Sonata I for Flute and Piano

Craig Bakalian

Flute and Piano, written in 1991, revised 2019

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Foreword

This sonata for flute and piano was first written in 1991 and has suffered multiple revisions. The paper it was currently (2019) written on was accompanied by piles of eraser dust. I still imagine sections of the first movement being written differently and with the practical experience of writting music for over 30 years, I hear the main melodic motif as being poorly audiated; sounding like a hiccup of fifths. While its open fifths lend it to variation, the over all harmonic movement of the exposition prevented it from being fully varied. I understand that my mind's audiation became compulsed by the first movement of this sonata because I could not audiate a second theme to coordinate with the main hiccup theme. I am still not satisfied with the first movement.

The second movement was performed by me and an un-named accompanist at a chamber music organization in Princeton, New Jersey around 1993. He was a kind gentleman who was a proficient pianist who studied in the Mid-West section of the United States; an area where so many excellent pianists are educated. I will never forget him. And, I will never forget the performance afternoon where I was mistaken as a kitchen worker because of my Middle-Eastern appearance. I thoroughly enjoyed the kitchen of this large estate where I warmed my flute and had my fill of shrimp and salted fish. The most enjoyable part was the confusion from dozens of smiling kitchen workers as to why a kitchen worker was playing a flute. Apologies darted through the air as why the original racist led me to the kitchen in my tuxedo; Middle-Eastern people look like people of Latino descent, a wonderful mistake. And the confusion did not stop there. An expectation followed me as being a living composer in the Princeton area. Living composers write weird music that cannot be understood. This was expressed to me as a certainty. I remained silent and refused to discuss the matter. A leader of the chamber music organization continued to express his discomfort with the tonality of the Second Viennese School and the composers of the cherished Princeton University faculty. 'Did you not see the program for the afternoon performance?', I stated plainly with a half smile on my face thinking about every 12 tone piece that I love and cherish.

Oddly, I was placed at the end of the first segment of the concert, directly before the intermission. Still being a good flutist and being in the hands of an excellent accompanist, the performance felt good inside. Most performers know this feeling of success. The applause was full with some people standing. I was stunned. Hands were shaken and smiles were exchanged along with more apologies about why the music I wrote was with tonal and metric syntax and why it was dramatic. Apologies continued thoughout the entire evening, especially from the artisic director of the chamber music organization who invited me to perform. One intelligent musician in the audiance asked me where the other movements were and why did I not perform them. I giggled like a child. I told a bunch of fairy tale excuses and giggled some more fully disclosing my moral off-center. The first and last movements were basically a mess and I was not going to put any musician and audience through that mess, including myself. This was the community standard that exceeded my art, and interestingly I avoided expressing that truthful standard to a

musician who would understand it. I quickly fled the scene as a young man not privy to a culture of wealth and status. Water under the bridge.

Now I am 58 years old. I rarely play the flute. I could perform this sonata, yet not in front of an audience. But now I am fully able to edit and revise it which is something the younger composer could never do. I feel good about this edit and revision. I feel it is in a place where a community, a group of musical minds, could get enjoyment from it and two musicians could have fun performing it. Yet in this edition I am refusing to put dynamic marks. I also removed previous phrasing and slur marks- as much as I would possibly allow myself. I have always felt that if a musician cannot glean dynamics and phrasing from the tones and rhythms of a piece of music, he or she does not have the readiness to perform it. This music is written to be felt in the body and mind. My body and mind exist in a community of other like minded bodies.

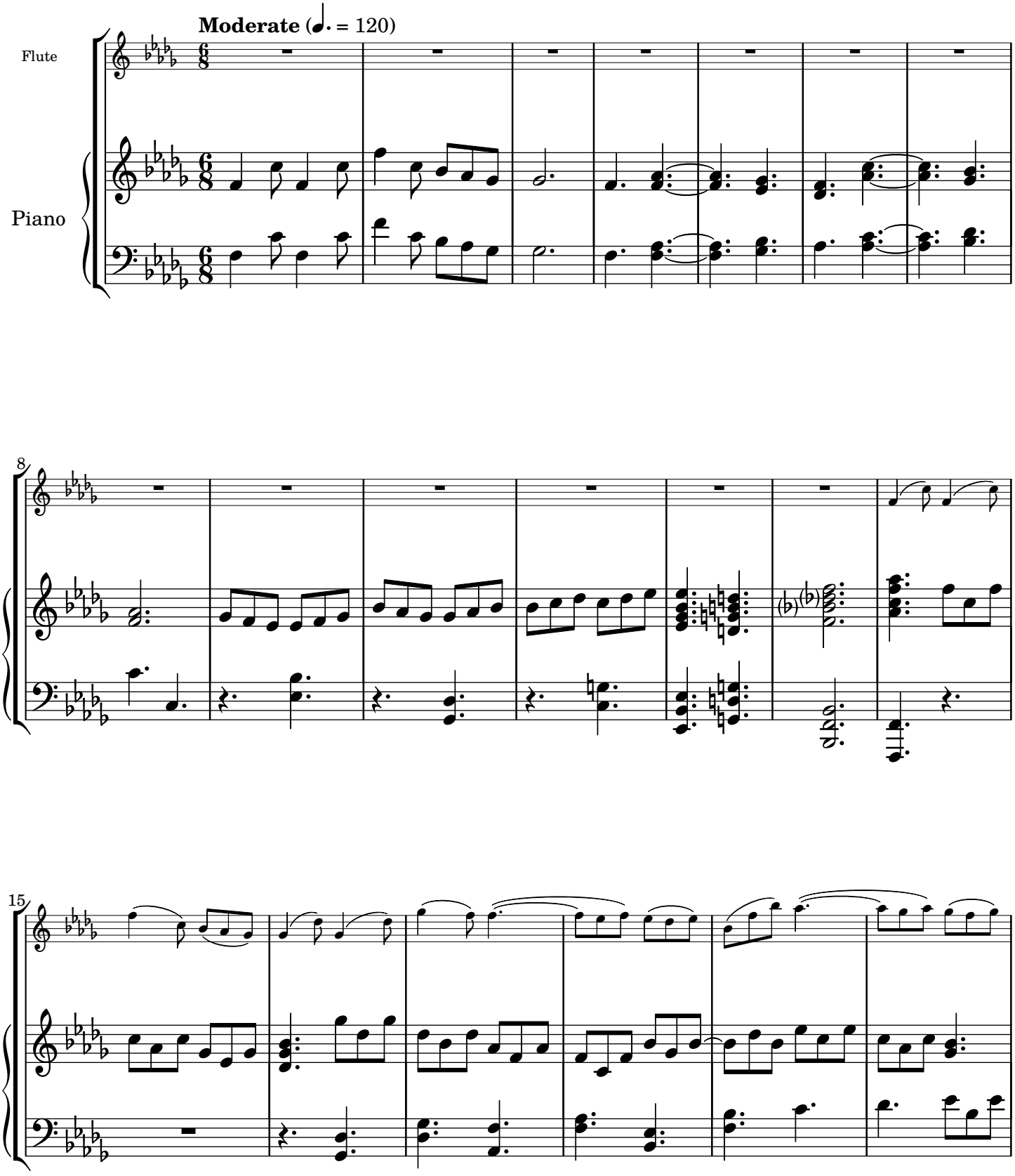
Lastly, all three movements begin with phrygian themes. It orginated from a young composer whose audiation was stimulated by the unique feeling of phrygian tonality and the challenges it presents to composers. I do remember writing this work in the early mornings of the weekends for two or three hours, exhausting my creativity, taking a afternoon nap, and waking in a phrygian dream. I love writing music.

