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A SERIES OF FIVE GRADED SELECTIONS FOR
STRING ENSEMBLE(REPRESENTING
DEVELOPMENT AT THE END OF EACH YEAR
FOR FIVE YEARS)

RAYMOND M. HASLAM

1958

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A SERIES OF FIVE GRADED SELECTIONS FOR STRING ENSEMBLE (REPRESENTING DEVELOPMENT AT THE END OF EACH YEAR FOR FIVE YEARS)

by

Raymond M. Haslam

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree

of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Music Education

1958

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE
Logan, Utah

H 2741

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The writer wishes to make sincere recognition of the valuable assistance given by the late Dr. N. W. Christiansen in the selection and formulation of the problem of this thesis.

Acknowledgment is gratefully expressed to Professor John Philip Dalby, Chairman of the Thesis Committee, for his efficient and inspiring guidance during the composition of this work. His many hours in helping to bring this project to a satisfactory conclusion are greatly appreciated. Also, much gratitude goes out to the other members of the Thesis Committee, Dr. E. A. Jacobsen, Dr. L. G. Noble and Professor H. R. Reynolds, and to Dr. J. Stewart Williams, Dean of the Graduate School, for their very helpful contributions and willingness to make themselves available when advice was needed.

Many student musicians and music teachers participated in the experimental phases of this study. To them, sincere appreciation is offered. Without their help and reactions, the compositions of this study could not have been tried and proven.

The writer also feels deeply indebted to a quintet of string performers who made themselves available for the recording of the compositions of this project so that they could be played for the Thesis Committee. This proved of inestimitable value as a part of the final examination.

Raymond M. Haslam

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INTRODUCTION

The problem involved in this project is the composition of a series of selections for string ensemble. The series is comprised of five sections, each to parallel general achievement of the string students at the end of each year for five years. The degree of advancement one year over another is based not upon the slow student, nor the student who learns extremely fast. Nor is it graded to meet achievement of students who have been afforded a large amount of private instruction over the five years. Rather, it is based upon the growth and development, as observed by the writer, in a group of students of the Ogden City Schools. The writer believes that this would be typical of youngsters in other systems. Also, it is generally agreed upon by string music educators that a group of violins will reach a higher degree of proficiency over a given period of time than will the lower strings, viz., cellos and string basses. This fact has been kept in mind in the writing of these ensembles.

The first selection is elementary in nature written to match the achievement of the student after one year of experience on his instrument. The second is graduated to match achievement attained to after two years experience, and so on down to the fifth selection which has been written for students with approximately five years experience on their instruments.

The instruments comprising the ensemble are violin, viola, cello and bass violin. All third violin parts may be played by viola and all viola parts are written within the range of the violin as a third violin part. At times it becomes necessary to double third violins with the violas in order to balance the parts. There will be very few, if any, violas in the first and second year group. It is generally advisable to give them training on the violin primarily and then convert them over to viola.

There have been traditional string ensembles written ever since the time of Mozart, Hayden, Beethoven and Brahms. However, writing for school ensembles is comparatively new, particularly on the first, second and third-year level.

In 1948, the music department of the University of Illinois under the direction of Wolfgang Kuhn and in cooperation with the Illinois State Unit of American String Teacher's Association, undertook to compile a list of available literature for string orchestra. From a list of over 40 publishers, there were approximately 20 folios and 15 incidental selections provided to match ability of students with one, two and possibly three years experience. This is in comparison with hundreds of works for groups of more mature development.

The leading string combination has been the quartet--two violins, viola and cello. The term string ensemble differs from the quartet in that it includes the bass violin and possibly another violin part doubling with the viola. Also, ensemble music is written to be performed by a group of strings, more than one to a part, while the quartet is limited to four performers.

For years string ensemble consisted of melody played by the first violin accompanied by the other instruments. However, composers were not long in seeing the possibilities of affording all of the members a similarity in tone quality and an equally distributed flexibility in musical expression. It has been with this thought in mind that these compositions have been written.

The need for this study is a functional one. The compositions have been written to be played, and by students of the ability level indicated. This functional need became apparent in the spring of 1956 when a group of 80 students of first and second-year ability were invited to participate as a string ensemble in a spring music festival sponsored by the Weber College music department. Providing music for a group of this kind was a problem. The first two parts of this project were written to provide music with which to meet that invitation. The other three divisions have been used by smaller groups.

Much effort is bent towards writing new music at the various achievement levels of band organizations, but little, comparatively speaking, for the string groups of grade school and early junior high age. Re-arrangements of older music literature are frequently brought forth in folios, but very little new music is

available, particularly for the grade school groups.

Many problems have to be considered in writing music for the experience levels of this project. In the first place, a knowledge of composition and general procedure is a necessity. Such elements as bowing, fingerings, position work, rhythm and tempo are of prime importance in keeping the particular selection within the ability level. Attention has been drawn to the introduction of certain of these problems in the introductory statements of each of the sections of this thesis, so that analyzation will be ommitted here. In order to better correlate the material contained within the compositions with regular instructional materials received by the students during the first two years, the C. Paul Herfurth "Tune-a-Day"[1] string method, books one and two, was selected to gear the first two sections to. In general, each book represents the culmination of a year's experience.

At the end of the second year, methods of teaching on the part of the teacher and learning on the part of the student, mushroom in such a variety of ways that it is difficult to continue a set course. As a result, the final three selections are of a general nature, written to parallel general achievement at the end of the particular year. A great deal of training during the third, fourth, and fifth years is directed towards refining and improving techniques already introduced during the first two years. The most important addition to this is the work in the positions of the instrument. On the stringed instruments, there are any number of places along the neck where the hand may be located in order to produce the desired note. The latter compositions of this thesis provide work in this field.

It has been the intention of the composer to provide material of musical value as well as material of problem challenge. Each section has been written to provide a little different type of music than the previous. The first, THE

[1]Permission granting right to mention C. Paul Herfurth's "Tune-a-Day" string method was received in a letter from the Boston Music Co., dated March 22, 1956.

SEASONS, is a little suite of four short selections, each depicting a season of the year—winter, spring, summer and autumn. The second, SUNRISE TO SUNSET, is a tone poem describing the sunrise, general activities of the day and the sunset. TWO THEMES provides an opportunity for refinement of dexterity and fluency of playing on the part of the student. The two themes are of a contrasting nature. The first is in moderately bright three-quarter tempo in a general traditional style. The second is of a melodic nature. Another suite, the DANSE SUITE, is the fourth part of the project. The writer has attempted a musical definition of each of four popular folk dances—the saraband, the gavotte, the polka, and the minuet. Verbal definitions have been included in the introductory statement of the suite. Here, for the first time, work in the third position is necessary rather than optional. The fifth and concluding part of the work is a SYMPHONETTE IN TWO MOVEMENTS—a moderato and a scherzo.

THE SEASONS

THE SEASONS is a suite made up of four short selections each depicting a specific time of the year—winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Each section has deliberately been kept at about a two-minute duration because the average student at the end of one year of instruction is not able to go too long at a time without a few seconds rest. A short narration at the beginning of each section provides this needed rest. An example is included with the composition.

Intentional effort has been made to create three different ability levels in the first, second, and third violin lines. The ability level is quite wide spread in a typical group of students with one year's experience. The second violin part is not quite as difficult as the first and whenever possible, the third has been given the easiest fingering part of the harmony. Generally, however, the rhythm goes parallel to the first and second parts and the harmony is equally as important. None of the parts have been "just thrown in." They are all very necessary. The third violin part has been kept in the range of the viola so that if the players are available the viola can double with the third violins.

The material in this suite has been arranged to coincide with instruction from the Paul Herfurth "Tune-a-Day" series, Book One. The first and biggest consideration in paralleling a composition with his book one is that of fingering. During the first year instruction, presuming that book one is covered, fingerings are kept uniform. In other words, each finger falls in exactly the same place regardless of which string the student is playing on. Thus, in the composition and arrangement of THE SEASONS, particular care had to be taken as to selection of key signature and voicing of the various instruments. Exceptions to the uniform fingering appear in the first violin part in the third and fourth sections. The second finger is lowered one-half step a few times in order to maintain chromatic and melodic continuity. Usually in a group of first year students there will be some who have progressed enough beyond the majority

that they will have had some training along this line. This instruction appears in the second lesson of Mr. Herfurth's book two.

Other problems covered in the Tune-a-Day book one and included in the suite are: playing off-beats, the dotted half note, the slur, counting the slur over the measure, semi-stacatto slurred notes, D.C. al Fine, repeat signs, and first and second endings.

THE SEASONS

Winter

Sing a song of winter,
   Sing a song of sleds;
Sing a song of tumbling
   Over heels and heads;
Up and down a hillside,
   When the moon is bright,
Sledding is a tip top
   Wintertime delight.

Spring

'Tis springtime, 'tis springtime, cold winter is past;
Warm breezes are blowing, and May's here at last;
The birds are returning,
Their songs fill the air,
And the meadows are smiling with blossoms so fair.

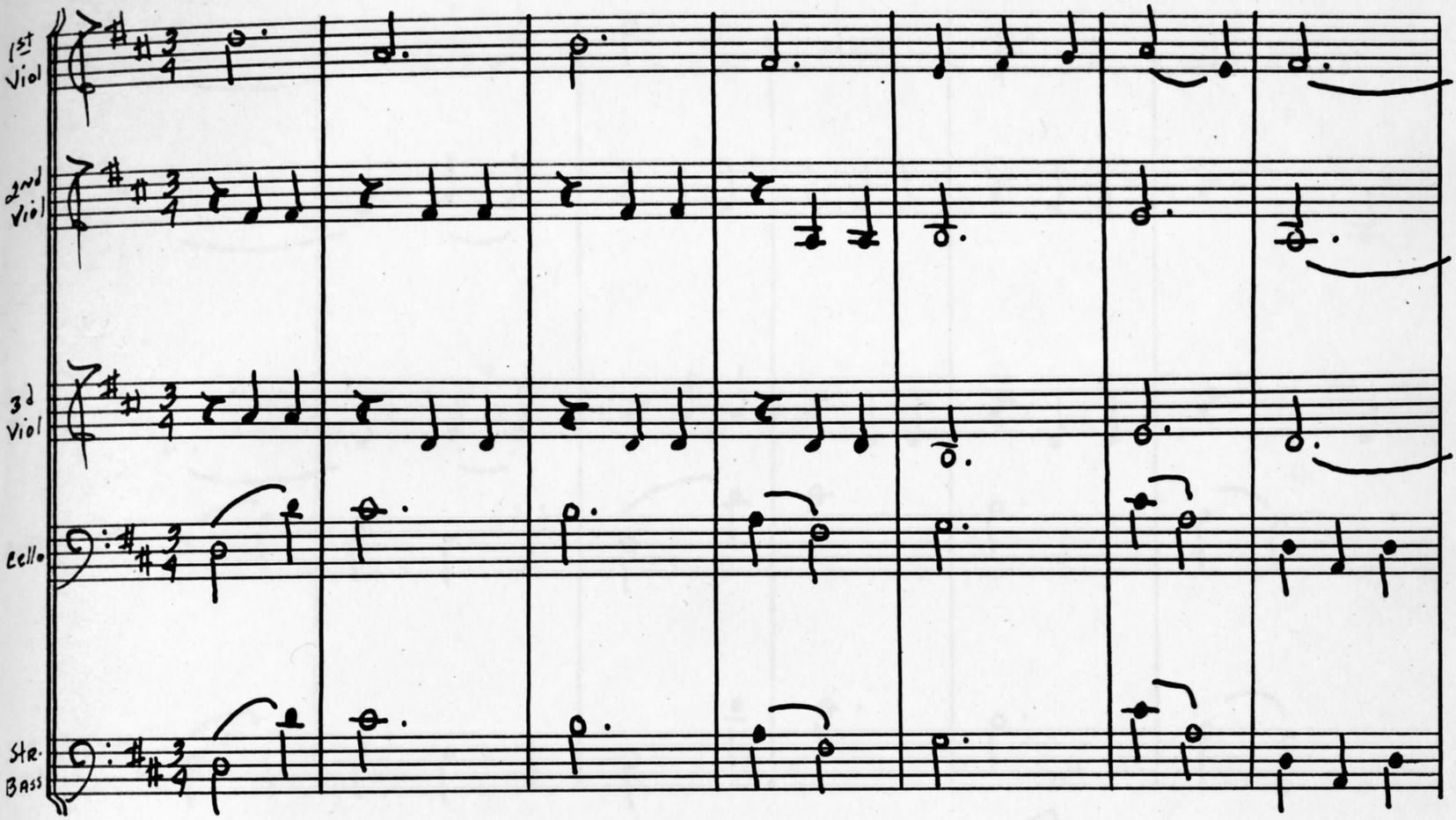
Summertime

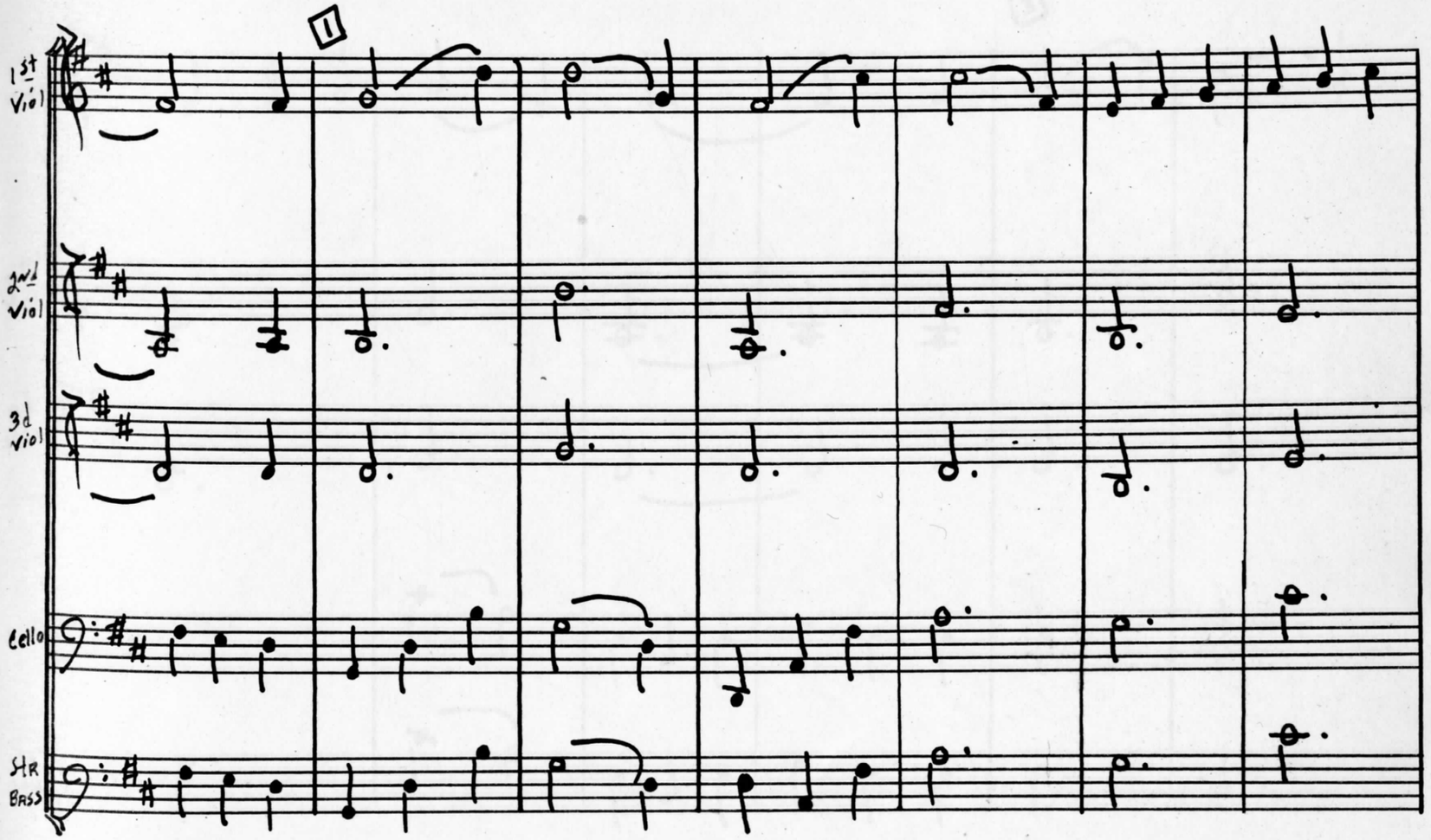
I'm wearing old clothes--my favorite kind,
They're faded and tattered, but fish don't mind;
My line's in the water with squirming live bait,
I like to go fishing,
   And dream while I wait.

Autumn

Come, little leaves--said the wind one day;
Come over the meadows with me and play;
Put on your dresses of red and gold,
For summer is gone, and the days grow cold.

The Seasons
(Winter)





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2

1st Violin

2nd Violin

3d Violin

Cello

Str Bass

3

1st Violin

2nd Violin

3d Violin

Cello

Str Bass

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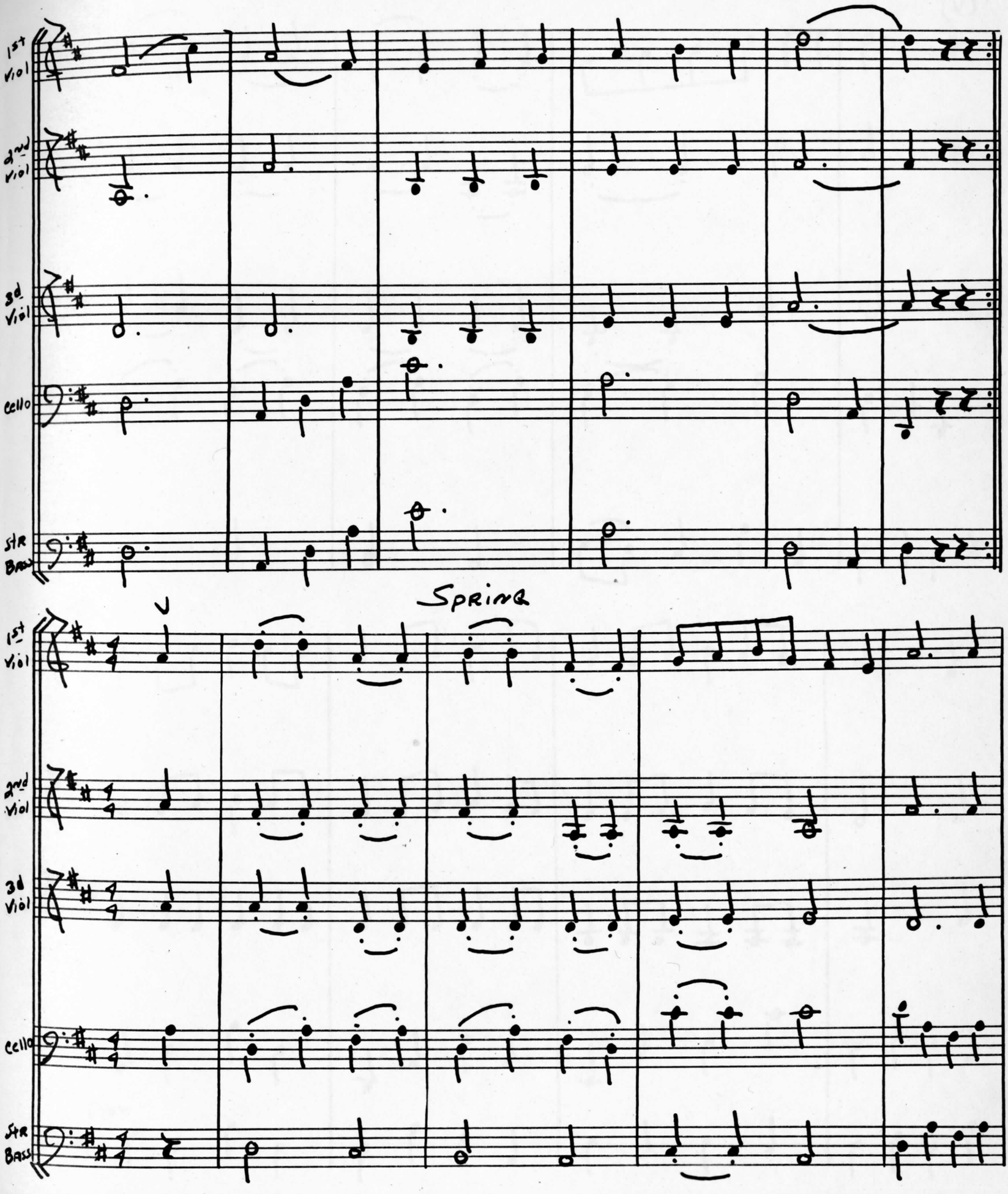

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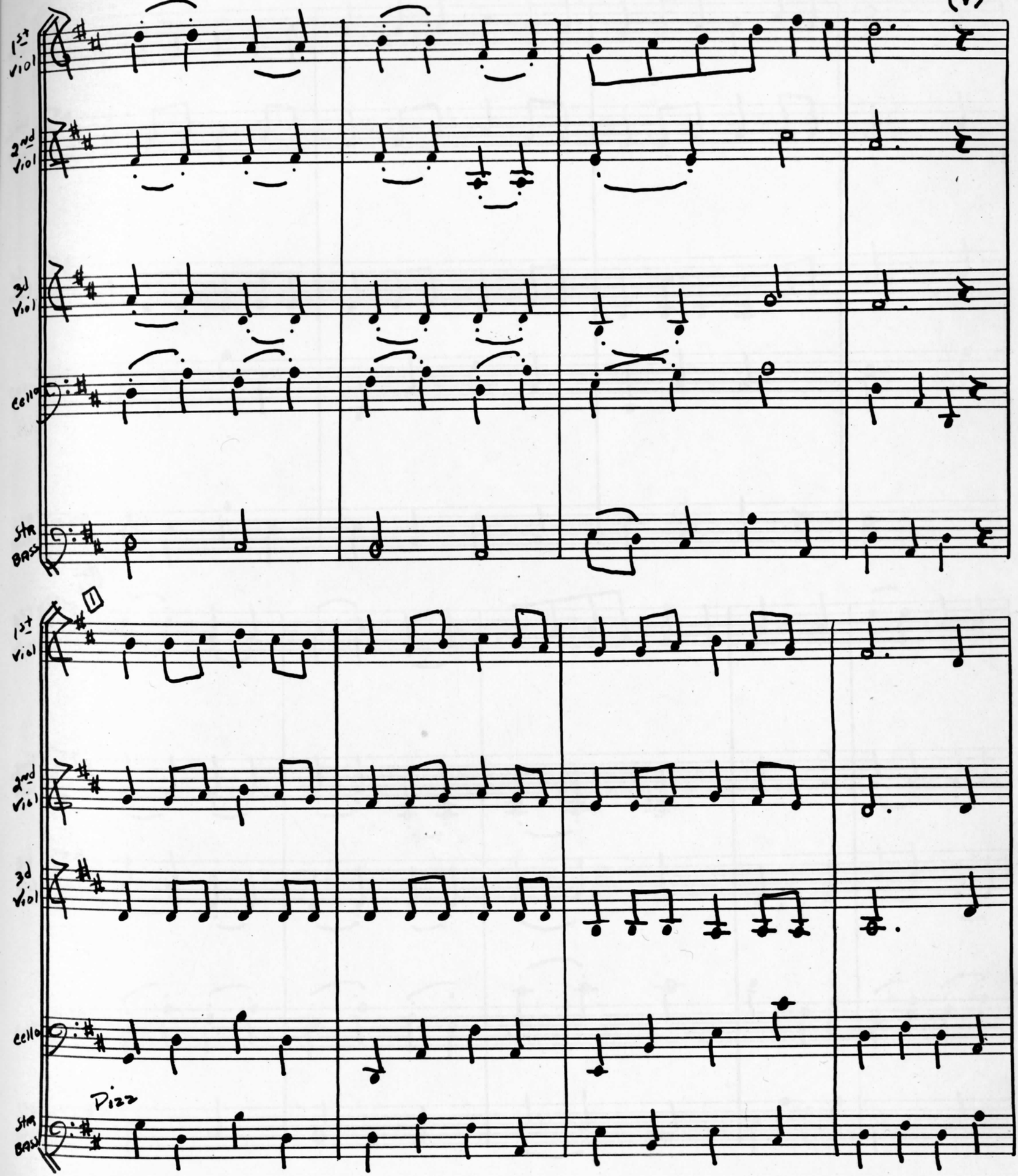

