Swan

For Saxophone Quartet

David Lancaster

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Swan - for Saxophone Quartet, by David Lancaster

Duration approx. 7 minutes.

First performed by the Lunar Sax Quartet in York, June 2011.

Dedicated to Jane Callow

Swans, genus ***Cygnus***, are birds of the family Anatidae, which also includes geese and ducks. Swans are grouped with the closely related geese in the subfamily Anserinae where they form the tribe **Cygnini**. The word swan is derived from Old English *swan,* akin to the German *Schwan* and Dutch *zwaan* and Swedish *svan*, in turn derived from Indo-European root *swen* (to sound, to sing), whence Latin derives *sonus* (sound).

The **Black Swan Theory** (or **Theory of Black Swan Events)** is a metaphor that encapsulates the concept that *the event is a surprise (to the observer) and has a major impact.* The theory was developed by Nassim Nicholas Taleb to explain firstly the disproportionate role of high-impact, hard to predict, and rare events that are beyond the realm of normal expectations in history, science, finance and technology, and secondly the non-computability of the probability of the consequential rare events using scientific methods (owing to the very nature of small probabilities).

Leda and the Swan *is a motif from Greek mythology in which Zeus came to Leda in the form of a swan. As the story goes, Zeus took the form of a swan and raped or seduced Leda on the same night she slept with her husband Tyndareus, King of Sparta. Leda subsequently bore Helen (of Troy) and Polydeuces, who were children of Zeus, while at the same time bearing Castor and Clytemnestra, children of Tyndareus.*

The silver swan, who living had no note,
When death approach'd, unlock'd her silent throat;
Leaning her breast against the reedy shore,
Thus sung her first and last, and sung no more.
Farewell, all joys; O Death, come close mine eyes;
More geese than swans now live, more fools than wise.

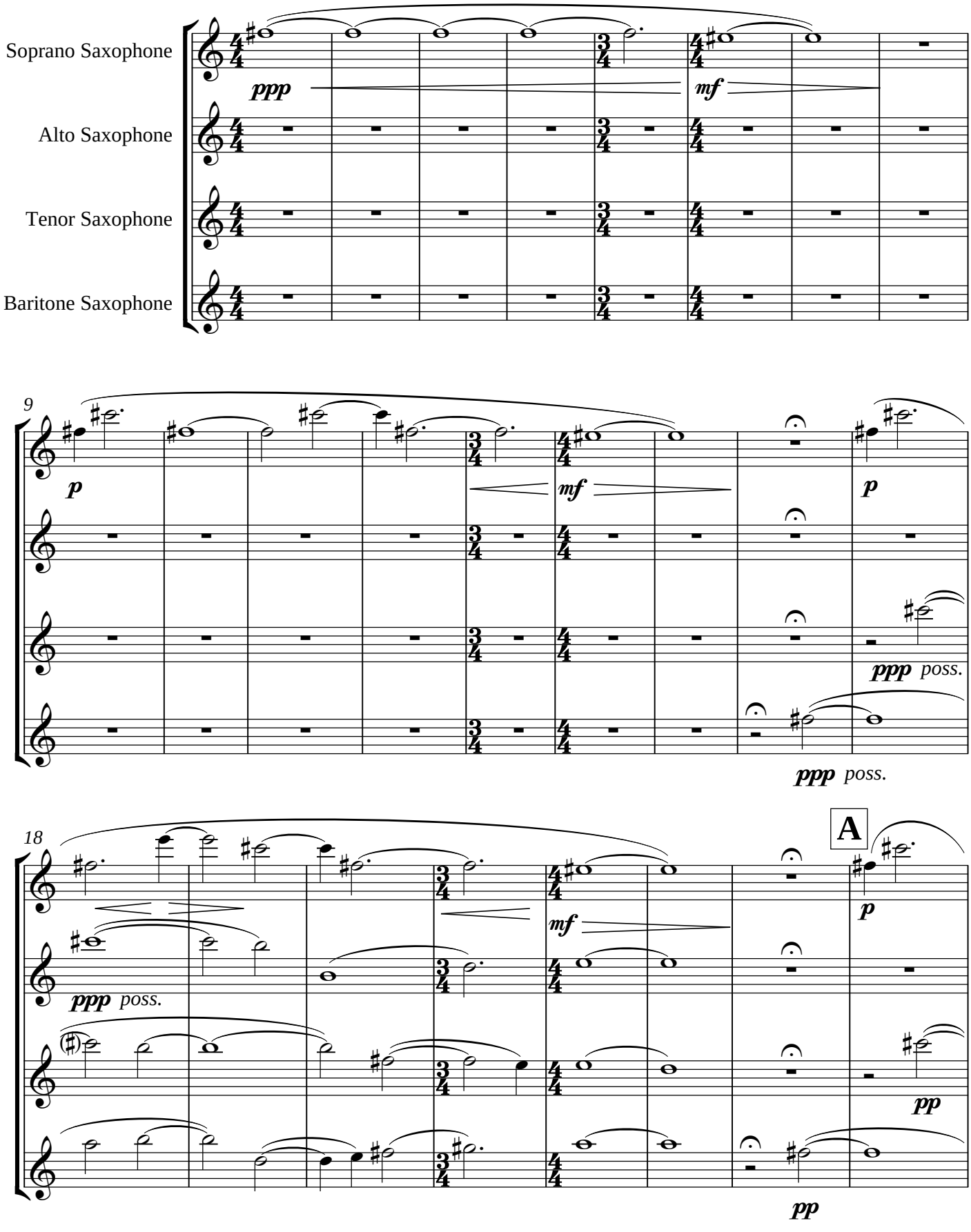
"Jane was characteristically late, around ninety minutes if I remember correctly. (Apparently it had taken longer than expected to collect the Alfa from the garage). But then, quite suddenly, there she was: strikingly blonde, voluptuous, elegant and walking slowly towards me. 'Miss Swan?' I tentatively enquired. She giggled, twinkled her eyes and took my hand…"

