A Reicha (1770—1836)

4 Fugues from Op 36

(179?-1803)

arranged for Wind Quintet

(Cor Anglais; Clarinet in B♭ & A)

by Toby Miller (2013-8)

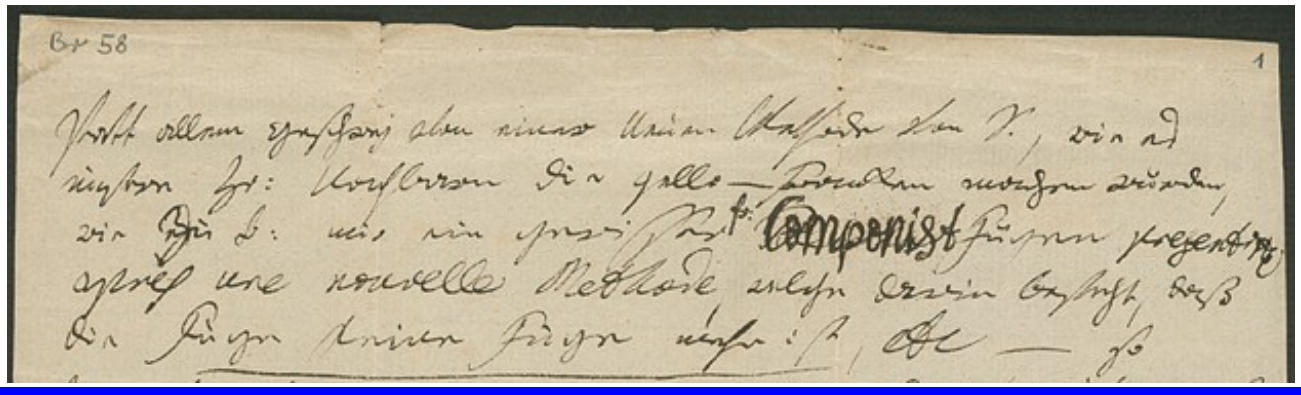
left:

Anton [Antonín / Antoine] Reicha [Rejcha]

(Drawn in 1815 by Claude-Marie-François Dien)

below: Fragment of letter from Beethoven to Breitkopf & Härtel, 18. Dec 1802 (from Beethoven-Haus Bonn, Bodmer collection):

*"statt allem Geschrey von einer Neuen Methode von V.[ariationen], wie es unsere Hr. Nachbarn die gallo-Franken machen würden, wie zu B.[eispiel] mir ein gewisser ~~Reicha~~ fr[anzösicher] **Componist** Fugen presentirte après une nouvelle Methode, welche darin besteht, daß die Fuge keine Fuge mehr ist, etc"*



From the pen of the 'father of the wind quintet' we already have 25 lengthy quintets, plus three slow movements with cor anglais, specially written for these forces. So why these arrangements of 4 fugues, originally for keyboard? If you try them I hope you will quickly see that they come from a completely different 'compartment' of Reicha's art. Although by far his best known works, the wind quintets are a highly misleading basis for generalizations about Reicha's composition, or for assessing his importance to the history of music. His best-known wind quintet, Op 88 no 2 in E♭, does contain a fugue in the second movement (ironically the edition by Leuckart that was most widely used until recently cuts it—in fairness Reicha himself indicated it as optional - among much else) and there is plenty of counterpoint elsewhere, but the general musical style of the quintets is uncontroversial, often passing for Haydn or Mozart. This is because of the aims Reicha set out for them: to encourage more ambitious composition for wind instruments by extending both playing and compositional technique. Writing for some of the finest players of his day, he wanted to exploit ideas not explored in the '*Harmoniemusik* of the previous century - advanced technique, the distinct strengths and characteristics of each instrument and of their sounds in combination - while modelling his new body of work on the 'serious' quartet and quintet repertoire already available for strings. By this time Reicha was finally established firmly in Paris, at his second attempt: in 1818 he became (with the sponsorship of Louis XVIII) Professor of Counterpoint and Fugue at the Conservatoire, introducing his own texts. His pupil Berlioz, who was highly sceptical of most of the teaching he received, recognized Reicha as both clear and forward thinking, and interested in his pupils. Reicha's reputation ultimately rests on his theoretical ideas and his teaching: his 36 Fugues belong to that part of his compositional output.

Back in 1802, after his first disappointment in Paris, Reicha was drawn to Vienna by the presence of Haydn and of Beethoven, his friend from school-days in Bonn. In his bag he had a collection of keyboard fugues he had composed, which he was regularly adding to: some of them on subjects from the old masters (Bach, Handel, Frescobaldi and Scarlatti), and all supporting Reicha's comment in his autobiography about his Vienna period: "Ideas came to me so rapidly it was often difficult to set them down without losing some of them. I always had a great penchant for doing the unusual in composition. When writing in an original vein, my creative faculties and spirit seemed keener than when following the precepts of my predecessors." So we find a fugue in 5/8 time, one in alternating bars of 6/8 and 2/8, one with different rhythms in each hand (polyrhythm), one with six subjects, another whose first subject is a single repeated note. Reicha showed them to Beethoven: he bought a copy of the final set of 36 when they were published next year and, according to one scholar, used ideas borrowed from Reicha for the fugues in the slow movement of the *Eroica* symphony which was in gestation at this time. However his public response is documented in a letter he sent to publisher Breitkopf & Härtel in December 1802 (about his Piano Variations Opus 34 and 35): "Instead of making a great clamour about a new method of writing variations, like our worthy neighbours the Gallo-Franks would make, such as for instance, when a certain French composer presented me with fugues *après une nouvelle méthode*, the method amounting to this, <u>that the fugue is no longer a fugue</u>, and so on—I have wished to draw the attention of those who are not connoisseurs to the fact that at any rate these variations are different from all others." This appears to mark the end of the friendship: Beethoven never mentions Reicha again, while according to Berlioz, in a eulogy he wrote after Reicha's death: "the intimacy does not seem to have lasted long between the two great musicians… What makes me think so is that I often have heard Reicha express himself quite coldly regarding Beethoven's works, and to speak with a badly disguised irony about the enthusiasm which these created...". The four fugues 'old & new' in this selection are as follows:

- Fugue **no. 13** "composed according to a new system" uses only the white notes of the piano, yet includes cadences on all the notes of the C major scale except the 7th.
- Fugue **no. 3** on the subject of the first movement of the F minor quartet Op20 by Haydn, to whom Reicha dedicated his whole collection, develops it in a style we can already call Romantic
- Fugue **no. 12** is an extraordinary Scherzo in 2/8 with a tiny subject, in which a third of all bars are completely silent. Whether it is really a fugue or not, Haydn would have appreciated the comedy
- Fugue **no. 7,** on the first subject of Mozart's 'Haffner' Symphony, includes 2-octave leaps from the first violin part. The *con fuoco* direction is Mozart's; Reicha's own directions are always minimal.

