ALEC WILDER'S MUSIC FOR MARIMBA: A PERFORMANCE PRACTICE GUIDE, A LECTURE RECITAL, TOGETHER WITH THREE RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS BY G. STOUT, N. ZIVKOVIC, D. ERB, W. KRAFT, K. ABE, W. PENN AND OTHERS

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ALEC WILDER'S MUSIC FOR MARIMBA: A PERFORMANCE PRACTICE GUIDE, A LECTURE RECITAL, TOGETHER WITH THREE RECITALS OF SELECTED WORKS BY G. STOUT, N. ZIVKOVIC, D. ERB, W.KRAFT, K. ABE, W. PENN AND OTHERS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of the North Texas in Partial
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For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS

By

Michael Van Waldrop, B. Mus, M.A.

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Waldrop, Michael Van, Alec Wilder's Music for Marimba: A Performance Practice Guide, A Lecture Recital, Together with Three Recitals of Selected Works by G. Stout, N. Zivkovic, D. Erb, W. Kraft, K. Abe, W. Penn and Others. Doctor of Musical Arts (Performance), May 1999, 241 pp., 159 musical examples, references, 25 titles.

The intent of this dissertation is to provide a reference guide for any prospective performer of Alec Wilder's four works for marimba: *Suite for Solo Guitar (1976), Suite for Trumpet and Marimba (1977), Suite for Flute and Marimba (1977),* and *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet (1977).* The first part of the dissertation provides background information pertaining to Wilder himself, the works for marimba, and theoretical aspects of Wilder's music. The second part addresses specific performance problems contained in the music. The dissertation culminates with the presentation of a performance edition of the marimba part of the previously unedited Sextet.

This dissertation will facilitate and enhance future performances of these works. It is hoped that this document will serve to help perpetuate and sustain interest in these important compositions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author would like to thank the following people, without whose assistance the completion of this document would have been impossible: Gordon Stout, for his answers to many questions about the music and the history of the works, Dr. Deanna Bush, for her assistance with the manuscript, Jane Beasley, for her assistance with the manuscript, Dr. Graham Phipps, for his assistance in theoretical analysis of Wilder's music, Margun Music for providing an original score of the sextet, and Dr. Robert Schietroma for his general assistance with the dissertation.

Tape Recordings of all performances submitted as dissertation requirements are on deposit in the University of North Texas Library.

PREFACE

Alec Wilder (1907-80) was a major figure in twentieth-century American music, first as a composer/arranger of popular music and later as a composer of concert music. He was regarded as somewhat of an eccentric by the serious music establishment and has only in the past twenty years received the recognition he deserves. He was a staunch opponent of atonalism, yet his music is highly complex and distinctly modern sounding. He is distinctive in that he is perhaps the only composer to so seamlessly meld the disparate worlds of American popular music with the European classical music tradition. Other 20th century composers (Stravinsky, Milhaud, et al) also incorporated jazz elements into their music, but none with such a profound understanding and respect for the music as Alec Wilder. He regarded the jazz improviser as the great musical phenomenon of the 20th century and was on intimate terms with many of the major jazz figures of the time.[1] This melding of musical styles served to create a unique and vital musical voice in the 20th century; one that stood in contrast to the prevailing atonalistic trends. Wilder's music is in certain ways a kind of refutation of the serialist's belief that dodecaphonic music was the only logical extension of romantic music. He wrote nary a note of atonal music, yet his musical style is as distinctively modern as anything Arnold Schoenberg ever wrote.

Wilder wrote three chamber music pieces for the marimba with other instruments in the 1970's, they are: *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, *Suite for Flute and Marimba*,

and *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet.* Prior to the composition of these works, Wilder's *Suite for Solo Guitar* was transcribed for the marimba by Gordon Stout. Stout's performance of the transcription was essentially Wilder's introduction to the marimba as a solo instrument.[2] Wilder, apparently enthralled by the instrument and Stout's transcription, subsequently composed the three chamber pieces featuring marimba in the next few years. These works are an invaluable part of the marimbist's repertoire, compositions by a composer at the height of his maturity and possessed of one of the most distinctive voices of the 20th century. This paper presents: a cursory biography of Mr. Wilder, a contextual background of the pieces themselves, a cursory analysis of the theoretical/compositional approach Wilder uses in these pieces and concludes with an examination of some of the more salient performance problems marimbists confront in successfully executing these chamber works.

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[1] Whitney Balliet. *Alec Wilder and His Friends,* (Boston, 1974), p. 203
[2] Alec Wilder. *Alec Wilder's Music for Marimba with Other Instruments,* (Huntington Station, NY) Golden Crest Records-CRS-4190. From the liner notes.

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University of North Texas

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A Graduate Recital

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assisted by

Marc White, *percussion* • Larry Jones, *trumpet*

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Four Movements for Marimba . . . . . Michael Burritt
1. *Improvisation*
2. *Perpetual*
3. *Ethereal*
4. *Mécanique*

Variations for King George . . . . . William Kraft

Suite for Trumpet and Marimba . . . . . Alec Wilder

Correspondances für zwei Schlagzeuger . . . . . Martin Redel

Two Mexican Dances . . . . . Gordon Stout
II. Allegro

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Eugenio Righi, *flute*

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from *Four Preludes, Nos. 1 and 2* . . . . . William Penn

Dream of the Cherry Blossoms . . . . . Keiko Abe

Theme and Variations for Four Timpani . . . . . John Floyd

Suite for Flute and Marimba . . . . . Alec Wilder

1. ♩. = 69-72
2. 𝅗𝅥 = 120
3. ♩. = 66-80
4. ♩ = 72-80
5. *Berceuse*
6. *Lively* ♩ = 132-144

Generally Spoken It's Nothing But Rhythm . . . . . Nebojsa Jovan Zivkovic

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MICHAEL VAN WALDROP, *percussion*

accompanied by

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Pezzo Da Concerto No. 1 . . . . . Nebojsa Zivkovic

Suite for Solo Guitar . . . . . Alec Wilder
trans. Stout

I. Expressively, with warmth
II. Slowly, Rubato
III. With vigor
IV. With abandon

Looking Back . . . . . David Friedman

Duo (Dance-Song) 1977 . . . . . Gordon Stout

Diversions for Two . . . . . Donald Erb

I. Allegro moderato
II. Adagio
III. Moderato

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MICHAEL VAN WALDROP, *percussion*

assisted by

Amy Goss, *flute* • Tracey Jones, *oboe*
Cindy Wolverton, *clarinet* • Melissa Peterson, *French horn*
Holly Holm, *bassoon*

Monday, April 26, 1999 5:00 pm Concert Hall

ALEC WILDER'S MUSIC FOR MARIMBA: A PERFORMANCE PRACTICE GUIDE

Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet . . . . . Alec Wilder (1907-1980)

I. ♩= *96 or faster*
II. ♩= *63 dolce*
III. ♩= *96 jazz style*
IV. ♩= *60*
V. ♩= *64*

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts

The Steinway piano is the instrument of choice for College of Music concerts.

LIST OF EXAMPLES

Abbreviations: *Suite for Solo Guitar*-SSG, *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*-STM, *Suite for Flute and Marimba*-SFM, *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*-Sextet

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CHAPTER 1

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Alexander Lafayette Chew Wilder was born in Rochester, New York on Feb. 16th, 1907 into a wealthy banking family. His family's wealth was to have a beneficent influence on Wilder's development as an artist, allowing him a certain freedom of expression in music not permissible to those musicians who must constrain their creative impulses to cater to the marketplace in order to make a living. This is not to say that Wilder was unable to make a living in music; to the contrary, he was at times very successful in terms of selling his compositions. Yet his wealth permitted him the luxury of not being constantly beholden to the marketplace, particularly in his earlier more developmental years.

His early home life was not particularly happy due to his mother's alcoholic tendencies and his father's untimely death. These two circumstances necessitated that young Alec be educated at a boarding school, where he apparently suffered greatly at the hand of the resident bullies.[1] This somewhat traumatic experience probably helped foster the introspective and artistic personality that Wilder developed later in life. He received no substantive formal musical education in early life but did exhibit some musical ability. He was most interested in the popular music of the day: show tunes, ragtime and dixieland. He even performed with some black musicians in a dixieland band at a summer resort playing piano and banjo.[2] A family visit to Venice in 1924 seems to have

been the impetus to Alec's ambitions to become a composer. The rich musical culture of that city seems to have been inspirational to him. Consequently, in 1926, Wilder sought instruction in composition and counterpoint with Edward Royce and Herbert Inch who were professors at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester. He never actually enrolled in the school, preferring instead to study privately. Wilder nonetheless became a familiar figure at Eastman and was able to find performers and advocates of his music. His first compositions were popular and art songs and, although his oeuvre soon expanded to all the mediums common to the era, the concept of the song and the inherently melodic and lyrical approach Wilder took towards it pervades all his music. The concept of lyricism and the search for new and endless melodic material was really his lifelong quest. While he was still studying at Eastman he was also making inroads into the songwriting business in New York. He was able to get one of his songs placed in the musical revues common on Broadway at the time. Revues were basically collages of songs by different composers. This particular revue was distinguished by the presence of Green's *Body and Soul* which has become one of the great jazz standards and points to the fact that early on Alec was able to achieve success as a composer of popular songs[3]. Wilder's tenure at Eastman ended in 1933 and he proceeded directly to New York City to work in the commercial music business as a songwriter and arranger.

One of his first high profile assignments was as a staff arranger for a CBS radio show. Meanwhile he continued to pursue songwriting with some success, placing a few songs in new shows. At Eastman, Wilder had forged a friendship with oboist Mitch Miller (later of "sing along with Mitch" fame). Miller strongly encouraged Wilder to

continue his pursuit of more serious musical composition. This encouragement resulted in the composition of a series of pieces called the Octets (1938-41), which used the instrumentation of wind quintet with a jazz rhythm section consisting of bass, drums and an atypical usage of harpsichord. These compositions helped instigate the development of a kind of jazz chamber music which came to be known as "Third Stream Music." The Octets later came to the attention of singing star Frank Sinatra who was enthralled by them and organized and conducted a 1945 recording session that resulted in an album of Wilder's concert music entitled *Frank Sinatra Conducts the Music of Alec Wilder.* Sinatra had become aware of Wilder through his popular songs, many of which Sinatra eventually sang and recorded.[4] It was during this period that Wilder achieved his greatest successes as a pop songwriter with the release of recordings of three tunes which became hits for him. They were *It's So Peaceful in the Country* ('41), *I'll Be Around* ('42), and *While We're Young* ('43). The lyrics for *I'll Be Around* were written by Wilder himself, whereas the other two songs had lyrics by Bill Engvick, a longtime collaborator. Eventually, the Sinatra album precipitated a gradual move towards concert music in terms of Wilder's musical focus. Wilder continued to write popular songs, however, until the end of his life.

The period between 1945 and 1952 saw an increase in Wilder's output of concert music. During this time he wrote orchestral music, chamber music for ballet, operas, and music for film. He also continued to write for the musical theater and developed a particular flair for composing children's music. Major works of the period are: *Piece for Orchestra* ('48), and the operas *The Impossible Forest* ('49) and *Kittiwake Island* ('53).

In 1948 Wilder auspiciously met composer/French hornist Gunther Schuller, who proved to be a very important colleague. Schuller, whose musical interests also embraced jazz and other popular genres, promoted his music and eventually agreed to publish and edit Wilder's music through his publishing company, Margun Music.[5]

The period from 1953-63 was one of great productivity for Wilder wherein he spent much of his time in Stony Point, NY. He continued, however, to indulge himself with seemingly whimsical train trips to various parts of the United States and in general led an increasingly nomadic lifestyle traveling just about anywhere at a moment's notice. He was noted for never having any more possessions than could be fitted in two suitcases with the result that he never kept any of his scores, preferring to give them to the performers for whom they were written. Despite these eccentricities, Wilder was always productive; he wrote a prodigious amount of music in his lifetime,especially in this period. Some of the more notable compositions were: the opera *Ellen*, a series of short musicals for the CBS Omnibus TV show, *A Child's Introduction to the Orchestra,* and a group of woodwind quintets, a genre that brought him some renown. As the rock era of popular music moved in, Wilder gradually moved away from pop music and focused increasingly on serious music. Wilder, justifiably or not, considered most rock music inferior in musical quality to the kind of popular music that had occupied his interests at the outset of his career.

The last sixteen years of Wilder's life saw him achieve greater recognition as a serious composer. However, the greatest achievement in his career in the public eye was the publication of *American Popular Song: The Great Innovators*, which won a National

Book Award and was widely regarded as an instant classic. In this work Wilder presents an exhaustive analytical and musicological study of the development of the American pop song from 1900-50 in which 560 songs were singled out for examination. The book was and is invaluable as an in-depth examination of one of the great style periods in music that has been largely ignored by serious musicologists. He published another book in 1976 entitled *Letters I Never Mailed,* which was comprised of unmailed letters addressed to various figures in his life, some obscure, others famous. The letters give insight into his life, character, and most importantly his views about music. Yet their publication seems oddly out of character for Wilder, who "assiduously avoided the limelight" during his life.[6] In addition to these literary endeavors Wilder still found time to write copious amounts of music, some of his best music in fact, which included the music he wrote for the marimba. During this period Wilder wrote a number of concertos for various instruments including a saxophone concerto for jazz sāxophonist Stan Getz which was performed and recorded by the Boston Pops. Other prominent works of the period were: *Suite for Piano*, *Fantasy for Piano and Wind Ensemble*, a church cantata called *Mountain Boy*, and an opera entitled *The Truth About Windmills*, the *Children's Plea for Peace* and a collection of children's songs called *Lullabies and Night Songs*. He continued to rail against the rock movement, most conspicuously in a *New York Times* article entitled "Rock - Mass Hysteria or Mass Art?". In this article he lambastes rock artists and praises the jazz education movement, making note of the successful jazz program at the University of North Texas as being an excellent example of the direction contemporary music education should be taking.

Alec Wilder died in Gainesville, FL on Christmas Eve in 1980. He left a rich legacy of music, writings and friends who have succeeded in keeping his music and memory alive. His was a free spirit who experienced most of the 20th century, rode the tides of massive changes that enveloped the era, and eventually produced a very personal and thoughtful body of musical work which serves as an exemplar of American music of the time. Musician David Demsey wrote this about Wilder's work: it is "distinctively American, uncompromisingly original, yes, but truly reflective of our innermost wellspring".[7]

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[1] David Demsey and Ron Prather. *Alec Wilder a Bio-Bibliography,* (London, 1993) p. 3.
[2] Ibid., p. 5.
[3] Desmond Stone. *Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself (A Life of the Composer),* New York: Oxford University Press pp. 178-187
[4] Sinatra recorded *I'll Be Around* on the album *The Wee Small Hours of the Morning* Capitol Records, Feb. 8, 1955, he also recorded *Where Do You Go?* on the album *No One Cares* also on Capitol, and *Where is the One?* is on the album *Where Are You?.*
[5] Demsey and Prather. *Wilder a Bio-Bibliography,* p. 3.
[6] Balliet. *Wilder and Friends,* p. 180.
[7] Demsey and Prather. *Wilder Bio-Bibliography,* p. 21.

CHAPTER II

WORKS FOR MARIMBA

The first of the four works for marimba was actually composed for the guitar in 1968 and entitled simply *Suite for Solo Guitar*. The guitarist for whom the work was written apparently found the work unplayable. The work languished in obscurity until trumpeter Robert Levy, a long-time devotee and advocate of Wilder's music, suggested to his colleague and friend, marimbist Gordon Stout, that he transcribe the work for marimba. Stout found the work to be "perfectly suited to the marimba" and a performance was arranged for Wilder at a private home in Maryland in 1976.[1] Wilder was impressed with the performance and intrigued with the possibilities of the marimba as a solo instrument. He was reported to have said of the piece: "It's the first time I've learned how to write for one instrument, by learning how not to write for another".[2] Wilder's introduction to Stout's transcription marimba apparently was the impetus for the composition of the three chamber works for marimba with other instruments during the next two years.

According to Stout, Wilder did not consult with him about idiomatic aspects of marimba performance: "We never discussed techniques or grips, or rolls, etc."[3] Stout believes that Wilder had a working knowledge of the capabilities of the instrument as a result of hearing his performances. Yet Wilder sometimes writes below the range of the instruments of the period which only went as low as an A below middle C.

Stout also states that as far as he knows there was never any programmatic intent in any of the works for marimba. This is belied somewhat by Wilder's music which is very lyrical and induces many images in the minds of most listeners. It is more likely that the music is unintentionally programmatic; that certain aspects of Wilder's human or personal experience come through without premeditation. Stout does say this about Wilder's music: "It is music that has lots of emotion to it, without necessarily being about emotion. I believe that Alec wrote music with great emotion, but not about it."[4]

The first of the chamber pieces to be written was *the Suite for Trumpet and Marimba* in 1977. It was written for Robert Levy and Gordon Stout during the Tidewater Music Festival in Maryland. It was first performed by Levy and Stout at Virginia Commonwealth University in April of 1978. This composition was followed closely by the *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, also written in 1977 and actually performed prior to the first performance of the Trumpet and Marimba suite on February 23, 1978. The last of the marimba pieces to be written was the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, which also dates from 1977.[5]

A chronological examination of the three chamber works in sequence reveals an evolution in Wilder's style of writing for the marimba. The trumpet suite is less idiomatic to the marimba than the flute suite; it is full of technically demanding and somewhat awkward passages. Stout says that it is "more about the music than the marimba".[6] The flute suite on the other hand is, for the most part, very idiomatic to the marimba and offers proof that Wilder's facility for marimba writing improved as he gained experience in writing for the instrument through repetition; he was learning by

trial and error. His improved skill in writing for the marimba is also evident in the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* with the exception of movements III and V which exhibit a return to some of the less idiomatic writing of the trumpet suite. Even more pronounced than Wilder's development as an idiomatic composer for the marimba is his increased awareness of the timbral possibilities of the marimba, especially in regard to its combination with other instruments. This development reaches fruition in the sextet. In this work Wilder exhibits a profound understanding of how certain ranges of the marimba effectively combine with various wind instruments to create new and interesting sounds. Indeed, in certain passages of the sextet the marimba is blended so well with the wind instruments that it sounds as if it were another wind instrument. Herein lies the greatest strength of these works: Wilder explores like few other composers the lyrical and song-like possibilities of the marimba as well as its special qualities, to produce a unique work for percussion. In order to perform these pieces successfully, the marimbist must "breathe" with the other instruments, and listen intently to the timbral shades created by the marimba in combination with the various wind instruments.[7]

According to Stout the sextet is the "culmination" of Wilder's compositions for marimba; the greatest of the three works.[8] The flute suite has proven over time to be the most popular of the three works.[9] Perhaps this is attributable to the difficulty of assembling and rehearsing the wind quintet. However there is some justification for the contention that the *Suite for Flute and Marimba* is the greatest of the works because it is the most idiomatic in terms of the marimba part and the undeniable beauty of the music. Of course any such judgements on any work of art's relative worth to another is entirely

subjective. The duo with trumpet apparently has received the fewest performances.[10] This may be attributable to the extreme difficulty of the trumpet part as well as the difficulty of the marimba part. Despite the technical difficulties this work still contains some superb music, especially in movements IV and V.

In the late '60s and through the '70s most of Wilder's musical attention was focused on concert music, most conceived for various types of chamber music. For many young musicians he was an inspiring figure. He encouraged many serious young musicians in this era of turbulence and in turn was inspired by these young musicians to produce what are unquestionably some of his greatest works.[11] It is ironic that one of Wilder's most inspired and productive periods was influenced by the burgeoning youth culture whose rock music and rebelliousness he so disdained. The works from this era are significant music in that they provide a musical view and perspective that encompasses the entirety of a life. His musical mind and general intellect were still very acute, as witnessed by his success with the book *American Popular Song*. Music from a composer possessed of such insight supported by wisdom gained through a lifetime of rich personal and musical experience is of incalculable value. The imagery that the music froms this period brings to the mind is powerful. Arnold Sundgaard, who was Wilder's librettist and lyricist on numerous projects, has compared the many facets of Wilder's mature personality to the "annular rings of a rugged tree trunk".[12] This metaphor is applicable to Wilder's musical personality because similarly to the growth of a tree the inner rings of youth remain and grow concurrently with the outer rings brought by age. In this music, the presence of the present is as palpable as the presence of the

past. The works for marimba are from this late period in Wilder's compositional output and they provide the listener and performer a musical view from an expansive perspective.

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[1] Wilder *Music for Marimba* Golden Crest (liner notes)
[2] Ibid.
[3] Mr. Stout's response to a questionnaire from the author.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Wilder. *Music for Marimba.* Liner notes.
[6] Stout questionnaire.
[7] Stout also addresses the issue of timbral combinations in the questionnaire.
[8] Wilder. *Music for Marimba* Liner notes.
[9] Demsey and Prather. *A Bio-bibliography*
[10] Ibid.
[11] Desmond Stone. *Alec Wilder in Spite of Himself (A Life of the Composer)*, New York: Oxford University Press pp. 178-187.
[12] Ibid. p. 4.

CHAPTER III

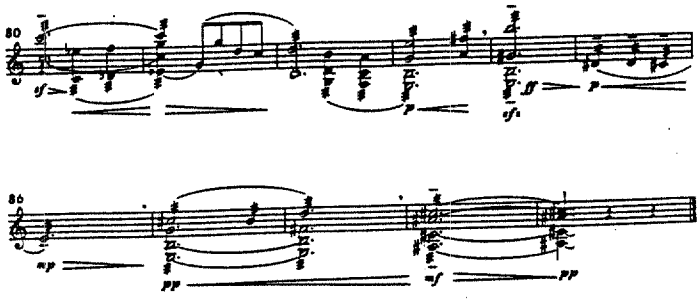
THEORETICAL AND FORMAL ASPECTS OF WILDER'S MUSIC

In discussing Wilder 's compositional and theoretical approach to music it is worthwhile to examine what he himself says about the subject:

"I work almost wholly intuitively. I have a few little technical things I use, but I believe that technique is a composer's secret; any composer who talks about technique is simply offering a substitute for content. I have an innate sense of order, balance, and shape. I know most of the rules of counterpoint although I never studied theory. When I start a piece, I try and find a melodic idea that I consider seminal, that I think will hold up. Then I find secondary themes as I move along. I work at the piano more often than not."[1]

Although Wilder's music is tonal it is far from simplistic or conventional. It often exhibits a type of chromatic inflection which jazz theorists refer to as modal interchange. In modal interchange the tonality of a certain passage will be held while the mode constructed on the tonality will fluctuate. Wilder's music makes pervasive use of this technique in the compositions discussed in this study. Example 1 illustrates modal interchange as found in Movement II of the *Suite for Solo Guitar*:

Ex. 1 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. II, ms. 80-90

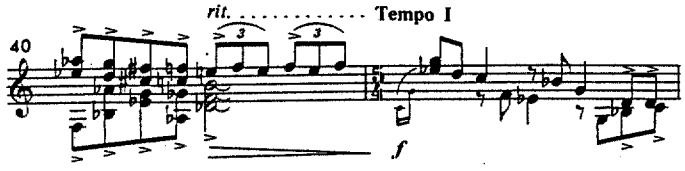


The excerpt shows the final eleven measures of the movement. The homophonic texture of the movement affords excellent opportunities to understand Wilder's approach to harmonic motion in a distilled setting. The harmonies in this passage are decorated with chromatic notes that suggest changing modal characterisitics. The modal interchange begins in ms. 82 with G and F triads descending to the E minor chord in a kind of phrygian cadence. At this point the piece appears to be in E phrygian. However the very next chord on beat 3 of ms. 83 is an E suspended chord with an added ninth(F#). The F# in this context indicates either E dorian or aeolian. Yet the next chord cadences decisively on an E major chord, indicating another modal interchange to E ionian or mixolydian. Measures 85 to the end must be viewed with the ending F# major chord in mind. In measure 85 Wilder is suggesting the F# key with the introduction of the D# and the C#[2] He however quickly goes back to an E dorian base with the Emin6th chord in the next measure. The next measure has an E9th chord with no third. The E9th chord resolves unexpectedly but inevitably to an F# major triad. The resolution is not <u>modal interchange</u> but is instead a modal cadence akin to a minor V chord resolving to a major I, also known as a cadential dominant minor.

The concept of dominant seventh chord tritone substitution is another aspect of jazz harmonic practice used constantly by Wilder. The concept is one in which the shared tritones of two dominant seventh chords a tritone apart make these chords interchangeable. This gives the composer the option of pivoting twice as many ways from a given dominant seventh chord when its related tritone substitute is taken into account. Consider the possibilities of the G7th and Db7th taken together. The G7th chord by itself could proceed to one of six basic choices in conventional harmony, C, A min, Ab, E, Eb or F in first inversion.while the Db7th chord could move to Gb, Eb min, D maj, Bb, A or Cb in first inversion. So now, instead of six possible resolutions for the dominant 7th chord, the composer may choose from twelve. The most common application of this principle has the dominant 7th chord resolving down a half step. Wilder makes copious use of the dominant seventh chord tritone substitution principle throughout the works for marimba.

Examine here measures 40 and 41 taken from the fourth movement of the Suite *for Solo Guitar:*

Ex. 2 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. IV, ms. 40-41

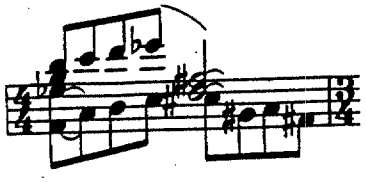


Measure 40 presents a cycle of dominant seventh (add13) chords leading to a Db7#9 chord on beat three that very clearly resolves to a C minor chord on beat 1 of measure 41.

The resolution of the Db7#9 chord down to the C minor chord is a classic tritone substitution.

In the second movement of the guitar suite Wilder employs another deceptive resolution of a dominant seventh chord down to another seventh chord a minor third below. The concept is based on using an expected bass note resolution, in this case a first inversion I chord, but changing the chord quality of the chord of resolution. In C, for example, a G7 (F in the bass) resolves to an Emaj7th chord. Another example would be a G7 progressing to an E triad with G# in the bass then proceeding eventually on to A minor.[3] In this example from the second movement of the *Suite for Solo Guitar* an arpeggiated F13(#11) chord resolves to an arpeggiated D maj 7th chord:

Ex.3 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. II, ms. 4



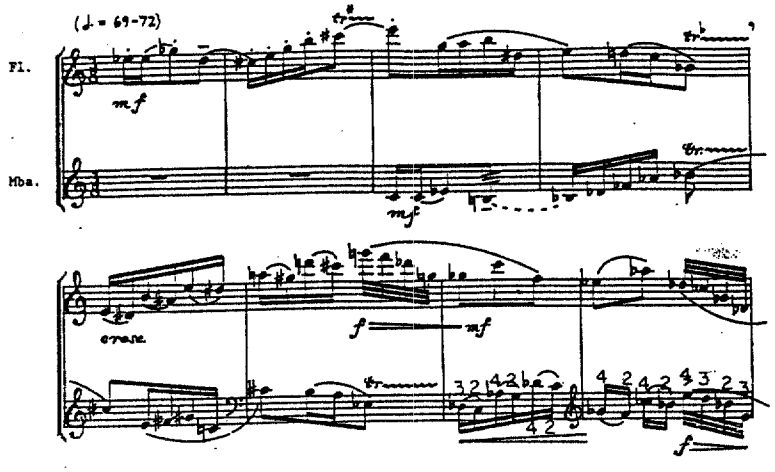
F13(#11) Dmaj7

Similar to this is the resolution of a dominant 7th down a major third , which is justifiable when viewed as an instantaneous modal interchange. For example, a G7th chord could progress to an Eb chord if viewed as an elided cadence in C minor with the Eb considered to be a substitute chord for C minor. The adoption of these advanced harmonic procedures greatly expands the options of any composer working within a tonal

framework. Yet the coherent connection of the more elusive resolutions requires the skilled manipulation of a composer like Wilder who is sensitive to context and (especially in classical music) voice leading.

The focus of Wilder's formal training was in counterpoint and he considered it to be the skeleton or framework of all consequential music.[4] This orientation is strongly reflected in all of the works for marimba. An excellent example of the contrapuntal nature of his music can be observed in the first movement of the *Suite for Flute and Marimba*. This movement is essentially a canon where the first voice is imitated two measures later by the marimba at the interval of a minor tenth below. The motivic material that forms the basis for much of the work is presented in the opening statement of the flute:

Ex. 4 *Suite for Flute and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 1-8



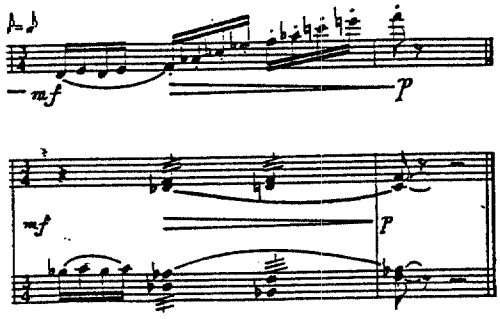
The minor third motive is ever present throughout the movement as is the close position arpeggiation of the half diminished 7th chord in measure two. The canonic texture is interrupted briefly at letter A. There is a partial recapitulation in the fifth measure where the material for the next five measures is an exact replication of the music from measures five to ten of the beginning of the piece. At measure 35 the same material is unexpectedly repeated up a half step, which creates a sense of lift toward the end of the movement. There is a strong half cadence on C at measure 39, which sets up the final four bars that function as a coda of sorts. The overall form of the piece is a ternary design with allusion rather than literal restatements, characteristic of much of Wilder's music.

Although his musical idols from the classical world were Bach, Debussy, Faure and Ravel, Wilder's music more readily recalls the contrapuntal styles of Bartok and Hindemith. Stylistic similarities to Bartok are also suggested by Wilder's frequent use of modes, including the modal mixture. Wilder, again like Bartok was something of an ethnomusicologist with respect to his research into American popular song. Indeed, the strong influence of jazz is perhaps the most distinguishing feature of his music. He made little distinction between his work as a popular songwriter and his "serious" concert music. When asked to compare the two approaches he said: "It's mainly a matter of degree. The seed of a song grows into a small plant with a single flower, but a concert piece has as complex a root system as a tree."[5] Critic Whitney Baillet said of Wilder's music "……Wilder has succeeded where so many have failed- in making jazz and formal music work hand in hand."[6] Therefore there is a kind of naturalness to his music in spite

of its complexity; it is a product of its environment –the natural musical reaction of Alec Wilder to the musical surroundings of his life, those being mainly jazz and pop music. He took these influences and combined them with the skills he acquired at the Eastman School of Music to forge a distinctive style. What is most striking is the often elaborate structural, almost architectural elements that are evident in his music, which were seemingly created through a primarily intuitive approach to composition.

All of the movements of the works for marimba have chordal structures and voicings that are reminiscent of jazz. Example 5 quotes from the close of the first movement of the *Suite for Flute and Marimba.* In this excerpt Wilder uses the progression Db7 to Bb7(9,#11) to F min:

Ex. 5 *Suite for Flute and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 42-43



The upper extensions of C and E in the flute give the illusion that this is a kind of dominant-tonic motion. In fact it is a progression typically found in blues. In this instance the IV dominant 7th chord is given the 9th and #11 extensions so that when it moves in retrogression back to the I chord it has a stronger pull back to the I chord .

Again such instances of jazz harmonic usage are pervasive throughout the works for marimba.

The following is a summary of the characteristics of Alec Wilder's theoretical and formal approach to music: At its basis the music comes from a strong natural feeling for harmonic motion as it is practiced in the European common practice tradition. It is also strongly influenced by the harmonic practice of American popular song (before 1950) and jazz. In its melodic and harmonic content the music makes pervasive use of modes and the jazz theoretical concept of modal interchange. Wilder's approach to form was fluid and strict adherence to preset forms is not characteristic of his music. Wilder's approach to form will be discussed in greater detail in Part II of the dissertation, focusing on specific movements. The most distinctive characteristic of Wilder's music is its contrapuntal basis. Wilder forged a unique compositional style based on the fusion of traditional contrapuntal techniques with modern jazz harmonic practice. All of these musical characteristics are exemplified by the four works for marimba.

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[1] Balliet. *Wilder and Friends*. p. 201.
[2] The melodic figuration here is much like the 13th century Landini cadence, a melodic figuration common to another style of modal music.
[3] I learned this technique from private jazz piano lessons with the great jazz pianist Gene Rush, professor emeritus at the University of Memphis.
[4] Stone. *Wilder in Spite of Himself* p. 32.
[5] Baillet. *Wilder and Friends* pp. 185-186.
[6] Ibid., p. 185.

PART II

PERFORMANCE PROBLEMS OF THE WORKS

INTRODUCTION

This section of the paper will attempt to address performance problems encountered by the marimbist in these works for marimba. The music will be examined from three vantage points. The first area was already touched upon in the preceding section and it will concern musical/formal considerations such as motivic identification, identification of form and sections within that form, and key scheme within and between movements of a particular suite. The second area to be covered is the technical aspect of performance such as stickings, rolling techniques to be used, mallet selection, and selected practice techniques. The sticking choices were made in order to help facilitate ease of execution as well as contribute toward a more musical performance. The mallet selections were made with regard to questions of balance in the ensemble and to tone color in the marimba itself. The terminology used for stroke types and numeration of the four mallets will be taken from Leigh Stevens' marimba technique manual *Method of Movement*.[1] A summary of these terms and their definition is listed in Appendix A at the end of the document. The third area to be addressed with regard to performance problems inherent to the works is the more subjective question of interpretation and performer's interpretive license. Included in this would be any deviation from the score,

tempo and expression markings, and also the question of transposition (of sections or whole movements) to utilize the marimba's currently extended range as compared to the essentially four and a third octave range (A1 to c3) that Wilder composed for.

Theoretical and formal aspects are briefly touched upon in the performance practice analyses for the individual movements. It is important that prospective performers have an awareness of harmony, motivic development and form in the suite movements. Knowledge of these aspects of the music greatly enhance the chance for a musical performance works. When the text refers to the overall large sectional form of a given movement the reader should refer to the complete edited parts for the marimba which are included in an appendix.

As stated in the preface the intention here is to provide for any prospective performer of these works a reference guide to performance problems and possible solutions to these problems. A corollary benefit of opening the music to these questions of interpretation and performance practice is that it often helps perpetuate and sustain interest in the music itself. It is fervently hoped that this document achieves just that.

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[1] Leigh Howard Stevens. *Method of Movement for Marimba* (New York: Marimba Productions, 1979)

CHAPTER FOUR

PERFORMANCE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE *SUITE FOR SOLO GUITAR*

OVERVIEW

The dominating issue with the *Suite for Solo Guitar* is the fact that it is a transcription. The composer's original intent is, at the outset, unavoidably altered. Having stated this, it is remarkable how idiomatic the piece is to the marimba. Stout's transcription makes very few alterations to the original score, those few being concerned mostly with five or six note chords that must be edited to comply with the four-note limitations dictated by four mallet marimba technique. Stout often circumvents this by quick ornamental arpeggiations of the chords in question. Still, these alterations do not significantly alter the musical intent of the work.

Another very significant question that should be addressed is the range of the work. As stated previously, Stout originally transcribed the work for a four octave C to c3 ranged instrument. That necessitated the piece be played up an octave. Stout now performs the piece down an octave from his transcription and newly returned to the original range in which Wilder composed the piece.[1] The extension of the low end range of the marimba has made this possible. The octave transposition is generally an improvement, however, certain movements cannot be completely transposed down the octave depending on the range of the marimba available to the performer.

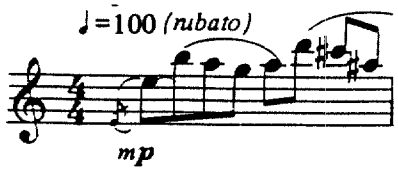
The area where Stout made the most alterations is in the dynamic and expressive markings. Virtually all the markings are Stout's. This is in accordance with Wilder's wishes, however, because Stout says that "...Alec wanted it published for marimba just like I played it...". This is a powerful endorsement of the transcription. Yet it is apparent that there is some leeway for differences in interpretation with regard to dynamics and expression markings and even with regard to tempo considerations. Stout agrees with this and says that if a performer were to "...go back to the original manuscript to learn the piece they might come up with a totally different version of how to play it...that would be fine with me and most likely would have been with Alec."[2]

The greatest challenge this piece poses to the performer is the contrapuntal nature of the work. The left and right hands must often operate independently of one another and often in quick passages. This characteristic is evident in the chamber works but it is even more pronounced in this piece. It is attributable to the fact that this is a solo work. Consequently, contrapuntal passages which could have been divided between two instruments, now must be executed by a single player.

Probably the most difficult aspect to performance of Wilder's music is navigating its unpredictable flow. Because his approach to composition is so "intuitive", formal analysis of the music can be a daunting task. Yet the words of Wilder himself are the key to any successful analysis of Wilder's music. A statement quoted previously in this work holds the clue to analysis of this music: ".....I try and find a melodic idea that I consider seminal.....". Wilder considers his motives to be the generative force for the entire work. This is especially borne out in the *Suite for Solo Guitar* and there is

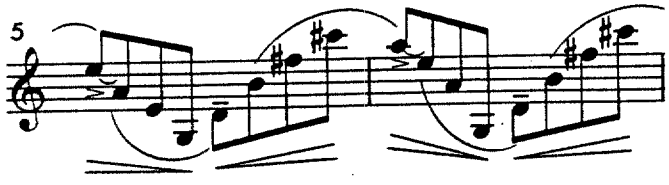
significant evidence of cyclic relationships between the movements. Example 1 states the opening motive for the work.

Ex. 1 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. I, ms. 1



This motive is developed extensively within the first movement but it is still more subtly developed throughout the work. Take, for example, the key scheme or major tonal areas of the Suite movement by movement. The first movement begins in E and closes on a C#. The second movement begins in E again but closes in F#. The third movement begins melodically in E and ends with an A minor chord. Finally, the fourth movement begins in F# and moves through three major tonal areas A, E, and C# closing on an A minor chord. All these pitches except for the F# are contained in the opening eight note motive and the most important notes in the motive, the first note E and the twice repeated A, receive the greatest focus as tonal areas throughout the work. Another remarkable example of cyclism in the the suite occurs in measures 5 and 6 of the fourth movement:

Ex. 2 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. IV, ms. 5-6



These measures are notable in that they are not melodic. They are merely transitional material to a restatement of the opening F# theme at the B pitch level. The most remarkable thing about them is that both measures contain only pitches contained in the opening eight note motive with the E doubled in the first measure and the A doubled in the second measure. This mirrors the key scheme of the suite: movements I and II begin in E while movements III and IV end in A.

A complete understanding of motivic development in this work is not essential to successful performance. Yet an awareness of the significance of motivic development and awareness of the major motives is essential to successful performance. An awareness of cyclism or reference to previous movements in later movements is also very helpful to the performer. A more in-depth examination of the motivic development inherent to this music is suitable more for a theoretical paper than for this performance practice dissertation.

The transcription of the *Suite for Solo Guitar* succeeds in adapting a work that was deemed unplayable by the guitarist for whom it was written. It fits remarkably well on the marimba and is a valuable addition to the literature.

MOVEMENT I

Movement I is perhaps the most difficult in the suite. It is characterized by a highly contrapuntal texture and a number of very challenging passages. The form of the movement is a kind of indistinct ternary that is typical of much of Wilder's music. The opening section consists of measures 1 through 22. Letter A is a false recapitulation of

the opening which leads to a transition in measure 25 to a rearranged statement of the opening motive in the left hand, now transposed to F#. This is the beginning of a long development wherein the opening motive and secondary motives are subjected to various rhythmic and tonal variations. The *true* recapitulation begins at letter C (measure 59). In the early measures of the recap the pitch material is exactly like the beginning of the movement. Later in the movement, however, certain passages are raised a half step. This is typical of many of Wilder's tonal schemes for the close of certain movements. The technique is somewhat akin to a style of stock jazz big band arrangements that modulate up a half step or whole step in their final chorus. Wilder arranged for big bands and it is likely he transferred, consciously or subconsciously, this technique to his "serious" music. The piece begins at the E tonal level and stays there generally (albeit with many transient modulations) until the end where the key changes dramatically to C#. Here is a schematic of the movement's form:

INTRO OR EXPOSITION: ms. 1- 25 tonal area: E

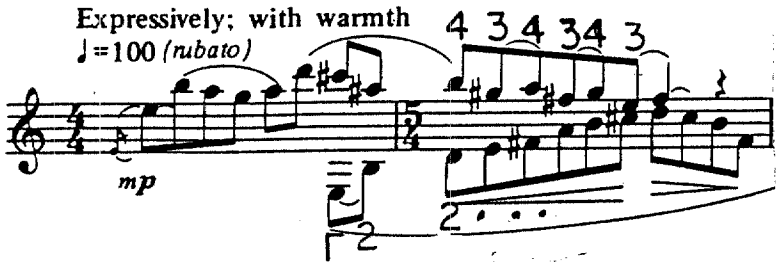
DEVELOPMENT: ms. 26- 58 modulatory

RECAP: ms. 59- 75 tonal area: E

CODA: ms. 76 to end tonal area C#

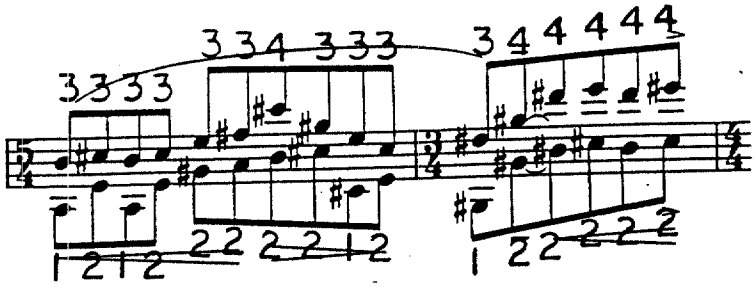
In the opening two measures the technical challenges posed by this music for the marimbist becomes apparent. Disjunctive contrapuntal lines separated at wide intervals must be executed in opposing hands. The right hand in this passage must utilize single alternating strokes[3] to execute the descending sequence of broken thirds:

Ex. 3 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. I, ms. 1-2



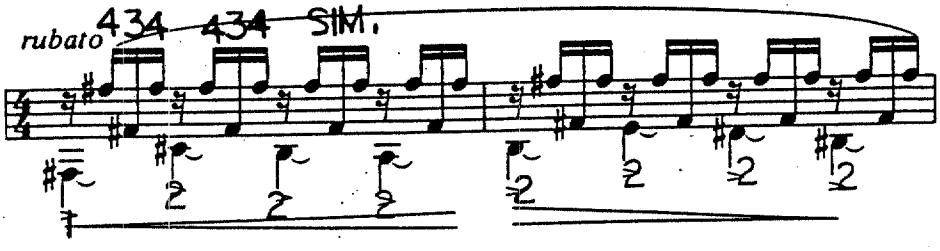
It should be noted that the opening grace note E was added by Stout and not in the original manuscript. It was, however, approved by Wilder and sets the stage for the many grace note ornaments used later in the suite in order to execute chords with more than four voices. These opening two measures set a pattern where the hands function independently. This pattern is continued for most of the "exposition". Measures 7 and 8 are particularly difficult and necessitate a combination of single alternating and single independent strokes in separate hands:

Ex. 4 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 7-8



In measure 25 the texture is changed for the first time where the motive is now stated in the left hand in F# with the right hand executing double lateral strokes on an F# upper pedal tone.

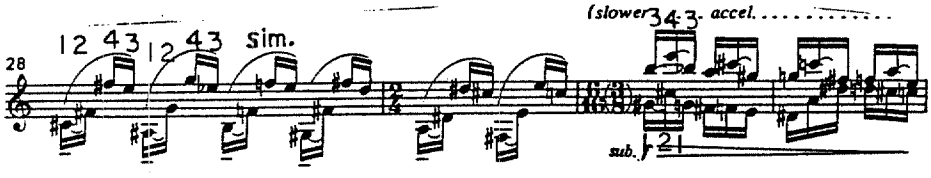
Ex. 5 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 25-26



Wilder also uses pedals in this movement in measures 32-39 , 46-47 and measure 77 to the end. In the pedal at measure 77 it is again placed above the melodic motion, similarly to the one in measure 25.

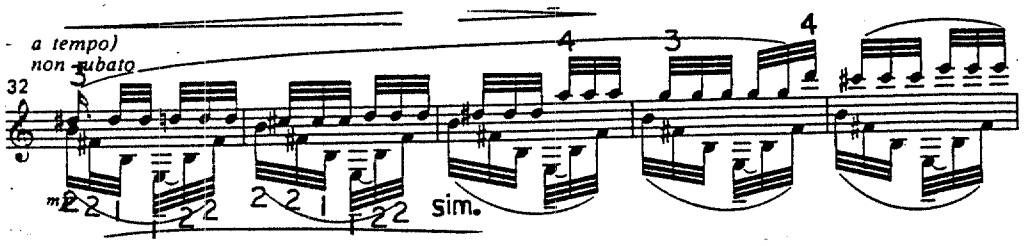
Measure 28 has a very awkward series of alternating left, then right handed double laterals. In measure 29 it may be necessary to employ a slight ritardando into measure 30 because of the rapid shift of register. Example 6 presents these measures with suggested stickings:

Ex. 6 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 28-30



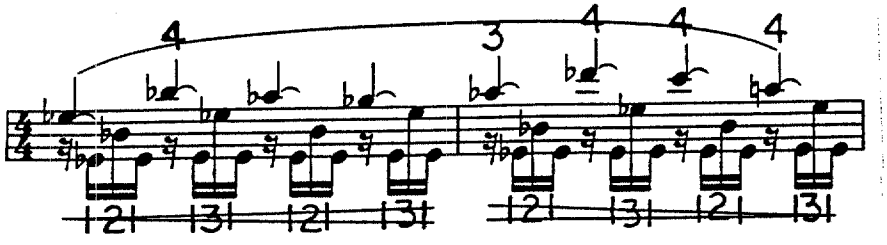
Measures 32 through 39 constitute one of the most difficult passages to master in the movement. Wilder uses an ostinato in the left hand which outlines a B chord (the quality of the chord is constantly altered by a changing right hand) alternately with an E chord with an added ninth. Here is a suggested sticking for the left hand ostinato:

Ex. 7 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 32-36



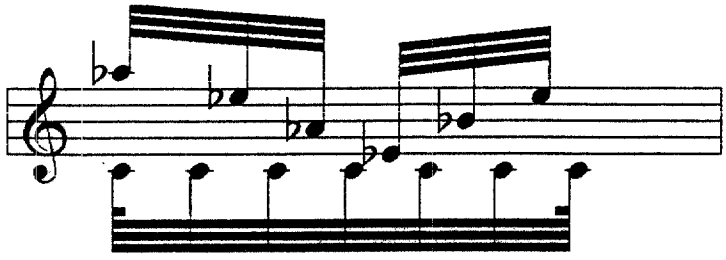
Measures 46 and 47 are one of the pedal points and require a unique 8 note sequence of stickings that can be applied to the entire two measures: 4121,4131. This measure is similar to measure 25 in that it is a slowed down version of the opening motive at the Eb pitch level. Here are measures 46 and 47:

Ex. 8 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 46-47



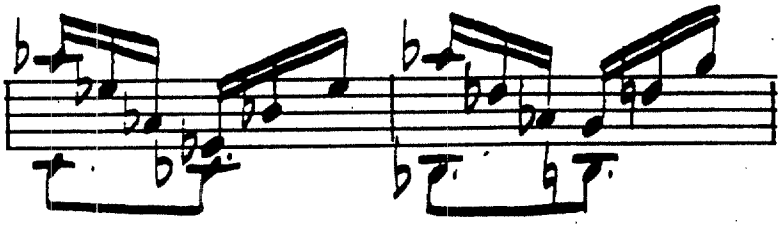
Measure 52 has an incorrectly notated rhythm which should be notated thus:

Ex. 9 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 52



Measure 52 is also an excellent example of the type of alterations Stout uses in the transcription to make the music more idiomatic to the marimba. Here is how this passage looked in Wilder's original version for guitar:

Ex. 10 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. I, ms. 52



In the coda at measure 77 there is an abrupt movement toward the tonal area of C#. There is an upper pedal with C#'s in octaves; these octaves should be played with a 4 and 2 mallet combination of single independent strokes.

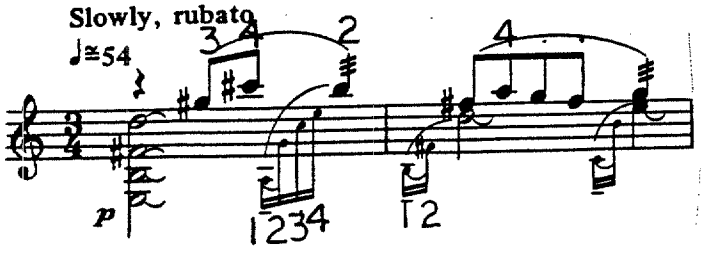
The mallets to be used should be graduated in hardness, with medium mallets in the left hand (mallets 1 and 2) and medium-hard mallets in the right hand (mallets 3 and 4).

The rubato indication at the top of the movement was added by Stout. The original manuscript indicated no rubato. Wilder, however, according to Stout "loved the way I used rubato in this movement."[4] It is recommended that the performer use rubato. The degree of rubato used could conceivably be less than that which is indicated in the score, but definitely not more. One danger in this movement is to play passages too quickly; to overplay the virtuosic elements in this music. Although this music is virtuosic, it is not meant to sound so. It is meant to sound lyrical and expansive. Another danger is letting the counter lines of the piece obscure the motives that are being developed.

MOVEMENT II

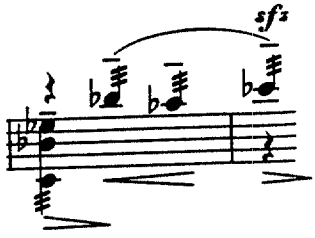
The second movement of the guitar suite is a relatively clear piece formally, consisting of three large sections (ABA) comprising an overall ternary structure. The middle section contains developmental, as well as new and contrasting material. The main motives for the A section and its return are contained in the first two measures:

Ex. 11 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. II, Ms. 1-2



They are represented in measure 1 by the two eighth notes G# and C# followed by a quarter note B and in the second measure by the five note lower and upper neighbor melodic figure extending from beat one to beat three. This motivic material is manipulated and taken through various modulations until a new motive is introduced in measure 23:

Ex. 12 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. II, ms. 23



This motive and an inverted version of the initial A motive provide the material for the B section. The first great climax of the movement occurs in the B section in measures 43-57. The recapitulation at letter C is essentially identical to the opening and the dynamic is even softer than the opening piano marking. It mimics the opening until measure 78 where it deviates and begins a coda of sorts which leads to the piece's final climax at measure 84. The movement's final cadence is decidedly a resolution but the progression from an E suspended 7^{th} chord to the final F# major chord is actually a modal VII to I cadence, as was touched on earlier in Part I of the dissertation. Here is a schematic diagram of the movement:

A: ms. 1-10 modulatory

A': ms. 11- 31 development of opening material at the C pitch level

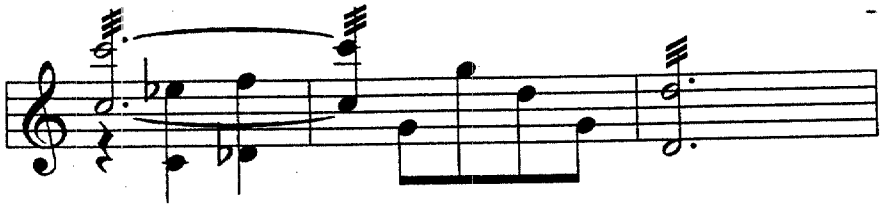
B: ms. 32-63 developmental of the motive from ms. 23. Tonal area is modulatory.

C: ms. 64-77 Recapitulation of section A

CODA: ms 78 to end. Tonal area is first E then finally to F#.

The grace note figure leading into beat three of the opening measure is probably the most difficult passage in the piece and should be sticked 12342 with the left hand crossing over the right. It is imperative that the grace notes be kept at as low a volume as possible so as not to cloud the main melodic motive; this principle holds for all the grace note figurations of this piece. Another very difficult passage occurs at measure 80 where the high c2 must be held while the voices move in tenths beneath it. The solution which achieves the most satisfying result involves adding a c1 an octave below the high c2 and holding both C's until beat two of measure 81:

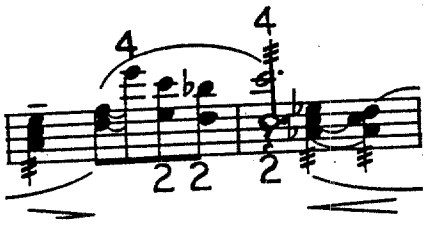
Ex. 13 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. II, ms. 80-82



This idea of doubling isolated notes in the high register at an octave below can be applied elsewhere in the movement to good result. The C on beat one of measure 13 can be doubled. The G on beat one of measure 15 can also be doubled (though the low doubling

voice can only be held for 1 beat here). The G on beat one of measure 78 can also be doubled in this manner; as can the C in measure 76. In measures 16 and 17 further added notes greatly enhance the flow of the music. A d1 pitch can be added on the upbeat of three, leading to a c1 pitch, which will double the c2 pitch on beat one of measure 17. Example 14 shows measure 17 with the added notes:

Ex. 14 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. II, ms. 17



Such alterations to the score normally would be considered questionable, yet Stout made rhythmic and pitch alterations to the original piece in order to make the piece more idiomatic to the marimba and these minor additions also serve that purpose.

Again most of the expression marks in movement II are Stout's. The opening marking "slowly, rubato" is however Wilder's. Therefore the implementation of rubato here is more mandatory than in the first movement. There are many sforzando dynamic indications in this piece, some of which come from Wilder's manuscript. Yet care should be taken not to over accent these because doing so might disrupt the general tranquility of the piece. The climax of the piece occurs in measure 84 with a sforzando

marked E major chord. In this instance the marking should be taken literally and the marimbist should attack the instrument at full force. Care should also be taken to observe the pause sign indicated at the end of measure 83. The pause should be very short, approximately a sixteenth rest in length. This pause marking is Stout's and not in Wilder's original, yet it is highly effective and therefore recommended that it be observed.

The texture of this movement is chorale-like and necessitates that most of the piece be rolled. Most of the rolls will be the traditional hand to hand variety, yet softer dynamics at the end of phrases will benefit from the usage of a more independent type of roll consisting of alternating double lateral strokes. The mallets to be employed in this piece should be relatively soft but also hard enough to realize the sudden sforzandos and fortes. A combination of soft and medium mallets works well and is very effective in achieving the illusion of sostenuto that is necessary for successful performance of this piece. The sticking for this piece is problematic in that it involves the voicing of four note chords in the low register followed quickly by the melodic motivic material in a higher register. The higher melodic material should be played mostly by the two mallets of the right hand with independent and double lateral strokes. This will create a kind of melody with accompaniment texture.

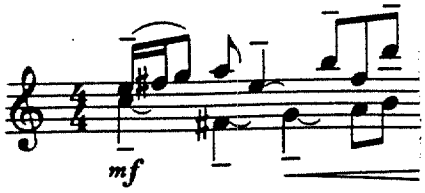
The greatest challenge in this piece is maintaining a sense of forward motion while employing rubato and simultaneously bringing out the melody. Stout considers this movement to be "the most difficult movement musically to perform.....(the player must try) to get the top voice to sound like a sustained melody, while stopping its flow to

fit in the chords below."[5] It is imperative that certain passages that are sparser in texture be played with intensity and lyricism so that they will not be overshadowed by the thicker texture of the rest of the movement. Measures 28, 29, 33, 34, 37 and 38 are among these measures deserving of special attention. Again keeping the forward motion is the goal. Finally, implementation of rolls is left up to the performer; the roll indications in the transcription are Stout's. The performer may judiciously apply rolls where they are not indicated or conversely not roll where it is indicated. It is suggested however that drastic alterations to the transcription be avoided because of the undeniable validity of Stout's work and Wilder's approval of said work.

MOVEMENT III

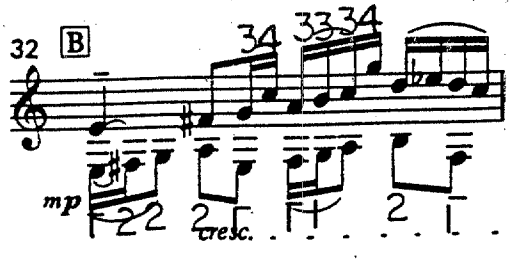
The form of this movement is ambiguous. It could be considered through-composed or a contrapuntal form similar to an invention. It is more likely the latter because of the highly contrapuntal nature of the music. Regardless of the name of the form, the piece is held together by variation, repetition and transposition of this motive from measure 1:

Ex.15 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 1



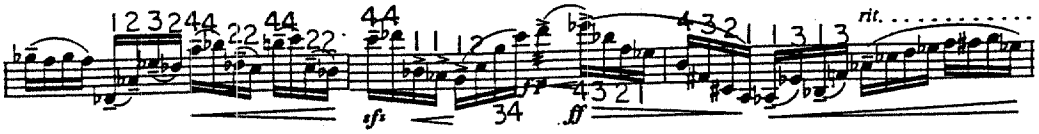
The motive from measure 1 is repeated in full at measures 18 and 23 in the movement and it is repeated many other times in the movement in fragmented form. Wilder introduces many secondary themes or motives in the movement, some of which are developed throughout the movement. None of these secondary motives is as prevalent as the opening motive. In fugal procedures the main motive would be termed a "subject" and the secondary themes "countersubjects." Despite the similarities to contrapuntal forms, this is not a fugue or an invention; there is little consistent evidence of the movement of a subject from voice to voice in a systematic manner. Yet in measure 32 there is a truncated statement of the opening theme in the bass voice:

Ex. 16 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 32



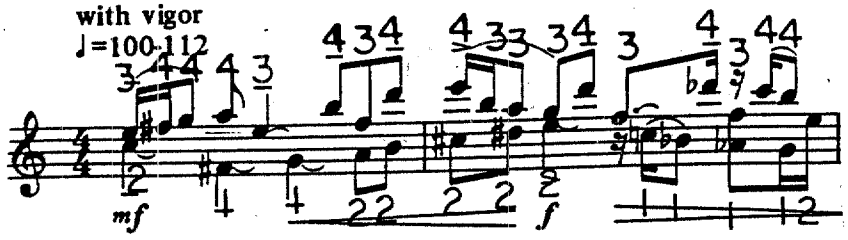
Essentially the piece is a contrapuntal work held together by one main theme and many other more transitory secondary themes. There is an abundance of free episodic passagework in the movement. Measures 9 through 11 are an example of some of this passage work, here they are with some suggested stickings:

Ex. 17 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. III, ms. 9-11



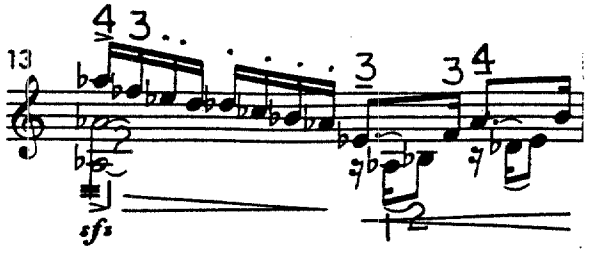
The technical demands in this piece are apparent at the beginning and are similar to the first movement in that the separate hands must execute two different lines, often moving in contrary motion. Here is a suggested sticking for the first two measures:

Ex. 18 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 1-2



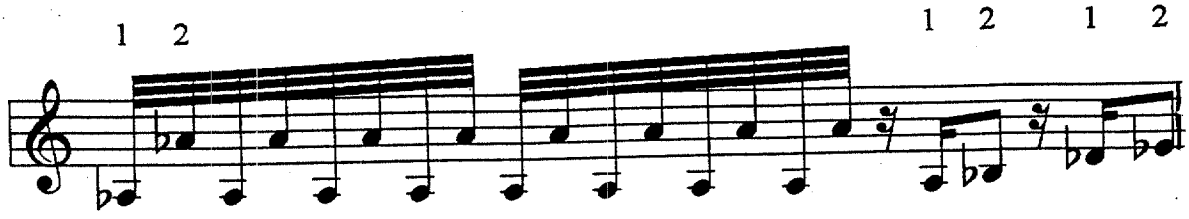
The first truly problematic passage in the piece occurs in measure 13:

Ex. 19 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 13



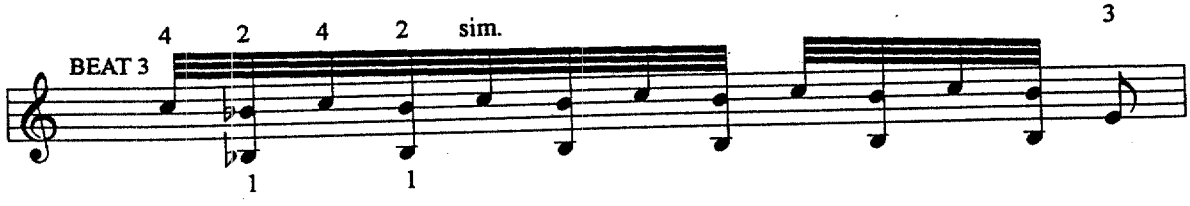
In order to realize the half-note Ab's in the left hand it is recommended that the marimbist use an "independent roll", articulated in a 32nd note rhythm, with mallets 1 and 2 alternating. These are not single alternating strokes; the speed with which they must be executed necessitates the "continuous hand motion" that characterizes the independent roll.[6] Example 20 displays what the left hand should be playing in measure 13:

Ex. 20 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 13



The same approach should be used in measure 22 of the movement. Measure 26 has a half note Bb in octaves with a trill on the upper Bb. The octave Bb's should be played by mallets 1 and 2 in the left hand while the C part of the trill should be played in mallet 3 in the right hand. It is recommended that the roll be measured in 32nds and that it be a hand to hand roll. Example 21 shows a realization of measure 26:

Ex. 21 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. III, ms. 26



The final cadence on A minor is difficult to achieve in the short eighth note interval given in the piece. In actual performance the chord can be delayed until beat two without any appreciable negative effect.

The mallet selection here should be designed to achieve a warm articulate sound. Since so much of the melodic passagework is executed in the right hand, it is recommended that the performer use harder mallets in the right hand or at least on mallet 4 in the right hand.

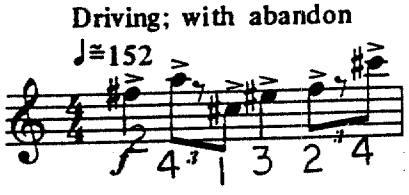
Interpretive issues are few here; if the music is played correctly with the indicated expression marks and dynamics the movement plays itself. The main issue here is rhythm. Stout says that this movement is all about "groove."[7] There is very little tempo fluctuation in this movement. The fact that it is preceded by two movements that exhibit a great deal of rubato makes the impact of the third movement even greater.
The indicated dynamics here are mostly Stout's elaboration on the few markings given by Wilder in his score. The performer should take care not to allow the pianissimos to impede the forward momentum of the movement.

MOVEMENT IV

Movement IV is a frenetic musical journey posing many challenges to the marimbist. There are abrupt transient modulations, an intense driving jazz influenced rhythm at a fast tempo, and many challenging virtuosic passages in the piece. This movement ties together the suite, paraphrasing motives and tonal areas in the first three movements. It is a difficult movement to execute technically and musically.

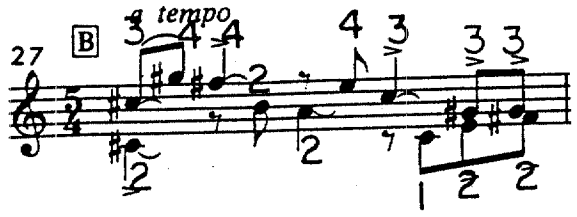
Form in this movement is even more difficult to discern than in movement III. It is a very indistinct ternary form. Measures 1-27 comprise the A section, measures 27 through 46 constitute the B section and measures 47 to the end represent the altered return to the A section. There are two main unifying elements here, the first being the motive stated in the opening measure:

Ex. 22 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. IV, ms. 1



This motive is restated in various states of fragmentation and transposition throughout the movement. In measure 7 it is restated transposed up a fourth. In measure 9 (letter A) it is restated again in the original key minus the final C#. It appears in some form or another in all the following measures: ms. 23-24, ms. 17, ms. 20, ms. 45, ms. 47-48, ms. 50-52, ms. 54-56, ms. 58-59. The second group of unifying factors in the piece are the references to the earlier movements. The pitch material of measures 5 and 6 contain the exact pitches of the opening motive (E,A,B,G,D,C#,A#) of movement I rearranged in a different sequence. This element of cyclism occurs early in the movement. Another element of cyclism occurs at a major section break in the piece: letter B/measure 27. The motive here is derived from the first three notes of the opening motive of movement I.

