Contrapunctus

For SSAATTBB Choir and Organ

David Karapetyan

Performance Notes

1. There is no text for the piece. All singers are expected to vocalize "Ah" throughout the piece.

2. Slurs are to be interpreted primarily as rhymical dividers, used to communicate dance-like rhythms and divisions. We note that the structure and effect of the piece relies in part on the acoustic reverb of a large performance venue. The venue would ideally be cathedral, followed next in preference by a church. At the heart of the piece is the contrast between held quarter notes, and how they lead into sudden staccatos or staccato tenutos, as well as the thematic (3+1/4) four note kernel, which should be played in an agitated, sudden manner.

3. The metronome markings are exact, and must be observed. Critical to the overall structure of the piece is an observance of the various additive meters, and the stresses they imply.

4. There is a distinct difference between staccato notes and staccato tenuto notes in the piece, and and the performer should observe this. The staccato tenuto quarter note is, essentially, an eigth note with a slight swell in many cases. The staccato tenuto was used in lieu of eigth notes to ease readability of the score and to generally not obscure the metrical structure. The staccato quarter note always has a quicker attack and release than the staccato tenuto in this score. Aside from that, note durations are notated precisely, so there is little room for rubato.

5. Bass pedal on the organ is used throughout the work. For the sake of clarity, organ staffs not in use after the first system have been omitted. Every note on an organ bass clef staff is intended for the bass pedal.

6. The piece was composed originally on an electric harmonium (harmochord), and we ask that the organ registration closely approximate the sound of one. Ideally, if a harmochord is available, the organ part of the score should be played on it. The registration should also produce, in the highest ranges, a sound that closely mimics that of a soprano singing without vibrato.

7. Shifts in dynamic markings are not to be added by the performer. There are crescendos and decrescendos built into the structure of the piece, achieved either by explicit notation, or via combinations of voices that serve either to increase or decrease the overall volume. The dynamic markings included and the implied dynamic range for the piece must be thought of in the context of organ registration, the effect of which would serve to make certain notes on the organ (not including the bass pedal) more piercing or pronounced than others. TWe stress that the dynamic range between fortissimo and piú piano is not large for this piece (it is 1-1 aligned with the timbres of the harmochord and the implicit range they generate).

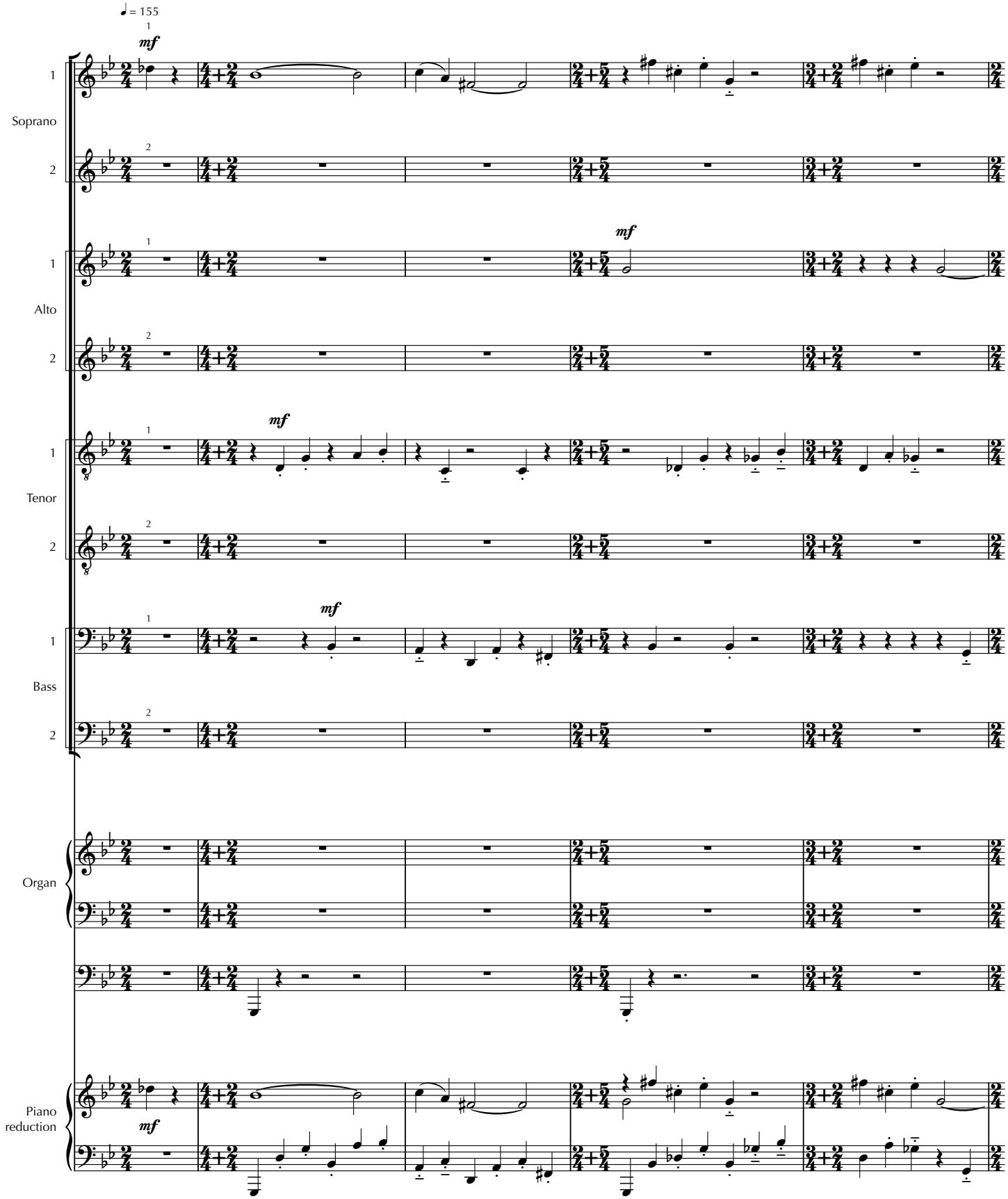
8. The piano reduction is an approximation only, and has been written with an emphasis on the harmonic content of the piece, followed by voice leading. For example, in certain cases, overlapping notes in different voices have been ommited.

Contrapunctus

For SSAATTBB Choir and Organ

Composed on 25.05.2023. Scored for choir 27.01.2024

David Karapetyan (b. 1982)



