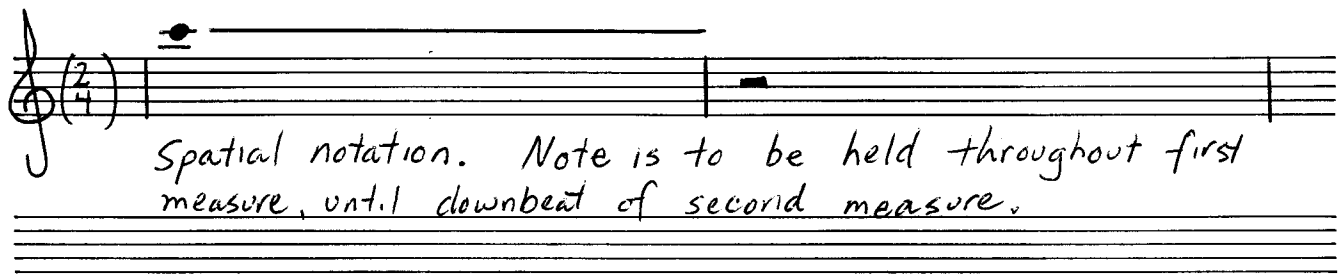
Small Shadow in the Desert

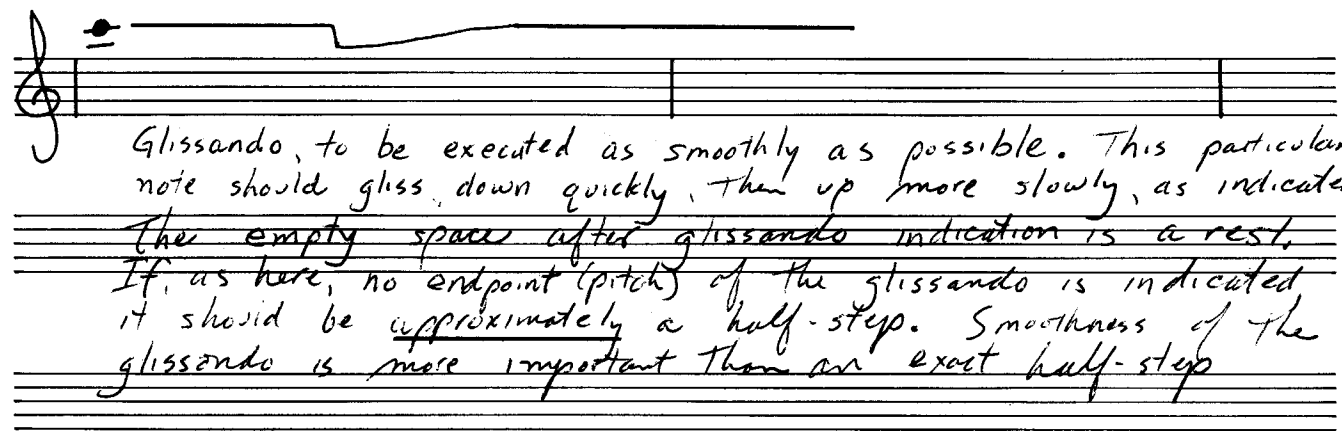
by Lois V Vierk

for three clarinets
(3 clarinets in B-flat or
3 clarinets in A)

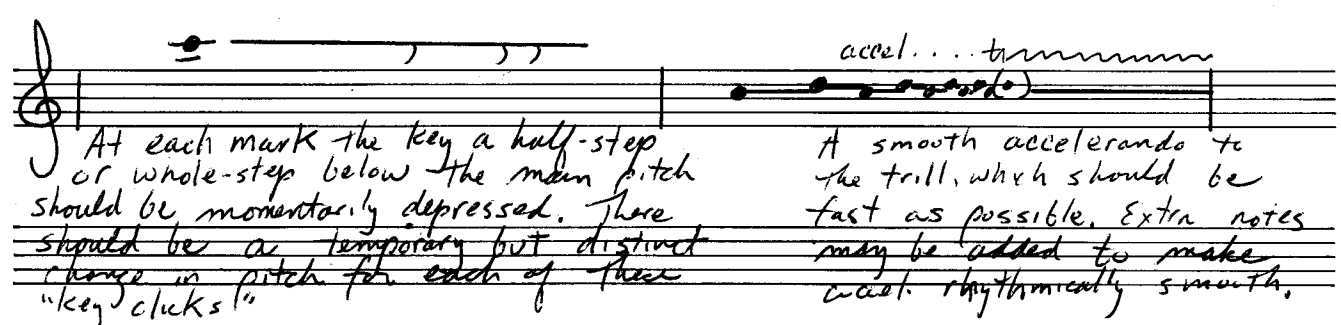
Symbols used



Spatial notation. Note is to be held throughout first measure, until downbeat of second measure.