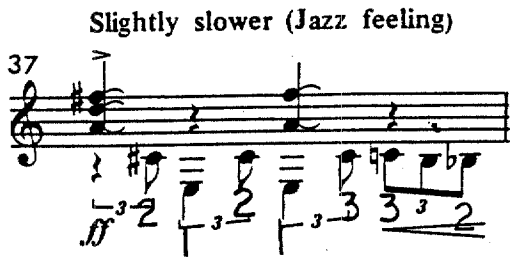
Ex. 23 *Suite for Solo Guitar,* Mvt. IV, ms. 27



This motive is also similar to the opening motive of Movement II. Measures 41 through 43 are similar to rhythmic and melodic motives in Movement III. The most obvious cyclic element to this movement is the sequence of major tonal areas employed in it. The movement goes through the tonal areas of F#, E, C#, E, A, C, F#, A, F#, E, and A. All of the areas except for C are members of the pitches comprising the opening motive and all of the key areas represent either opening or closing keys of the previous three movements. The key of C also plays a significant role in movement II of the suite. The preponderance of E tonalities earlier in the suite combined with the preponderance of A tonalities later in the suite serve to create a hidden grand V to I cadence which underlies the whole form of the suite.

The technical problems of the movement are manifold. Especially difficult is the fact that equal demands are made on the left and right hands. In measure 37 the C# and E in between the 2nd inversion statements of the D chord must be executed by the left hand with double lateral strokes:

Ex. 24 *Suite for Solo Guitar*, Mvt. IV, ms. 37



Similar demands are made on the left hand in measures 15 and 16, 28 and 29, 34-36, 42, and in measures 61-65. In these measures all the notes with stems going down should be played by the left hand, usually with this sticking: 1 , 2 , 2.

Measure 16 is particularly difficult with its wide intervals on the accidentals. The best choice of sticking for beats two and three of this measure is: 4,3,2,1,2,3,2,4. This sticking also applies to measures 5, 6, and 21 of the movement.

The mallets to be used in this piece should be relatively hard because of the intense nature of the music and the abundance of passages in the upper register. A graduated combination of medium-hard and hard mallets should work well for the movement.

The interpretive problems in this movement are challenging. The goal is to maintain the intensity of the movement while using the ritardandos and allargandos for momentary relief from the relentlessness of the music. The rhythms are to be played exactly as written; none of the straight eighth notes should be "swung". The eighth notes meant to swing are notated, by both Wilder and Stout, as the first and third part of a triplet. The dynamics in the transcription are mostly Stout's and they really bring the movement to life; they make a difficult movement to understand much clearer. Stout's

added ritardandos and accelerandos aid considerably in the effort to maintain intensity, while providing momentary respite from the intensity at the proper times. The sections that are marked "jazz feeling" are in Wilder's original manuscript. These sections function as relief from the driving intensity of the straight eighth note sections preceding them. They should be played in a playful manner, almost sardonically.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS ON THE *SUITE FOR SOLO GUITAR*

The most important thing to bear in mind when performing the *Suite for Solo Guitar* is the work's overall scheme, motivic and tonal relationships between the movements. Wilder's music is elusive at times and the direction and logic in it can sometimes be difficult to discern. Yet it is almost always perceivable when the music is carefully examined. A performer sensitive to this logic and direction is essential to bringing this music to life; not all of Wilder's music "plays itself." Movement III, however, is a perfect example of a movement that is musically very accessible . Nonetheless, any knowledge of the music's mechanics or background will aid considerably in attaining the goal of a meaningful and inspired performance.

The guitar suite is unlike the other works for marimba in that it is a transcription. It is in actuality the musical vision of two people: Wilder and Stout. Stout's transcription succeeds beautifully in realizing Wilder's musical vision. It is, however, unavoidably colored by Stout's own personal musical tastes and preferences. The changes suggested in this chapter enhance performance of the *Suite for Solo Guitar* by providing alternative sticking choices and revoicing certain passages in order to take advantage of a different

approach to marimba technique. While it is unnecessary that other alternative transcriptions of the guitar suite be made, it is important that any prospective performer be aware that he or she may have something unique to bring to this music. Most of the dynamic and expressions marks in this piece are Stout's; if the instincts of a performer lead in a different direction with regard to these aspects of the transcription, he or she should not be reluctant to try new ways of performing this music. In the words of Gordon Stout: "Alec was thrilled when a performer brought something to his music that he had not thought of before himself."[8]

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[1] Stout Questionnaire.
[2] Ibid.
[3] See appendix A.
[4] Stout questionnaire.
[5] Stout questionnaire.
[6] Stevens. *Method of Movement.* p. 30.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Stout questionnaire.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN OVERVIEW OF THE THREE WORKS FOR MARIMBA WITH OTHER INSTRUMENTS

Before beginning to look at the *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba, Suite for Flute and Marimba* and the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet* individually, it is necessary recall that these three works were all written specifically for the marimba within a two year period, from 1976 to 1977.[1] As a consequence they have much in common. The trumpet and flute suites share a common structure of six movements, while the sextet has only five movements. The pacing of the movements is very similar in all the suites. The first movement is fairly fast, the second is slow and ballad-like, the third is again fast and in triple meter, the fourth is in a medium tempo but serene and lyrical, the fifth is slow and sparse, and the sixth is fast and frenetic. The fourth movement in the sextet is more like the fifth movement of the other two suites, while the fifth corresponds to the sixth in the other suites. All of the penultimate movements are similar in that they are slow, sparse and end in the key of G minor.

Wilder had a special affinity for chamber music; it was his preferred medium. While the duos do not fit the strict definition of "chamber music" because they don't have three players, they still have the characteristics of chamber music with marked equanimity and subtle interplay between the players. Wilder said this about chamber

music: "...chamber groups, trios, quartets, quintets. They remain the truest expression of music, not only because they demand that every note be the right one, but because they are musical expressions of.... overt individuals...while every player in an orchestra may be superb, the very presence of so many players may well reduce the personal intensity of the music." He goes on to say: "In chamber music there can be no deception or sleight of hand. ...there must be a ...desire to cooperate, to assist, to interlock, to sacrifice and to check substantial amounts of ego at the door of the rehearsal hall."[2] There are two very important conclusions that can be drawn from these statements. The first and obvious conclusion is that Wilder felt that chamber works were the "truest expression" of his music. The second conclusion that can be inferred from the statement is that Wilder greatly valued the individual musical personalities of performers and that he appreciated their input. The three works for marimba should be considered chamber music and Wilder's attitude about chamber music should be borne in the minds of prospective performers of these suites. He considered chamber music to be a very interactive and even democratic process between performers, and even between performers and the composer. He would frequently attend rehearsals of his music though he rarely attended performances.[3] He genuinely loved the interaction between the players and his music and looked forward to the new insights different players brought to his music.

These chamber works for marimba differ from the guitar suite in many ways. The treatment of themes is one of the ways in which the chamber works differ from the guitar suite. Many of the motives between movements of the individual suites are similar, but there is no overt cyclic treatment of themes in these works. This is in contrast to the *Suite*

for Solo Guitar, which had some very obvious cyclic elements. There are also many similarities in motives between the suites themselves but this is perhaps due more to Wilder's general melodic style as opposed to any conscious or subconscious attempt to connect the suites. The lack of repetition, which is evident in the plethora of melodic ideas introduced in these works, is rather remarkable. Wilder is possessed of a seemingly inexhaustible supply of melodic invention. In these works, Wilder's melodic approach is similar to the guitar suite in that he generally uses modes for his tonal basis while using modal interchange frequently to modulate and switch modes. The use of counterpoint is even more pervasive in these works than in the guitar suite. This is attributable to the increased instrumentation, which leaves more potential independent voices at Wilder's disposal.

The increased use of counterpoint has a pronounced effect on the formal structure of the movements of the suites. As the number of instruments increases, the contrapuntal potential increases. The temptation to create an almost continuously developmental texture is irresistible for Wilder. This continuously developmental texture is perhaps the most common trait this music shares with jazz. Jazz by its improvisatory nature is continuously developmental. At its highest level it is without a planned structure, almost like a musical conversation where one player offers a musical idea, the idea is commented on and a musical conversation ensues. Wilder's approach to form in these works is similar to this idea. There is certainly a sense of form to Wilder's works but the forms are not planned in advance; they evolved as the pieces were being composed.[4] Tedrow Perkins, in an analytical thesis based on three Wilder woodwind quintets, says

this about Wilder's forms: "The structural form of the individual movements of Wilder's quintets... is complicated and arbitrary."[5] Perkins essentially ignores the question of form in his thesis. Jean Roberts, however, in her dissertation analyzing Wilder's five suites for piano says that Wilder's "forms are found to be mostly traditional".[6] The pattern seems to be that in solo works Wilder's approach to form is more structured and traditional. This is evident in the *Suite for Solo Guitar,* where movements one, two and four are clearly in ternary form.

The words of Wilder himself help to clarify his highly intuitive approach to music and musical form:

> "...all my life I have shied away from more than an essential minimum about the creative process. It is possible that had I studied more my music would be better; on the other hand, it's also possible that too much knowledge would have put my creative muscles into a permanent charley horse."

He goes on to say:

> "I once asked a superb musician... what a passacaglia was. He told me startledly, "But you've written one!" He recalled a piece I had written and...explained that a recurring chromatic line I had kept repeating throughout the piece was, in fact, enough to have made it a passacaglia."

Later Wilder says: "All I can say is that if any of my music is good, its sources are almost solely intuitive."[7]

A very important source regarding these three pieces is the recording *Alec Wilder's Music for Marimba With Other Instruments* on Golden Crest Records. The

recording was made in 1979, and the marimbist was Gordon Stout. Wilder himself attended the recording sessions. The recording is an invaluable sound document in terms of performance issues related to these pieces. The performances are excellent, the recording quality is good for the time and, most importantly, it is the only known commercially released recording of the music.

The three chamber works by Wilder written specifically for marimba are excellent examples of his highly successful and intuitive approach to composition. They are unique in the repertoire of marimba music and offer not only great music but valuable lessons in ensemble playing with wind instruments.

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[1] Stout Questionnaire
[2] Alec Wilder. *Letters I Never Mailed*, (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1975), p. 146
[3] Stout Questionnaire
[4] This information was gained from conversations with pianist Steven Harlos who knew Wilder personally and was knowledgeable about his music. Mr. Harlos was responding to a question about form in Wilder's music.
[5] Tedrow Perkins. *An Analysis of Woodwind Quintets No's 3,6 and 12 of Alec Wilder* (MM Project California State University Fullerton, 1977) p. 5
[6] Demsey and Prather. P. 160
[7] Wilder. *Letters*, p. 162

CHAPTER SIX

PERFORMANCE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE *SUITE FOR TRUMPET AND MARIMBA*

The *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba* was the first work written by Wilder specifically for the marimba. There is still not a great deal of idiomatic writing for the marimba. The trumpeter must be very facile and able to execute quick chromatic phrases with ease, without overpowering the marimba. Although the greatest demand on the marimbist is in the ensemble playing required by the piece, there are still many technical challenges in this piece for the marimbist.

The suite has six movements in all:

Movements:		Form:
I-	Fairly fast ♩ = 104	Through-composed
II-	Languorously 𝅗𝅥 = 56	Indistinct ternary
III-	♩. = 56-60	Through-composed
IV-	♩ = 80-86	Ternary
V-	♩ = 40-46	Ternary
VI-	♩ = 88 With Vigor	Indistinct Ternary

Movements III and VI are reversed from their original order. The switch was suggested by Gordon Stout and Robert Levy who edited the piece for performance, and was

approved by Wilder himself. Stout and Levy simply felt the suite worked better with the movements switched. A switch like this is more easily made in this piece than it would have been in the guitar suite, because there is much less of a cyclic relationship between movements in the trumpet suite.

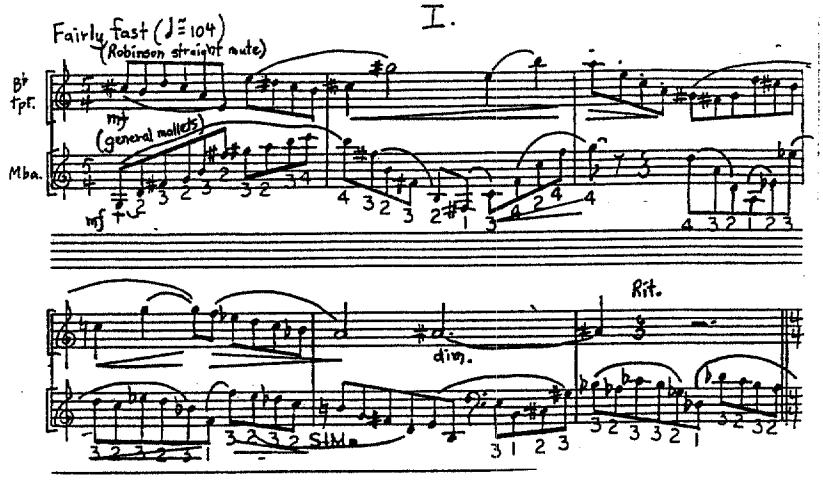
The editorial changes made by Stout in this suite are less significant in this piece than in the guitar suite. There are a few places where Wilder writes something that is unplayable (as in the end of movement VI) and Stout rewrites these passages. There are also a number of places where Stout and Levy add expression and dynamic markings. The piece is still for the most part is presented exactly as Wilder composed it.

In this suite, Wilder is still learning how to compose for the marimba, still learning its potential. It is the least "marimbistic" of the three works. Stout says that "it is more about the music than the marimba."[1] Movement IV is the exception in this suite and is a harbinger of the style Wilder would later develop more fully in the *Suite for Flute and Marimba*. The main challenges for this suite are mastering some of the more awkward technical passages and most important, learning to phrase and articulate with the trumpet.

MOVEMENT I

The form of movement I is a continually developing contrapuntal form in which a few melodic ideas introduced at various points in the movement are thoroughly developed. The first melodic motive introduced in measure 1 in the trumpet part is followed by a number of contrasting motives for the next five bars. See example 1:

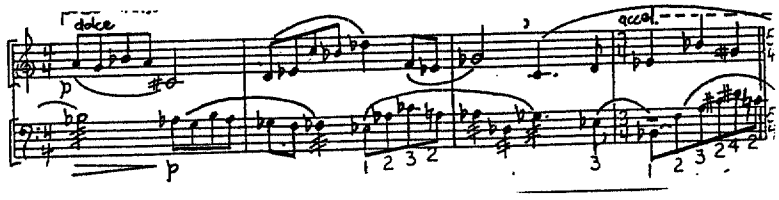
Ex. 1 *Suite for Trumpet for Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 1-6



Many of these ideas are fragmented into smaller motives, inverted and generally altered later in the movement. They provide the melodic material on which the movement is based.

The next major group of motives Wilder uses is introduced in measure 7 of the trumpet part. See example 2:

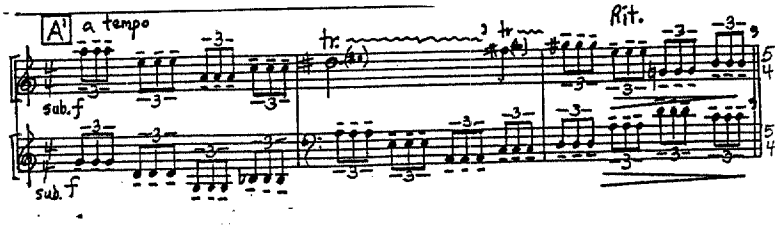
Ex. 2 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 7-10



Careful examination reveals the motive in measure 7 is actually just a fragment of the opening motive. The fragment stops on the fifth note, which descends a major third lower than the expected F natural, thus deviating from the interval sequence presented in the opening motive. Measure 8 is also partially a fragment of the opening motive; the two eighth notes on beat two leading into the Db on beat three recall exactly the the first three notes of the opening motive. Measure 8 thus introduces new melodic ideas that are derived from the original idea. They are distinctly different melodic shapes, yet still related to the original motive. Wilder often derives new motives in this manner, out of already extant motives.

Letter A is an incomplete return to the opening motive, now presented by the marimba. The motive is tossed about between the trumpet and marimba parts at various pitch levels until at A^1 a new triplet based idea is introduced. This rhythmic motive is genuinely a new idea not derived from previous motives. See example 3:

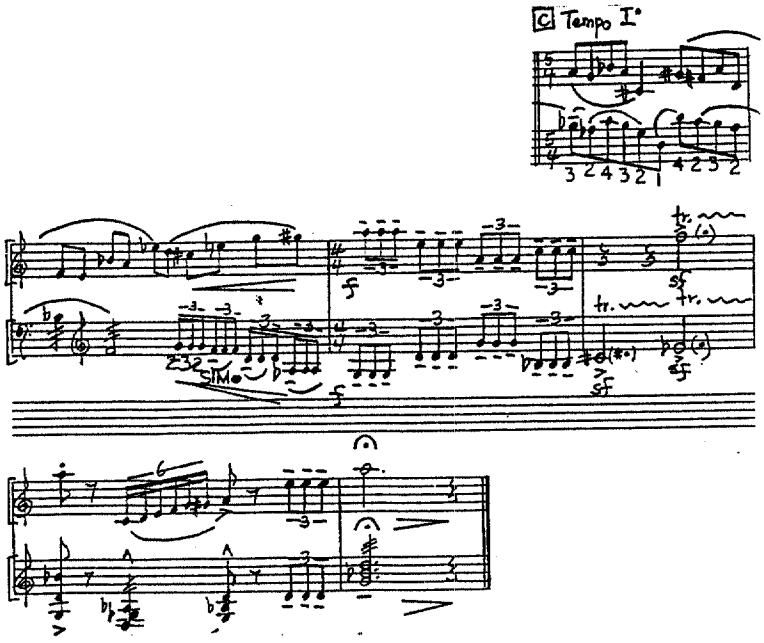
Ex. 3 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 17-19



This triplet-based motive is combined with fragments of the original motives from measures 1 through 6 at letter B. Letter B^1 is almost an exact return to the phrase from measures 7 to 10. At letter C Wilder puts all the motives together; in the first measure of

letter C he places the slightly altered original motive in the marimba voice against the motive from measure 7. Here is letter C:

Ex. 4 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 32 to the end



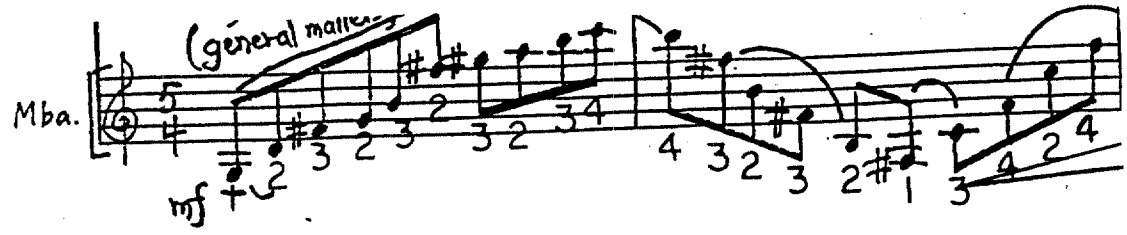
Wilder brings the movement to a close at letter C by combining elements of all three major motivic ideas introduced at measures 1, 7 and 12.

Movement I is a perfect example of the concept of "continuous development" which has been referred to so often in this study. Wilder takes a few melodic ideas, creates more ideas out of these ideas, and ultimately juxtaposes these ideas contiguously and simultaneously, thereby fleshing out an entire piece from one germinal idea or as he puts it, the work's "seminal" idea. This movement does not adhere to a preset form, it is instead developed organically.

Technically, the performer is confronted with only a few difficult passages; for the most part the movement is easily manageable with the employment of some creative sticking choices. Except for the last two measures, the movement could be played with two mallets. While Wilder himself recommends that the player use only three mallets it is ultimately recommended the marimbist use all four mallets. [2] The first two measures are a good demonstration of why the use of all four mallets is recommended.

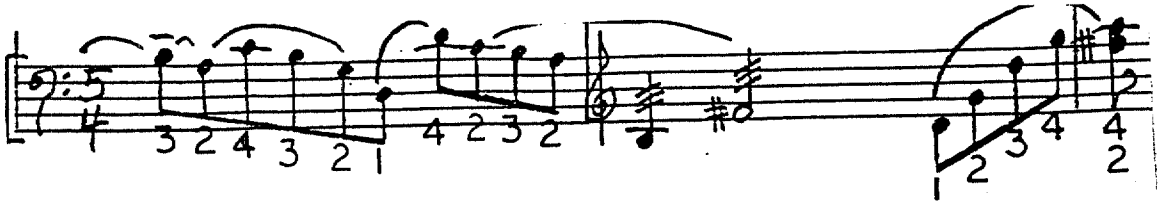
See Ex. 5:

Ex. 5 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 1-2



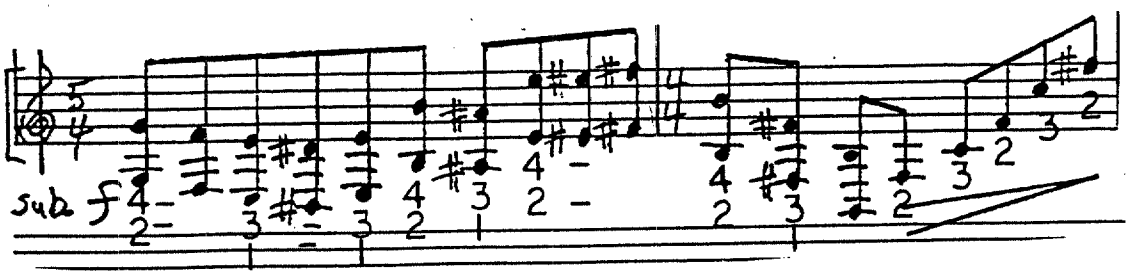
All four mallets are used to execute the single line passage shown in Ex. 5. A similar approach to many other passages in the piece will make it much easier to execute. The first three measures of letter A illustrate another instance where the use of all four mallets in a single line is recommended. Here are measures 7 through 10 shown in Ex. 6 with recommended stickings:

Ex. 6 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 7-10



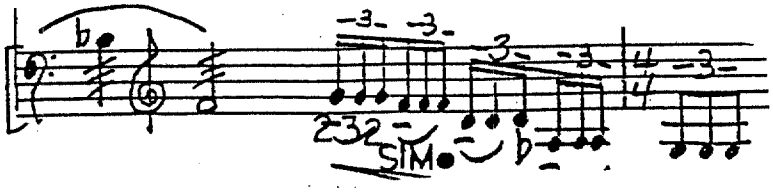
Letter B, on the other hand, introduces a difficult passage in octaves that should be executed in the following manner:

Ex. 7 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 20-21



Another very difficult passage in sixteenth-note triplets occurs five measures before the end of the movement. Here the inner mallets should be used in a strict alternating fashion in order to assure that each note is clearly articulated. See Ex. 8:

Ex. 8 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 13



In measures 25 and 26 the marimba plays straight eighth broken octaves against triplets in the trumpet; these rhythms can be difficult to coordinate and will require special attention. In general the greatest challenge in this movement is the coordination of the marimba part with the trumpet in places in the movement that require subtle

changes in tempo. To ensure that the players stay together the marimbist and trumpeter should carefully observe the breath marks in the score.

In the recording made by Stout and Levy the performers employ a slight ritard during the last three measures that is very effective. The ritard is not marked in their edition but should be employed in performance. The recording in general exhibits a flexible approach to tempo in this movement, almost a rubato approach. This is very difficult to coordinate with another player. The recording beautifully demonstrates the subtle sensitivity to pacing required by this movement. The recording is an excellent example of how the movement should be interpreted with regard to phrasing, articulation and tempo.

The mallets used in this movement should be medium to hard; the lowest mallet should be medium in hardness while the upper three mallets may be slightly harder. The marimbist should experiment to find the best combination of mallets for the piece. If the trumpet player plays with a full strong tone, harder mallets may be required to achieve balance.

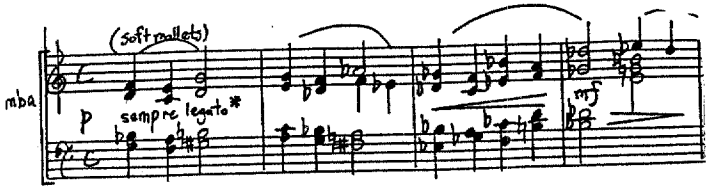
MOVEMENT II

The second movement is unique among all the movements of the three chamber pieces because of the chorale-like texture in the marimba part. The marimba never really departs from this texture creating the illusion that its part is accompanimental. However analysis shows this is really not the case because the top voice of the marimba part contains many motives and counterlines also shared by the trumpet part. As a consequence the marimbist must strive to bring out the top voice in the chord voicings. The alternating open position and close position seventh chord voicings indicate a strong

jazz influence. Indeed, the entire movement has a subtle jazz undertone with the various muted trumpet sounds.

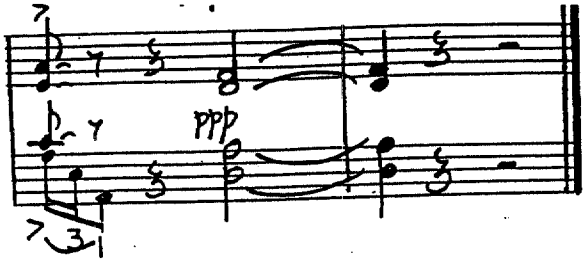
As in the first movement the form of this movement is elusive. A ternary design with a brief return of the opening motive in the original key of B at letter C is suggested. Letter B, on the other hand, could also be viewed as the opening of a kind of developmental middle section. In short as in movement I, a kind of continual development of motives is characteristic of this movement. The main motives used in the movement are contained in the top voice of the marimba part in the first four measures. See Ex. 9:

Ex. 9 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 1-4



The technical problems in this movement are minimal. The sticking is obvious. The chorale texture is broken only in the penultimate measure. Example 10 displays a suggested sticking for this measure:

Ex. 10 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. II, final two measures



The main technical issue confronting the performer in this movement is how best to achieve the sostenuto texture appropriate to the chorale style. Most of the rolls will be executed in a typical hand to hand fashion. However, judicious employment of double lateral rolls and simultaneous independent rolls in separate hands at the ends of phrases and long tones will sustain musical interest by varying the texture. The mallets used in this movement should be very soft with perhaps a slightly harder mallet in the top mallet, number four.

The roll speed should vary according to dynamics and register. In general the higher the register, the faster the roll should be. The roll speed should also increase as the dynamic level increases. The marimbist should aim for the slowest roll speed possible because fast rolls will disturb the legato line.

The final D minor chord is an excellent example of where alternate roll techniques can be utilized to good result (see example 10). The marimbist should first attack the chord with simultaneous double verticals. He should then move quickly to a double lateral roll and gradually modulate the roll to simultaneous single independent rolls in both hands as the dynamic decreases.

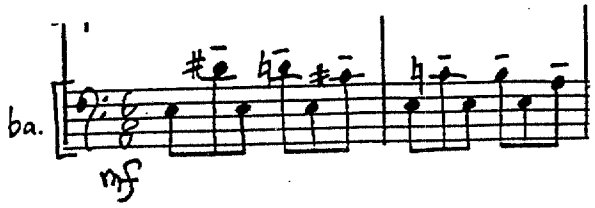
Interpretive issues here are similar to the first movement: the tempo is fluid, the players must phrase together, and the marimbist must be careful to observe the breath marks. In this movement the marimbist should be careful not to overshadow the muted trumpet.

Stout and Levy's recording again is an excellent resource for prospective performers. The marimba part is well played by Stout even though the mallets he uses are somewhat hard and the roll speed is on the fast side.

MOVEMENT III

Movement III is challenging both technically and musically. Precise execution is essential because of the dense rhythmic texture and chromatic tonal texture. The form here is nebulous; like the previous two movements it consists of continuous contrapuntal development of evolving motives. A device that Wilder uses copiously in this movement is that of pedal points. He opens the movement with a pedal point E in the marimba which alternates with a descending chromatic line. Example 11 presents the opening passage for the marimba:

Ex. 11 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 1-2



Wilder uses this kind of pedal point figuration later in measures 7,8, 11, 12, 18 19, 20 to 23, 28, 29, 34, 35, and in measures 37 through 39. The pedal points are a recurring motif that Wilder uses to bind the movement together; more than half the measures in the movement have some kind of pedal point. Example 39 illustrates how the figure appears in closing measures 37 to 39:

Ex. 12 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 37-39

The final low C# was added by Stout; Wilder intended to end the movement with the octave G#'s. He was persuaded to change it by Stout and Levy.[3] The ending works equally well either way; the C# ends with a stronger sense of resolution, whereas ending with the G# leaves the listener with a sense of suspense. A performance could use either Stout's or Wilder's intended ending, depending on the preference of the performer. The pedal points are a recurring motif that Wilder uses to bind the movement together; more than half the measures in the movement have some kind of pedal point.

In the trumpet part there is again evidence of development of new motives through alteration of earlier motives. Compare measures 7 and 31:

Ex. 13 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. III, ms. 7 and 31

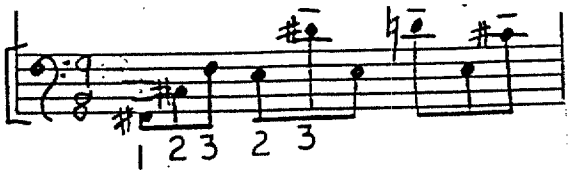
These measures are intervallically altered inversions of each other. Motivic relationships of this sort are observable throughout this movement. Many of these relationships are difficult to trace and not always conclusive.

The musical and ensemble difficulties in this movement are manifold. The texture is very dense and chromatic. There are very few chances for the trumpet player to take breaths. Stout and Levy's published edition has added breath marks and they must be observed, however, the pauses should be as slight as possible. The tempo in this

movement is more consistent than in the first two movements. Overall, the movement must have a sense of rhythmic drive and relentless forward motion.

Letter A introduces an F# on the third eighth note which should be played down an octave because that is how Wilder had written it originally. Stout changed it because the marimbas of the time did not go that low. Here is the measure as it should be played now:

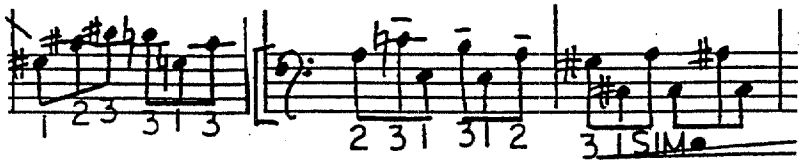
Ex. 14 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 11



This passage brings up the issue of the range of the marimba part. When Wilder was composing this work, he must have been aware that the low range of the marimba had recently been extended to a low A1. The many low B1 pitches in the first movement are evidence that he was. Yet he must have also been aware that this low F#1 pitch was not available at the time. It is mere conjecture, but it is more than likely that Wilder wrote the low F# not out of ignorance of the instrument's range but in the anticipation that eventually the range of the instruments would be expanded to accommodate his music.

The technical issues in this movement deal mainly with stickings. The movement comprises mostly single lines, but the use of all four mallets greatly facilitates performance of the more difficult passages. Example 15 presents an early example of this preferred sticking style in measures 4, 5 and 6:

Ex. 15 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 4-6

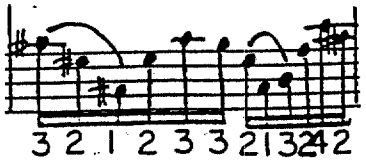


Passages including alluded to earlier pedal tones should be struck with the same mallet to emphasize the repetitive nature of the pedals. The pedal C#, shown in Ex. 16 notes must be played with mallet 2 in the left hand:

Ex. 16 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 18-19

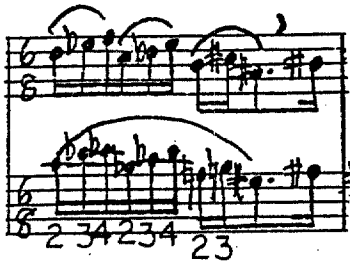
A very difficult sixteenth-note passage occurs at three after letter C. A possible sticking for the passage is shown in Example 17:

Ex. 17 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 29



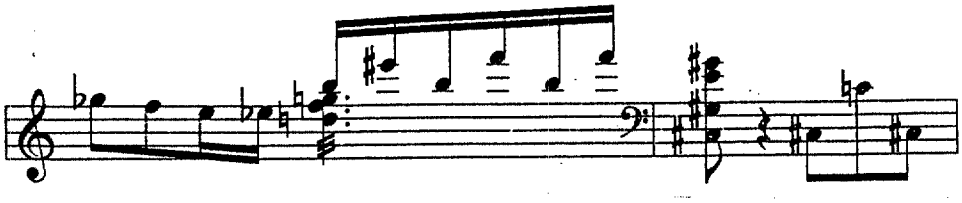
Another very difficult passage occurs at a measure before C. A sequential sticking using the top three mallets makes this passage much easier. Example 18 shows the measure with recommended stickings:

Ex. 18 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. III, ms. 26



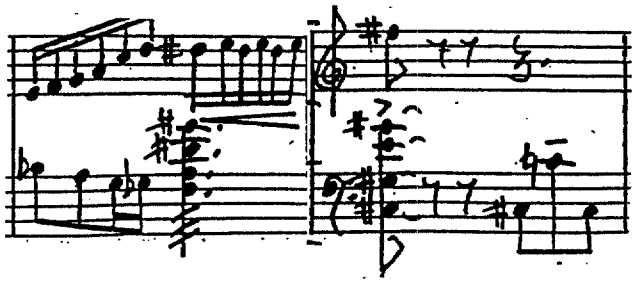
Four measures before the end of the movement there is a roll on beat two, which in Wilder's original notation looks like this:

Ex. 19 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 36-37(from Wilder's original parts)



There is a clearly notated B natural here that is impossible to play. The player could possibly try to play the measure as Wilder originally intended, while of course omitting the B, but even this is nearly impossible. The best solution to playing the problematic passage is the solution Stout provides in the published edition. Example 20 quotes Stout's edited version of this measure:

Ex. 20 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 36-37



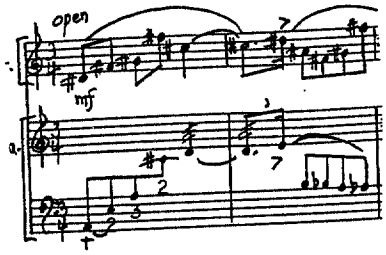
The third movement is one of the most difficult movements to execute. The marimba part is challenging but the trumpet part is incredibly difficult. The marimbist must be very sensitive to the phrasing of the trumpet player and to that end must be conscious of observing the breath marks while at the same time maintaining the rhythmic flow of the movement.

MOVEMENT IV

Movement IV is perhaps the most effective movement in the suite; it is very lyrical and the writing for marimba is idiomatic. Wilder makes very effective use of the instrument's low register in this movement. In his edition, Stout makes some significant embellishments which help greatly in making the piece even more idiomatic to the marimba.

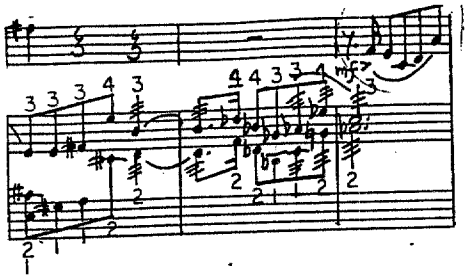
Surprisingly, the form of this movement is straightforward ternary form. The first section is comprised of measure 1 to letter A. The middle section, which is mostly developmental, consists of letters A and B. There is a truncated return to the opening theme at C. The two main motives developed in this movement are contained in the first two measures of the trumpet part. These measures are quoted in Example 19:

Ex. 21 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 1-2



Example 22 presents the first three measures after letter A, opening of the developmental section:

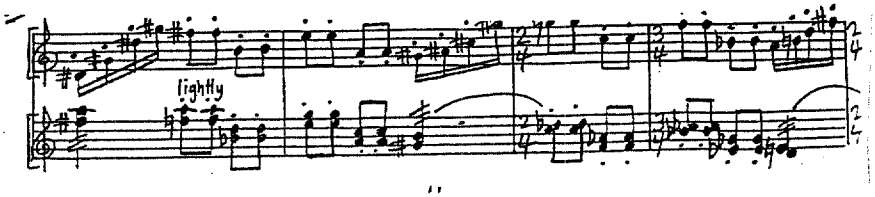
Ex. 22 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 10-11



Here the marimba restates the opening motive with an altered intervallic structure. In the third measure of this example the trumpet repeats the rhythm and contour of the second measure of the opening motive and alters the intervals.

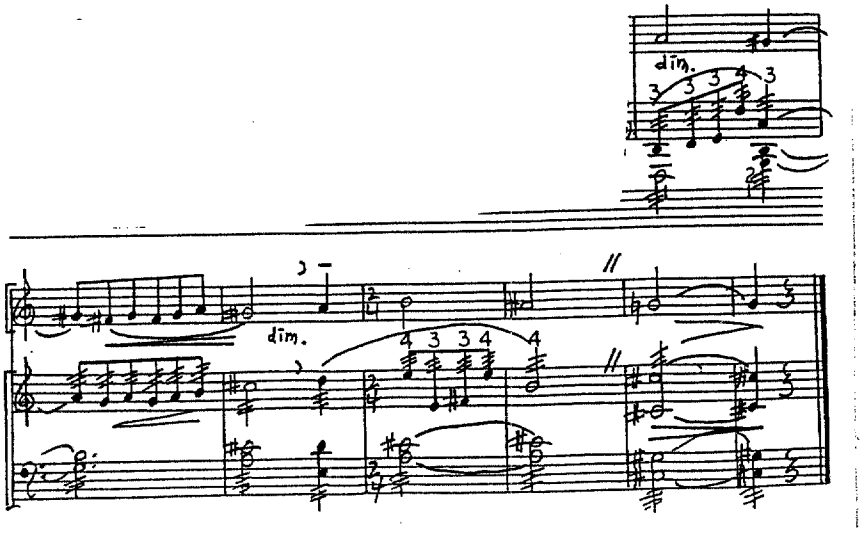
In measures 18 through 21 Wilder introduces a new idea consisting of light repeated staccato eighth notes a perfect fifth apart. It contrasts sharply with the constant variation on the opening motives. The staccato eighth notes serve as a kind of a mocking reference to the opening motive with its lyrical legato eighths. See example 23:

Ex. 23 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 18-21



At letter D, the closing section, Wilder combines the opening motive paraphrased in the marimba with a new idea in the trumpet. The closing cadence is a very interesting chord progression where an A maj9 chord resolves to a C# major chord. This cadence is an instance where Wilder is using modal interchange from C# phrygian or aeolian, which would normally contain the Amaj9 chord to a final cadence in C# ionian. The modal quality of the cadence is greatly enhanced by the presence of the B natural, which provides the pull to C#. These passages at letter D, are shown in example 22:

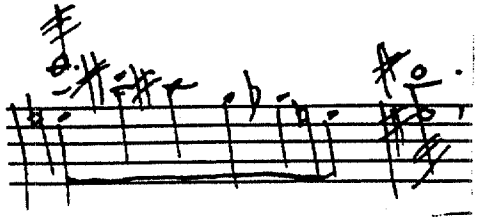
Ex. 24 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 34-end



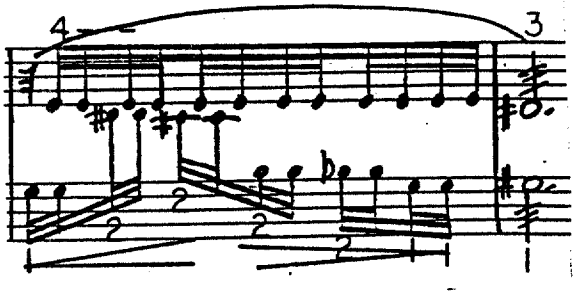
Very few problems arise in this movement with regard to sticking, most situations are either obvious or so technically simple that they could be handled with a variety of stickings. Usage of the outside 1 and 4 mallets is recommended in order to keep a flow in the many open position chord arpeggiations. Perhaps the most difficult passage in the movement occurs at letter A. A recommended sticking is contained in example 20 above. The other rather difficult passages occur in measures 3, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16, 17, and 27. In Stout's edition the hands are broken into two lines of alternating thirty-second notes. The first measures faithfully reproduce Wilder's intentions. In example 25a measure 3 is shown as it appears in Wilder's manuscript and in 25b as it appears in the edited version:

Ex. 25a,b *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba,* Mvt. IV, ms. 3

25a- Wilder manuscript



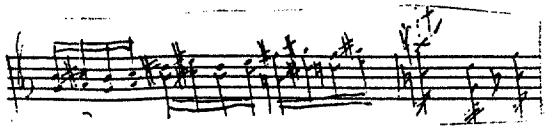
25b-Published version



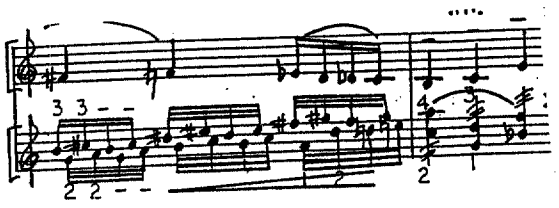
Measures 16, 17 and 27 in Stout's edition depart from the double stops Wilder originally intended as is evidenced if one compares measure 27 in Wilder's version and in the edited version. See examples 26a and 26b:

Ex. 26a,b *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 27

26a-



26b-



It is important to bear in mind that Wilder approved of Stout's alteration and that they were included at the editor's suggestion. It could be justifiably argued that measures 16, 17 and 27 be played, as Wilder intended, as sixteenth note double stops. It is a matter of personal preference how the marimbist decides to play these measures; both interpretations are musically effective. Stout's version is consistent with the earlier thirty-second note passages, while the original version by Wilder matches better perhaps the sixteenth-note based trumpet part.

The interpretive questions in this movement are few. The expression marks provided by Stout and Levy are clear and if adhered to, the music flows very smoothly. As in the previous movements, the marimbist must be sensitive to the trumpeter's phrasing and to the breath marks notated in the score. The mallets used should generally be soft. A graduated set of mallets should be used with softer mallets in the lower mallets; experimentation will determine the best choice of mallets.

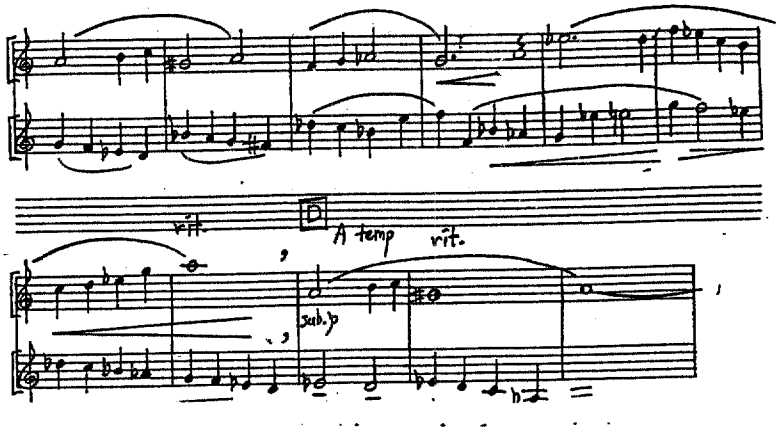
MOVEMENT V

Movement V is the only movement that could possibly vie with movement IV for the designation as "most effective movement" in the suite. The haunting melody stays

with the listener for a long time. Technically, there is nothing exceptional in the movement except for questions regarding variation in roll speed. What makes this movement so effective is its sparseness: the slow subtle counterpoint coupled with the plaintive melody.

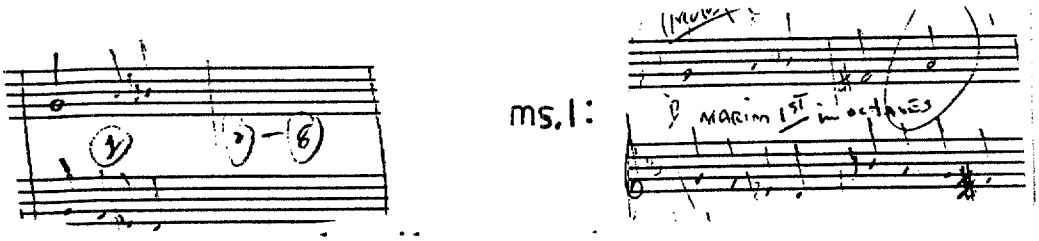
The form of the movement is a clear ternary design: letter A constitutes a statement of the theme, B a contrasting developmental section and letter C a return of the opening theme. The marimba has an eight-bar introduction, which returns as the counterpoint to the restatement of the theme at letter C. Example 27 presents letter C with the theme in the trumpet and the counter line in the marimba:

Ex. 27 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 30-37



The music at letter C poses one of the few technical problems in the movement: the application of octaves to the single line in the marimba part. In the autograph score Wilder indicates that the marimba part should copy measures 2 through 8 after he notates the first measure of C with a single line. Yet measures 2 through 8 have the line in octaves, not single lines. See example 28 from Wilder's score:

Ex. 28 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 30-37



The section sounds fuller and provides a more satisfying climax if the octaves are added. It is a subjective question and certainly a matter of taste. The performer could justifiably double everything 8va basso from letter C to the end. But such a solution departs from the sparse texture Wilder apparently wanted here. It is likely Wilder didn't want octaves in the marimba at letter C, when the Stout recording and Wilder's approval of the Stout/Levy edition are taken into account. Some performers do add the octaves anyway, considering them to be the most musical way of ending the movement.

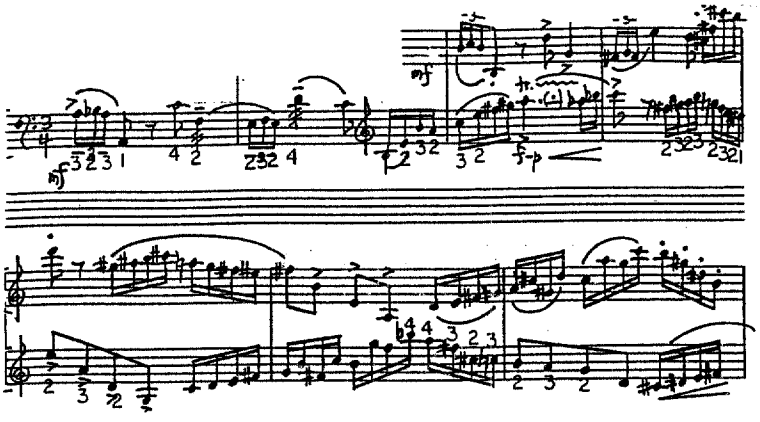
The mallets used in this movement should be very soft. The goal here is understatement. The music should be played with a slow sense of tragic resignation. The marimbist should linger on the long rolled notes as long as possible. The rolls should be free and unmetered and as slow as possible, while still achieving a sostenuto effect

MOVEMENT VI

The sixth movement is very difficult both musically and technically. Formally Wilder returns to the developmental continuous forms of the first three movements. There is a vague allusion to ternary design with the opening section consisting of measures 1 to letter B1, the middle section at B1 and the reprise coming at the fourth bar of letter C. But the form is obscured by extensive use of imitative counterpoint and canon between the trumpet and marimba. These canonic procedures are also used in the

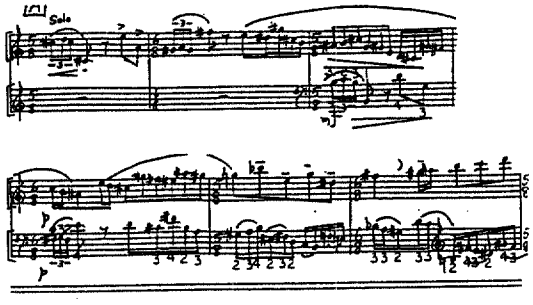
first movement of the *Suite for Flute and Marimba*. The canon in this movement begins at two measure intervals and then in the fifth bar contracts to one measure intervals. This continues until letter A where the opening theme is restated, now inverted with the trumpet stating the theme first. The theme has been truncated now and is in 5/8 meter. The canon continues at two measure intervals until it finally breaks a measure before B1. Example 29 shows the first six measures:

Ex. 29 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 1-6



Example 30 shows the continuation of the canon at letter A:

Ex. 30 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 13-18

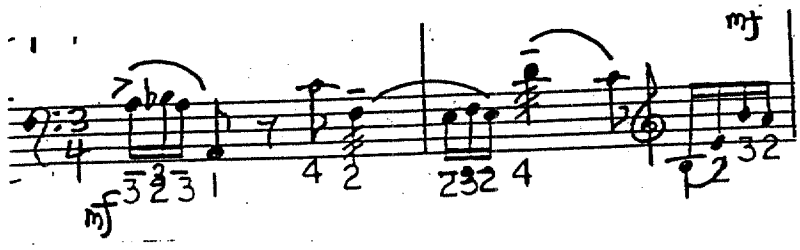


Performers of this movement must be cognizant of this canonic activity to effectively perform the movement. The juxtaposition of rhythms between the

instruments can be very difficult to coordinate. An awareness of the mirroring of one voice after another aids in keeping the ensemble together. Like movement III this movement is very difficult for the trumpet with few opportunities for breaths. The marimbist must carefully observe the breath marks here.

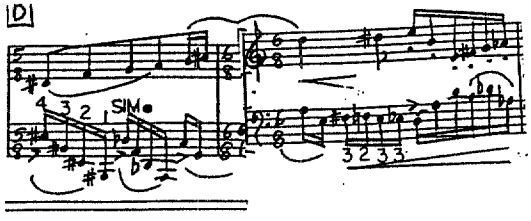
The movement is also very difficult for the marimbist as well. The use of all four mallets to execute the many disjunctive single line phrases will greatly facilitate performance of the movement. Example 31, the opening two measures of the marimba part, serves as an illustration:

Ex. 31 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 1-2



The sticking above immediately employs all four mallets to the single line passage. This approach to sticking should be applied throughout the movement. Perhaps the most difficult passage for the marimbist occurs at letter B. Example 32 illustrates how letter B should be sticked:

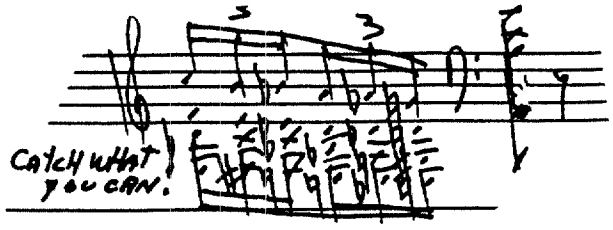
Ex. 32 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 21-22



The closing measure of the suite is one of the most difficult interpretive questions in all the works for marimba. Examples 33a and 33b show what Wilder wrote and Stout's solution to Wilder's impossible passage:

Ex. 33a,b *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 43

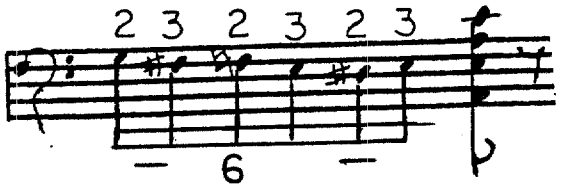
33a-Wilder's manuscript



33-bStout's edited version

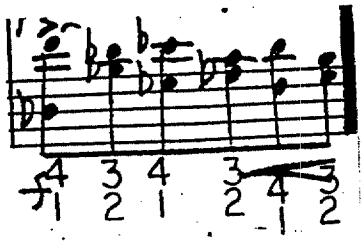
Wilder approved of Stout's version. It is arguable, however, that a better solution to realizing this passage would be to take either the top or bottom line of the sequence of chords, play that line and catch a revoiced version of the closing A minor chord. Example 34 provides the recommended solution to this final measure:

Ex. 34 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 43



The middle section at letter B1 is also somewhat difficult. The double stops should be executed by alternating the outside and inside mallets. See example 35 for the recommended sticking:

Ex. 35 *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 23



The mallets used in this movement should be relatively hard.

SUMMARY

The *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba* is essentially a somewhat flawed work. Movements III and VI are very awkward technically for the marimba. Moreover the lack of motivic continuity between the movements in the suite gives less of a sense of completeness than was the case in the *Suite for Solo Guitar.* Nevertheless the suite contains a considerable amount of quality music, especially in movements IV and V. These movements are a harbinger of the beautiful marimbistic writing Wilder exhibits in the *Suite for Flute and Marimba.*

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[1] Stout Questionnaire
[2] Stout concurs with the author's recommendation. In a telephone interview he said he always used four mallets when playing Wilder's music.
[3] From a telephone interview with Gordon Stout.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PERFORMANCE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE *SUITE FOR FLUTE AND MARIMBA*

OVERVIEW

The second work Wilder composed for marimba was composed in 1977 for Gordon Stout and flutist Virginia Nanzetta. The timbral combination of flute and marimba works exceedingly well. Like the trumpet suite, the suite is in six movements, with a sequence of tempos and styles mirroring the six movements of the *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba.* Below is an overview of the six movements and their form:

Movement:	Form:
I ♩. = 69-72	Through composed
II ♩ = 120	Through composed
III ♩. = 66-80	Modified Rondo
IV ♩ = 72-80 with simplicity	Through composed
V ♩ = 56 BERCEUSE, cantabile	Passacaglia/Ostinato
VI ♩ = 132-144 LIVELY	Modified Ternary

The first movement is a contrapuntal and canonic piece in a brisk 6/8 meter. The second is a slow ballad. The third movement is quick and in triple meter. Movement IV is

homophonic and lyrical. The fifth movement is a sparse slow ballad in G minor. Movement VI is a fast and contrapuntal closing movement.

There was a considerable amount of editing done by both Stout and Nanzetta over the course of a few years of performances.[1] This editing culminated in the edition published by Margun Music. The marimba writing in this suite is idiomatic and very lyrical. The texture of the music is typical of Wilder's music in its pervasive imititation and counterpoint. The forms are mostly through composed and developmental, sometimes with a loose ternary background form. There is no obvious pattern of cyclic treatment of themes and motives between movements in the suite. The music here is lighter, with the counterpoint not quite as dense as in the trumpet suite.

The technical challenges in the piece are not overwhelmingly difficult; most of the challenges are musical and related to ensemble playing with the flute. Movements IV and VI are the most technically challenging pieces for the marimbist. The most characteristic aspect of this music is its almost endless lyrical quality; phrases often elide into new phrases, and lyrical melodies are juxtaposed contrapuntally to create a rich tapestry of contrapuntal lines. The tonal material is modal in character with an abundance of transient modulation. Wilder's work here resulted in perhaps his most lyrical writing for the marimba. The movements will be looked at consecutively and their respective performance problems will be addressed in the remainder of the chapter.

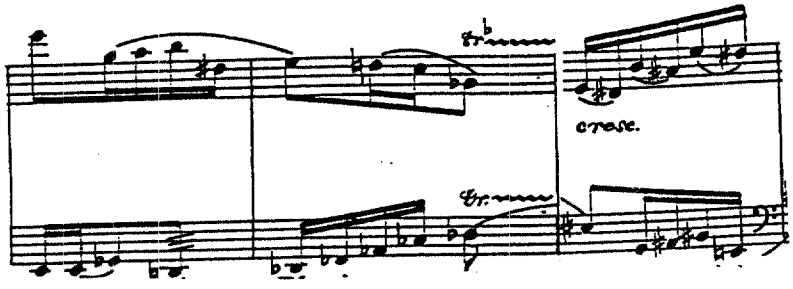
MOVEMENT I

Movement I begins in canon at the interval of a minor 3rd. This imitative texture persists throughout the movement. The canon breaks briefly at letter A, but returns four

measures after A. The canon breaks again at five measures before the end; these last five measures constitute a coda. There is a sense of constant modulation throughout the movement. The music is tonal but the shifts are so frequent that they create a kaleidoscopic shimmering of various tonal hues. Wilder uses modal interchange and jazz harmonic progressions to achieve this sense of constant modulation.

Measures 3 through 5 are a good example of Wilder's use of jazz harmonic progression in the movement. See measures 3 through 5 in example 1:

Ex. 1 *Suite for Flute and Marimba,* Mvt. I, ms. 3-5



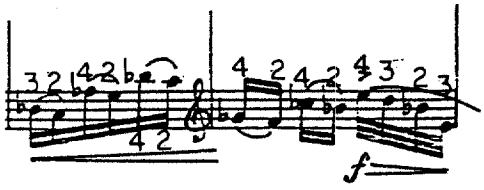
C B7#5 Bbmin7b5 Ab9 Dbmin(C#min)

The only chord in this passage which seems unorthodox is the Bbmin7b5, yet if there were an Eb bass note in the chord it would be an Eb sus7b9 chord, which progresses very correctly to the Ab9 chord.

The technical challenges in the movement involve deciding with stickings that enable the performer to execute quick and fleeting passages that allow him to be in good

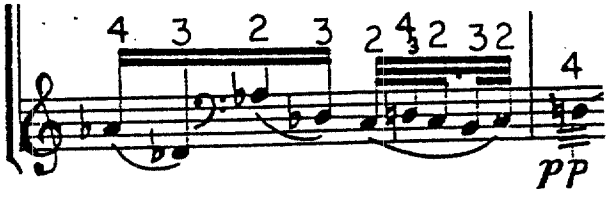
position to execute the following passages. Measures 8 and 9 provide a good example of the kind of creative sticking choices the marimbist must utilize in order to navigate the difficult passages gracefully. See example 2:

Ex. 2 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 8-9



One measure before A presents perhaps the most difficult passage in the movement. Example 3 displays a suggested sticking for this measure:

Ex. 3 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. I, ms. 26



The balance between the marimba and flute is a very significant issue in this movement because of the many passages in the low register of the marimba. The marimbist must be careful not to overshadow the flute during these passages.

In Wilder's original manuscript for this piece there are three "dolce" markings that were left out of the published edition. They should have been left in; they are a clear indication of the composer's overall intent for this piece. Without them the movement could easily be interpreted in a more aggressive manner than is appropriate. The "dolce" marking appears three separate times in Wilder's score: at measures 7, 11 and 30. The recording by Stout and Nanzetta, while very well played, is taken at too fast a tempo. Wilder's original metronome marking is actually eighth note equals 144 beats per minute. This is significantly slower than what it is marked on the published edition and how it is played on the recording. If the tempo is too fast the subtle harmonic flow becomes very difficult to discern. It is recommended that the piece be played slower than the metronome marking on the published edition. Wilder's original marking is perhaps too slow, somewhere in between is probably the best tempo for the movement.

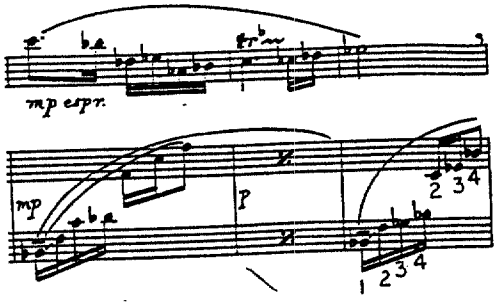
The mallet selection in the piece should be fairly hard. A graduated set of mallets of differing hardness would be effective. The lowest mallet could be of medium hardness, the inner mallets slightly harder and the top mallet even slightly harder than the inner mallets.

MOVEMENT II

The role of the marimba in this movement is essentially accompanimental and the flute is melodic. Movement II represents the least contrapuntal movement in all the works for the marimba. For much of the movement, the texture is flute melody with marimba accompaniment. The form of the movement is ambiguous; the movement is held together by a recurring ostinato-like arpeggiation of a minor chord with an added

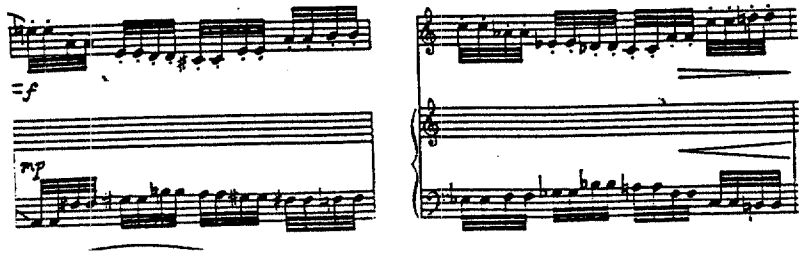
ninth in the marimba and a melodic motif which is never restated exactly. Example 4 presents the first entrance of the ostinato figure and the motif in measure 2:

Ex. 4 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 2-3



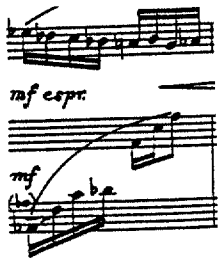
Another motive occurs in measures 8 and 9 consisting of a passage of thirty-second notes. This motive recurs at eight measures before the end of the piece. Measures 8 and 9 are also one of the few passages where the marimba is not in an accompanimental role. A motive similar to this appears in the second movement of the *Sextet for Marimba and Woodwind Quintet.* The thirty-second note motive from measures 8 and 9 are shown in example 5:

Ex. 5 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 8-9



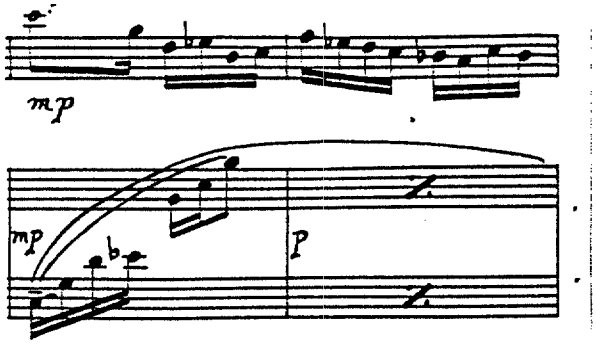
The arpeggiated ostinato figure recurs at measure 10 with a new motive stated in the flute part. See example 6:

Ex. 6 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt., ms. 10



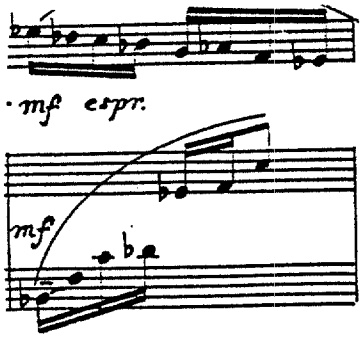
The motives shown in the above examples are not strictly restated in the movement, except for the arpeggiated accompanimental motive. The shape of the motives are retained but the intervallic structure is often very altered. Here are two examples of recurrences of the motives. The first example occurs at measure 19 and is an alteration of the motive from measure 3. It is shown here in example 7:

Ex. 7 *Suite for Flute and Marimba,* Mvt. II, ms. 19



The next example occurs at letter B in measure 28 and is an alteration of the motive from measure 10. See example 8:

Ex. 8 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 28

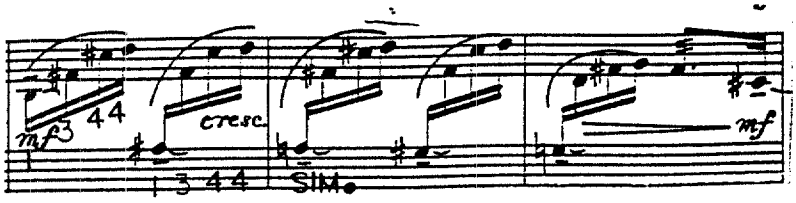


These motives recur often in the work but are always somewhat mutated. This is another example of Wilder's "continuously developmental" approach to composition, somewhat akin to the theme and variation process.

In addition to being the least contrapuntal of all the movements, movement II is also one of the least chromatic and modulatory of all the movements. Much of the opening to letter A stays close to the key of Bb minor. The section at A is modulatory and developmental. The section at letter B moves back to the key of Bb minor. The key scheme here indicates an underlying ternary design, yet the motives do not match this ternary scheme. These contradictory indicators are what make analyzing form in Wilder's music so exceptionally difficult.

At six measures before letter B Wilder uses a technique known to jazz theorists as "Voice Implied Harmony" where one voice moves in a stepwise fashion while the other voices remain the same.[2] See example 9:

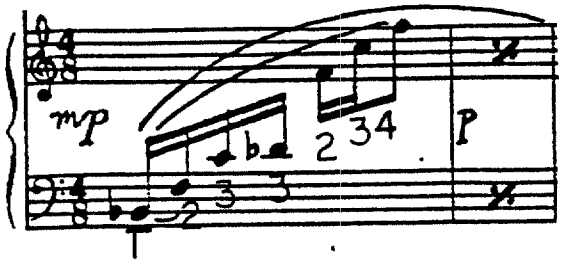
Ex. 9 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 22-24



The chords in this passage are Bmin9 with a chromatically descending bass. The harmony essentially stays the same, while the illusion of harmonic motion is created by the descending bass line. The passage is another instance where Wilder is incorporating jazz harmonic practice into his concert music.

The technical demands posed by this movement are minimal. The marimbist should use all four mallets to play the open position arpeggiated ostinato figures. Example 10 illustrates how these arpeggiations should be sticked:

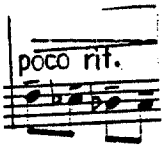
Ex. 10 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 1



The Ab1 in measure 10 should be played as written. Its inclusion in the published edition points to the probability that Stout and Wilder both anticipated that eventually the marimba would extend in its low range so that this Ab1 would eventually be playable. At the time this edition was published, the marimba extended no lower than an A1.

