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FORGOTTEN NAMES

by

Nicholas Sanders

B.M., Millikin University, 2017

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Music Degree

> School of Music in the Graduate School Southern Illinois University Carbondale May 2019

THESIS APPROVAL

FORGOTTEN NAMES

By

Nicholas Sanders

A Thesis Submitted in Partial

Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of

Master of Music

In the field of Theory and Composition

Approved by:

Dr. Christopher Walczak, Chair

Dr. Eric Mandat

Dr. Jessica Butler

Graduate School Southern Illinois University Carbondale April 9, 2019

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Nicholas Sanders for the Master of Music degree in Theory and Composition, presented on April 9, 2019, at Southern Illinois University Carbondale.

TITLE: FORGOTTEN NAMES

MAJOR PROFESSOR: Dr. Christopher Walczak

Forgotten Names is a fifteen-minute programmatic work for wind ensemble and electronics. The piece represents my aim to express conceptually the memories of human lives being lost with the passage of time. The two salient vehicles used to convey the concept are melodic motivic development and pre-recorded electronic audio accompanying the ensemble. The prerecorded electronics work in tandem with the ensemble and provide the audience with inferable aural symbolism. These audio samples are to be triggered by a percussionist by using the free, downloadable program, *Pure Data* along with a performance file provided by the composer. *Forgotten Names* also draws its influence from similar works by well-known American composers. The pitch material used in this work is derived from *On the Transmigration of Souls* by John Adams while the formal structure is influenced by Charles Ives's *The Unanswered Question*.

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INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo 2 Flute Alto Flute (G) Oboe English Horn (F) Bassoon Contrabassoon Clarinet (Eb) 2 Clarinet (Bb) Bass Clarinet (Bb) 2 Alto Saxophone (Eb) Tenor Saxophone (Eb)

> 4 Trumpet (Bb) 4 Horn (F) 2 Tenor Trombone Bass Trombone Euphonium Tuba

> > Piano Contrabass

4 Percussion Computer with Amplified Stereo Speakers (Perc. I)

Percussion I: Computer, timpani, wind chimes, suspended cymbal

- Percussion II: Snare drum (shared with perc. III), concert bass drum, suspended cymbal (shared with perc. III), medium tam-tam (shared with perc. III)
- Percussion IIII: Large marimba (shared with perc. IV), glockenspiel, chimes, bell tree, snare drum (shared with perc. II), tambourine, suspended cymbal (shared with perc. IV), medium tam-tam (shared with perc. II)
- Percussion IV: Large marimba (shared with perc. III), vibraphone with vibrato, crotales, medium and large toms, medium lead pipe (opt. break drum), suspended cymbal (shared with perc. III)

CHAPTER 1

MEANS OF COMPOSITION

Forgotten Names, an unspecific elegy for wind ensemble and electronics, expresses sentimentality for the memories of vibrant lives being lost and forgotten with the passage of time. In order to achieve this, I have employed various compositional techniques aimed to express the story. The two main compositional concerns were the overall form and the piece's pitch material. Both approaches to these concerns have been derived from musical works expressing similar concepts. The groundwork for pitch material in *Forgotten Names* originates from the opening measures of *On the Transmigration of Souls*, John Adams's Pulitzer Prize winning tribute to the lost lives of the September 11th terrorist attacks. This work has been described by the composer as a "memory piece" in which he juxtaposes a busy cityscape against the names of those lost in the tragedy.¹ Adams begins his piece with ambient recordings accompanying a boy's voice repeating the word "missing."² After a minute of recorded sound, the first musicians enter. The sonorities used in these opening measures consist of open fifths and fourths, producing a consonant, empty texture which lends itself to the haunting theme of the piece. The most active instrument in these measures is the harp, as shown in Figure 1. The six

Figure 1. Adam's On the Transmigration of Souls, measures 7-9, harp³



¹Thomas May, *The John Adams Reader: Essential Writings on an American Composer*. (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus, 2006), 191.

²John Adams, On the Transmigration of Souls for Orchestra, Chorus, Childrens Chorus and Pre-recorded Sounds (New York: Hendon Music, 2009), 1.

³Ibid.

pitches of the chords found in this Figure, arranged as a scale, produce a symmetric hexatonic collection (C-sharp – D – F – G-flat – A – B-flat). It is from this six-note collection that I have derived the pitch material used in my piece; however, *Forgotten Names* is not a memory piece, but rather a work lamenting the loss of one's memory.

In his book *The Structure of Atonal Music*, American music theorist Allen Forte gave this hexatonic collection the name of "6-20" which has a prime form of (014589).⁴ However, Forte does not order his pitches in the same manner as Adams. Adams uses the first transposition, T_1 (C-sharp – D – F – G-flat – A – B-flat), rather than the prime form, T_0 (C – D-flat – E – F – G-sharp – A). In order to pay homage to Adams, I primarily use T_1 , but I do use other transpositions of 6-20 throughout the piece. I chose this hexatonic collection based on the interval content. The abundance of both major and minor thirds along with other perfect consonances allows for both rich sonorous harmonies as well as open, somewhat hollow harmonies, as exemplified in the opening measures of Adams's work.

Forte's hexachord 6-20 is special because it can be heard as two augmented triads that are a semitone apart. This pitch-class set has special properties which allow it to invert and transpose onto itself. However, one drawback of using it as a content-generating primary collection is the lack of continuous half and whole steps. 6-20 does not contain any instances of multiple adjacent stepwise intervals. While this does allow for an array of unique harmonies, most melodies articulated by this collection seem to sound static and directionless based on the symmetry of 6-20. Given that, I decided to use a similar, closely related set to craft the musical lines in *Forgotten Names*. My melodies were created with the five-note set, Forte 5-6, prime form

⁴Allen Forte, *The Structure of Atonal Music* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980).

Figure 2. Prime Form



(01256), because of its similarity to 6-20 with the addition of another stepwise interval. This additional note expands my interval collection by adding a half-step as well as a whole-step, allowing me to construct melodic lines with more direction and less harmonic stasis.

Furthermore, since the two sets are closely related, the melodic character of 5-6 works well with the harmonic character 6-20. As shown in Figure 2, the prime form of 5-6 shares four notes with the first transposition of 6-20. Figure 3 shows another aspect of the relationship between the two sets; when the operation I_3 is applied to 5-6 (inverted then transposed by three semitones) the resulting transformation shares four tones with 6-20. The initial instance of 5-6 and its transformation at I_3 , when combined, produce all of the tones contained in 6-20 (T_1) along with two new notes outside the hexatonic collection.

The most prominent instance of 5-6 being used in *Forgotten Names* is in the main theme. The theme is a 17-note passage which contains four instances of 5-6. The theme is shown in its entirety in the horn solo in Figure 4. This line is a palindrome in terms of interval content and rhythm, with the ninth note, A, being the axis. It begins with 5-6 at I₃. Every note in the line is a Figure 4. *Forgotten Names*, measures 41-46, French horn, concert pitch. Inversional axis.

