Johann Andreas Amon

CONCERTO

for Viola & Orchestra

Piano Reduction

in G major

Transcribed & Edited by Alan Bonds

ARCODORO
PUBLICATIONS

PREFACE

This edition has been prepared from the version originally overseen by Sydney Beck at the New York City Library. During the 1930's Depression the Library employed several professional copyists (some of whom it seems were also musicologists) to render into 'fair copy' dozens of fairly obscure original manuscripts in its possession with a view to their being resurrected and performed. The resultant scores have been reprinted by Garland Press. Luckily Beck was a distinguished violist, viola da gambist and viola d'amore afficionado. He managed to include the Stamitz D major, Rolla E flat and Amon A major concertos in the project .

The scores are admirable in many ways. The calligraphy is beautiful, they are as faithful as possible to the original, and they provide interesting and useful introductory material including the provenance of the original manuscripts.

However, this particular Concerto seems to have posed some problems for the copyist(s) working on it, mostly stemming from the fact that the solo part was originally intended to be played on a viola tuned a major-second higher than usual (D,A,E,B). There are a few precedents for this practice in the 18th century, the most notable being the Mozart *Sinfonia Concertante* K.364 in which the solo viola is asked to tune a minor-second higher. This re-tuning is aimed at putting the instrument into 'overdrive' to extract extra tone and resonance. It seems that the normally-tuned viola in the 18th Century was not considered capable of competing with the orchestra, and it must be admitted that writing orchestral accompaniments for the solo viola has always been a challenge. Mozart's solution was ingenious but until fairly recently hardly anyone played the part as written.

Confronted with an orchestral score in A major and a solo viola part in G major, someone (possibly the copyist) seems to have arbitrarily decided that most modern violists would probably resist re-tuning their instrument using modern strings to the higher tuning. They chose instead to transpose the orchestral score down a major-second to retain the integrity of the passage work of the viola part (very decidedly in G major). The results are in some respects problematic. Quite a few notes appear outside the range of accompanying instruments. The beautiful autonomous double-bass part was all but destroyed for the four-string bass (if they don't have access to bottom G's). Even worse, the Horn parts were left in E when clearly they should be in D.

Furthermore, the original parts (from the Library of Congress) are apparently quite inconsistent in matters of detail, particularly dynamic markings and articulations. According to Beck, the viola part is the most detailed and provides clues for the other parts.

The score as published by the Garland Press is the transposed version in G major, warts and all. It contains two distinct hands—that of the professional copyist in fine copperplate manuscript, and a second using a different non-calligraphic pen of some kind. According to Beck, the NYCL wanted to at least make available what they had in some kind of usable form, but many of the extra markings seem unusual for scores of this time and I am therefore frankly suspicious of these extra markings. It is not clear whose 'corrections' these are. They may be by Beck himself. He was a famous and highly repected musicologist and who am I to challenge his scholarship and expertise? However they look more to me like the kinds of markings made in orchestral rehearsals—lots of extraneous slurs, articulations, dynamics etc. Could they have something to do with one of Trampler's early performances? Without having seen the original manuscripts it is impossible to tell, but I have made the conscious decision to include only the marks in the hand of the original copyist. I find it hard to accept that he (or she) was so derelict in his/her duty as to overlook so many extra markings. I have corrected just a few glaring inconsistencies and anomalies. This 'minimalist' version looks much more like the scores I know of this period and leaves a lot of room for performers to finesse their own interpretation (particularly the soloist).

If the dating of 1799 is correct, it is roughly contemporaneous with Beethoven's early and Haydn's later symphonies, and the influence of Rossini is also evident. The questionable markings remind me more of middle and late Beethoven – even Brahms in some places.

Given all of the above, three possibilities exist for performing this concerto with orchestra:

1. as originally written—viola part in G retuned a major second higher, orchestra in A;
2. viola part in G, orchestra in G
3. viola part in A, orchestra in A

The first solution is clearly the best choice (provided the instrument is robust enough to withstand the pressure). Gut strings seem preferable, certainly not high-tensile steel or space-age synthetics. The orchestral parts are not compromised.

The second solution is fine for the viola, but creates problems for some of the orchestra parts.

The third solution creates big problems for the solo viola part, especially the passage work, harmonics, open strings etc. and is only to be undertaken by the very brave.

The version for viola & piano is in G or A. It is supplied to allow for exams, auditions etc. The original orchestral version contains material to allow the soloist to direct the ensemble by leading. It is sometimes derived from the accompaniment. In order to transcribe some of the material for piano I have altered the tuttis so that the viola sometimes takes the leading voice. However, the solo passages are identical to the orchestral version.

Like most concerti of the later 18th Century, the solo part obviously invites the player to make their own decisions about bowings, slurs, nuances etc. Mozart, Haydn, Stamitz and Viotti should probably be the models. There are a couple of mini-cadenzas from the composer but the soloist must set about writing a major cadenza.

Finally, although the original title page states: "*Concerto pour L'Alto Principale Avec Accompagnement de deux Violons, deux Flutes, deus Cors, Bassons, Viola, Violoncello & Contre Bass*", the words 'flute' and 'oboe' were often used interchangeably (it was often the choice of the publisher). These parts look more like oboe parts to me. They would certainly sound as well (or even better) for the oboe. I also doubt whether more than one bassoon is necessary.

If balance problems present themselves in the solo sections, it is preferable to cut the number of accompanying strings to one or two per part. This too was common practice.

The Obituary of Johann Andreas Amon

This musician, respected by all who knew him, died on the 29th of March of this year [1825] in Wallerstein, as princely Capellmeister. Gerber must have been very ill-informed about him and his works: (see his Neues Tonkünstler-Lexicon, where even his name is printed incorrectly, as Ammon); turning rather to those, who, at least earlier or later came into closer contact with him, we may read here certain determinations about him based on more accurate sources.

He was born In 1763 in Bamberg, and even as a boy, he was educated for music. The first court singer herself, Fracasini, instructed him in singing, especially in church music, excellent at that time, as did the concertmaster Bäuerle in instrumental music, especially in violin-playing. When his boy's voice broke, he conceived a special love for the Waldhorn and sought to transfer to this instrument what his voice could no longer do. Punto, at that time the most famous of all hornists, became acquainted with him, helped him work and took him on his travels through France and Germany. Thus both were in Paris in 1781 and 1782, where Amon also took instruction from Sacchini in composition. In 1783 they visited other great cities of France until, in 1784, they began their German trip with Strassburg and spent more or less time in Frankfurt, Aschaffenburg, Leipzig, Dresden, Berlin, etc. Later they went to Vienna and stayed there longer. On these travels, Amon seconded [played second horn to] Punto.and conducted him in the concertos which Punto performed. In each of these places Amon became known to the most distinguished masters of his art, and because his youthful, unassuming, cheerful, and pleasant disposition pleased all, he was well received by them. He especially praised in this regard Hiller in Leipzig, Reichardt, Düpont, Haak, Gros, and Mara in Berlin, as later in Vienna Haydn, Mozart, Vanhall, and Hoffmeister. Through closer acquaintance with such people and their works, he widened his knowledge and strengthened his taste. But his chest became weak and this forced him to give up what had up to now been his favorite instrument. In its stead he took up violin, viola, and pianoforte, practiced them diligently, and without regard to whether he could or would become a real concert player, he learned to play them masterfully. In 1789, he attained a lasting residency and position as music-director at Heilbronn, where he also conducted the Liebhaberconcerte for almost thirty years; later, in 1817, he was Capellmeister to the Prince of Wallerstein, at whose court he spent, busily, the rest of his life.

From his early adult years to his last days, he dedicated his best time and his best skills to composition. So the number of his works became quite large– far larger than those who were not acquainted with him more closely know because more than a few remained unprinted; of the printed ones, certain types were not widely disseminated. His works did not create sensations in the world and were not acclaimed– they were not suitable for that nor he likewise; but they have brought charm [as well as] pleasant and useful entertainment to many people. We do not wish to indulge in deeper criticism here– it is even less necessary as various matters have been discussed by knowledgeable people in earlier issues of this paper and they should not be judged with flatteries but with calm, considered approbation. We also refrain from giving a complete catalogue of his compositions, although it could be offered here. The printed works have been issued by Imbault and Pleyel in Paris, by Castaud in Lyon, by BossIer in Speyer, by Andre in Offenbach, by Simrock in Bonn, by Falter in München, by Gombart in Augsburg, etc. They consist of Duos, Trios, Quartets, Quintets, etc., of Symphonies, Sonatas, Variations, Marches, easy Handstikke for pianoforte, Dances, etc; for voice, of two Masses (one of them, a German Mass, written by the Prince of Oettingen Wallerstein), smaller church pieces, Cantatas, Arias, German Lieder, Italian Canzonettas, etc.; he also wrote two operettas. Shortly before his death he wrote music for accompanying the prayers during the Mass for the Dead. This music, he himself declared, was his swan-song, and requested, as he felt death approaching, that it be played during his own mass. At the second church service, the princely orchestra of Wallerstein fulfilled this wish for its late conductor and friend. Among his compositions that remained unpublished are twenty-seven [pieces] in all the above main categories of instrumental music; also German Lieder and a German Requiem.

Amon was an experienced director (orchestral music he directed with the violin, vocal with the pianoforte), a painstaking teacher of voice and of almost all instruments, for he knew them all, even the klavier [clavichord], harp, and guitar– such that he leaves behind capable students, male and female; he was most excellent in playing the violin or viola himself in quartet and with pianoforte accompaniment. In personality, he was an honest, good-natured man, modest, polite and agreeable, a pleasant companion, a close friend to his friends; beside that, a tall, slim, handsome man. He leaves a widow, four sons and a daughter. He had the misfortune to lose one son grown, and already of no small reputation– who, from his earliest days, showed an important talent and aptitude for music and drawing. Everyone that knew this able, industrious, good, and pleasant man will, without a doubt, agree in spirit with what has been written here and always think of him with esteem and affection.