In the measure before B the marimbist should insert a slight ritard. This is very effective and helps lead back to the return of the original key of Bb minor. See example 11:

Ex. 11 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. II, ms. 26



Movement II is very delicate; the marimbist must be careful not to overbalance the flute. It should be played slowly; the indicated eighth note equals 120 beats per minute is too fast. Wilder actually marks it in his score as eighth note equals 60. This is too slow, however, and indicates possibly a mistake on his part. The tempo is not rigid in the movement and should range anywhere from 90 to 100 beats per minute for an eighth note. Wilder included the expression mark "morendo" at the end in his original score; this was left out of the published edition.

The mallets used by the marimba should be very soft and graduated in hardness with the softest mallet in the number one left hand mallet.

MOVEMENT III

The third movement marks a return to Wilder's typical contrapuntal texture. The form is again somewhat amorphous but there are similarities to rondo form in this movement. Here is a schematic of the form of the piece as a rondo:

Section X: measures 1 to letter A

Section Y: letter A

Section X1: letter B

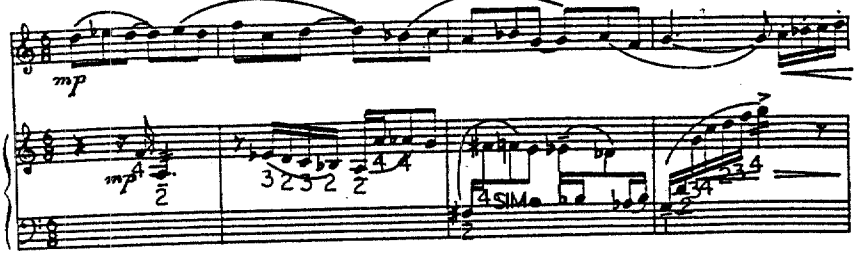
Section Z: letter C (contrasting material)

Section X2: letter D

Coda: letter E

Letter D is almost an exact tonal and motivic recapitulation. The main motives developed in the X sections of the piece are contained in the first four measures of the piece. The trumpet plays an ascending minor second interval while the marimba executes a prominent descending minor sixth interval. The trumpet continues to develop the motif in seconds in a sequential fashion while the marimba introduces a number of new sixteenth-note based ideas. See the opening measures of the movement quoted in example 12:

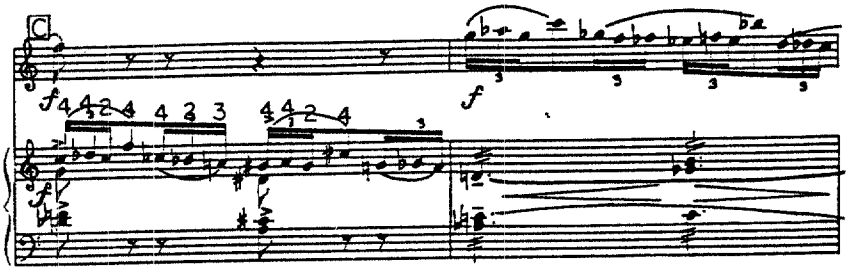
Ex. 12 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 1



These motives quoted in example 12 are the material on which the X sections are based.

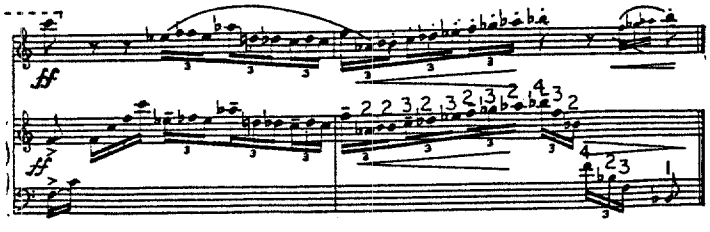
At letter A, there is a new triplet-based motive introduced in the trumpet. This is the motive that is developed in the contrasting Y and Z sections of the movement. The motive is shown in example 13 at letter C in the marimba, at the beginning of the Z section:

Ex. 13 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 28



The coda is a brief summation of the movement, which contains elements of all the major motives from the X and the Y/Z sections. The closing passage is a variation on the triplet-based motive from letter A. It is also one of the most difficult passages technically for the marimba. See example 14:

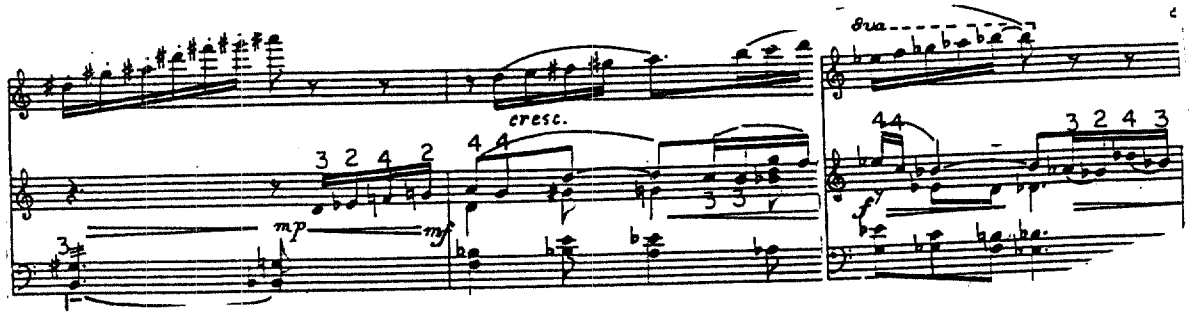
Ex. 14 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 44-45



Rhythm is the key to this movement. The motives are not particularly melodic; they are fragmented and rhythmically based, not lyrical. Stout says that this "is a movement for dancers at heart."[3] The tempo in the movement therefore should have no trace of fluctuation or rubato. The rhythmic aspect of the music bears similarities to movements III and VI of the trumpet suite and movement III in the sextet. The movement should be played with a gigue-influenced lilt.

The technical demands in this movement are significant for the marimbist. There are many difficult chromatic runs which require complex sticking choices. One of the most difficult sections occurs at six measures prior to letter C. The single line passages interspersed with the four voiced chords makes for a challenging passage. Example 15 presents a suggested sticking for this passage:

Ex. 15 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 22-24



Another very difficult passage with similar problems occurs at letter C in measure 28. In example 13 there is a suggested sticking shown for this measure.

In example 14, the closing two measures of the movement are shown. The passage is very treacherous for the marimbist; especially difficult is the descending open

fifth passage covering two octaves in the second half of the last measure. A viable alteranative reading would be to raise the last sixteenth-note triplet up an octave. The sticking for the passage remains the same whether it is played as written or with the last triplet raised an octave. It is certainly preferable to play the passage as written, the original way being undeniably more dramatic and virtuosic. Yet the chances of missing the final notes are great and such a mistake is really catastrophic, considering that these are the final notes in the movement.[4]

The third movement in the end is mostly about rhythm and "groove"[5]. The players must always strive to find the proper balance between a sense of energetic forward motion and the tendency to rush. If the movement is rushed, many of the intricate passages will be lost and the dance-like feel will be destroyed. It is important for the performers to maintain a strong internal pulse because the many off-beat entrances can cause confusion as to where the measure begins.

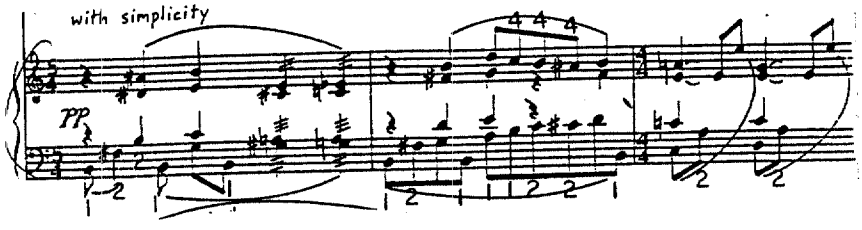
MOVEMENT IV

Movement IV is one of the most effective movements in all the works Wilder wrote for marimba. Stout considers this the most difficult movement in the suite to make work.[6] The difficulties are mainly in the ensemble playing; the music is very fluid with many subtle ritards and accelerandos. It is imperative that the flutist and marimbist interpret these tempo fluctuations together. The marimba part is predominately homophonic but there is still much contrapuntal interplay between the top line of the marimba and the trumpet. The tonal centers tend to linger a little longer than is typical for Wilder's music. The movement begins in B major and ends in B minor with many

transient modulations in between. Yet the overall character of the music is less chromatic than most of Wilder's music. The form here is ambiguous; themes are developed throughout the movement, yet there are no overt sectional divisions.

Two of the main motives developed in the movement occur in the opening three-measure marimba introduction seen in example 16:

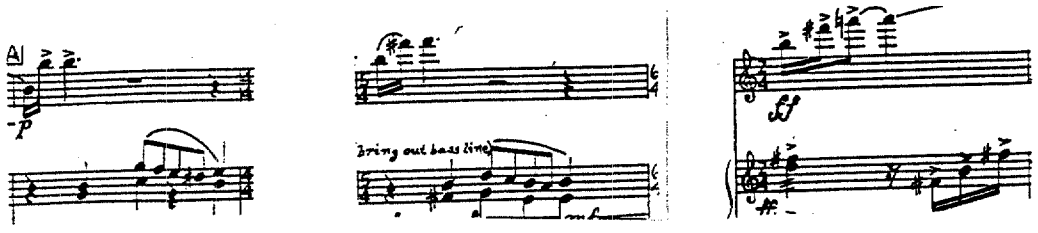
Ex. 16 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 1-3



This phrase from the introduction reoccurs in various states of alteration throughout the movement: it appears in measures 1, 7, 11, 19, 25, and 33. Throughout the movement secondary figures are introduced that reappear later in the movement, sometimes much later in the movement and in an altered form. The sixteenth-note figure that appears at letter A reappears again at the third measure before C and also at the end in the flute. Three separate entries of this figure are given in example 17:

Ex. 17a,b,c *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 11, 26, 42

17a 17b 17c

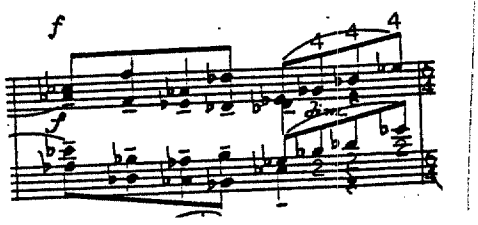


The main challenges in this movement for the marimbist involve phrasing and articulating with the flutist. There is considerable ebb and flow with regard to rhythmic interpretation. The opening marimba introduction seen above in example 16 should set the tone for this rubato approach to tempo in this movement. In the first measure the marimbist should begin delicately, almost tentatively, but by beats two and three of the measure, however, there should be a slight accelerando. Then in beats four and five there should be an equally slight ritardando. Measure two should be slightly faster, while measure three should slow down slightly. A very subtle rubato should be employed throughout this passage and in most of the movement. The recording by Stout and Nanzetta provides an excellent example of the kind of approach to tempo and rhythm that should be used in performing the movement. Most of the slight ritards and accelerandos should be felt intuitively by the marimbist and flutist together.

Technically this movement is difficult because of the combination of the chordal texture below interspersed with melody in the top voice, as is seen in the introduction. Similar performance practice concerns occur in the second movement of the Guitar Suite.

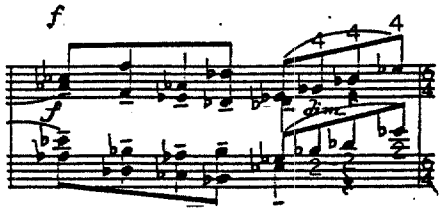
The most challenging passage in this movement occurs in measure 17. In this measure the marimbist must execute many simultaneous double vertical strokes in both hands which make wide interval shifts. The "poco affretto" ("a little hurried") adds to the difficulty of execution. The marimbist should practice the passage slowly and with hands separated at first. See example 18 that quotes the passage just described:

Ex. 18 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 17



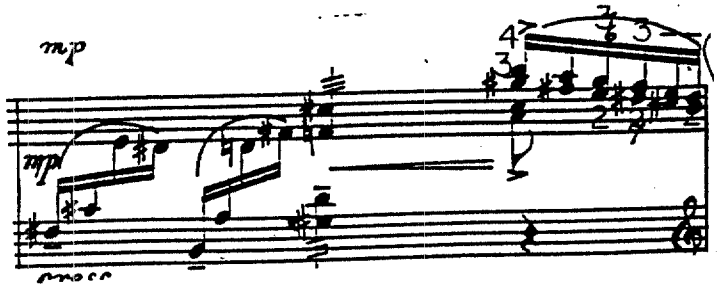
The passage which occurs at three measures before C is also difficult. A slight ritard beginning on beat four will make it more manageable. A suggested sticking is given in example 19:

Ex. 19 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms. 26



Another difficult passage appears on beat four of the third measure after letter A, with a descending line of parallel third double stops. See example 20 for a suggested sticking for these thirds:

Ex. 20 *Suite for Flute for Marimba*, Mvt. IV, ms.13-14



The mallets used in this piece should be relatively soft and graduated in hardness. A similar selection of mallets to those used in movement II should serve the performer well.

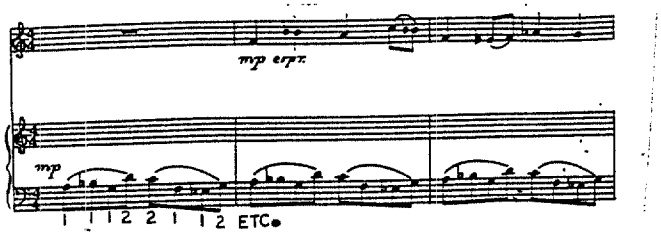
In this movement Stout and Nanzetta introduced many dynamics changes from Wilder's original score. These changes were very effective and help considerably in giving the movement shape. The most remarkable thing about the piece is that Wilder is able to make the marimba function simultaneously as an accompanimental and contrapuntal voice to the flute. Jazz mallet players would do well to study this movement, and apply its techniques to their solo realizations of jazz standards on the marimba and vibraphone.

MOVEMENT V

Wilder uses a recurring four measure ostinato figure that pervades most of the piece. The pattern so closely resembles a passacaglia that the movement easily could be interpreted as a modern adaptation of this familiar baroque pattern. The ostinato is dropped at letter B in what is a contrasting section. The overall form could be considered ternary with opening and closing sections built on the passacaglia ostinato and the middle

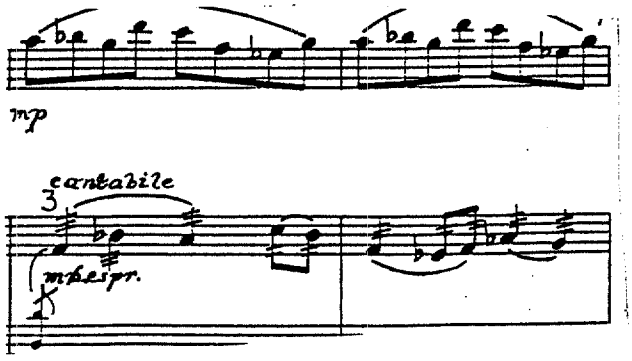
section consisting of letter B. Because passacaglia is actually more a technique than a form, it would probably be more accurate to consider the overall form to be ternary. The ostinato is played by the marimba in the first four measures. The first statement is shown in example 21:

Ex. 21 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. V, Ms. 1-4



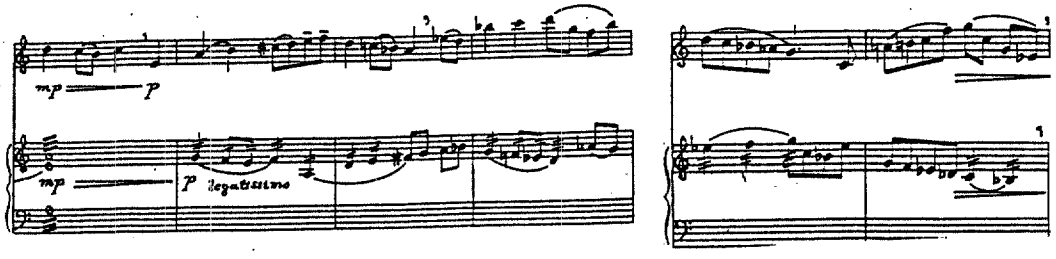
At letter A the ostinato is taken up by the flute an octave above and the flute's theme is transferred to the marimba in its original octave in a passage based on invertible counterpoint. It is shown in example 22:

Ex. 22 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 8-9



Letter B is developmental and as was noted earlier, does not include the ostinato. The figure first played by the flute is an alteration of the opening theme from measure two. This quickly evolves into new and contrasting material by the third measure of B, where a canon at the interval of a fifth between the flute and marimba begins. In example 23 the canonic section occuring at two measures after B is quoted:

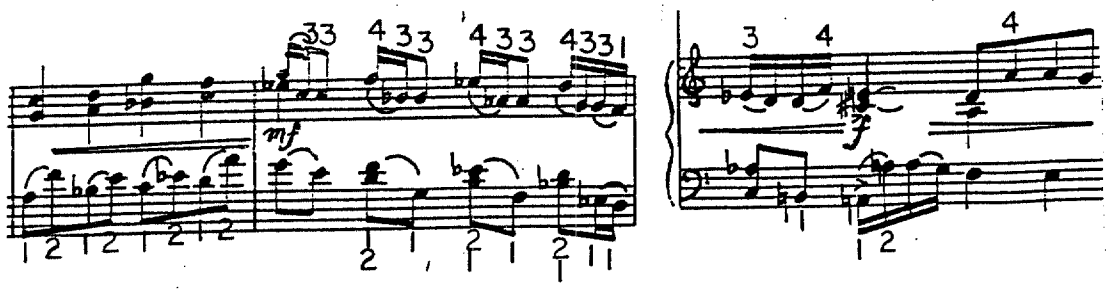
Ex. 23 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 17-22



The movement closes with a coda at the fifth measure after C. The theme is stated here by the flute in the extreme high register while the marimba breaks into a four voice chorale-like texture beneath the flute.

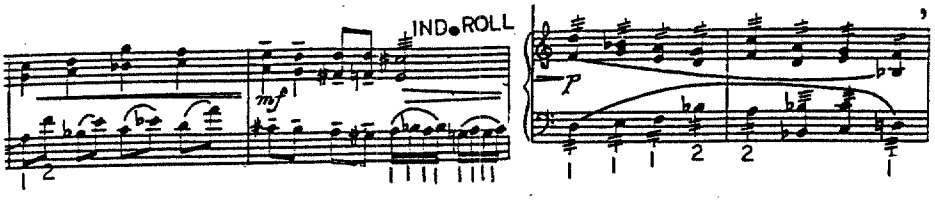
Technically there are few demands made in this movement. Measures 5 through 7 constitute probably the most difficult passage. A suggested sticking for these measures is shown in example 24:

Ex. 24 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 5-7



In measures 11 through 14 there is a similar passage that requiring some sensible sticking patterns. It should also be noted that on beat three in the right hand the marimbist should use an independent roll to achieve the half note roll on the E and C#. See example 25 for a suggested sticking for these measures:

Ex. 25 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. V, ms. 11-14



The ostinato should always be played in the left hand by the marimbist, regardless of whether it is played alone or with upper chord tones in the right hand. This single handed approach will give the ostinato a more individualized sound and enable the marimbist to play the figure with a steady dynamic and tempo. The suggested sticking for the ostinato is contained in example 21 above.

The main challenges in this movement are musical in nature. The tempo is slow and the texture is sparse and light. The movement engenders a strong temptation to rush because of the sparse texture. Yet the music must be played patiently at a steady slow tempo. Most of the expression marks are Stout's and Nanzetta's; they serve the music well by giving it a clearer shape. Wilder's opening subtitle of "berceuse" indicates Wilder's feeling that the music thought of as a lullaby. According to Stout, Wilder always envisioned a mother holding her child for this movement. This is the only known indication of any kind of programmatic intent for any of the works for marimba.

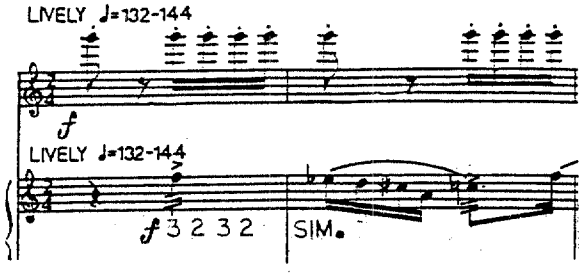
In the recording of this movement Stout and Nanzetta play the movement faster than the indicated quarter note equals 56 beats per minute. The movement is difficult for the flutist at a slow tempo. The long phrases make it difficult for the flutist to breathe. If possible the movement should be played slower than the recording. The 56 metronome marking is probably impossibly slow, but the players should strive to get as close as possible to the indicated tempo. The mallets used in this piece should be soft in the left hand but rather medium in hardness in the right hand.

MOVEMENT VI

The final movement is very fast and bears similarity in mood with the final movement of the guitar suite. The form is a free ternary design: the first section consists of the opening all the way to letter B, the middle section is a short section with an ostinato in the marimba at letter B, the flute plays a short four measure phrase which leads back to the reprise at letter C. The first seven measures of the reprise are almost identical to the opening seven measures of the movement.

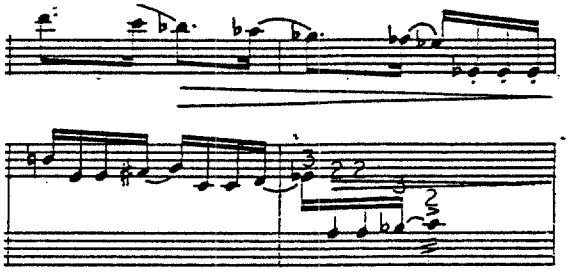
The motives in this movement are very amorphous with regard to their intervallic shape. The two main motives are essentially rhythmic in nature and are contained in the first two measures. The first motive is a repeated sixteenth-note figure on beat two of measure one in the flute part. The second rhythmic motif used in the movement comes on the second beat of measure two in the marimba and is the dotted eighth sixteenth-note figure shown in example 26:

Ex. 26 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 1-2



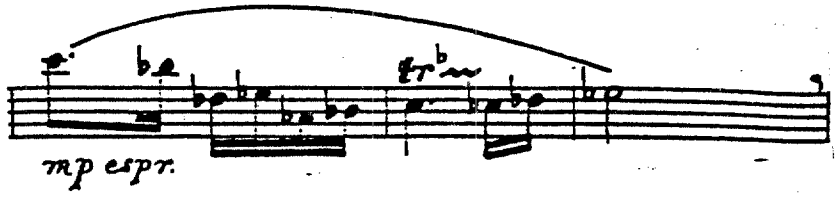
These two rhythmic shapes are given many different melodic shapes in the movement. One of the more prominent sixteenth-note melodic figures first occurs in measures 5 and 6. See example 27:

Ex. 27 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 5-6

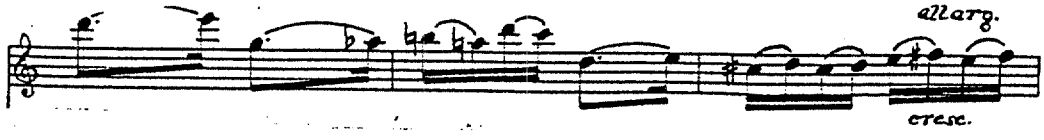


In the flute part in these measures there is a variation on the dotted eighth sixteenth-note figure, which consists of a descending whole note scale. Wilder uses these motives to create other variations based on the sixteenth and dotted eighth sixteenth note motive. Some of the motives bear similarity to earlier motives in the suite. The diminished seventh chord arpeggiations in measure 8 are reminiscent of the half diminished arpeggios from movement I (see examples 29 below and 1 above). The four measure phrase that the flute plays in the B section is a free inversion of the flute melody from movement two. Example 28 provides a comparison of the two motives:

Ex. 28a *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI ms. 2-3 Mvt. II



28b ms. 34-35

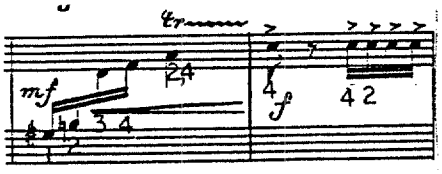


There are many other instances where certain motives in the sixth movement are similar to earlier motives in the suite but it must be stated that it is highly possible and even probable that most of these resemblances are coincidental or unconscious references on

the part of Wilder. The above-noted instances of references to earlier motives could very likely be coincidental. Nonetheless, there is a hint of cyclism in this final movement and it helps greatly to foster the sense of finality in this final movement that is lacking in the final movement of the *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba.*

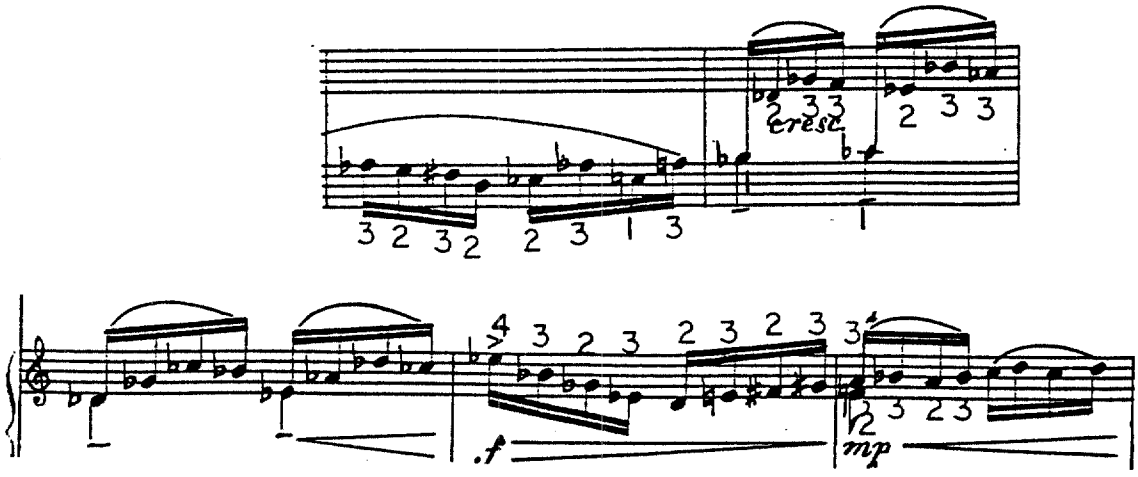
Technically, this movement is extremely difficult, mainly because of the speed and the many angular chromatic sixteenth-note lines. In both the published edition and Wilder's manuscript there are many quarter note and dotted eighth-note rolls notated. Stout recommends playing these as sixteenth notes in order to maintain the rhythmic flow.[7] A wise choice of stickings for difficult passages will also help facilitate a smooth rhythmic flow. These stickings are shown in example 29:

Ex. 29 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 8-9



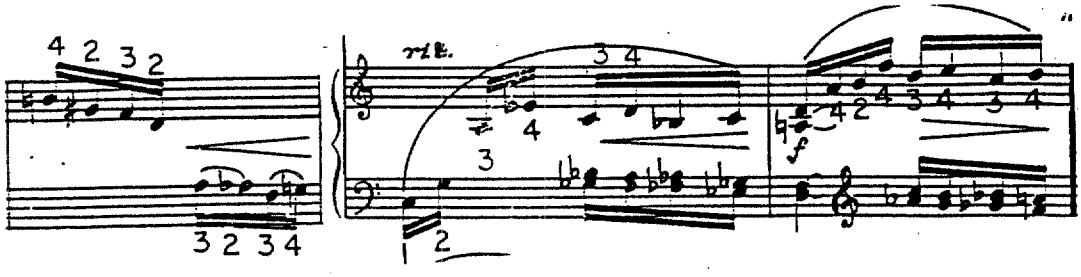
The tremolo marking should be played as sixteenth-note triplets beginning on a B natural. Another difficult section beginning at six measures before letter A is quoted in example 30 with a suggested sticking for these measures:

Ex. 30 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 17-21



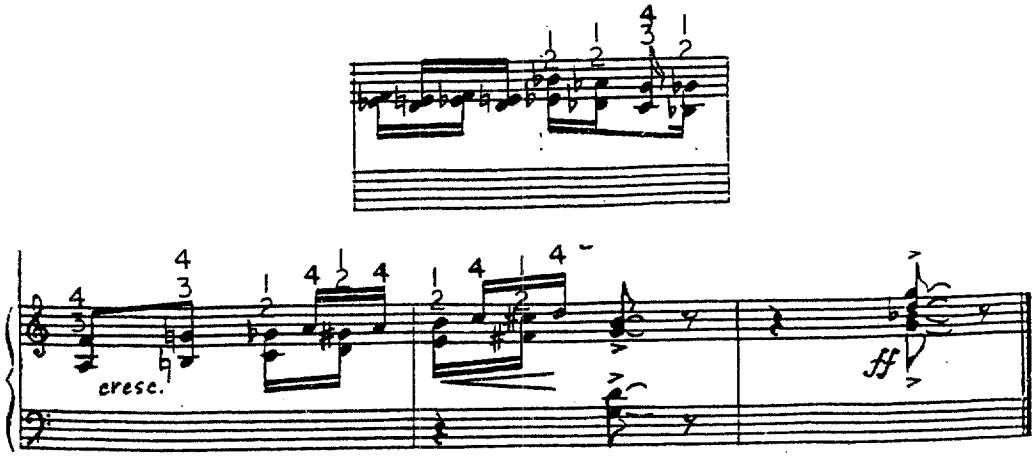
The passage occuring three measures before B is perhaps the most difficult passage in the movement. The ritard must be drastic here; the marimbist must essentially slow the pace to half time within the space of two measures. A suggested sticking for these measures is seen in example 31:

Ex. 31 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 30-32



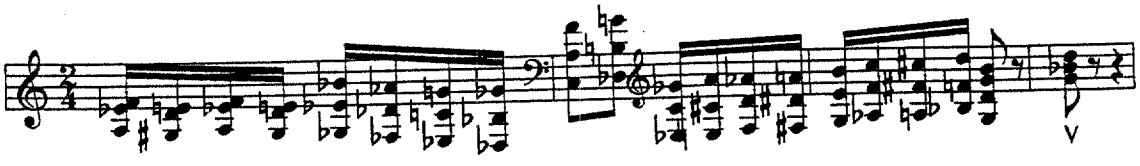
The last four measures are also extremely difficult and must be executed with a combination of left and right handed double vertical strokes. See example 32 for a suggested sticking for this closing passage:

Ex. 32 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 45-48



The passage is actually a simplification of Wilder's original version which is unplayable. Example 33 quotes the closing measures in Wilder's hand:

Ex. 33 *Suite for Flute and Marimba*, Mvt. VI, ms. 44-47



A d natural occurs in measure 44 on beat two, while in the published version it is a Db. Stout says that he is fairly certain that the note should be a Db because the corresponding measure 7 from the opening also has a Db. The D natural as Wilder has it does not sound out of place in the end and it would not be unlike Wilder to slightly alter the closing reprise of an earlier passage. Alas, since the composer is deceased correct reading of the D in measure 44 will never be known for certain. Gordon Stout should be given the benefit of the doubt here and it is finally recommended that the note be played as written in the published edition, as a Db.

The final movement of this suite should have a relentless quality; a determined sprint to the finish. The recording of this movement is excellent; the performance marimba part could hardly be excelled, either technically or musically. The marimbist should use generally hard mallets in this movement.

SUMMARY

Overall, the *Suite for Flute and Marimba* is Wilder's most successful work for marimba. The pacing of the movements is very comfortable and they fit together well. The suite in general is more cohesive than the trumpet suite and the writing for marimba is more idiomatic to the instrument. Much of the credit for this should go to Gordon Stout's careful editing of the marimba part.

The flute suite also exhibits a marked sensitivity on Wilder's part to the timbral aspects of the marimba in combination with a woodwind instrument. This sensitivity reaches its full flowering in the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, where the strongest aspect of the music is the orchestration of the marimba with the various wind

instruments. As a result of his subtle use of the timbral qualities of the marimba in combination with the various winds, Wilder created in the sextet sounds that "had never been heard before."[8]

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[1] Stout questionnaire.
[2] Gene Rush. *Jazz Theory Handbook* (Memphis: Gene Rush Publications, 1992) p. 37
[3] Stout questionnaire.
[4] The author made this alteration when he performed the work.
[5] See appendix A.
[6] Stout questionnaire.
[7] Stout questionnaire.
[8] Alec Wilder. *Music for Marimba* , liner notes.

CHAPTER EIGHT

PERFORMANCE ISSUES PERTAINING TO THE *SEXTET FOR MARIMBA AND WIND QUINTET*

OVERVIEW

Wilder is considered to be one of this century's greatest composers of woodwind quintets; indeed, his thirteen woodwind quintets have become staples in the repertoire. Tedrow Perkins states in his master's thesis "...the twelve (quintets) represent the most monumental collection of woodwind quintets since the time of Reicha."[1] At the time Perkins wrote his thesis in 1975, Wilder had not yet composed his thirteenth quintet (1977) or this quintet with marimba. Wilder wrote his first quintet in 1954. The *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet* is only the second instance in his compositional career when he felt compelled to add another instrument to the quintet. The first time occured in 1966 when Wilder composed the *Suite for Baritone Saxophone, Horn and Wind Quintet*.[2] This work was written for famous jazz saxophonist Gerry Mulligan. Thus, Wilder composed a total of 15 woodwind quintets altogether if these two exceptional works are included. The fact that Wilder composed the sextet for marimba in a genre he was so well known for, indicates the high regard he had for the marimba as an instrument and also for Stout, the performer for whom the work was written. Wilder knew that if a new composition of his were to receive widespread attention it would be a woodwind

quintet. At the time of the composition of the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet a* quintet by Alec Wilder was a major musical event. The fact that this was possibly Wilder's last work in the genre only magnifies the importance of this remarkable composition.

The *Sextet for Marimba and Woodwind Quintet* premiered on Feb. 5th, 1978 in Philadelphia. It was performed by Stout and the Philadelphia Woodwind Quintet.[3] In a critique of this performance in the next day's *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin,* reviewer Tom DiNardo characterized the music as "...sincere.., sometimes gnarled and wry, witty and ever filled with a sense of wonder." [4] The sense of wonder in this composition stems from Wilder's fascination with the timbral possibilities of combining the marimba with woodwinds. In this encounter with the marimba at the end of his career, Wilder had indeed come upon a palette of sounds that he had never before heard and he was obviously pleased with how well the marimba combined with woodwind instruments. DiNardo says that the music at times is "gnarled and wry" and this aptly describes movements three and five. The music in these movements has many jagged edges, with displaced rhythms, modulatory and chromatic lines, and abrupt endings. The music is compelling in spite of these difficulties and after repeated listening and study, the underlying logic that informs this work becomes apparent.

The style of writing in this work is not as complex and chromatic as some of Wilder's earlier quintets, some of which displayed (unintentional) dodecaphonic tendencies.[5] Moreover, the music is imbued with a playful quality with much interplay between the marimba and winds. Formally, like the suites with flute and trumpet, this

chamber work is more loosely organized with no obvious cyclic treatment of themes. Consistent with his general approach to form, the forms employed in this five movement suite are contrapuntally based and developmental, and are for the most part difficult to discern. The overall structure and musical characteristics of the individual movements in the sextet is very similar to the sequence Wilder uses in the suites for trumpet and flute:

Movement:	Form:
I ♩ = 96 or faster	Modified Ternary
II ♩ = 63 dolce	Indistinct Rondo
III ♩ = 96 jazz style	Through-composed
IV ♩ = 60	Modified Ternary
V ♩. = 64	Through-composed

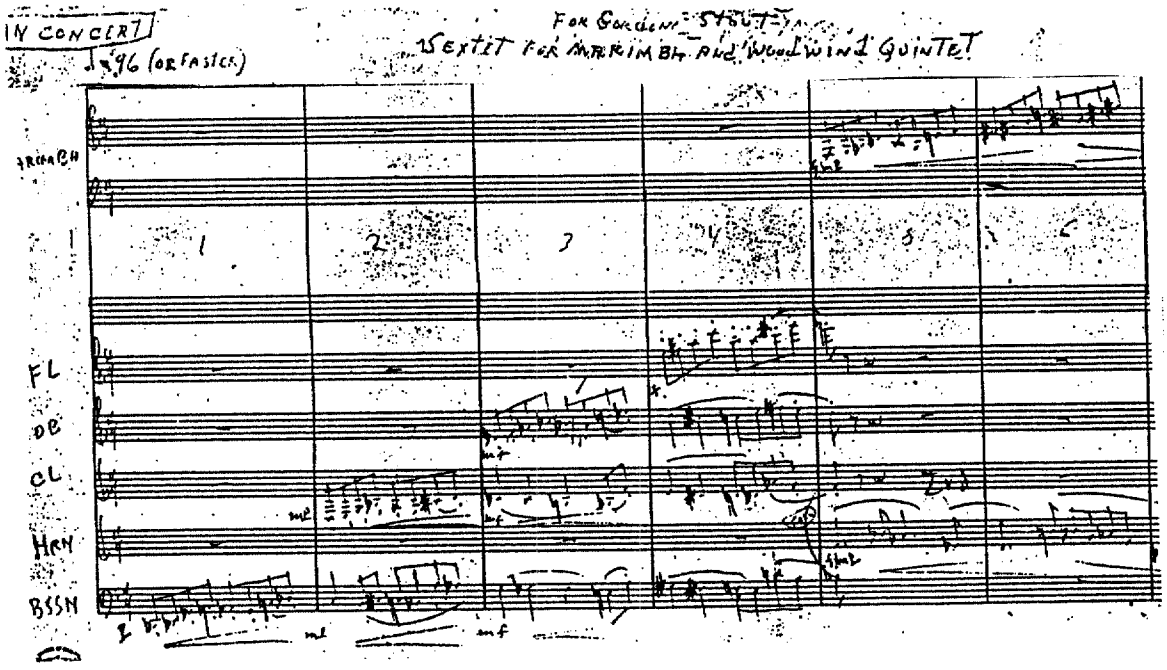
The technical demands in the sextet are not incredibly difficult overall, but the third movement is possibly the most challenging in all of the suites. The greatest challenge posed by the sextet for the marimbist is functioning as an equal member in an ensemble that is not accustomed to playing with a marimba. The marimba is an equal voice in this ensemble, one among six.[6] The marimbist must strive to blend and phrase with the wind instruments and that requires knowing the other five parts as well as the marimba part.

The sextet has never been edited for performance. The published versions are the copies made directly from Wilder's manuscript by his copyist. The are no stickings in the marimba part, few horn cues, and a few major omissions from the score. These matters will be addressed in this chapter and will constitute the basis of a performance edition of the marimba part. The edited marimba part is included in appendix C at the end.

MOVEMENT I

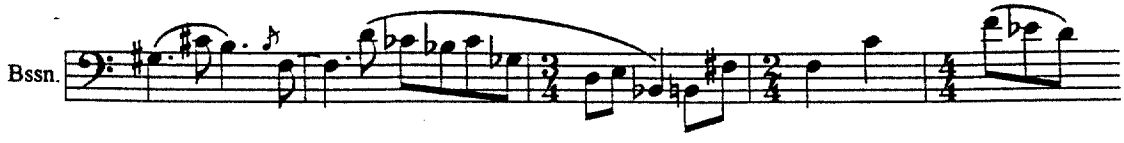
Wilder begins the quintet with a movement overflowing with imitative counterpoint. He starts with a motive in the bassoon which outlines a minor ii-V-I progression and transposes this motive up chromatically each successive measure, giving it to all the woodwinds in succession:

Ex. 1 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 1-6



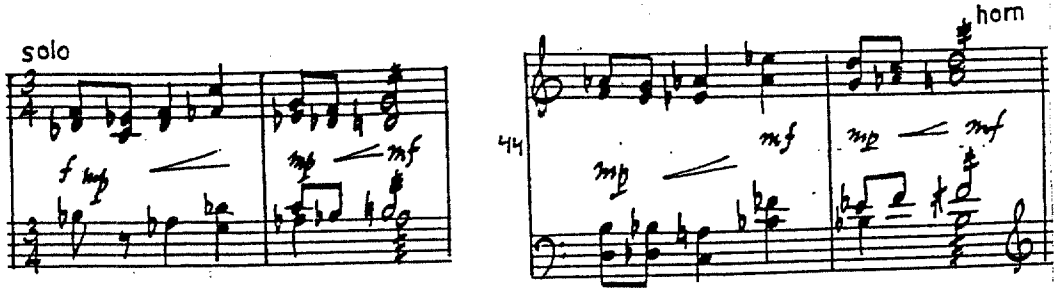
It is observable also in the above example that at measure 5 the marimba enters with the motive, continuing the upward sequence. The horn enters at measure 5 as well introducing a new theme. This theme is not seen again until measure 32 when it is reiterated by the bassoon. Example 2 presents the bassoon part at measure 32:

Ex.2 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. I, ms 32-34



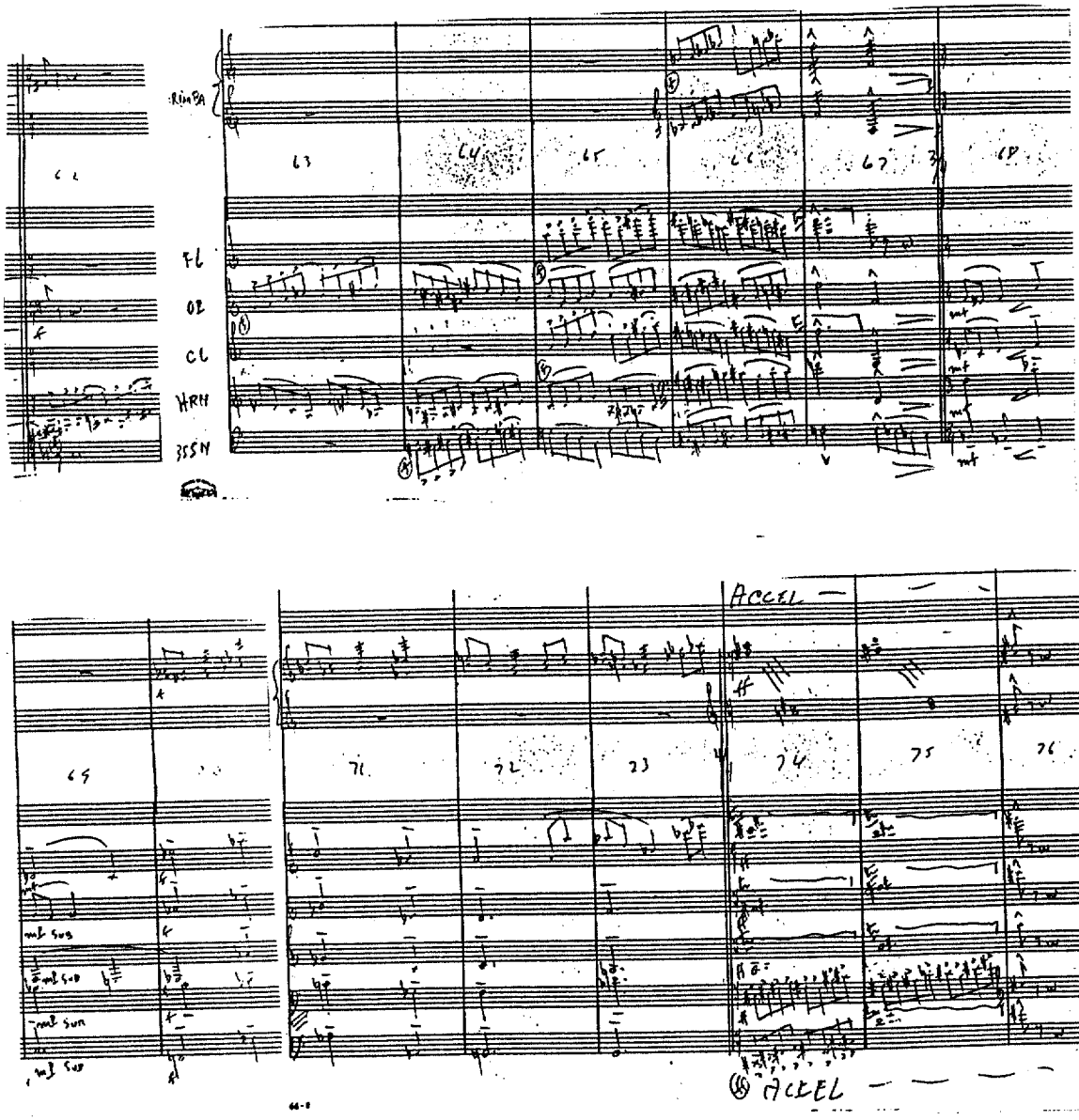
Measure 32 is the beginning of a developmental middle section wherein earlier themes are altered and restated and new themes are introduced. At measure 42 a new theme is introduced by the marimba in what is essentially a solo setting.

Ex. 3 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. I, ms. 42-45



This theme is then taken up by the winds at measure 54 which leads to a restatement of the original theme at measure 62. At measure 68, however, he reverts back to the theme introduced at measure 42. The passage eventually leads back to a two measure reprise of the original theme and a closing cadence on an F# minor chord. See example 42:

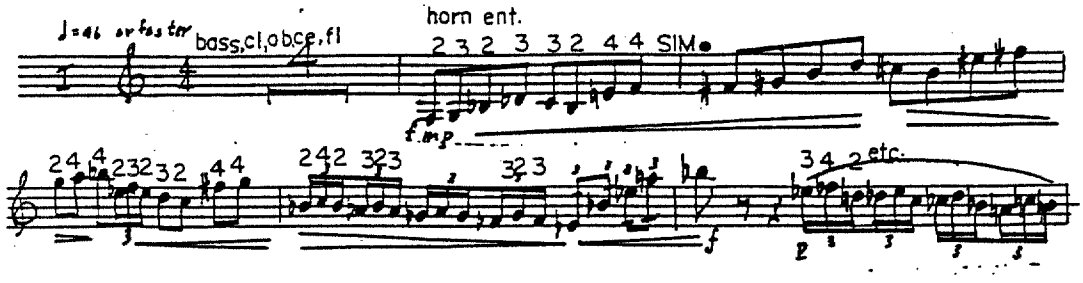
Ex. 4 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, measures 62- end.



The overall form of the movement is unclear although the elements of ternary design may be discerned: measures 1-31 may be viewed as the first section or the "exposition", measures 32-62 may be considered a developmental middle section, and the third and final section 62 to the end is the recapitulation. It is more accurate, however, to view the movement as constantly developmental and contrapuntally derived, while combined with a kind of free ternary background.

The marimba part in the first movement is technically challenging and requires a very creative use of independent strokes in all four mallets. The marimba part enters at measure 5 with the opening theme. See example 5:

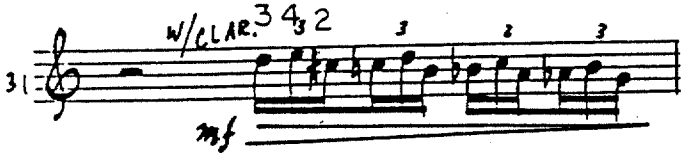
Ex. 5 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 5-9



This opening passage is playable with the top 2,3, and 4 mallets. The opening measure is sticked with double strokes in the fourth mallet of the outside right hand in order to achieve a slurred legato effect on the last two eighth notes of measures 5, 6, and 7. In measure nine there is a very difficult twisting downward sequence of sixteenth-note triplets of a chromatic three-note figure. The sticking suggested is a possible solution.

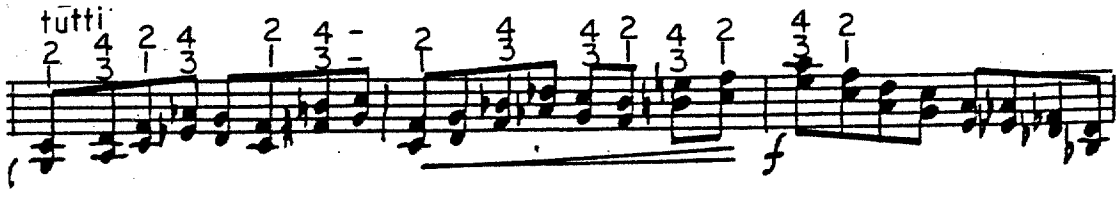
The same melodic pattern recurs again in measure 31 and the same sticking can be used there as well.

Ex. 6 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 31



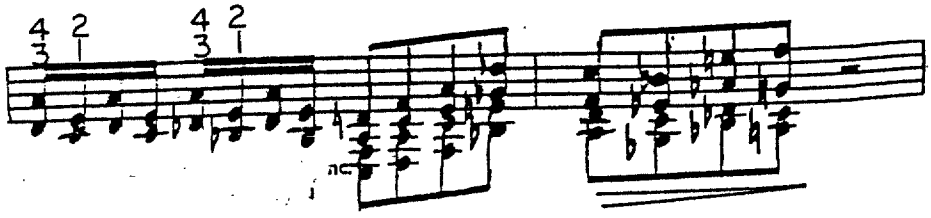
There is a tutti section at measure 14 where the marimbist must execute a difficult passage of double stops in parallel fourths. It is advisable that these be executed with alternating left and right double vertical strokes which can be seen in example 7 below.

Ex. 7 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 14-16



At measure 29 another passage of double stops occurs that must be executed with alternating double vertical strokes. The marimbist must take care that inside mallet 3 is on the far side closer to the accidental Db than mallet 2, which should be closer to the marimbist and away from the accidentals. The overlapping of the inside mallets is awkward but is really the only viable solution to executing this difficult passage. See example 8:

Ex. 8 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 29

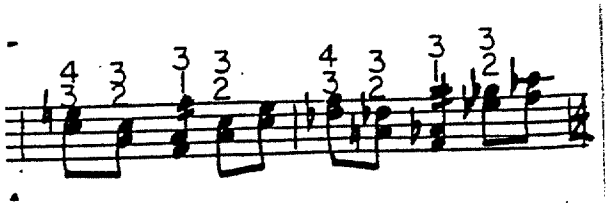


Measures 37-39 presents a long passage in sixteenth-notes, followed immediately by a solo passage in octaves. A judicious choice of stickings will greatly facilitate a musical performance of this passage. It is important to prepare for the sudden jump to octaves in measure 39. The sticking suggested will make the jump much less difficult. It should also be noted how the double stickings with the third mallet on the Eb to D pitches and the Ab to G pitches in measure 37 help to realize the indicated slur markings. See example 9:

Ex. 9 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 37-39

Another passage of double stops appears at measure 72 necessitating a series of double vertical and double independent strokes. A suggested sticking for the two measure passage is given in example 10:

Ex. 10 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. I, ms. 72-73



In addition to the many challenging technical passages, the marimbist must also be constantly aware of the instrument's role in the ensemble. The marimbist must know when the marimba is playing a solo or primary part, or merely a secondary or supportive role in the ensemble. Altogether there are six passages where the marimba is the most prominent voice. They are: measures 5-6 (see Ex. 1), measure 25, measures 28-29, measures 39-48, and in measures 70-73. The marimbist should also be aware of the particular instruments it is called upon to perform with. In general, an awareness of the entire aural effect of any given passage is of greater import in achieving an effective performance of the sextet than mere concern for faithful execution of the marimba part.

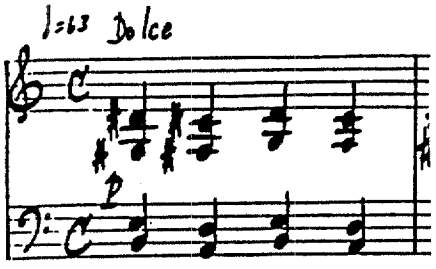
MOVEMENT II

The second movement of the sextet is a welcome respite from the athletic demands of the first movement. Wilder succeeds beautifully in this movement in his writing for the marimba and in the creation of timbral colors between the marimba and the winds. This movement bears a kinship in mood and texture to both second movements of the suites with trumpet and flute, respectively. The form of the second movement is rondo-like though such a description belies the constantly developmental character of the music. Analyzed as a rondo the design of the movement is as follows:

A: ms. 1-9, B: ms. 10-18, A': ms. 19-26, C: ms. 26-43 (developmental with new material), A'': ms. 44-49 (truncated recapitulation at the original pitch level), CODA: ms. 50-end (an extended developmental coda of previous material).

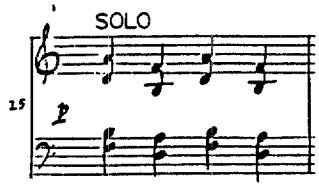
There are four main motives developed in the movement. The first comes in measure 1 of the solo marimba part, with the top voice alternating tones a major second apart in quarter notes above major seventh chords voiced in open position. See example 11:

Ex. 11 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 1



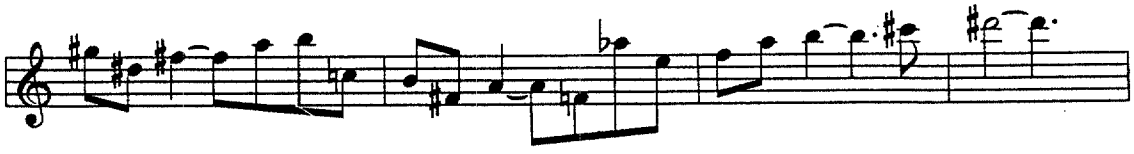
This motive recurs at several points throughout the piece, albeit sometimes with different melodic intervals and underlying chord structures. The passages where it does recur in alteration do, however, retain the same melodic contour and the same quarter-note rhythm. Example 12 is an example of the recurrence of this motive in a somewhat altered fashion:

Ex. 12 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 2-5



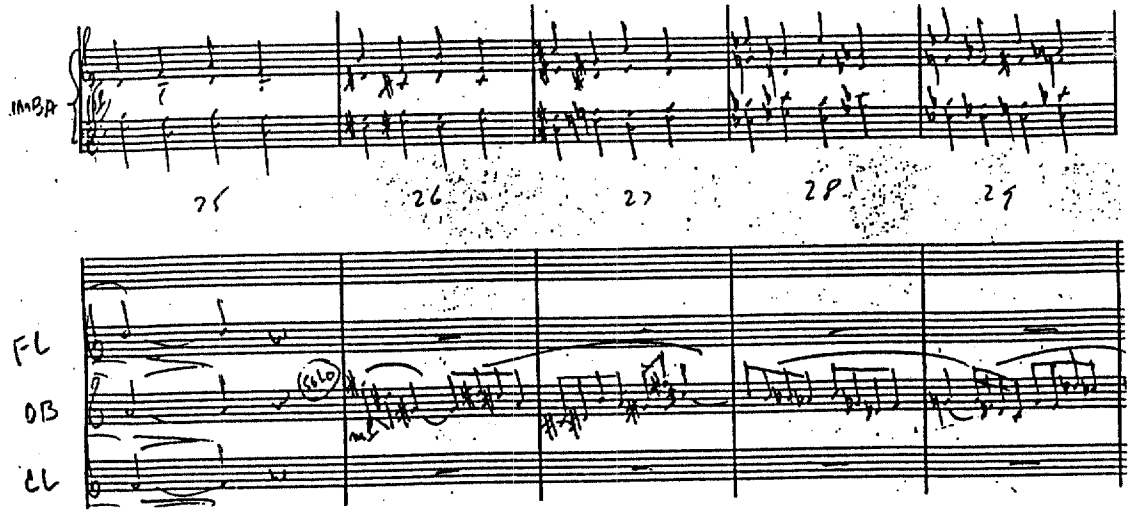
The second major motive, a four-bar motive, first appears in the oboe entrance in measures 2 through 5. This motive is taken up at various points throughout the movement by the bassoon and french horn as well as the oboe. See example 13:

Ex. 13 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 2-5



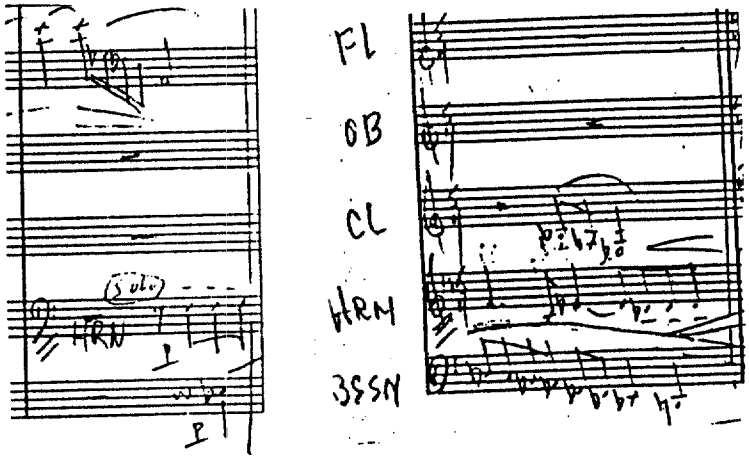
Another motive is introduced in the developmental section C which is kind of an inversion of the motive introduced by the oboe in measure 2. This new motive is repeated by the oboe beginning in measure 26. The opening descending fourth interval is the same as the earlier motive but thereafter the directions of the intervals are reversed and the interval distances are also altered. The similarities between the motives are apparent, however, because the texture is the same with the quarter-note seventh chord accompaniment in the marimba and also because of the lyrical eighth-note flowing rhythm of the oboe part. The oboe entrance at measure 26 is shown in example 14:

Ex. 14 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms 26-29

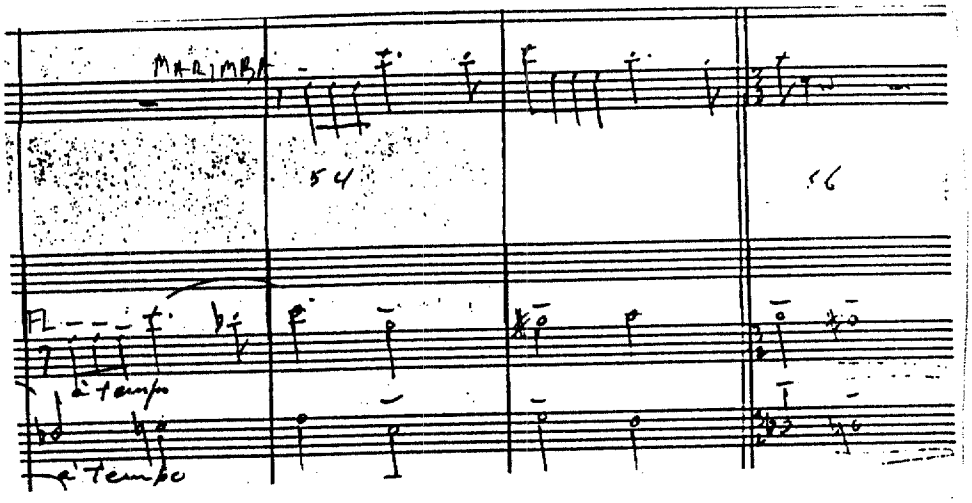


The third major motive subject to further development first occurs in the french horn at measure 32. This motive is echoed throughout the remainder of the developmental section C with the intervals altered but the melodic shape and rhythm held intact. See examples 15 and 16 for a comparison of the motive in measure 32 and its reappearance in measures 53 through 55 in the flute and marimba parts:

Ex. 15 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 32-33

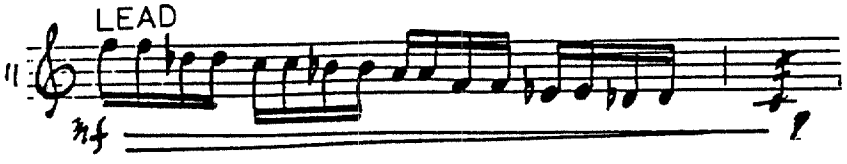


Ex. 16 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. II, ms. 53-55



The fourth recurring motive in the movement is first stated in the marimba part in measure 11. It is characterized by its descending repeated sixteenth notes. It recurs mostly in the marimba part with various combinations of intervals. While it is not a strict melodic motive, the distinctiveness of the rhythm and the repeated notes make it a distinct motive or gesture that helps to unify the movement. It occurs four different times throughout the movement: measure 11 in the marimba, measure 16 in the winds, and again at measures 18 and 61 in the marimba. The motive as first stated by the marimba in measure 11 is shown in example 17:

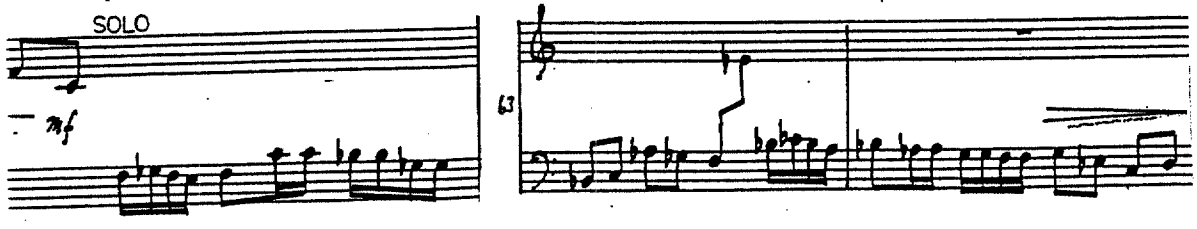
Ex. 17 *Sextet for Marimba and Quintet,* Mvt. II, ms. 11



It is noteworthy that this motive is very similar to the motive used by Wilder in the second movement of the *Suite for Flute and Marimba* at measure 8.

The technical challenges presented by this movement are minimal. The choice of sticking is either obvious or so easy that a multitude of solutions would work equally well for a given passage. More important is the matter of knowing which instrument the marimba combines with at particular points, noting especially the placement of solo passages for the marimba. Maintaining a sense of lyricism and constant flow while adhering to the slow tempo are importatn issues. A solo passage for the marimba at measures 62 through 64 shown in example 18 illustrates the challenges of maintaining flow with such a sparse texture.

Ex. 18 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 62-64

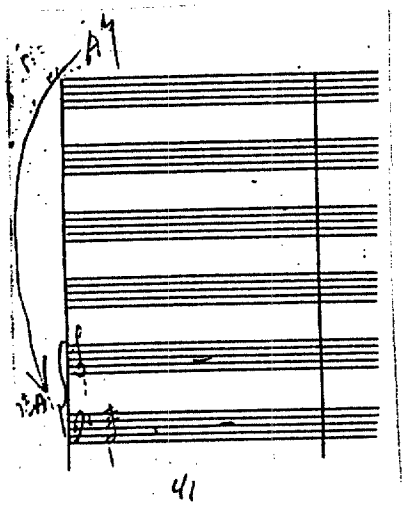


The eighth notes should be rolled in this passage.

The first passage in the sextet that requires emendation occurs in this movement. In the marimba part there is one glaring omission that was more than likely a mistake of

the copyist. At measure 41 Wilder clearly adds a low A1 in the marimba part on the score:

Ex. 19 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. II, ms. 40-41

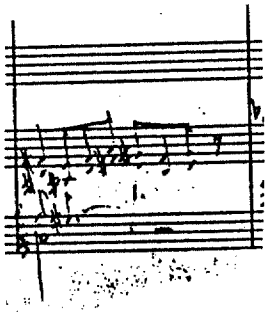


The added A makes sense musically and harmonically. It should certainly be played. Another place where the marimba part must be amended occurs in measure 60. The low C# half note should be held until the upbeat of beat four and the same holds true before the G# beginning on the upbeat of beat one. This emendation matches the low C# and G# in the bassoon and french horn parts. The original and corrected version is given in example 19a and 19b:

Ex. 20 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. II, ms. 60

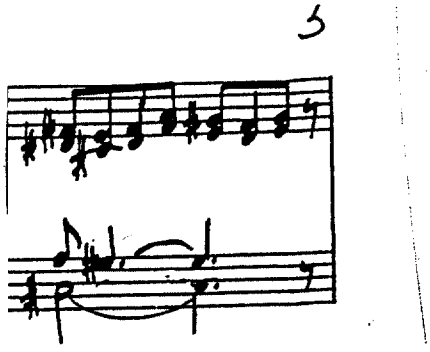
20a

Original



20b

Corrected



Movement II is not a difficult movement; if the player is sensitive to the dynamics and phrasing of the ensemble as a whole, the movement will certainly receive a successful performance. The mallets used in this movement must be soft. Medium soft mallets should be used in the top three mallets while an even softer mallet should be used in the low number 1 mallet.

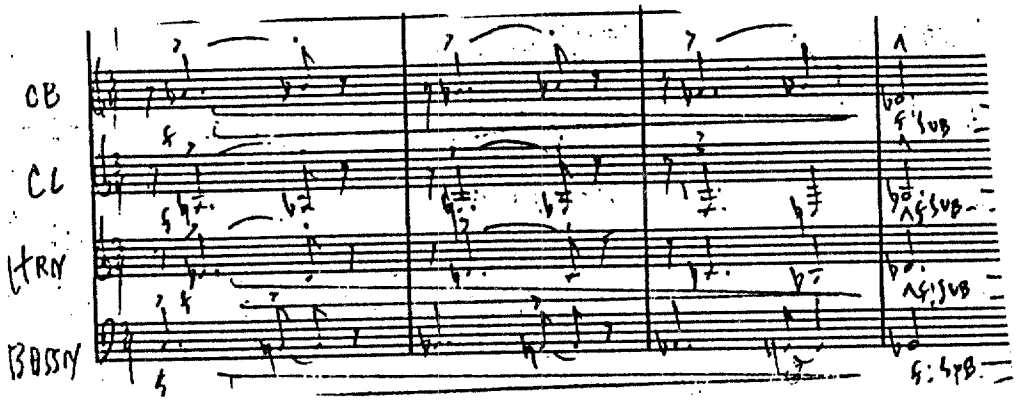
MOVEMENT III

In stark contrast to movement II, the third movement is quick in tempo, turbulent in character and technically demanding. In fact, Movement III is perhaps the most demanding movement in all of Wilder's works for marimba. Innovative stickings are essential to execute some of the more treacherous passages in the piece. The formal and theoretical aspects in this movement are equally abstruse. The form is contrapuntally derived and is continuously developmental. There is a definite recurrence of themes

here, especially the opening themes first introduced by the marimba, but these recurrences follow no typical pattern characteristic of traditional forms such as rondo or ternary form.