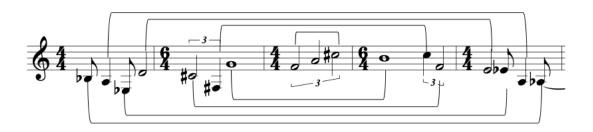




Figure 5. Forgotten Names, Measures 41-46, French Horn, Concert Pitch. 5-6 Collections

member of a particular 5-6 set with the exception of the ninth note (A). Figure 5 articulates the instances of 5-6. The first and second instances share two tones as do the last two instances. By constructing the main theme in this manner, the line grows organically out of the underlying pitch material and is distinctive enough to be recognizable in later appearances. The elisions found in this line allow for a fluid theme and go on to be used as melodic sequencing throughout the piece. In addition, the middle three pitches of the theme, F - A - C-sharp, create an augmented triad articulating the general structure of 6-20 as previously discussed. The augmented triad also serves as a connection between 5-6 and 6-20.

On the Transmigration of Souls influenced the pitch material of my piece while *The Unanswered Question* by Charles Ives influenced the form of the work. However, unlike my close association with the Adams composition in terms of pitch, the formal influence of *The Unanswered Question* was looser; I have used Ives simply as a reference to the possibilities for composing a fruitless quest for closure. In *The Unanswered Question*, Ives uses the solo trumpet melody shown in Figure 6 to propose a question. This question will be repeated, yet never changing, as the woodwinds attempt to answer the question. Over time, the woodwinds routinely fail to answer the question. Ives demonstrates this by composing passages similar to the trumpet melody but never exactly emulating it⁵. An example of this is the flute excerpt in Figure 7. Throughout this short chamber work, Ives uses these similar, but not quite the same, melodies

⁵Charles Ives, *The Unanswered Question* (New York: Southern Music Publishing, 1908), 3.

Figure 6. Charles Ives, The Unanswered Question, measures 38-39, trumpet solo⁶



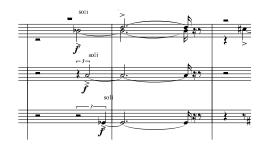
Figure 7. Charles Ives, The Unanswered Question, measures 41-43, flute⁷



as a means of further influencing other musical ideas. I have utilized this cause and effect concept in my work.

I have structured the form of *Forgotten Names* in such a question-and-answer pattern. I start by posing a melodic question, either by a solo instrument or by electronics. These moments will influence the material of the subsequent music played by the full ensemble just as in *The Unanswered Question*. For instance, the main theme of my piece is played in its entirety only once as the horn solo in measures 41 to 46. However, fragments of this theme appear in many iterations throughout the work, yet they never appear exactly as stated in the horn solo. One example of this is the trumpet soli in Figure 8. The pitches are in the correct order throughout the soli; however, the theme is passed between the four trumpets and the rhythms are altered in

Figure 8. Forgotten Names, measures 84-85, trumpets, concert pitch



⁶Charles Ives, *The Unanswered Question* (New York: Southern Music Publishing, 1908), 3. ⁷Ibid.

Figure 9. Forgotten Names, measures 41-42, French horn, concert pitch



Figure 10. Forgotten Names, measures 313-324, flute



comparison to the original. There are also many instances in which the theme appears in small snippets such as the horn solo in Figure 9. This short moment serves an interjection of the theme into the other music being played in those measures. There are many failed attempts to complete the theme, and fragments of the theme are scattered amongst the work. This concept culminates with the flute solo in the final measures (313-324). The solo, shown in Figure 10, is the final attempt at restating the theme. As it begins, it is faithful to the original, but by the fifth measure diverges (317). After this, the flute makes a few more attempts at finishing the line correctly before frustratingly giving up and fading out.

Forgotten Names prominently features pre-recorded electronic music. These electronic sounds represent the lives behind the forgotten names. The piece begins with ambient noise and chattering voices, similarly to *On the Transmigration of Souls*. The electronic sound at the beginning of the work can be distinguished as human voices as well as natural elemental sounds, but as the piece progresses these sounds become more crass and unnatural, utilizing sine waves and white noise. This evolution of the electronic sound represents the memory of vibrant lives washed away, dissolving into static. This is similar to *On the Transmigration of Souls*, in which

Adams gradually distorts the recorded voice of a boy saying the word "missing."⁸ In addition to the introduction of synthesized sounds, the human chatter (noticeably edited) undergoes a sequence of abrupt stops. This phenomenon serves as a representation of the vivid lives being reduced to nothing but noise, paralleling the thematic redaction symbolizing the names being forgotten.

The prerecorded sounds are to be triggered on a computer by the first percussionist using the program *Pure Data. Pure Data* is freeware easily downloadable on the internet. I have created a performance file (patch) to be used with the performance which can be supplied via email, flash drive or any other electronic means. The first percussionist will see buttons that will trigger each of the prerecorded moments. Each sound file can be abruptly stopped if need be, and the overall volume can be adjusted by a slider control. Aside from the computer and the downloadable materials, the only other electronic equipment needed for performance is a set of amplified stereo speakers powerful enough to project throughout the concert venue. Technical instructions are included in the score's program note.

In addition to the aforementioned pieces by Adams and Ives, much of the orchestration in this work has been inspired Augusta Read Thomas's piece for wind ensemble, *Magneticfireflies*.⁹ I was attracted to her use of bright colors and elaborate polyphonic (approaching heterophonic) orchestration. I use similar orchestrational techniques to represent the vibrancy of the human

⁸John Adams, On the Transmigration of Souls for Orchestra, Chorus, Childrens Chorus and Pre-recorded Sounds (New York: Hendon Music, 2009).

⁹Augusta Read Thomas, *Magneticfireflies* (New York City, NY: G. Schirmer, 2003).

lives. Other influences came from various pedagogical orchestration books for wind ensemble scoring such as Clair W Johnson's *Practical Scoring for the Concert Band*.¹⁰

Forgotten Names is a work that expressesses the anxiety of mortality and the fear of our lives being left behind with the passage of time. Built on the compositional approaches of masters like Ives, Adams, and Thomas, *Forgotten Names* is an attempt to expand on the form and use of materials found in these works. It is an elegy designed to create an impression that our lives and names will dissipate and vanish as time unfolds.

¹⁰Clair W. Johnson, *Practical Scoring for the Concert Band* (Dubuque, IA: WM. C. Brown Company Publishers, 1961).

