At the Cross:
Lamentations of Three Marys

Music and Lyrics by Vanessa McClintock

For soprano, mezzo-soprano, contralto, and piano.

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At the Cross: Lamentations of Three Marys

This work, part of the *Bible Women* series, is based on John 19.

Started in early December 2024 (just after having completed "The Lord's Prayer" for SMTB), this trio represents three women at the crucifixion of Jesus: Mary, His mother; Mary Magdalene; and Mary, wife of Clopas. There was a fourth, the sister of the mother, but she is not represented here.

All three Marys sat at the base of the cross, sharing each other's grief and caring for each other and the Saviour, as best they could.

The text consists simply of "Oh" and "Ah"—no text or quotes from the Bible—representing the wailing, the laments of three women grieving a great loss.

Voice assignments are soprano: Mary Magdalene; mezzo: Mary, wife of Clopas; and contralto, Mary mother of Jesus, whose range is from low F3 to high D5. In "Mary's Lullaby," the first composed of this set of *Bible Women*, Mary is a soprano. There, she is a teenage mother, while here she is middle-aged.

As with nearly all of my mature works, this has a good deal of what might be construed as "bitonality." I truth, though, it is based on terraces of common harmonies that share diminished 7th chords. For example, the upper register might have a C major chord, what the lower register has an Eb major chord. Each shares the same dim 7th chord: B-D-F-Ab. This work has more singular tonality than others in my developed history, and also features some harmonies based on fourths and fifths, rather than thirds. You also will find many instances of "cross-relations," i.e. one voice singing , A-natural while another voice sings Ab, etc.

Most of the accompaniment consists of sparse static chords, with little polyphonic movement, and much is sung *a cappella* (without accompaniment at all).

Vanessa McClintock, composer
December 2024

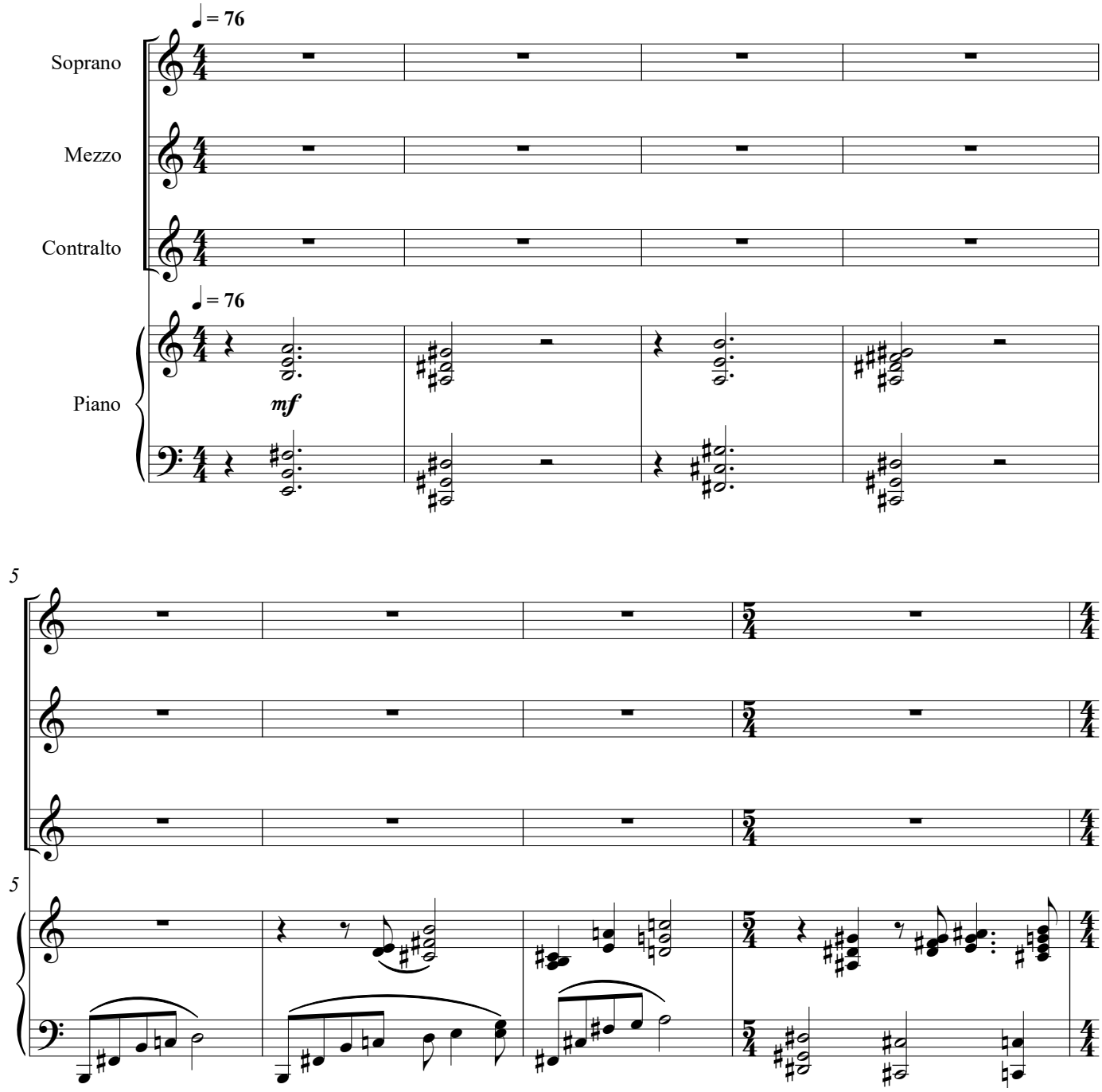
At the Cross: Lamentations of Three Marys

