MERRY CHRISTMAS, STEPHEN LEACOCK
(a chamber opera for string quintet and three singers)

CONCERTINO
(for two pianos and percussion)

STRING QUARTET #1

an excerpt from
THE MASTER'S STROKE
(an opera for seven singers, chorus, and instrumental quintet)

by

NEIL ANDREW WEISENSEL

B. Mus., The University of Manitoba, 1989

FOUR MUSICAL COMPOSITIONS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF MUSIC

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(School of Music; Composition Programme)

We accept this thesis as conforming to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

April 1999

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School
~~Department~~ of Music (Composition

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date May 11/99

Abstract:

Four separate compositions make up this thesis.

The chamber opera *Merry Christmas Stephen Leacock* is conceived as a one-act opera for film. There are three characters, portrayed by soprano, tenor and baritone voices, and musical support is provided by a string quintet with the following configuration: two violins, viola, and two cellos. The text, from a Leacock short story, was adapted into a libretto by writer Pamela Post. Composition of the work started in September 1997 and was completed in December of that same year. Revisions were completed by June of 1998.

Total duration: ca. 18 min.

The instrumental piece, *Concertino*, was started in October 1996 and finished June 1997. The musical forces required for this piece are two pianos and two percussionists playing the following: vibraphone, marimba, xylophone, toms, snare drum, and crotales.

The piece is in four movements:
I. Commotion
II. Comfort
III. Carnaval
IV. Convergence/Confluence
V. Coda

Total duration: 18 min. 10 sec.

The composition of *String Quartet #1* (first movement of a set of variations on an original theme) was started in late February and completed on March 15, 1998. A theme from an earlier orchestral piece, *Suite for Orchestra* (1995), is developed in this quartet.

Total duration: 4 min. 30 sec.

The Master's Stroke is a 90-minute opera for seven main characters, SATB chorus, and chamber orchestra. The excerpt presented here is from Act I Scene I, and is scored for piano, cello, clarinet, violin and percussion. Composition commenced in earnest in January of 1999, and the score was completed in mid-April of that same year.

Total duration: 10 min.

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Acknowledgements:

There are a few groups and individuals without whom my compositions would have never seen the light of day. In particular I would like to thank my parents for their seemingly limitless supply of love and support; Pamela Post, for her love and encouragement, and for helping me always to see the big picture; Martha Lou (Louie) Henley, for her enthusiasm in all things musical and her love of people; the faculty at UBC for the professional performance opportunities I was afforded while there, and especially Steve Chatman and Keith Hamel, for their fine instruction and encouragement.

Merry Christmas Stephen Leacock was presented in Vancouver by Current Sound Opera(ations) in December 1997 with a grant from the Hamber Foundation. Many thanks to Leslie and Rosalind Beale-Dala for their talent and efforts.

Concertino, for two pianos and percussion, was commissioned by The Hammerhead Consort, and funding for the composition was provided by a grant from the Manitoba Arts Council. The piece had its premiere on June 21st, 1997 in Edmonton. Swedish Radio Imports released a CD recording of *Concertino* in February of 1999 as part of a larger Hammerhead Consort recording.

My *String Quartet #1* was given a public presentation at the University of British Columbia School of Music by the Arditti Quartet on March 19, 1998.

The Vancouver Opera Guild provided the funding for me to compose the excerpt from *The Master's Stroke* by way of their Career Development Grant in 1995. The Martha Lou Henley Foundation funded Michael Cavanagh in his development of the libretto. Vancouver New Music performed the excerpt as part of a fully-staged production on May 6th, 1999 at Vancouver's Christ Church Cathedral.

Neil Weisensel, May 10, 1999

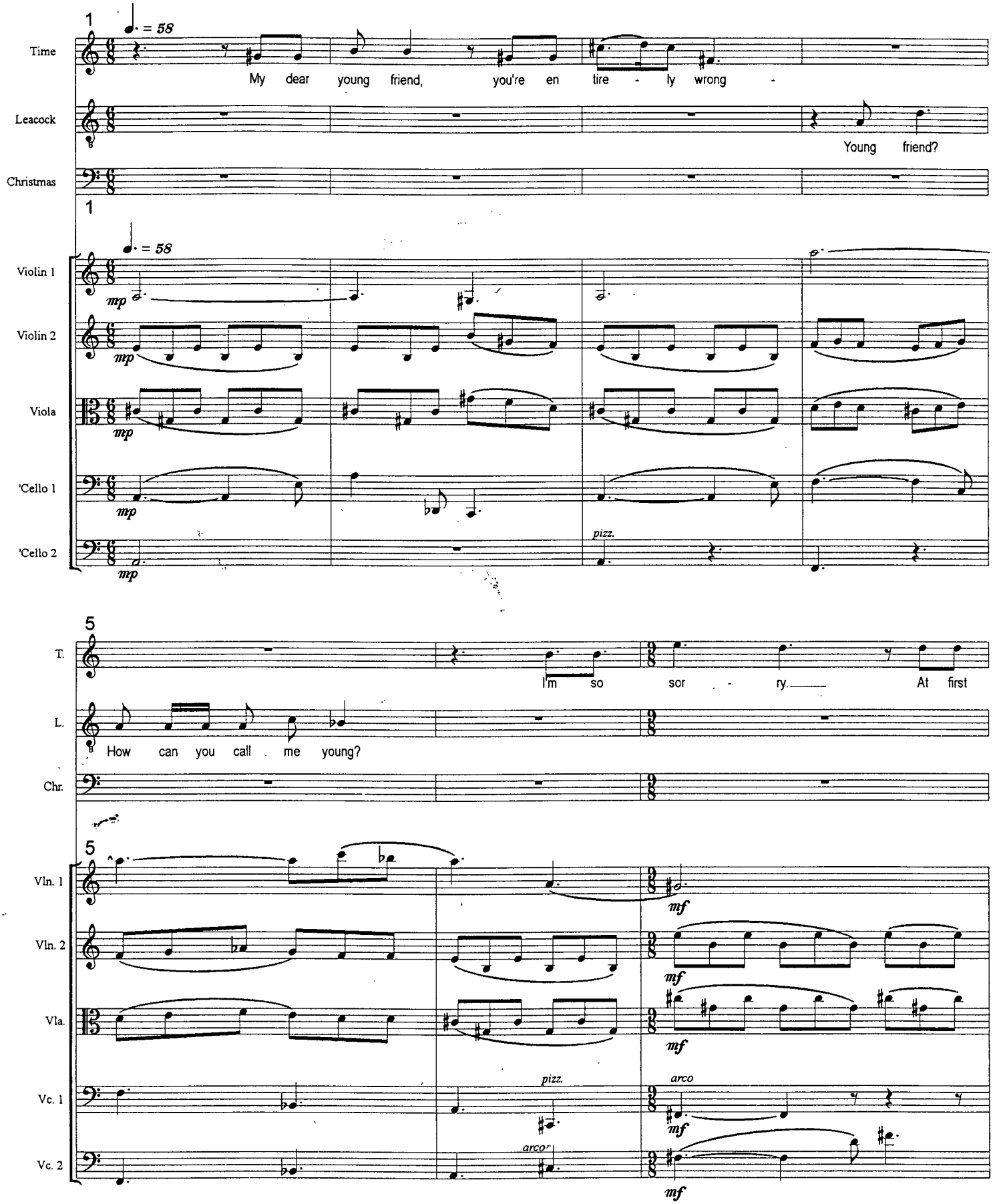
Adaptation: Dwayne Beaver
Libretto:Pamela Post

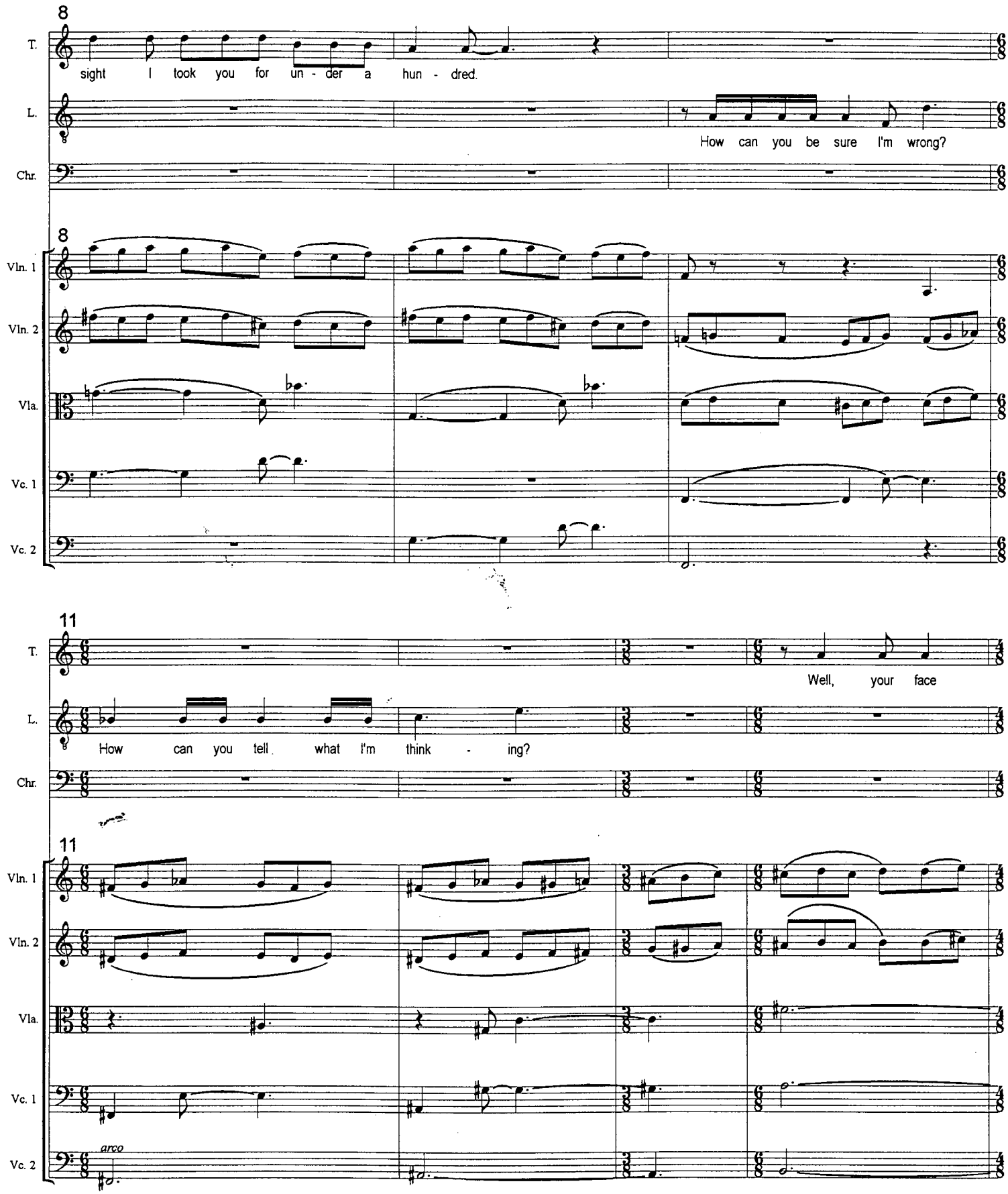
Merry Christmas Stephen Leacock

(based on a Stephen Leacock short story)

Draft 2 Nov. 21/98

Music: Neil Weisensel





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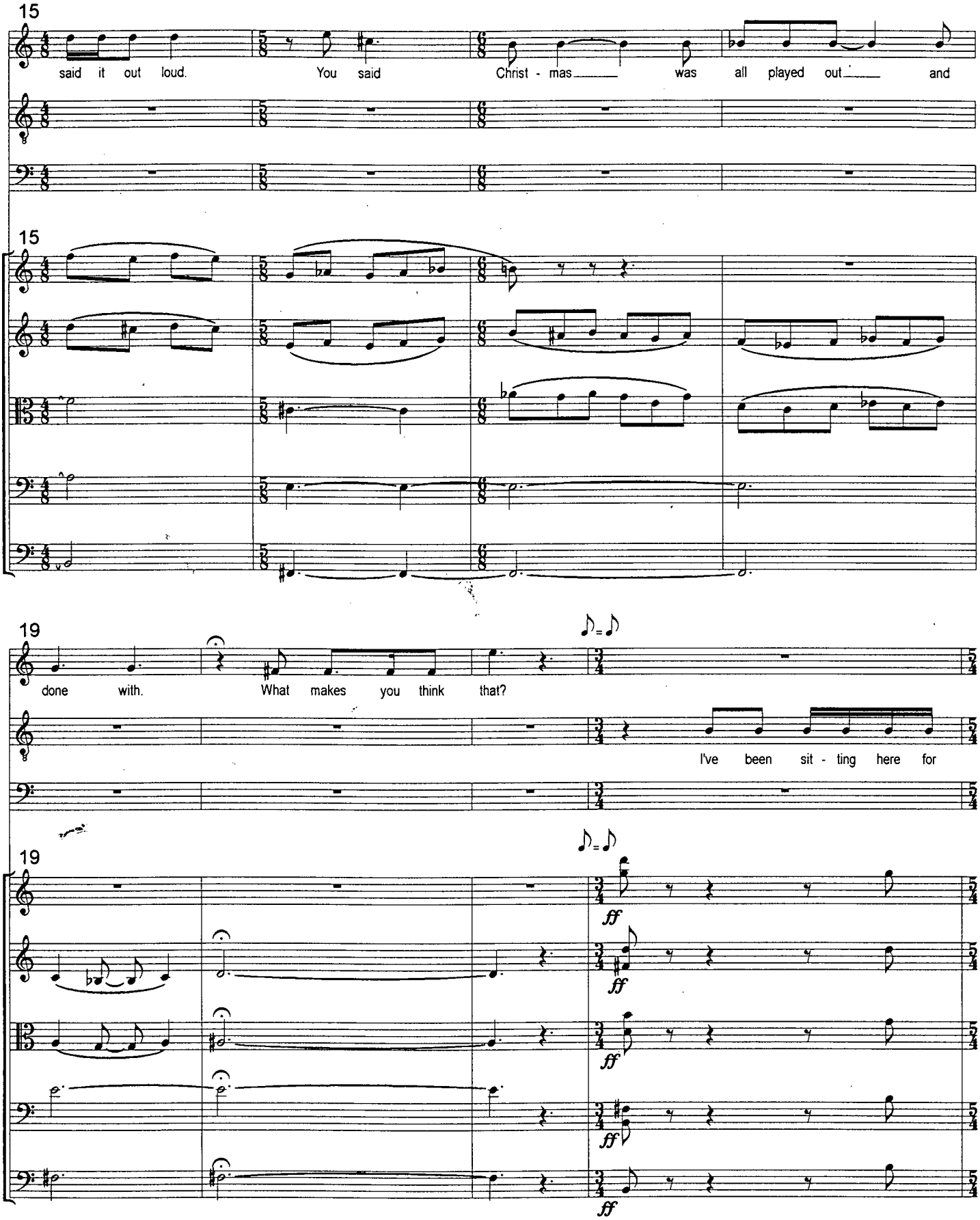

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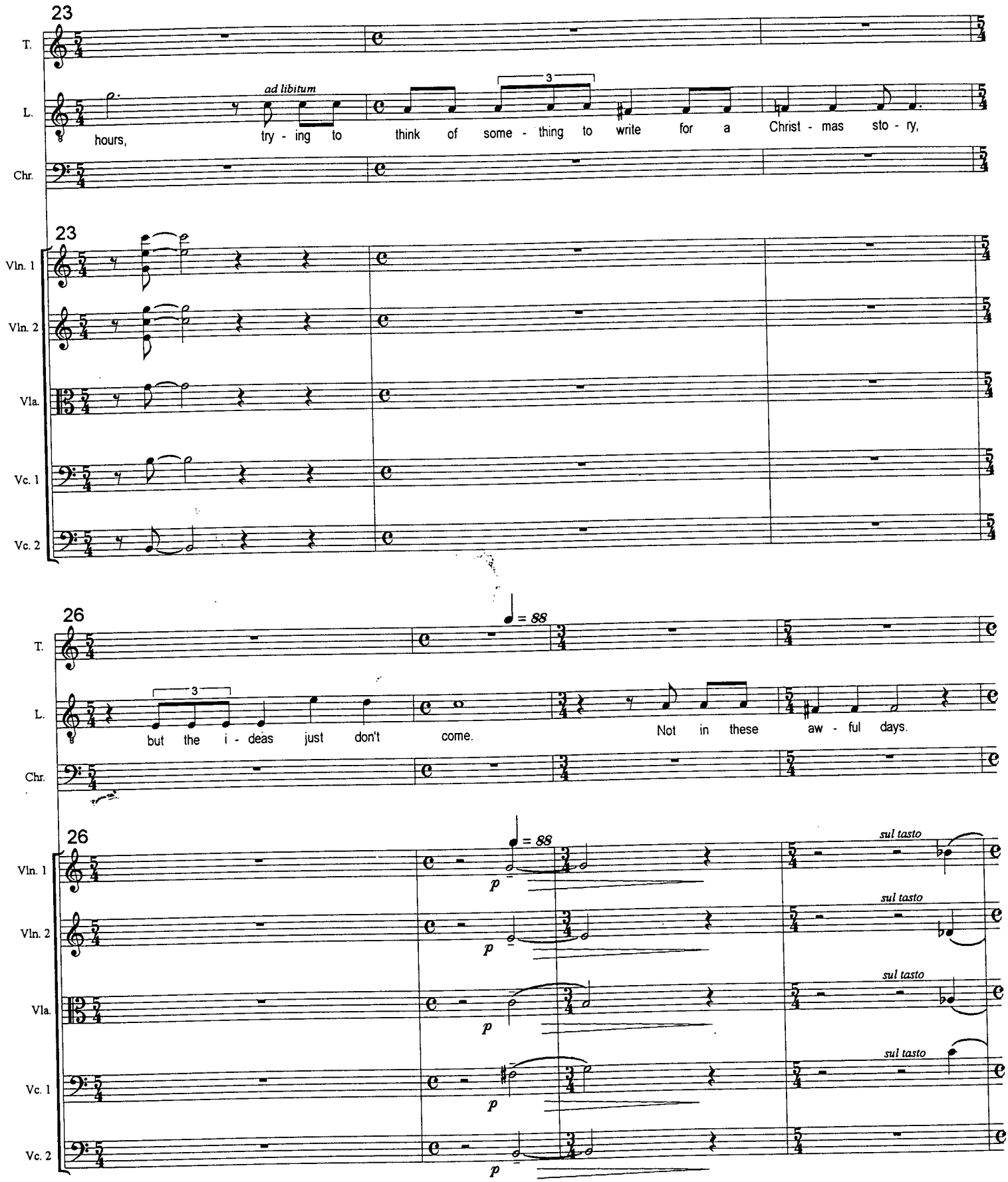

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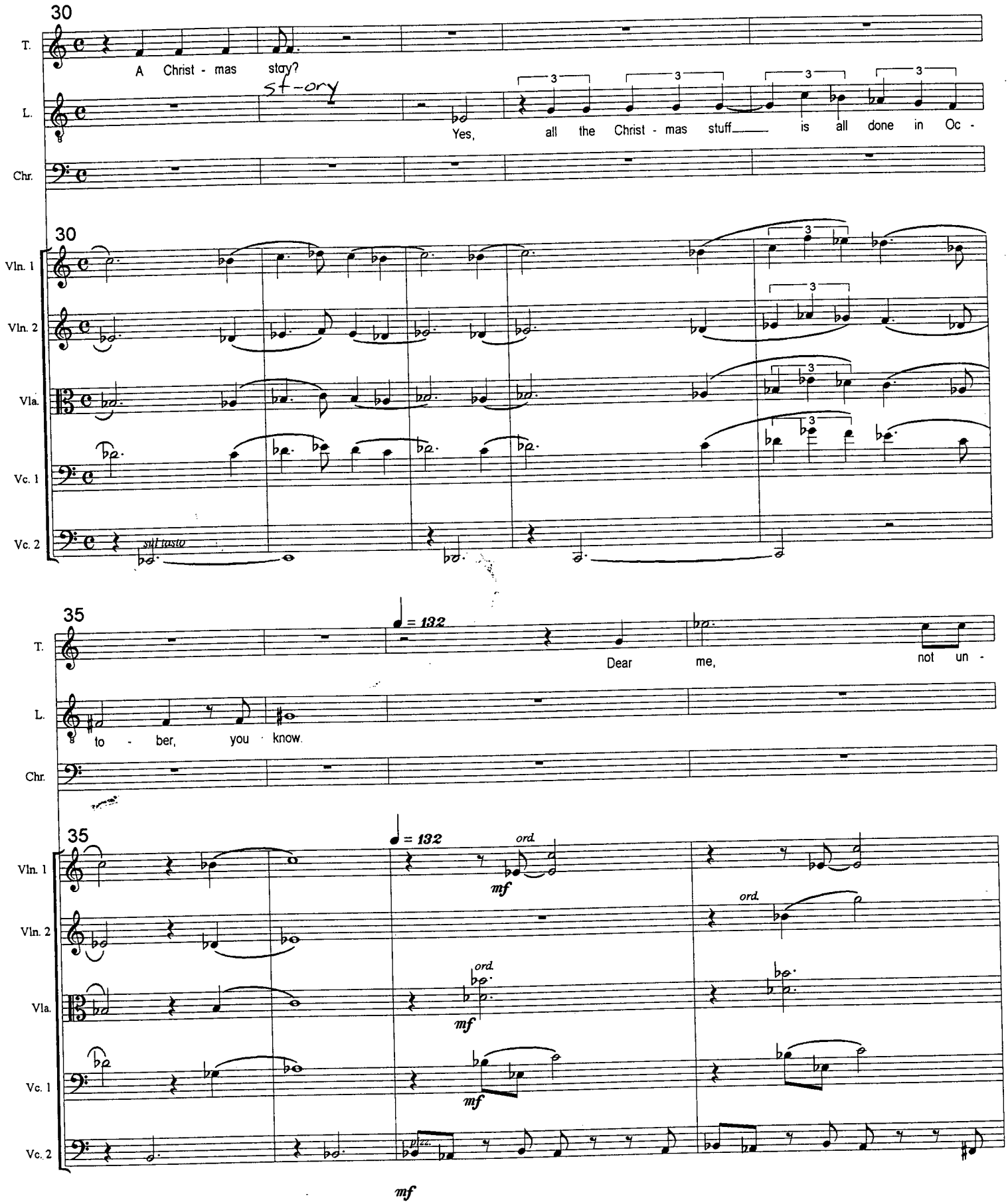

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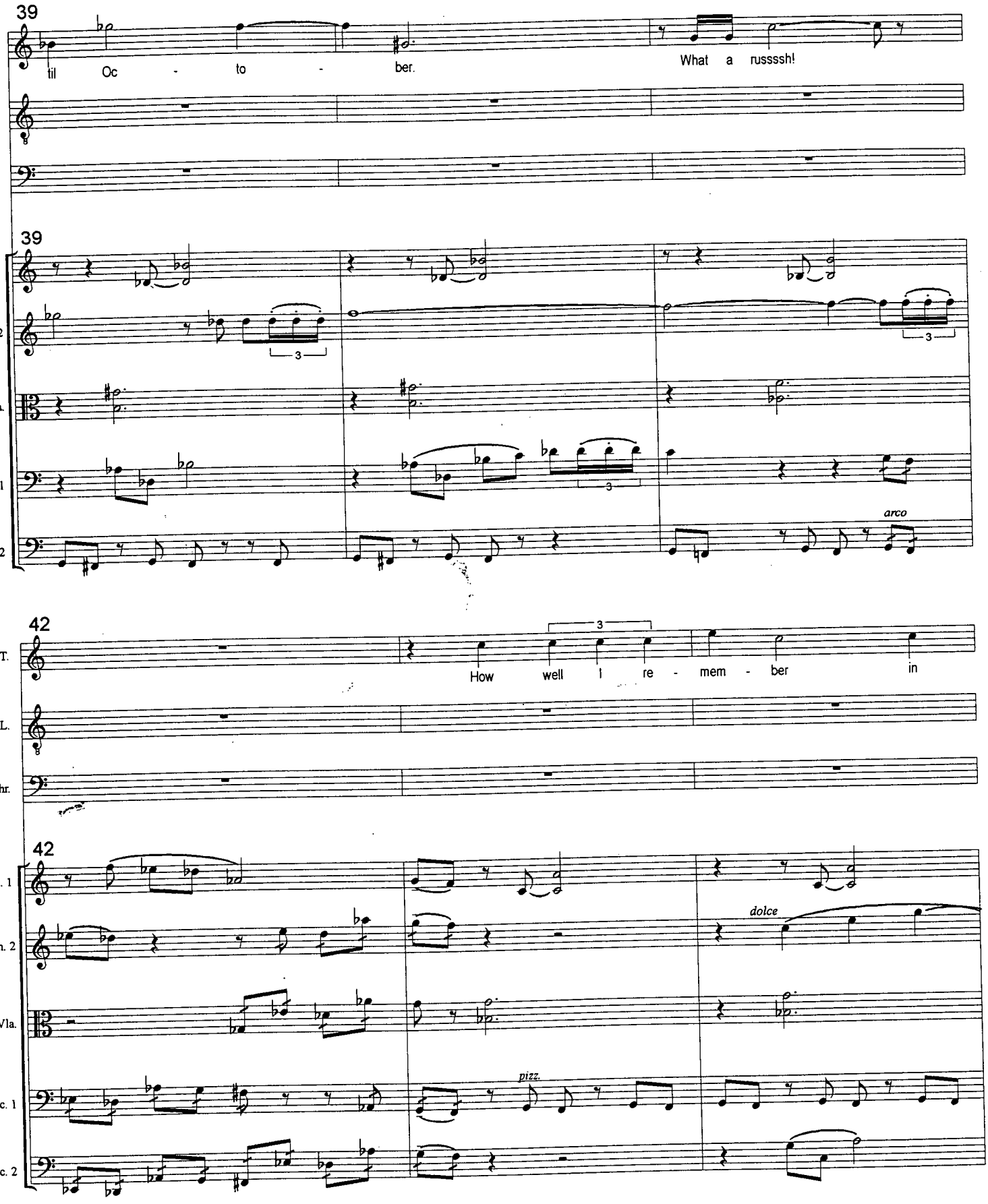

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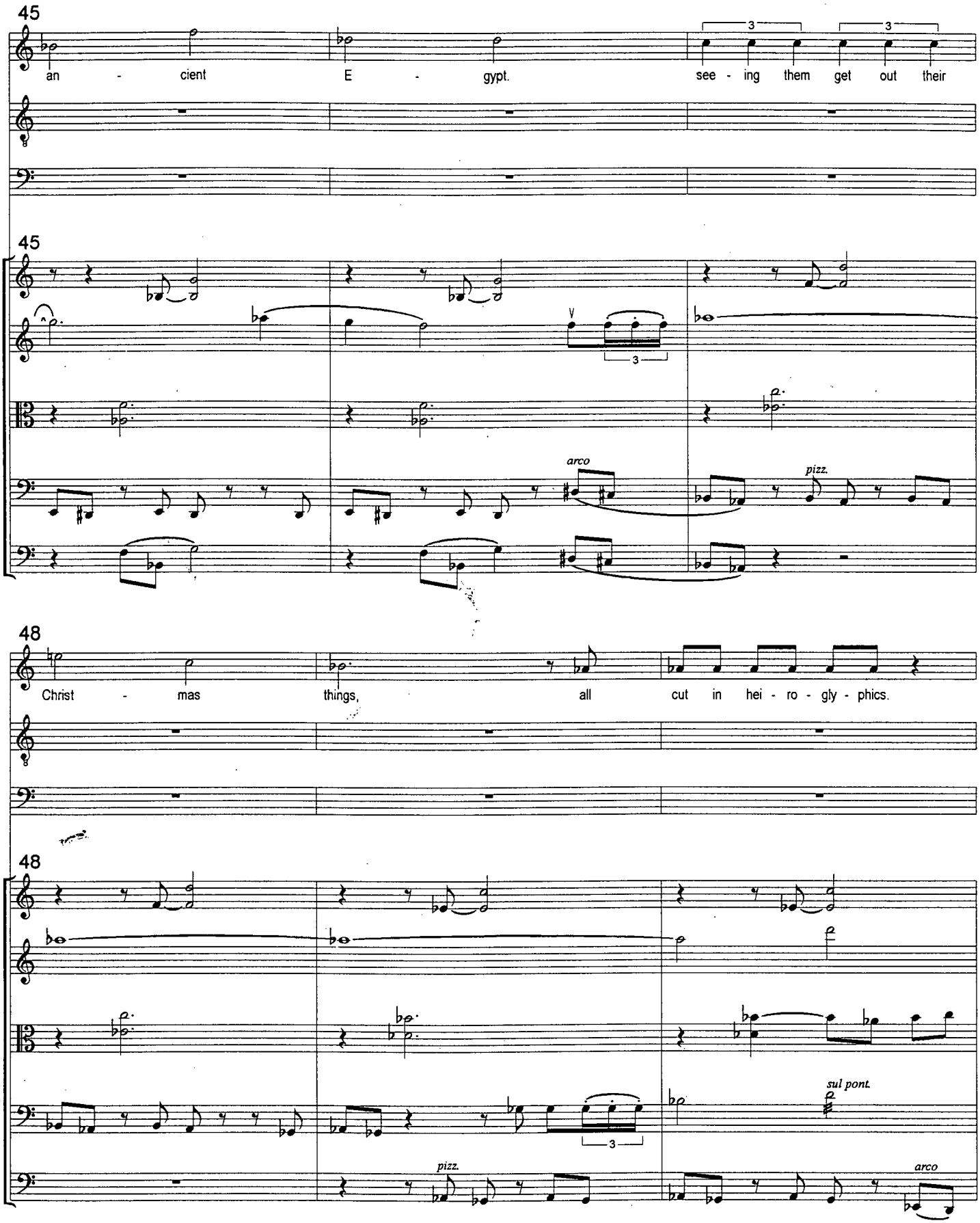

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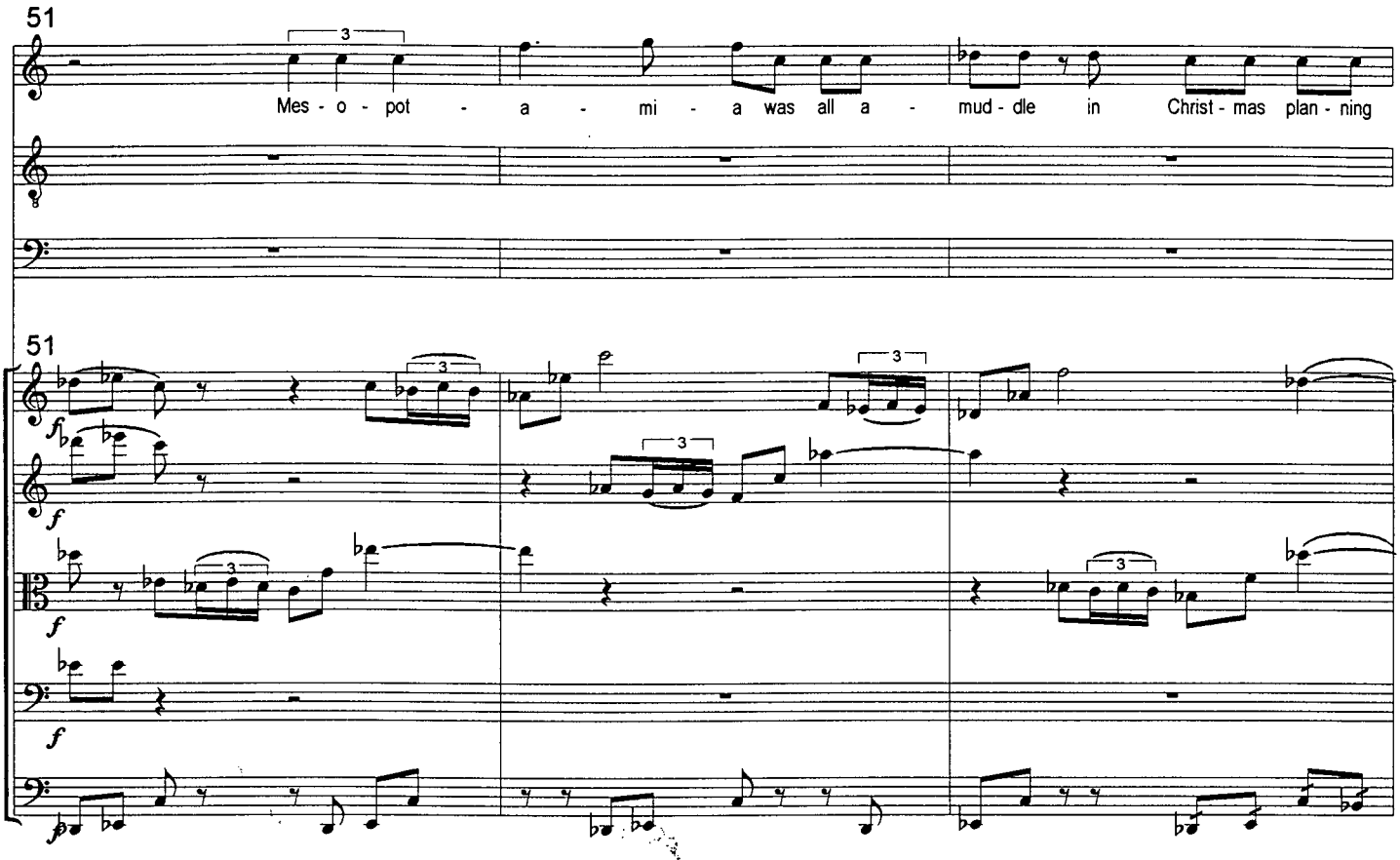

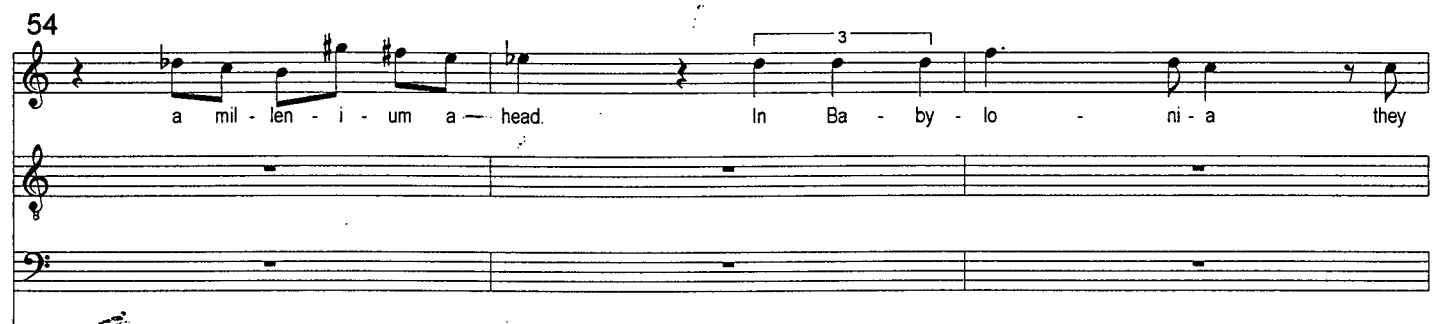

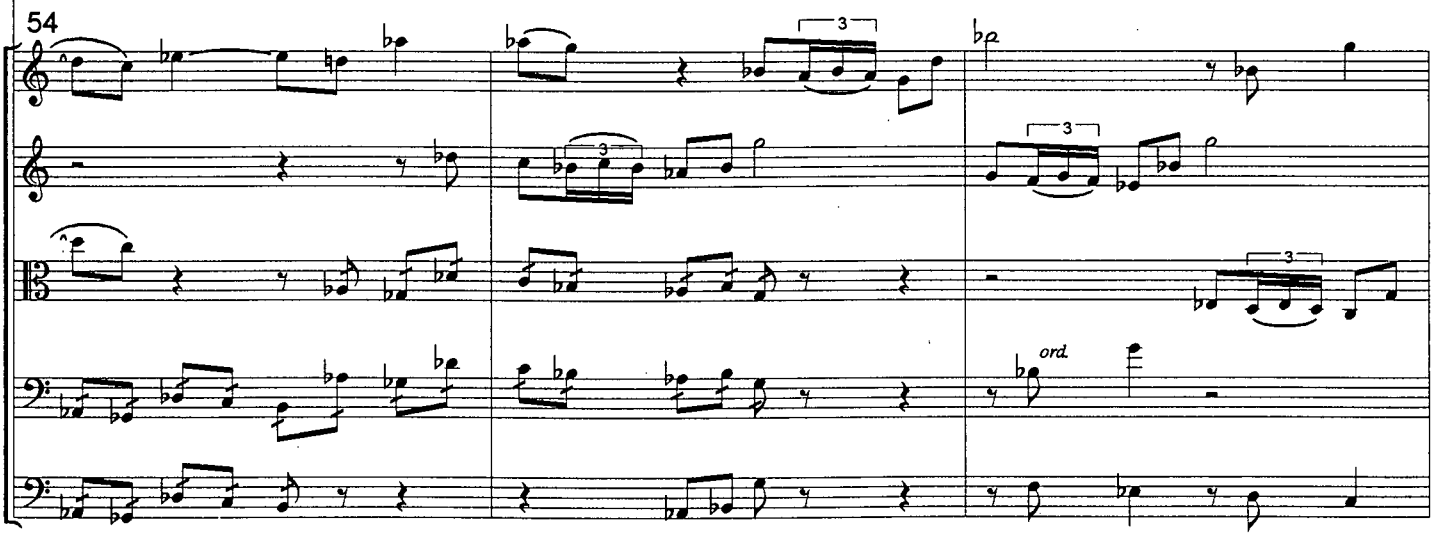

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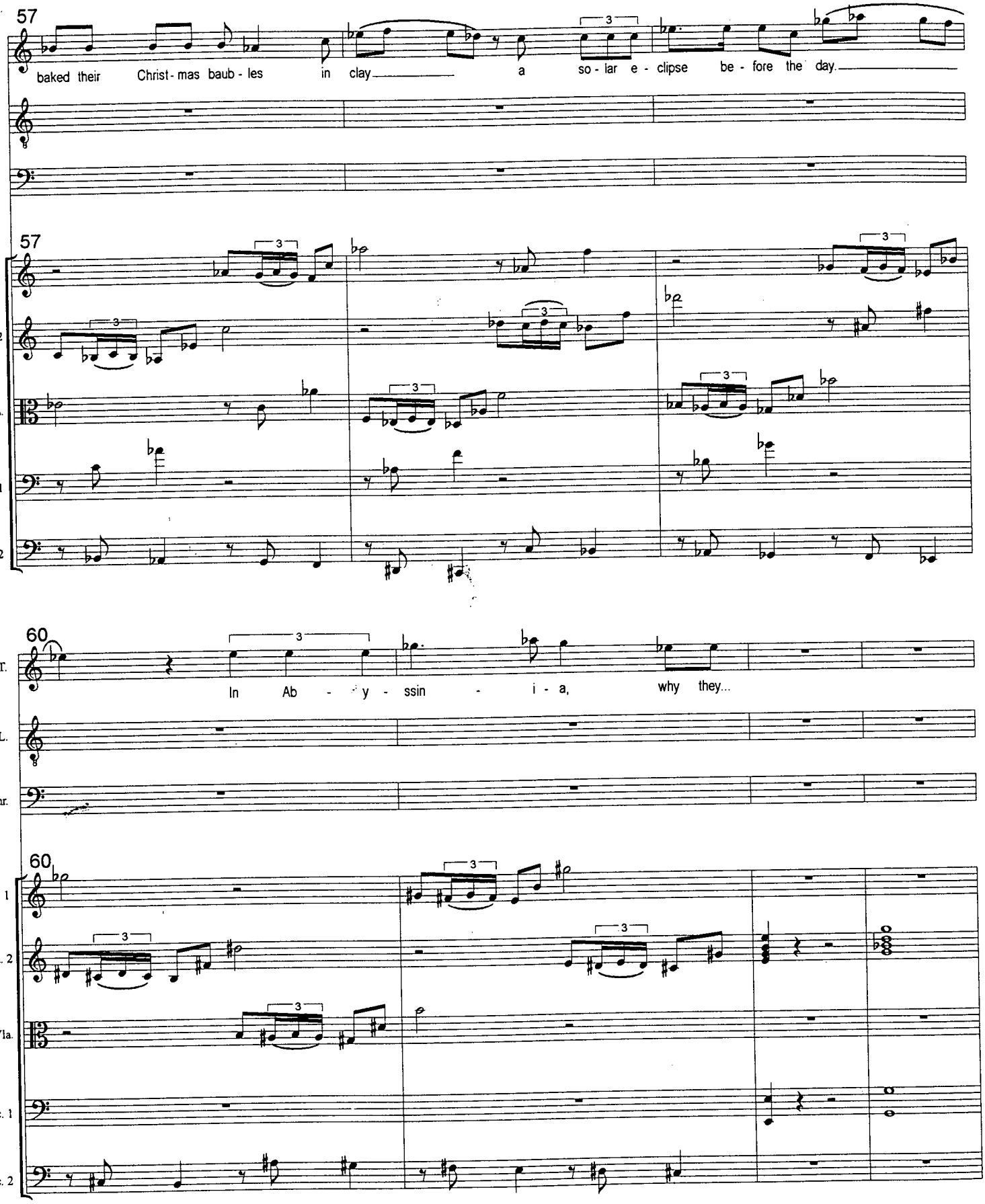

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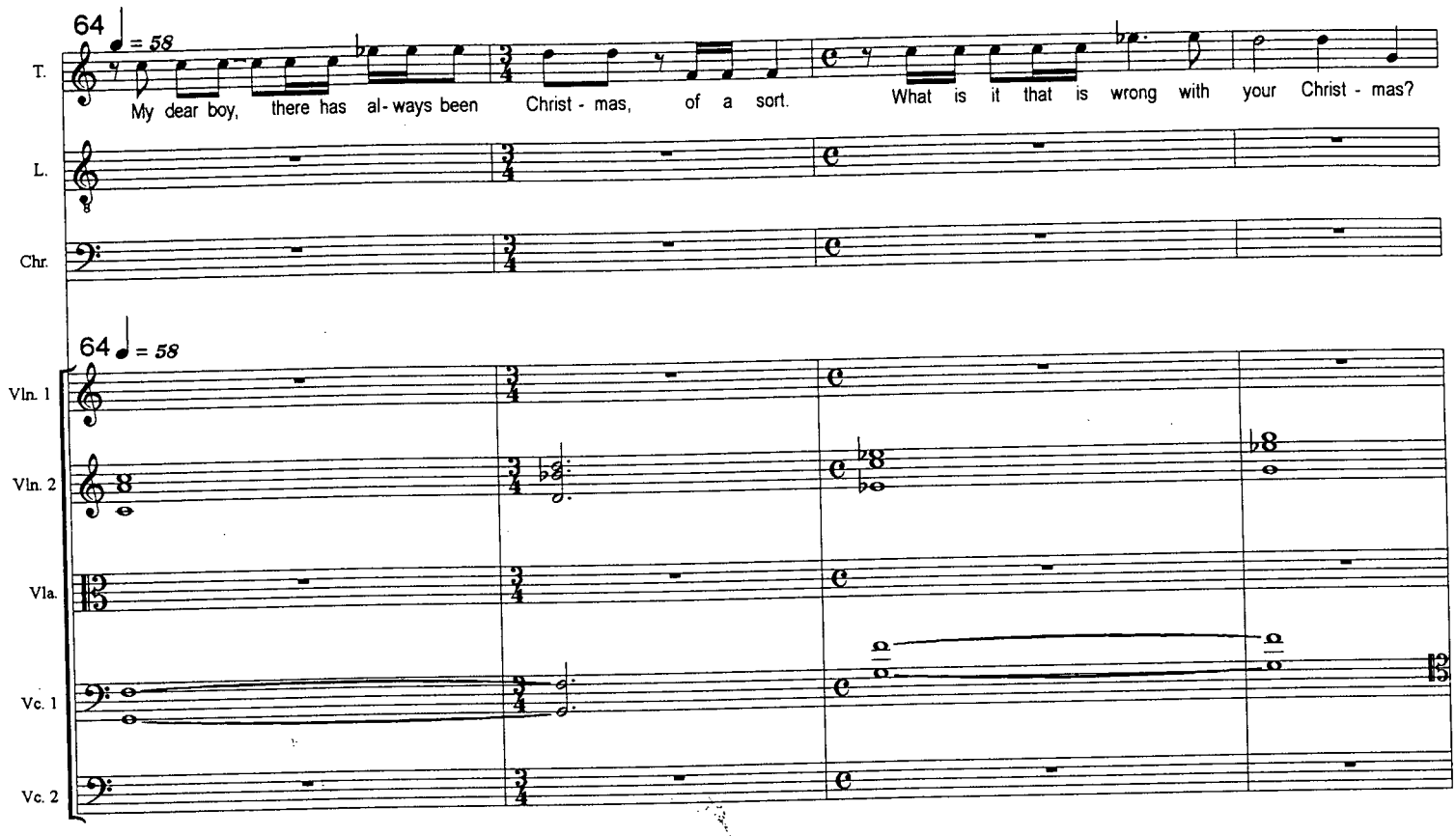

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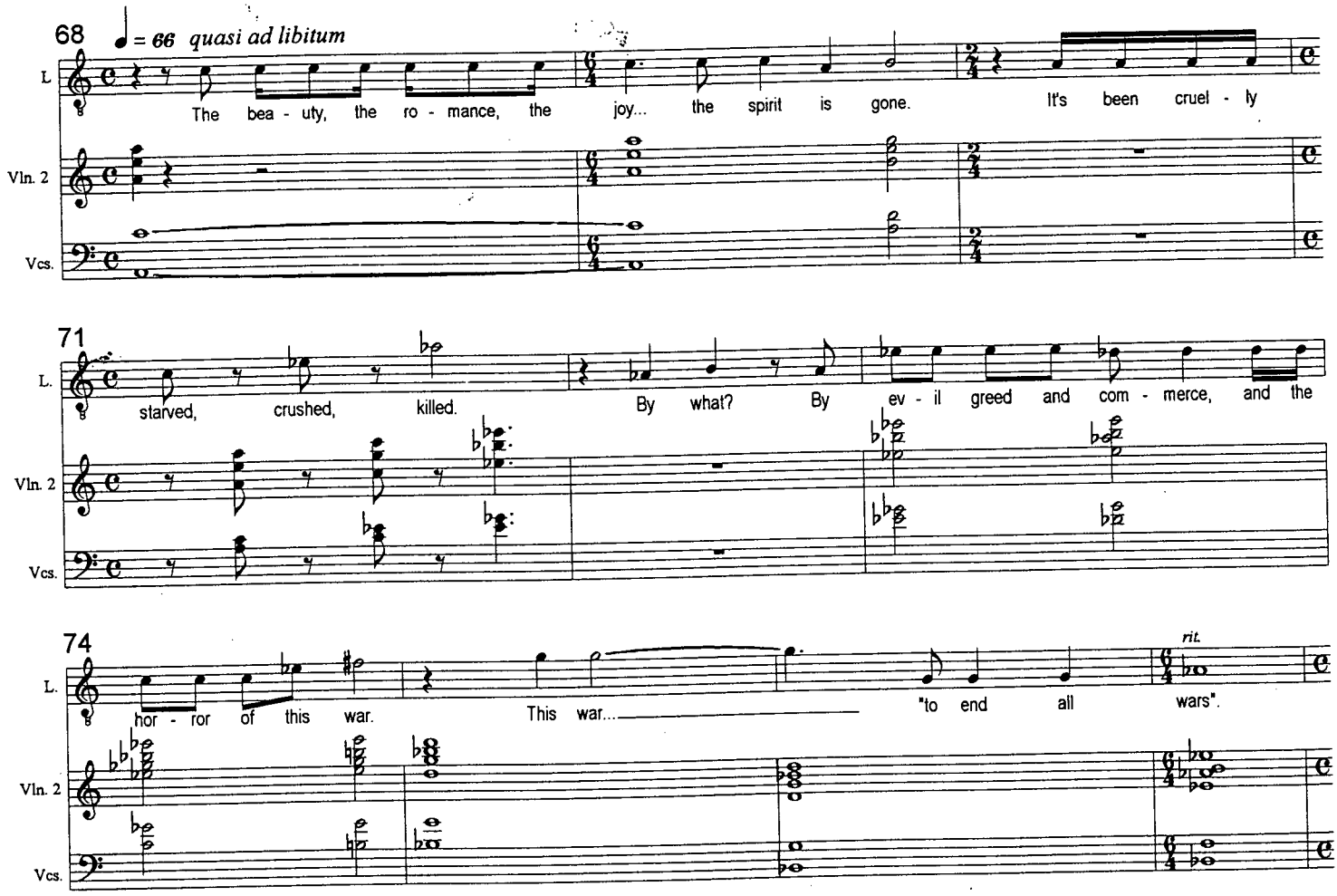
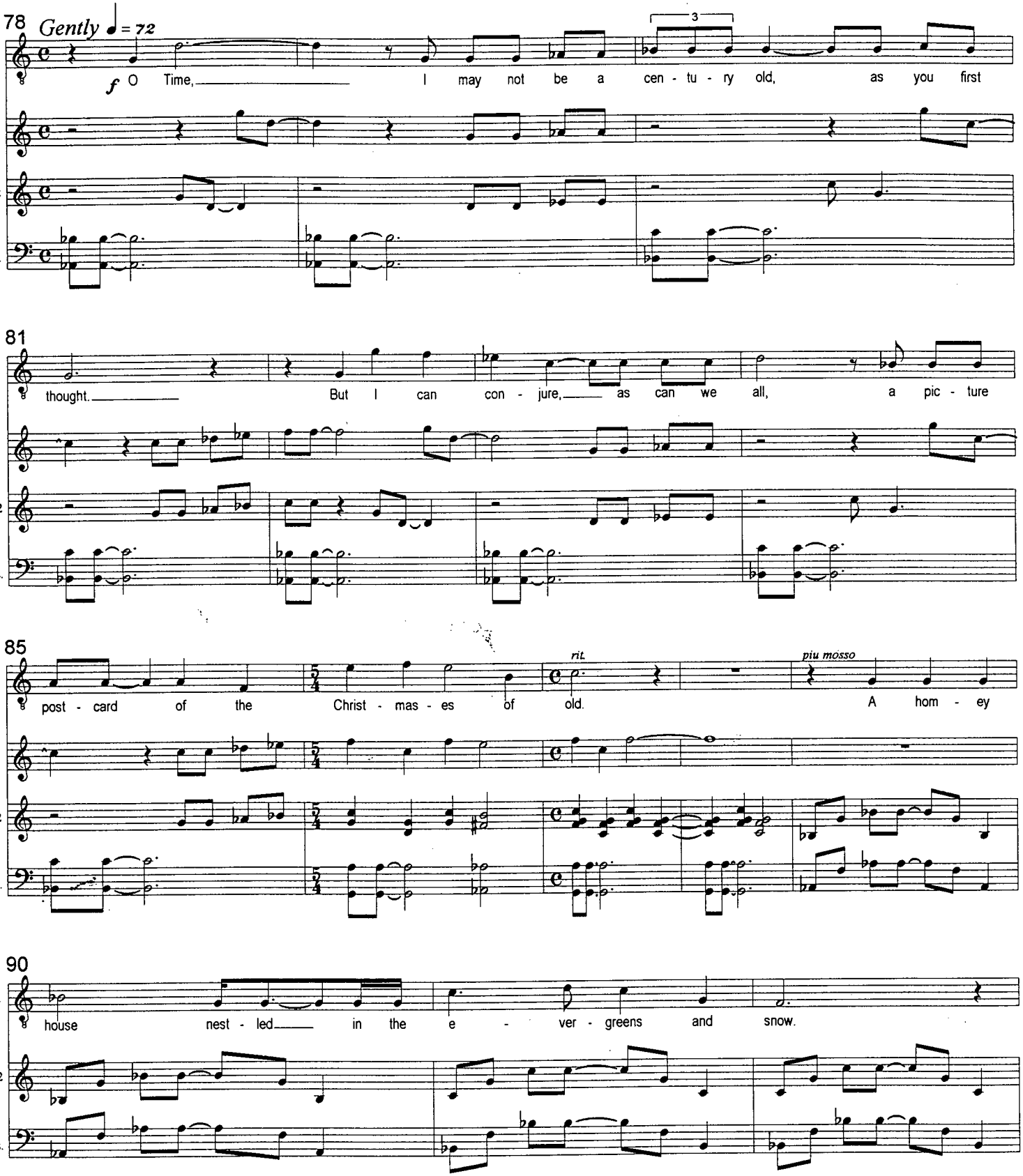

68
♩ = 66 quasi ad libitum
L
The bea - uty, the ro - mance, the joy... the spirit is gone. It's been cruel - ly
Vln. 2
Vcs.
71
L.
starved, crushed, killed. By what? By ev - il greed and com - merce, and the
Vln. 2
Vcs.
74
L.
hor - ror of this war. This war... "to end all wars".
rit.
Vln. 2
Vcs.



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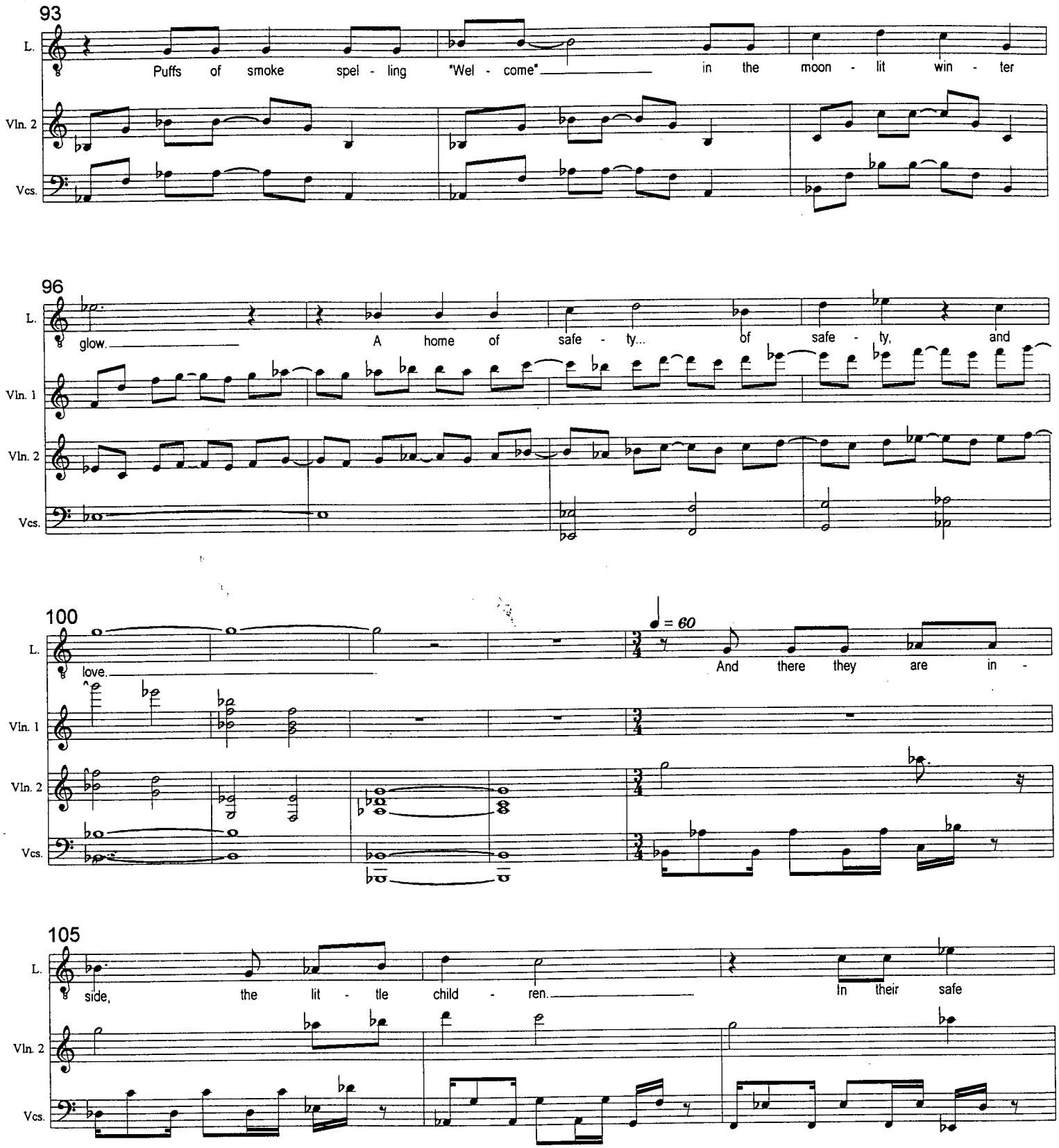

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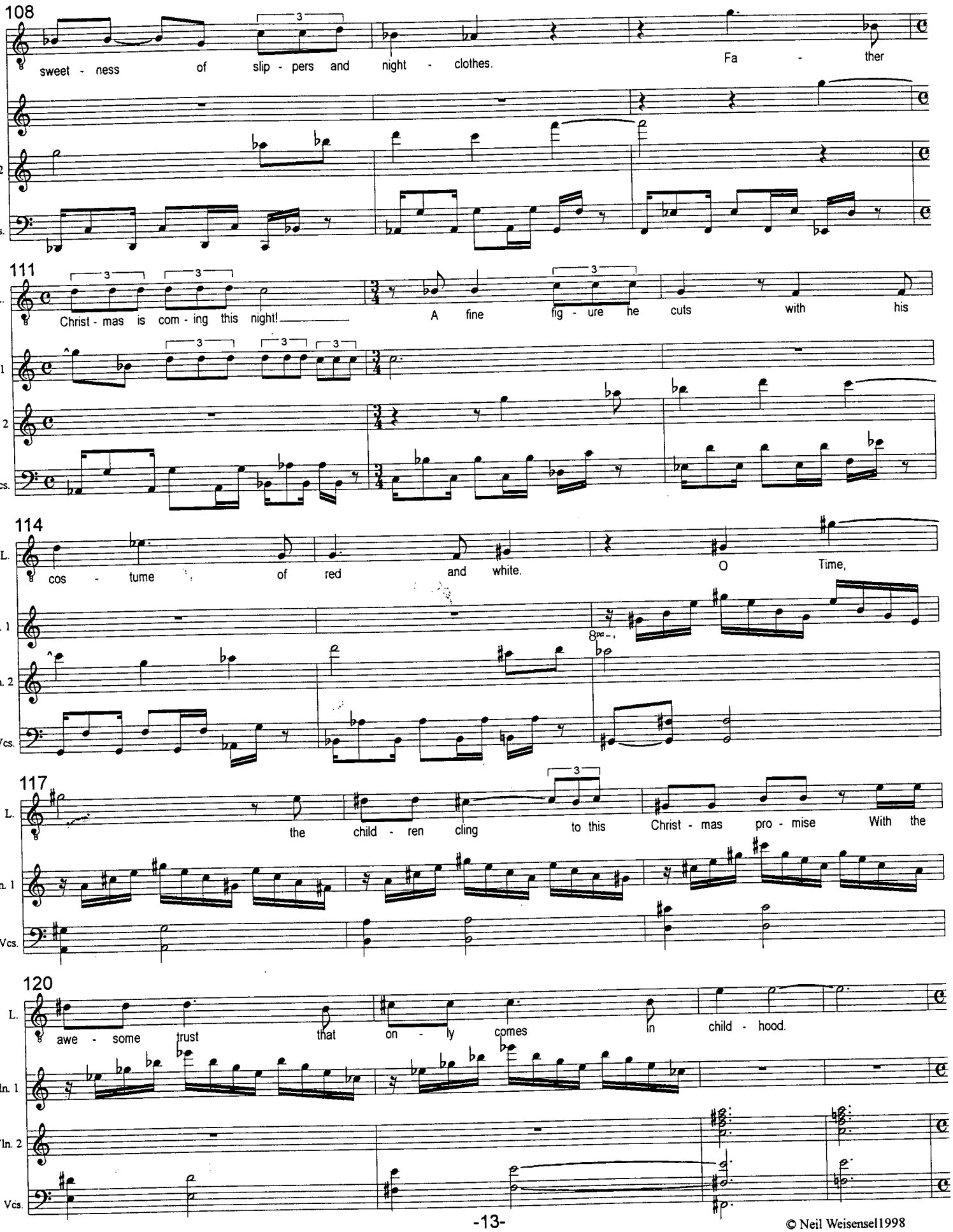

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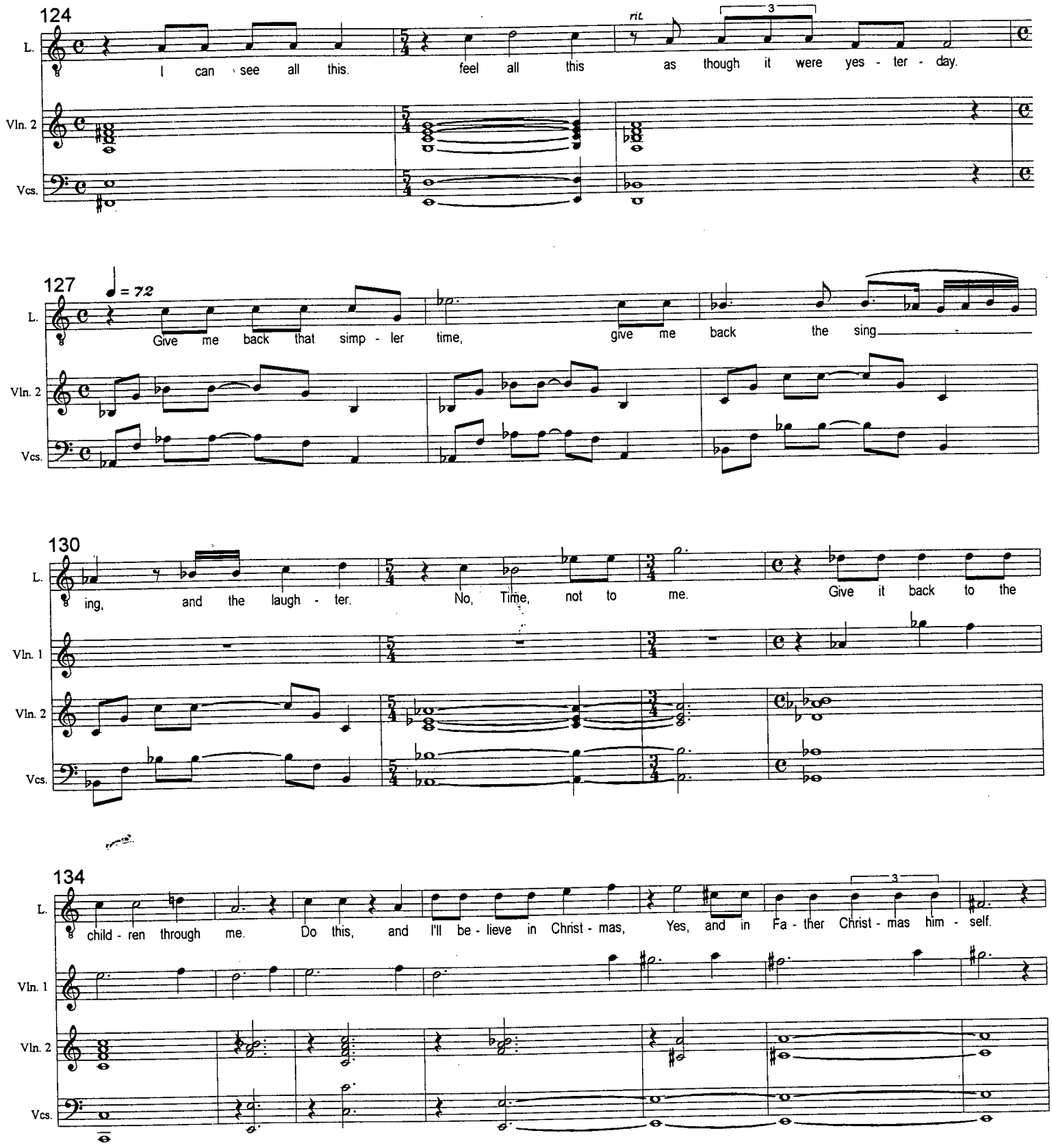

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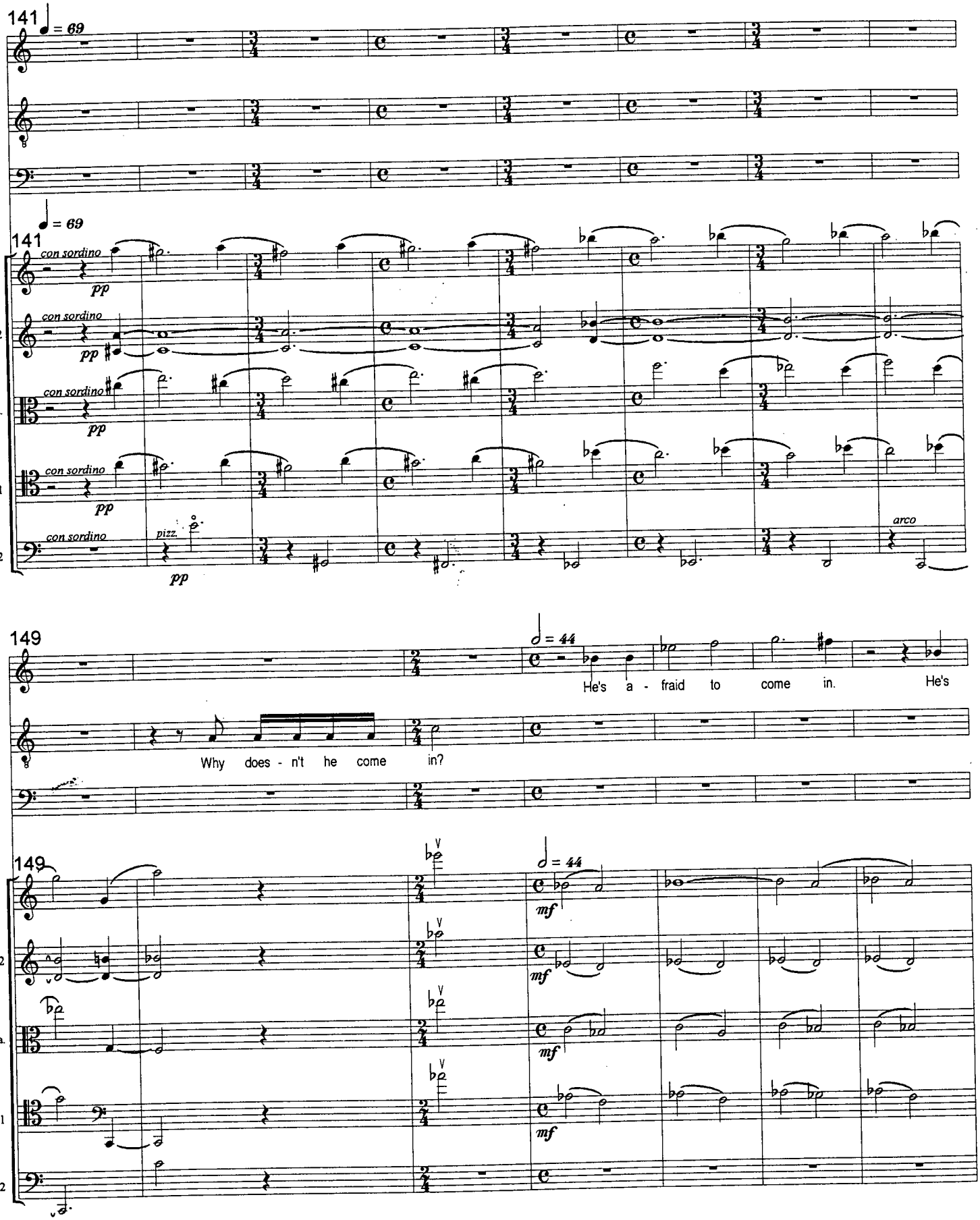

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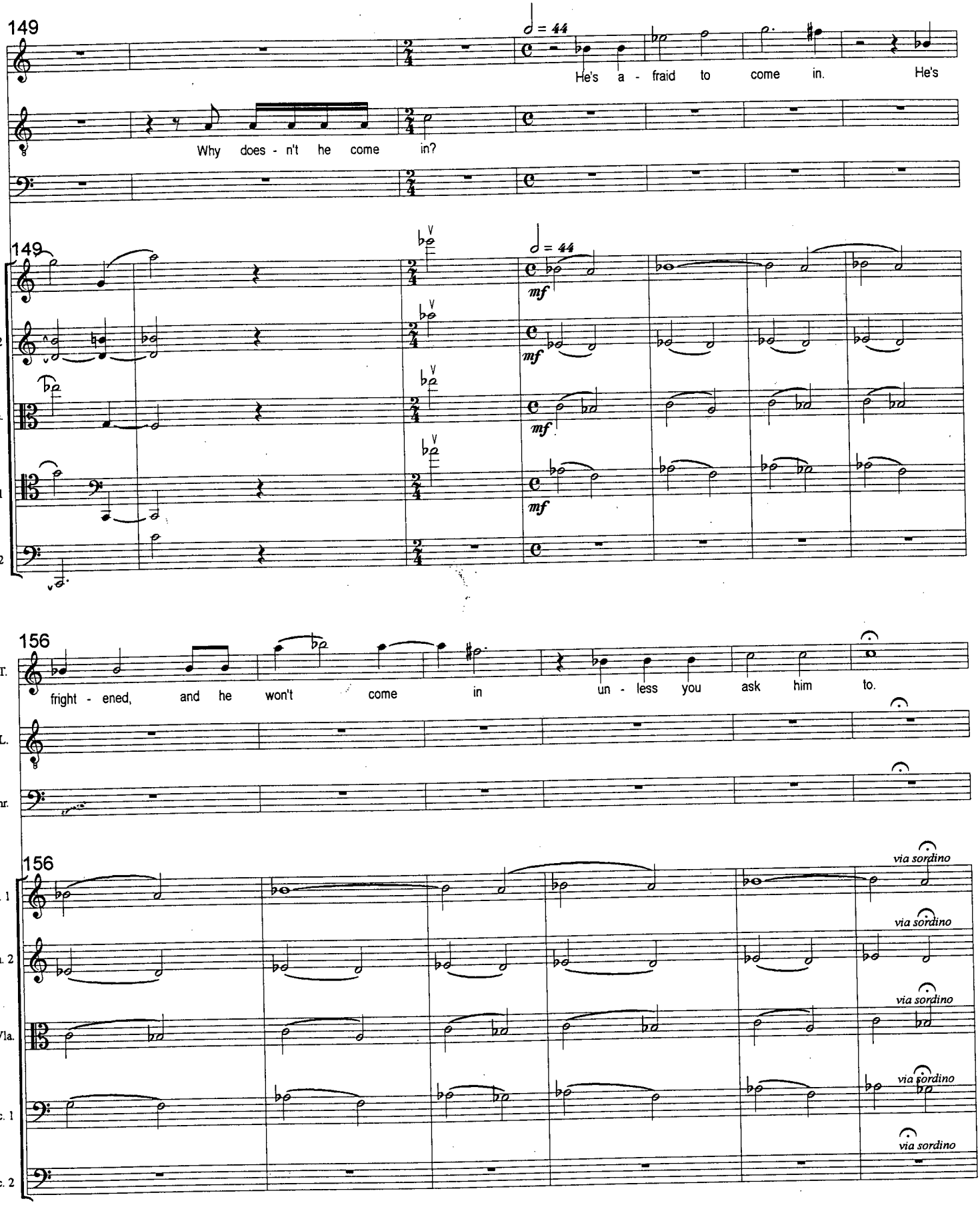

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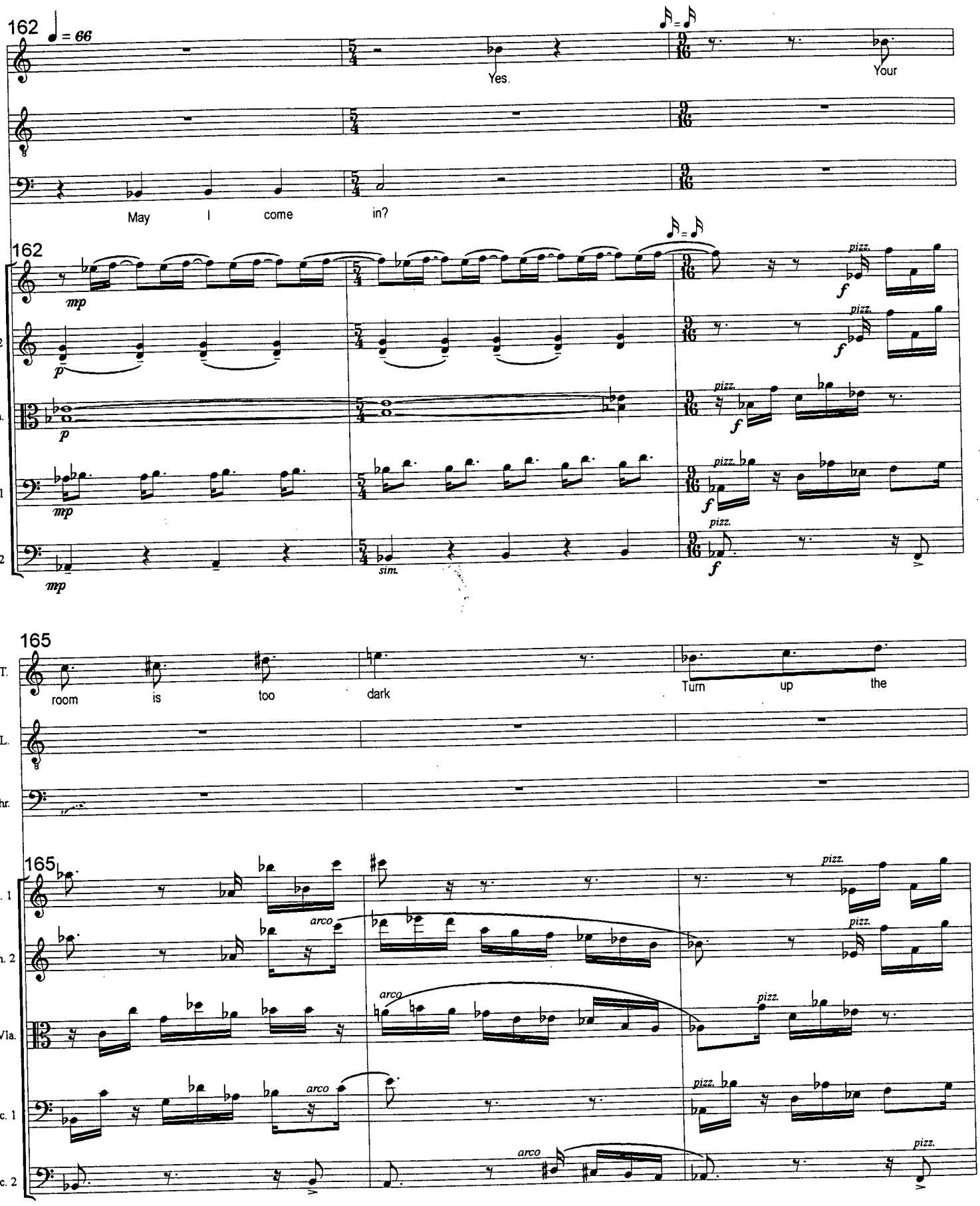