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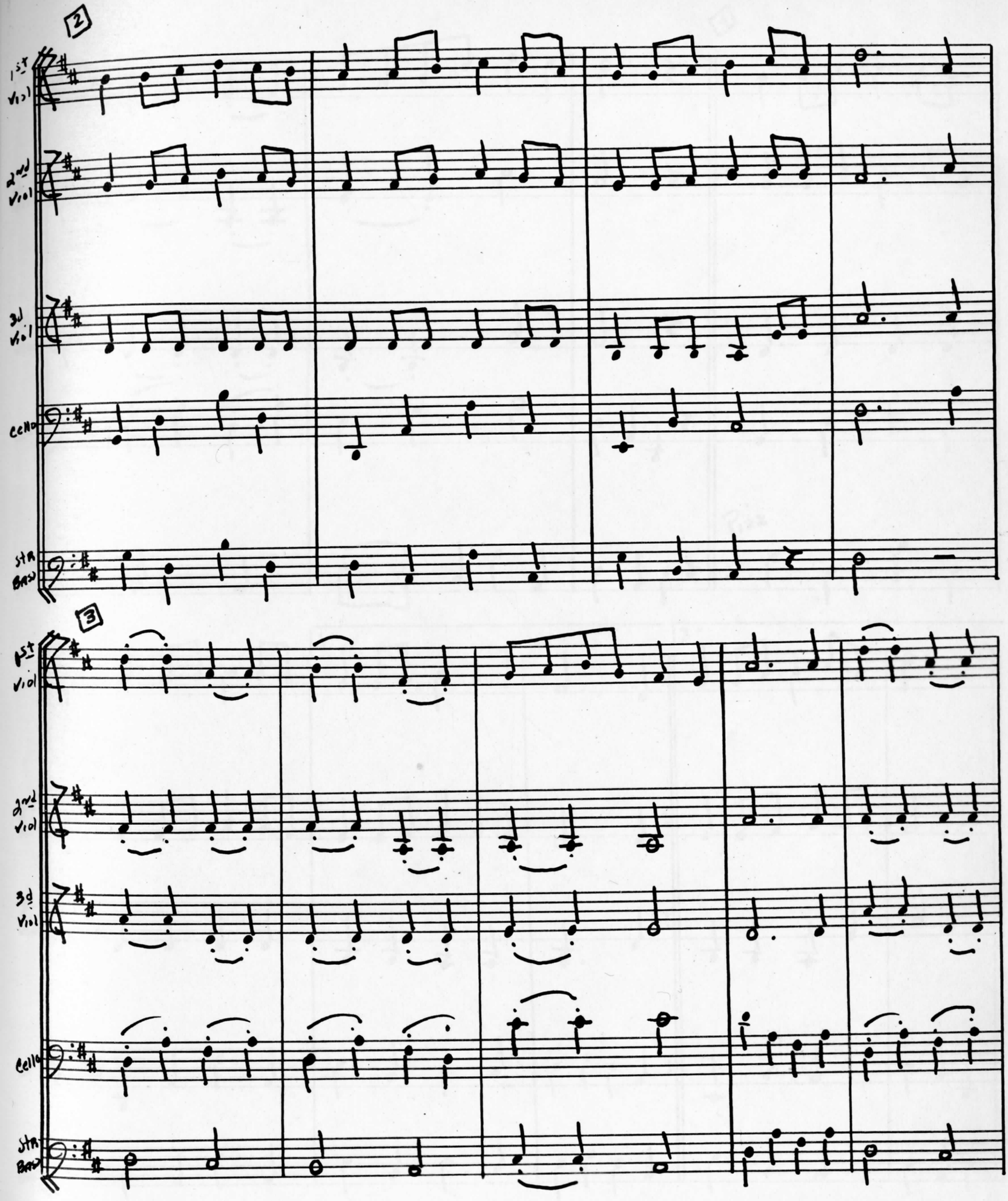
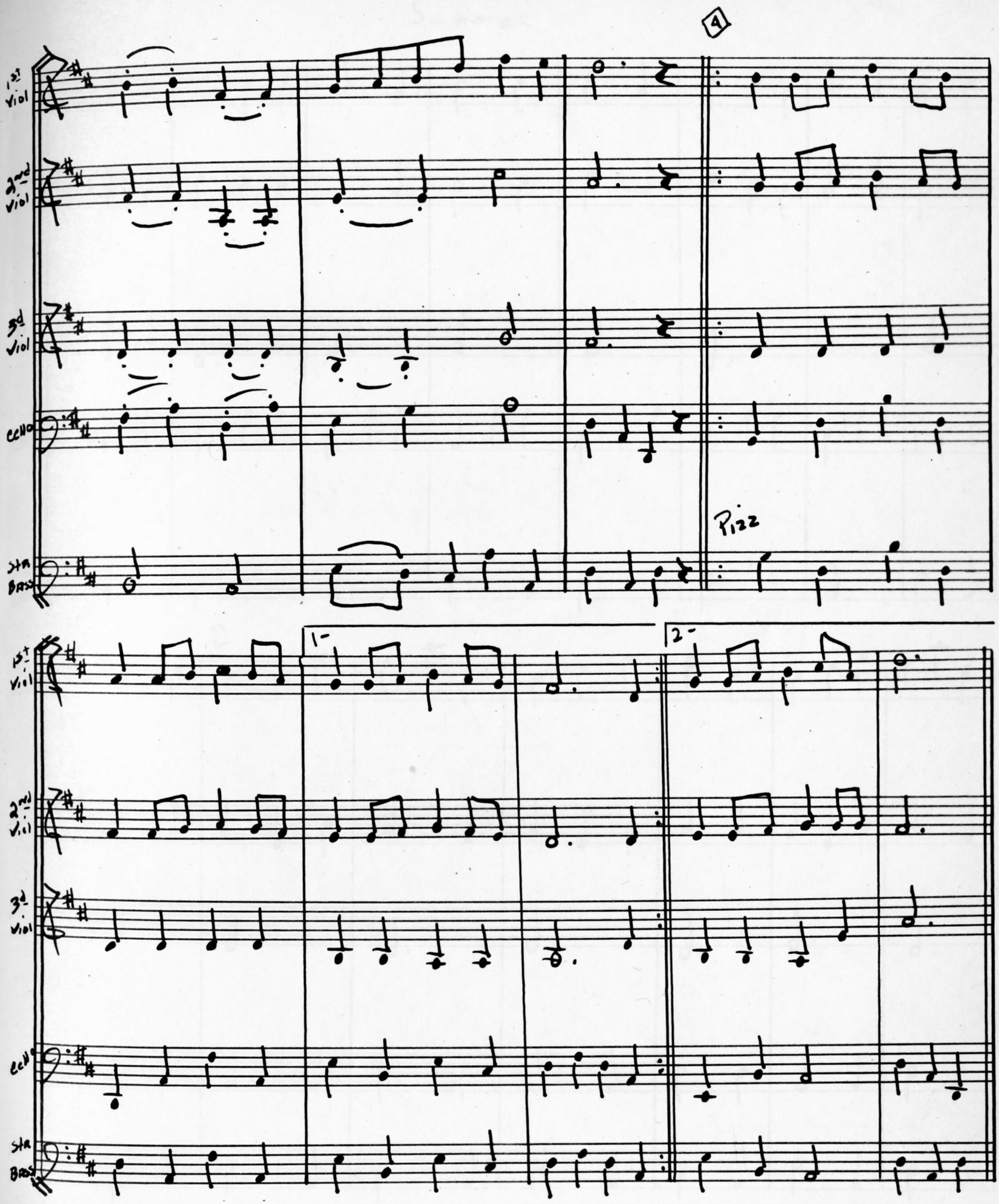

2
1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Str Bass
3
1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Str Bass



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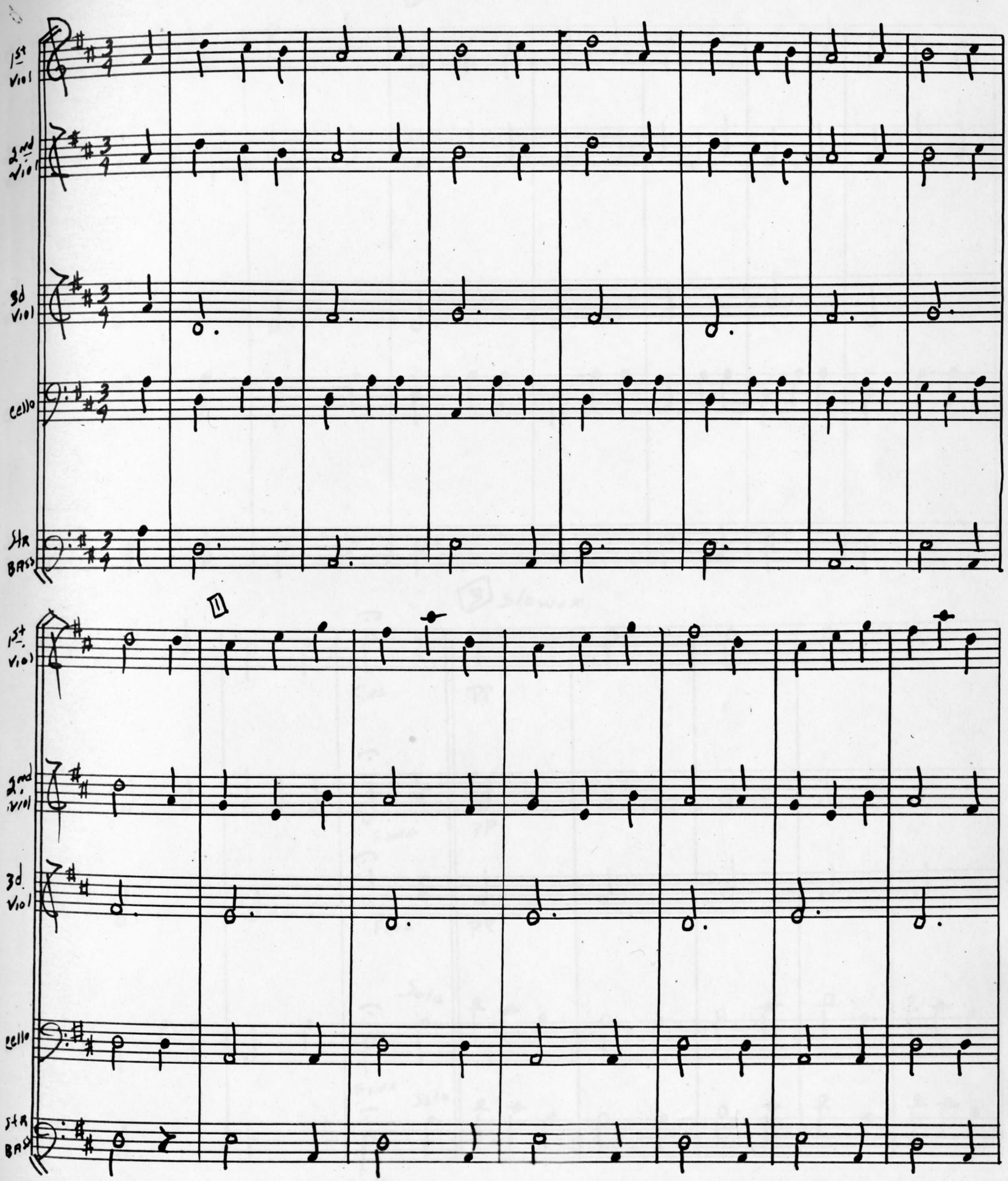
Summer



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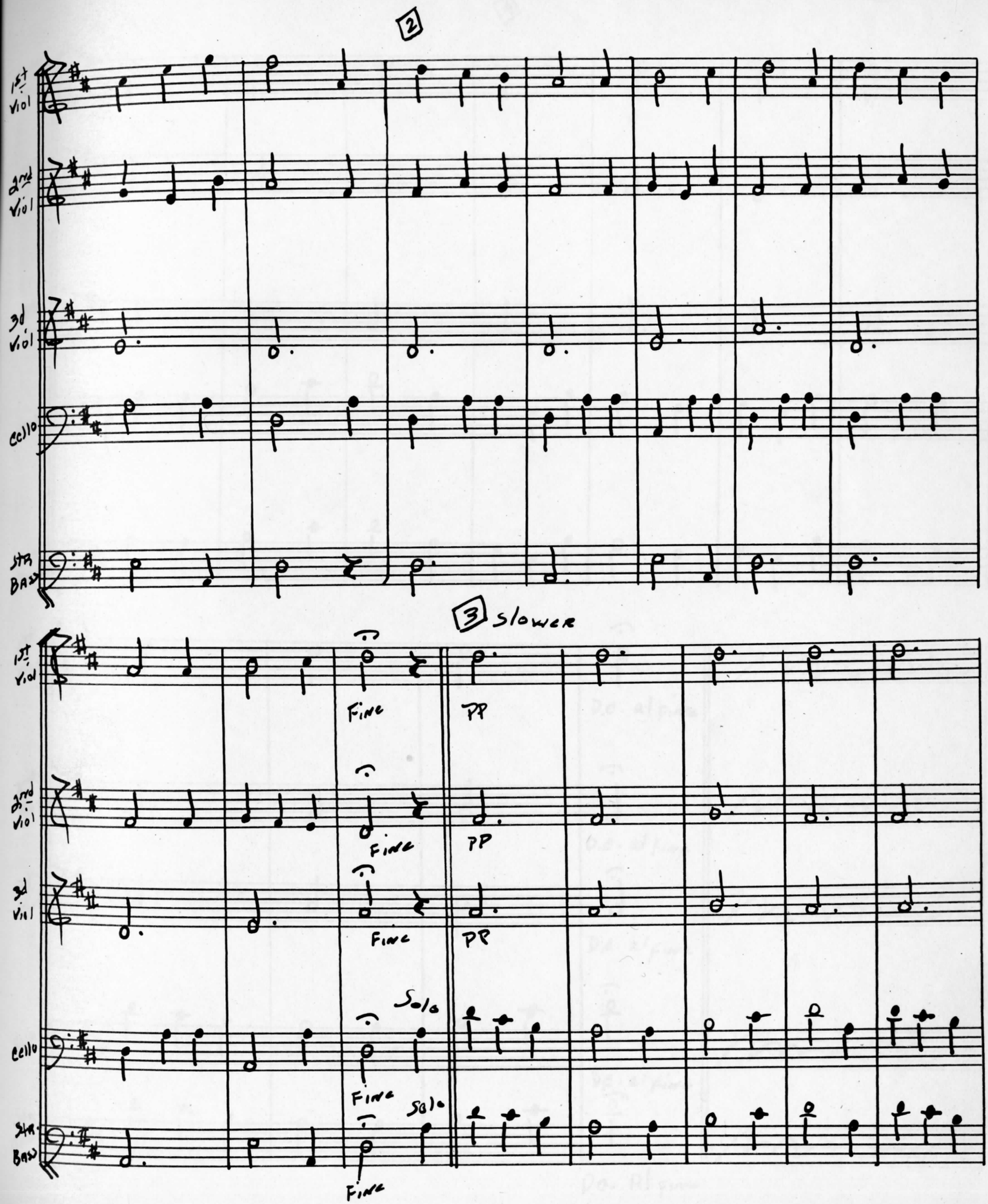

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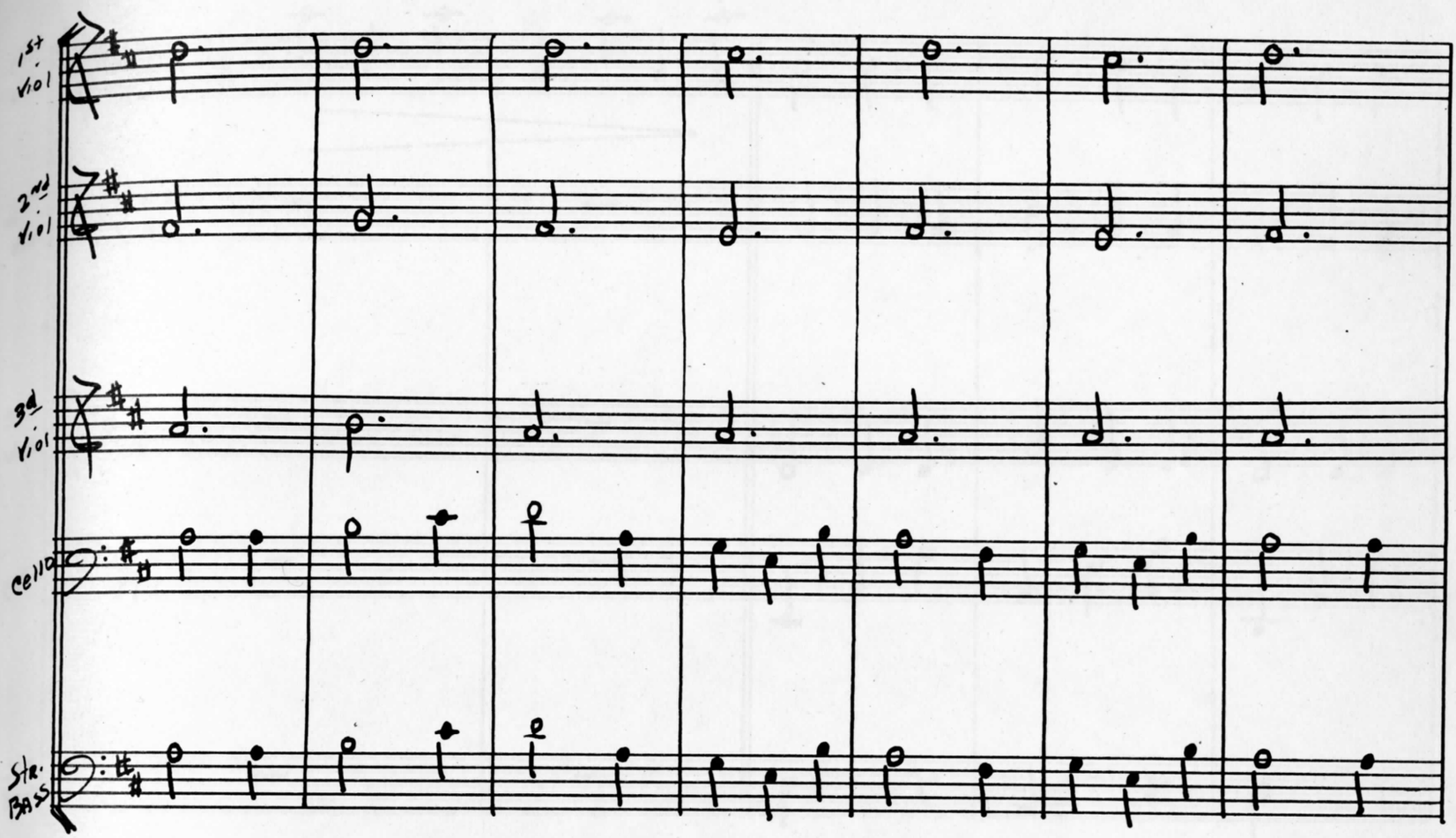

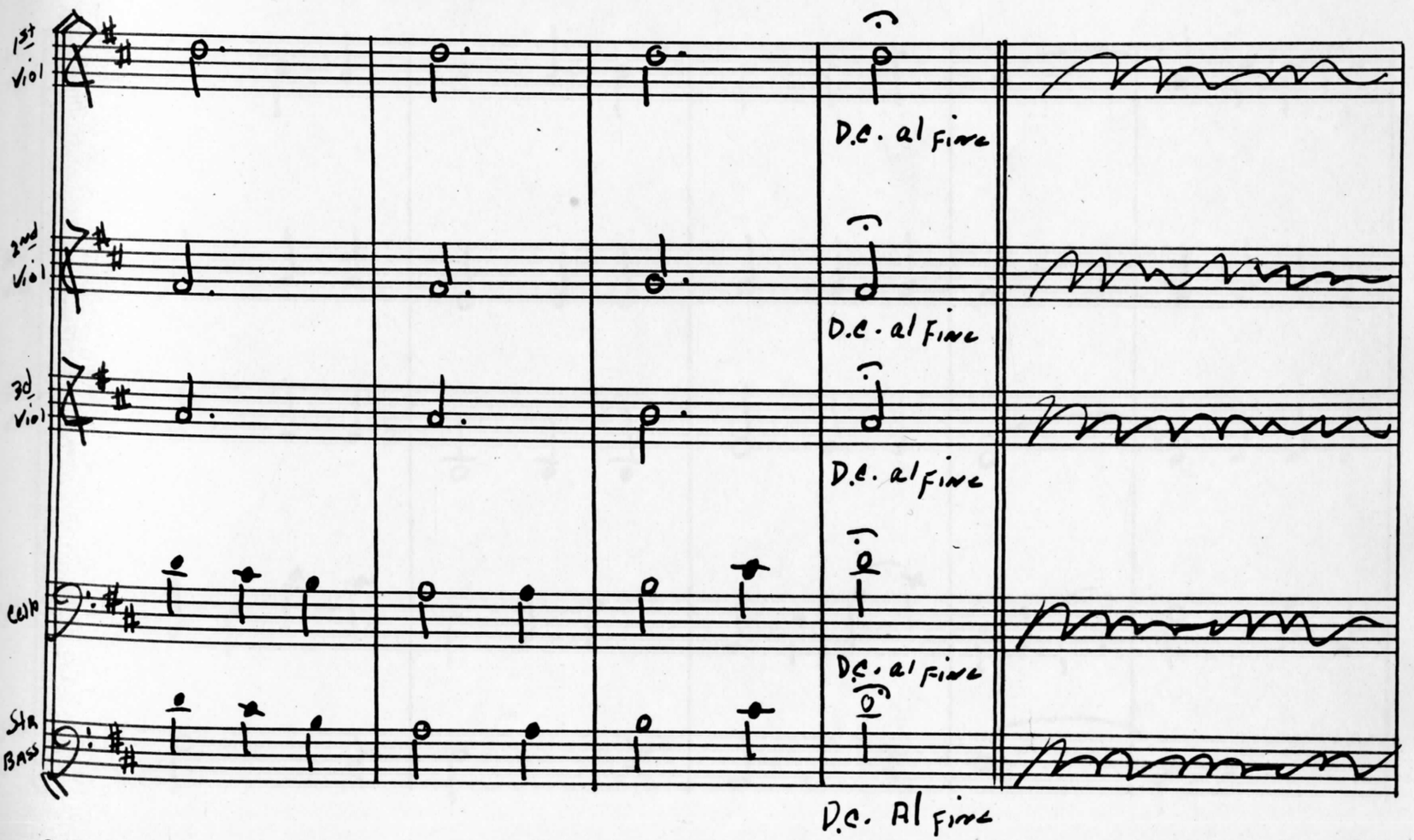

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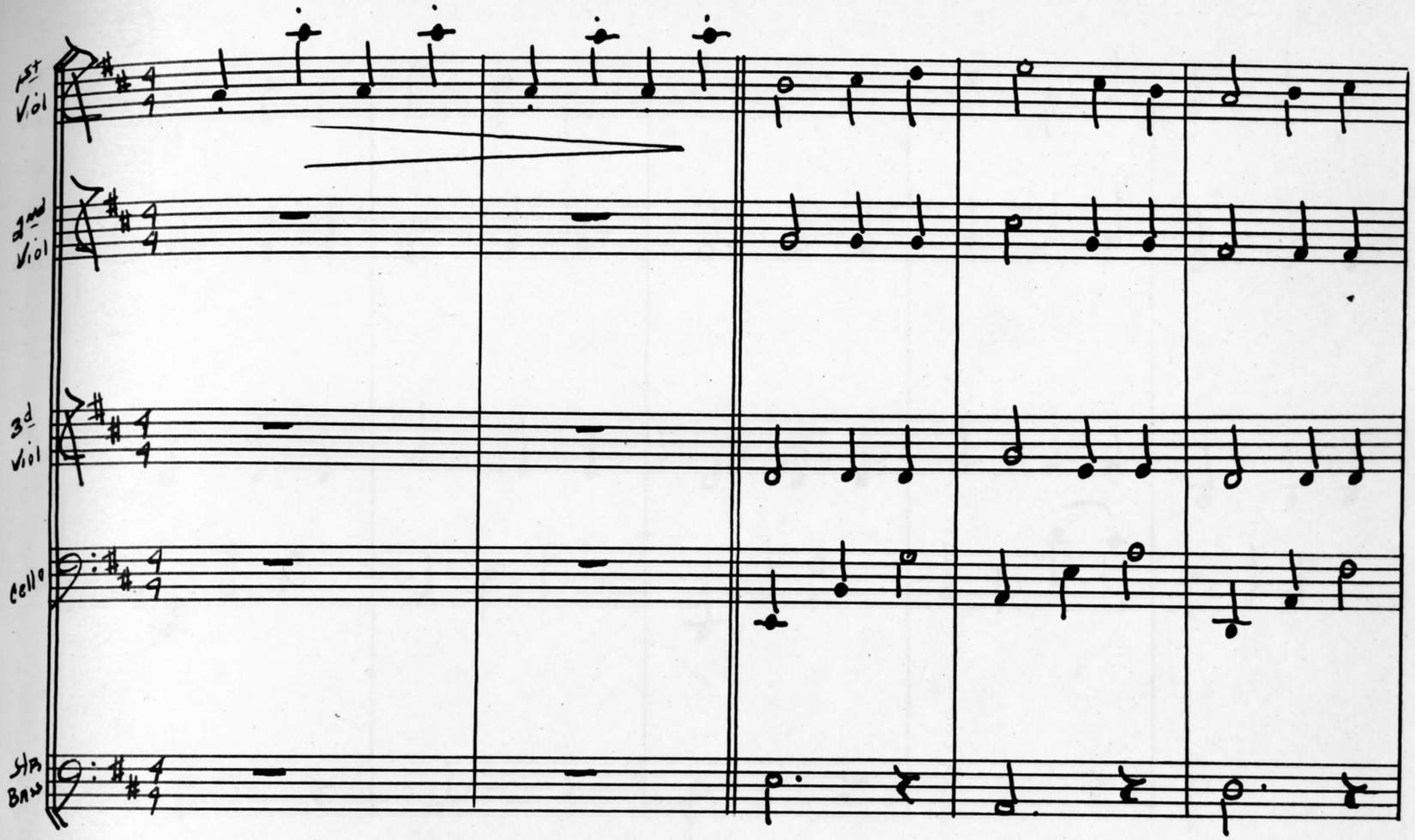
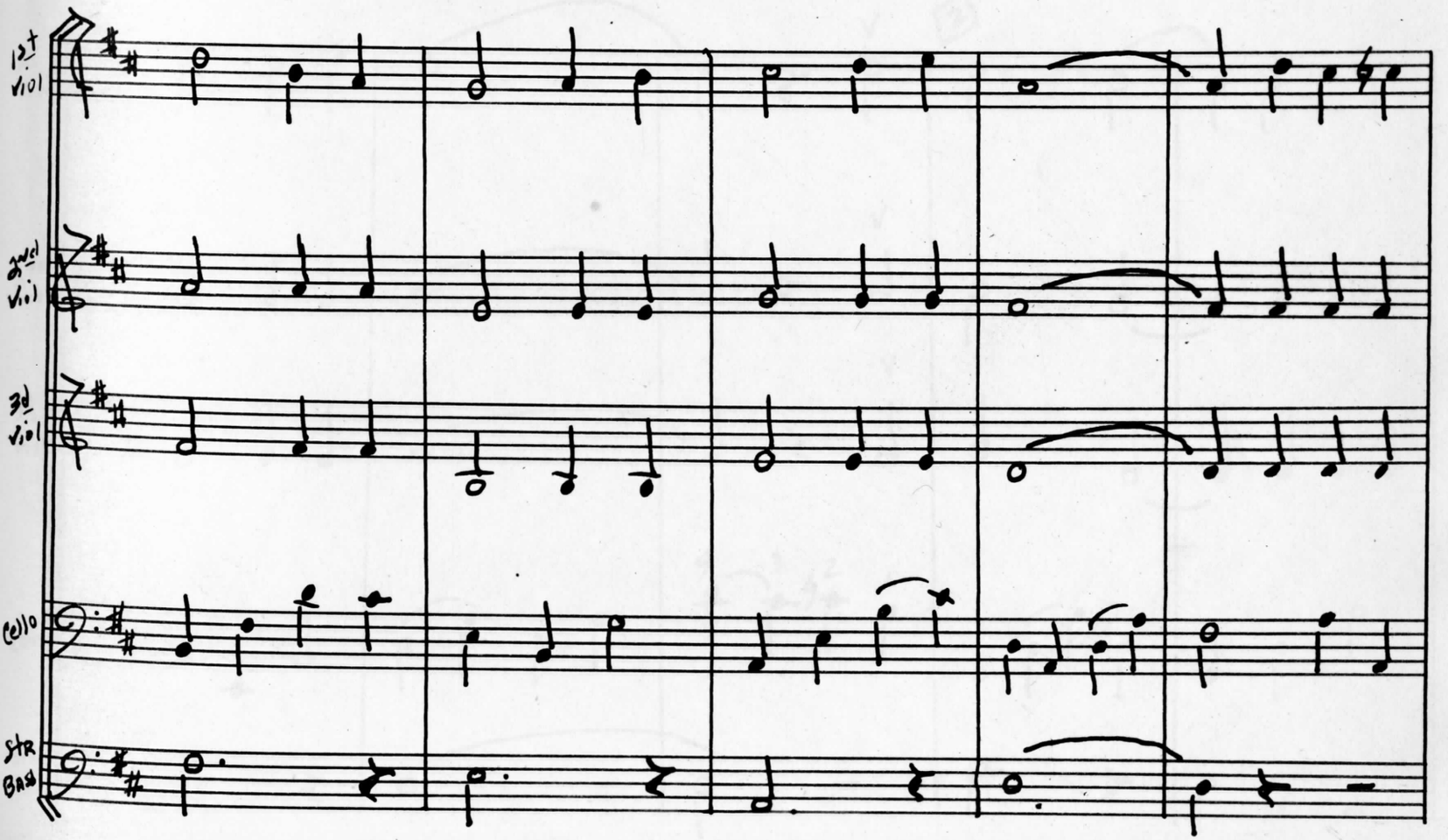
Autumn