The opening three measures consist of a sequence of six chords which are seemingly incomprehensible clusters. See example 21:

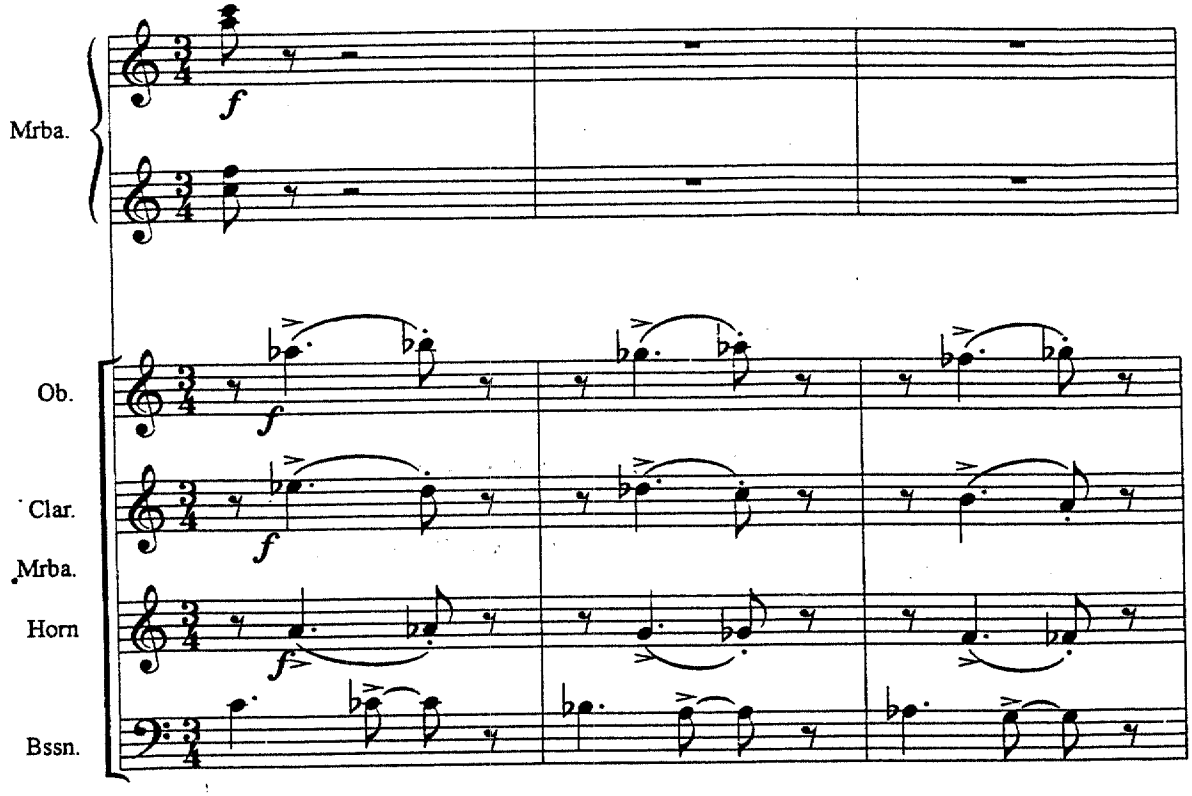
Ex. 21 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 1-4



The clue to deciphering the function of these chords is in their return at measure 57. The chords are the same here in the winds even though they are voiced differently. The key to understanding these chords is in the marimba part with its clear F major triad. When this chord is superimposed over the voicing in the winds the chord is clearly an F7#9. Essentially, this is a rootless voicing of a dominant 7th chord with a #9 extension. If this idea of superimposition of triads is extended by common circle of fourths, this previously inscrutable progession becomes clearly a chain of dominant 7th chords:

F7#9-Bb7b9-Eb7-Ab7b9-Db7#9-Gb7b9. Example 22 shows the sequence of chords at measure 57:

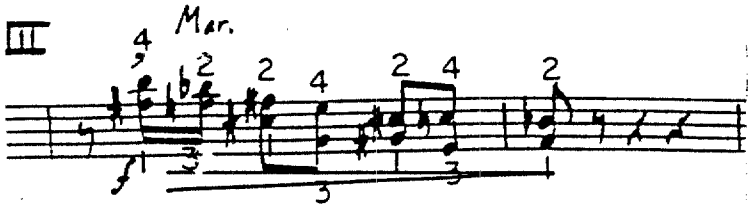
Ex. 22 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III ms. 57-59



This opening sequence from the first measures is the first motive, and as can be seen from the example at measure 57, recurs later in the movement. It recurs also at measures 5, 15, and 40 but in these measures the pitch content is altered while the rhythmic structure and orchestration are retained. The chords in these other contexts may also be understood as rootless extended dominant seventh chord voicings like the sequential progression at the opening of the movement.

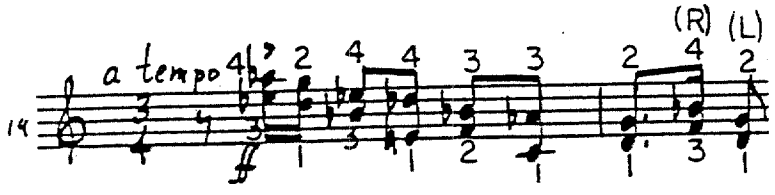
The next major motive introduced, shown in example 23, occurs in the marimba at measure 4.

Ex. 23 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 4



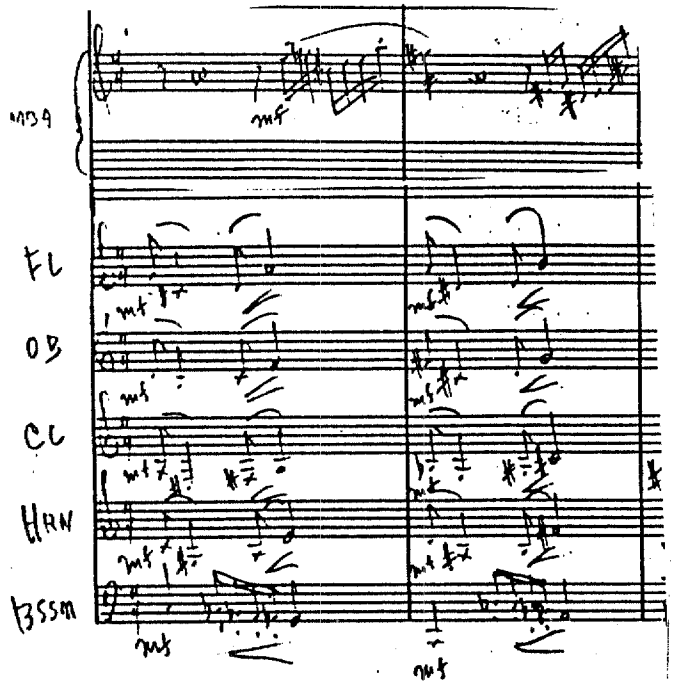
This motive recurs regularly in the marimba part with the same general melodic contour and rhythm, yet with its intervallic construction altered. The figure reappears in measures 8, 14, 24, and finally near the end of the movement. The altered version as it appears in measure 14 is shown in example 24:

Ex. 24 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 14



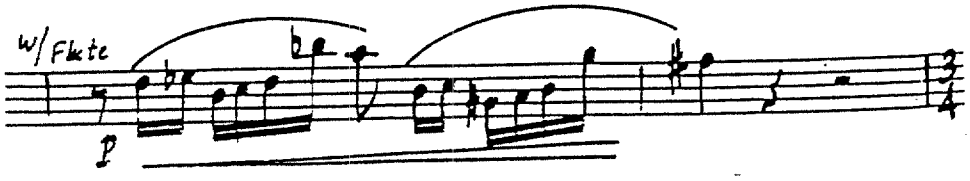
Another significant motive is introduced by the winds at measure 9. Example 25 reproduces measure 9 of Wilder's score:

Ex. 25 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. III, ms. 9



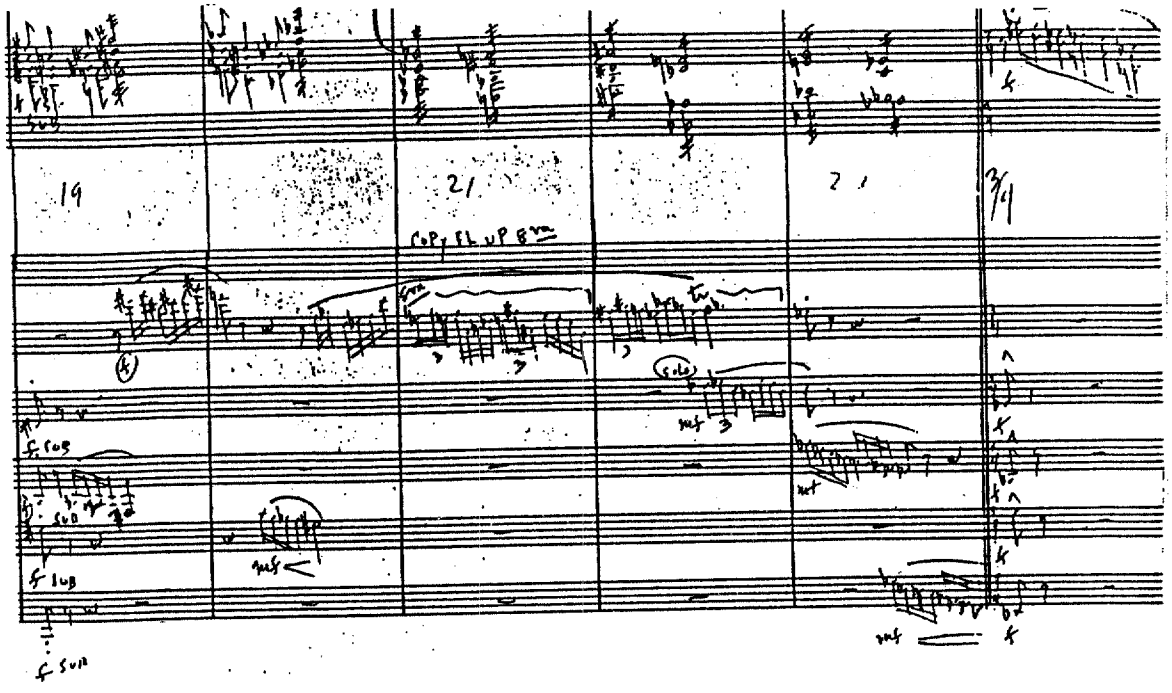
This motive, in the winds, returns in the marimba in measures 19 and 20 (see example 25 below) , and again in the winds at measures 60 and 61. In the above example it can also be observed that the marimba introduces many scalar passages and melodic figures. Many of these figures are developed in a fragmented and transposed manner later in the movement. Example 26 reproduces the figure from the marimba part in measure 9 as it reappears and is treated sequentially in measure 64 of the marimba part.

Ex. 26 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. III, ms. 64



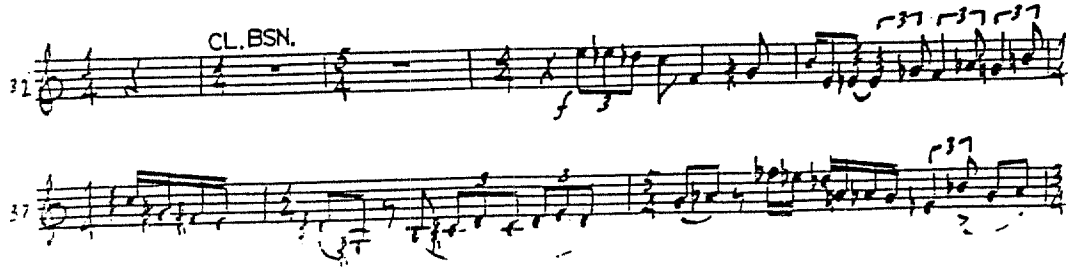
In measures 19 to 24 the entire five-measure passage returns in its entirety distributed between the voices of the winds, although in this case it is transposed down a half-step. The passage in question is shown in example 27:

Ex. 27 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 19-24



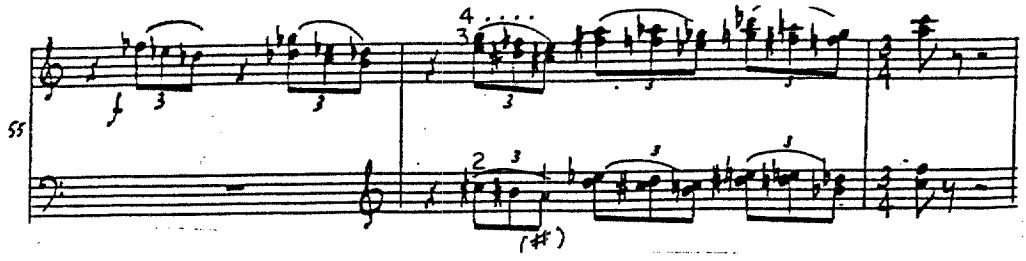
A new jazz-inflected motive is introduced in measure 25 by the flute and clarinet in octaves. This motive is restated by the marimba at measure 35. See example 28:

Ex. 28 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 35-40



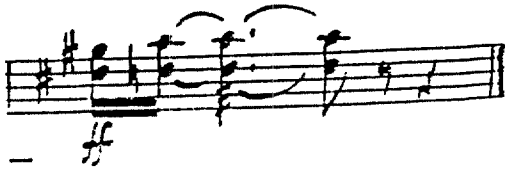
This motive recurs again in the flute part at measure 51. This presentation is also fragmented and subsequently serves as the basis for measures 55 and 56, two of the most difficult measures in the movement for the marimba. See example 29:

Ex. 29 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 55-56



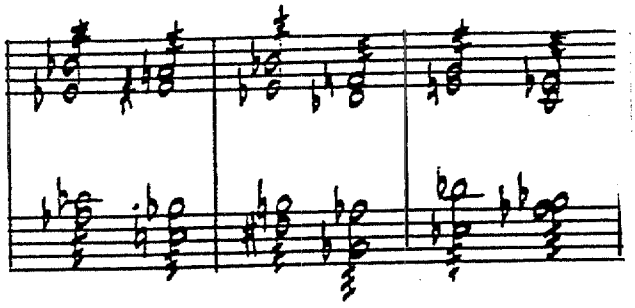
The movement comes abruptly to a halt in a startling fashion with a new rhythmic figure. This sixteenth-note based figure reappears in the final movement; this recurrence is one of the few examples of cyclism in the suite. The final measure as it appears in the marimba part is shown in example 30:

Ex. 30 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 68



Another more obscure instance of cyclism between movements occurs in measures 21-23 in the marimba part. Here Wilder is making a subtle reference to the slow quarter-note seventh chord rolled notes which open the second movement. Compare example 31 below with example 11above:

Ex. 31 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 21-23



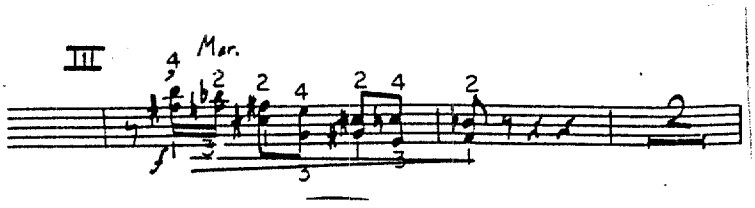
Movement III is noteworthy for its style of orchestration. In this movement Wilder sets the marimba for the most part in a concertato fashion against the winds. Except for a few brief passages, the marimba is either being supported by the winds, performing alone, or is itself supporting the winds. Winds and marimba rarely play together in this movement. By contrast the surrounding movements of the sextet exhibit a greater confluence and overlapping of parts between the marimba and winds. While this movement is not strictly intended to feature for the marimba, the marimba does have more exposed passages than any other instrument in this movement.

The most challenging aspect of this movement concerns the technical level of difficulty in the marimba part. Certain passages are almost unplayable and a very creative approach to sticking is needed to overcome the technical problems. In a few instances it may be necessary to simplify certain passages. Altering the original text should be a last resort, however, and it should be possible for most advanced performers to play this movement with assiduous practice and application of these recommended stickings.

The first entrance of the marimba establishes the high level of difficulty of the movement and the sticking provided is the best solution to realizing the passage. It

involves breaking the double stops between first the 1and 4 mallets on the opening F# and B, and then using the inner 2 and 3 mallets on the F and Bb notes (mallet 3 crosses under mallet 2 and plays the F here). This unorthodox sticking that makes the measure much more playable is shown in example 32:

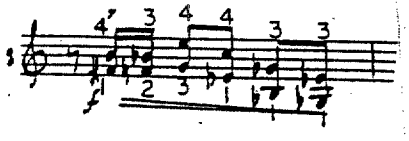
Ex. 32 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 4



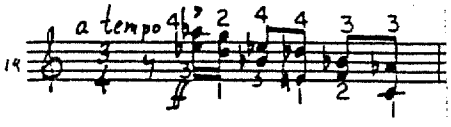
This motive recurs five more times during the movement and each time it requires a new sticking. Example 33 a-c present the five recurrences with their recommended stickings:

Ex. 33a-e *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III

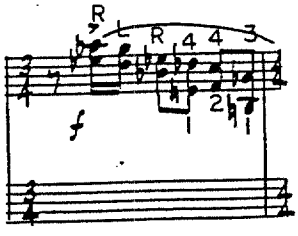
a. ms. 8



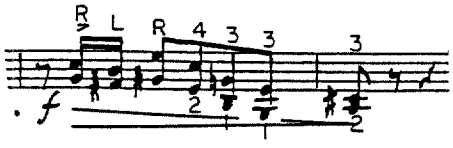
b. ms. 14



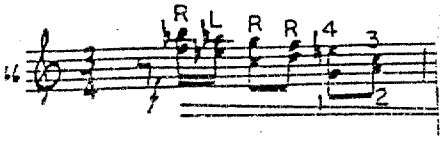
c. ms. 24



d. ms. 43



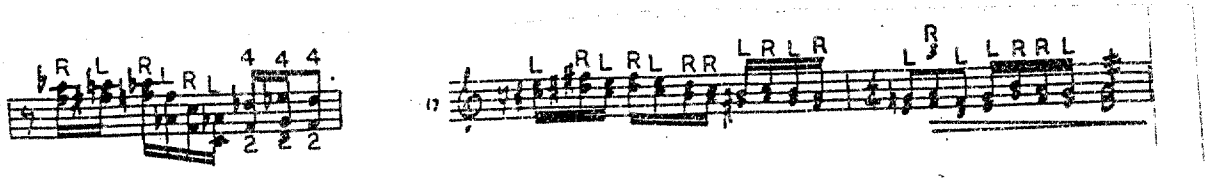
e. ms. 66



Though these stickings should help facilitate execution of these passages it is essential that the performer begin playing these measures slowly and sedulously in order to build the muscular and kinesthetic memory patterns necessary to successfully execute the changing interval distances.

Measure 16 presents a passage of double stops which is nearly impossible to play. Stout's recording though is a testimony to his outstanding technique. To perform this passage Stout uses a series of double vertical strokes that make the speed required to play the double stops more attainable. Accuracy, however, is still very difficult to attain. Here is a recommended sticking for this three measure passage:

Ex. 34 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 16-18

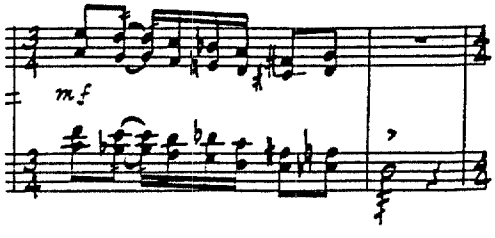


The most difficult passage is the second double stop in measure 16, the F# and A. If the F# is omitted the passage is much easier to execute. The omission of the note does not alter the musical essence of the passage. An even greater alteration would be to play only

the top line of this sequence of double stops; again without any appreciable negative impact on the musical content. If after diligent practice the player is unable to execute the double stops as they appear in the original part, the aforementioned editorial options are recommended. Measure 17 is also difficult but is eminently playable with the sticking shown above. There is some question about whether the last F in the measure is a natural or sharp. It is clearly marked as an F natural in Wilder's score but the note is circled with a question mark around it. The harmony below the note is a Gb diminished triad, which seems to imply that the note in fact an F#. Yet the note leads into an Amin7th chord and the F natural could very well be considered a passing tone. Stout plays an F natural in his recording of the work. Since Wilder was at the recording session and approved Stout's performance it is recommended that the note in question be played as an F natural.

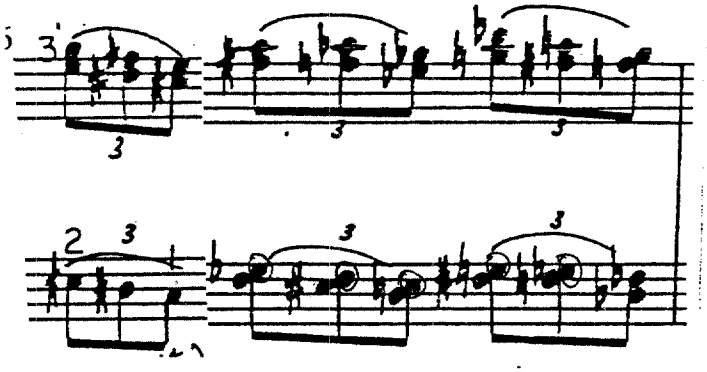
Measure 48 introduces a very difficult sequence of descending seventh chords voiced in open position. The measure must be practiced slowly and with hands separated. Gradually the tempo should be sped up and the hands put together. Example 35 reproduces the measure in question:

Ex. 35 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 48



This passage is followed by a sequence of descending diminished/maj7th chords at measure 56 beginning at beat three. It is recommended that the inner voice, which is a half step above the lowest note in these chords, be omitted; otherwise the passage is virtually impossible to play. Example 36 shows the notes to be omitted circled:

Ex. 36 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. III, ms. 56



The missing accidental on the "a" pitch on the third partial of the triplet on beat two needs to be added making the "a" an a#.

The most important musical or interpretive issue to bear in mind when performing this movement is its concertato style. The marimba part plays nearly as important a role as the entire wind quintet. Also of great importance are the jazz elements in this movement. The eighth notes should be played as written except for the passage from measures 25 through 39; here the straight eighth notes must be "swung"; that is performed as the first and third notes of an eighth-note triplet. This rhythmic interpretation is appropriate given the style of the passage and is also the way Stout plays the passage on the recording. In the autograph score Wilder has written the indication "jazz style" at the beginning of the movement. The jazz influence here is manifest in the

syncopated offbeat rhythms, the extended seventh chords, and the intuitive and improvisational way in which the motives are developed.

The mallets used on this piece should be relatively hard. A graduated set would be very effective where medium mallets are in the left hand and medium to hard mallets are in the right hand.

MOVEMENT IV

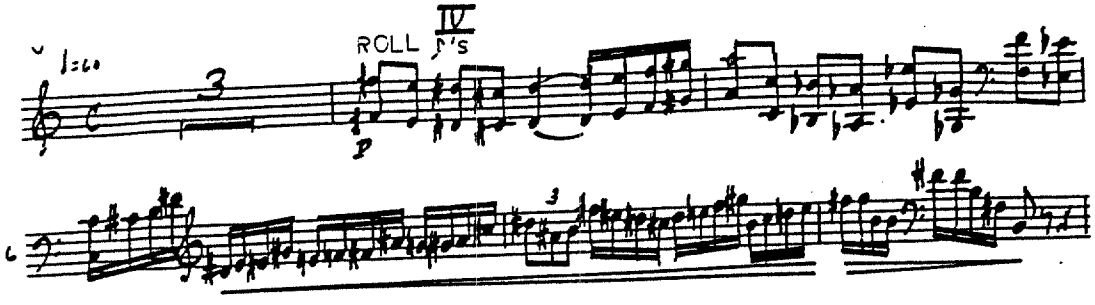
Movement IV bears a close kinship to the fifth movements of both the flute and trumpet suites. All these movements are slow, relatively sparse in texture, and end in the key of G minor. The form is a typical Wilder free ternary design, where the recapitulation is truncated, in another key, and altered in orchestration. The first section is comprised of measures 1 to 20, the second section contains measures 21 to 42, and the last section consists of measures 43 to the end. The first section contains all the main motives. The second section is more of a developmental section. The third section is the recapitulation and ends with a coda. It should be borne in mind that these sectional divisions are, as is customary in Wilder's works, blurred and imprecise. As in most of the movements of the suites continuous development of a multiplicity of motives is paramount.

The main motives in this movement are contained in the first eight bars. The first motive is in measures 1-4 in the flute. See example 37:

Ex. 37 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 1-4

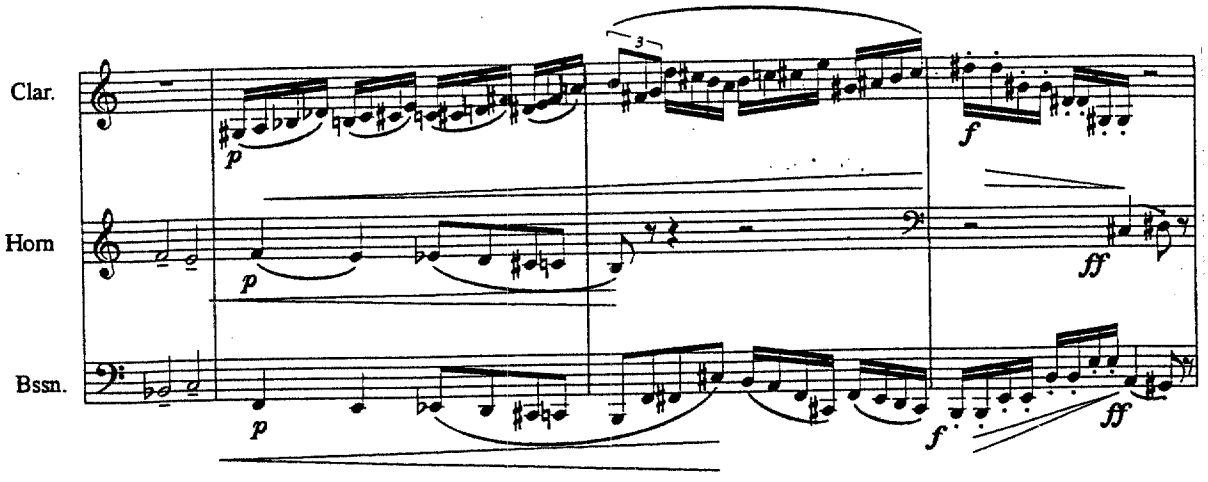
The next major motive is introduced in bars 4 through 8 in the marimba part. The eighth-note motive in measure 4 is ubiquitous in this movement. The chromatic sixteenth-note sequence in bar 6 is also developed extensively in this movement. Example 38 reproduces measures 4 to 8 of the marimba part:

Ex. 38 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IVms. 4-8



The descending open fifth repeated sixteenth-note motive in measure 8 is seen again in the development in measure 35 in the flute. Measures 6,7 and 8 are in fact seen in their entirety in measures 26 to 28 in the clarinet. The material here is transposed up a minor sixth. Example 39 includes these measures from the development:

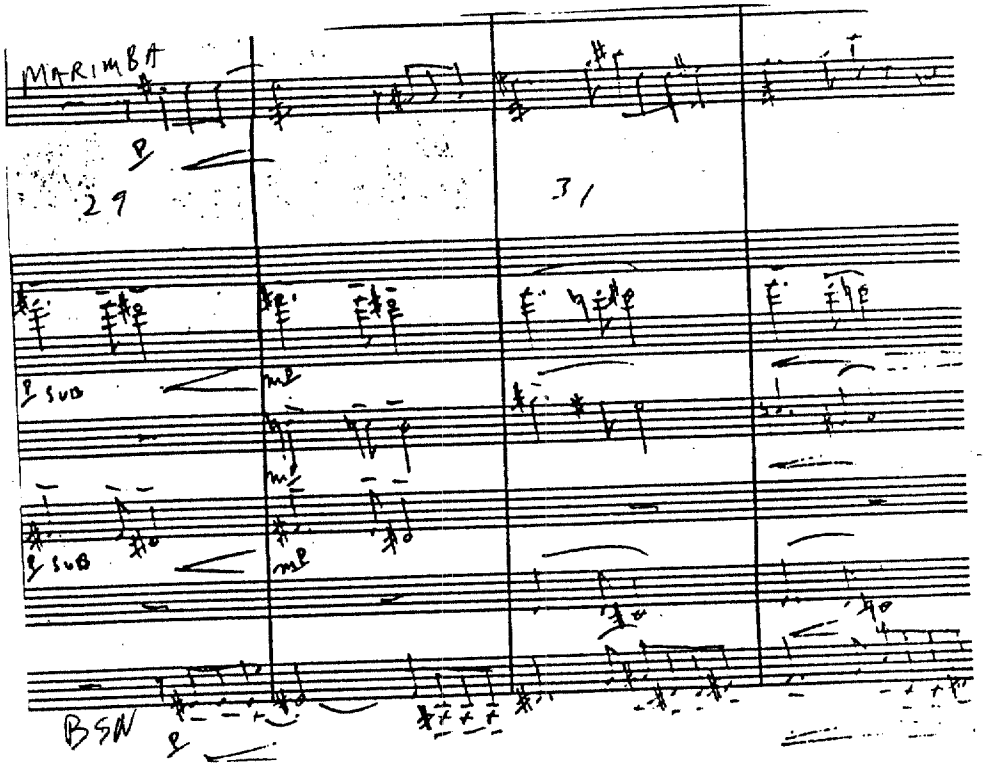
Ex. 39 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 26-28



Measures 4 through 8 of the marimba part provide much of the motivic material on which this movement is based. The motives are seen in various states of fragmentation and alteration throughout the movement as will be demonstrated by several subsequent examples.

In measure 29 a new motive is introduced by the marimba and bassoon, which is very similar to the rhythmic motive from the second movement (see examples 15 and 16 above). Example 40 displays these measures as they appear in Wilder's score:

Ex. 40 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 29-32

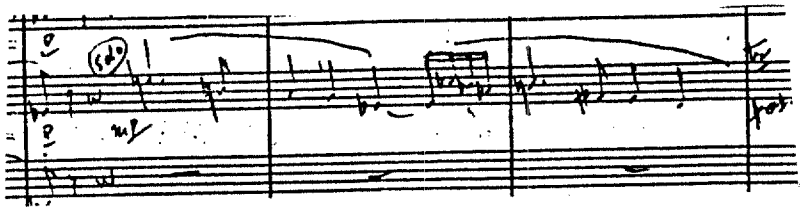


In measure 39 the motive from measure 6 in the marimba is altered by rhythmic augmentation appearing again in the marimba in a solo setting. See example 41:

Ex. 41 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 39-42

Four measures prior to this, at measure 36, the material from measures two through four are transposed and reduced by rhythmic diminution in the clarinet part. Those measures from the score are shown in example 42:

Ex. 42 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 36-38



The examples above are but a few instances of the techniques Wilder uses to develop motives in this movement. He applies these developmental devices to other motives in the movement and applies this continuous developmental technique within the framework of a free ternary design to create a free-flowing sonic tapestry.

The technical demands for the marimbist in the fourth movement are minimal. The regulation and modulation of roll speeds is the performance aspect that requires the greatest attention. The slow tempo of the piece presents a genuine challenge. To successfully realize the intent of this movement it is necessary to create the illusion of sustained sound through creative application of rolling techniques. The rolls should not be strictly metered but instead should be freely varied in their speed depending on register and the desired dynamic level. The final five measures of the marimba serve as an excellent example of a performance situation where variation of roll speed is required to achieve the most musical result. They are shown in example 43:

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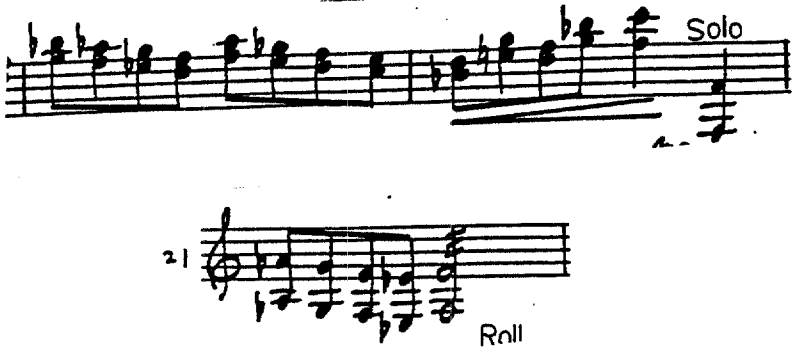
The ensemble playing in this movement returns to a more interactive role between the winds and the marimba. Solo sections for the marimba are featured as well as a number of sections in which the marimba functions as a surrogate wind instrument. In its surrogate role as wind instrument the goal is to blend as completely as possible with the other winds, to, disappear, in effect, into the timbral fabric of the wind sonority. Sections where the marimba is required to blend with the winds are interspersed with sections where the marimba is pitted against the winds in concertato fashion. In the opening section of the movement the marimba, for example, is set against the winds as a lead voice. While the marimbist must play the passage lyrically, it is essential that the instrument maintain its separate identity from the winds. This opening section consisting of measures 4 through 8 reappears later in measures 15 and 16. At measure 18 the player must strive to blend with the winds, to function as it were as the sixth wind player. See example 45:

Ex. 45 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 18-21

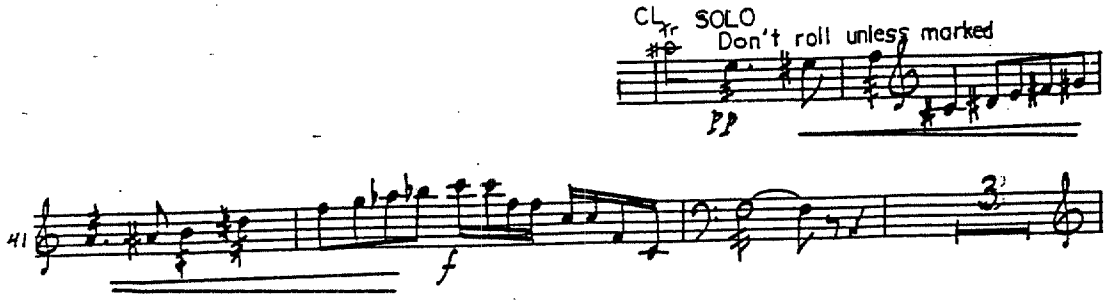


The eighth notes in measures 18 to 20 should be rolled, as should most of the notes except for sixteenth notes. In measure 21, as can be seen in example 42, the marimbist

must switch on beat four into a soloistic frame of mind instantaneously contrasting with the previous ensemble passage. This is an excellent example of the performance challenges posed by the piece, involving as it does the quickly changing roles the marimbist must adapt to.

Measure 29 introduces a figure that echoes a motive from the second movement. The marimbist must blend tones and phrase with the bassoon in this four measure passage (see example 38). At measure 39 the marimba begins a solo after a half note trill on c# by the clarinet. This is one of the few instances where the eighth notes should not be rolled. The solo should be played as Stout performed it on the recording, as Wilder notated it adding a slight accelerando from beginning to end. See example 46:

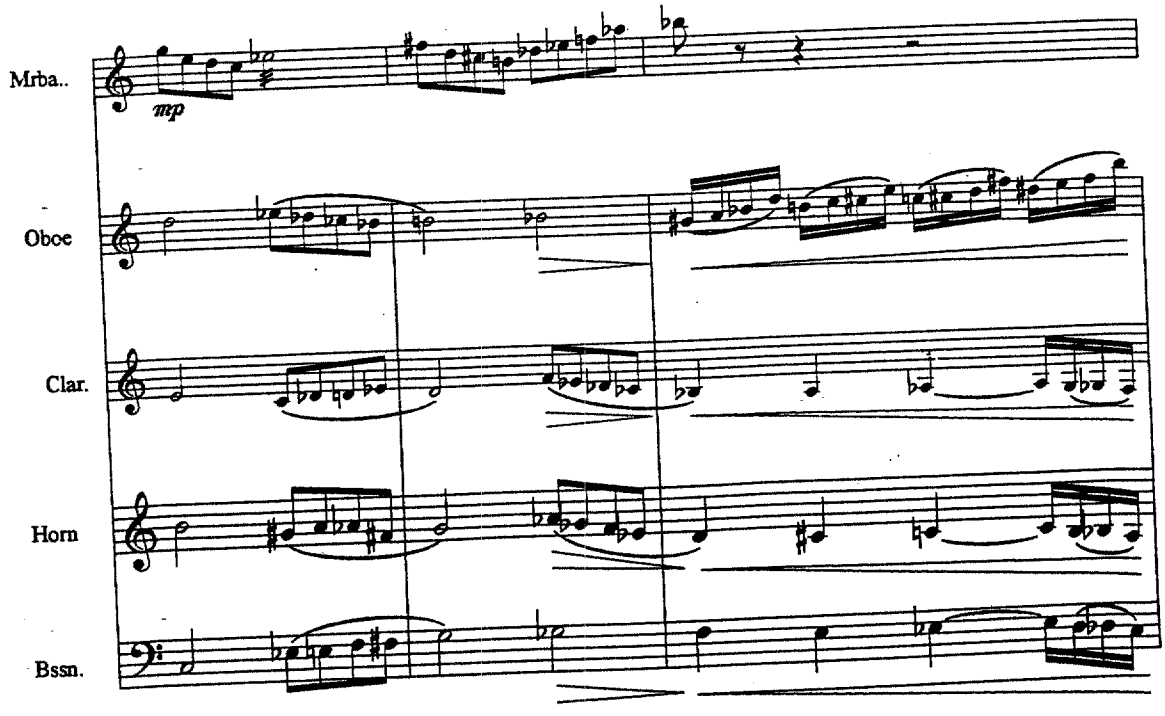
Ex. 46 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 39-43



At measures 47 to 49 the marimba's role changes once again to that of a member of the wind group; the part could easily have been given to the flute, which is tacet at this point. This passage illustrates how Wilder strives in this movement of the sextet to

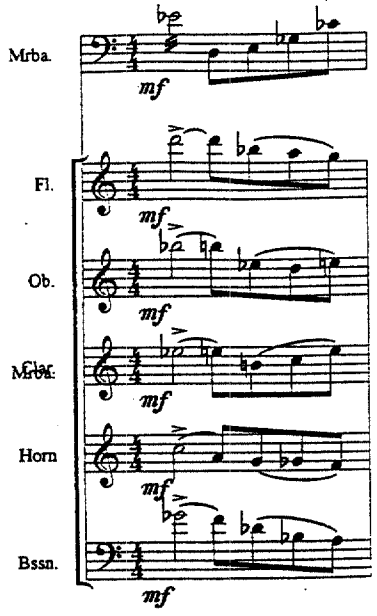
integrate the marimba with the winds. The eighth notes should be rolled here. The measures shown in example 47 are taken from Wilder's score:

Ex. 47 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 47-49



Measure 56 is another spot where the marimba functions as a sixth wind. The ascending eighth-note line must be blended with the winds to the point where the timbre of the marimba is indistinguishable from the ensemble. See example 48:

Ex. 48 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. IV, ms. 56



Finally there is the important solo passage near the end of the movement where the marimbist must play the opening motive, first stated by the winds in measure 1, now rolled in octaves by the marimba at the original pitch level (see example 40). The solo passage eventually leads to the final cadence on a G minor chord. These measures were fully realized earlier in example 41. It should be noted that, on the recording, Stout rolls all the notes in this passage, including the unmarked eighth-notes. This is perfectly acceptable but the passage also sounds effective with these notes played as written. In fact the contrast of the struck notes is in some ways more desirable.

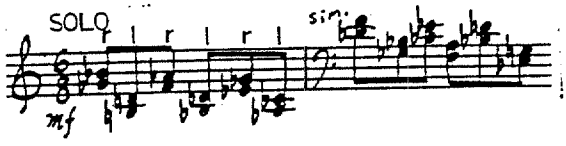
The focus in the fourth movement is on lyricism, the attainment of a singing tone, and the sensitive blending of timbres among all instruments. The movement provides no technical challenge for the marimbist except for regulation of roll speed. It is the only movement that could be played with two mallets. It is recommended, however, that the

marimbist use four mallets in order to facilitate transitions between rolls and single notes. The stickings used in measures 59 and 60 illustrate this well (see example 40).

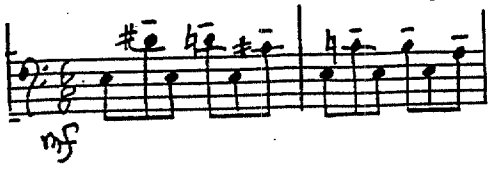
MOVEMENT V

Movement V is the closing movement of the suite. It bears a great similarity to movement III of the suite with trumpet, which was originally intended by Wilder to be the closing movement of that suite. Both of these movements are in a quick 6/8 meter and begin with a descending eighth-note figure in the marimba part, as shown in example 49:

Ex. 49a *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. V, ms. 1 Sextet



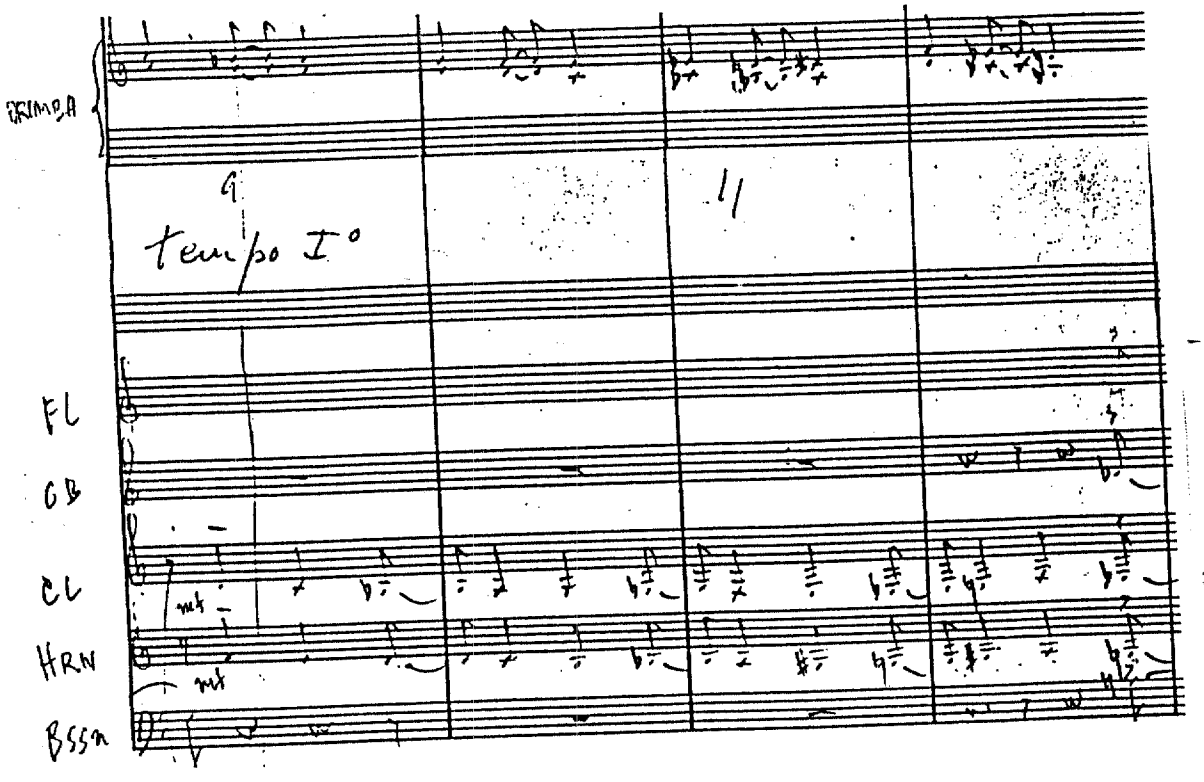
b. *Suite for Trumpet and Marimba*, Mvt. III, ms. 1 Trumpet suite



Like all of Wilder's closing movements, the tonalities in the fifth movement are constantly modulating and the overall tonal character is chromatic. Syncopation pervades the movement with many offbeat entrances and meter changes. The form is free and developmental.

The motives here are less distinct than in other movements. Many motives are indistinct rhythmic and melodic gestures as opposed to specific melodic motives. The first motive is actually the opening eighth-note phrase in the marimba seen above in example 46. This figure actually comprises two motives that answer each other. The first motive consists of the upper voice on the first, third and fifth eighth notes of the bar while the second motive consists of the lower answering voice on the second, fourth and sixth eighth notes of the bar. In measures 9 through 12 these motives are seen distributed between the marimba and the winds. See example 50:

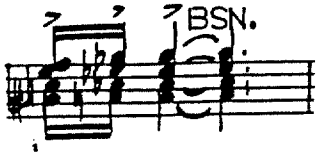
Ex. 50 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 9-12



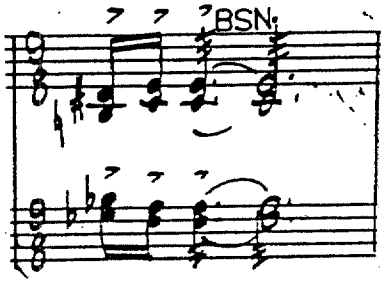
In measure 3 of the marimba part, immediately following the opening eighth-note motive, Wilder introduces an abrupt sixteenth-note figure which is the same figure that closed movement III. The figure occurs three times in the movement: measures 3 and 6 in the marimba part, and in measure 36 played by the winds. These are shown in examples 51a, b, and c:

Ex. 51a,b,c *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V,

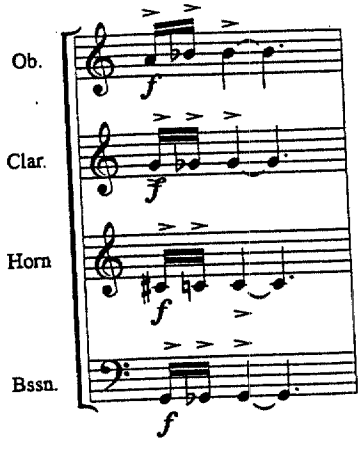
a. ms. 3



b. ms. 6



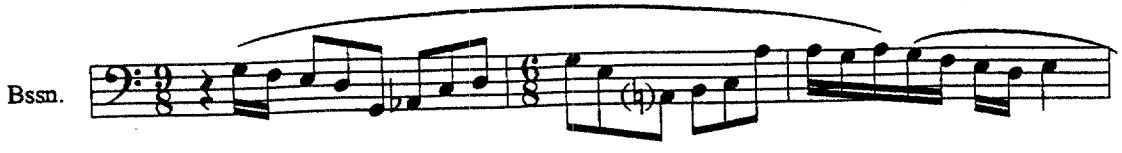
c. ms. 36



This is probably the most overt example of cyclism in the sextet and is a tongue in cheek reference to the earlier statement. It is, in fact, probably more accurate to view the figure at the end of the third movement as being an intentional foreshadowing of events to come, the figure actually belonging more to the fifth movement than the third. Owing to the three statements of the motive in the fifth, as opposed to the single statement of the motive in the third movement.

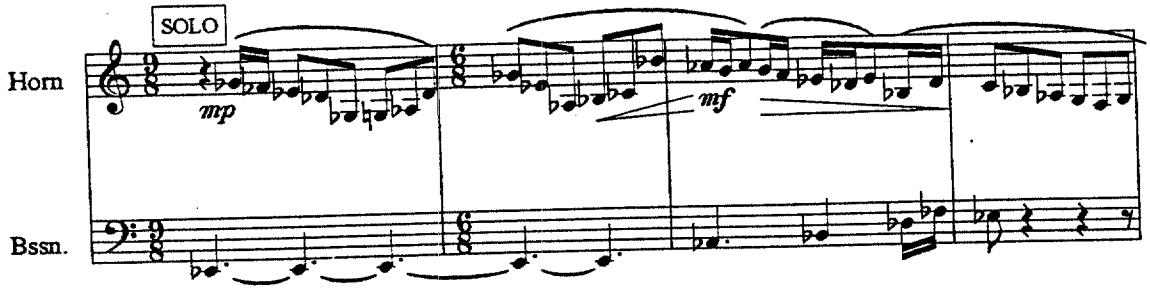
Another motive is introduced in measure 3 by the bassoon. This motive is actually a fragment of the longer motive which is fully stated by the bassoon in measures 6, 7 and 8. It is shown in example 51 in Wilder;'s score:

Ex. 52 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 6-8



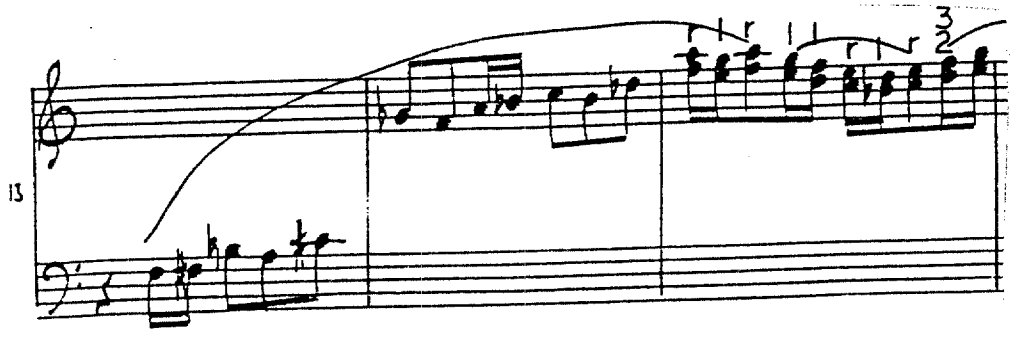
This motive recurs at measure 59 transposed down a half step in the french horn part where it is only slightly altered. Its recurrence at measure 59 is shown in example 52 :

Ex. 53 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 59



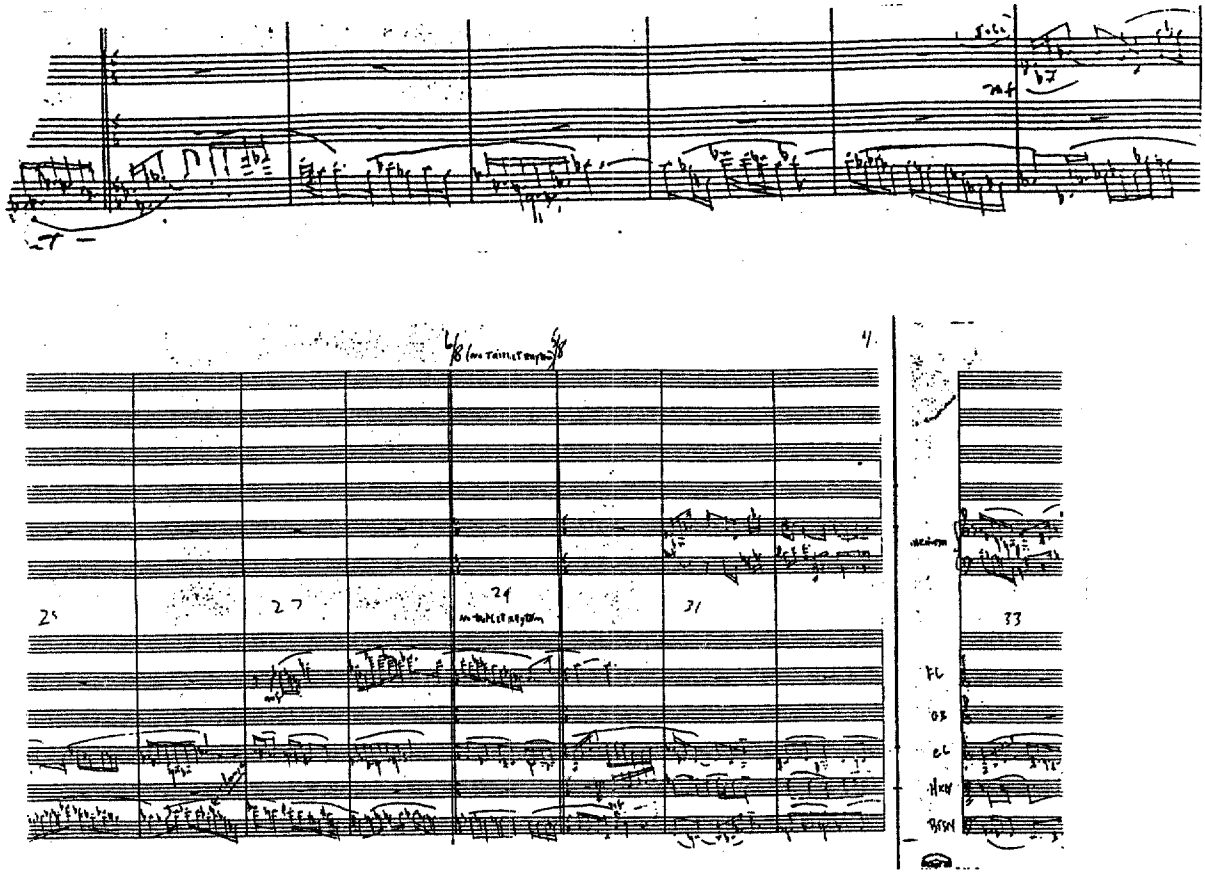
The motive that appears in measure 7 is also fragmented, inverted and generally "paraphrased" throughout the movement. The marimba takes the rhythm of this motive while changing the melodic direction of certain passages of the motive. Measures 13 to 15 in the marimba part are shown in example 54:

Ex. 54 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 13-15



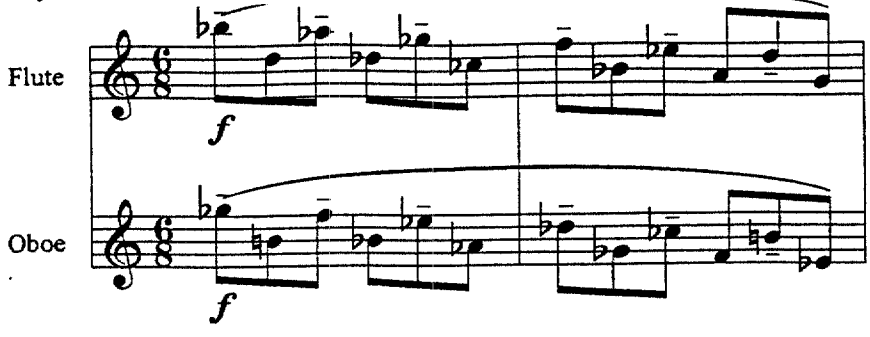
Measure 19 initiates a new section in 5/8 with new motives and gestures. Once again, the motive is introduced by the bassoon and is followed in canon by the clarinet at measure 24. The canon is not continued in the flute and horn entrances, which enter at different pitch levels; the marimba enters with this motive in measure 31 at the same pitch level as the original bassoon entrance. See example 55 in the score:

Ex. 55 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 19-33



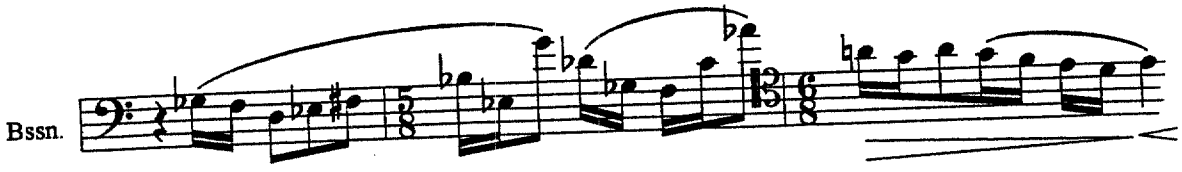
Measure 34 marks a return to the opening eighth note motive now taken by the winds. The return of the motive is shown in example 56:

Ex. 56 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 34



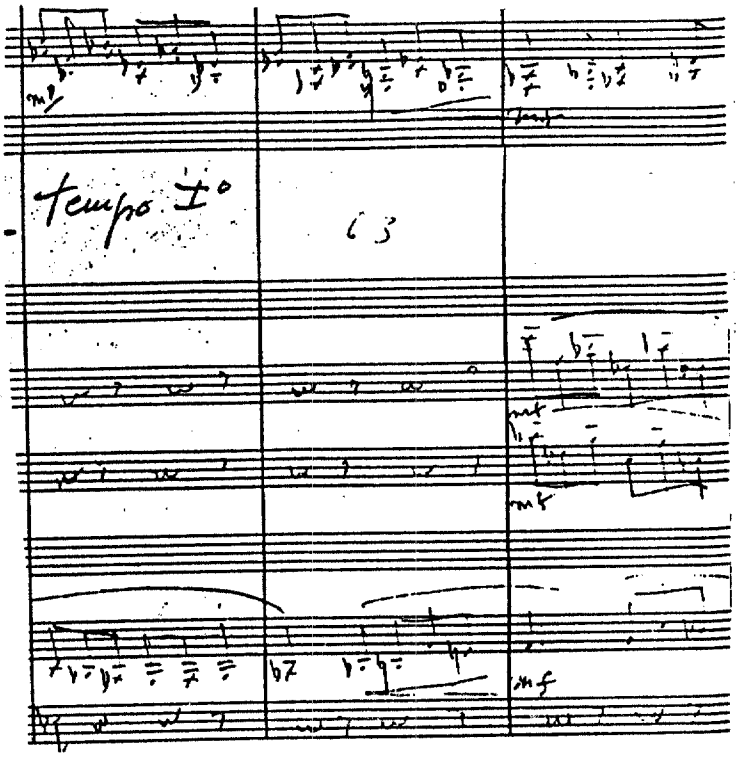
This return, however, is quickly followed in measure 37 by a statement of the motive from the canonic section at measure 19. The restatement of this motive is presented in the bassoon and is directly preceded by an exact restatement of the bassoon's original entrance figure from measure 3. Example 57 shows measures 36 and 37 of the bassoon part :

Ex. 57 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 36-37



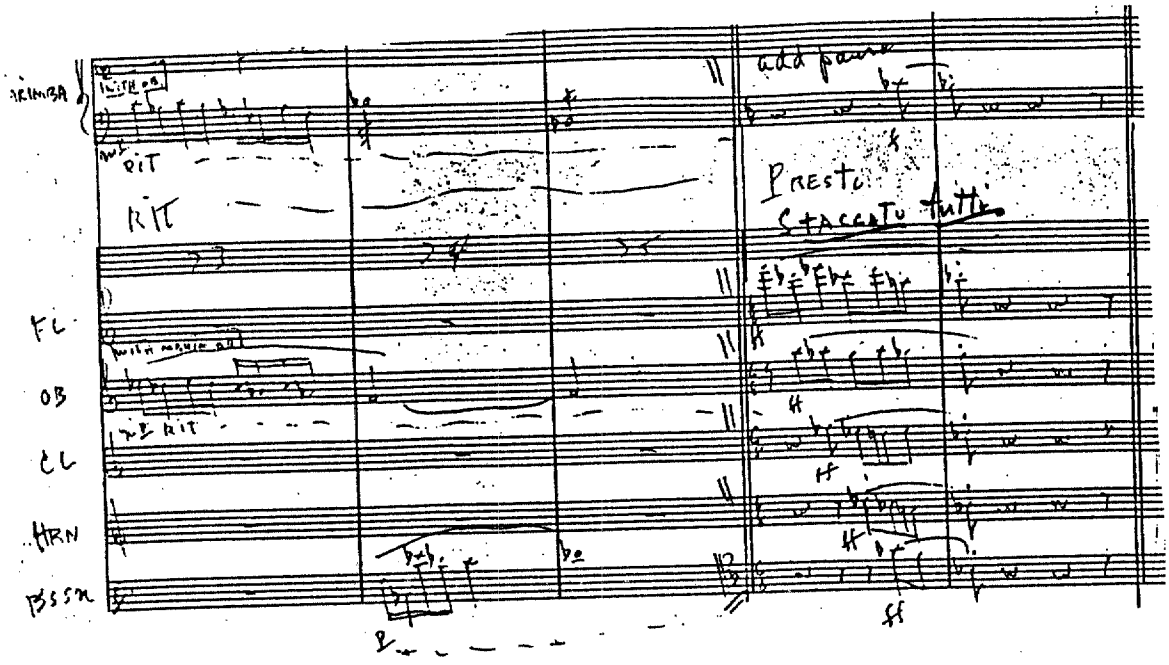
The juxtaposition of motives from different sections is what makes Wilder's music difficult to analyze with regard to form. Just when it appears a section will be recapitulated a motive from another section suddenly interrupts the process. Wilder continues to mix and develop these various motives in movement V until measure 62 where there is, in fact, a more definitive return to the original motive in the marimba. The tempo marking tempo I° signals the arrival of the recapitulation by a return to the original tempo. See example 58:

Ex. 58 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 62-65



From this point in the movement Wilder moves quickly to the end pausing abruptly at measure 72 with a lengthy ritard leading to a fermata and pause at measure 75. The final two measures present a restatement of the opening eighth-note motive, with the instruments added successively from highest to lowest finally cadencing together on a Bb minor chord. Example 59 shows the last page of Wilder's score:

Ex. 59 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 73-77

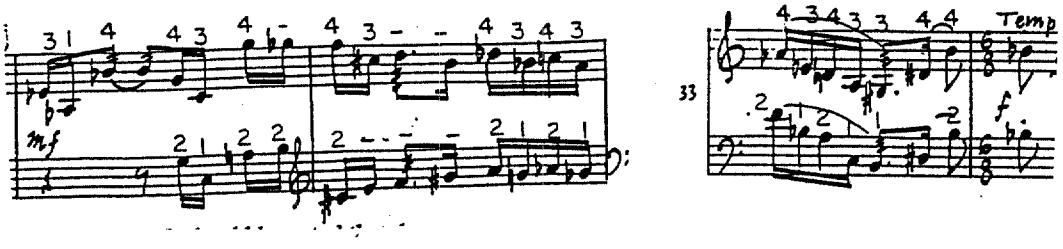


Movement V makes many technical and musical demands on the marimbist. It is very difficult in the ensemble passages with its many syncopations, meter changes and the dispersal of phrases between instruments in a hocket-like fashion. Measure 9, as seen in example 48, is a good example of this hocket-like texture. This measure must be felt in the three, as a hemiola, with the marimba playing the onbeats. The players in the ensemble must make this switch or metric modulation instantaneously in order to execute the passage. The section in 5/8 (see example 51) is also challenging with its unorthodox meter and fugal texture. The many offbeat entrances can easily cause the performer to

lose his or her place. This very dense and turbulent texture continues for most of the rest of the movement. The concentration of the performers must not wane or the potential for musical disaster is great. The marimbist must know the other parts and memorize his entrances, especially after long rests such as occur at measures 17 to 30 and 55 to 62. It is very difficult to count bars during these rests because of the changing meters and tempos.

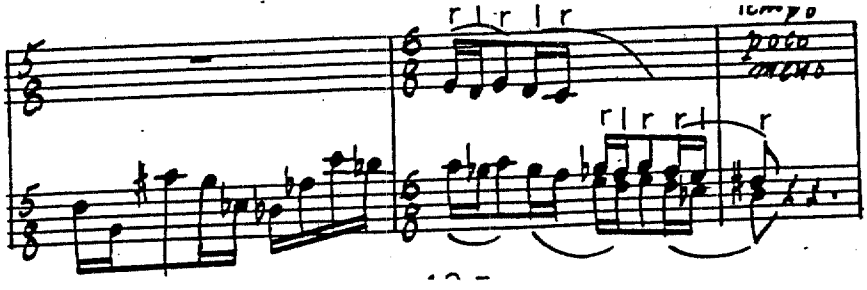
There are some difficult technical passages in the final movement of the sextet. The opening passage, seen in example 47, is difficult to execute and must be performed with alternating double vertical strokes in the right and left hands. A lot of horizontal motion in the arms and elbows results from the many instances when the position of the inside and outside mallets must change to accommodate the changing accidentals. The most difficult passage in the piece occurs at measures 31 through 34 where the marimba enters with the right hand imitating the earlier entrances of the bassoon and clarinet while the left hand plays a counter line to this. The passage is shown with recommended stickings in example 60:

Ex. 60 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet*, Mvt. V, ms. 31-34



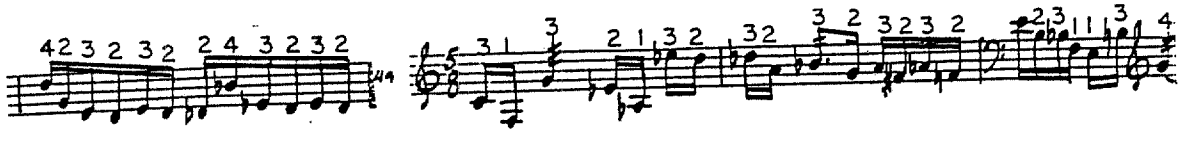
It should be noted that the tempo here is slower than in the beginning of the movement and on the recording it is significantly slower than the indicated "poco meno" in Wilder's score. The passage in the above example is much more easily managed at the slower tempo. Another "tempo poco meno" marking appears at measure 44; this passage is, however, not played as slow as the first "poco meno" was on the recording. Immediately preceding measure 44 there is a challenging passage of parallel thirds which, like the opening passage, must be executed with a series of alternating double verticals in separate hands. The sticking chosen helps to delineate the phrase markings that were put in by Wilder. The passage with suggested stickings is shown in example 61:

Ex. 61 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. V, ms. 42-43



In measures 48 through 51 there is a single line passage which requires a variety of single independent strokes from all four mallets. The following sticking suggestions, shown in example 62, will help the performer negotiate the many wide leaps:

Ex. 62 *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet,* Mvt. V, ms. 48-51



The final passage from the ritard in measure 72 to the closing "presto" phrase in measure 76 (see example 58) is somewhat elusive and requires exactly the right pacing to achieve the desired musical intent. Perhaps a metaphorical description will help elucidate how this passage should be interpreted. Imagine that this movement has been a long race that is near the finish line; at measure 72 the participants pause briefly before the finish line, catch their breath, then at measure 76 in a sudden burst of energy the participants make a last mad dash to the end. The ending of the suite is peculiar and reflects Mr. Wilder's "wry" sense of humor, as commented upon earlier by critic Tom DiNardo, manifesting itself near the end.

