Antonio Gervasoni

Northern Landscapes

for String Quartet

Lima, 11 August 2020

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Programme Notes

Northern Landscapes is a piece inspired by a trip I made in December 2019 to Mancora, a city and also a well-known beach resort in the Piura region, in northwestern Peru.

There are no direct flights to Mancora and the trip by land from the nearest airport takes about an hour, crossing a desert landscape of beautiful yellow, orange and brown shades, which extend through endless valleys and majestic canyons.

It is this part of my journey to Mancora that inspired me to write Northern Landscapes, whose objective is simply to capture the essence of that sensation of going at great speed through a colorful scenery.

On the musical side, the piece uses two simple elements: short rhythmic motifs that combine a quaver and two semiquavers, and sustained notes that are always off-beat, which gives them a kind of floating sensation.

I play with these elements in several ways, accommodating them and then re-accommodating them again as if they were lego pieces, combining them in different types of textures, modifying the way they sound through dynamic changes and bowings (articulations), all this over simple harmonies that contribute to give the piece a bright and cheerful sound.

As for the structure, I make no use of traditional forms. The piece is simply a collection of moments — of sound "landscapes" — that come and go, each with its own characteristics. In the end, the short rhythmic patterns disappear progressively, like a spring that loses its energy, leaving only the sustained notes but just for a brief moment, since they also die away shortly after.

Notation

As in many modern scores, the purpose of the metre indication (4/4) is merely to ensure the synchronisation of the players. There is no intention to establish a stressed/unstressed beat structure within the bars. For this reason, some changes between sections don't occur at the beginning of a bar, which explains why certain rehearsal marks occur in places other than the first beat.
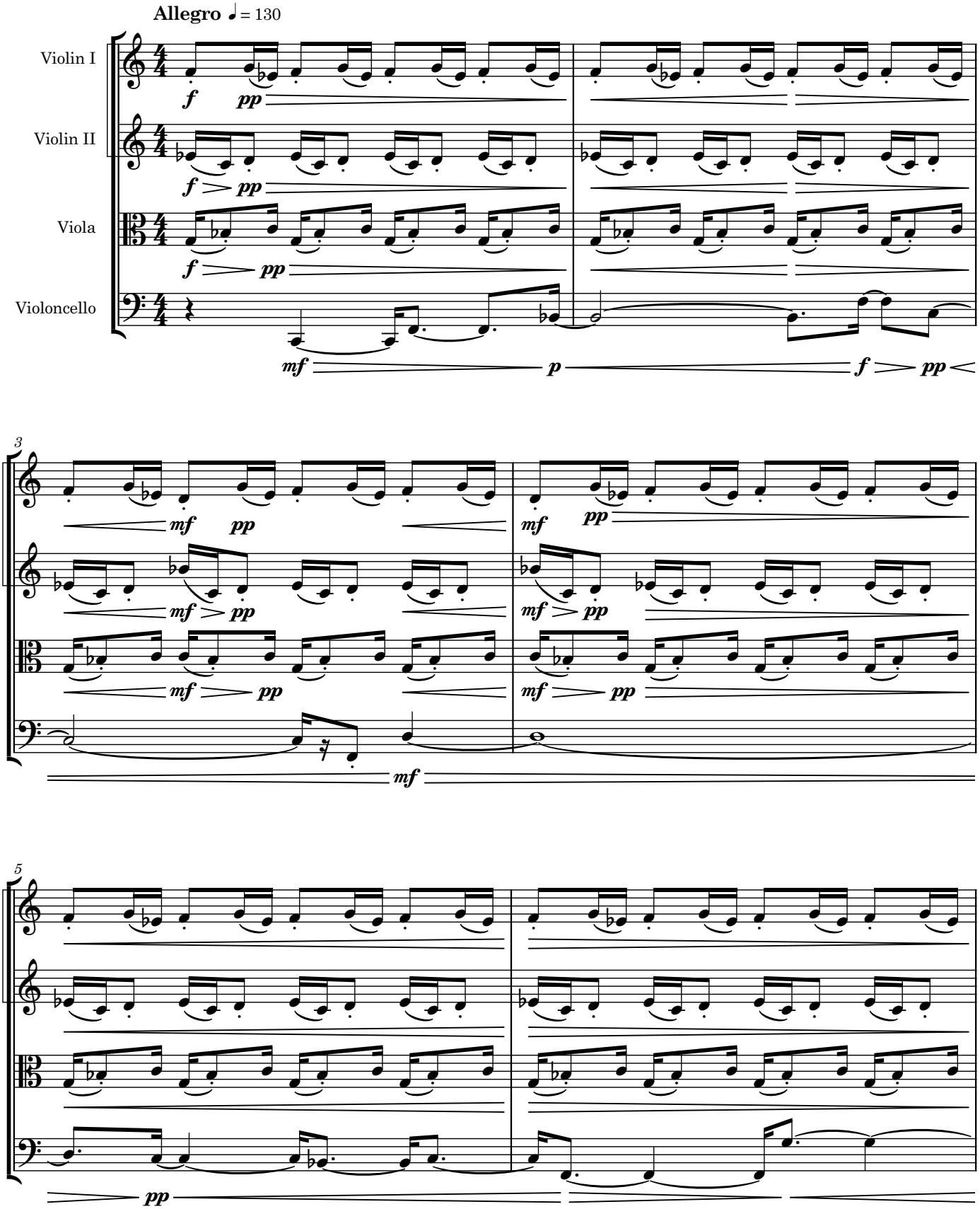
Duration

Approximately 4' 21"

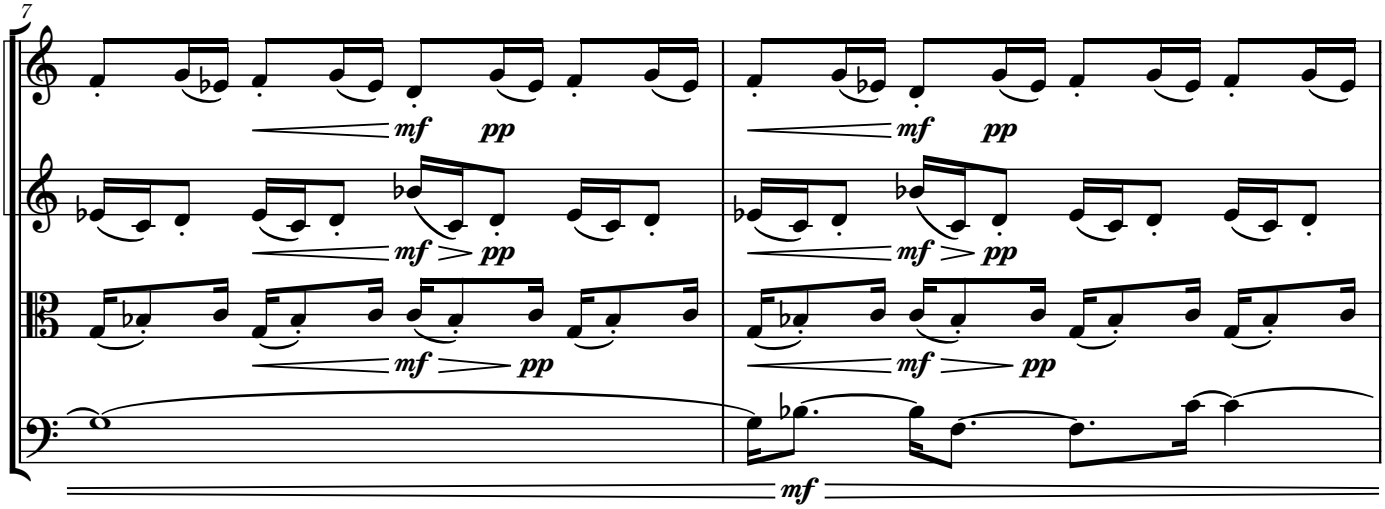
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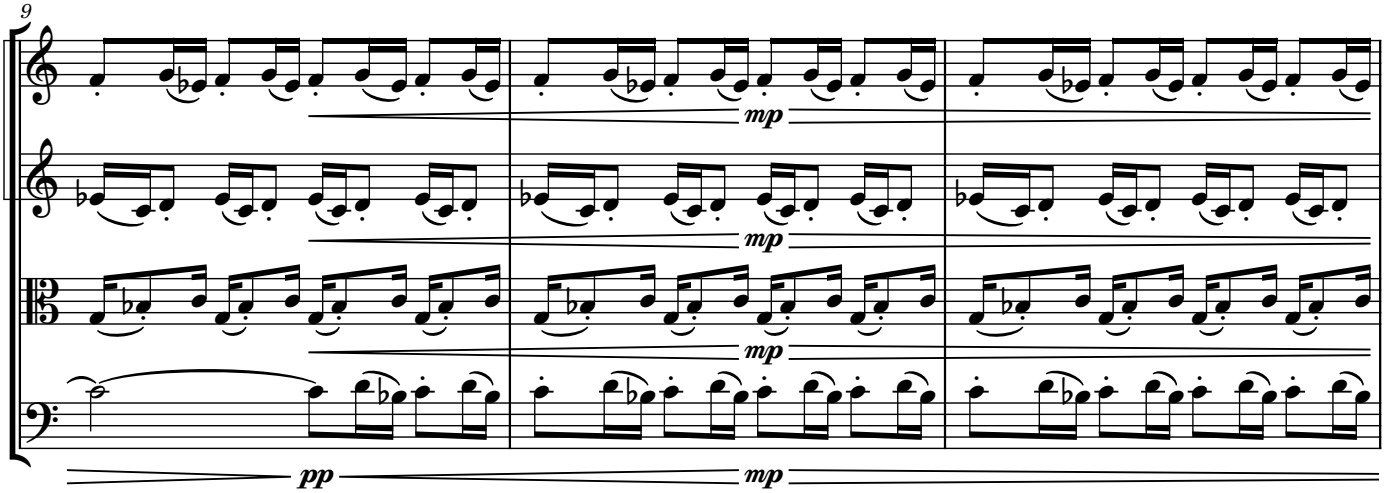
for String Quartet