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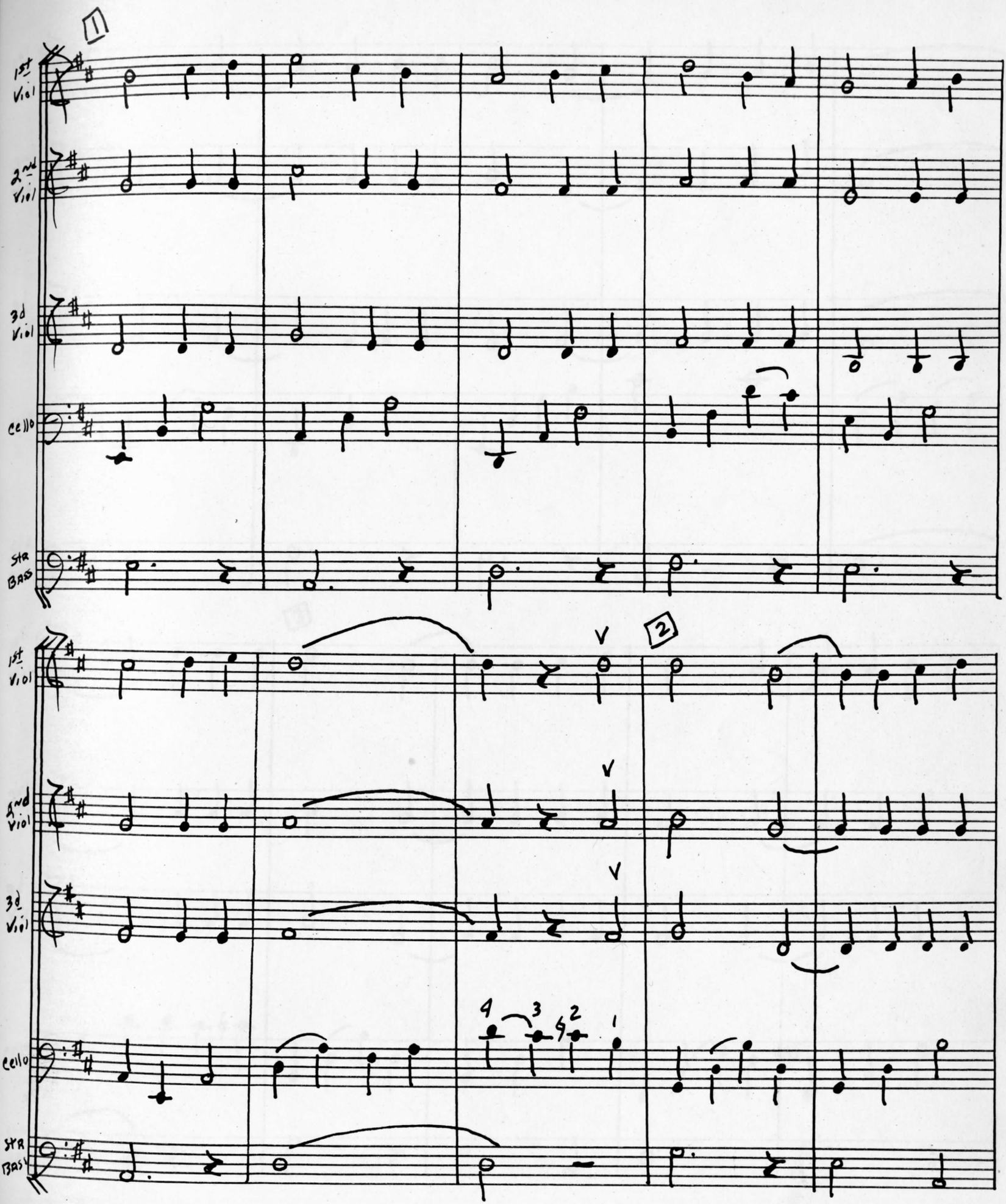

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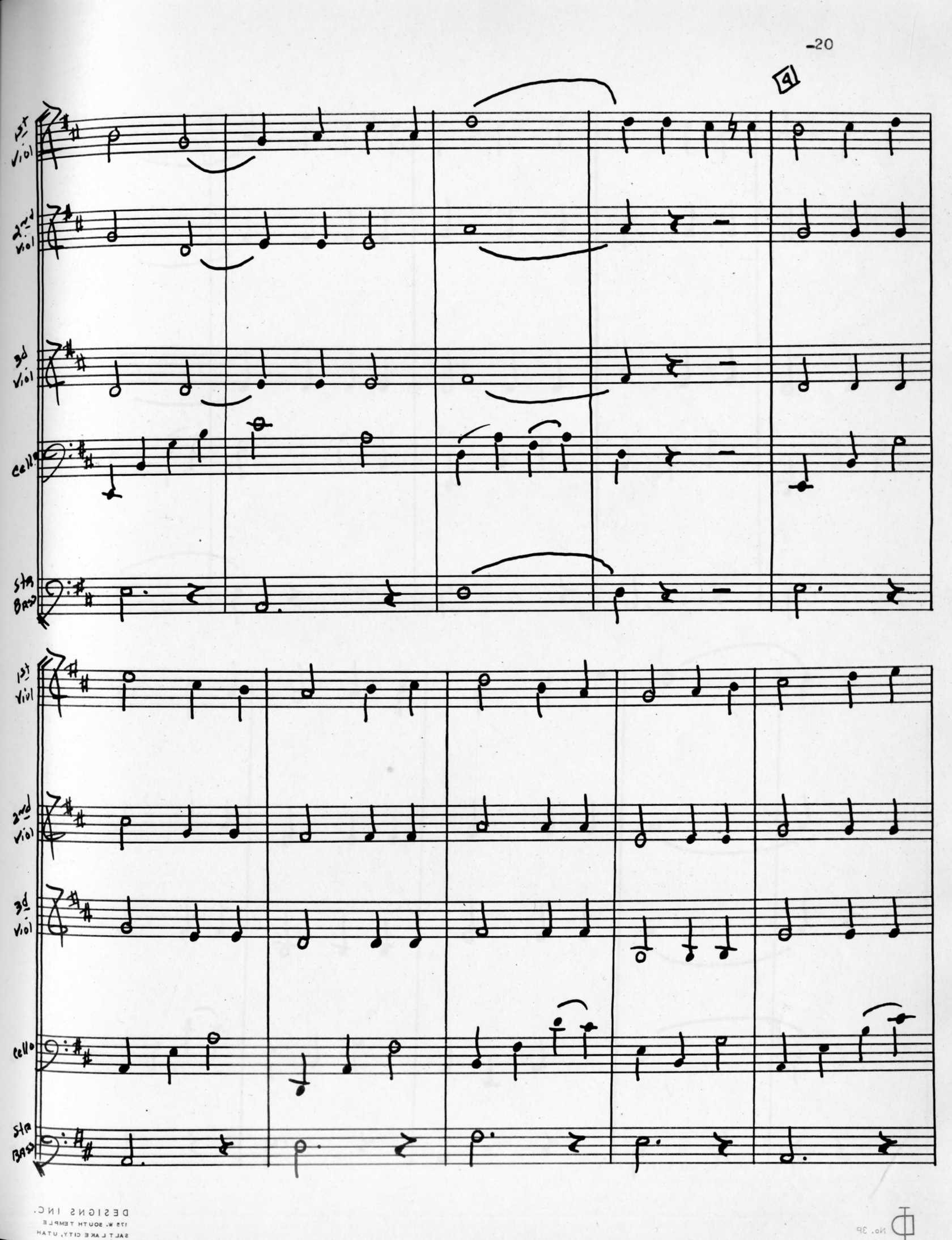
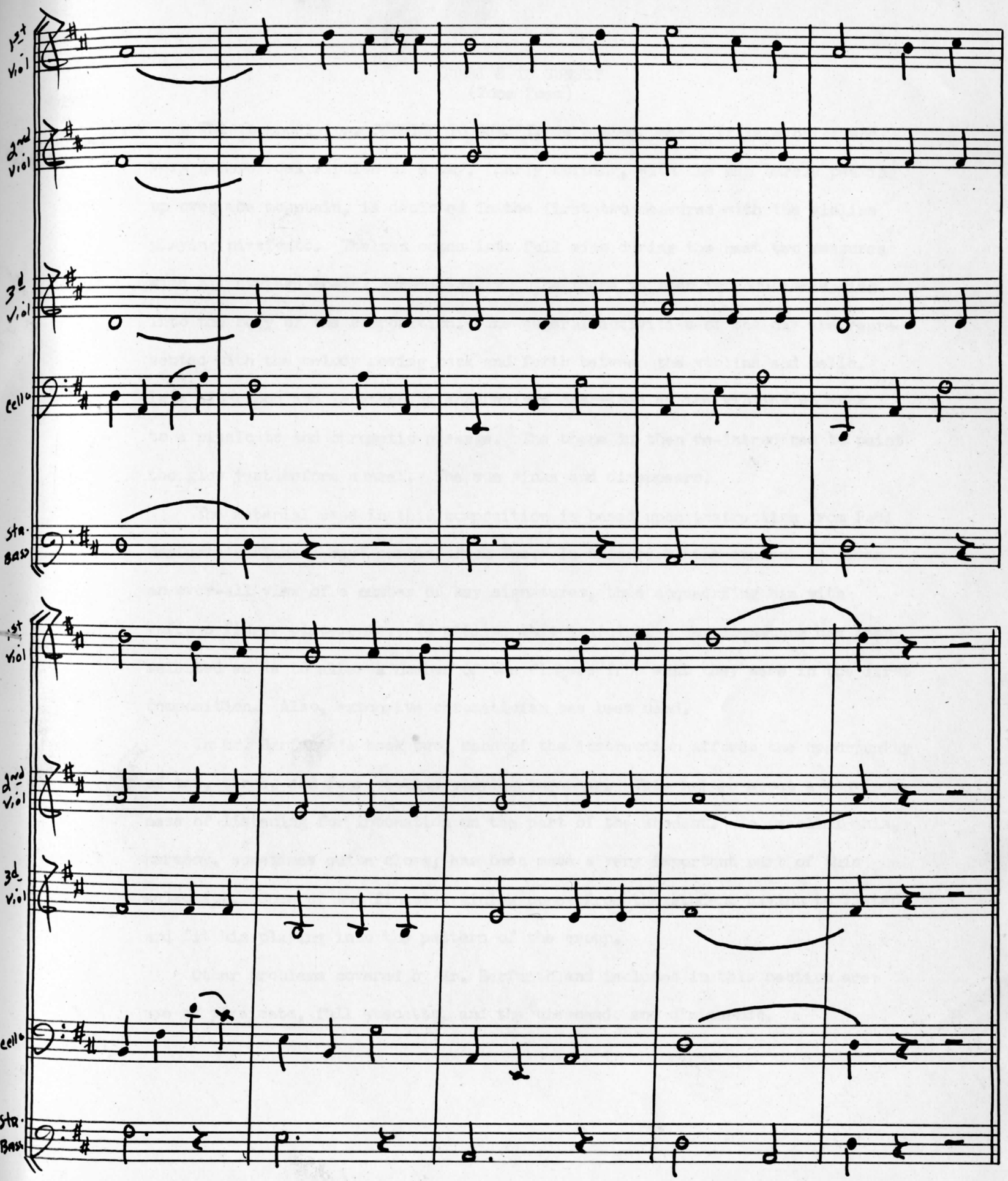

9
1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Sts Bass
1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Sts Bass



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SUNRISE TO SUNSET
(Tone Poem)

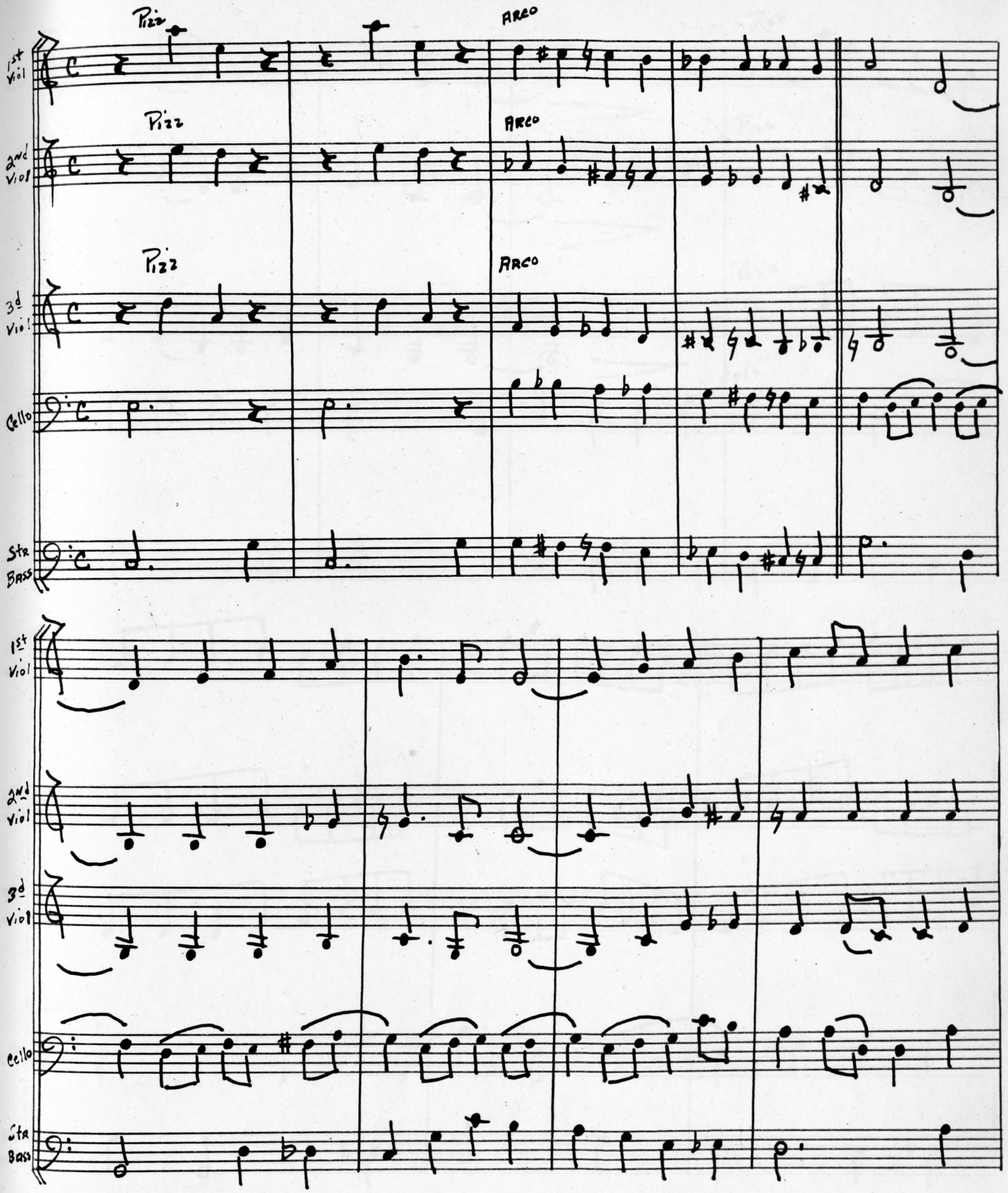
This composition, SUNRISE TO SUNSET, is a tone poem. It is a brief and very general description of a day. Early morning, with the sun barely peaking up over the mountain, is depicted in the first two measures with the violins playing pizzicato. The sun comes into full view during the next two measures with all strings bowing chromatically. The theme is then introduced leading into the body of the composition. The general activities of the day are represented with the melody moving back and forth between the violins and cello. Late afternoon and lengthening shadows are described as the violins go back to a pizzicato and chromatic passage. The theme is then re-introduced to paint the glow just before sunset. The sun sinks and disappears.

The material used in this composition is based upon instruction from Paul Herfurth's "Tune-a-Day" series, Book Two. In this book, the student is given an over-all view of a number of key signatures, thus acquainting him with various finger placements. To utilize this training, a key signature has been selected so as to alter a number of the fingers from what they were in the first composition. Also, extensive chromaticism has been used.

In Mr. Herfurth's book two, much of the instruction affords the opportunity of two, three, and four violins playing together. This brings about a conciousness of listening for intonation on the part of the student. To parallel this, harmony, sometimes quite close, has been made a very important part of this selection. Some of the finest training comes from the student having to listen and fit his playing into the pattern of the group.

Other problems covered by Mr. Herfurth and included in this section are: use of pizzicato, full stacatto, and the crescendo and diminuendo.

Sunrise To Sunset



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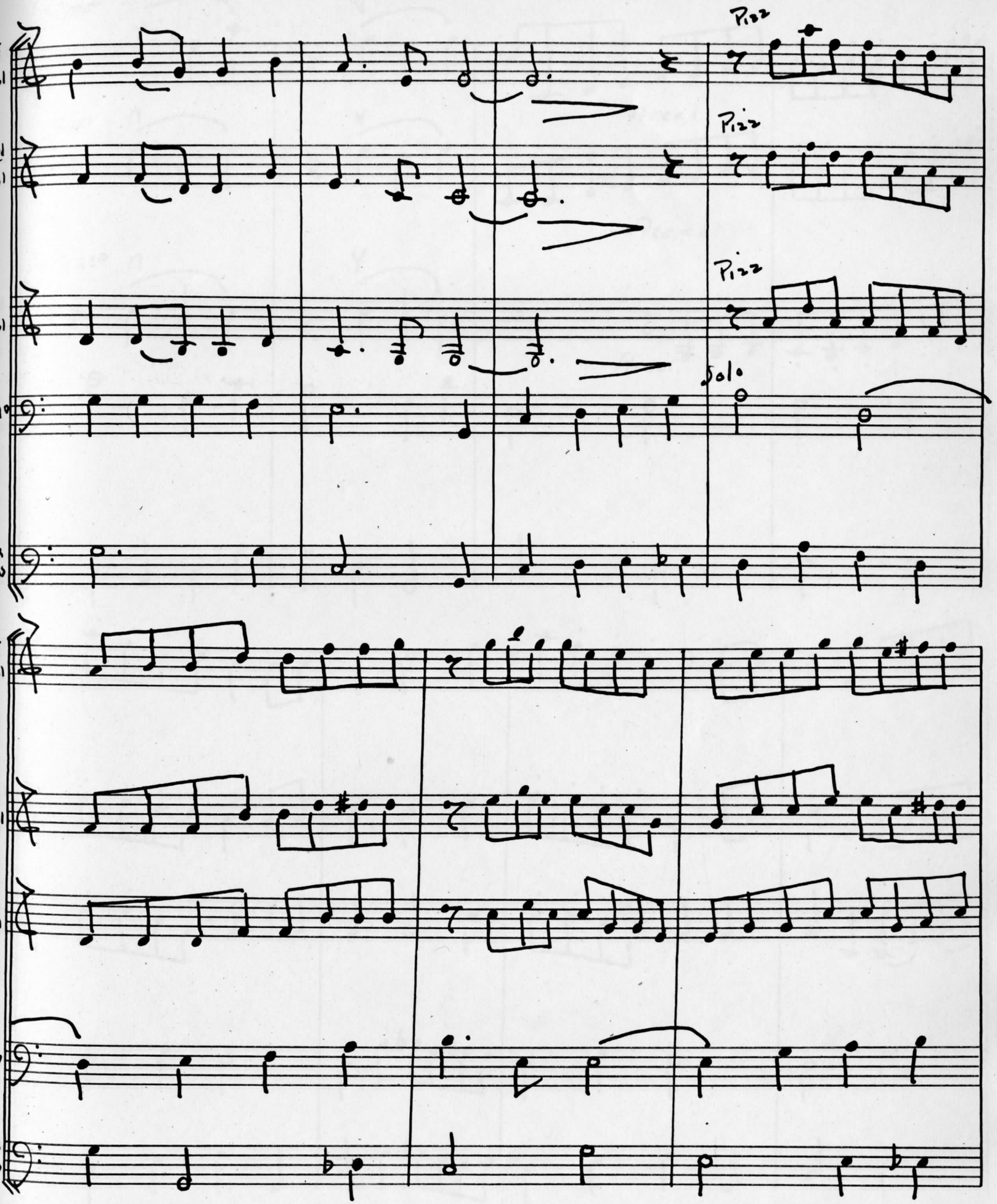
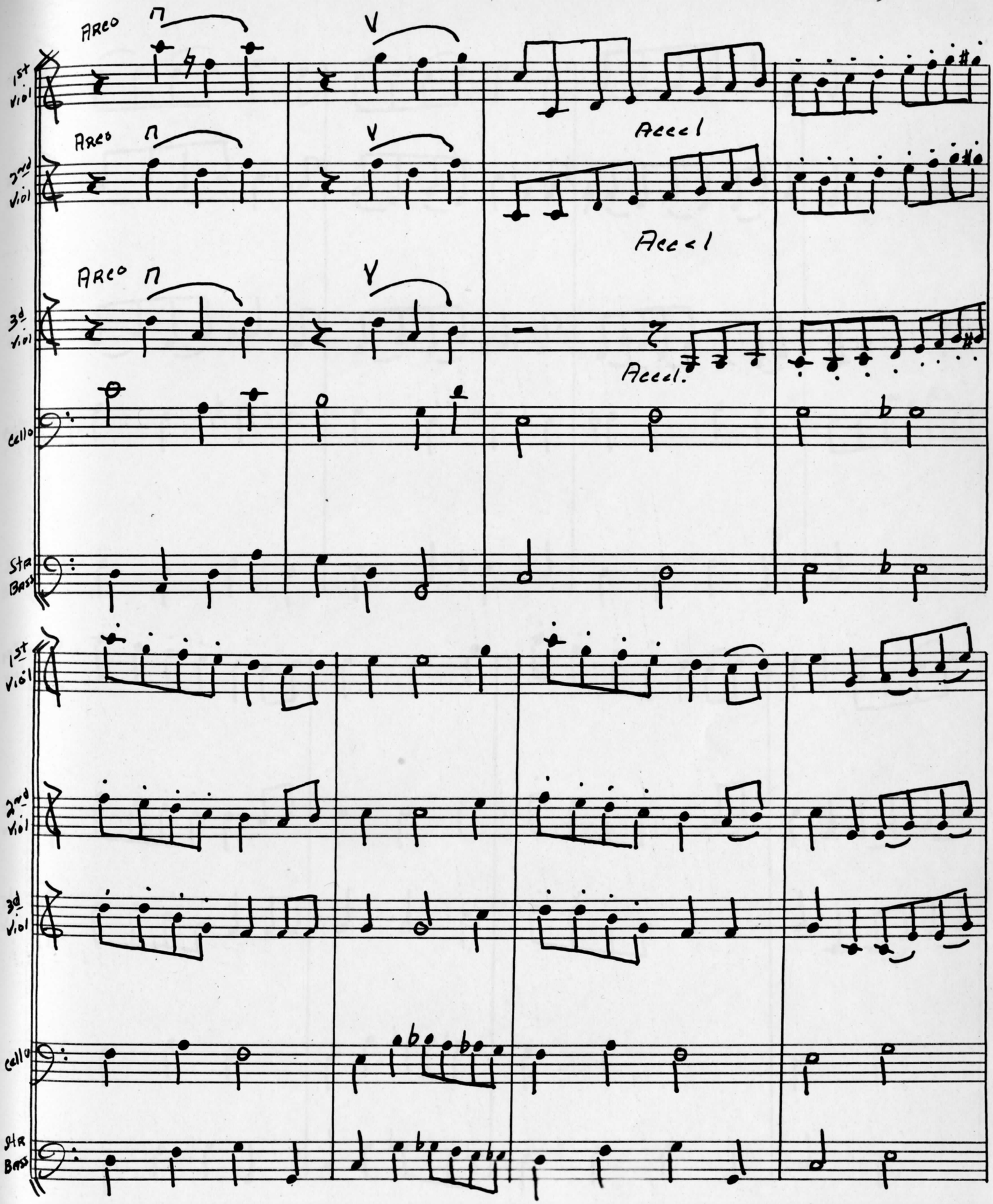

1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Str Bass
Pizz
Pizz
Pizz
Solo
1st Viol
2nd Viol
3d Viol
Cello
Str Bass



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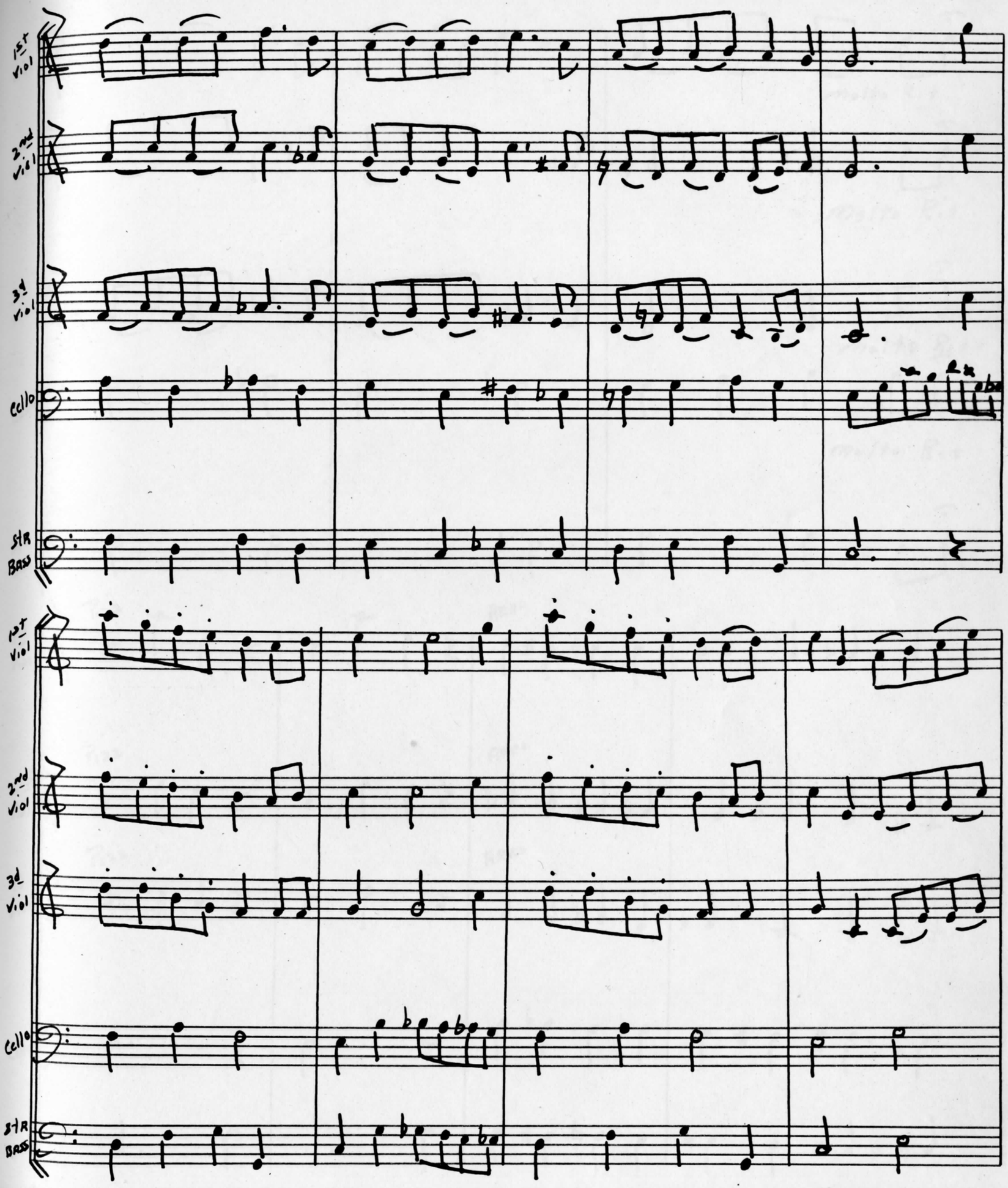