SUMMARY

Alec Wilder's *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet* is a landmark work for the marimba, the only one of its kind by an already acknowledged master of the woodwind quintet genre and a new master of marimba composition. Pedagogically it is probably the most instructive work a marimbist can study in order to gain facility for playing in an ensemble setting with wind instruments. Learning to breathe and phrase like wind instruments do is a very difficult thing for most percussionists, as it is not idiomatic to literature for the instrument. Yet to perform this piece well the marimbist must do exactly that, breathe and phrase like wind instruments. It is hoped that this examination of the performance problems inherent to the sextet, in combination with the performance edition of the marimba part included in the appendix, will persuade more marimbists to attempt this fascinating work.

[1] Tedrow Perkins. *An Analysis of Woodwind Quintets No's 3,6 and 12 of Alec Wilder* (MM Project California State University Fullerton, 1977) p.1
[2] Demsey and Prather. P. 53
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid. p. 175
[5] Perkins. P. 7
[6] Stout Questionnaire. Stout concurs with this view of the sextet.

CONCLUSIONS

The second part of this dissertation has dealt mainly with the minutiae of the various works for marimba. It is appropriate now to look at the works again in their entirety and place them in their proper perspective in the continuum of serious music in general. The didactic value of the works for marimbists has already been emphasized, their uniqueness in the repertoire for marimba. What hasn't been addressed is their uniqueness in general. Great composers don't often compose for obscure instruments such as the marimba. Wilder was a champion of obscure instruments; he is arguably the most important composer of works for the tuba. He also wrote significant amounts of music for the bassoon, french horn and trombone. As the culture of the world accelerates, soon into a new millenium, the tendency to disregard music and art that is not mainstream and reflective of the newest trends is pervasive. It is important that worthwhile music that is not necessarily part of the mainstream or on the cutting edge of current trends be preserved. The works for marimba by Wilder certainly aren't mainstream or reflective of new trends in music; they are simply beautifully crafted pieces of music which transcend their time. Wilder worked tirelessly to provide significant music for the more obscure instruments within the traditional assortment of western instruments. It is important that those who benefited the most from Wilder's efforts, the performers on these instruments, should endeavor to return the favor by preserving his music and thereby rescuing it from obscurity.

It is recommended that prospective performers do some background research into Wilder's life in order to gain some overall perspective on the music. Wilder's own books *American Popular Song* and *Letters I Never Mailed* offer many insights into Wilder's views about life and music. Desmond Stone's excellent biography of Wilder: *Alec Wilder In Spite of Himself,* was published by the Oxford University Press in 1996. The works for marimba receive some mention in the book, as does Gordon Stout. There is no paucity of information about Wilder; there are now even internet websites devoted to Wilder. The devotees of his music keep it alive and now, almost twenty years after his death, his music is perhaps performed more often now than it was in his lifetime.

The intent of this dissertation has been to provide a prospective marimbist a performance guide to all of Wilder's works for marimba. The ultimate achievement of the dissertation has been the preparation of a performance edition of the marimba part in the *Sextet for Marimba and Woodwind Quintet.* The part has been edited with regard to emendations to the notational content of the part itself, the inclusion of stickings for most passages, horn cue markings and , finally, phrasing and articulation markings. It should be emphasized that this dissertation is an unavoidably personal perspective on performance practice issues pertaining to Wilder's music for marimba. The perspective differs from that of the marimbist the works were composed for. The music is examined here from the perspective of a marimbist who plays with a technique based on the innovations of marimbist Leigh Stevens, which is a very different technical approach than Gordon Stout's. The music is also examined theoretically from a learned jazz perspective. It is certainly possible that other performers and theorists could look at this

music from an entirely different perspective and arrive at some very viable alternative solutions to the performance practice and analytical issues posed by this music. Such continued investigation would be welcome and would be in accordance of the goals of the dissertation. It is ultimately hoped that this dissertation is an instigator to further investigation into, and improved performances of, the works of Alec Wilder for marimba.

APPENDIX A

JAZZ TERMINOLOGY

1. Bebop- A style of jazz originating in the 1940's which is characterized by its fast tempos, frequent modulations, use of upper extensions of chord structures and across the bar-line polymetric phrasing.
2. Groove- A slang term for dance oriented music where the tempo is very steady.
3. Jazz Rhythm- The rhythmic approach in jazz is predicated on a motoric steady tempo. There can be none of the slight fluctuations in tempo that are characteristic of most common practice era classical music.
4. Modal Interchange- A sudden change of mode in a given composition while the tonality of the mode is retained. A change from A aeloian to A lydian for example.
5. Swing- A process by which jazz musicians delay the playing of the second eighth note of a beat anywhere from just slightly after the second eighth note to the fourth sixteenth note of a beat. The amount of delay is determined by tempo and style. Slower tempos will generally delay the eighth note more and, conversely, faster tempos will have less of a delay.
6. Tritone Substitution- Dominant seventh chords located a tritone apart from each other are interchangeable in jazz harmonic practice. This is because they share the same tritones.

7. Voice Implied Harmony- A technique by which a composer may sustain interest in a static harmony by moving one voice by step, while retaining the other voices in a given harmony.

APPENDIX B

MARIMBA TERMINOLOGY[1]

Stroke Types:

1. Single Independent Strokes- Individual strokes in one of the four mallets. Single independent strokes must be followed by a stroke from a mallet in the opposite hand.
2. Single Alternating Strokes- Alternating individual strokes in mallets of the same hand. For example 121212 in the left hand or 434343 in the right hand.
3. Double Lateral Strokes- A very rapid single arm motion stroke accompanied by a turn of the wrist which enables the player to make a double stroke with both mallets of an individual hand. The mallet sequence can be inside to outside, or outside to inside: 12 or 21 in the left hand, 34 or 43 in the right hand.
4. Double Vertical Strokes- The simultaneous striking of both mallets in the same hand: 12 or 34.

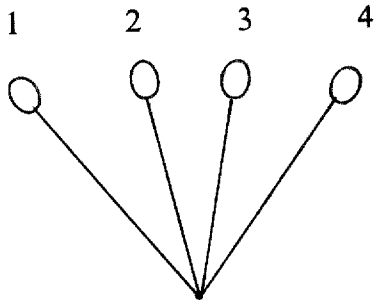
Roll Types:

1. Traditional Hand to Hand Rolls- This roll is basically a rapid alternation of double vertical strokes in the separate hands.
2. Double Lateral Rolls- A quick succession of alternating double lateral strokes in separate hands.

[1] This terminology is borrowed from Leigh Stevens *Method of Movement* and from information obtained in master classes with Mr. Stevens

3. Independent Rolls- A roll using both mallets of a single hand. The roll is basically accelerated single alternating strokes accomplished by a rapid turning of the wrist and lower arm.
4. Double Independent Rolls- Simultaneous independent rolls in separate hands. The rolls are not necessarily at the same speed.

MALLET NUMERATION



APPENDIX C

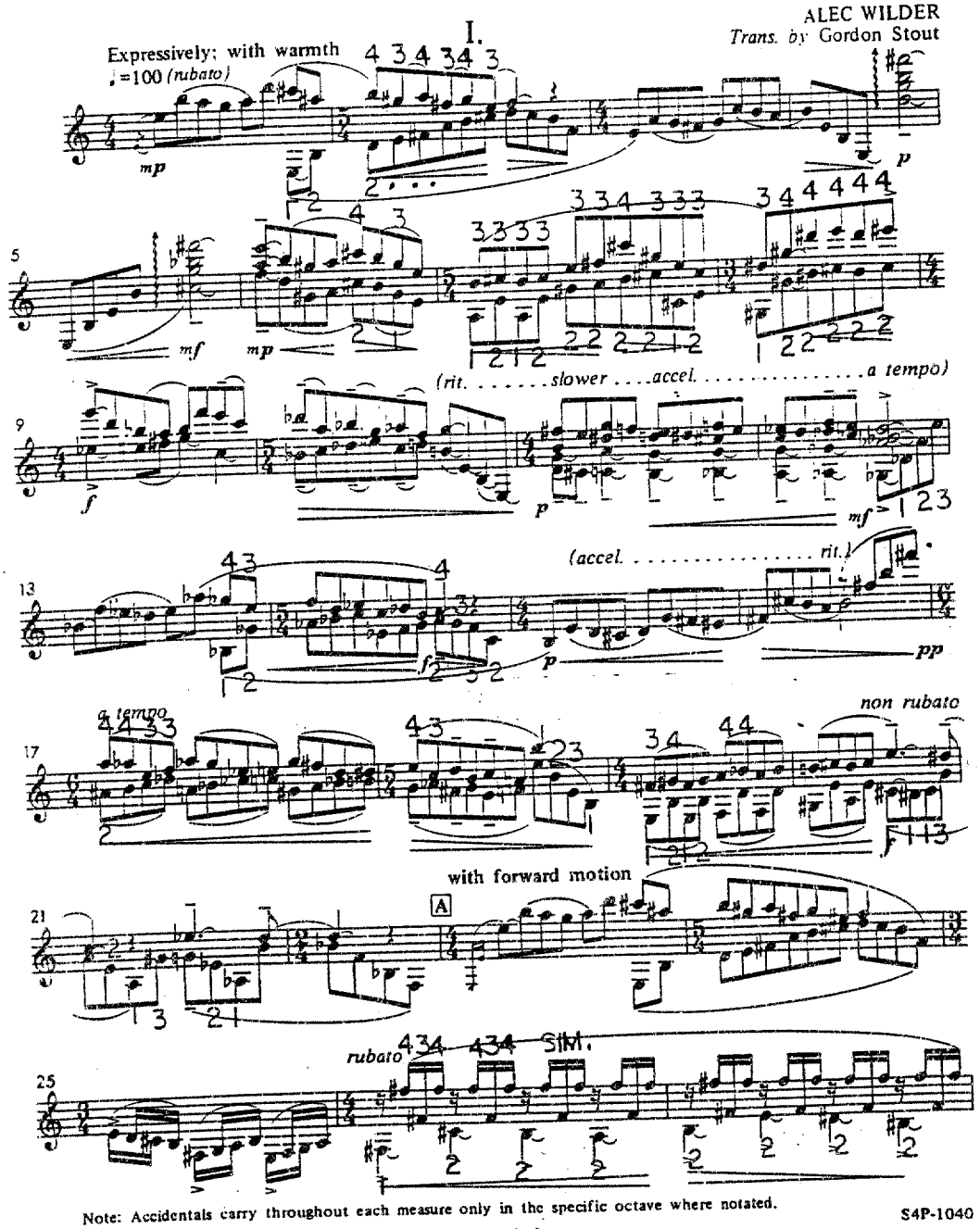
THE EDITED MARIMBA PARTS OF THE WORKS

The marimba parts of the respective works are presented here in chronological order of their composition; the same order in which they were presented in the dissertation. The parts are edited mainly as to sticking. There are a few instances where notes have been changed and/or put into their correct octaves. In the *Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet* rehearsal cues have also been included. The stickings are marked with the numbers 1 to 4 corresponding to the four mallets as demonstrated in Appenix B on marimba terminology. The indication of a dash (-) or dot(.) after a sticking number means that the same mallet number is to be continued until another number is given or until the marks cease. A marking of sim. or etc. indicates that the following passage should be sticked similarly to the preceding passage.

SUITE FOR SOLO GUITAR

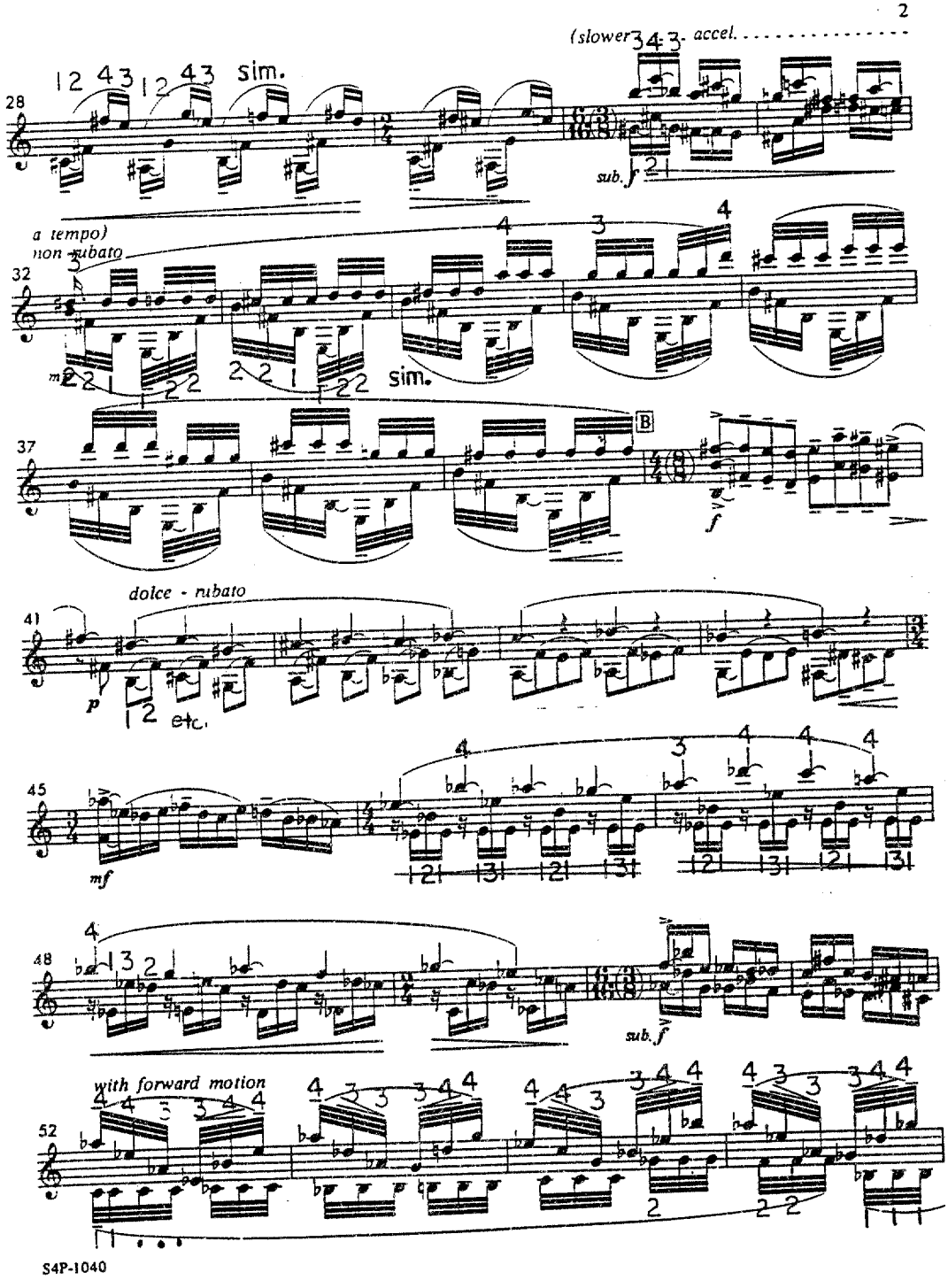
ALEC WILDER
Trans. by Gordon Stout

I.

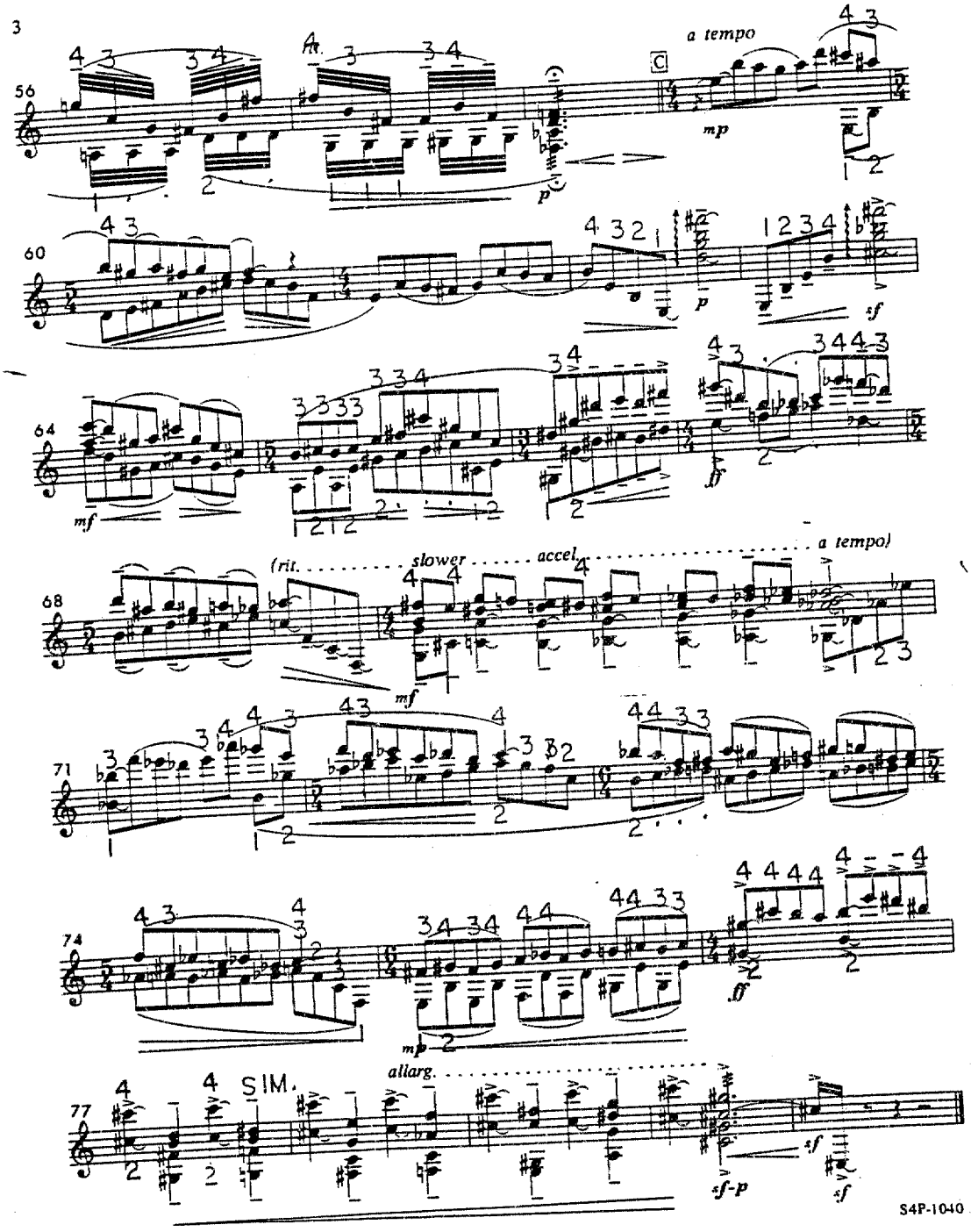


Note: Accidentals carry throughout each measure only in the specific octave where notated.

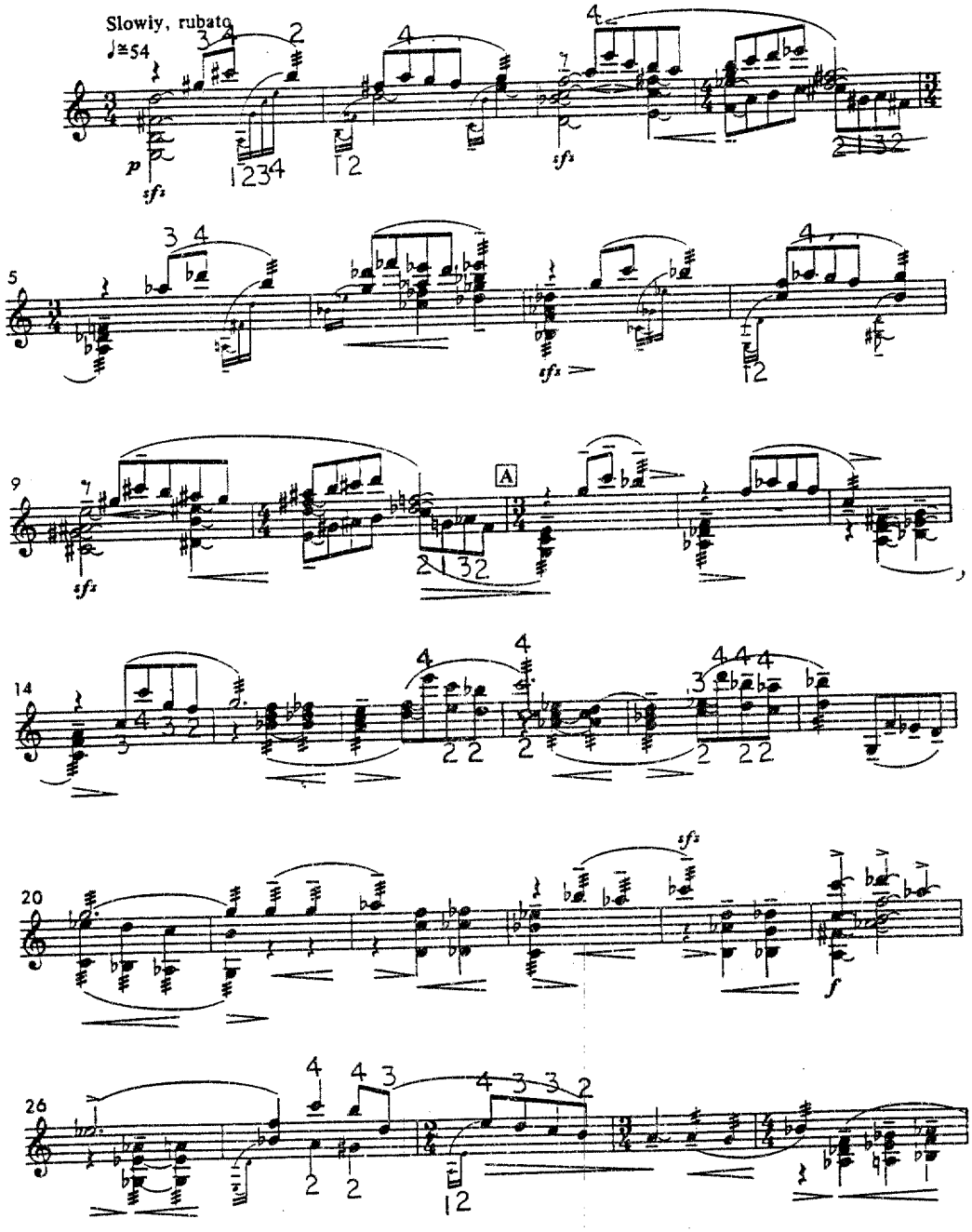
S4P-1040


(slower) accel.
sim.
sub. f
a tempo)
non rubato
sim.
B
f
dolce - rubato
p
etc.
mf
sub. f
with forward motion

S4P-1040


3
56
A
a tempo
C
mp
p
60
p
sf
64
mf
ff
(rit. slower accel.
a tempo)
68
mf
71
74
mp
ff
allarg.
77
SIM.
sf
sf-p
sf
S4P-1040

II.



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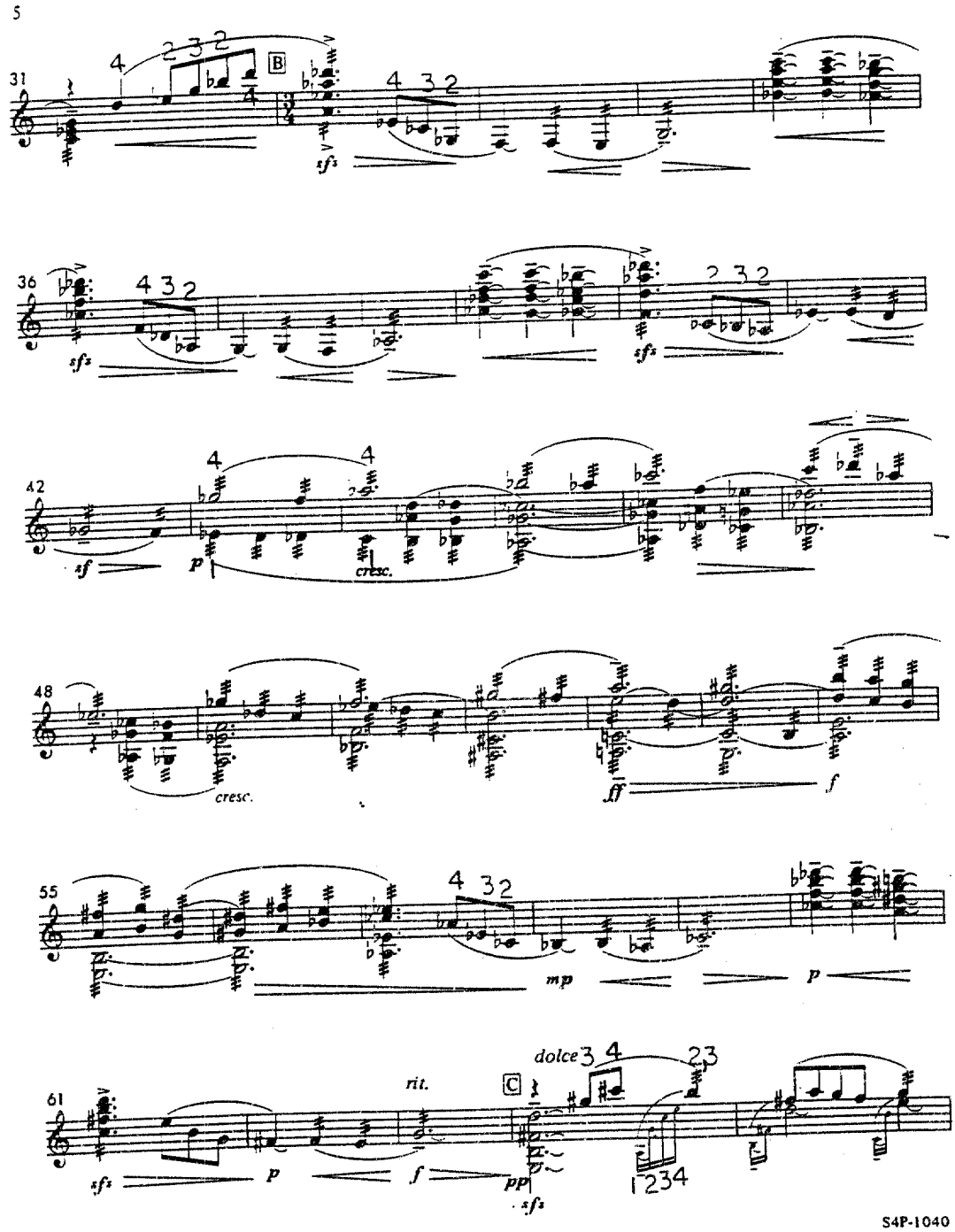
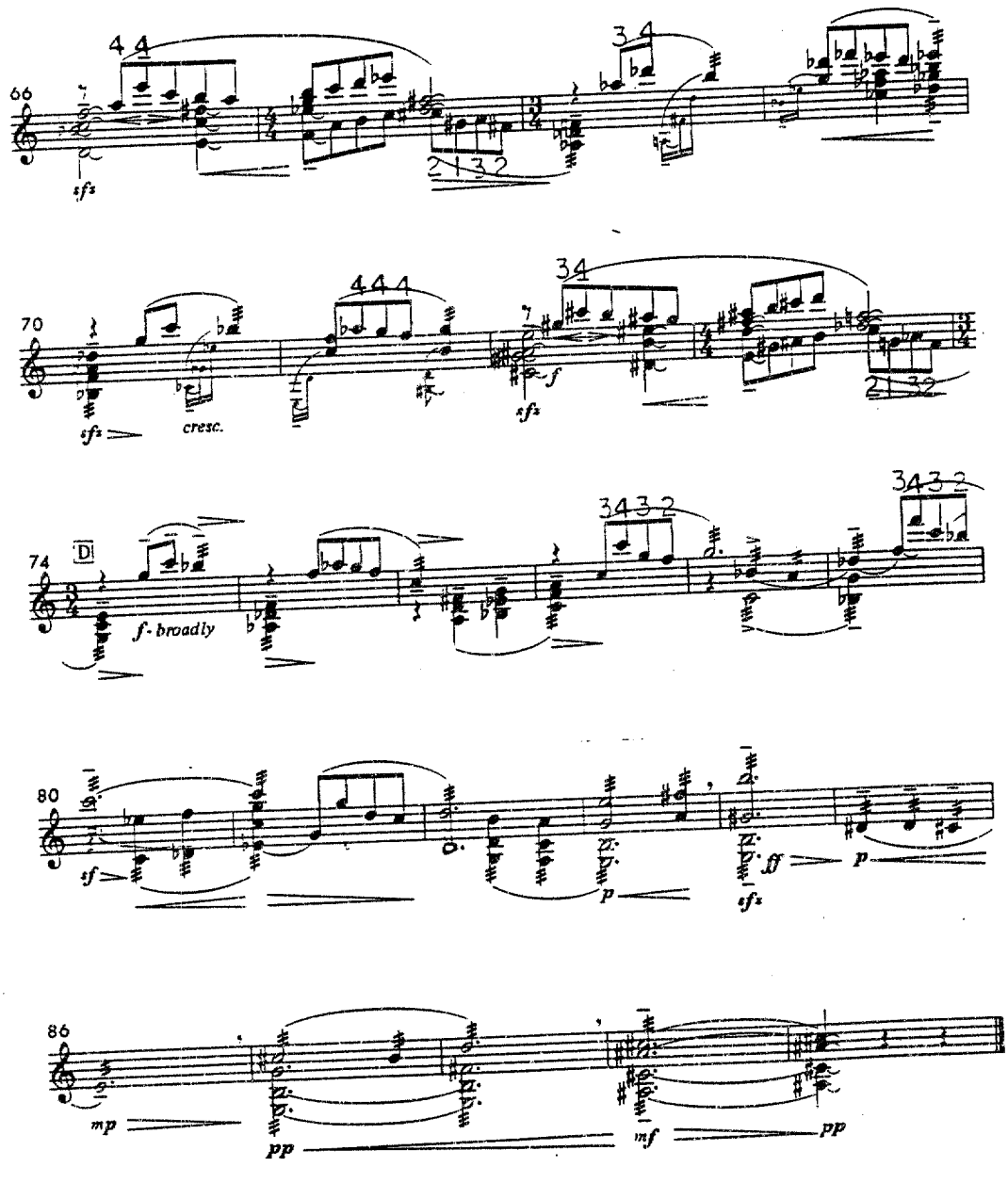
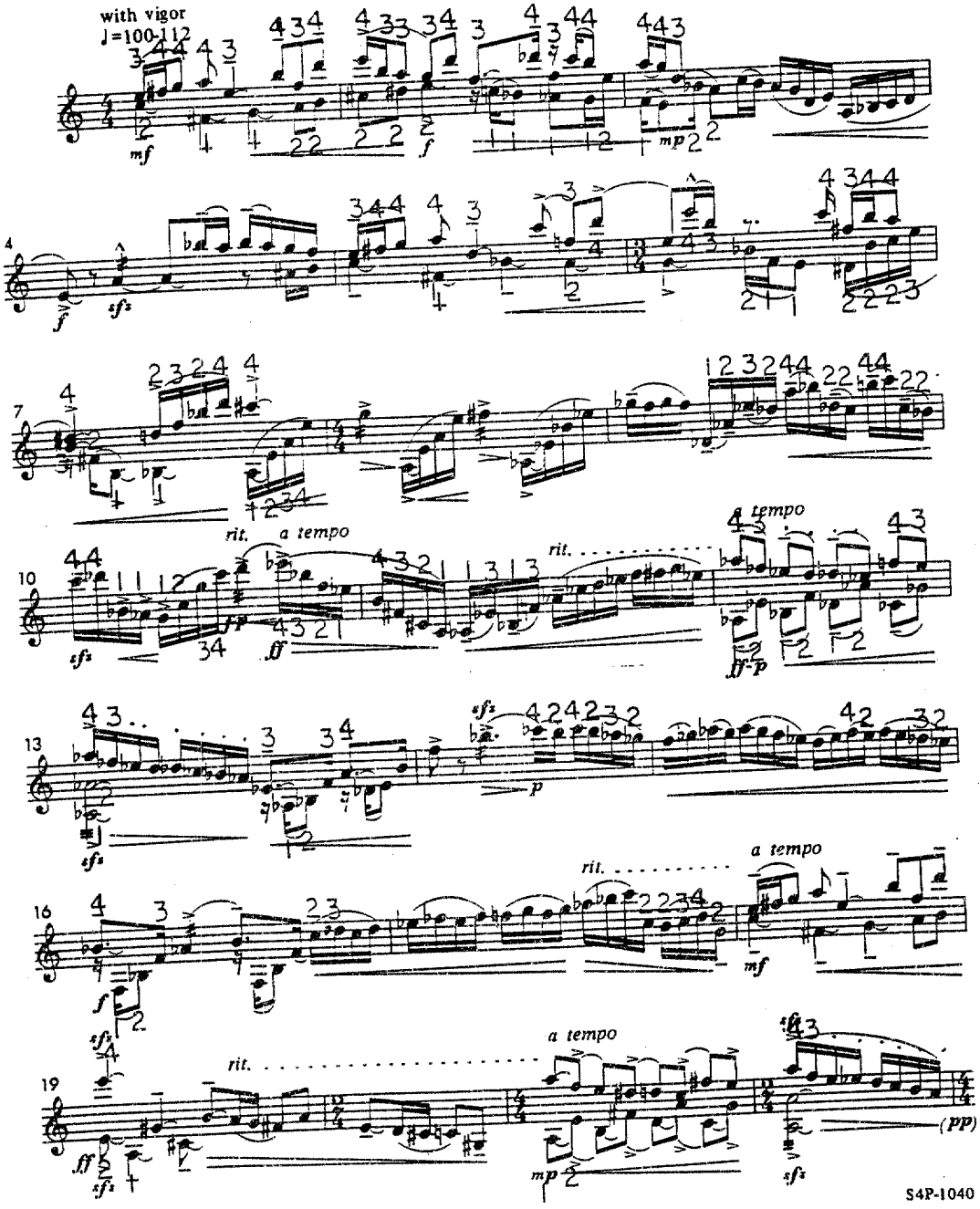

5
31
B
sfz
36
sfz
sfz
42
sf
p
cresc.
48
cresc.
ff
f
55
mp
p
61
rit.
C
dolce
sfz
p
f
pp
sfz
S4P-1040


66
sf
70
sfz
cresc.
f
sfz
74
D
f- broadly
80
sf
p
sfz
ff
p
86
mp
pp
mf
pp

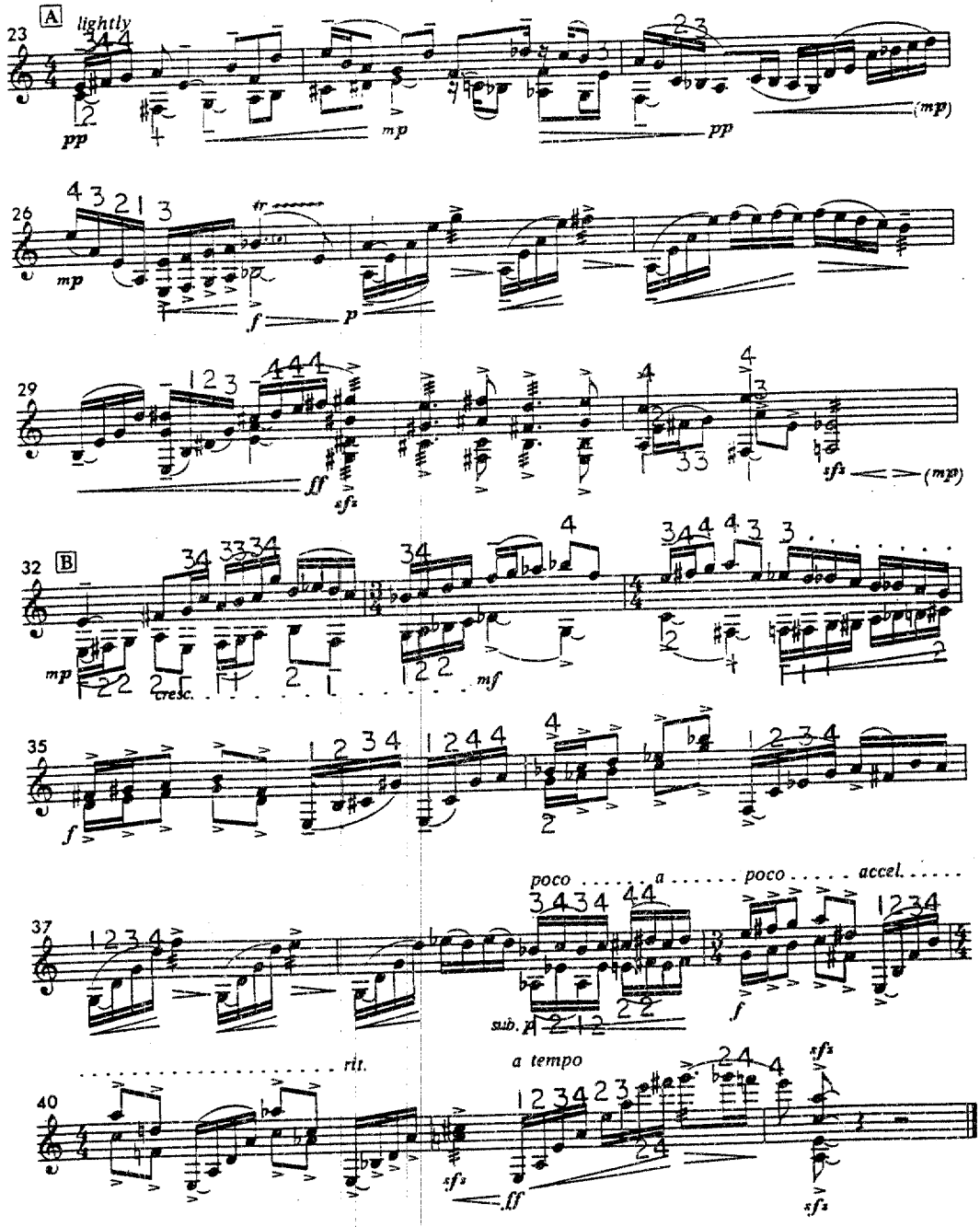
S4P-1040

7

III.

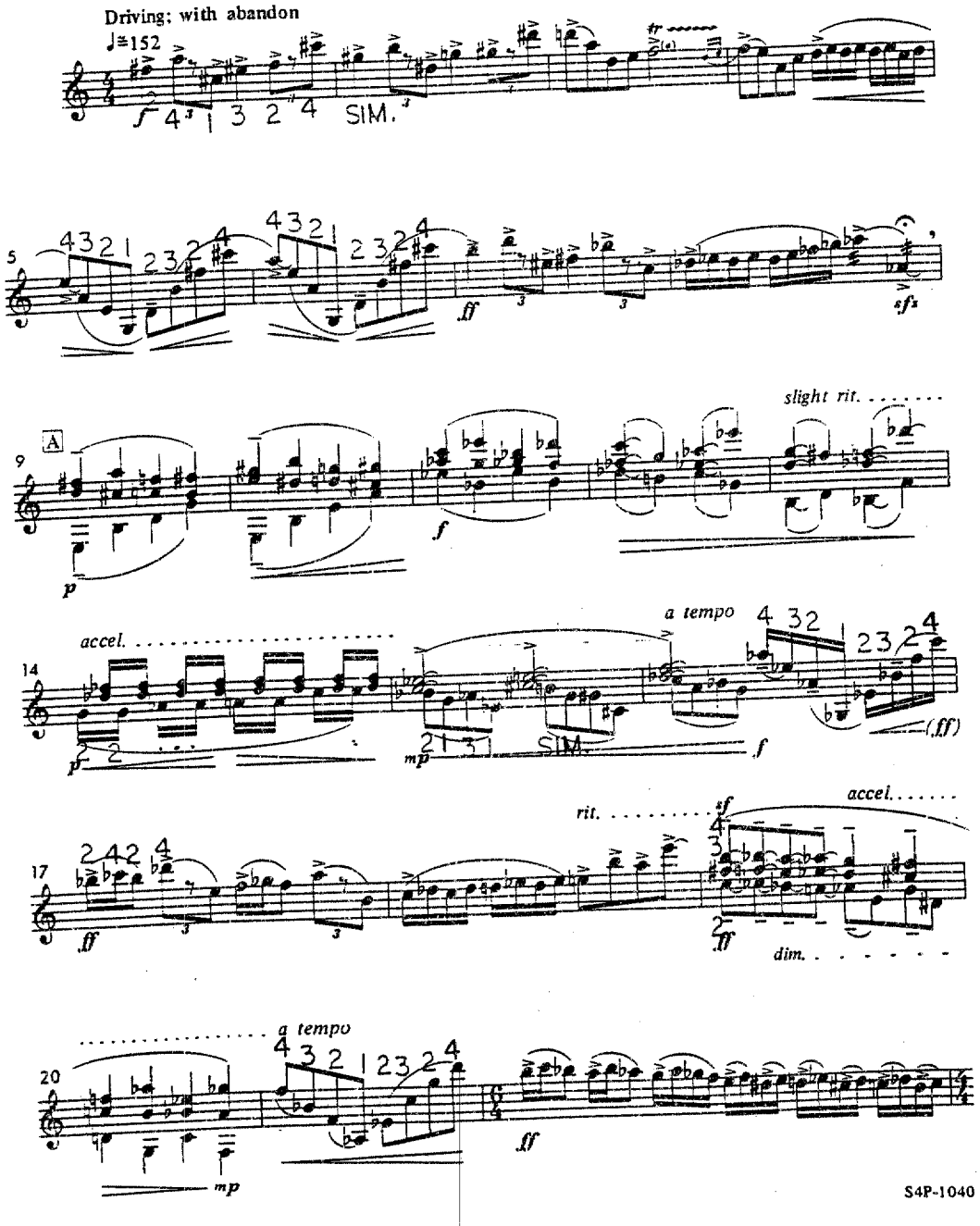


S4P-1040

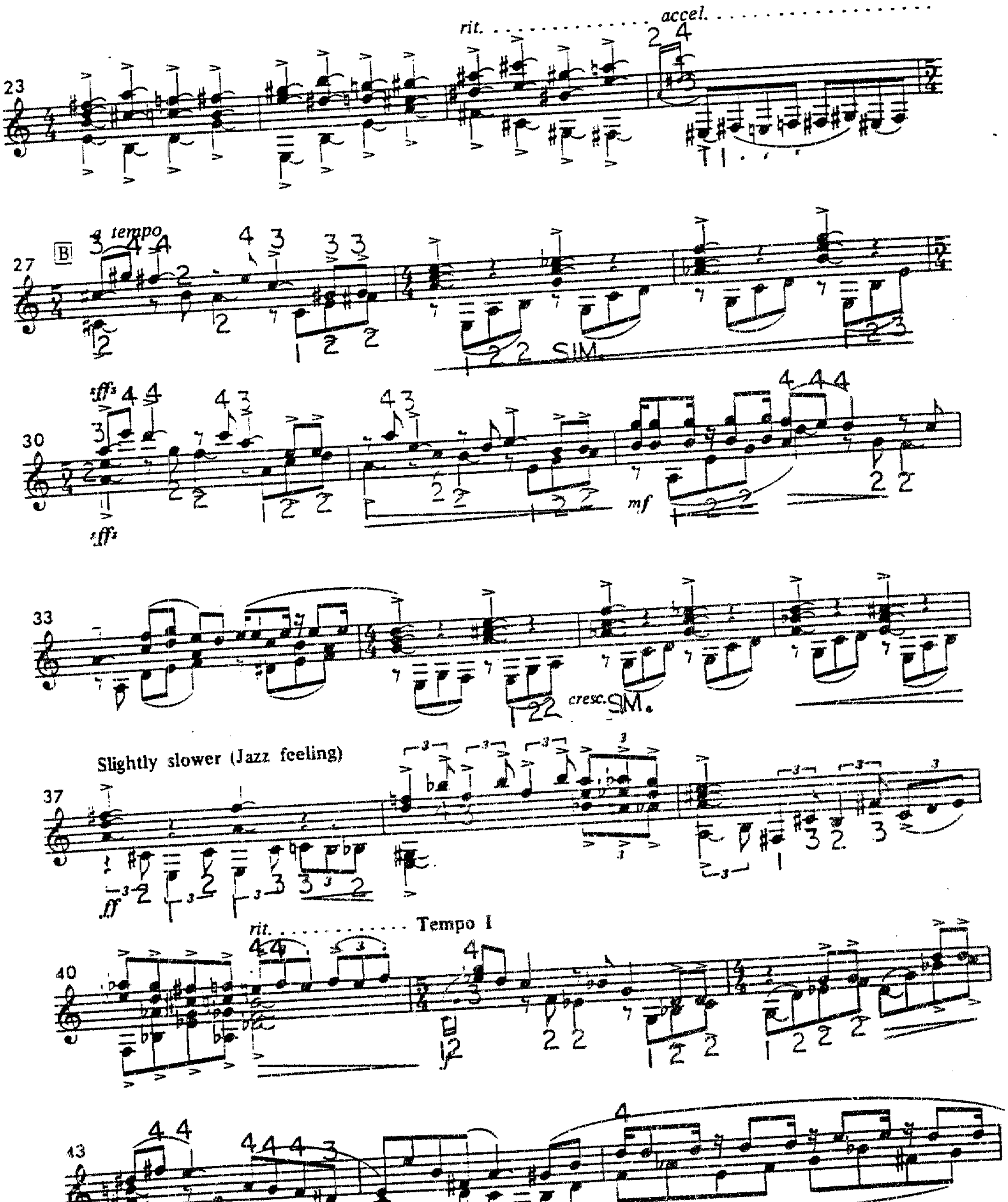

A
lightly
23
pp
mp
pp
(mp)
26
mp
tr
f
p
29
ff
sf
sf
(mp)
32
B
mp
cresc.
mf
35
f
37
poco . . . . . a . . . . . poco . . . . . accel. . . . . .
sub. p
f
. . . . . rit.
a tempo
40
sf
ff
sf
sf

S4P-1040

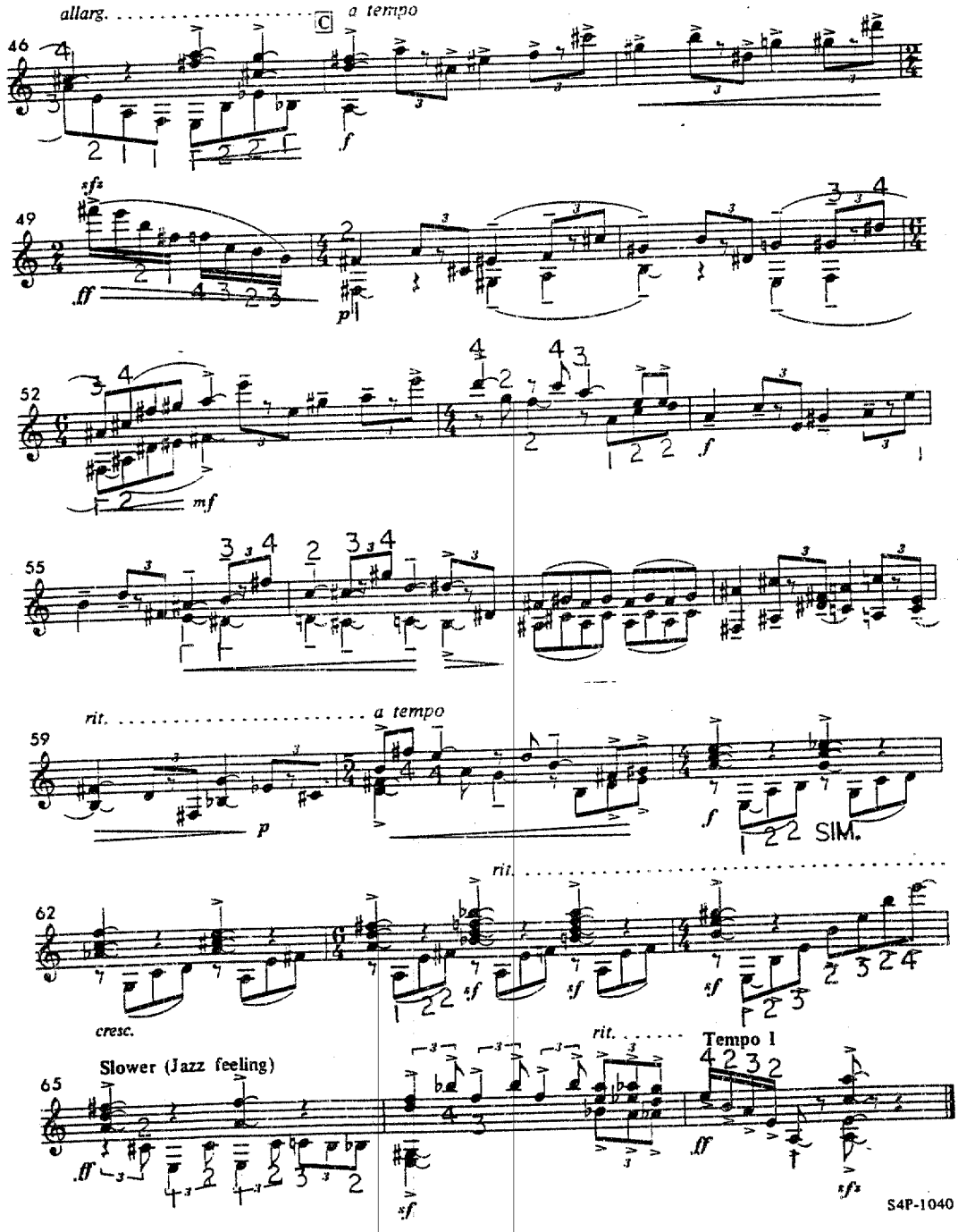
IV.


Driving; with abandon
♩=152
f
SIM.
ff
sfz
A
slight rit.
p
f
accel.
a tempo
mp
SIM.
(ff)
rit.
sf
accel.
dim.
mp

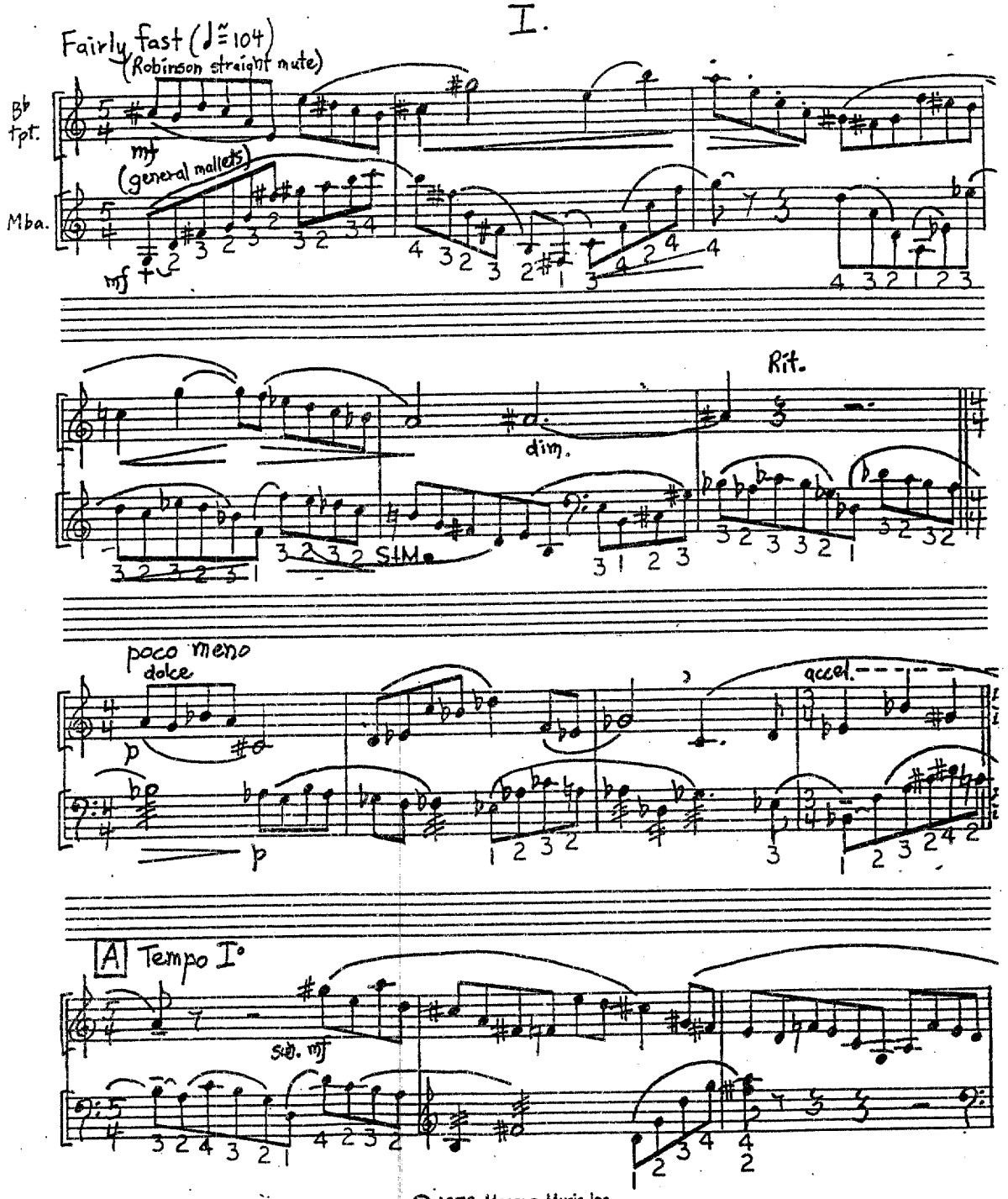
S4P-1040

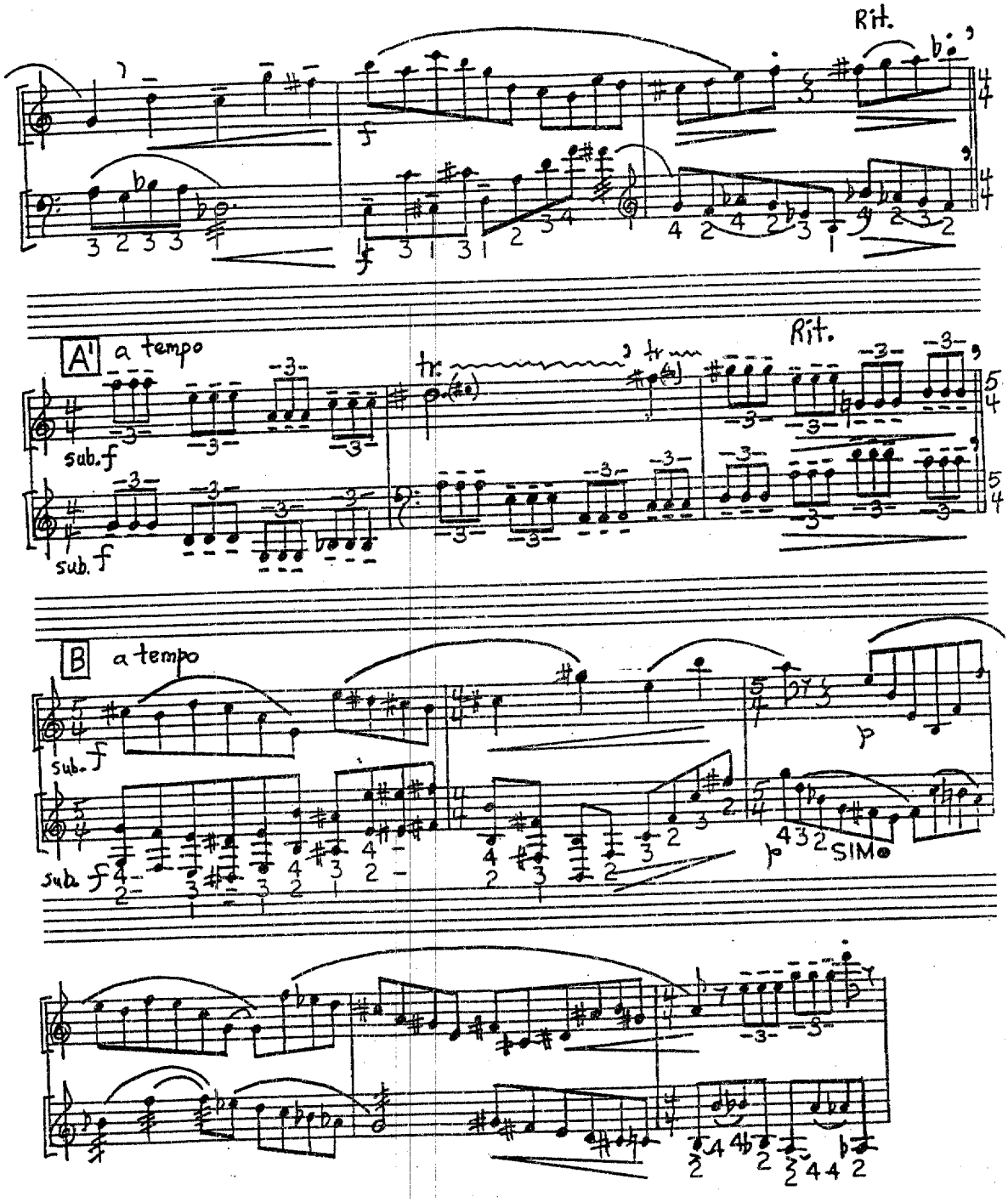

rit.
accel.
a tempo
B
sffz
mf
SIM.
cresc.
Slightly slower (Jazz feeling)
ff
rit.
Tempo I

S4P-1040

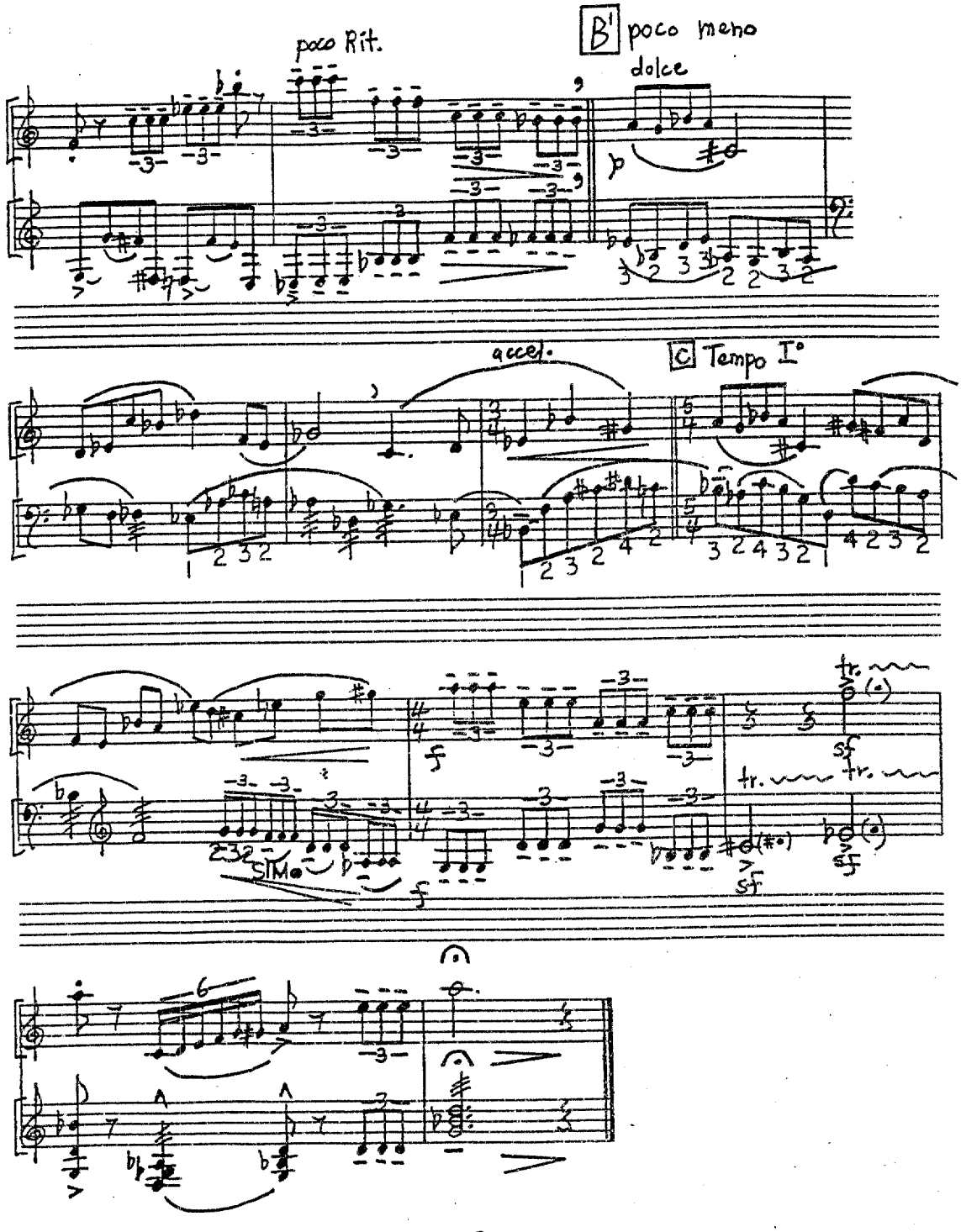

allarg.
C
a tempo
46
f
49
sf
ff
p
52
mf
f
55
rit.
a tempo
59
p
f
SIM.
rit.
62
cresc.
sf
sf
sf
rit.
Tempo 1
Slower (Jazz feeling)
65
ff
sf
ff
sf
S4P-1040

I.

