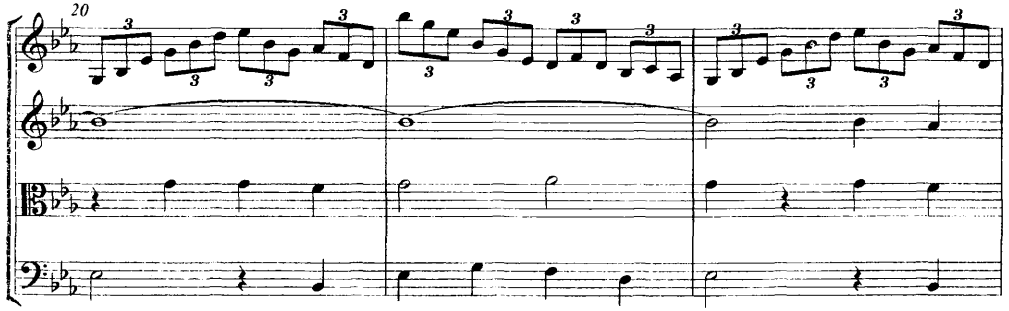
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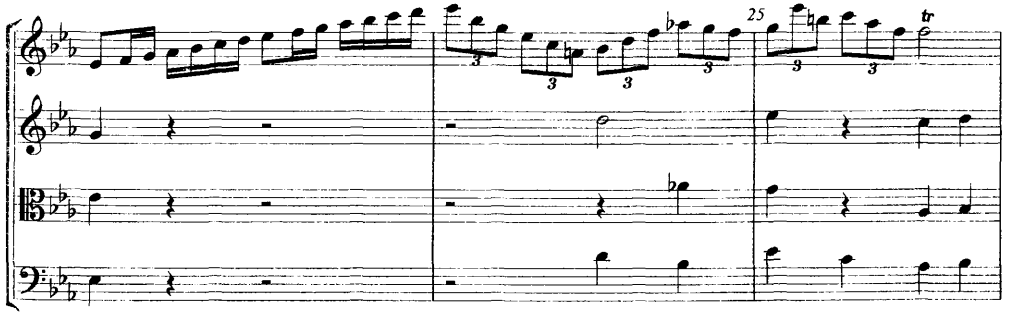
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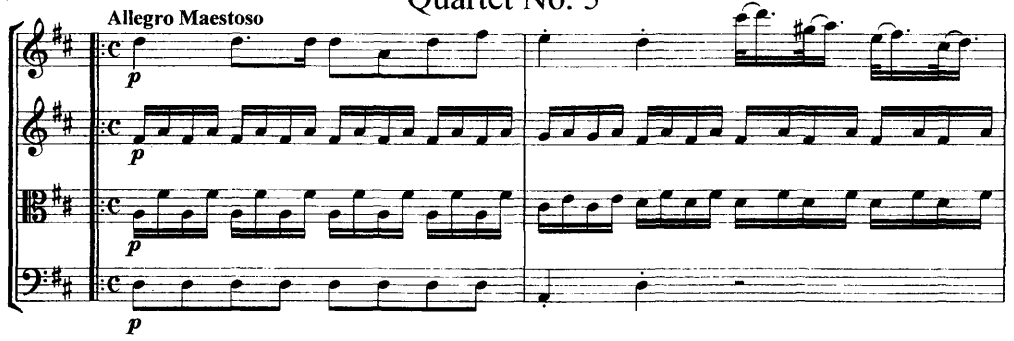
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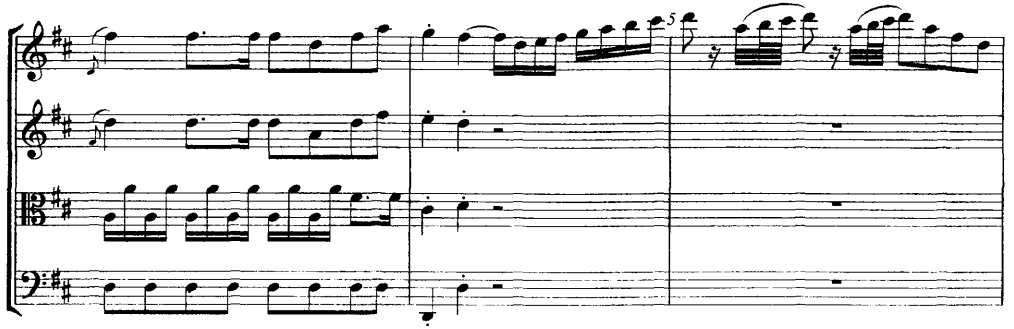
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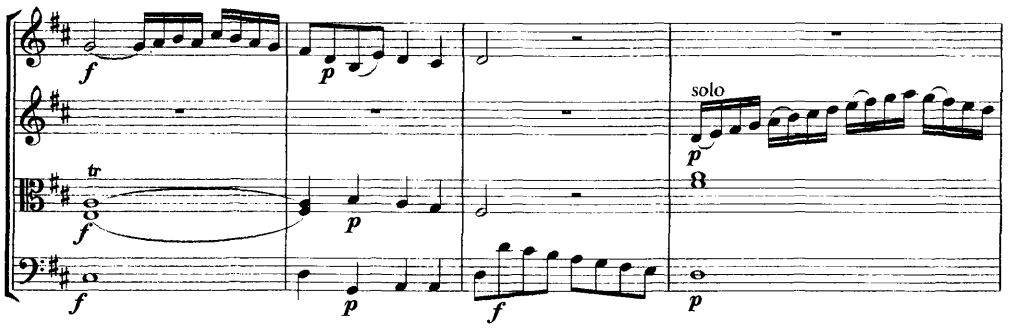
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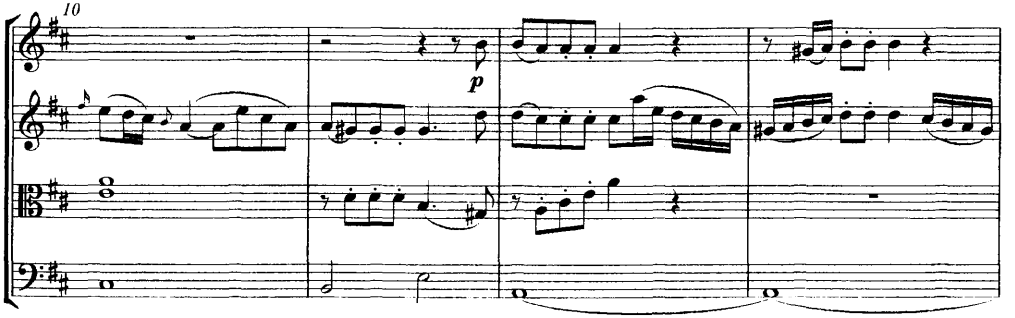
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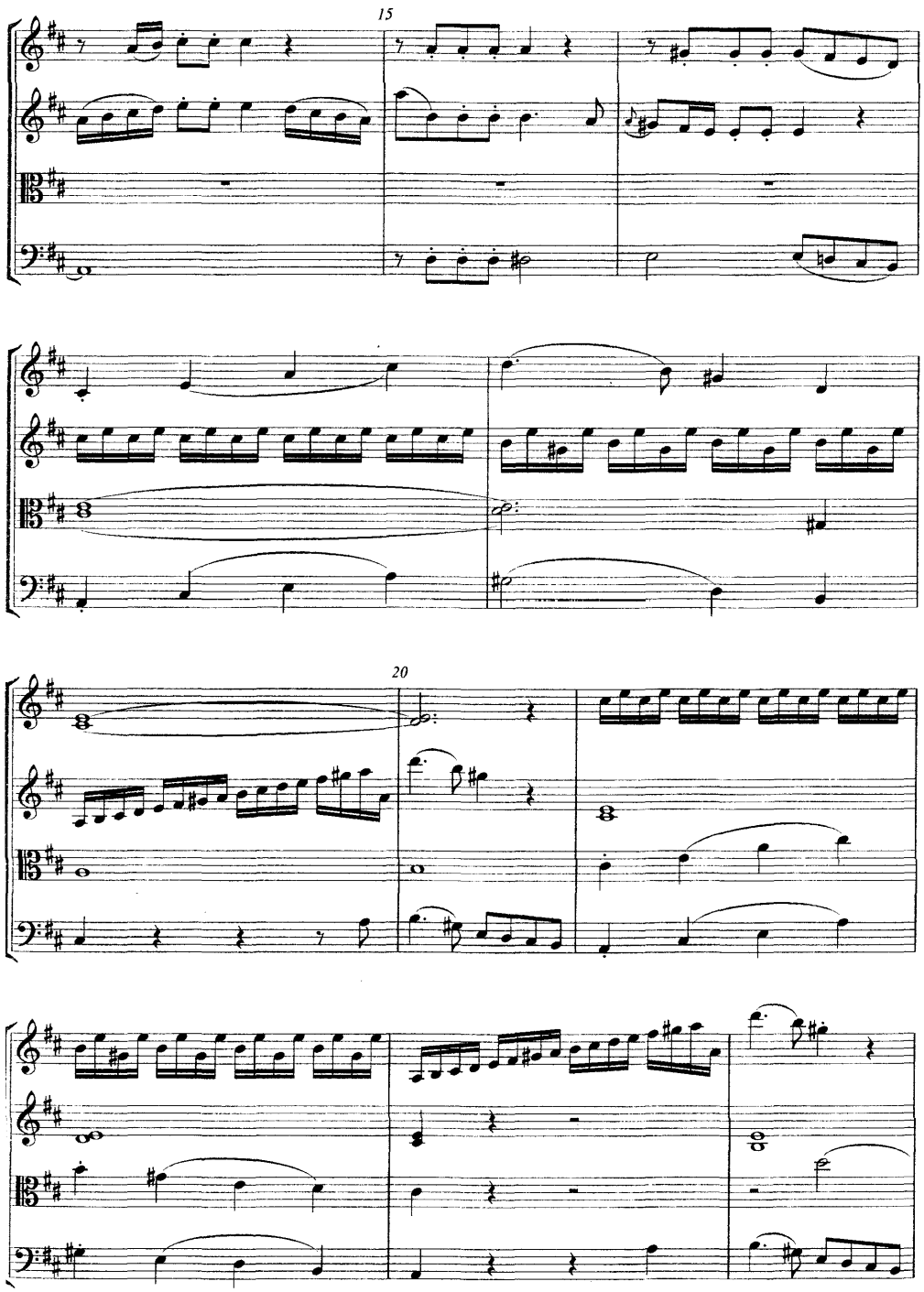