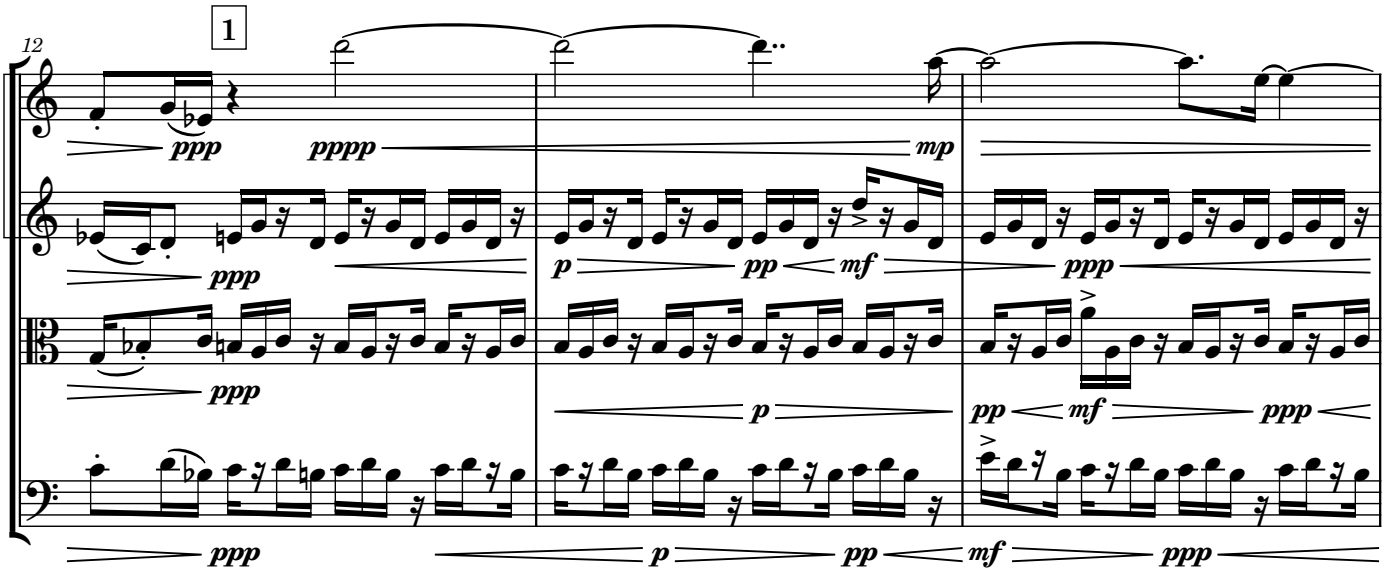
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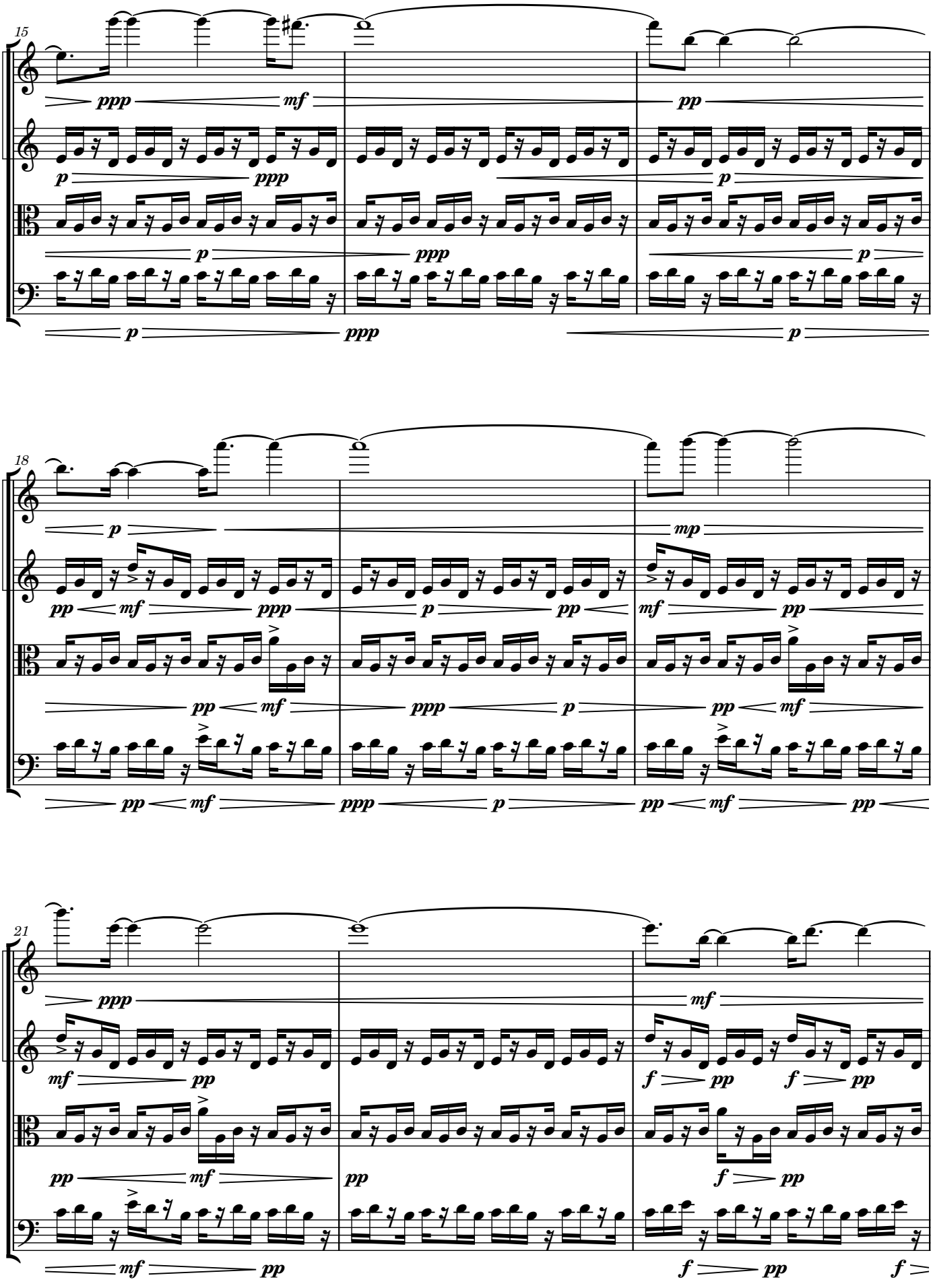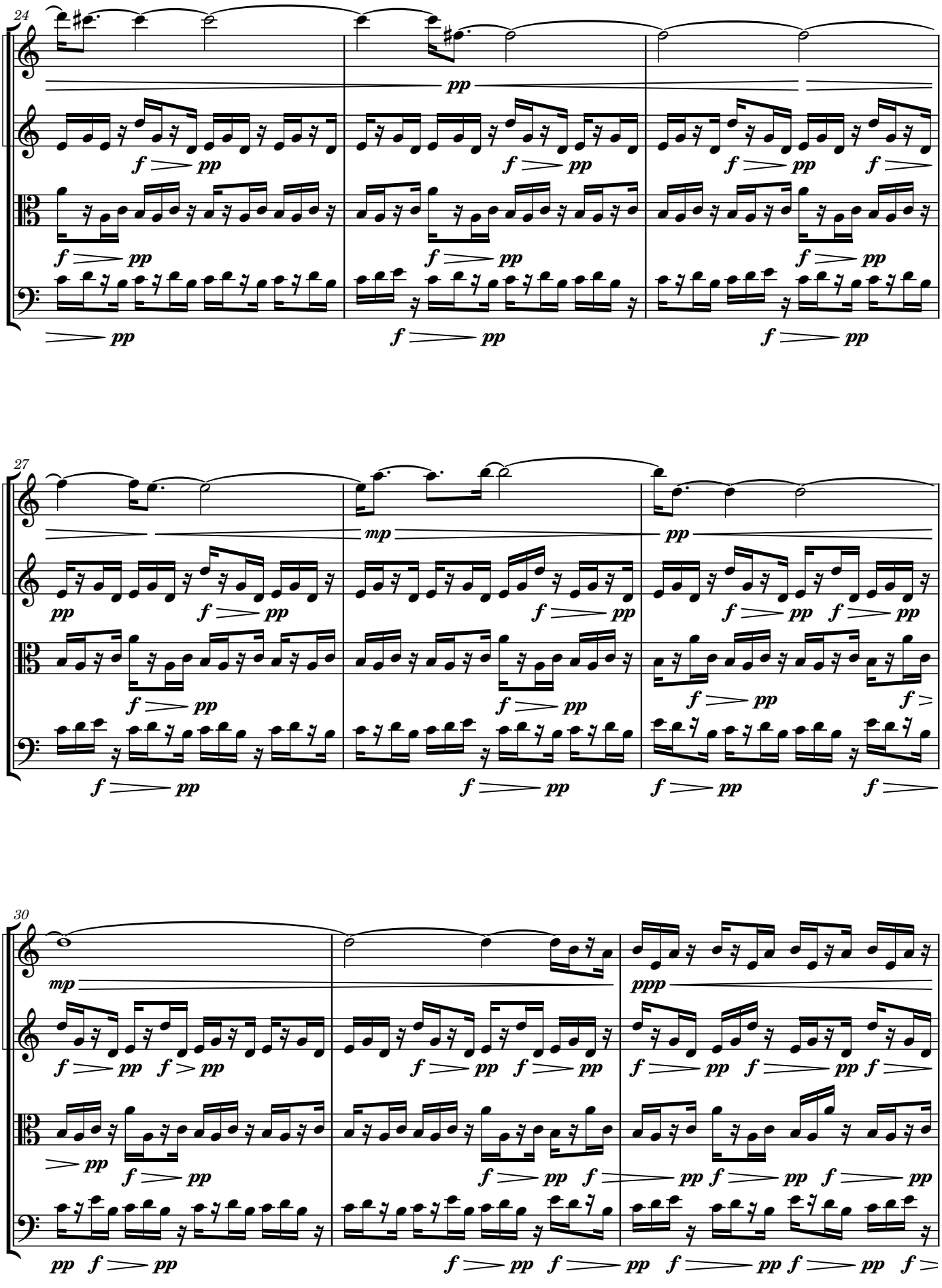