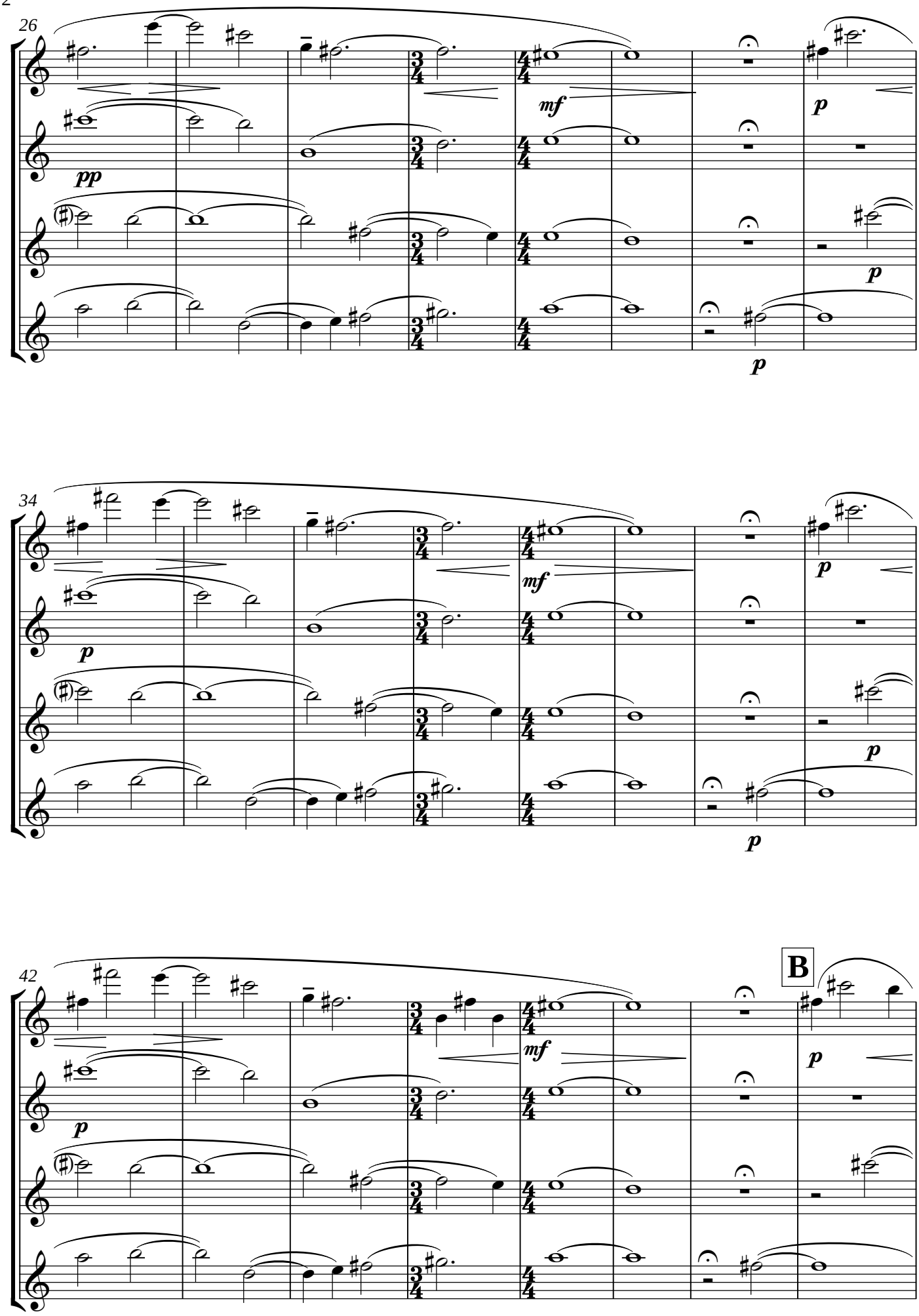
Transposed score

Swan

David Lancaster

♩ = 106 Plaintive and Calm

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mf
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p
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34
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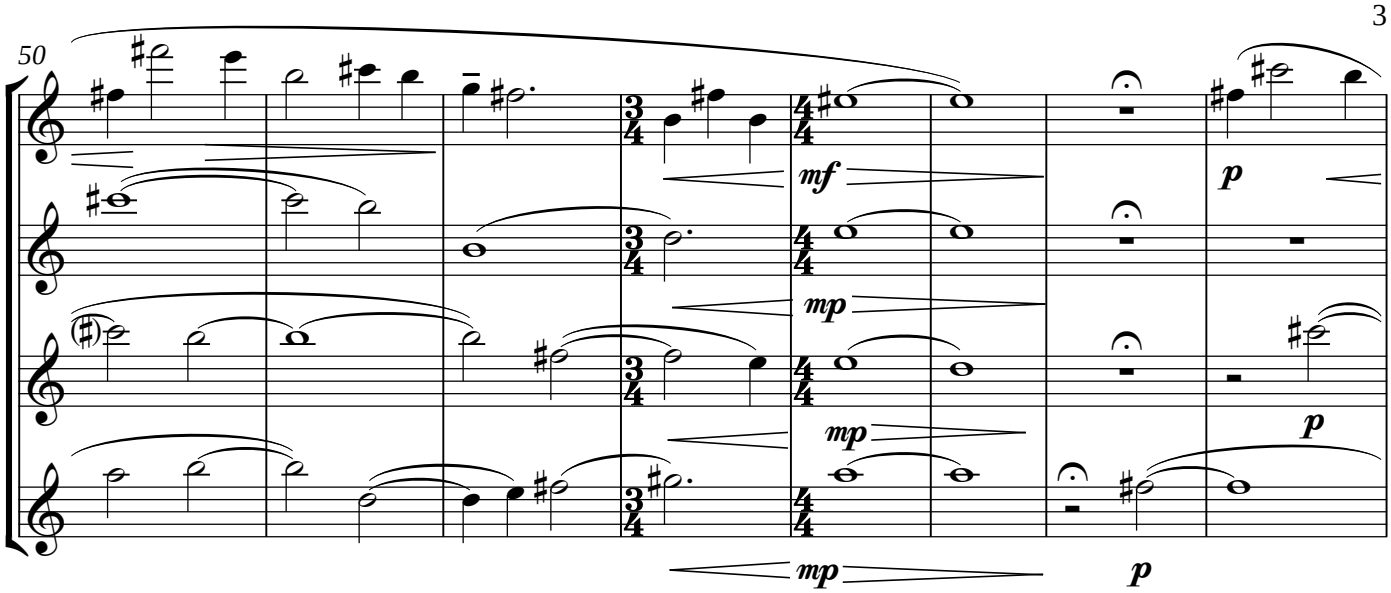
mf
p
p
p
42
B
p
mf
p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mp
p
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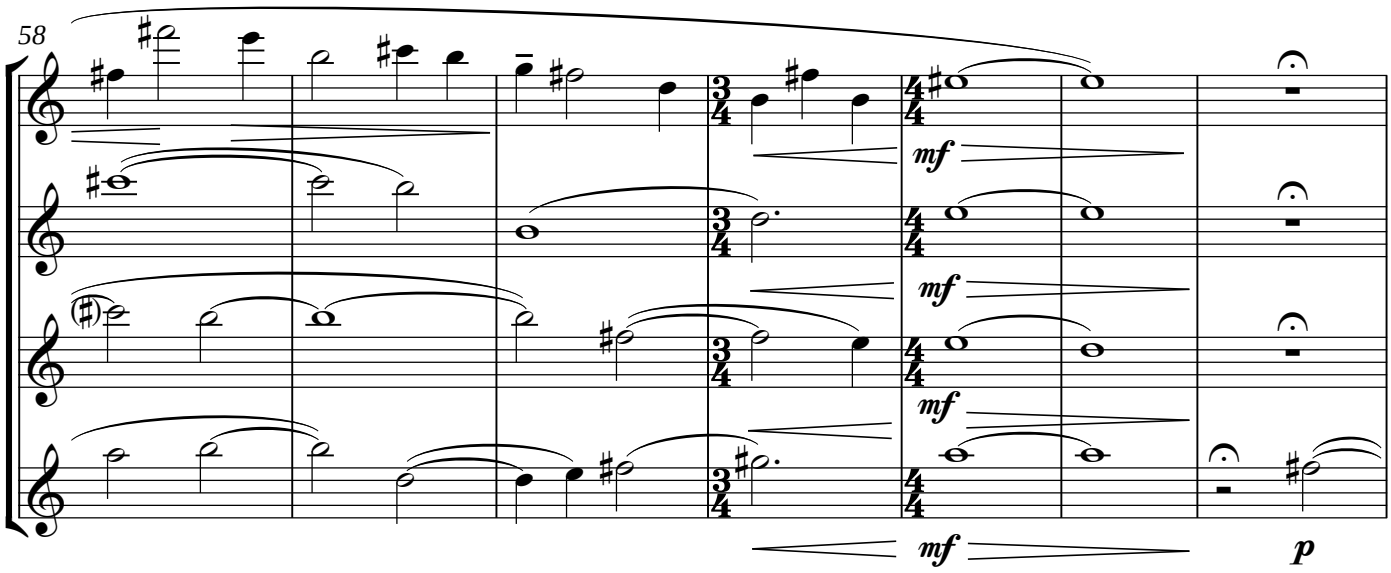
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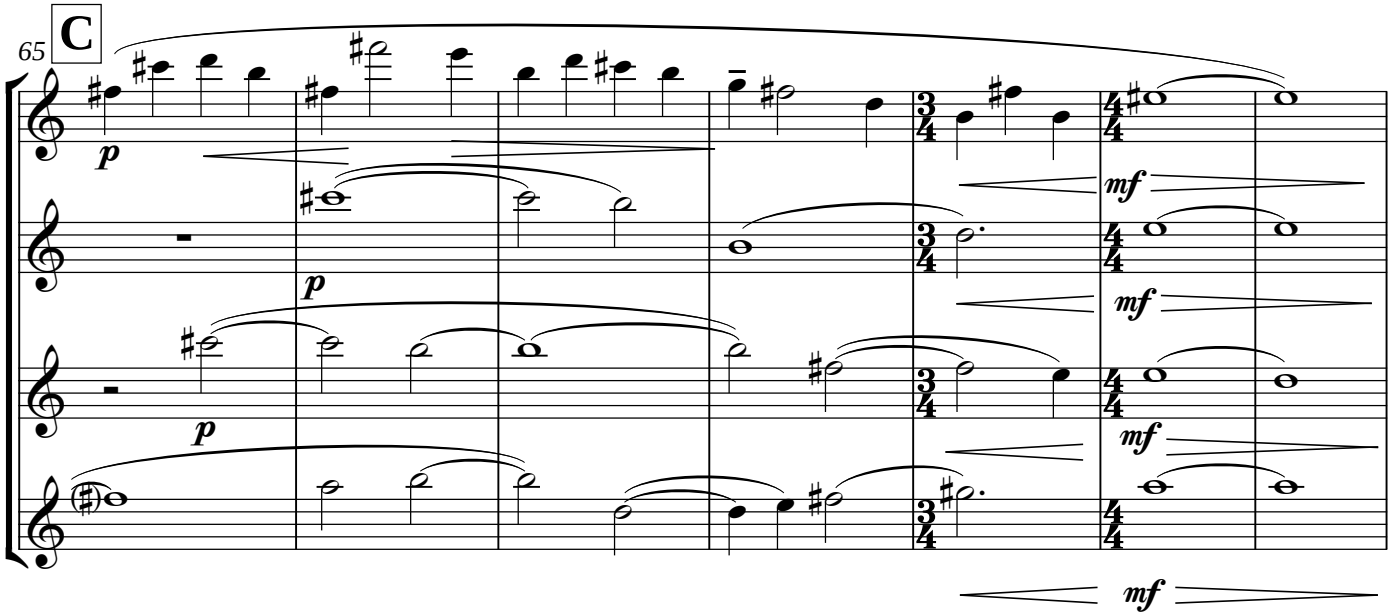
mf
mf
mf
p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C
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mf
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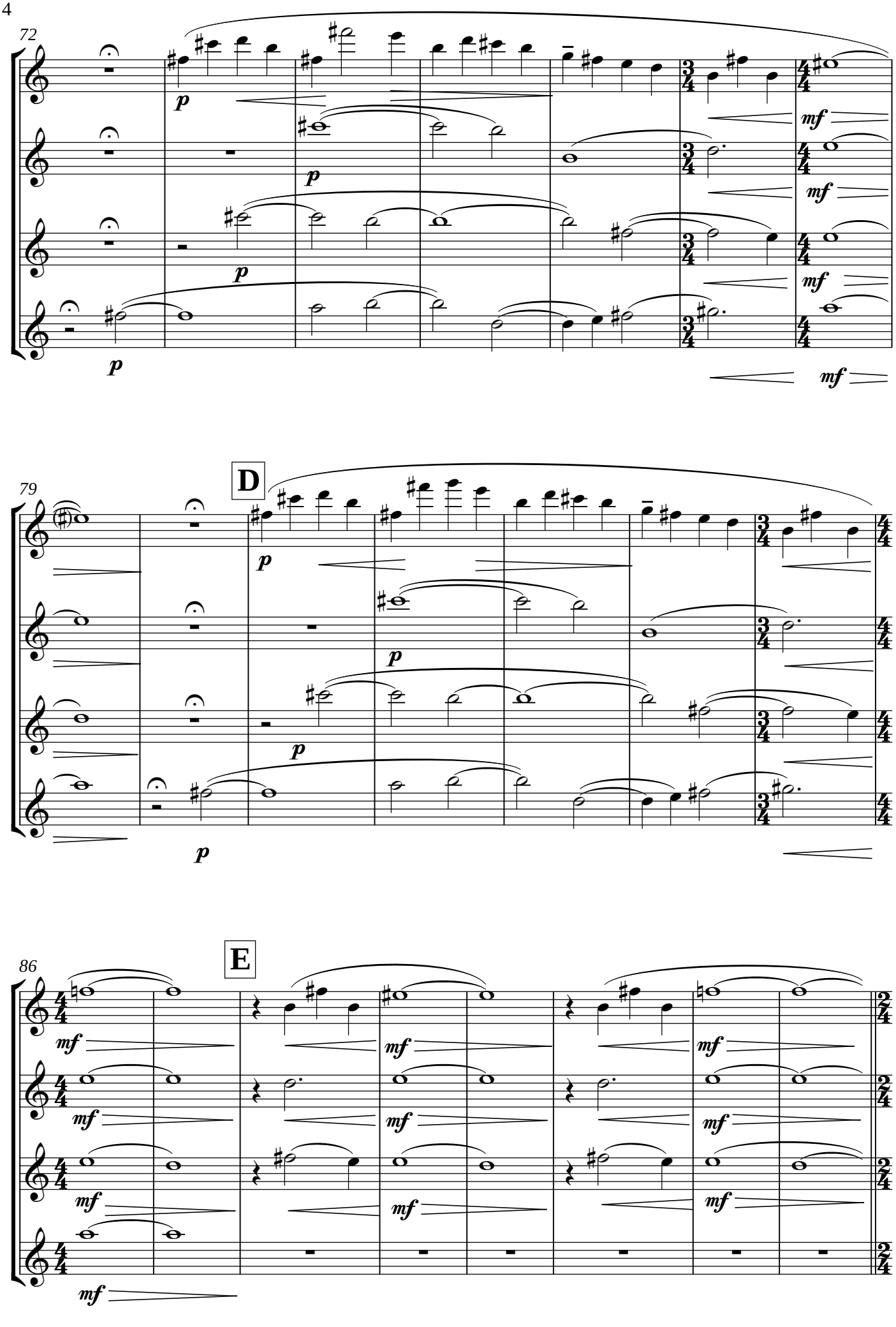
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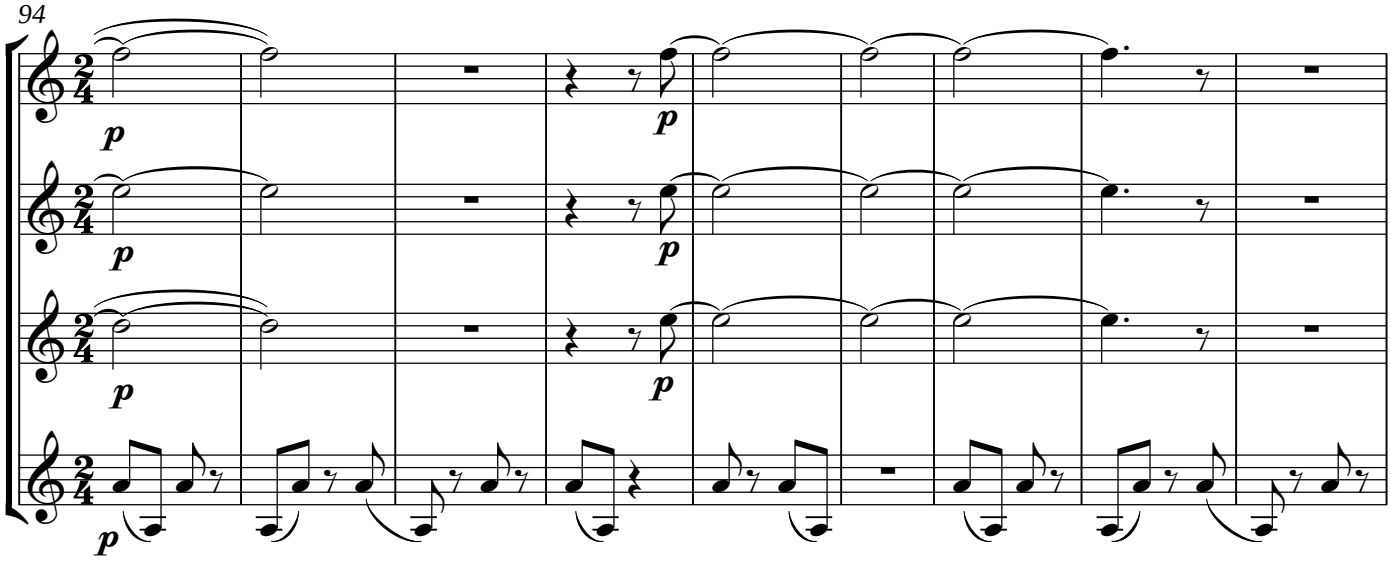
p
mf
79
D
86
E

