"Le Corsaire"
(abridged)

Hector Berlioz

Scored for 12 trombones

arranged by

Bob Reifsnyder

Music from the

ROMANTIC BONE COLLECTION

VOLUME SIX

About the Composer

"Le Corsaire" of Hector Berlioz (1803-69) was composed in 1844 to create another "showstopper" for his hugely successful concert tours through Europe, which were hugely successful for him both artistically and financially. Like "King Lear", it was written on a holiday in Nice, but not with a preconceived subject in mind. His first title was the fairly innocuous "Tour of Nice', but he later decided to name it "Le Corsaire Rouge" after the James Fennimore Cooper novel "Red Rover". Eventually he settled on "Le Corsaire", after the more successful Lord Byron verse of the same name.

Unlike his other concert overtures, the slow section is brief, with a melody that is also quite short in duration. This is very uncharacteristic of Berlioz, who pioneered the concept of long song-like melodies in instrumental music. The allegro finale, though, is vintage Berlioz. The melody is constantly developed, with imitation his preferred mode of expression. Also in abundance is dynamic contrast to the extreme, with several climaxes eventually leading to a rousing finish. The work is very popular with both performers and audiences to this day; after "Symphonie fantastique", "Roman Carnival" and "Hungarian March" (from Damnation of Faust), it is his fourth most frequently performed work. It is no accident that three of these come from the 1840s, which was by far his most successful period as a conductor and composer with contemporary audiences. It is important to note, however, that he remained unpopular in France, where he was a neglected musical genius for his entire career.

About the arranger

Bob Reifsnyder, a graduate of Interlochen Arts Academy, has two degrees from Juilliard and a Doctorate from Indiana University. As a trombone teacher, he has served on the faculties of the Juilliard Pre-College Division, Indiana University, Indiana State University, and Ithaca College. As a professional trombonist, he has been a member of the West Point band, the National Orchestra of New York, the Spoleto Festival orchestra, Goldman Band, Ringling Brothers, the German orchestras of Bielefeld, Kaiserslautern and Solingen, Terre Haute Symphony, Tri-Cities Opera, Cayuga Chamber Orchestra, Manitowoc Symphony and the Wisconsin Philharmonic. As a gig musician, he has appeared with the Metropolitan Opera, the orchestras of Wuppertal and Dusseldorf in Germany, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, Chamber Orchestra of Lausanne, Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Syracuse Symphony, Binghamton Pops, Ithaca Opera, the Wisconsin orchestras of Sheboygan, Oshkosh, Green Bay and the Fox Valley Symphony.

Notes for this arrangement

1. Performance- These works are designed to add to the performance repertoire of the low brass choir.

2. Clef reading- These arrangements will hopefully also serve as advanced clef practice for trombonists playing the top parts. It is unfortunate that clef reading skills don't seem to be a priority for many contemporary trombone teachers, but the ability to transpose at sight remains a prerequisite for becoming an excellent professional musician. Please keep in mind that the first time one has to ask a conductor for a transposed part is likely the last time one will perform with that ensemble!

3. Scoring- There is some octave displacement to keep the individual parts within the comfortable range of the performing instruments and to establish the alto trombone as the highest voice.

4. Range- The basic range of these transcriptions is from high D to low B. For each of the three quartets, the ideal mix would be alto, .525 bore tenor, .547 bore tenor and bass trombone.

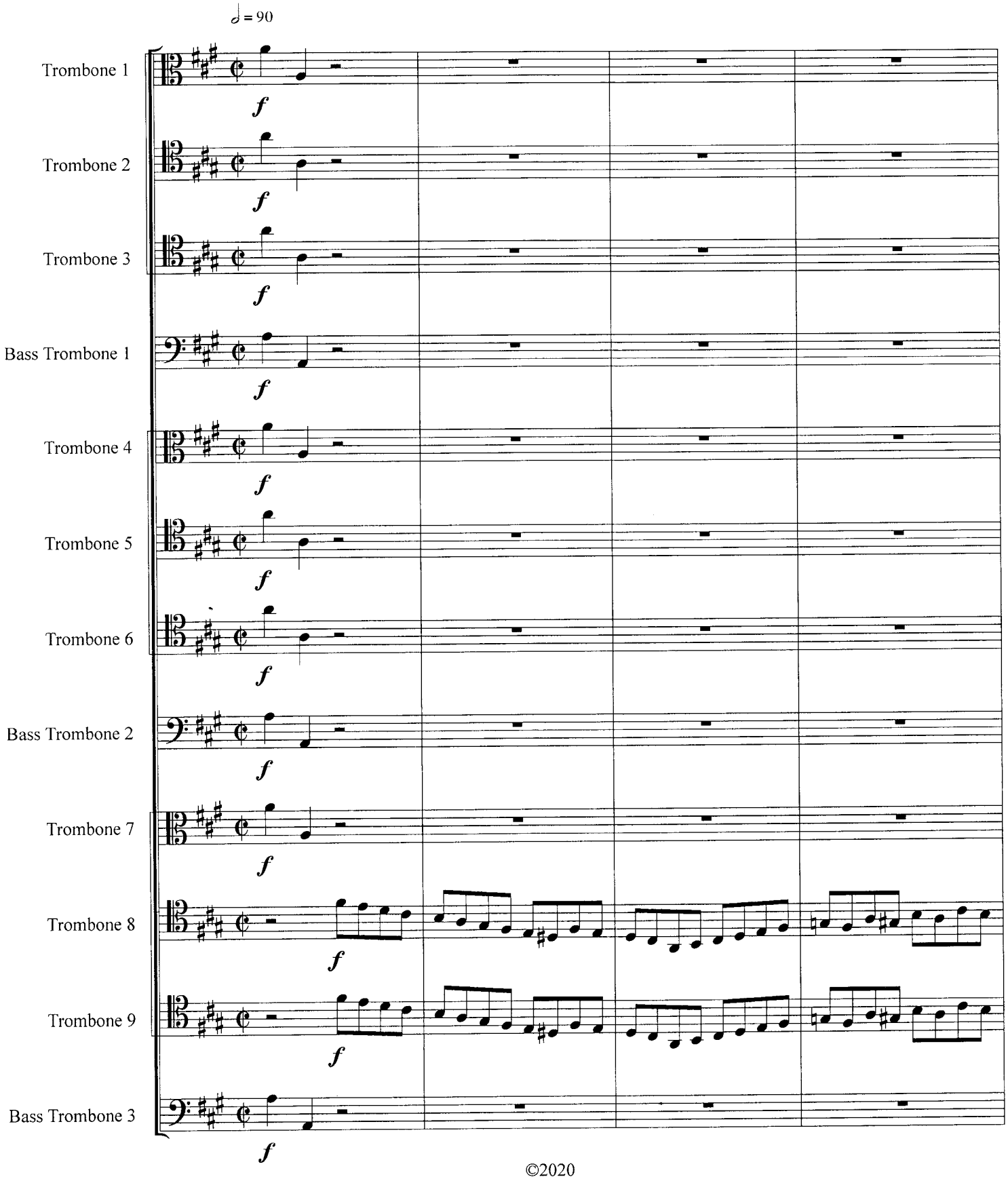
5. Breathing and Articulation- There are no breath marks in these transcriptions; that is perhaps the most personal decision a brass player ever makes. There are, however, notes left out in extended passages that would be otherwise impossible to perform well, hopefully in the most appropriate locations. Performers are also encouraged to add slurs whenever it is deemed appropriate.

Score

Le Corsaire

Berlioz

Bob Reifsnyder



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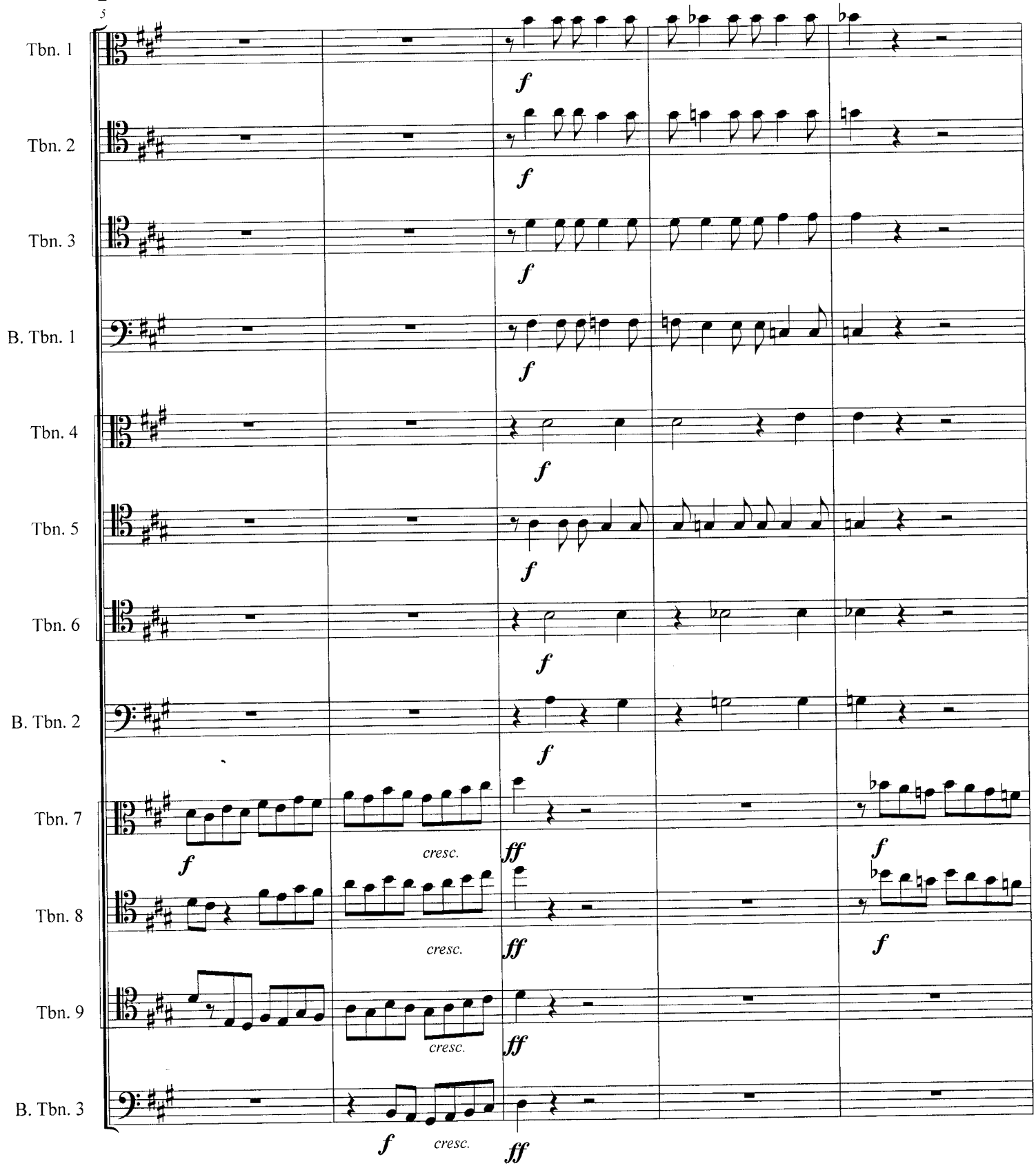
Le Corsaire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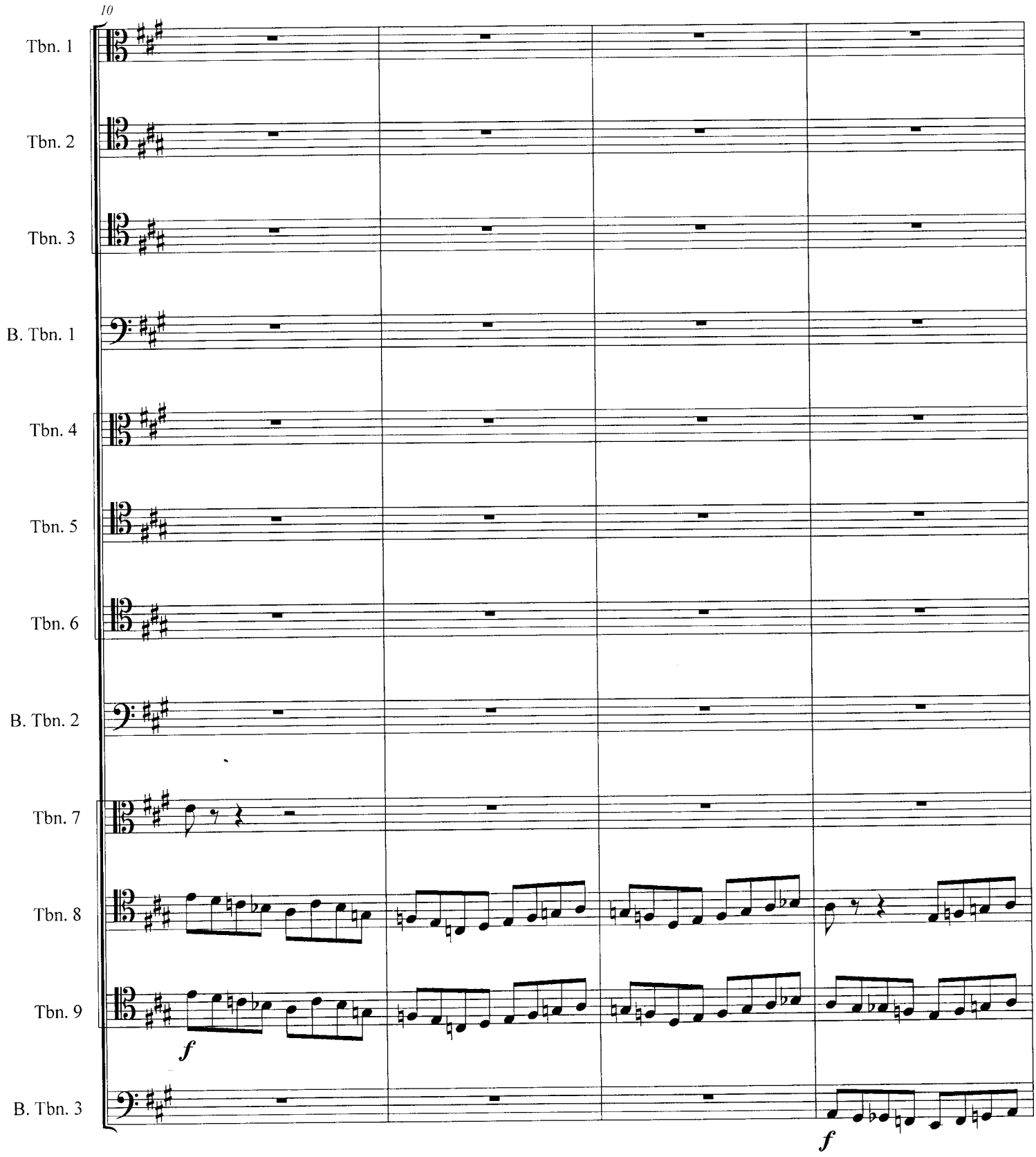
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Le Corsaire

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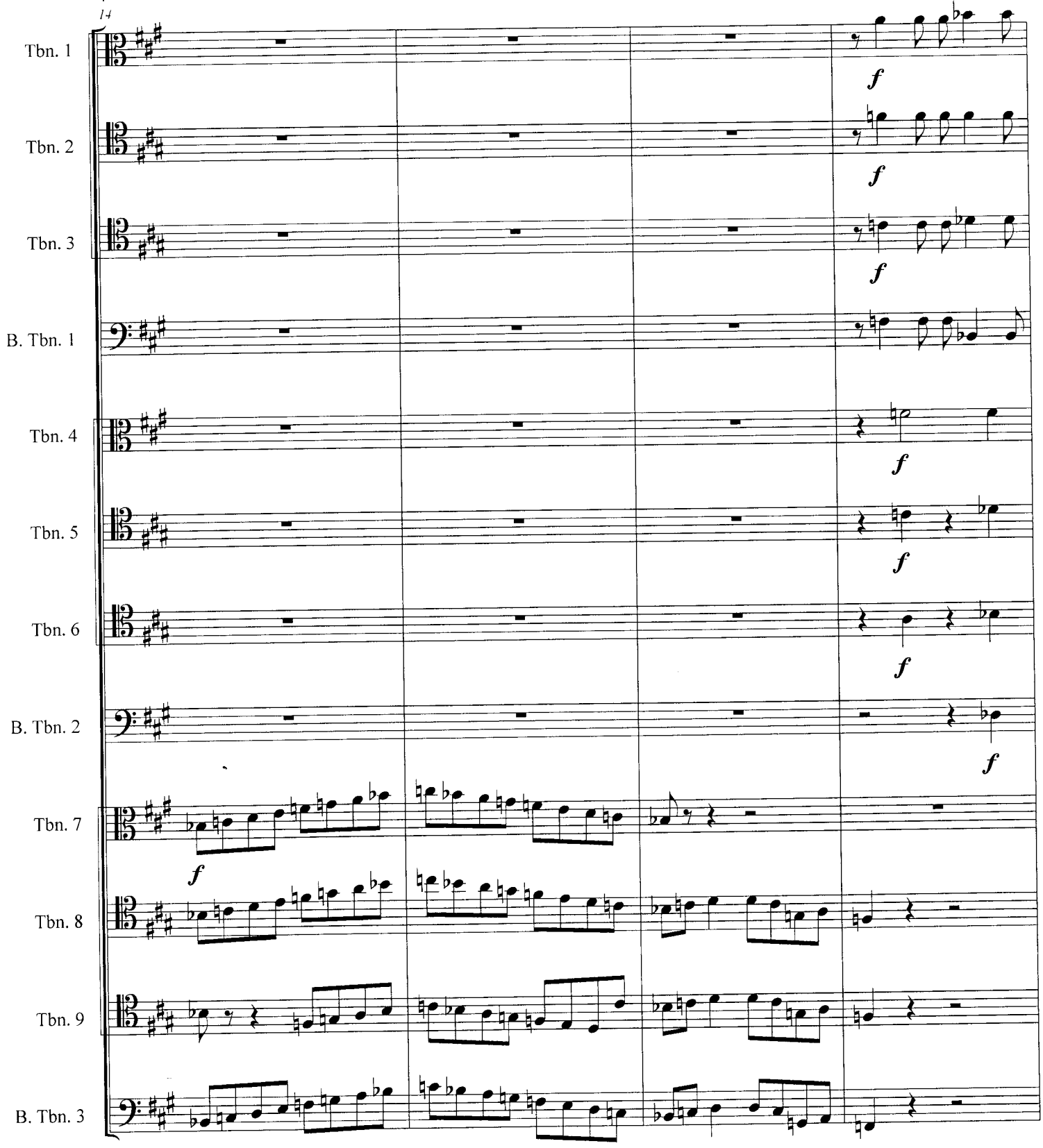