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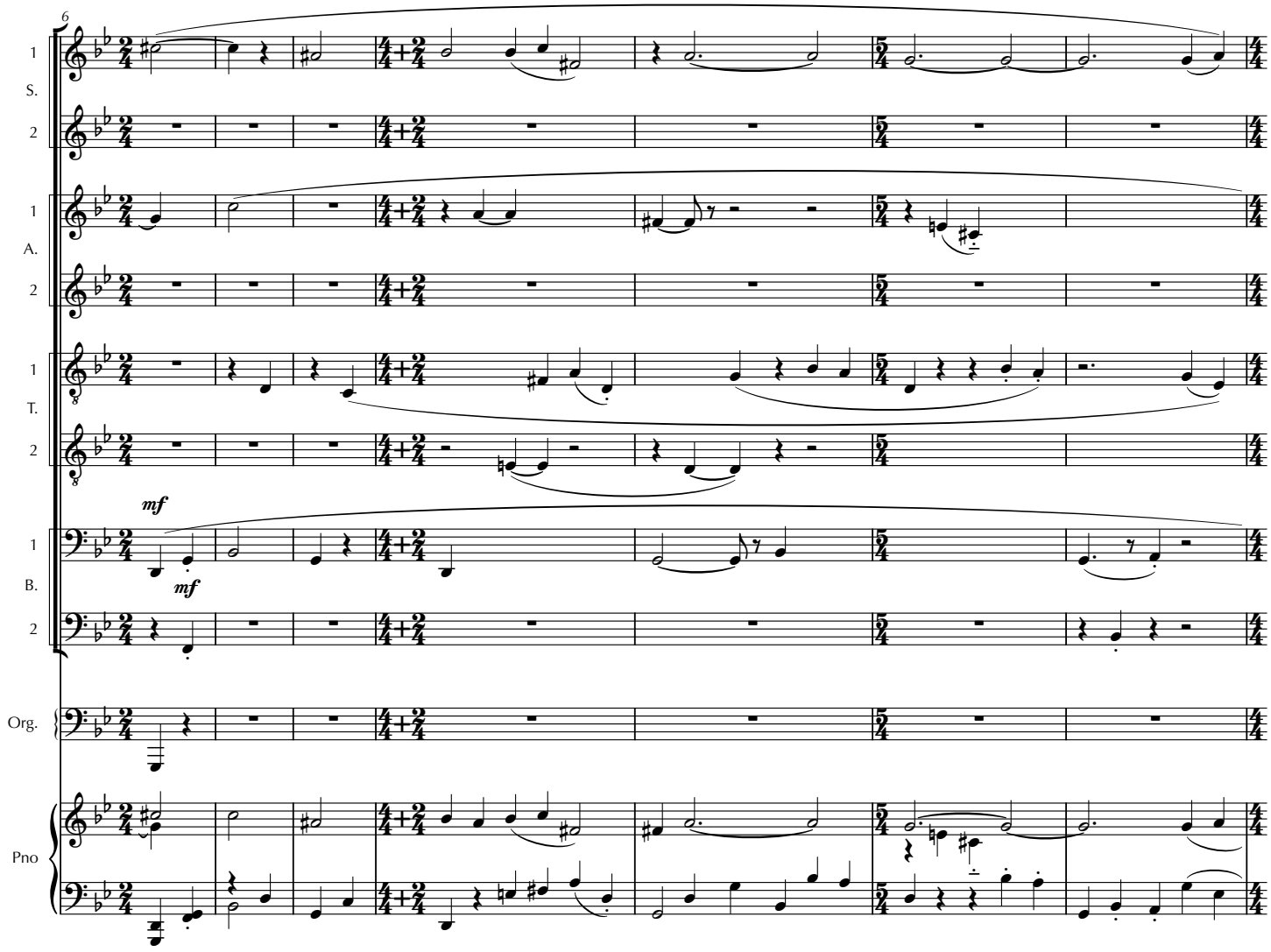
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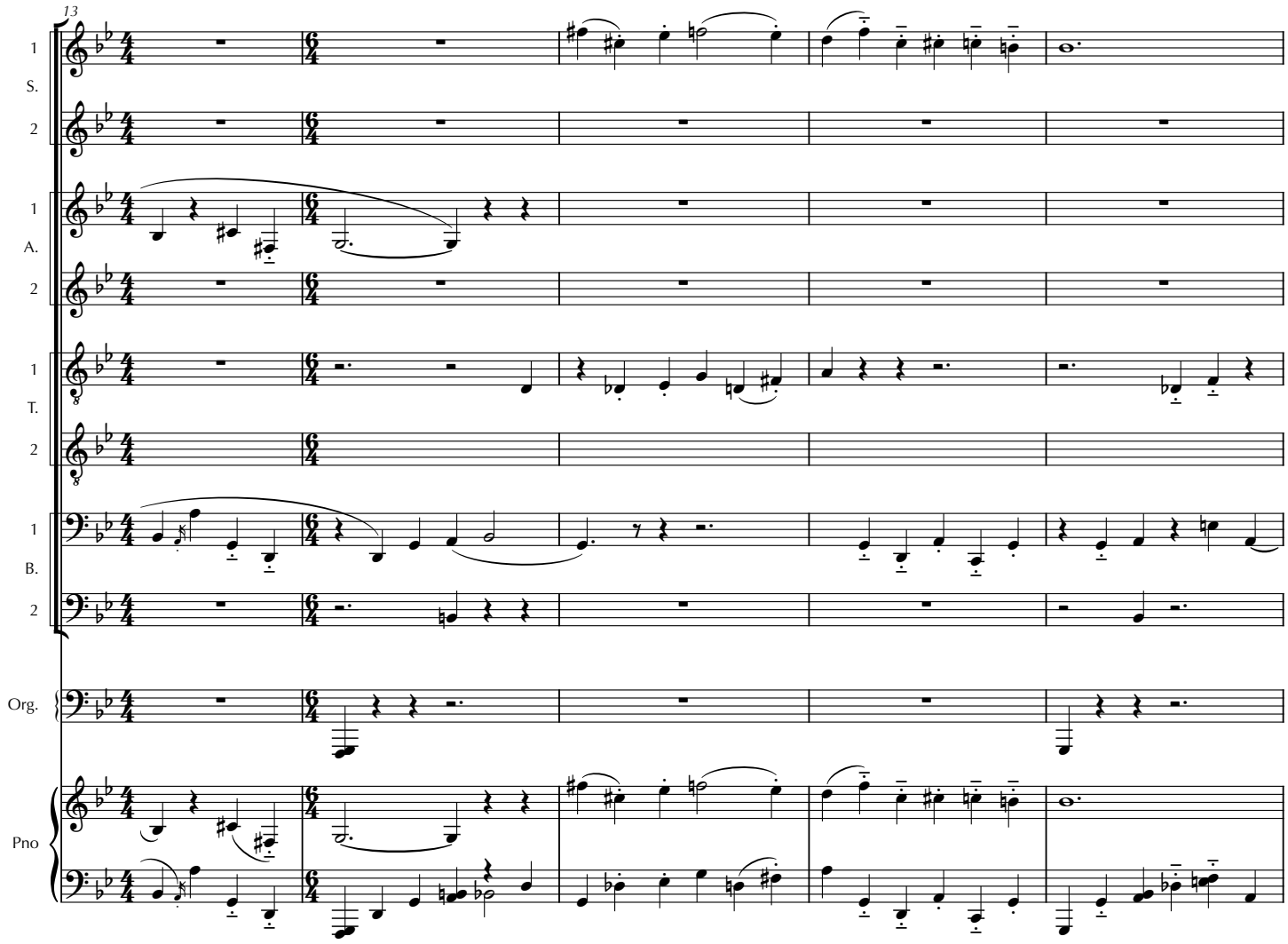
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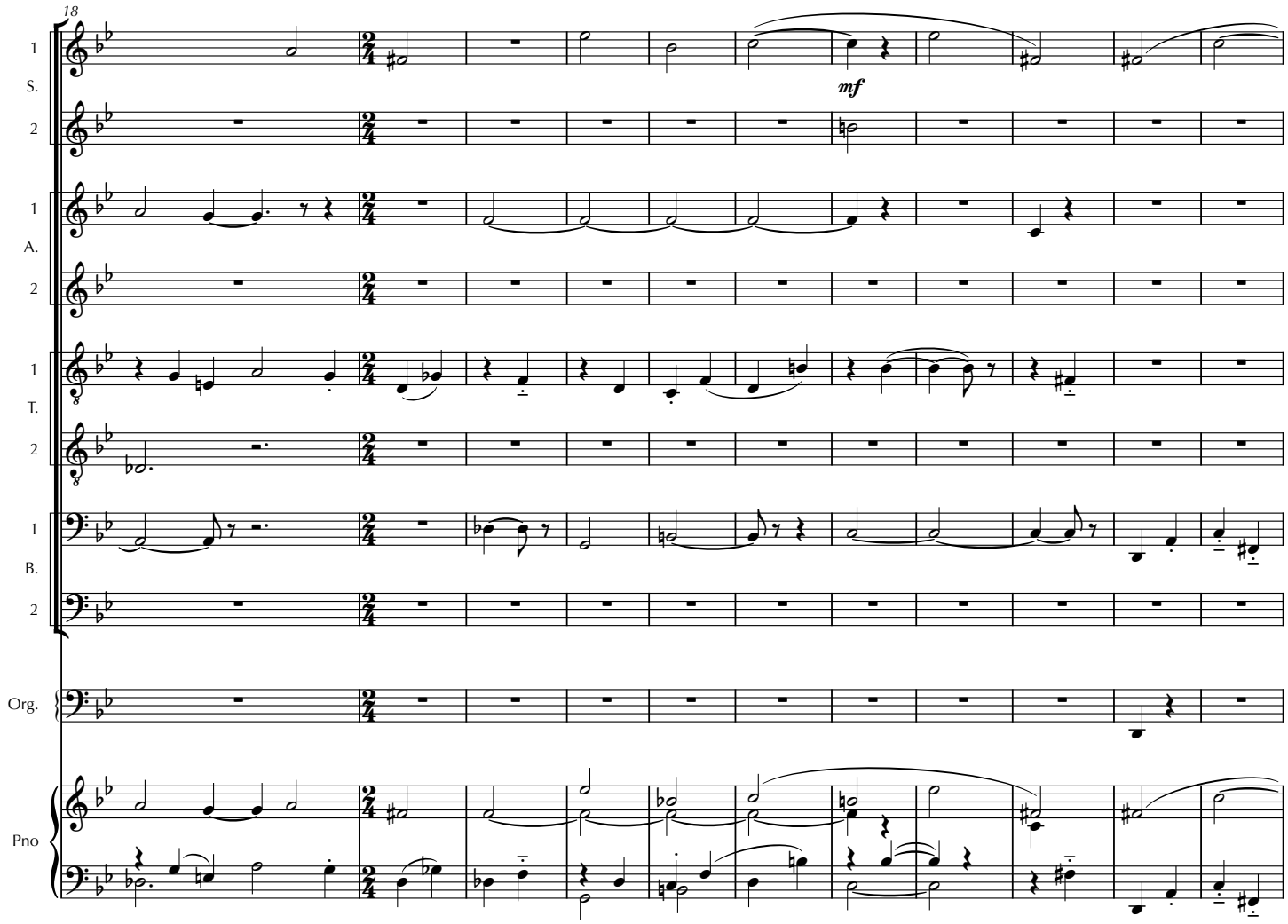
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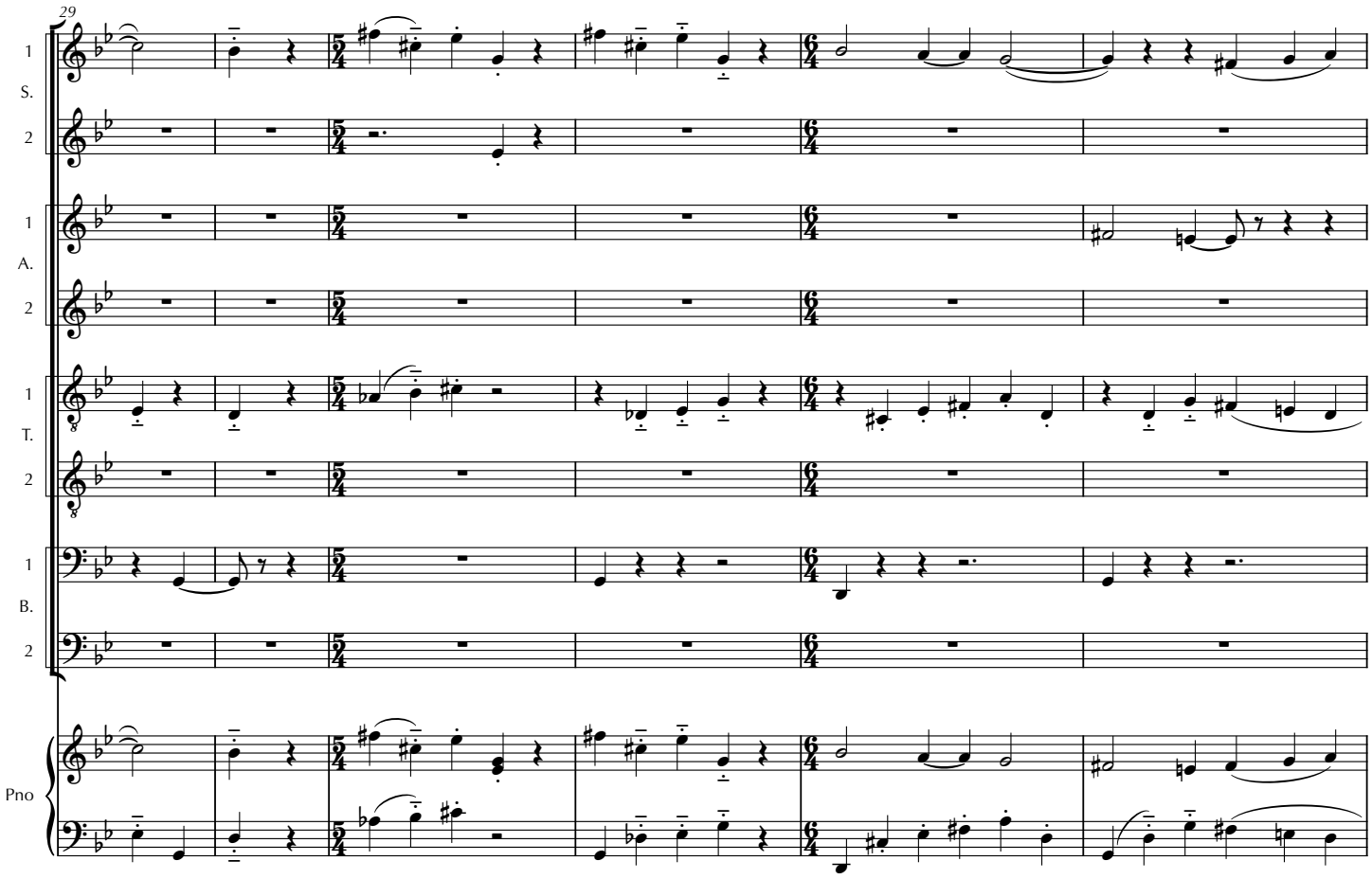