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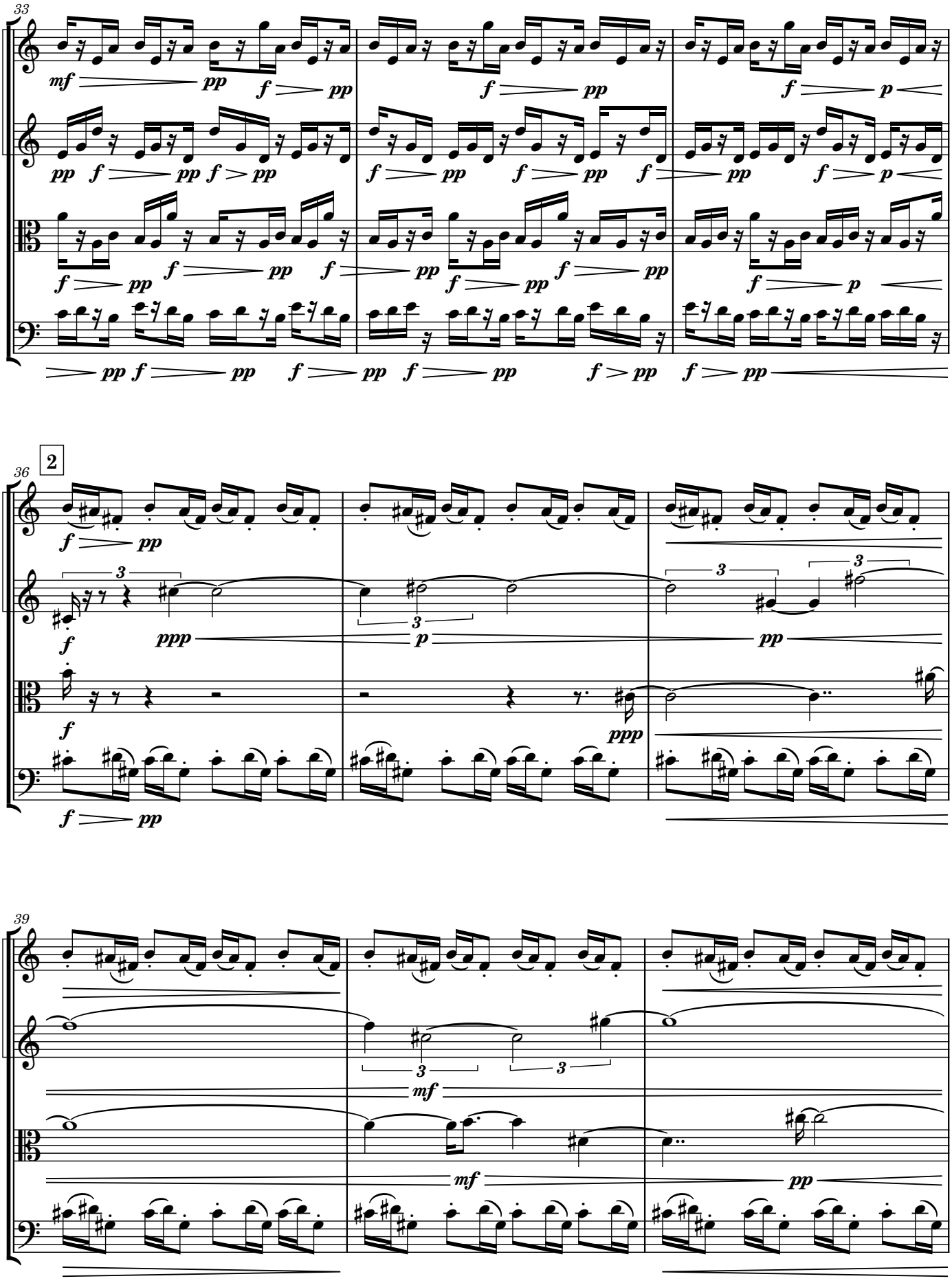

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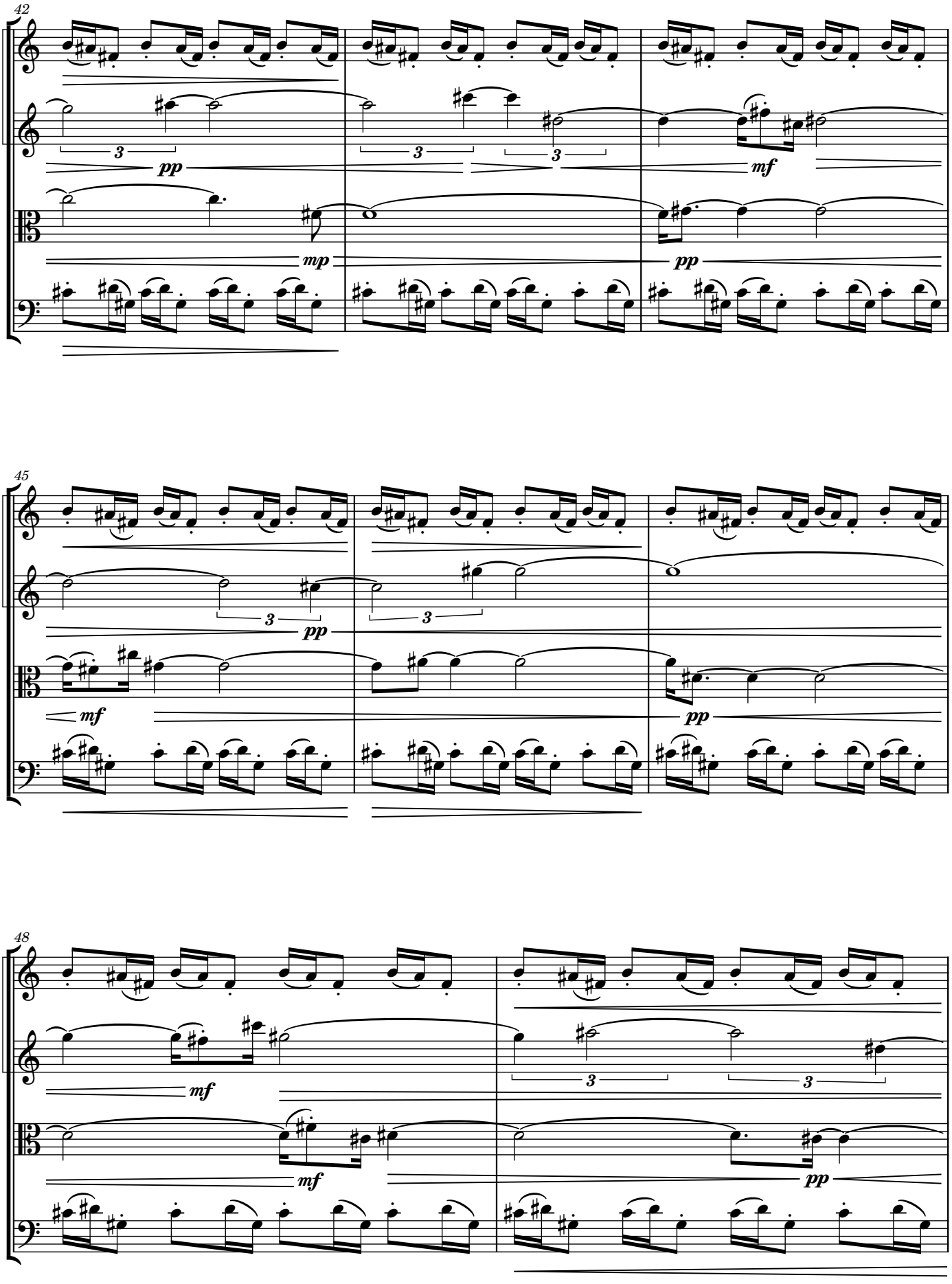

