Oracle

for Violin and Hand Drums

Paul Frehner, 2007

Performance Notes

Oracle is a piece for violin and one percussionist playing hand drum(s) such as tablas or the bodhrán. Four pitches, from low to high, are indicated in the score. The player should try to achieve the greatest contrast in pitch available on the drum in order to highlight the four pitch levels. For example, on a bodhrán the lowest pitches should be played near the center of the drum while the highest at the rim employing a finger snapping technique.

If the piece is played on Indian tablas the percussionist can, in general, freely choose when to bend the notes played on the bayan drum. There are moments, however, when downward glissandos are desired. These are indicated by downward pointing arrows.

Note that it is also possible to play the piece on four drums, such as two bongos and two congas, tuned low to high.

Accidentals function in the traditional manner, however, cautionary accidentals are used as needed.

Approximate Duration: 6'15"

Oracle was composed during my residency at the Chapelle historique du Bon-Pasteur and is dedicated to Nadia Francavilla and D'Arcy Gray.

Program Note

Oracle is a short piece for violin and percussion that tries to evoke a primal setting in which communication with the spirit world is achieved through frenzied and energetic ritualistic motions. The percussion setup is very basic, bordering on the primitive. The entire part is written for membranophones, or drums with a stretched skin pulled tautly across the frame. The percussionist has a choice of playing the part on a single frame drum or on a combination of drums, such as a set of tablas or on bongos and congas, for instance. The violinist plays passages that sound at times exotic due to the intervallic content of the mode from which the music is drawn. The two instruments interact very closely with each other throughout the piece, each part punctuating the other. As the piece progresses the tempo is increased in order to raise the intensity level of the ritualistic motions that the music attempts to evoke.

PF

Note de programme

Communication avec le monde des esprits, mouvements frénétiques, gestes et musiques qui mènent à l'état de transe... tel est le cadre primitif d'où découlent ces rituals que tente d'évoquer *Oracle*, une courte pièce pour violon et tambour. La partie de percussions demeure très simple. Comme cette œuvre est ecrite pour membraphones ou tambours à peau tendue, le percussioniste dipose du choix de jouer sur des tablas, sur deux bongos et deux congas ou sur un seul tambour dont il saura tirer quatre sonorities différantes allant du grave à l'aigu. La partie de violon prend ses raciness dans une musique modales dont les intervalles peuvent paraître exotiques. Les duex instruments interagissent intimement tandis que la pièce évolue, chacun ponctuant le discours musicale de l'autre. À mesure que la pièce progresse, le tempo s'accélère jusqu'à créer l'intensité dans un mouvement répétitive qui recoupe le côté tribal que l'œuvre tend à évoquer.