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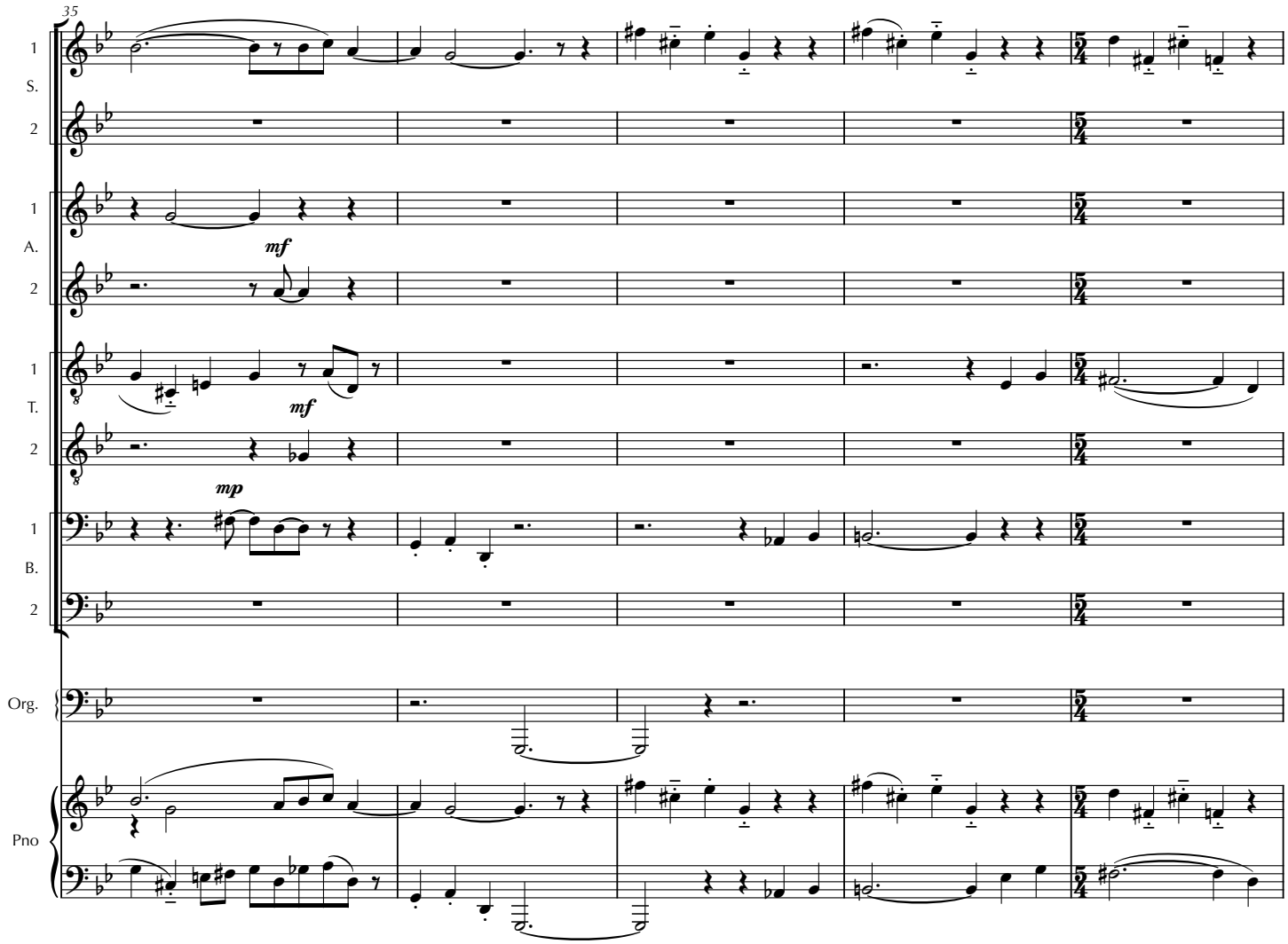
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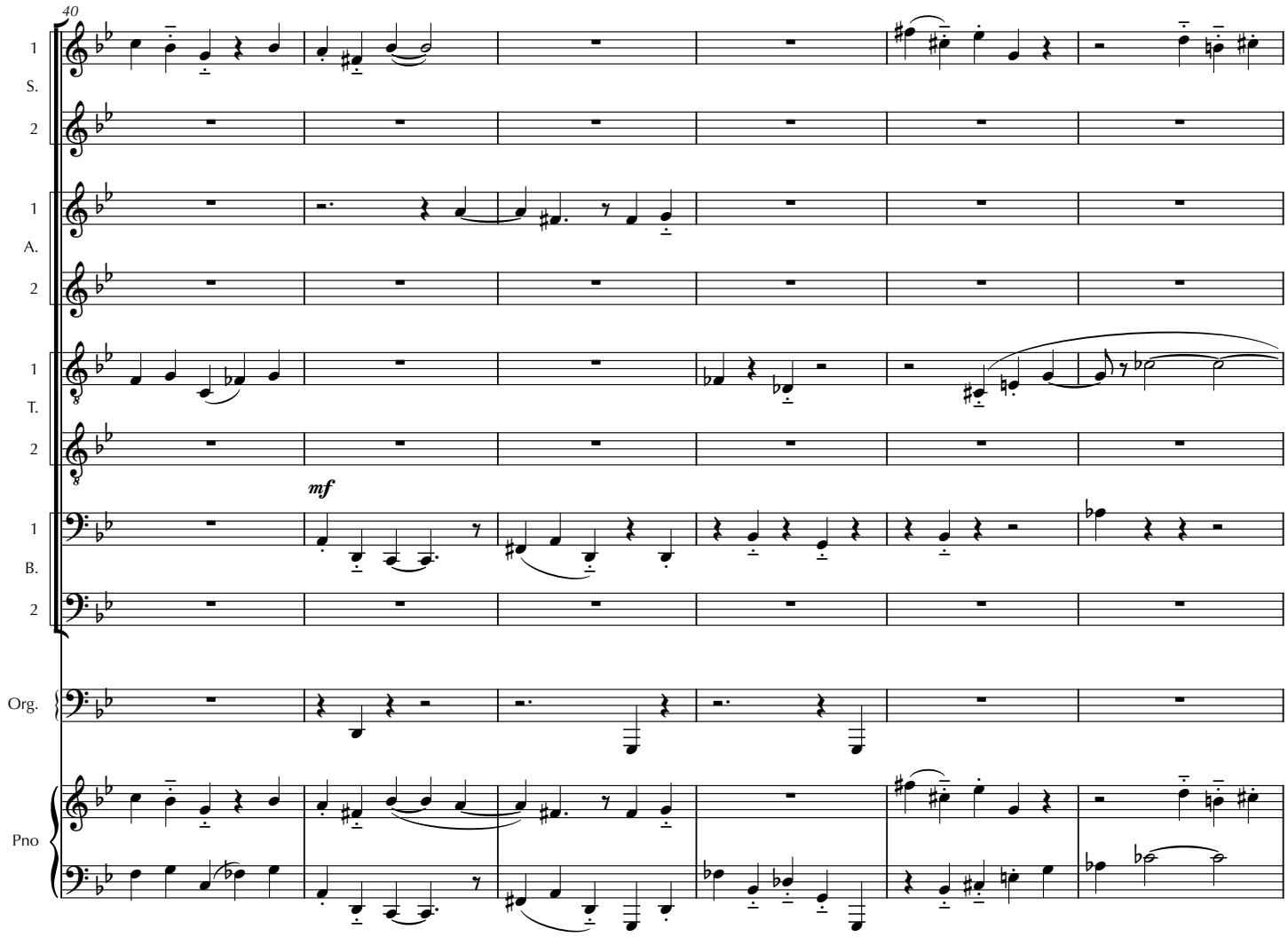
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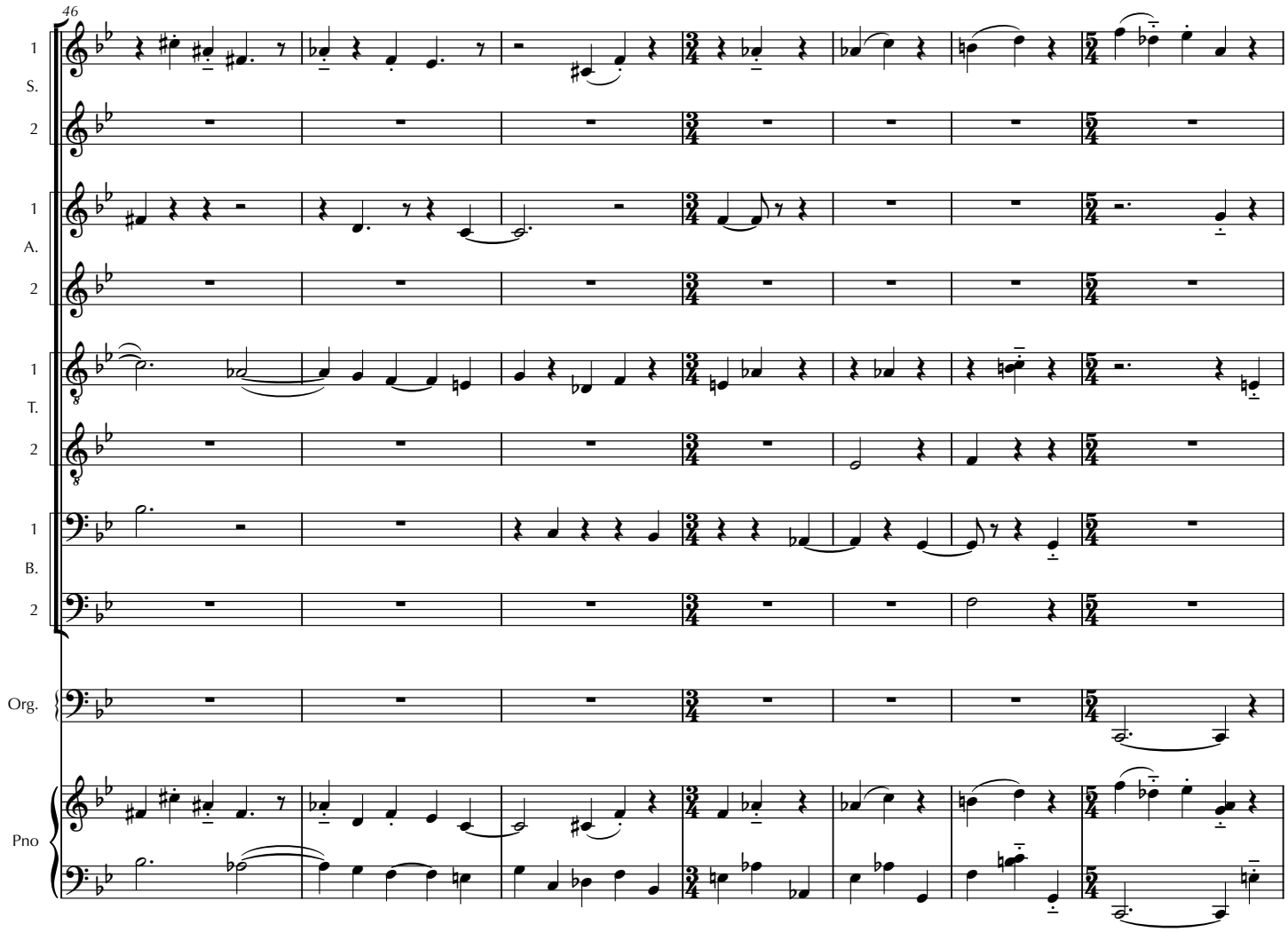
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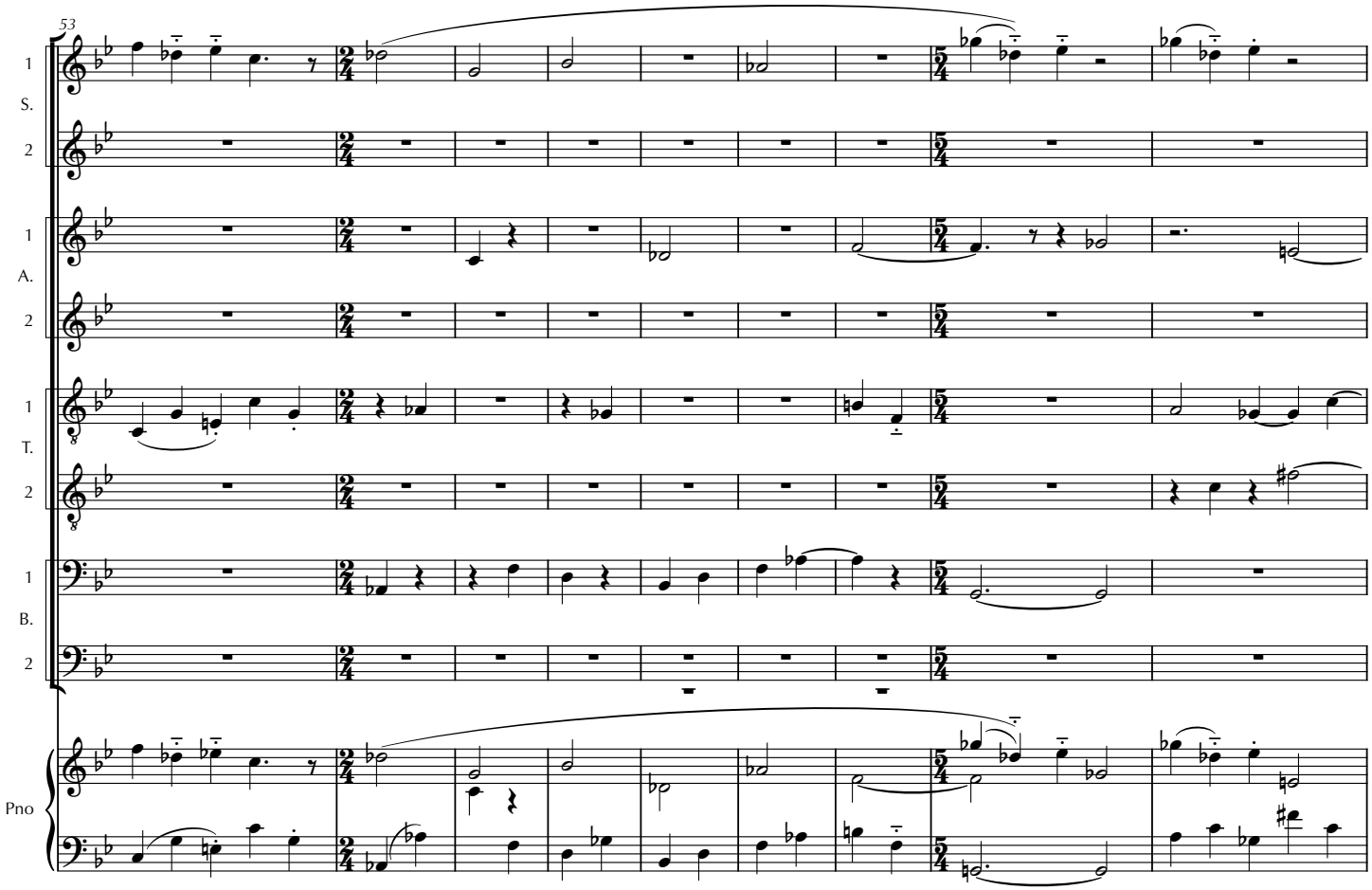