CHAPTER 2

SCORE

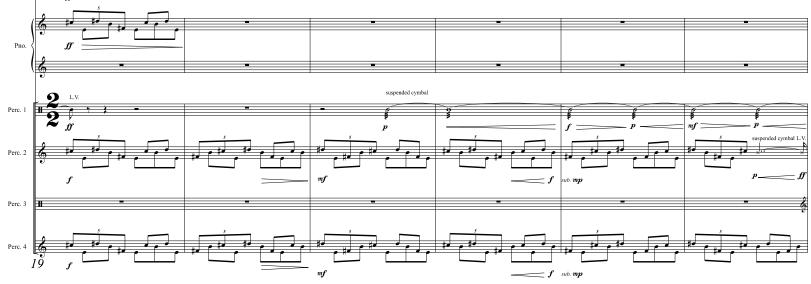




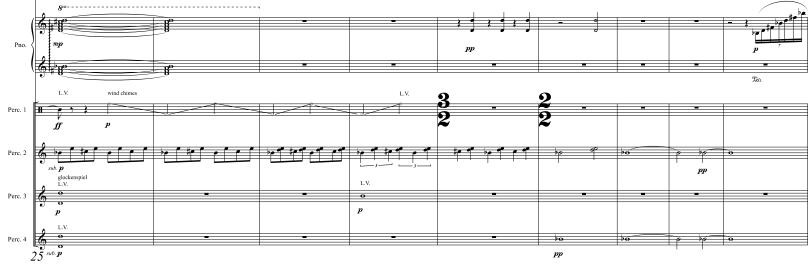














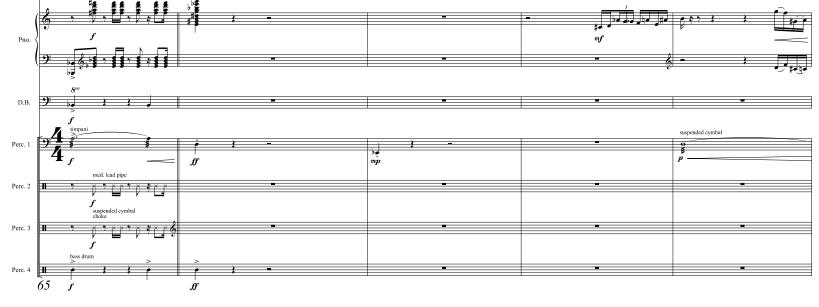




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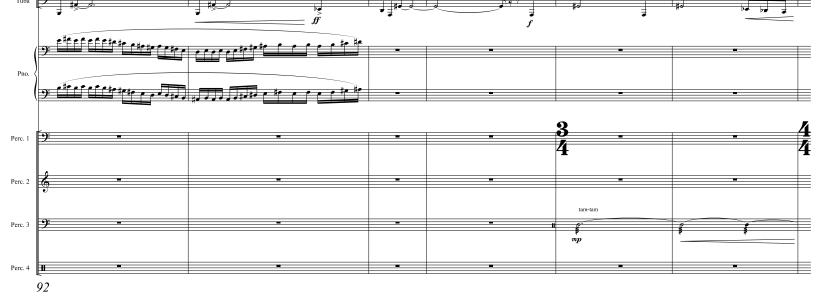


