Frederic Rzewski
THIRTEEN STUDIES FOR INSTRUMENTS

written for the Ensemble Inter-Contemporain
January 1977

Performing instructions

The following set of short studies is meant for an ensemble of unspecified instrumentation. All parts are written in the treble clef, but any part may be read at any time in any octave. Some of the studies require a certain minimum number of instruments: e.g. Study No. 2 requires seven; others, such as No. 8, could be done with a smaller number. The instrumentation is not necessarily the same for all thirteen studies. Generally speaking, the ensemble should include a variety of instrumental families with a variety of ranges, grouped in such a way as to enhance the soloistic character of each part. Example: for a study requiring six instruments, such as No. 1, the instrumentation might be: string bass, trombone, vibraphone, flute, electric piano, alto saxophone; but it might also be: glockenspiel, violin, electric organ, tuba, bass clarinet, and harp. In other words, the instrumentation for each piece should be selected with a view to maintaining the distinct color of each instrument as much as possible.

The duration of each study may range from 2 to 4 minutes on the average. At certain points some short free improvisations may be introduced: i.e. after Nos. 3, 6, 9, and 11, and to a certain extent within Nos. 12 and 13. However, this is not obligatory, nor, for a given performance, is it necessary to perform all of the written studies. For example, for a performance of ca. 15-20 minutes' duration one could perform only Nos. 1, 4, 7, 10, 12, and 13, thus concentrating only on the more "strictly" notated material. If all of the written studies are performed, with improvisations injected as well into the above-named points, a complete performance could well reach a duration of one hour.

In Study No. 2 ("Dialogue with Commentary"), the top line is to be read by two instruments, one reading the notes with stems extending upward and the other the notes with stems extending downward. This is rather difficult, and if it proves to be too difficult or one is feeling lazy the whole line could be read by a single instrument, e.g. piano or electric guitar.

The general tendency of the piece is to begin with more or less strictly defined material and to move progressively toward situations of greater freedom. If no improvisations are done in the earlier stages, one should develop the "free" central section of No. 12 or that of No. 13 at some length, extending the duration of one or the other study to 5 minutes or more, so that one has a chance to hear the various transpositions of the basic melodic shapes in many different accidental combinations.

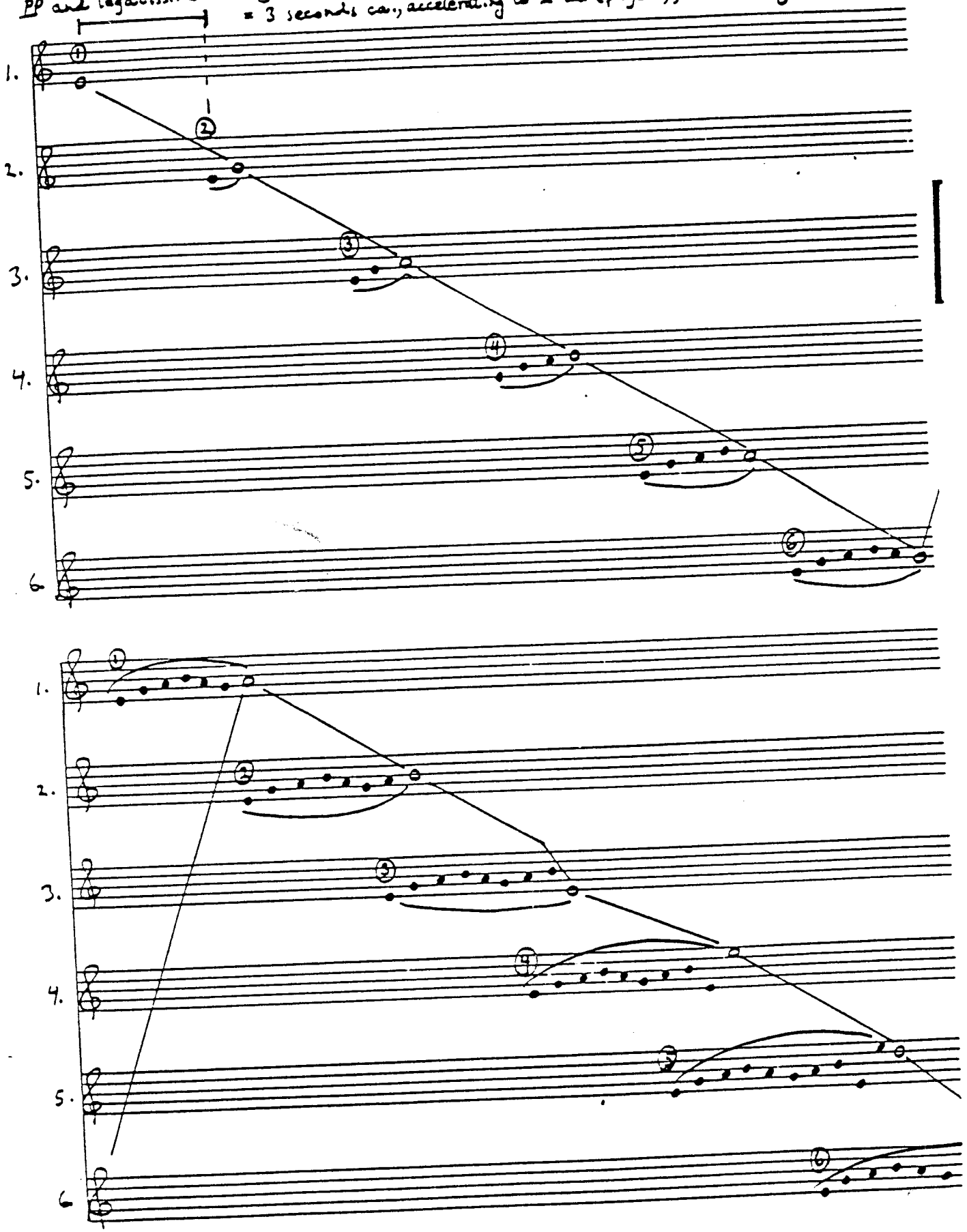
Instrumental Study No. 1

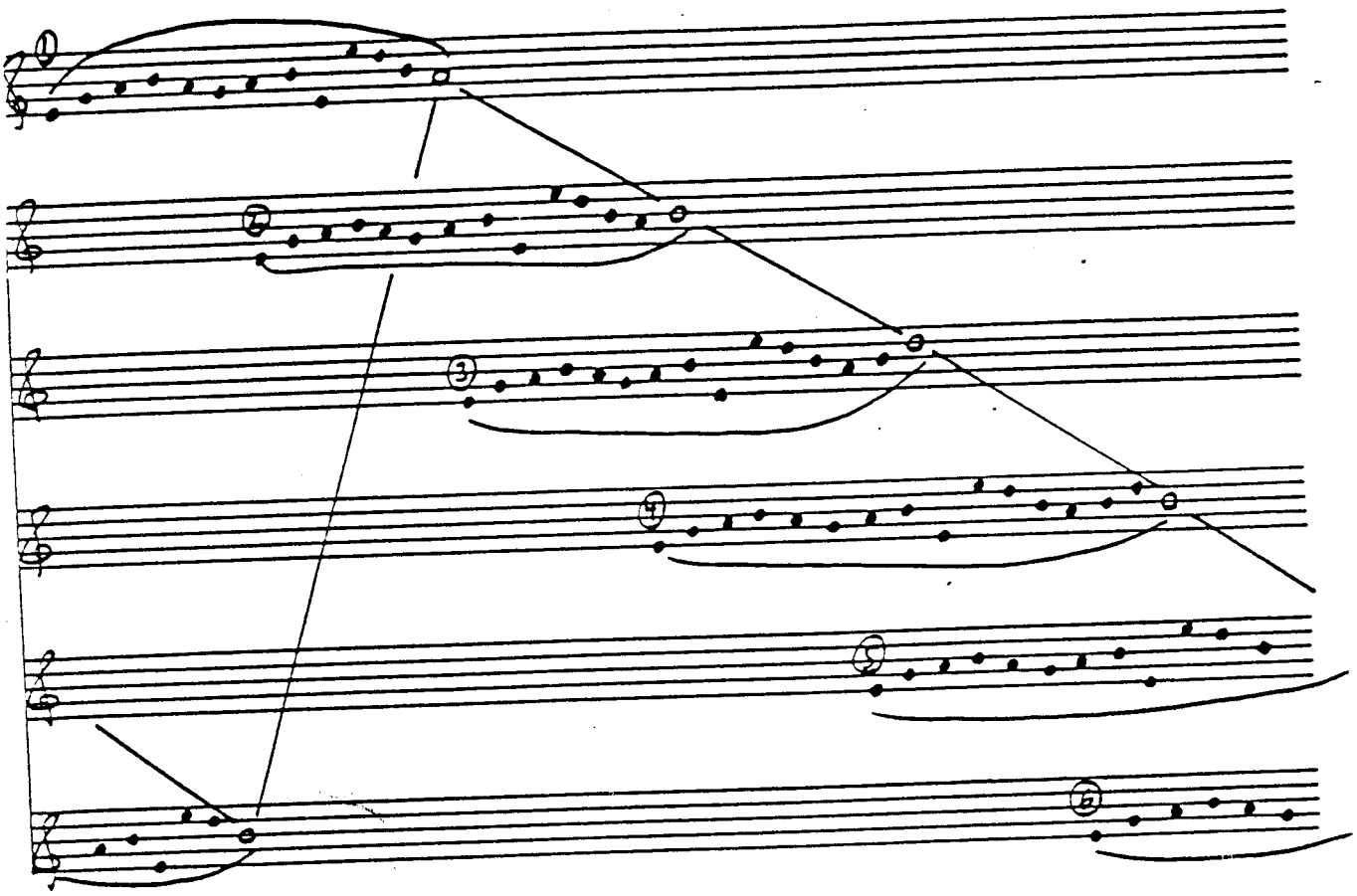
Frederic Rzewski

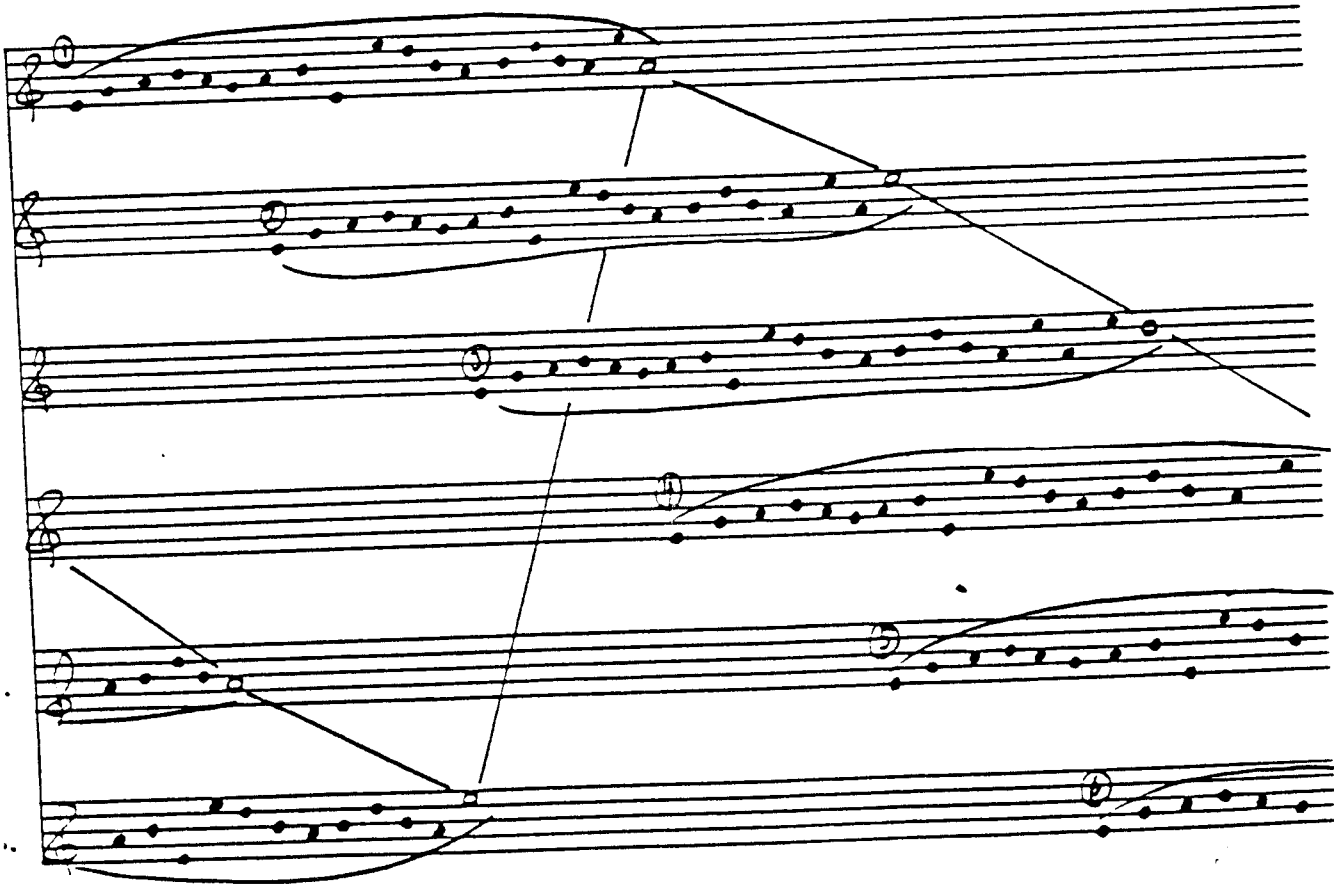
(1.)

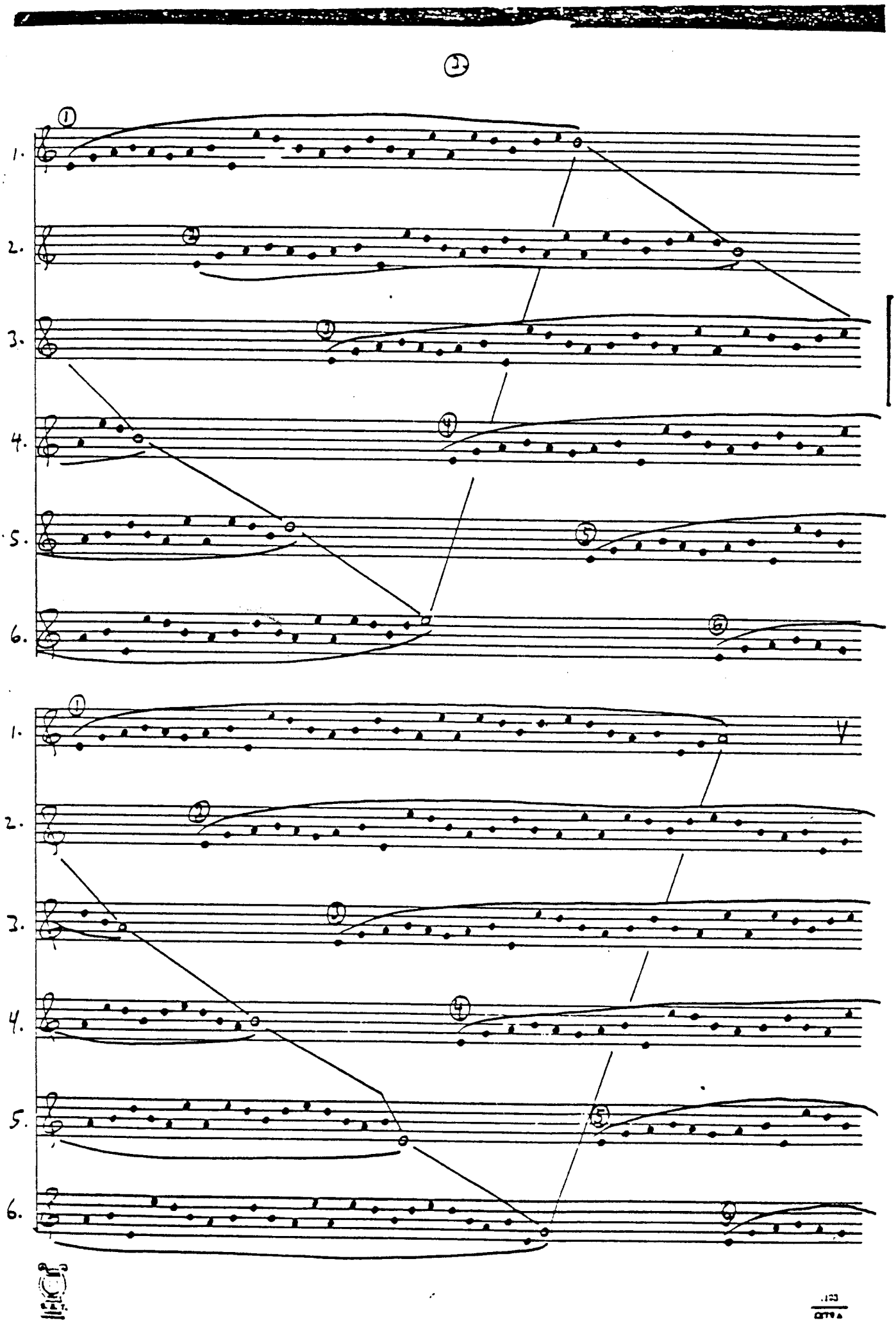
pp and legatissimo throughout, rhythmically free and flexible, expressive

= 3 seconds ca., accelerating to 2" ca. (page 4), then slowing to 3" again.