from John 19

King James Version, Holy Bible

Vanessa McClintock

Mary, Mother of Jesus; Mary Magdalene; Mary, wife of Clopas
Contralto Soprano Mezzo



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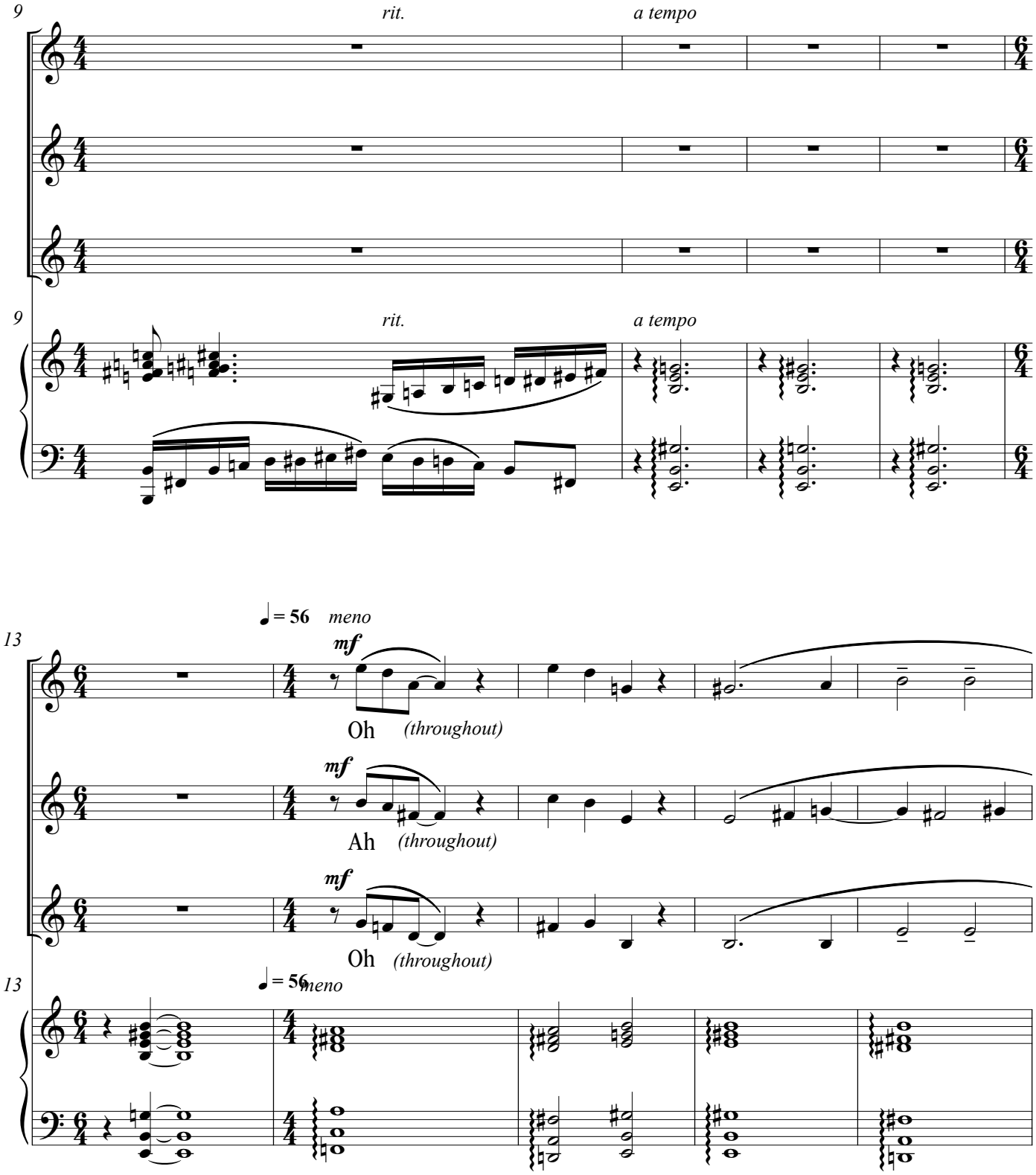