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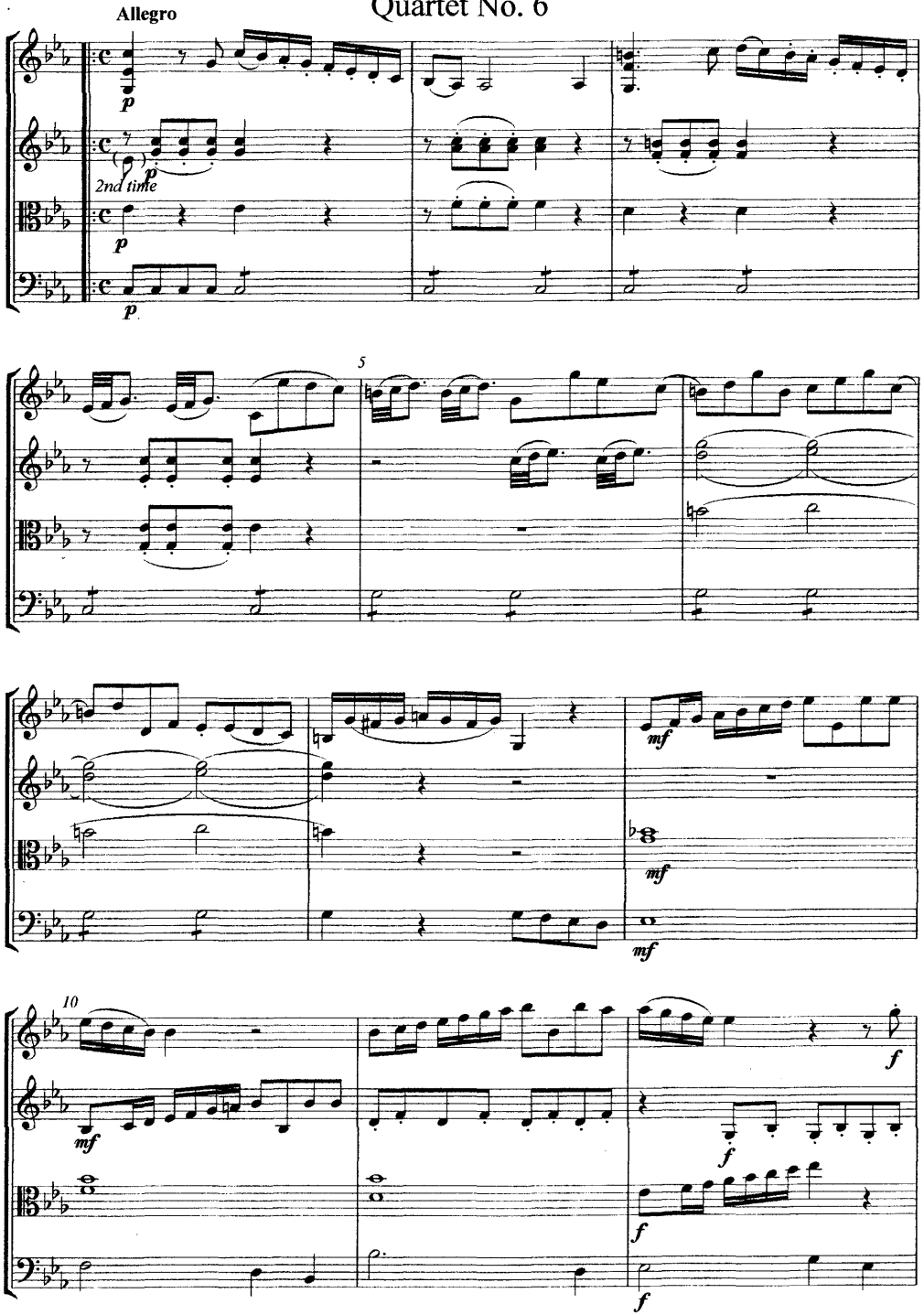

