

IN CELEBRATION

THESIS

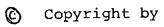
Presented to the Graduate Council of the North Texas State University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

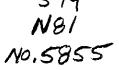
Ву

Columbus G. Walden, B.M. Denton, Texas December, 1981



Columbus G. Walden III

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Columbus G. Walden, B.M. Denton, Texas December, 1981 Walden, Columbus G., <u>In Celebration</u>. Master of Music (Composition), December, 1981, 49 pp., 8 illustrations.

<u>In Celebration</u> is a through-composed work of approximately eight minutes in length for high baritone voice and orchestra. The text is taken from the Magnificat and Psalm 150 and was chosen for its celebrative nature.

In <u>Celebration</u> is in four continuous sections. The first section, which is an orchestral introduction, is followed by three other distinct, vocal and orchestral sections. The introduction and following two sections are rhythmic and driving in nature, each section increasing in perceived tempo until the climactic final measures of the third section. The concluding section is slow, legato and reverent in mood. The function of this section is to release the tension built from the preceding sections and to bring the piece to a joyful, yet prayerful close.

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Introduction

<u>In Celebration</u> is a through-composed work of approximately eight minutes in length for high baritone voice and orchestra. The instrumentation of the orchestra is as follows: piccolo, two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets in B flat, two bassoons, four horns in F, two trumpets in C, three trombones, tuba, four timpani, tam-tam, cymbals, tambourine, snare drum, suspended cymbal, celesta, bass drum, vibraphone, xylophone, piano, violins, violas, violoncellos, and double basses. The text is taken from the Magnificat and Psalm 150 and was chosen for its celebrative nature.

In <u>Celebration</u> is in four continuous sections. The first section, which is an orchestral introduction, is followed by three other distinct, vocal and orchestral sections. The introduction and following two sections are rhythmic and driving in nature, each section increasing in perceived tempo until the climactic final measures of the third section (see Figure 1). This is accomplished in the slower tempo of the third section by a division of the beat into sixteenth rather than eighth notes. These first three sections of the piece are intended to work together insofar as their rhythmic and driving nature is concerned, however each of these sections has its own distinct development of

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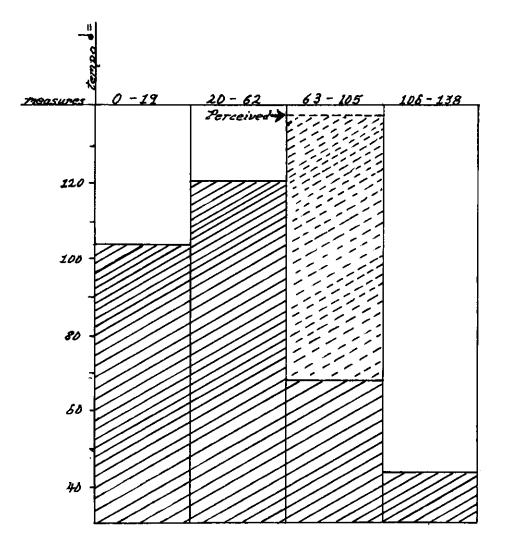


Fig. 1--Tempo graph

thematic materials. These sections are meant to have a dynamic approach to the musical expression of praise, each with its own climactic and subclimactic moments. The primary climactic moments of these sections are marked by the rise to their areas of highest density, which are found at the end of the first and third sections and in the middle of the second section. The concluding section is slow, legato and reverent in mood. Although it is contrasting in nature with the other sections, there are unifying thematic materials in this section, which are drawn from the second section. The function of this section is to release the tension built from the preceding sections and to bring the piece to a joyful, yet prayerful close.

Section I

Section I, the orchestral introduction, is intended to capture immediately the interest of the listener. The interest of this section is maintained and heightened by the following means: colorful and highly contrasting instrumentation; driving, syncopated rhythms; and a generally ascending melodic contour with a corresponding thickening of texture and increase in dynamic level. All chords in this section are primarily made up of an octave with a central tritone.

The opening two measures are an example of the varied instrumentation. In both measures, the double basses and piano begin with a down beat, eighth note, octave leap figure (the cellos are added to this figure in the second measure), which is followed on the second beat by an octave and tritone chord that is held for six beats. In the first measure, the woodwinds hold the octave and tritone chord and the strings play pizzicato on the attack of the chord. In the second measure, the strings hold another octave, tritone chord and

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the woodwinds play a staccato attack. An f is present as the lowest note in both chords. In the first measure, it is held by the cellos and bassoons while the basses play it pizzicato as the final note of the octave leap figure. In the second measure, the note is held by the bassoons and horns while both the cellos and basses have the note as the final pizzicato of the octave leap figure.

Measure four provides the rhythmic material from which all other rhythms in this section are derived (see Figure 2). Variations on this rhythm include: lengthening the third and fourth notes of the treble by an eighth note in measure six, adding an off-beat beginning in measure eight and repetition of rhythm in measures ten and eleven. A one-beat



Fig. 2--Seminal rhythm of section I

extraction of two eighth notes is used to build momentum in measures twelve and fourteen. In measure seventeen, the figure is truncated by not continuing to measure eighteen with a quarter note on the first beat. This creates an element of surprise by not fulfilling the preceding pattern. Through the first five measures, the bass octave leaps remain on FF and the two octaves above. From measure six to measure seventeen the bass ascends from FF to E flat. The pitch level of the octave tritone chords ascends from c^1 , g flat¹, c^2 in measure eight to d flat², g^2 , d flat³ in measure seventeen. A corresponding increase in dynamics and thickening of texture work with the ascending pitch level to heighten tension.

Measures eighteen and nineteen serve to complete the introductory section and also serve as a transition to the next section. The final descending woodwind motive, which completes this section, is later used as a prominent motive in the final section of the piece (see Figure 3).



Fig. 3--Woodwind motive

Section II

The second section begins in measure twenty as the tempo is increased to J=120. This section introduces thematic material that will be used extensively in the remainder of the piece. The melodic line, which is presented first in the trumpets in measure twenty as a bright and driving opening statement to this section, is used quite differently as the prayerful and subdued closing vocal phrase

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of this work (see Figure 4). The difference in mood of this line in the final section, as compared to this section, is achieved by a slowing of the tempo from d=120 to d=40-48, a change in dynamic level from forte to piano, a change in



Fig. 4--Opening trumpet melody of section II compared to closing vocal phrase of the work.

articulation from a trumpet line in which each note is tongued, to a very legato vocal line which is melismatic in nature, and a change in the presentation of the second and tenth notes from an off-beat syncopation to the beginning of the second beat of a legato vocal measure. The brass figures used from measure twenty-eight to thirty-one are altered and used as the seminal motivic material for the beginning of the third section (see Figure 5). The first descending interval is changed from a minor third to a tritone, and the following ascending interval is changed from a perfect fourth to an augmented fifth. The opening vocal line of this section is altered and used to set the Alleluia in measures 120 and 121 of the final section (see Figure 6). The two phrases have similar shapes and contain

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Fig. 5--Brass motives from section II and opening material from section III.

the same triplet figure, which is the only deviation from the duple division of the beat in these phrases. In the final section, the notes in the fourth beat of the first measure of the phrase, which correspond to the first two beats of the second measure in the original, are raised from the original by a half-step and a whole-step respectively.

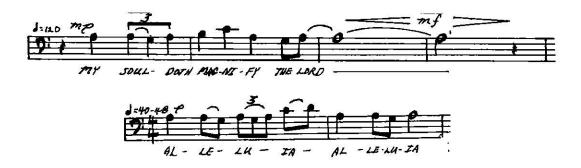


Fig. 6--The opening vocal line from section II and the Alleluia from the final section.

The second beat of the phrase in the final section has no corresponding material in the original. This opening vocal

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line, which is also used, transposed, to close this section, is not unlike much of the vocal material of the last section, even though this section is rhythmic and fast paced, the final section is more restrained. Similarities include triple as well as duple divisions of the beat and singlebreath phrases of limited range which center around the first pitch of the phrase.

The accompaniment to the voice in this section consists of chords in a persistent rhythm of two dotted quarter notes, an eighth note and an eighth rest, always in 4/4 meter. The first and second chords of the accompaniment figure are identical, and the third chord, which is different from the first two, serves to lead to the next measure. This measure may be a repetition of the previous material, or it may establish a new group of chords to be repeated. As the section progresses, the density level increases until its thickest and loudest point at measures 45 and 46. From this point to the end of the section, the density level decreases as the dynamic level and orchestral timbre occur on each new area of chordal accompaniment material.