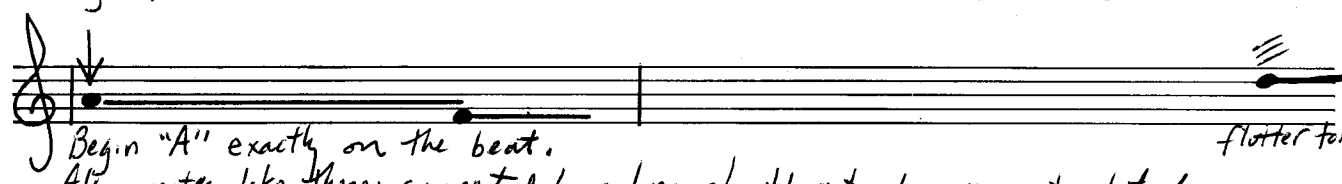


Glissando, to be executed as smoothly as possible. This particular note should gliss down quickly, then up more slowly, as indicated. The empty space after glissando indication is a rest. If, as here, no endpoint (pitch) of the glissando is indicated, it should be approximately a half-step. Smoothness of the glissando is more important than an exact half-step



At each mark the key a half-step or whole-step below the main pitch should be momentarily depressed. There should be a temporary but distinct change in pitch for each of these "key clicks!"

A smooth accelerando to the trill, which should be fast as possible. Extra notes may be added to make accel. rhythmically smooth.



Begin "A" exactly on the beat.
Also, notes like these, connected by a line, should not be re-articulated.

Grace notes should be played quickly, but distinctly.

Note: recording made in 1978 was of three clarinets in A.

For performance questions please contact the composer:

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Small Shadow in the Desert (1978)
for 3 clarinets

by Lois V Vierk

When I wrote this piece I was a student at California Institute of the Arts, located a bit north of Los Angeles. In those days whenever I had time, I'd go for a beautiful hike in a nearby desert. In the middle of the day when the sun is directly overhead, the shadows of the plants and rocks and anything else that happens to be there are very small, and of course it can be extremely hot. The intensity of the sound of three clarinets, especially playing loudly in the high register, reminds me of being in unrelenting heat in the gorgeous southern California desert.

In this short work, the three clarinets act together to produce what I call one "sound shape". The elements of the sound shapes in this piece include dynamic glissandi and held notes, crescendo/descrecendo patterns, and fast moving notes. Over the course of the work, sound shapes flow from the extreme high register down through the mid-range to the low register. Material is presented in imitative passages. Because the instruments are of the same timbre, all melodic nuances are clearly audible.

This work was influenced by certain pieces of Gagaku, Japanese court music, which I was studying and performing at the time in ensembles led by Gagaku master and UCLA professor Suenobu Tōgi. In these particular pieces, several ryūteki flutes (my instrument) or several hichiriki double reeds play canons in free rhythm. A sound at once massive and transparent is produced.

Note from 2018:

This work was originally the first movement of my 1978 composition *Song for Three Clarinets*, which subsequently went through yet another renaming, *Desert Heat*. Finally I settled on using the first movement only, with the title *Small Shadow in the Desert*. The recording was made on April 16, 1978 at a concert of the Independent Composers Association in their "Second Second Storey Series" at Larchmont Center, Los Angeles. Clarinetists are Alan Solomon, Dave Ocker, Laurel Hall. For more information about this concert check out the excellent blog Mixed Meters by Dave Ocker: http://mixedmeters.com/2008/05/second-second-story-series-concert-one.html

Small Shadow in the Desert

Lois V Vierk

♩=60

Clarinets

1

2

3

f

ff

4.

mf

ff

7.

mf

mf

ff

10.