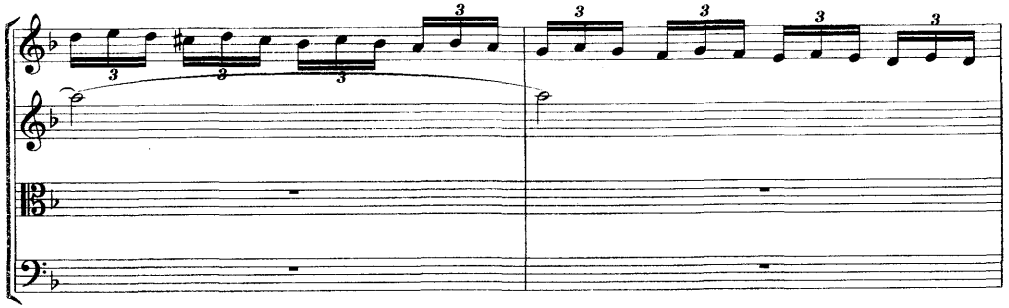

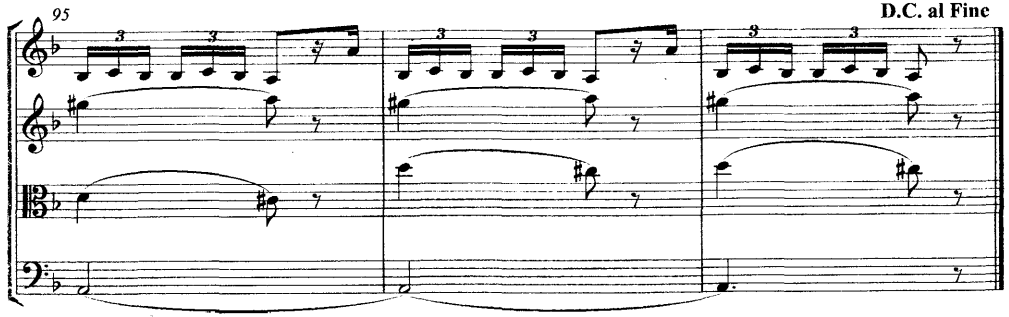
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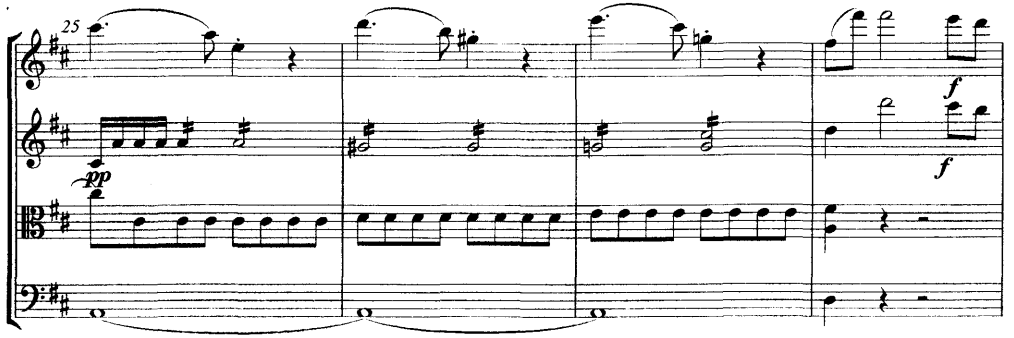
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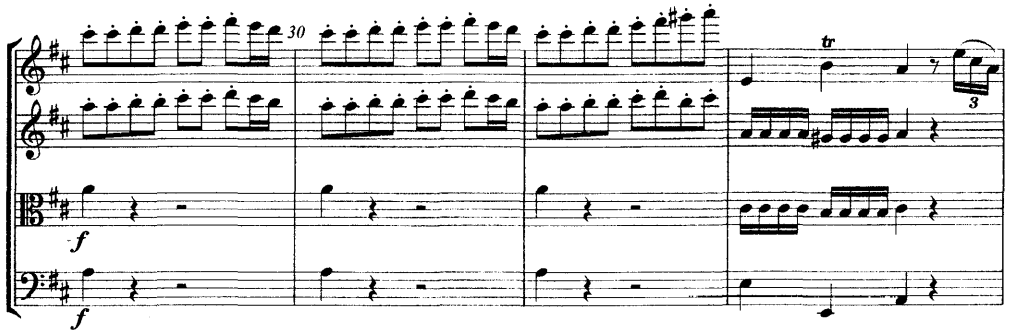
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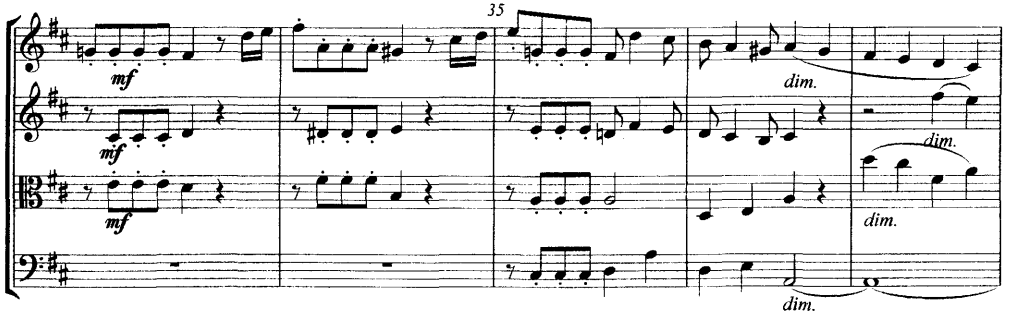
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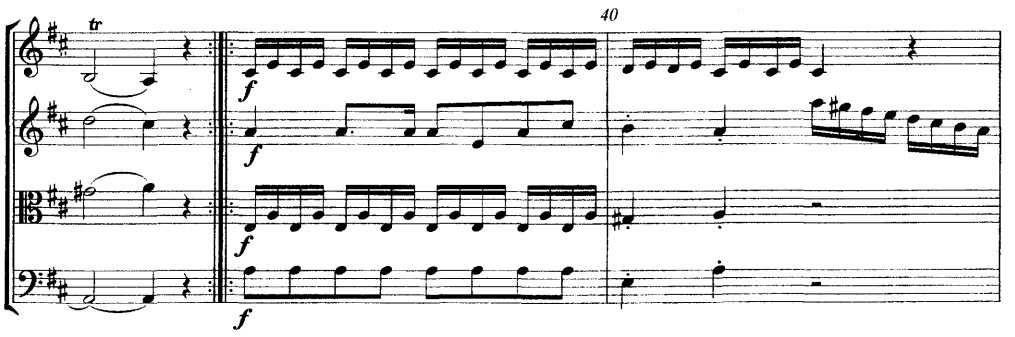