An instrumental statement answers each vocal statement in the first part of this section. The instrumental statement is most often based on the preceding vocal line. Only in measures 45 and 46 does it not respond with material taken from the vocal line. In the remaining part of this section, there is no longer an answering instrumental

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statement and the musical intensity is decreased until the end of the section.

Section III

The third section begins in measure 63 with a change in tempo from J=120 to J=69. The actual effect, however, is that of a faster tempo, since the division of the beat is now sixteenth notes instead of eighth notes (see Figure 1, page ii).

As stated previously, the opening bass motive is derived from alterations of the motives in measures 28 through 31 (see Figure 5, page vii). The first treble motives in this section are derived from alterations and harmonizations of this opening bass motive (see Figure 7). The first descending



Fig. 7--Treble motive, section III

interval is changed from a tritone to a minor third or augmented second. The ascending interval is then changed to a tritone. Most of the harmonization is built around major sixths, minor thirds and minor sevenths. The bass motive changes to a rhythmic ostinato pattern over which most of the rest of this section is built. The pitch content of the pattern changes every few measures, and these changes

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provide the variety in pitch material and harmonic areas necessary to sustain the musical drive of this section.

The text setting in this section is quite different from that in any other section. Whereas the other sections are primarily legato in nature, the nature of the setting here requires a more accented and marked type of singing. The melodic motion is much more jagged than in the other sections, even though each vocal phrase still has a distinct shape and destination (see Figure 8). This section requires the widest vocal range, and much of it lies in a high tessitura for the baritone. This tessitura is chosen for its intensity, which is meant to convey the intense and reverent joy of the text.



Fig. 8--Vocal phrase, measures 79 and 80

The vocal line in this section is usually paired with a corresponding instrumental line in a duet-like fashion. For example, the first vocal phrase of this section is stated alone with a trombone line that harmonizes the vocal line in a duet fashion, as opposed to an accompaniment role for the trombone. In other phrases, the melodic instrumental line may react or respond to the vocal line. For example,

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the trombone and tuba in measures 79 and 80 react to the vocal line with stretto harmonization which is answered by woodwind and string figures drawn from the vocal line. In some parts of this section, particularly toward the end, the vocal line is doubled and the corresponding instrumental melodic line is played by several instruments.

The orchestration in this section combines classical restraint with interjections of bright, sparkling color. It is classical in the sense that the orchestration is seldom "thick or lush." It is romantic in its constantly shifting timbres and its use of unexpected colors. For example, the piano is used extensively for its timbre and percussive qualities. The xylophone and vibraphone, along with other percussion, are used as a musical spice to highlight a particular timbre. An example of the unexpected color changes is found in measures 85 through 87. This begins with only voice and ostinato pattern at a mp dynamic. First and second trombones then respond to and accompany the vocal line. The vocalist repeats the words, "the trumpet," to which the horns respond with a stopped "horn-call" figure. This is followed by a sudden change in color with woodwinds and xylophone playing a forte, thirty-second note descending pattern.

The final part of this section brings the entire piece to its high point of musical intensity. Beginning in measure 94, this part increases in dynamic level, thickness

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of orchestration and general intensity until measure 99. The intensity is maintained from measure 99 to 104. The orchestration in these measures changes to a low, rumbling texture which brings this section to a close. After the molto ritardando in measure 104, measure 105 makes the transition to the final section. The voice repeats the text "the loud cymbals" in a free manner, and the mood is changed completely with the beginning of the final section.

Section IV

The final section is of an entirely different but completely appropriate mood. For the first time, the rhythmic and driving musical nature is replaced with a restrained, reverent one. This mood is chosen in order to convey the sincerity of the joy of the text.

Even though the nature of this section is radically different from the others, it acts as an integral part with the whole, not in opposition to it. The primary unifying elements are common thematic material with the second section and the general nature of the vocal lines in these two sections. The vocal melodies of both sections use both duple and triple divisions of the beat, and both have singlebreath phrases of limited range. The exceptions to the last statement are the final Alleluias and Amens, which cover an octave range and are best taken in two breaths. However,

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as stated earlier, these phrases are taken directly from the opening brass lines of section two and, therefore, thenatically unite the two sections.

This section begins with an opening statement in the horns. This phrase is then used for the first two vocal phrases, changing only the last note each time. The first five measures of this section center around G in the bass. The center of the bass foundation then moves to A flat in the next two measures. Tension is added by centering the vocal line around c^1 while the second violins constantly hold a d flat¹ along with their e flat¹. The second chord of measure 114 is used to move the center of the bass to F in the following measure. The primary motion is supplied by the basses and cellos moving from B to F sharp in measure 114 and then falling a half step and settling on F in 115, where they remain for most of the rest of the piece.

The woodwind motive in measure 114, which relates to the transition between sections I and II, leads into an alternating pattern which emphasizes the interval of the tritone. Celesta is added here for color.

From measure 118 through 125 the strings hold the octave A's and E flat tritone along with the bass F. The voice and horns continue the melodic material above this sonority. In measures 125 through 131 the strings and woodwinds take up the melodic material and bring this section to its most climactic moments. The crescendo and rising melodic line

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of measure 126 leads to the surprise of the subito piano in 127 and subsequent crescendo and continued rising melodic line to forte in 128. The next three measures decrescendo to piano and the strings return to their previous sonority of bass F and octave A's with tritone E flat. The closing vocal phrases, which were taken from the opening brass lines of the second section, are stated above this sonority. The horns have the closing melodic phrases with the familiar woodwind motive found between the horn phrases and closing the work. The last interval of the woodwind motive is changed from a tritone to a major third of f^2 and a^2 in the closing measure. This creates a feeling of resolution with the F in the basses and cellos and adds to the finality of the closing of the work.