CONCERTO FOR VIOLA

I

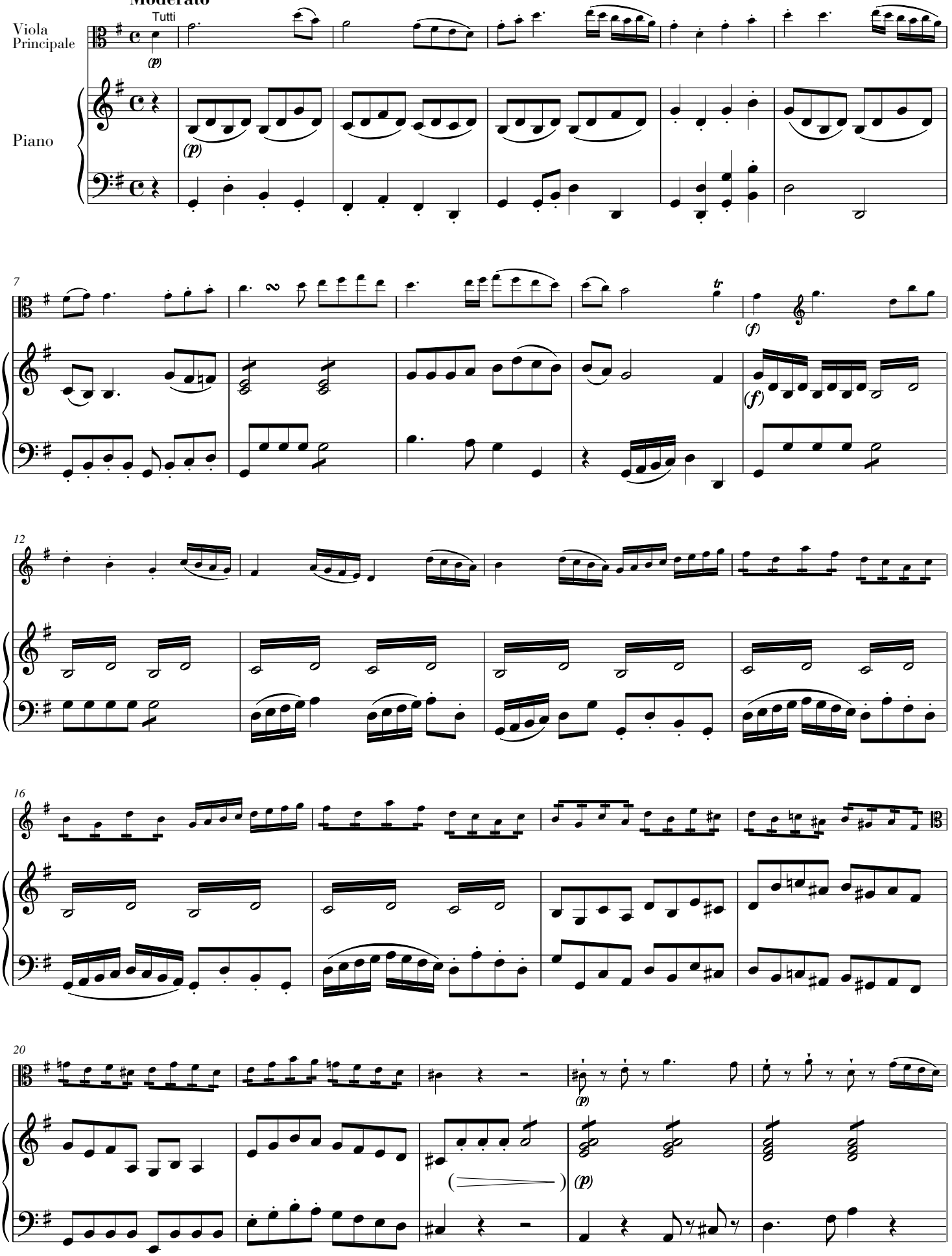
Johann Andreas Amon

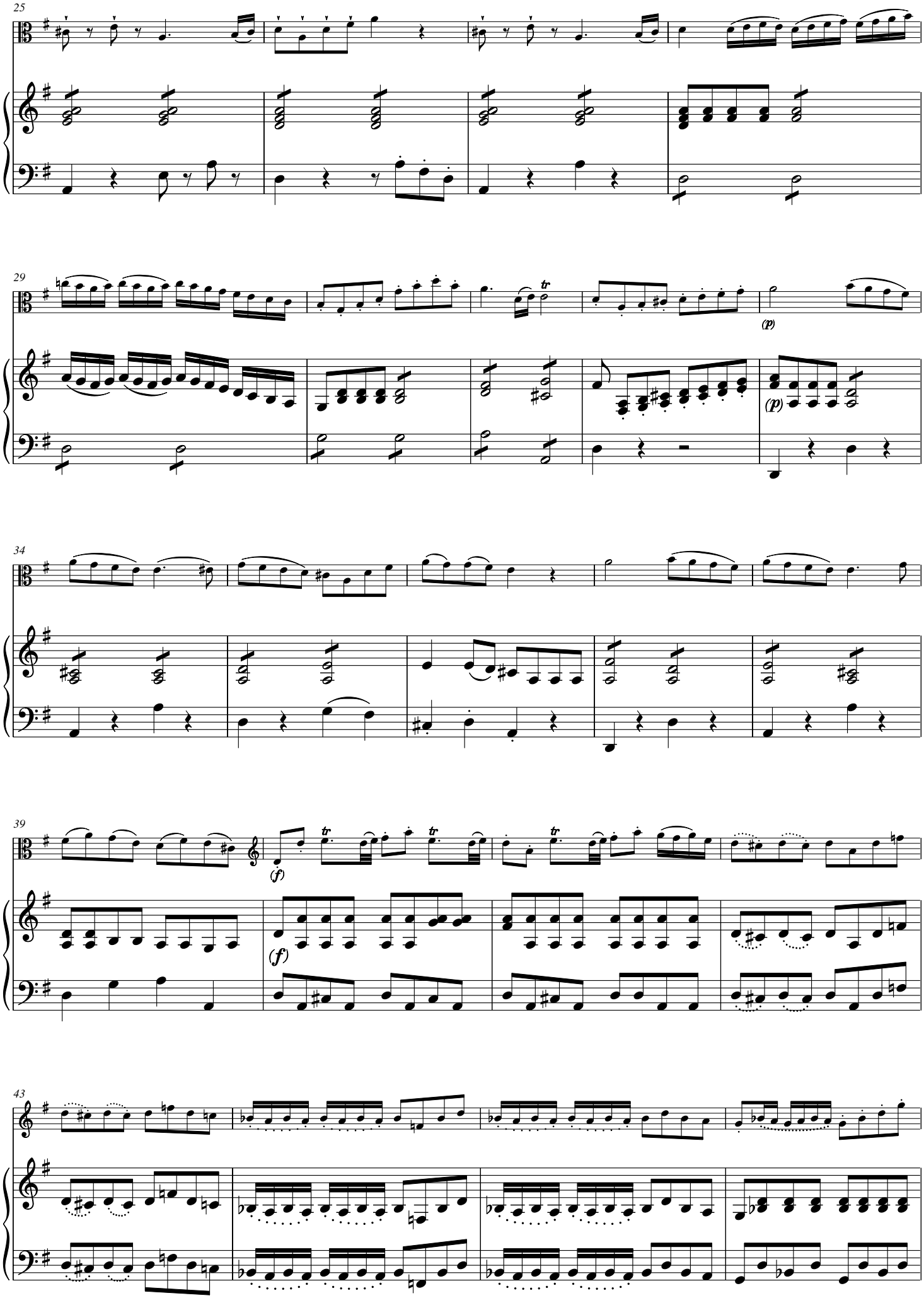
Moderato

Tutti

Viola Principale

Piano

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(p)
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(f)
(f)
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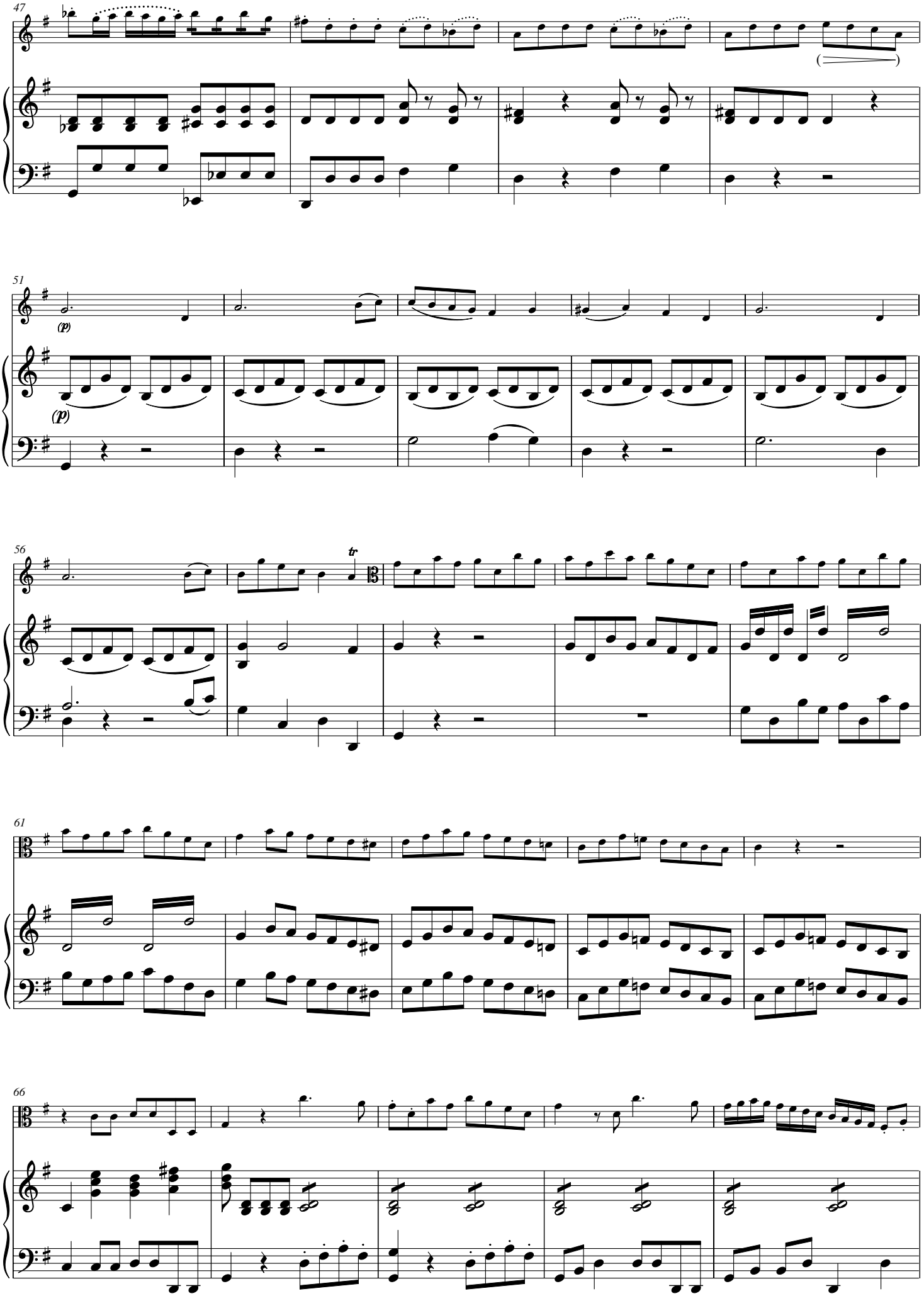
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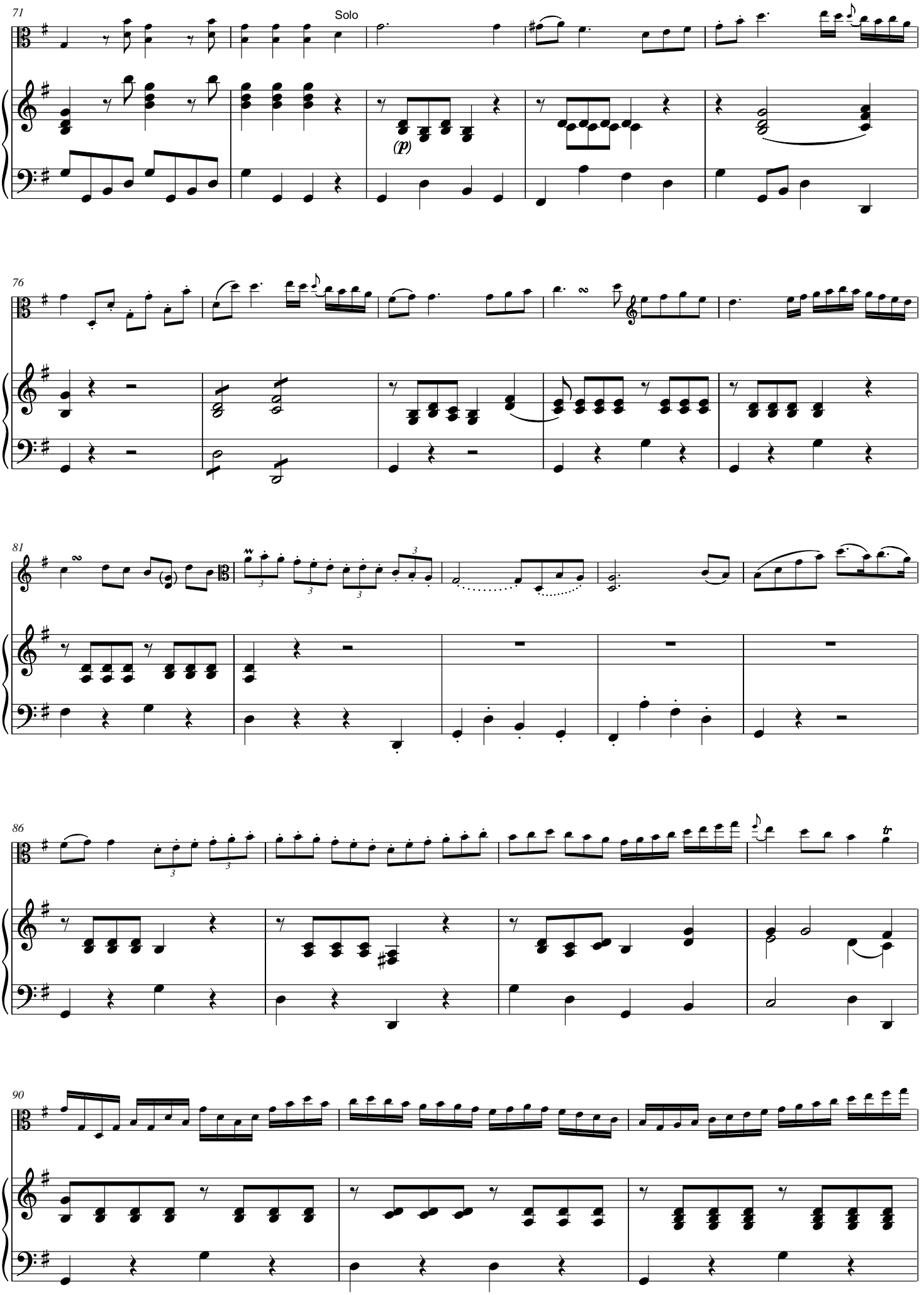
(p)
(p)
56
tr
61
66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Solo
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81
86