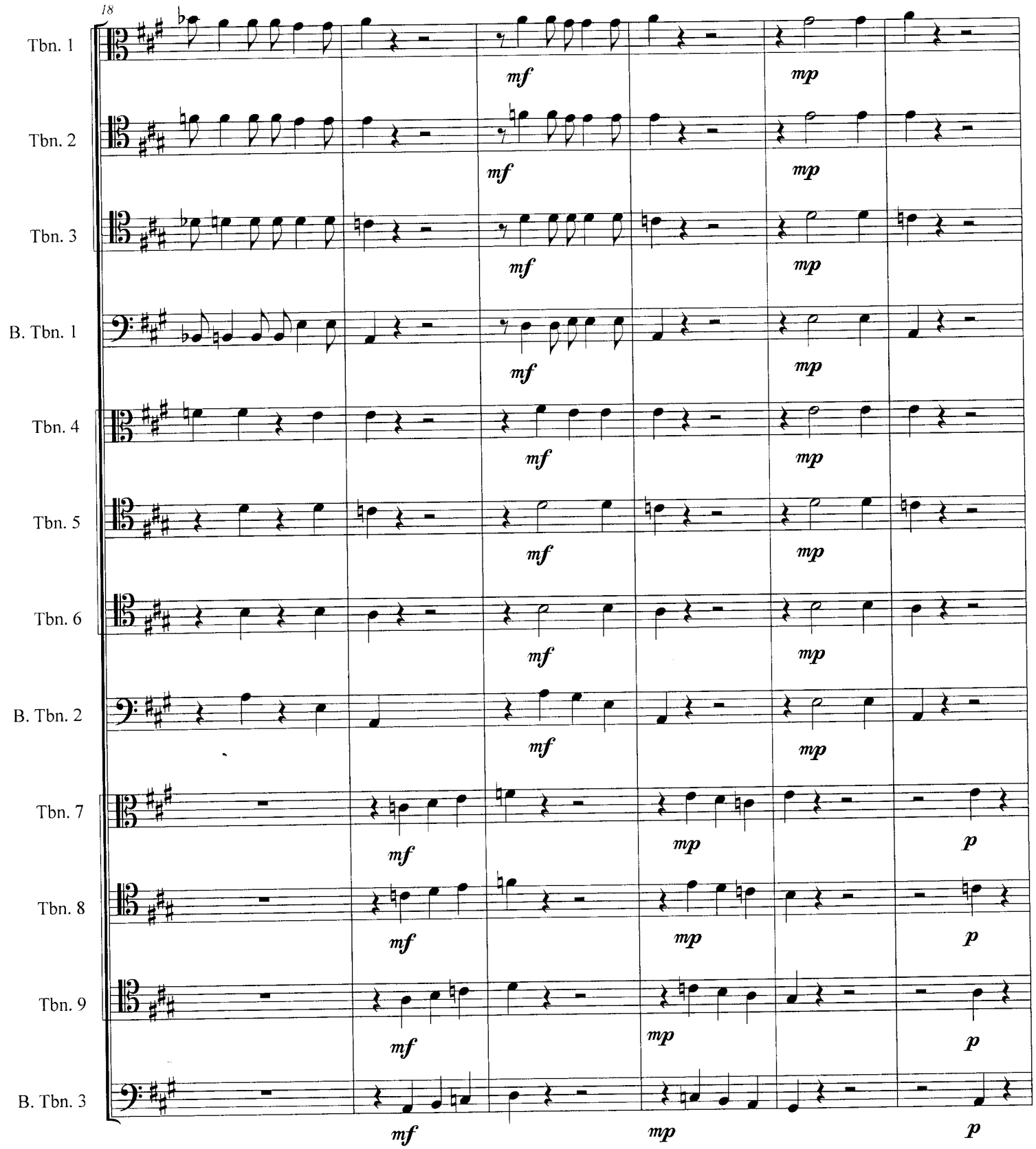
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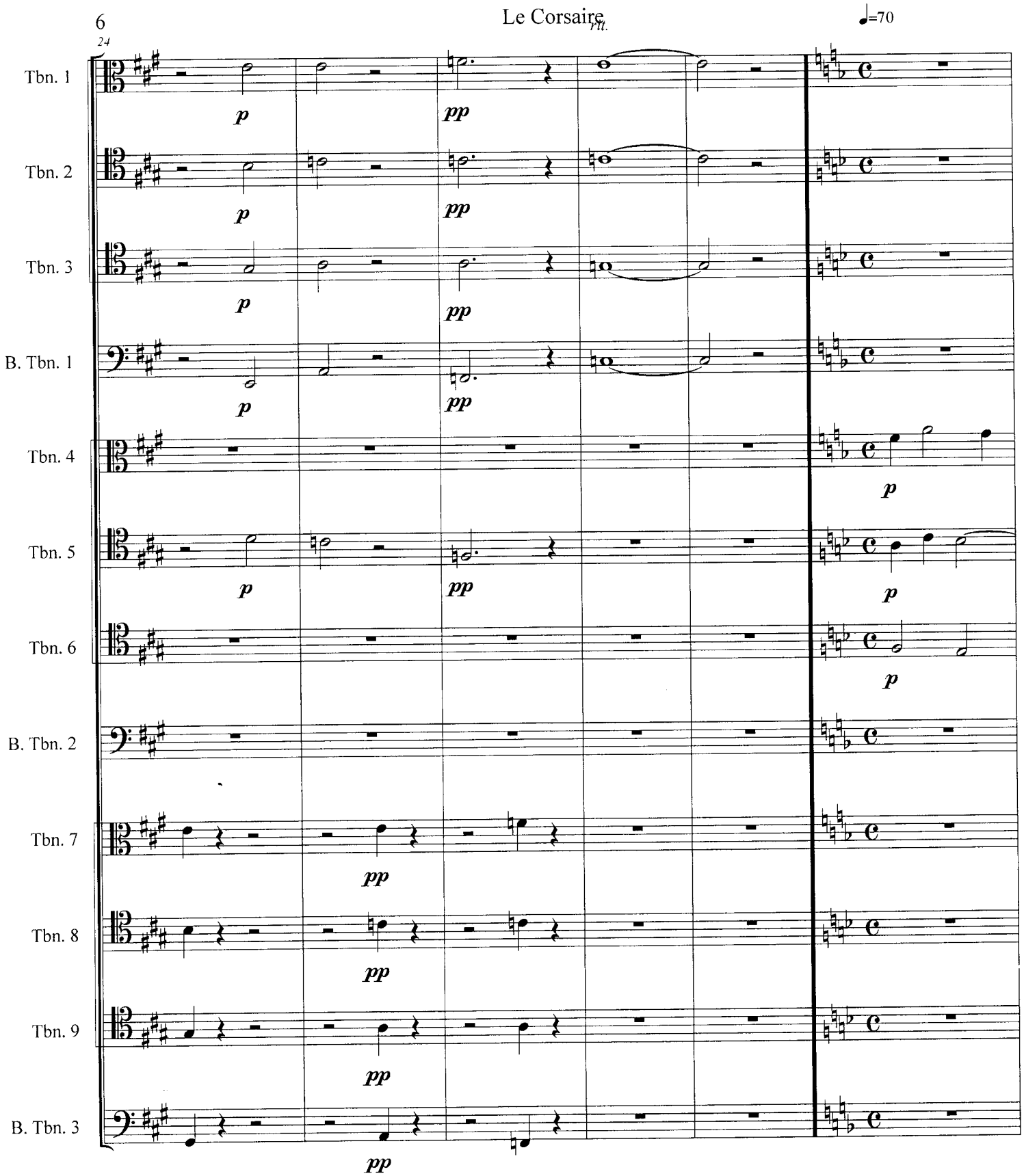
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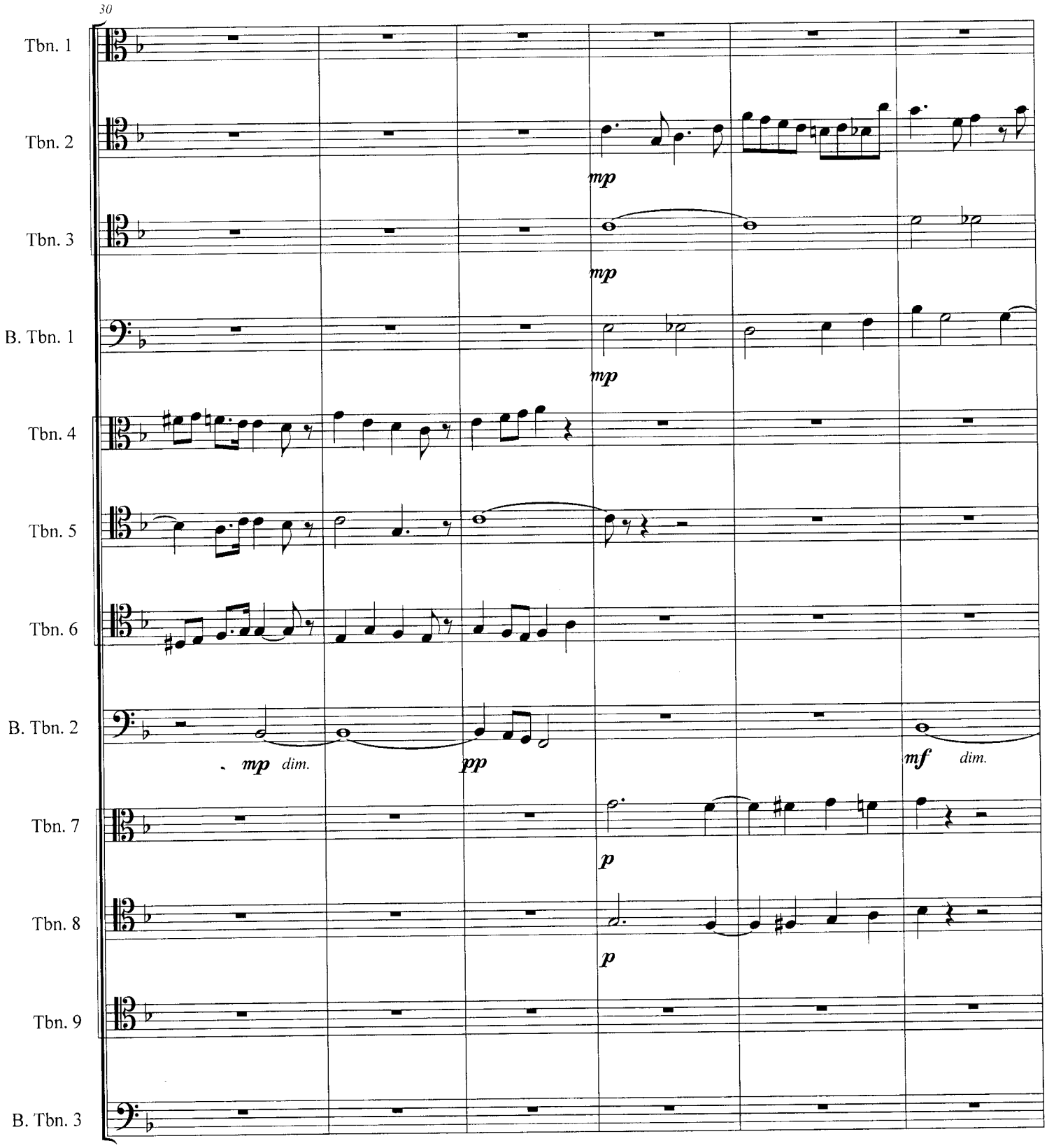
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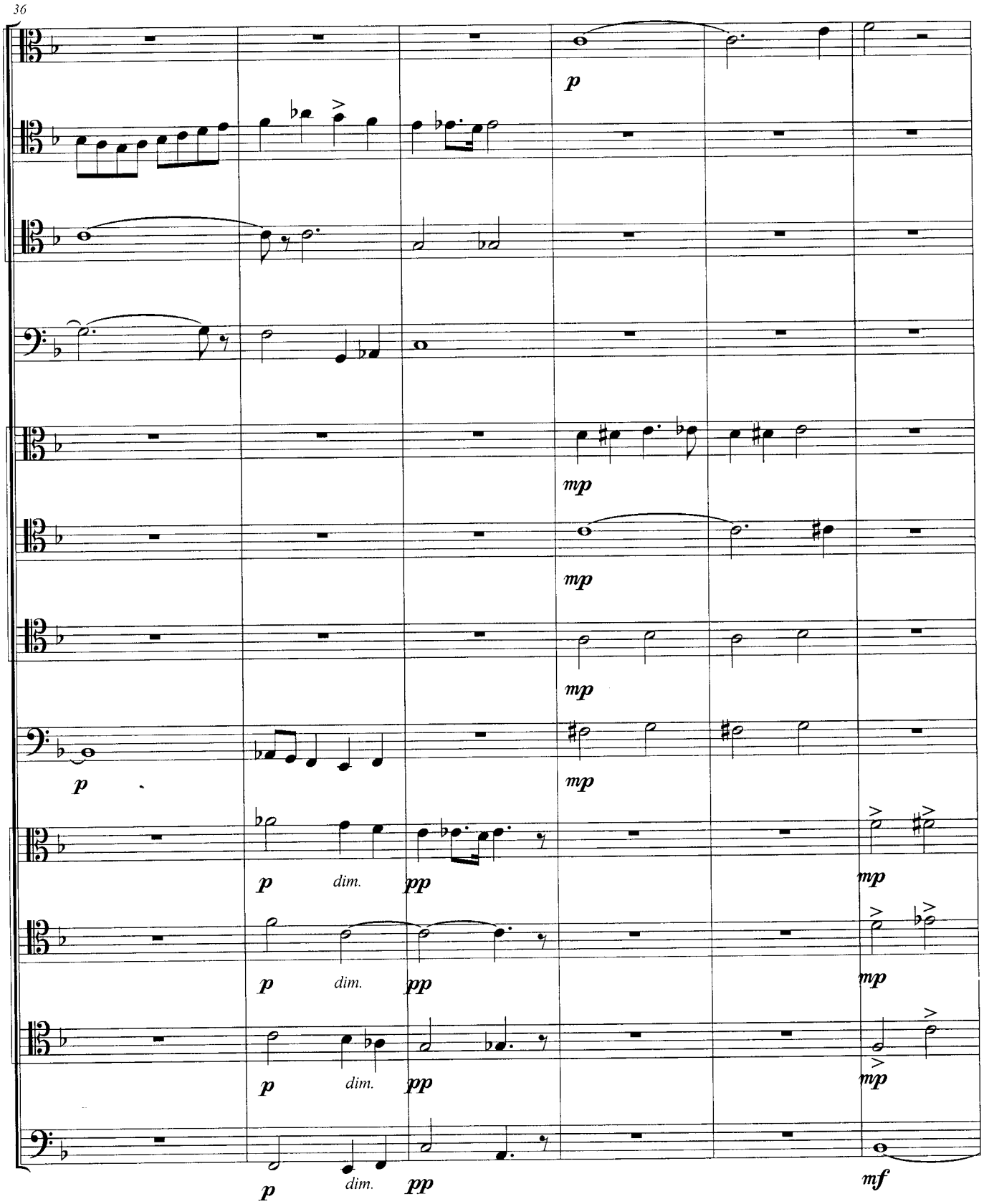
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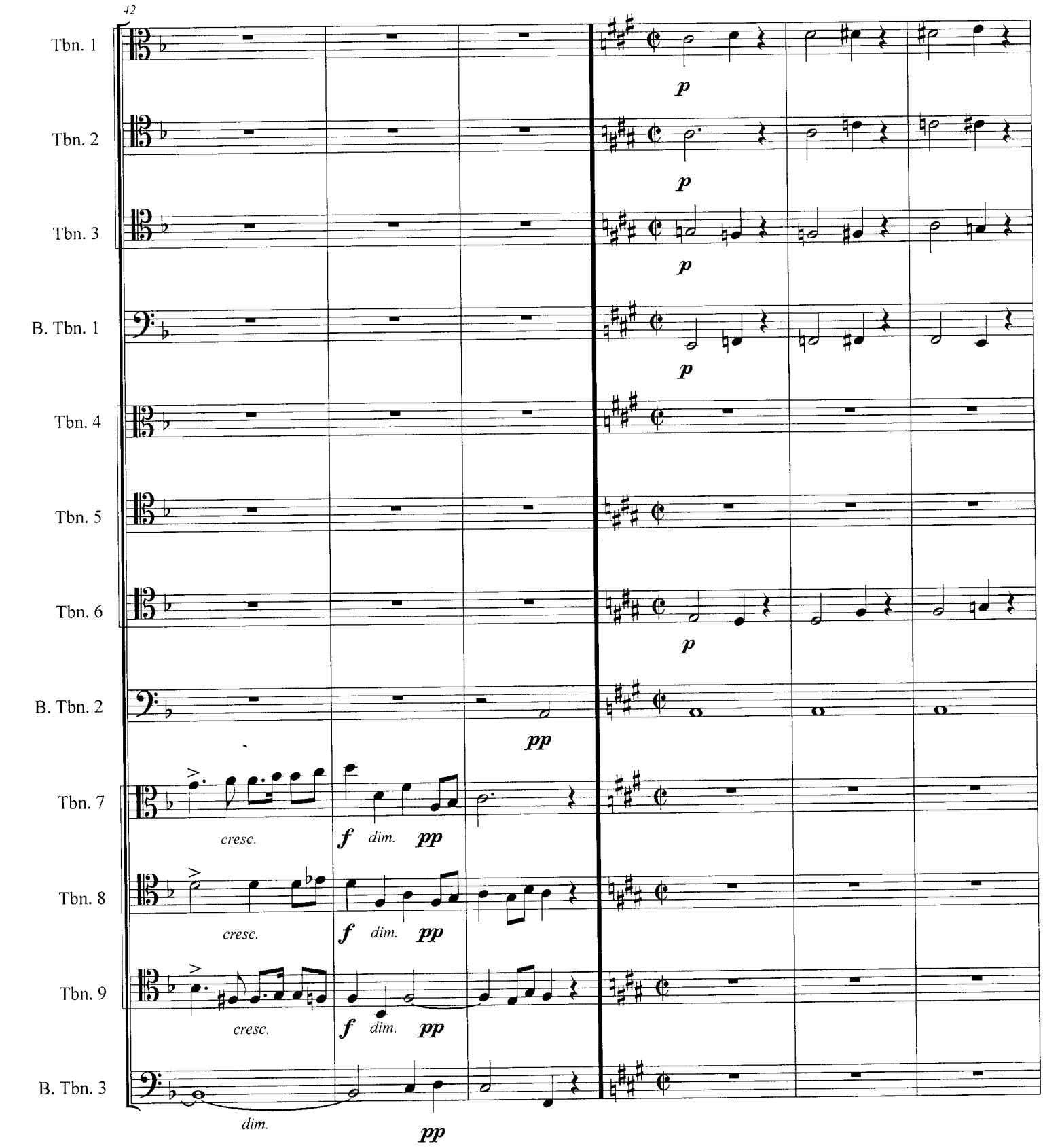
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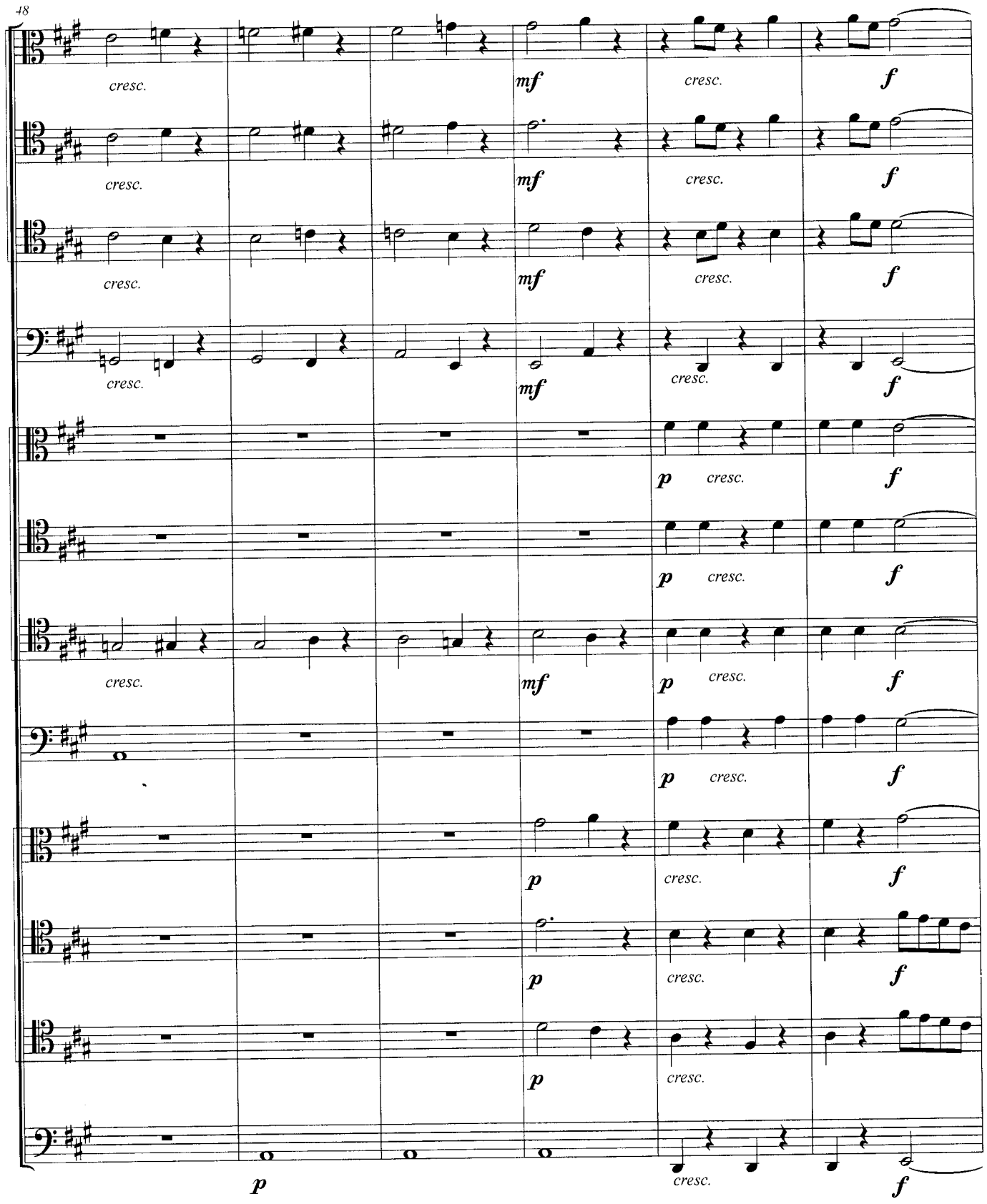
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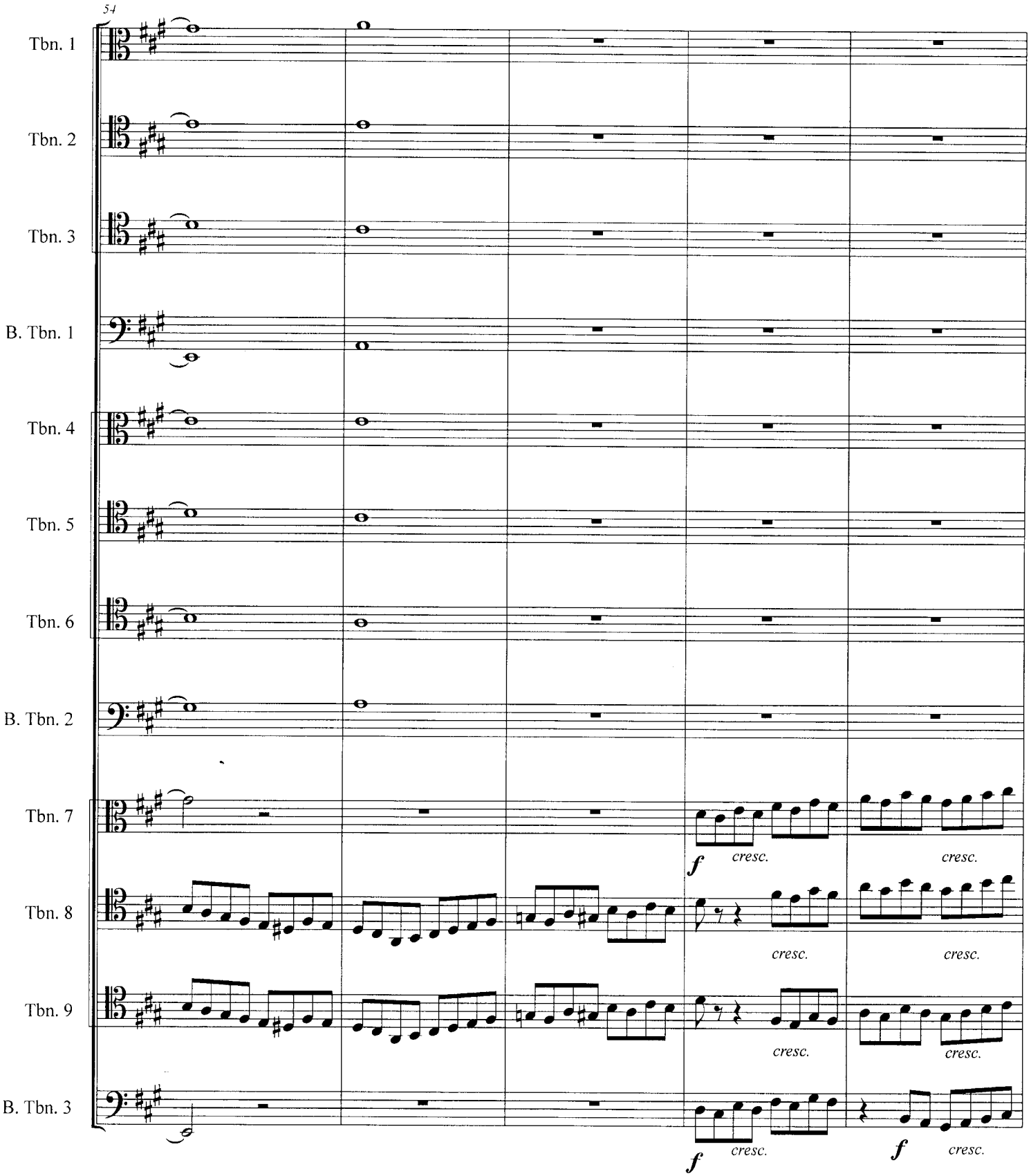
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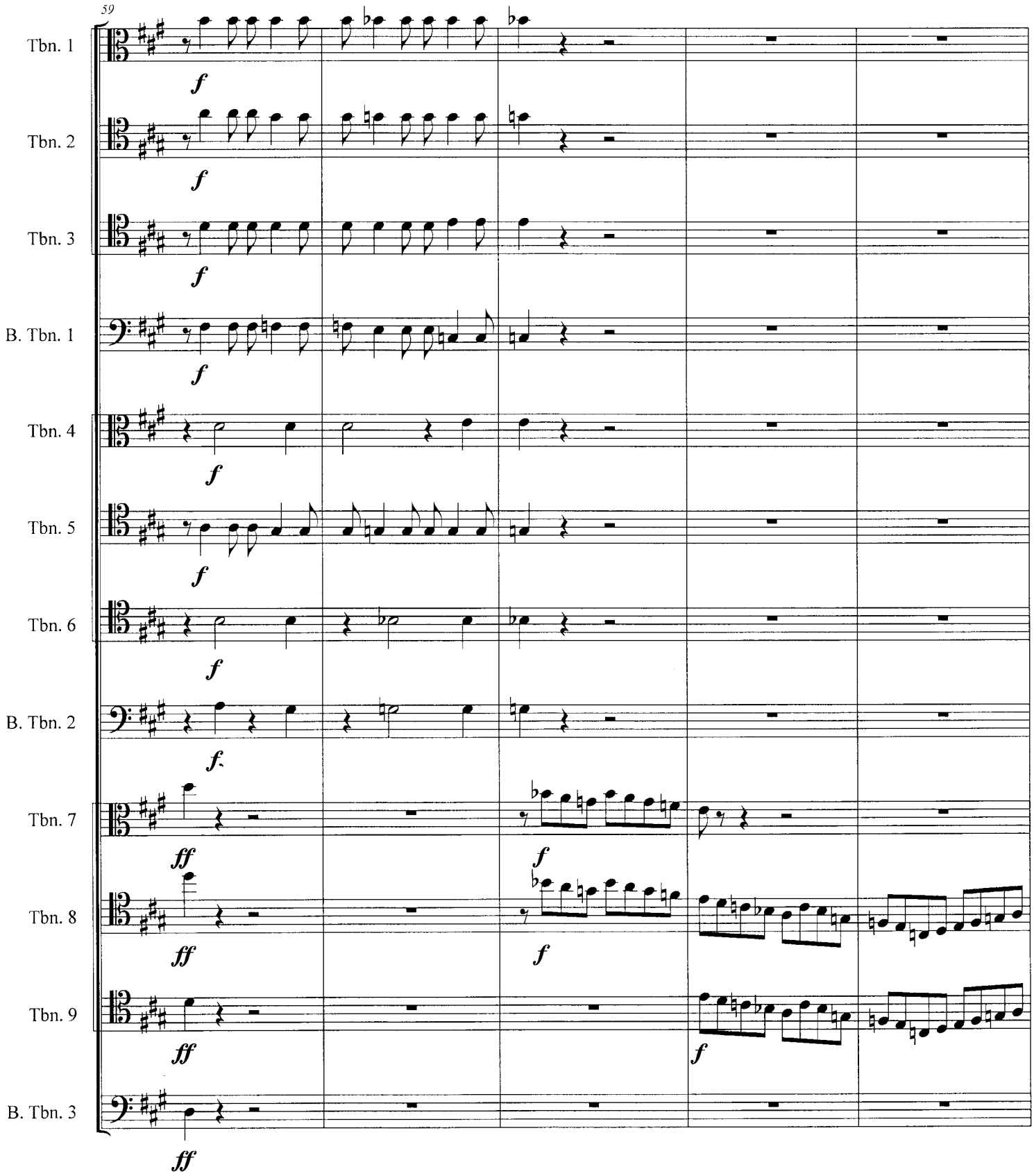
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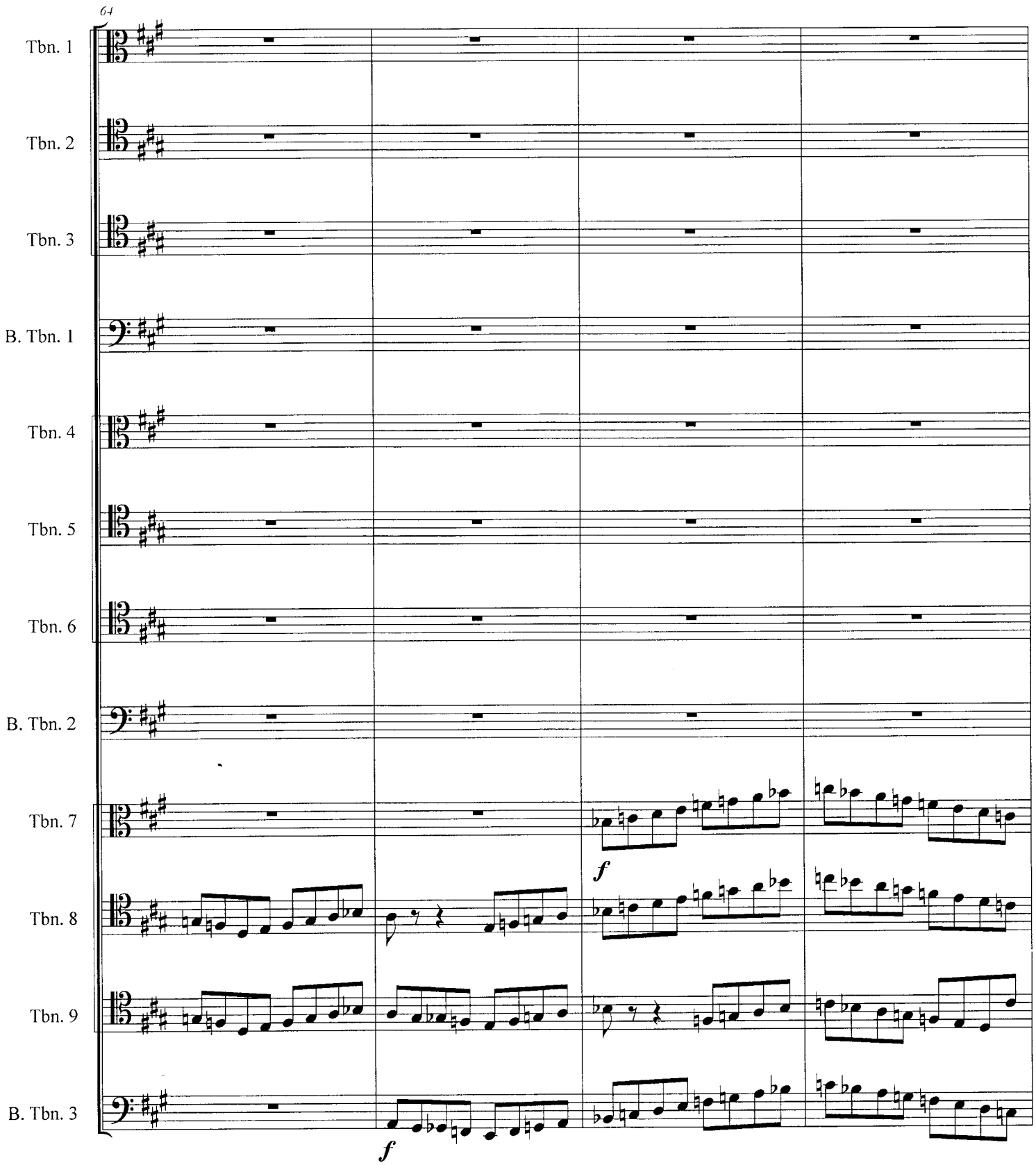
