Joseph Klein

Three Studies in Change

for brass quintet

(1997)

I. evolution • II. erosion • III. entropy

C trumpet 1 (dbl. B♭ piccolo trumpet)
C trumpet 2 (dbl. B♭ Flügelhorn)
F horn • trombone • tuba

Commissioned by Morehead State University in Honor of its 75th Anniversary
for the MSU Faculty Brass Quintet

duration: c.12'

Performance Instructions

As the concept of change is at the heart of these studies, it is important that performers be aware of the direction of each process, striving for a subtle and convincing realization throughout.

The work includes indications for entering and exiting the performance area, although it may also be performed without this theatrical element. In following these directions, players should be aware of logistical considerations (e.g., placement of mutes/instruments onstage and offstage), and will be obliged to memorize that portion of music to be played while moving from one area to the other. (This is more important at the beginning of *evolution*, as the music at the end of *entropy* is more improvisational in nature.)

Mute requirements are as follows: horn and tuba: standard mutes; trumpet 1: straight, plunger, and harmon mutes; trumpet 2: cup and plunger mutes; trombone: plunger and harmon mutes.

I. evolution

The first eight measures of *evolution* are to be realized in a very free manner: each measure is approximately ten seconds in duration, and dotted barlines are used only for points of reference; there should be no sense of pulse throughout this section. Measures 9 and 10 are transitional, leading into the metered section beginning in measure 11.

The mobile figure in the trumpet 2 and horn parts in measures 6 and 7 should not stand out from the texture, but should continue in the same manner: bracketed pitches should oscillate slowly (*quasi lento*) and irregularly in order not to imply a pulse, and the dynamics should be consistent with the other instruments in this section.

II. erosion

This movement consists of two layers: a granitic isorhythmic figure and a fluid cluster figure. As the movement progresses, the former becomes less intense, while the latter becomes somewhat thicker.

The sustained tones in the isorhythmic figure must be held for the full value, creating the impression of an impenetrable wall of sound. As this figure begins to disintegrate through gradually shifting attacks, it is important that these delayed attacks (e.g., trumpet 2 in m.19, horn in m.34, etc.) be clearly and definitively articulated, resulting in an echoing effect.

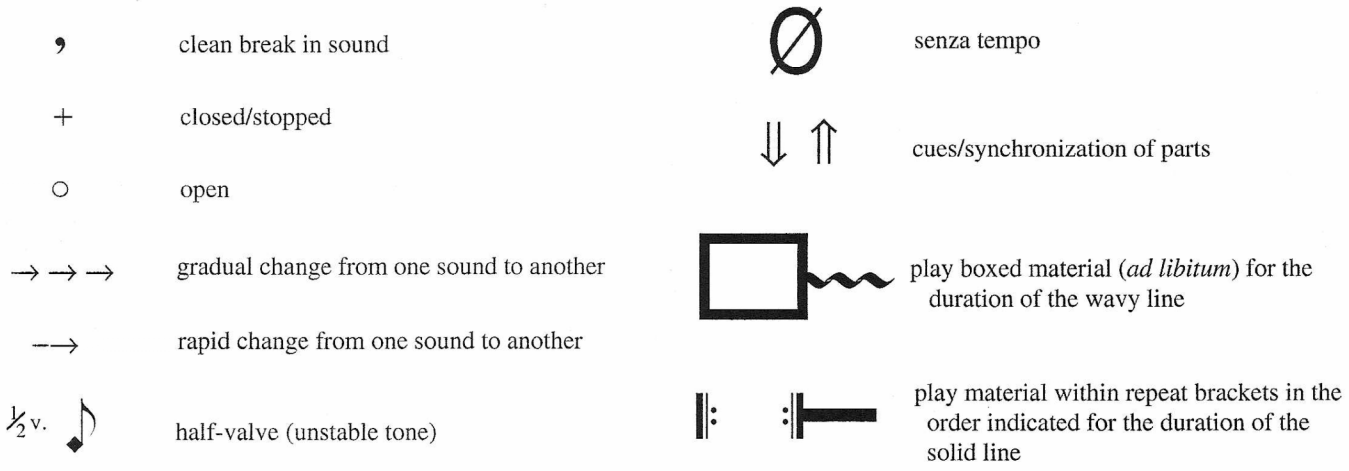
The cluster figures should sound like a single diffuse mass of sound; therefore it is important that individual lines are not perceived, and that a distinct difference is made between the open and muted/stopped sounds. (It should be noted that although this latter figure appears in the score to be getting faster during the course of the movement, it actually maintains the same perceptual rhythmic speed, given the gradual *ritardando* throughout the movement.)

III. entropy

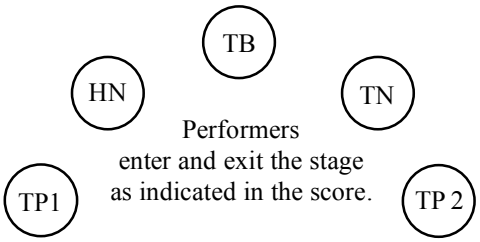
This transformation in *entropy* is particularly critical beginning with the mobiles in measure 40, at which point each instrument in turn disassociates itself from the temporal unity of the previous section. This process begins with the horn in m. 40, followed by the tuba (m.44), trumpet 1 (m.47), trombone (m.48), and trumpet 2 (m.49). By measure 50a, there should be no common pulse, each of the five players repeating the given material independently, with slight fluctuations of tempo around MM. 120. In measure 50a, the strict rhythmic relationships within each part are eliminated in turn (horn, tuba, trumpet 1, trombone, trumpet 2), followed by a gradual decrease in the number of pitches within each part beginning in measure 50b. However, the note order is still maintained until the boxed mobiles appear in measure 50c; here the pitches indicated within each part may be played in any order. It is important for the ensemble to maintain the same level of textural density throughout this section, and not to allow the metric disintegration to result in a thinning of the composite texture. (Although it is not indicated in the score, the rate of disintegration should not change after measure 49; therefore, measures 50a through 50e should last approximately 12 seconds each.)

At the end of measure 50c, the players begin to incorporate timbral alterations in the boxed events, creating the effect of a distortion of the sound. The half-valved pitches should be very diffuse and unstable, and the other effects should not be too prominent, but must blend with the texture. The material continues through the final measure (50f), though here the density is to gradually decrease resulting in a textural dissipation.

Symbols



Set Up



Program Note

Each of the *Three Studies in Change* is modeled after a different process associated with the natural world. From a conceptual standpoint, the first movement is concerned with growth, the second with leveling, and the third with disintegration.

The first study, *evolution*, is modeled after a biological process which generally occurs over thousands of years. Musically considered, the movement begins with a single pitch which gradually expands outwards, first resulting in dense clusters, then eventually growing into individual lines covering the full registral spectrum of the ensemble, at which point the tuba line becomes the ostinato bass line for a passacaglia. As the movement progresses, the rhythmic activity also increases, becoming more contrapuntally and less texturally oriented.

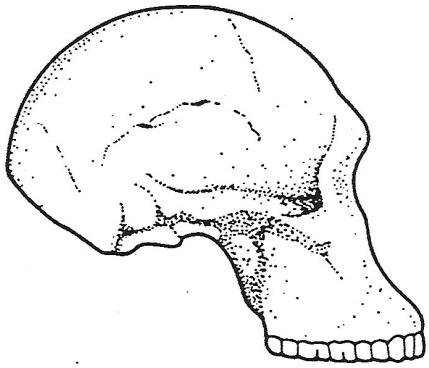
The second study, *erosion*, is modeled after a geological process which generally occurs over millions of years. Here the granitic isorhythm, a jagged, three-octave homophonic line of 14 pitches transposed and cycled through 12 durational units, becomes less profiled and more drawn out through the course of the movement. Additionally, a fluid tone-cluster figure is interjected at several points, acting to wear down the isorhythmic figure.

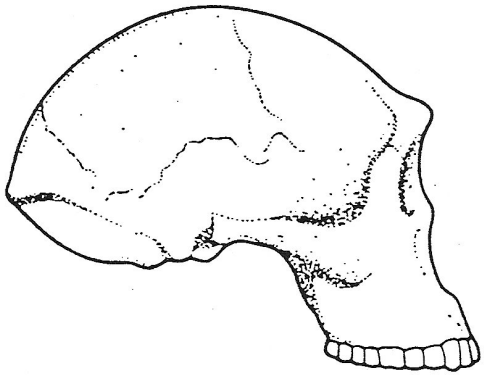
The third study, *entropy*, is modeled after a physical or cosmological process, which in the former may occur during the course of seconds and in the latter occurs over billions of years. A mechanical ostinato figure undergoes gradual pitch, rhythmic, and timbral alterations, eventually losing all sense of line and meter as the figure disintegrates.

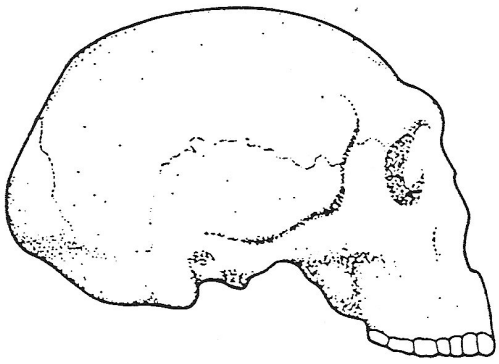
These three studies are structurally interrelated in several ways. For example, the tempo of the first study remains at MM.60 throughout; the second begins at MM.120 and gradually slows down to MM.60 by the end; the last study is at MM.120 throughout. Thus, the outer studies taken together reflect a slow to fast progression, while the inner one is characterized by the reverse process. Regarding pitch relationships, the second study closes with a cluster around middle C, the focal point of the opening of the first study; taken together, the first and second studies project a registral expansion and contraction around middle C. By contrast, the pitches at the beginning of the third study represent the complement of the closing pitches of the second; this final study concludes with all twelve chromatic tones present.

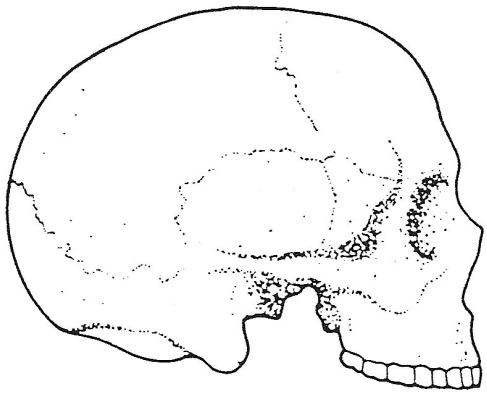
Three Studies in Change was commissioned by Morehead State University in commemoration of its 75th anniversary for the MSU Faculty Brass Quintet, who first performed the work there on April 10, 1997.

I. evolution









C Score

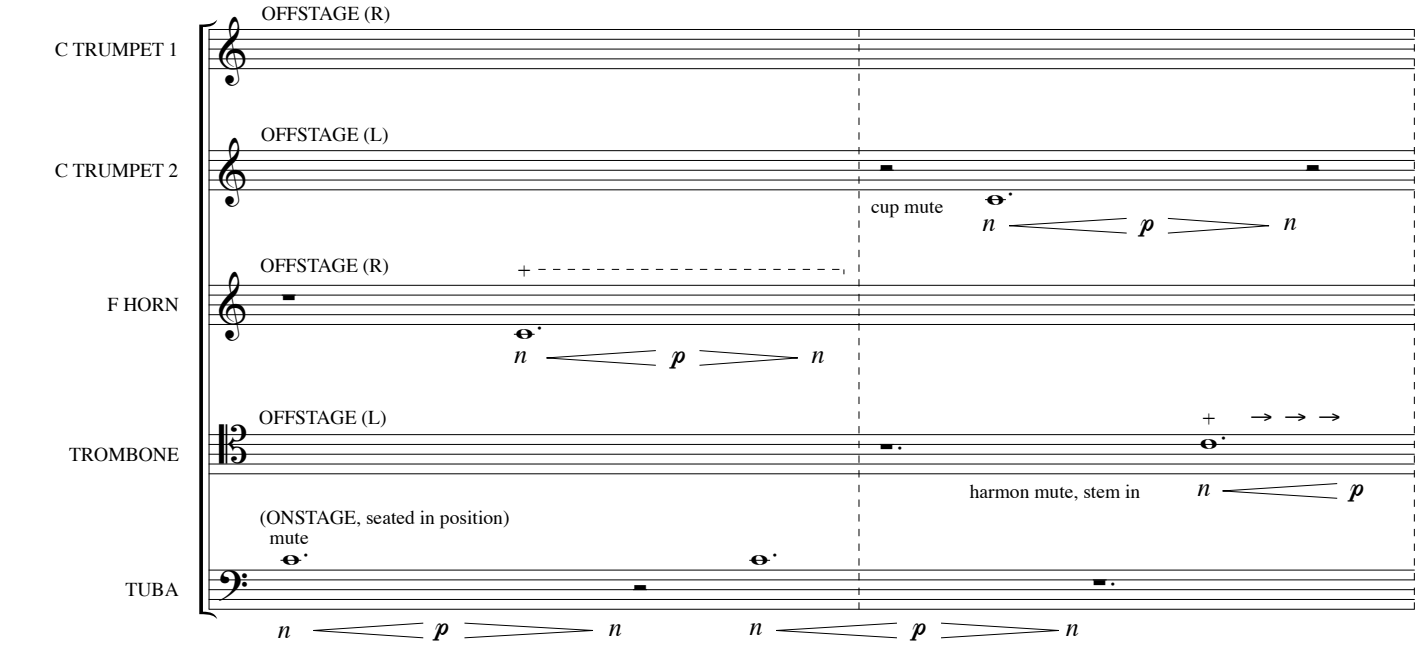
Three Studies in Change

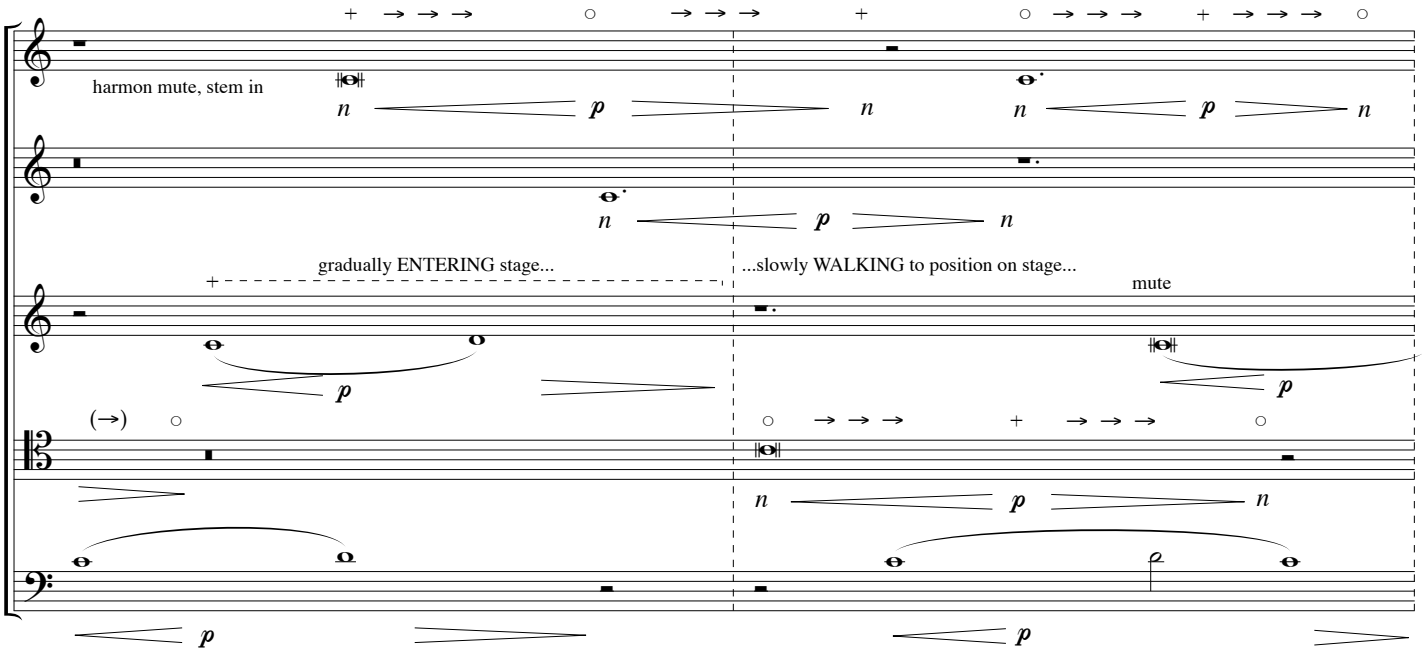
for brass quintet

Joseph Klein
(1997)

I. evolution

Fluid, amorphous ♩ = c.60 (1 measure = c.10 seconds)