Fugue no. 13 'with 2 subjects using a new harmonic system', Op 36 no 13

Score (instrumental pitch)

A Reicha

arr. for wind quintet by Toby Miller

Allegro moderato [♩ = 80]

[♪ & ♪ always staccato except where indicated]

Cadence sur la dominante

Flute

Cor Anglais

Clarinet in B♭

Horn in F

Bassoon

[mf]

5

[p] [mf] [p]

[p] [mf]

[mf]

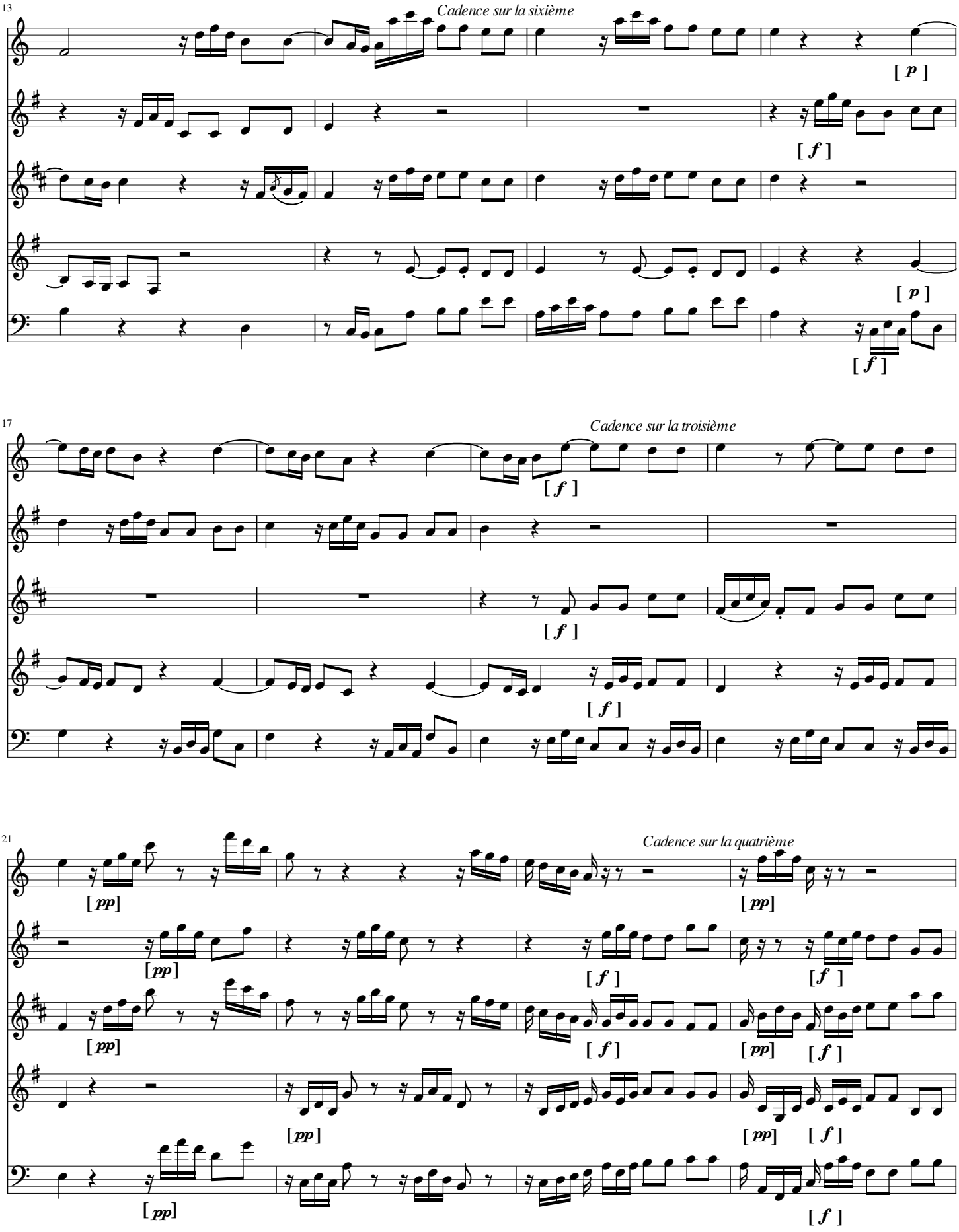
9

Cadence sur la seconde

[mf] [p]

[p] [p]

[p] [p]