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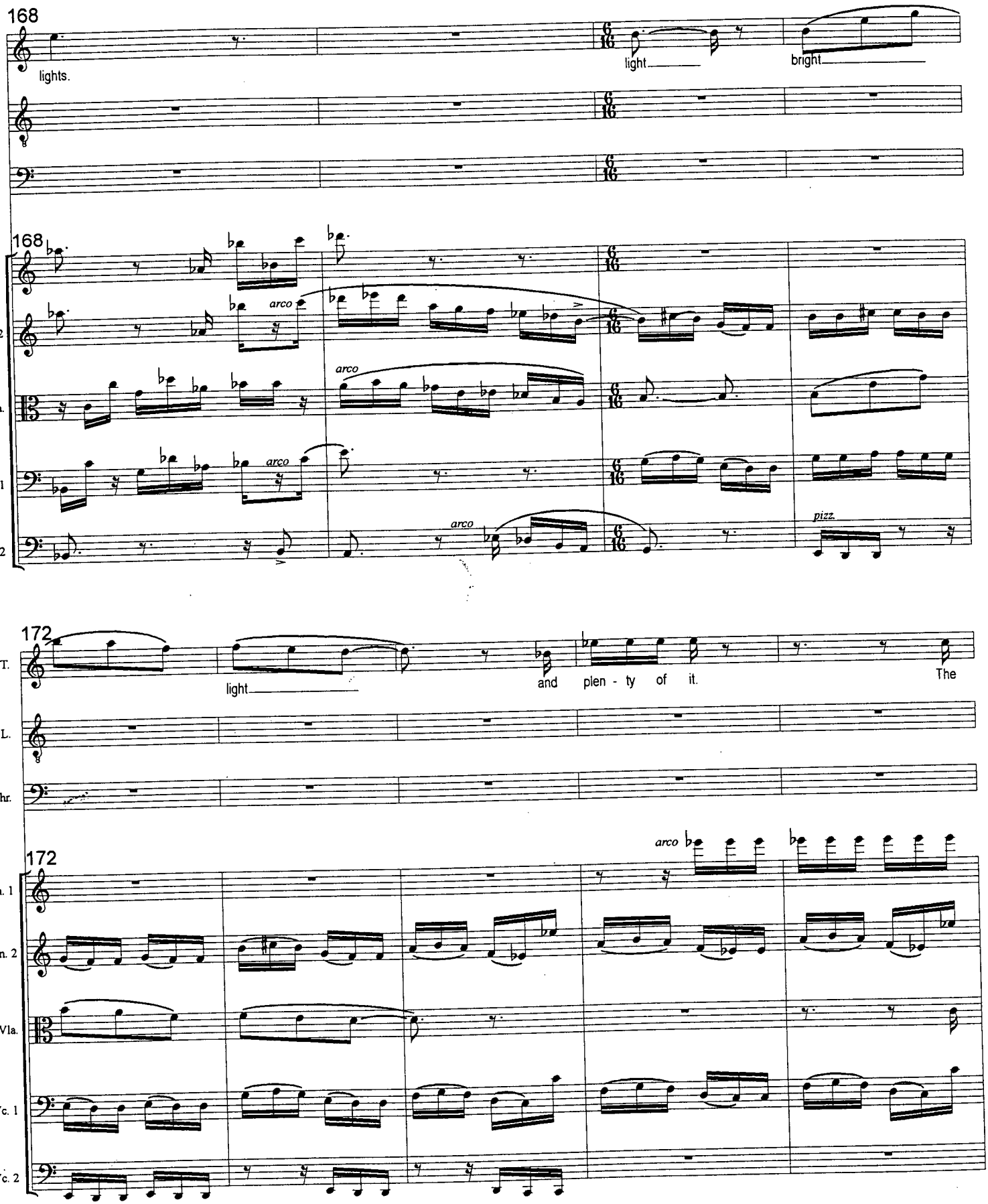

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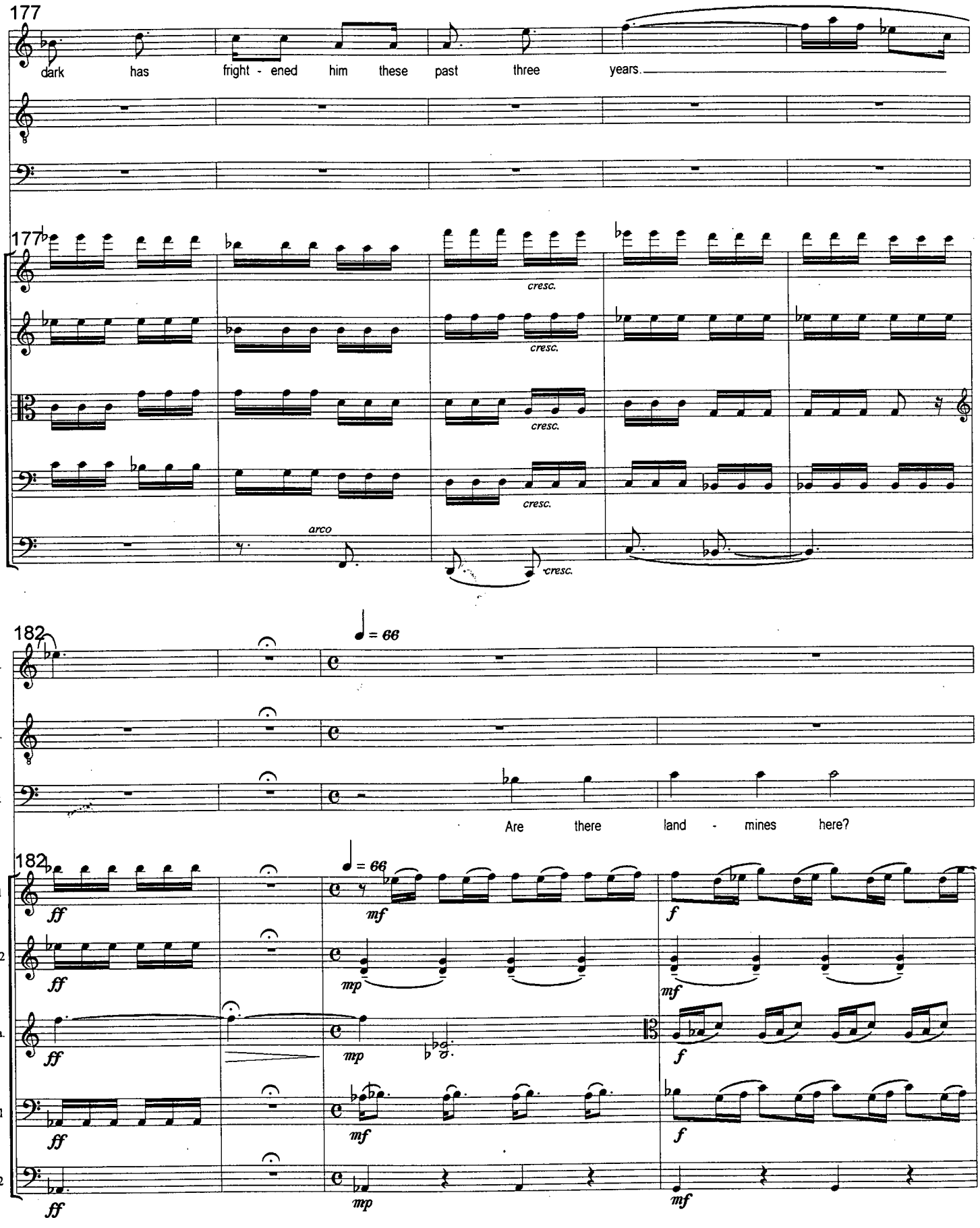

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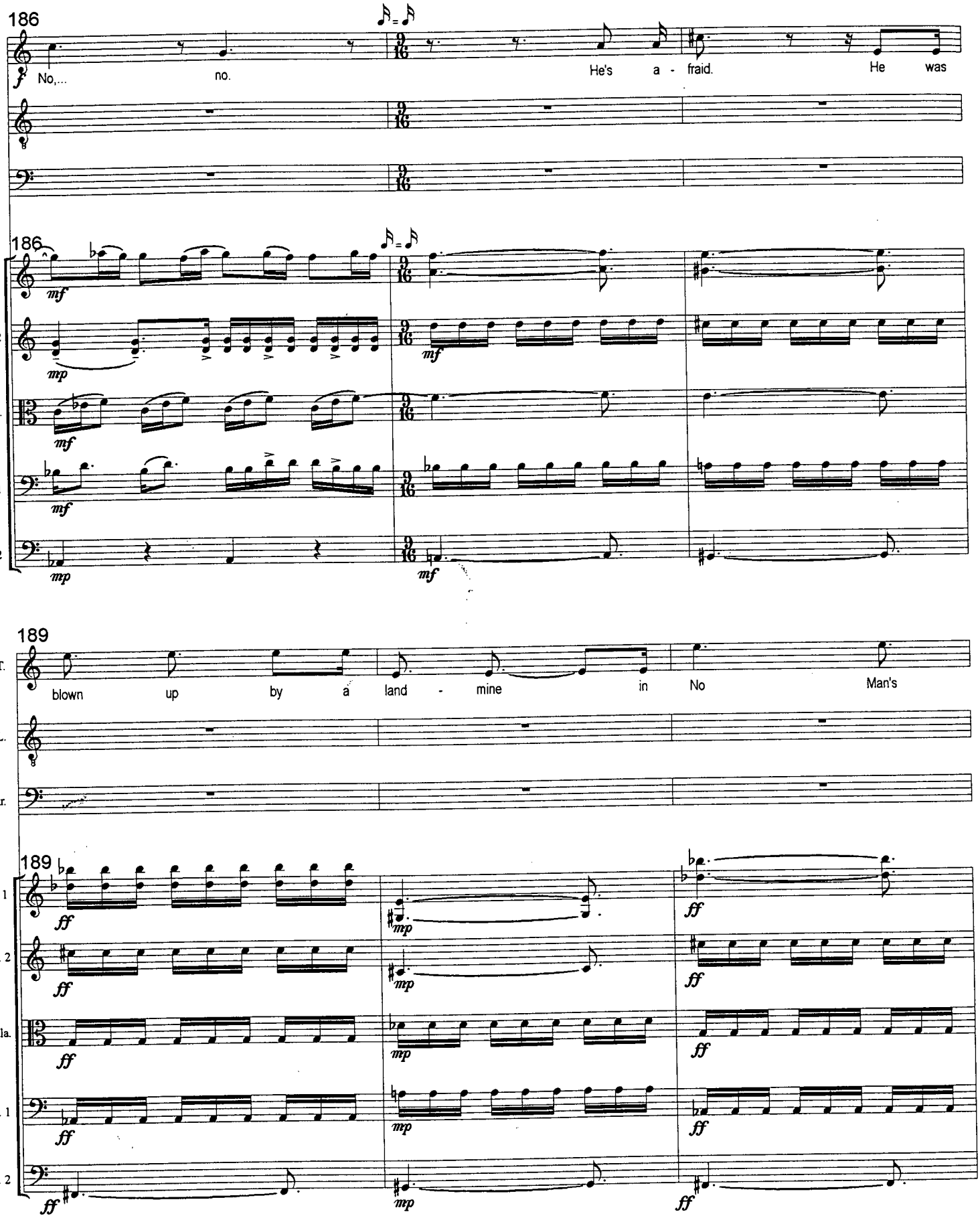

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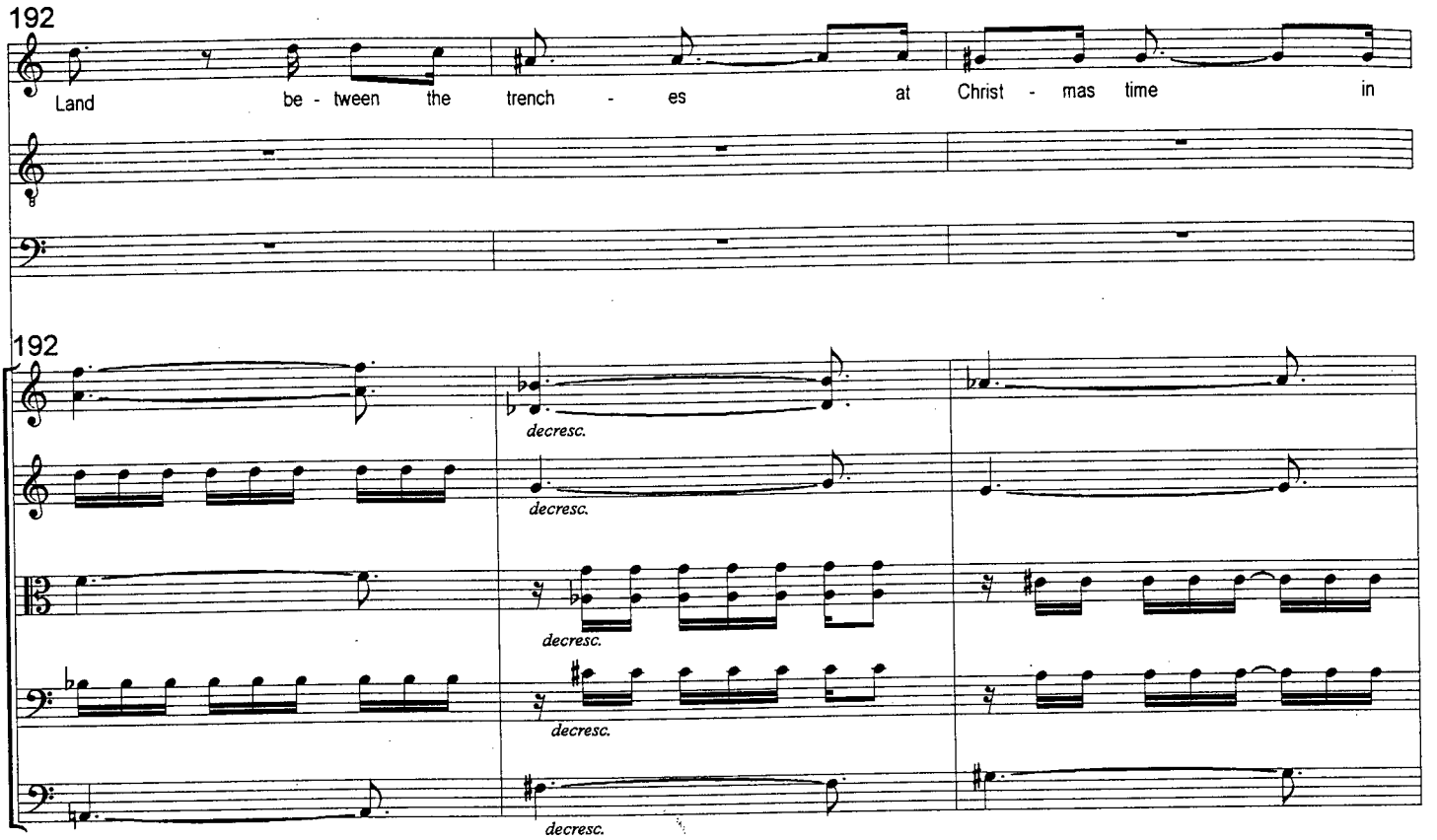

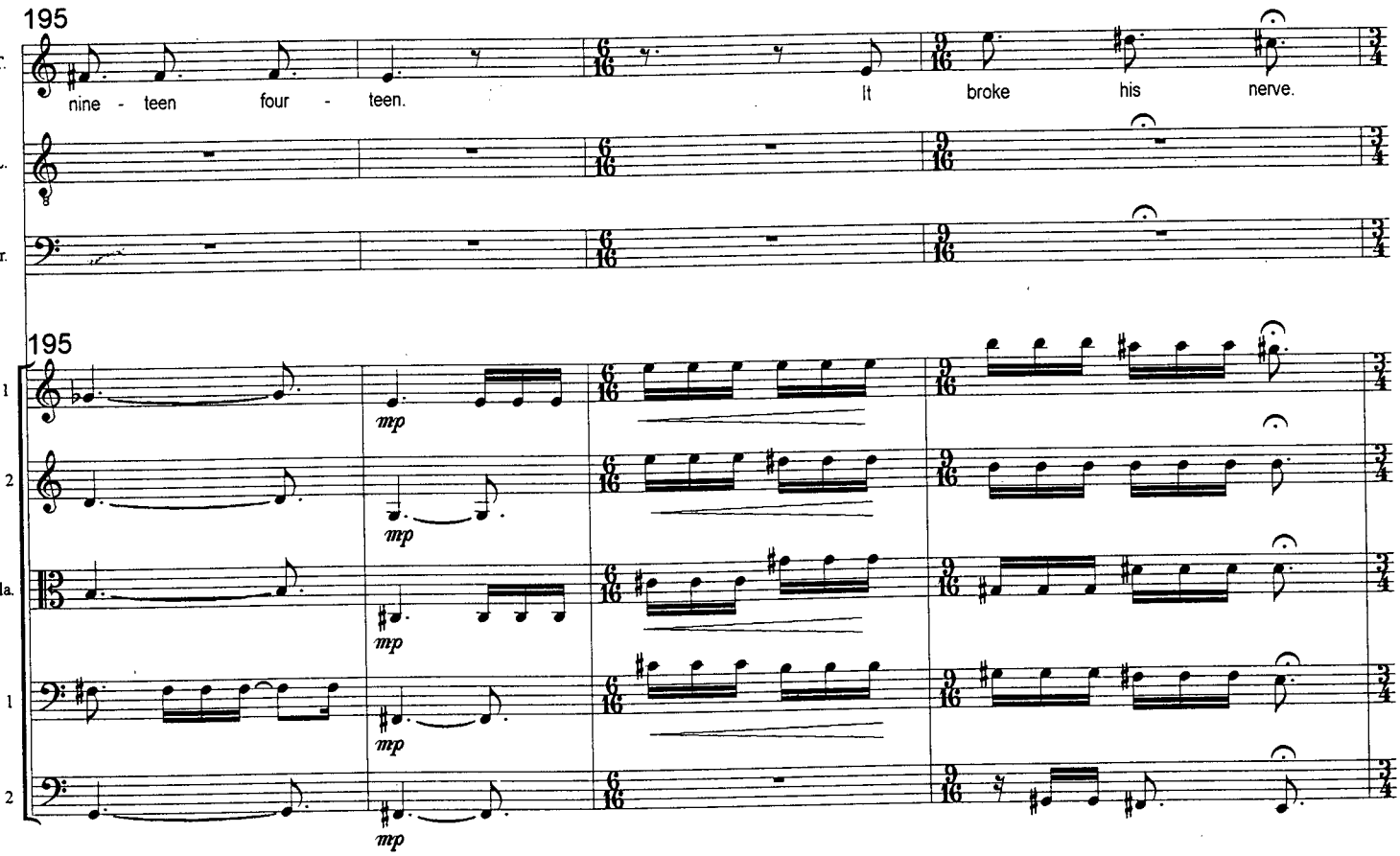

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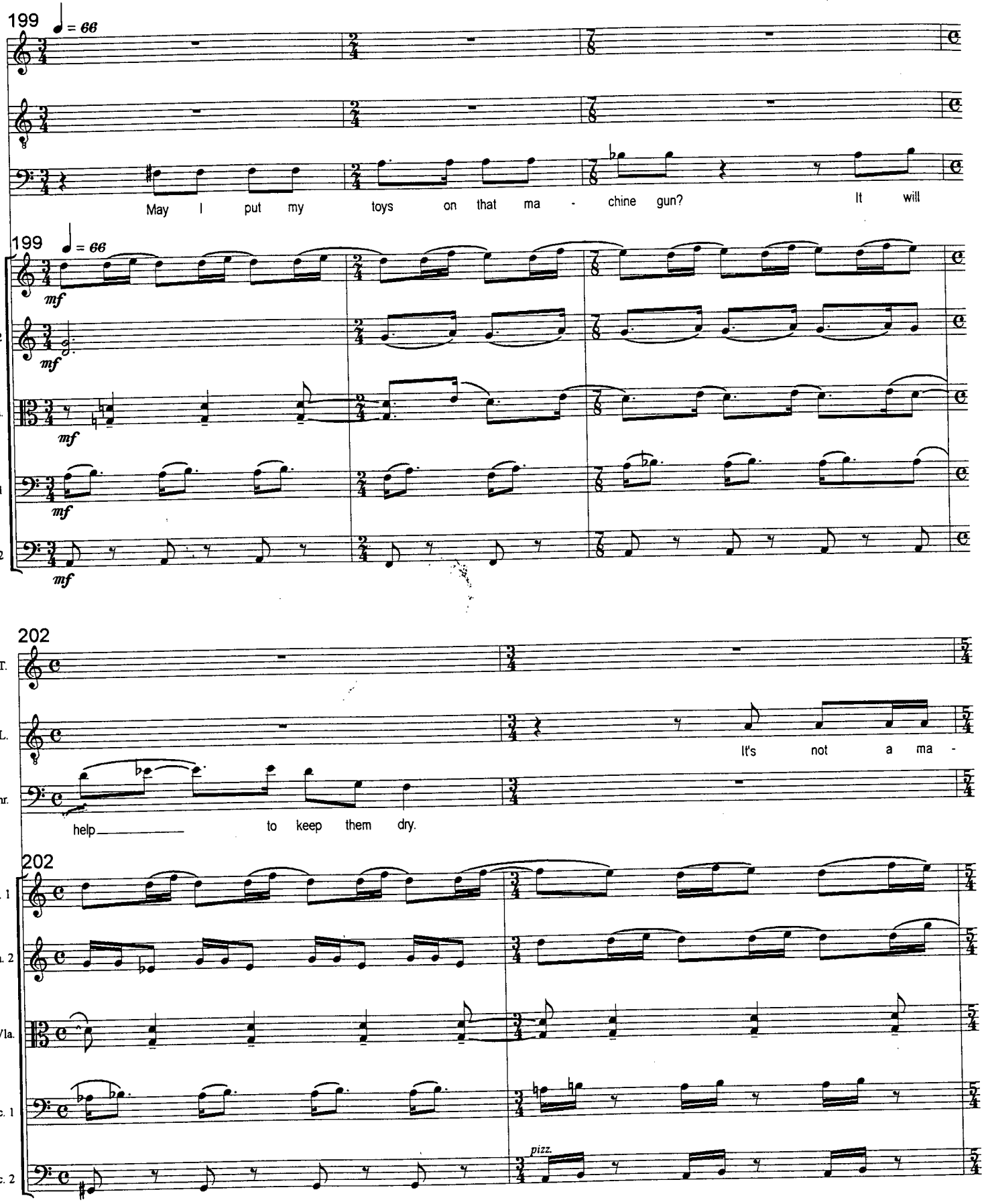

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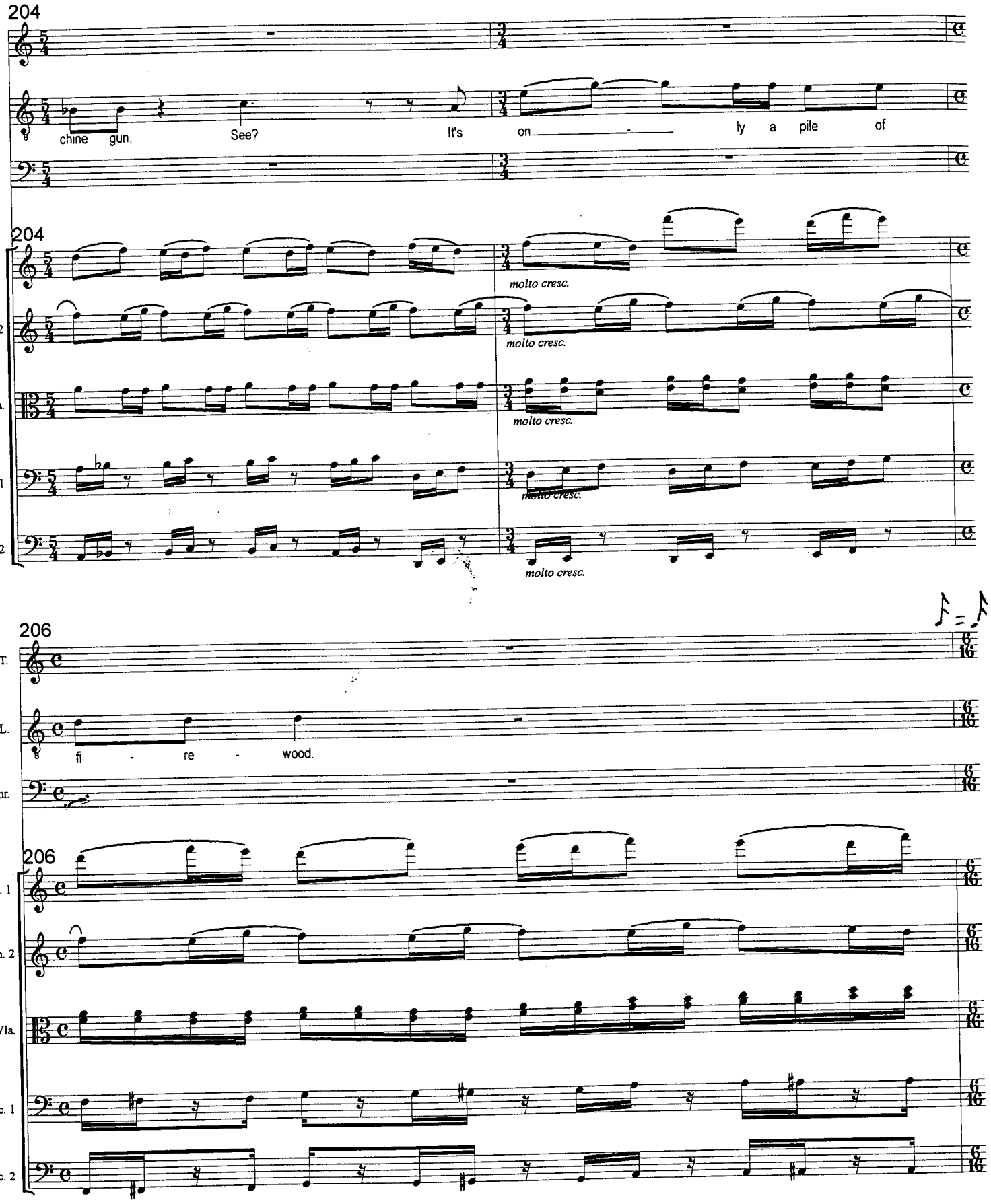

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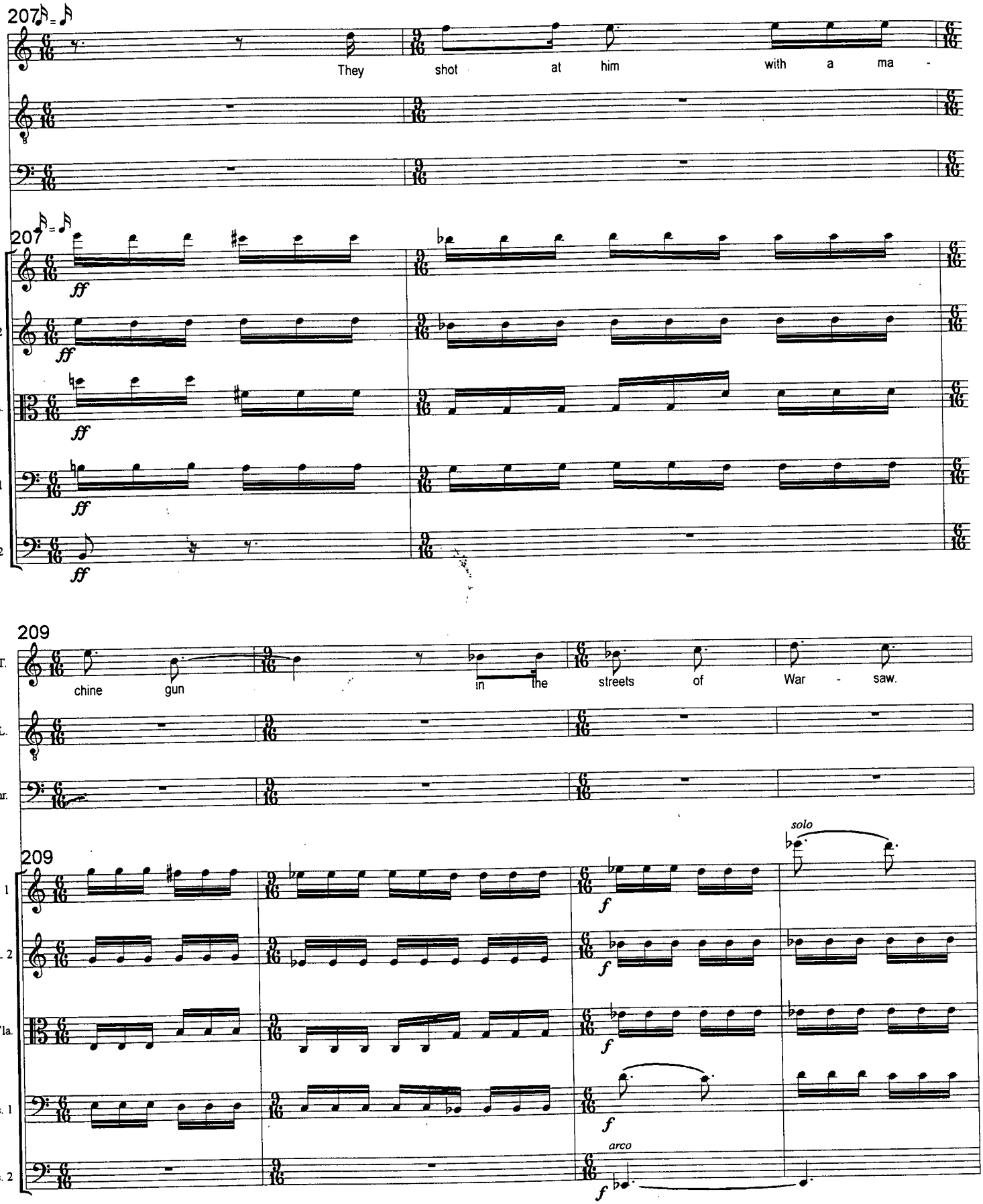

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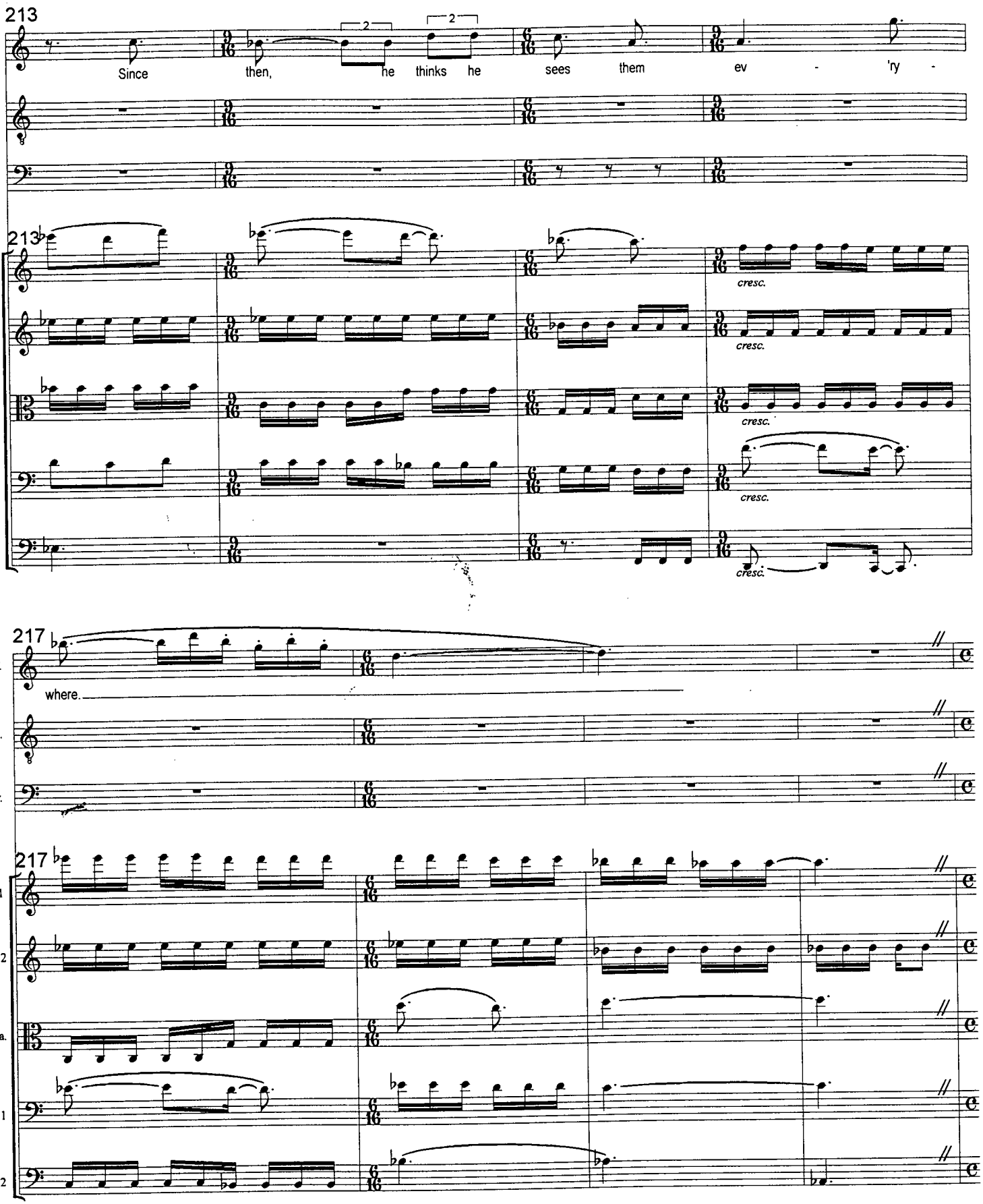

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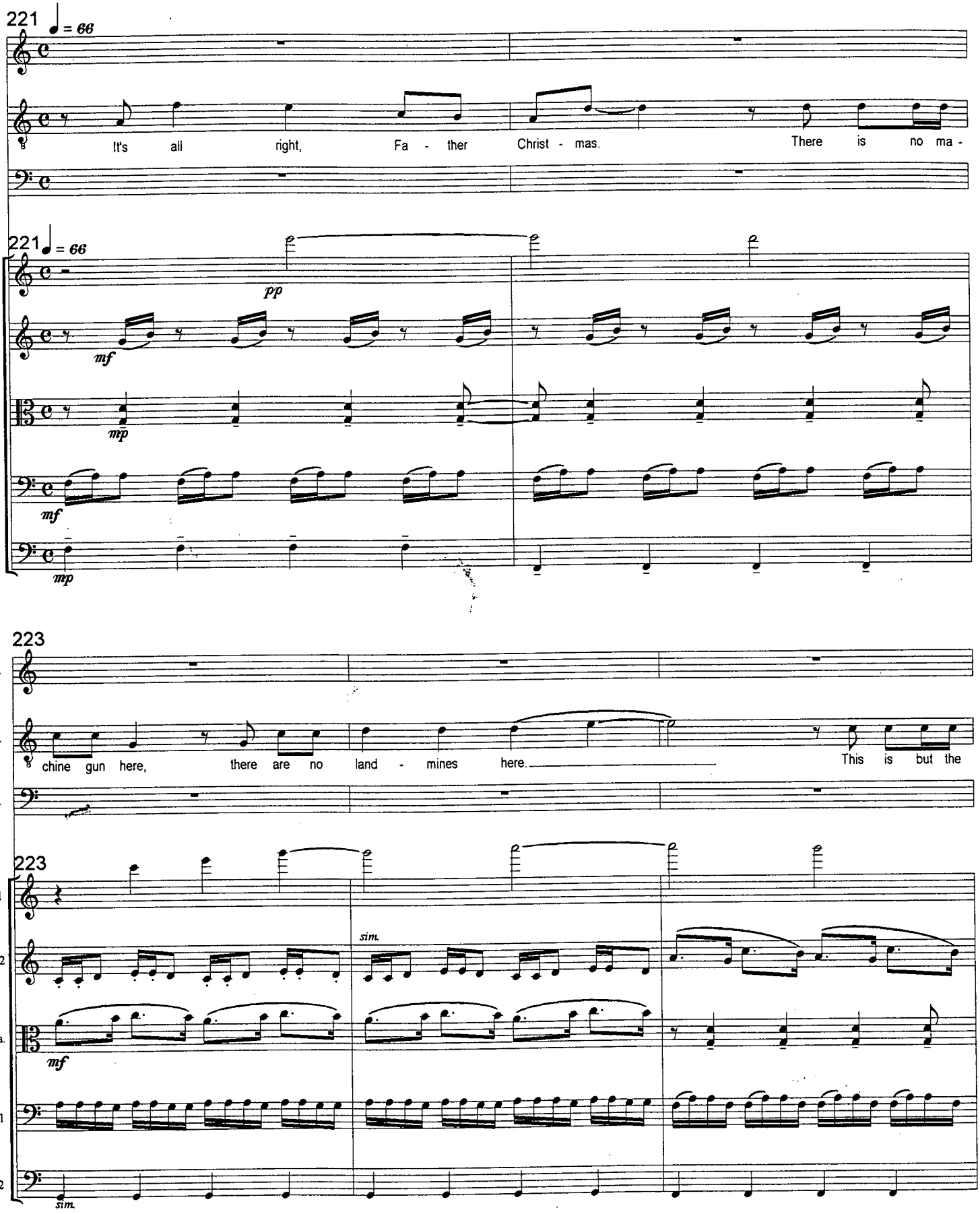

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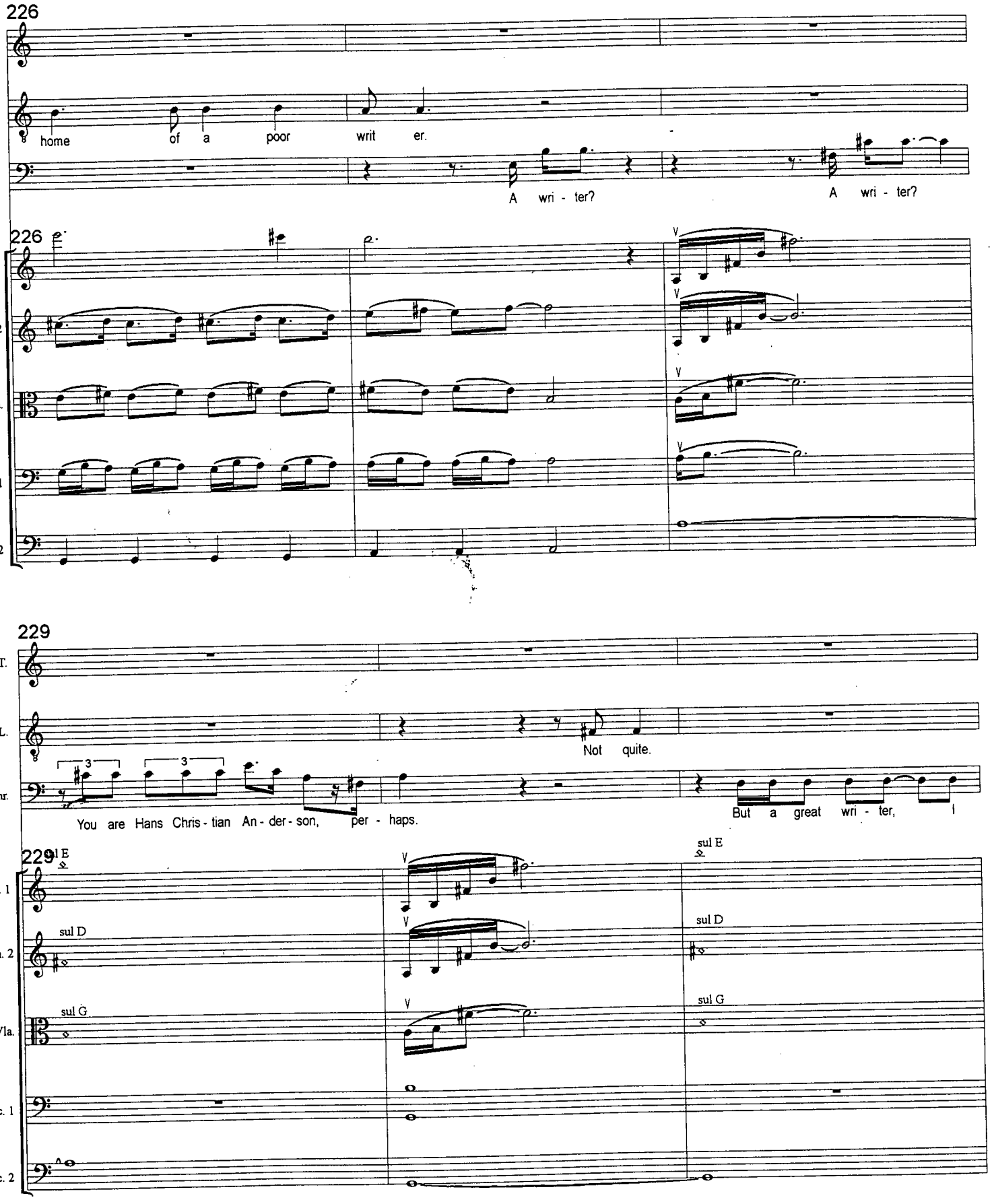

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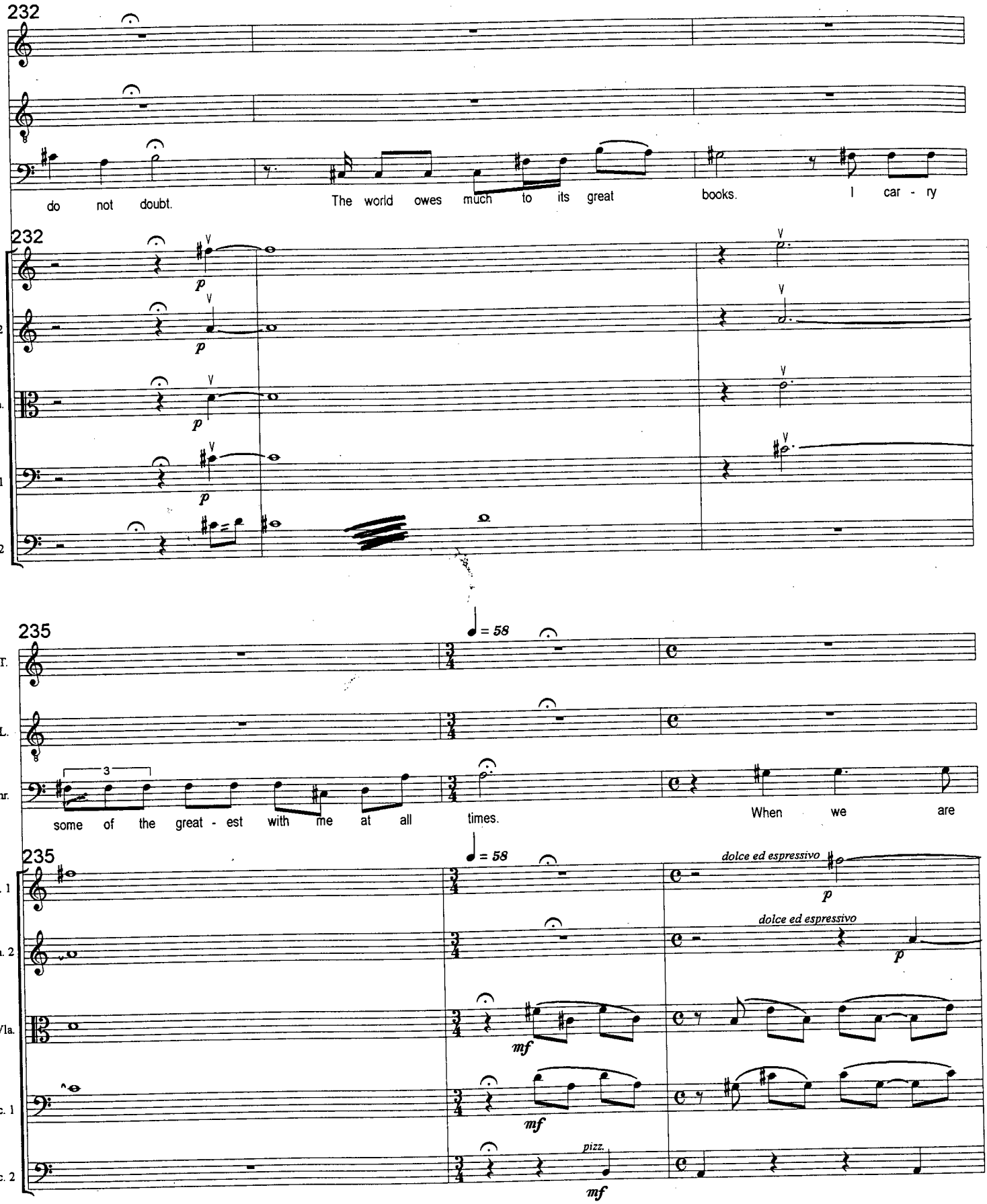

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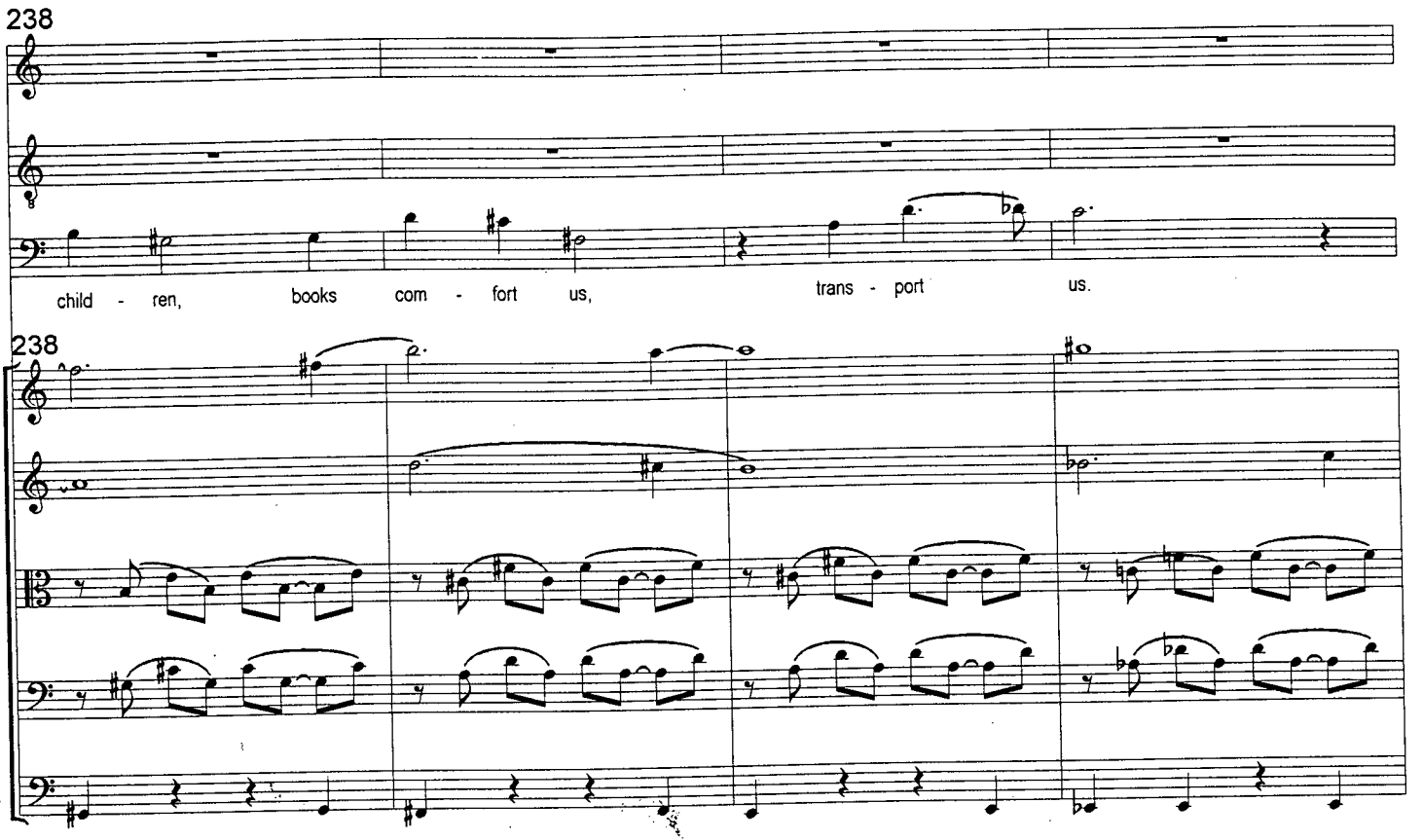

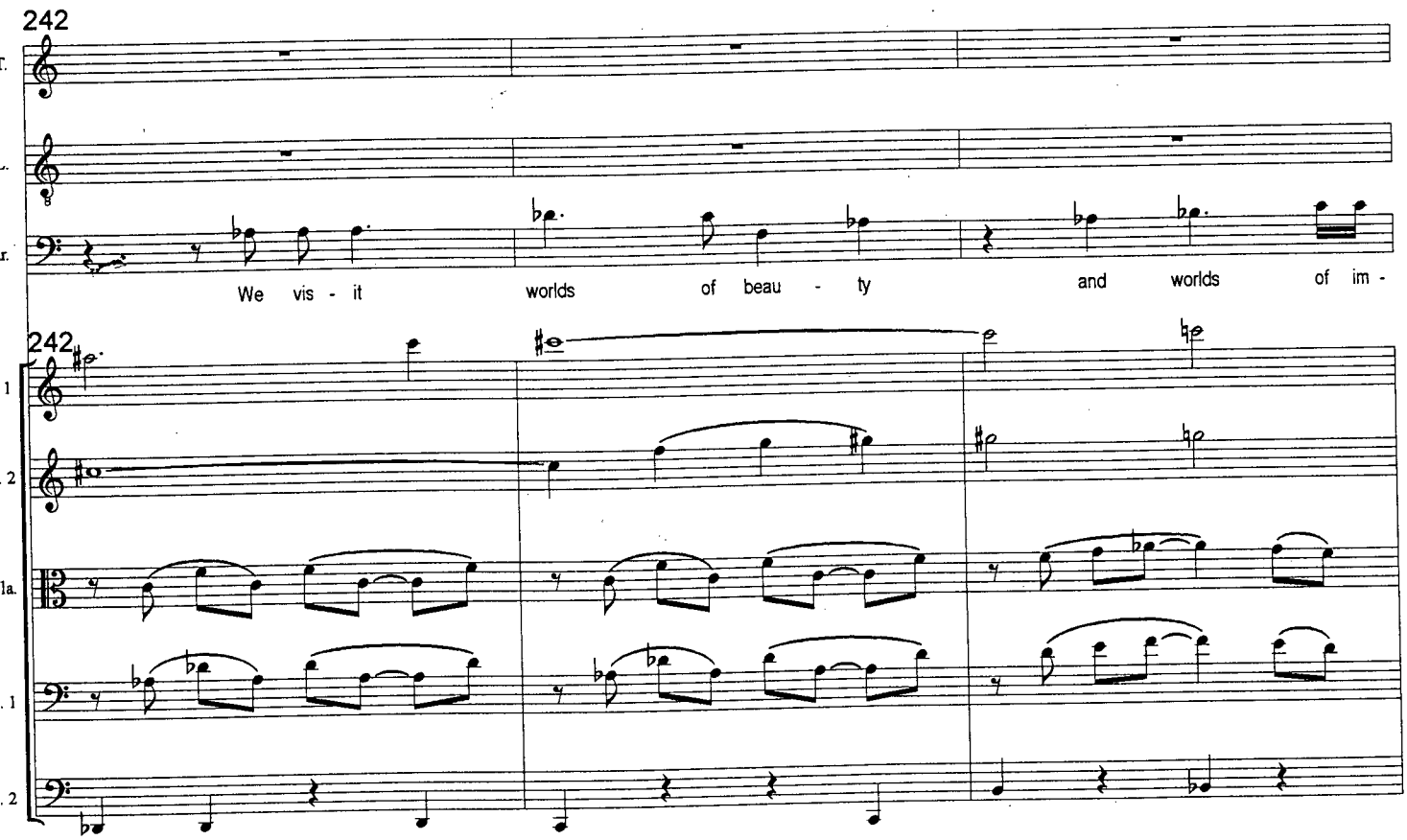

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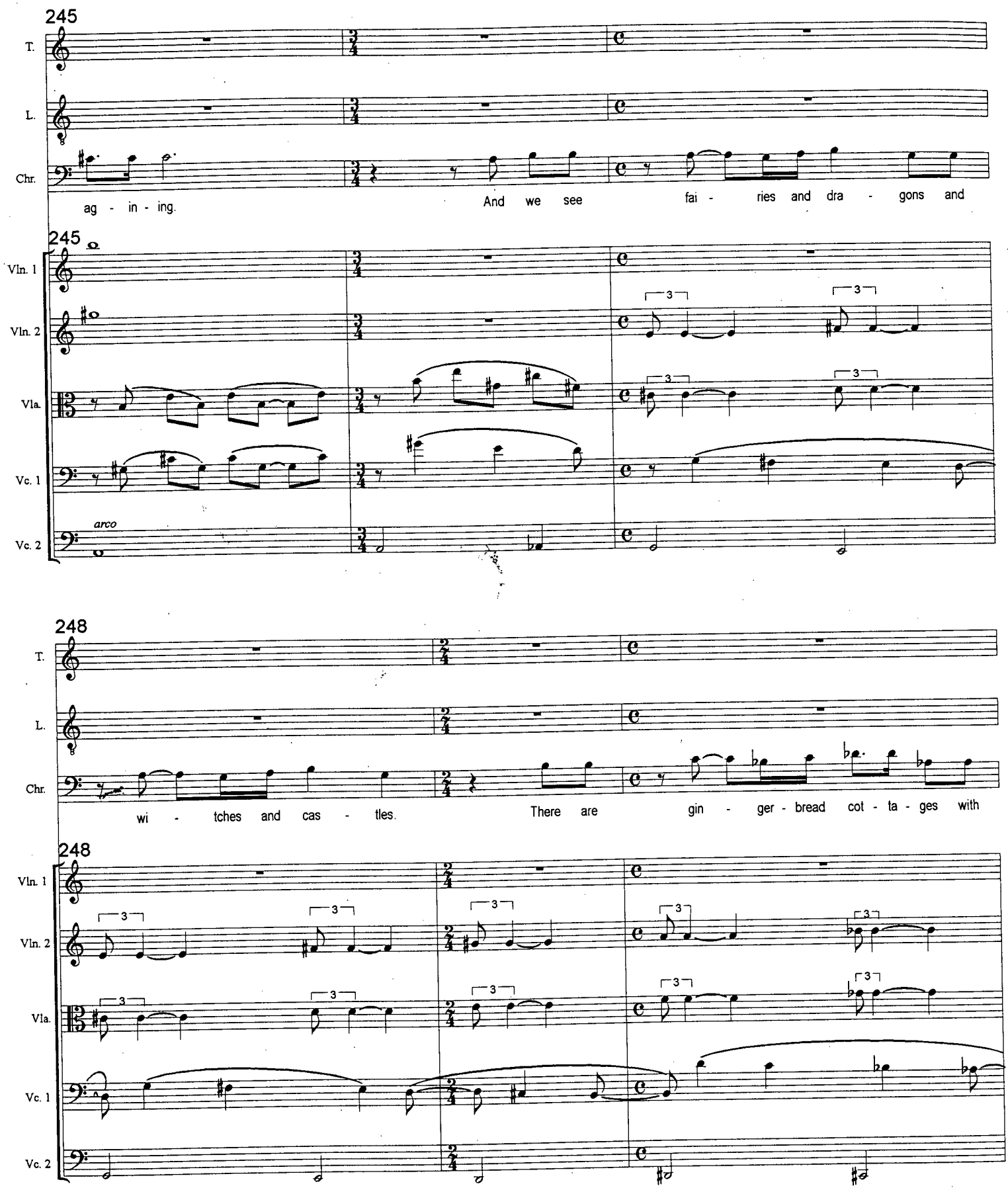

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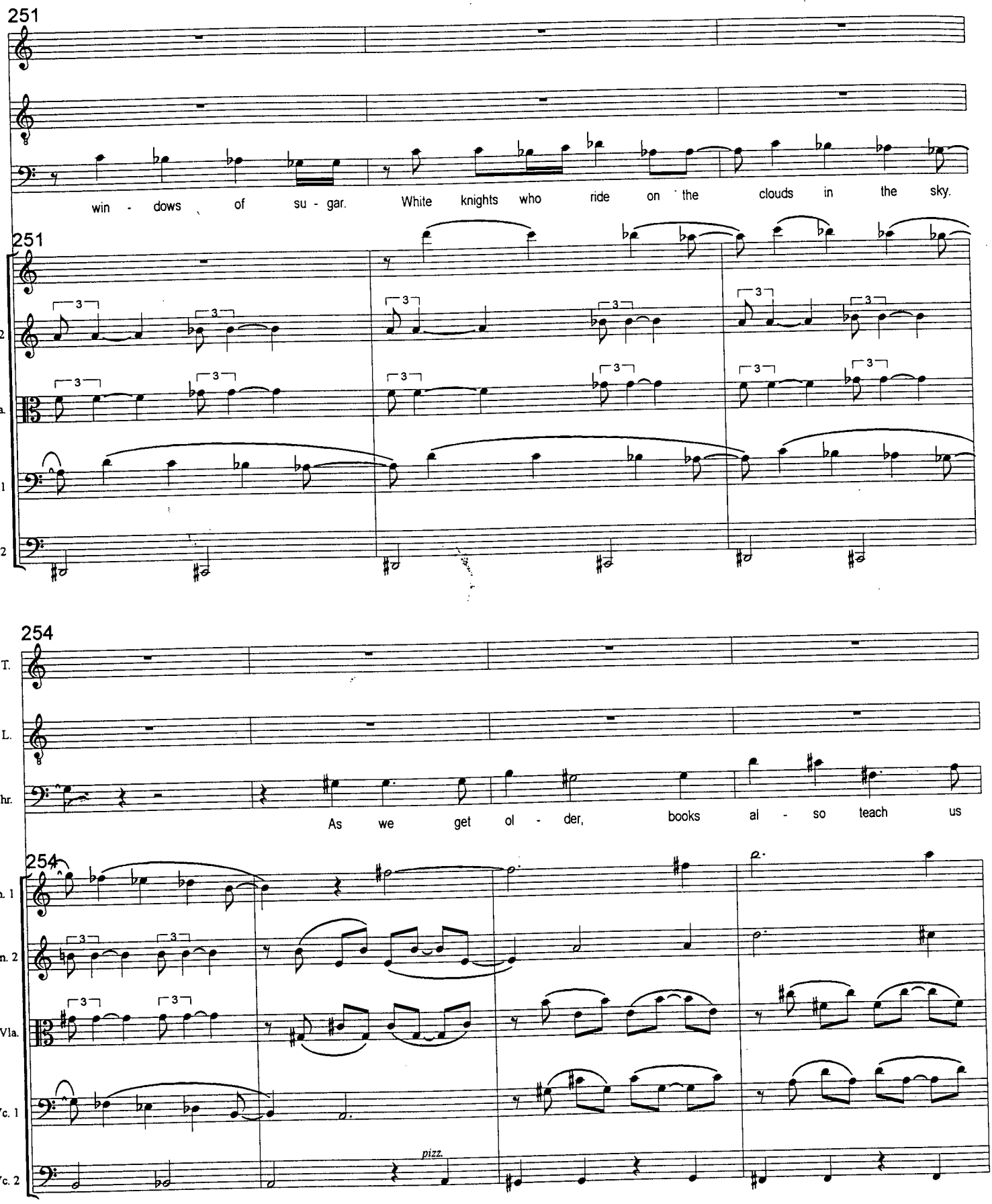

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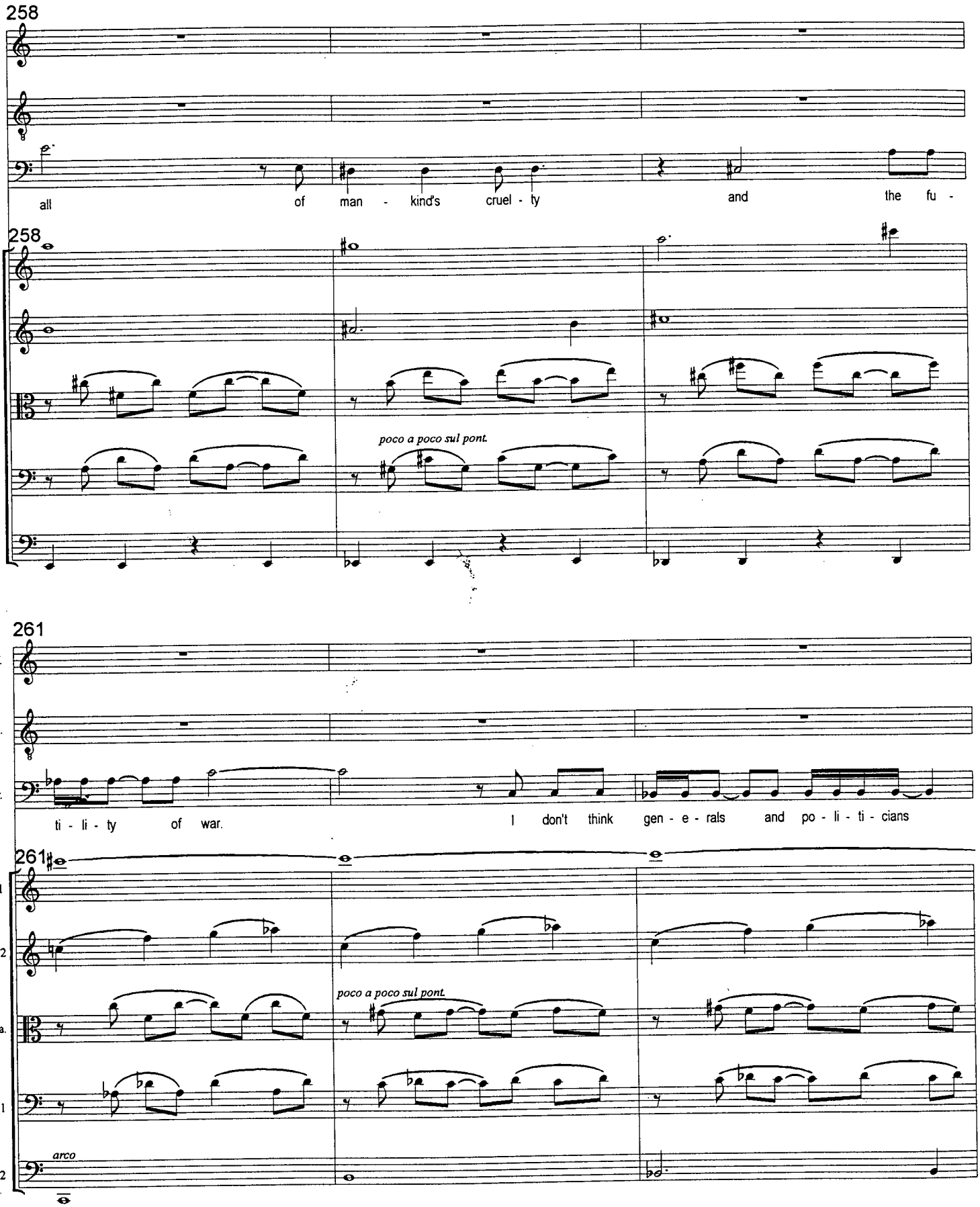

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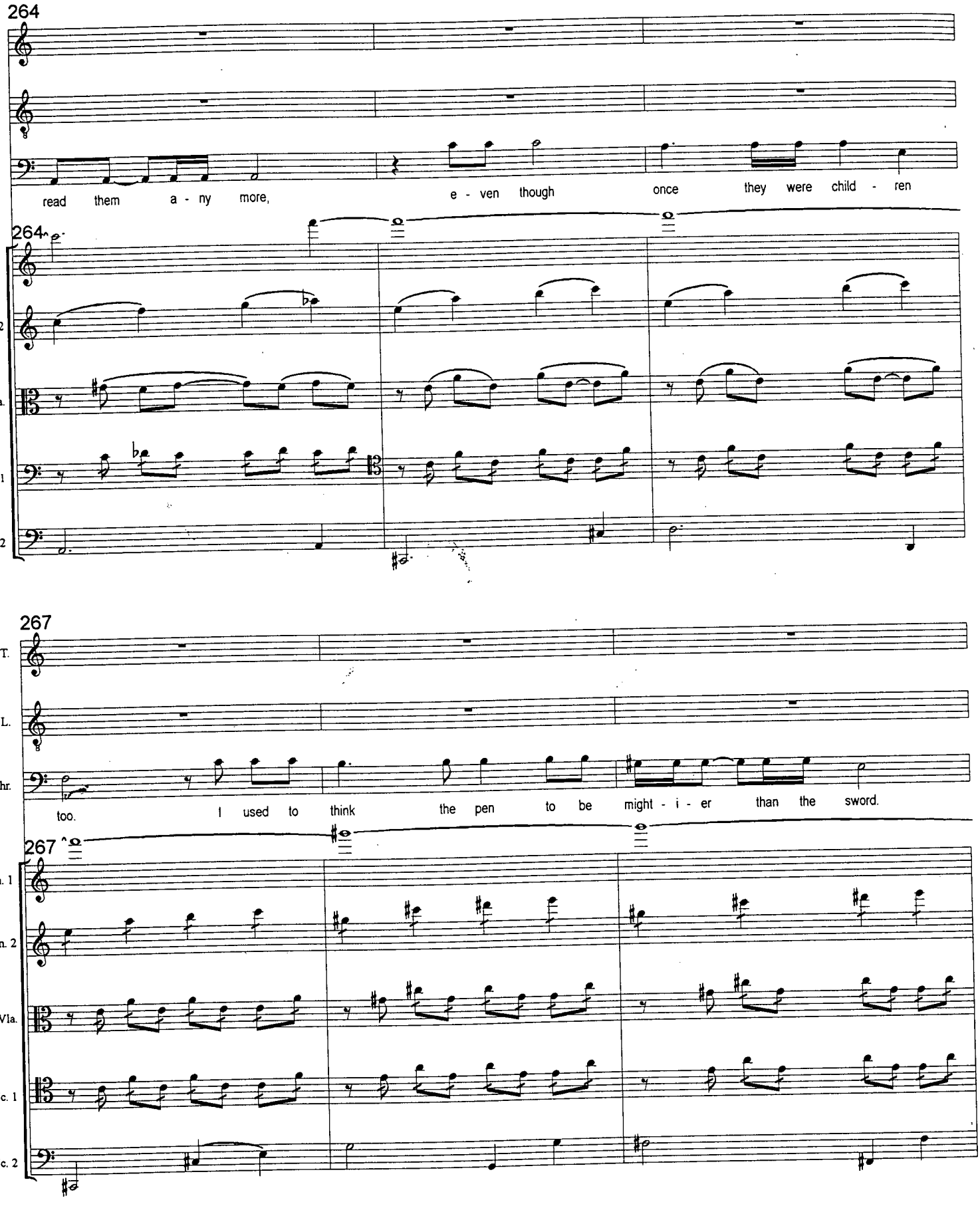

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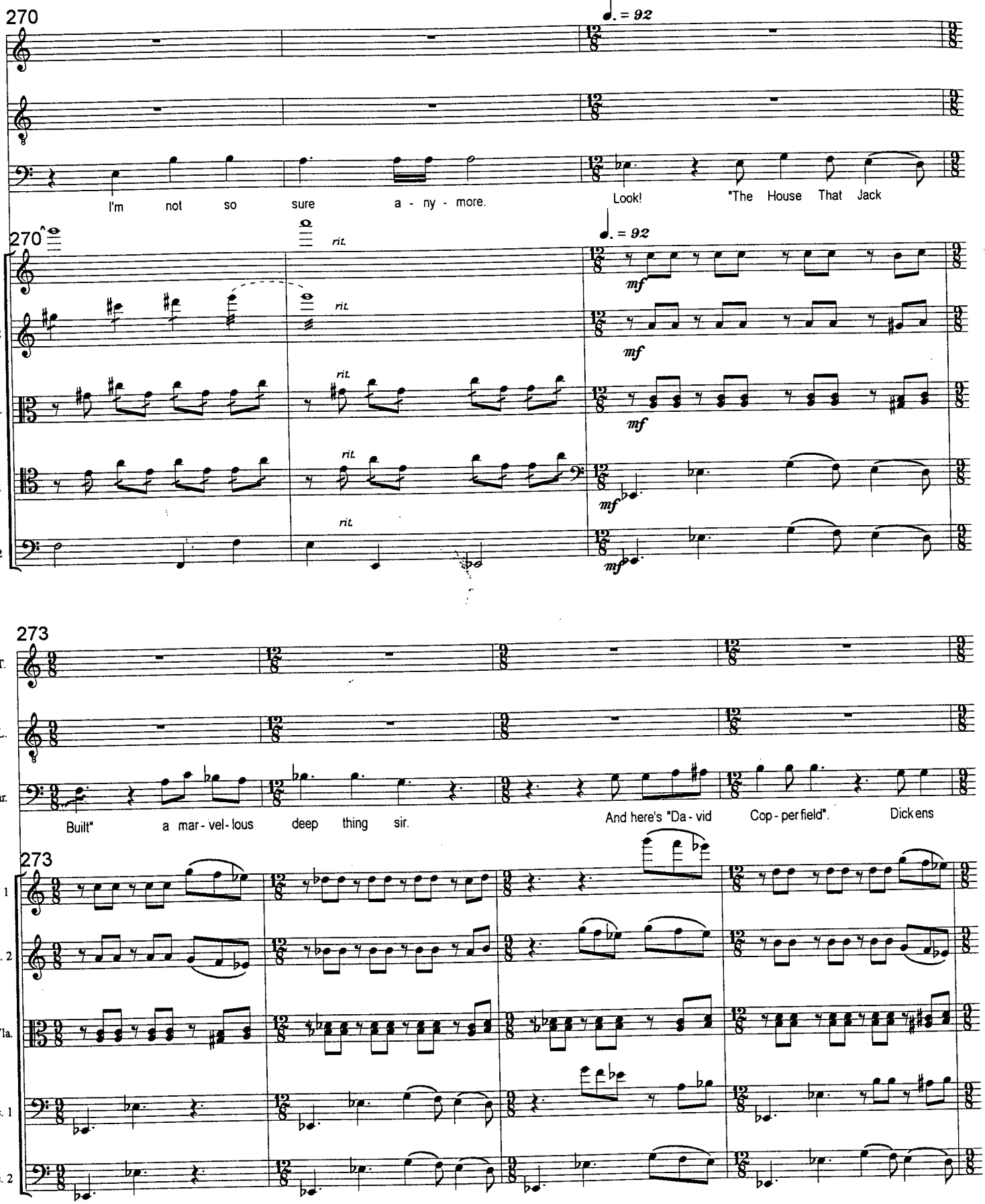

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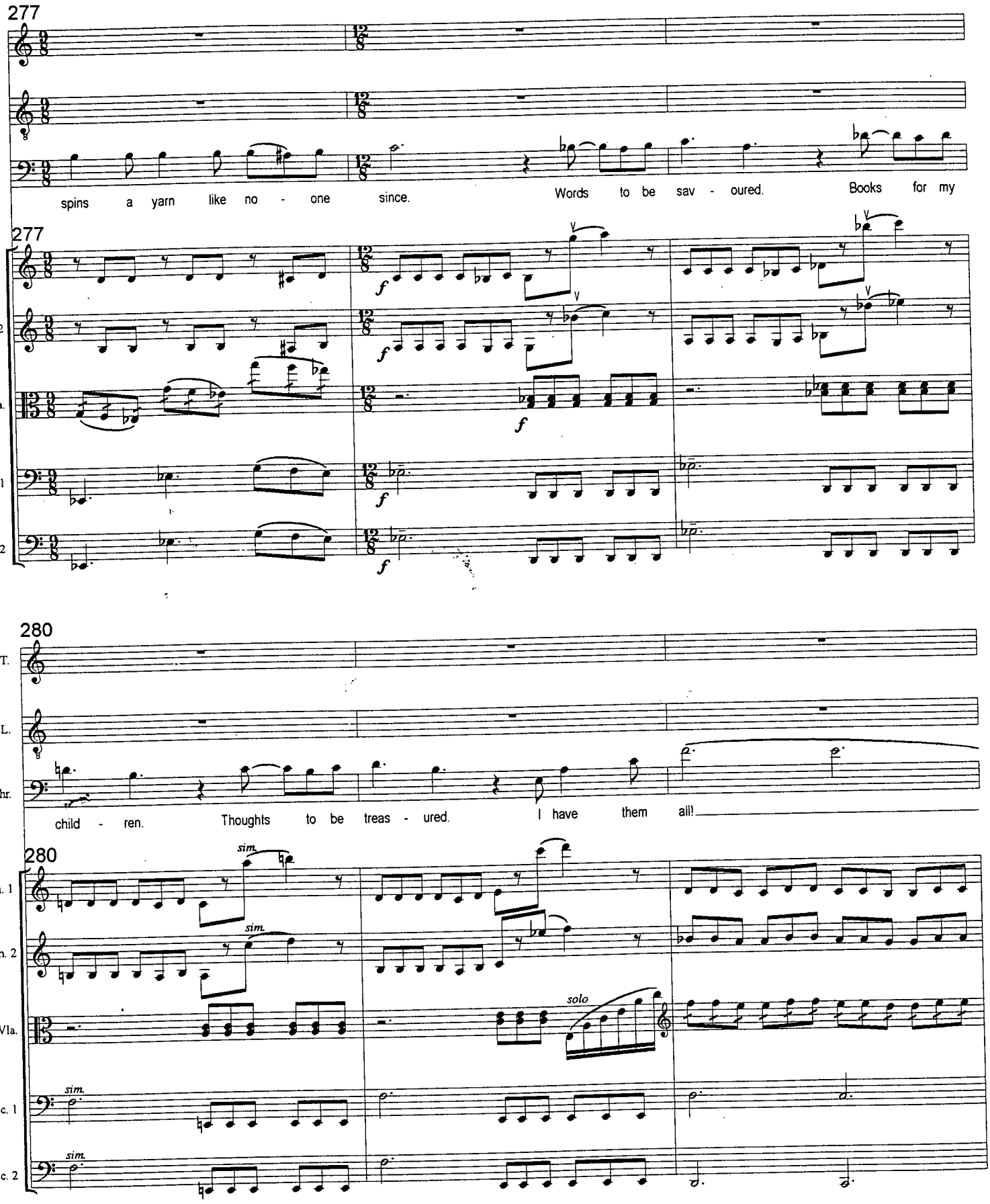