♩=180 Rapid, with flowing movement

94



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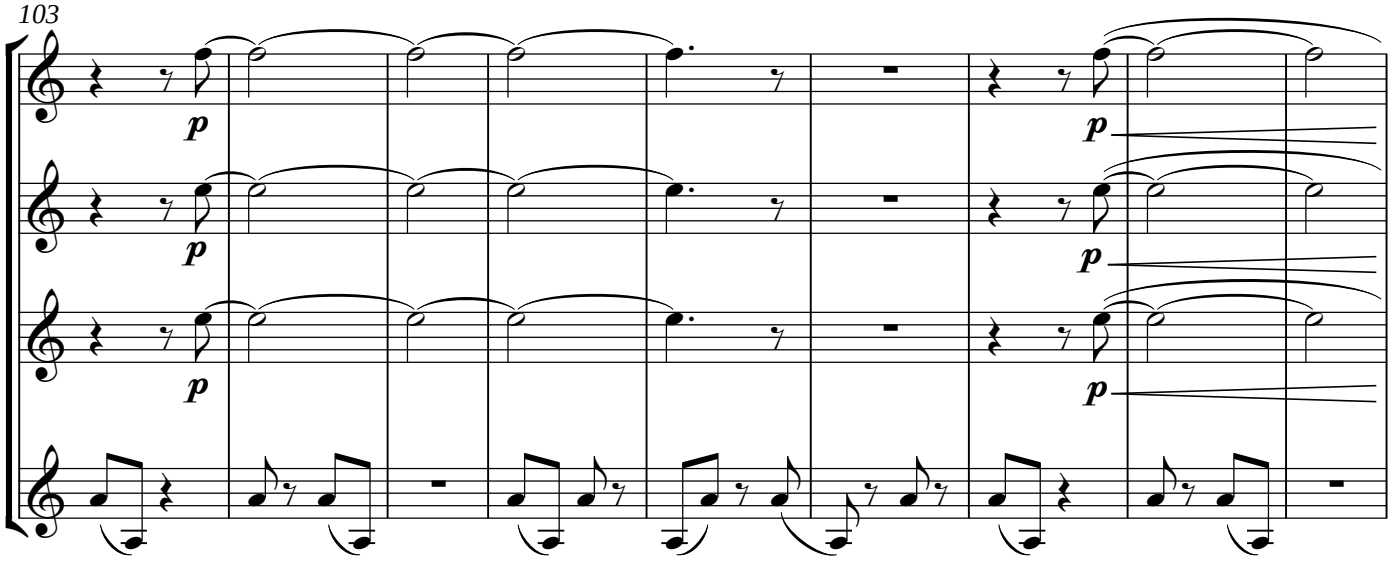

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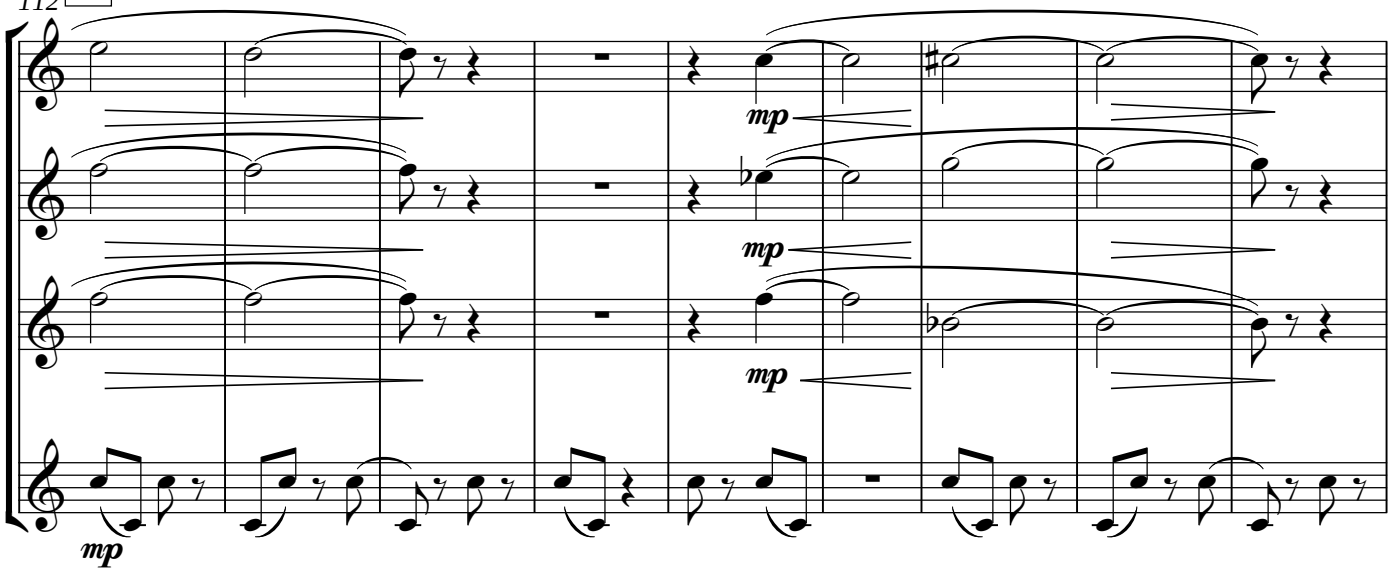