13
Cadence sur la sixième
[p]
[f]
[p]
[f]
17
Cadence sur la troisième
[f]
[f]
[f]
21
Cadence sur la quatrième
[pp]
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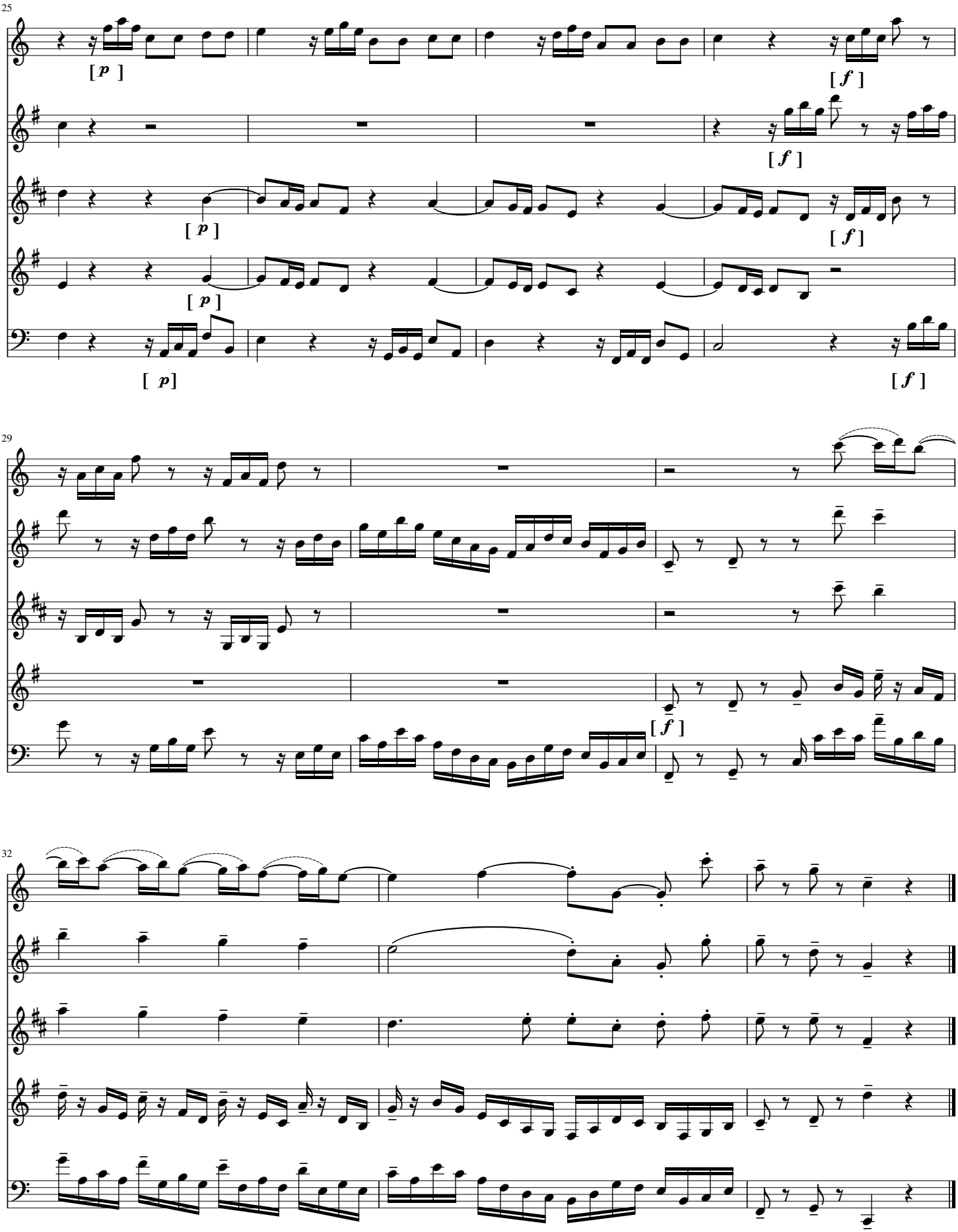
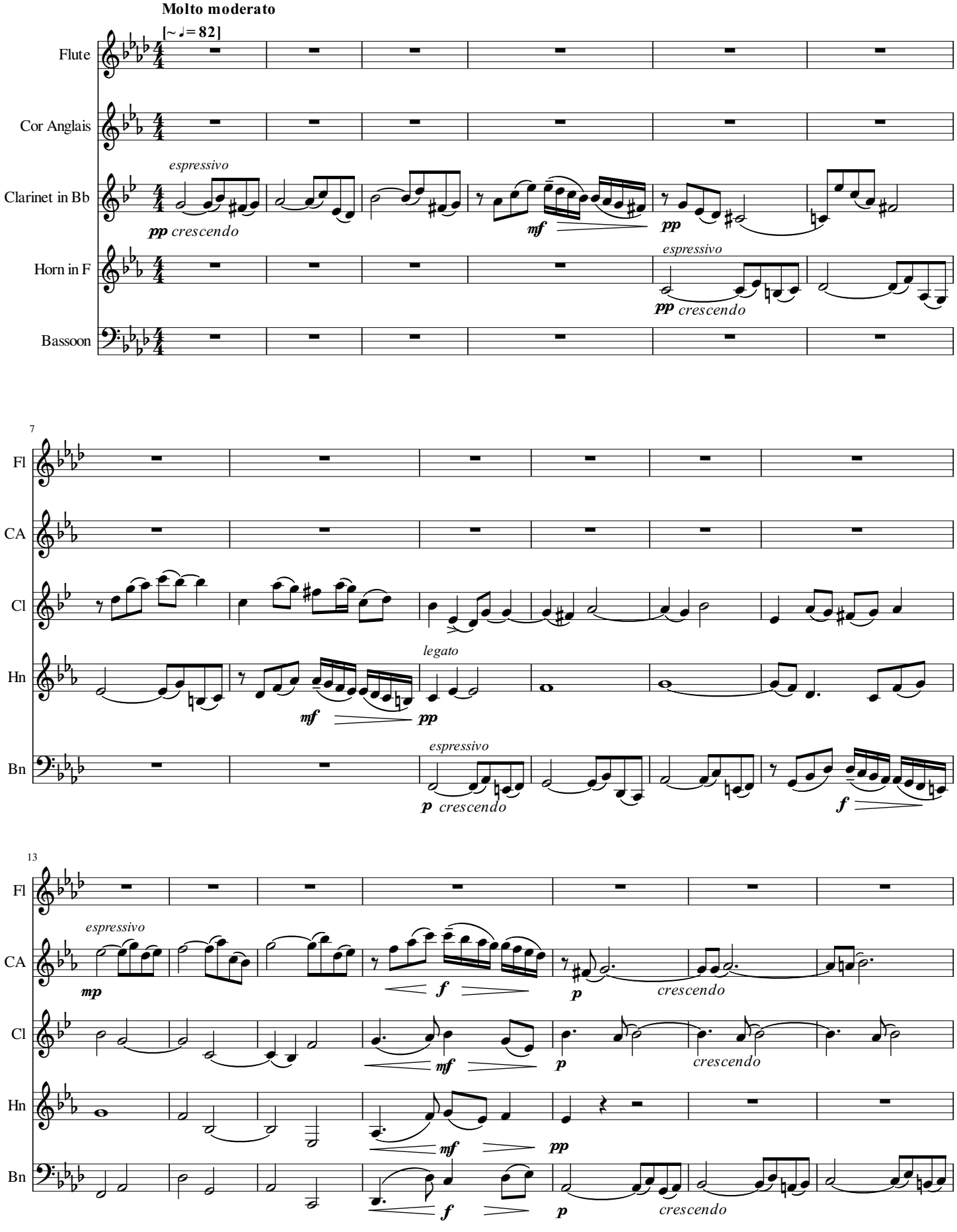
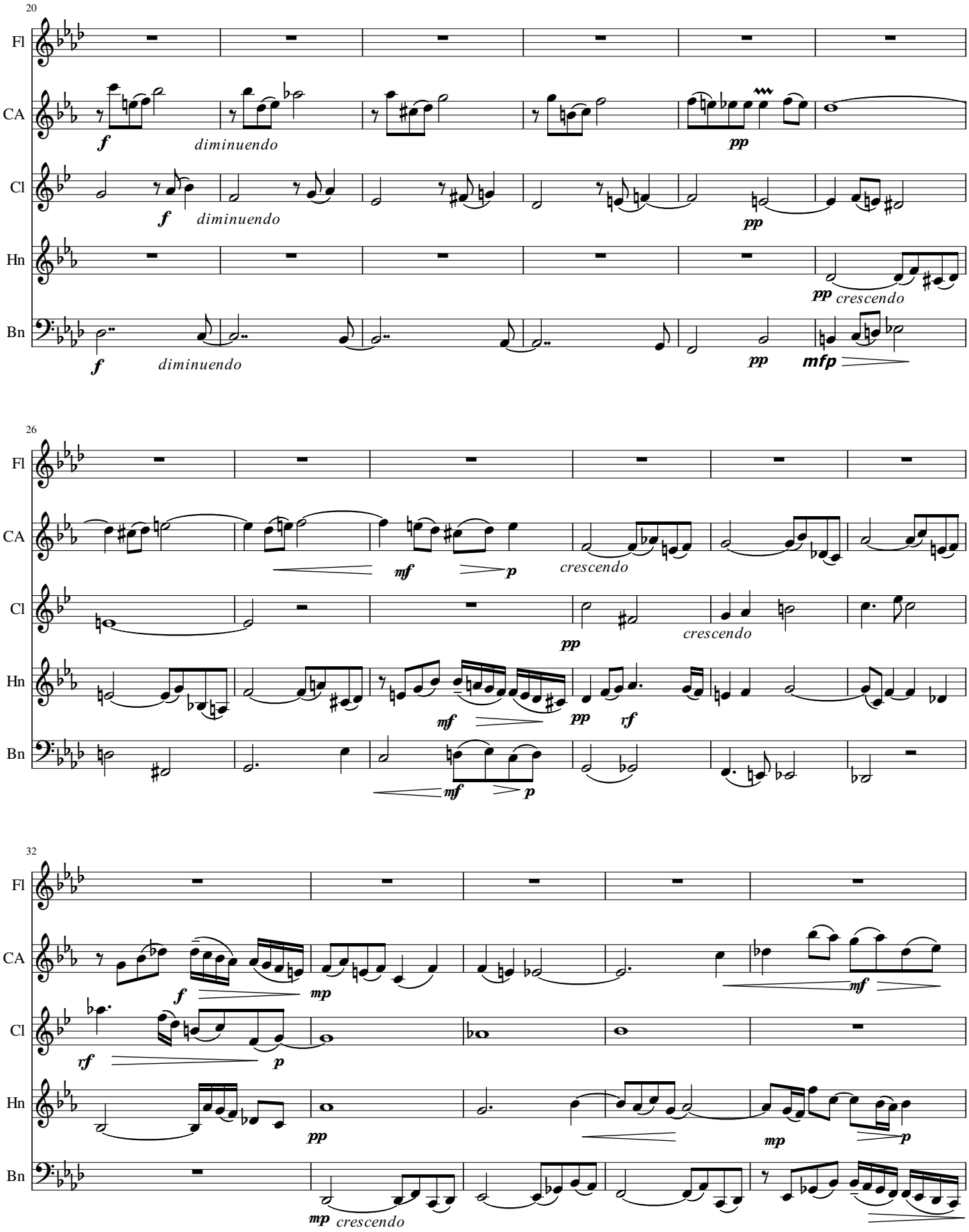
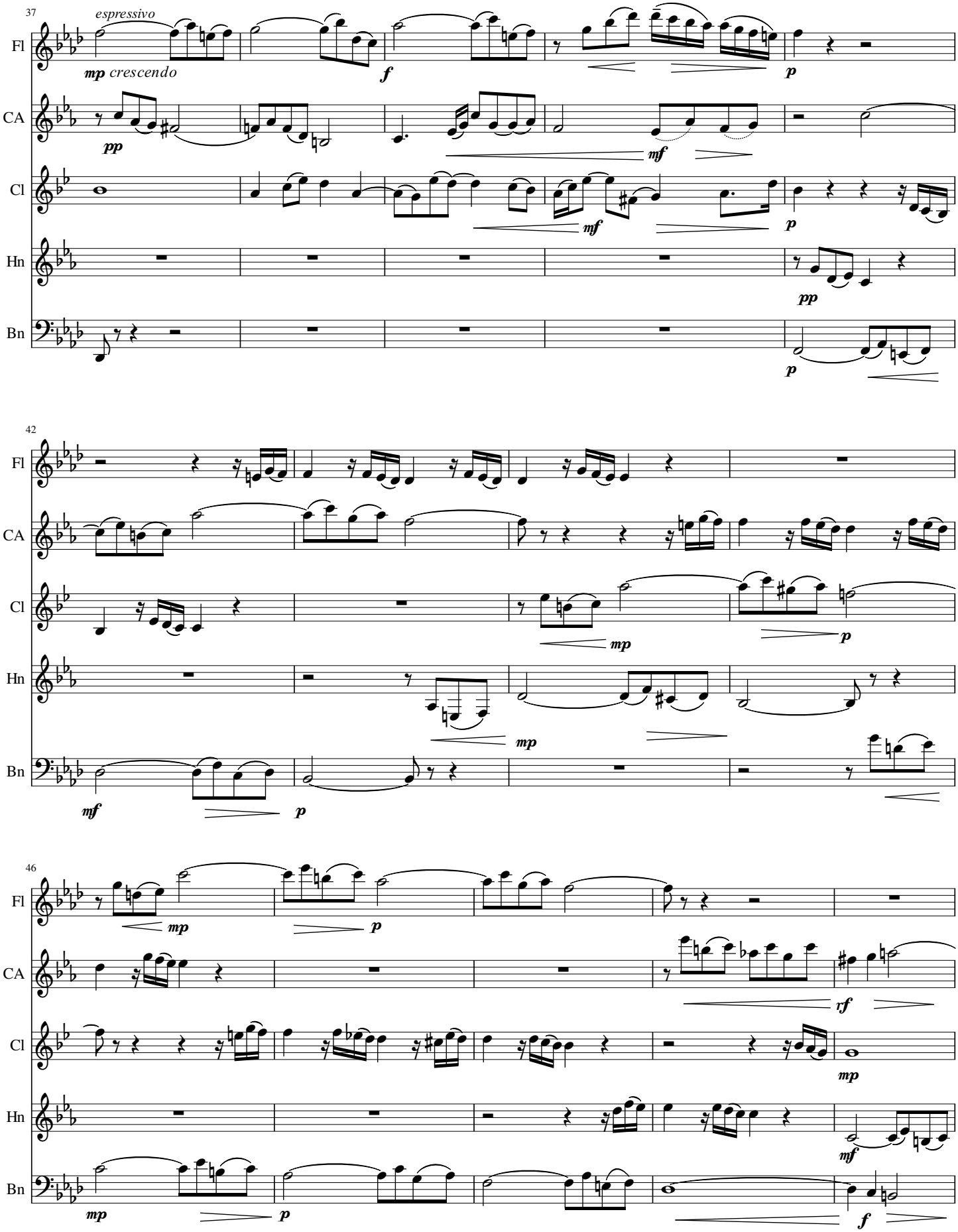