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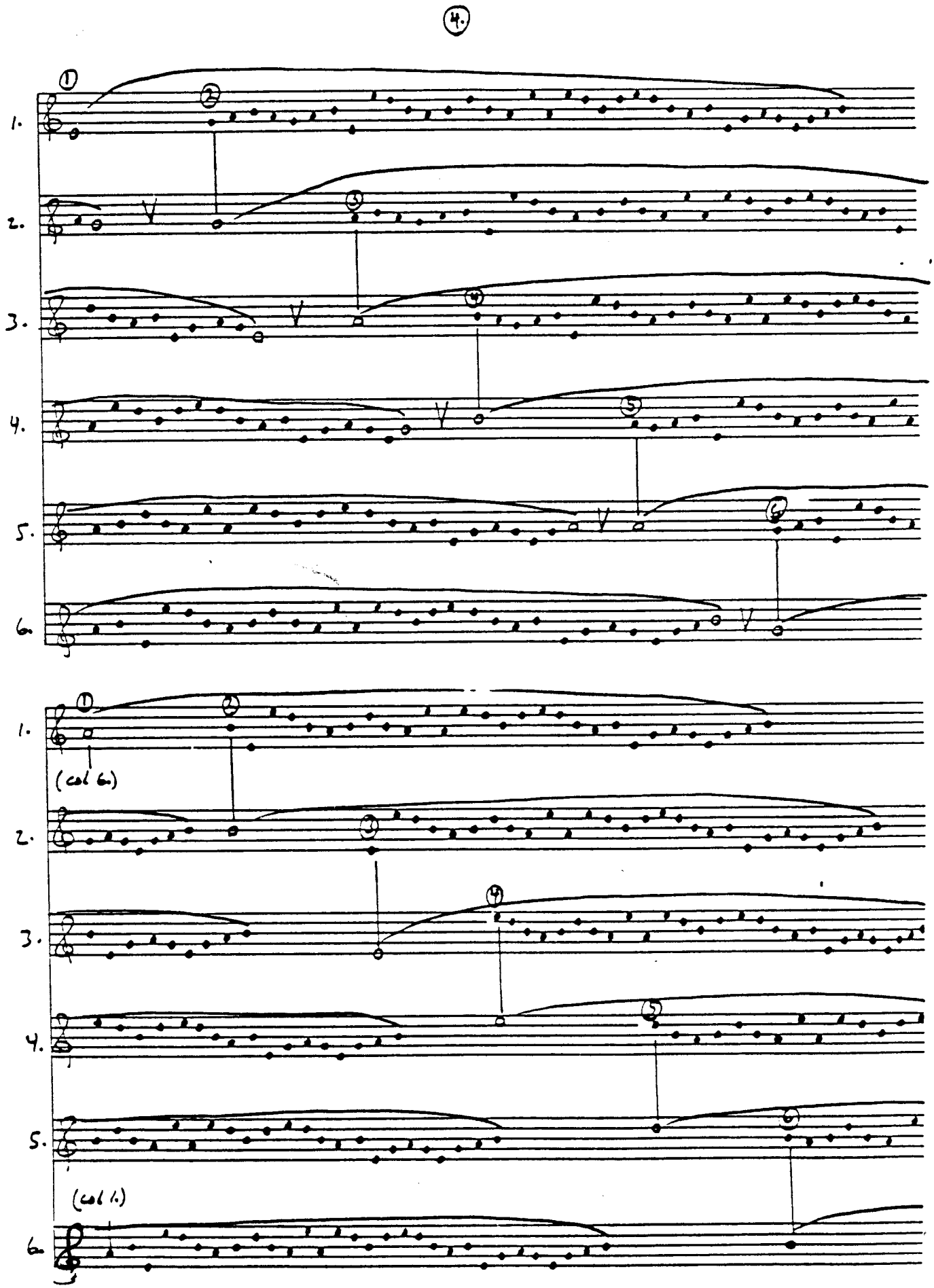
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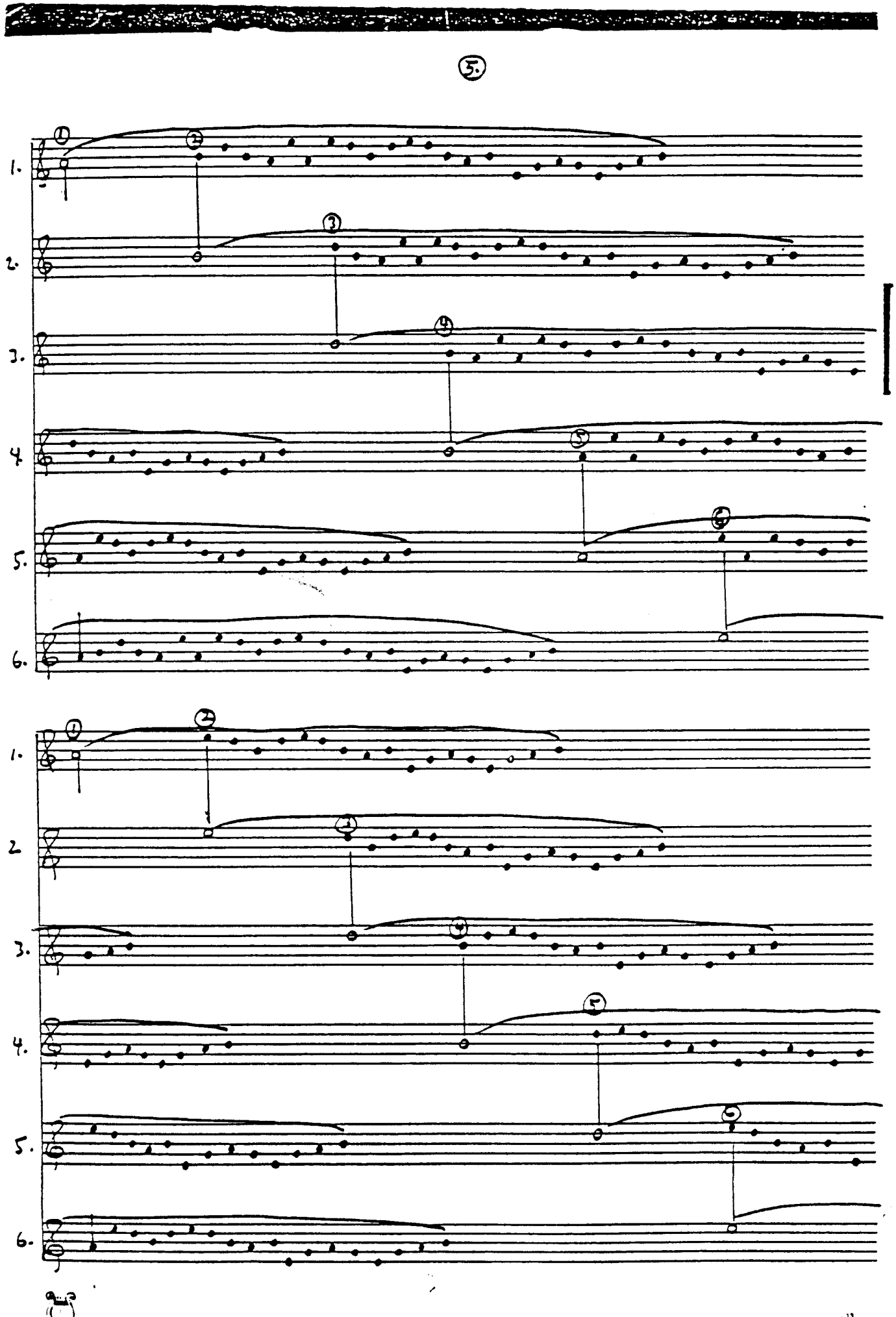

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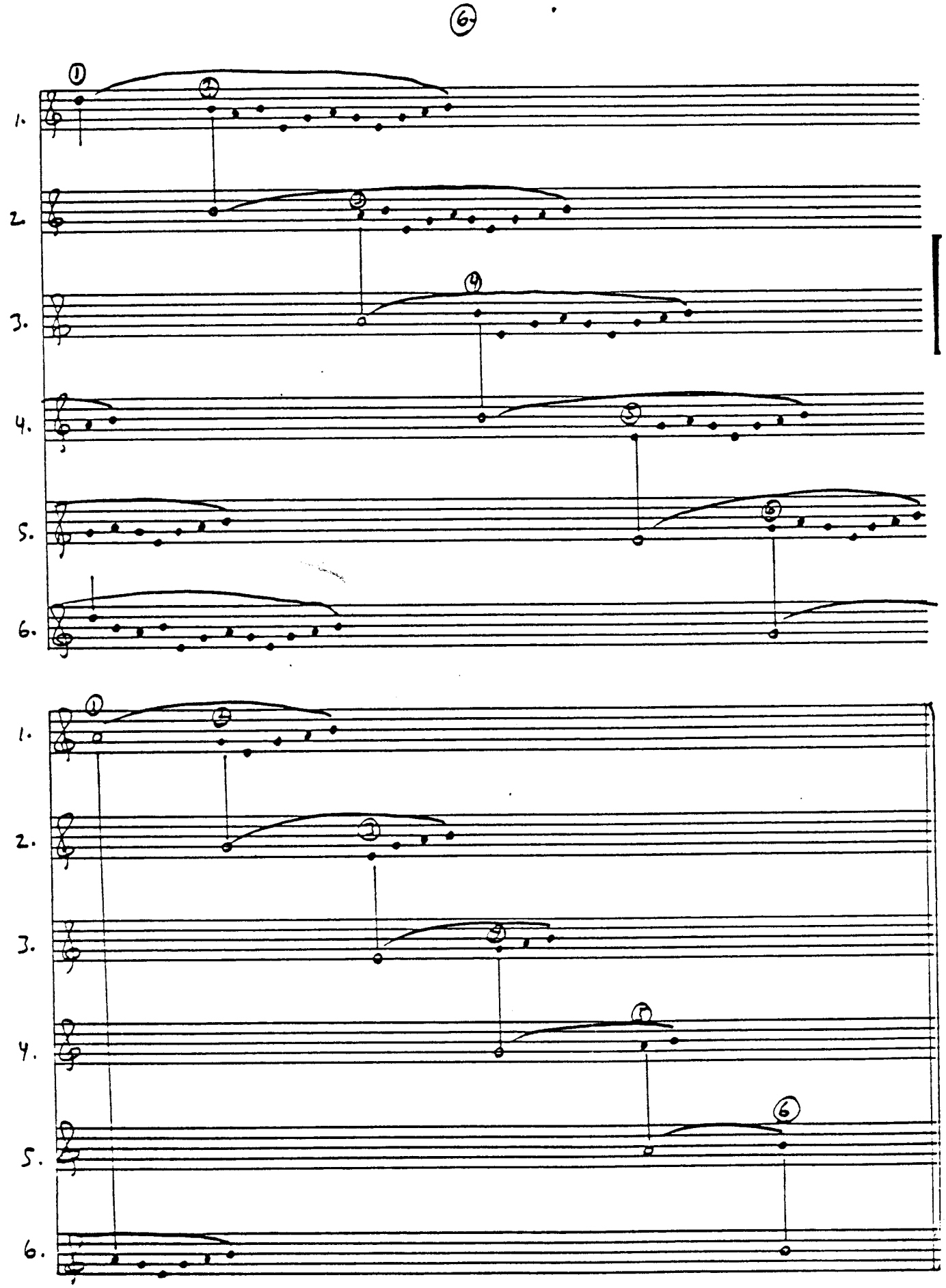
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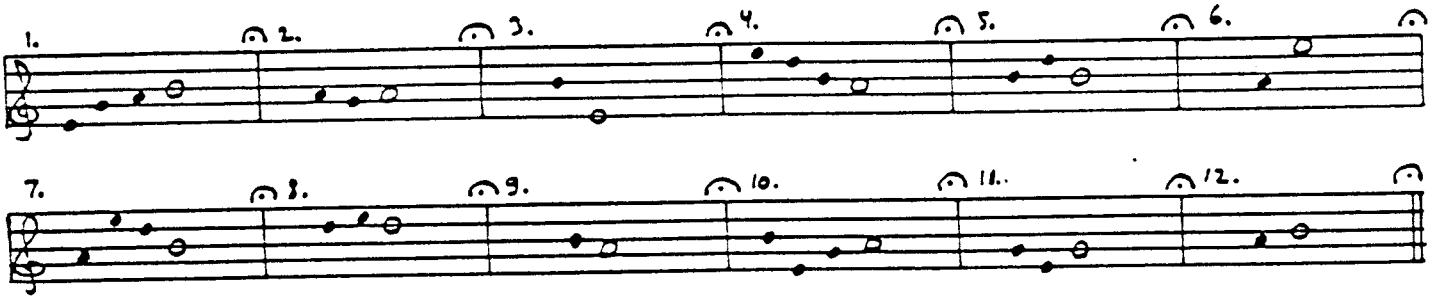
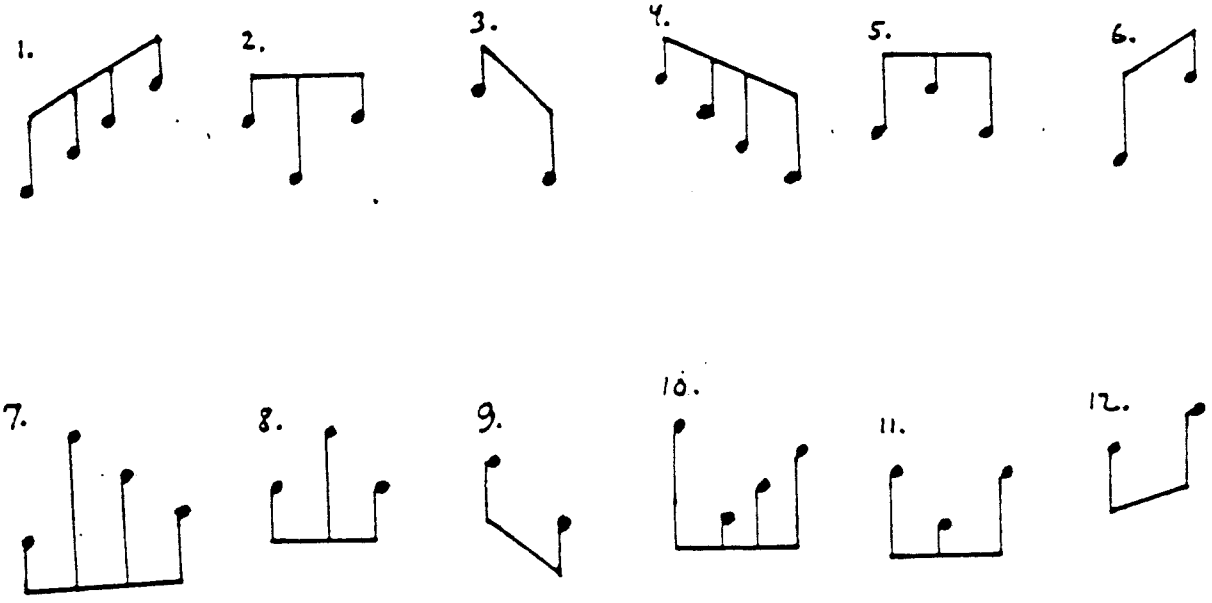
Study No. 2

Each instrument plays the following phrases with long spaces between each phrase. The instruments play one at a time, but in no particular order. Play in any octave. Quite slow. The effect should be something like calls being answered, or echoed, from a great distance. Transpose ad lib to any degree.

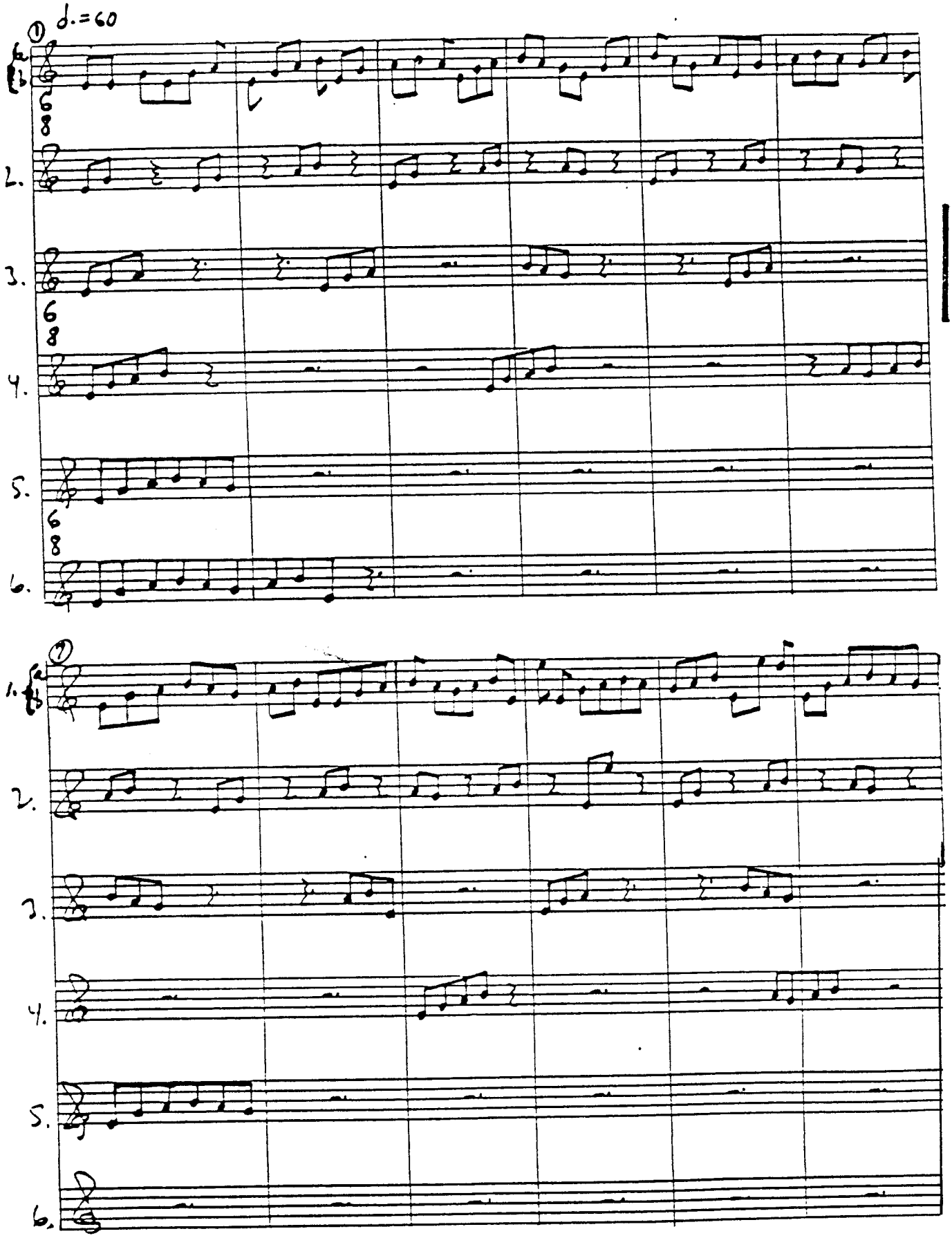


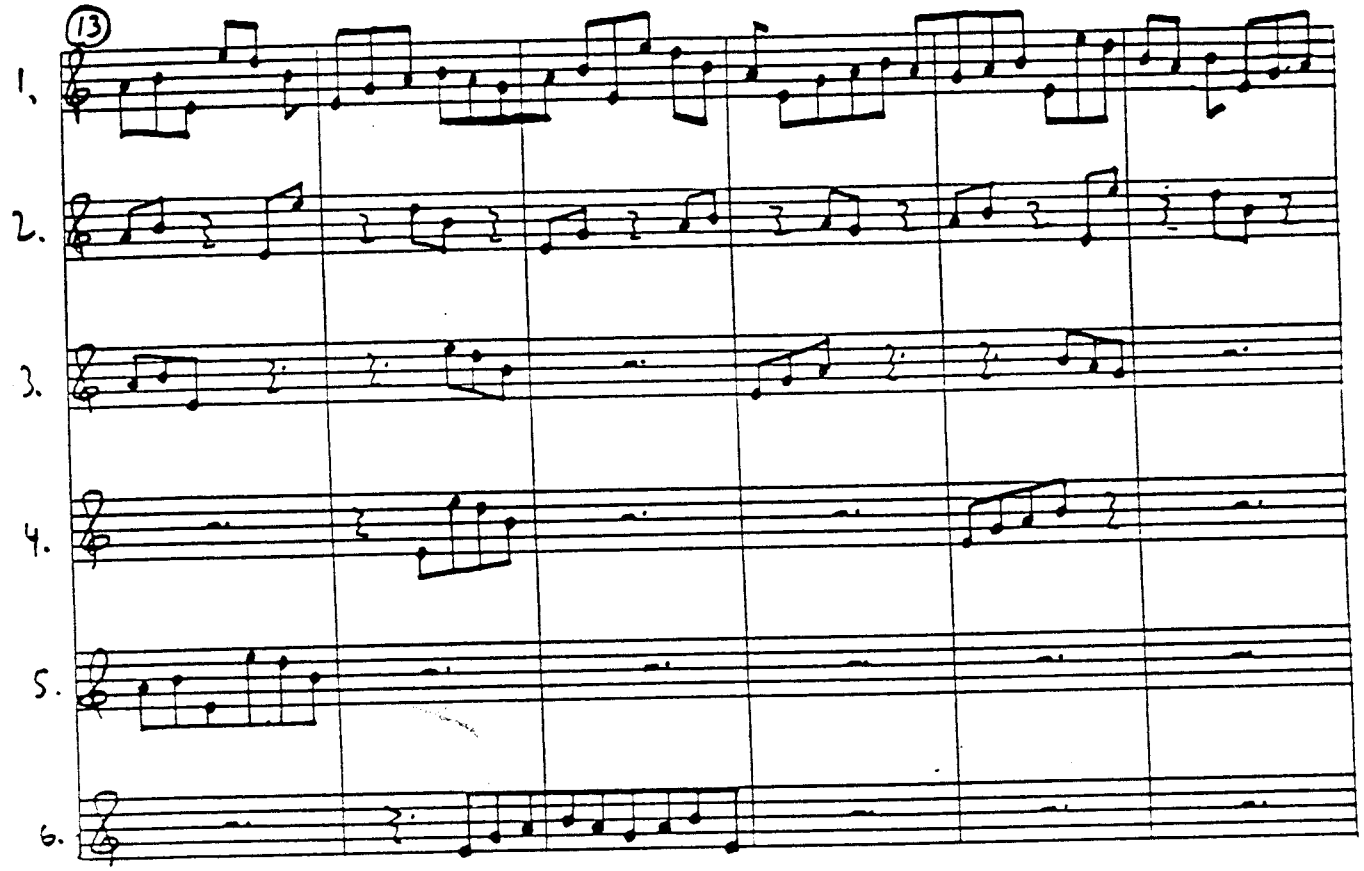
Study No. 3

Each instrument plays the following figures, outlining the melodic shapes using any pitches and intervals. Slow, with no clear unit of time. Interlacing, like a Klangfarbenmelodie.