ff

mf

mf

mf

ff

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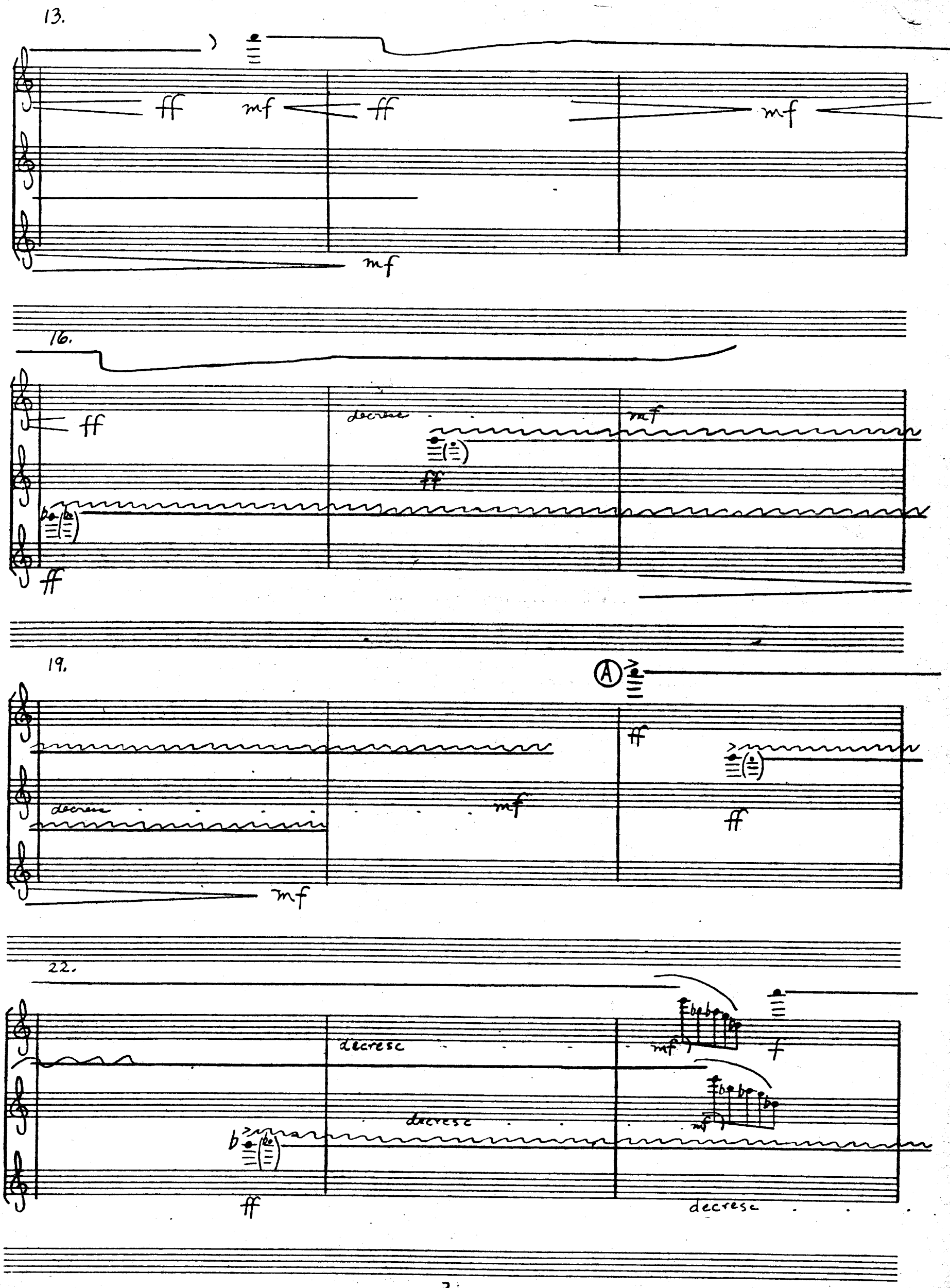