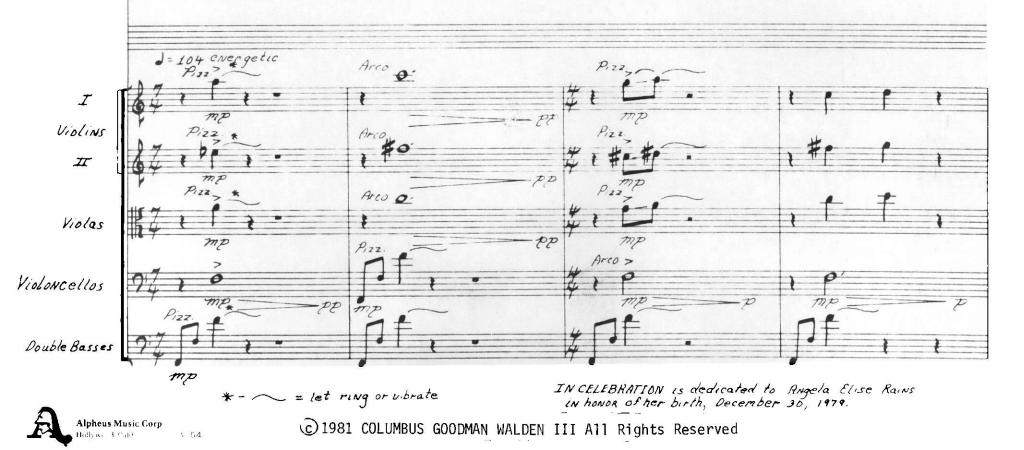
Conclusion

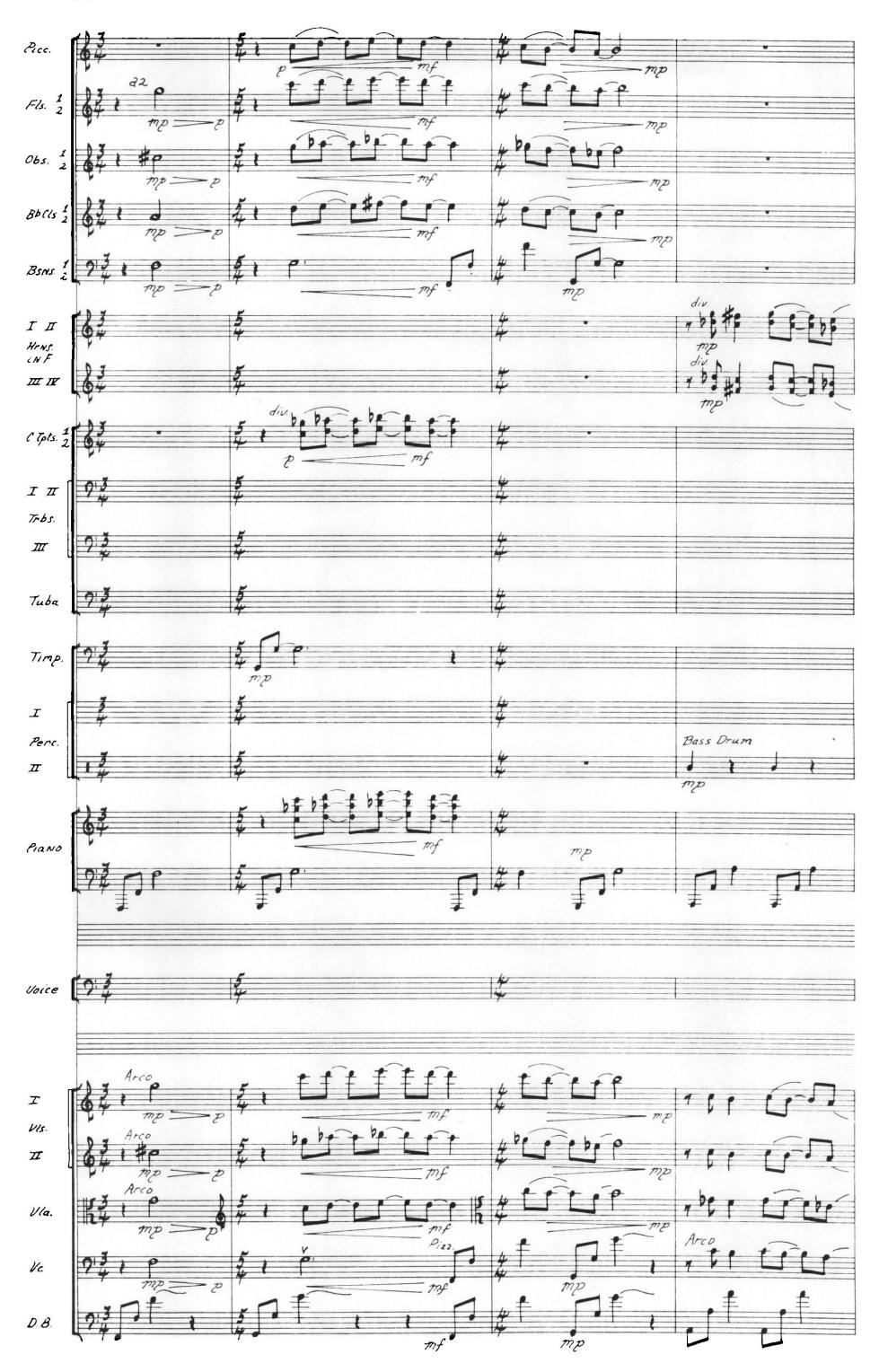
<u>In Celebration</u> was written to celebrate the beginning of life and in praise of the creator of it. The piece is an attempt to convey this celebration and praise by means that would express both the excitement of new life and a reverence for its creation, with the first three sections primarily an expression of excitement and joy and the final section concluding the piece in reverent praise. <u>In Cele-</u> <u>bration</u> is dedicated to Angela Elise Rains in honor of her birth, December 30, 1979.

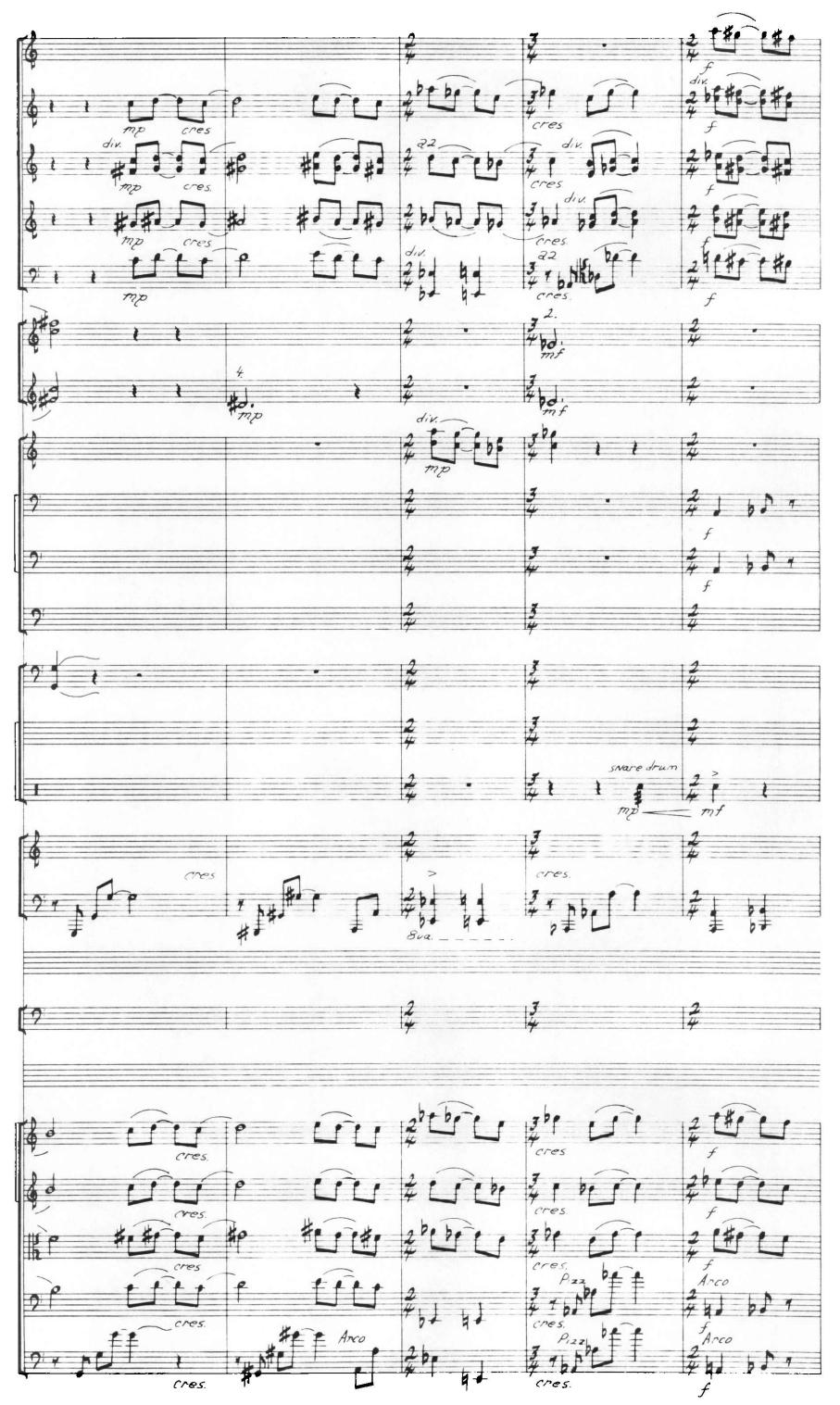
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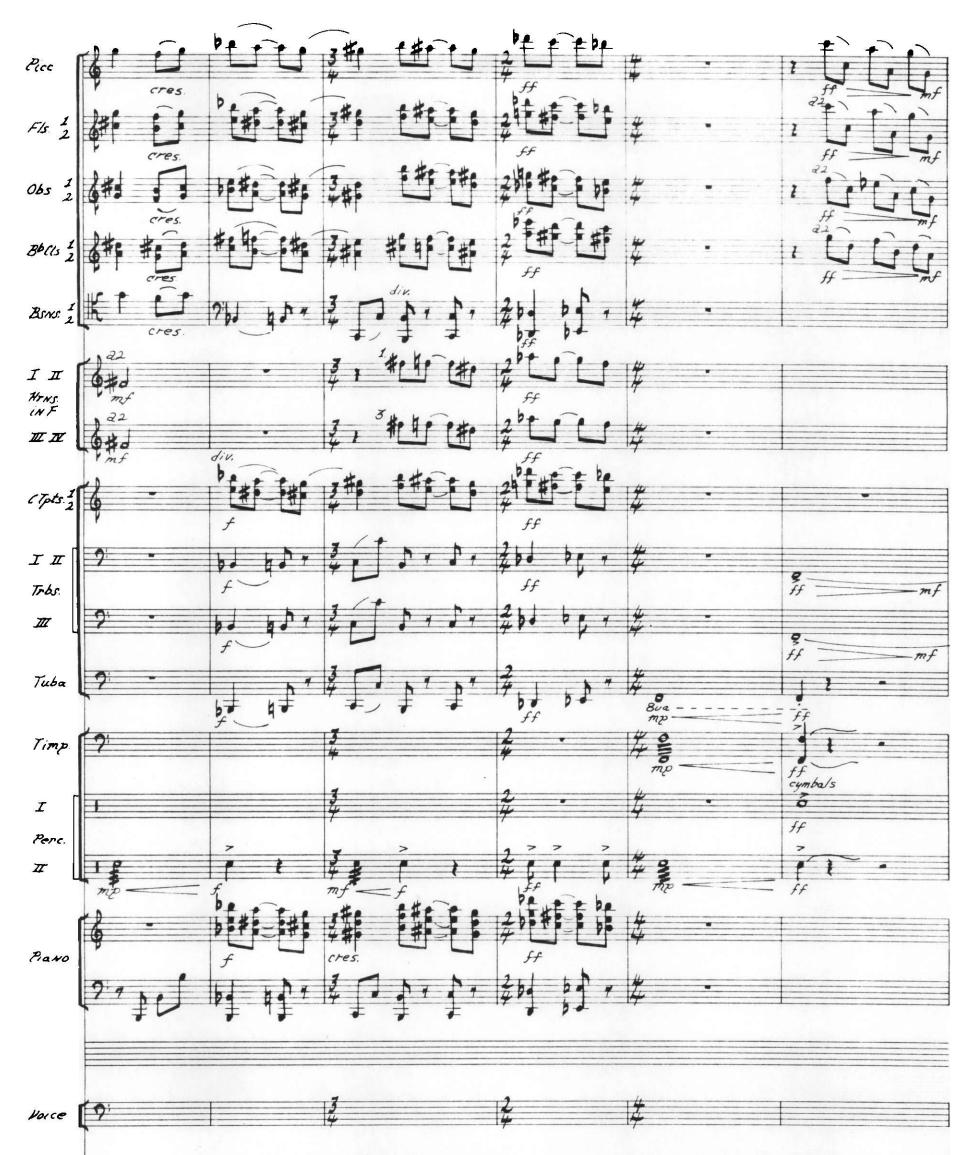
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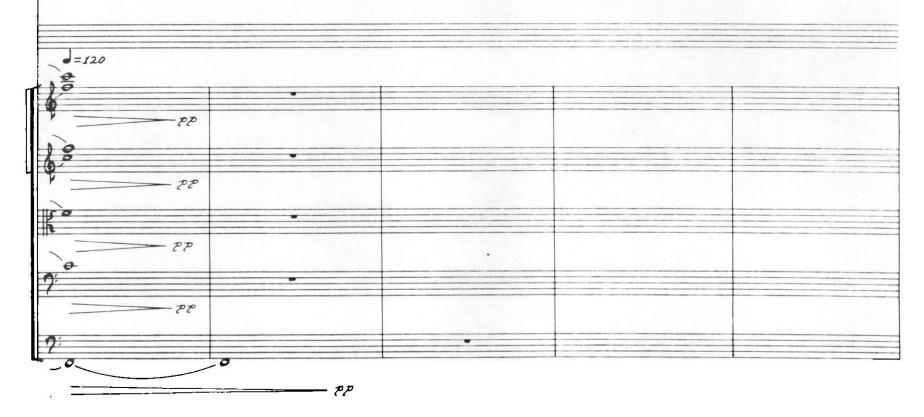