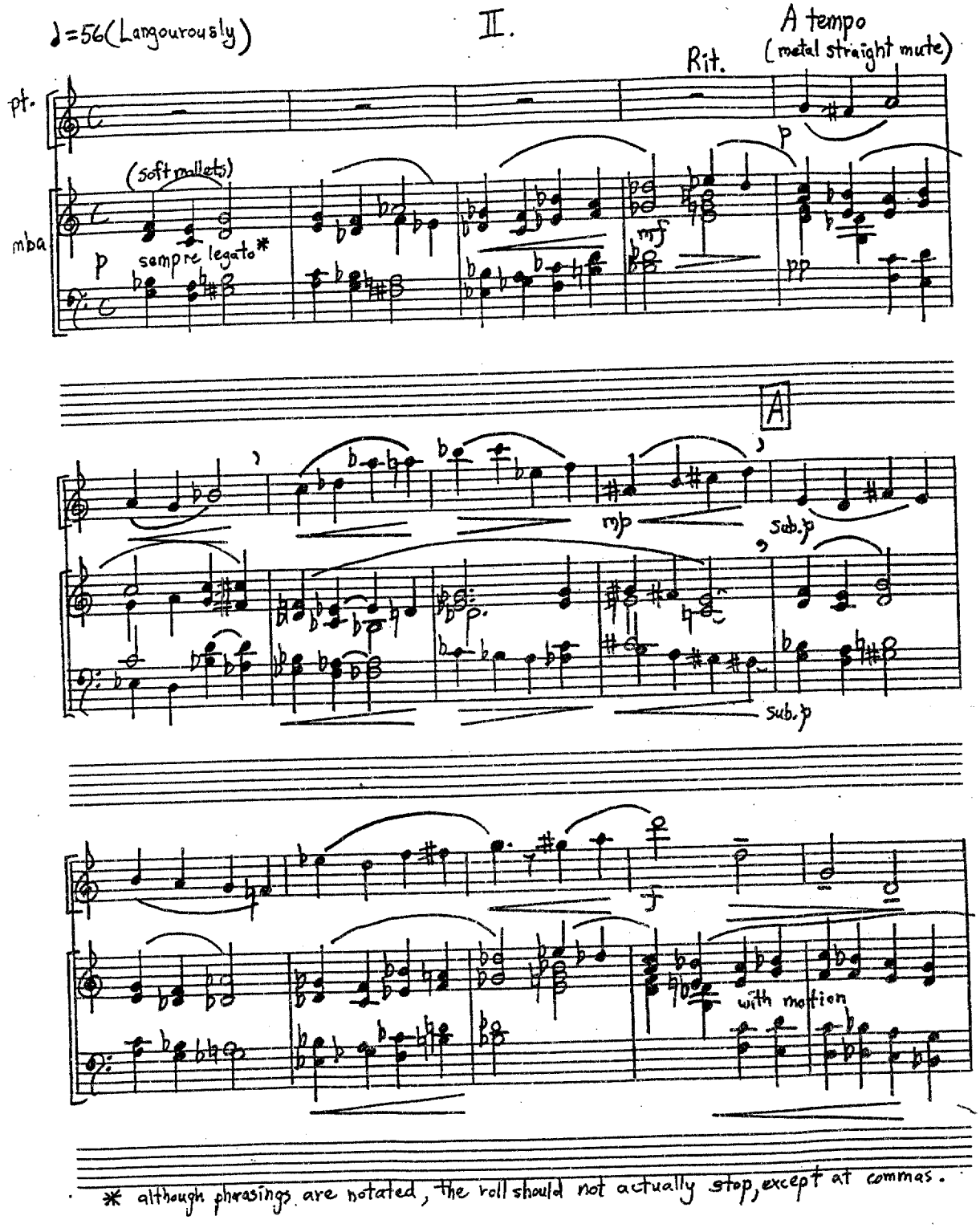


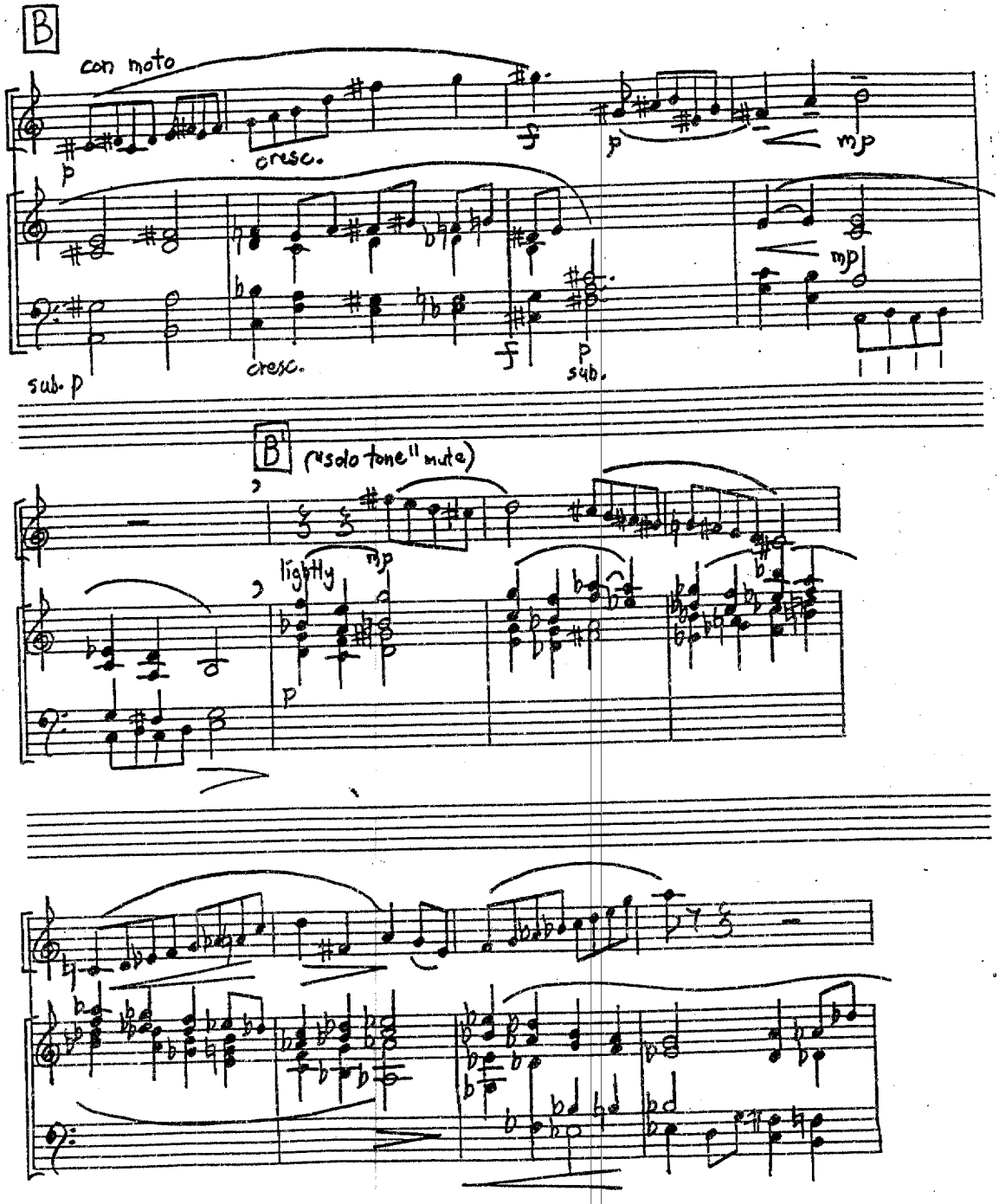


2

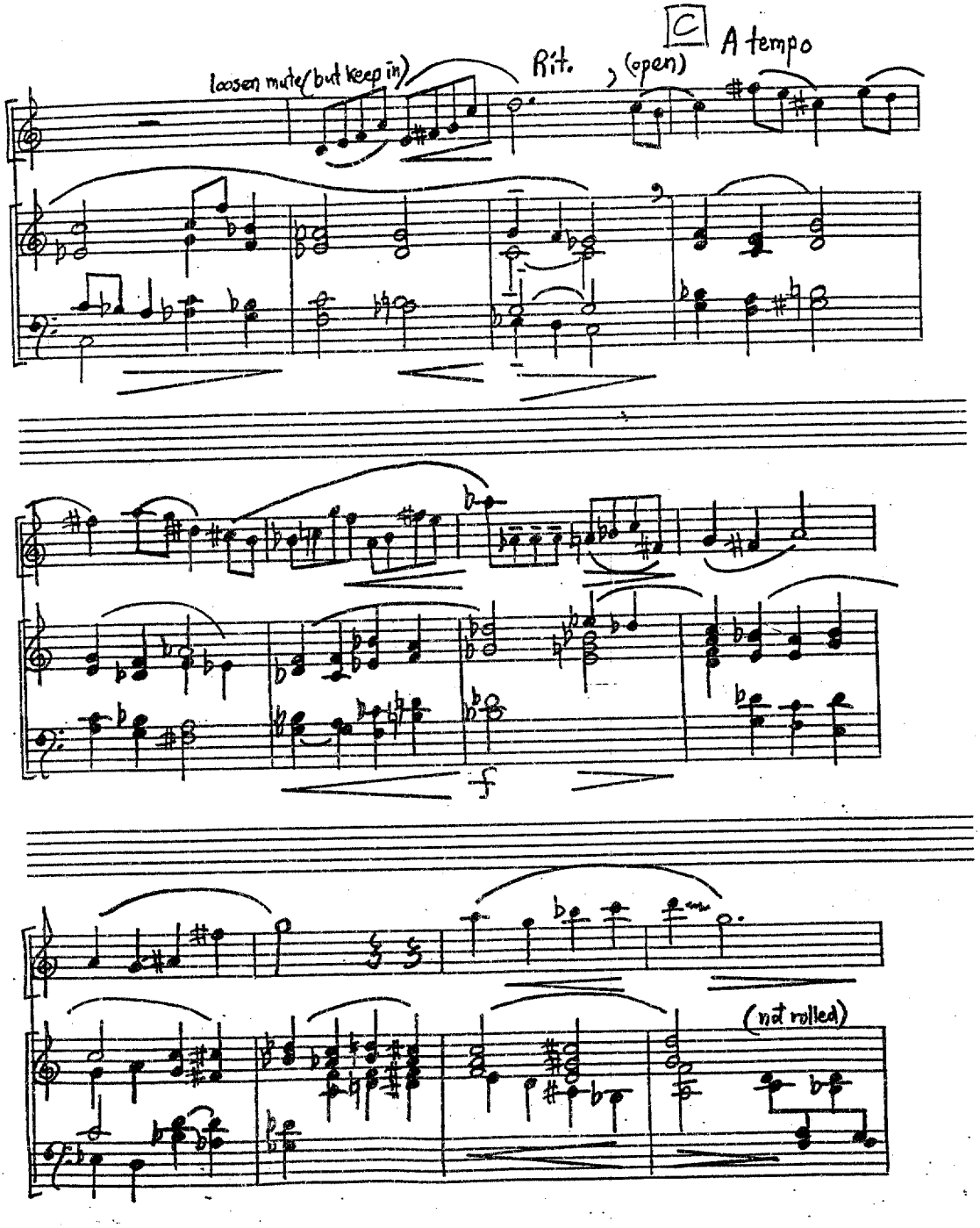


3

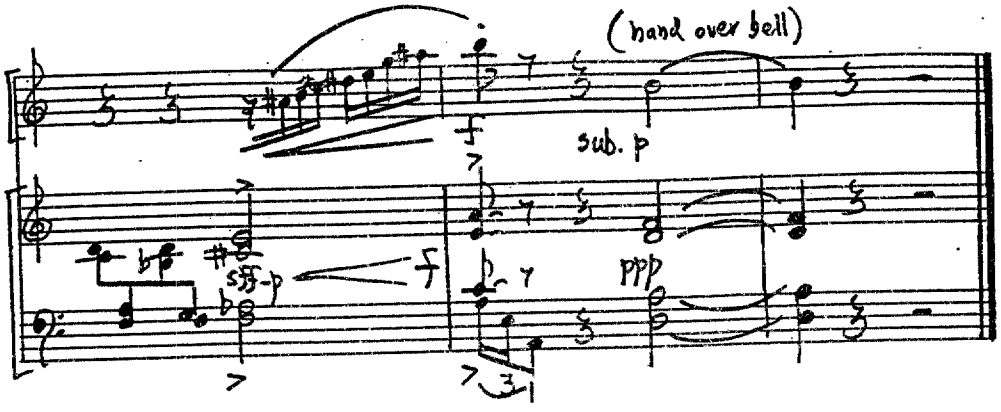

♩=56(Langourously)
II.
A tempo
(metal straight mute)
Rit.
pt.
mba
(soft mallets)
p
sempre legato*
mf
pp
A
mp
Sub.p
Sub.p
f
with motion
* although phrasings are notated, the roll should not actually stop, except at commas.


B
con moto
p
cresc.
f
p
mp
mp
sub. p
cresc.
f
p
sub.
B'
(use solo tone II mute)
lightly
mp
p

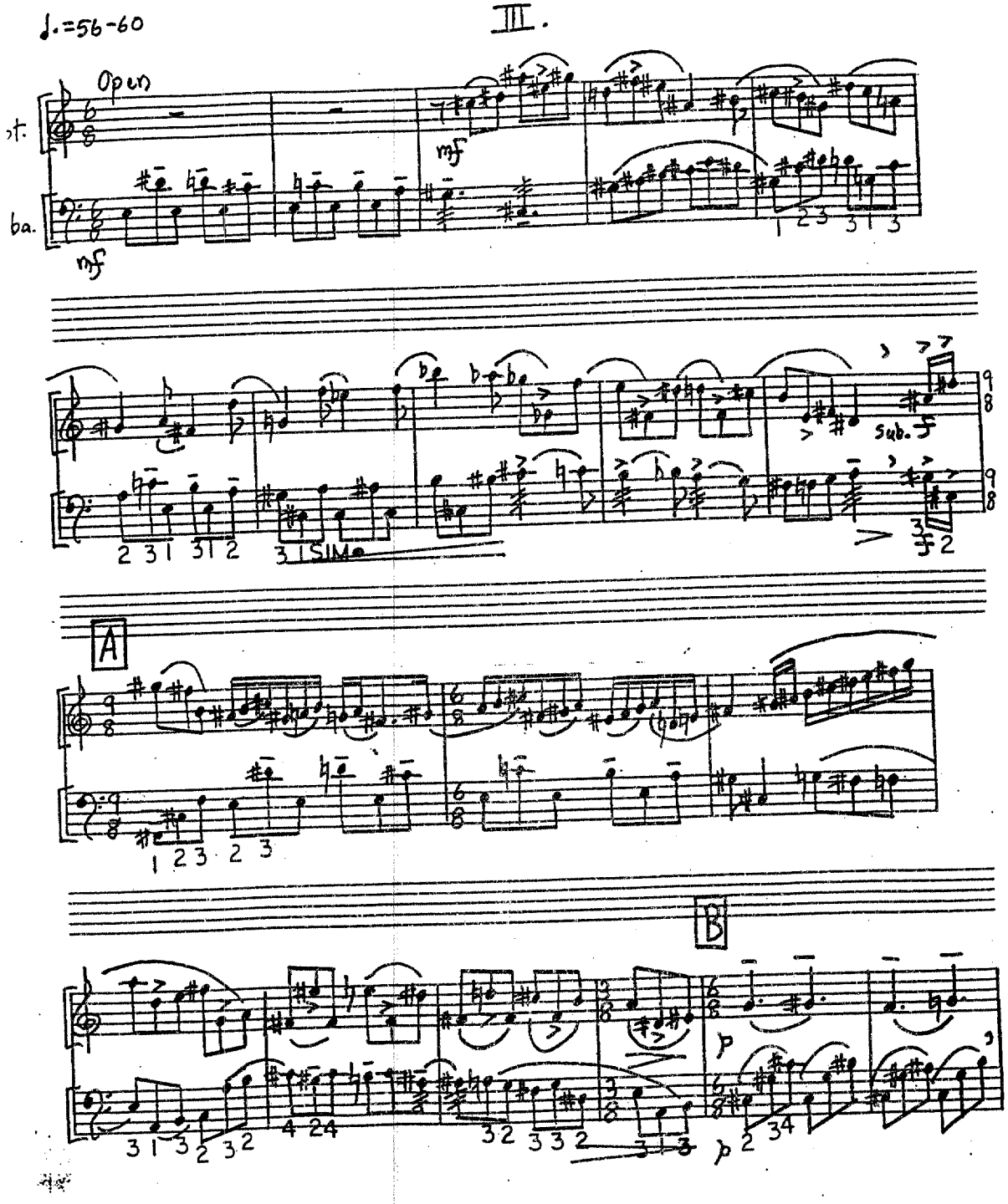
5

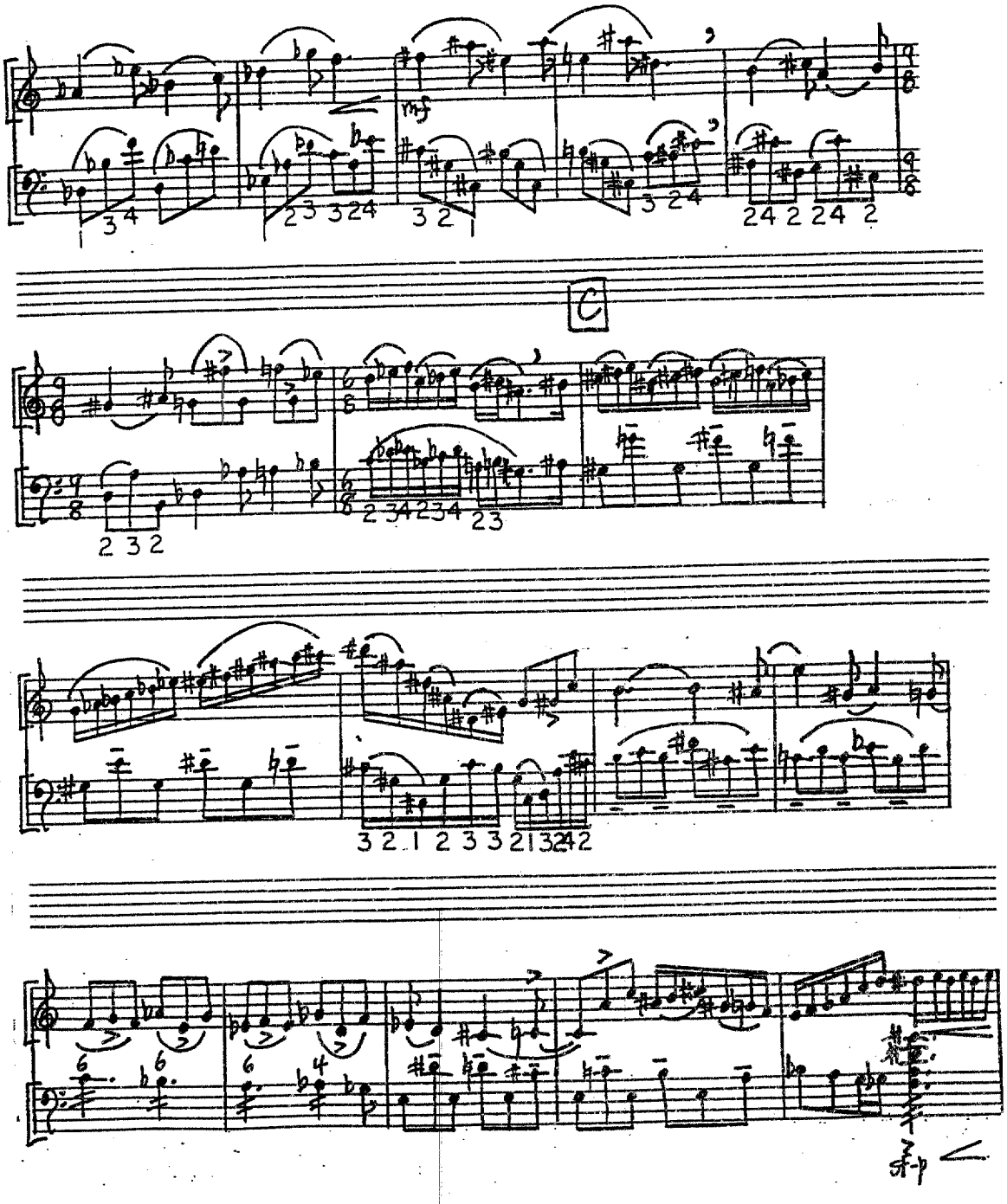


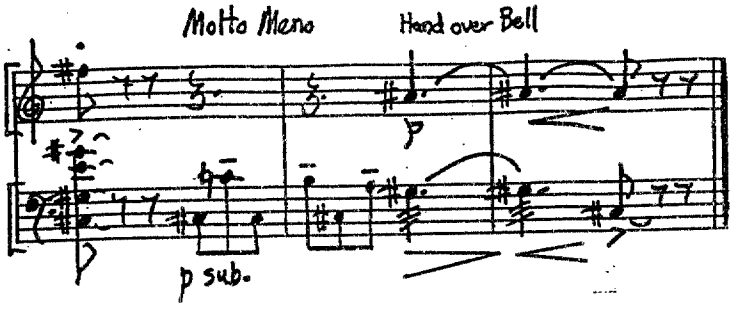
6



7

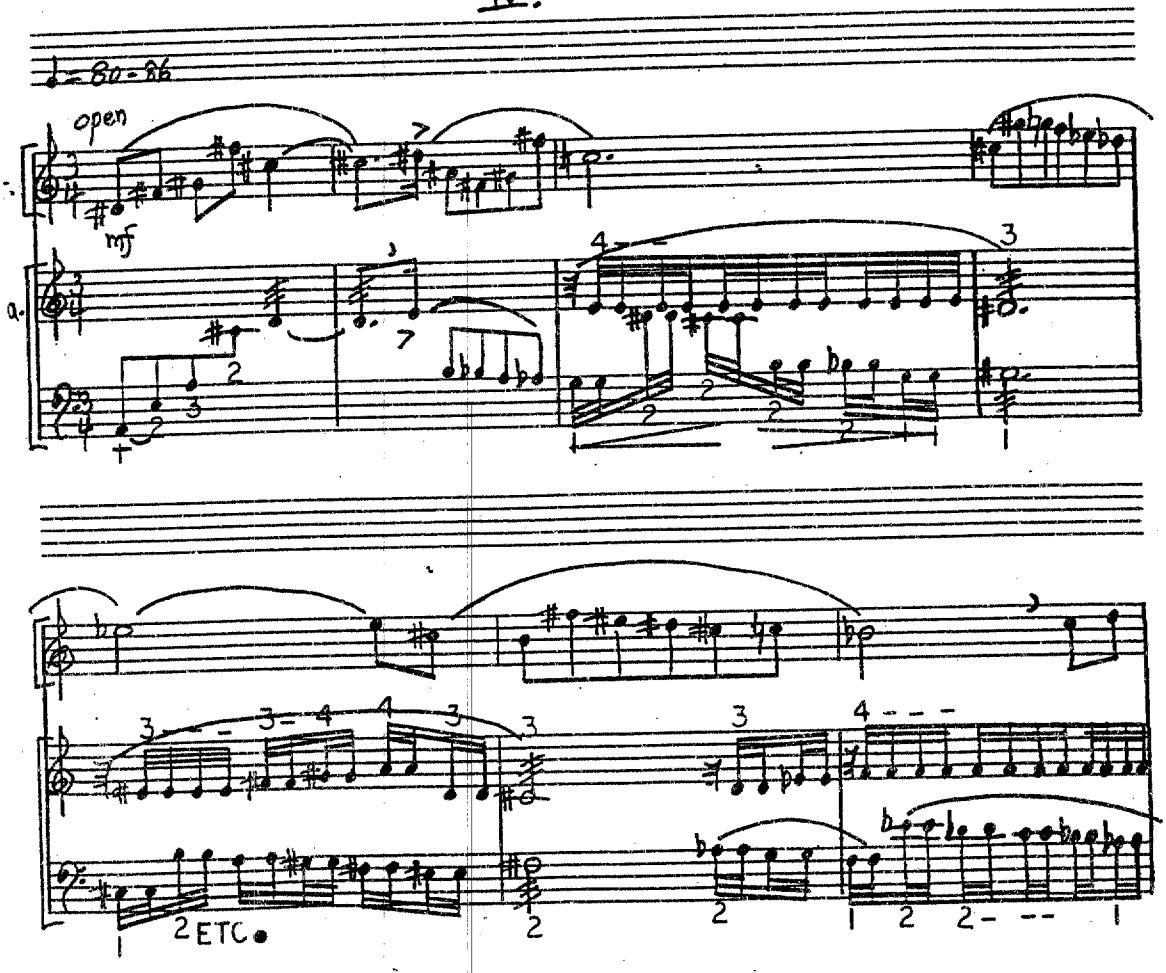

♩.=56-60
III.
Open
mf
mf
Sub. f
SIM.
A
B
p
p


mf
C
sfp

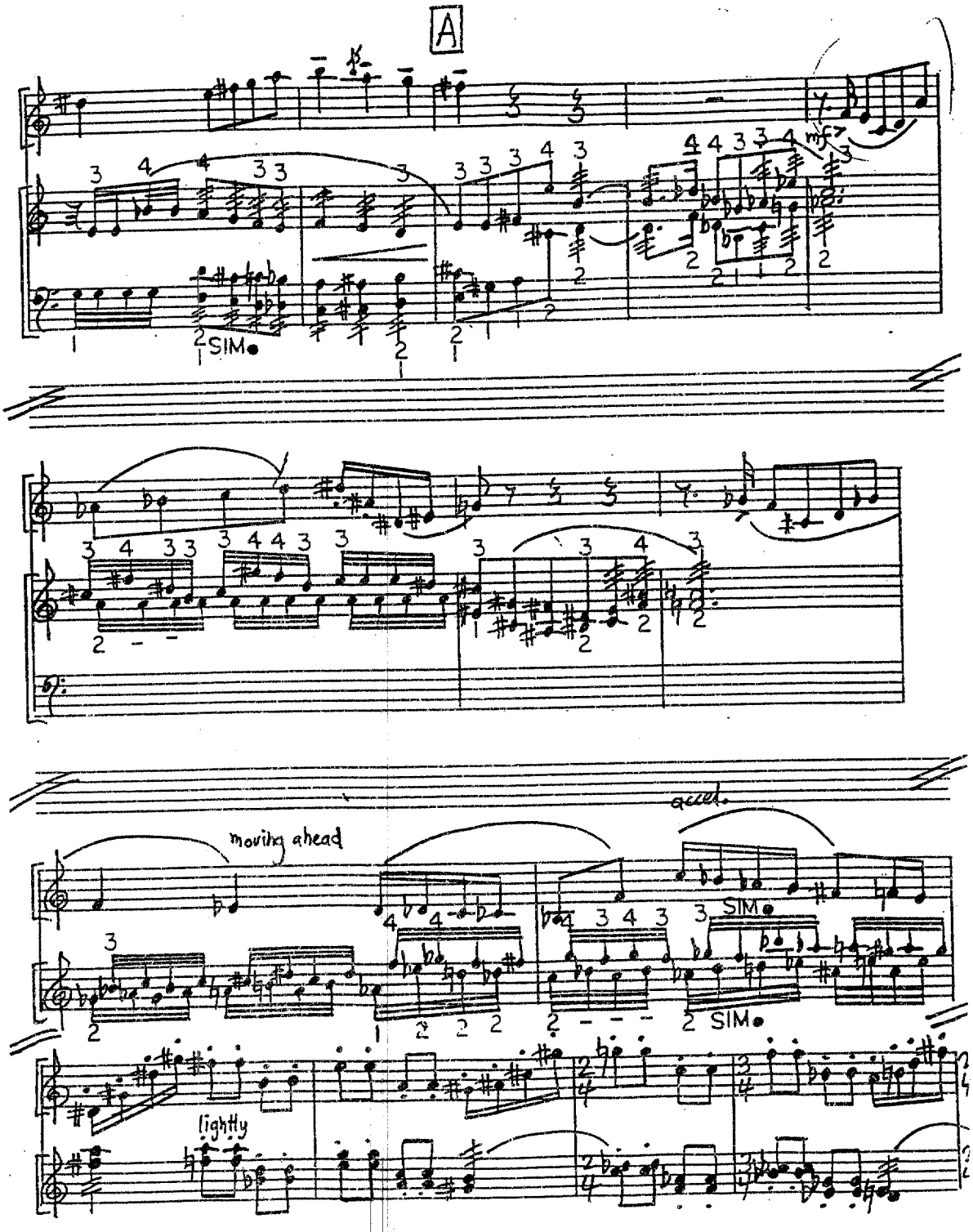


9a.

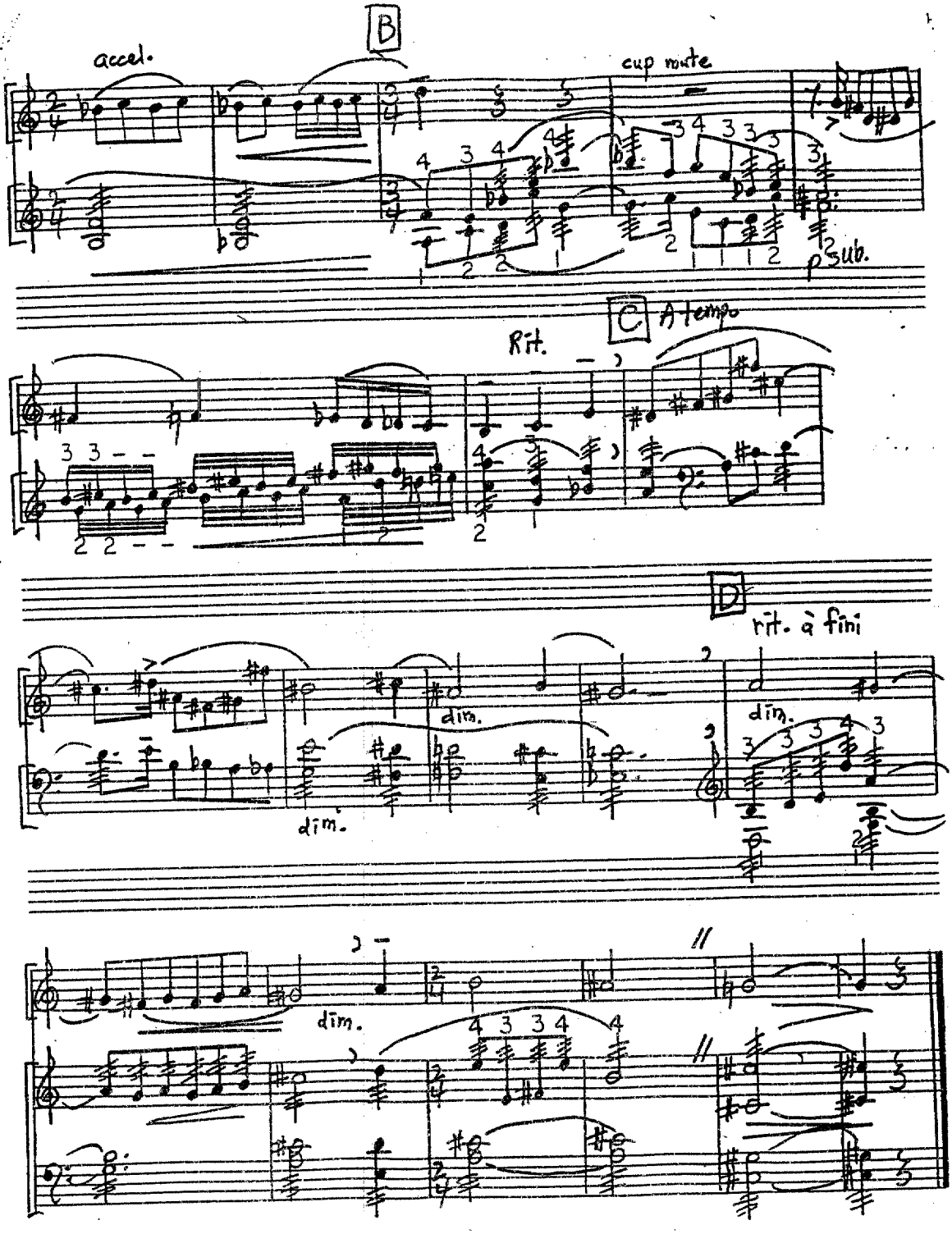
IV.



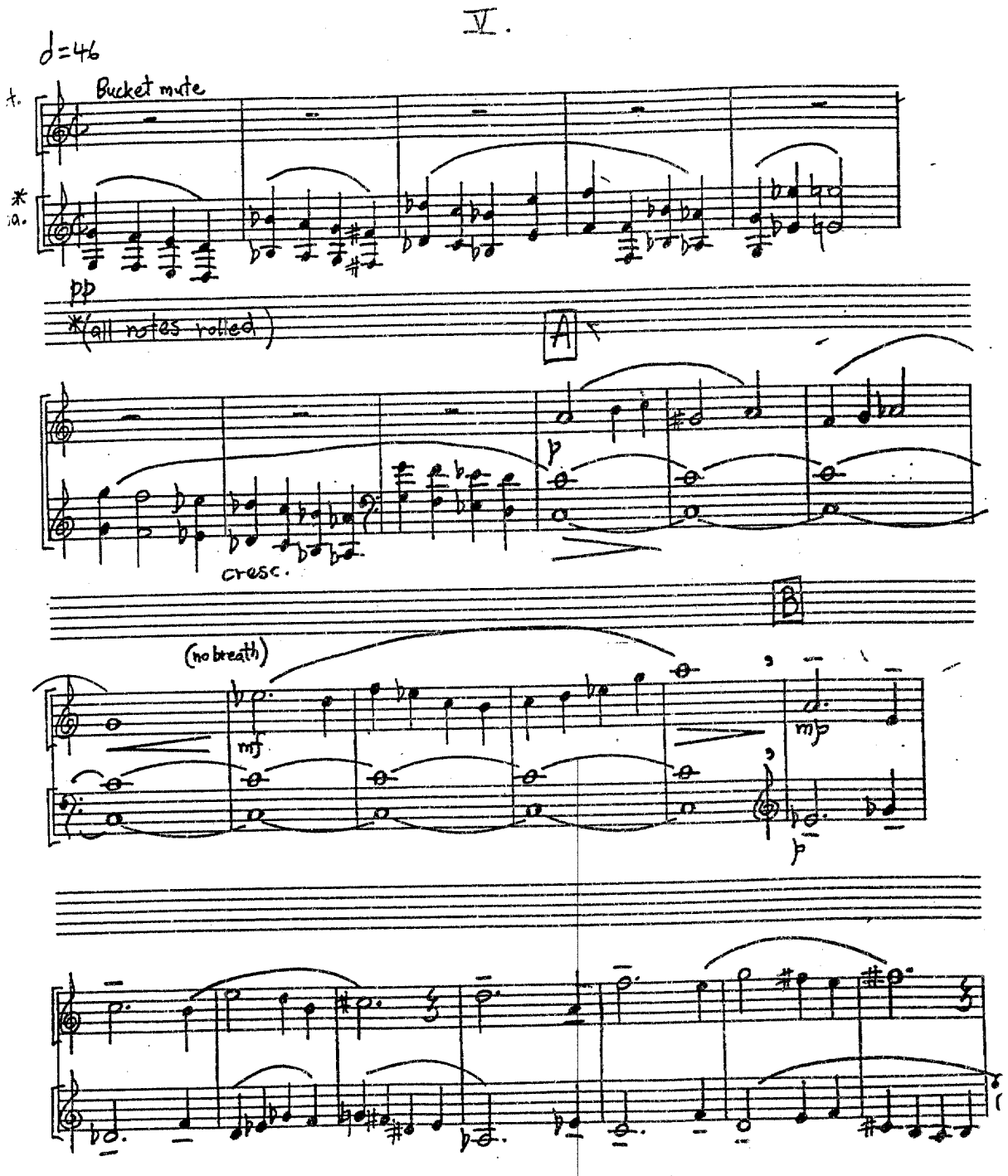
10

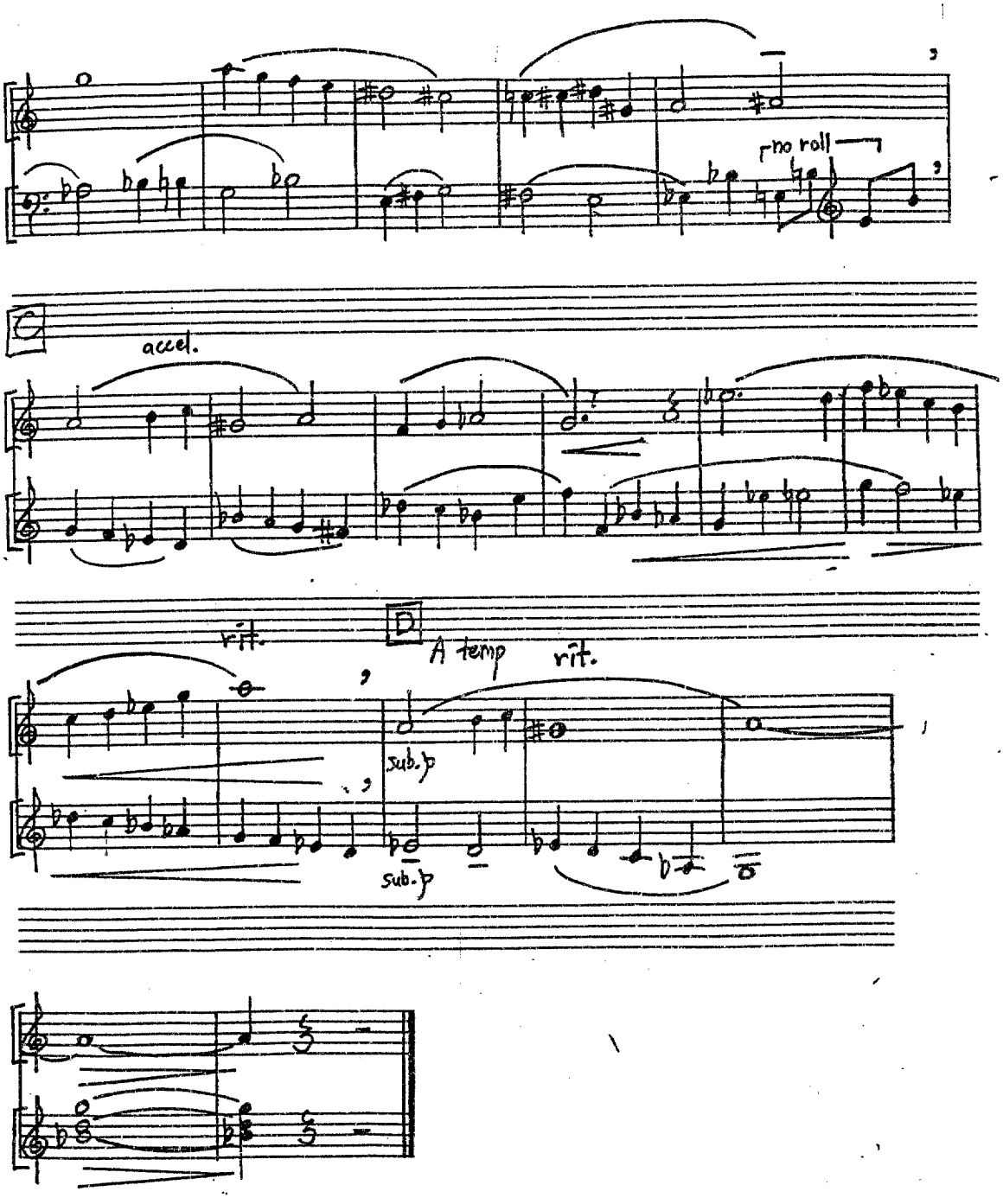


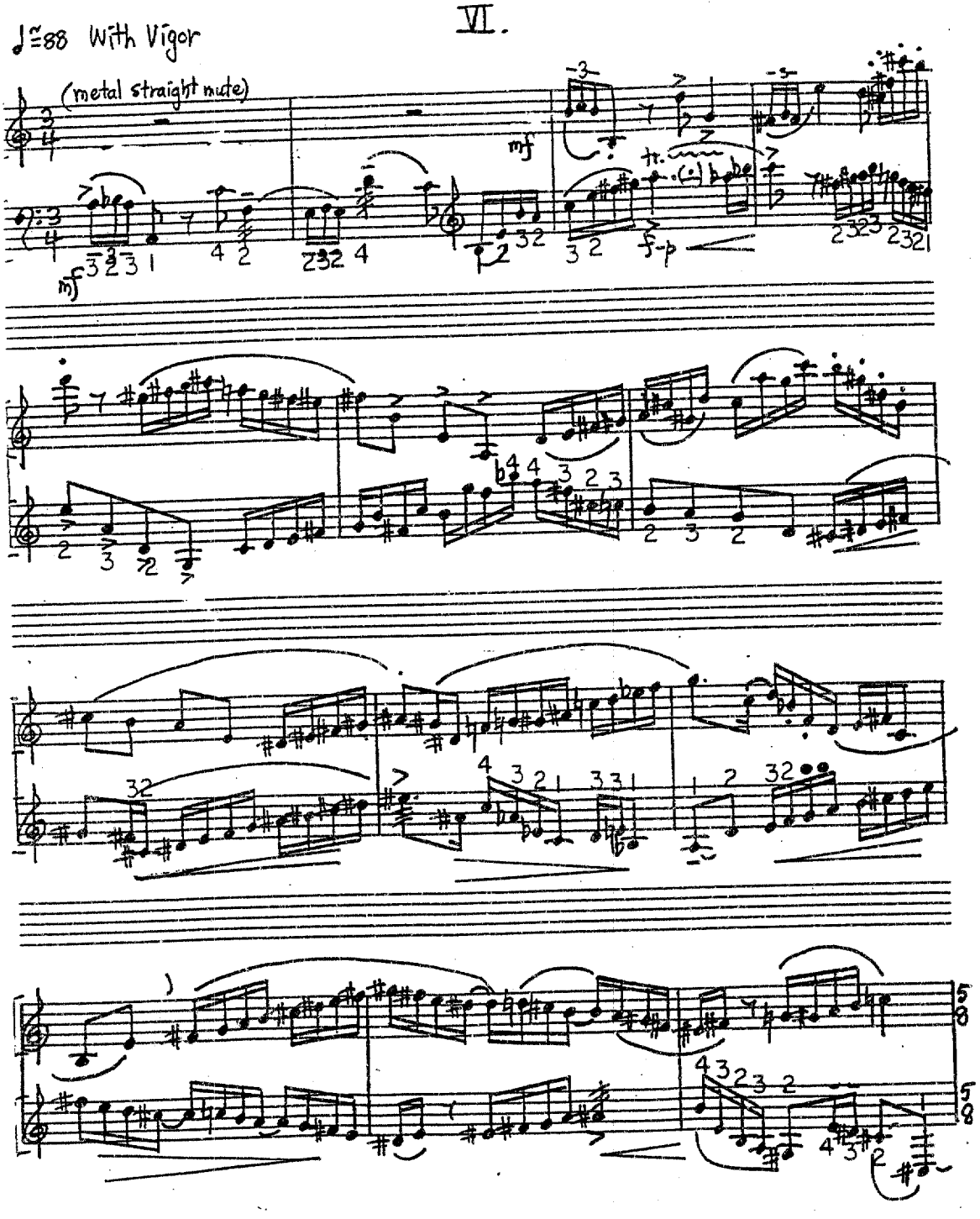
11

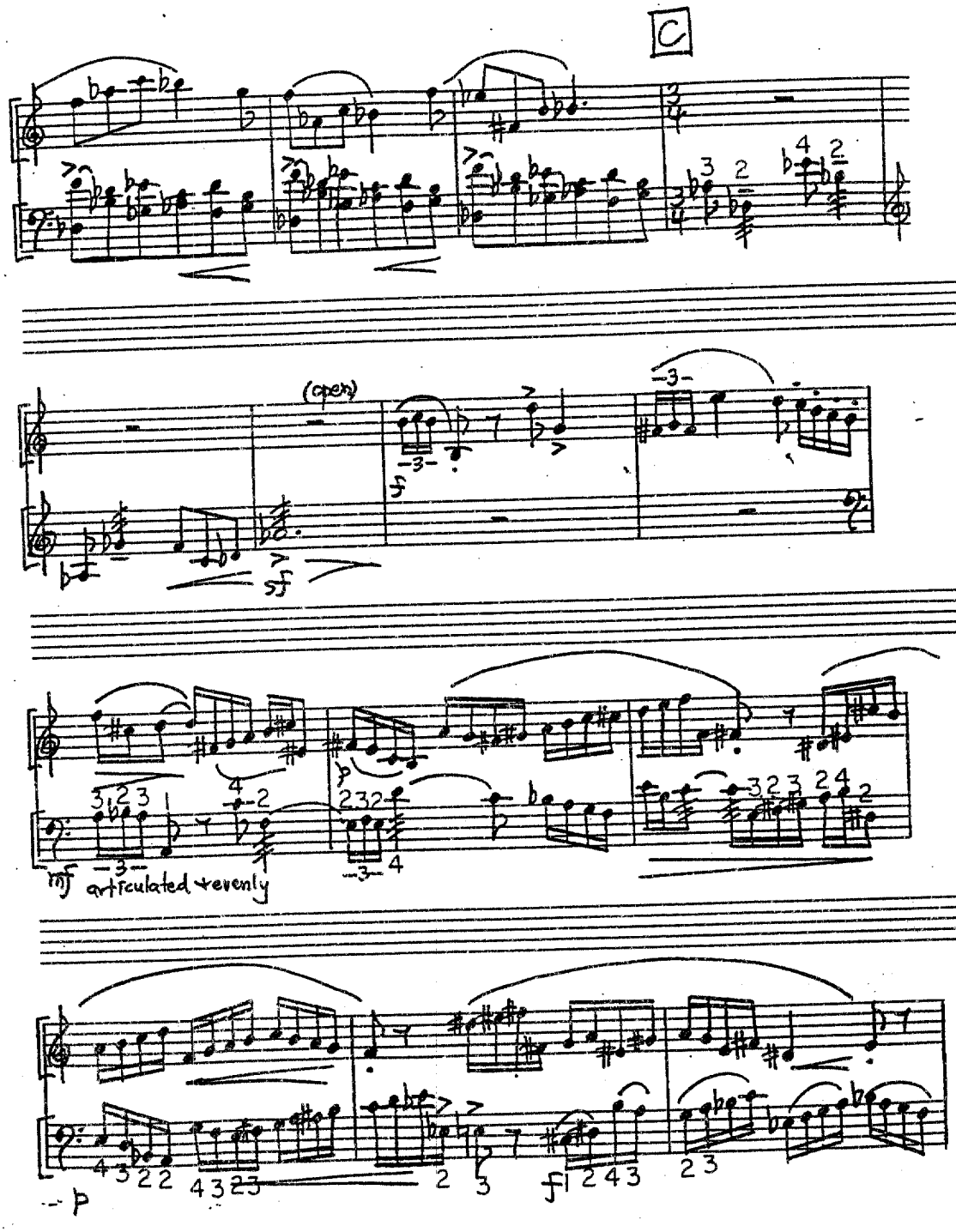


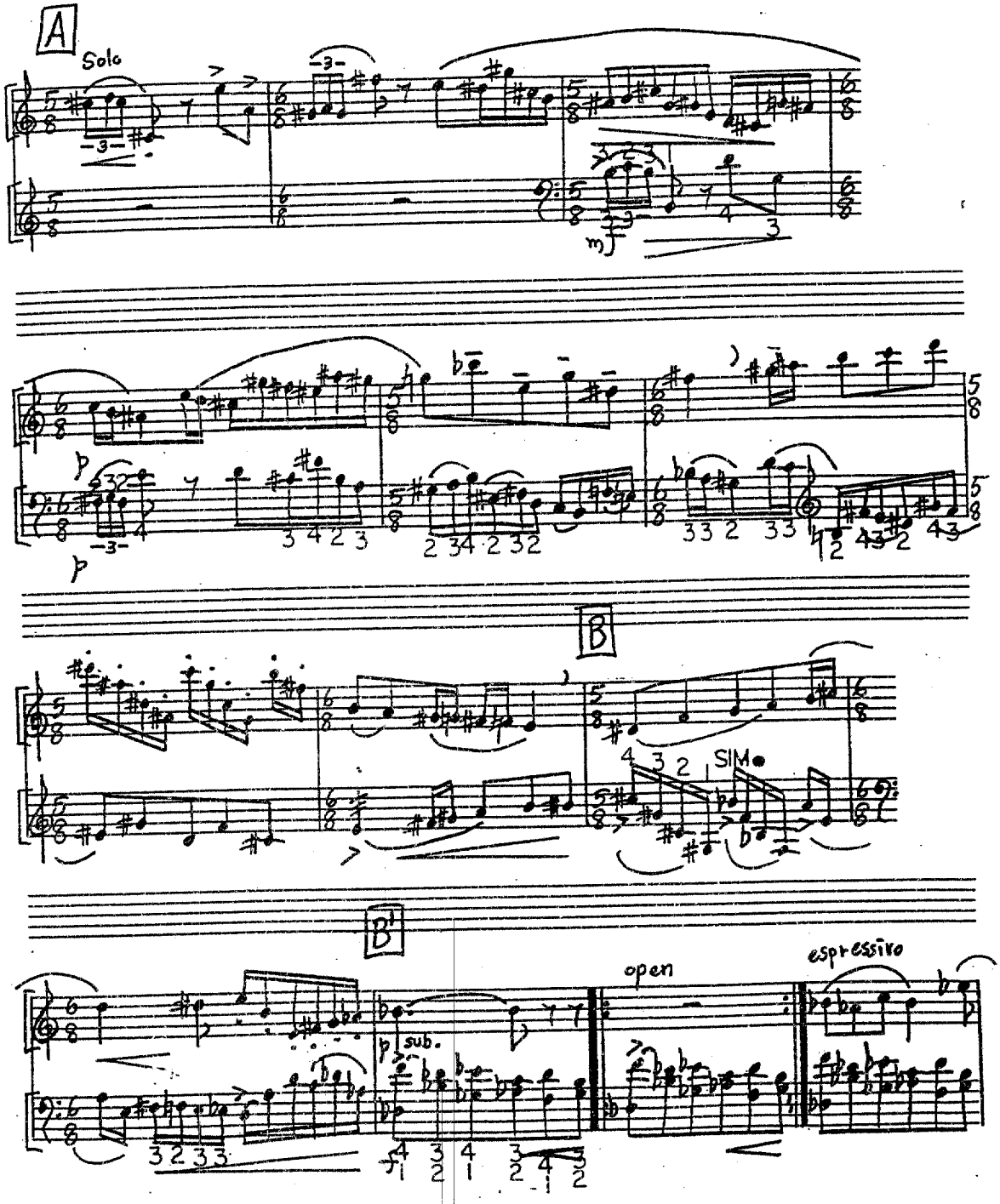
12


V.
♩=46
Bucket mute
pp
*(all notes rolled)
A
cresc.
B
(no breath)
mf
mp
p

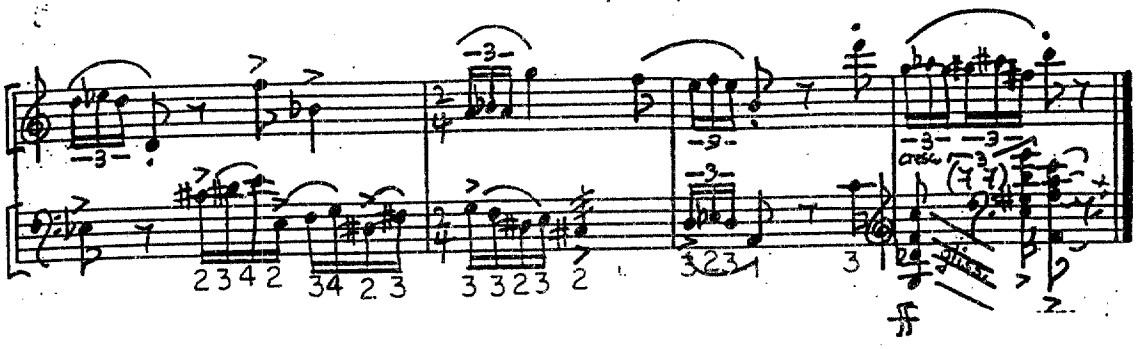

no roll
C
accel.
rit.
D
A temp
rit.
sub.p
sub.p


VI.
♩=88 With Vigor
(metal straight mute)
mf
mf
f-p


C
(open)
mf articulated evenly



16

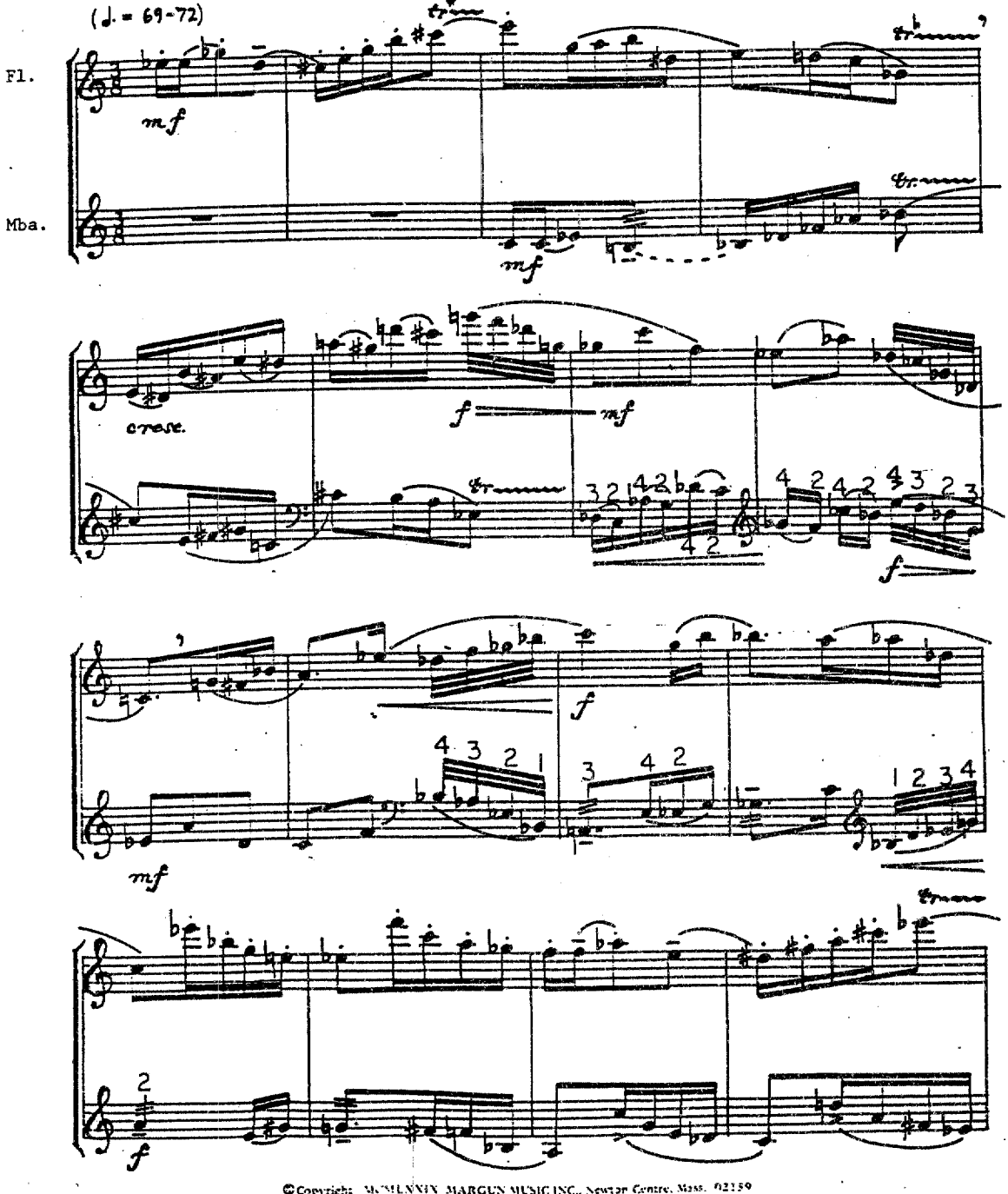


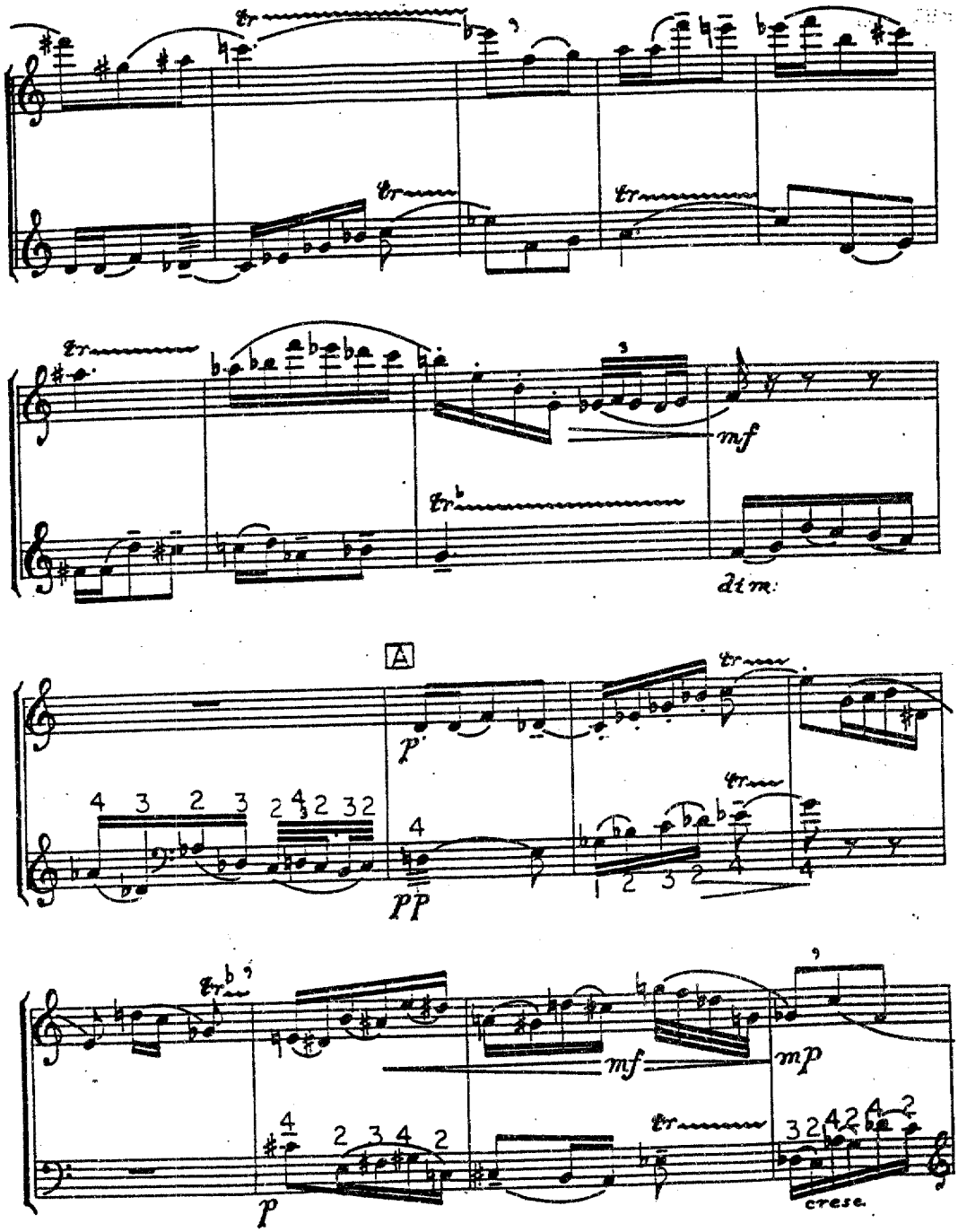
18

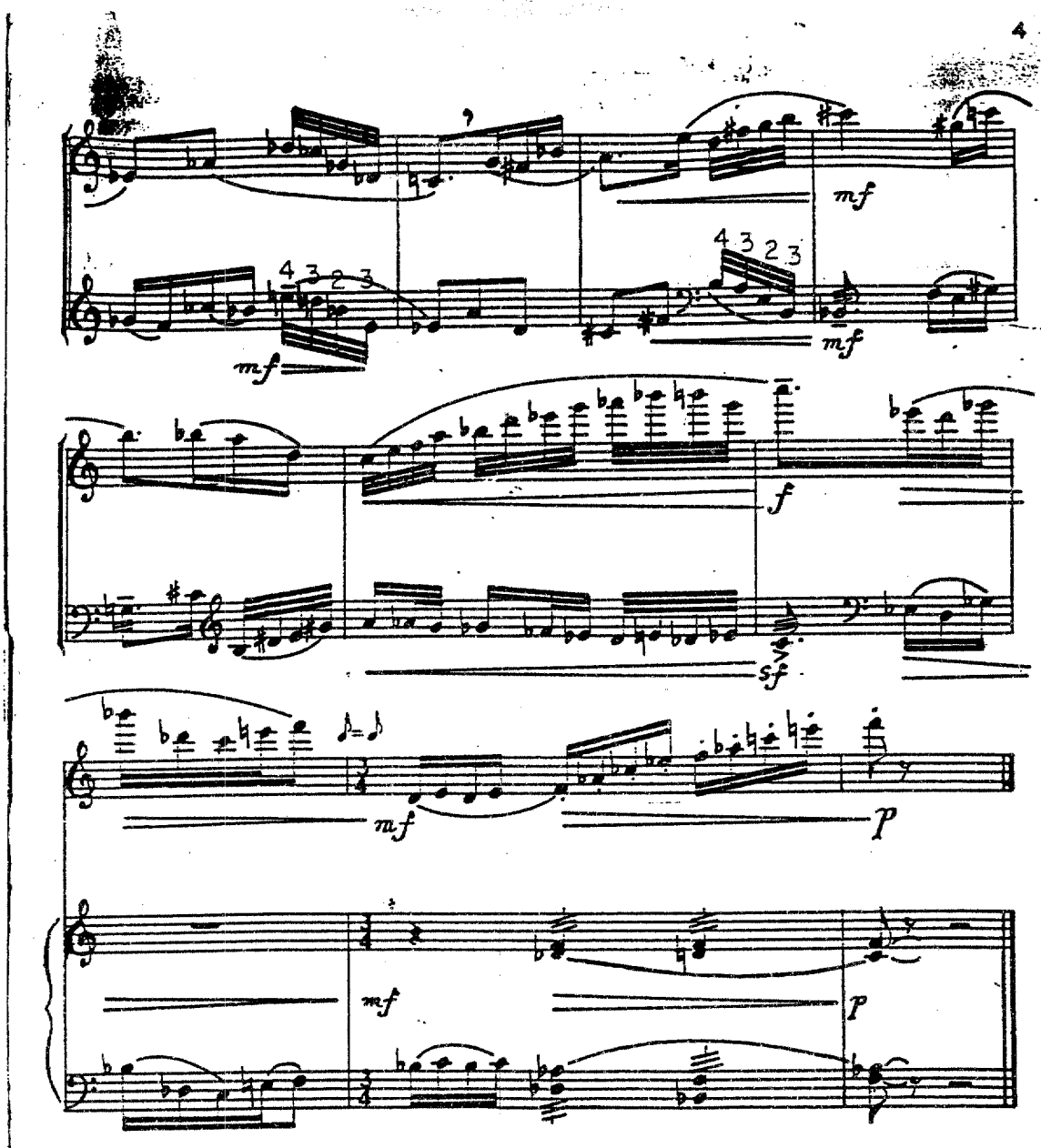
SUITE
for Flute and Marimba

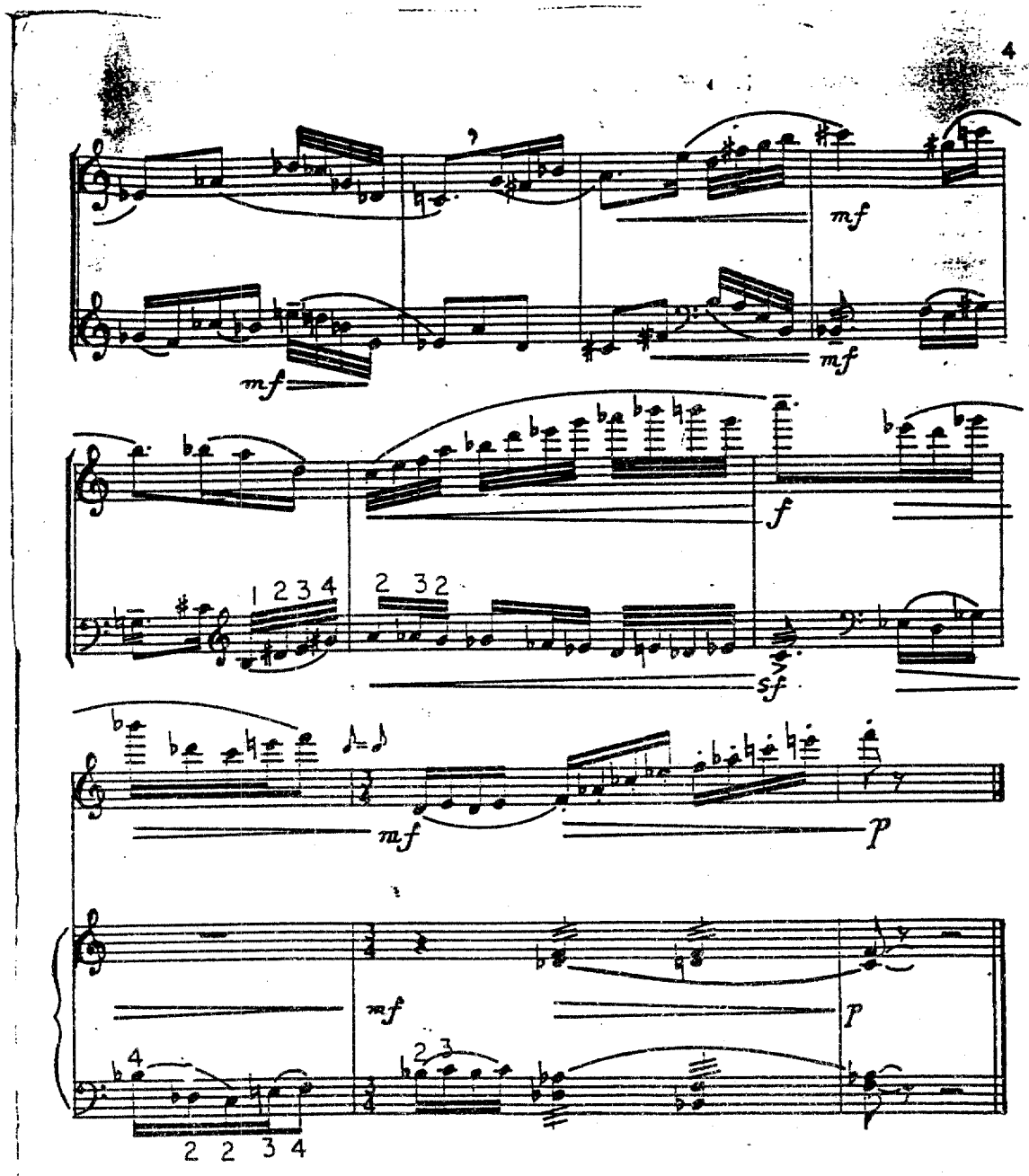
I

Alec Wilder

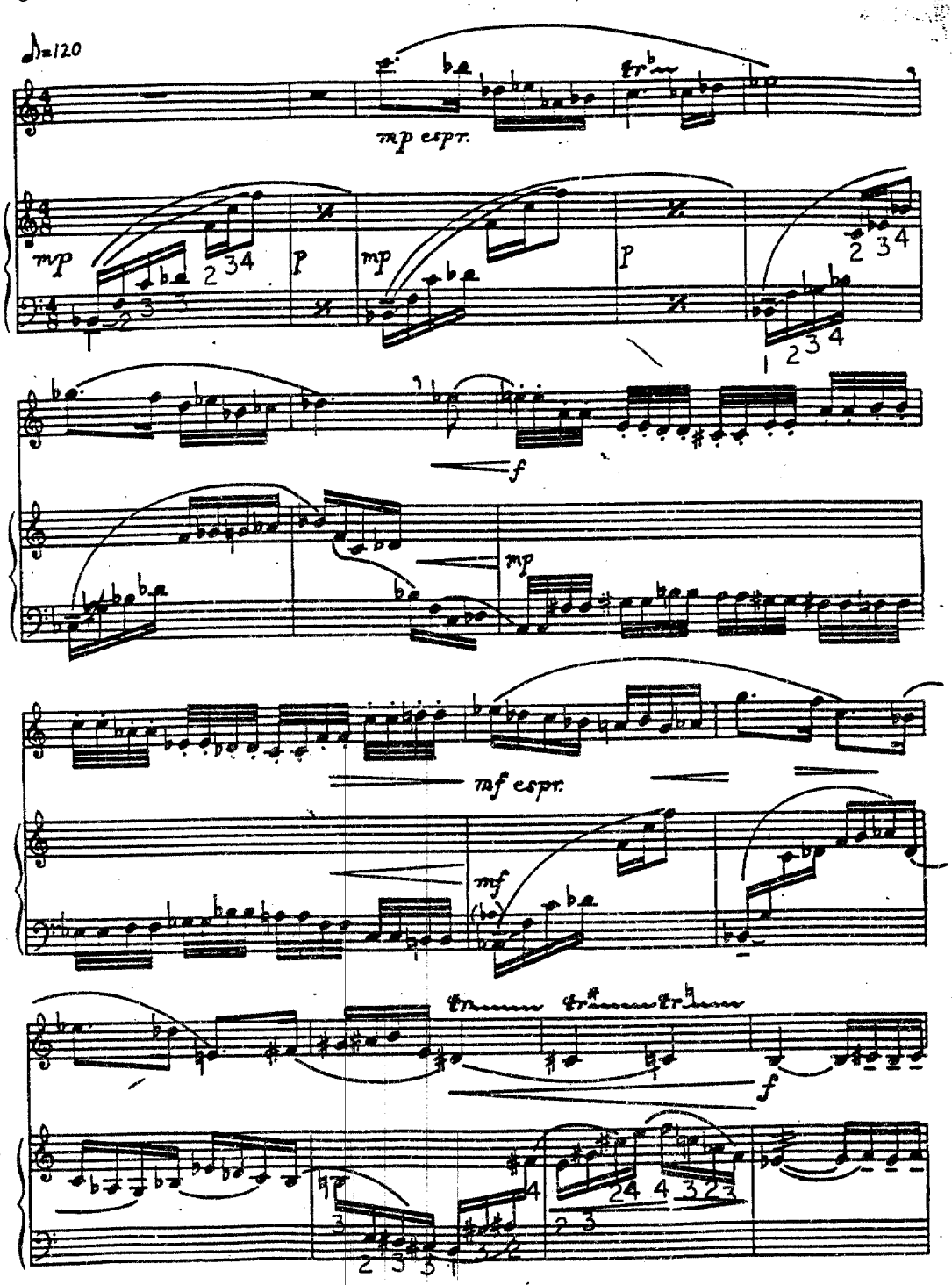


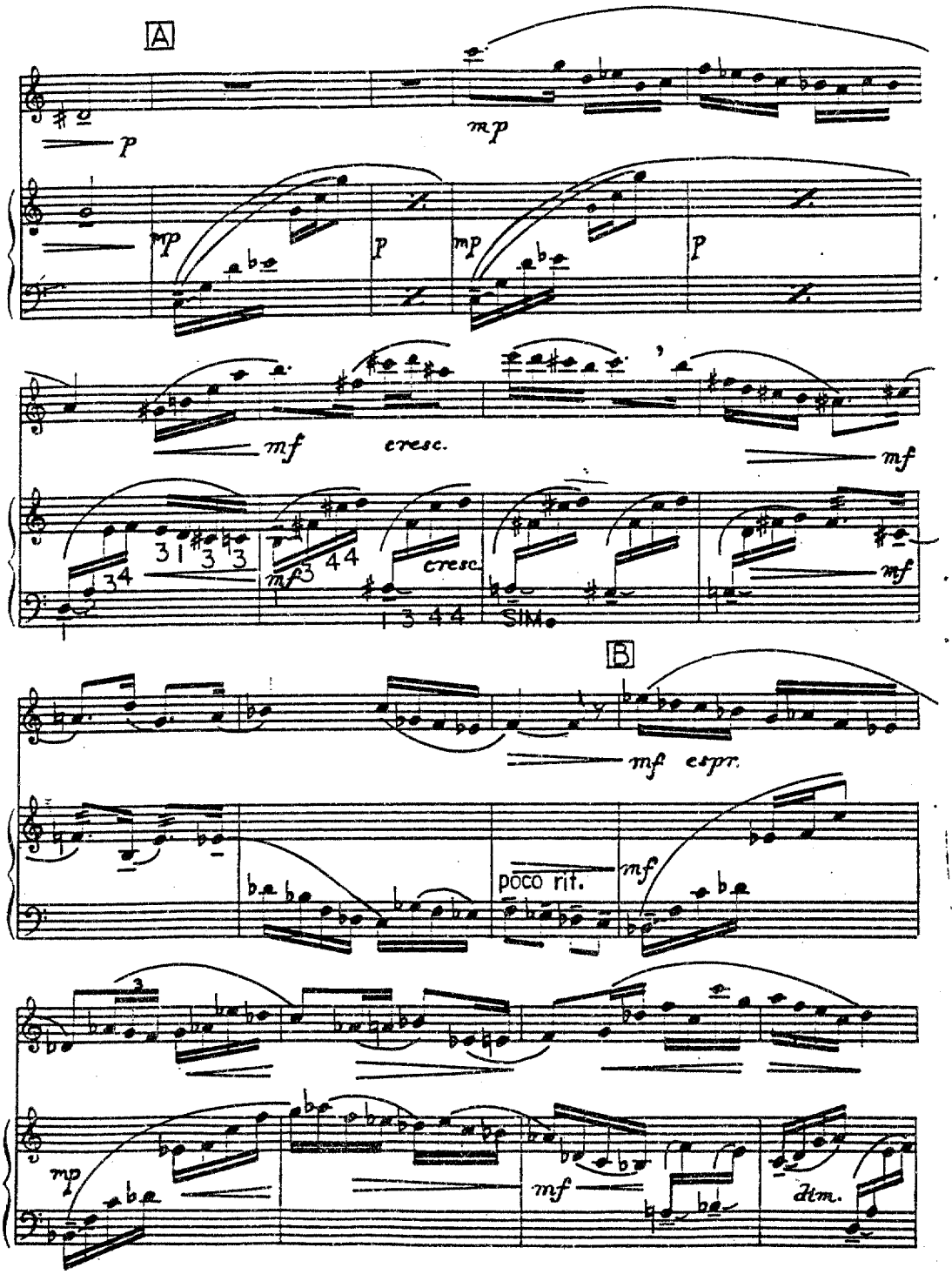

tr
mf
dim.
A
p
PP
mf
mp
p
cresc.