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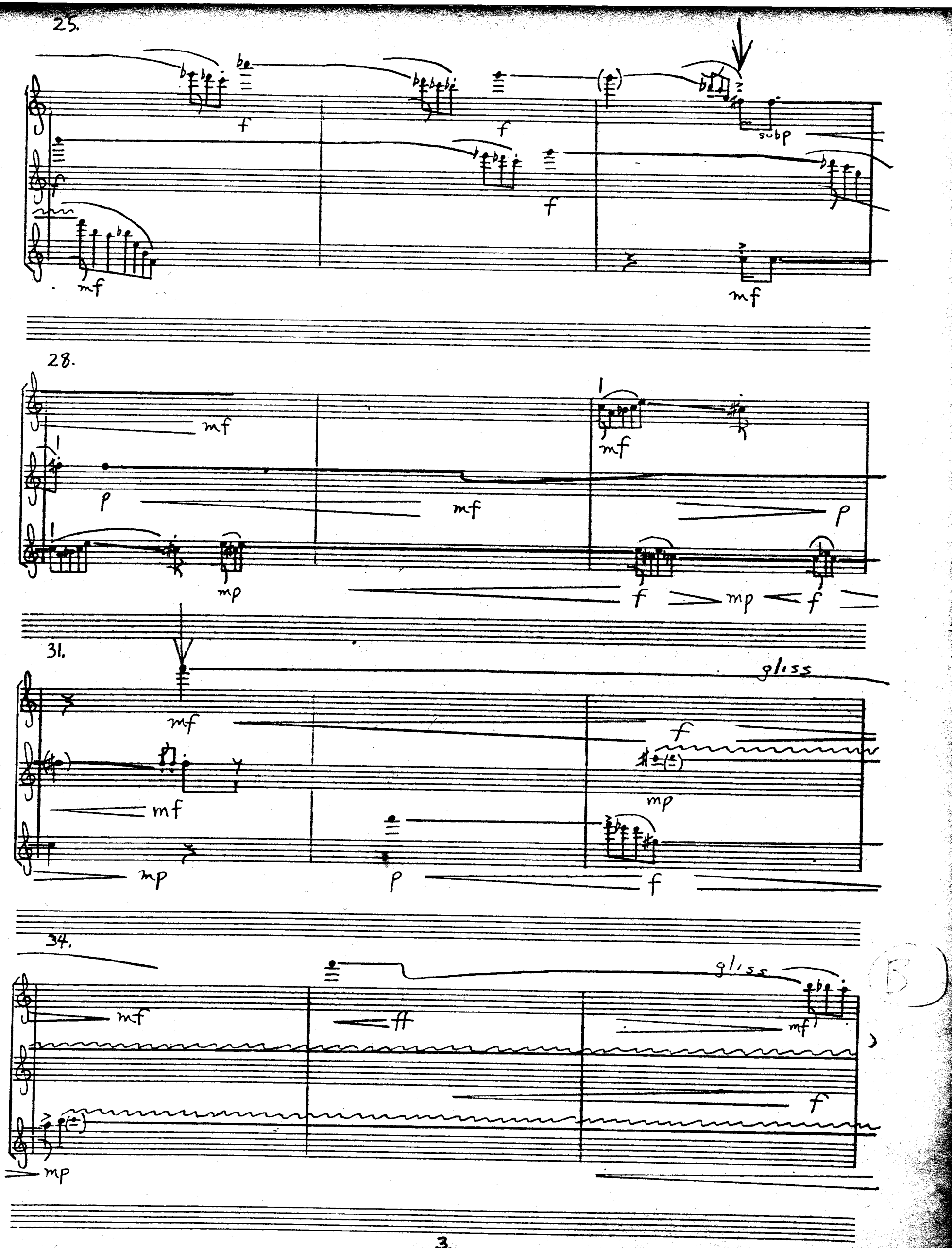

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(B)

37.

mf (mf)

mf (mf)

pp

f mf

mp p

40.

mp pp mp pp

p cresc mf

mp p mf decresc

2nd part (B)

43.

mp mf p

sf p

mf p mf

p mf

46.