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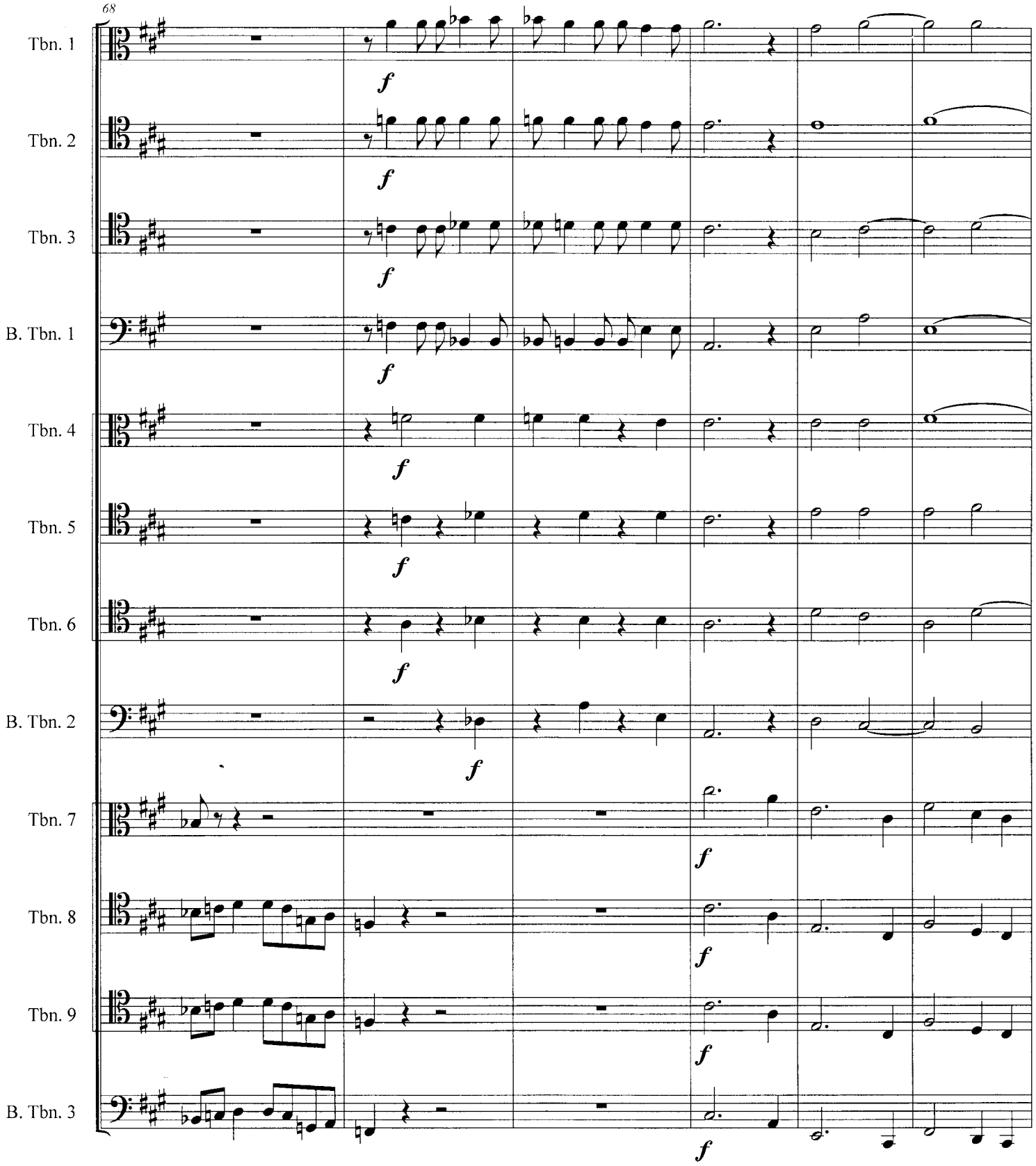
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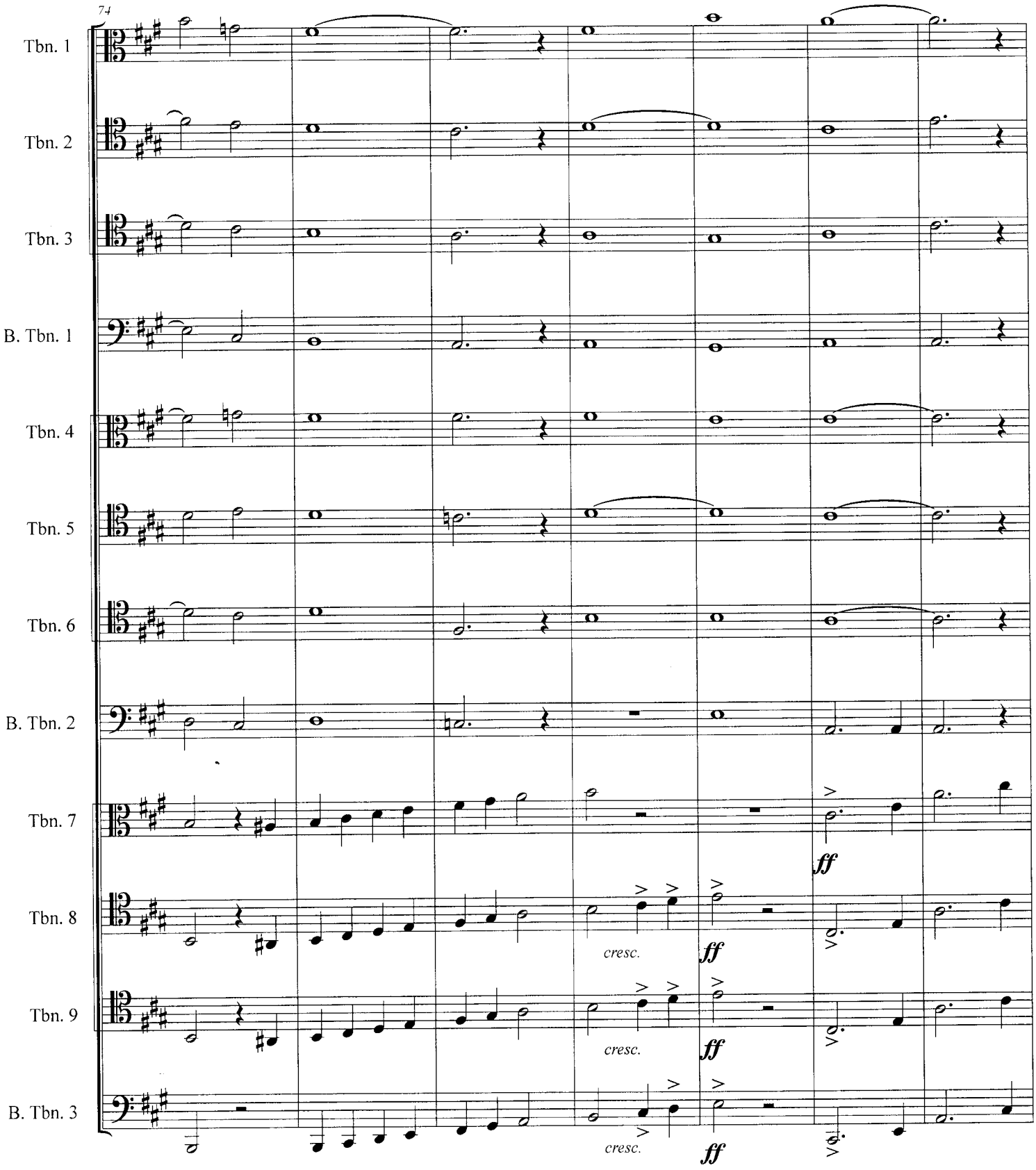
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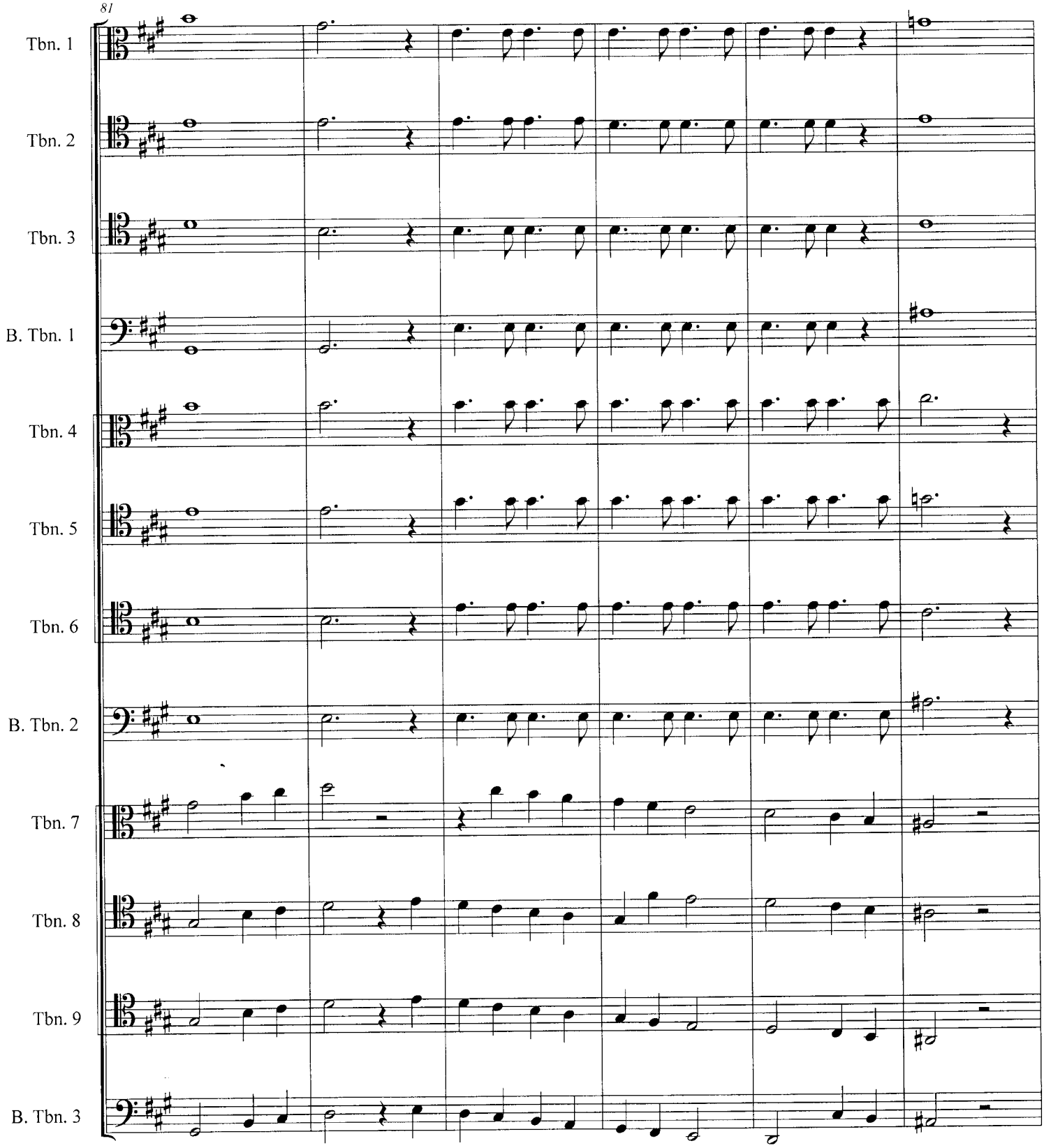
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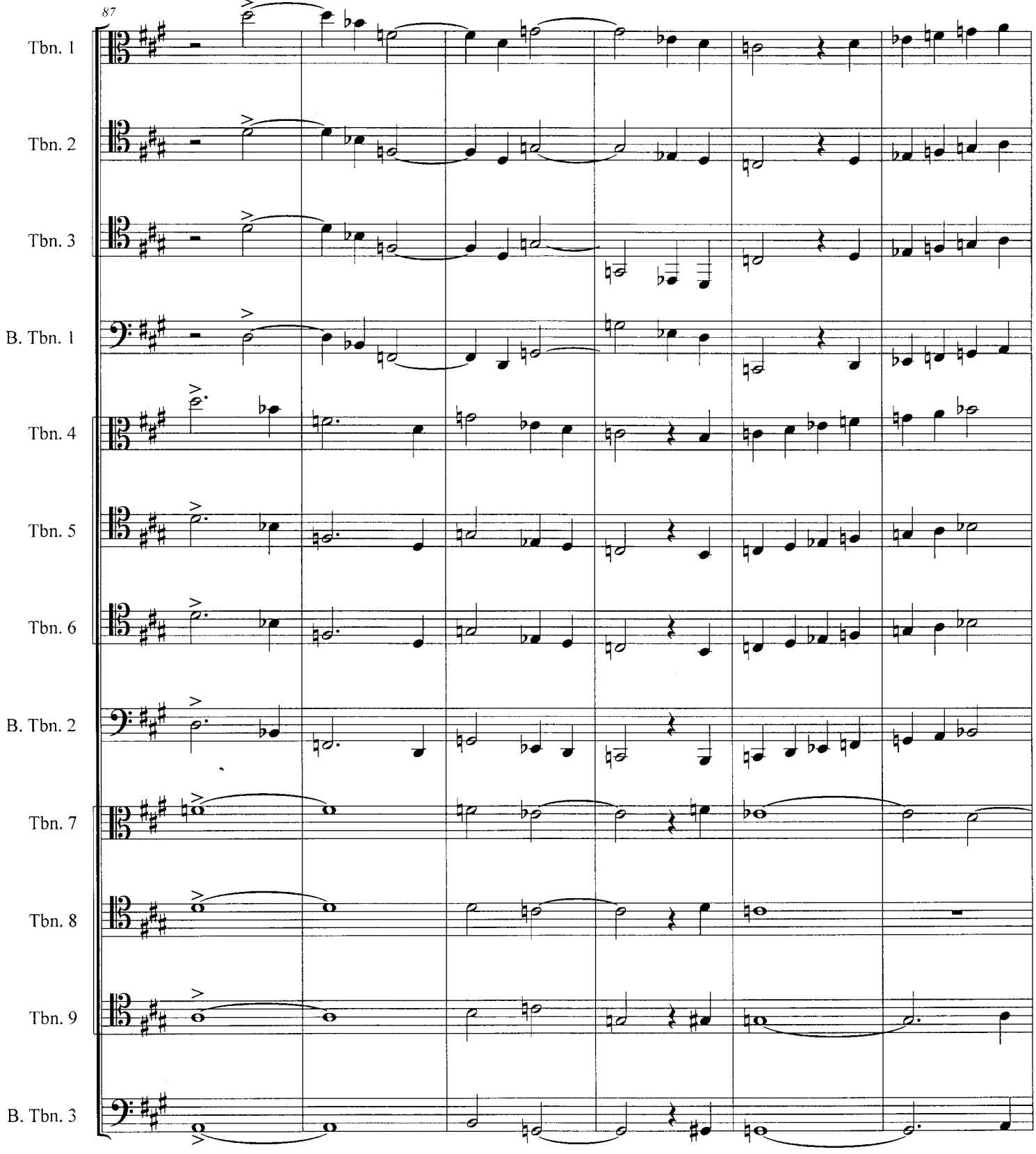
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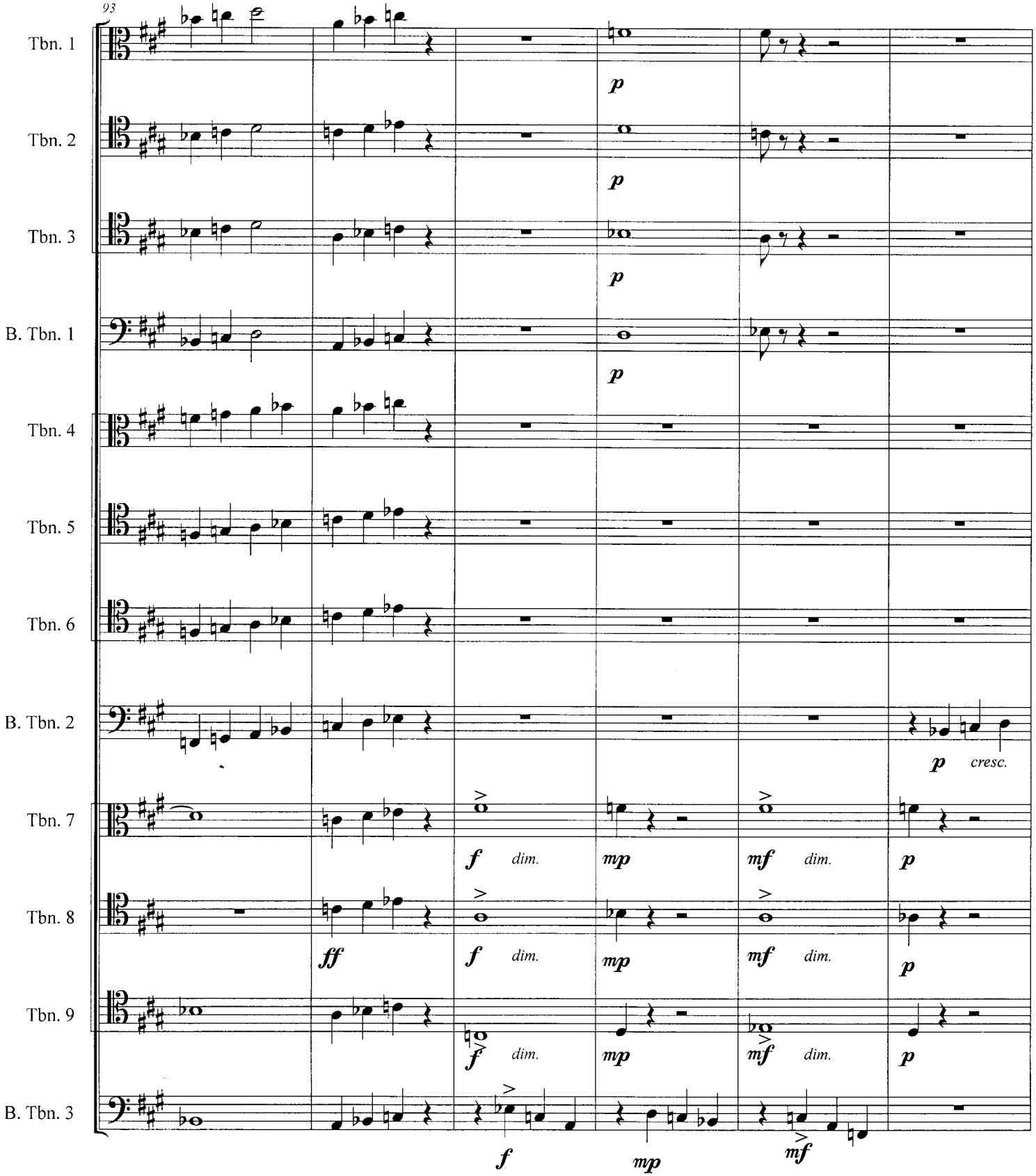
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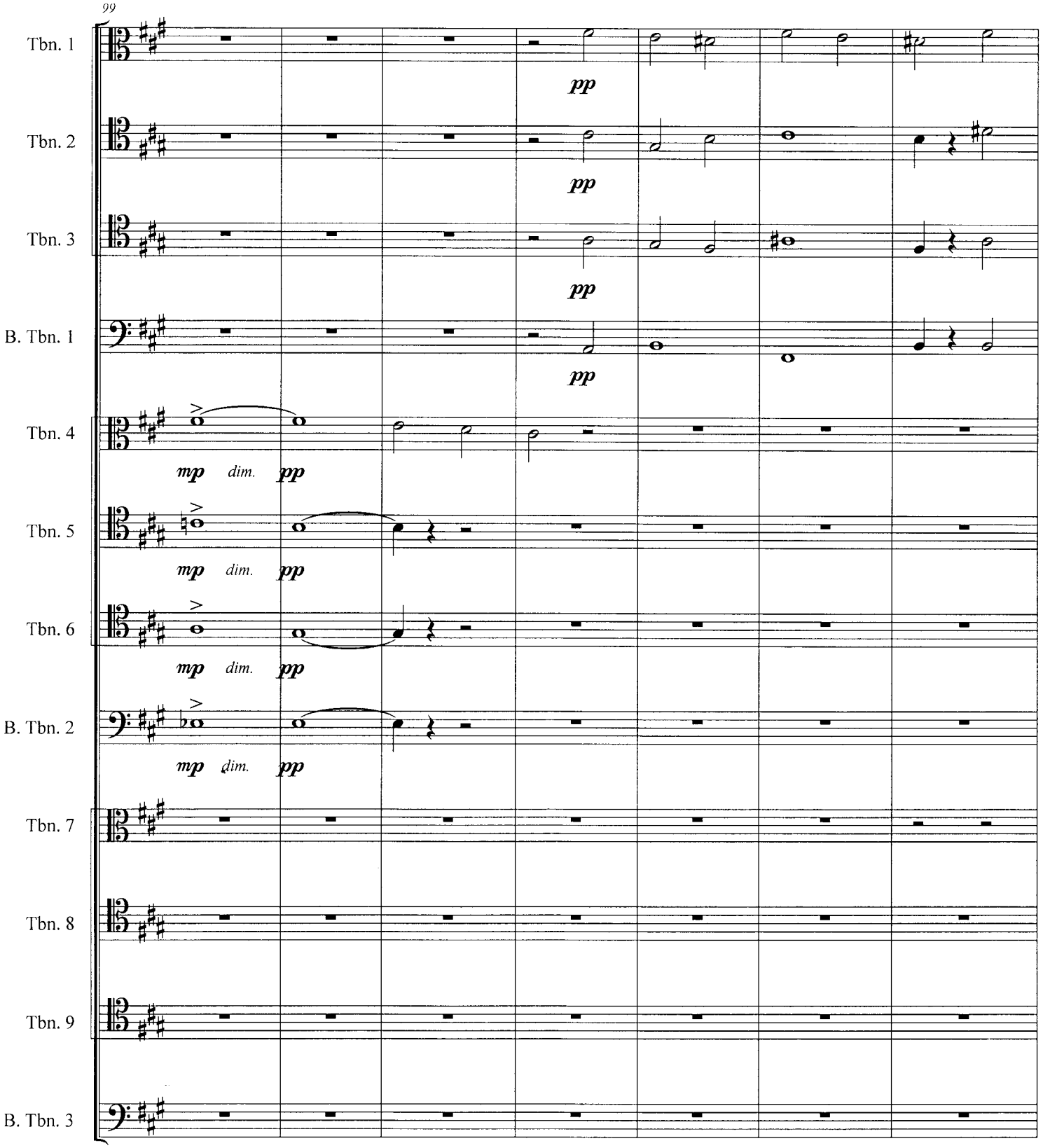
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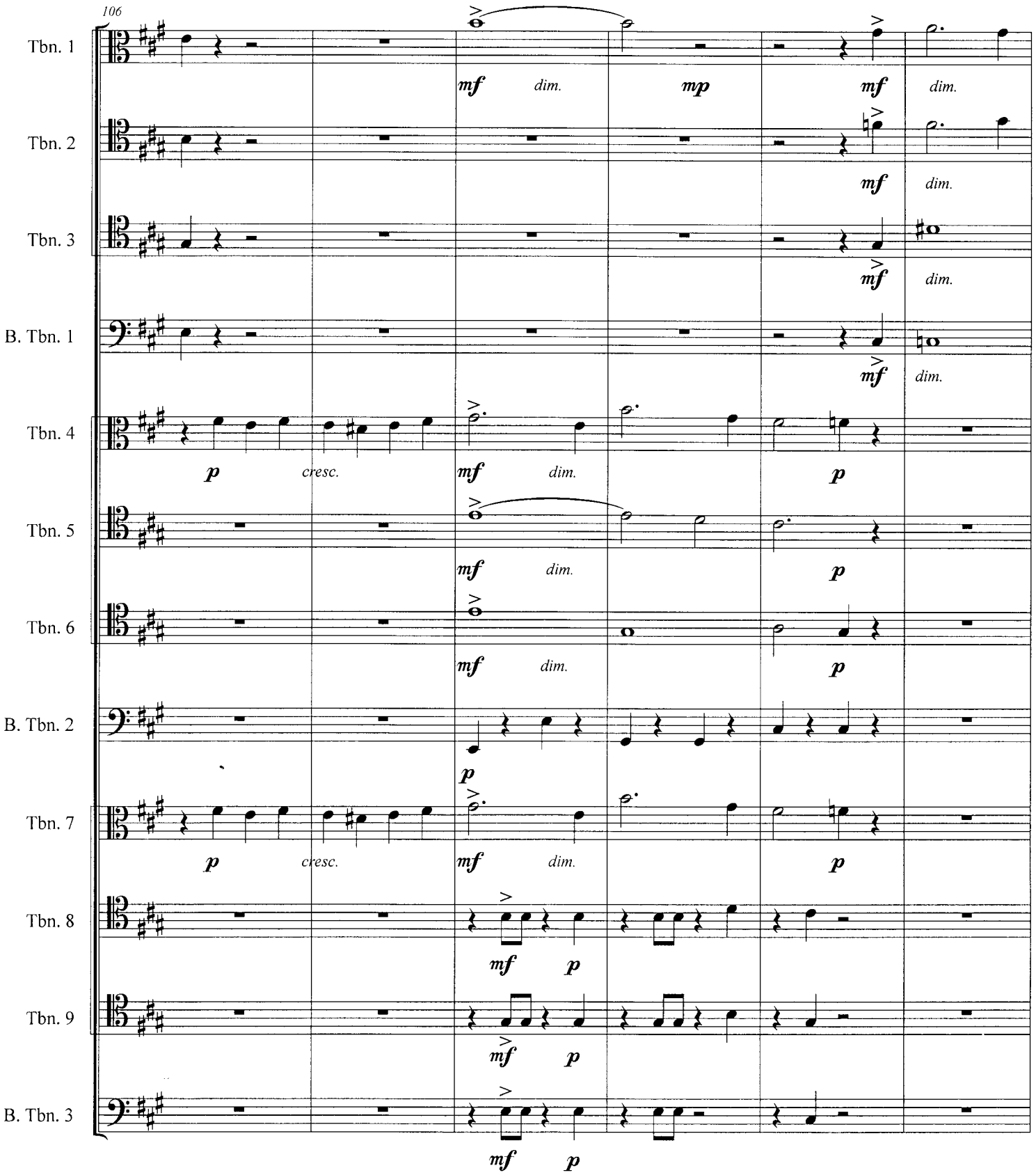
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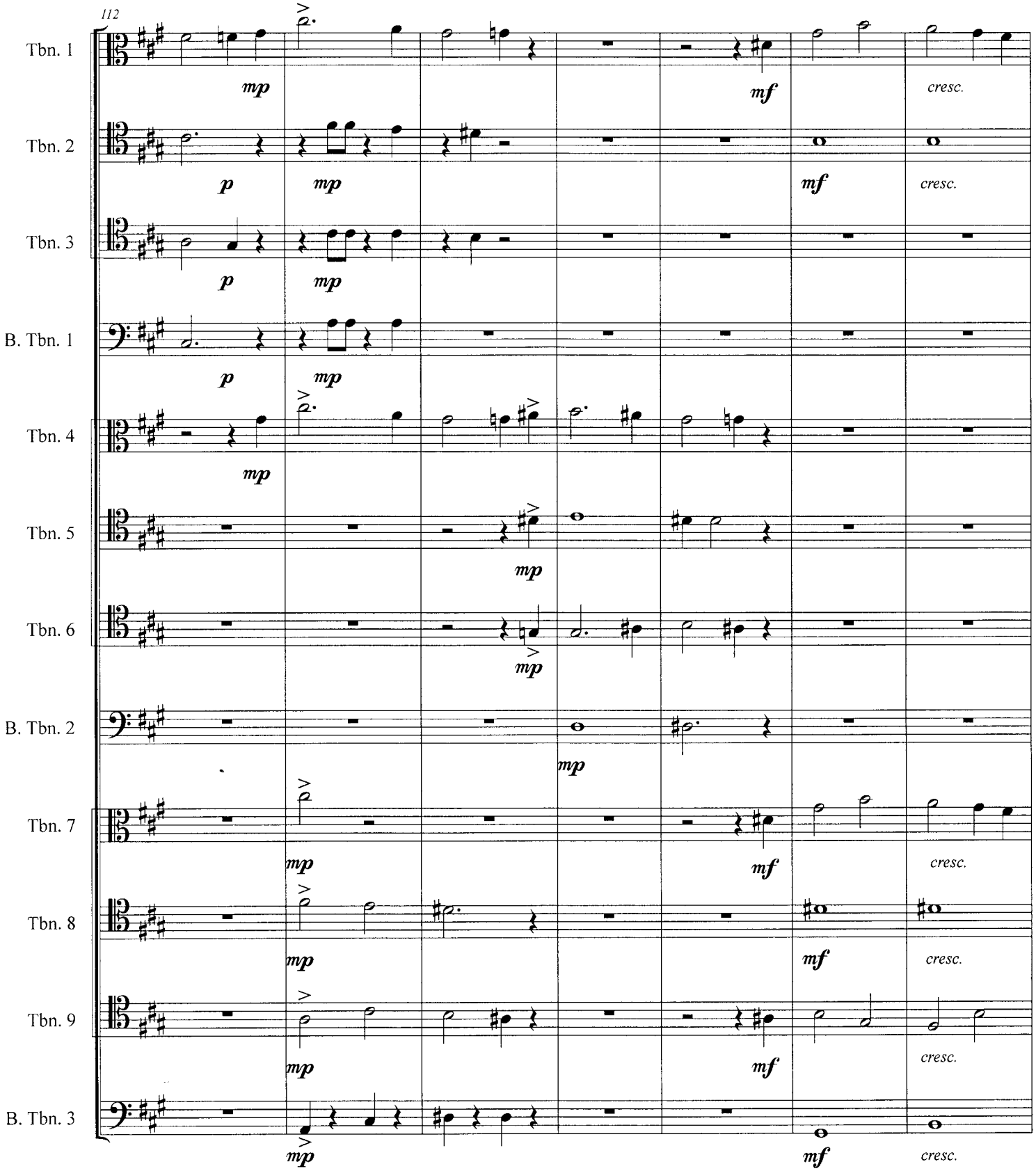