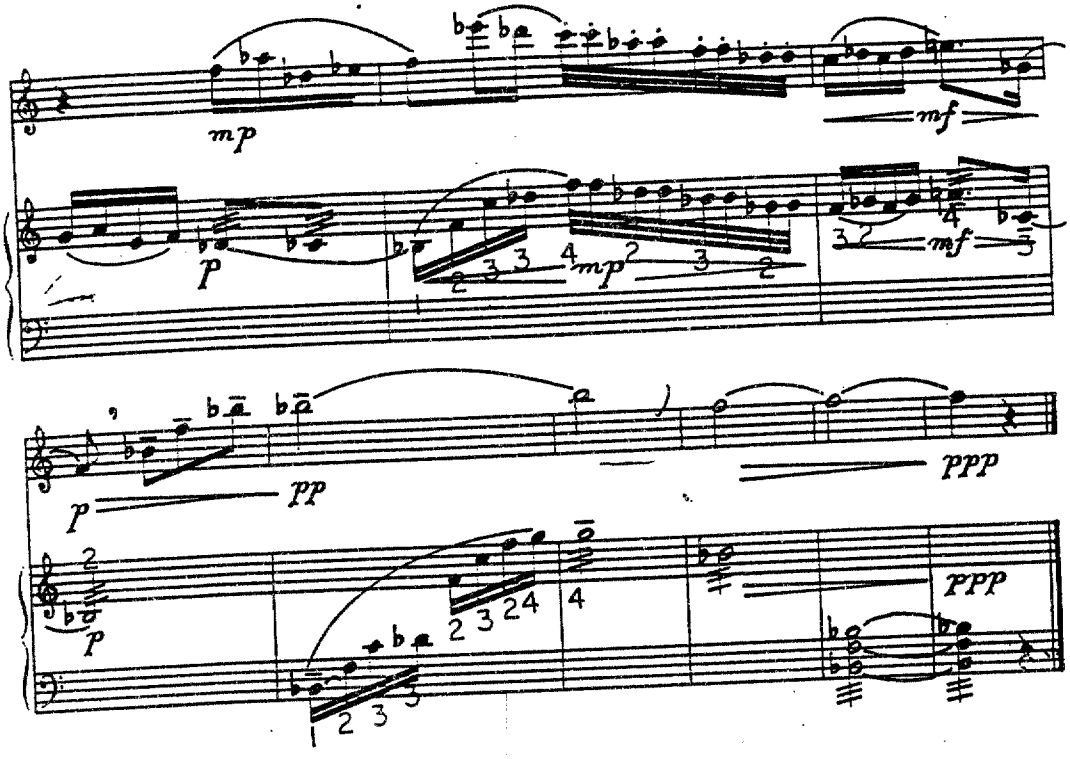

4
mf
4 3 2 3
mf
4 3 2 3
mf
f
sf
mf
p
mf
p


4
mf
mf
mf
f
1 2 3 4
2 3 2
sf
mf
p
mf
p
4
2 2 3 4
2 3

II

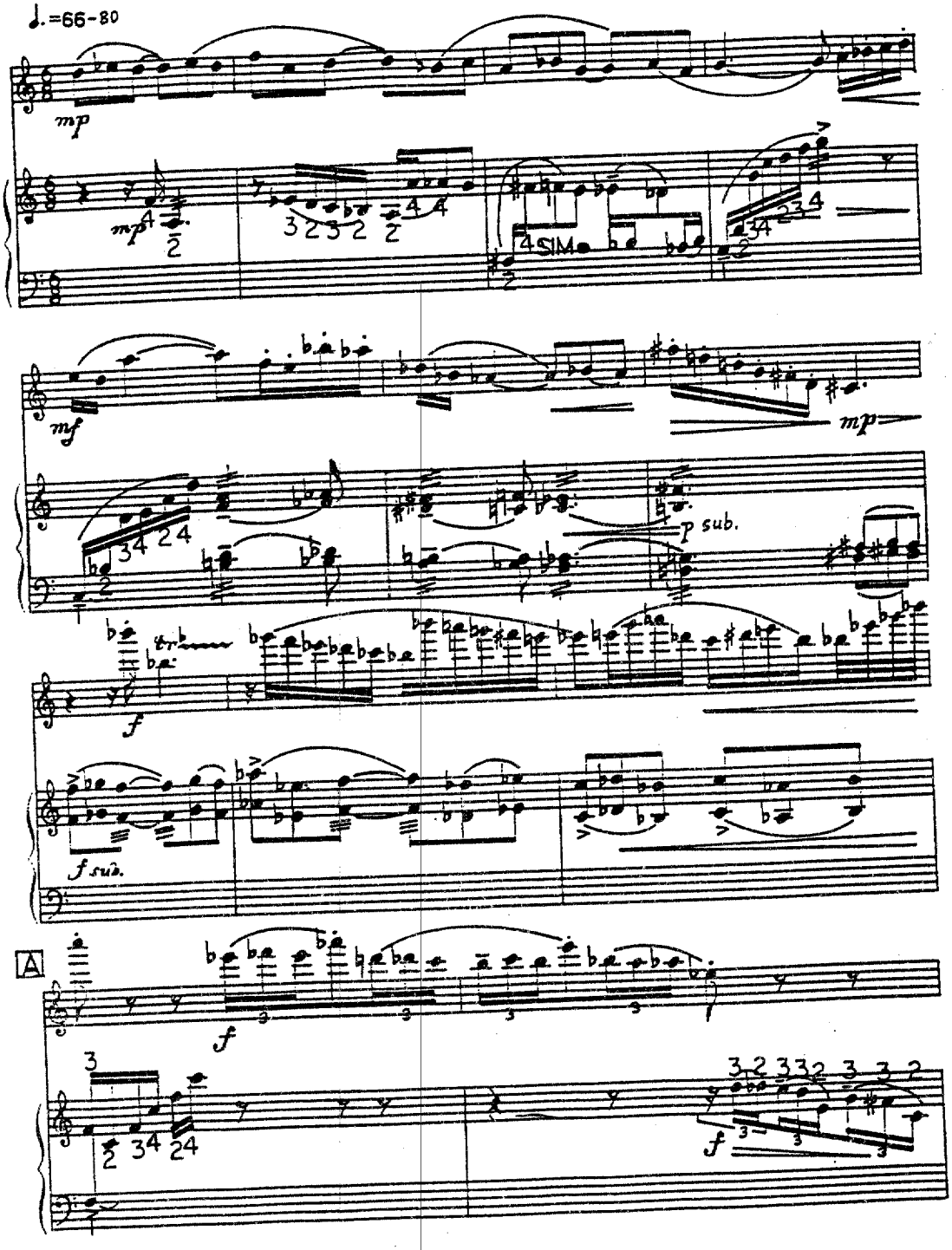


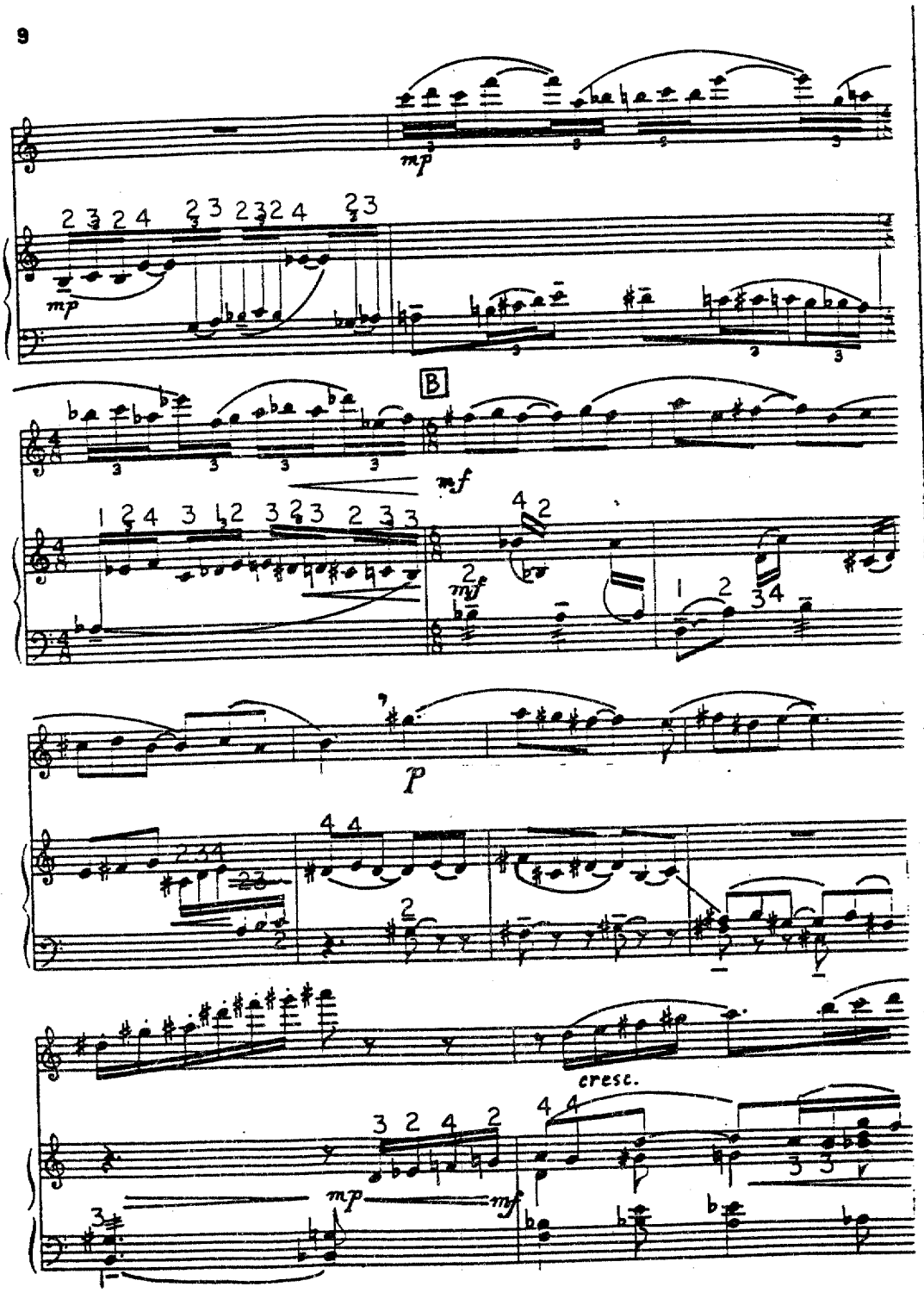

A
mp
p
mp
p
mp
p
mf
cresc.
mf
cresc.
SIM.
B
mf espr.
poco rit.
mf
mp
mf
dim.

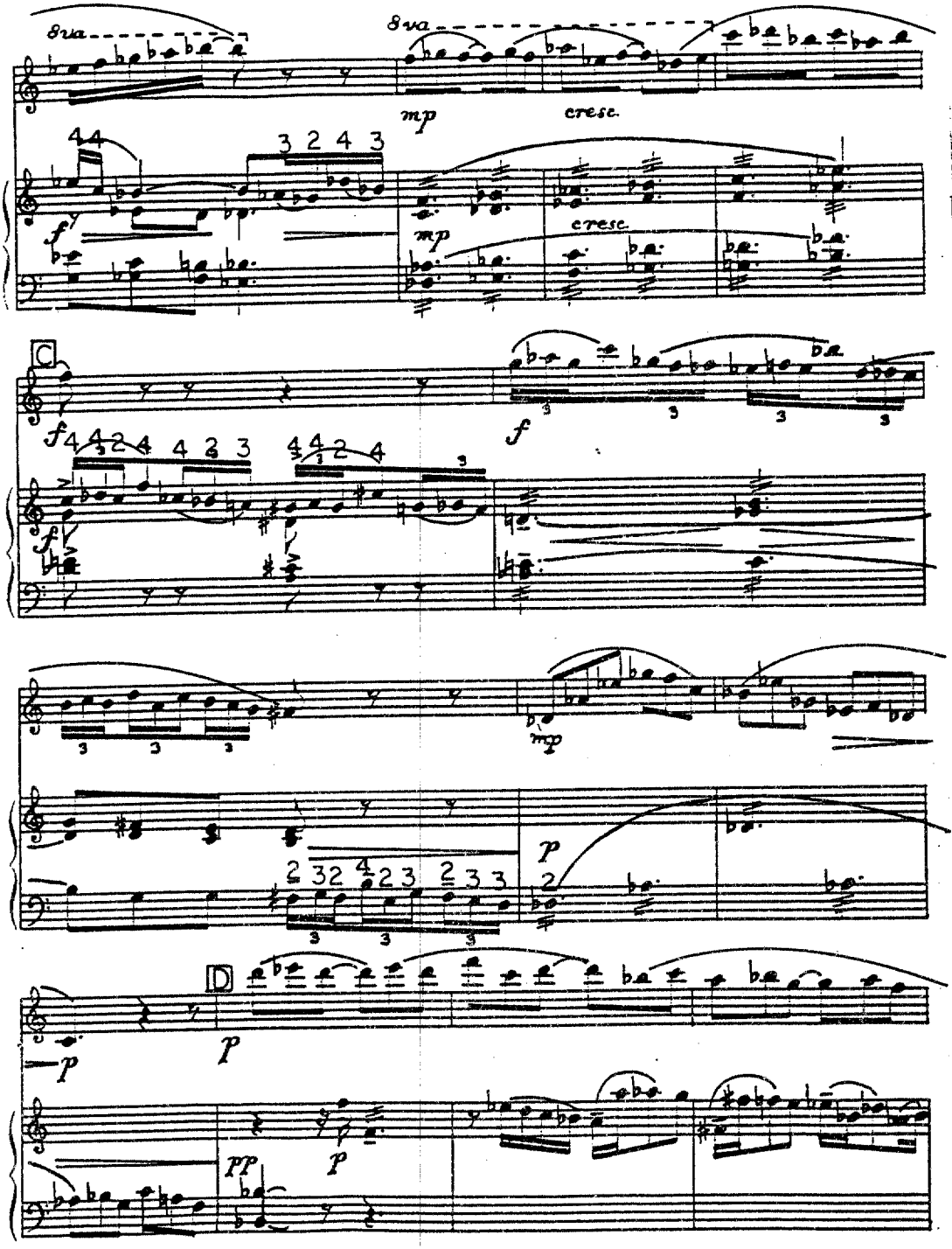

mp
mf
p
mp
mf
p
pp
ppp
p
ppp

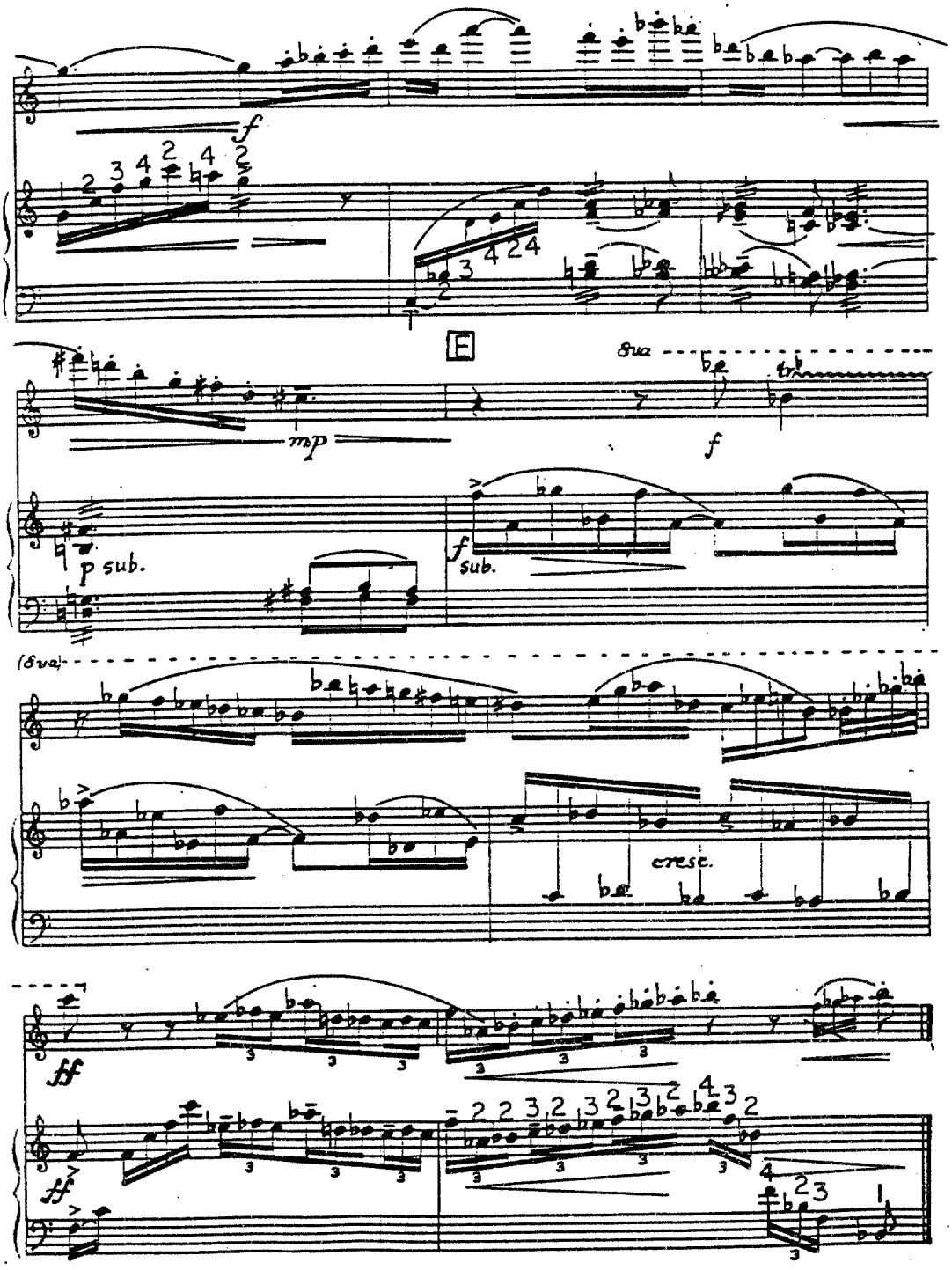
8

III

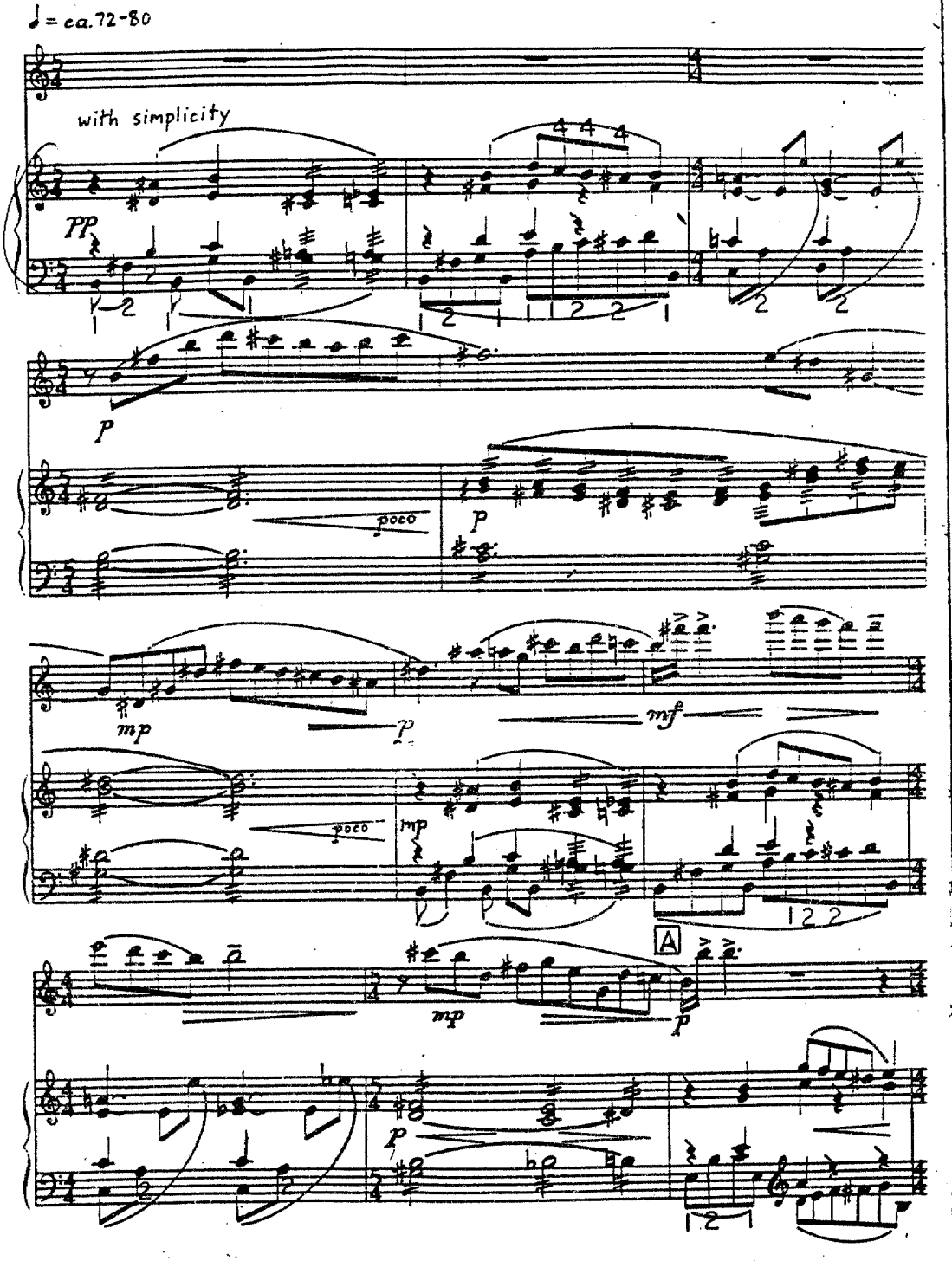


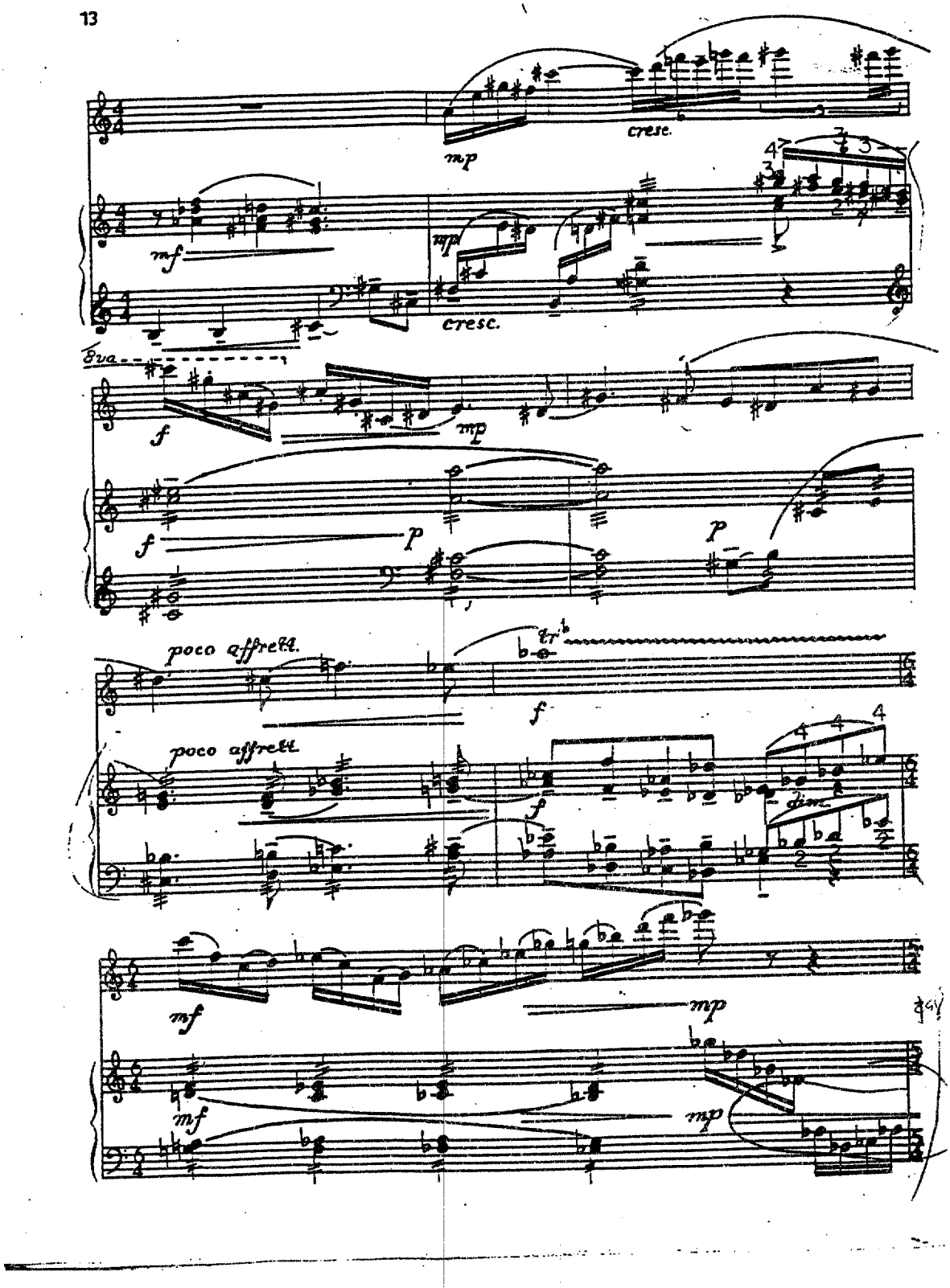

9
mp
mp
B
mf
mf
p
cresc.
mp
mf

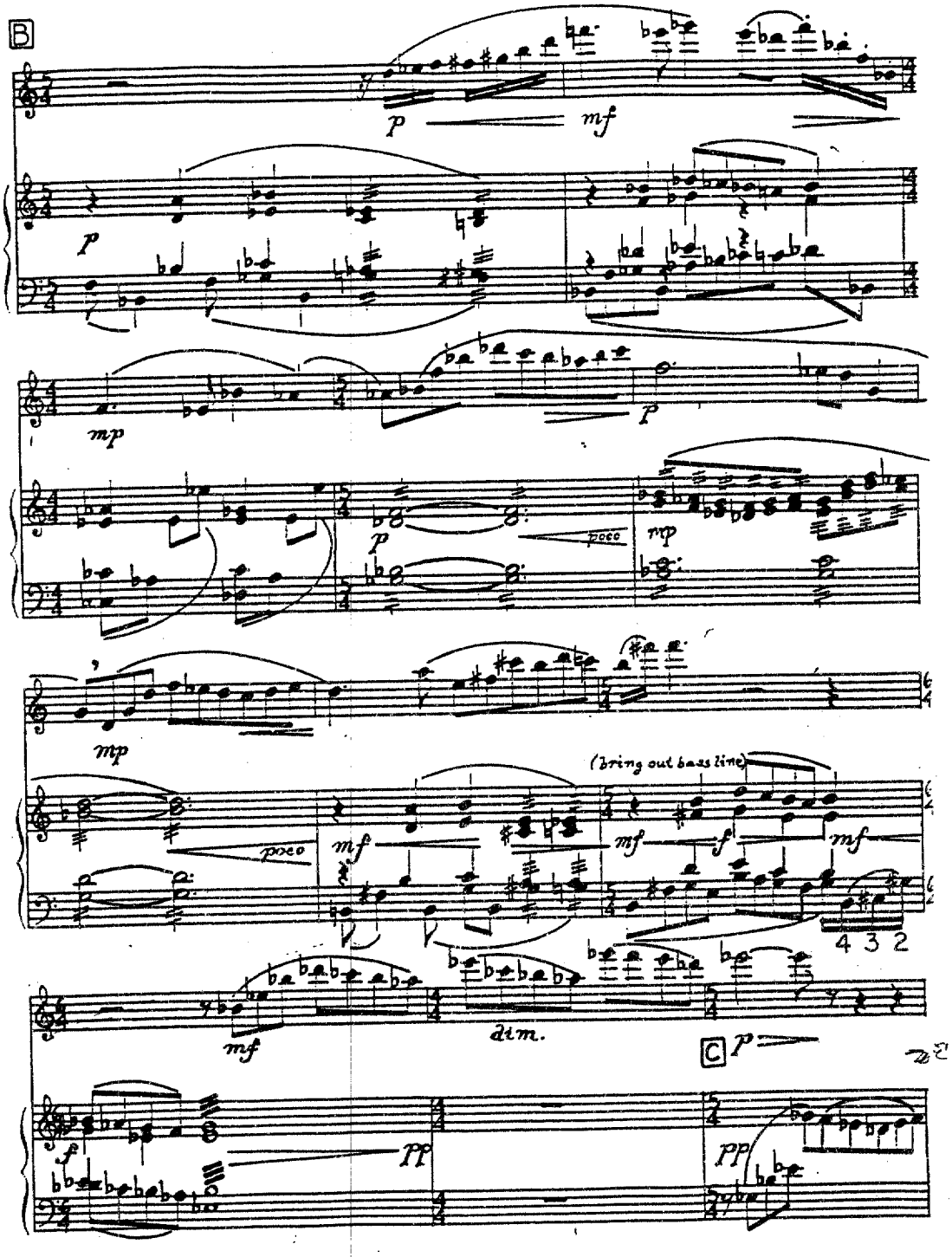

8va
8va
mp
cresc.
mp
cresc.
C
f
f
f
mp
p
D
p
p
PP
p


f
E
8va
mp
f
p sub.
f sub.
(8va)
cresc.
ff
ff

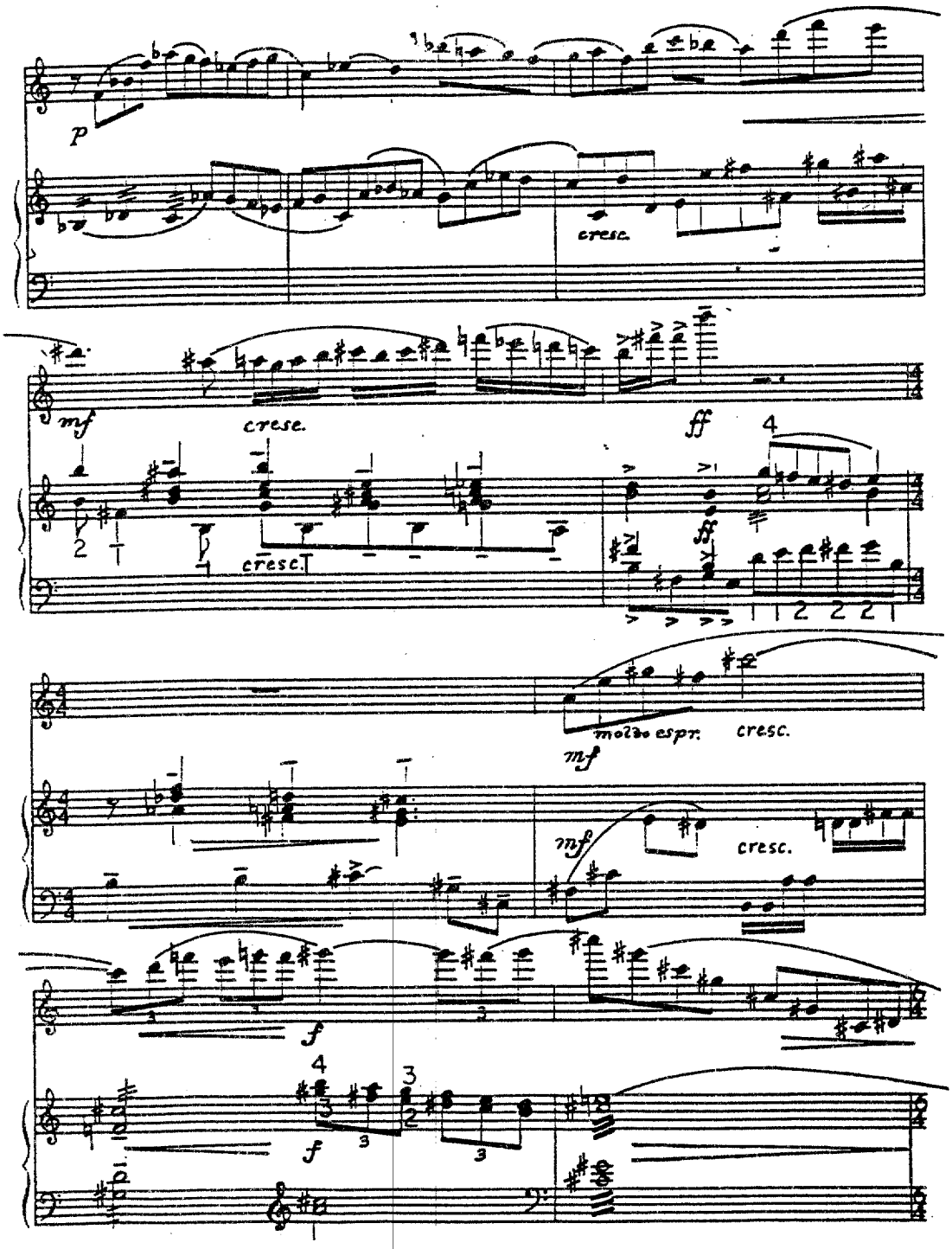
IV

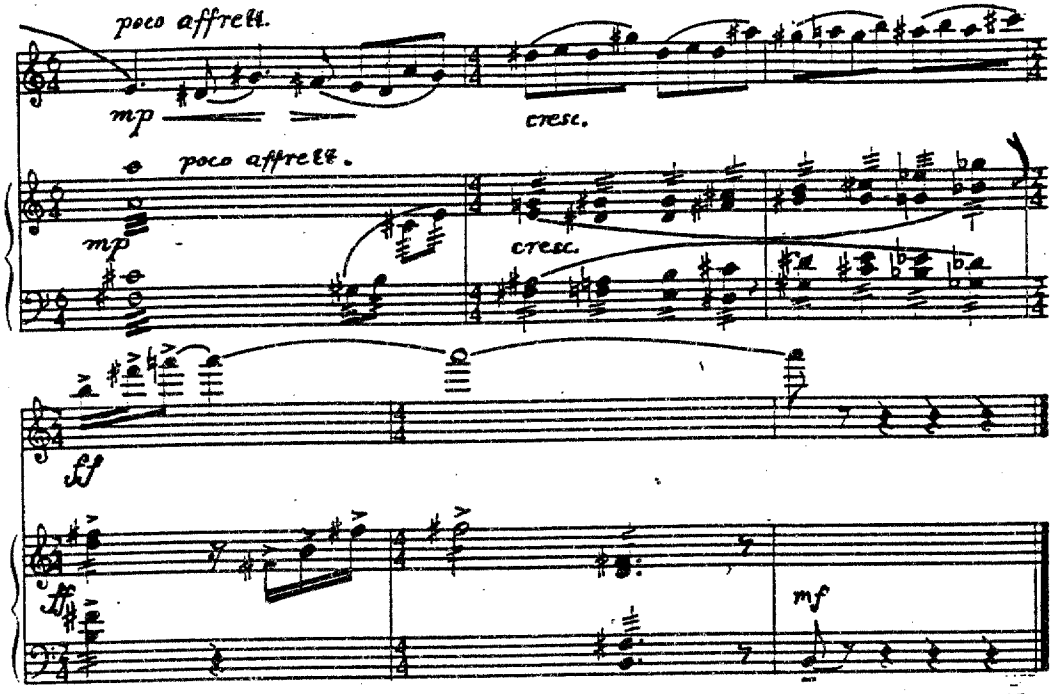



mp
cresc.
mf
mp
cresc.
8va
f
mp
f
p
p
poco affrett.
tr
f
poco affrett.
f
dim.
mf
mp
mf
mp


B
p
mf
p
mp
p
poco
mp
mp
(bring out bass line)
poco
mf
mf
f
mf
4 3 2
mf
dim.
C
p
f
pp
pp

15



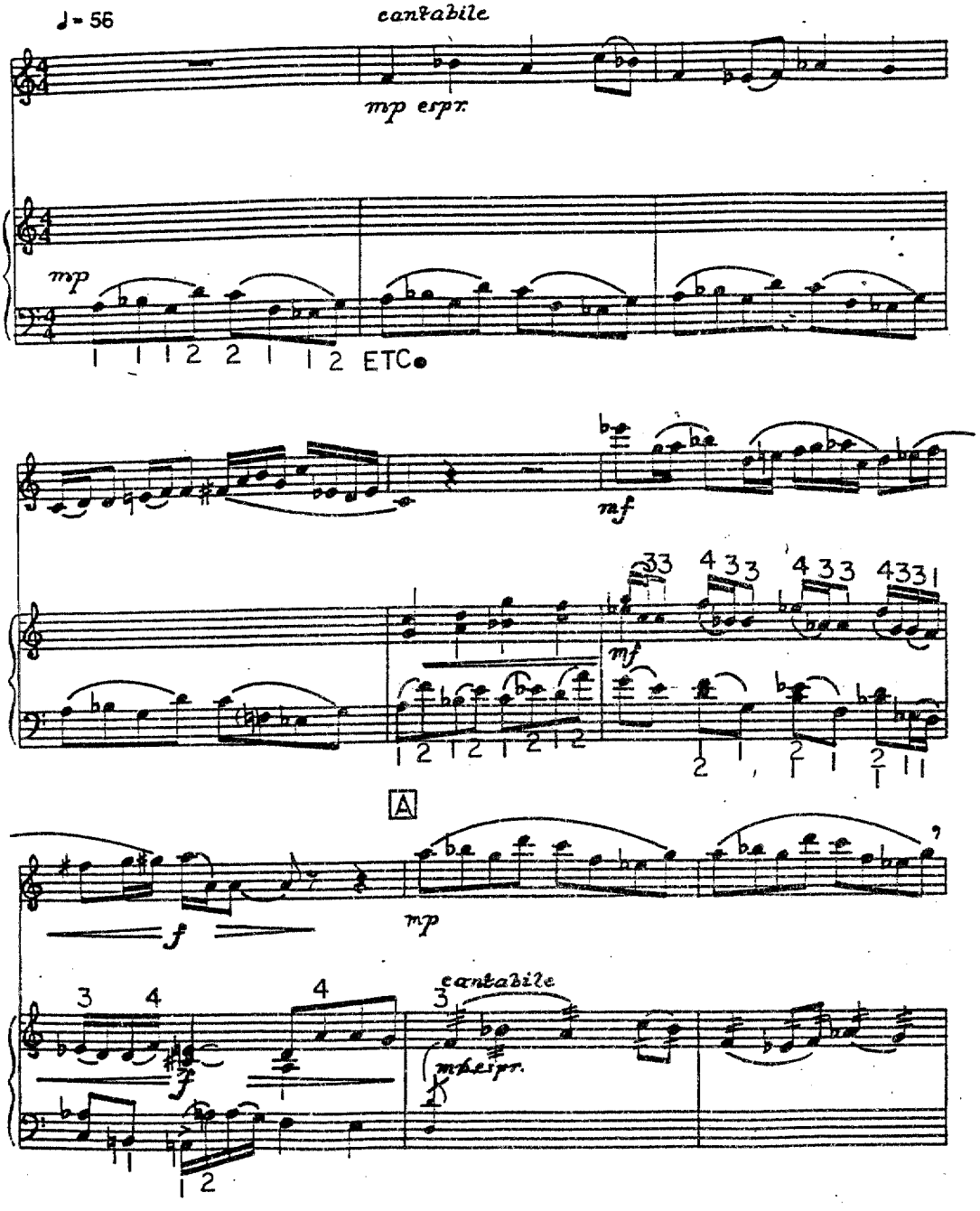

poco affrett.
mp
cresc.
poco affrett.
mp
cresc.
ff
ff
mf

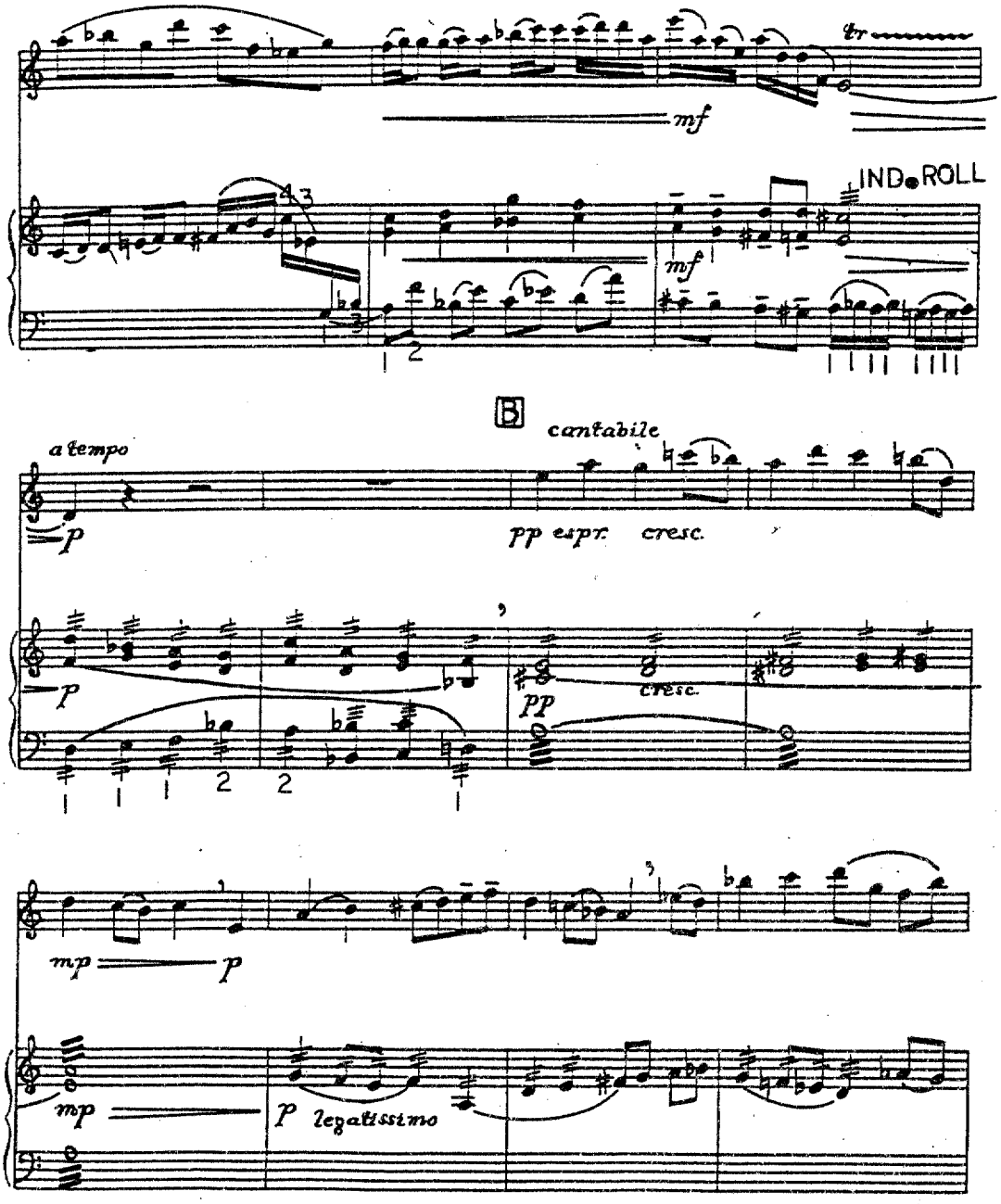
17

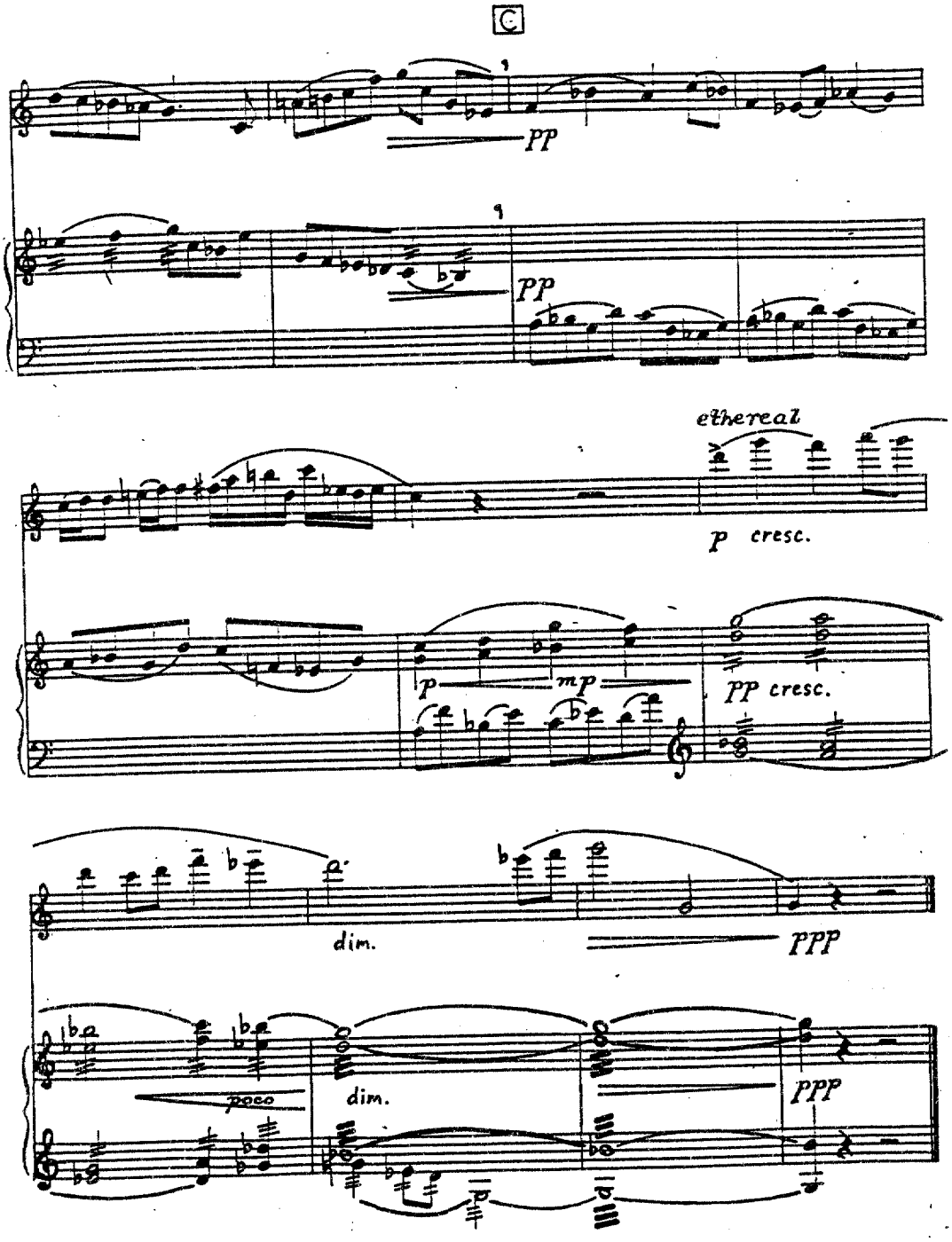
V

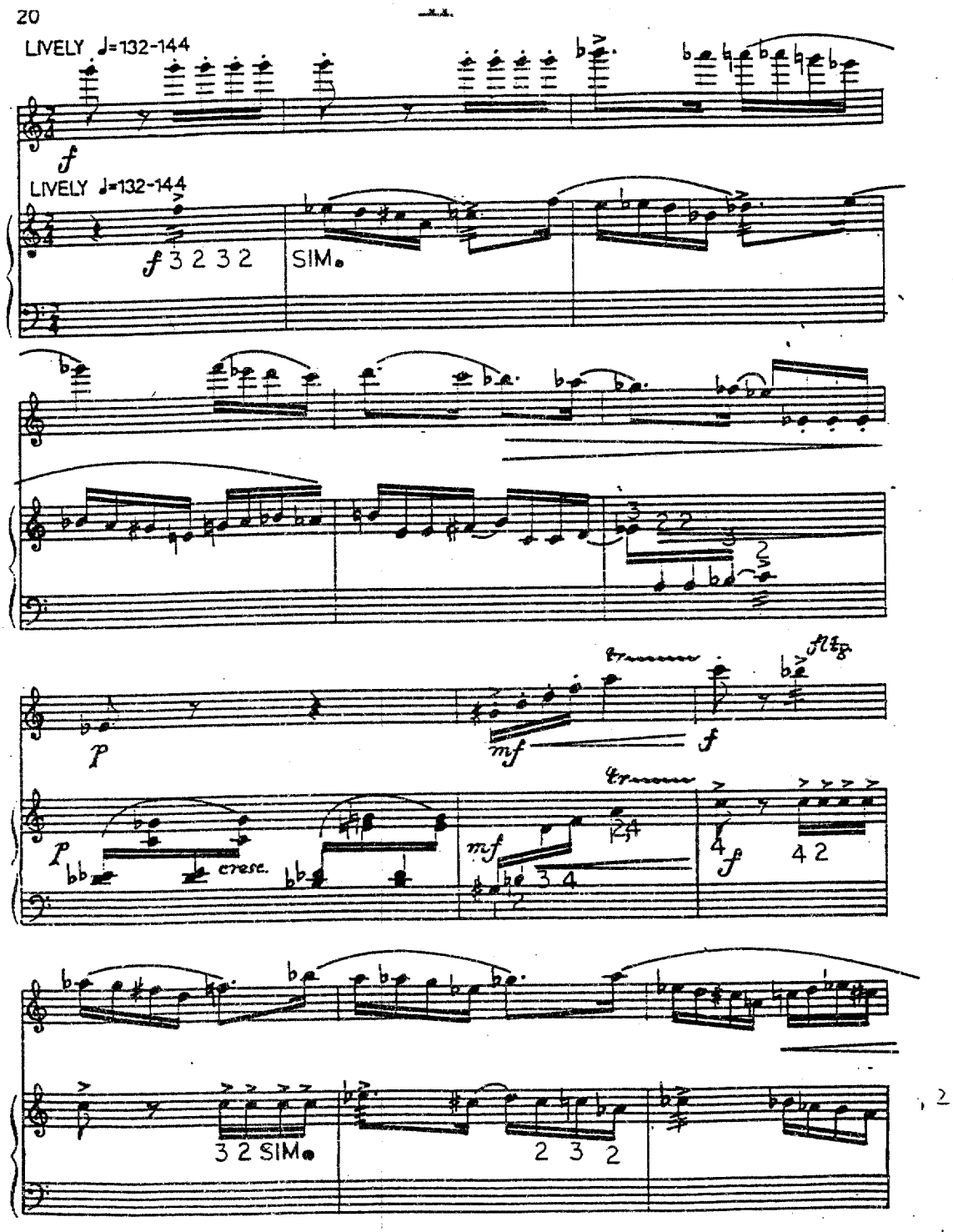
BERCEUSE

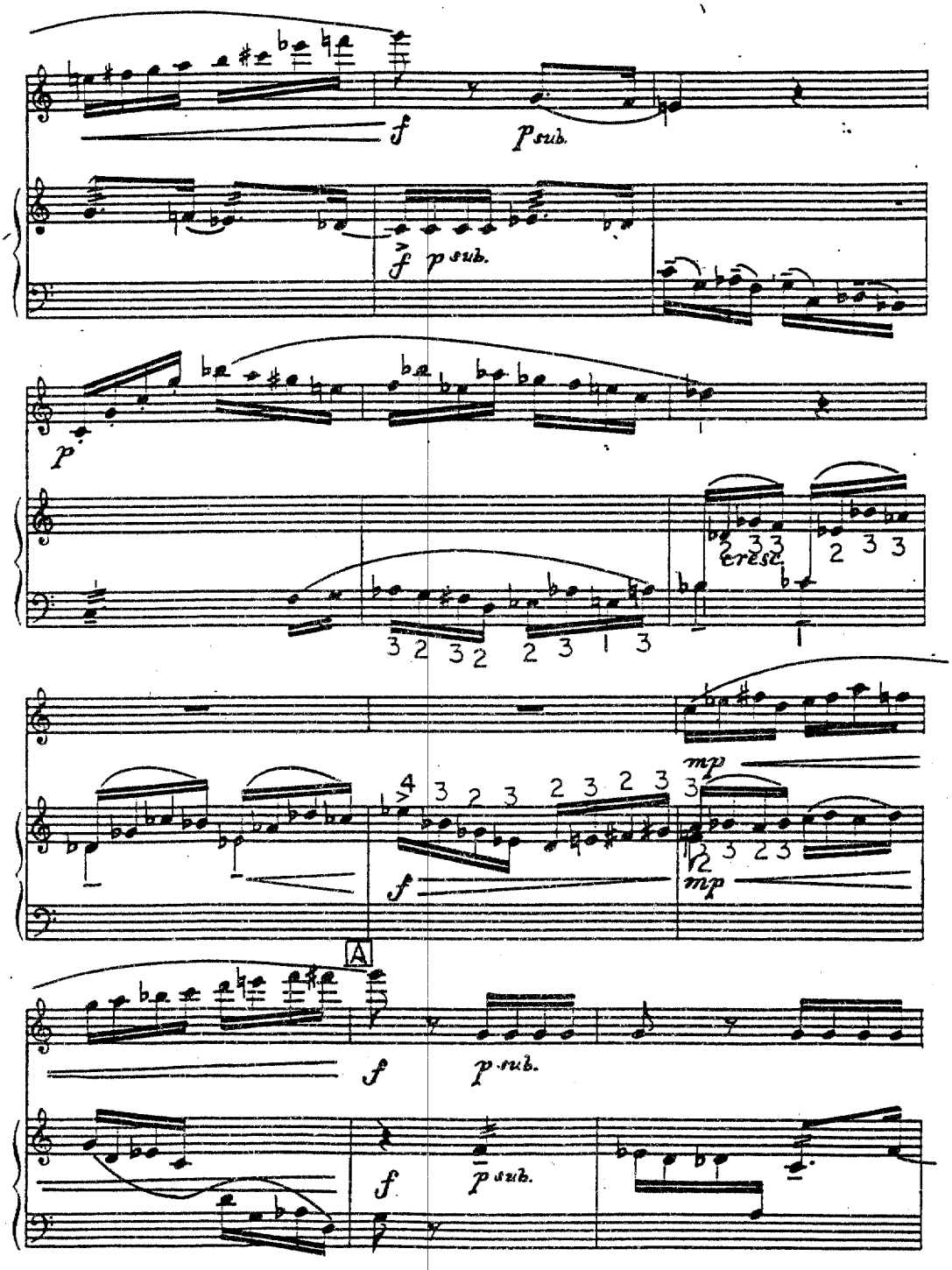
♩ = 56

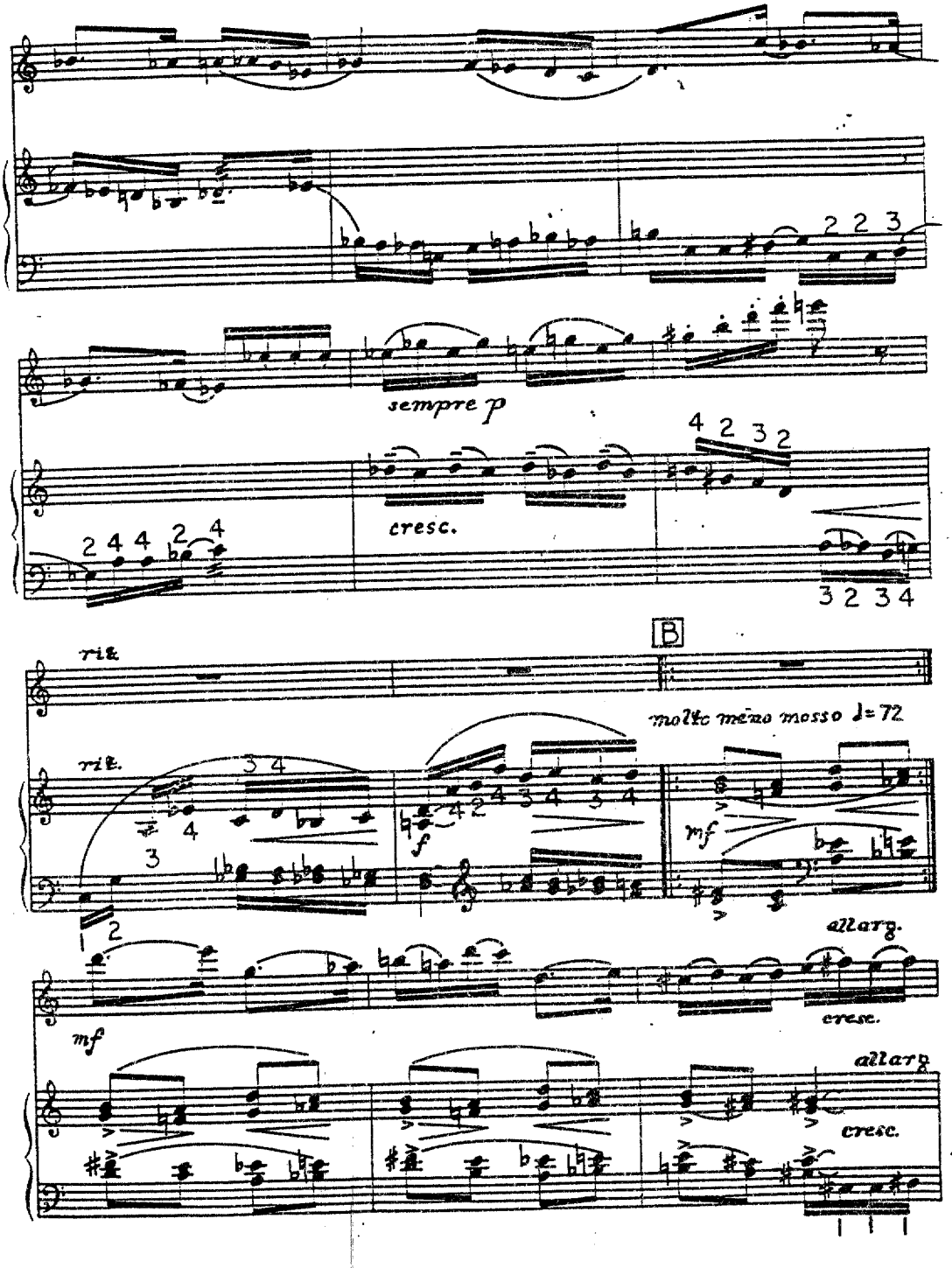


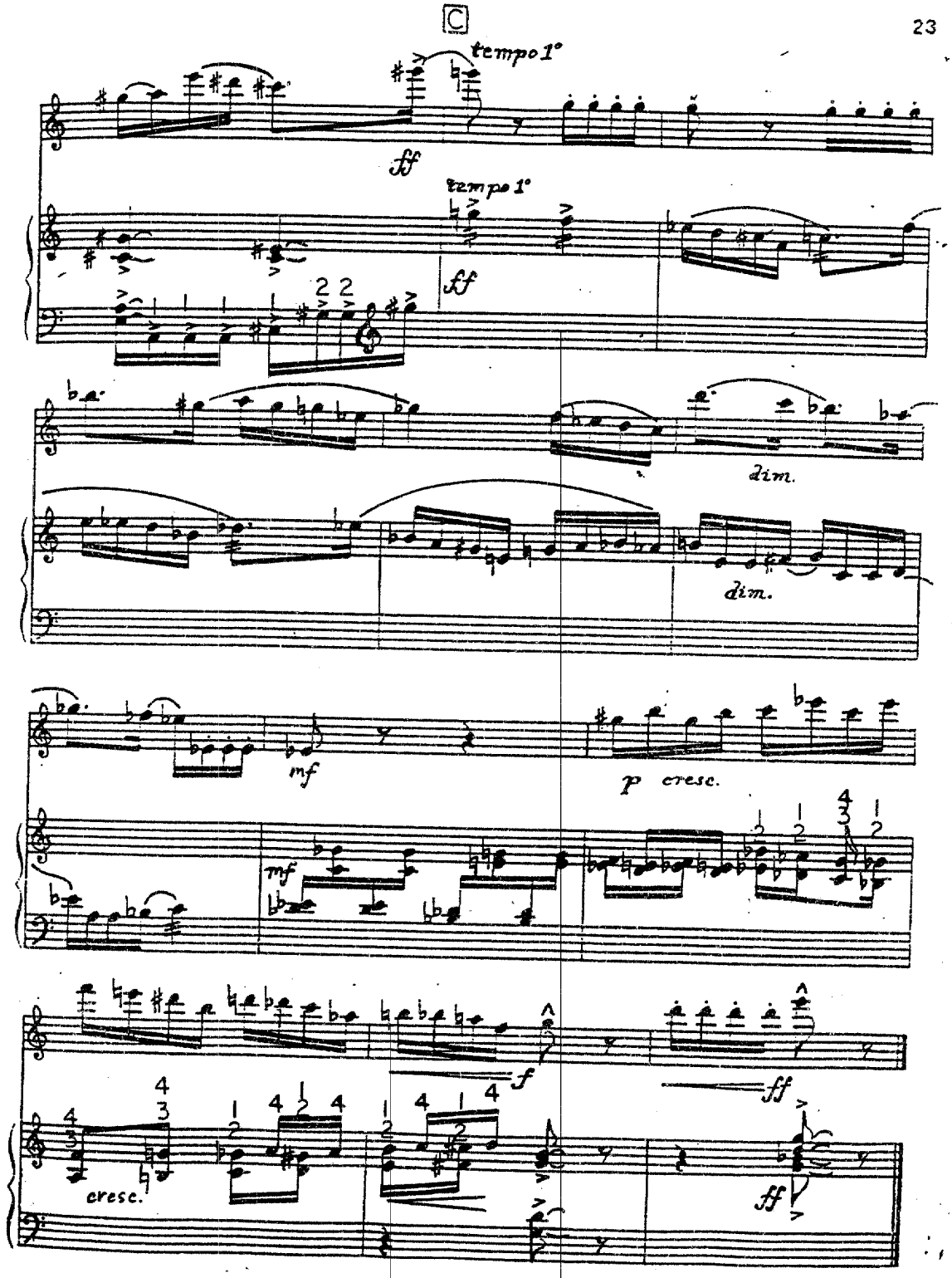

tr
mf
IND. ROLL
mf
B
cantabile
a tempo
p
pp espr.
cresc.
p
cresc.
pp
mp
p
mp
p legatissimo