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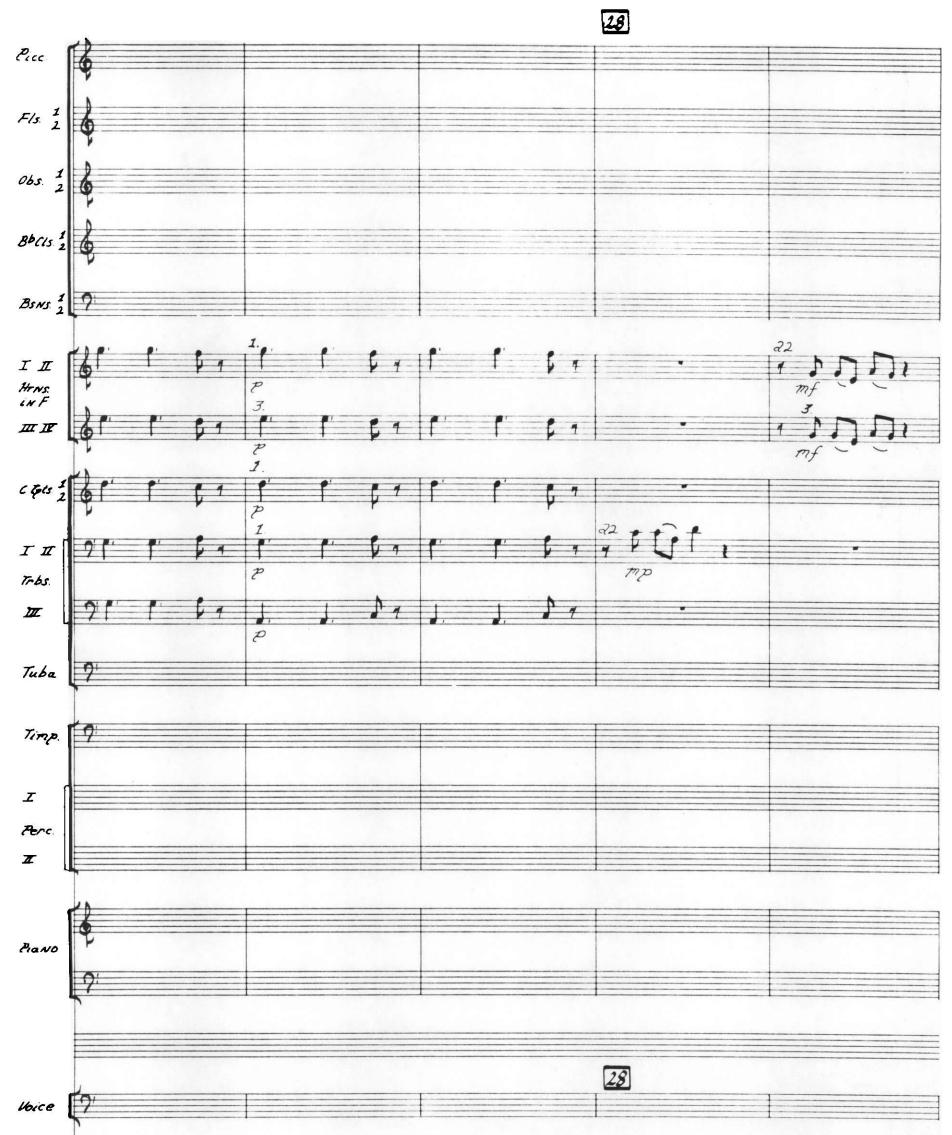