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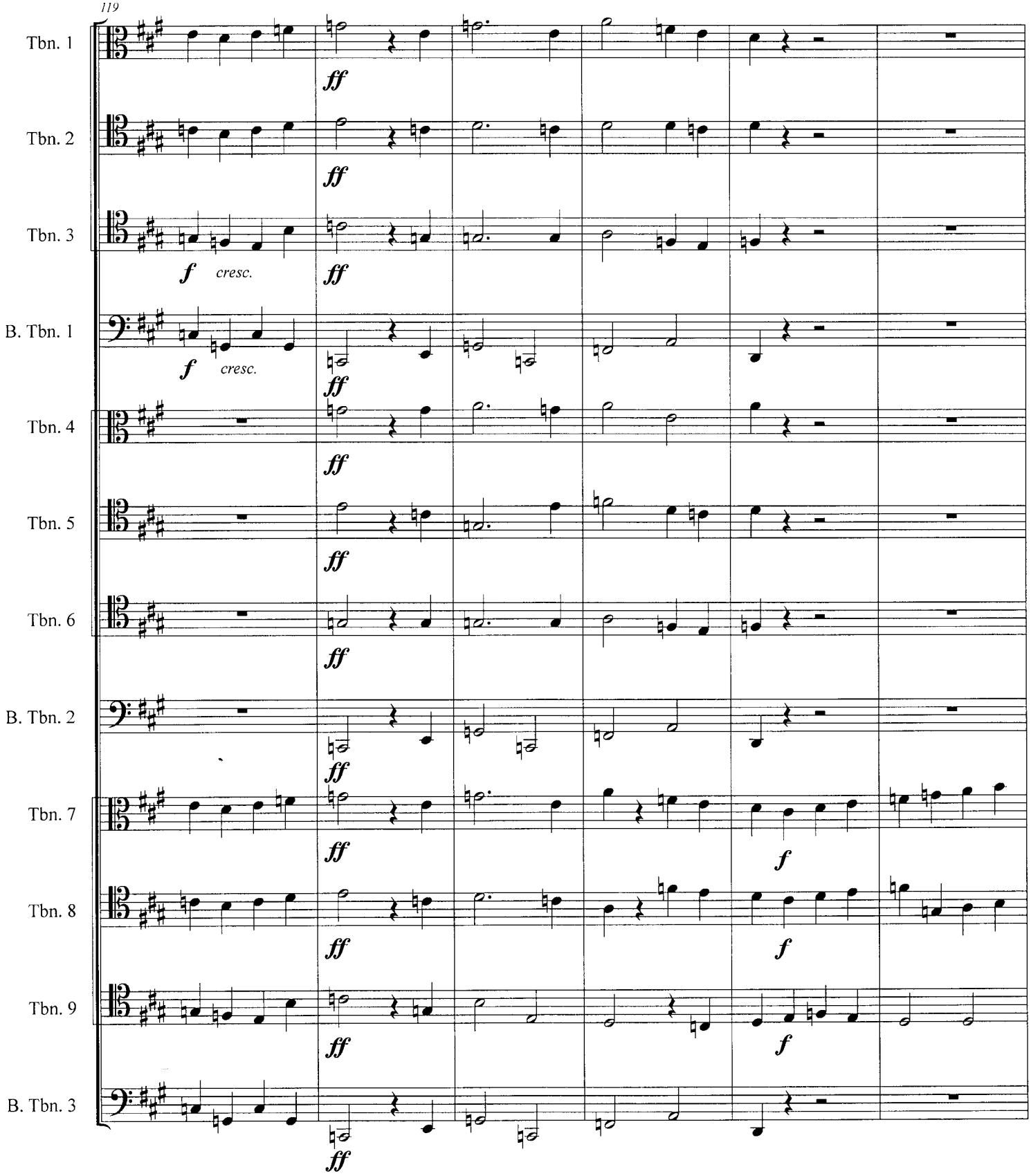
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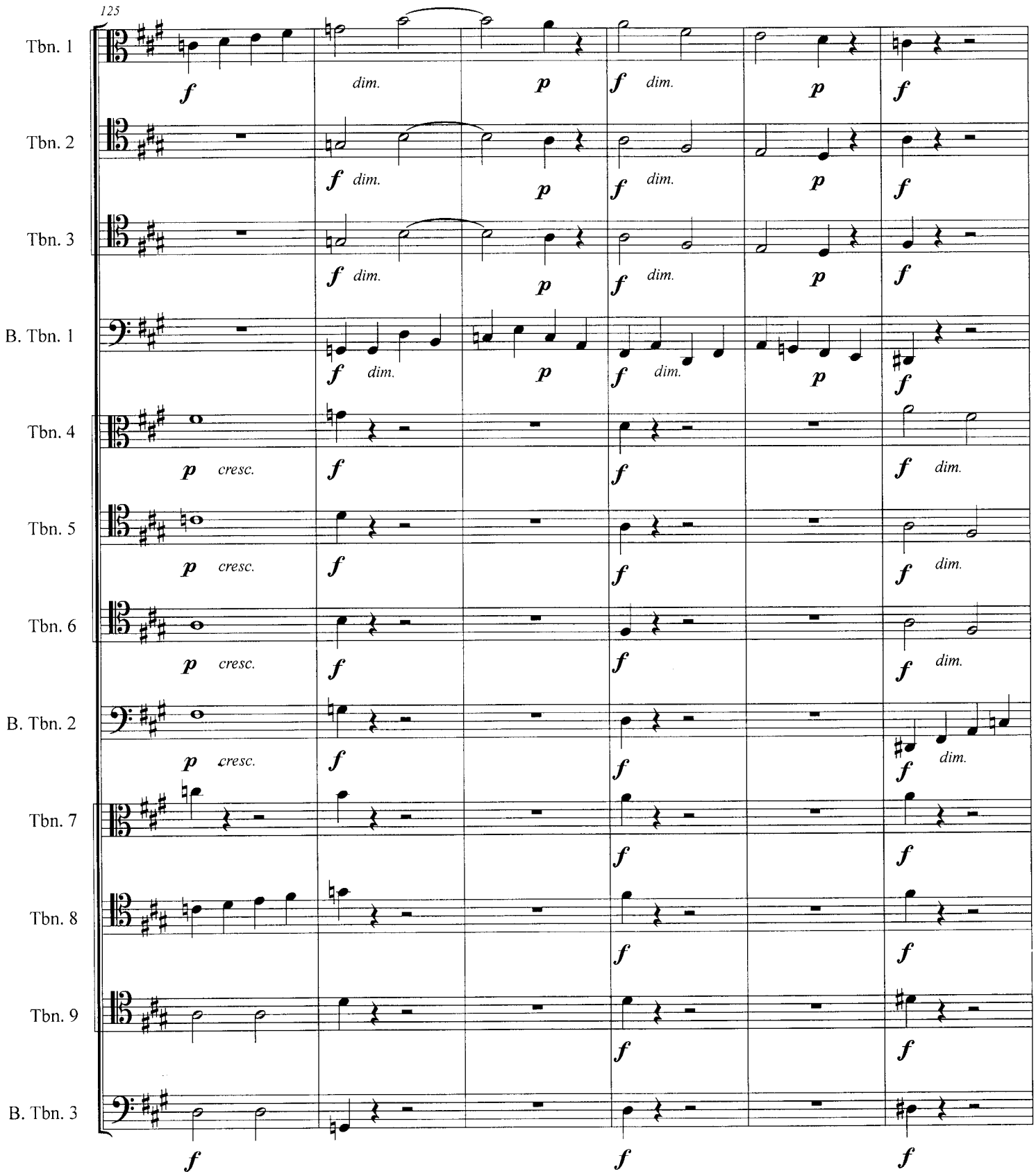
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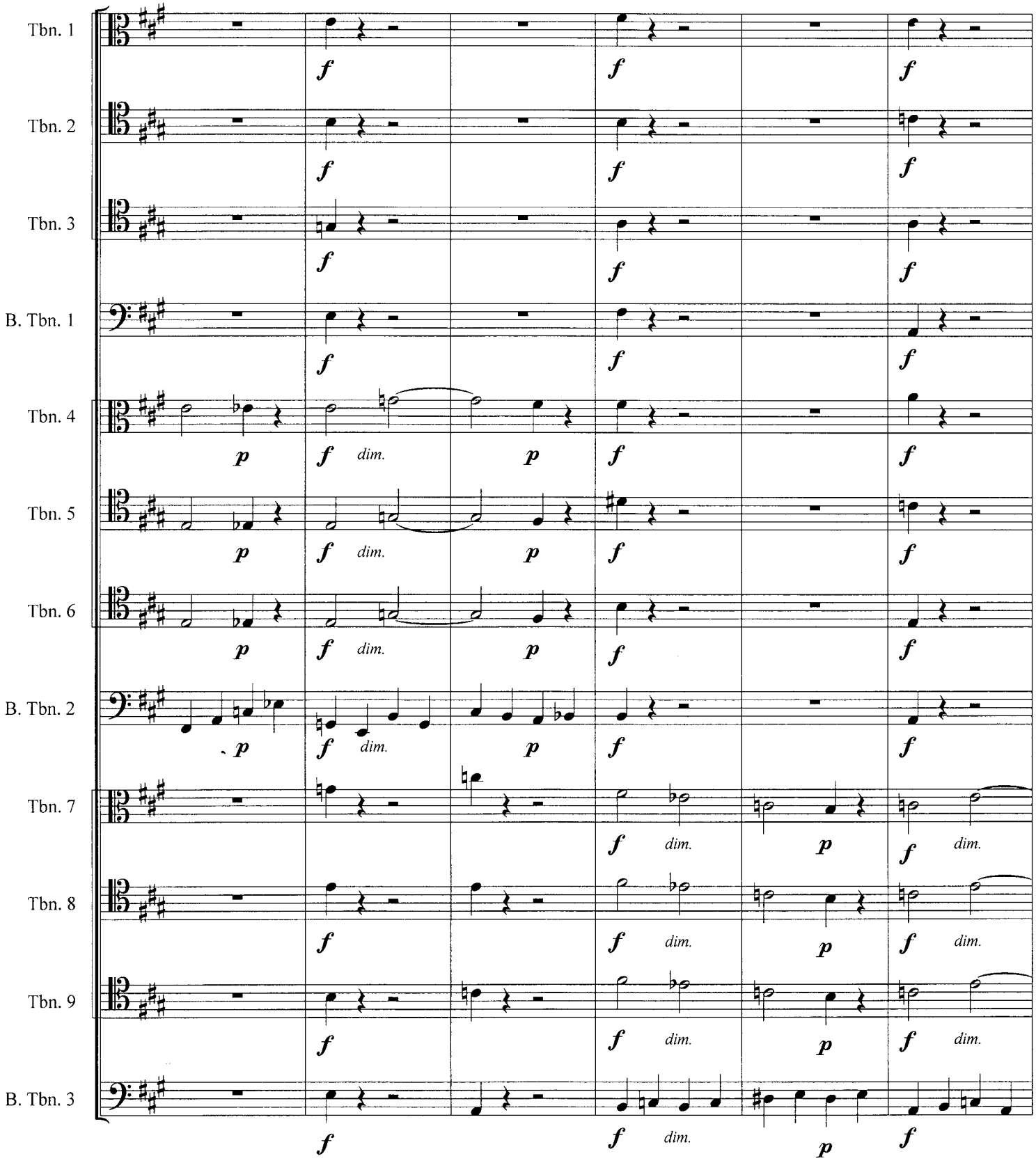
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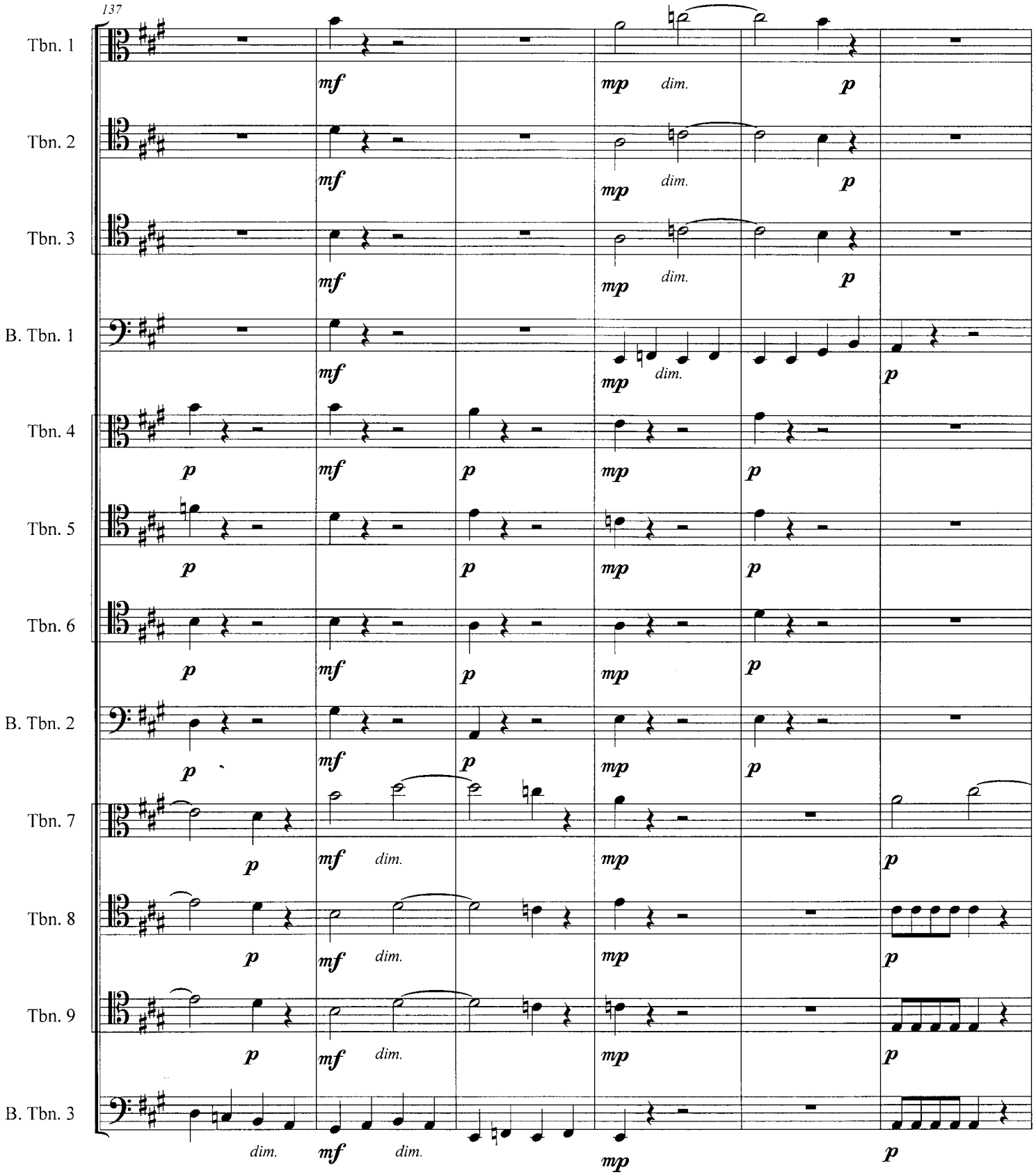
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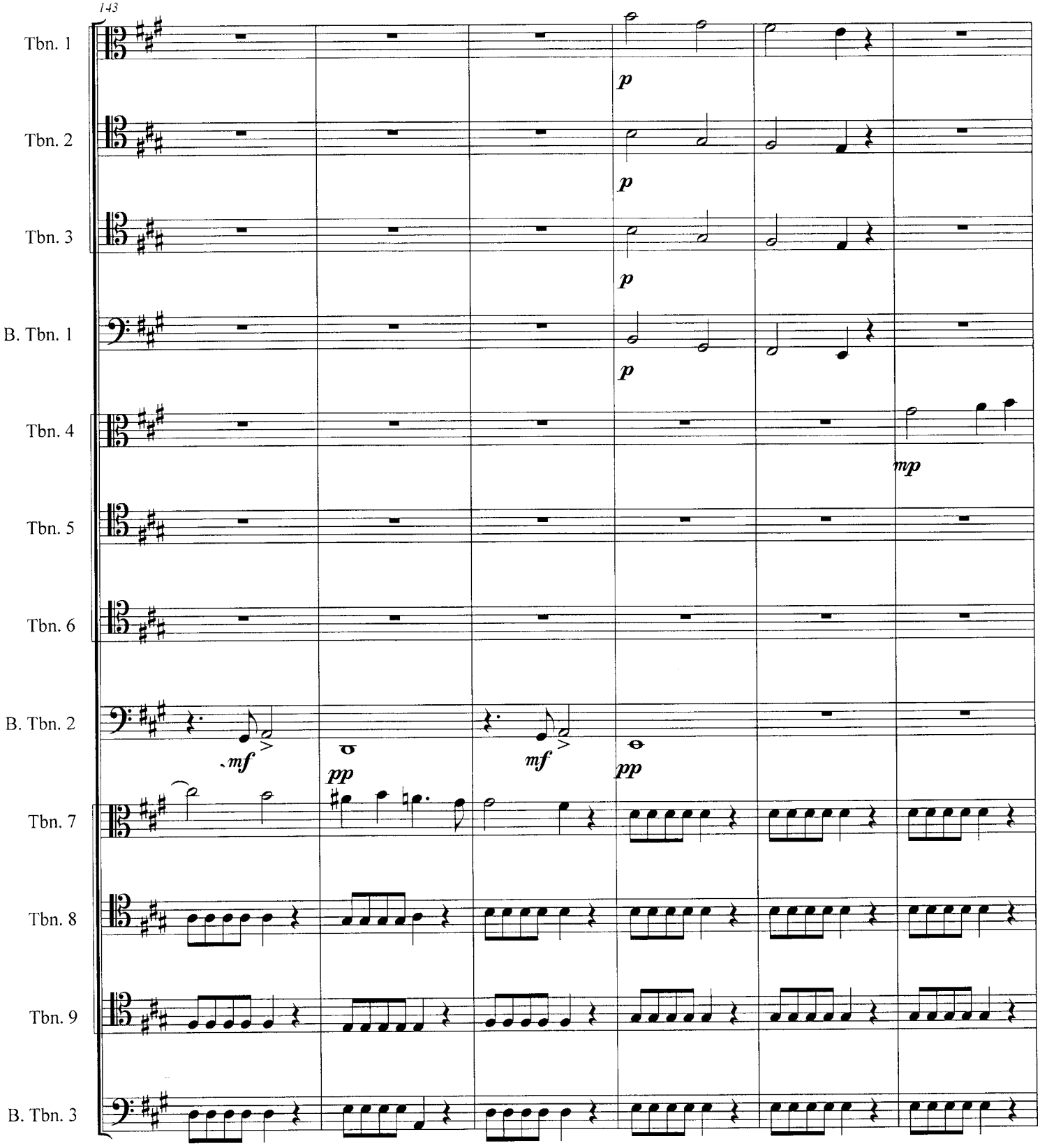
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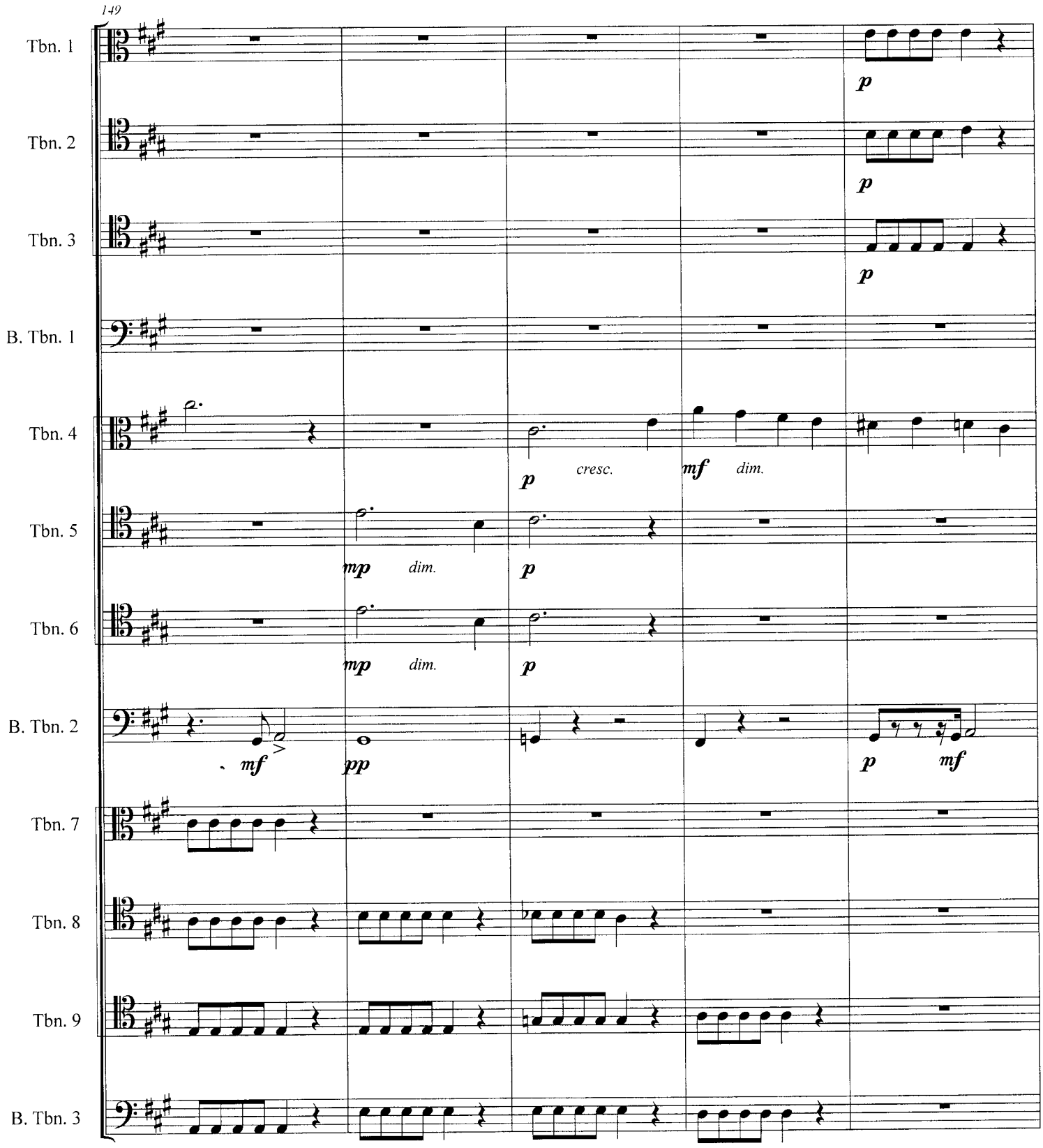
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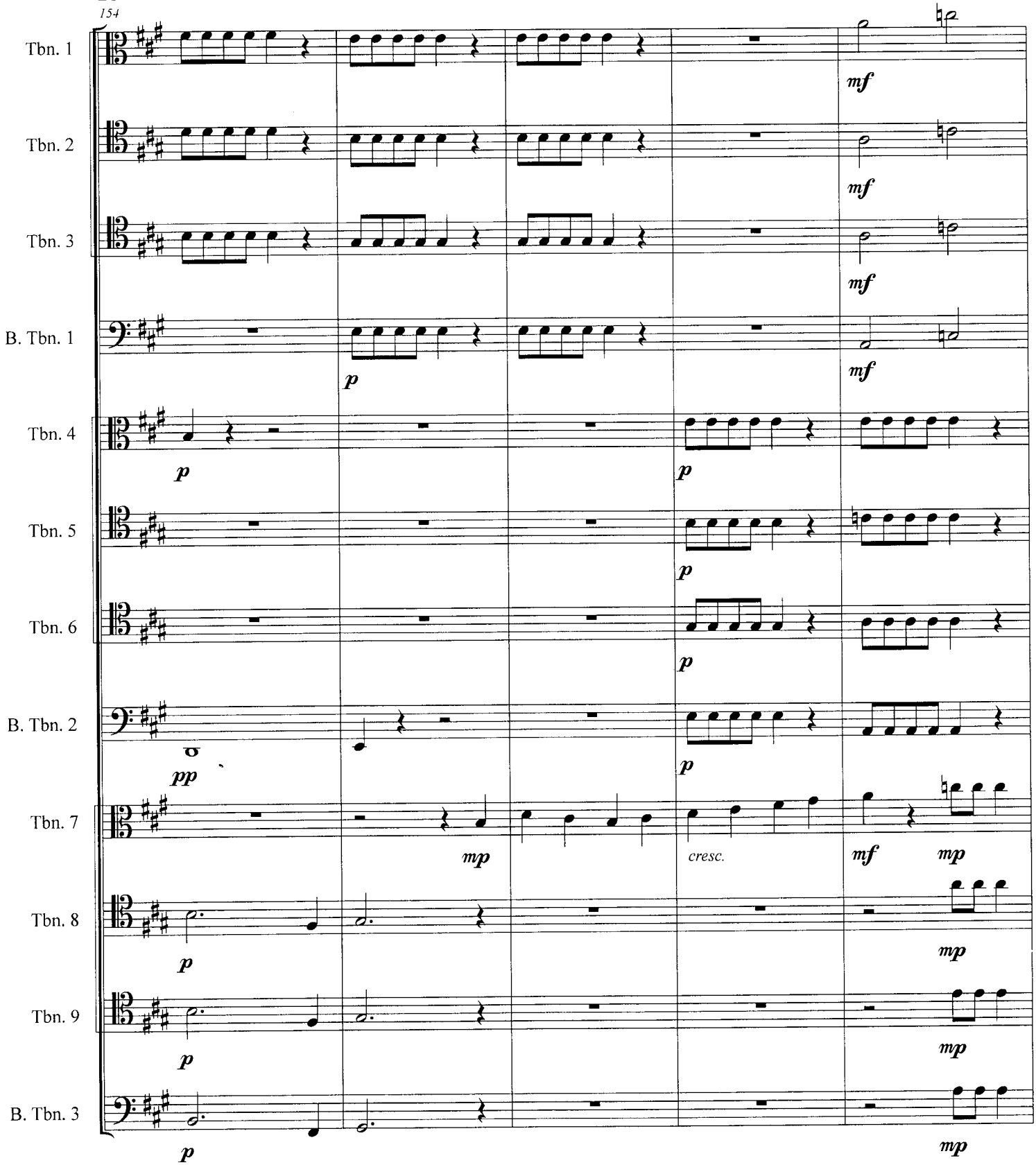
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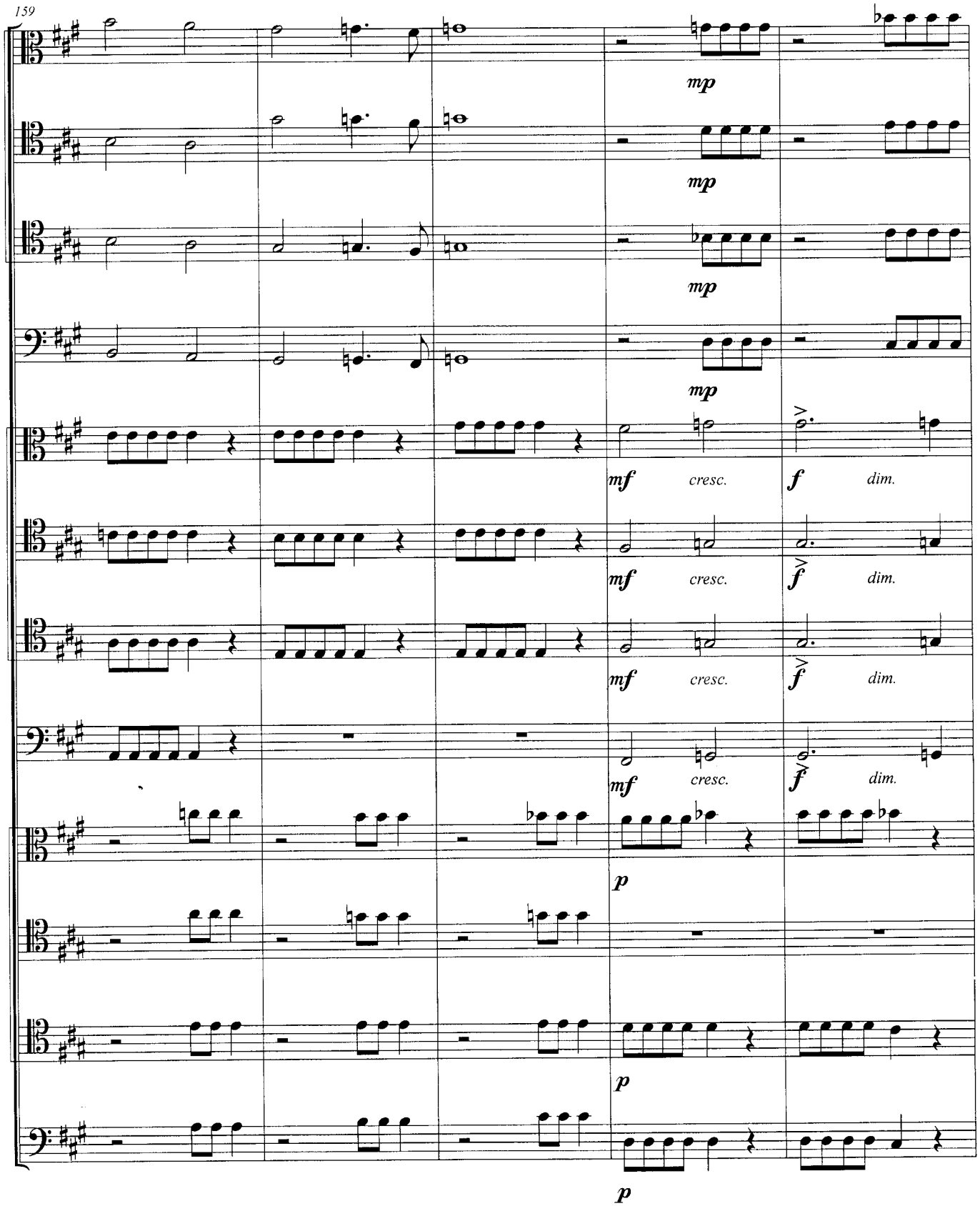