C
PP
PP
ethereal
p cresc.
p
mp
PP cresc.
dim.
PPP
poco
dim.
PPP

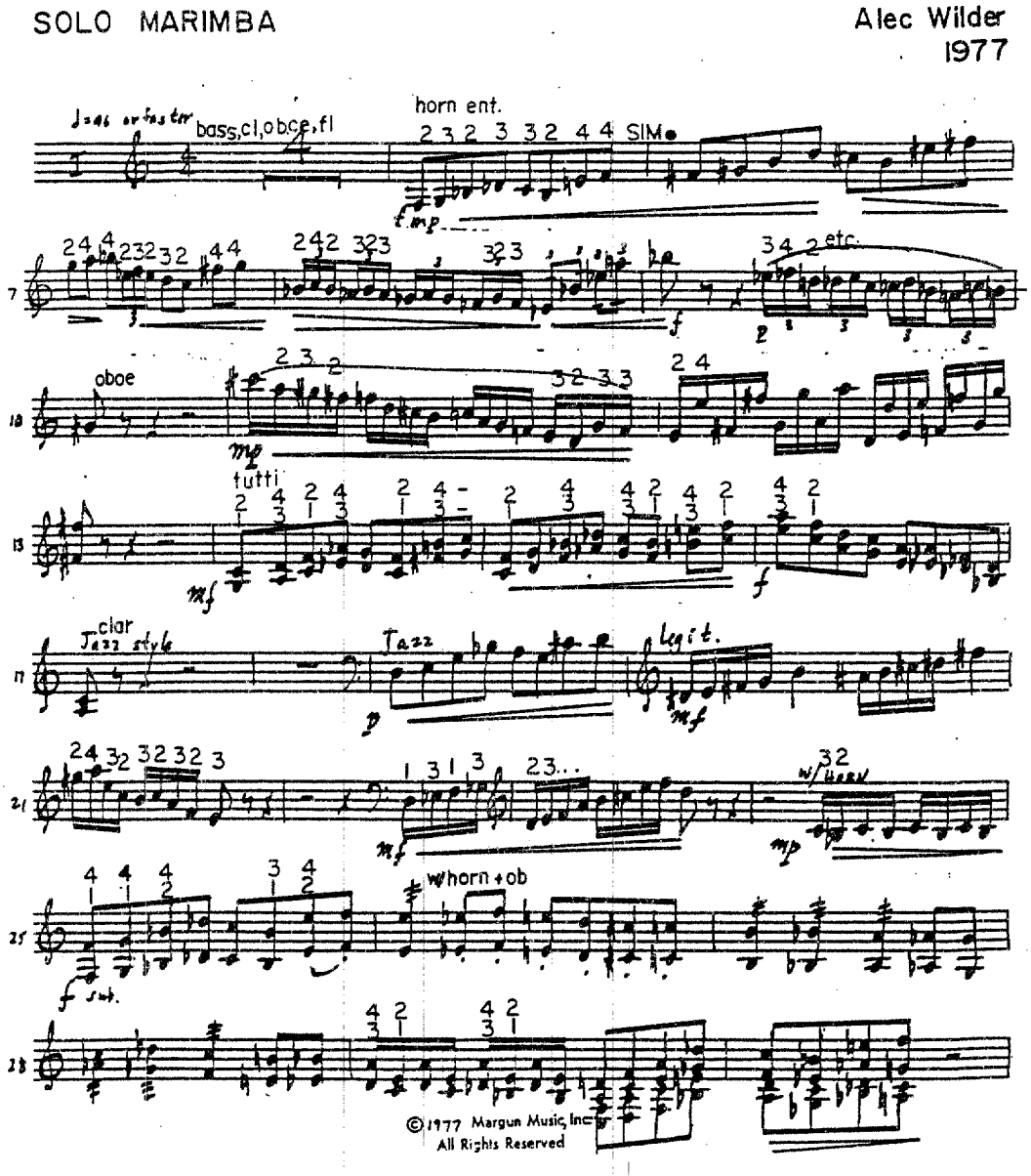

20
LIVELY ♩=132-144
f
LIVELY ♩=132-144
f 3 2 3 2
SIM.
p
mf
f
p
cresc.
mf
f
4 2
3 2 SIM.
2 3 2

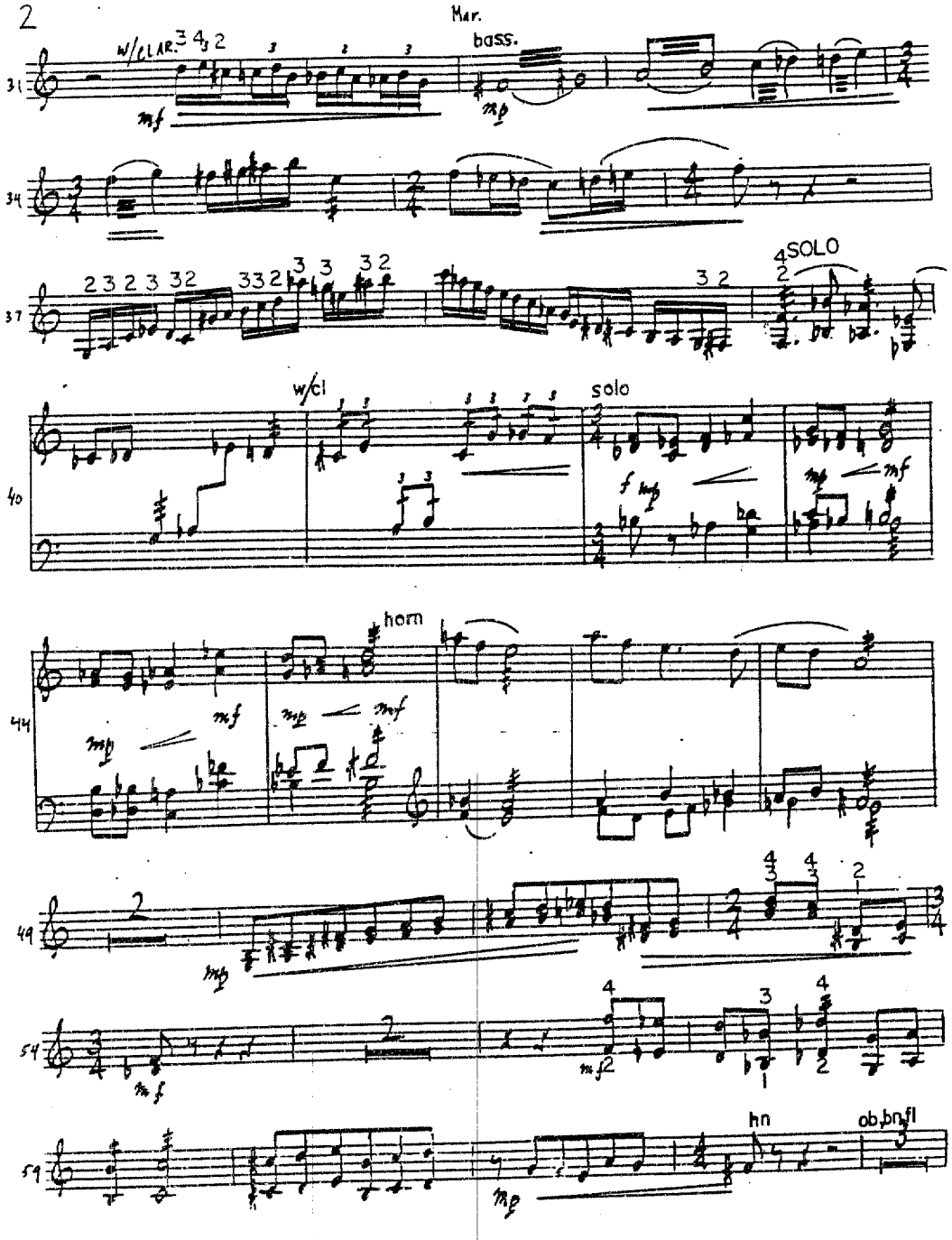

f
p sub.
cresc.
mp
A

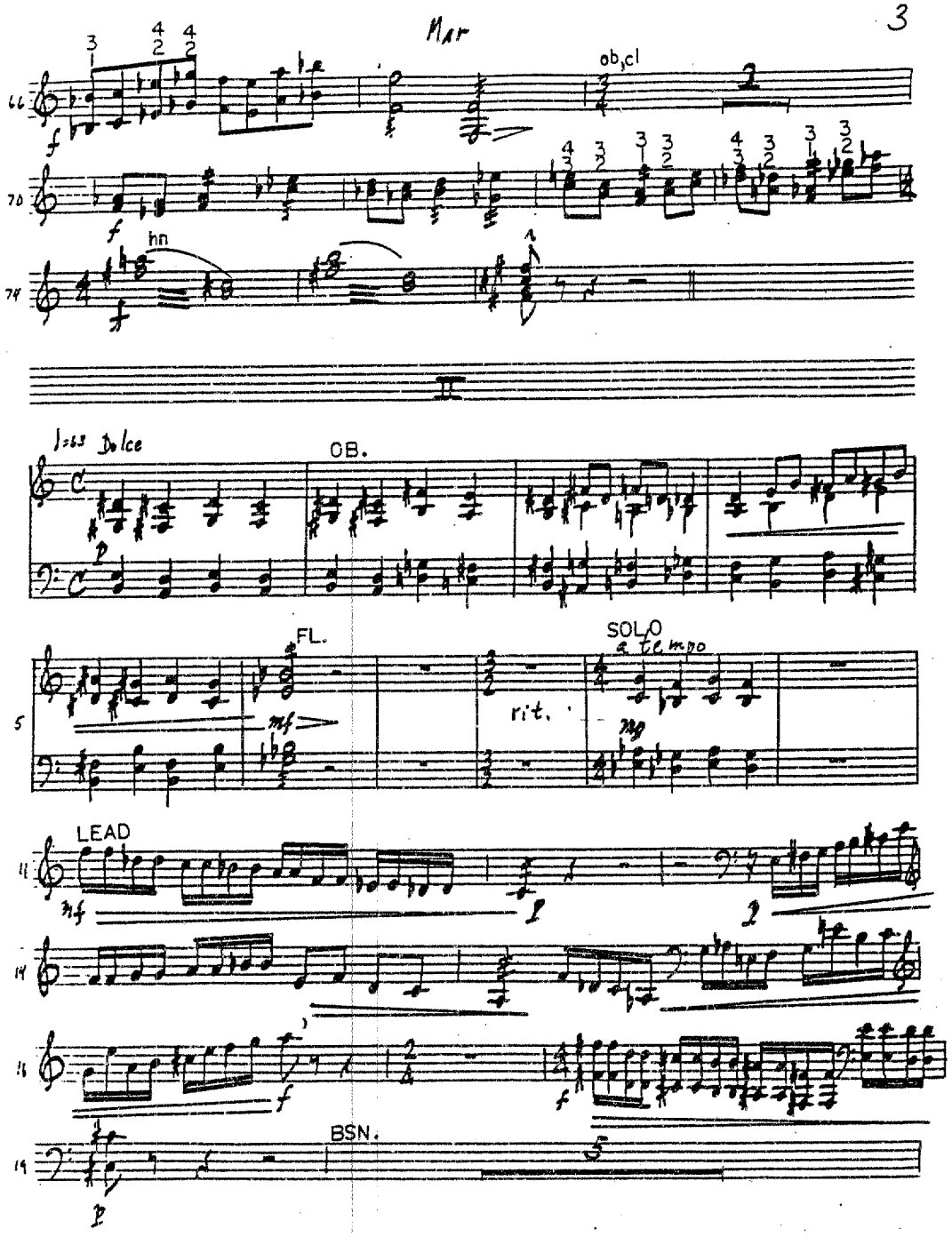

sempre p
cresc.
B
rit.
molto meno mosso ♩= 72
rit.
mf
allarg.
cresc.
mf
allarg.
cresc.

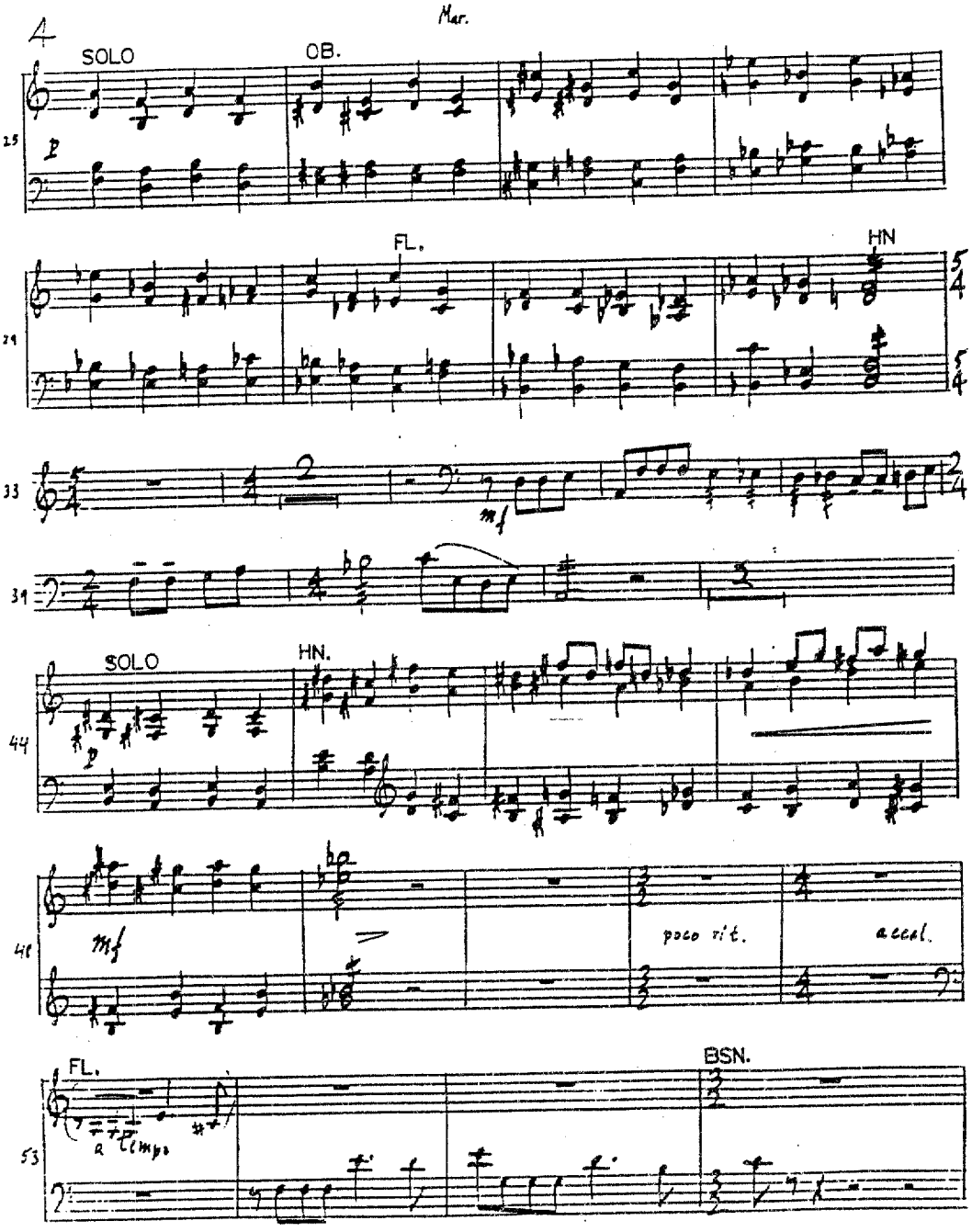

C
tempo 1°
ff
tempo 1°
ff
dim.
dim.
mf
p cresc.
mf
f
ff
cresc.
ff

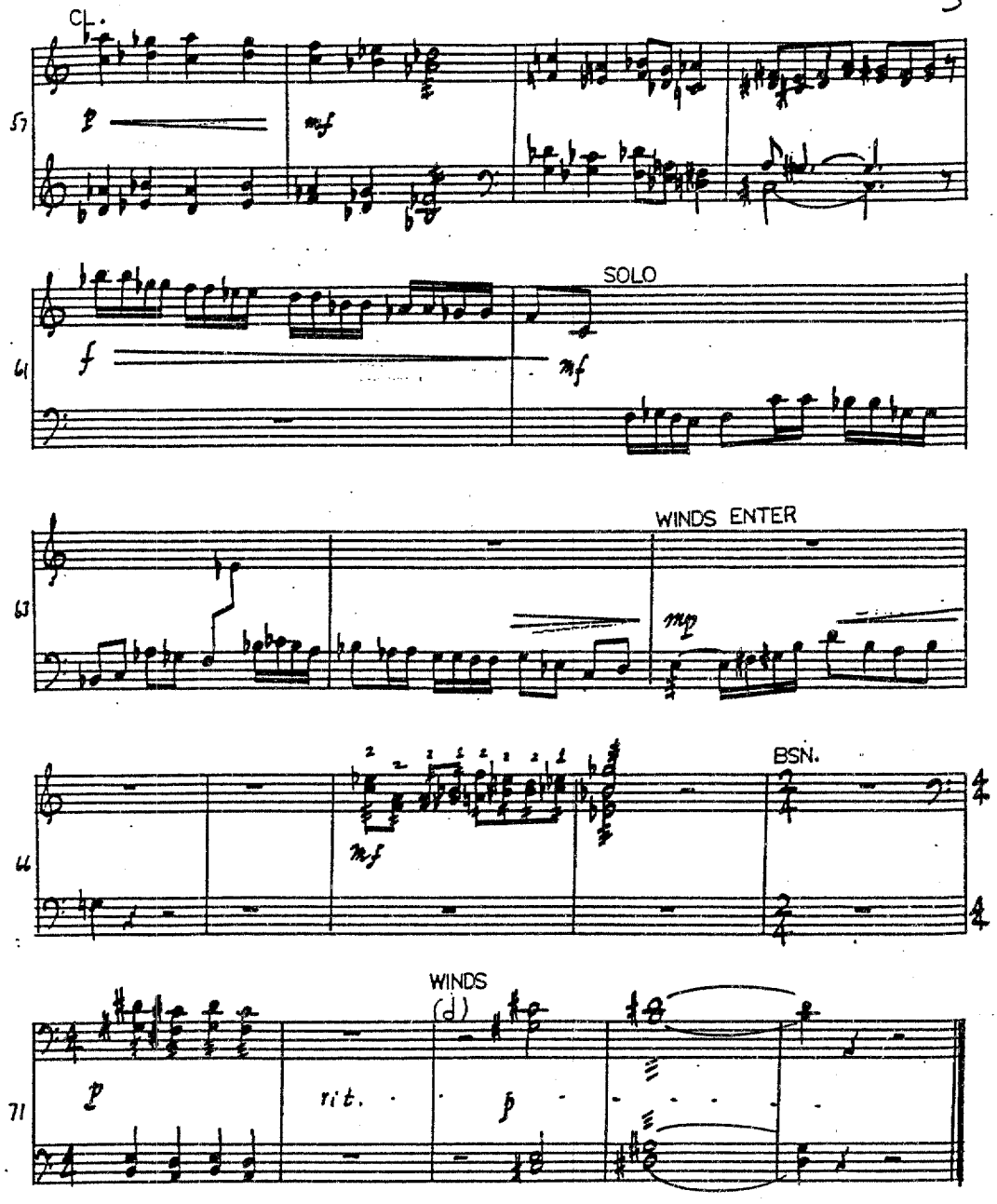
Sextet for Marimba and Wind Quintet

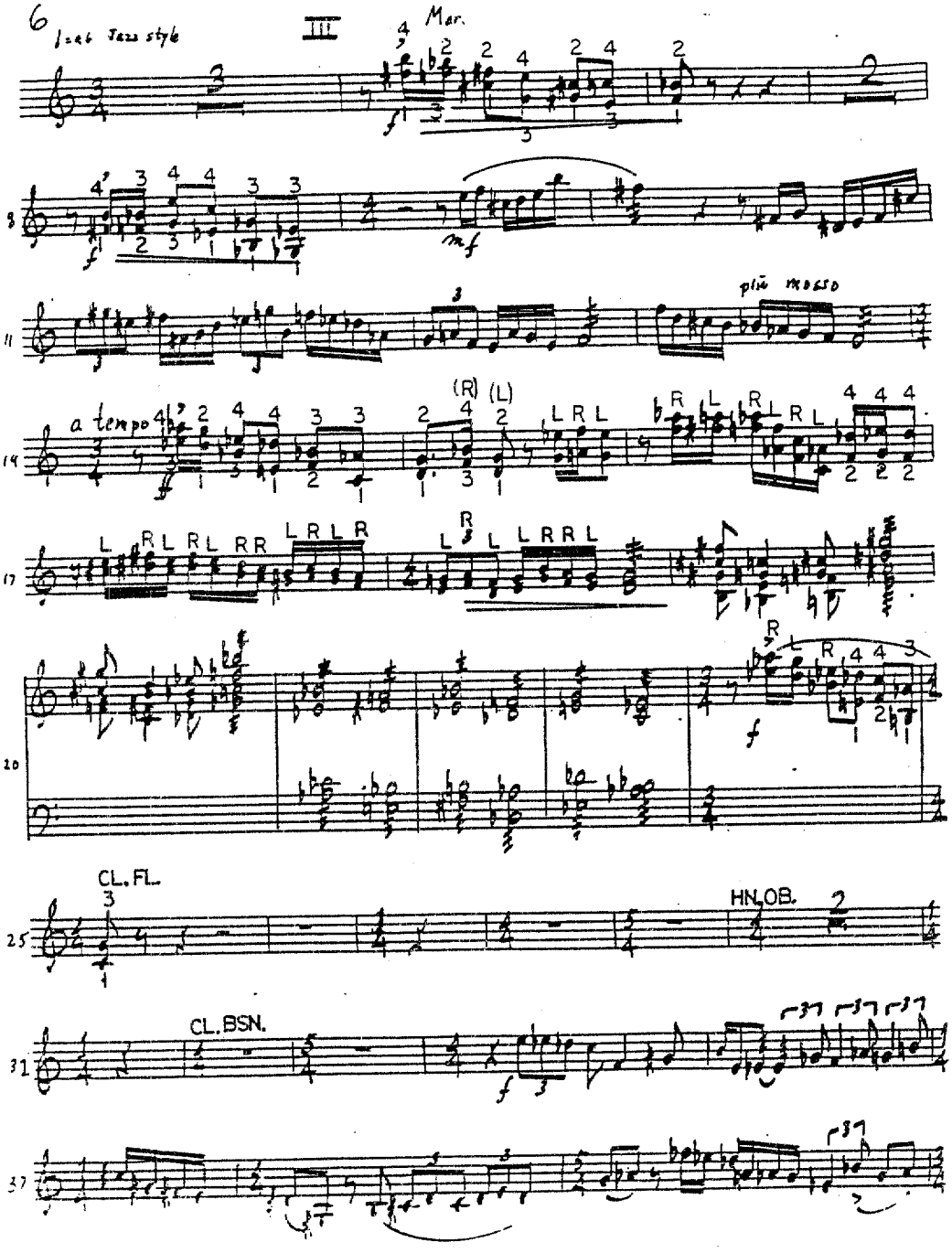


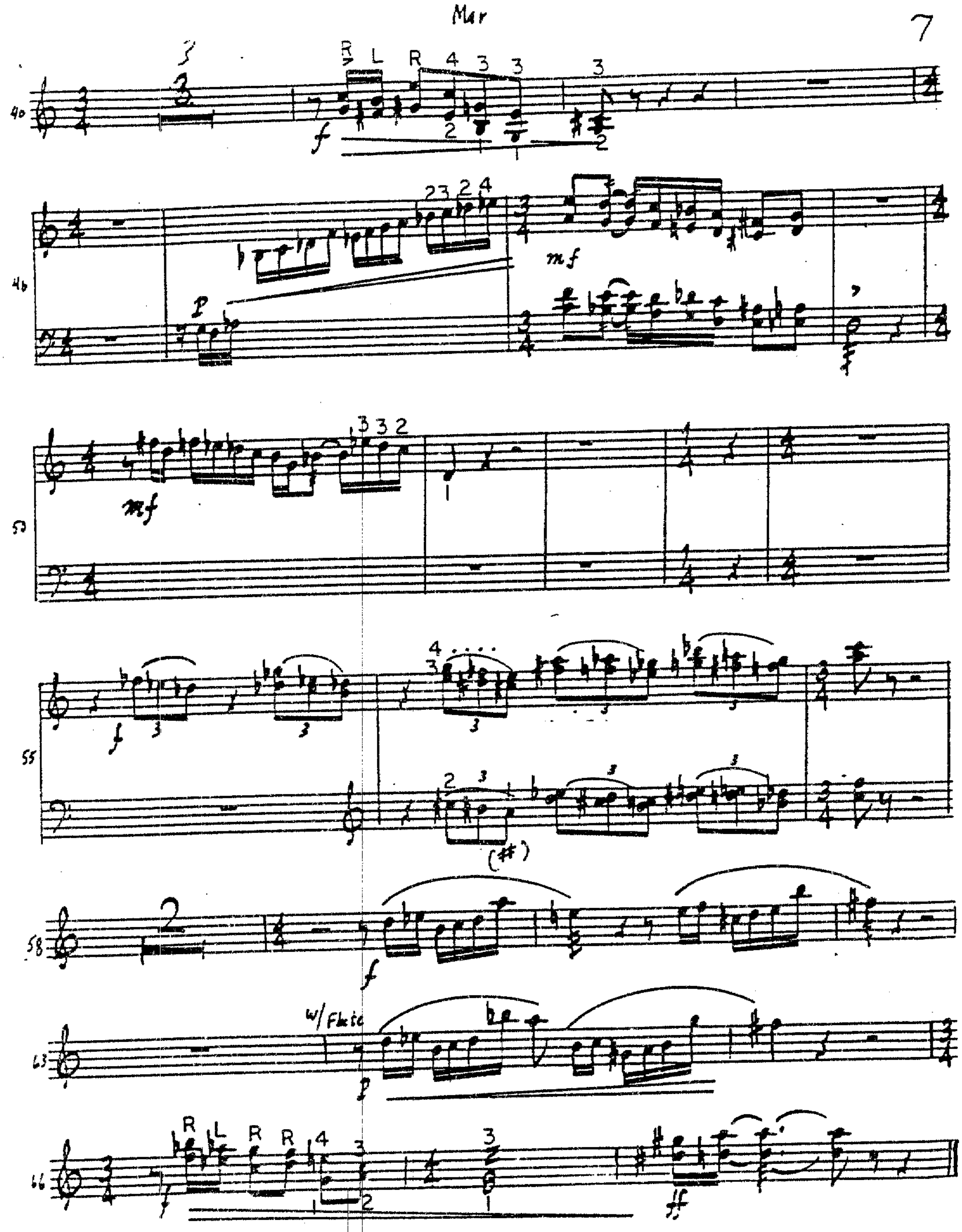

2
Mar.
w/CLAR.
bass.
SOLO
w/cl
solo
horn
hn
ob.bn.fl

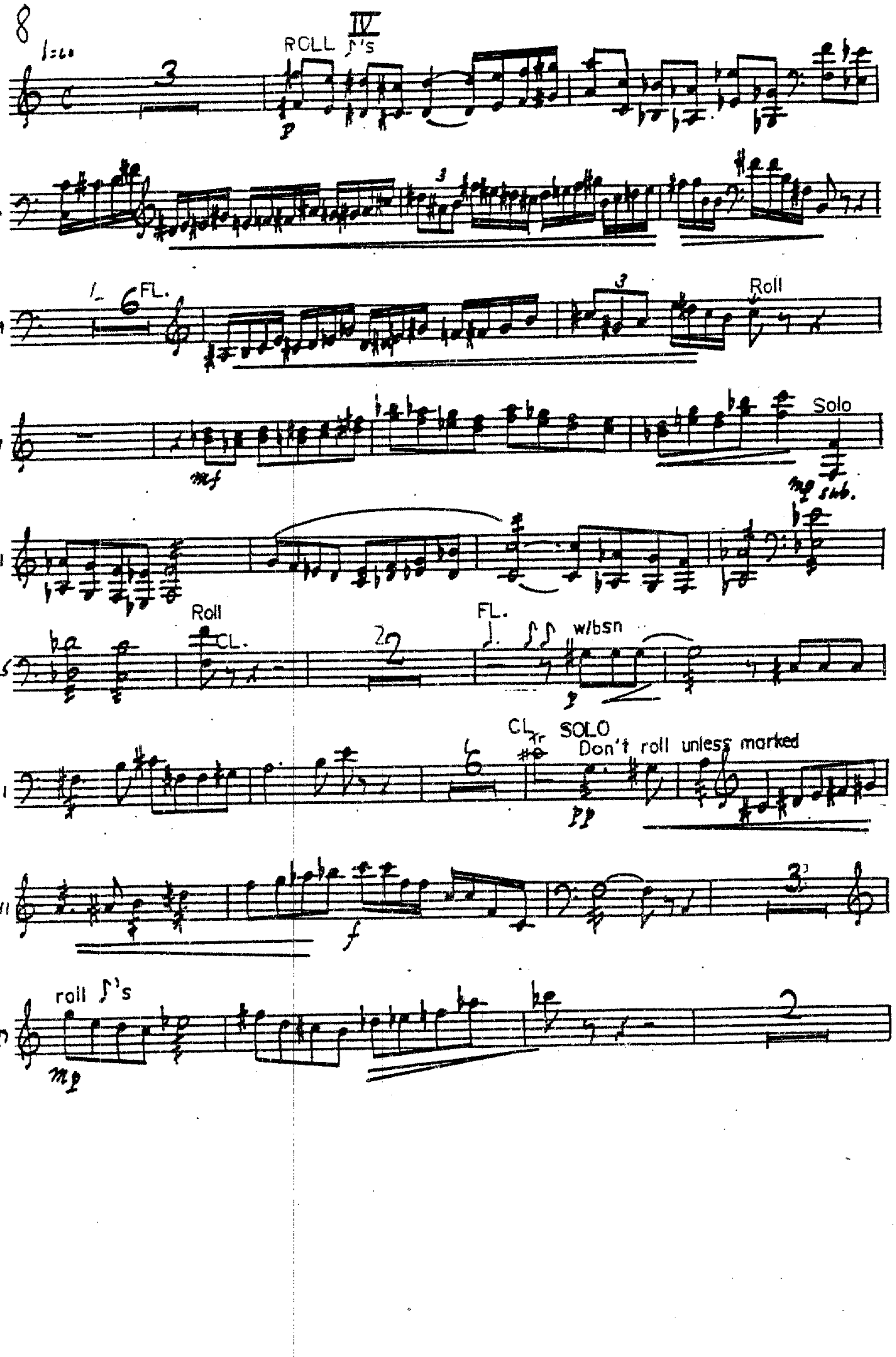

Mar
ob,cl
hn
II
Less Dolce
OB.
FL.
SOLO
a tempo
rit.
LEAD
BSN.

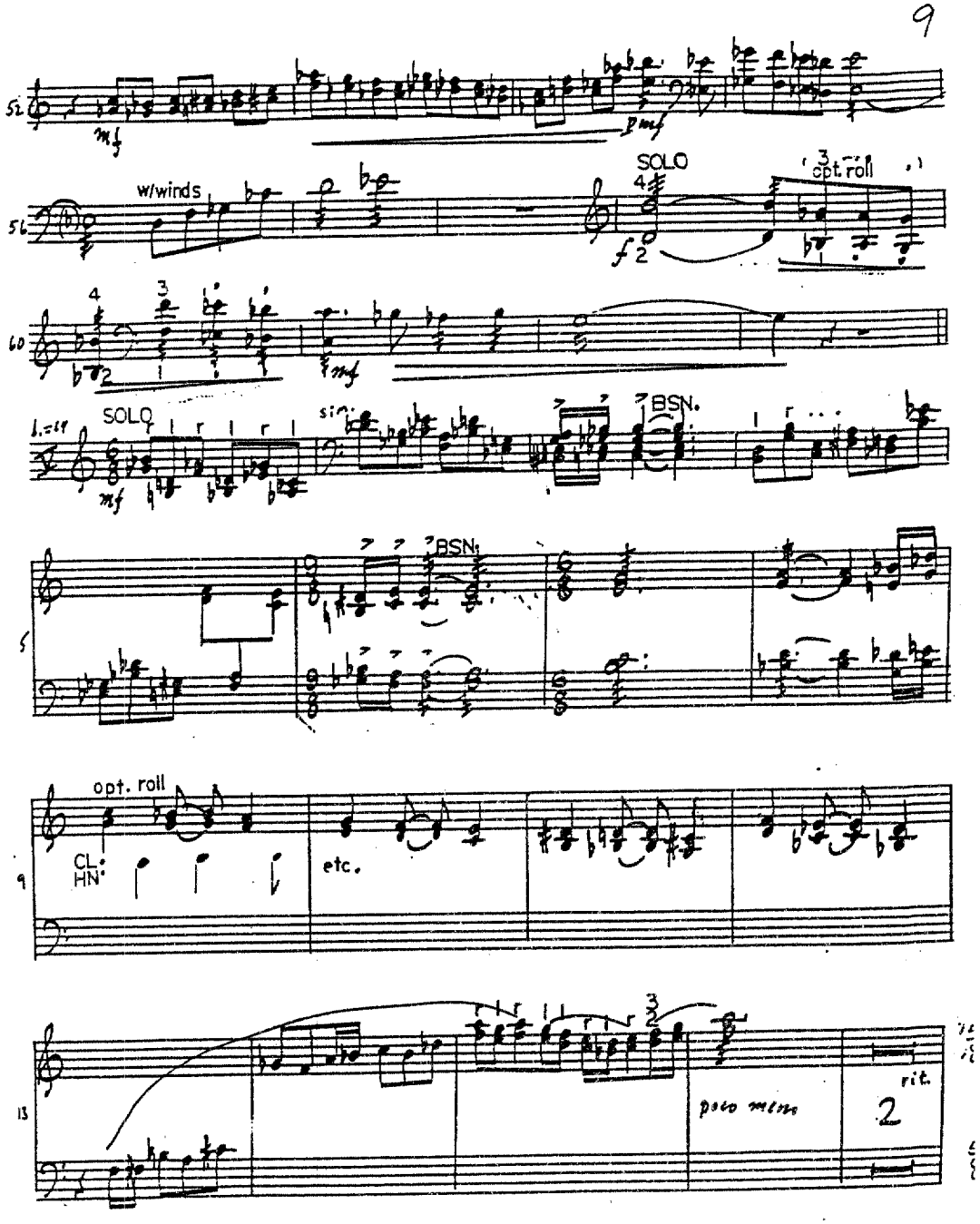

Mar.
4
SOLO
OB.
25
p
FL.
HN
29
5/4
5/4
33
mf
2/4
39
SOLO
HN.
44
p
mf
poco rit.
accel.
48
FL.
BSN.
53
a tempo

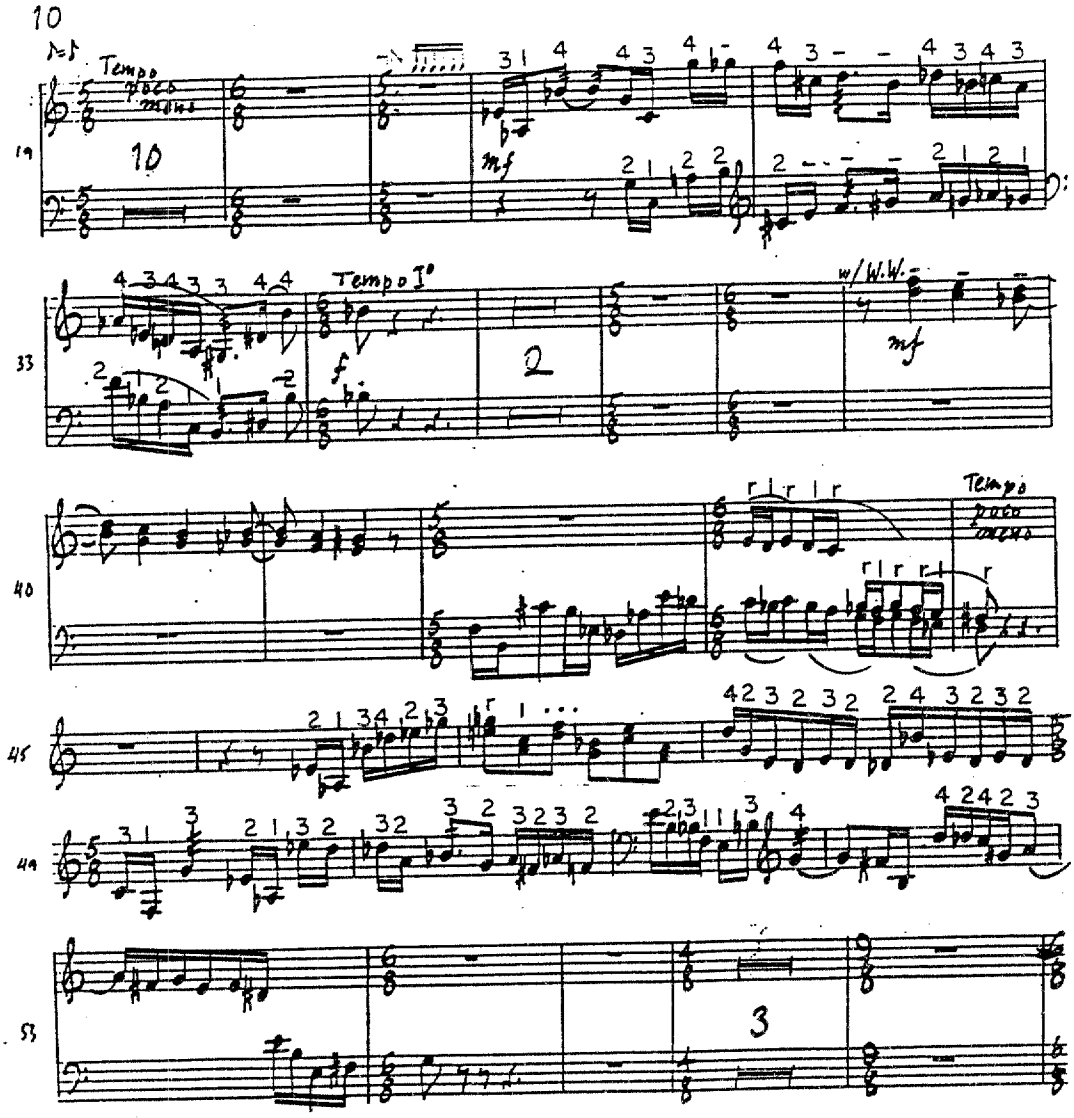

Cl.
SOLO
WINDS ENTER
BSN.
WINDS
rit.

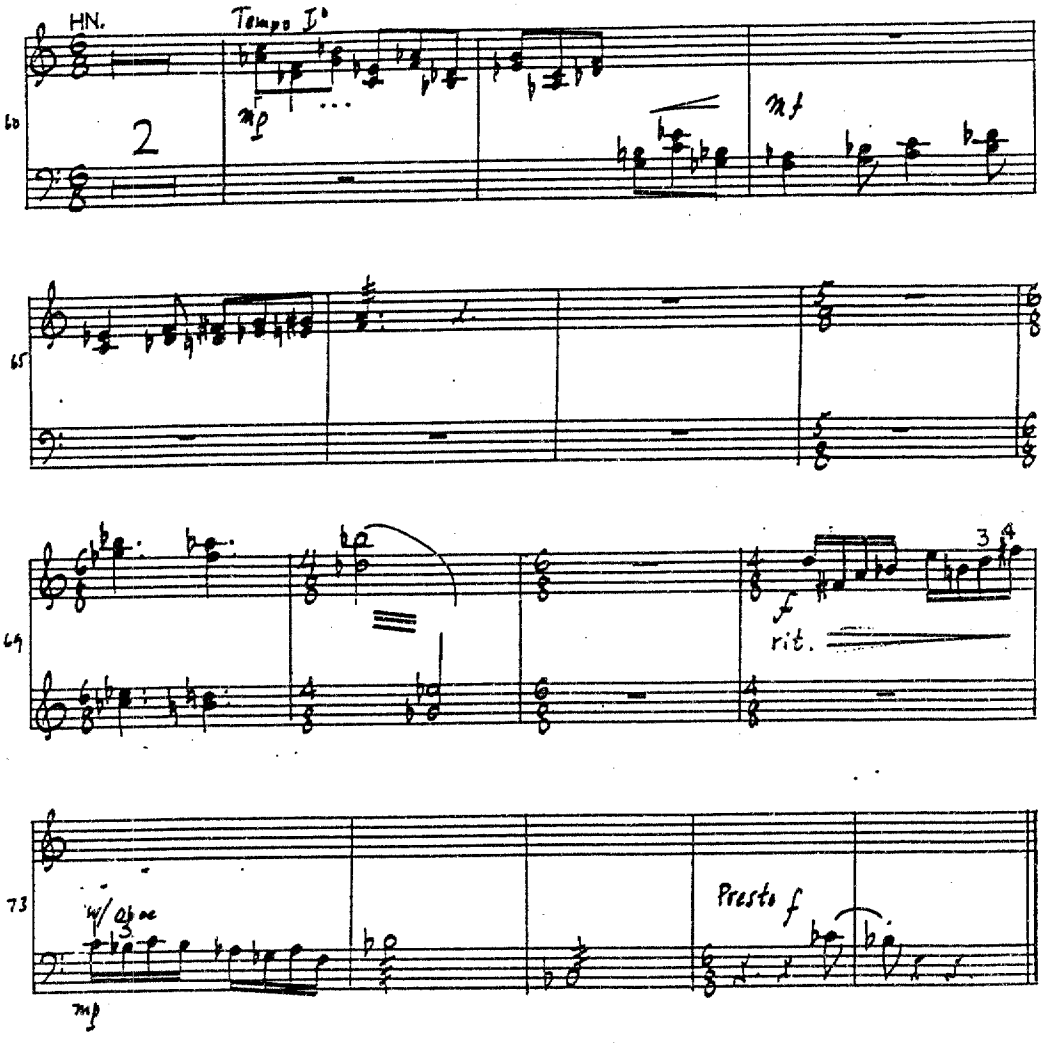

6
Jazz Jazz style
III
Mar.
mf
più mosso
a tempo
(R) (L)
CL. FL.
HN. OB.
CL. BSN.


Mar
7
w/Flute


ROLL ♪'s
Roll
FL.
Solo
Roll
CL.
FL.
w/bsn
CL
SOLO
Don't roll unless marked
roll ♪'s


9
51
mf
pmf
w/winds
56
SOLO
4
f 2
3
opt. roll
60
mf
SOLO
mf
BSN.
BSN.
opt. roll
CL.
HN.
etc.
13
poco meno
rit.
2


10
Tempo poco meno
mf
Tempo I°
f
w/W.W.
mf
Tempo poco meno


HN.
Tempo I°
mp
2
mf
f
rit.
w/ oboe
mp
Presto f

APPENDIX D

RECOMMENDED MALLET SELECTIONS FOR INDIVIDUAL MOVEMENTS

The mallets referred to here are Leigh Steven mallets manufactured by Malletech. The model numbers used are LS5(soft), LS10(medium soft),LS15(medium hard) and the LS20(hard). They are listed from left to right corresponding to mallets 1, 2, 3, and 4 respectively.

Mvt.	Guitar Suite	Trumpet Suite	Flute Suite	Sextet
I	10,10,10,15	10,10,10,15	10,10,15,15	10,15,15,15
II	5,5,5,10	5,5,5,10	5,5,10,10	5,10,10,10
III	5,10,10,10	10,15,15,15	10,10,10,15	15,15,15,20
IV	10,15,15,15	5,10,10,10	5,10,10,10	5,10,10,10
V		5,5,5,10	5,5,10,10	10,15,15,15
VI		10,15,15,15	10,15,15,20	

APPENDIX E

The Stout Questionnaire

These questions were submitted to Gordon Stout in the fall of 1998. He returned these answers in January of 1999. They are presented here in complete and unedited form.

QUESTIONS FOR GORDON STOUT REGARDING ALEC WILDER'S MUSIC FOR MARIMBA

1. **How closely did you work with Wilder in terms of acquainting him with idiomatic aspects of marimba performance? Was he aware of alternate technical approaches(grips, roll techniques etc.) or did he base his writing mainly on your style?**

   I don't remember ever talking with Alec about any idiomatic aspects of marimba performance. He saw and heard me play more than once, I believe, before writing his first marimba music (trumpet/marimba Suite). I'm sure that he must have known the range of the instrument I played at the time, but otherwise he wrote on his own, perhaps based on my style, which he had seen a couple of times. We never discussed techniques or grips, or rolls, etc.

2. **Were the pieces written at the piano or did Wilder conceive the music in his mental ear?**

   To the best of my knowledge Alec wrote all of his music in his mental ear. I never saw him working at the piano. You might ask Bob Levy about this, as he knew Alec for many more years than did I.
   (Bob Levy, home: 920-739-3108. office: 920-832-6622. e-mail: <robert.levy@lawrence.edu>)

3. **What is the exact sequence of the pieces as they were written?**

   The Guitar Suite was first(1968). The Suite for Trumpet and Marimba was second(1976). The Suite for Flute and Marimba was third(1977), and the Sextet for Marimba and Woodwind Quintet was last(197?).

4. **What insights into the music did Wilder give you personally as to his overall intent in the music? Was there any programmatic intent in the music?**

   To the best of my knowledge there was never any programmatic intent in any of the pieces we are discussing here (marimba music). Little insight was given as to his overall intent in the music. When a piece was completed, he would give it to us. Then we would go to work to learn it. Then we would play it for him, discuss any changes that were necessary, but basically go to work on the music in fairly specific terms (tempo, dynamics, expression, etc.) till it was the way he wanted it.

5. **Wilder sometimes spoke of" secrets within the music", did he ever confide to you any secret meanings in the music? If not do you perceive any?**

I don't remember him talking about this. Maybe it refers to a musical device in the composition that was important (sequence, canon, etc.). He often spoke of the "charm of impossibilities" in music, which basically refers to the fact that when performers are really in to the music in performance, you never know what great things could happen. And there is no way to predict when these amazing things will happen in performance.

6. Do you perceive references to previous works in the later works among these four pieces?

Only in that Alec remained true to his musical vision throughout all of his compositional output. But as to specific references to previous works I would have no way of knowing. I don't remember him ever speaking about that.

7. Do you sense an evolution in style as he wrote the successive works?

Yes, I do. I think that as we progress from the tpt./mba. to the fl./mba. and finally to the ww quintet/mba. piece, that the writing gets more and more concerned with how the color and timbre of the marimba combines with other instruments. The tpt./mba. piece is the most technically demanding, and in a way the work with the least marimba personality in it. It is more about the music than the marimba. In the flute and marimba work, the personality of the marimba as Wilder saw it began to emerge more clearly. By the woodwind quintet and marimba work, the marimba had emerged completely in Wilder's mind (I think) as an instrument whose voice would combine and contrast with other instruments to create beautiful and interesting sounds, colors, and timbres.

8. In your opinion, how significant is this music in general and for the marimba in particular?

People seem to go either one way or the other with Alec's music. Either they are really big fans and believe in the value and importance of his music, or they pay little attention to it. I am obviously one who believes that Alec Wilder is a very important American composer, who wrote a great deal of really great music. There is no question about his importance as a composer of popular songs in the era of Gershwin, Porter, and the others. His music is written for virtually every instrument, and he gave a voice to some instruments that didn't have much music written for them at a particular time (marimba, tuba, etc.). I should say, however, that he wrote for people, not for instruments. He wrote for marimba because he got to know me, and heard me play, etc. Almost all of his music was written because of his relationship with a person(s).

I feel it is significant music for the marimba. But, in a way, who am I to say whether is it or not? Time will be the true measure of significance. I can tell already, though, that most young marimbists don't know about Alec Wilder's music for marimba. I still regularly perform the guitar suite in recital. It has never been really popular with marimbists. It has been some years since I have played the other works, however. I certainly hope that when the history books are written about the development of marimba literature in the 1970's, that there will be a chapter about Alec Wilder.

I think that his marimba music helped to make the instrument more popular to a lot of musicians as well. Bob Levy and I have played the tpt./mba. Suite at brass conferences, and in many concerts all over the country. The Suite for Flute and Marimba was written originally with Samuel Baron in mind, although the premiere and recording were done with Virginia Nanzetta. The Woodwind Quintet and marimba work was given its premiere performance with me and the Philadelphia Orchestra WW Quintet. All of those great musicians and more had good experiences with the marimba because of his music.

9. What was Wilder's attitude towards performance practice in general and most importantly in these works? Was he rigid or open to other ideas?

Alec placed a great deal of trust and faith in the performer that he wrote a particular piece for. I am not exactly sure what you mean by performance practice in this case. Maybe you could elaborate this for me. If he wrote something that the performer could not do, then he and the performer would work to change it. But at the same time, he didn't worry about how playable something would be while composing, because he wrote his music for players that were extremely capable, and because he had heard them do amazing things that others might have considered impossible. Especially in his later years, Alec hated going to concerts of his music (and basically refused to do so), but loved going to rehearsals. He loved rehearsals with a passion.

10. Would he have been opposed to the idea of alterations to the score in order to take advantage of the now extended range of the marimba?

Of course, I don't really know. The largest marimbas available at the time were 4.3 octaves. He certainly liked the middle and low registers of the instrument, although I don't believe to the exclusion of the upper notes. My guess is that he would have like it sometimes, but not always. If it served at musical purpose, or created a really great sound, color, or timbre he would have gone for it.

11. What in general terms is the most important thing that a performer must be aware of when trying to successfully perform this music? In other words is

there something different or unique the performer must bring to Wilder's music in order to realize the intent of the music?

An understanding of Wilder's style. A love for the spontaneous in music. Wilder came from a jazz background, and many of the performers he wrote for (not all) were jazz players as well as classical players, so an understanding of jazz style is important to understanding and effectively playing his music. Alec was thrilled when a performer brought something to his music that he had not thought of before himself. He appreciated virtuosity, but never at the expense of the expression of the music.

12. **In your opinion, what is the musical message of this music? Do you view it as "absolute music" like Bach or more romantic in approach?(Personally I find much of Wilder's music to be romantic in character, conjuring up many images for me; although I know that Wilder in many ways detested this musical approach)**

This is a very difficult question to answer. We each bring out unique and individual experiences to what we hear in music. No two people hear the same thing in the same way when listening to the same music. I tend not to listen to music programatically, but rather as abstract relationships of sound in time. I compose music this way as well. So I find Wilder's music to be more abstract than romantic. It is music that is aware of its time however (jazz influences). It is music that has lots of emotion to it, without necessarily being *about* emotion. I believe that Alec wrote music with great emotion, but not *about* it.

QUESTIONS ON THE GUITAR SUITE:

13. **Do you have an original copy of the score for guitar and if so could I have a copy of it?**

I have a copy of the "first edition". It is not in Wilder's hand, but is the original version for guitar, which to my knowledge has never been performed on guitar or published for guitar. Copy enclosed.

14. **In your transcription did you strive to emulate the guitar-like aspects of the piece or did you attempt to transform the work into something that might have been originally written for the marimba?**

At the time, I don't think I thought about it. I just tried to make is sound as good as I could on marimba. As I got to know the music - a process of discovery - I gradually found the way to play it on the marimba. I only had a four-octave instrument at the time (my King George). However, Alec himself felt that the way I played the piece transformed it into actual marimba music, and said so himself. He said it was the only time he wrote a piece for one instrument (guitar) later to

find out that it was really written for another instrument (marimba).

15. In movement II , I perform the entire piece down an octave. What are your thoughts on this and what do you think Wilder would have felt about this? Do you roll only those chords that are notated as such, or is there more leeway in the application of rolls?

For the last four or five years I have played the entire piece down the octave. This is actually the correct sounding octave to play guitar music in, and, now with five octave marimbas we can play guitar music in the correct range. I think Alec would have liked the way it sounds in the correct octave. I don't remember ever discussing this issue with him, however. As you will see in comparing the original to the published version, there are indeed changes that I made. Some because they better suited me, and others because a marimba is not a guitar. The version published by Studio 4 Productions for solo marimba, is as much as possible notated exactly the way I played the piece for Alec. I wanted to publish it for marimba more like what you see in the original manuscript, to allow for individual interpretations. But Alec wanted it published for marimba just like I played it. So all the roll indications, expression markings, etc. were how I played the piece. Especially if someone else were to go back to the original manuscript to learn the piece, they might come up with a totally different version of how to play it on marimba. That would be fine with me, and most likely would have been with Alec.

16. What are your thoughts in general about performance issues related to the Suite for Guitar?

As I mentioned previously, I think the entire piece should be played down an octave from the written score, to put it in to the correct sounding register.

Mvnt. 1 - Alec always loved the way I used rubato in this movement. I play it with a very flexible approach to tempo. Playing this movement in tempo makes the music completely different from the way I play it. This might be just fine, I don't know.
Mvnt. 2 - The most difficult movement musically to perform. The difficulty is how to get the top voice to sound like a sustained melody, while stopping its flow to fit in the chords below. Again, a flexible approach to tempo is the best, I believe.
Mvnt. 3 - This movement is more about groove, rhythmic intensity and vitality. My favorite movement to play, actually.
Mvnt. 4 - Jazz-like in the beginning, but don't swing the straight eighth-notes.
Not sure what to tell you other than these brief comments. If you need more specifics, lets me know.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SUITE FOR TRUMPET AND MARIMBA:

17. How do you address the balance problems in this piece? Do you tend to overplay the dynamics in order to match the volume of the trumpet in certain sections of this piece?

Bob Levy and I always, from the first time, seemed to play well together. I don't remember ever having serious balance issues that required me to play much differently with him than by myself. I think that the trumpet is an instrument that balances with the marimba very well generally. When playing with the flute, for instance, there are more instances when the marimbist has to be very concerned with not playing too loud based on the register of the flute (not over balancing when the flute is in the low register, for instance). With the trumpet, Bob and I never really had too many concerns of this nature. This is not to say that we didn't think about it, based on the texture that was employed at any given time (melody and accompaniment, counterpoint and contrapuntal textures, etc.).

18. Why did you switch the third and sixth movements from their original order? Did Wilder approve of this switch?

Although I don't remember specifically why this was done, I am sure it was done while preparing for performance with Wilder. My guess is that it was either an artistic decision based on the musical flow of the movements that Alec, Bob and I came up with, combined with the order that worked best for Bob Levy. It is a very difficult piece for the trumpet, and perhaps the order of movements as they exist now worked better for him. Maybe he could shed some light on this question.

19. In the last measure of Mvnt 6 you use a glissando instead of the original sequence of chromatically descending chords. How did you come to this decision and did Wilder approve of this alteration in the score?

If you have tried to play the original sequence of chromatically descending chords at the end of this movement, then you know why it was changed. It was impossible to play the chords the way they were originally written at tempo. The glissando gave the right musical effect, and was certainly approved by Wilder. As you can see from Wilder's manuscript(marimba part), there is the admonition "catch what you can", so he realized that he had written something which would be most likely impossible. And it was.

20. General thoughts on performance issues in the Suite for Trumpet and Marimba:

I think that listening to the recording with give you a good idea of how the music should be interpreted. Alec was at the recording session, on Long Island at Golden Crest Records, Clark Galehouse was the recording engineer. One of the

main issues for the marimbist is learning to play with an instrument that has to take breaths on a regular basis. By the way, all the rehearsal letters I put in for publication, which is my hand manuscript. It is a piece that requires a great deal of sensitivity with regards to tempo, rubato and musical flow. The music must be flexible, not rigid in interpretation.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SUITE FOR FLUTE AND MARIMBA:

21. This work seems to be the most idiomatic to the marimba. I don't have a copy of the original manuscript. Is the naturalness with which this piece fits on the instrument due more to your edits or to a progression in Wilder's understanding of how to write for the marimba? If you have a copy of Wilder's original score could I get a copy of it?

I am enclosing a copy of Alec's original handwritten copy. I am also sending you a copy of the first copy I received, which is actually the only copy I have ever used. It was copied by Alec's regular copyist, Don Jones, who I believe lived in Rochester, New York. As you will see, there was quite a bit of editing. The copy of mine includes many instances where I pasted the editing over the original (as copied by Don Jones, that is), and is what was used for the publication of the piece. I of course edited the marimba part, and Virginia Nanzetta did the flute part. All of the editing was done in person with Alec, over a number of years, from the premiere performance to the recording.

22. General thoughts on the Suite for Flute and Marimba:

Again, I think that listening to the recording will give a good sense of how the music should be interpreted. Alec was at the recording session.
Mvnt. 1 - the marimbist must be very concerned with not over balancing the flute when it is in the low register. Think in one to the bar, in two bar phrases. Match articulation of the flute.
Mvnt. 2 - the marimbist must play with a beautiful sound. at times supporting the melodies of the flute, and at others blending perfectly with the flute sound. Think in two bar phrases. An extremely lyrical and dolce movement.
Mvnt. 3 - This movement must have a lot of groove to it. It is a movement for dancers at heart.
Mvnt. 4 - The most difficult movement to make work as a whole. Very flexible music. Beautiful sounds.
Mvnt. 5 - The most beautiful movement of all!! Alec always imagined or pictured a mother holding her child for this movement.
Mvnt.6 - Although the roll indications might not indicate it, I always played the quarter-note and dotted eighth-note rolls as measured sixteenths. This really help the groove a lot. With fire and lots of rhythmic intensity. The last five bars are my realization of what Alec wrote, which was impossible. You can kind of tell what he

originally wrote from his manuscript which is hard to read. On my copy, I taped over what he wrote with my realization, which Alec approved of, of course. I have included the original copied version of those bars for you to see.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WOODWIND QUINTET:

23. I assume that this piece hasn't been edited as there is no indication in the parts or score, is this correct?

Yes, this piece has never been edited.

24. What do you feel are the crucial issues with regard to ensemble playing in this work? How do you setup for performance(please diagram if you will)?

I don't really remember much about set-up for this piece. My guess is that the woodwind quintet set-up as normal, and I set-up in back of them, facing the audience of course. The critical issue with regard to ensemble playing in this work is the concept of chamber music. Six equal participants or voices, of which the marimba is one. Learning how to mix and match the marimbas sound with each of the other instruments individually and in various combinations is the most important factor for a successful performance.

25. The third movement is extremely awkward in spots, how do you feel and how would Wilder feel about some alteration to make it more playable? What does the indication 'jazz style" mean here?

I don't know what kind of alterations you are talking about. I don't recall that we (the Clarion WW Quintet and I, on the recording) made any alterations in the parts. Yes, it has some awkward moments as I recall. Can you be more specific as to what you mean by alterations? Also, listen to the recording, and that should help. The "jazz style" indication, as I remember, does not mean to play eighth-notes swing. They are still straight. It means more about the rhythmic syncopations and style, and general feel for the music.

26. Was this piece intended to feature the marimba, or was the marimba intended to be an equal member of the ensemble, or was the marimba intended to be more supportive like a continuo role, or all of the above?

I believe that the marimba was intended to be an equal member of the ensemble in this piece. One voice among six total.

27. In closing many thanks again. I know that I've probably neglected to ask about some issues you feel are very important with regard to these works. If

you wish please feel free to talk about some of these things here:

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