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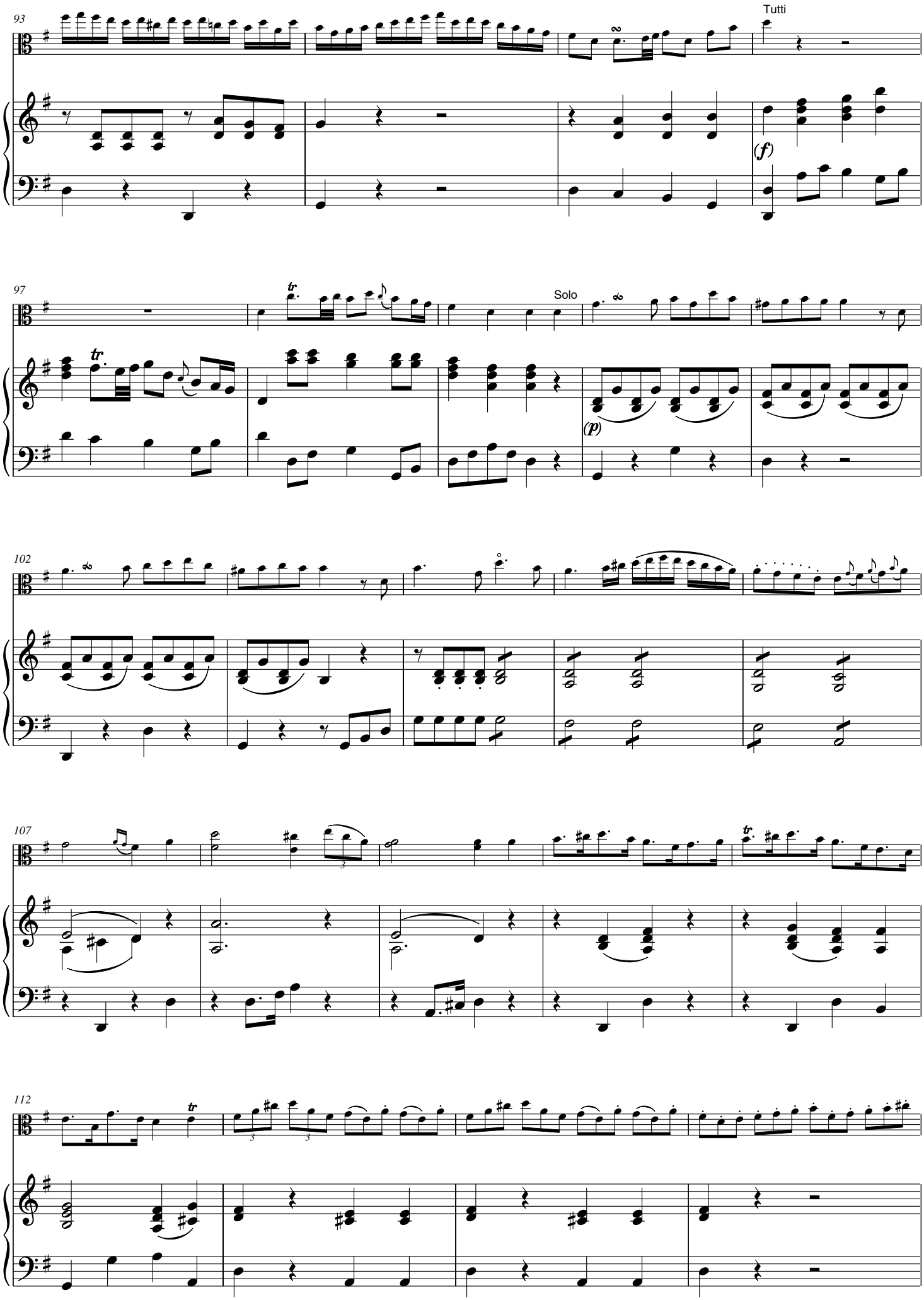
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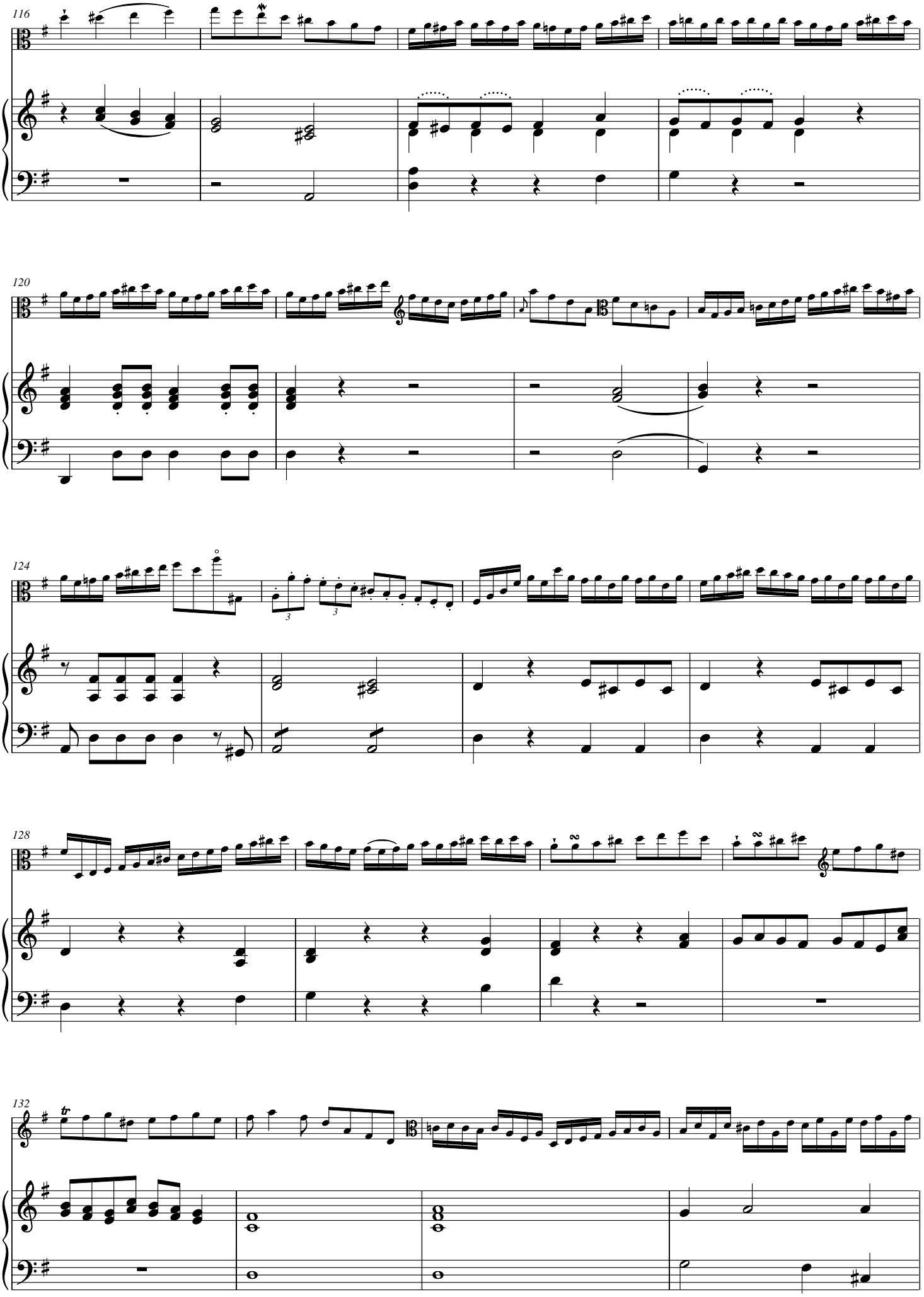
Tutti
(f)
97
Solo
(p)
102
107
112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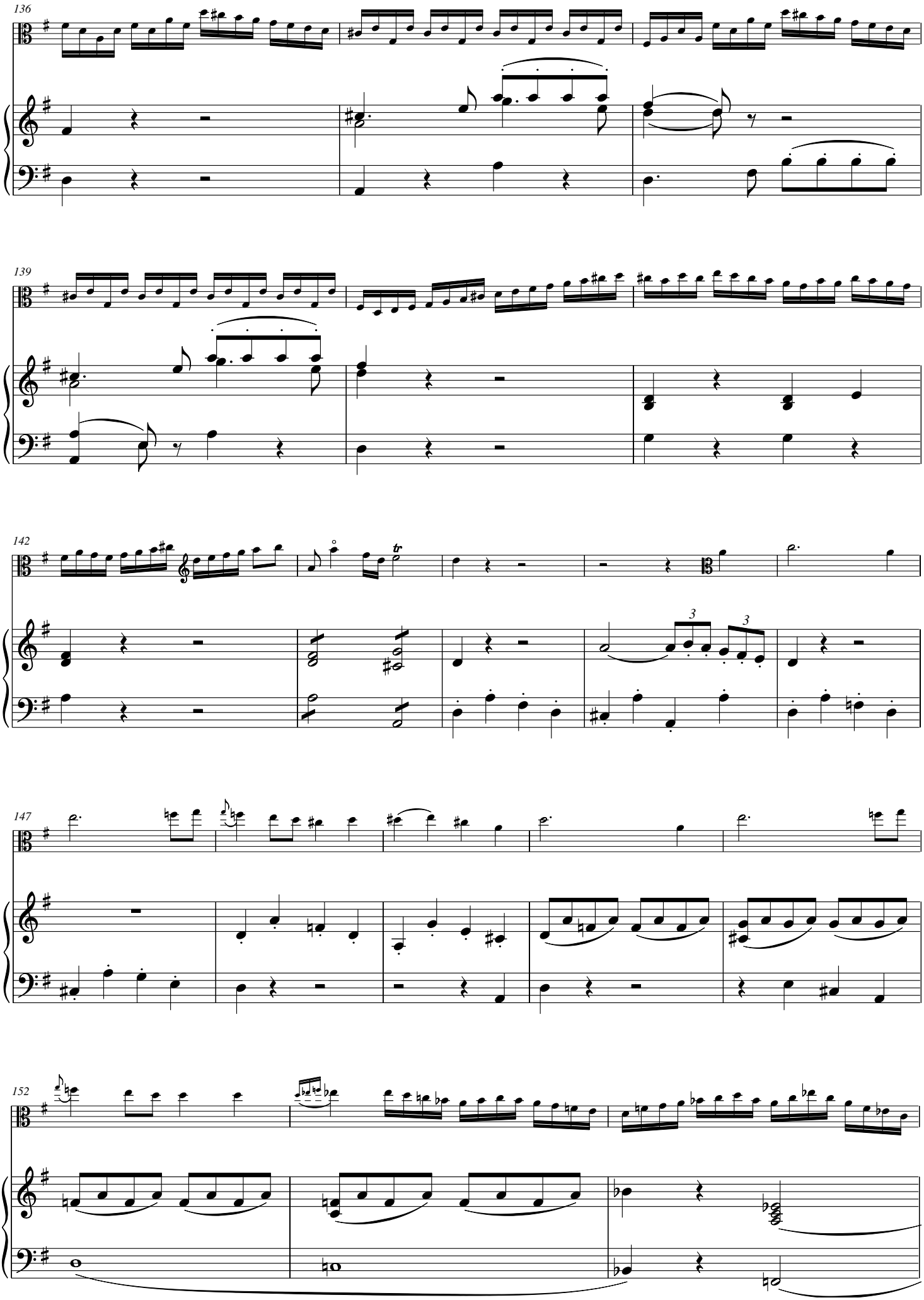
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3
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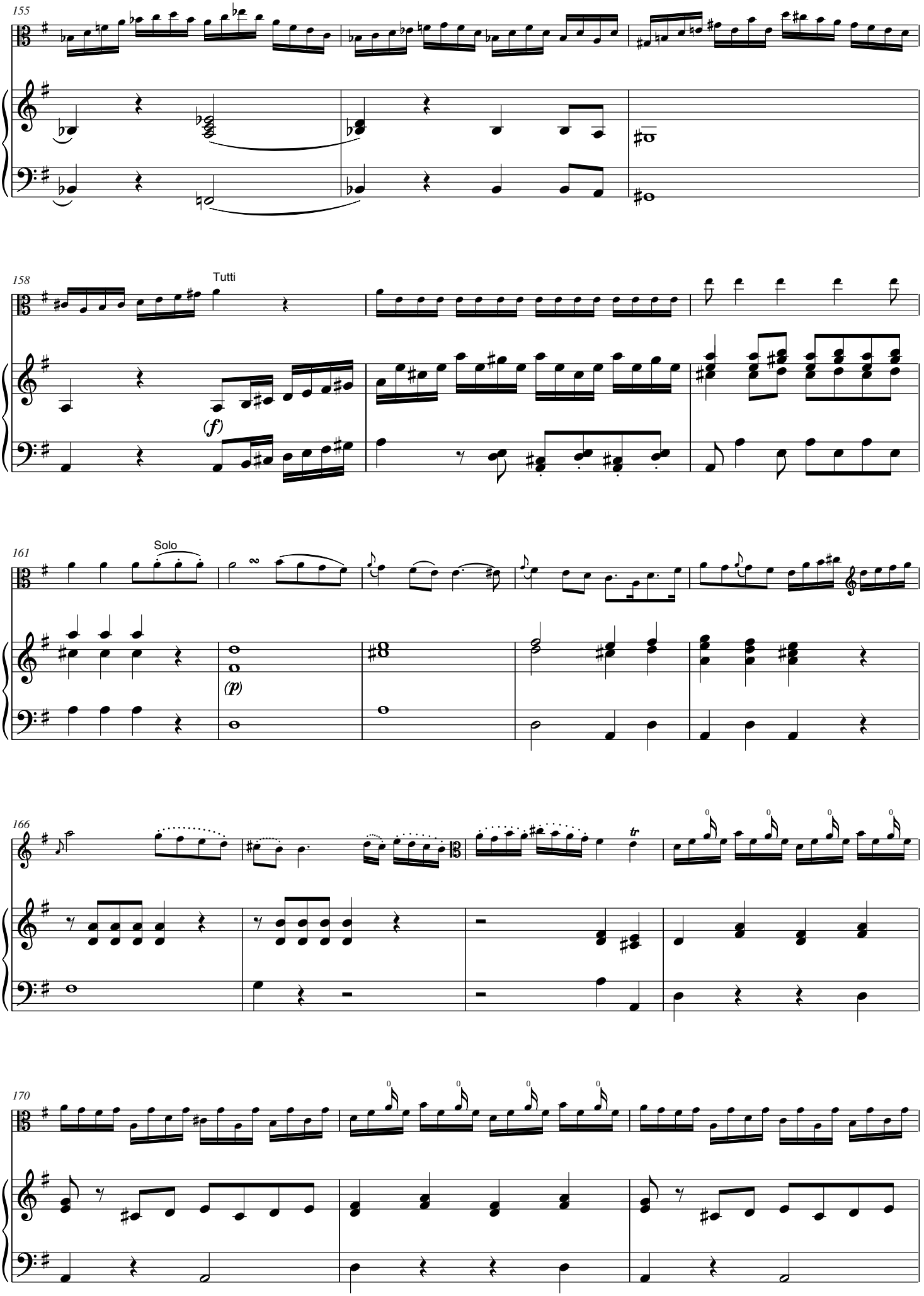
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Tutti
(f)
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Solo
(p)
166
tr