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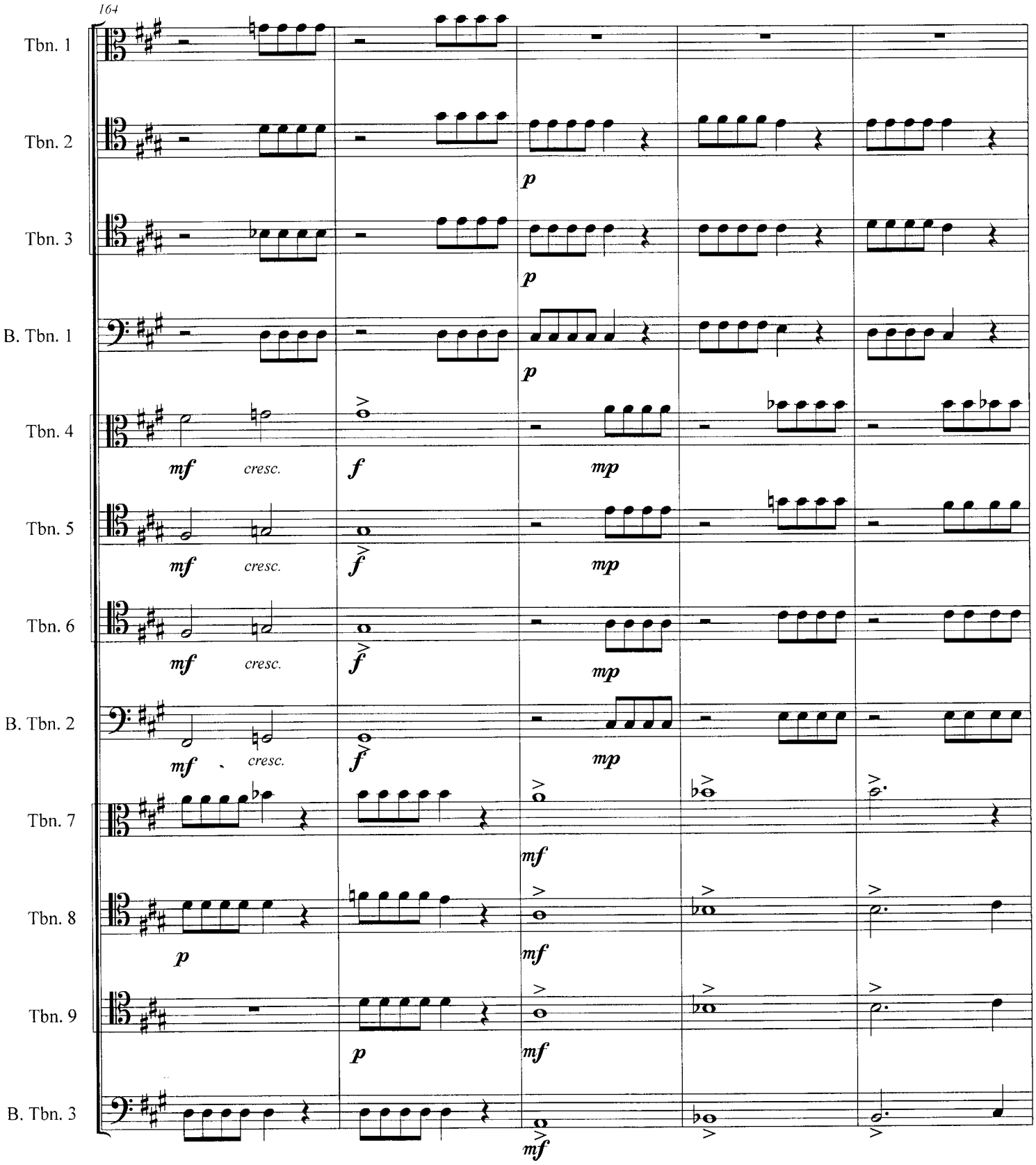
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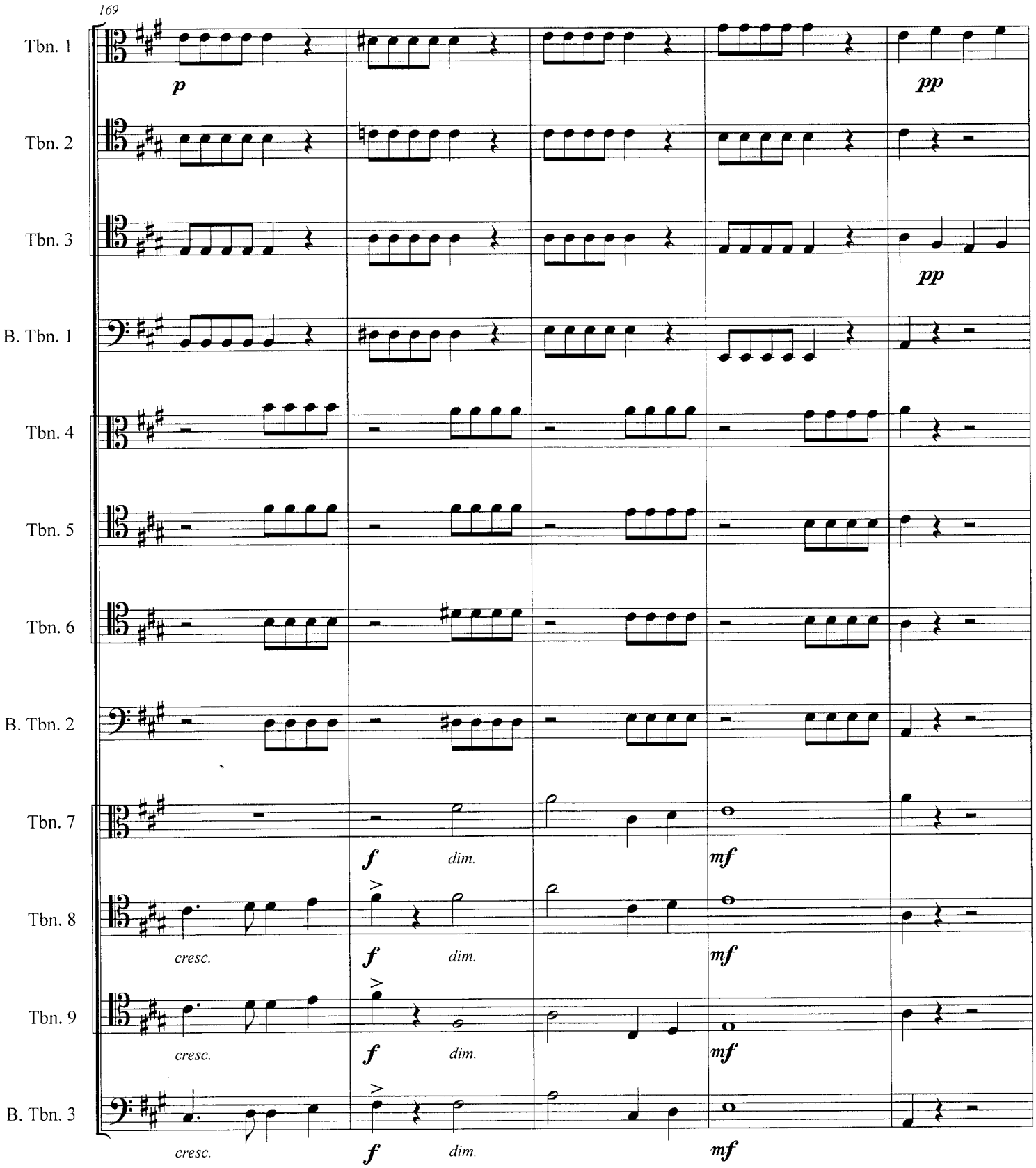
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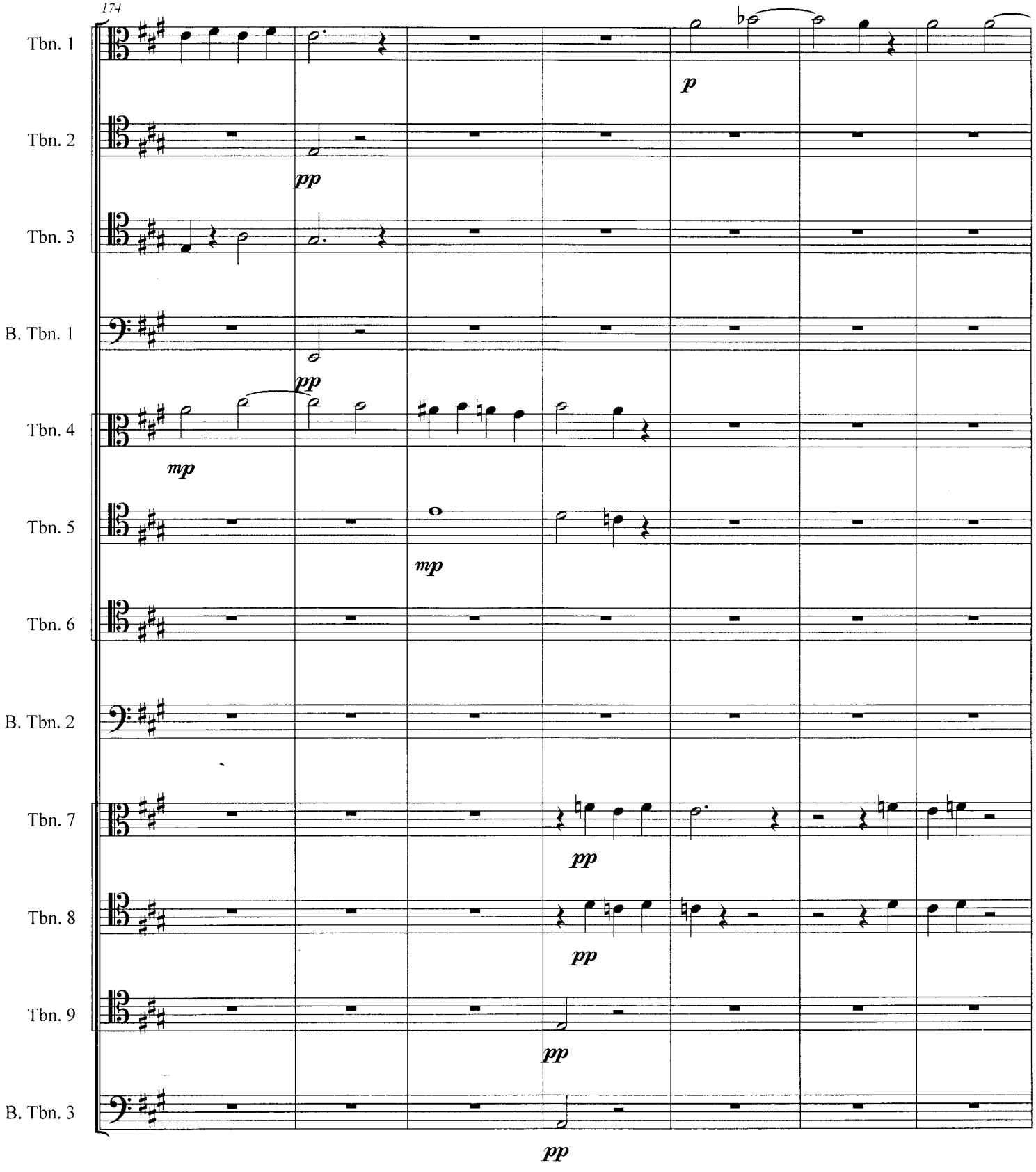
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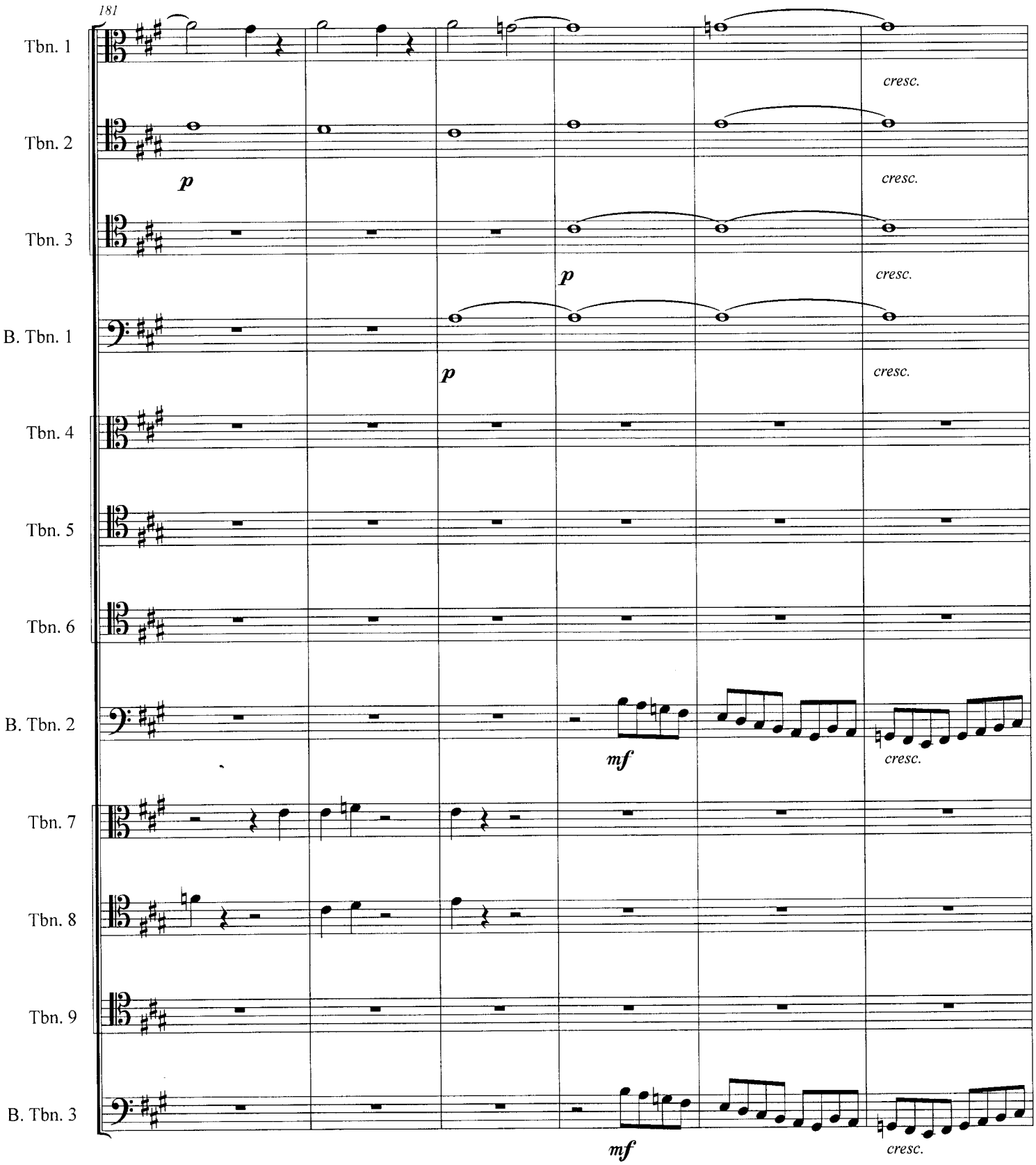
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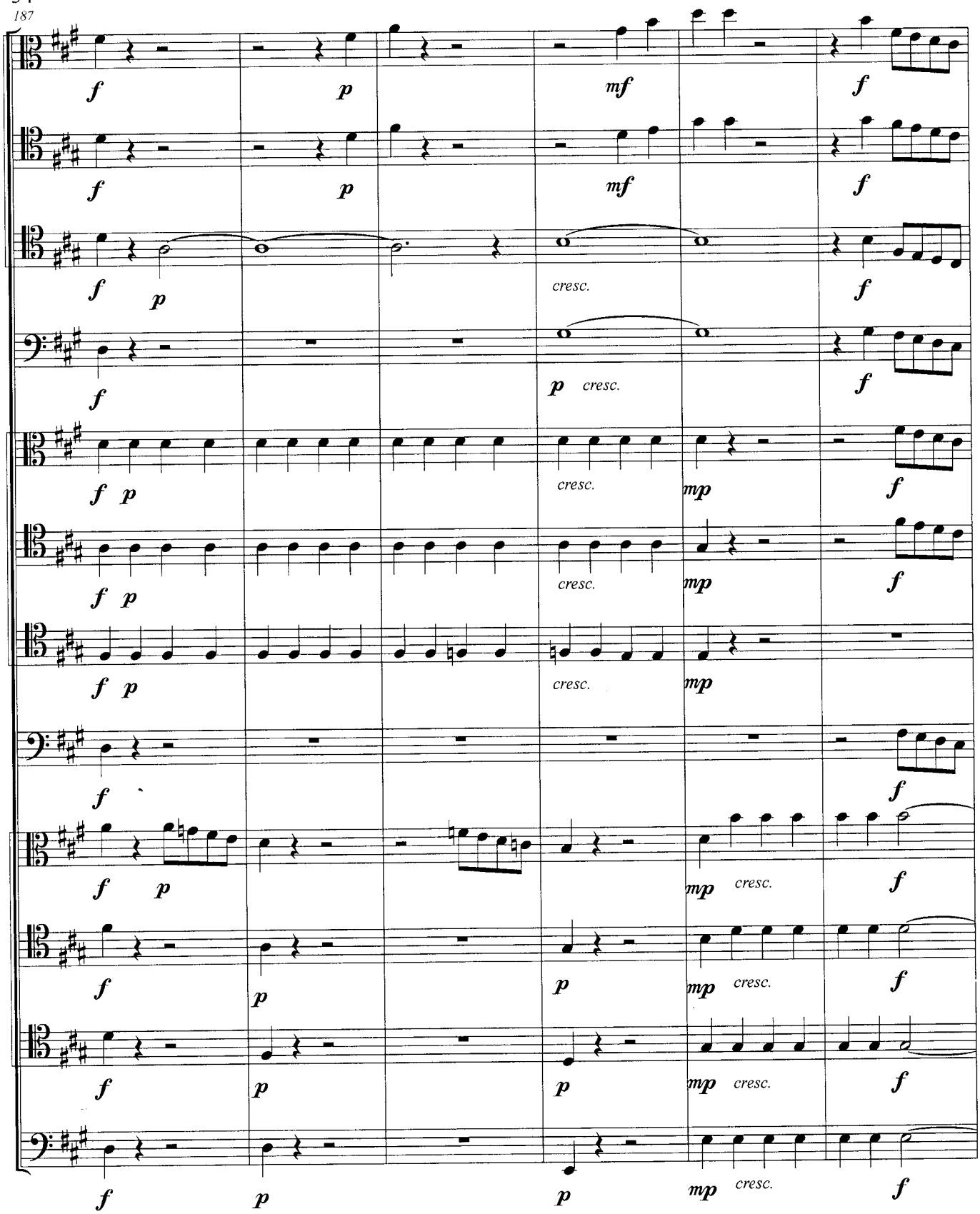
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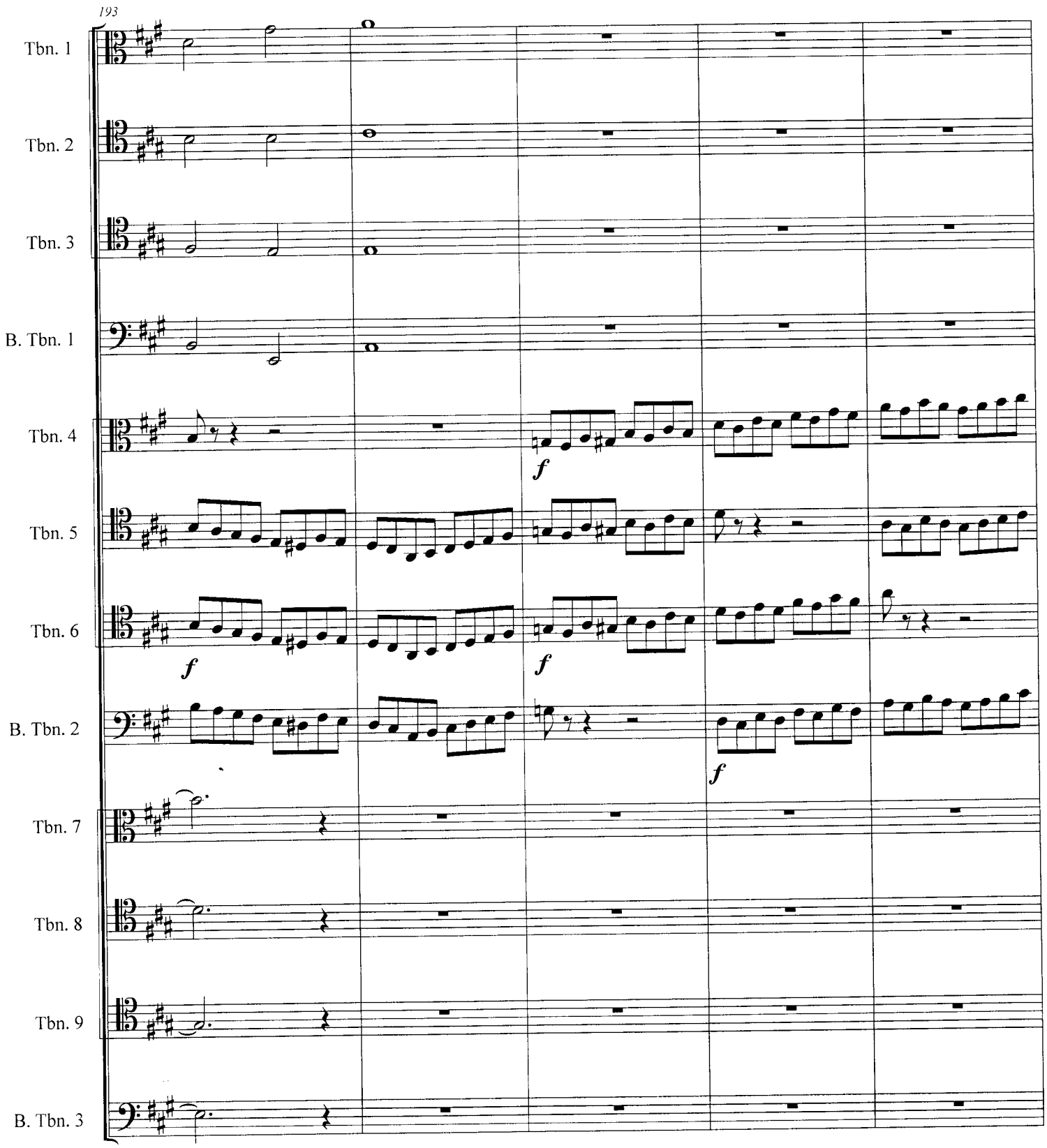
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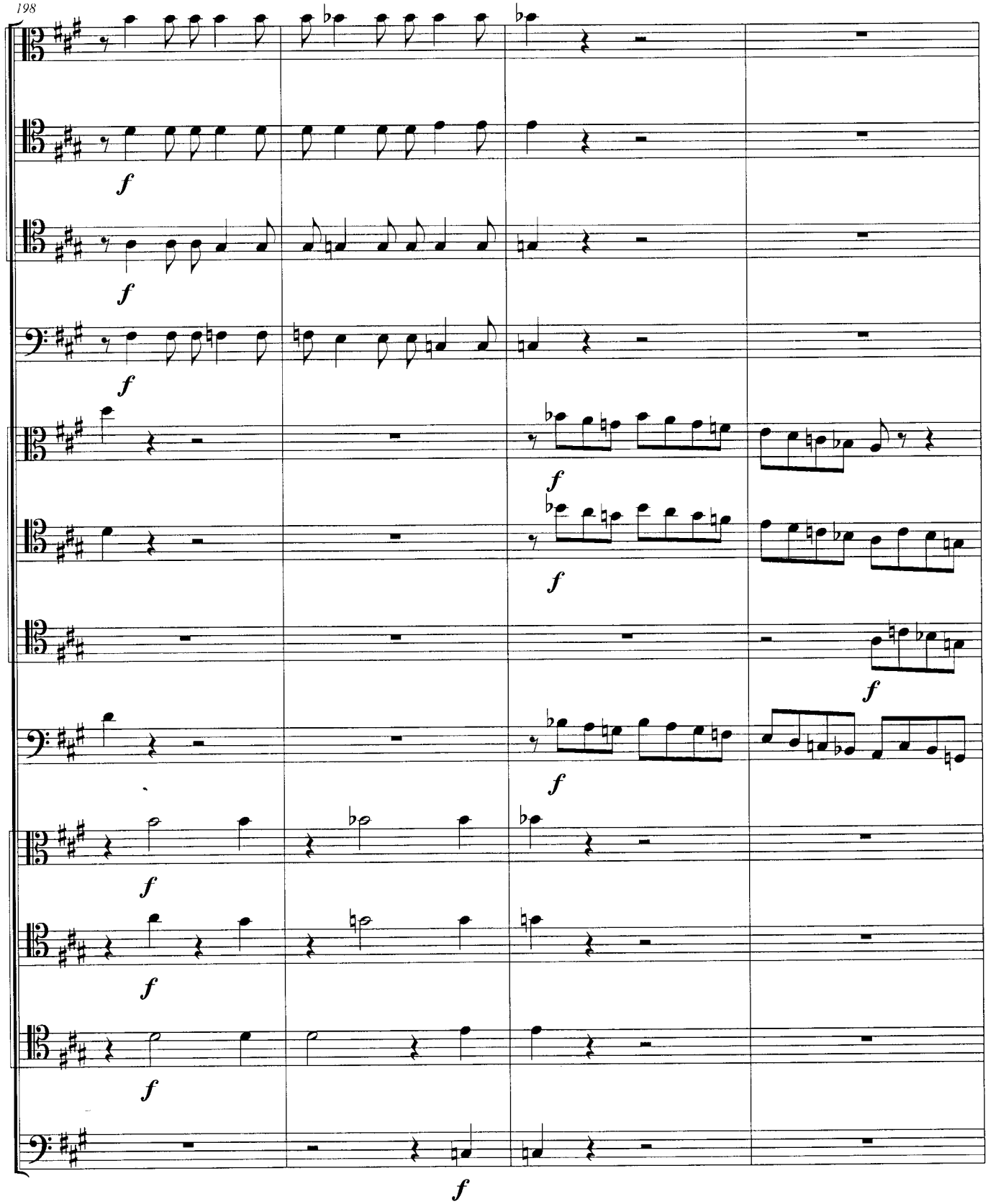
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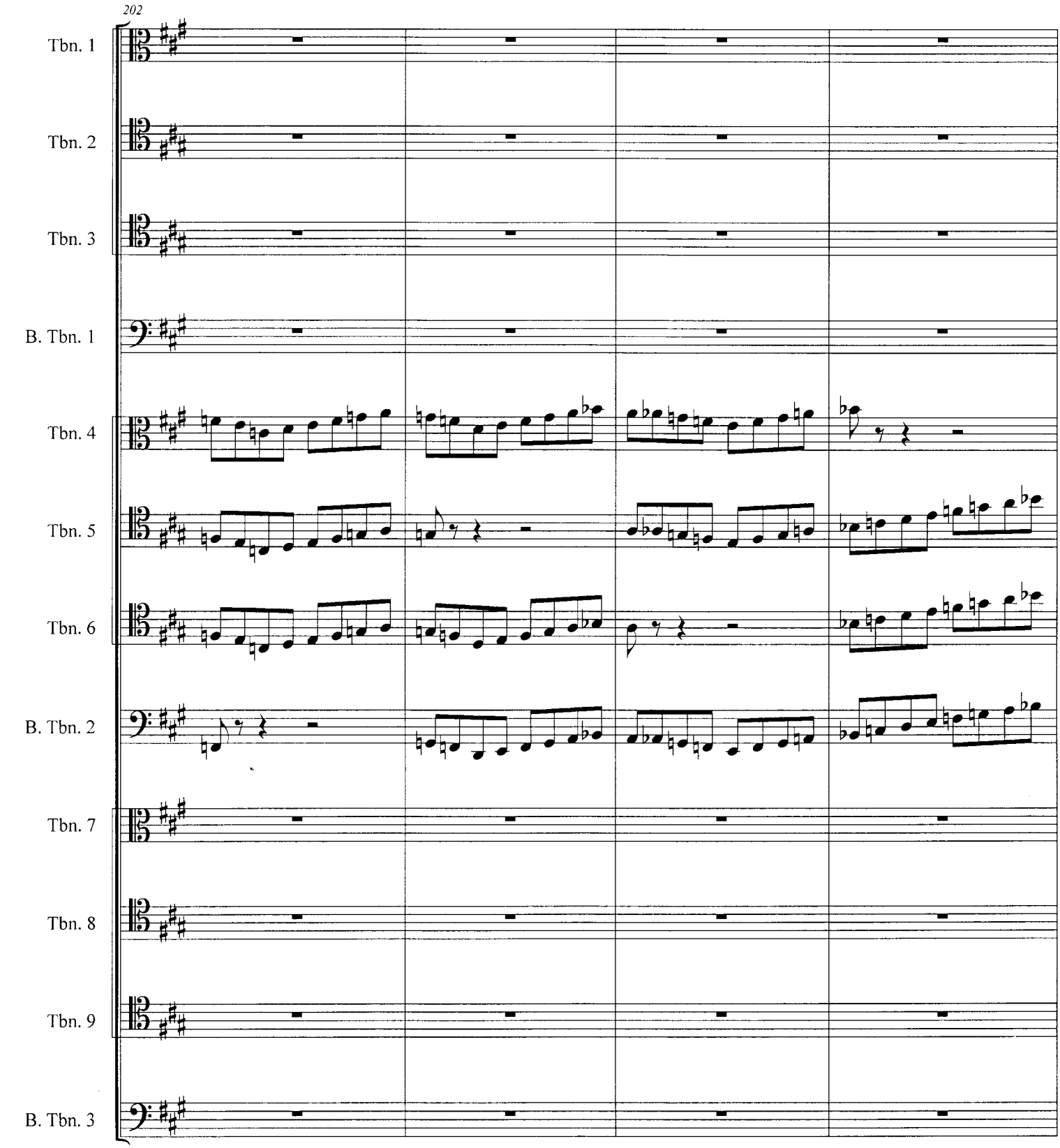
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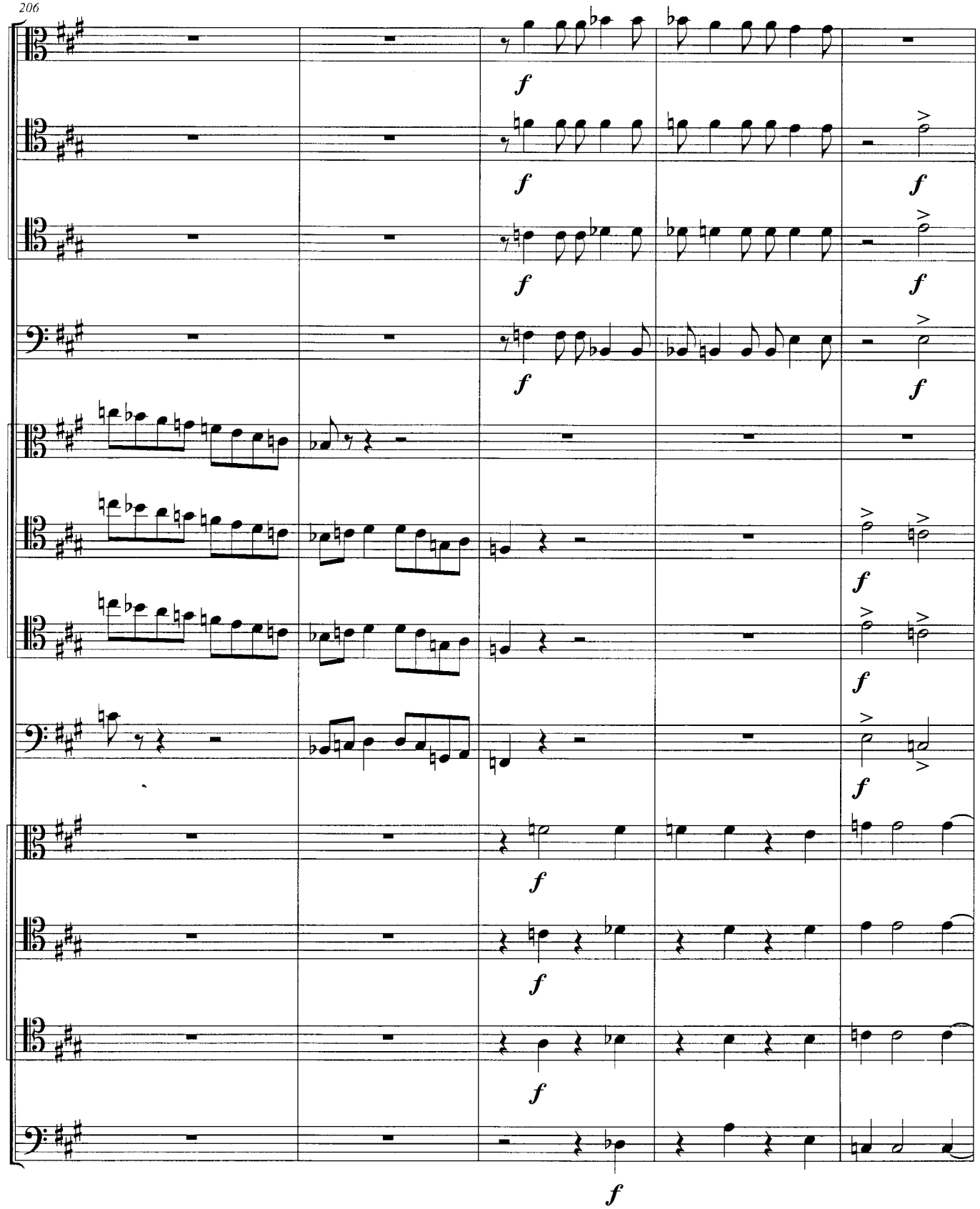