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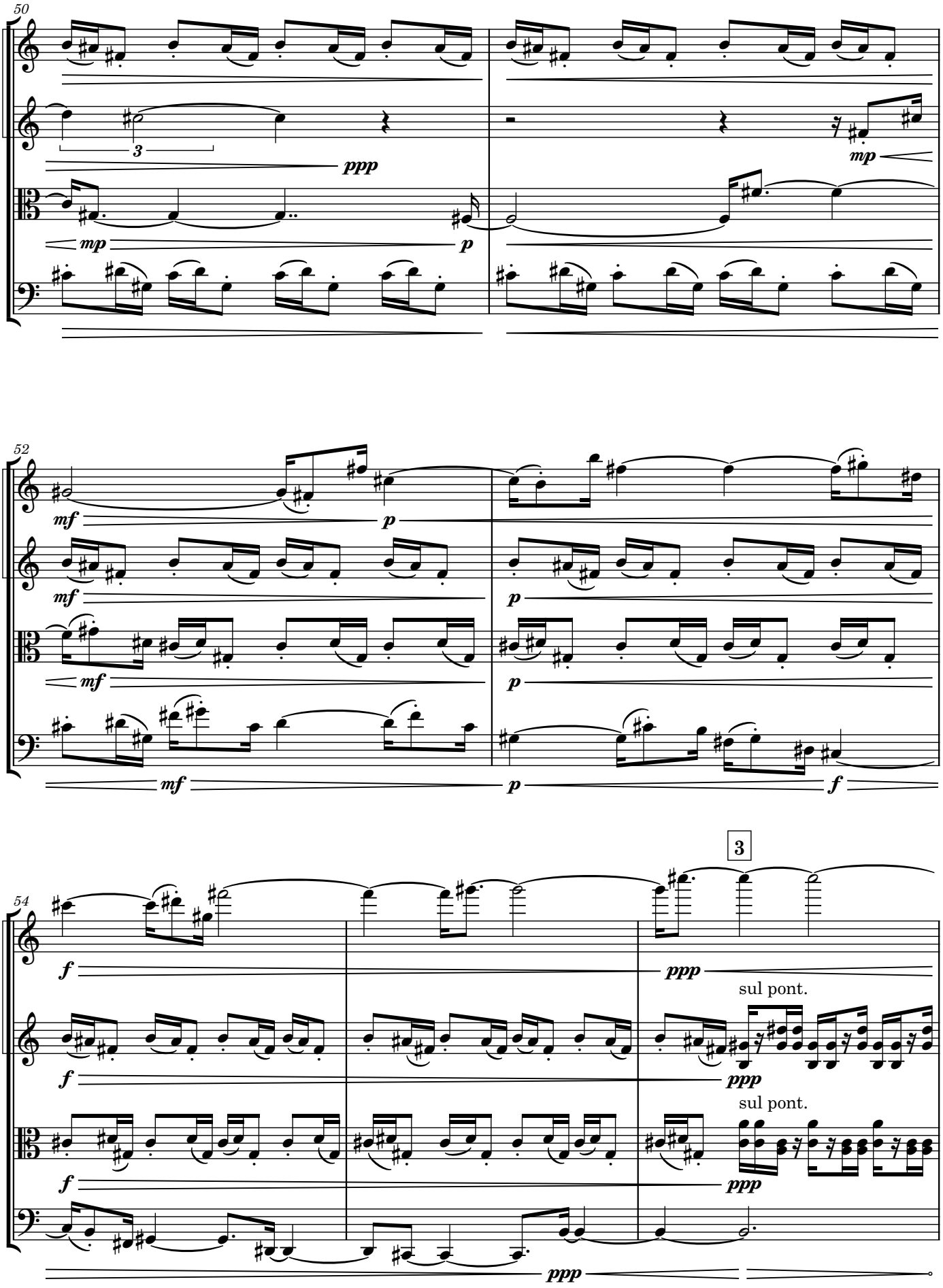

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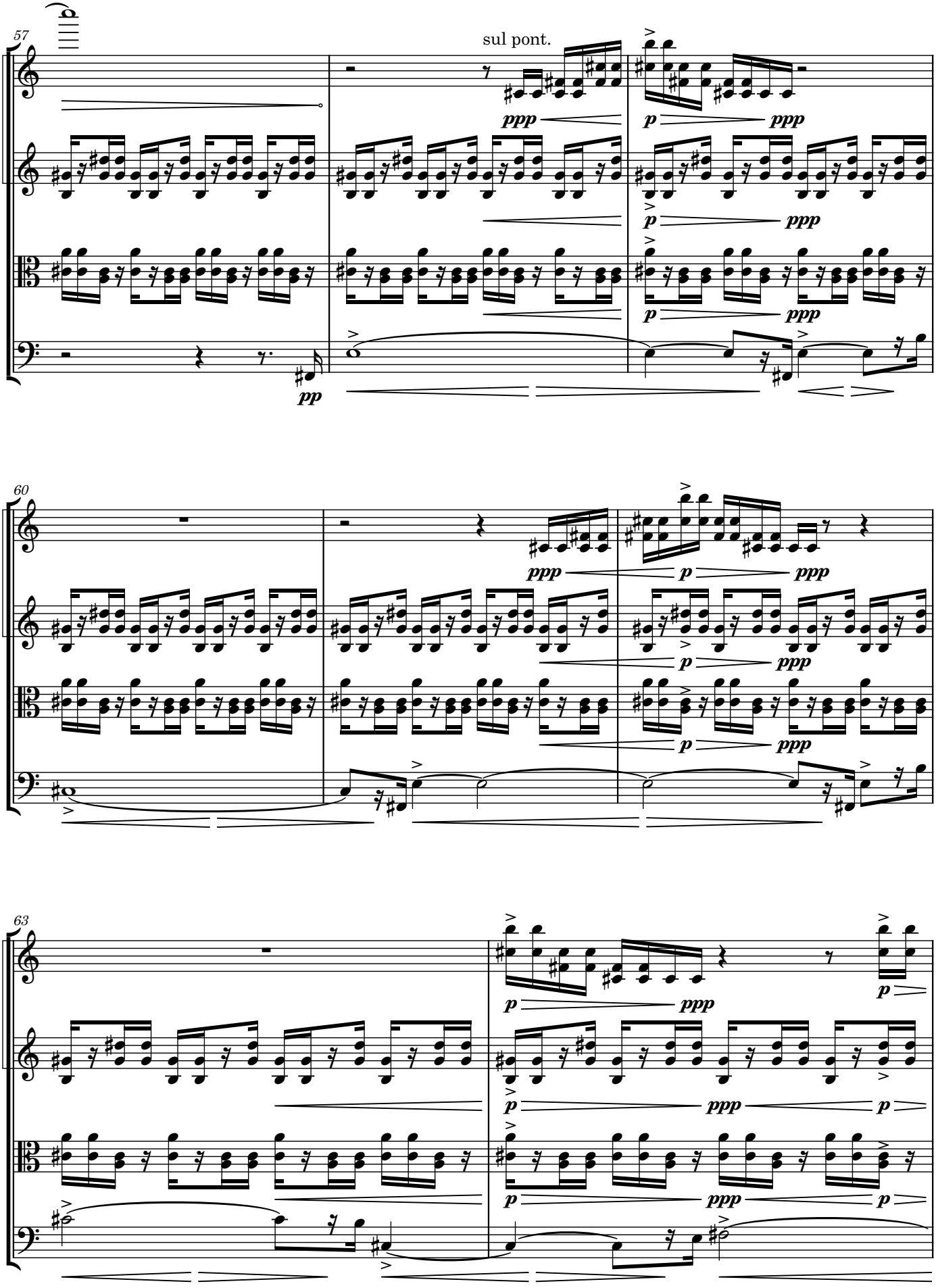

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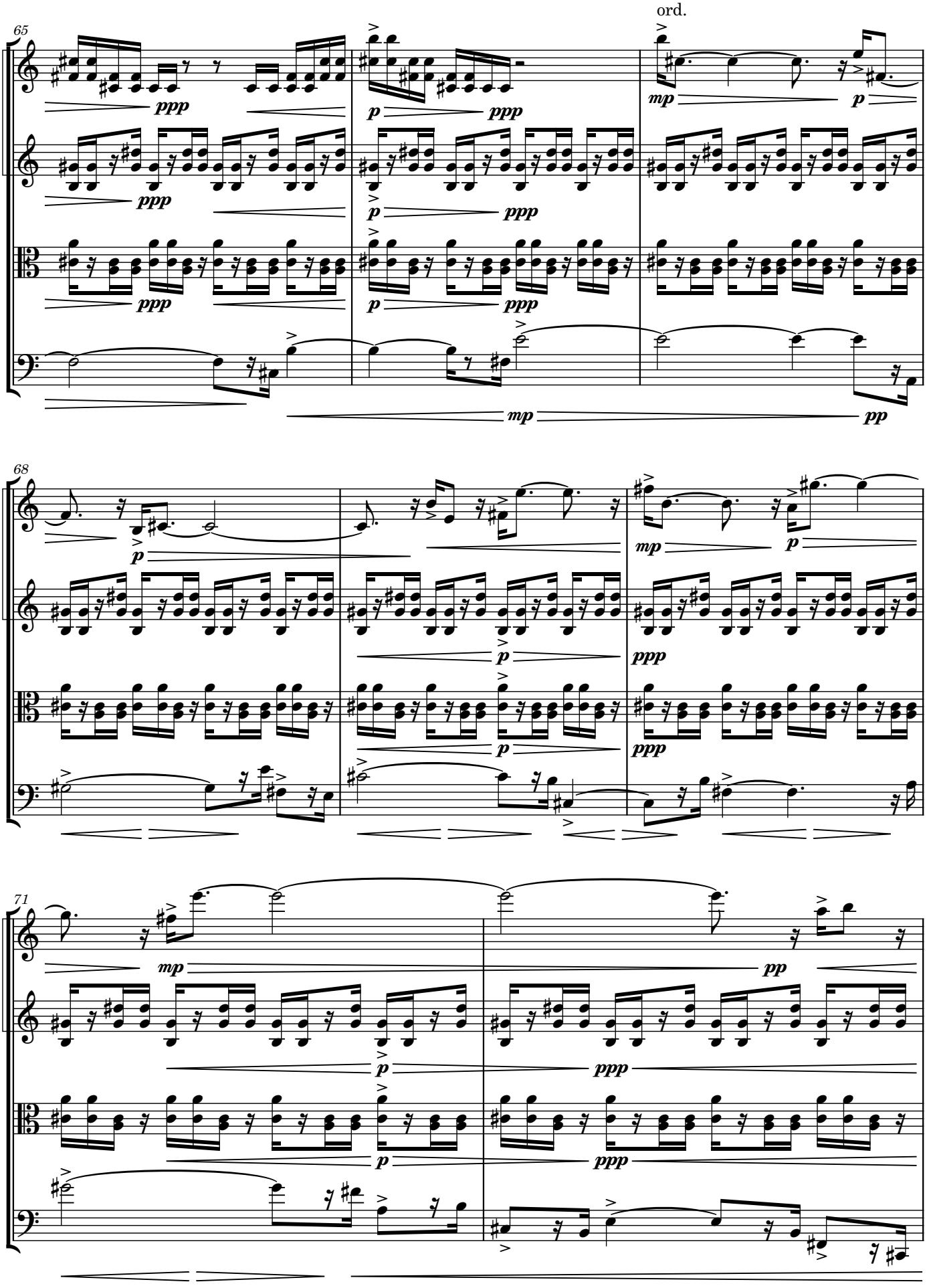