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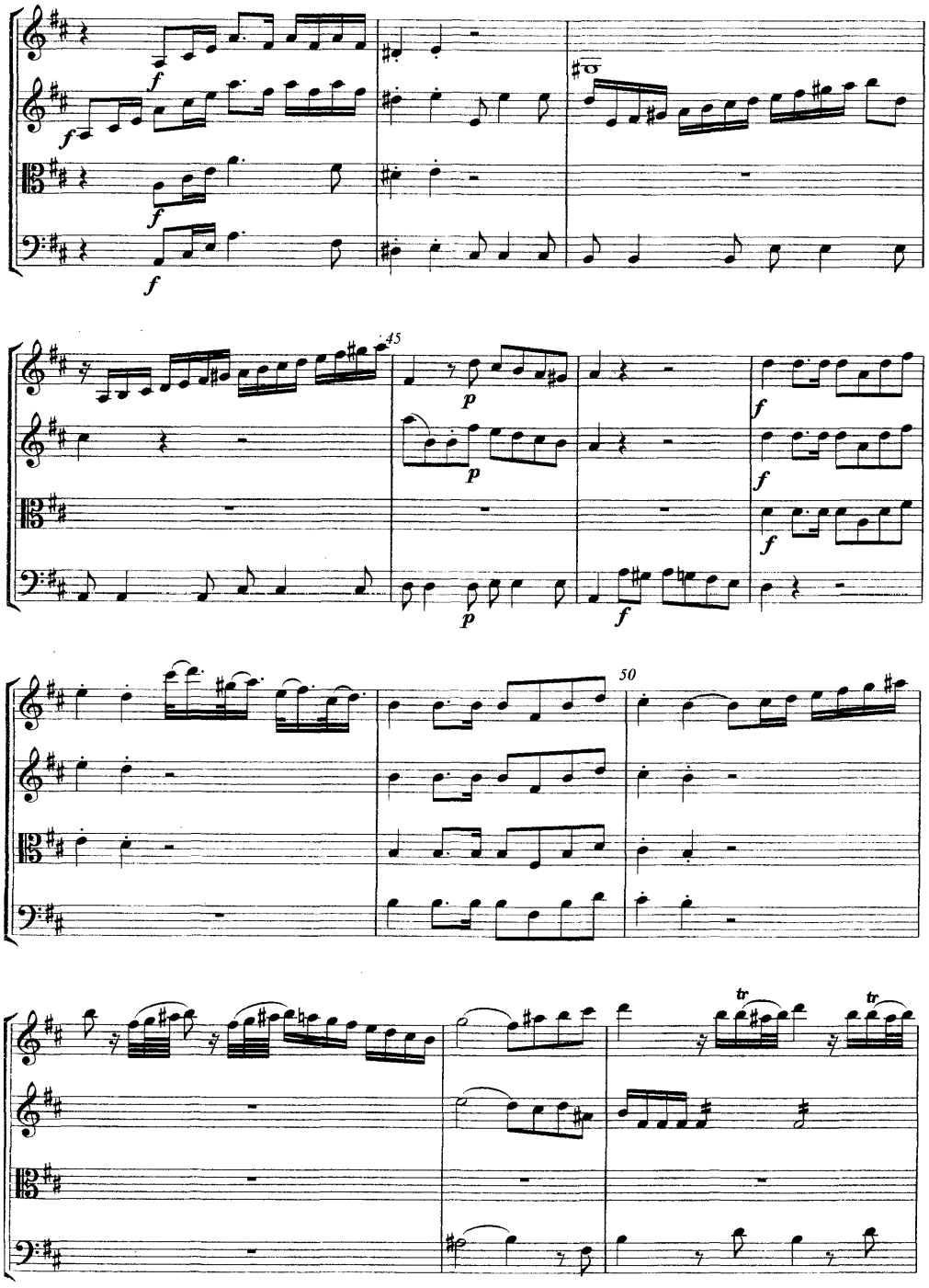
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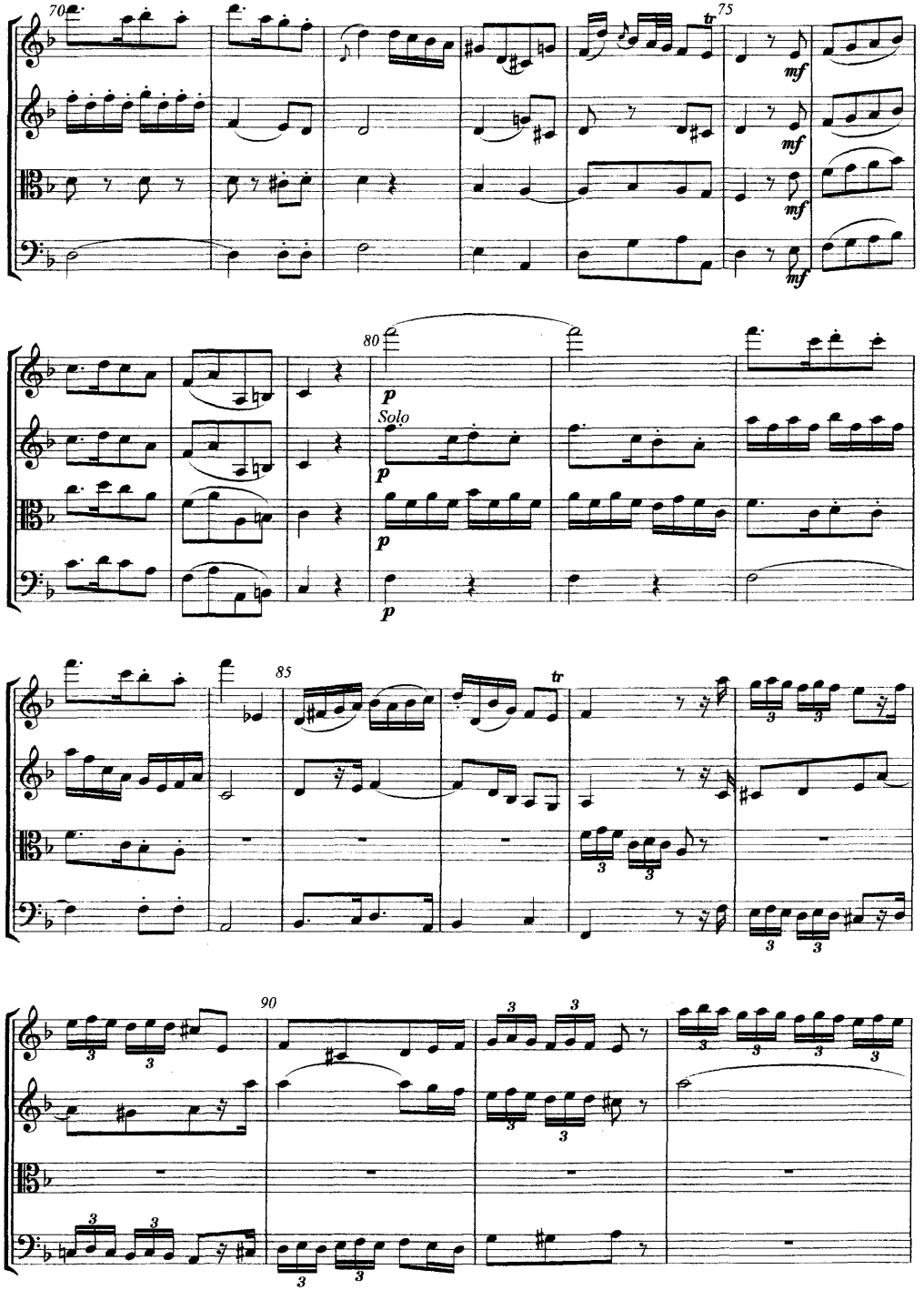
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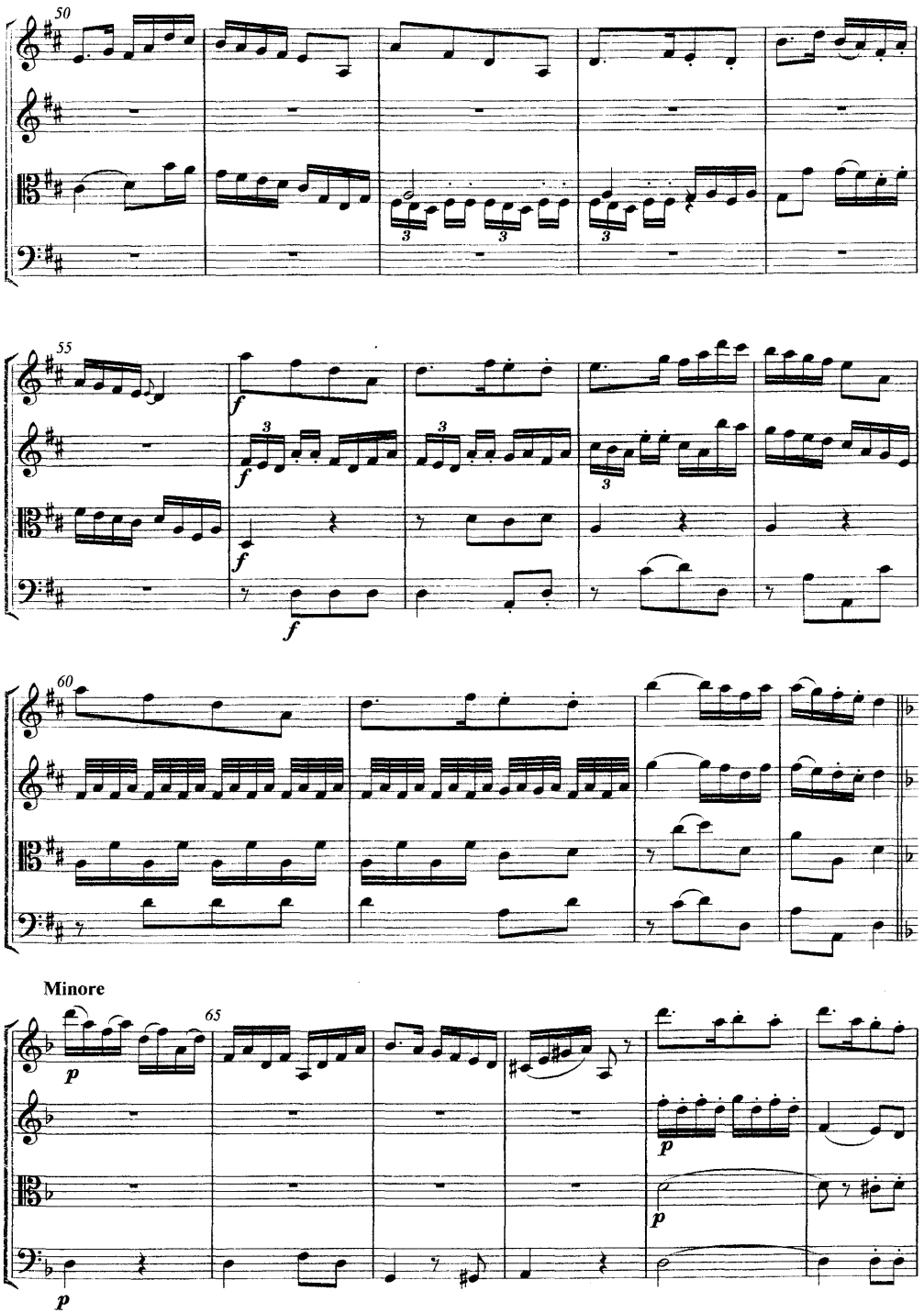
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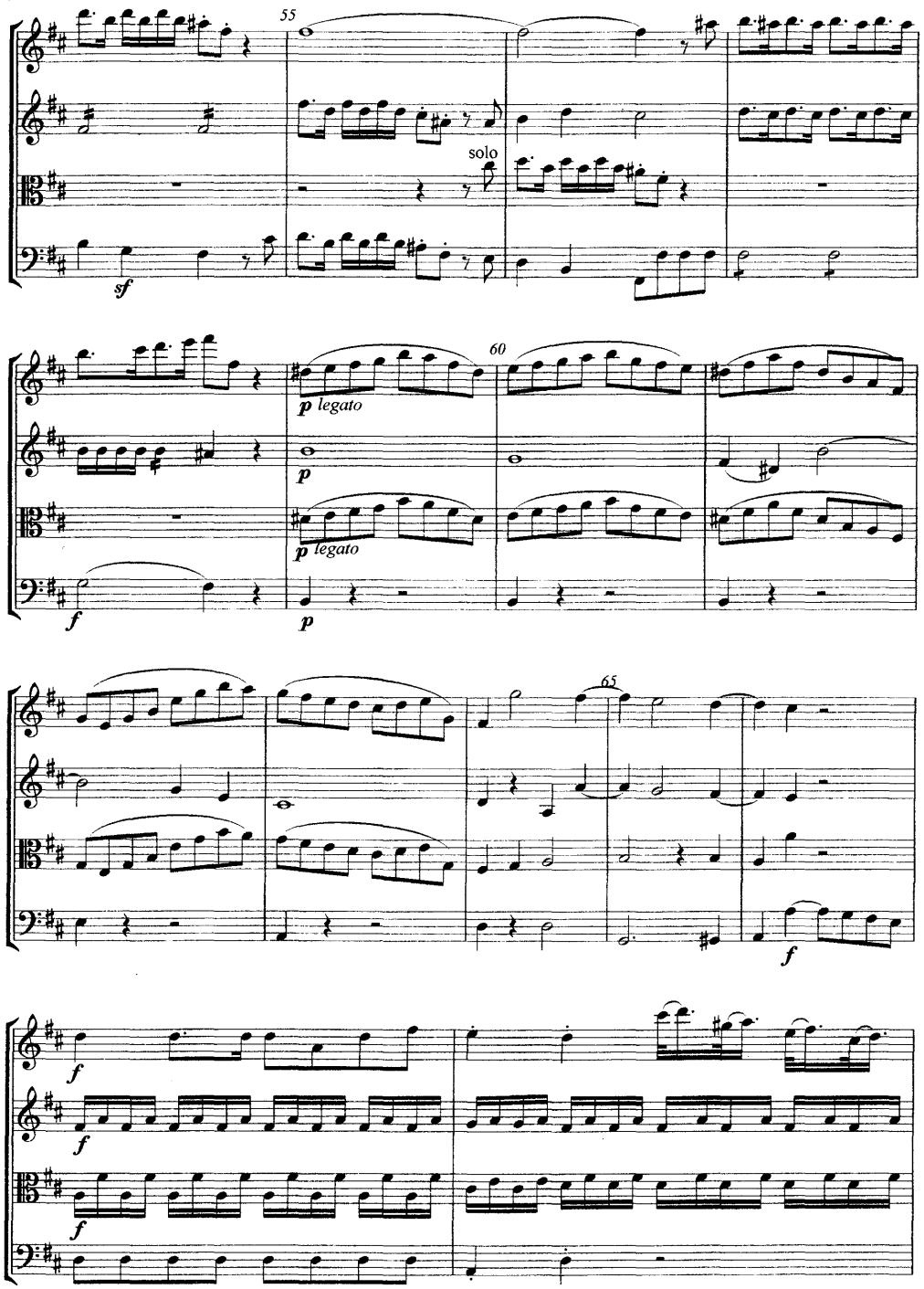
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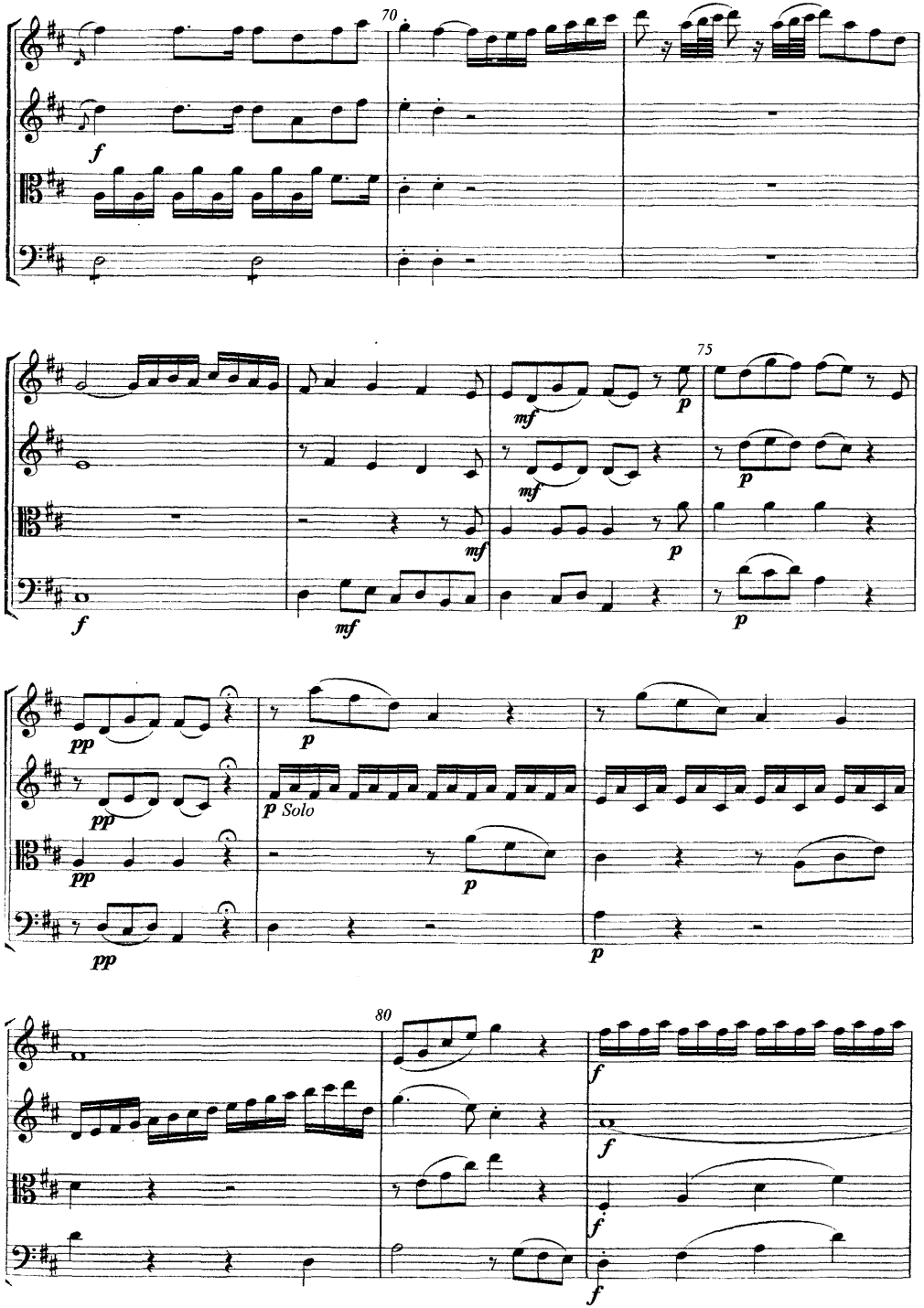
