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Animal Songs

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Jamie Wind Whitmarsh
2012

Animal Songs

for reed quintet

duration: approximately
7 minutes and 30 seconds

Animal Songs

PERFORMANCE NOTES

1. Trills should be the interval of a half step, unless otherwise noted.
2. Key clicks should always utilize as many keys as possible. Furthermore, the ensemble should coordinate the visual aspect of the key clicks, so that a 'snapping' effect is acheived.

PROGRAM NOTES

The ideas for *Animal Songs* grew organically over a period of time. My initial intent was to write music for the reed quintet – an ensemble that I find more inviting than the woodwind quintet, largely due to its homogeneity. As I dove into writing this piece, I began to notice (or imagine) some similarities to certain members of the Animal Kingdom. Thus, the scope of the piece was informed by what types of and how many different animals I wanted to include. While it would be easy to write about more common animals (cat, dog, horse, etc.), I wanted to give respect and attention to animals that do not normally receive their fair share of publicity.

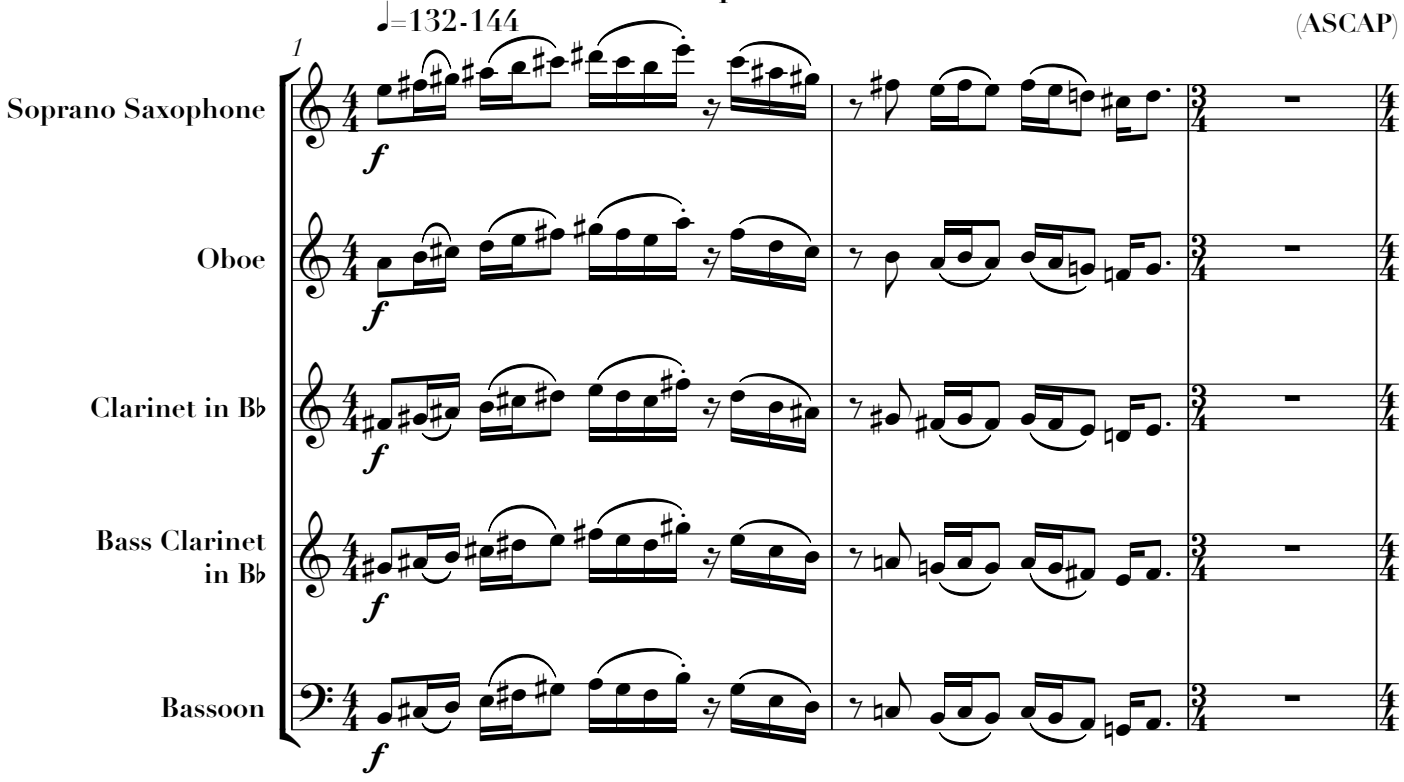
The Squirrel, The Barracuda and *The Snail* were mostly completed in one night, while *The Axolotl* and *The Bonobo* took several months to finish. *The Squirrel* utilizes vertical chunks of material that appear suddenly, often with no preparation. While listening to this music, one can imagine the skittish nature of a squirrel in a park. *The Barracuda* utilizes a four-note shape (the first four notes of the piece), which mirrors the pronunciation of the word 'barracuda'. Key-clicks from the ensemble imply the snapping of jaws. The image of a snail stretching itself over a long period of time to travel from one branch to another was the inspiration for the third movement. Although typically seen as a less 'serious' animal, I feel that the act of traveling – or even just surviving – must be an exhausting one for the snail. As such, *The Snail* takes on a noble quality that one might not ordinarily expect to associate with this animal. *The Axolotl* is quite musically sarcastic. Beginning with a lop-sided waltz, the odd appearance of this animal is mirrored in the tempo variations that permeate the work. The final movement, *The Bonobo*, seeks to synthesize musical elements from prior movements, drawing most heavily from *The Squirrel* throughout. Various cute chimp-like sounds occur, until the listener is reminded near the end that even the cutest monkey is still a wild ape that should not be trusted. The final measure of the piece combines musical material from each of the movements.

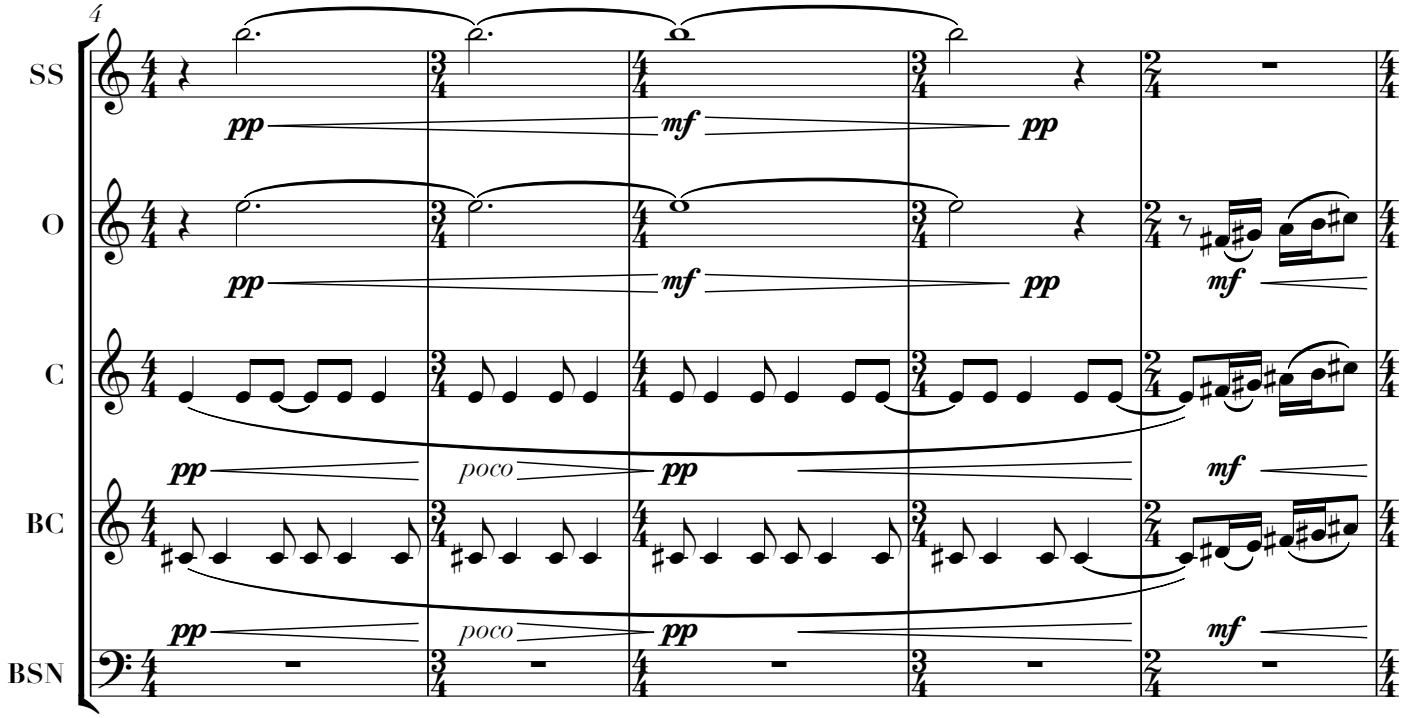
JWW

Animal Songs

I. The Squirrel

Jamie Wind Whitmarsh
(ASCAP)





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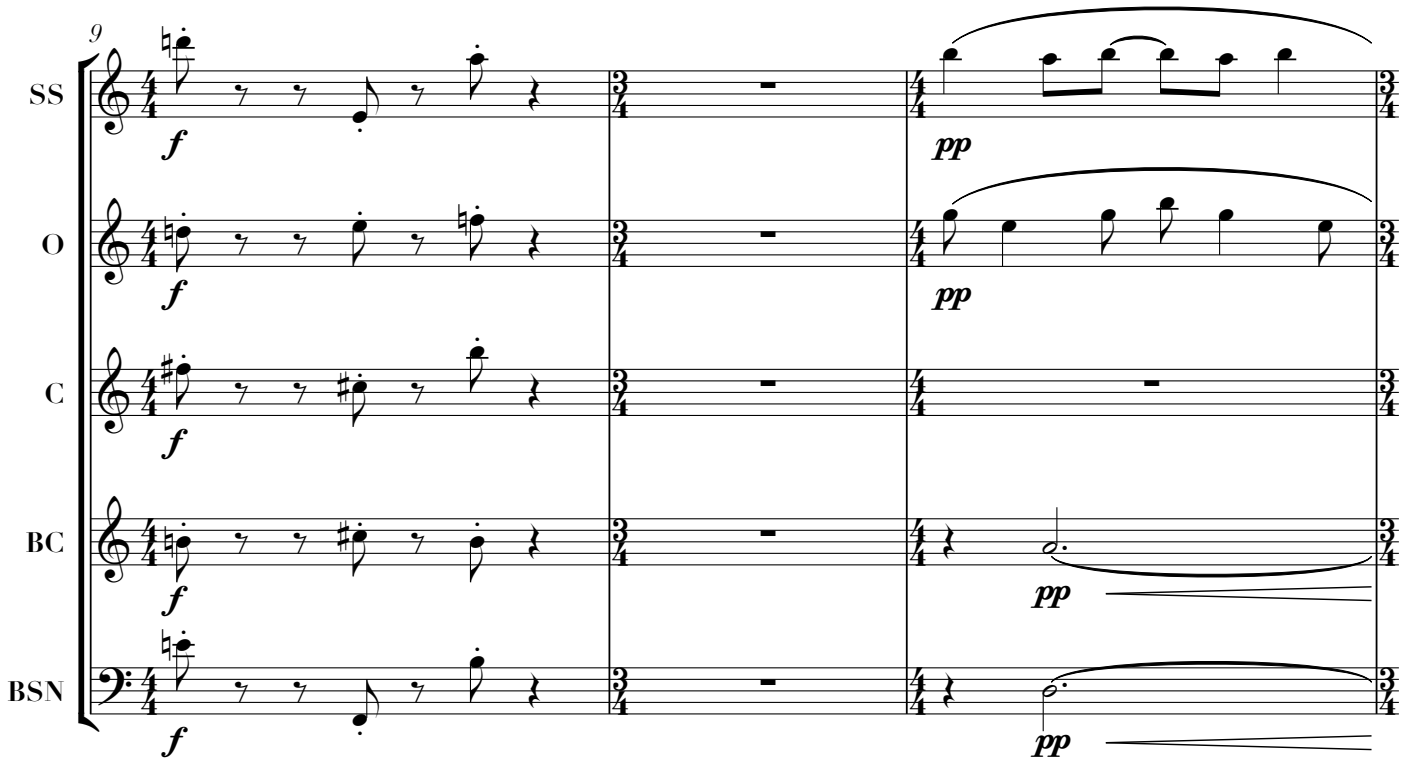

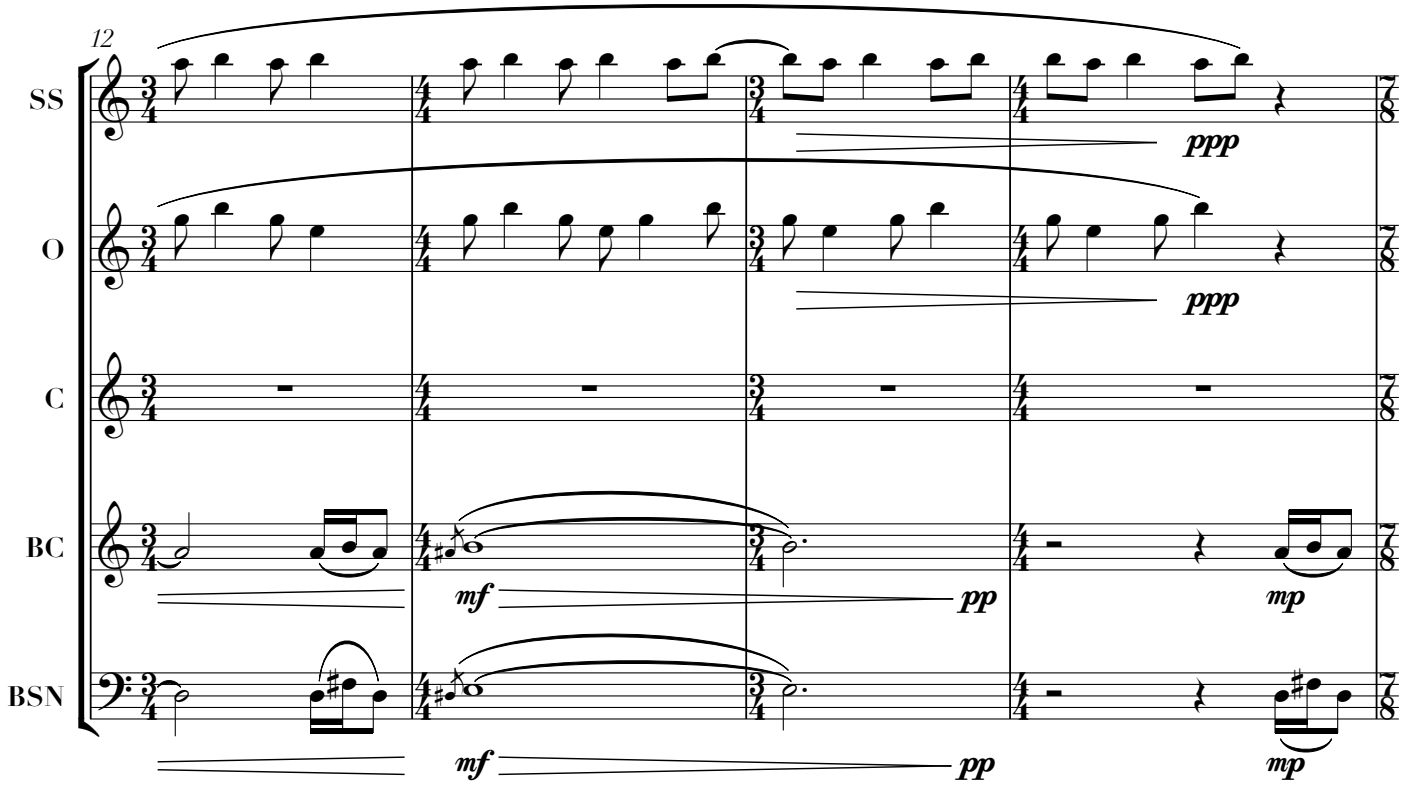

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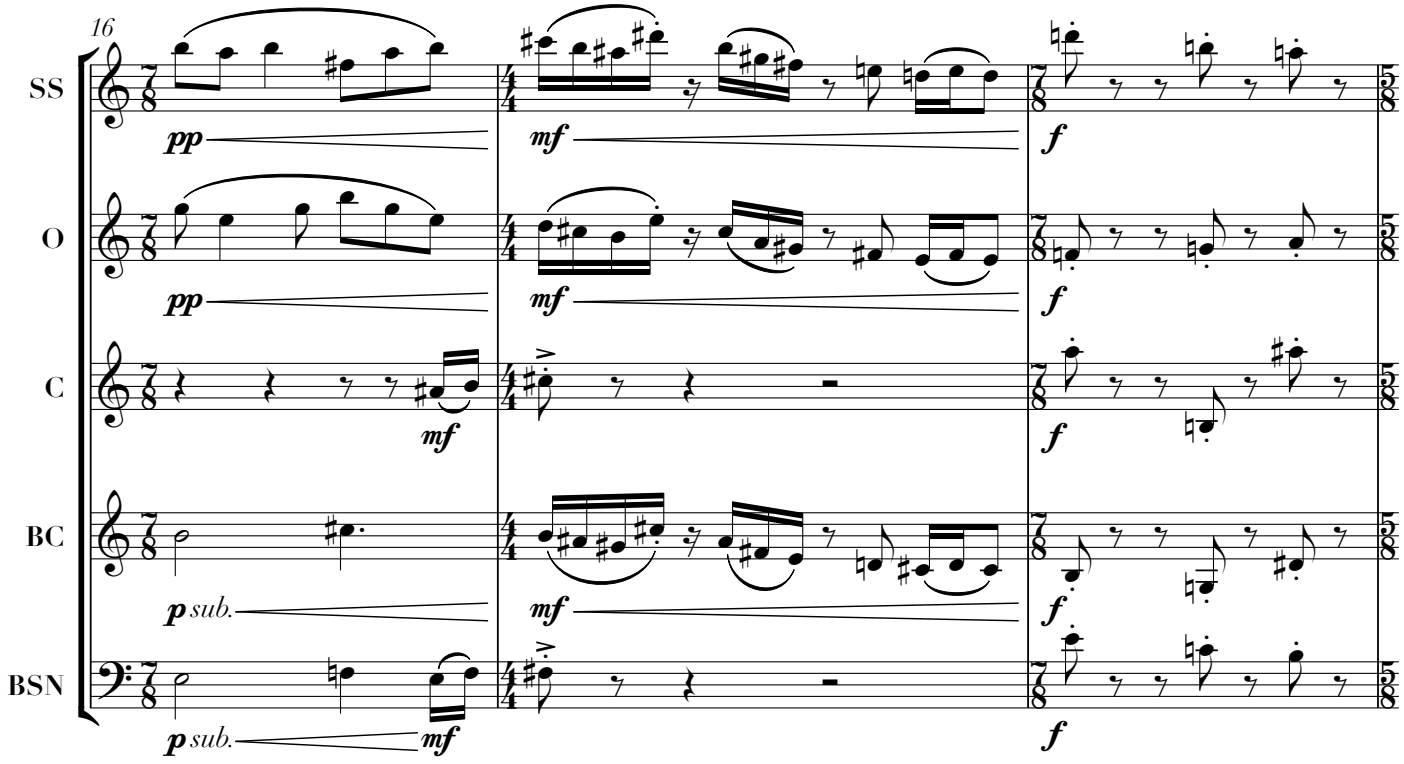

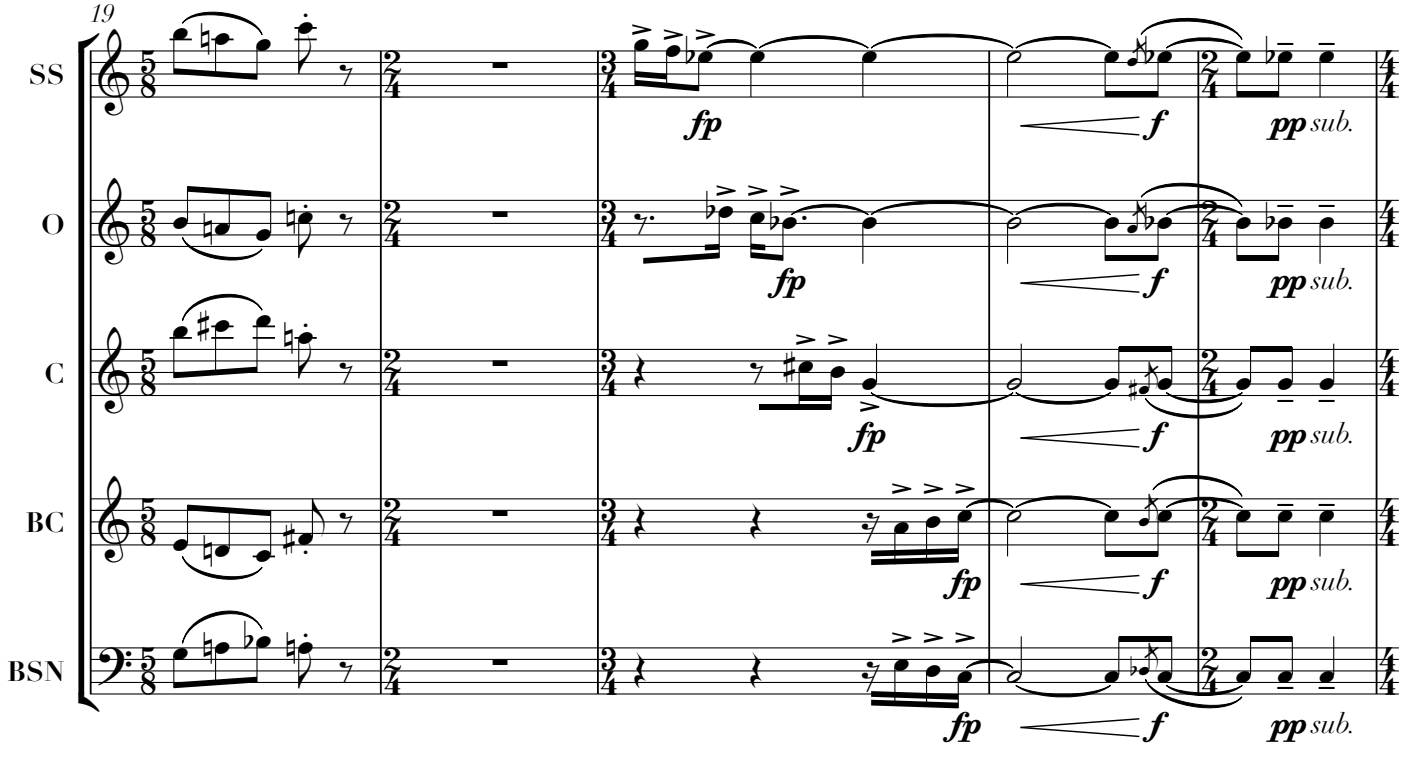

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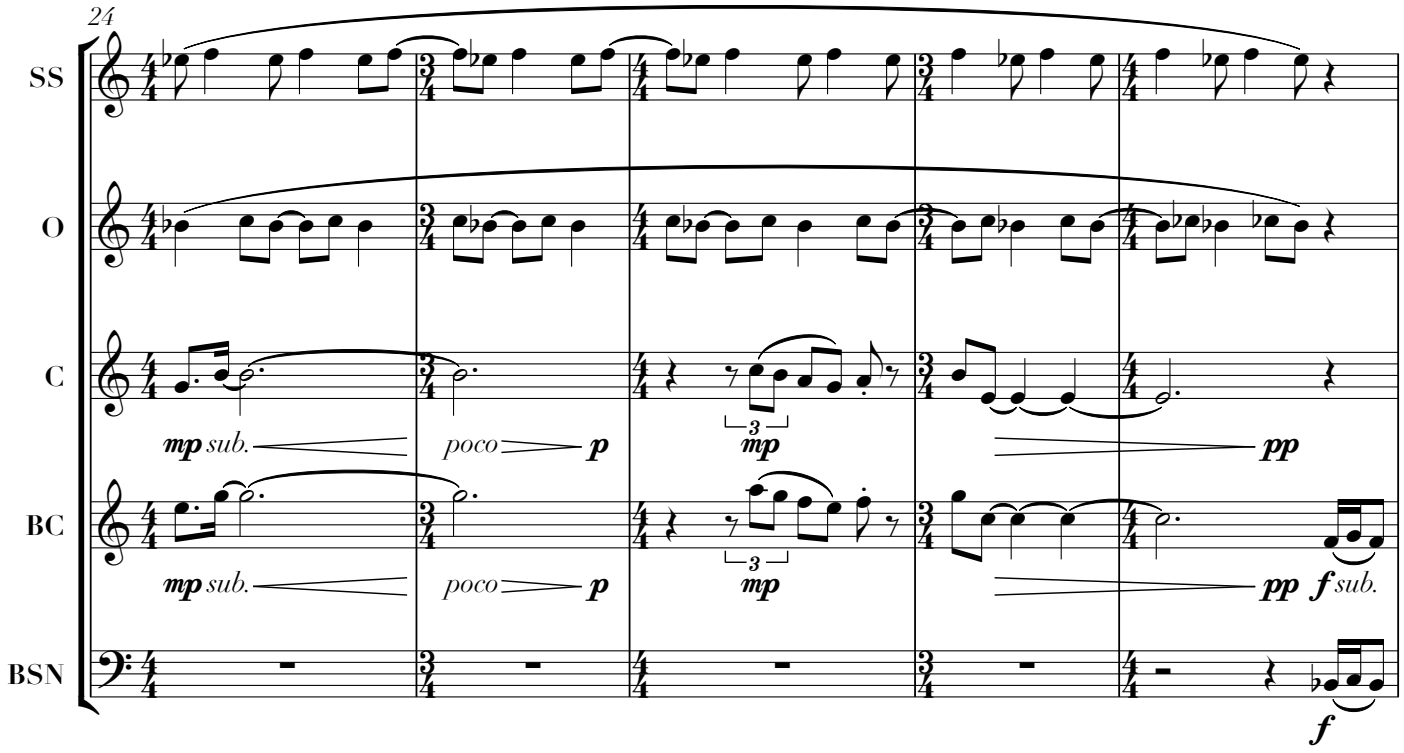