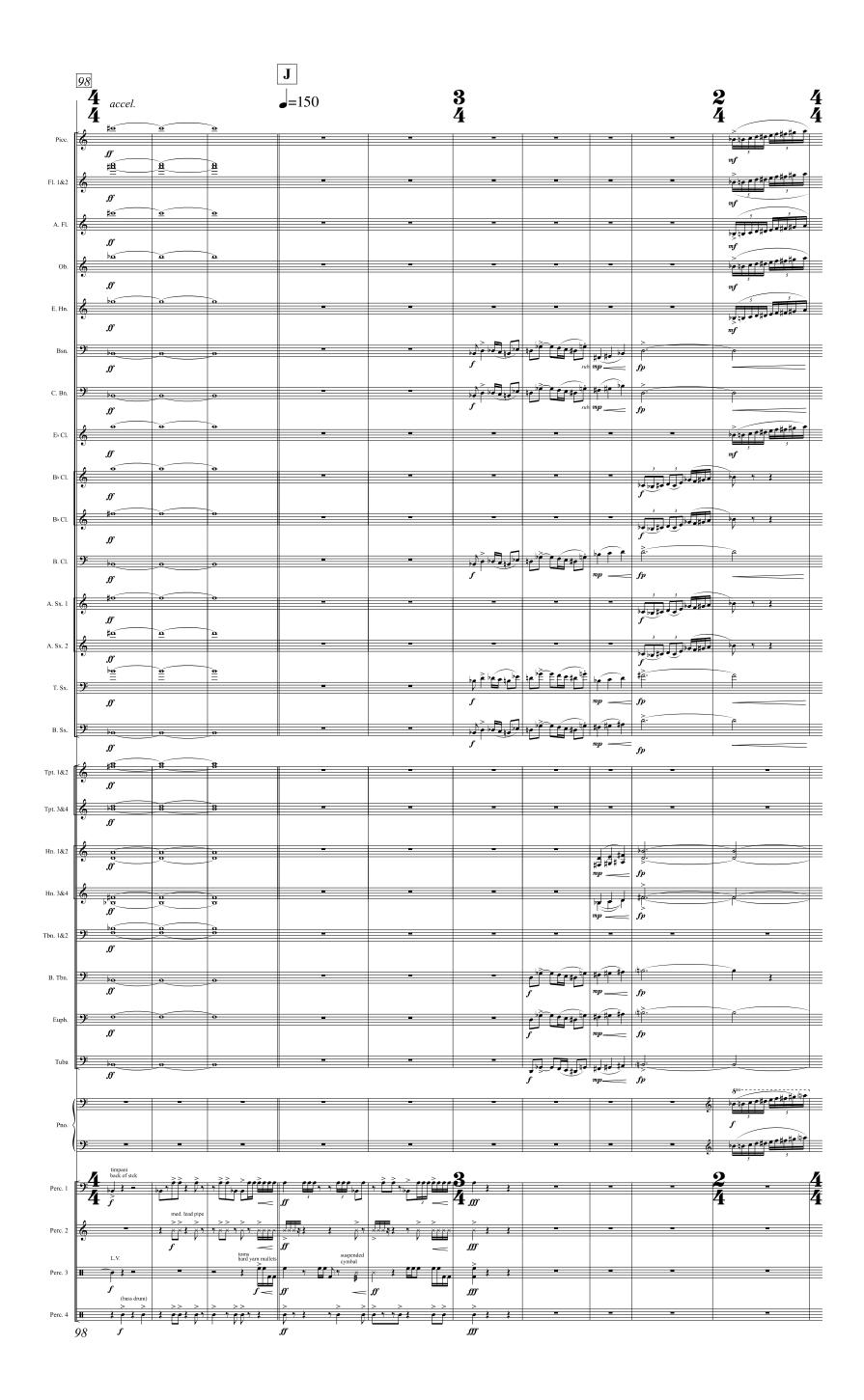






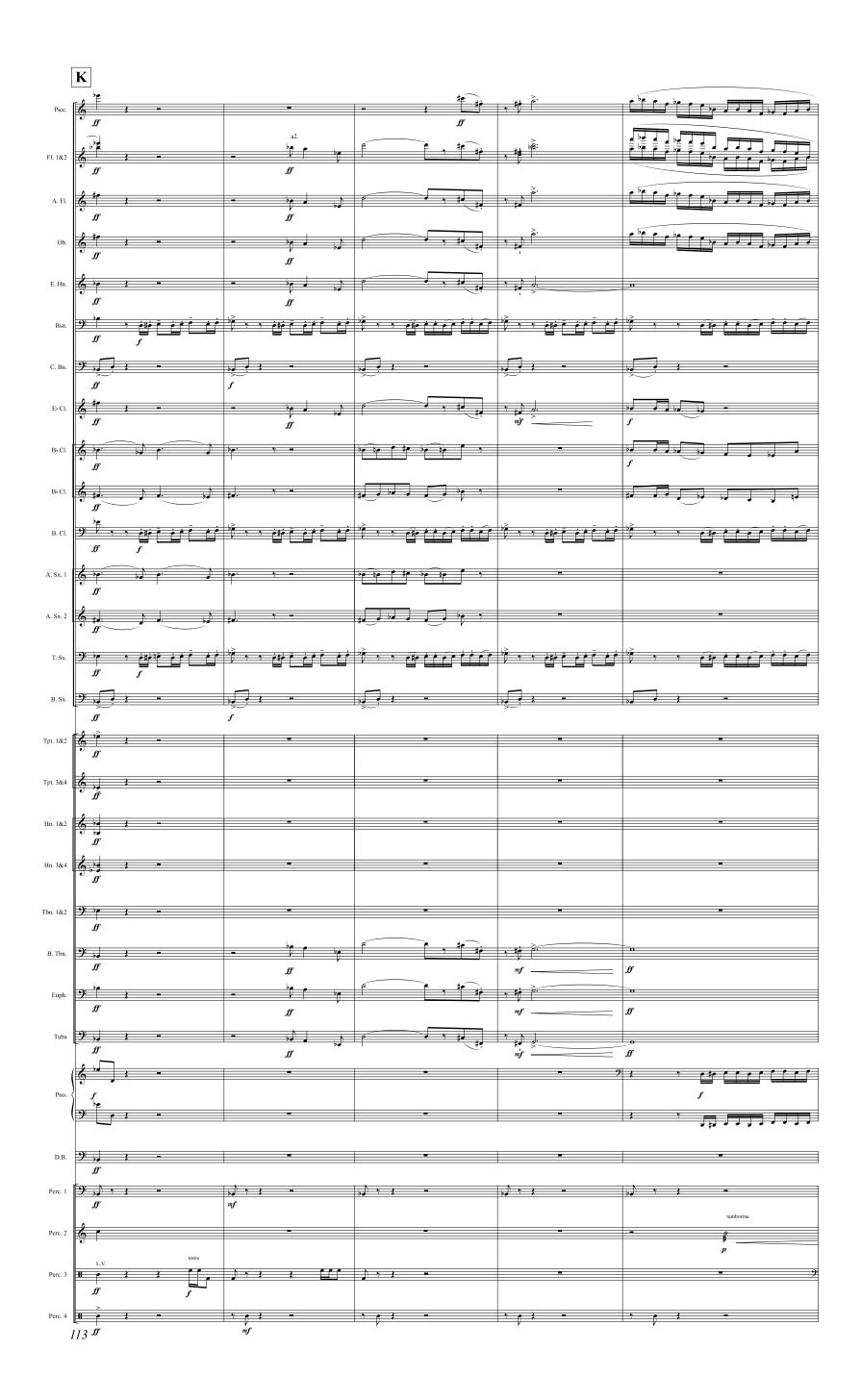
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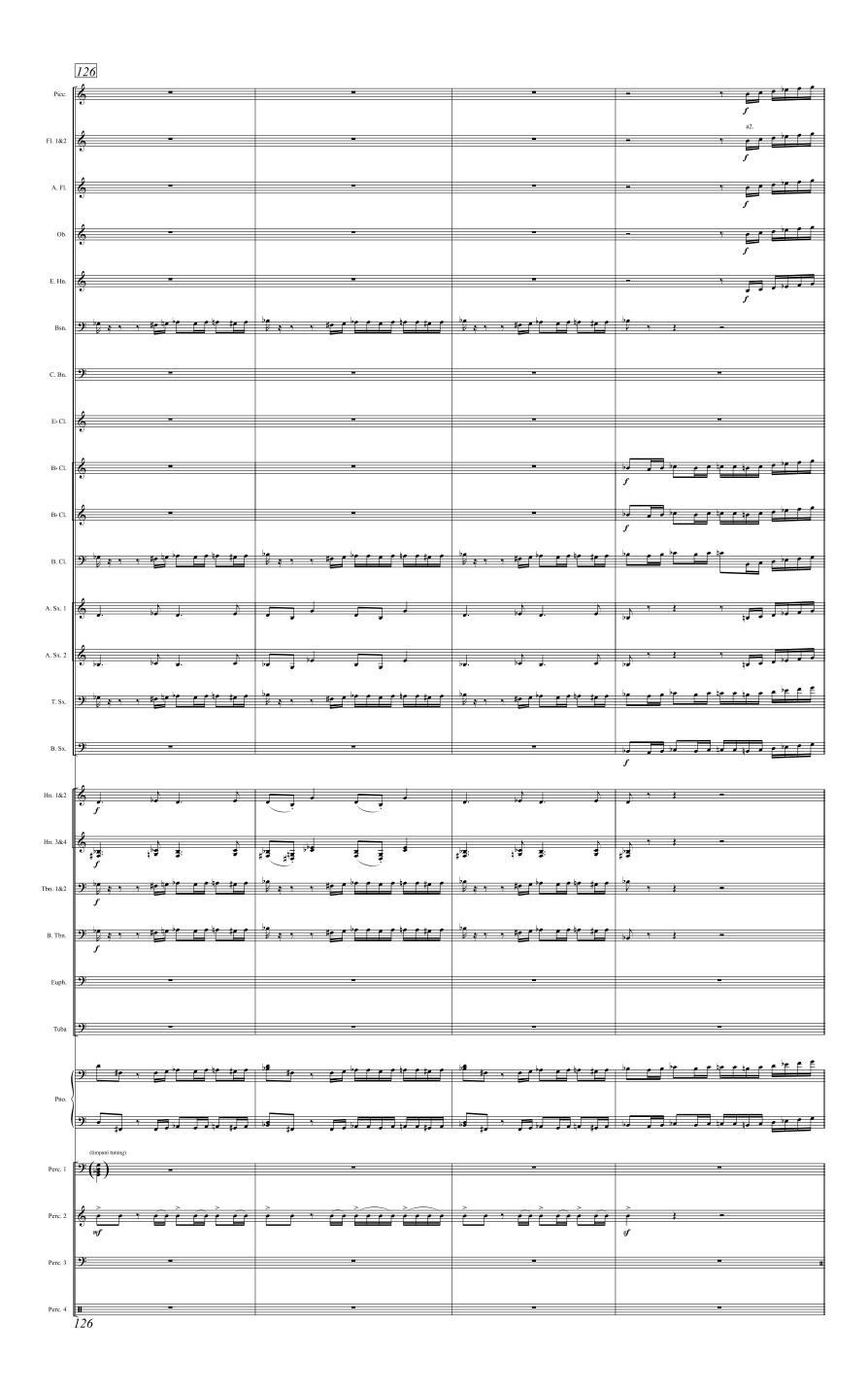