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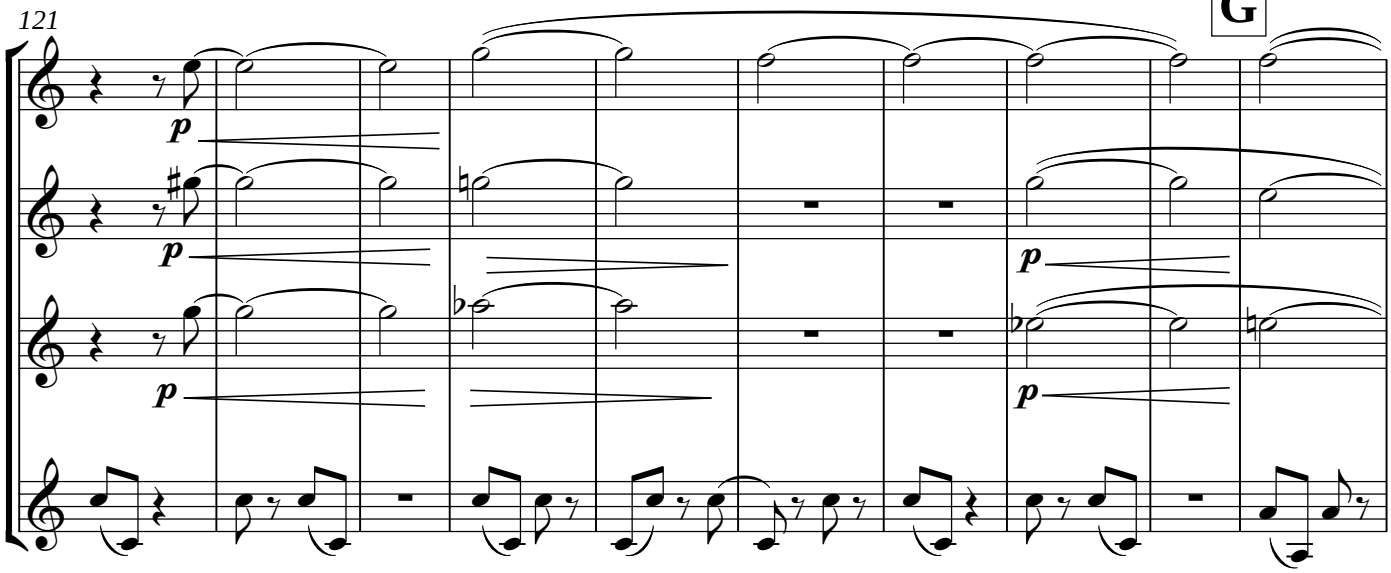

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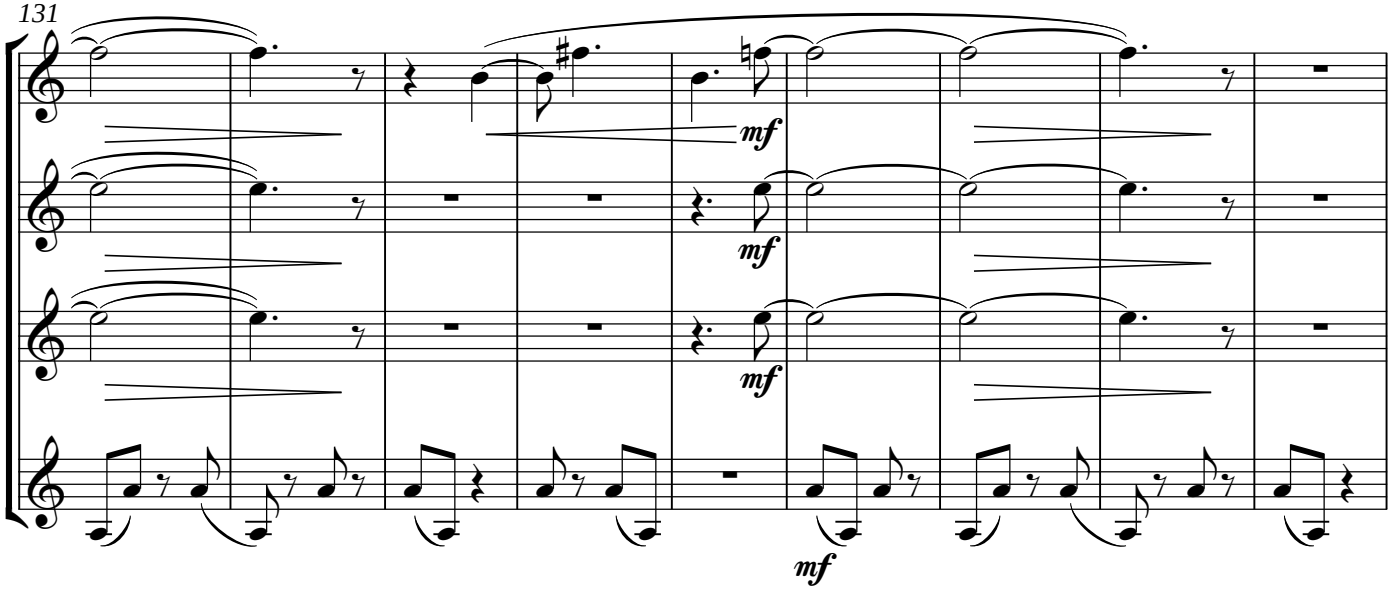

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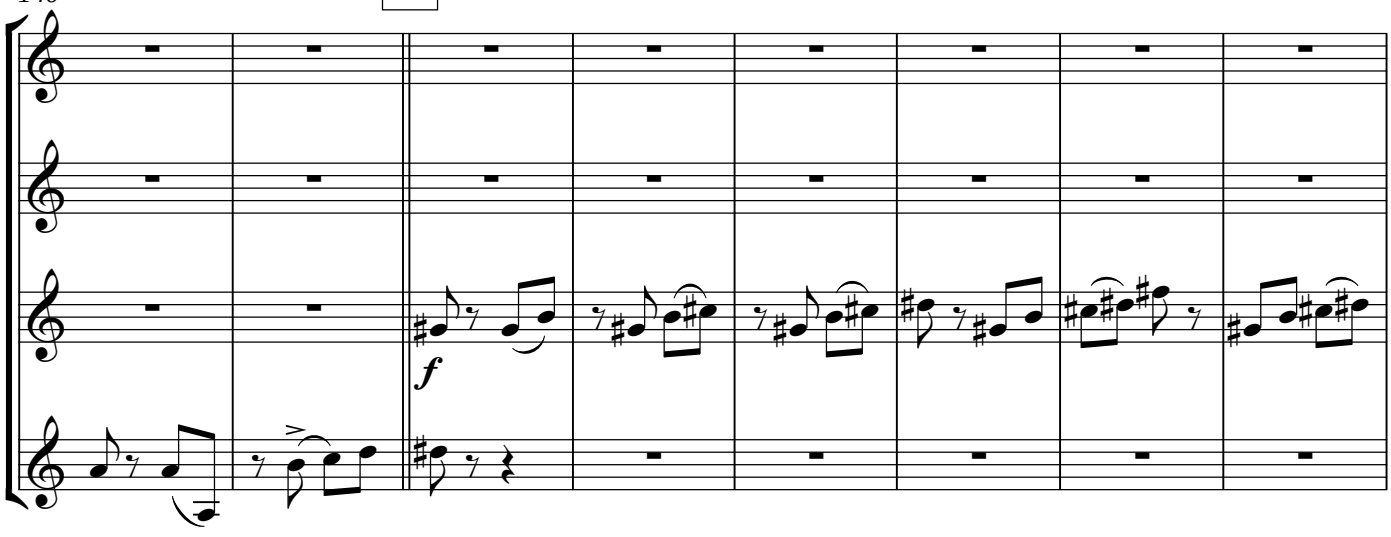

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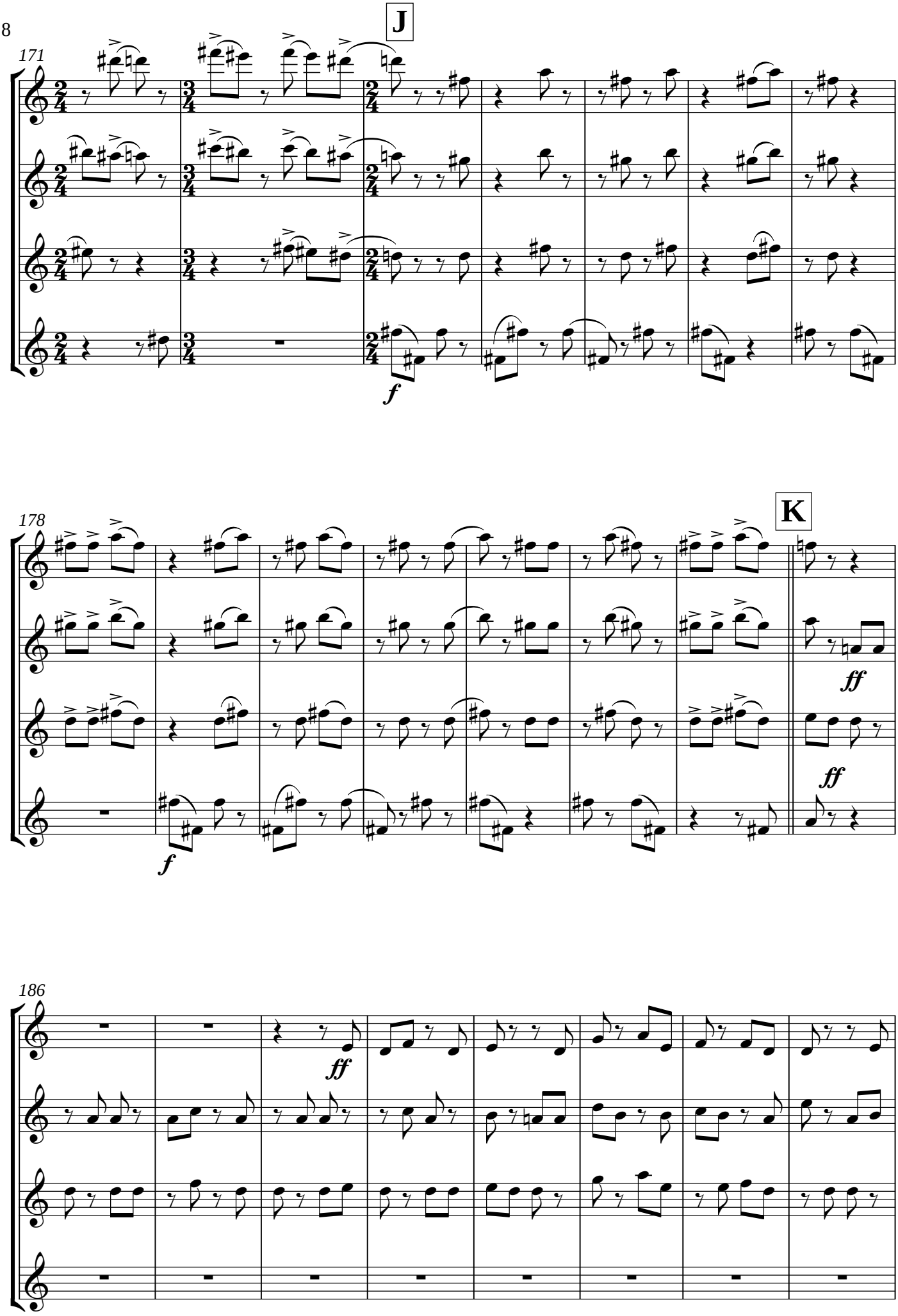
164