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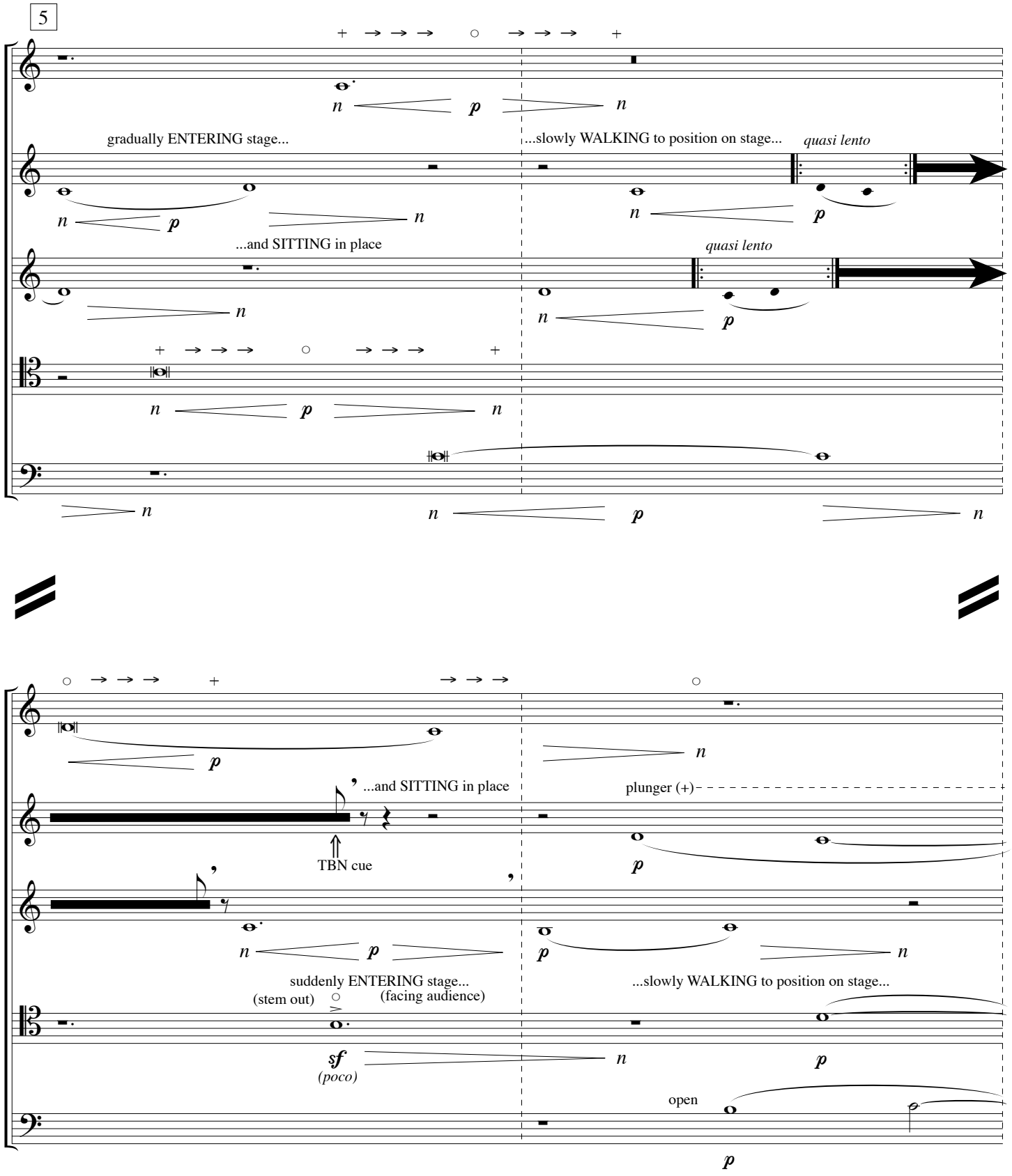
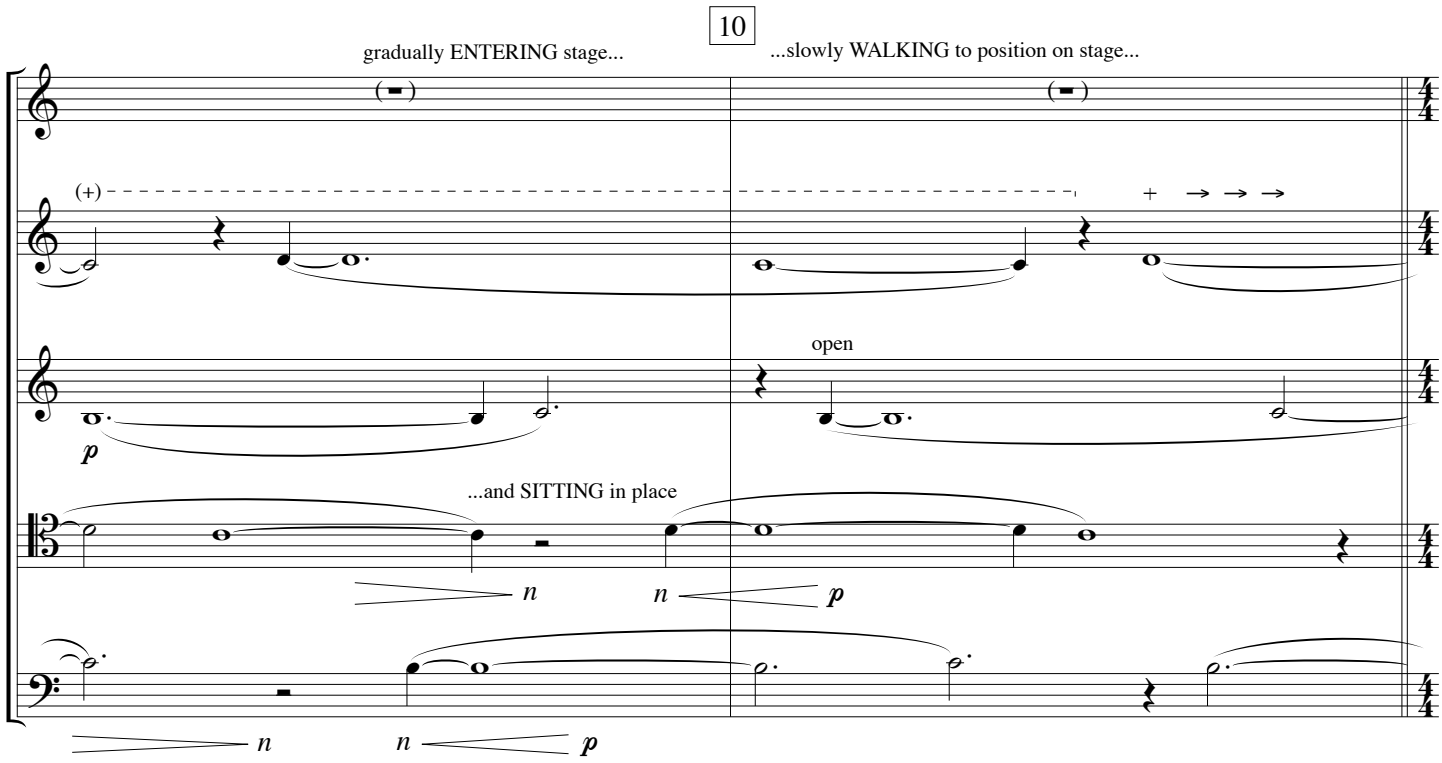
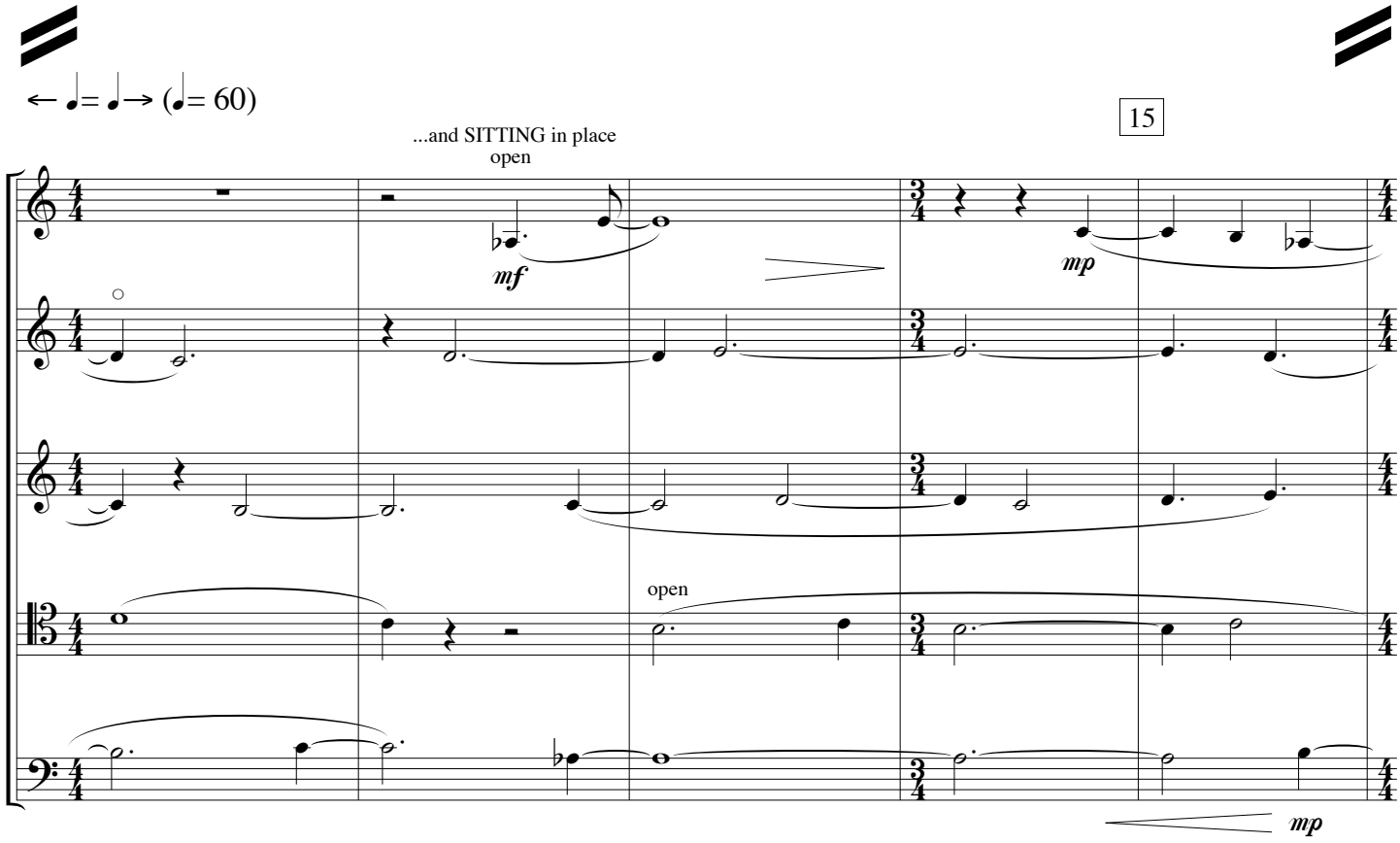
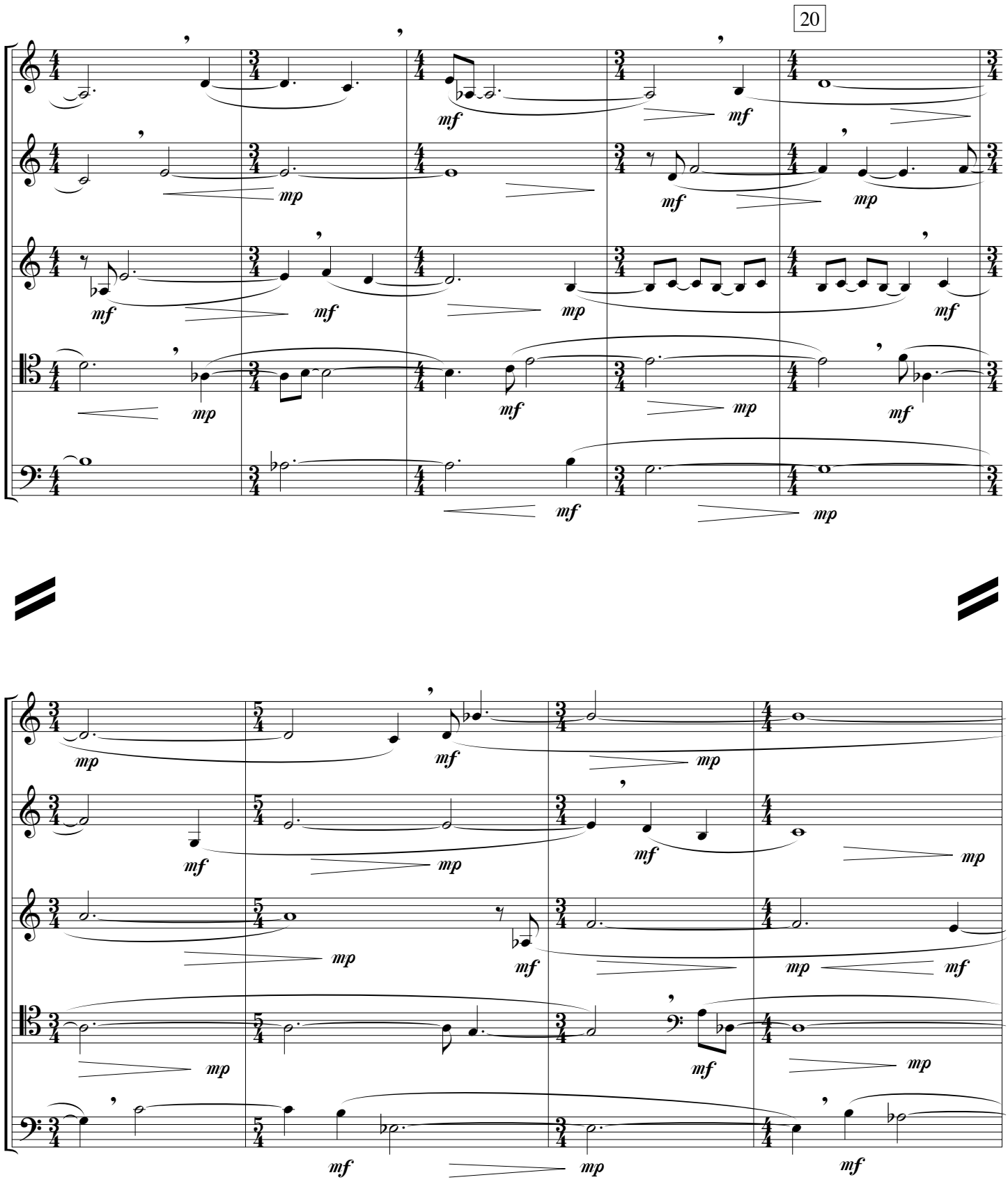
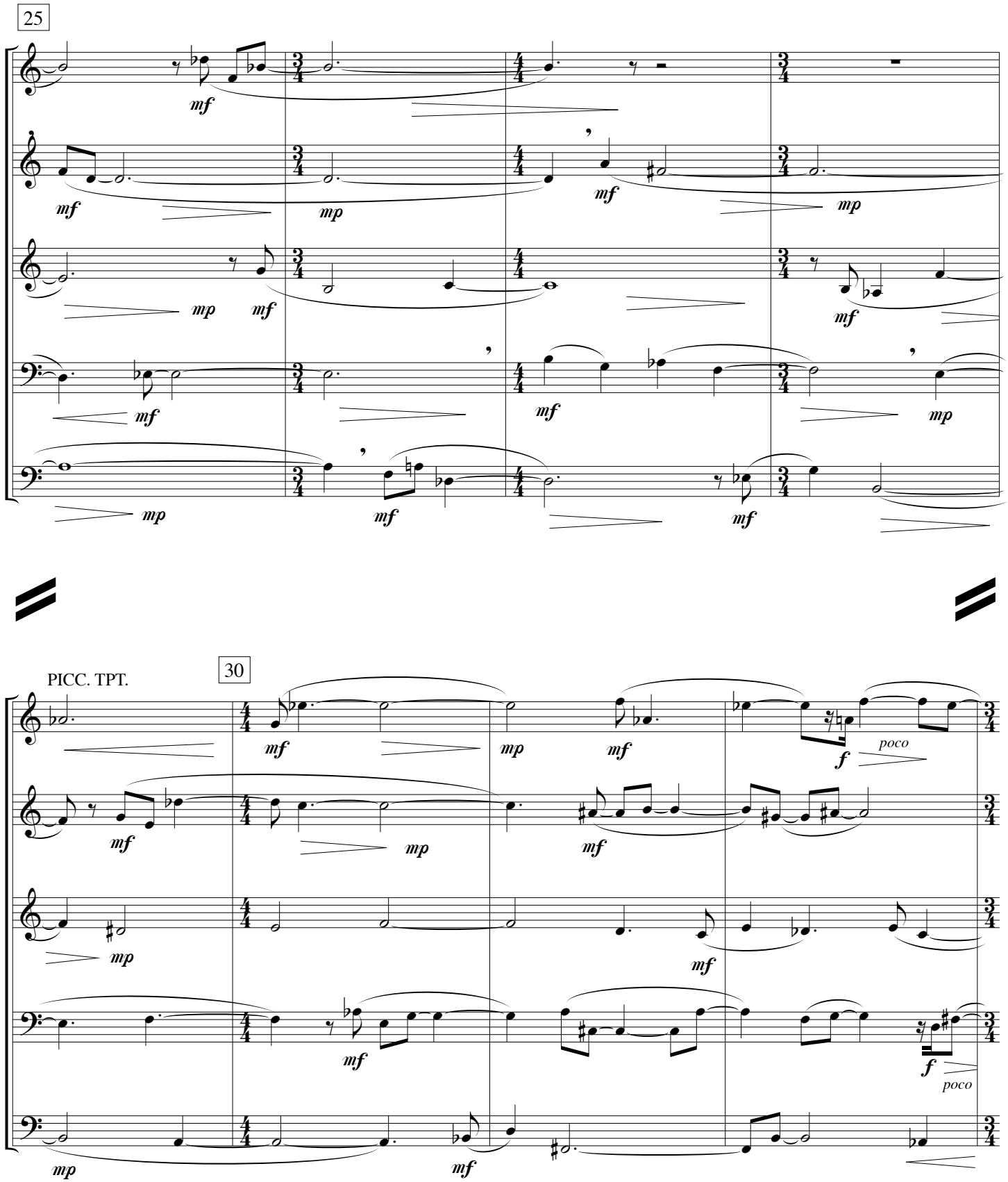
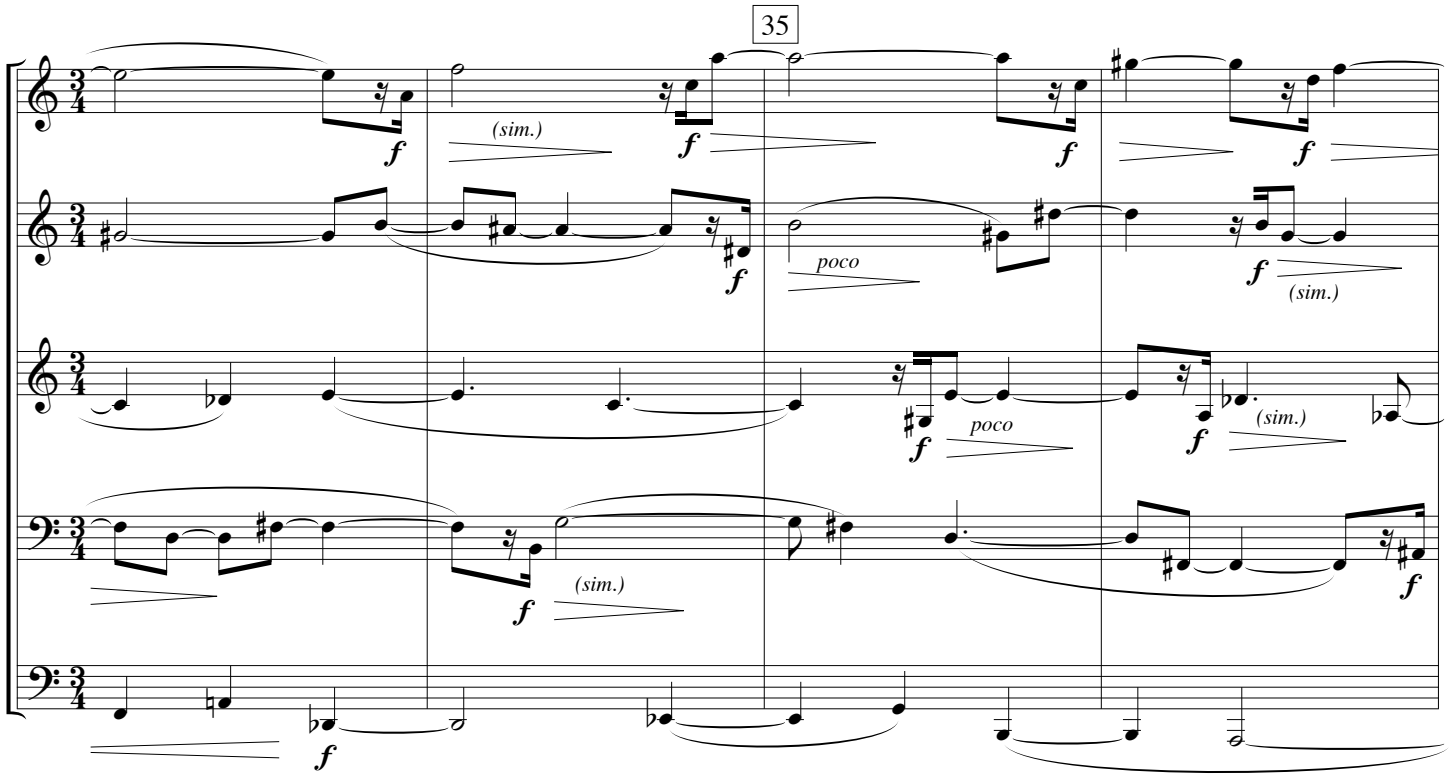

5
gradually ENTERING stage...
...slowly WALKING to position on stage...
quasi lento
...and SITTING in place
quasi lento
...and SITTING in place
plunger (+)
TBN cue
suddenly ENTERING stage...
(stem out)
(facing audience)
...slowly WALKING to position on stage...
sf
(poco)
open

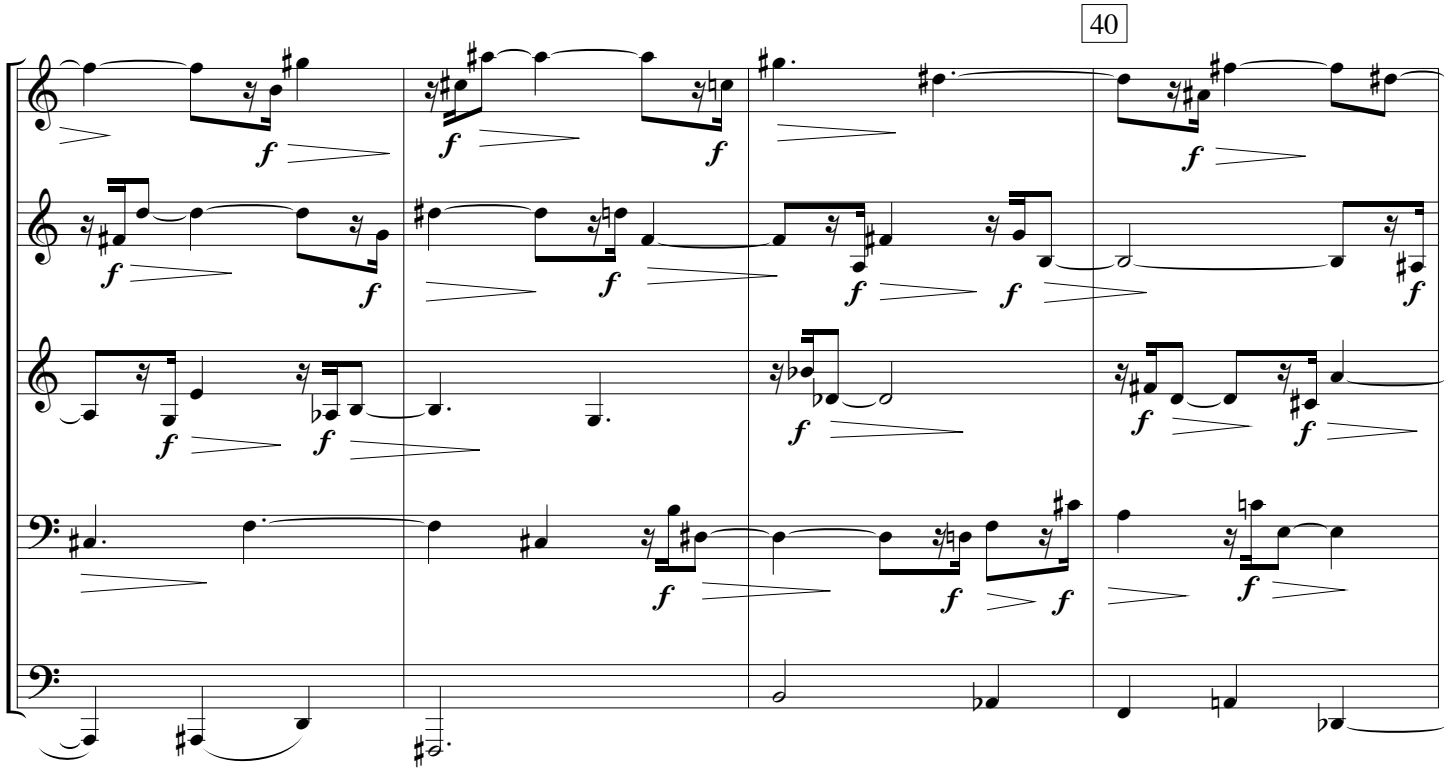

10
gradually ENTERING stage...
...slowly WALKING to position on stage...
(+)
+
open
p
...and SITTING in place
n
n
p
n
n
p

