Dieterich Buxtehude

(?1637 - 1707)

'Jig' Fugue in C *BuxWV 174*

for manual keyboard

Arranged for **Flexible Wind Quartet** *by Toby Miller (2012)*

Flute, Oboe, Horn & Bassoon: Flute, Oboe and/or Horn may be replaced by Clarinet(s), and Bassoon by Bass Clarinet

Diderich Buxtehude was born at Helsingborg, now in Sweden but then part of Denmark, probably in 1637. His father was an organist in Helsingør (Shakespeare's Elsinore), and Diderich followed in the profession, first at Helsingborg and then succeeding his father in Helsingør. In 1668 he moved to his final job at the Marienkirche in Lübeck, where he remained until his death in 1707, eventually Germanizing his name. As well as organist, Buxtehude was church treasurer, and he also developed his predecessor's tradition of promoting regular 'Abendmusik' concerts of both secular and religious music.

During his own lifetime Buxtehude developed a reputation as a "musician's musician". As well as money matters, organ building and repair, choir training and standard liturgical accompaniment in services, high skill in improvising at the keyboard was more important than composition. When Buxtehude wrote down his music it was in 'tablature' (alphabetic note names in long strings, one for each part in the counterpoint), a style that had some ambiguities and was perhaps more an aide-memoire to the composer or rough guide to the performer, and one which was already becoming old-fashioned. Everything that survives now (a fraction of his total output) was either copied by other composers, written out as training material for pupils or sent as presents to Buxtehude's friend Gustav Düben in Sweden. Famously, the young JS Bach walked 300 miles to Lübeck to hear the master performer and composer, to copy his music and learn everything he could about the practicalities of the job: Bach's one month's approved leave of absence extended to three, to the annoyance of his employer.

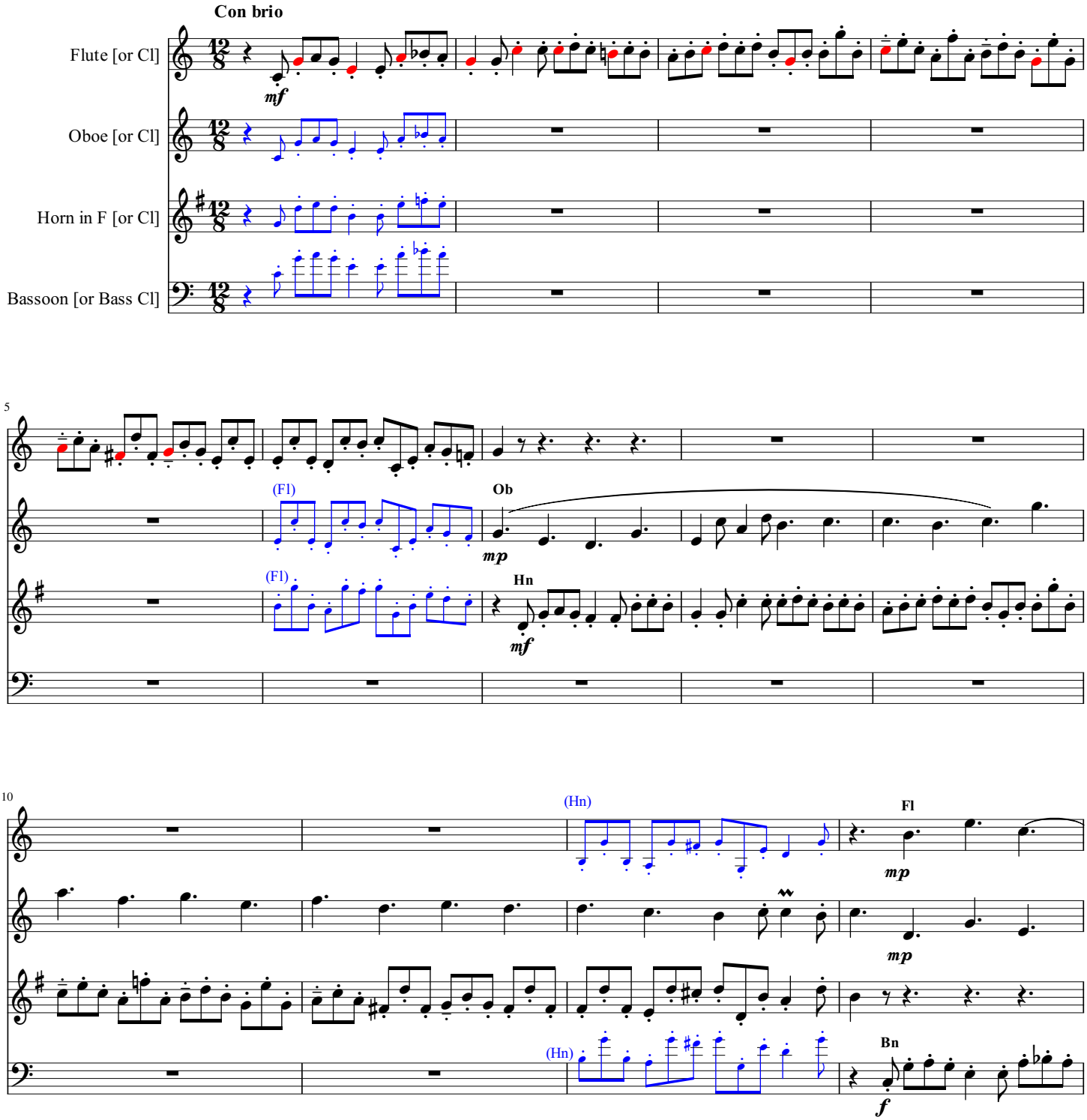
'Jig' Fugues in compound triple time were a speciality of Buxtehude. In his chorale fantasias they often accompany joyful words, and this one has been played at weddings. However the jig fugue that concludes his great E minor organ prelude (BuxWV 142) may have been conceived as a dance of death (a famous painting on this theme existed in the Marienkirche).