Instrumental Study No. 4: Dialogue with Commentary

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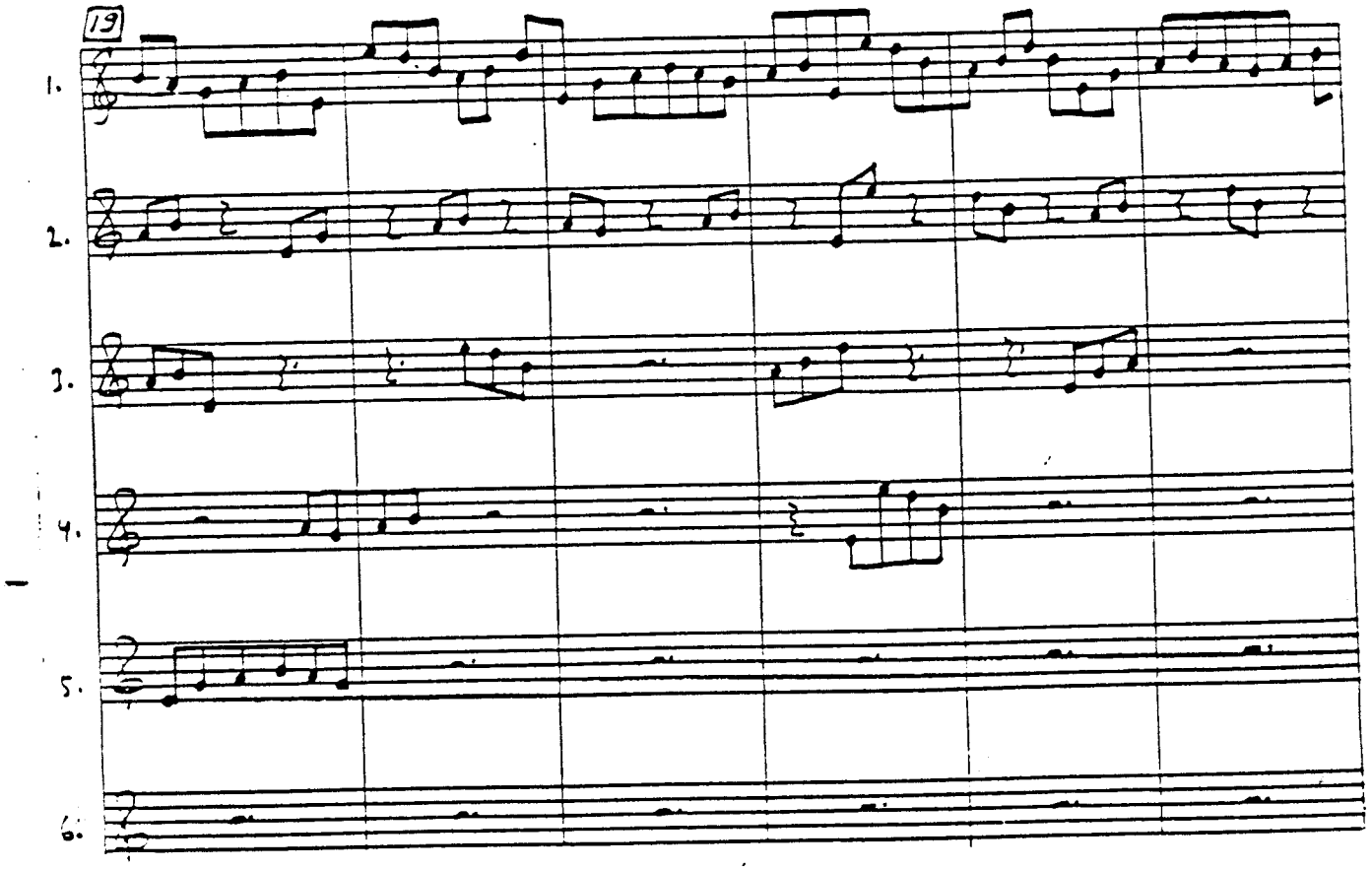
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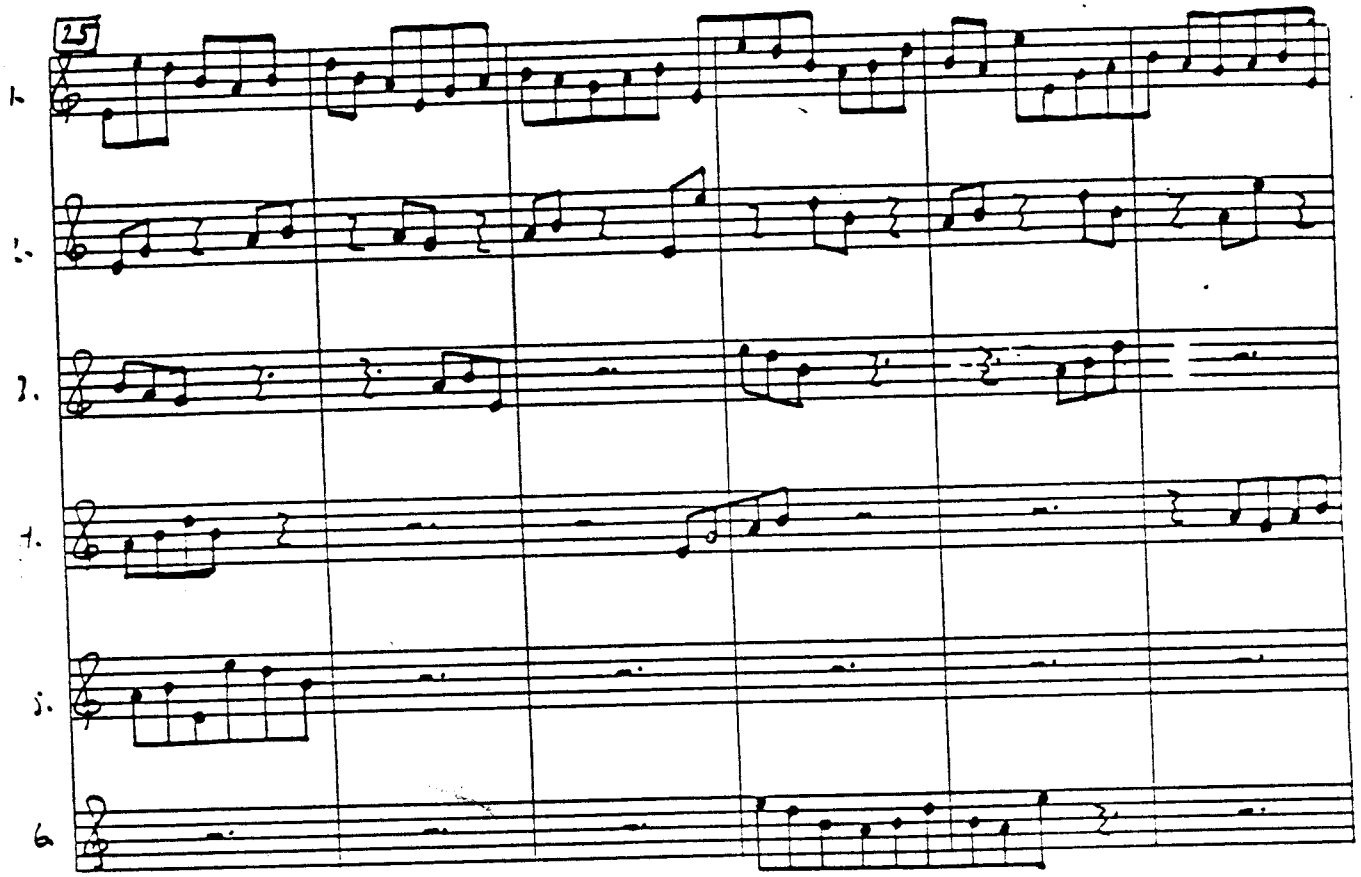
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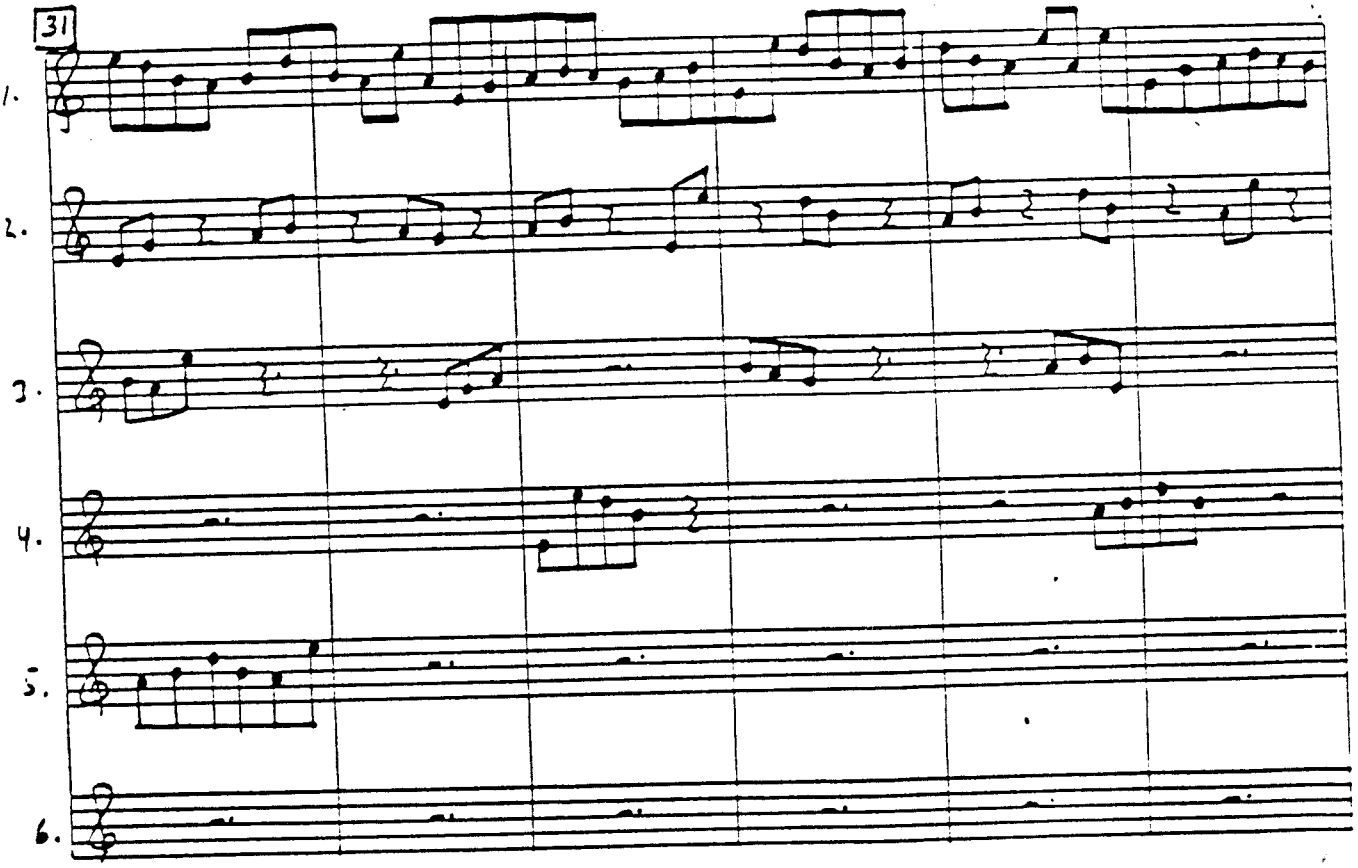
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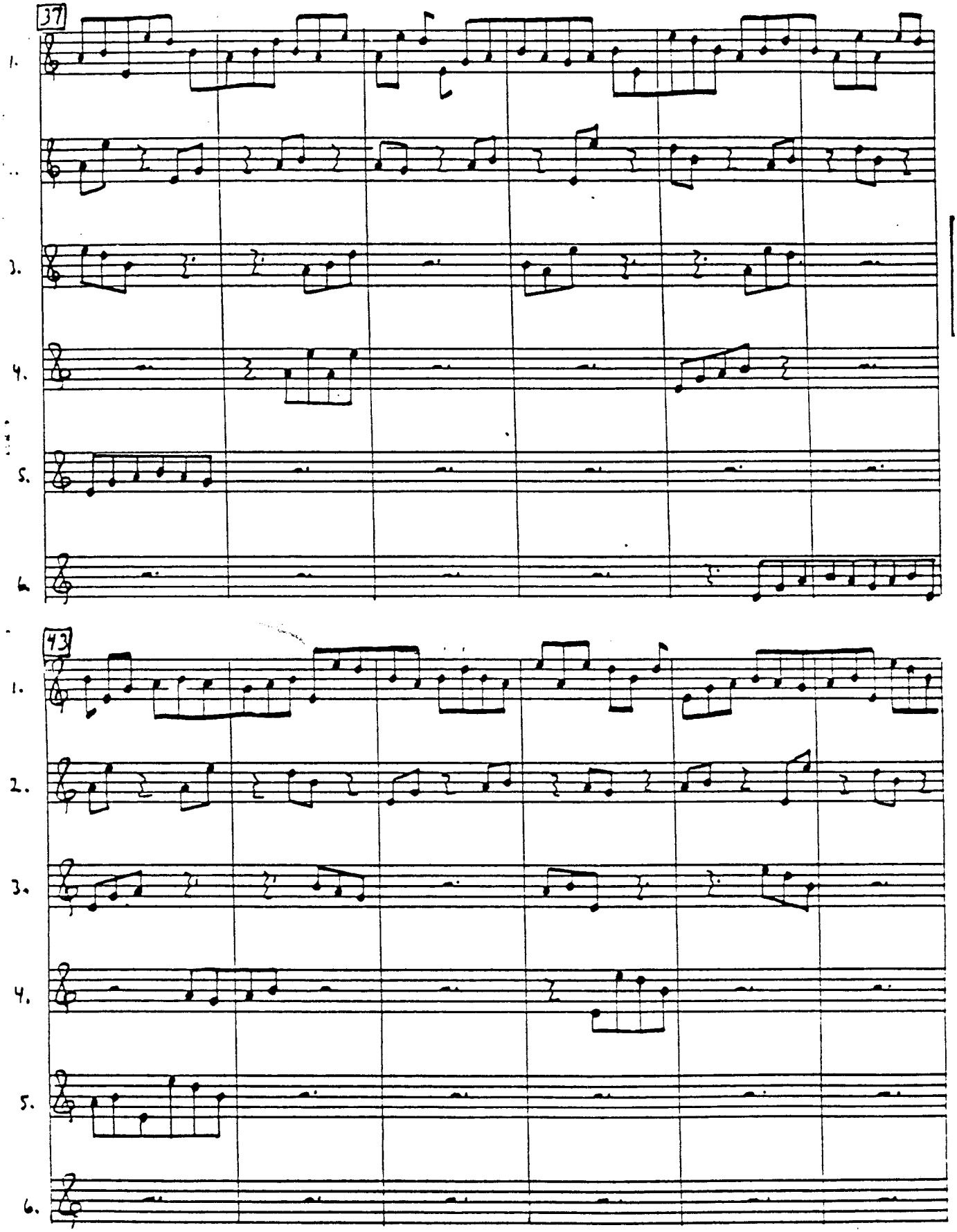
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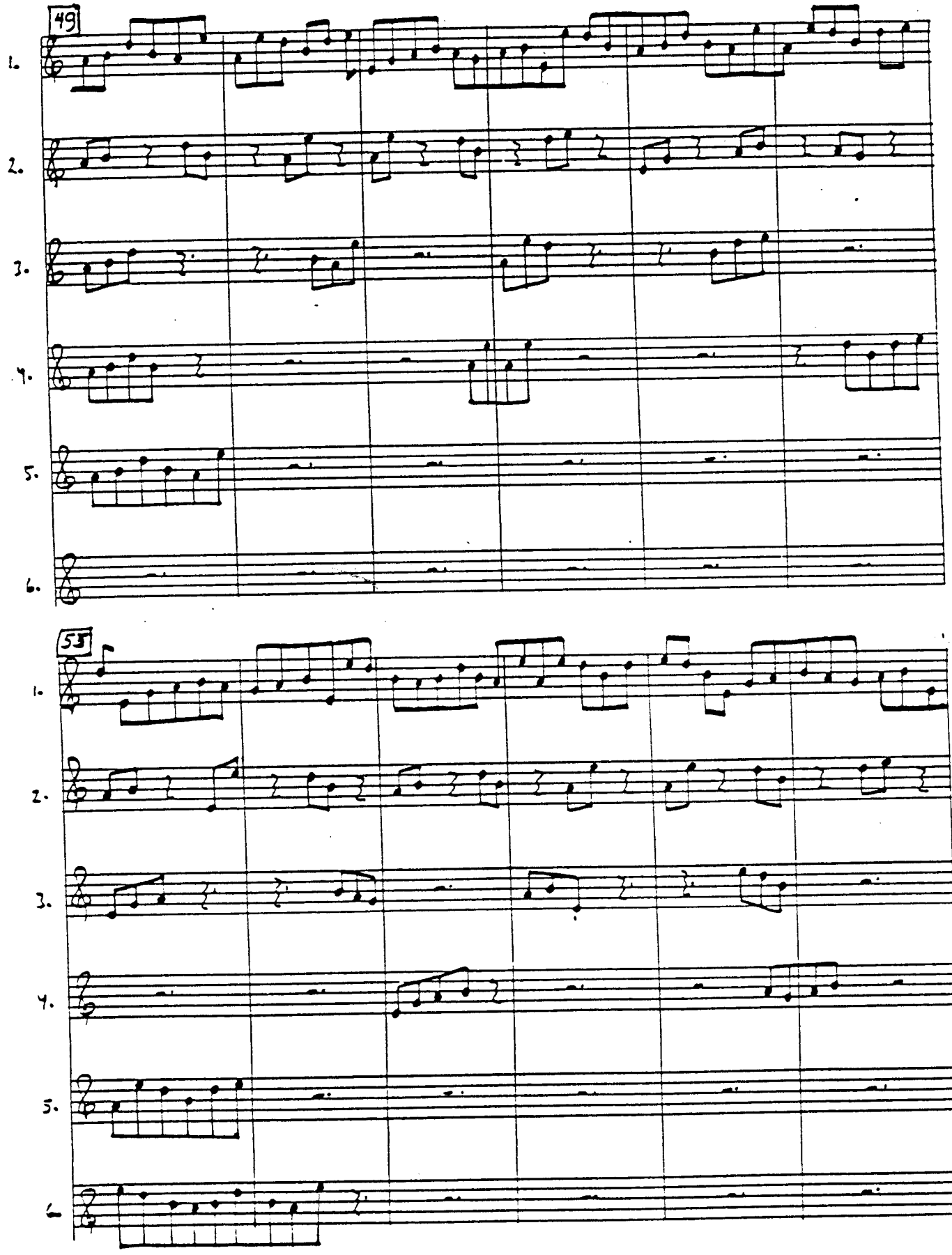
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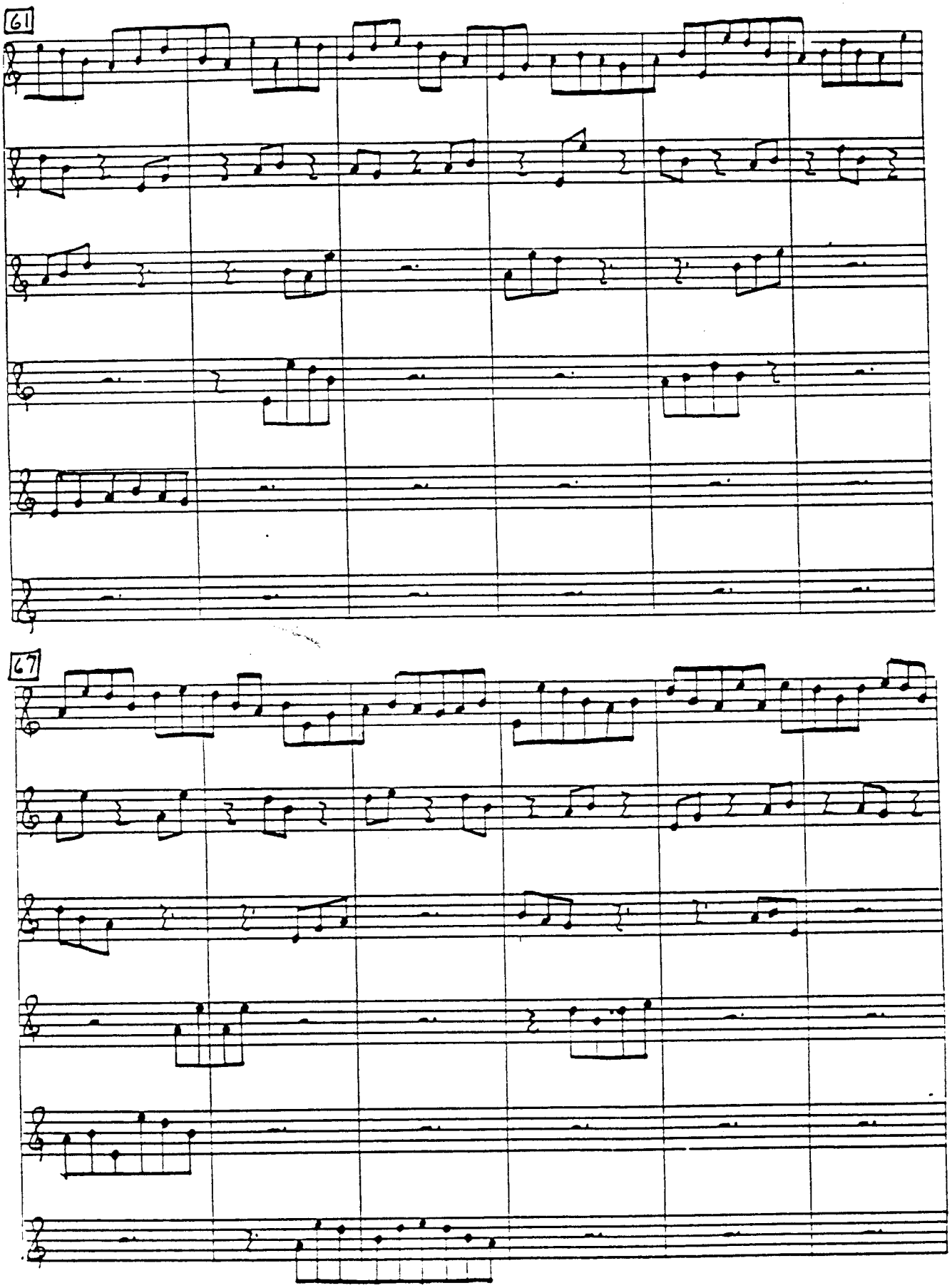
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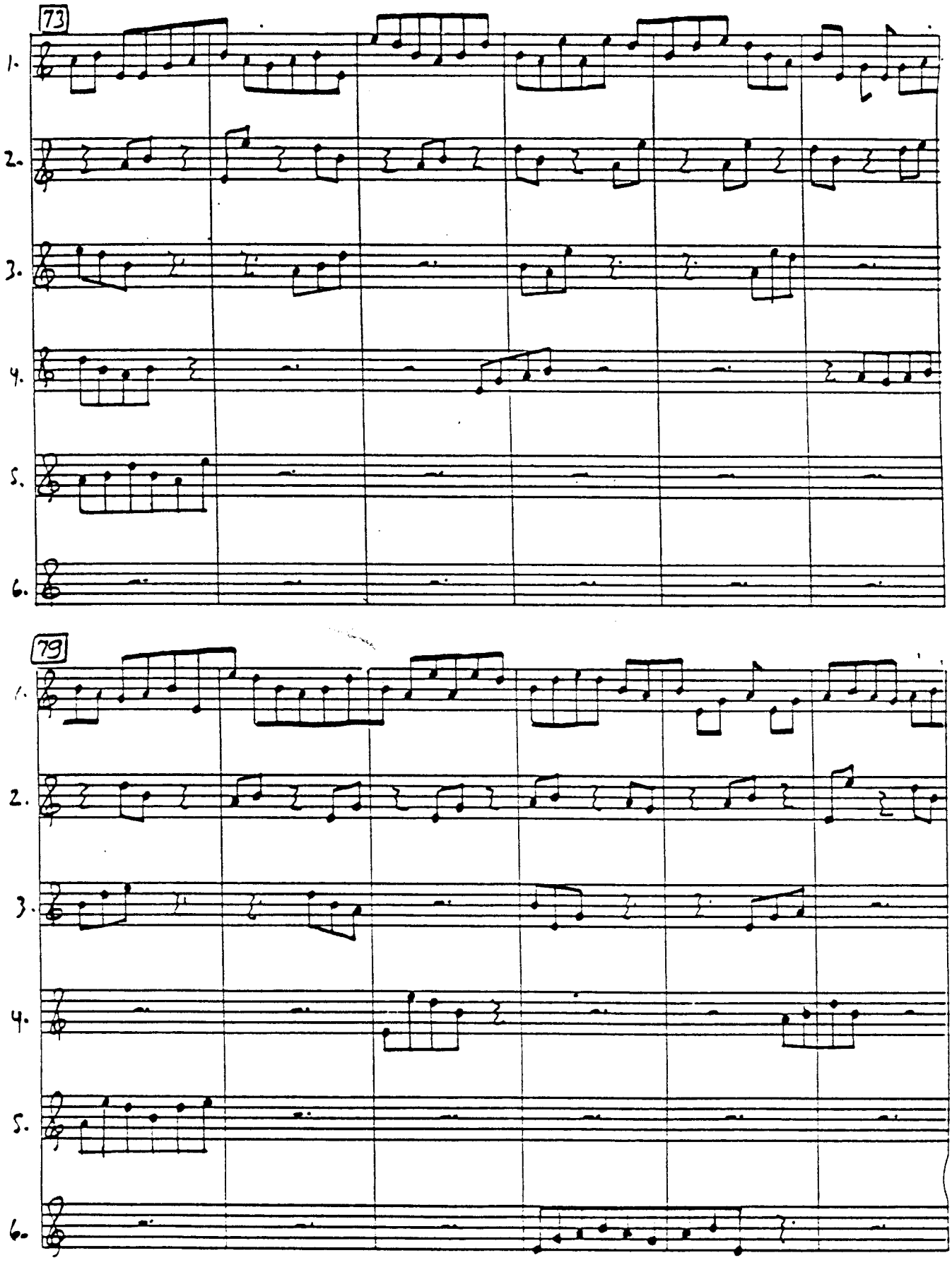
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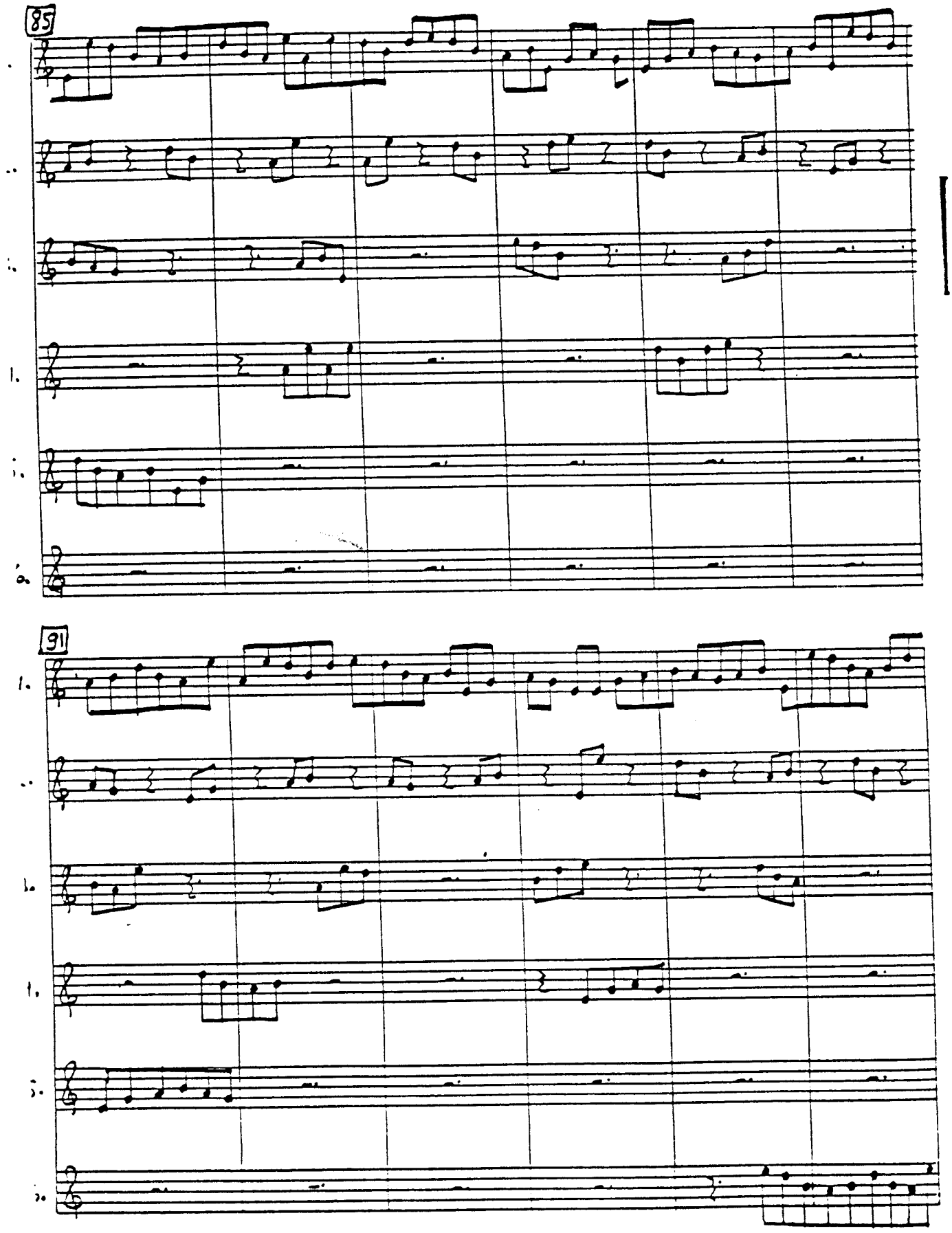