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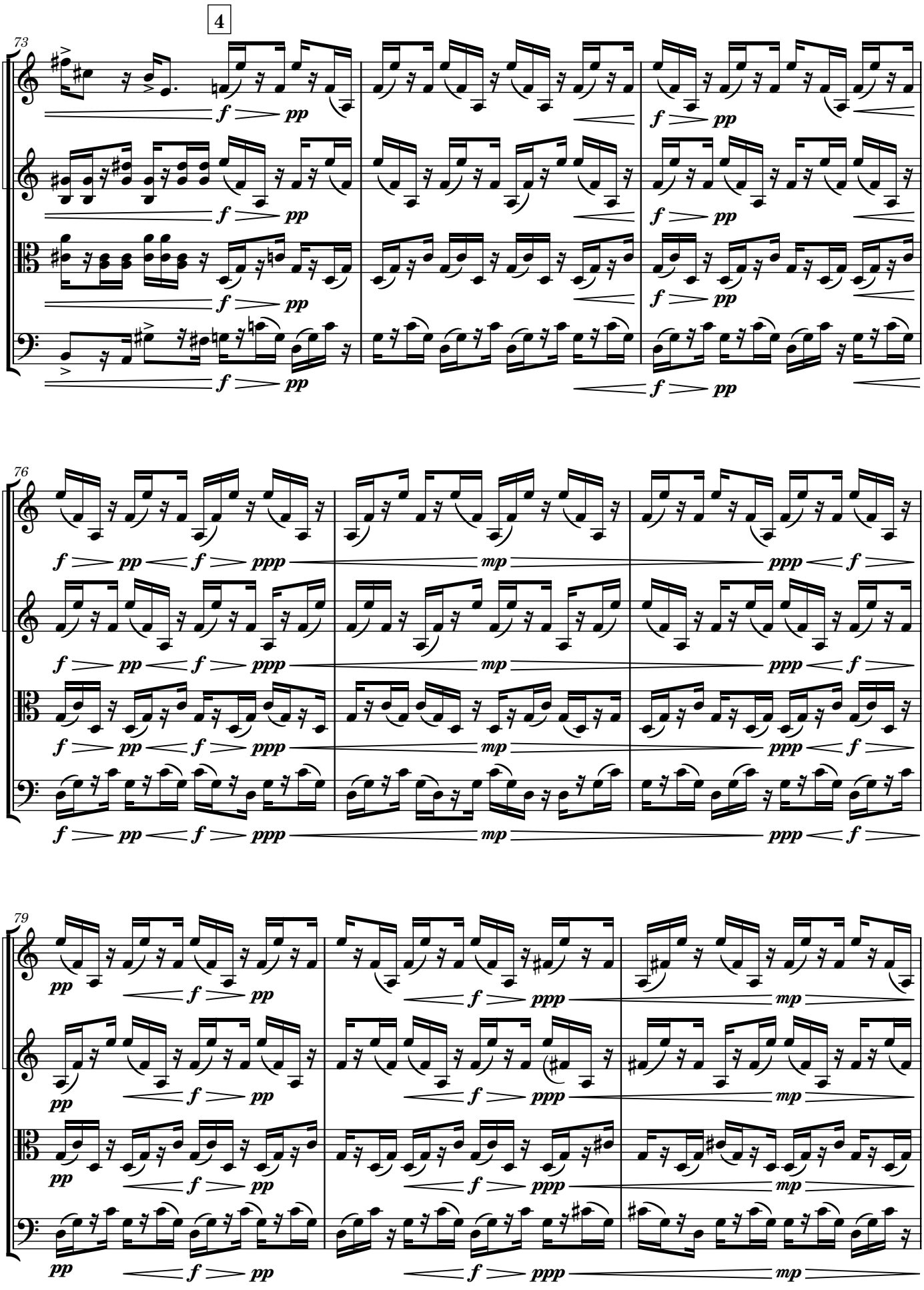

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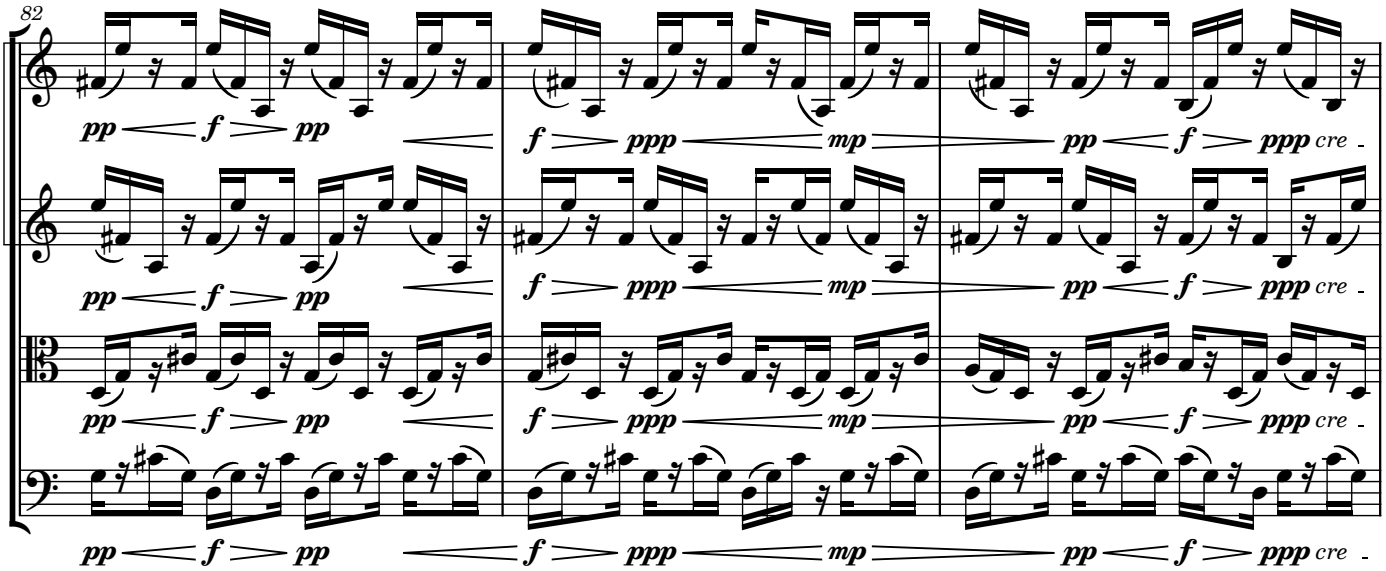

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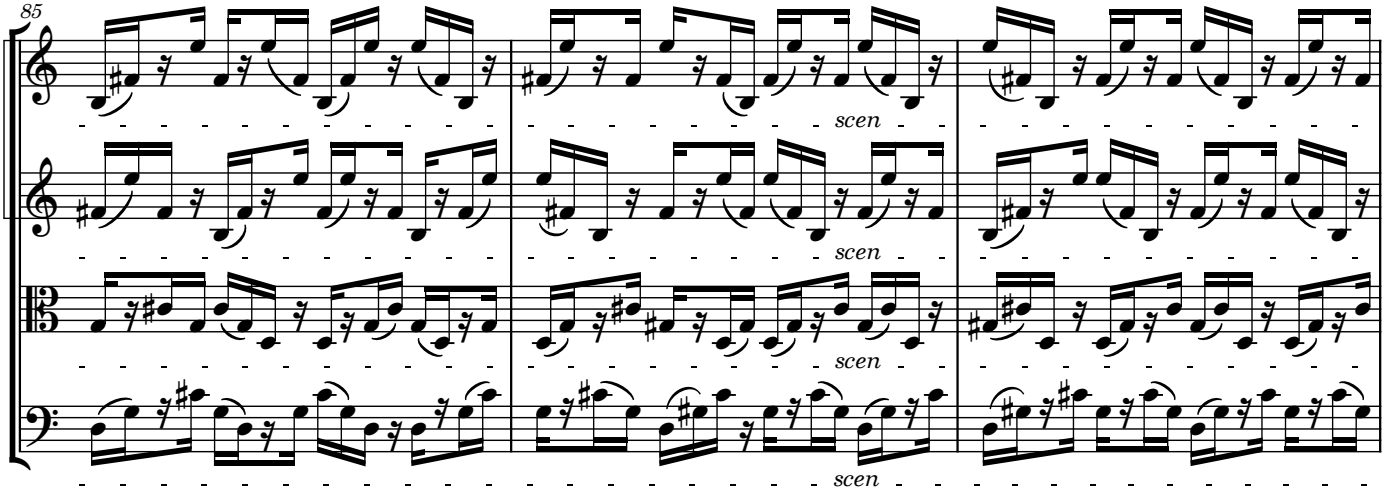

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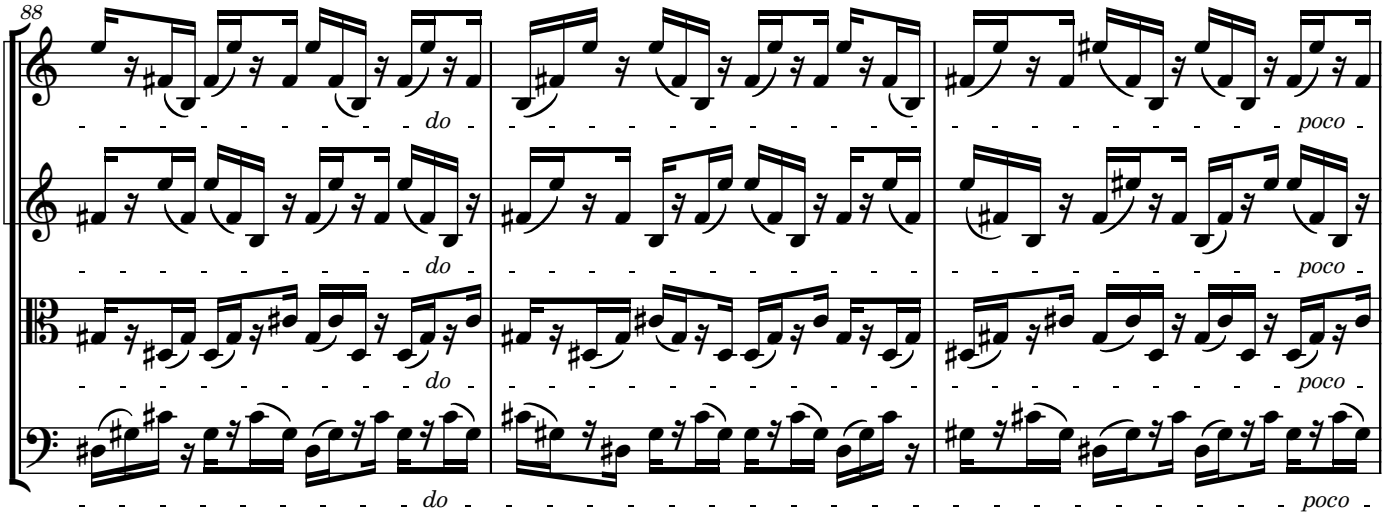