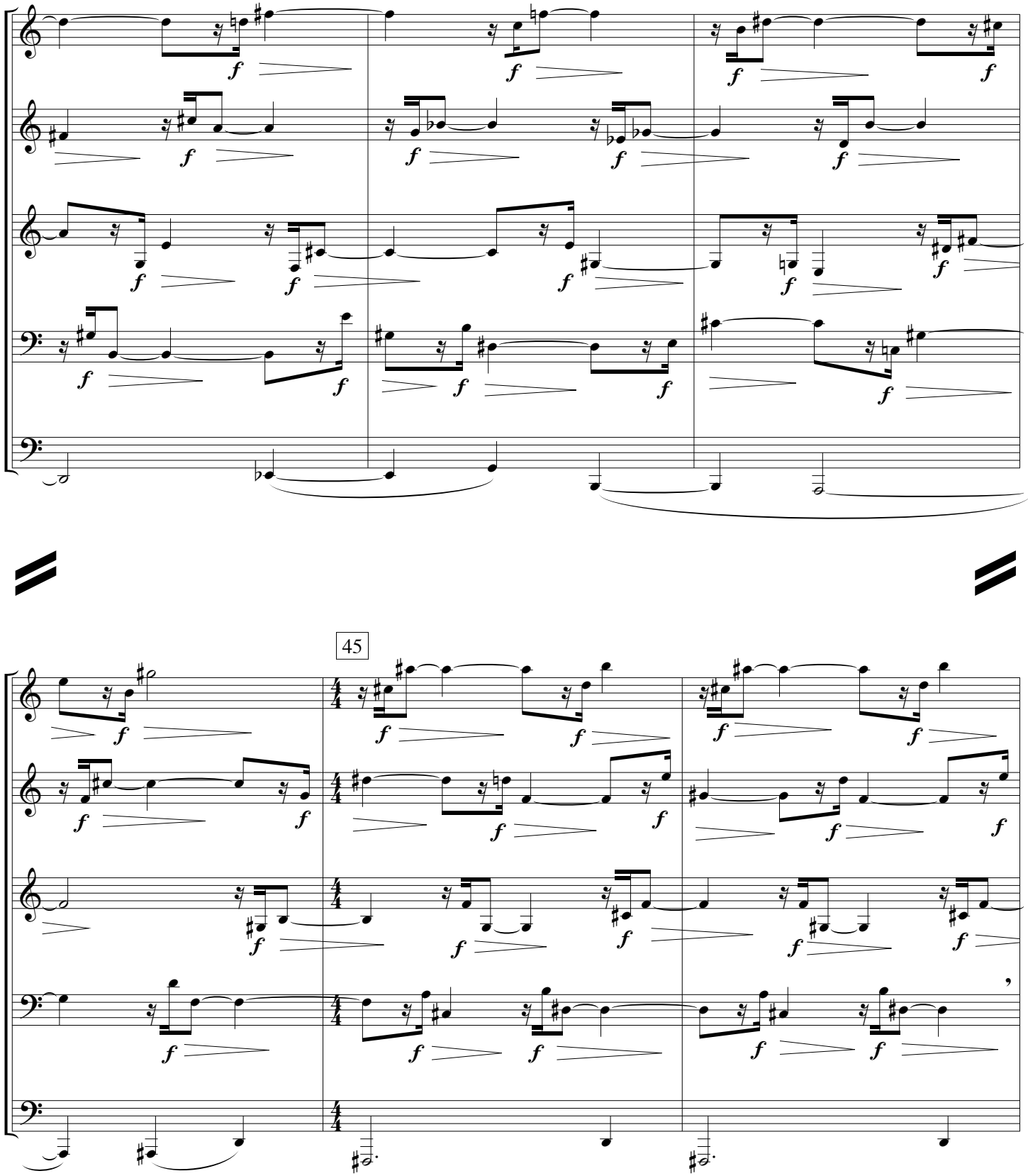

← = = → (= 60)
15
...and SITTING in place
open
mf
mp
open
mp

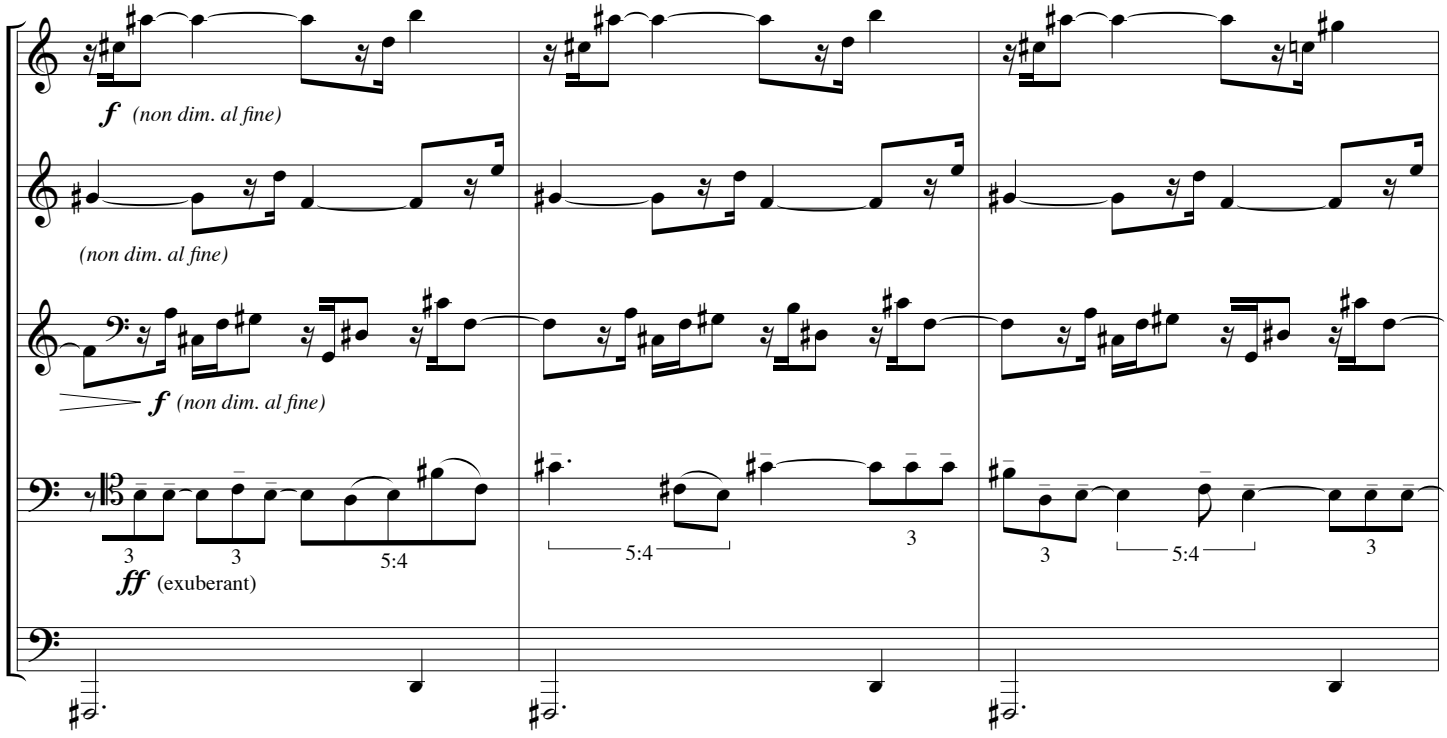

20

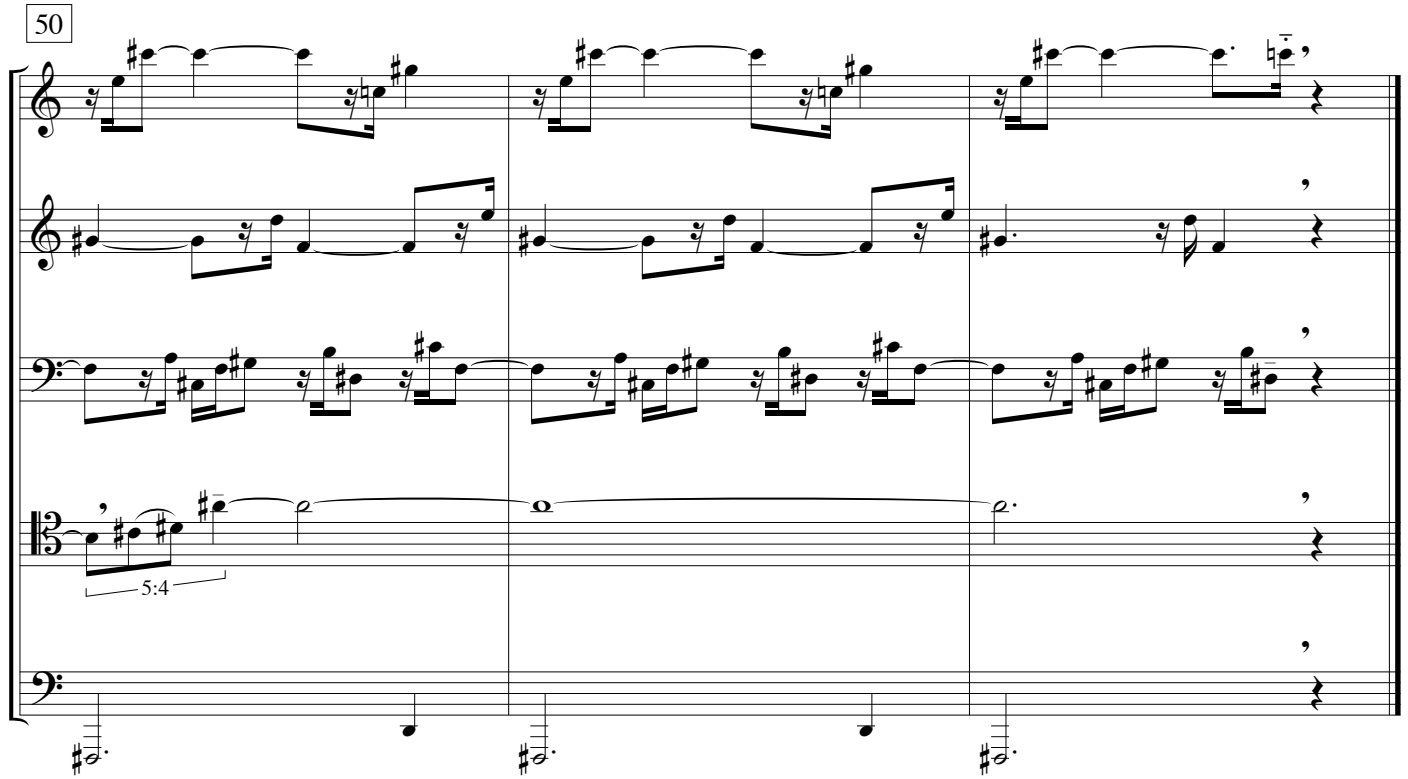

25
PICC. TPT.
30
poco
poco


35
(sim.)
poco
(sim.)
poco
(sim.)
(sim.)

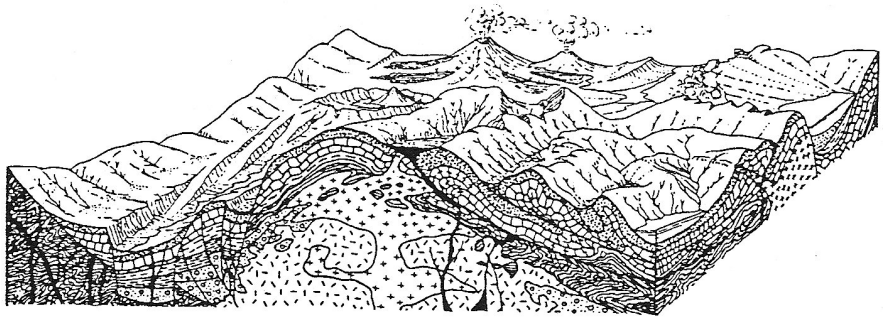

40

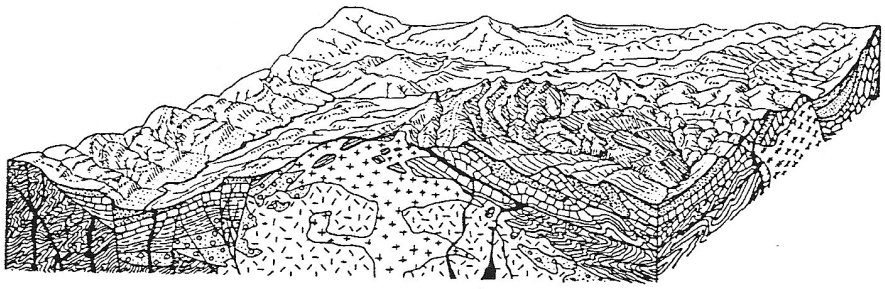

45

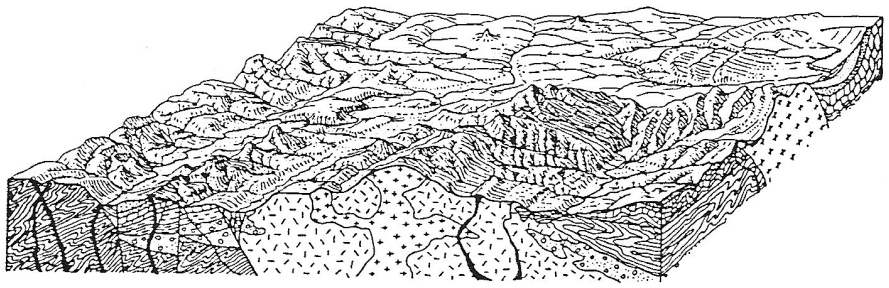

f (non dim. al fine)
(non dim. al fine)
f (non dim. al fine)
3
3
5:4
ff (exuberant)
5:4
3
3
5:4
3