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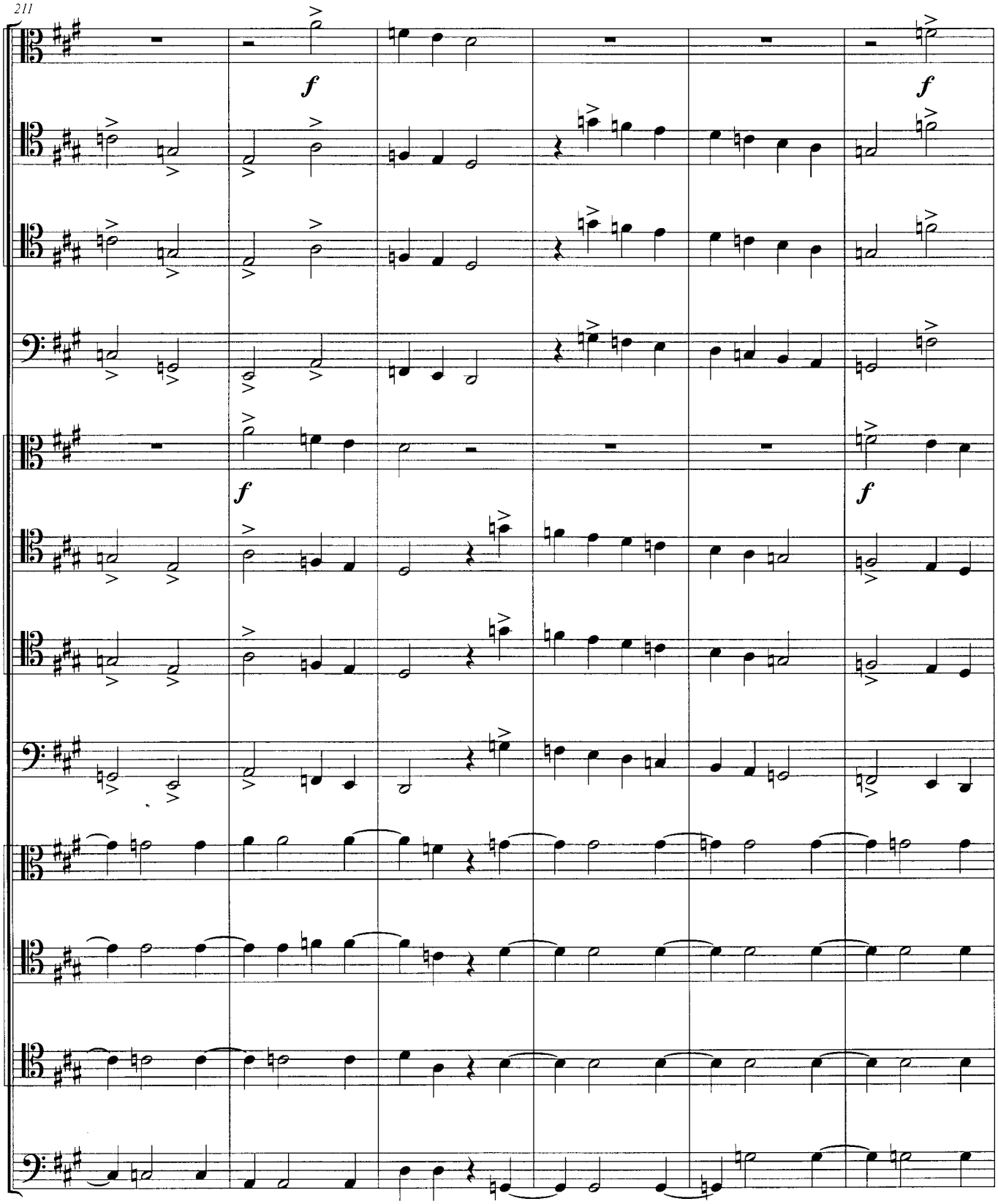
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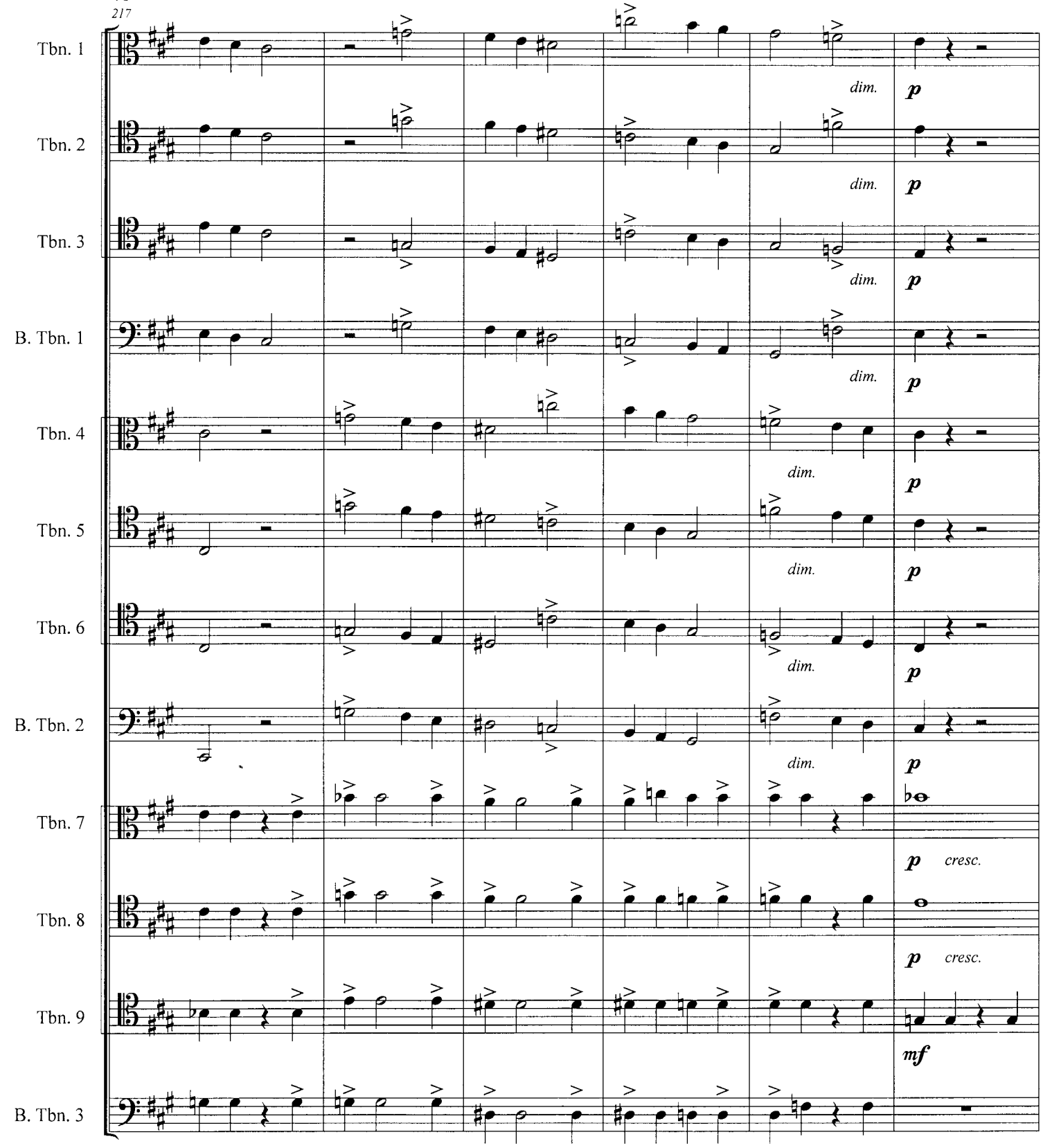
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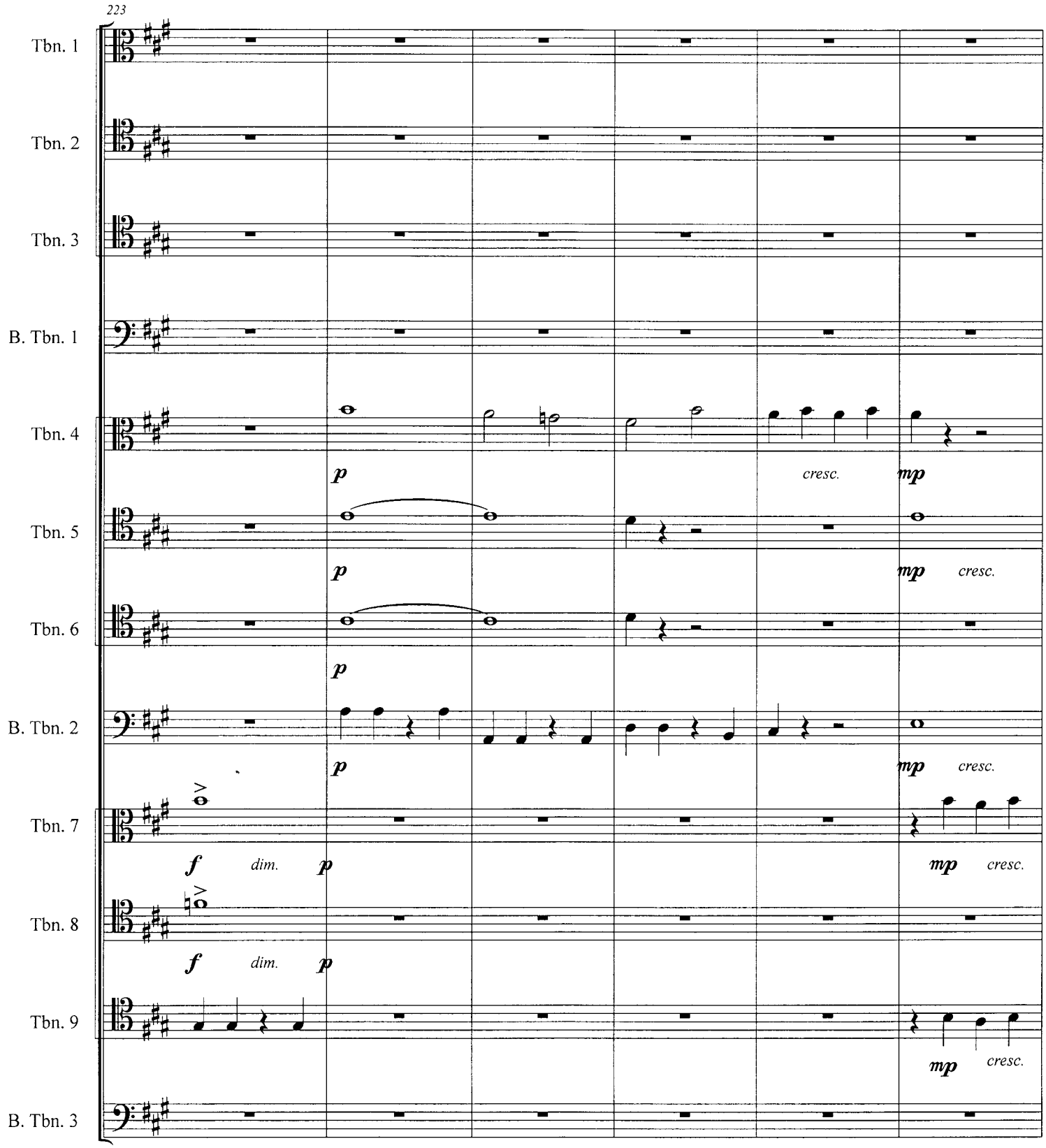
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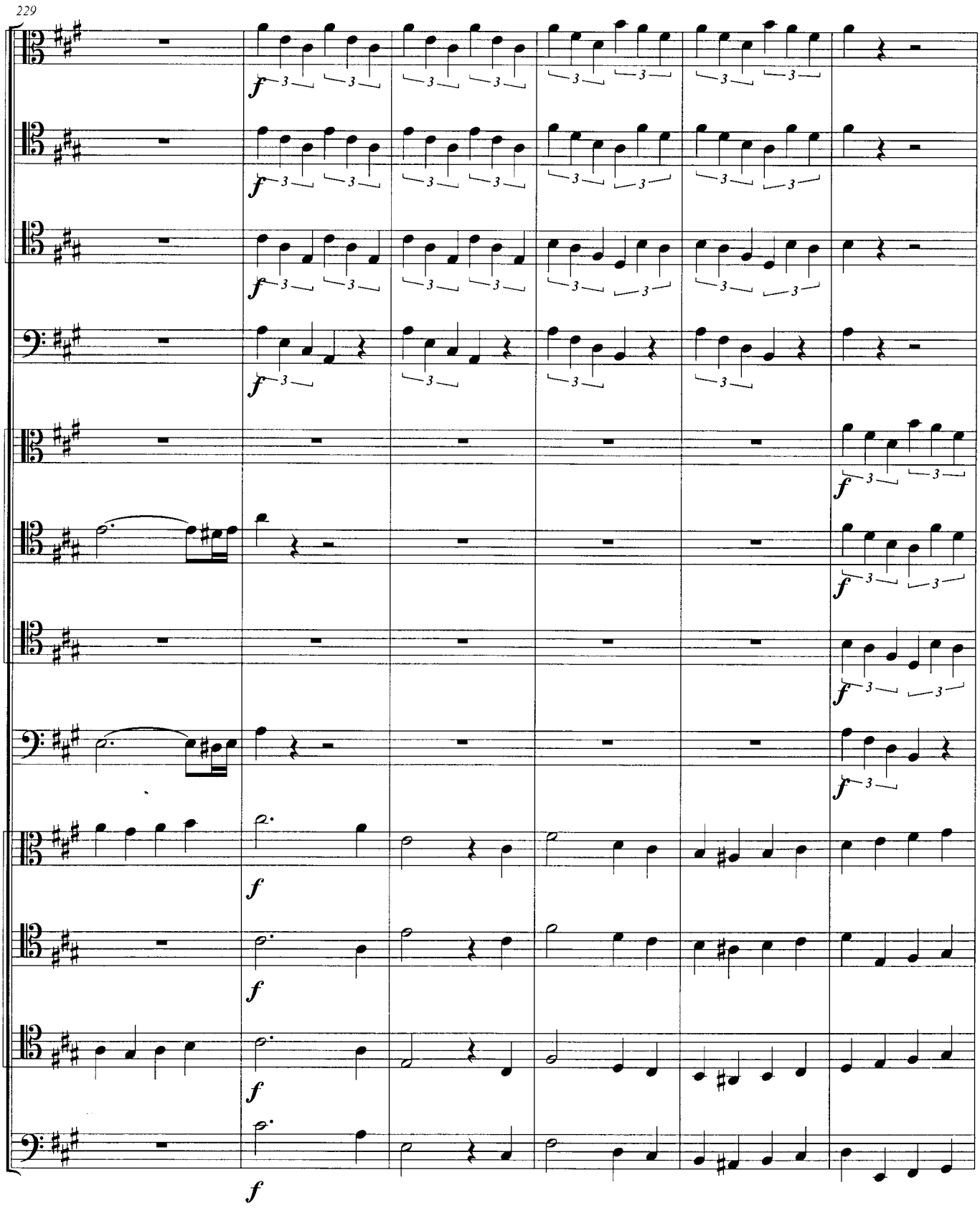
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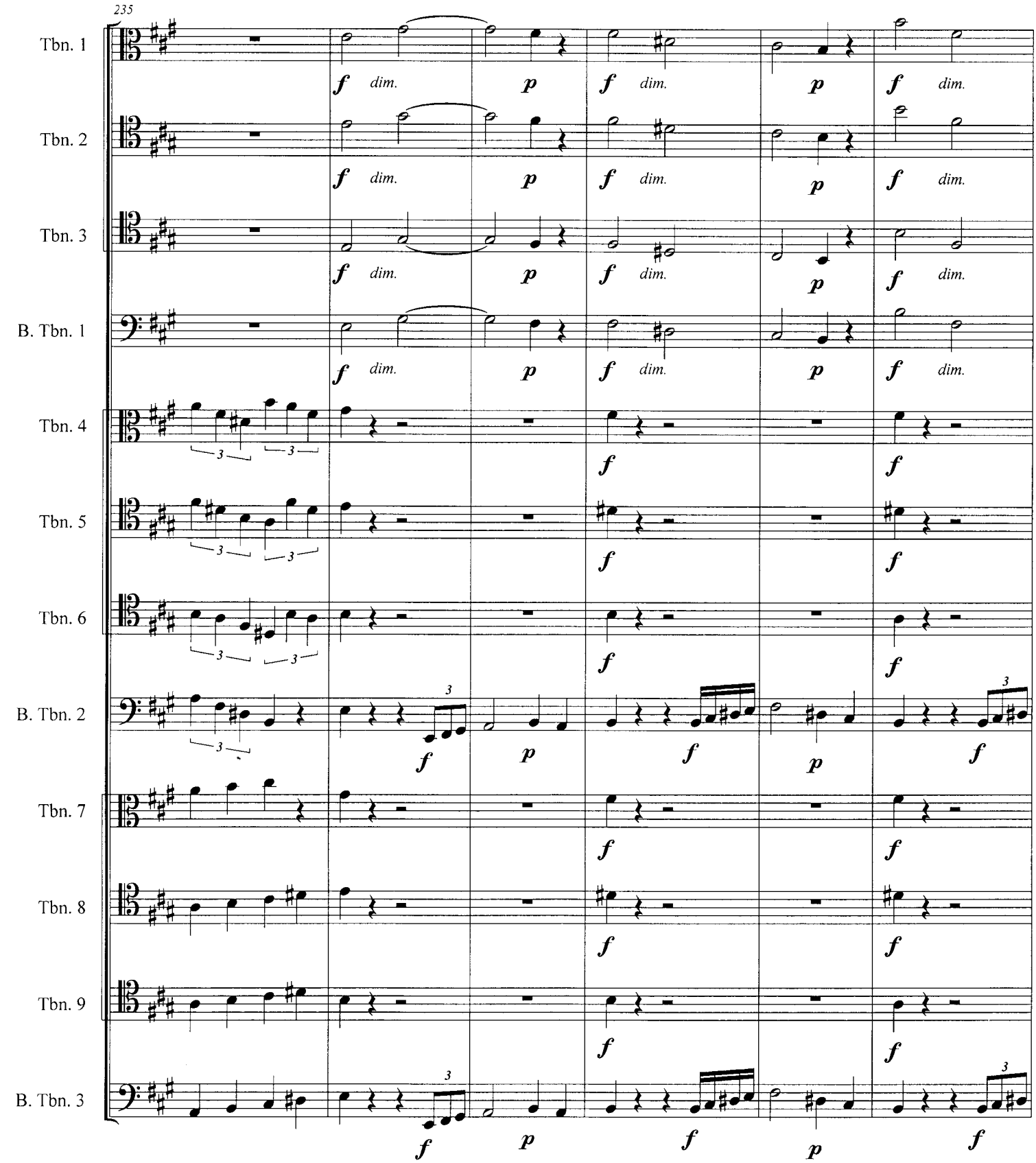
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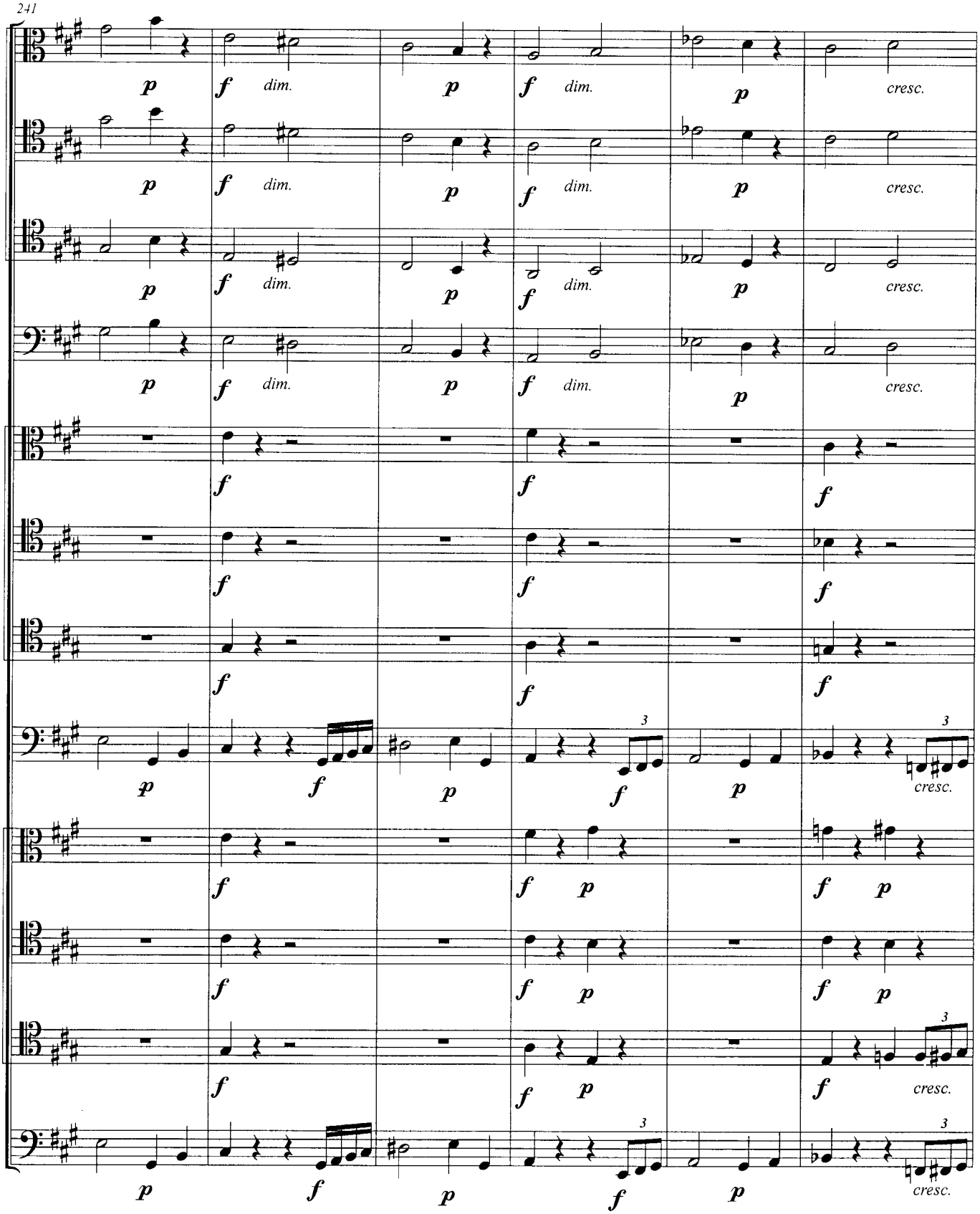
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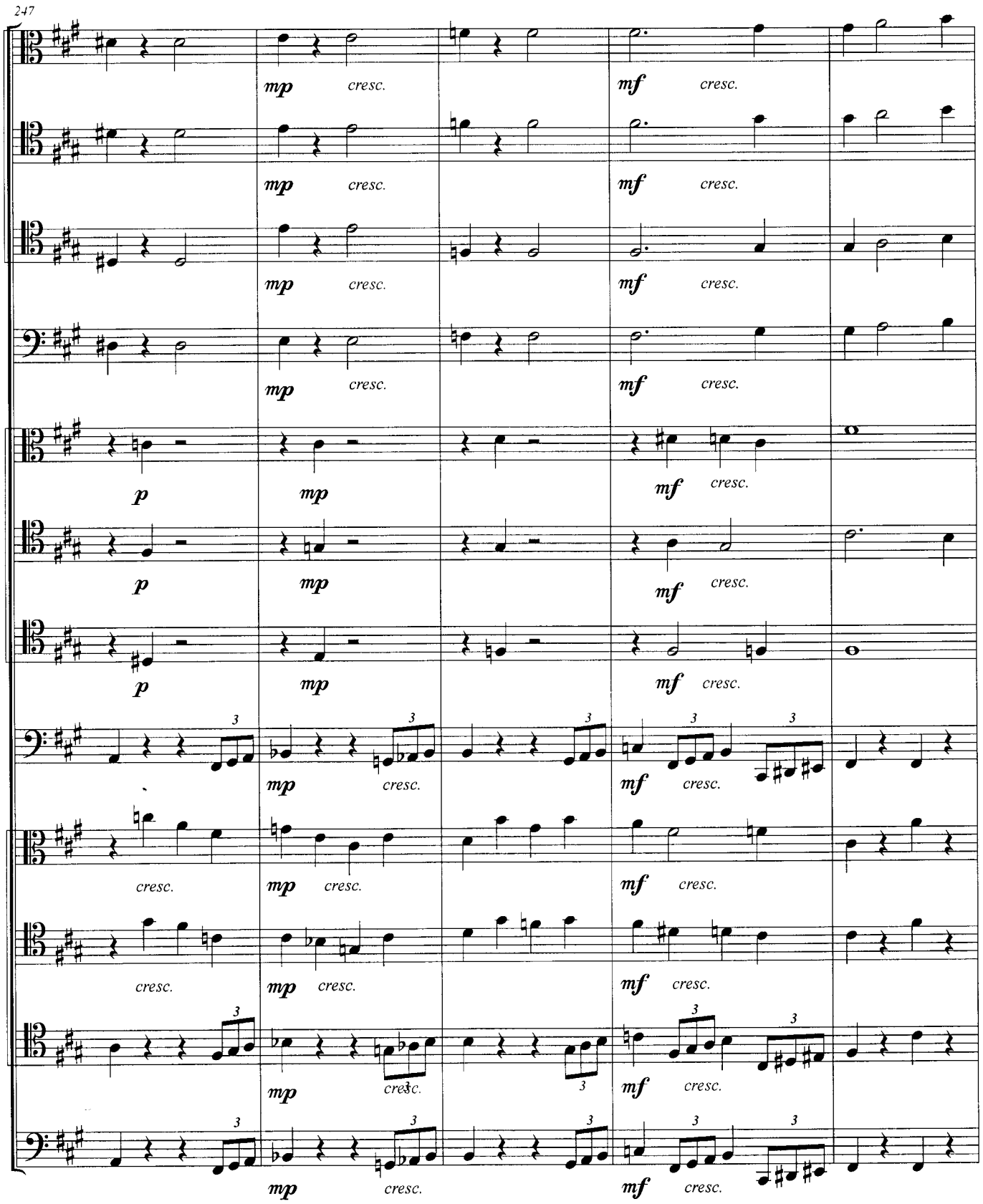
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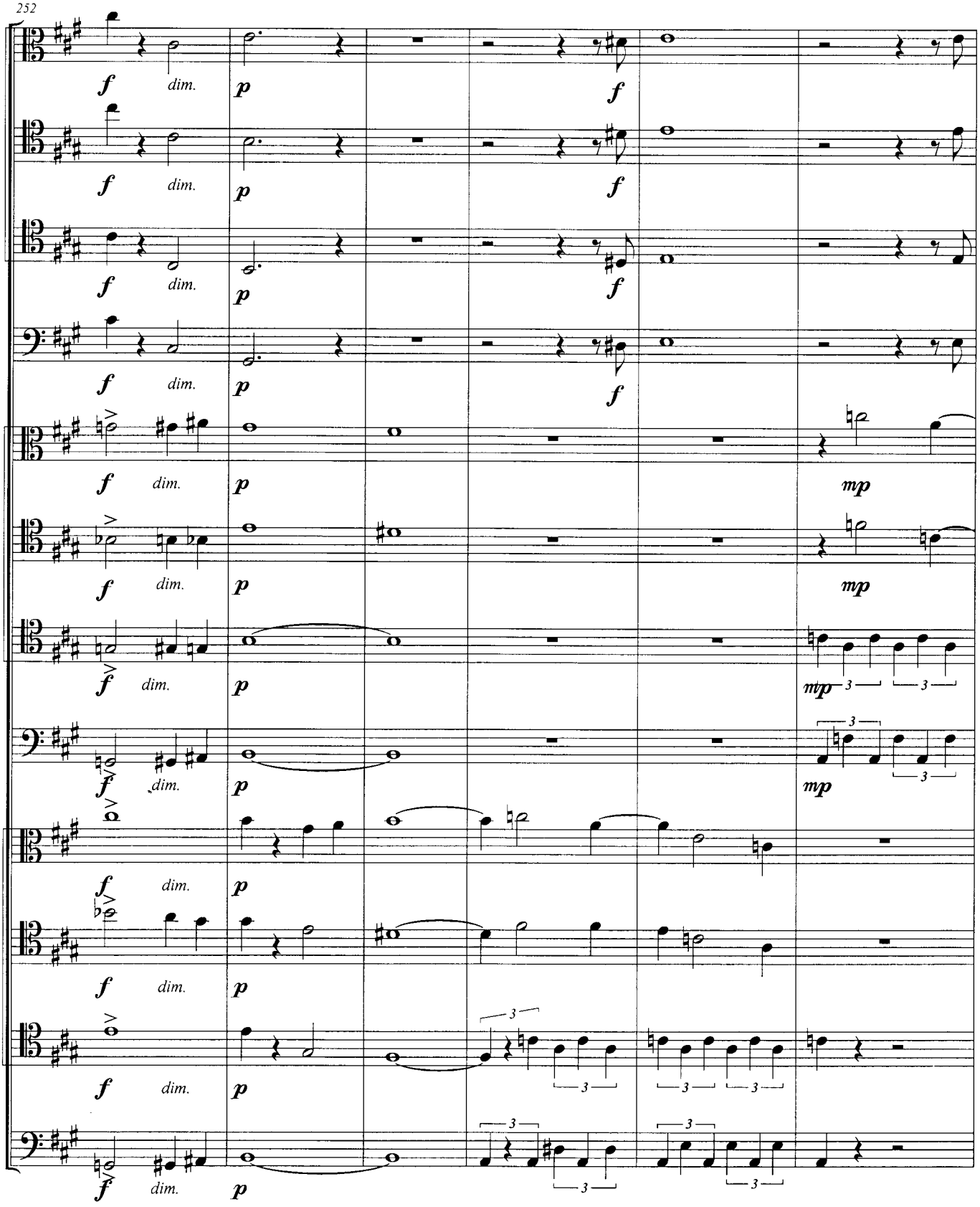