Craig Bakalian
Dec 1, 2019

Sonata I for Flute and Piano

Movement I

Craig Bakalian



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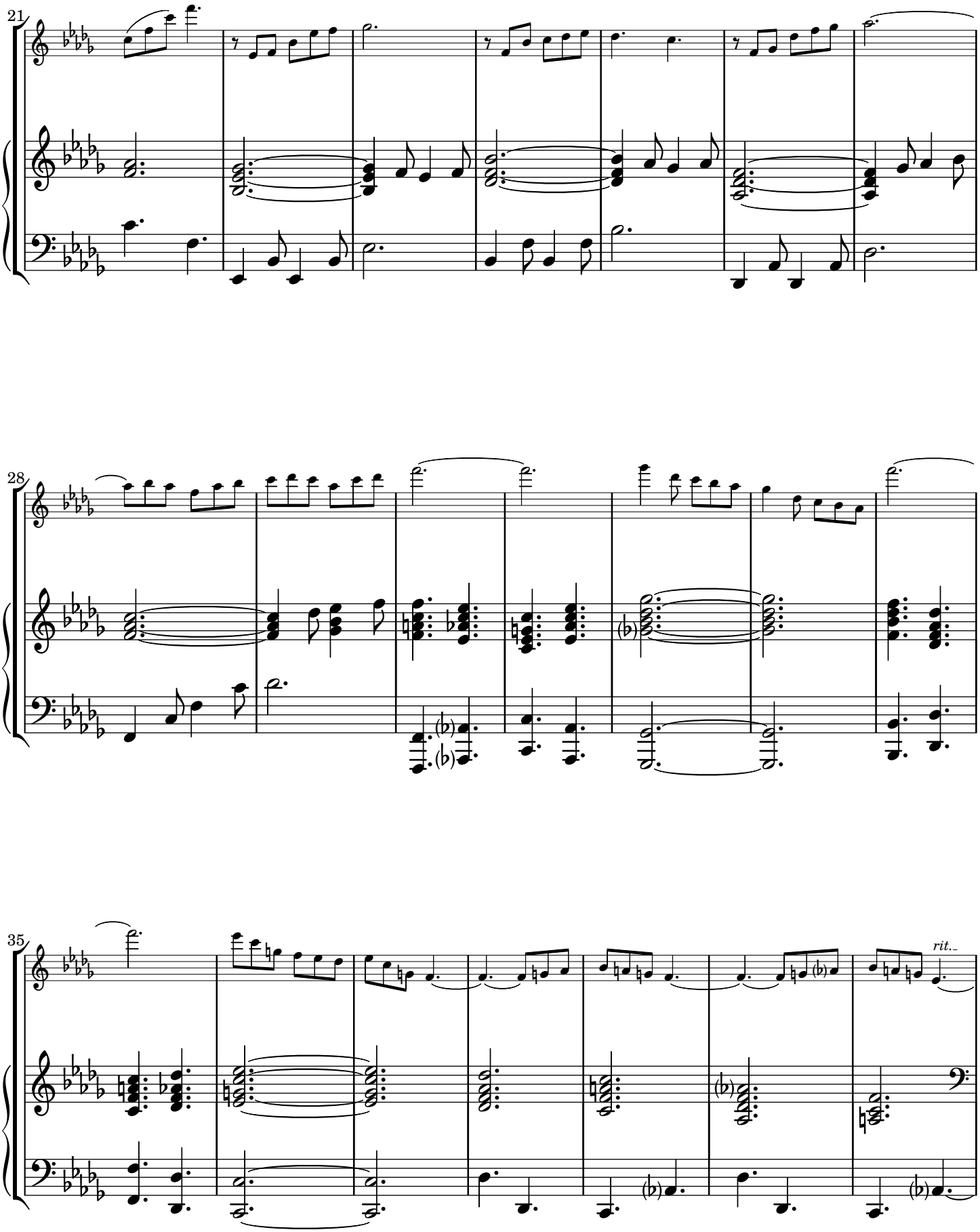
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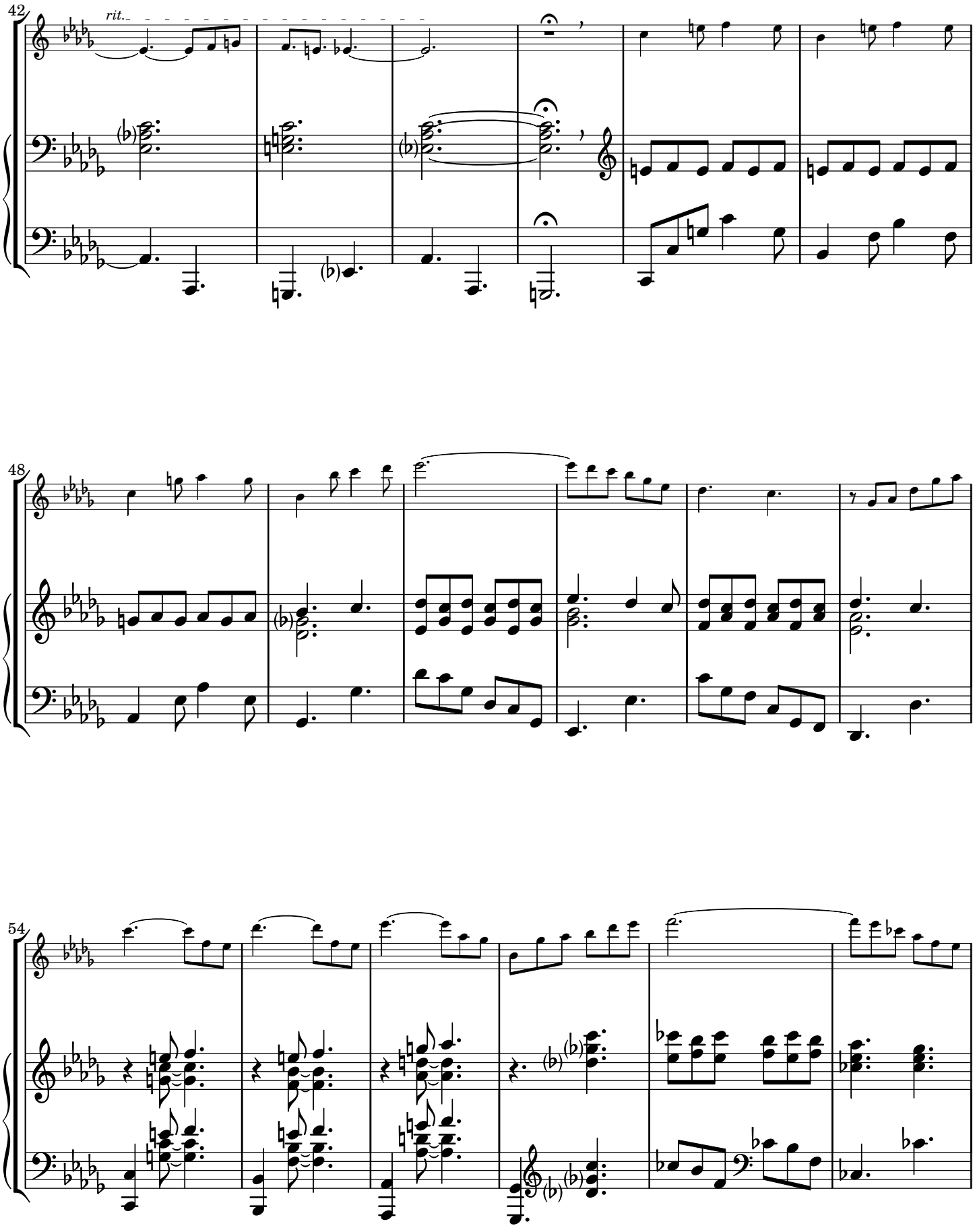
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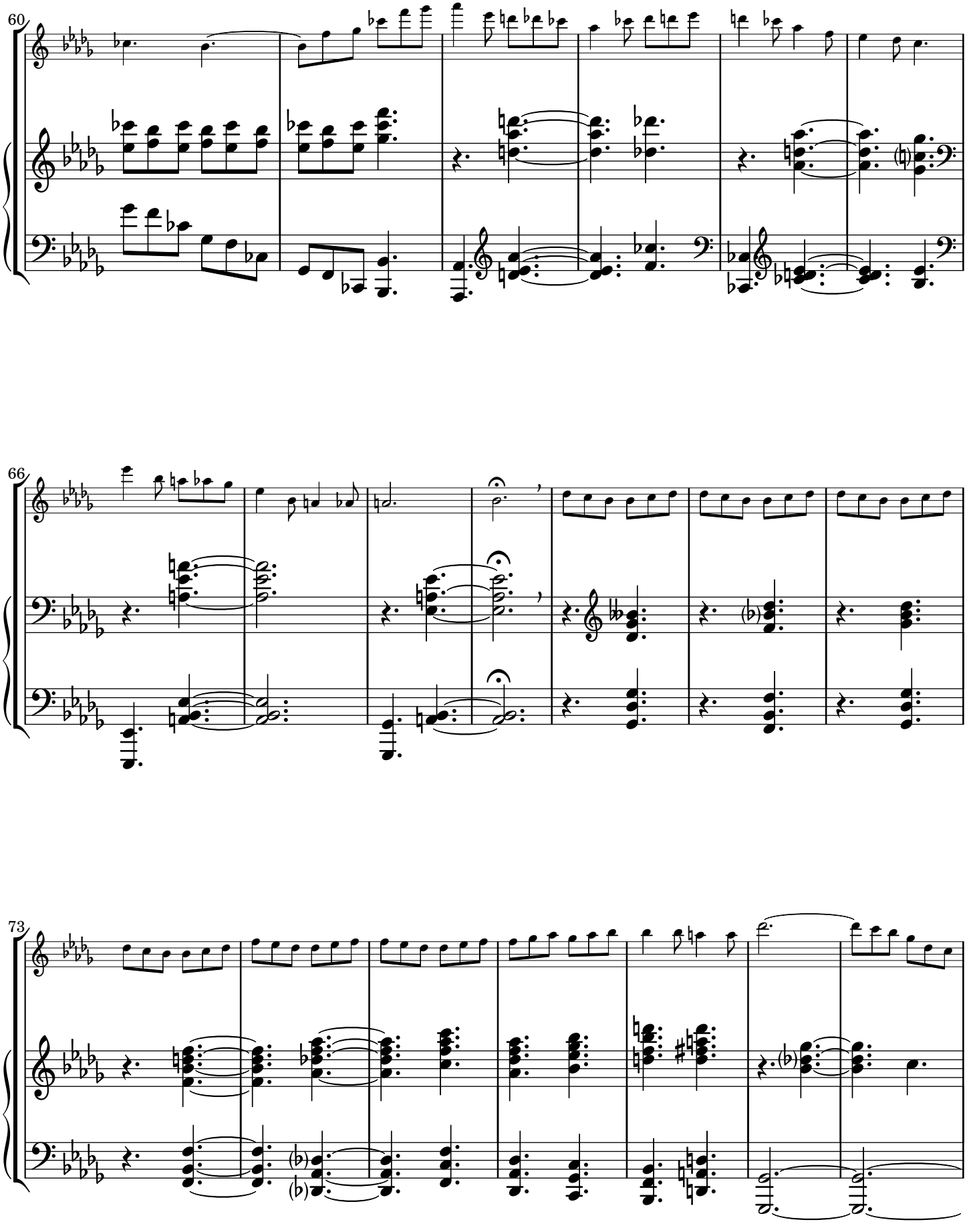
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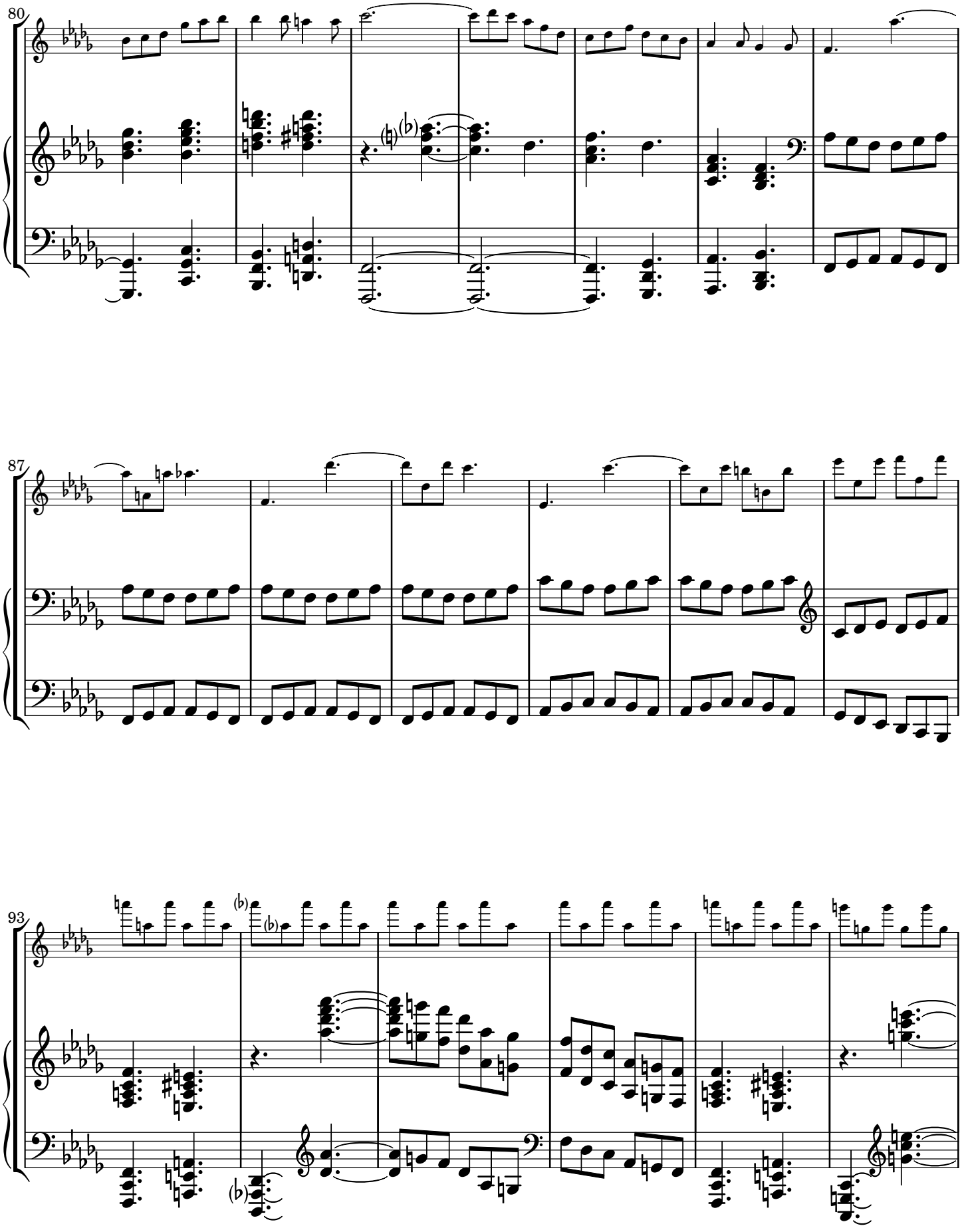
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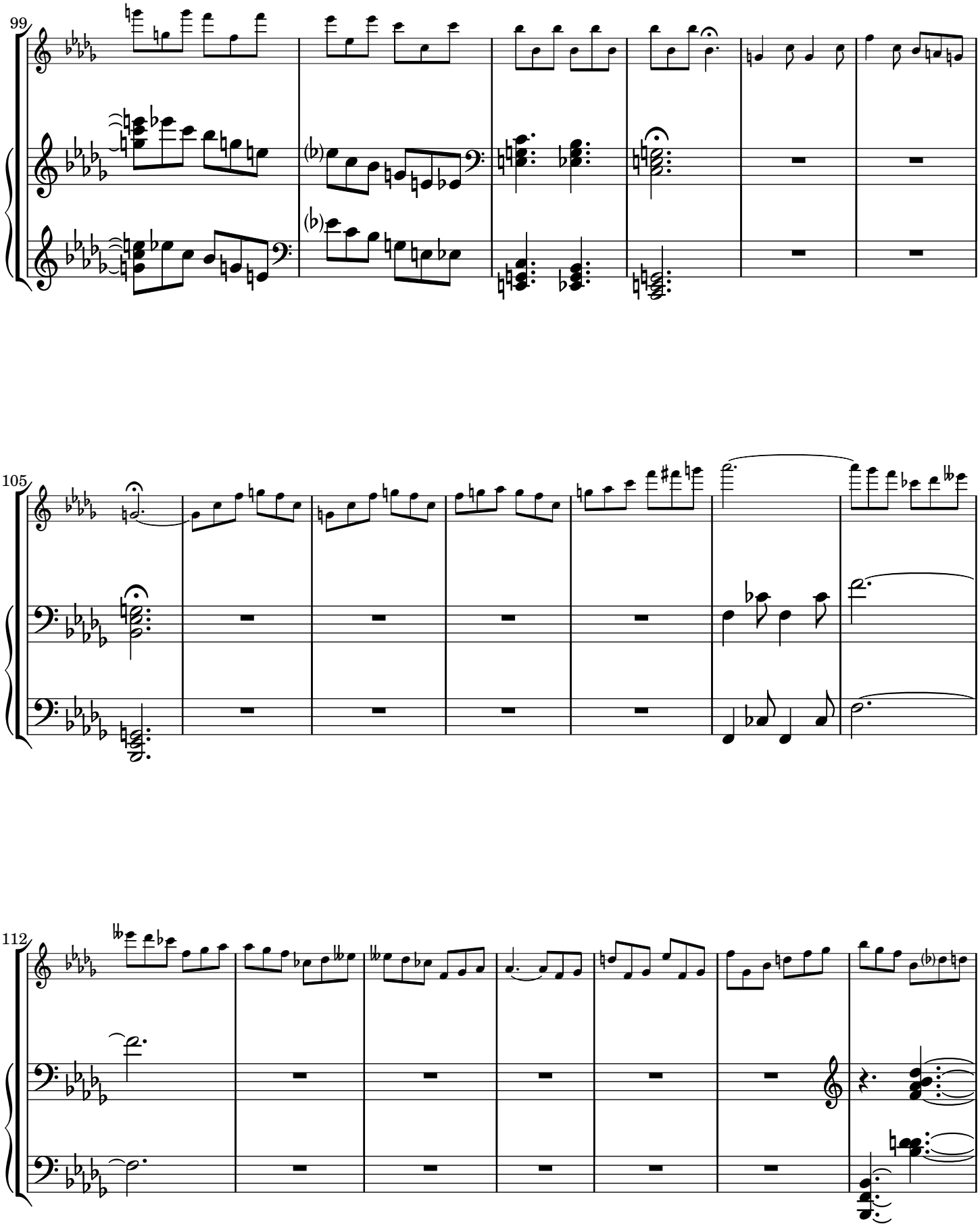
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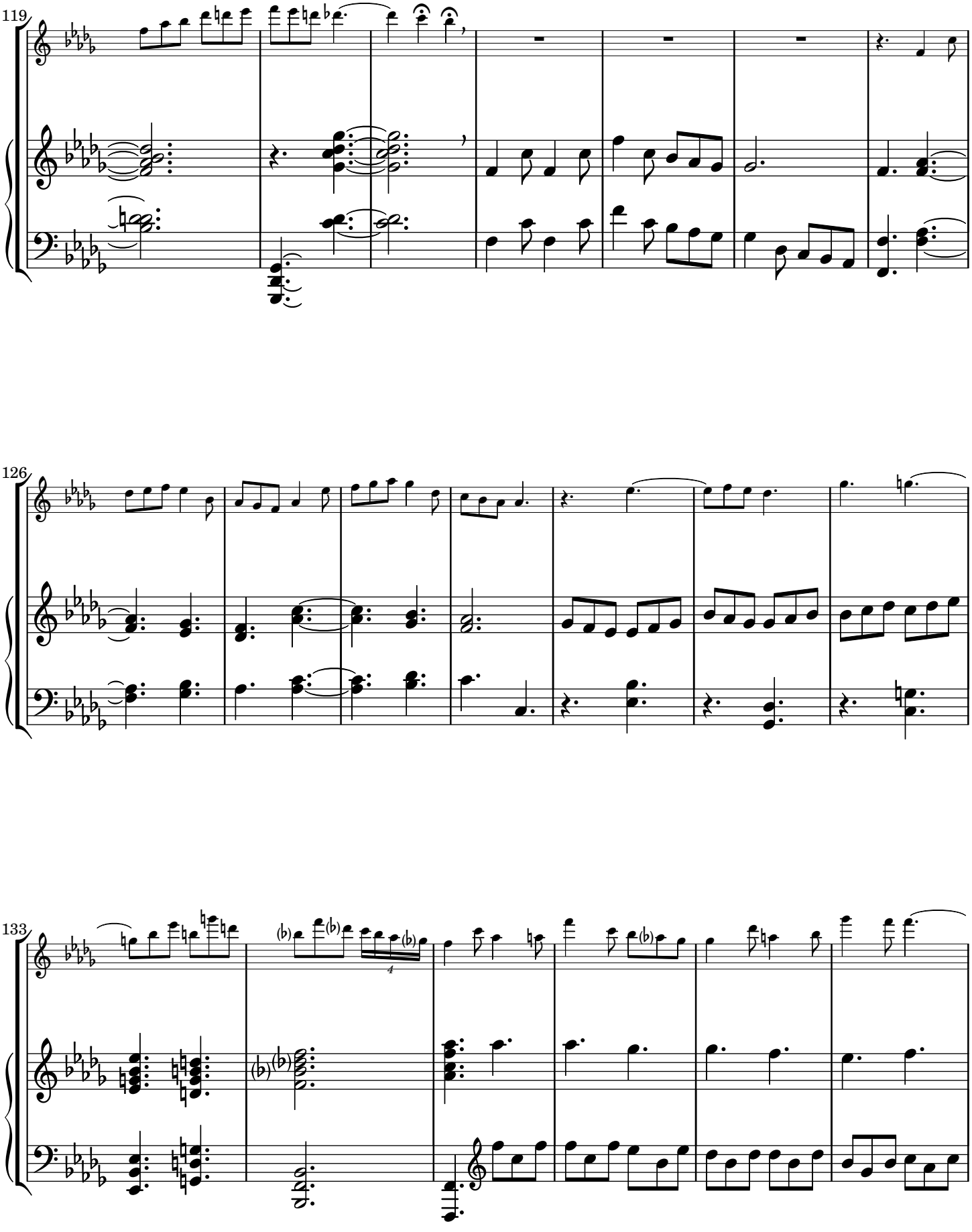
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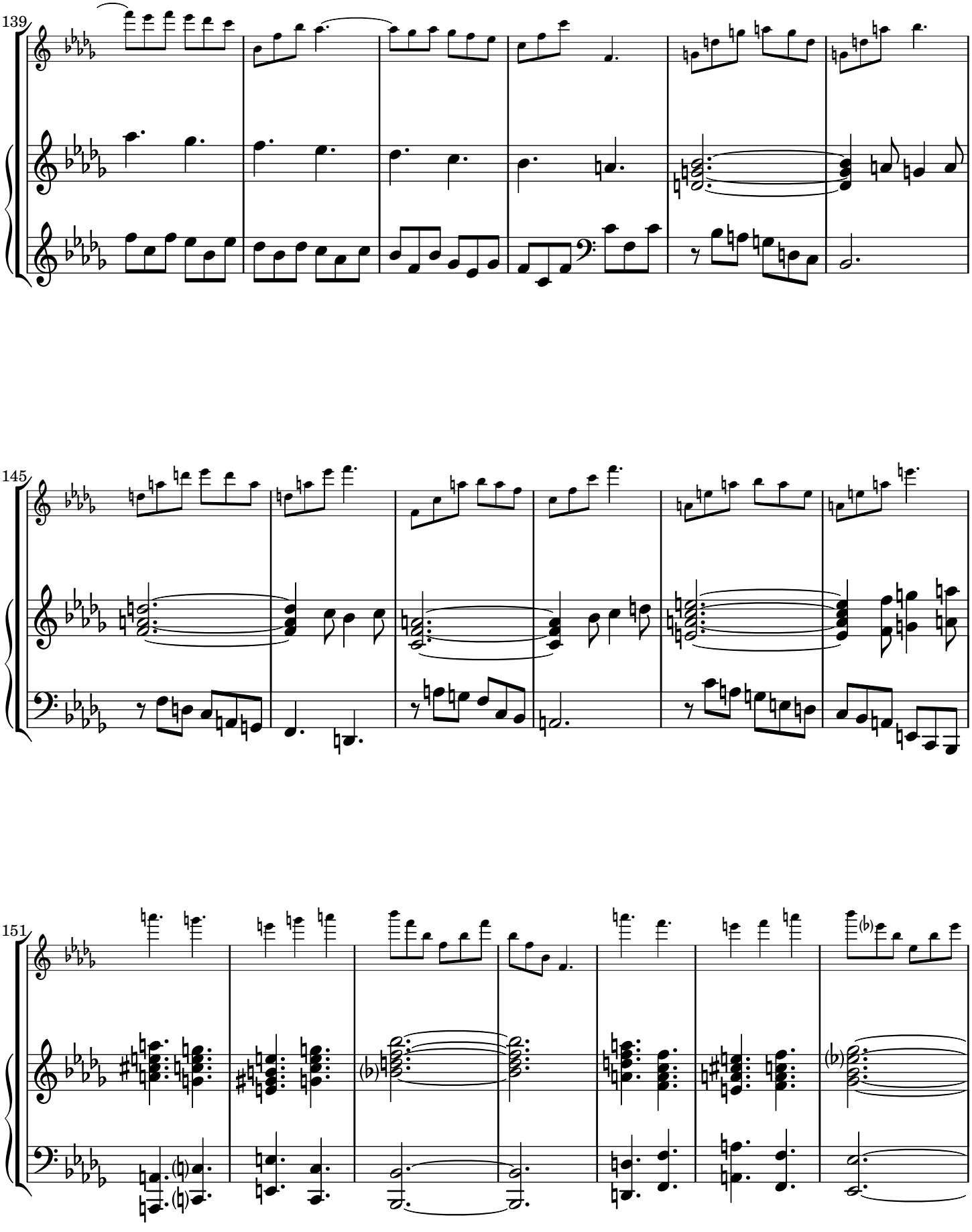
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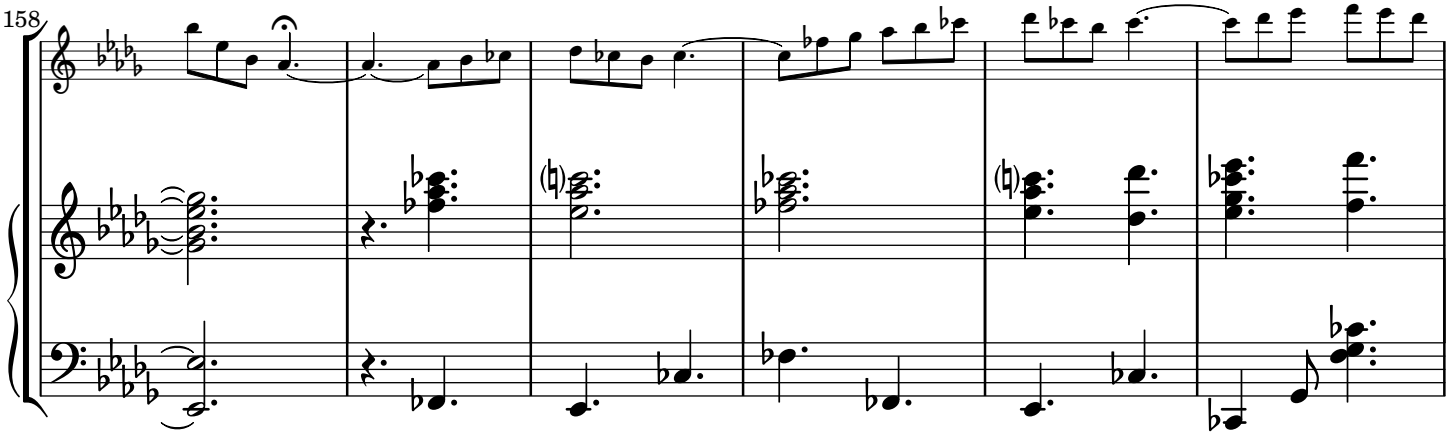

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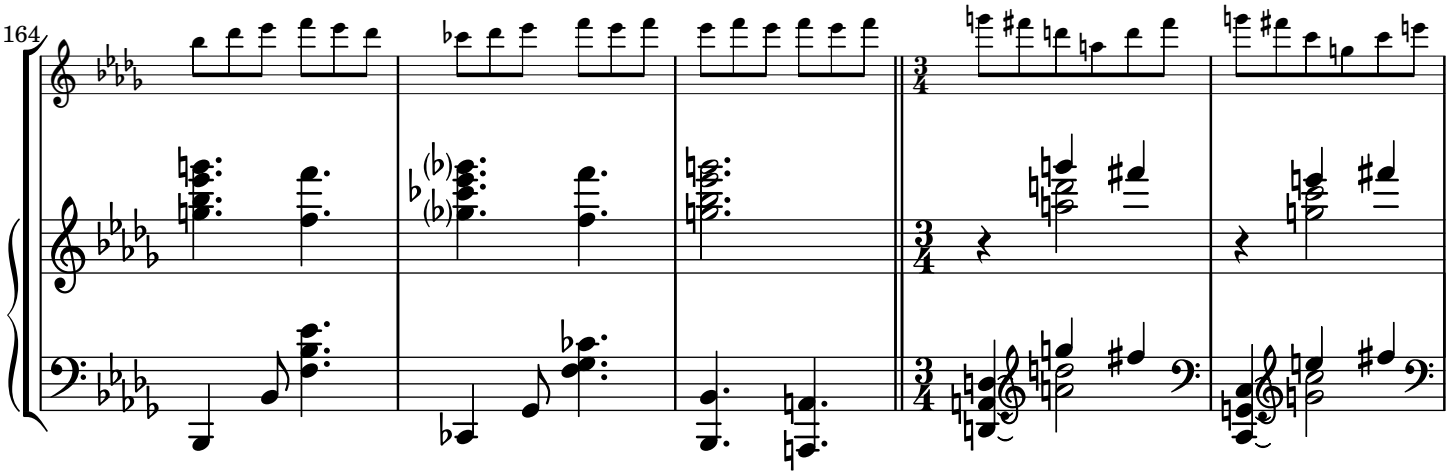
Very Fast (𝅗𝅥. = 130)