f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f
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ff
ff
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ff

ff

ff

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f

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f

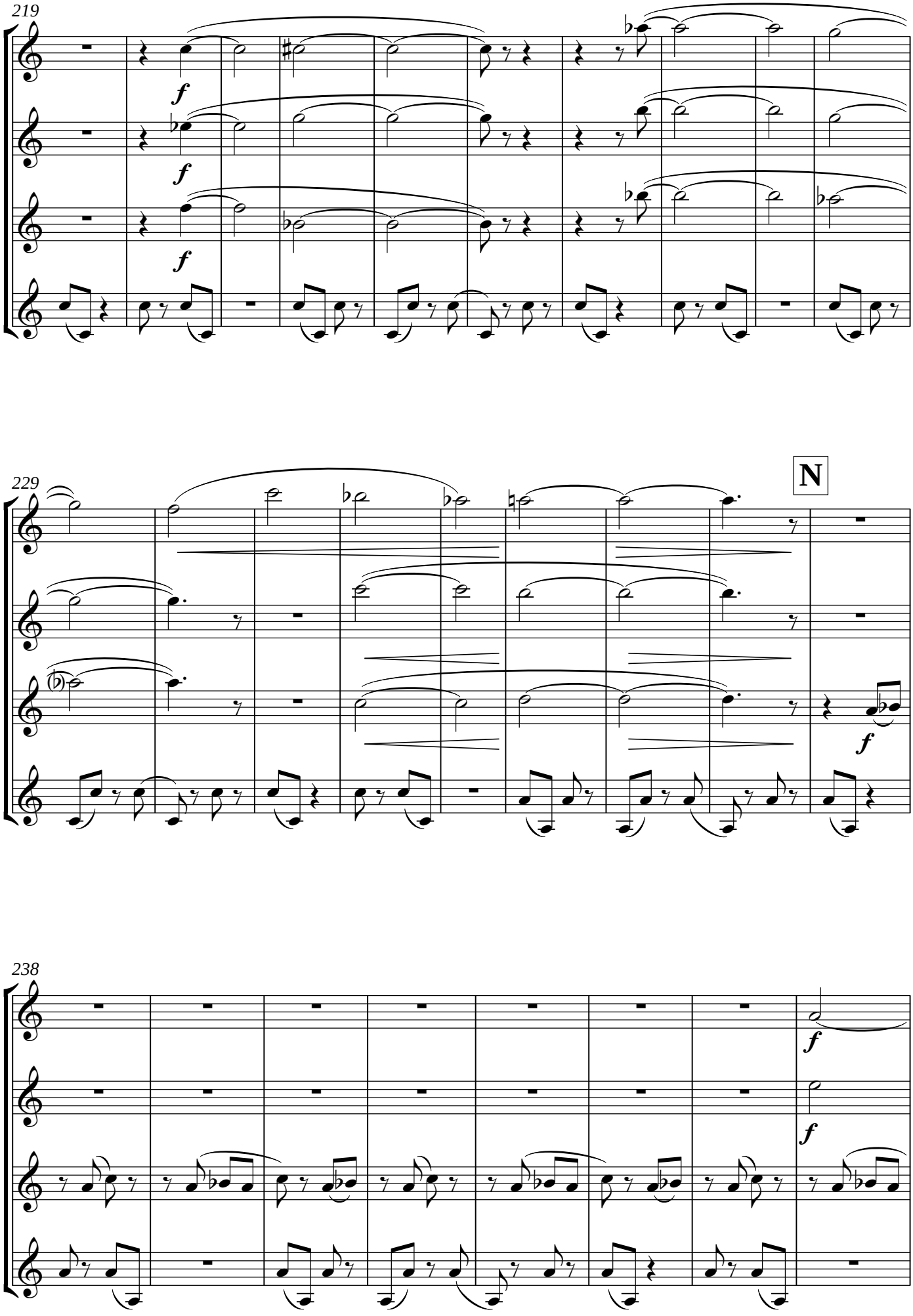
210

M

f

f

f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f
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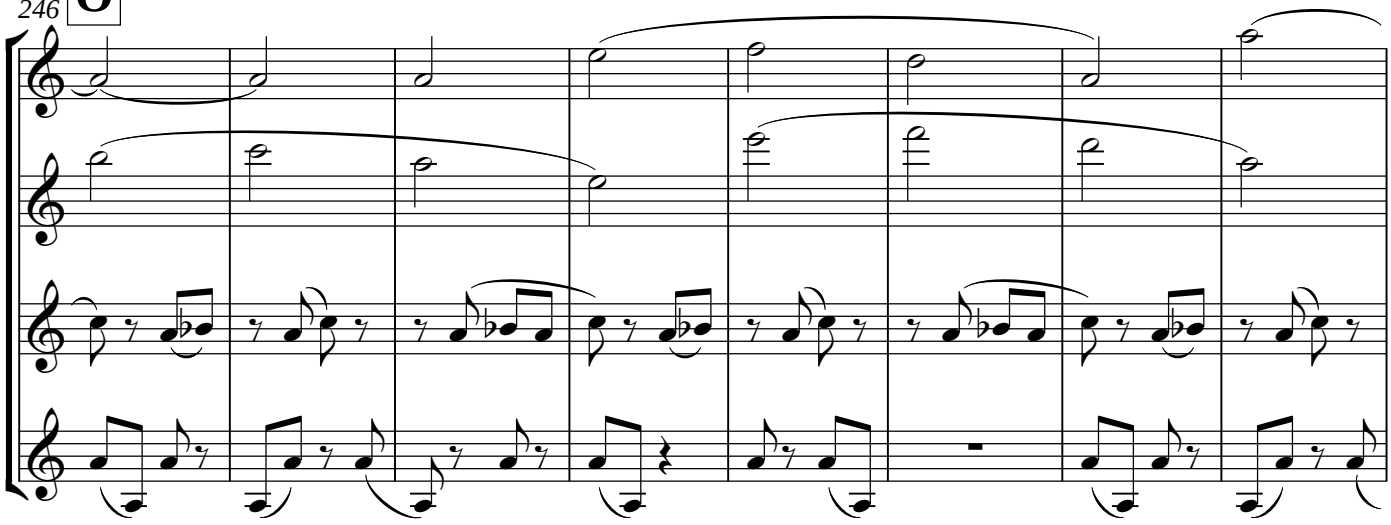

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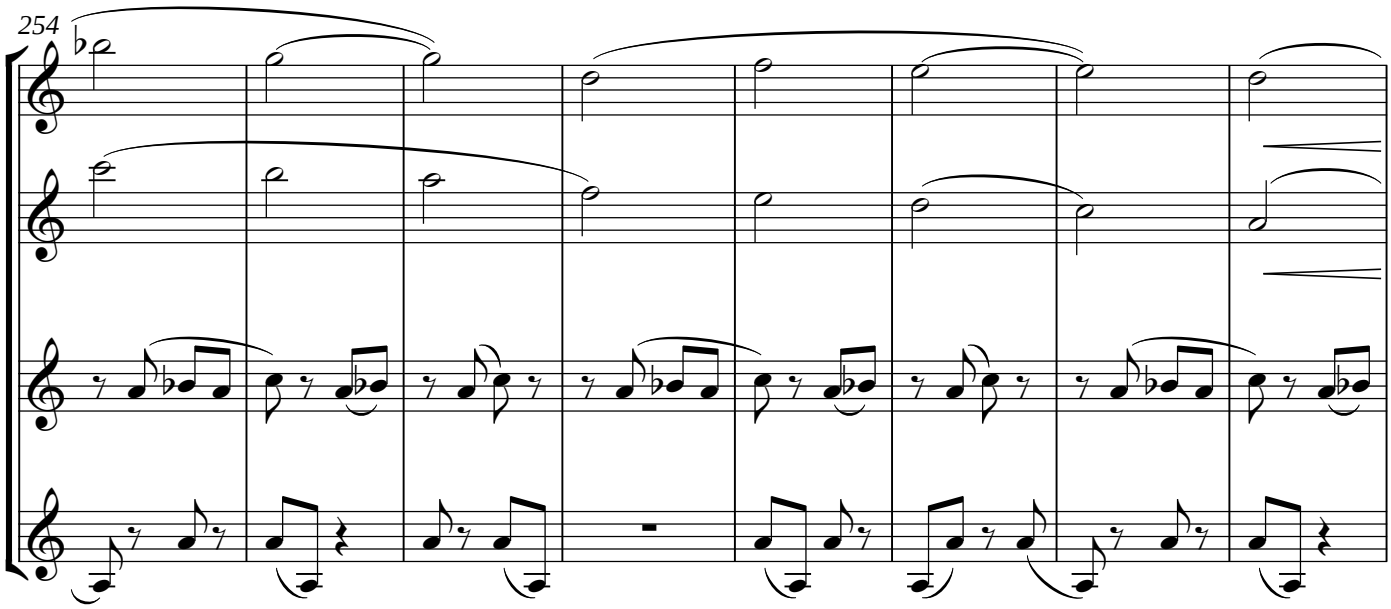

