To Stare Astonished at the Sea

by Lois V Vierk

for amplified string piano

For Margaret Leng Tan. Commissioned by Barry Goldberg on the occasion of Gayle Morgan's birthday.

Special thanks to Margaret Leng Tan for creative contributions.

Special thanks to Claudia Rüegg for performance instructions.

Special thanks to Hyun-Mook Lim for performance suggestions and for excellent proofreading.

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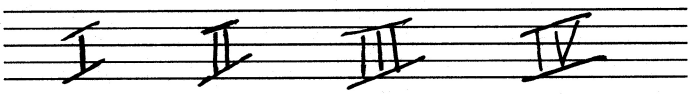
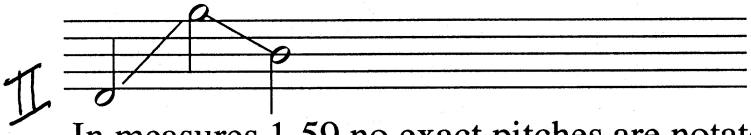
This piece is played entirely inside the piano on the strings.

Use metal guitar picks on fingers.

This piece was composed on a Steinway B. Other pianos can of course be used. In this case you may have to modify your understanding of the notation since the braces will be in different places.



Roman numberals on the staff refer to the segment of the piano strings, as separated by the braces. "I" is the lowest segment, "IV" is the highest segment.



In measures 1-59 no exact pitches are notated. The above figure means, in the second lowest segment of strings, gliss from the lowest string up to the highest, then down to about the middle string of the segment.

Beginning at measure 60, for segment II strings only, pluck the pitches notated, assuming a treble clef. Transpose this entire segment II part as needed for other than a Steinway B. (For other string segments no exact piches are notated). Please refer to tape.

The keys indicated to be depressed in m. 20 are for a Steinway B, as well. Transpose as needed.

IMPORTANT -- The keys indicated in m. 20 should be depressed BEFORE THE PIECE BEGINS. They are to be held down with sostenuto pedal, and the sostenuto pedal should be wedged down from back of pedal box. Try wedging in a pen or pencil before the piece begins.

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To Stare Astonished at the Sea

Amplification Instructions

This piece must be amplified. Two microphones are required. They are placed over the piano strings, one covering the high register, one the low.

Regardless of the size and resonance of the hall this piece requires amplification. Think of it as sound reinforcement, not as amplification for volume. Some of the sounds are quite delicate and soft and cannot be heard very far away.

Even with amplification, I suggest that you play out, making the soft sounds louder than usual. It is easy to hear the soft sounds as you're playing, but they do not carry.

To Stare Astonished at the Sea (1994)
by Lois V Vierk

When it is calm the ocean is gentle and inviting. It can be mysteriously majestic or humblingly powerful. Sometimes it thrashes about frighteningly. The title of my piece was inspired by the W. B. Yeats poem "Her Triumph". Yeats' words say to me that the energy of life itself is untamed and often wilder and more beautiful than what shows on the surface.

The piece is played entirely inside the piano on the strings. I composed the work in three sections. The first section opens with limpid glissandos in the mid-treble range that gradually gain momentum, culminating in a descending cascade that sets the tone for the next section. This begins percussively in the low register, gradually adding "tremolos" and "trills." The piece moves to higher strings and develops tonally with strummed string phrases and dynamic glissandos. It ends with a flurry on the highest strings.

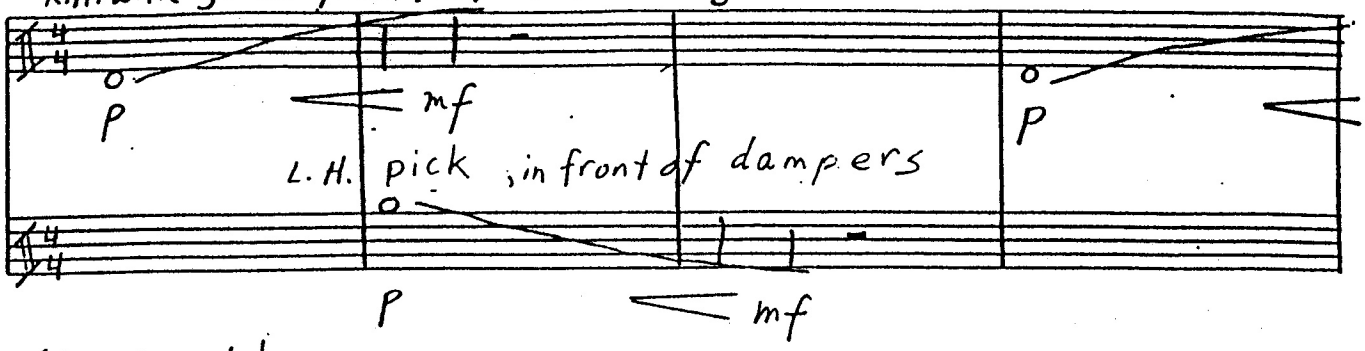
To Stare Astonished at the Sea was commissioned for pianist Margaret Leng Tan by Barry Goldberg on the occasion of Gayle Morgan's birthday.

♩= 54-60

To State Astonished at the Sea

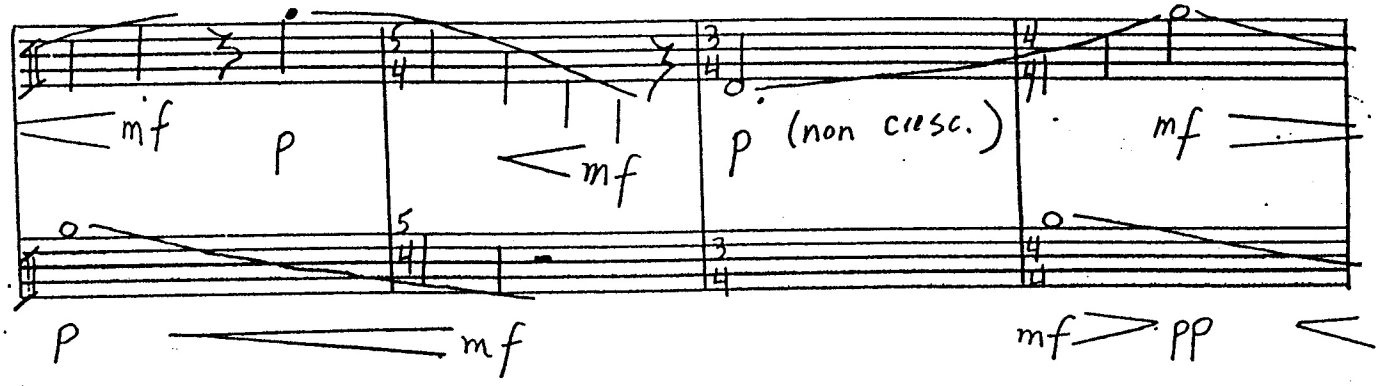
by Lois V. Vierk

R.H. with guitar pick, beyond the bridge



(sustain pedal down to m. 21) Also-have sostenuto wedged down, catching pitches as notated end of m. 20

5.



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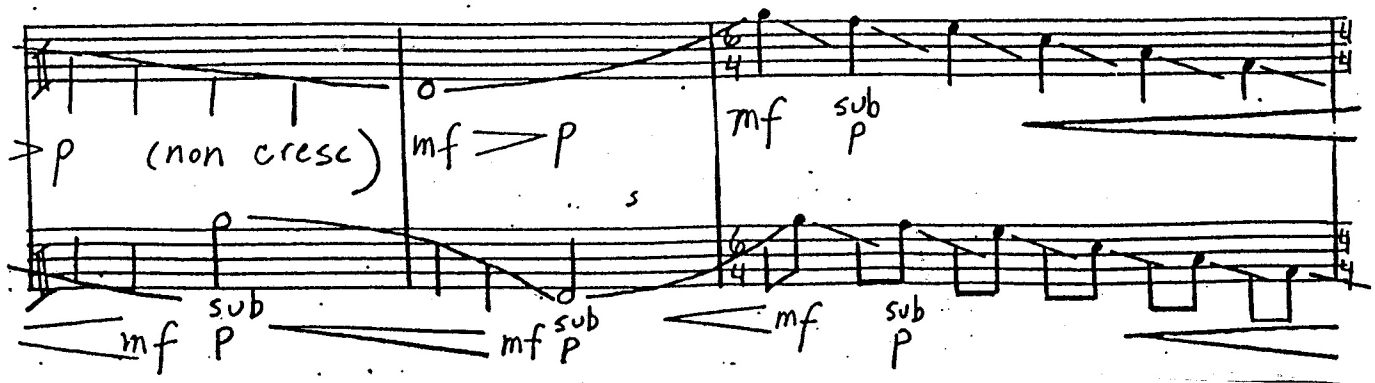

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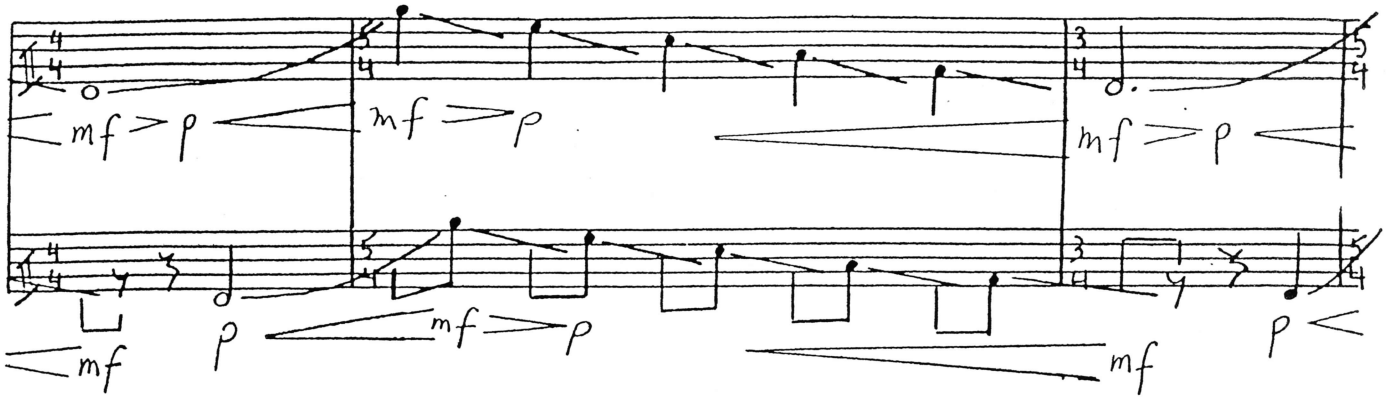
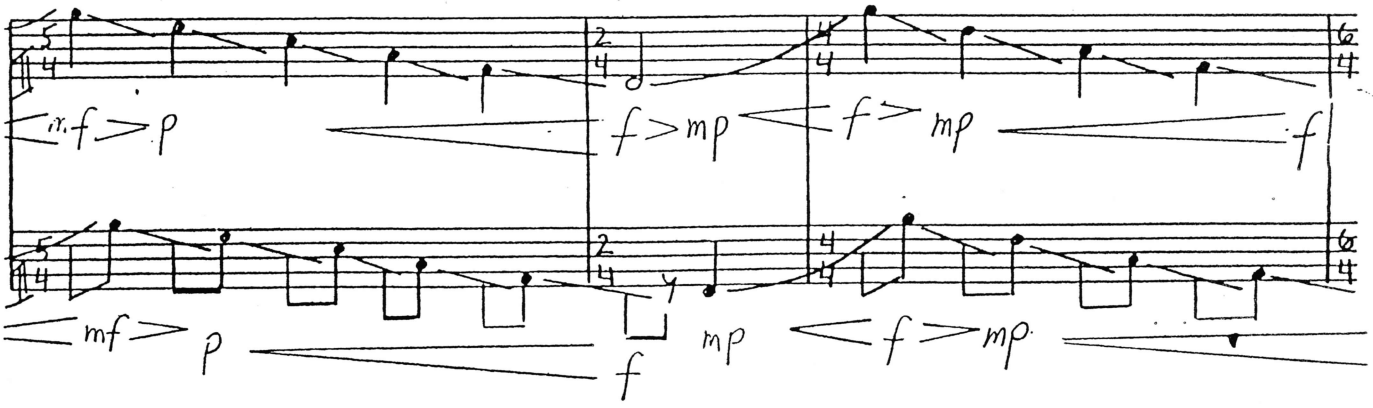
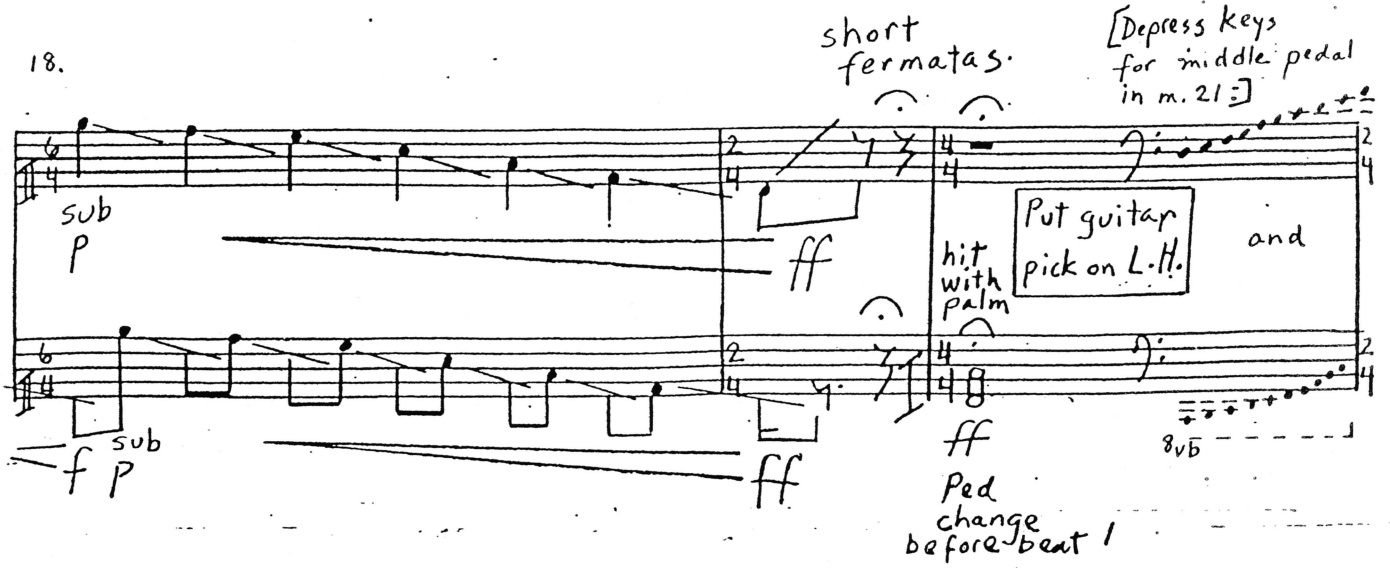
12.