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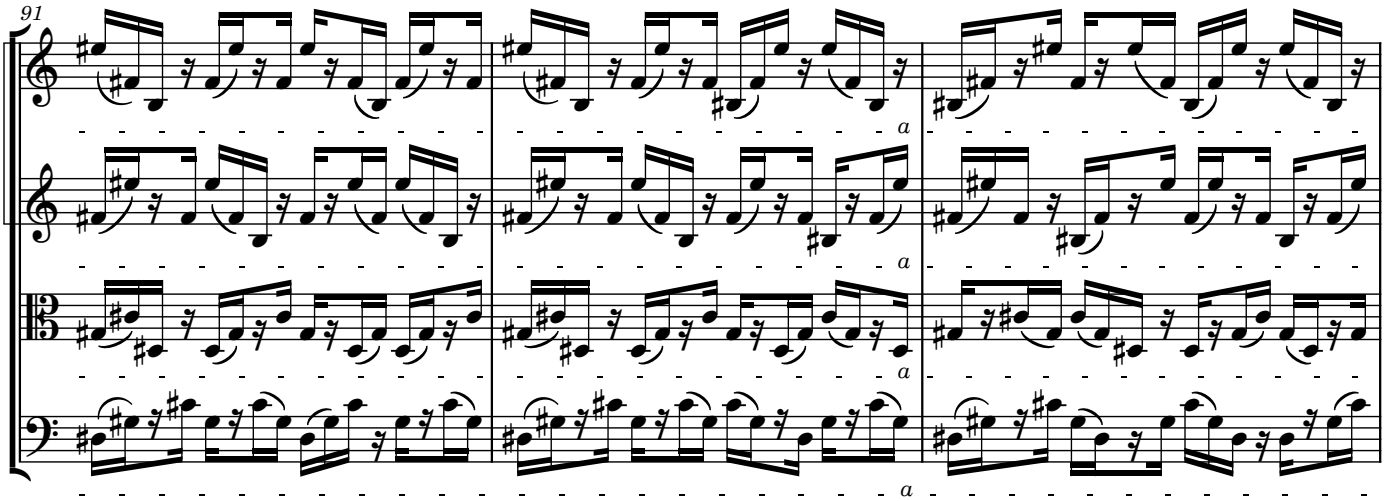

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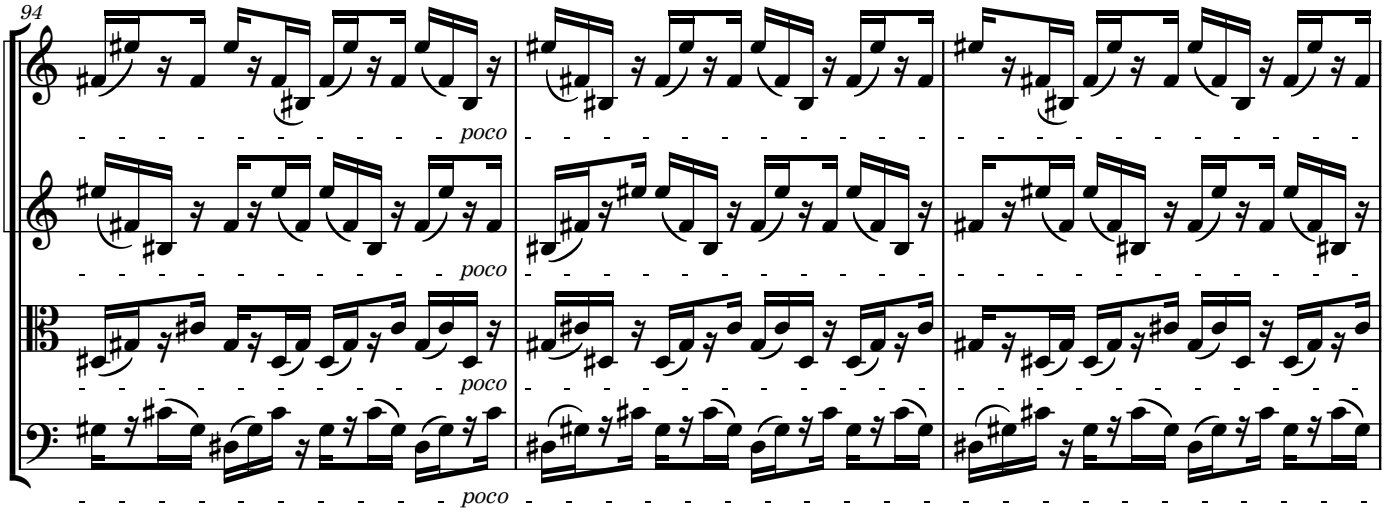

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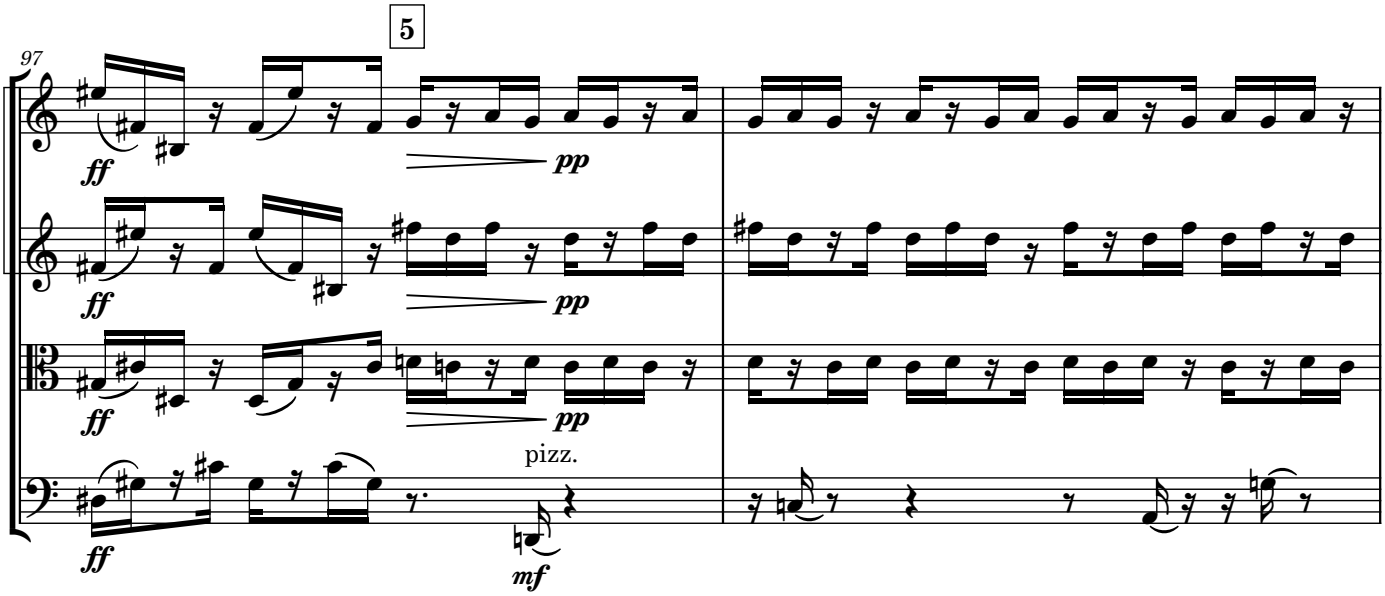

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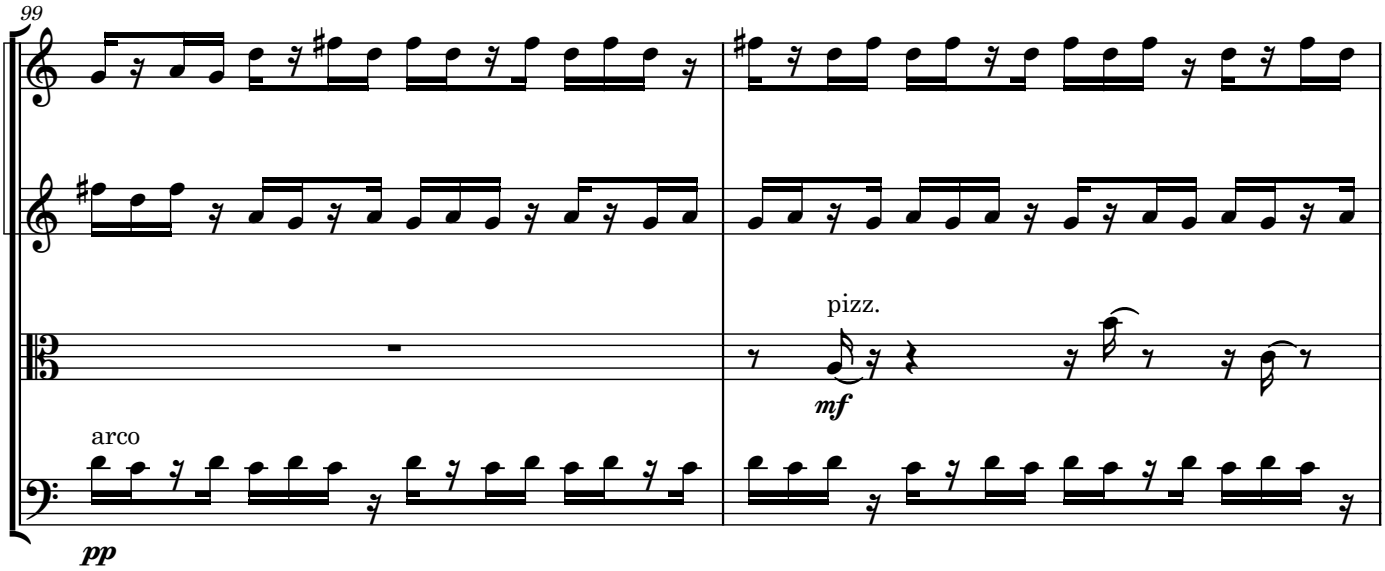