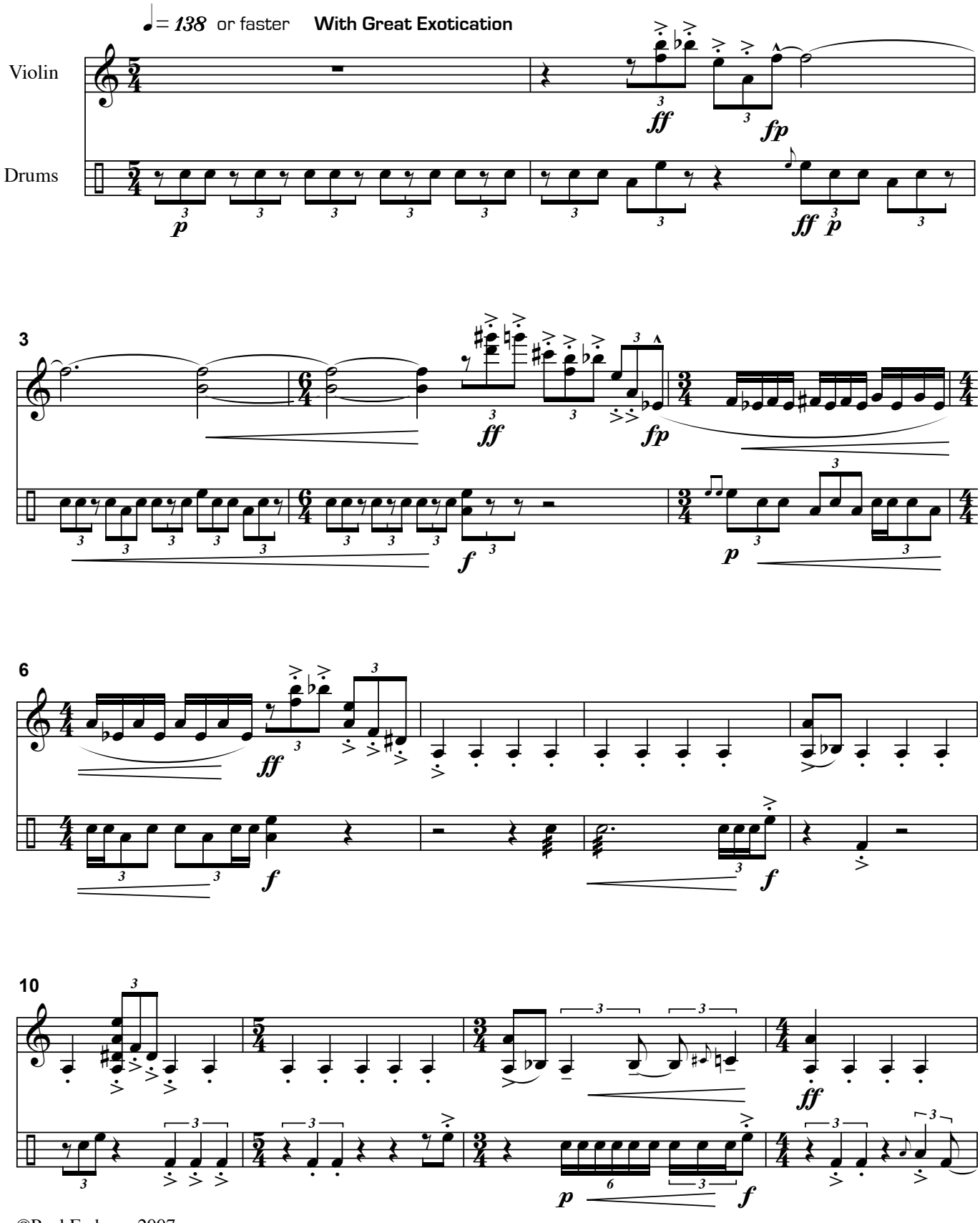
PF

Oracle

for violin and hand drums

composed for D'Arcy Gray and Nadia Francavilla