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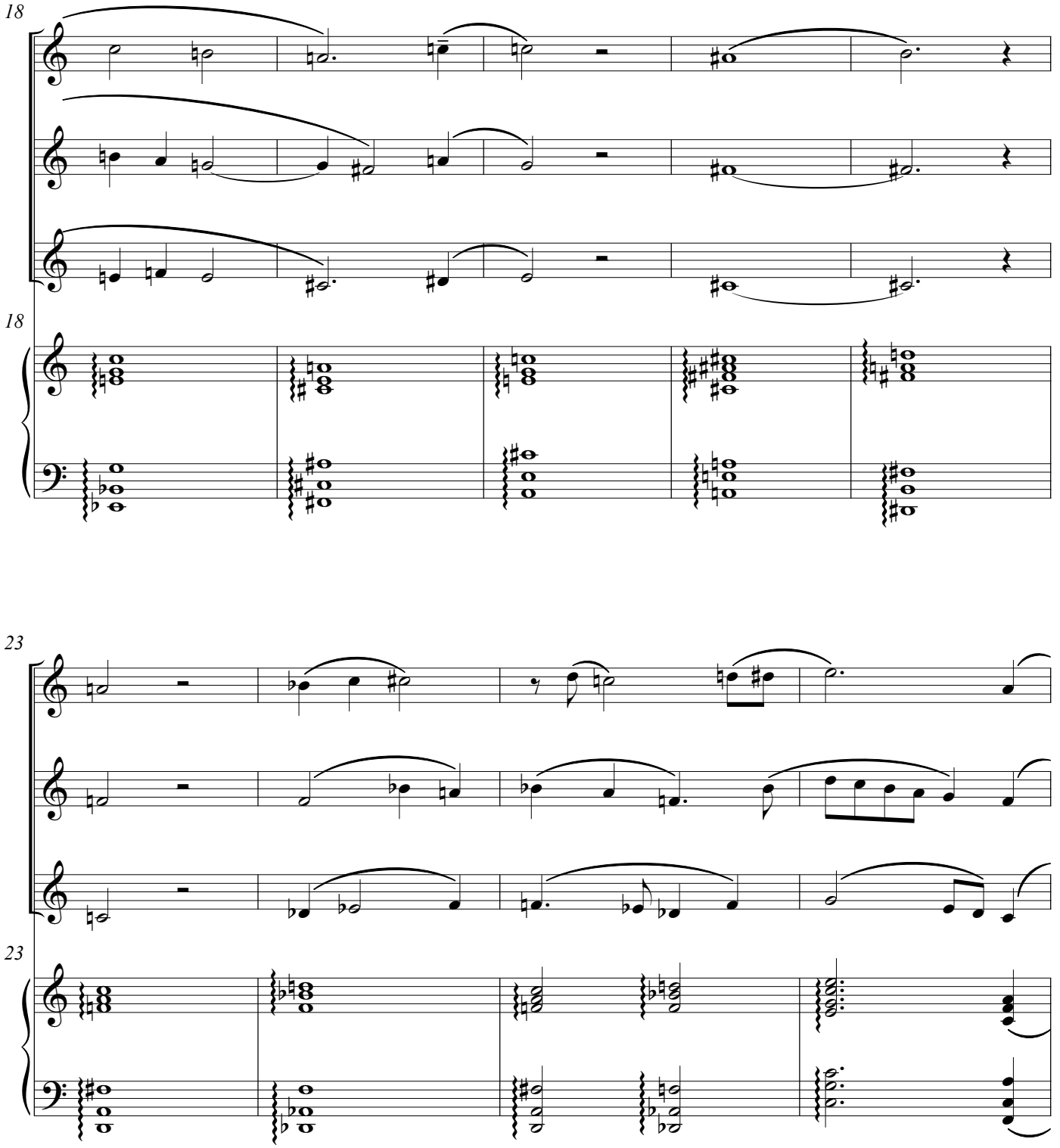

