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PARTITA

for 8 voices
by Caroline Shaw

for Roomful of Teeth

I. Allemande

II. Sarabande

III. Courante

IV. Passacaglia

duration 26’

Partita is a simple piece. Born of a love of surface and structure, of the human voice, of dancing and tired ligaments, of music, and of our basic desire to draw a line from one point to another.

notes on the score

Most of *Partita* is wordless, but a careful consideration of vowel color has been indicated in standard IPA. The occasional spoken and sung text pulls from wall drawing directions of Sol Lewitt, square dance calls, found phrases from an urban environment, and original writing by the composer.

The indications xöömei, kargyraa, and sygyt, which appear throughout the score, refer to traditional Tuvan vocal practice.

The familiar tune in the middle of the third movement, *Courante*, is from the 1856 hymn "Shining Shore" by Mr. George F. Root.

Voices are indicated 1 through 8 — essentially SSAATTBB. In the original Roomful of Teeth configuration, 1-4 were women and 5-8 were men. The top two and bottom two voices are specialists in the extreme upper and lower ranges. The middle four tend to be wide-ranging and flexible — or in soccer terms, sweepers.

The 2012 recording by Roomful of Teeth can be considered an essential part of the score. Many sounds and gestures cannot be notated in a conventional way, and the composer encourages drawing on a variety of sources available with today's technology to realize this piece with other ensembles in the future. However, no single document should ever be treated as ultimately prescriptive. Be free, and live life fully.

A few notes on the less-usual notes . . .

e.y.s.

"eat your sound"
a multi-step tongue filter developed by Roomful of Teeth

This is one example of a yodel break. The diamond notehead indicates the use of head voice. The comma stroke just confirms the differentiation from the chest voice that precedes it.

These are textured breaths, related to the Inuit throat singing tradition. They are featured primarily in Courante.

Audible exhale. Typically on "ah"

Audible inhale. Typically higher in pitch, and on "oh"

An inhale-exhale gesture, as in Inuit throat games. These can be more or less "noisy" depending on the dynamic context.

A gentle, natural close-mouthed sigh, glissing up to the pitch that follows. It is an abstraction of a P'ansori articulation.

stretch pitch slightly in either direction,
drawing from the intonation of Georgian singing

an expressive P'ansori gesture,
involving diaphragm accentuation and pitch inflection

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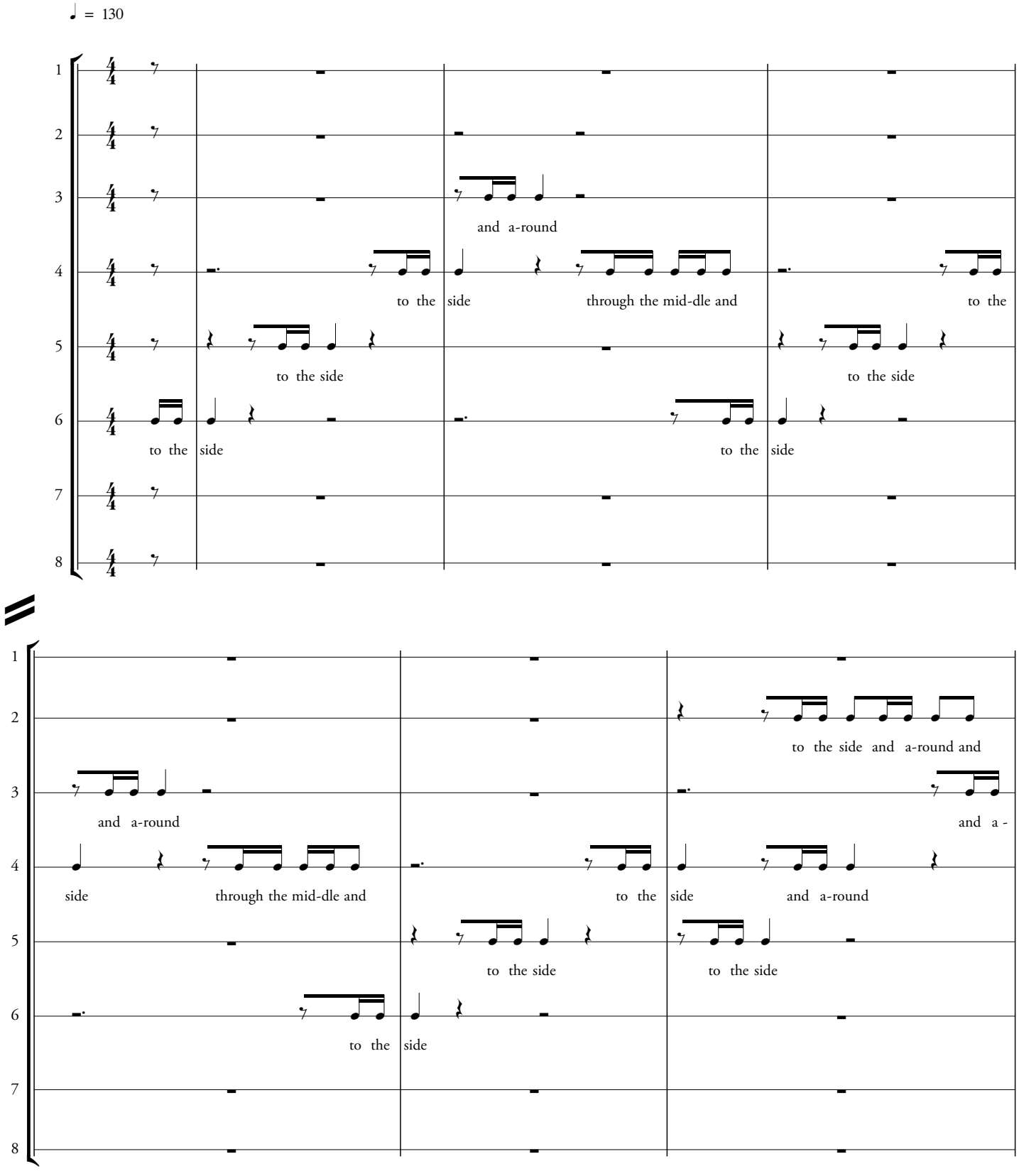
I. Allemande



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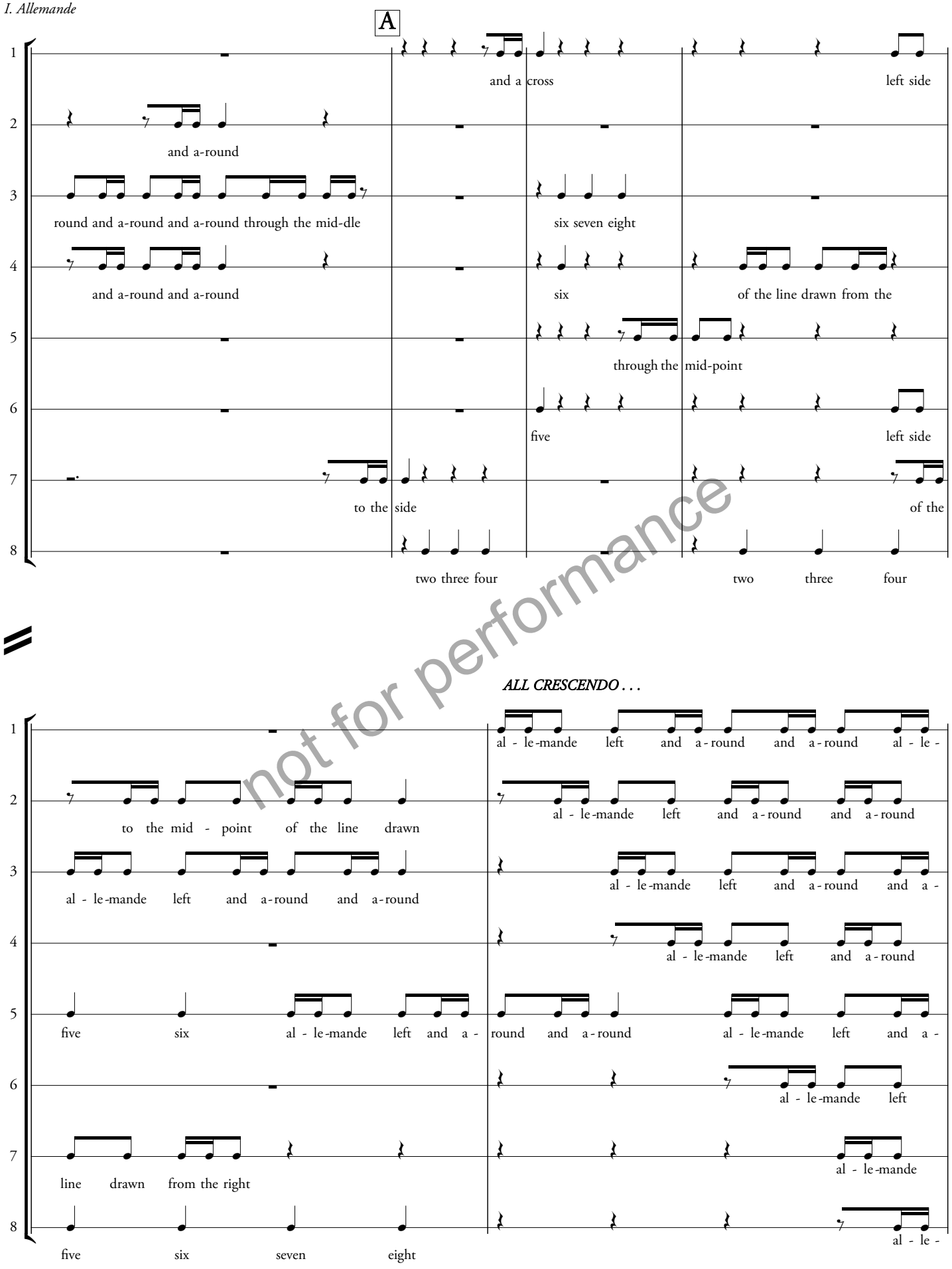
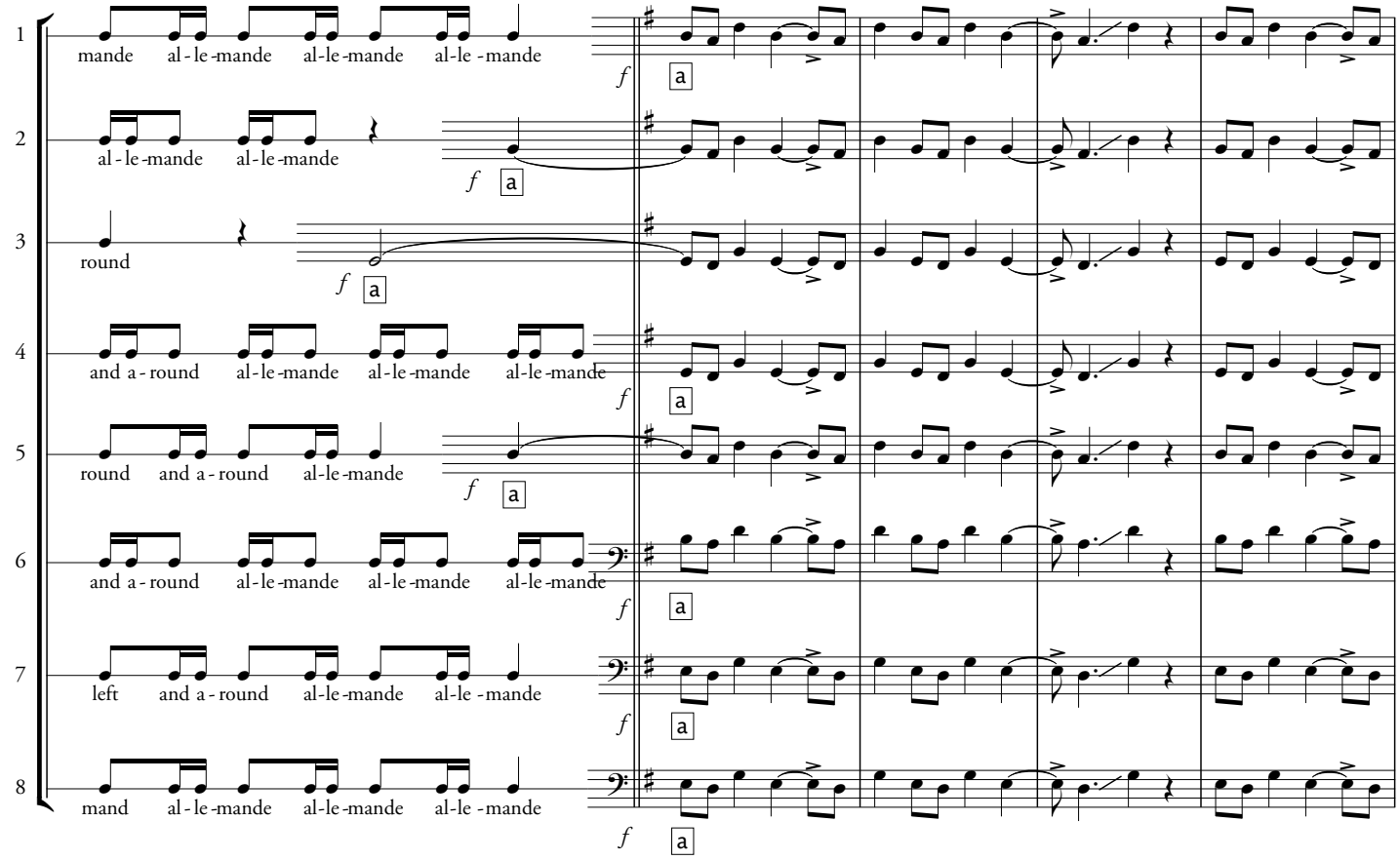
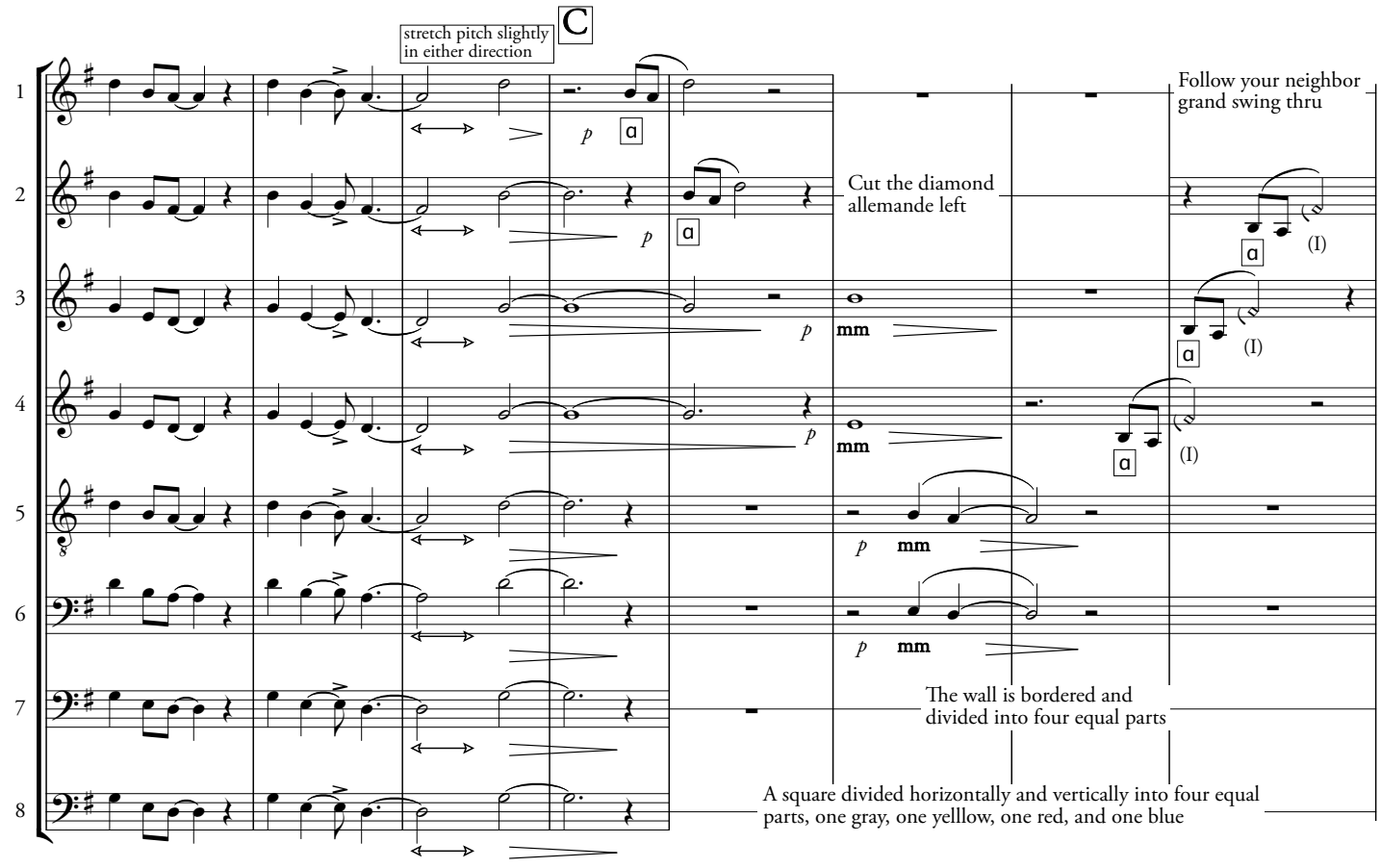
I. Allemande

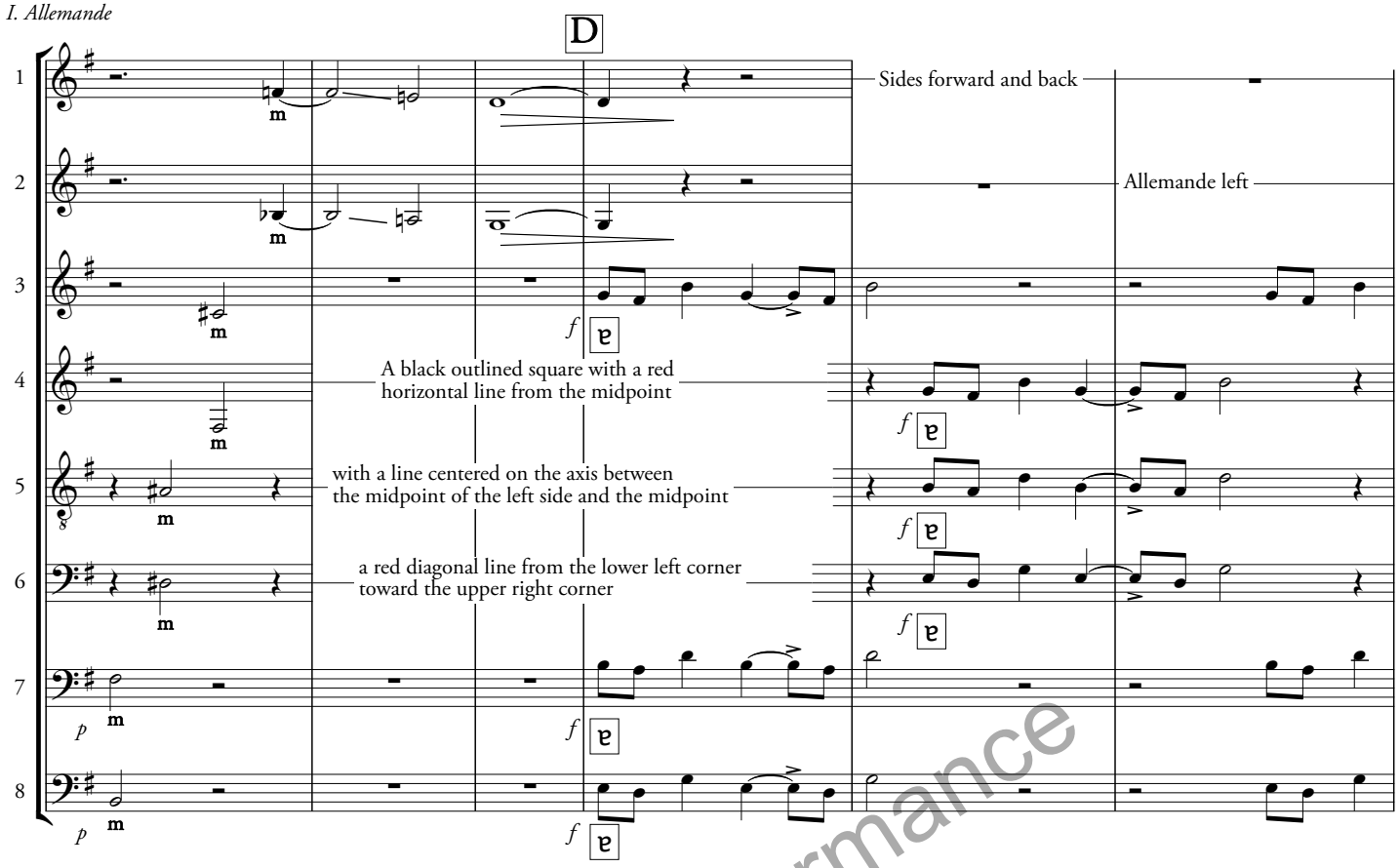


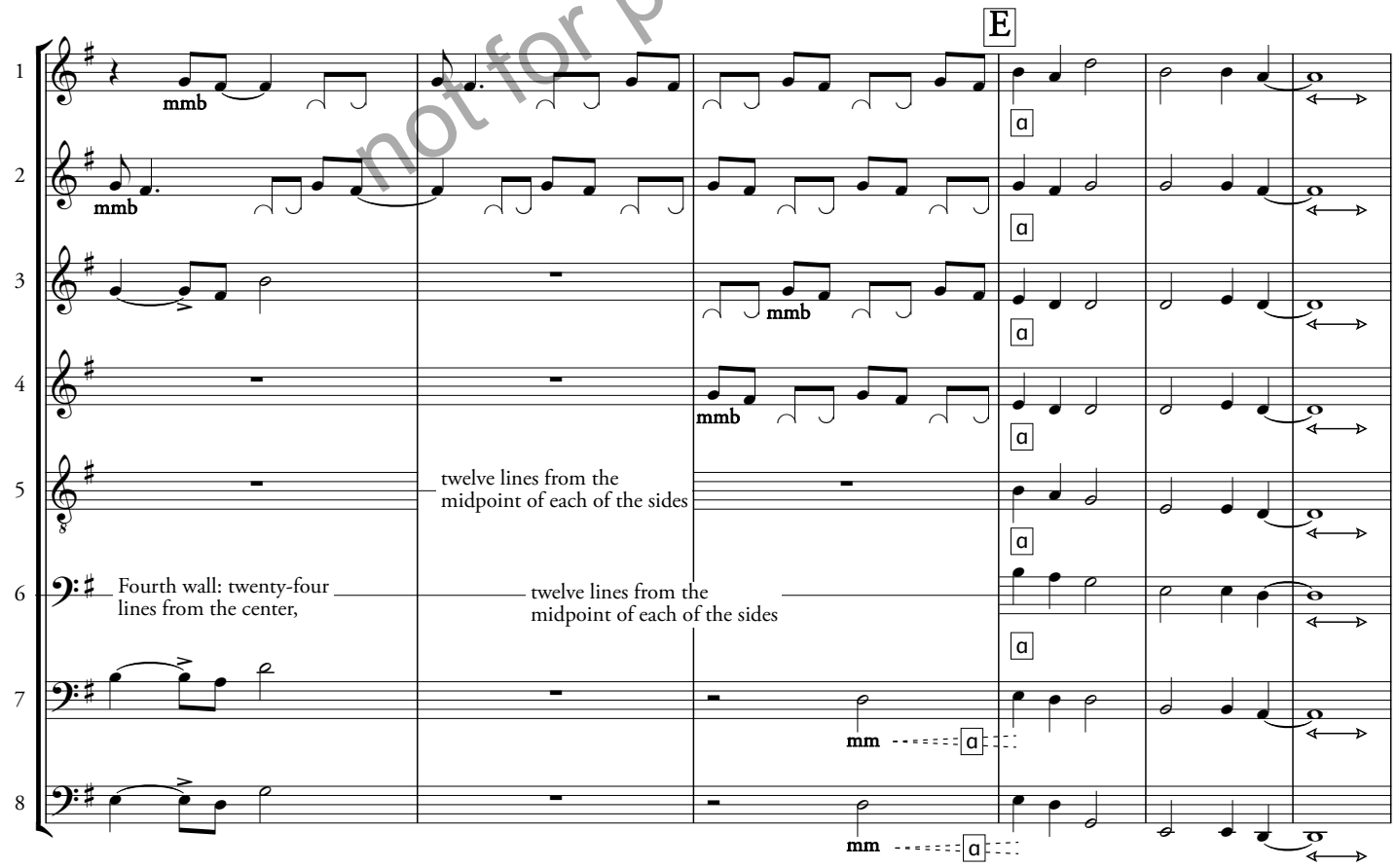
not for performance


1
mande al - le -mande al-le -mande al-le - mande
2
al - le -mande al-le -mande
3
round
4
and a - round al-le -mande al-le -mande al-le -mande
5
round and a - round al-le -mande
6
and a - round al-le -mande al-le -mande al-le -mande
7
left and a - round al-le -mande al-le - mande
8
mand al - le -mande al-le -mande al-le - mande
f
a


C
stretch pitch slightly in either direction
Cut the diamond allemande left
Follow your neighbor grand swing thru
The wall is bordered and divided into four equal parts
A square divided horizontally and vertically into four equal parts, one gray, one yelllow, one red, and one blue
p
mm
a
(I)