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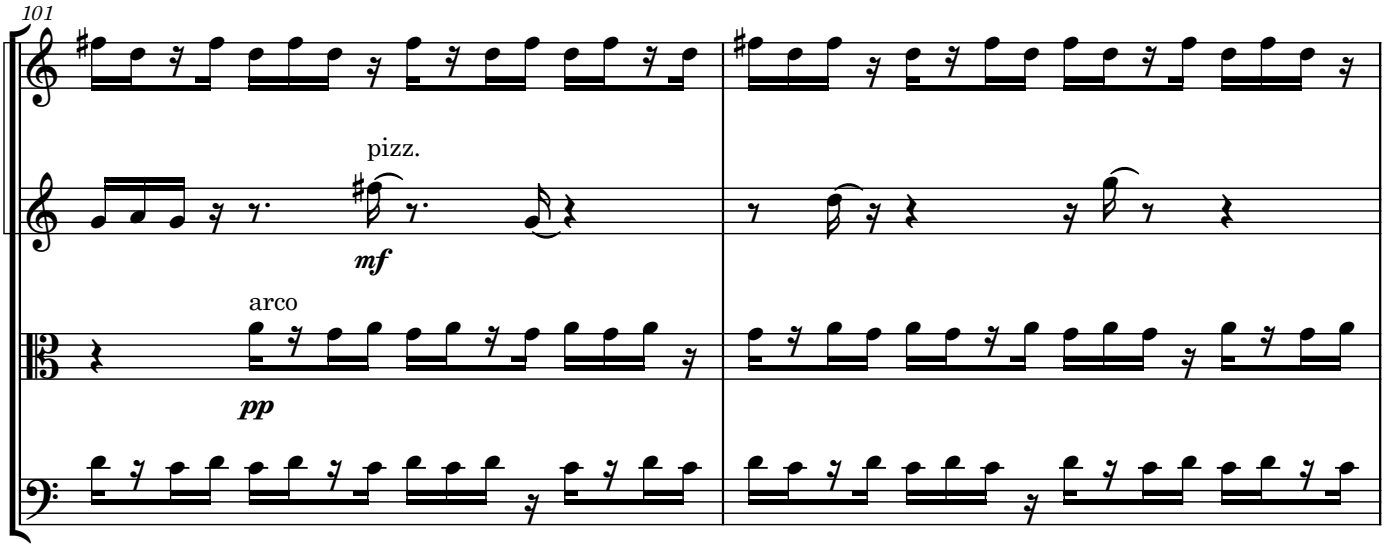

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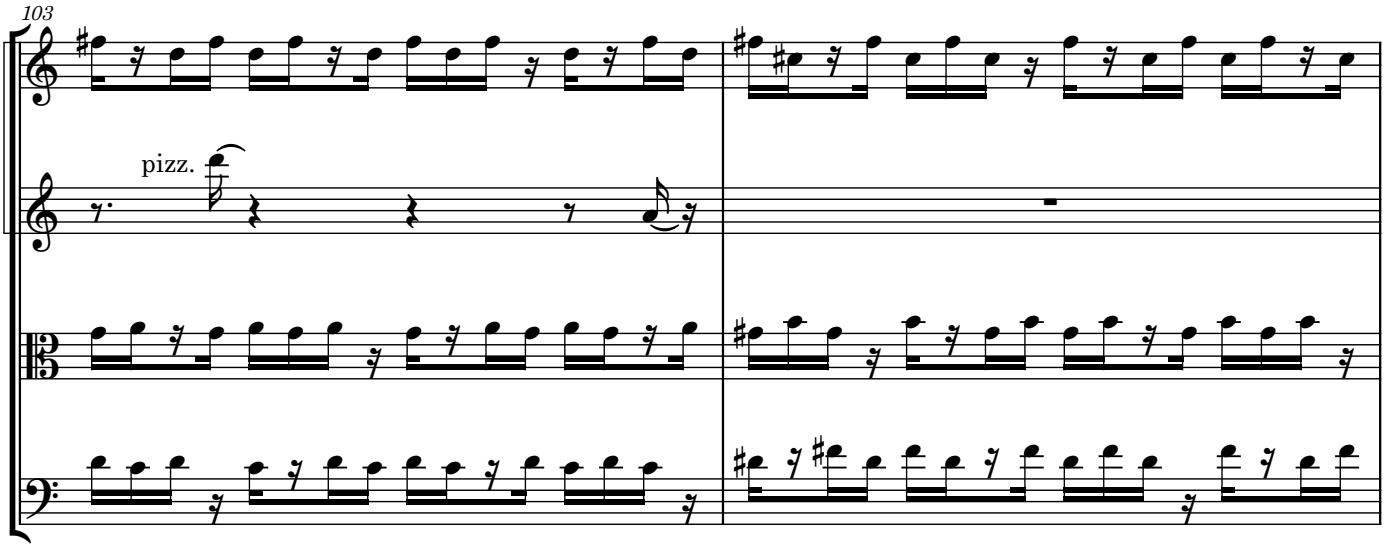

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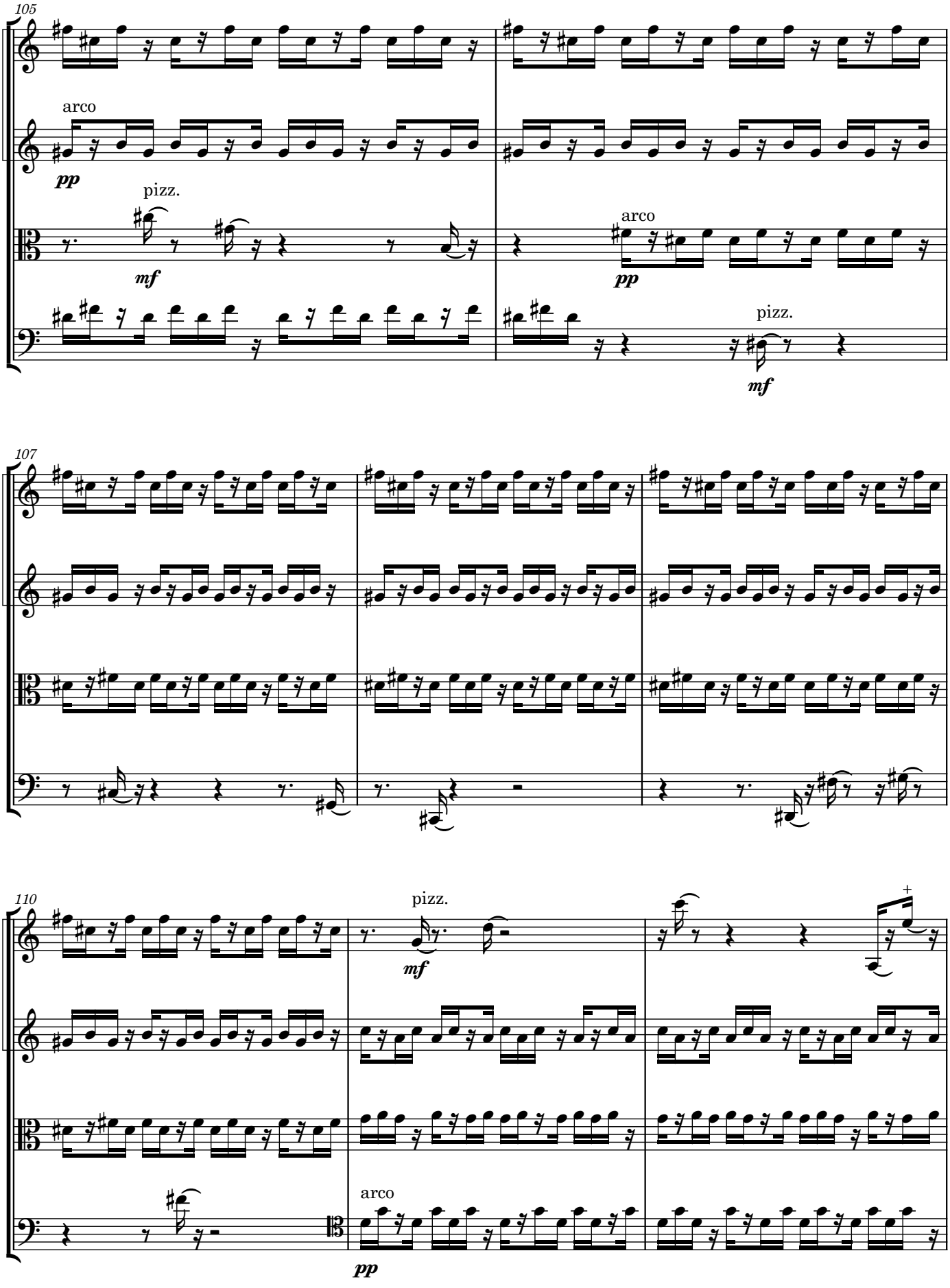