mf > p
mf > p
mf > p
mf
p
mf > p
mf
p

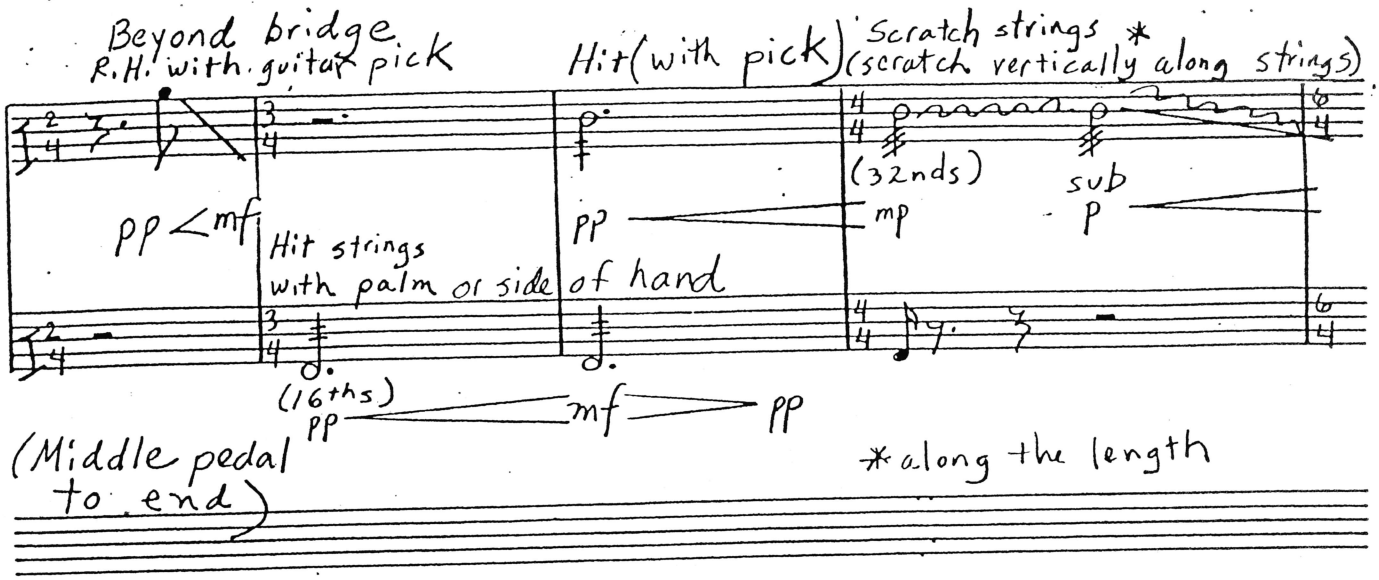
15.


mf > p
f > mp
f > mp
f
mf > p
f
mp
f > mp

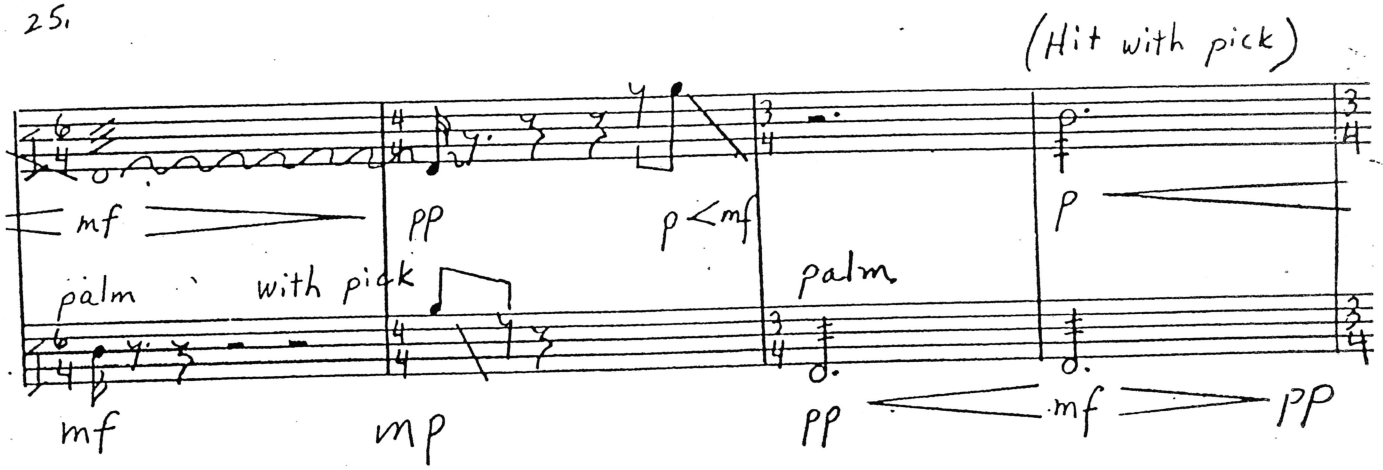
18.


short fermatas.
[Depress keys for middle pedal in m. 21:]
sub p
ff
hit with palm
Put guitar pick on L.H.
and
sub
f p
ff
ff
8vb
Ped change before beat 1

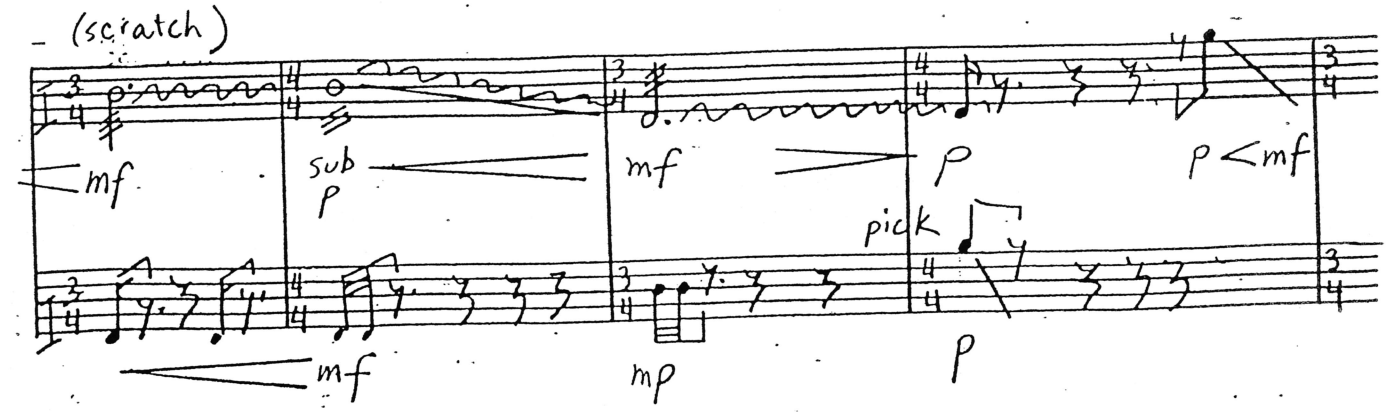
21. ♩≈60


Beyond bridge
R.H. with guitar pick
Hit (with pick)
Scratch strings *
(scratch vertically along strings)
pp < mf
Hit strings
with palm or side
of hand
(32nds)
mp
sub
p
(16ths)
pp
mf
pp
(Middle pedal
to end)
* along the length

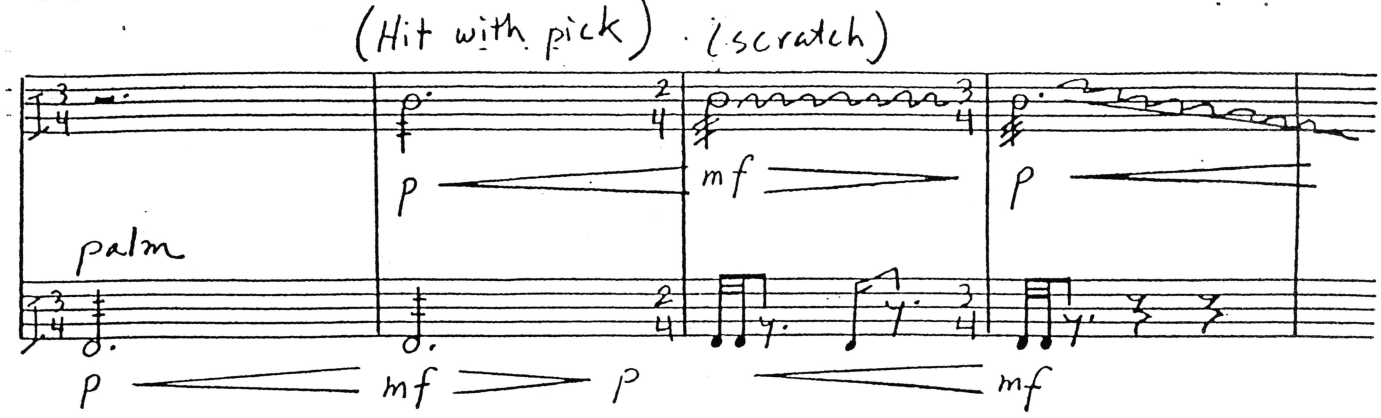
25.