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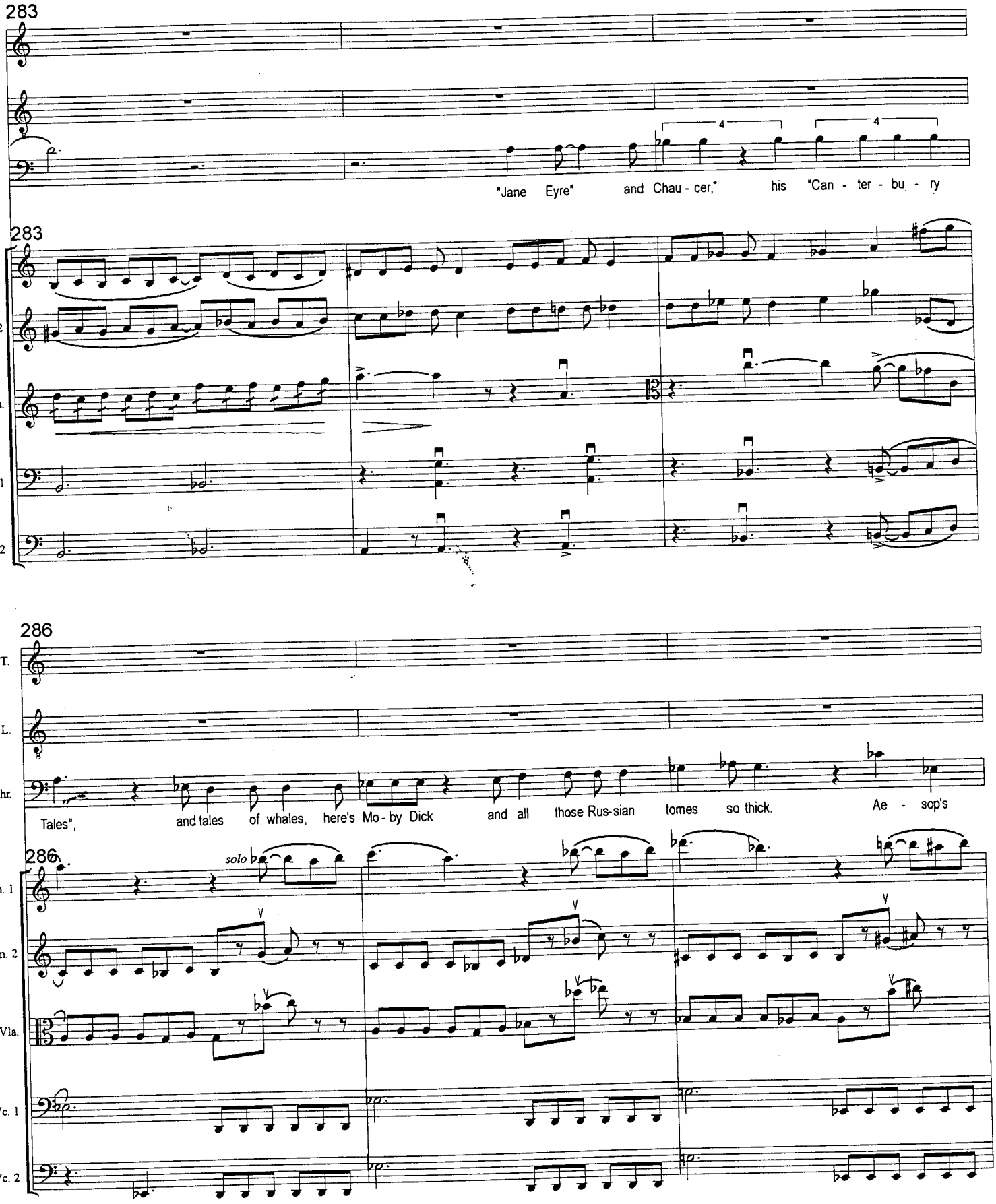

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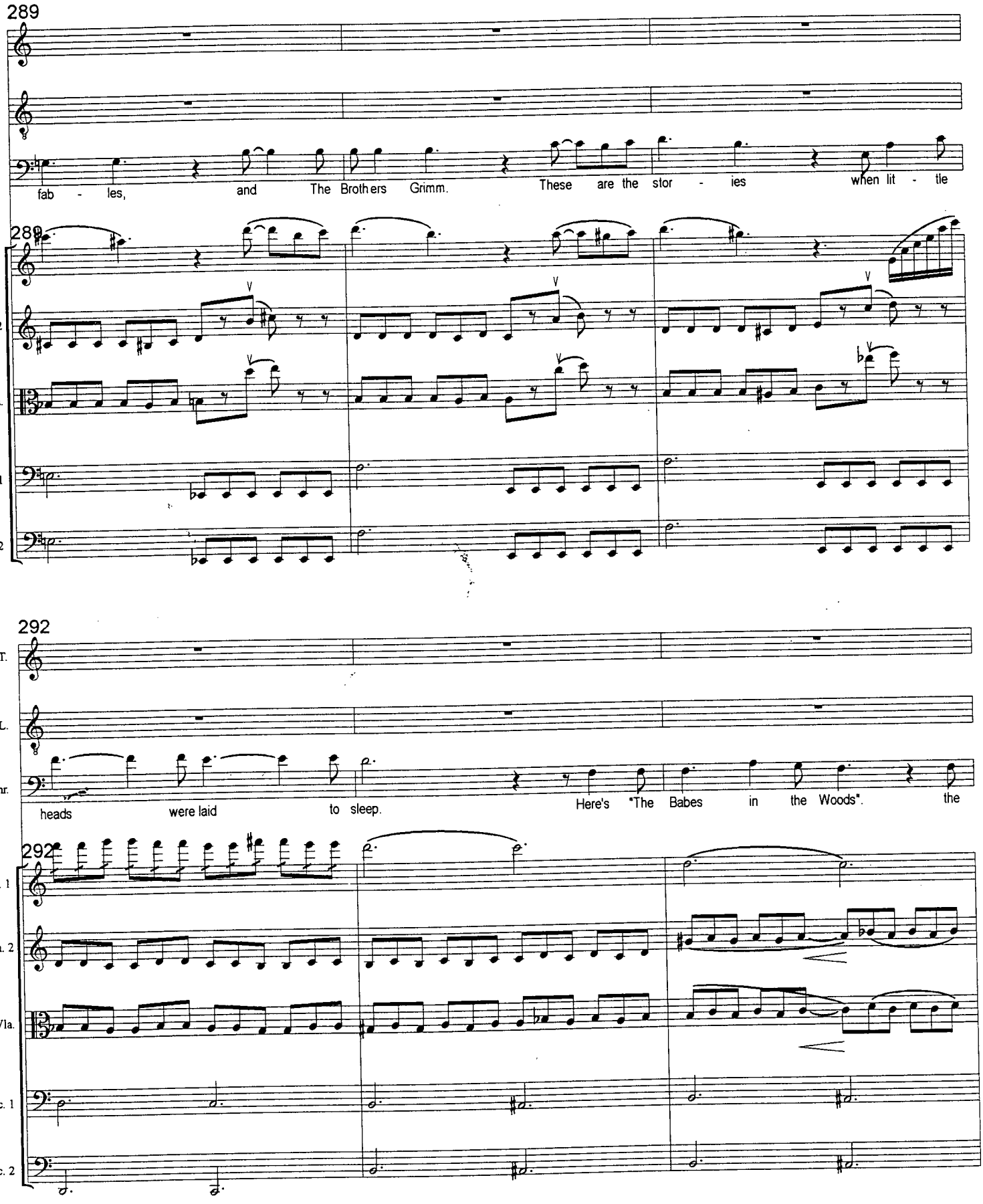

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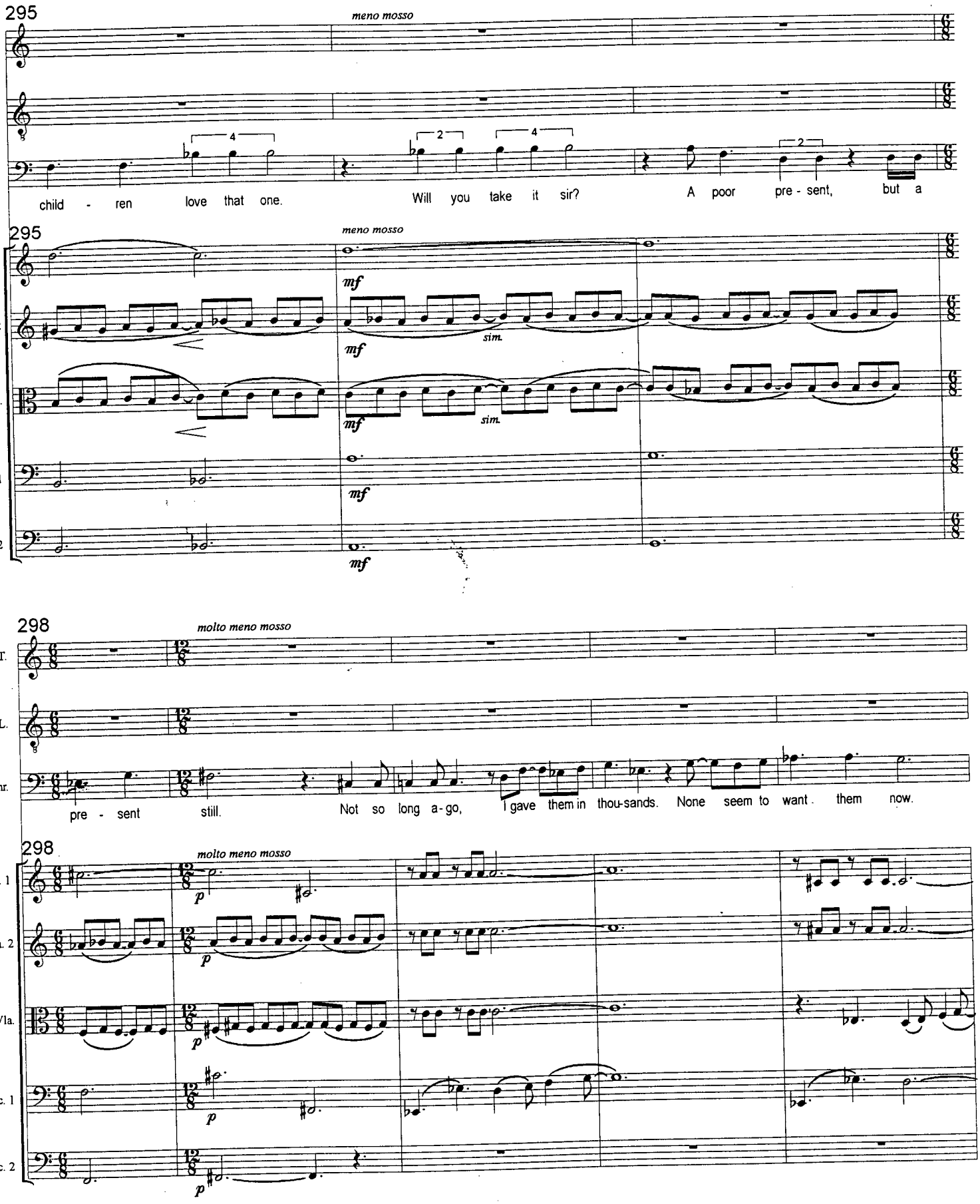

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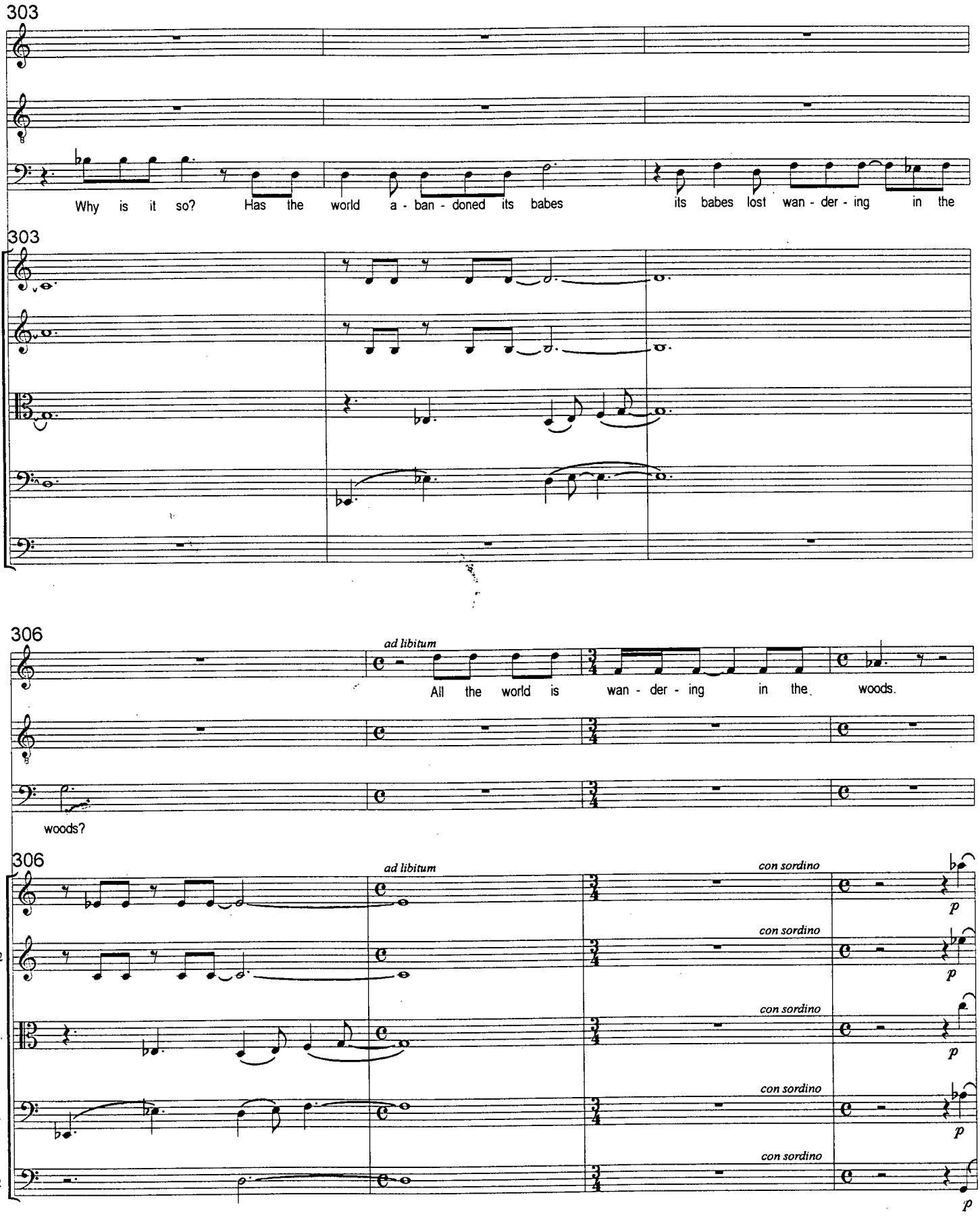

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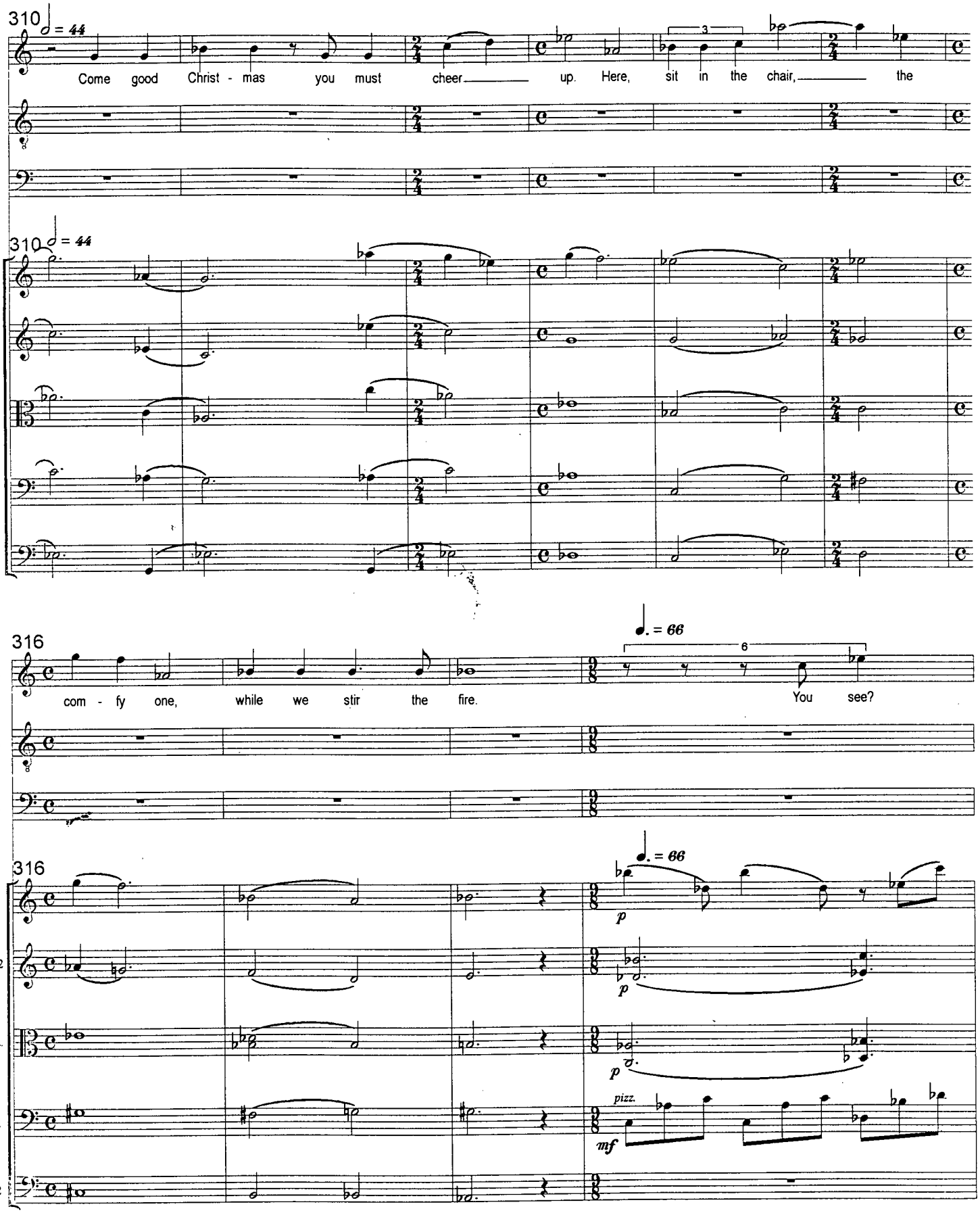

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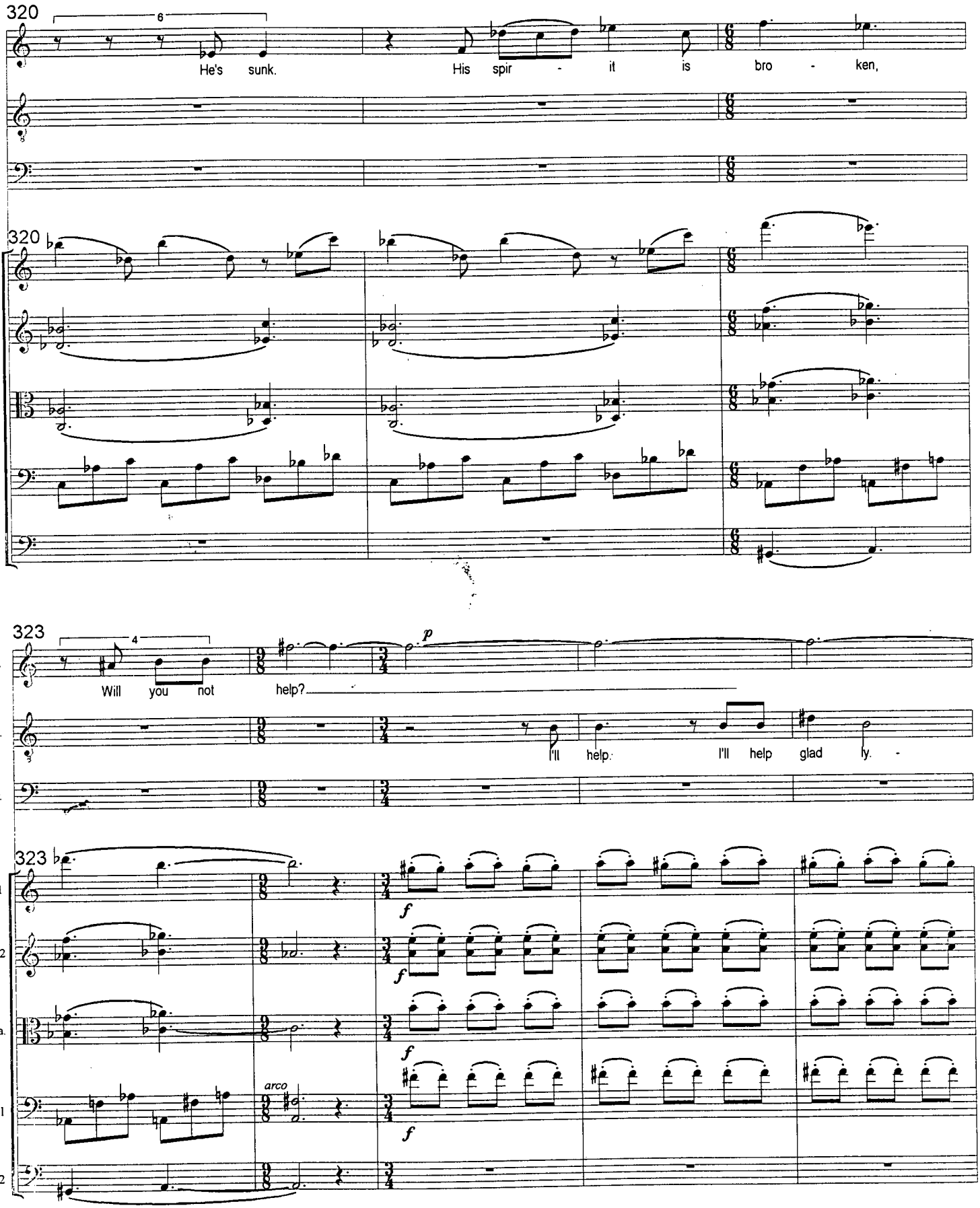

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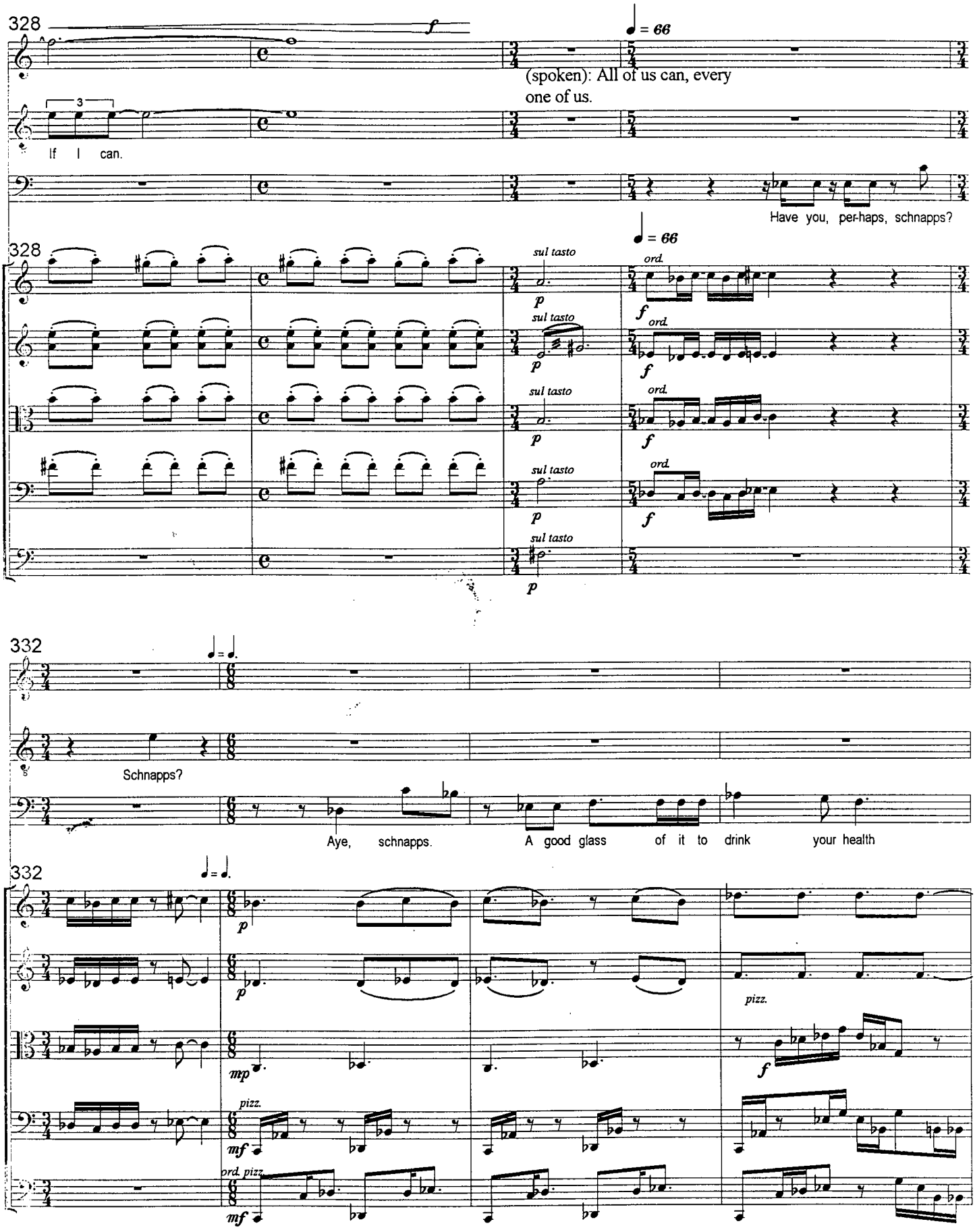

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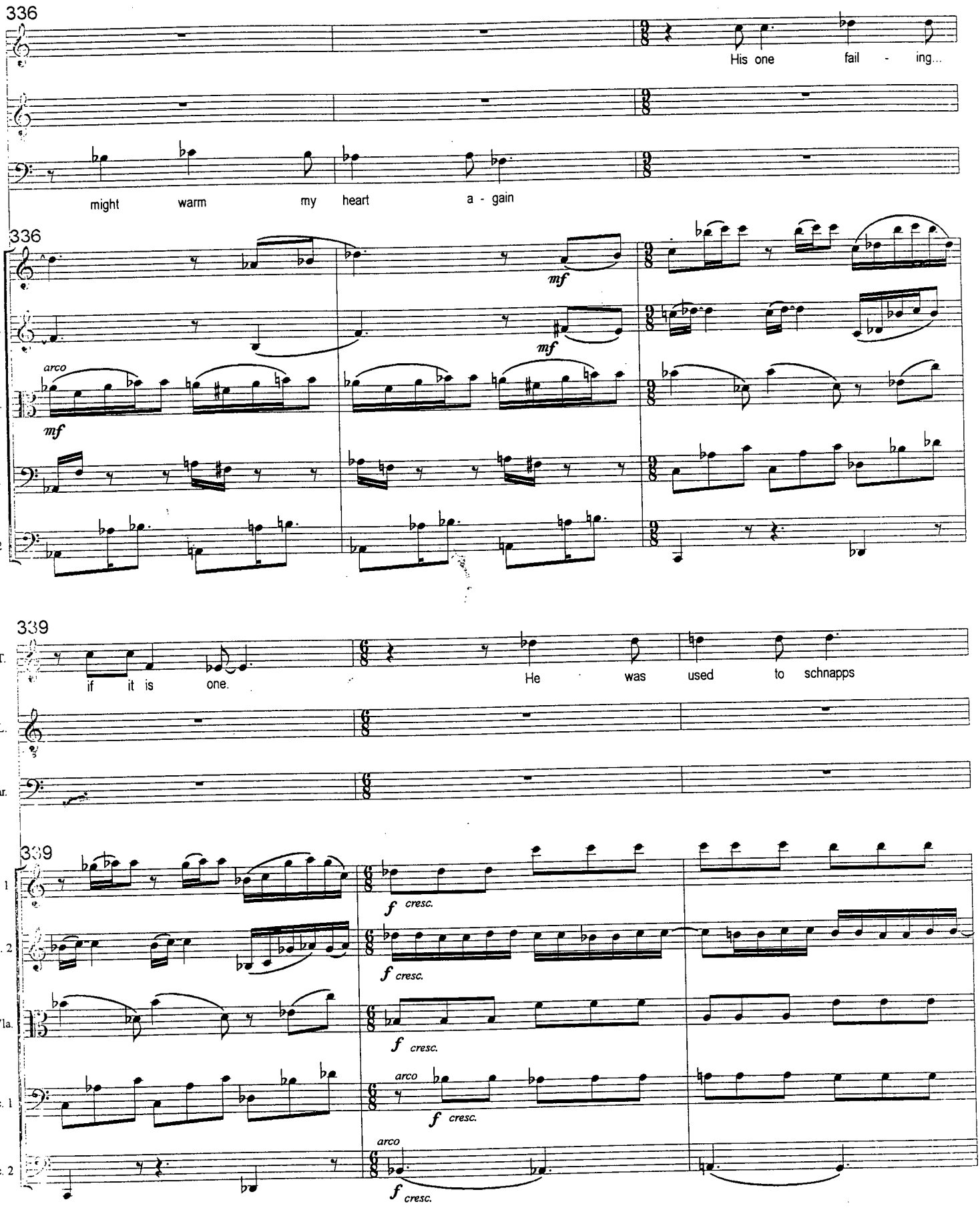

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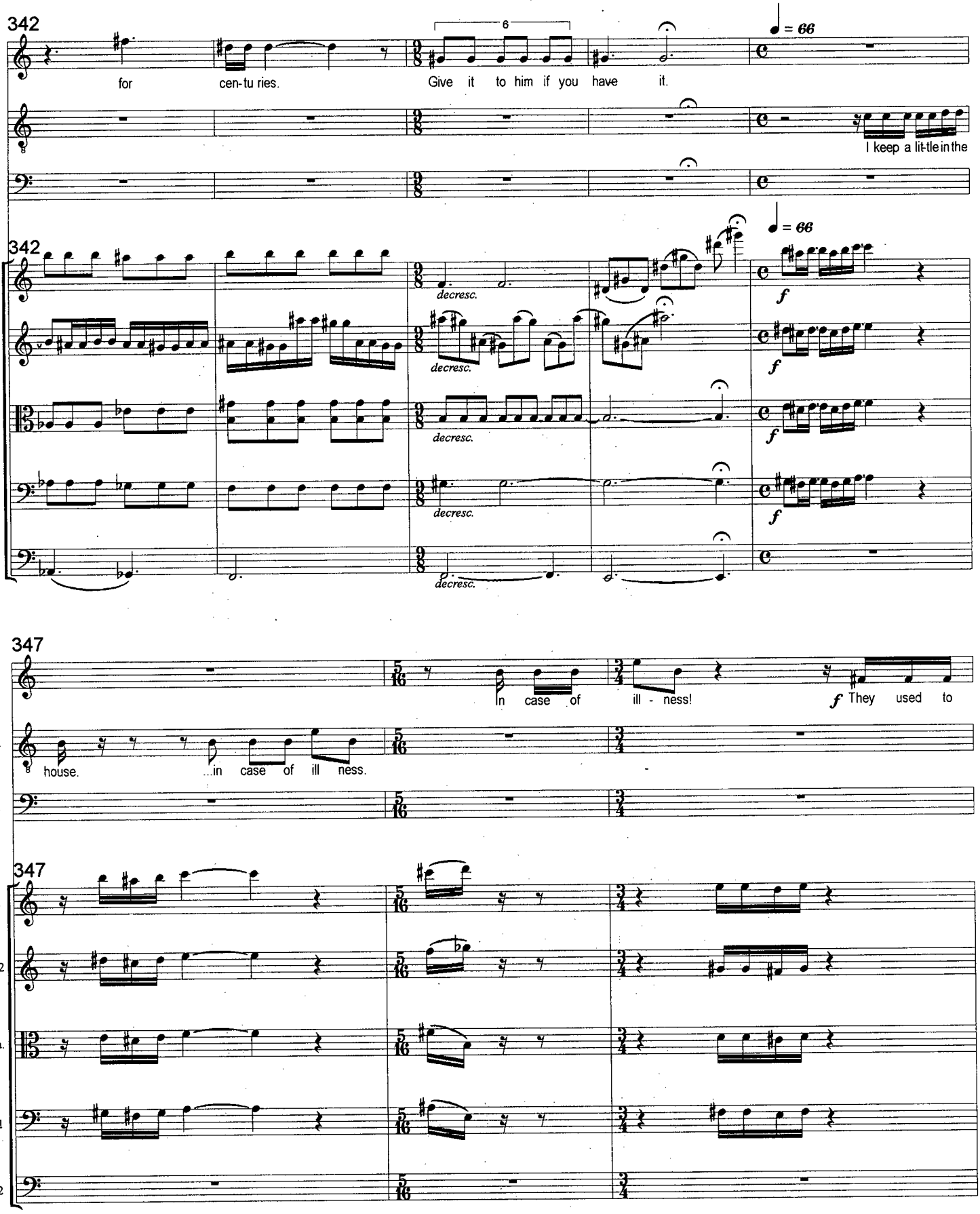

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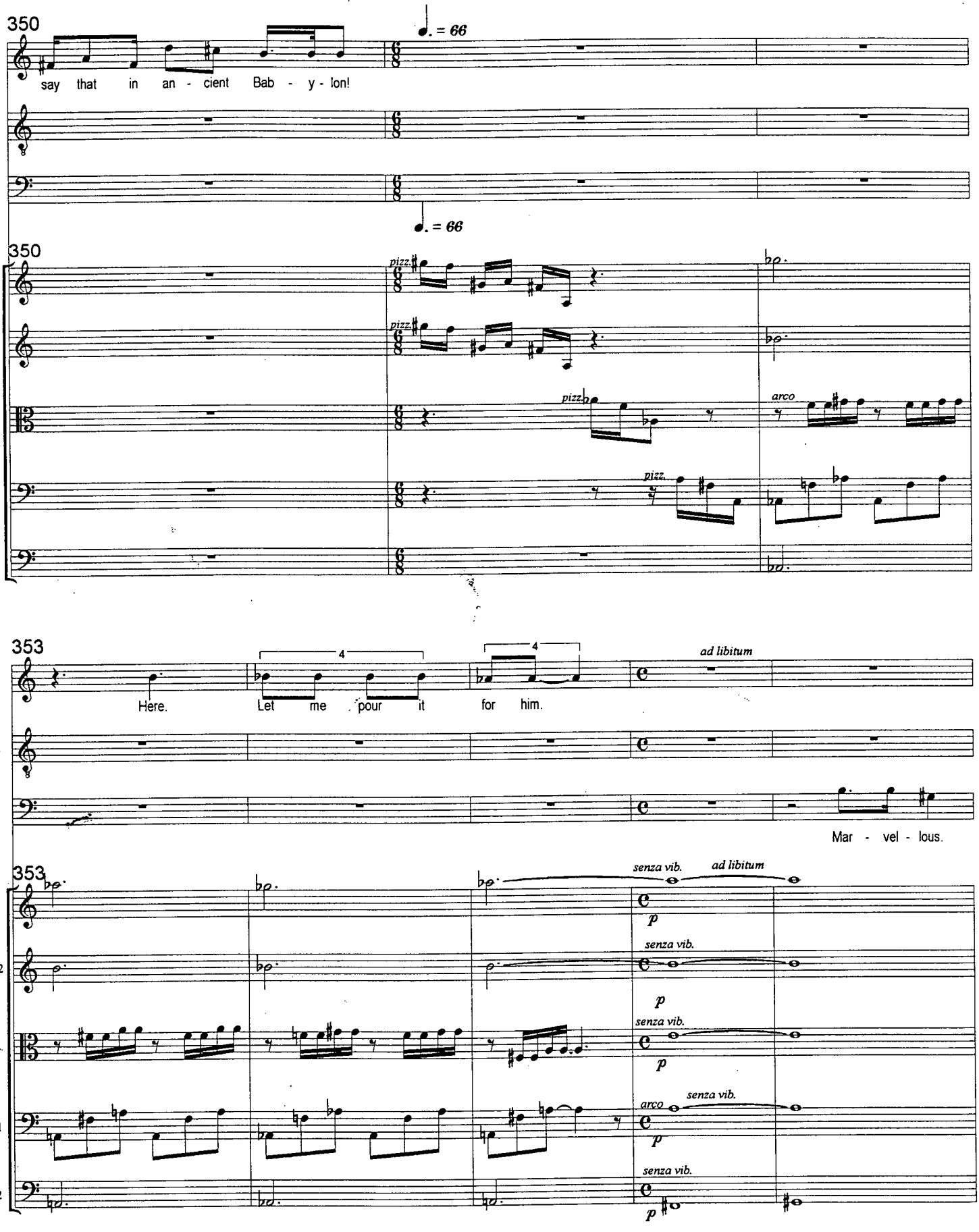

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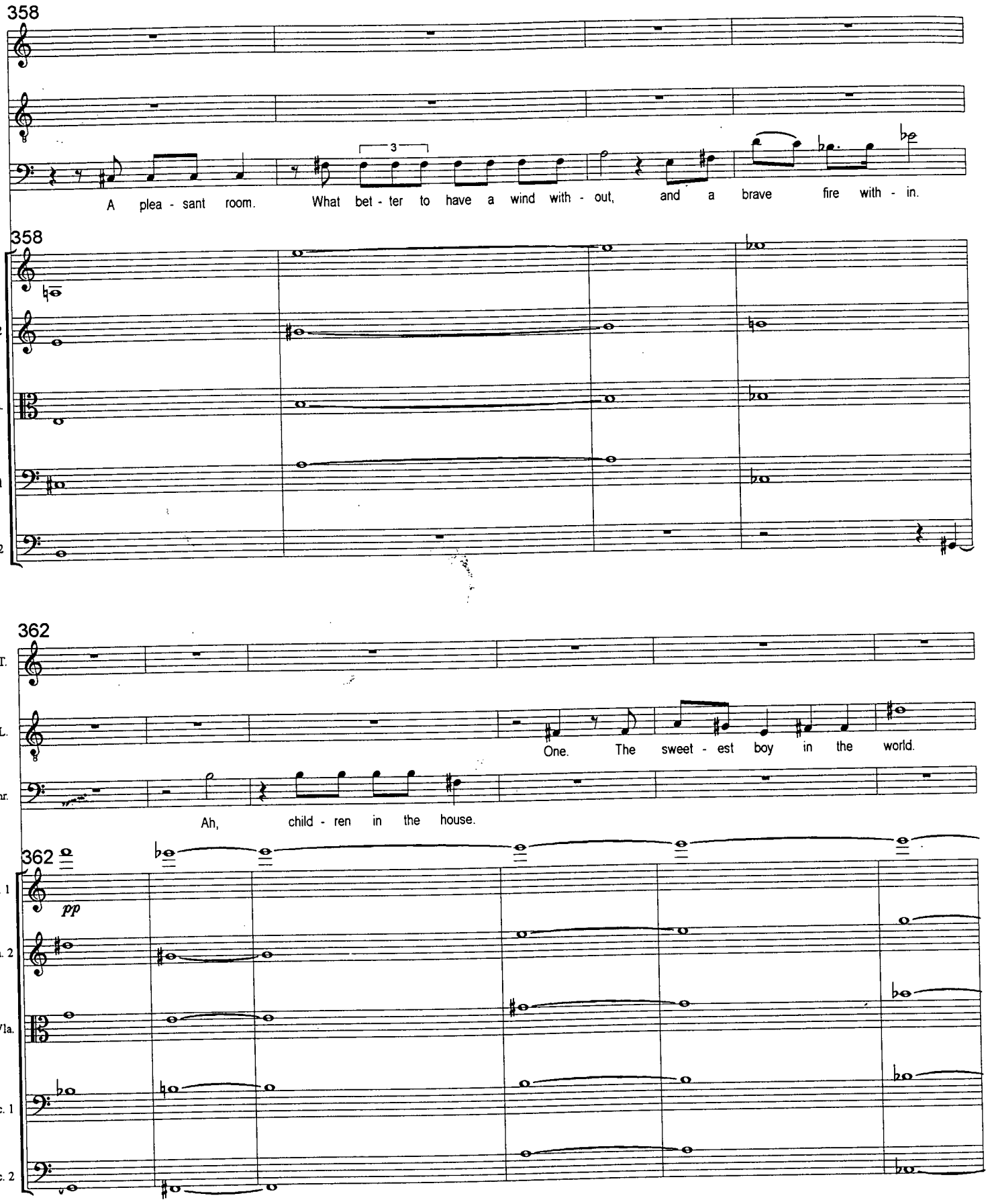

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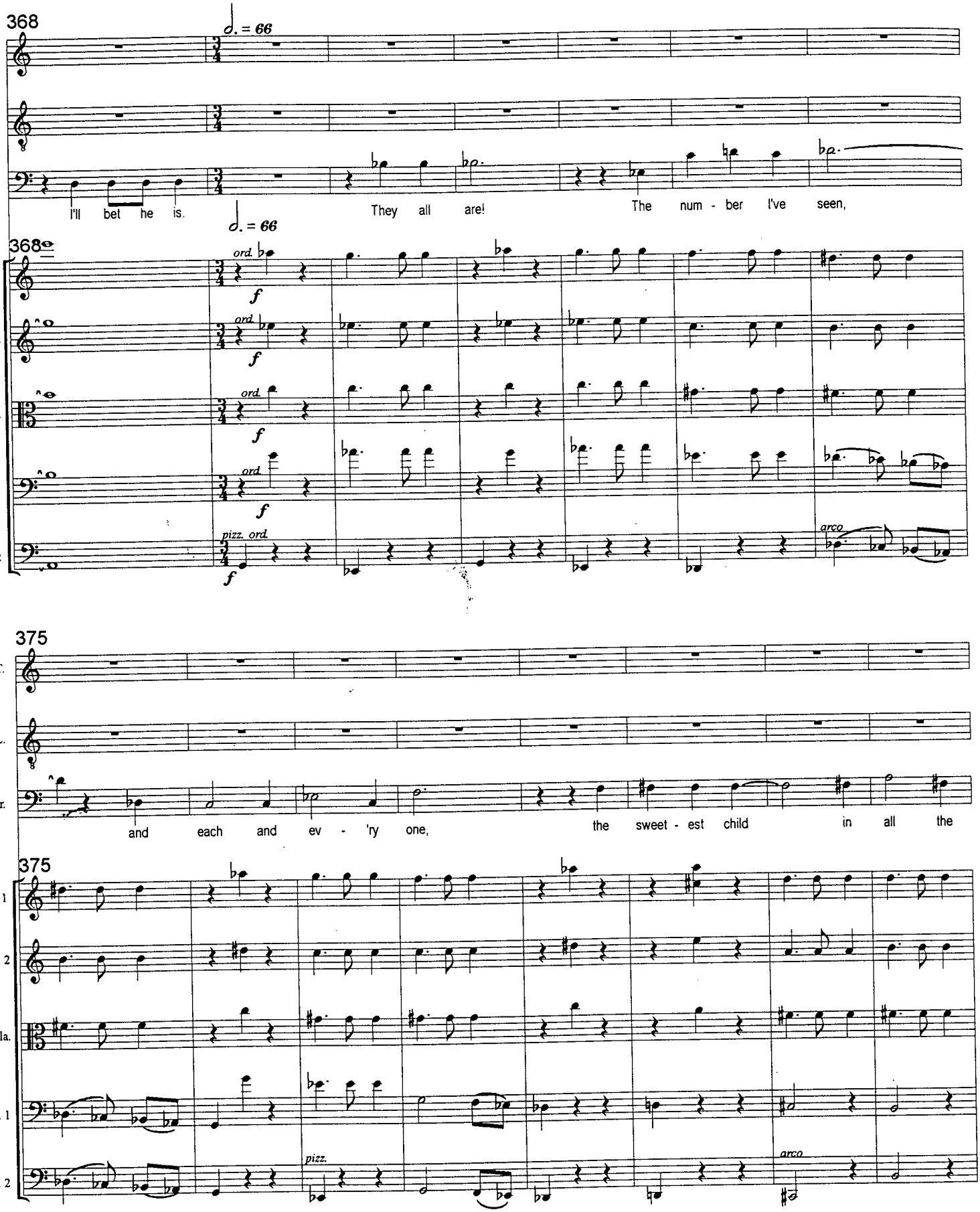

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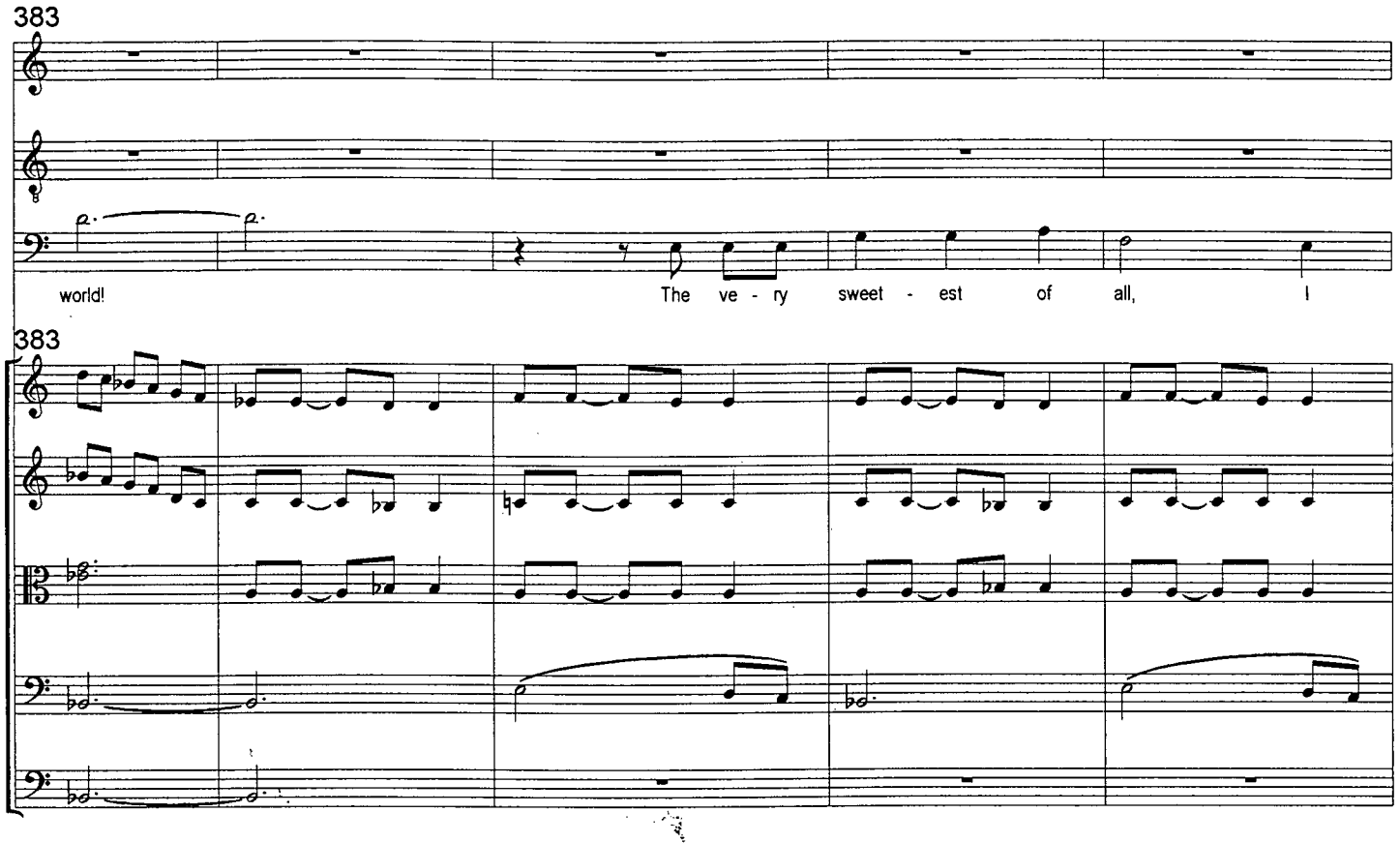

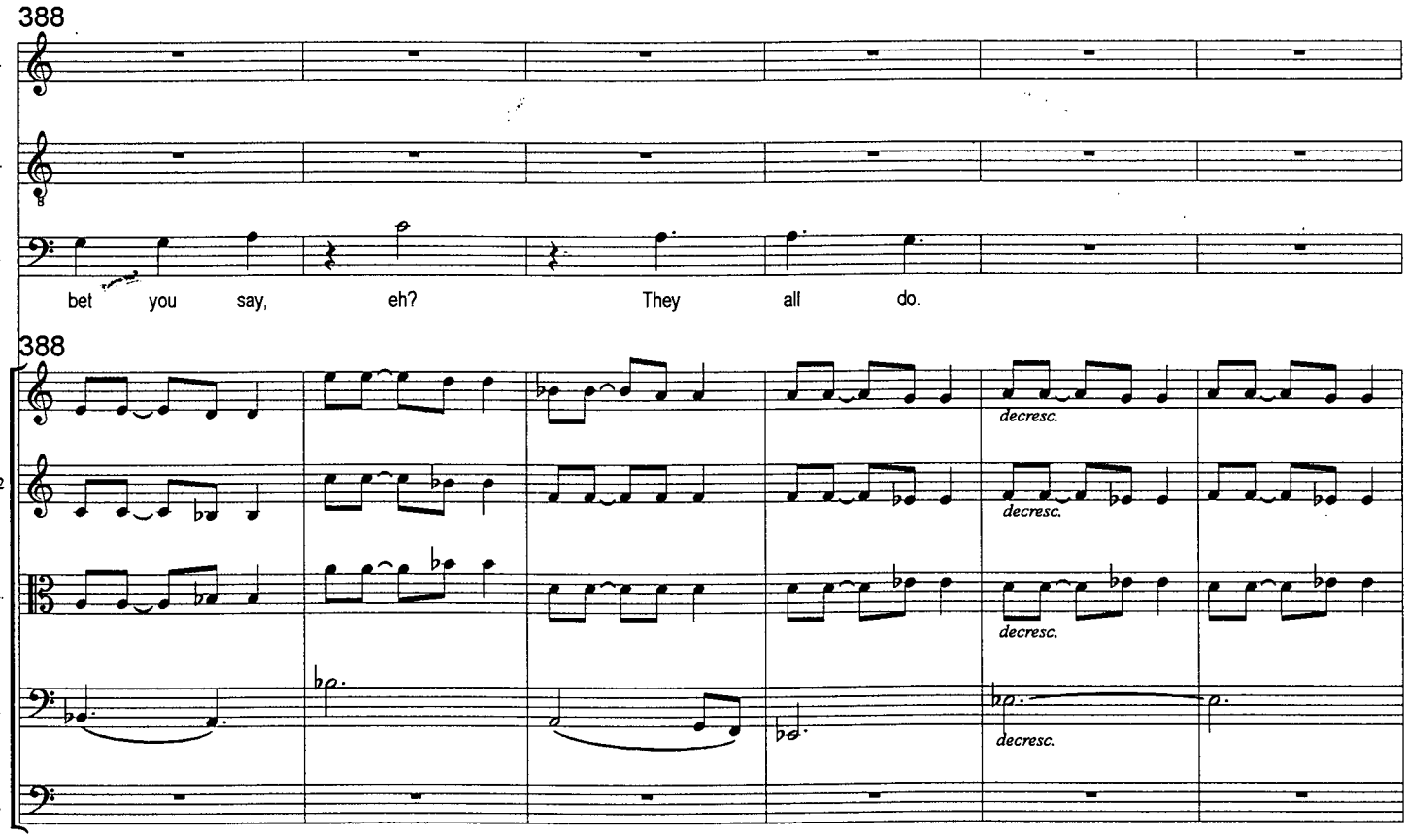

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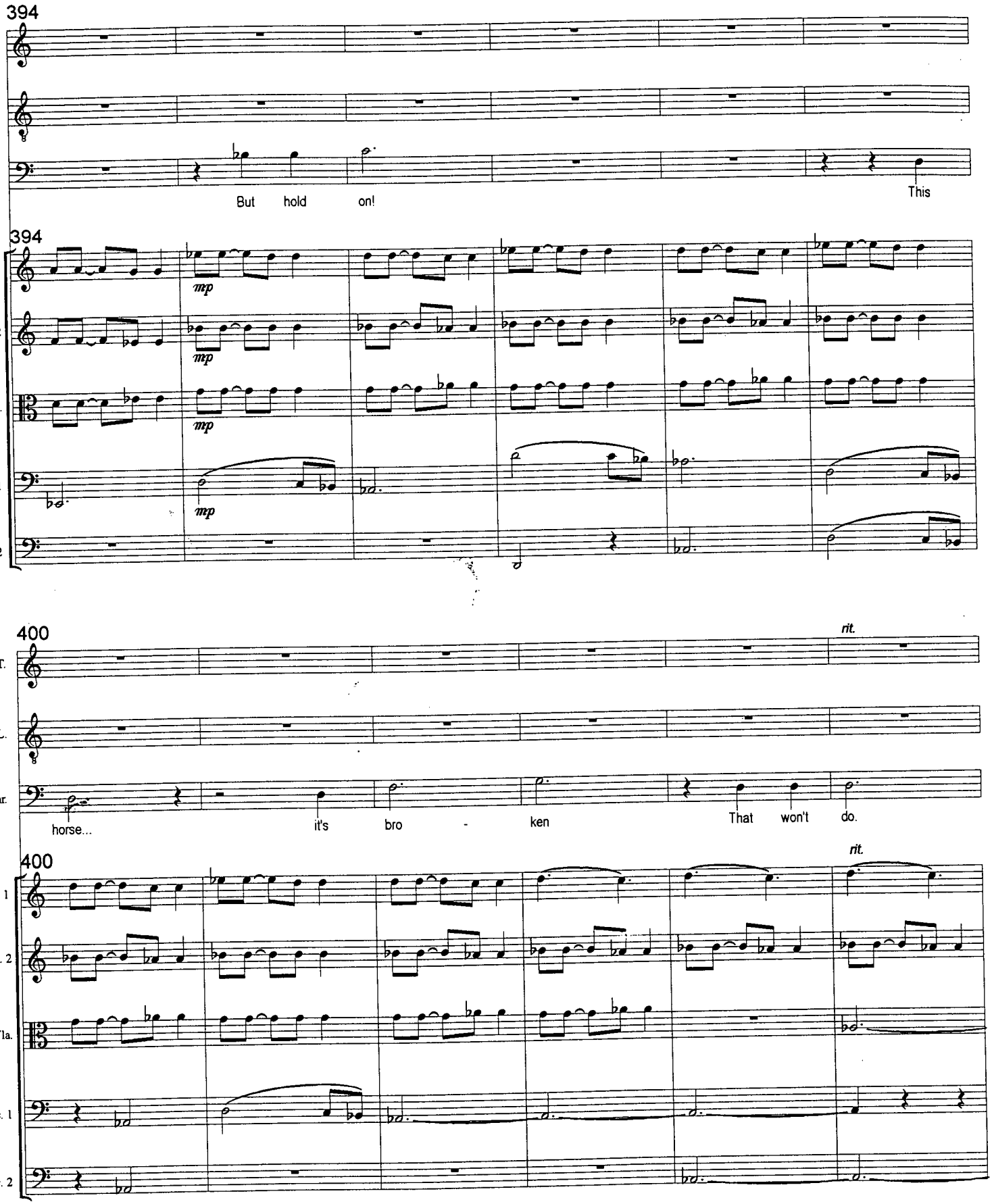

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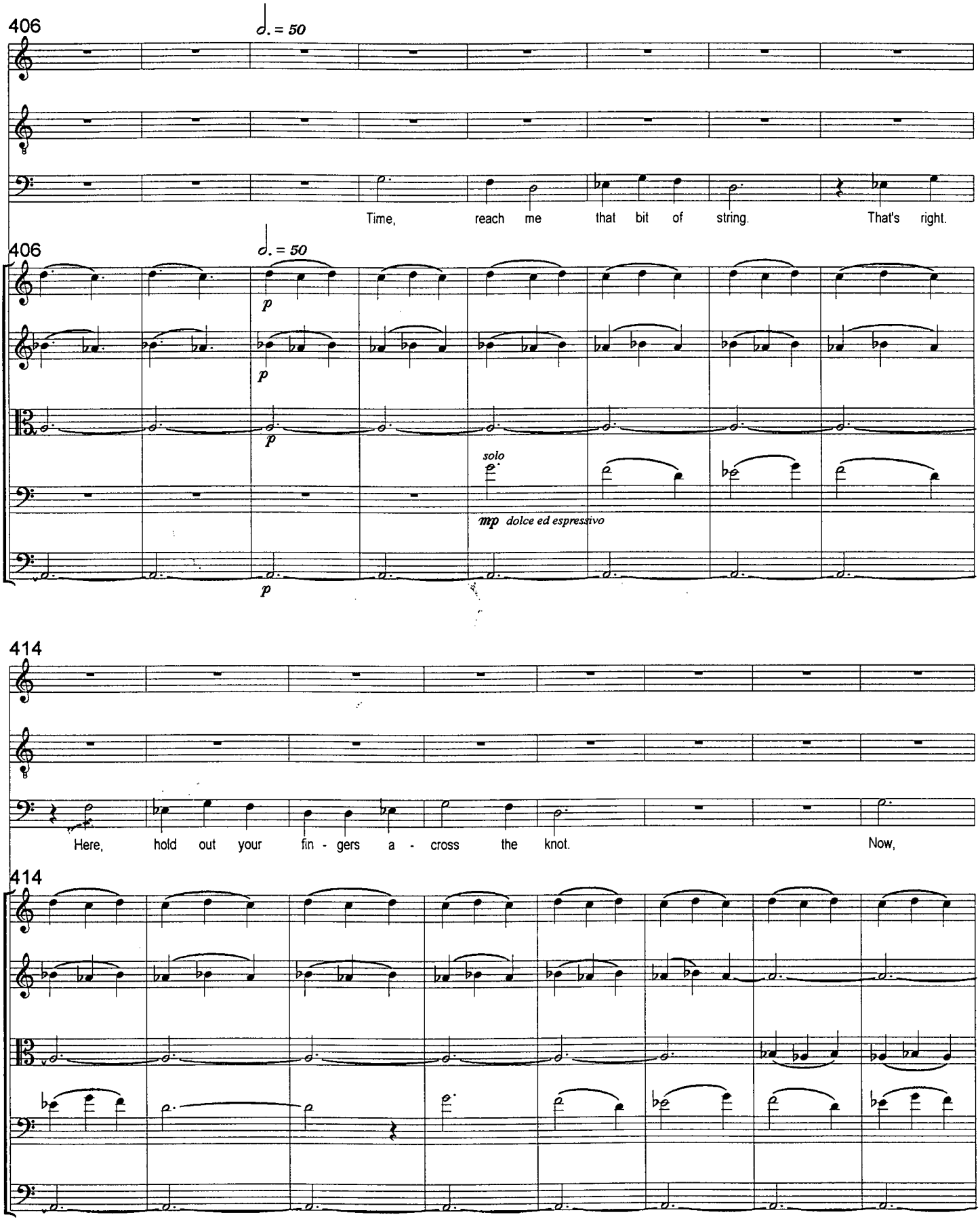

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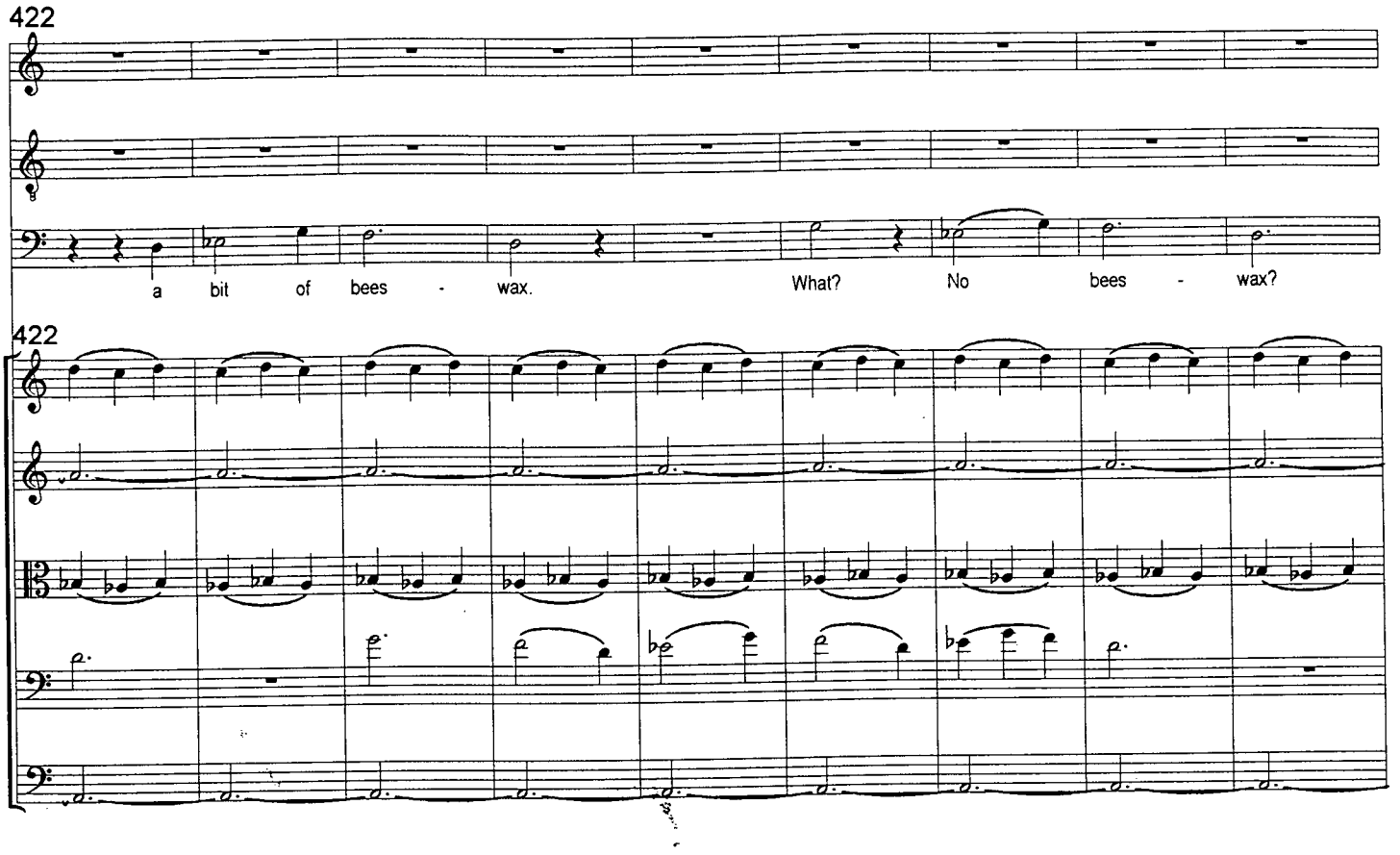

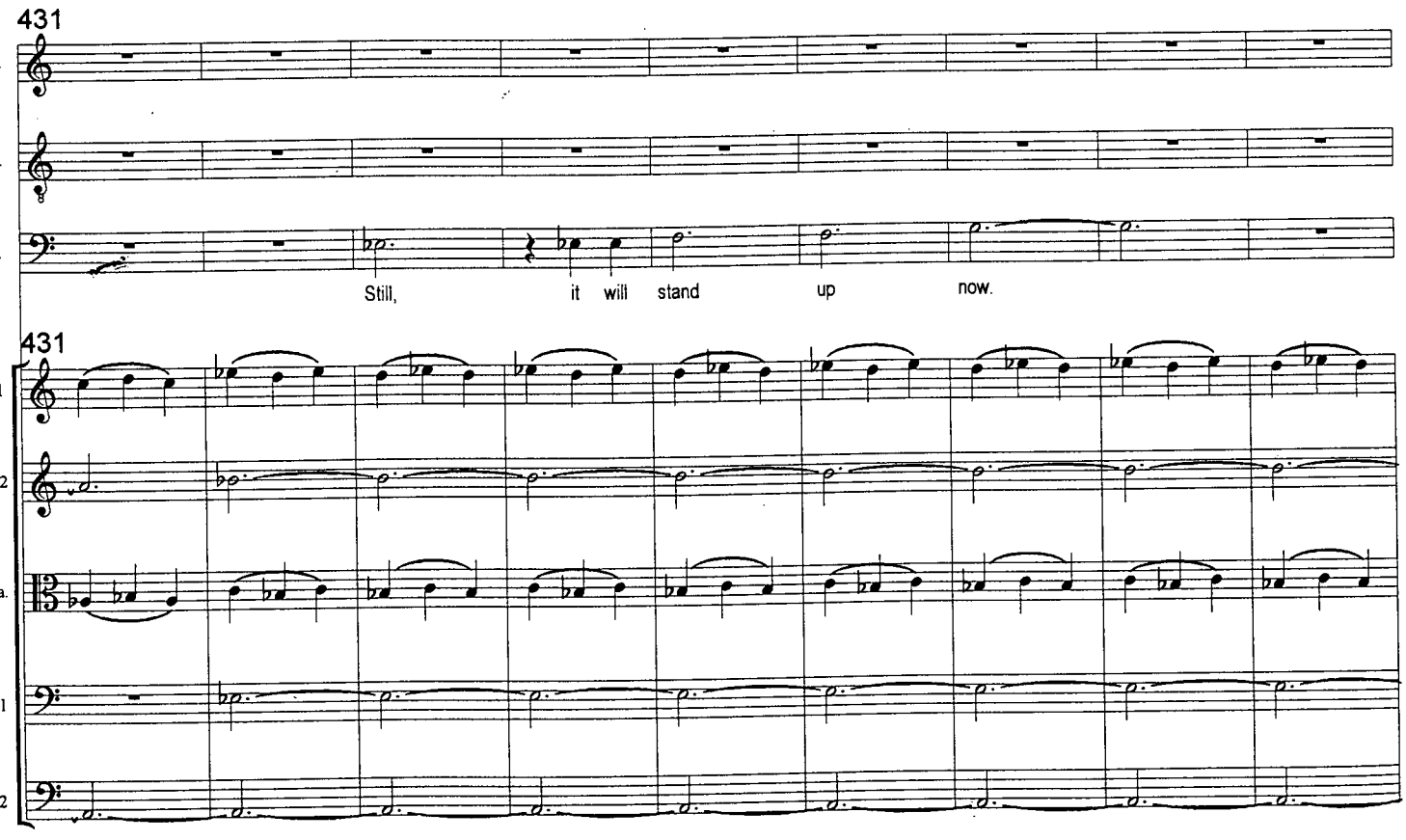

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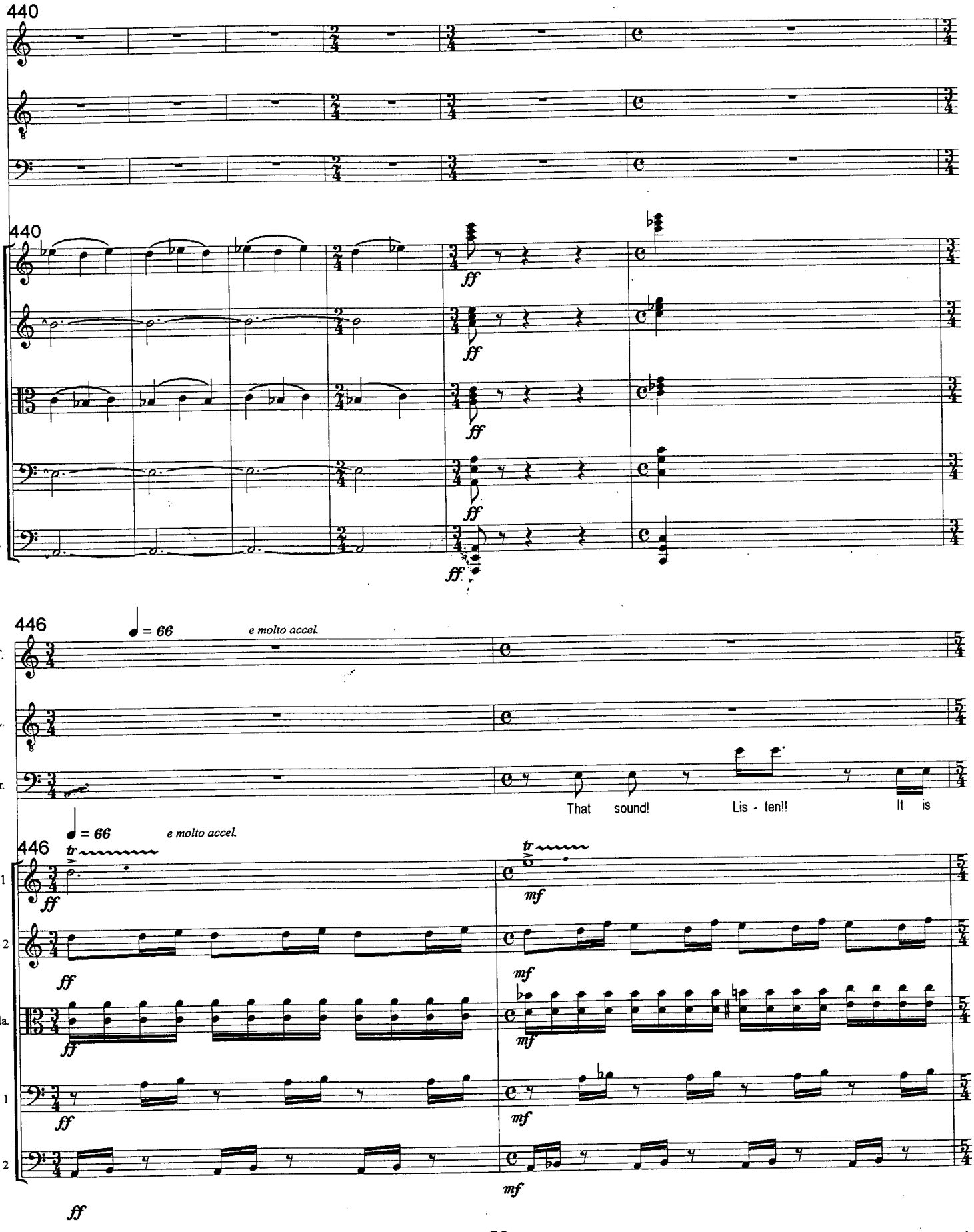

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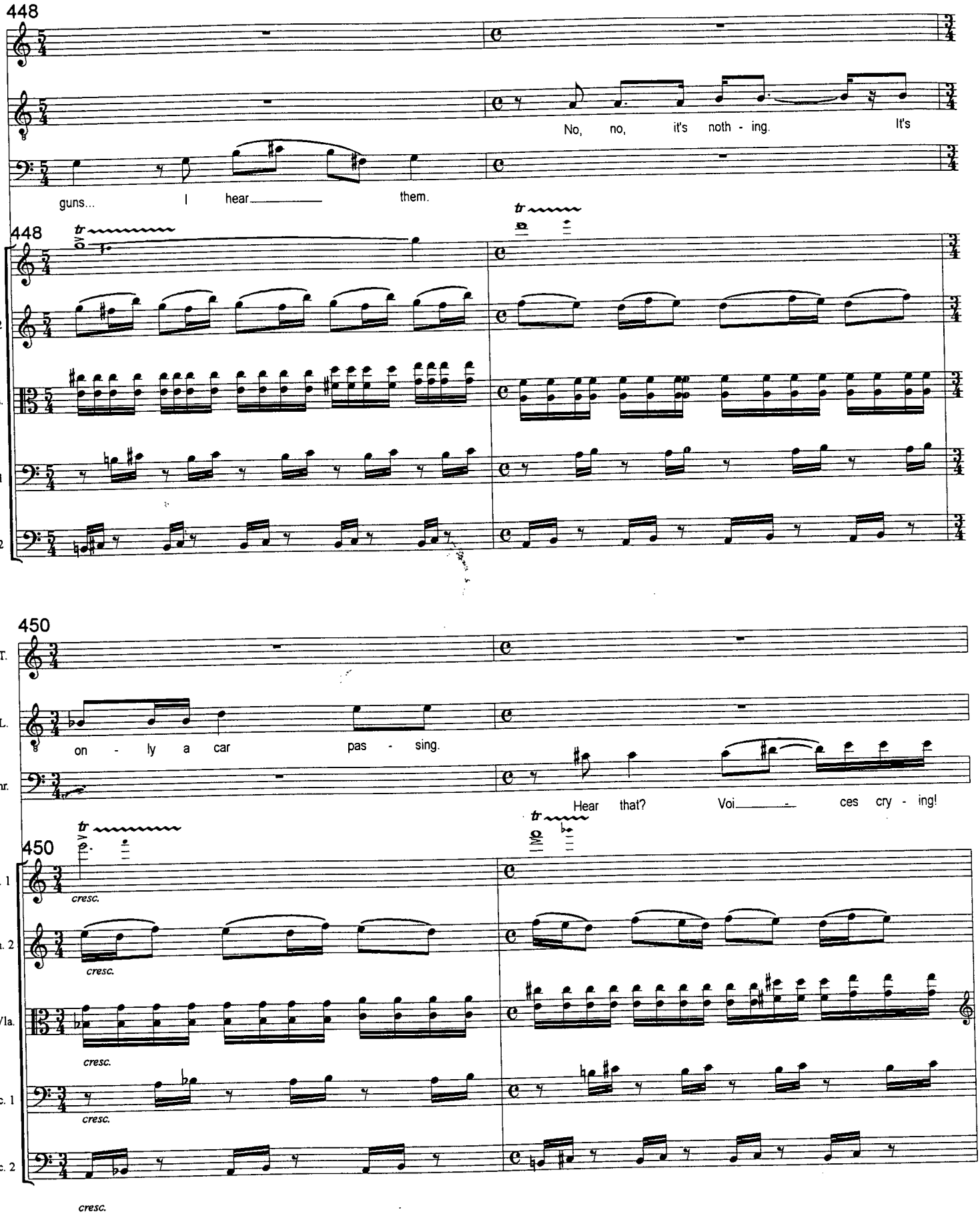

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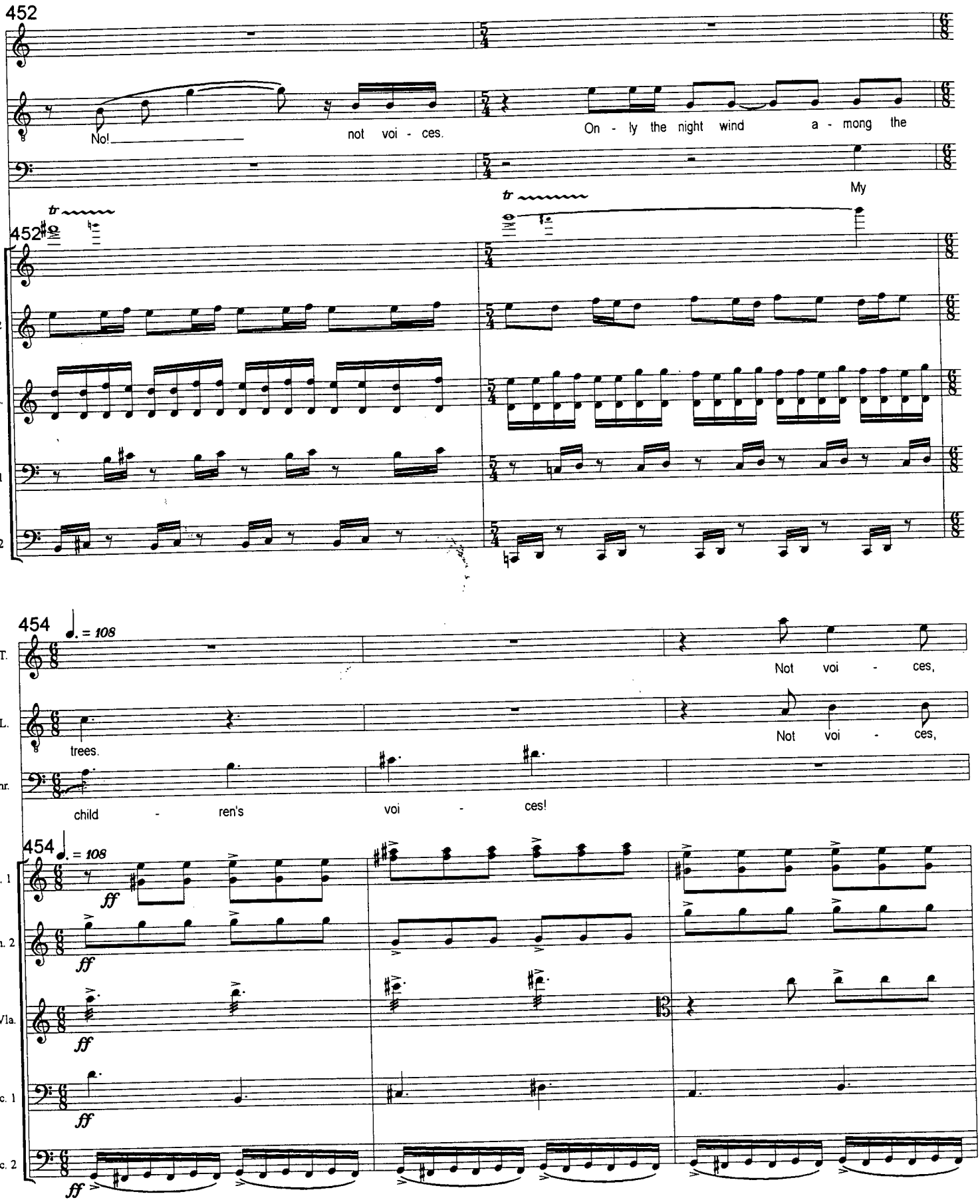