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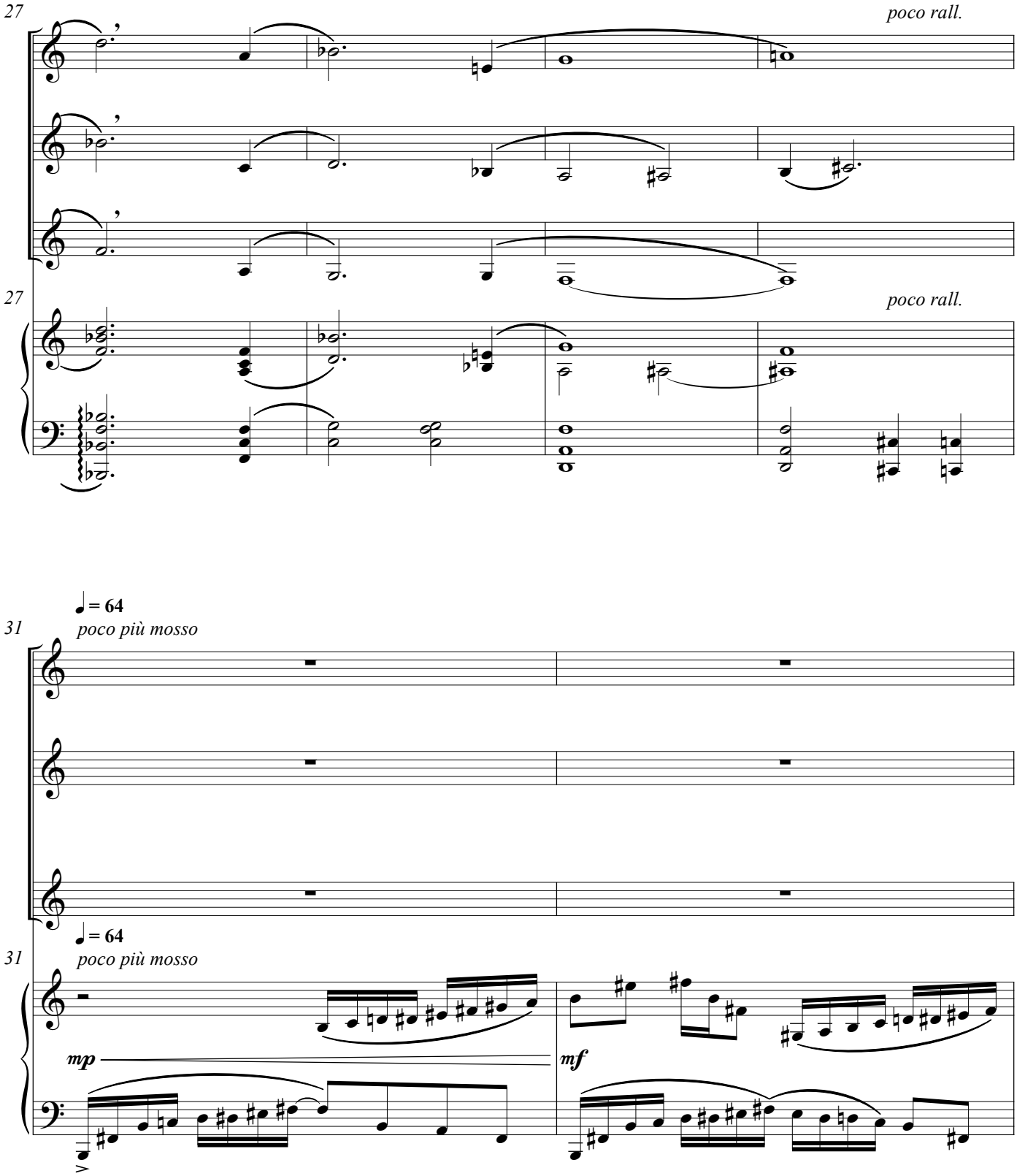