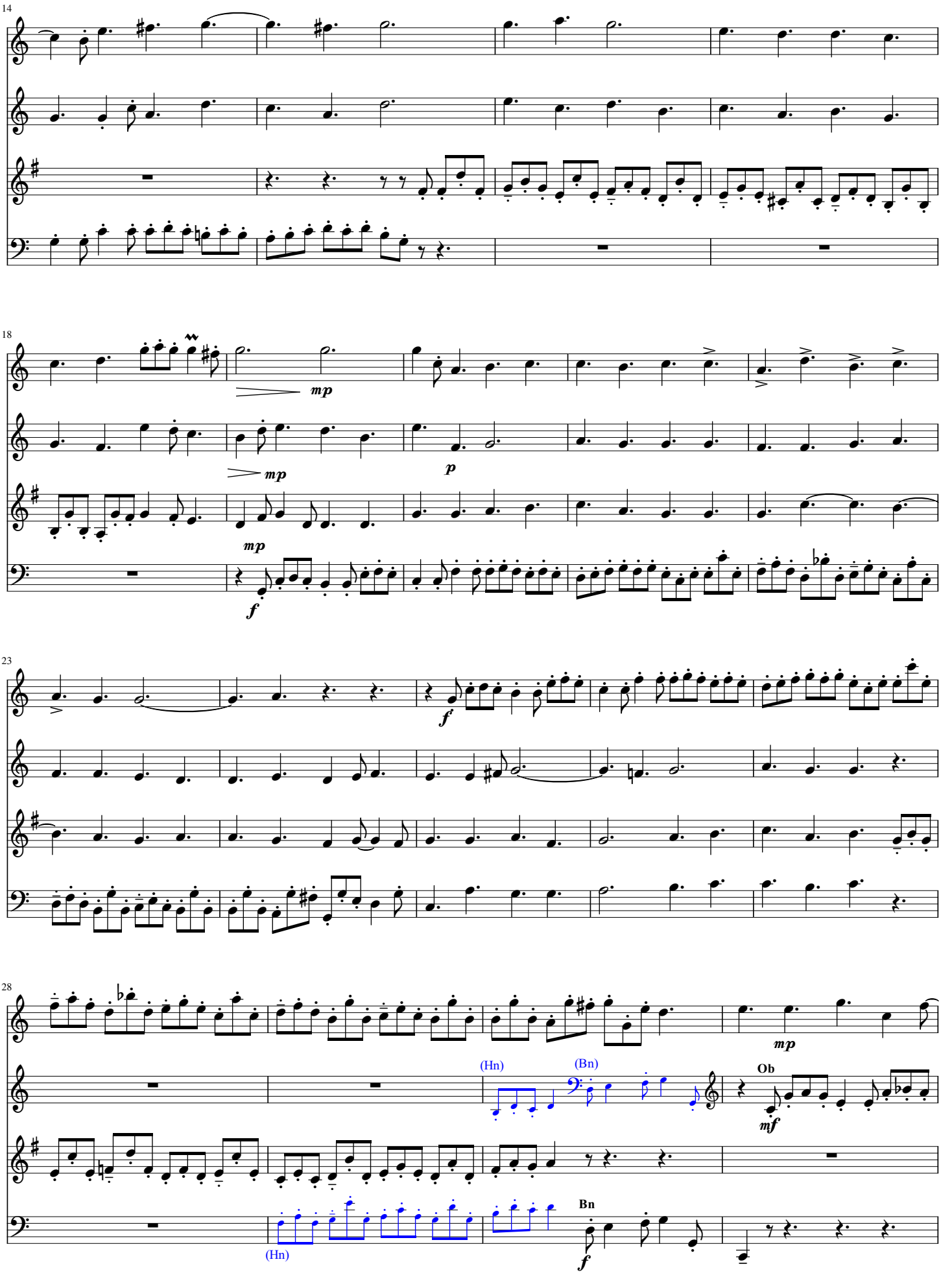
This fugue is in two 30-bar sections followed by a coda. I guess that it may have originated as an organ improvisation on a chorale tune whose first two lines resemble the tune known in England as 'St Anne'. This is attributed to William Croft and is sung to the Isaac Watts hymn 'O God Our Help in Ages Past' (notes highlighted **red** in the flute part). Croft's tune was published only in 1708, the year after Buxtehude's death. However Bach also wrote a large-scale Prelude and Fugue in E♭ major (BWV 552), nicknamed the 'St Anne' in England because of the similarity, yet in all probability without any connection to Croft's publication. It seems clear that a similar chorale melody was already in circulation in north Germany, whether independently or as a source for Croft's version.