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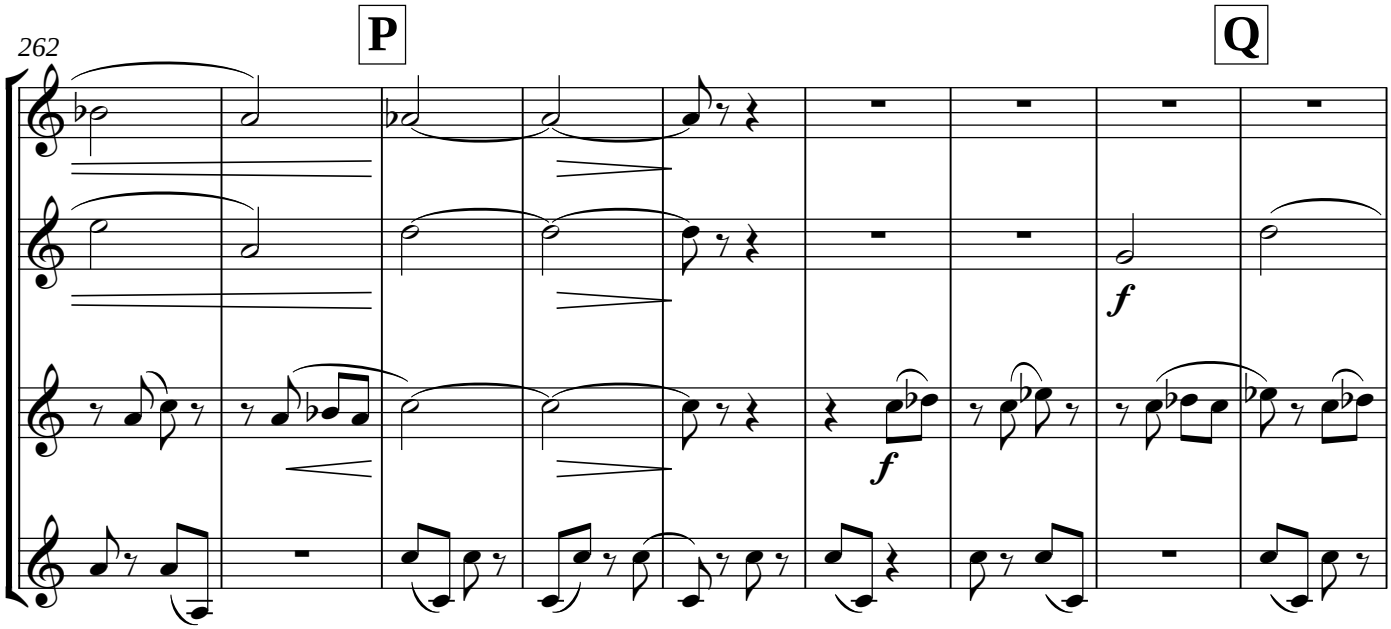