Paul Frehner, 2007



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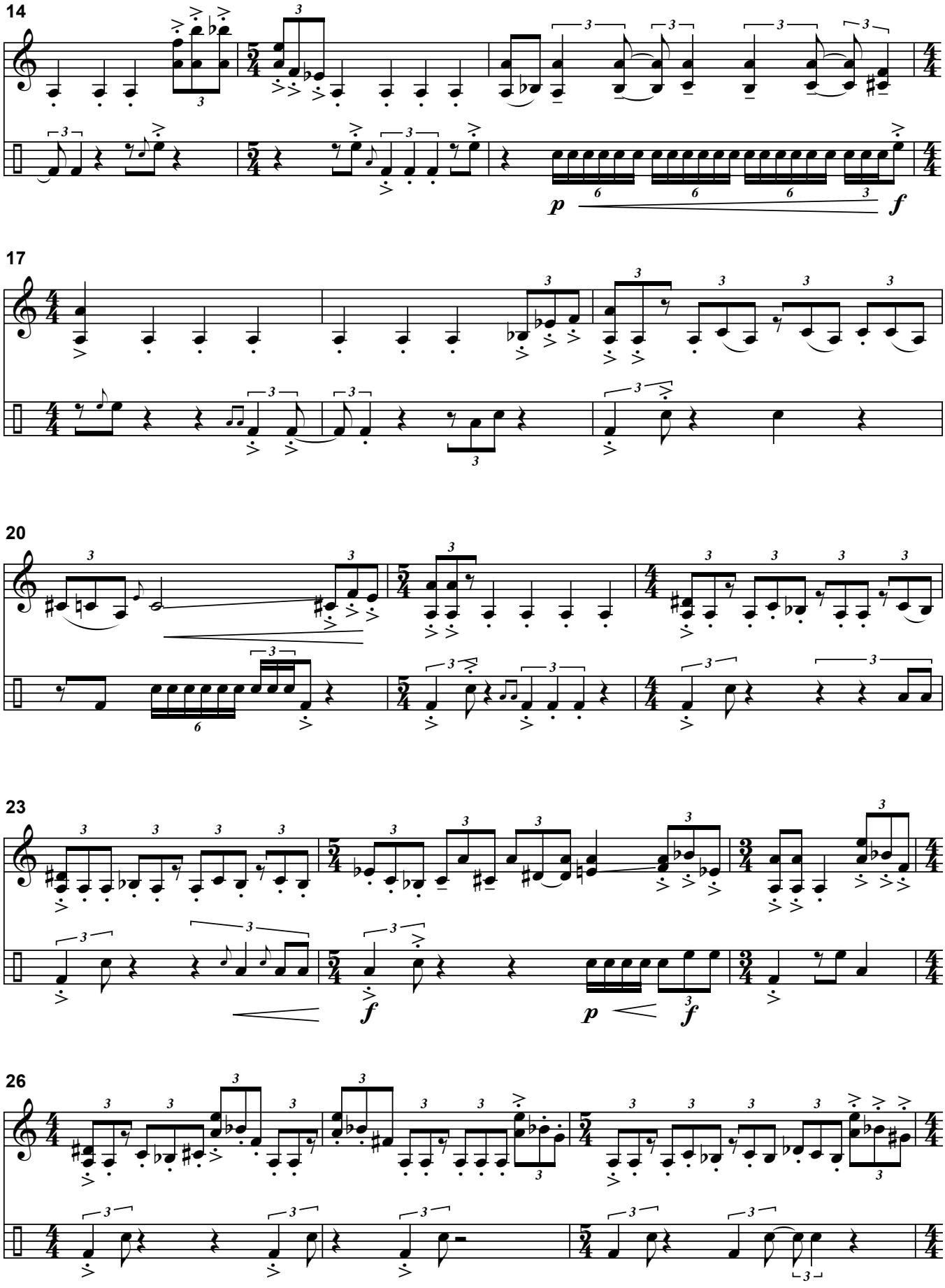