mp

p

mp pp

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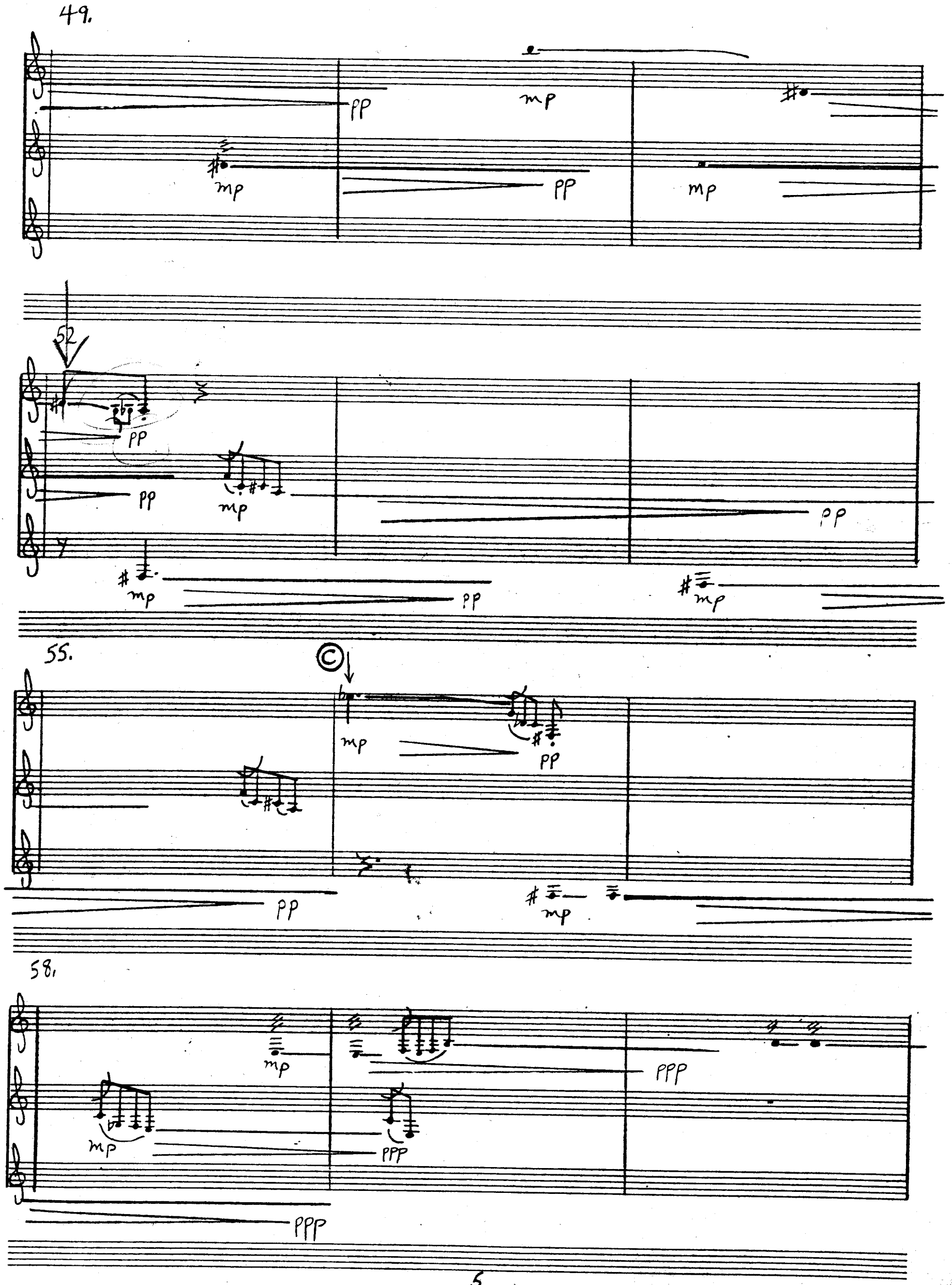

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61.

mp PPP P PPP mp PPP P

64.

Ⓓ

PPP P PPP PPP PPP P PPP

67.

9

PPP P PPP P PPP PPP PPP

70.