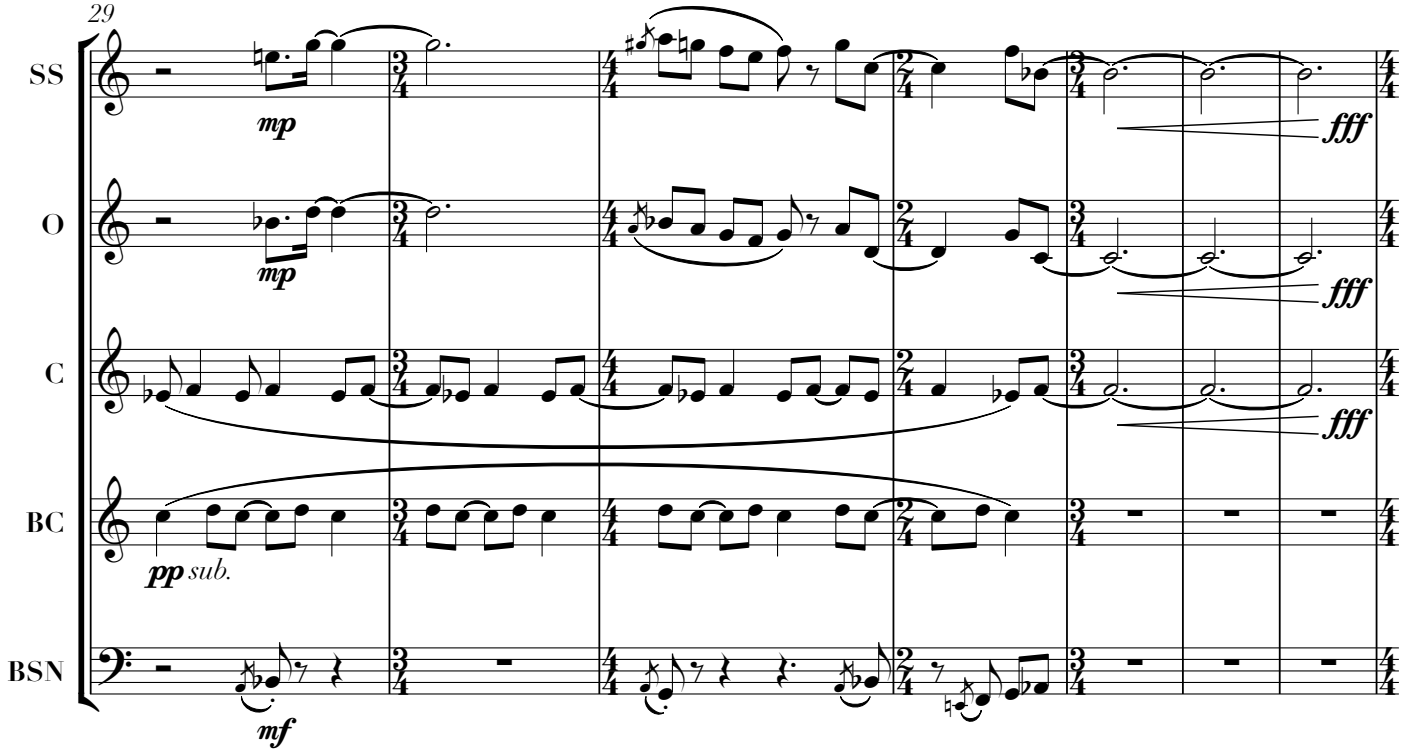

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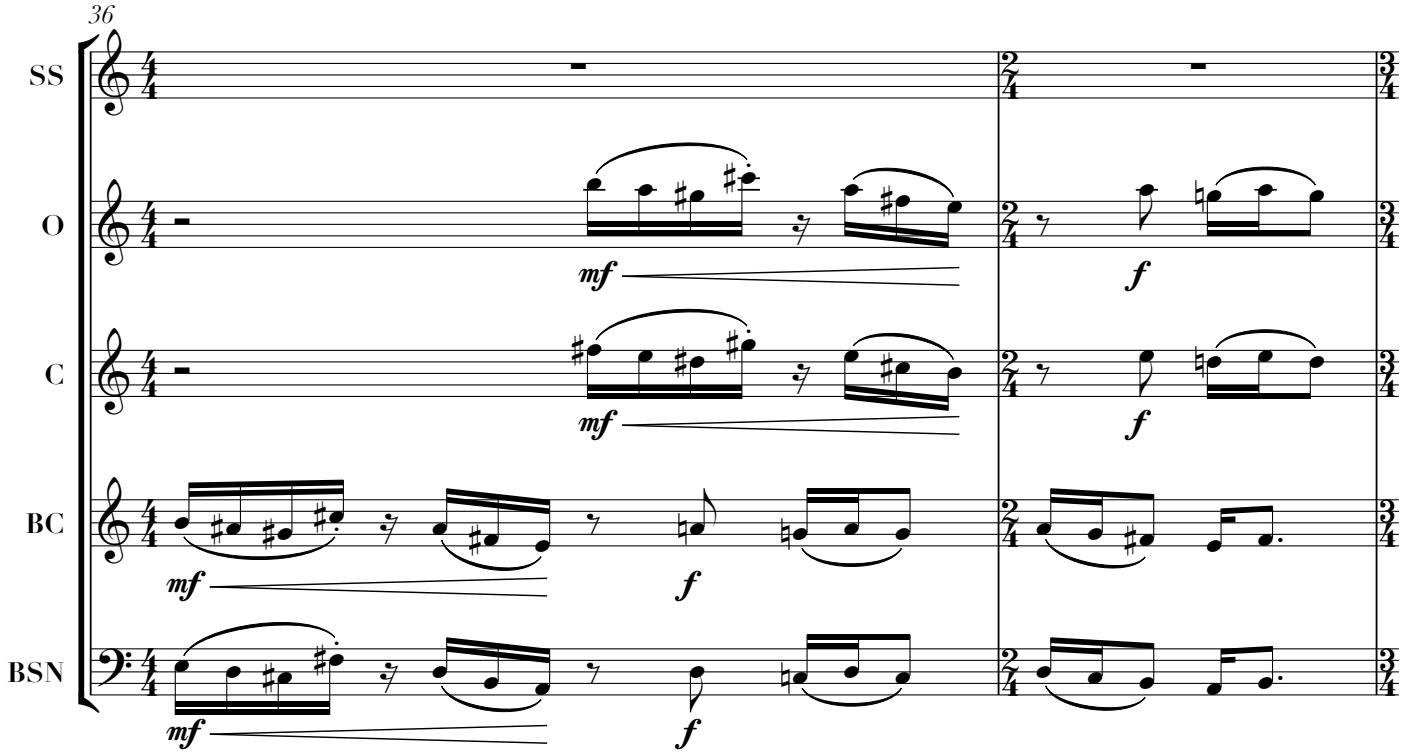

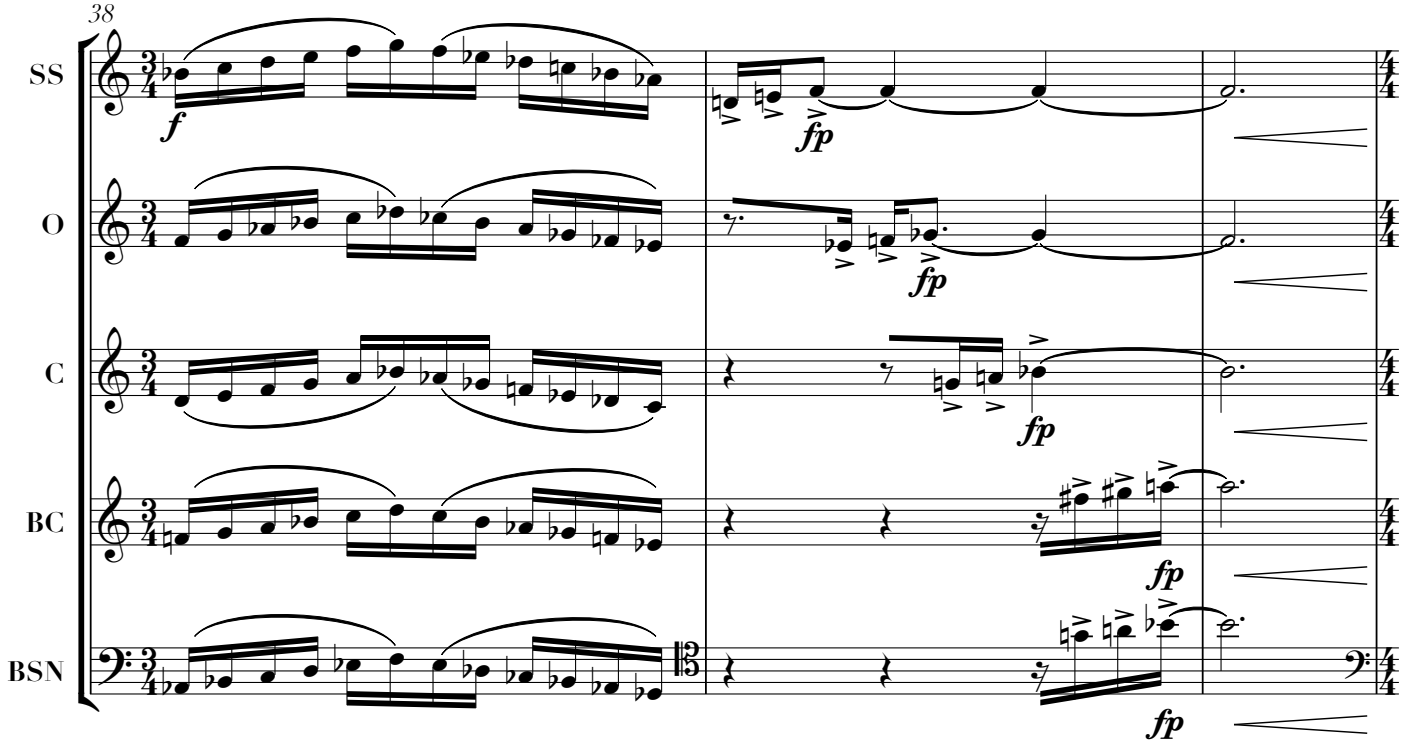

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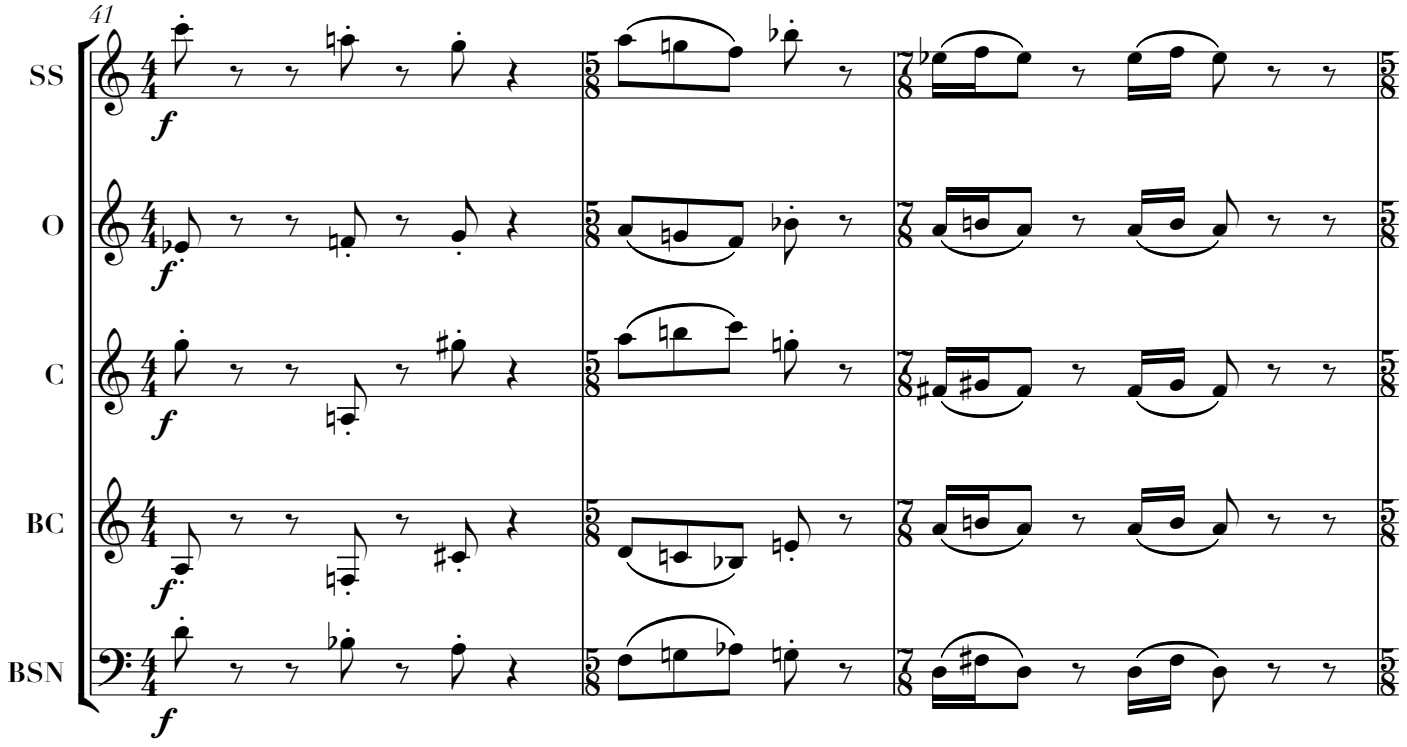

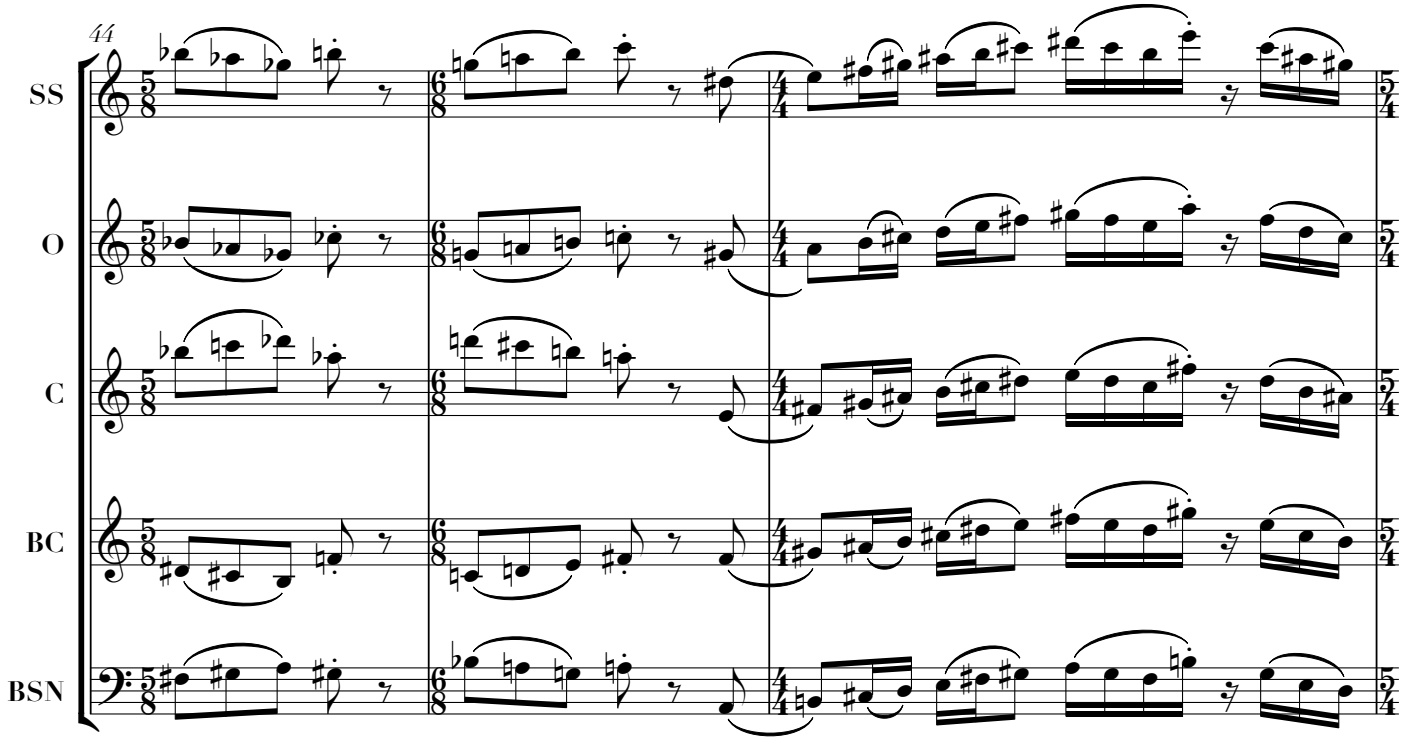

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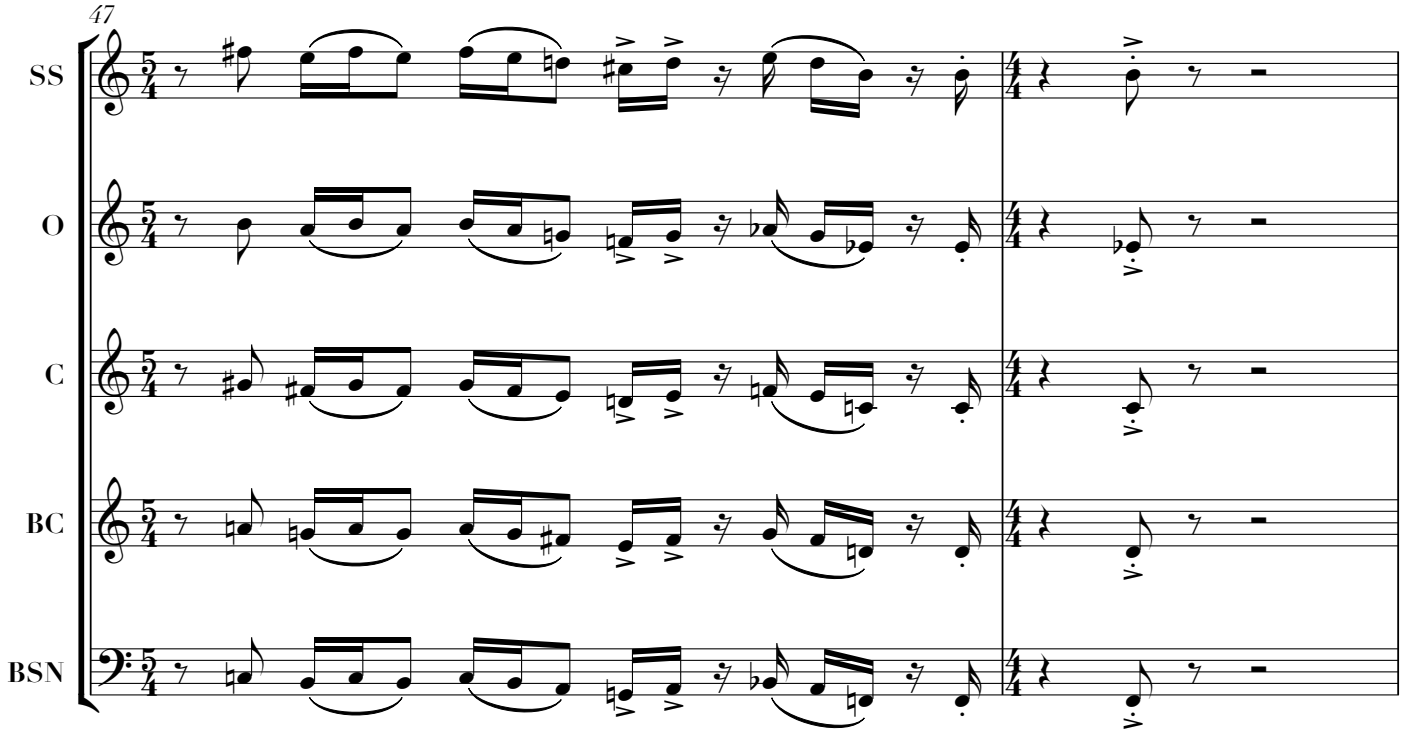

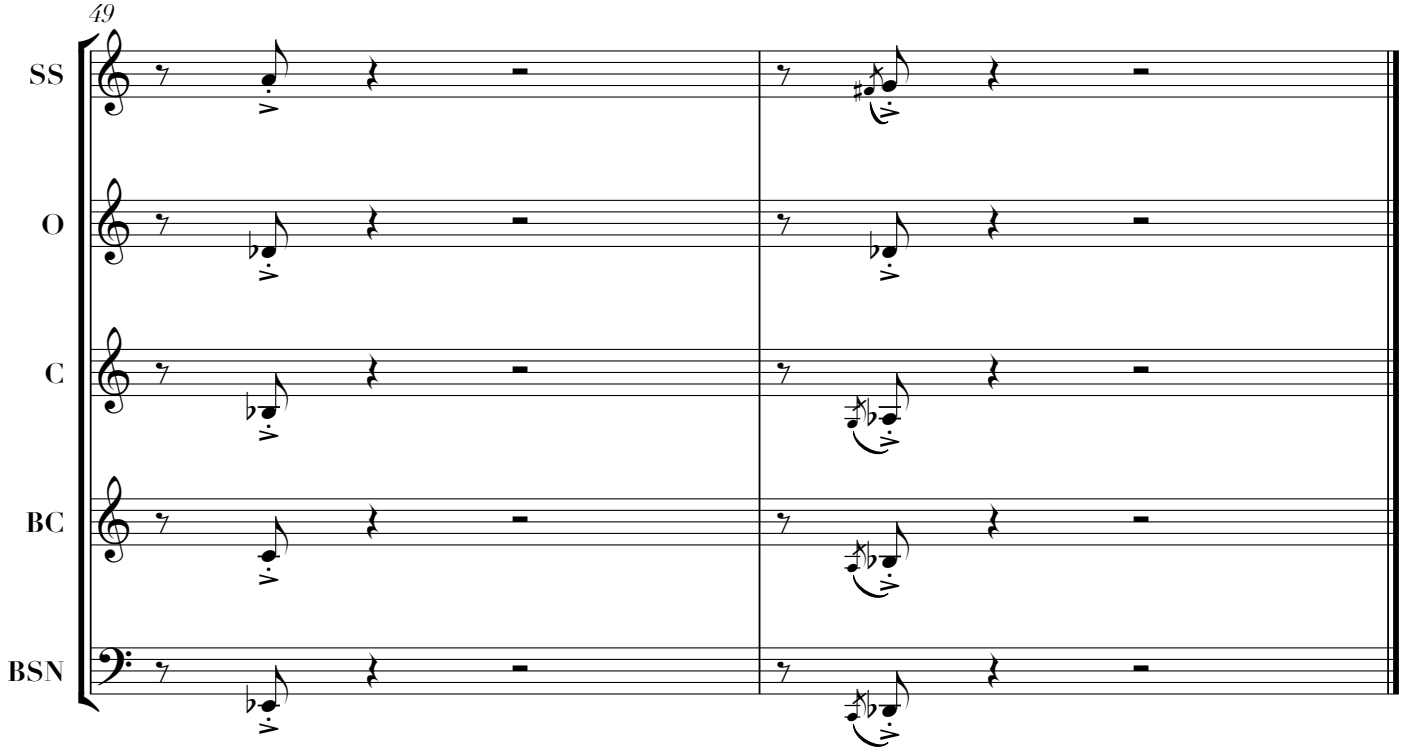

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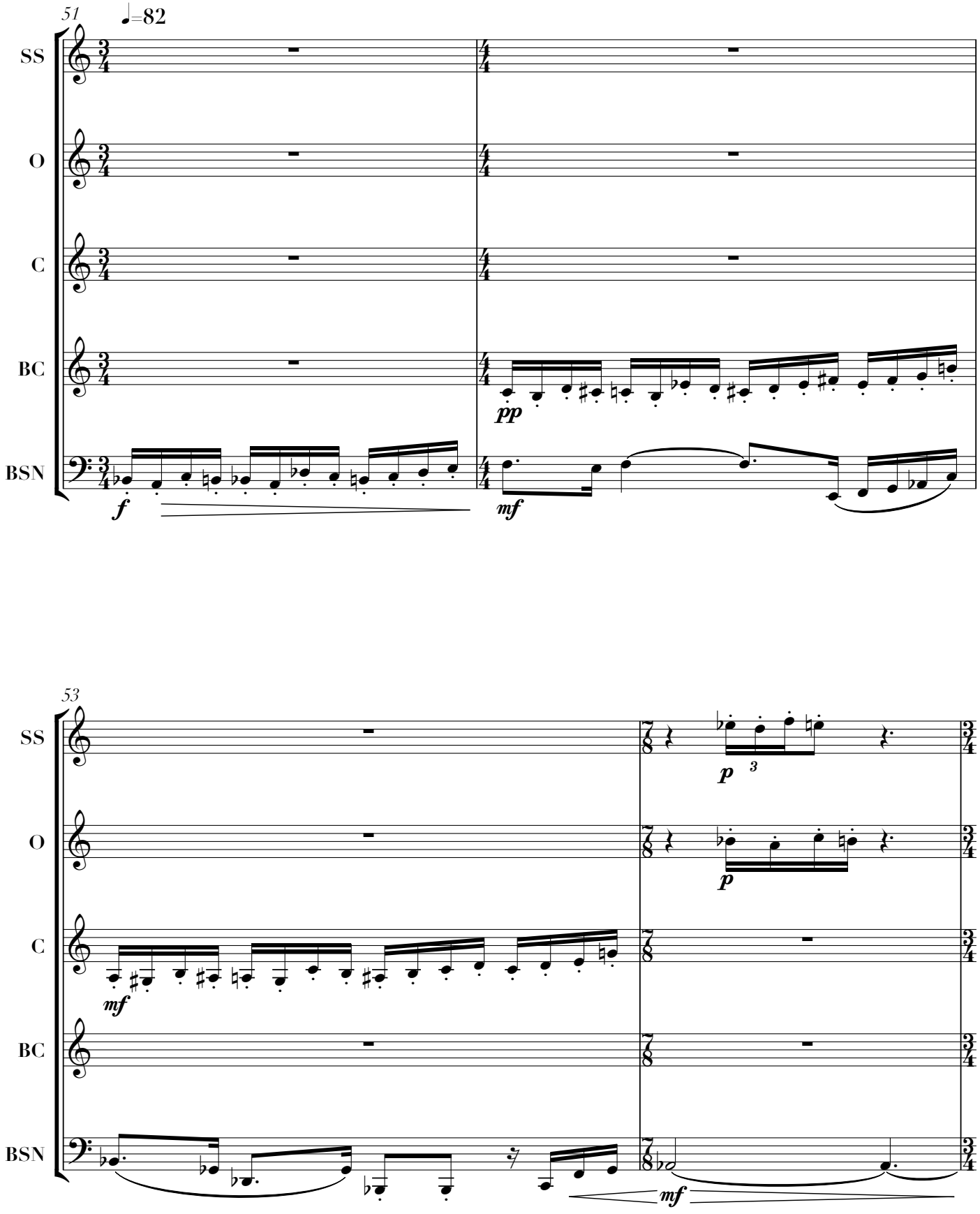