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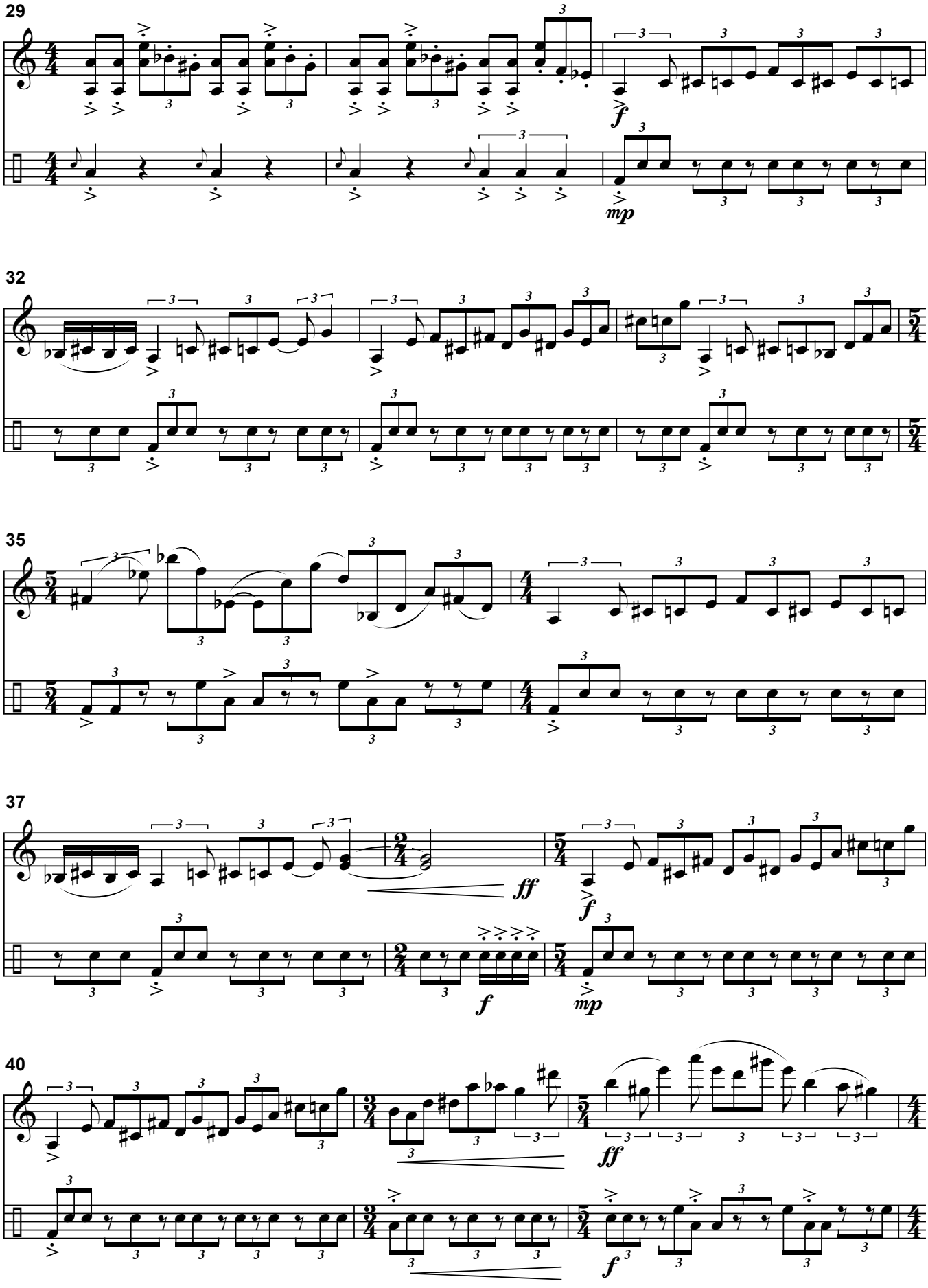
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