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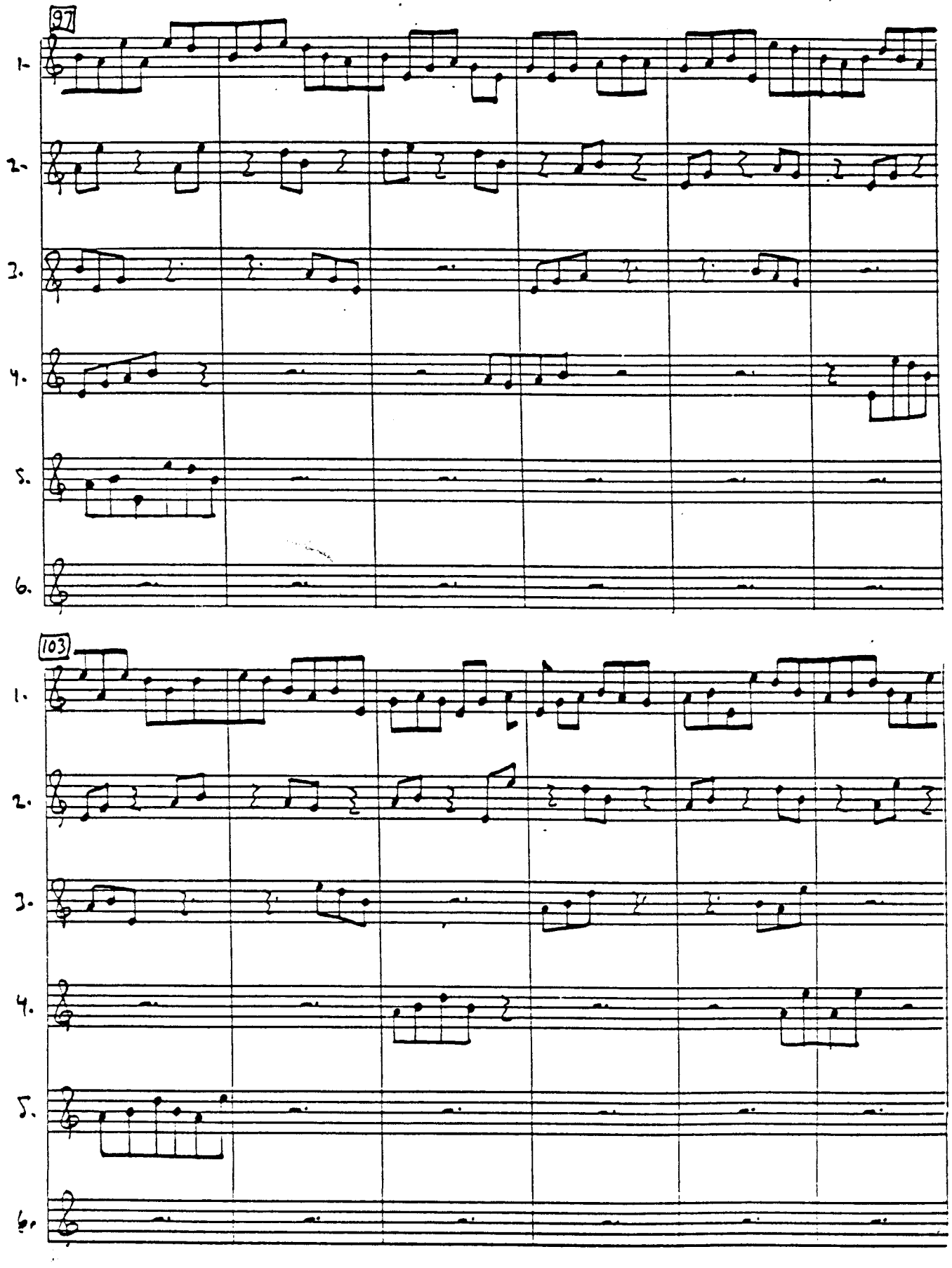
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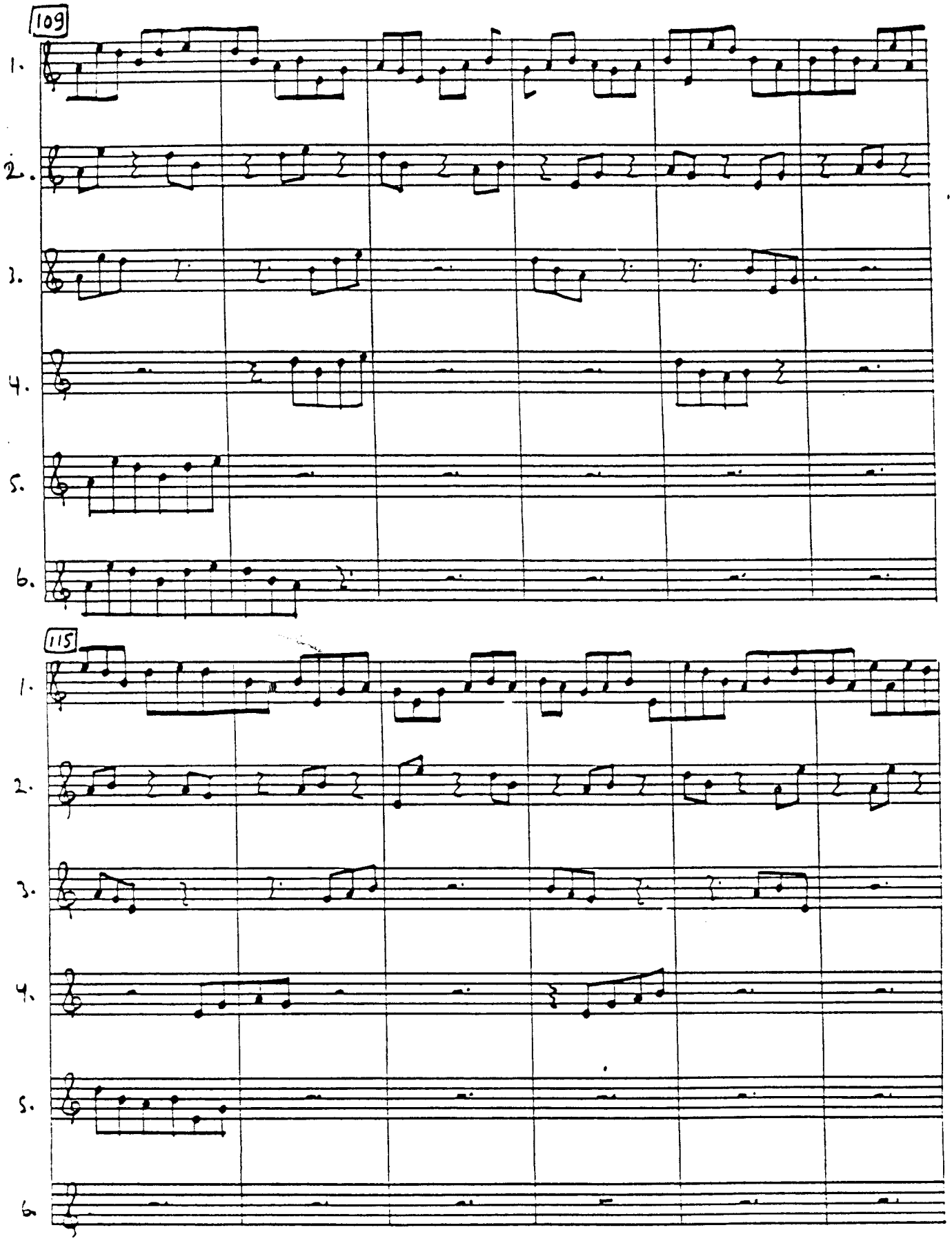
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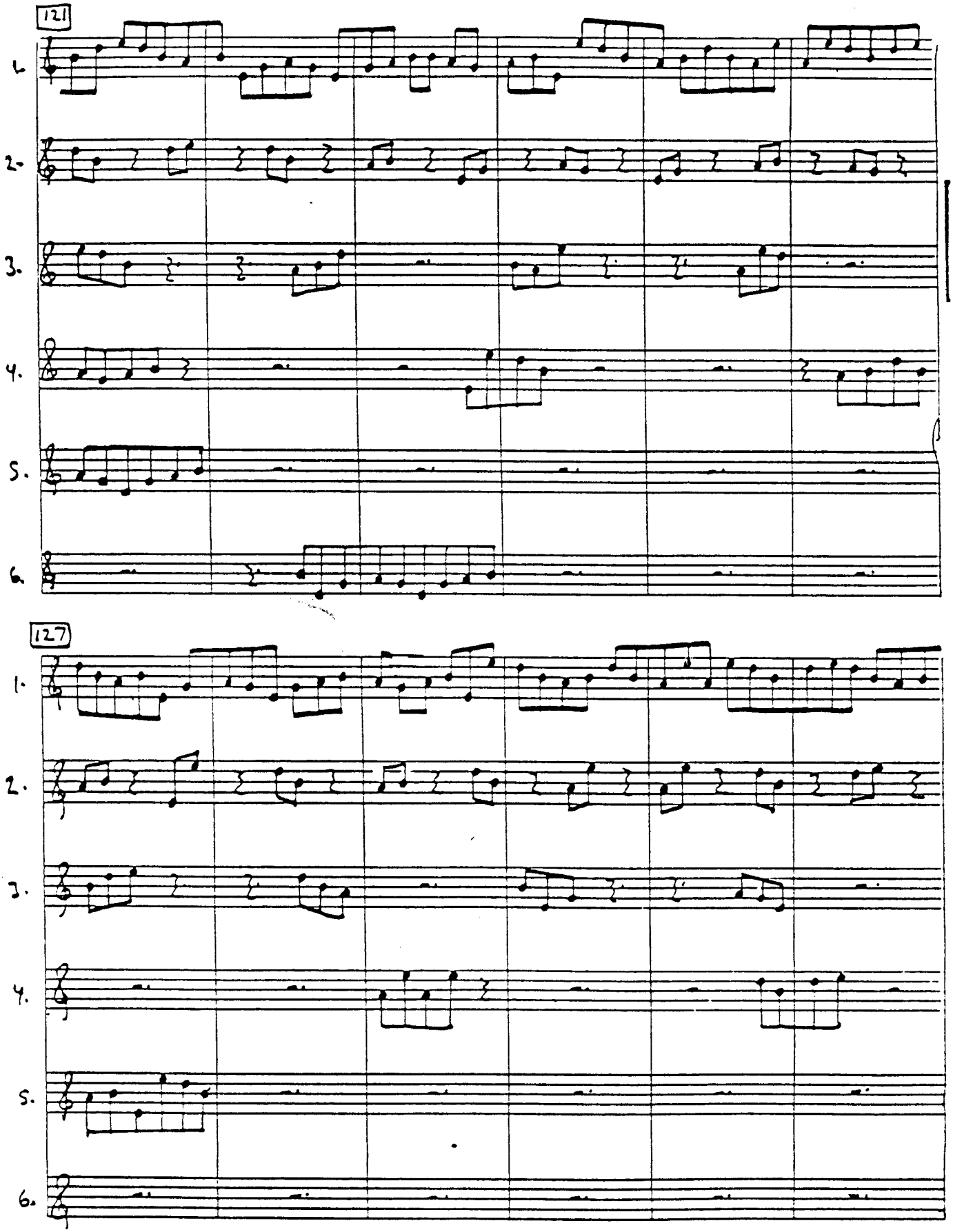
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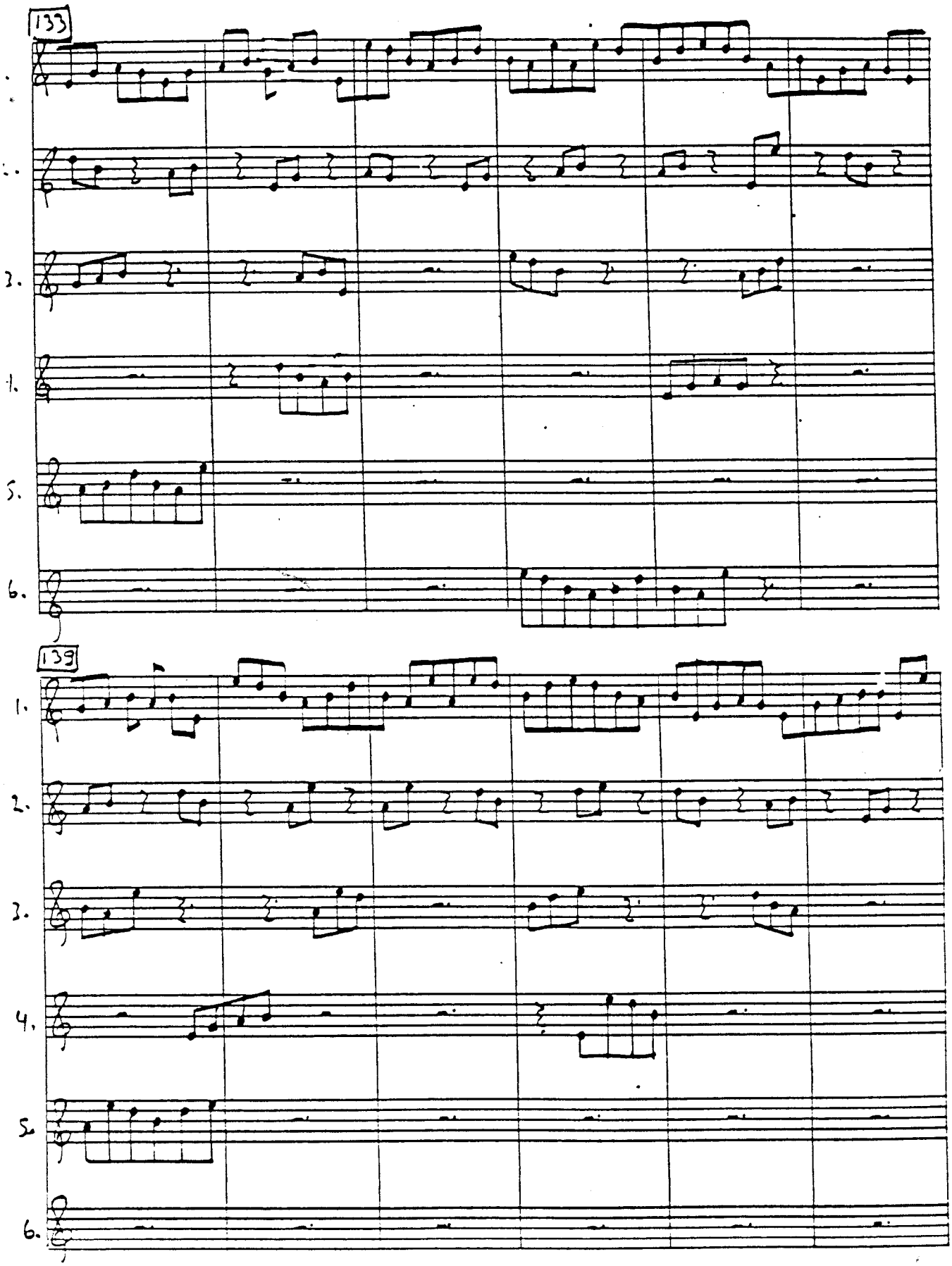
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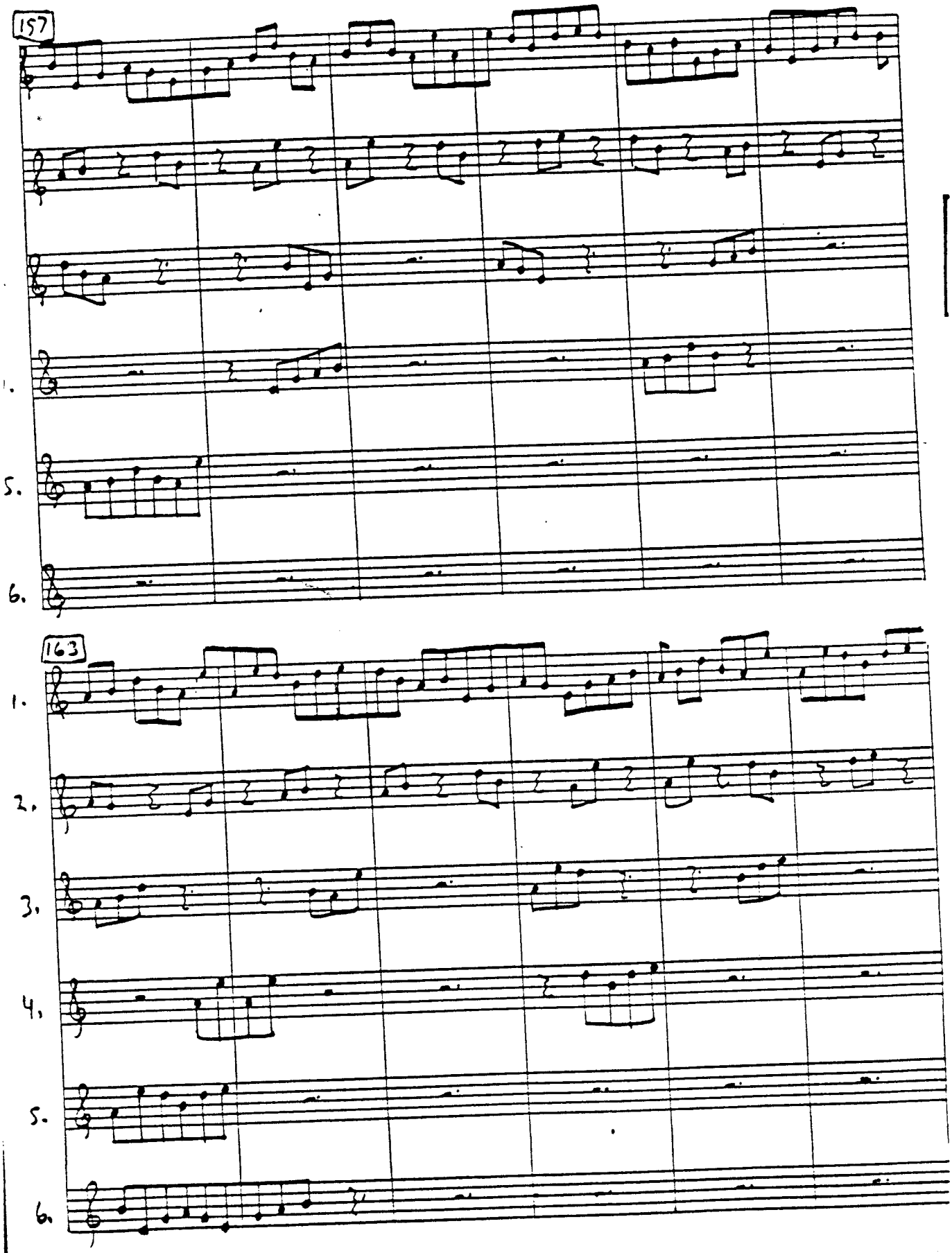
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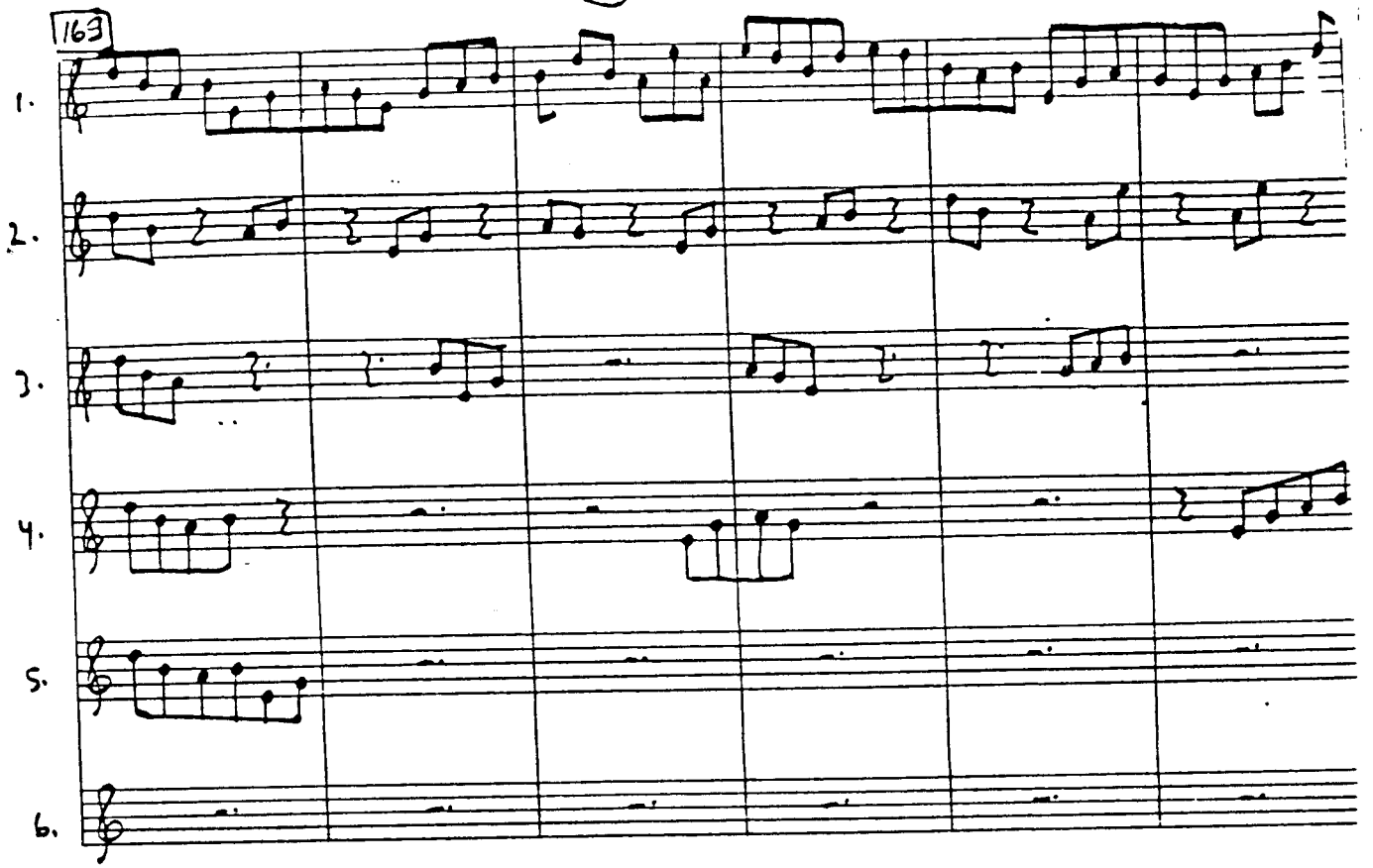
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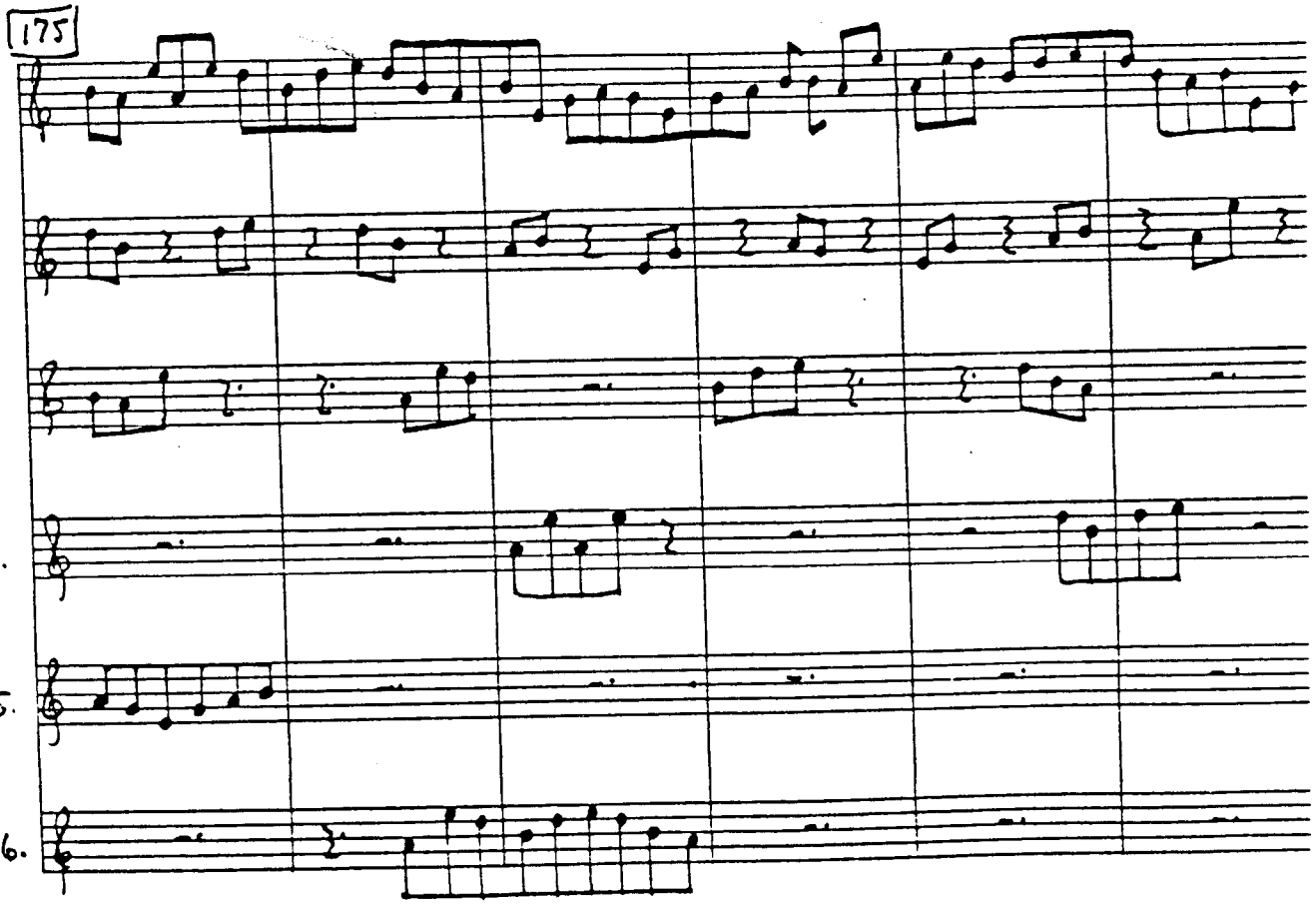
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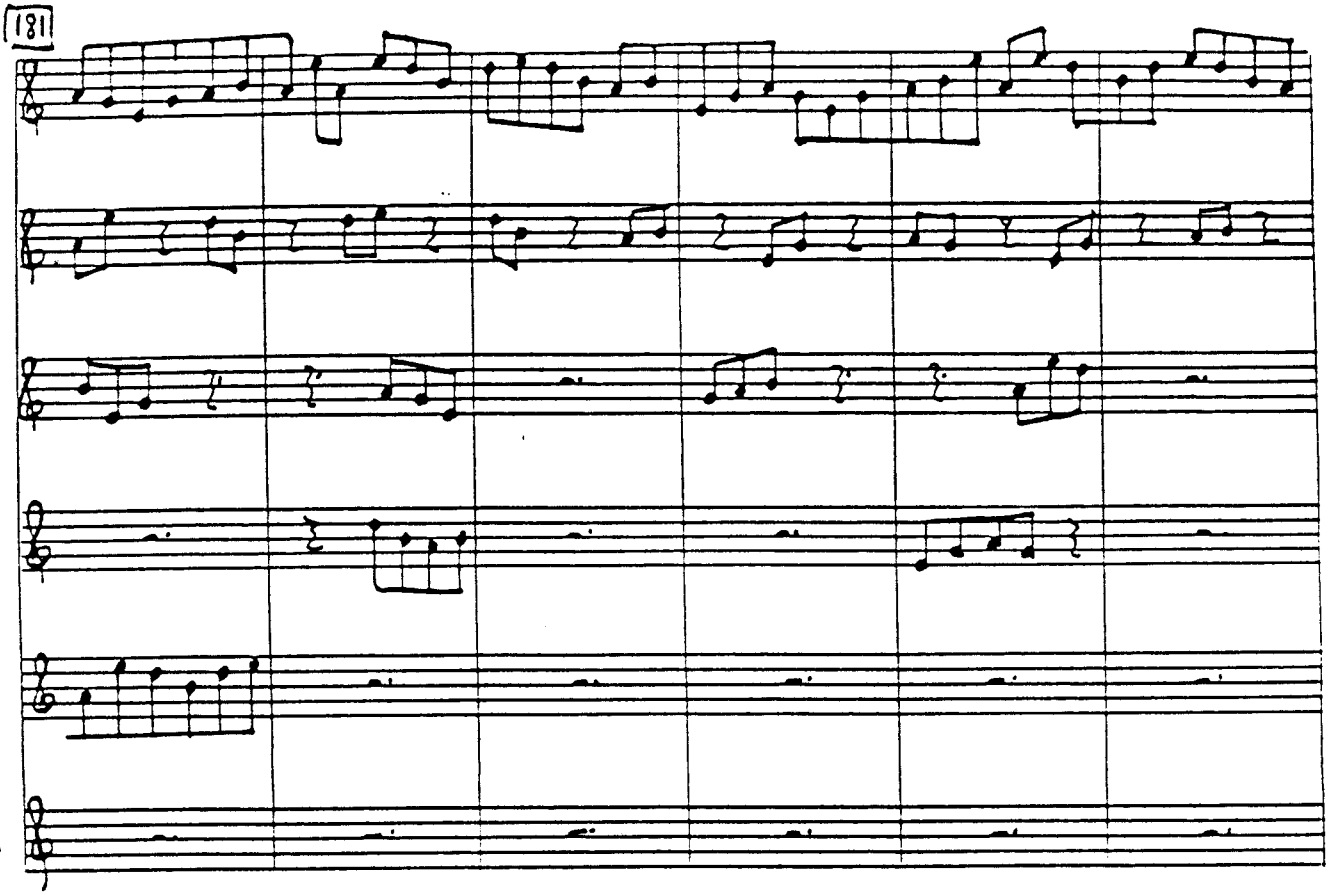

