Twelve Canons

by Peter Billam

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www.pjb.com.au

These pieces are mostly strict canons, at different distances, from one semitone to twelve semitones. The first canon, *Double-Canon at One Semitone*, should last about two and a half minutes.

At Two Semitones, is mostly conceived for piano; it should run at about seven notes per second, lasting about 96 seconds.

At Three Semitones, is offered in two versions: in open score (e.g. for string trio), and for piano. It should run at about three seconds per bar, and last about two minutes.

Double-Canon at Four Semitones, with voice-crossings allowed, is offered in two versions: in open score, and arranged for piano four hands. It should run at about 86 beats per minute, lasting just over two minutes.

At Five Semitones, a three-voice canon with two free voices, is offered in open score, playable on piano with three or four hands. It should run at about three seconds per bar, and last about two and three-quarter minutes.

At Six Semitones, a two-voice canon, is mostly conceived for piano; it should run at about 52 crochets per second, lasting about two and a quarter minutes.

At Seven Semitones, a close three-voice canon, is mostly conceived for piano; it should run at about 126 crochets per second, lasting nearly three minutes. The triple-trills can be played either with three hands, or with three-note arpeggios in each hand and a bit of pedal, or in regular semiquavers.

At Eight Semitones, also mostly conceived for piano, should run at about 54 crochets per second, lasting just over two minutes twenty seconds.

At Nine Semitones, should run at about 51 bars per minute, lasting almost two minutes twenty seconds. For the first 81 bars the canon is at at one bar's distance, bars 82-109 at one beat's distance, and the remaining bars at a distance of one semiquaver. It is probably best on three hands.

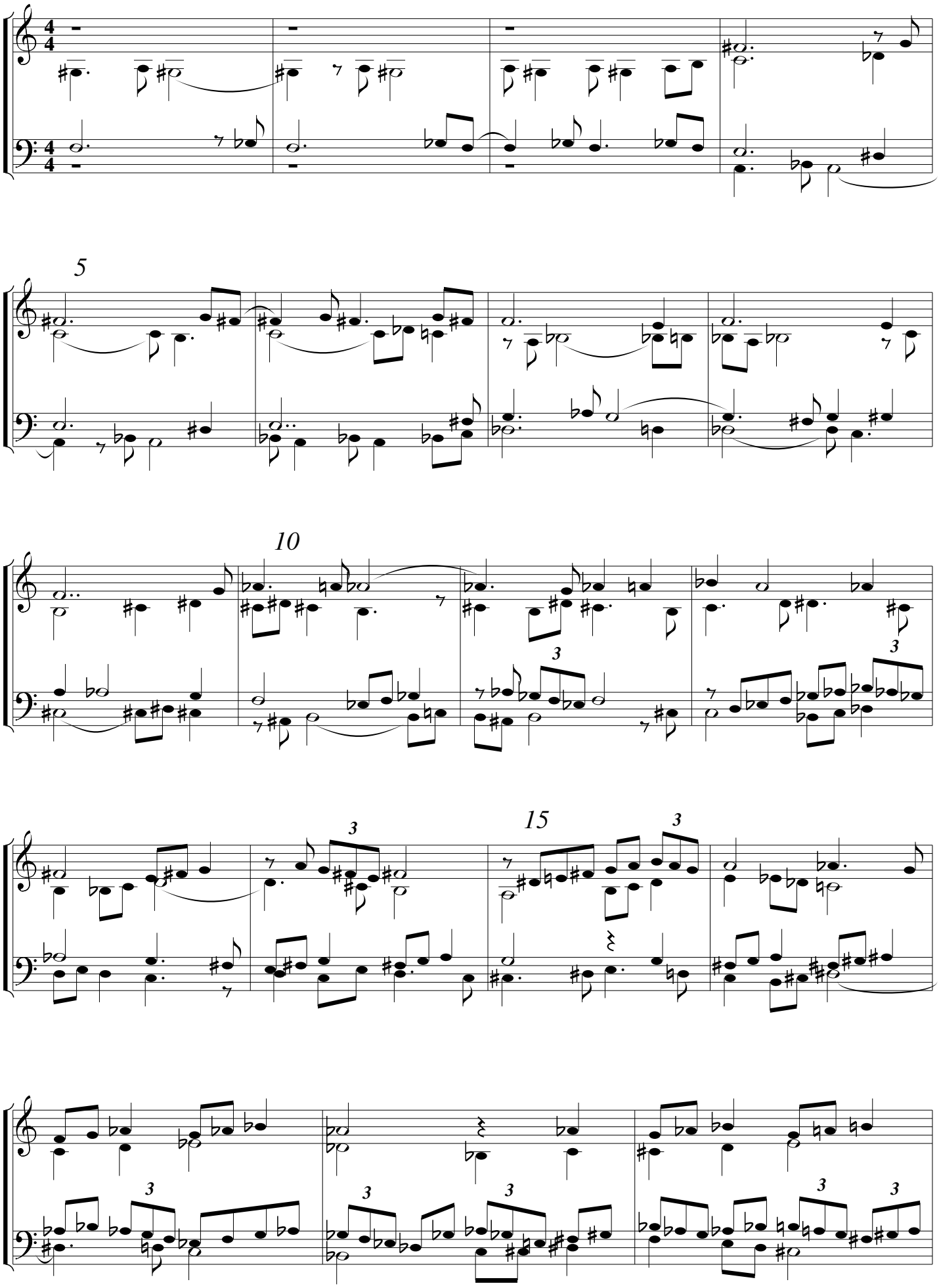
At Ten Semitones should run at 60 quarters per minute, lasting about three minutes thirty-six seconds. It is best if the canonic voices are a string quartet (or orchestra). The Bb pedal on a piano could be supported by a long note on a cello C-string tuned down two semitones.

At Eleven Semitones is a four-voice canon, and should run at about 75 quarters per minute. It could be played by four hands, or by violin, viola and two celli, or flute, clarinet and two basoons, or flute, clarinet and piano.

The final canon, *At Twelve Semitones*, should last just over two minutes.

Peter J Billam, *www.pjb.com.au*

Double–canon at one semitone



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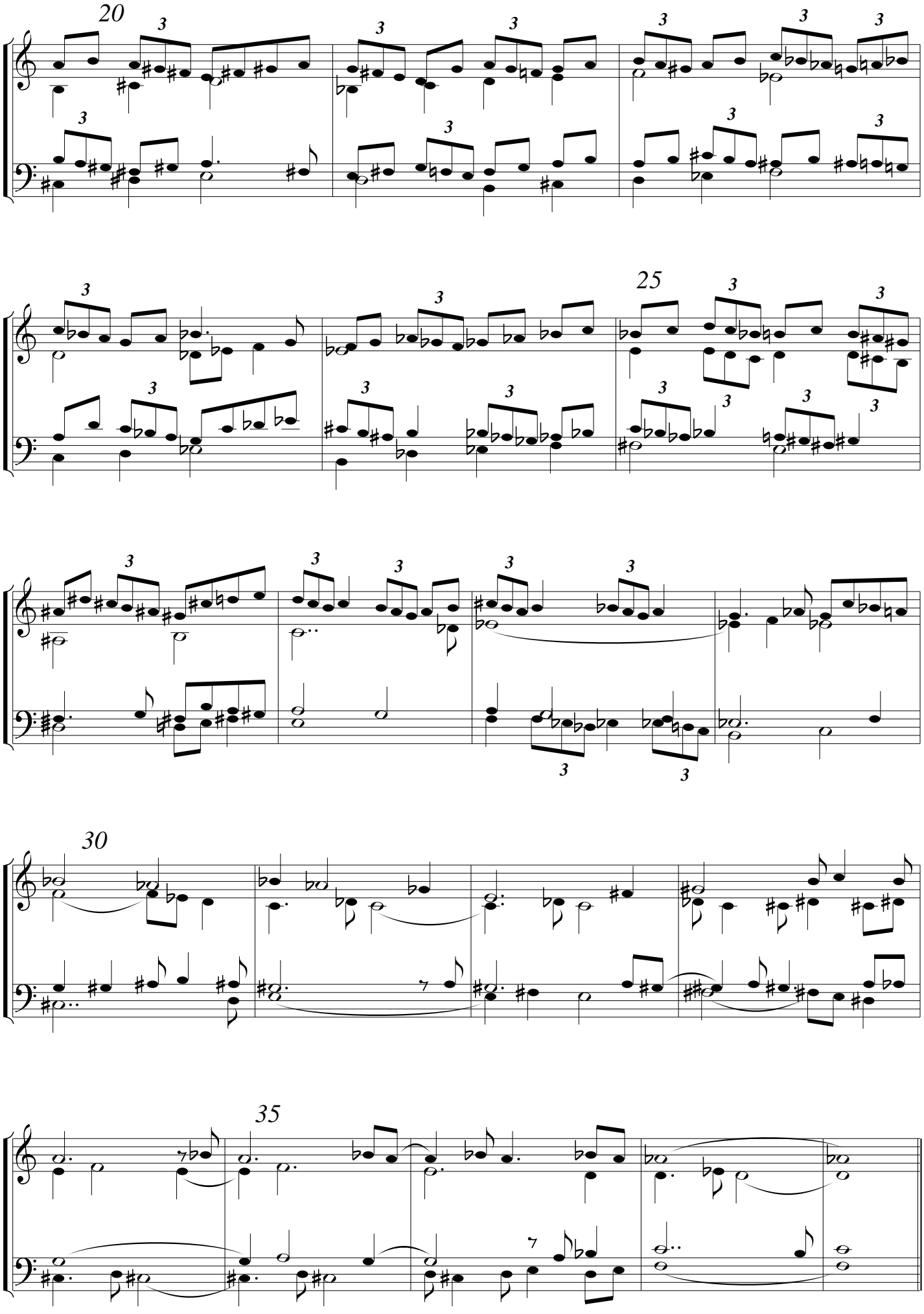

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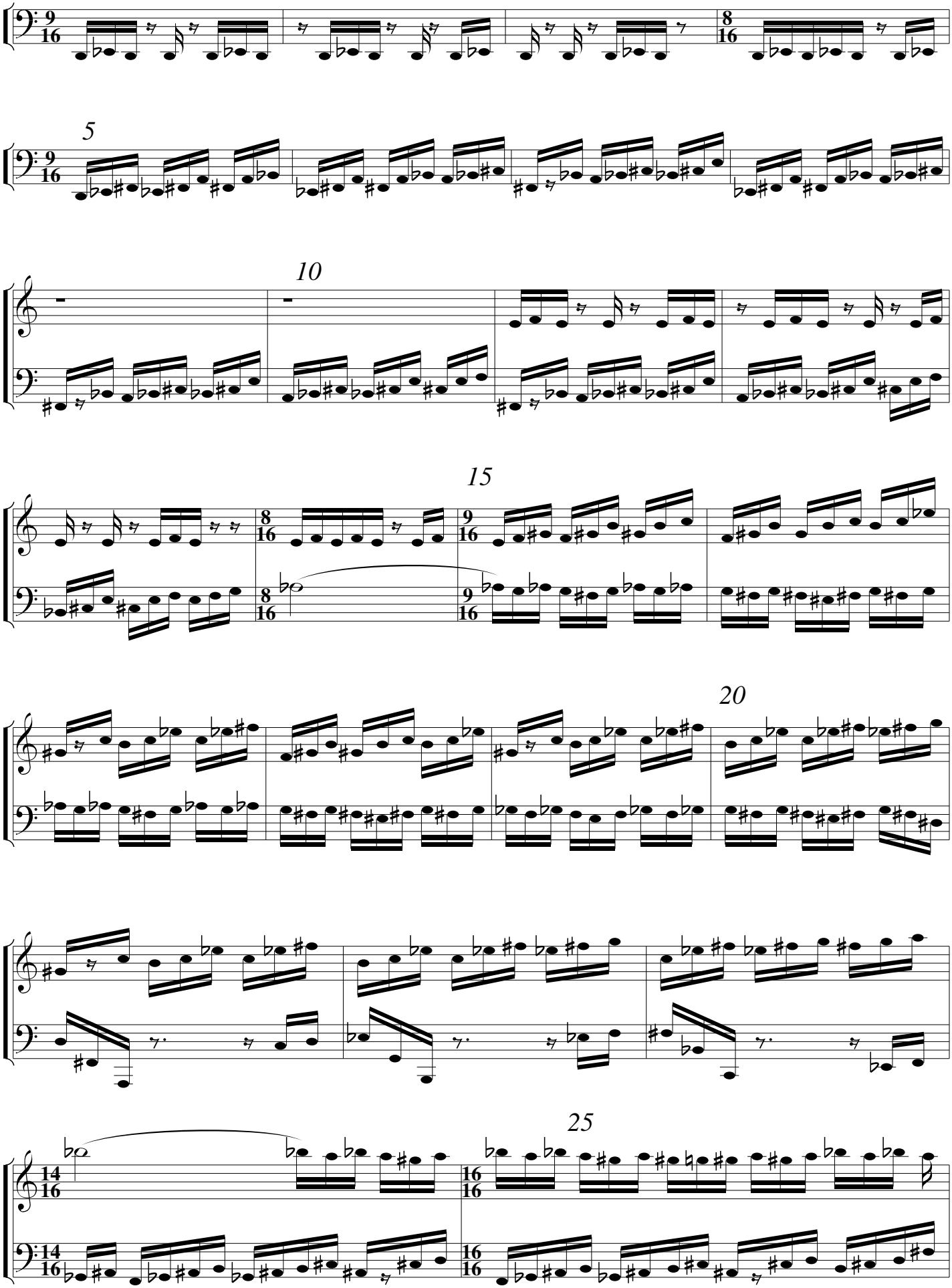
Canon at two semitones



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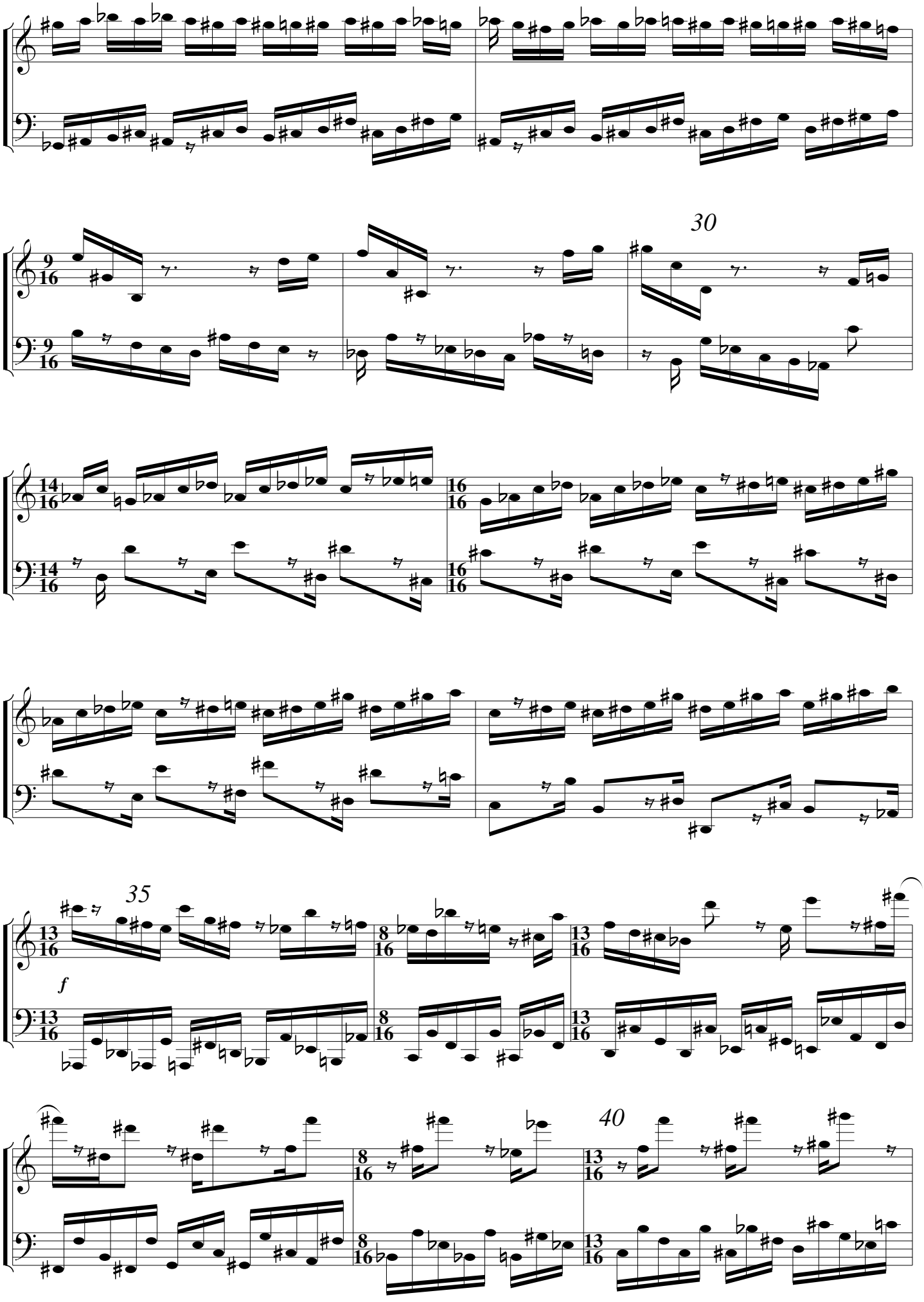

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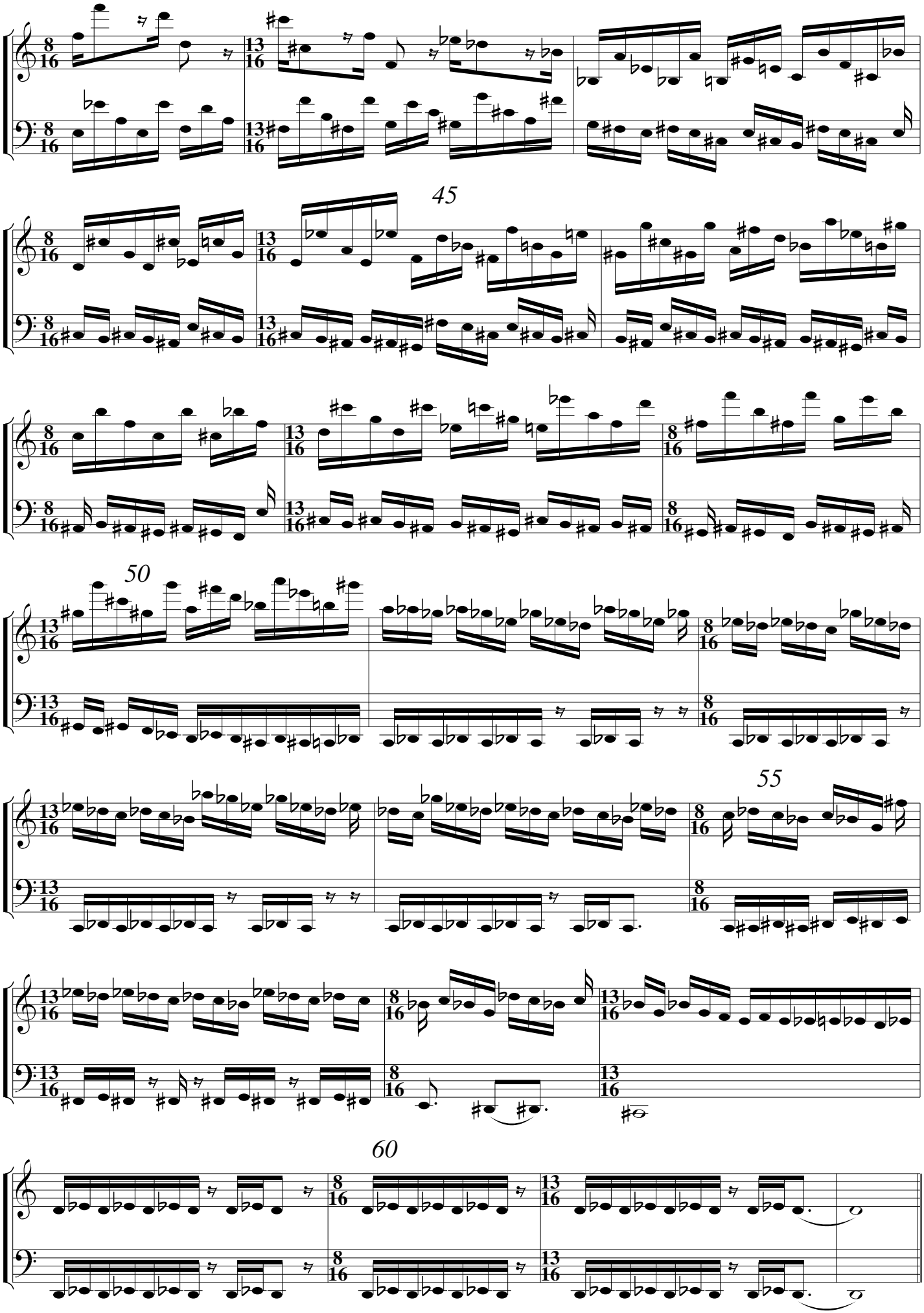

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Canon at three semitones

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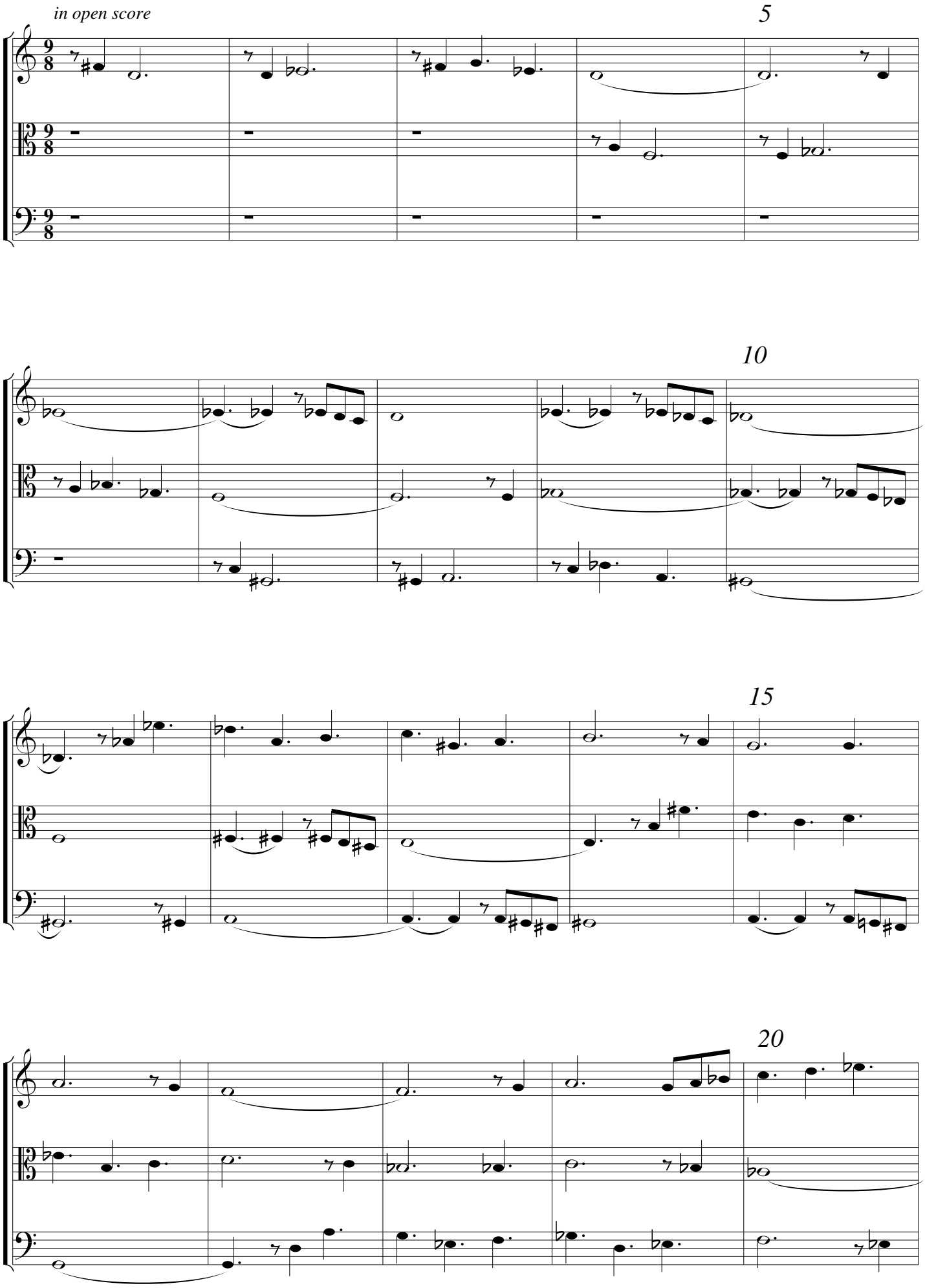
in open score