I. Allemande





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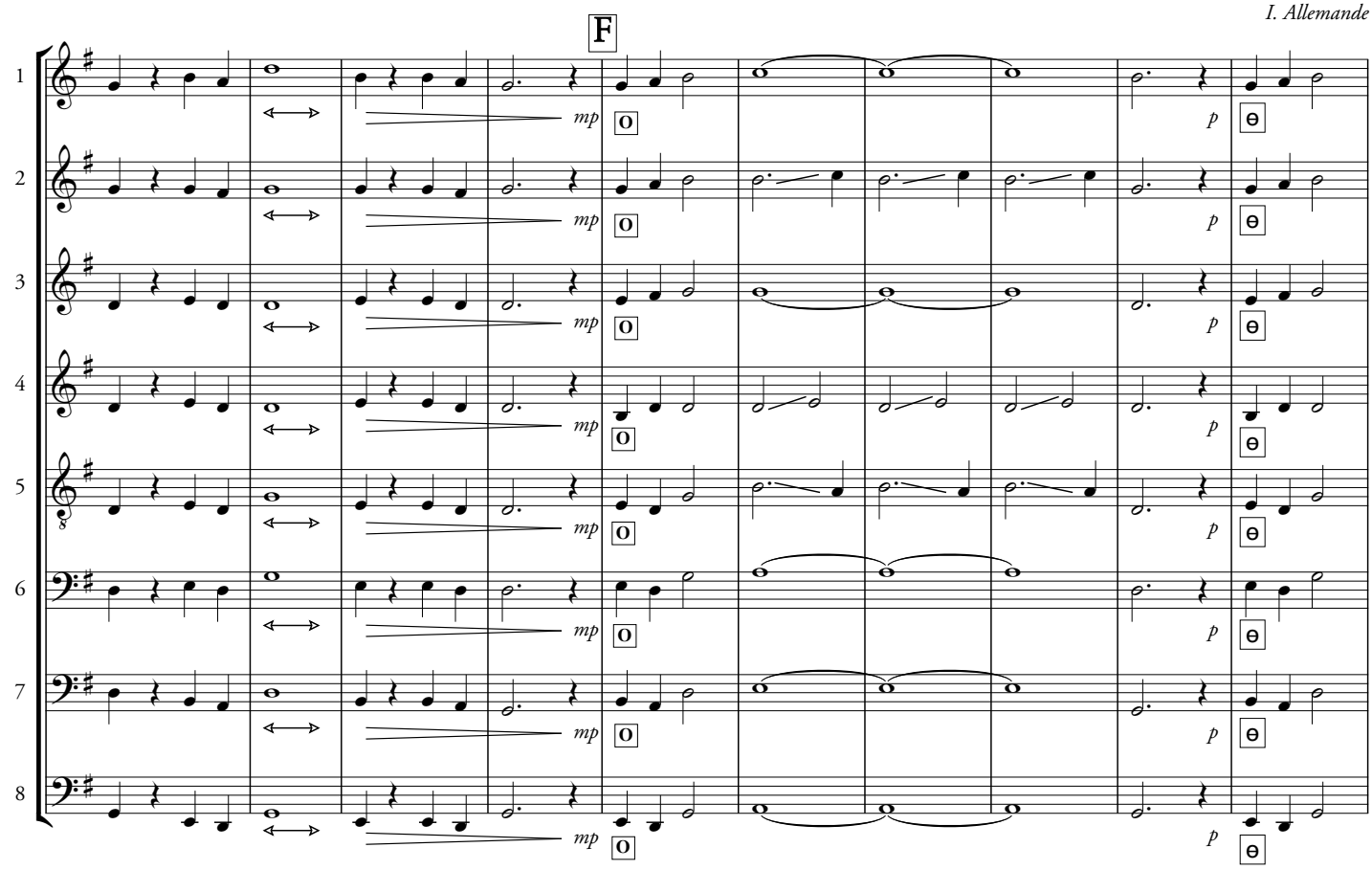
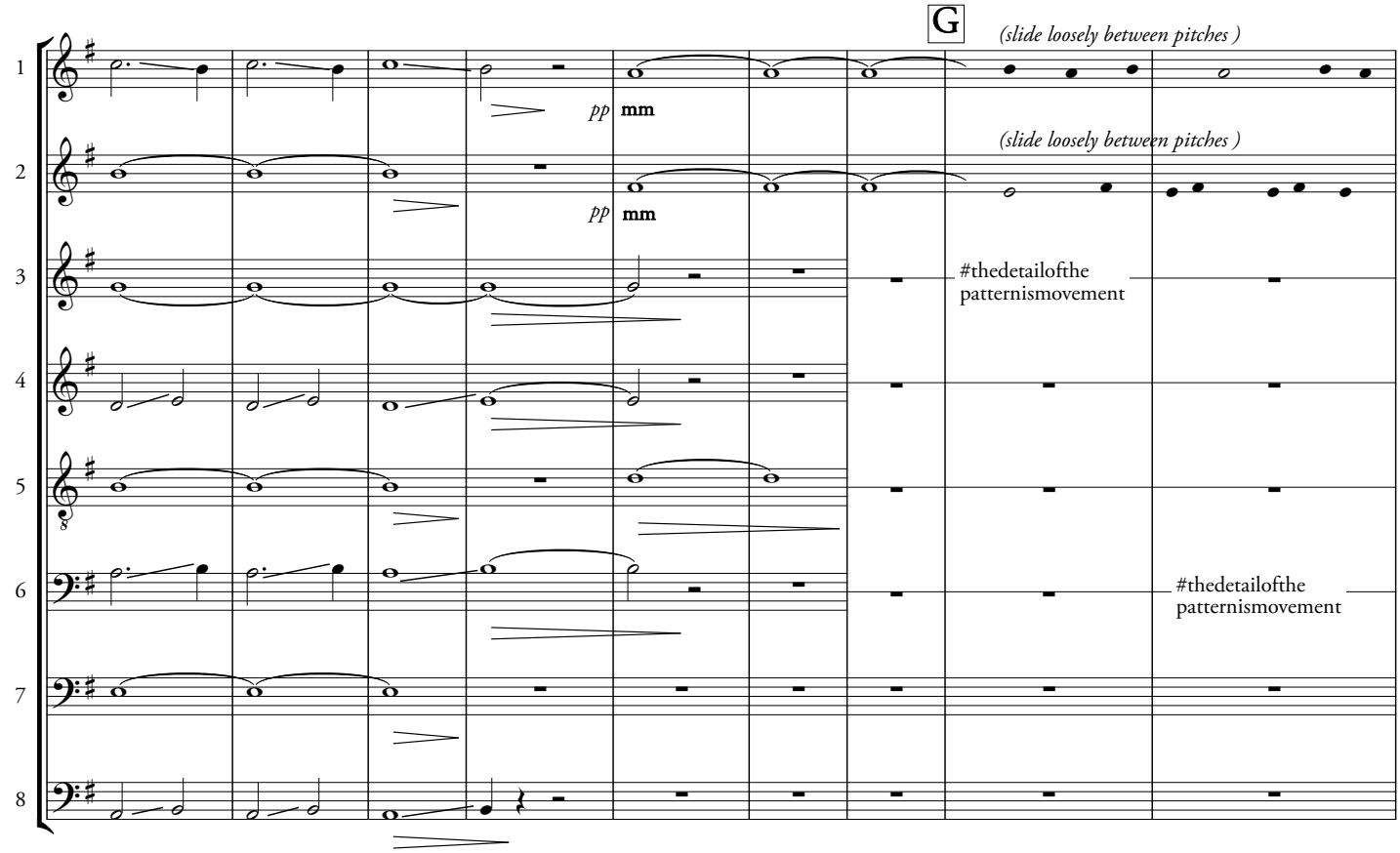
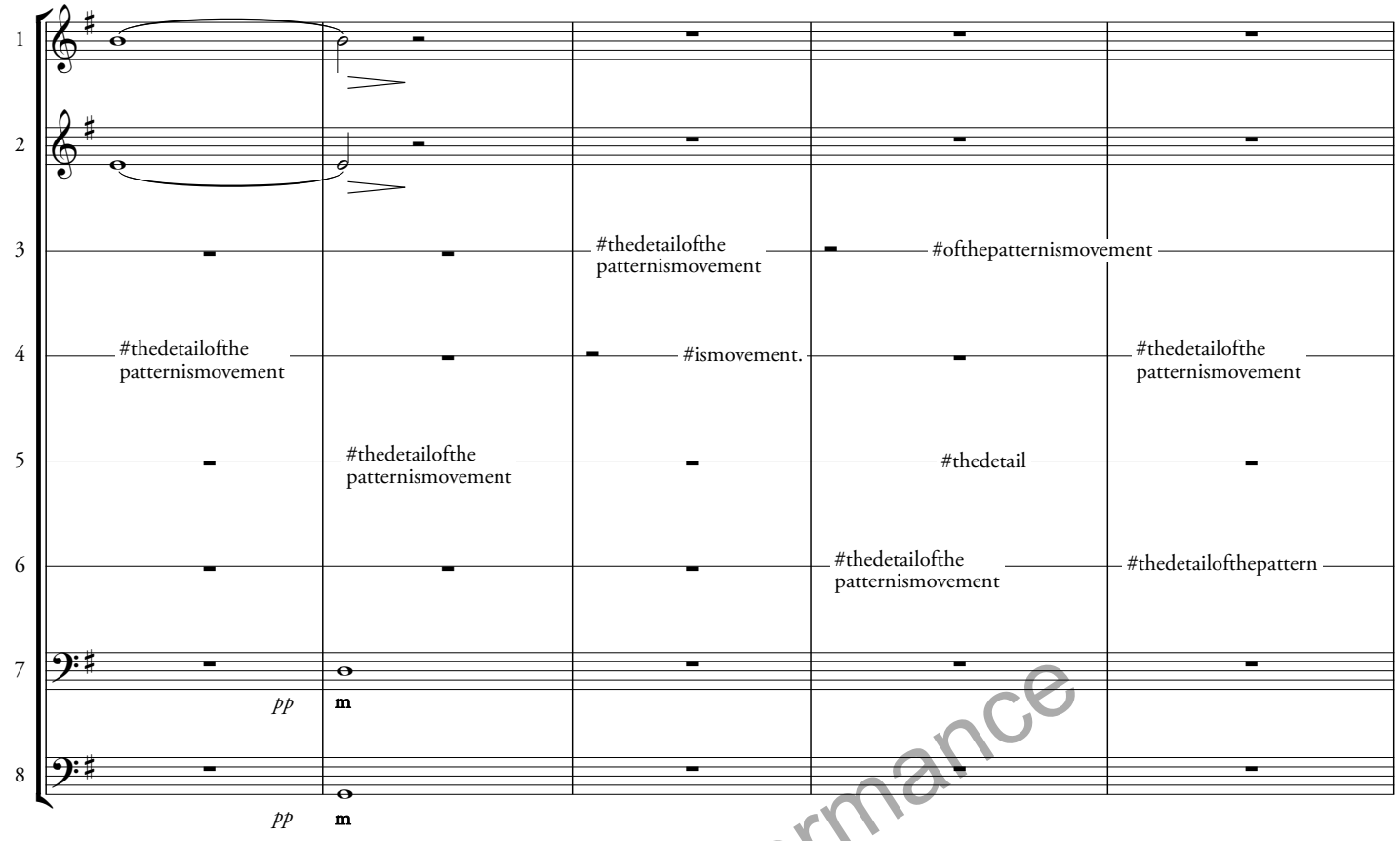
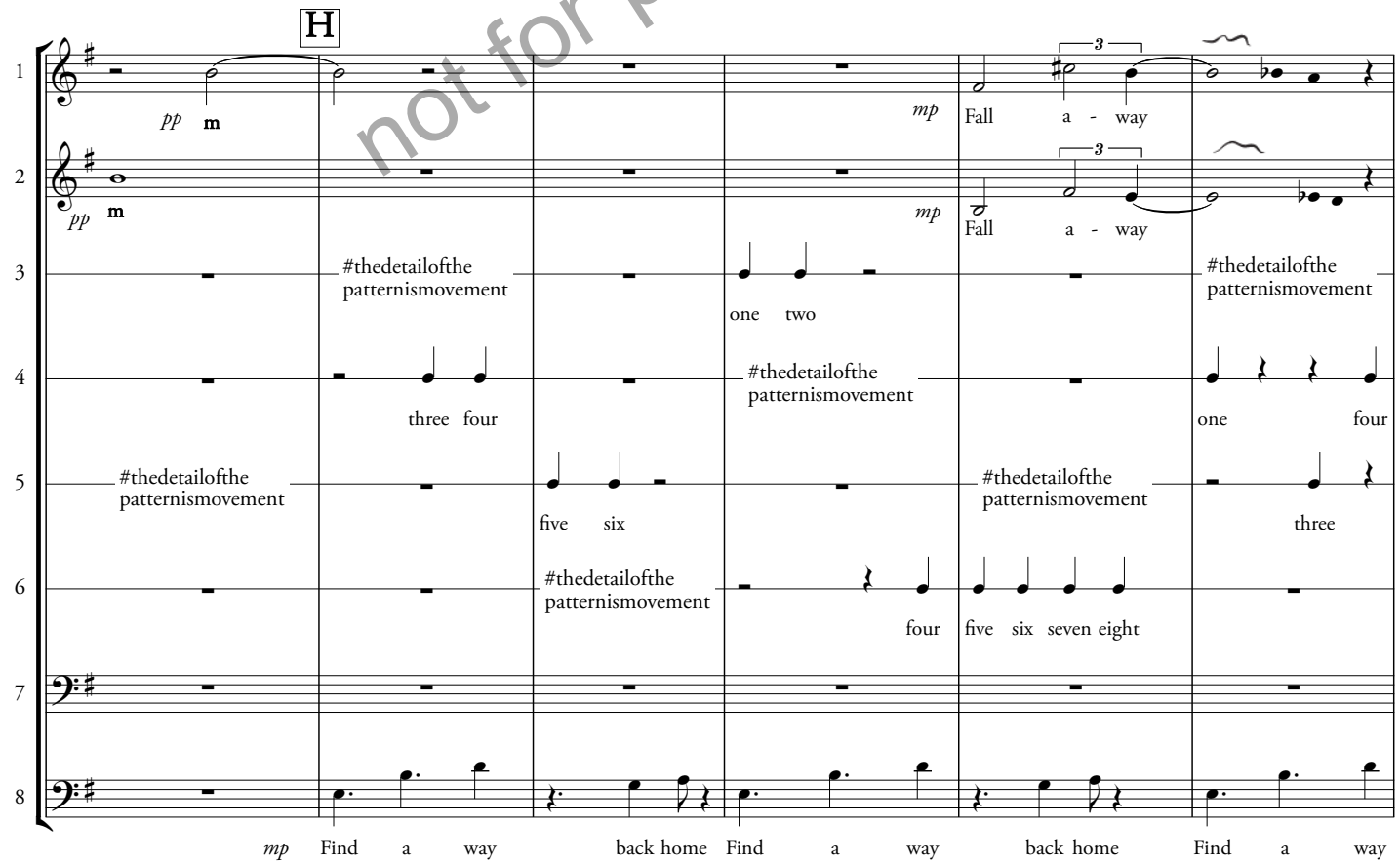

F
mp
p


G
(slide loosely between pitches)
pp mm
(slide loosely between pitches)
pp mm
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
#thedetailofthe patternismovement

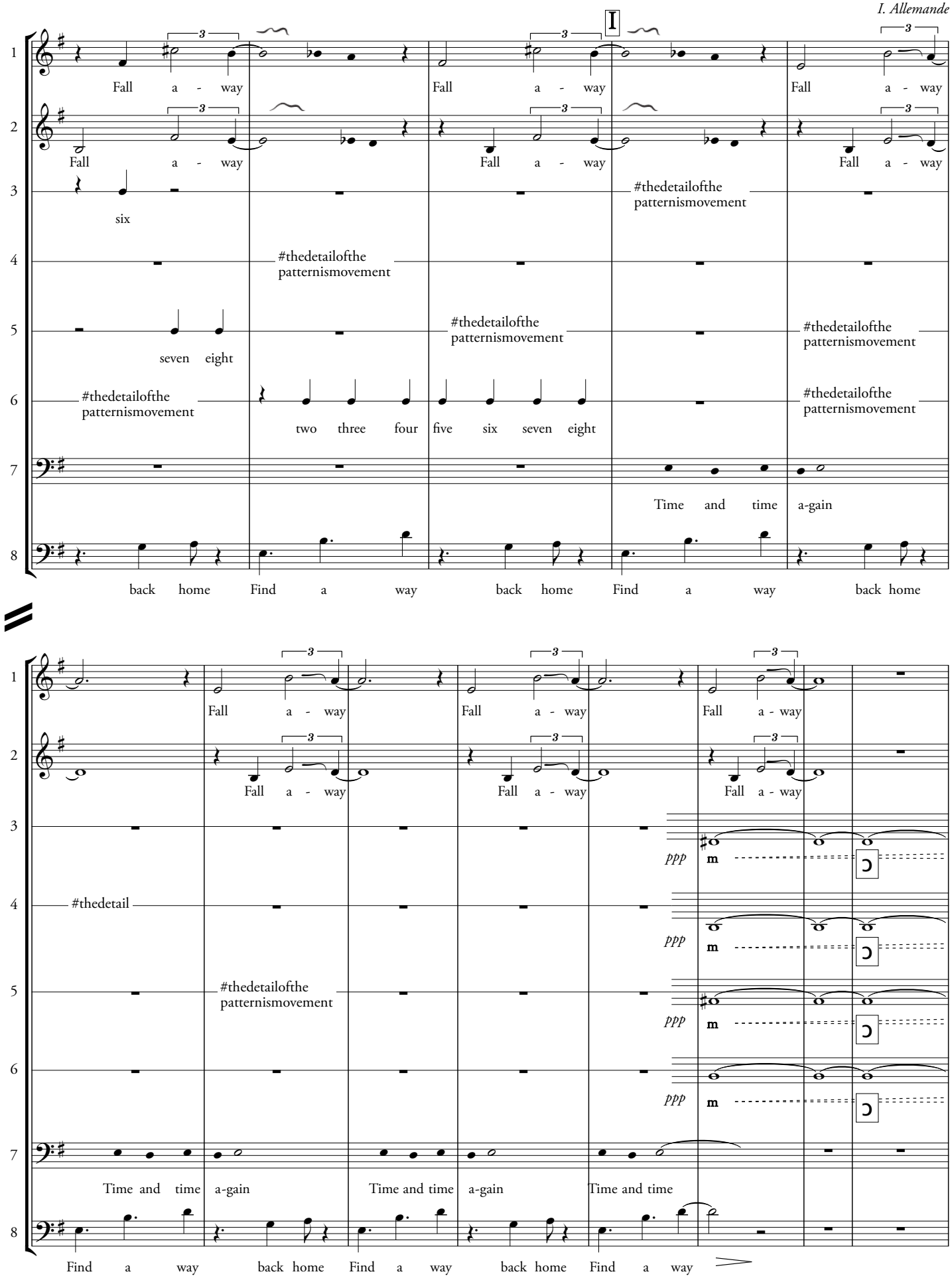
I. Allemande



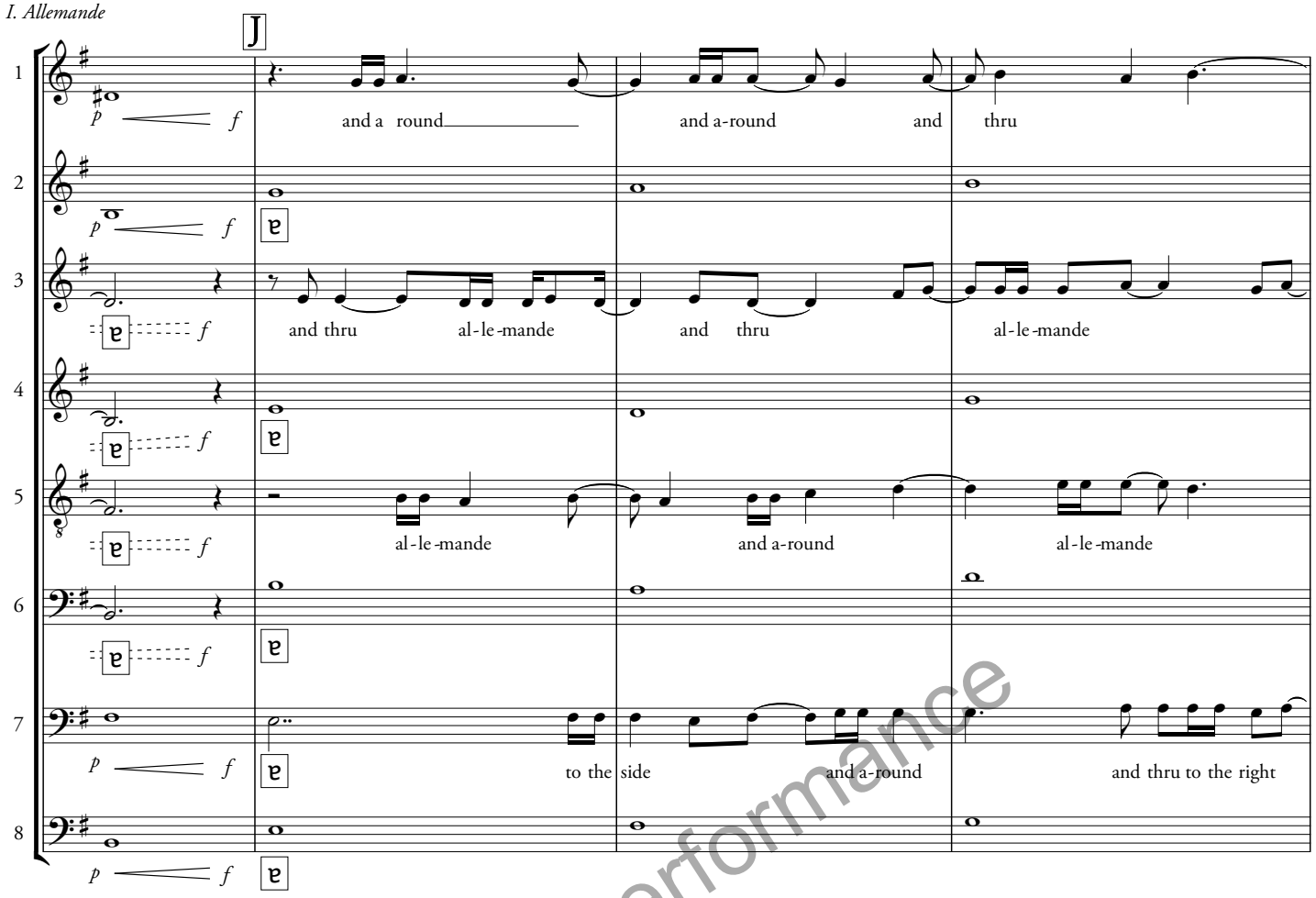
not for performance

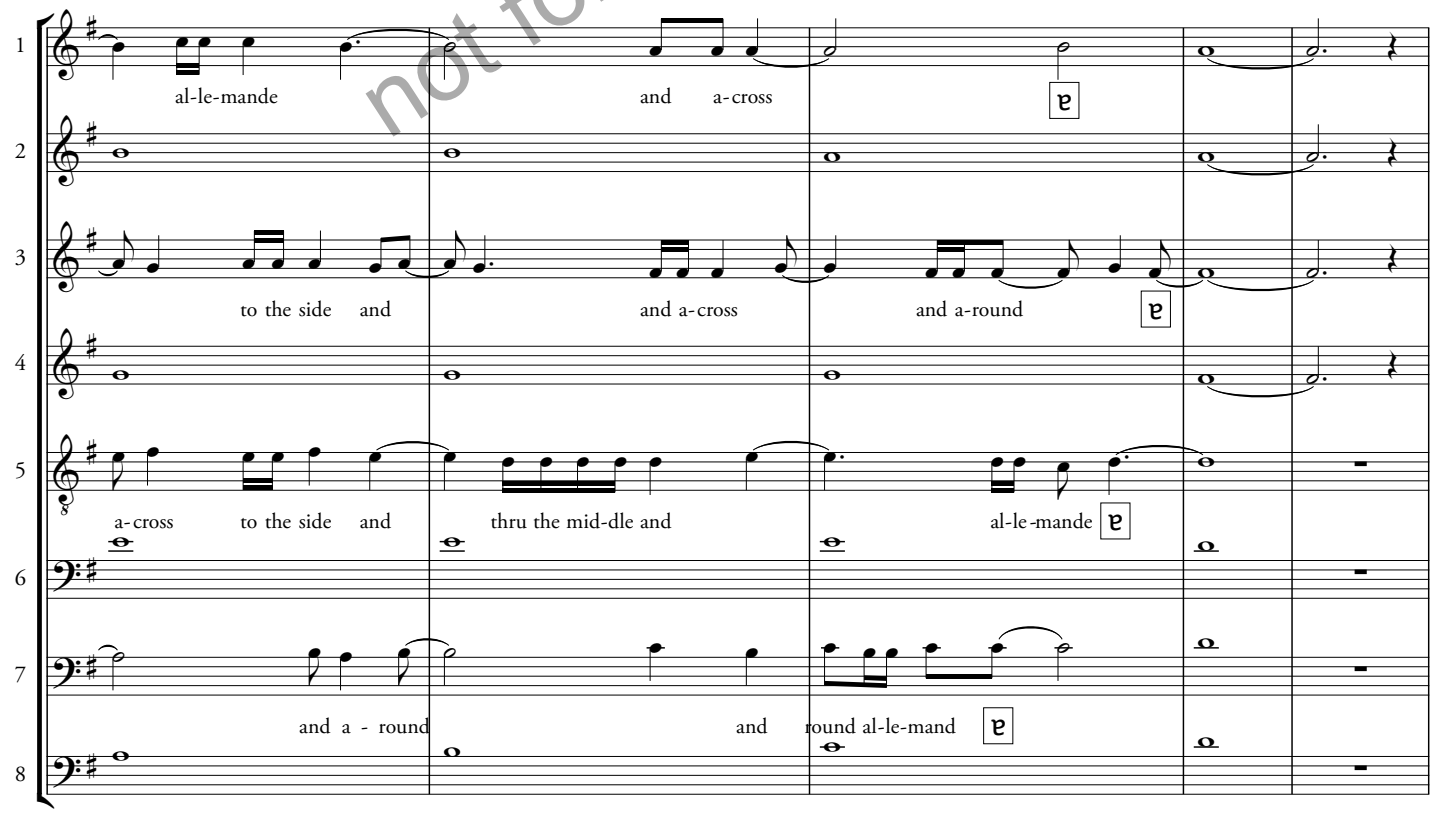


I. Allemande


I
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
six
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
seven eight
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
two three four five six seven eight
Time and time a-gain
back home Find a way back home Find a way back home
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
Fall a - way
ppp
#thedetail
ppp
#thedetailofthe patternismovement
ppp
ppp
Time and time a-gain
Time and time a-gain
Time and time
Find a way back home Find a way back home Find a way

I. Allemande





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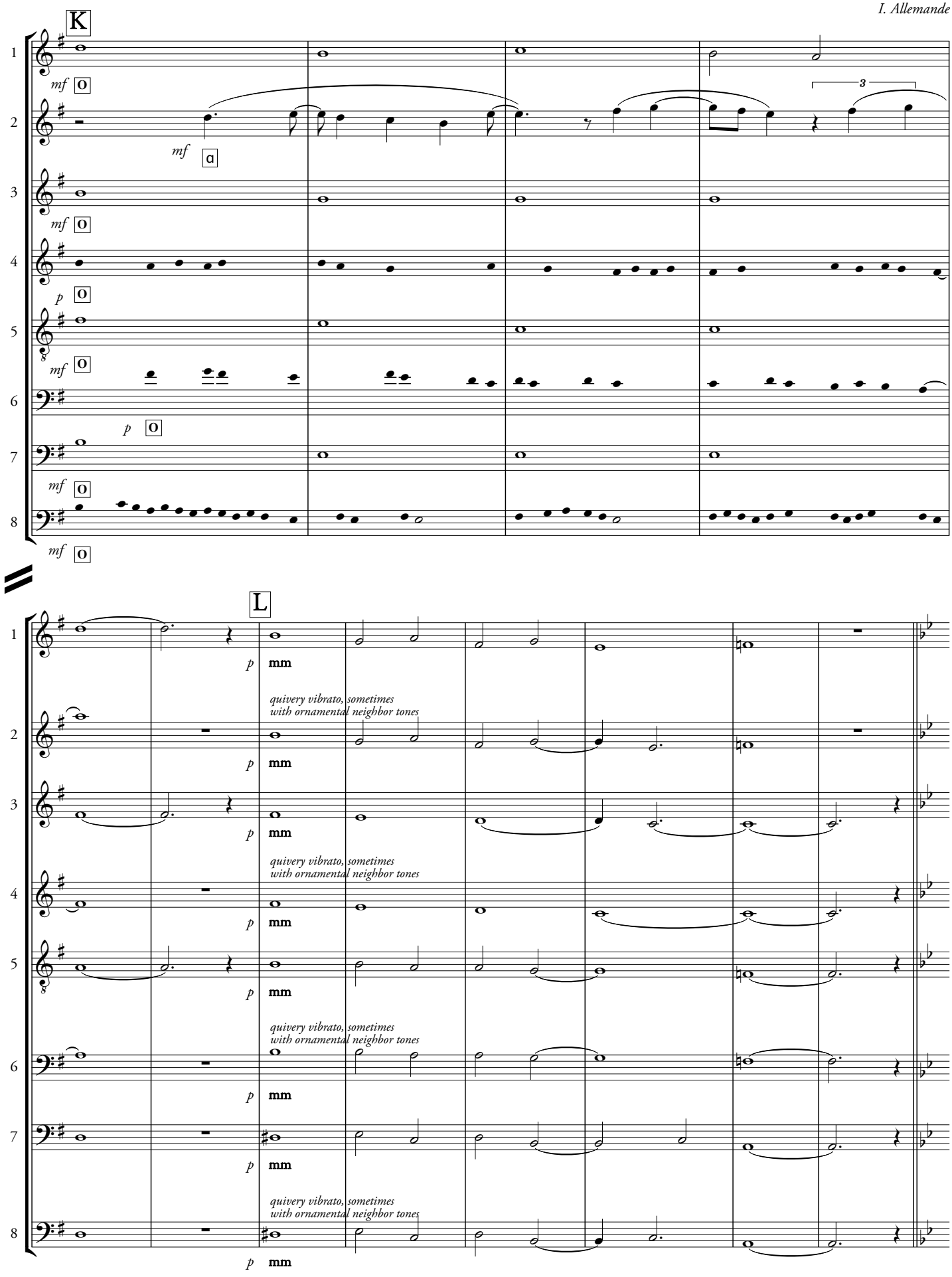
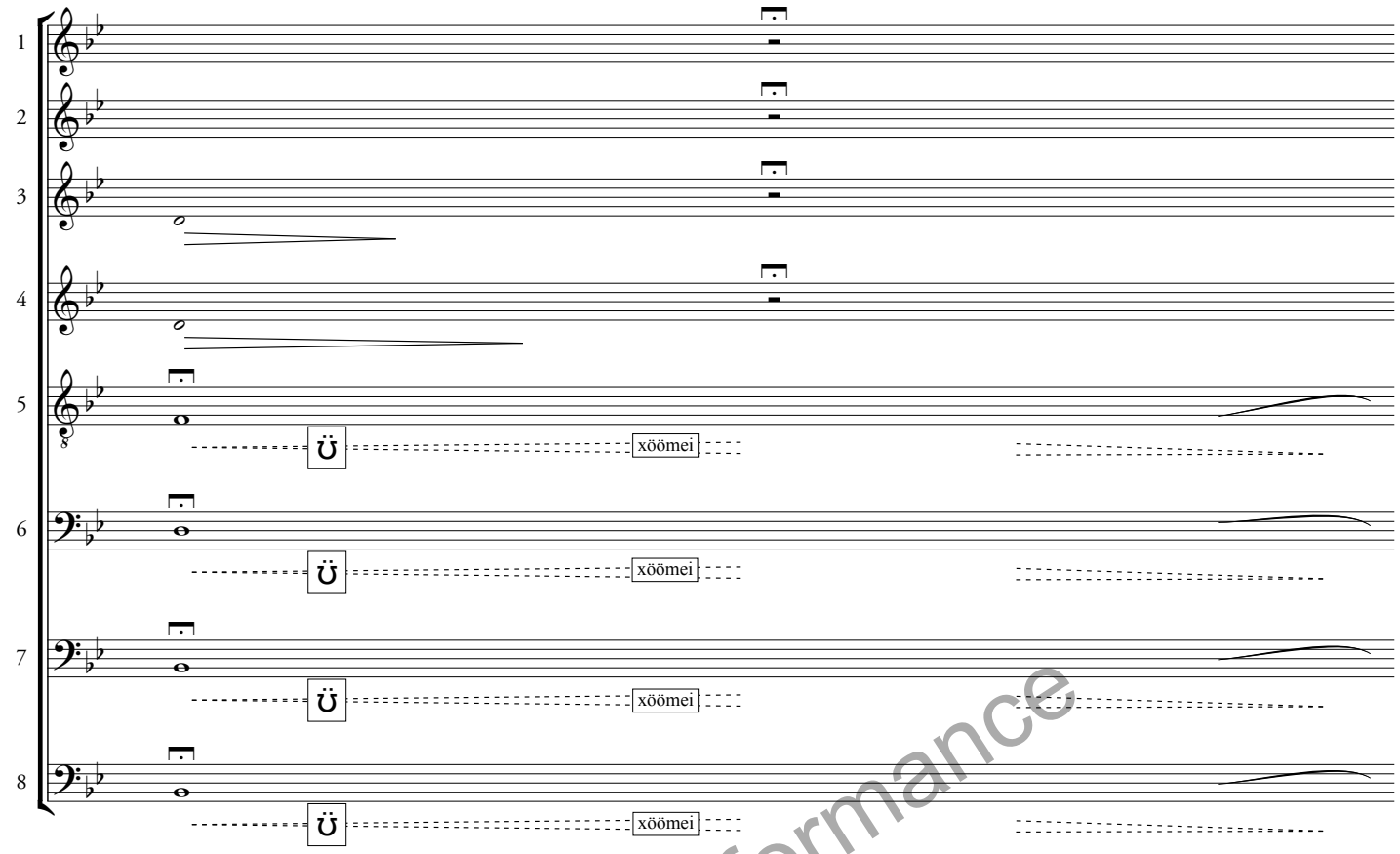
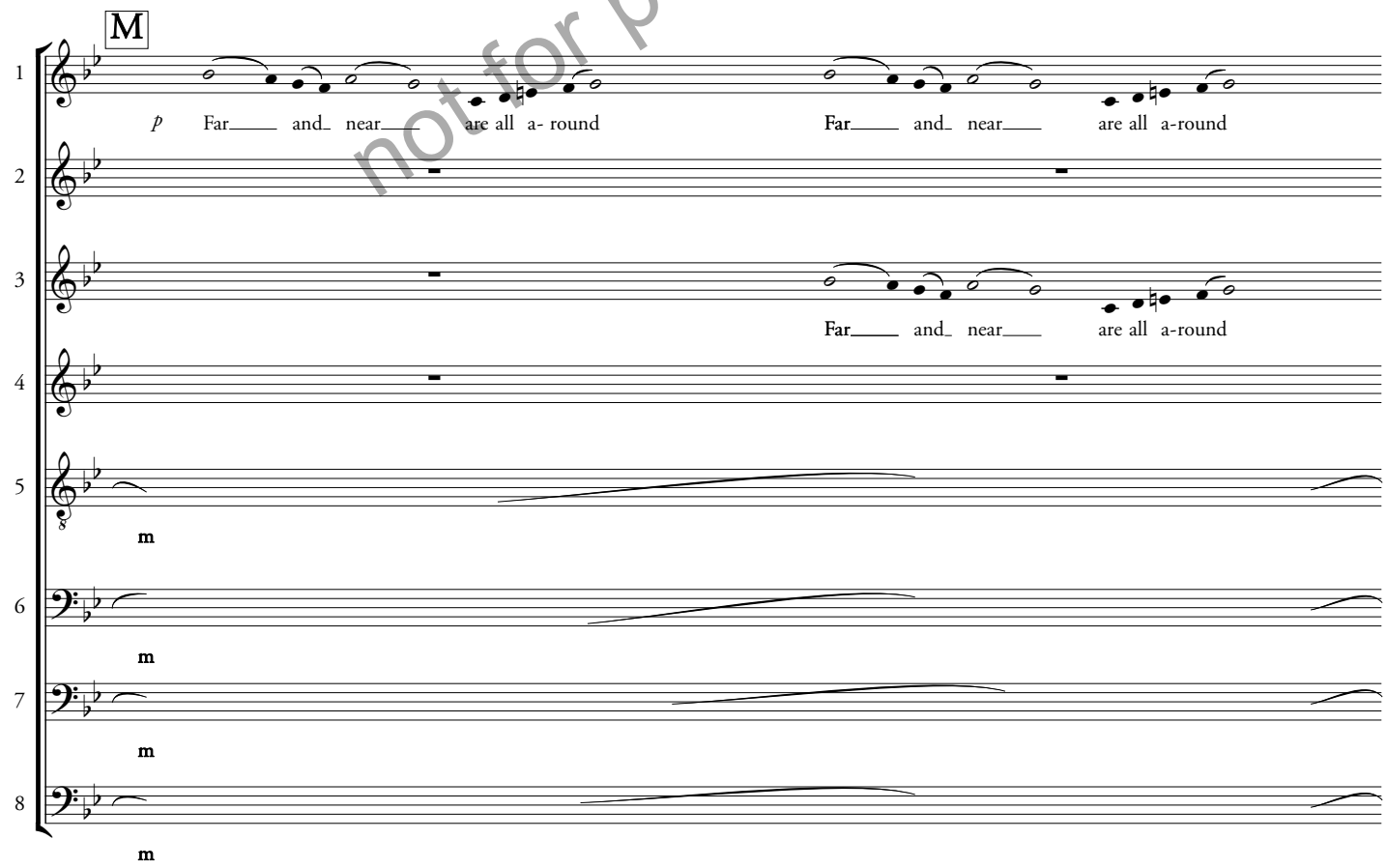