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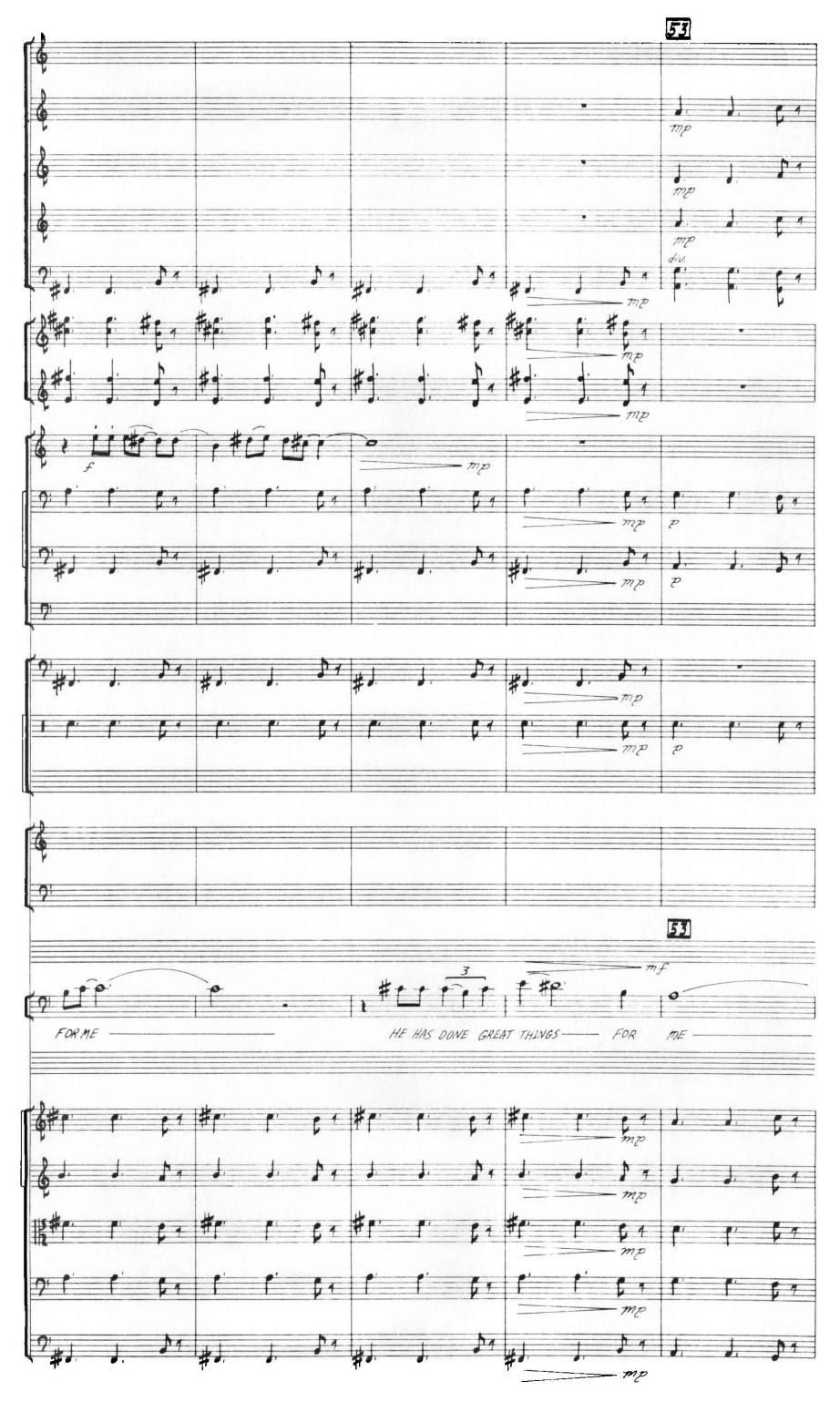
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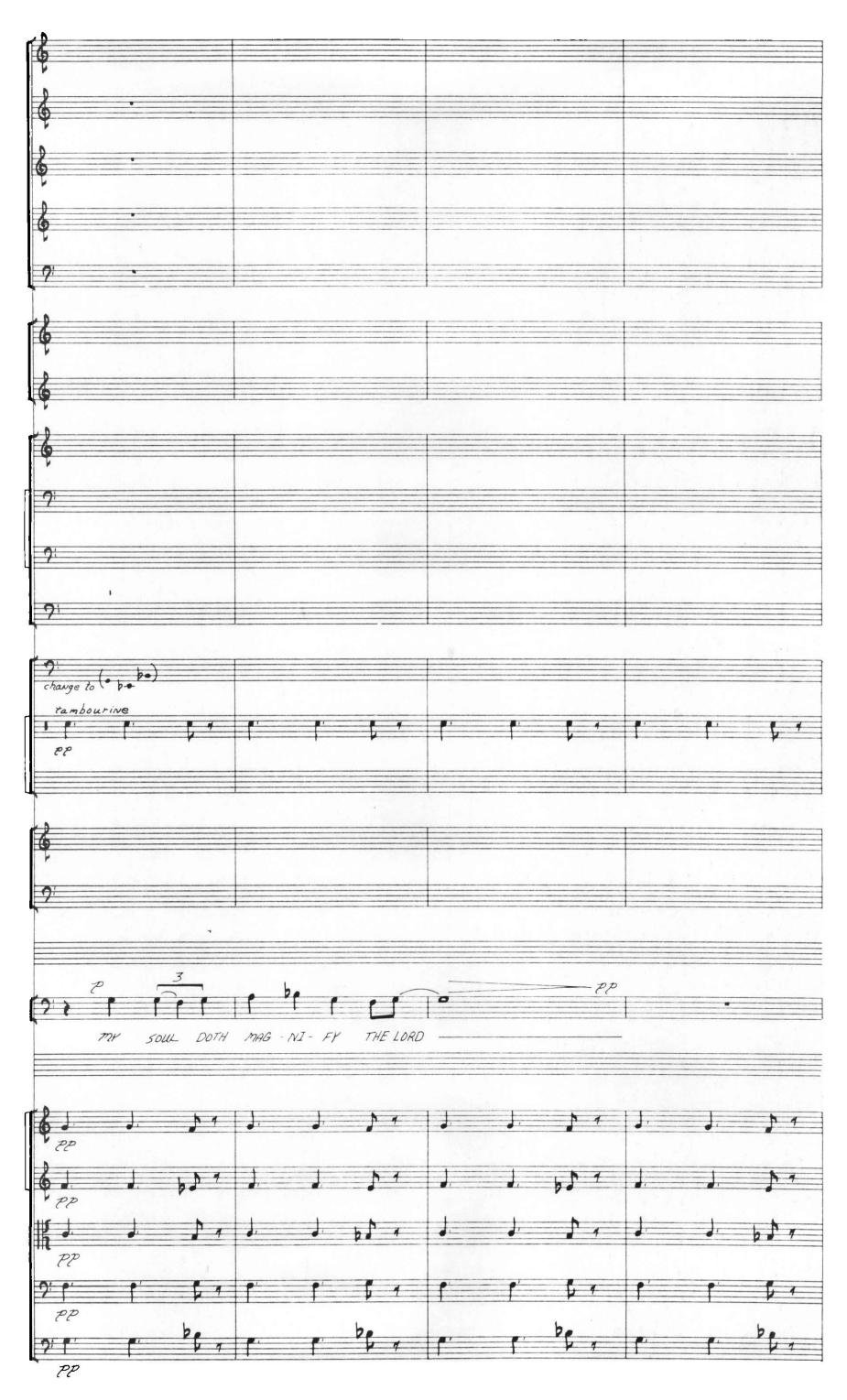