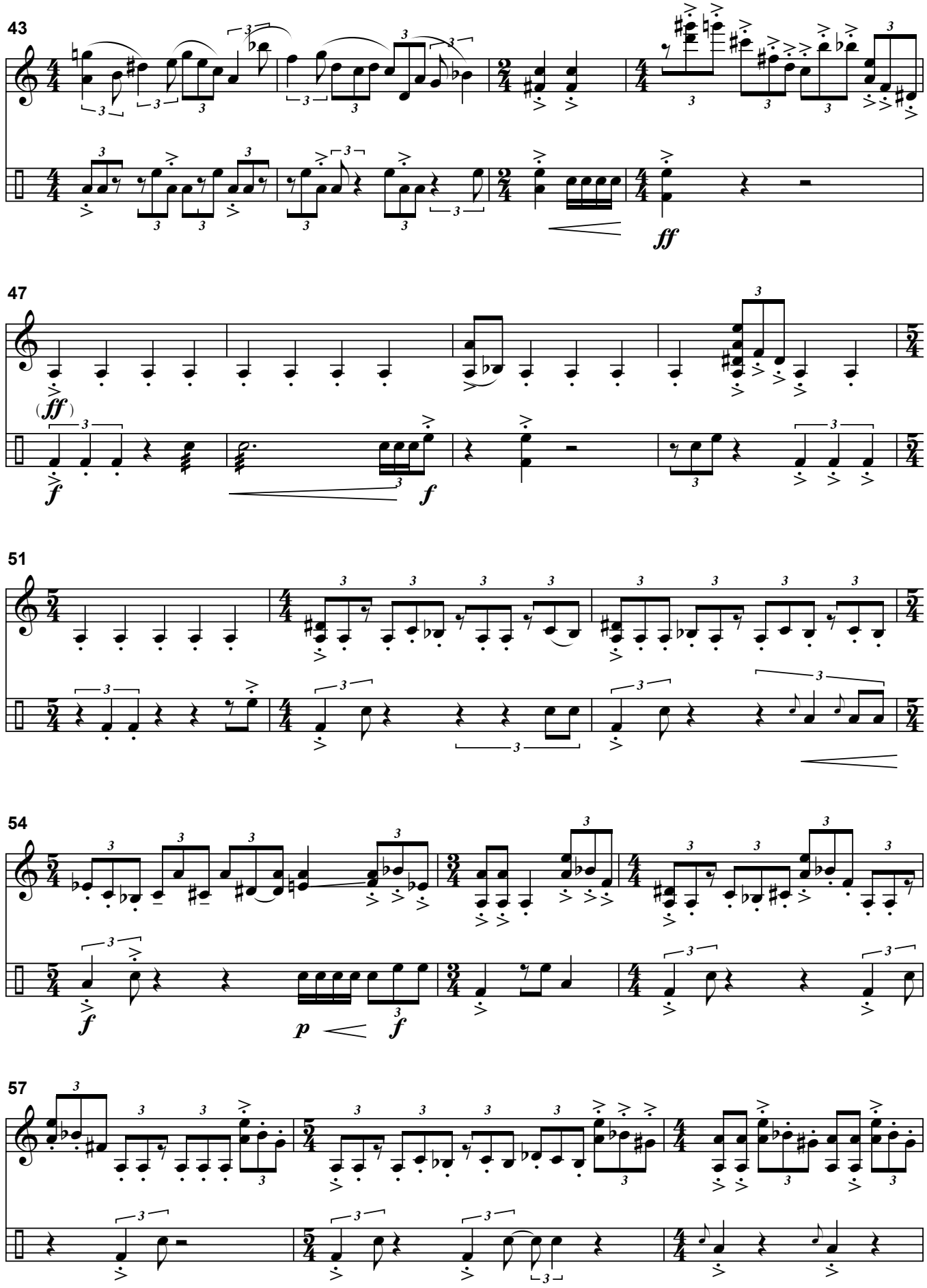
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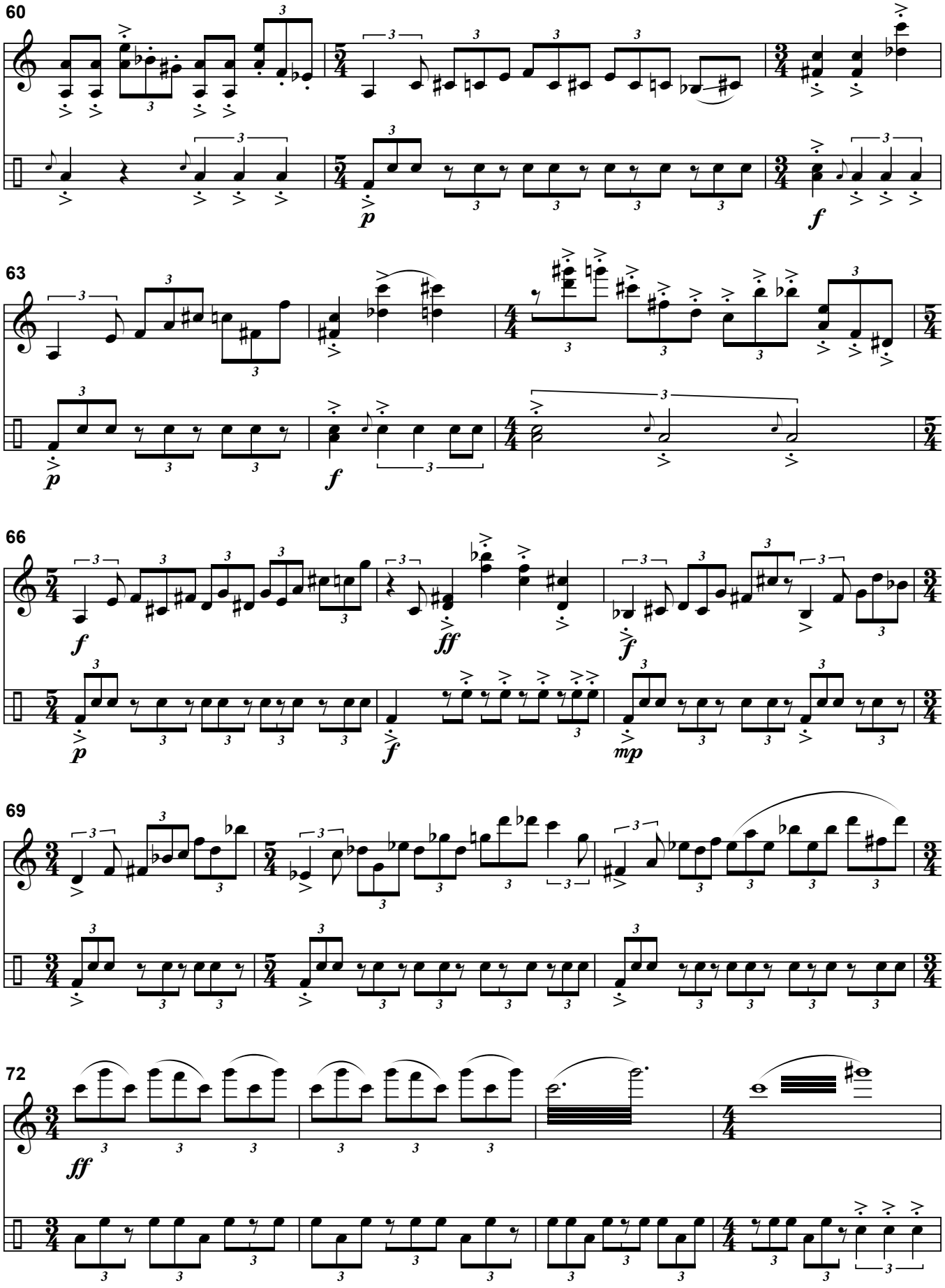