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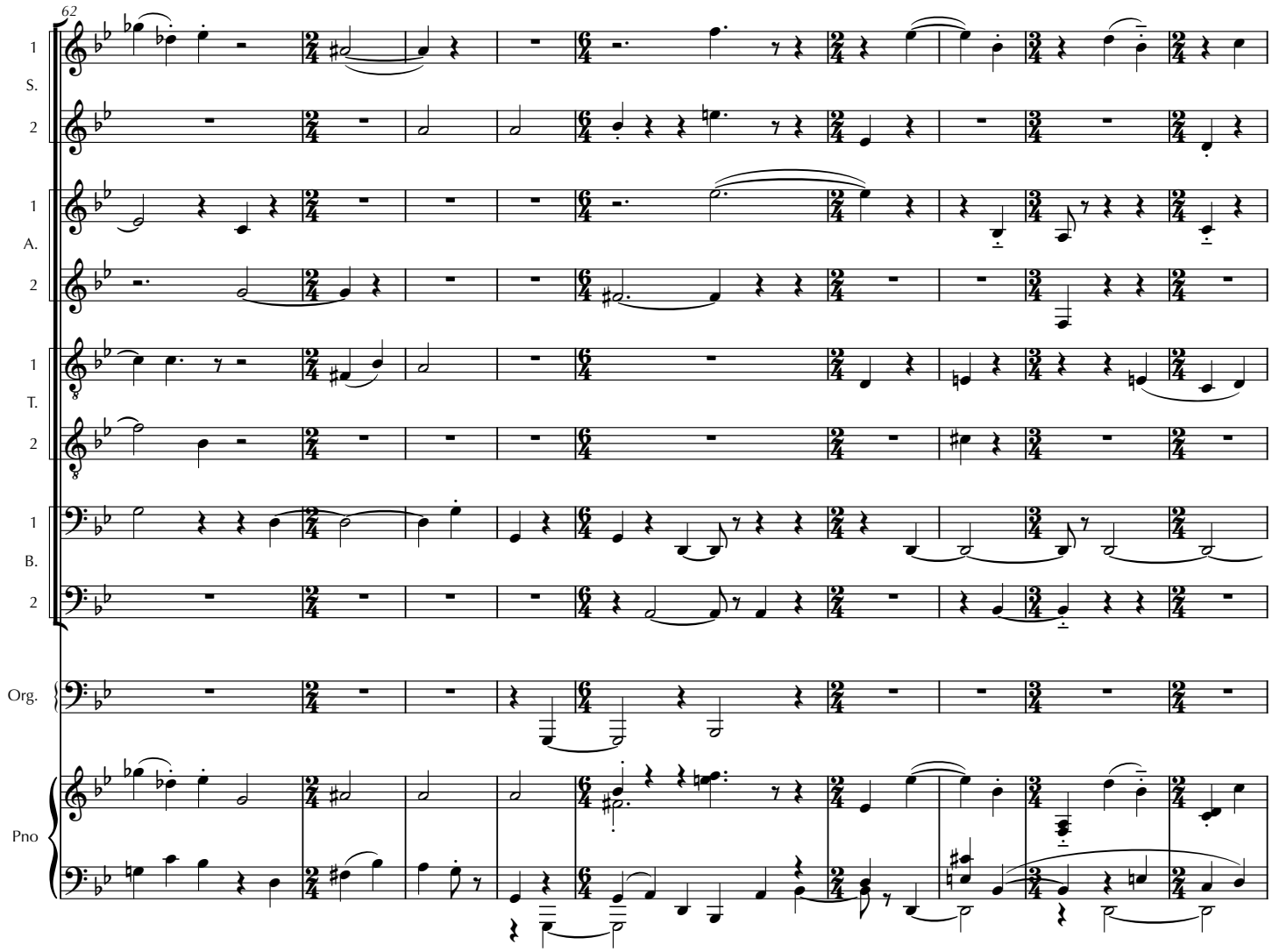
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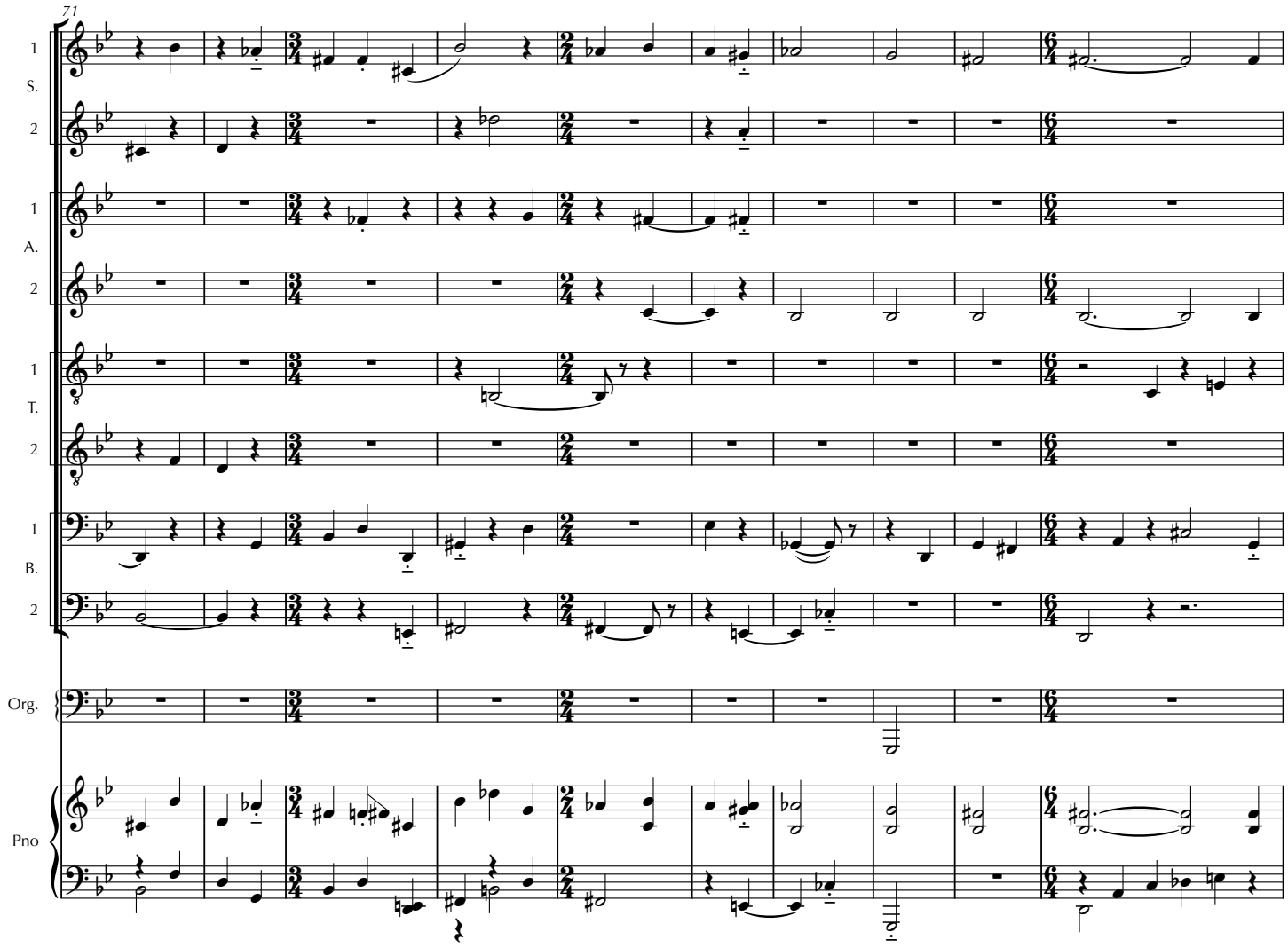
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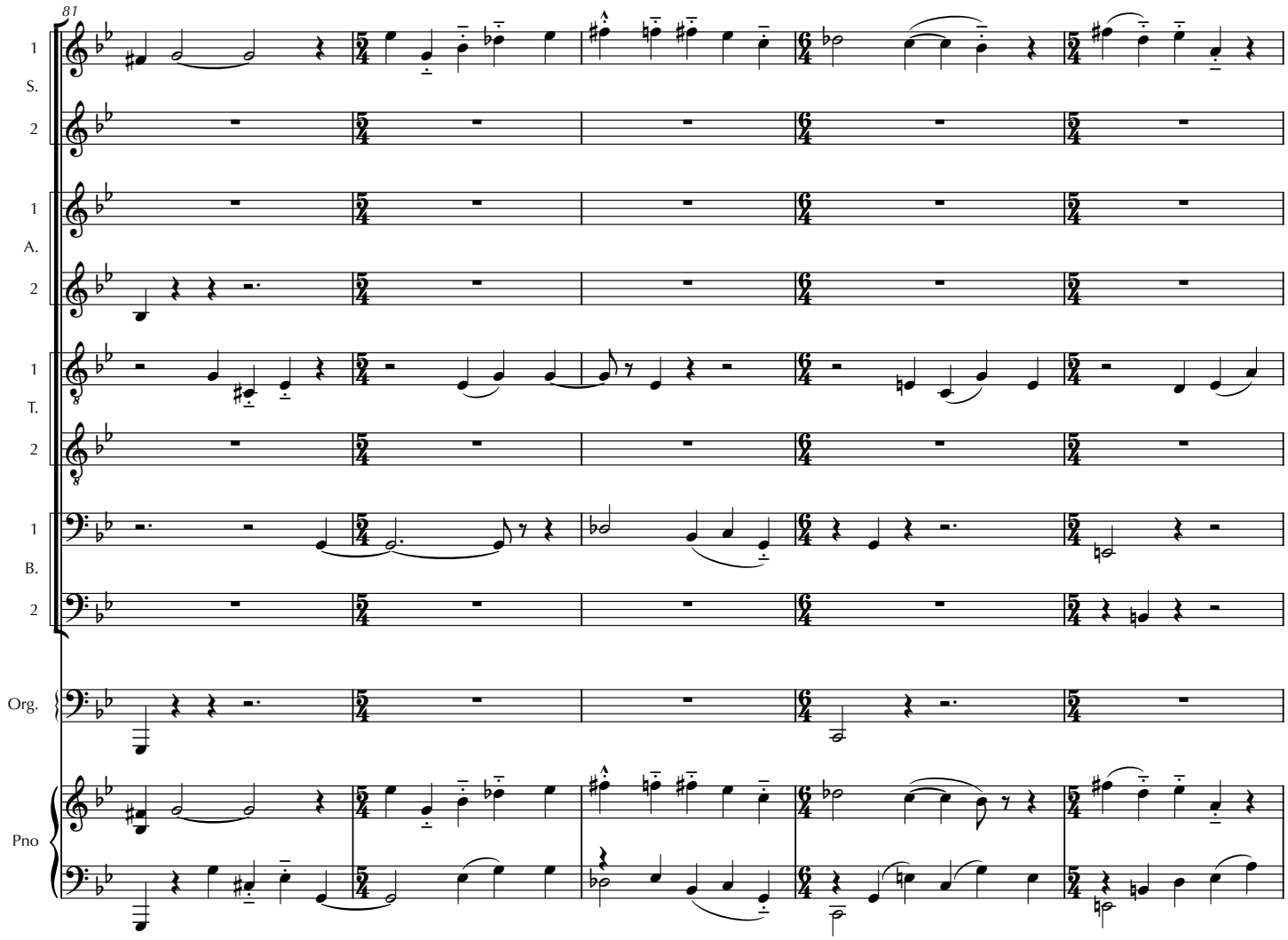
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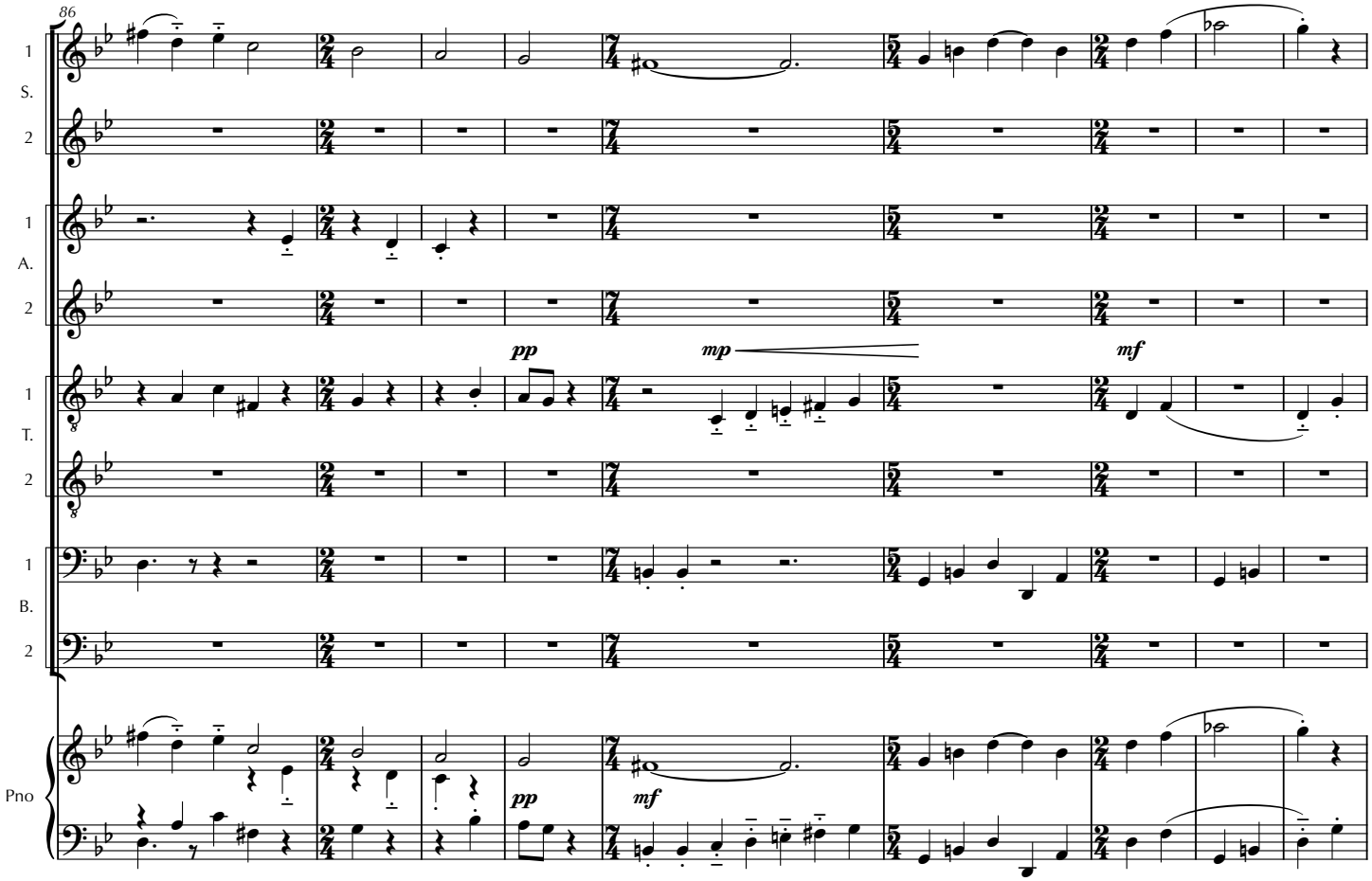
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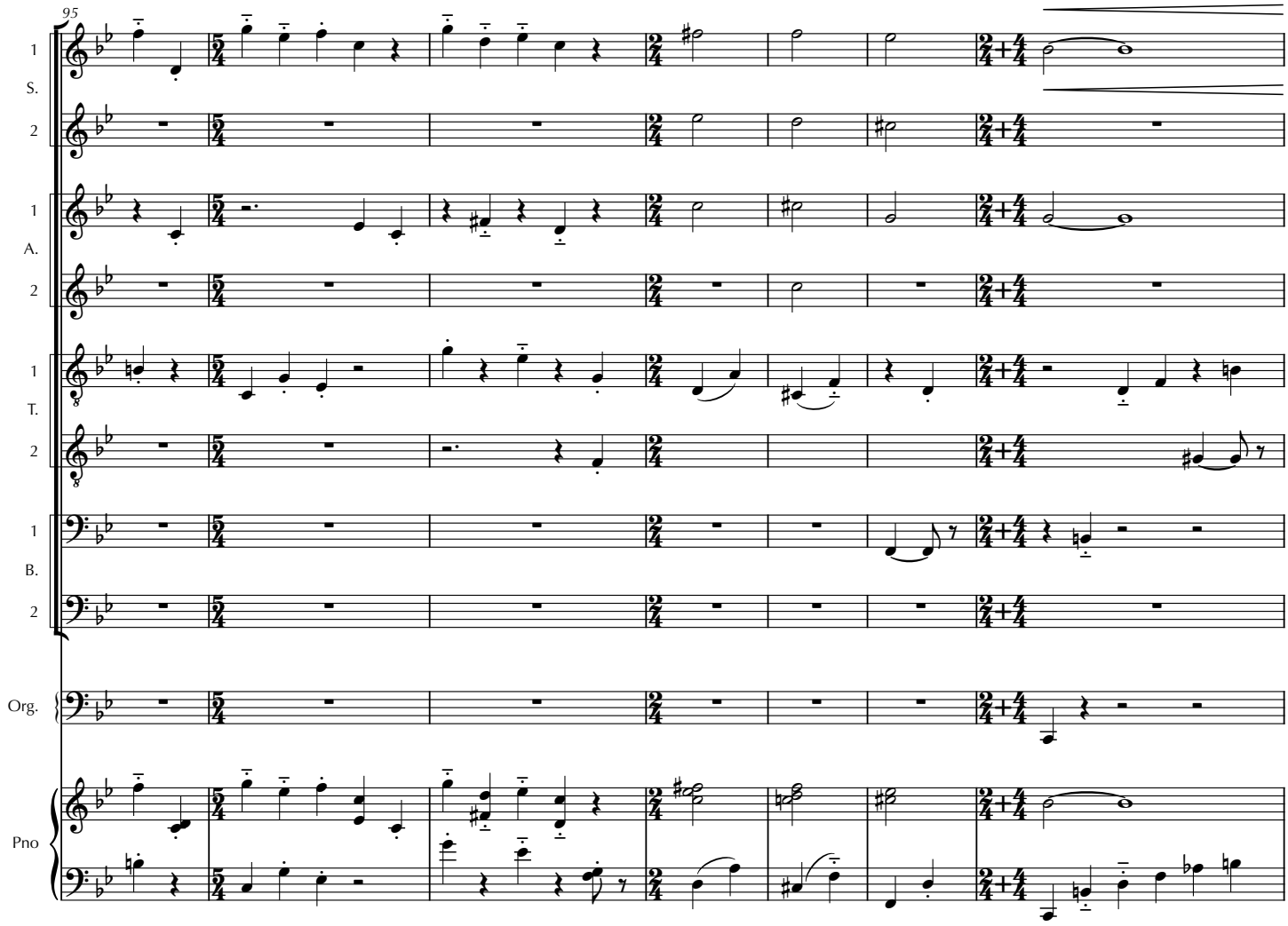