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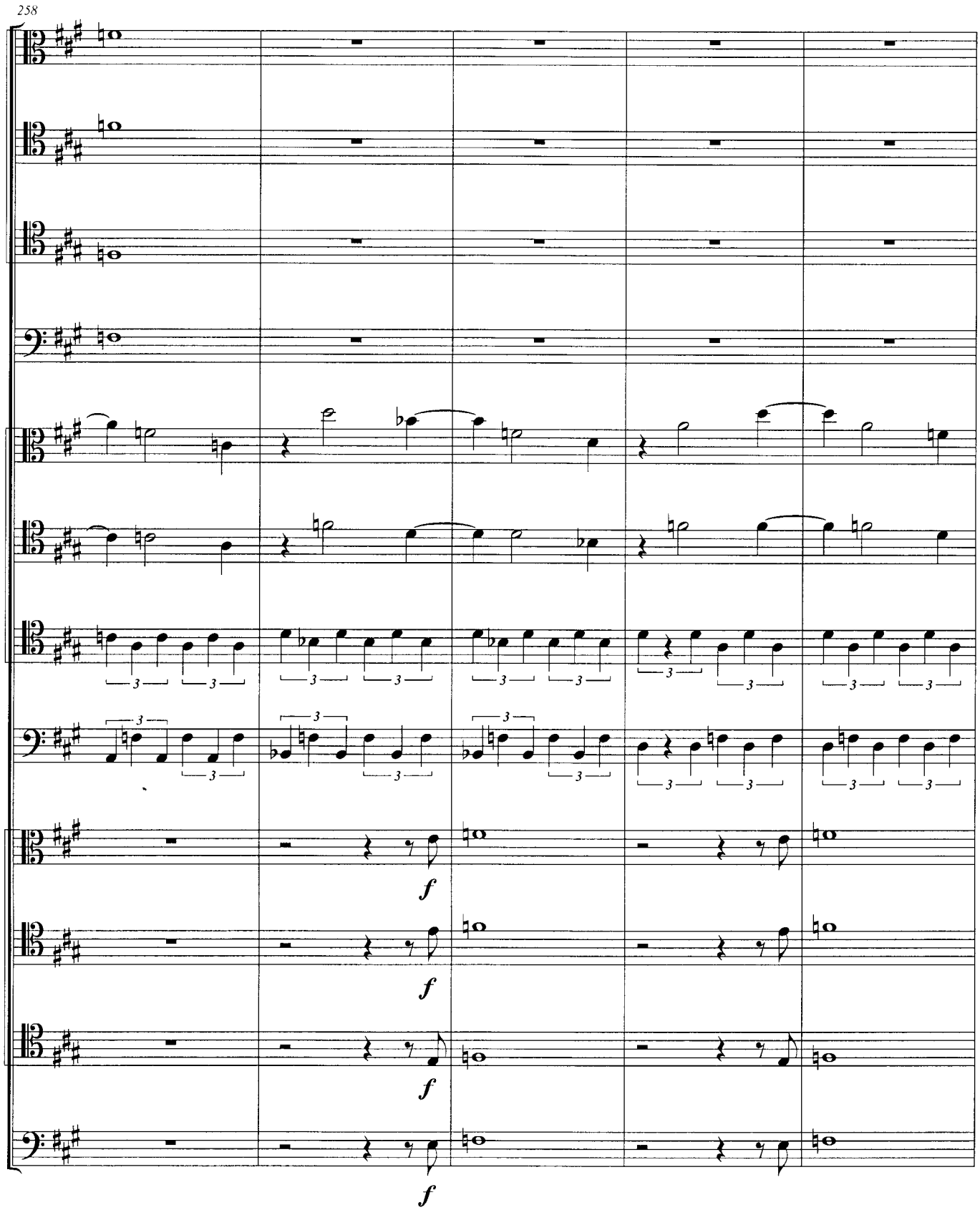
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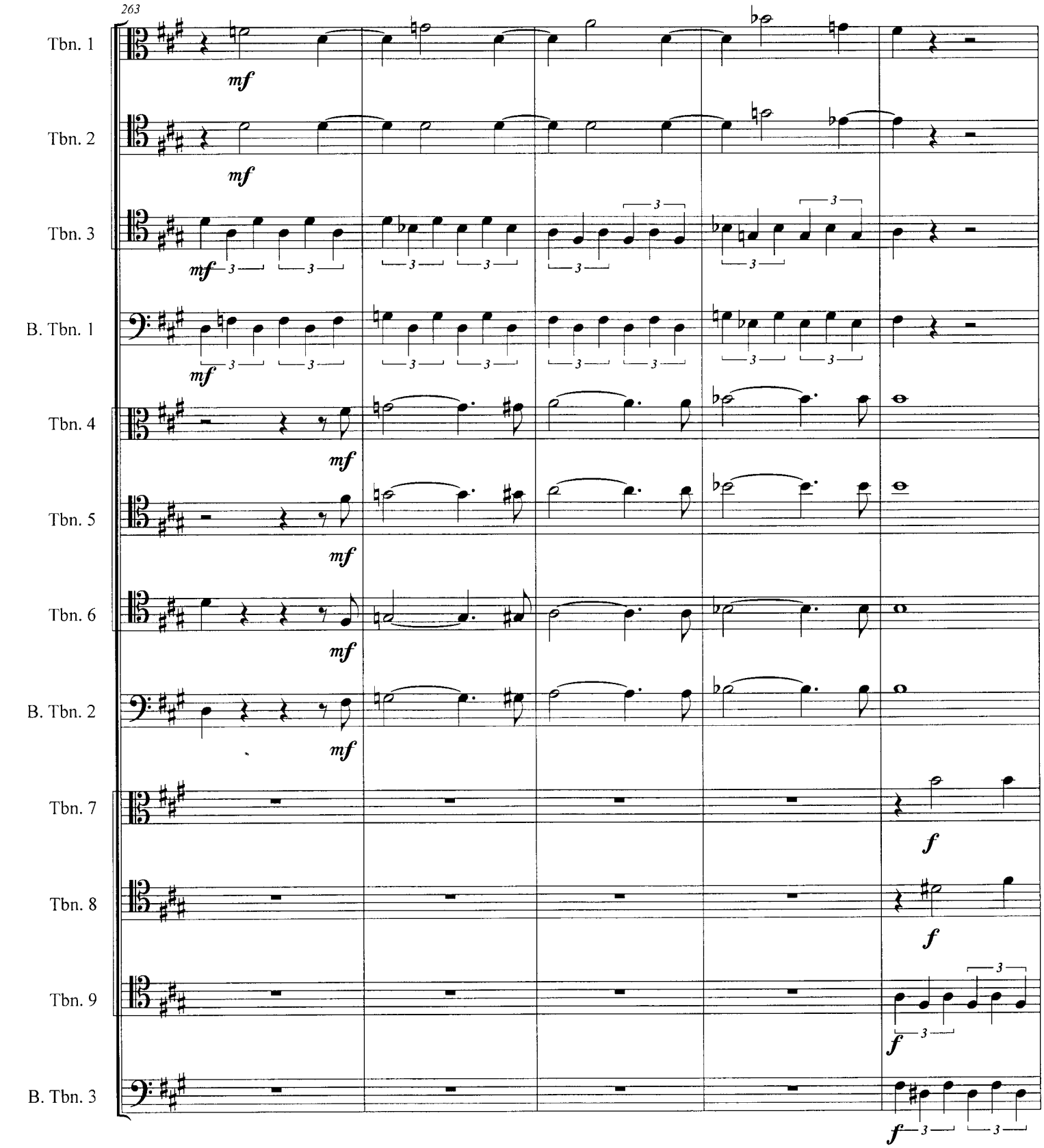
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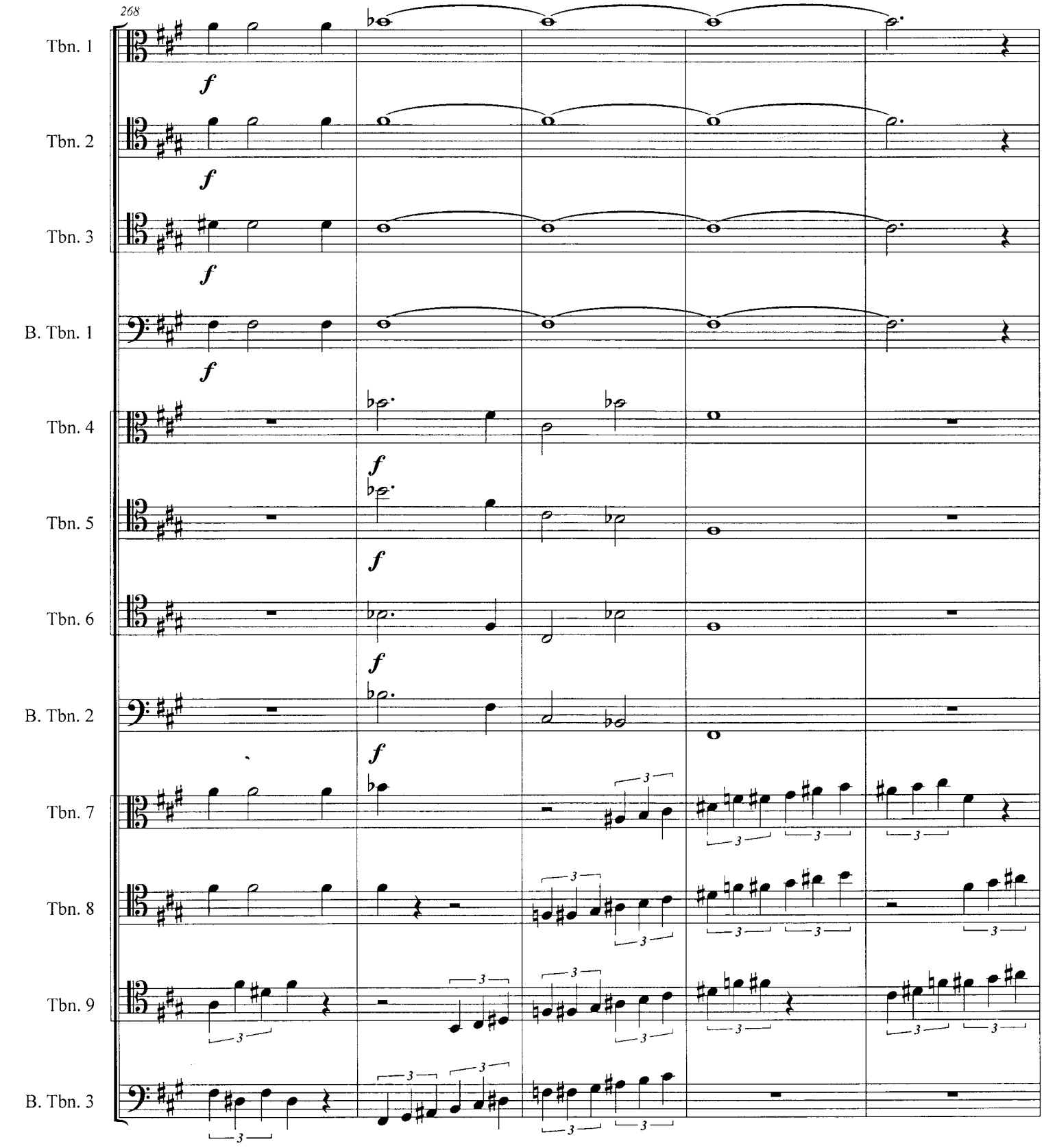
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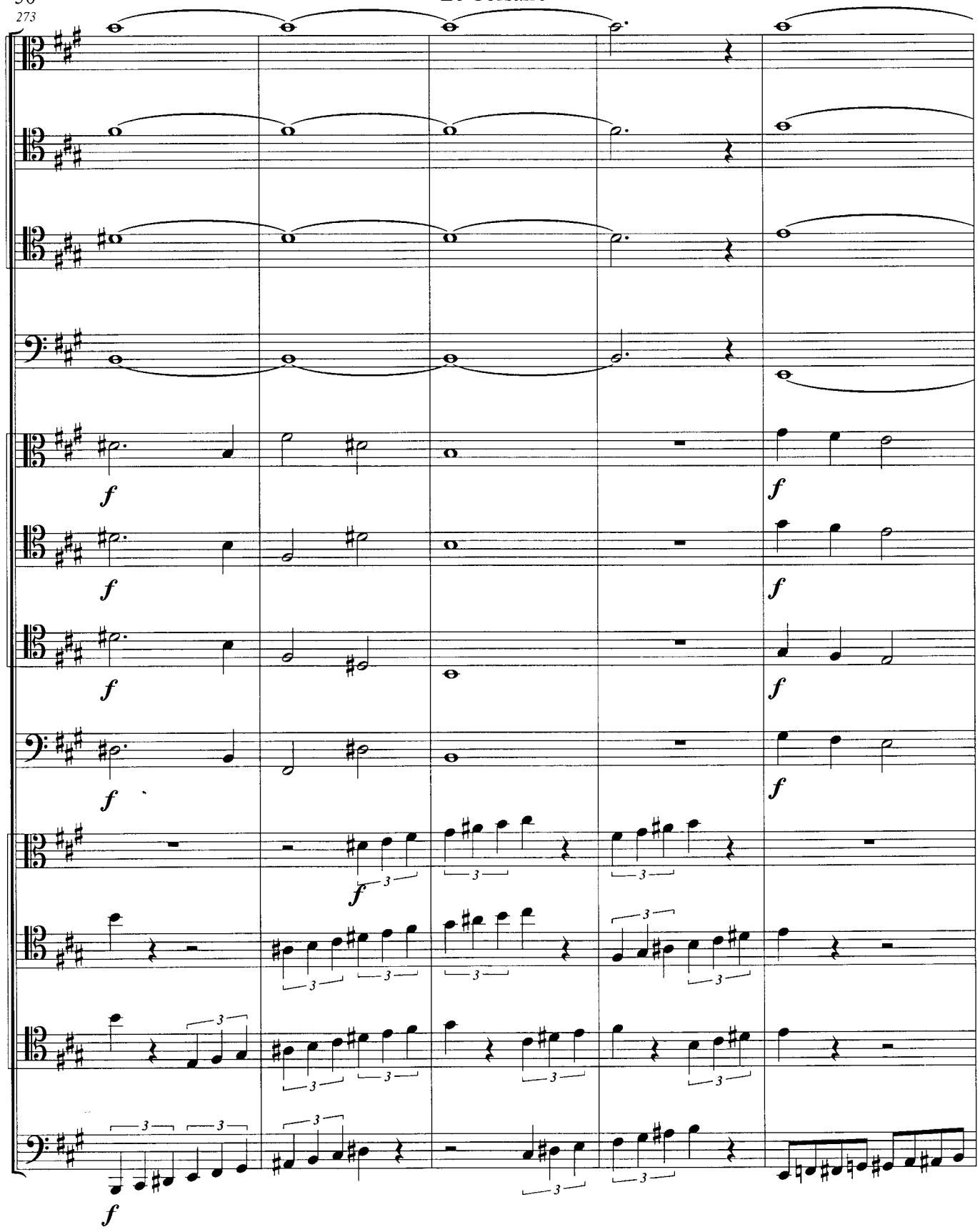
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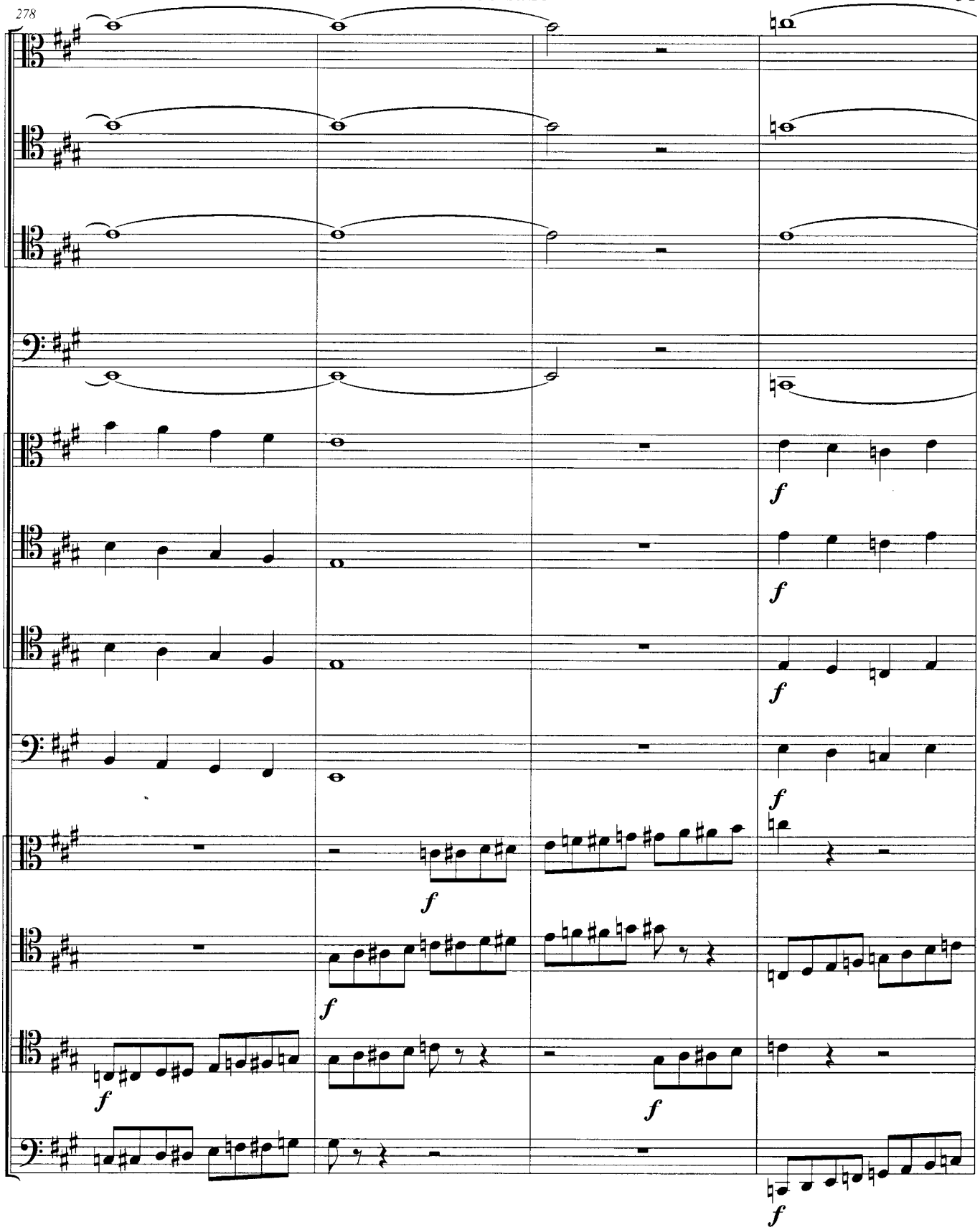
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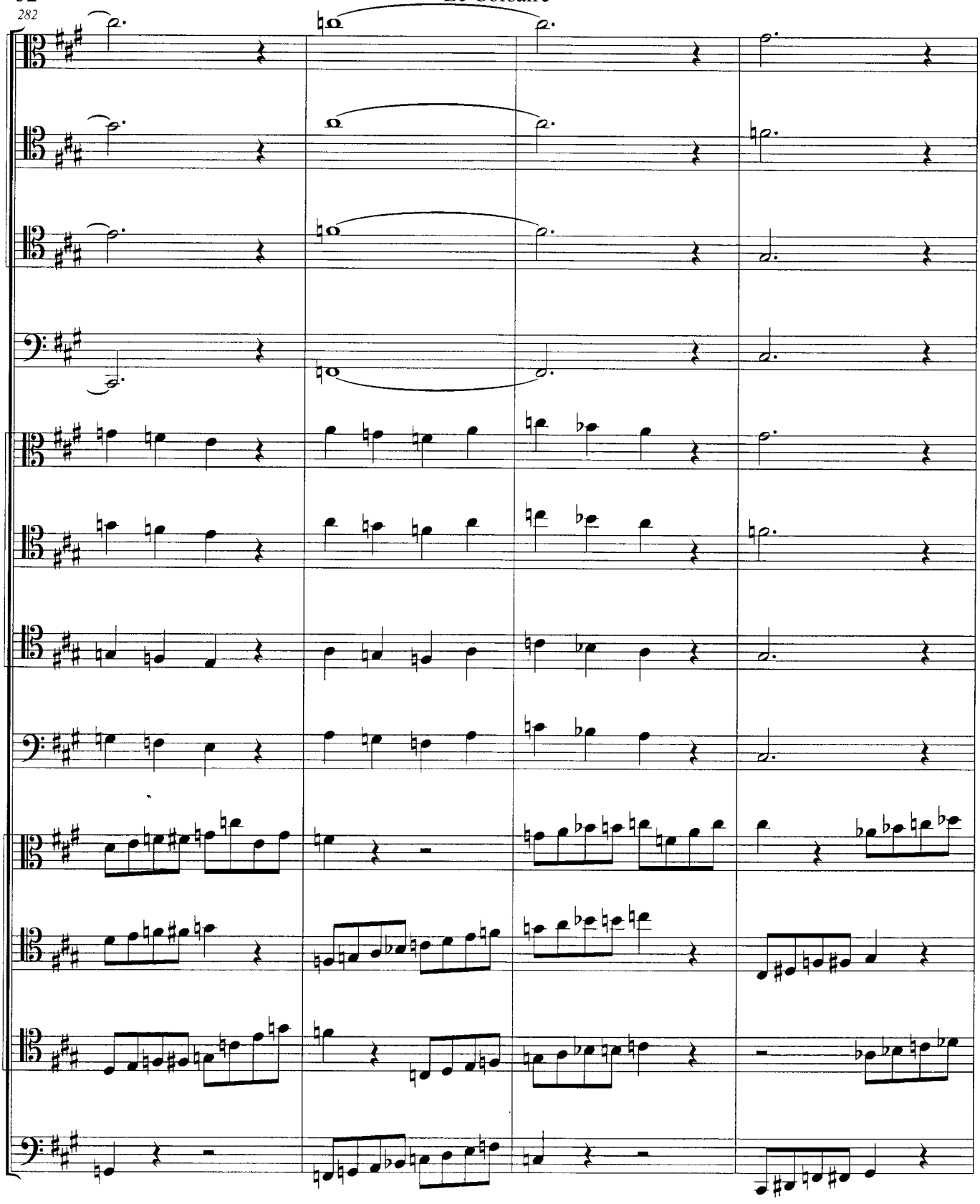
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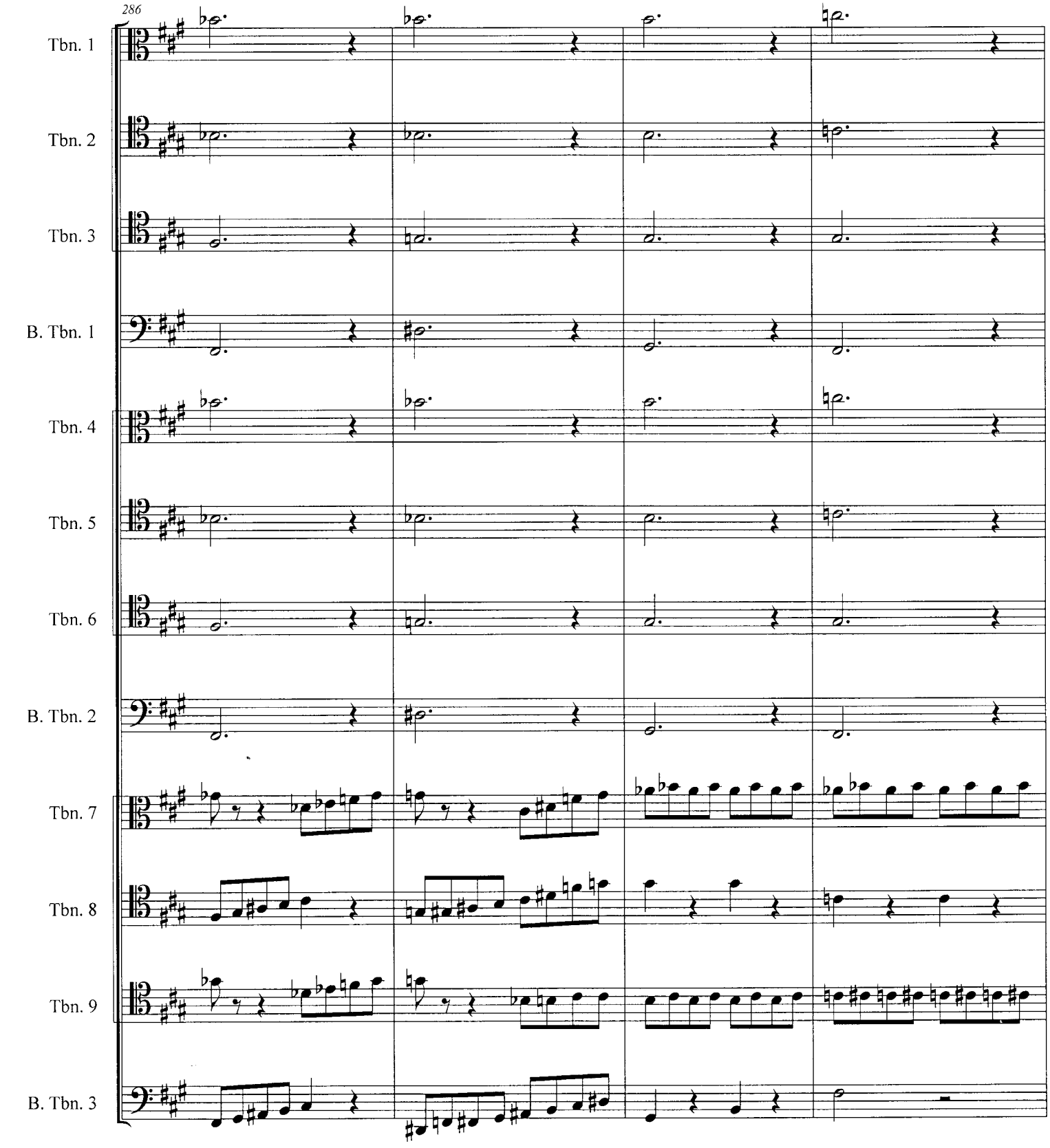
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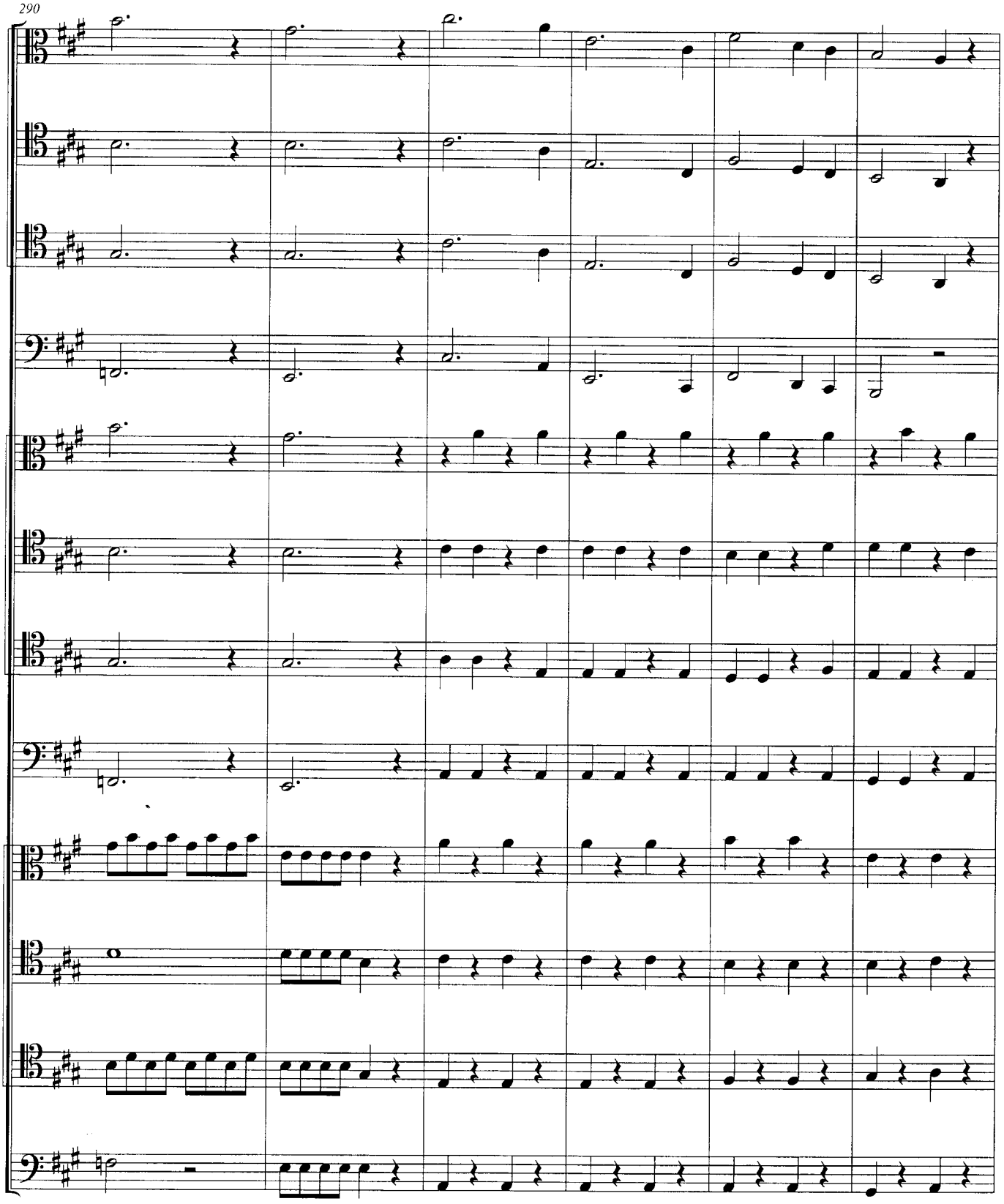