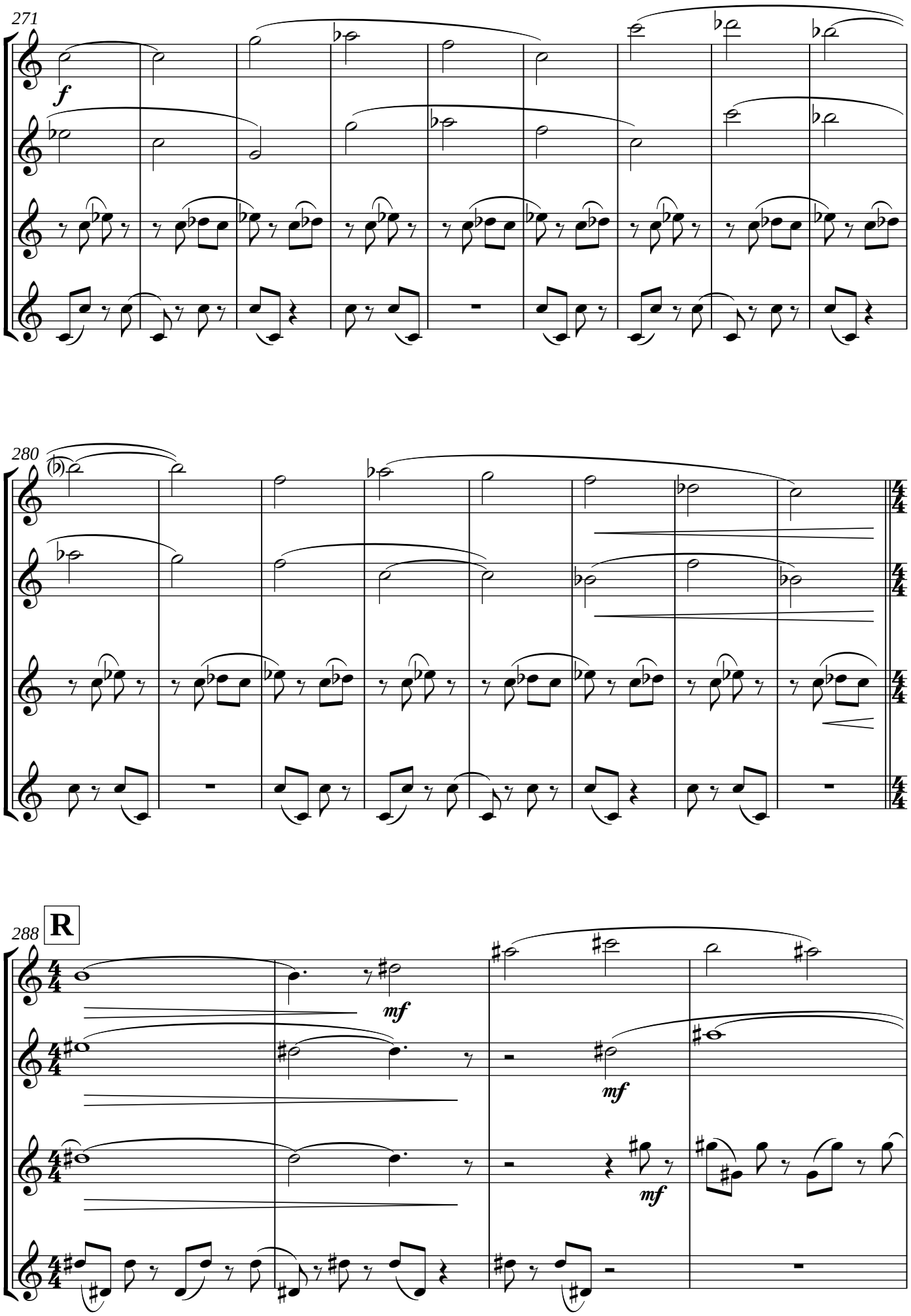
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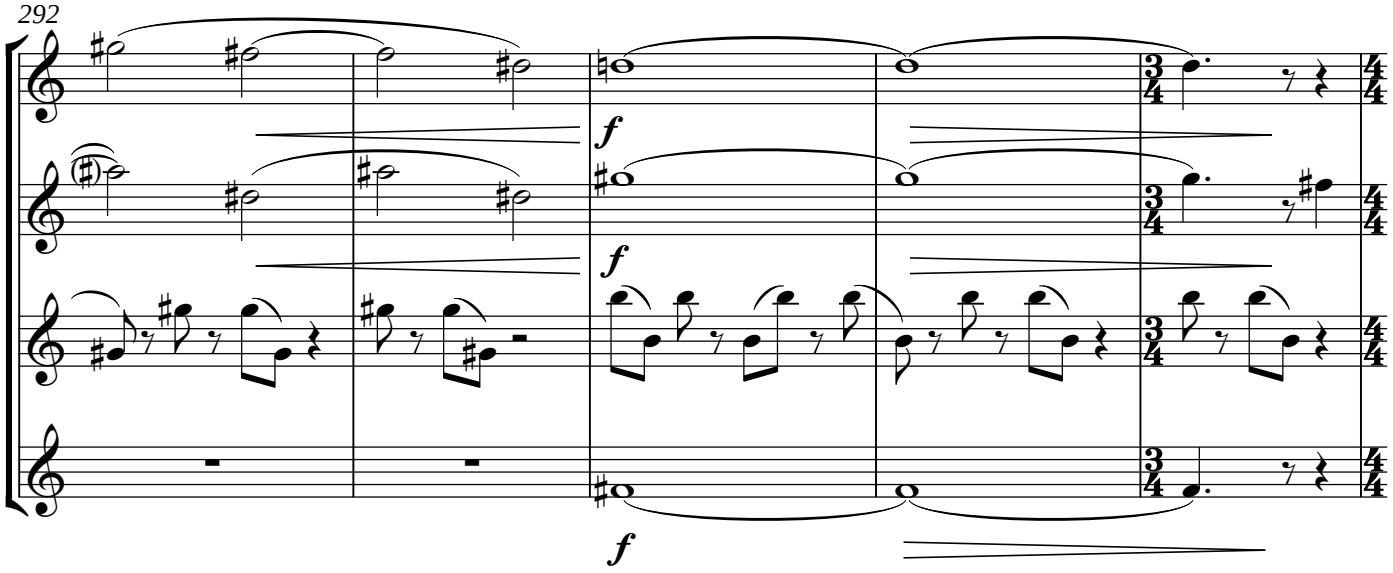
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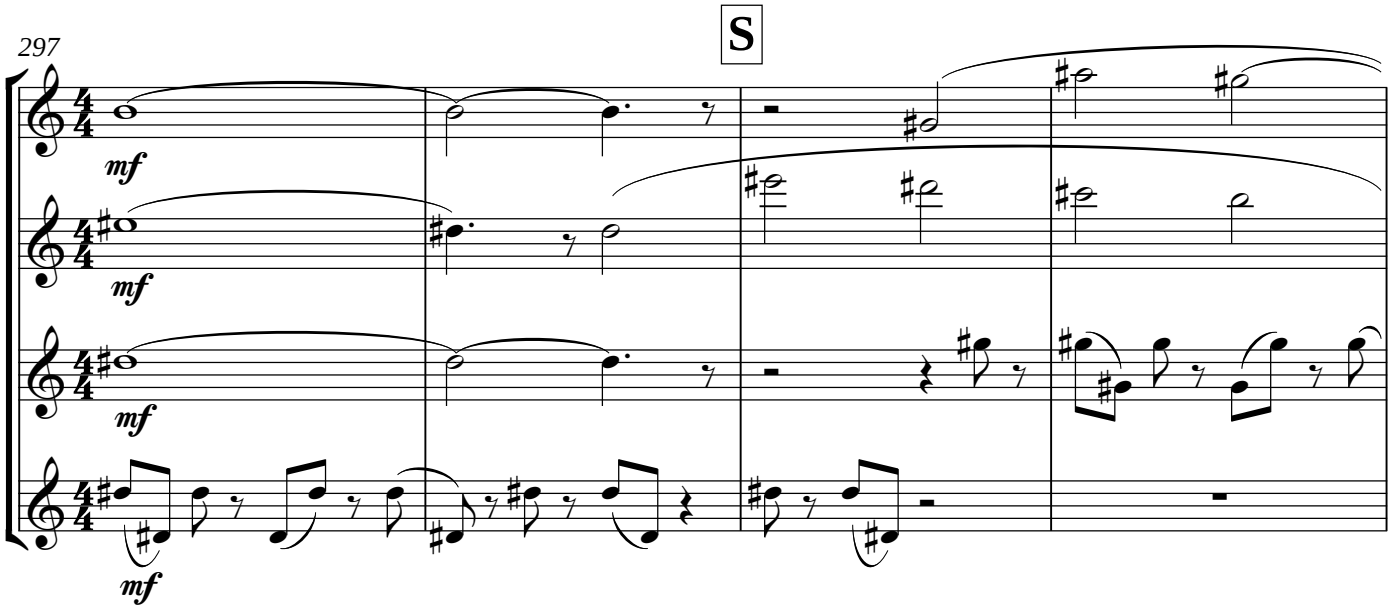
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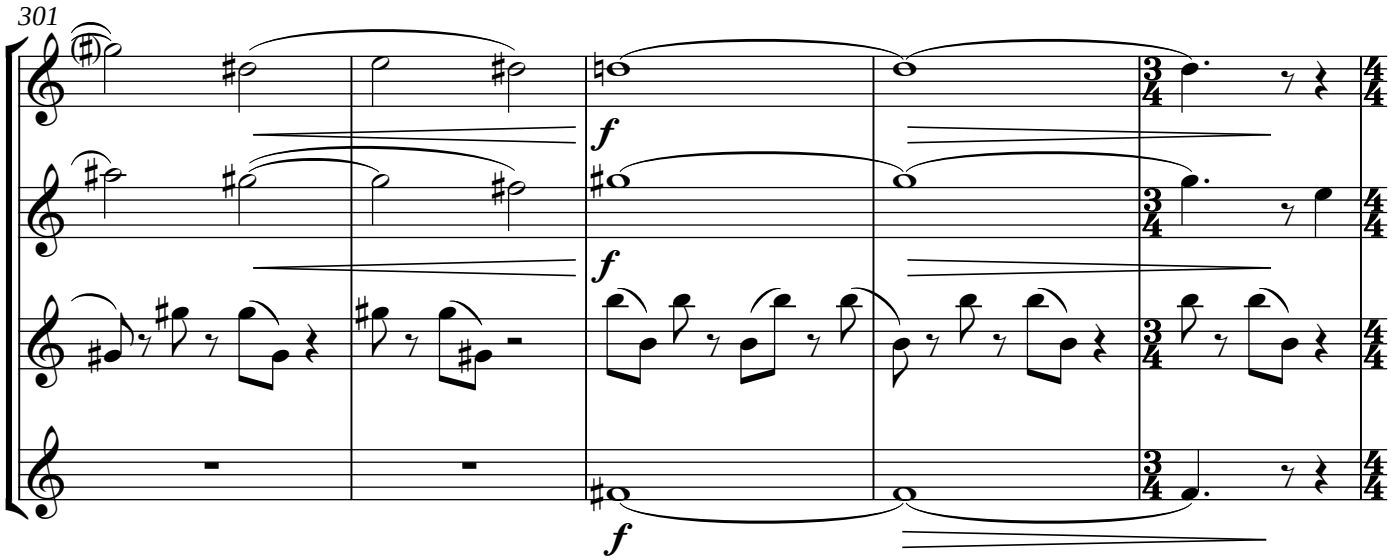
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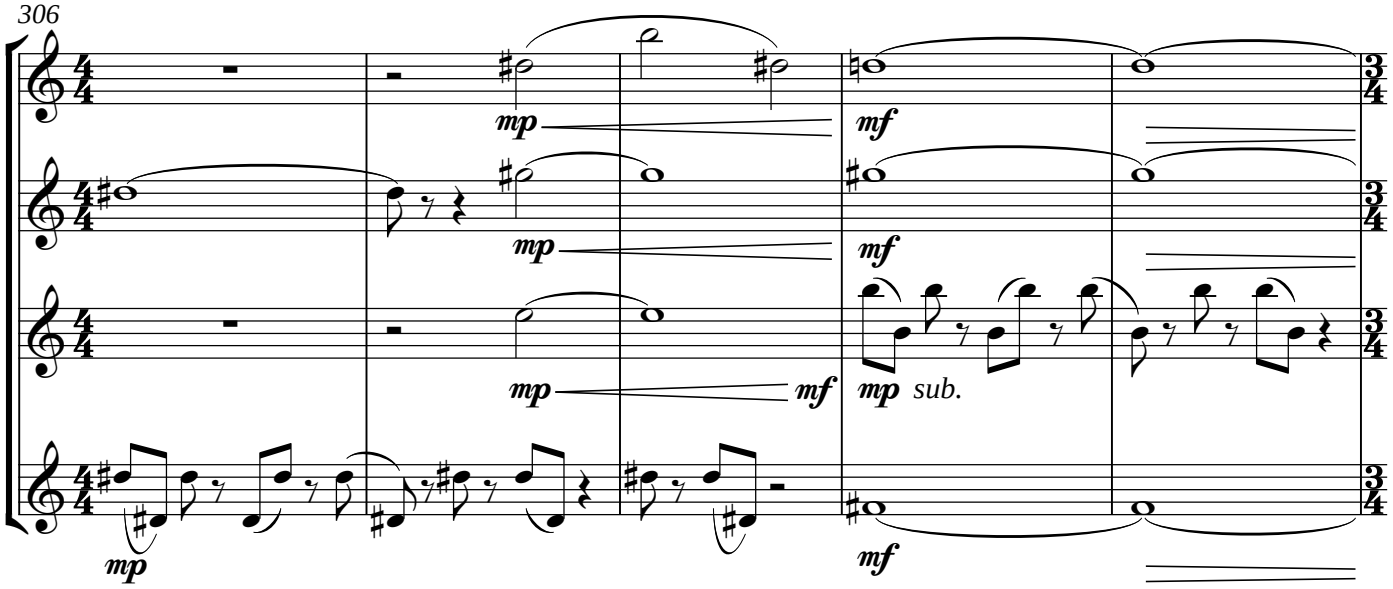