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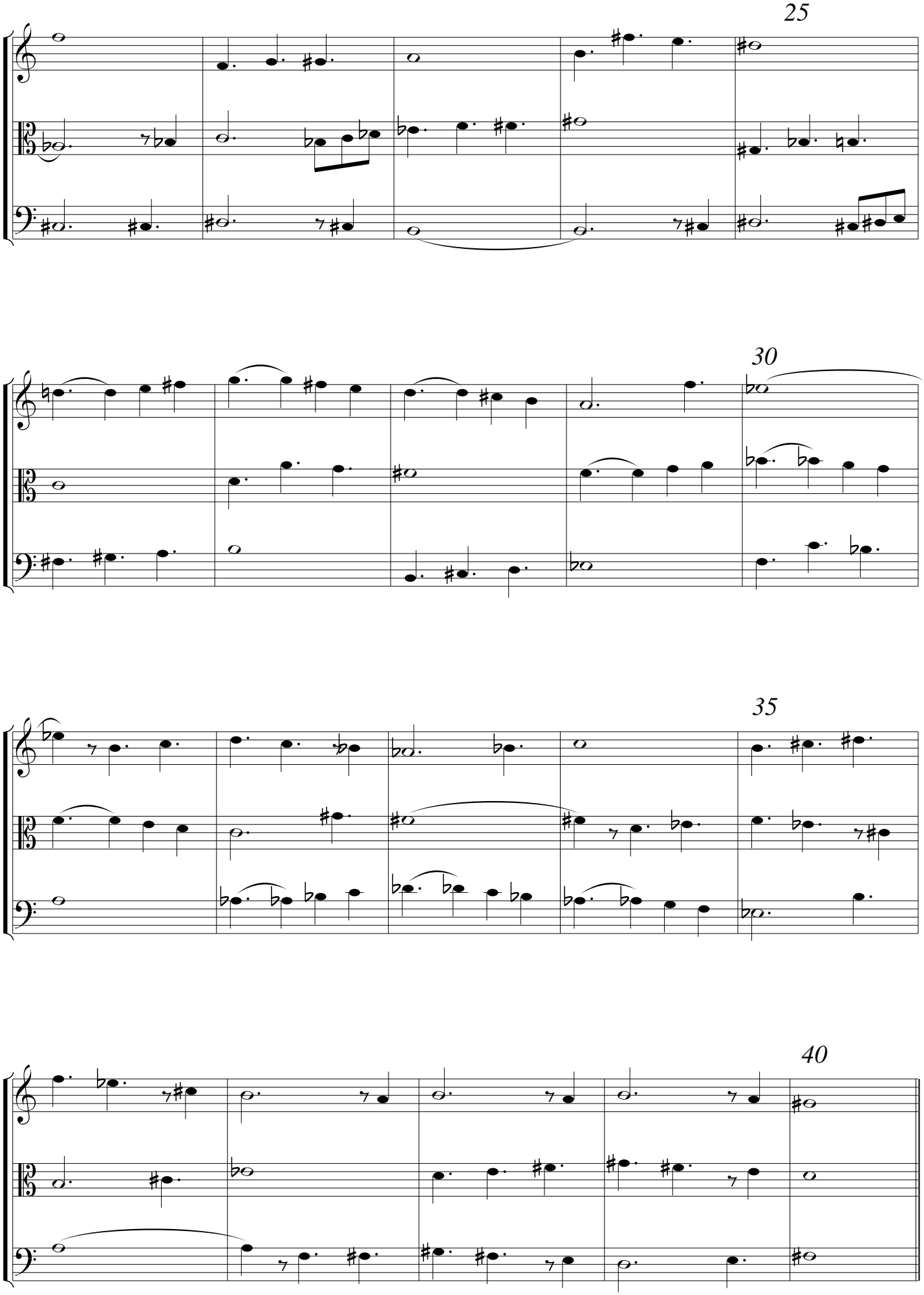

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Canon at three semitones

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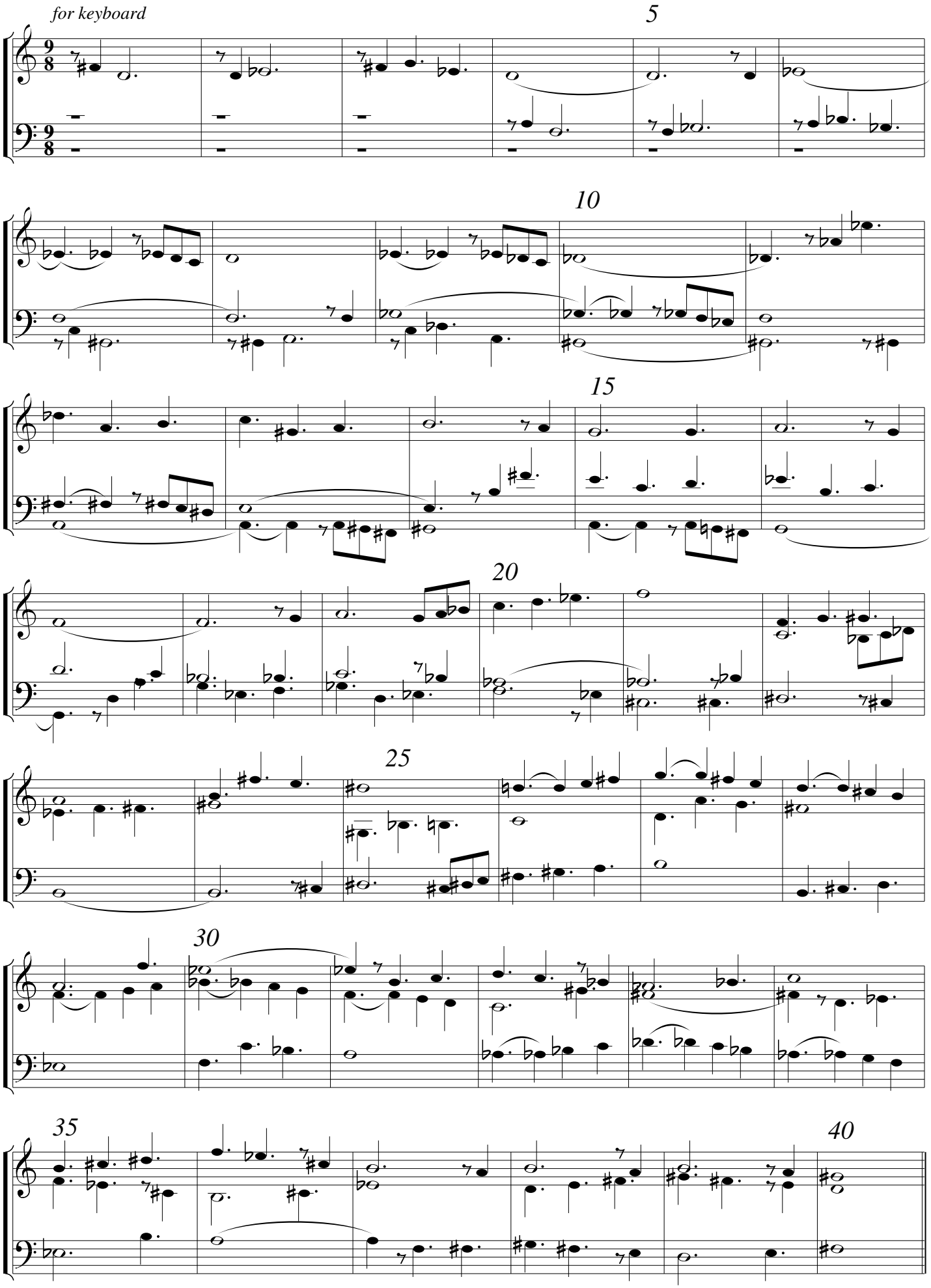
for keyboard



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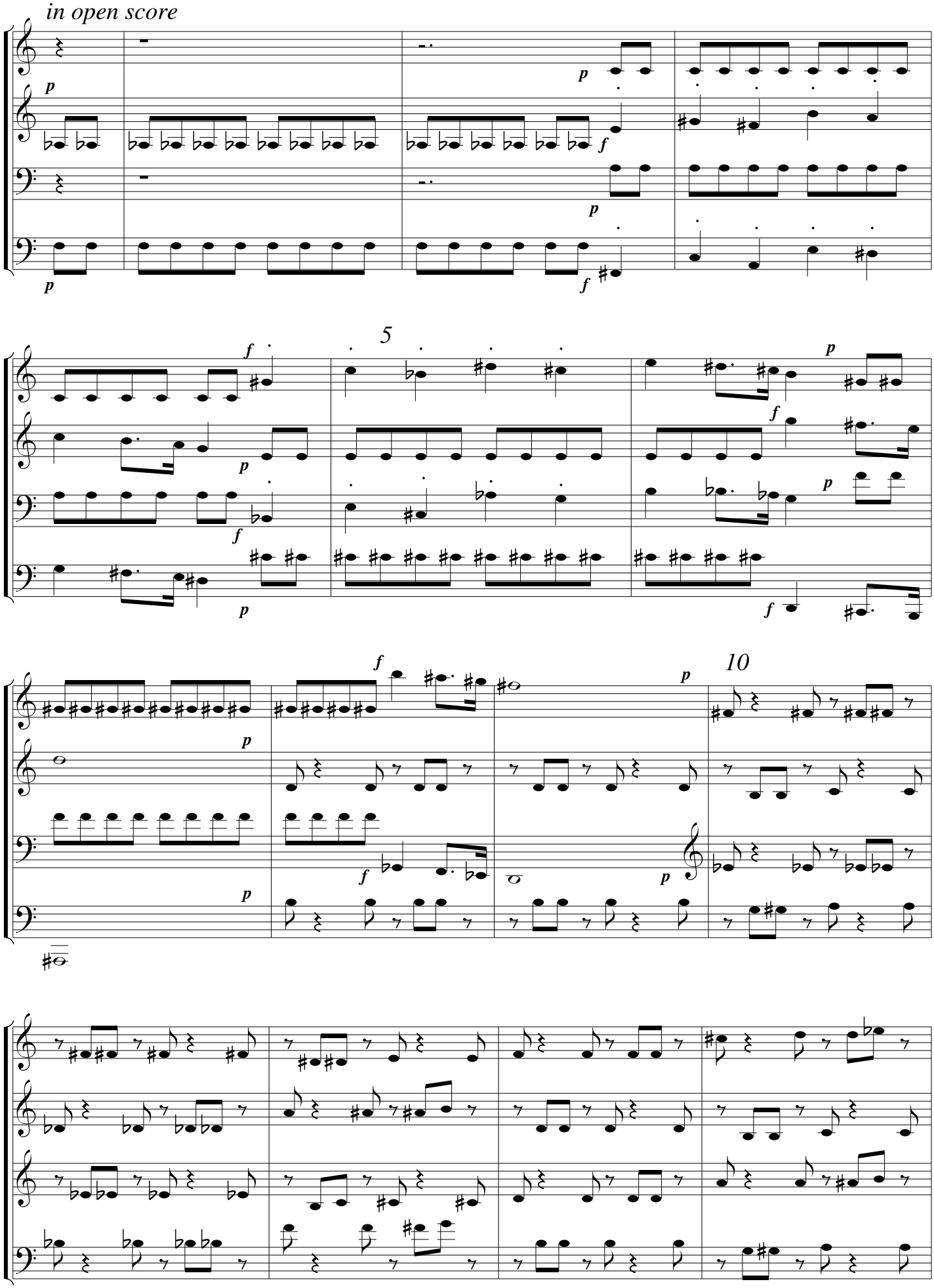
Double canon at four semitones

in open score



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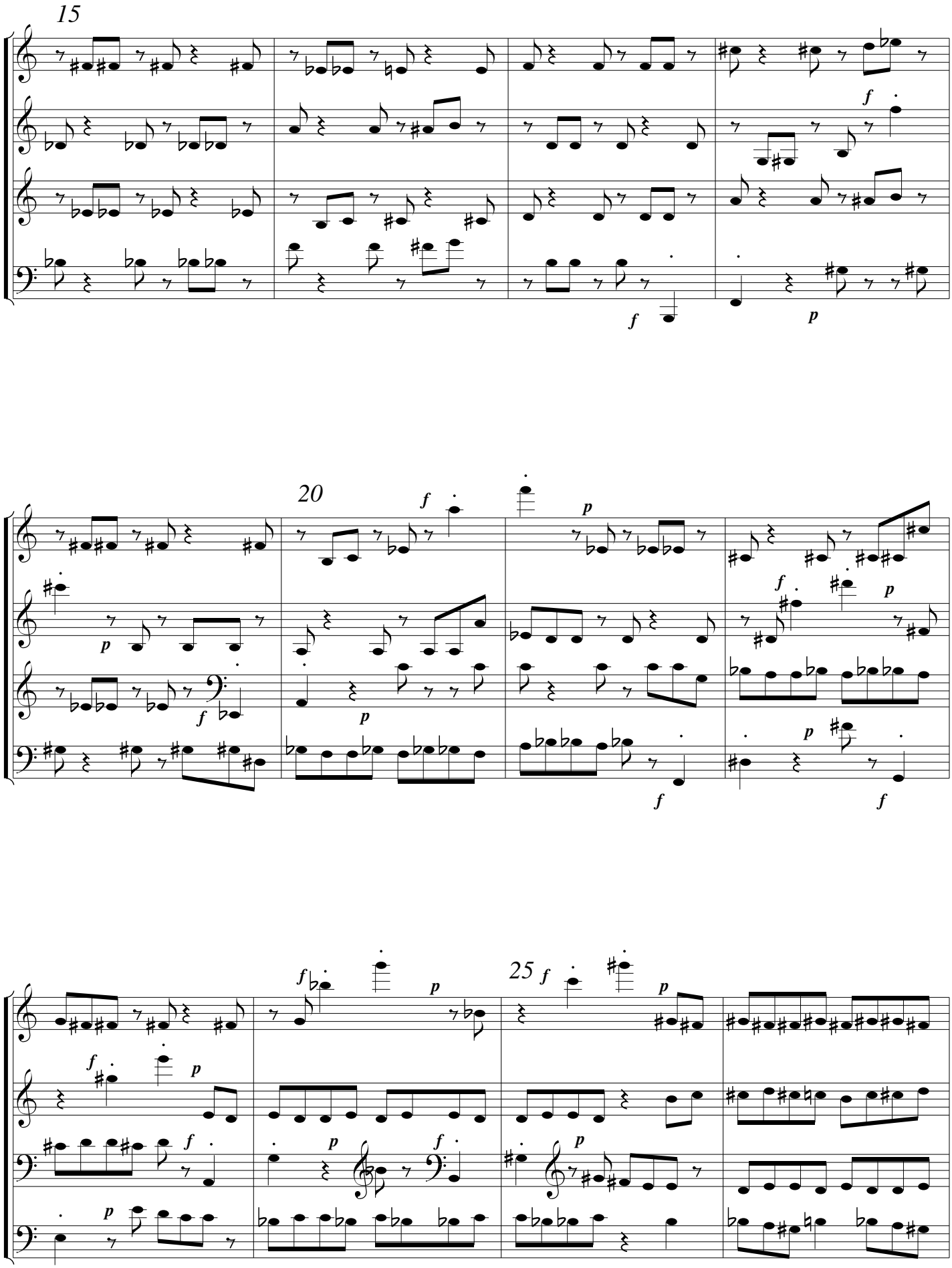

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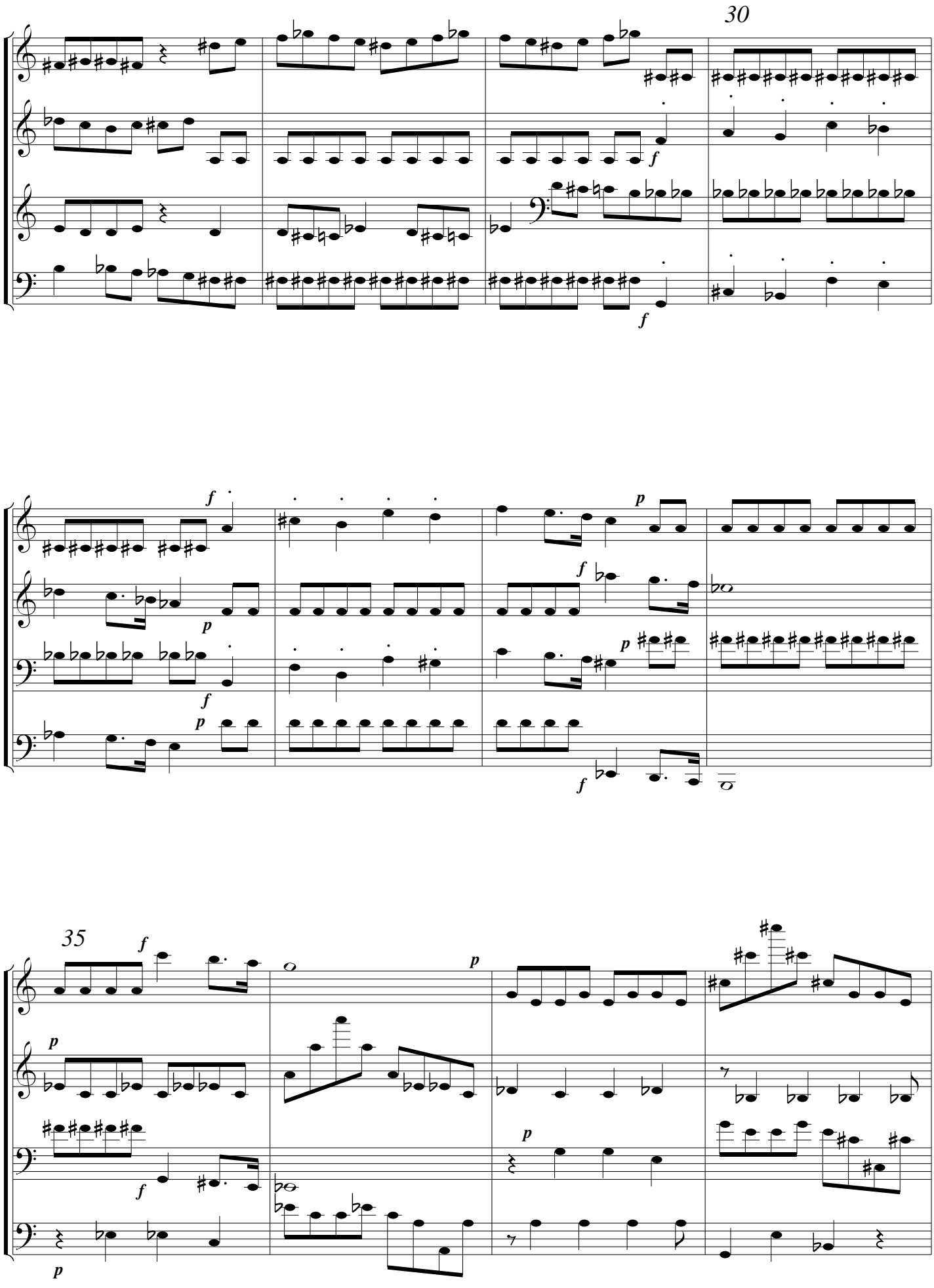

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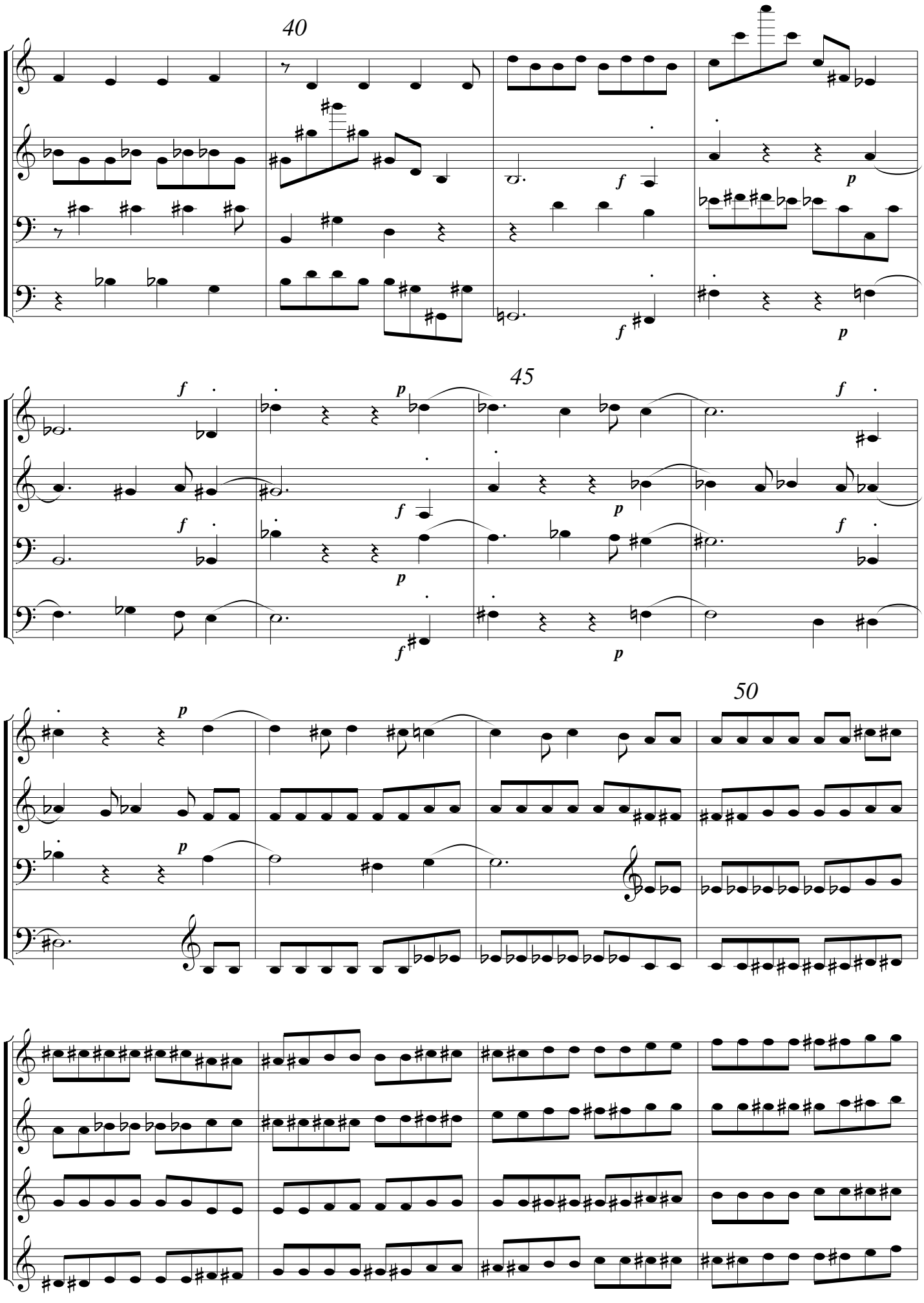