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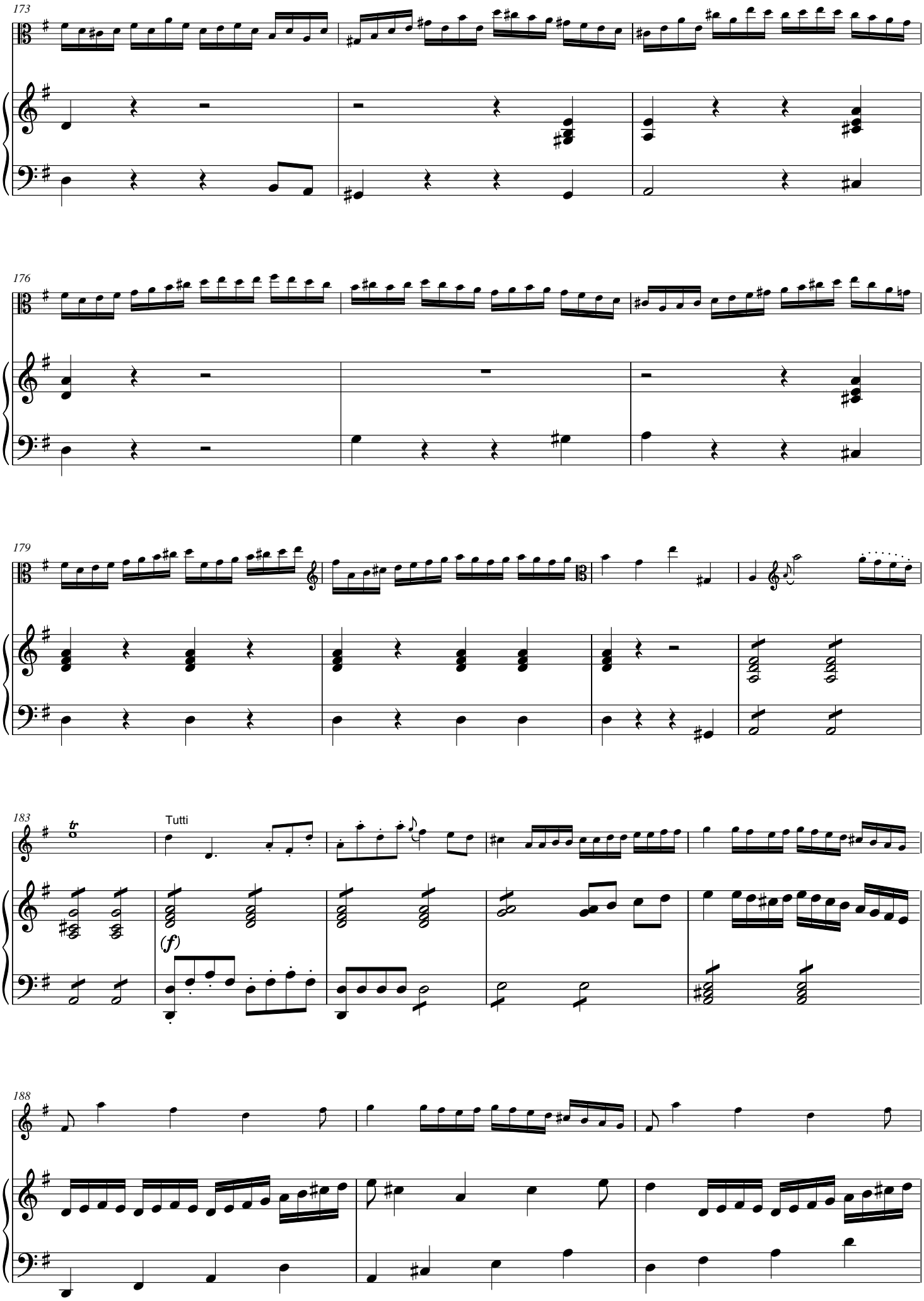
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Tutti
(f)
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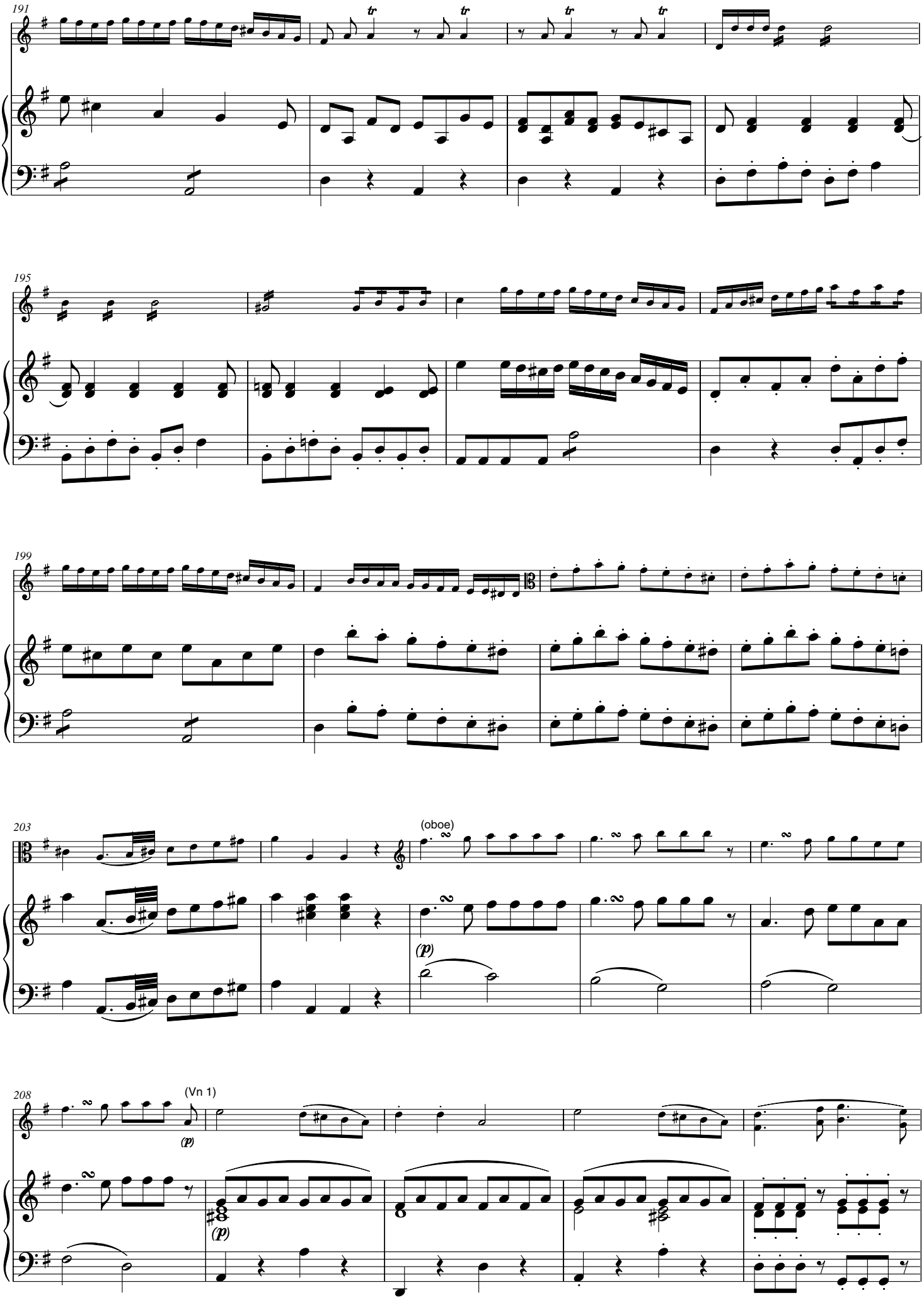
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(oboe)
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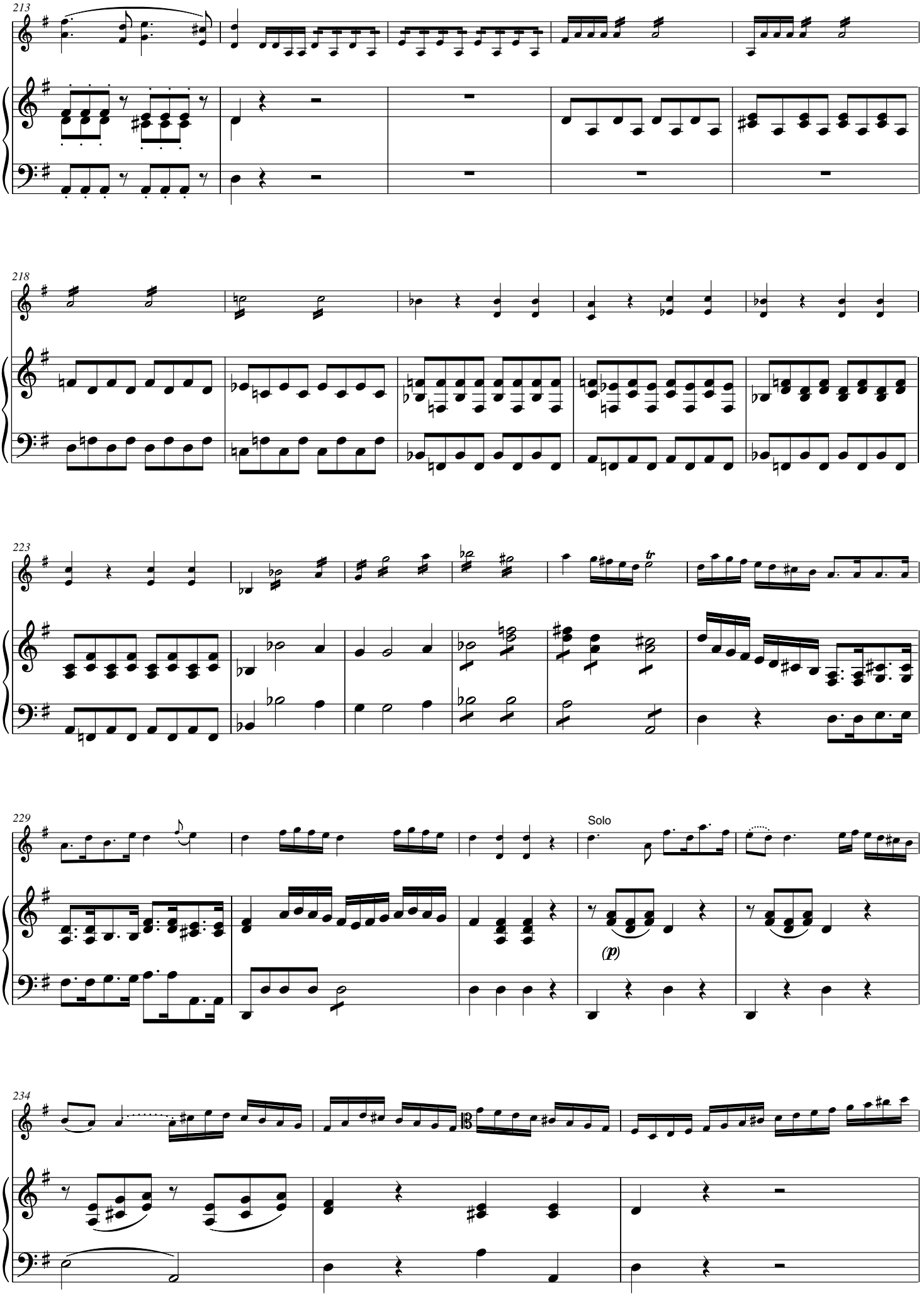
(Vn 1)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Solo
(p)
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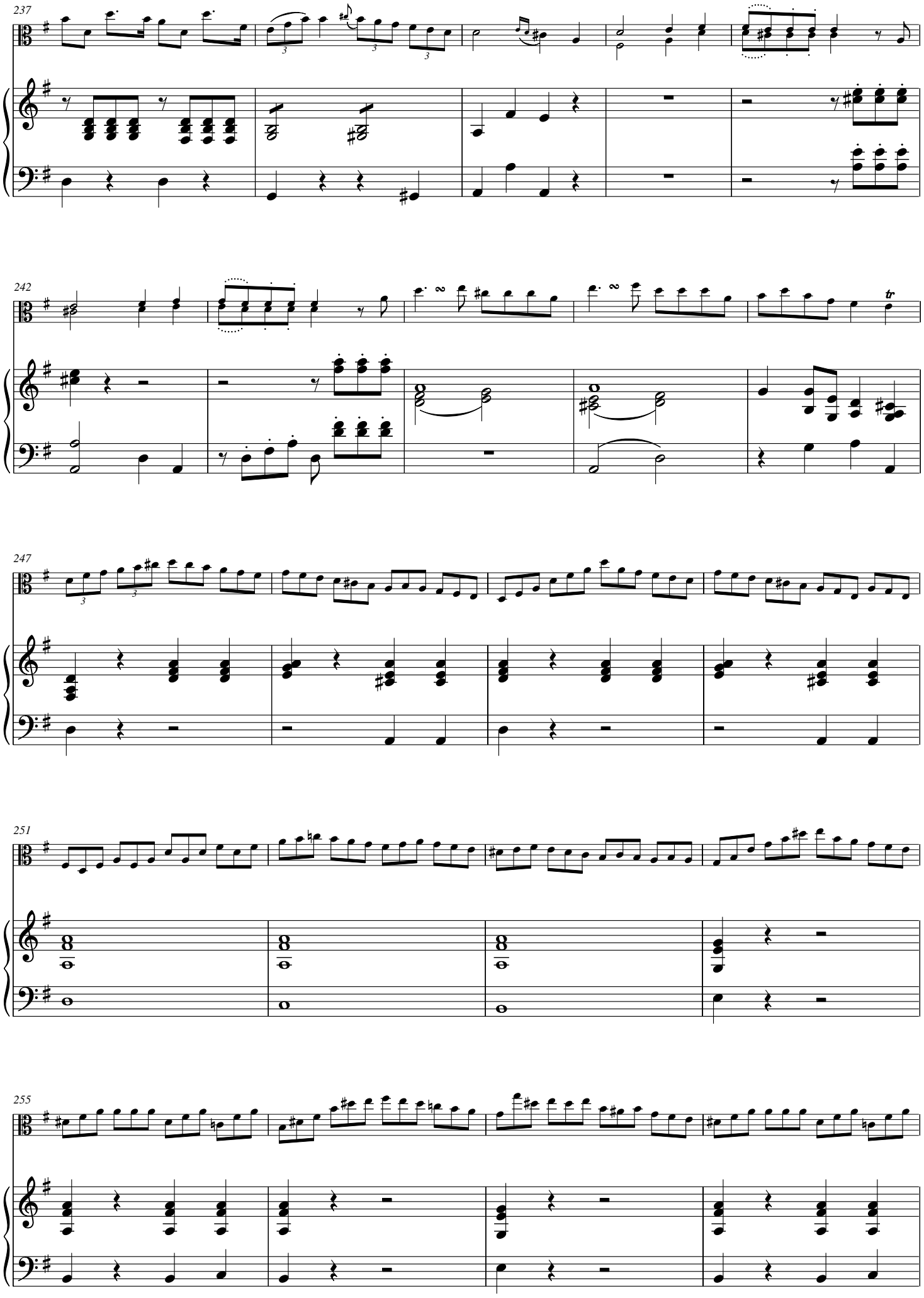
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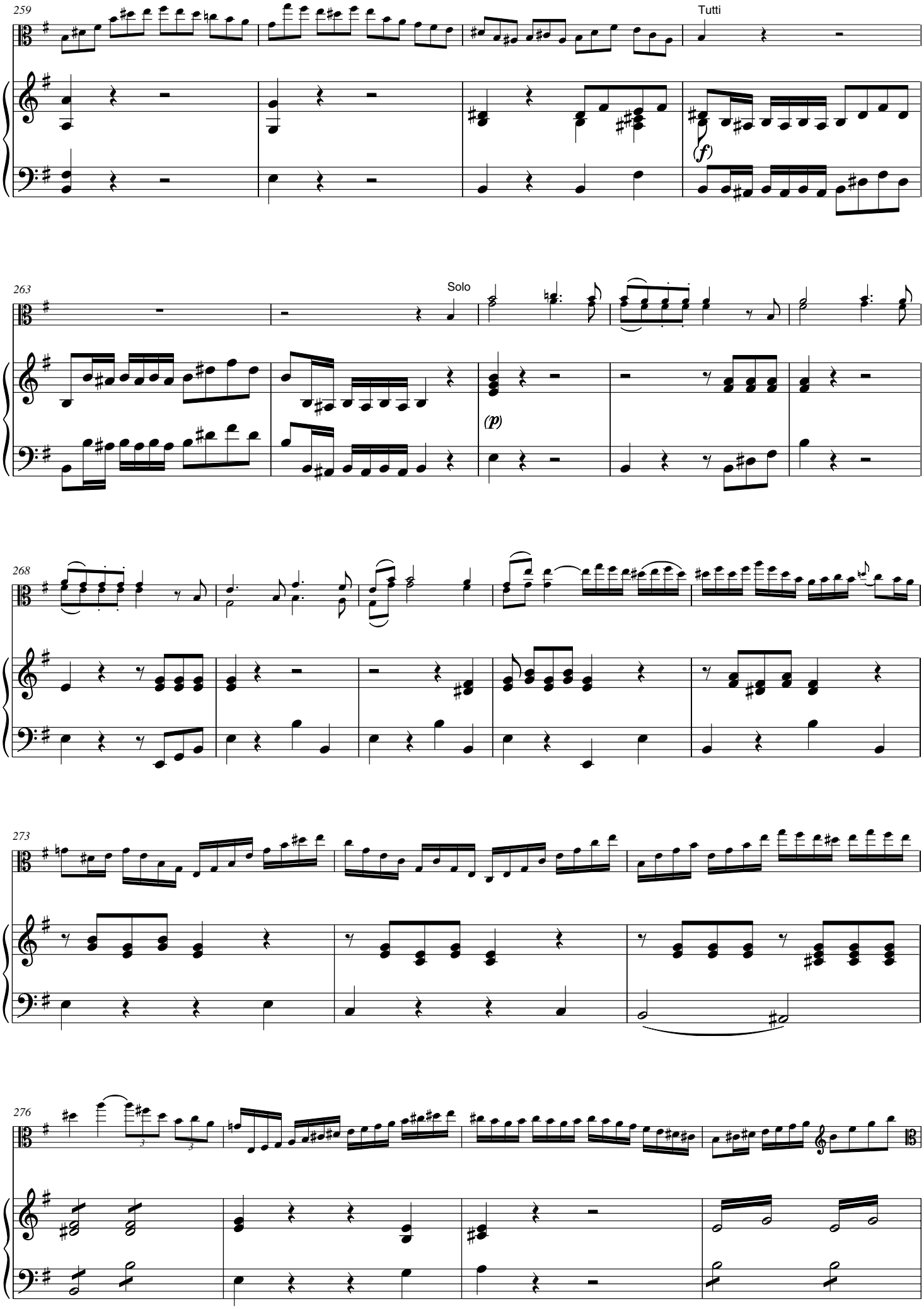