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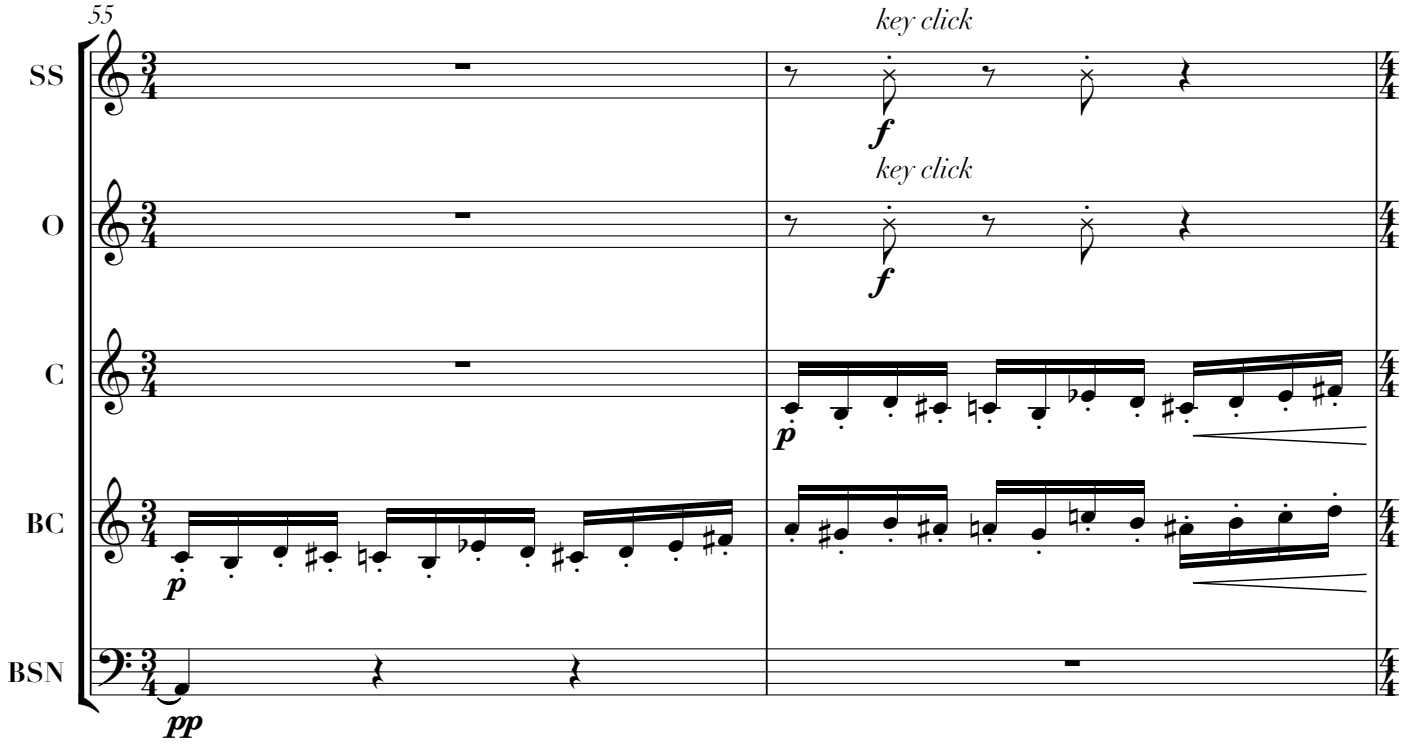

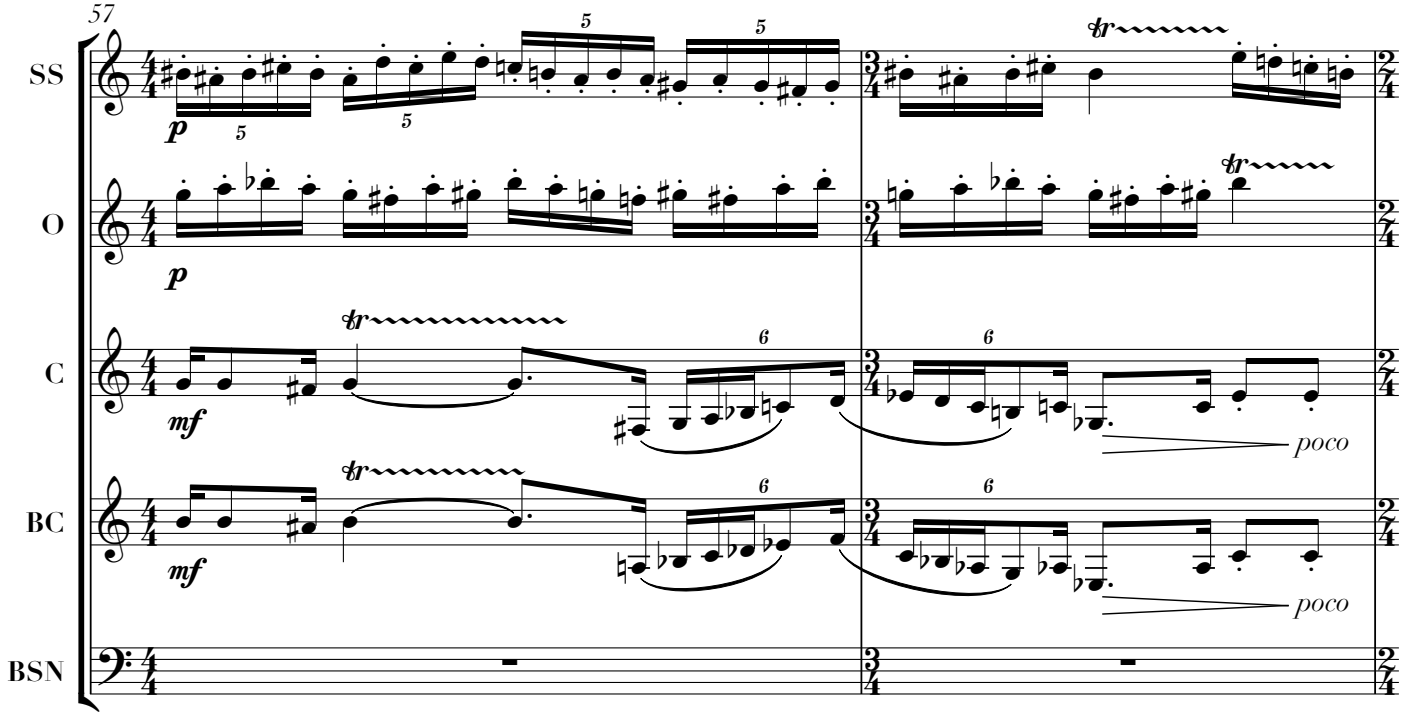

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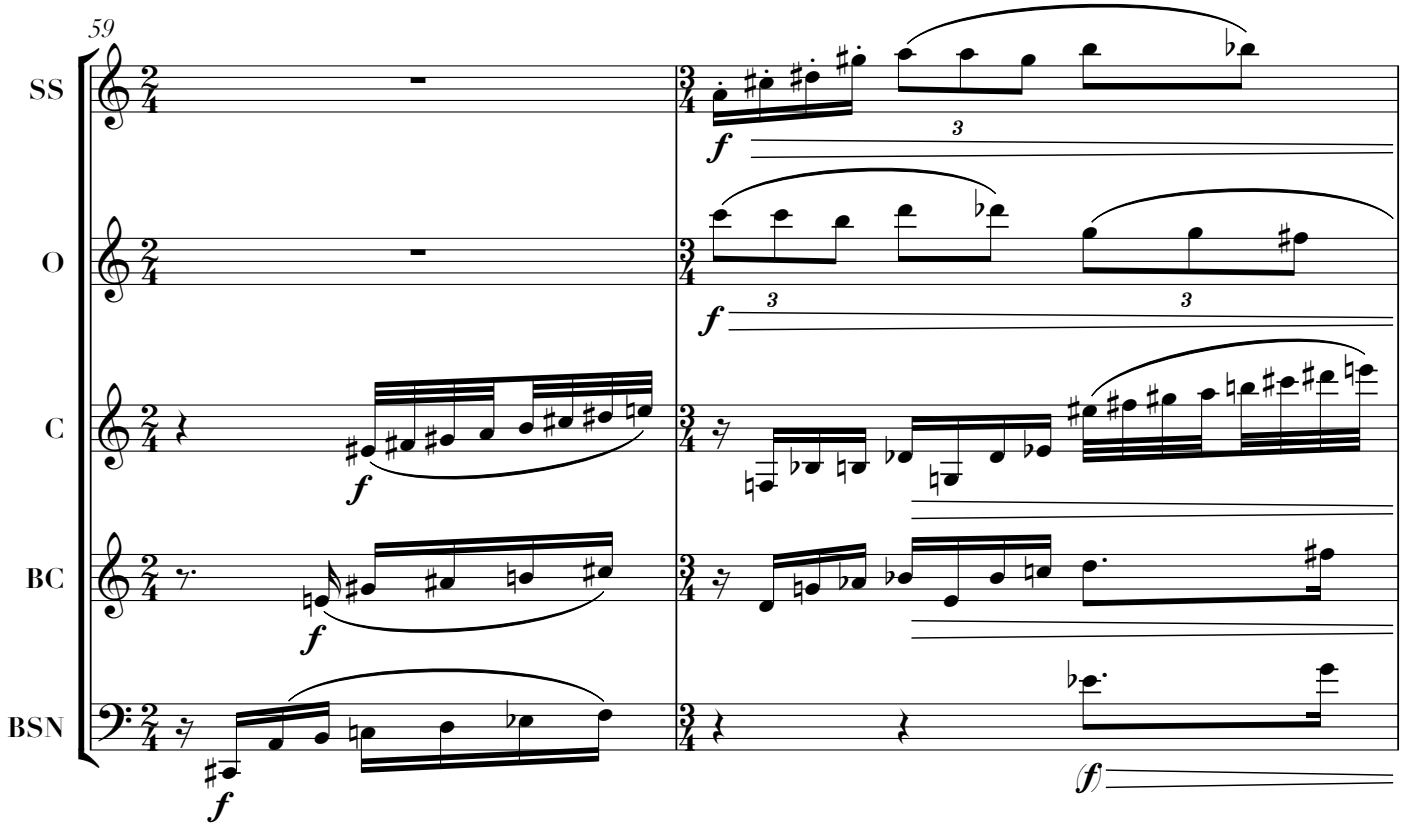

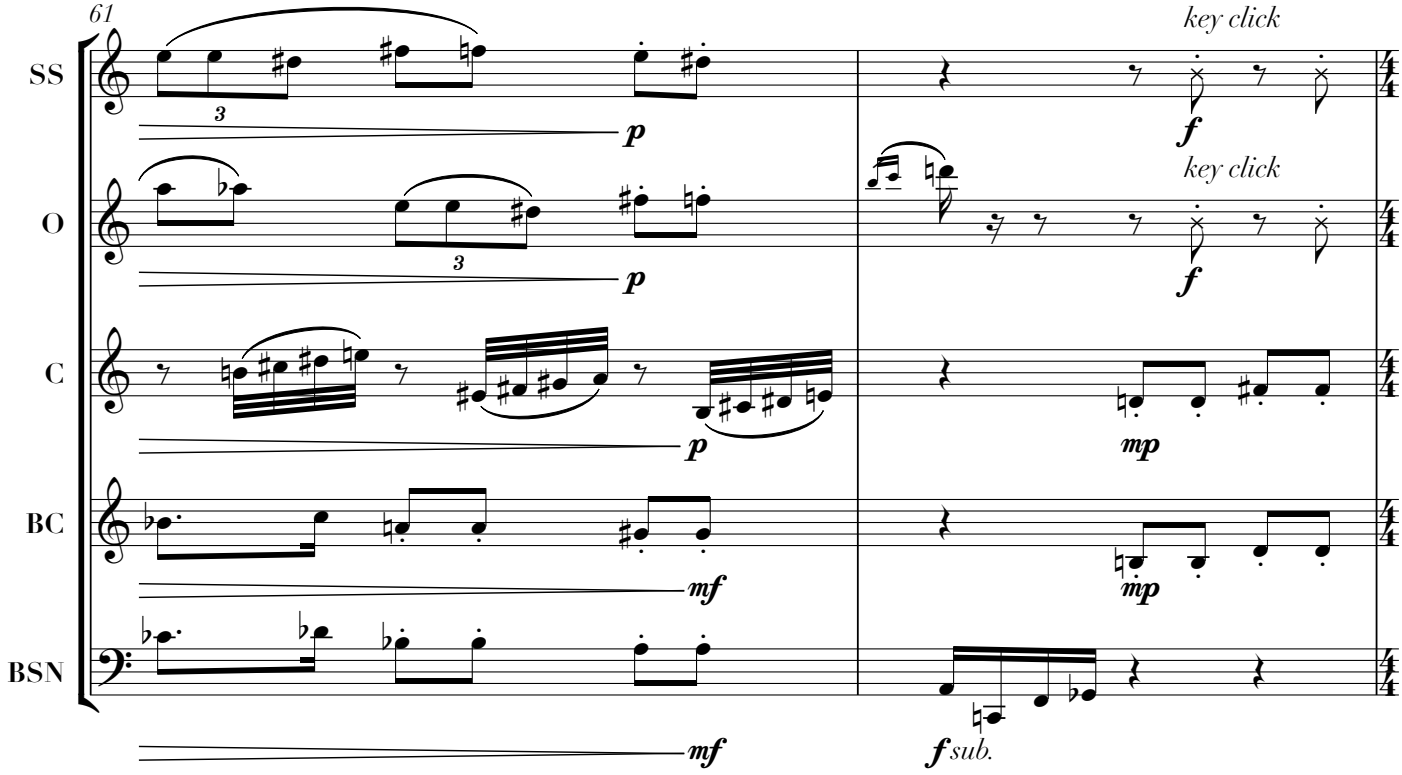

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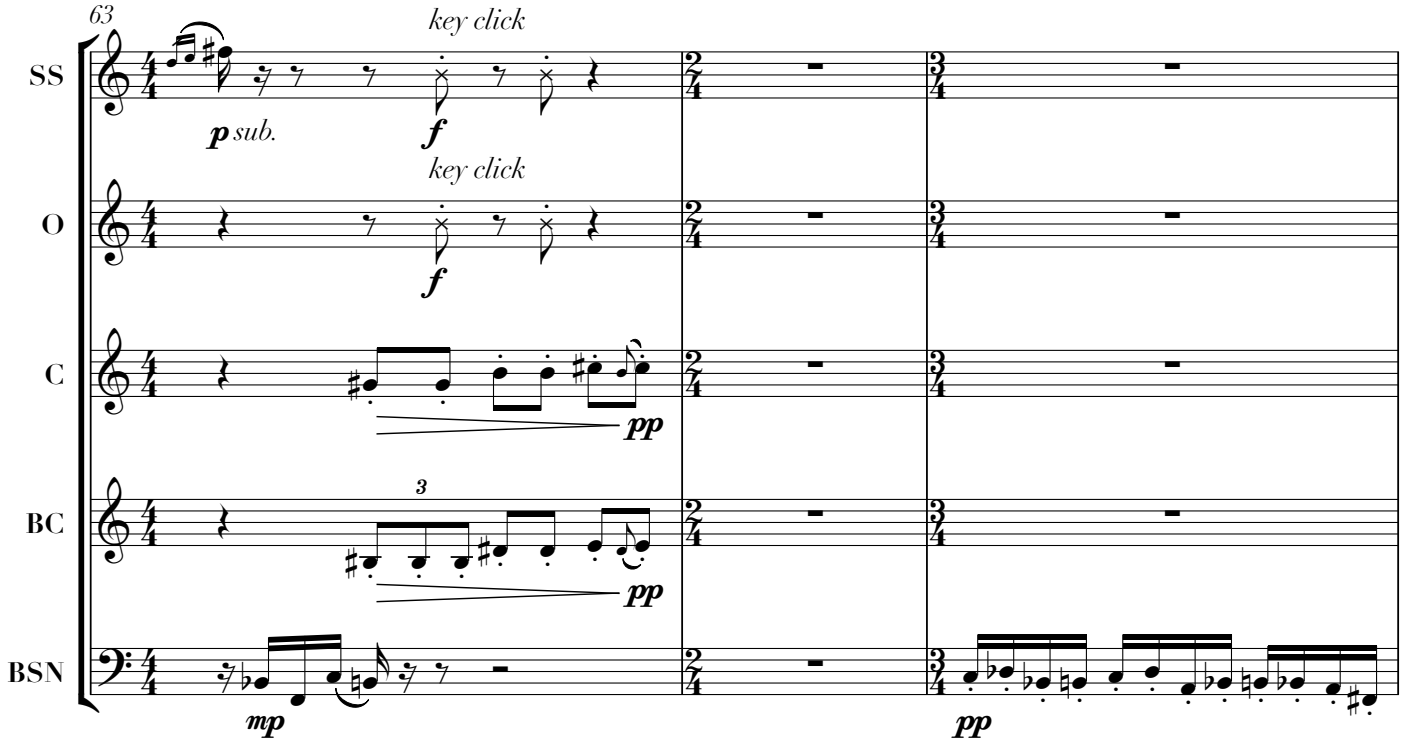

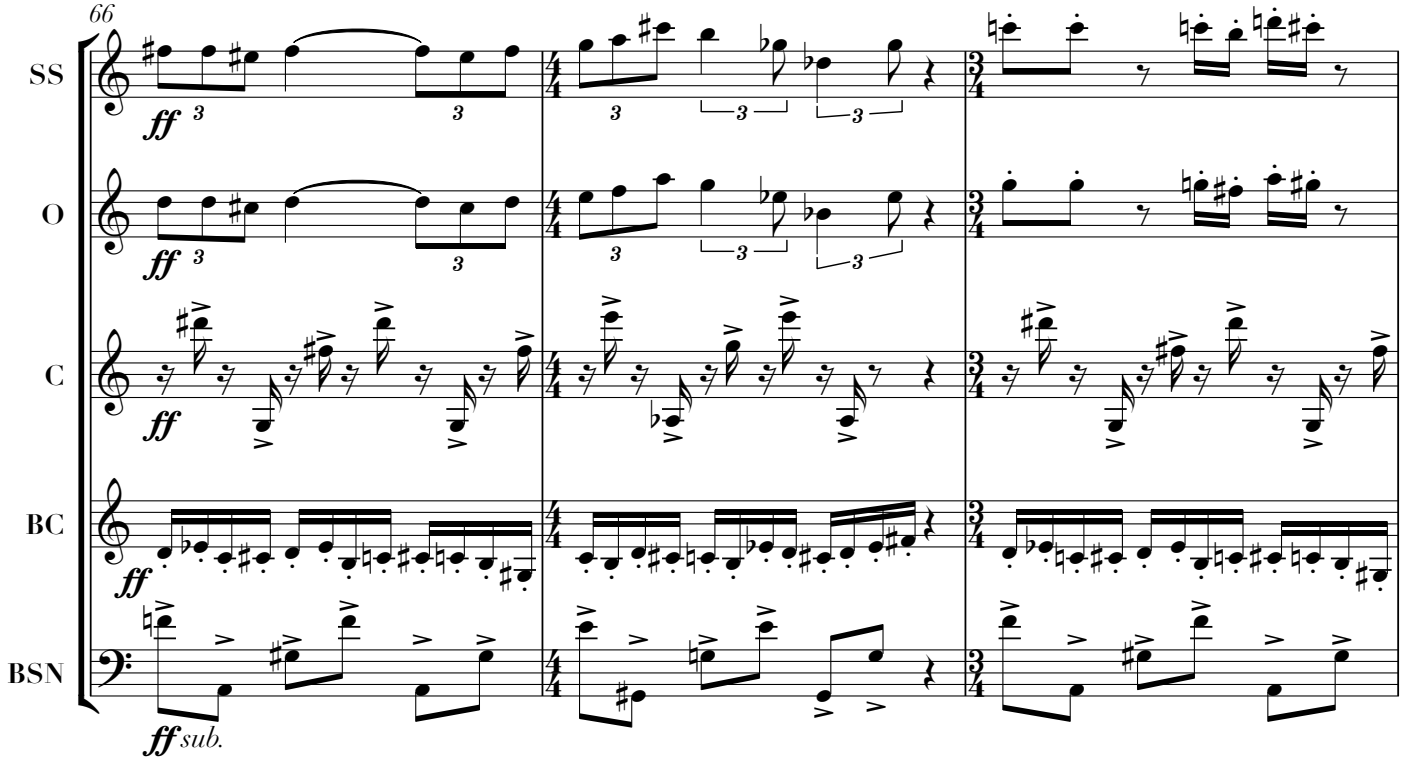

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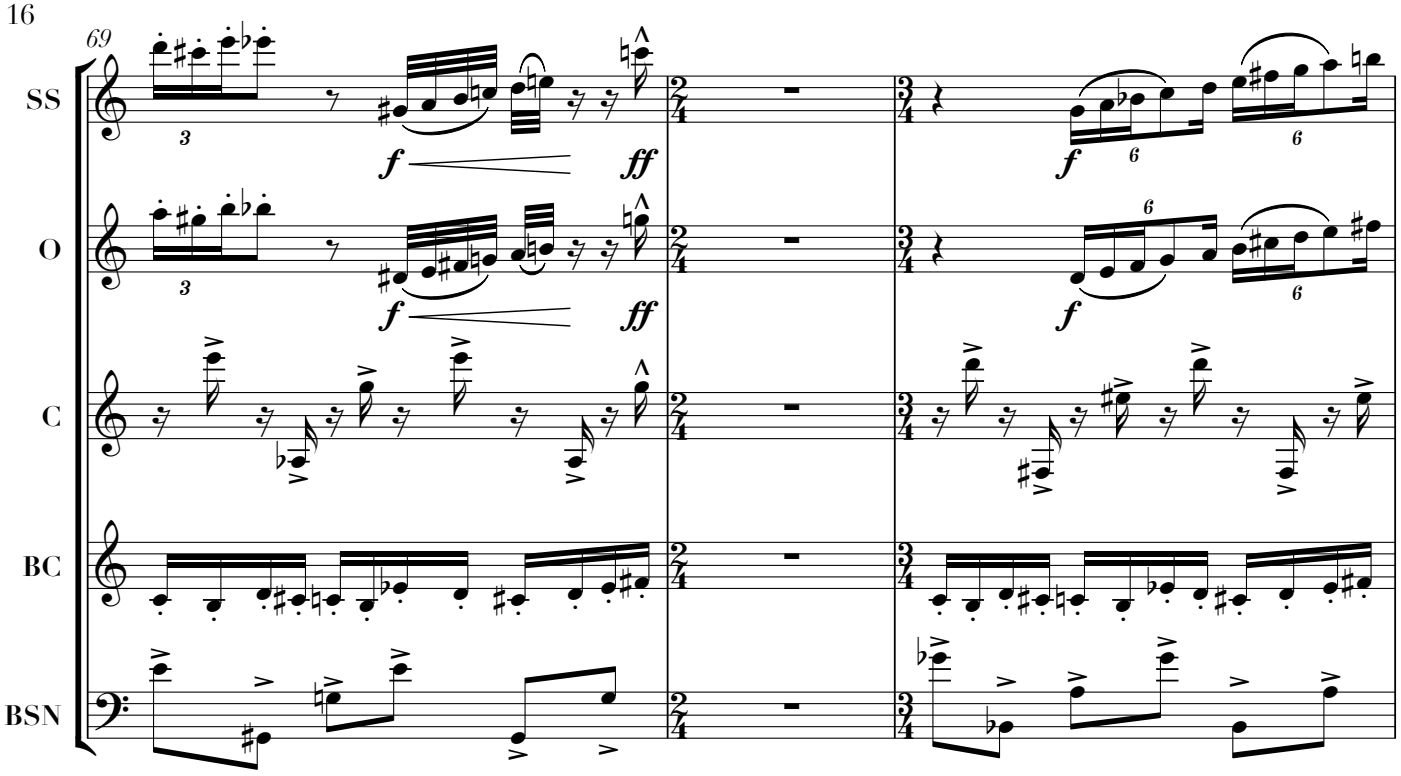