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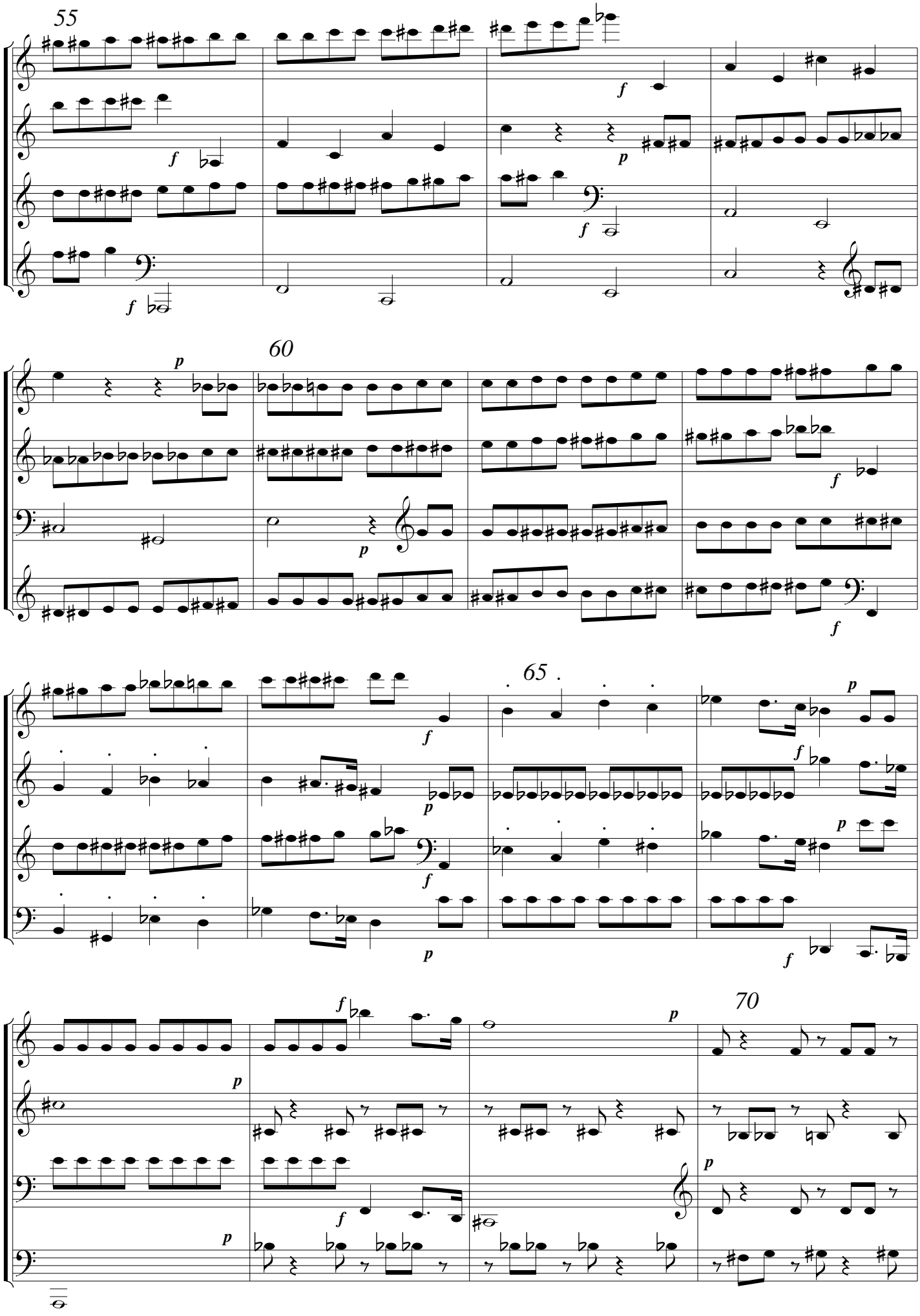

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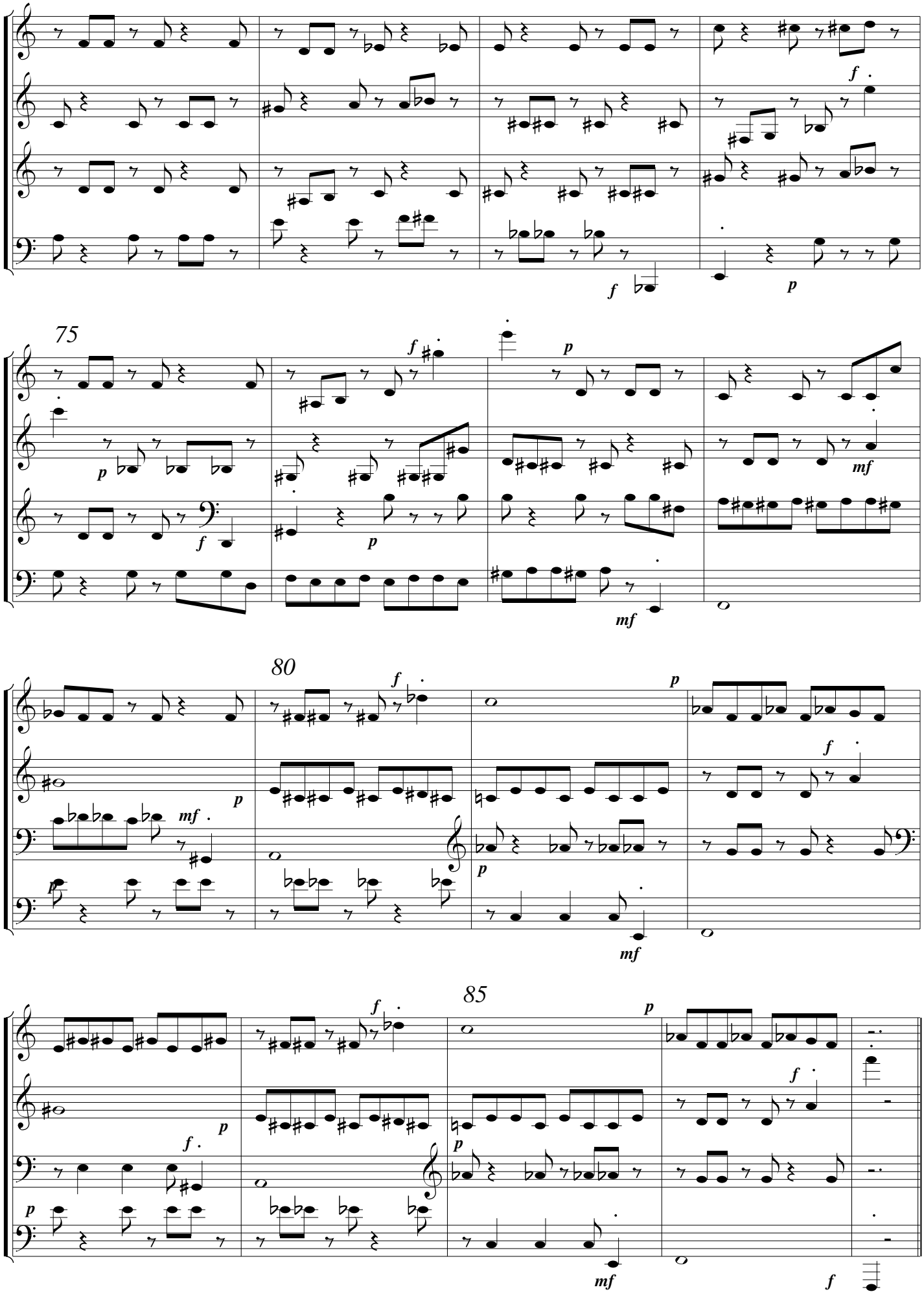

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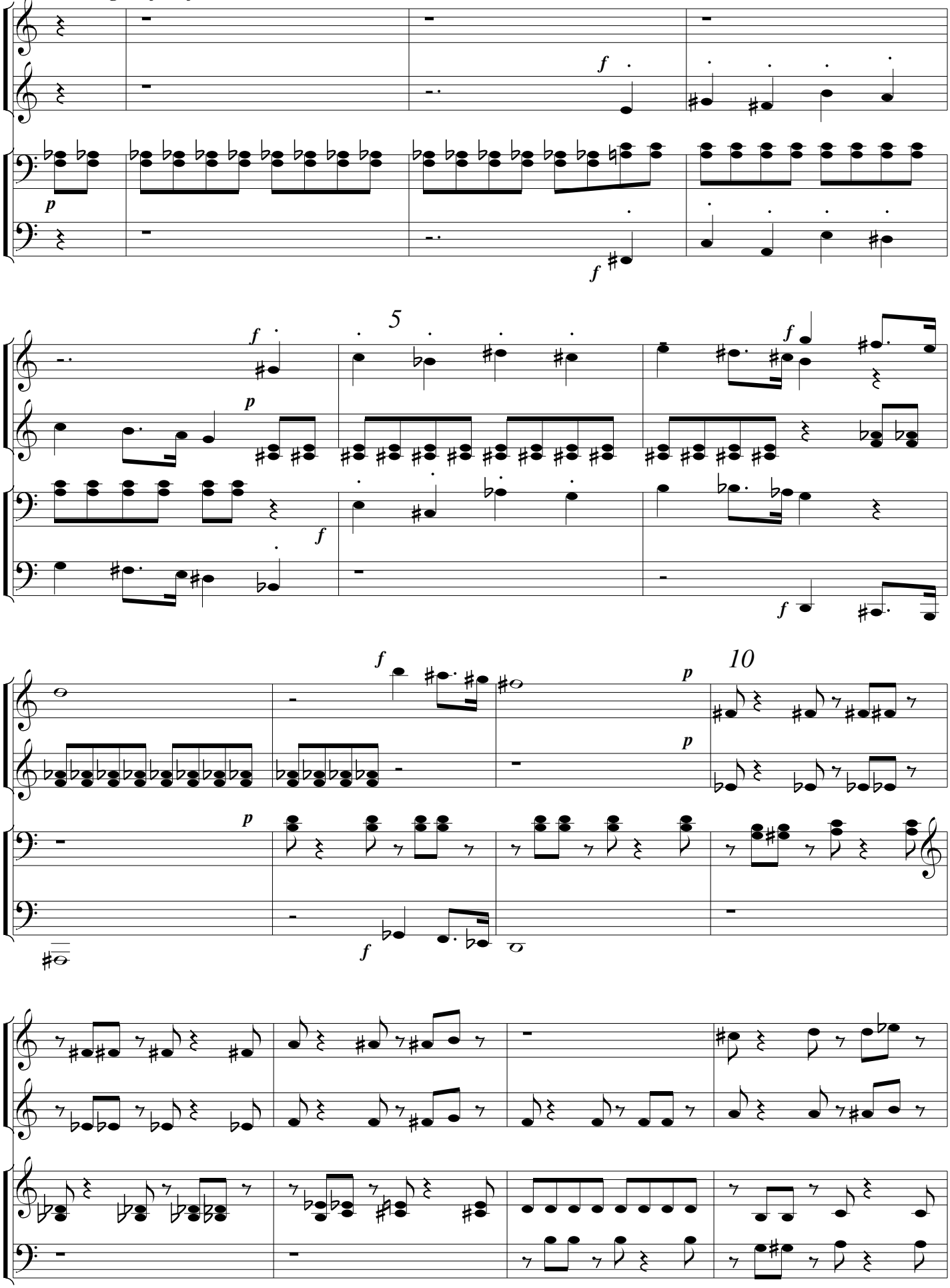
Double canon at four semitones

arranged for four hands



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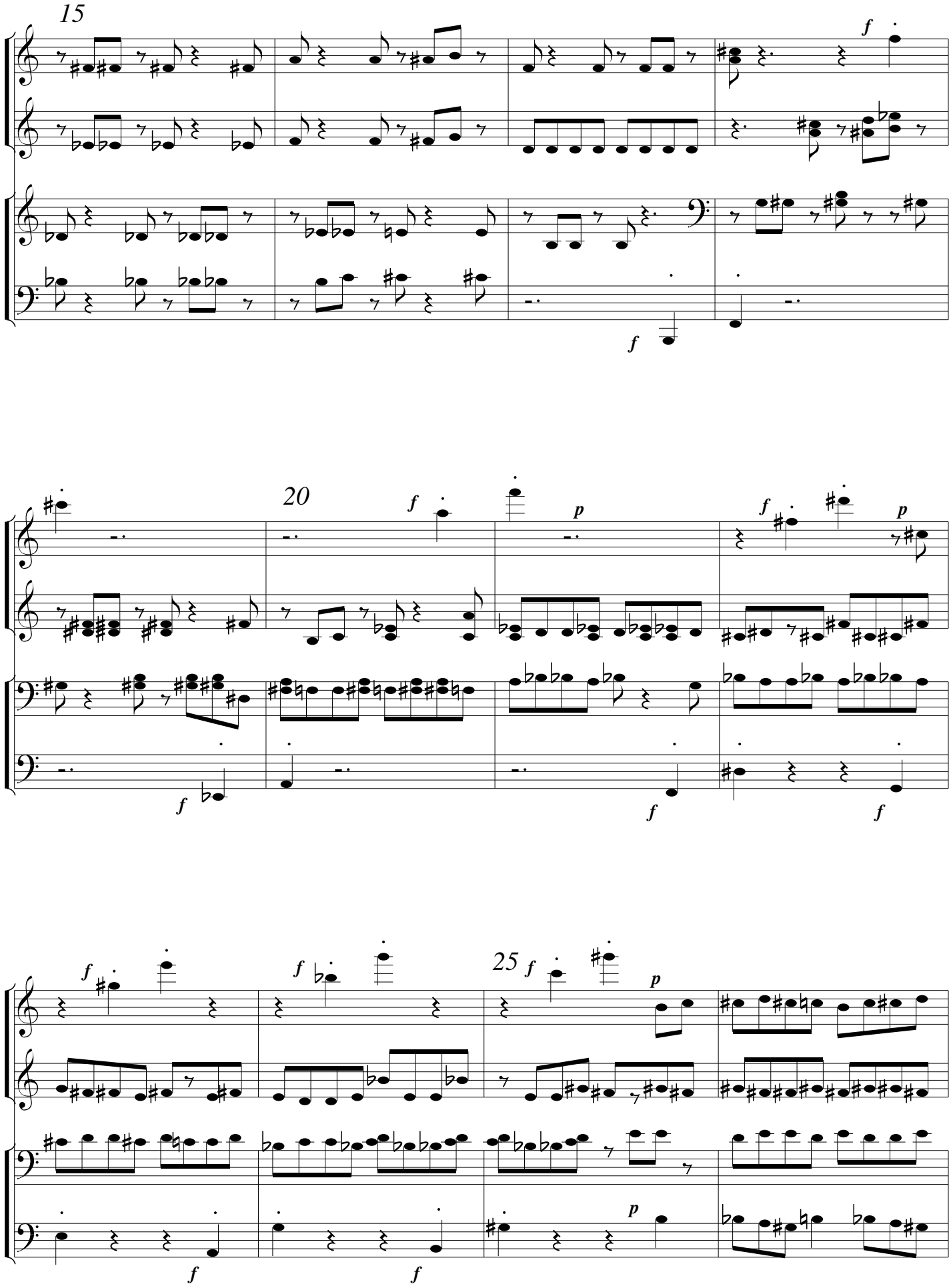

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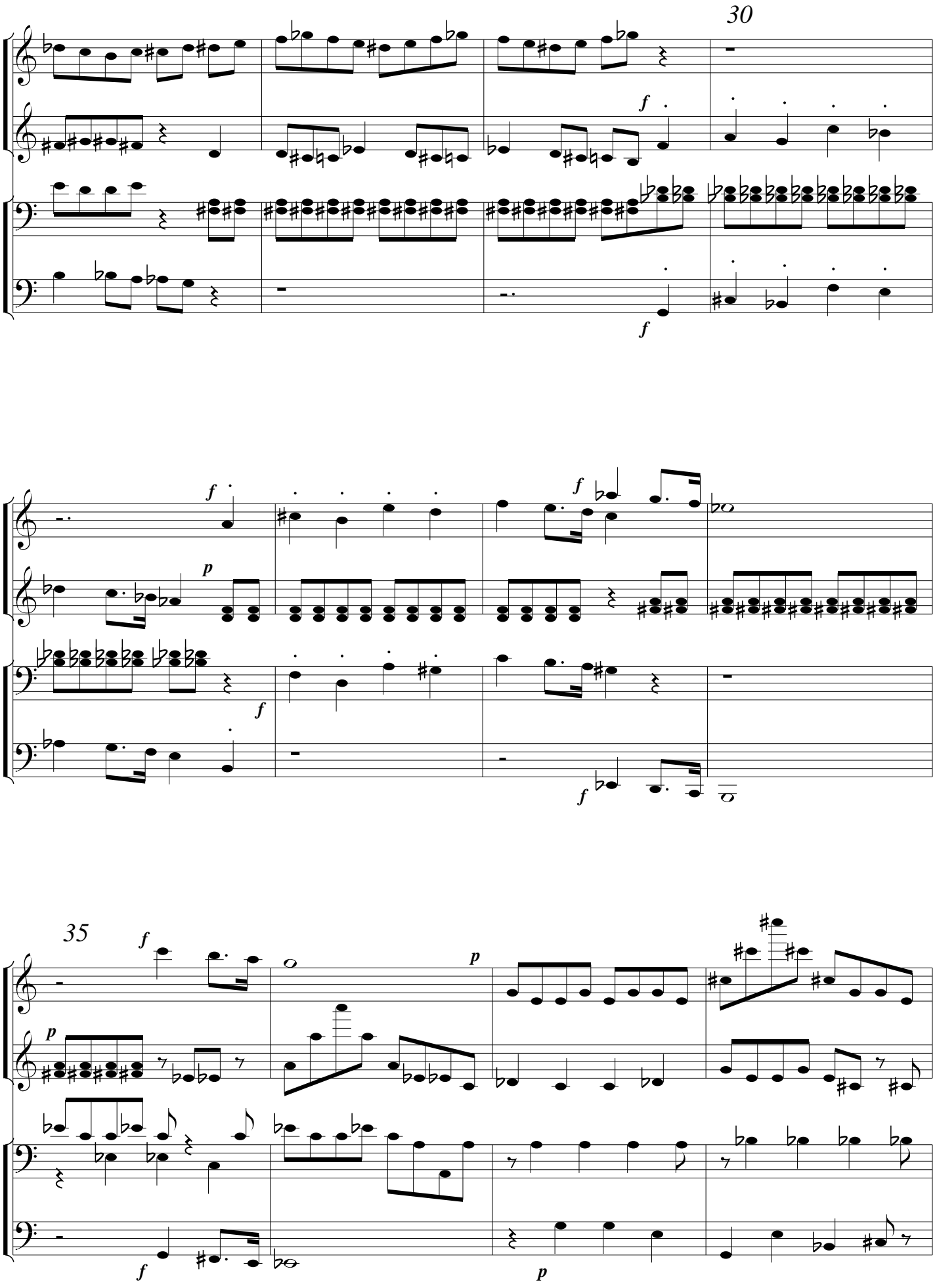

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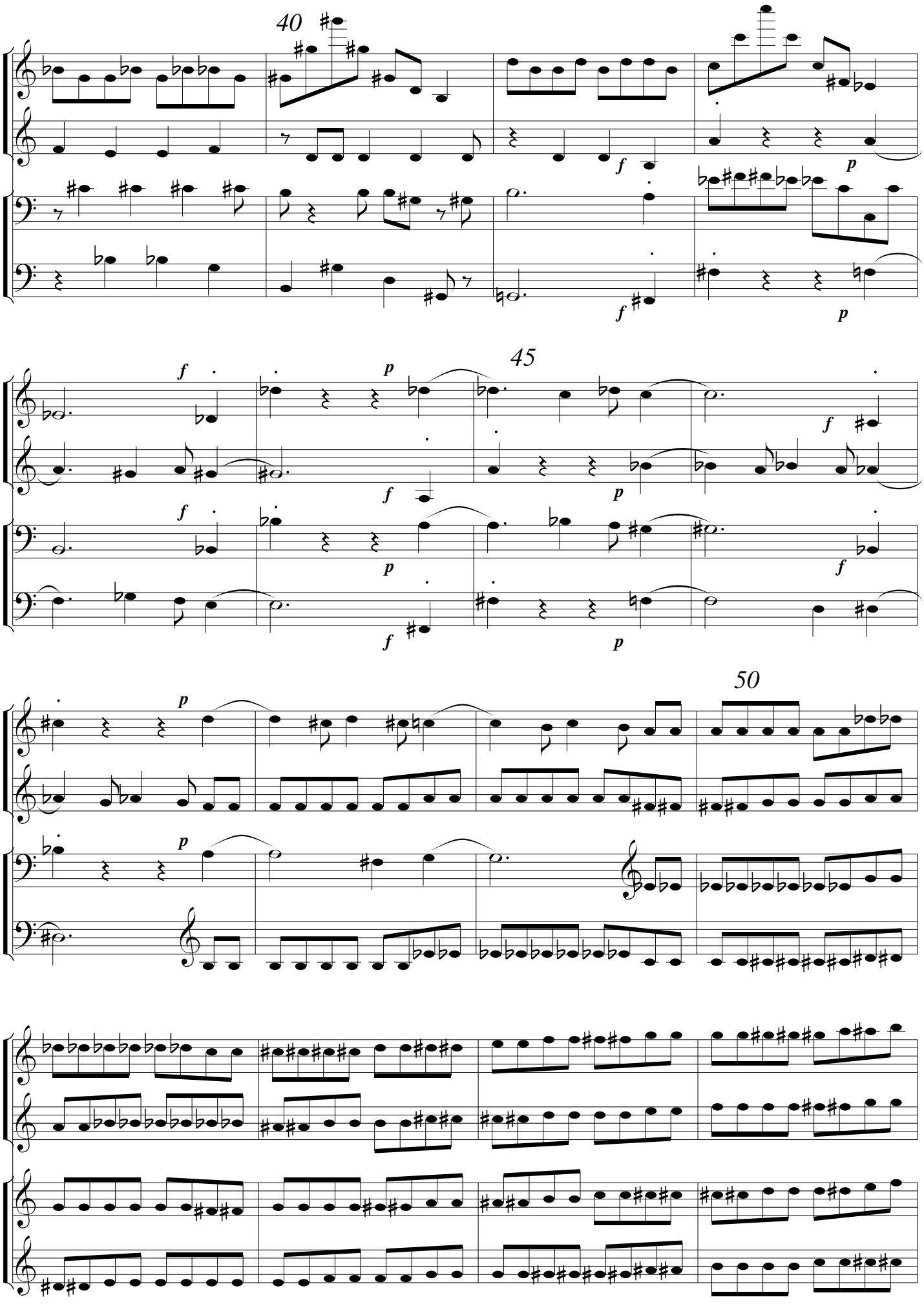

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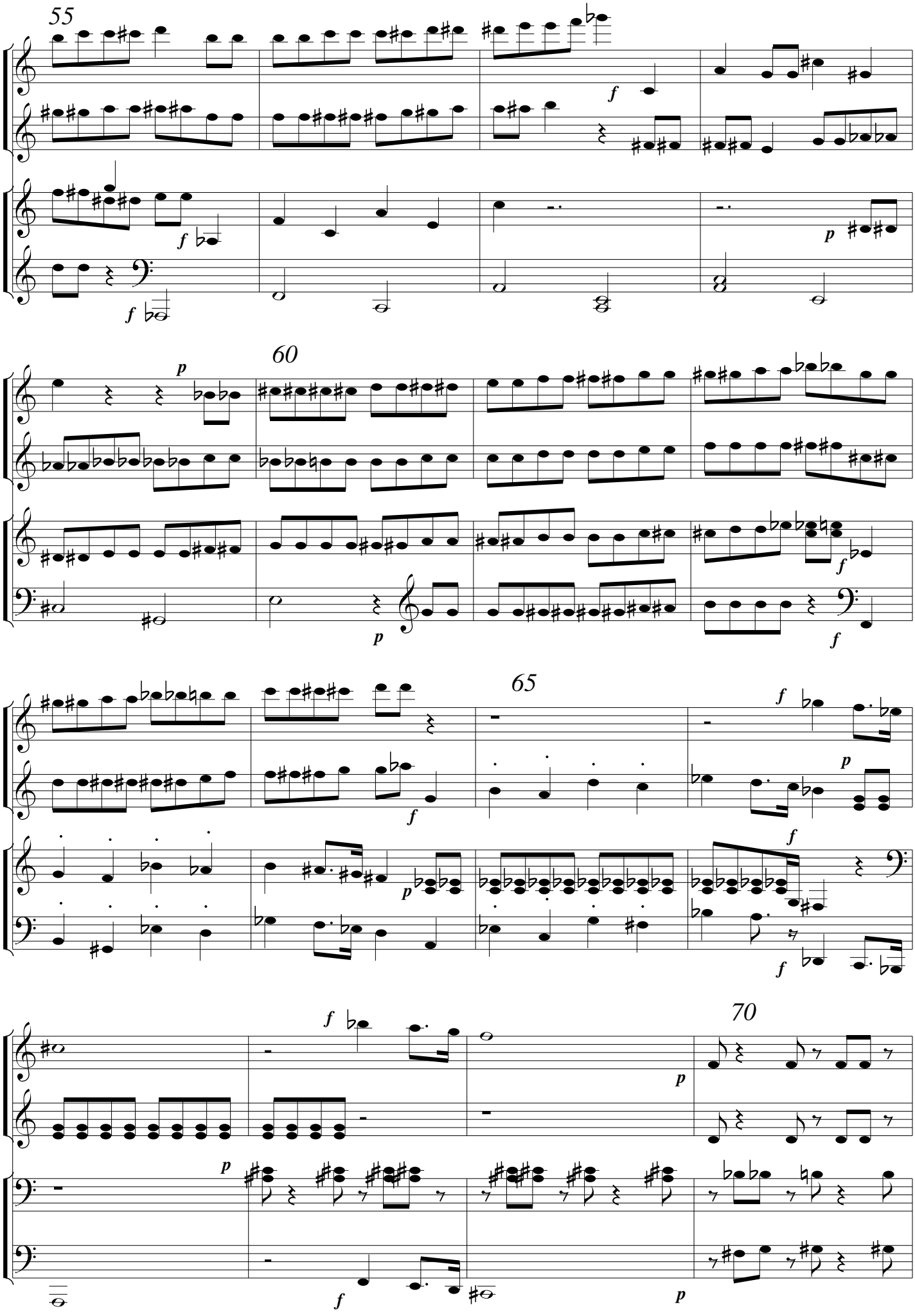