'Jig' Fugue in C major BuxWV 174

small score (instrumental pitch) arranged for flexible wind quartet by Toby Miller

Buxtehude

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28
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(Hn)
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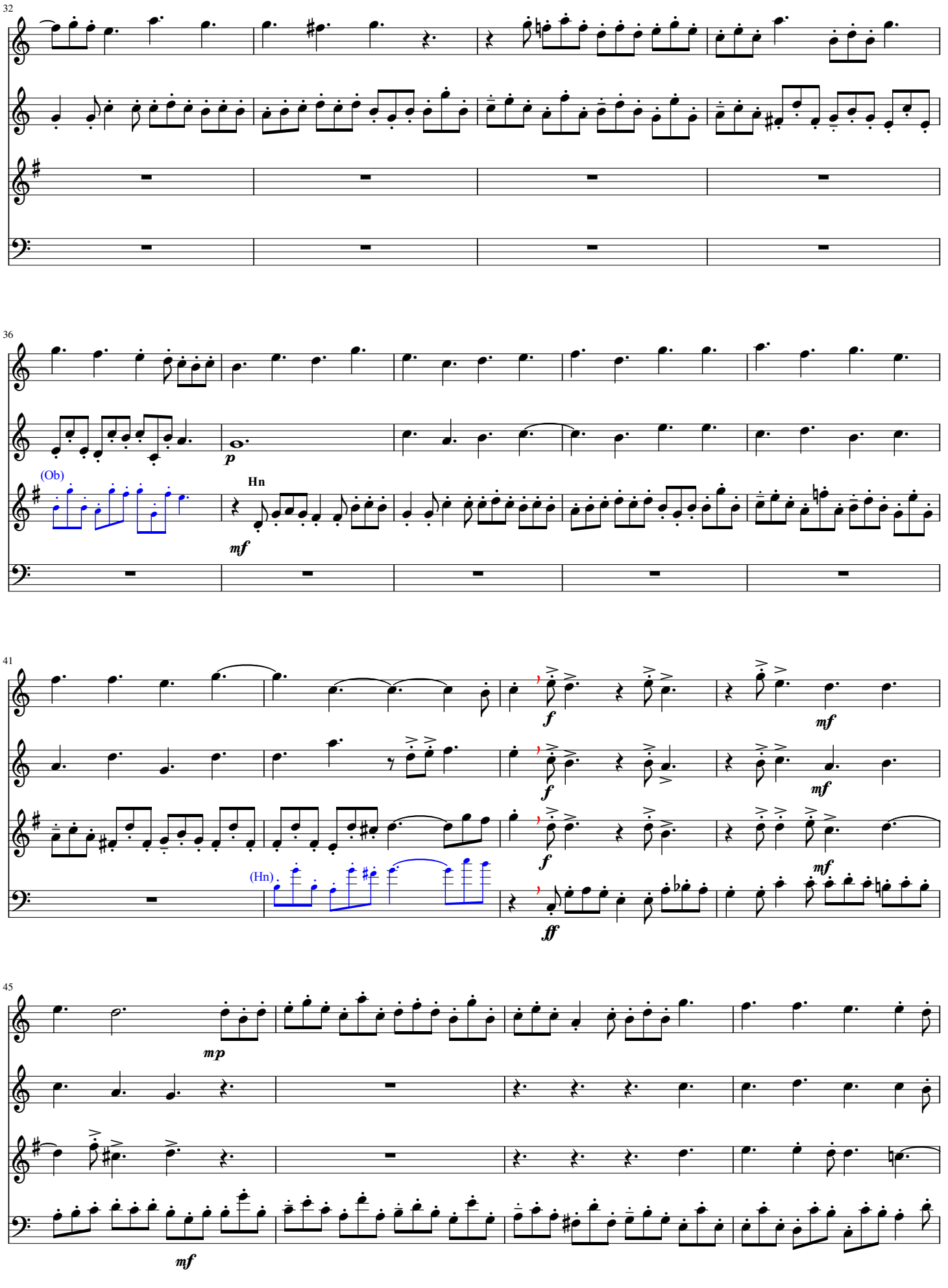