(Hit with pick)
mf
pp
p < mf
palm
with pick
palm
p
mf
mp
pp
mf
pp

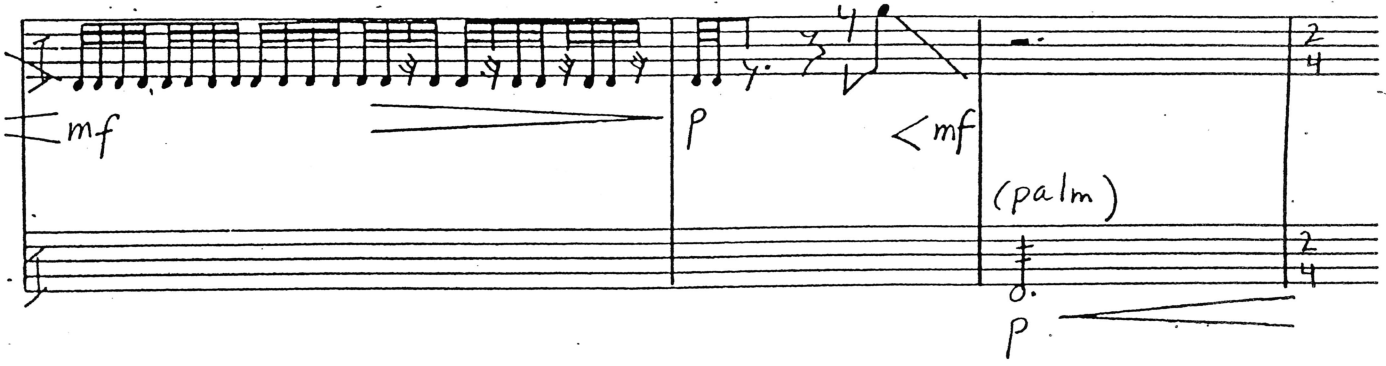
29.


(scratch)
mf
sub
p
mf
p
p < mf
pick
mf
mp
p

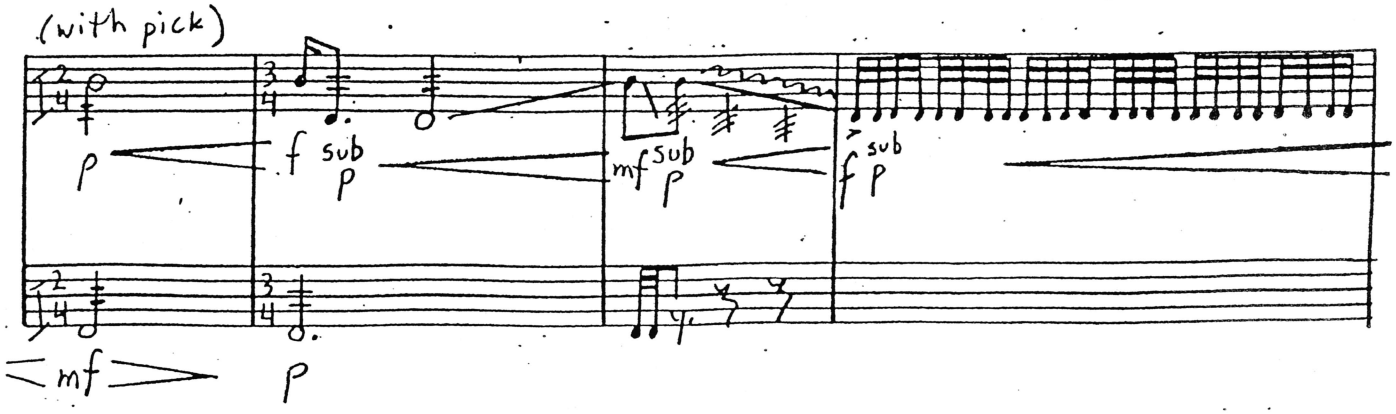
33.


(Hit with pick)
(scratch)
palm
p
mf
p
mf
p
p
mf
p
mf

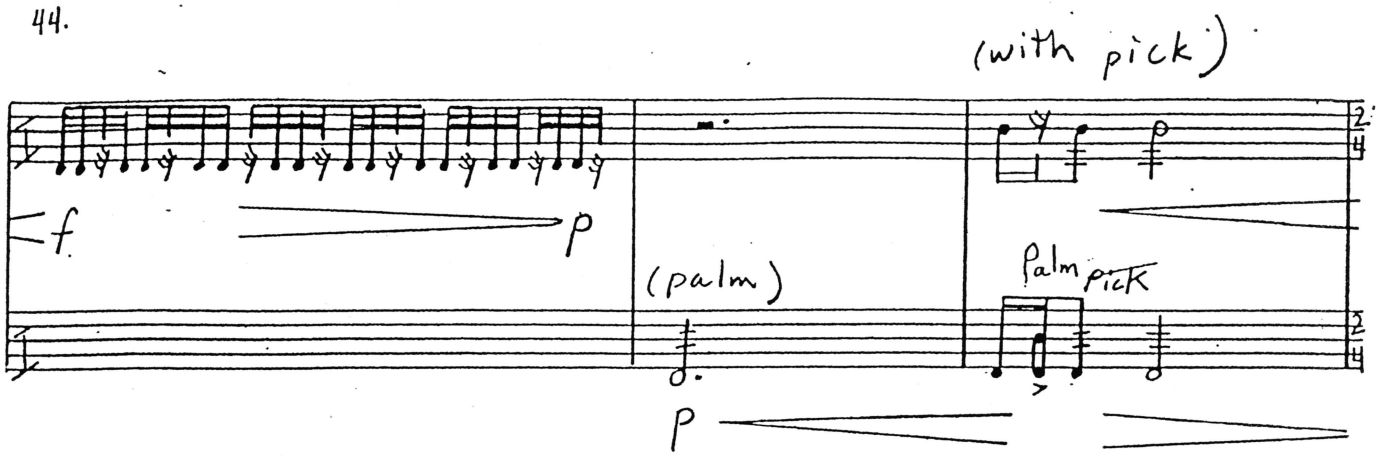
37.


(scratch)
mf
p
<mf
(palm)
p

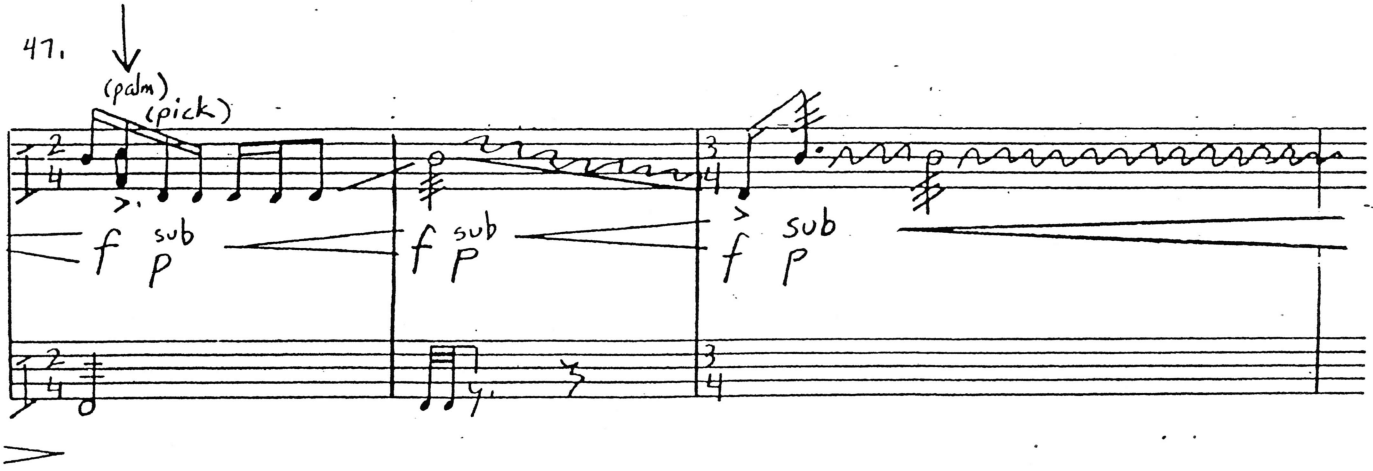
40.


(with pick)
p
f sub p
mf sub p
f sub p
<mf
p

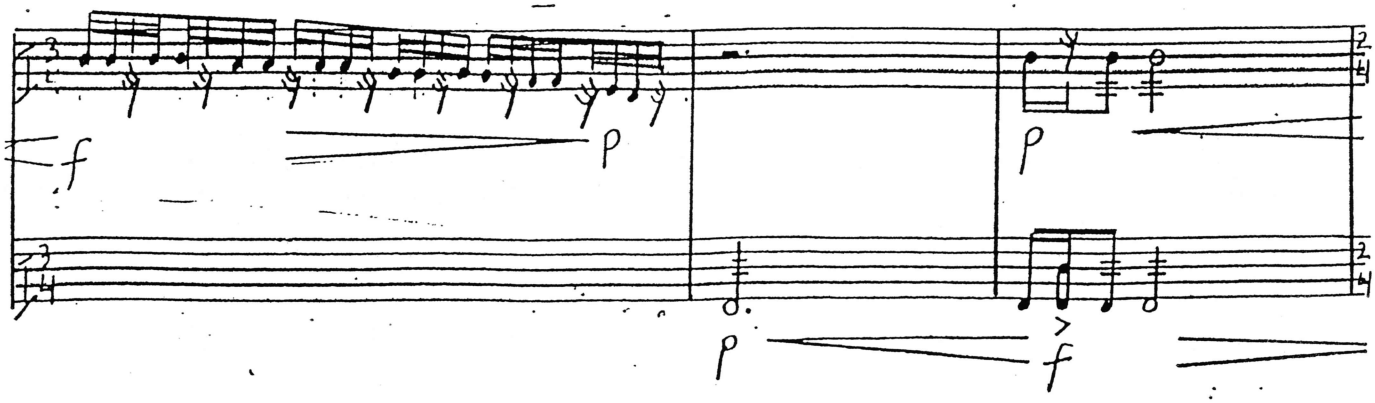
44.


(with pick)
f
p
(palm)
Palm pick
p

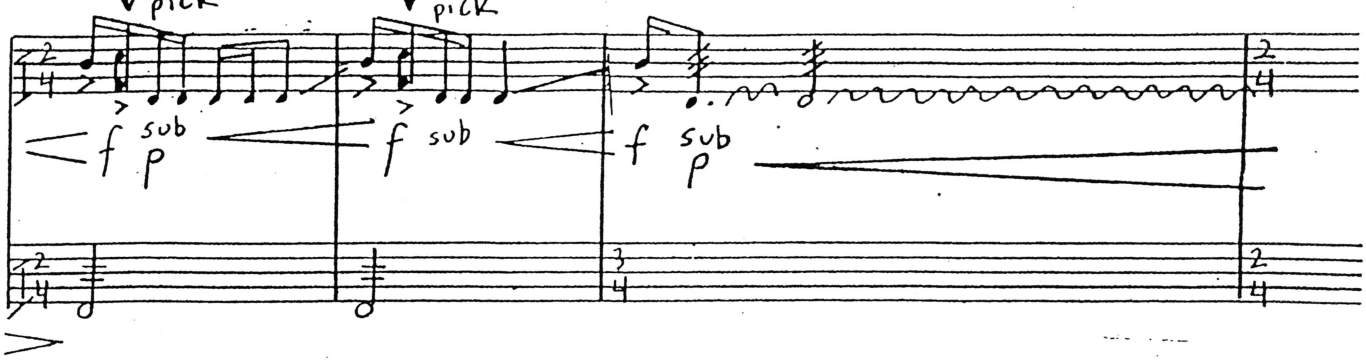
47.