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Tutti
(f)
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Solo
(p)
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273
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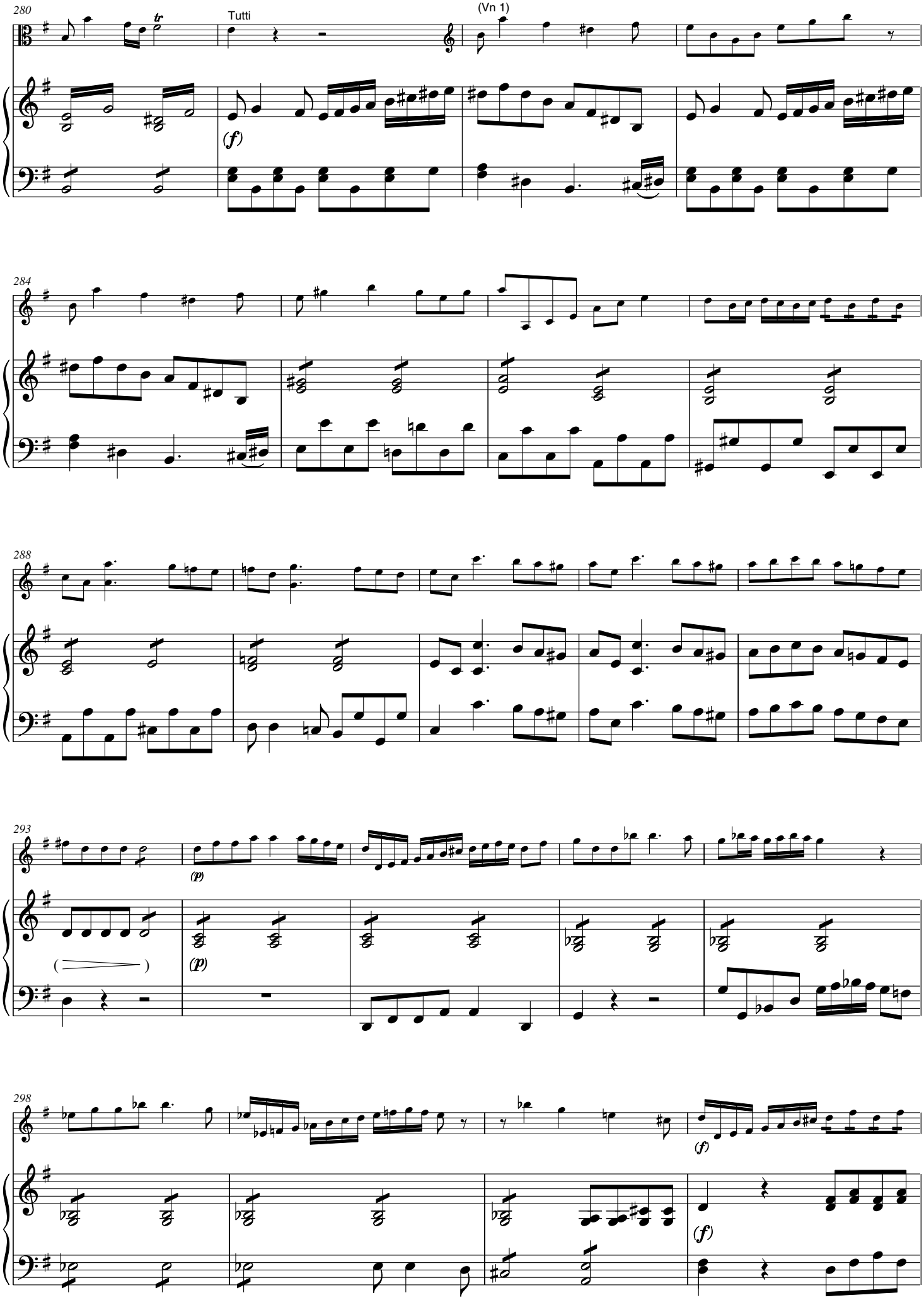
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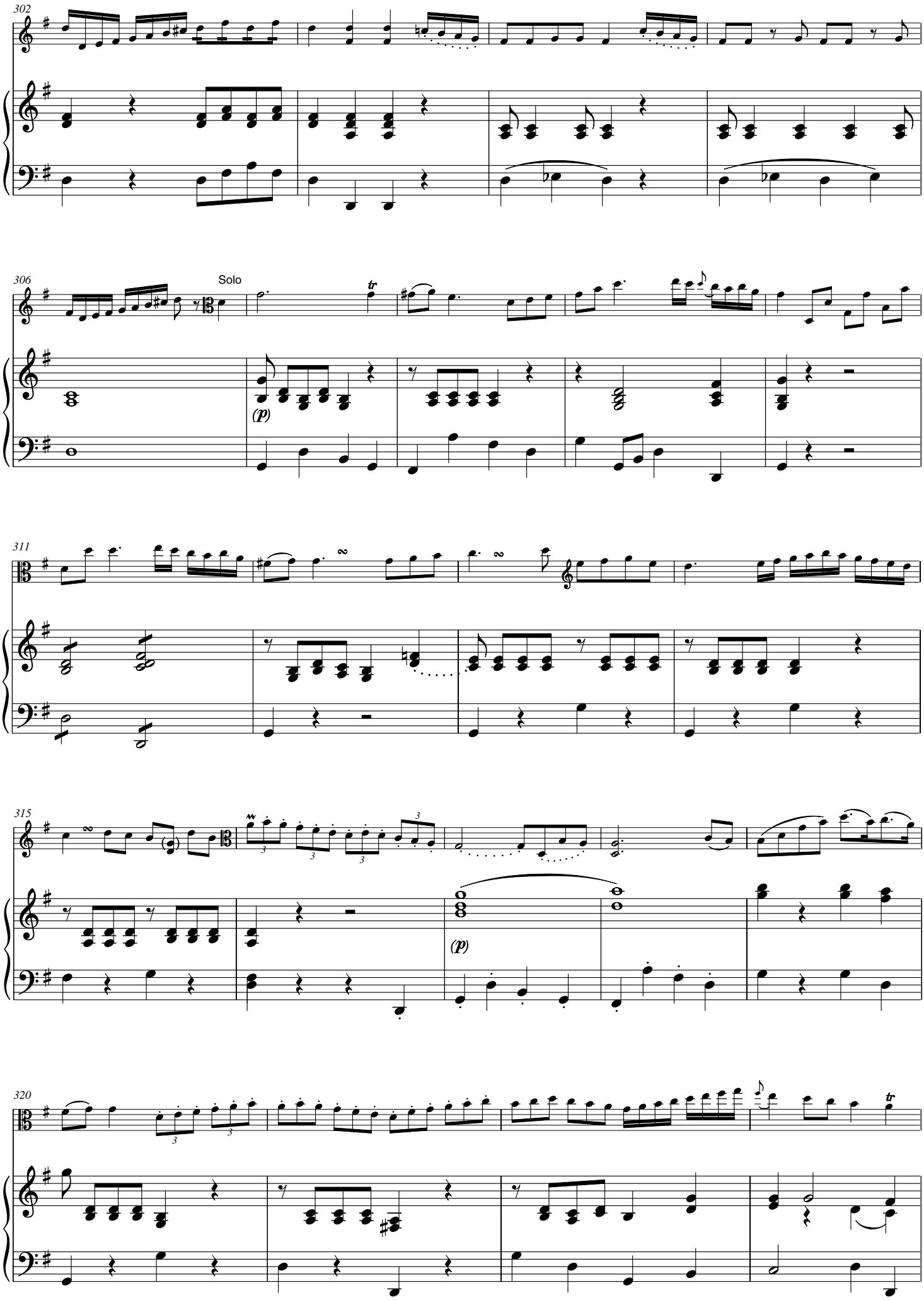
Tutti
(Vn 1)
(f)
284
288
293
(p)
(p)
298
(f)
(f)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Solo
(p)
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315
(p)
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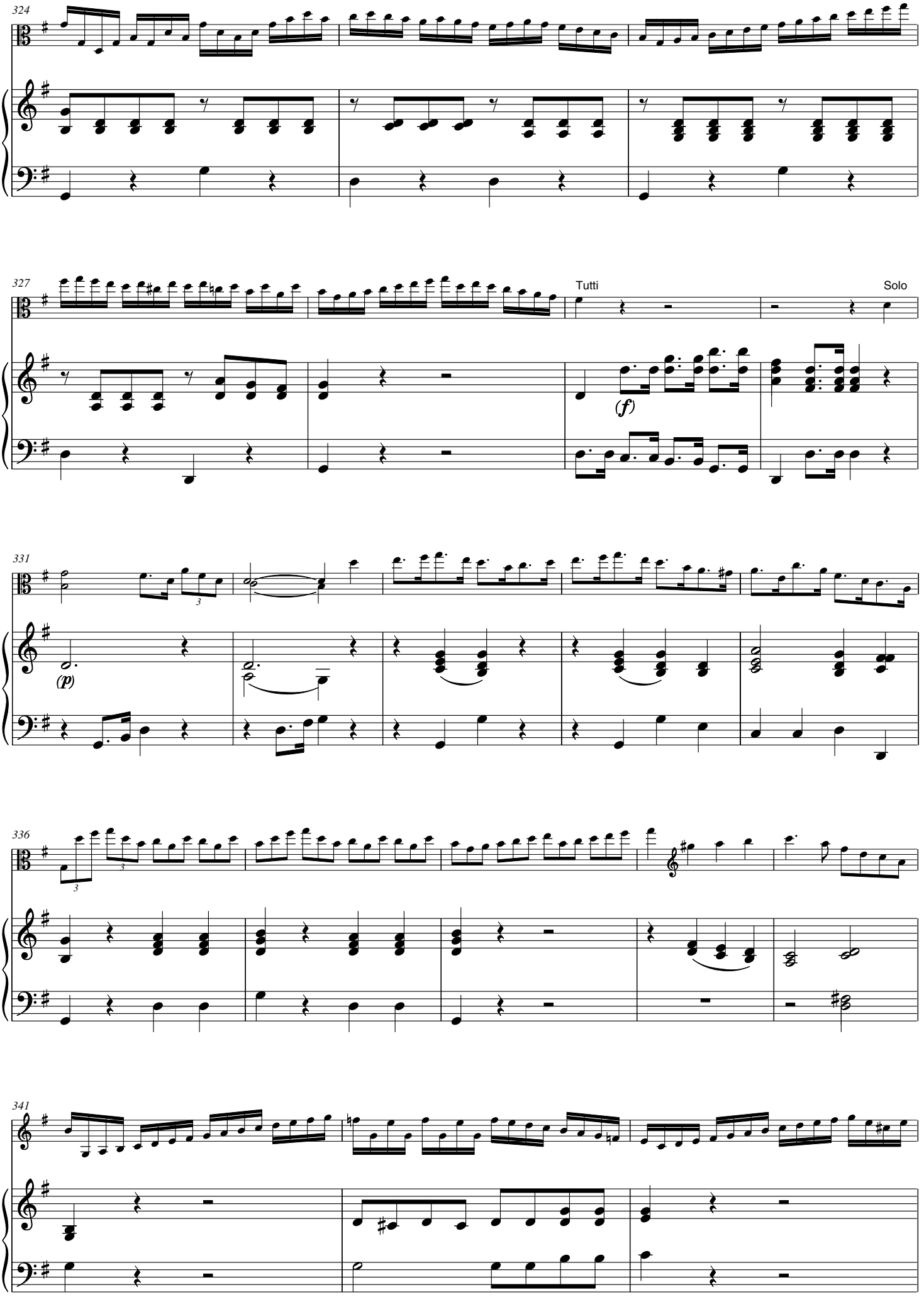