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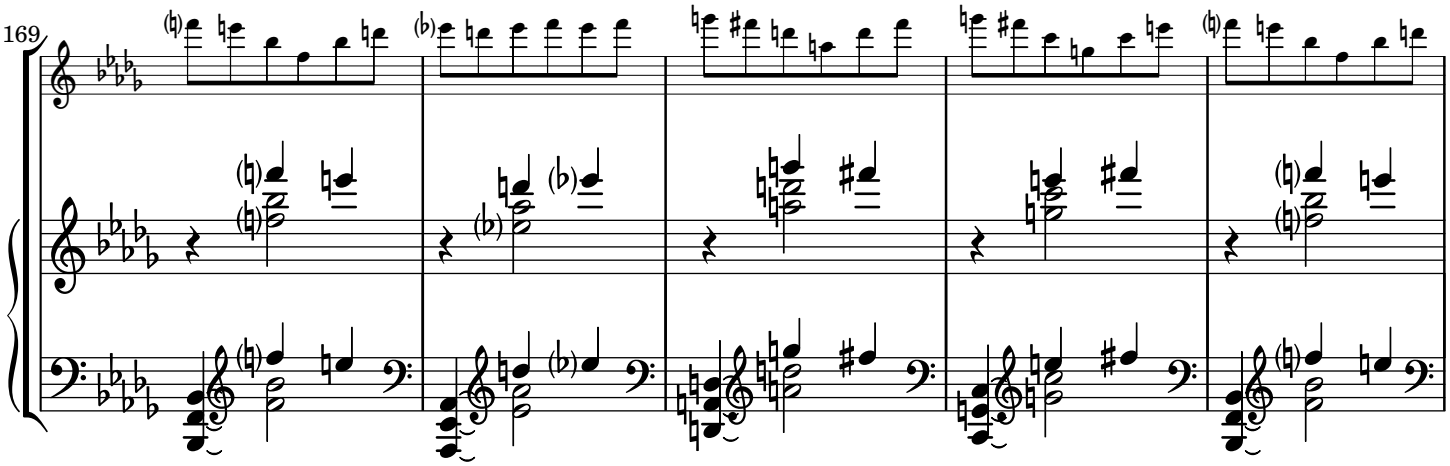

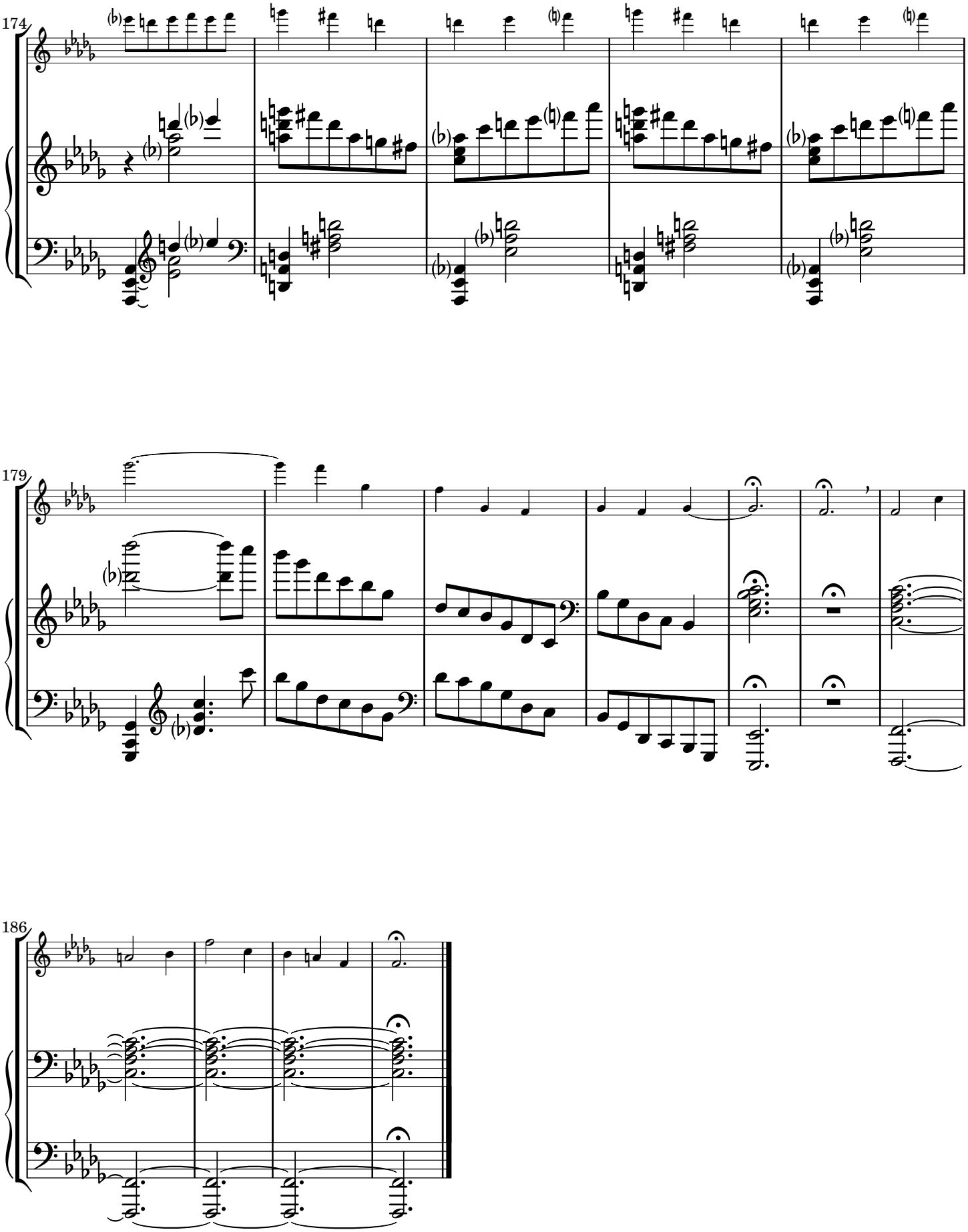
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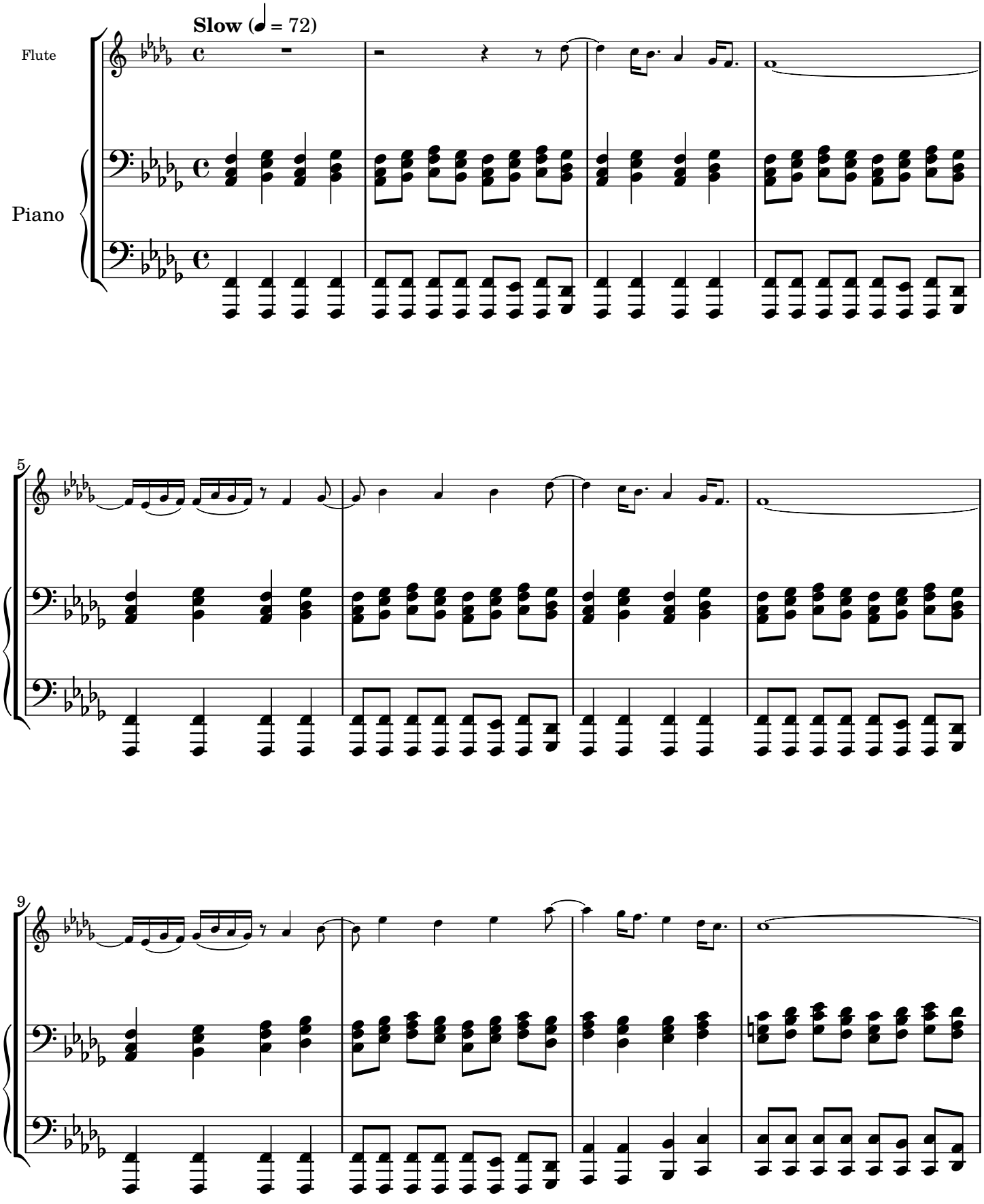