K
L
mf
p
quivery vibrato, sometimes with ornamental neighbor tones
mm

I. Allemande





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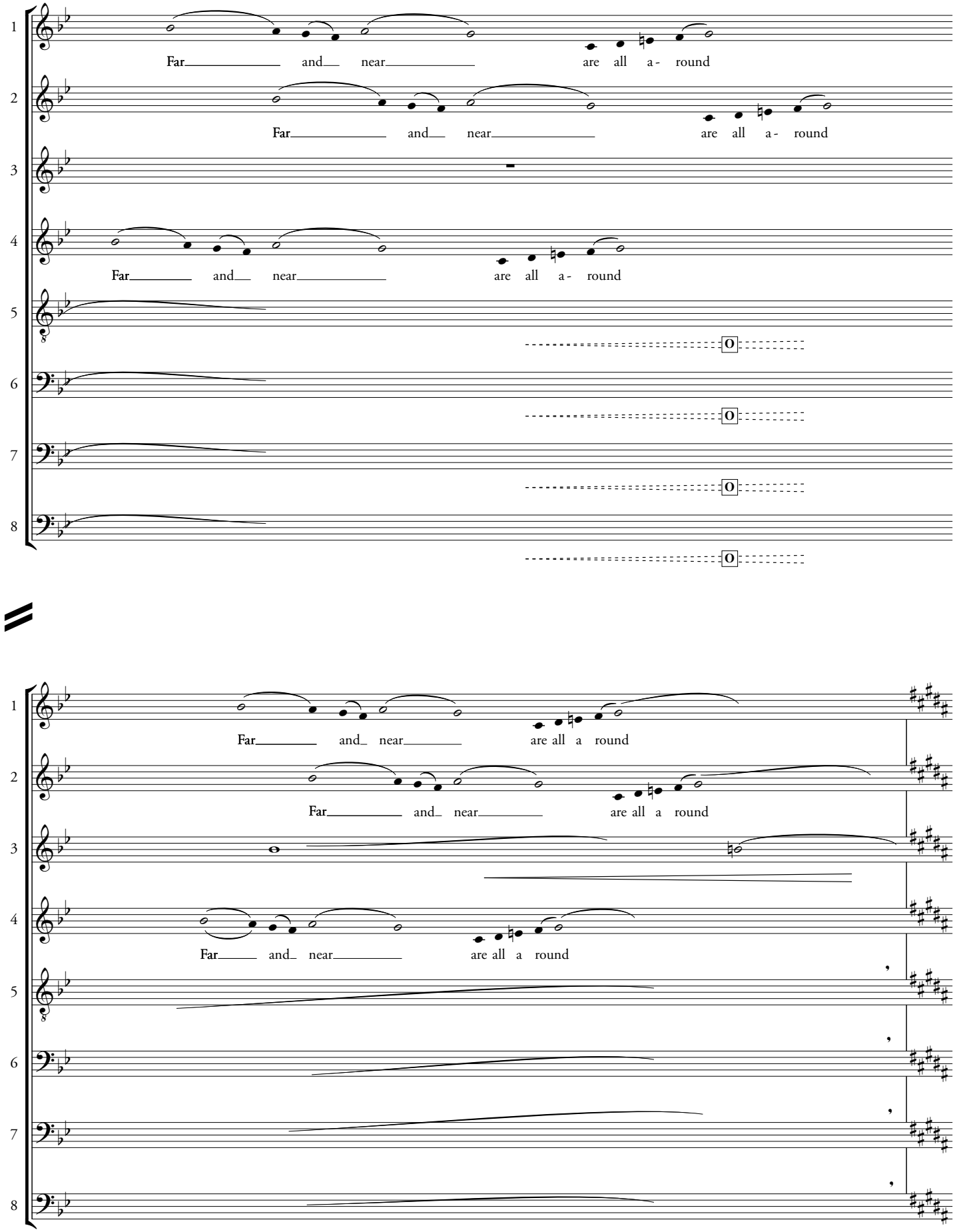
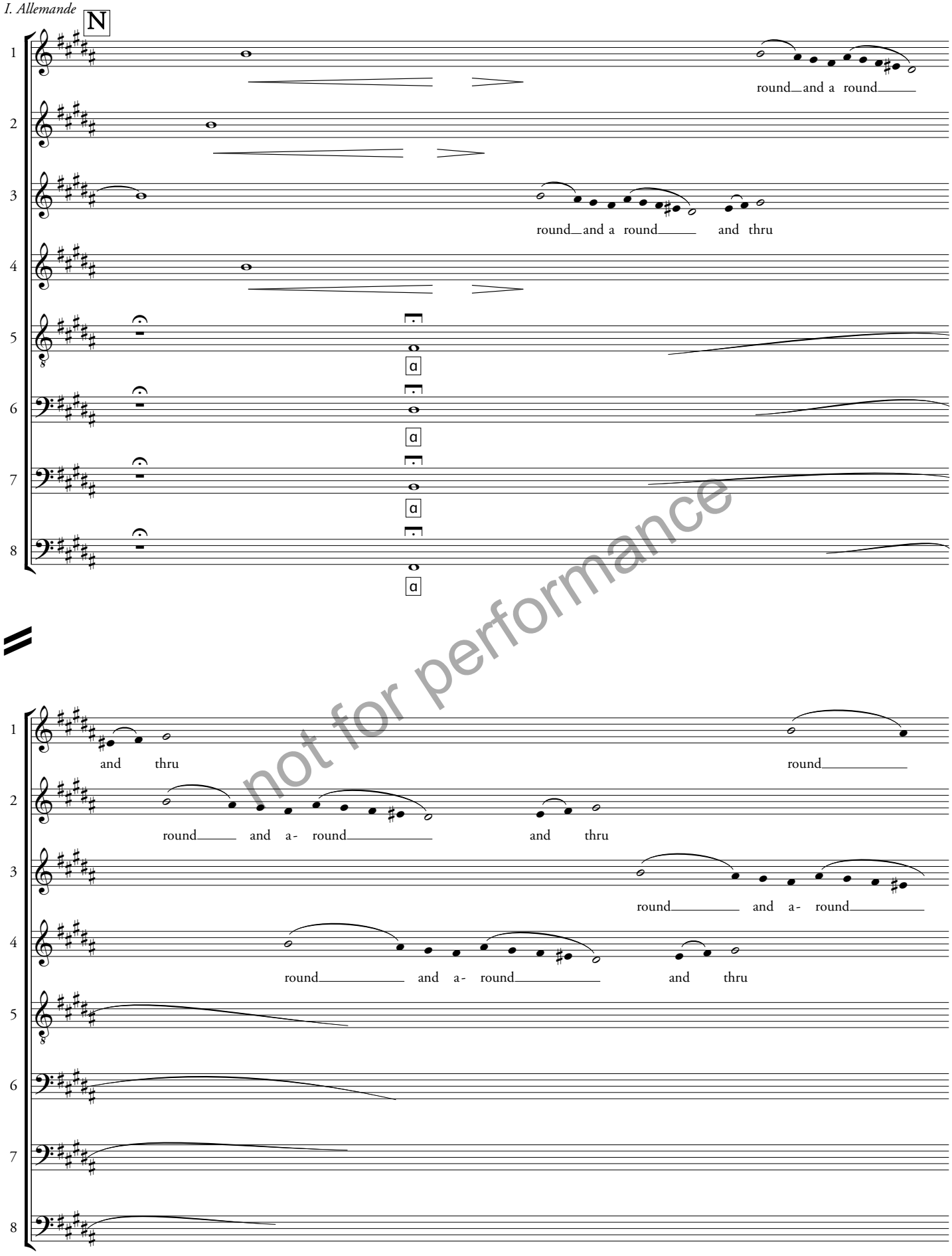

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
Far and near are all a - round
Far and near are all a - round
Far and near are all a - round
Far and near are all a round
Far and near are all a round
Far and near are all a round

I. Allemande



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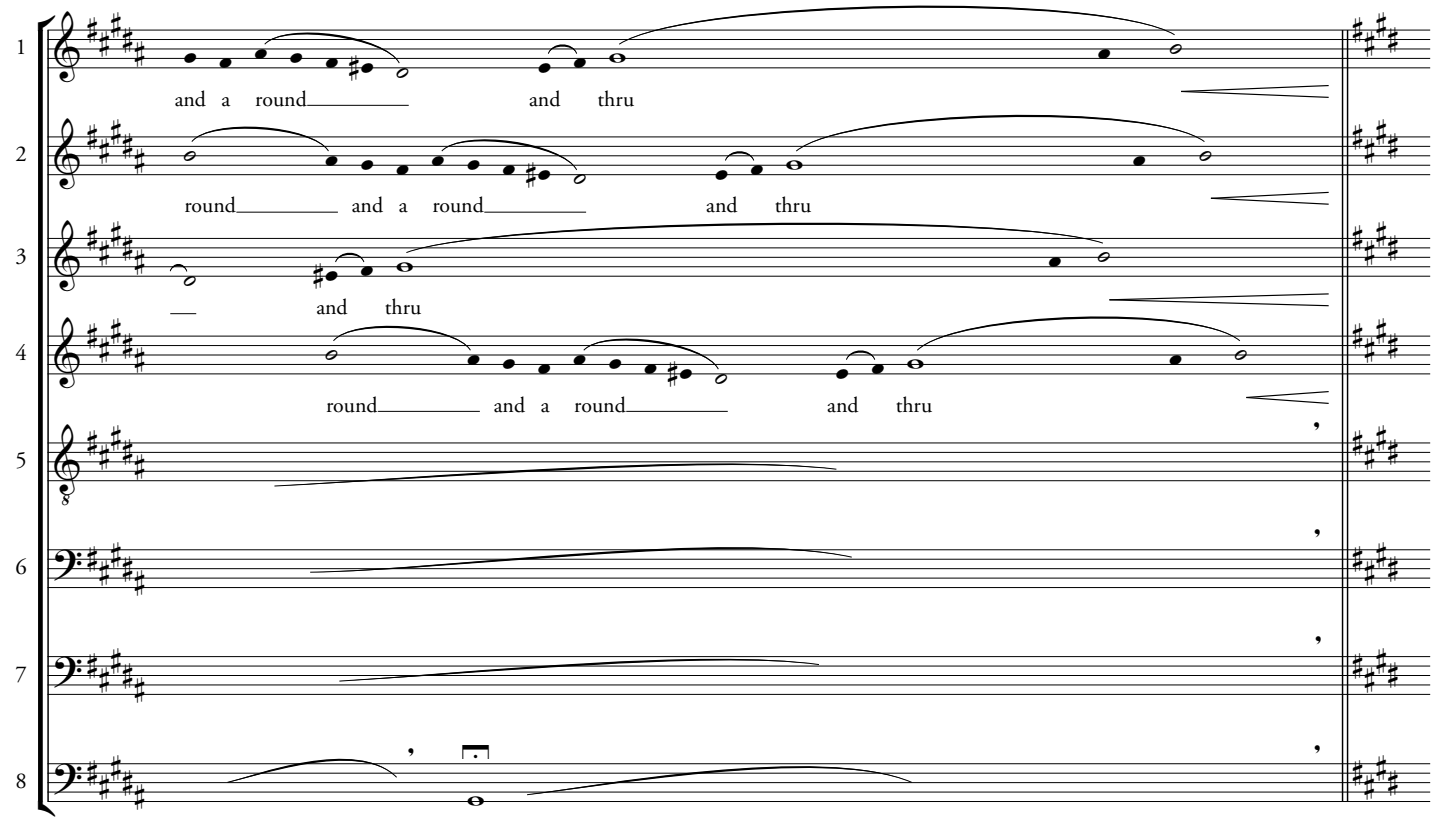
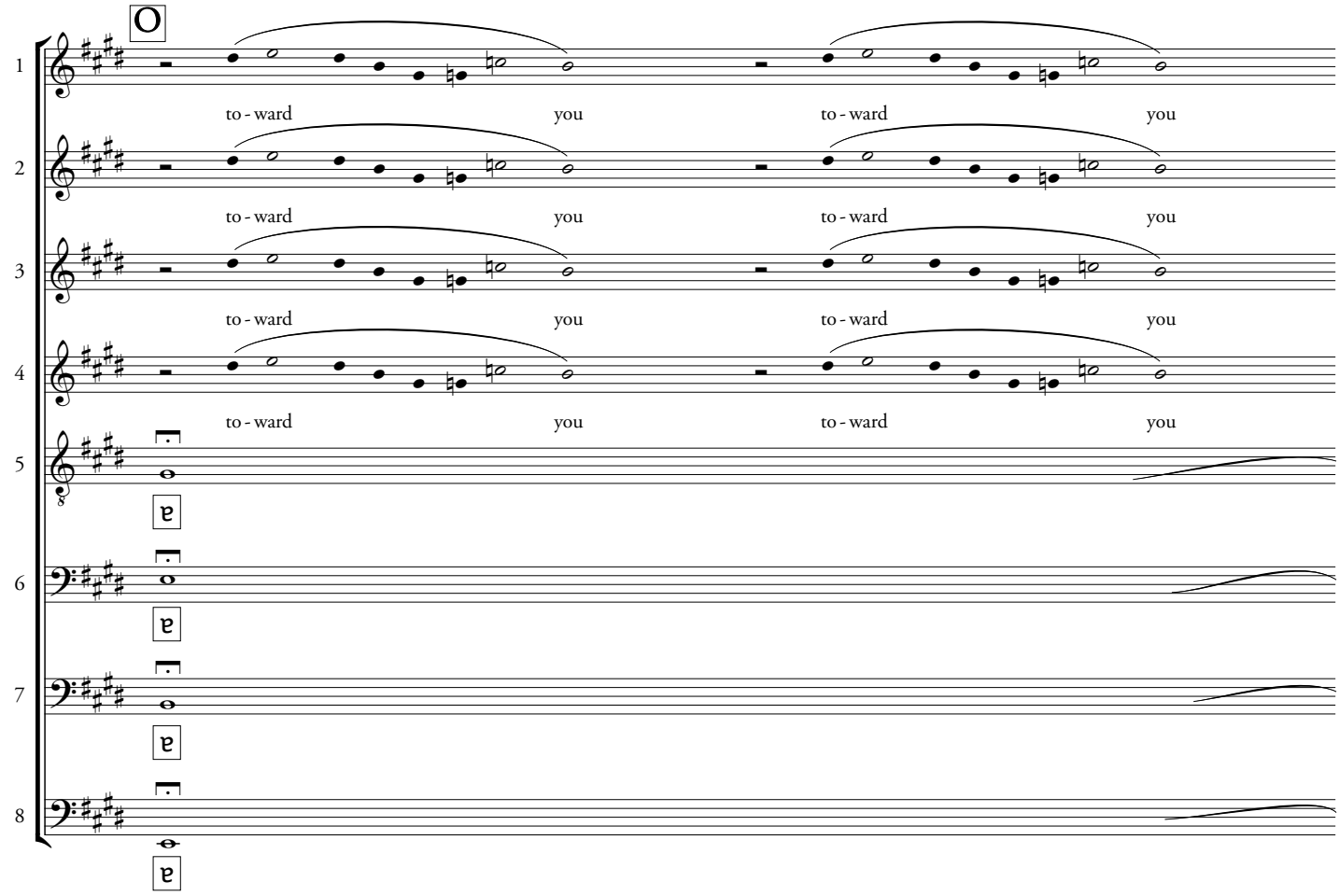
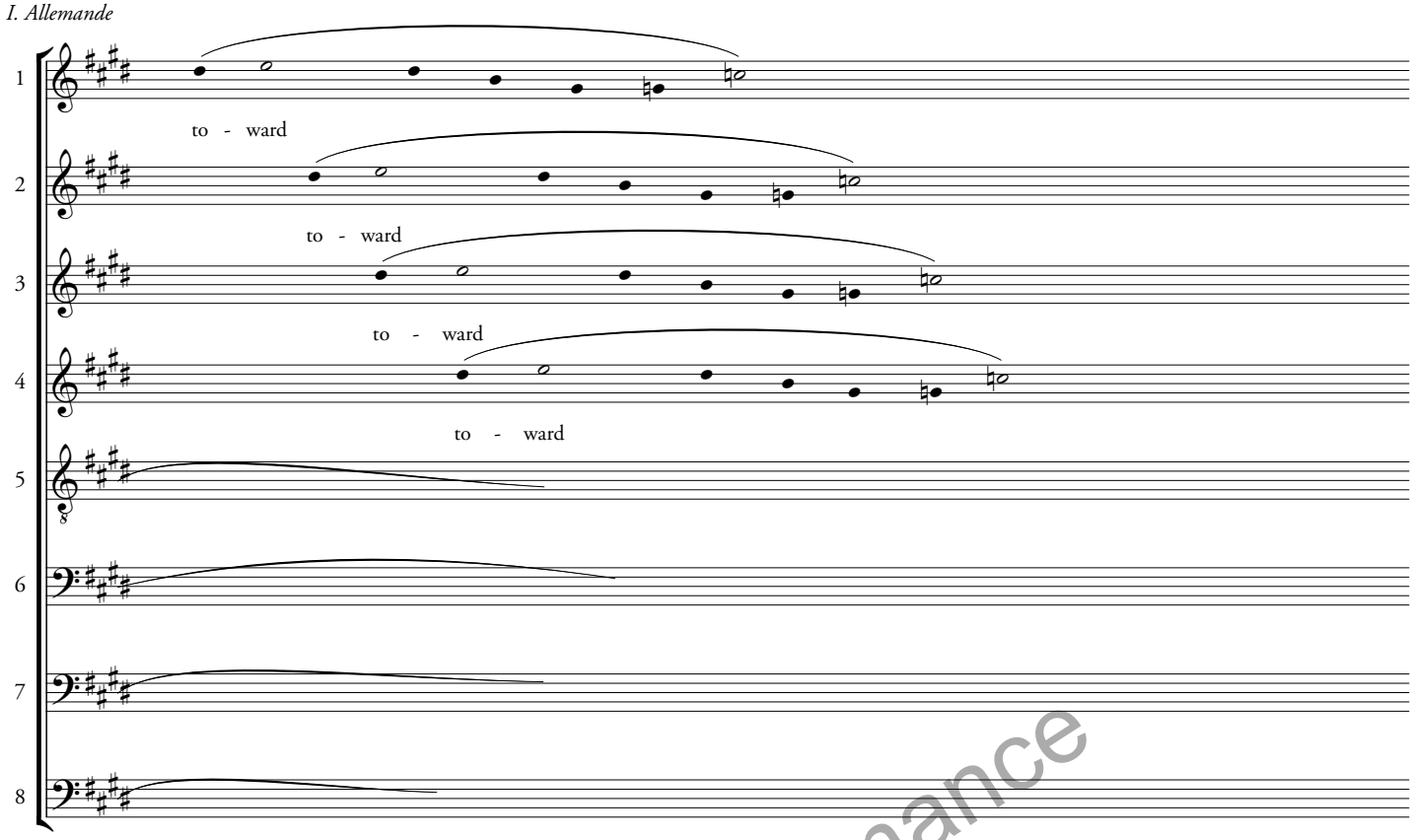
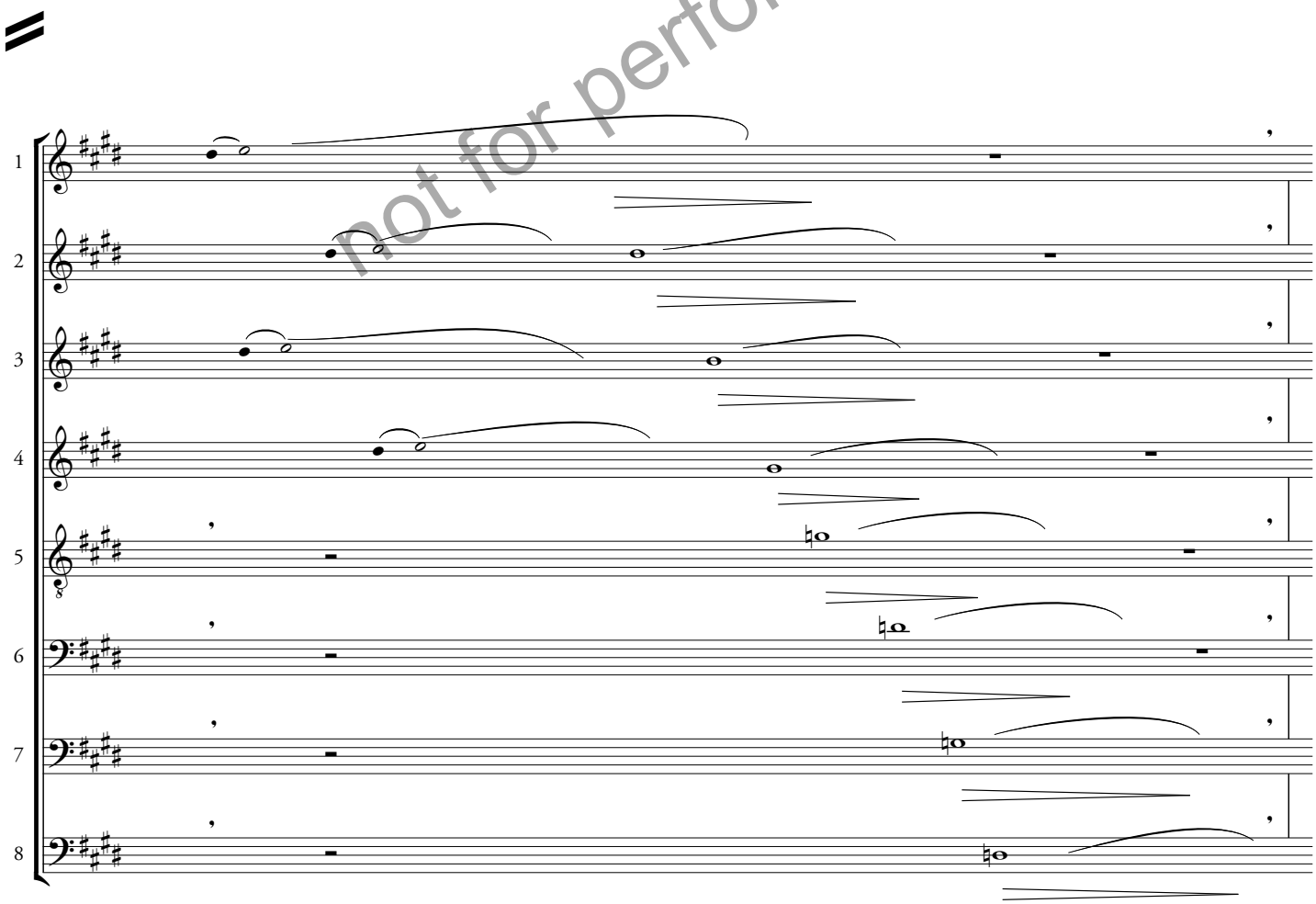

1
and a round and thru
2
round and a round and thru
3
and thru
4
round and a round and thru
5
6
7
8

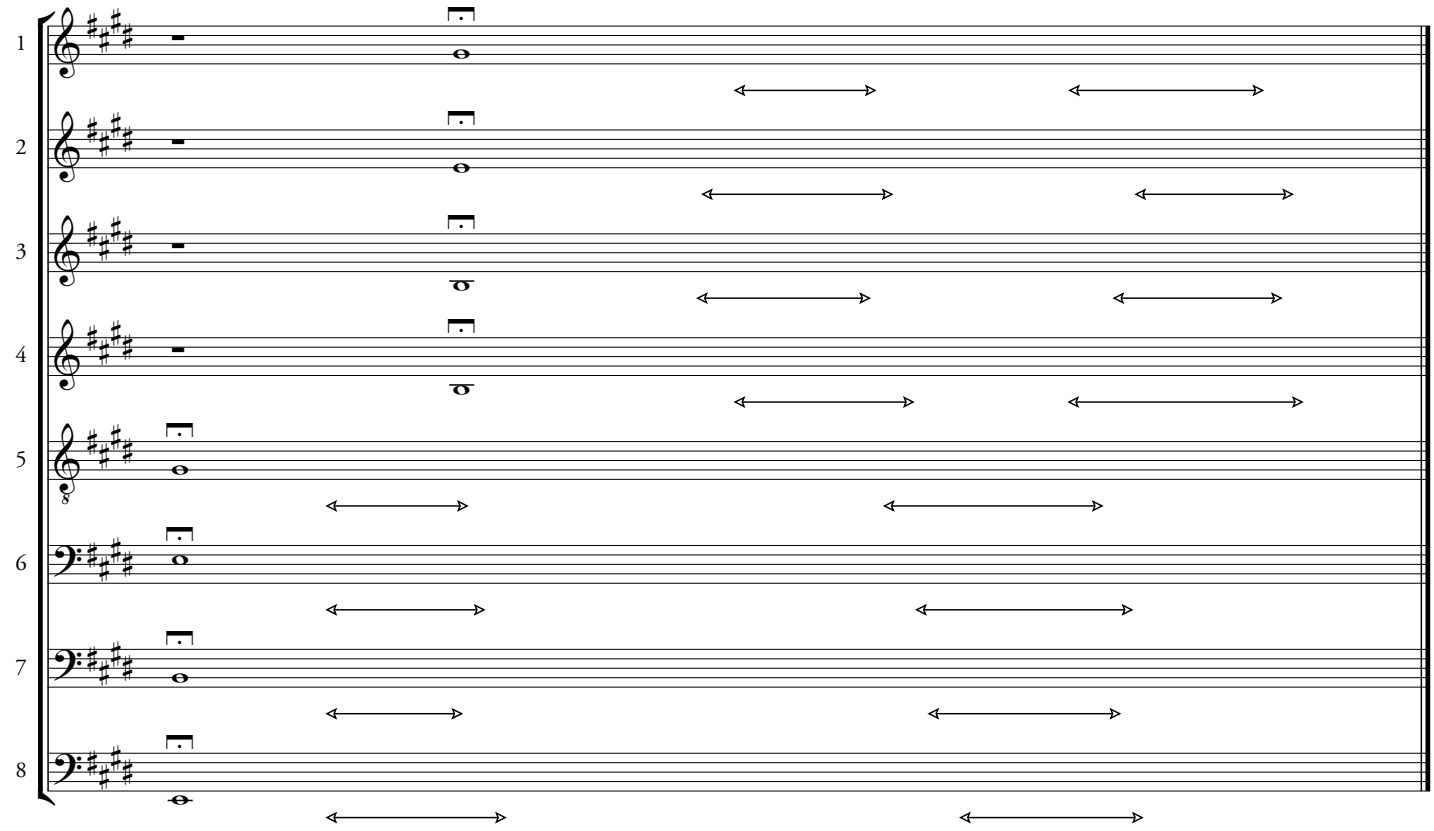

O
1
to - ward you to - ward you
2
to - ward you to - ward you
3
to - ward you to - ward you
4
to - ward you to - ward you
5
a
6
a
7
a
8
a