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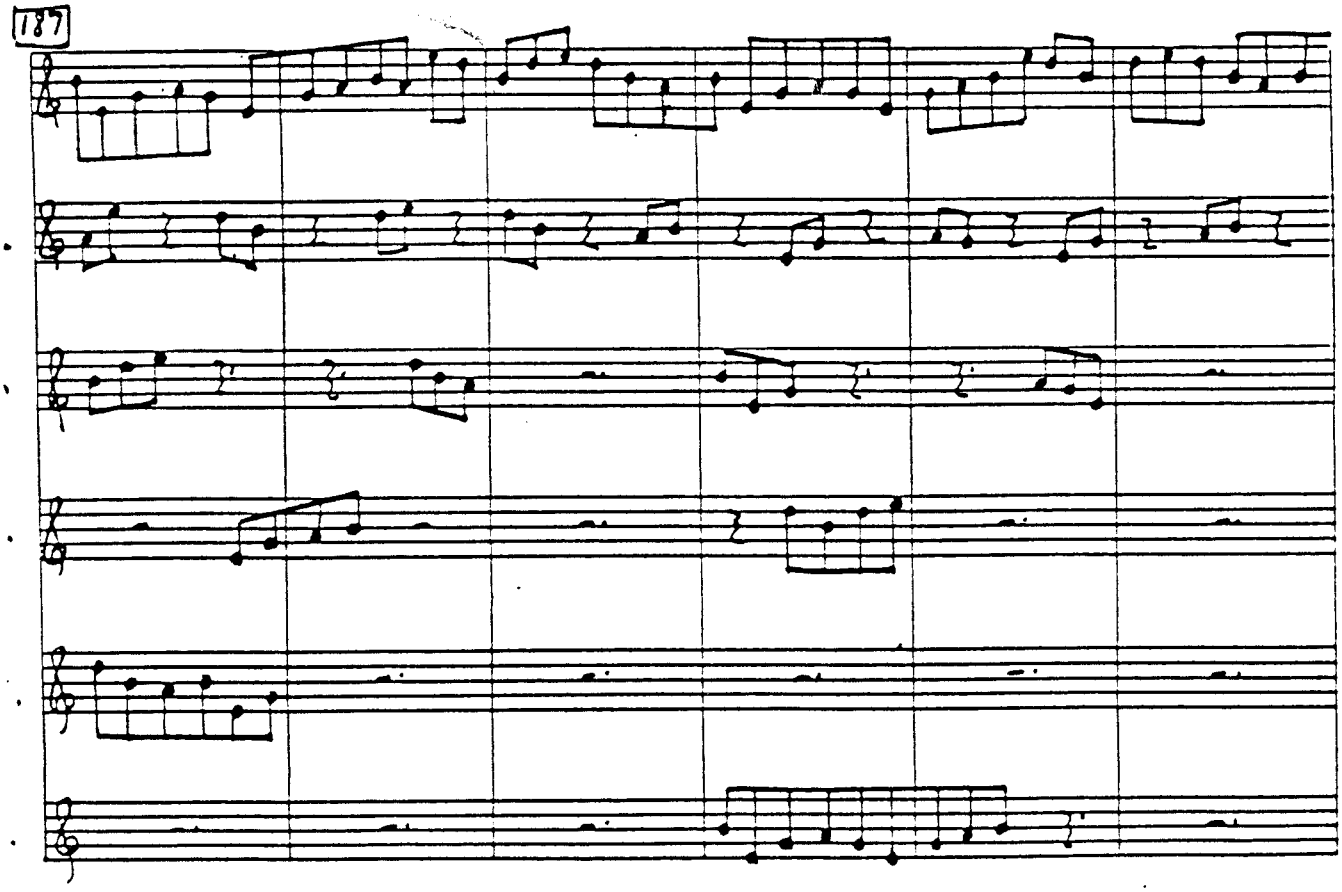