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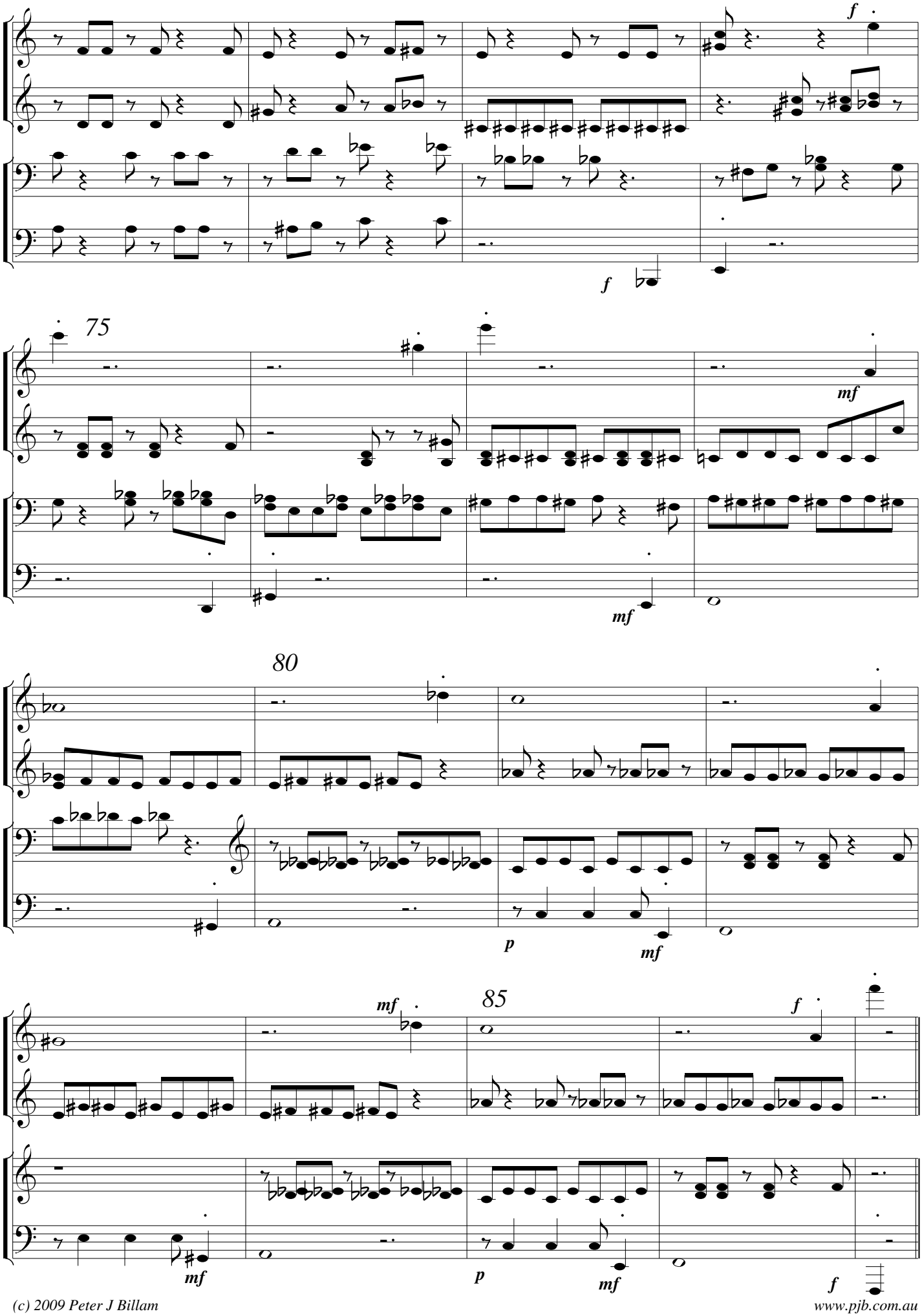

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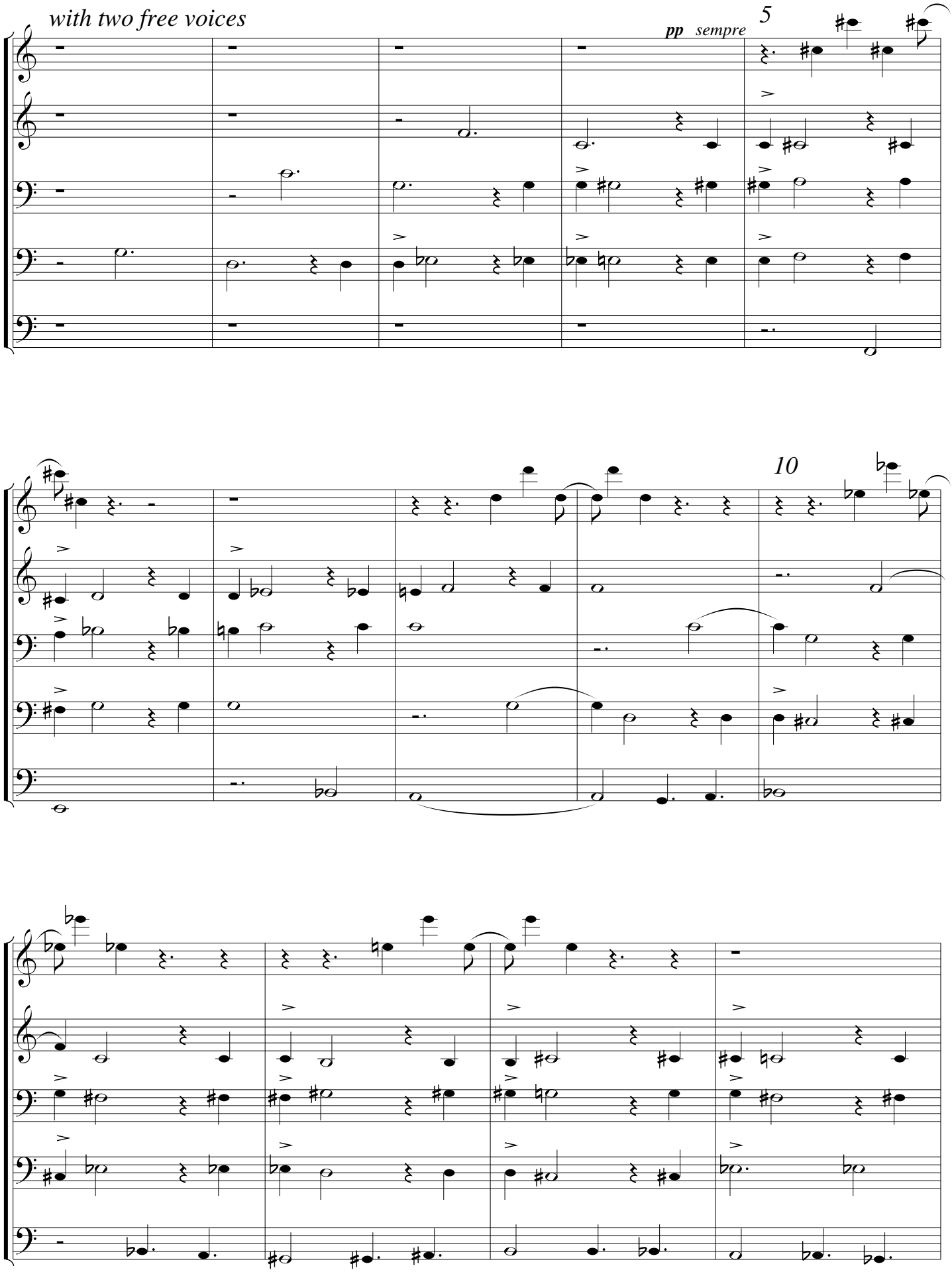
Canon at five semitones



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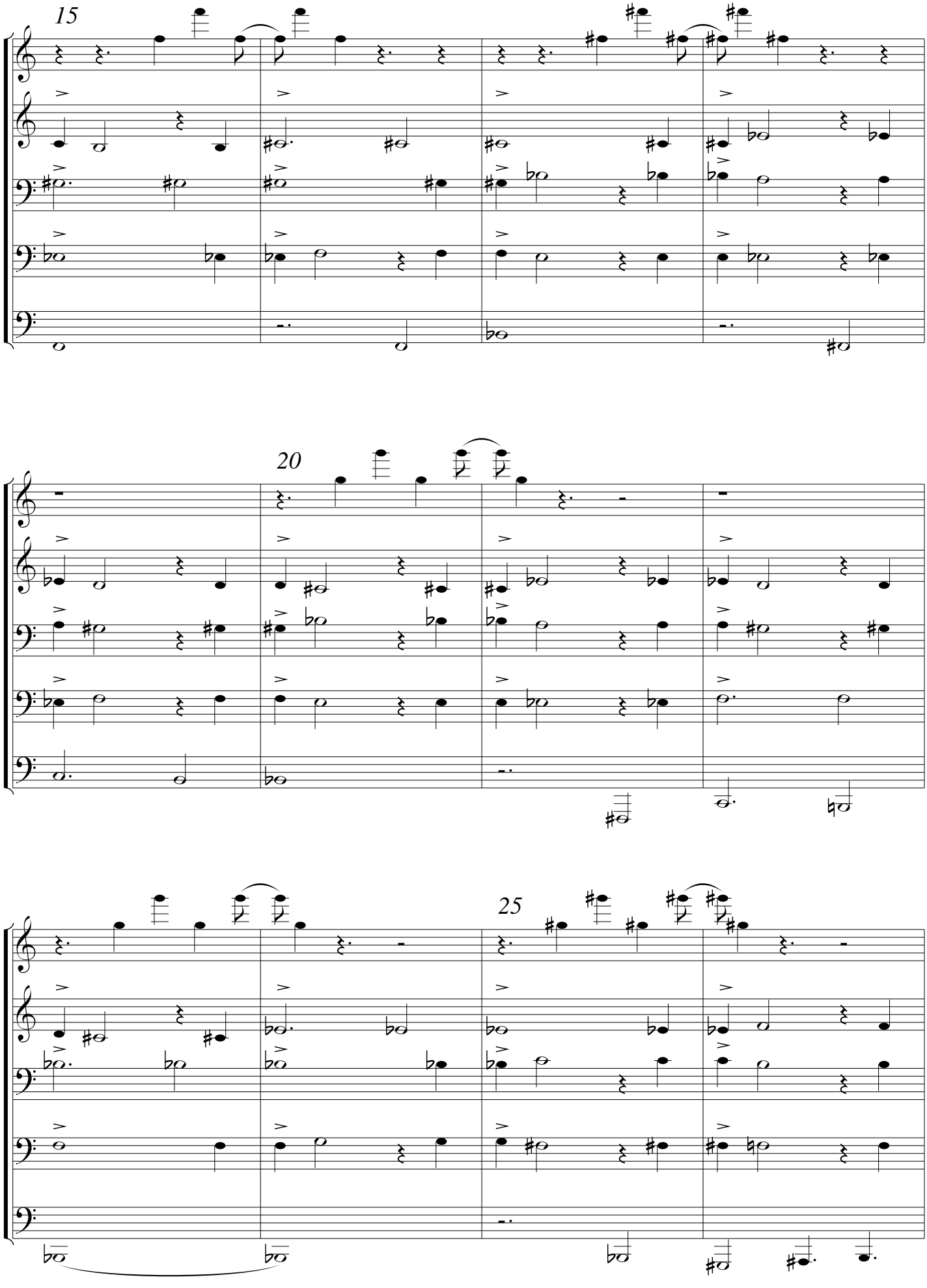

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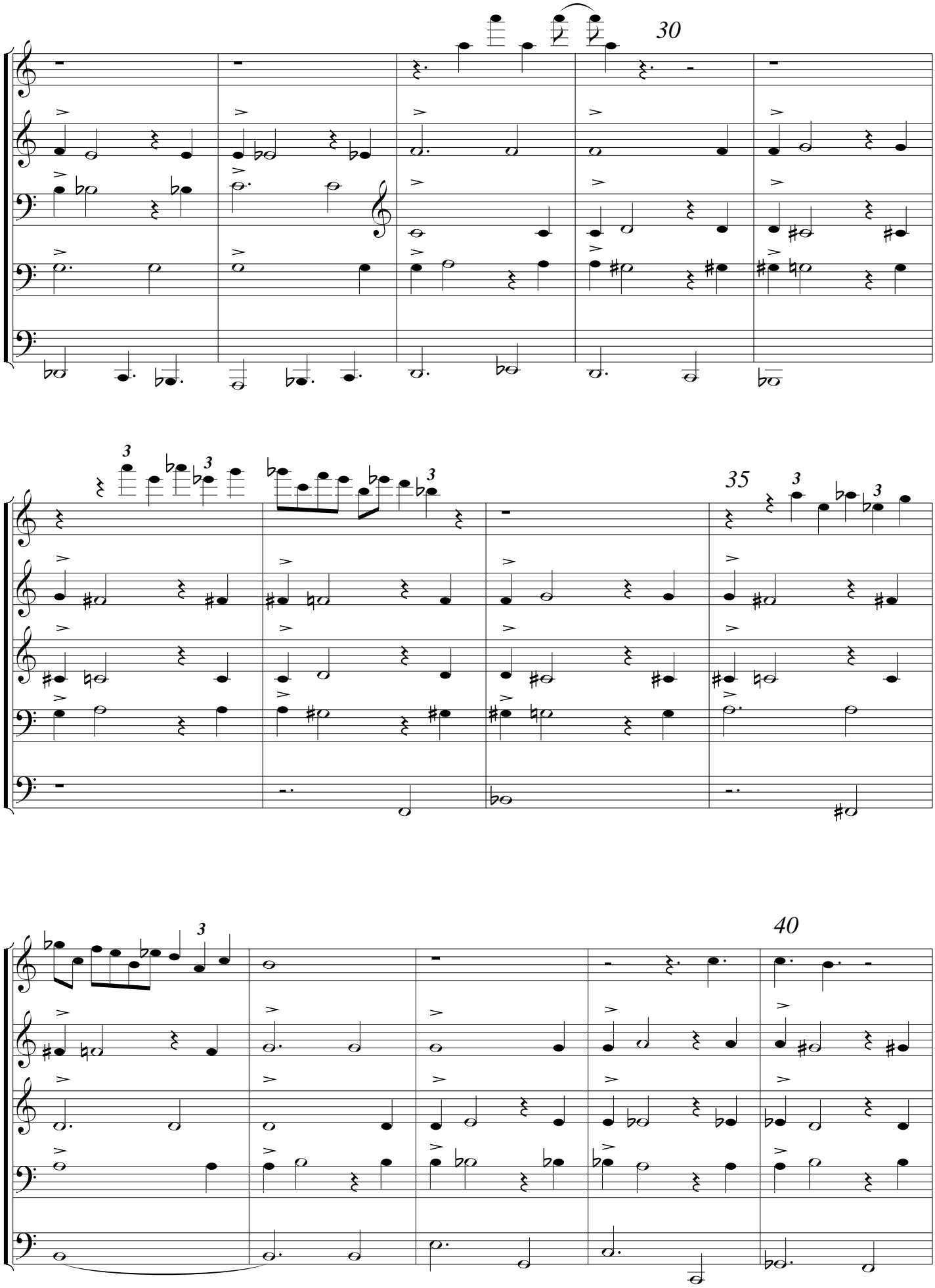

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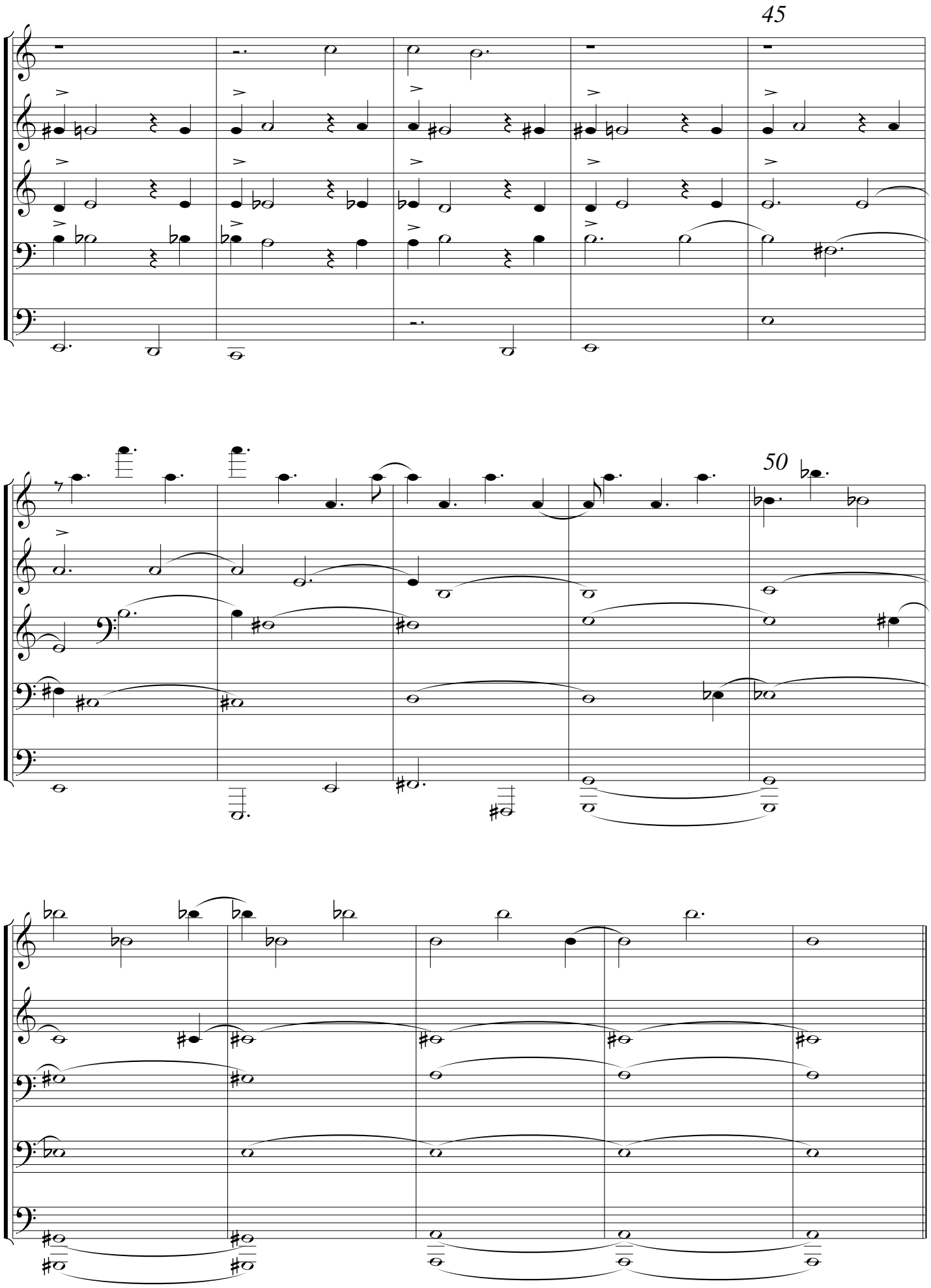

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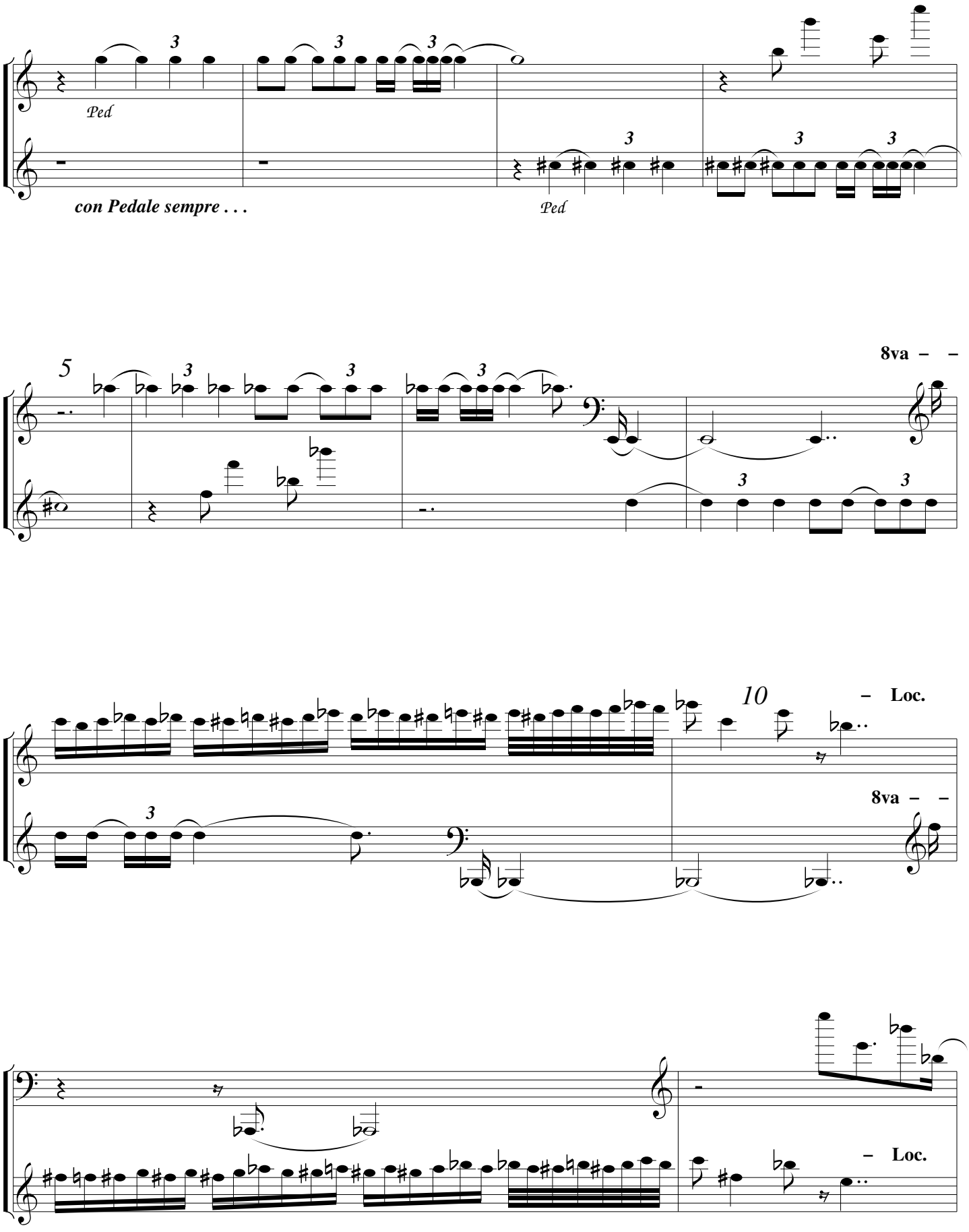
Canon at six semitones