I. Allemande

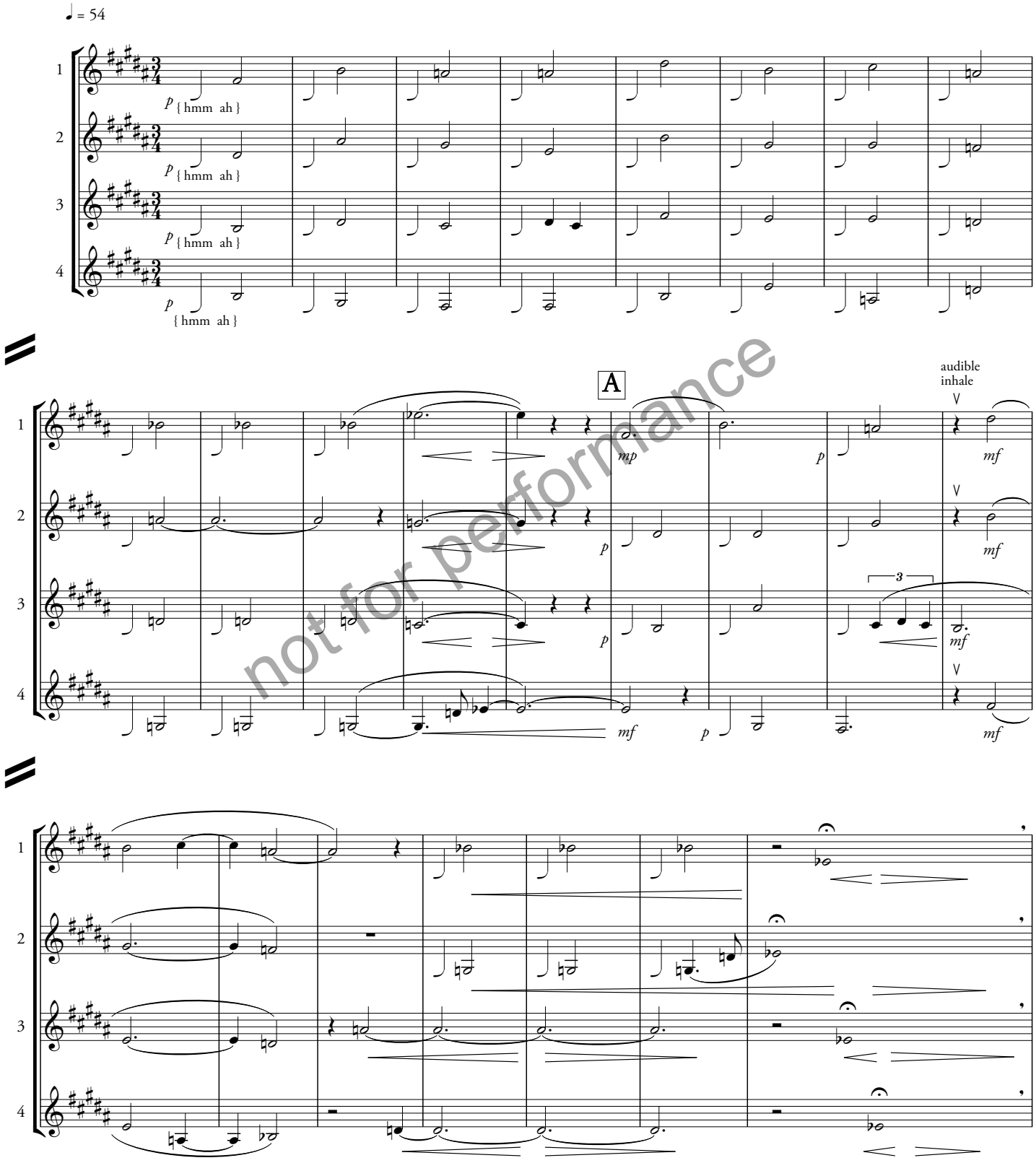




not for performance


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

II. Sarabande



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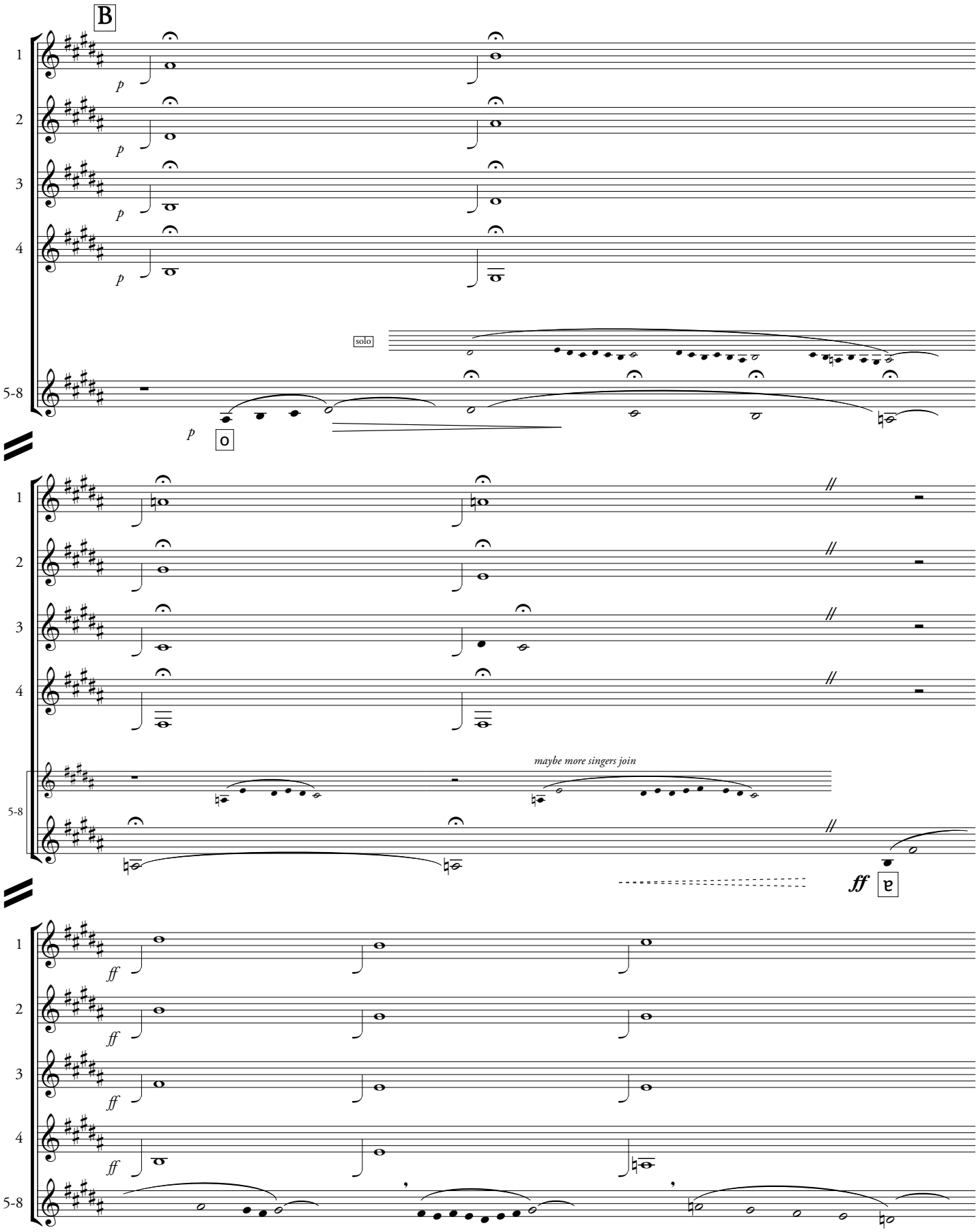
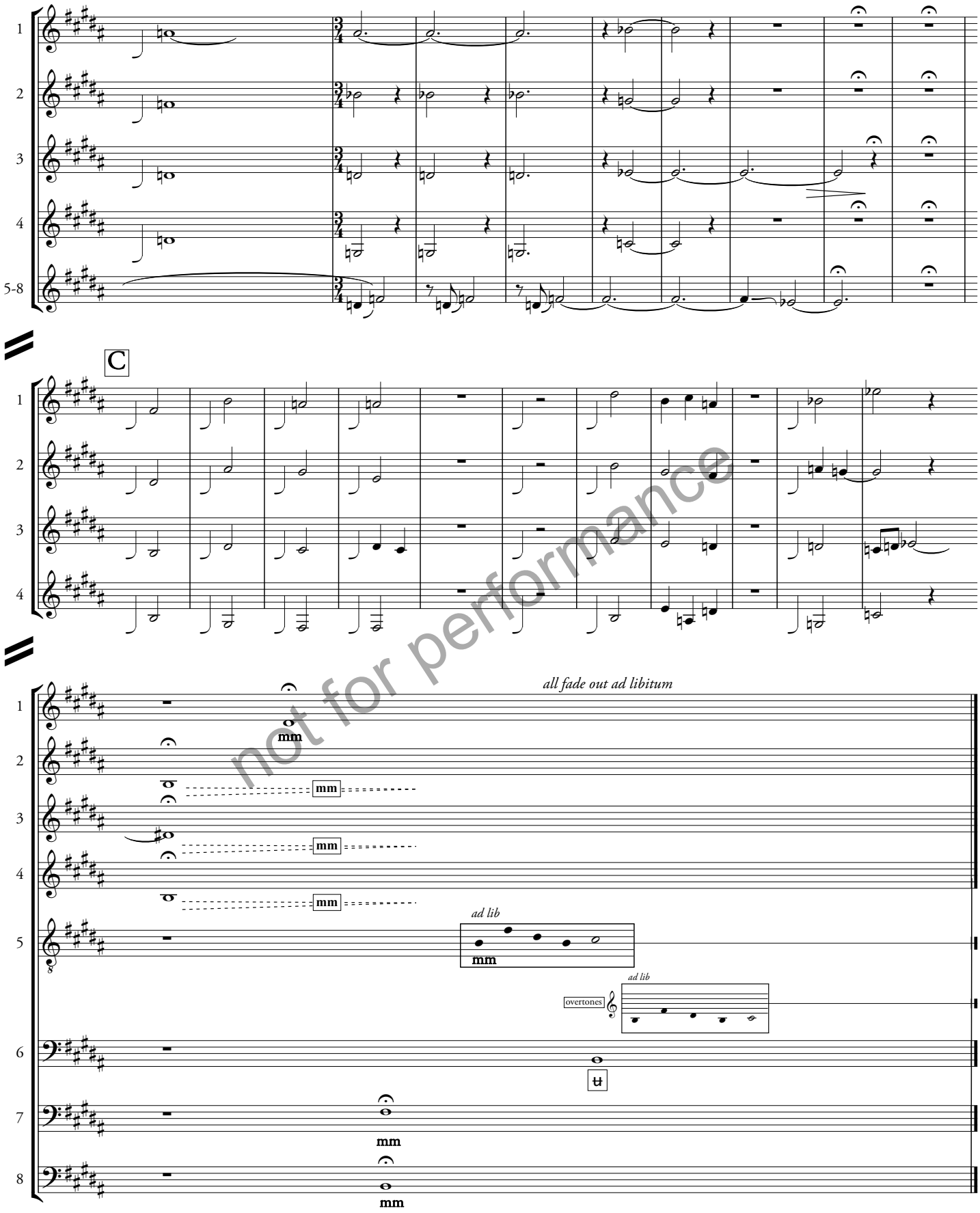
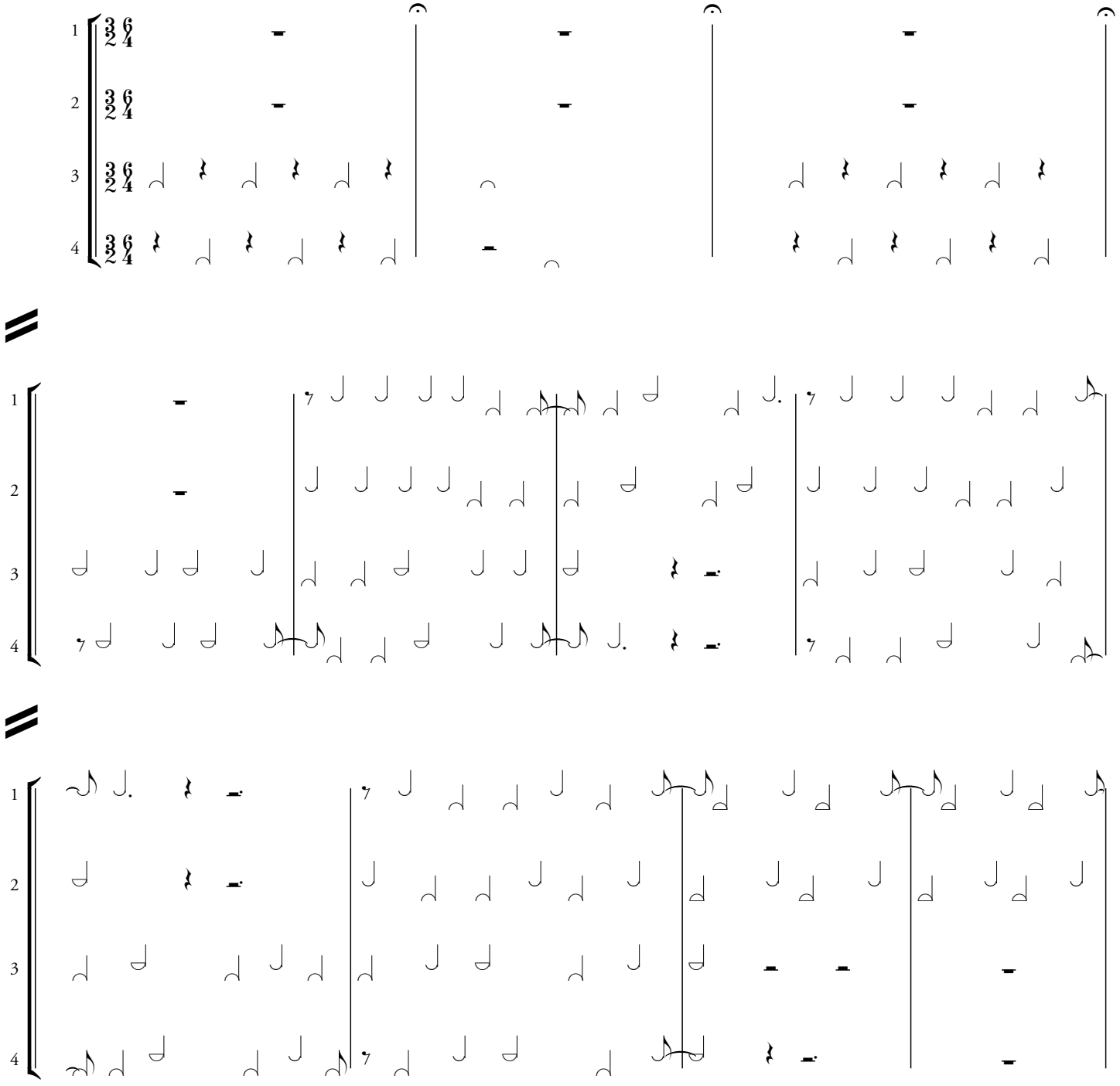

B
1
2
3
4
p
p
p
p
solo
5-8
p
o
maybe more singers join
ff
a
ff
ff
ff
ff

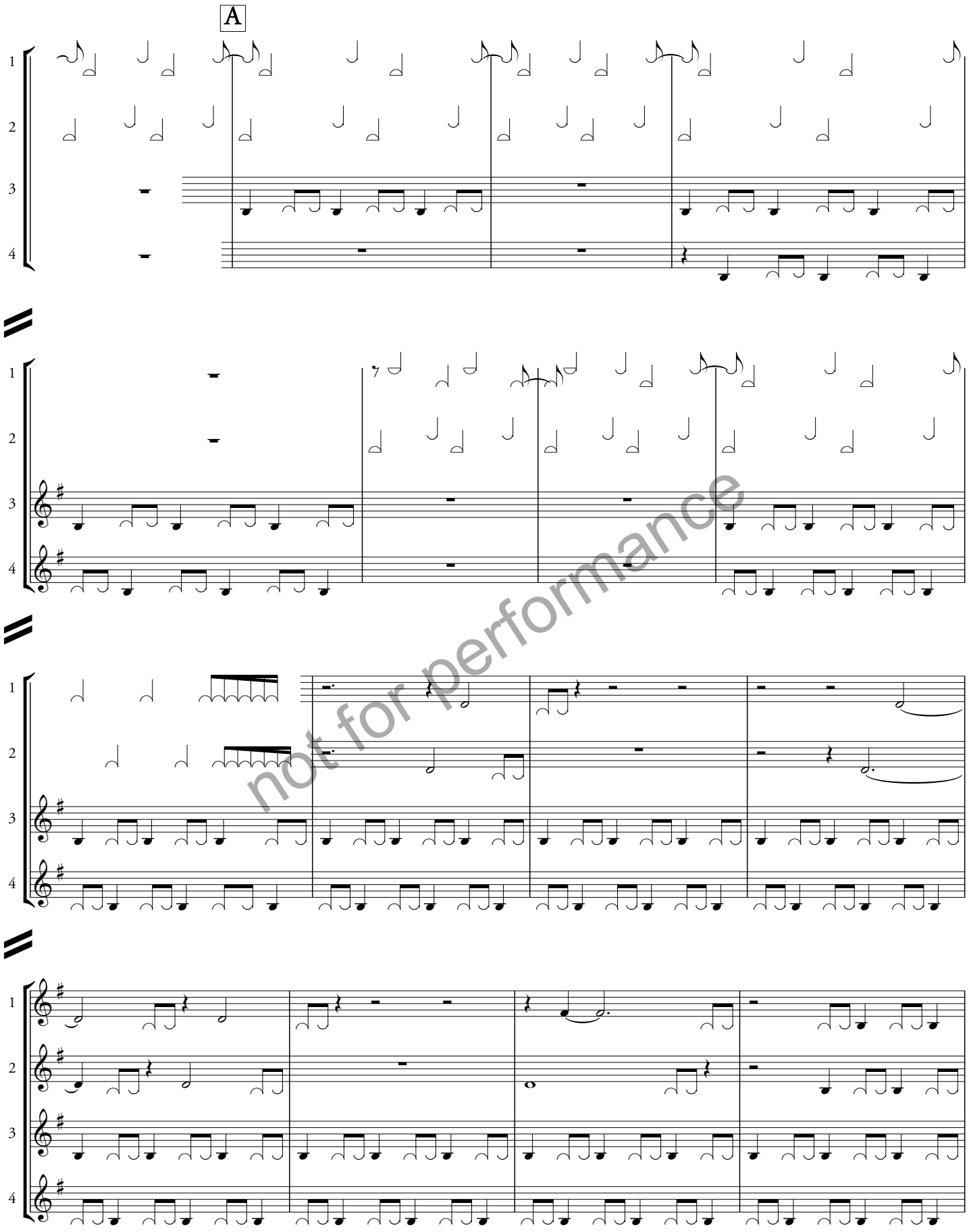


not for performance

III. Courante

♩. = 146 *silk shoes gliding over marble mosaic*





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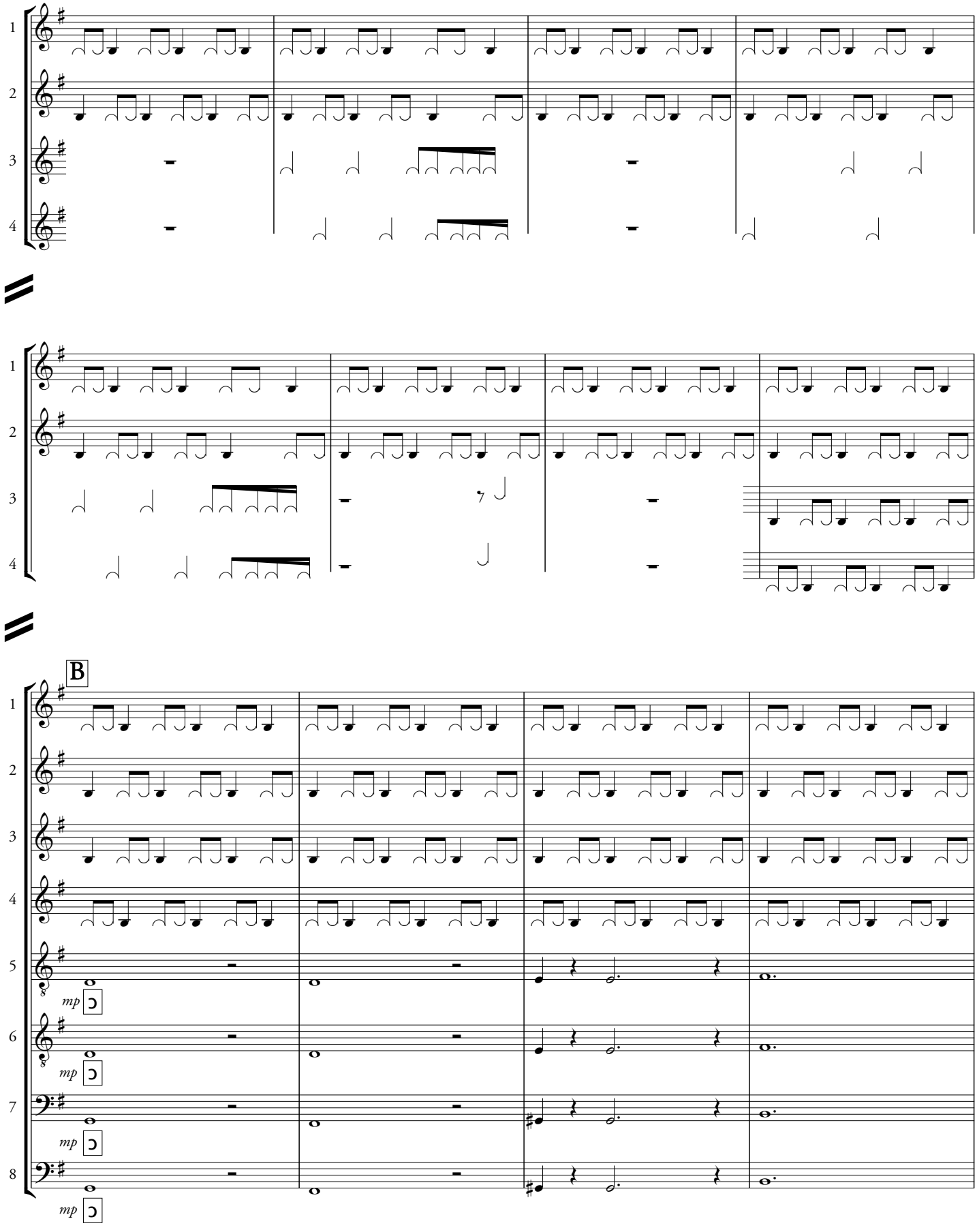
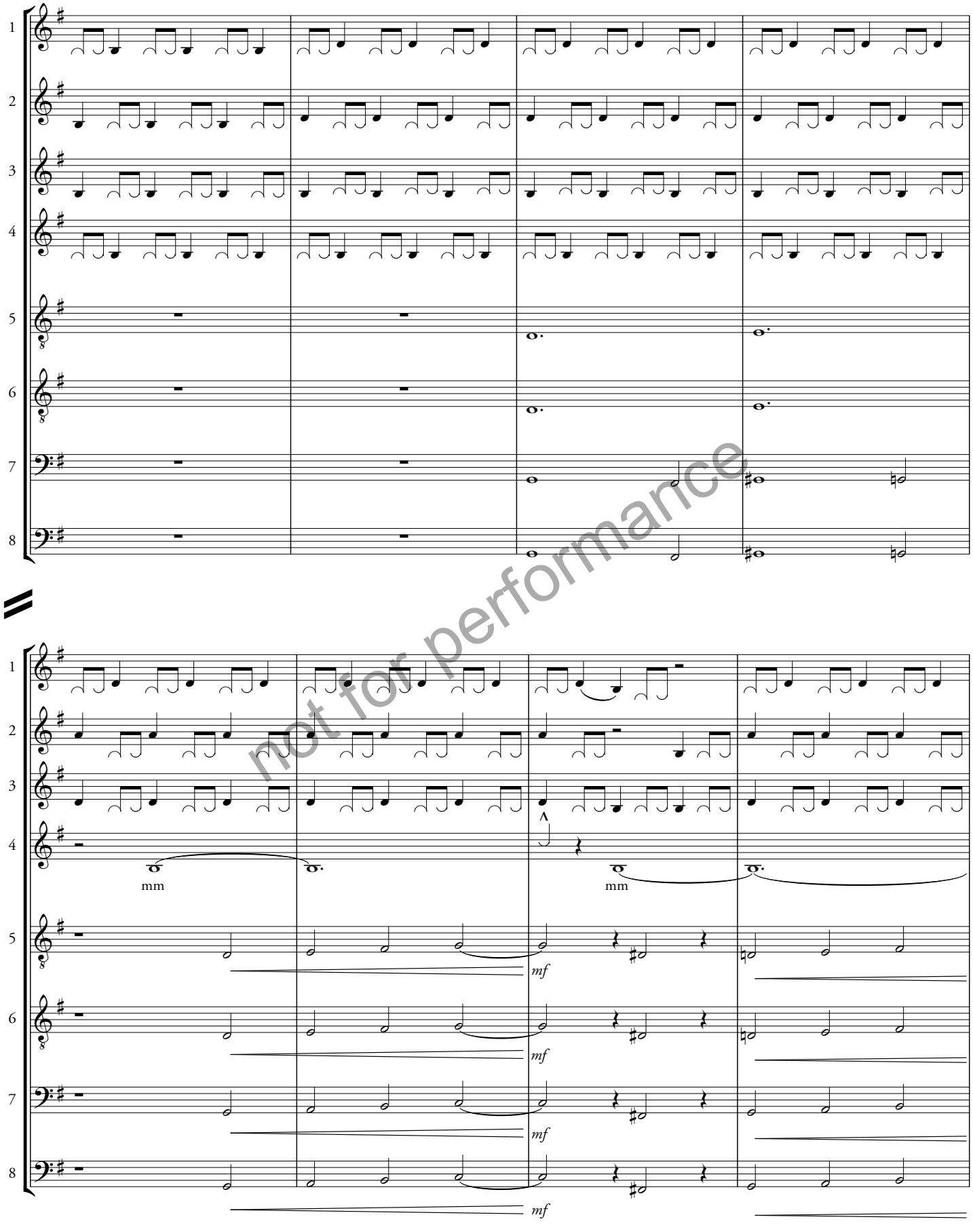