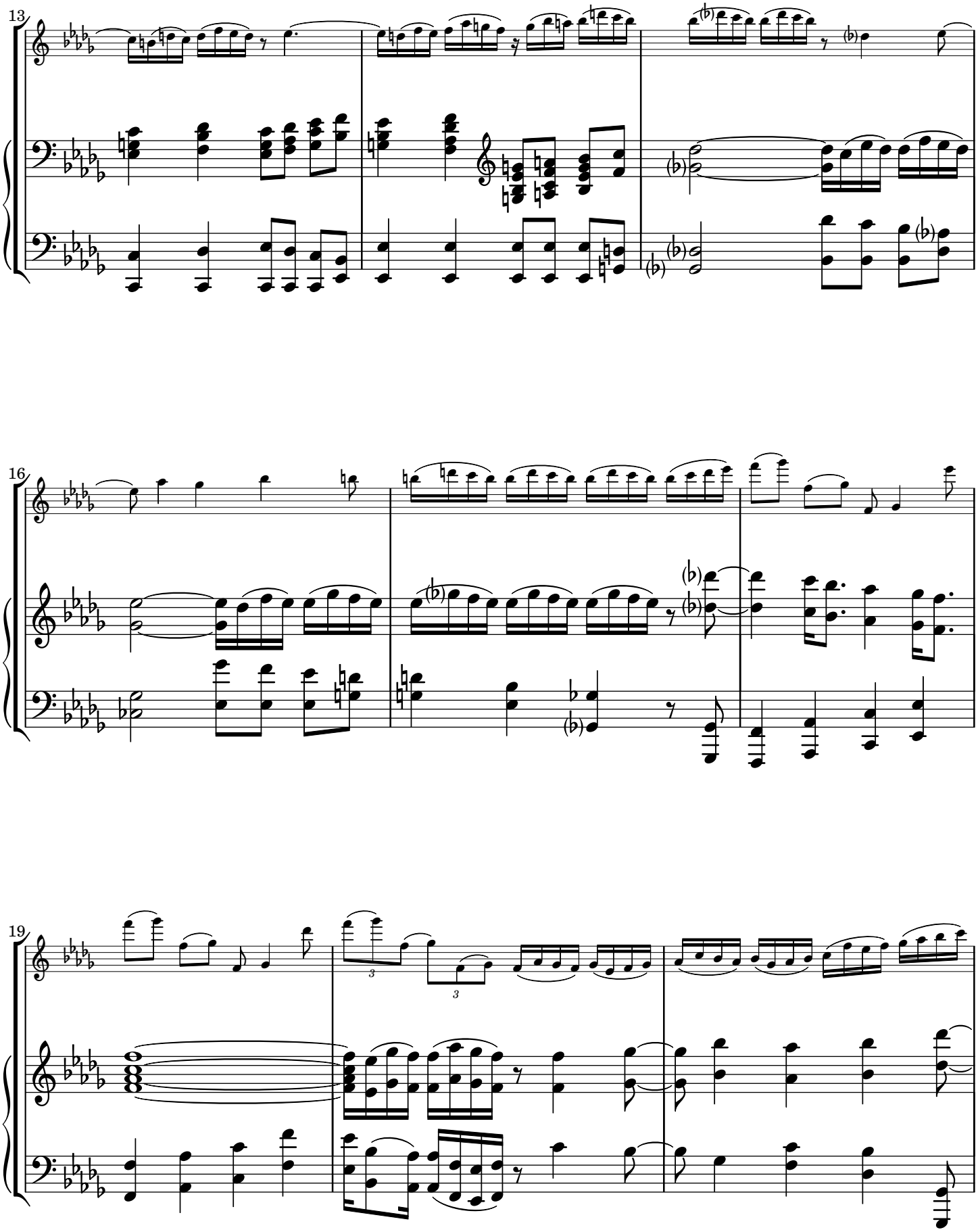
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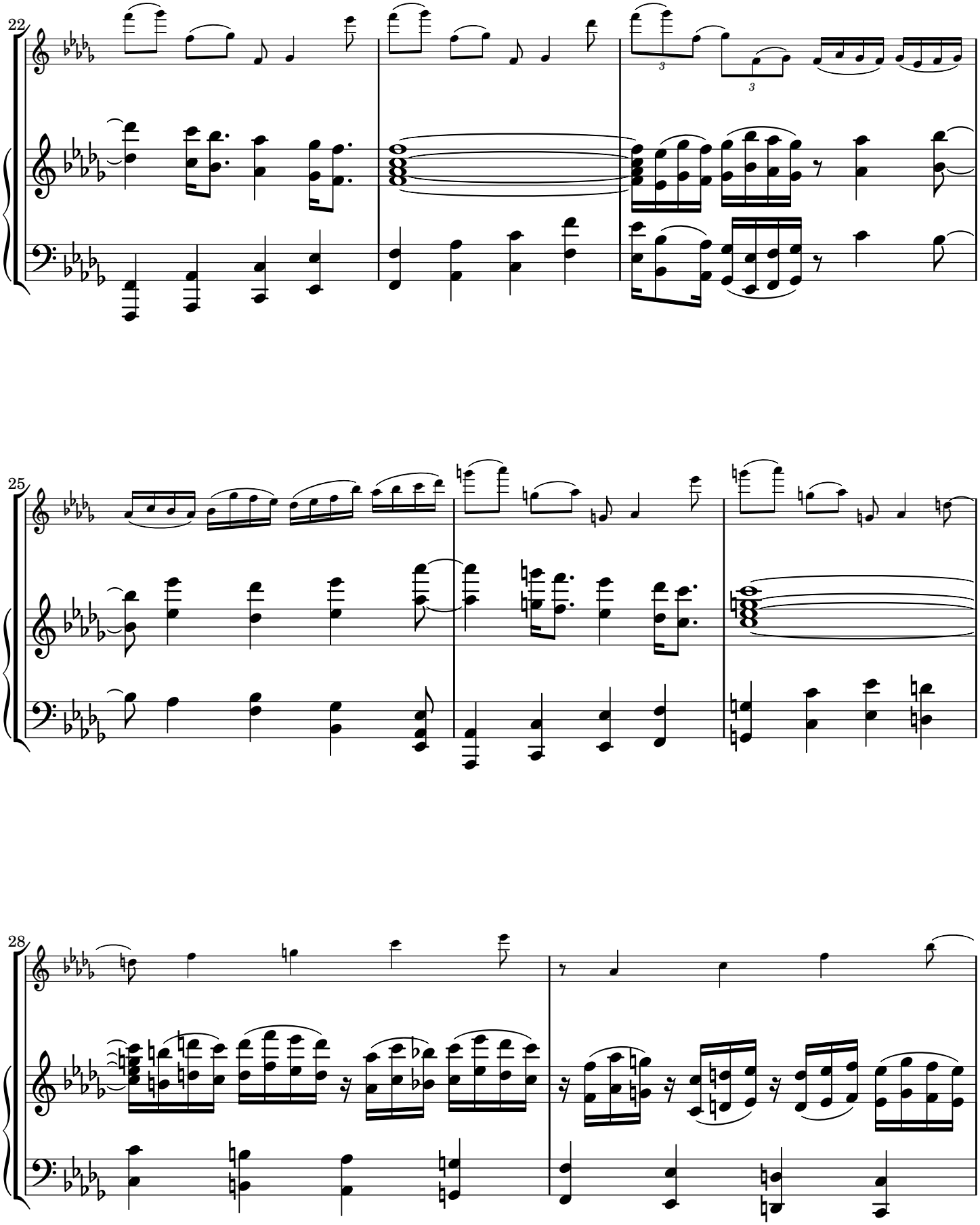
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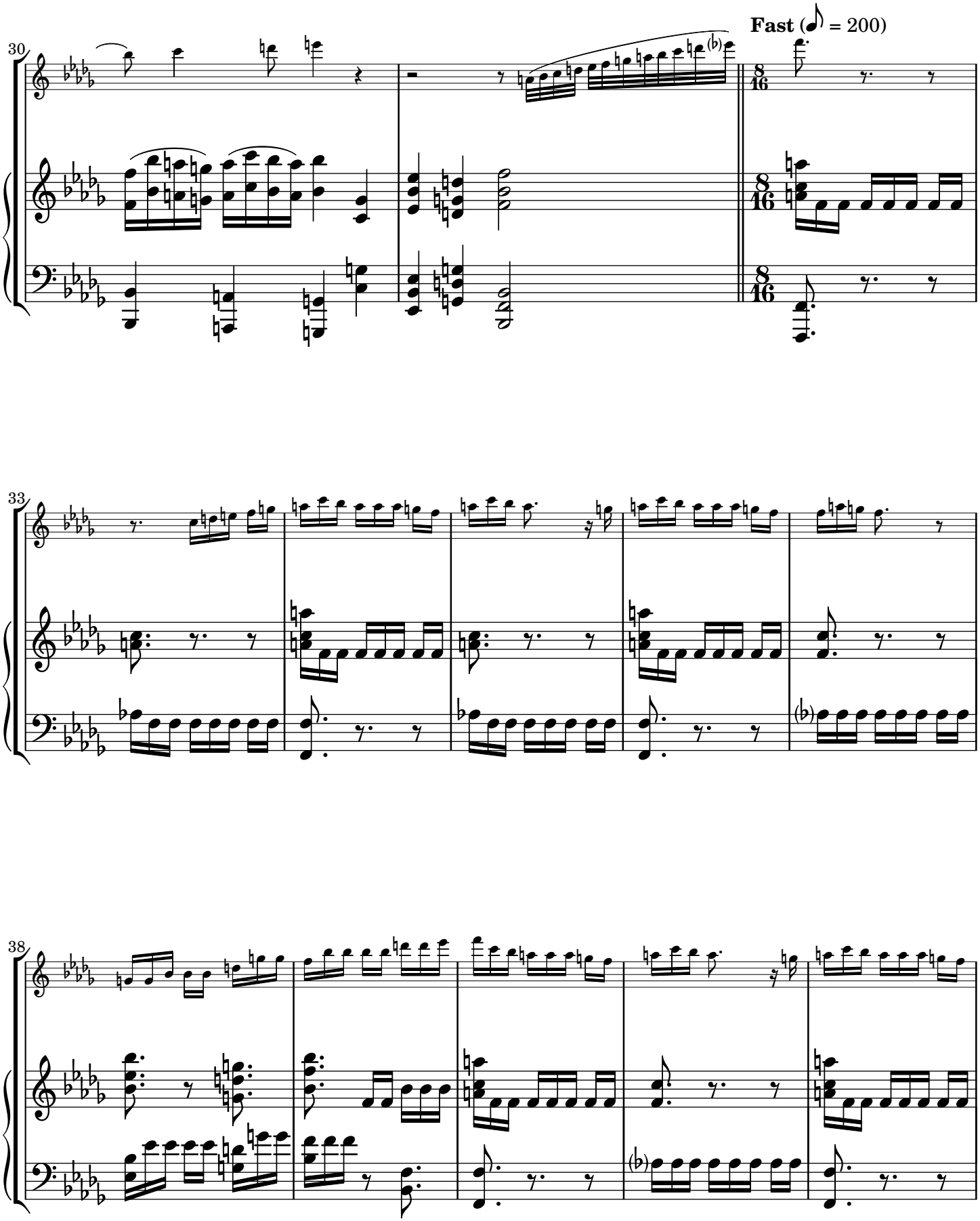
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Fast (♪ = 200)
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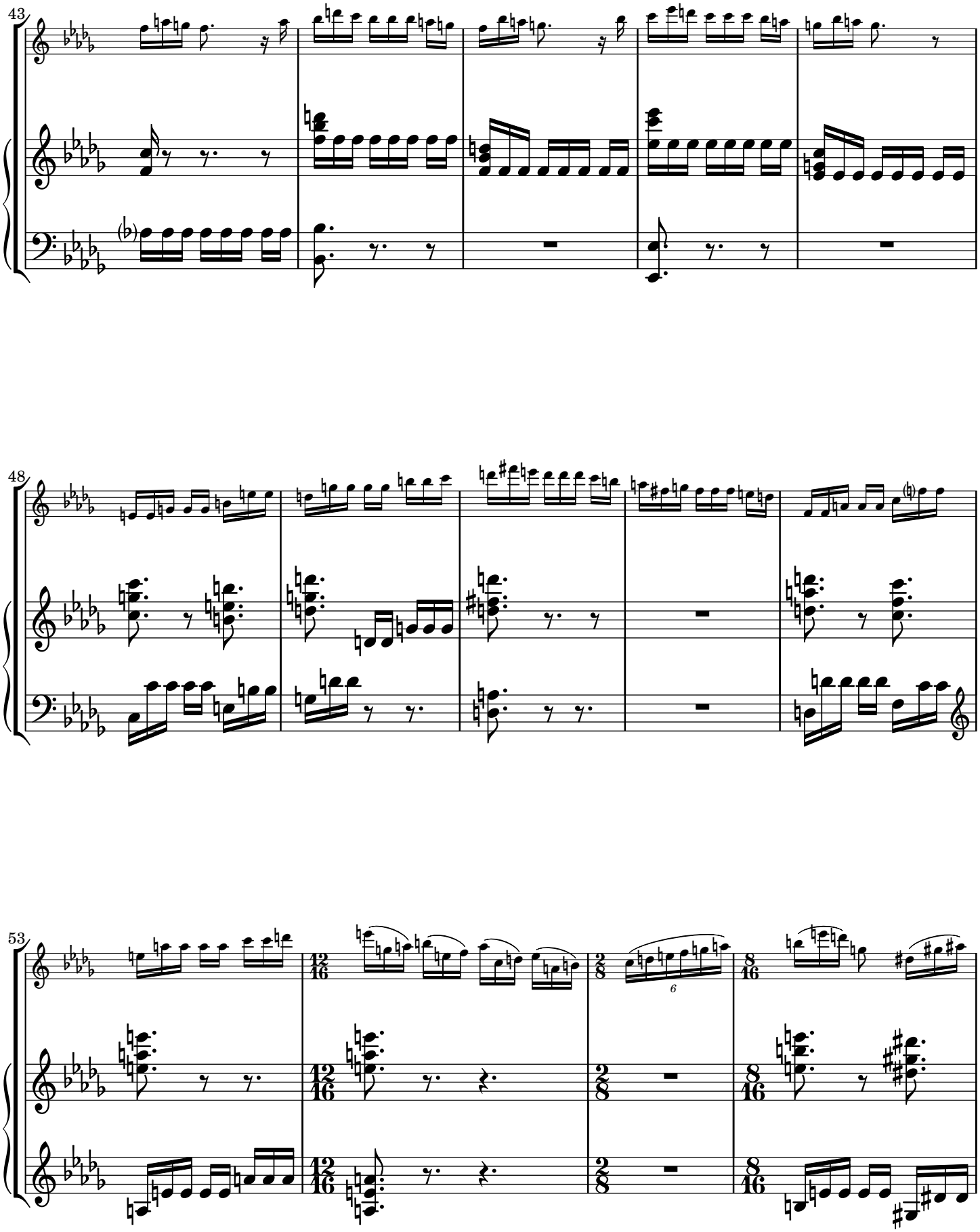
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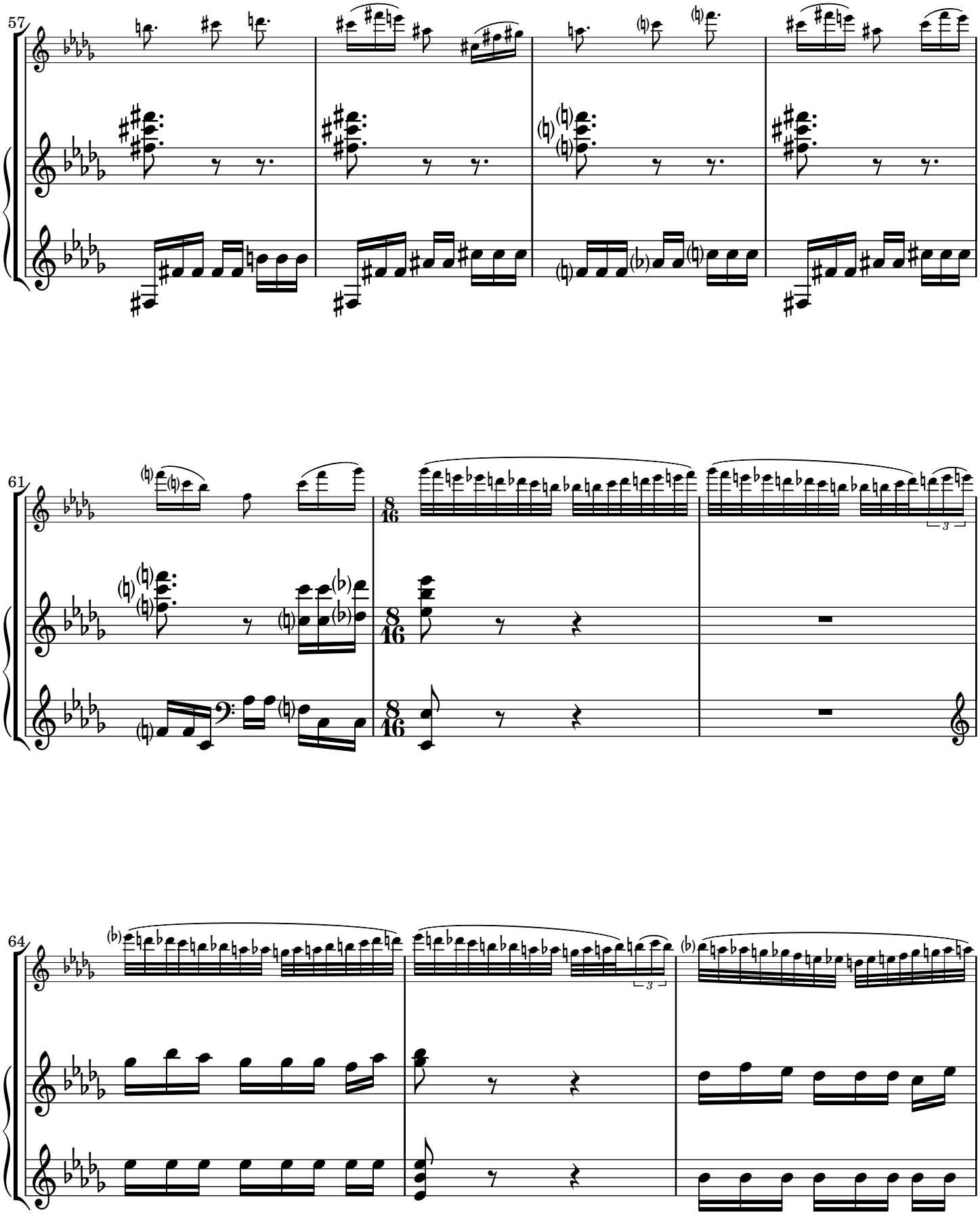
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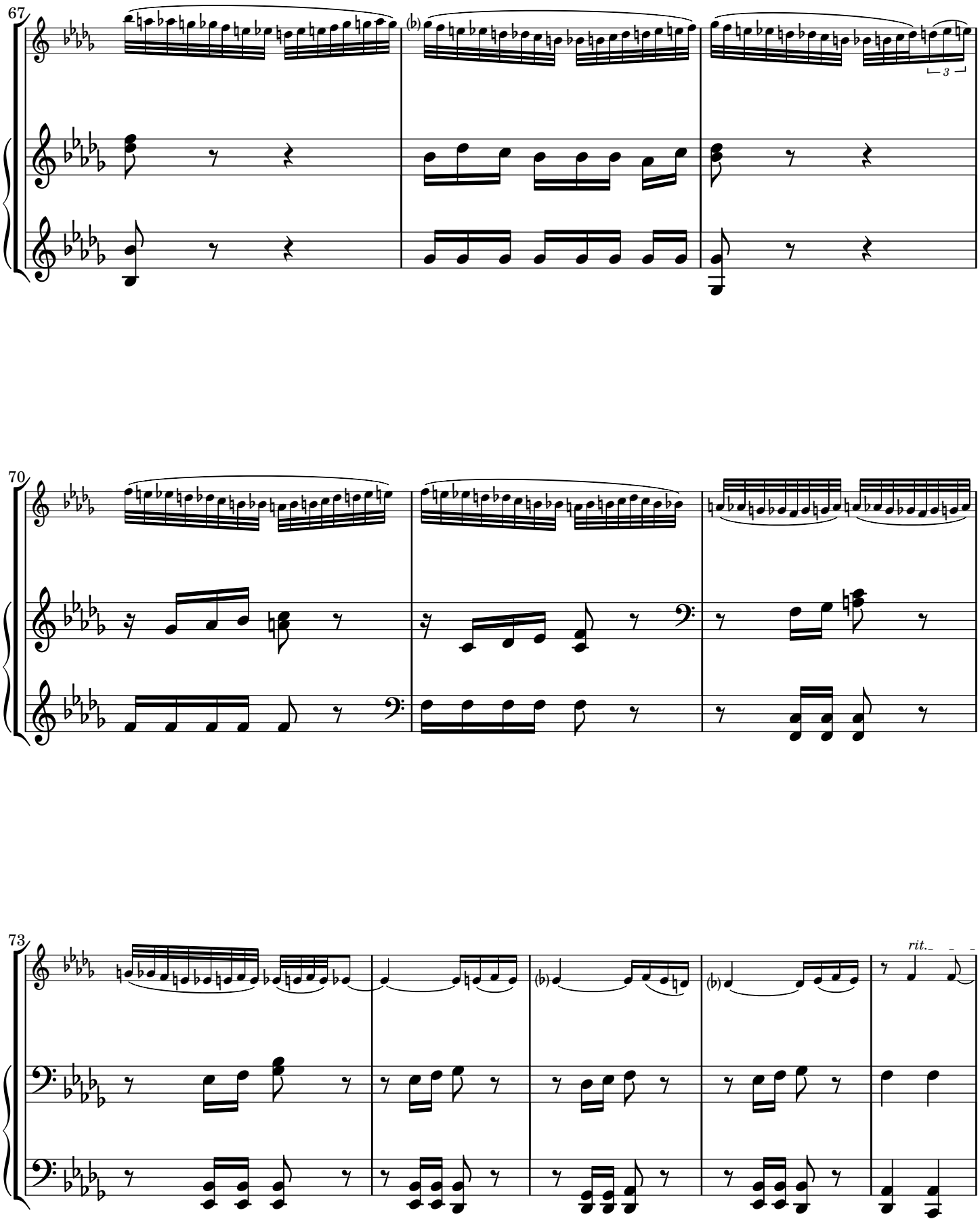