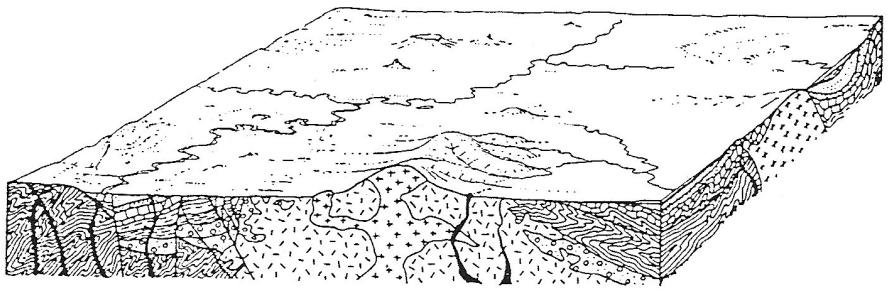

50
5:4

II. erosion

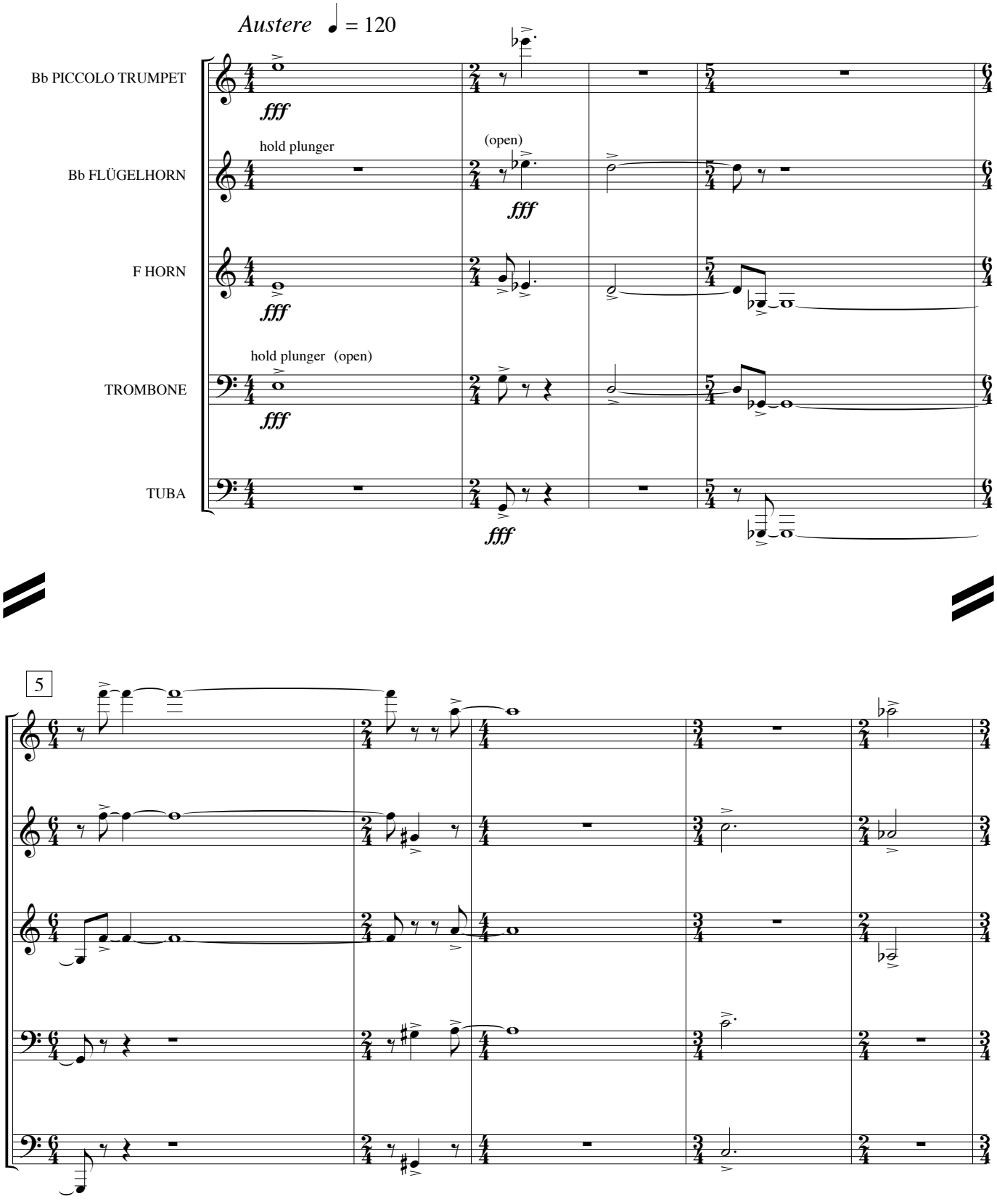


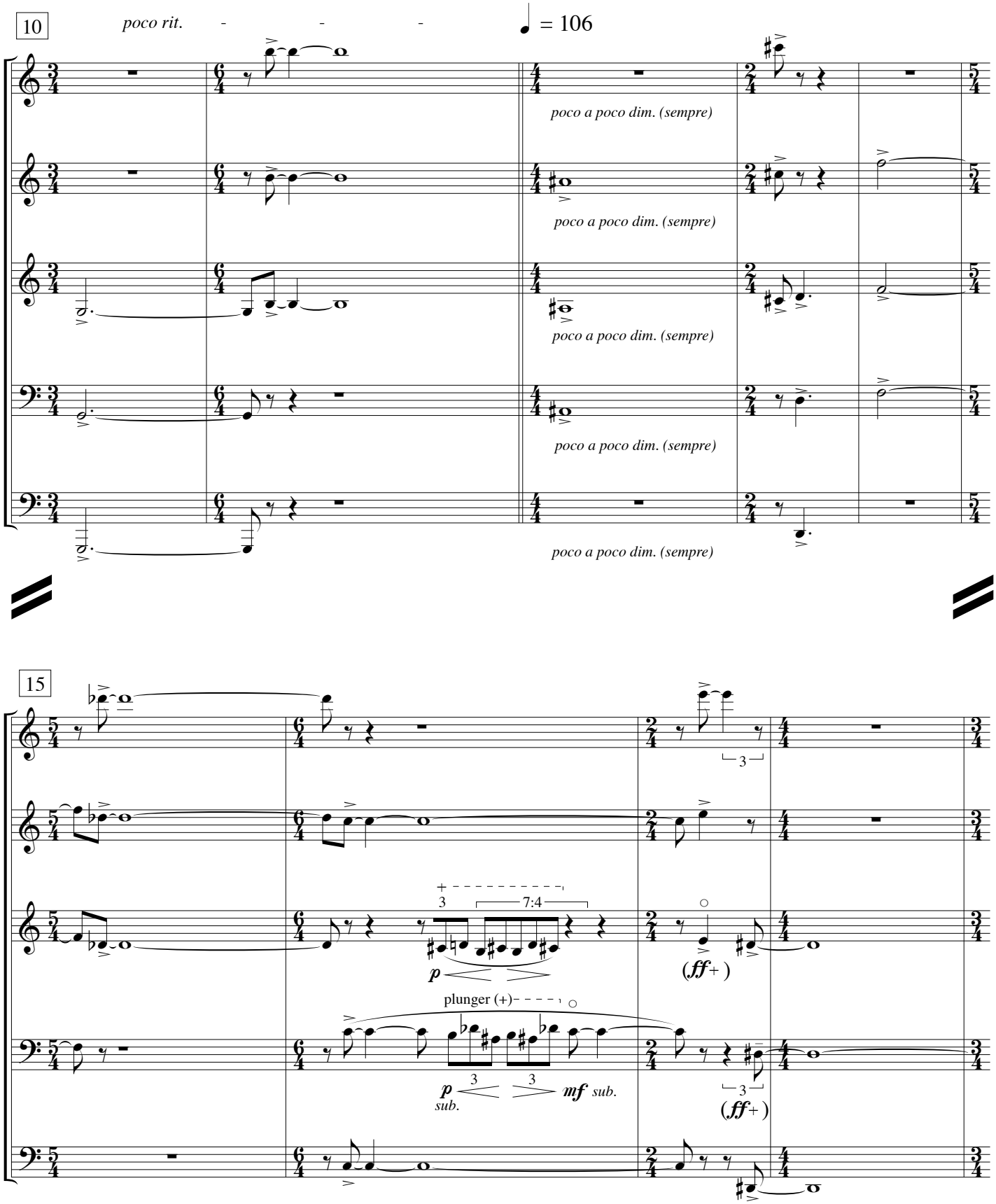


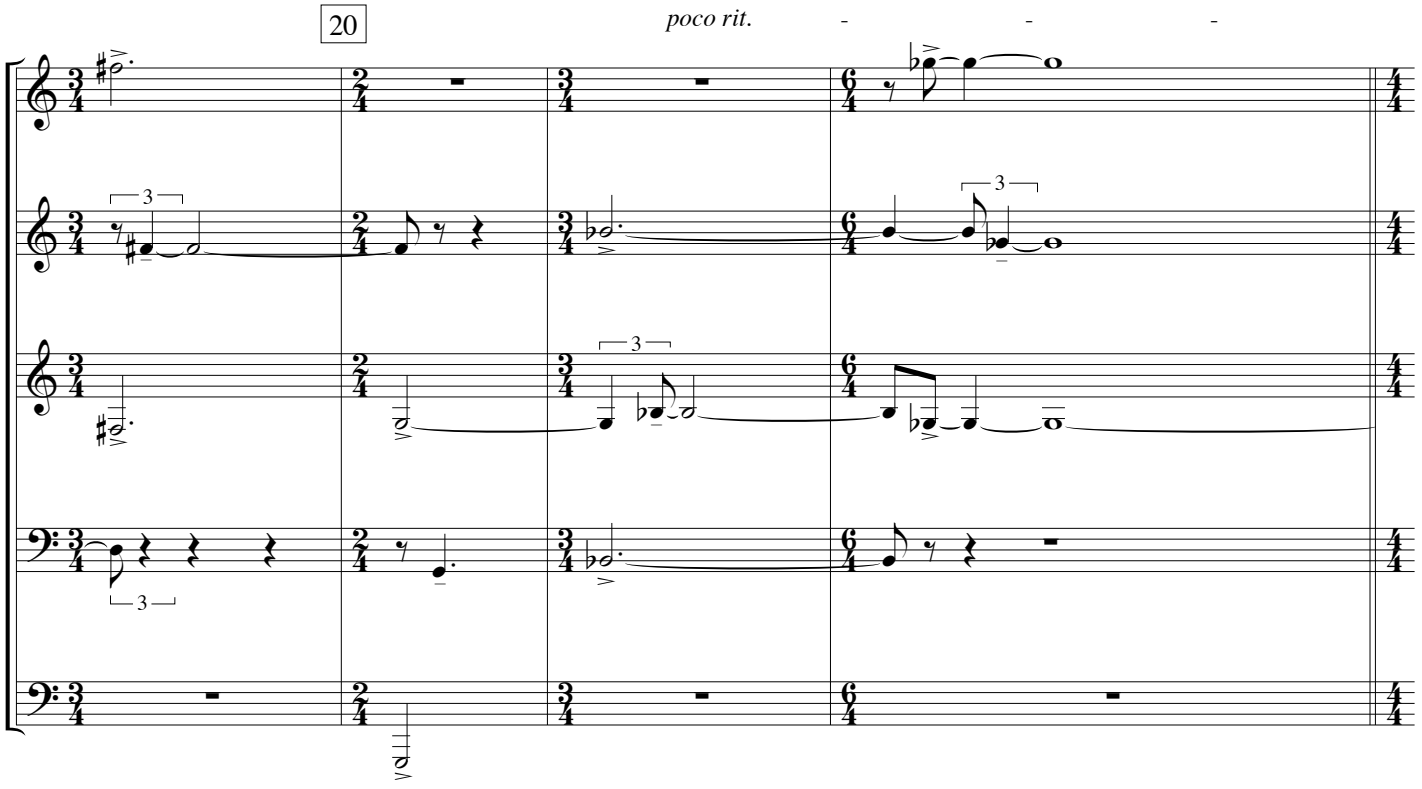


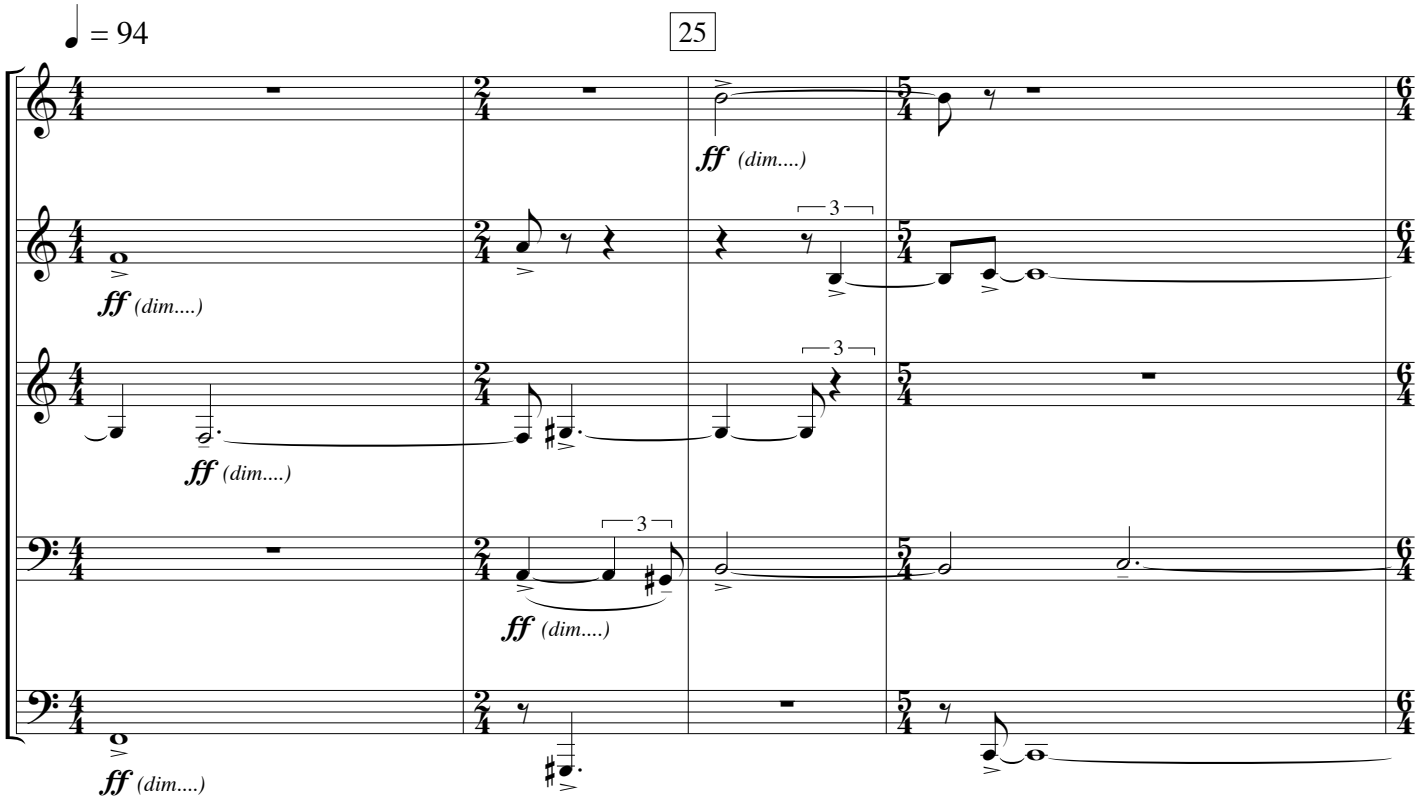


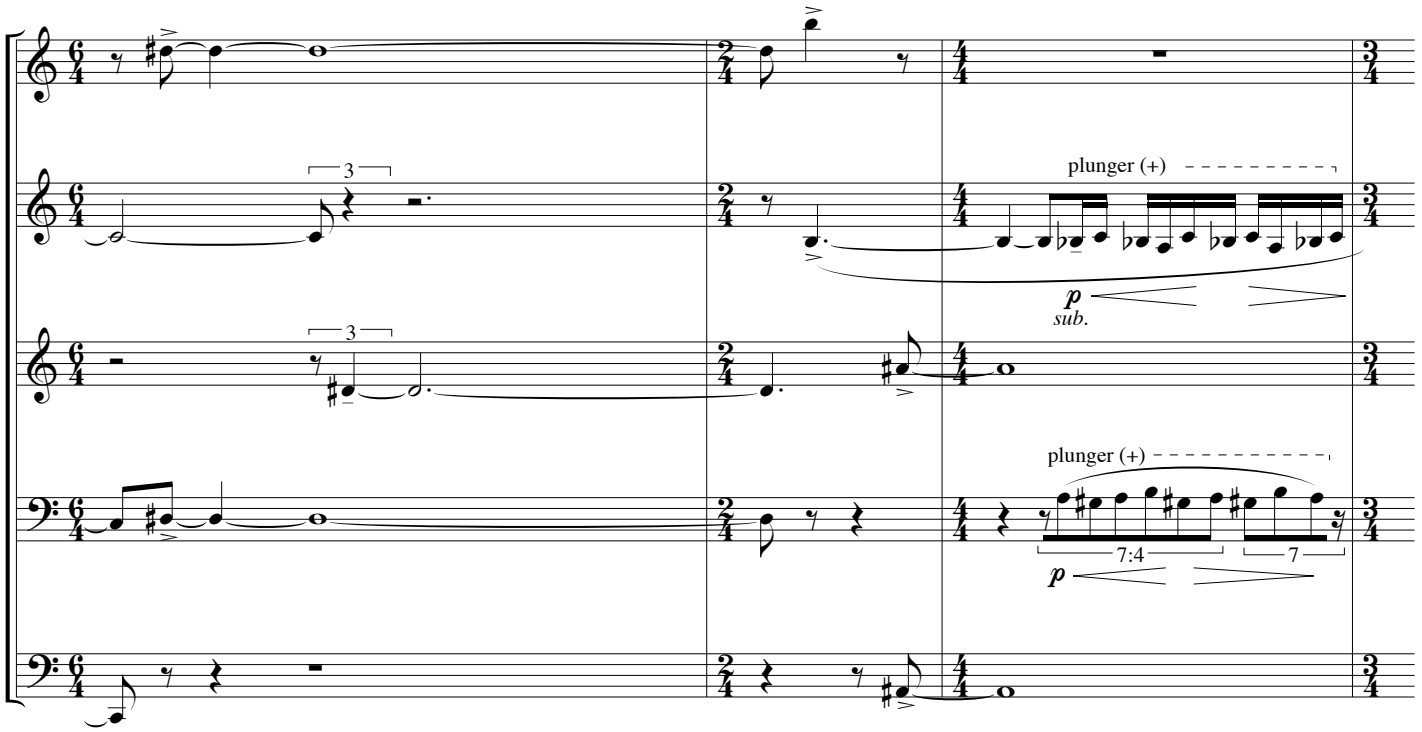
II. erosion

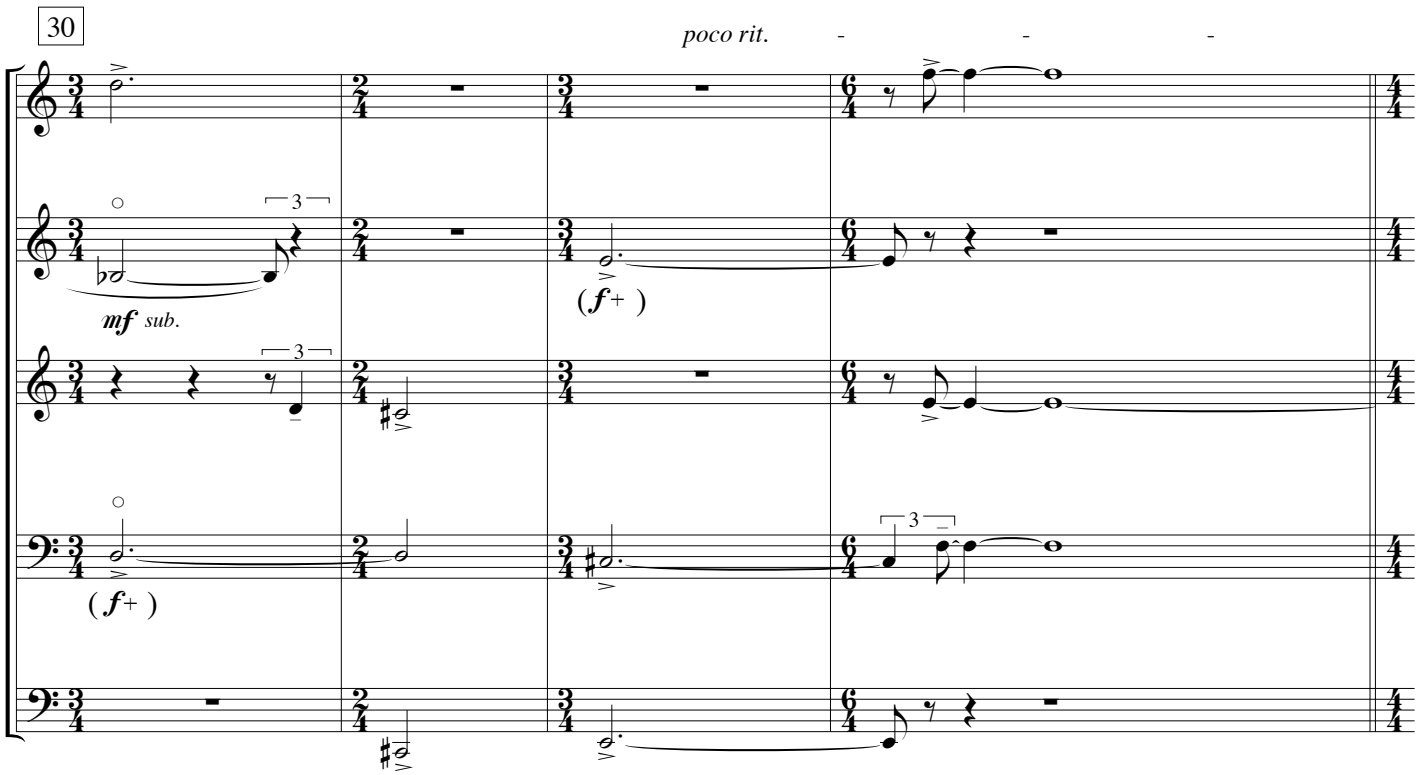

Austere ♩ = 120
Bb PICCOLO TRUMPET
fff
hold plunger
Bb FLÜGELHORN
(open)
fff
F HORN
fff
hold plunger (open)
TROMBONE
fff
TUBA
fff
5

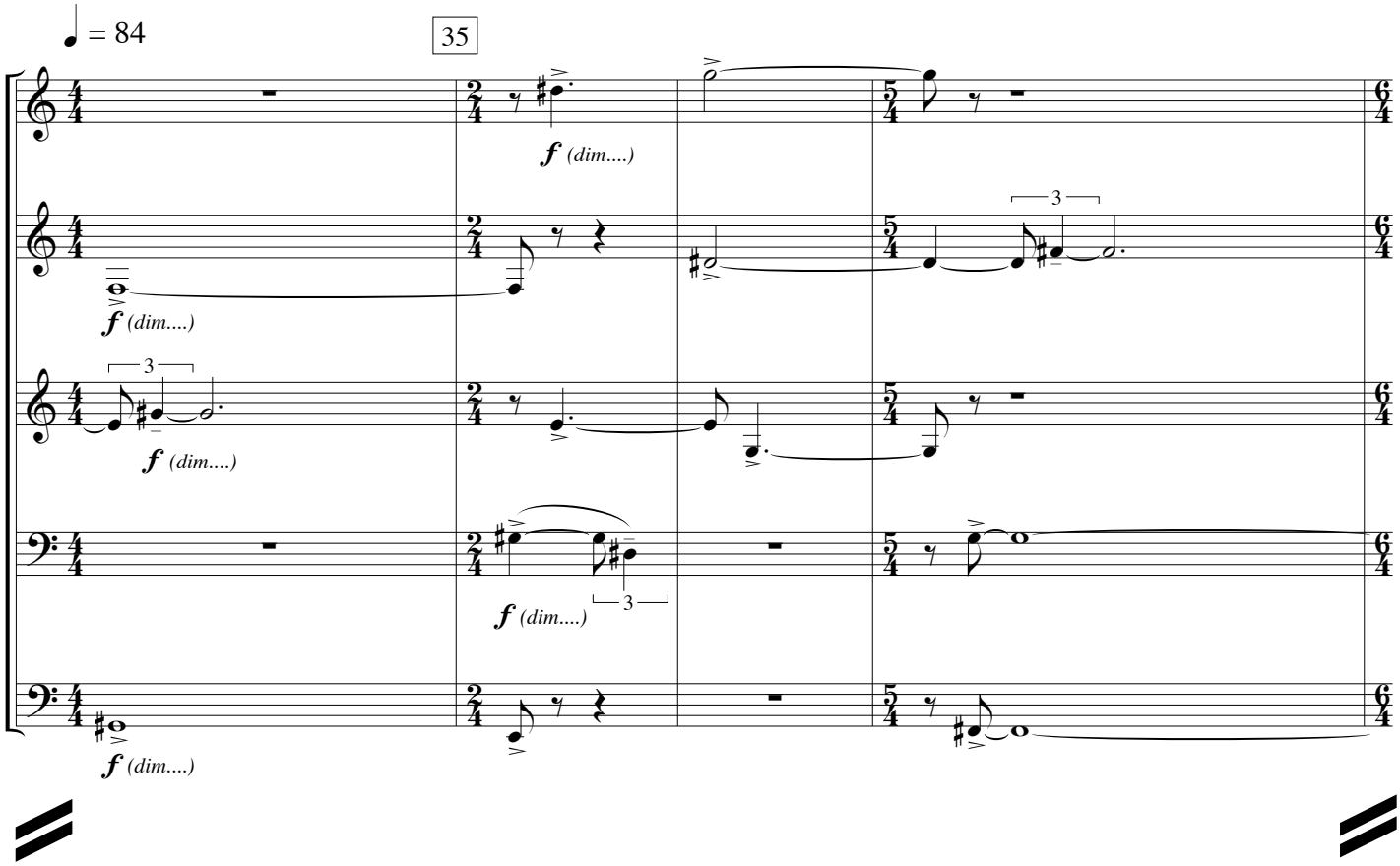

10
poco rit.
♩ = 106
poco a poco dim. (sempre)
poco a poco dim. (sempre)
poco a poco dim. (sempre)
poco a poco dim. (sempre)
poco a poco dim. (sempre)
15
3
3
7:4
p
(ff+)
plunger (+)
p sub.
3
3
mf sub.
3
(ff+)

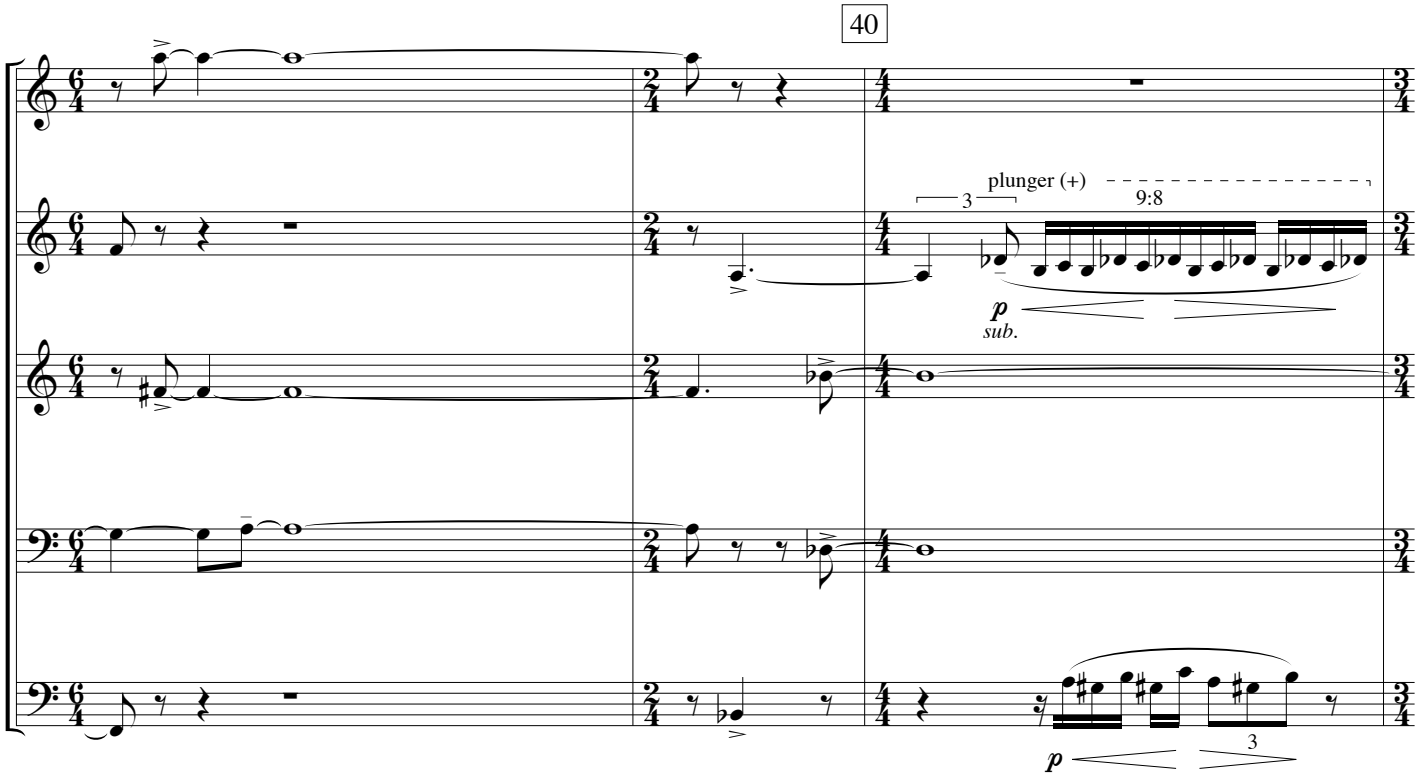

20
poco rit.

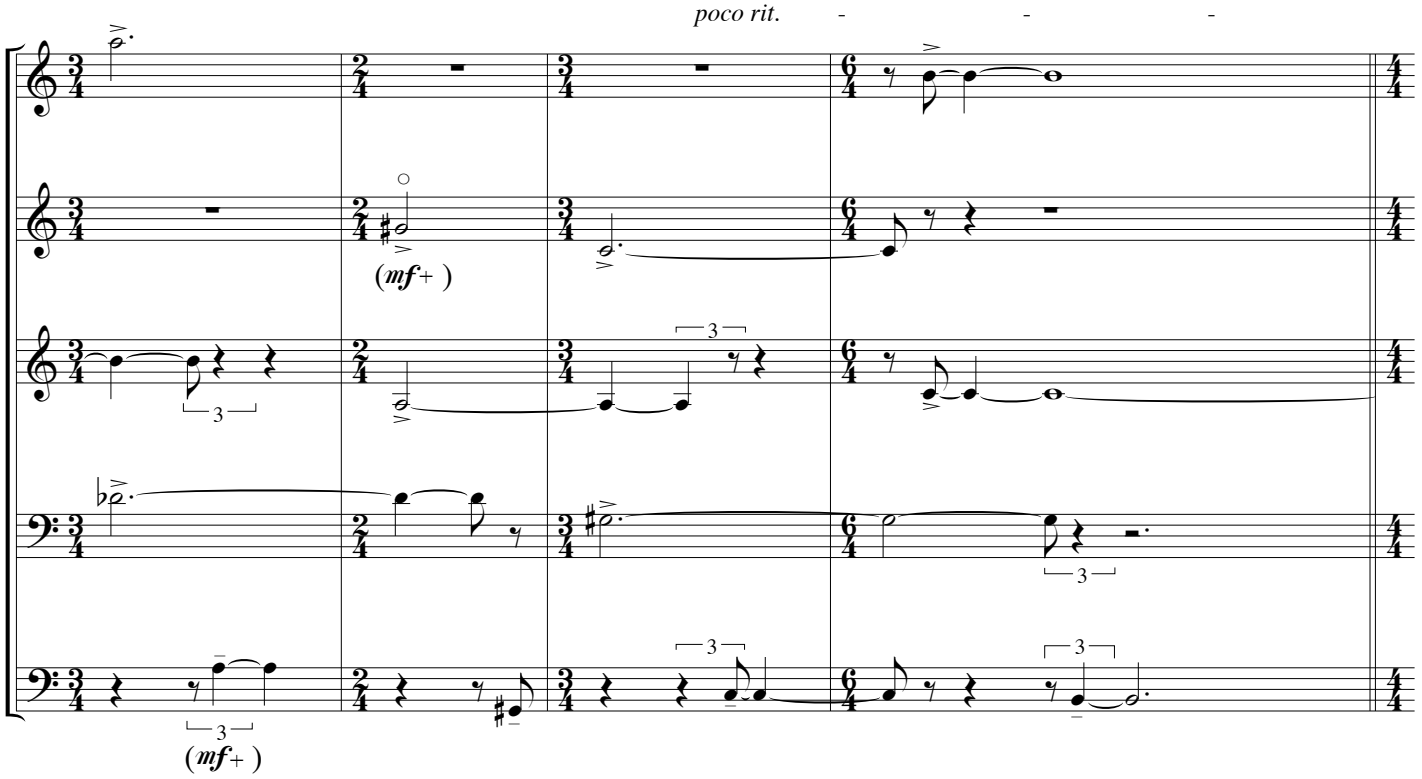

♩ = 94
25
ff (dim....)