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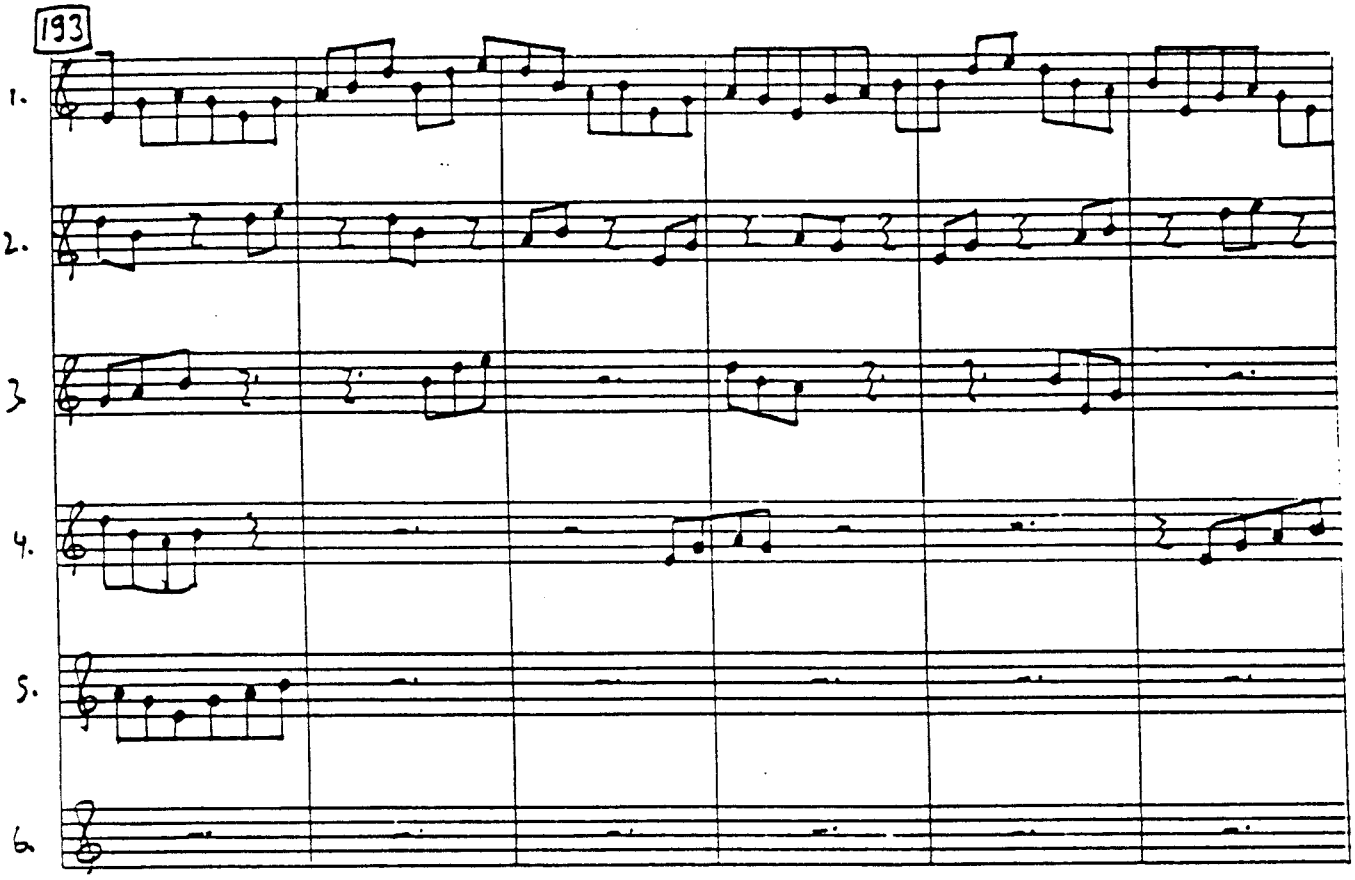

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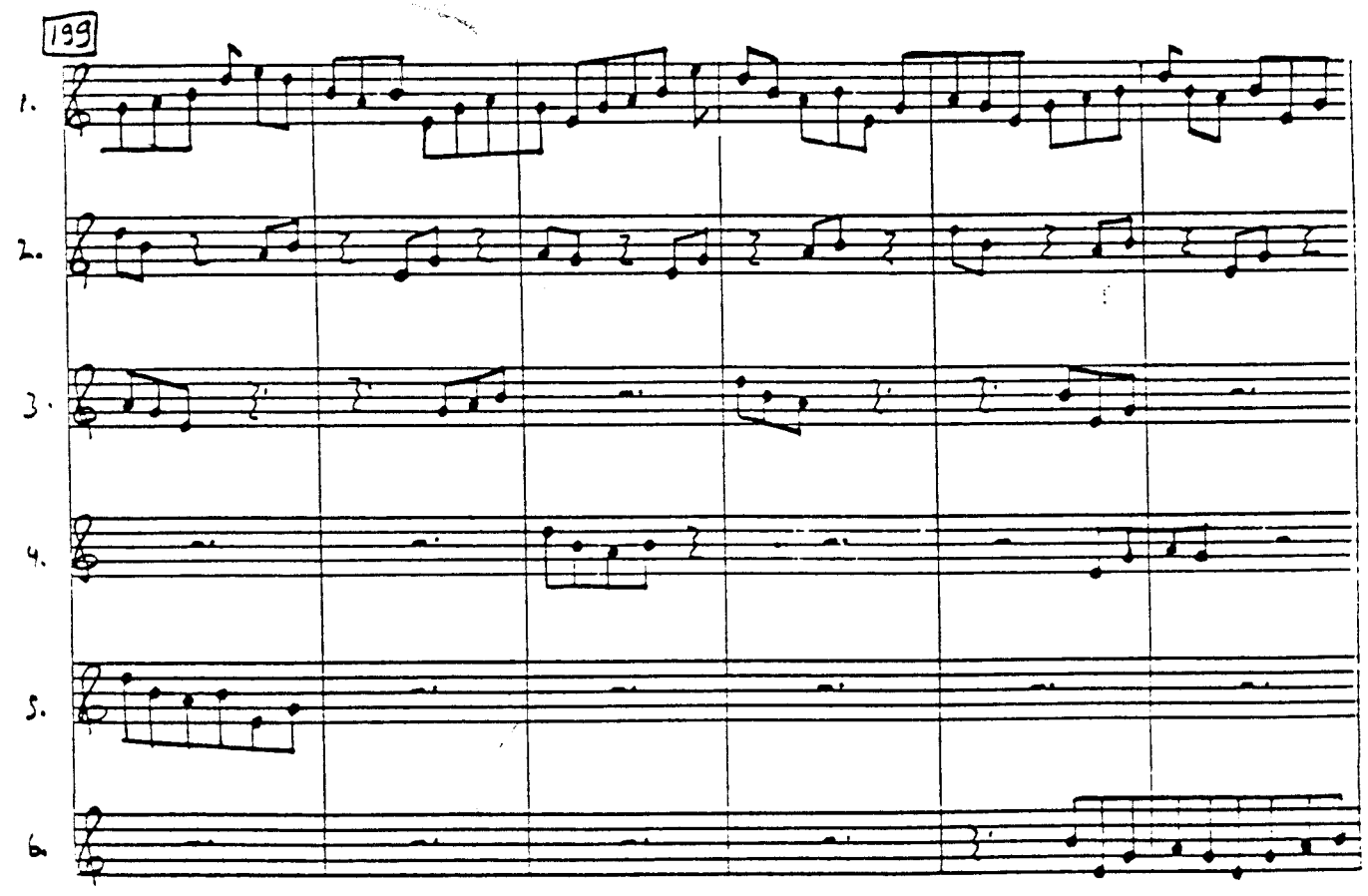