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Tutti
Solo
(f)
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(p)
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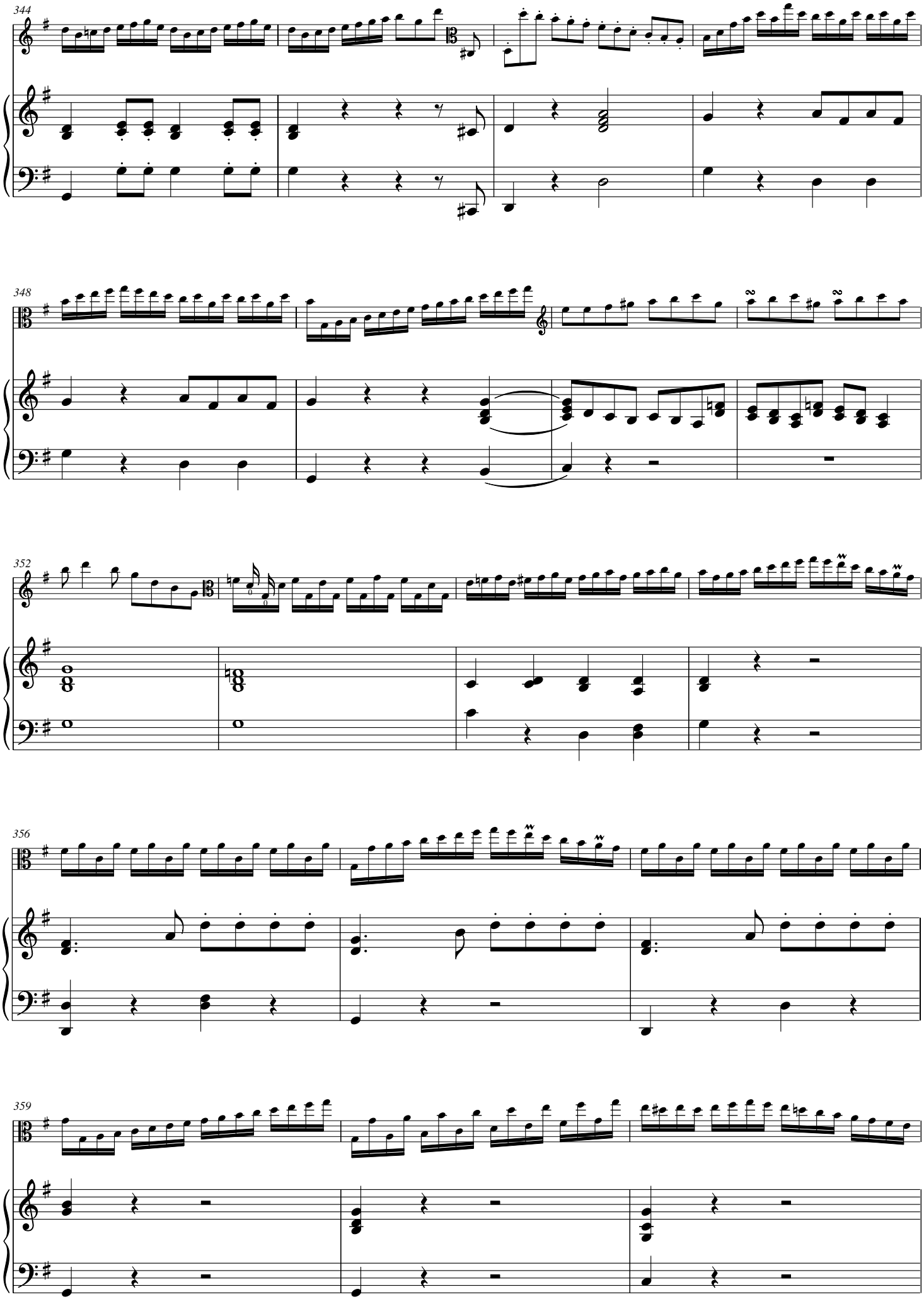
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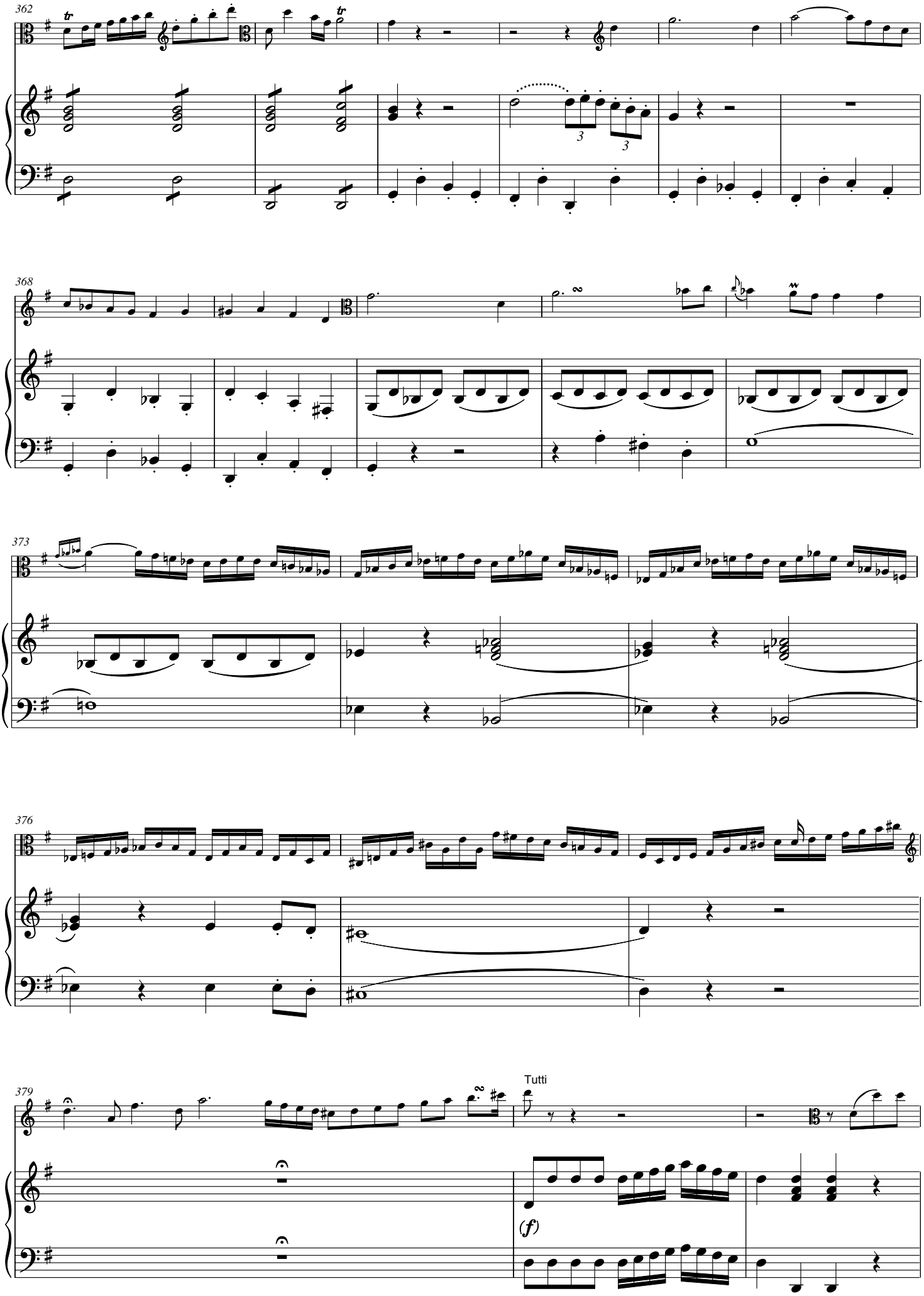
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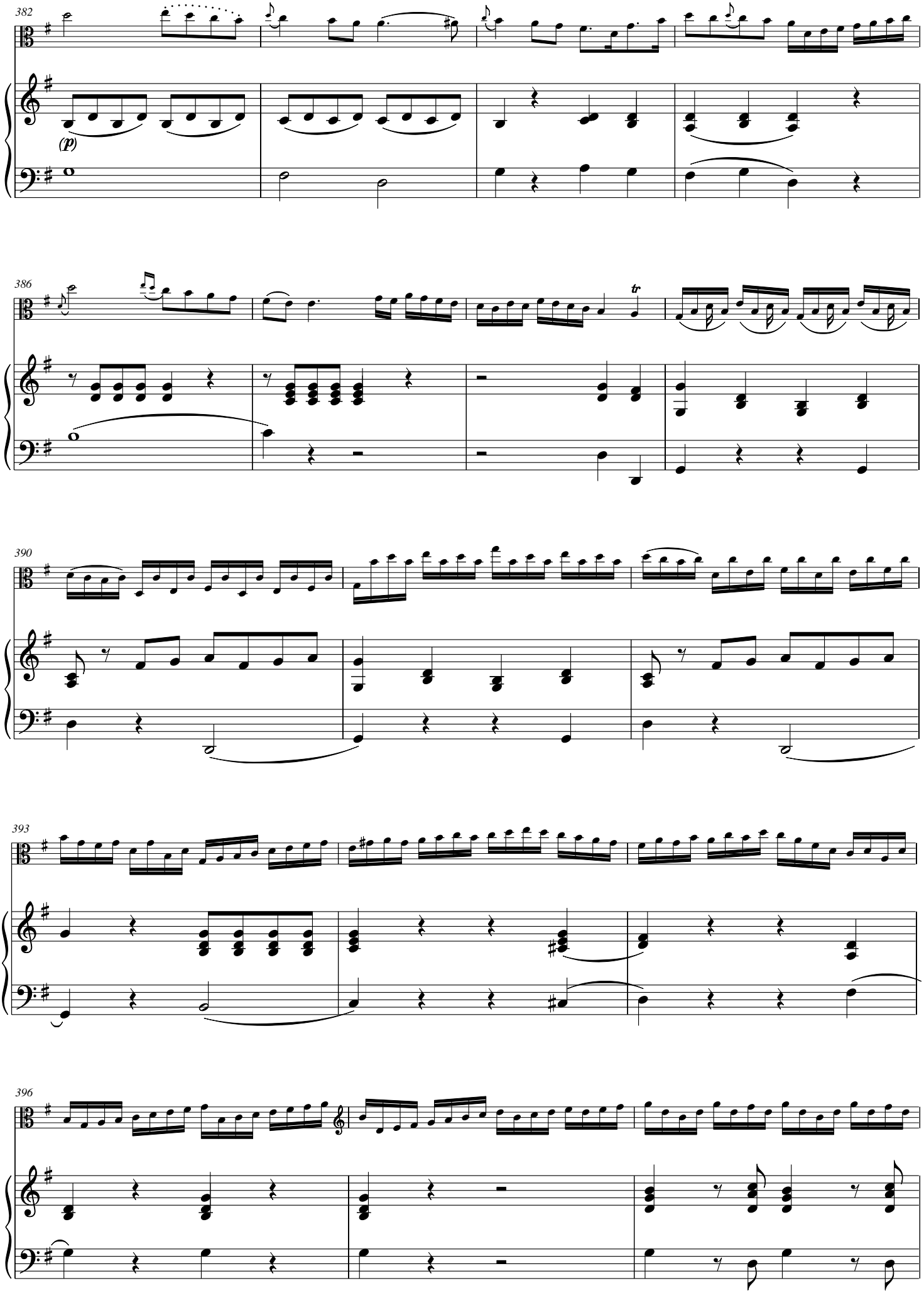
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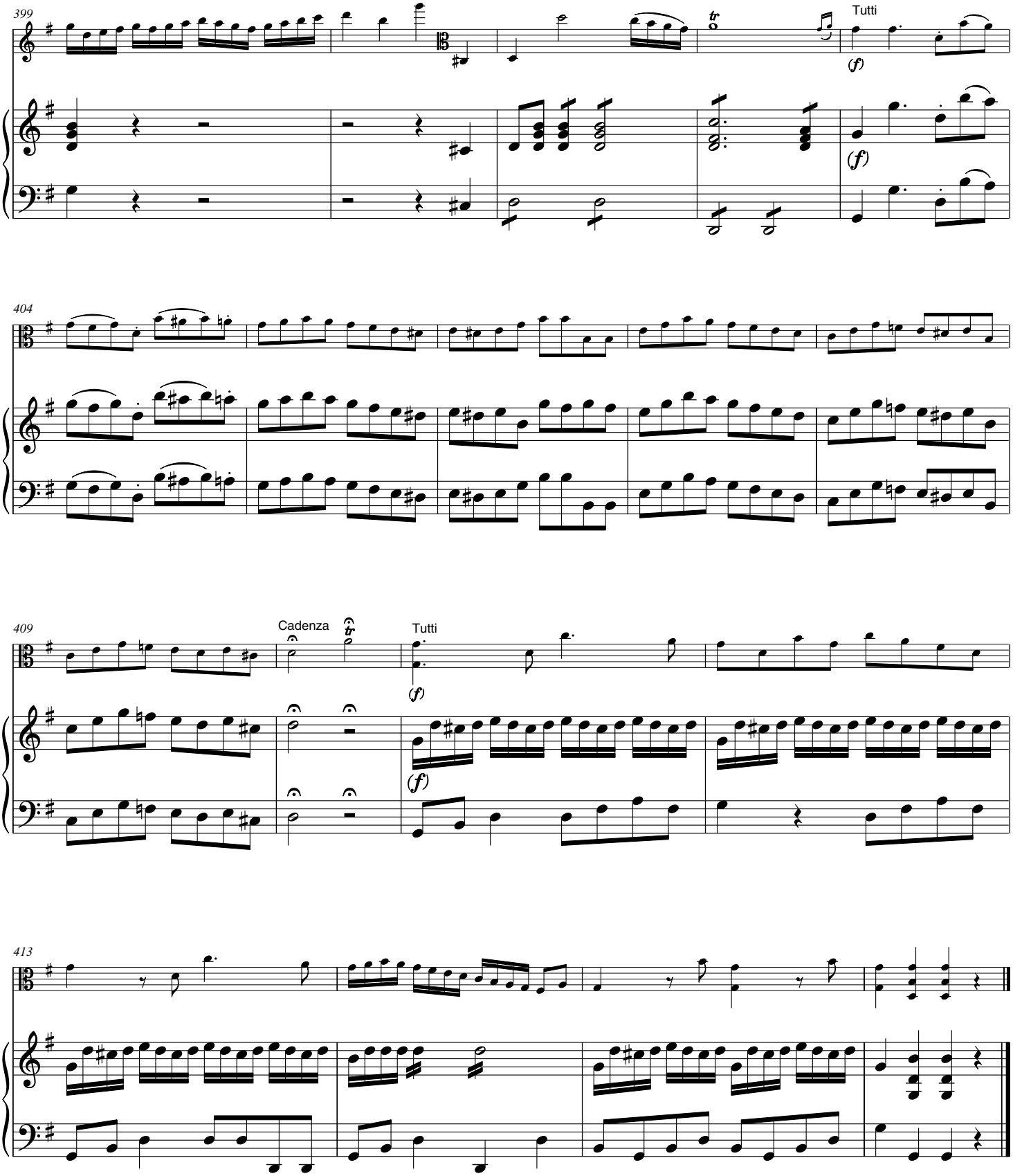
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Tutti
(f)
404
409
Cadenza
Tutti
(f)
(f)
413