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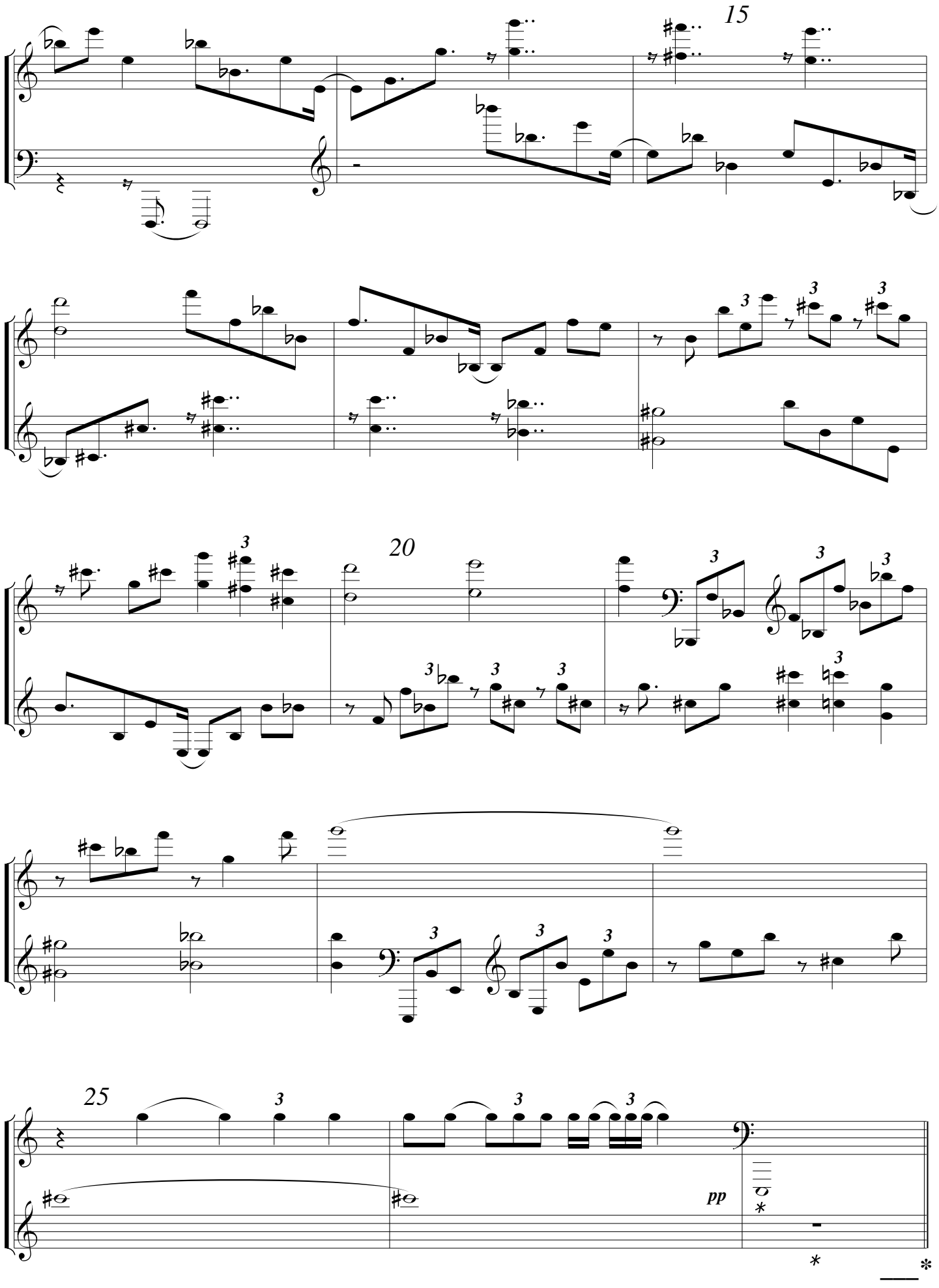

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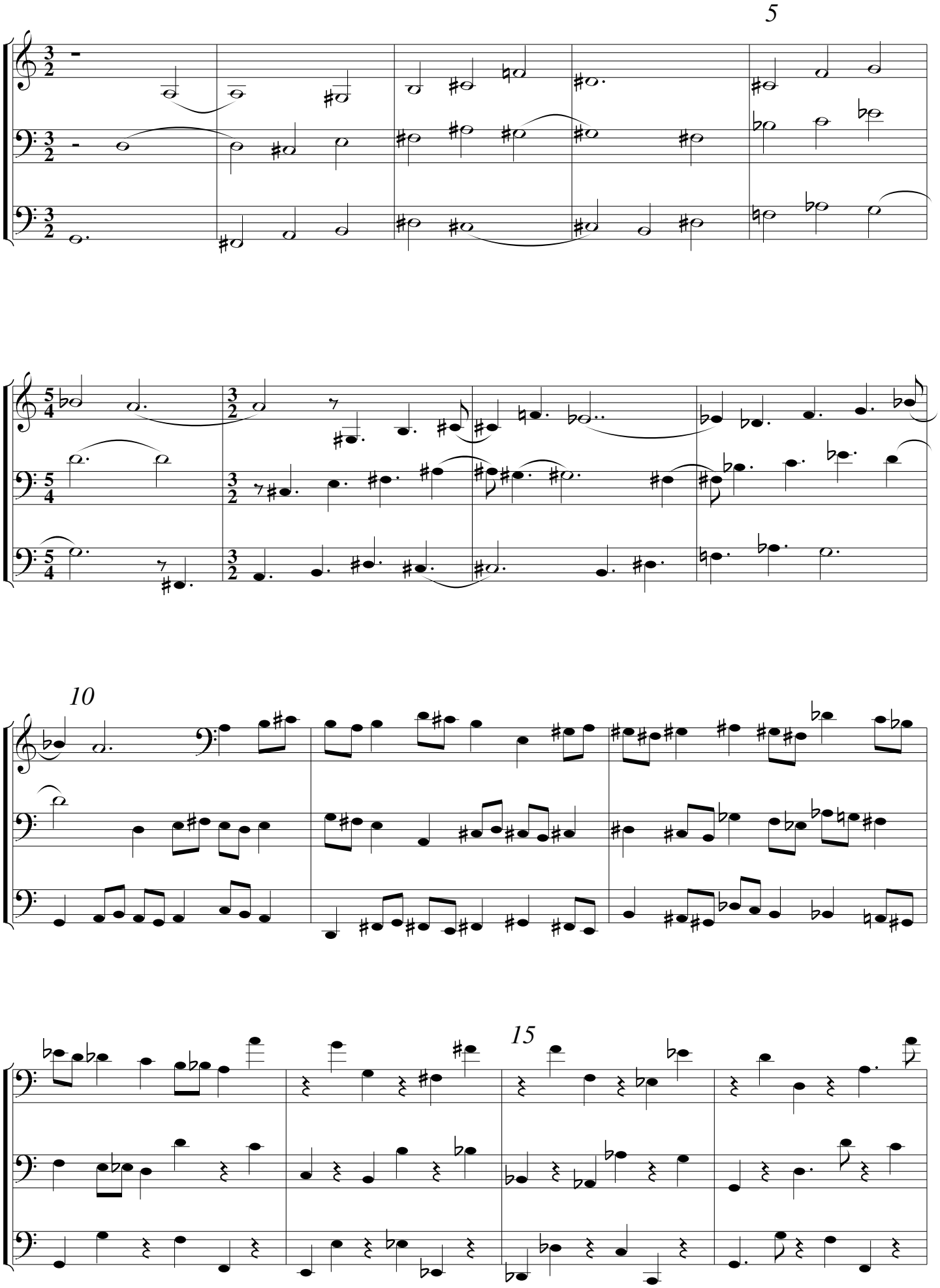
Canon at seven semitones



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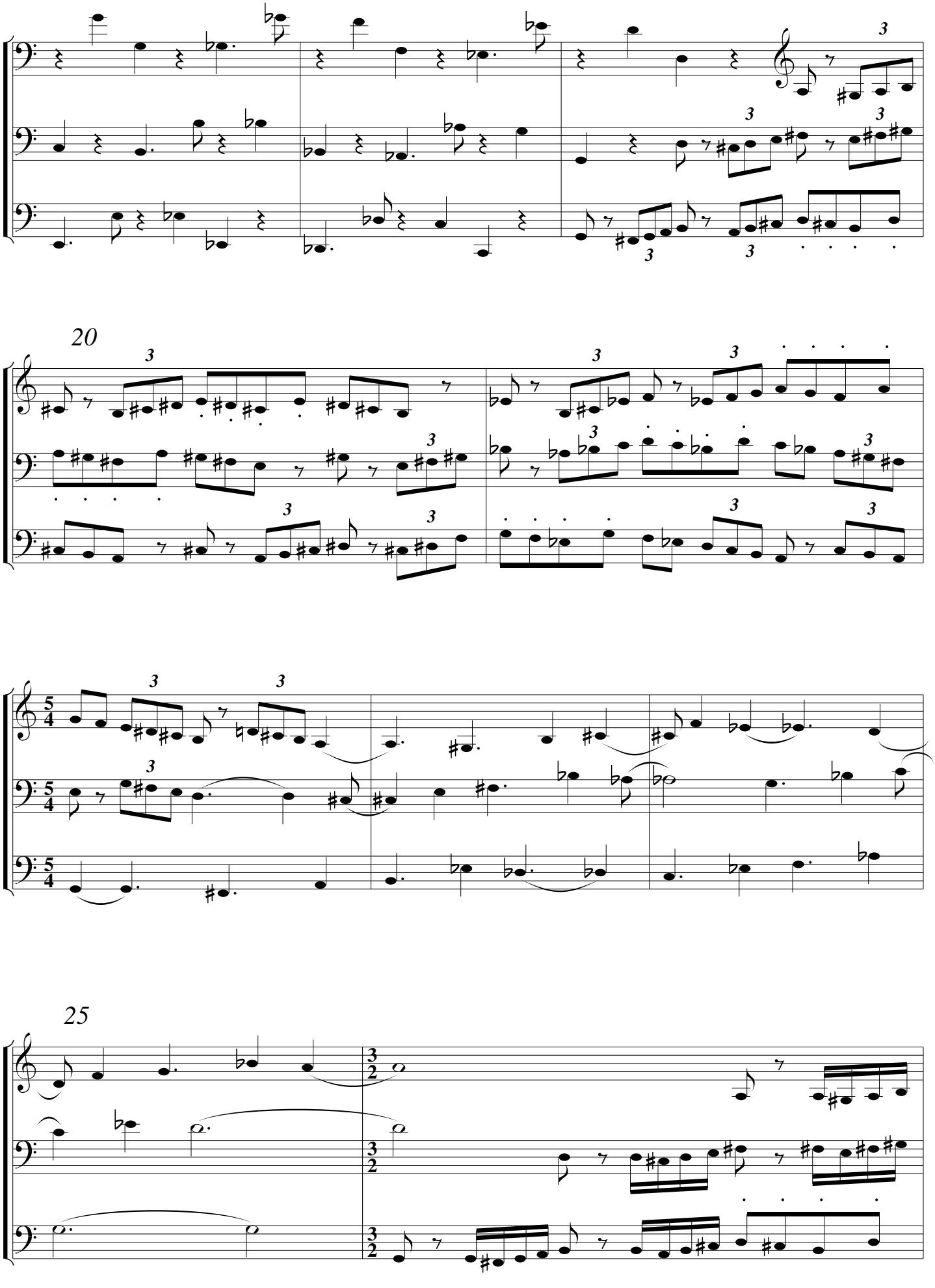

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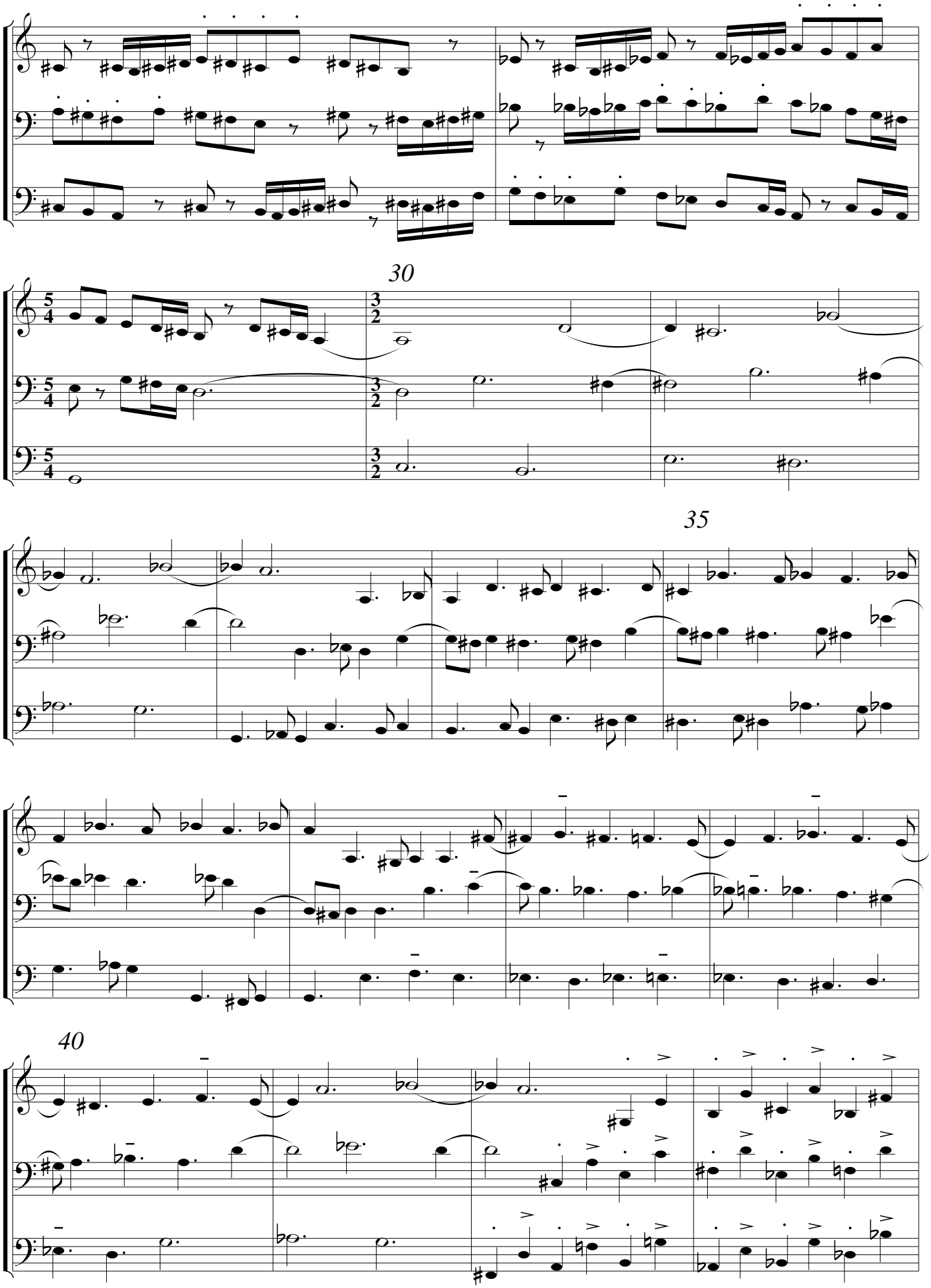

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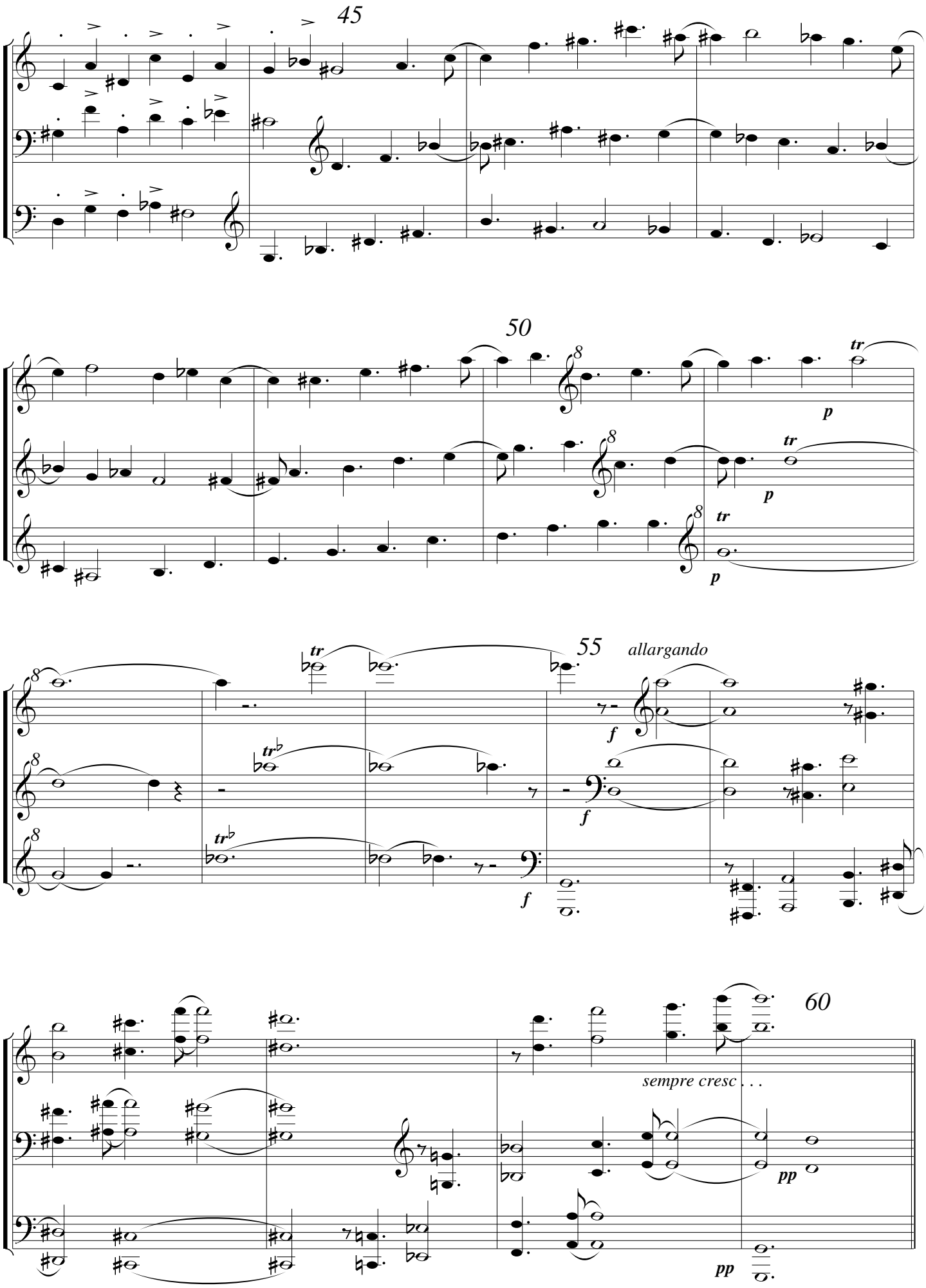

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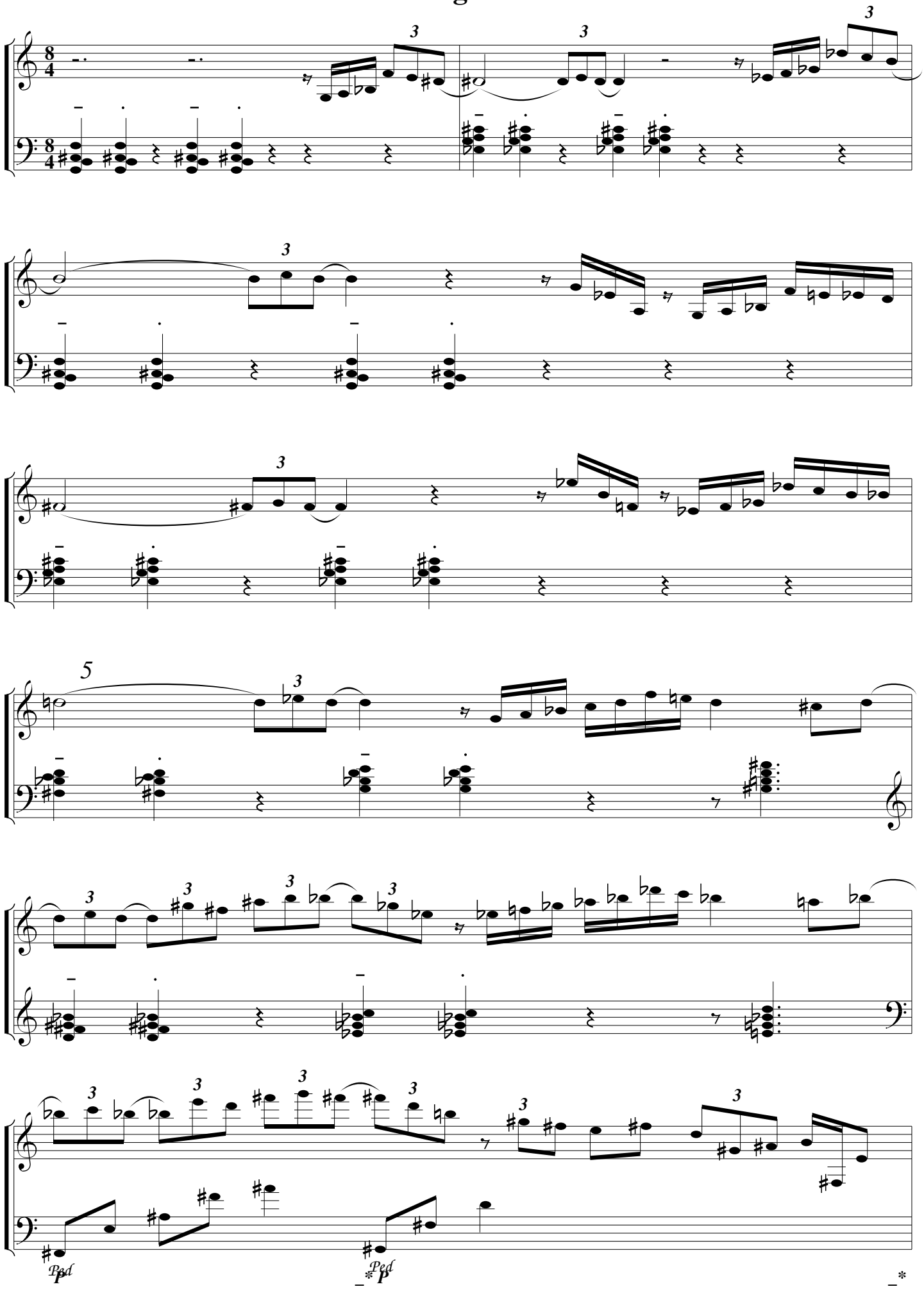
Canon at eight semitones



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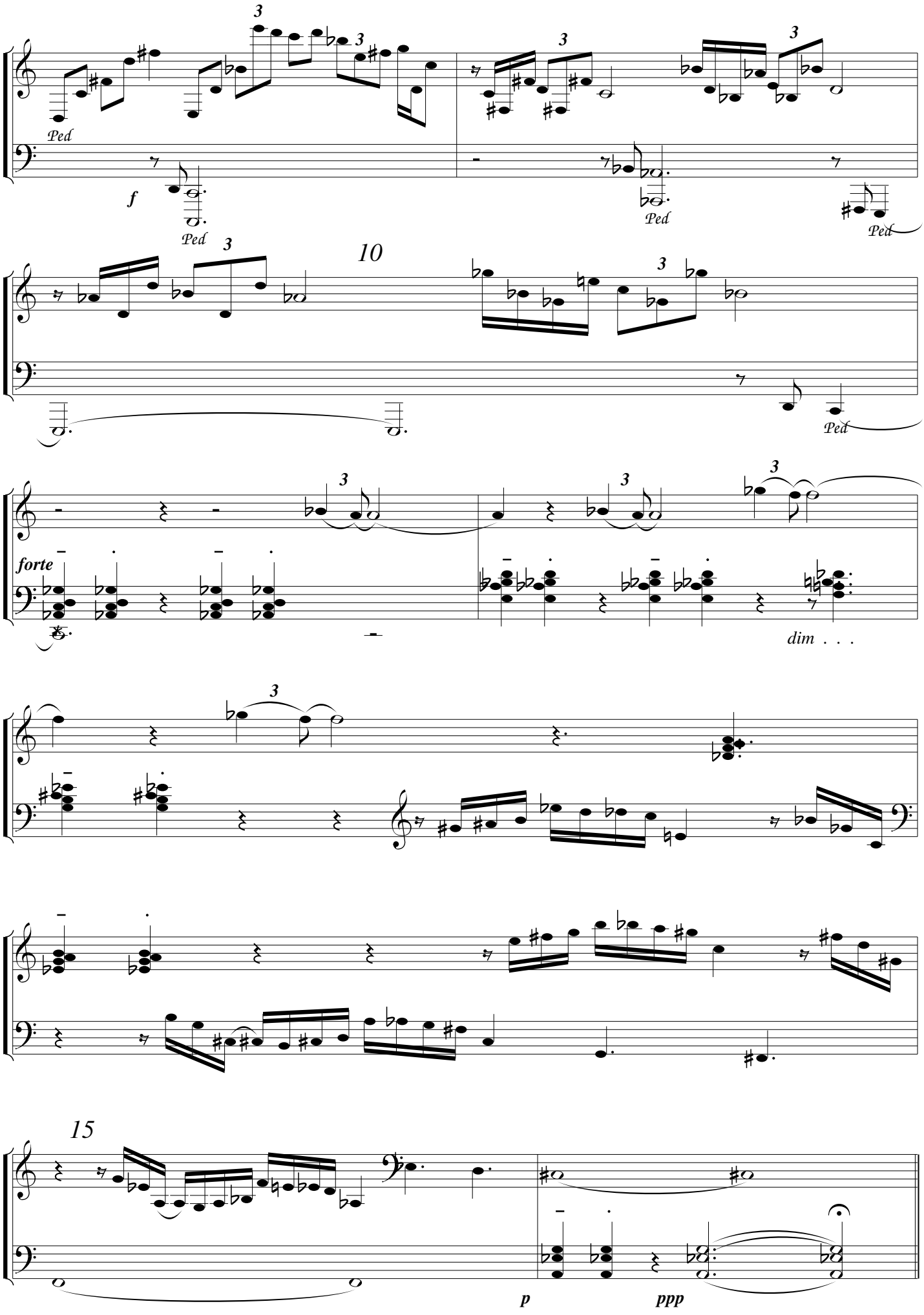