25
[p]
[f]
[p]
[f]
[p]
[p]
[f]
29
[f]
32

Fugue after theme from Haydn (Quartet Op 20 no 5 1st mvmt) Op 36 no 3

Score (instrumental pitch) arr. for Wind Quintet by Toby Miller A Reicha




20
Fl
CA
Cl
Hn
Bn
f
diminuendo
pp
crescendo
mfp
26
mf
p
rf
32
mp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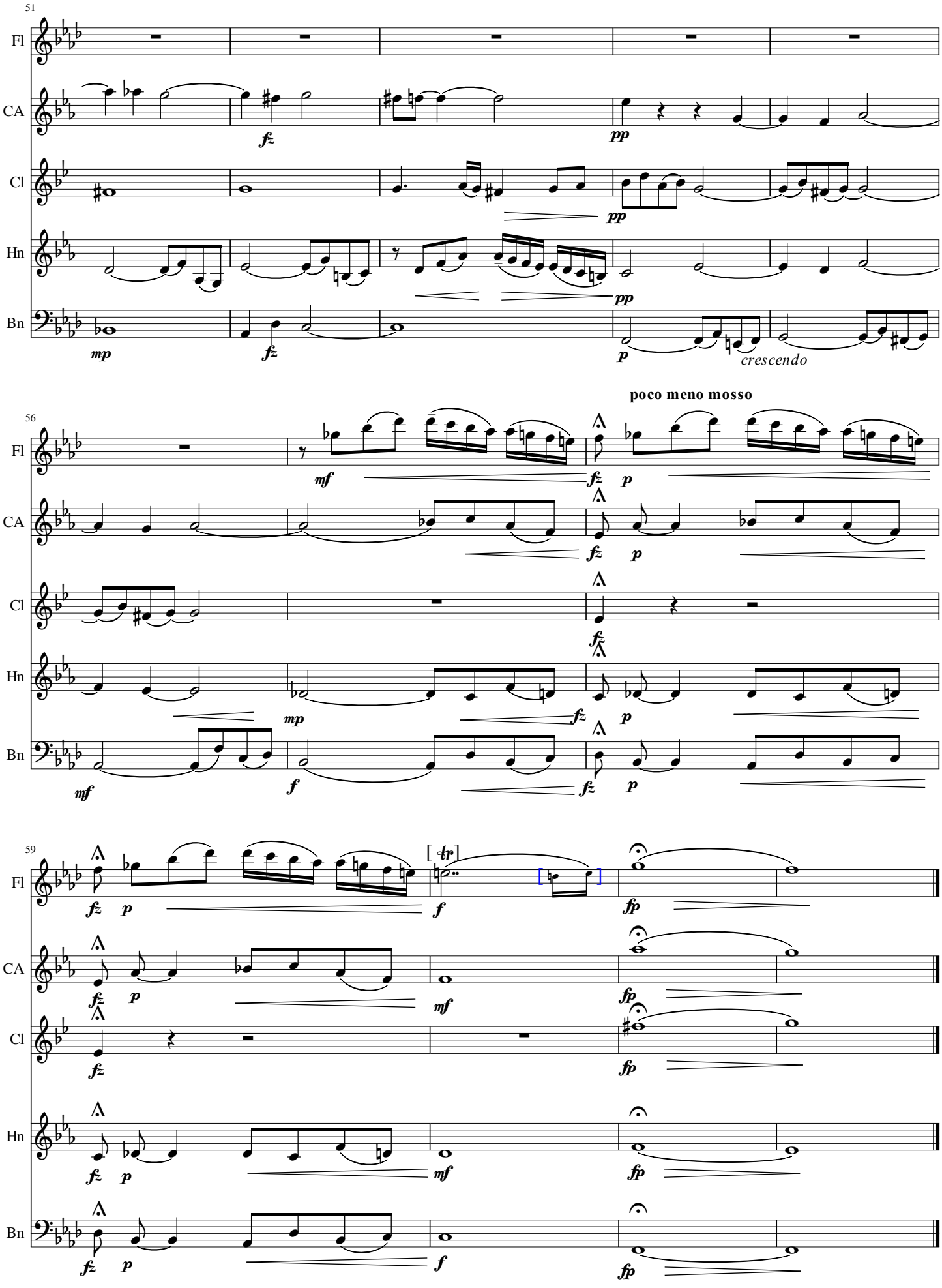
espressivo
Fl
CA
Cl
Hn
Bn
mp crescendo
f
p
pp
mf
42
mp
46
rf