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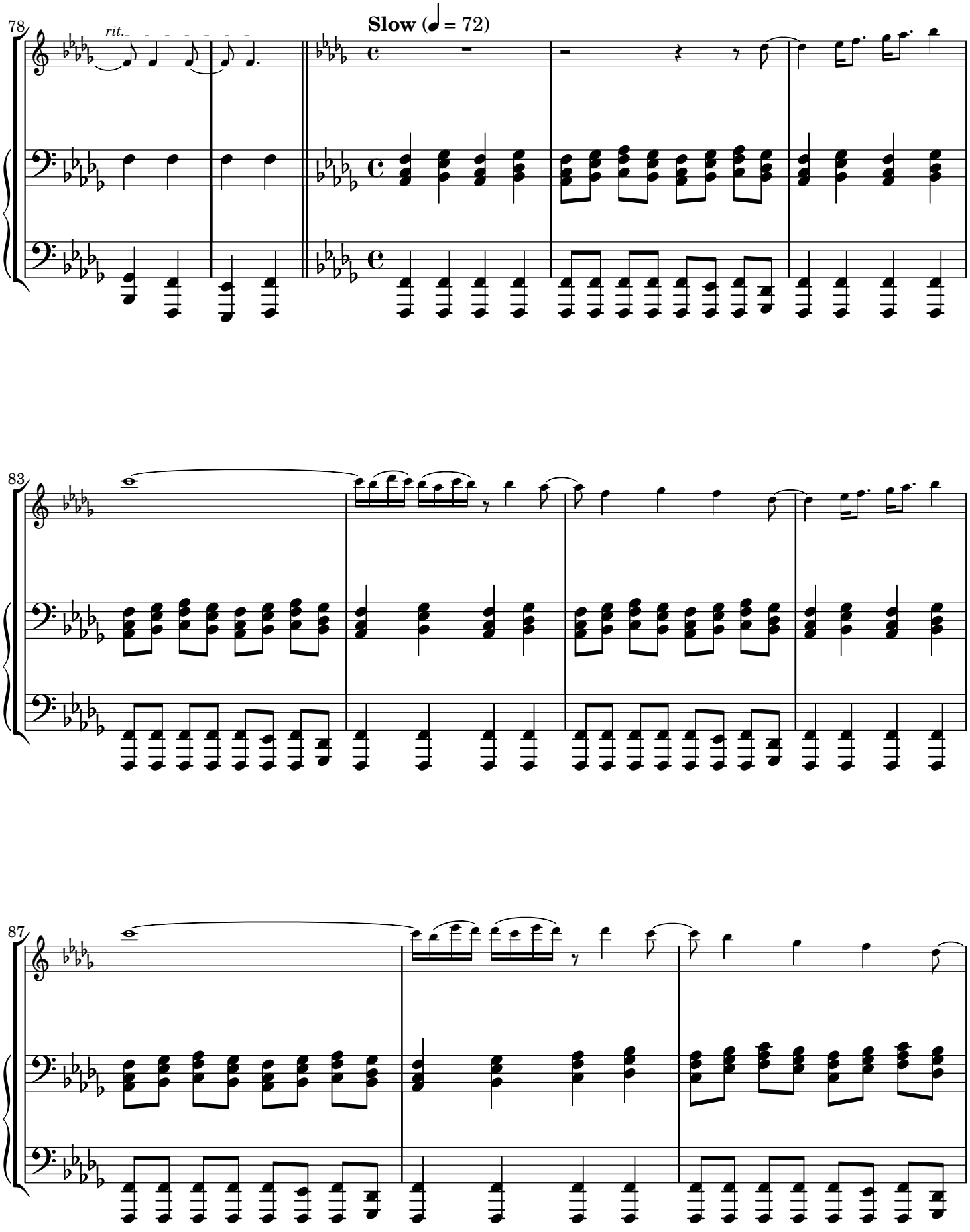
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Slow (♩ = 72)
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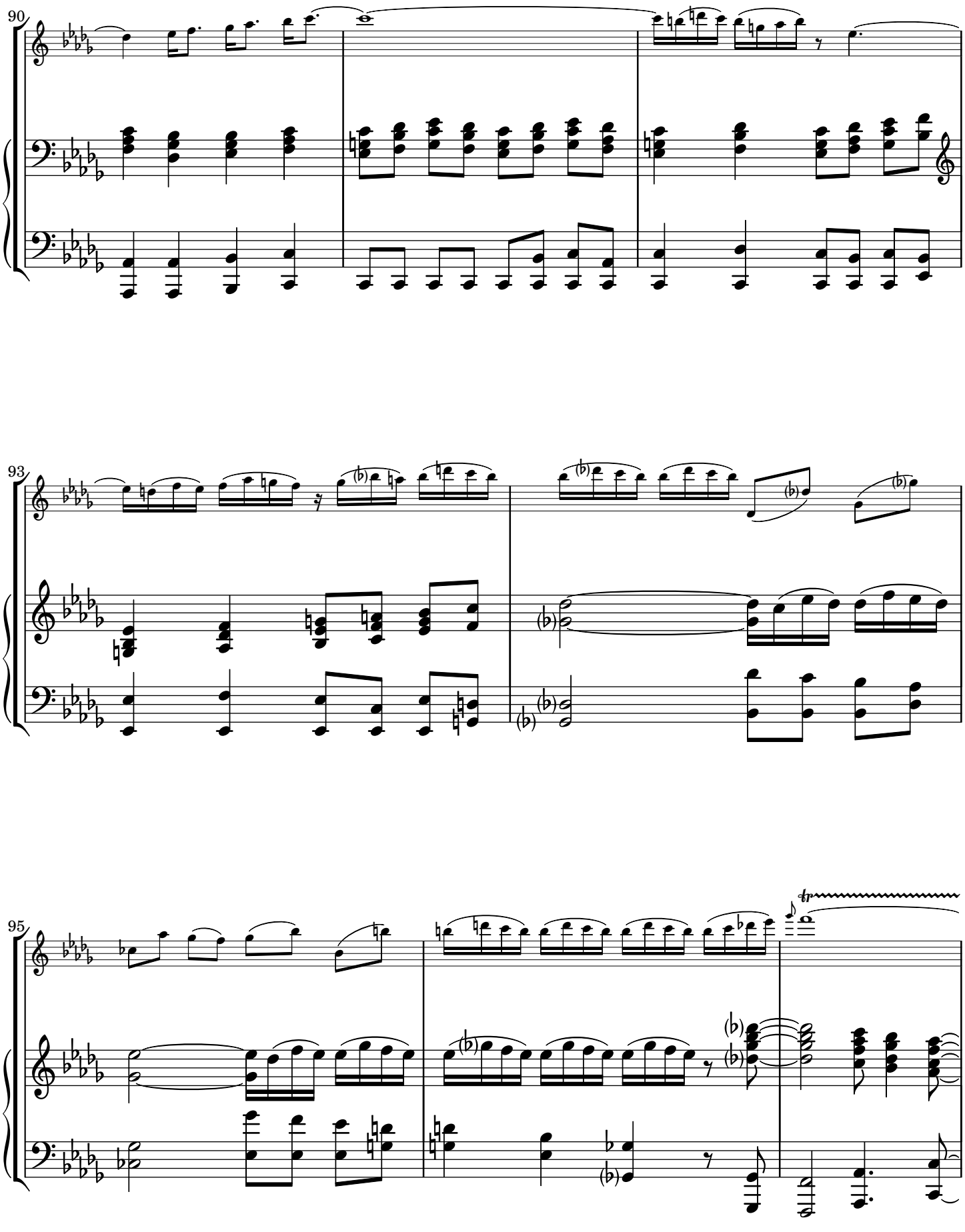
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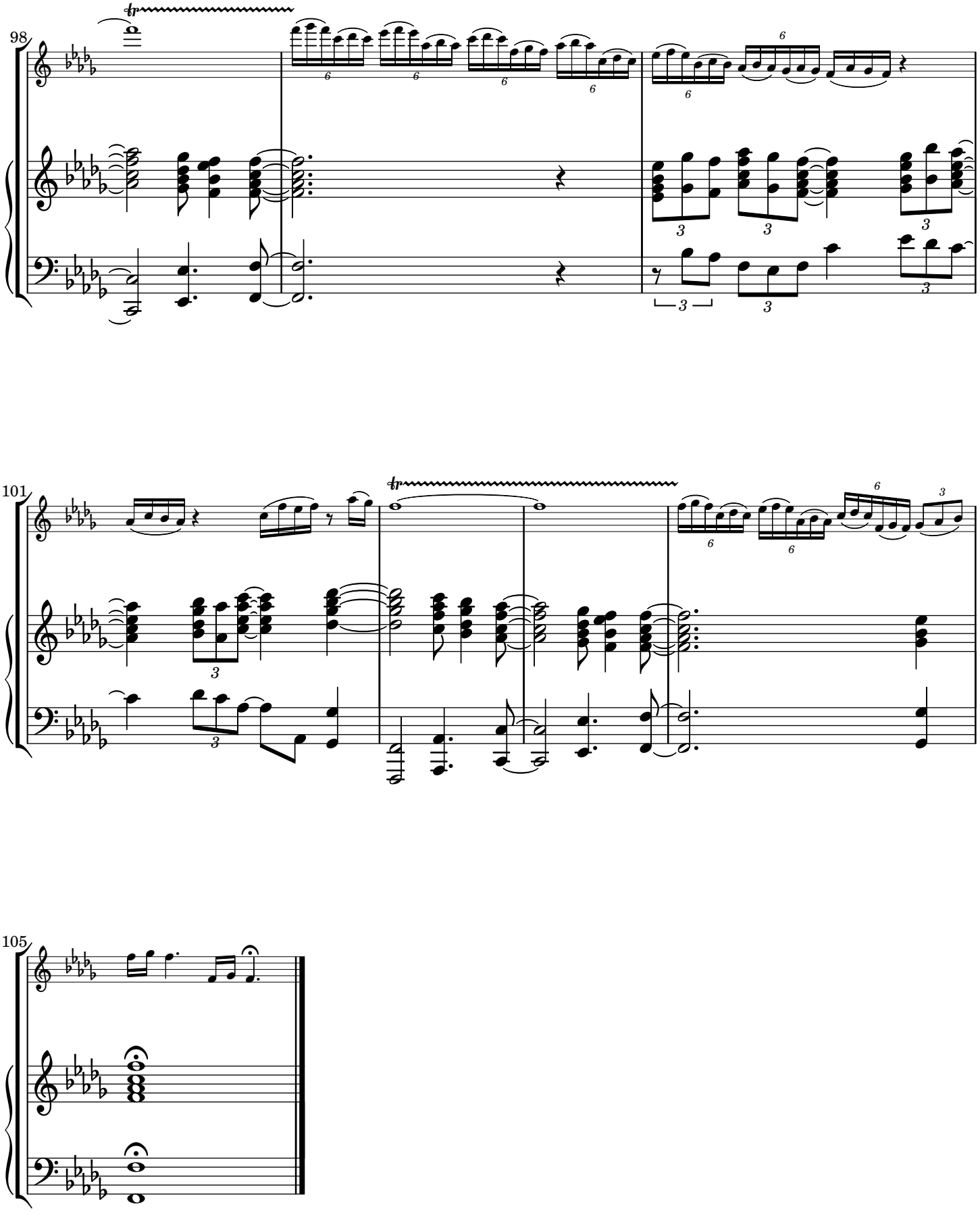
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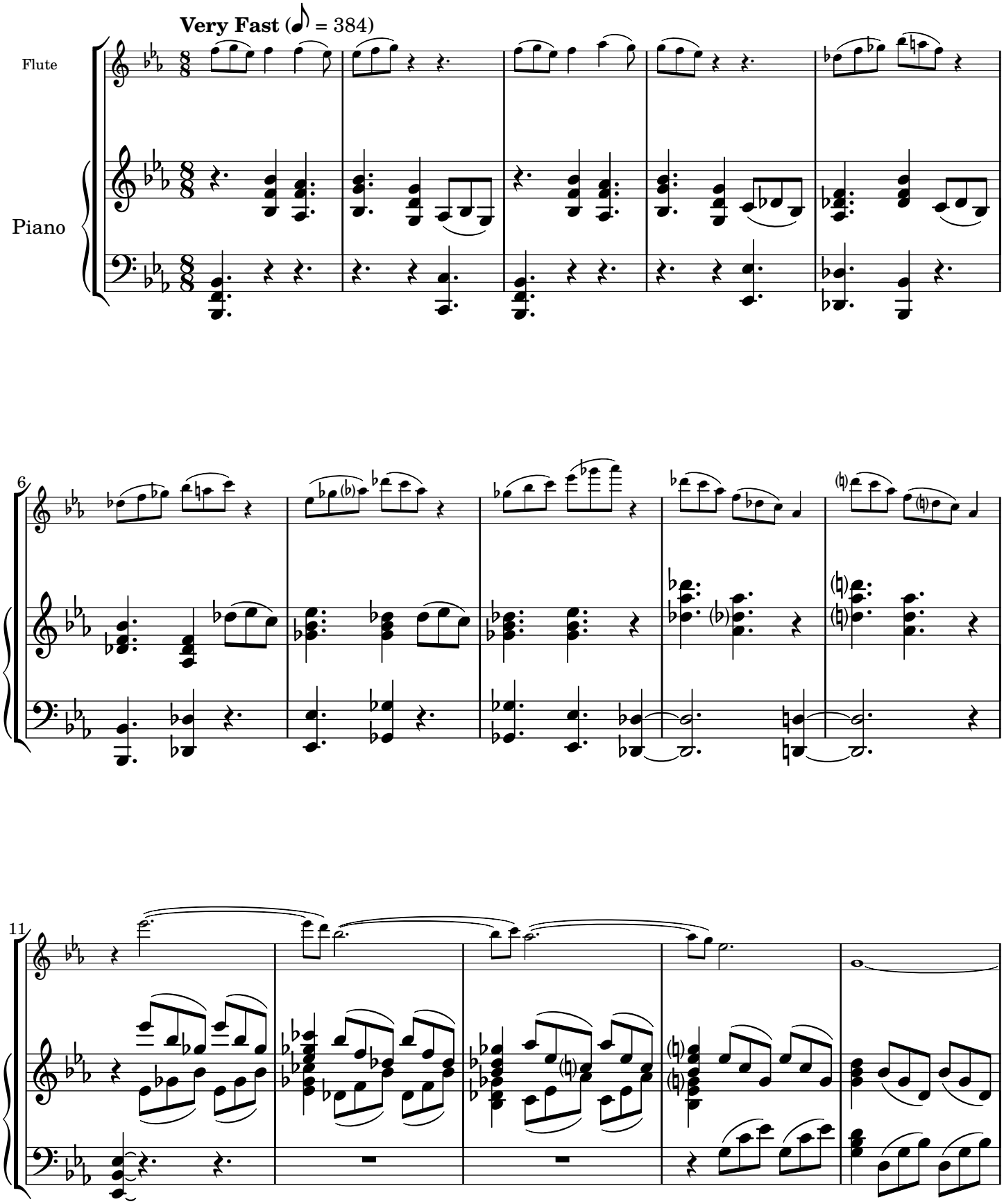
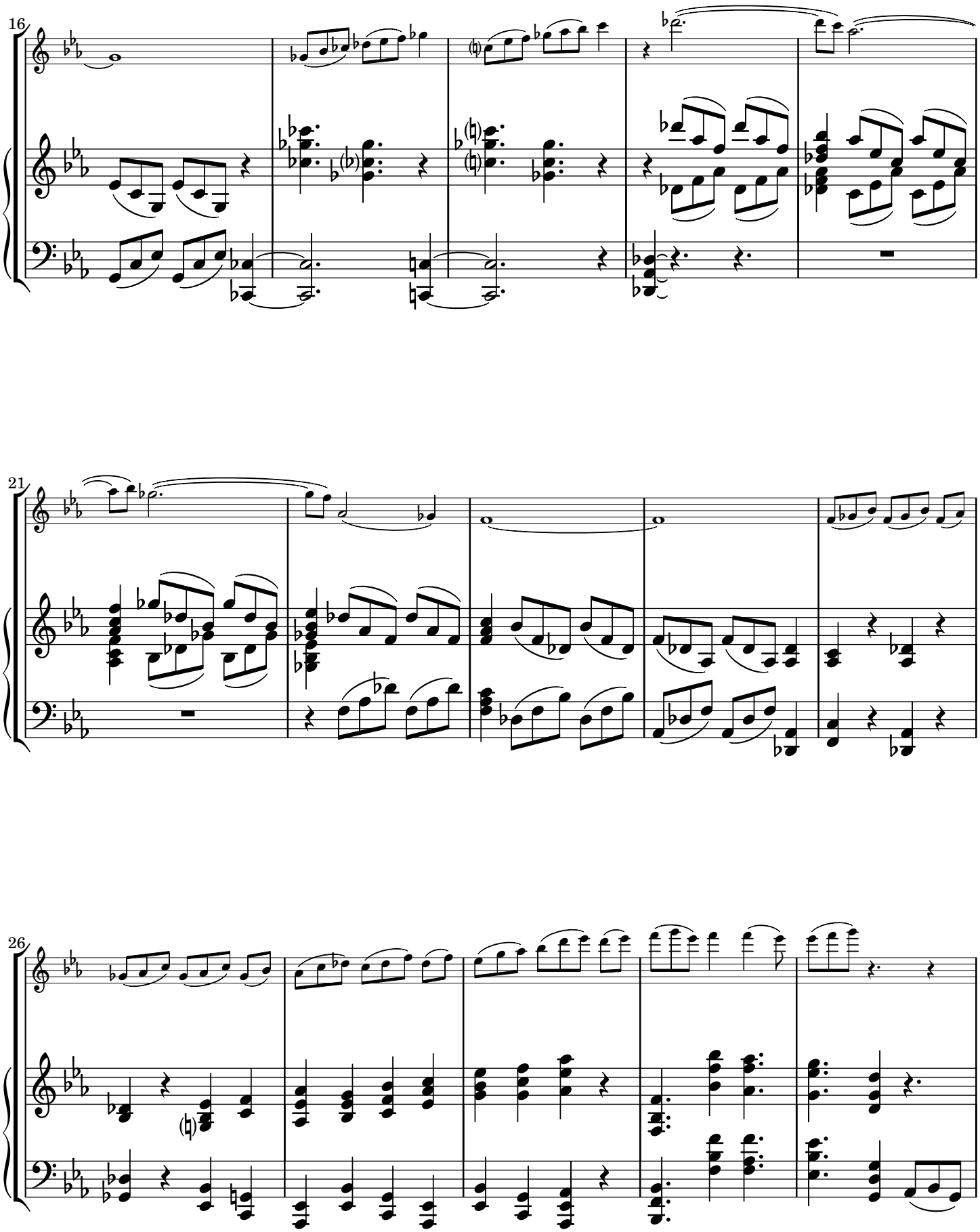
Movement III