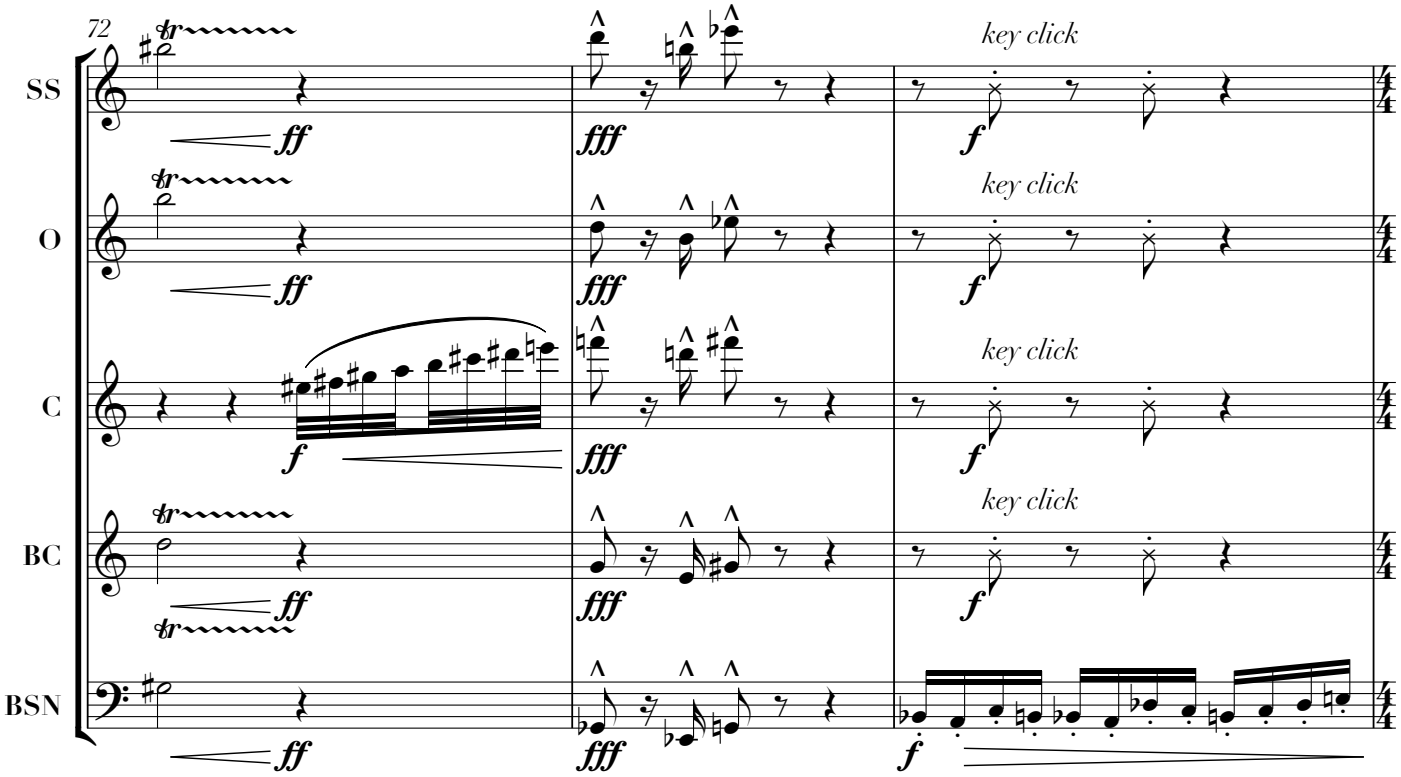

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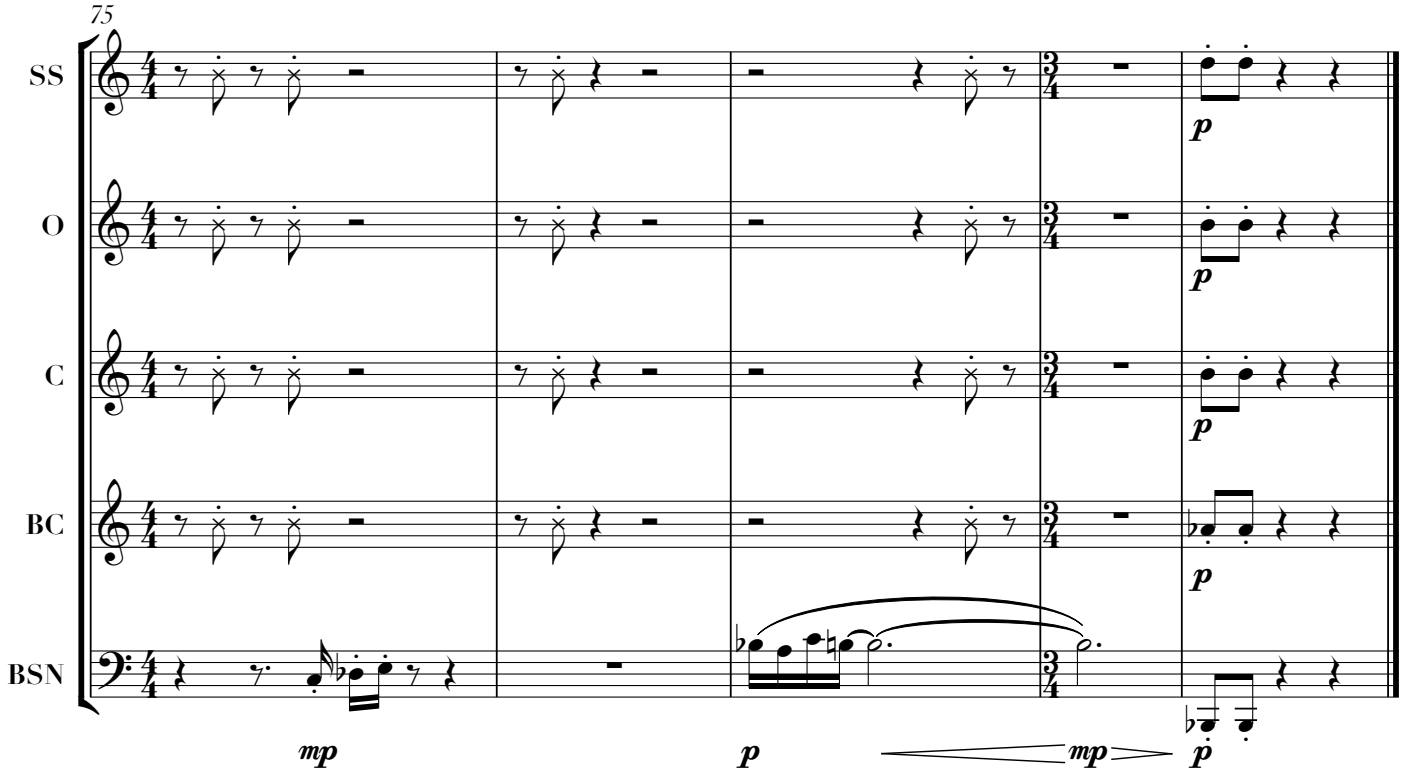

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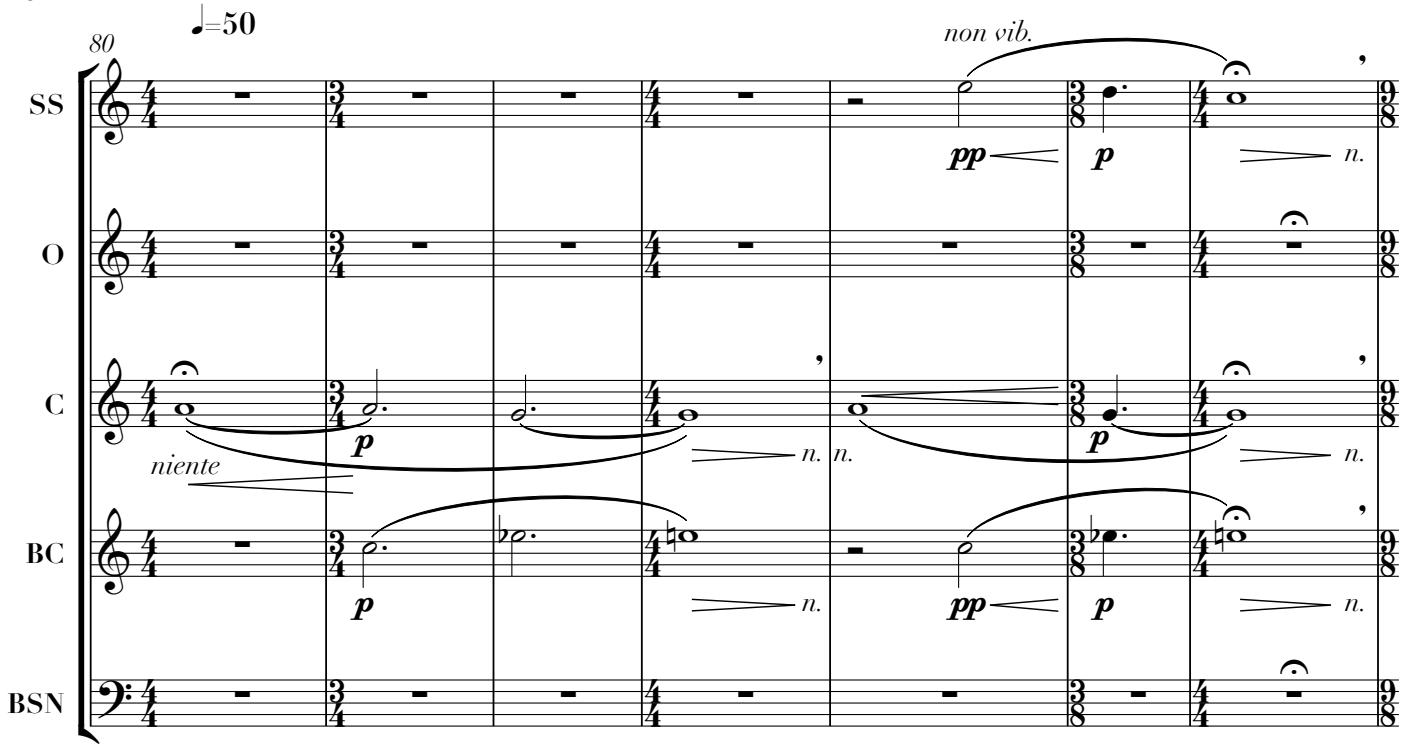
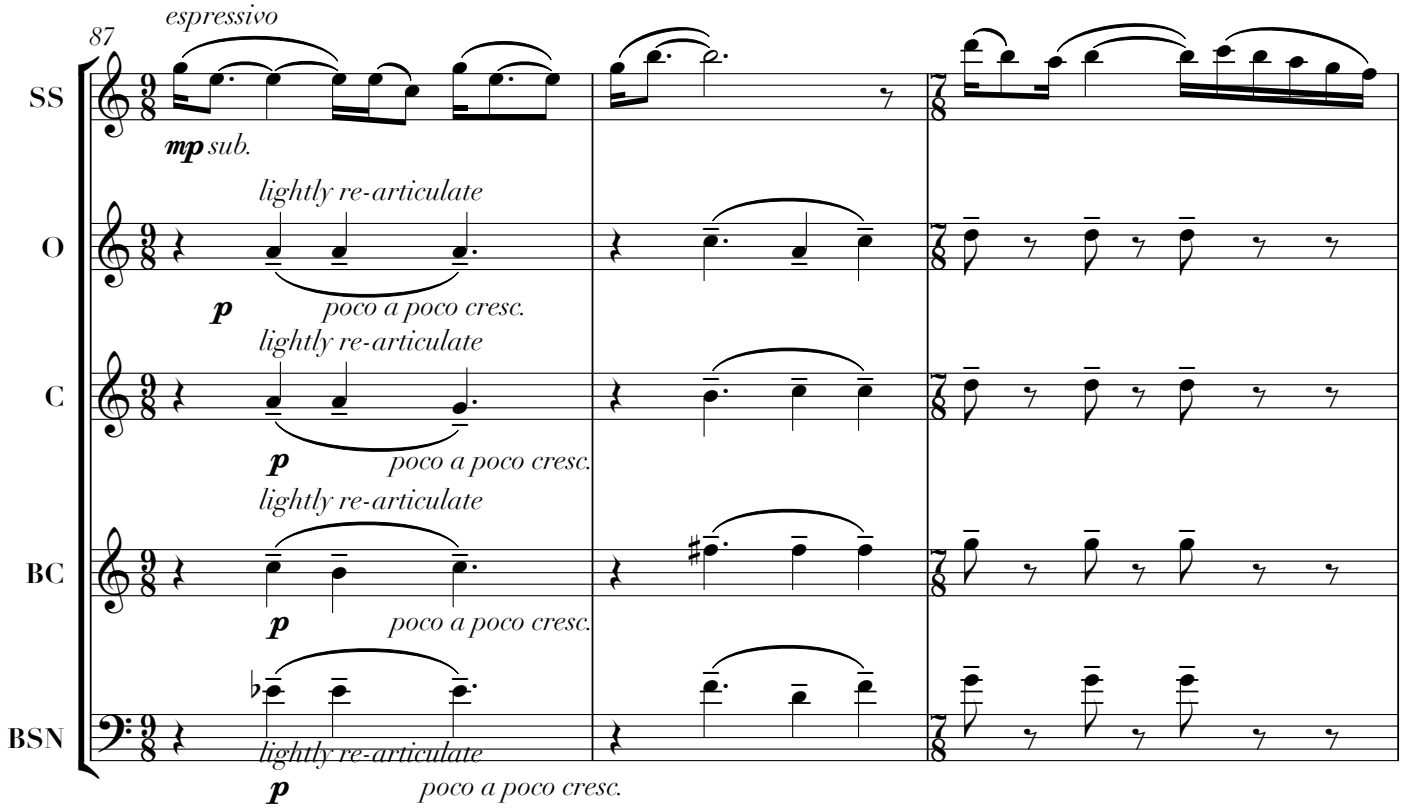
III. The Snail





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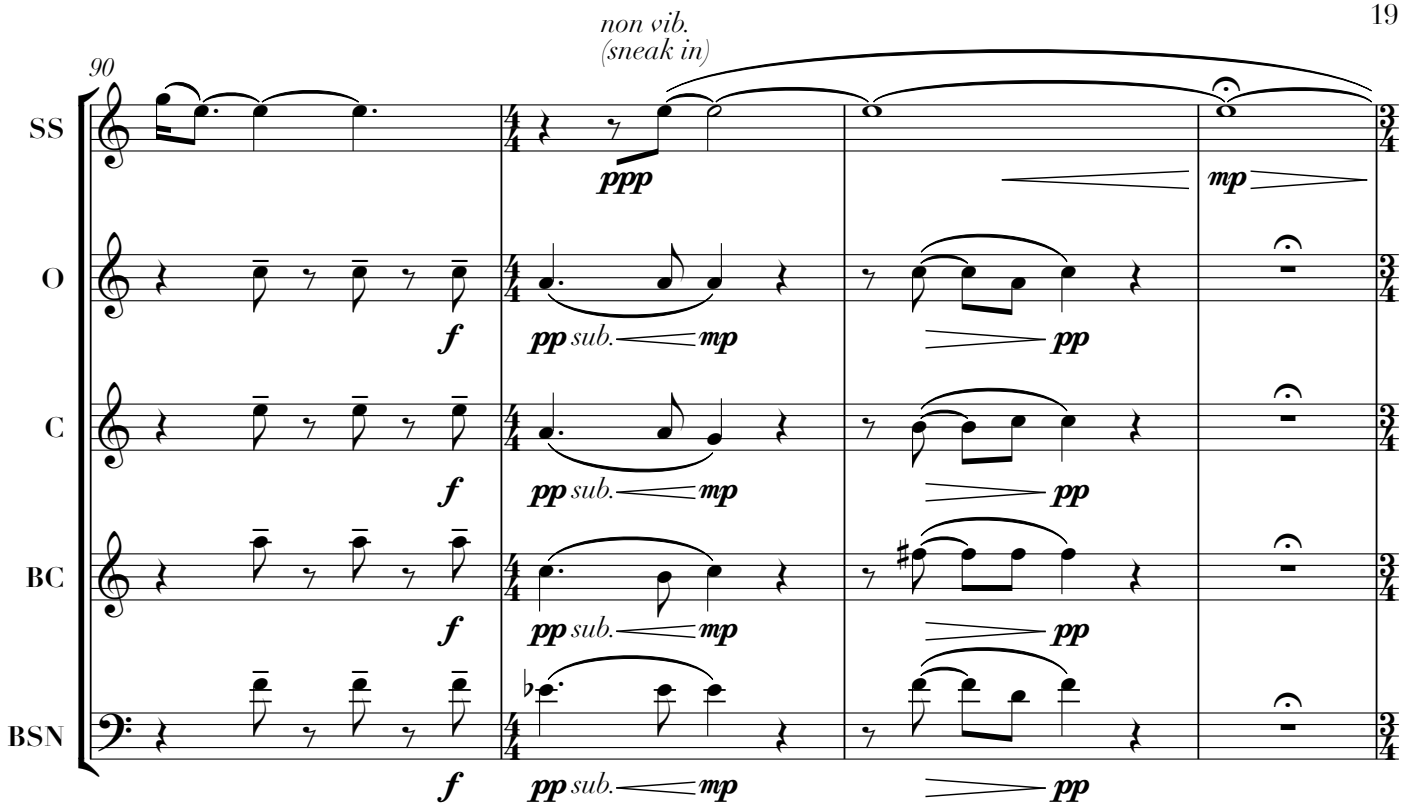

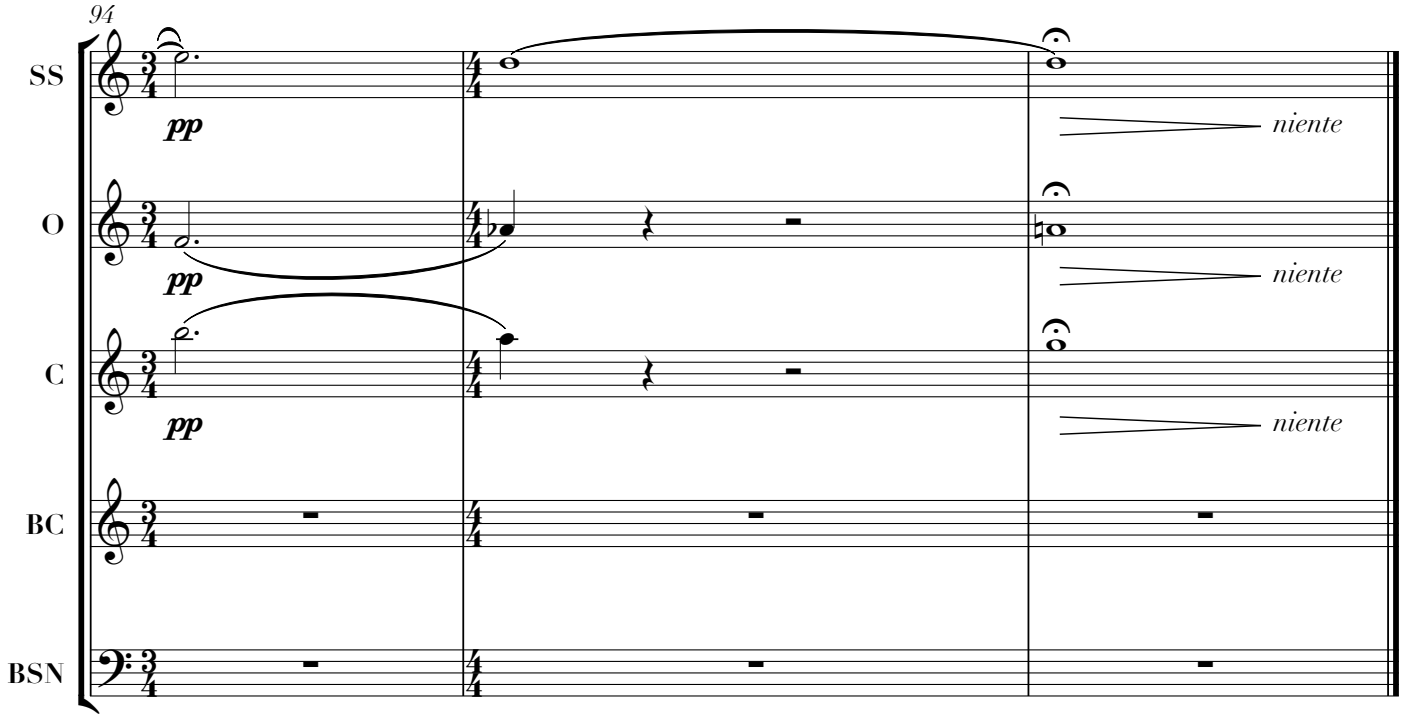

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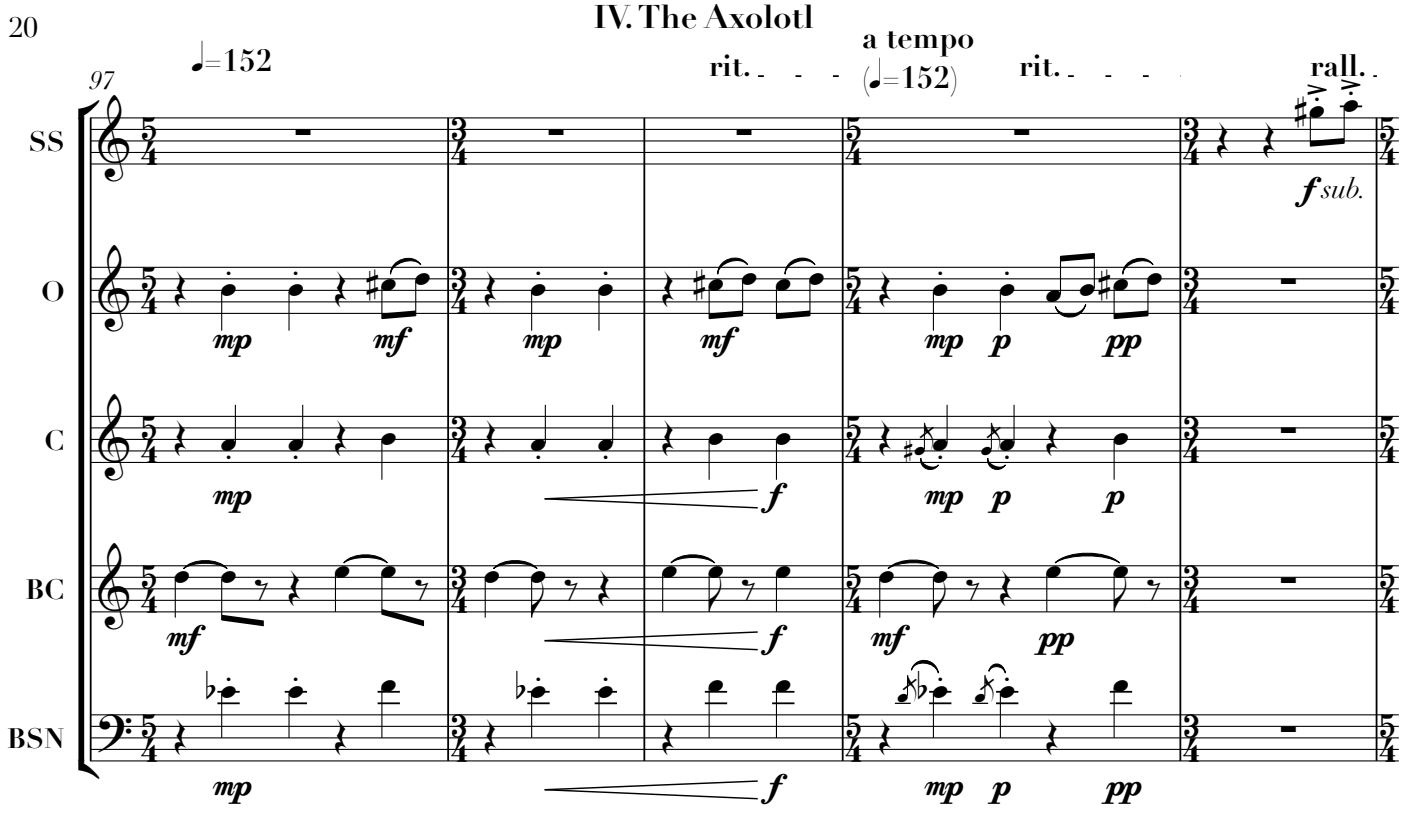