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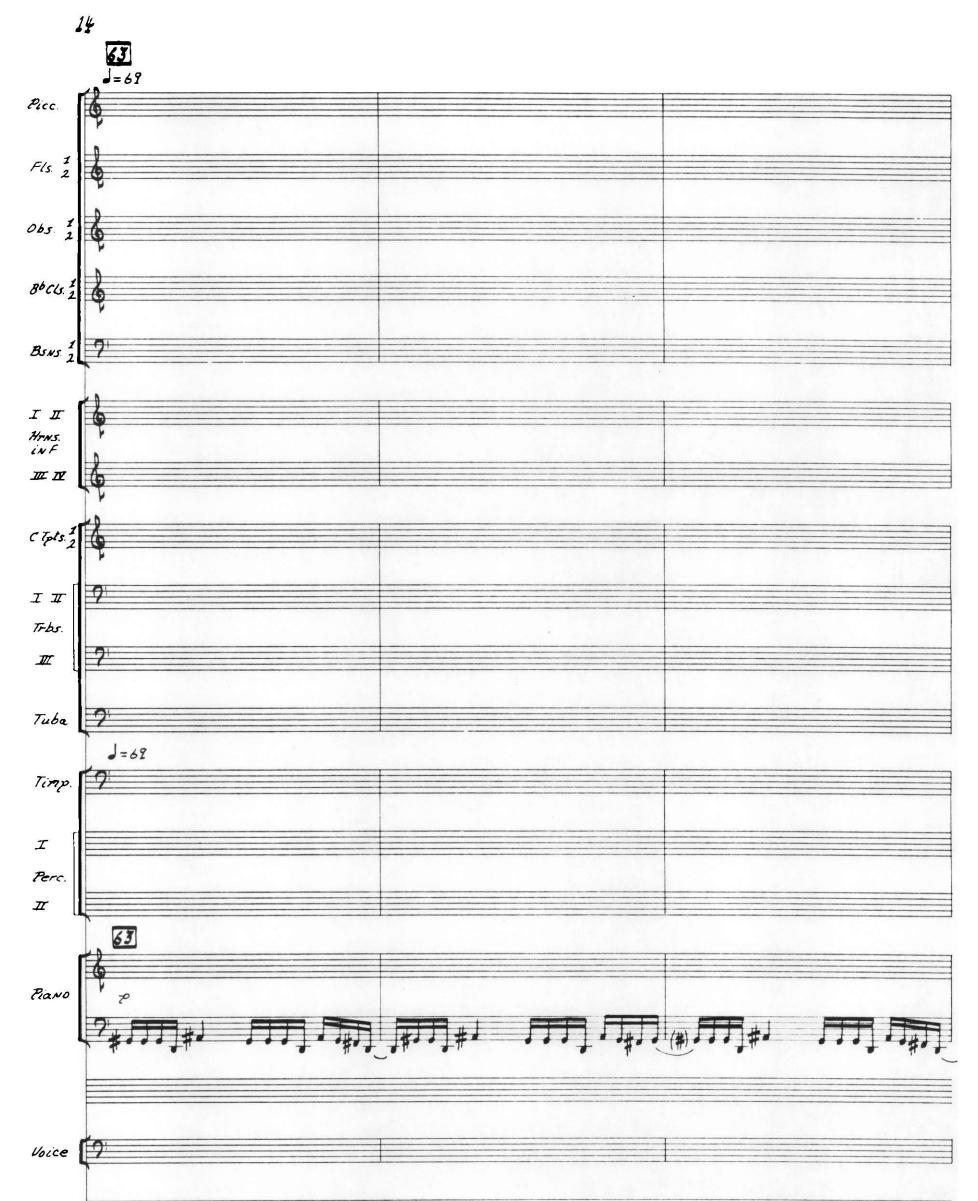