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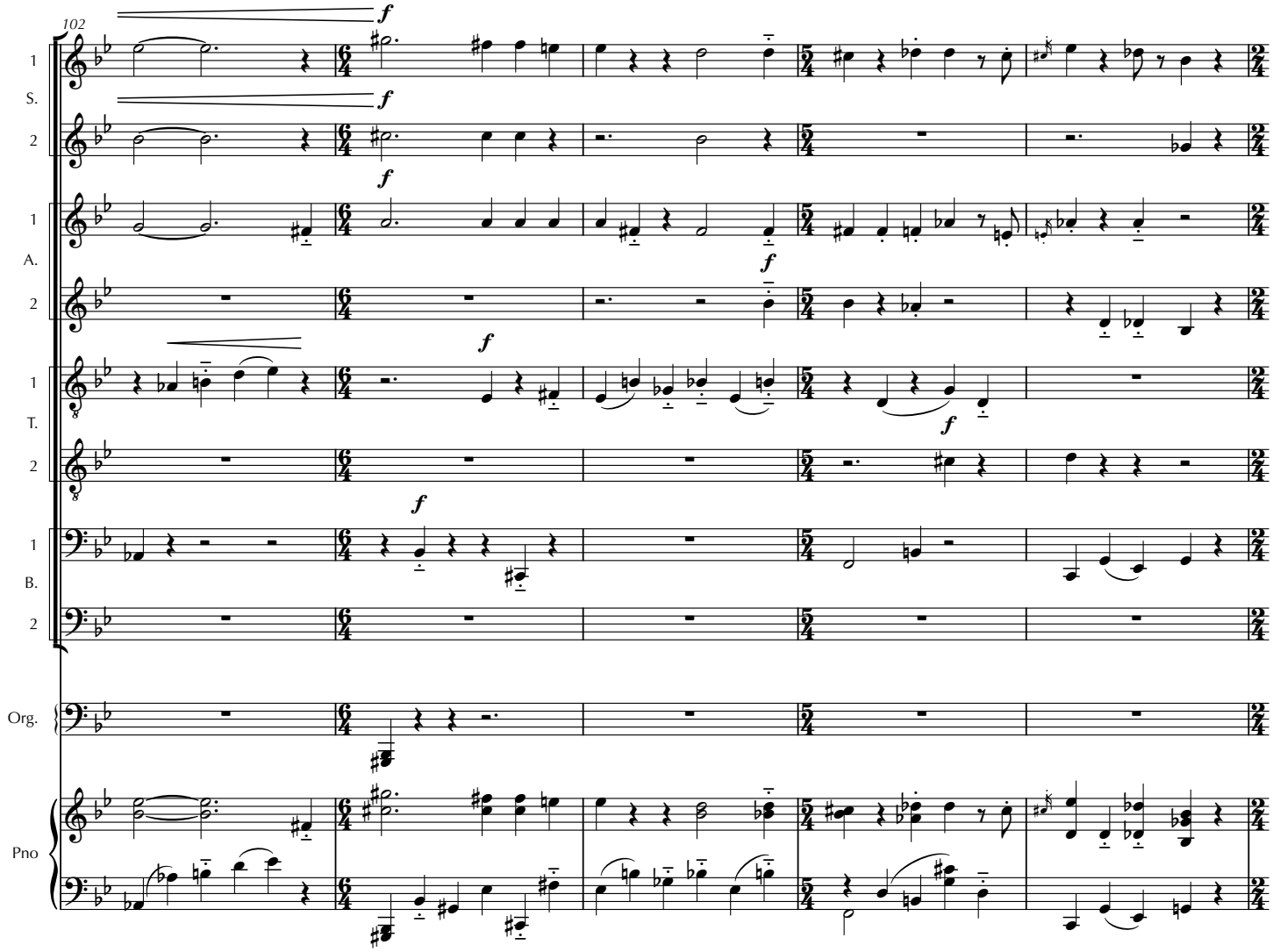
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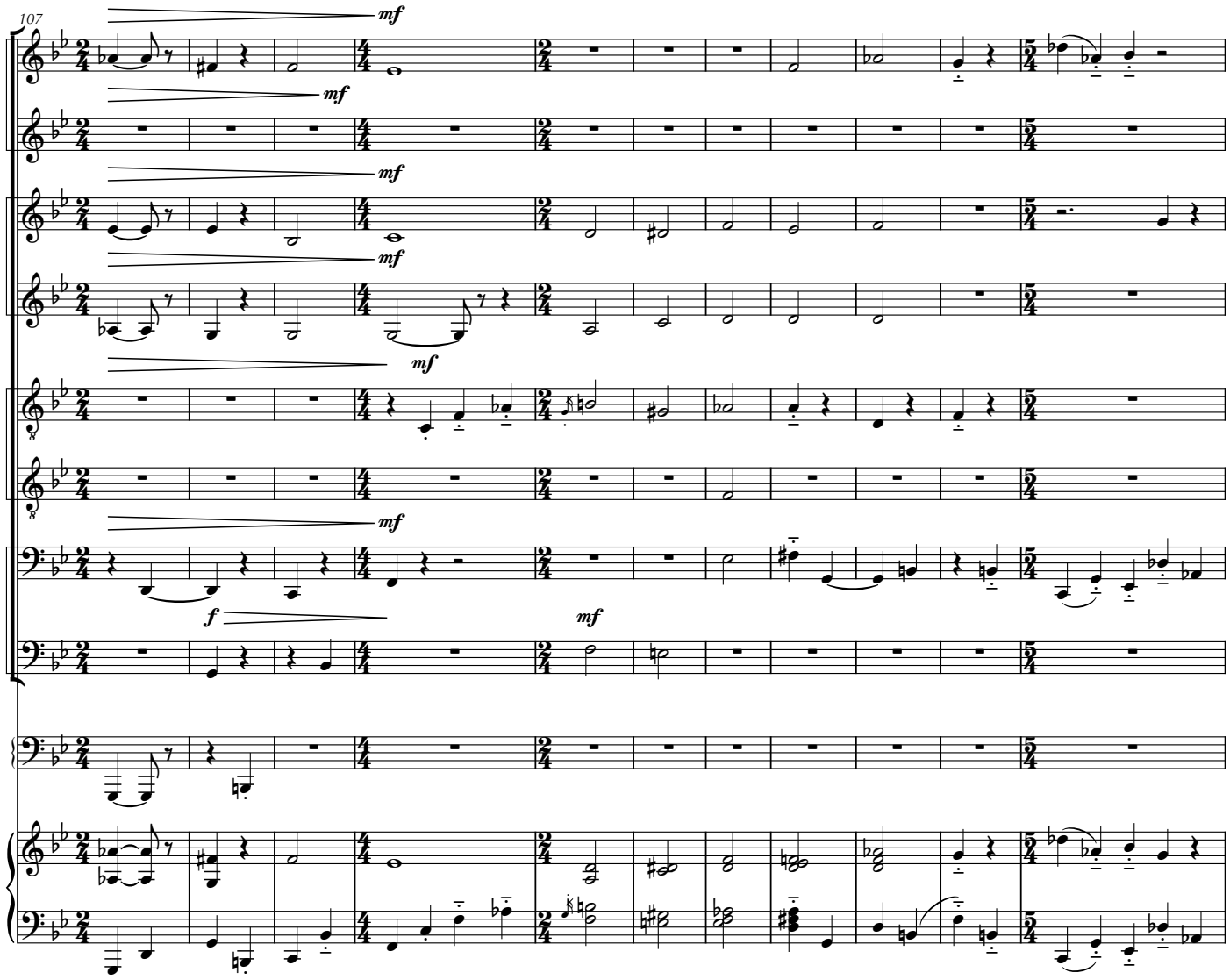
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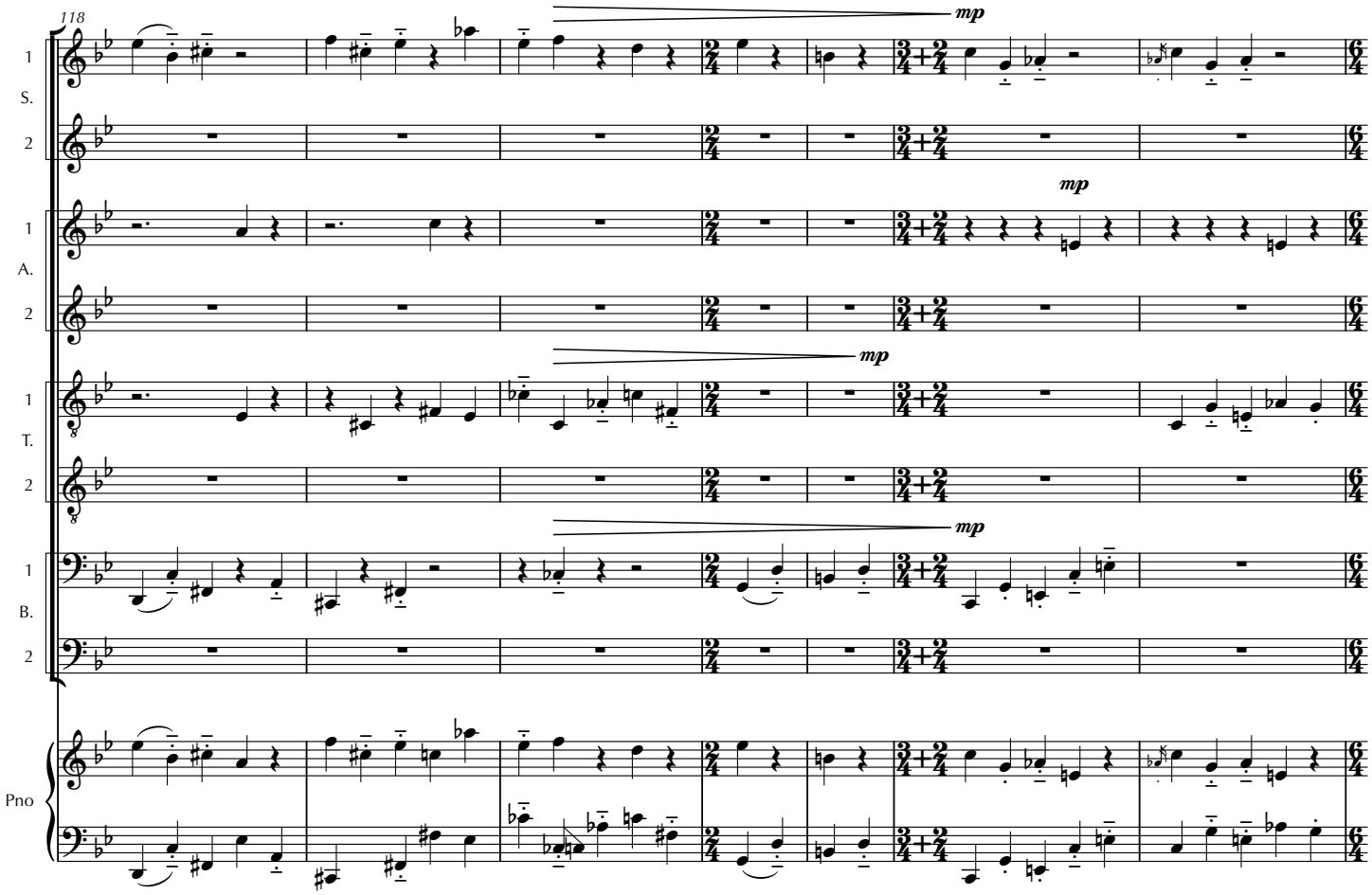
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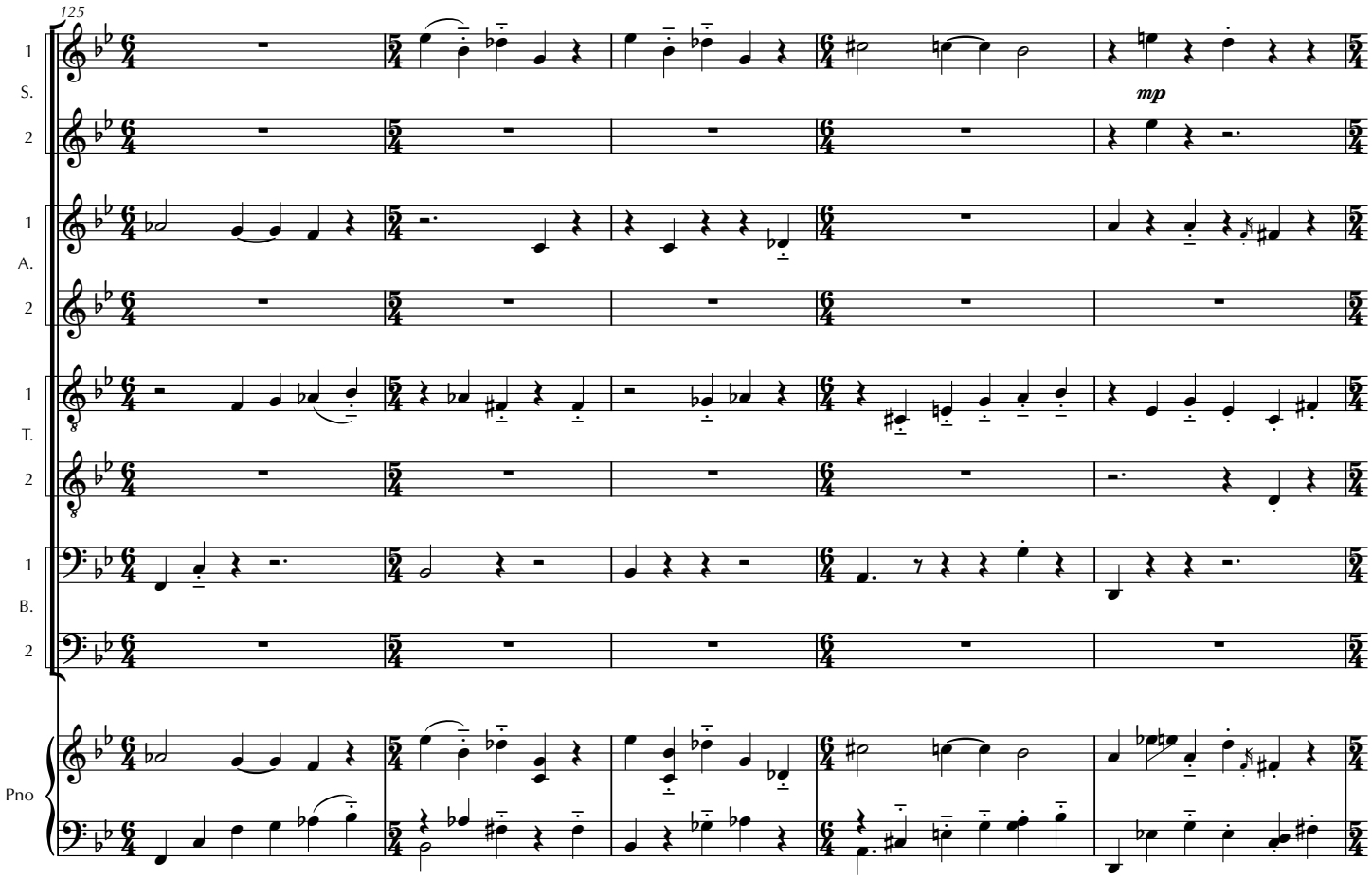