51
Fl
CA
Cl
Hn
Bn
fz
pp
mp
fz
p
crescendo
56
poco meno mosso
mf
fz
p
mp
f
59
[tr]
fp
mf

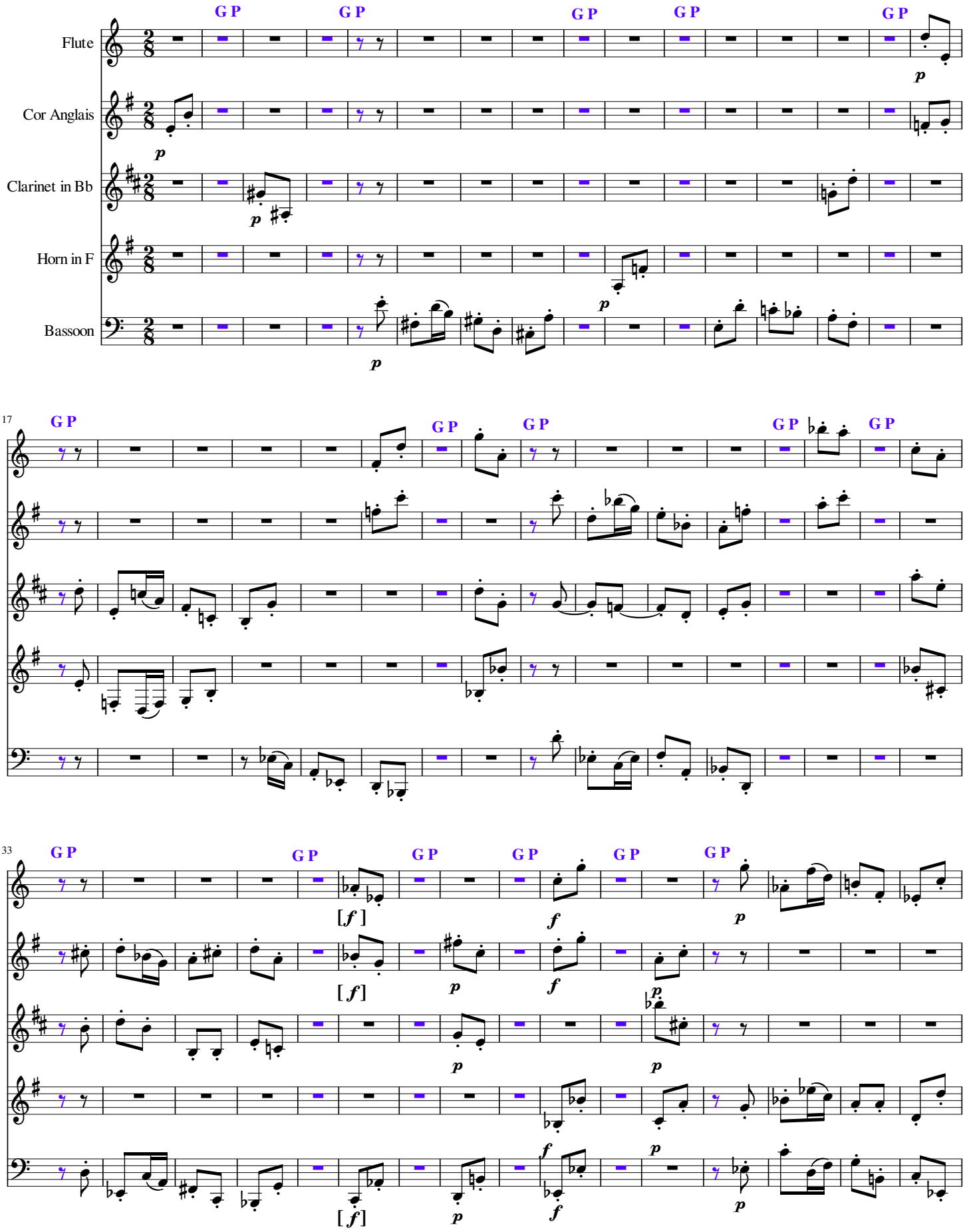
Fugue no. 12 for keyboard, Op 36 no 12

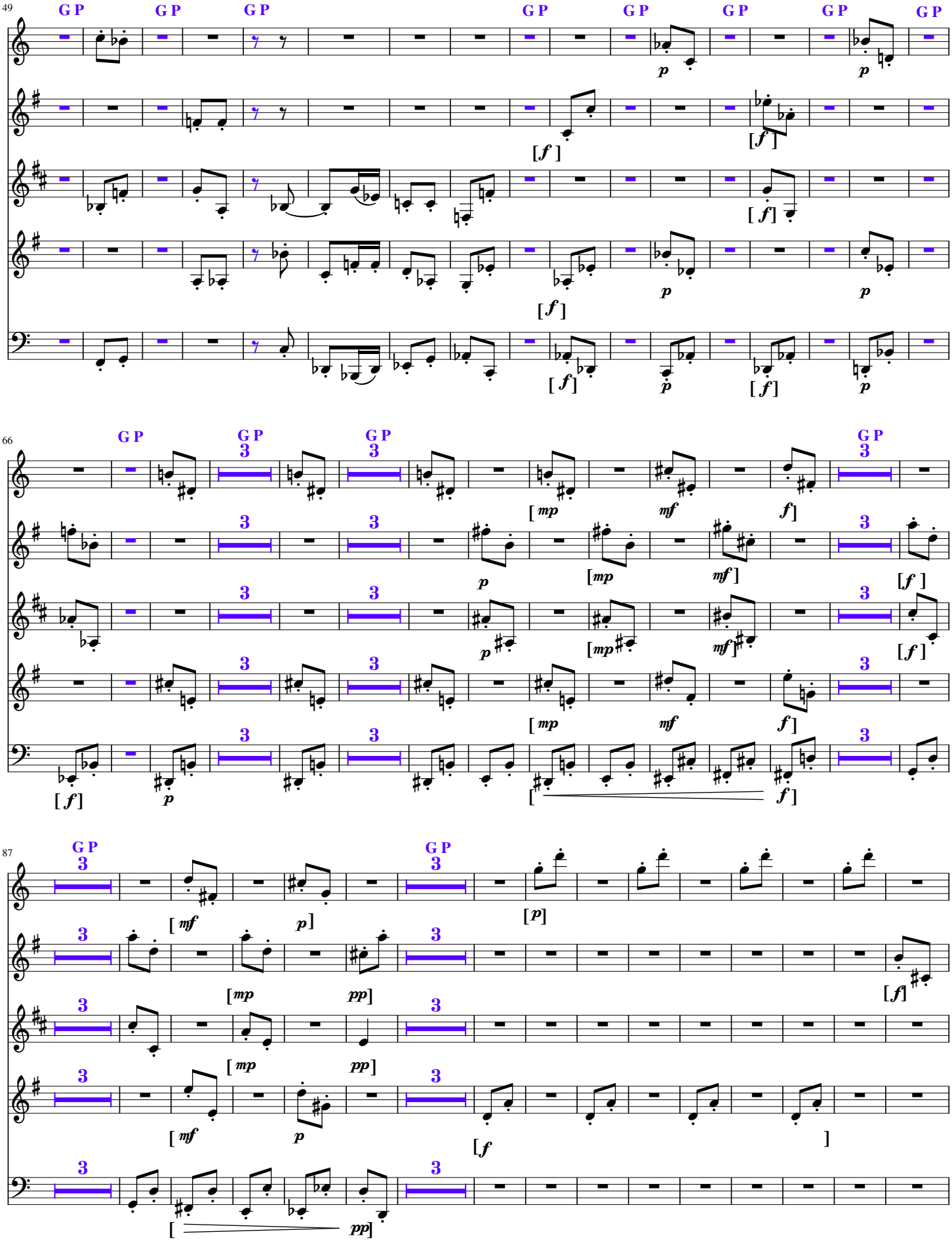
Score (instrumental pitch)

arr. for wind quintet by Toby Miller

A Reicha

Allegretto [~♪= 108]