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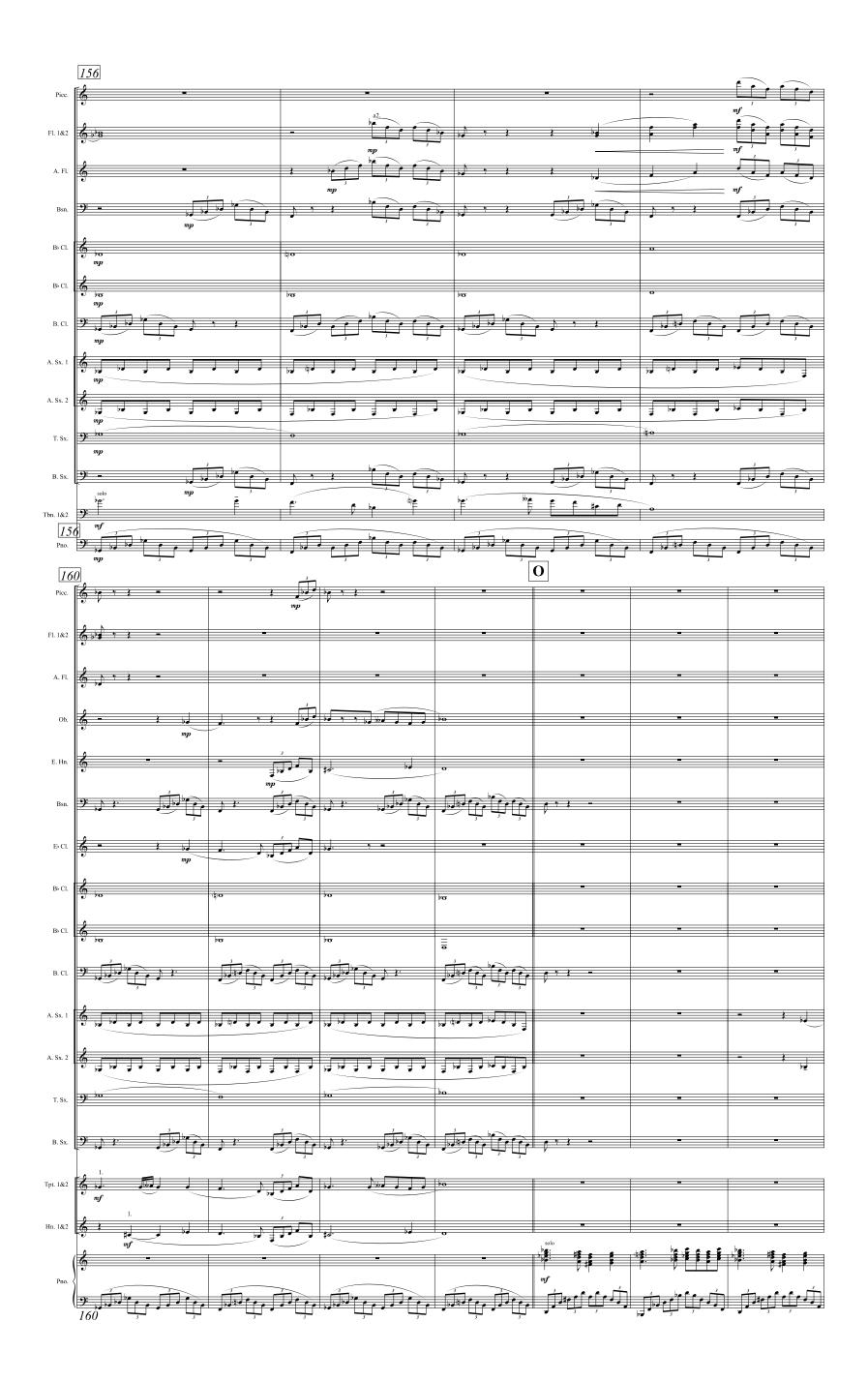