(palm)
(pick)
f sub p
f sub p
f sub p

50.


f
p
p
p
f

53. palm ↓ pick palm ↓ pick



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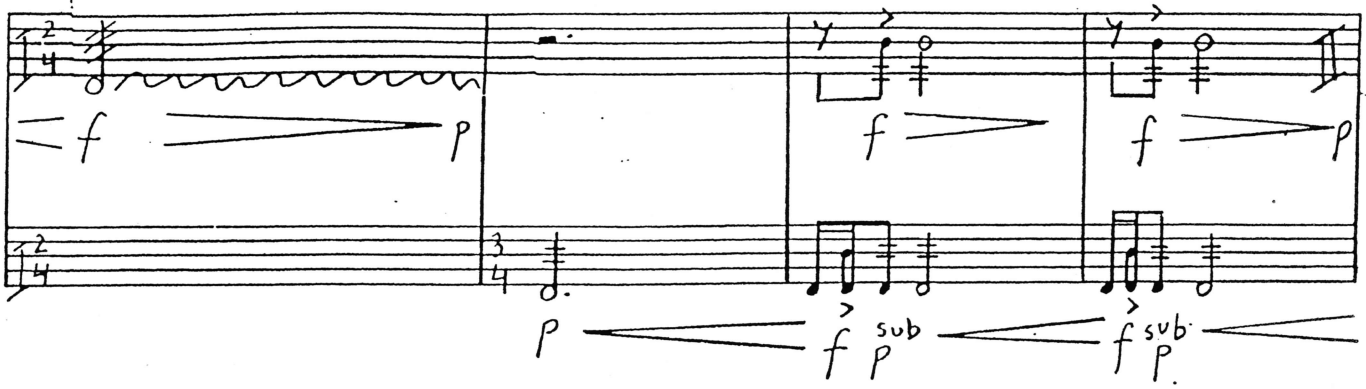
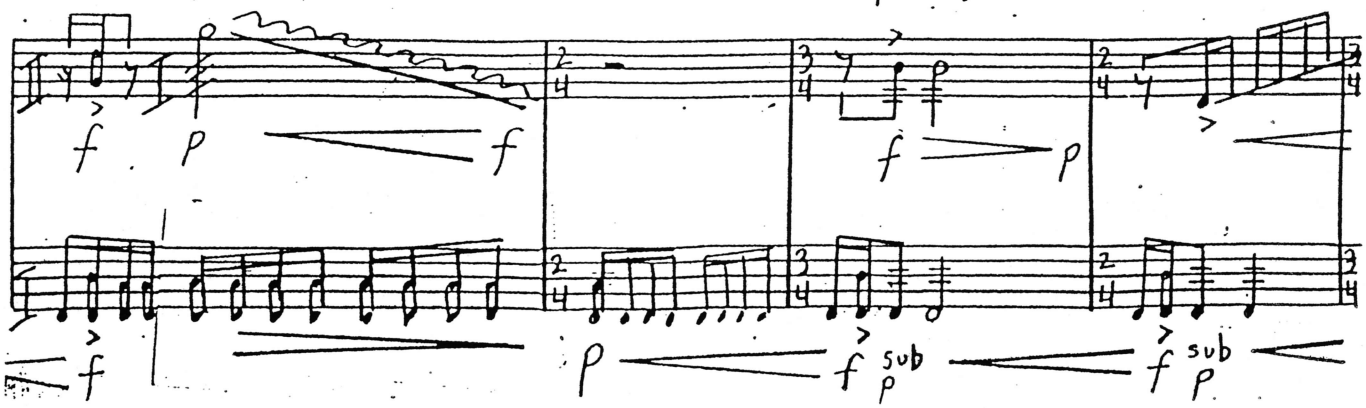
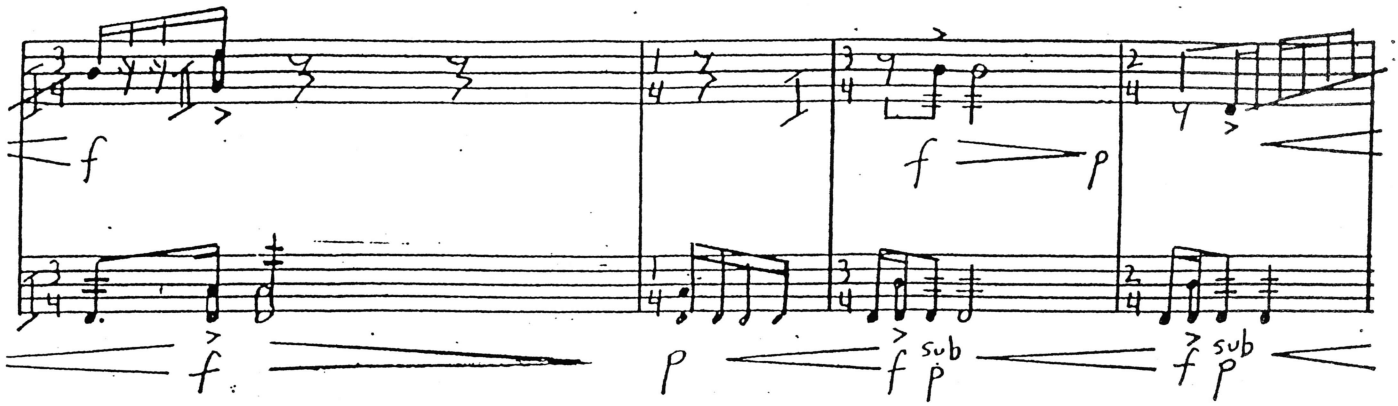


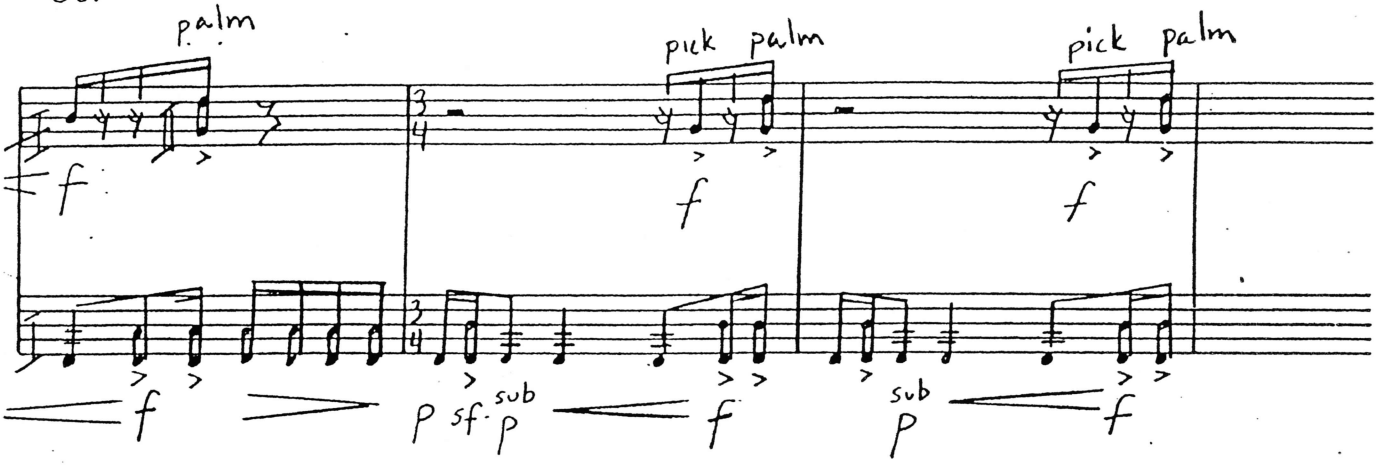
60.

(palm) (pick) (pick)

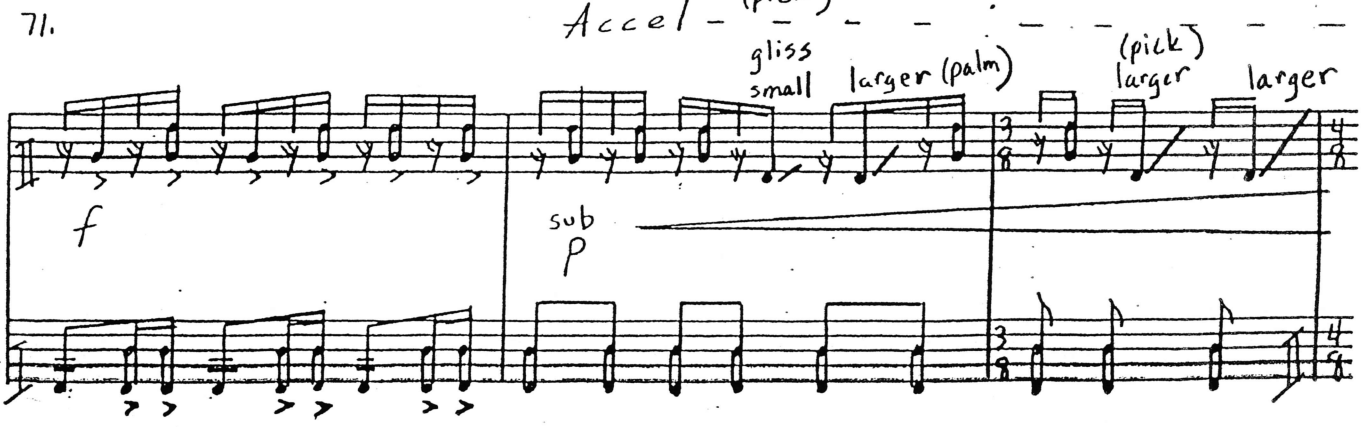



f
f
f
p
f
sub
p
f
sub
p

68.


palm
pick
palm
pick
palm
f
f
f
f
p
sf
sub
p
f
p
sub
f

71.


Accel - (pick)
gliss
small
larger (palm)
(pick)
larger
larger
f
sub
p

74. Both hands with pick

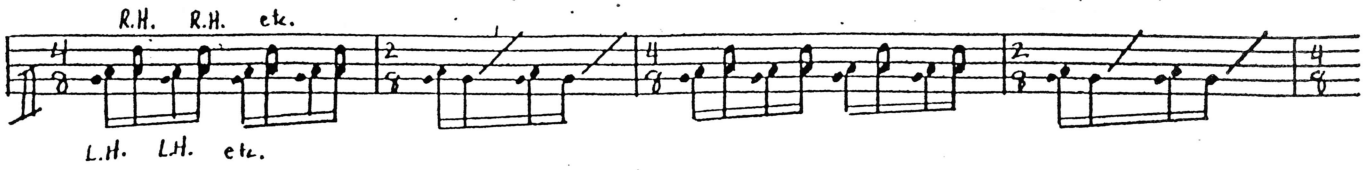
8

♪≈76

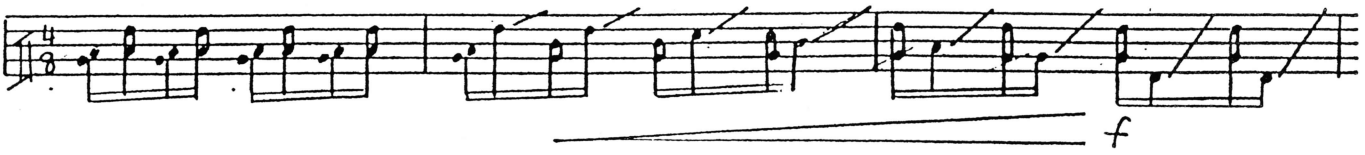
R.H. R.H. etc.

L.H. L.H. etc.

sub mp



7.8.