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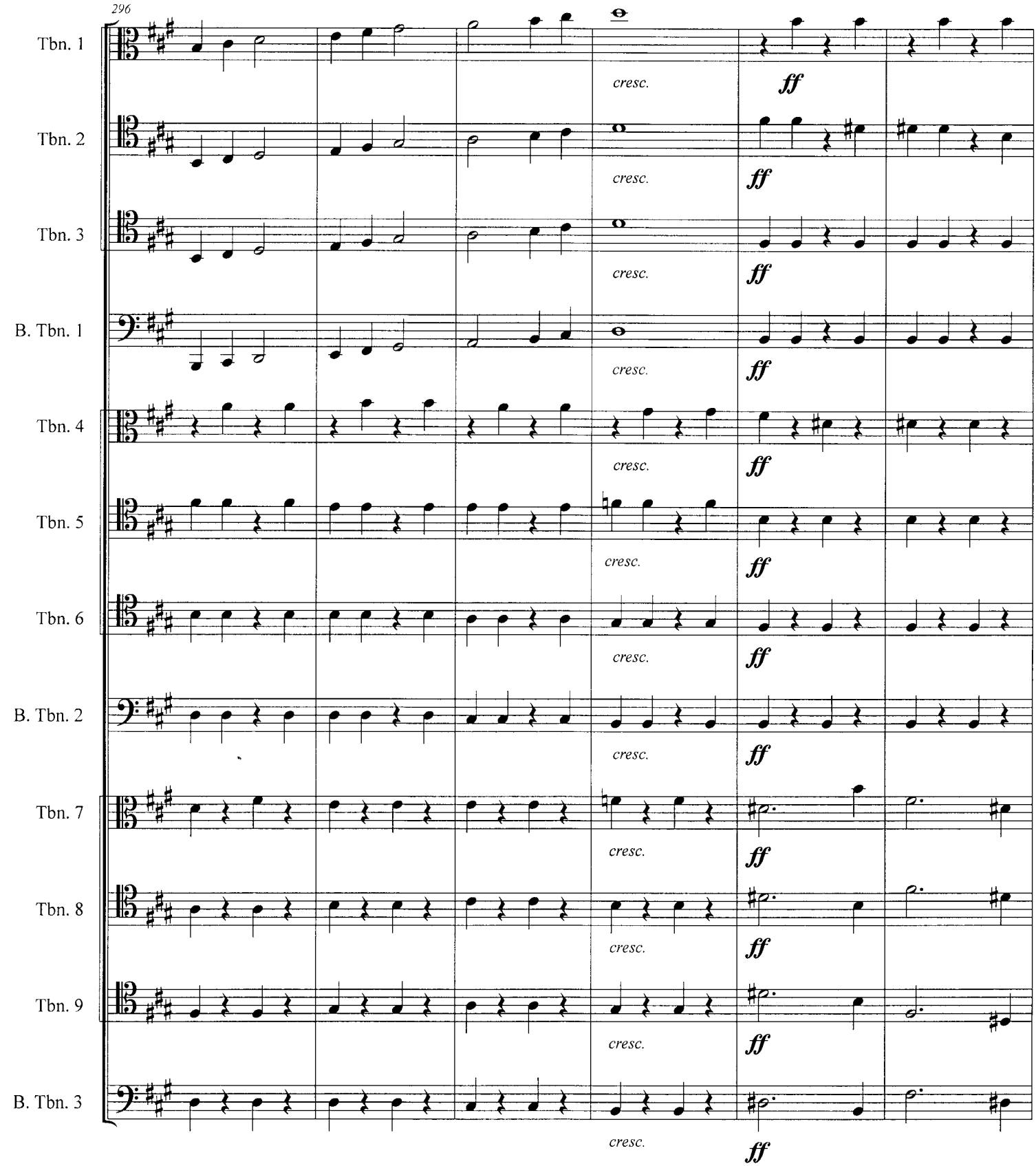
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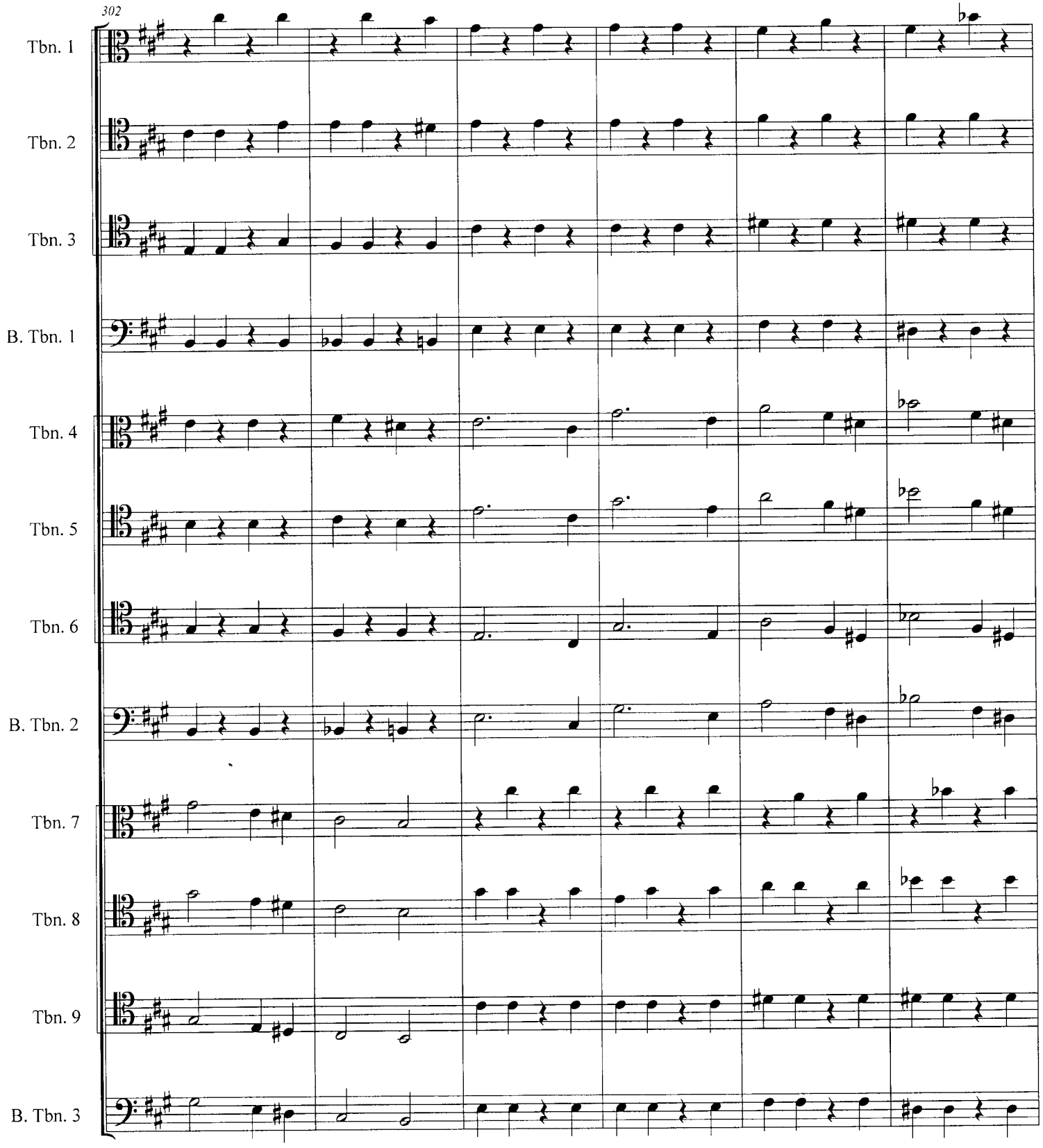
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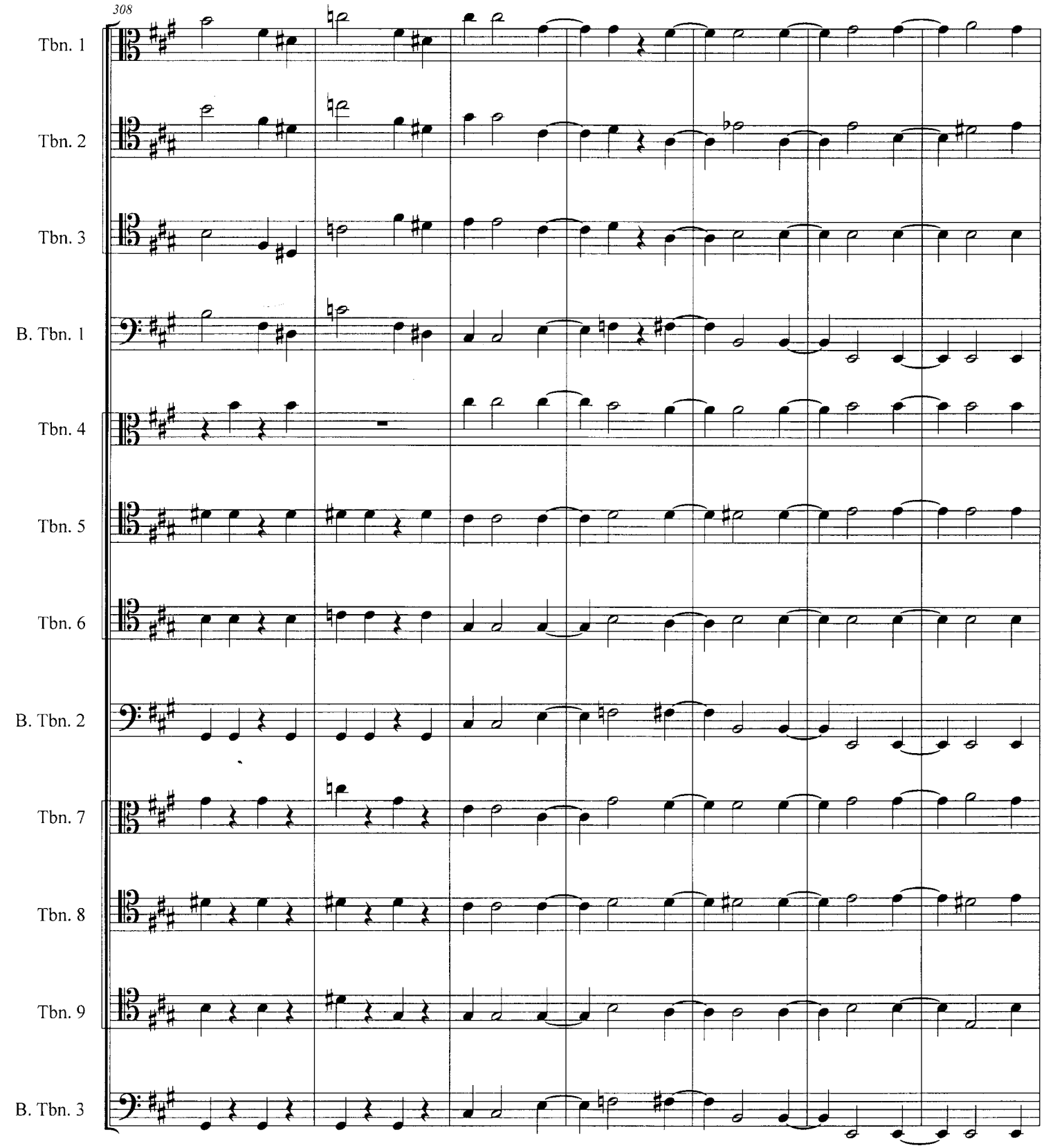
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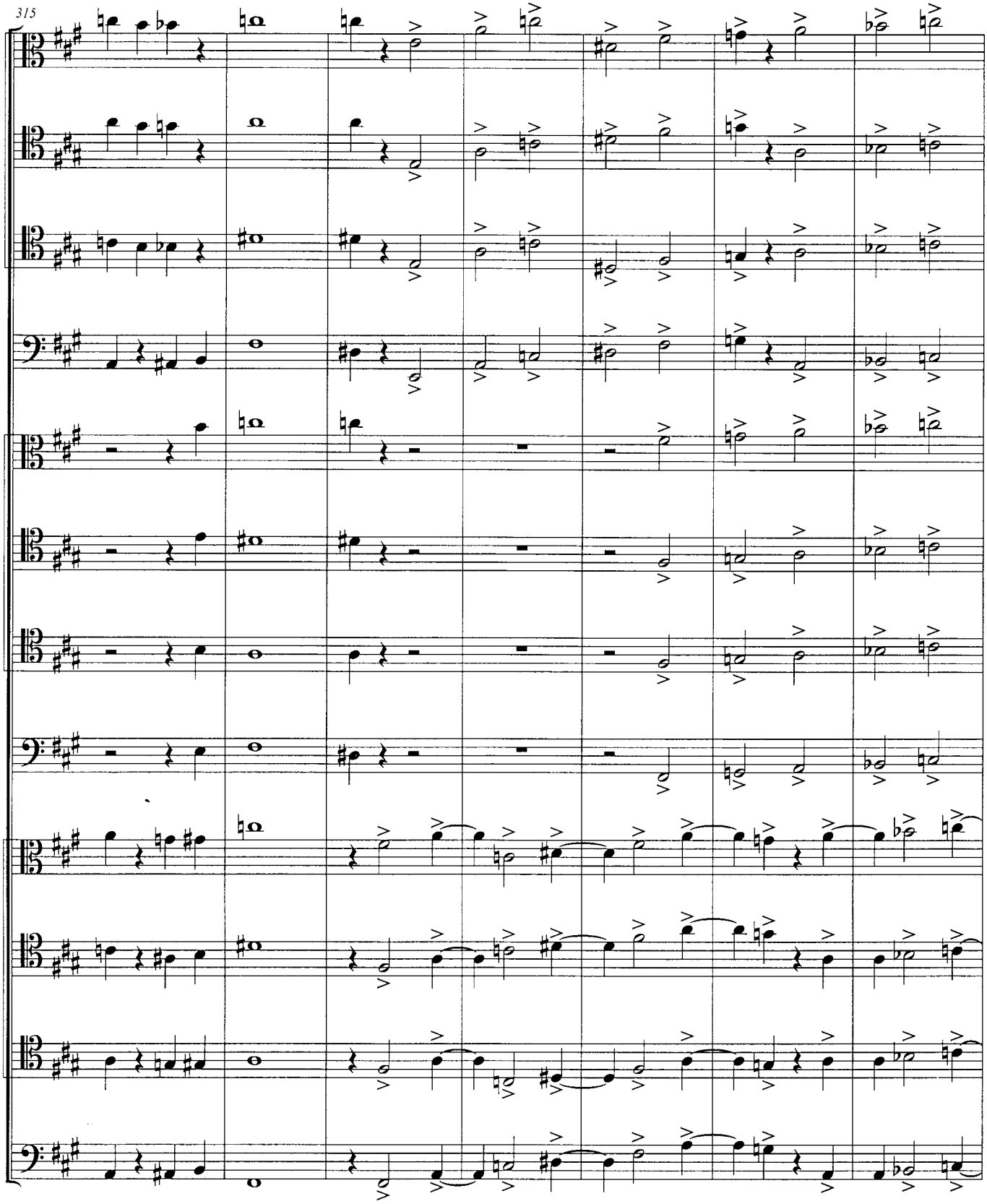
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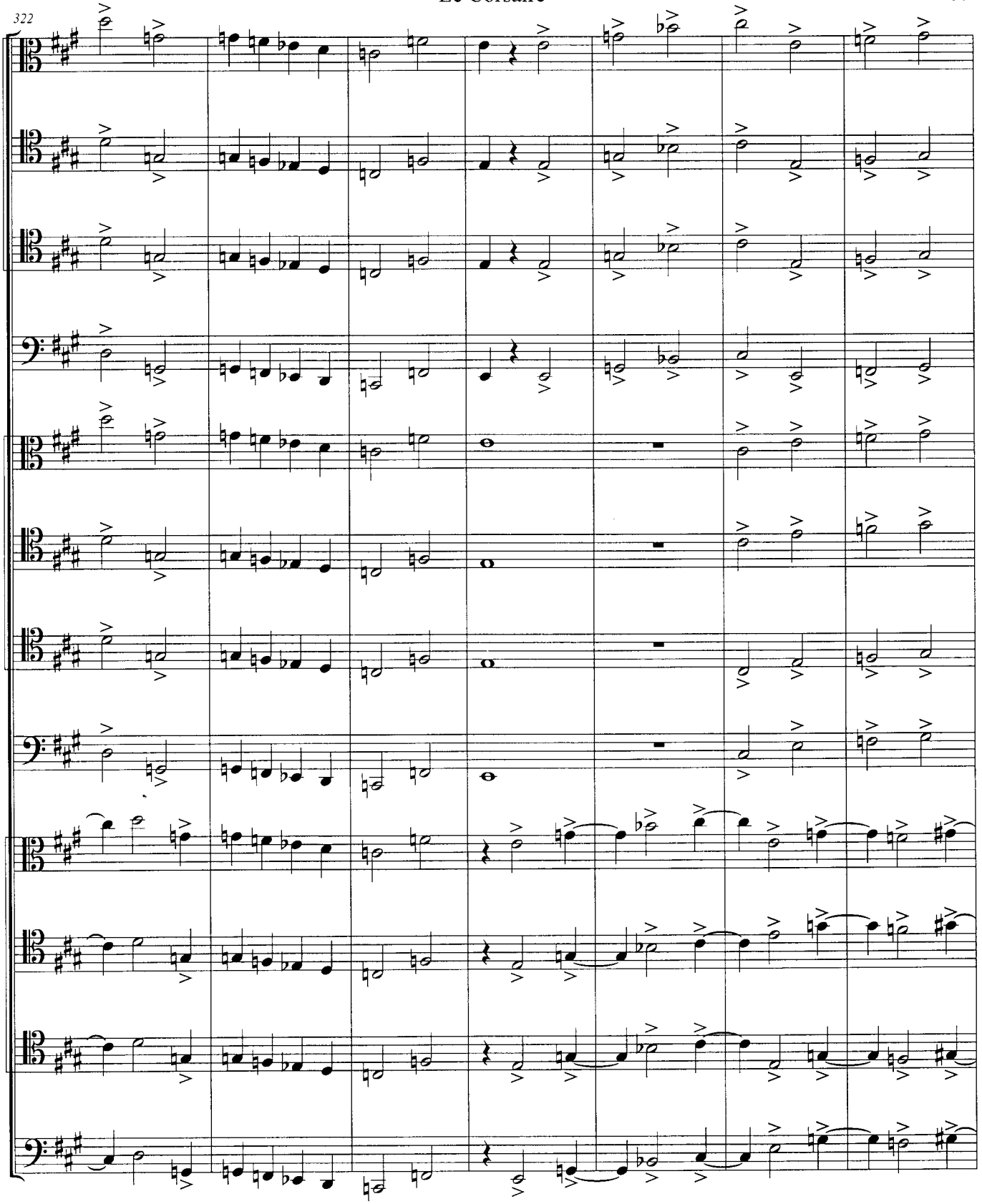
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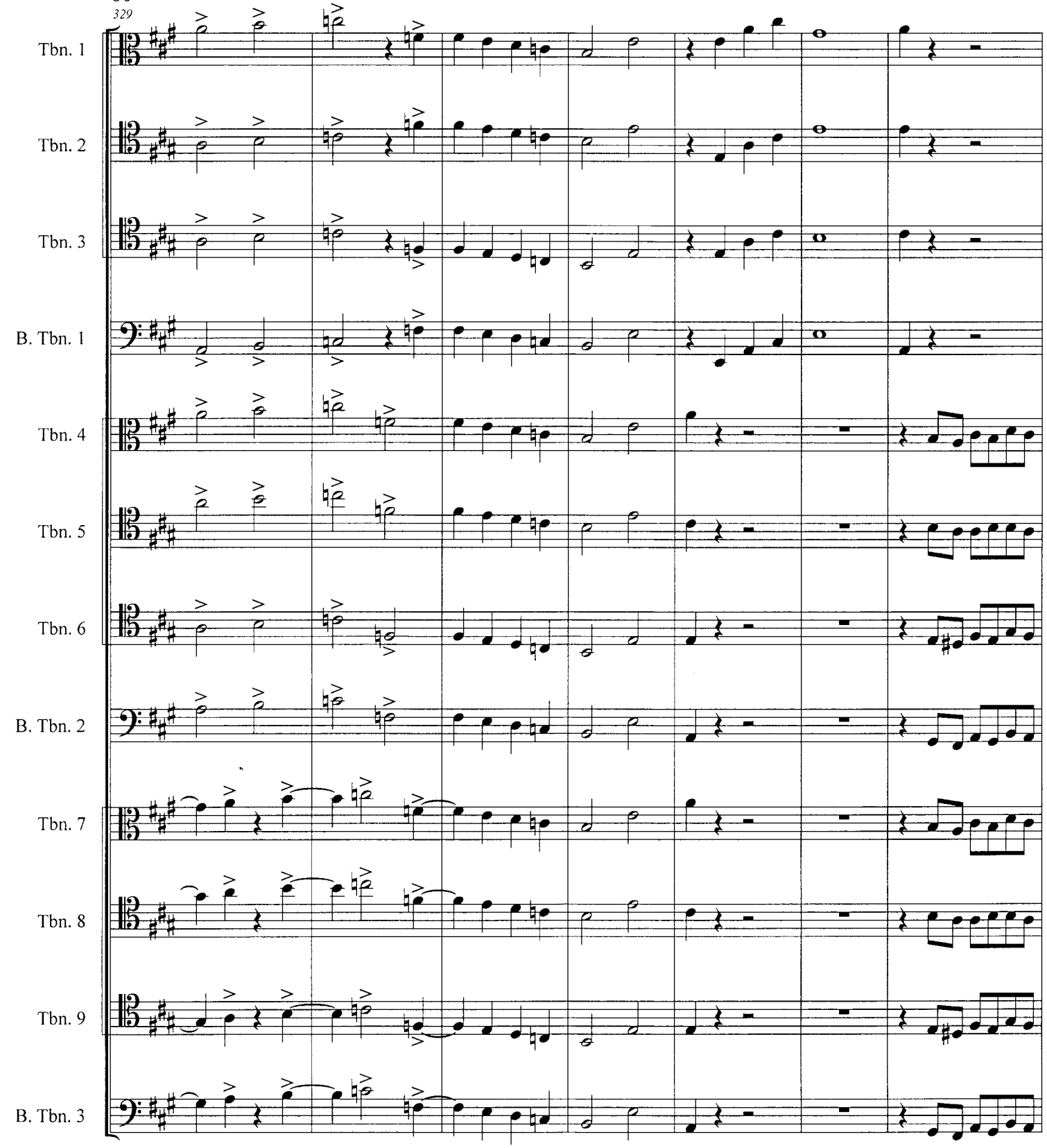
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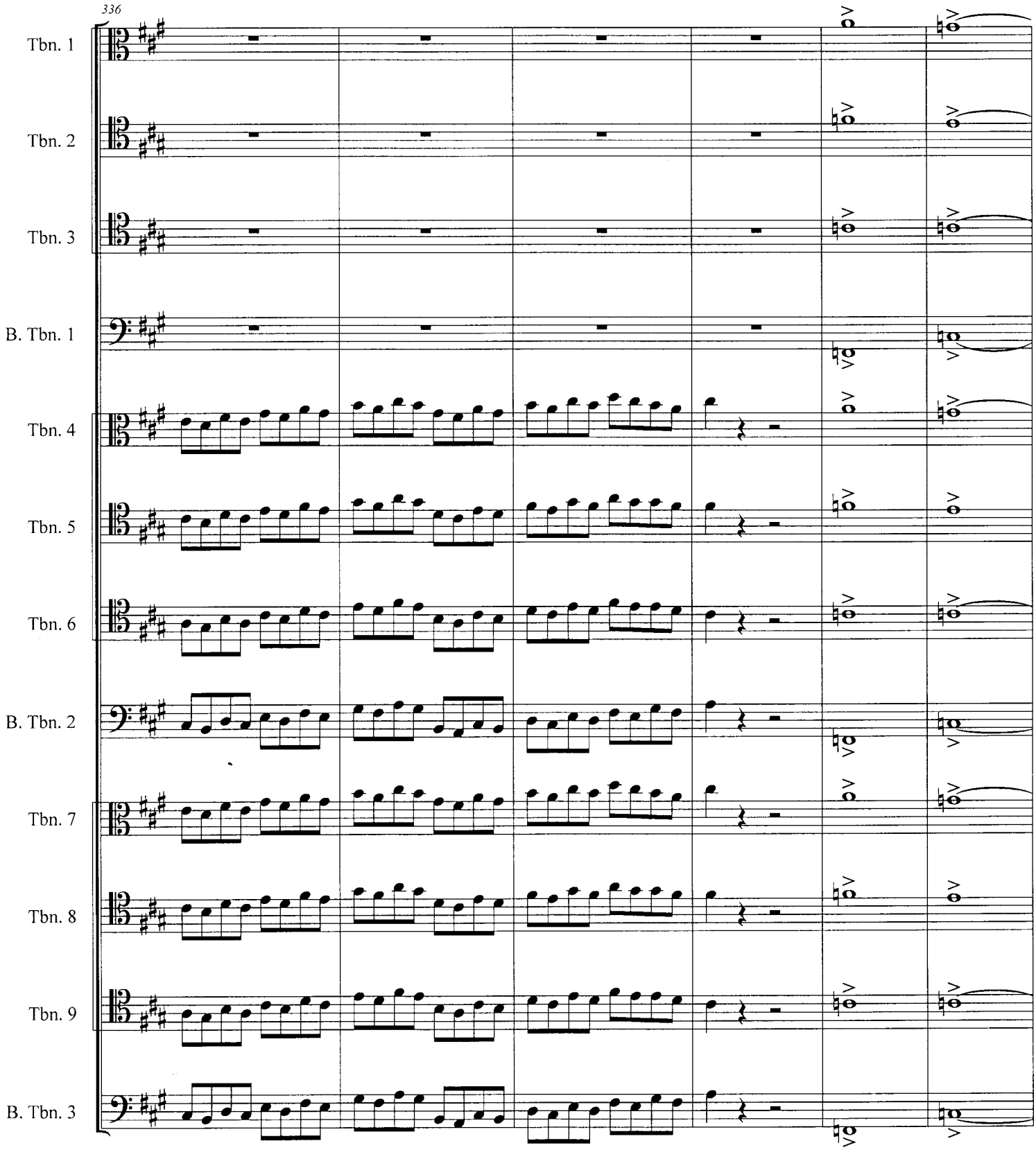
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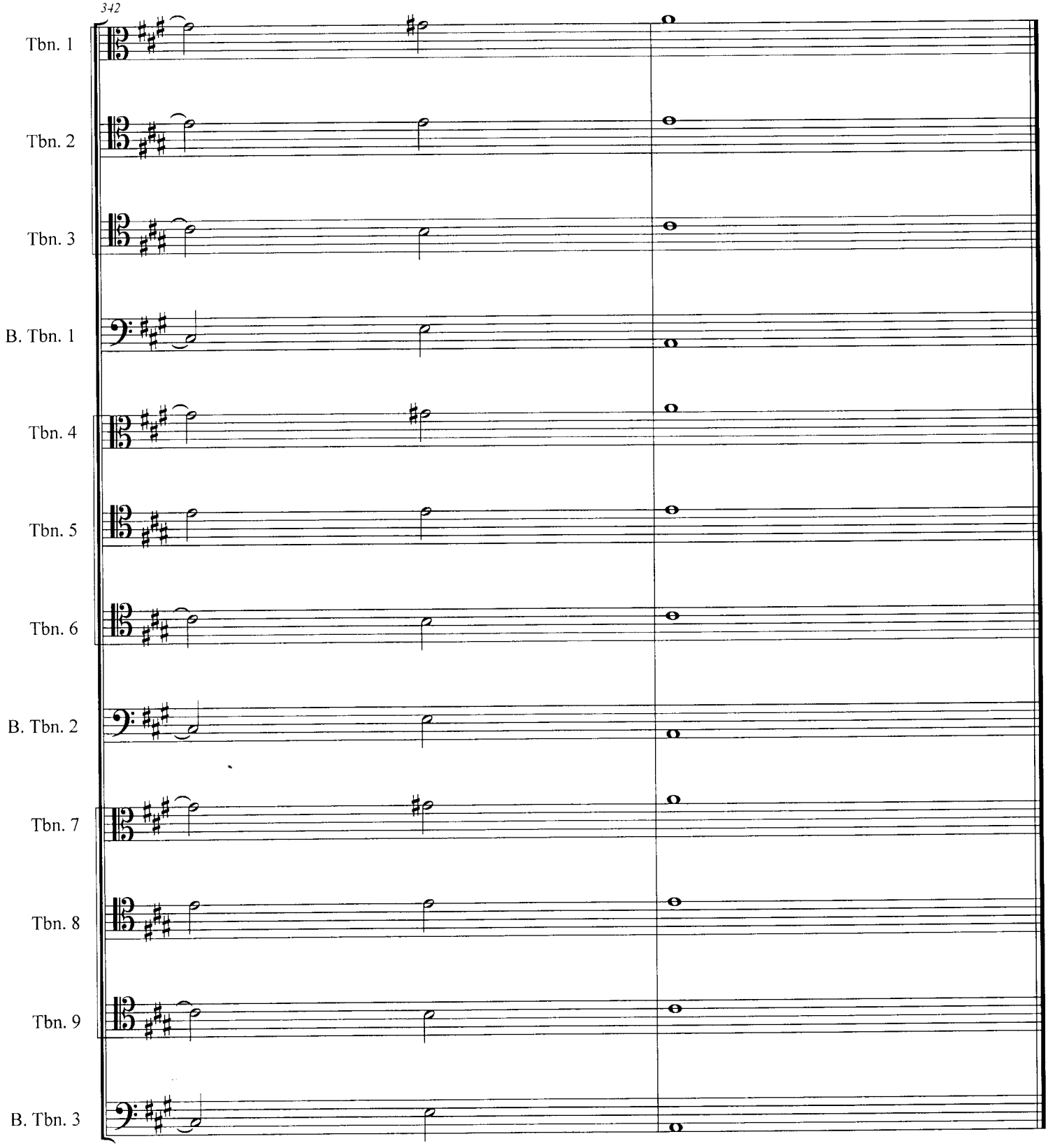
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