PPP P PPP PPP P PPP P

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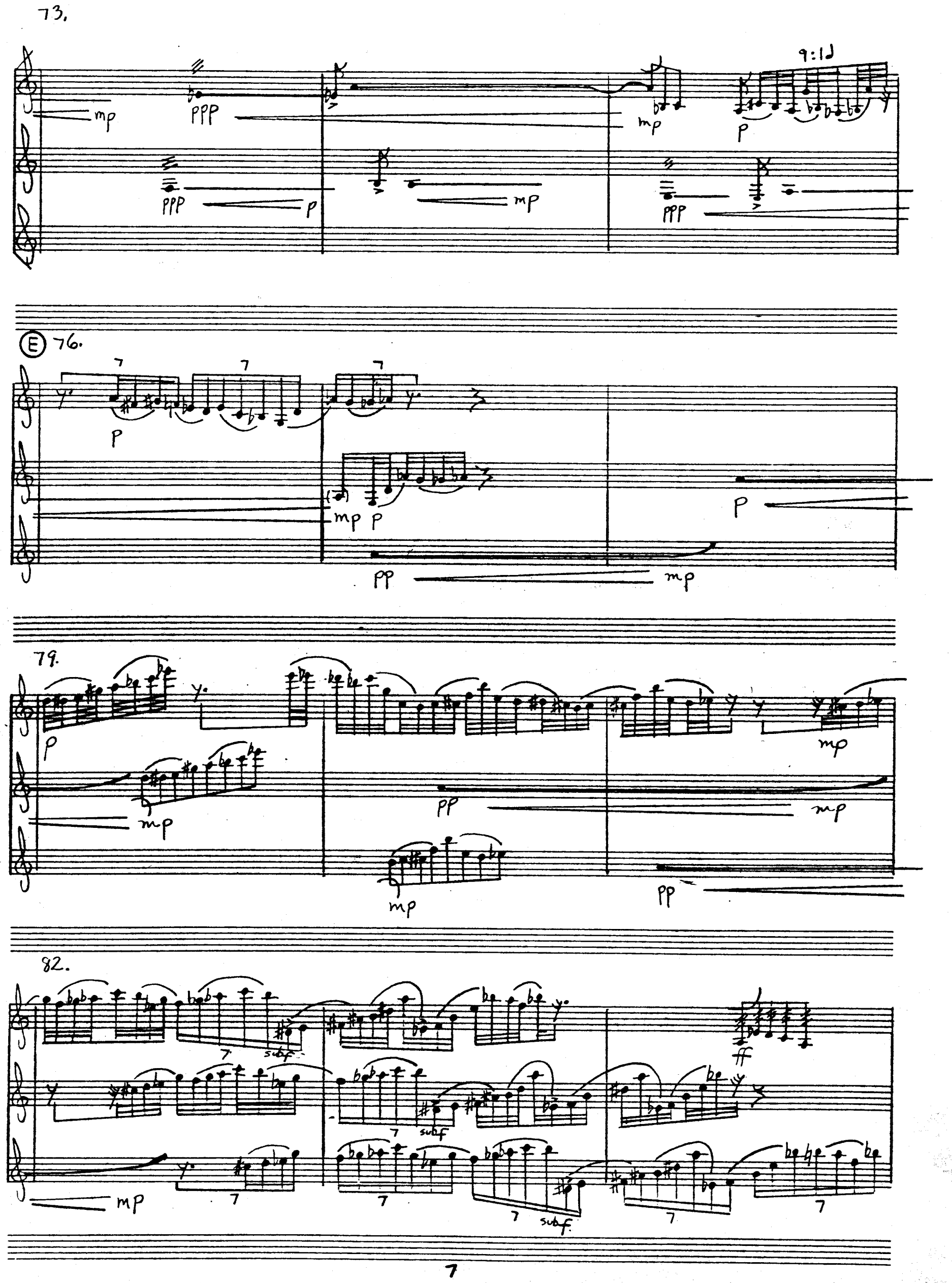

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85.

ff

ff

sub mp

sub mp

88

ff

ff

ff

P

Ⓕ 91.

PPP

PP

ff

ff

PP

94.

PP

PPP

(ordin)

PPP

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(ordin)

ppp — f

f

100.

mf

f

103.

mp ff

ff

mf

mf

mf

106.

ff

ff

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109.

(ff)

112.

ff

mf

mf

(ff)

mp

115.

ff mf ff

pp

ff

pp

f

p

118.

p

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121.

Ⓗ

mf

f

mf

f

124.

f

ff

ff

f

f

(f)

127.

ff

mf

f

ff

mf

f

ff

mf

f

130.

mp

mf

mp

p

mf

mf

mp

mf

P

mp

mf

mp

p

mf decrease.

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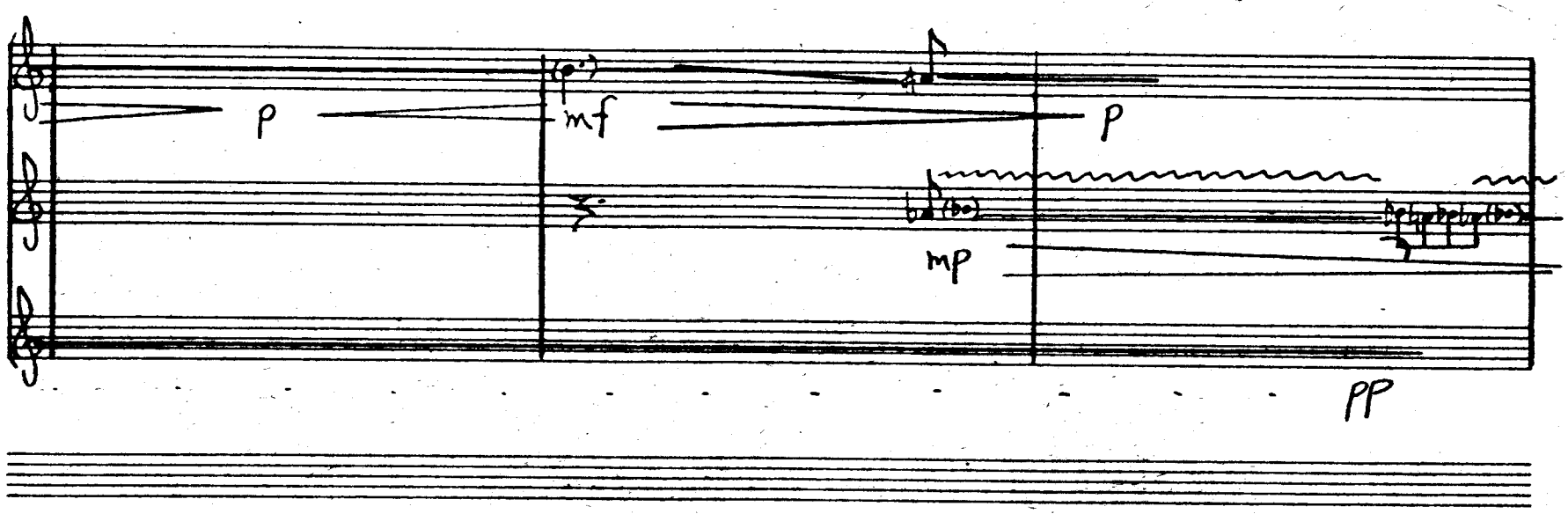
133.