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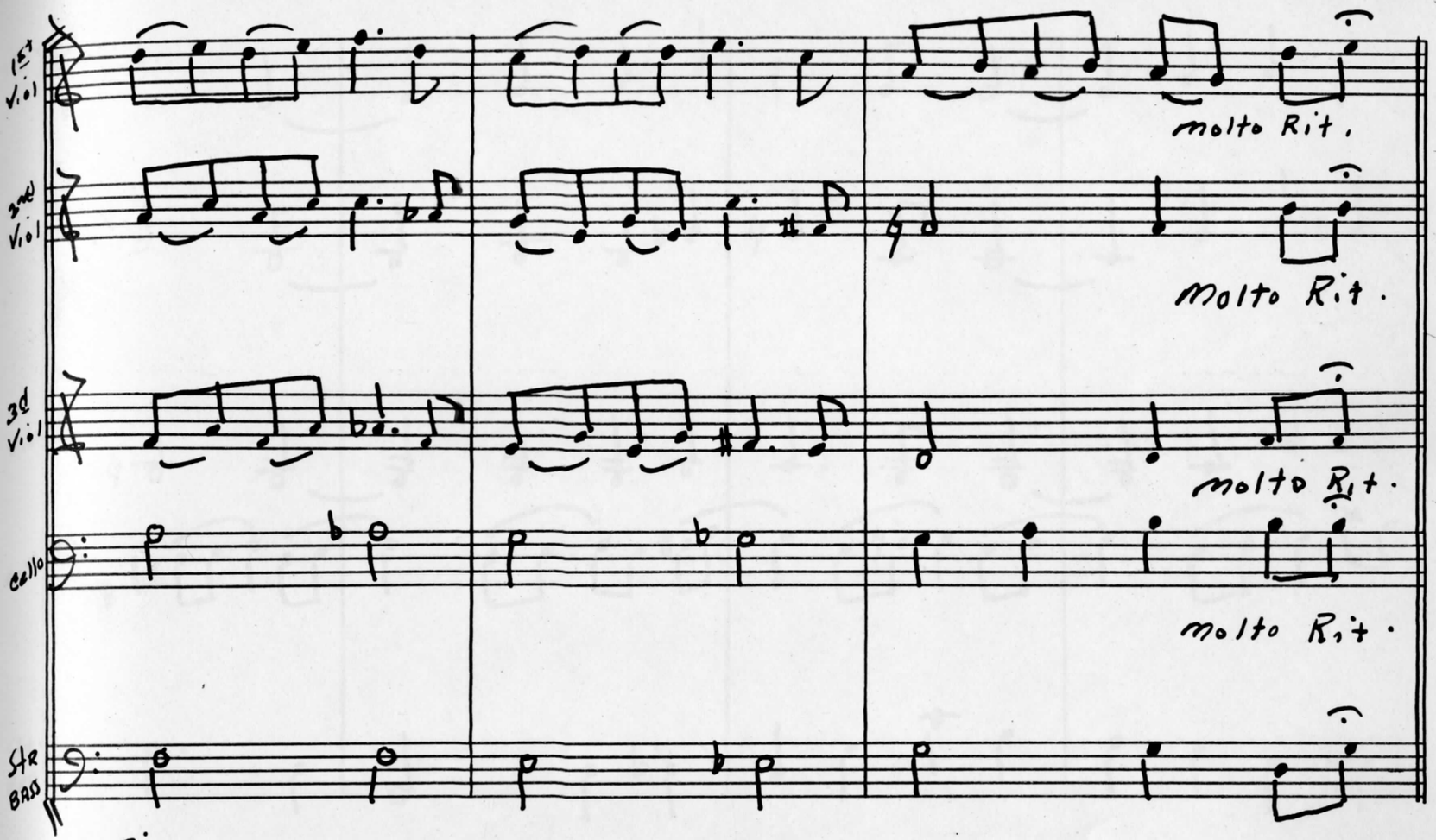

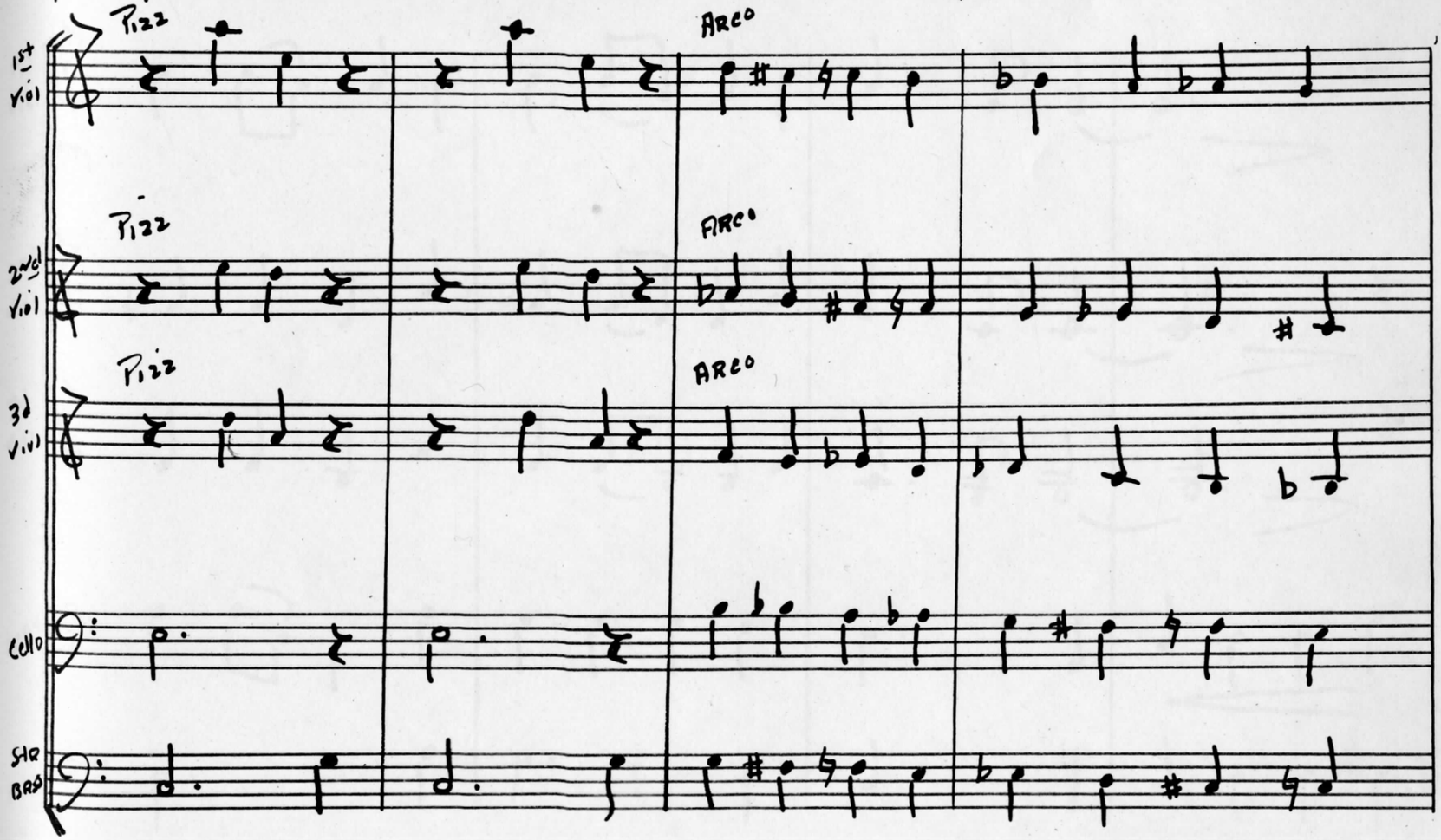

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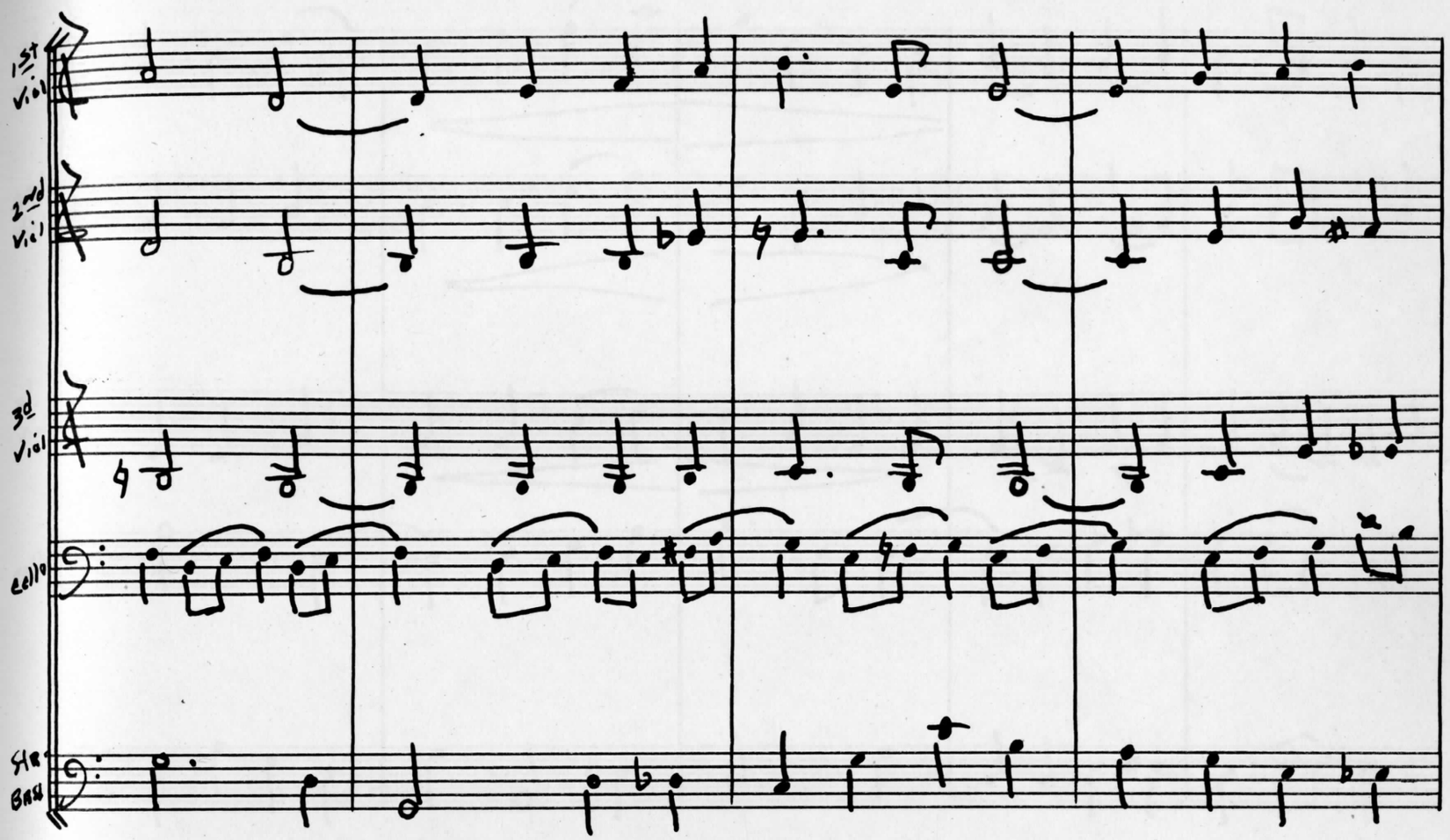
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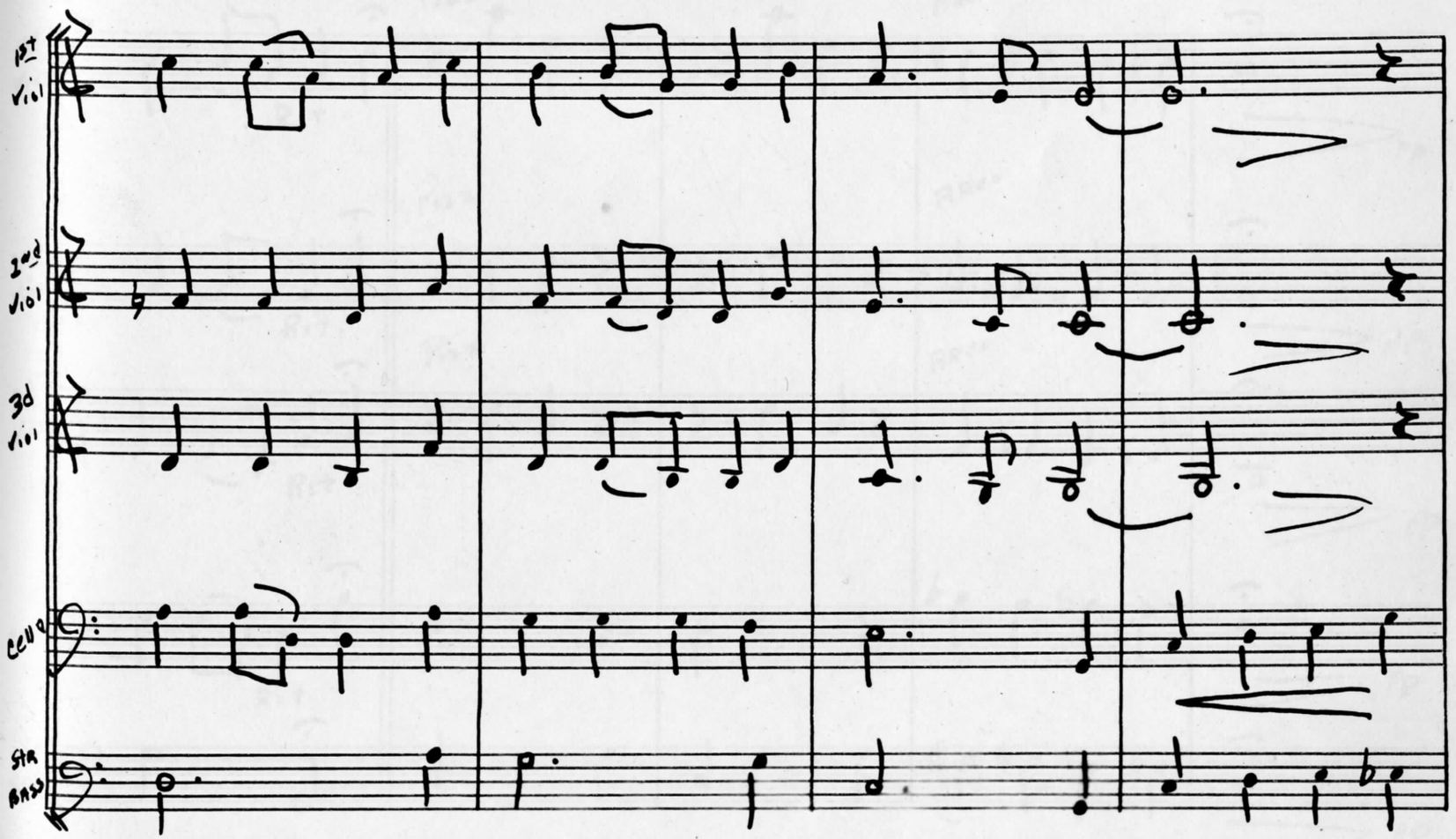
3d Viol
Cello
Str Bass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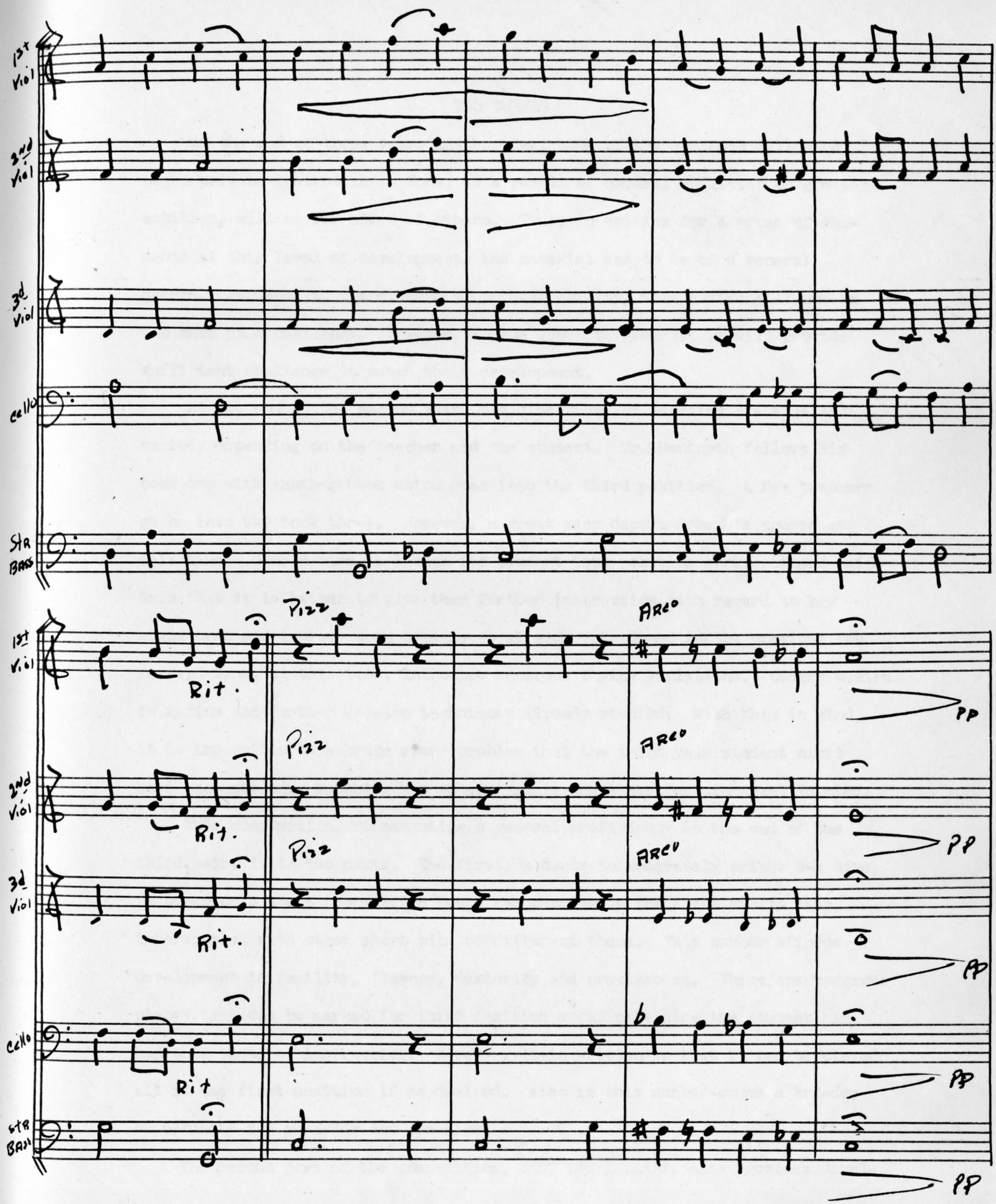

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TWO THEMES

At the end of three years' instruction, many of the students will have begun private instruction. Some, as a result of natural abilities or greater ambition, will be far ahead of others. Thus, in writing for a group of students at this level of development, the material has to be of a general nature. Perhaps, to the student of unusual ability, this number will not be too much of a challenge. However, to the group in general, it will provide sufficient challenge to match their development.

At the end of the second year, the directions of learning are wide and varied, depending on the teacher and the student. Mr. Herfurth follows his book two with another book which goes into the third position. A few teachers go on into the book three. However, a great many depart from his course at this time. Some desire to launch the student into position work. Others maintain that it is better to give them further instruction with regard to key signatures and improve upon techniques already introduced in the previous two years. Some, at this time, introduce numerous bowing variations. Others desire to refine and further develop techniques already studied. With this in mind, it is impossible to embrace every problem that the third year student might have encountered. Matching his general achievement has been the goal in mind.

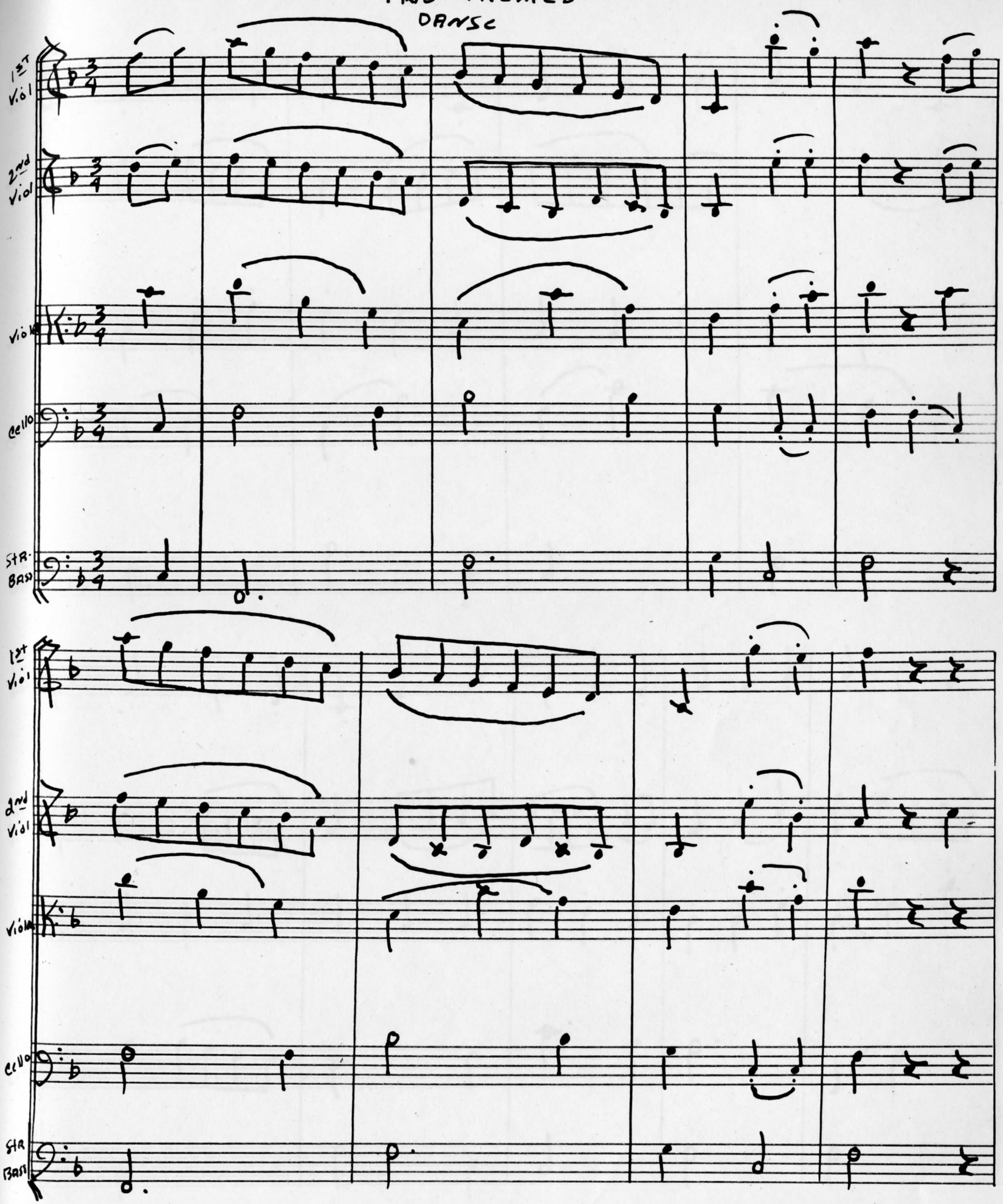
This composition, representing a general proficiency at the end of the third year, is in two parts. The first, a dance in moderately bright 3-4 time, is based on a short theme which keeps reappearing in the first violin line, interspersed with other short bits of different theme. This number affords development in facility, fluency, dexterity and preciseness. There are numerous places that can be marked for third position work, providing the student has had this phase of instruction. However, it is written so that it can be played all in the first position if so desired. Also in this number comes a broader opportunity for phrasing and dynamics.