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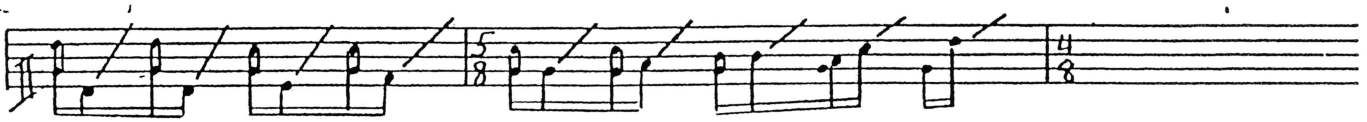

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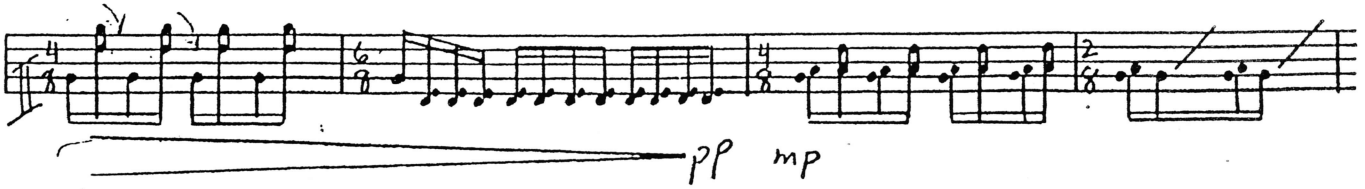

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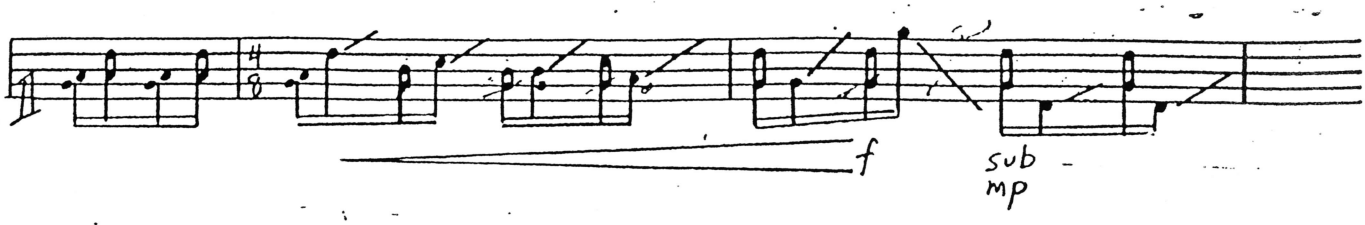

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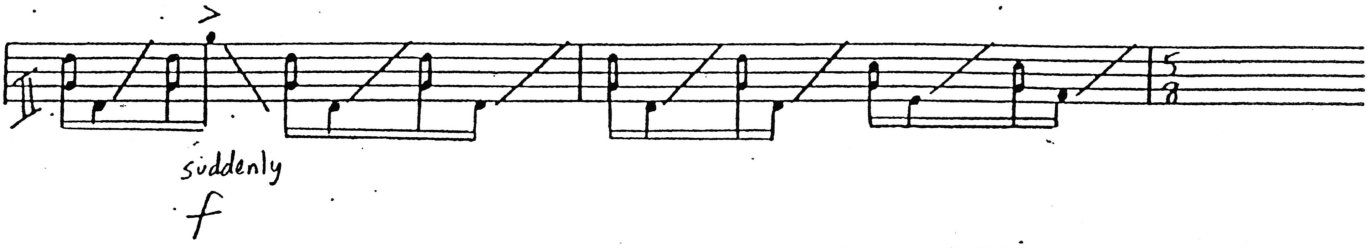

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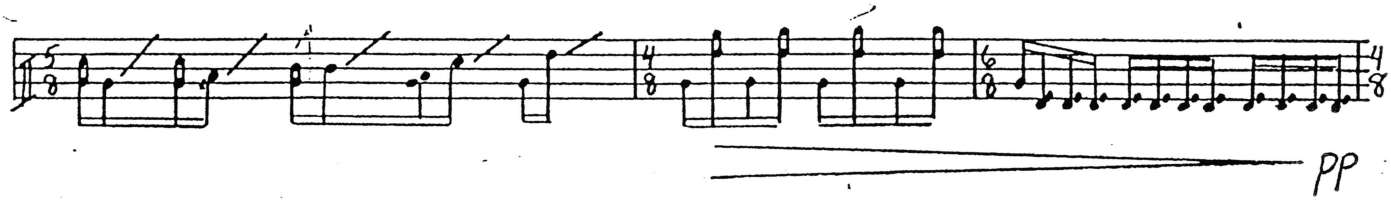

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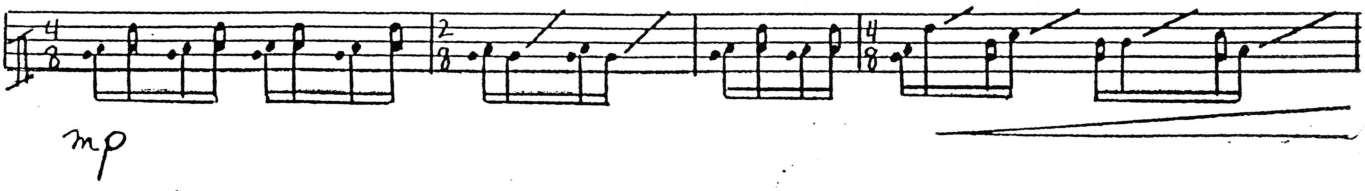

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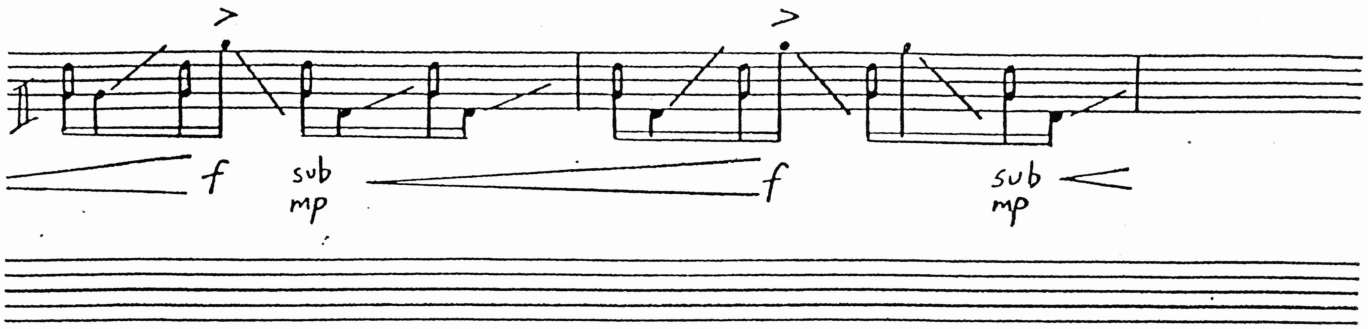

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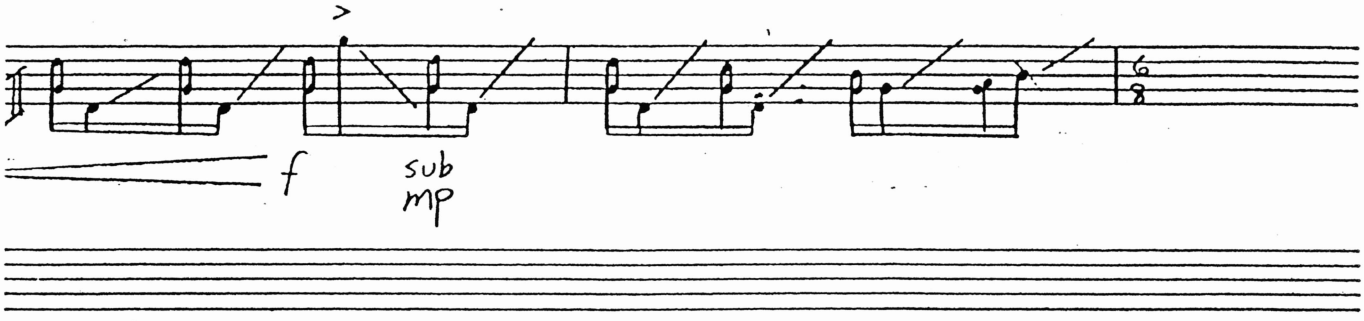

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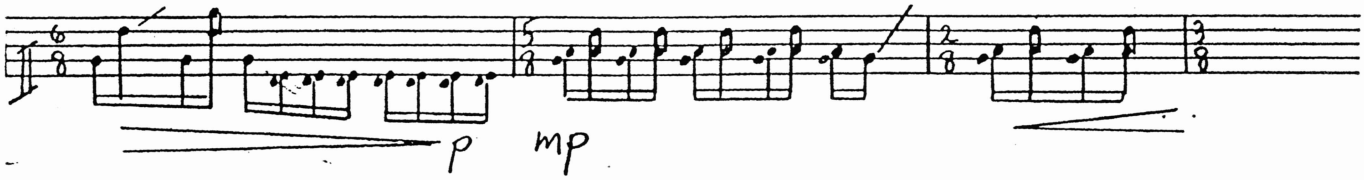

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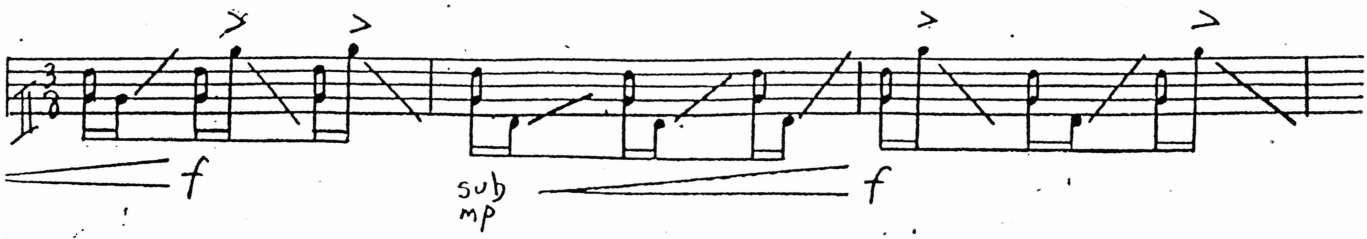

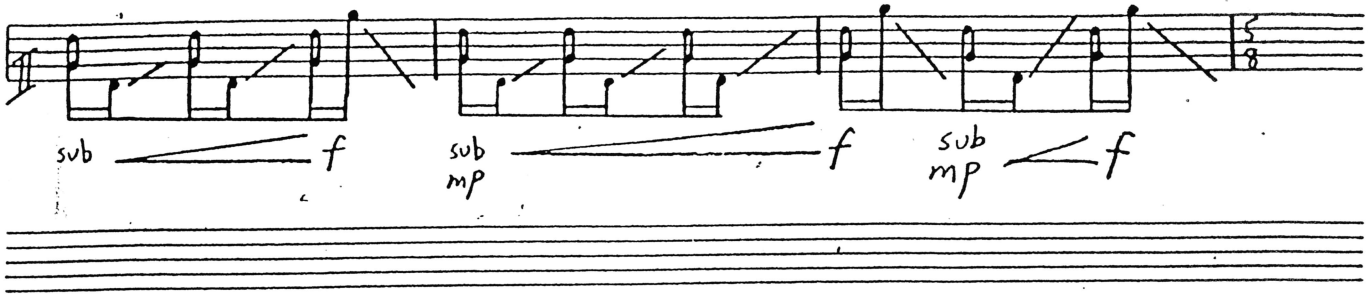

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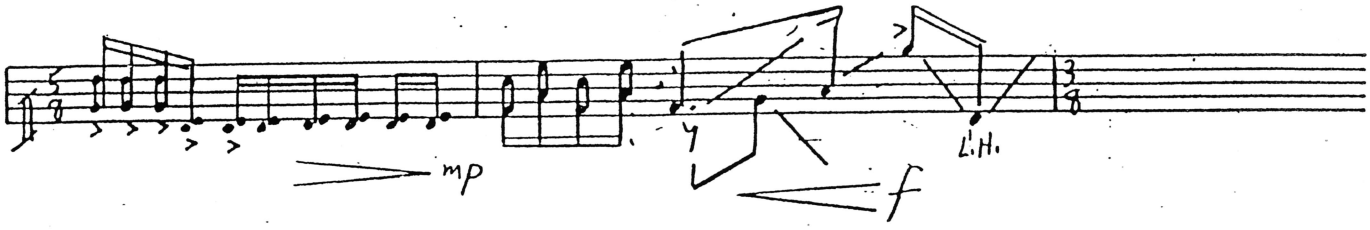