1
2
3
4
B
mp
mp
mp
mp



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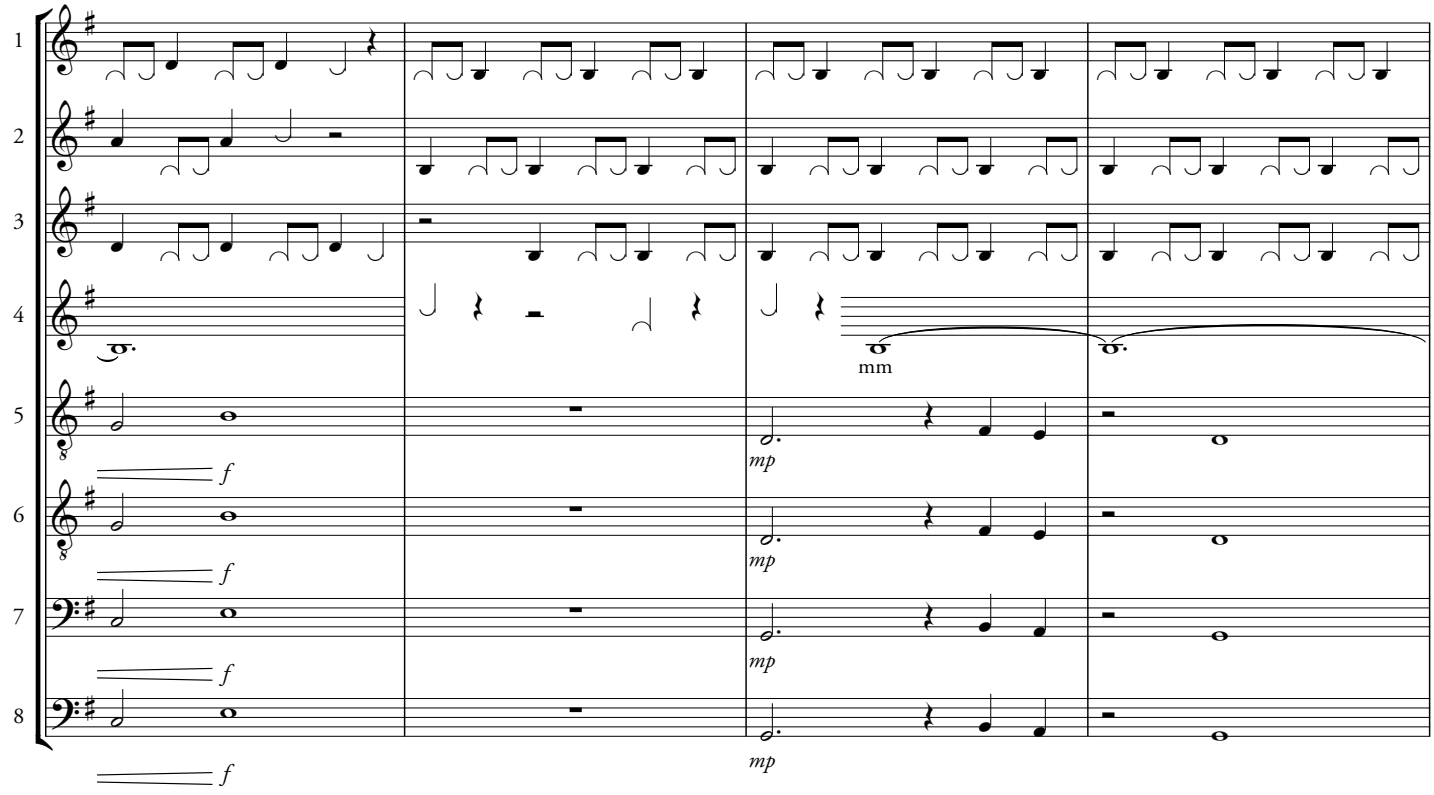
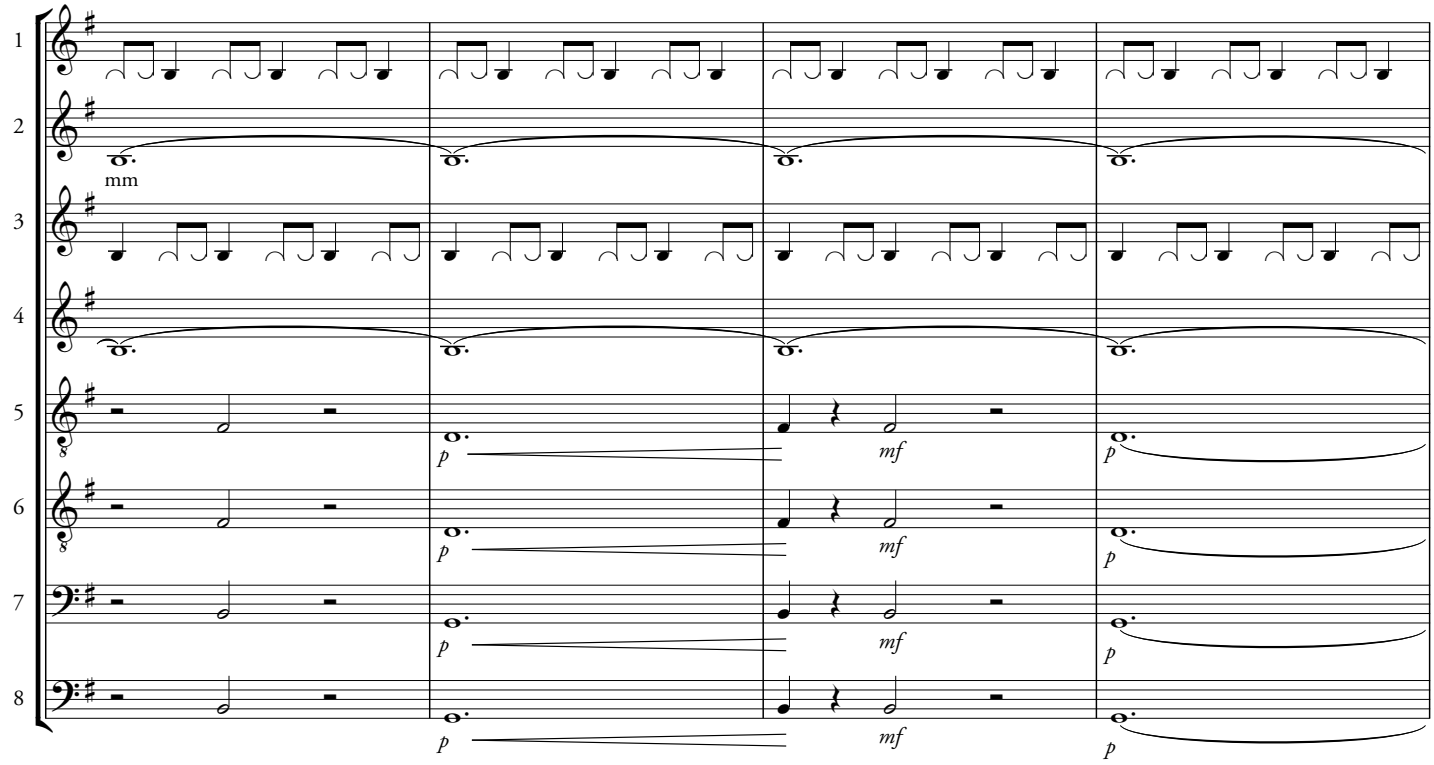
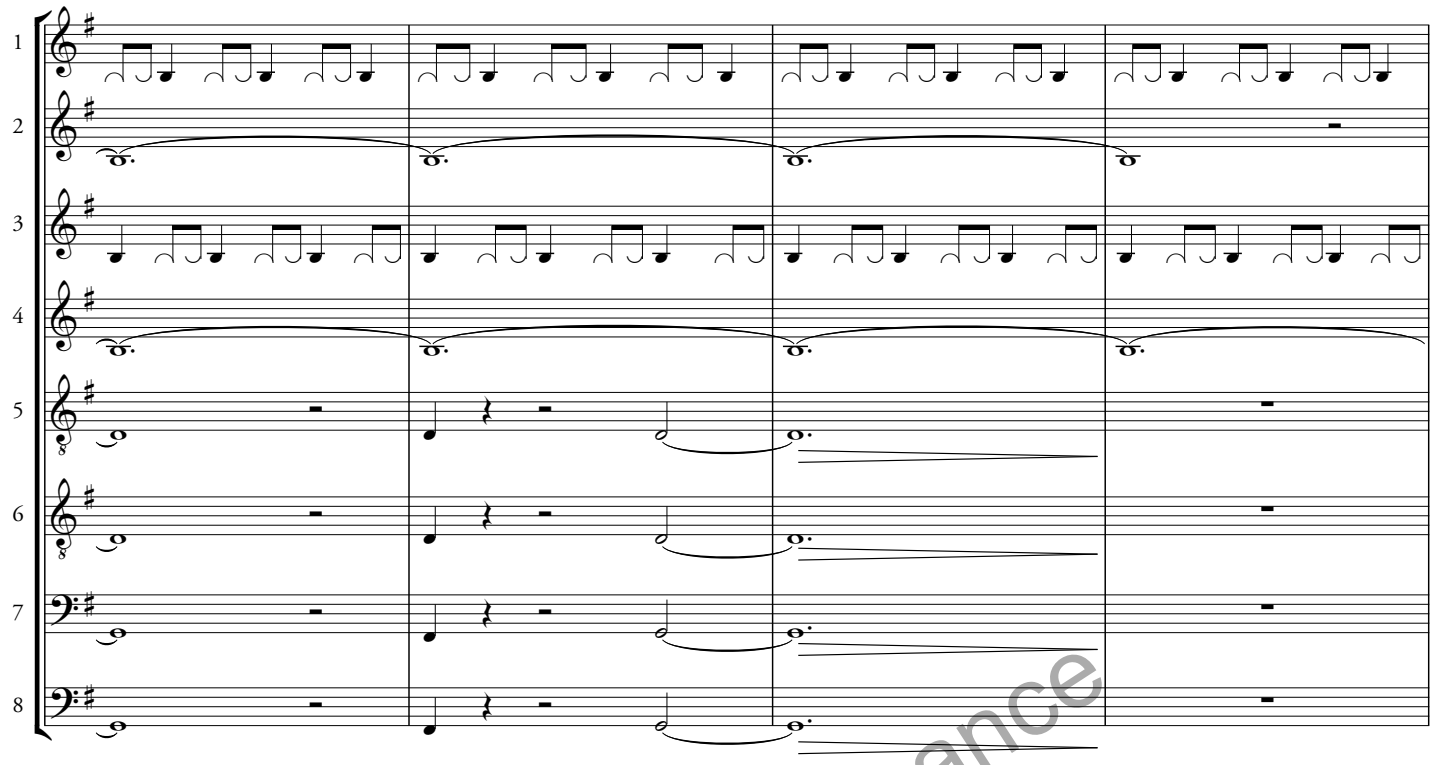
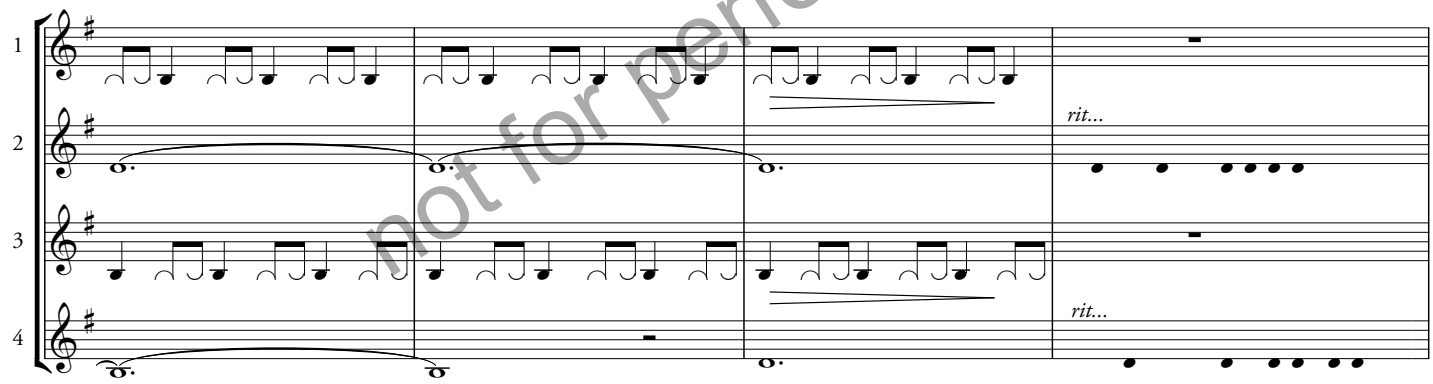
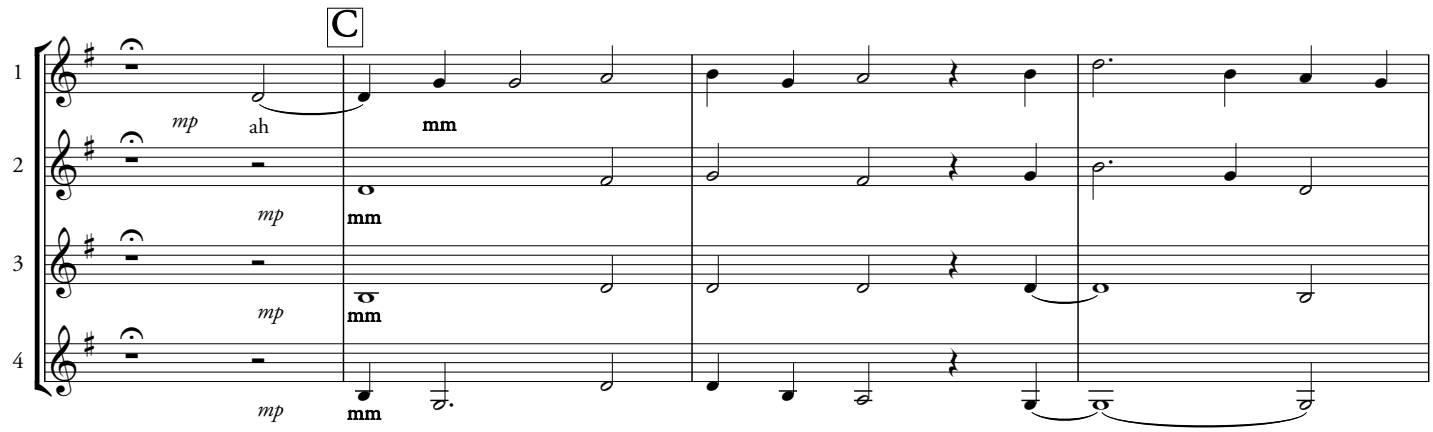

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mm
f
mp


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mm
p
mf







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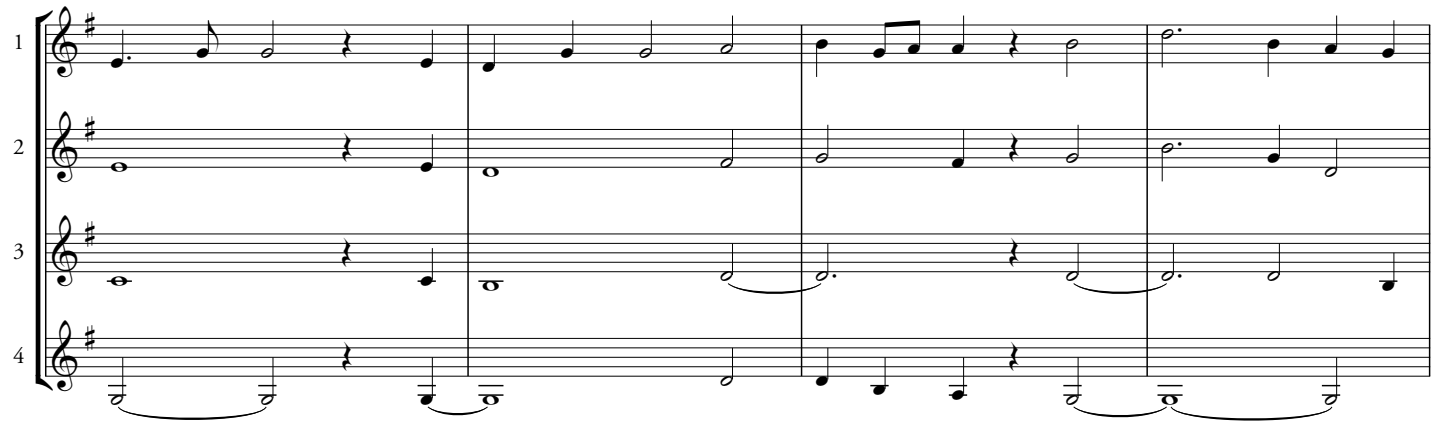
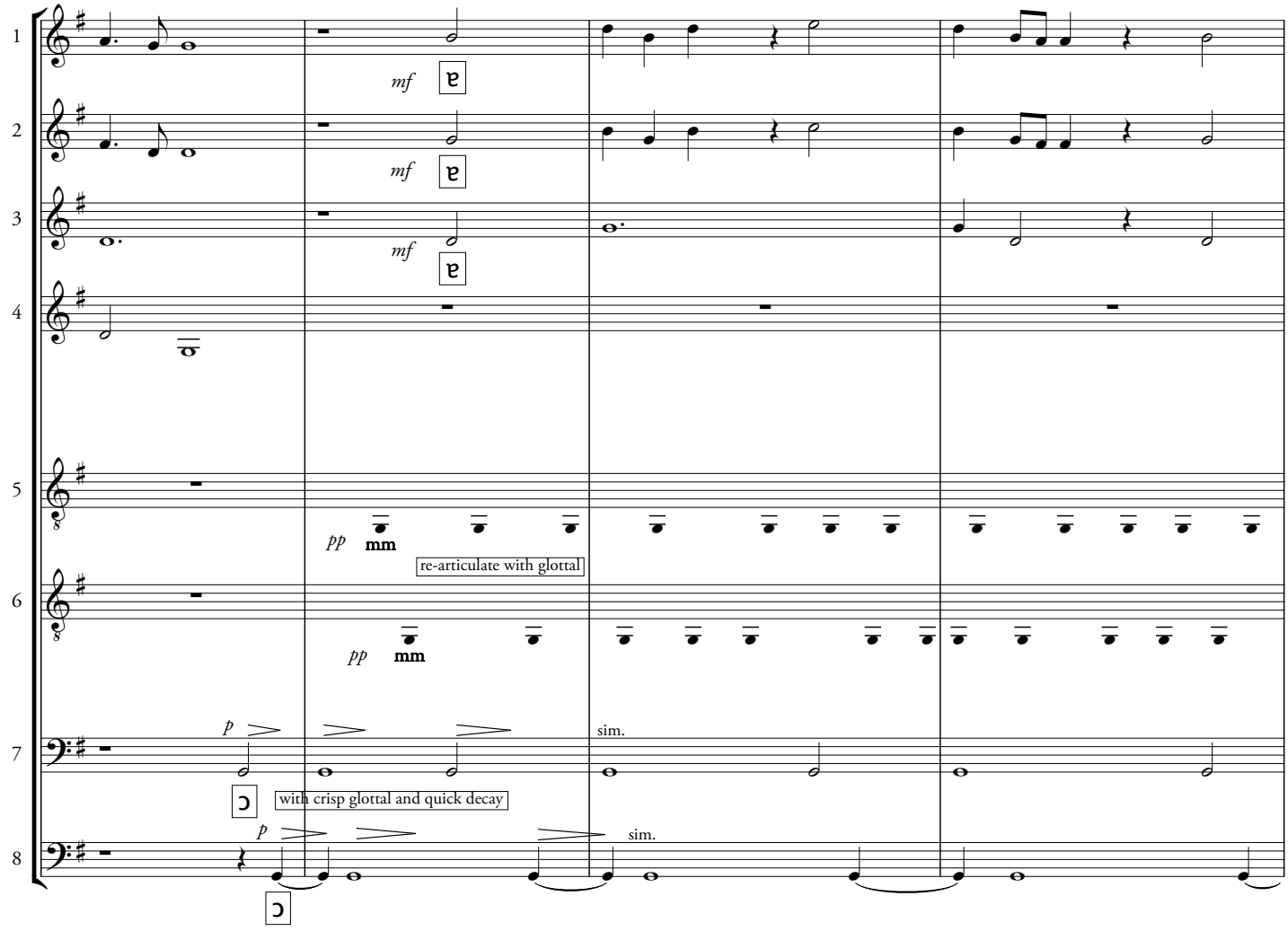
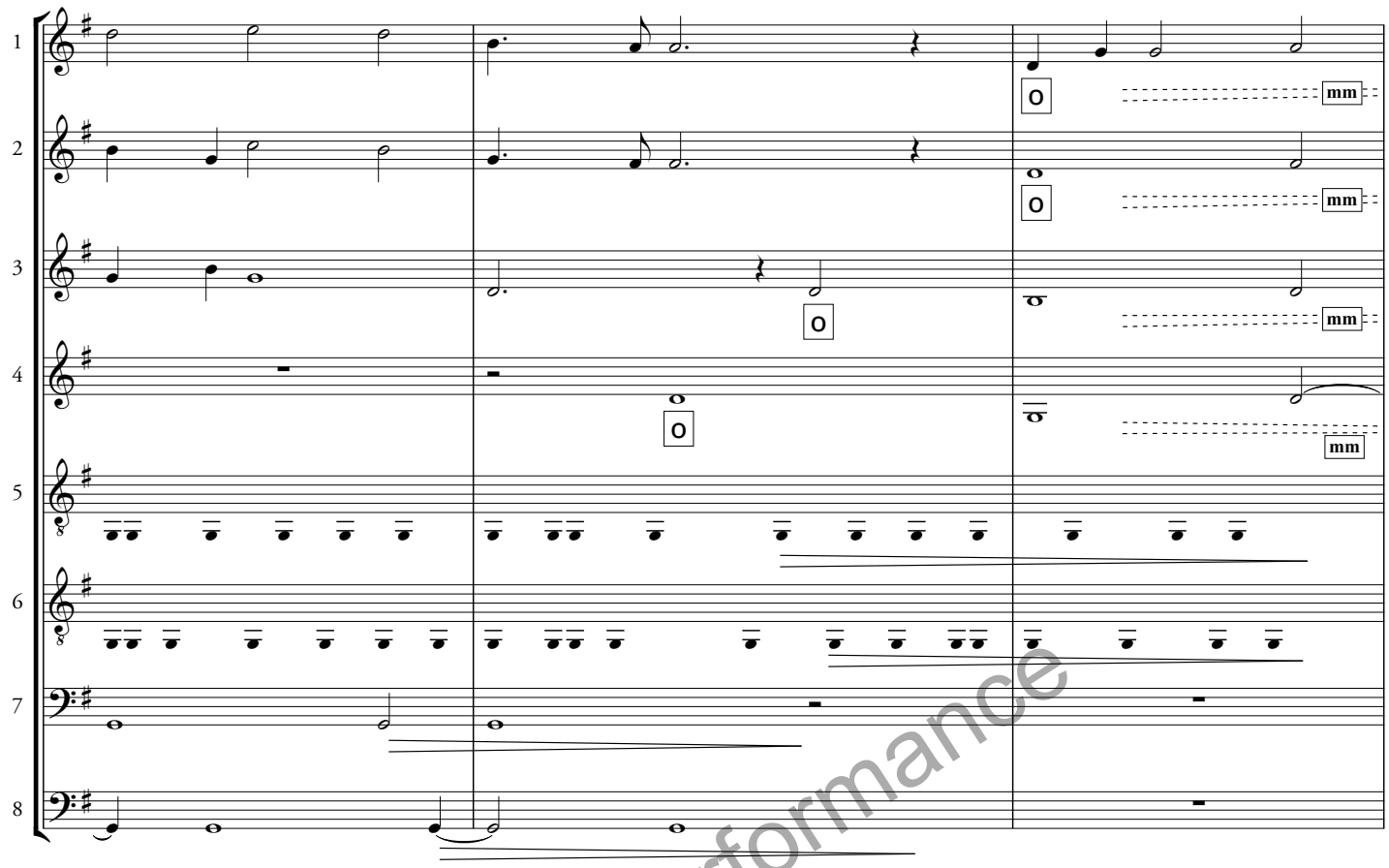

1
2
3
4


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mf
mf
mf
pp
mm
re-articulate with glottal
pp
mm
p
sim.
with crisp glottal and quick decay
p
sim.



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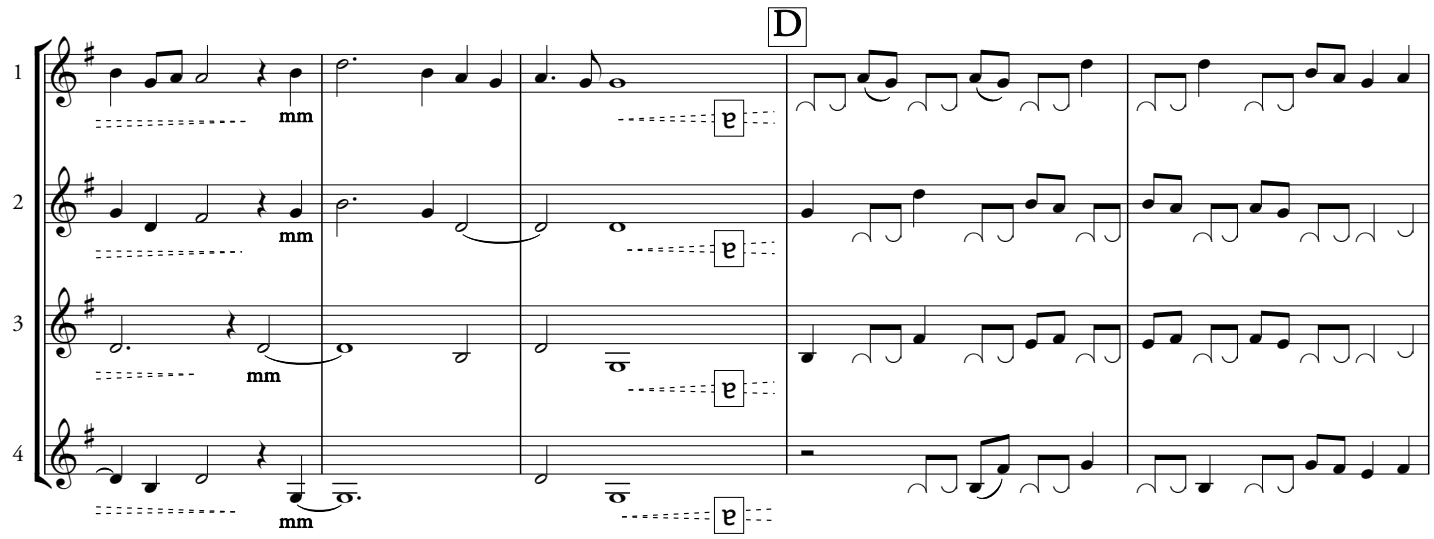
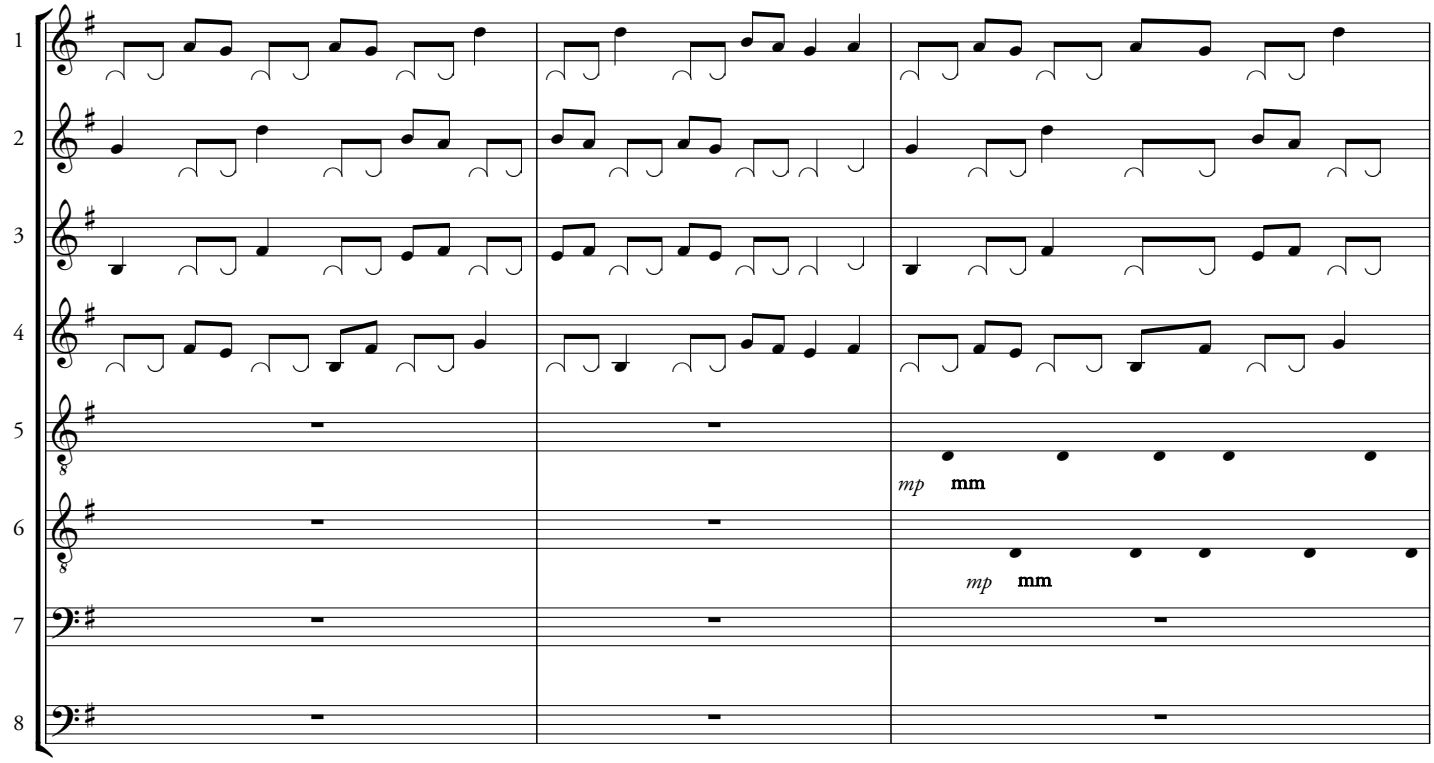
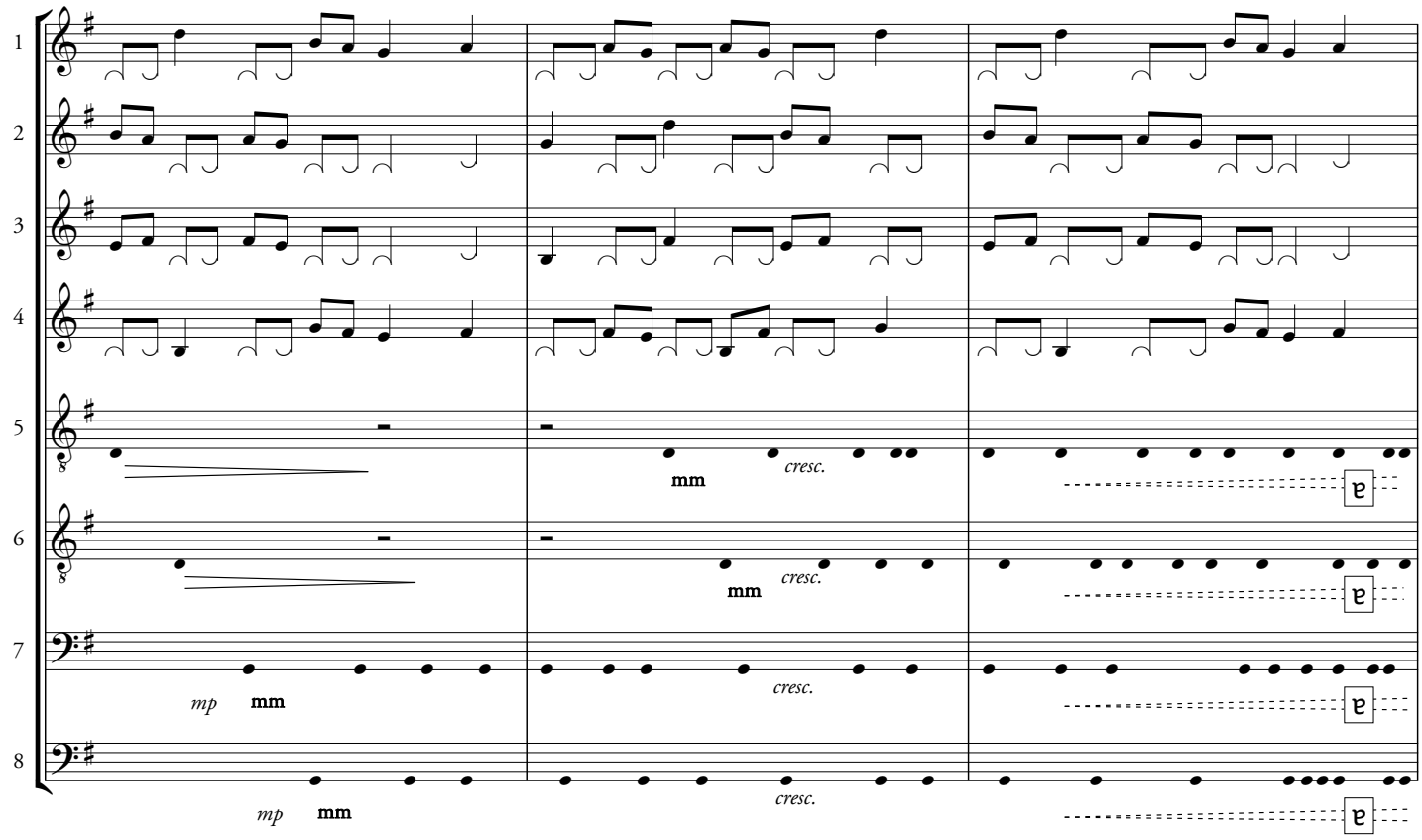
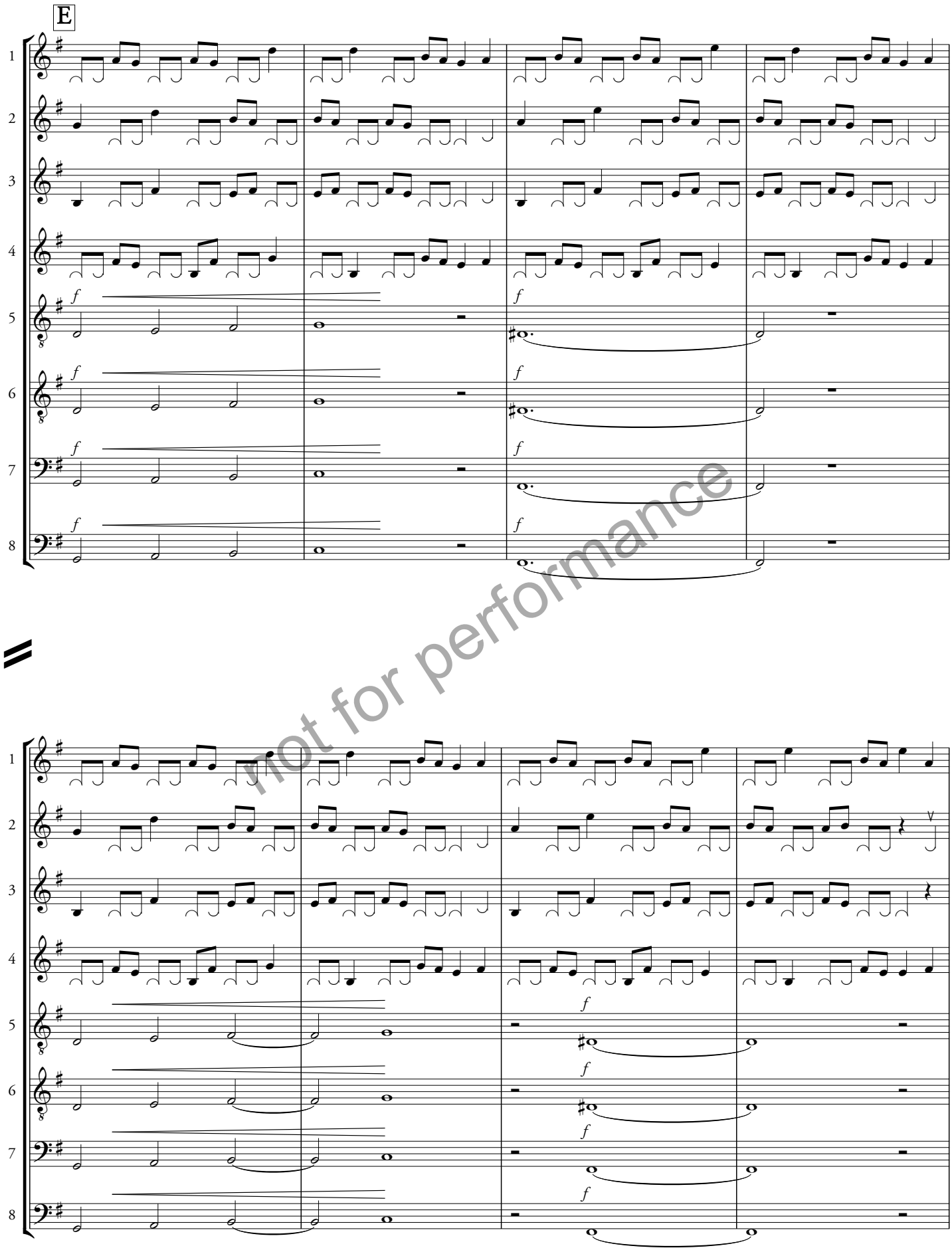
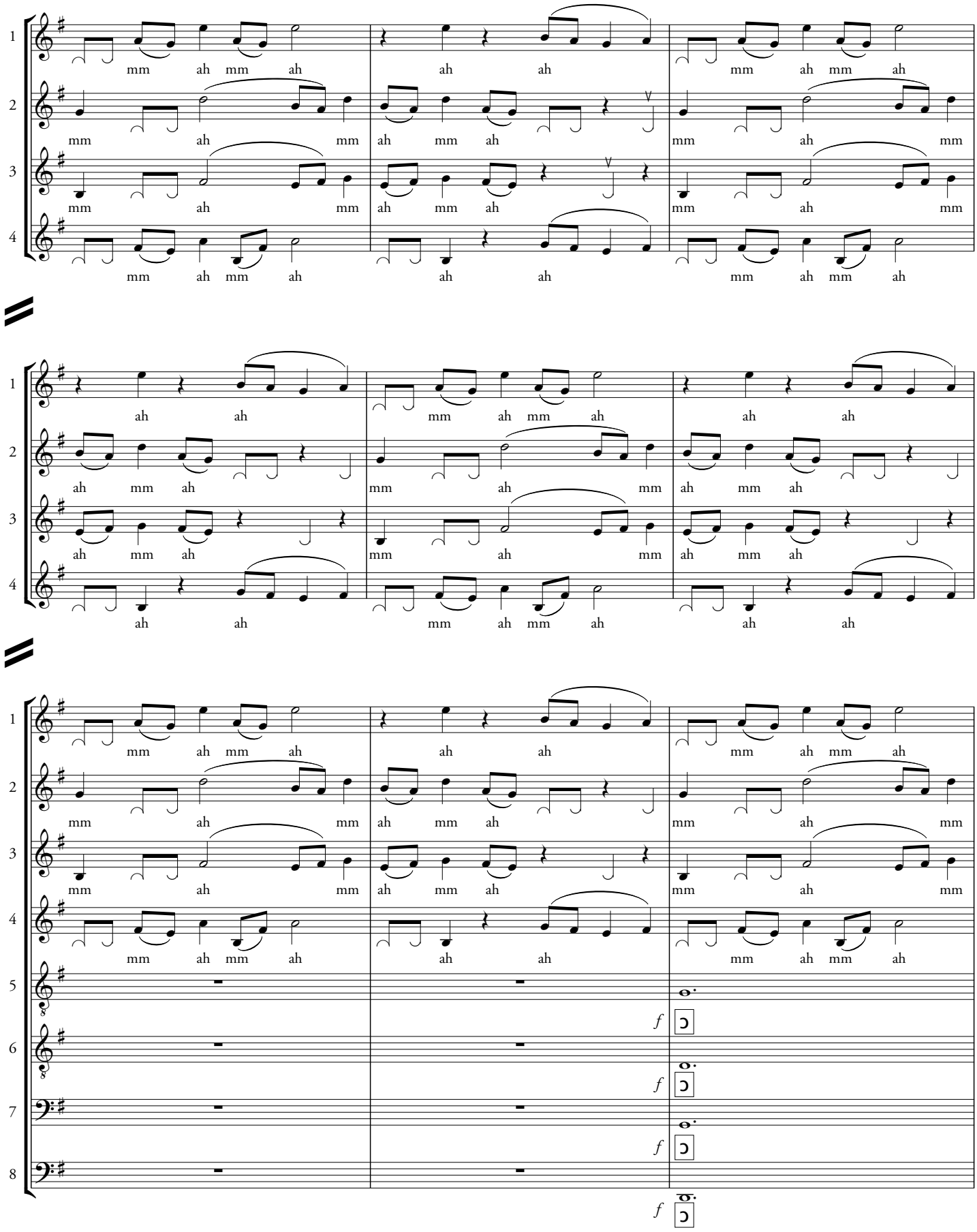
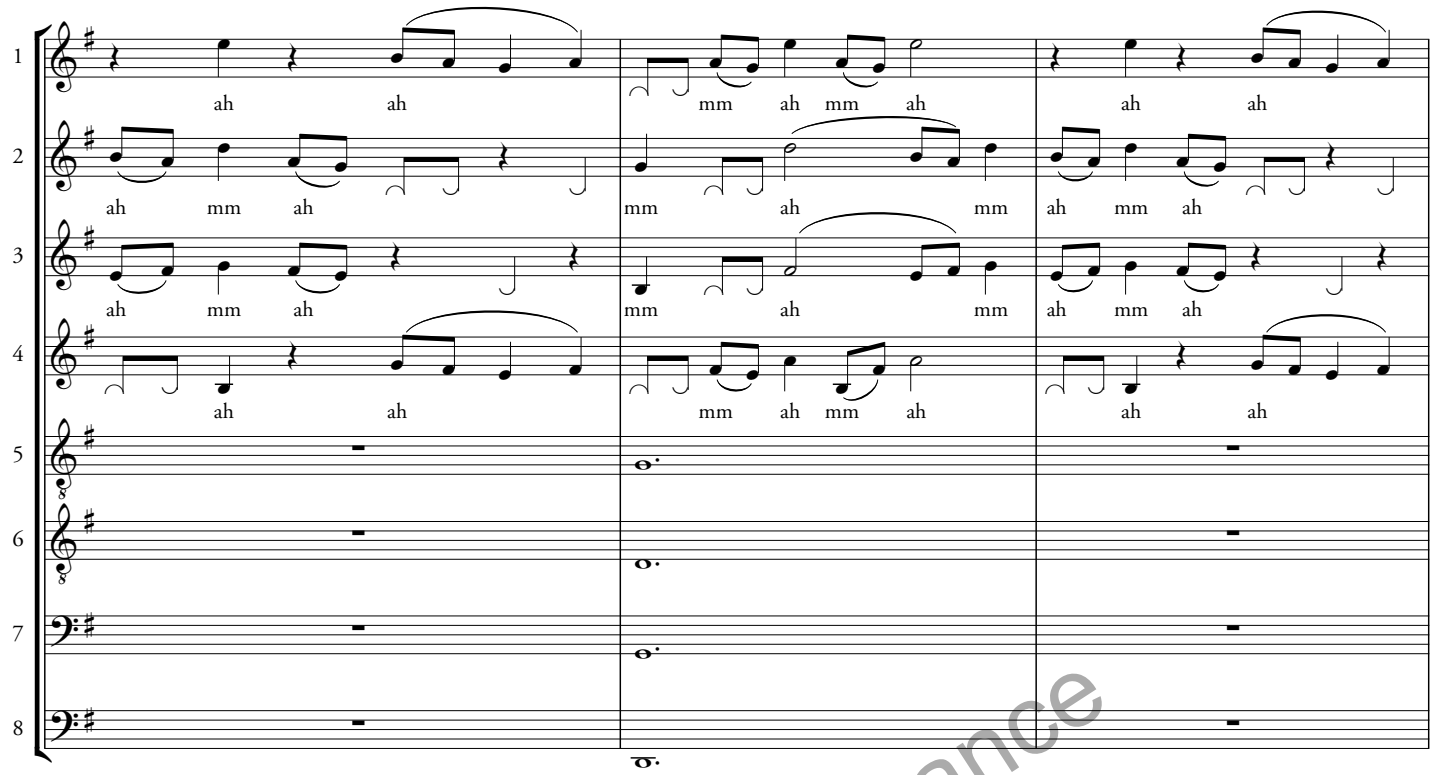