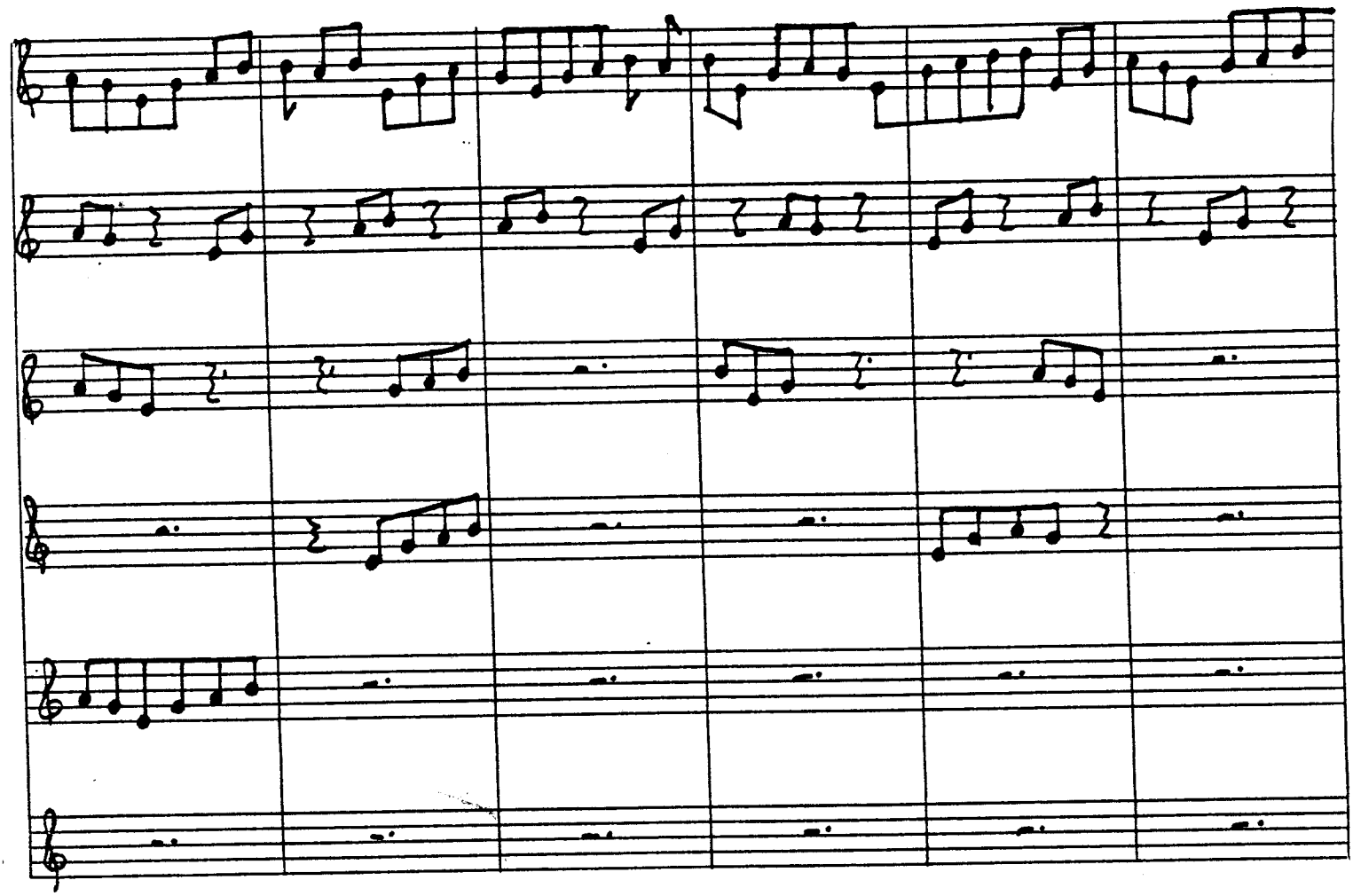

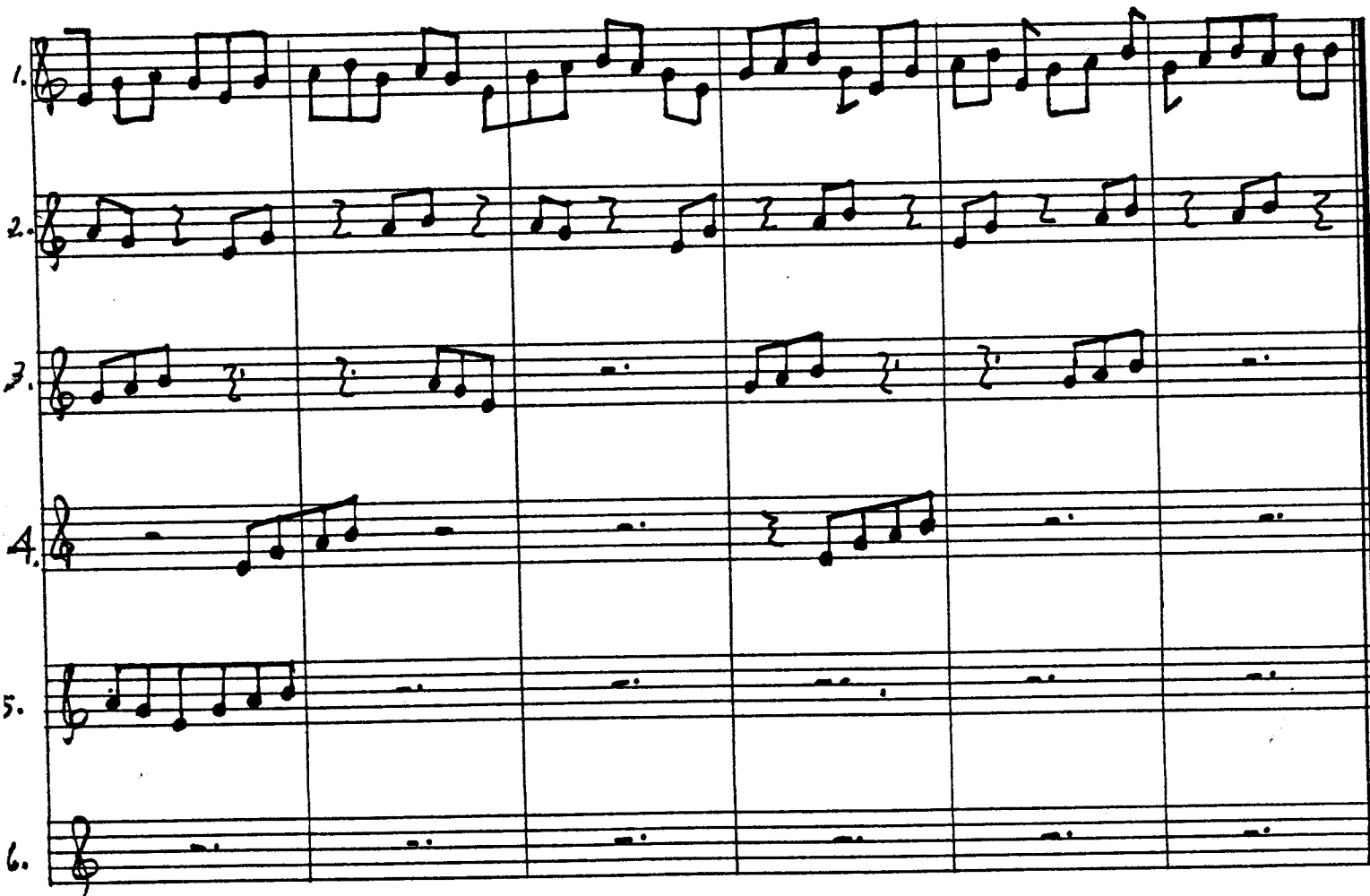
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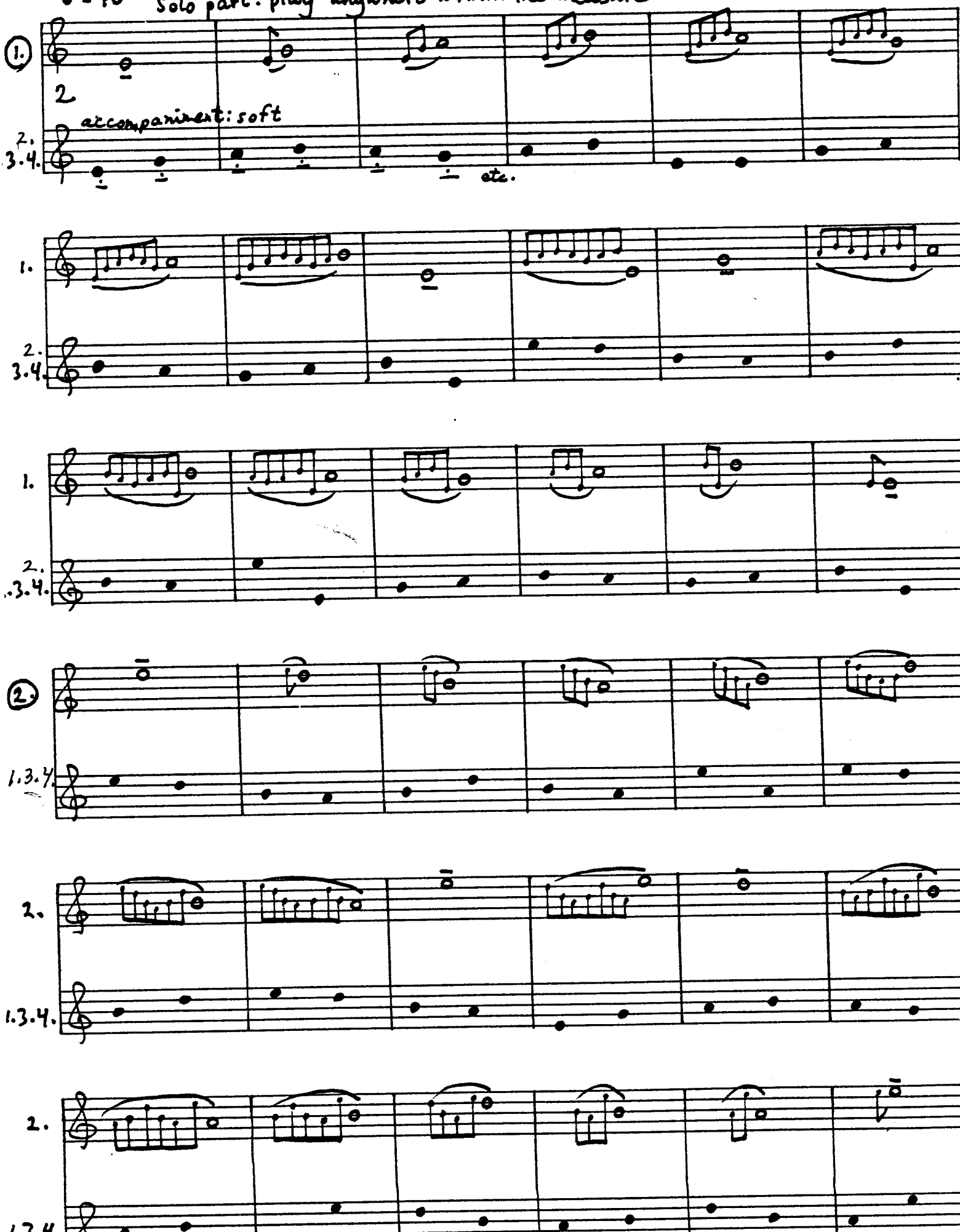
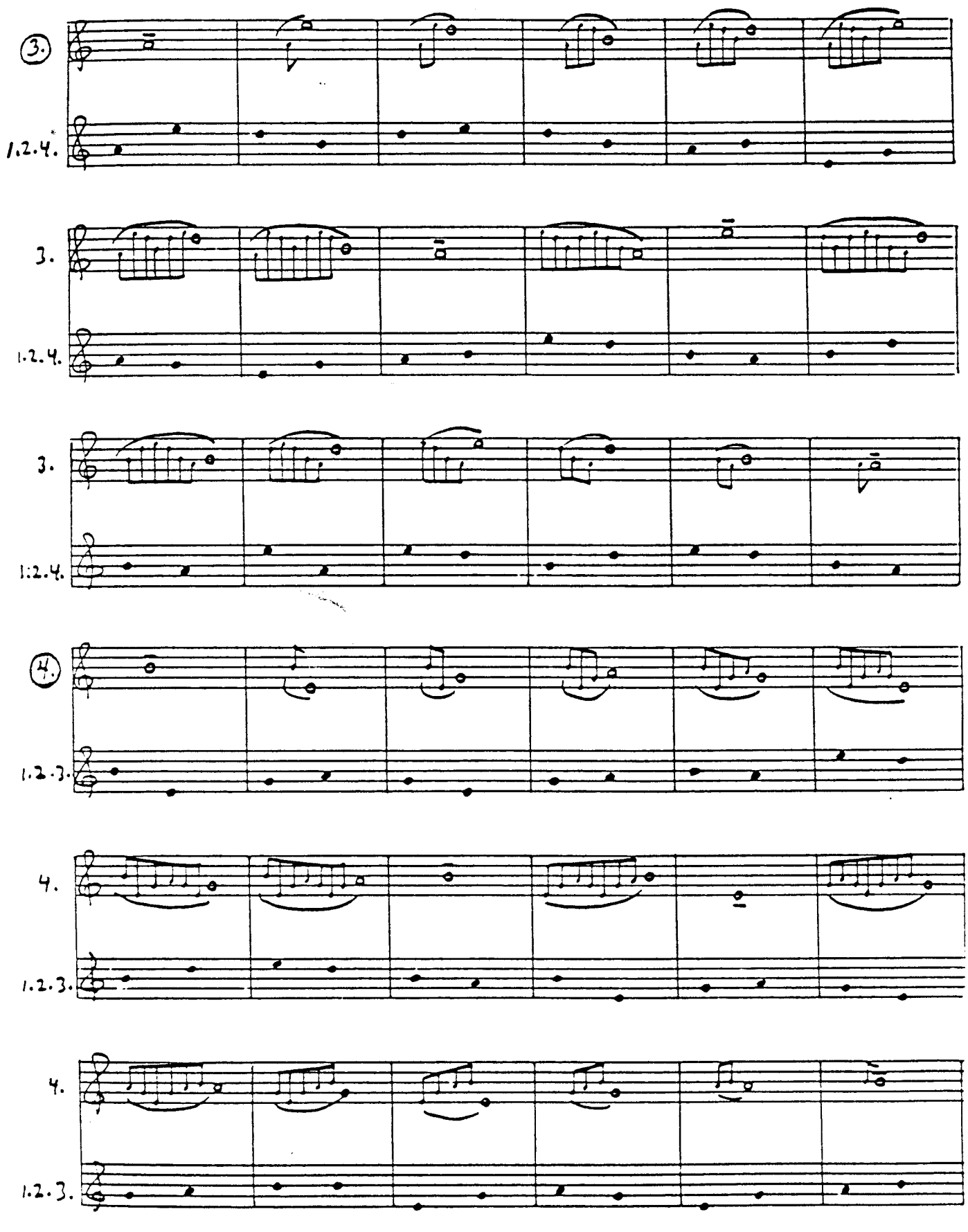
Study No. 7: Melody with Accompaniment (for 4 instruments)

♩ = 40 Solo part: play anywhere within the measure

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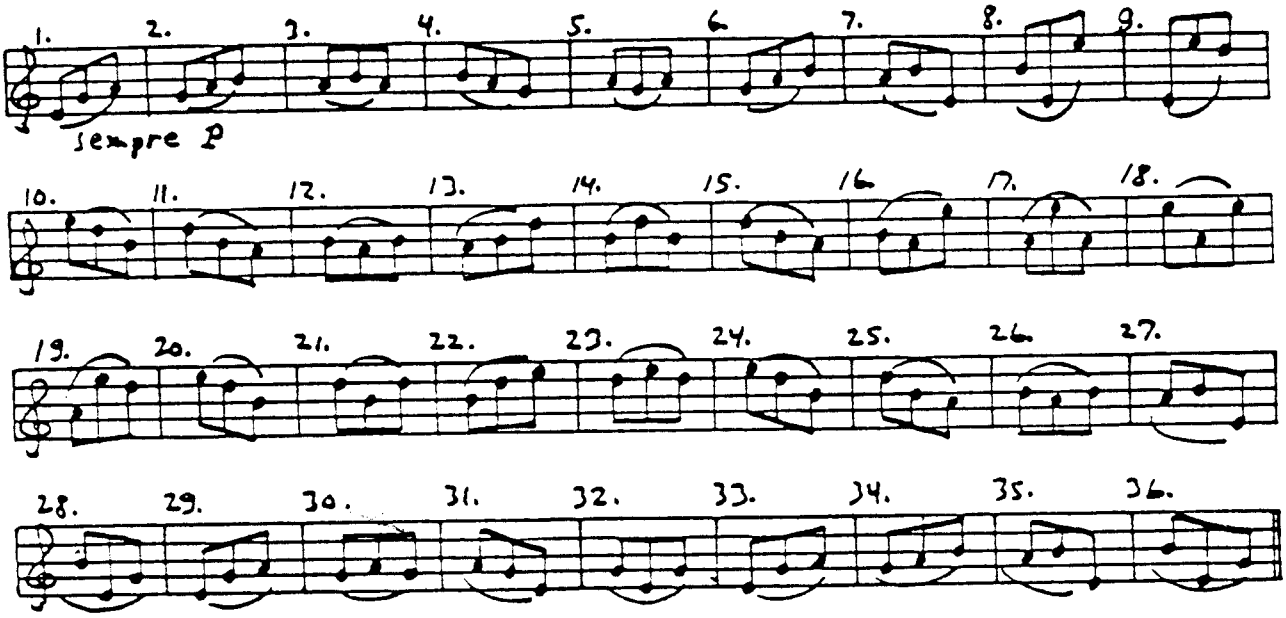
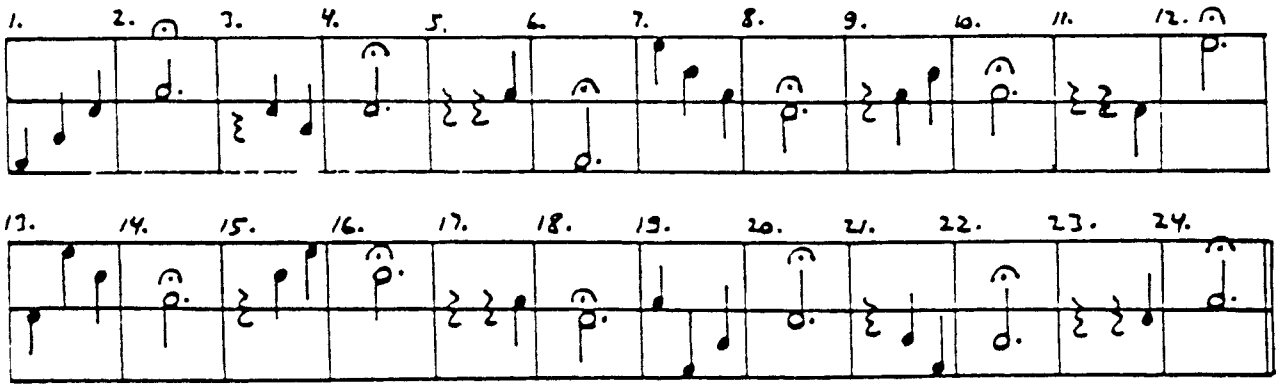
Study 1

Play each figure once, at a moderate speed. Play either after a short general silence, or together with the third note of someone else's figure. Wait any amount of time between each figure.
Transpose ad lib to any degree.