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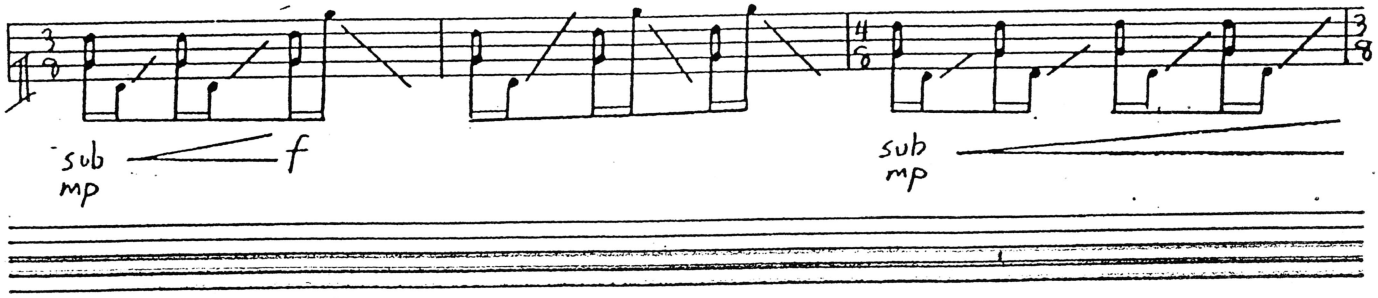

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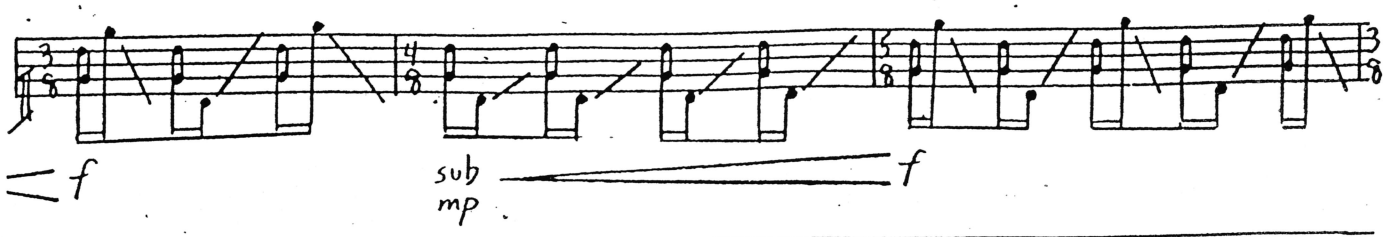

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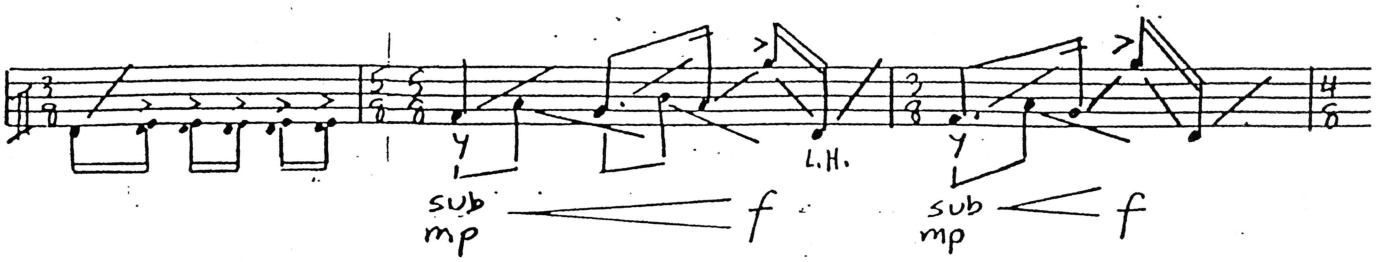

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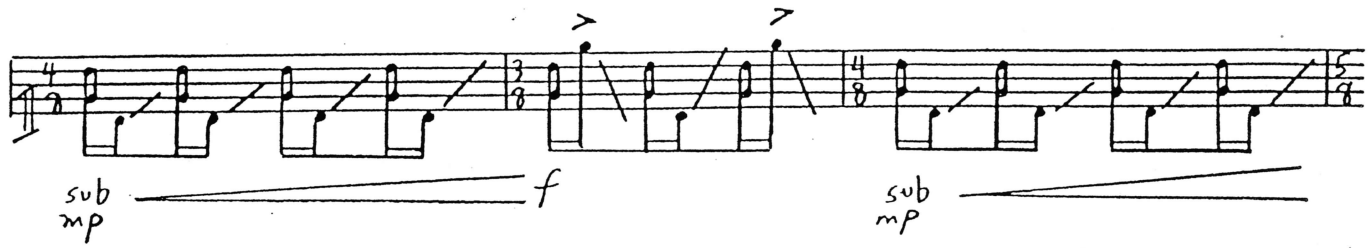

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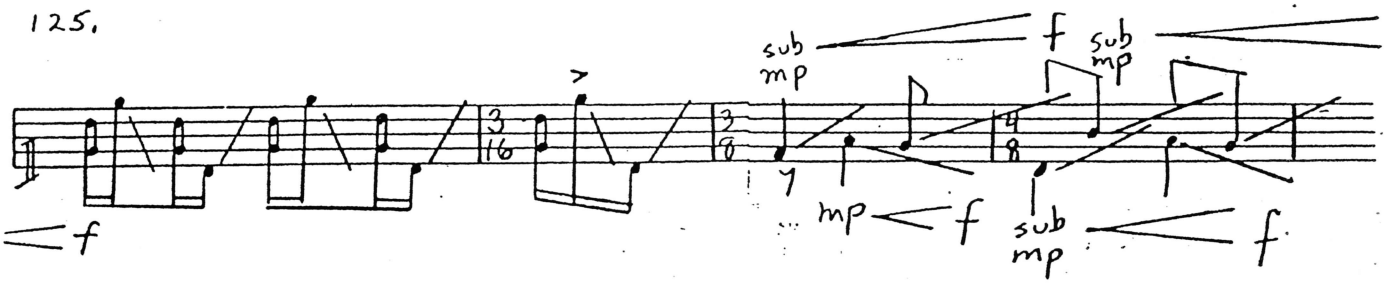

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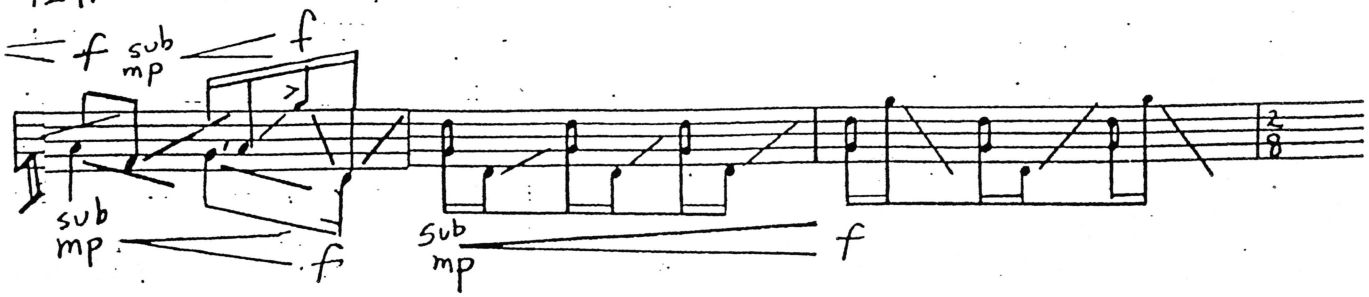

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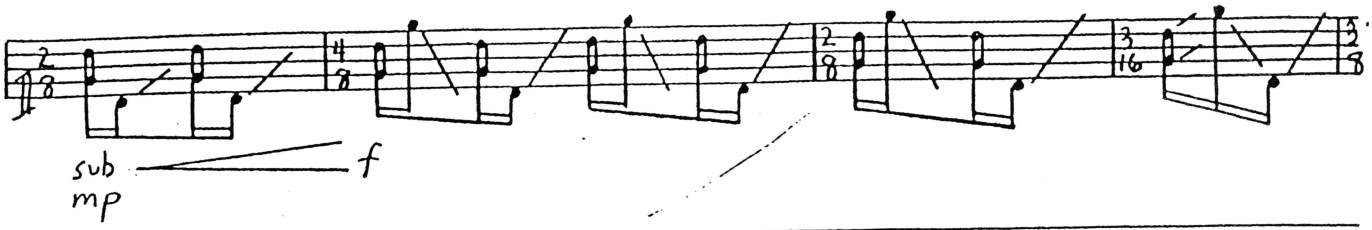
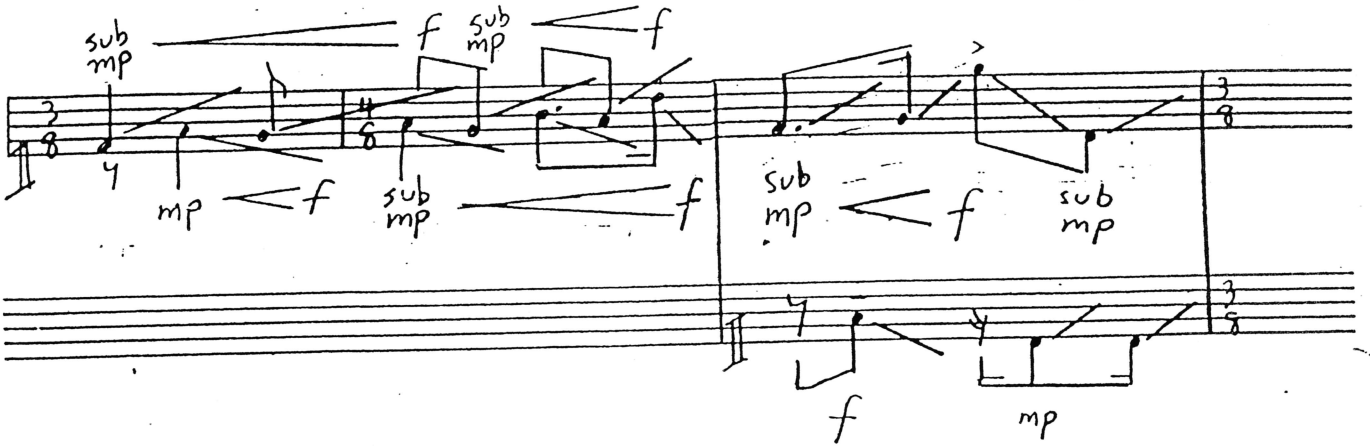