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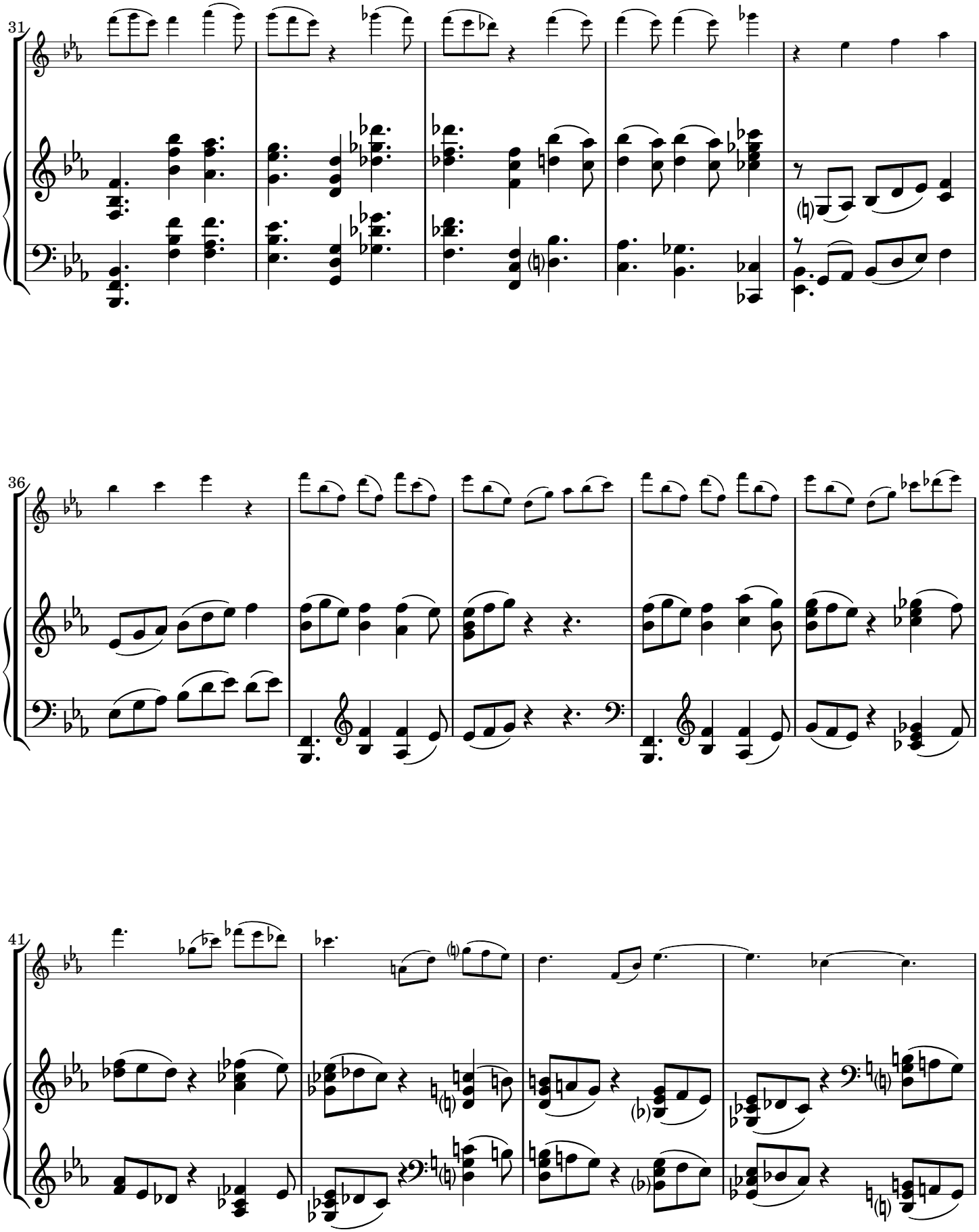
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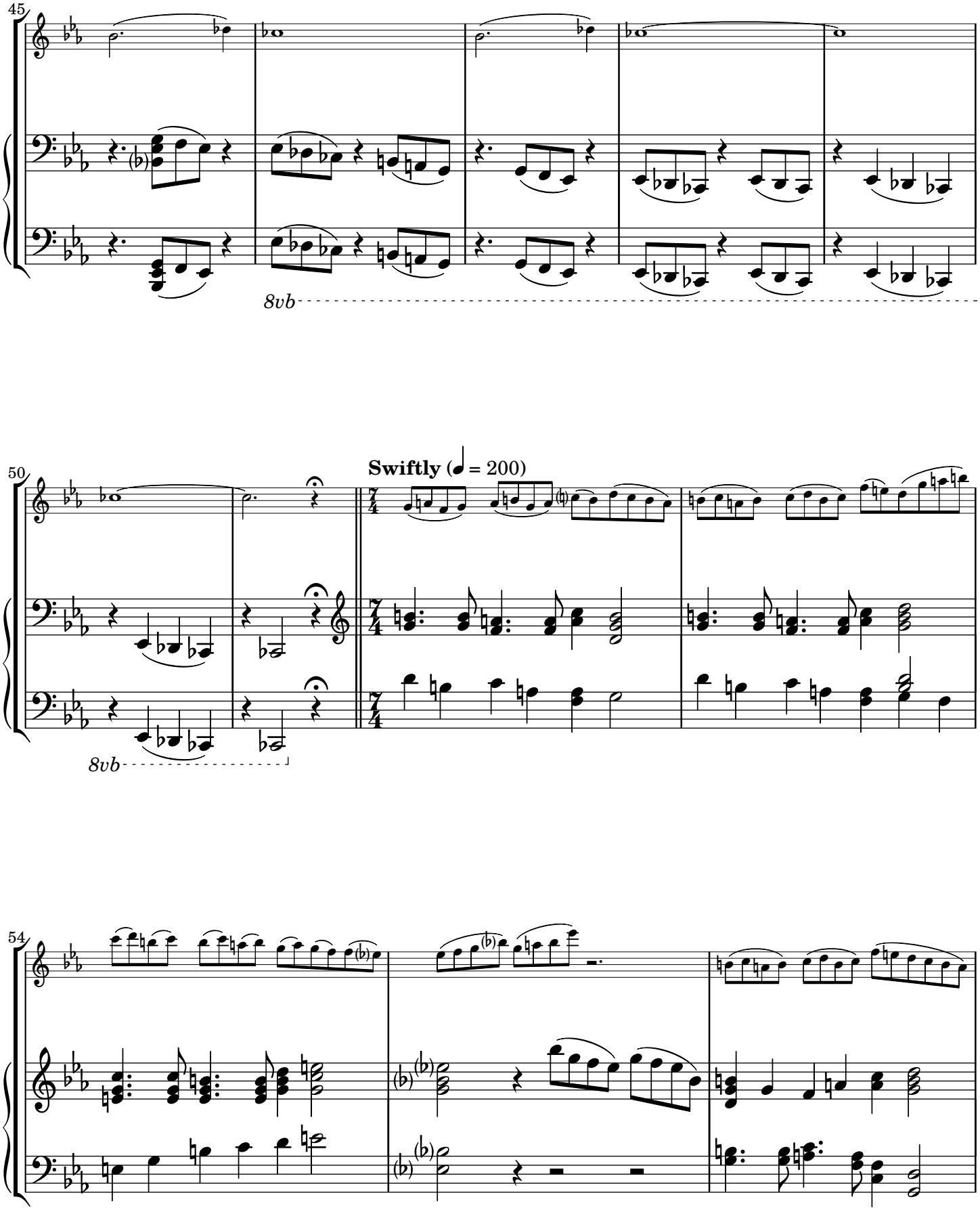
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Swiftly (♩ = 200)
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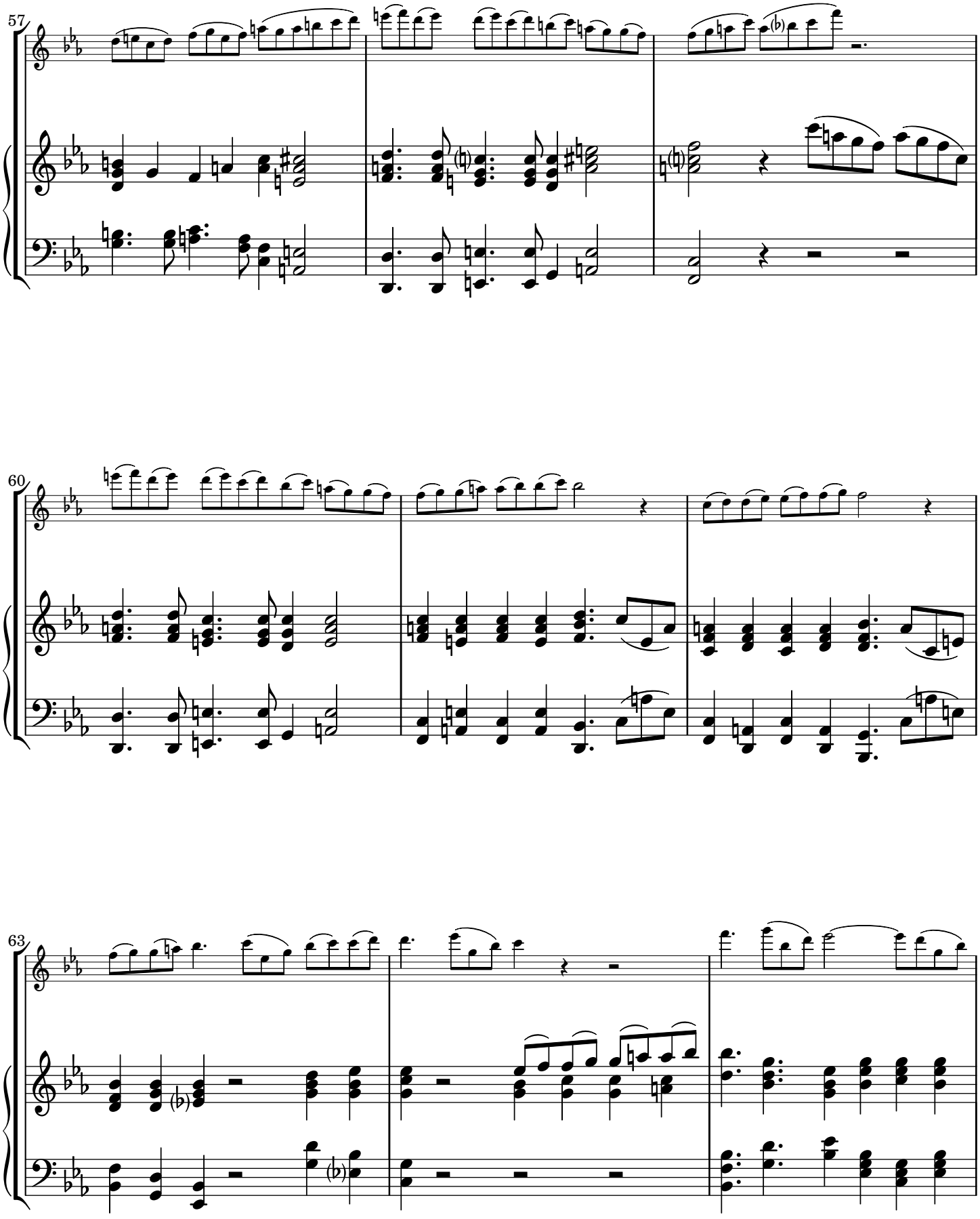
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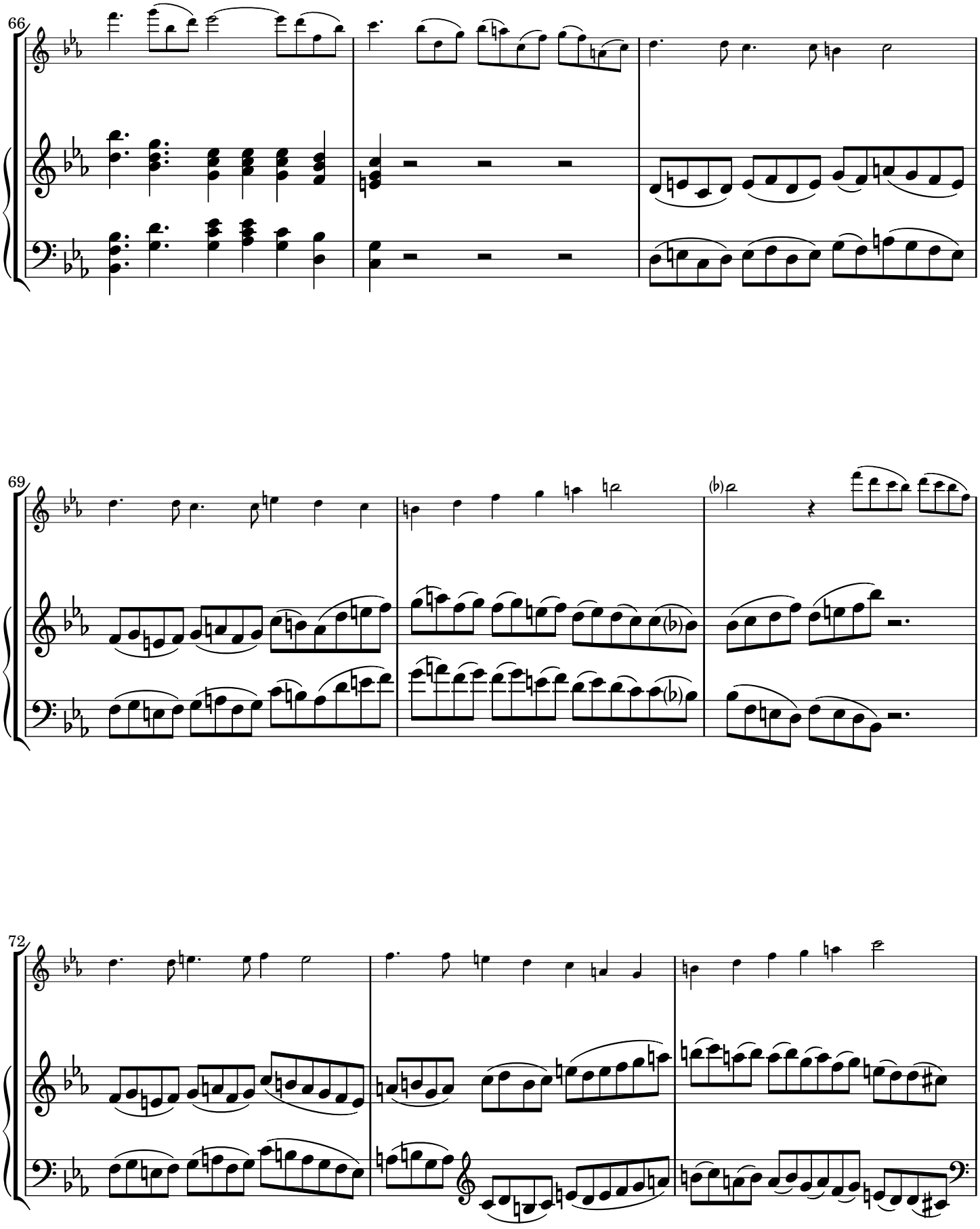
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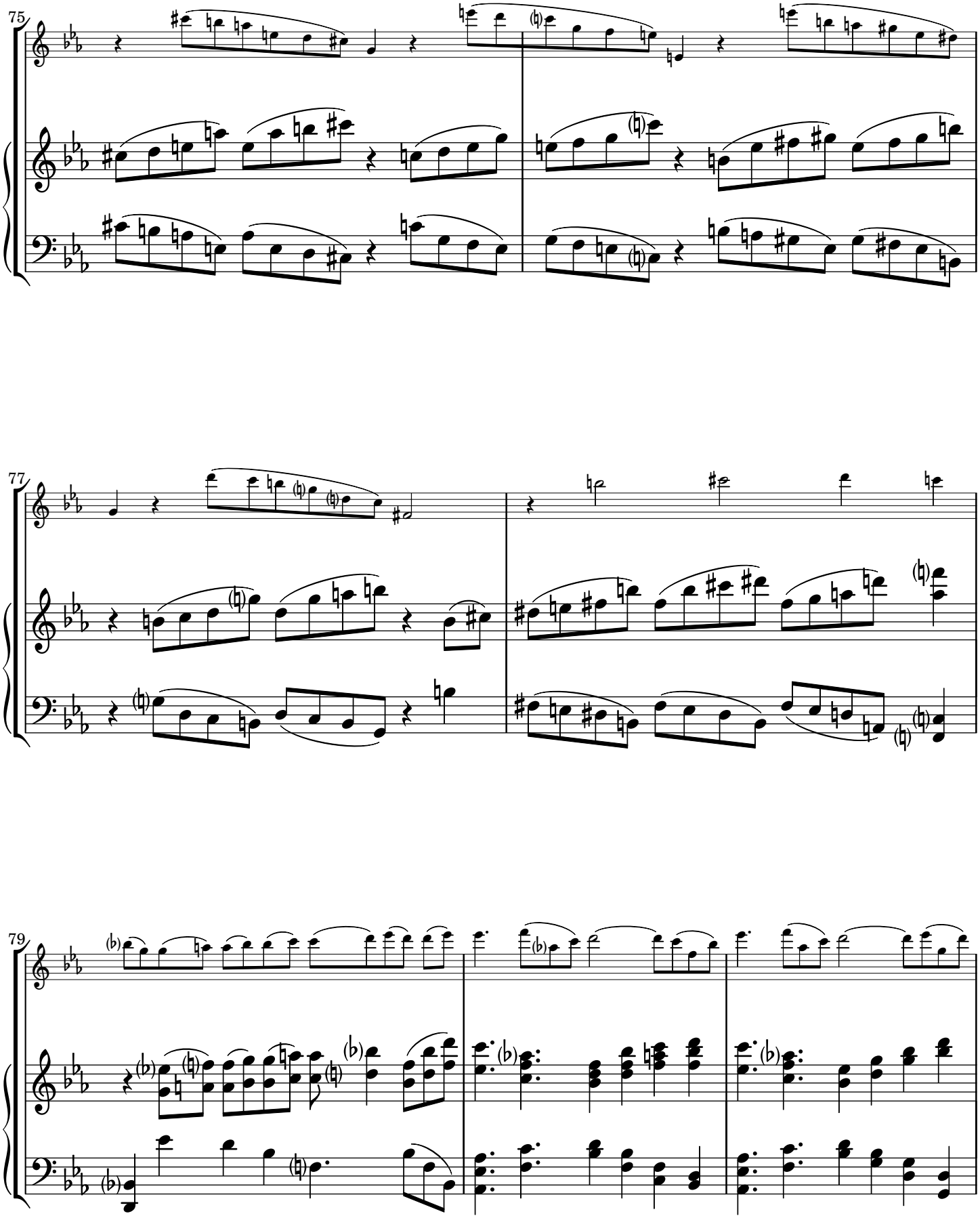
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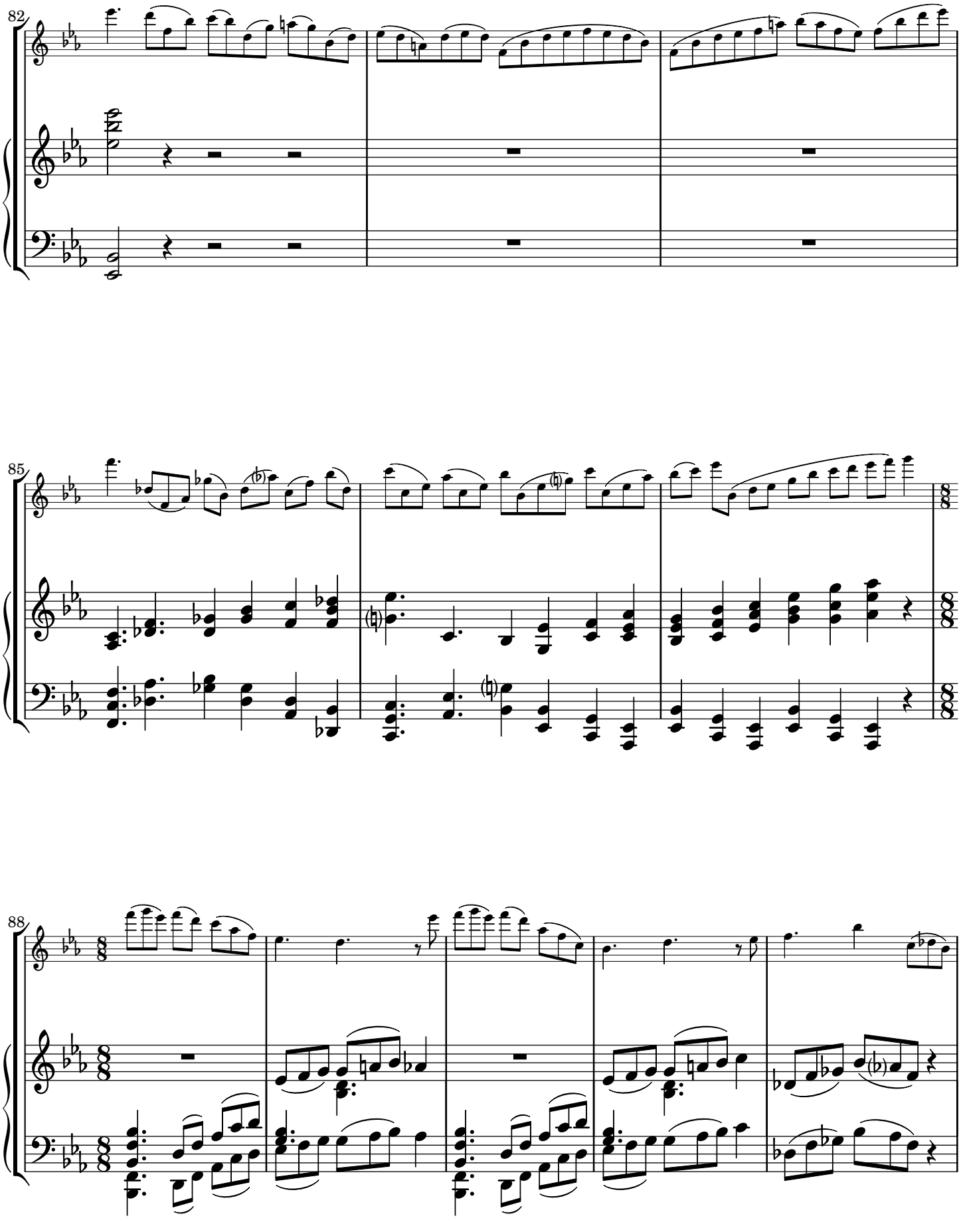