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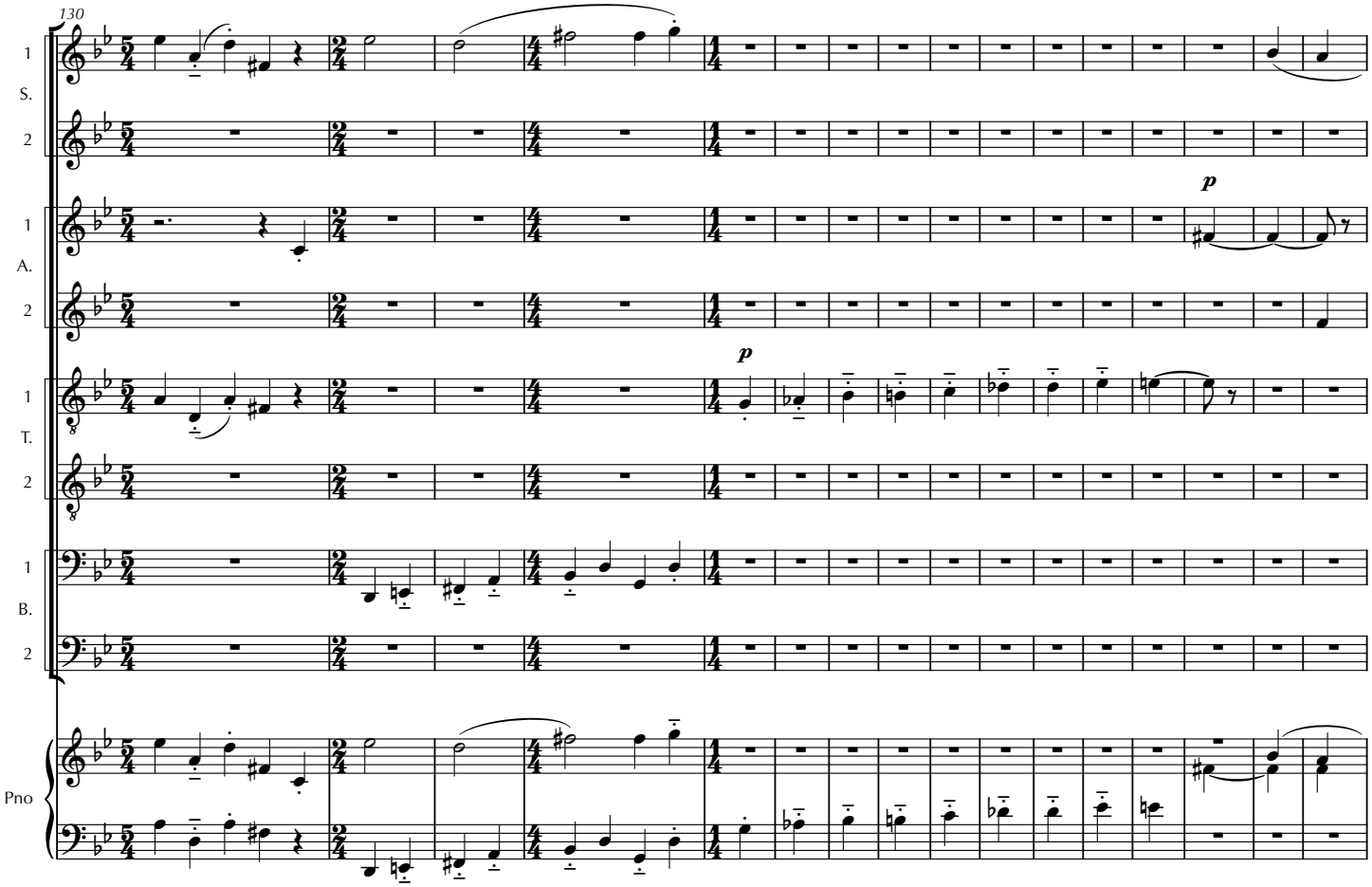
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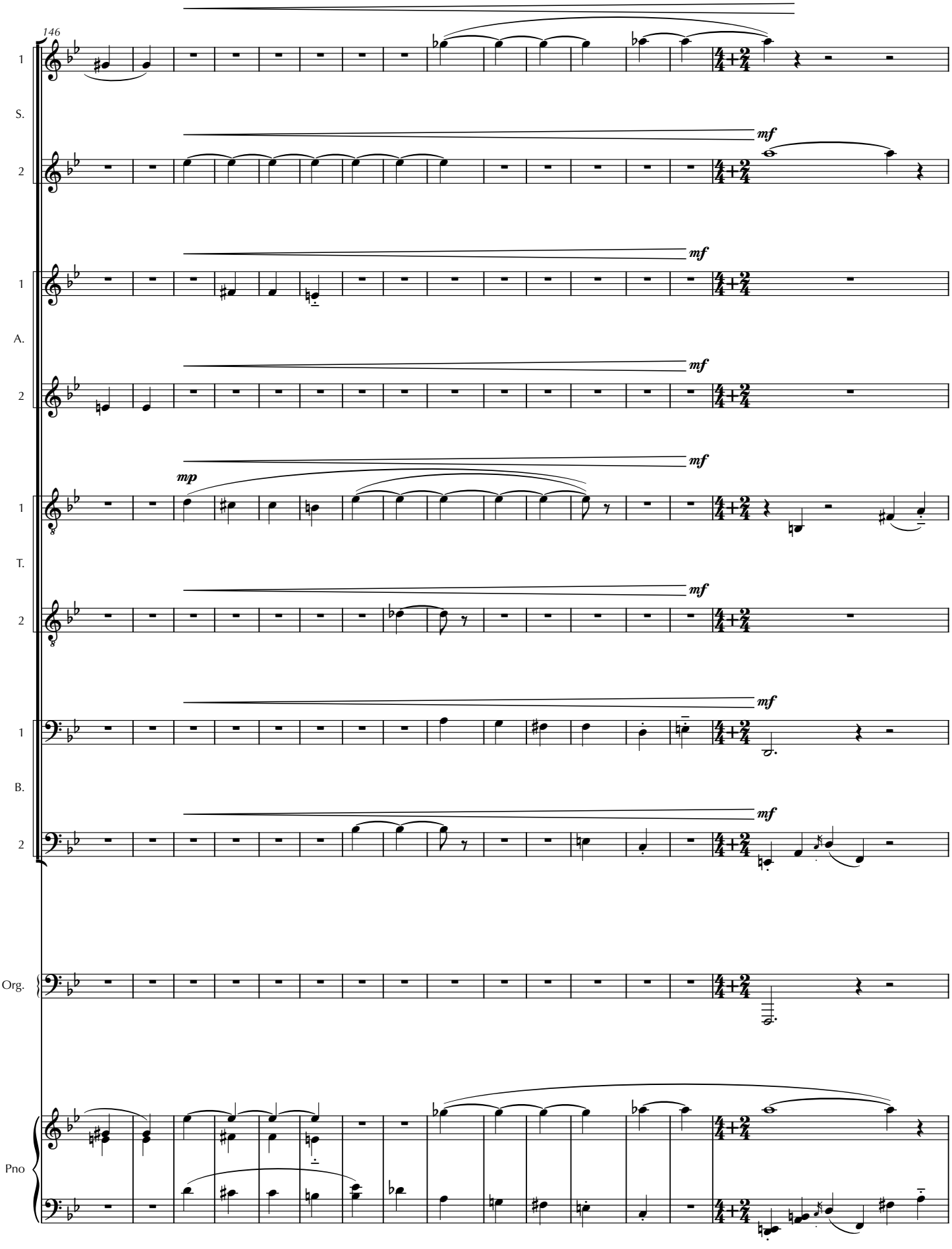
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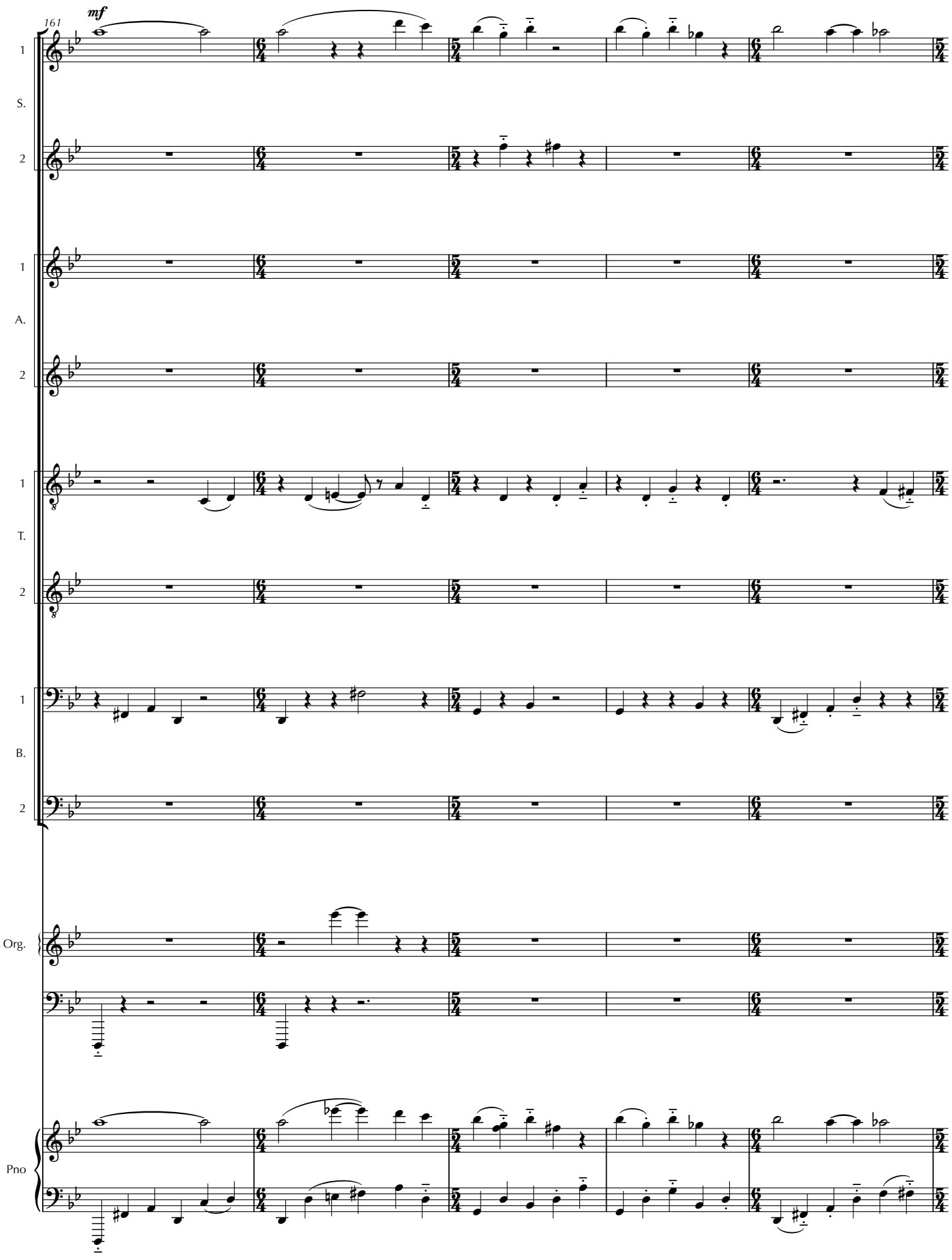
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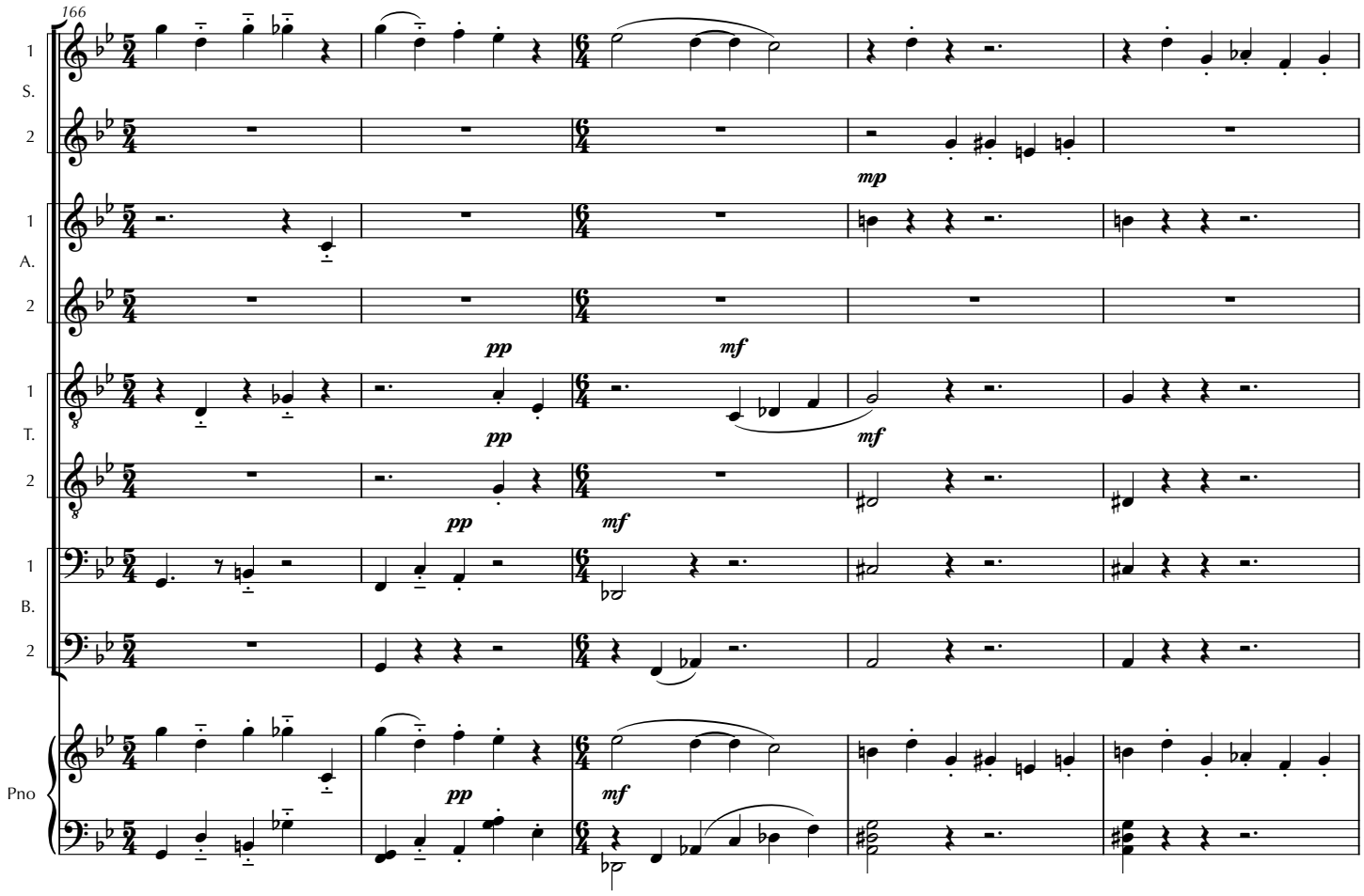