sub
mp
f


sub
mp
f
sub
mp
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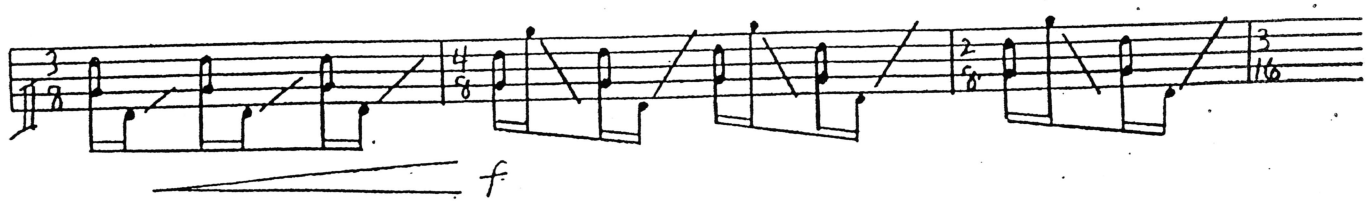
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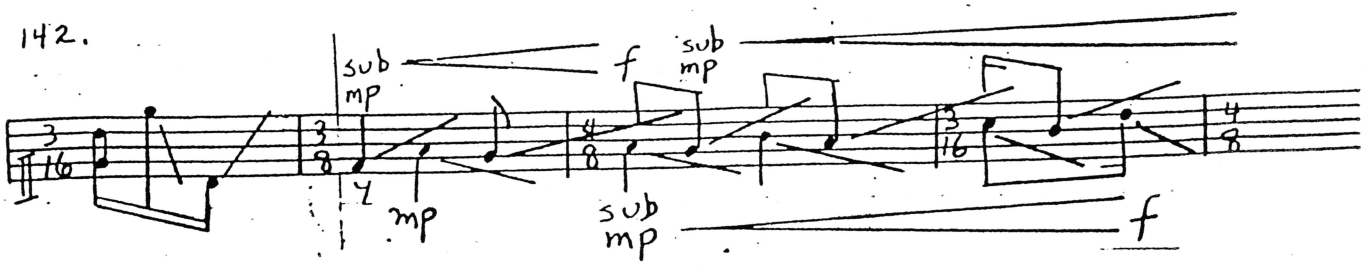
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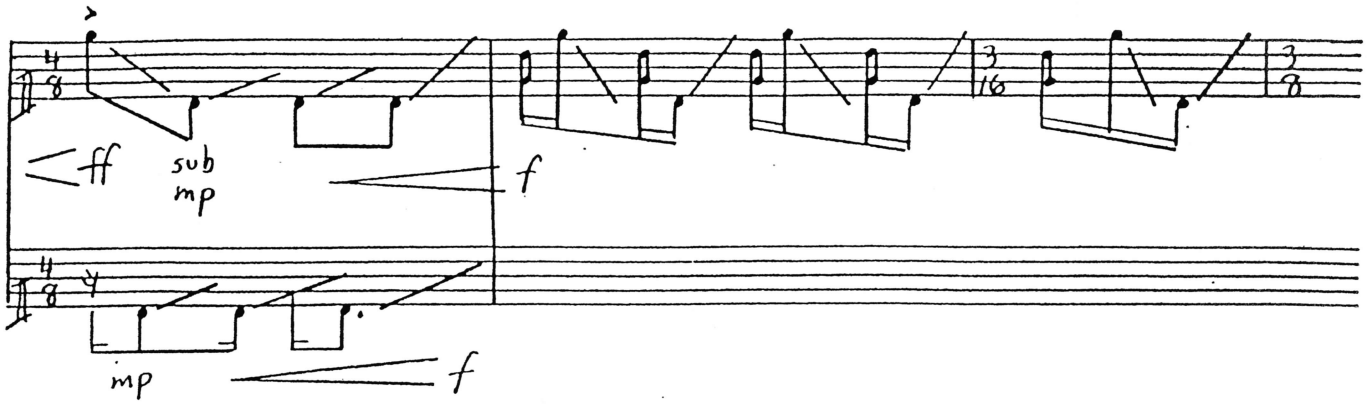

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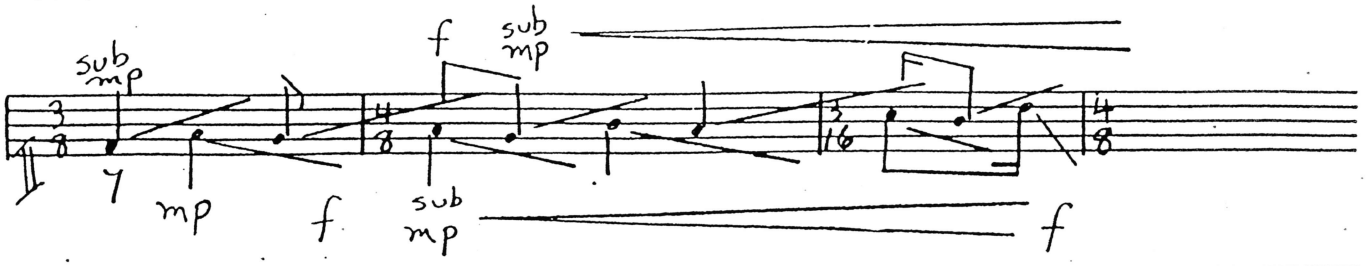

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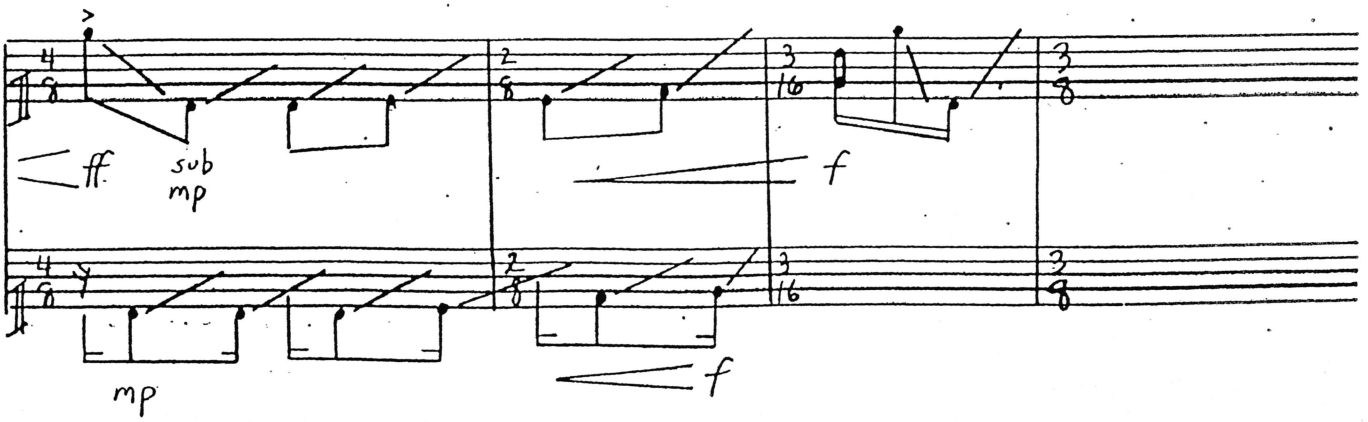

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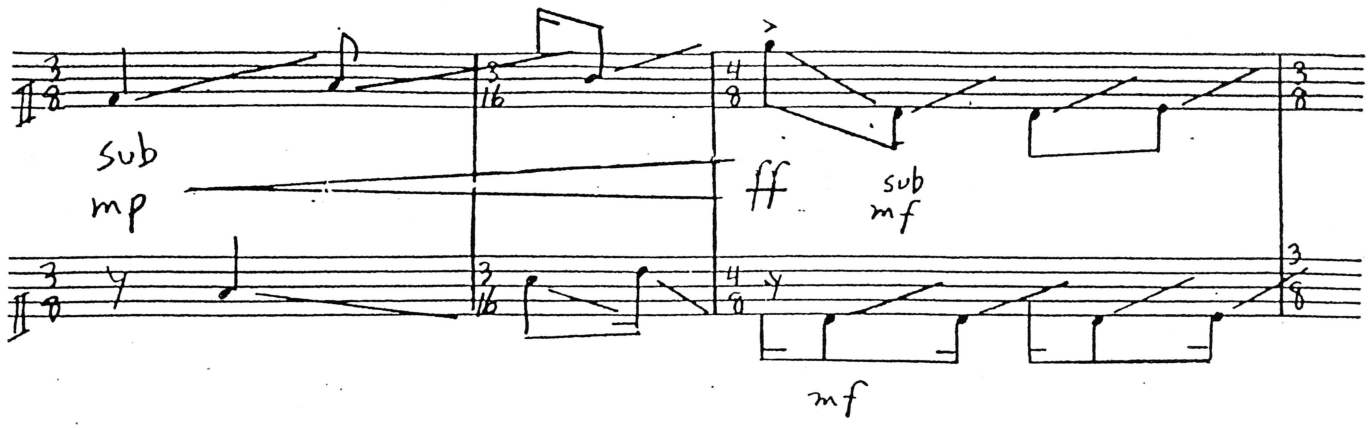

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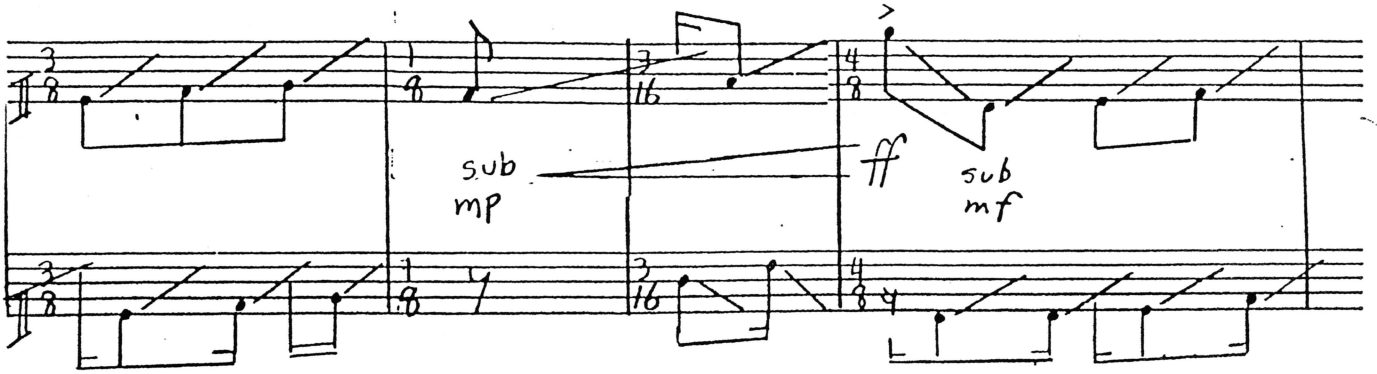

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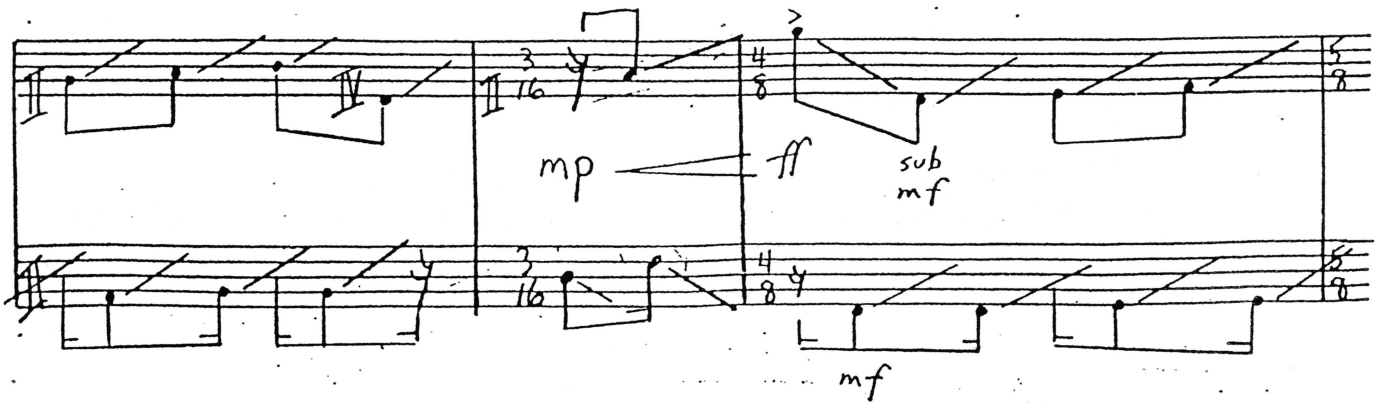