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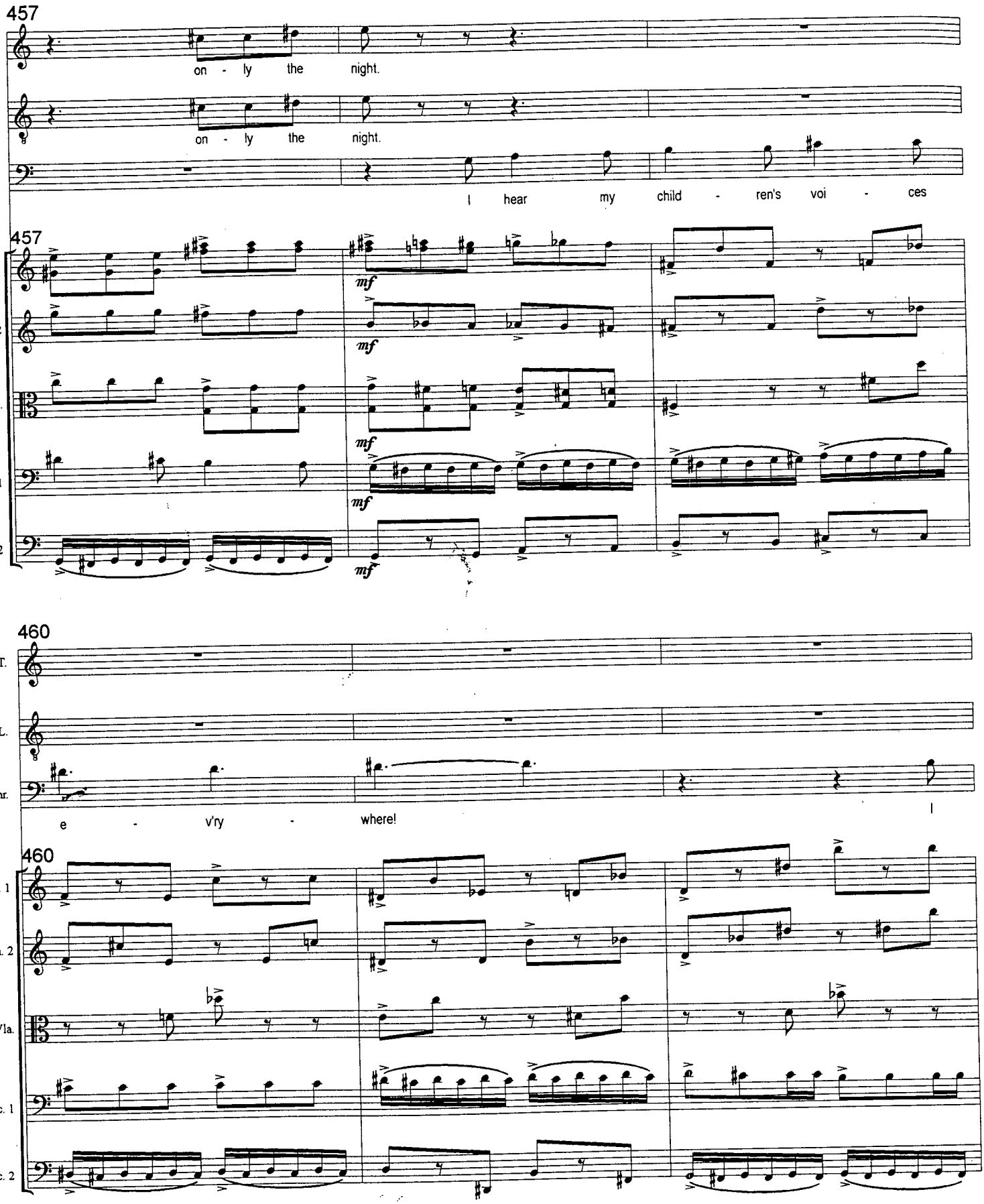

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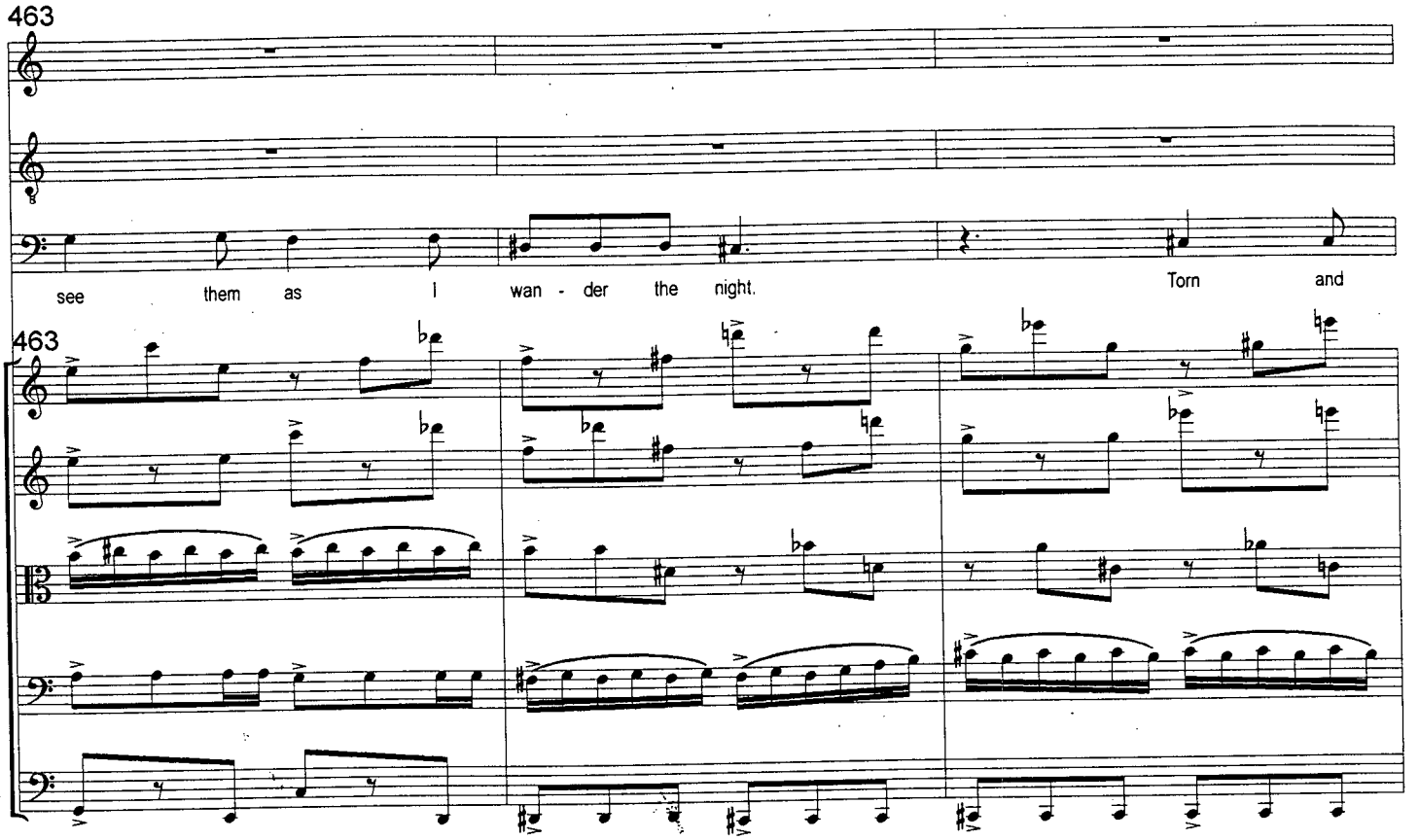

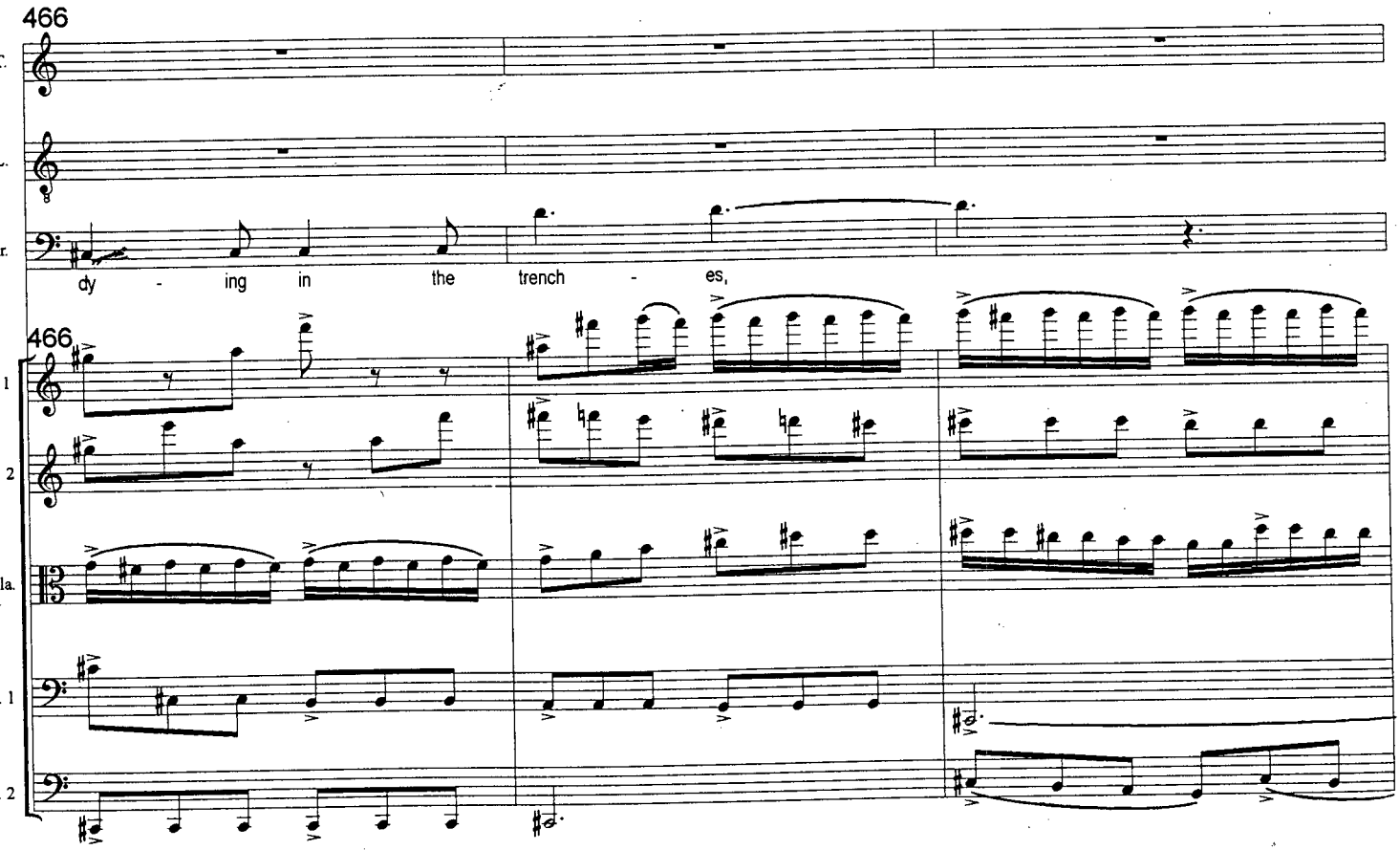

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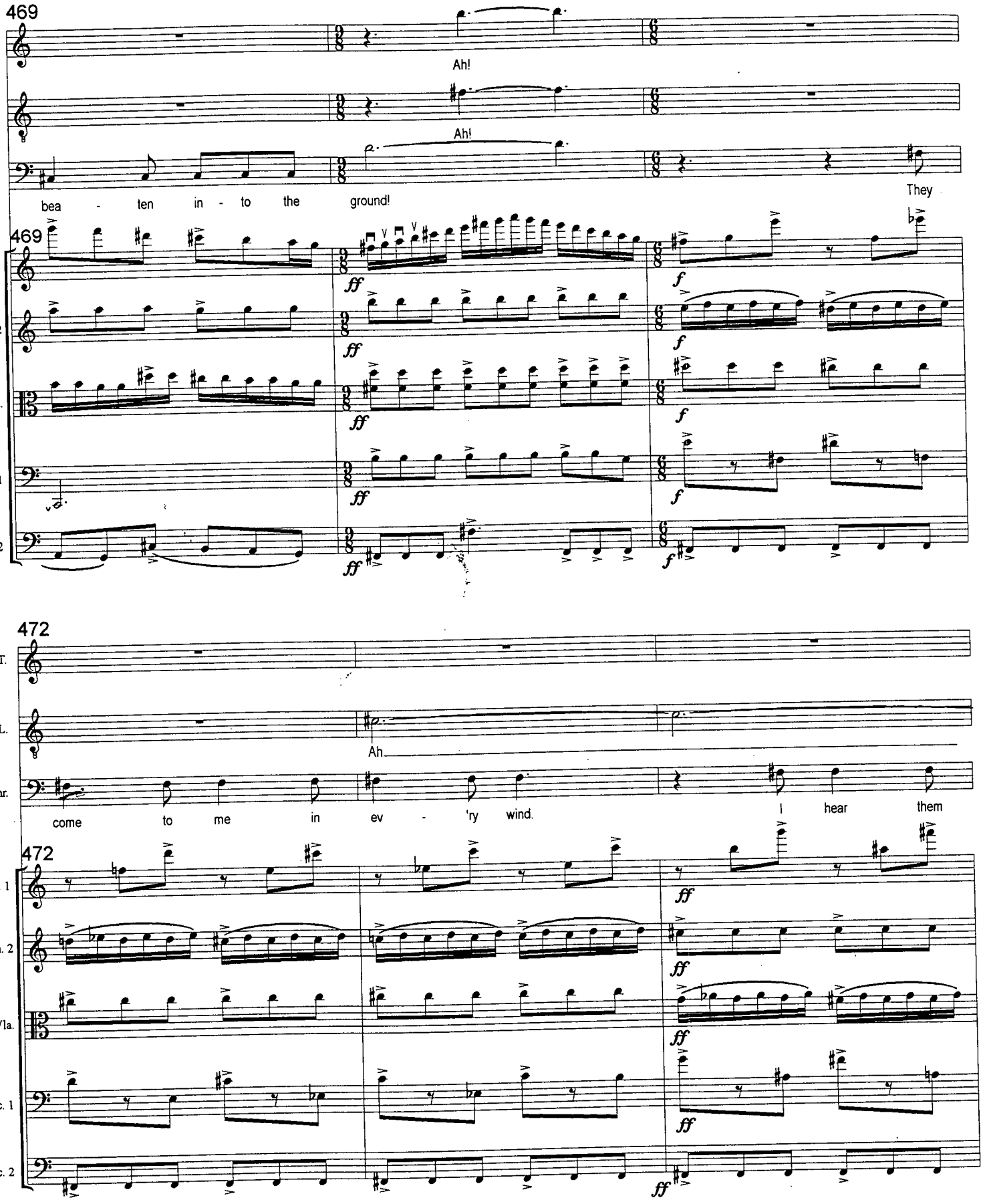

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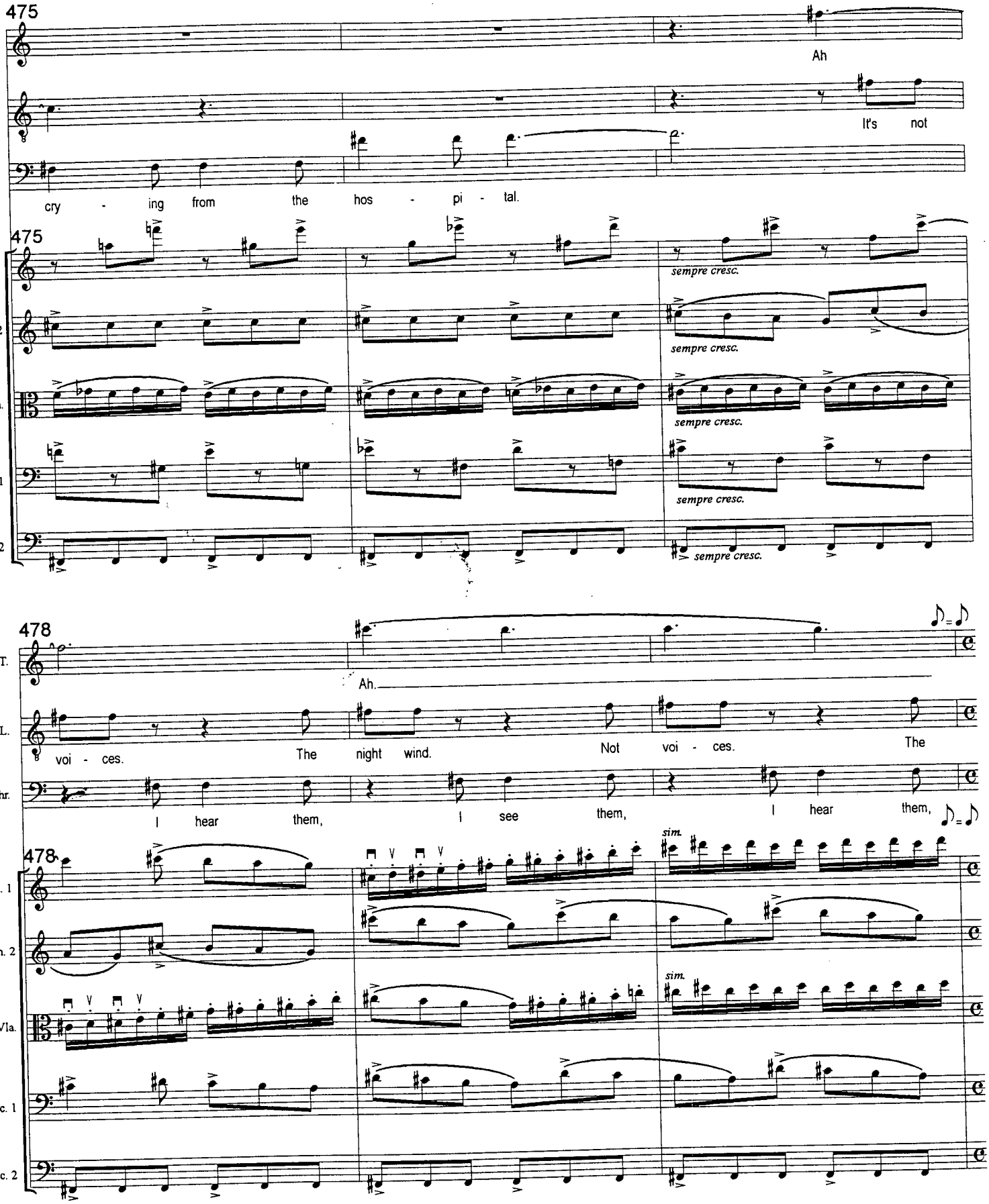

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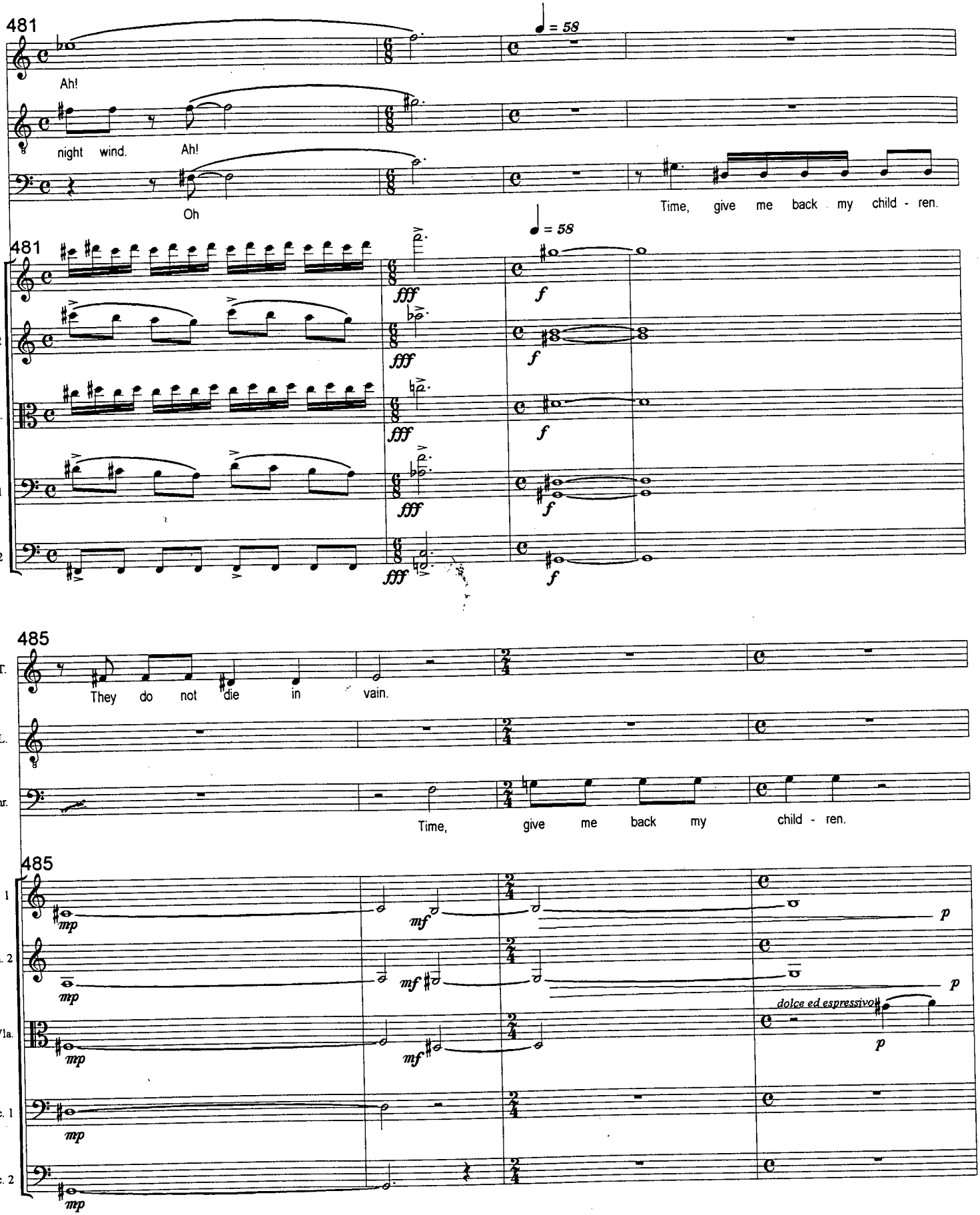

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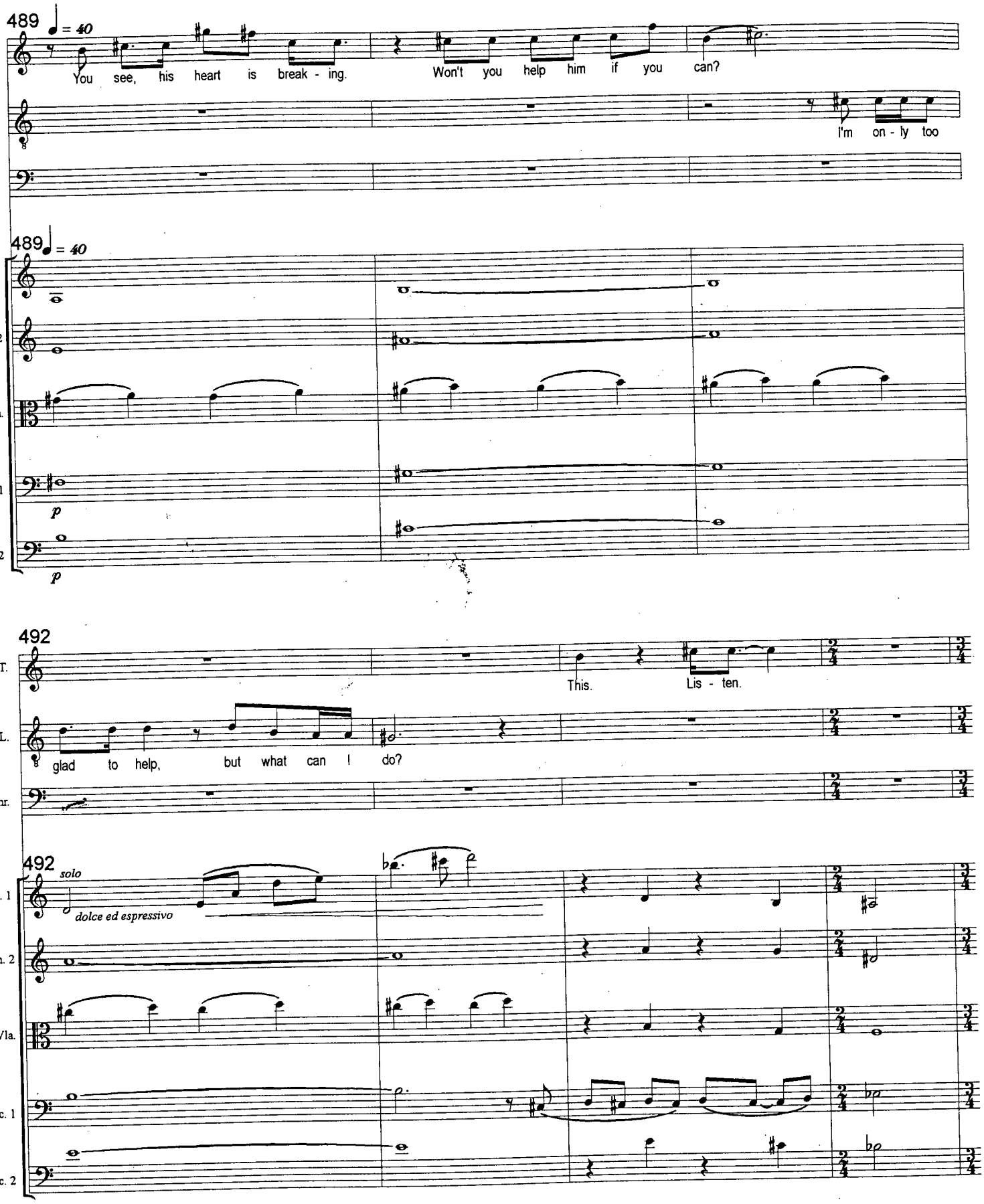

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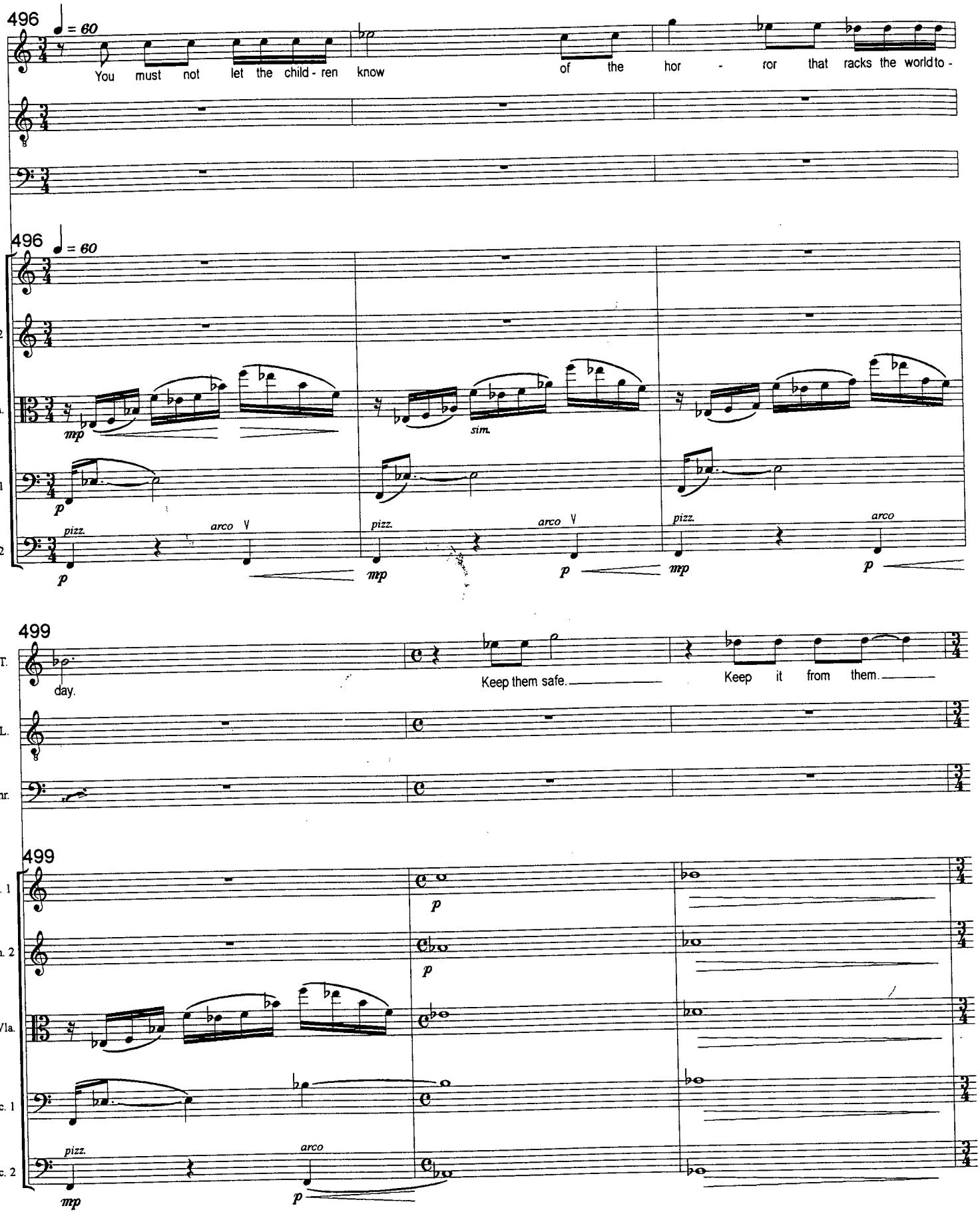

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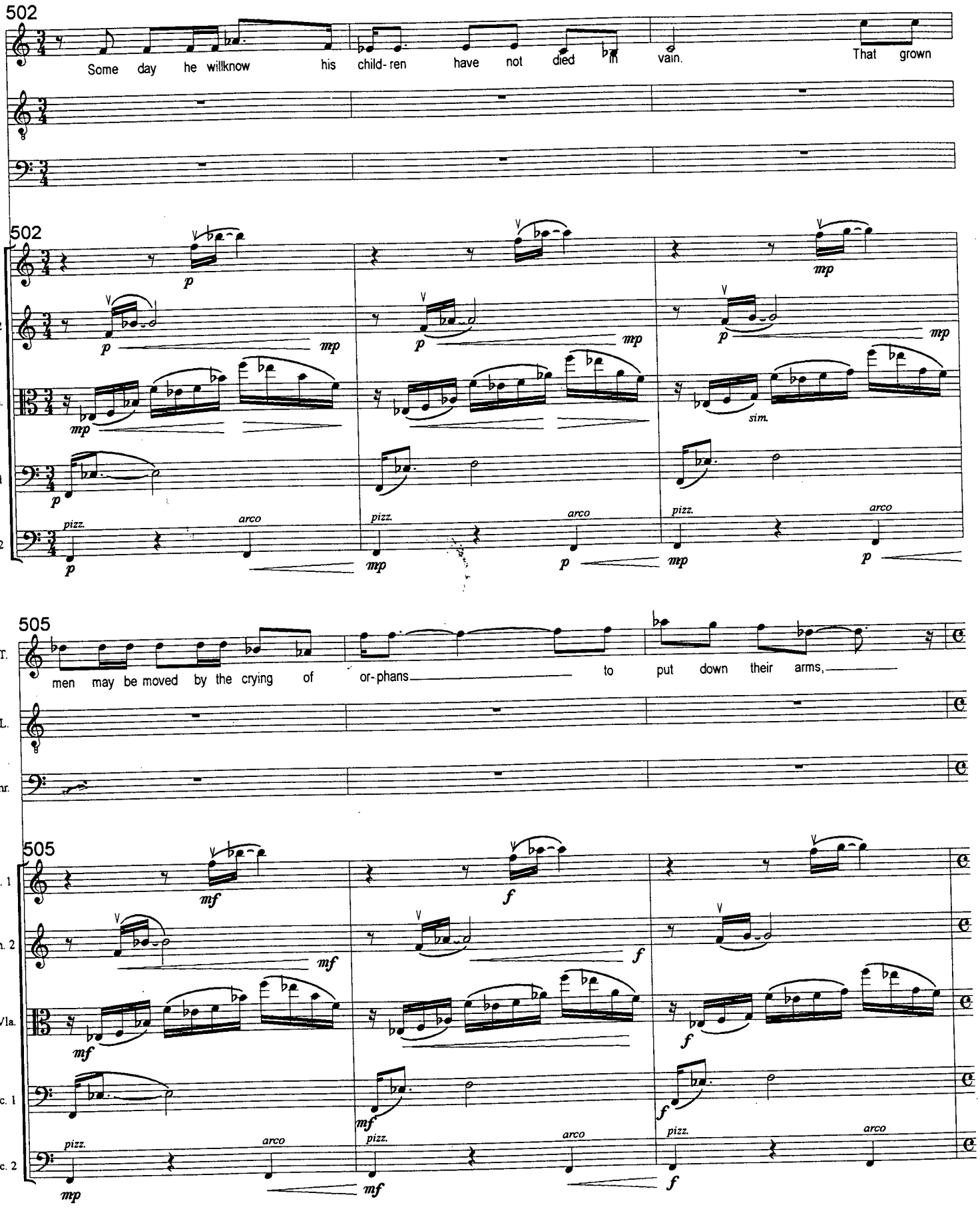

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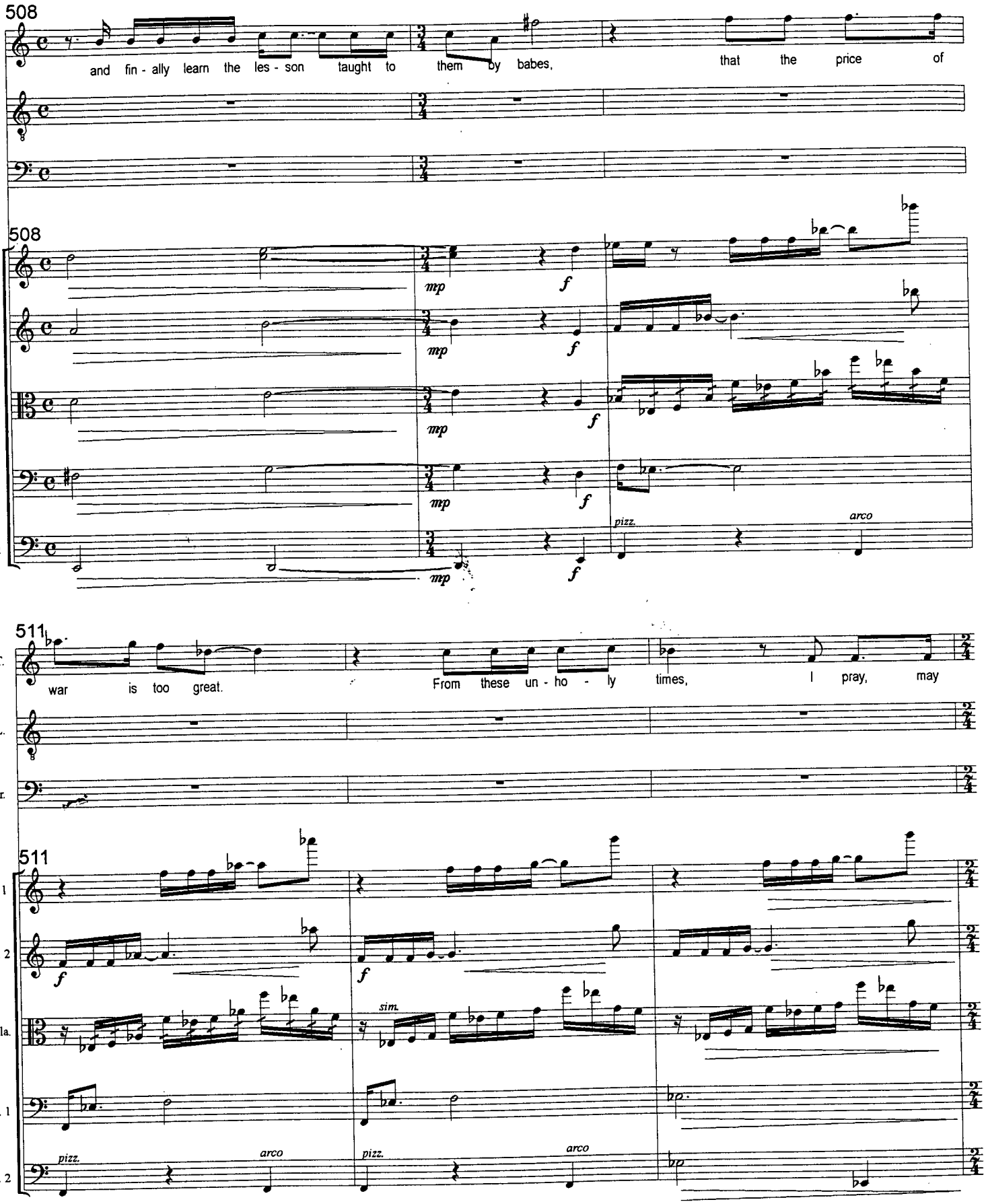

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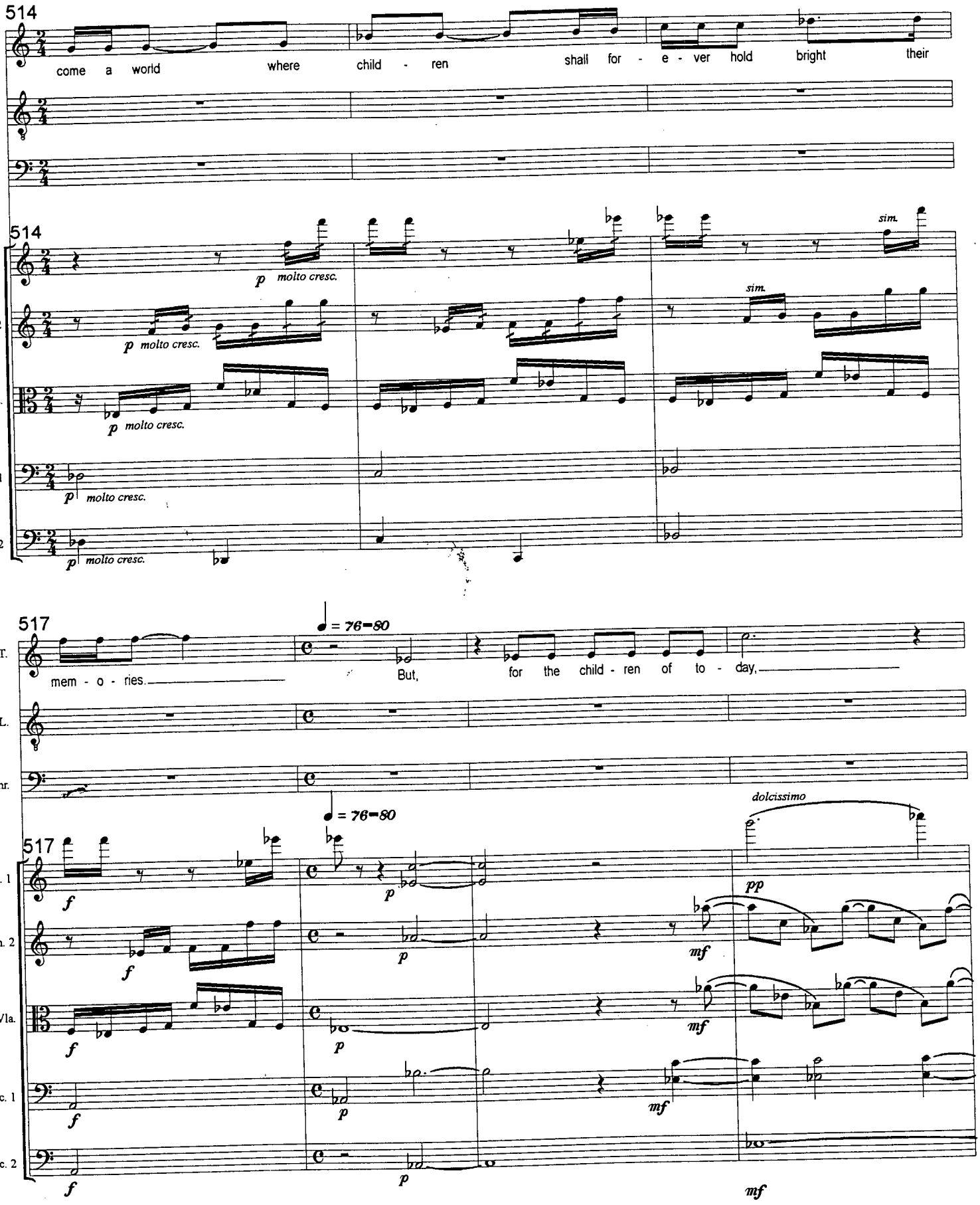

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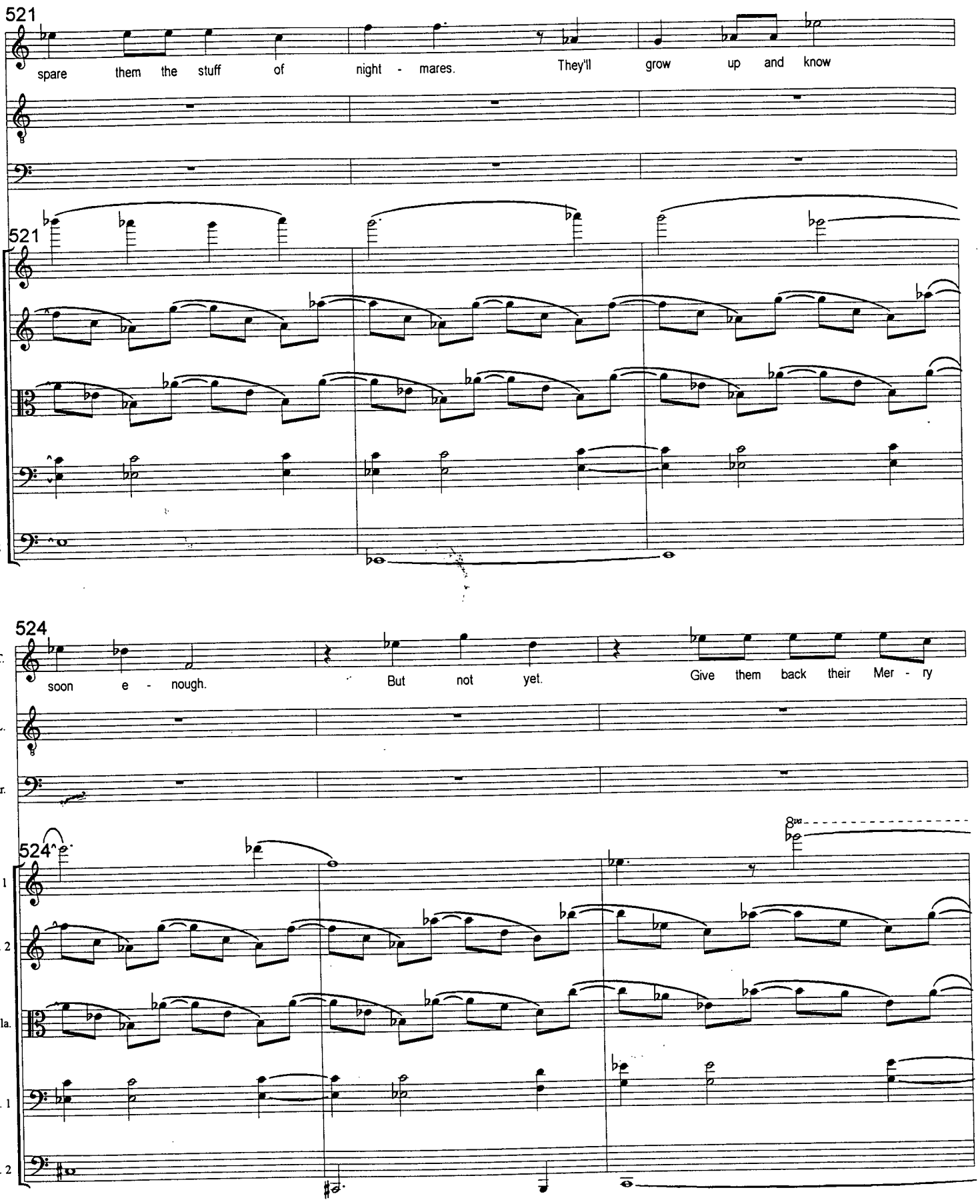

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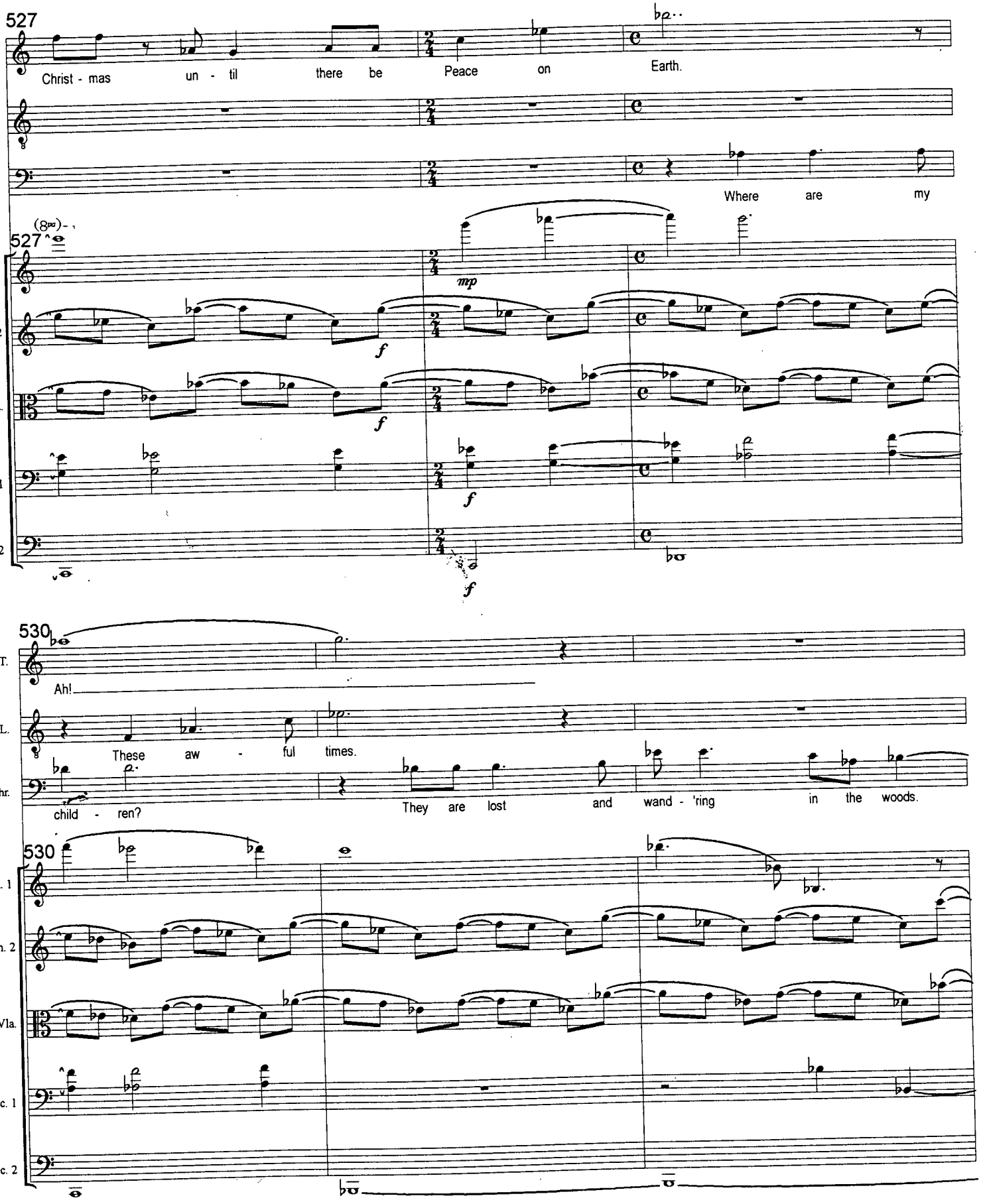

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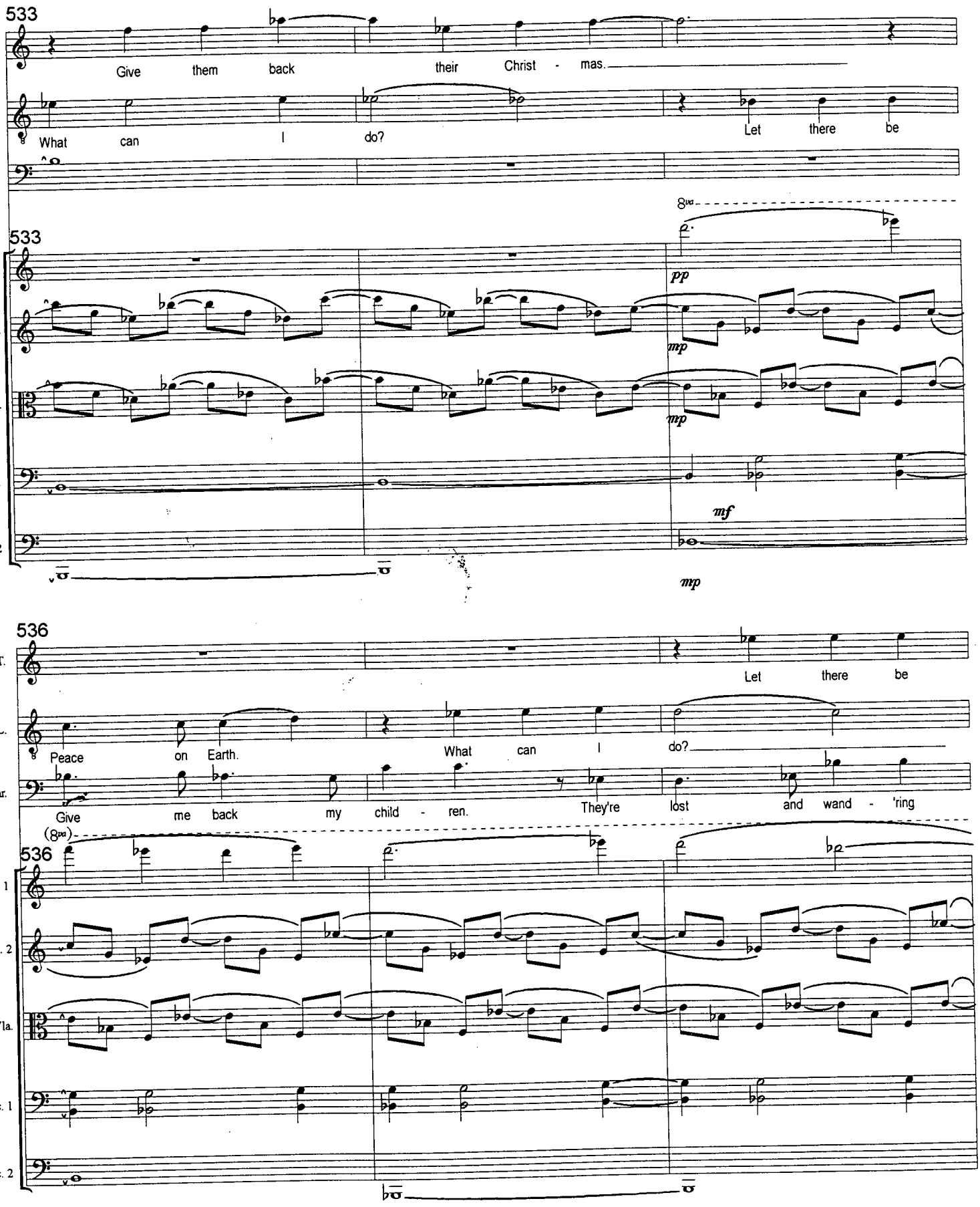

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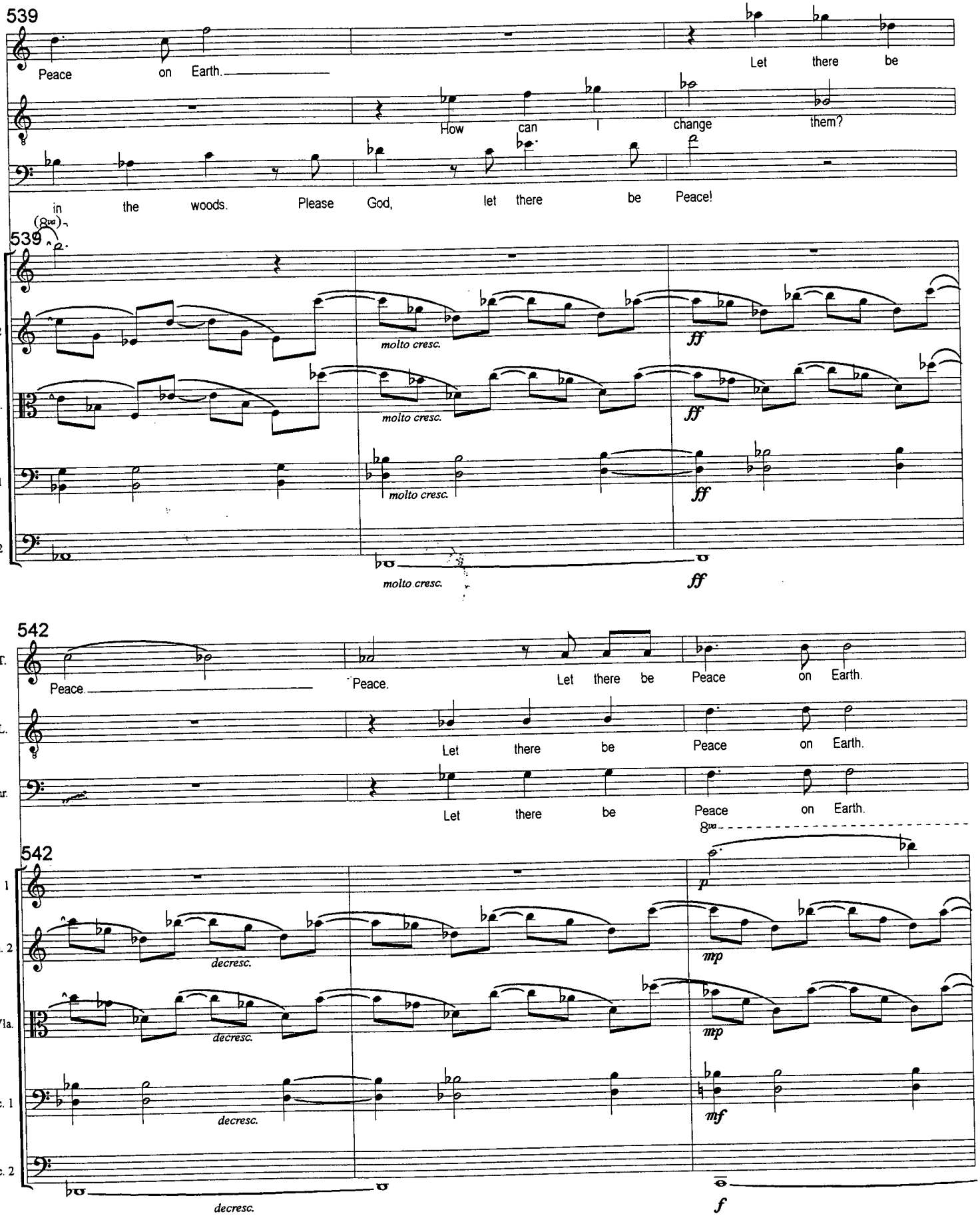

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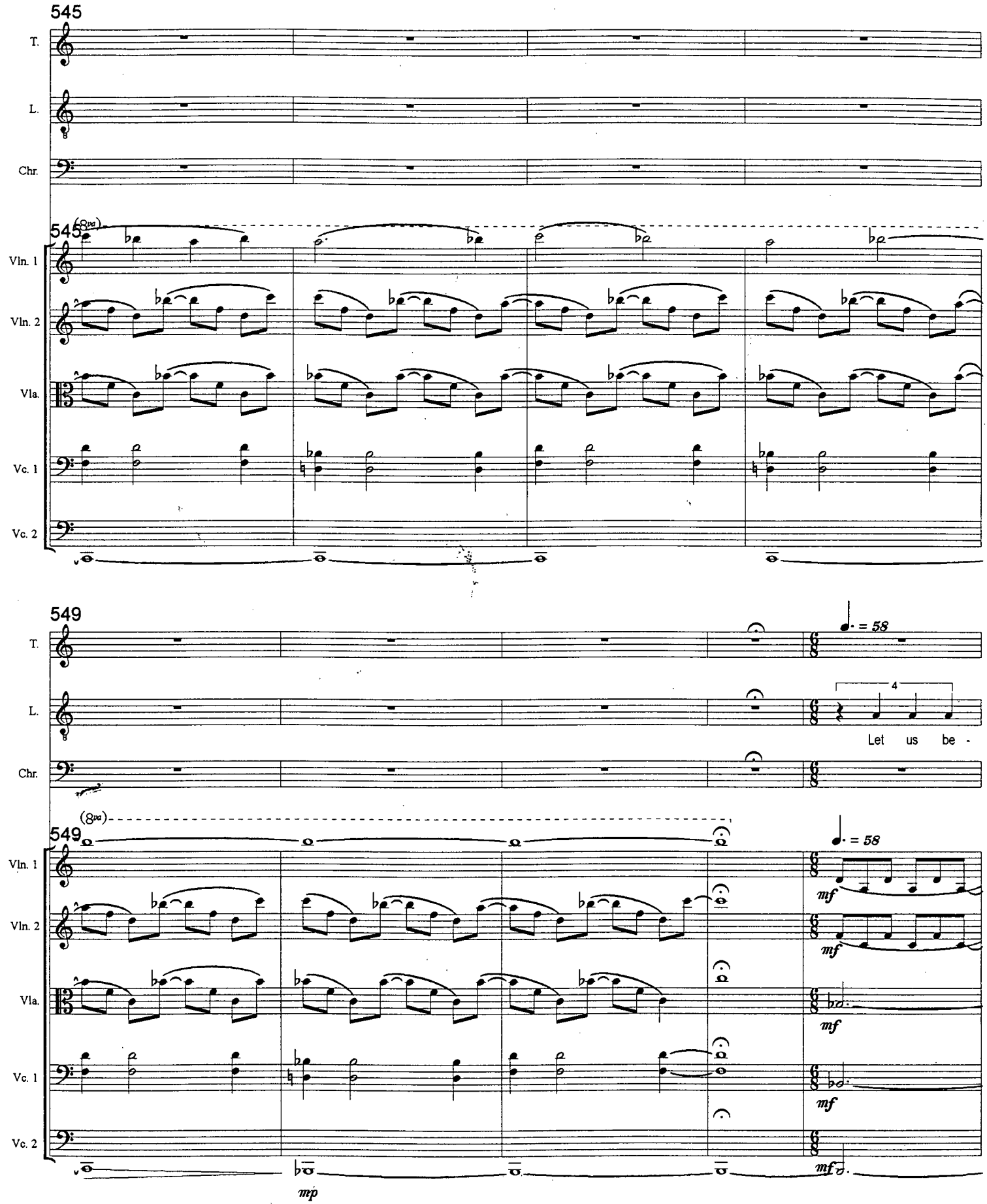

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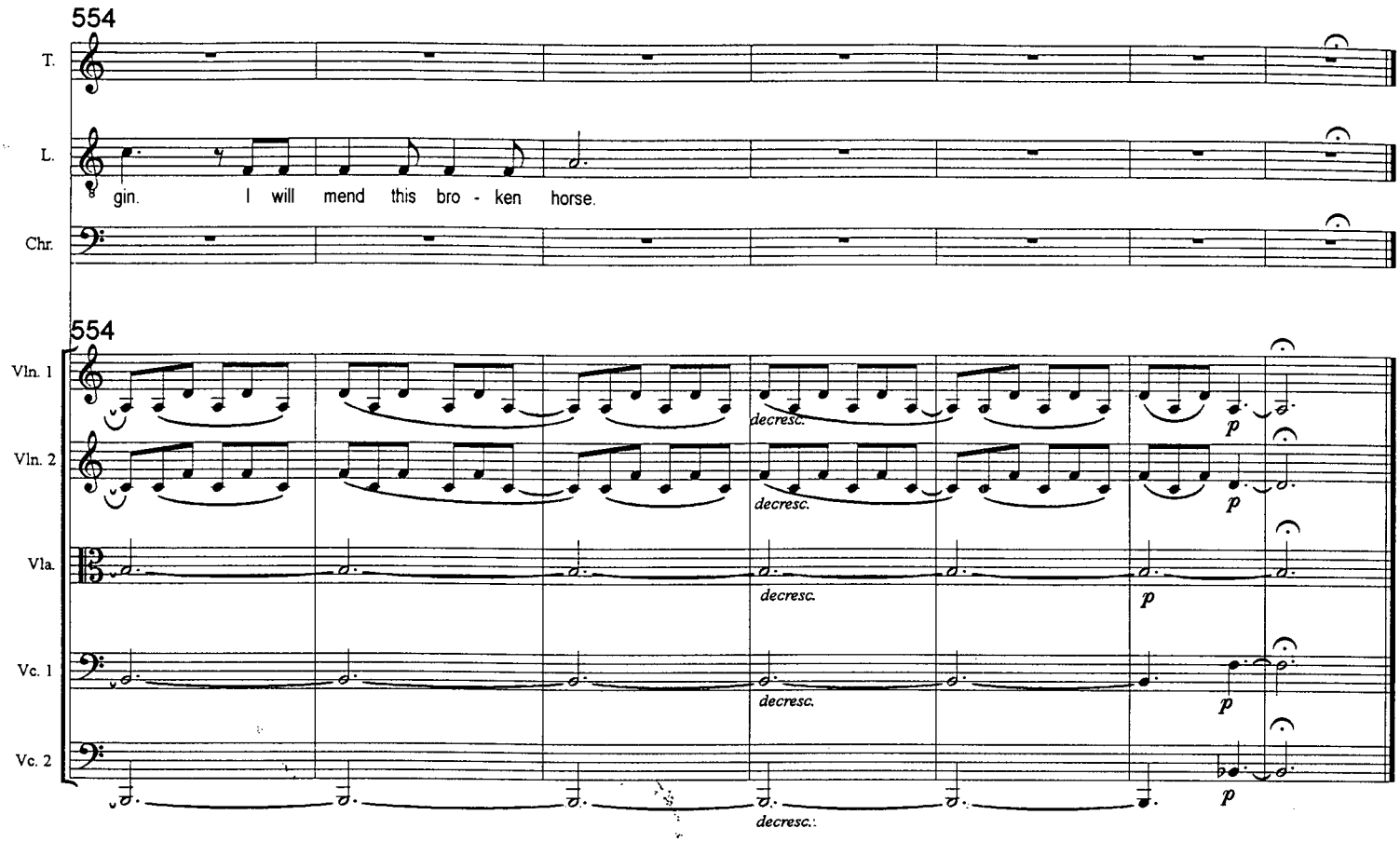

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Concertino

I. Com(motion)

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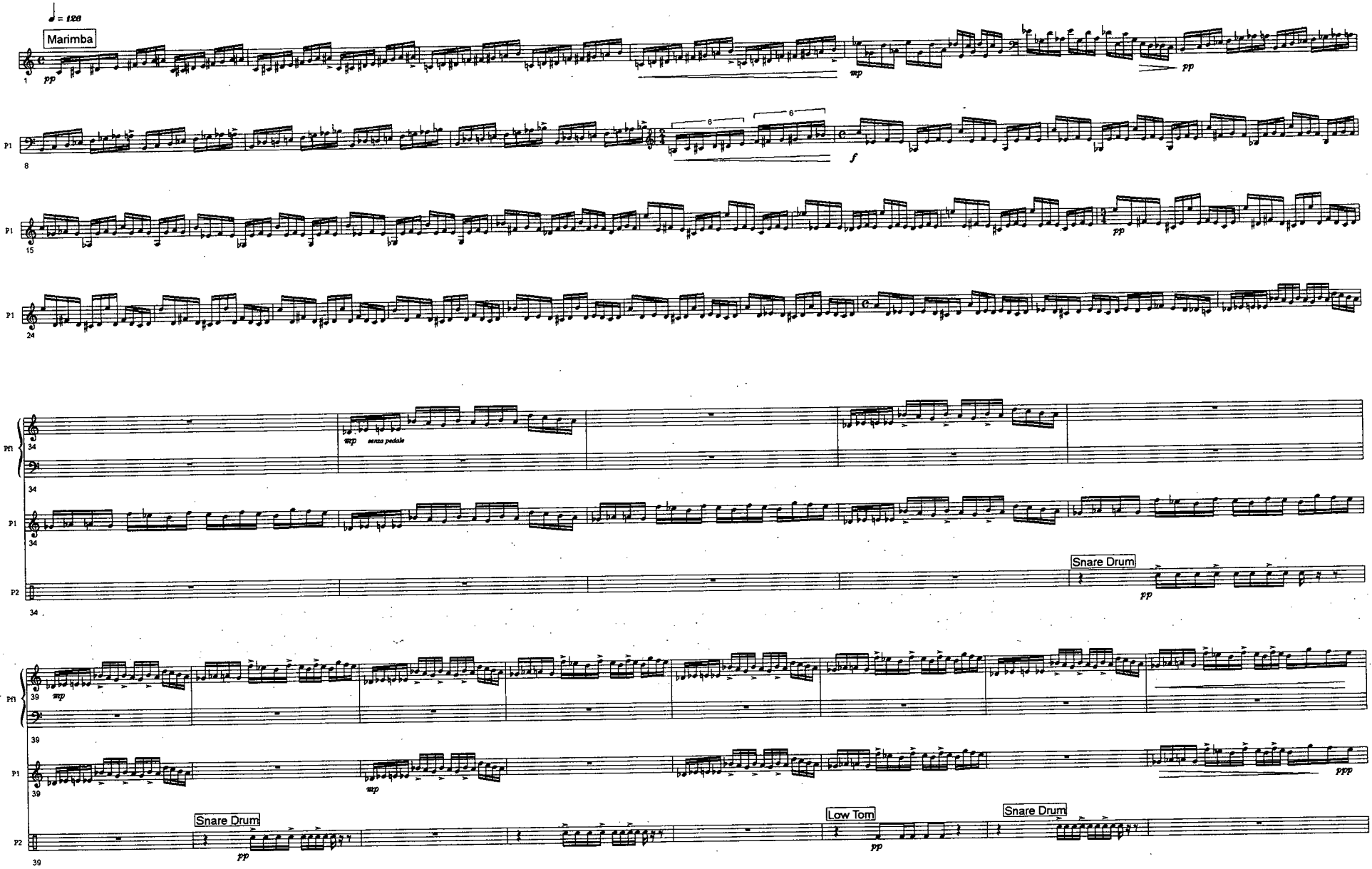

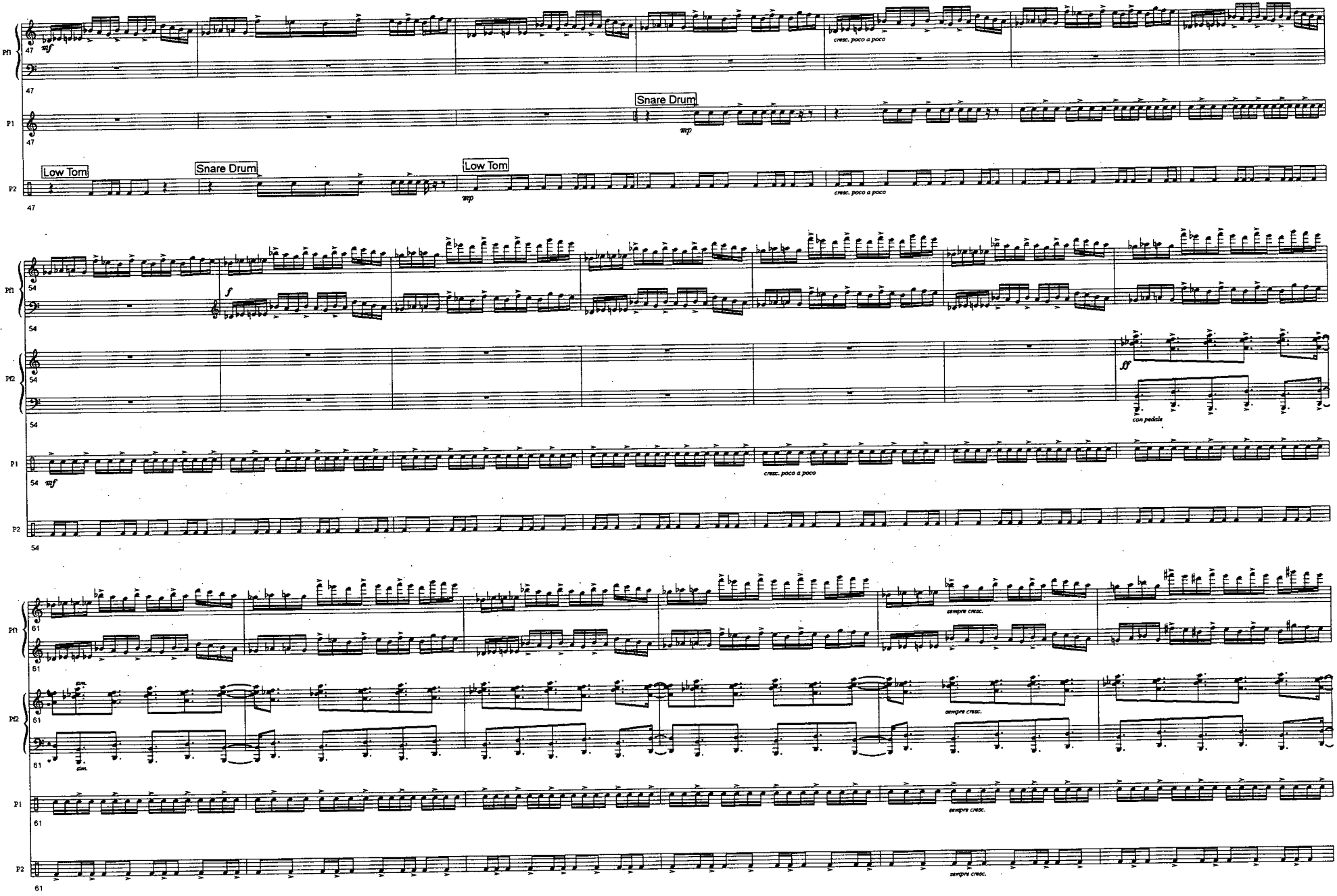

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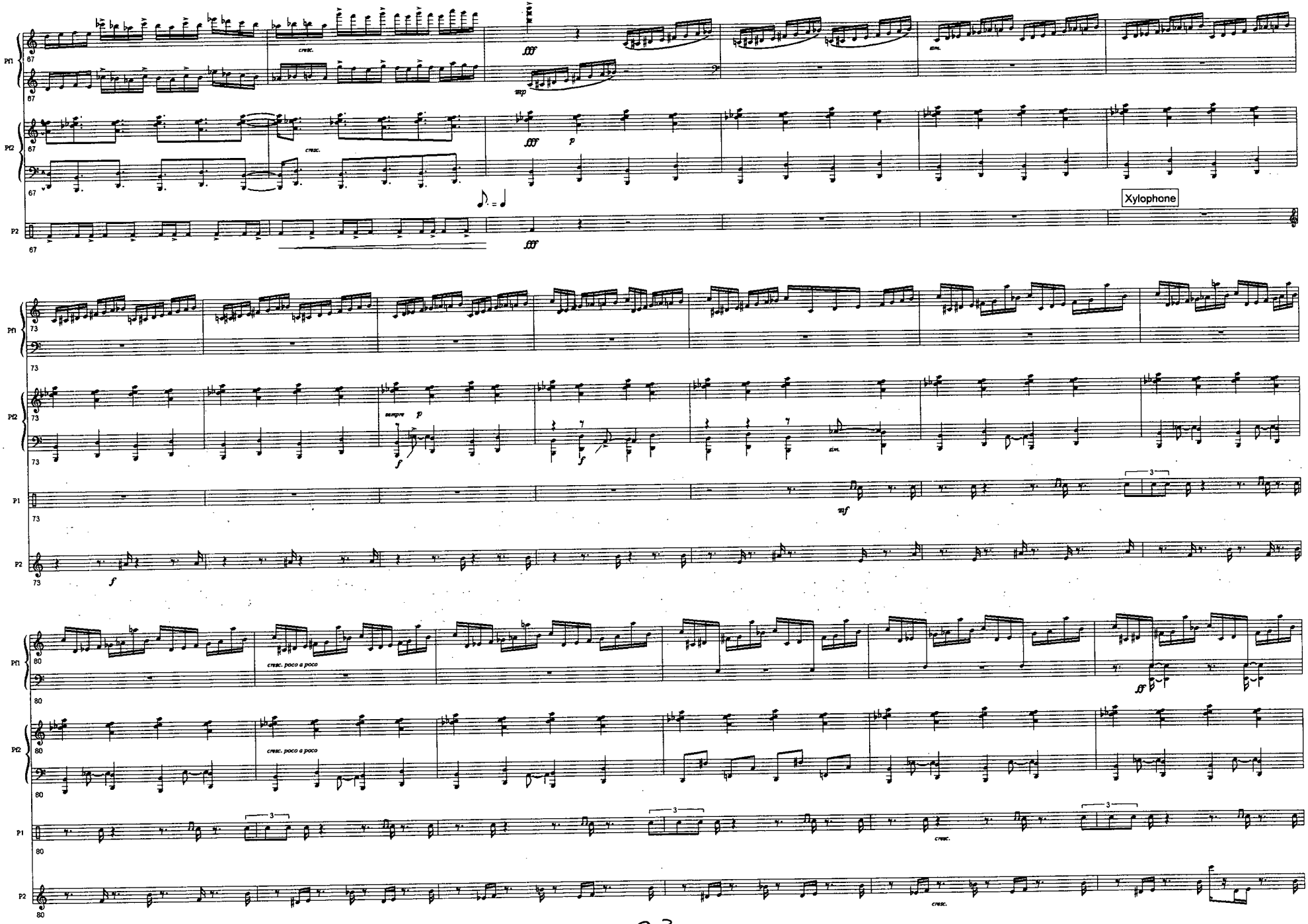