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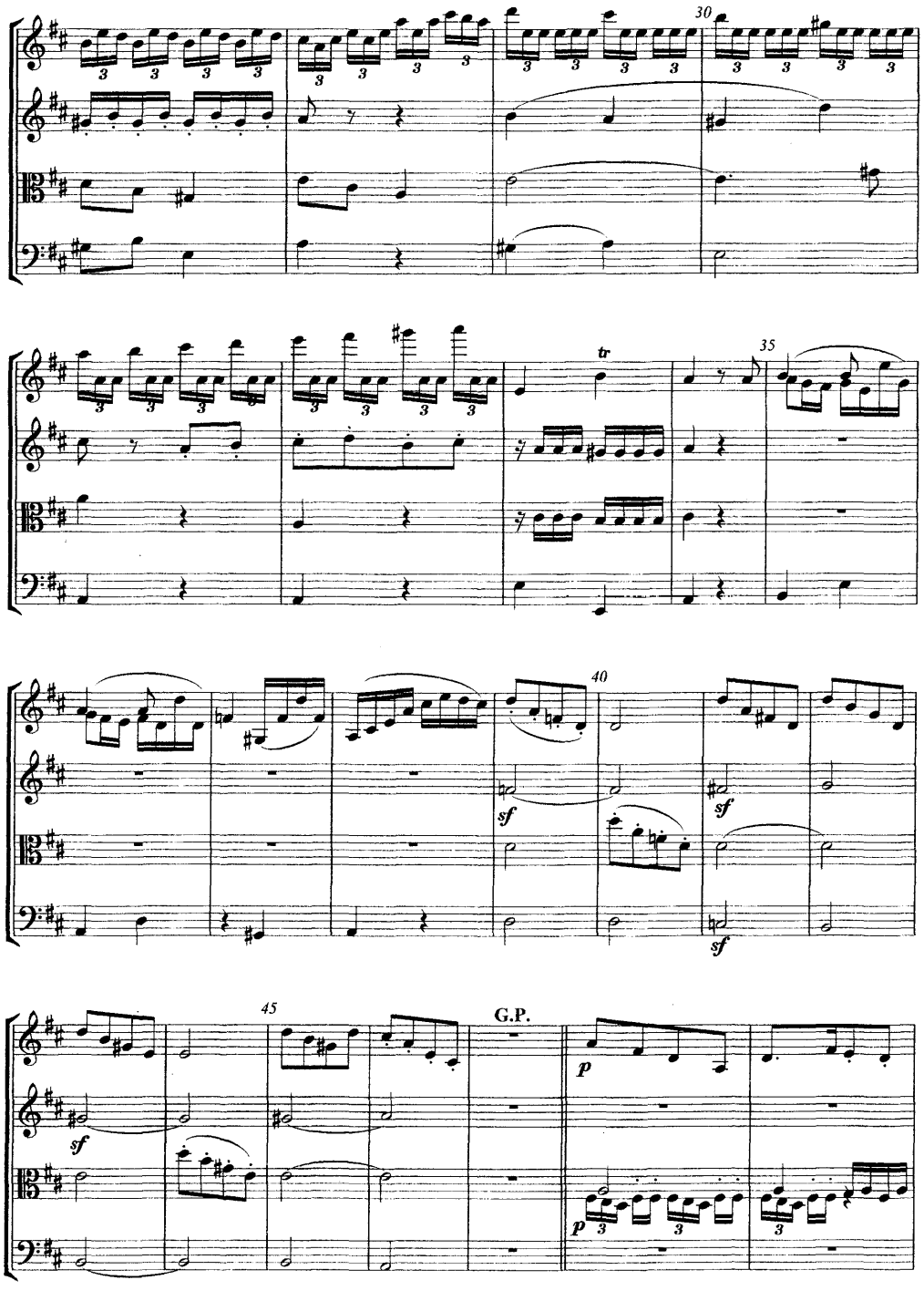
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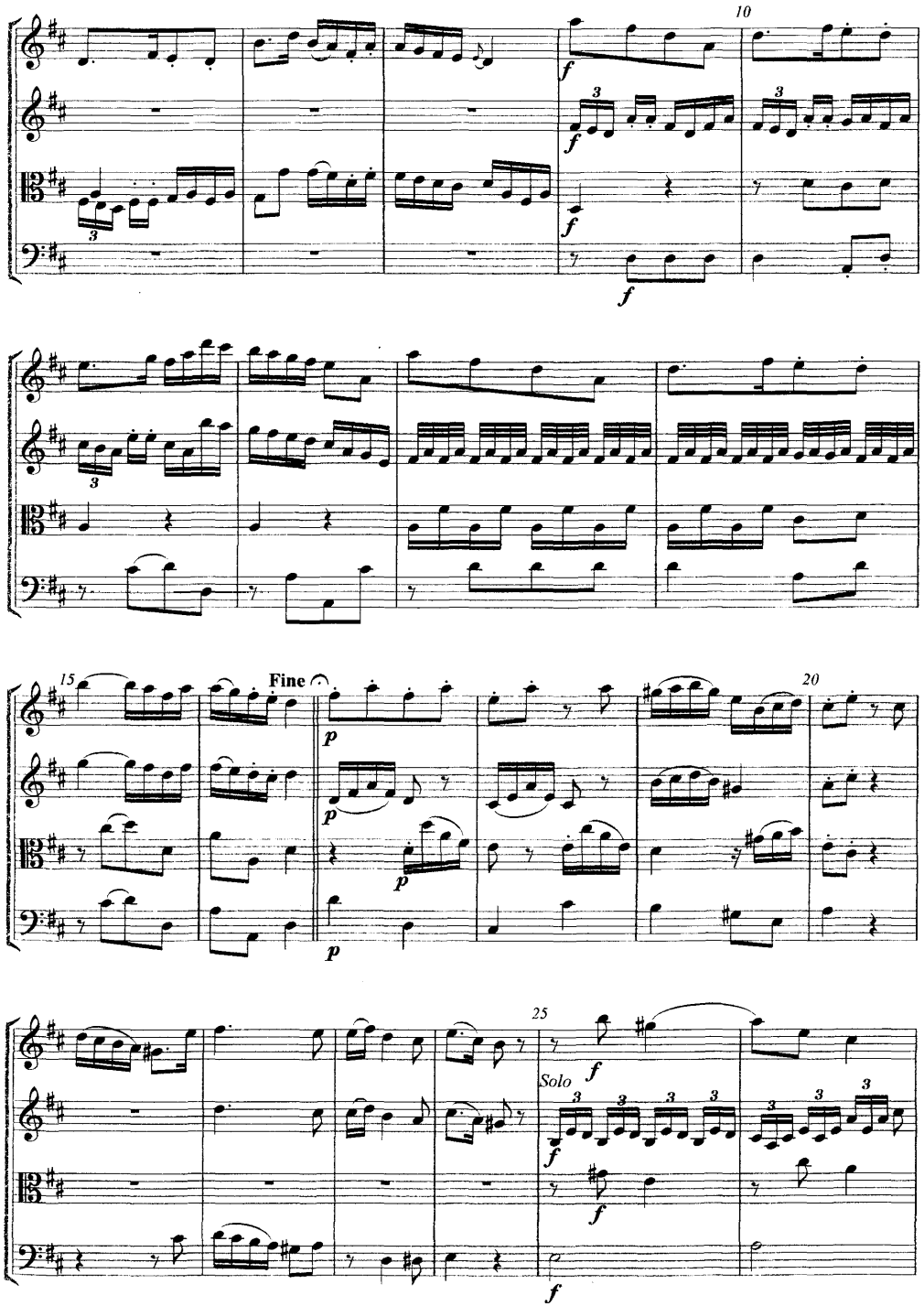
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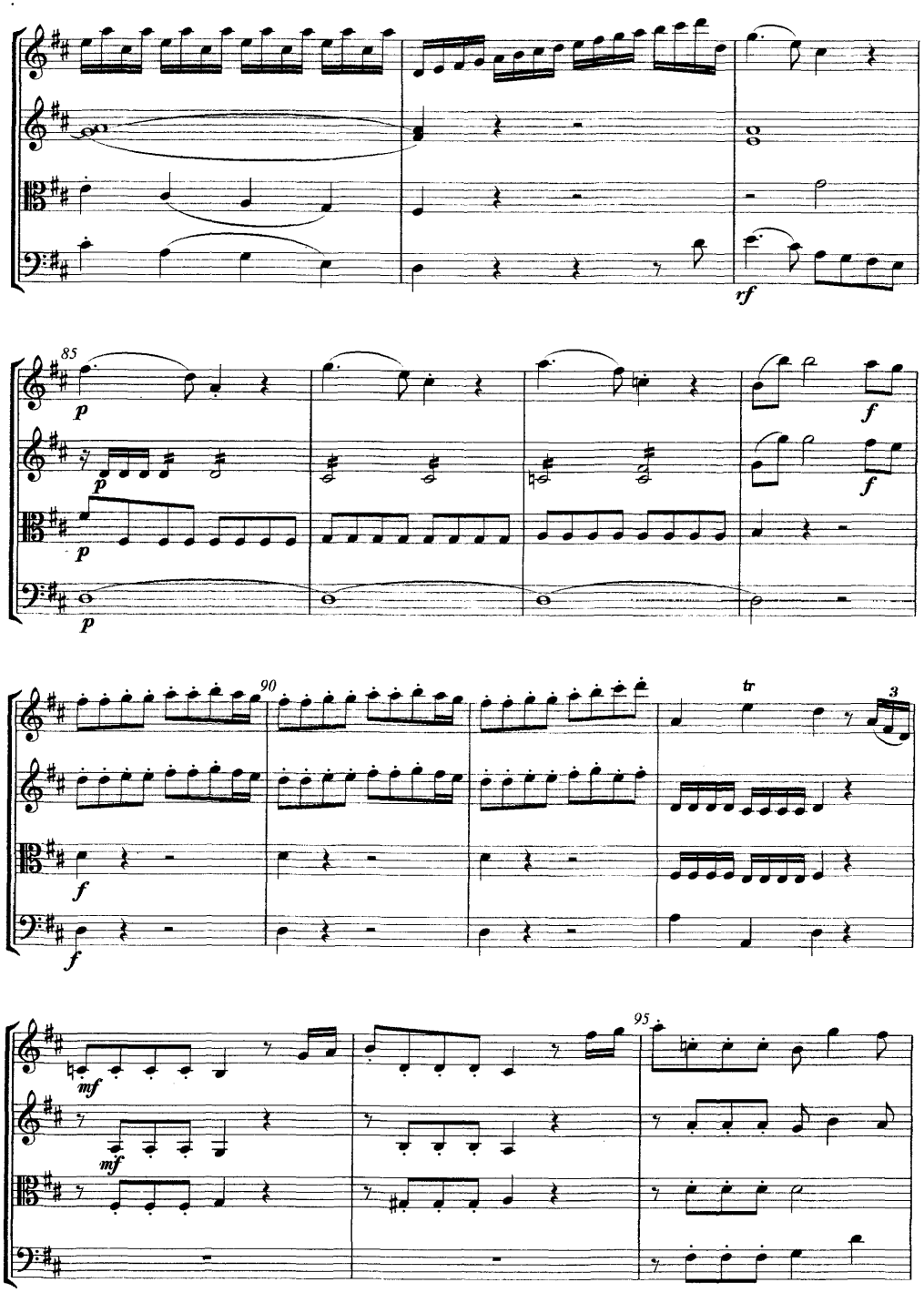
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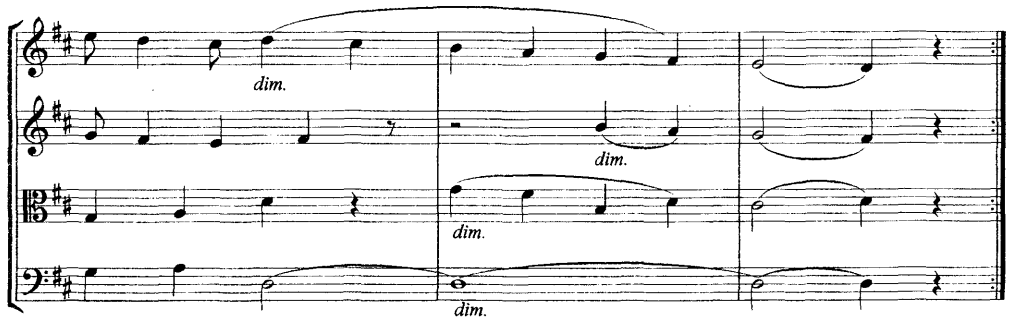
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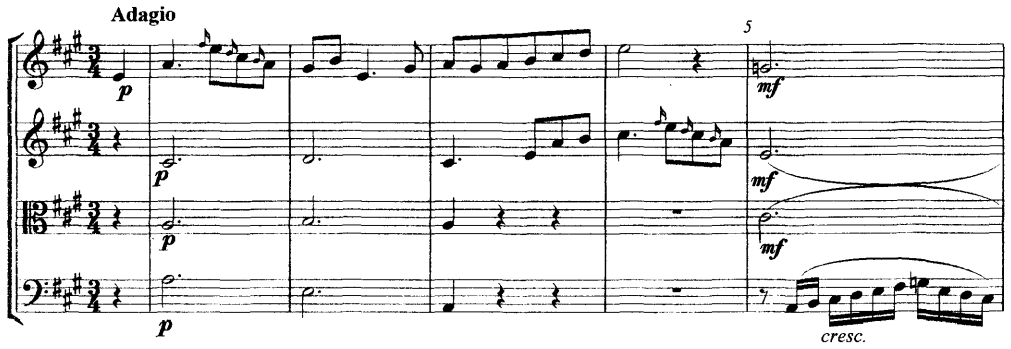
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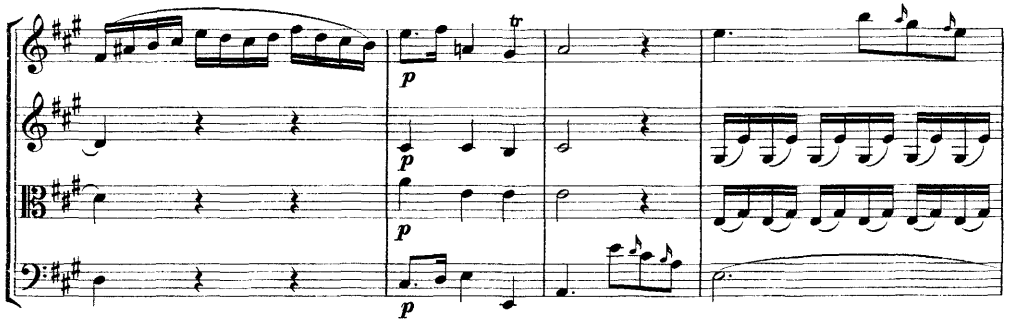