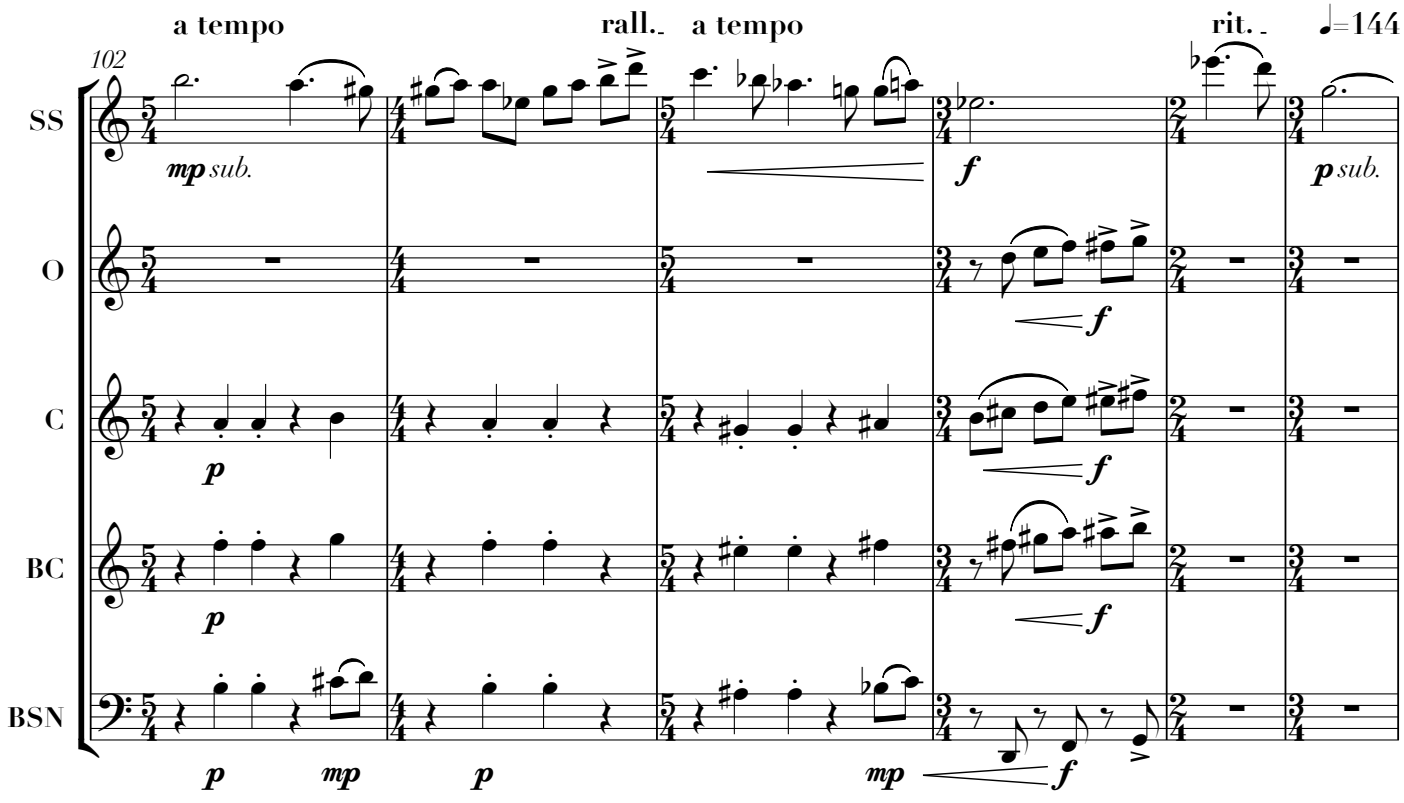

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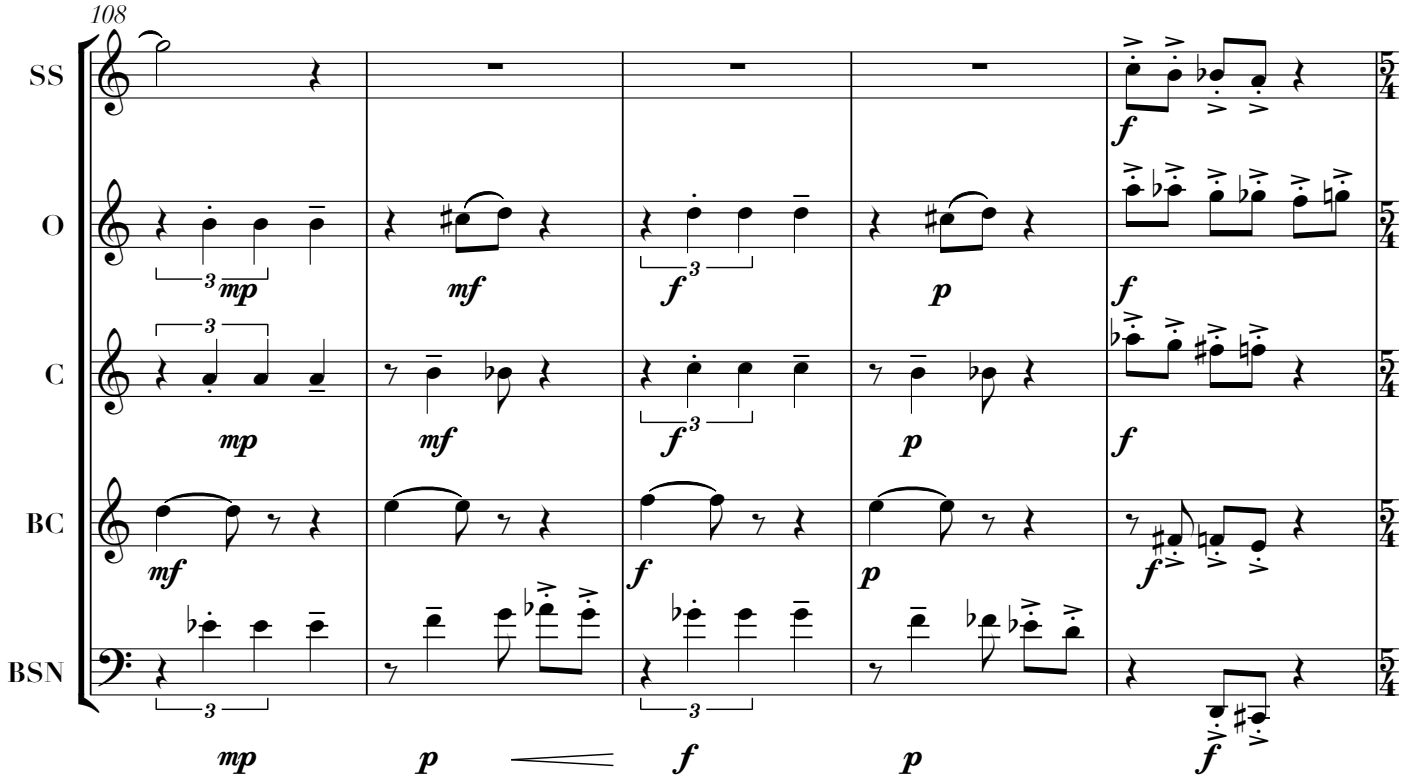

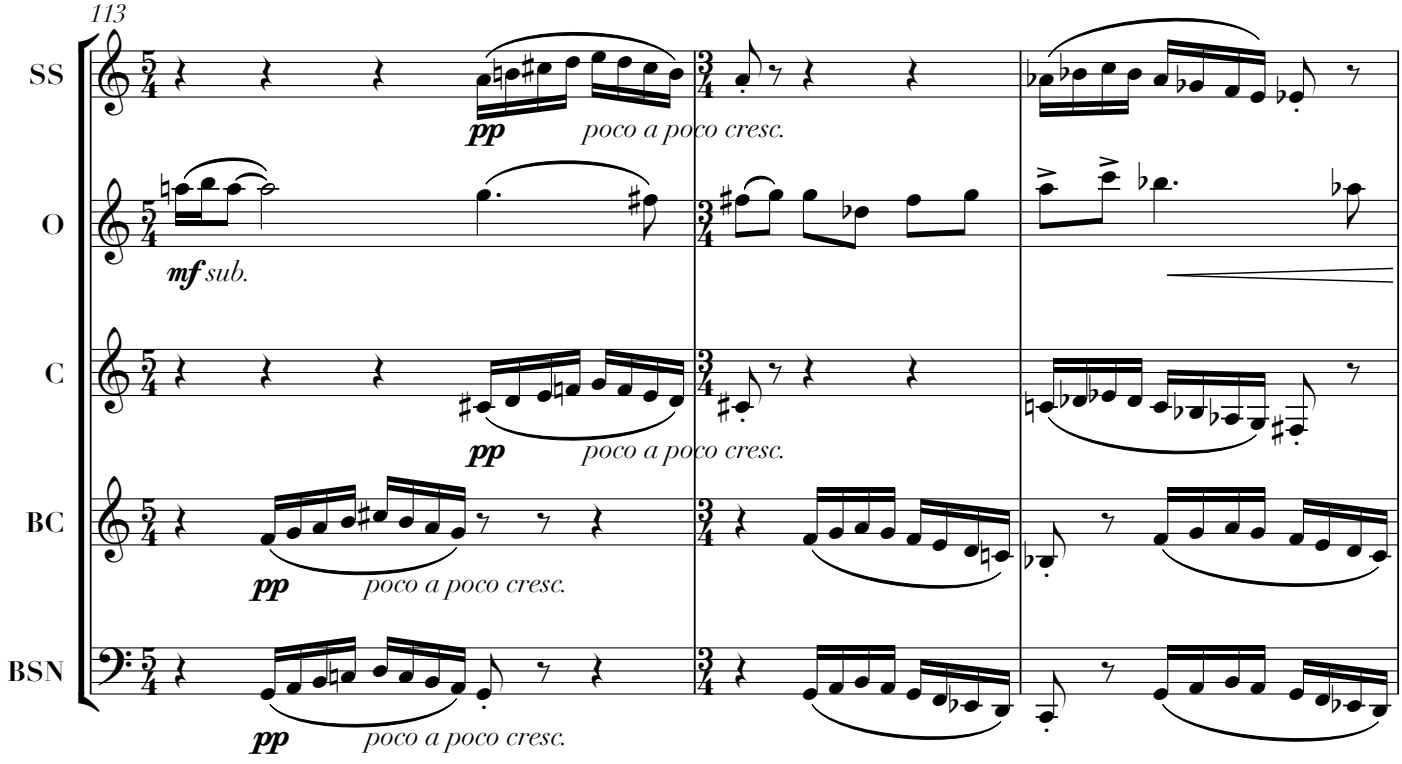

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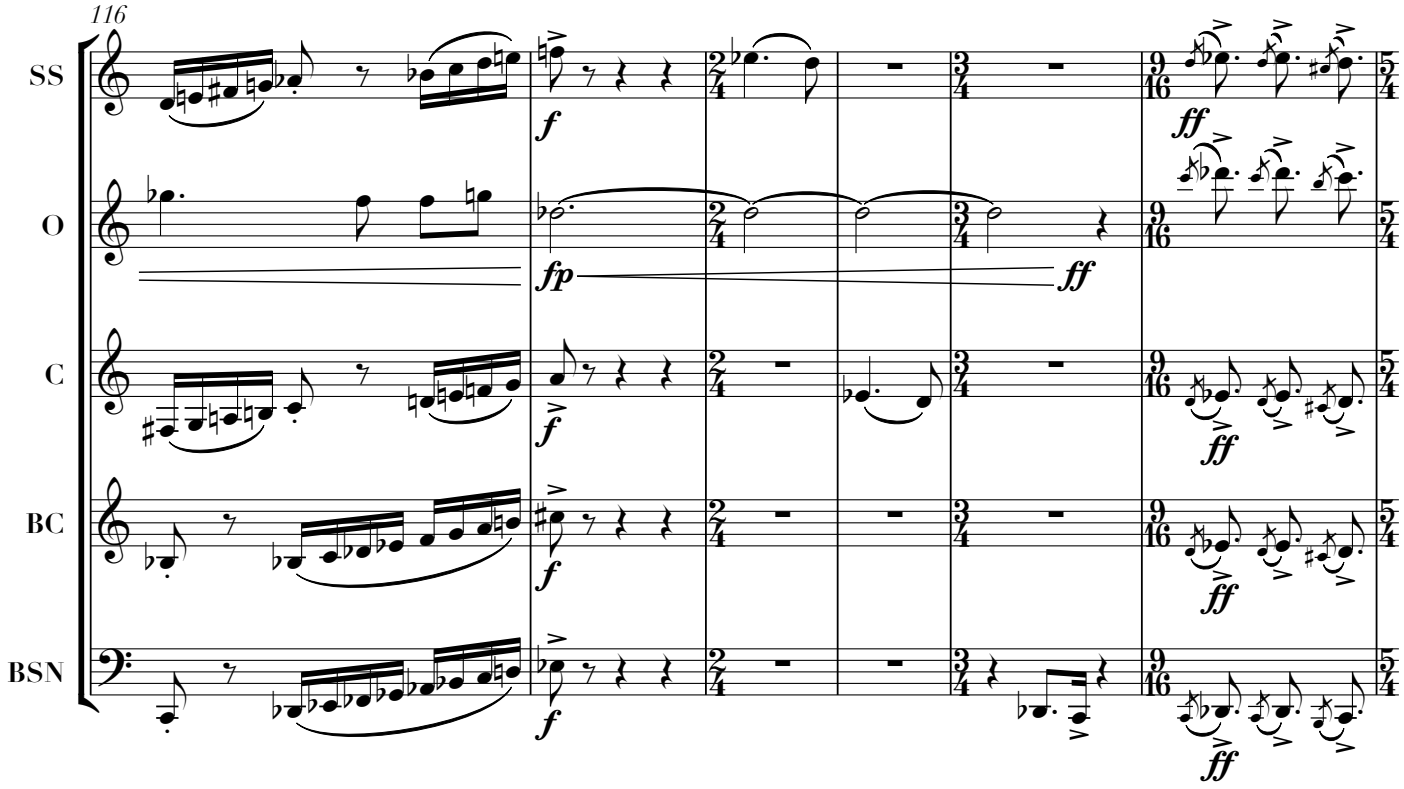

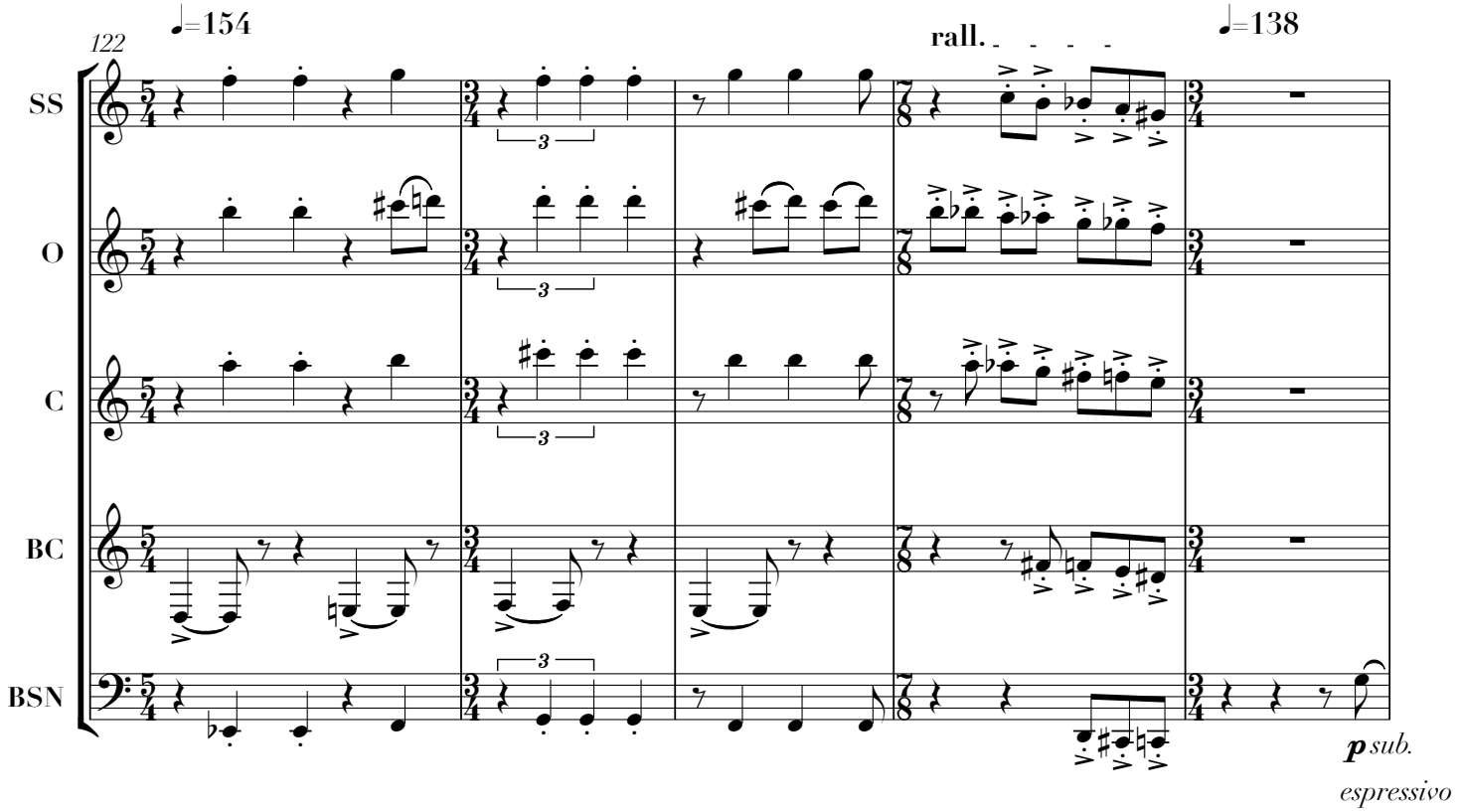

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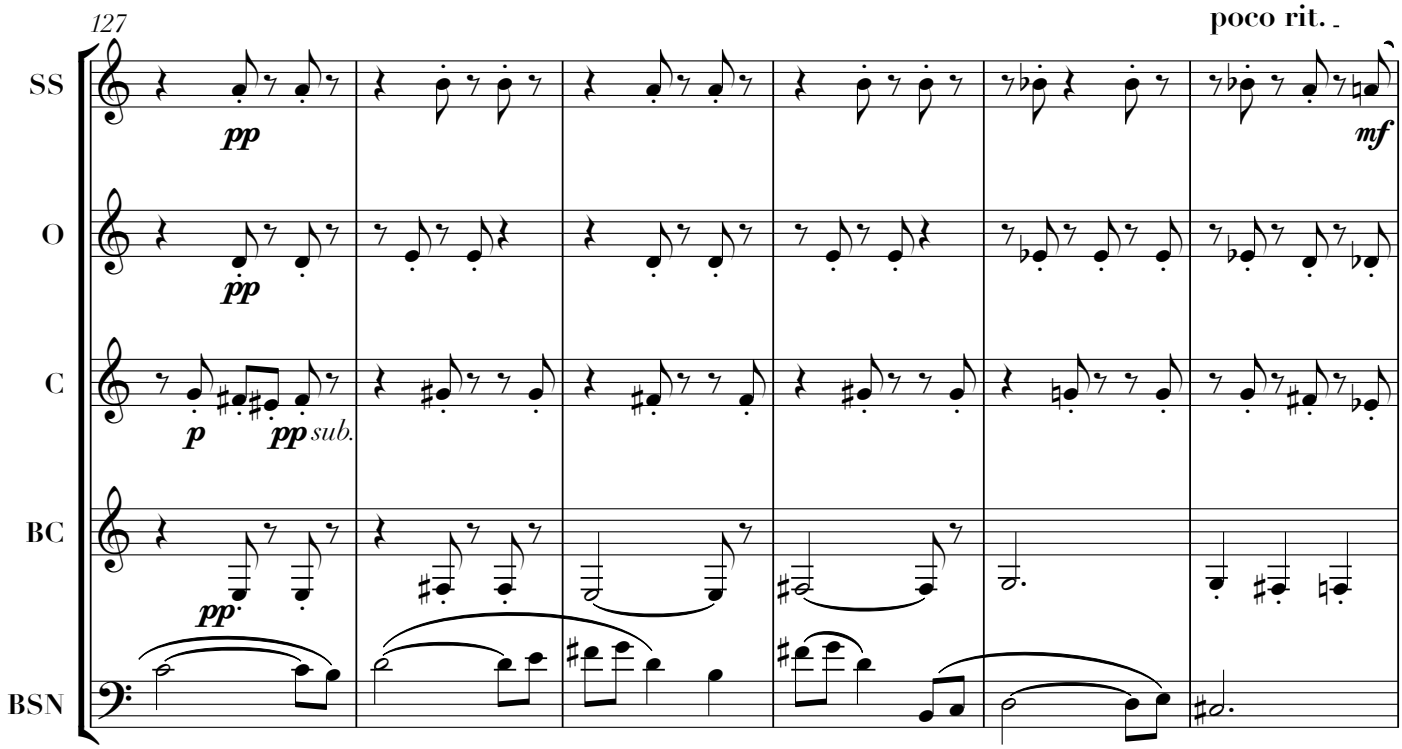

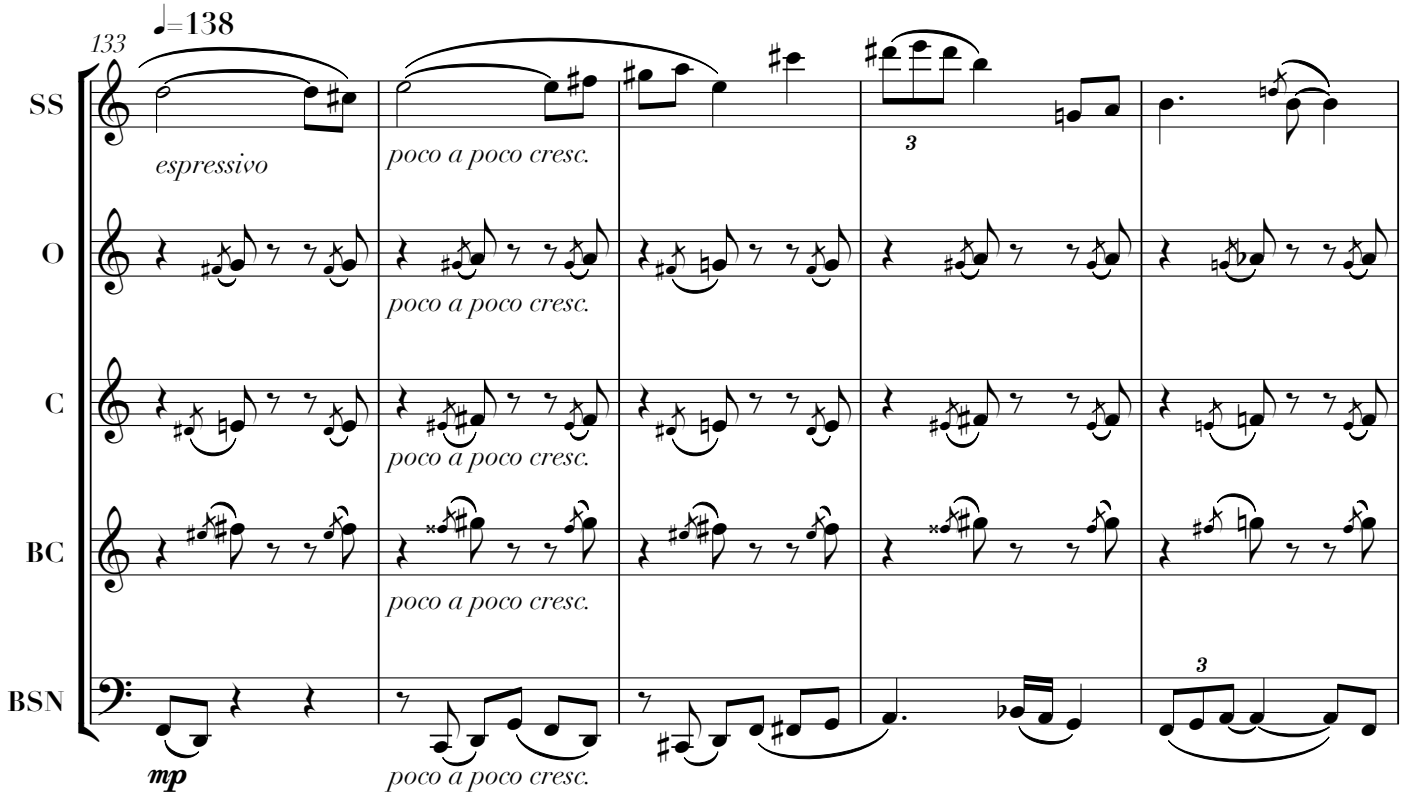

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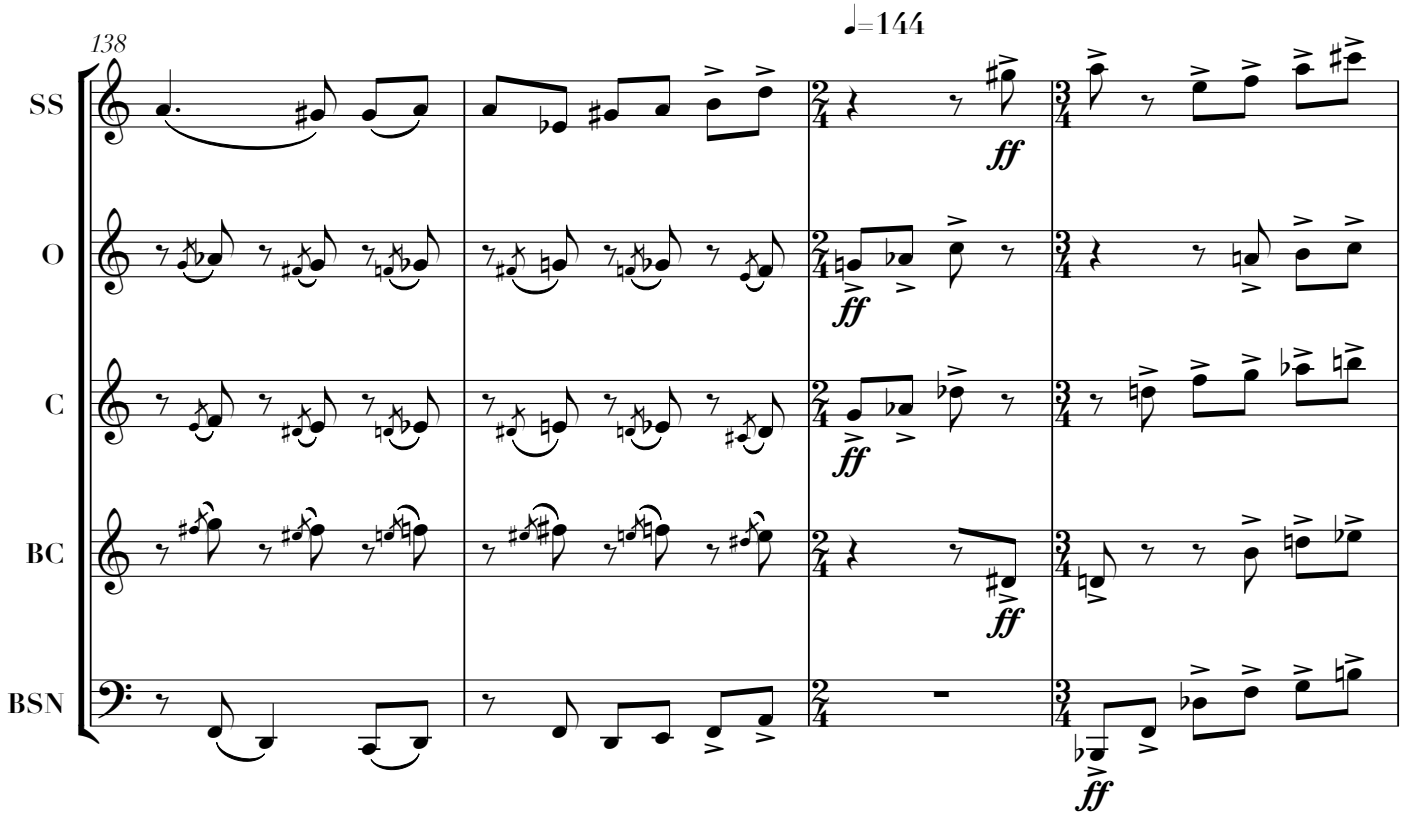