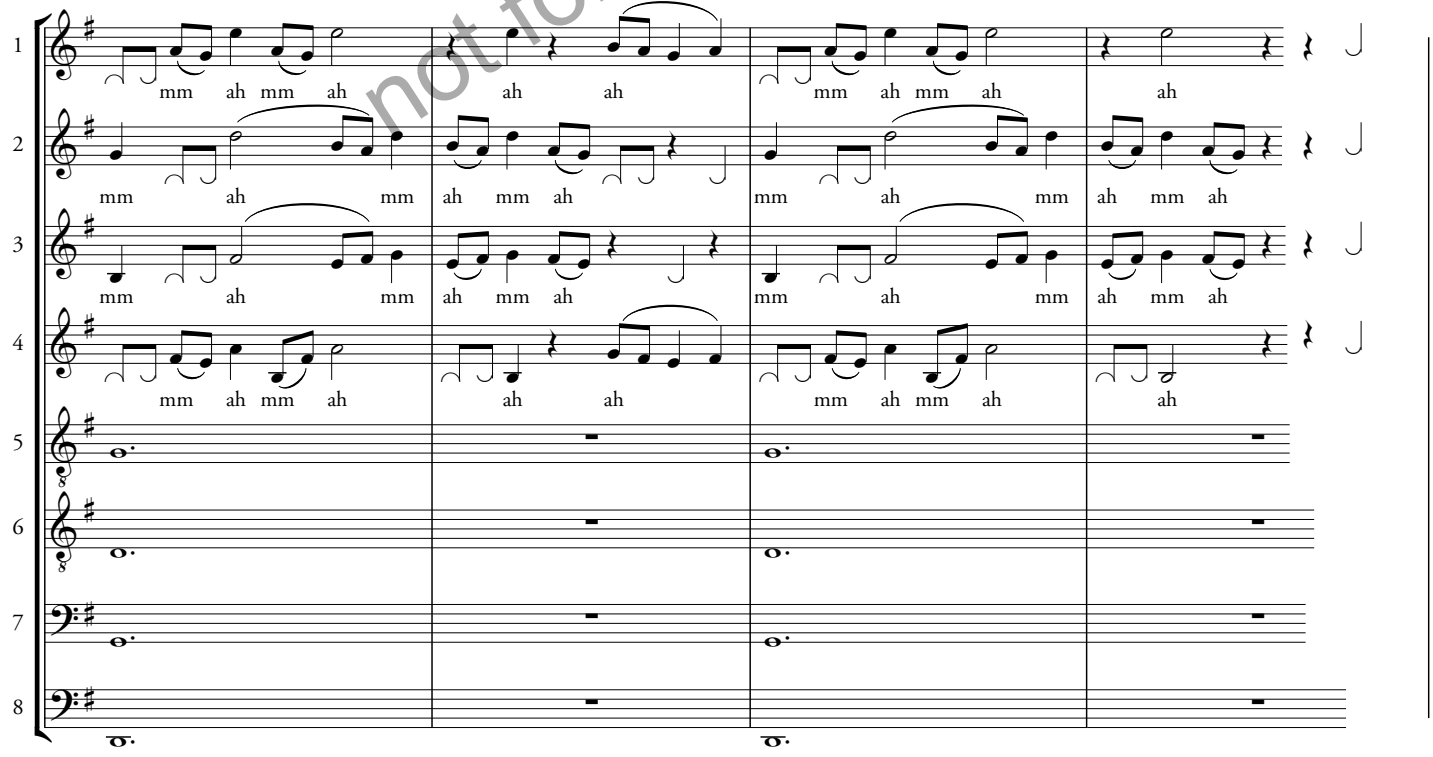

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mp mm
mp mm


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mm
cresc.
mm
cresc.
mp mm
cresc.
mp mm
cresc.


E
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
f
not for performance


1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
mm ah mm ah
ah ah
mm ah mm ah
mm ah mm
ah mm ah
mm ah mm
f