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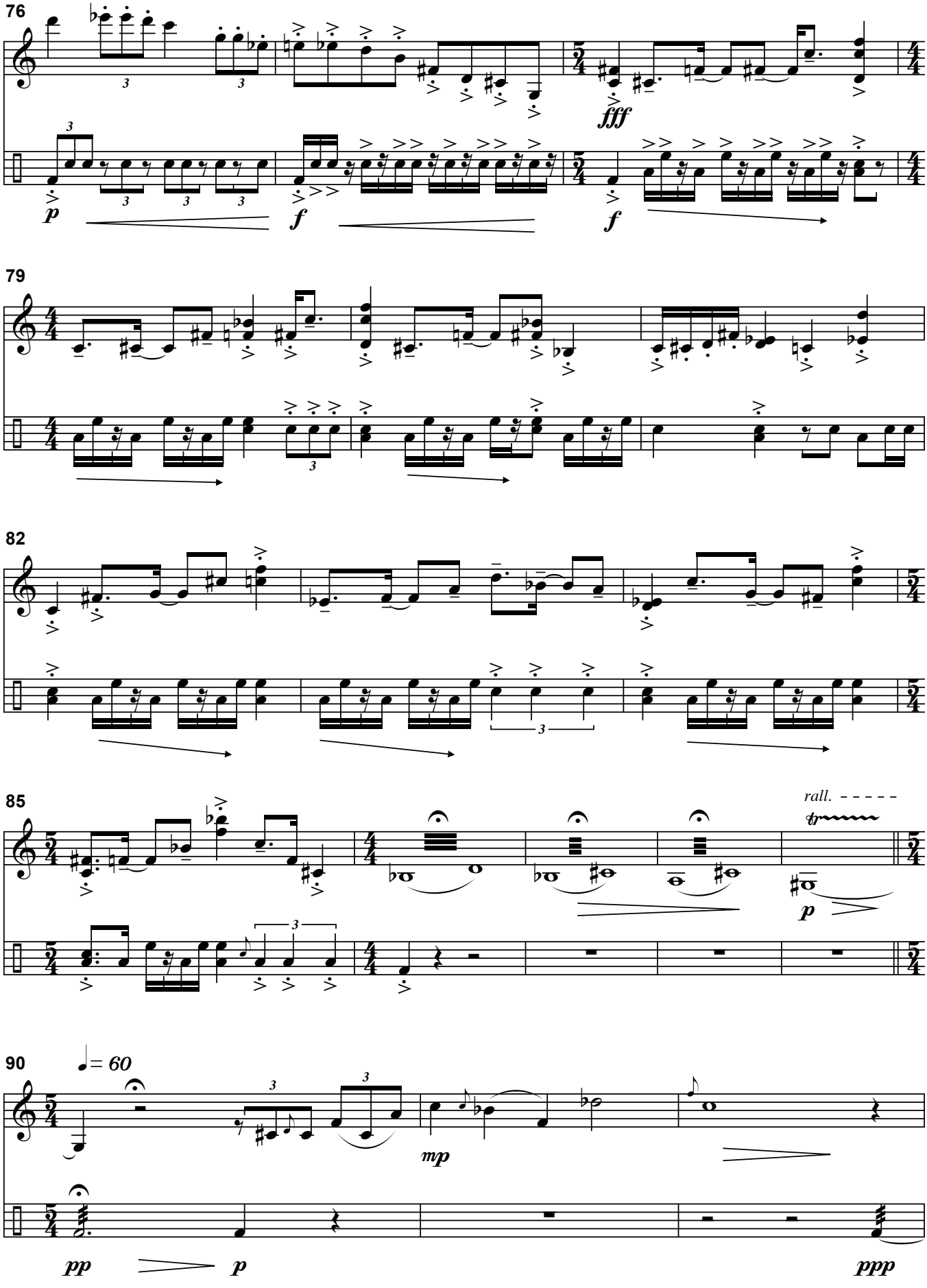
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