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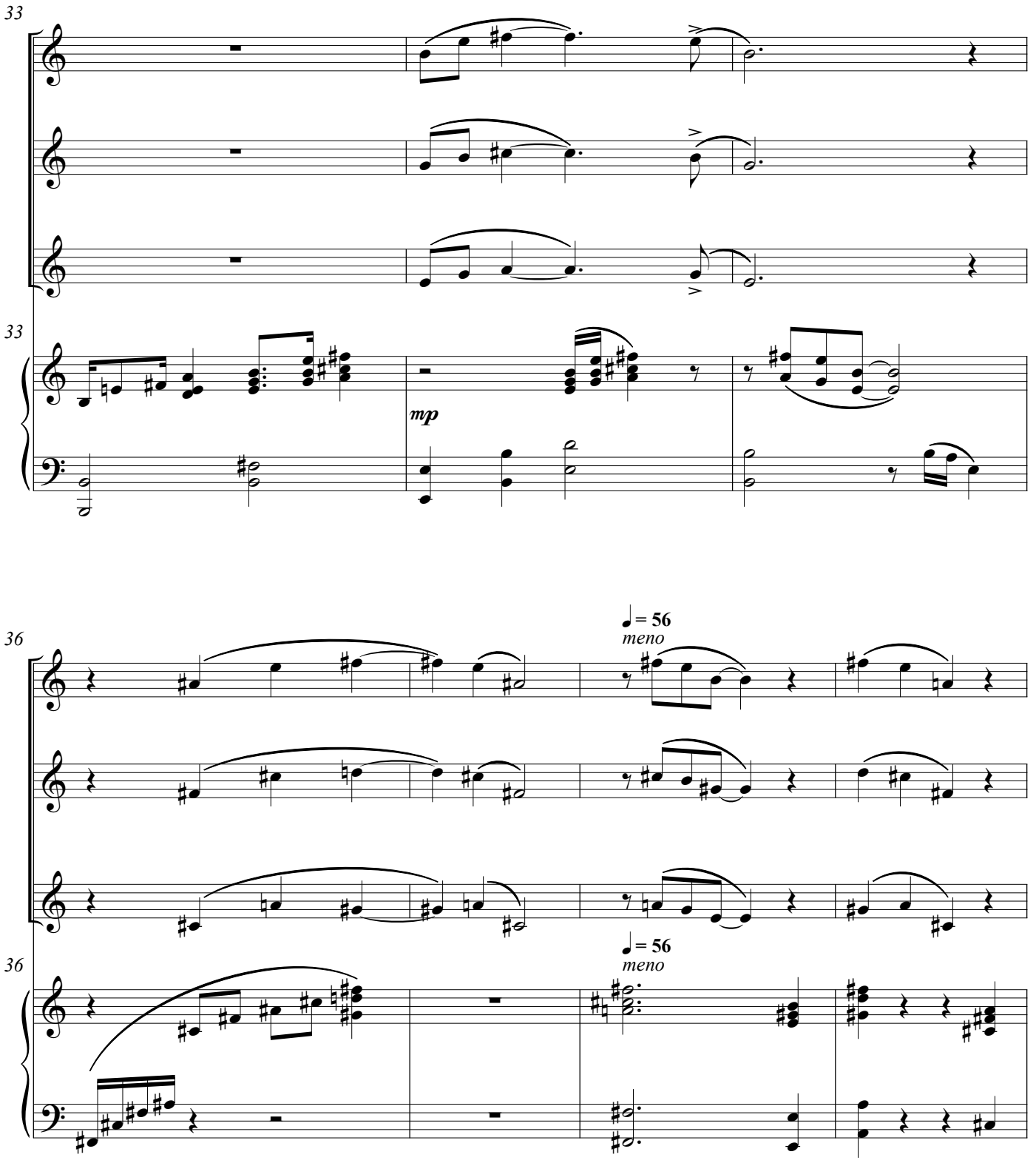