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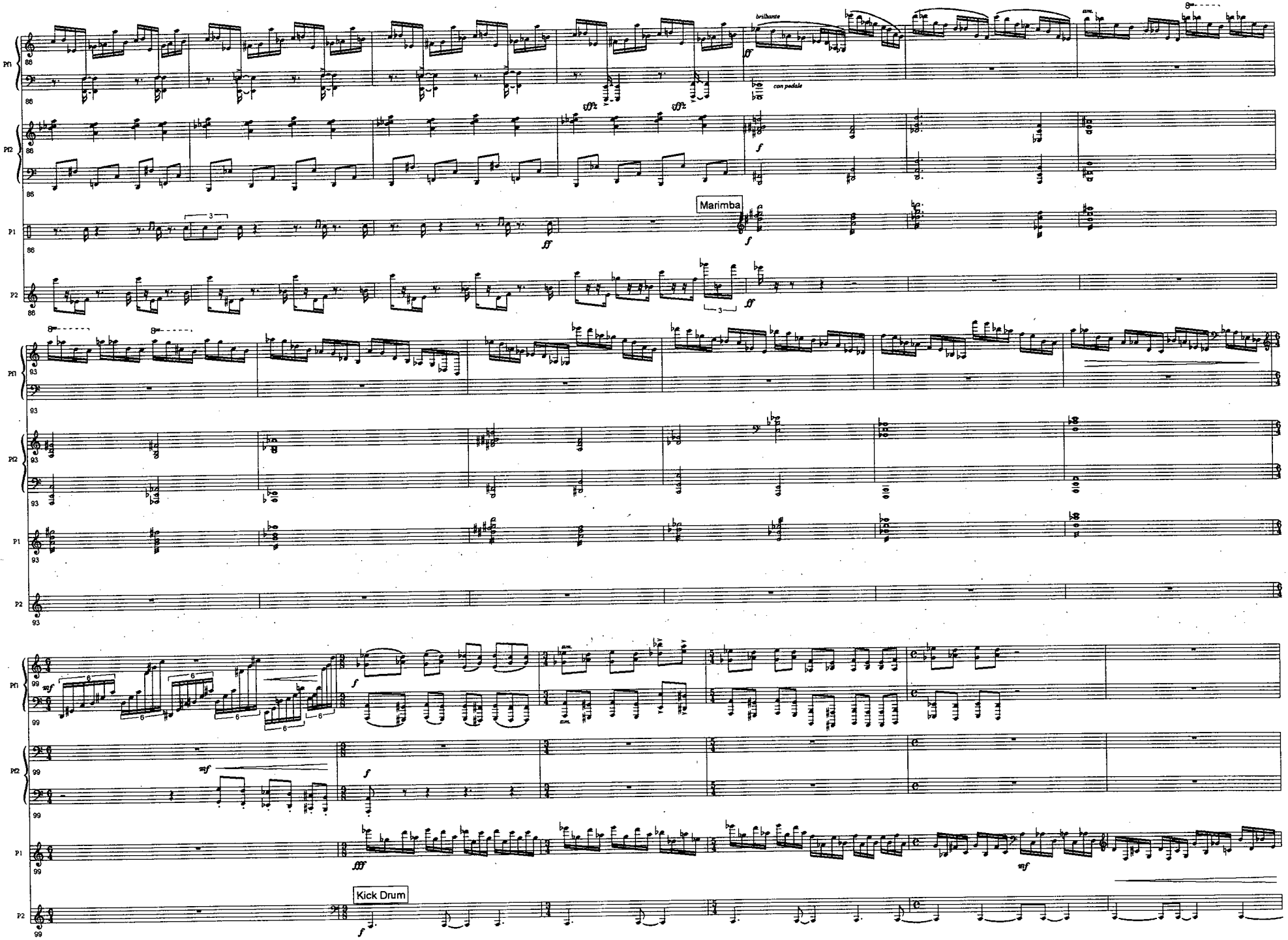

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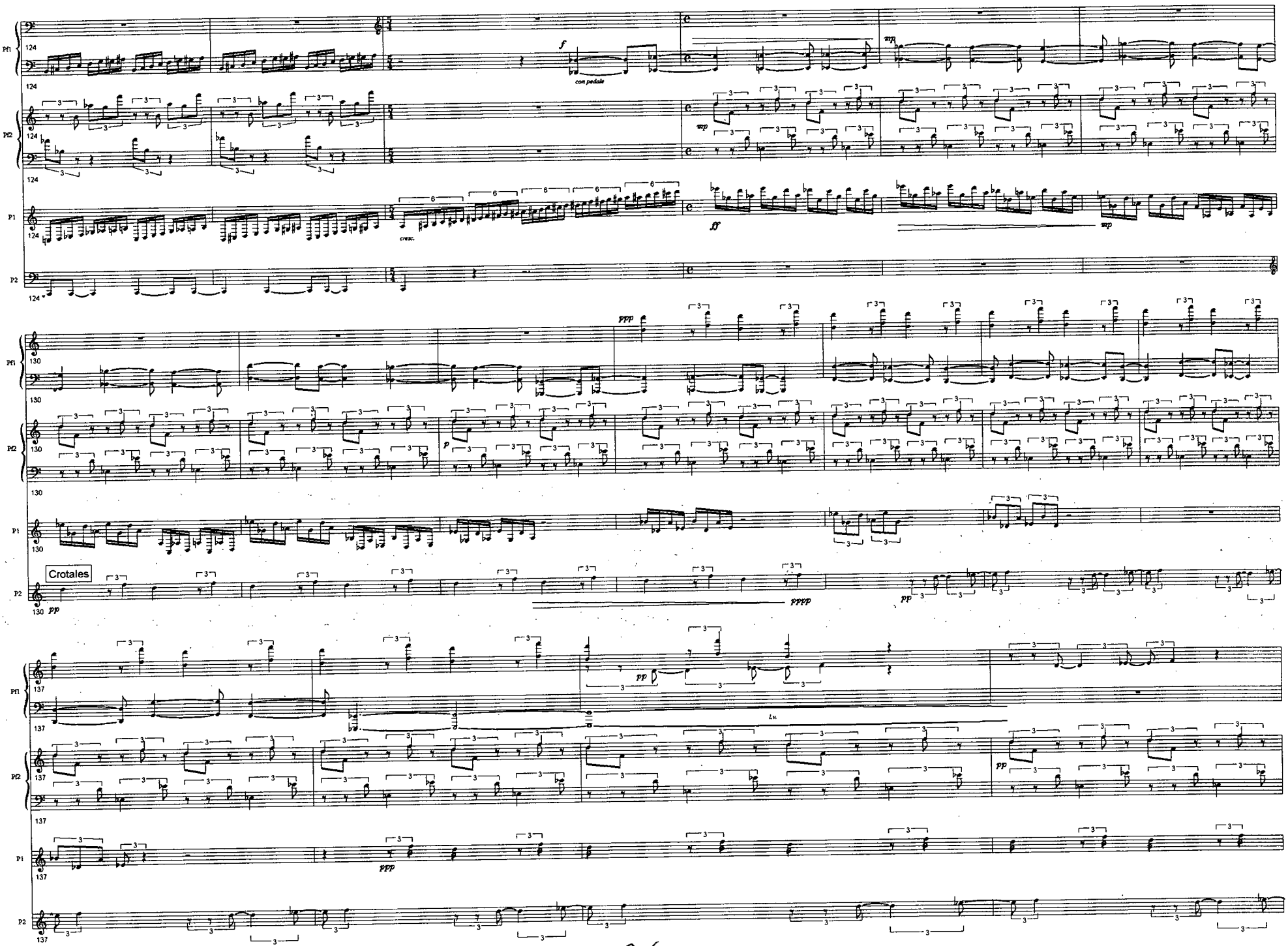

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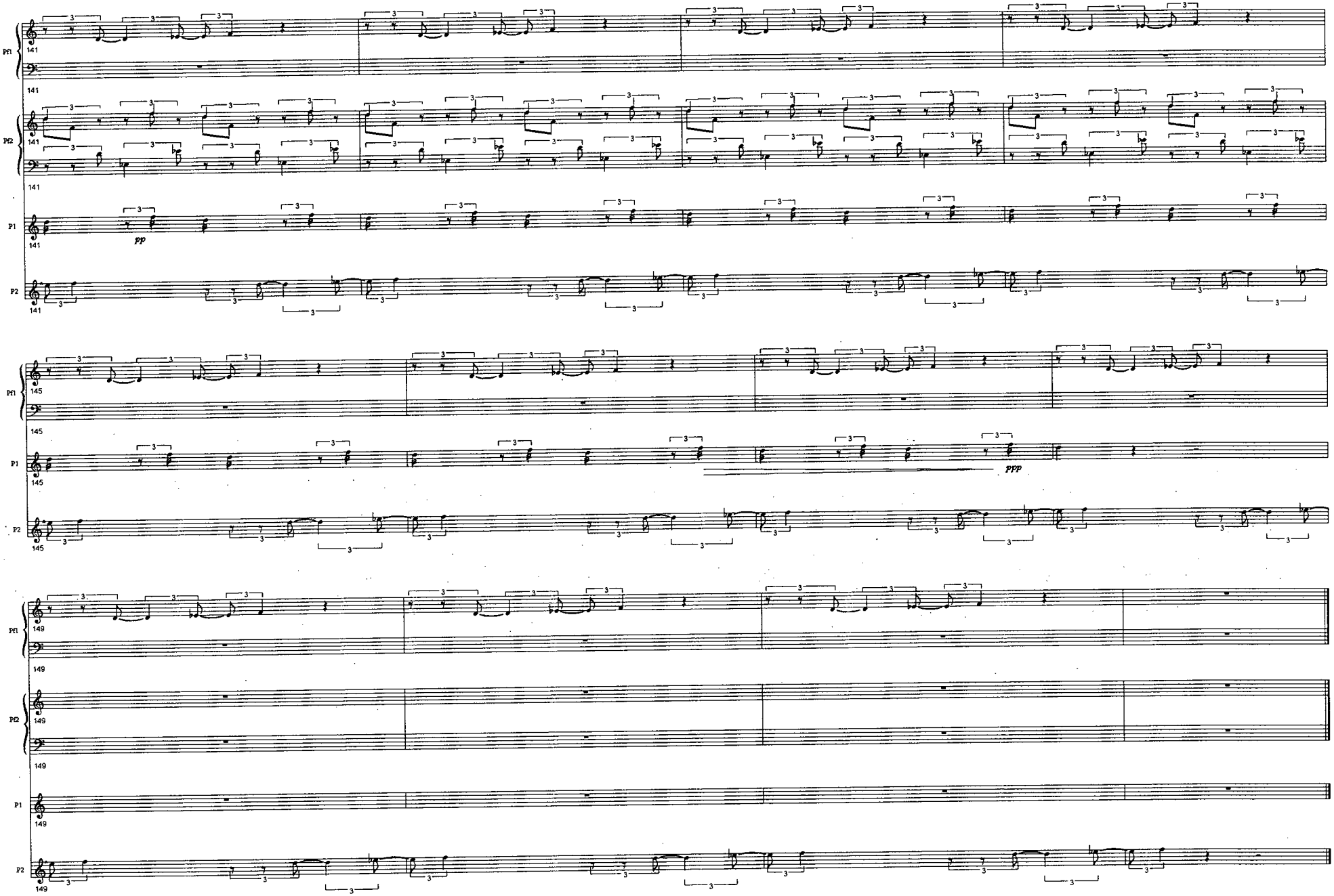

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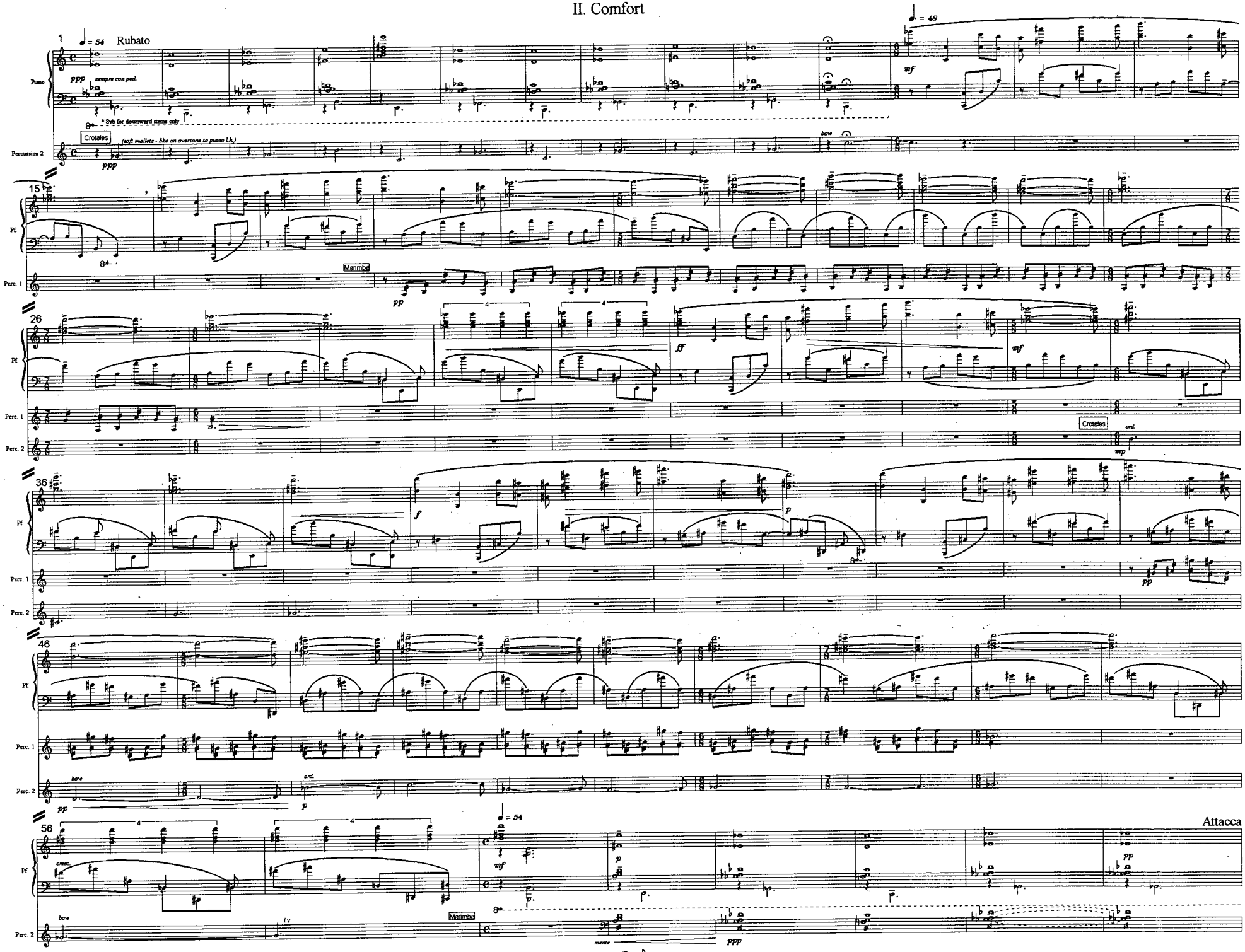
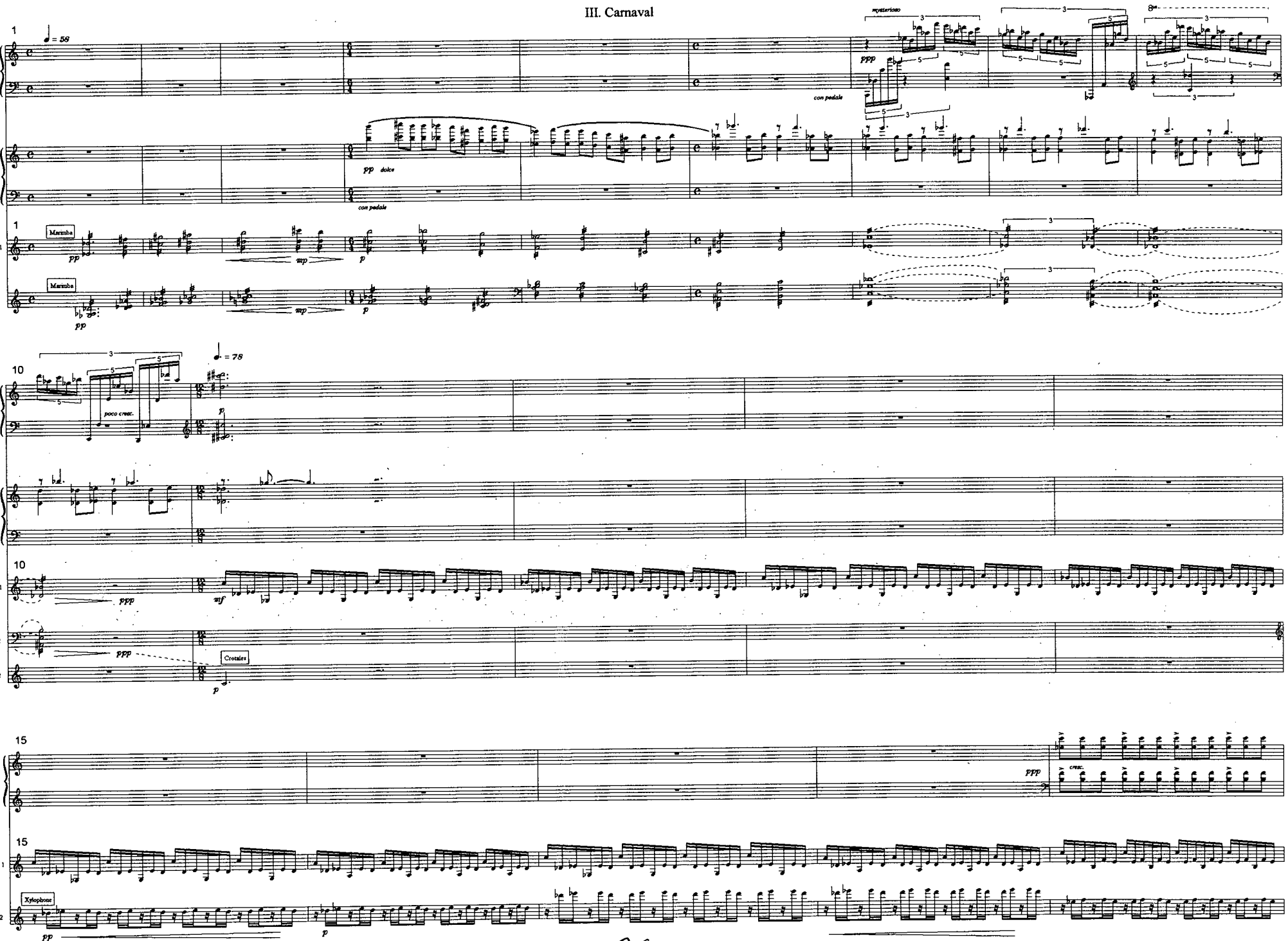
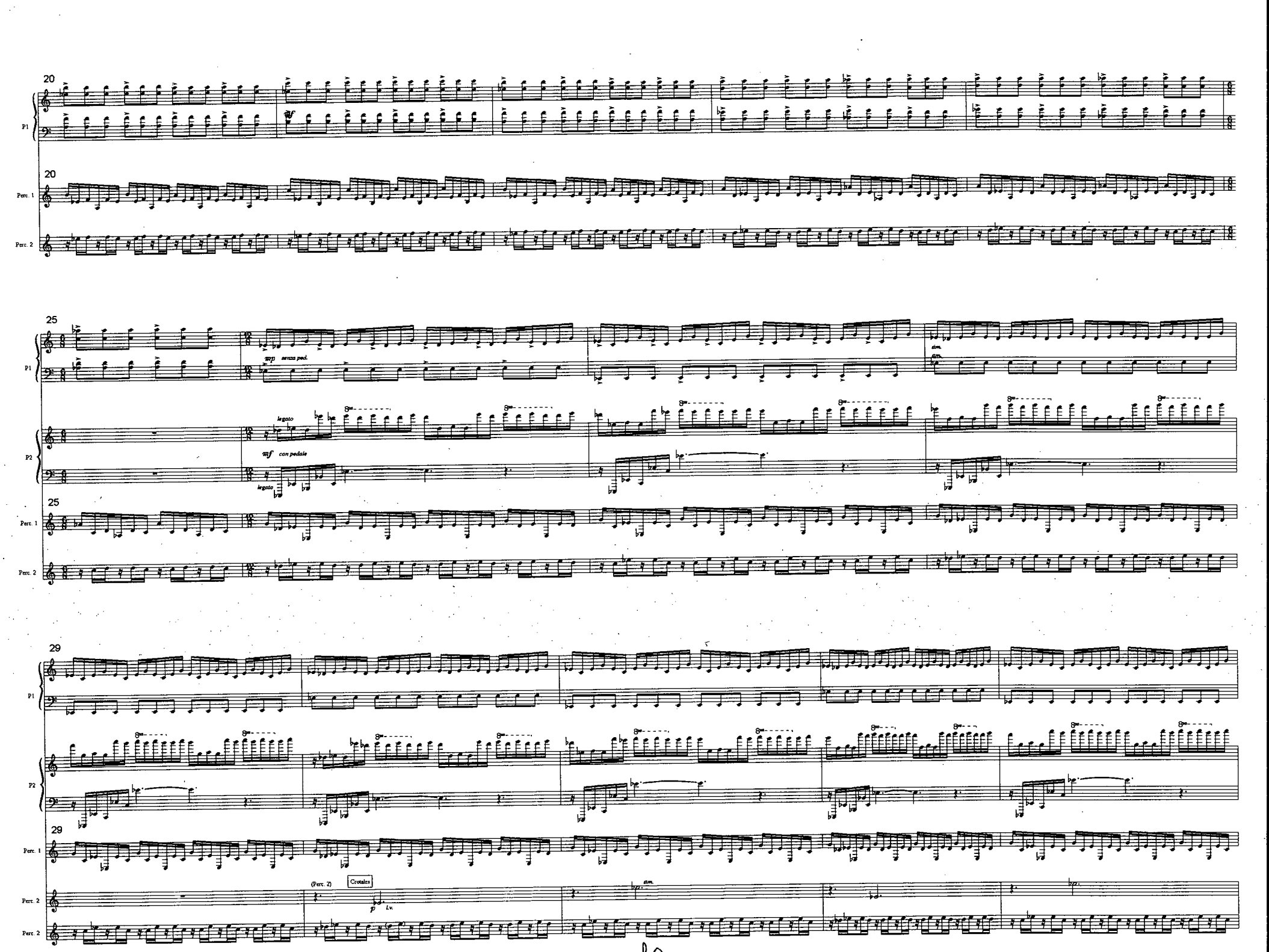
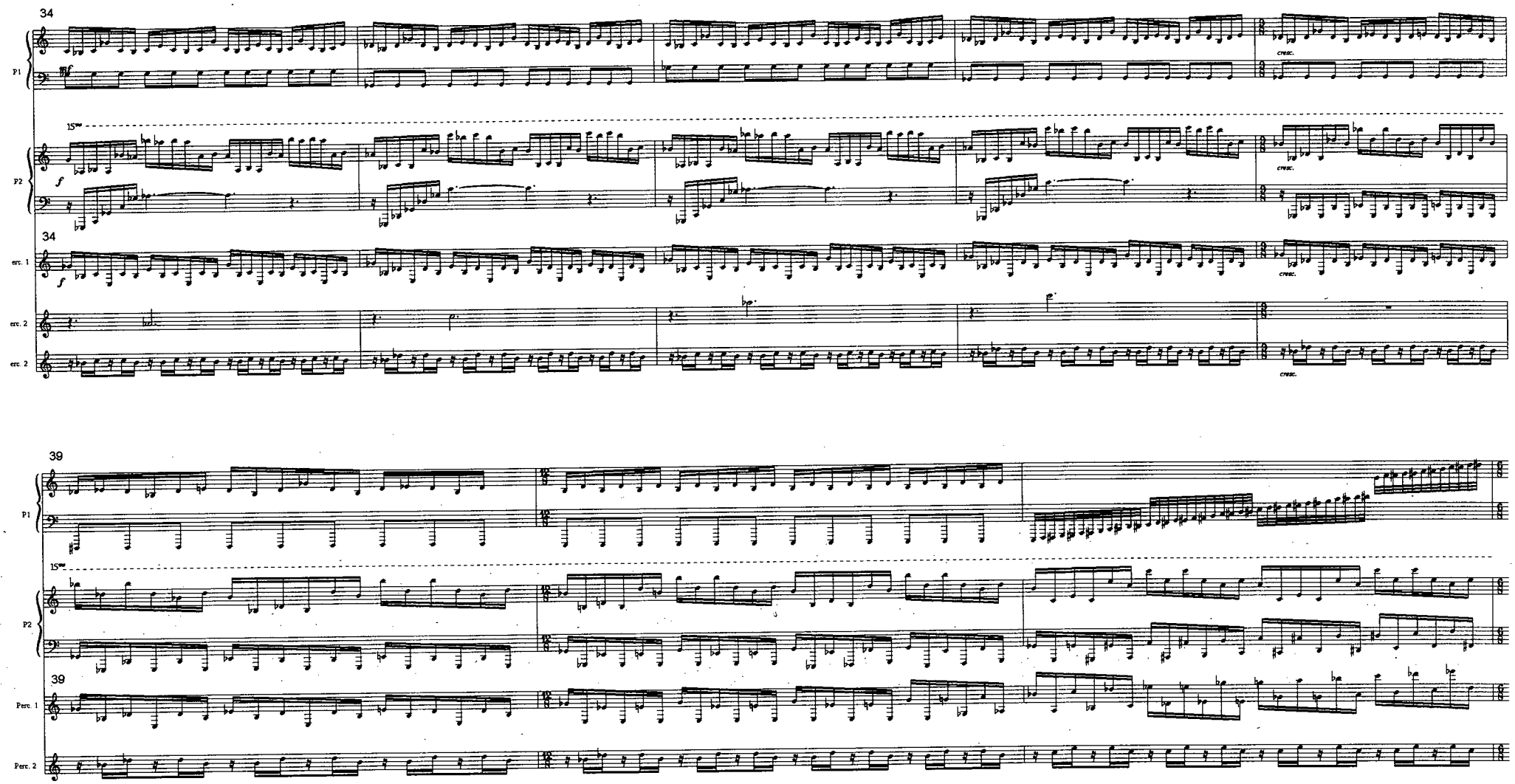
II. Comfort

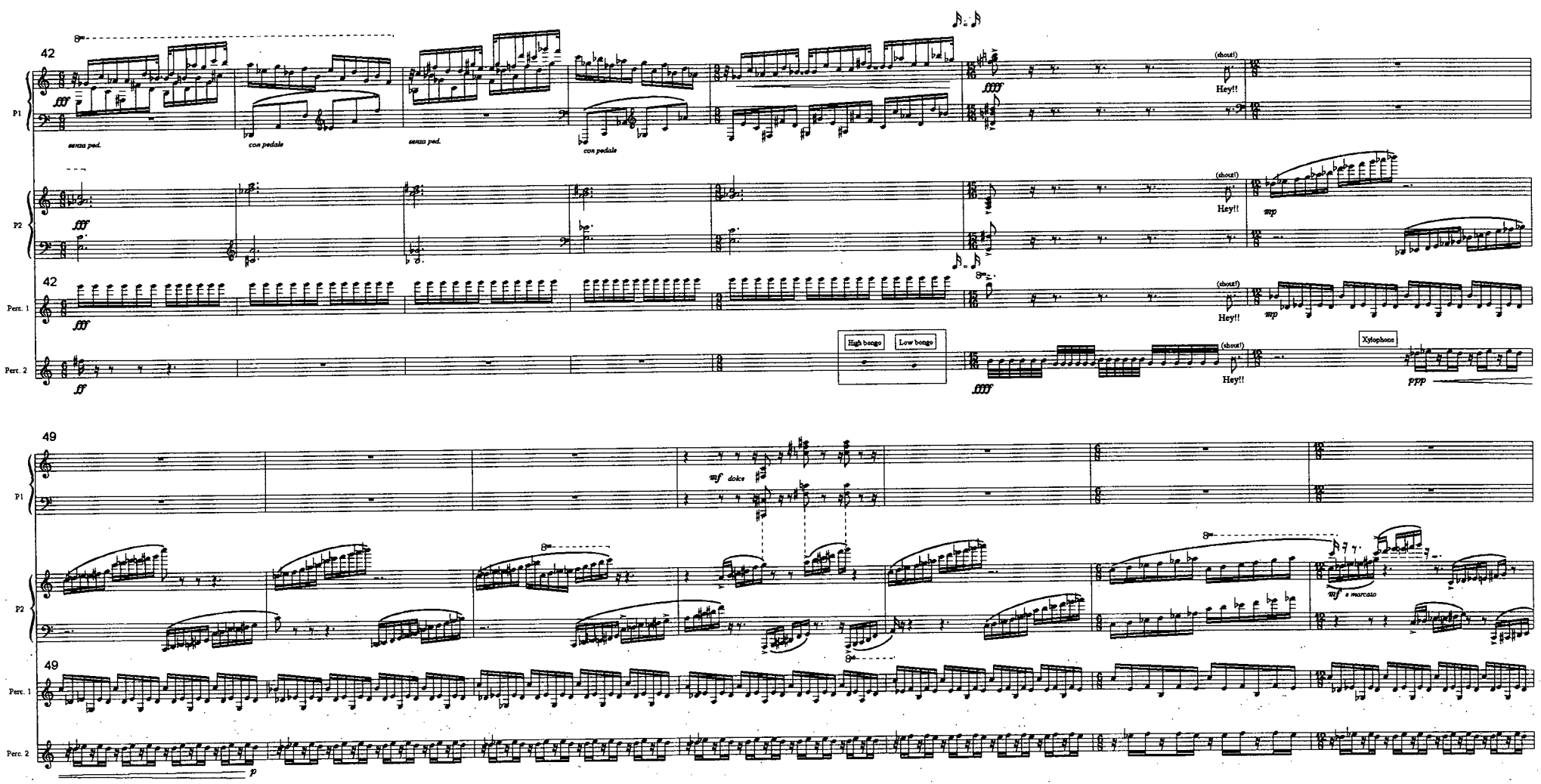


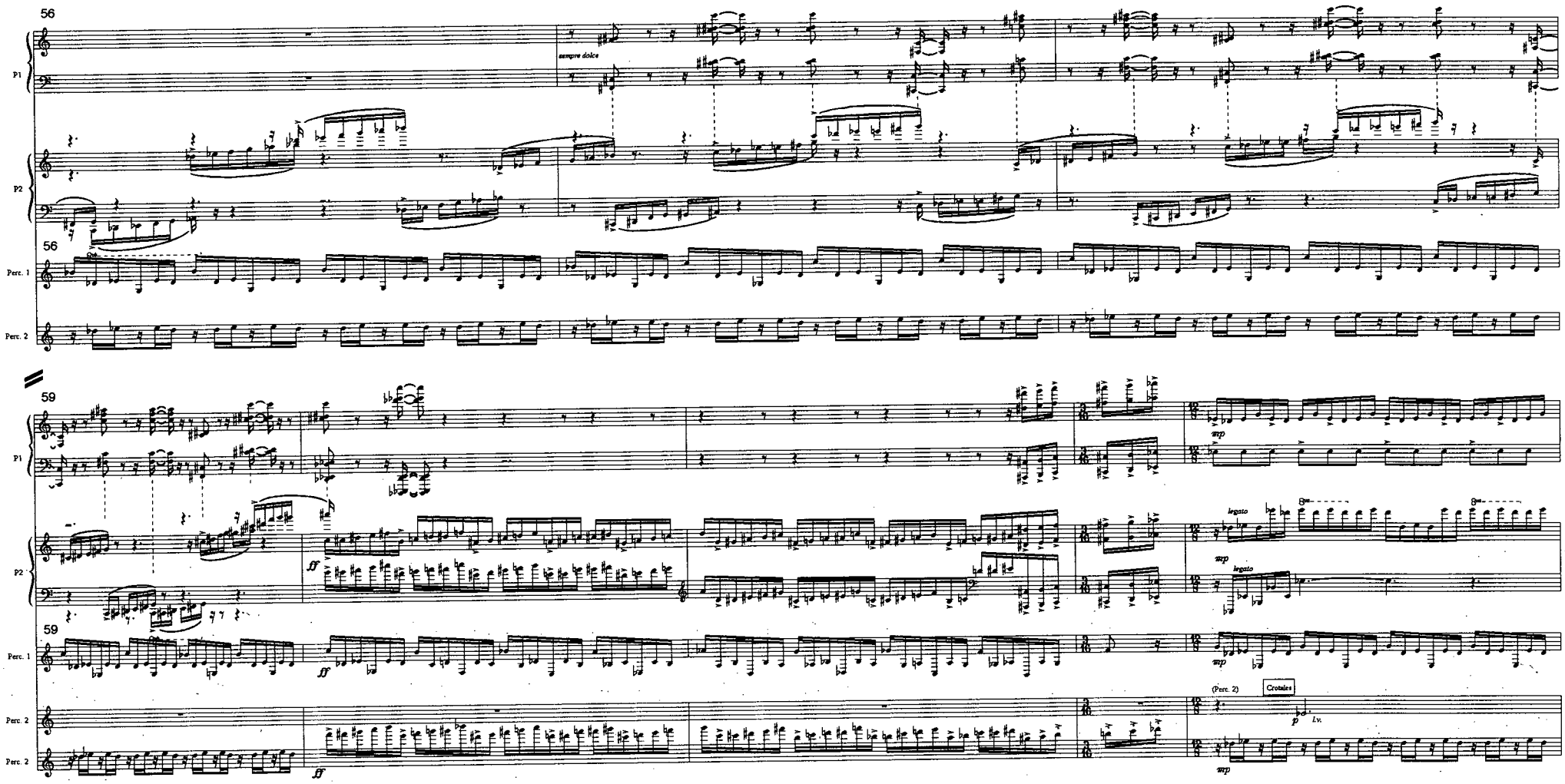
Rubato
Piano
Percussion 2
Crotales
(soft mallets - like an overtone to piano l.h.)
Pf
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Marimba
Attacca

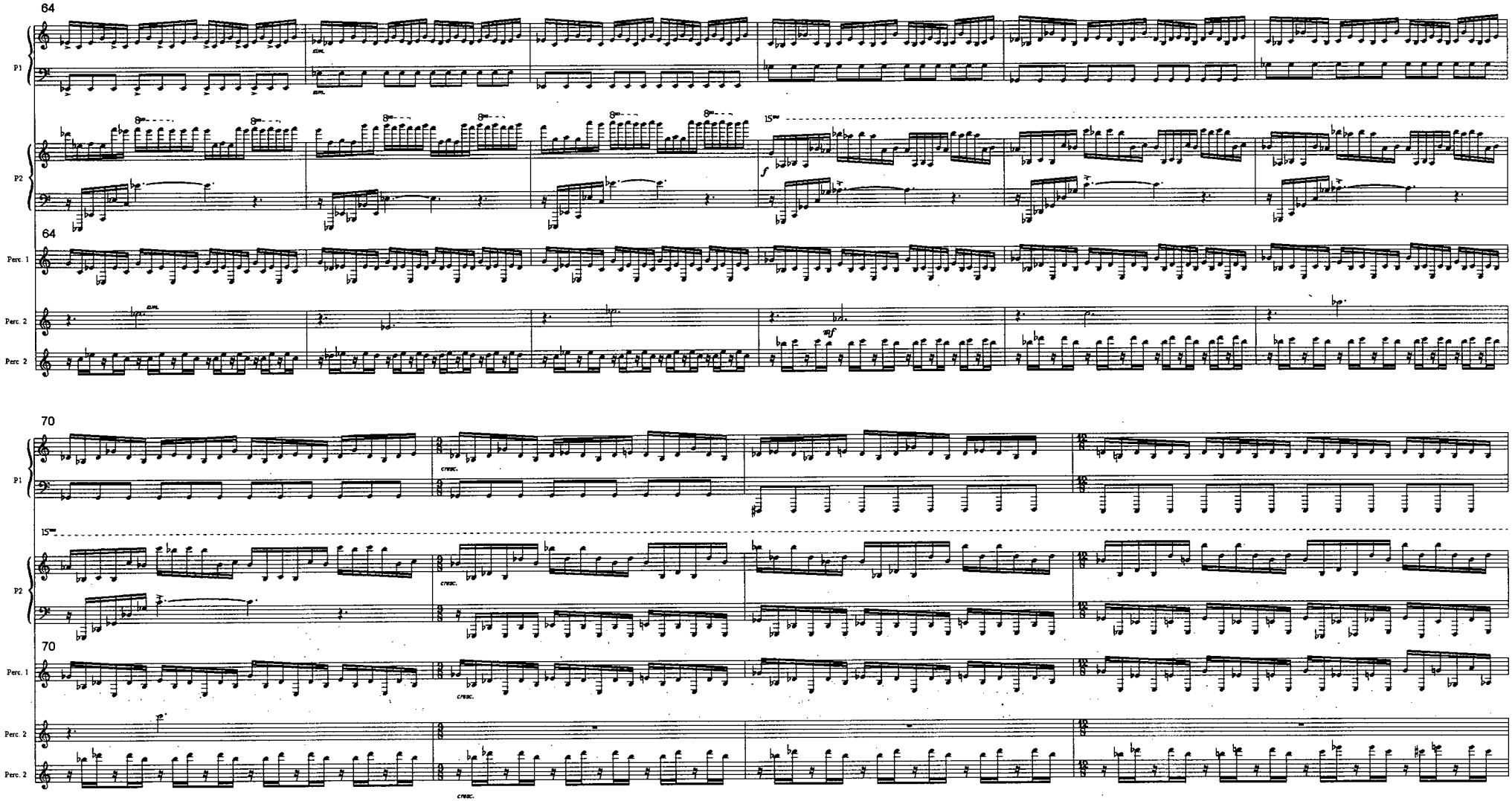

1
♩ = 56
Piano 1
Piano 2
mysterioso
ppp
con pedale
pp dolce
con pedale
1
Marimba
cussion 1
Marimba
ssion 2
pp
mp
p
10
♩. = 78
poco cresc.
P1
P2
10
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 2
ppp
mf
Crotales
15
P1
ppp
cresc.
15
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Xylophone
pp
p

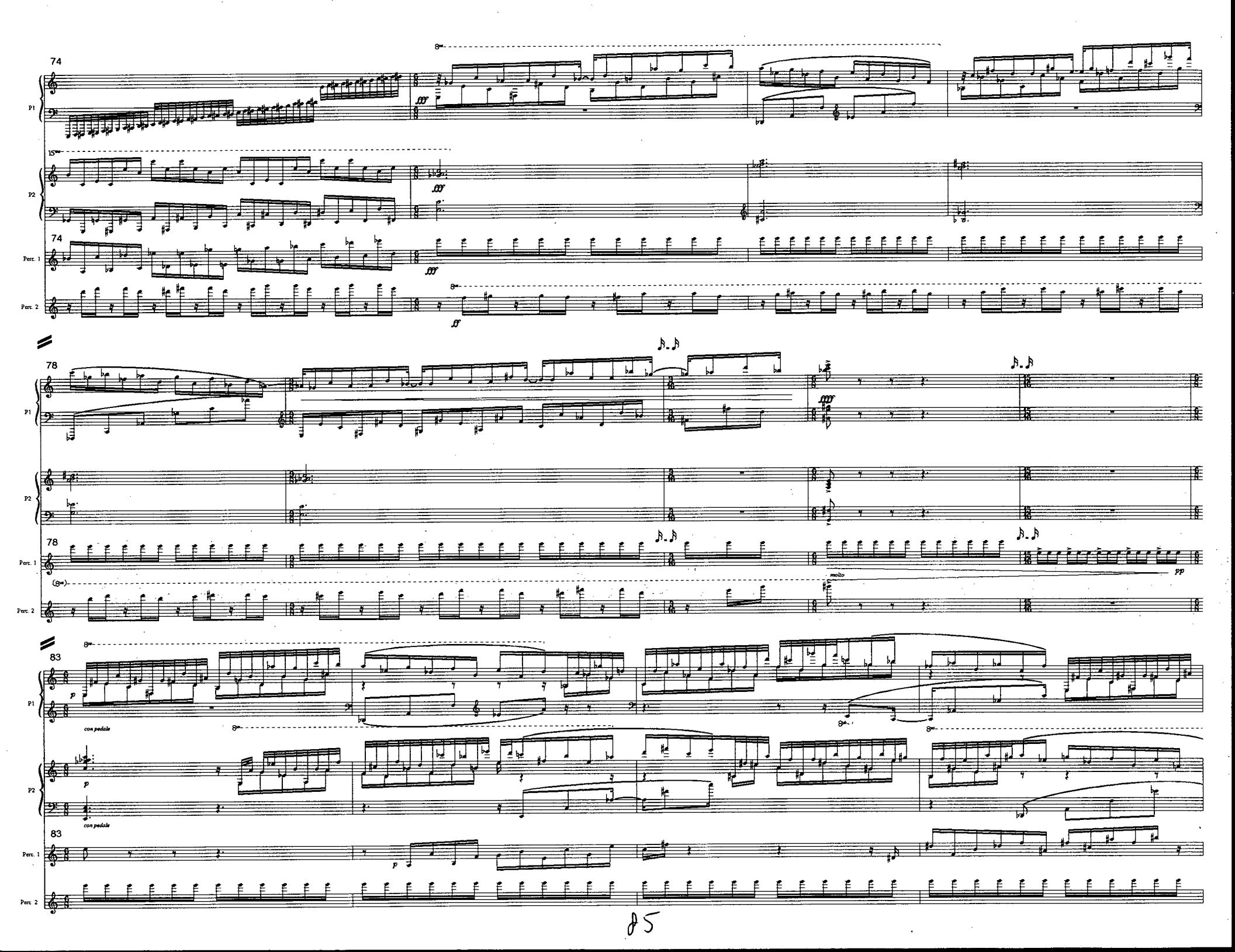

20
P1
20
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
25
mp senza ped.
legato
mf con pedale
legato
P1
P2
25
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
29
P1
P2
29
Perc. 1
(Perc. 2)
Crotales
p l.v.
Perc. 2
Perc. 2

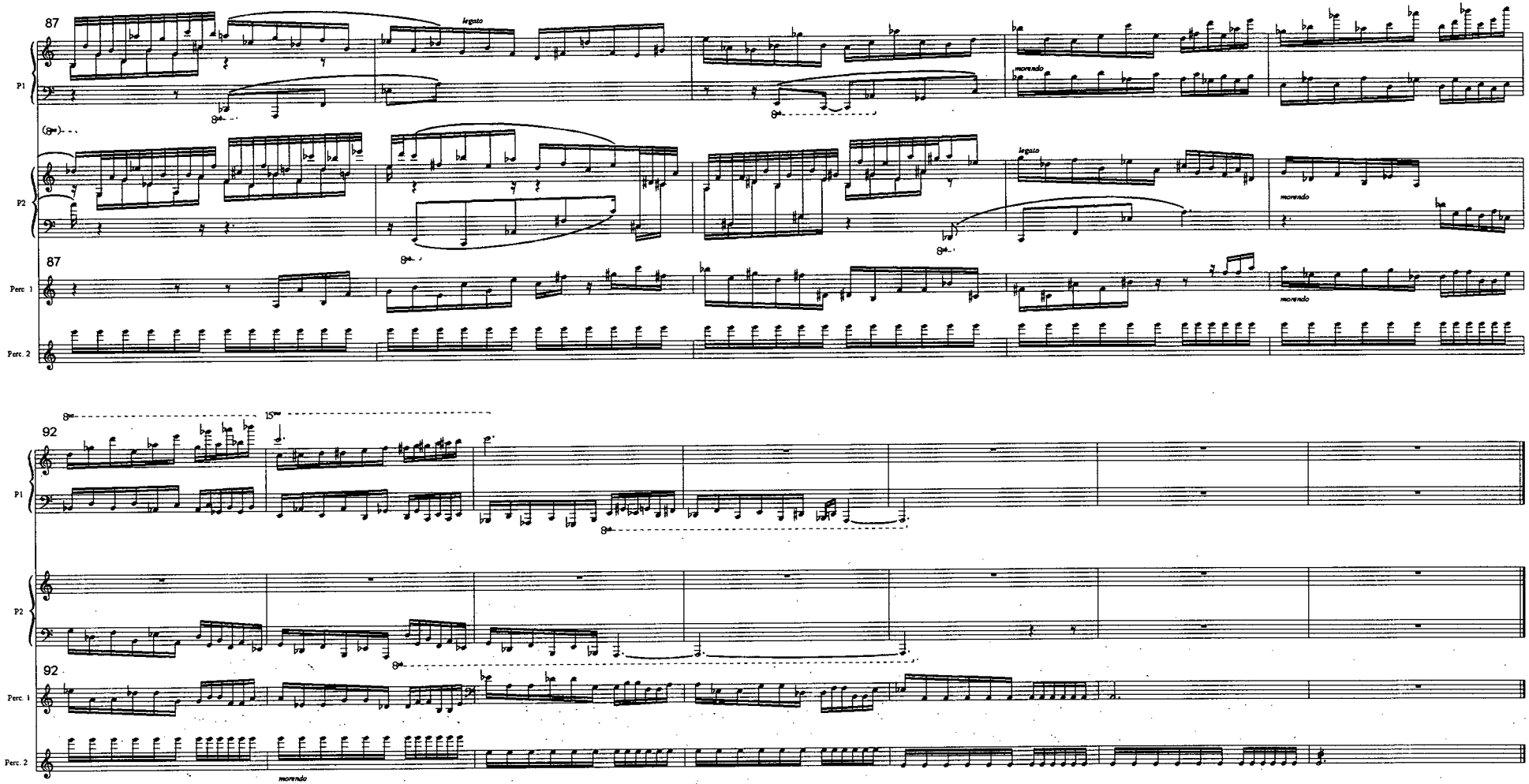

34
P1
P2
15ma
f
cresc.
34
erc. 1
erc. 2
erc. 2
39
P1
P2
15ma
39
Perc. 1
Perc. 2


42
P1
P2
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
senza ped.
con pedale
senza ped.
con pedale
(shout!)
Hey!!
High bongo
Low bongo
Xylophone
49
mf dolce
mf e marcato
p


56
P1
sempre dolce
P2
56
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
59
P1
mp
P2
ff
legato
mp
legato
59
Perc. 1
ff
mp
Perc. 2
(Perc. 2)
Crotales
p
l.v.
Perc. 2
ff
mp


64
P1
P2
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 2
70
P1
P2
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 2


74
P1
15ma
P2
74
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
78
P1
P2
78
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
molto
pp
83
P1
con pedale
P2
con pedale
83
Perc. 1
Perc. 2



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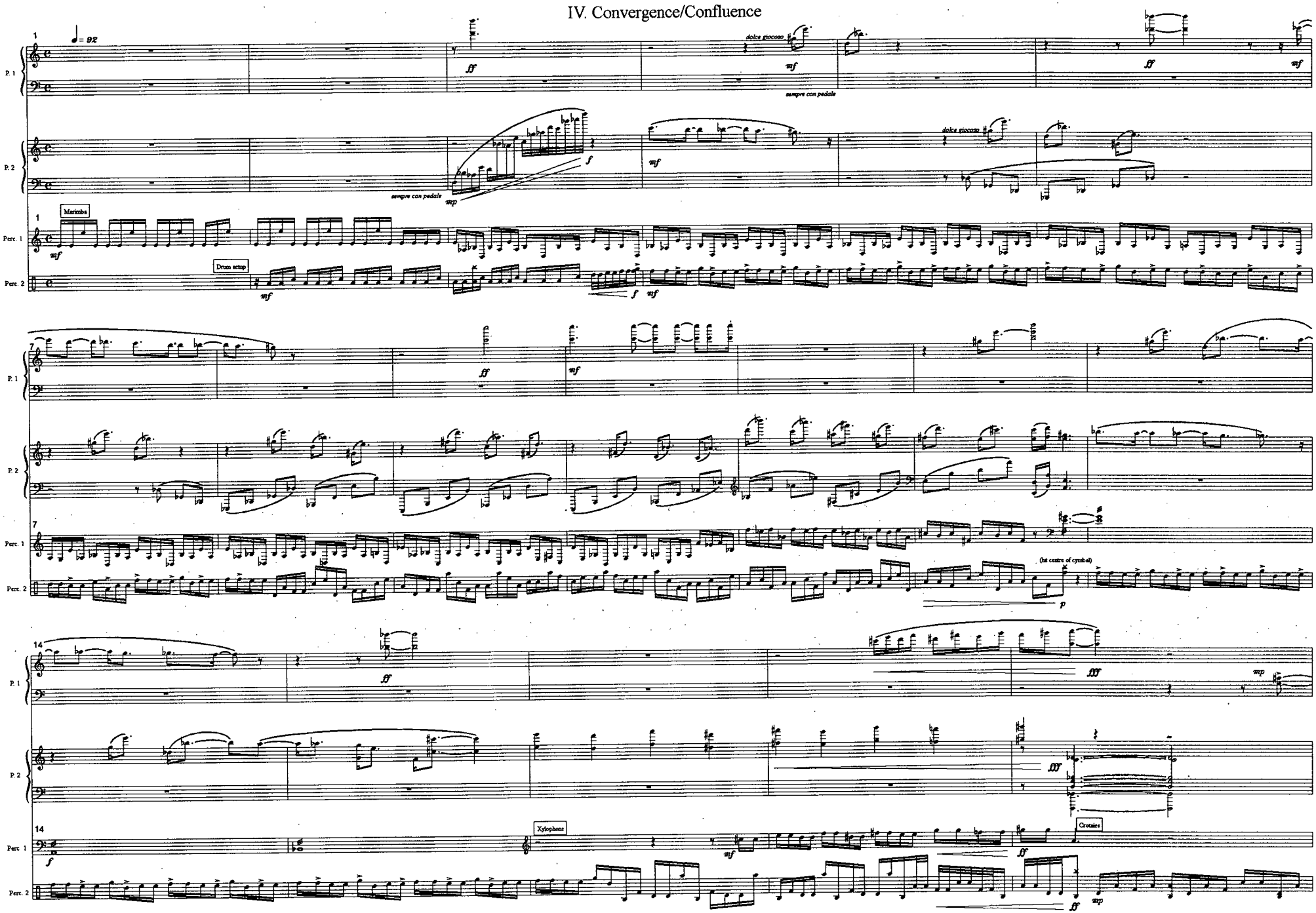
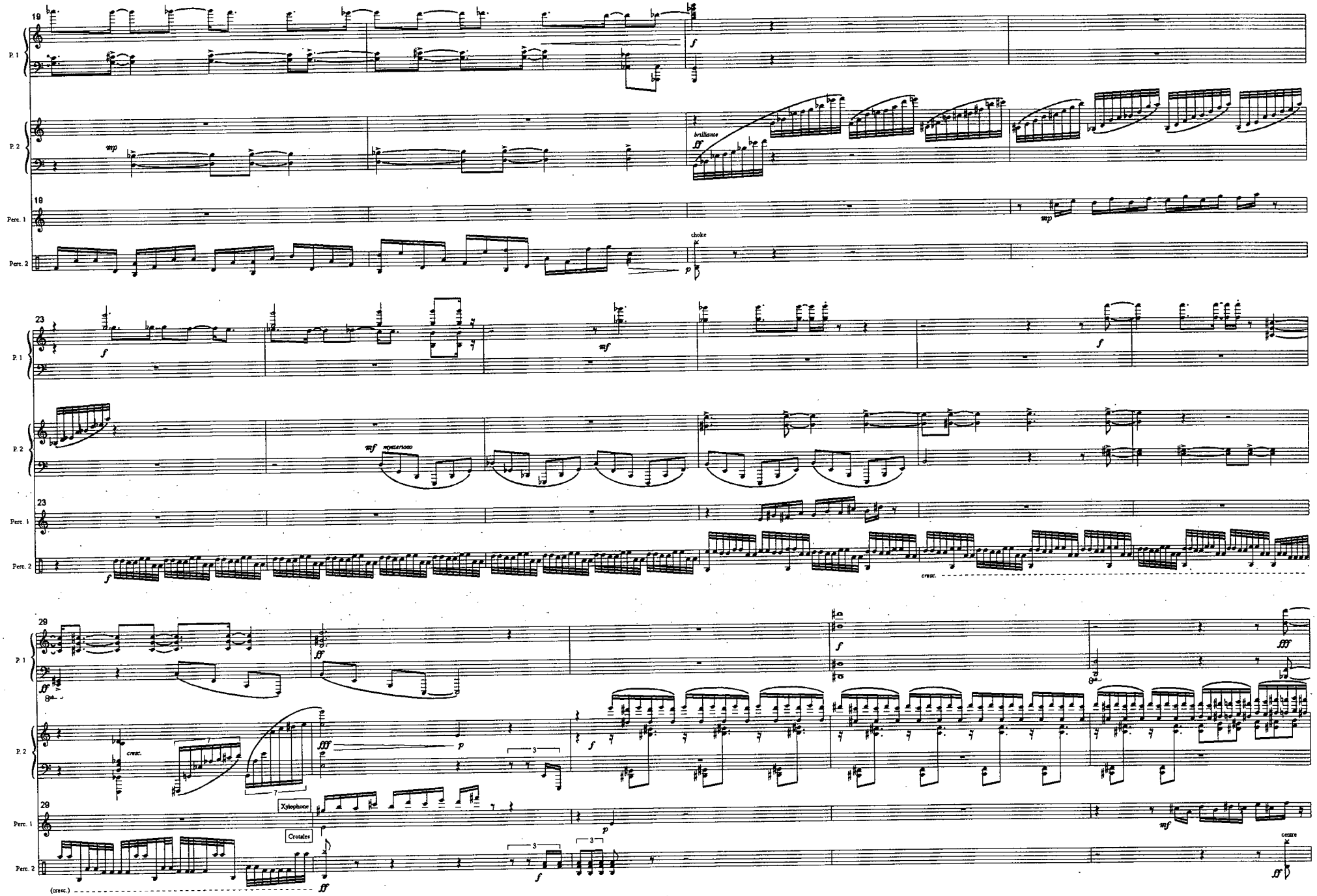

1
♩= 92
P. 1
P. 2
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Marimba
Drum setup
dolce giocoso
sempre con pedale
7
14
Xylophone
Crotales
(1st centre of cymbal)



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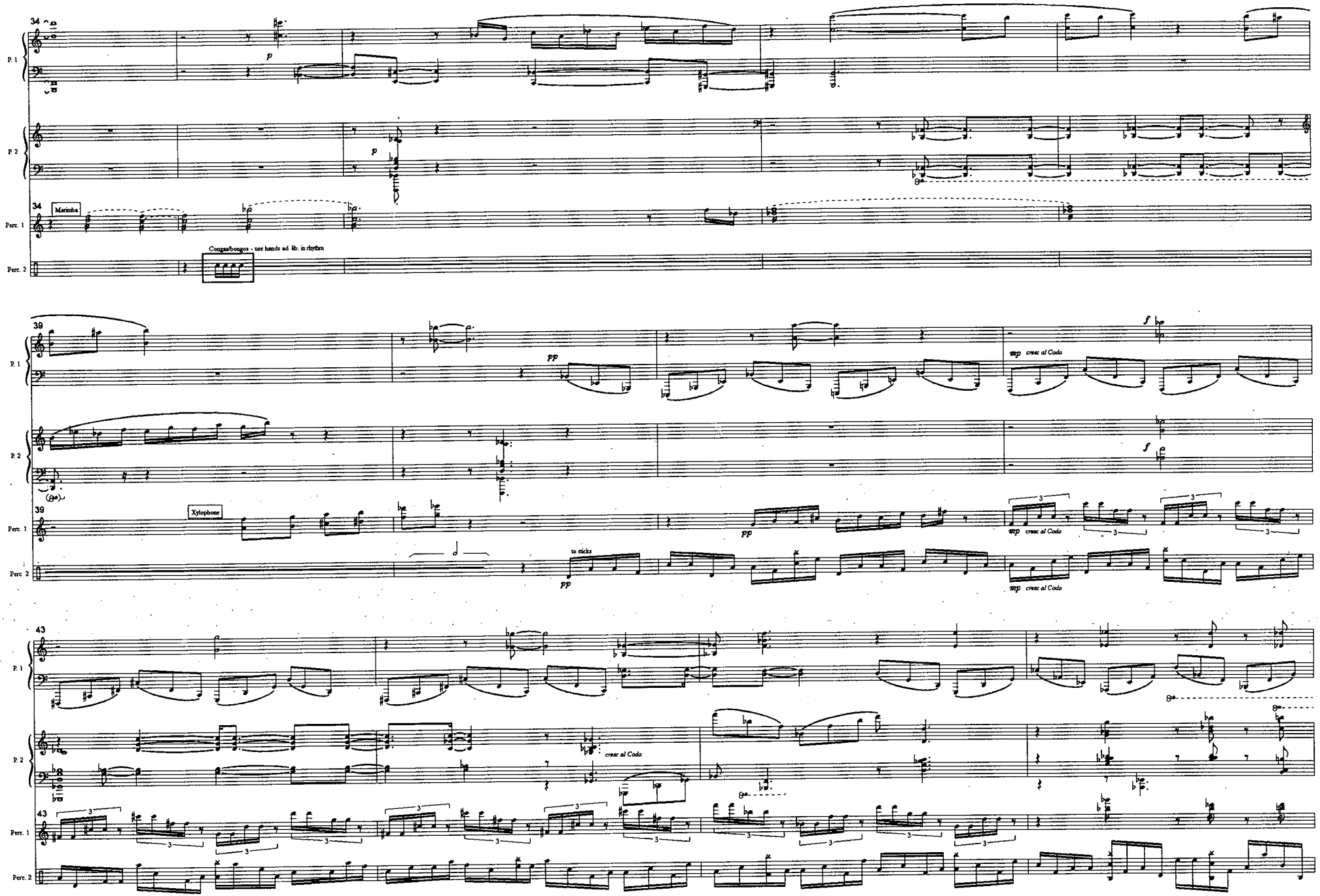

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CODA

♩= 116-120

47

A

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

sempre cresc.

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

sempre cresc.

(Xylo.)

sempre cresc.

ad lib. in rhythm

54

B

sempre cresc.

gradually accelerate to sextuplets

gradually accelerate to sextuplets

M.D.

gradually accelerate to sextuplets

gradually accelerate to sextuplets

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

gradually accelerate to quintuplets

61

C

D

ca. 10"

as long as desired

ca. 5"

Big improv. using fists

Big improv. using fists

M.D.

Big improv.

gradually accelerate to sextuplets

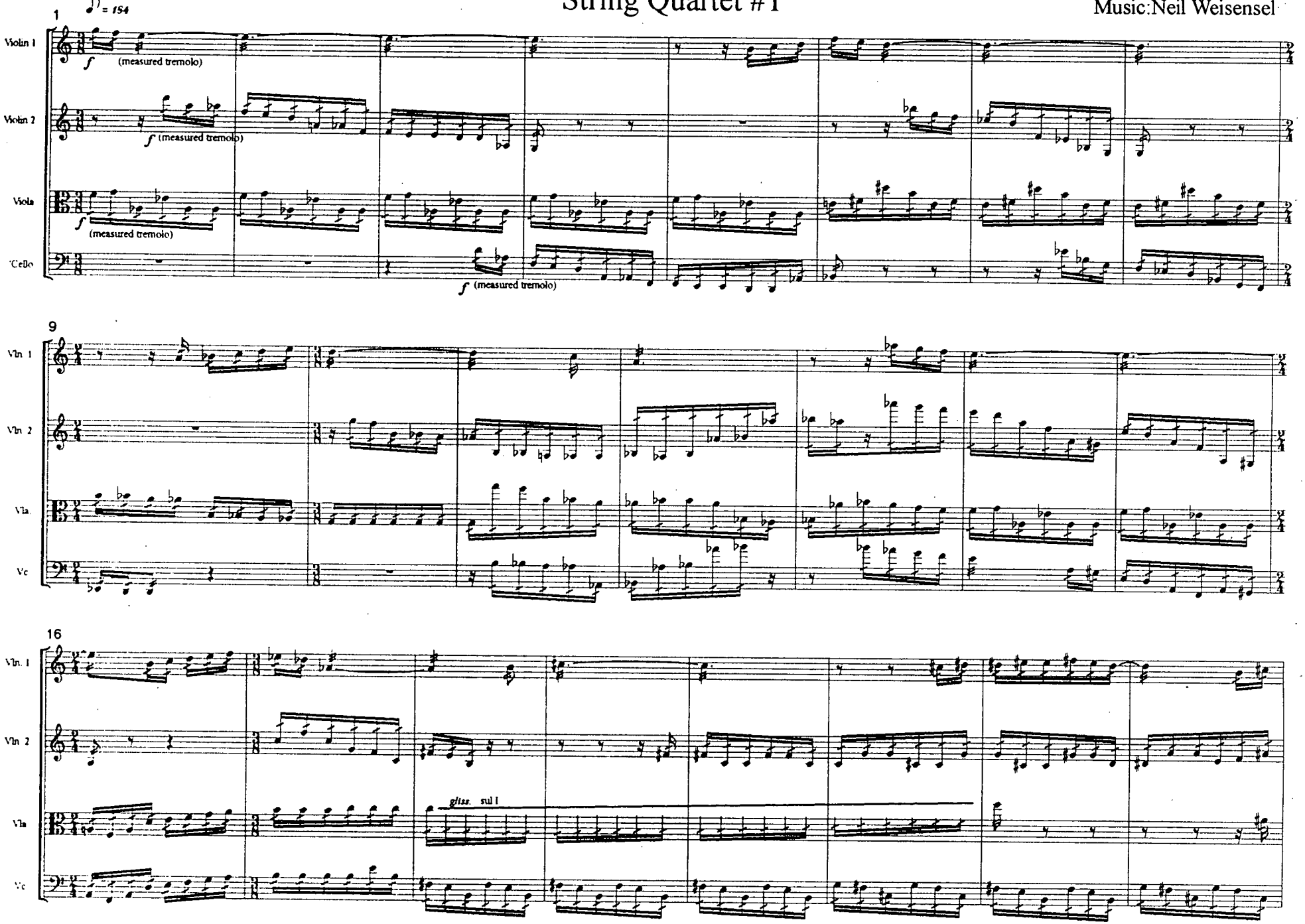
slowly accelerate to sextuplets

cue ending

Go nuts, drown out pianos

String Quartet #1

Music:Neil Weisensel



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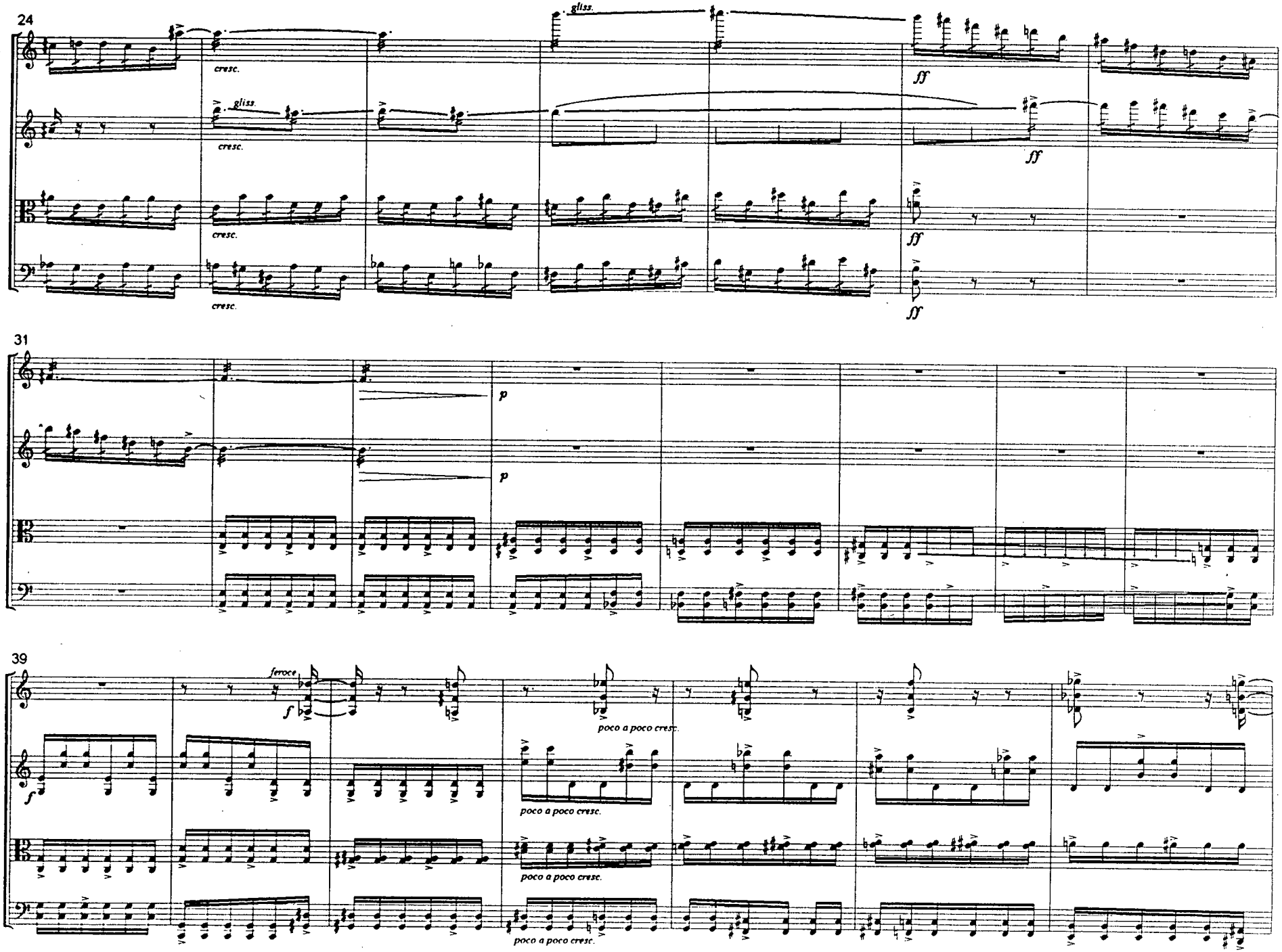

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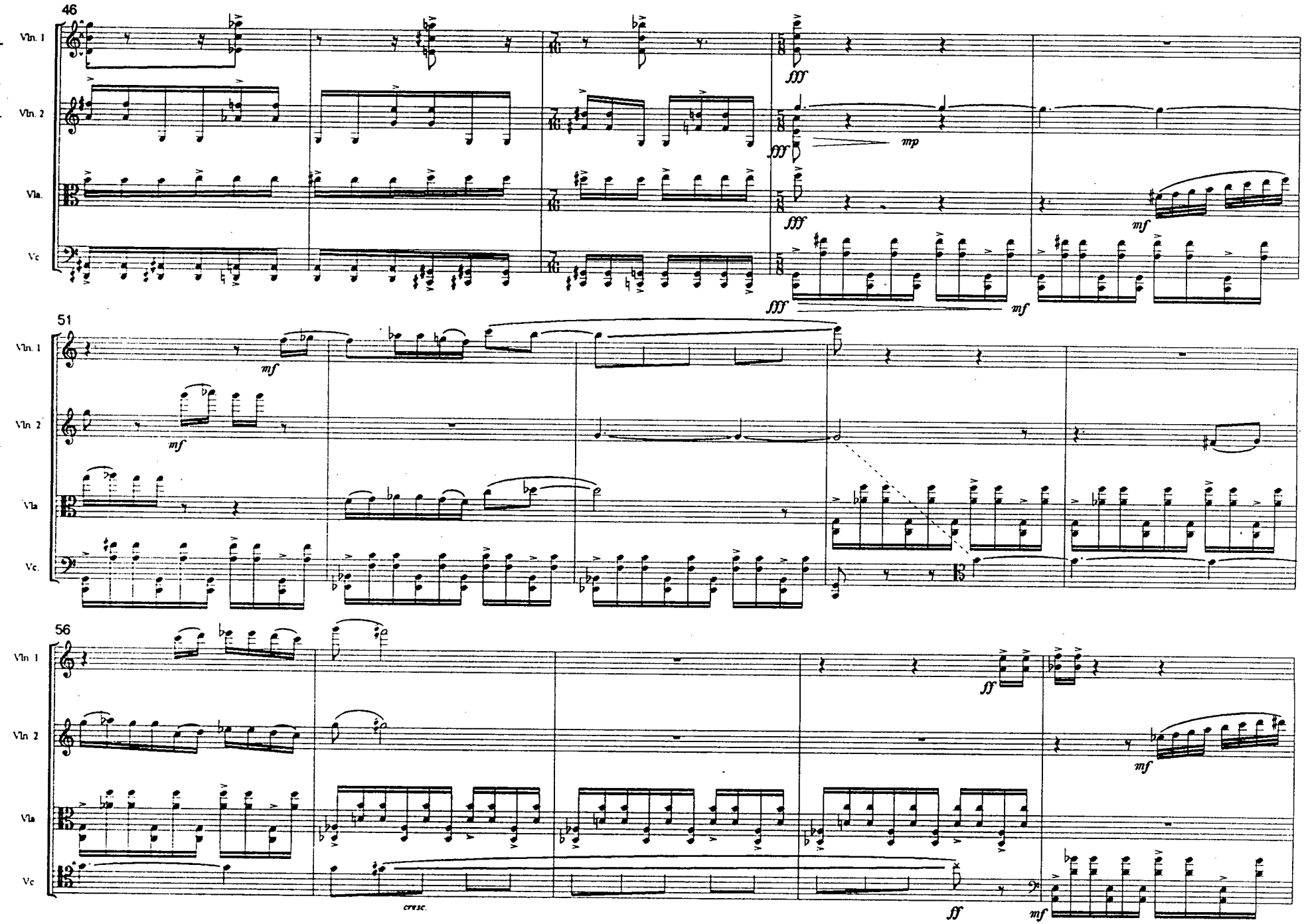

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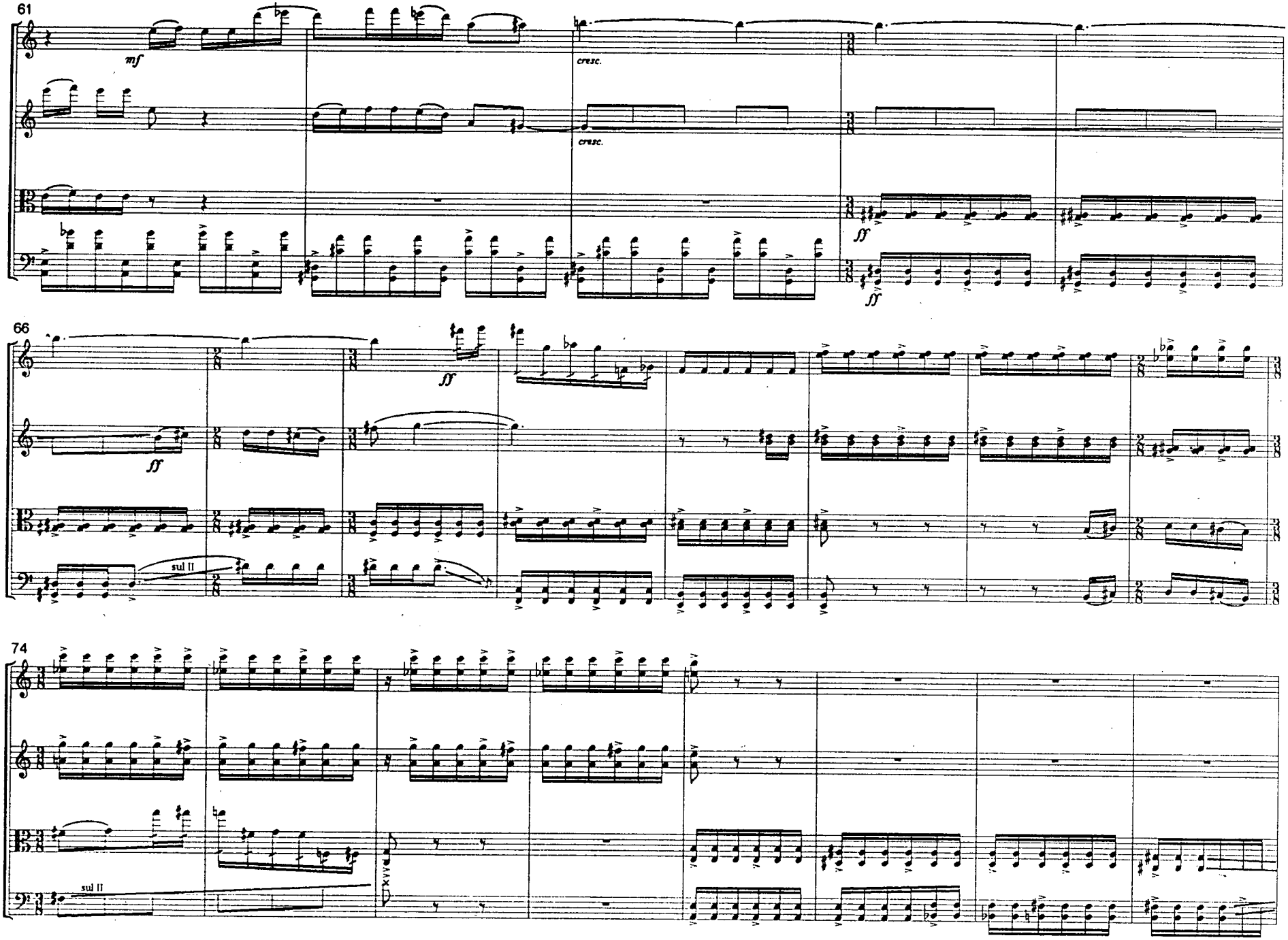