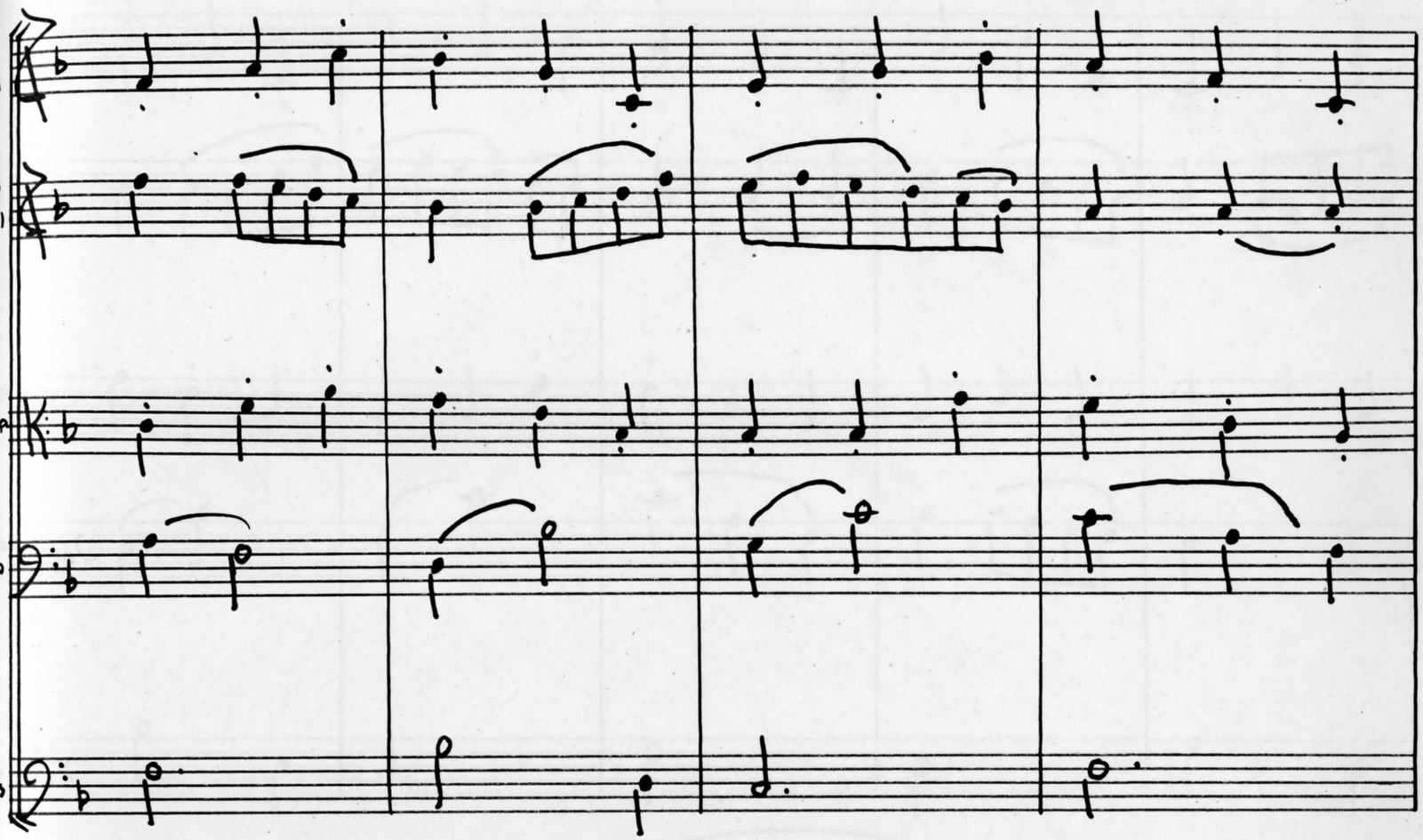
The second part of the composition, SCOTTISH LULLABY, also provides devel-

opment in phrasing, feeling, and dynamics. It is based on melody throughout, with the harmony playing an extremely important part. As in the case of the first section, there are places that can be marked for the third position.

Two Themes

DANSE

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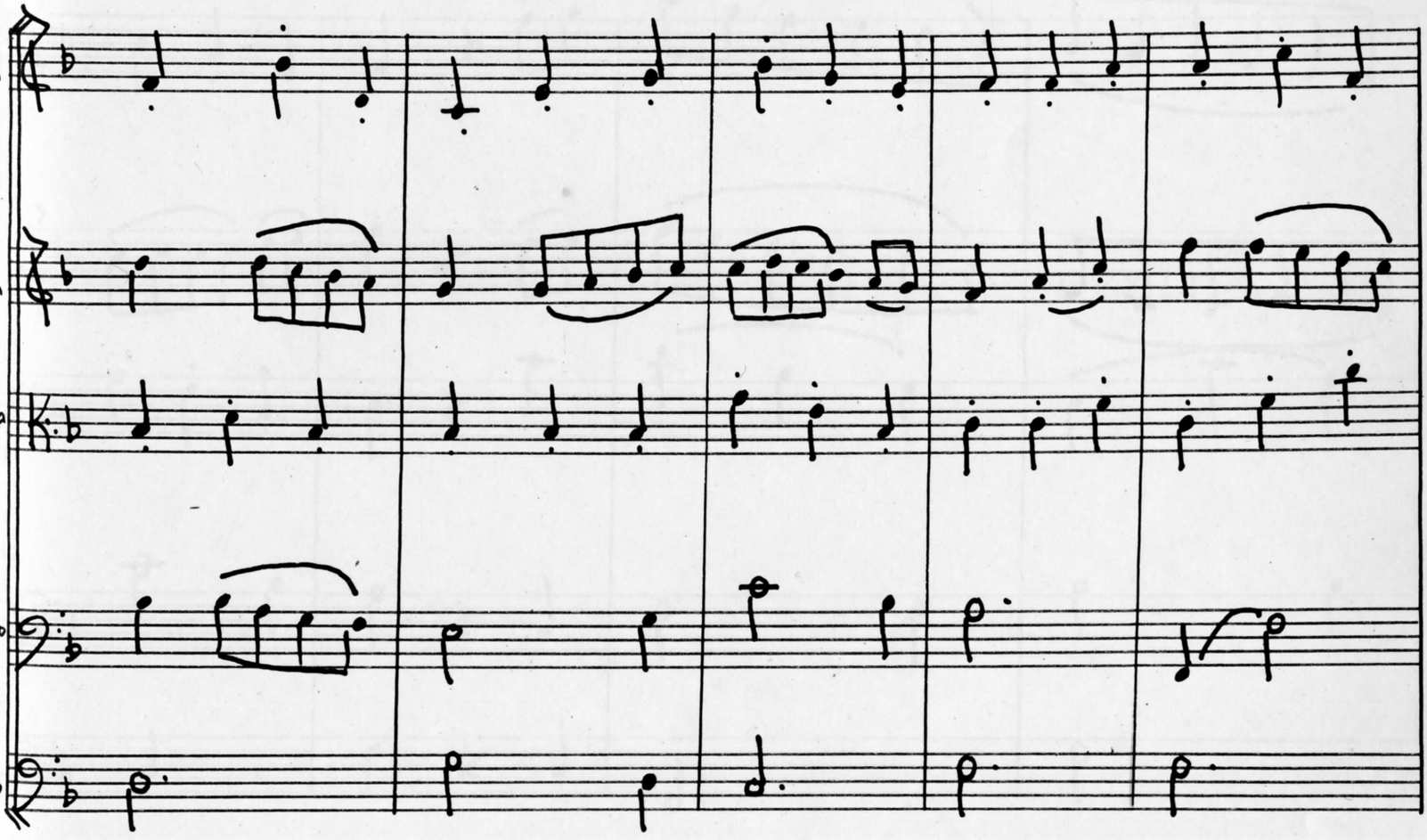
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass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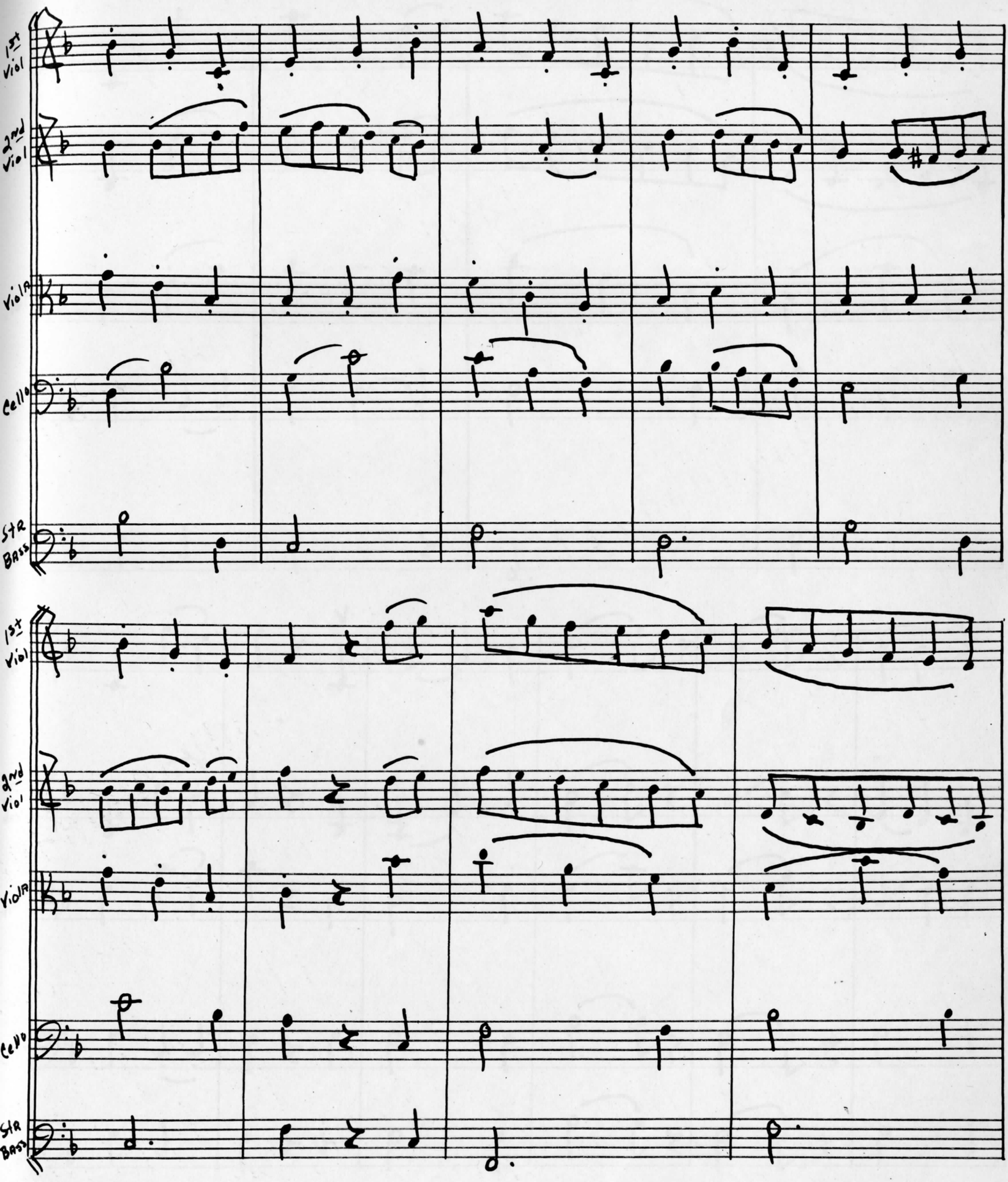
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass


1st Viol
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass
1st Viol
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass

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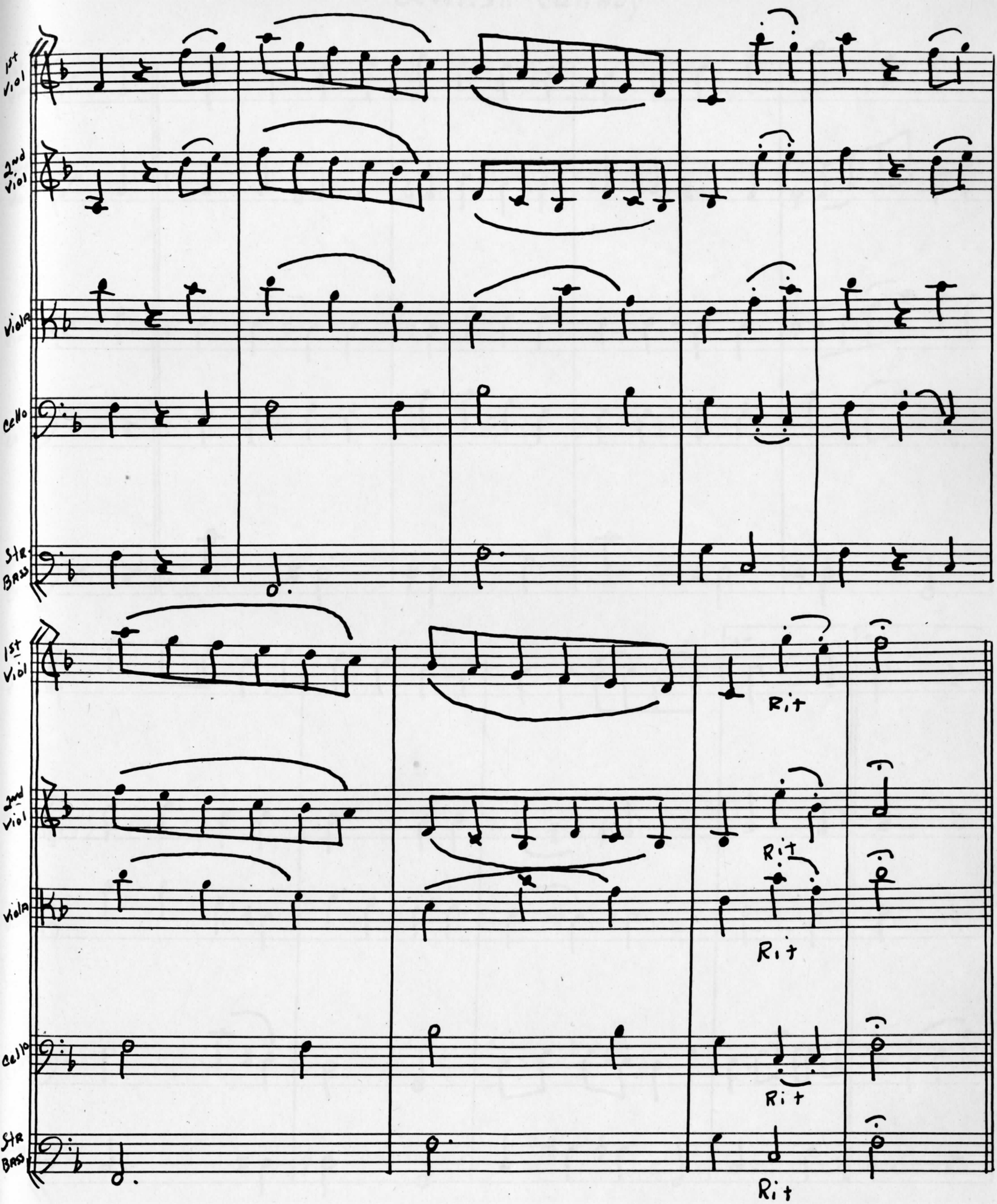
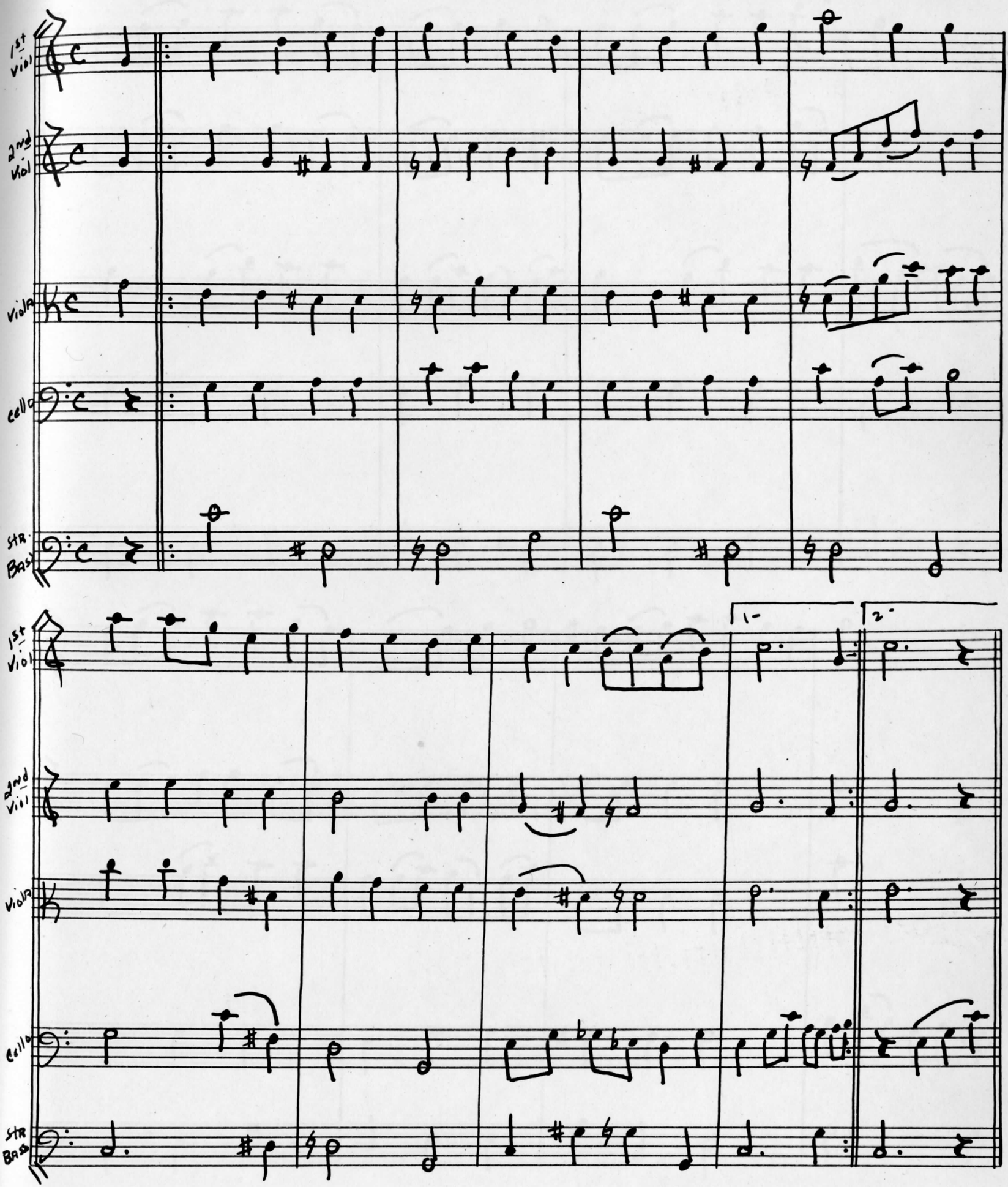

1st Viol
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass
1st Viol
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str Bass
Rit
Rit
Rit
Rit
Rit

Scottish Cullaby



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1st Viol

2nd Viol

Viola

Pizz

ARCO

Cello

Str Bass

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DANSE SUITE

This, the fourth in the series and representing general ability at the end of the fourth year, is a suite of folk dances—a gavotte, a minuet, a polka and a saraband. The object has been to portray as nearly as possible the characteristics of each dance.

Deems Taylor in his "Music Lover's Encyclopedia" has defined each of them as follows:

Gavotte: An old French dance (named probably from the people of Gap, called Gavots). It is in 4-4 time, strongly marked; begins on the weak half of a measure and ends on the accented; no notes smaller than eighth notes appear.

Minuet: A stately and deliberate dance (originating probably in Poitou in the 17th century) in triple time, with gallant and amorous spirit. As one of the most important music forms, it contains usually a principal subject and a trio each in contrasted sections.

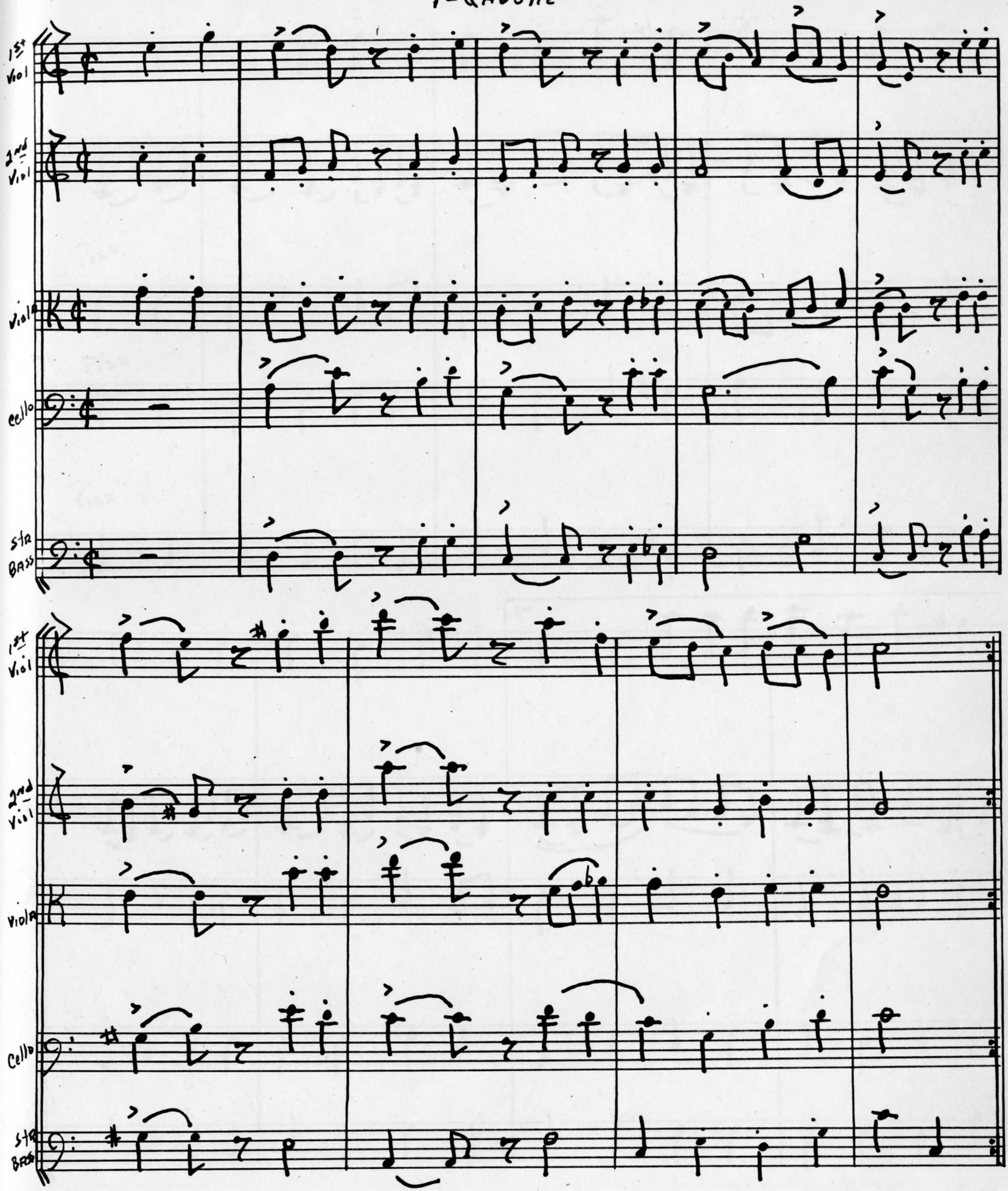
Polka: A vivacious hopping dance of Bohemian origin performed by two persons; the dance tune in 2-4 time with the third eighth note (second beat) accented.

Saraband: A stately Spanish dance; perhaps derived from the Saracens, and danced with castanets; it is in slow 3-4 or 3-2 time, with the second note usually prolonged through the second and third beats of the measure.

Once again, as in the preceding composition, the handling of problems has to be of a very general nature. There are parts that have to be played in the third position. Also, more emphatic use of stacatto notes, the accent, and the dotted eighth followed by the sixteenth are an important part of this suite.