not for performance

F *maybe slightly slower*

begin accel back up to tempo

mp mmb

mp mmb

and maybe slightly faster now... ♩= 80

mf

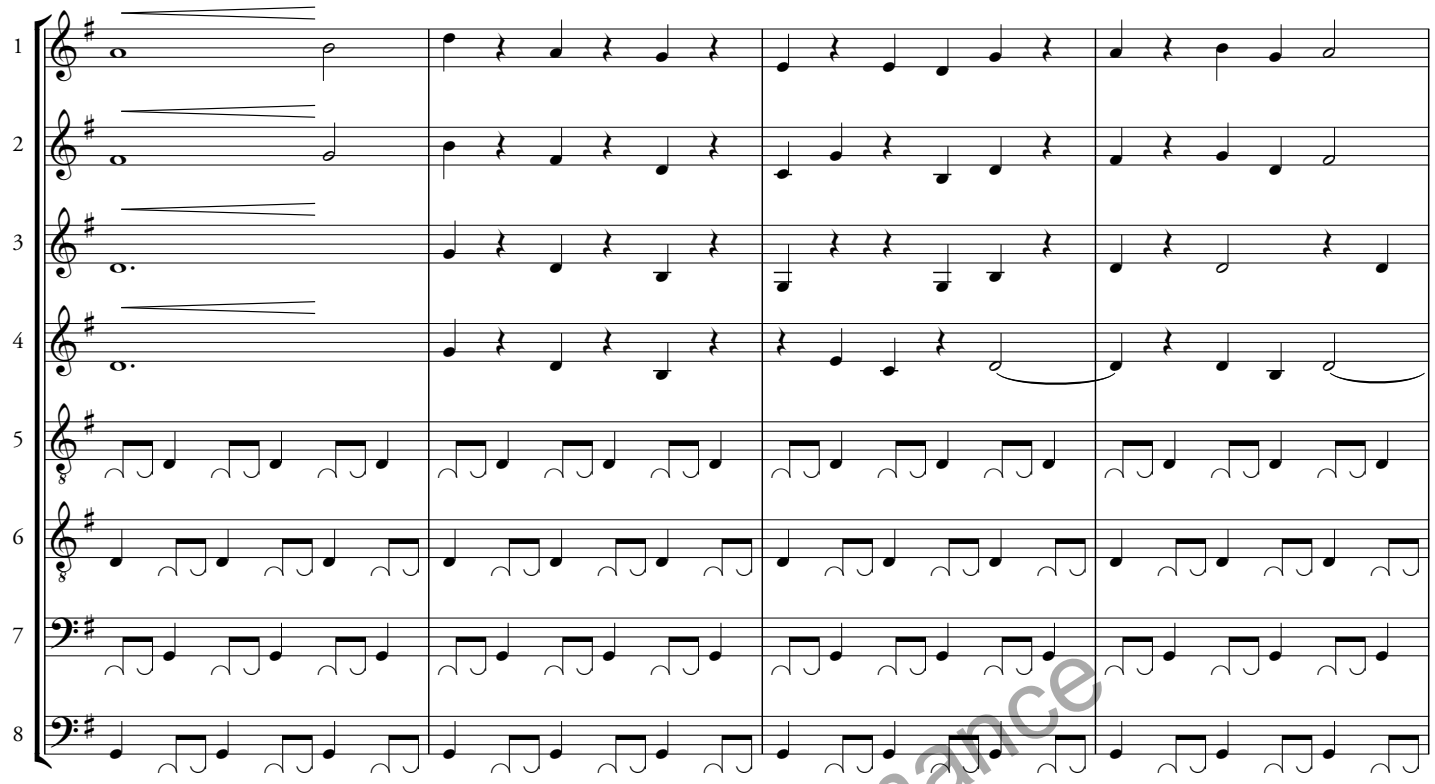
mf

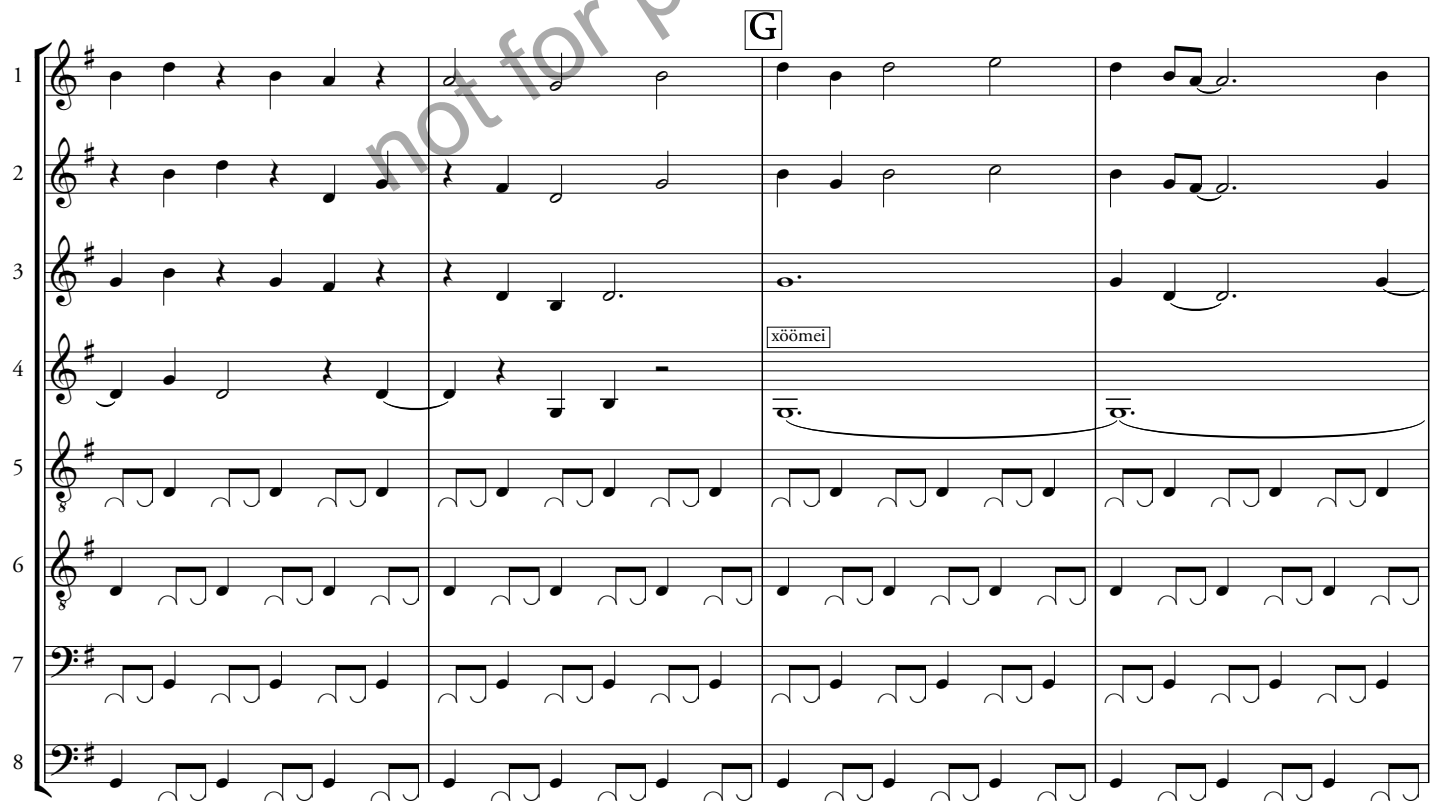
mf

mf

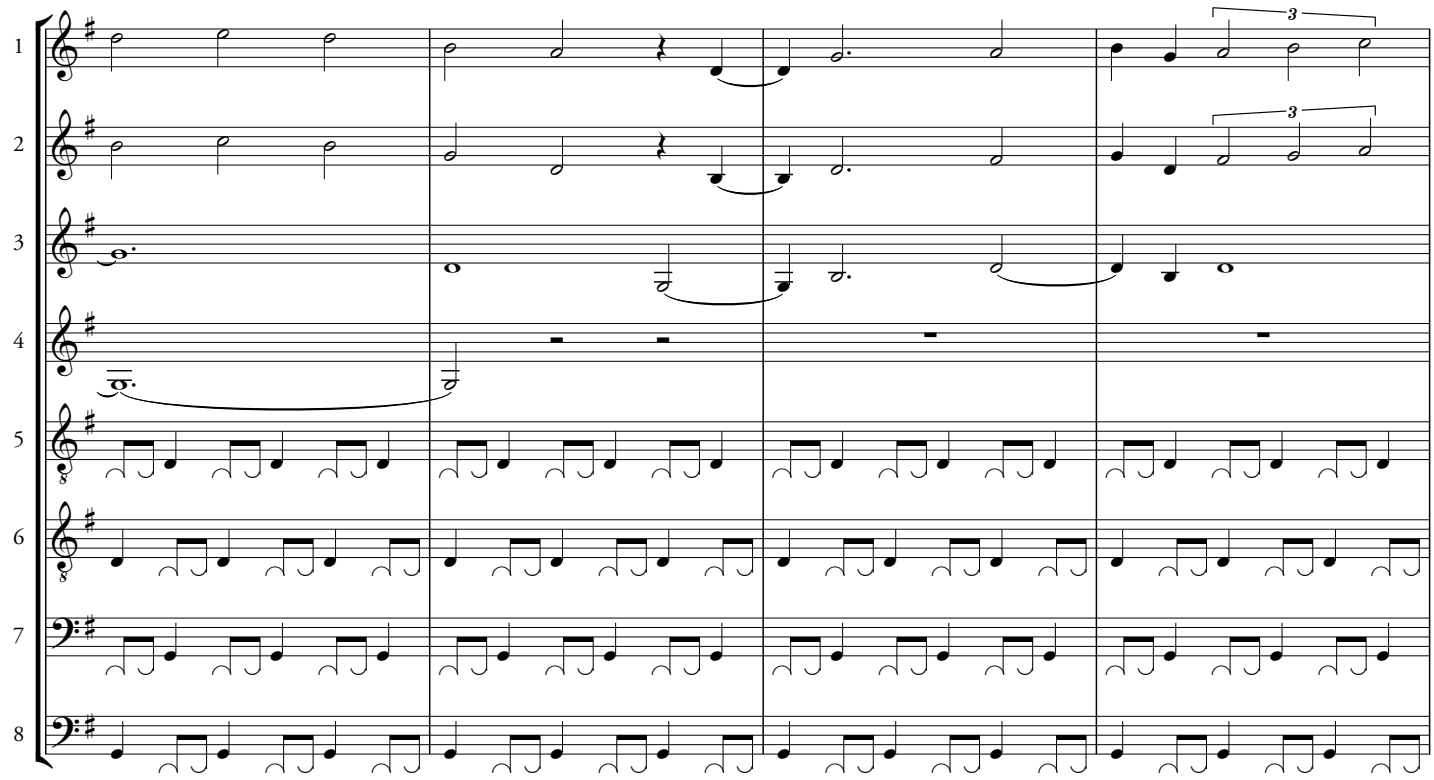
mp

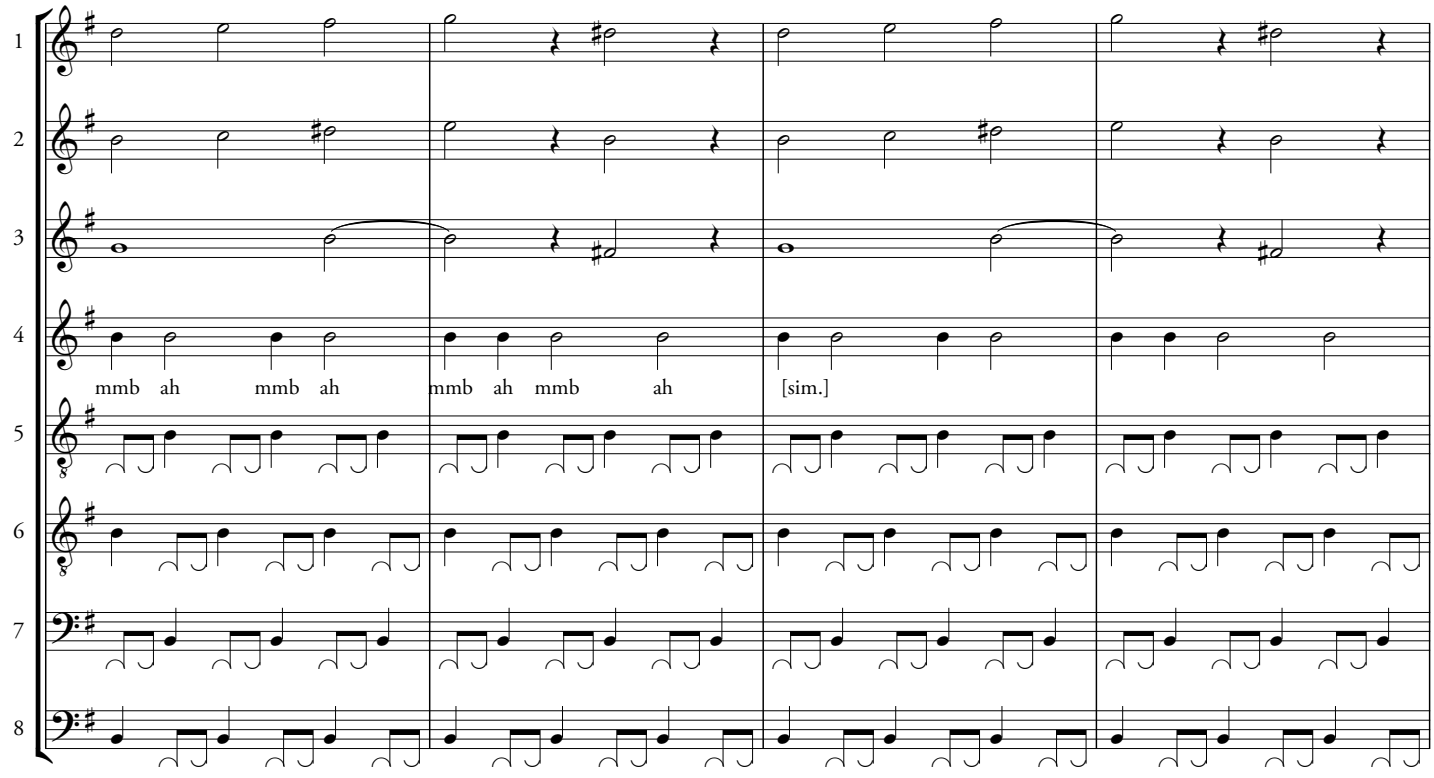
mp

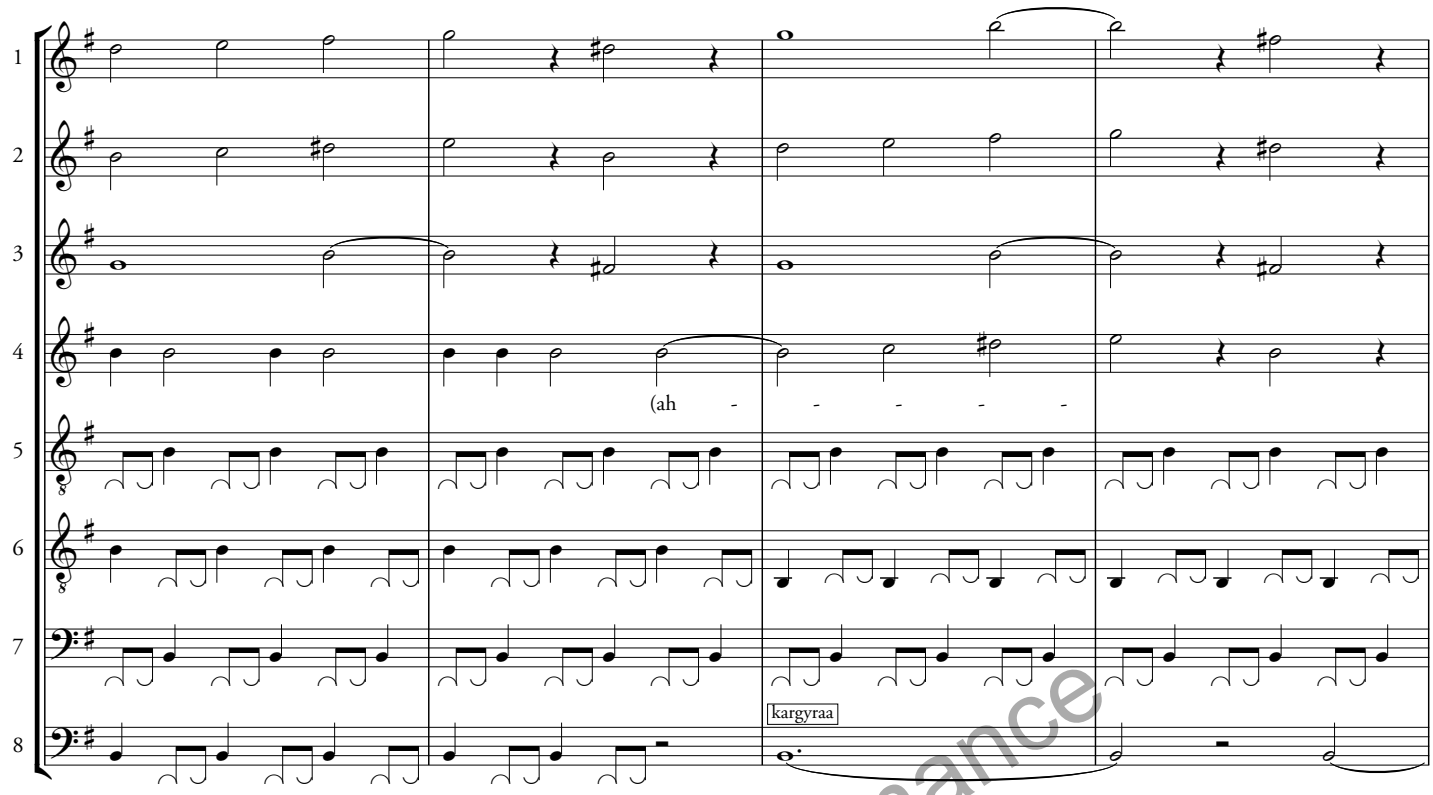


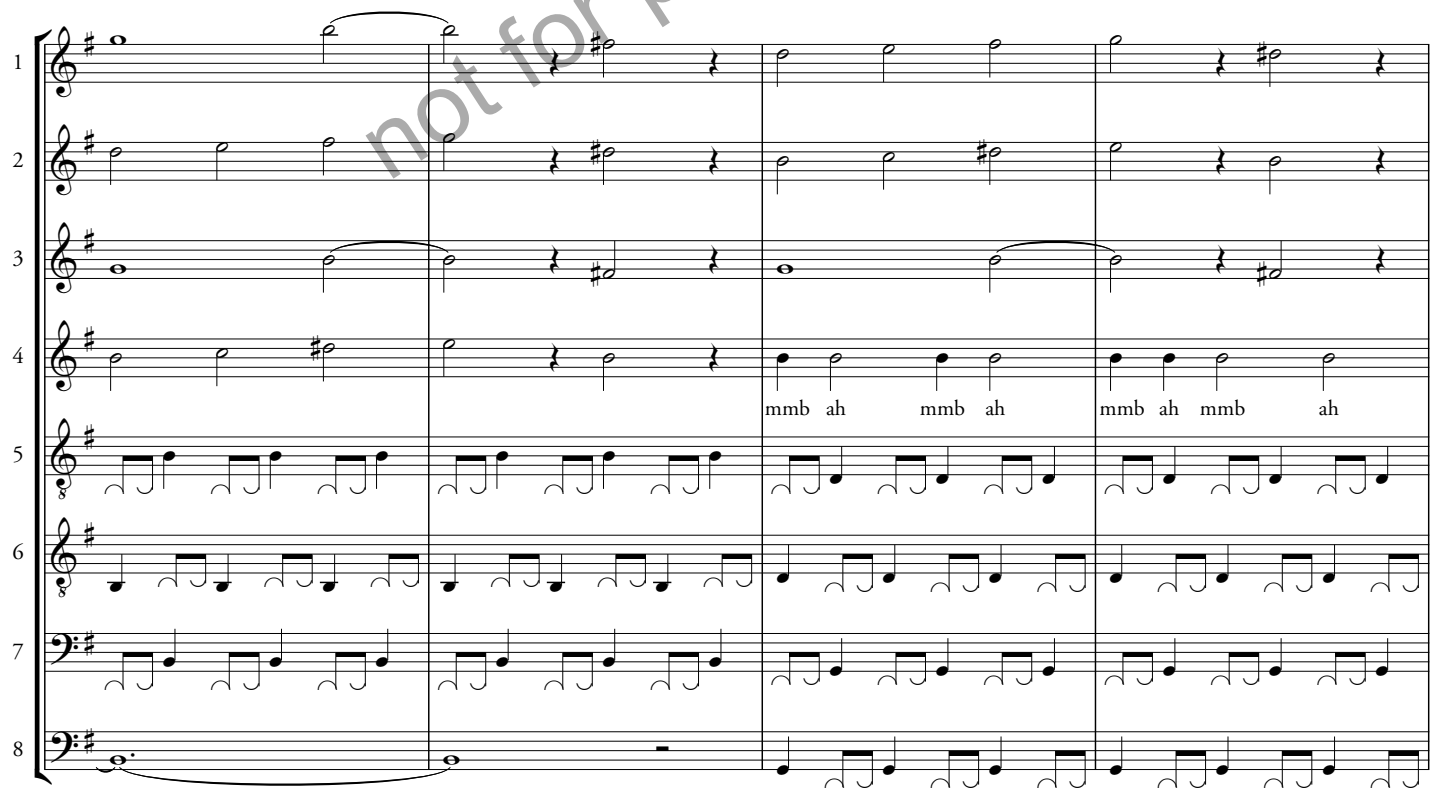


not for performance

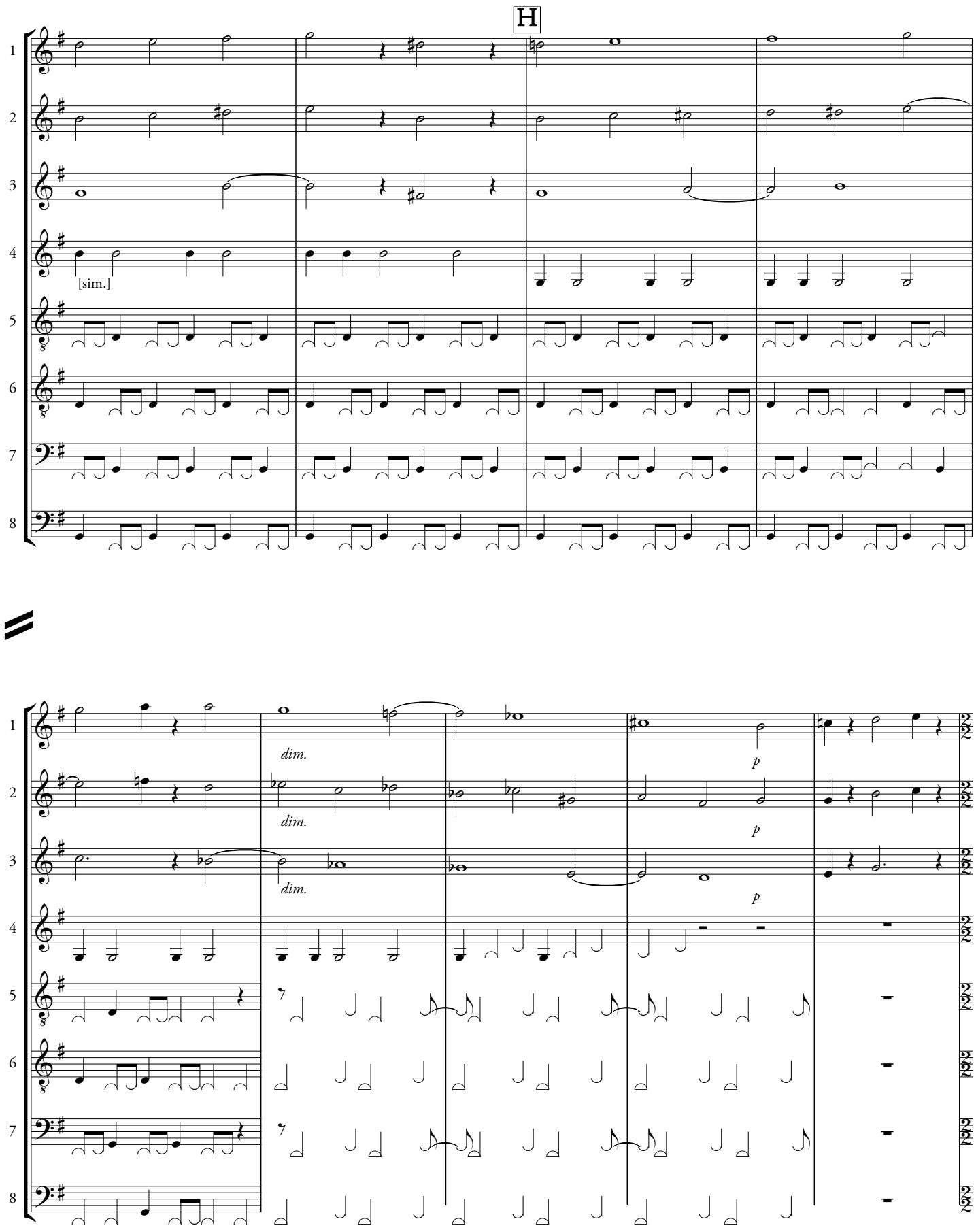



mmb ah mmb ah mmb ah mmb ah [sim.]