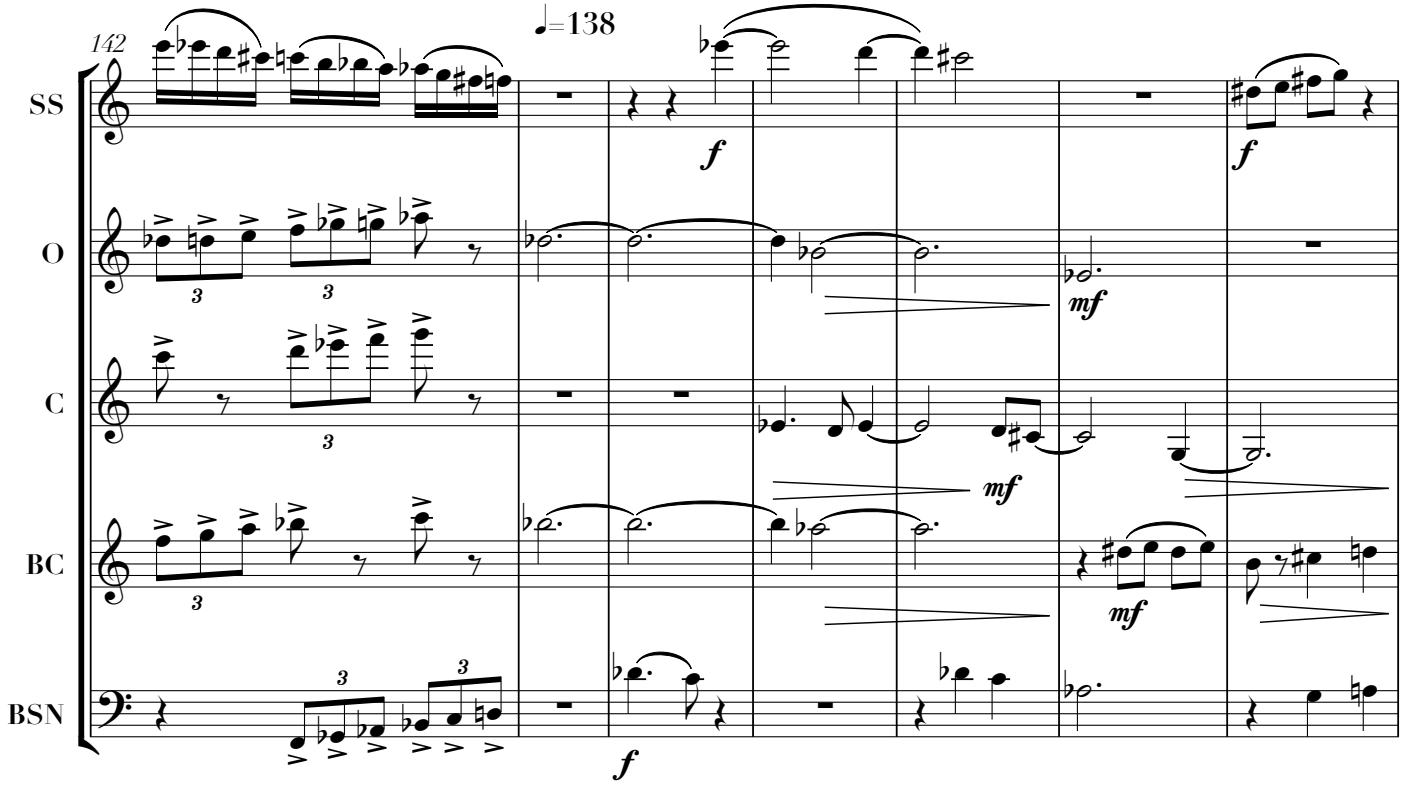

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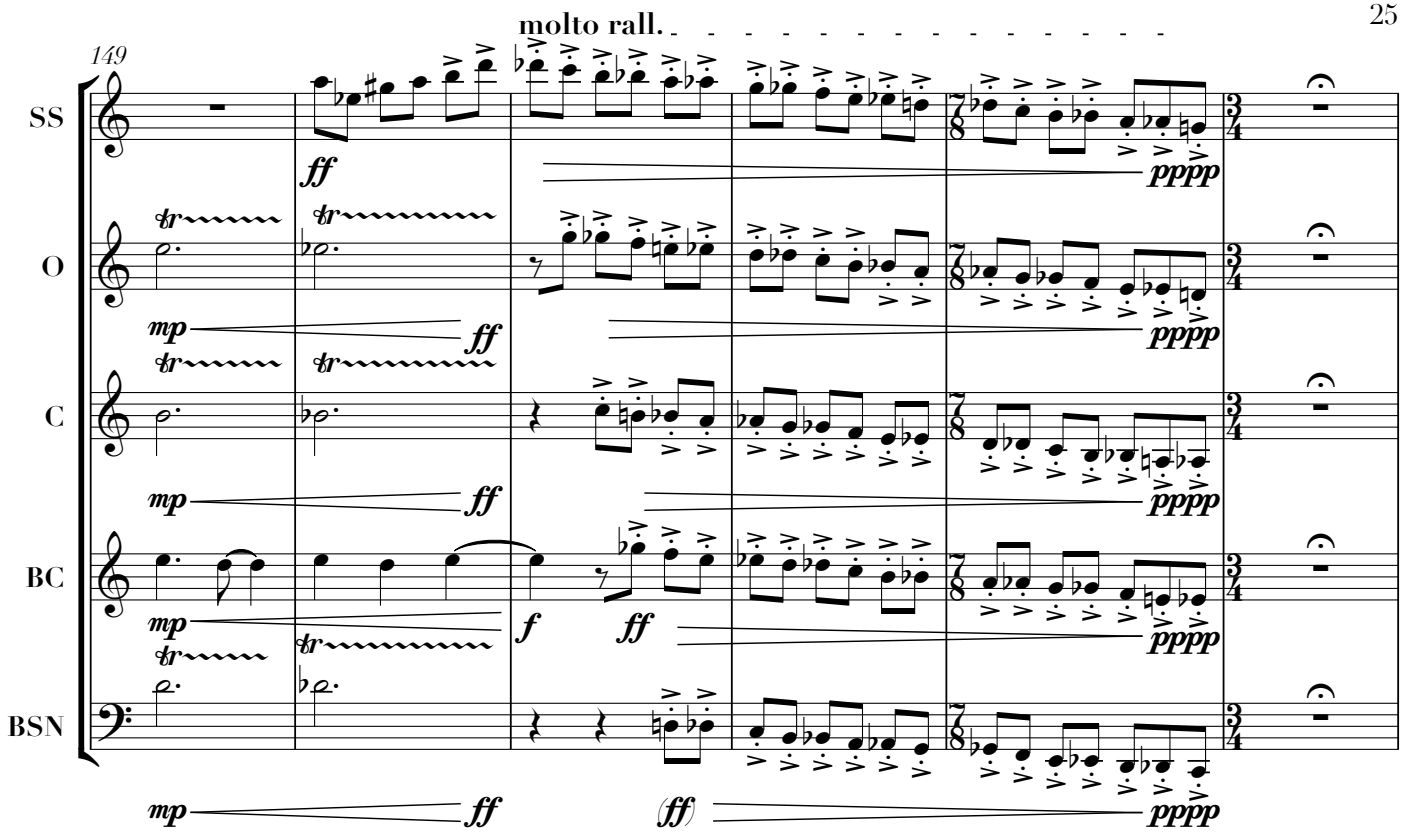

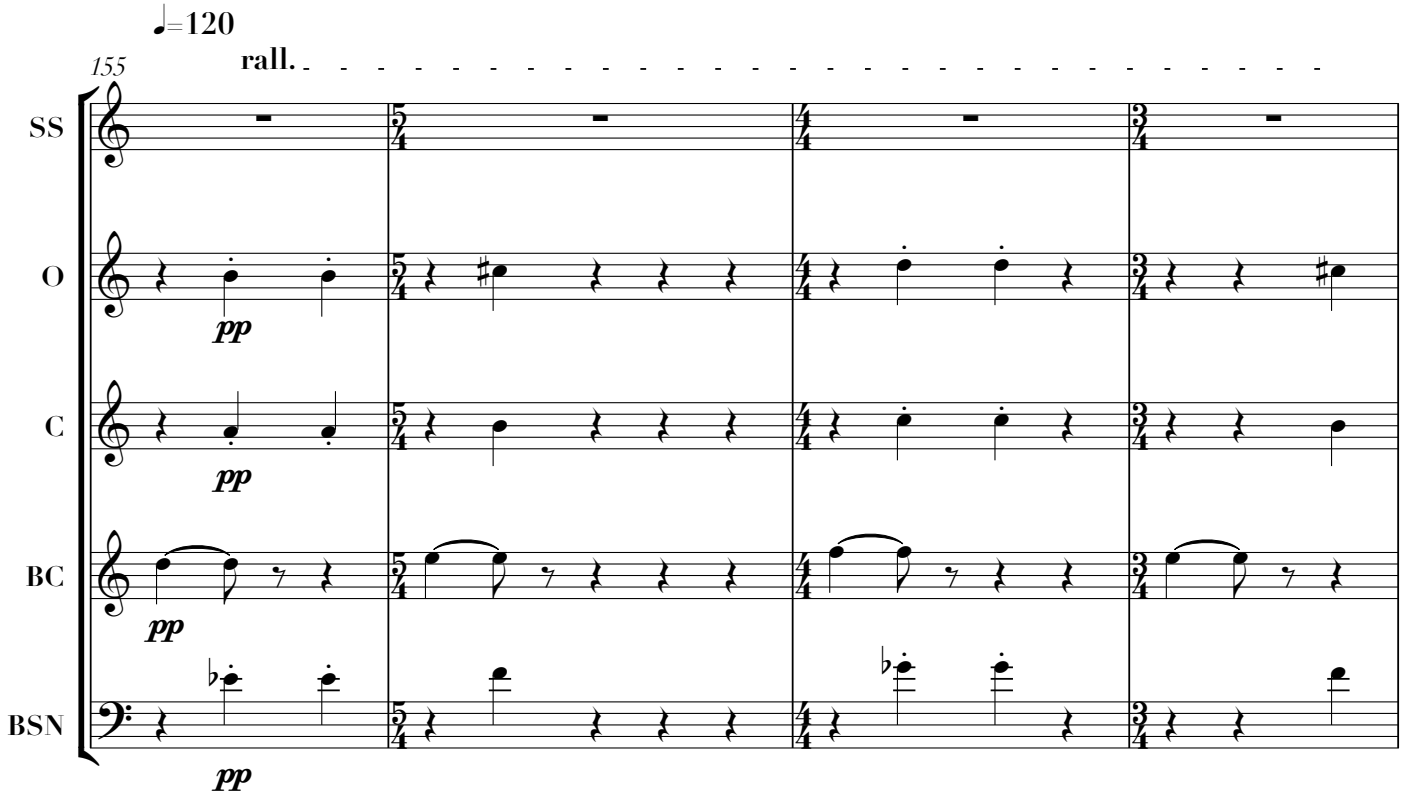

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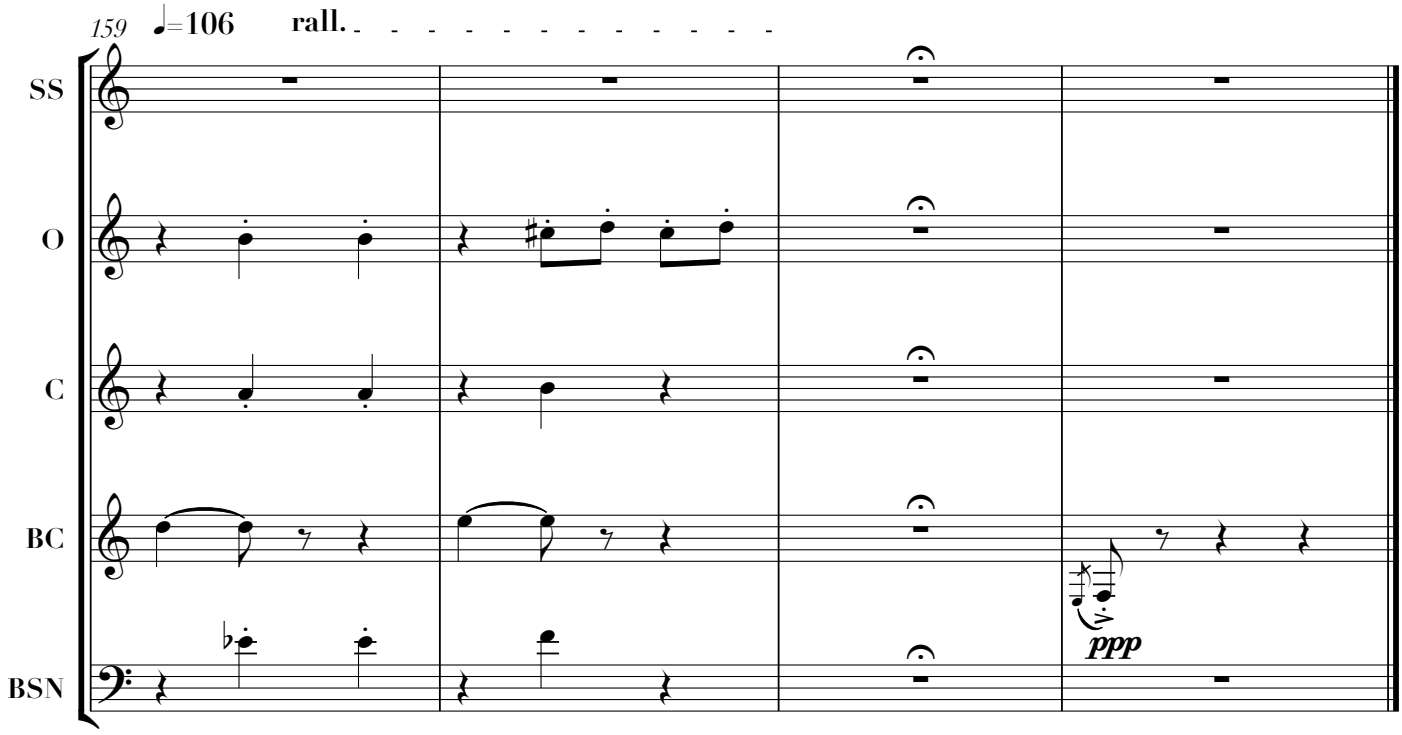

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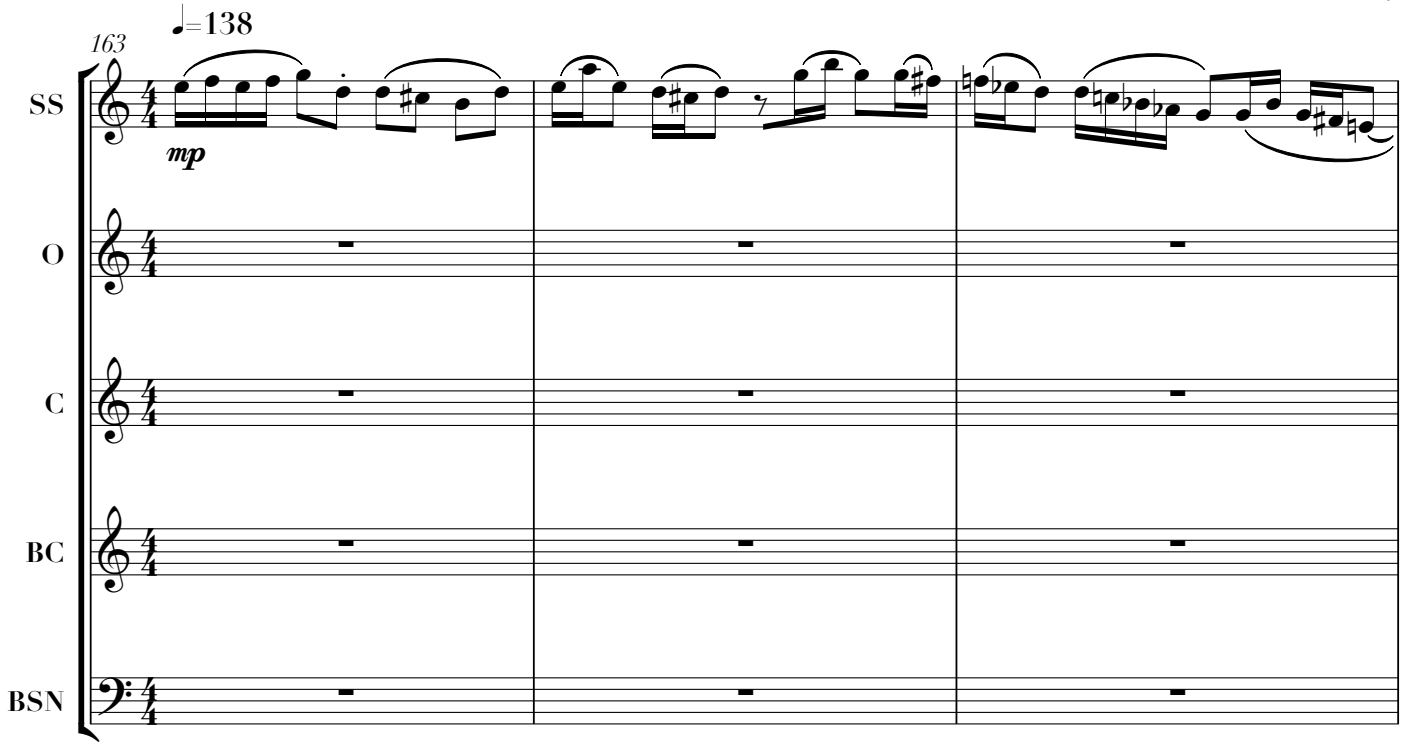

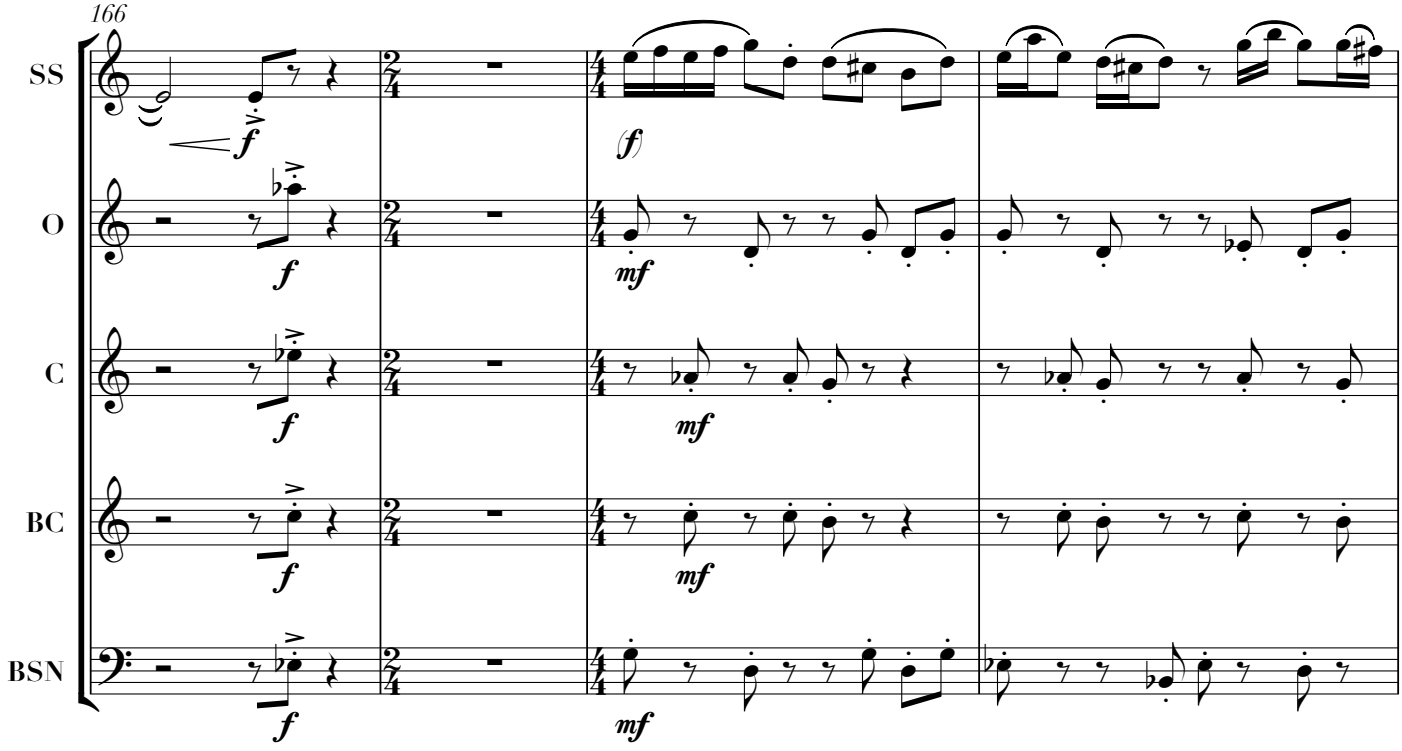

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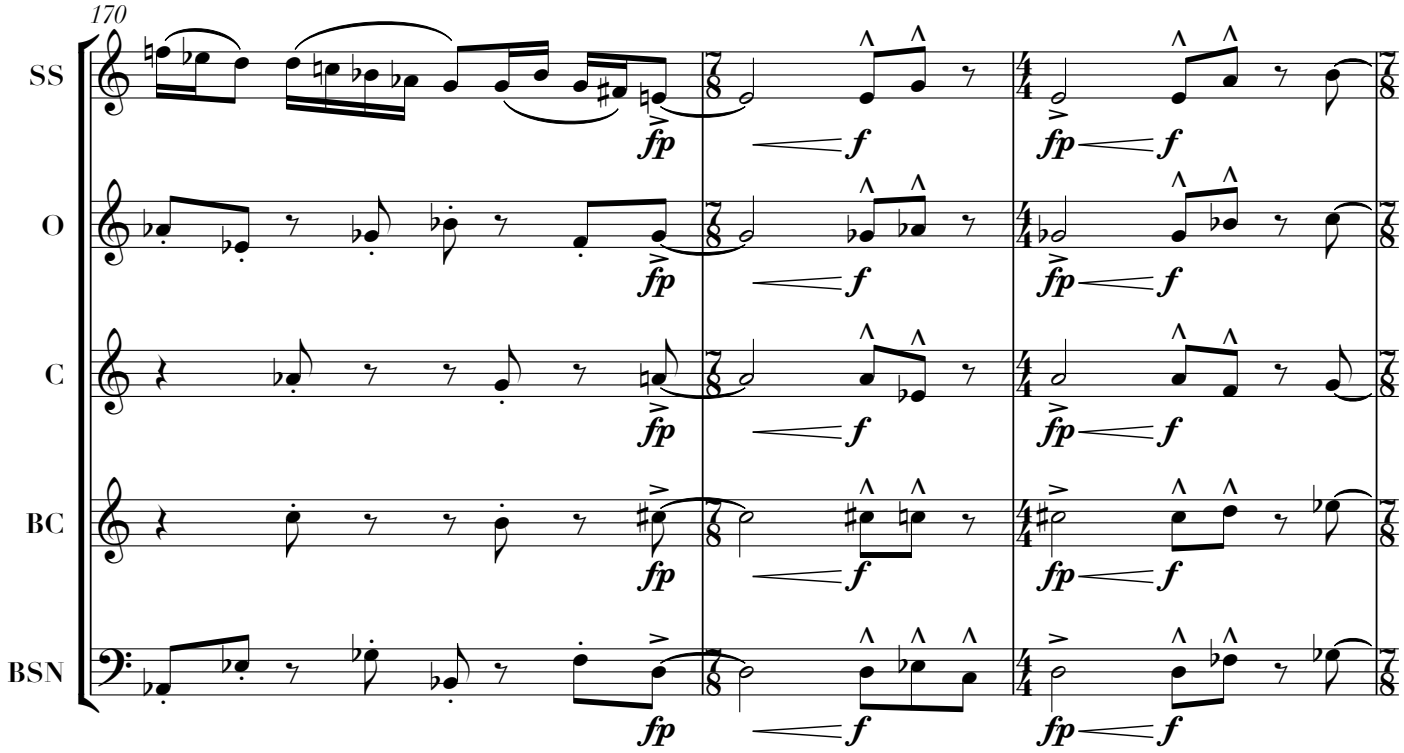