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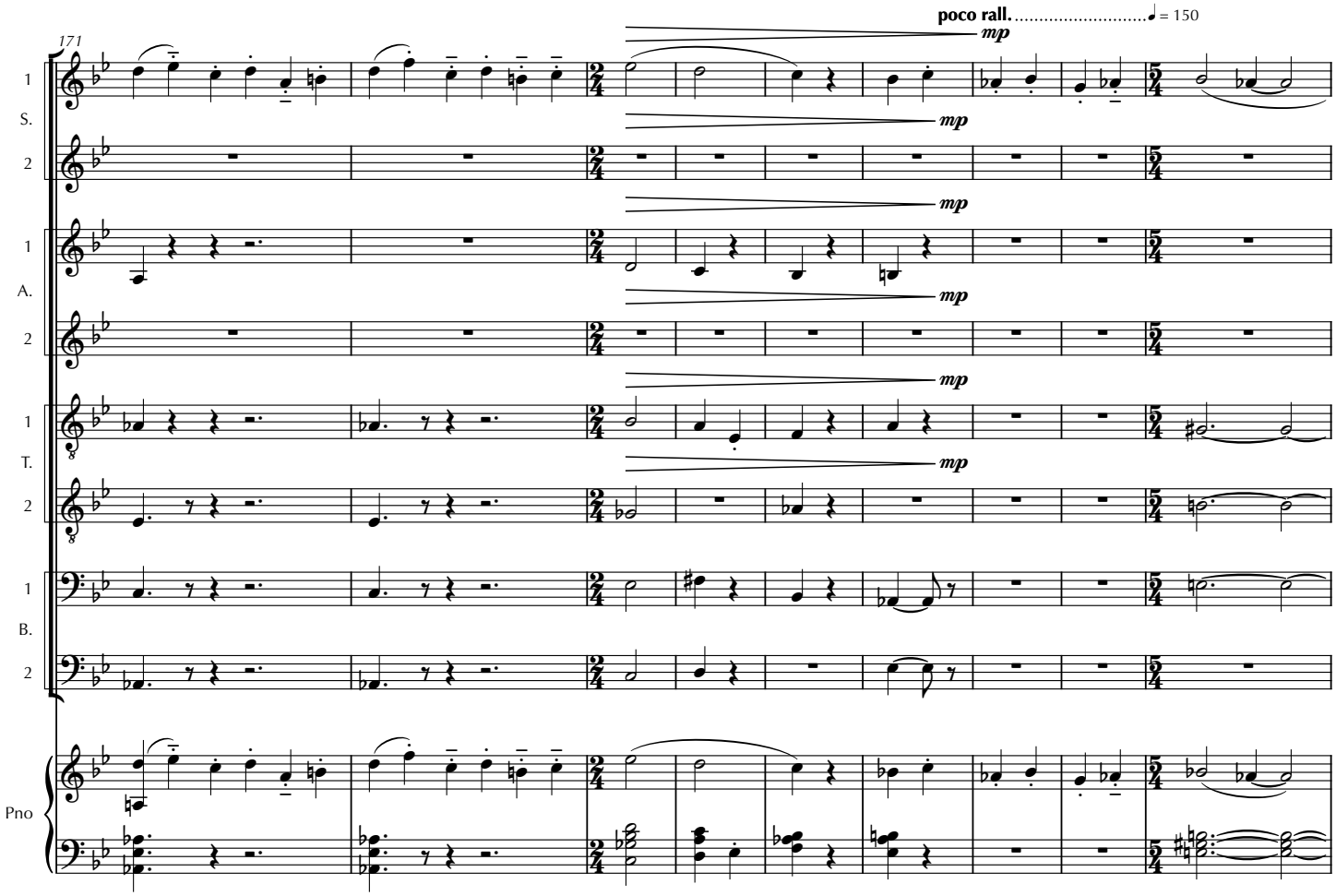
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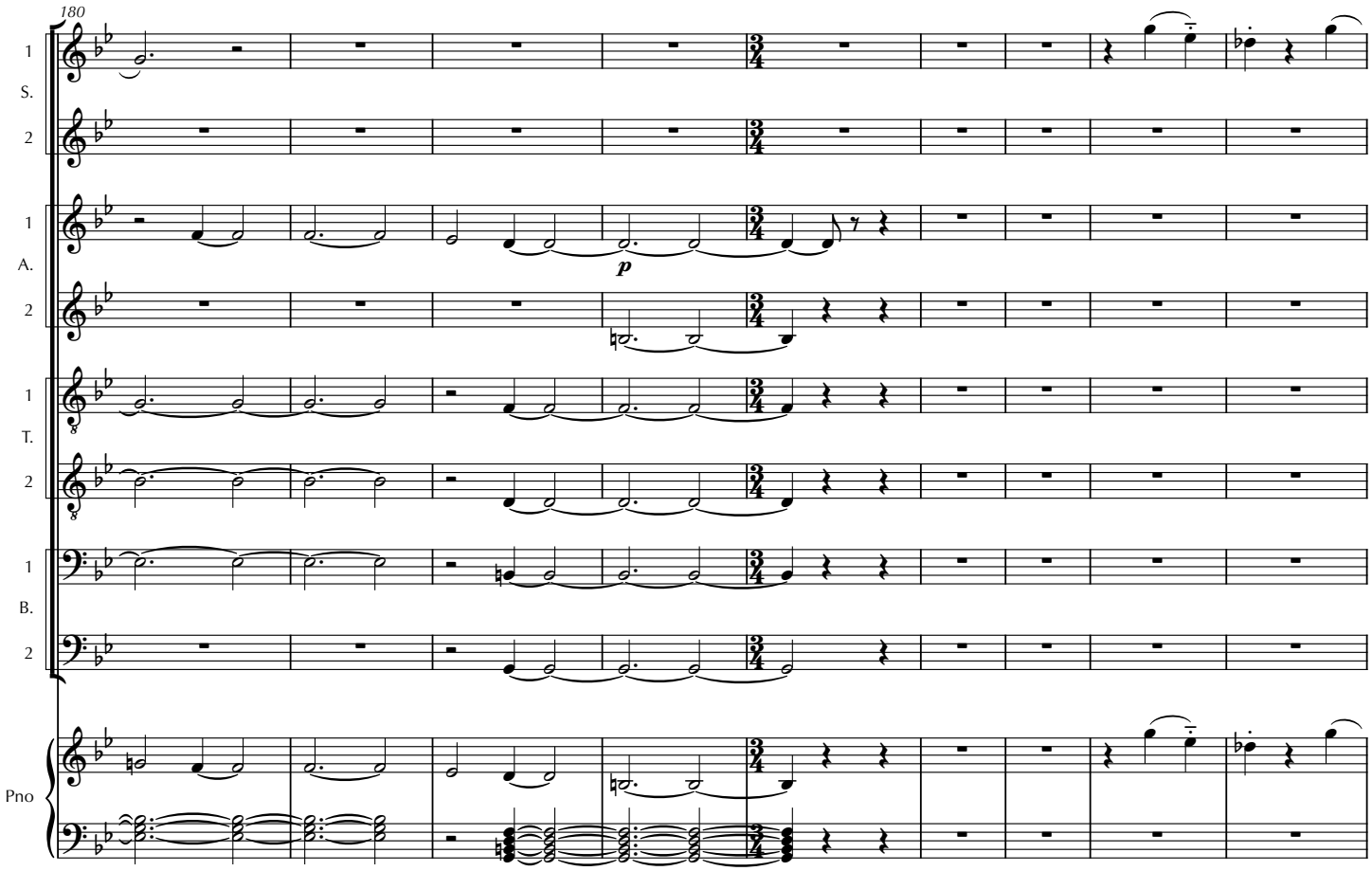
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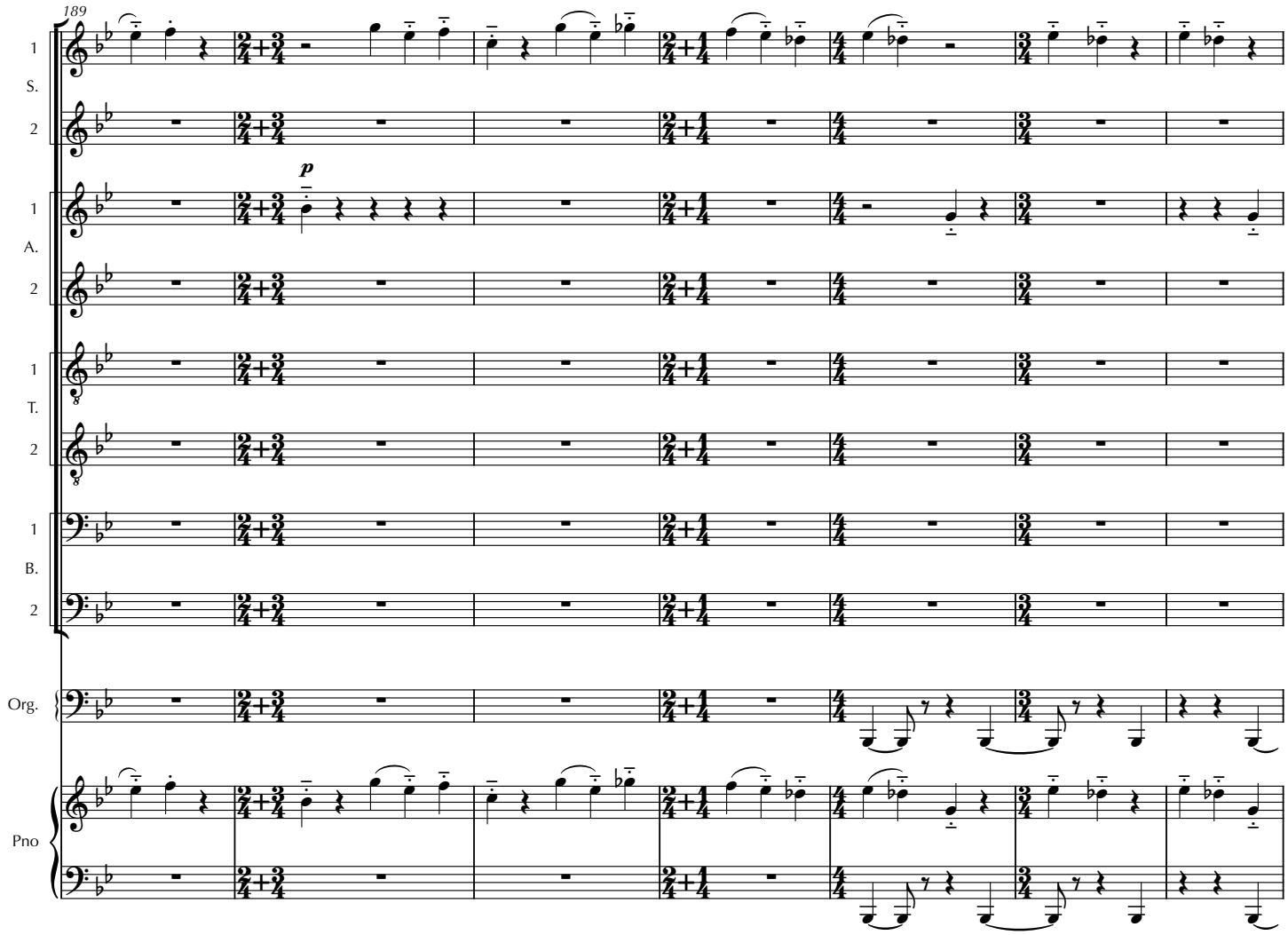
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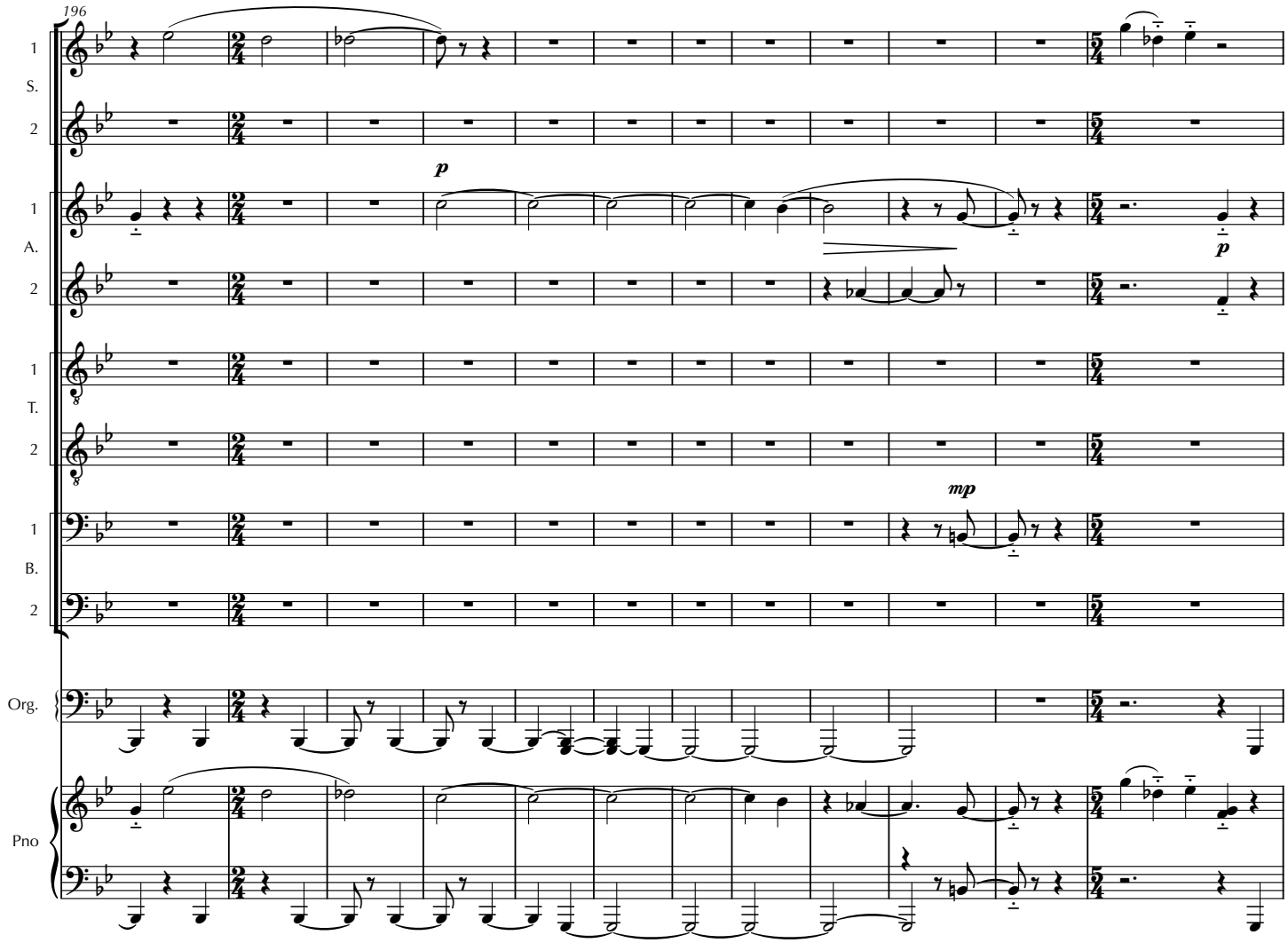