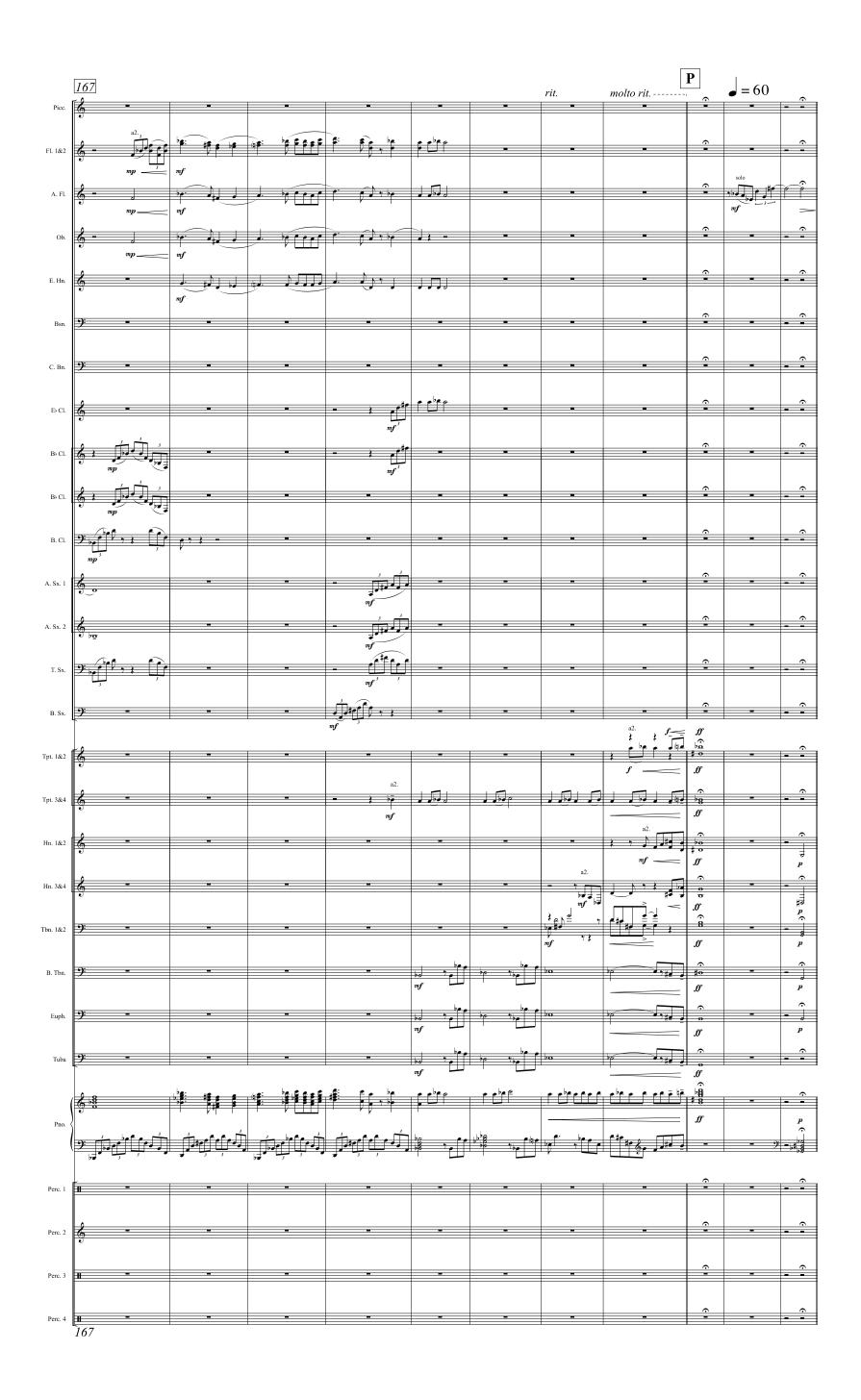


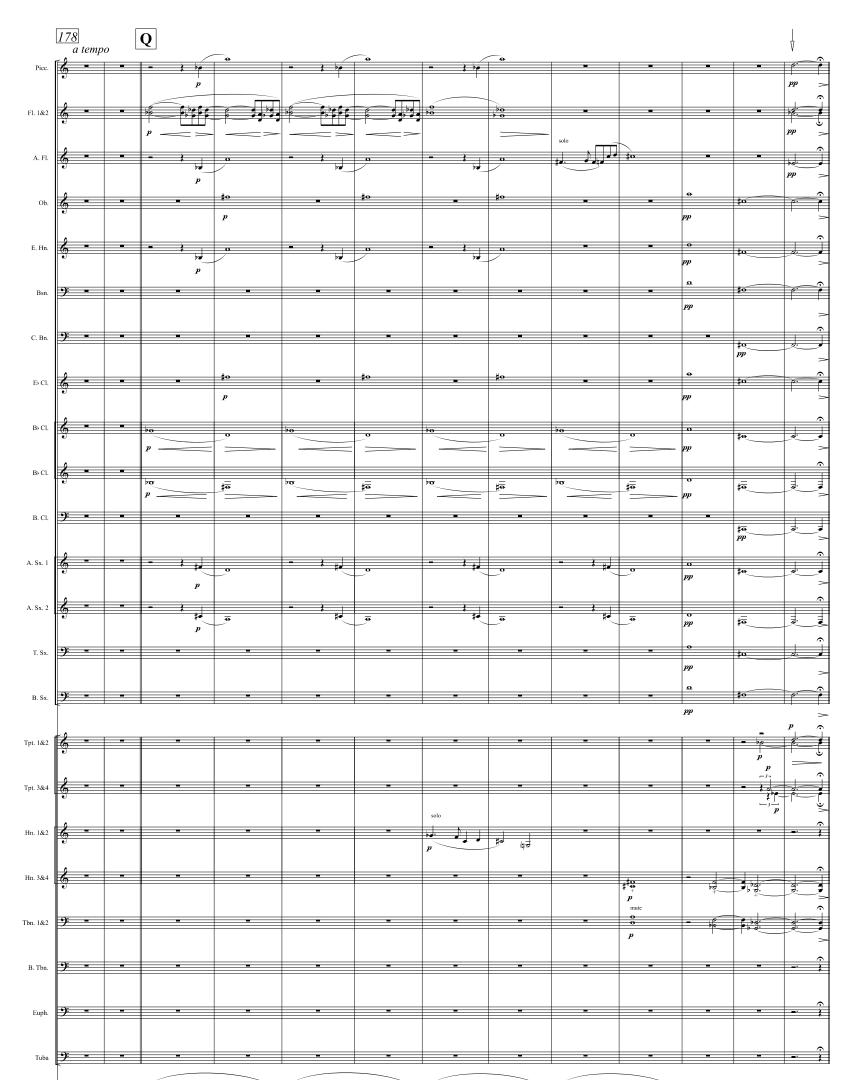


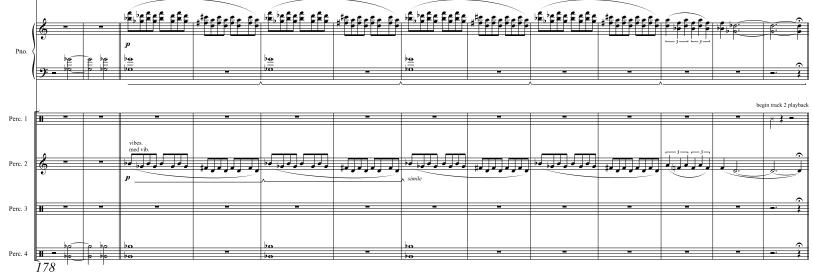


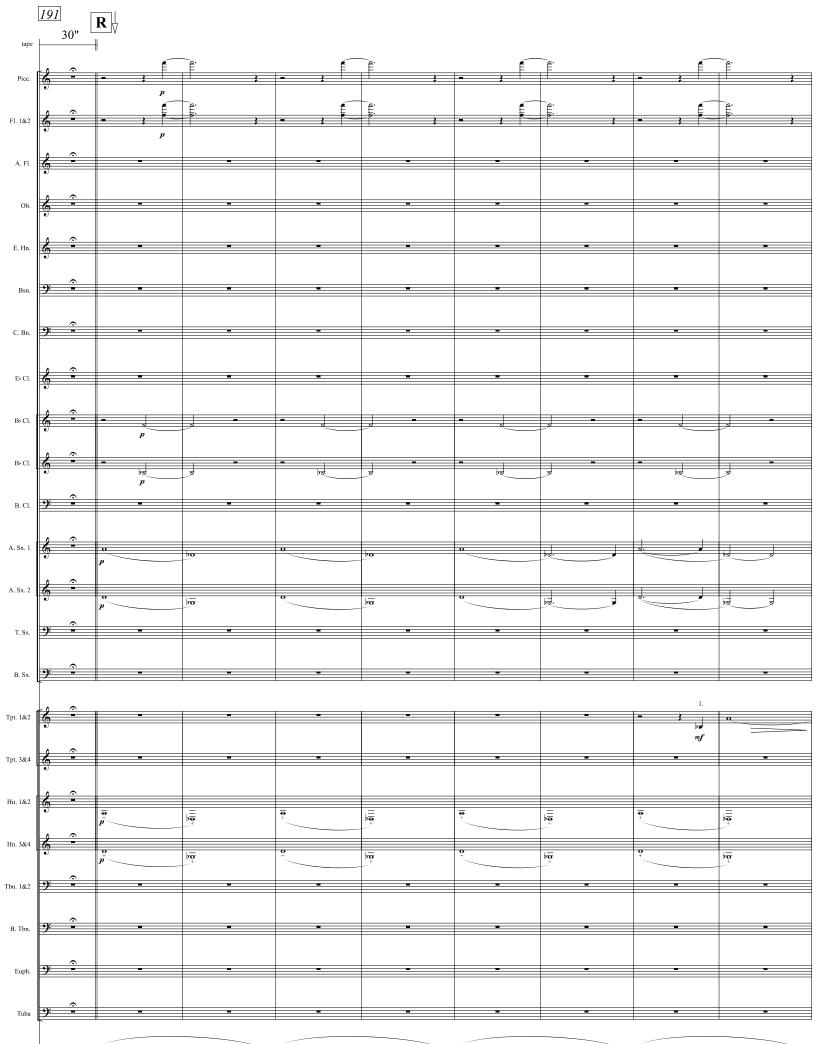