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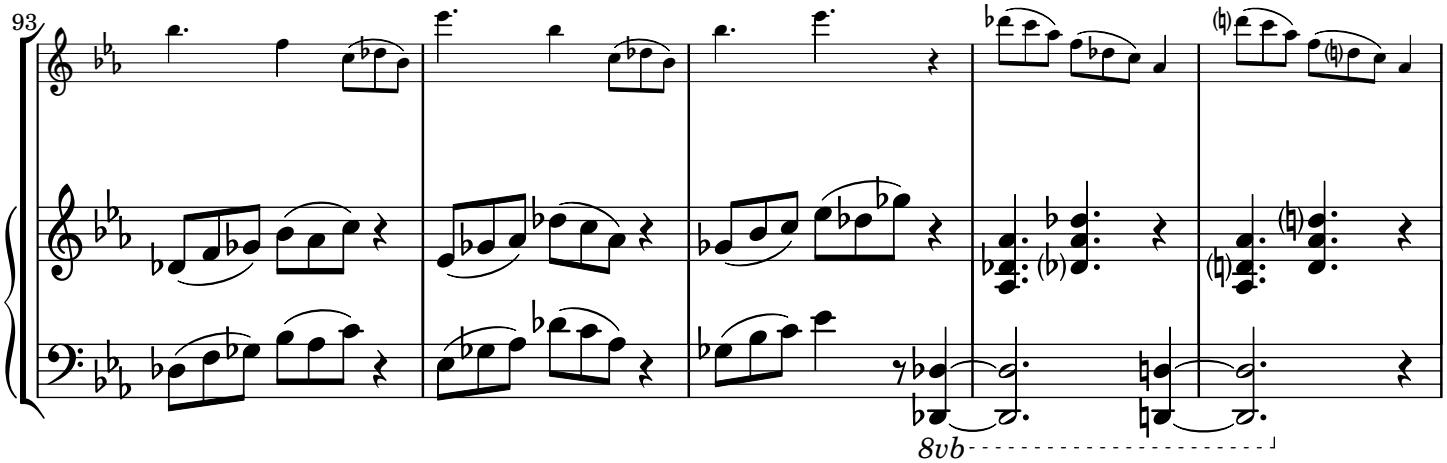
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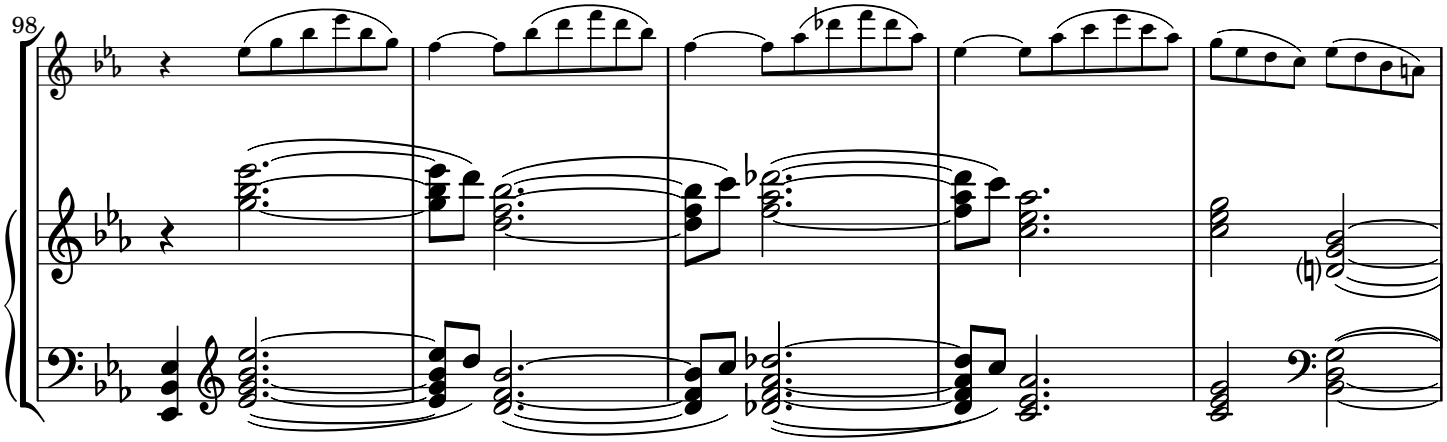
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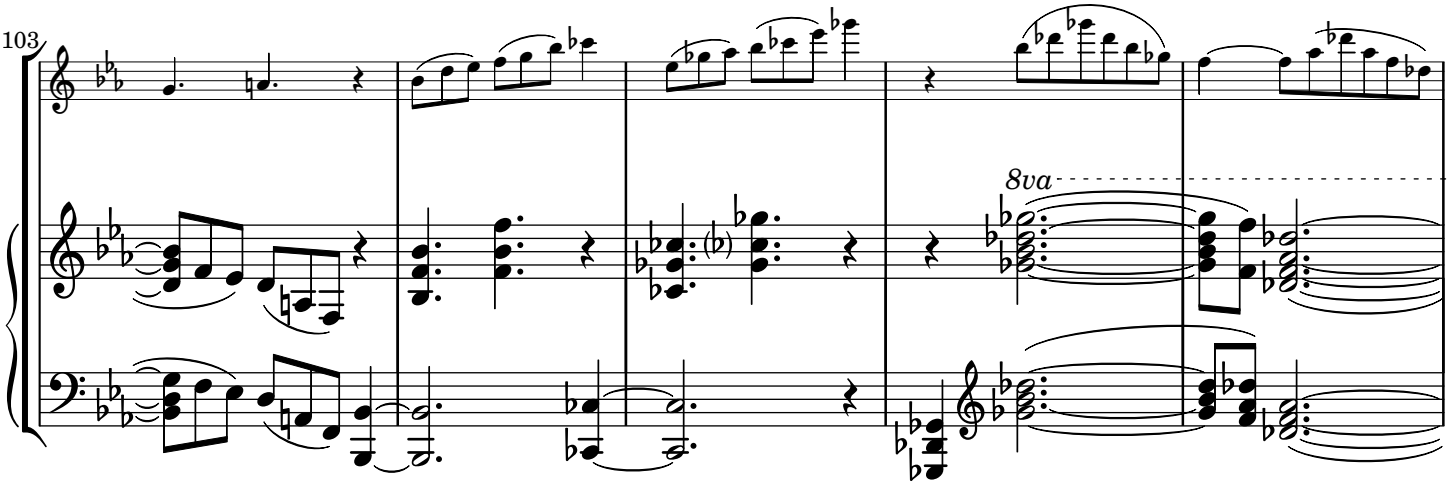
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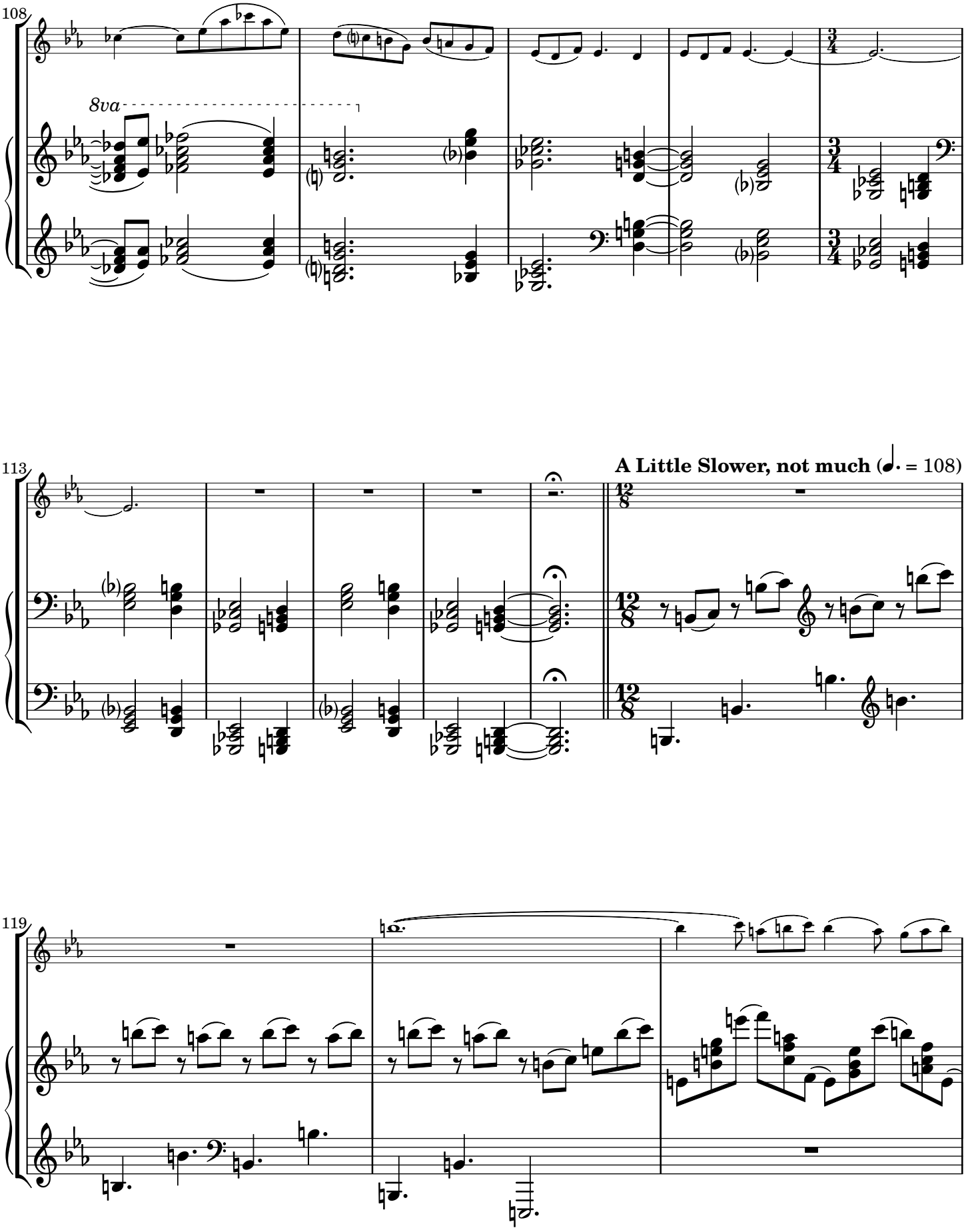
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A Little Slower, not much (♩. = 108)
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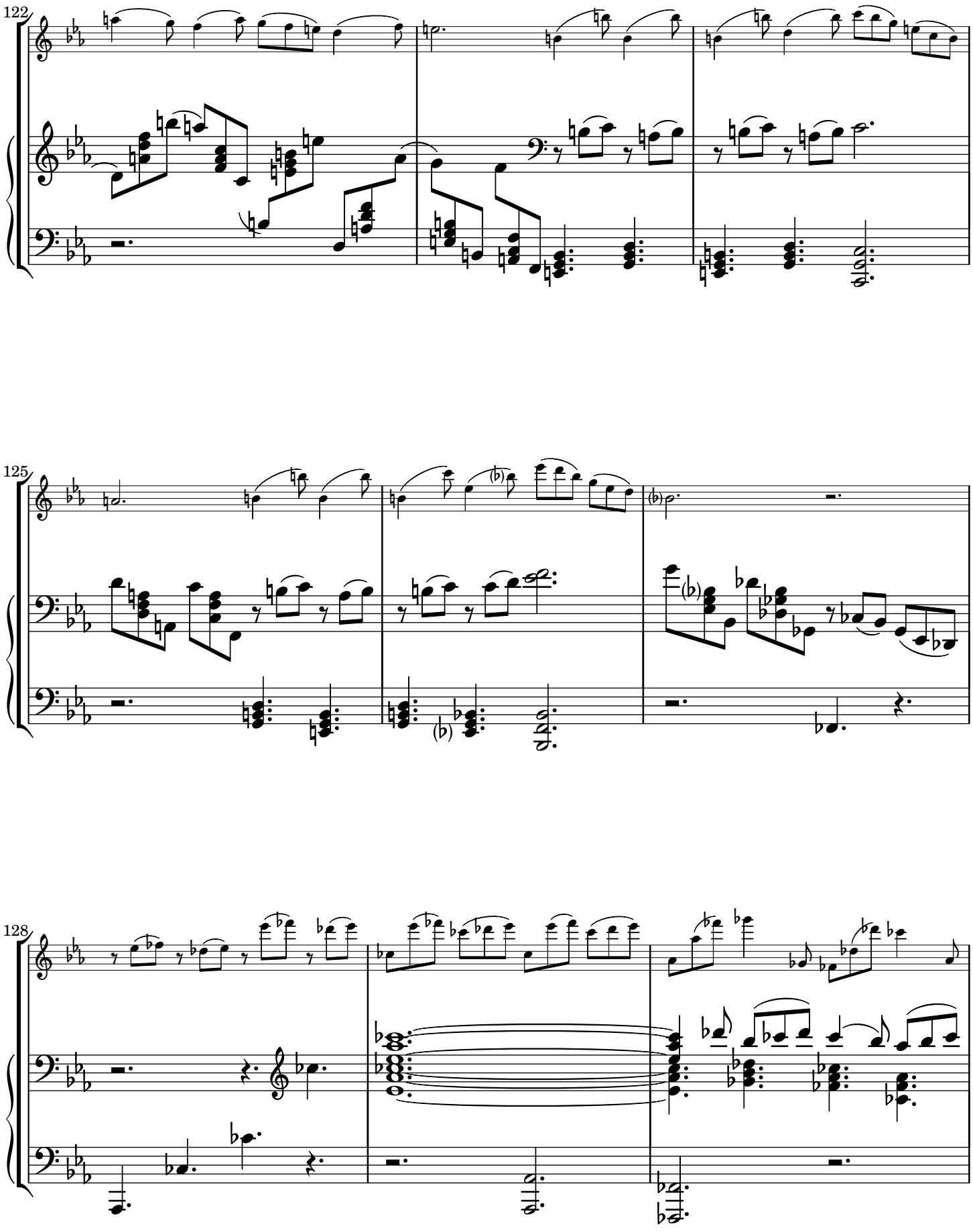
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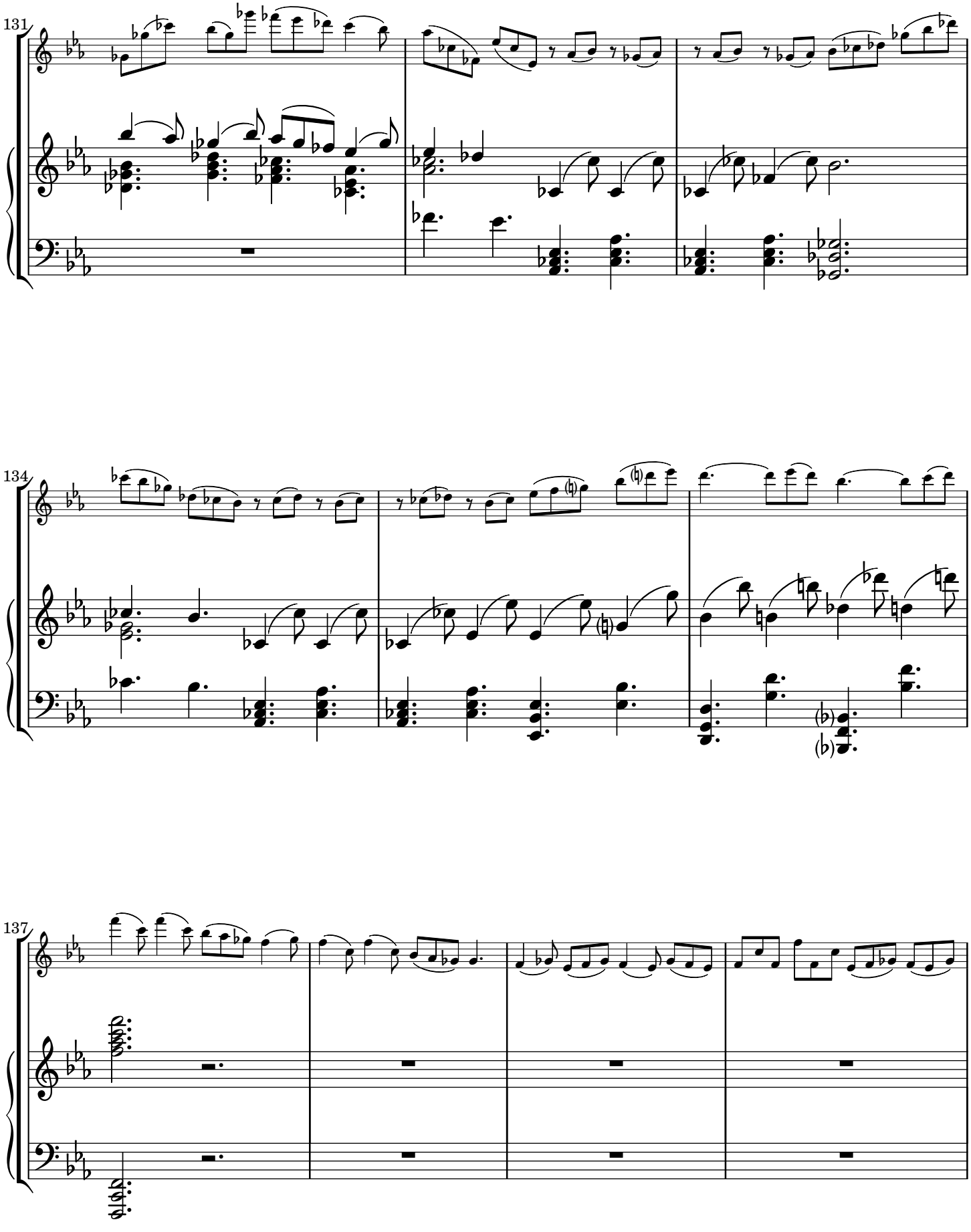