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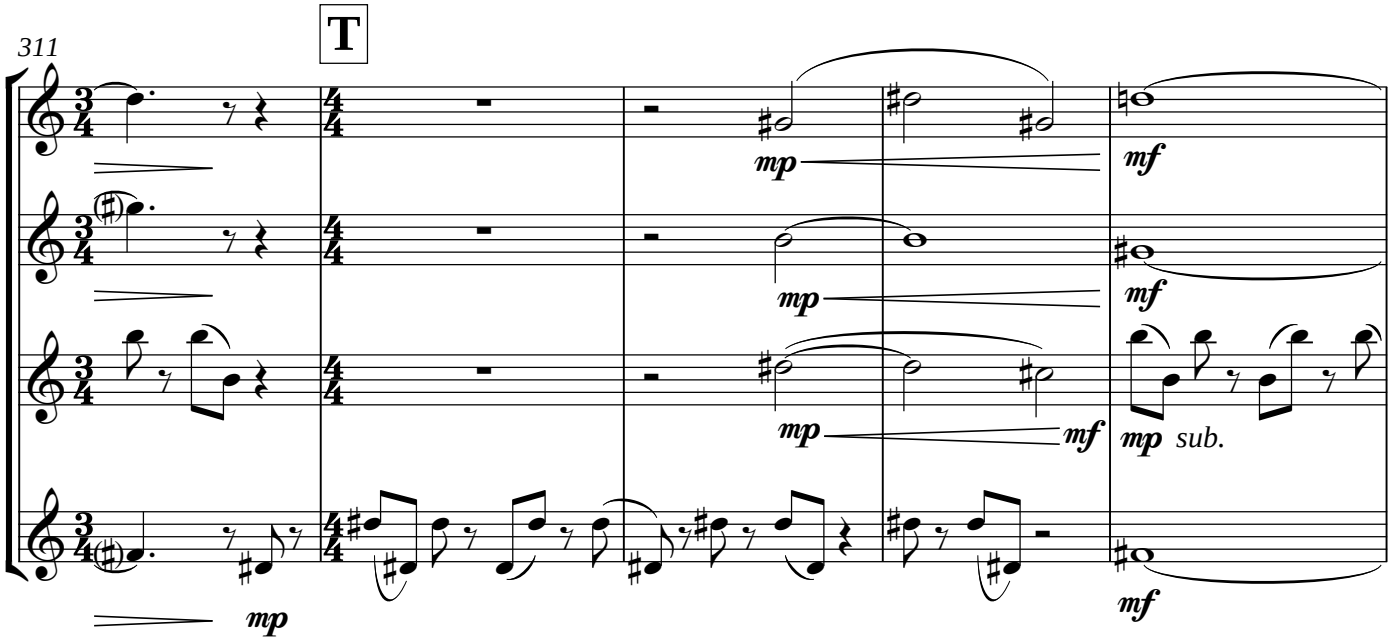
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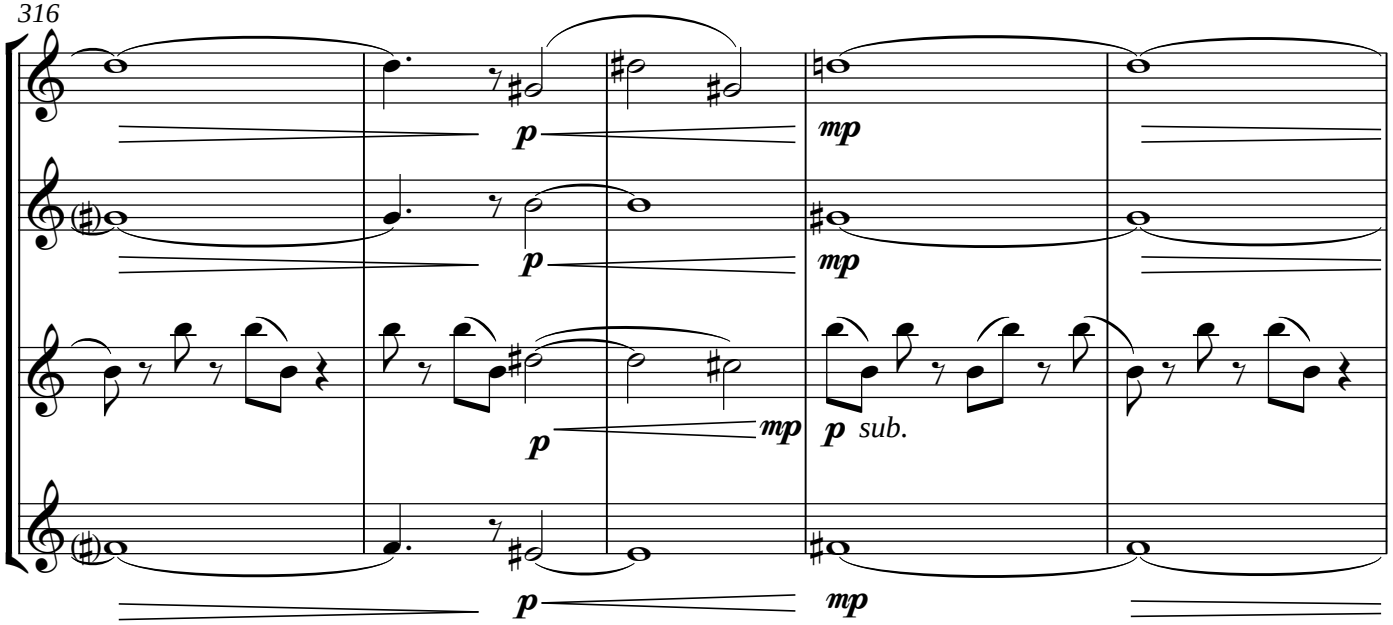
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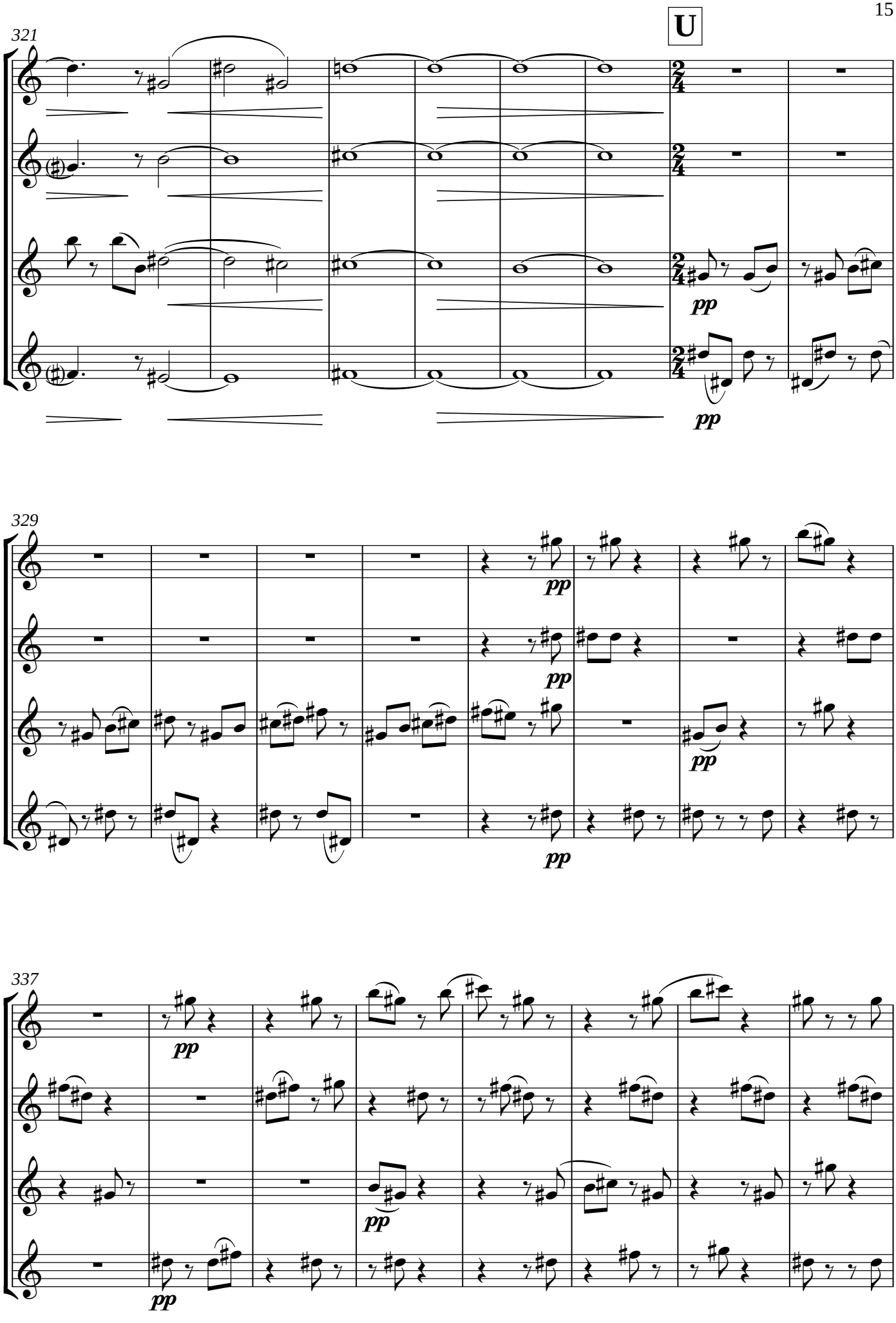
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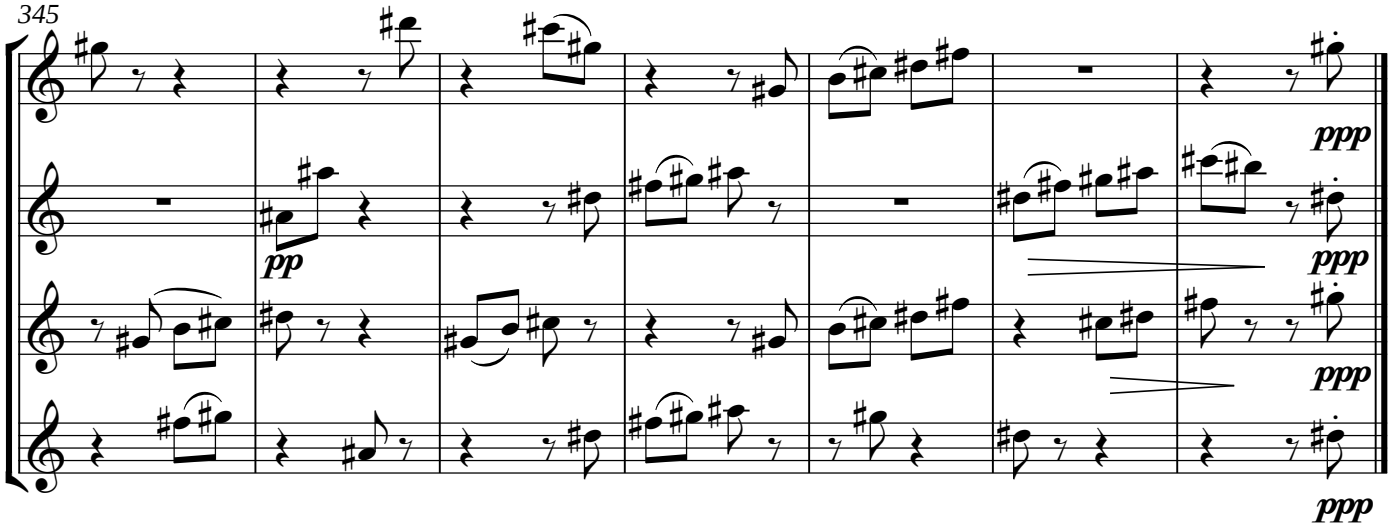
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