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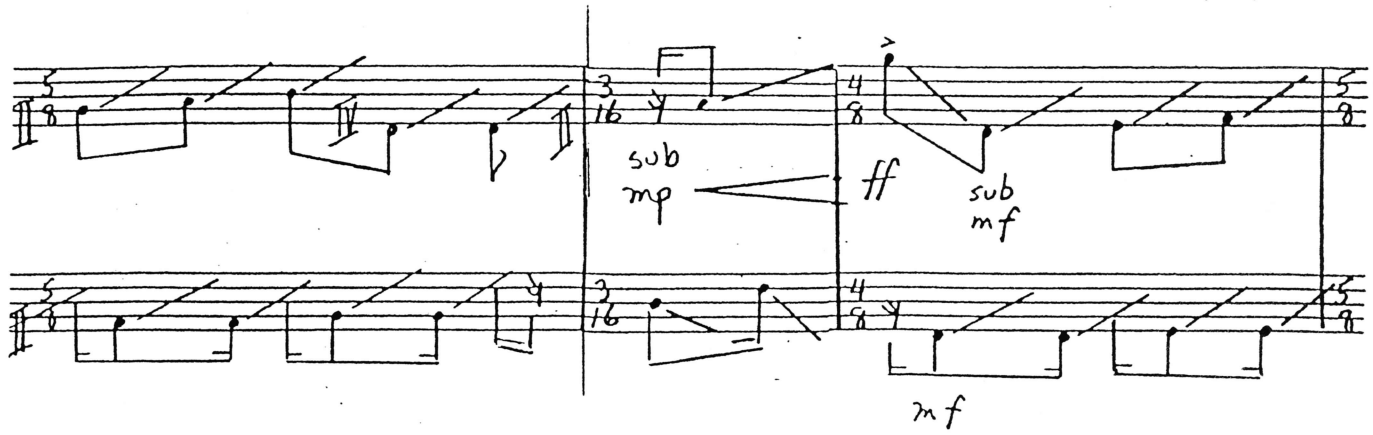

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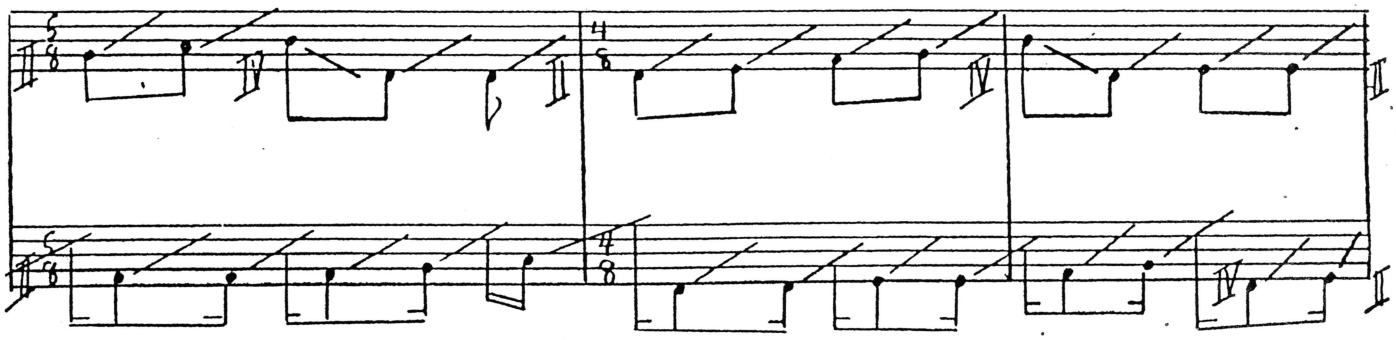

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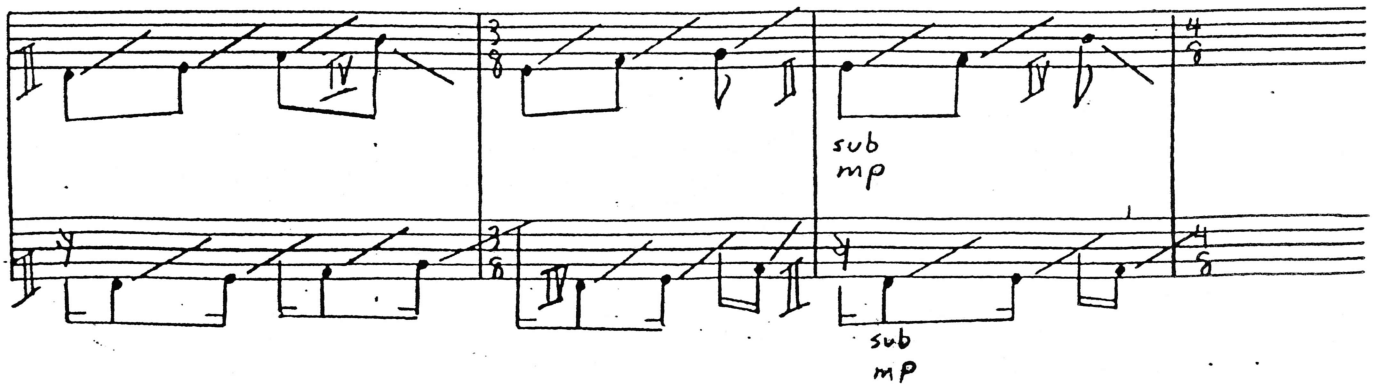

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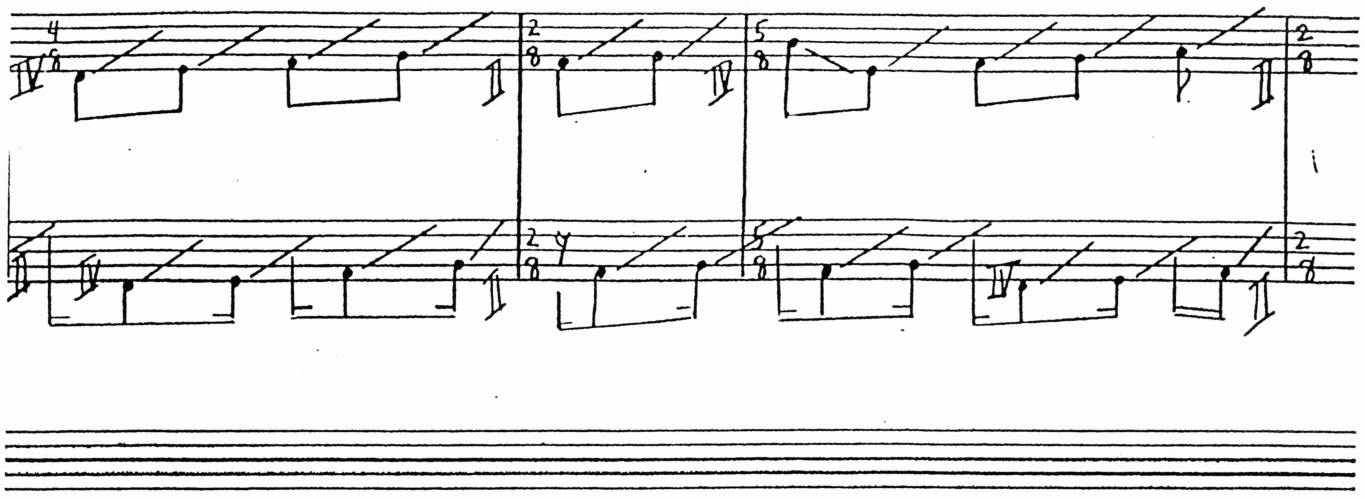

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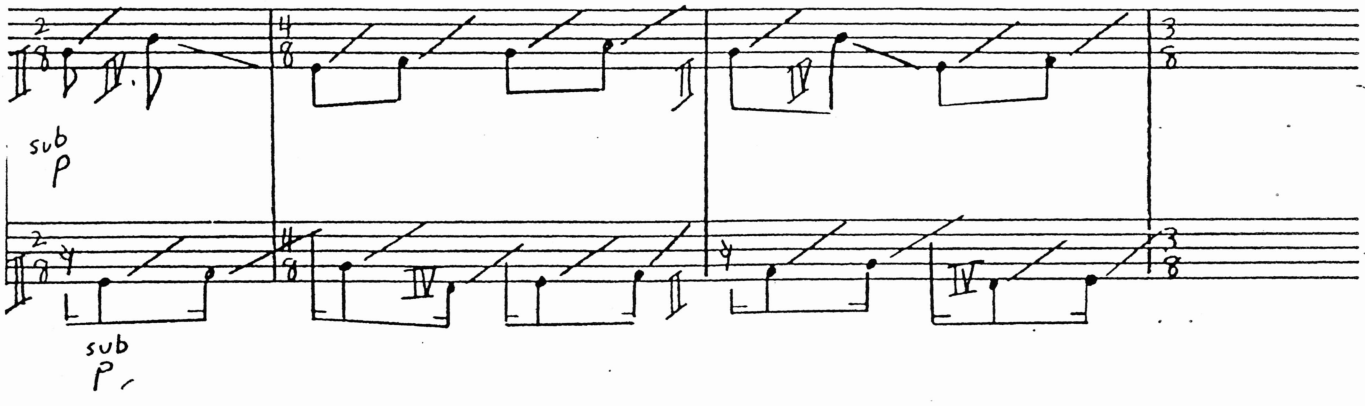

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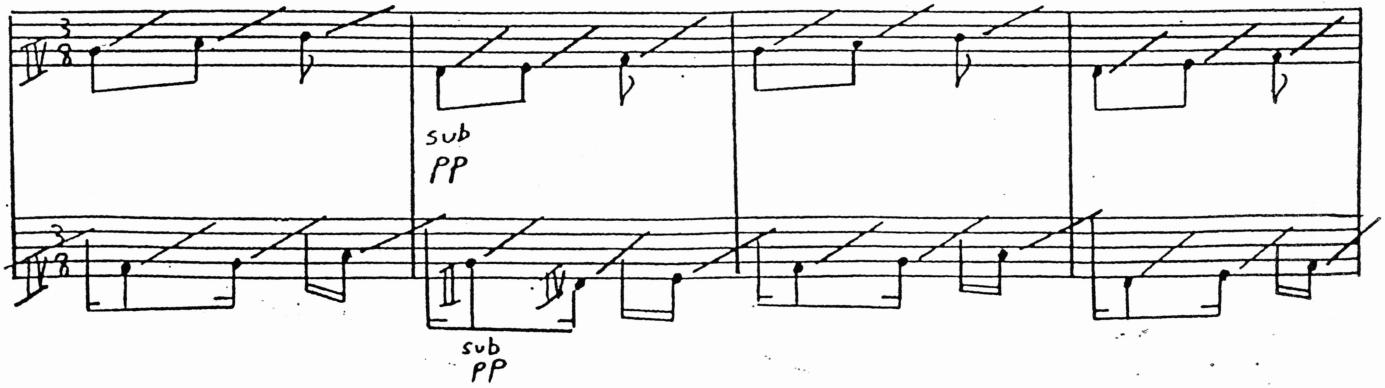

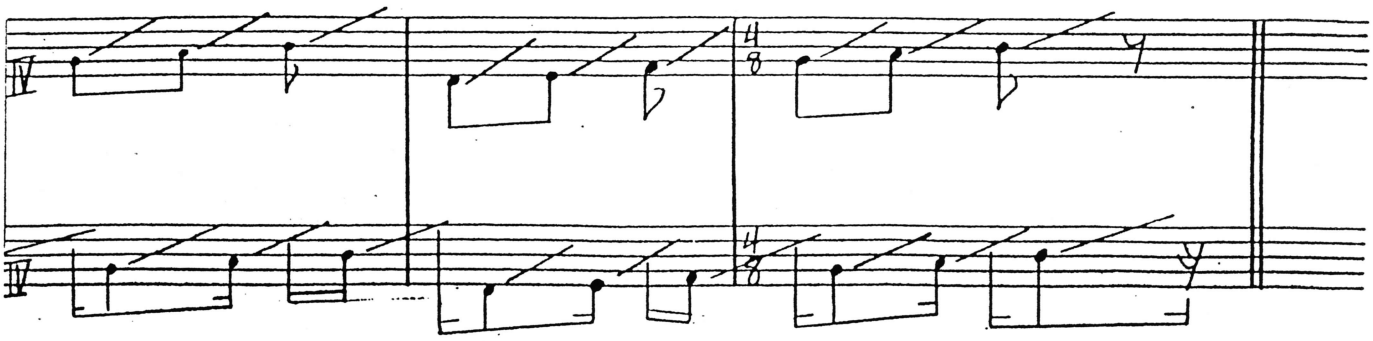

Score is available from Frog Peak Music

http://frogpeak.org/

For performance questions please contact the composer

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