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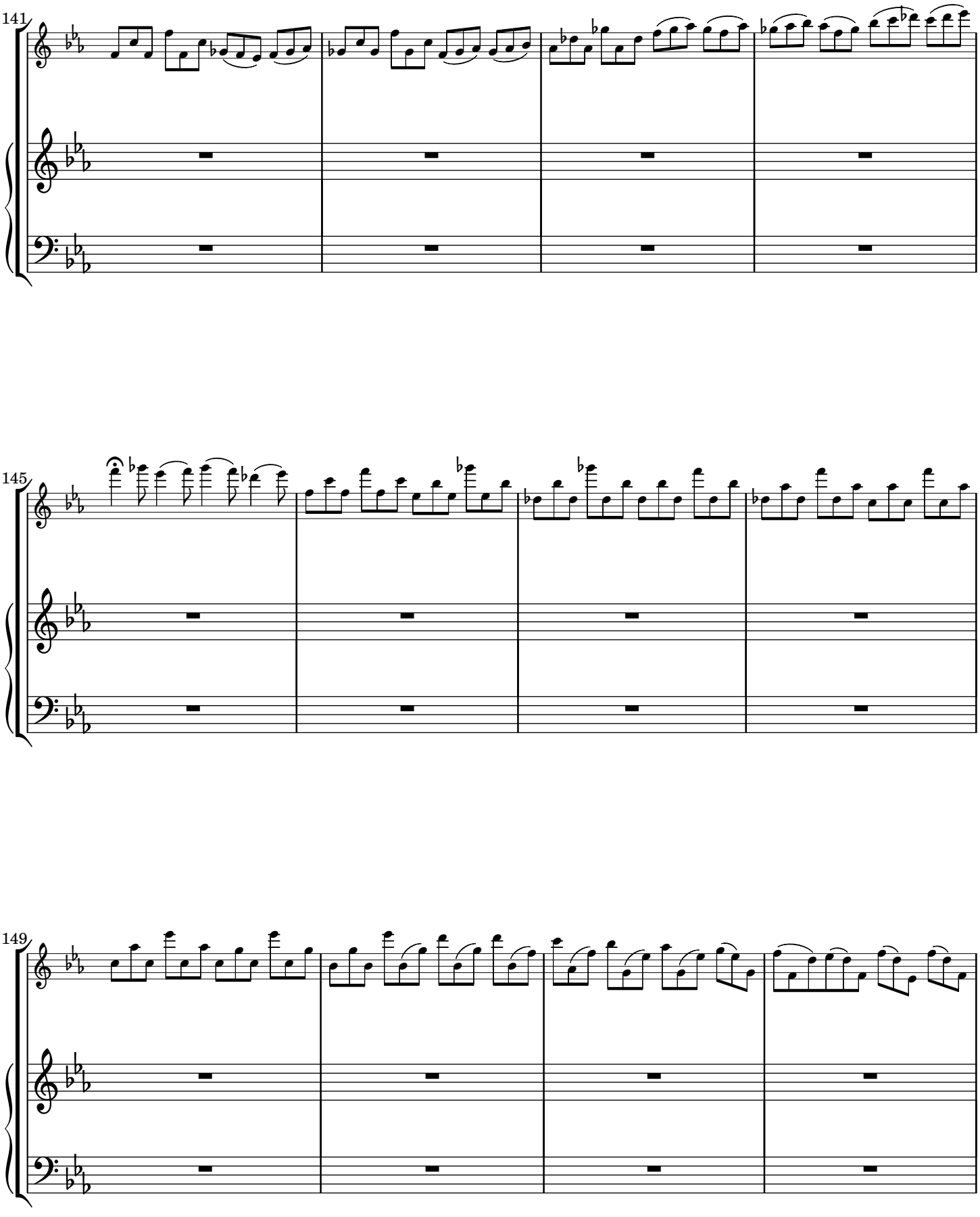
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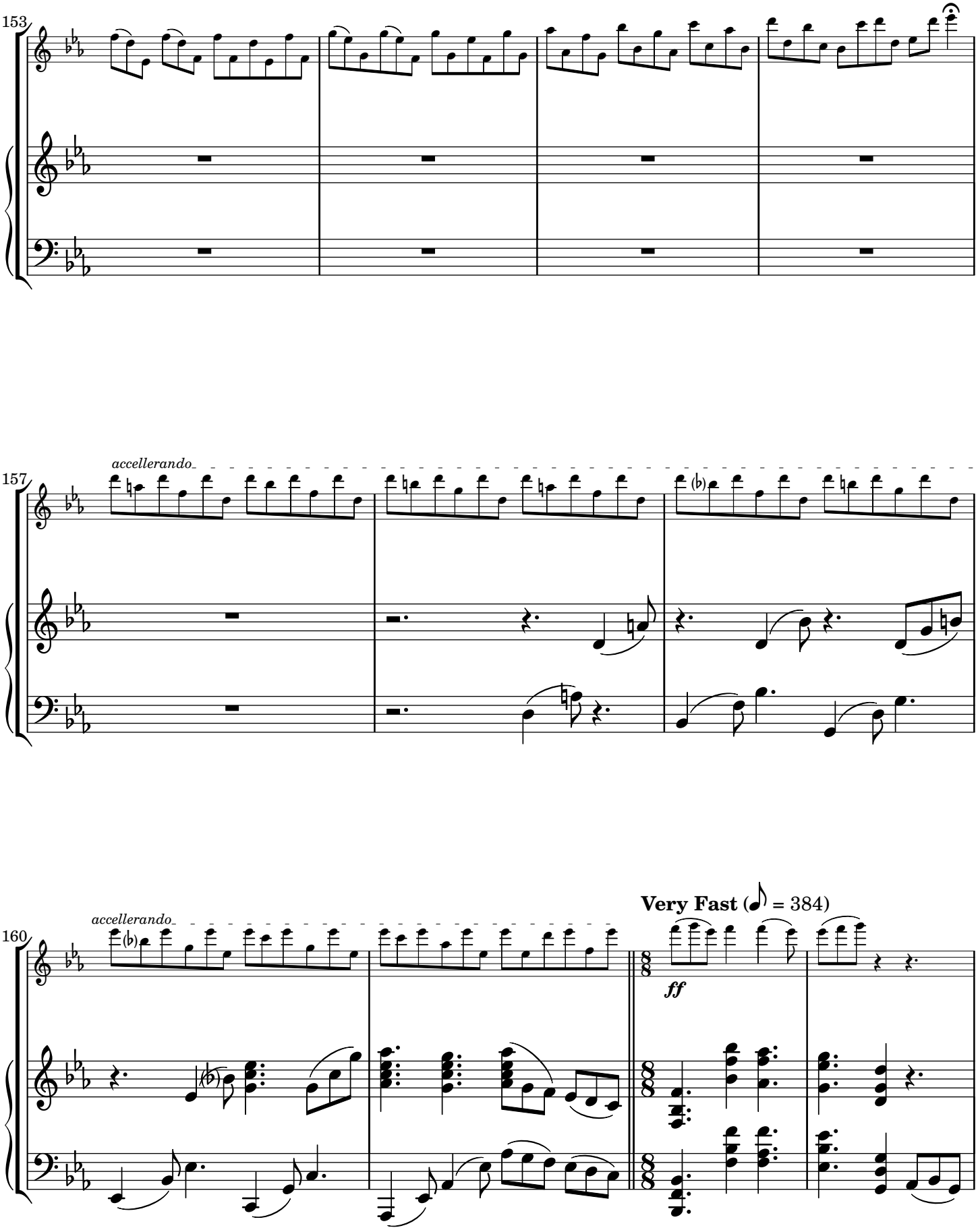
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accellerando
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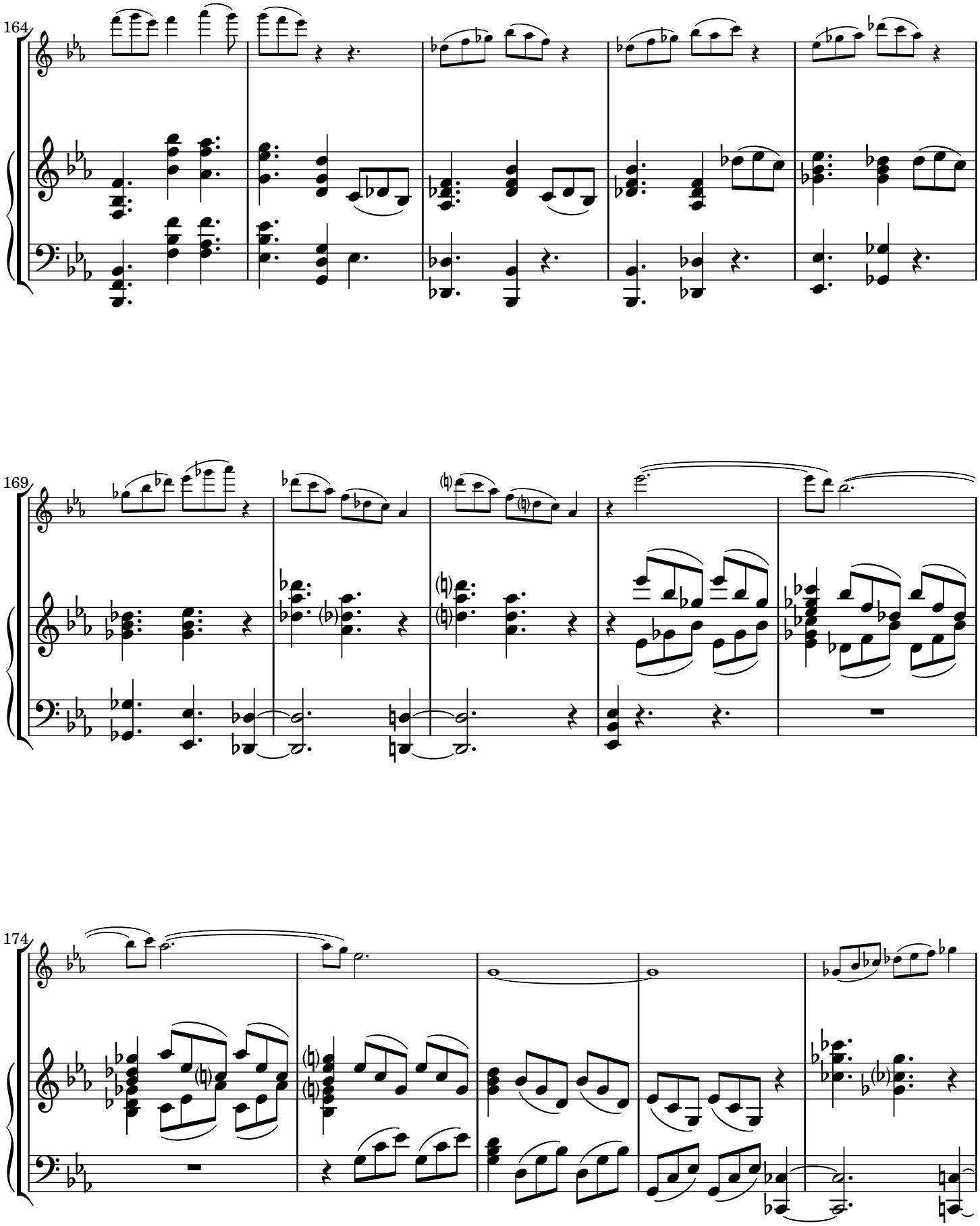
accellerando
Very Fast (♪ = 384)
ff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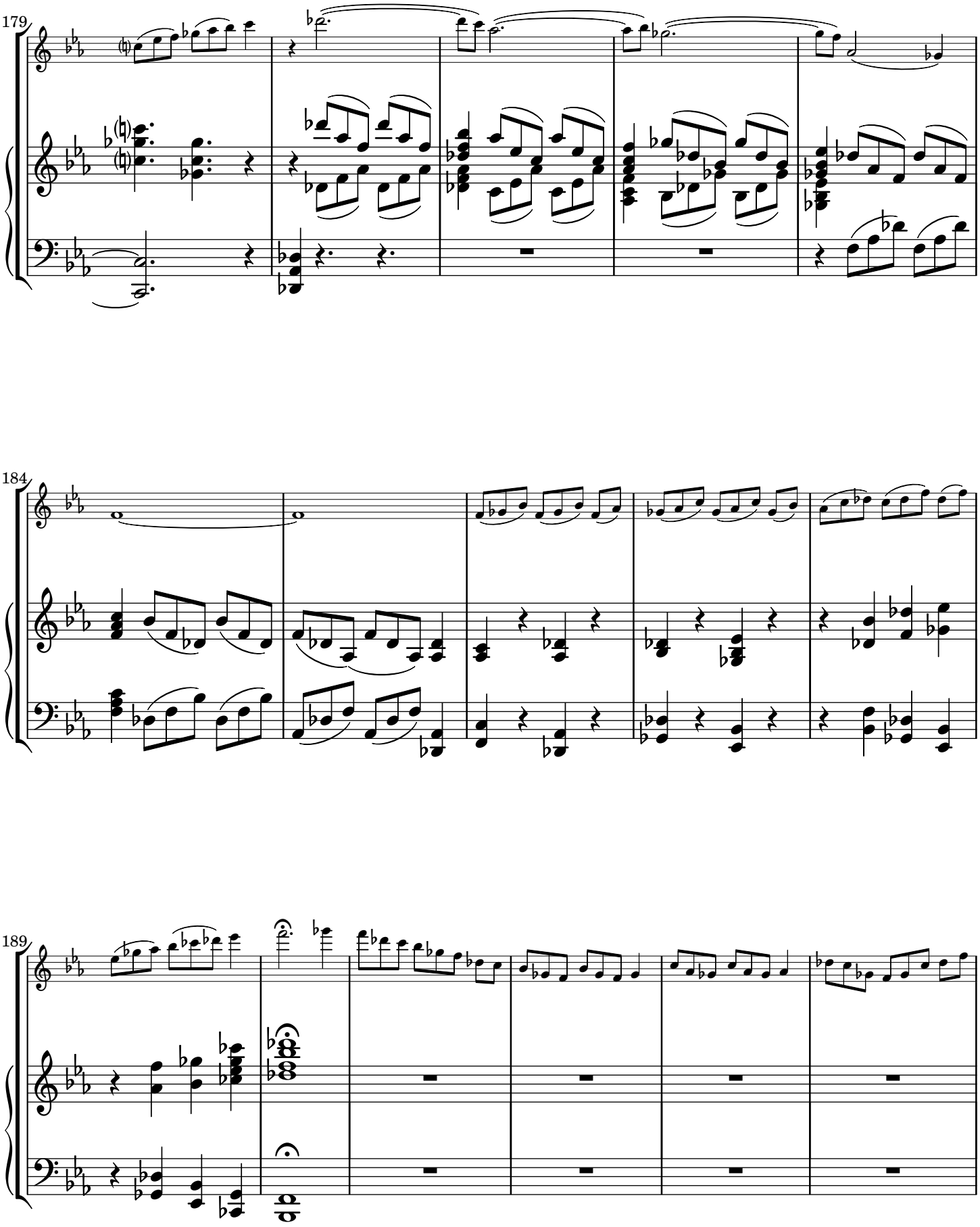
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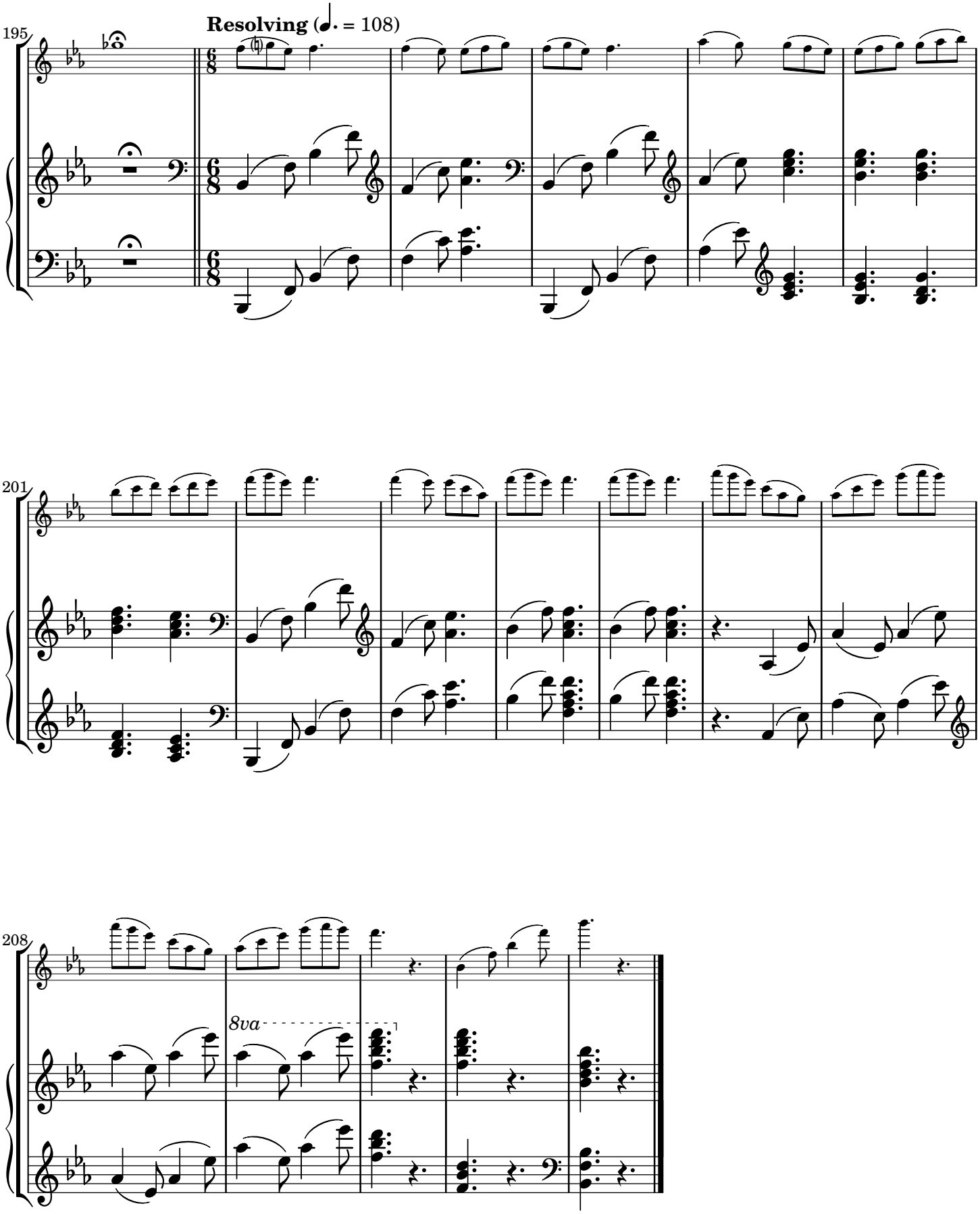
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Resolving (♩. = 108)
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