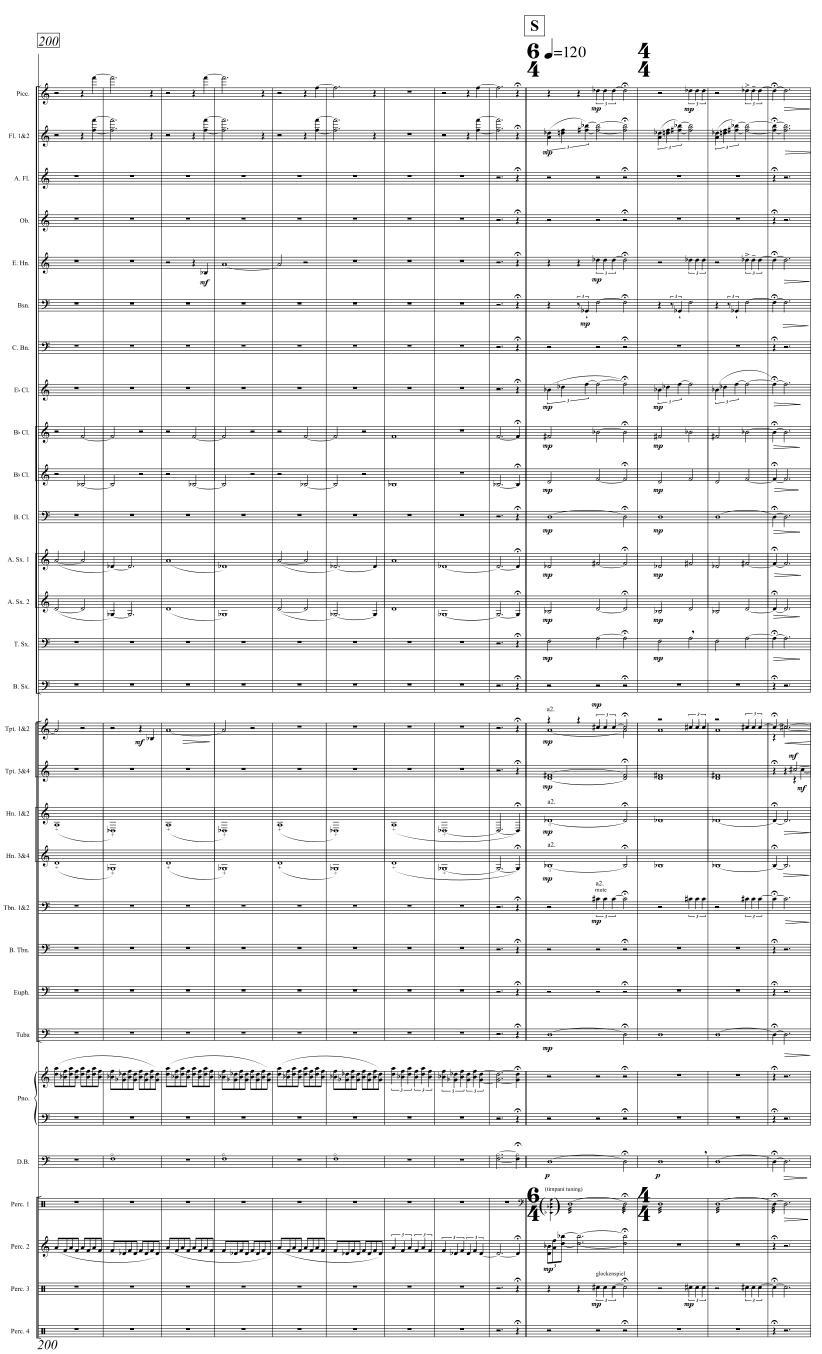


























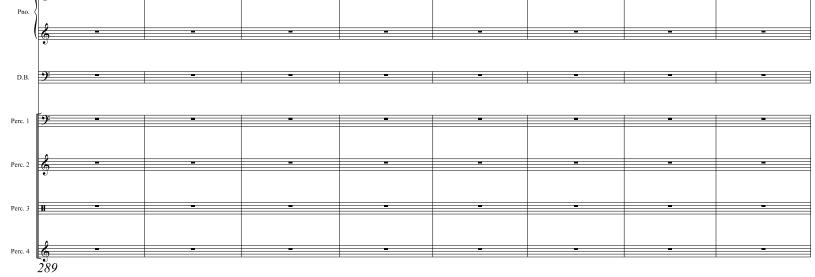
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