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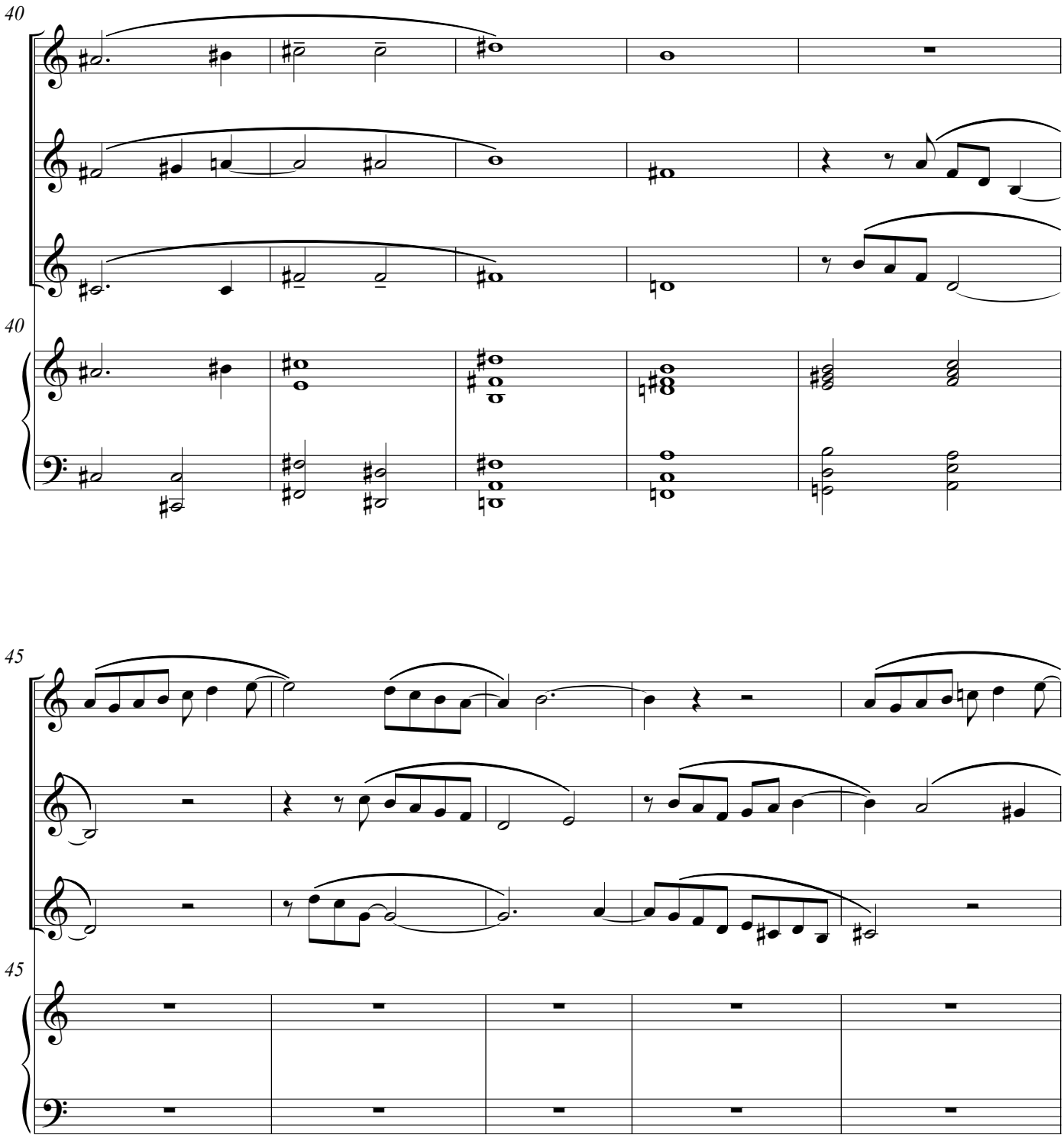