Danse Suite

1-Gavotte



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1st Viol

2nd Viol

Pizz

Viola

Pizz

Cello

Pizz

Str Bass

1st Viol

2nd Viol

Viola

Cello

Str Bass

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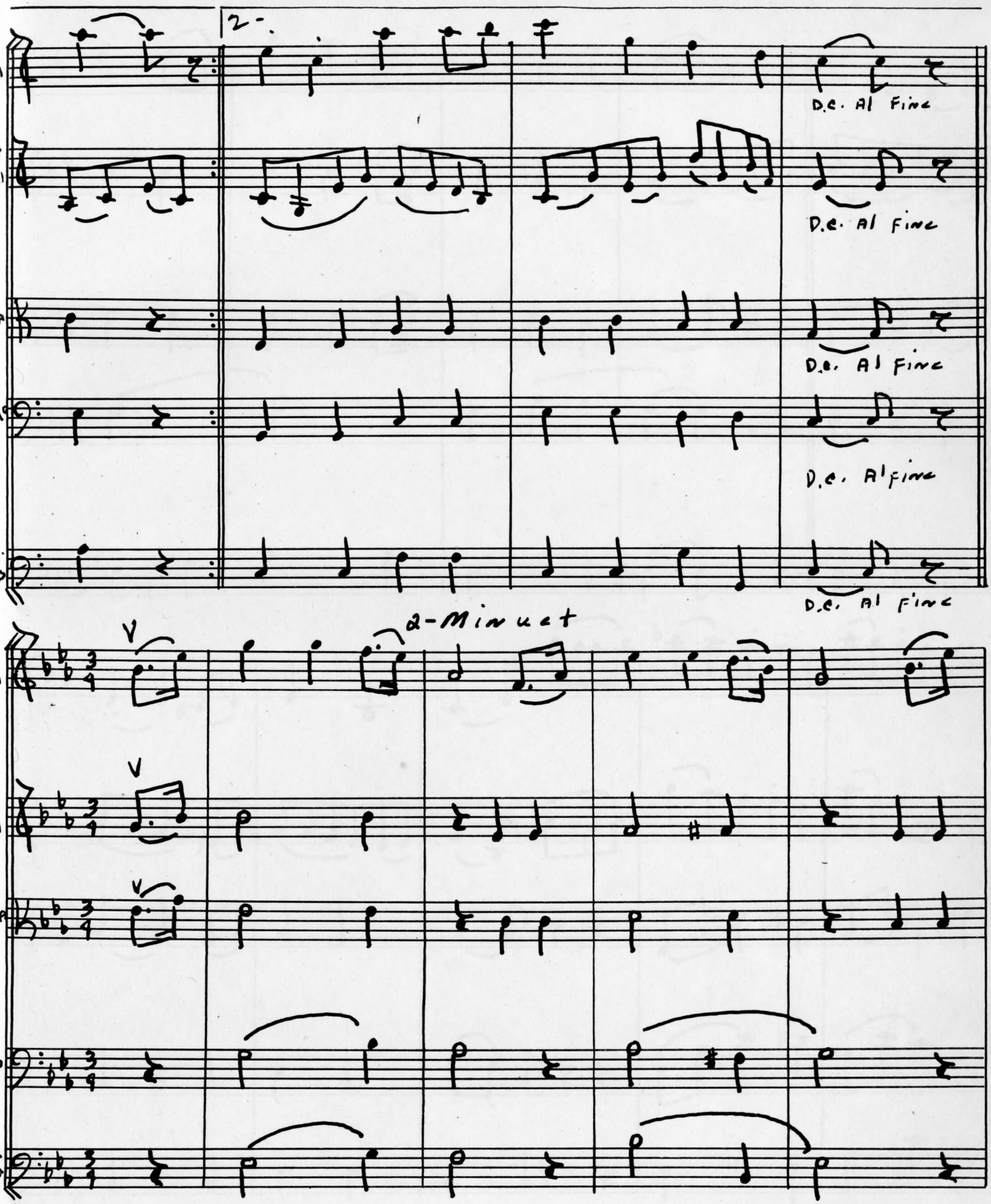

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3 - Polka

1st Viol

2nd Viol

Viola

Cello

Str Bass

1-

2-

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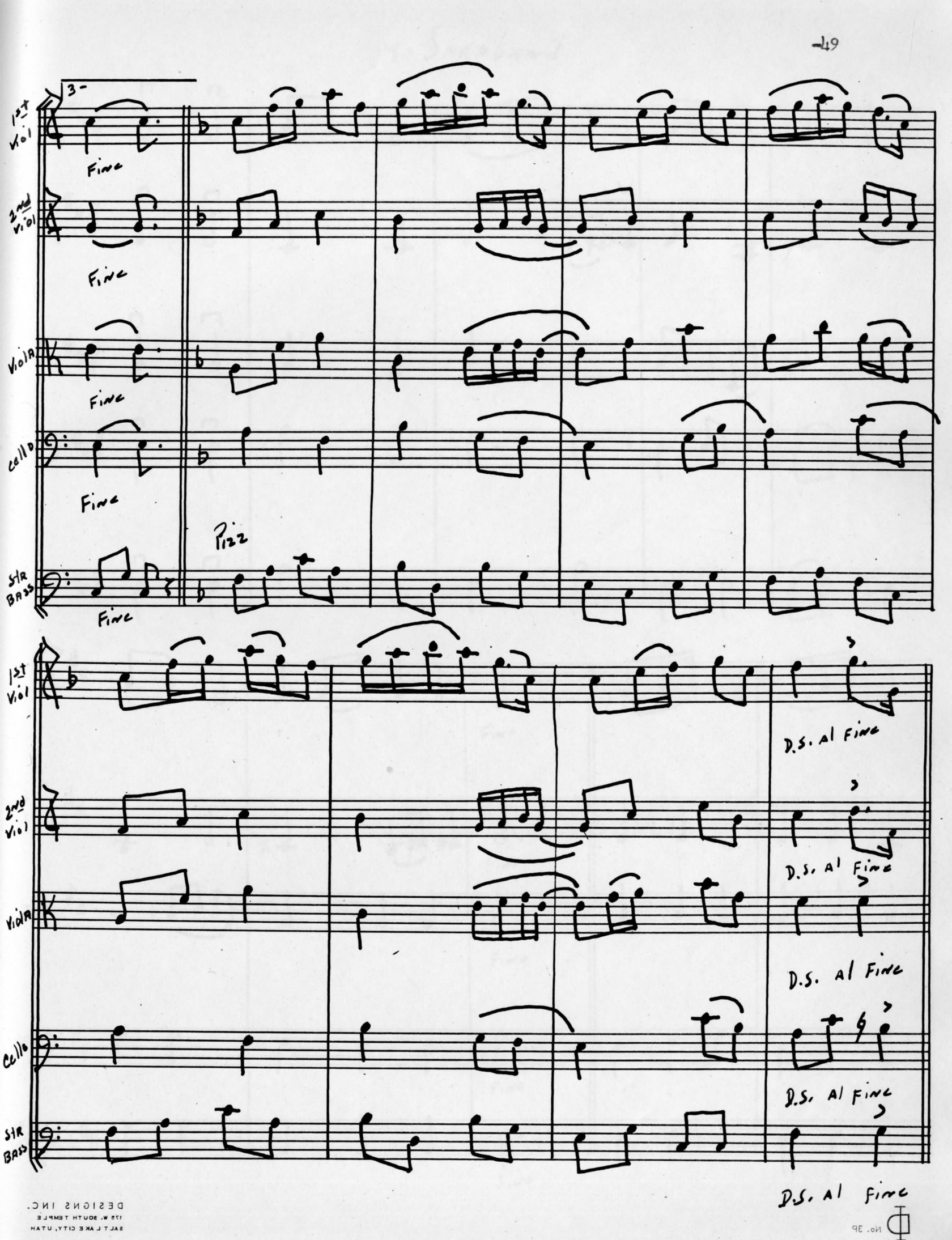

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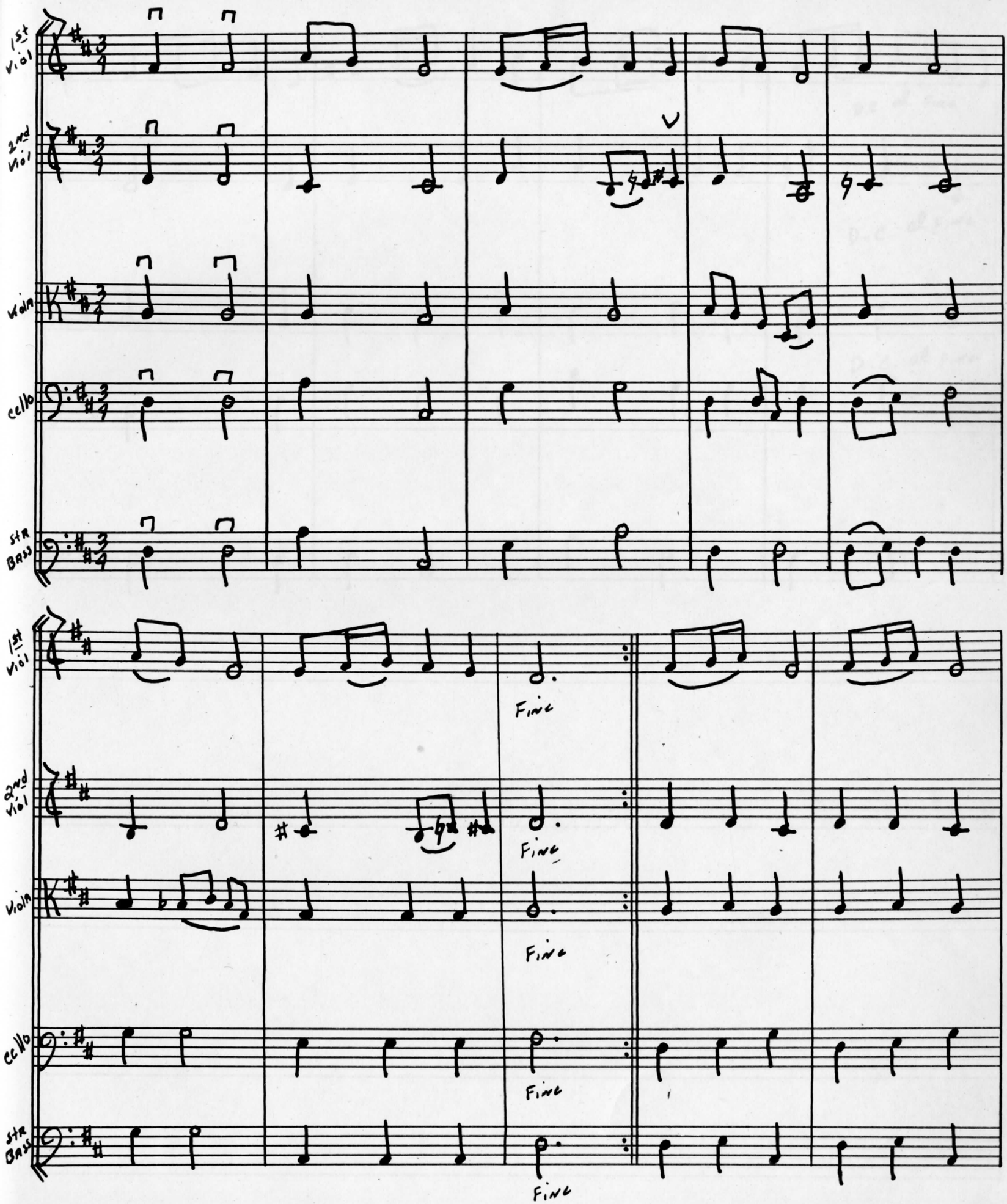
4- Sarabband



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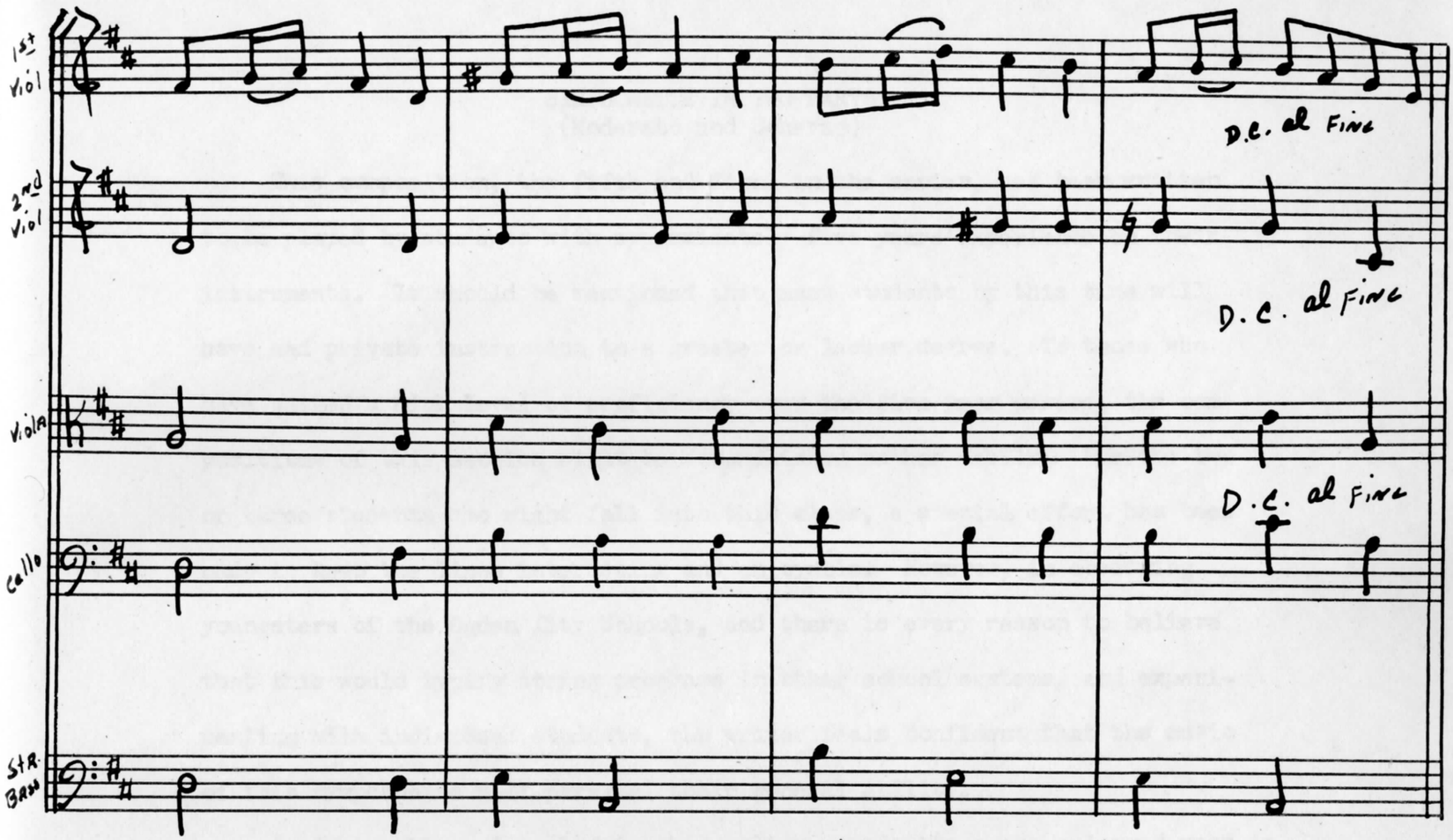

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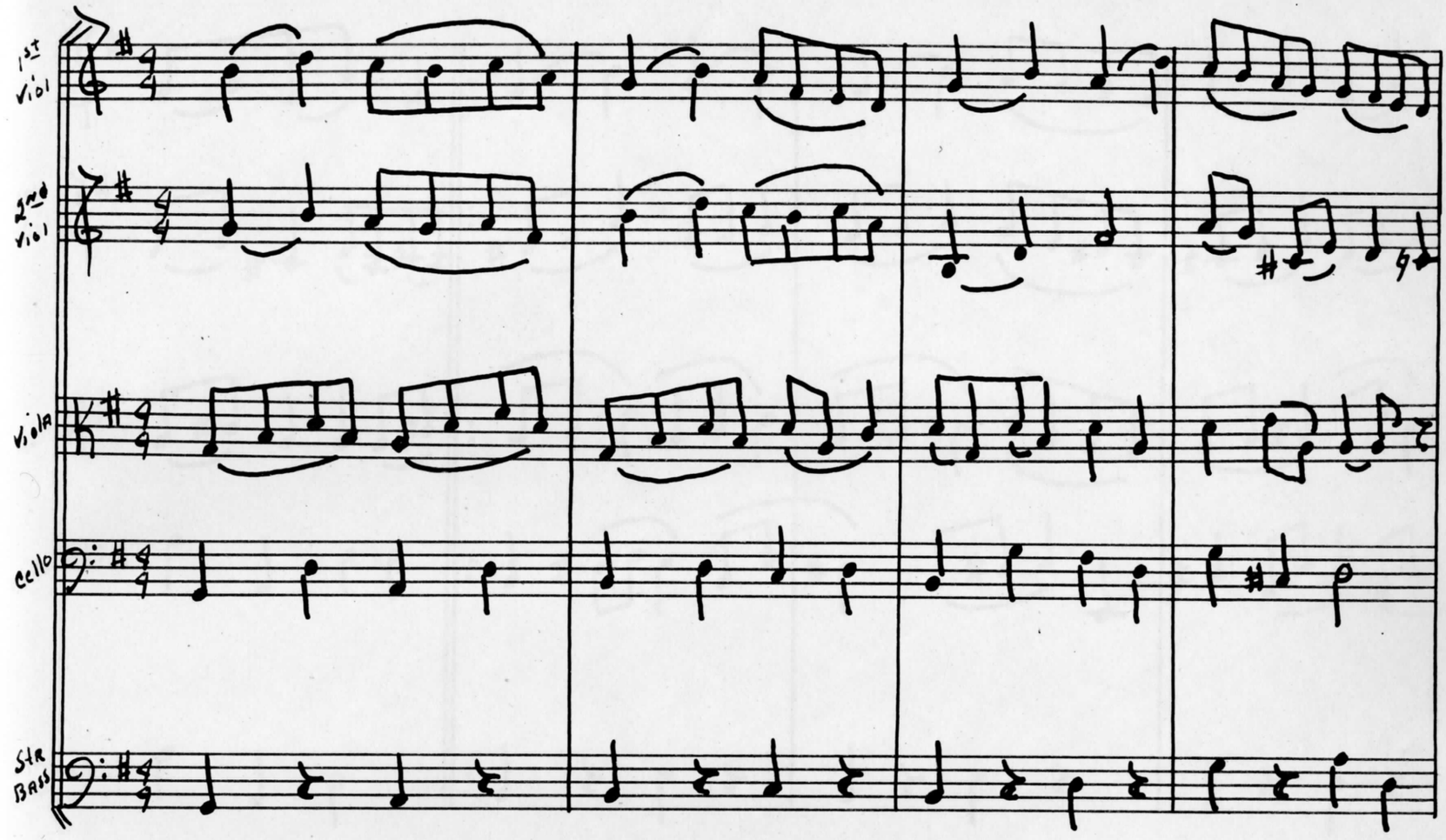
SYMPHONETTE IN TWO PARTS
(Moderato and Scherzo)

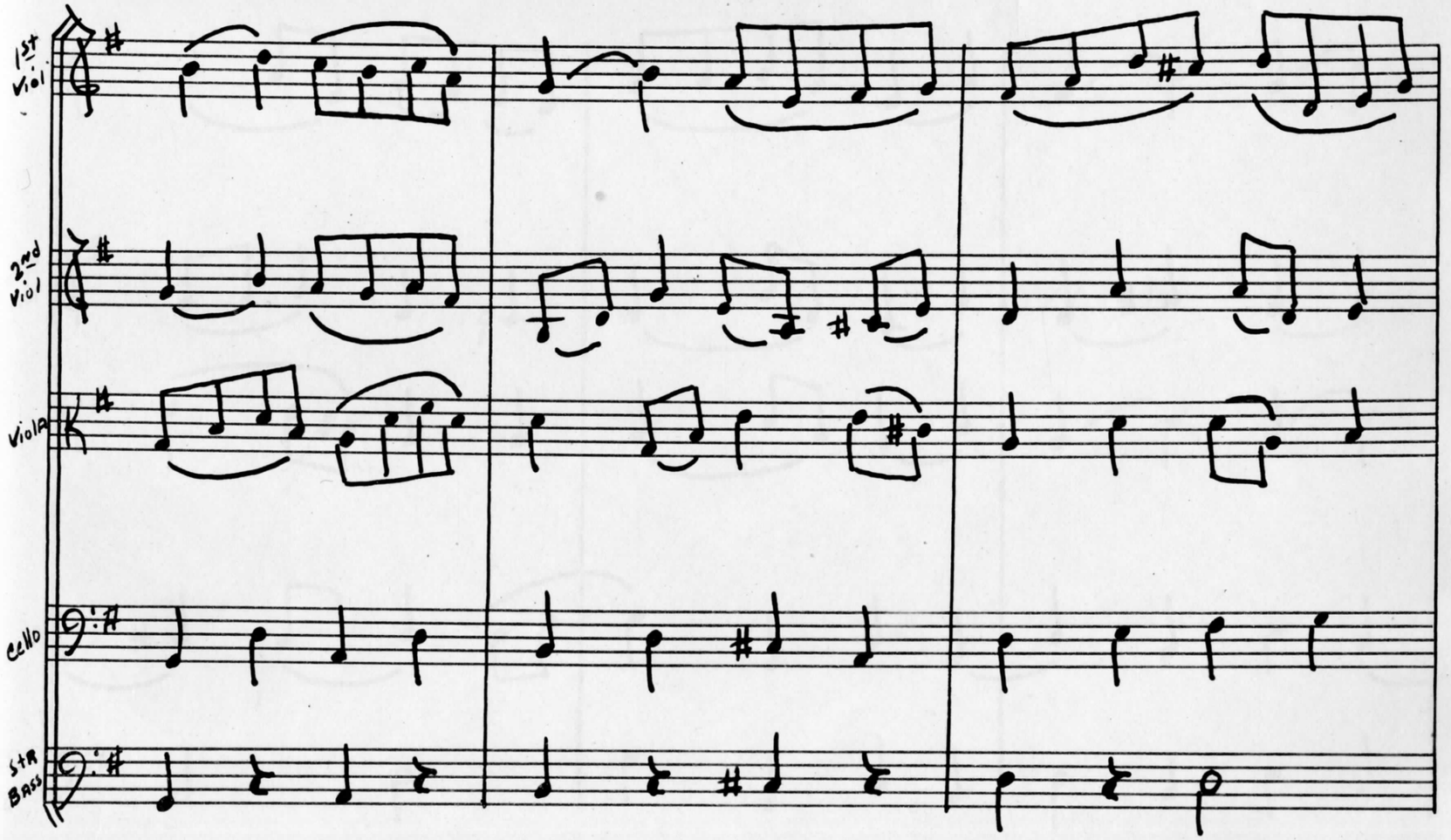
This composition, the fifth and final in the series, has been written to be played by students with approximately five years' experience on their instruments. It should be mentioned that many students by this time will have had private instruction to a greater or lesser degree. To those who have gained a high level of proficiency over the five year period, the compositions of this section might be accomplished rather easily. For the two or three students who might fall into this class, a special effort has been made to keep the lines interesting and enjoyable. However, in observing youngsters of the Ogden City Schools, and there is every reason to believe that this would typify string programs in other school systems, and experimenting with individual students, the writer feels confident that the music of this symphonette will parallel their general ability.

Again, problems launched in the earlier compositions are enlarged upon in this one. The performer by this time should have been made to realize that phrasing should be to a musical composition what proper breathing and emphasis is to good oration. In this section, refinement and precision are of great importance, together with dexterity and fluency. In the middle part of the moderato, a rapidly changing chord sequence marks the importance of careful listening. Good phrasing is essential. In the scherzo, a bright 3-8 tempo provides work in coordination of bow and fingers. Position work is necessary. Staccato notes appear throughout, with the melodic structure being shared by the various lines.

Symphonette

Moderato





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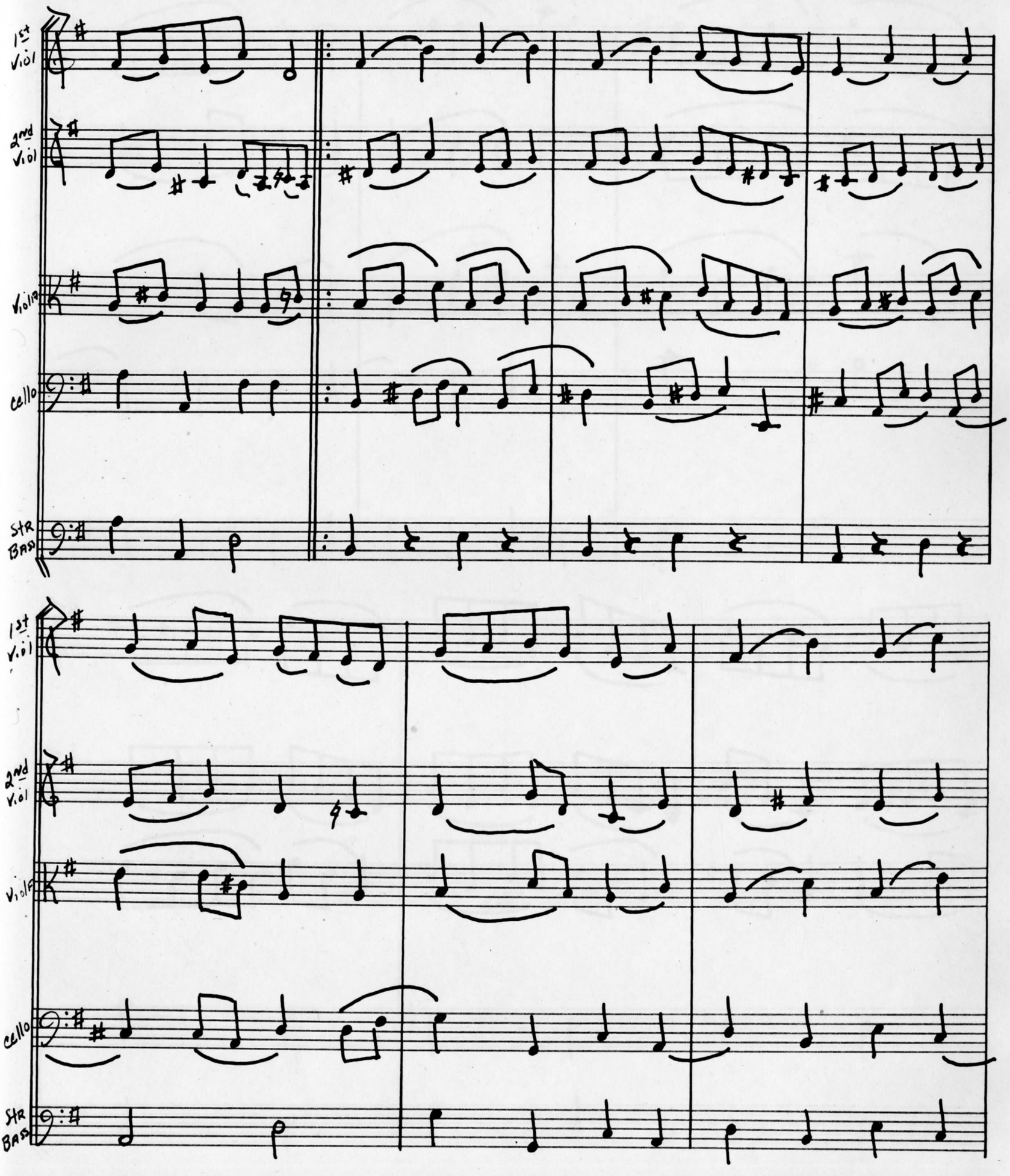

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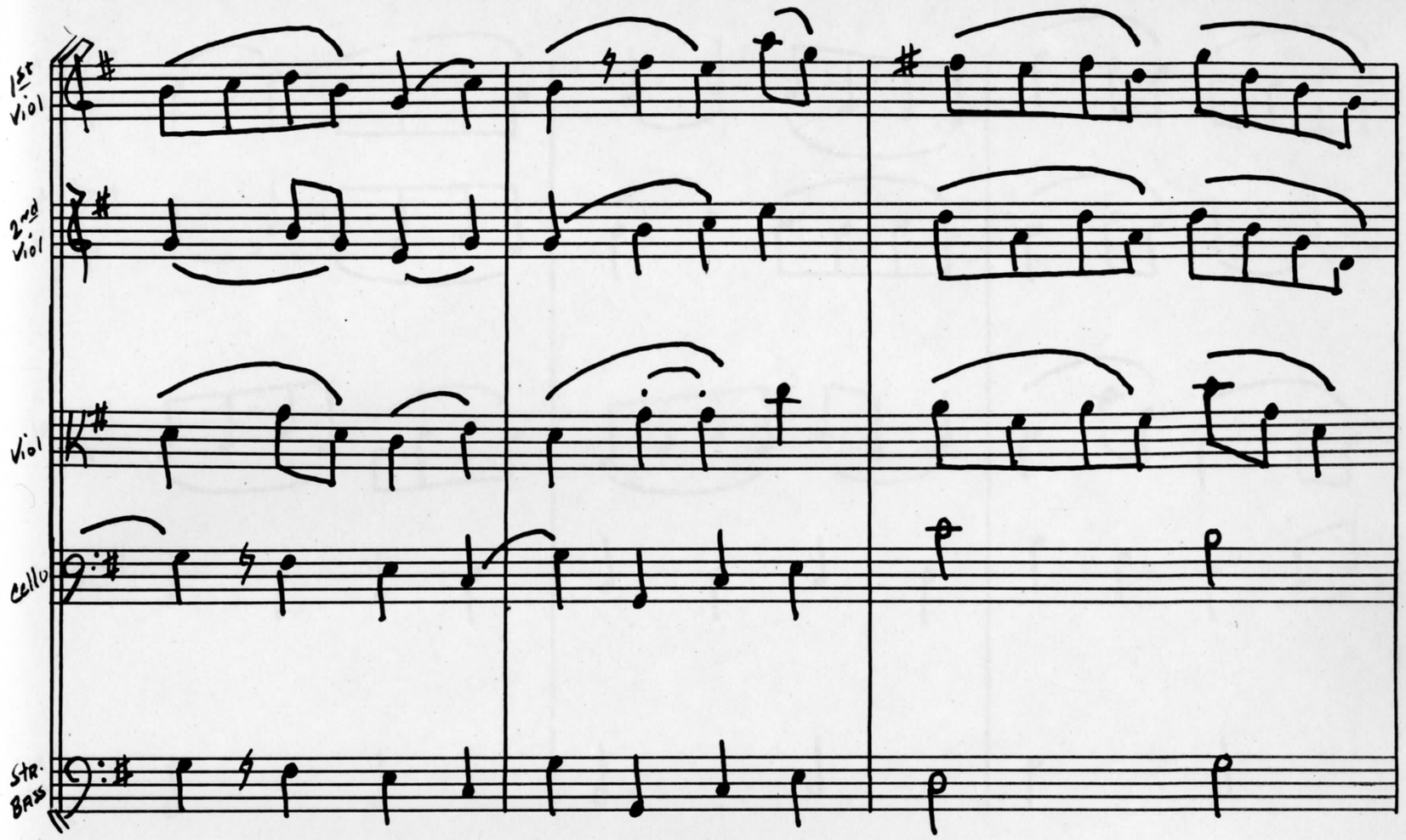