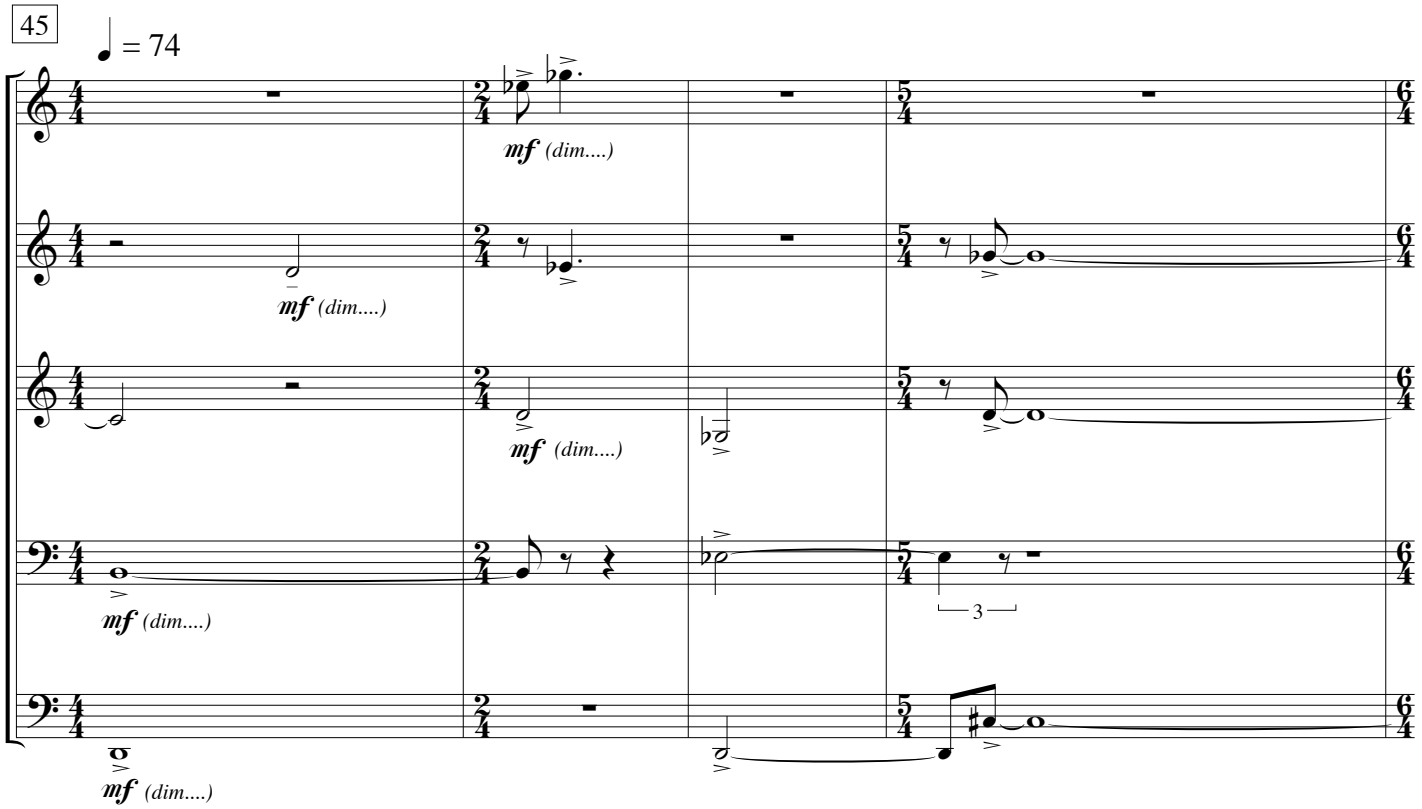

plunger (+)
sub.
plunger (+)
7:4
7

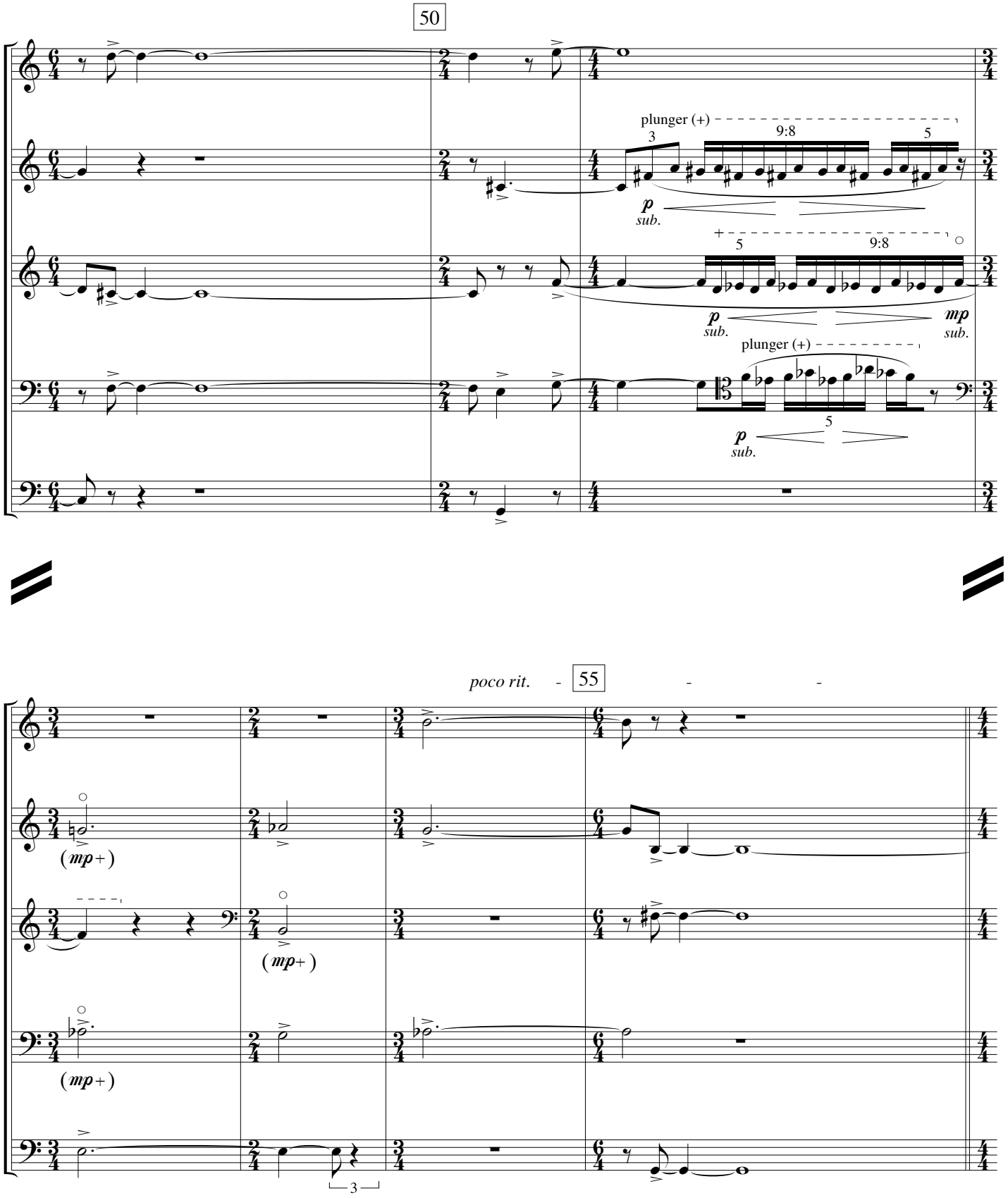

30
poco rit.
mf sub.
(f+)
(f+)

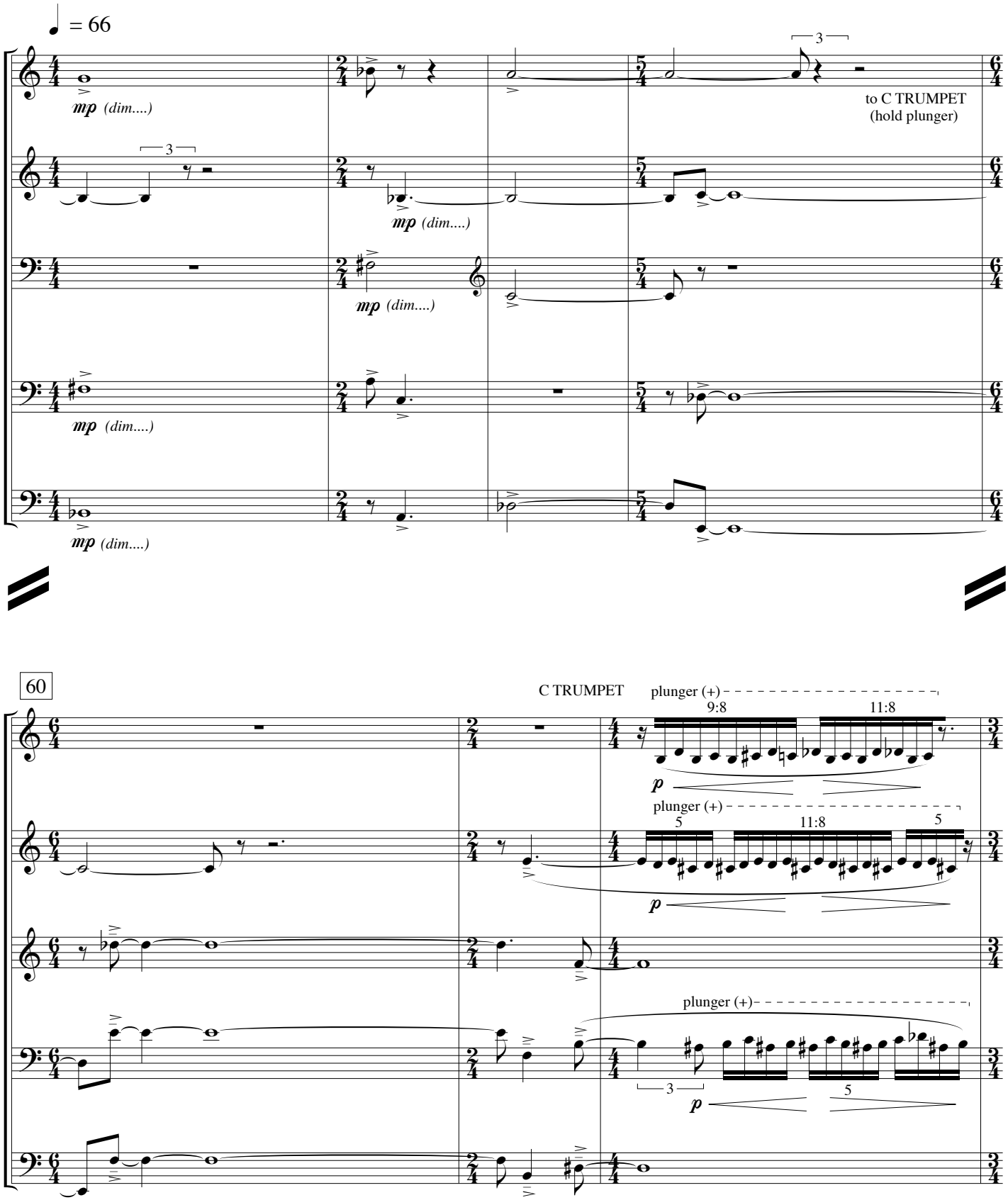

♩ = 84
35
f (dim....)
3

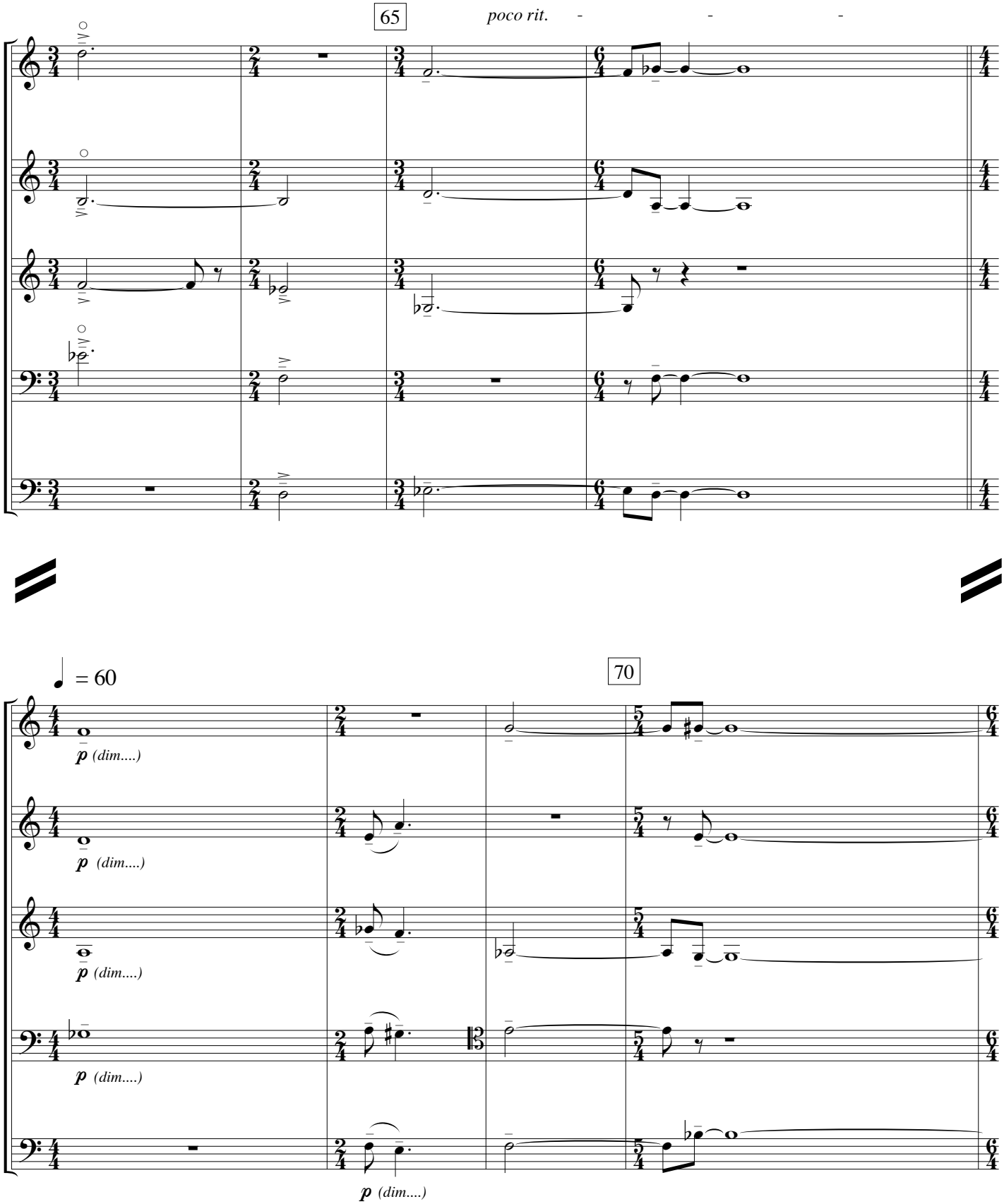

40
plunger (+)
9:8
3
p
sub.
p
3

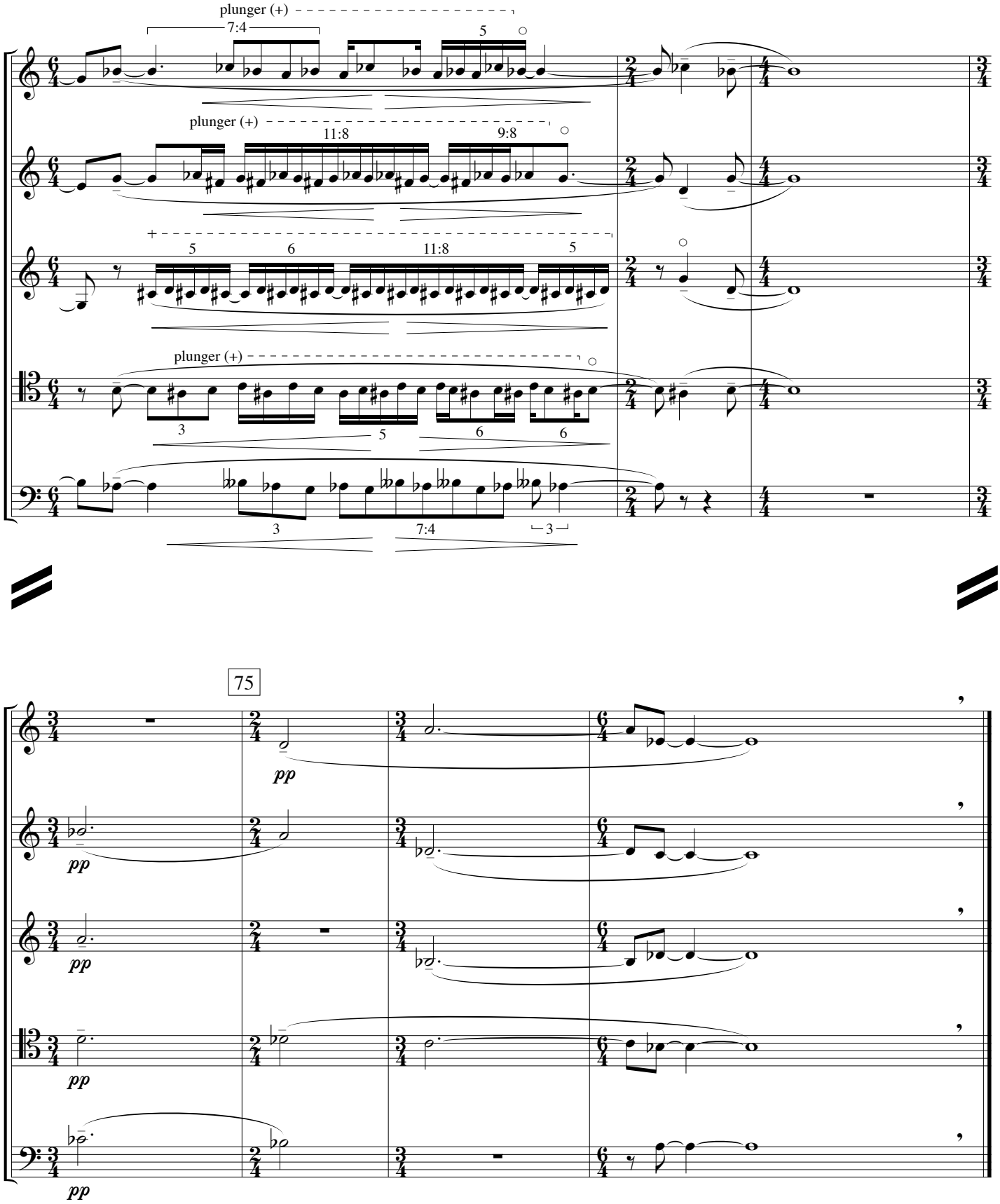

poco rit. - - -
(mf+)
(mf+)


45
♩ = 74
mf (dim....)
mf (dim....)
mf (dim....)
mf (dim....)
mf (dim....)

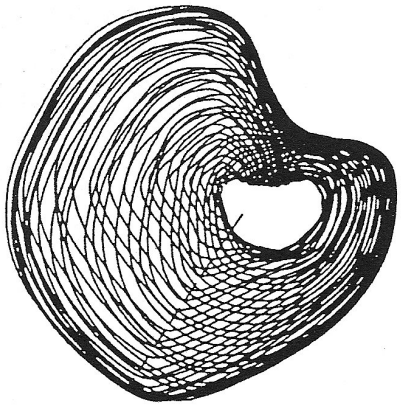

50
plunger (+)
3
9:8
5
p
sub.
5
9:8
p
sub.
mp
sub.
plunger (+)
5
p
sub.
poco rit.
55
(mp+)
(mp+)
(mp+)
3

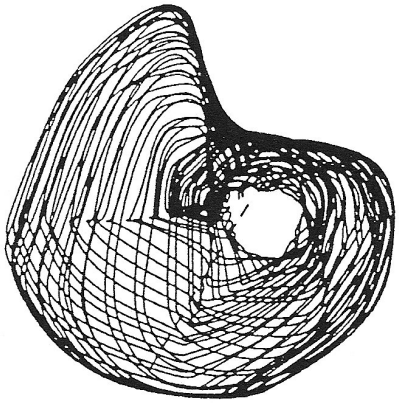

♩ = 66
mp (dim....)
3
to C TRUMPET
(hold plunger)
60
C TRUMPET
plunger (+)
9:8
11:8
p
5

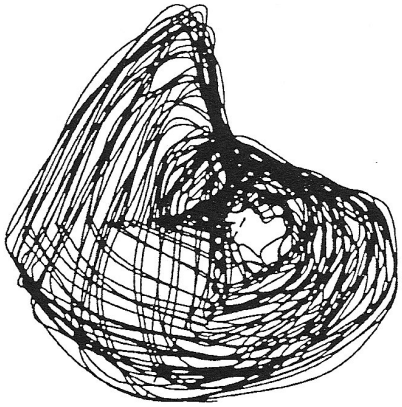

65
poco rit. - - -
♩ = 60
70
p (dim....)
p (dim....)
p (dim....)
p (dim....)
p (dim....)