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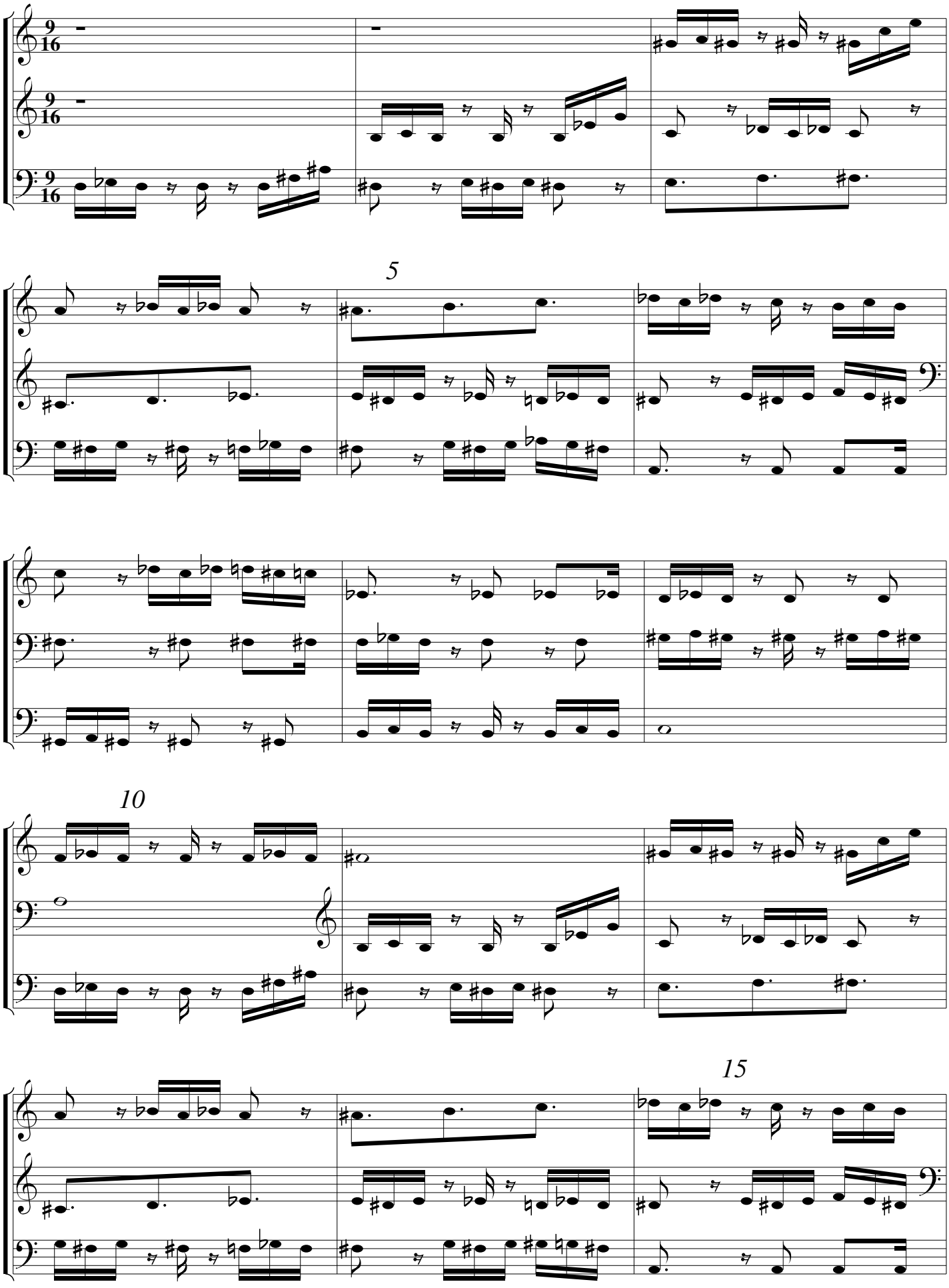
Canon at nine semitones



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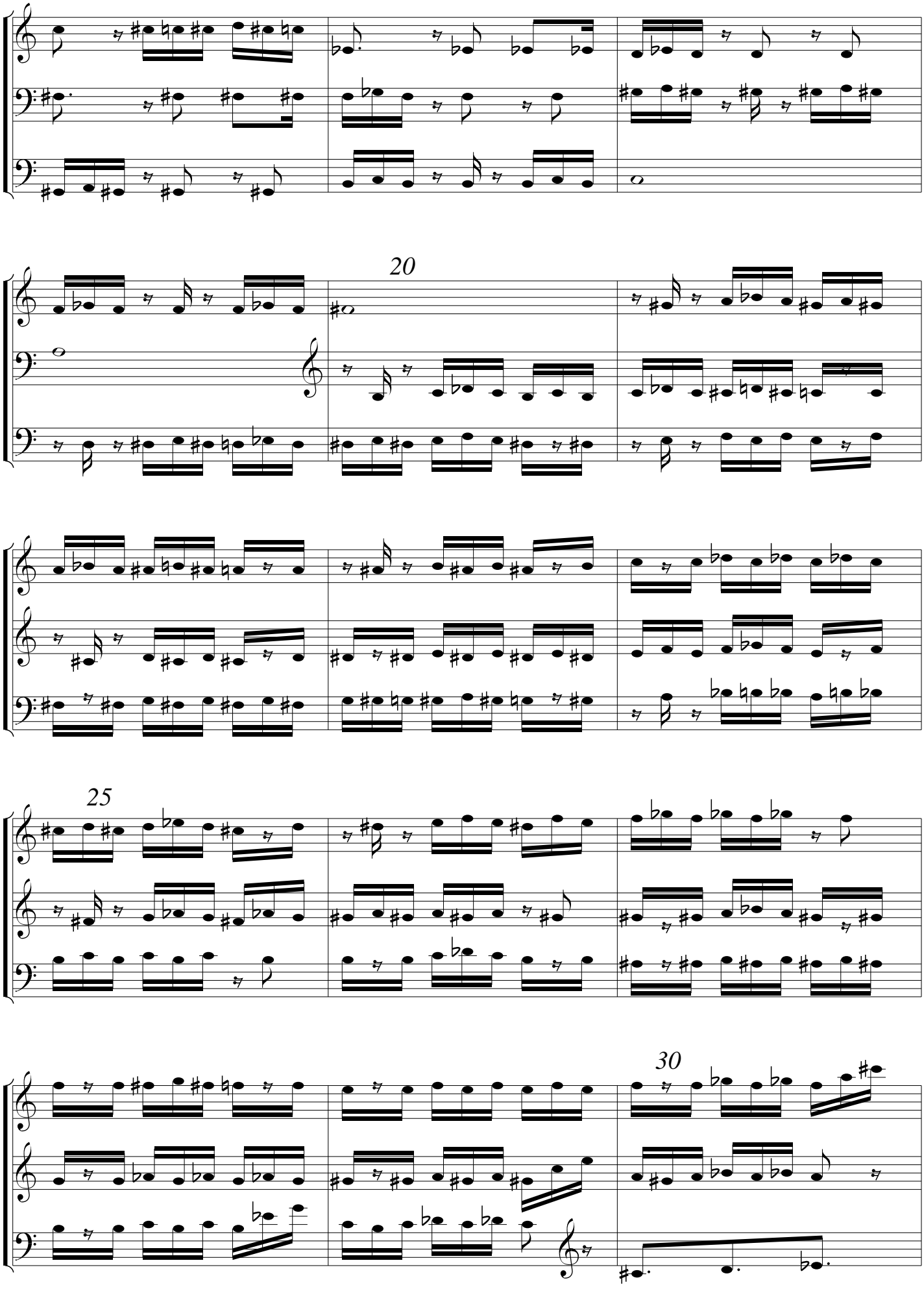

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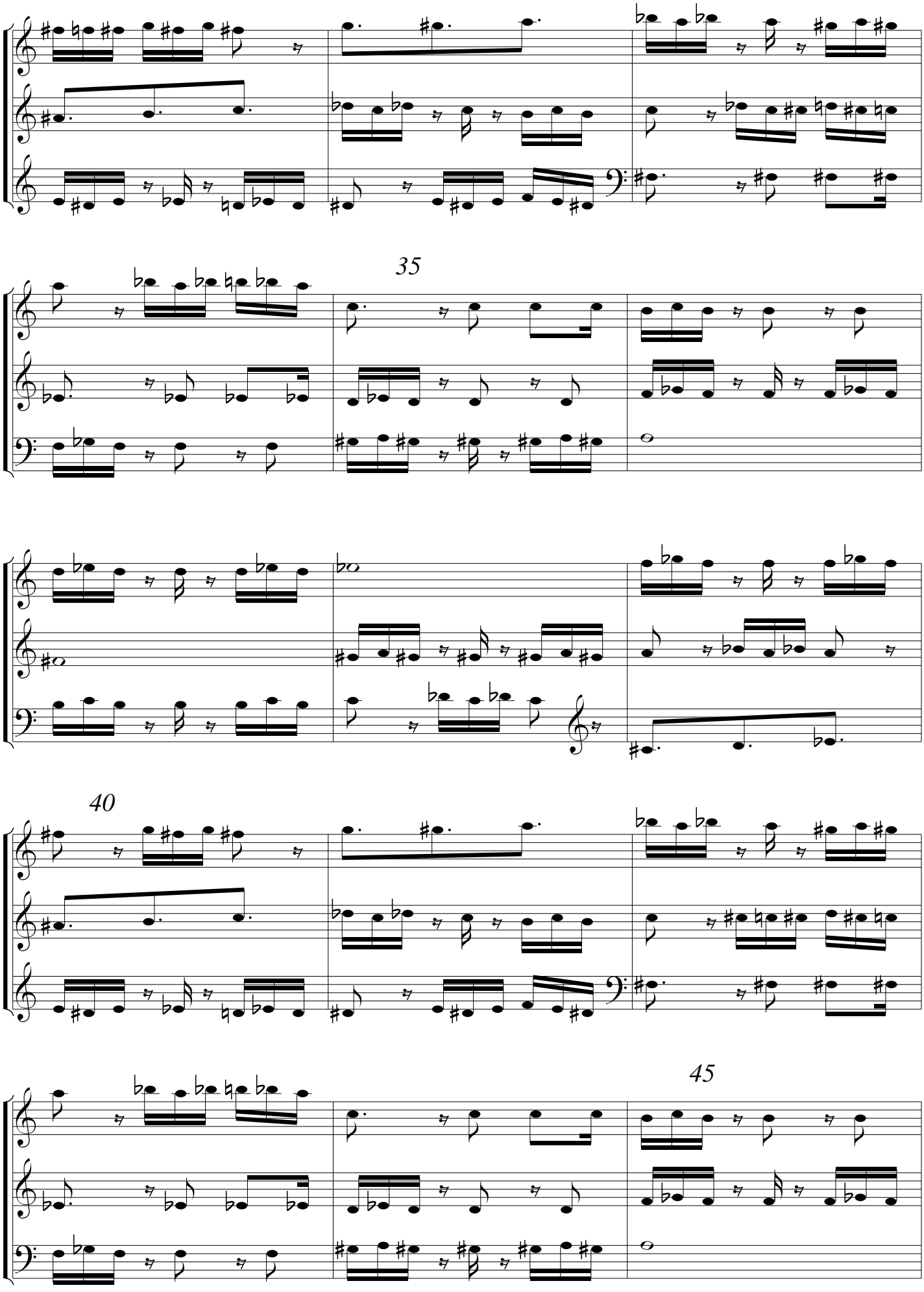

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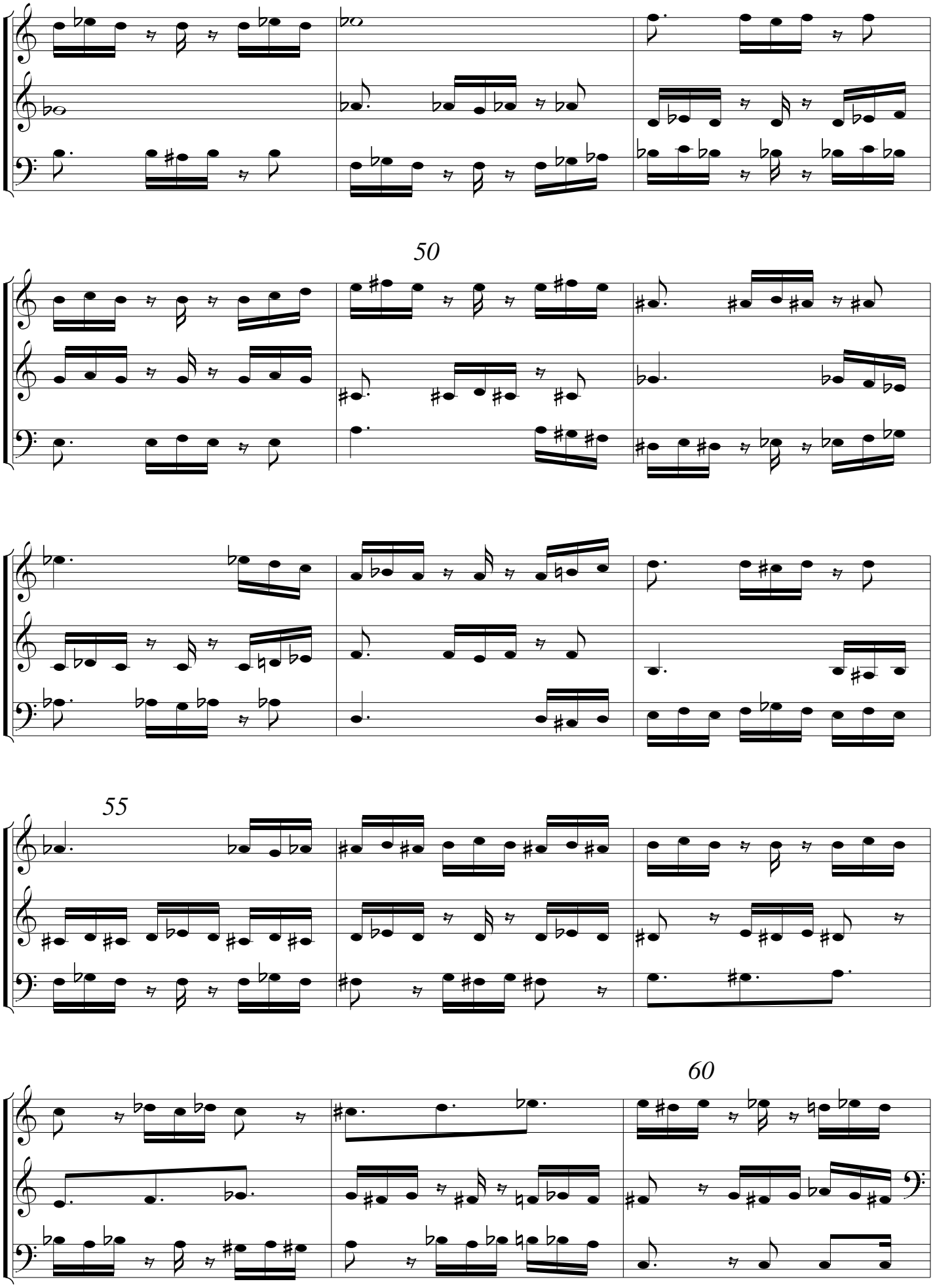

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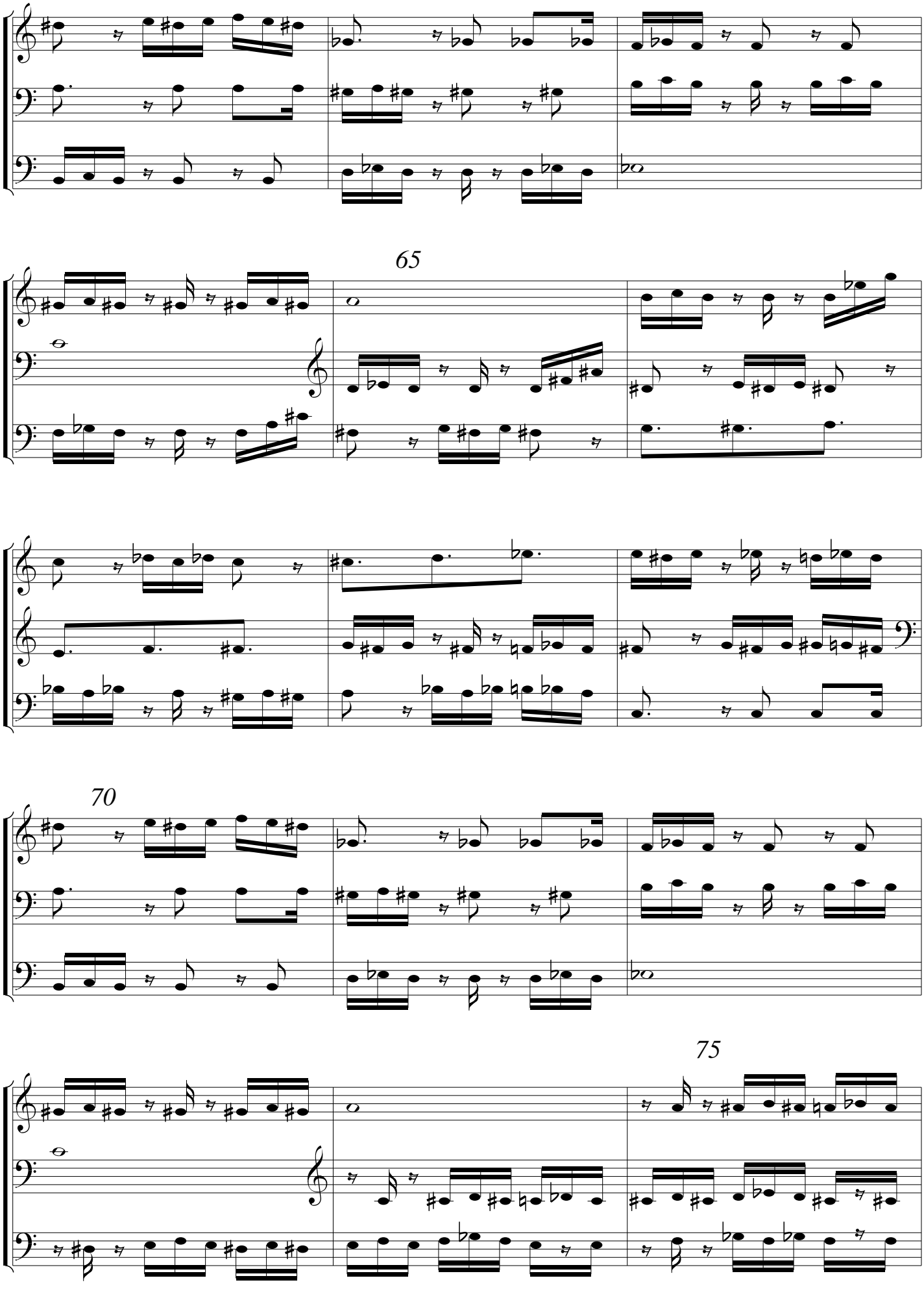

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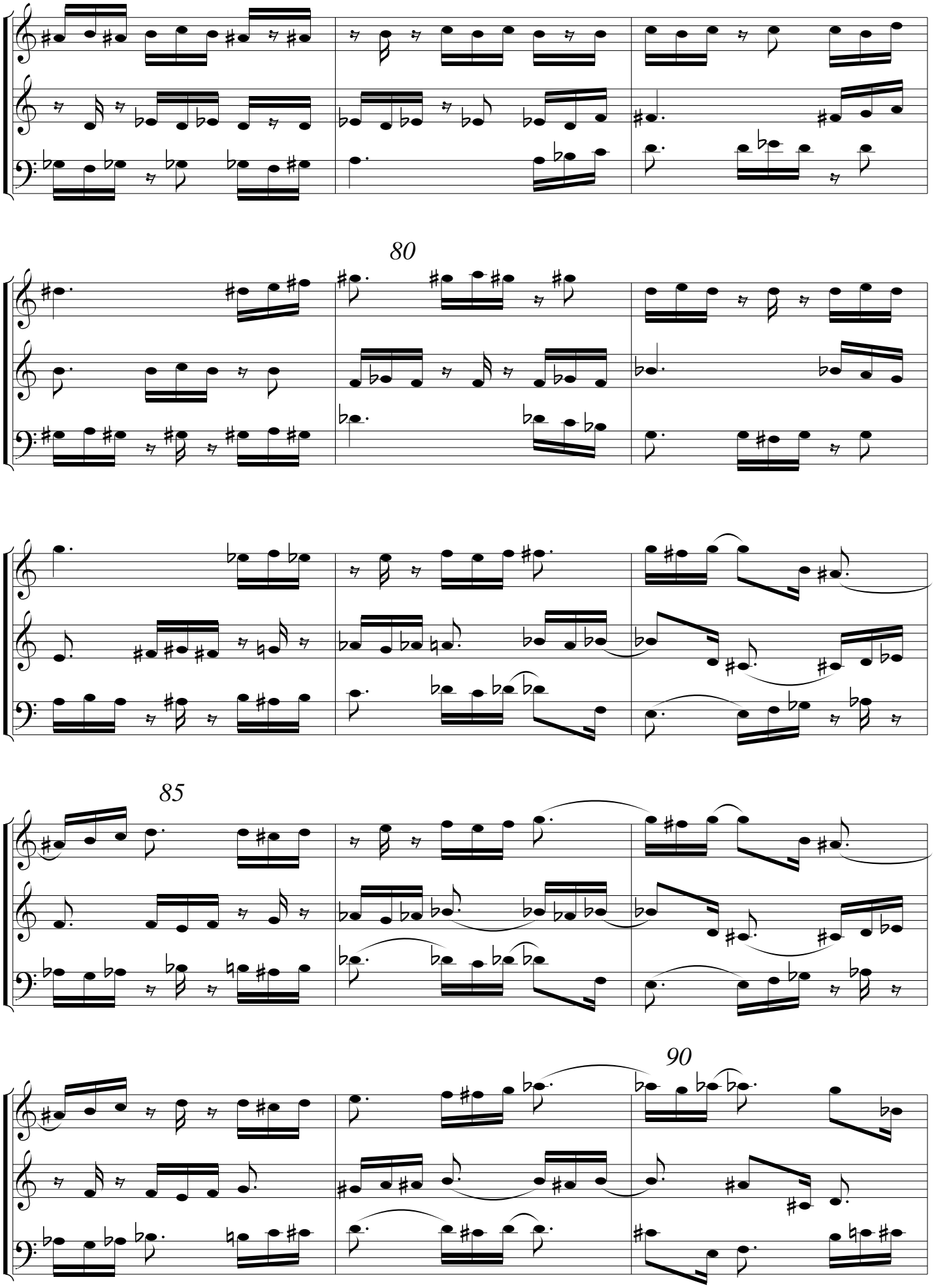