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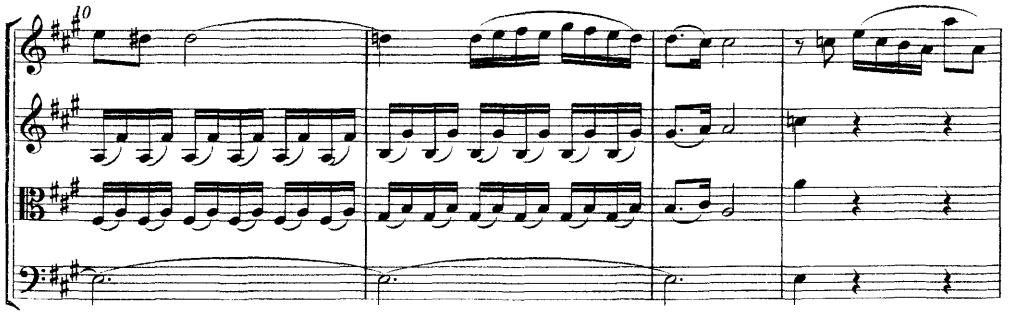
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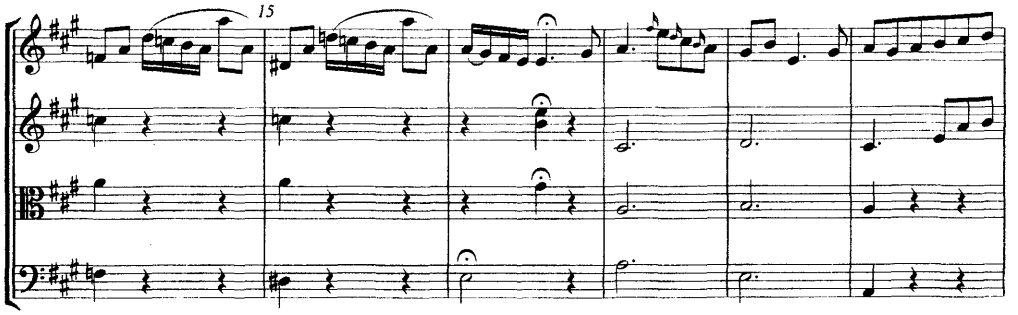
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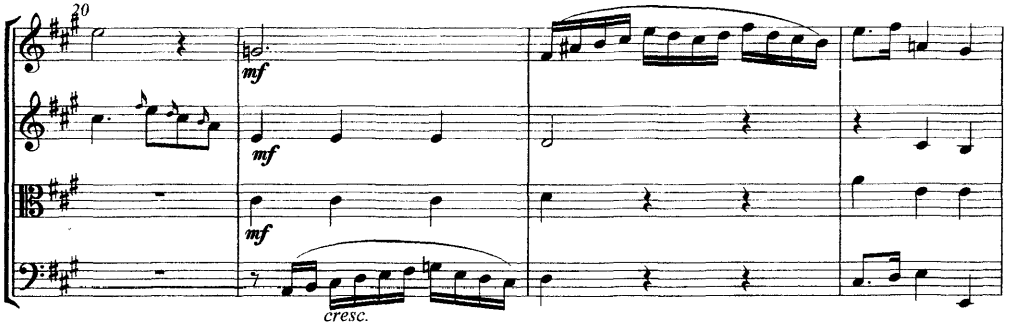
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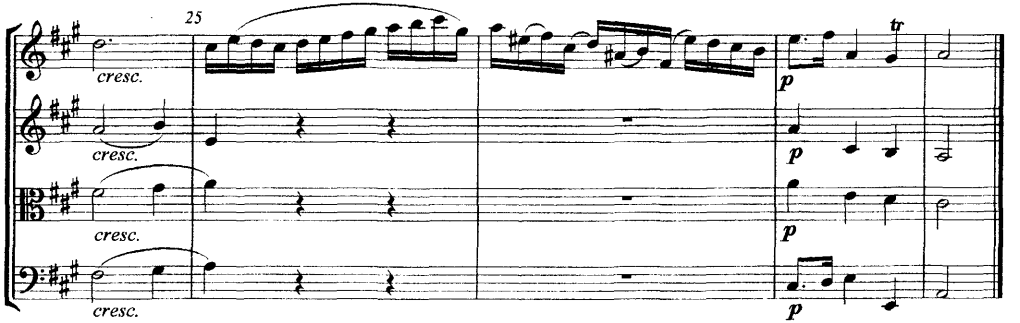
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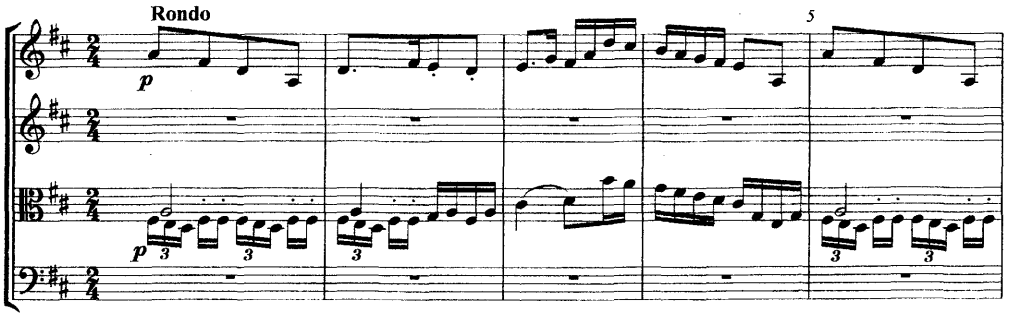
Rondo
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William Shield (1748 - 1829), born in the village of Swalwell on the Tyne near Gateshead was the eldest son of a singing-teacher. On the death of his father he was apprenticed to a boat- builder who encouraged his early talent on the violin. He continued his musical education under Avison, playing in concert series in Newcastle and leading theatre orchestras in Stockton-on-Tees and Scarborough.