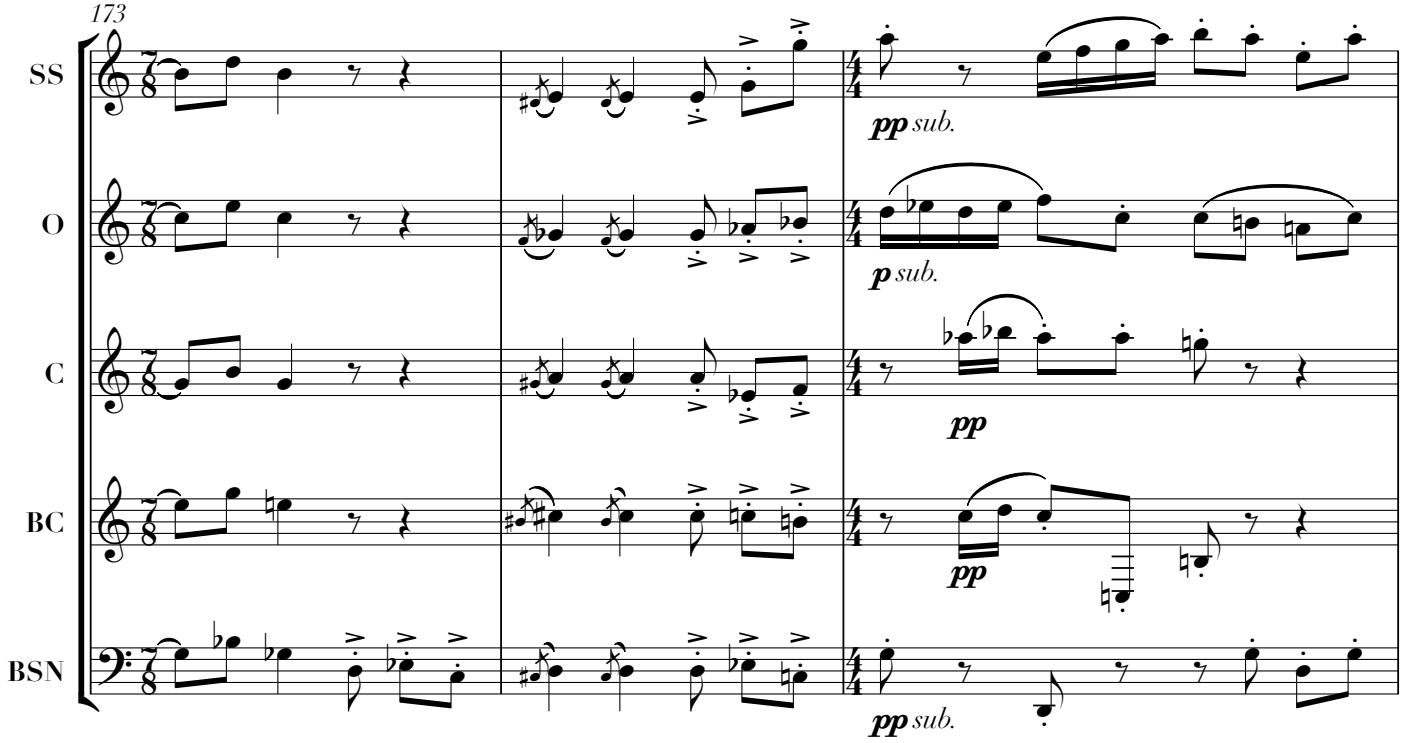

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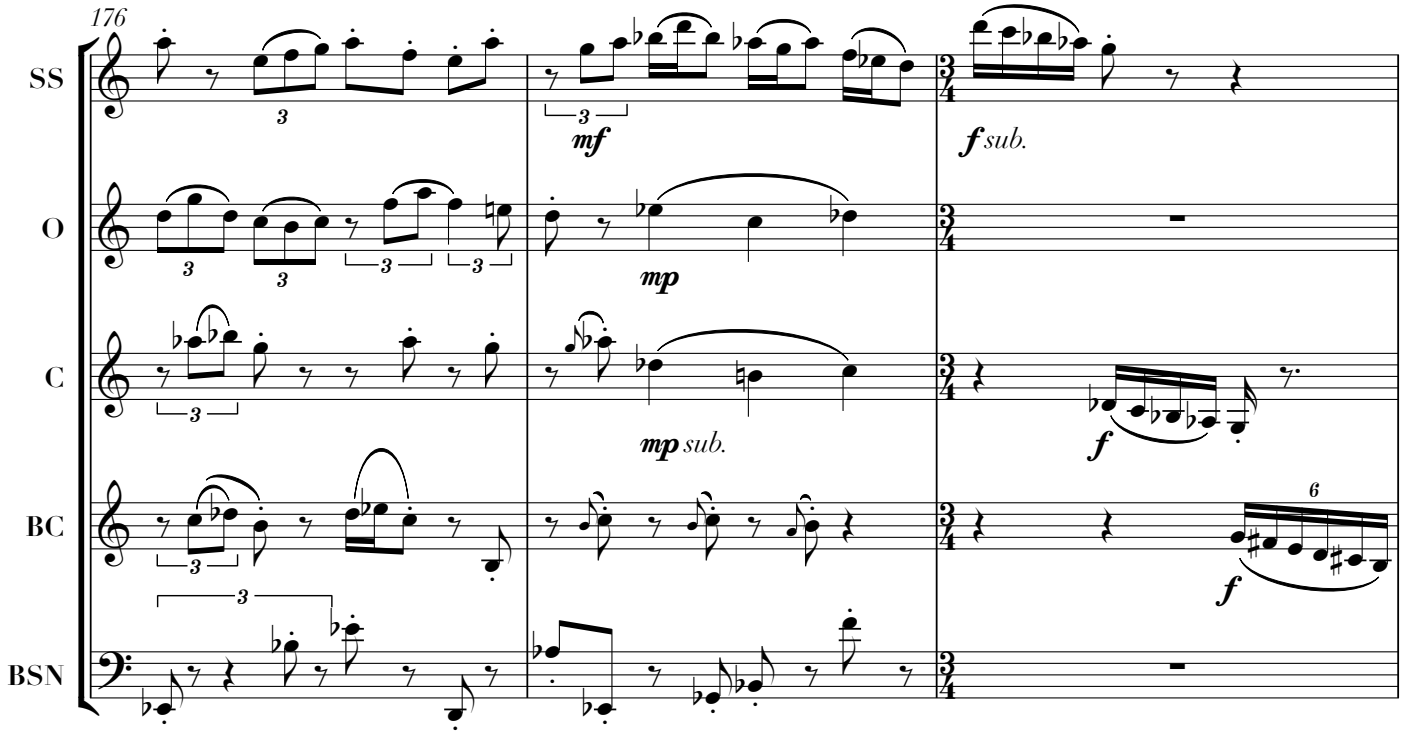

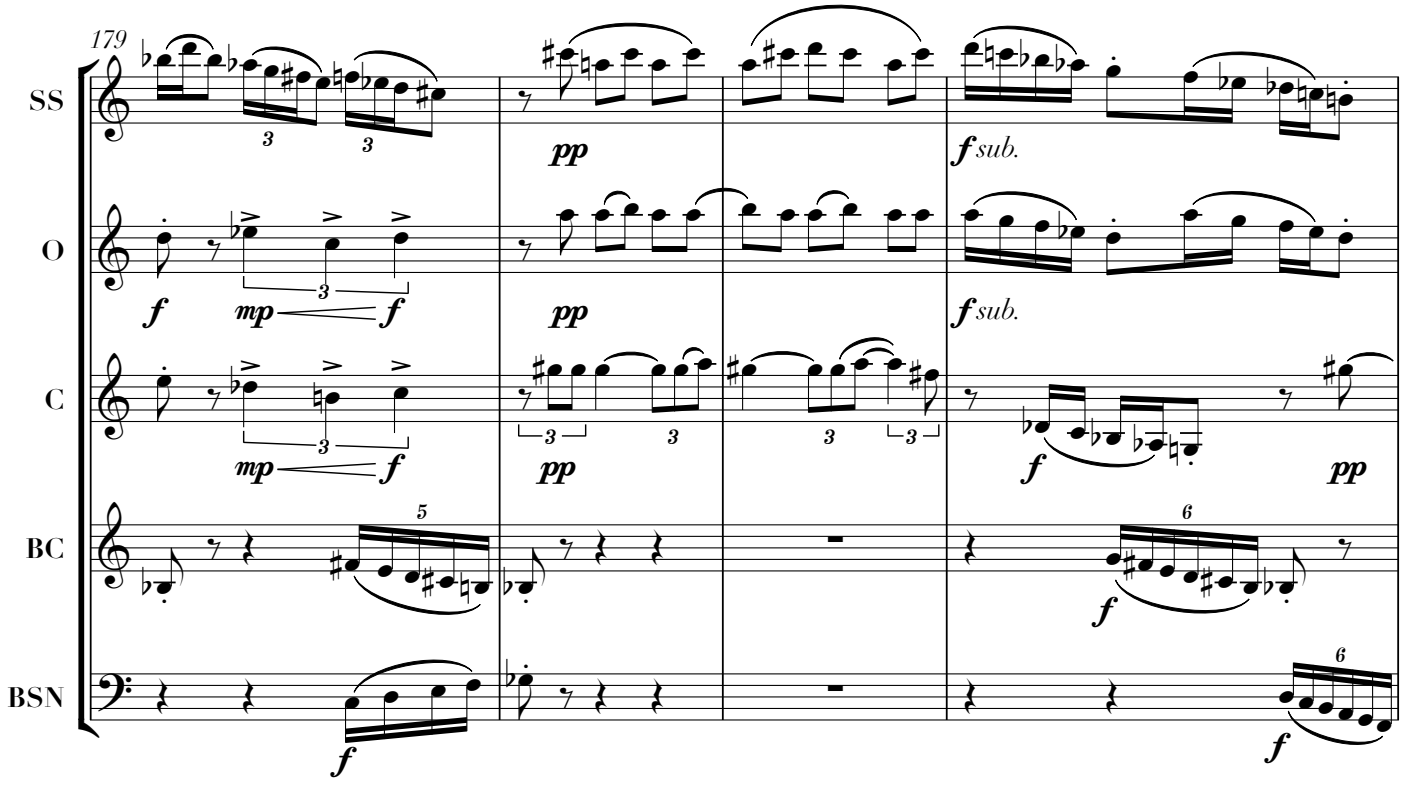

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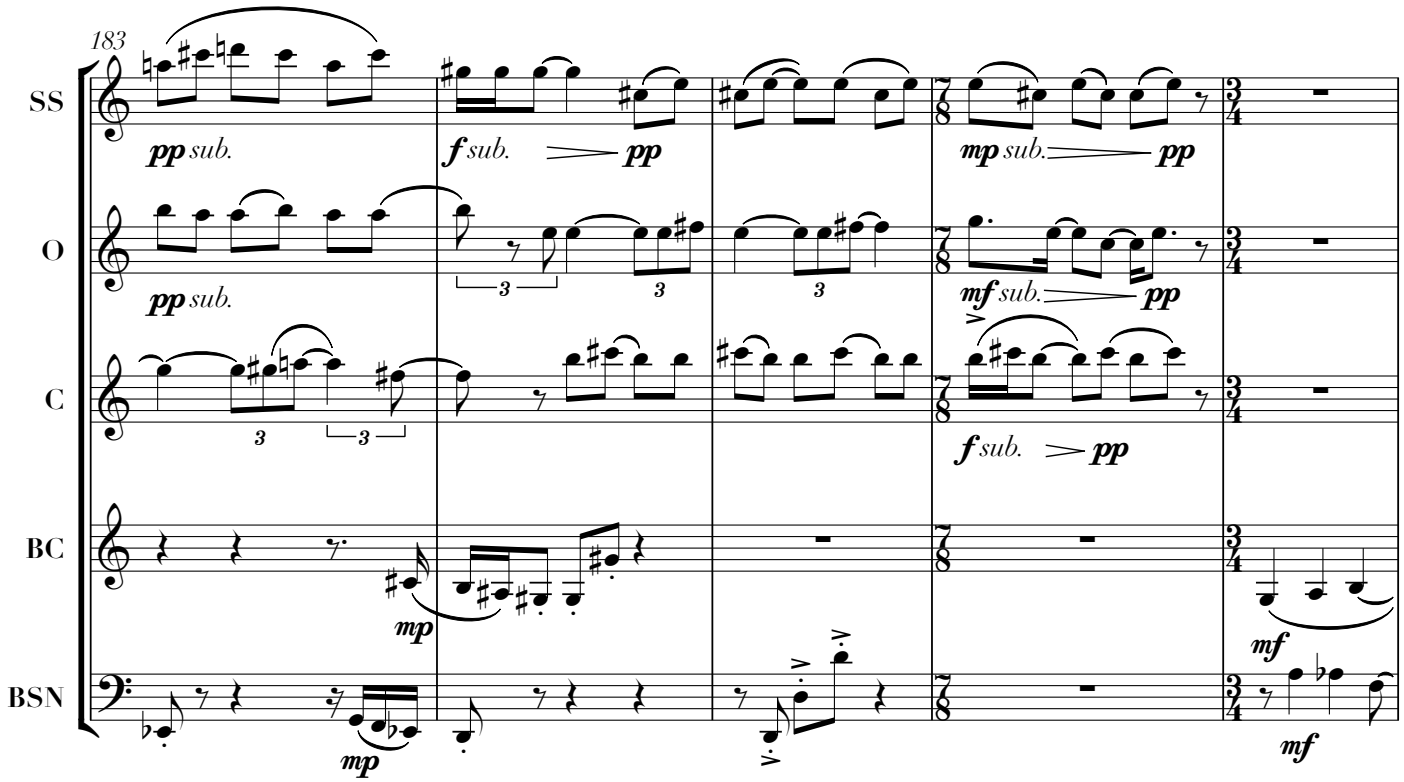

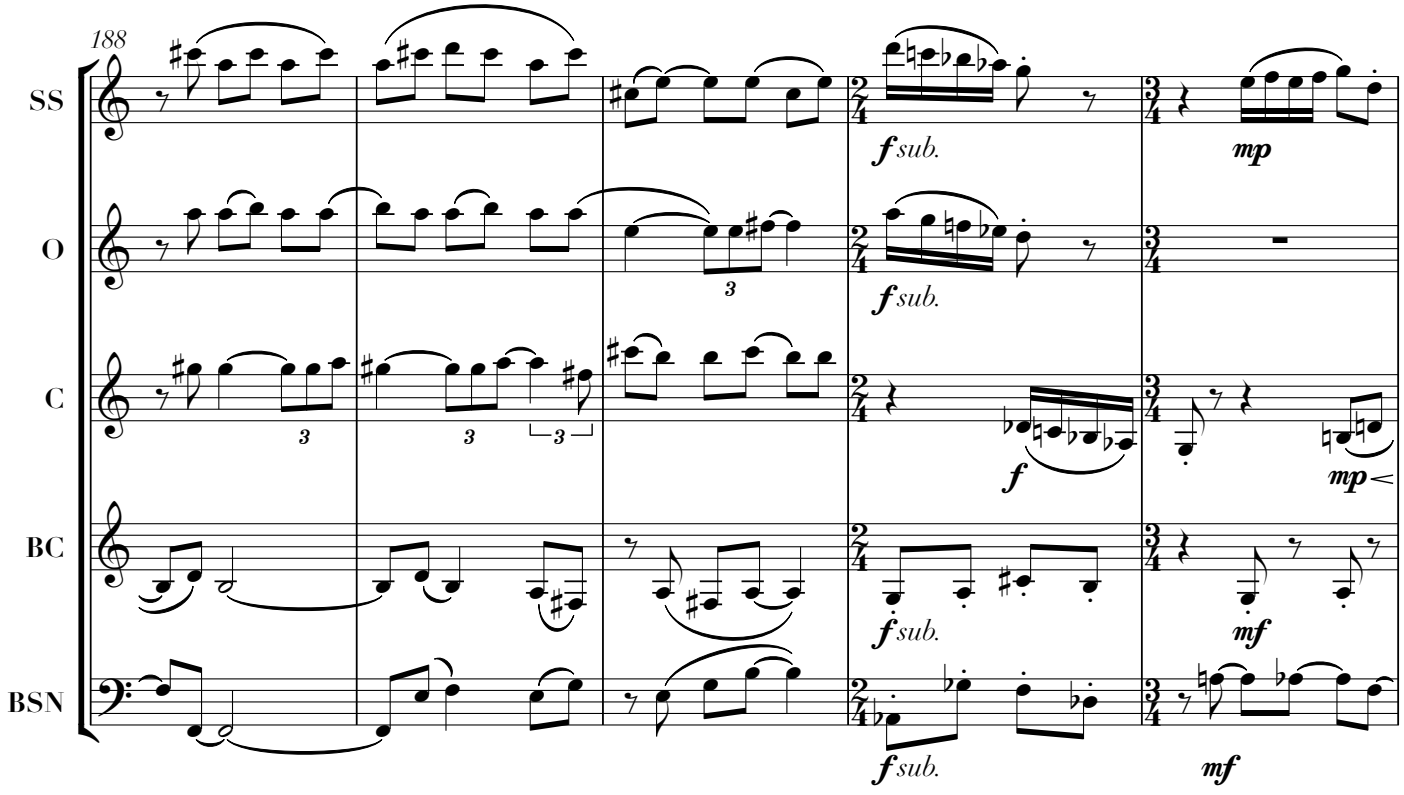

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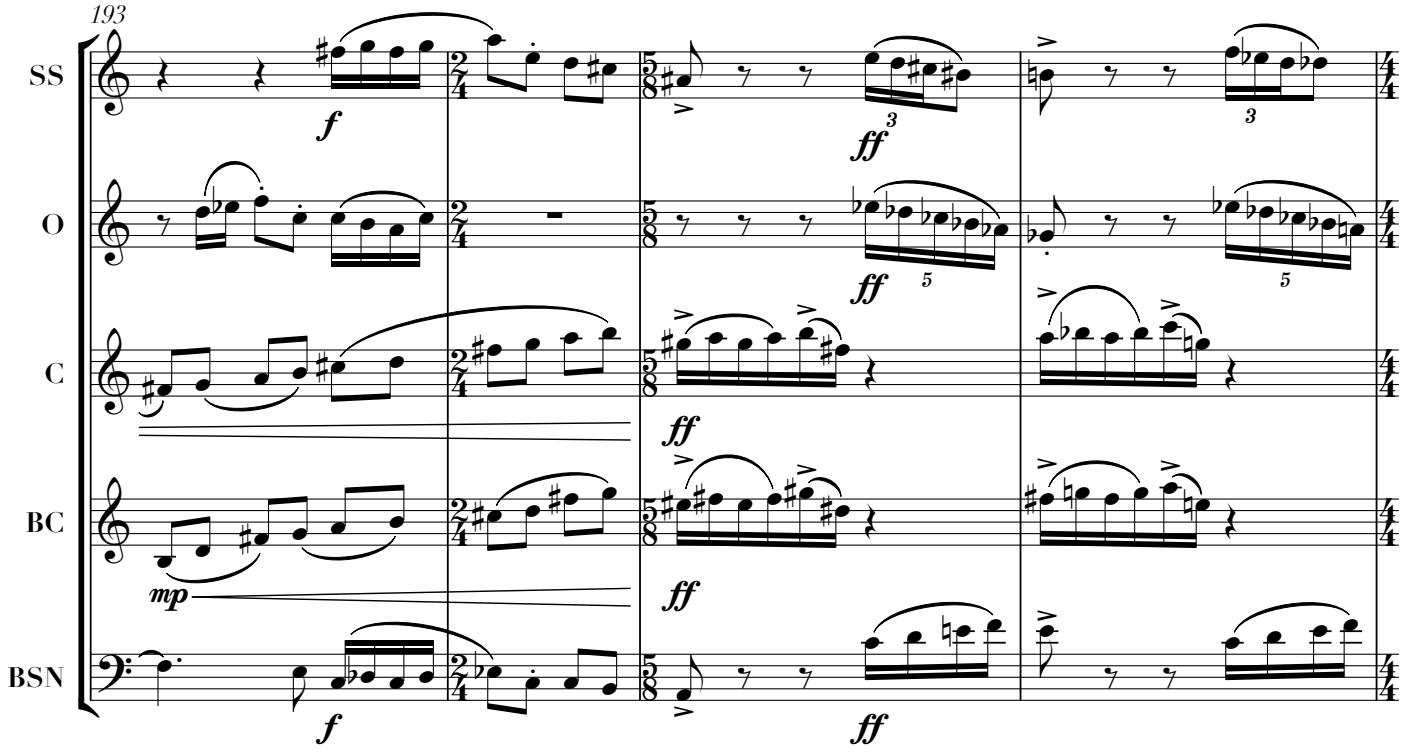