II

Adagio ma non troppo

Tutti

Viola Principale

Piano

(p)

7

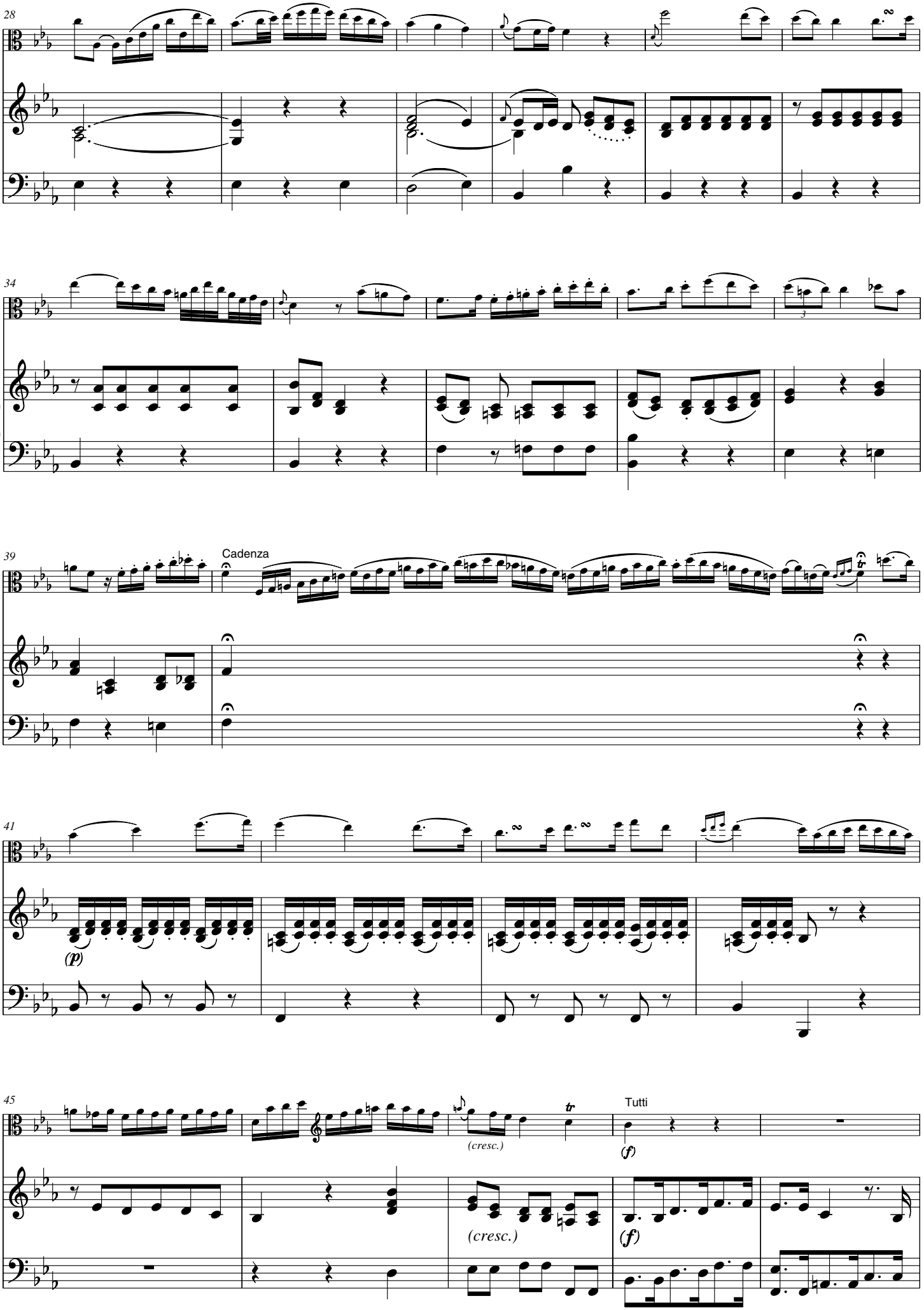
12

Solo

(p)

18

24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Cadenza
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(p)
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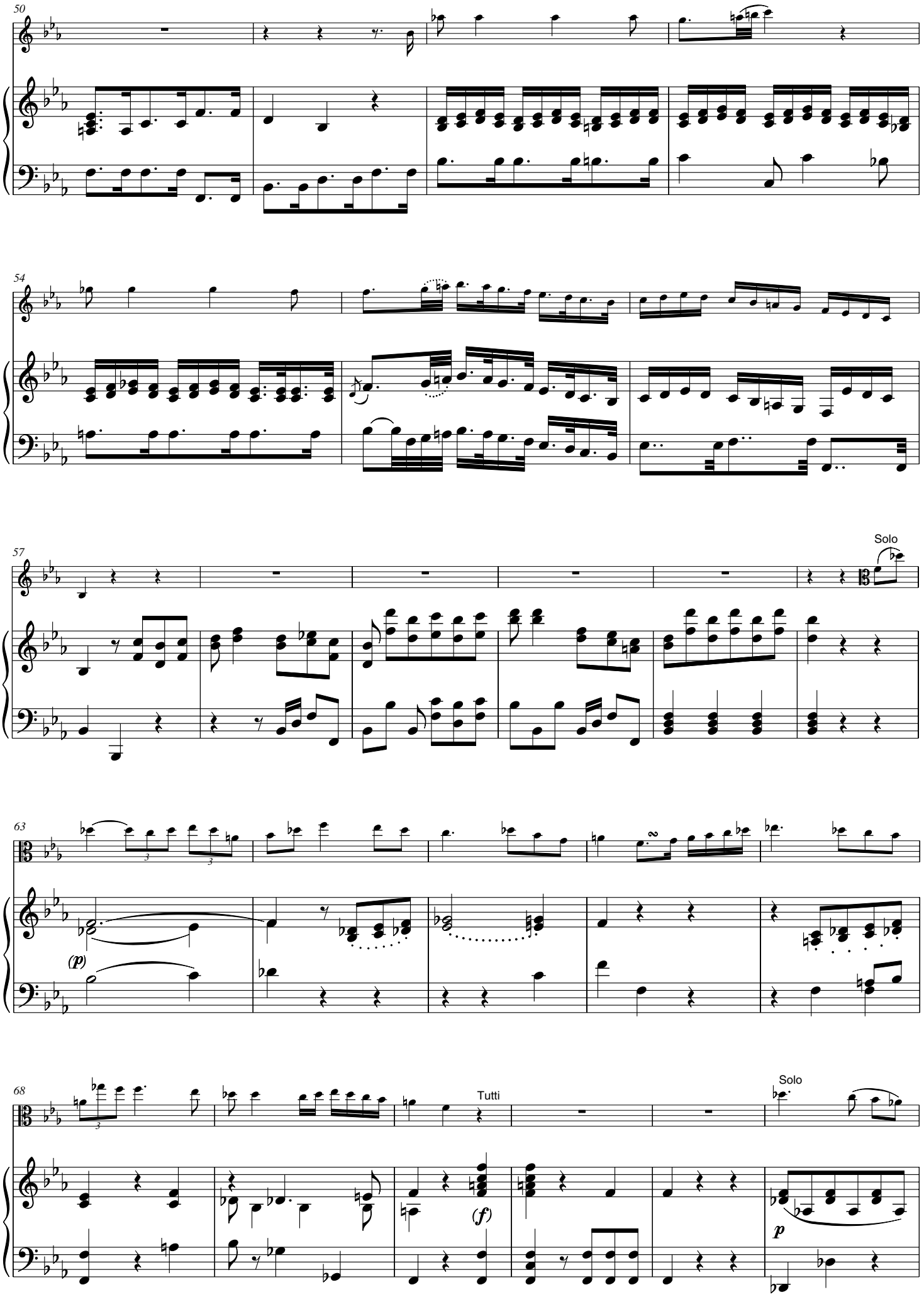
(cresc.)
tr
Tutti
(f)
(cresc.)
(f)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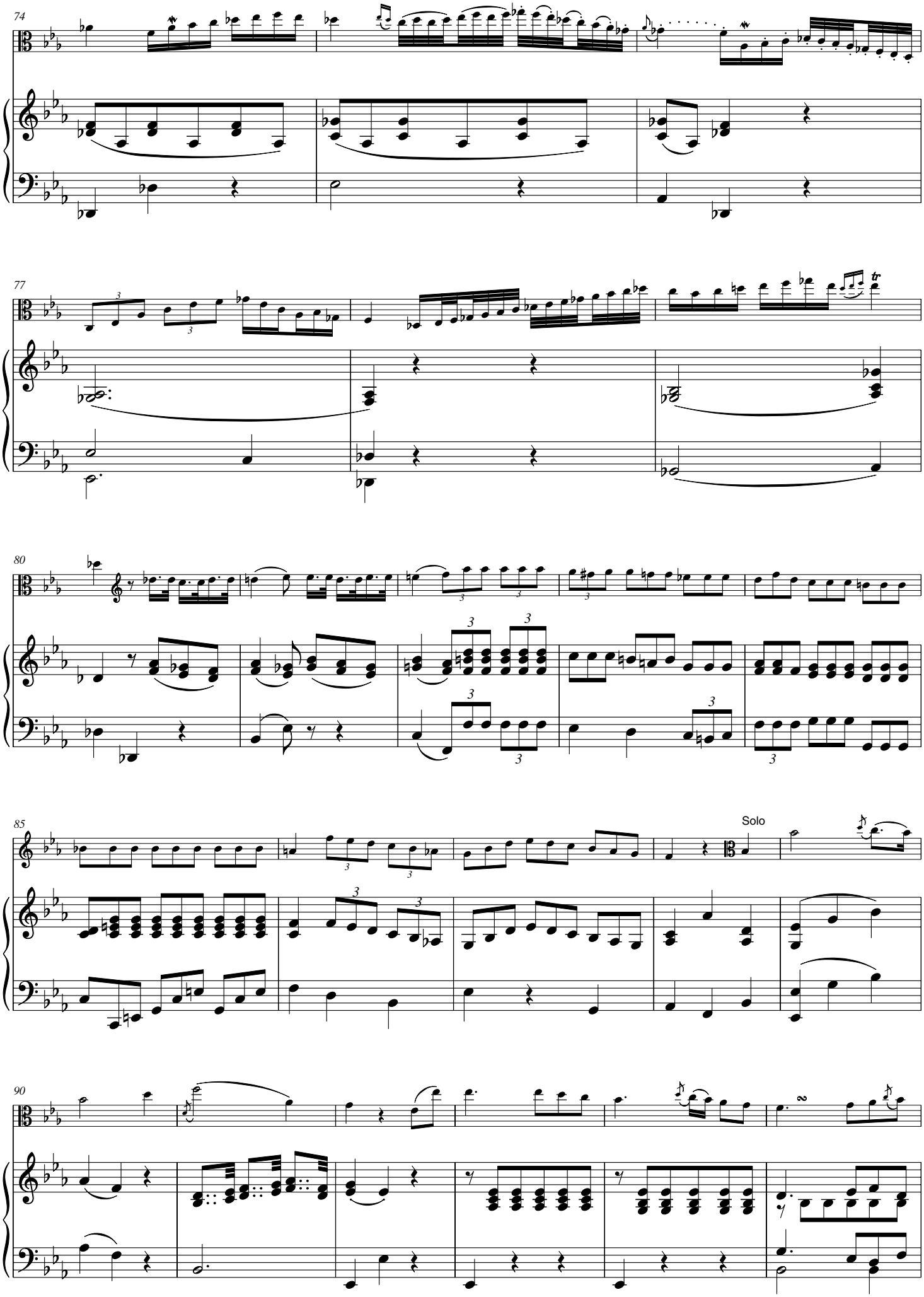
Solo
63
(p)
68
Tutti
(f)
Solo
p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80
85
Solo
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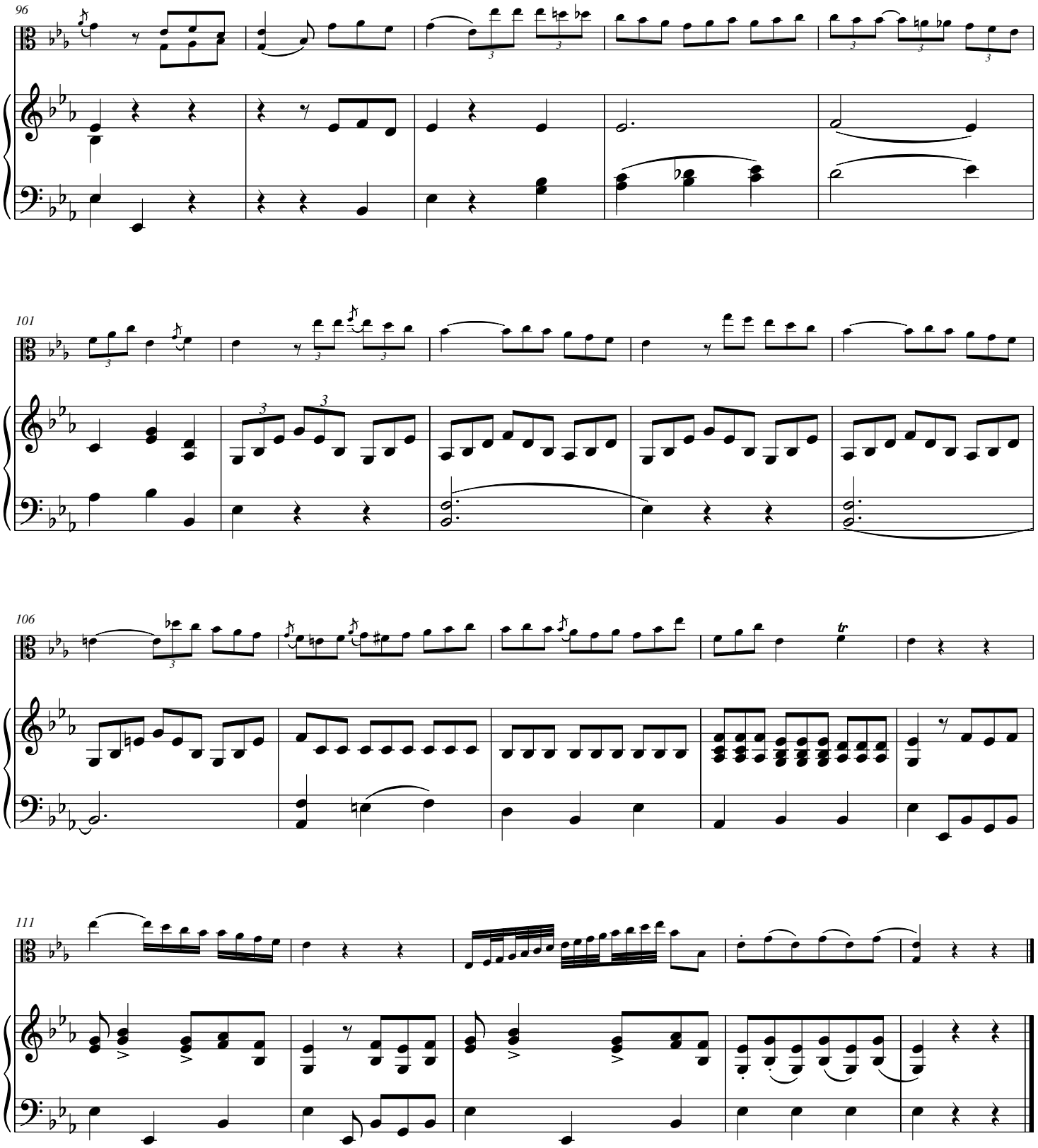
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106
111