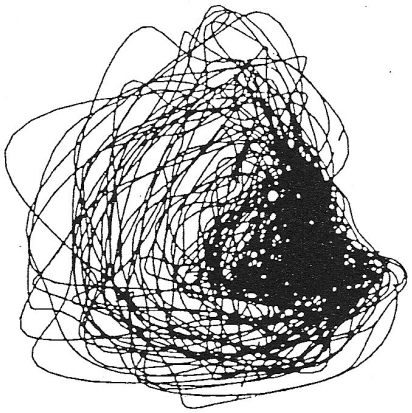

plunger (+)
7:4
5
plunger (+)
11:8
9:8
5
6
11:8
5
plunger (+)
3
5
6
6
3
7:4
3
75
pp
pp
pp
pp
pp

III. entropy

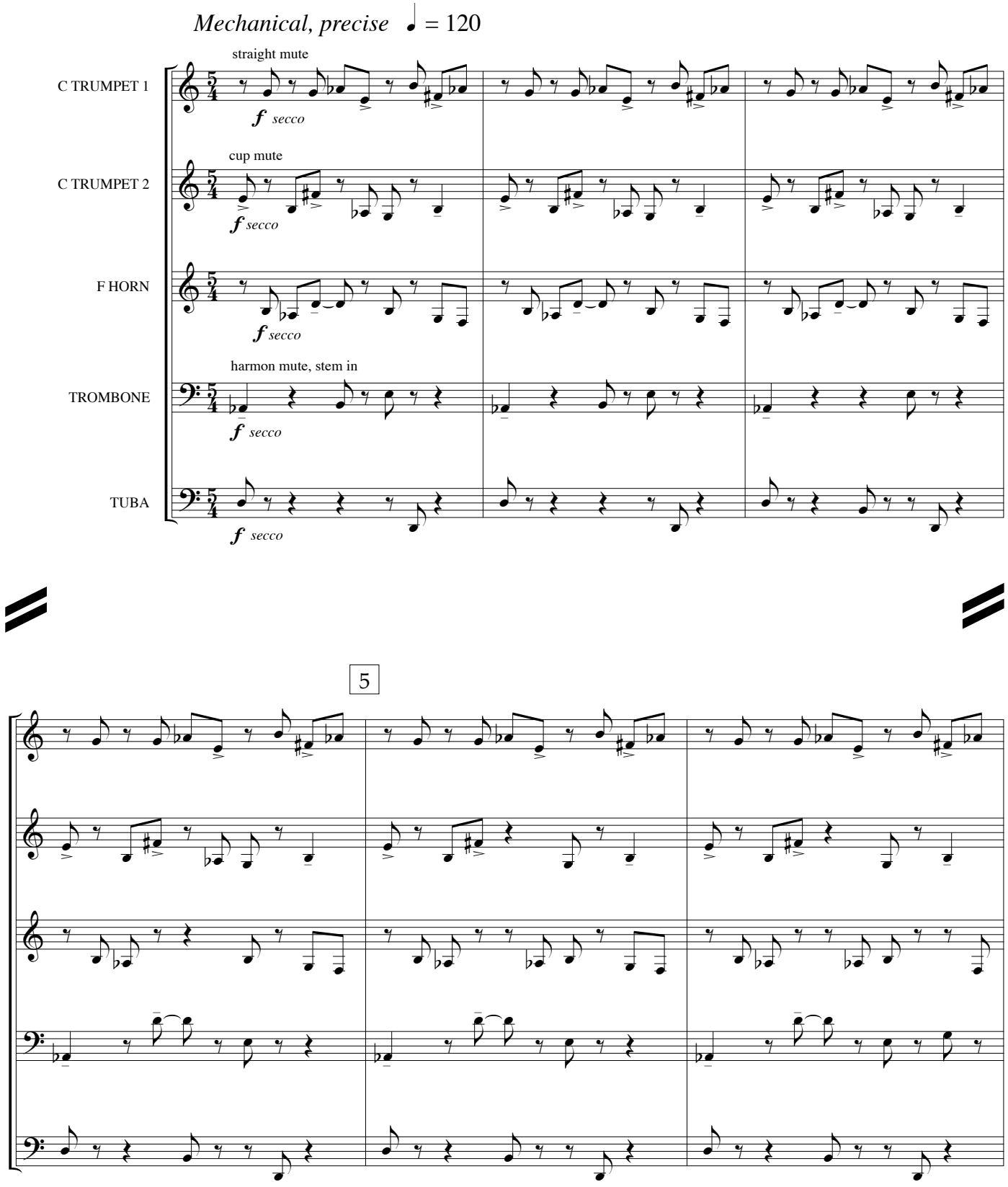


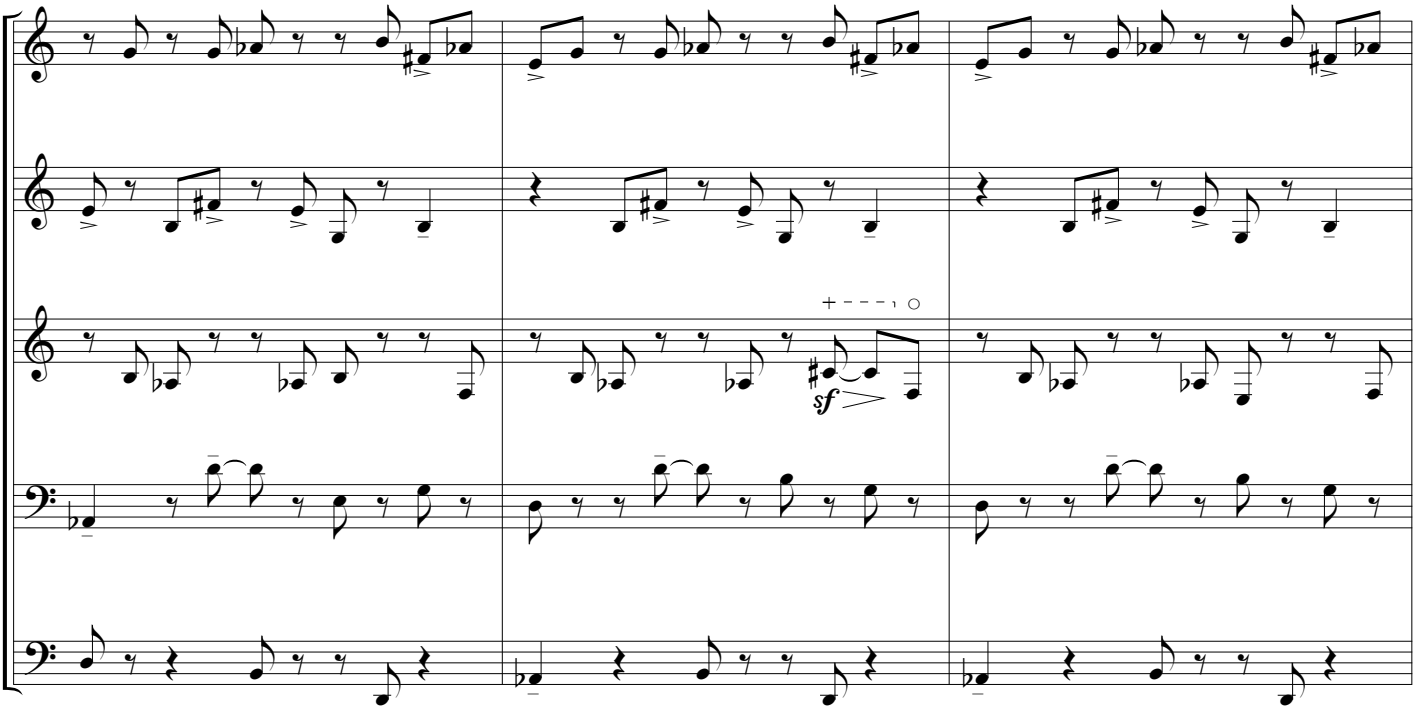






III. entropy


Mechanical, precise ♩ = 120
straight mute
C TRUMPET 1
f secco
cup mute
C TRUMPET 2
f secco
F HORN
f secco
harmon mute, stem in
TROMBONE
f secco
TUBA
f secco
5



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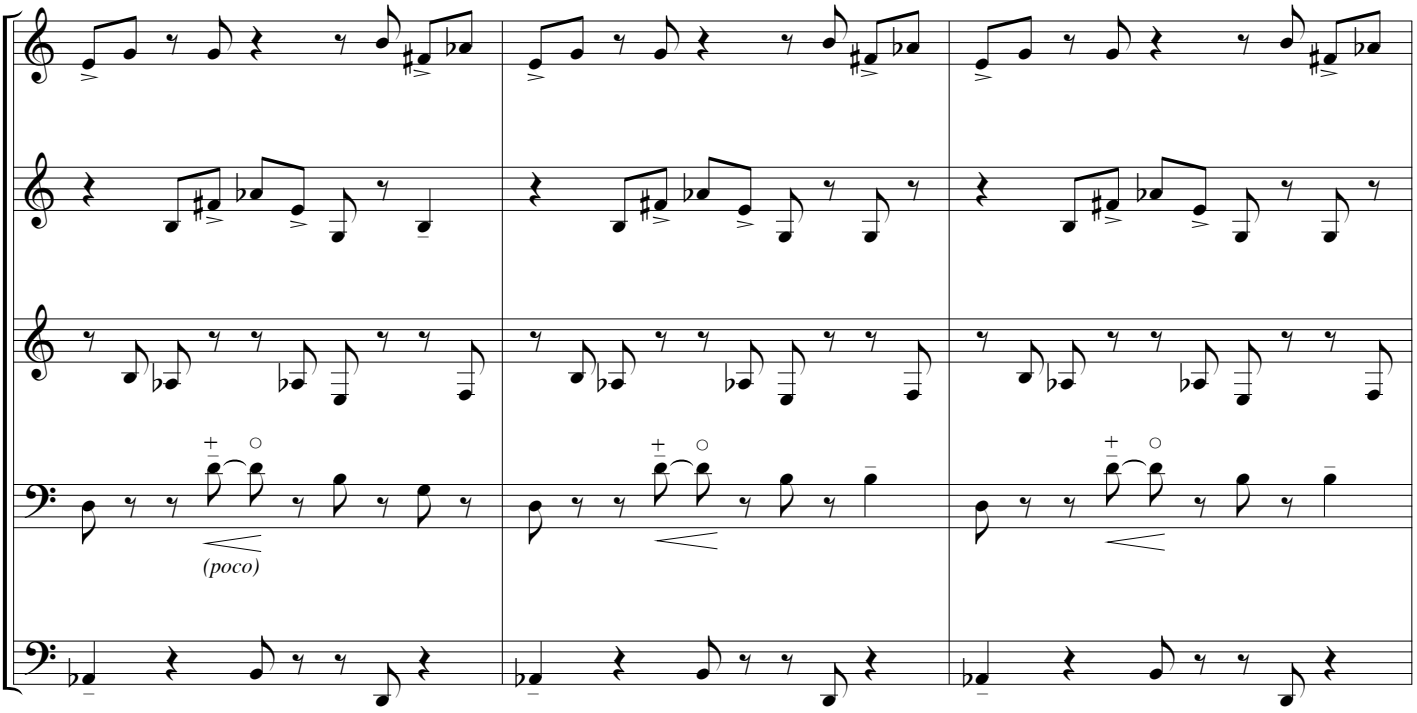

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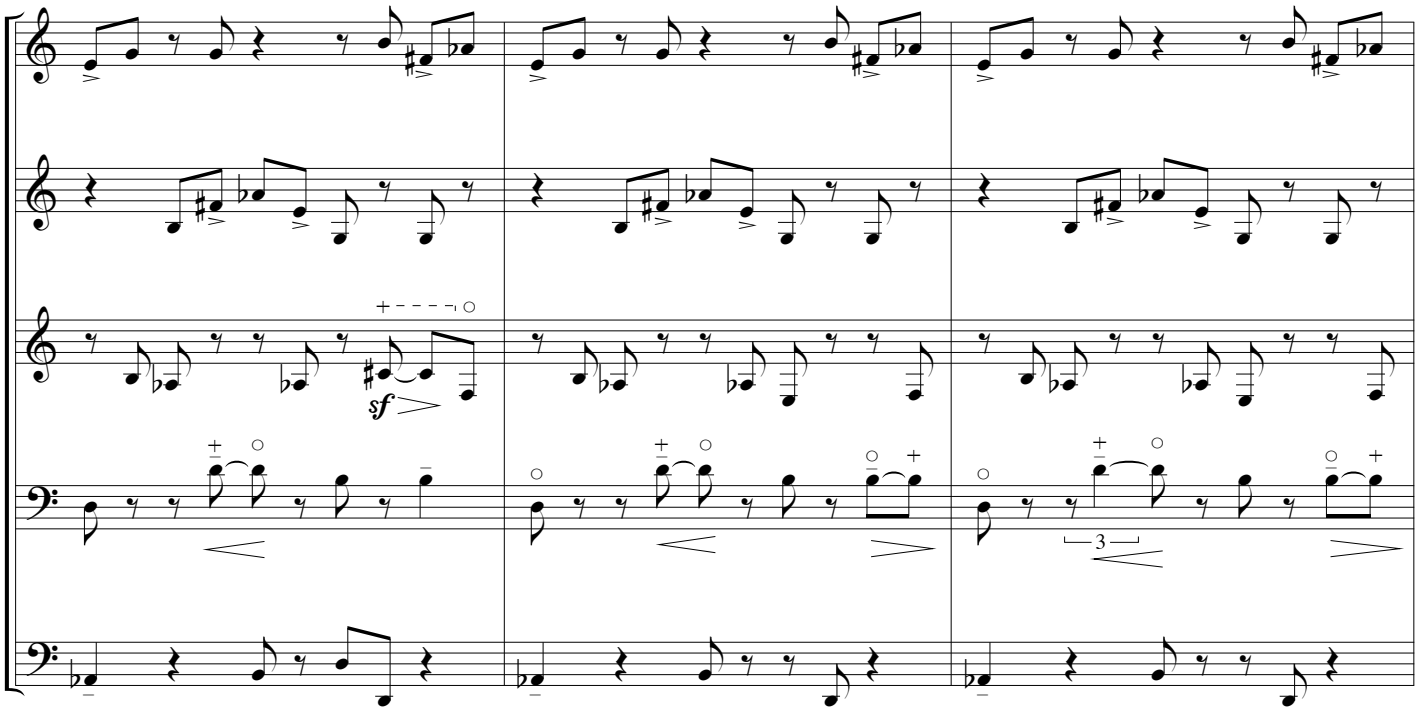
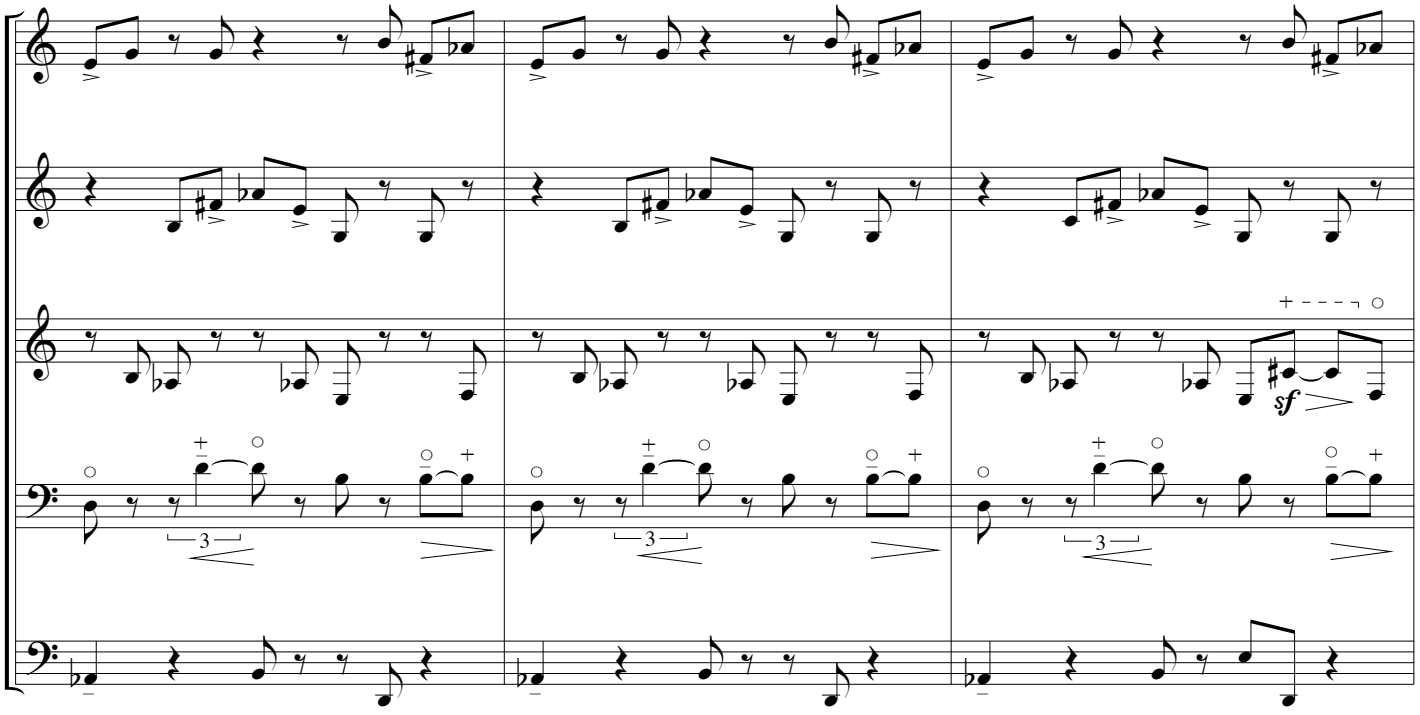
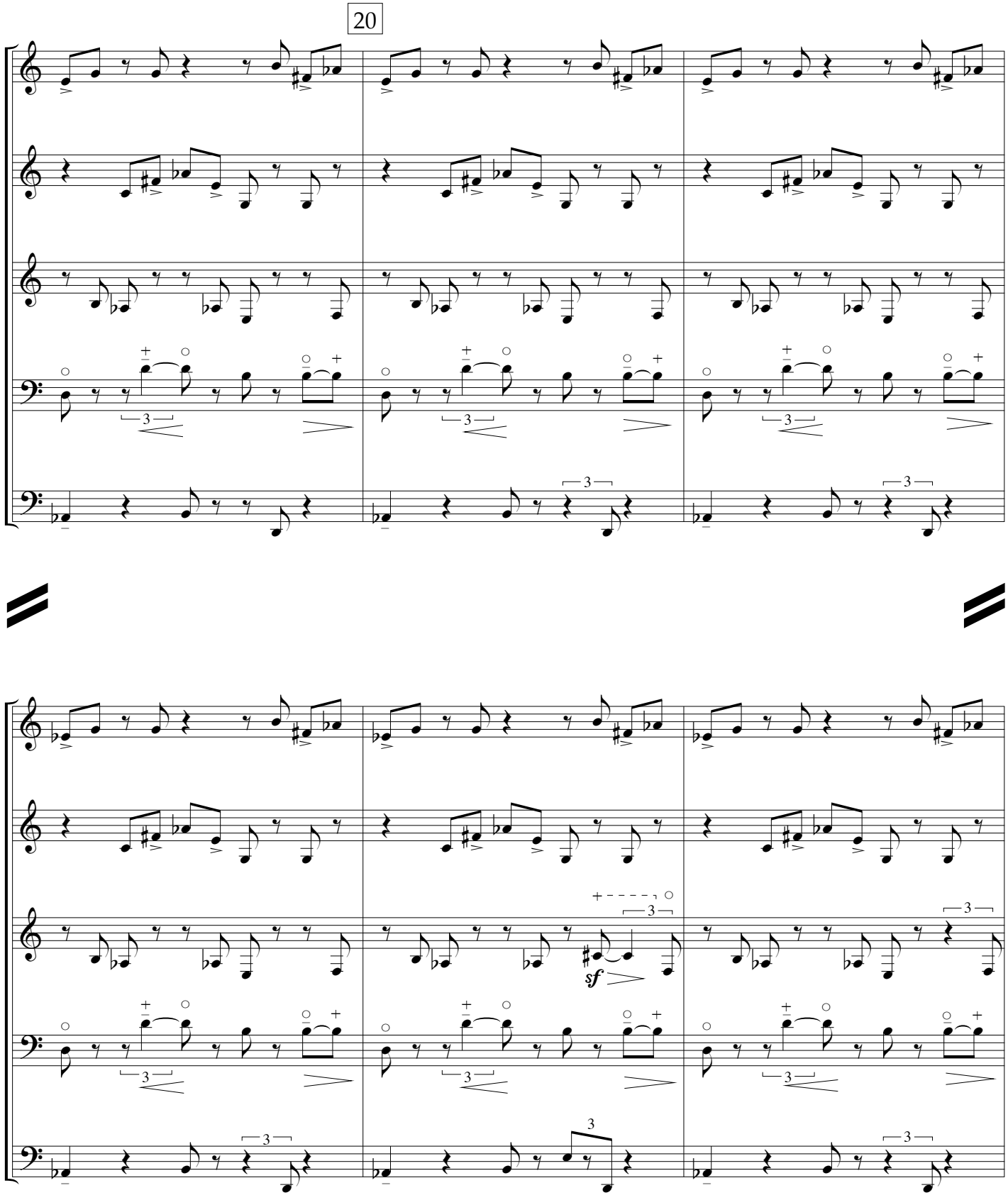
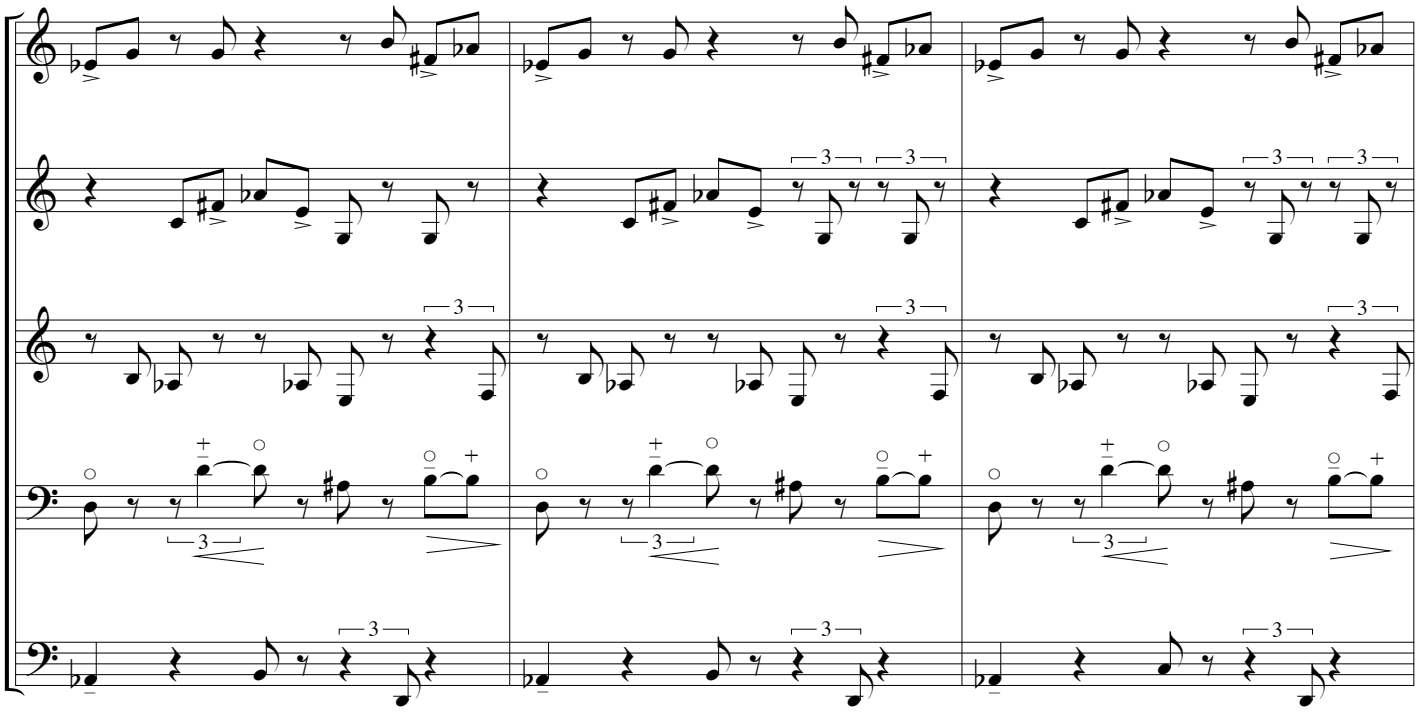