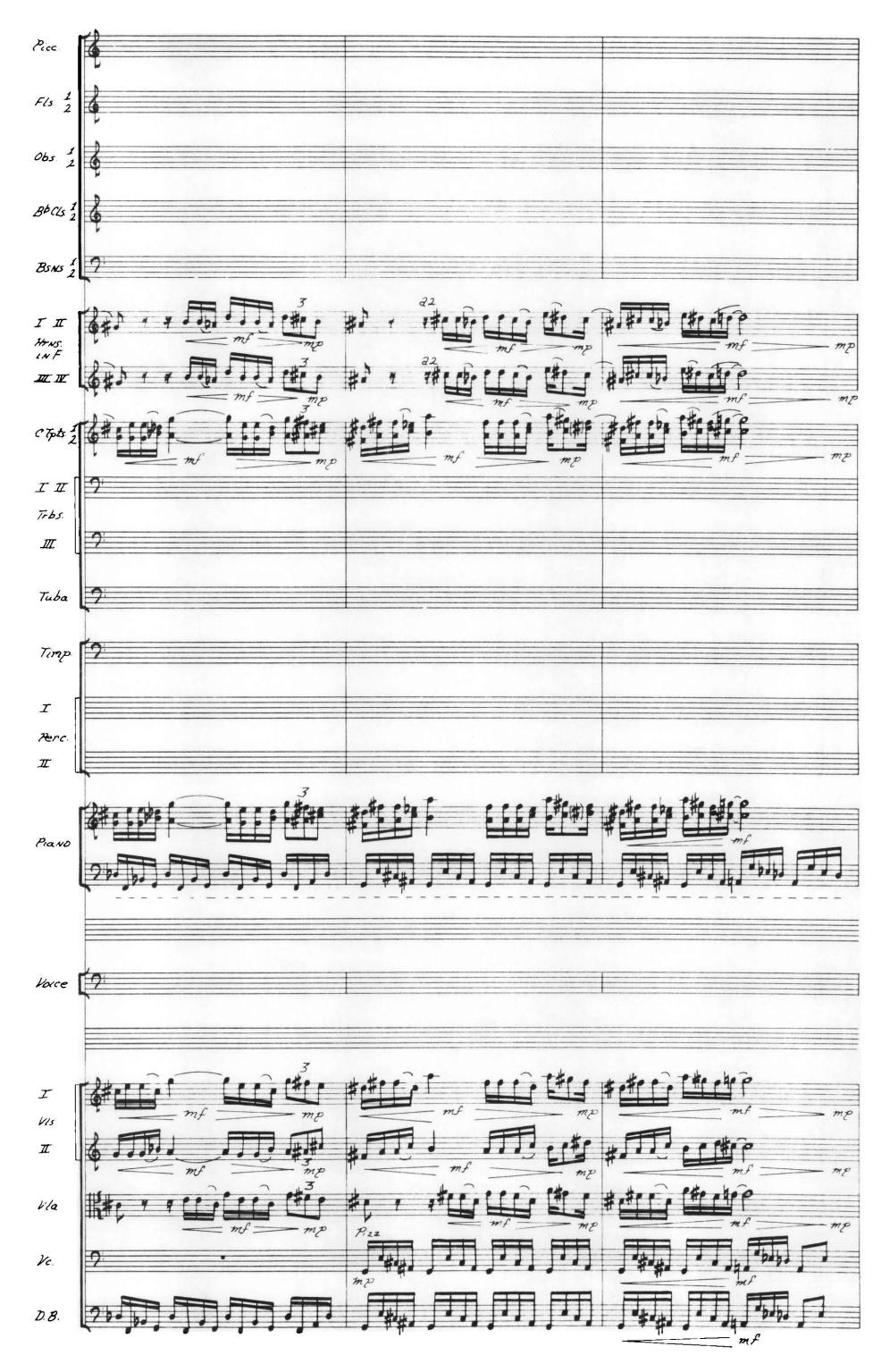






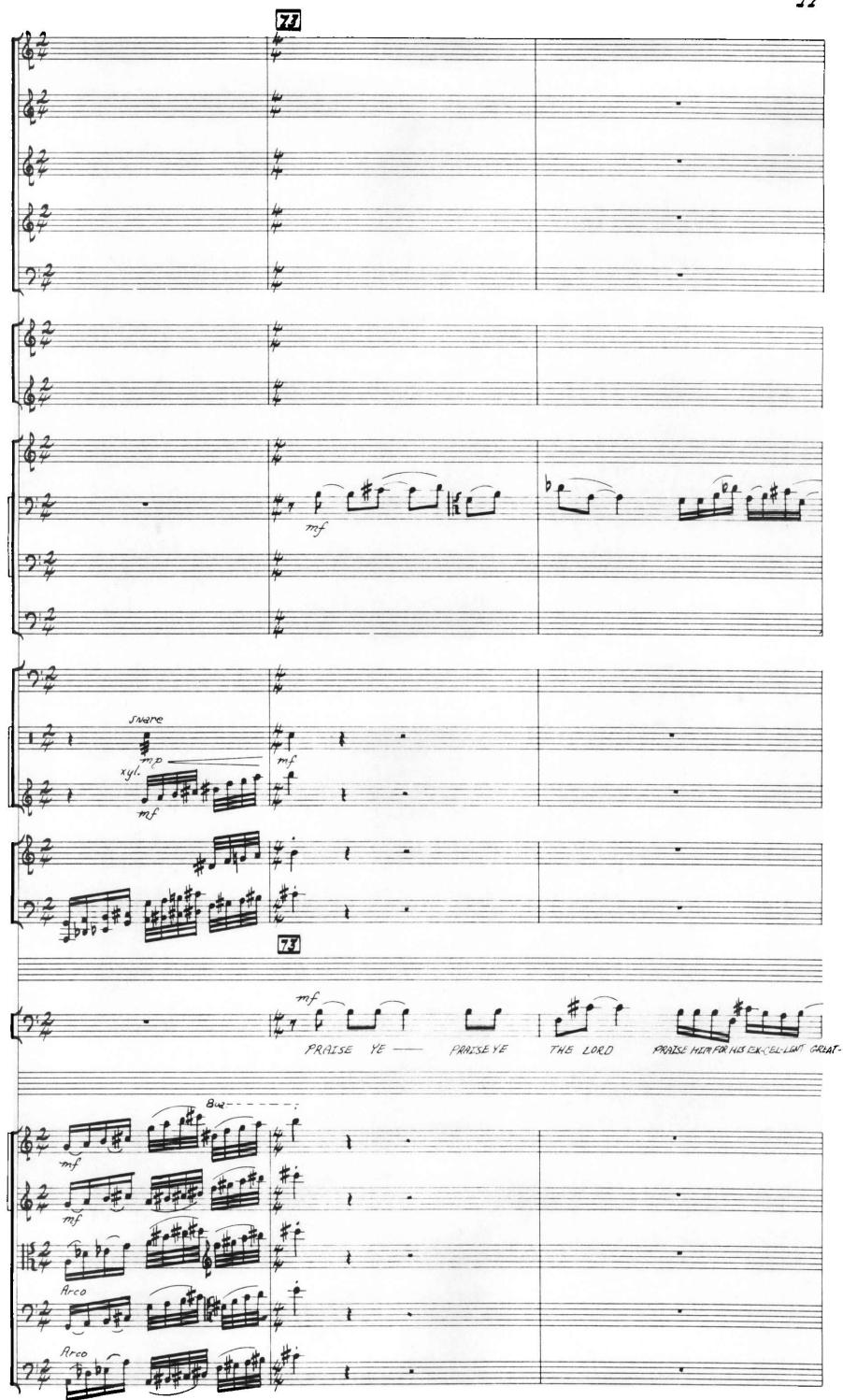
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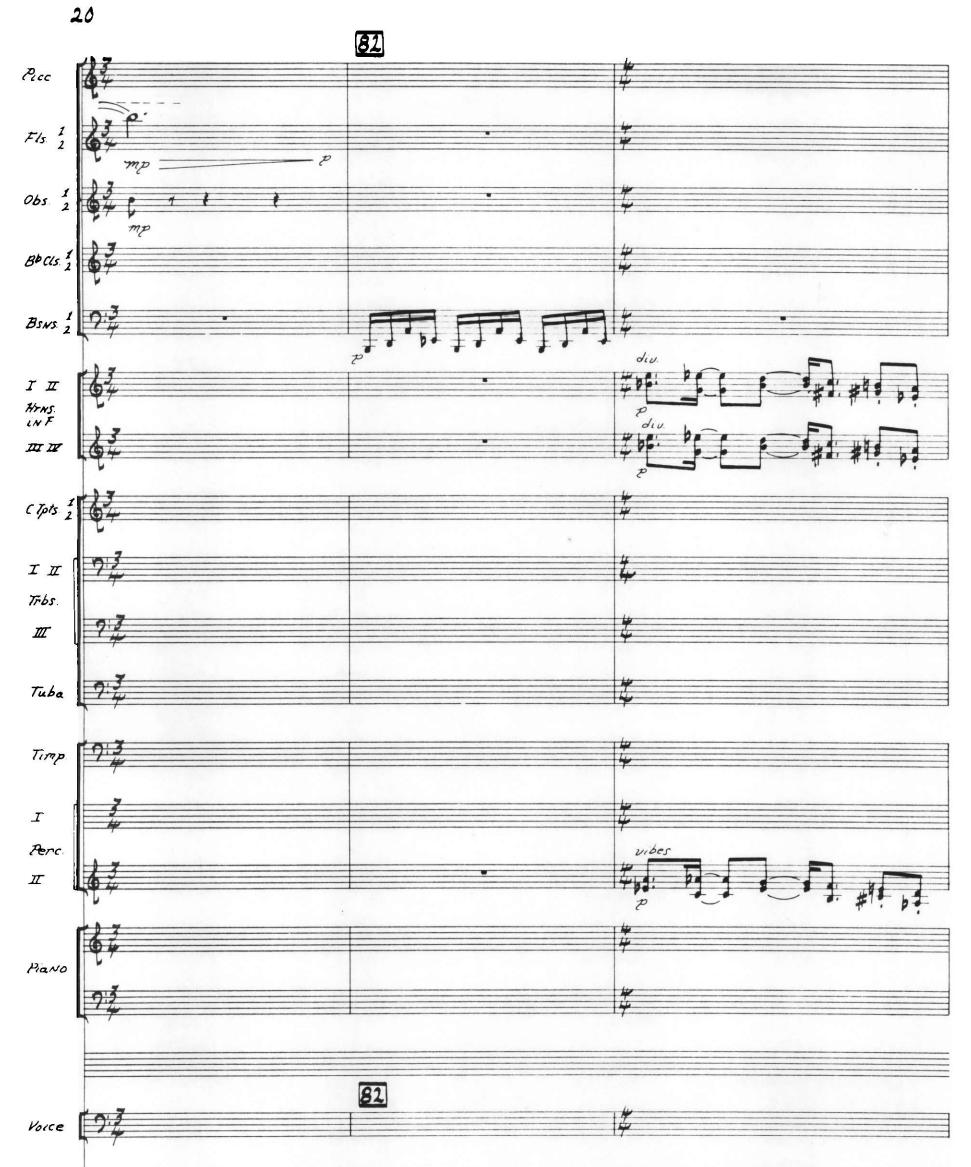
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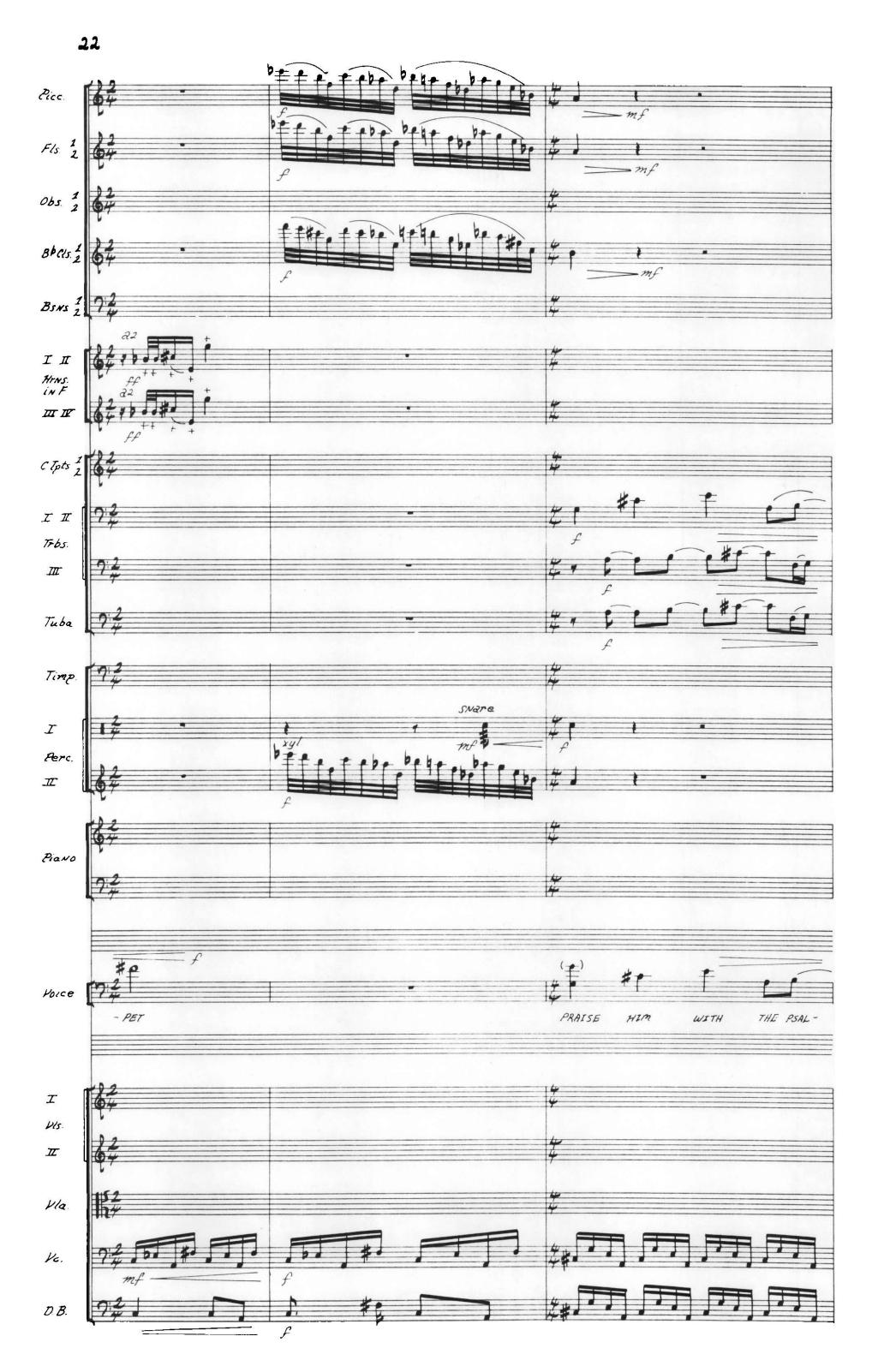