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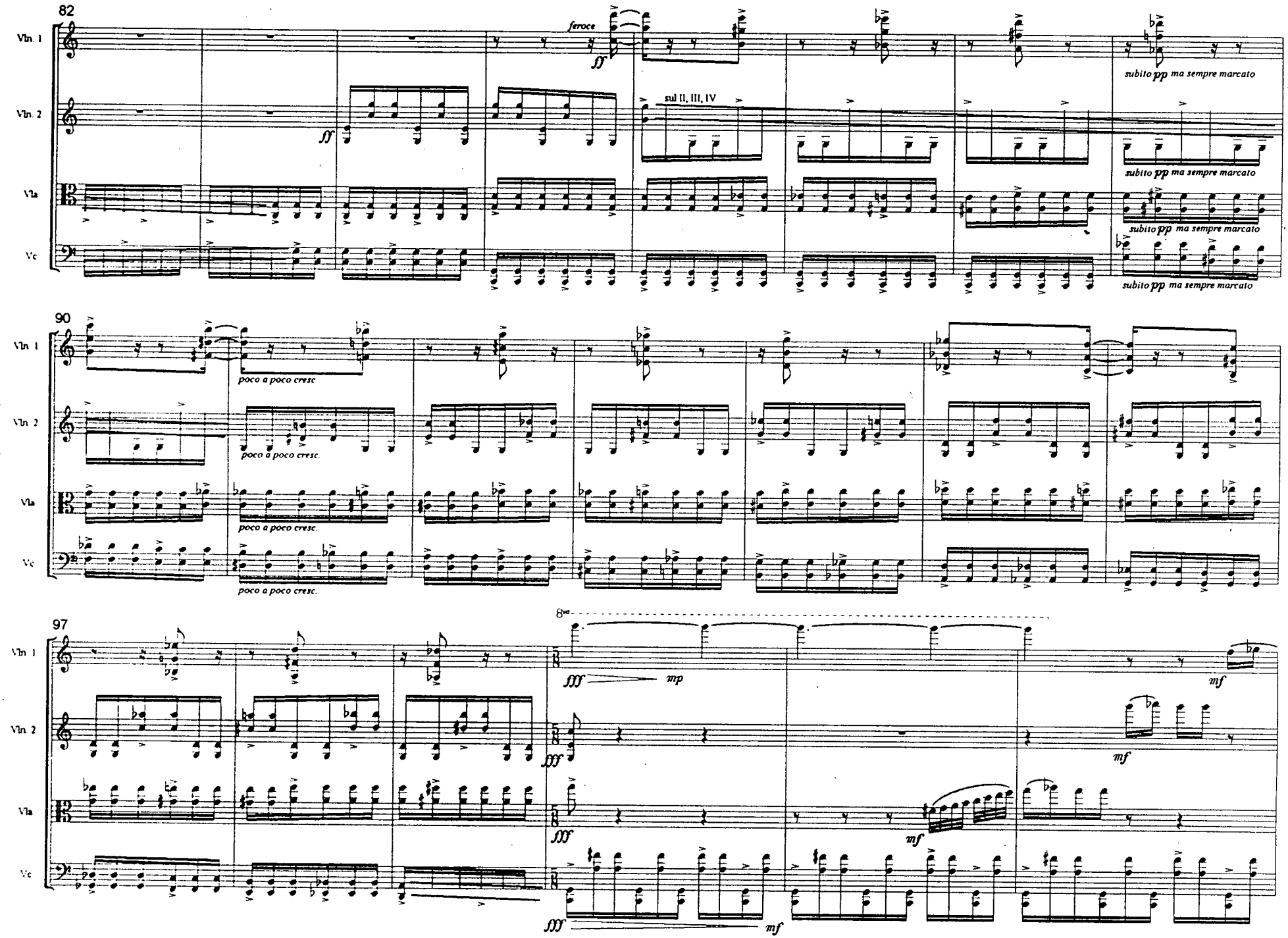

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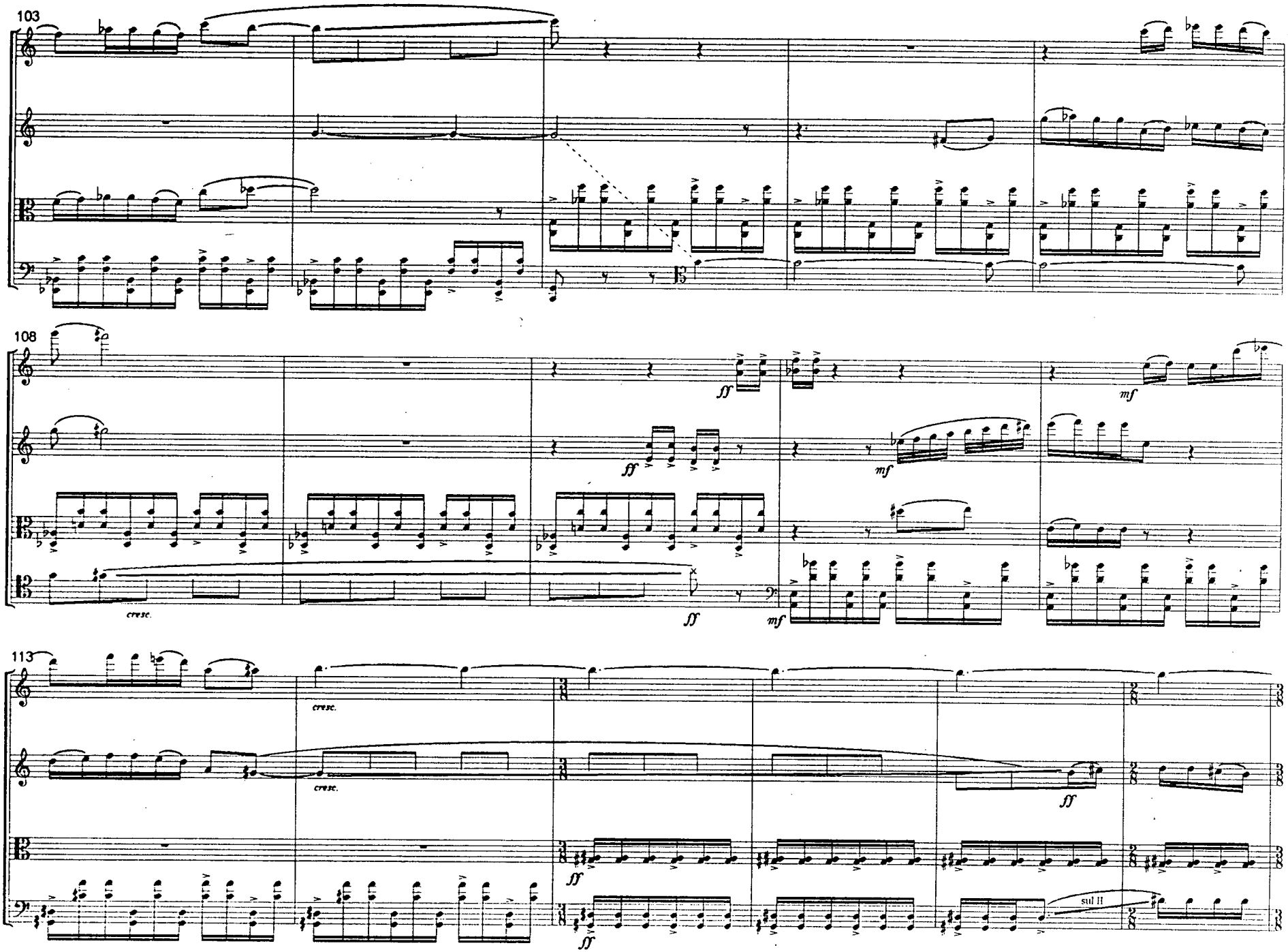

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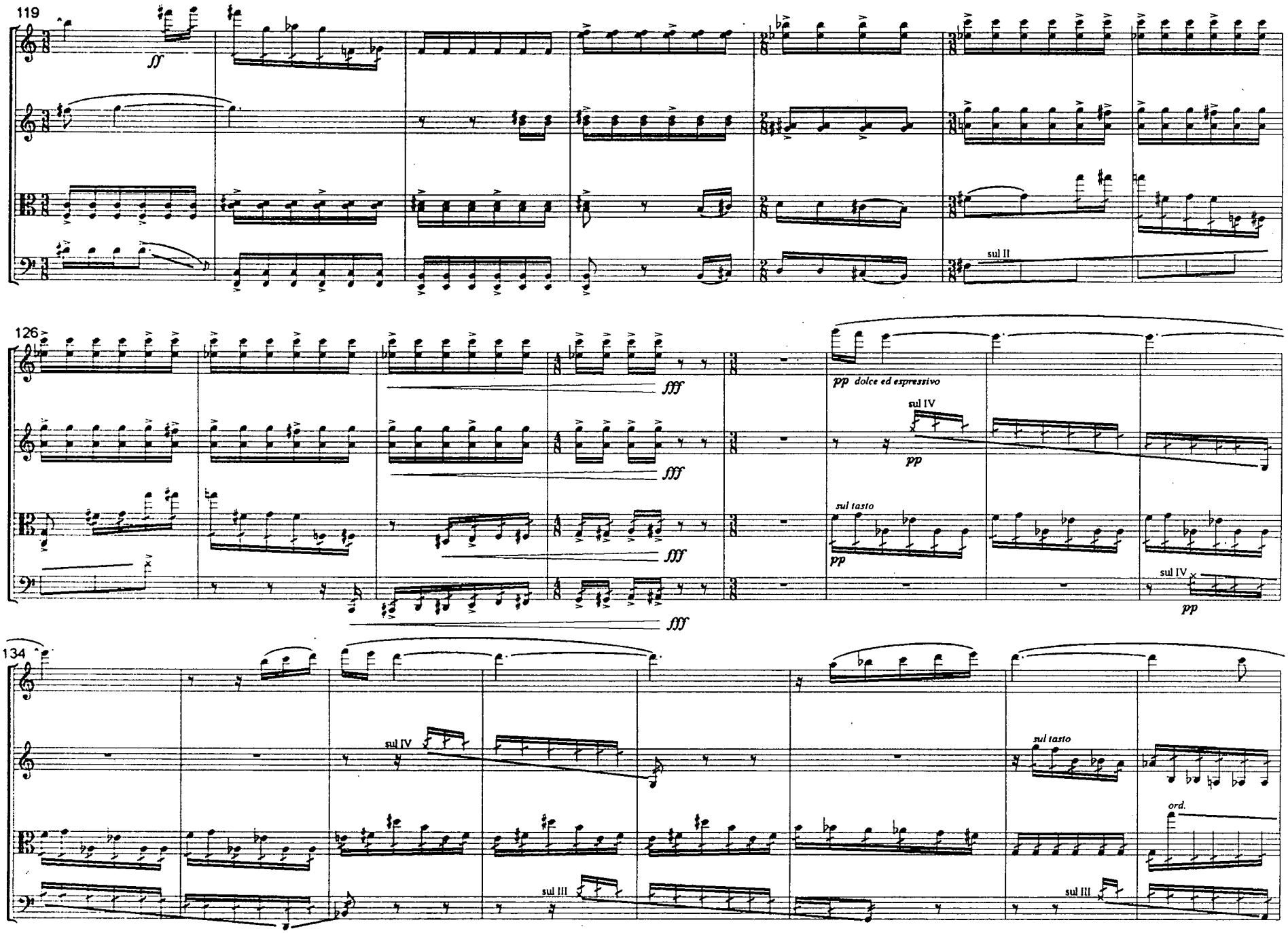

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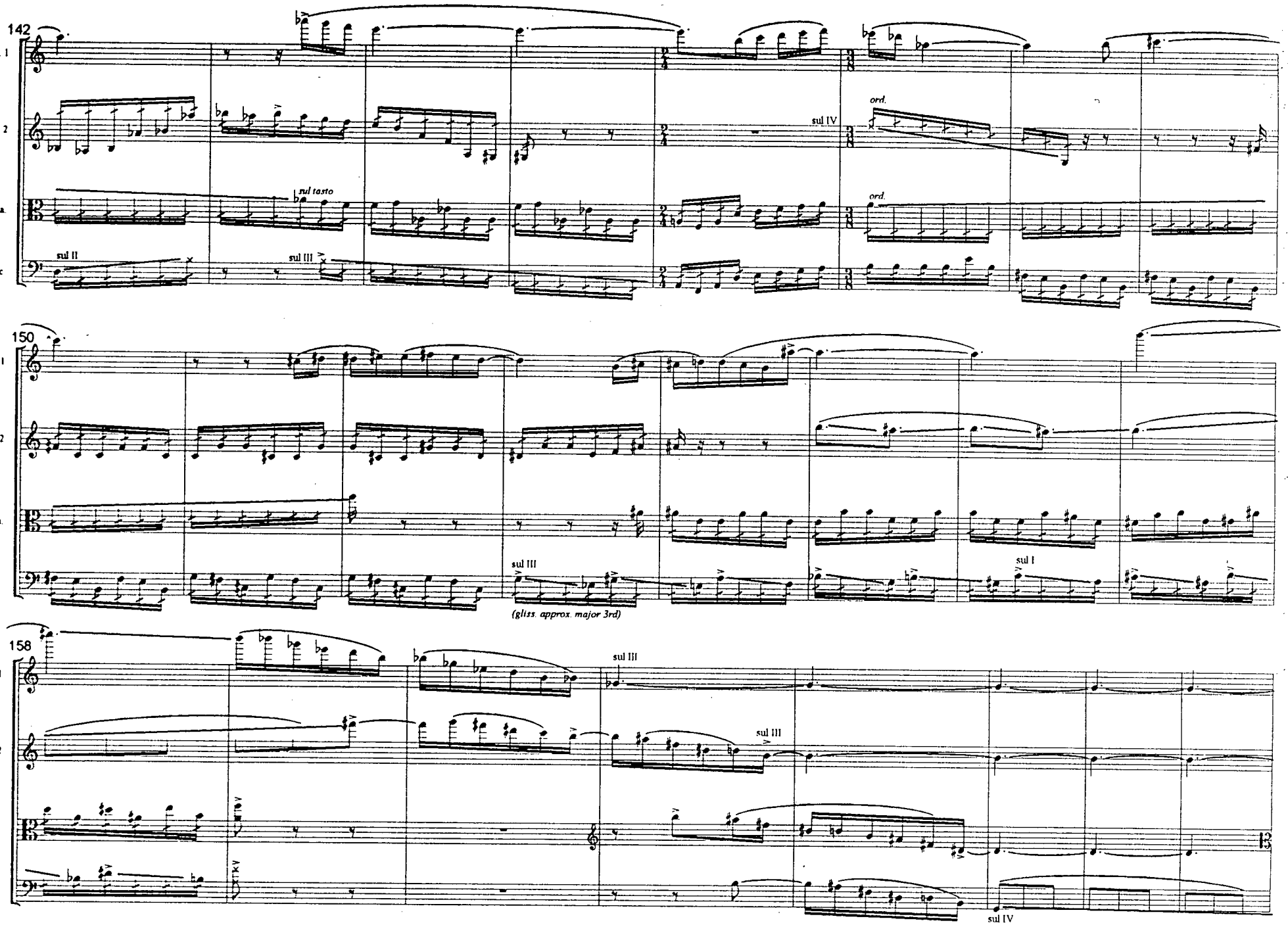

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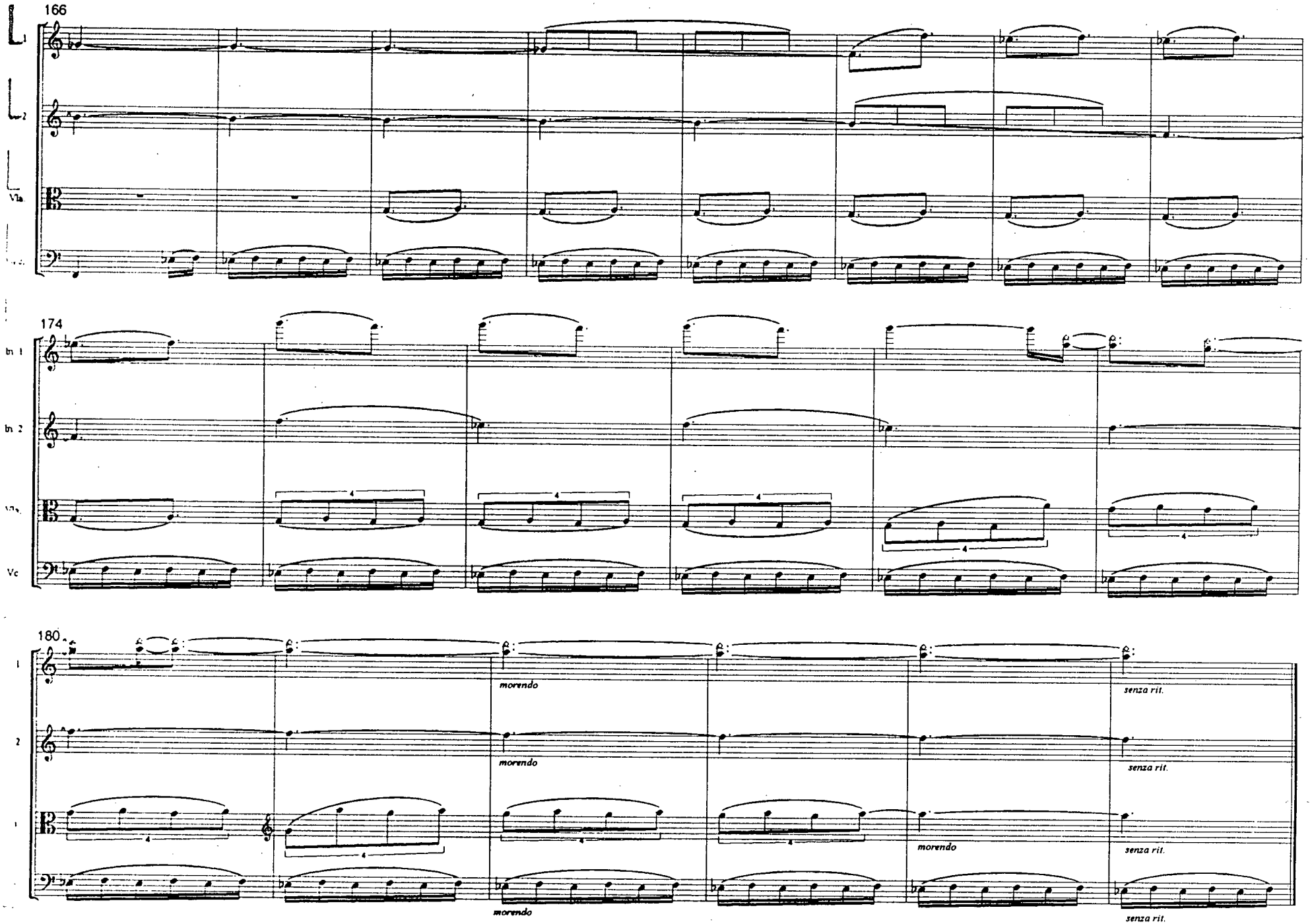

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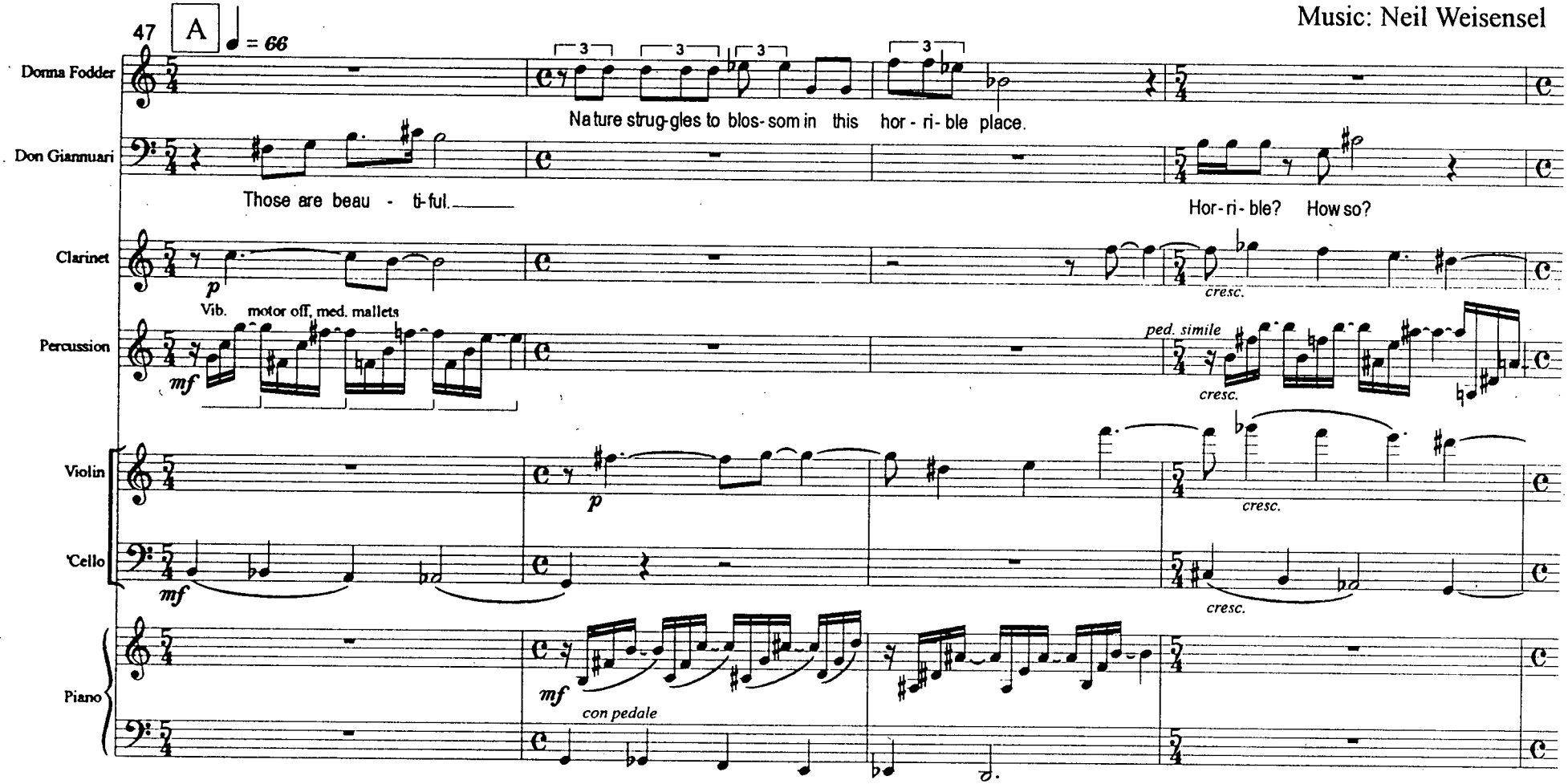
The Master's Stroke

An operatic comedy in two acts

Libretto: Michael Cavanagh

Music: Neil Weisensel



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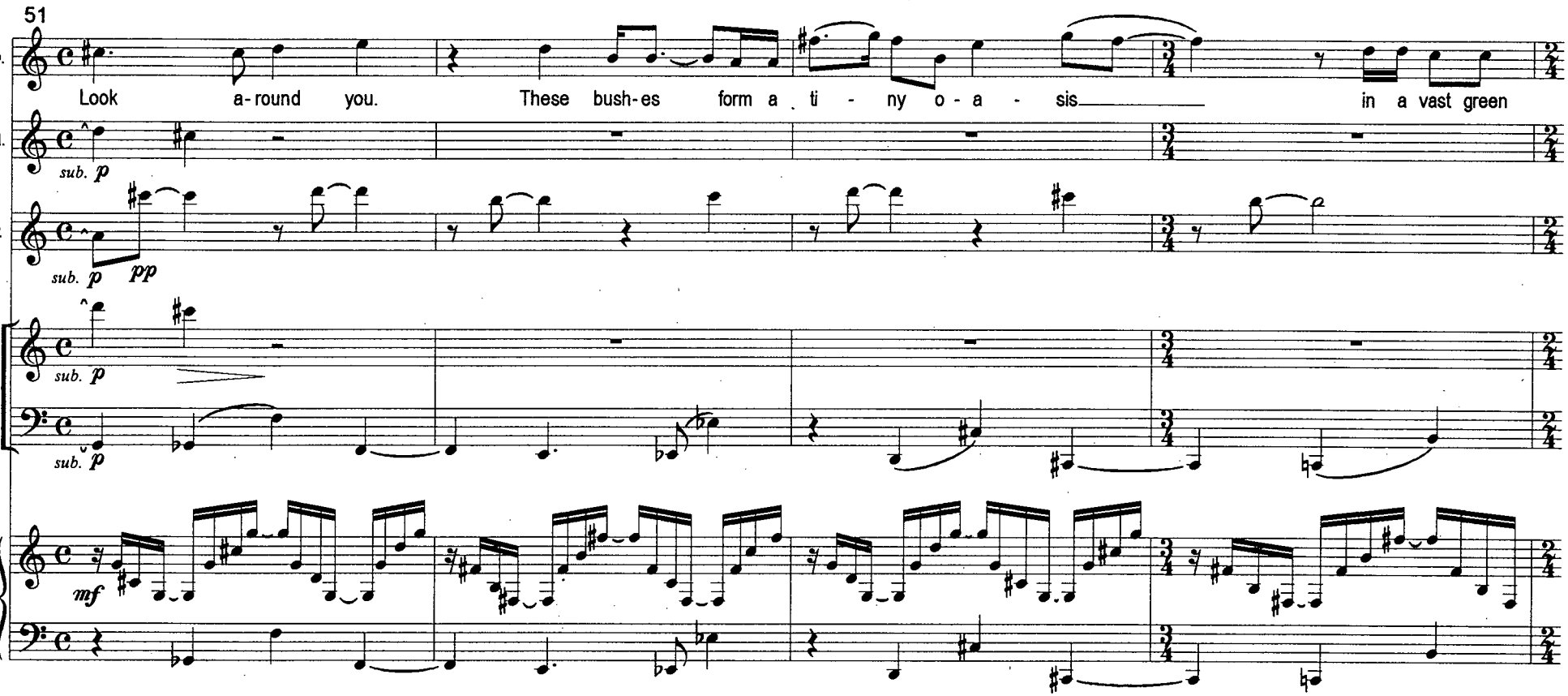

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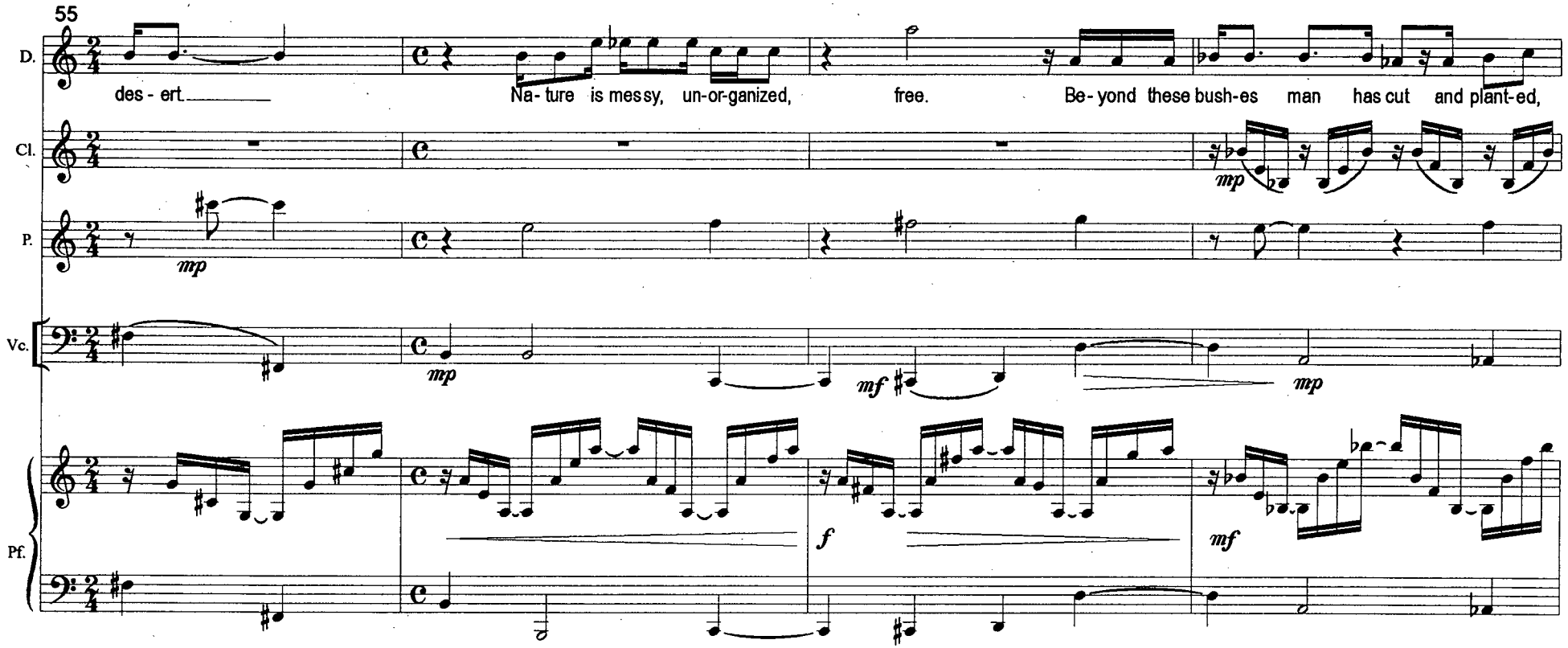

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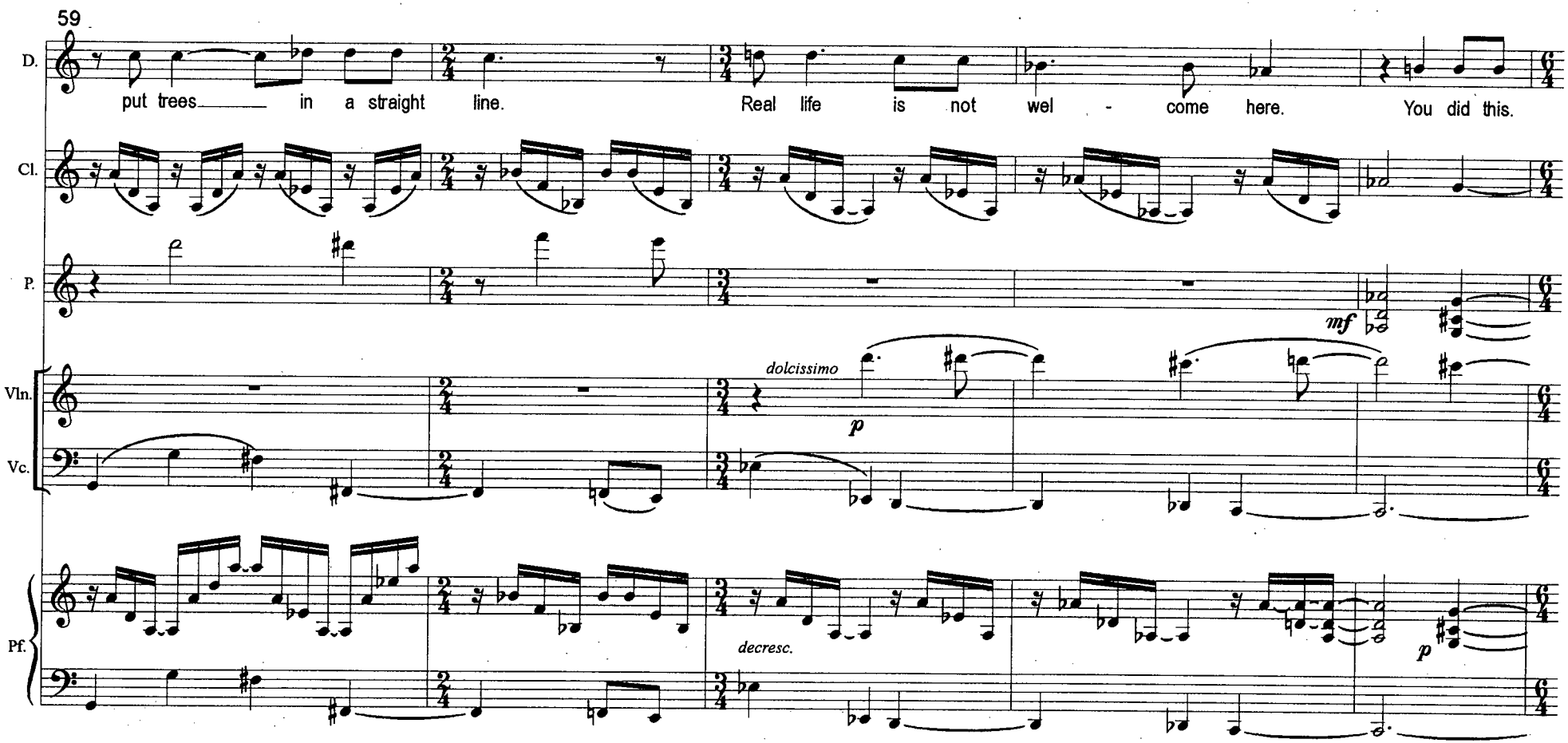

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64

B

D. You, and your kind.

D. G. But flow - ers line the fair-ways! Trees of ev' ry kind ring the greens! And wa - ter,

Cl. *pp* *p*

P. *mp* *mf*

Vln. *pp* *mp* *mf*

Vc. *pp* *mf* *mf*

Pf. *mf*

D. G. wa - ter is ev' - ry - where, mak - ing things grow in their beau - ty, as you do now, be -

P. *mp* *poco a poco cresc. e agitato*

(measured)

Vln. *mp* *poco a poco cresc. e agitato*

Vc. *mp* *poco a poco cresc. e agitato*

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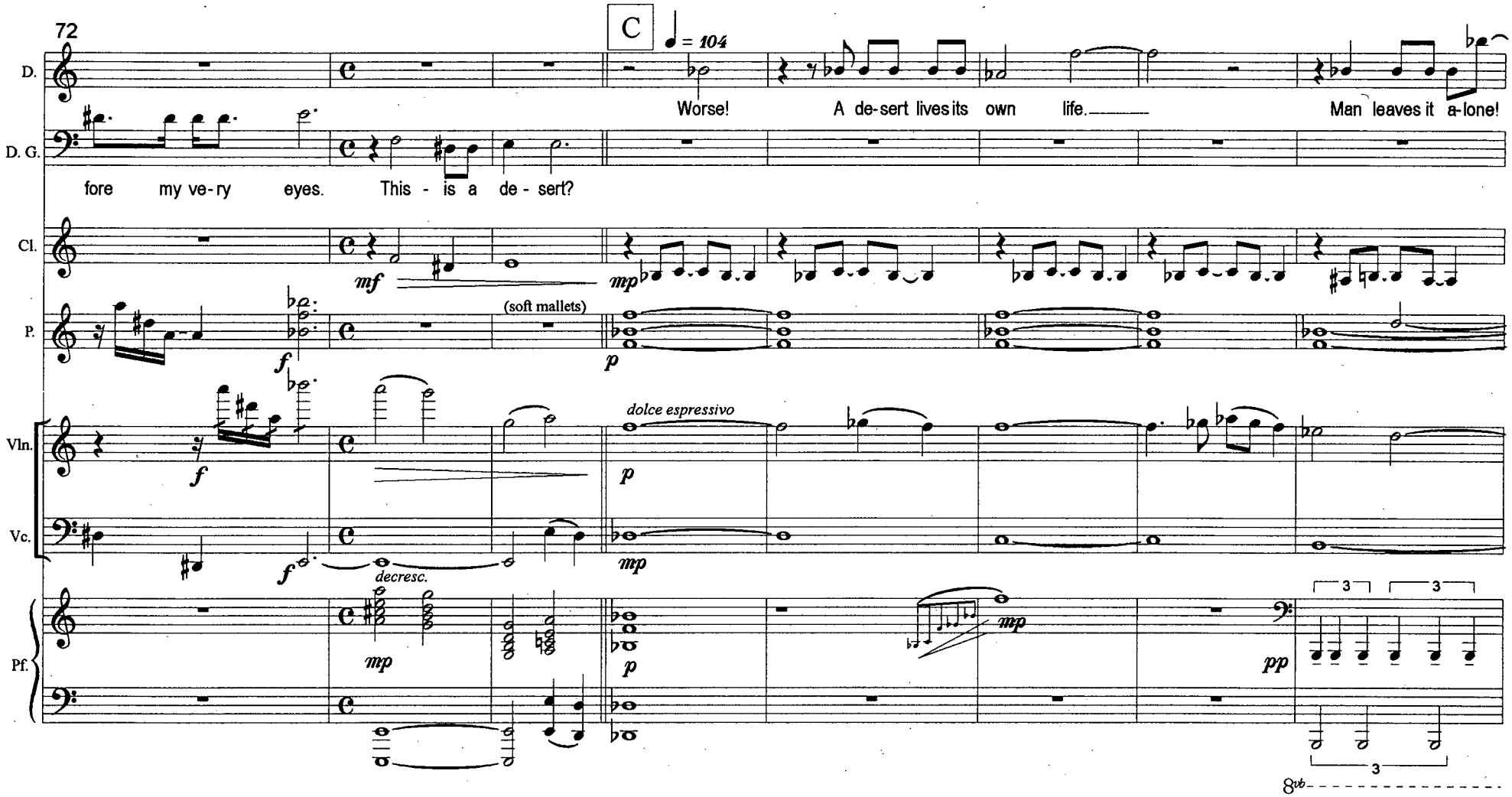

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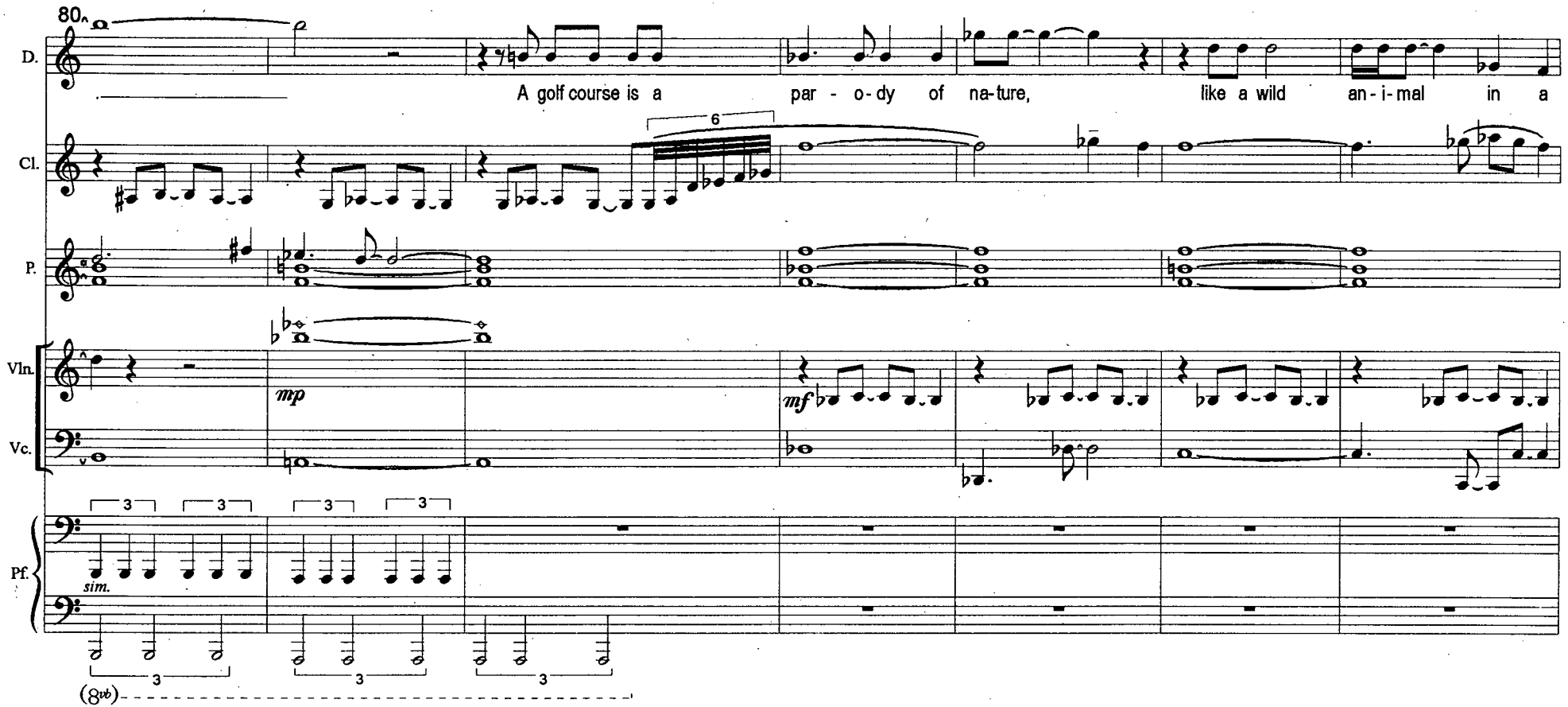

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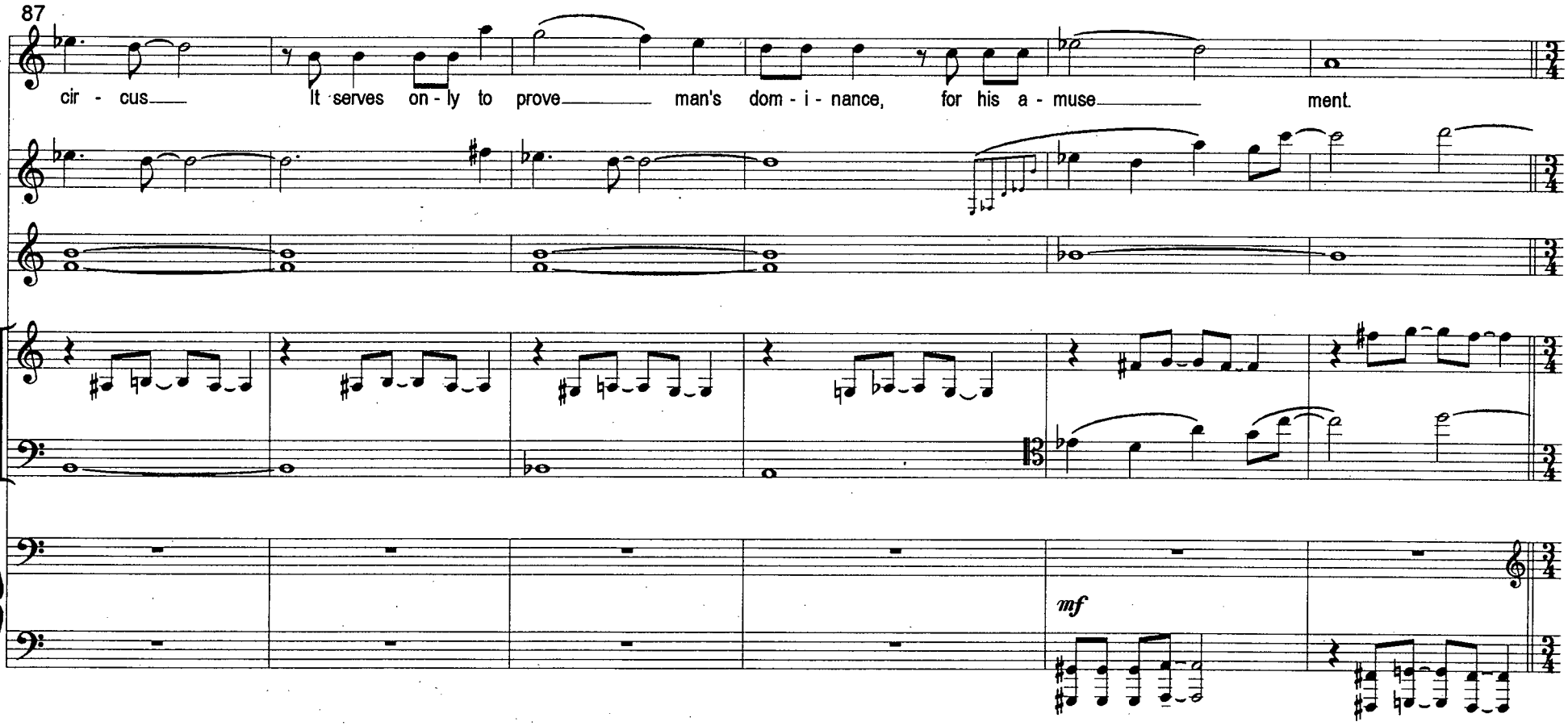

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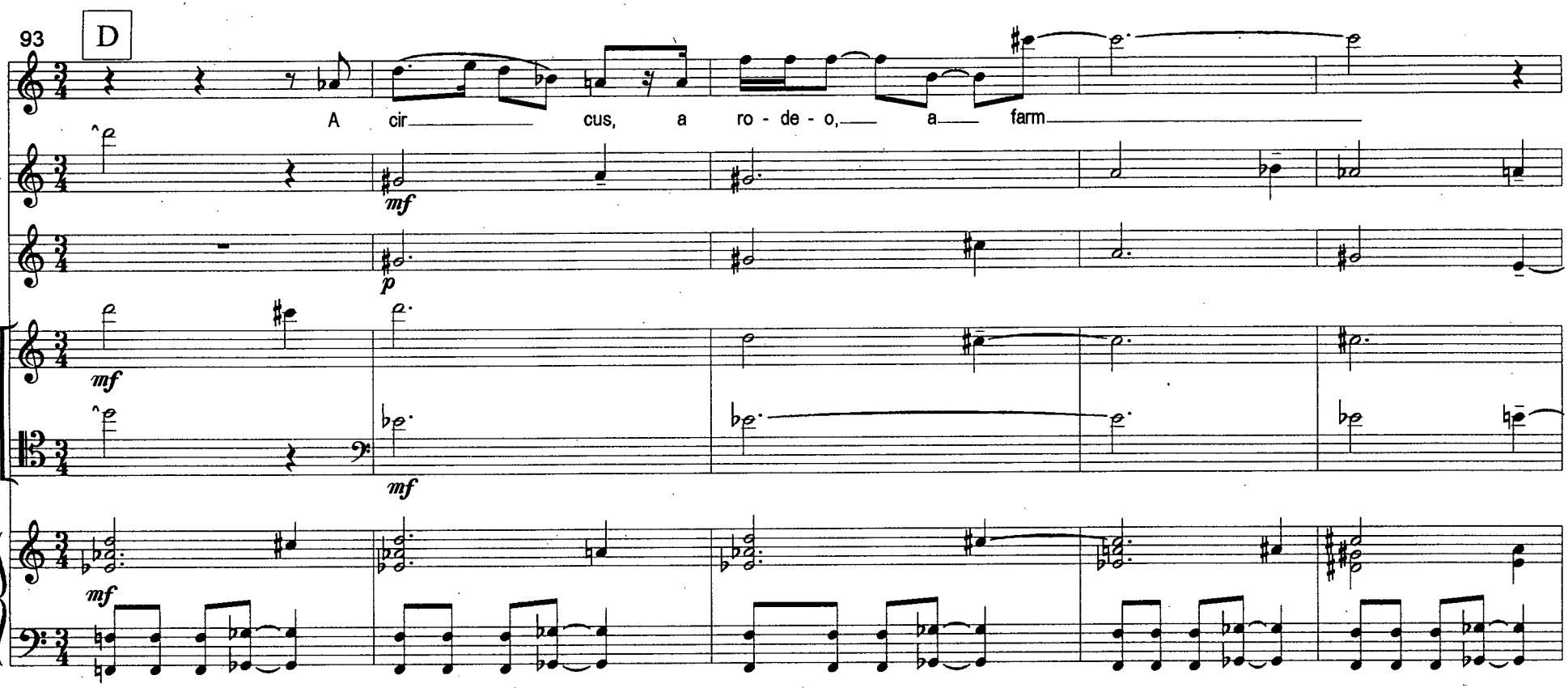

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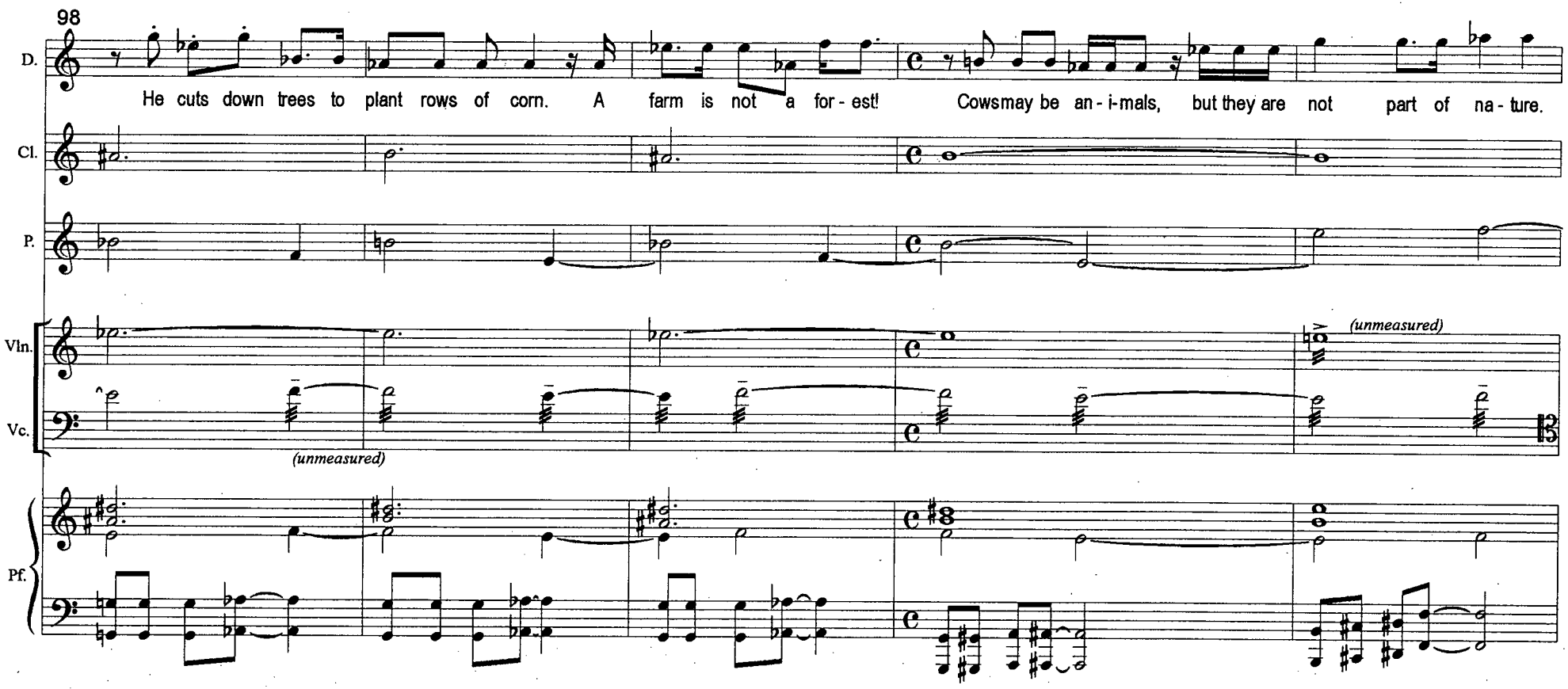

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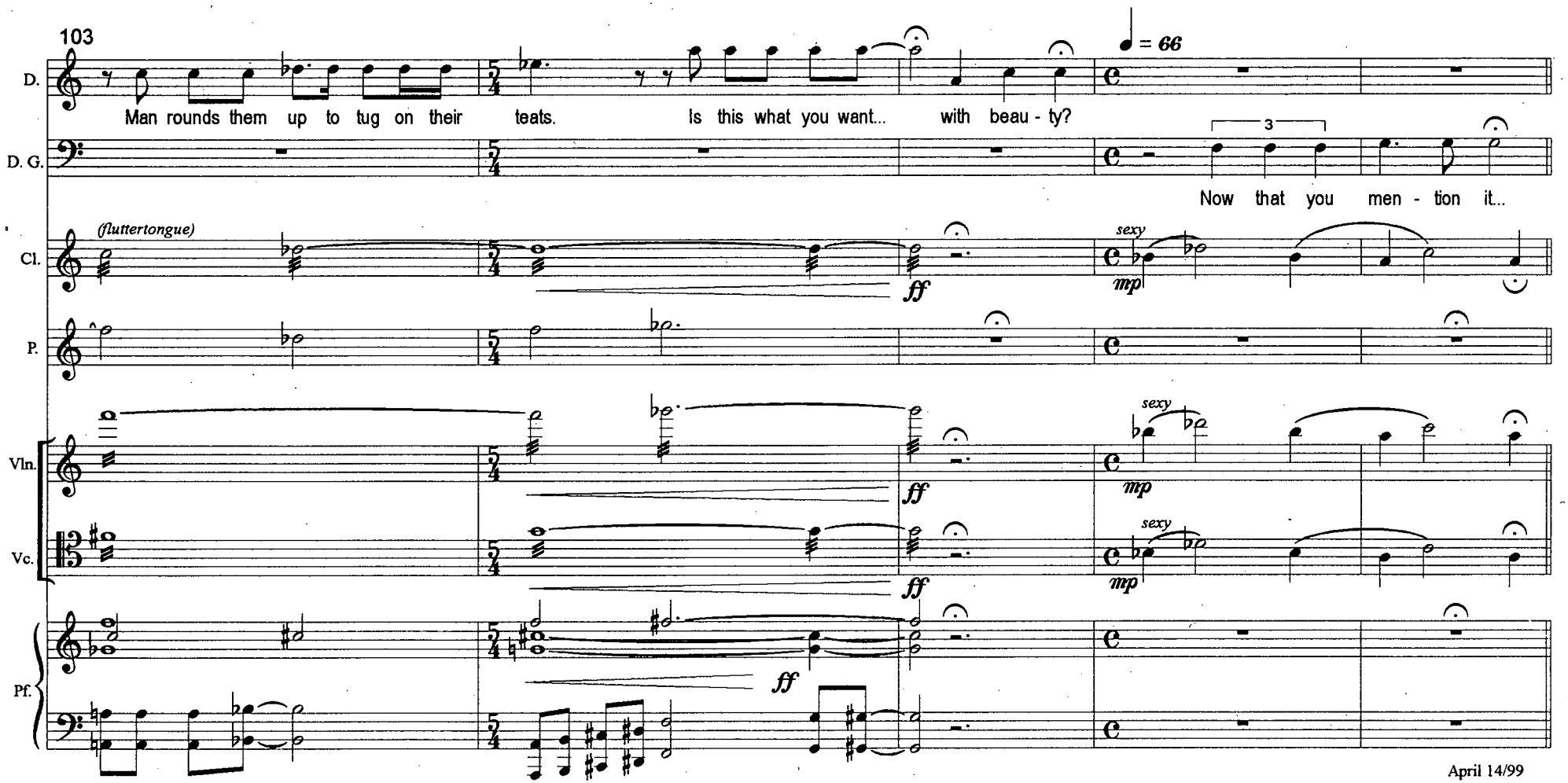

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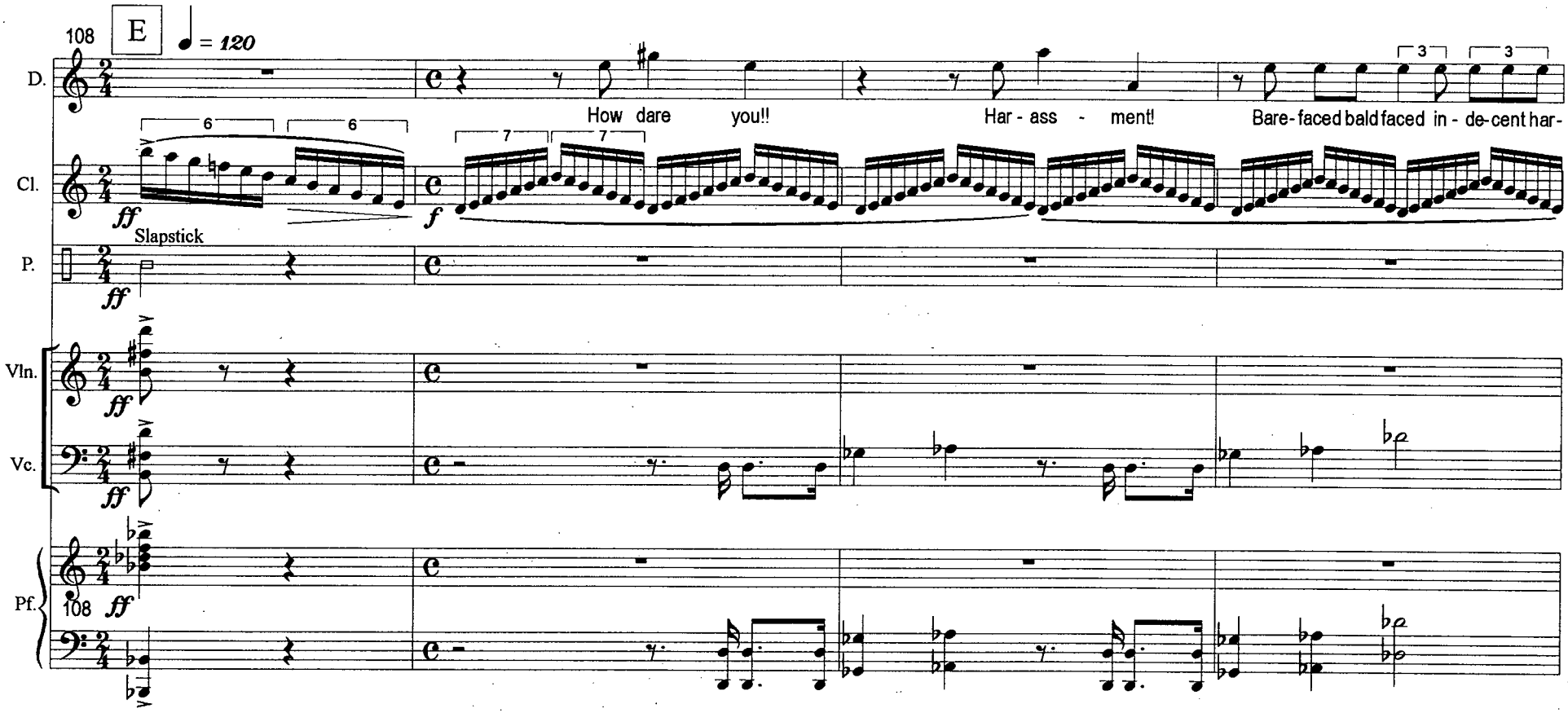

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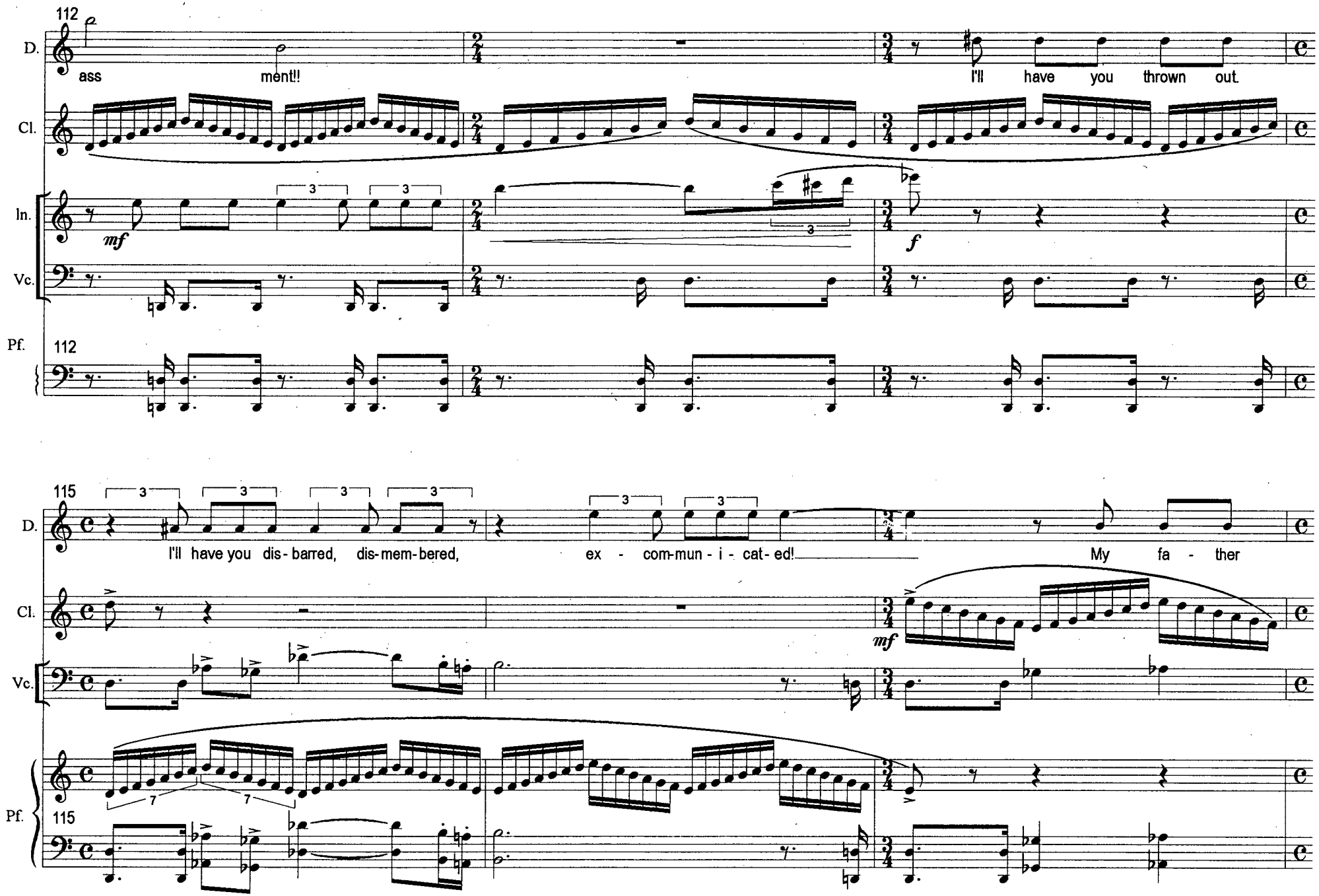

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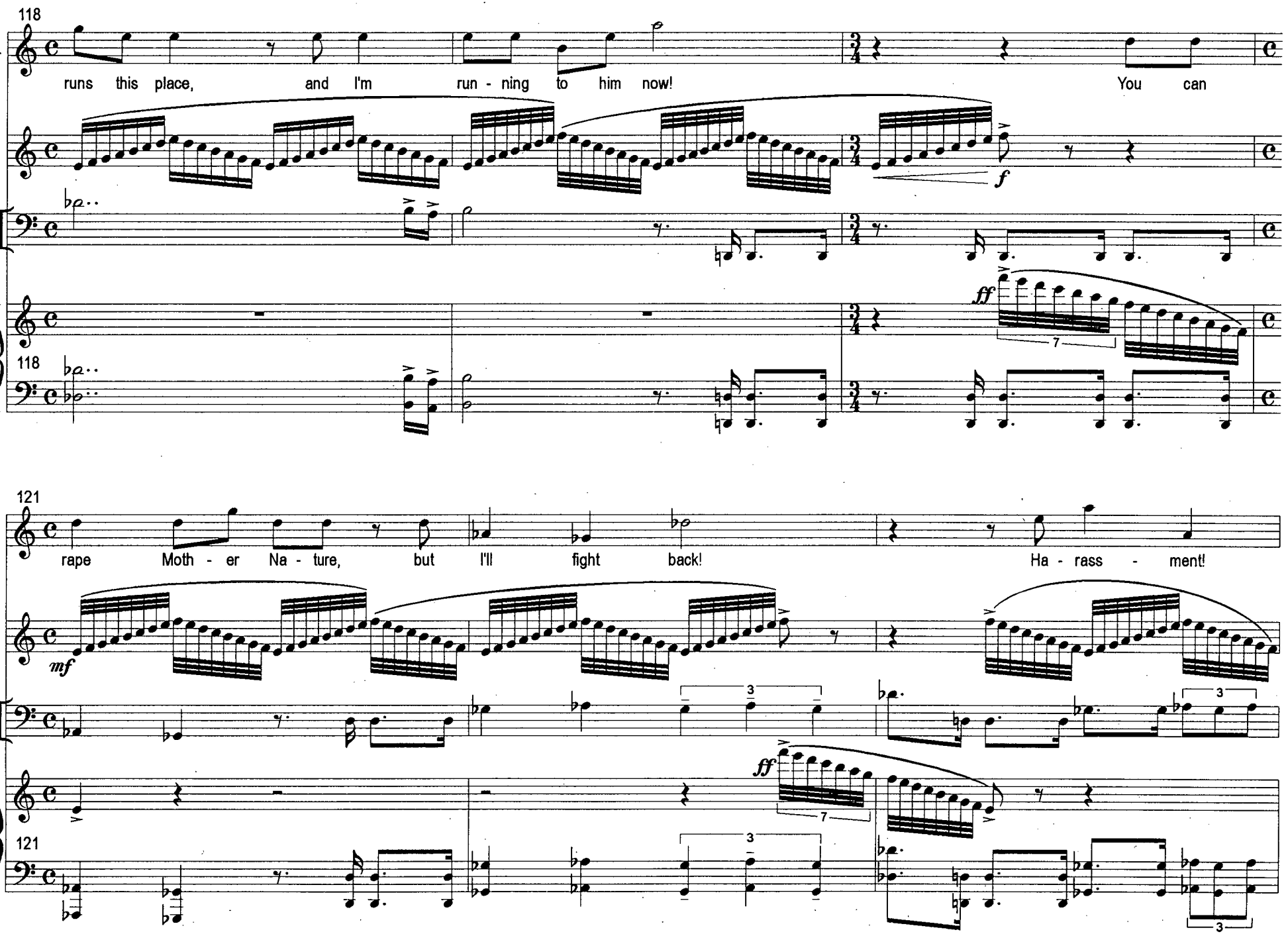

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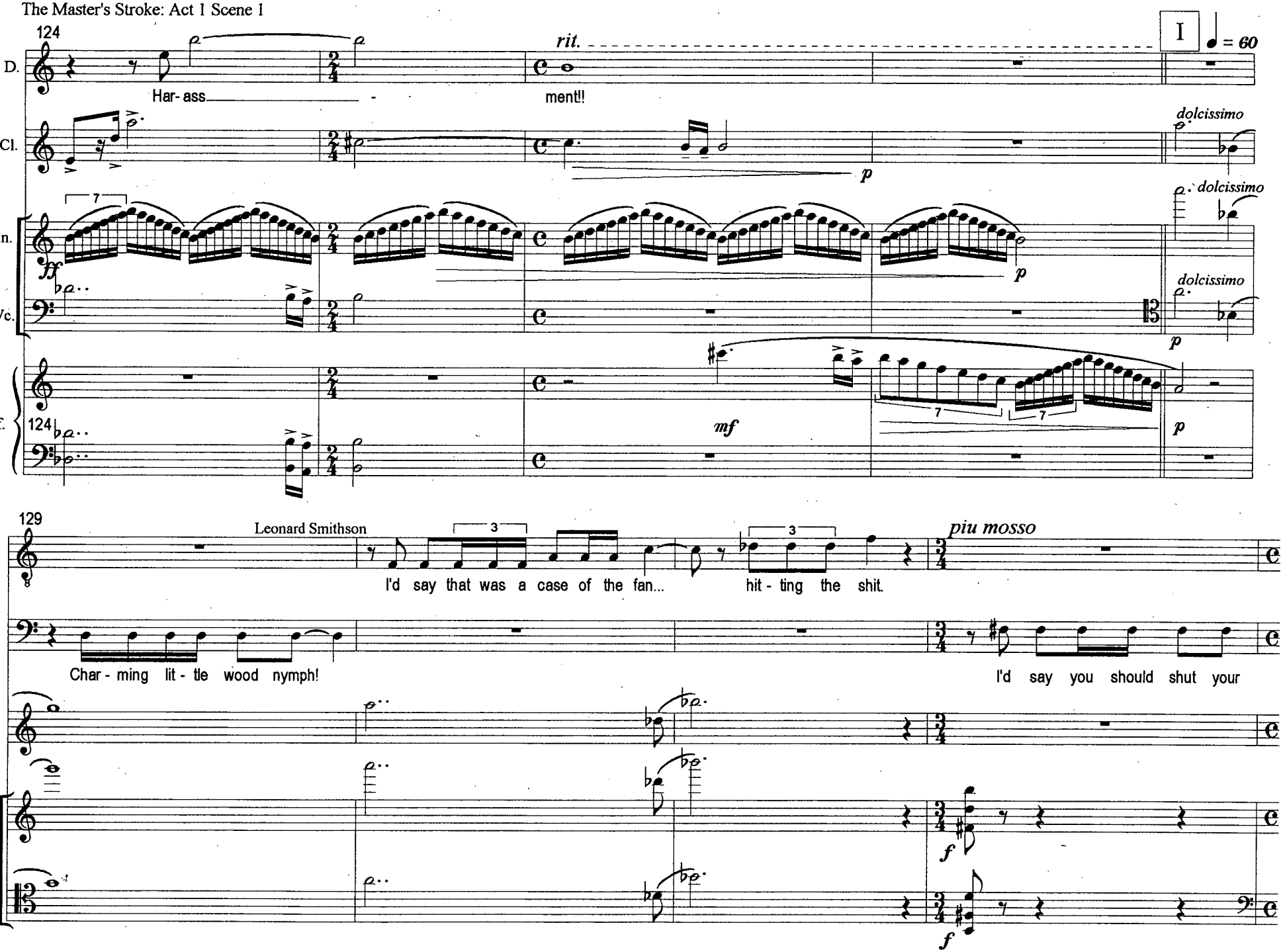

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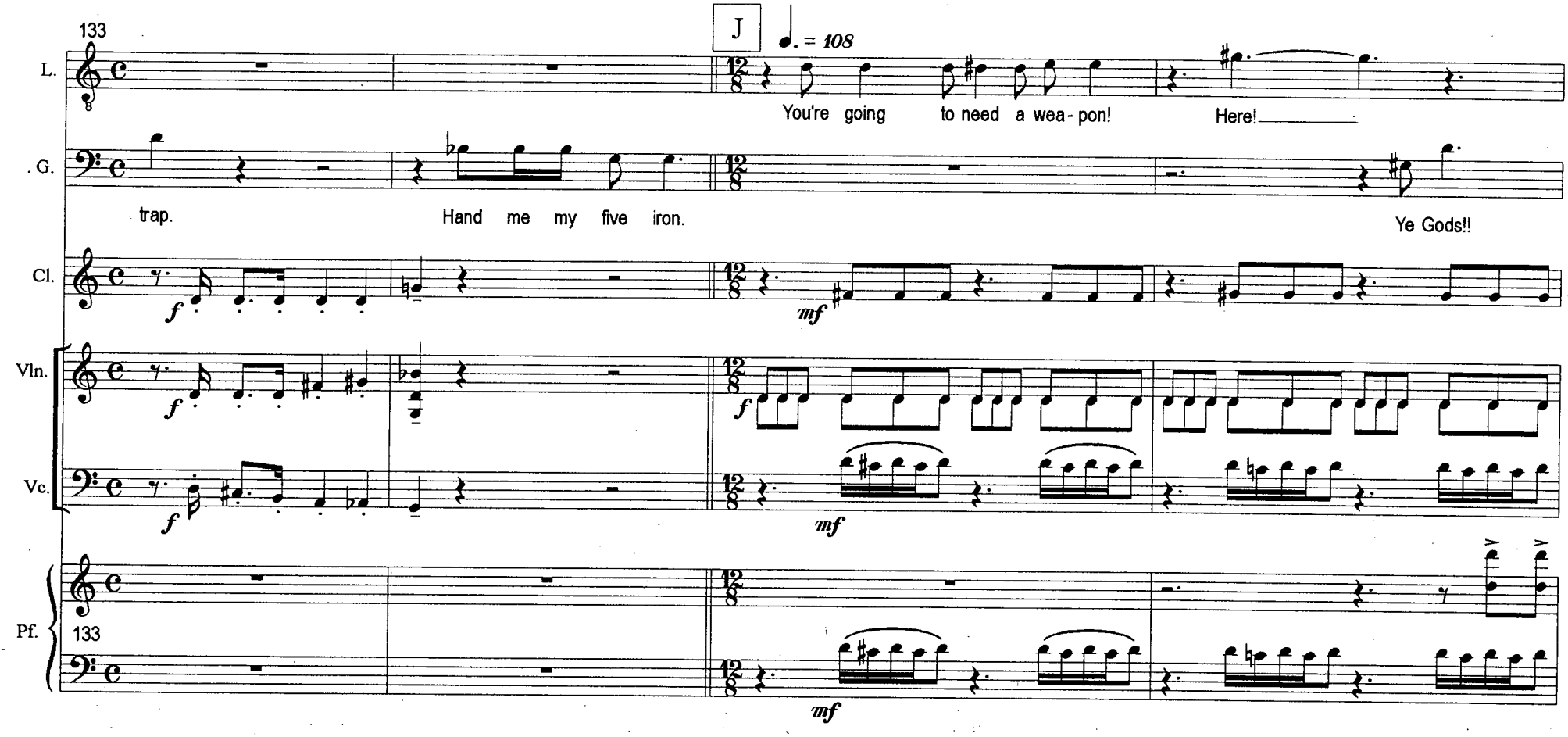

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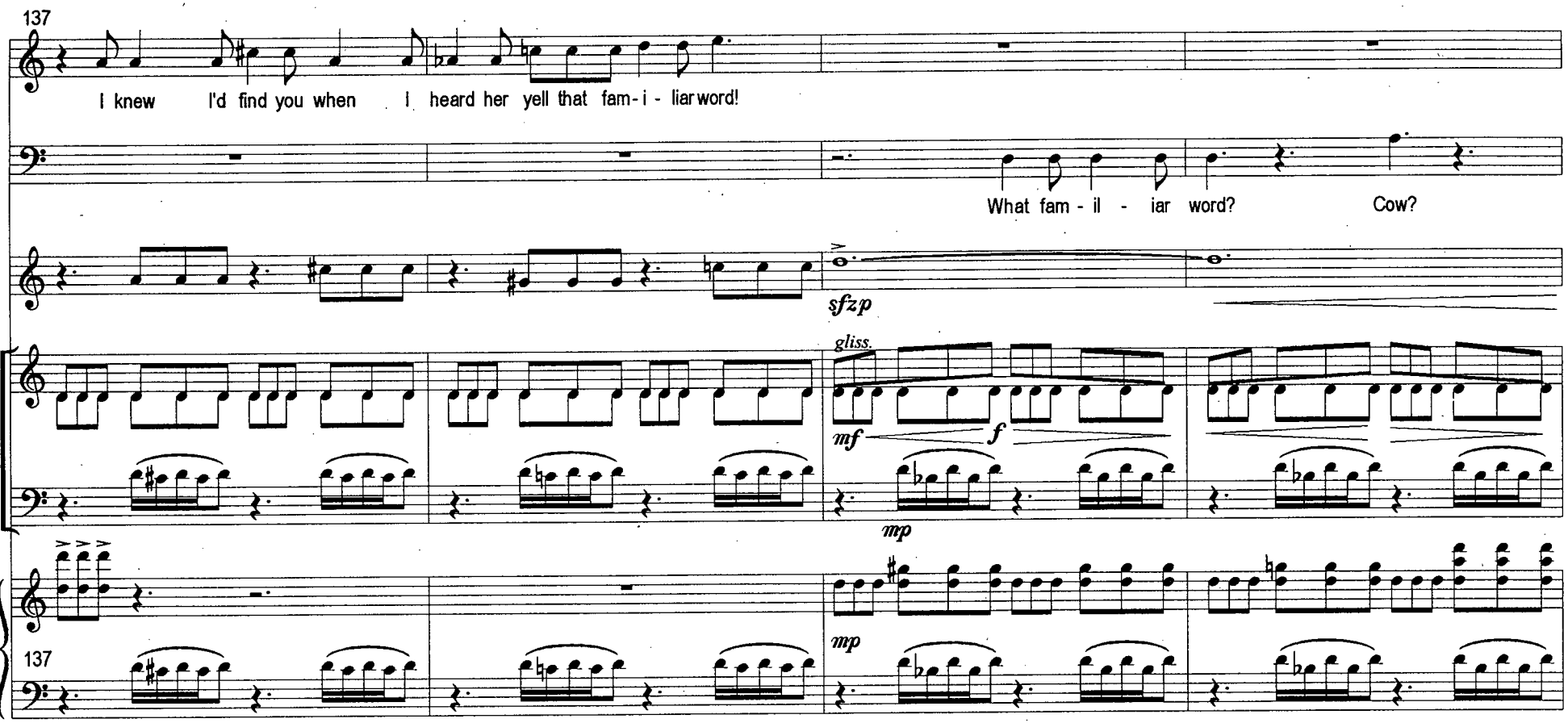