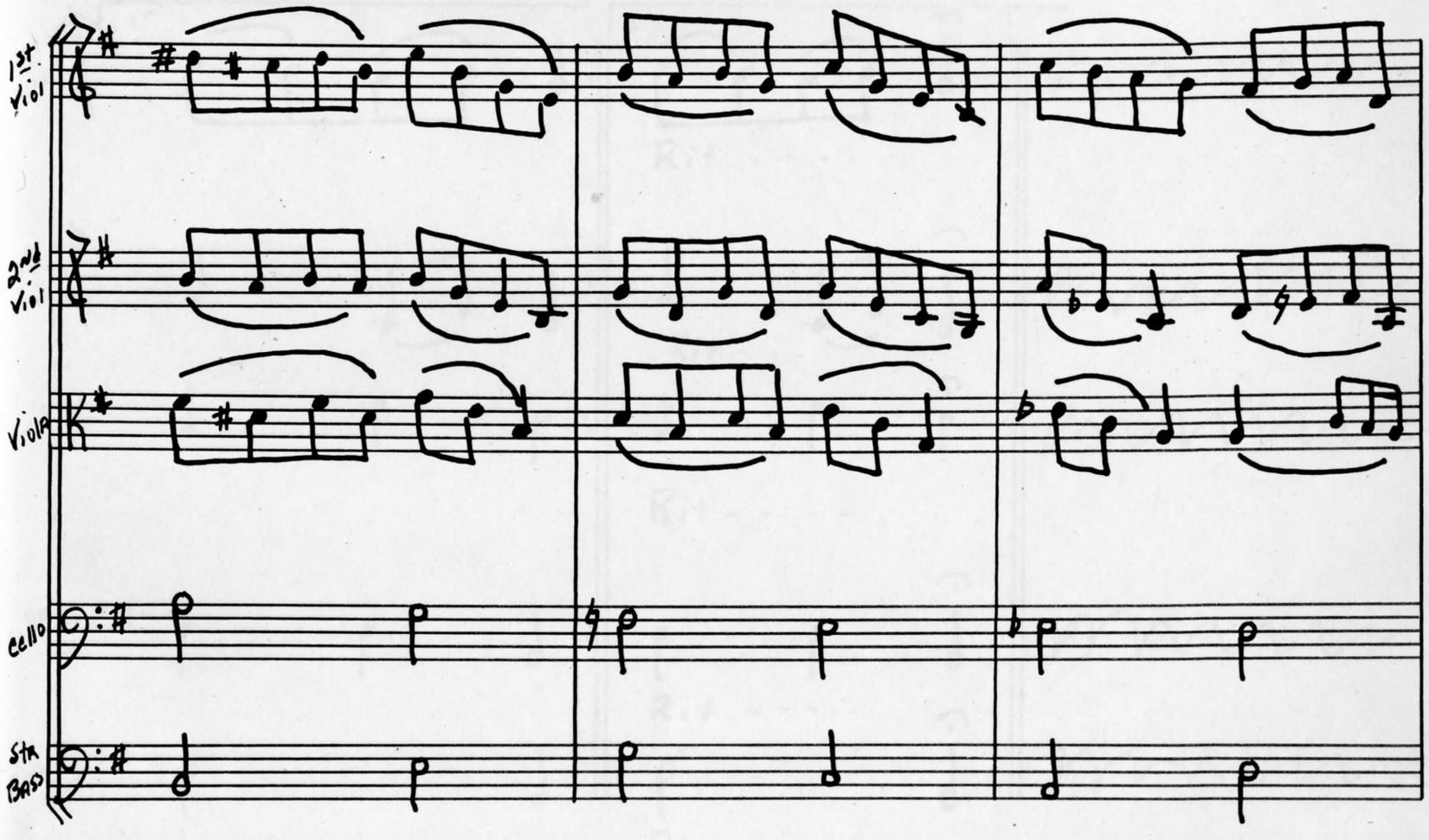

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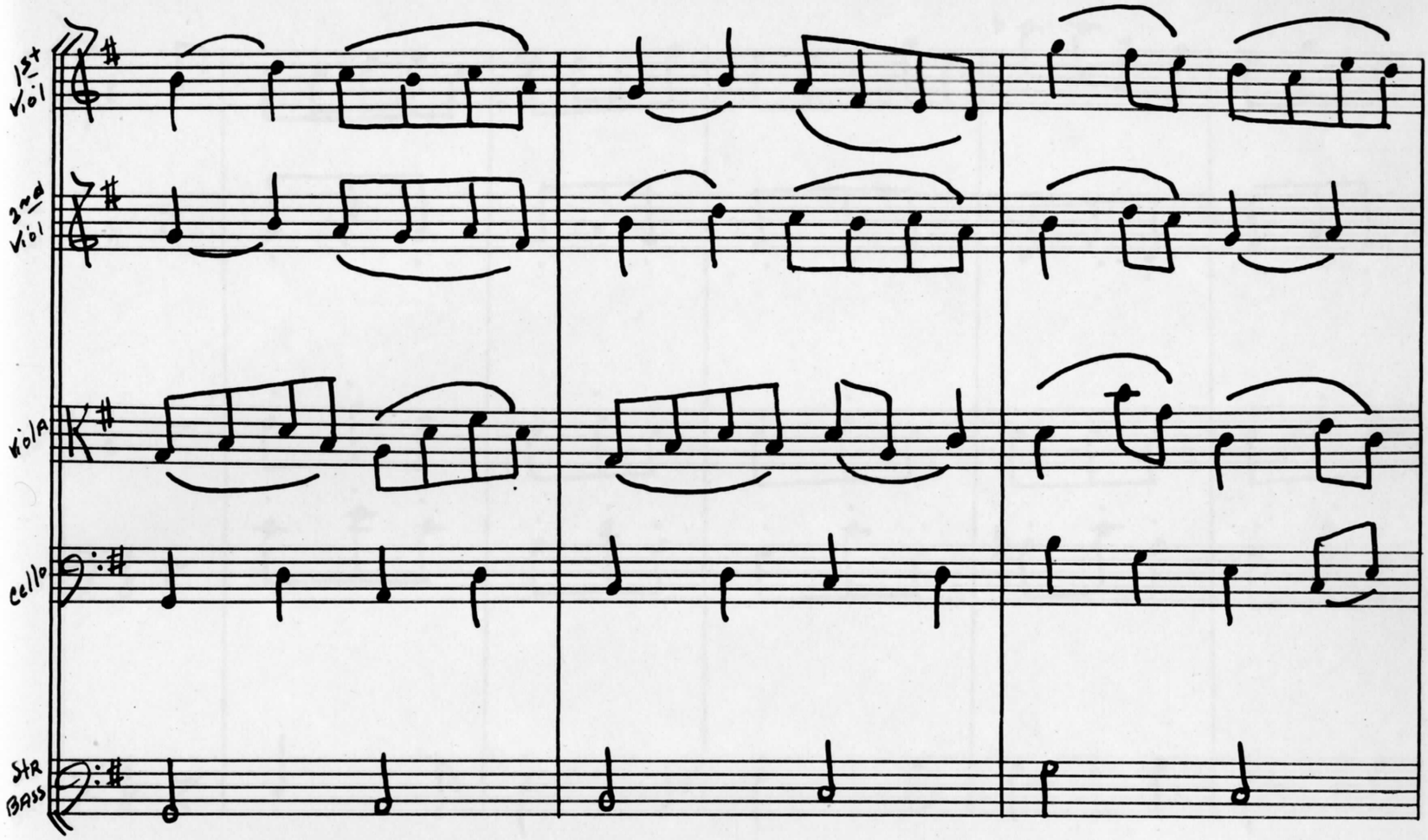

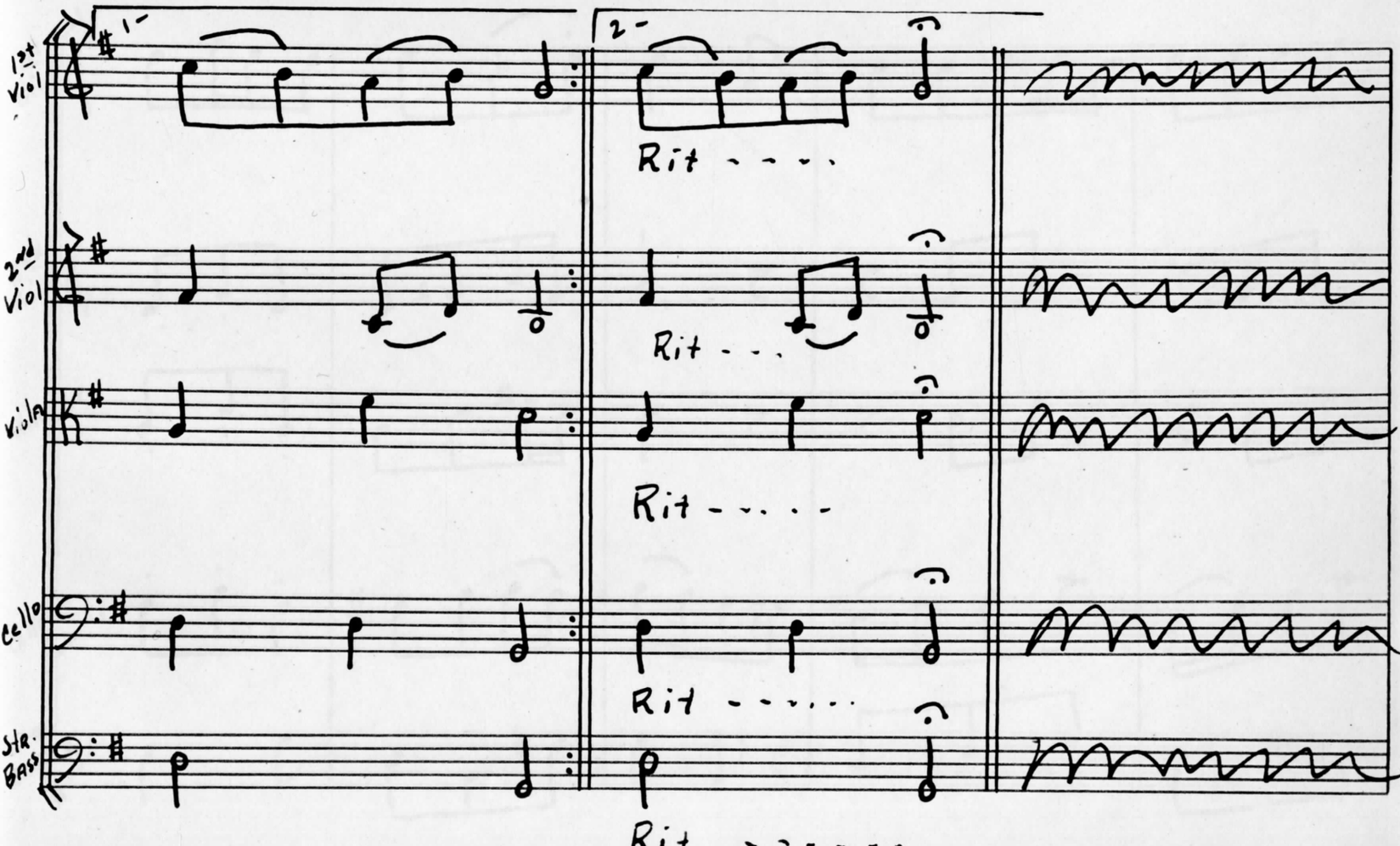

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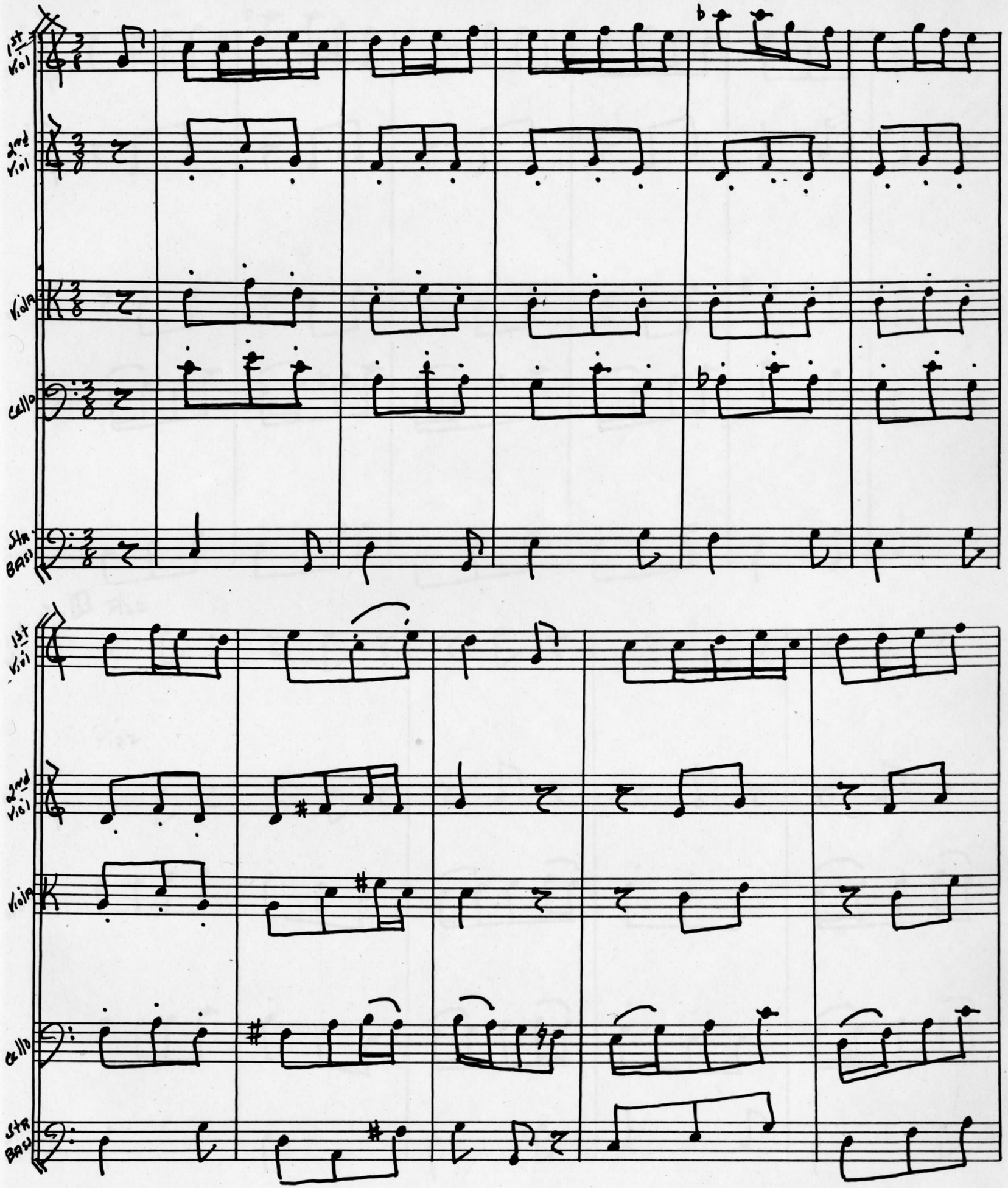
Scherzo



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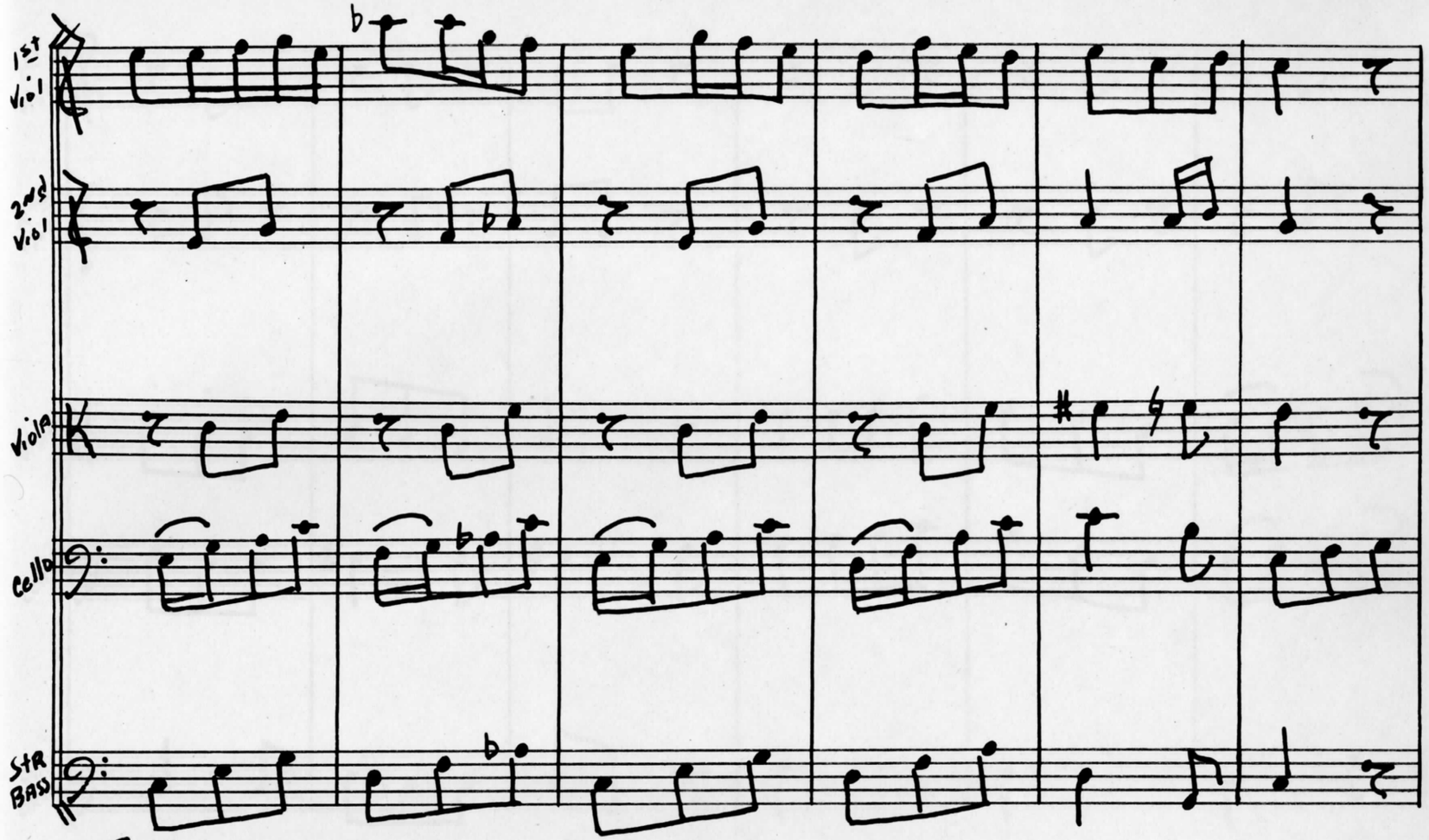

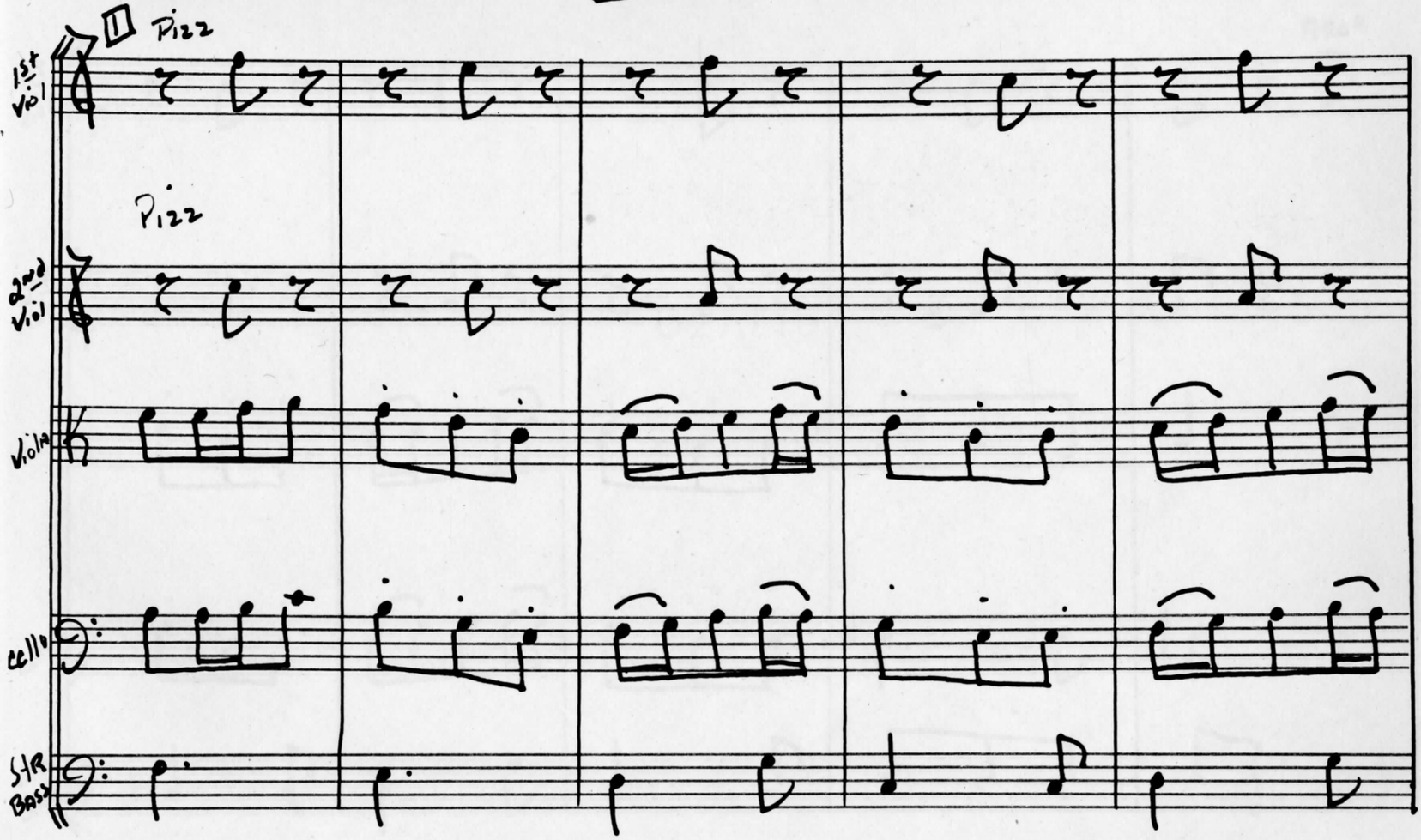

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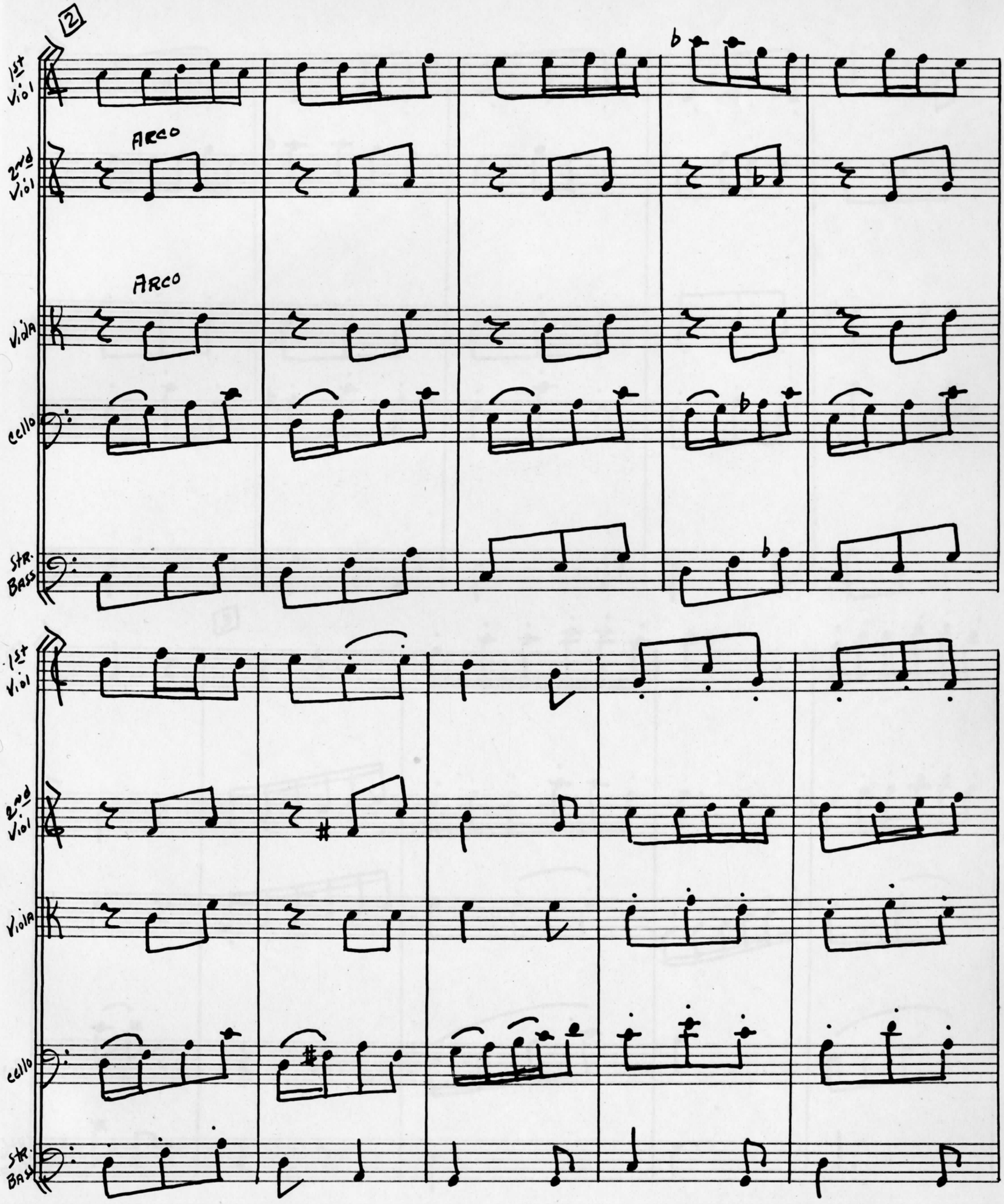
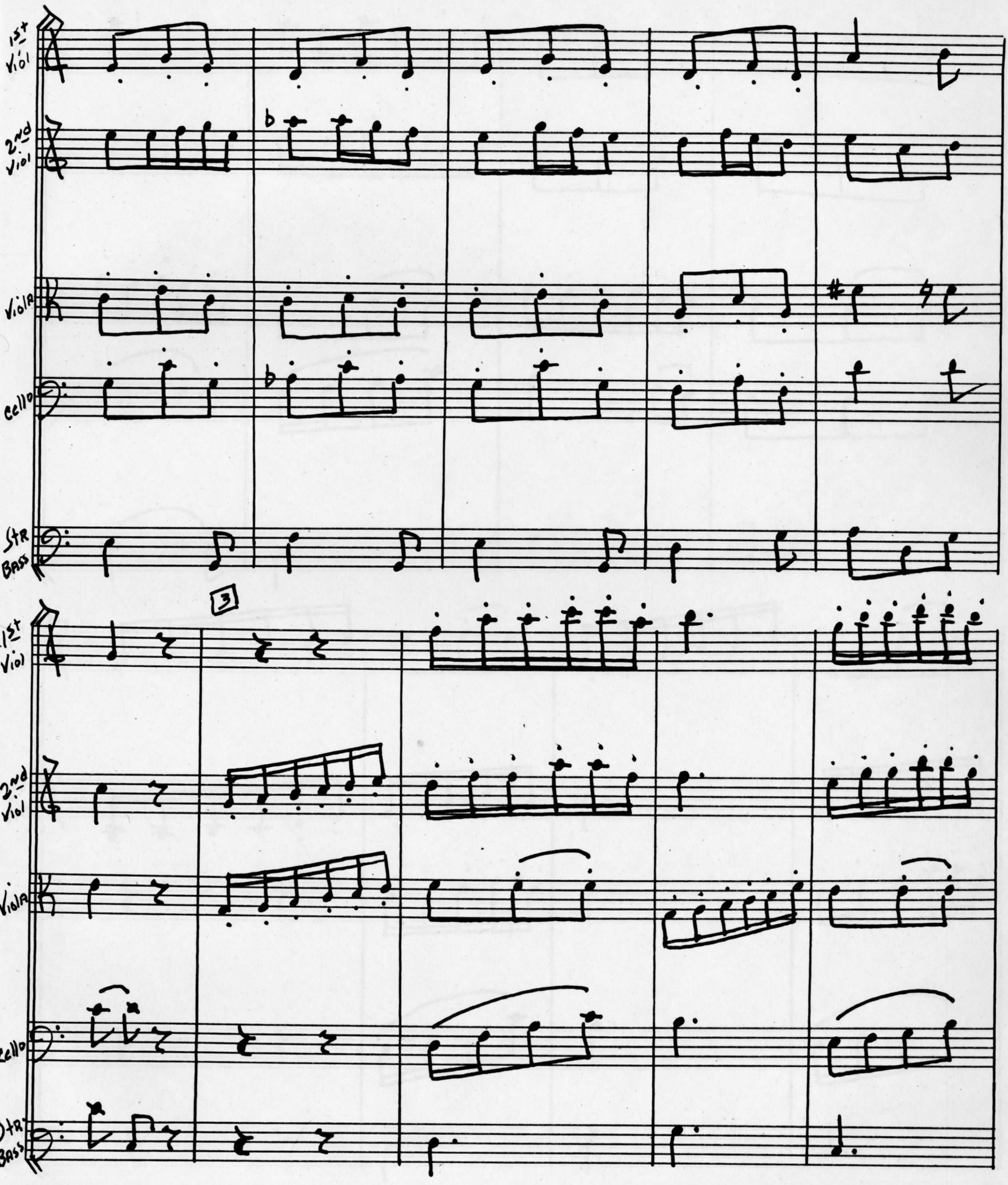