20
sf

25



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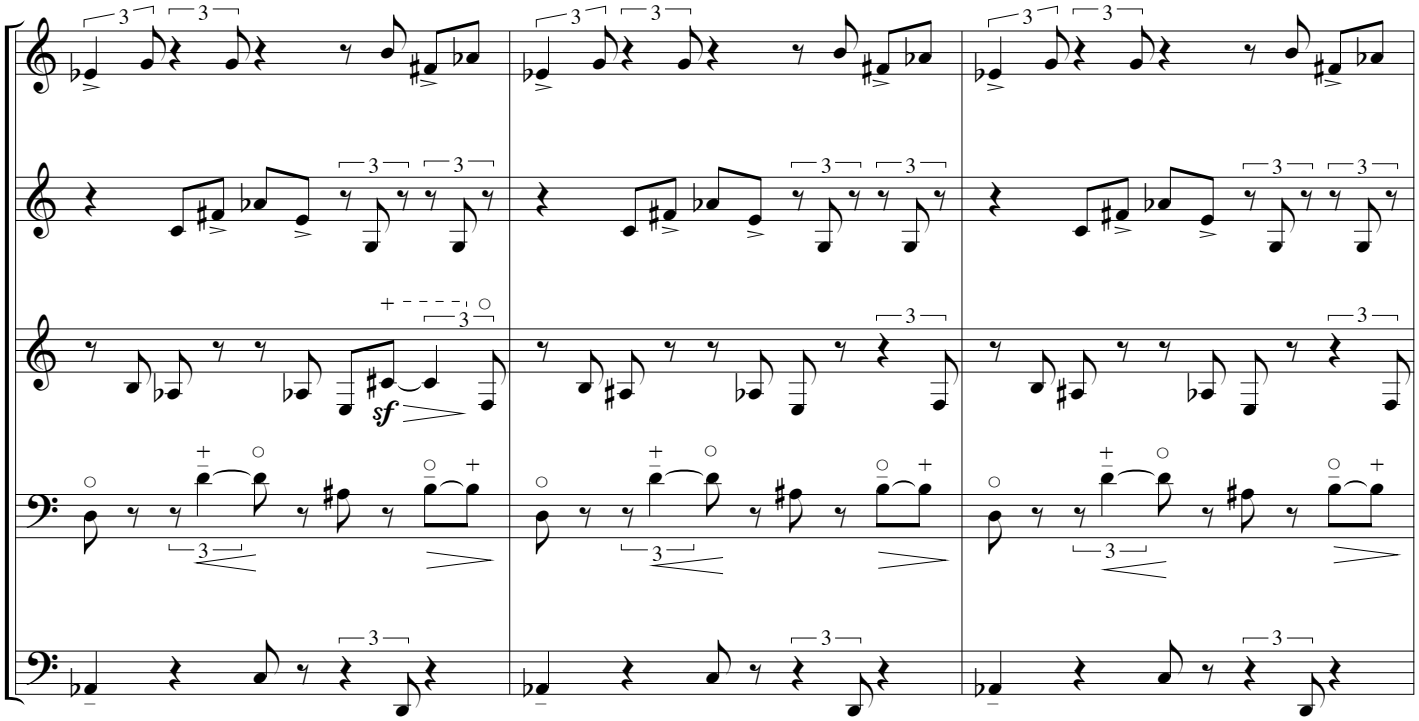

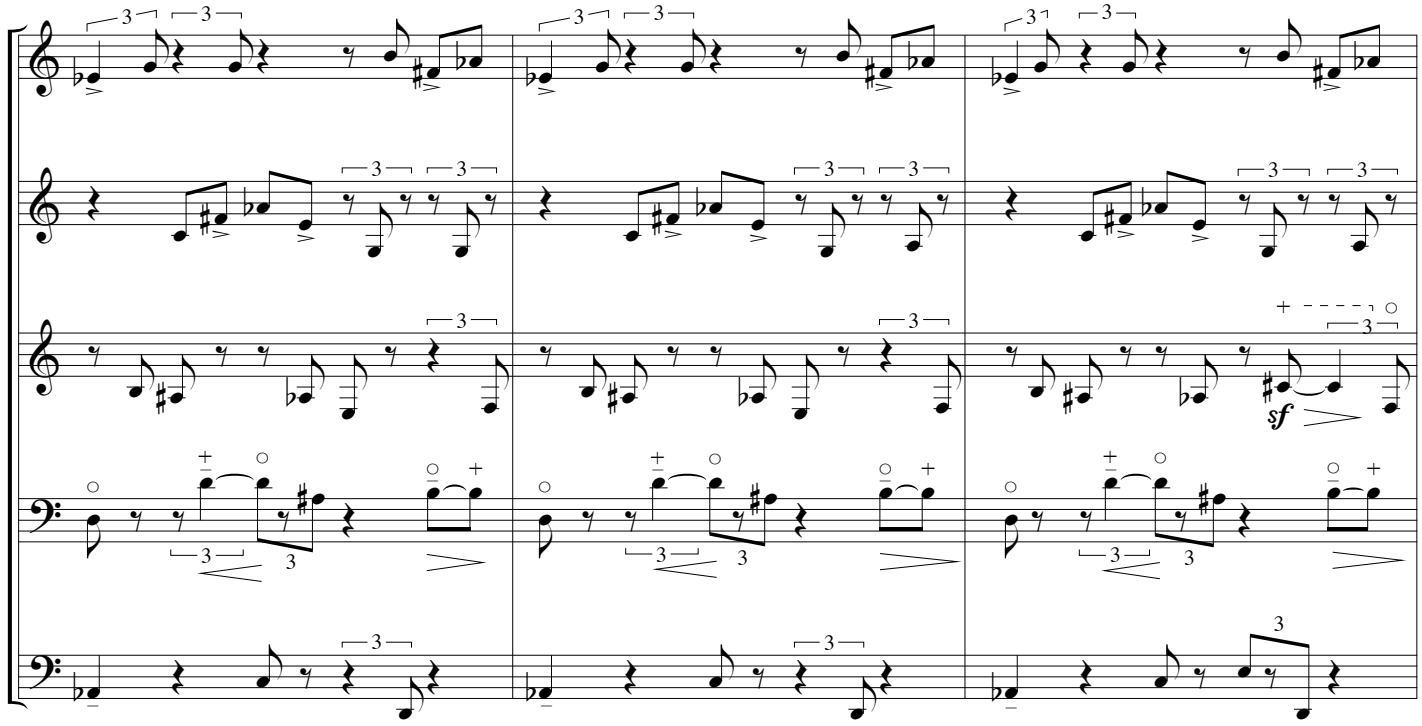
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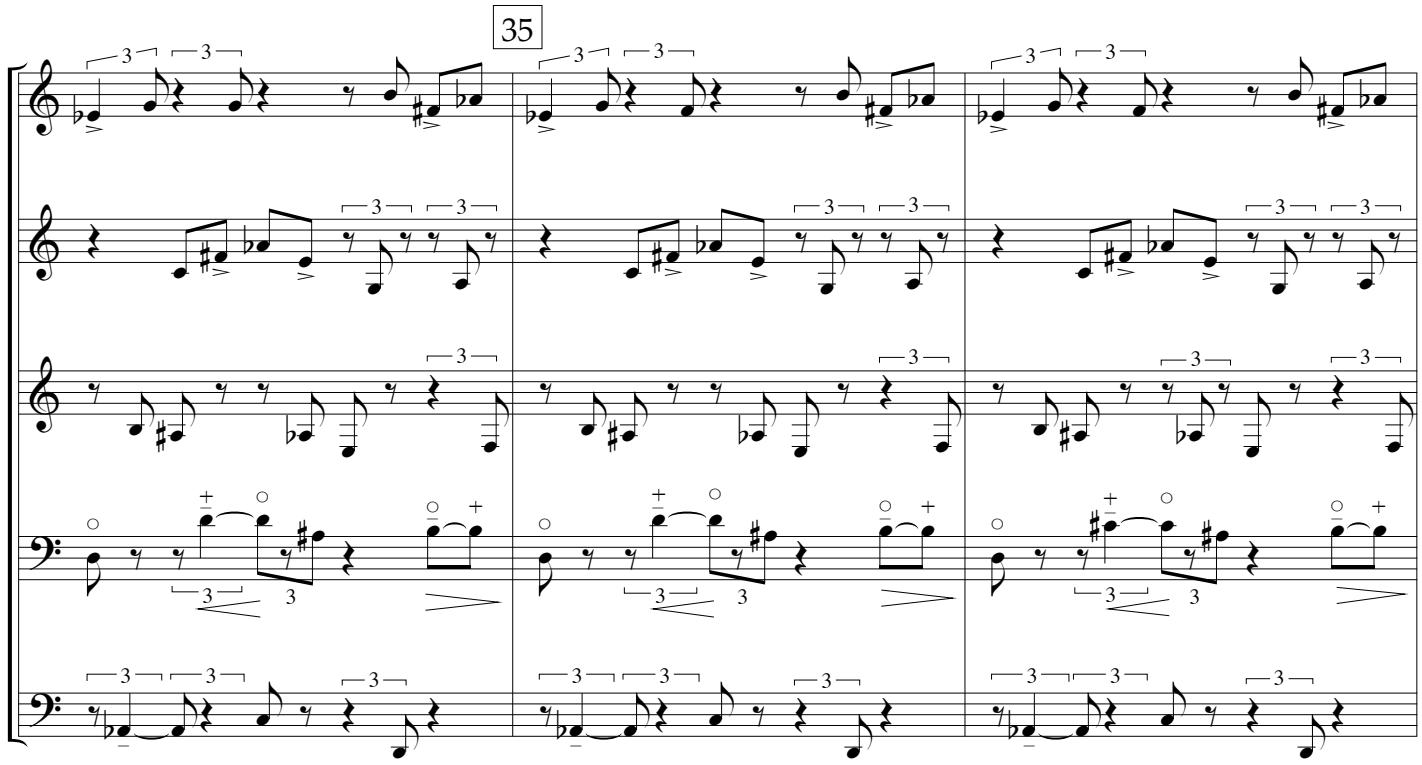
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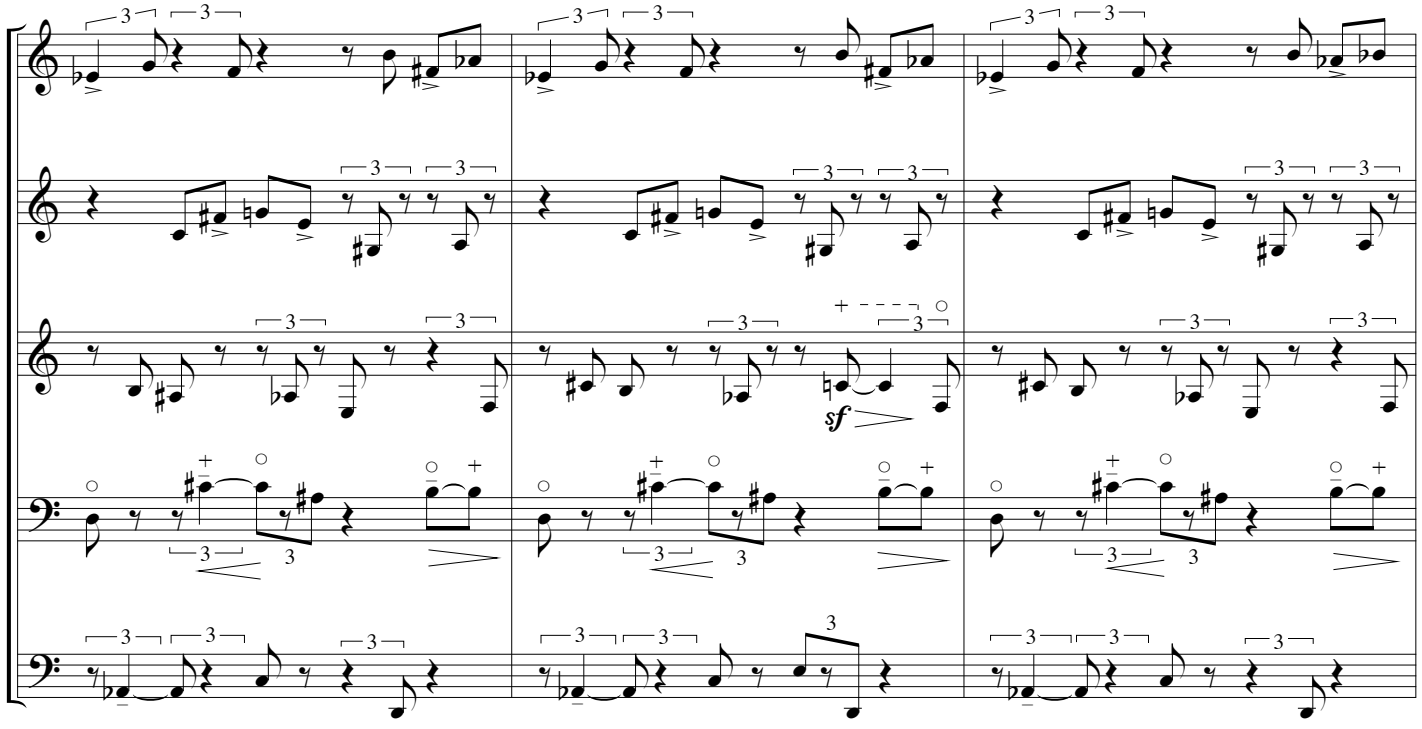
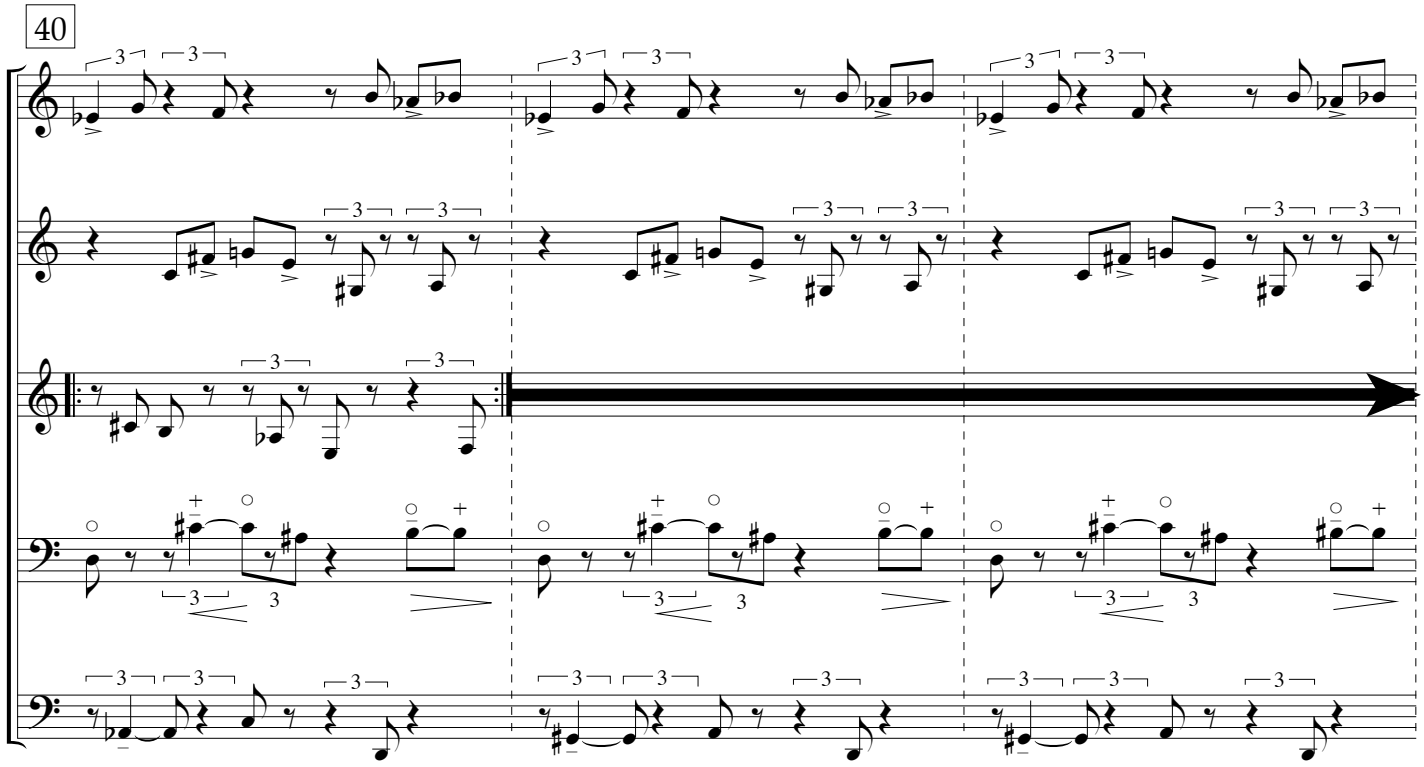