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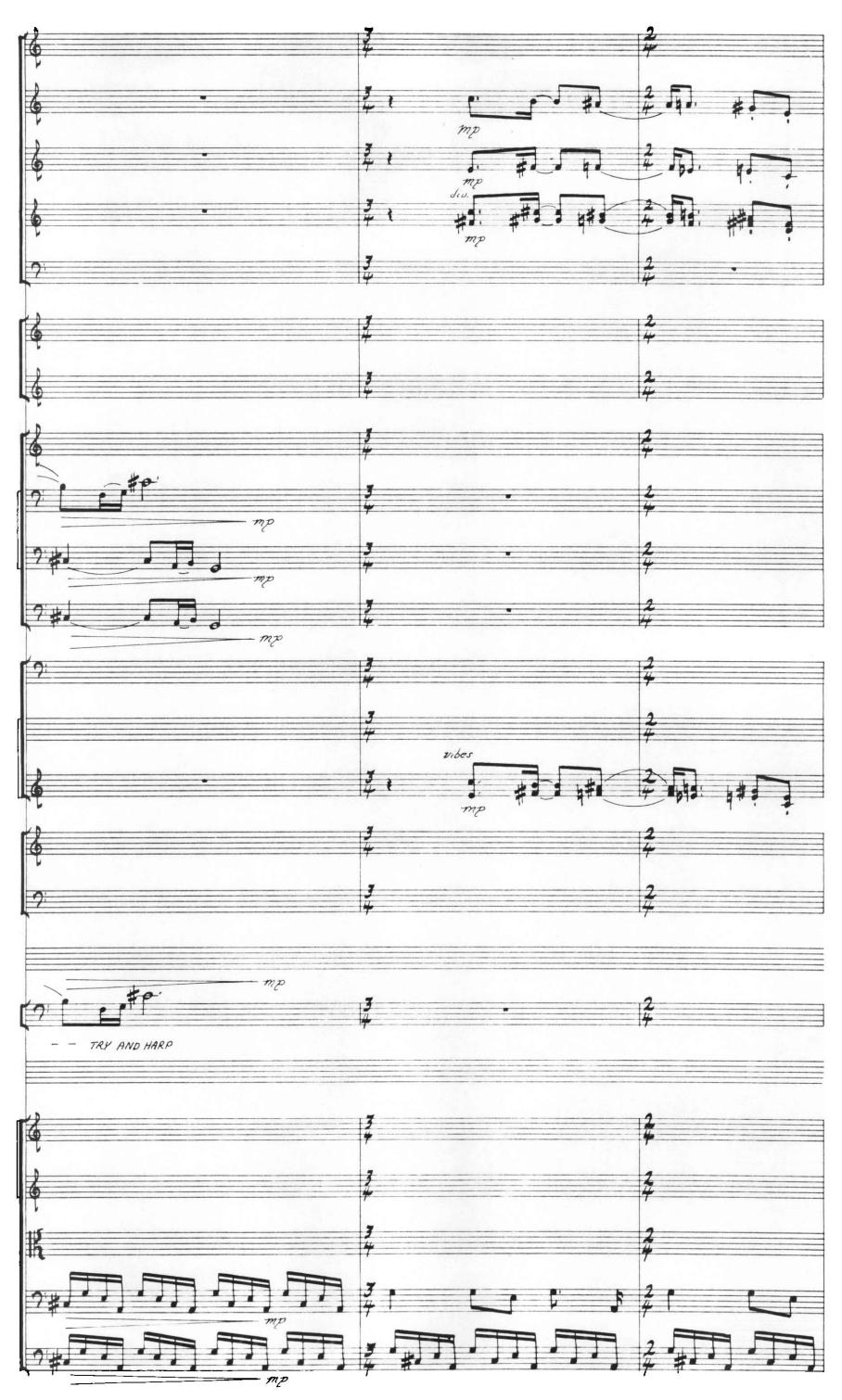
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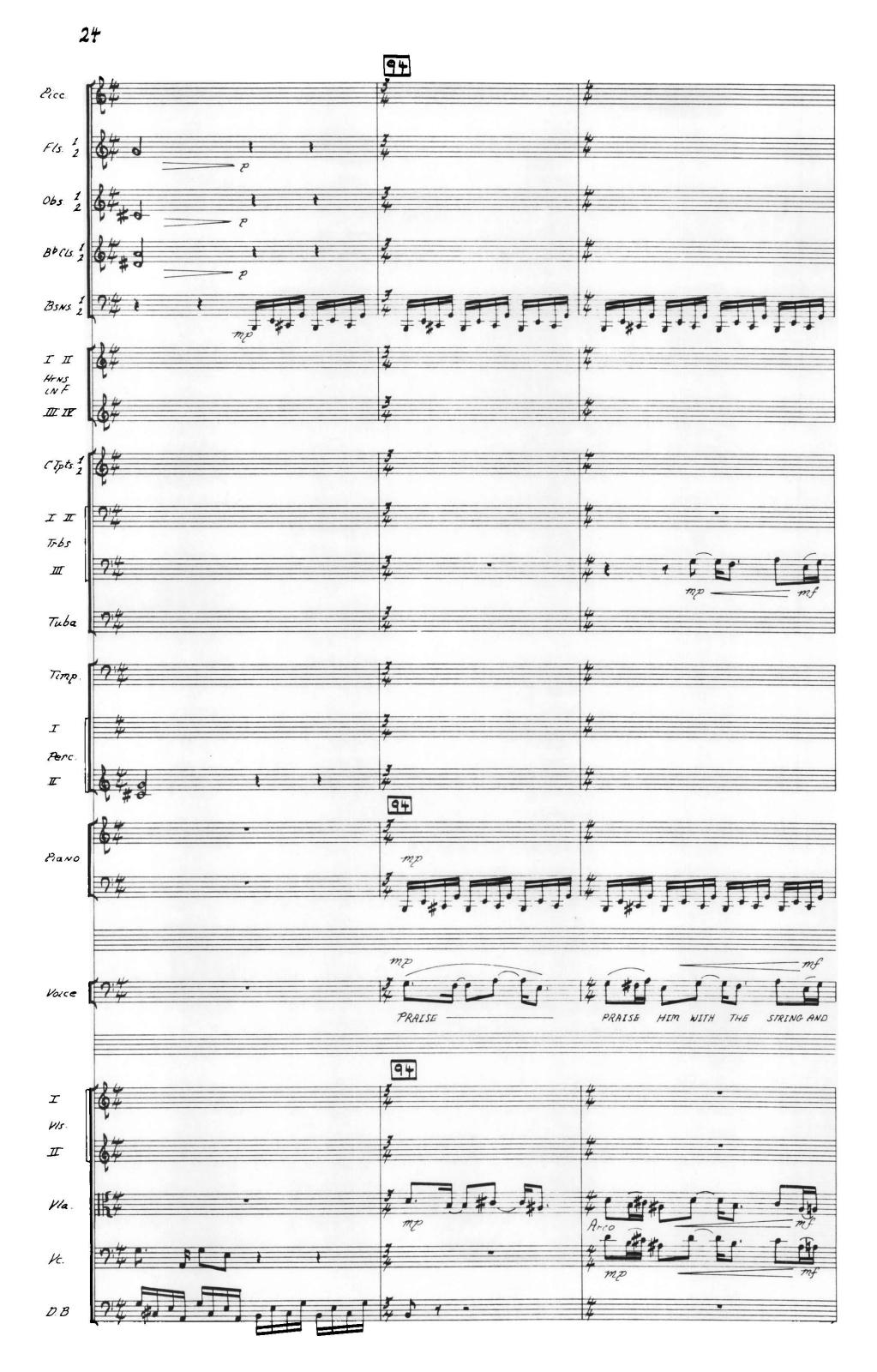




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