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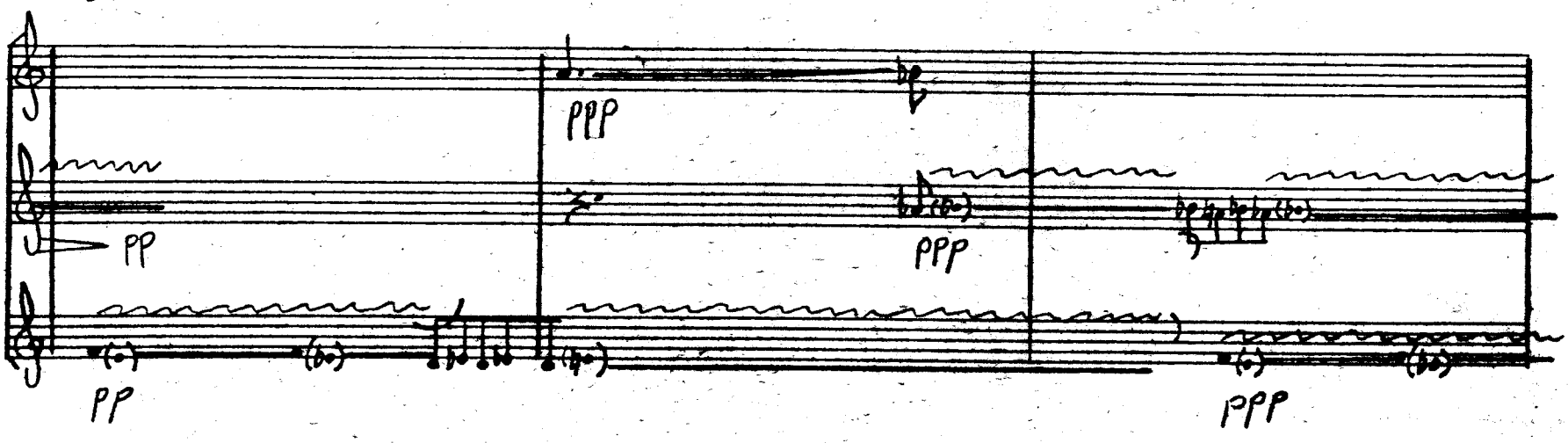