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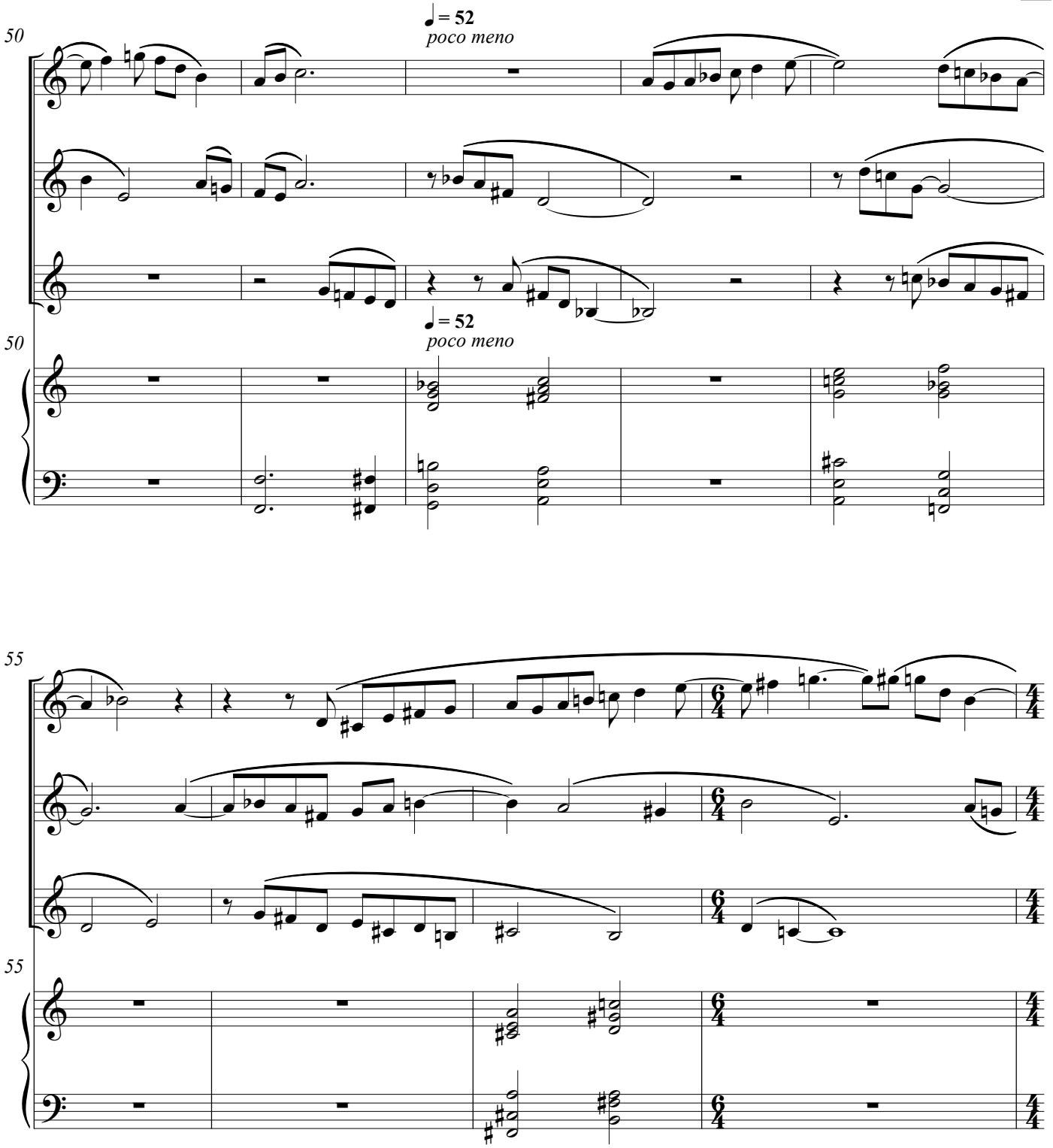