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G P
66
87
3
p
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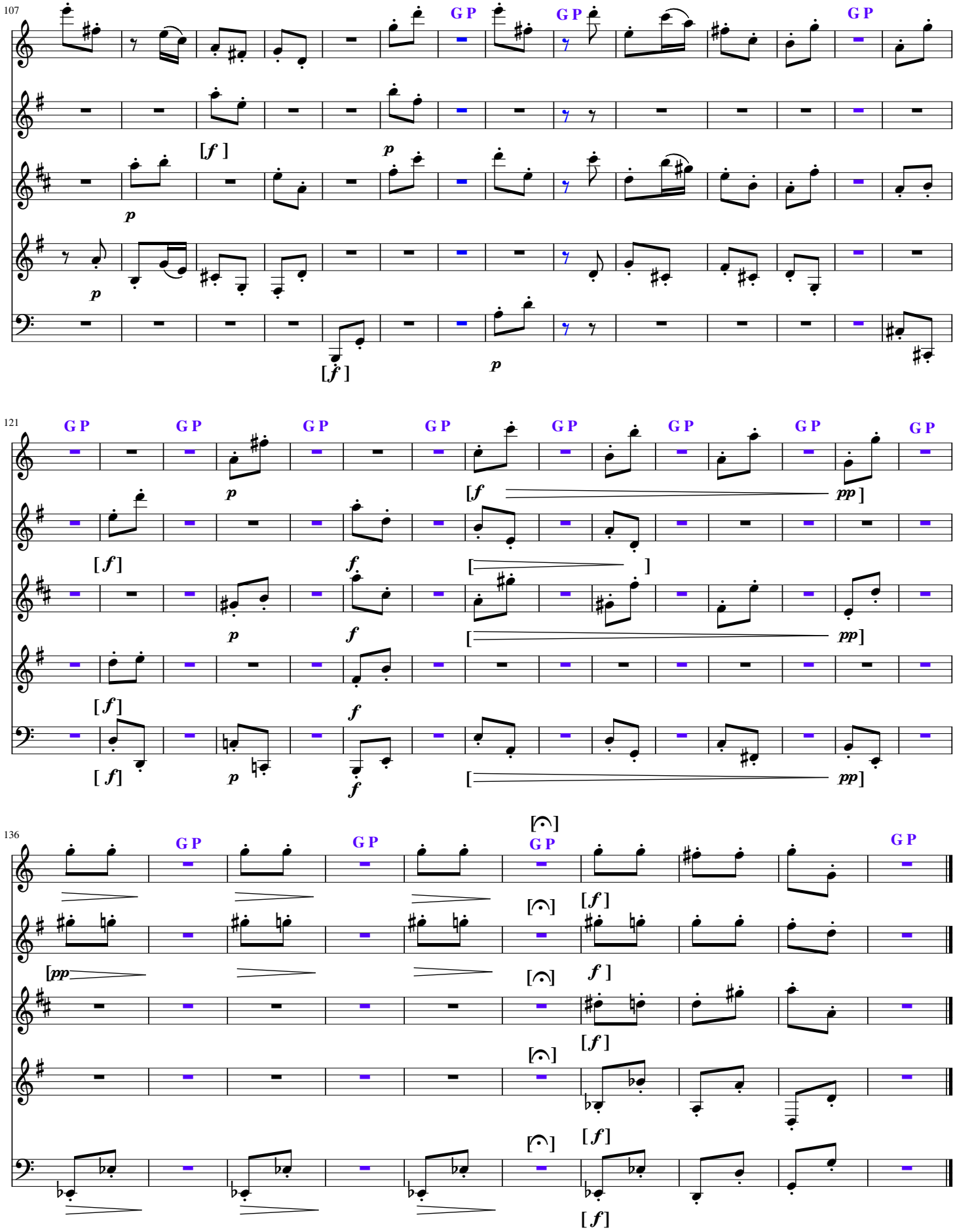
mf
pp]
[p]
[f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G P
G P
G P
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p
121
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G P
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f
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pp]
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f
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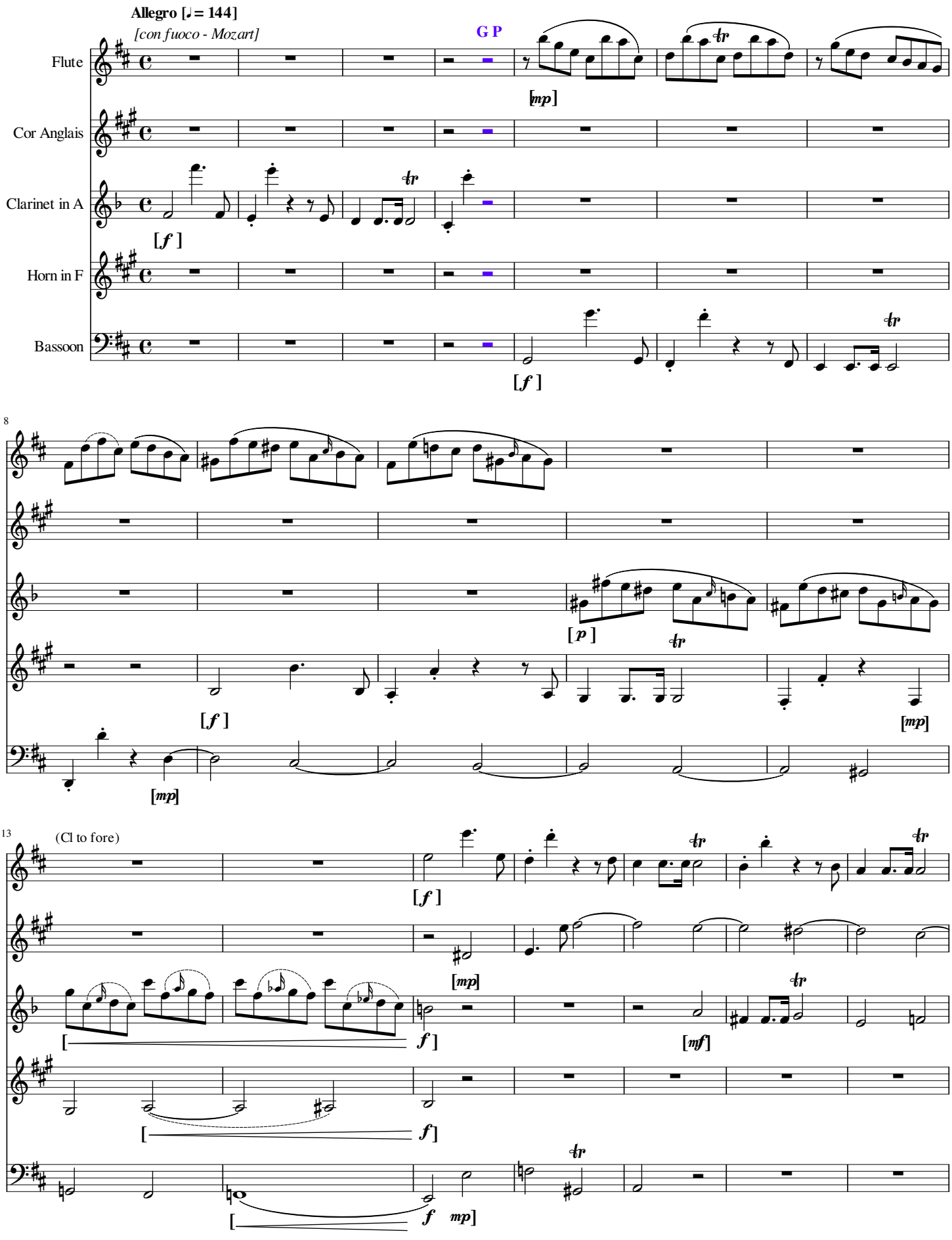
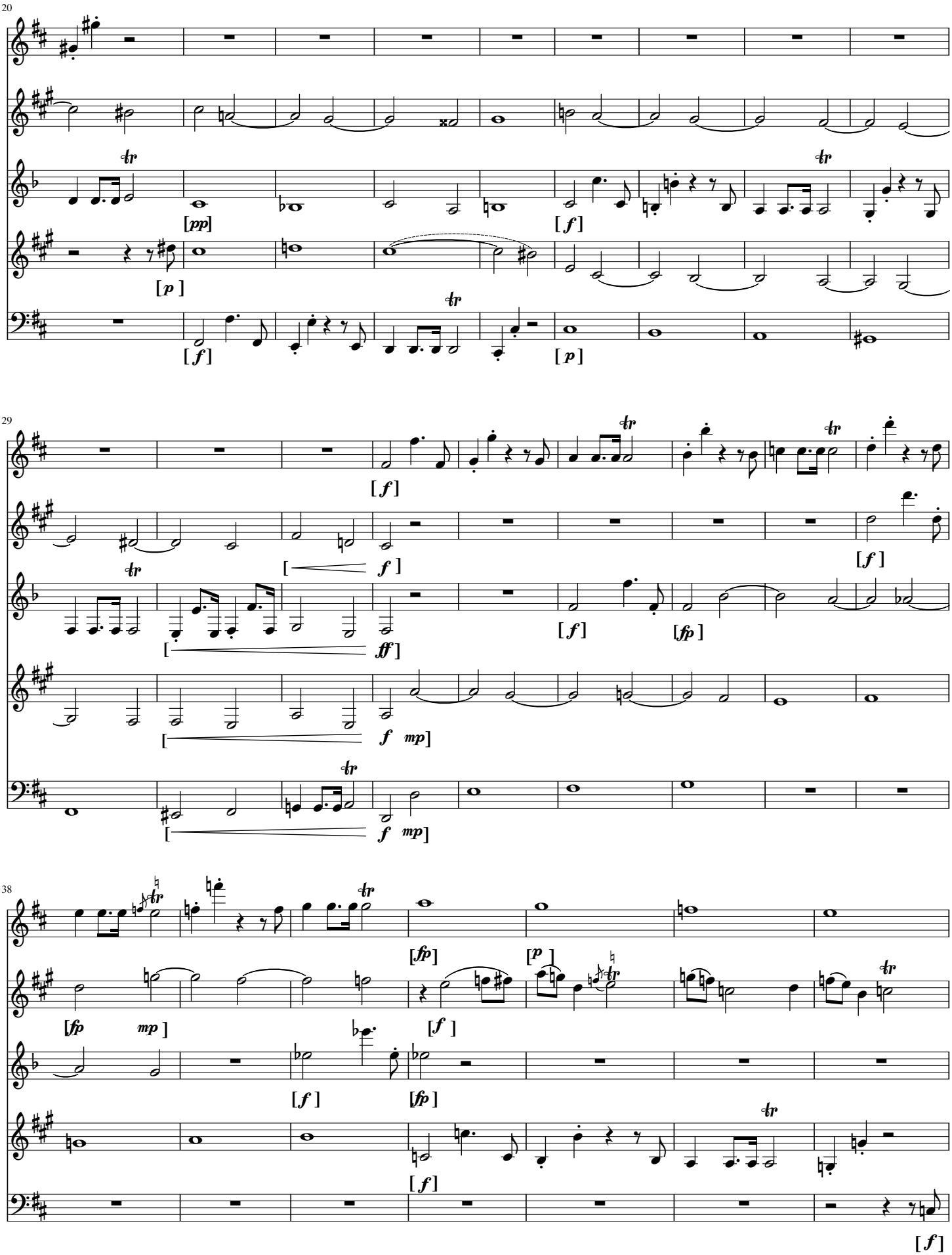
pp]
136
G P
G P
G P
G P
[pp
[f]
[f]
f]
[f]
[f]
[f]