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36
(Ob)
Hn
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41
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45
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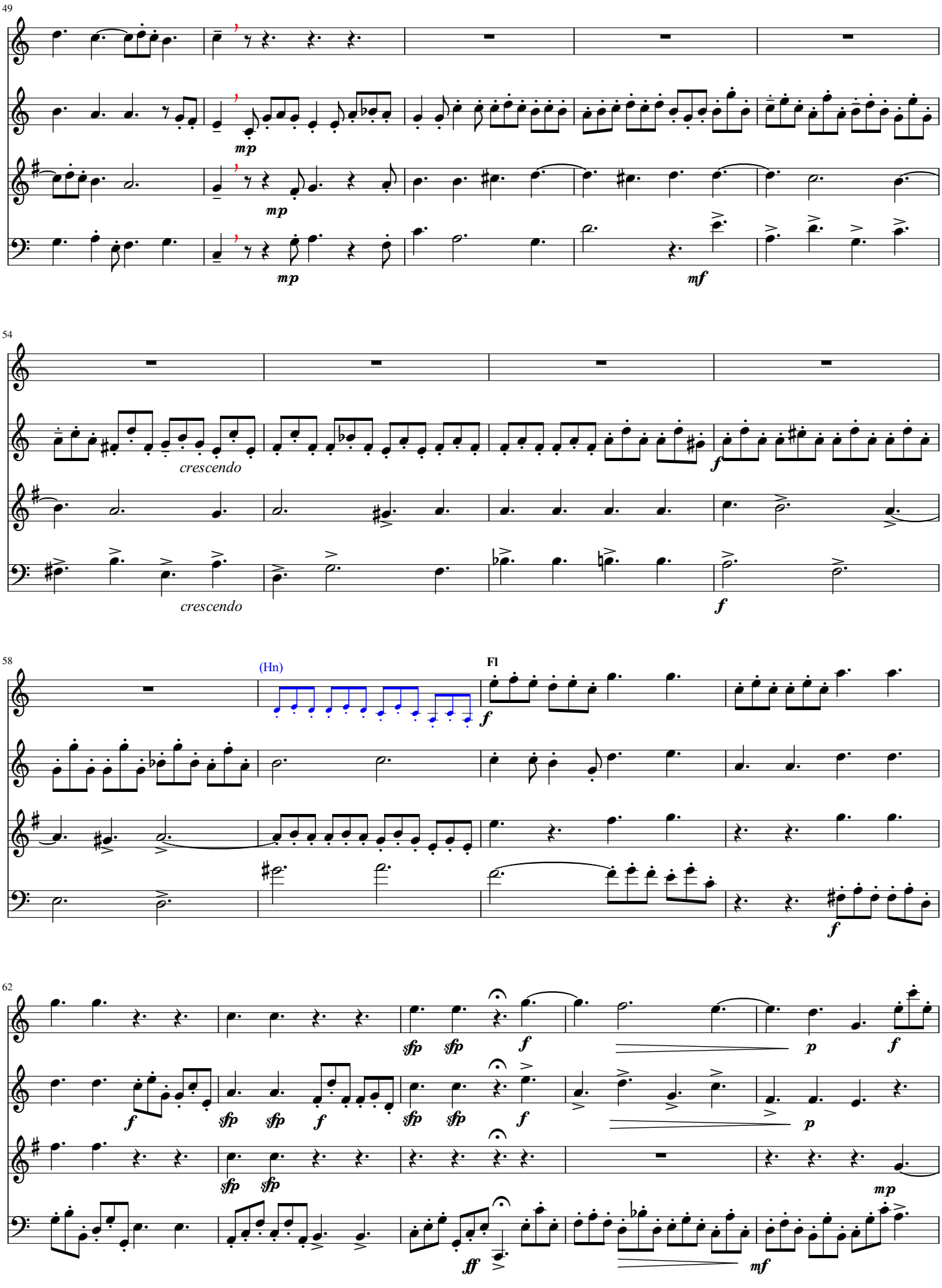
49
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mp
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mf
54