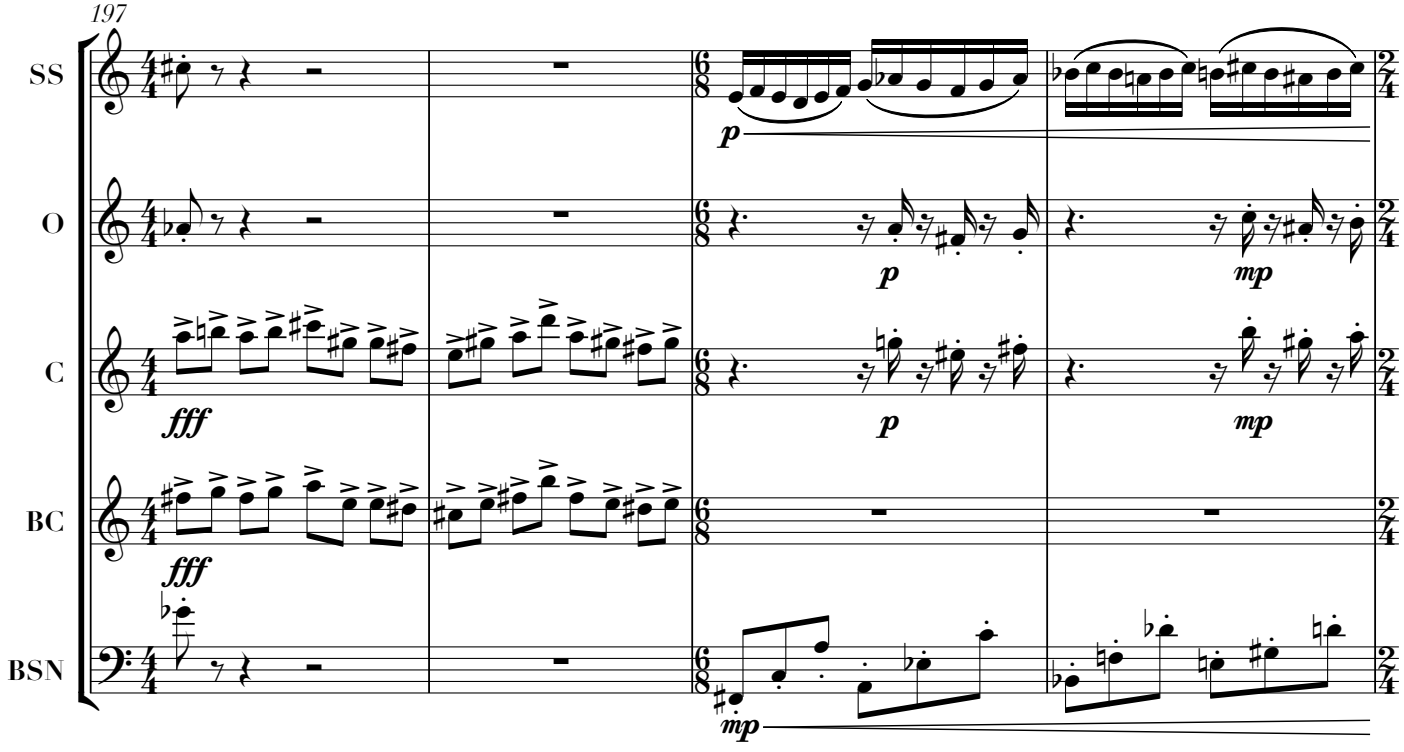

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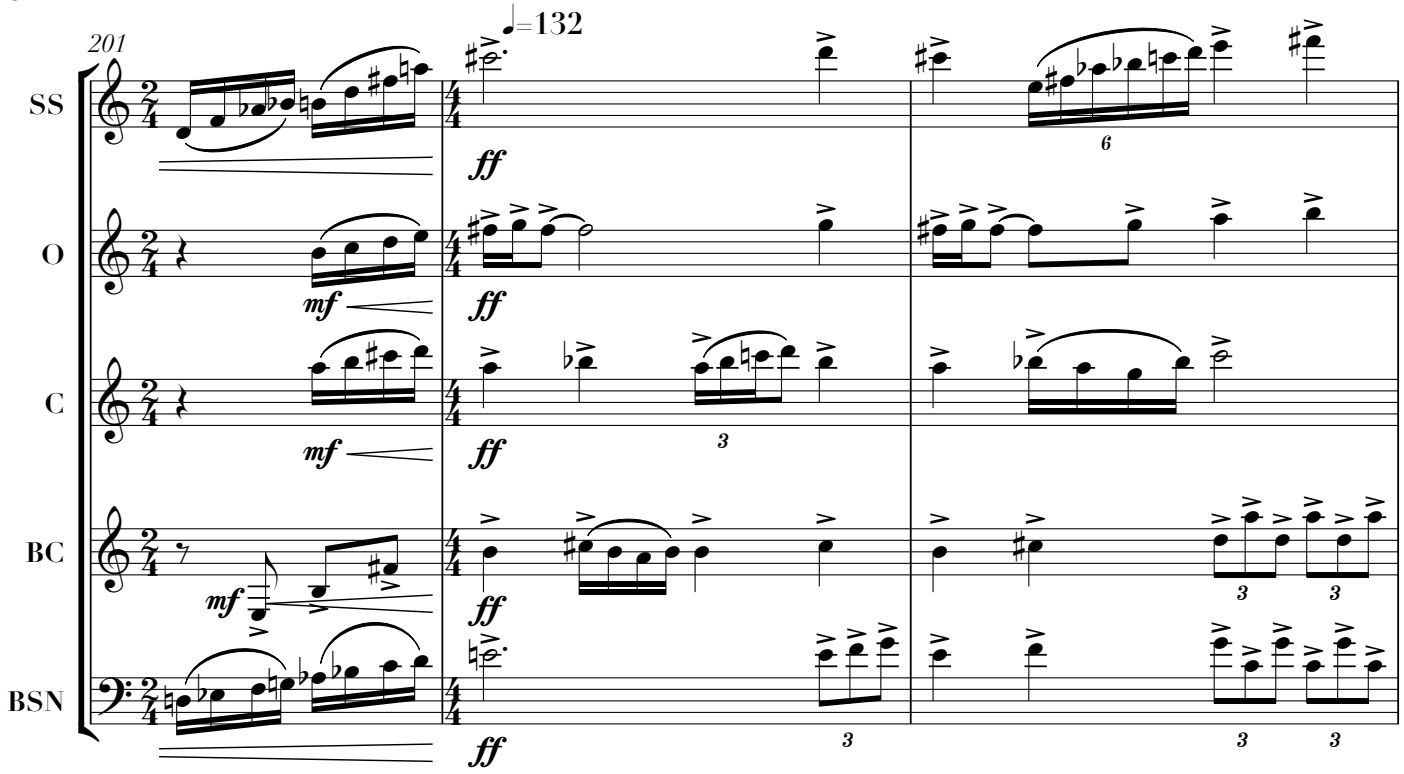

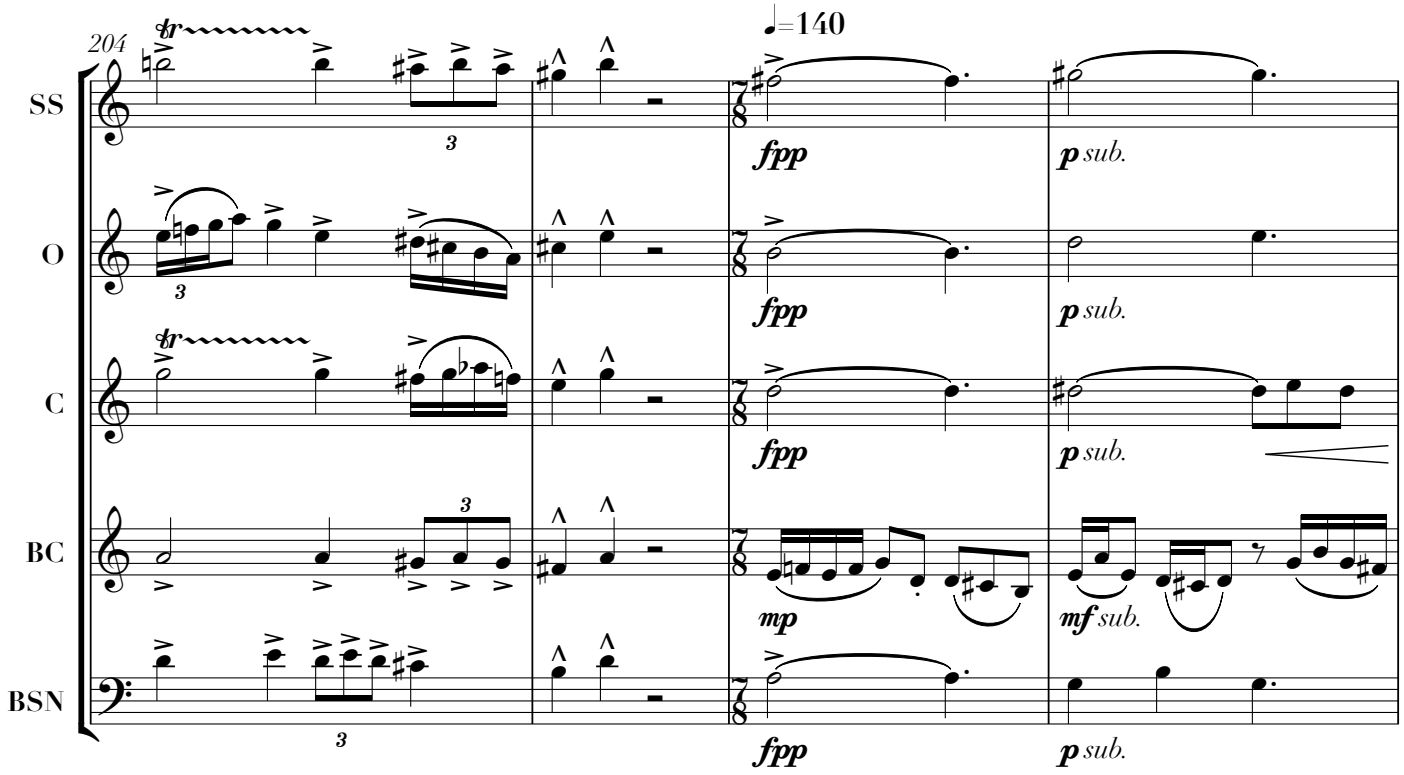

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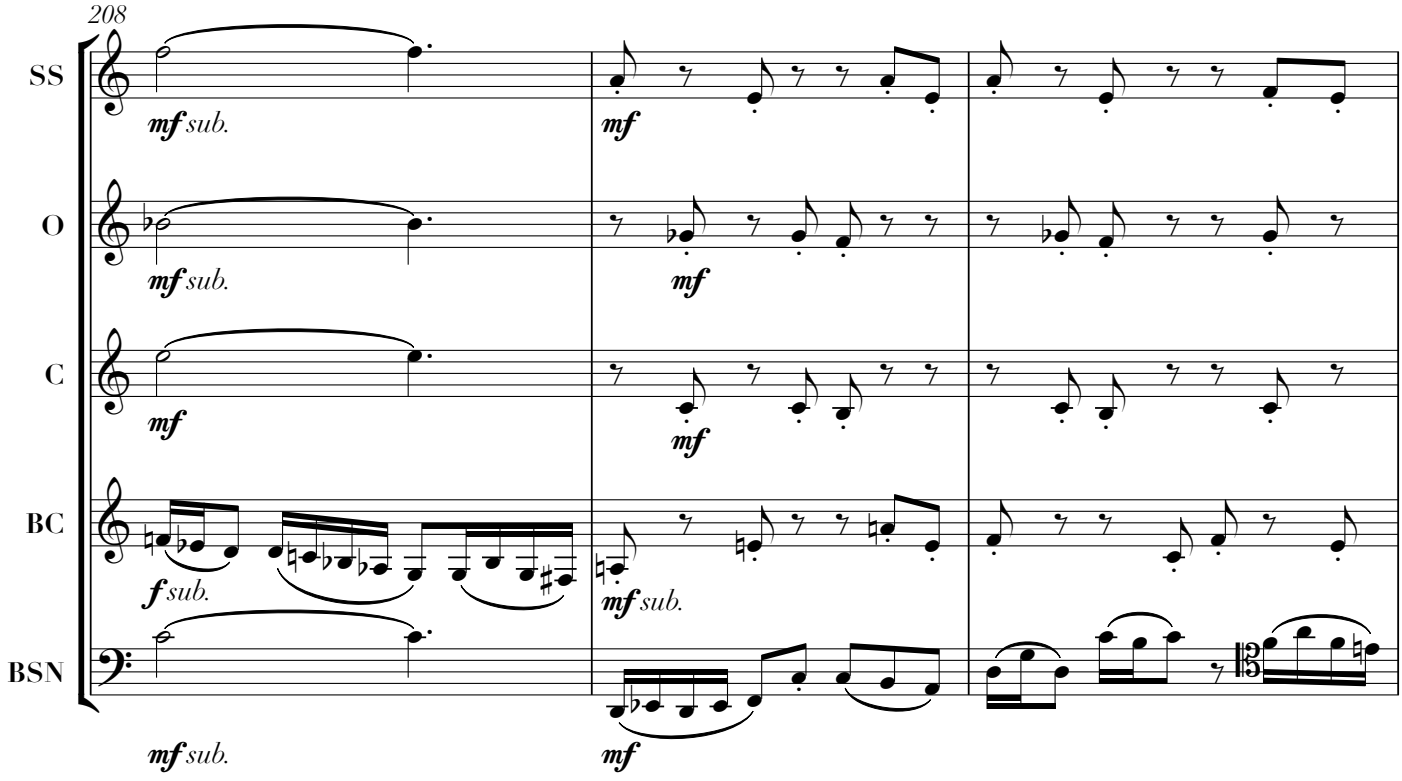

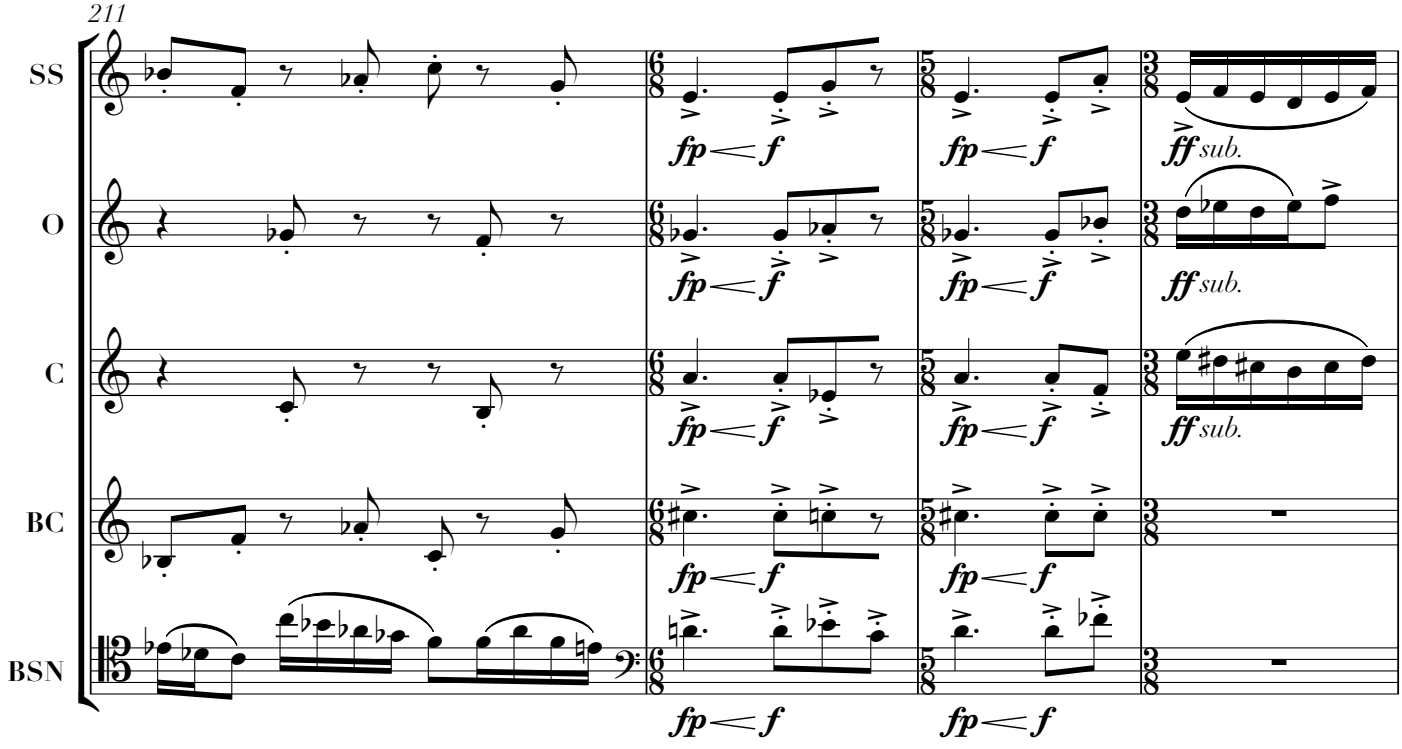

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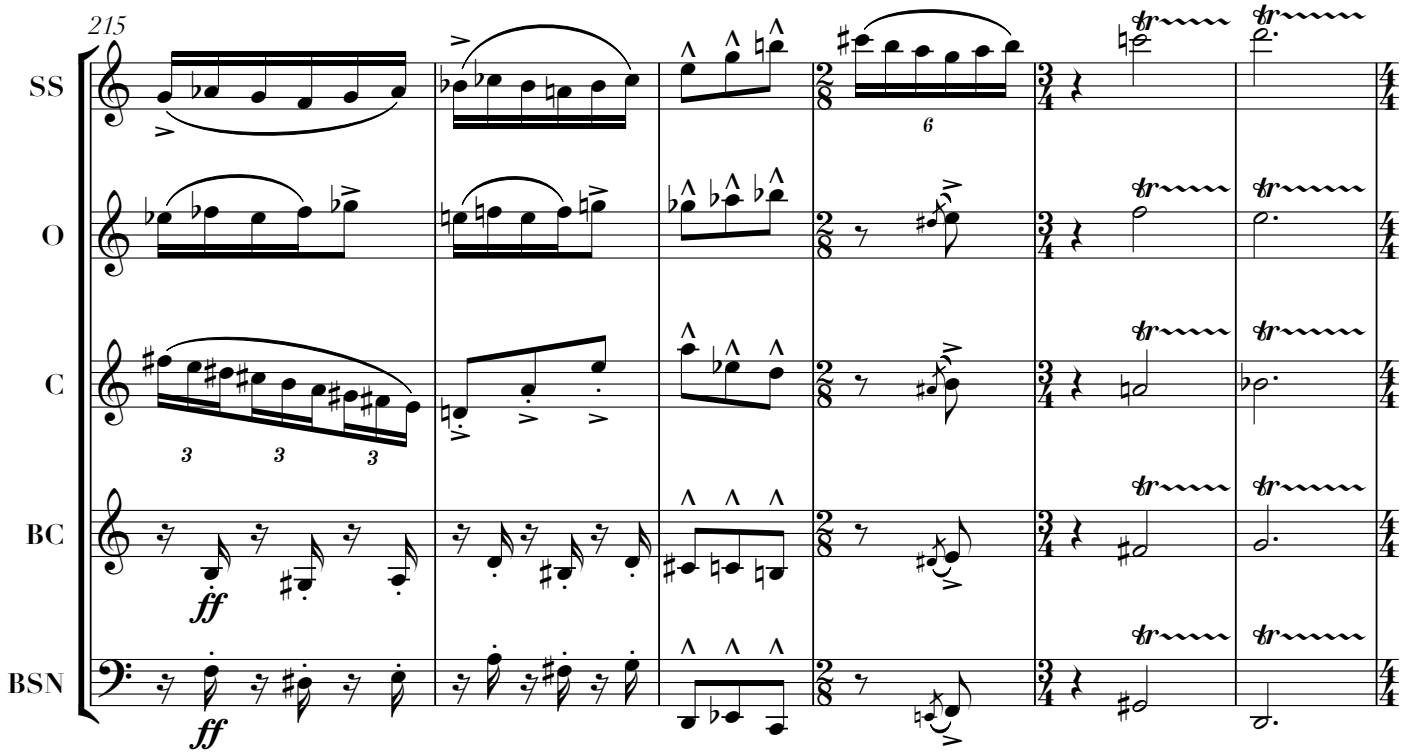

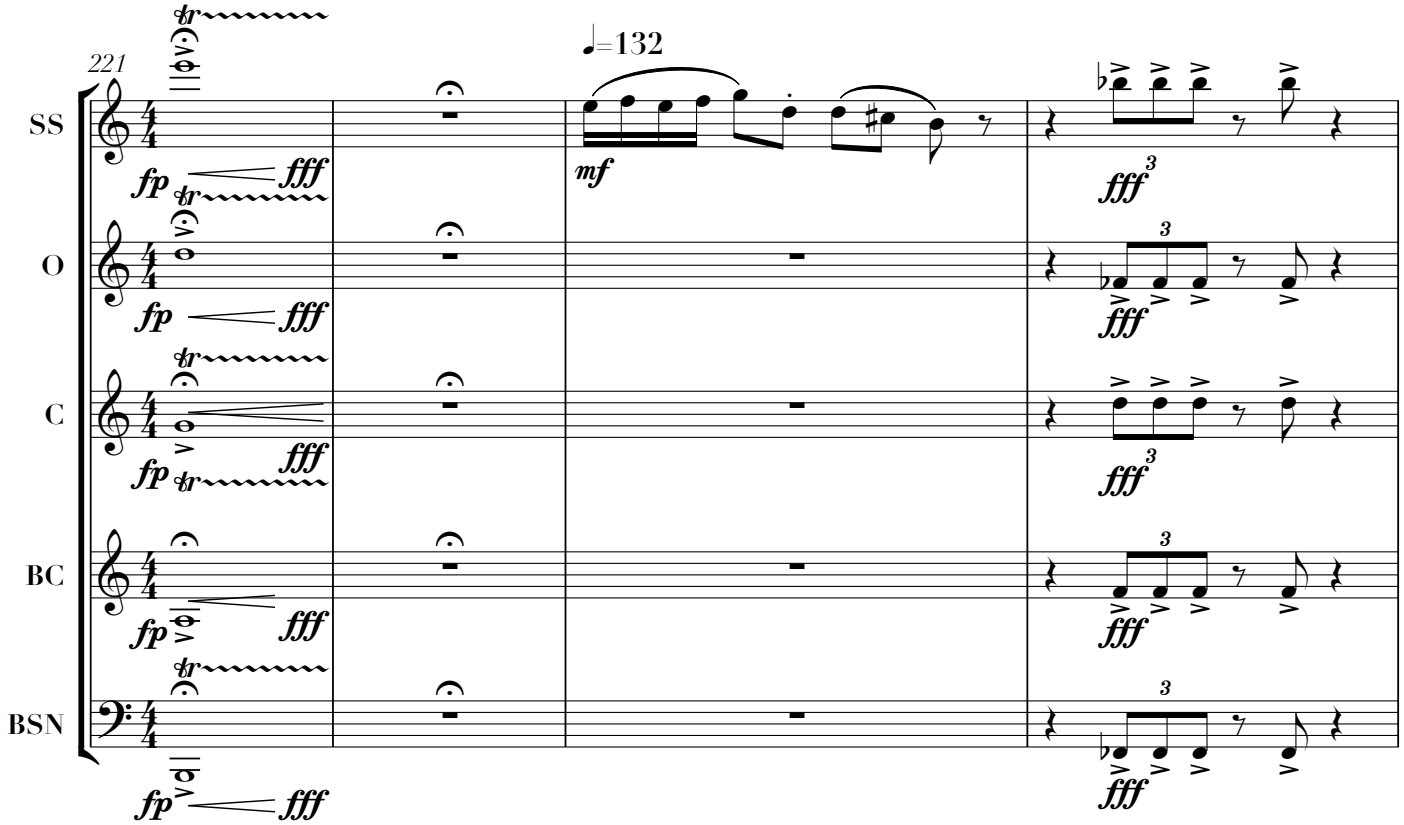

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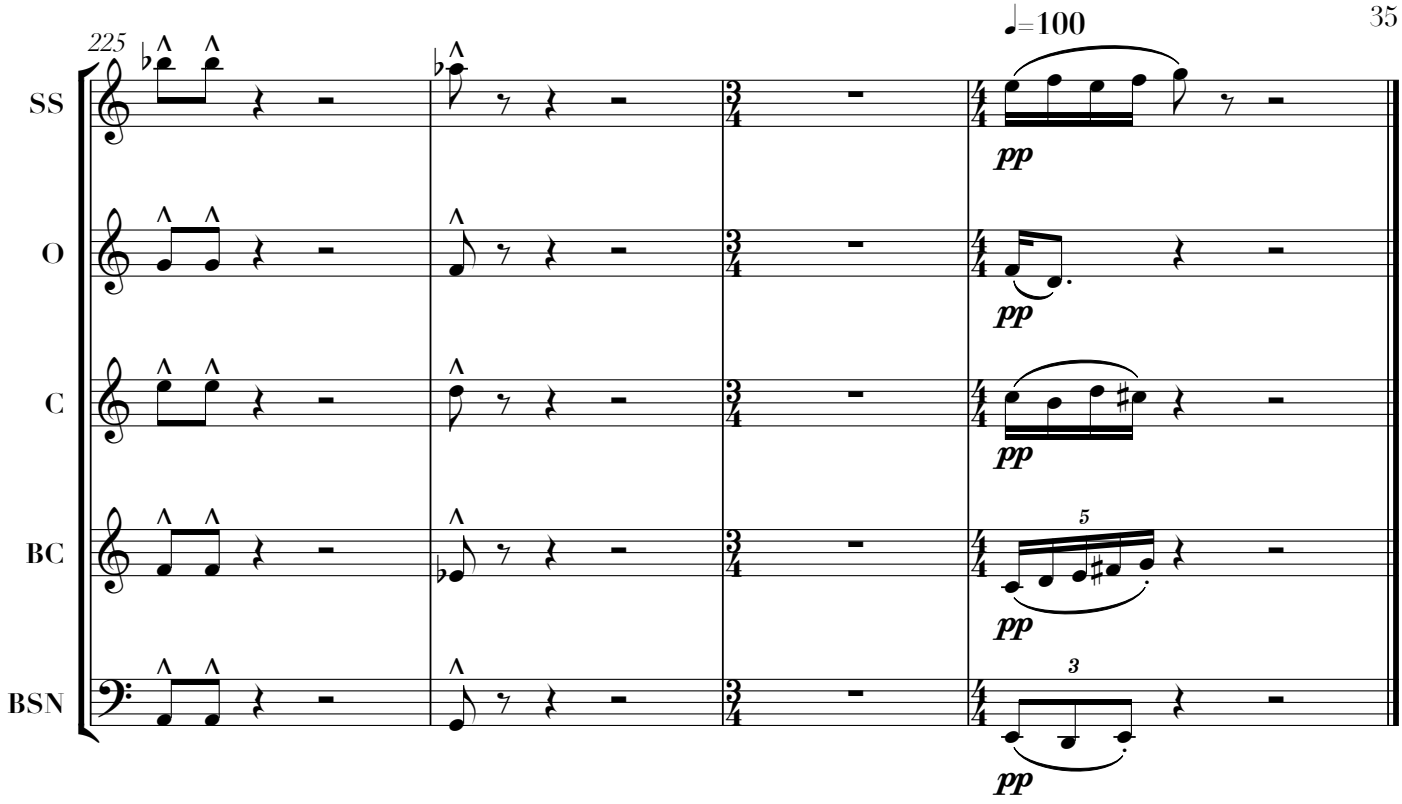

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