Moving to London in 1772 he played in the Italian Opera, initially violin and then viola, and wrote songs and two sets of violin duets. After his first dramatic piece 'The Flitch of Bacon' (1778) he joined the staff of Covent Garden, composing and arranging scores for numerous stage works. These included 'Rosina' (1782), which made his reputation, and which through its popularity established the currency of the tune we now sing to 'Auld Lang Syne,' and 'The Farmer,' the source from which Britten obtained 'The Ploughboy.'

Outside the theatre Shield's interest in folk-song also found expression in collections of English and Scottish Songs (1783, 1784) produced in collaboration with his friend Joseph Ritson, and in the musical examples in his *Introduction to Harmony* (1800) and *Rudiments of Thoroughbass* (1815).

Shield was one of Haydn's many English friends, playing with him in chamber ensembles and remarking, after a journey in Haydn's company, that he had gained more in four days than he had by study in any four years of his life.

He was a member of the Royal Band for many years before being appointed Master of the King's Music in 1817, and he was one of the founding members of the Royal Academy of Music in 1823. On his death in 1829 he bequeathed his viola 'commonly called a Stainer tenor' to the King, and is buried in Westminster Abbey beside his friend Clementi.

His six quartets of Opus 3 were dedicated to Lord Kinnaird and date from about 1780.

Ian Shield

Publisher's Note
We are extremely grateful to the Rev. Ian Shield for providing this biographical note about his distinguished ancestor, and for making available the copies of the original publication on which this edition is based.

MERTON MUSIC

SHIELD

SIX STRING QUARTETS
from Op. 3

Volume 2

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