sf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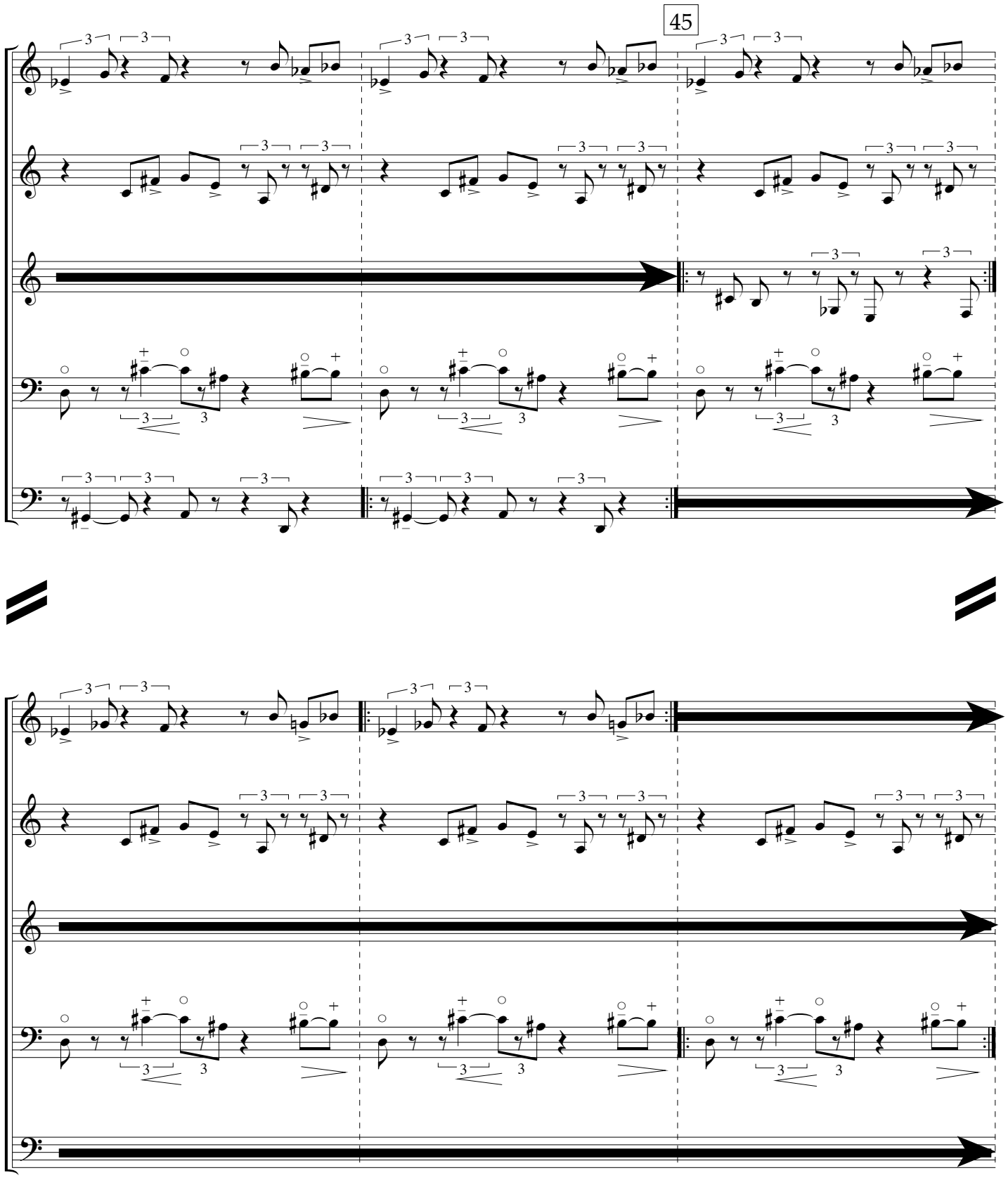
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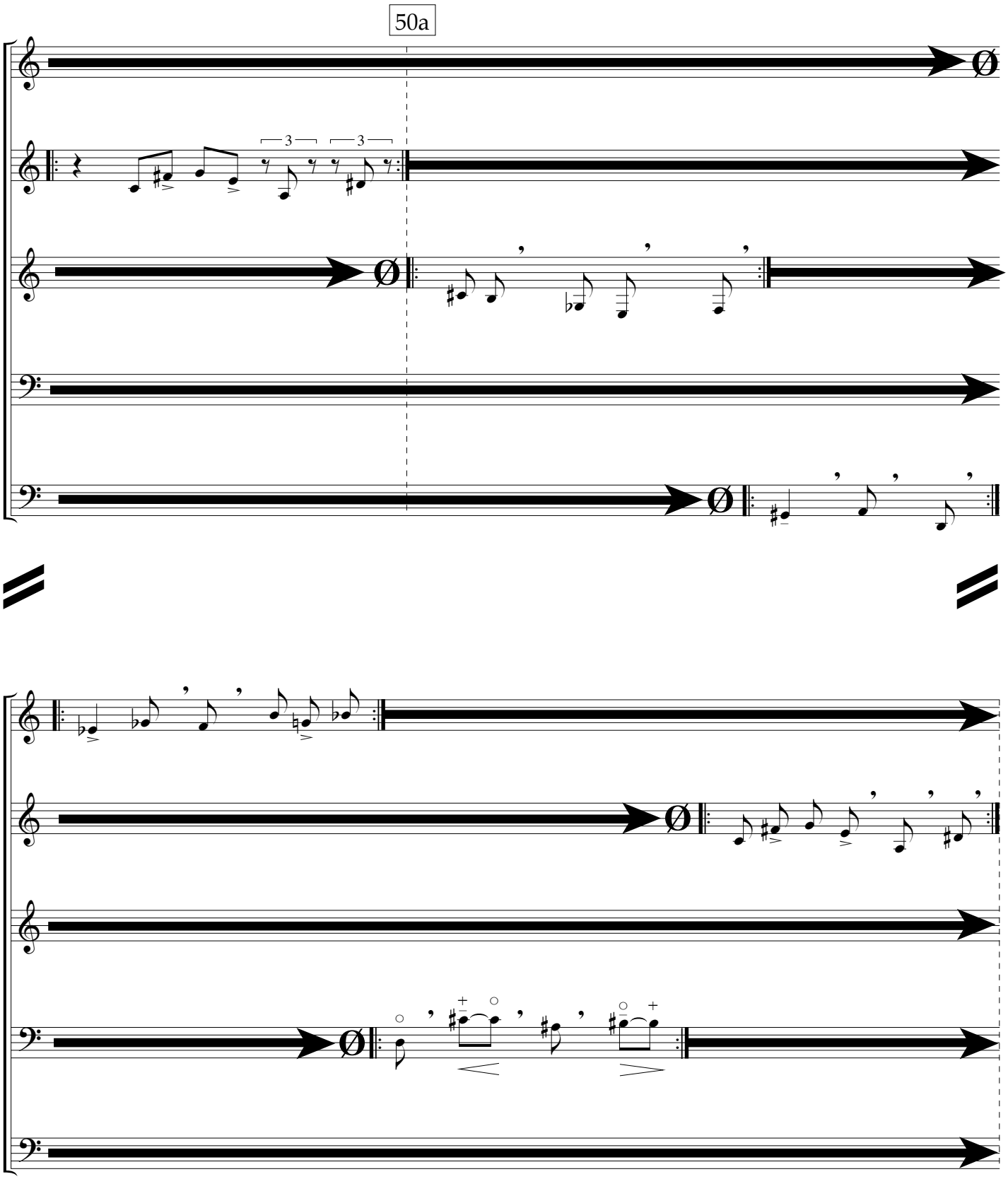
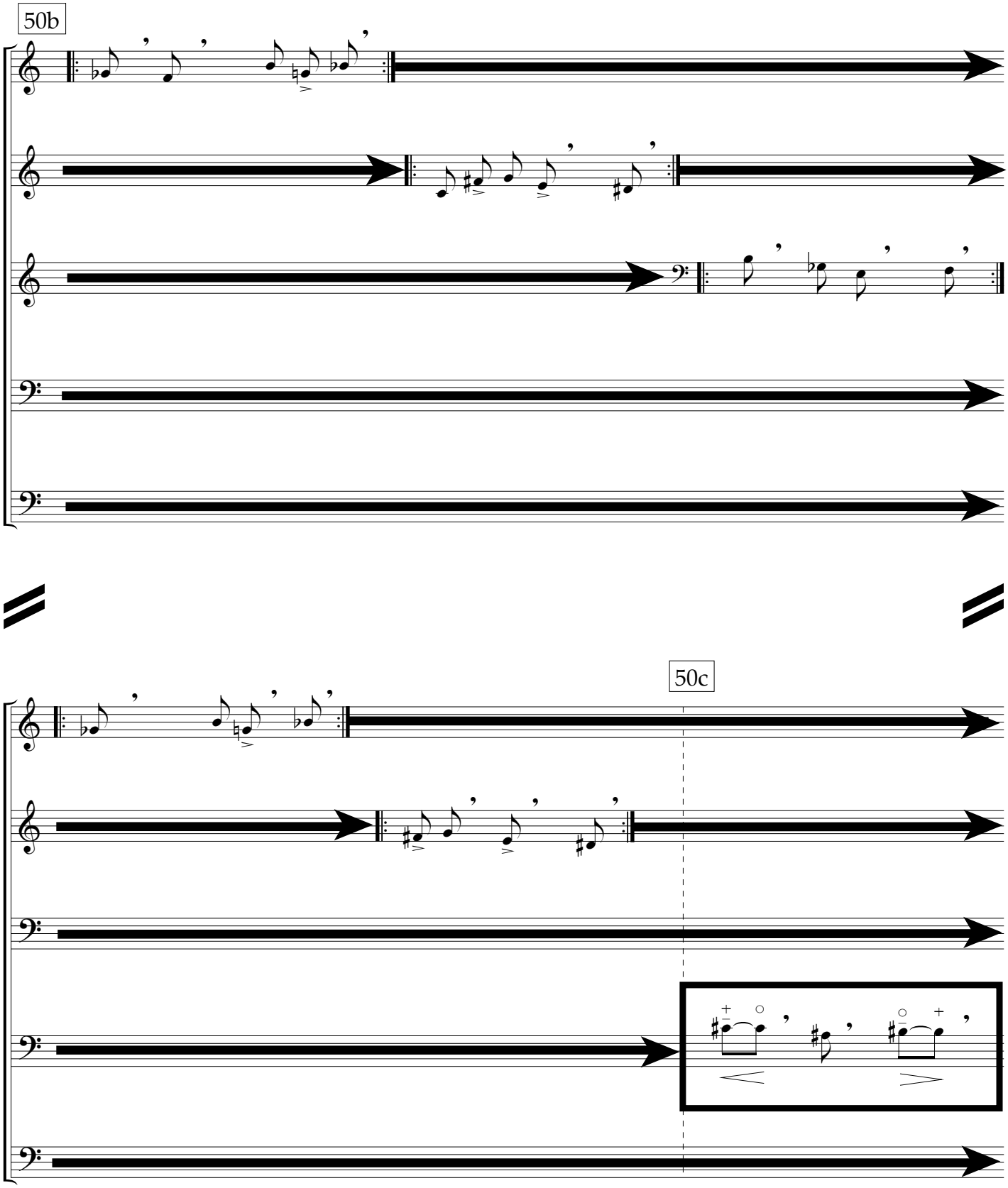
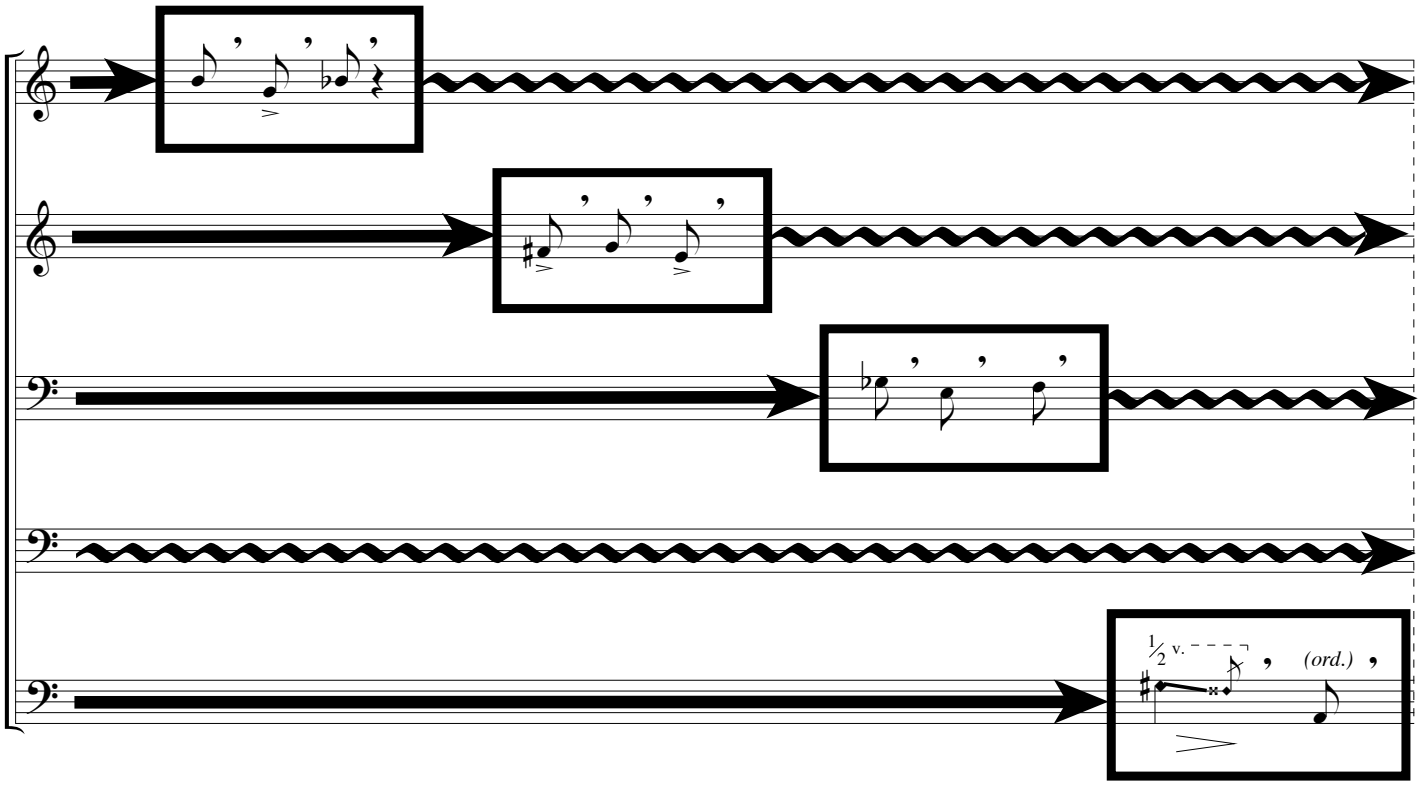
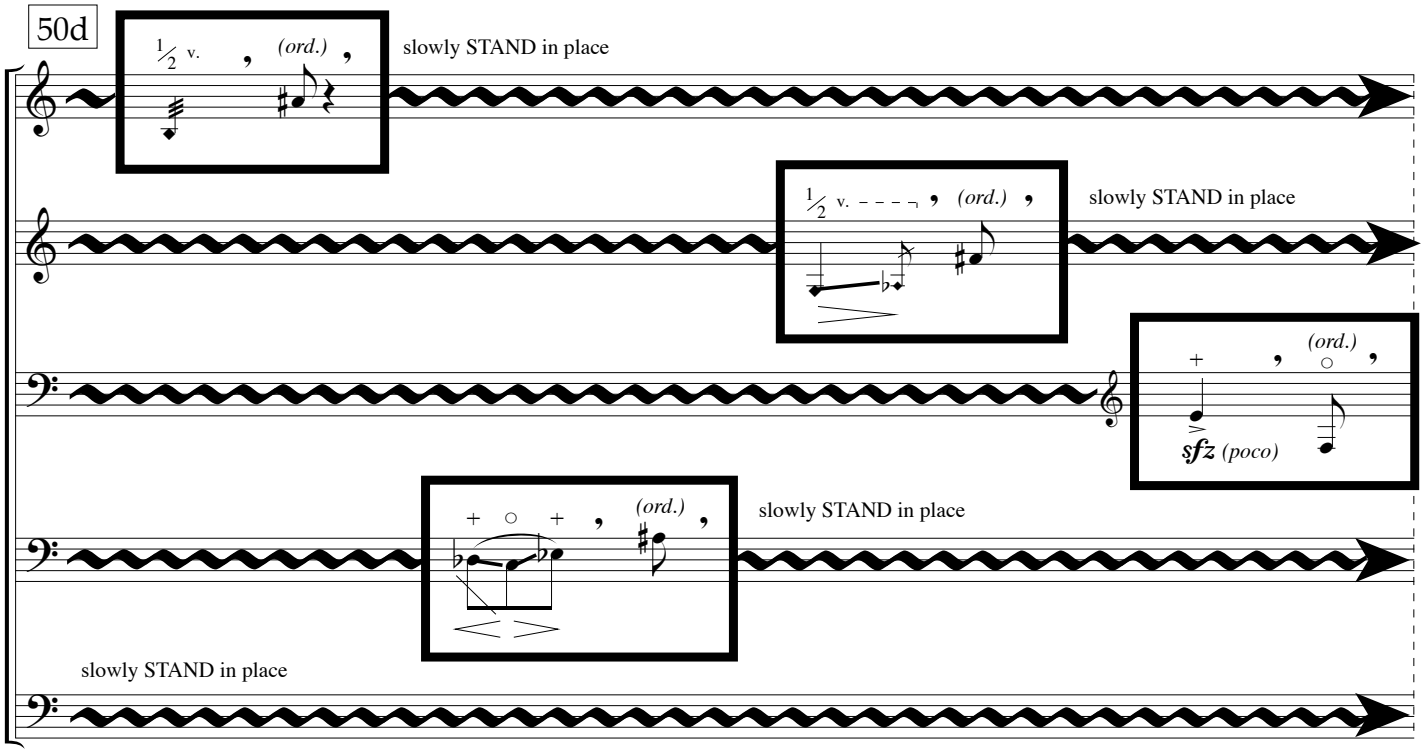
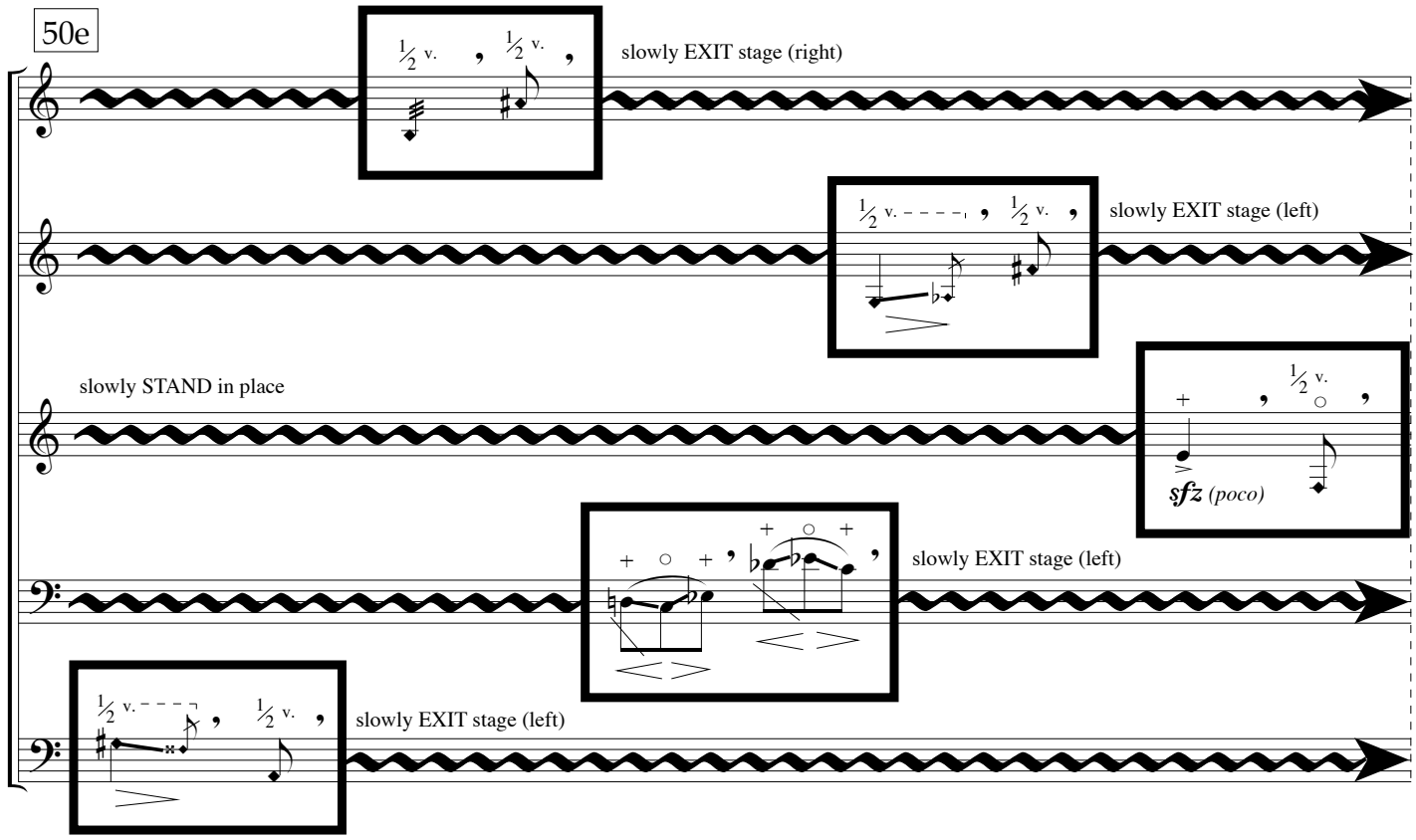
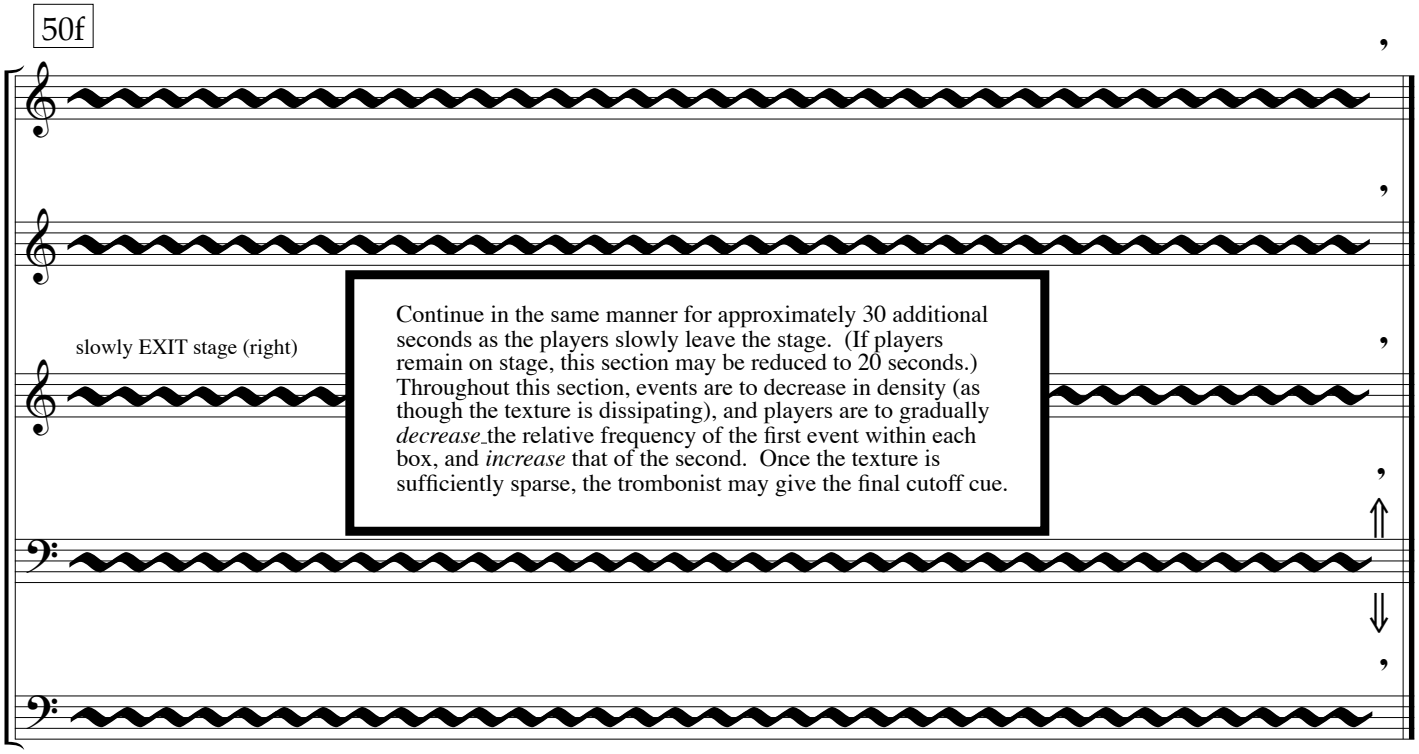

50a


50b
50c


½ v.
(ord.)


50d
½ v.
(ord.)
slowly STAND in place
½ v.
(ord.)
slowly STAND in place
(ord.)
sfz (poco)
(ord.)
slowly STAND in place
slowly STAND in place


50e
½ v.
½ v.
slowly EXIT stage (right)
½ v.
½ v.
slowly EXIT stage (left)
slowly STAND in place
½ v.
sfz (poco)
slowly EXIT stage (left)
½ v.
½ v.
slowly EXIT stage (left)


50f
slowly EXIT stage (right)
Continue in the same manner for approximately 30 additional seconds as the players slowly leave the stage. (If players remain on stage, this section may be reduced to 20 seconds.) Throughout this section, events are to decrease in density (as though the texture is dissipating), and players are to gradually *decrease* the relative frequency of the first event within each box, and *increase* that of the second. Once the texture is sufficiently sparse, the trombonist may give the final cutoff cue.

fine