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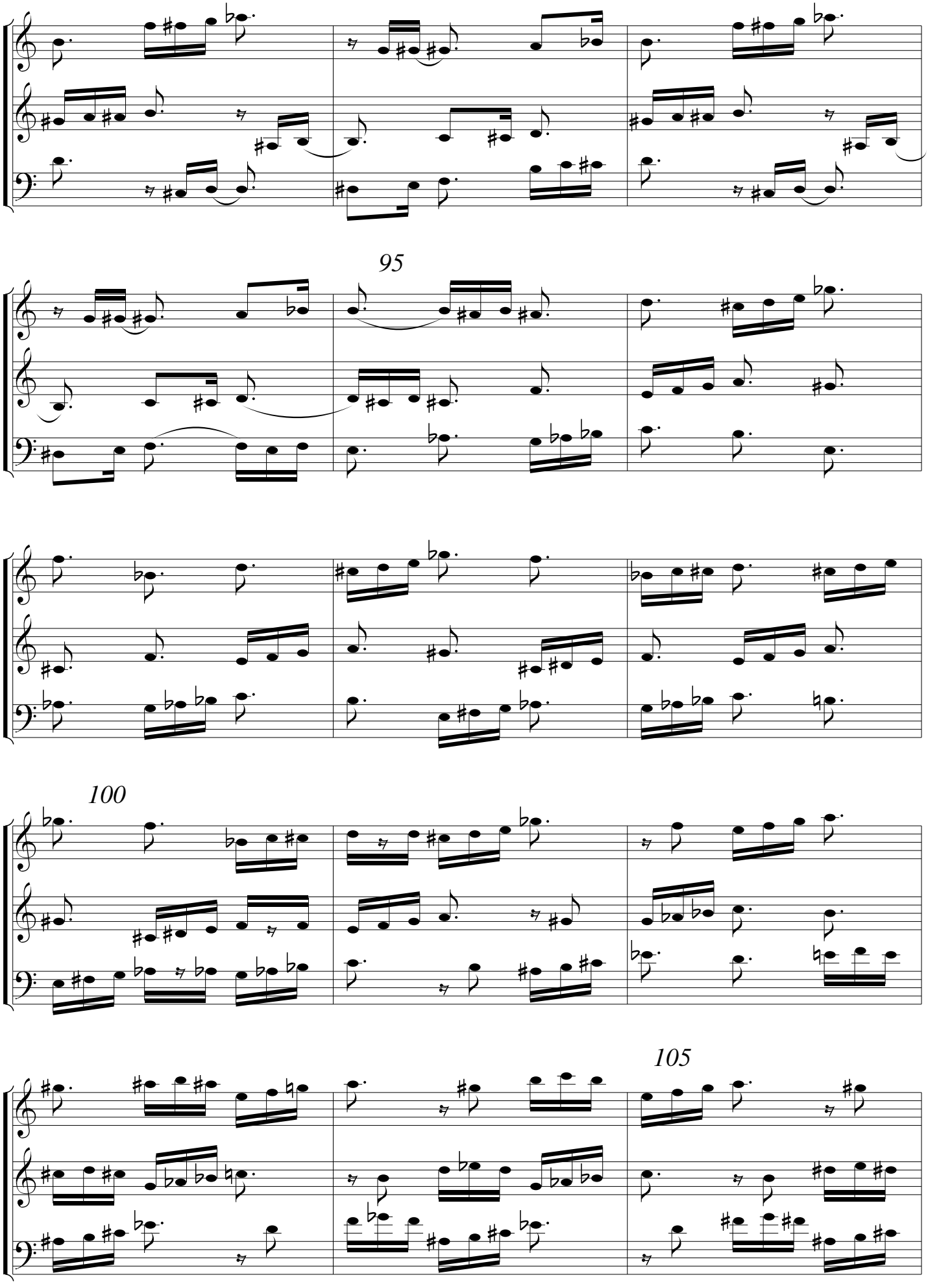

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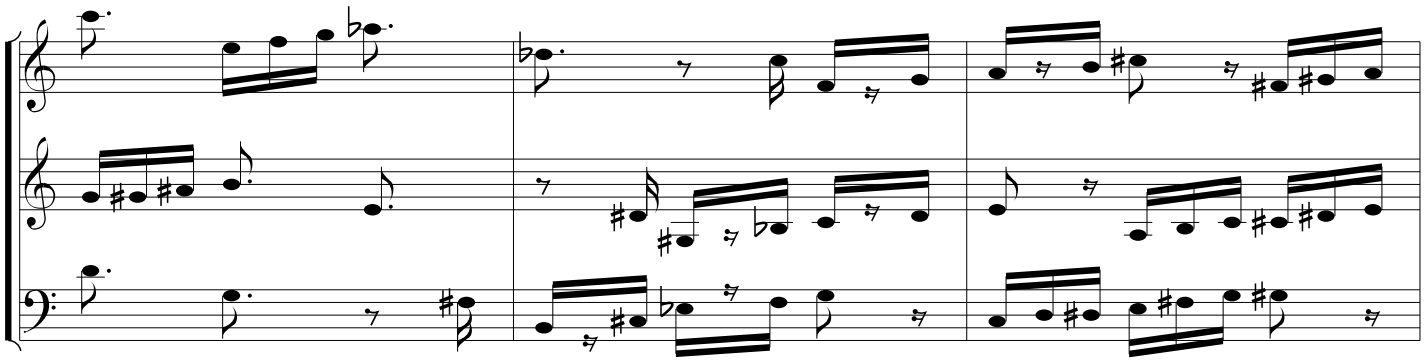

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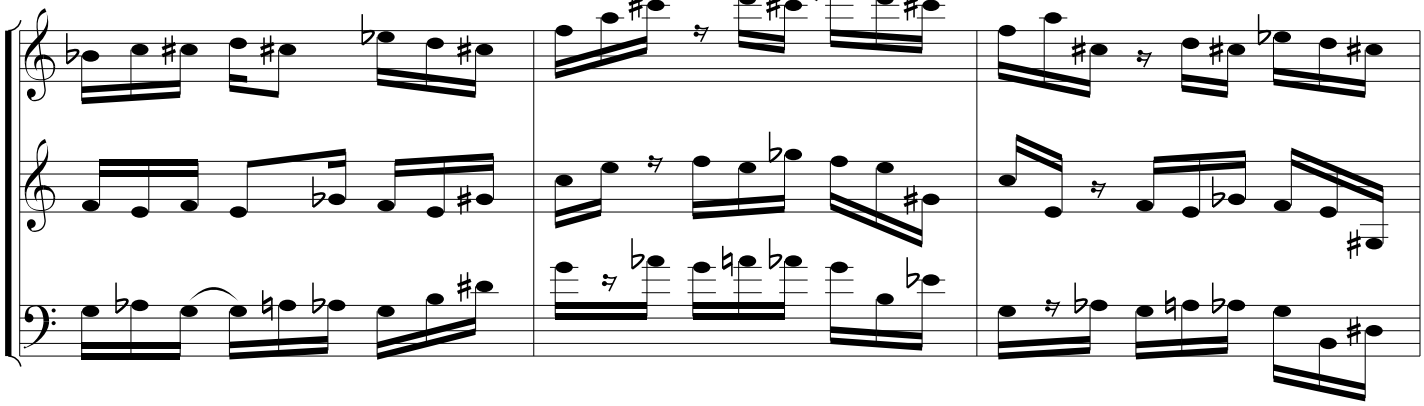

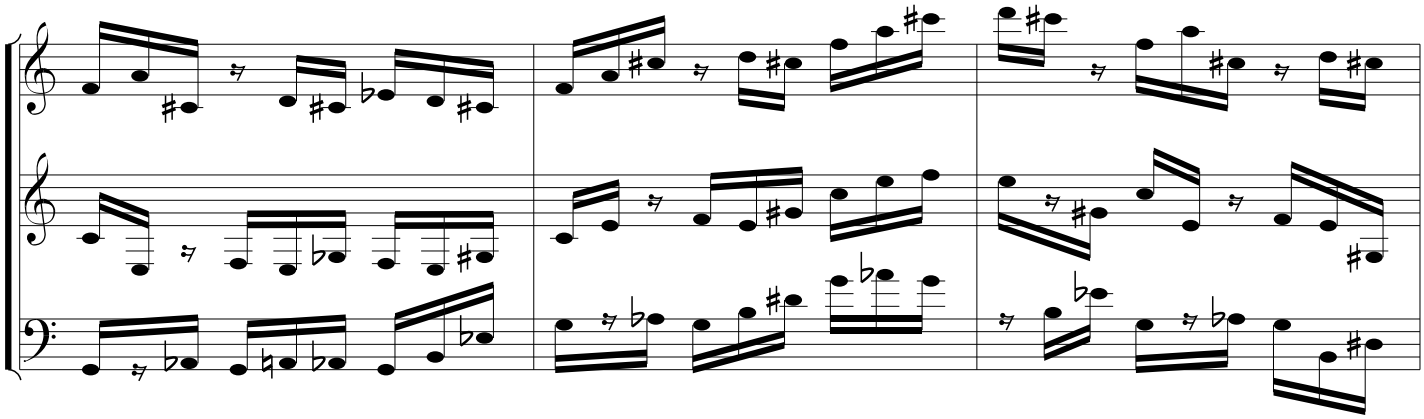

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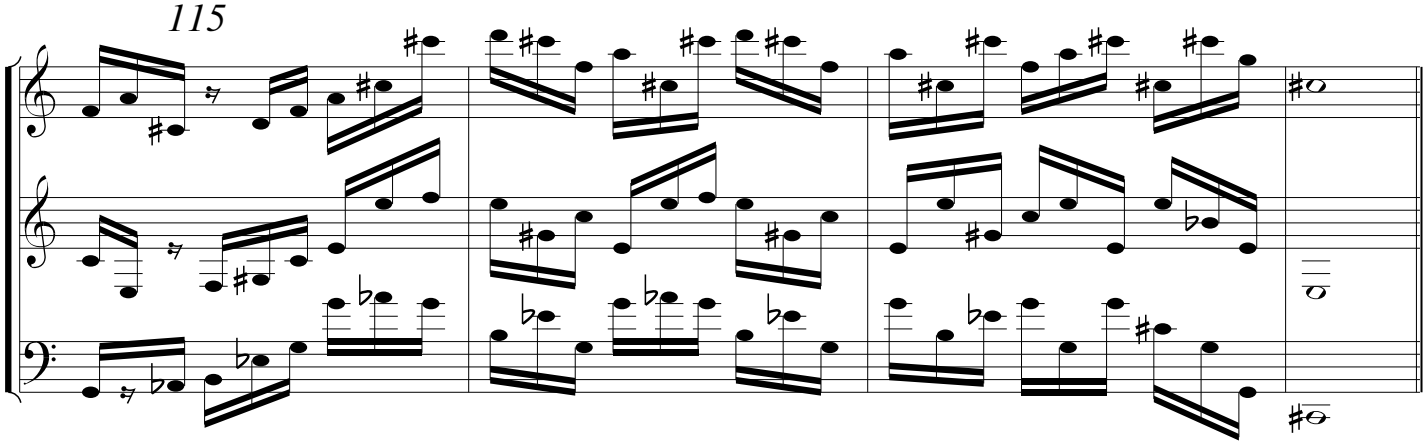

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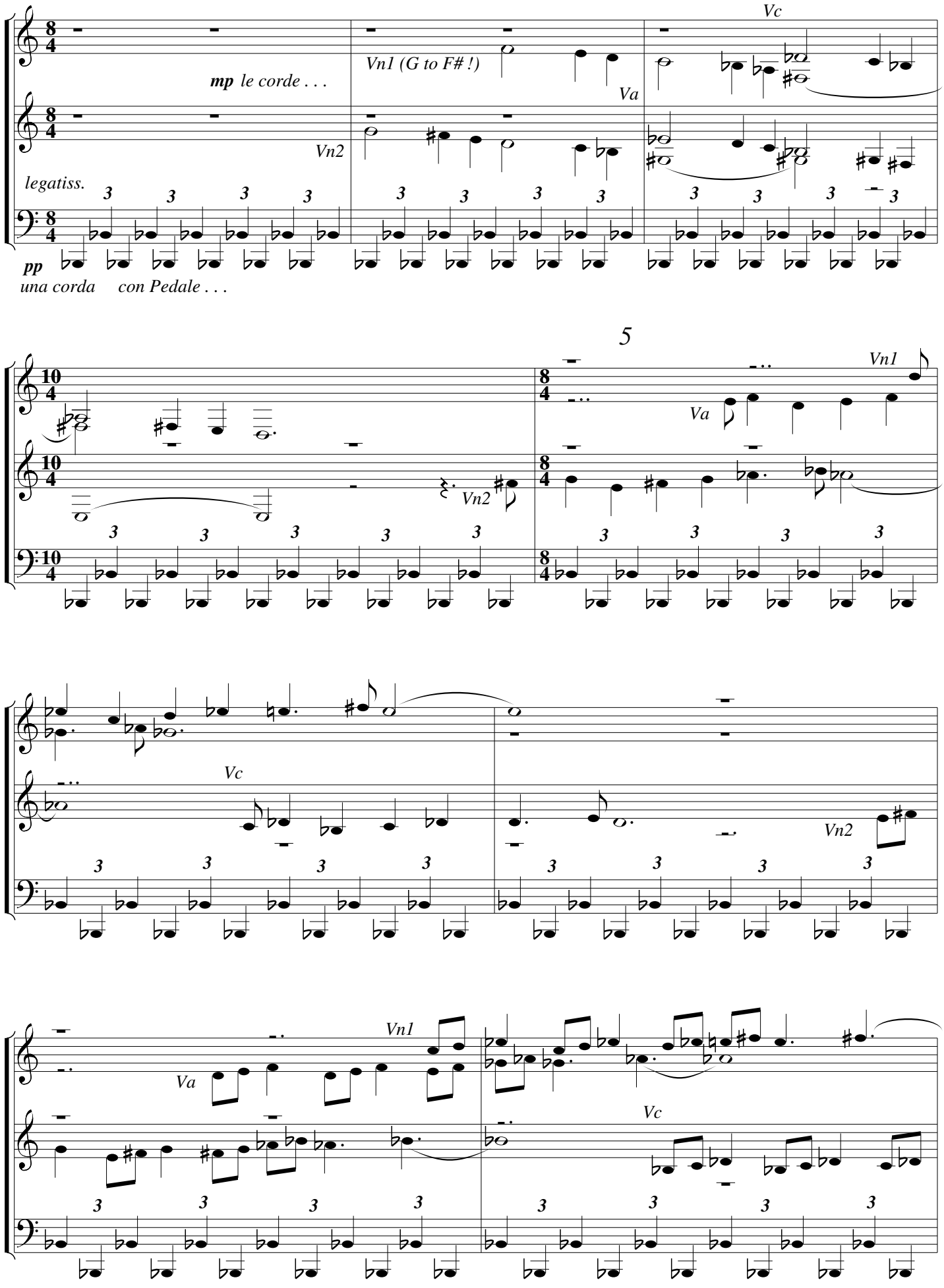
Canon at ten semitones



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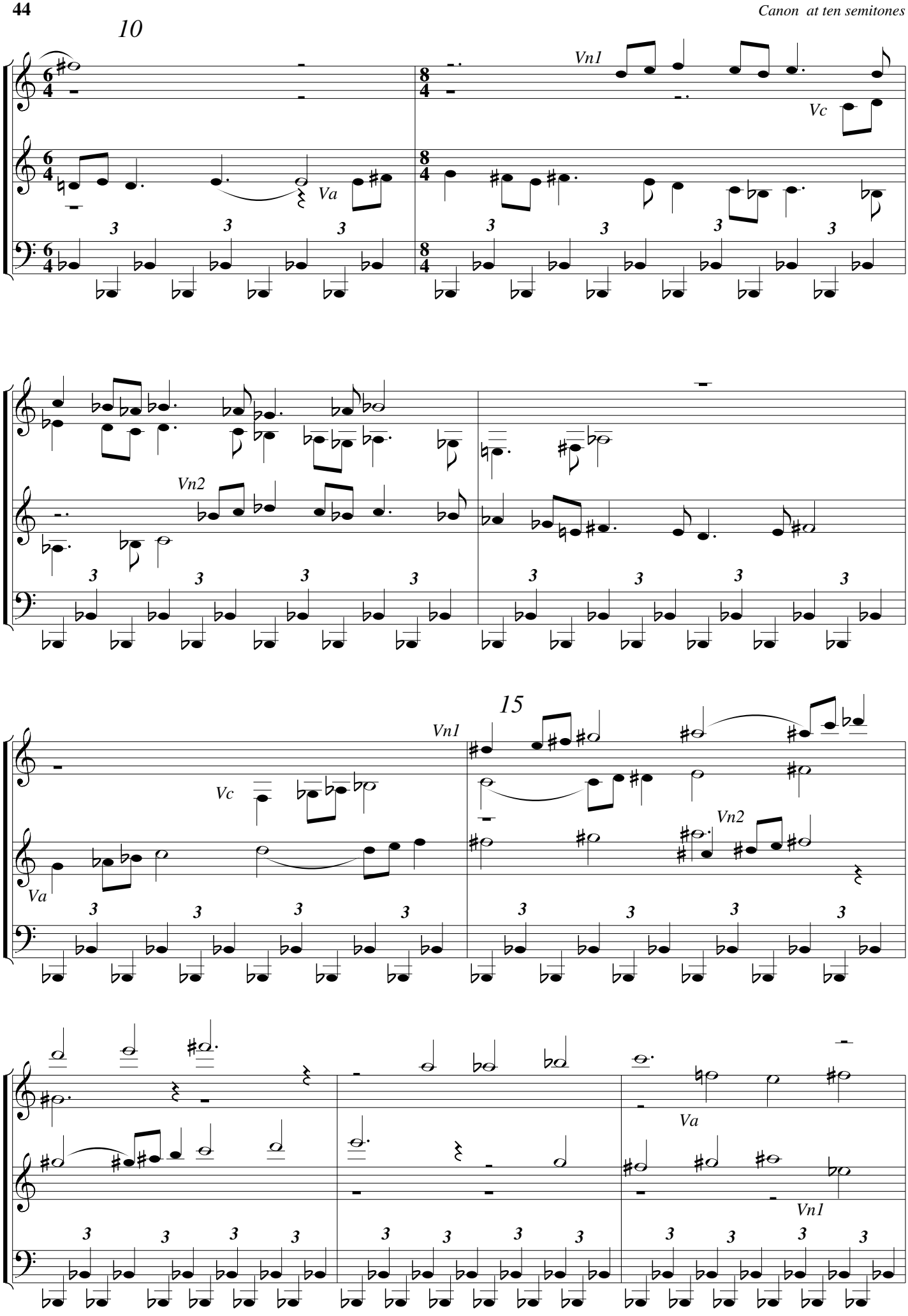

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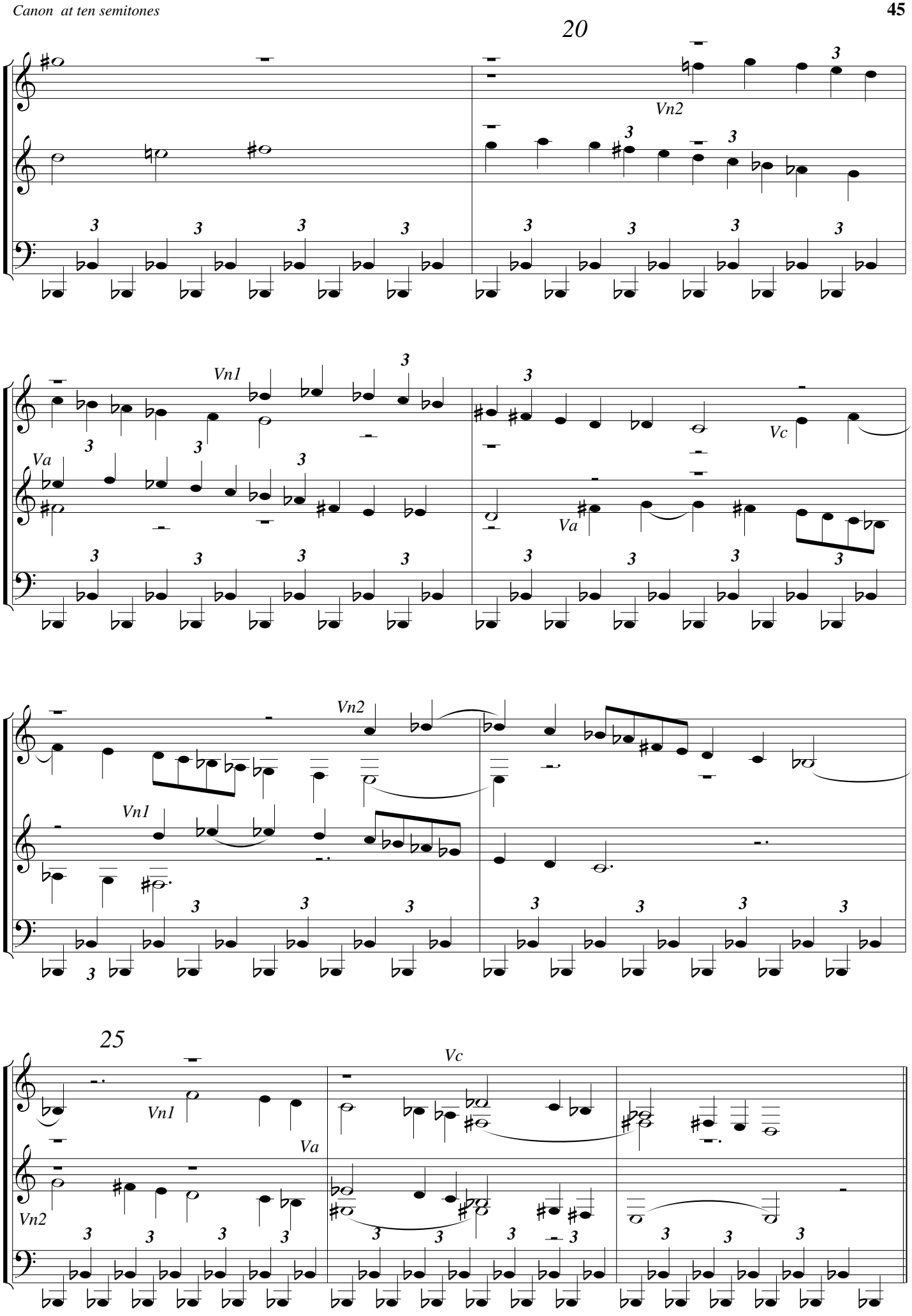

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Canon at eleven semitones

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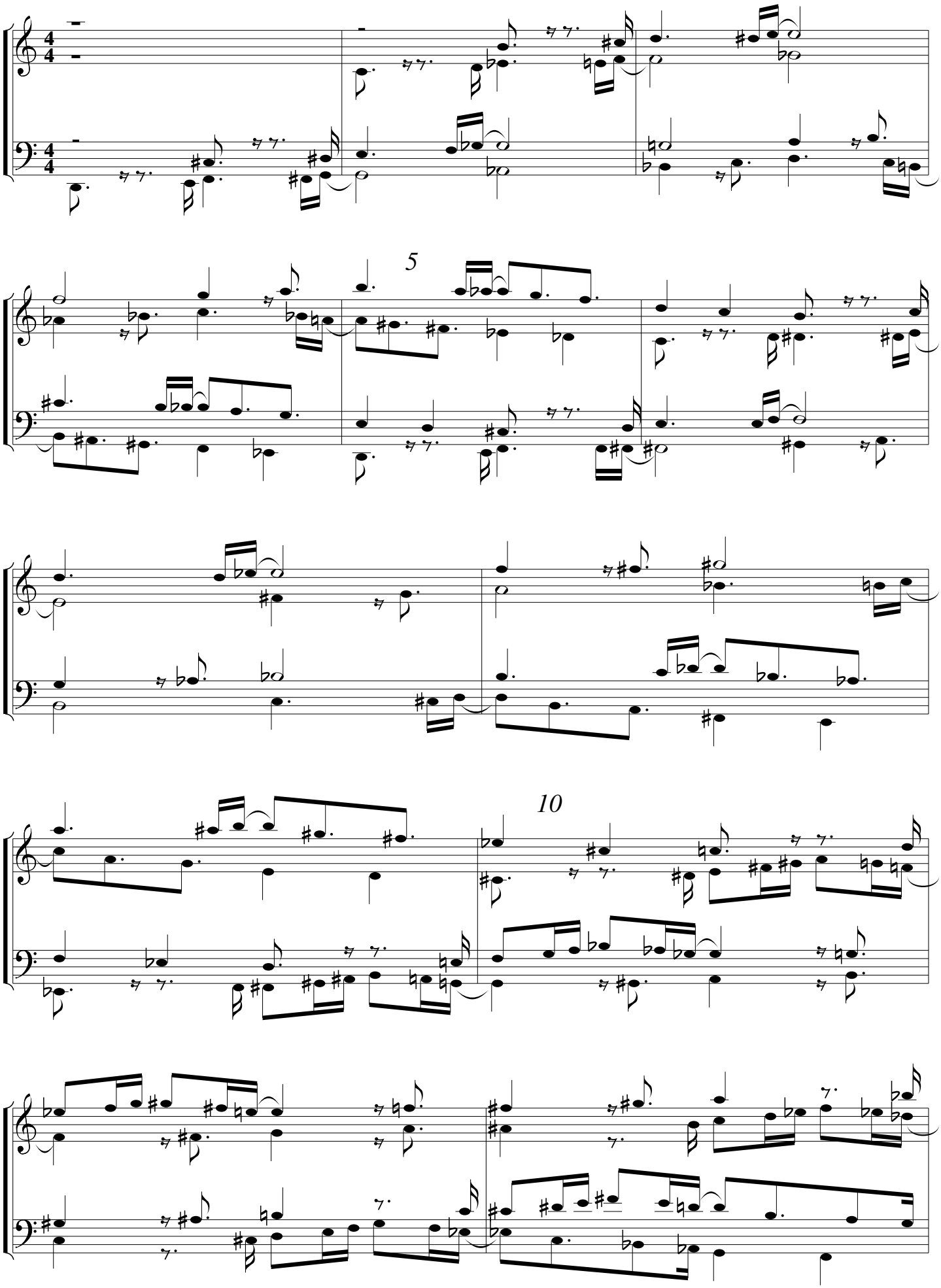