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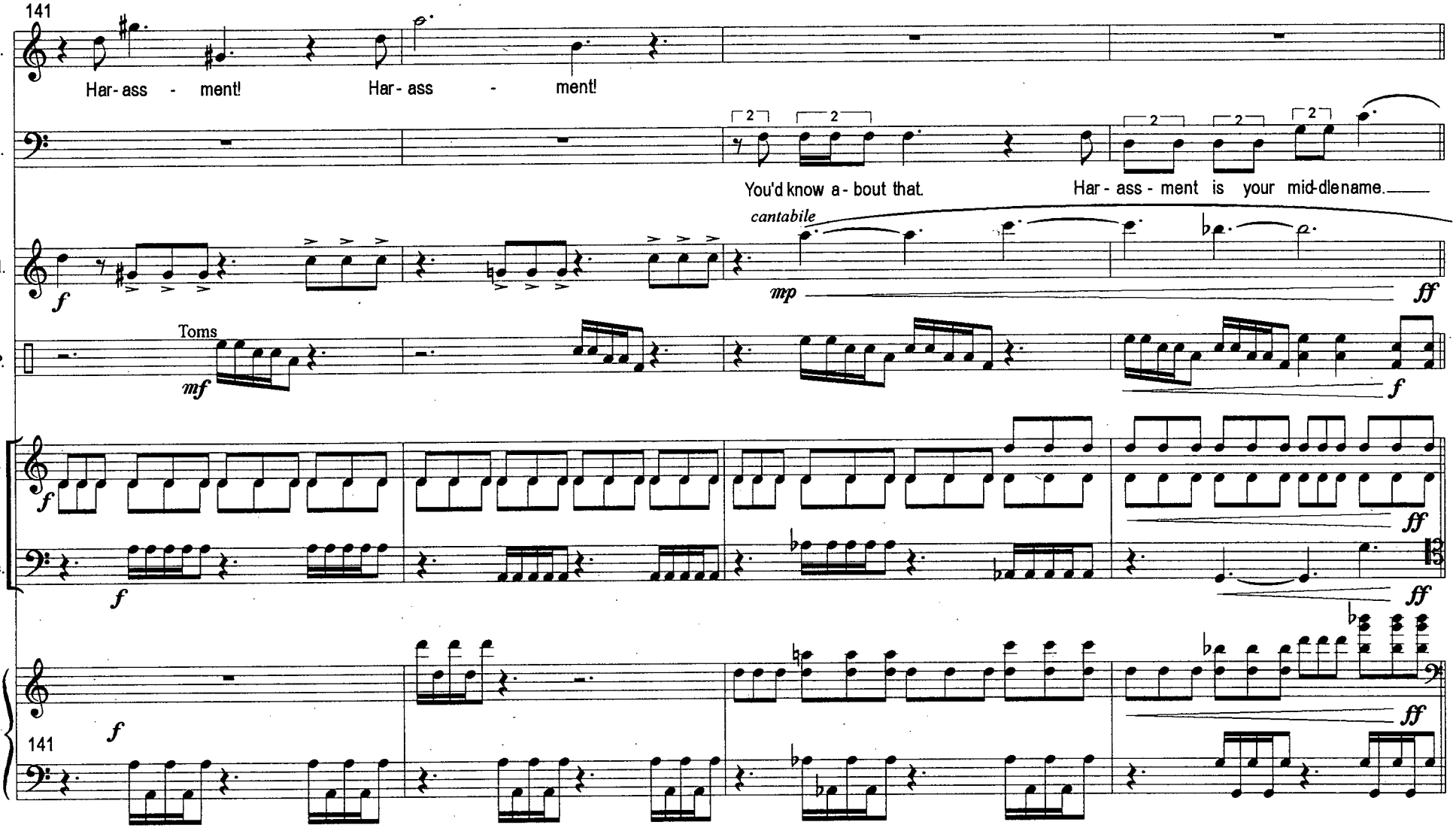

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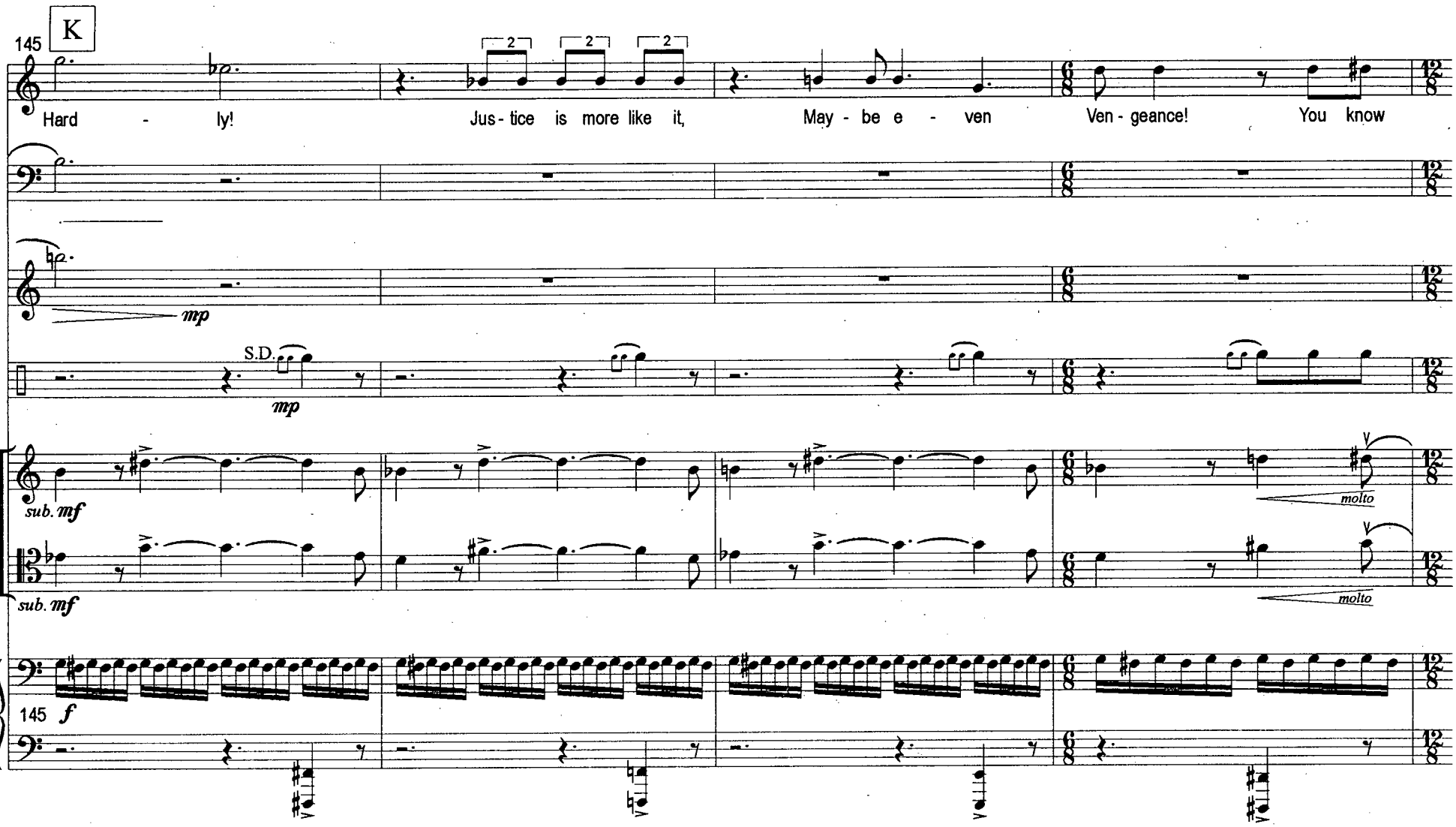

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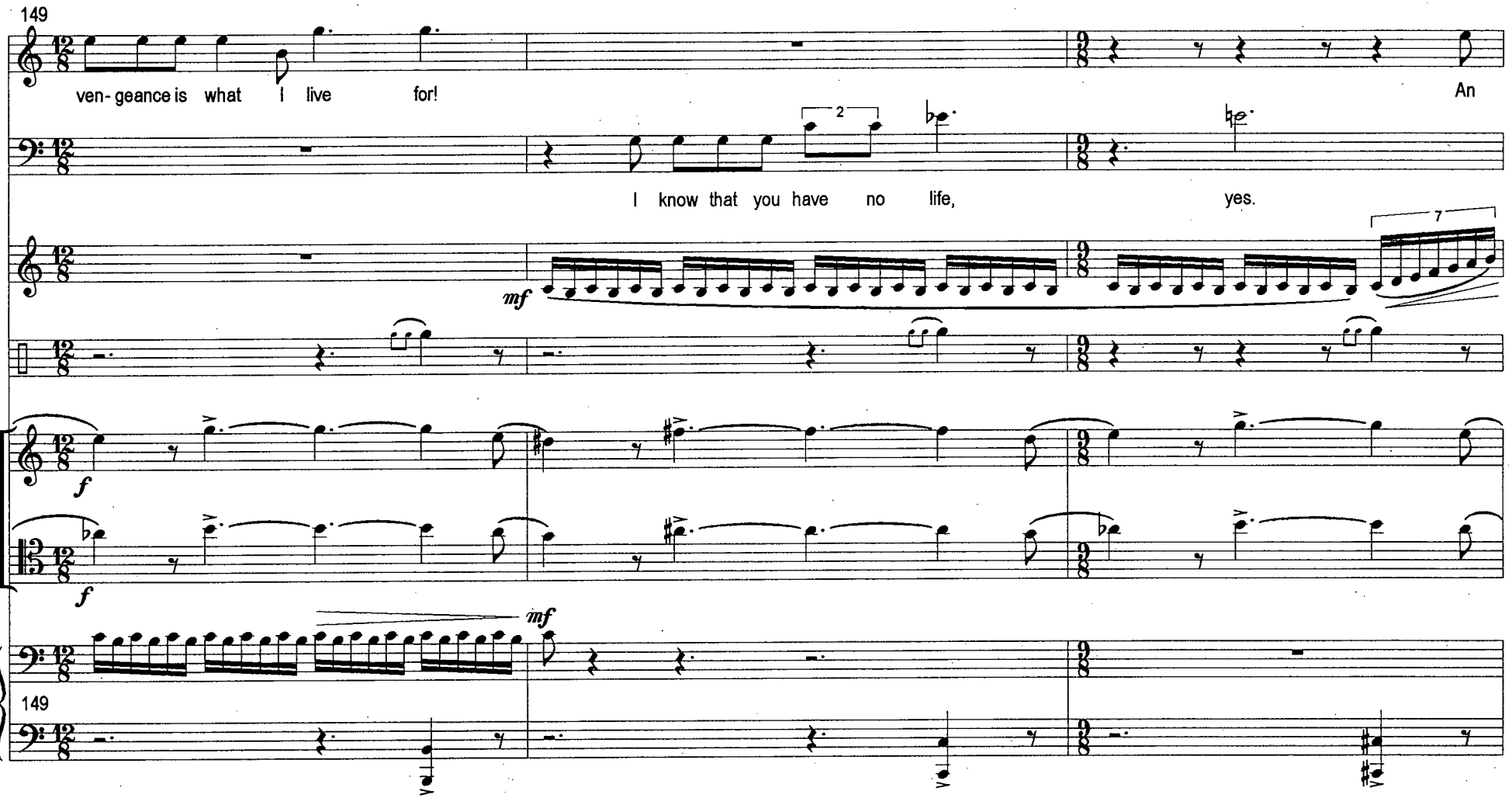

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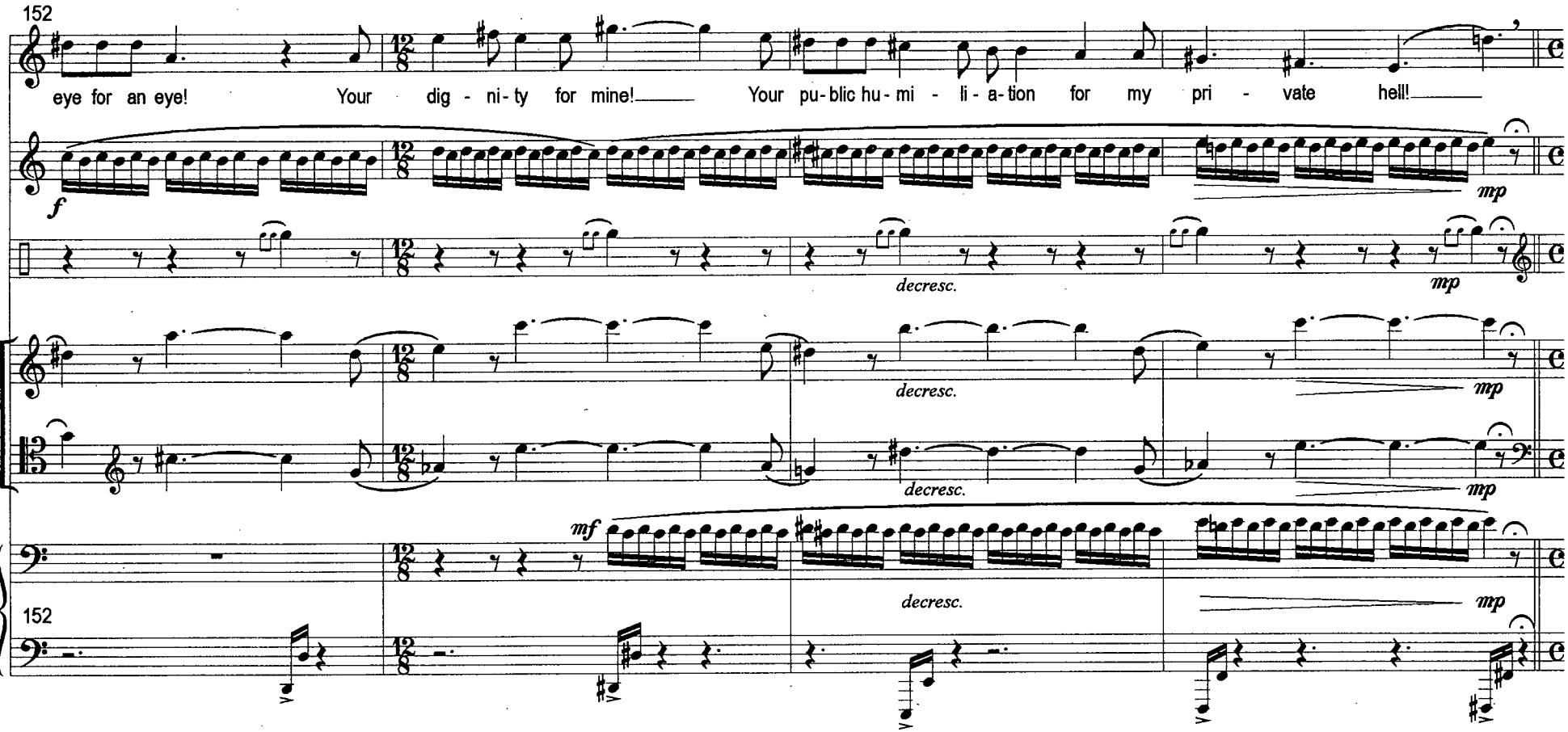

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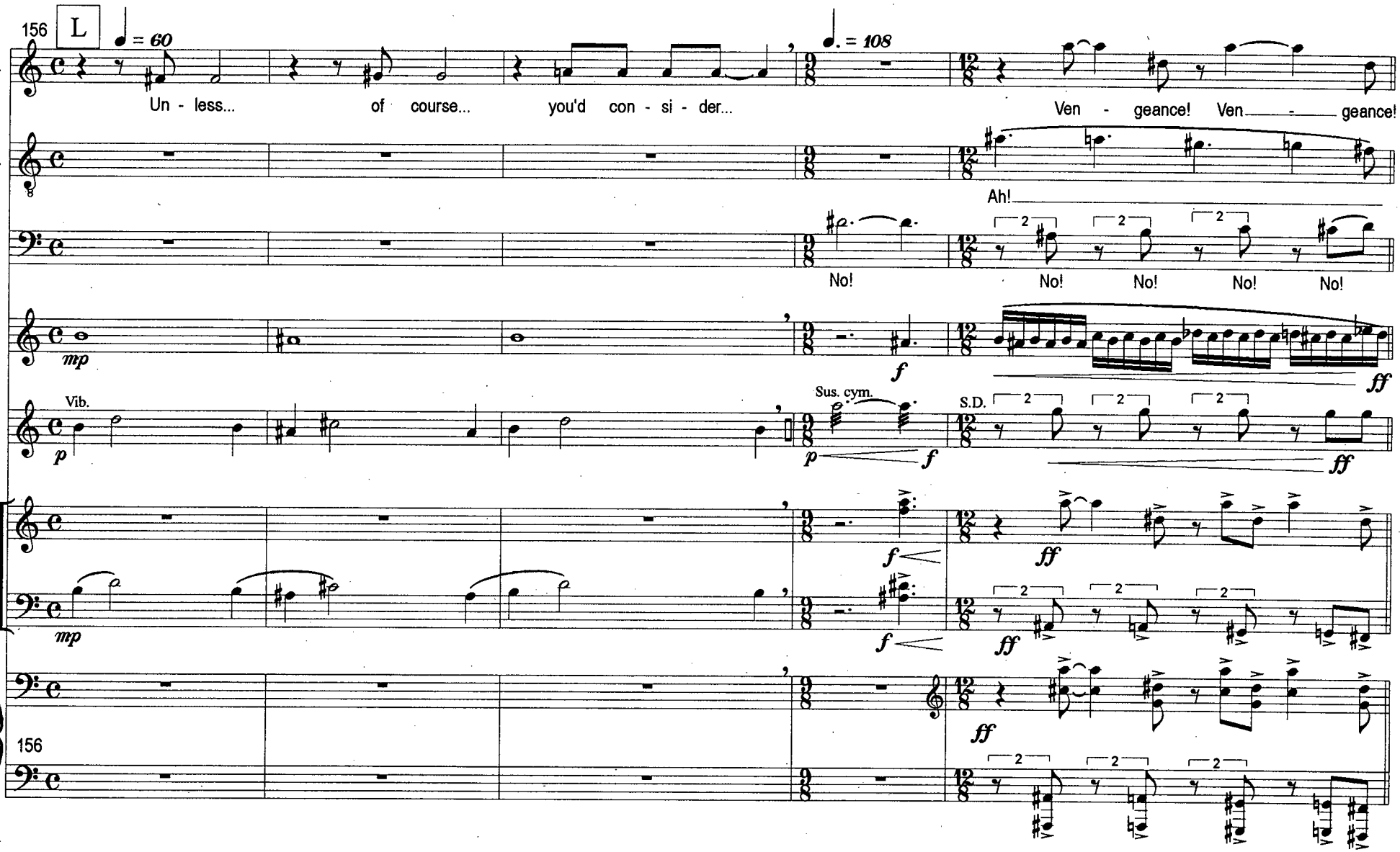

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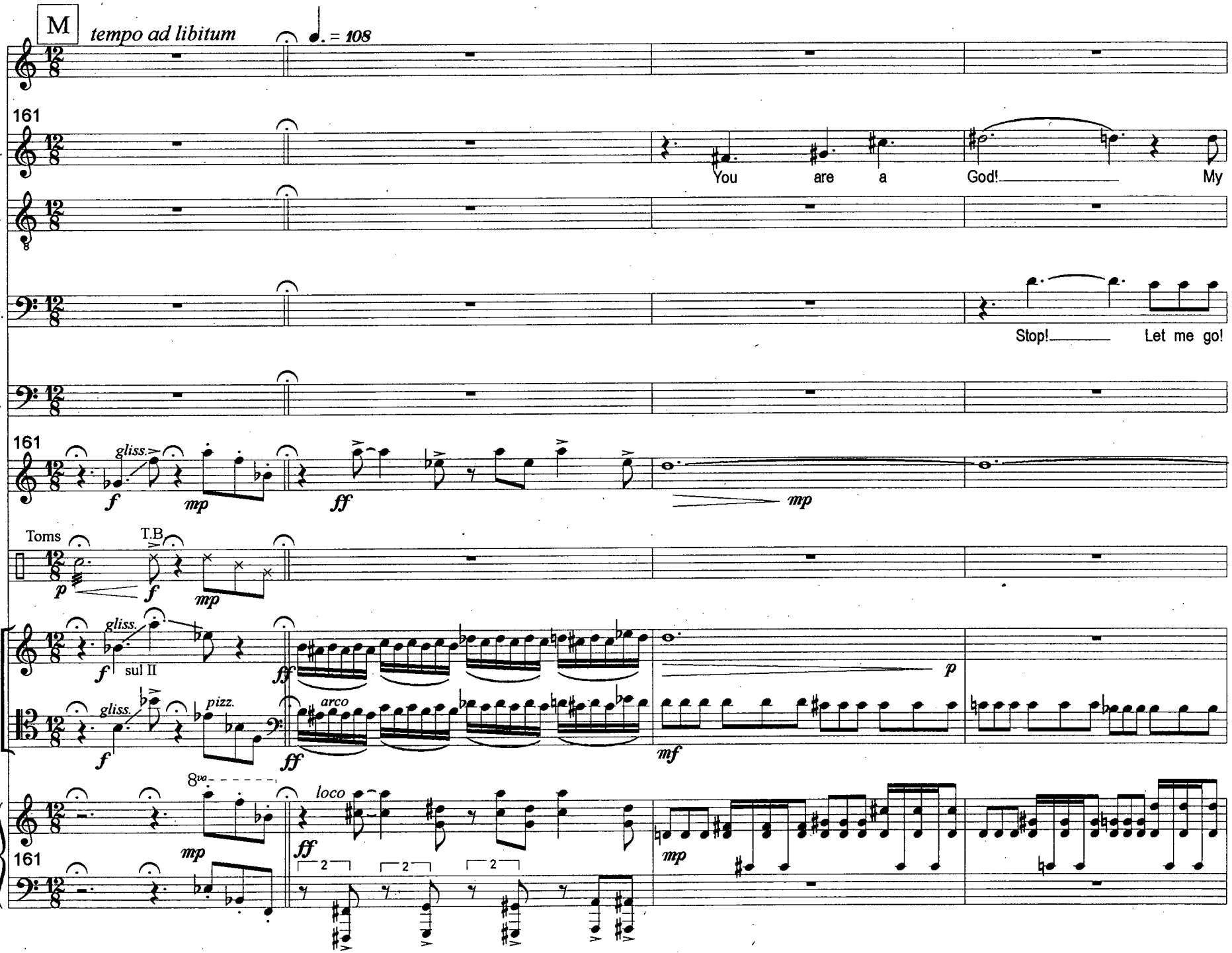

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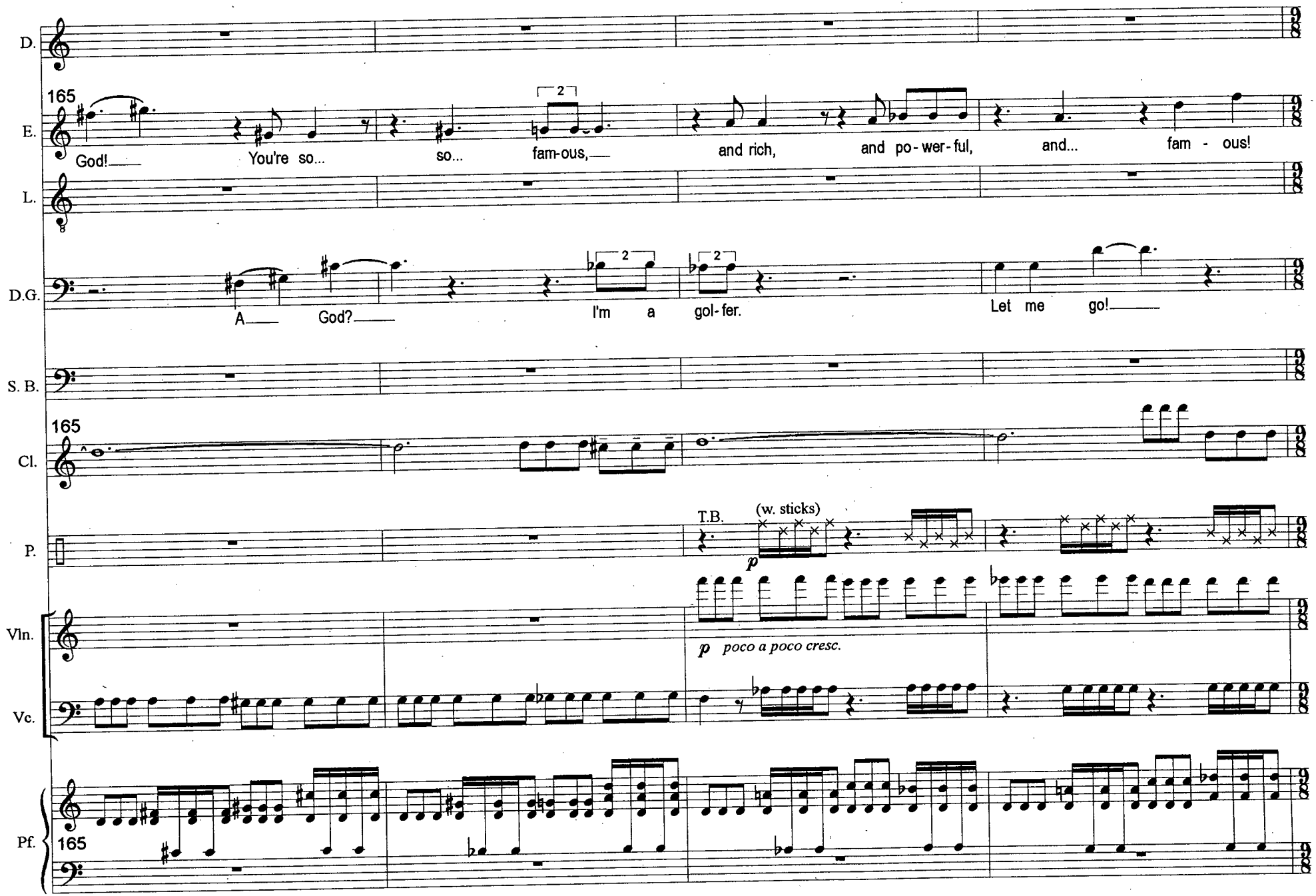

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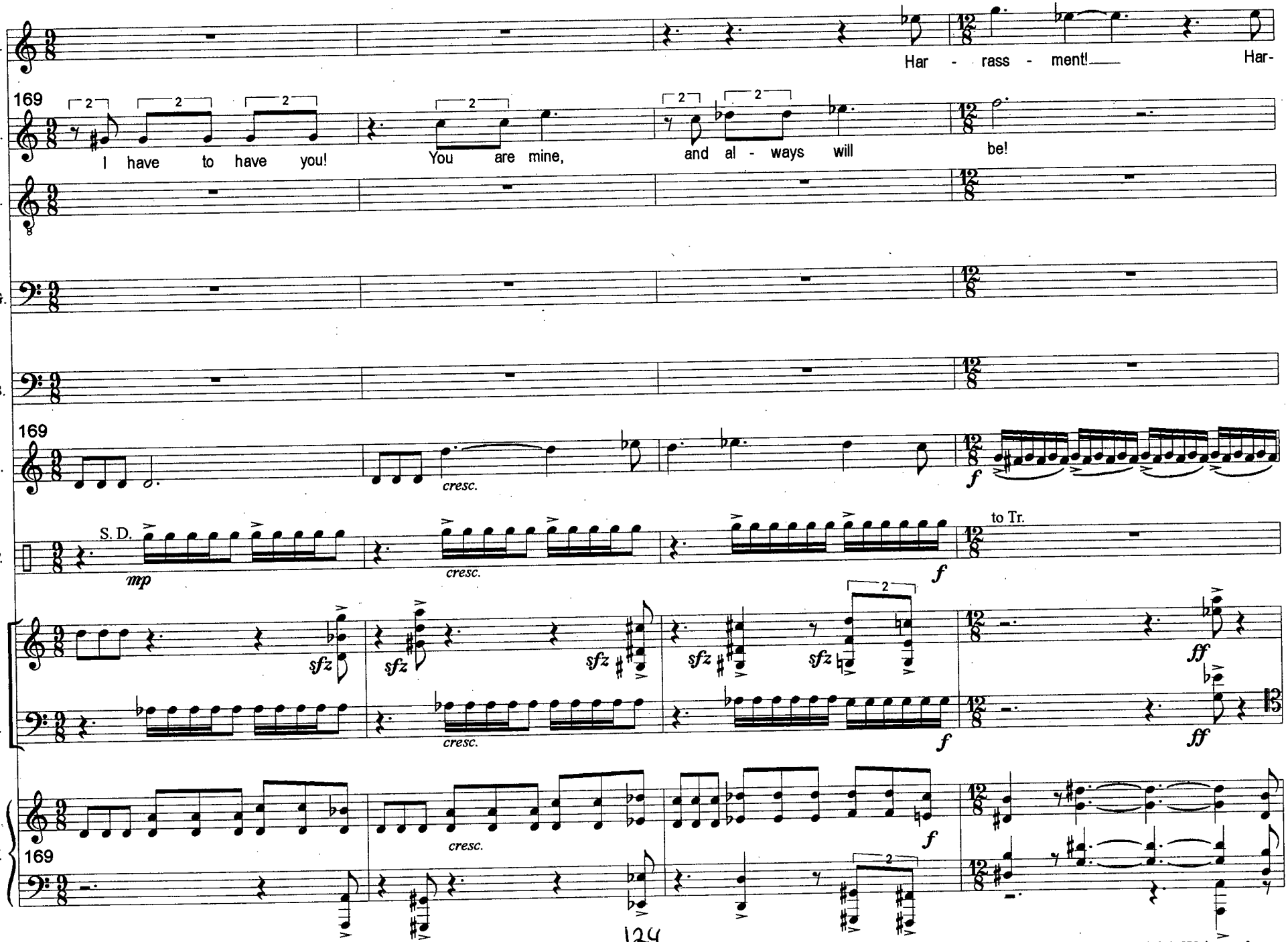

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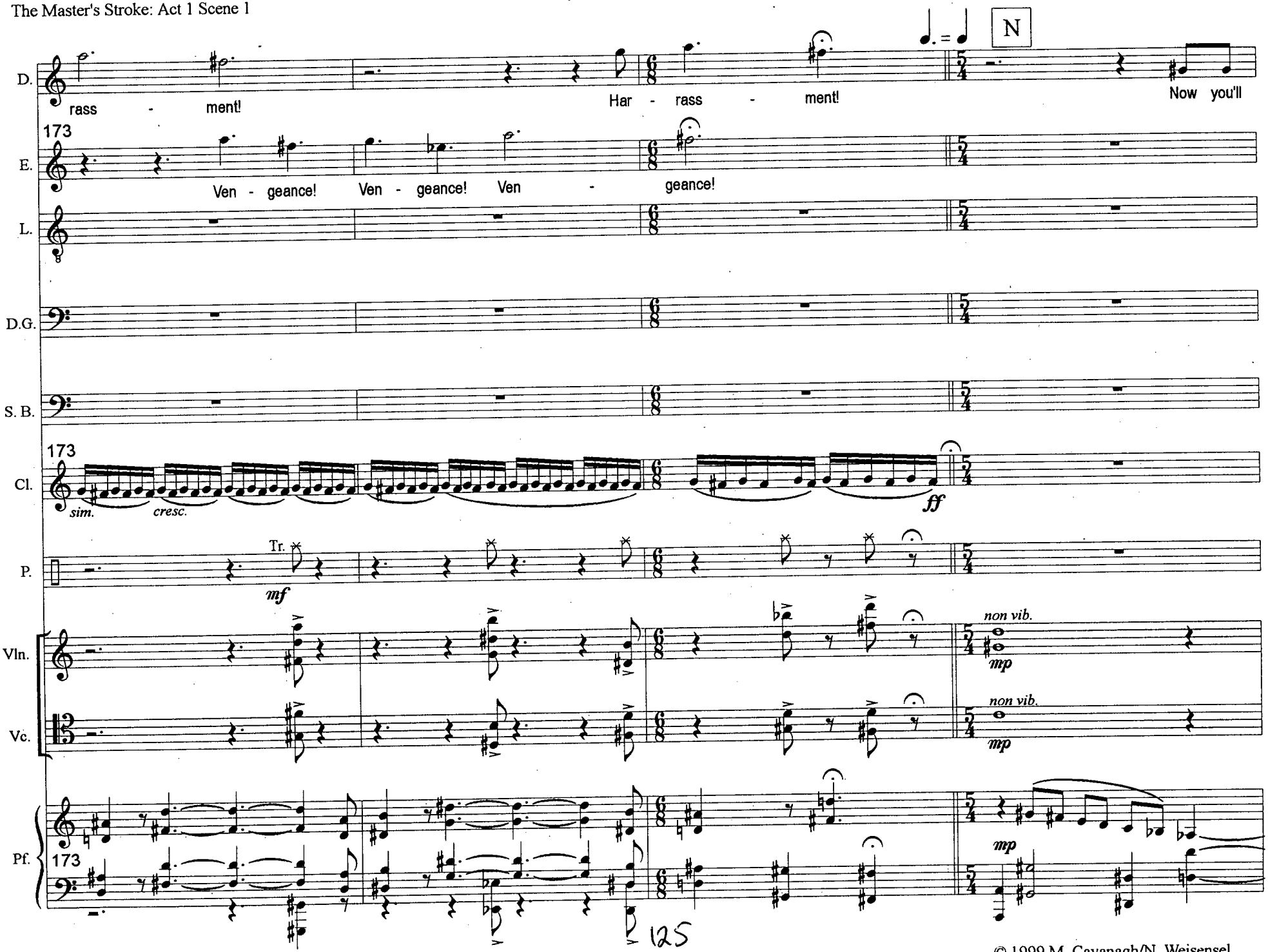

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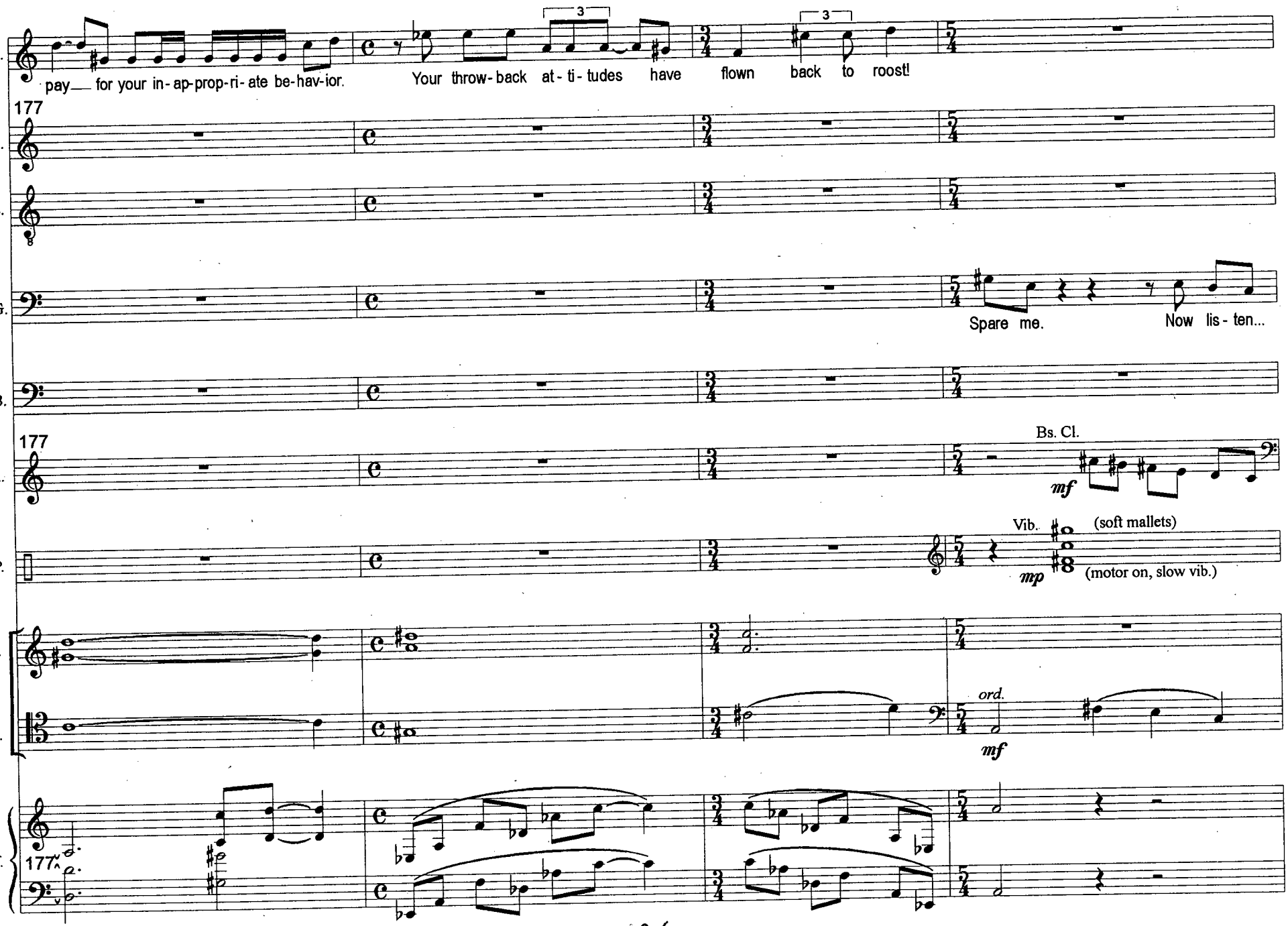

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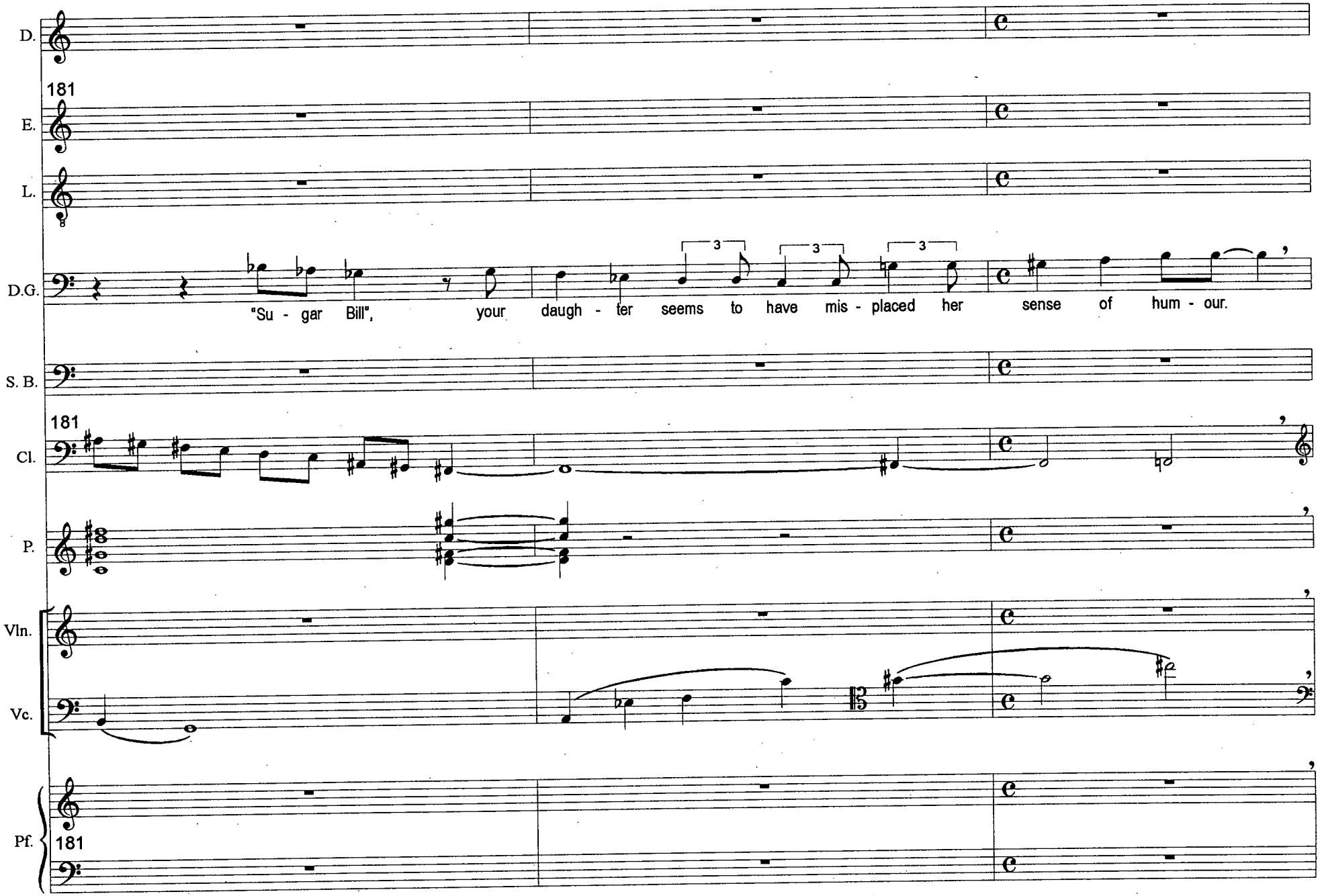

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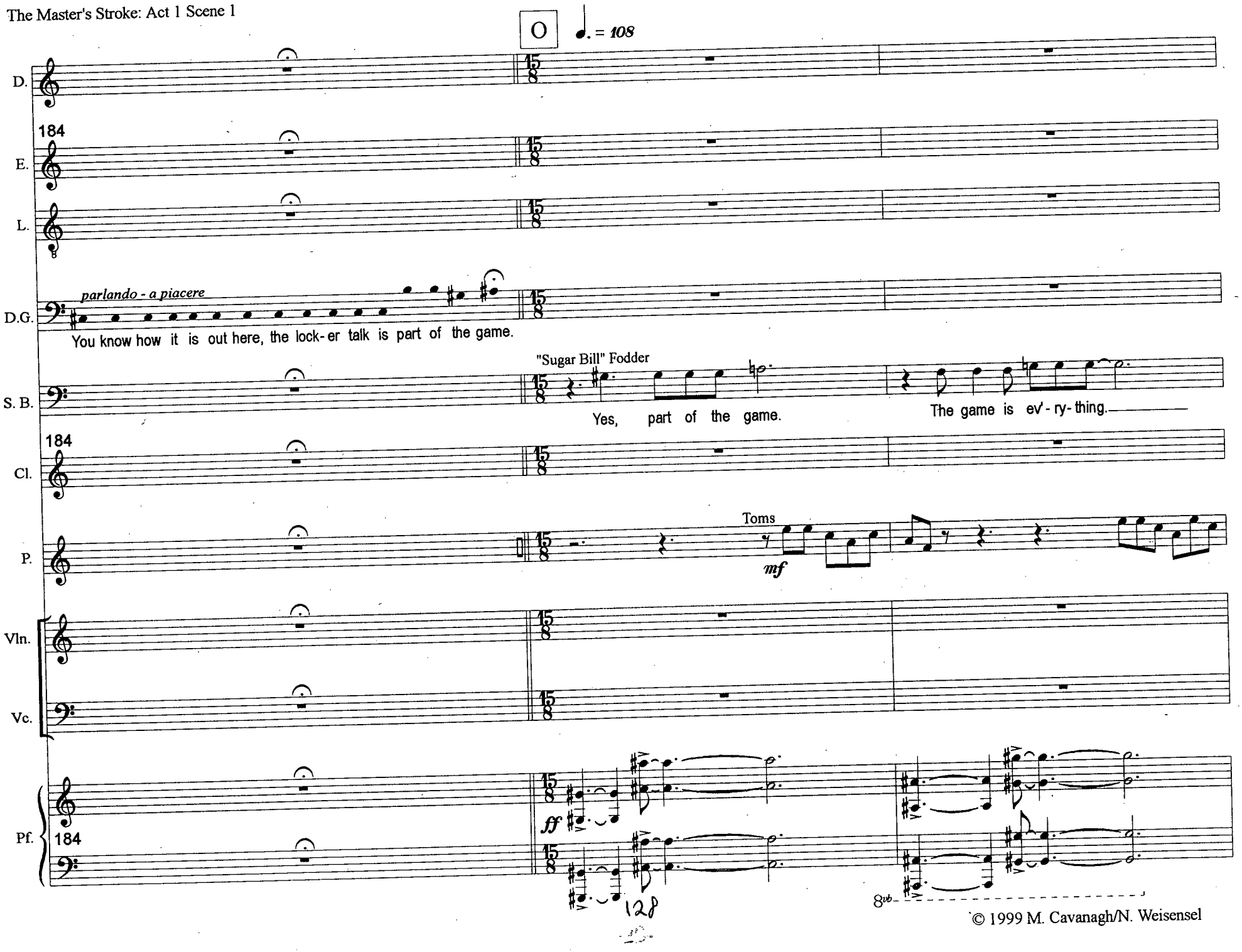

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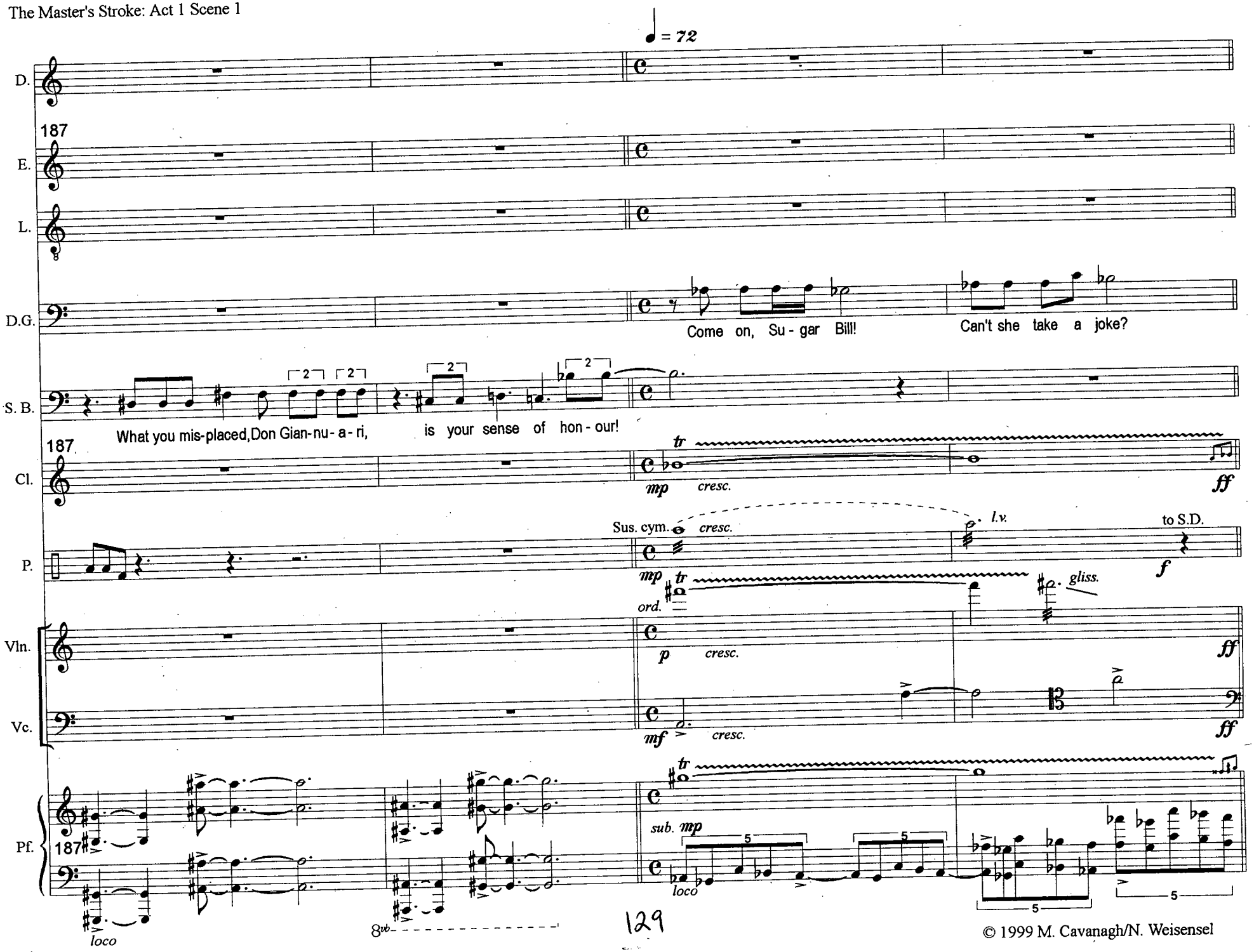

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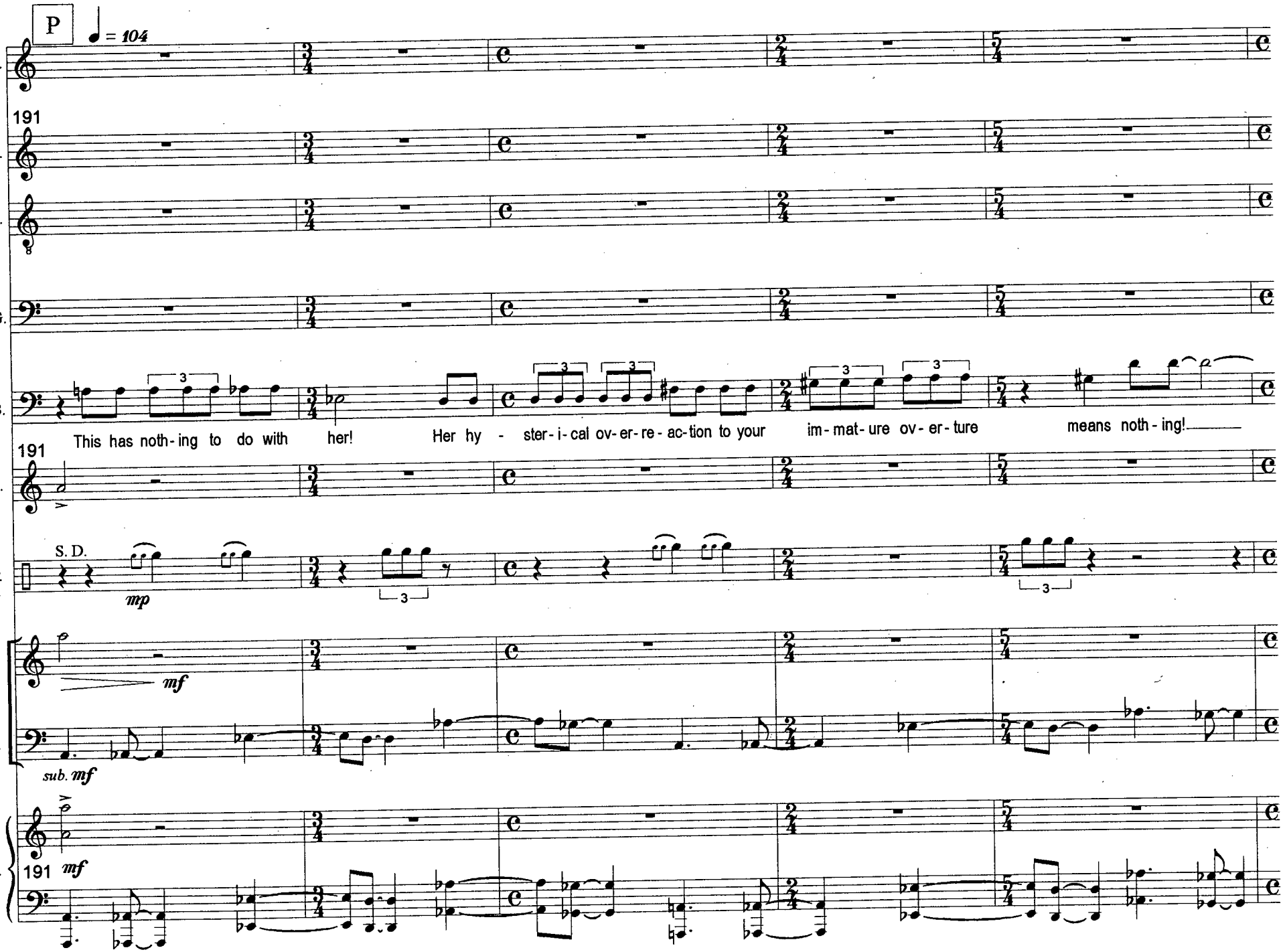

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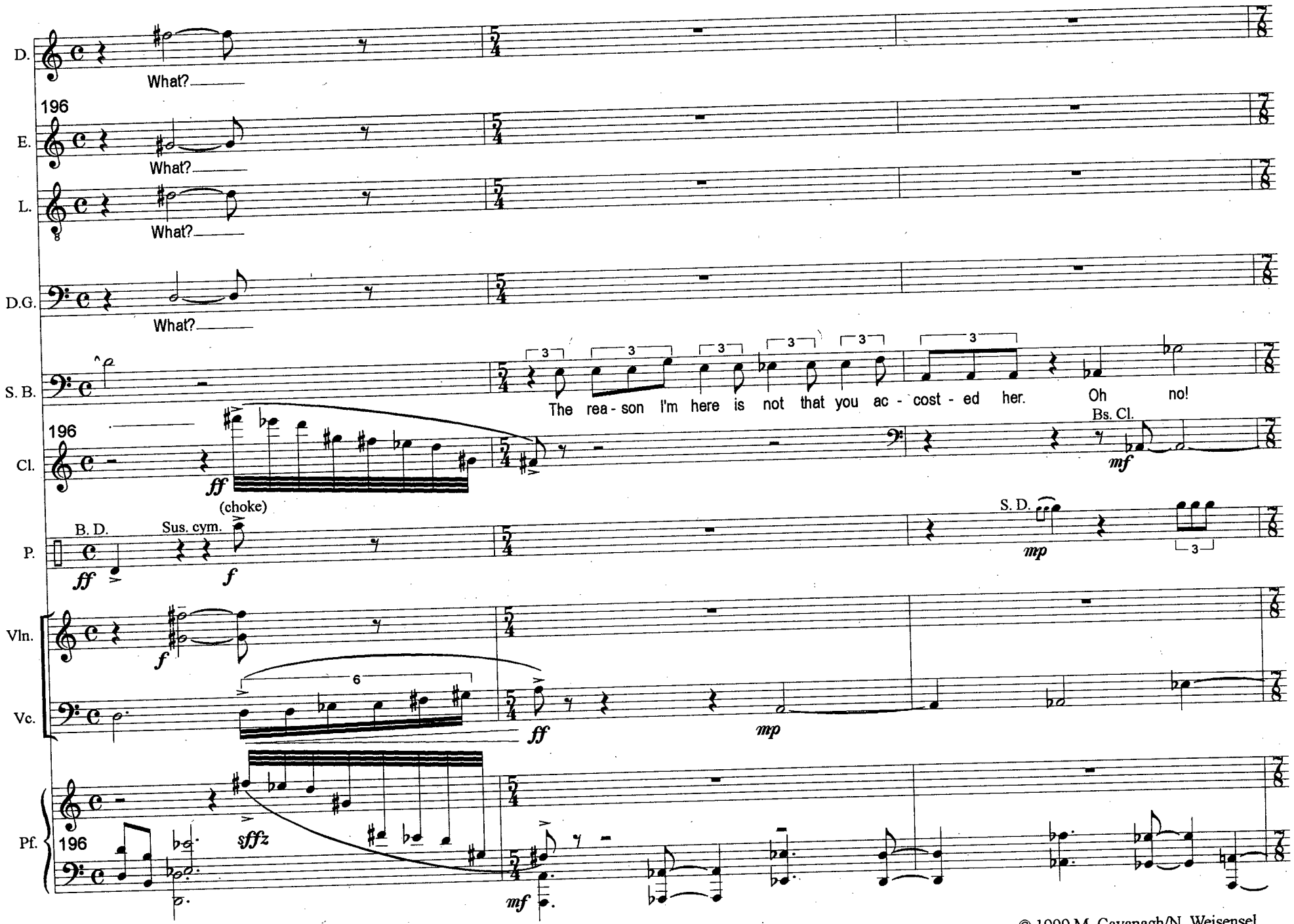

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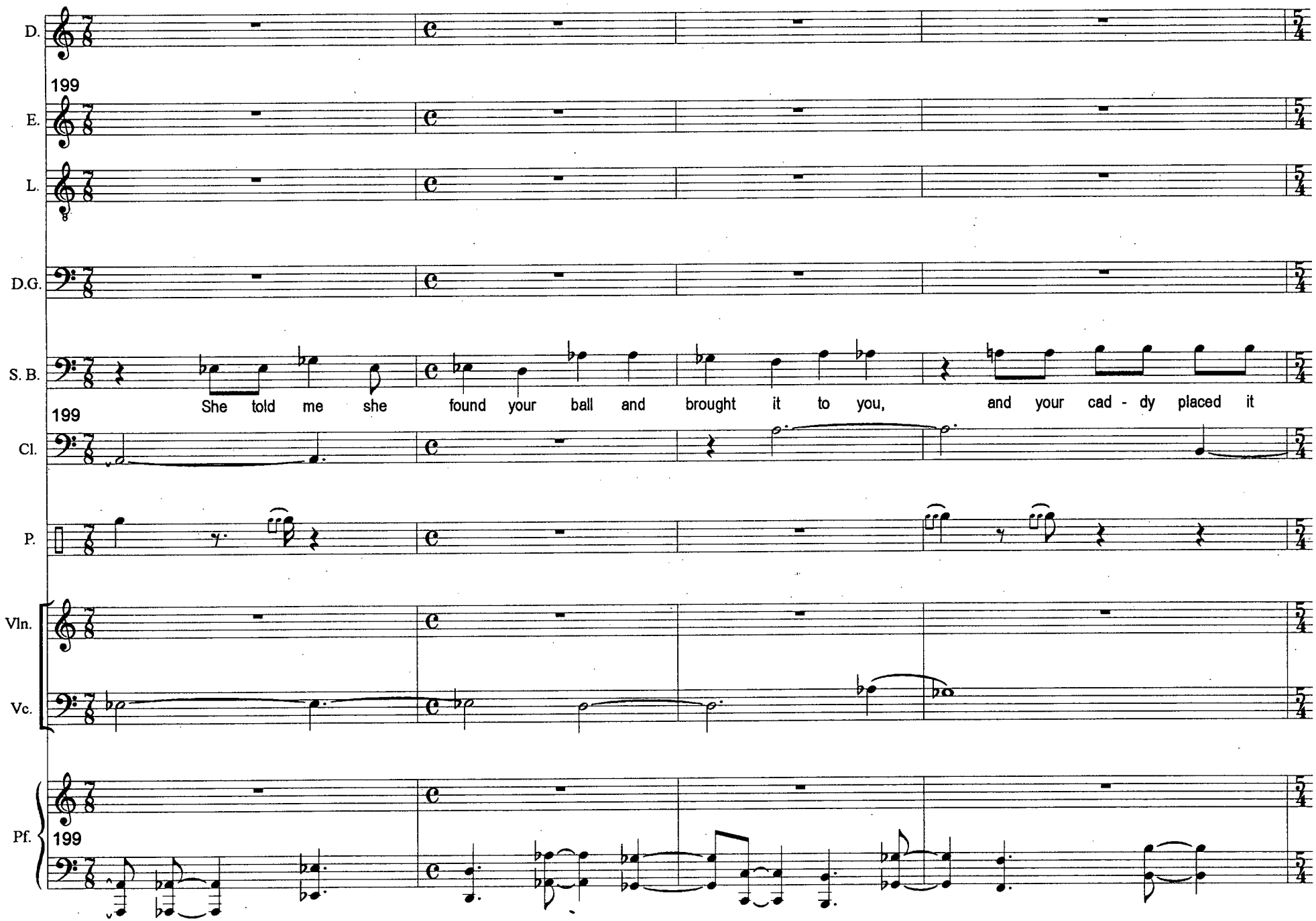

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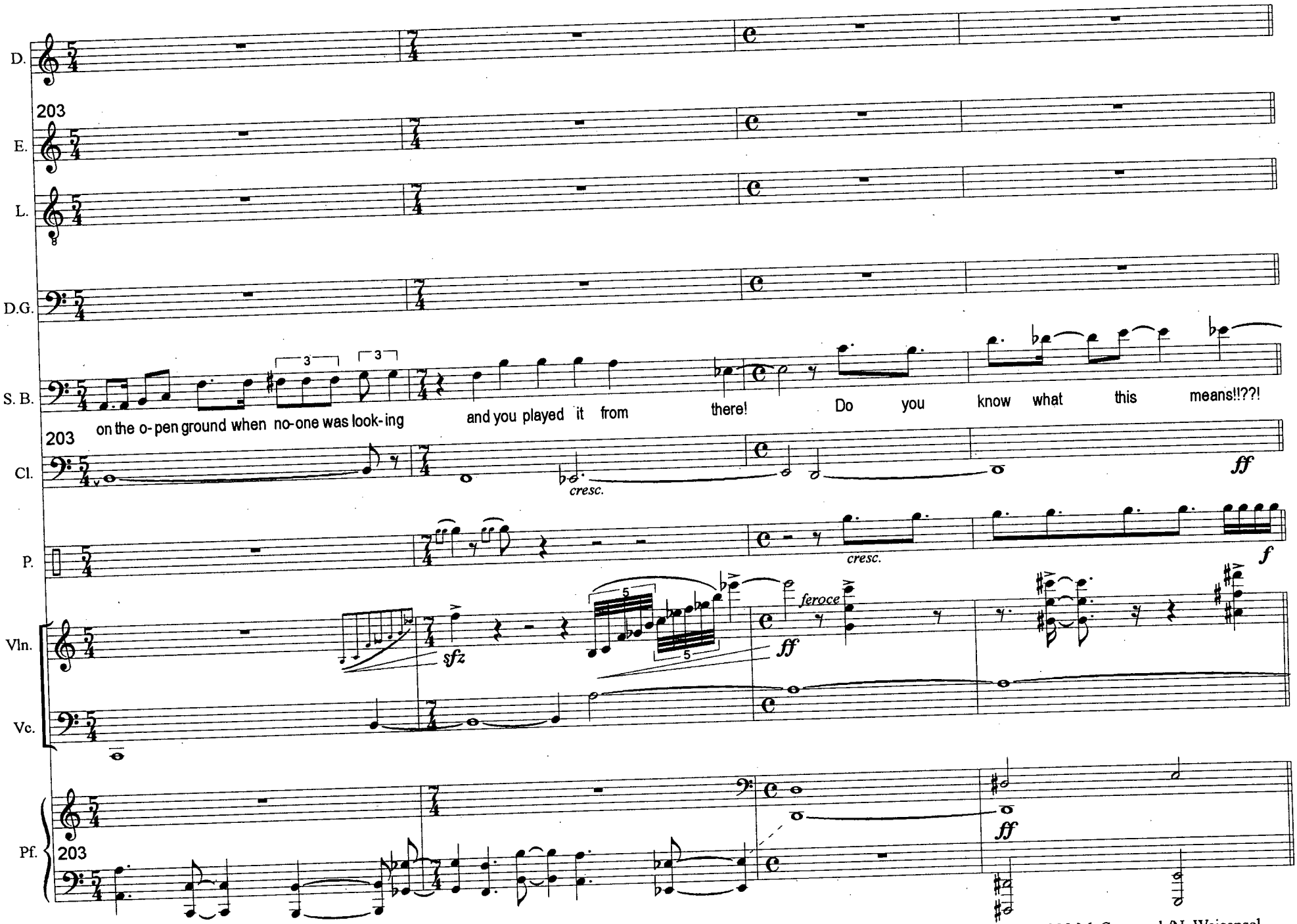

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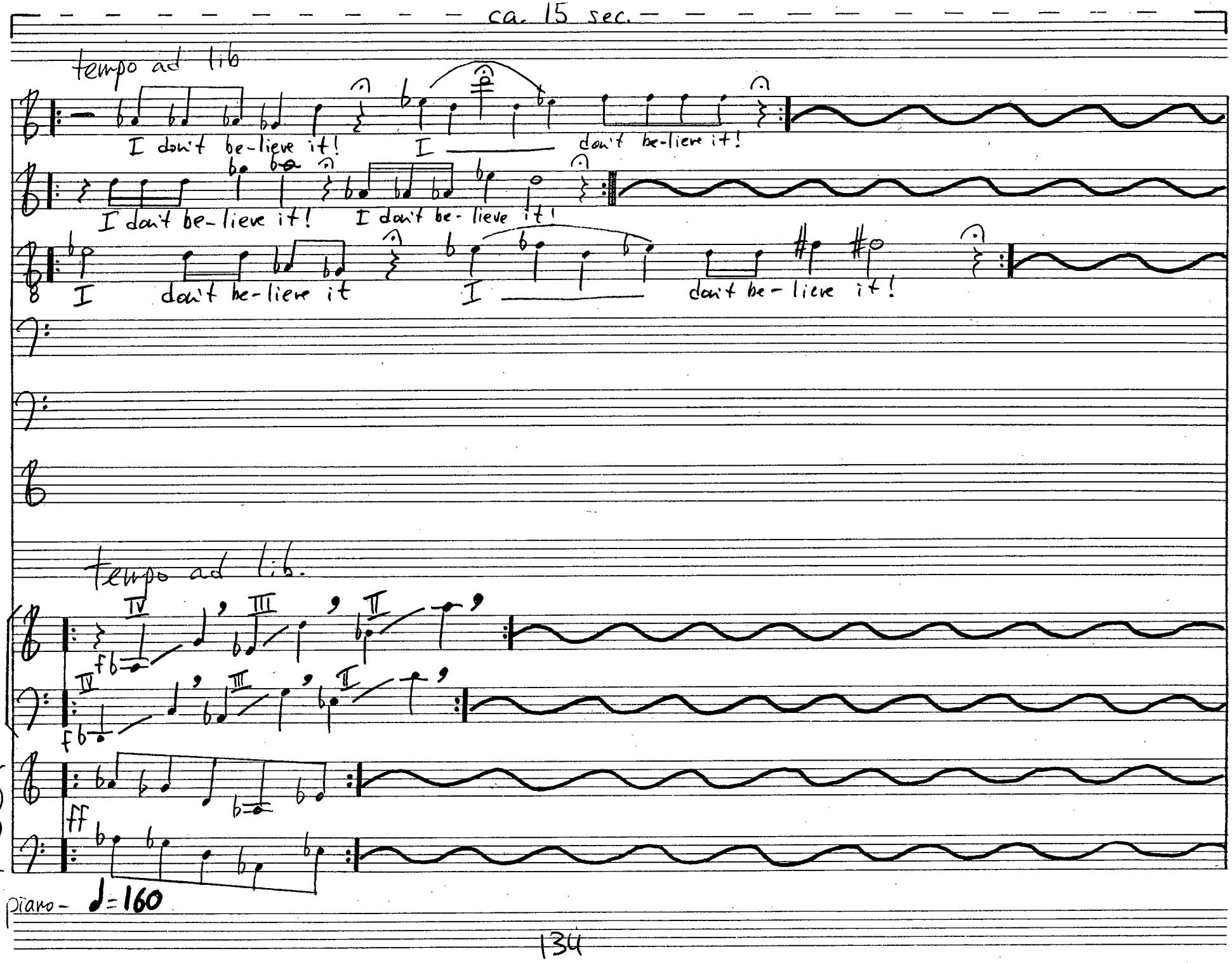
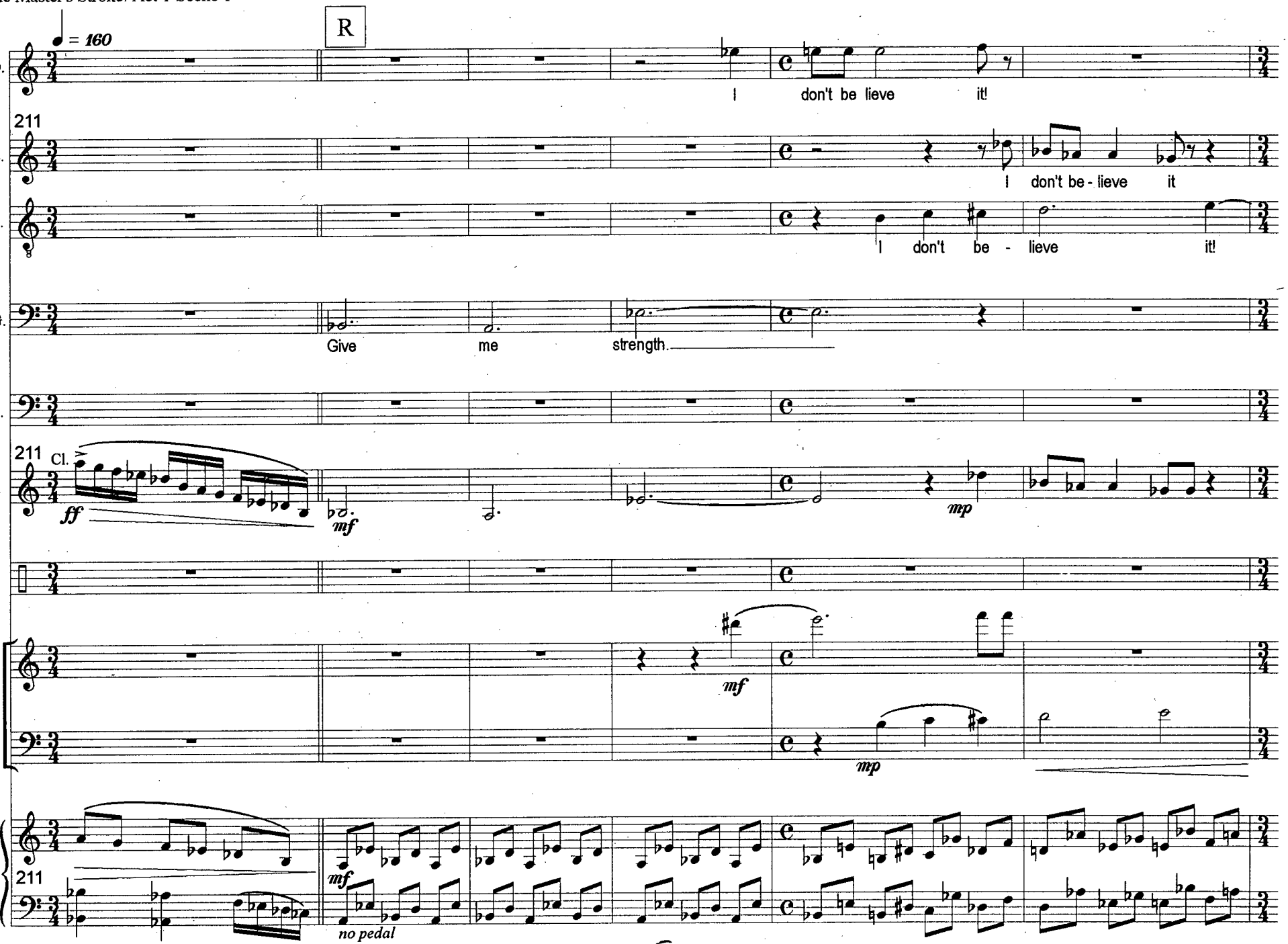


24 stave
Passantino Pad 25



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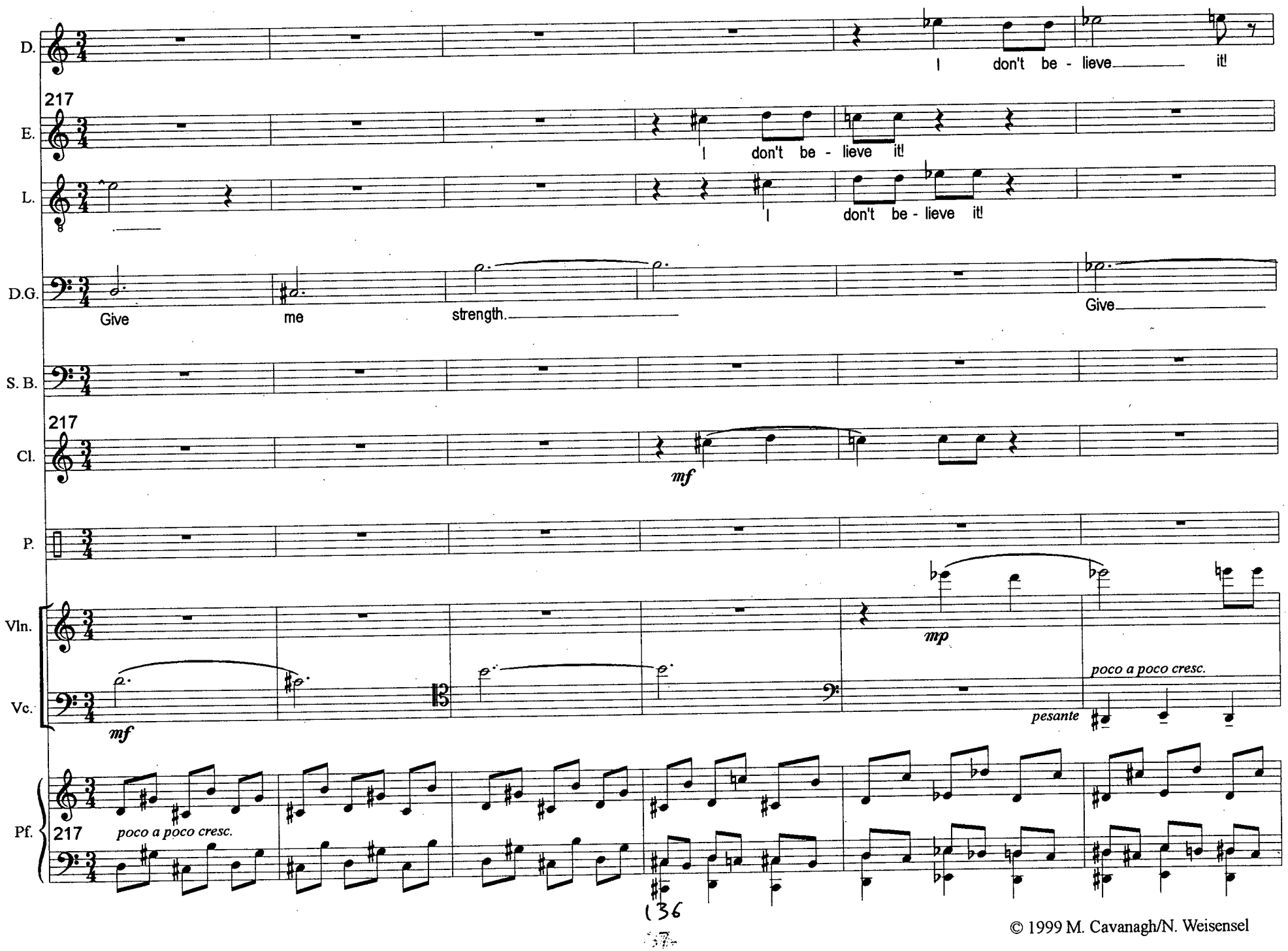