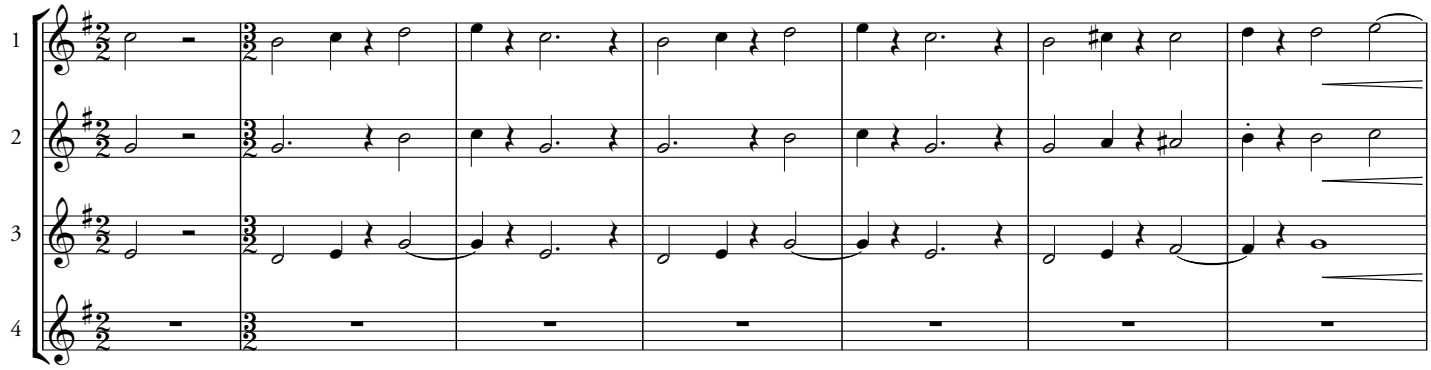


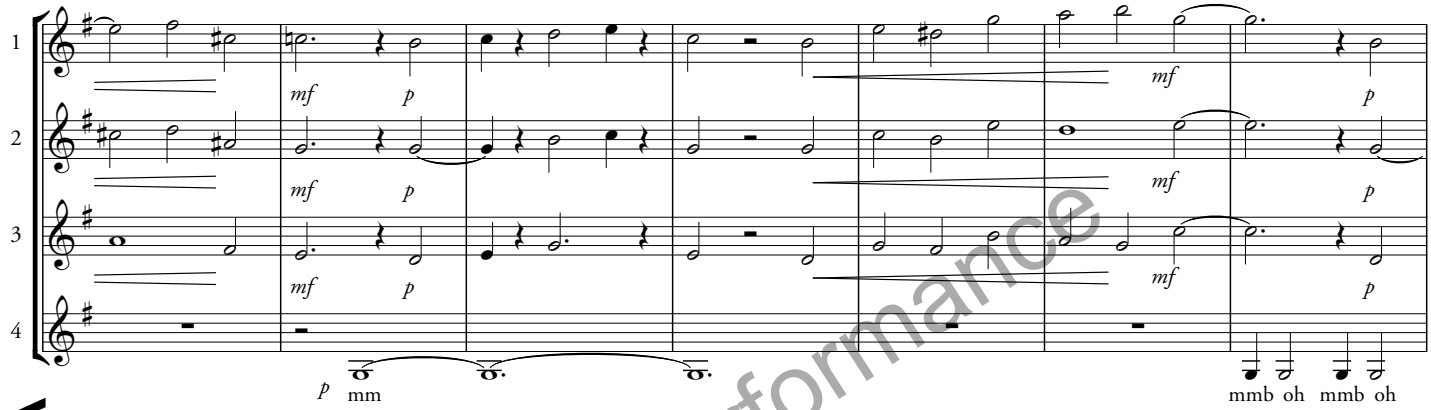


not for performance

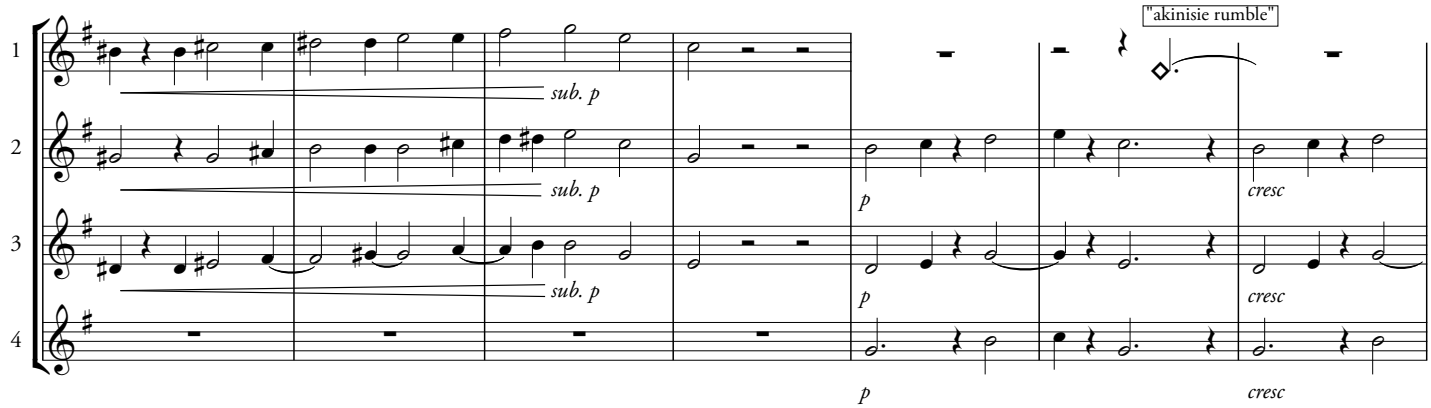

H
[sim.]
dim.
dim.
dim.
p
p
p

I *let the tempo move a little bit, naturally. gradual accelerando to ♩*

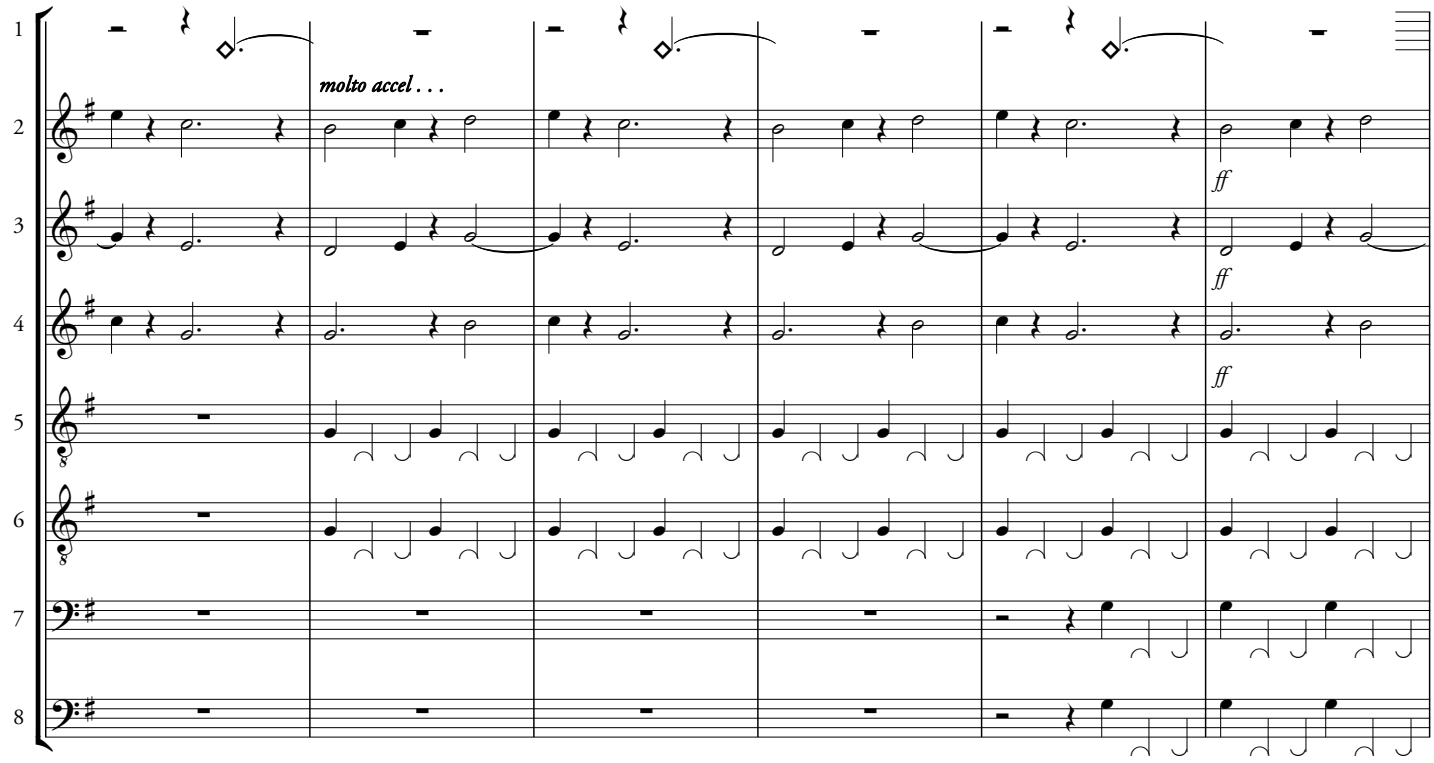


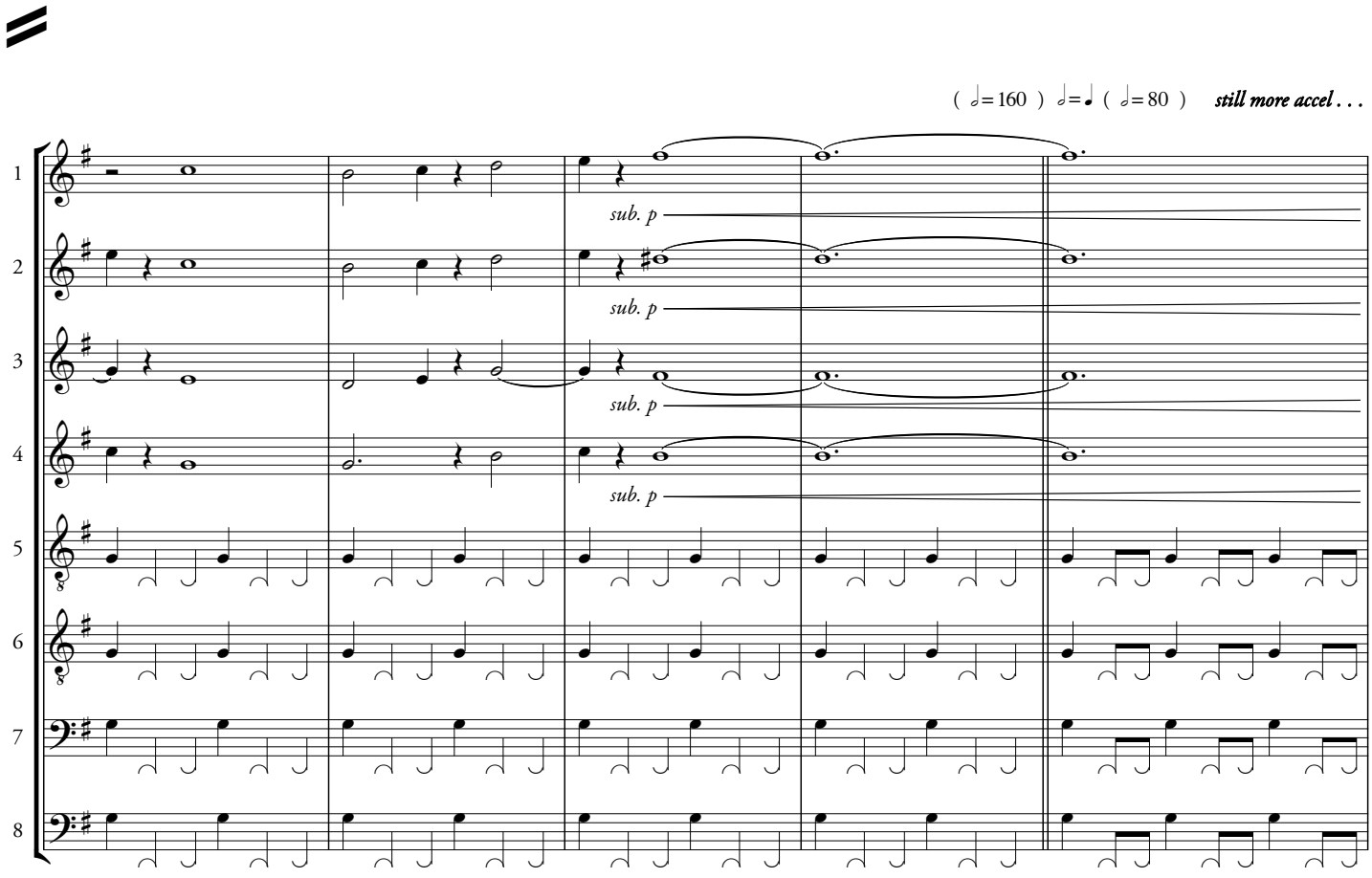


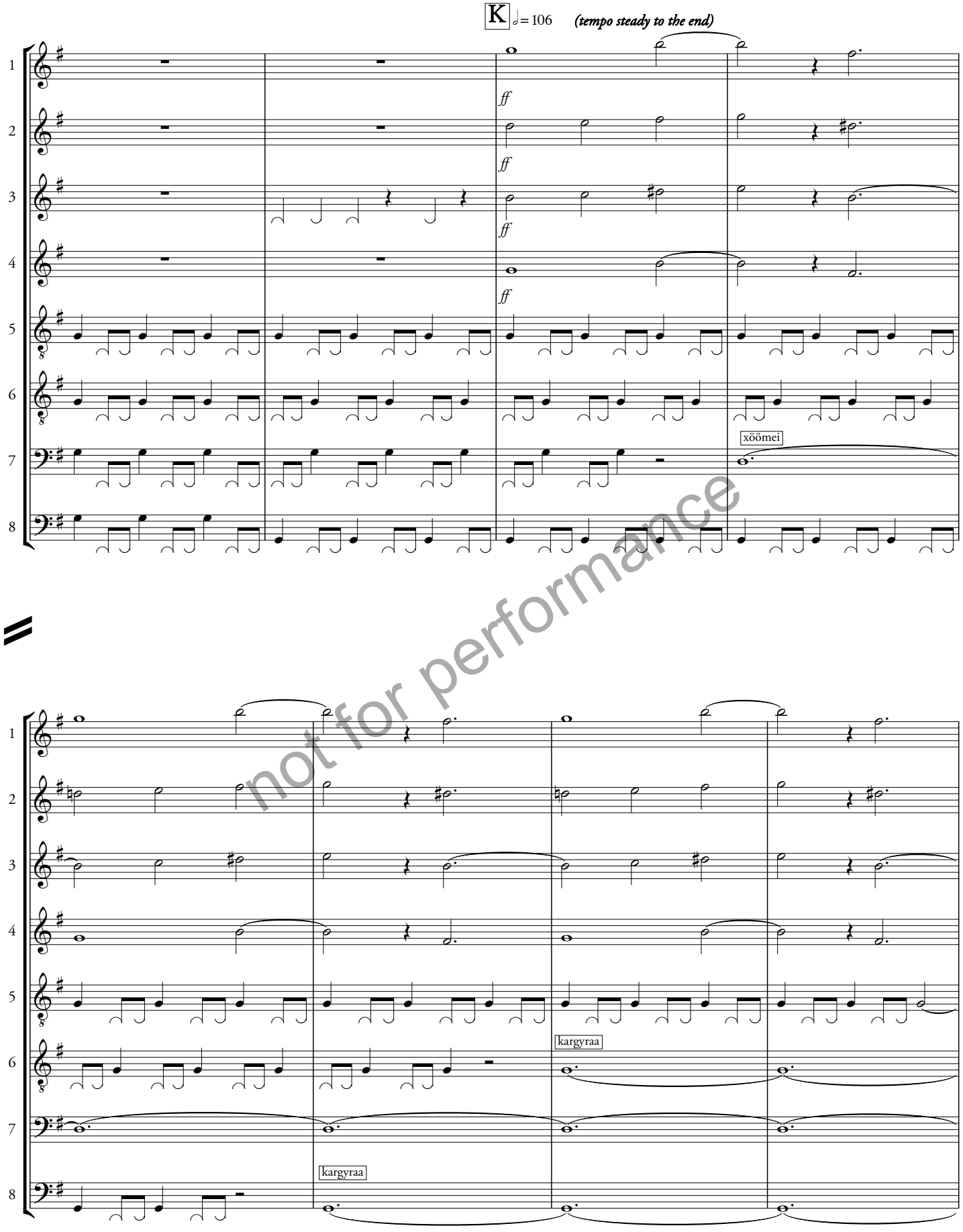
J ♩= 100



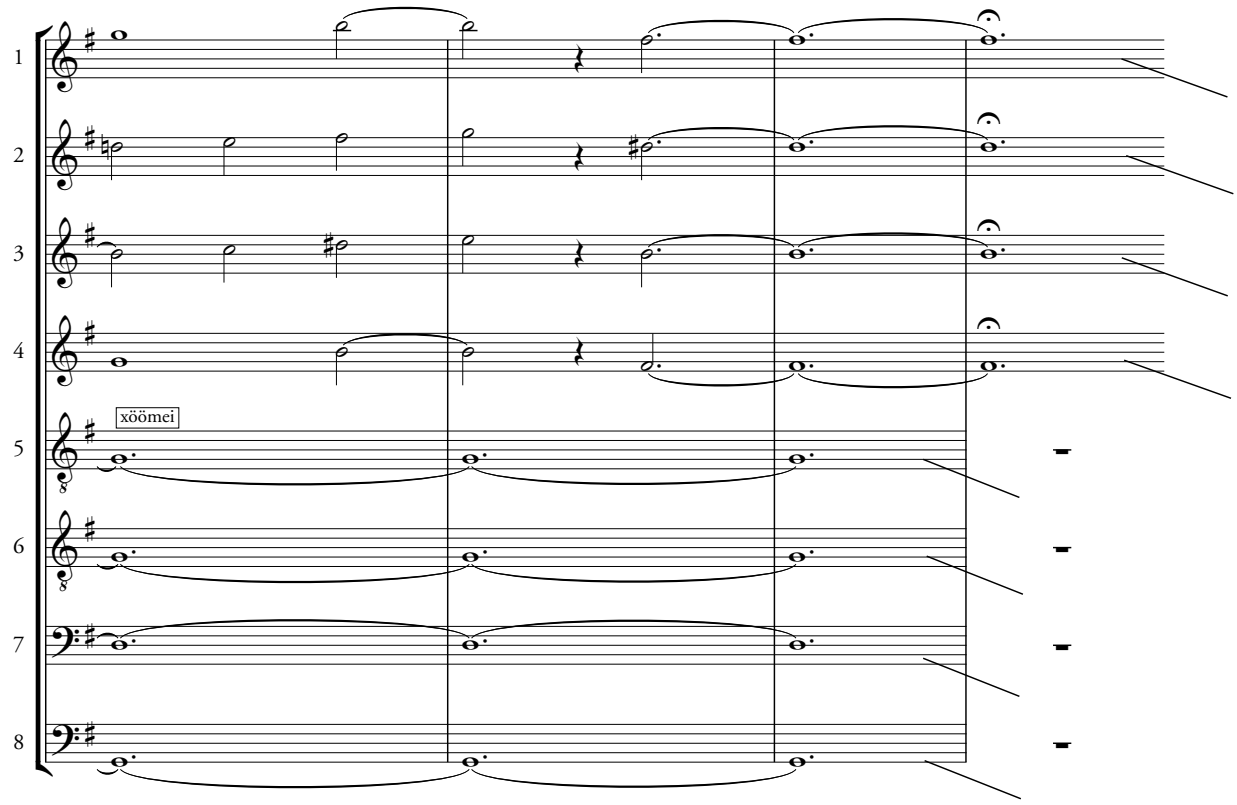
not for performance


molto accel . . .
ff
ff
ff

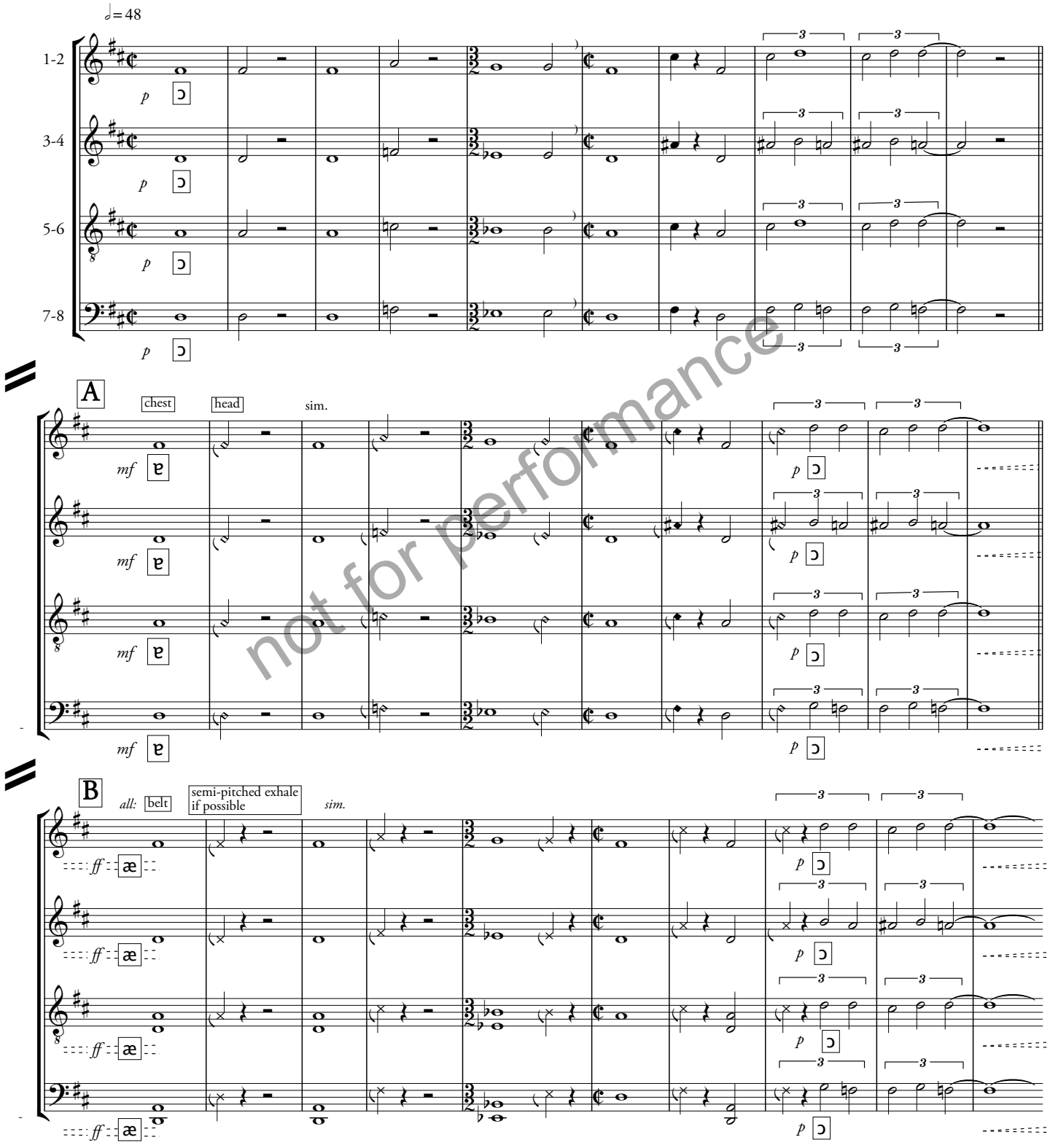

(𝅗𝅥 = 160) 𝅗𝅥 = ♩ (𝅗𝅥 = 80)
still more accel . . .
sub. p
sub. p
sub. p
sub. p



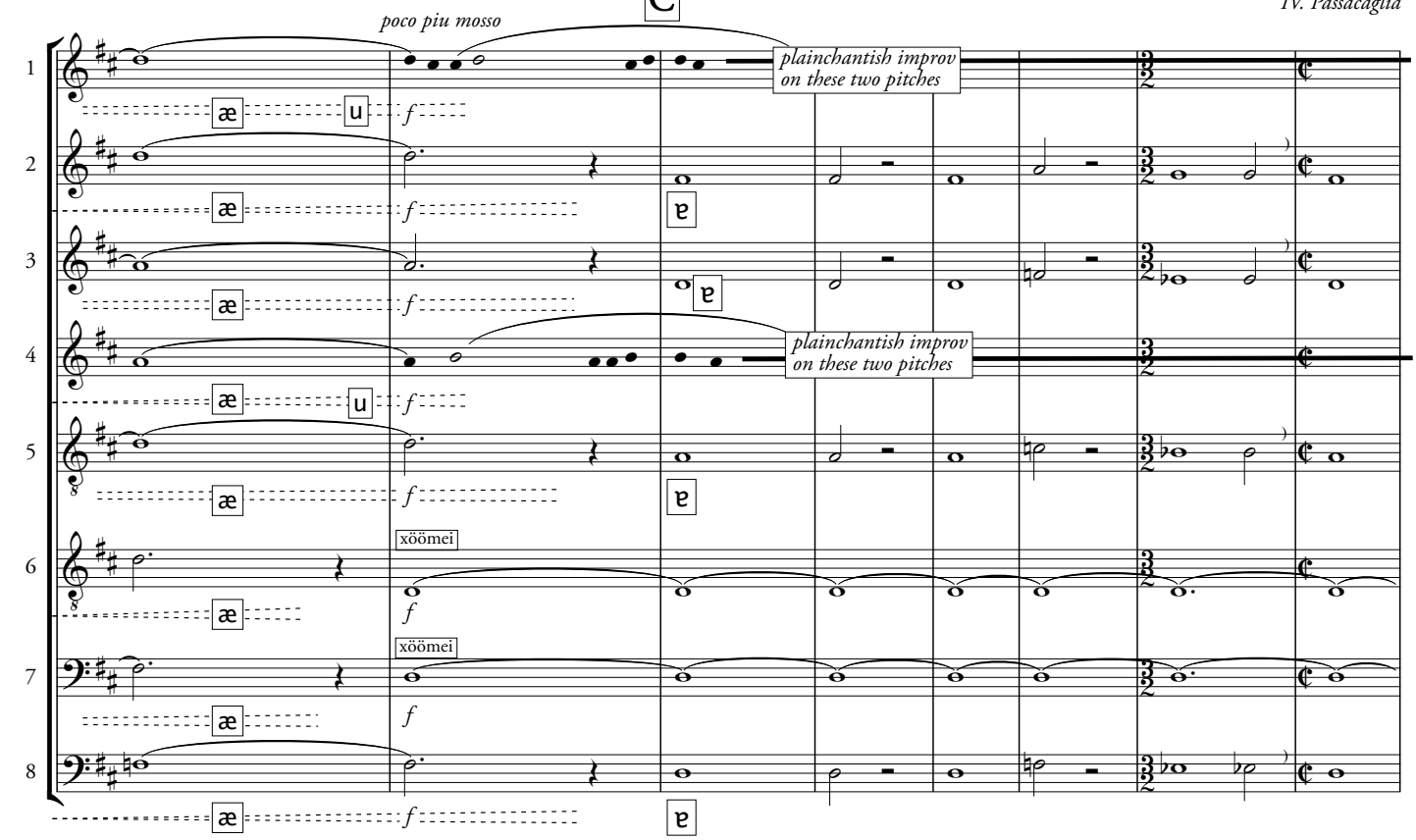
not for performance

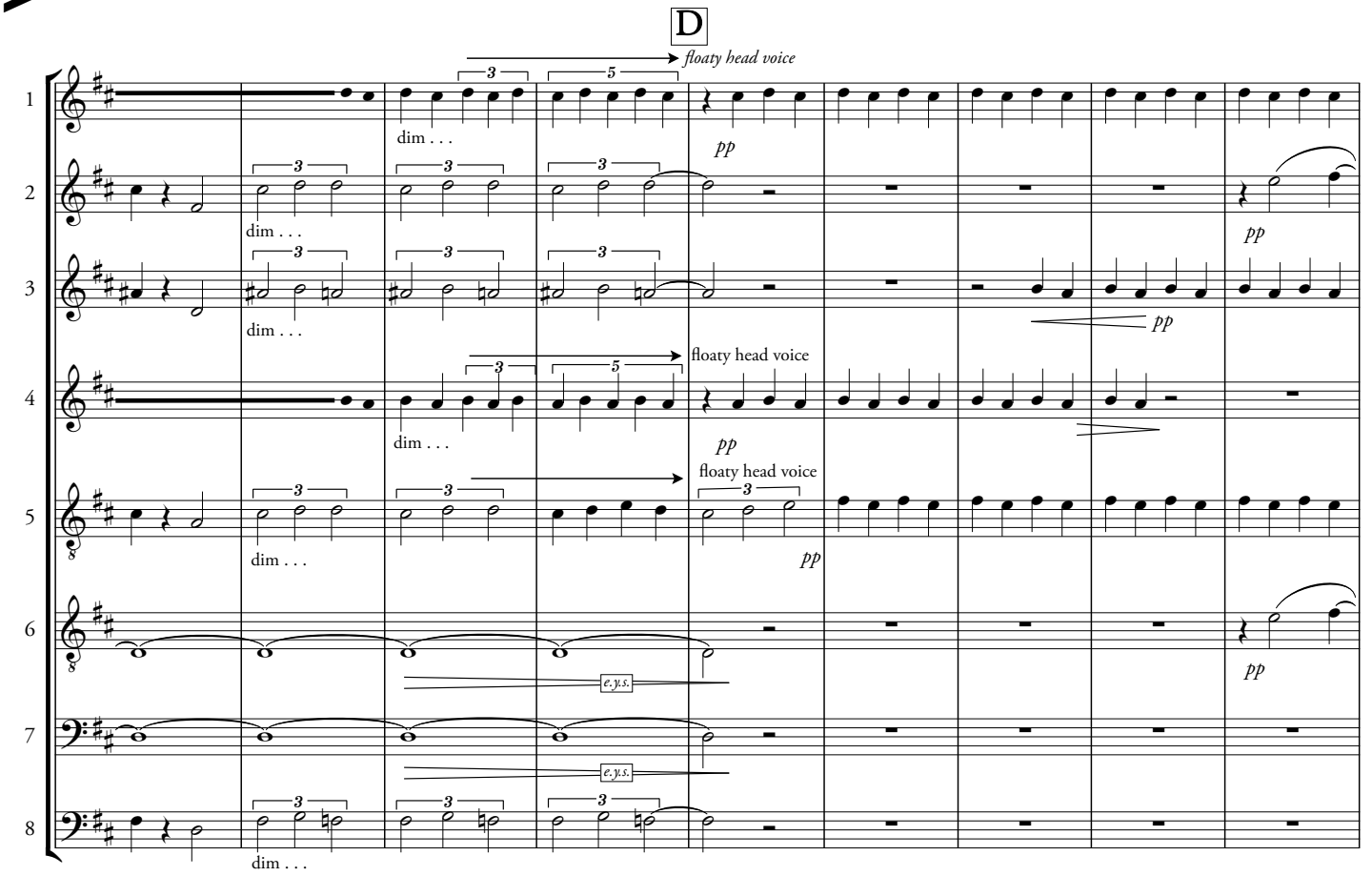

xöömei

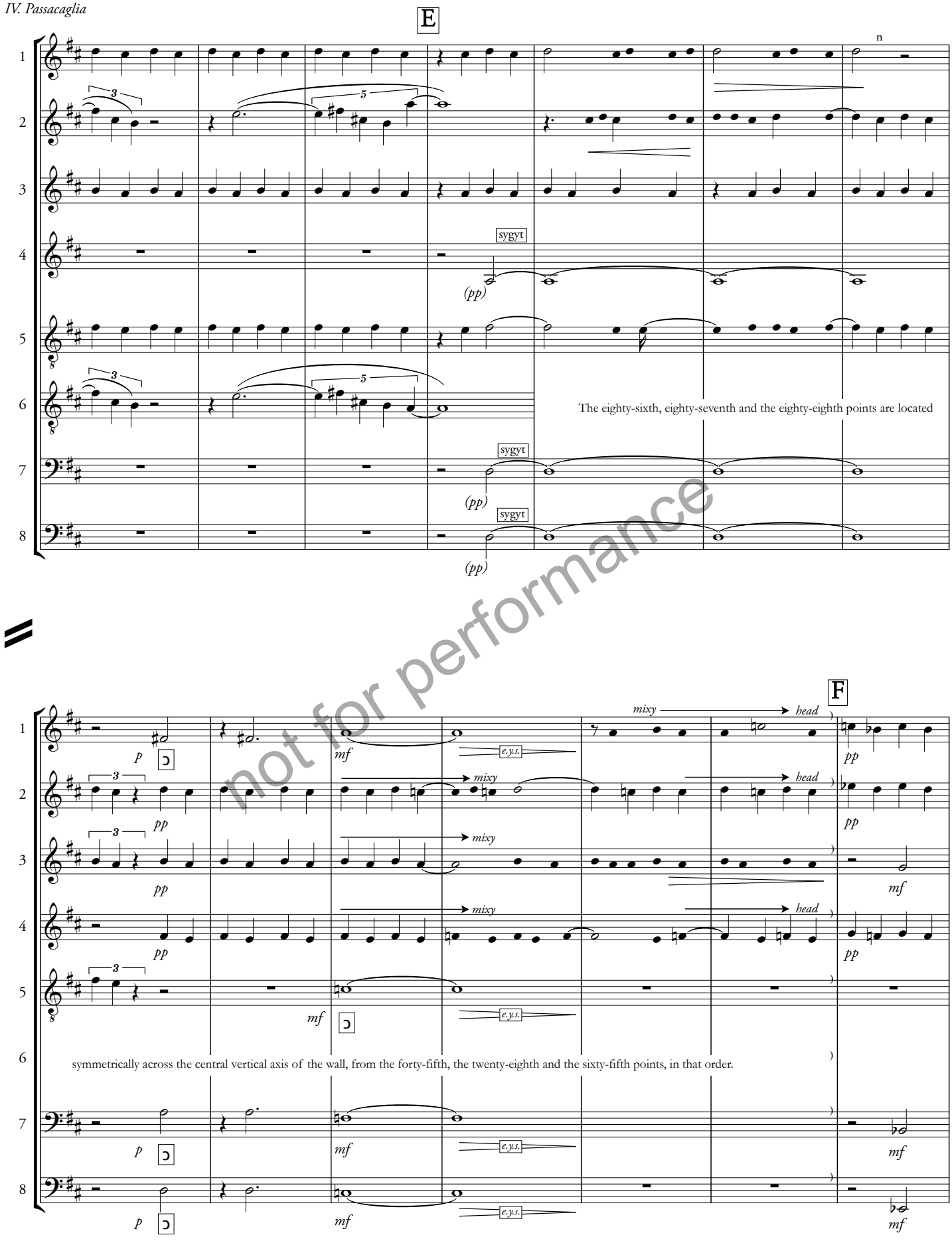
IV. Passacaglia



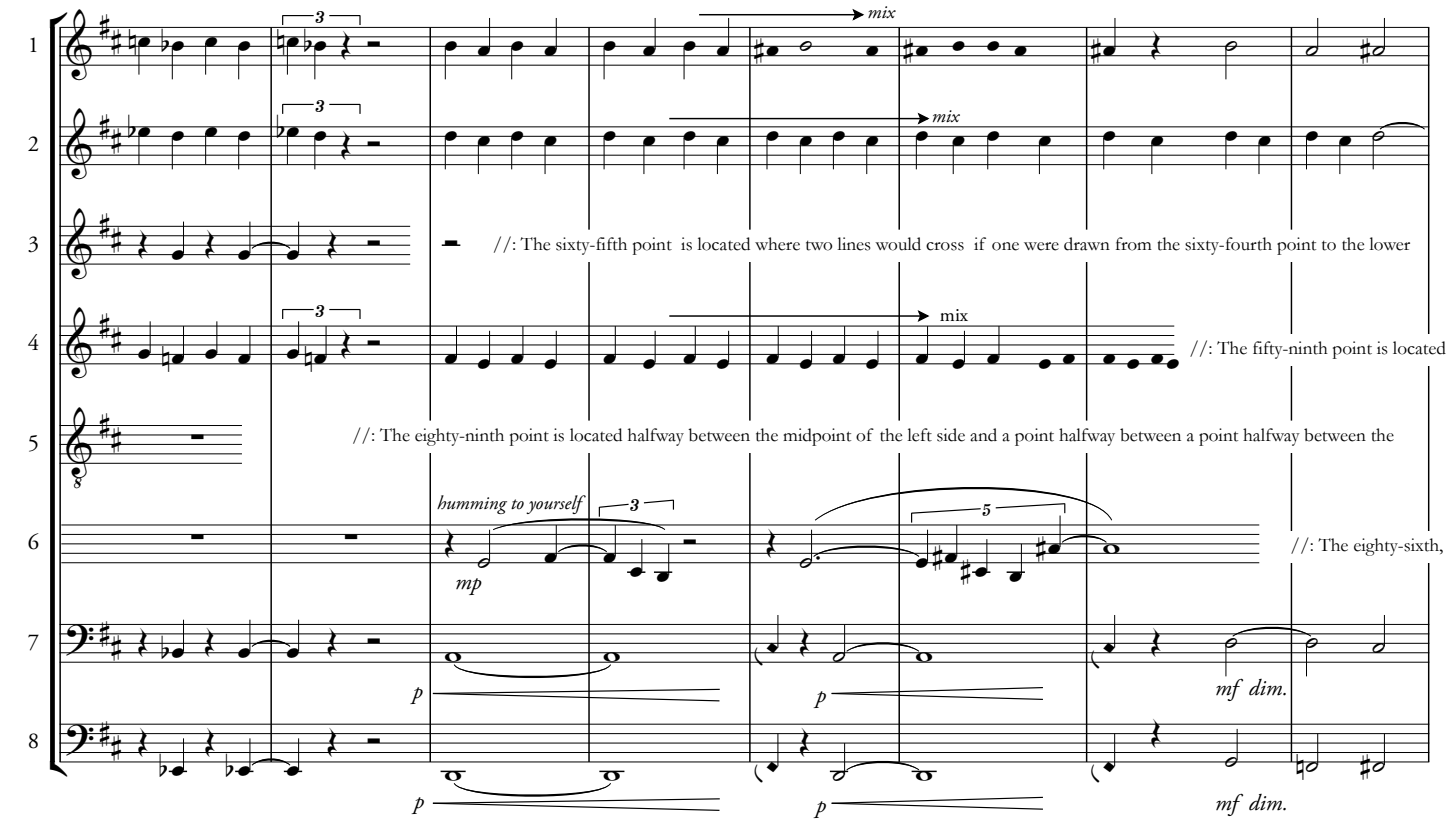
not for performance

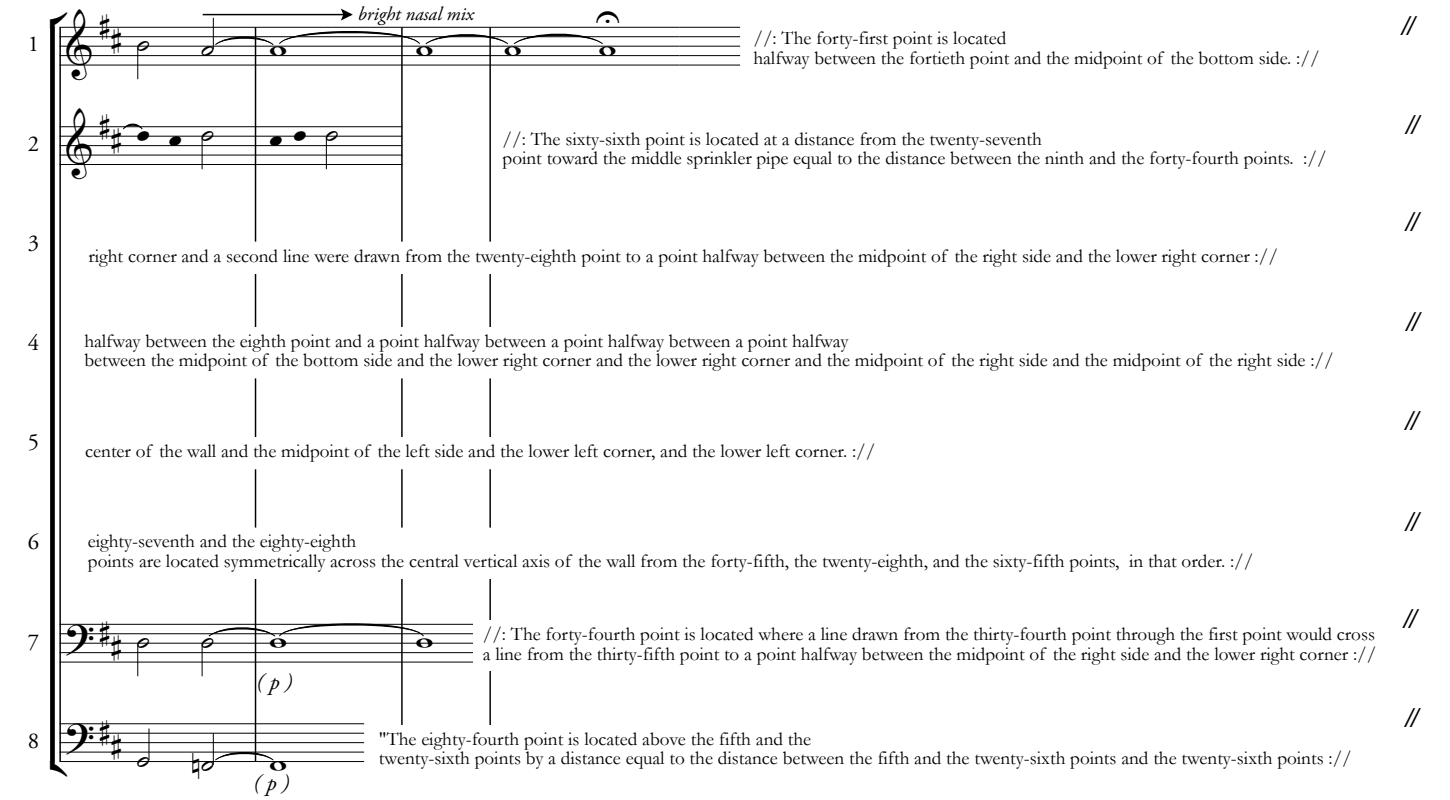

C
poco piu mosso
plainchantish improv
on these two pitches
plainchantish improv
on these two pitches
æ
u
ɐ
f
xöömei


D
floaty head voice
floaty head voice
floaty head voice
dim . . .
pp
e.y.s.



not for performance


mix
mix
mix
//: The sixty-fifth point is located where two lines would cross if one were drawn from the sixty-fourth point to the lower
//: The fifty-ninth point is located
//: The eighty-ninth point is located halfway between the midpoint of the left side and a point halfway between a point halfway between the
humming to yourself
mp
//: The eighty-sixth,
p
p
mf dim.
p
p
mf dim.


bright nasal mix
//: The forty-first point is located
halfway between the fortieth point and the midpoint of the bottom side. ://
//: The sixty-sixth point is located at a distance from the twenty-seventh
point toward the middle sprinkler pipe equal to the distance between the ninth and the forty-fourth points. ://
right corner and a second line were drawn from the twenty-eighth point to a point halfway between the midpoint of the right side and the lower right corner ://
halfway between the eighth point and a point halfway between a point halfway between a point halfway
between the midpoint of the bottom side and the lower right corner and the lower right corner and the midpoint of the right side and the midpoint of the right side ://
center of the wall and the midpoint of the left side and the lower left corner, and the lower left corner. ://
eighty-seventh and the eighty-eighth
points are located symmetrically across the central vertical axis of the wall from the forty-fifth, the twenty-eighth, and the sixty-fifth points, in that order. ://
//: The forty-fourth point is located where a line drawn from the thirty-fourth point through the first point would cross
a line from the thirty-fifth point to a point halfway between the midpoint of the right side and the lower right corner ://
(p)
"The eighty-fourth point is located above the fifth and the
twenty-sixth points by a distance equal to the distance between the fifth and the twenty-sixth points and the twenty-sixth points ://
(p)

G

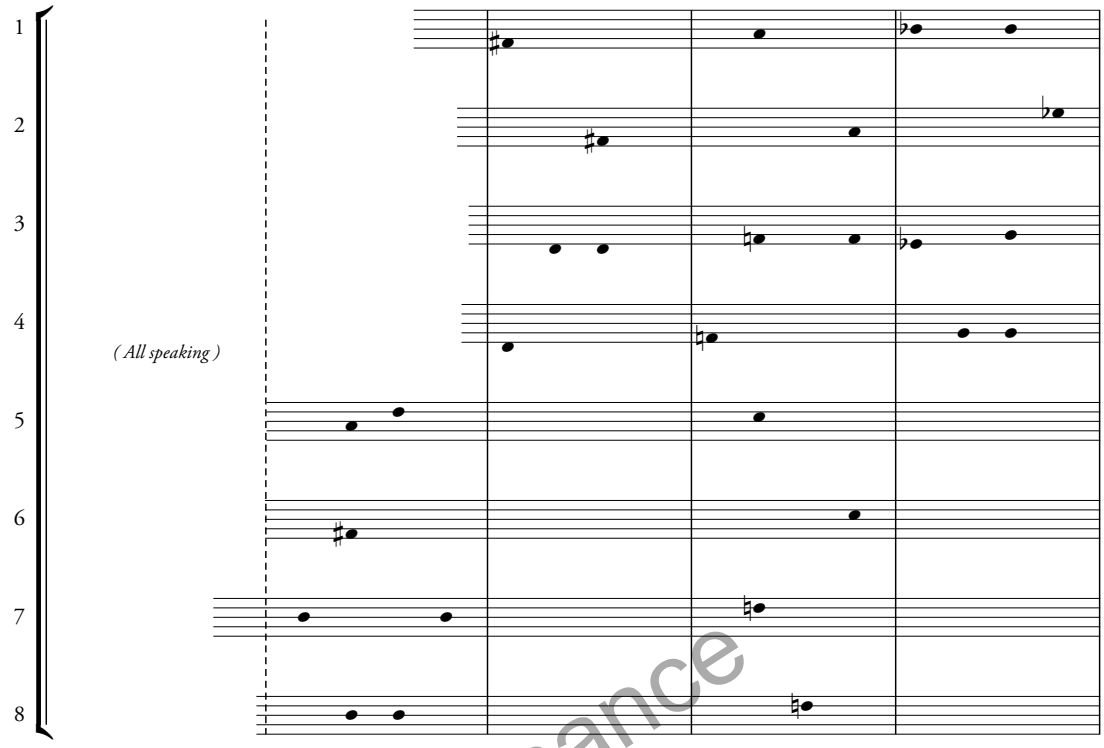
Note for all:

At cue, restart your text from the beginning and vamp on it through this next section.

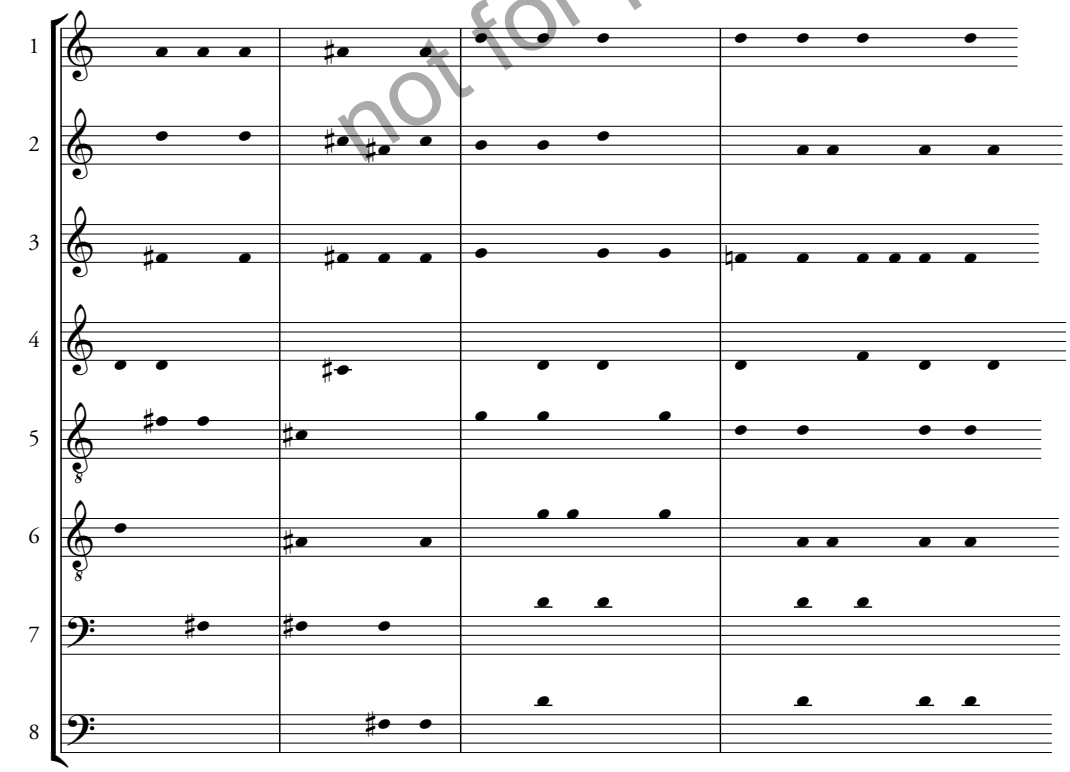
Speak clearly and naturally.

Each bar should last around four seconds and can be cued either by a conductor or just by ear among the singers themselves. (The harmony changes on each bar; it is the same harmonic progression stated at the beginning.)

The spacing of pitches throughout the bar, for each part, is approximate. Don't feel too tethered to it, but maybe use it as a guideline.

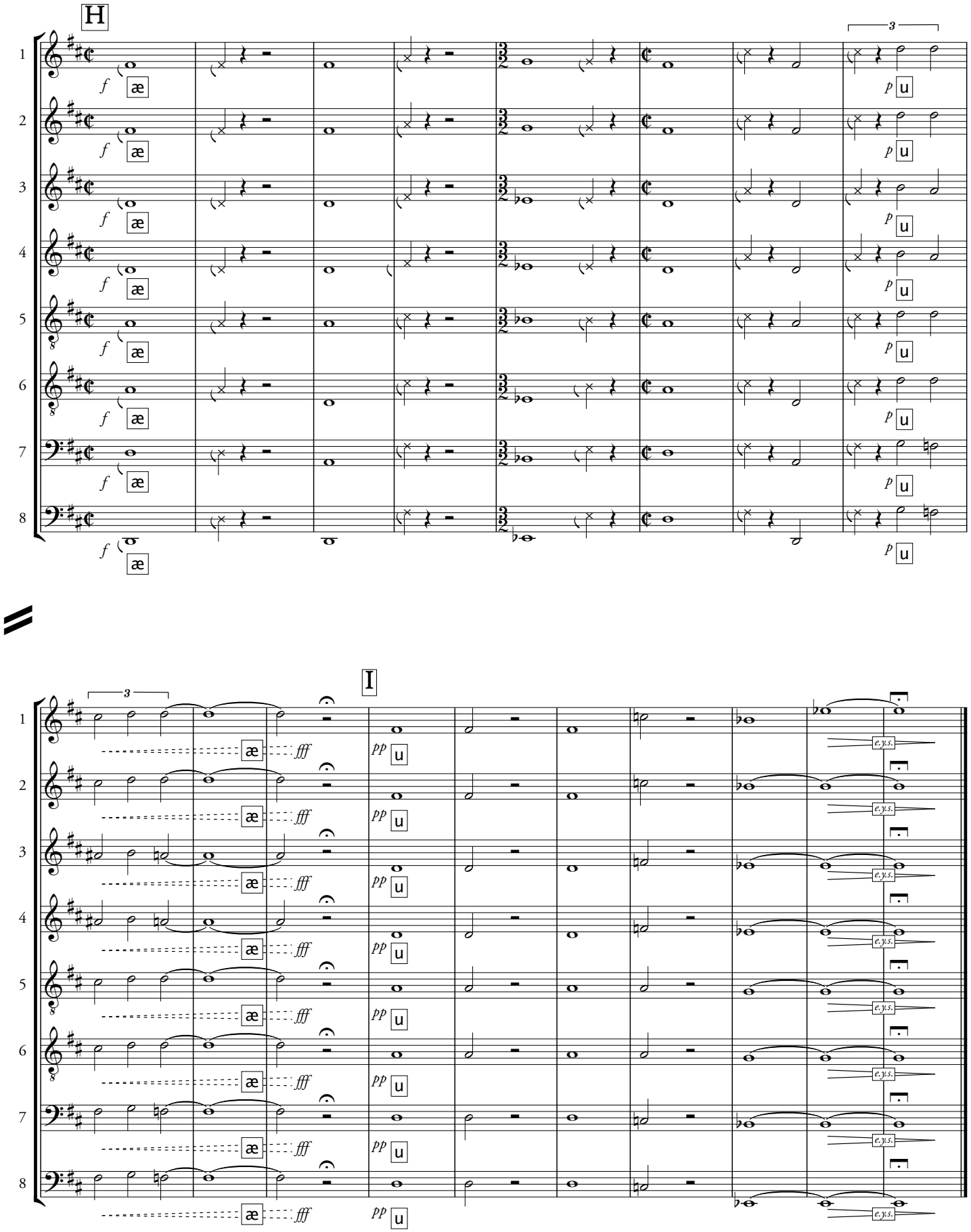


not for performance



Note for all:

All speaking descends to vocal fry. Big fat crescendo. Try to maintain the fry crackle as much as possible, without an overdramatic gliss.. (Microphones will help.)


H
I
æ
u
f
p
fff
pp
e.y.s.