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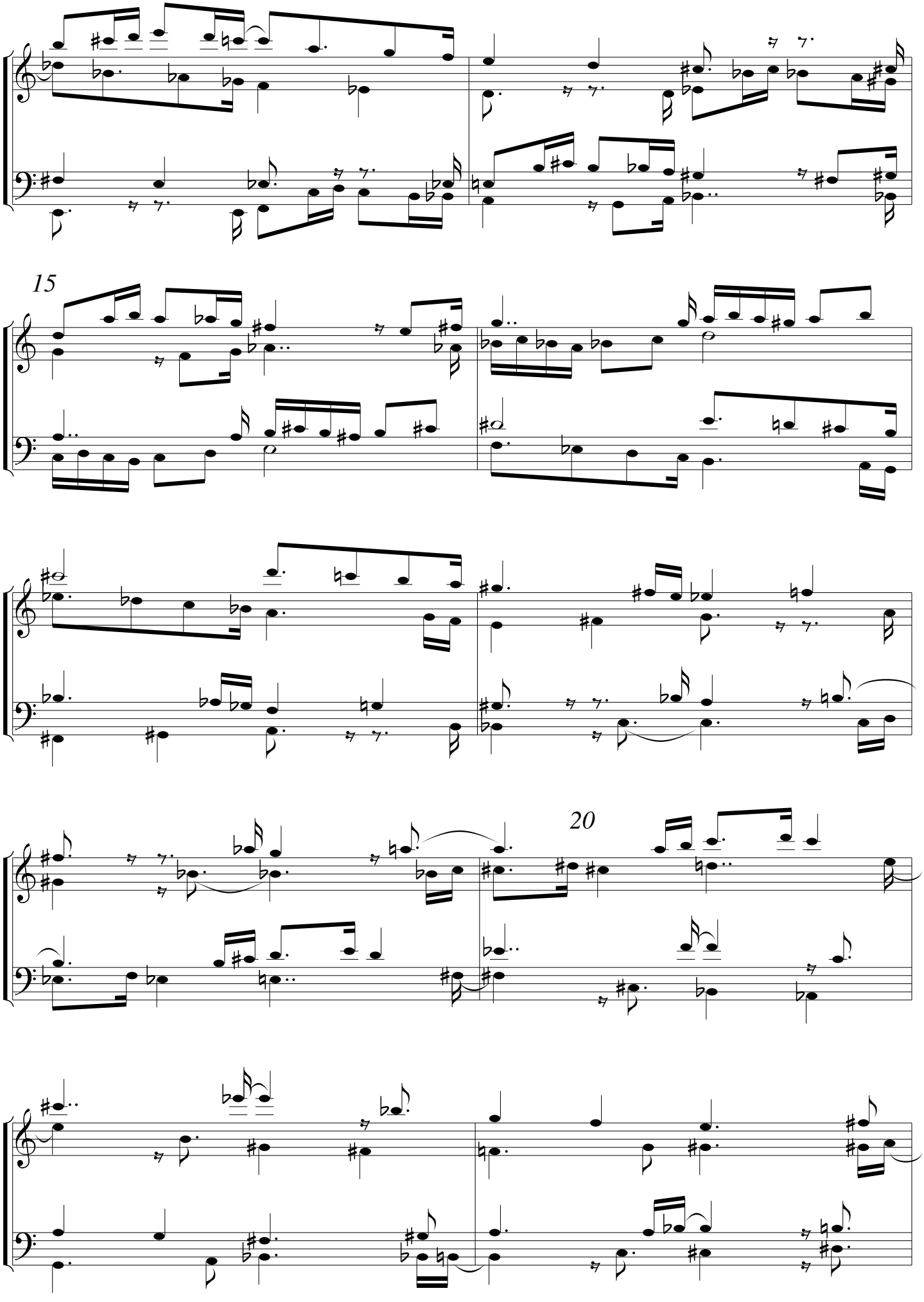

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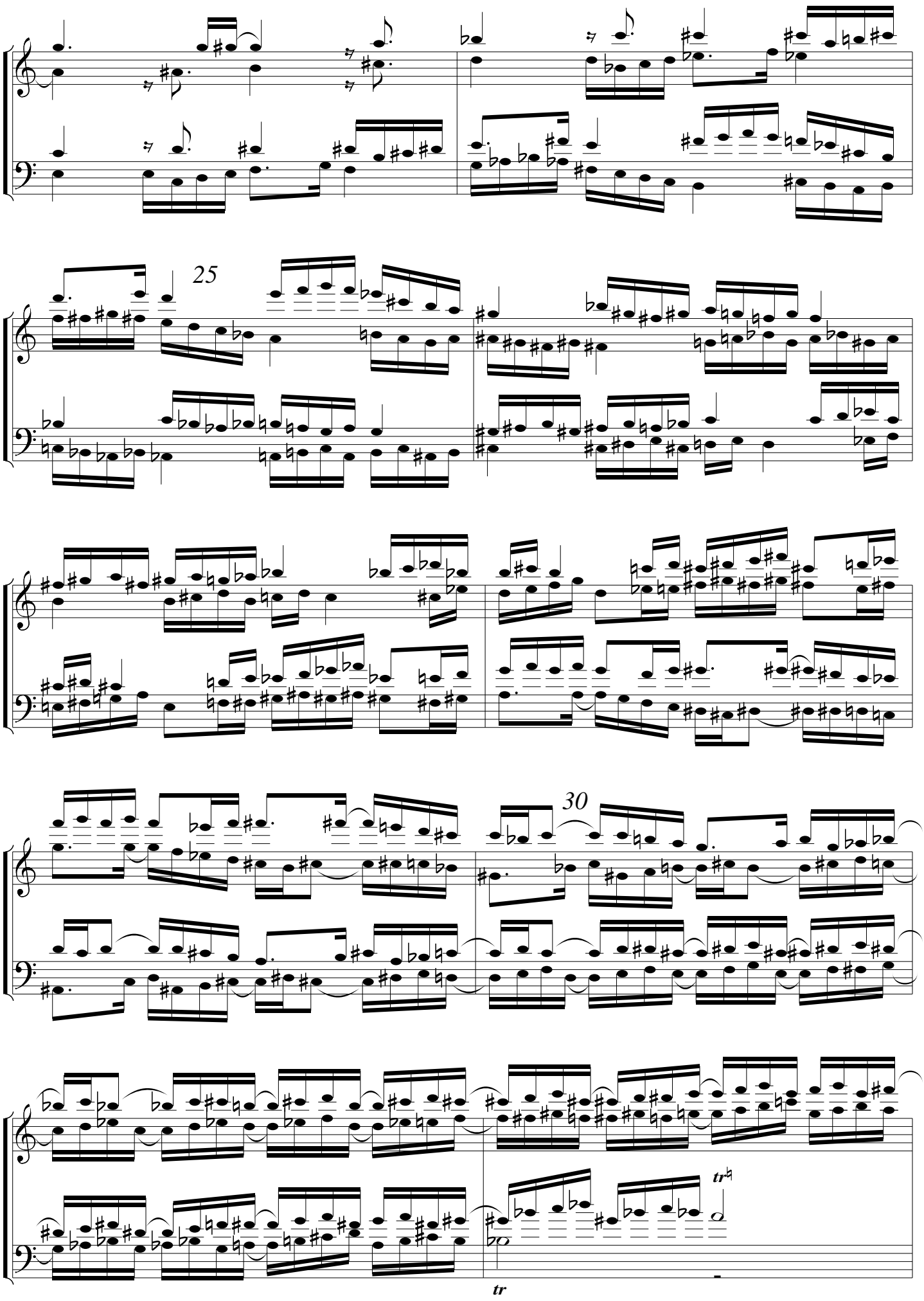

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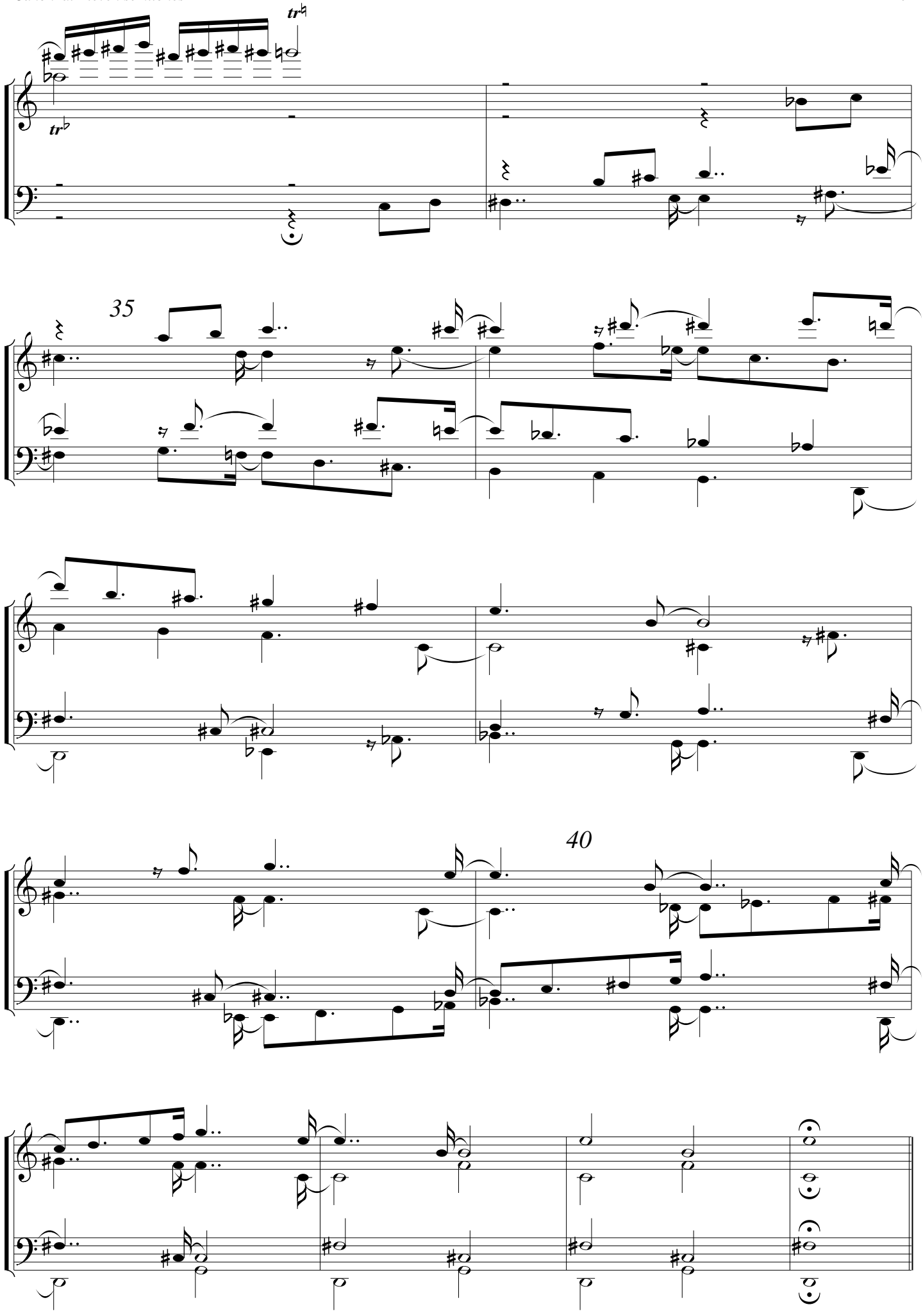

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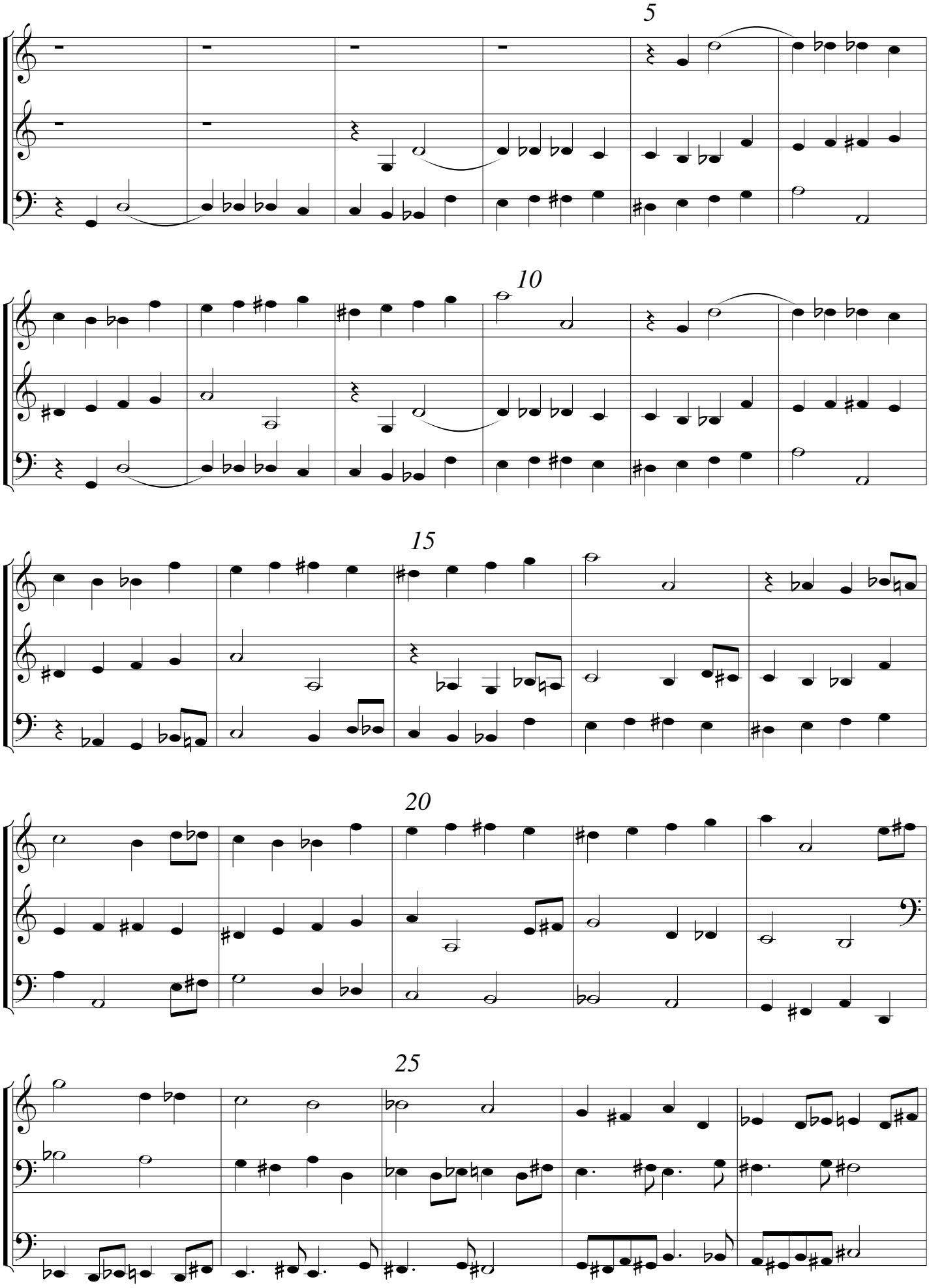
Canon at twelve semitones



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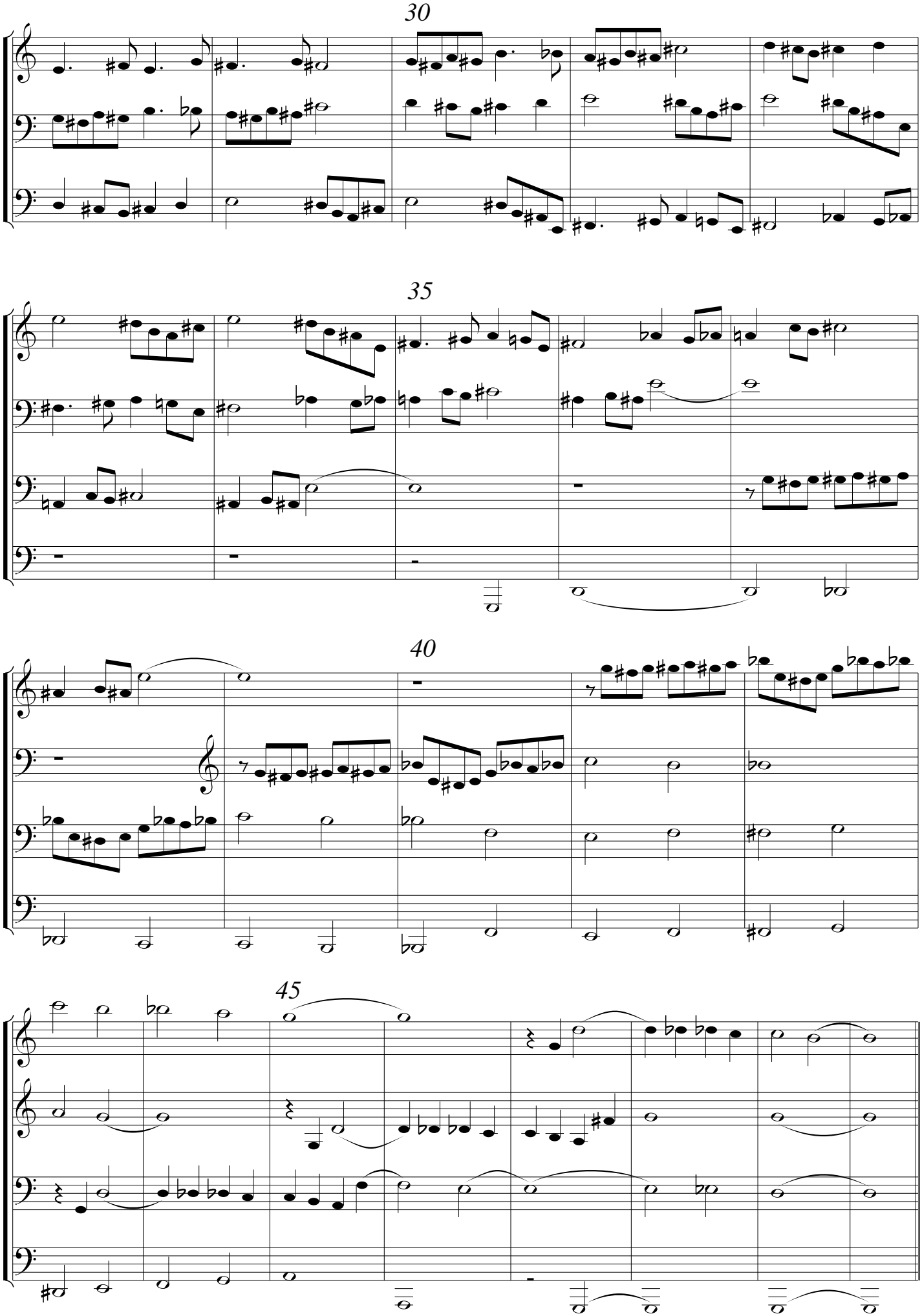

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Peter Billam was born in London in 1948, studied piano, and lived in Switzerland from 1973 to 1983, where he studied composition, classical guitar, flute and voice, worked as Musical Director of the *Théâtre Populaire Romand*, and as recording engineer, record producer and computer programmer. He moved to Tasmania in 1983, and lectured in composition at the Conservatorium. He founded **www.pjb.com.au**, becoming the first composer to sell scores on-line, taking scores from Composer to Performer in one immediate step. *Www.pjb.com.au* offers a new approach to music publishing. These pieces are **written to be read, made to be played !**

Compositions at *www.pjb.com.au* include: *Five Short Pieces*, guitar, 1979; *Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute and guitar, 1980; *De Profundis* and *Nacht*, on poems by Lama Anagarika Govinda, voice and piano, 1980; *Fünf Bagatellen*, piano, 1980; *Five Rounds*, choir, 1986; *Go Forth and Multiply*, choir, 1986; *Three Violin Duets*, 1987; *Fable*, for piano, 1987; *To Erich Jantsch*, SAATTB recorders, 1988; *A Suite of Curves*, trombone (or horn) and piano, 1990; *Two Recorder Duets*, alto recorders, or other melody instruments, 1991; *Trombone Quintet*, trombone, flute, piano, bass, and percussion, 1994; *Three Songs*, on poems by Jack Kerouac, Vikram Seth and Dylan Thomas, voice and piano (only the first and third of these are available), 1994; *Piano Study*, piano, 1994; *Four Dances*, various ensembles including recorder quartet, string quartet, 1995; *The Poet in the Clouds*, on a poem by S. T. Coleridge, SATB choir, 1995; *Tres Casidas del Diván del Tamarit*, on poems by Federico García Lorca, voice and piano, 1997; *Three Suites*, for the solo line, piano, and piano and a solo line, 2000; *Die Zeiten*, on poems by Kästner, Bachman and Jünger, choir (only the second and third of these are available), 2000; *Three Duets* for flutes, 2001; *For Four Hands* for piano four hands, 2002; *Three Preludes* for piano, 2003; *Second Solo Suite* for flute, violin, viola or cello, 2003; *Guitar Duet* for two guitars, 2006; *We Who Mourn* for choir, 2007; *Trio With Guitar* for guitar and two clarinets or two recorders or two violas, 2008; *Canons* for two- and four-hand piano, 2009; *Flute Trio*, 2012; *Twenty Studies* for piano, 2013-14; *Music for Strings* and *Two Encores for Strings* for 2vln, 2vla, 2vlc, 2015; *Album for Choir*, 2015; *Eight Pieces for Guitar*, 2017.

Arrangements include: By J. S. Bach: *Trio BWV 655*, piano and flute; *Vor deinen Thron BWV 668*, piano; *Fugue in F minor BWV 689*, SATB recorders; *Four Duets BWV 802-5*, keyboard; *Six Preludes and Fugues* from Book I, keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1031* in G major for alto recorder and keyboard; *Flute Sonata BWV 1032* completed by Peter Billam for flute and keyboard, also in C major for alto recorder, and in G major for descant; *Ricercare a 3 of the Musikalisches Opfer* for keyboard; *Ricercare a 6*, for sSATBG recorders, or strings, or two keyboards; and *Fuga Canonica*; from the *Art of Fugue*: *Contrapuncti 1*, *4* and *9* for keyboard, and *Contrapunctus 14* as completed by D. F. Tovey, for keyboard, or for SATB recorders, or for strings; *Passacaglia and Fugue in c* for piano four hands; *Chorales with Descant* for melody instrument and piano; *Cello Suites I*, *II* and *III* for flute or alto recorder, *Forty Chorales* for piano, *Der Geist hilft* for SATB-SATB recorders. By Bartók: *Suite op.14* for piano. By Brahms: *Fugue in Ab minor for organ*, for SATB recorders and gamba, in A minor; *Choralvorspiele for organ* plus settings by Isaac, Bach, Praetorius, recorders. *John Carr, Divisions on an Italian Ground*, flute or recorder and guitar. Franz Liszt, *Late piano pieces*, G.F. Händel: *Concerto Grosso in A minor* op 6 no 4, harpsichord and recorders; *Recorder Sonata in Bb* no 5, in G for tenor recorder and keyboard. Claudio Monteverdi, *Ecco Mormorar l'Onde*, SSATB recorders. Arnold Schoenberg: *Verklärte Nacht* for piano. Franz Schubert: *Four Songs*, voice and guitar; *Dances*, recorders and guitar, *Dances*, piano 4 hands. Scriabin, *Two Preludes op.67; Five Preludes op.74*, piano. Telemann, *Twelve Flute Fantasias* and *Six Duets*, recorder. Wilbye, *Draw on sweet Night*, SSATTB recorders, and for flute choir. *Twelve Italian Songs* and *Seven English Songs*, voice and guitar; *Folk Guitar Solos*; *Fourteen Folk Dance Tunes*, recorder and guitar; *Bushband Dances*, violin, accordeon and banjo; *Easy Classical Pieces*, Bb trumpet and piano; *Famous Beginnings*, for piano.

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