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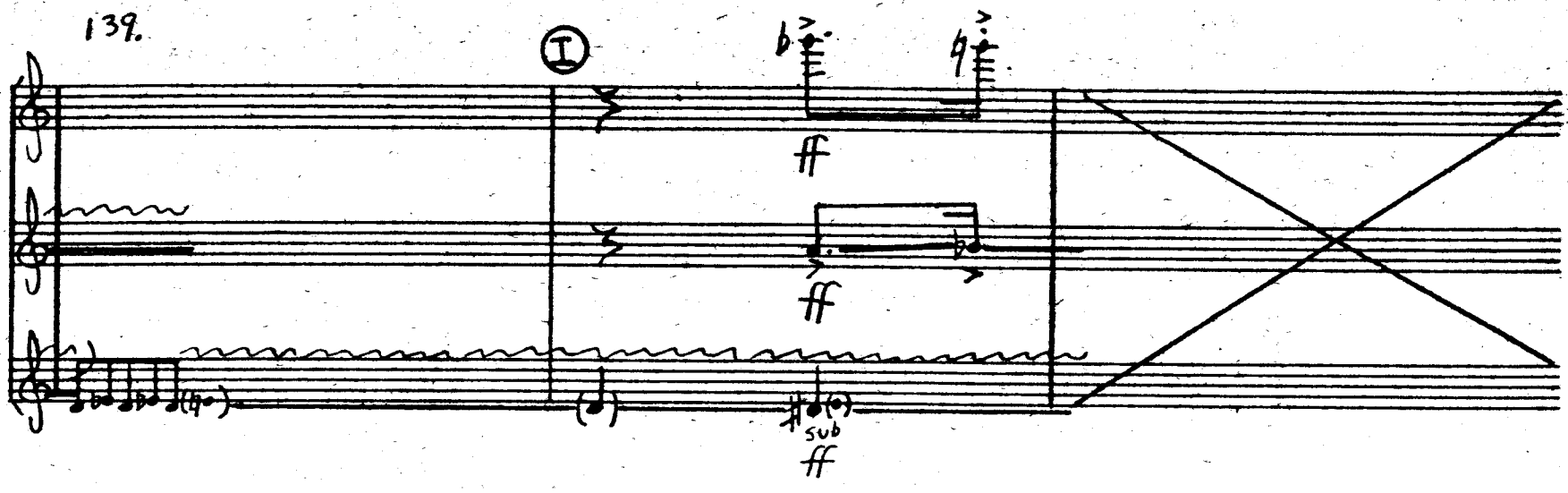

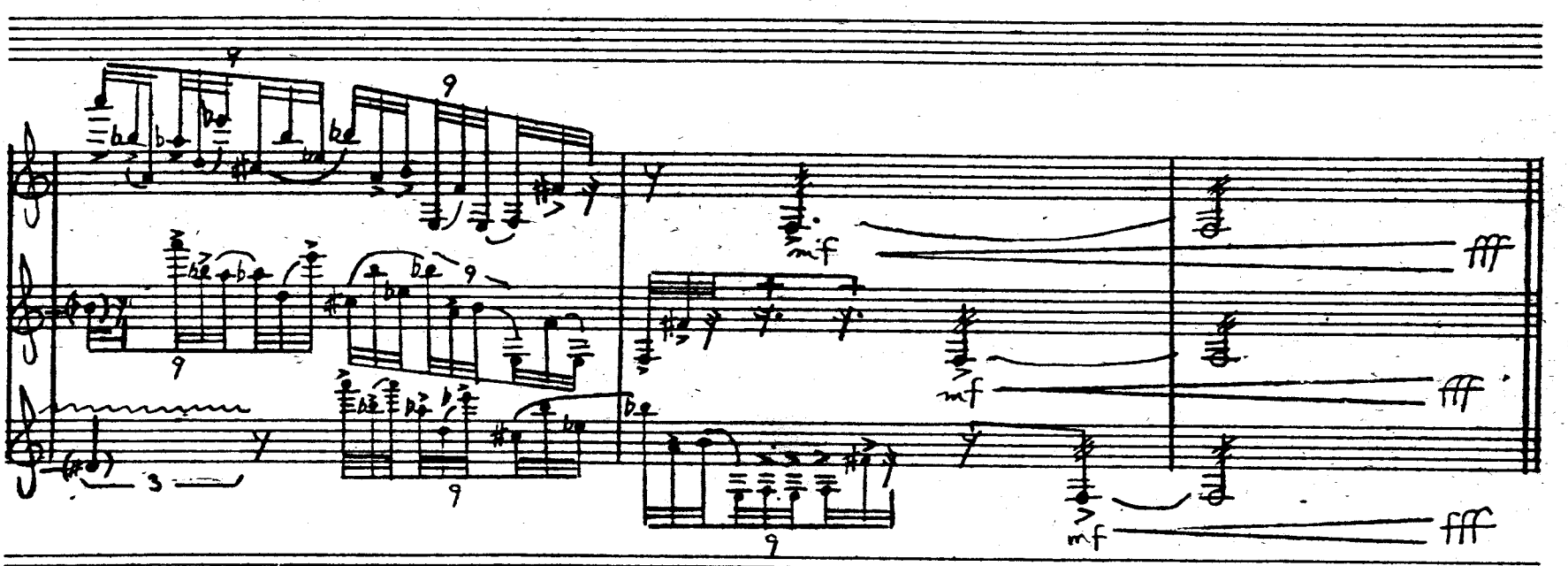

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