Fugue no. 7 on a theme of Mozart [Haffner Symphony], Op 36 no 7

Score (instrumental pitch) arr. for wind quintet by Toby Miller A Reicha

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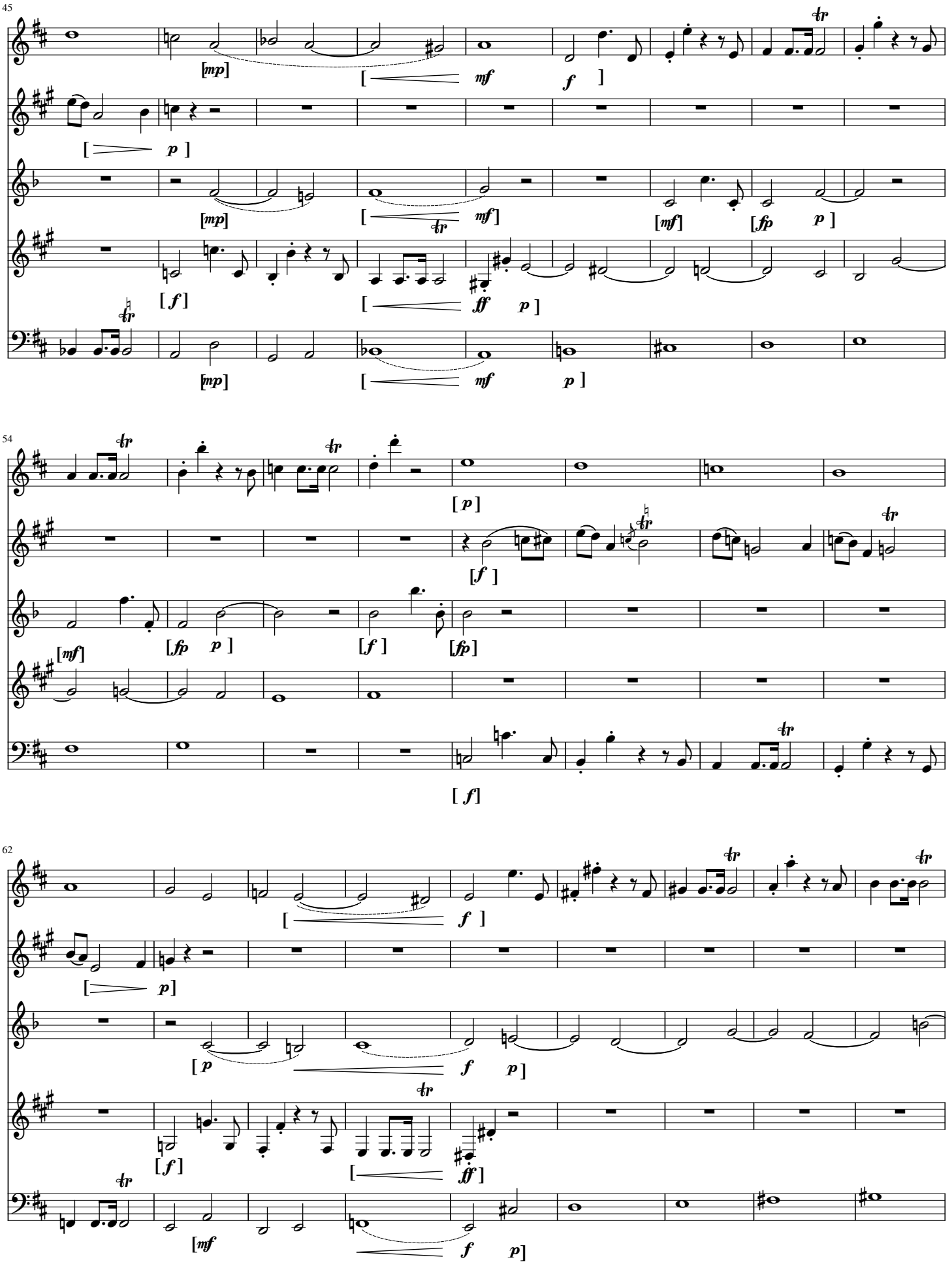
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[f]
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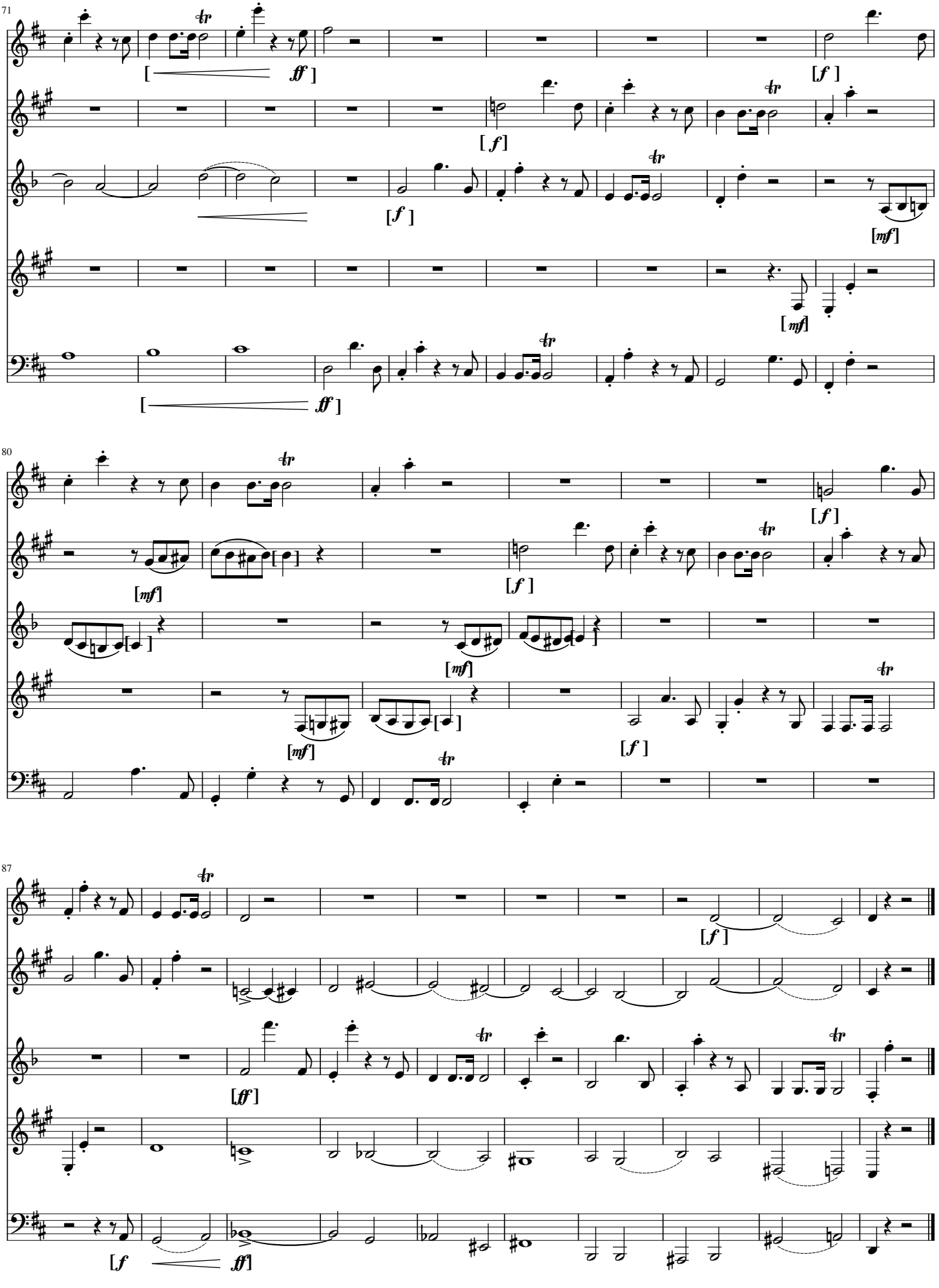
71
80
87