crescendo
crescendo
f
f
58
(Hn)
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f
f
62
sfp
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f
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sfp
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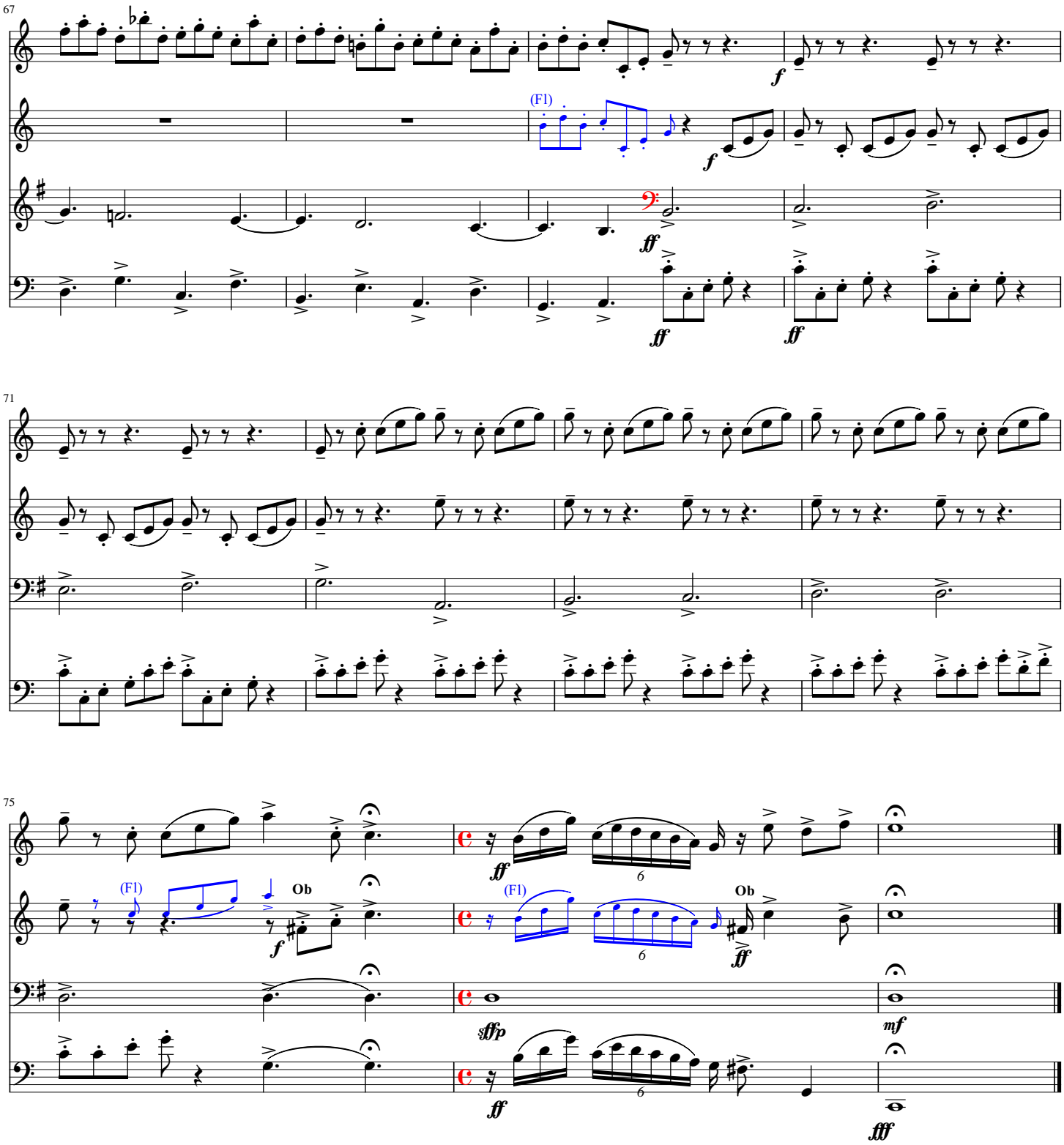
67
(Fl)
71
75
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