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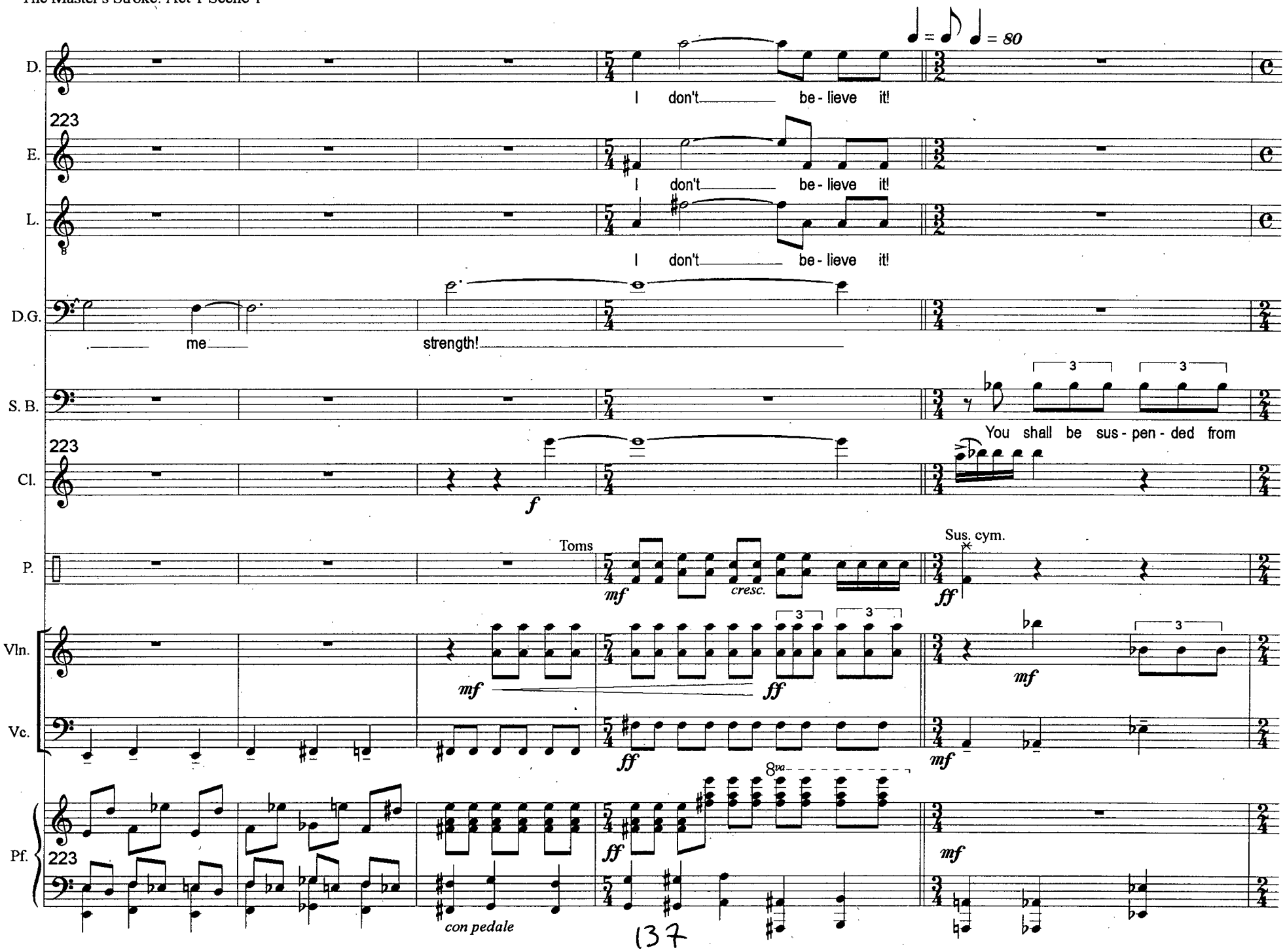

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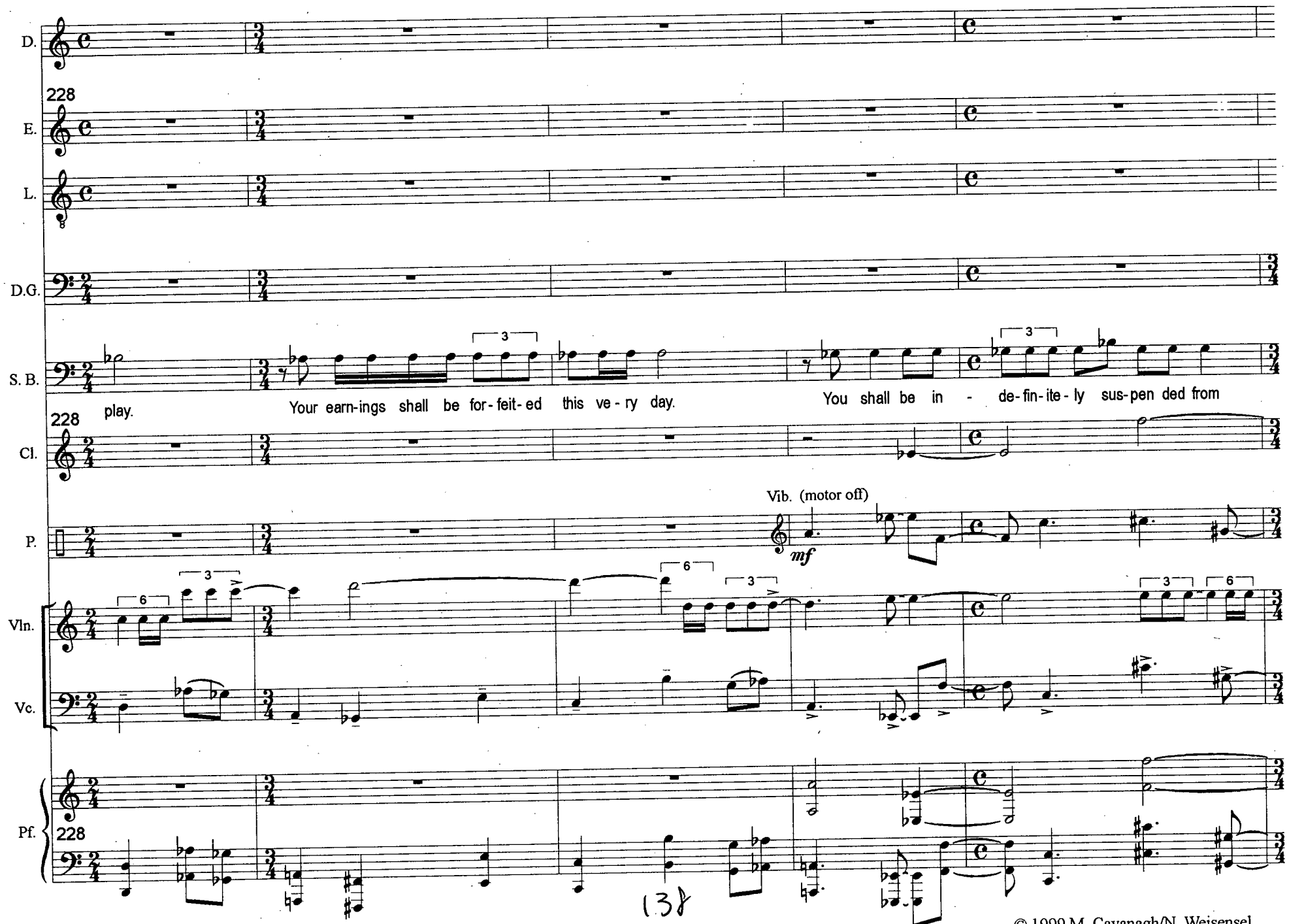

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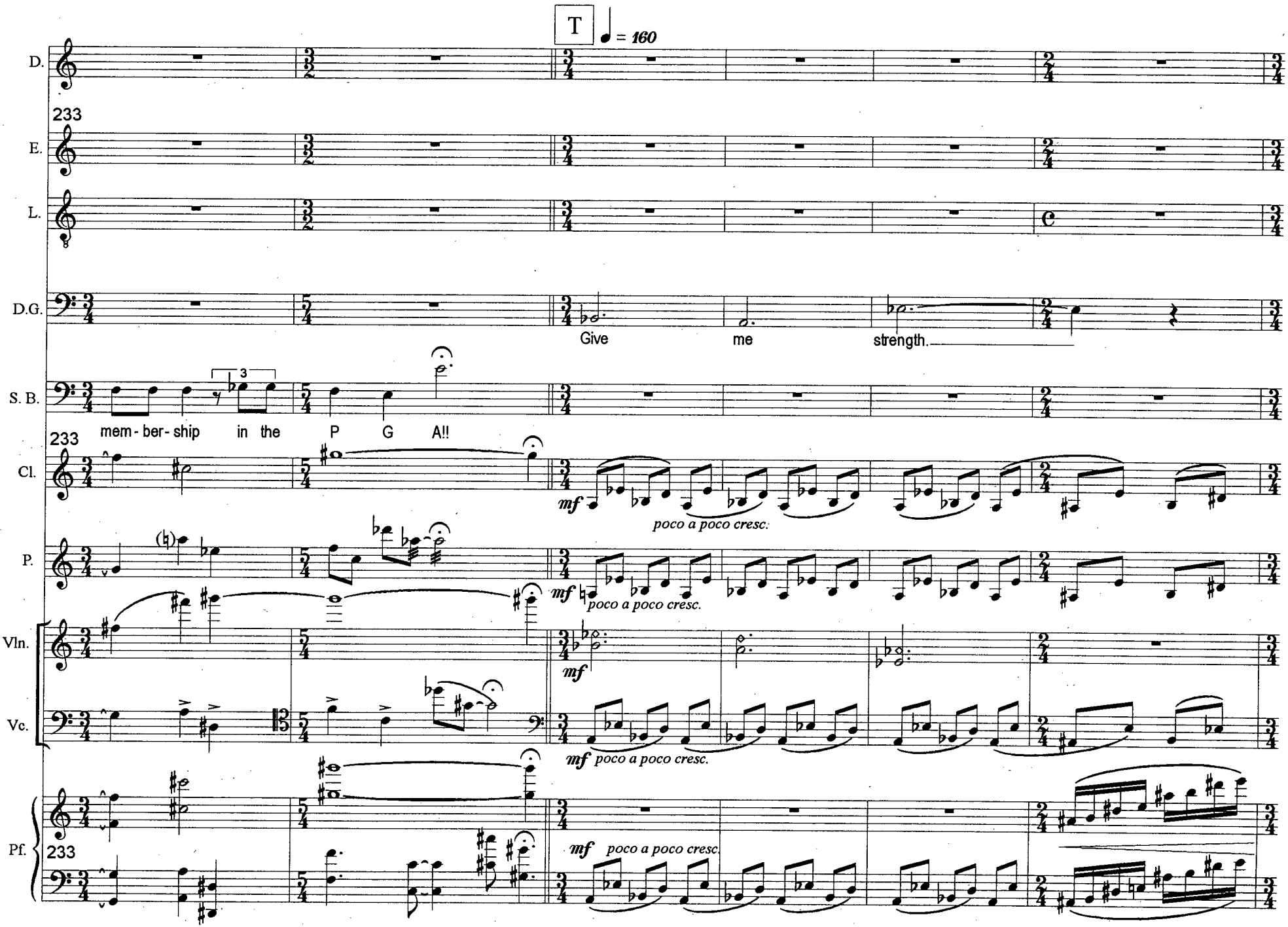

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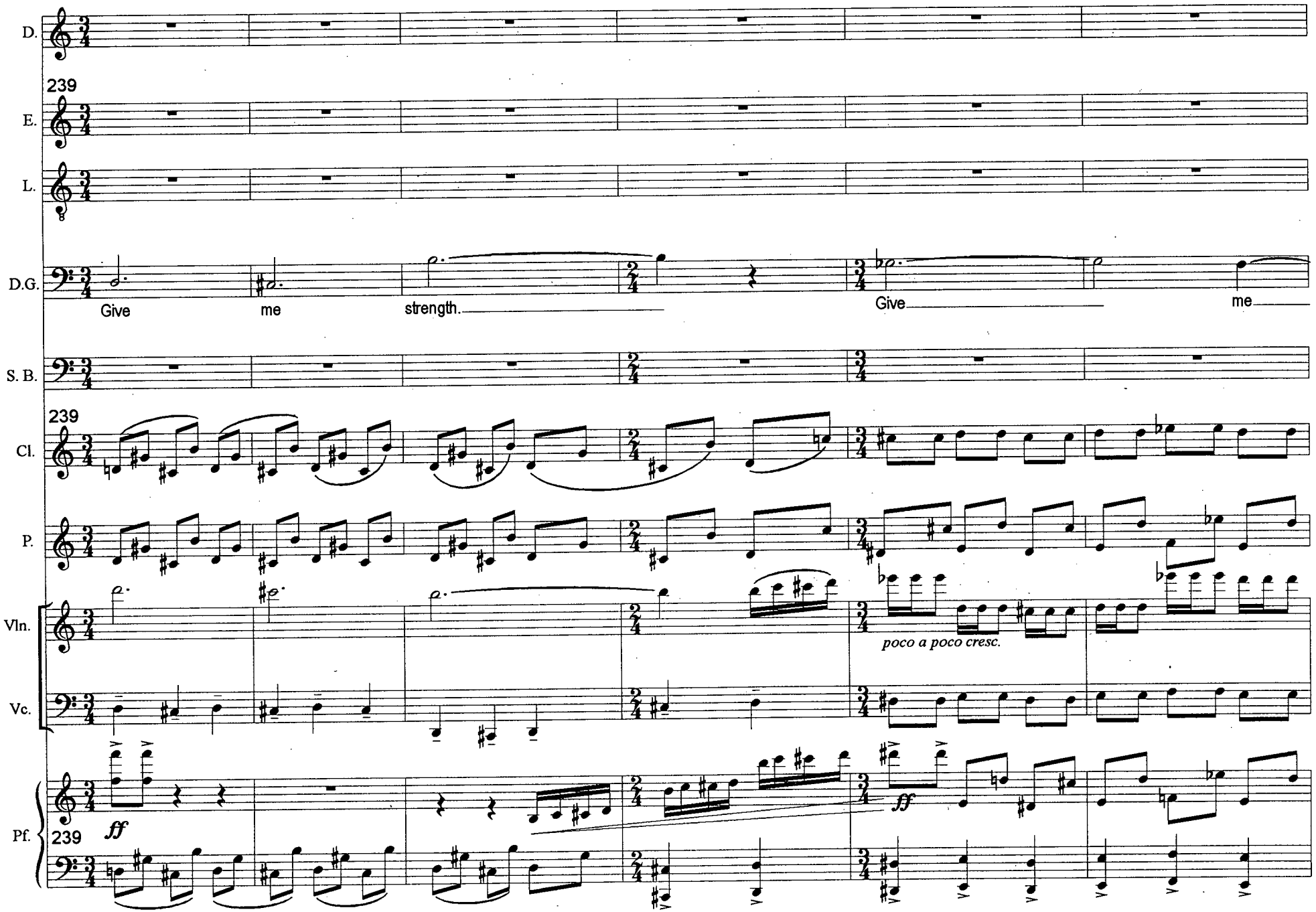

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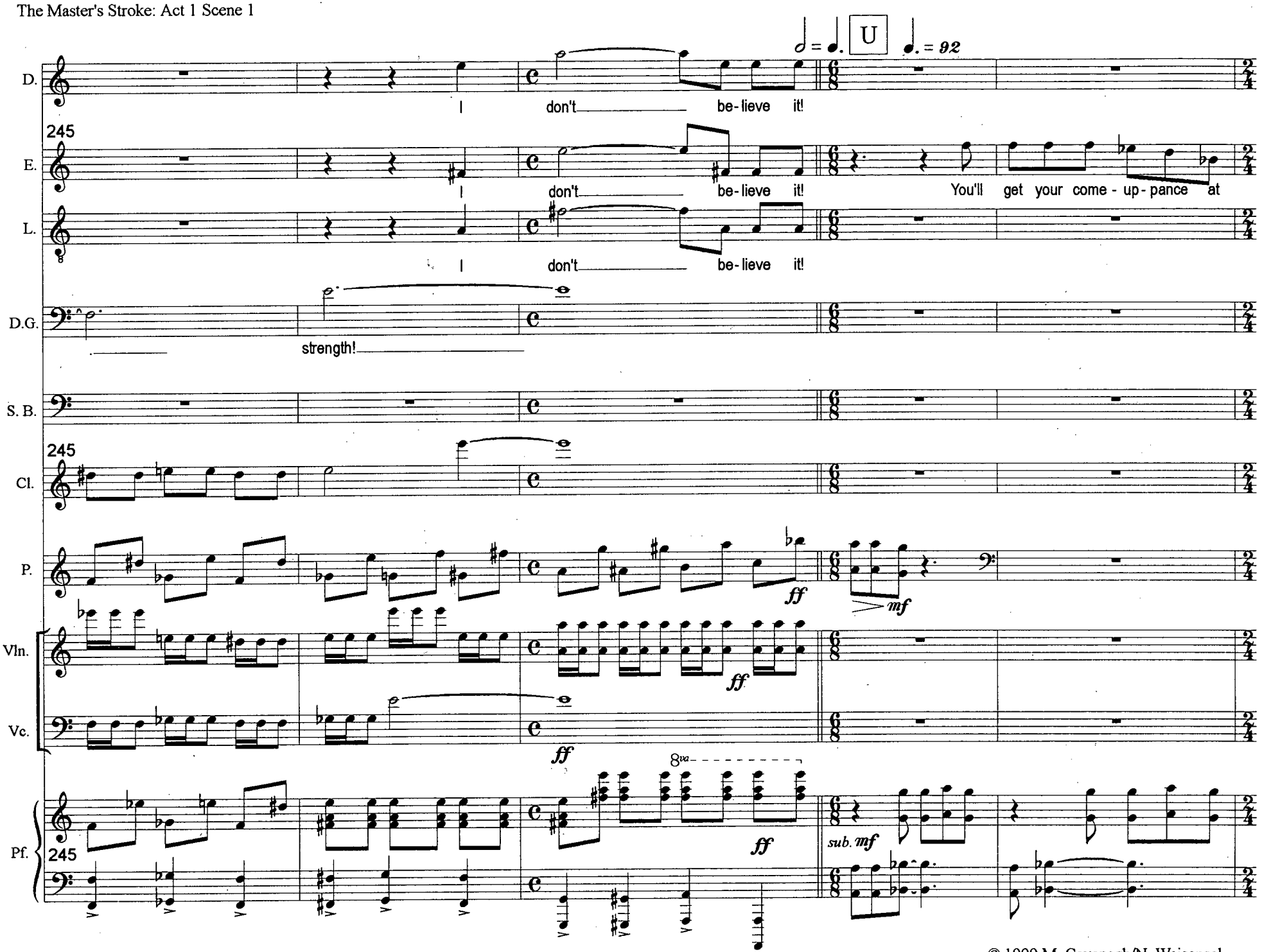

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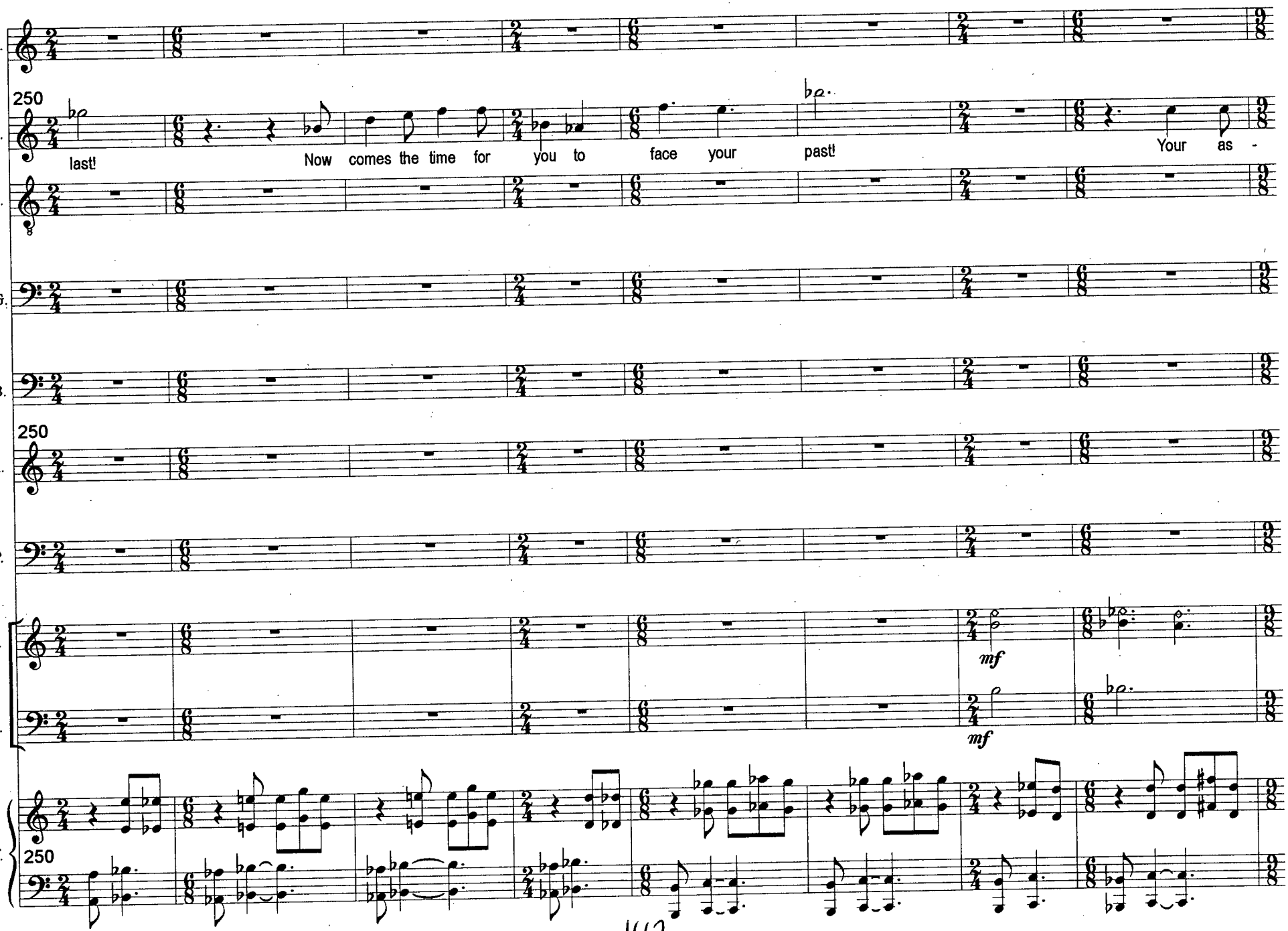

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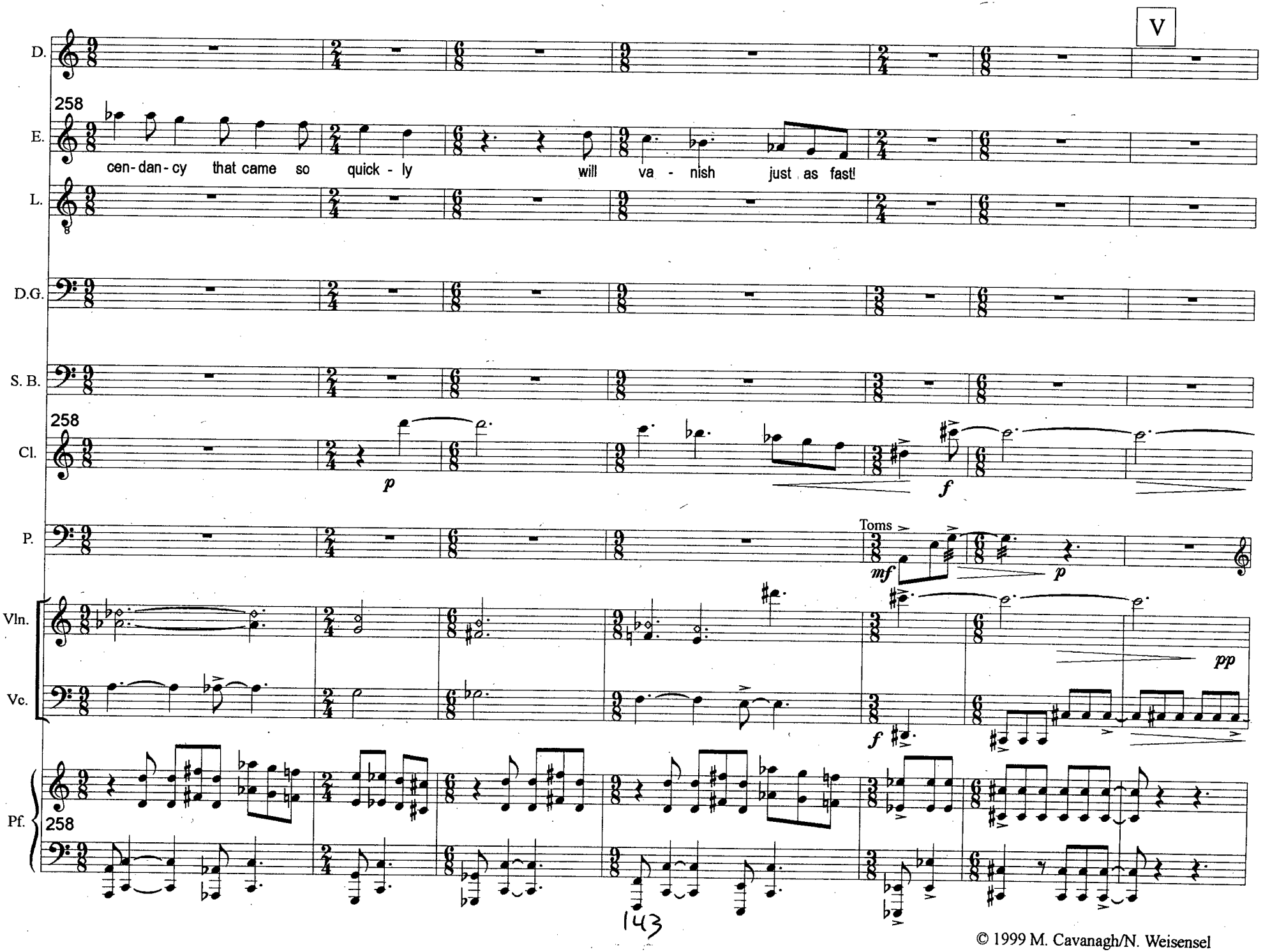

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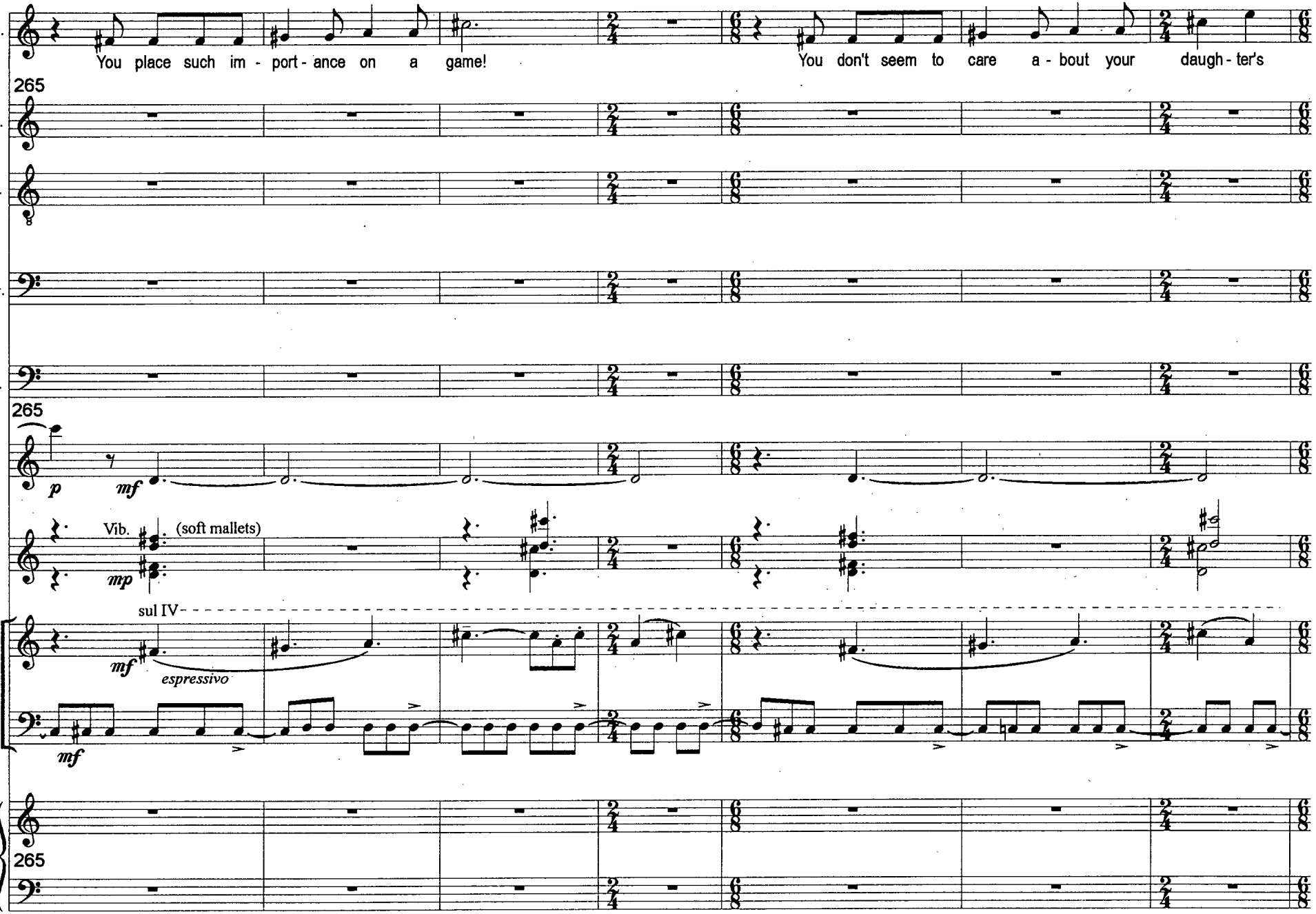

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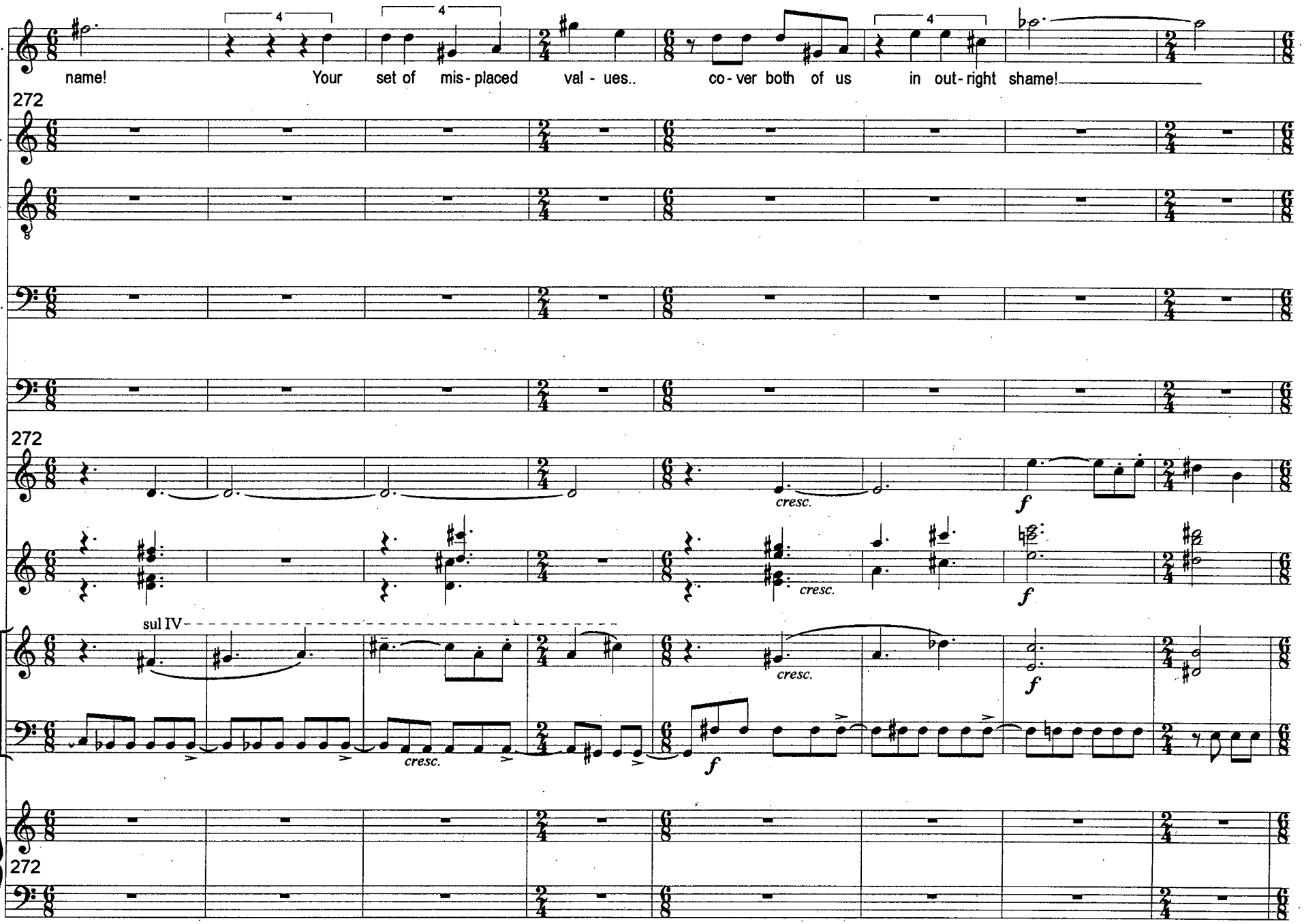

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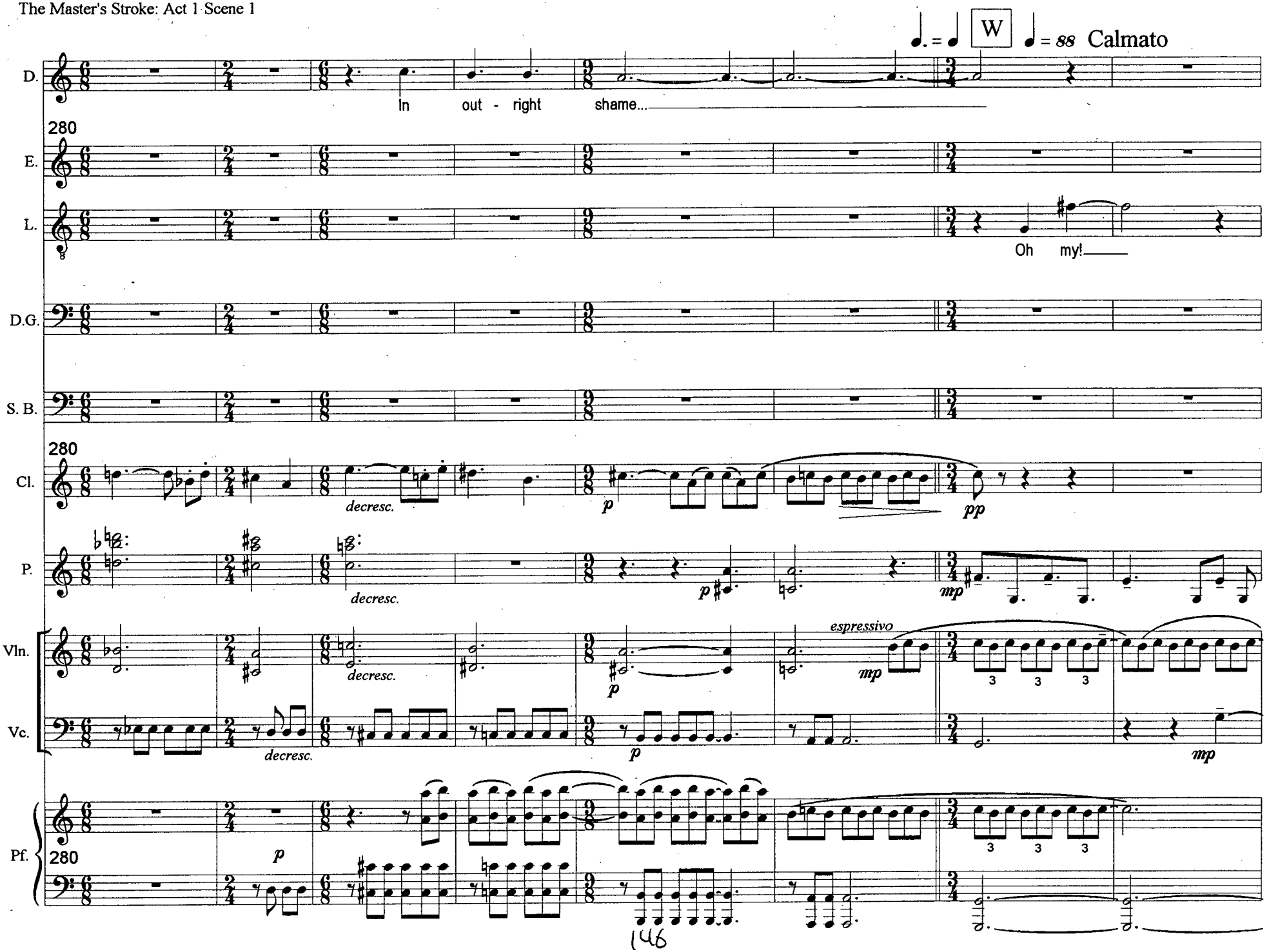

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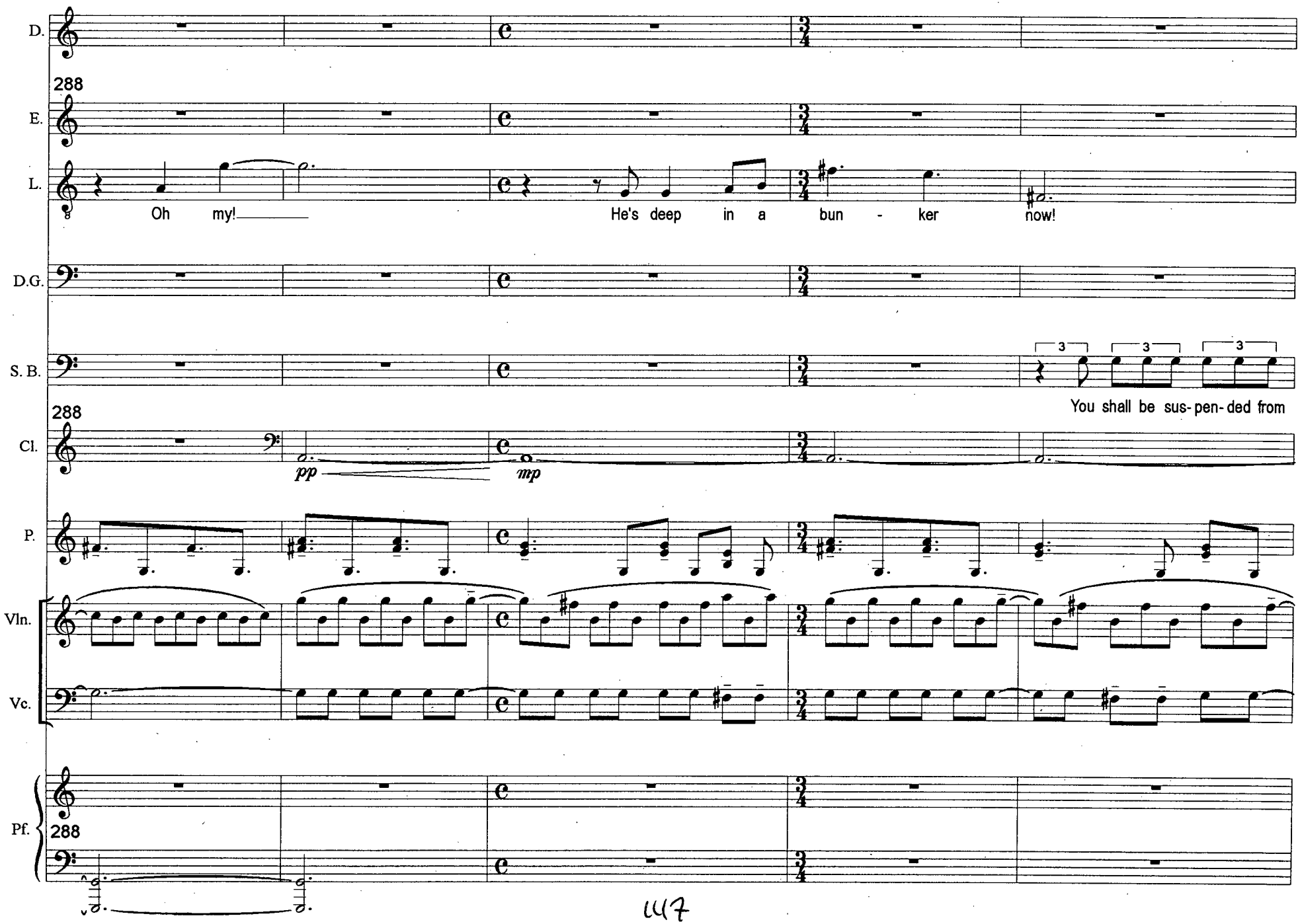

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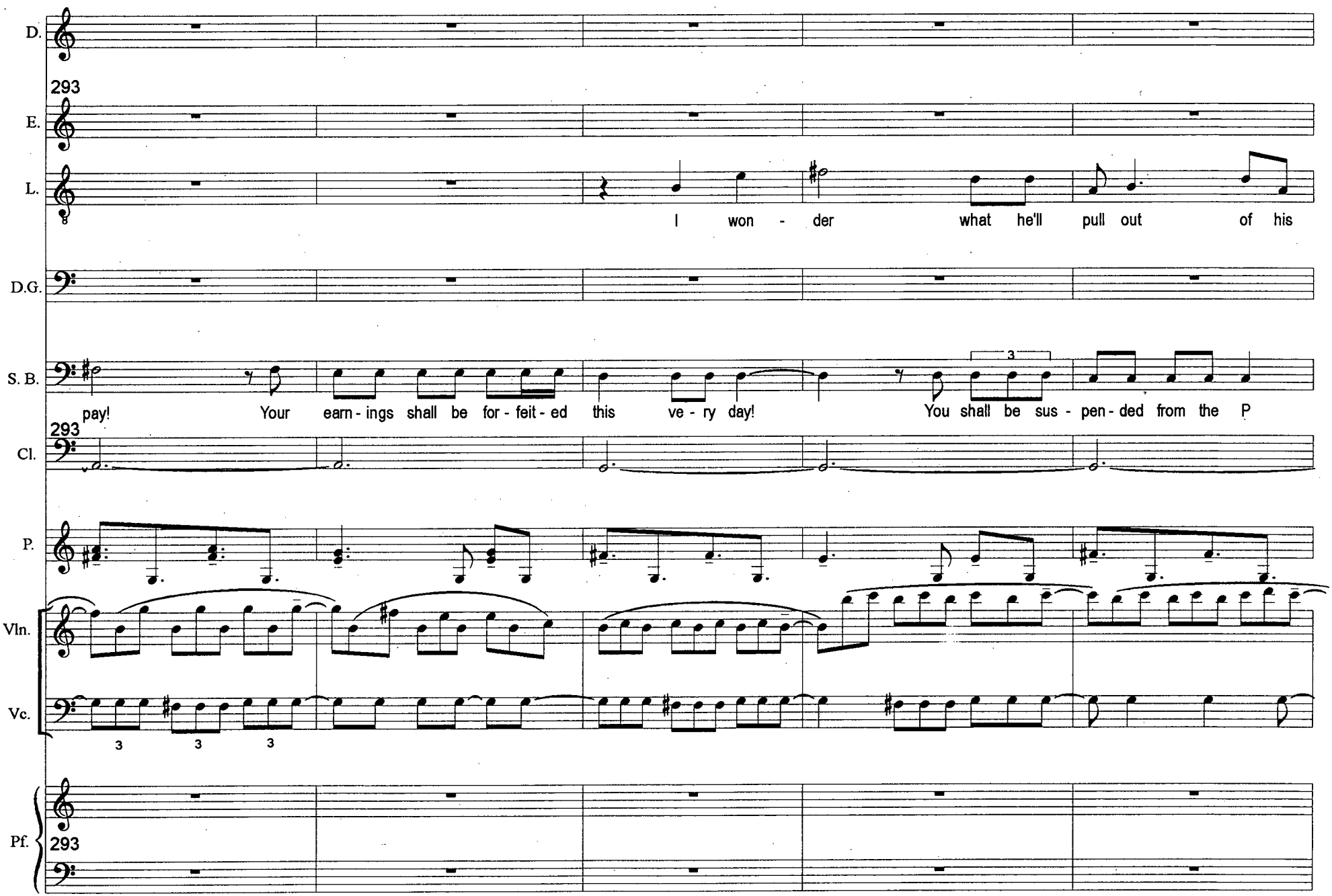

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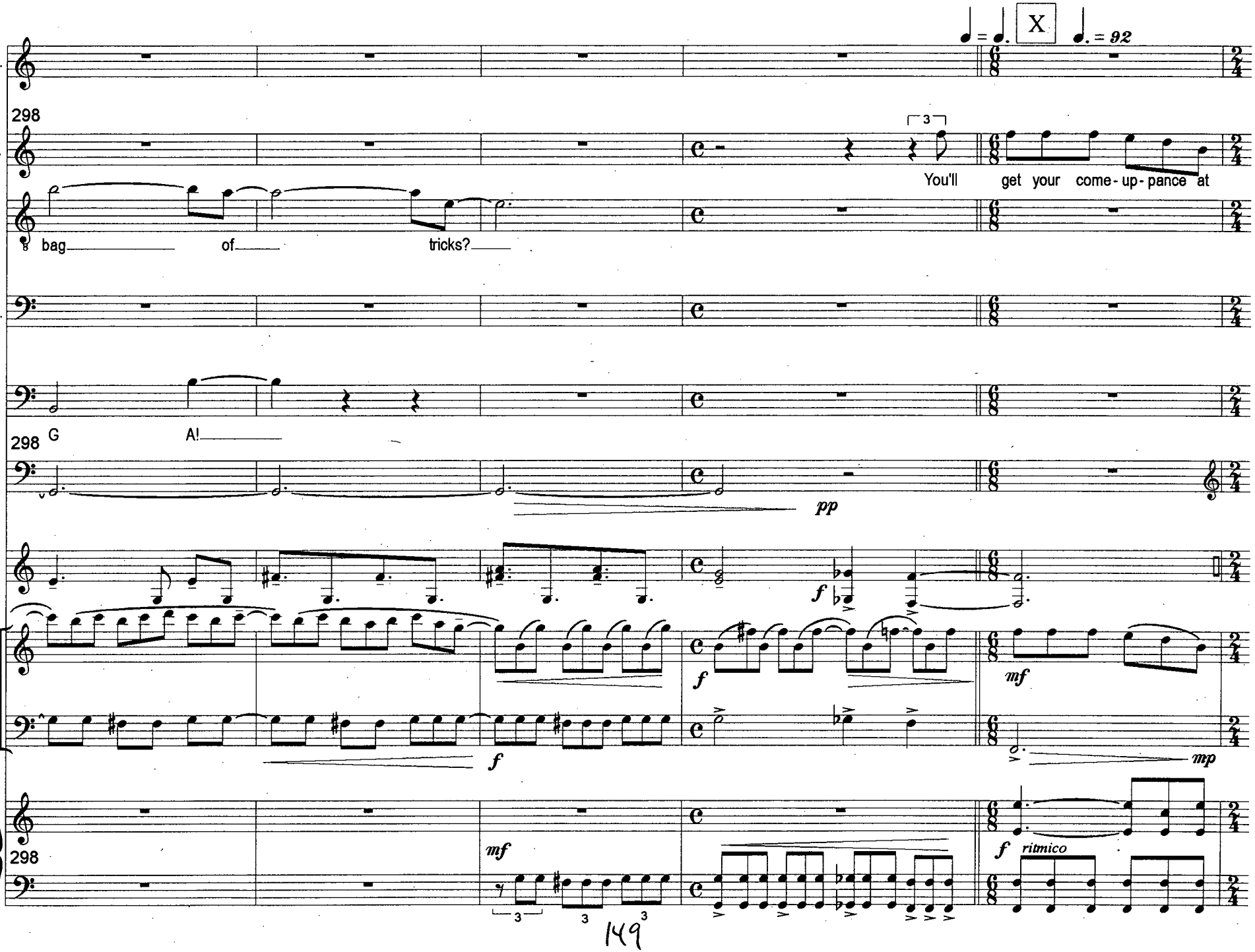

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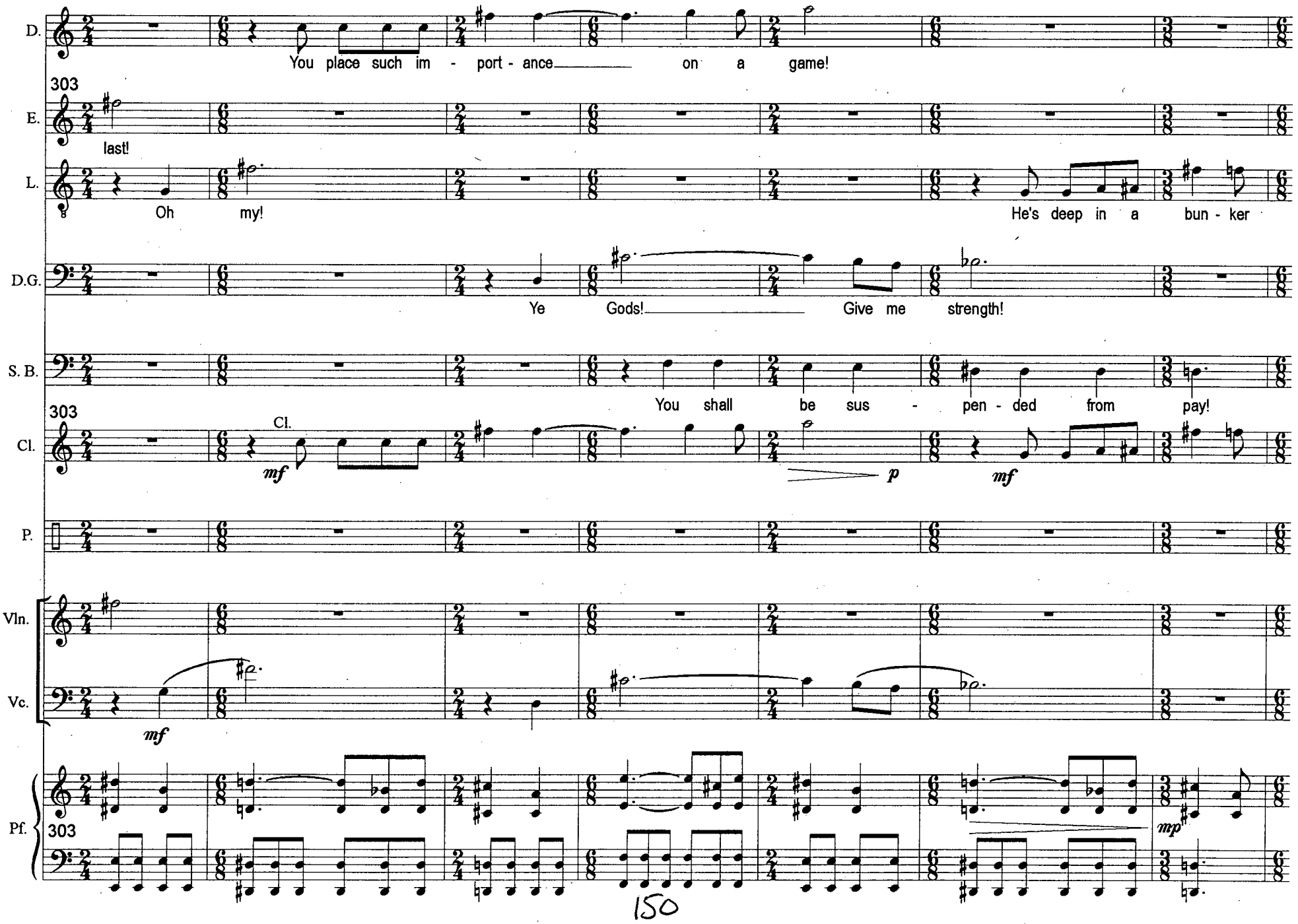

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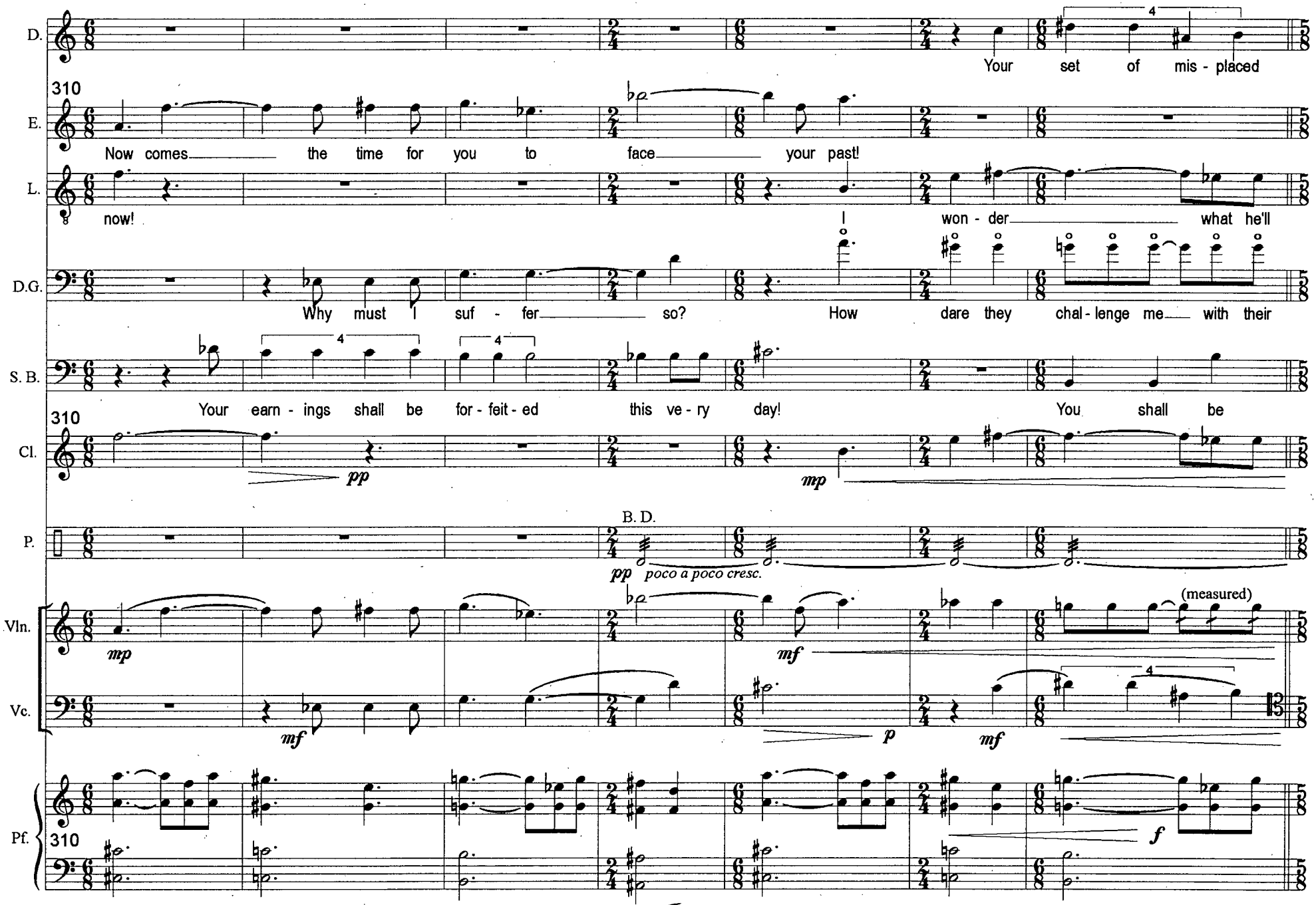

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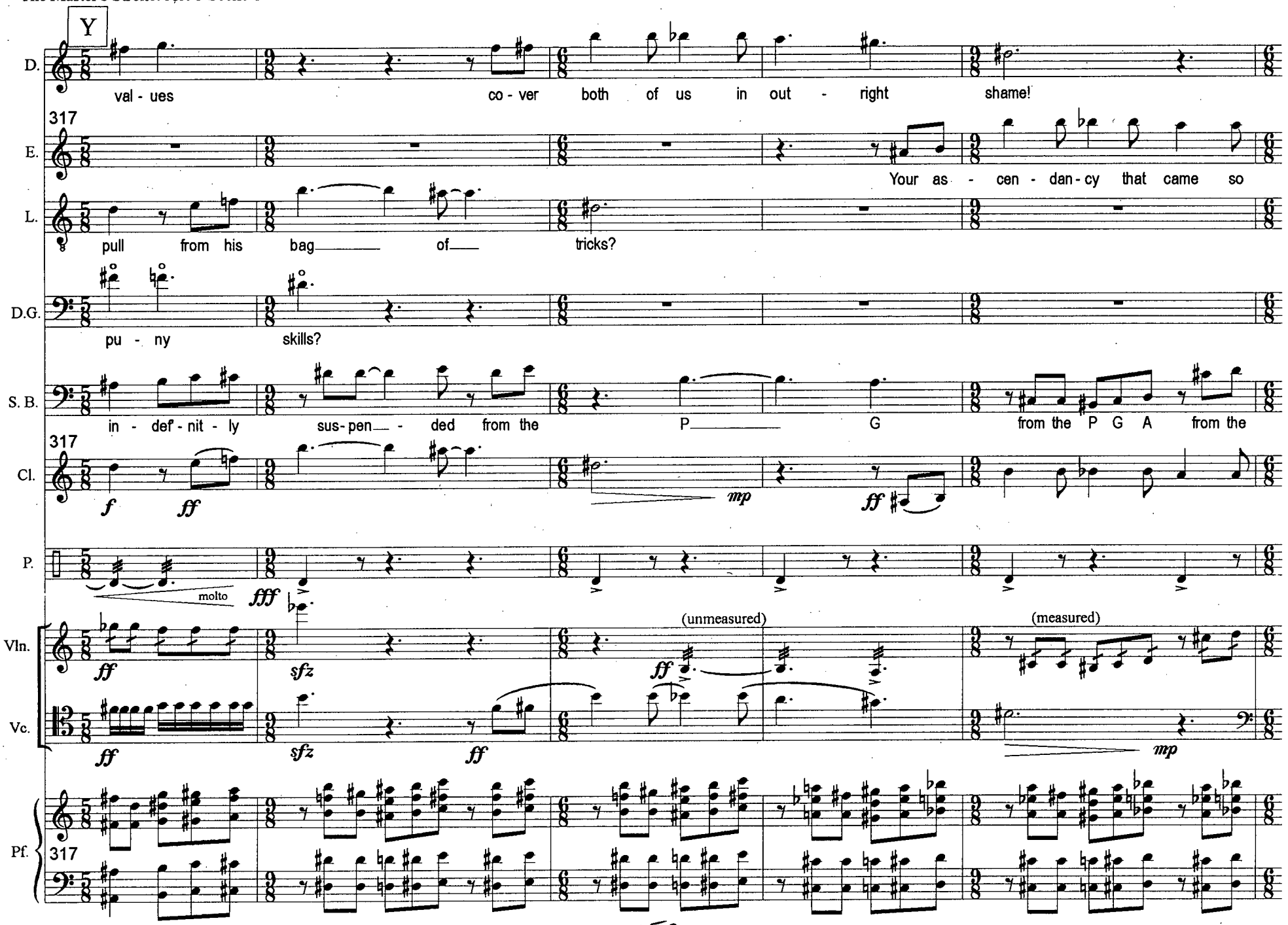

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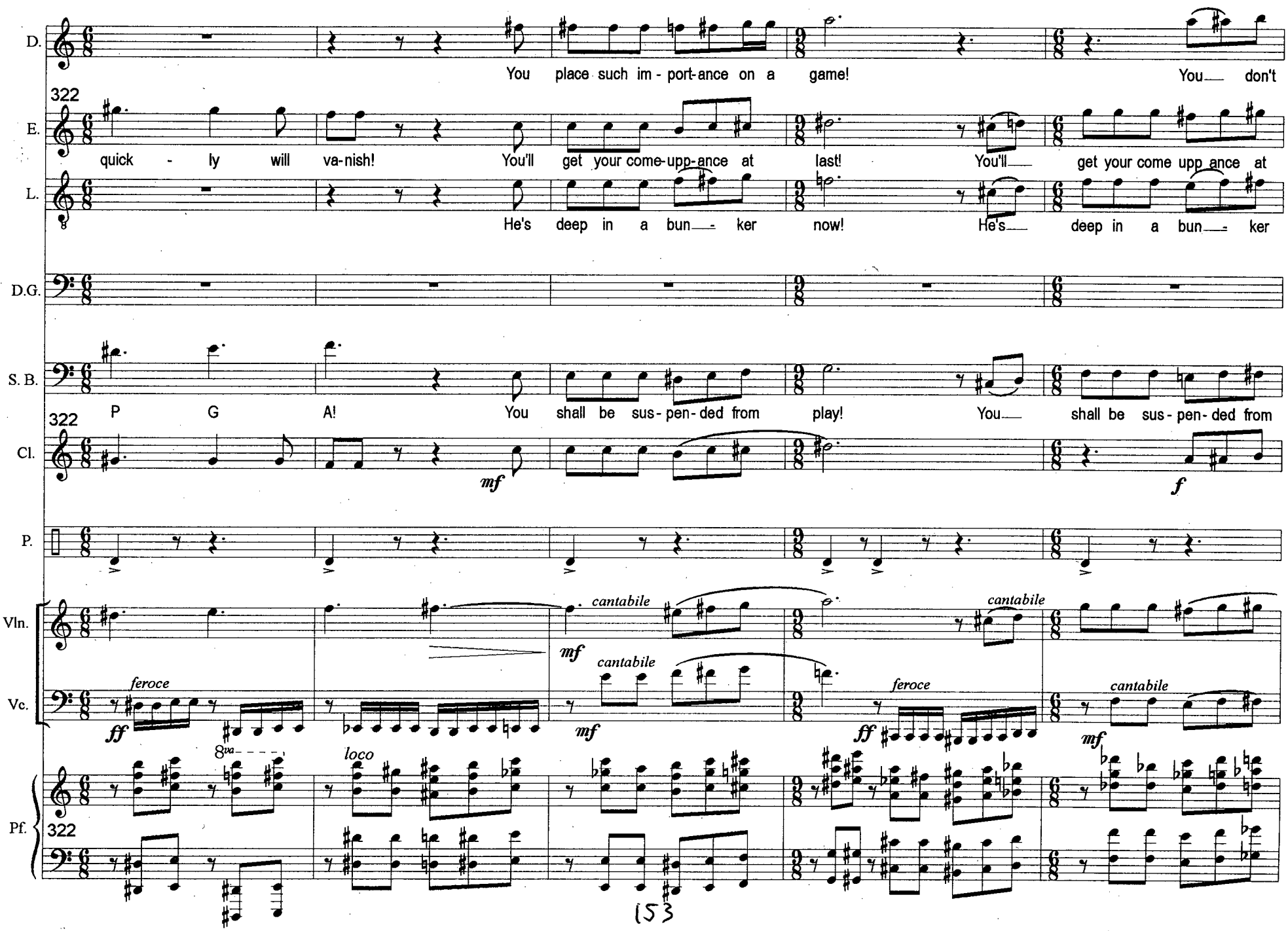

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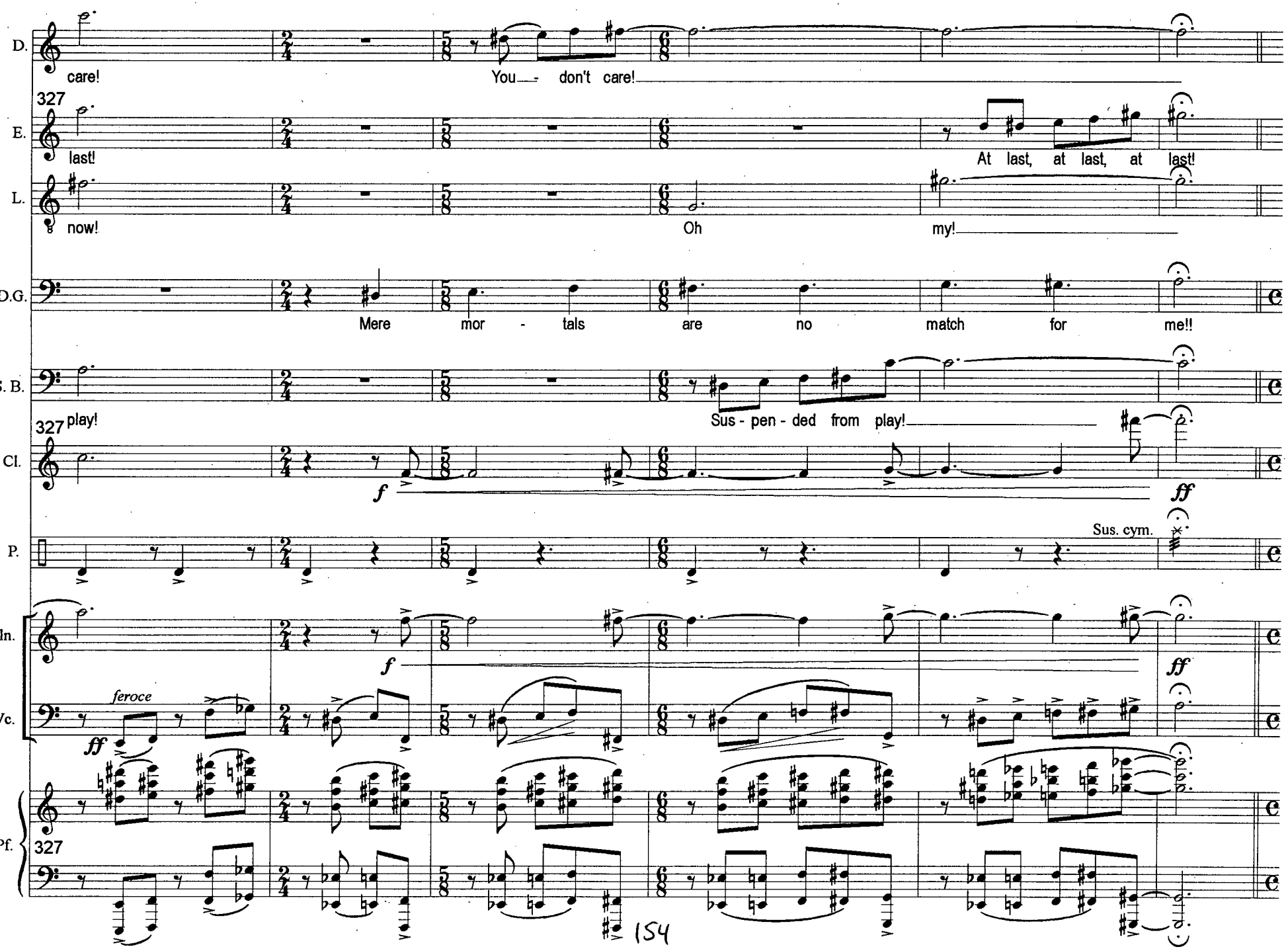

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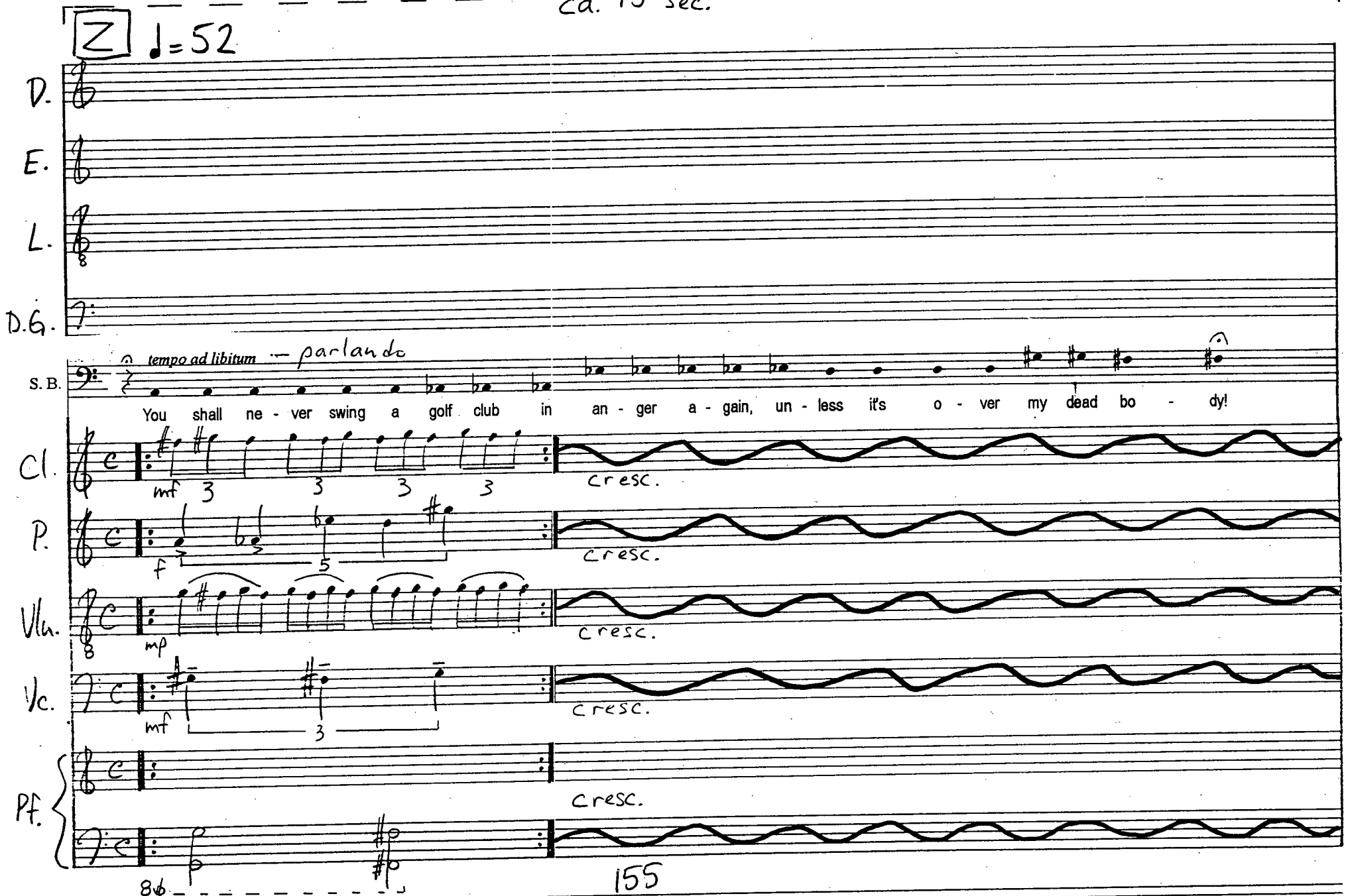
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tempo ad libitum — parlando
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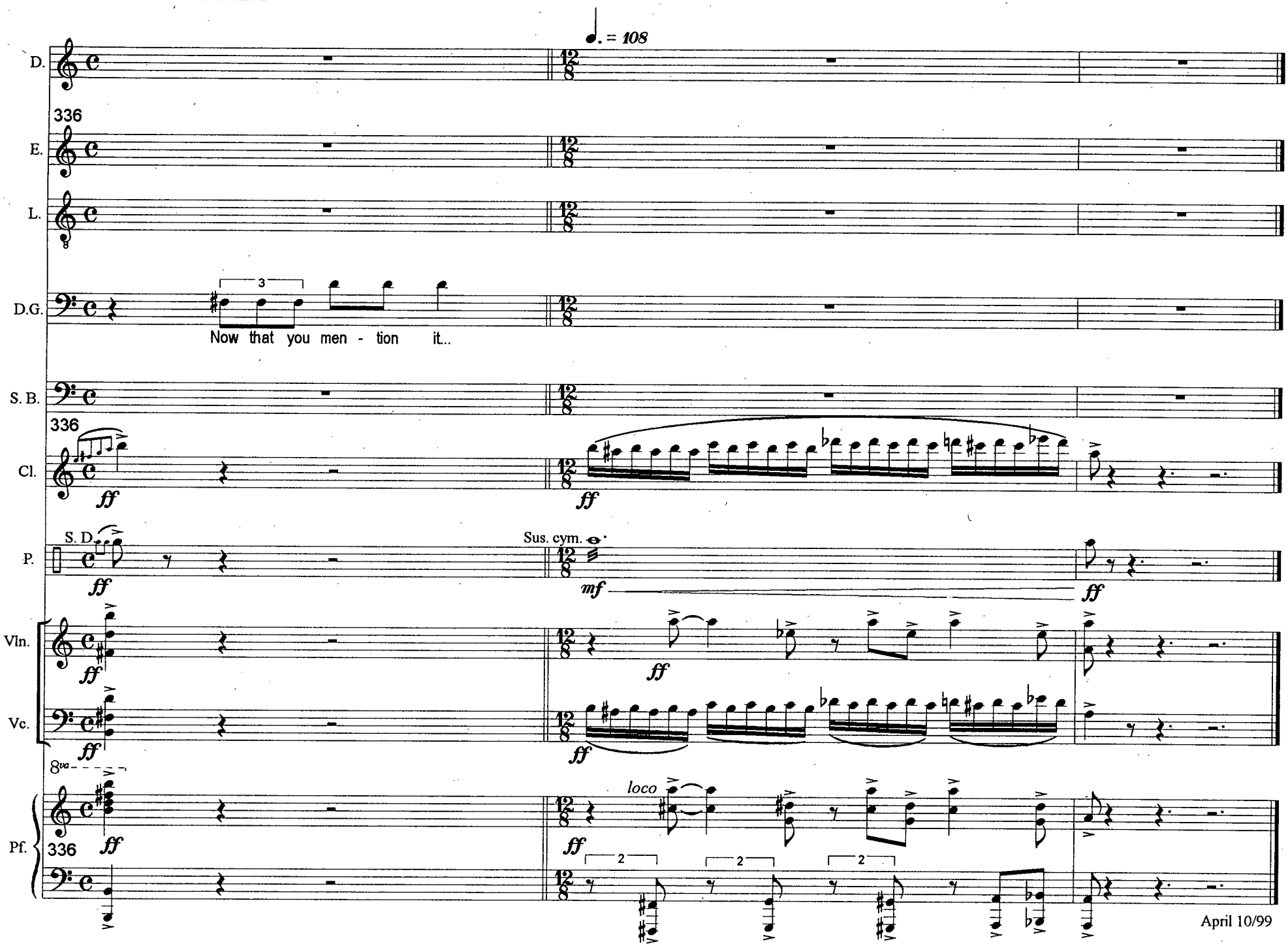

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