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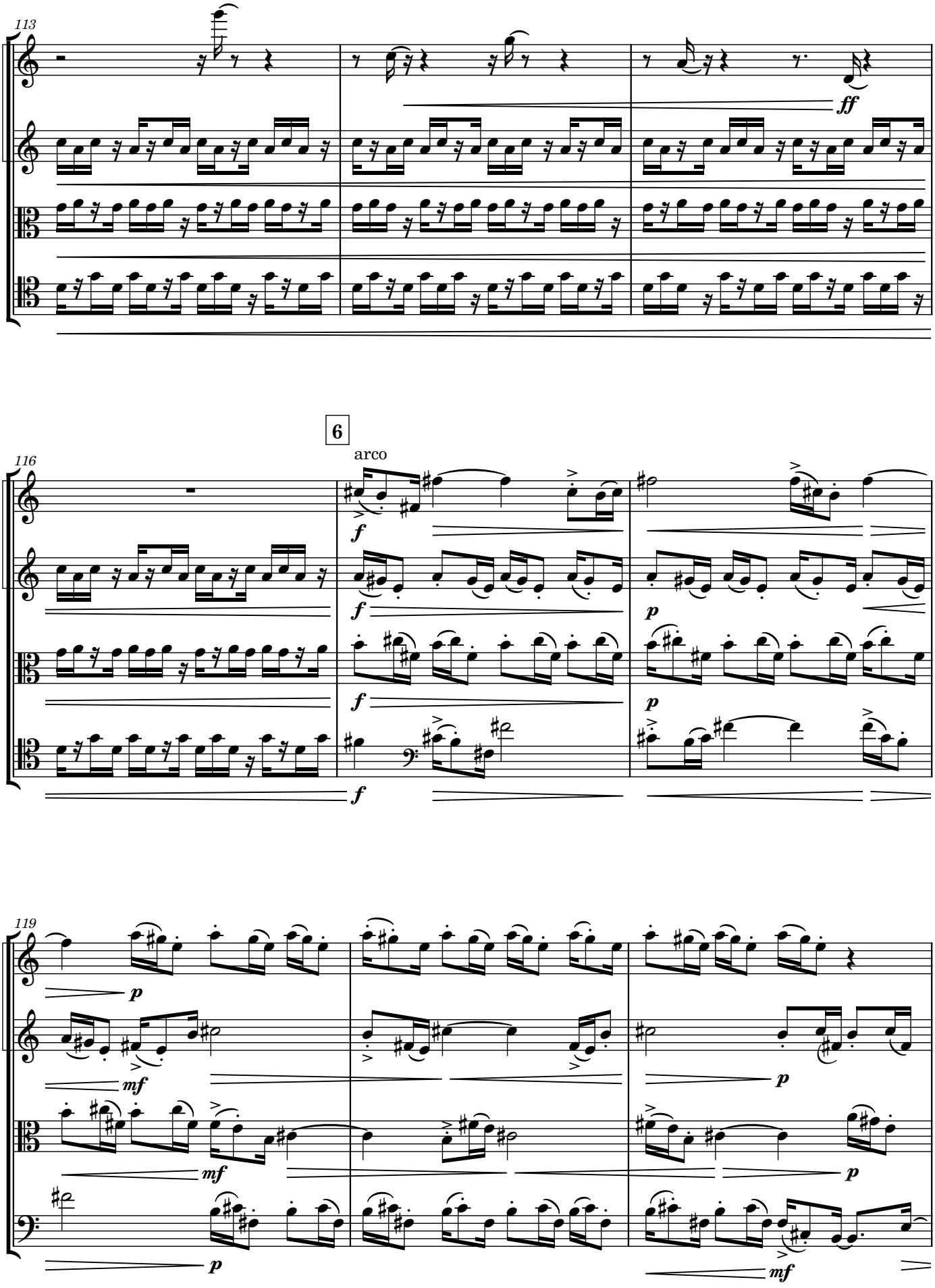

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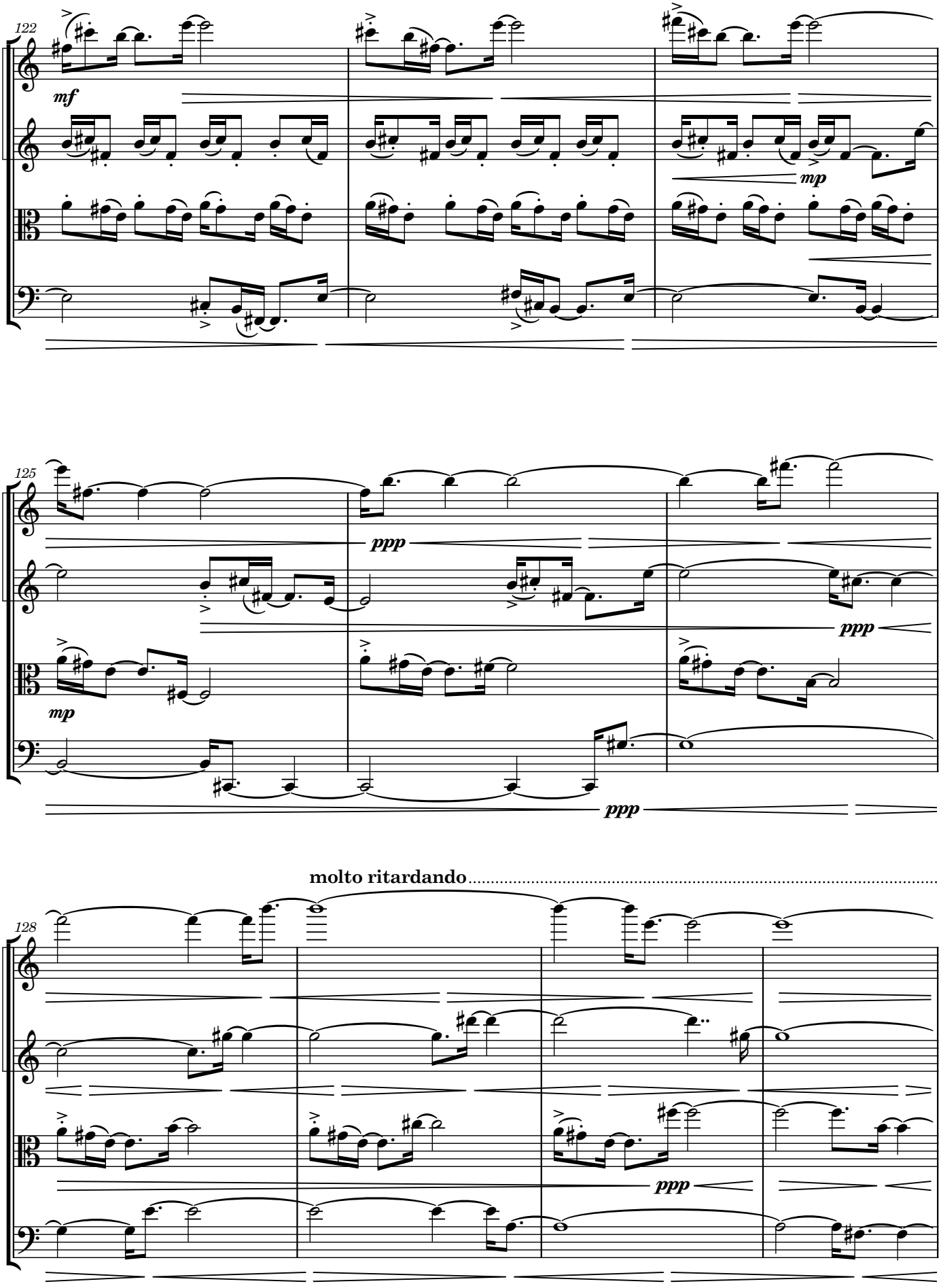

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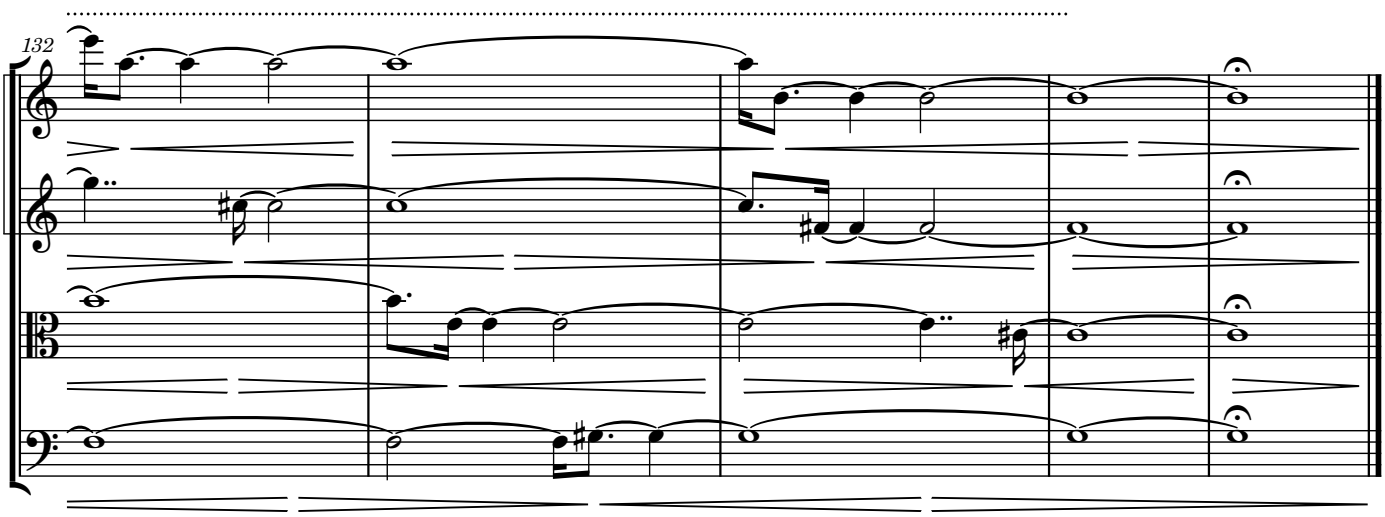

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