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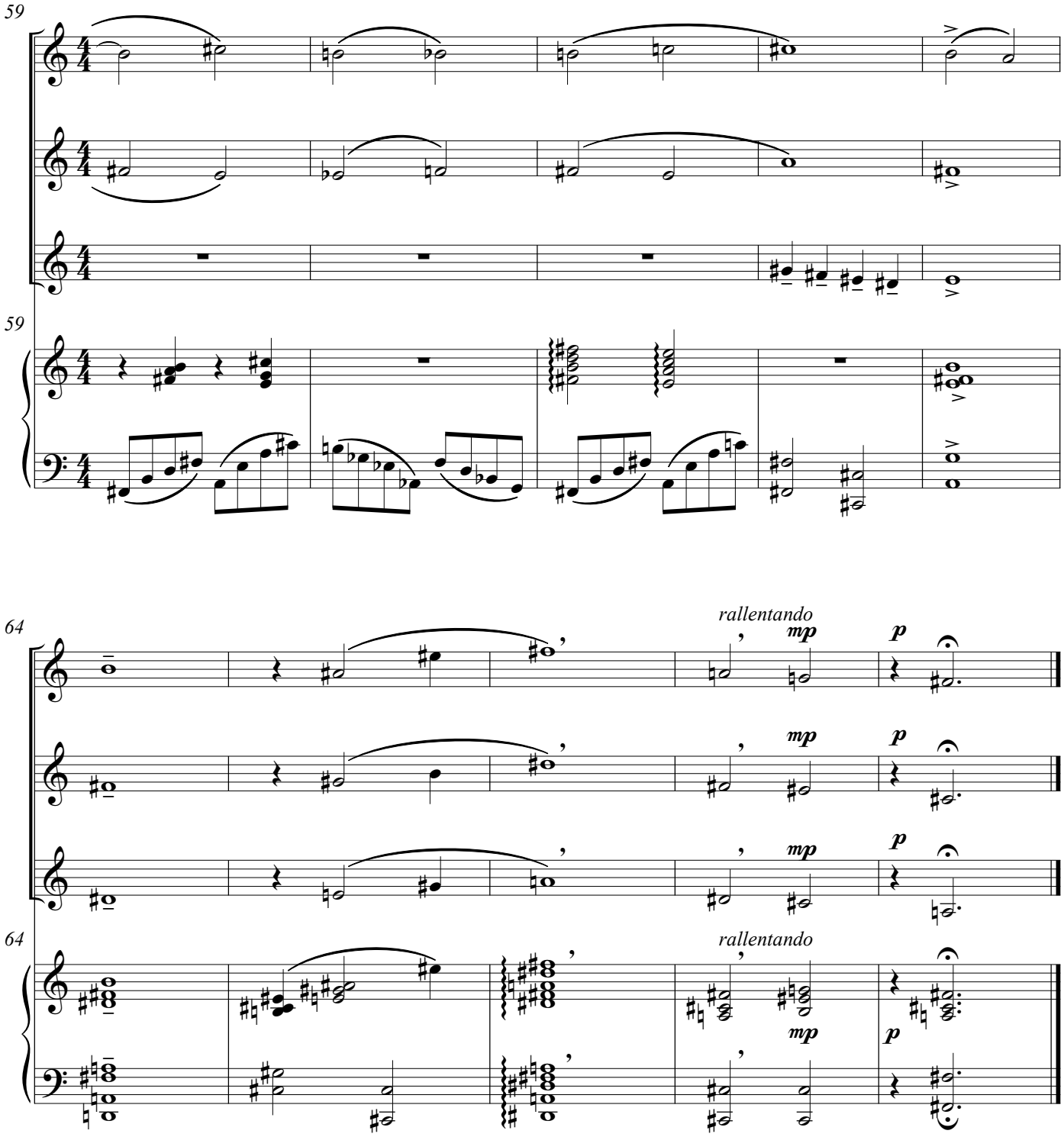

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