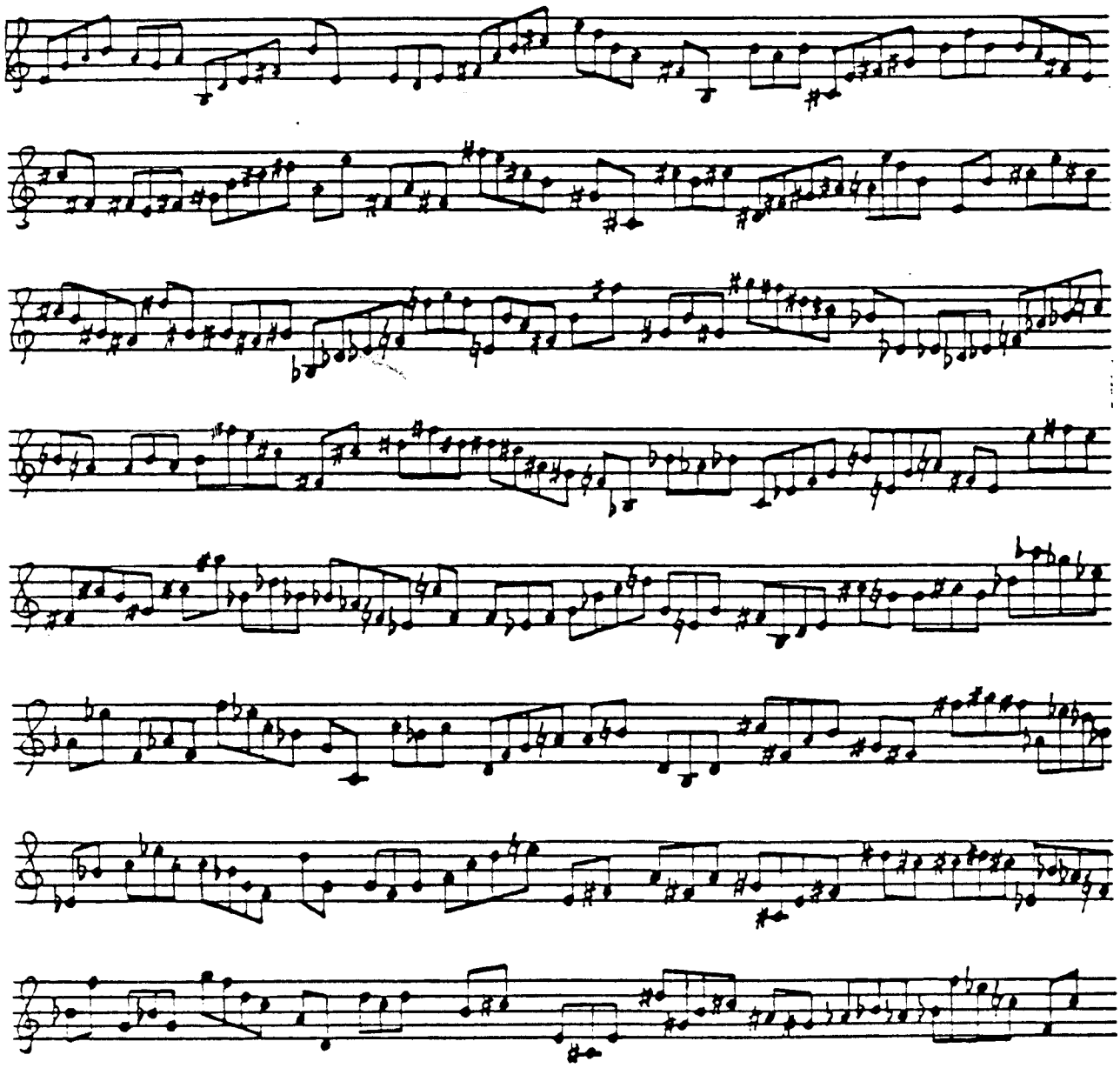
Study 2

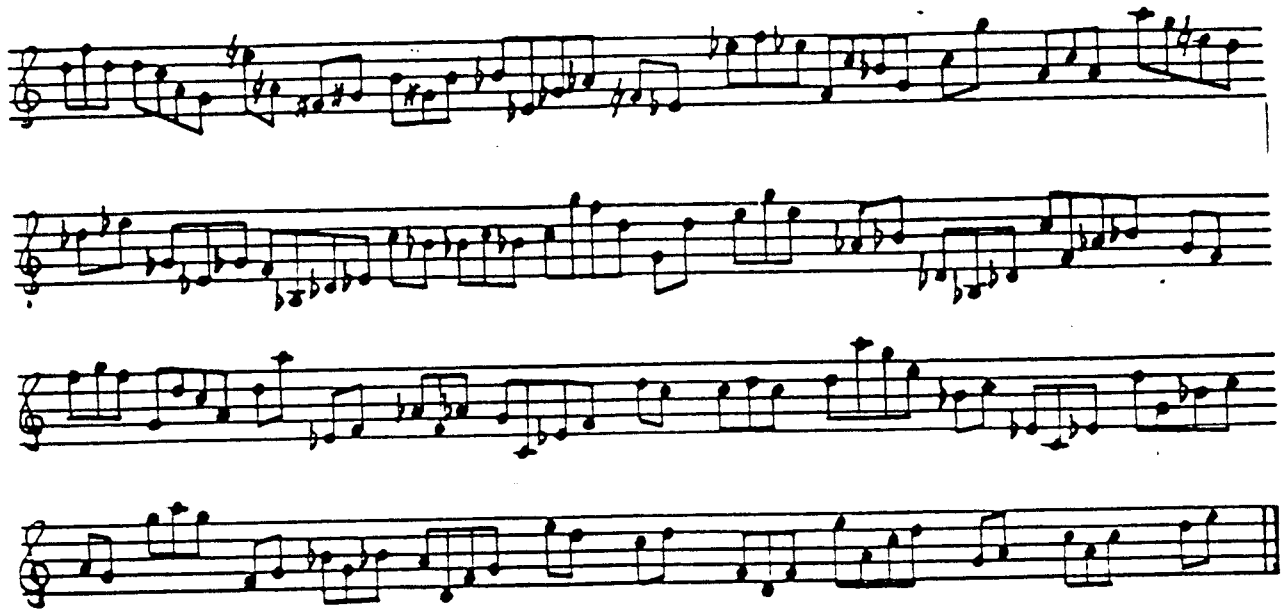
Any pitches. Play the melodic shapes with any intervals, as in Study No. 3. Feel a common slow pulse (♩. = ca. 2 seconds), but don't play in unison; don't all start together, but don't start in strict order one after another either. The fermata means that the note over which it is placed is held for an indefinite number of pulses, not however to exceed 6.



Study No. 10: Bousculade

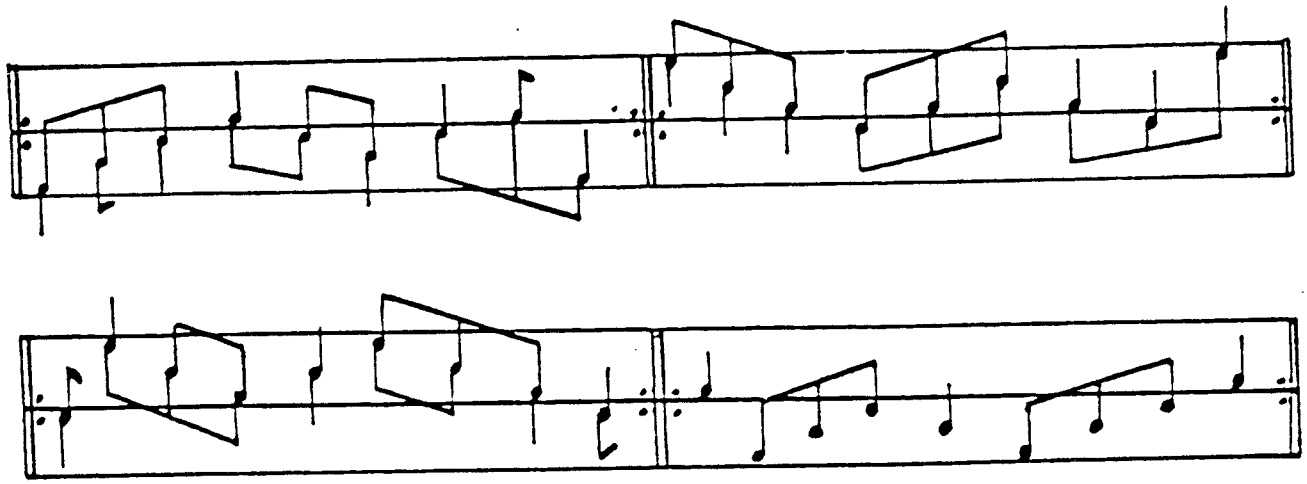
Any number of players. One takes the lead and the others try to follow, with some occasionally lagging stubbornly behind or pushing brasenly ahead. Erratic, aperiodic; sometimes fast, sometimes slow, with pauses of varying length between phrases, and sudden dynamic changes. Like a crowd of people jostling and shoving, stumbling over each other; or, perhaps, like a school of frightened fish. Any octave transpositions.





Study No. 11

Any pitches (as in Nos. 3, 6, 9). Play each of the 4 melodic phrases several times, sometimes reading the upper rhythms, sometimes the lower. Observe a fairly steady pulse, rather fast (♩ = at least 120). Any number of instruments, but not all of them all the time (allow space for solos, duets, trios, etc.).

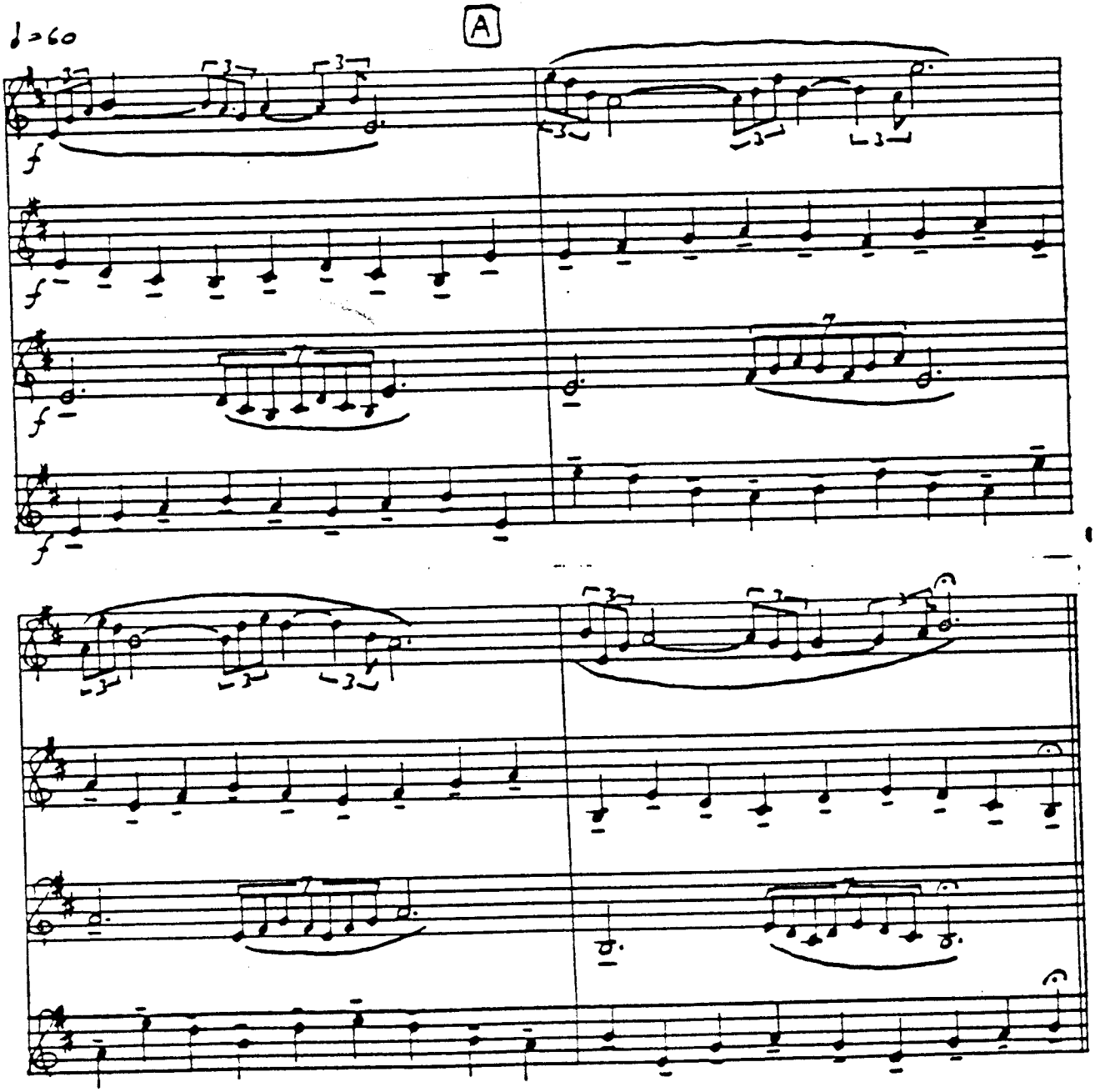
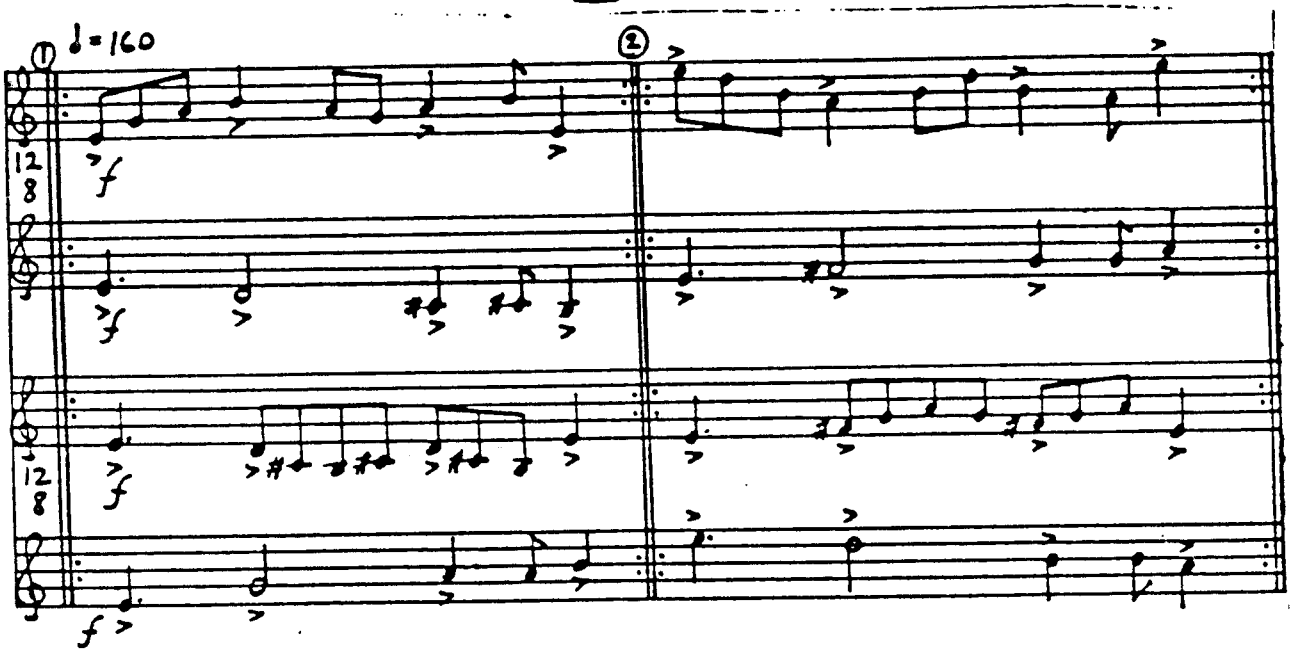
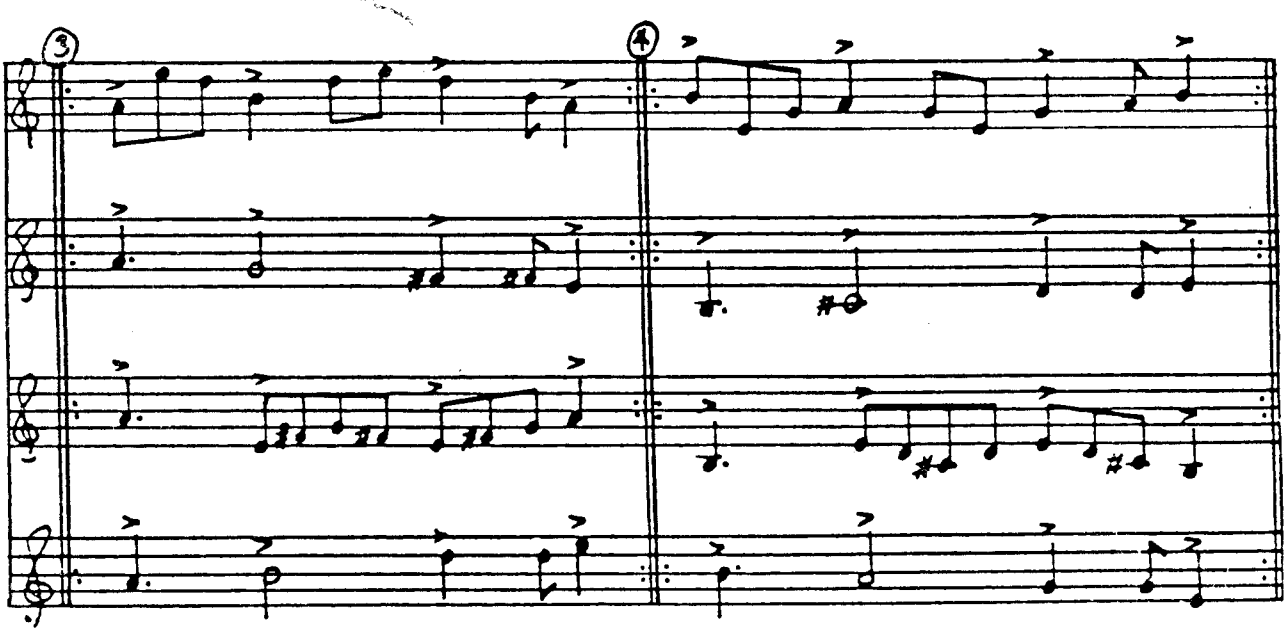


Study No. 12

1. All instruments play the 36-note melody together, in unison or in any octave-doubling combination, over and over again at a constant pulse of ca. 5 - 6 notes per second, generally loud.
2. After several repetitions, the players begin to introduce short rests (of one or two notes' duration) at freely chosen points, causing the ensemble to slip out of phase without disturbing the constant pulse. Begin by introducing only one rest per cycle, then two and three, and so on: the rests should become longer and the note-groups shorter.
3. Begin to transpose the melody into any or all of the 12 chromatic steps of the scale.
4. Hocketing: The note-groups now fairly short (4 - 6 notes); each instrument plays either after a general silence or at the end of a note-group in another instrument. The silences should be short enough so that one still feels the constant pulse, but should grow gradually longer.
5. When the silences have become long enough so that the sense of pulse is lost: Each player plays short bursts (2 - 4 notes), at various rates of speed, different ranges and dynamic levels, outlining the basic melodic <u>shapes</u> using any intervals (as in Studies 3, 6, 9, & 11).
6. The bursts gradually squeeze together until a situation is reached in which, when one player plays, all the others play simultaneously, followed by a silence of a few seconds, then another simultaneous burst, and so on. The bursts grow shorter, finally becoming one short note for each instrument.
7. When maximum simultaneity has been achieved, return to the original melody in the original mode, playing the last six notes or so. When all instruments have arrived at the final B, all play one long sustained B.

Study No. 13

Begin by playing section A once. Then play B as follows: Assign one instrument to each of the three lower systems, and all the others to the top system. After several repetitions of measure 1, let each instrument begin to transpose either up or down the circle of fifths, with any number of repetitions for each transposition, and any number of measures of rest between each transposition. When you have gotten back to the original key, stay there until all the others have gotten there too. Then repeat the process with measure 2. After all 4 measures have been done in this way, everybody play through section A once again. During section B, one or two of the players may abandon the structure entirely and improvise freely above the pattern. In any case, those who play the written patterns and their transpositions should always play together, i.e. should never go out of phase.



B