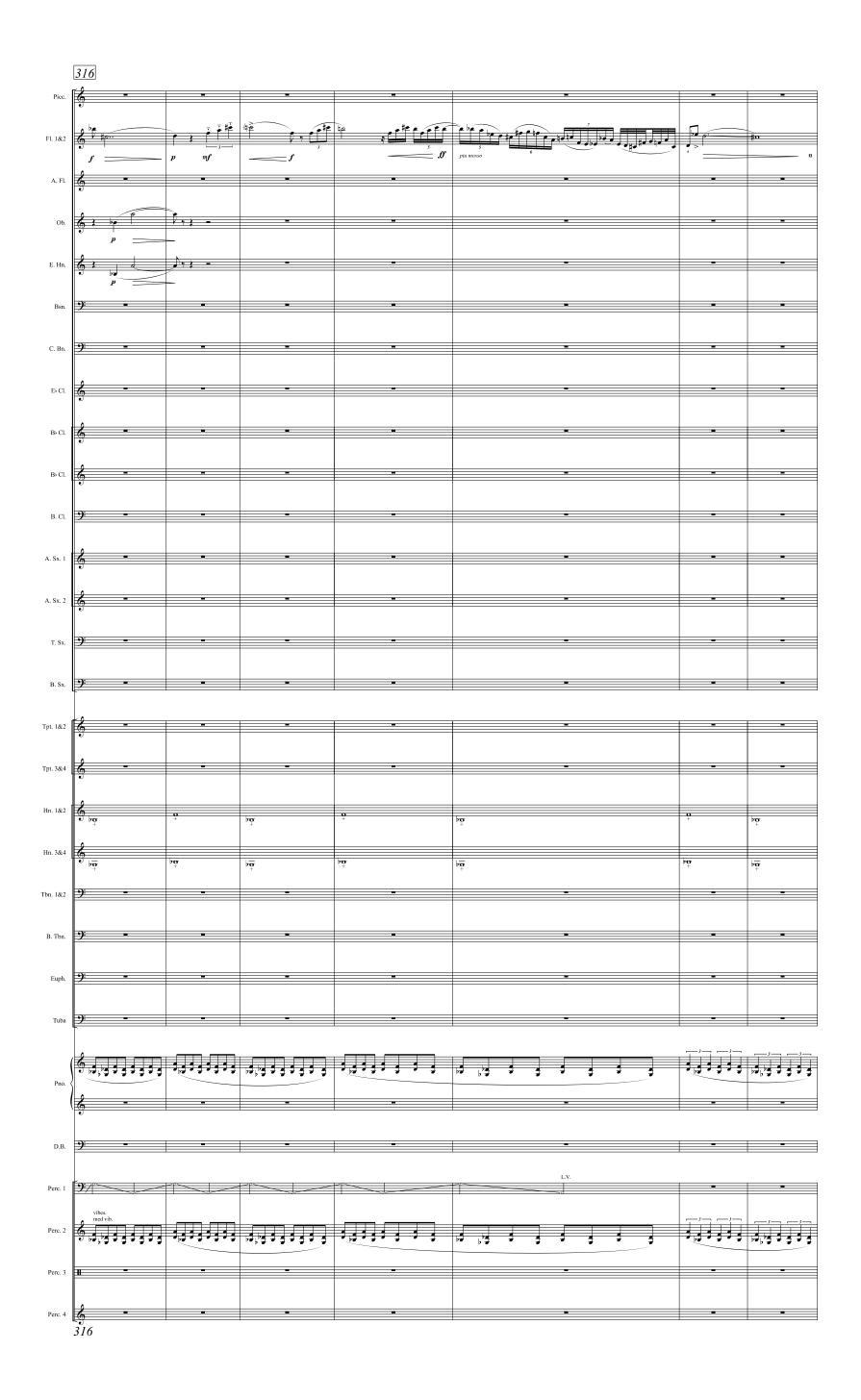


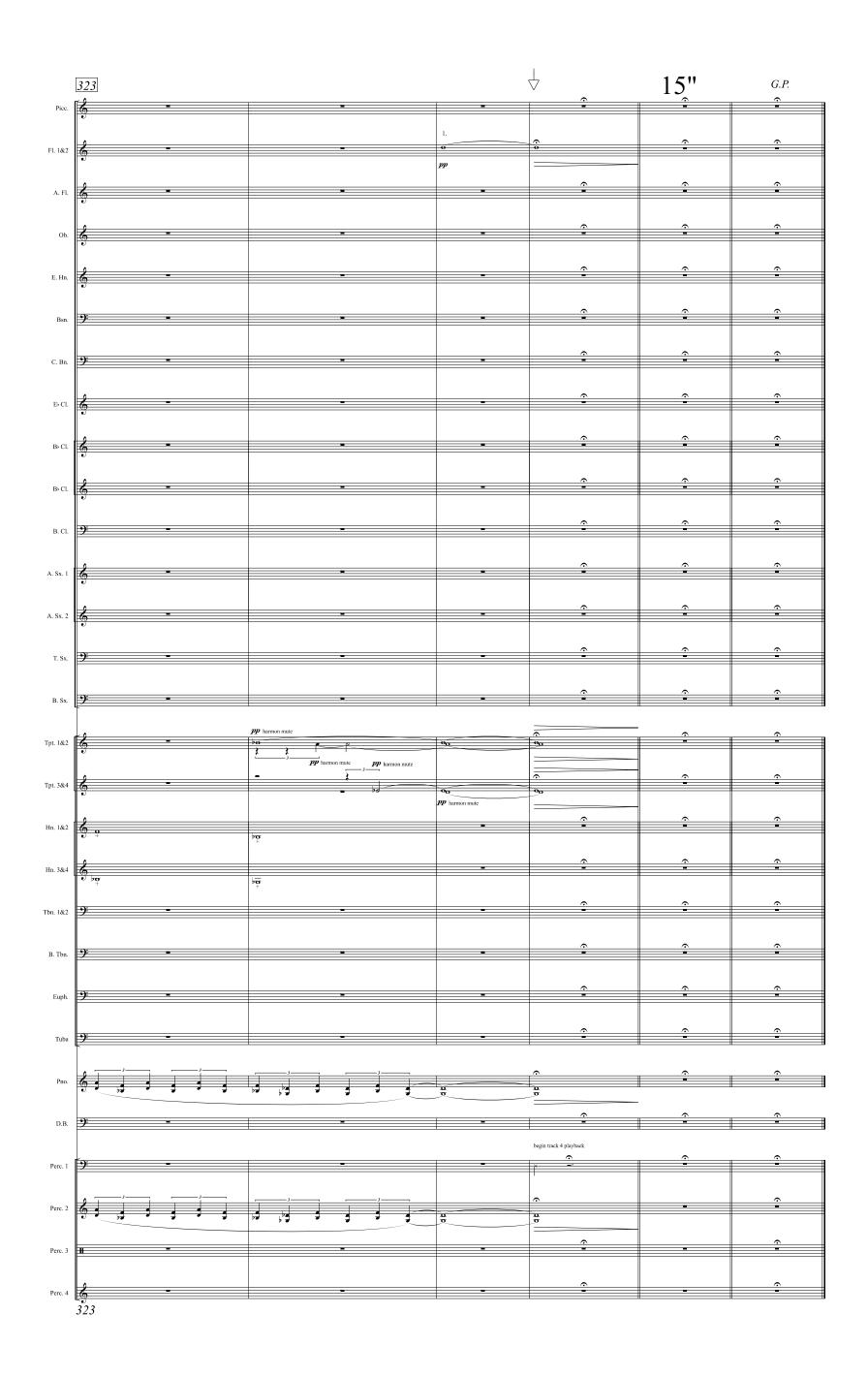












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