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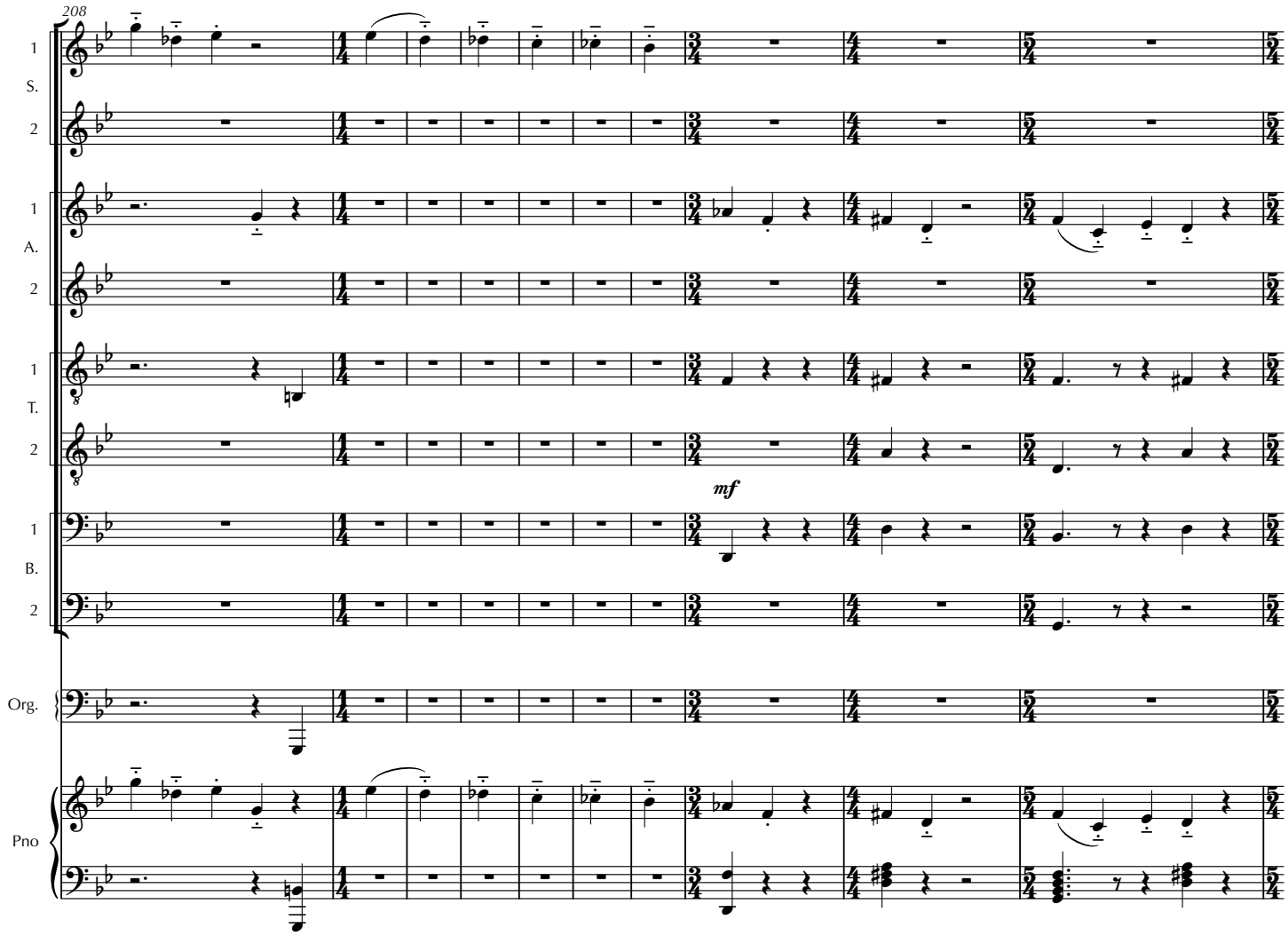
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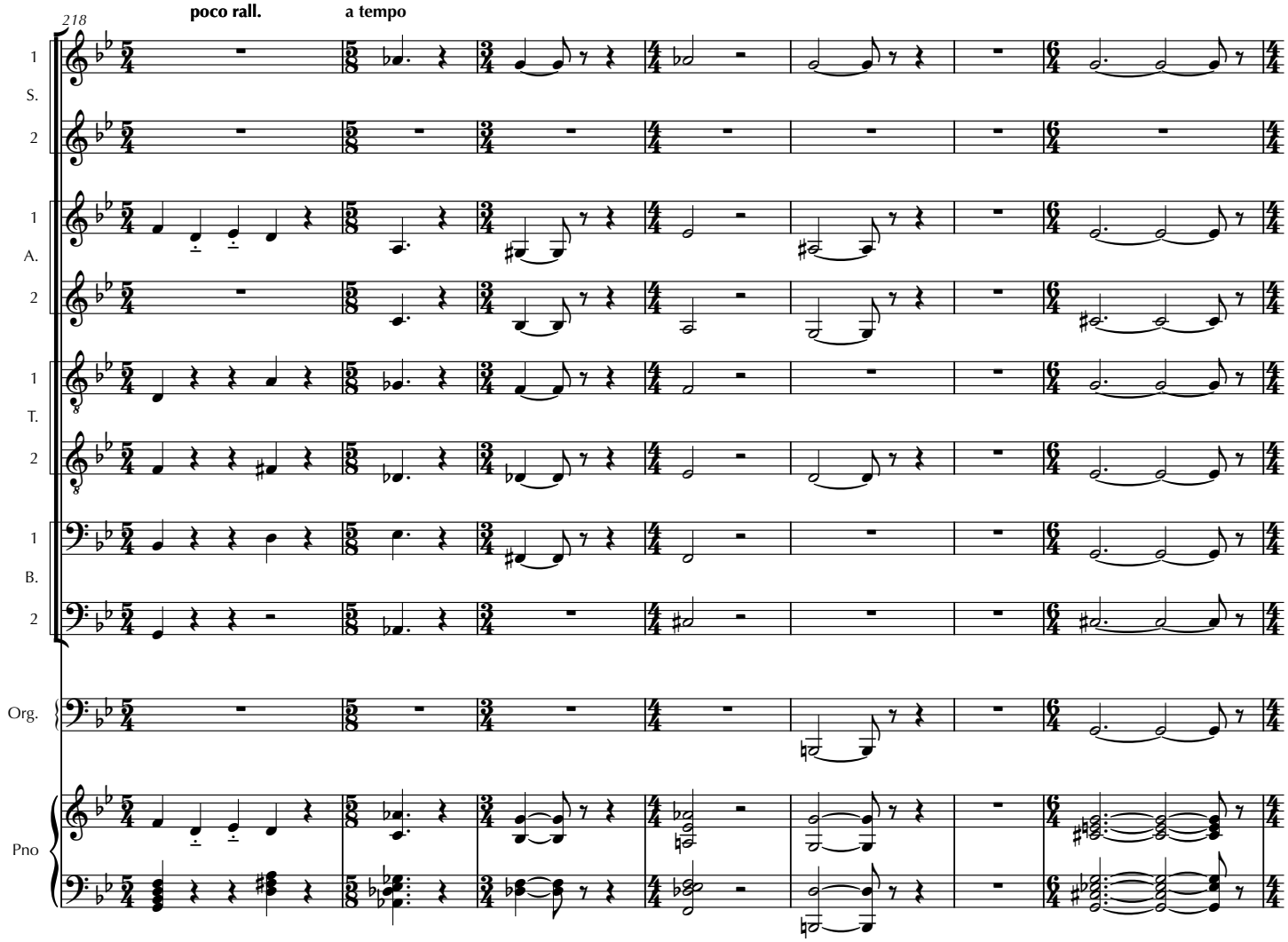
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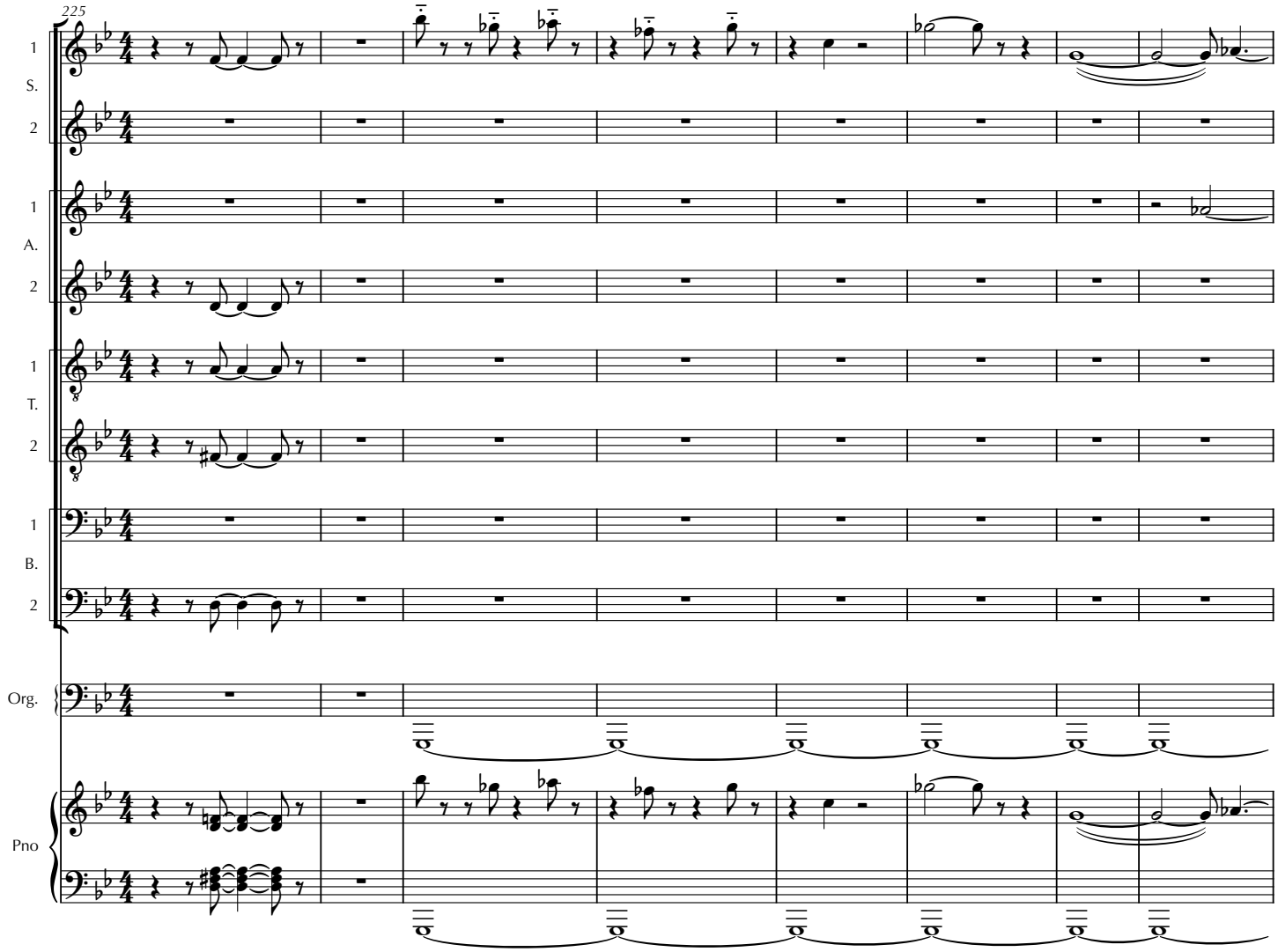
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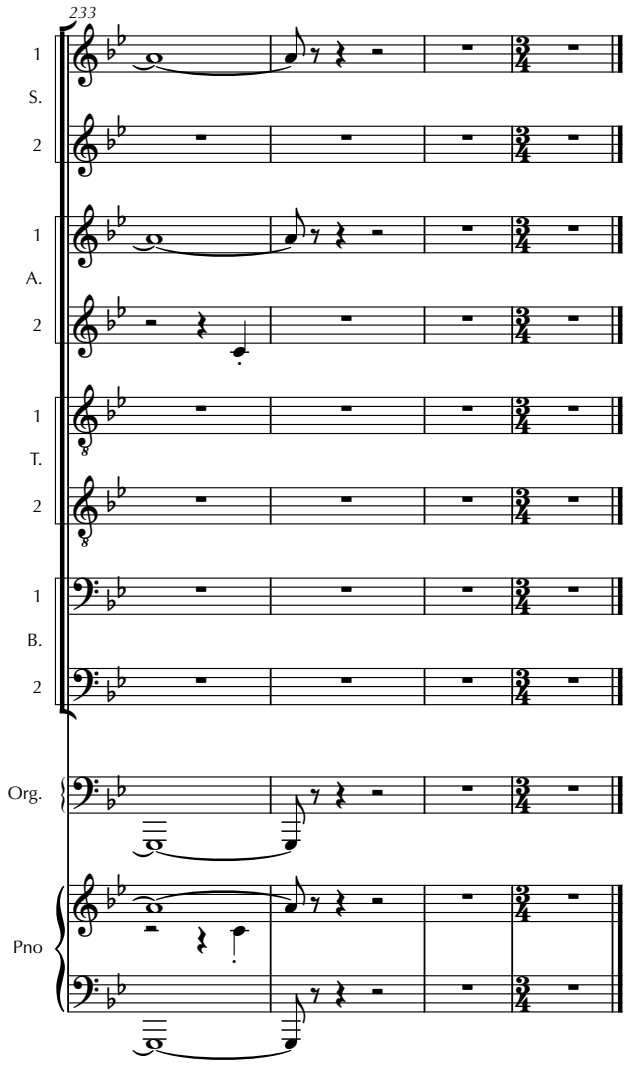
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