2
1st Viol
2nd Viol
ARCO
Viola
ARCO
Cello
Str. Bass
1st Viol
2nd Viol
Viola
Cello
Str. Bass



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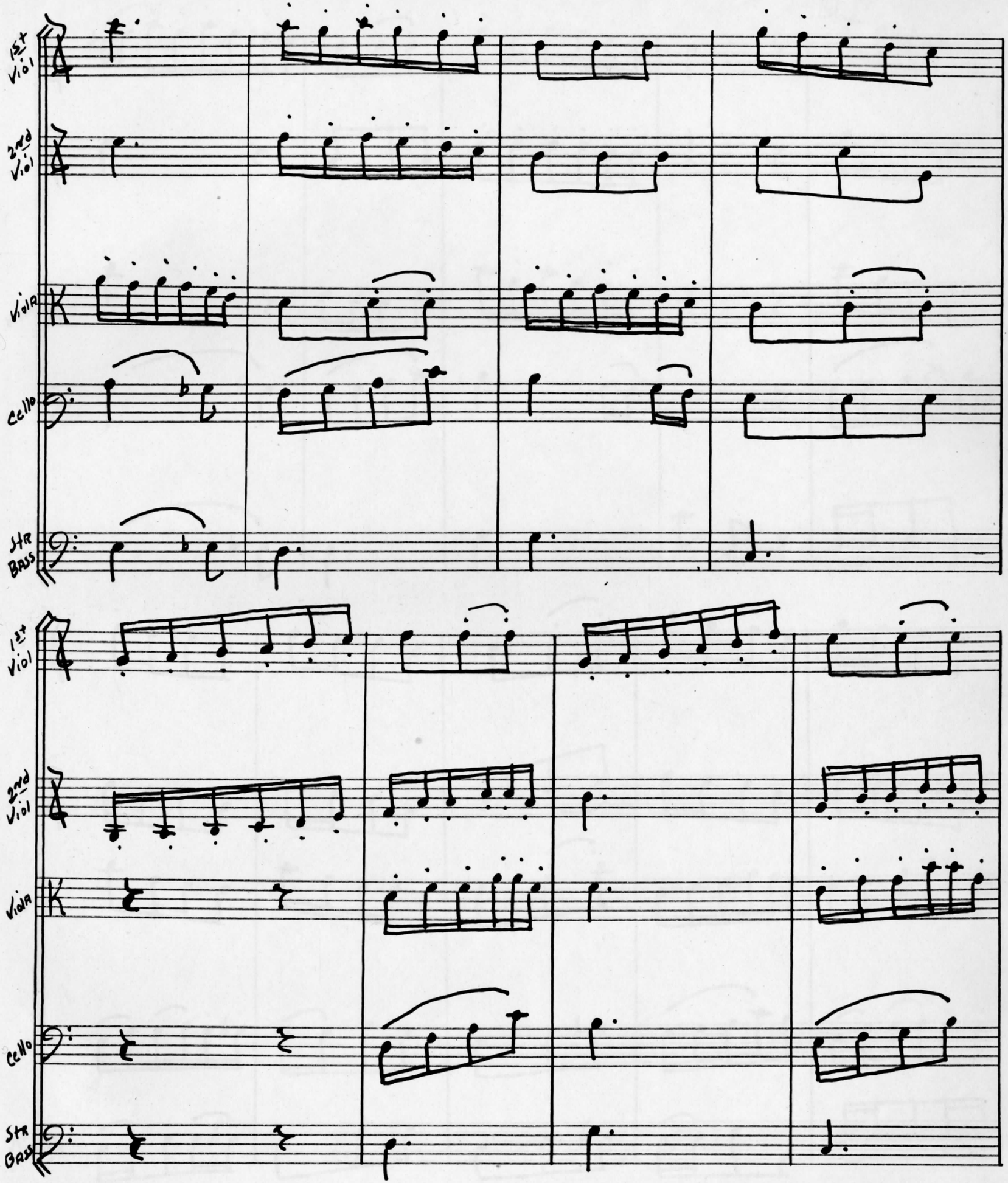

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4

1st Viol

2nd Viol

Viola

Cello

Str. Bass

1st Viol

2nd Viol

Viola

Cello

Str. Bass

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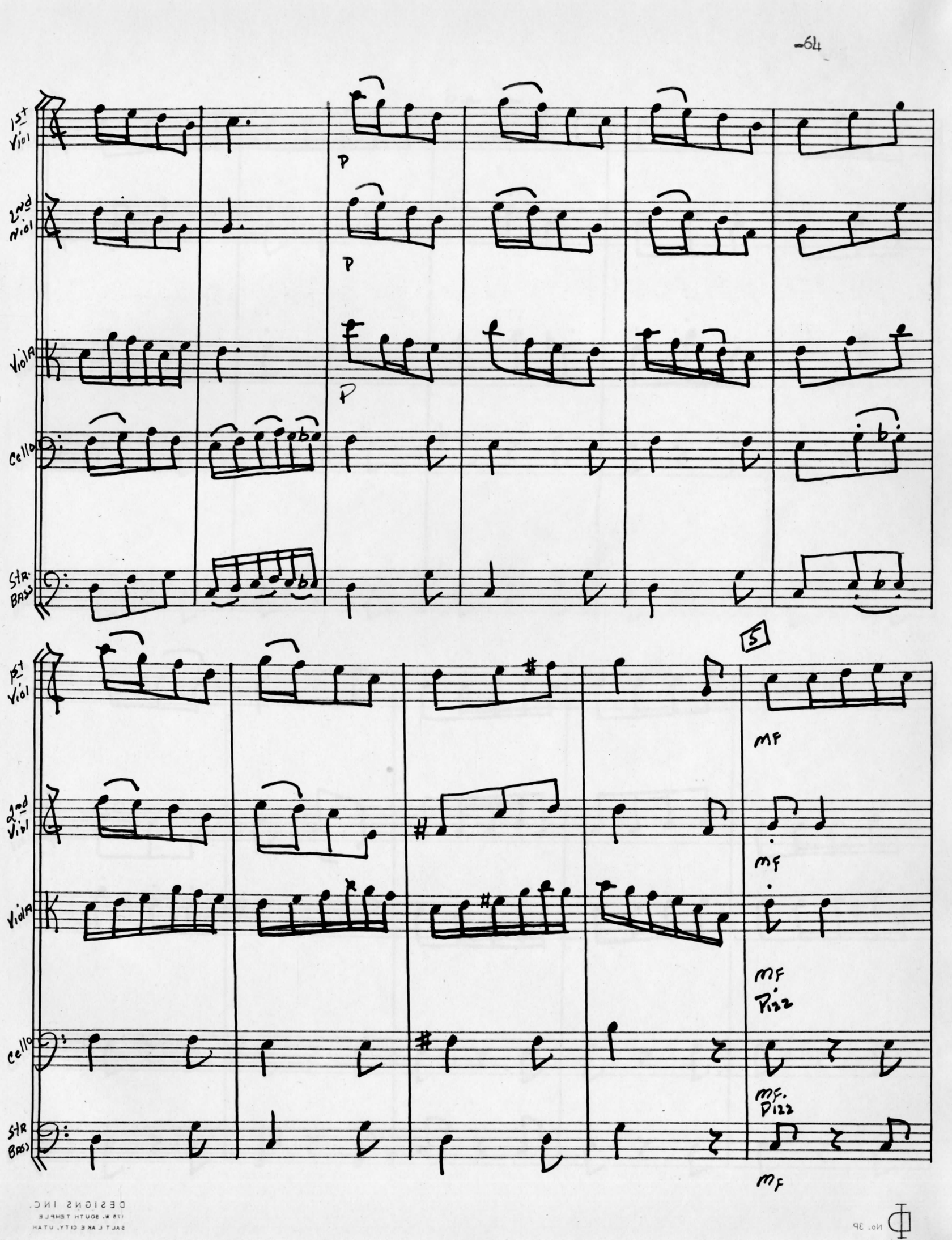

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1st Vln

2nd Vln

Viola

Cello

Str Bass

1st Vln

2nd Vln

Viola

Cello

Str Bass

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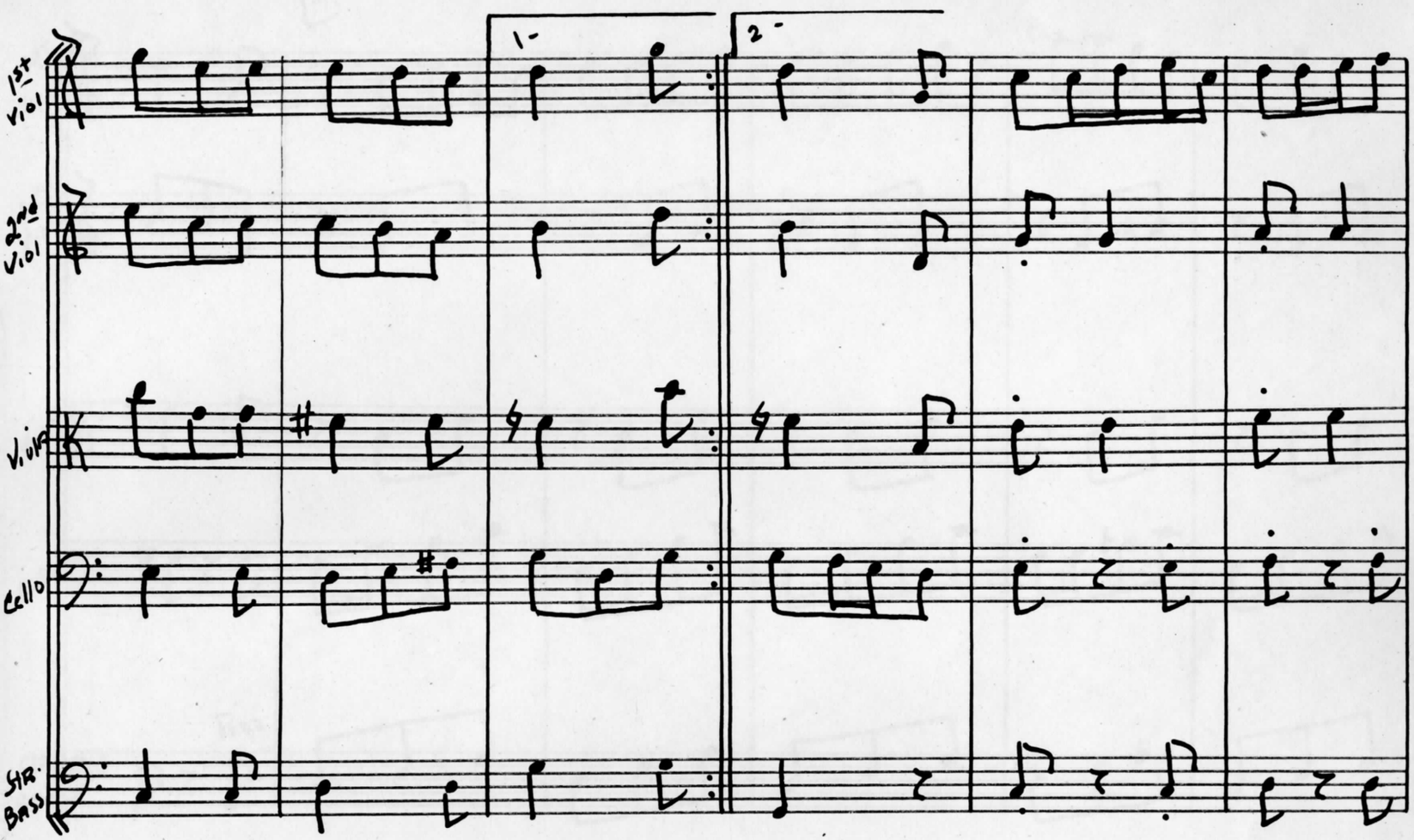

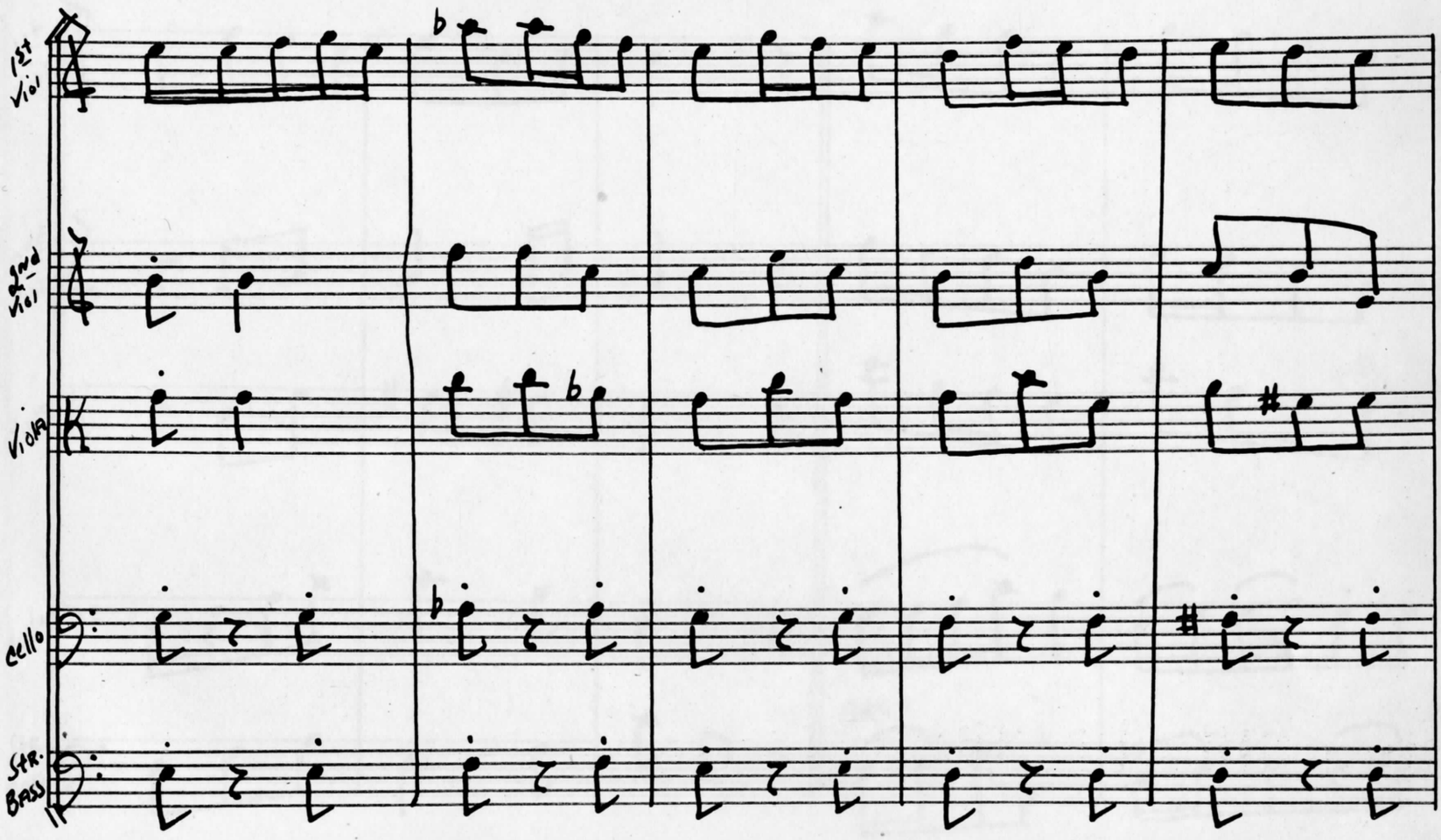

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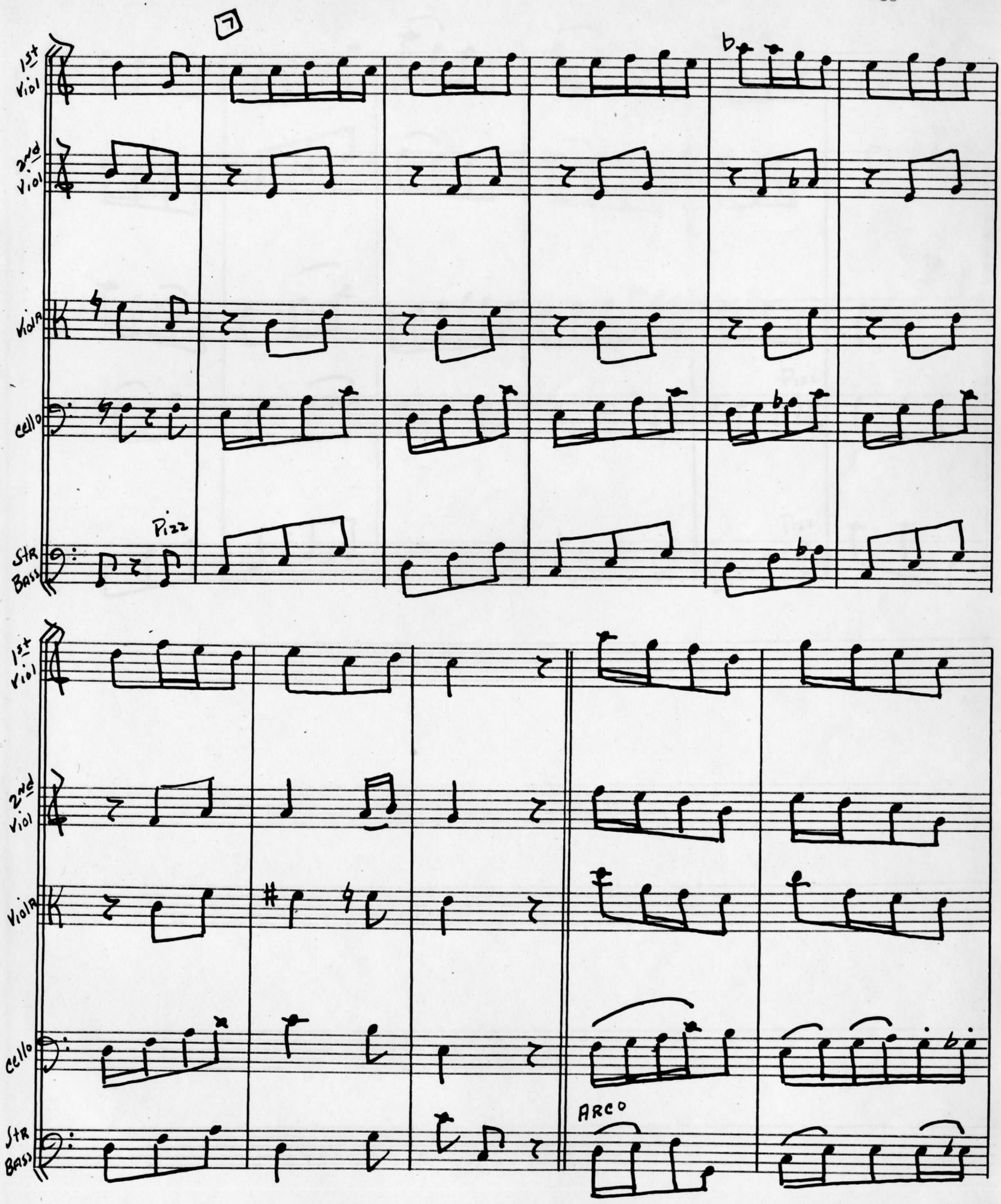

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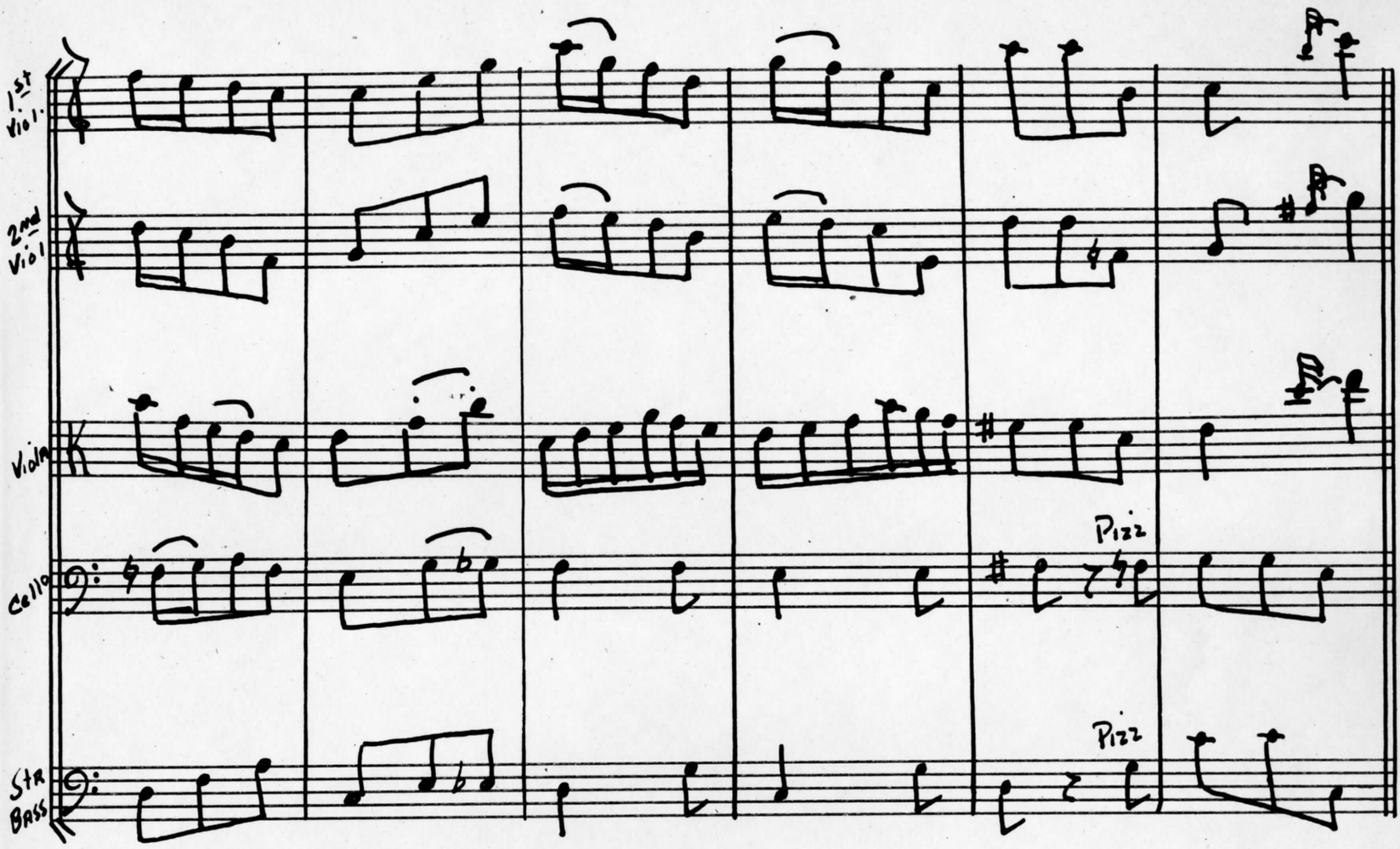

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