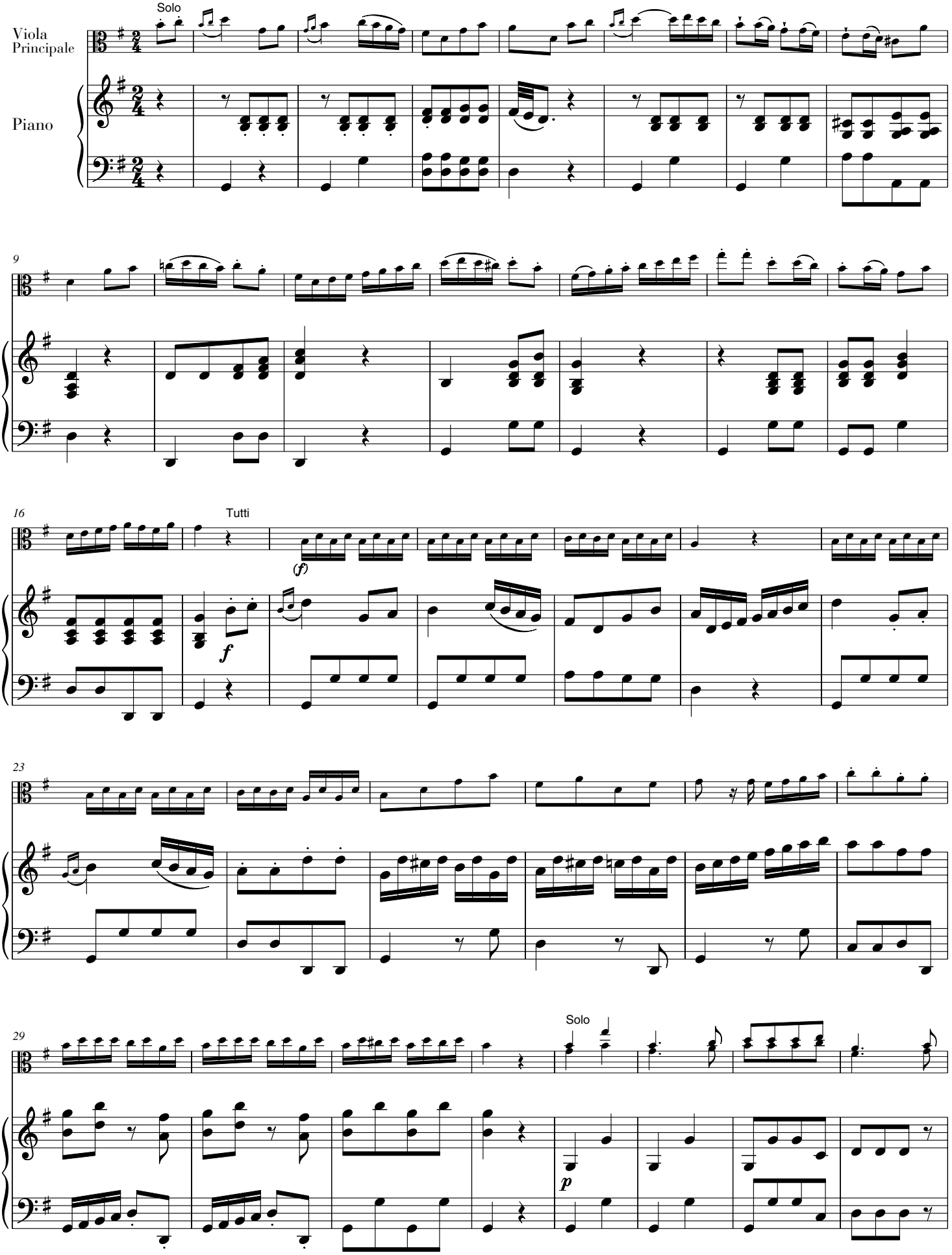
III
Rondo

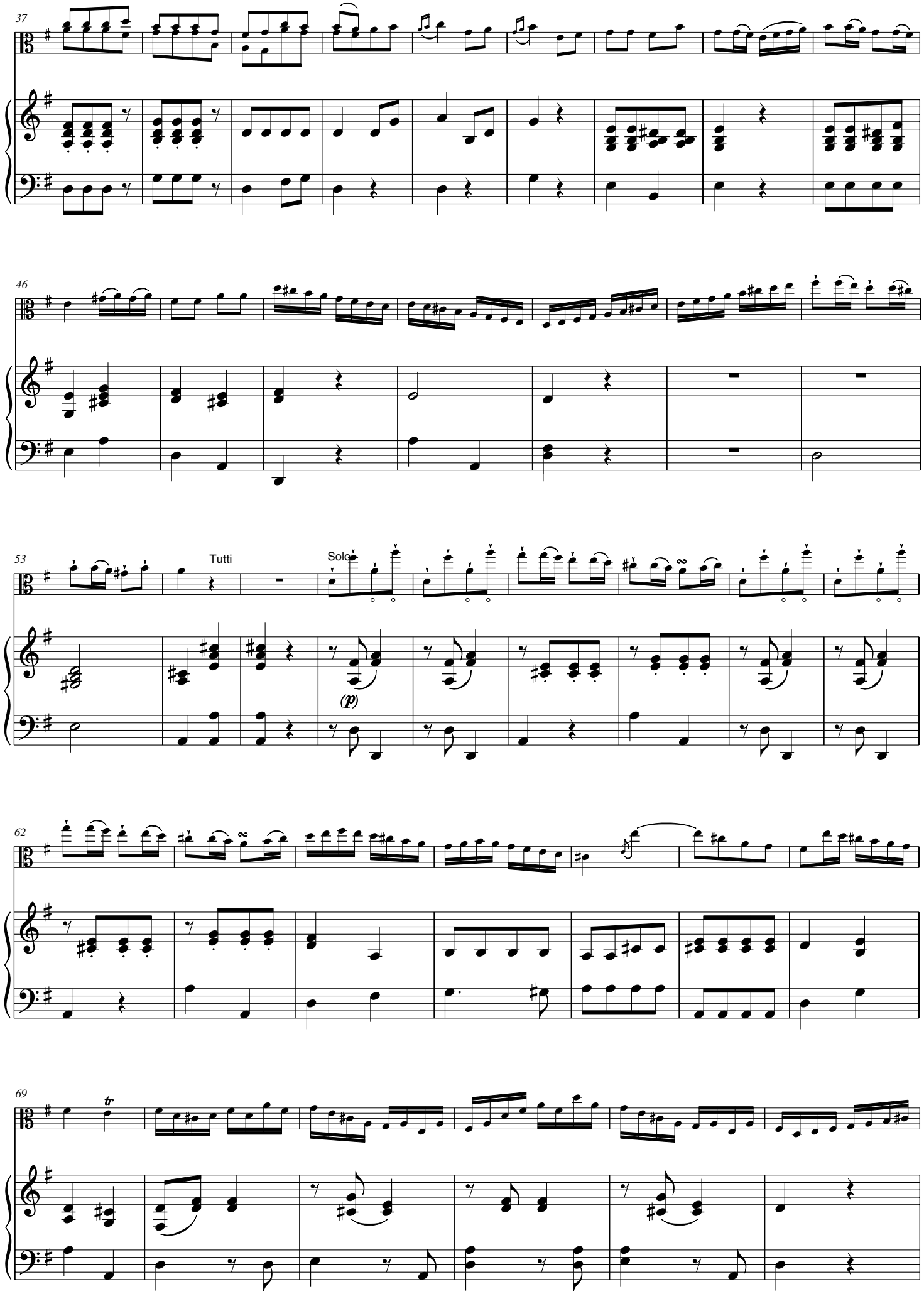
Allegro ma non troppo

Solo

Viola Principale

Piano

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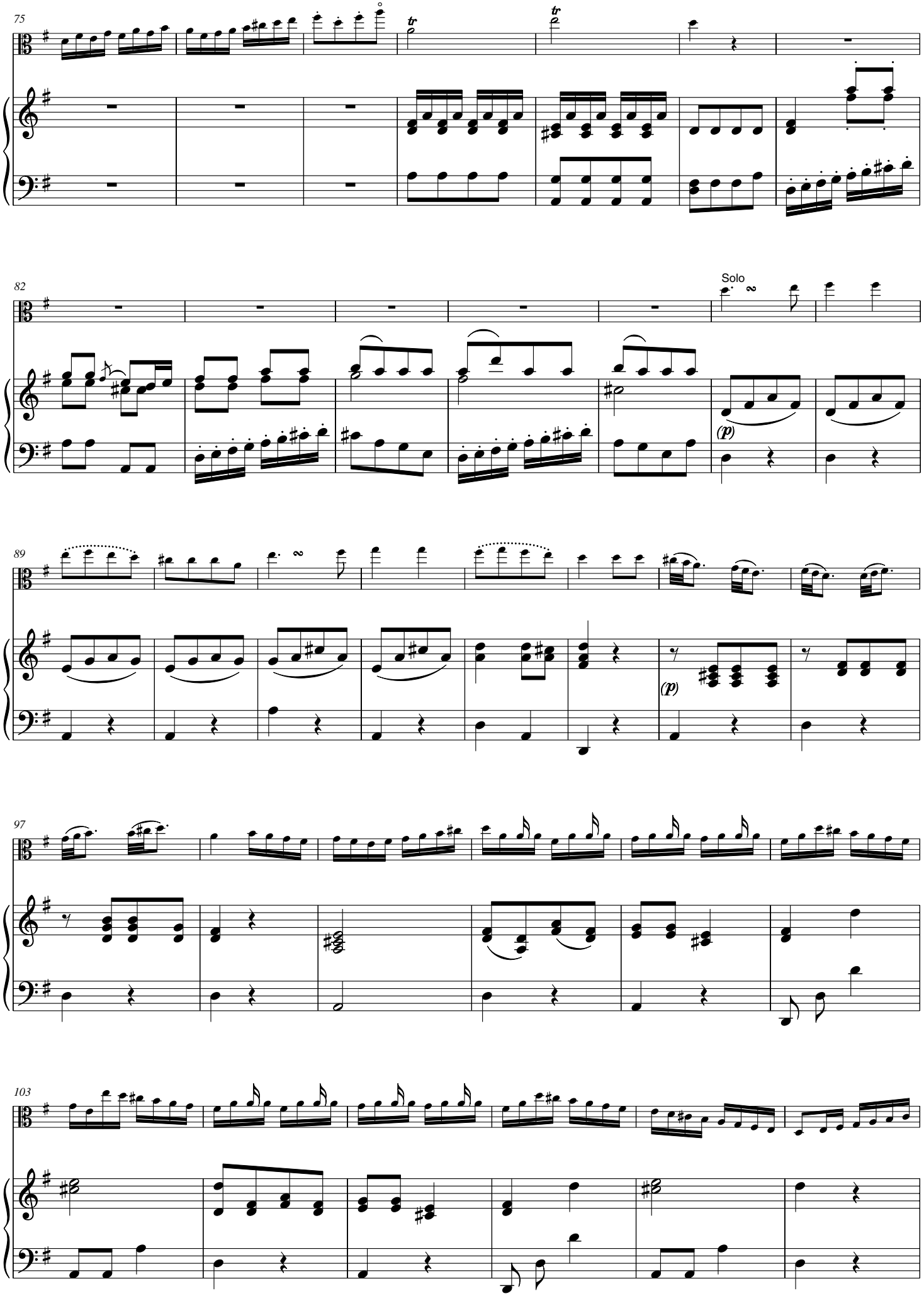
46
53
Tutti
Solo
(p)
62
69
tr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Solo
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97
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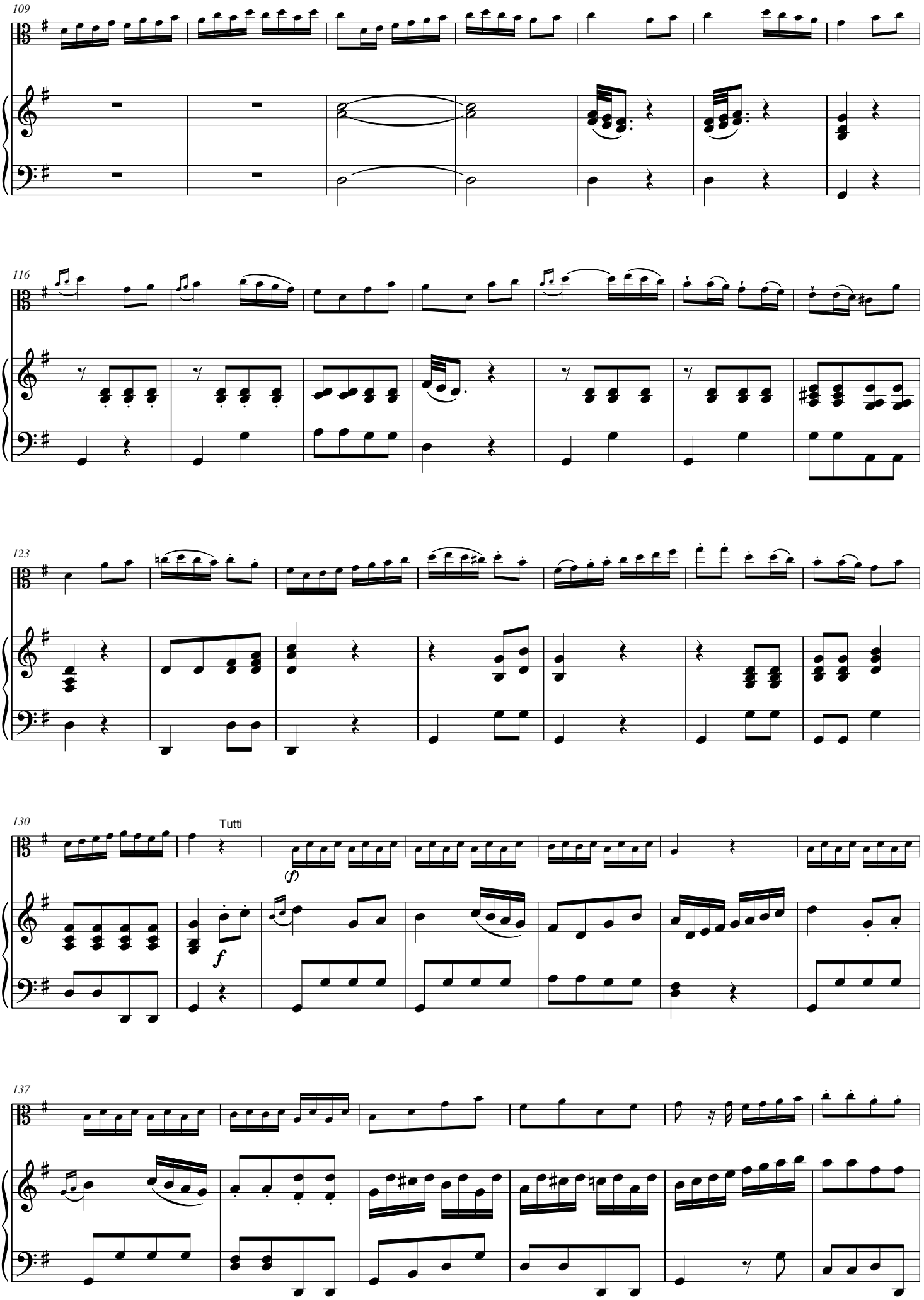
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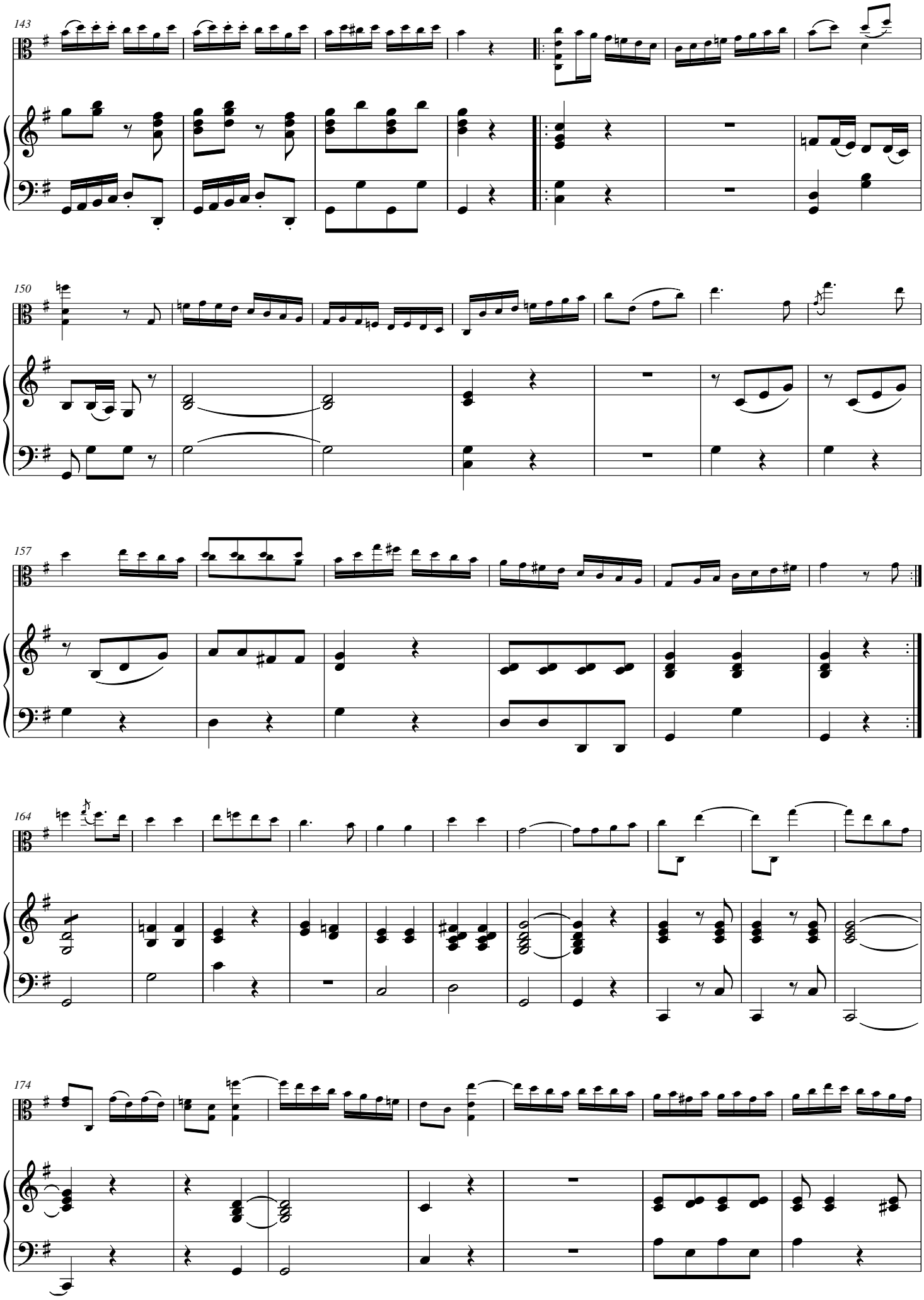
123
130
Tutti
(f)
f
137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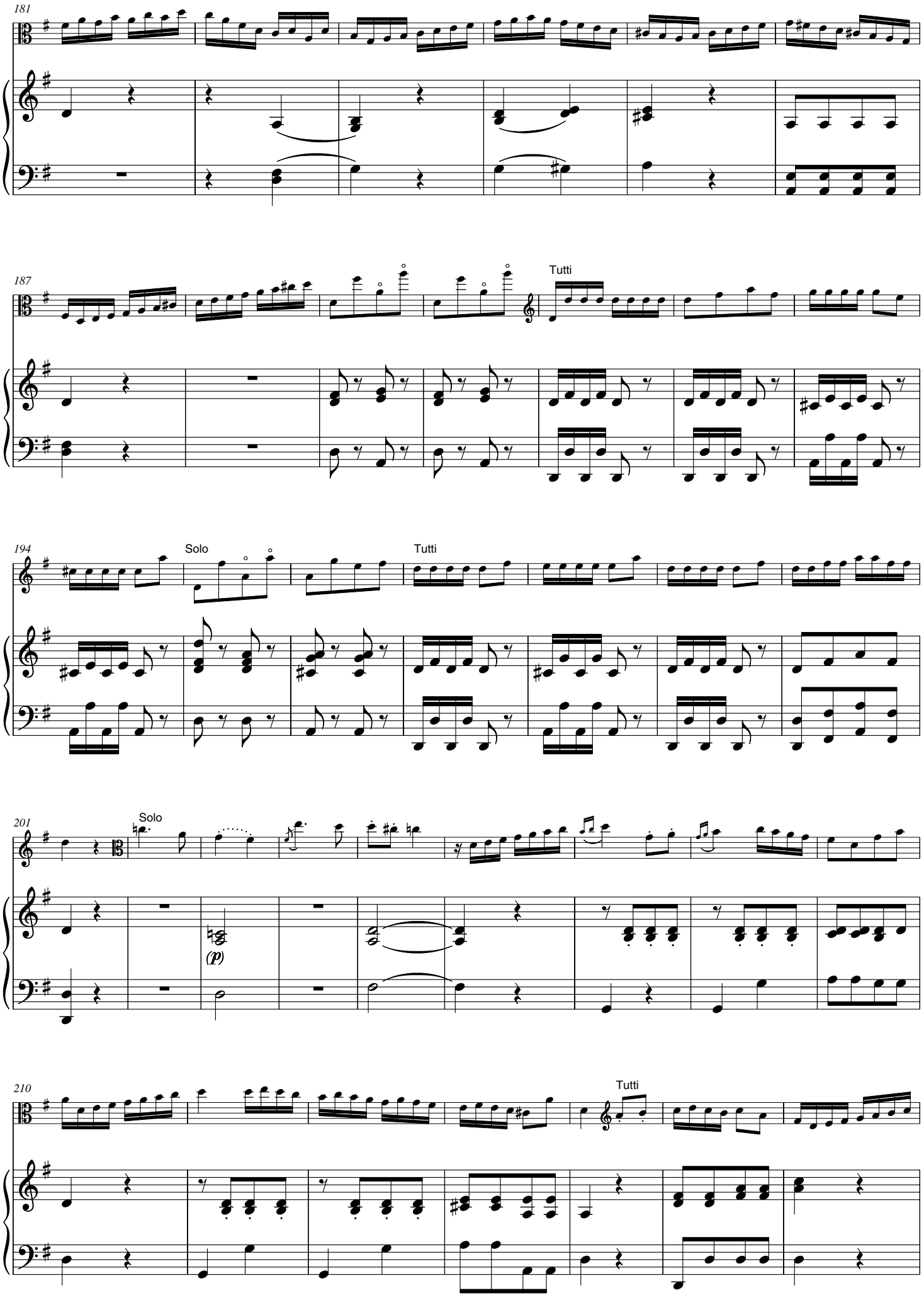
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Tutti
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Solo
Tutti
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Solo
(p)
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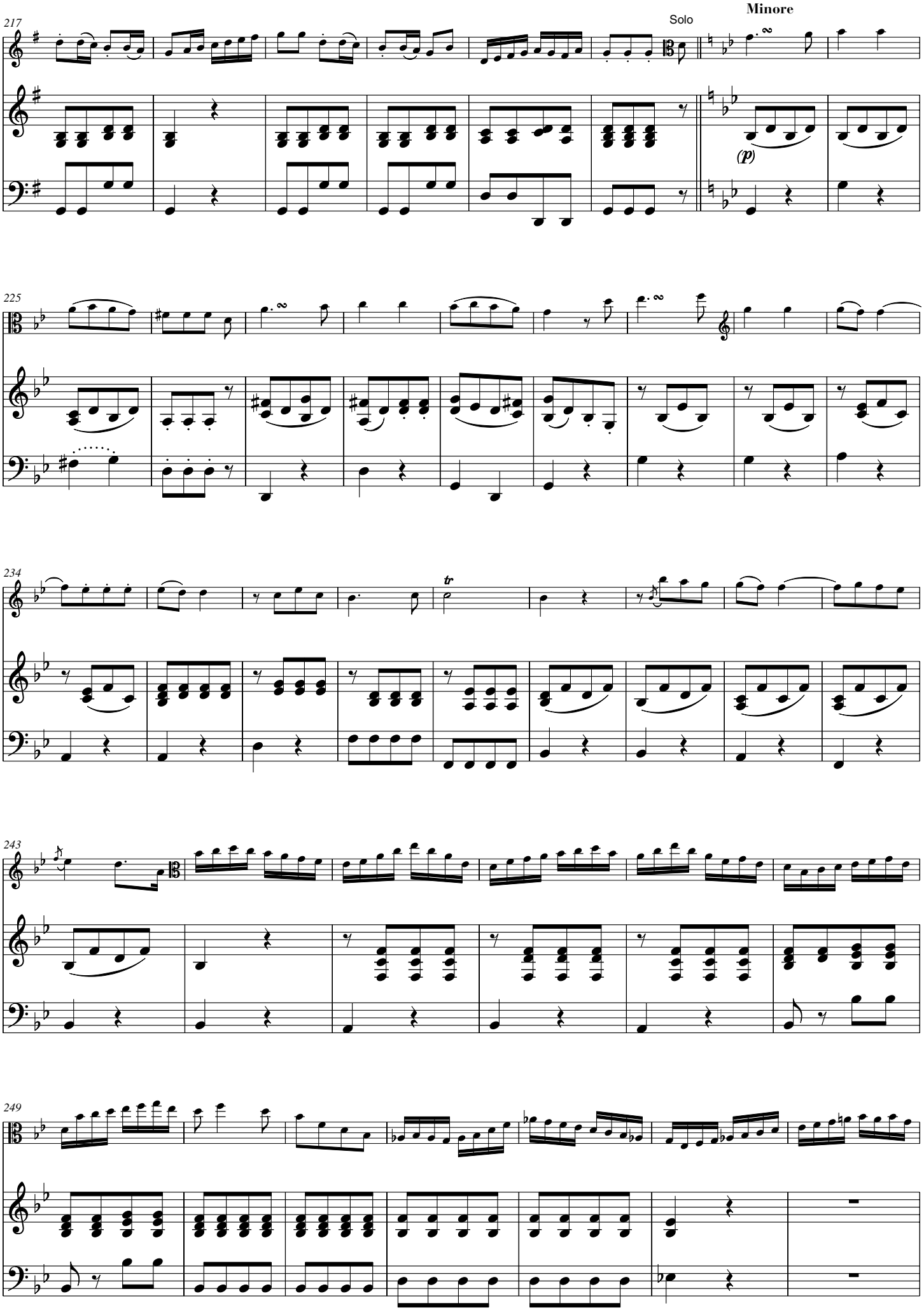
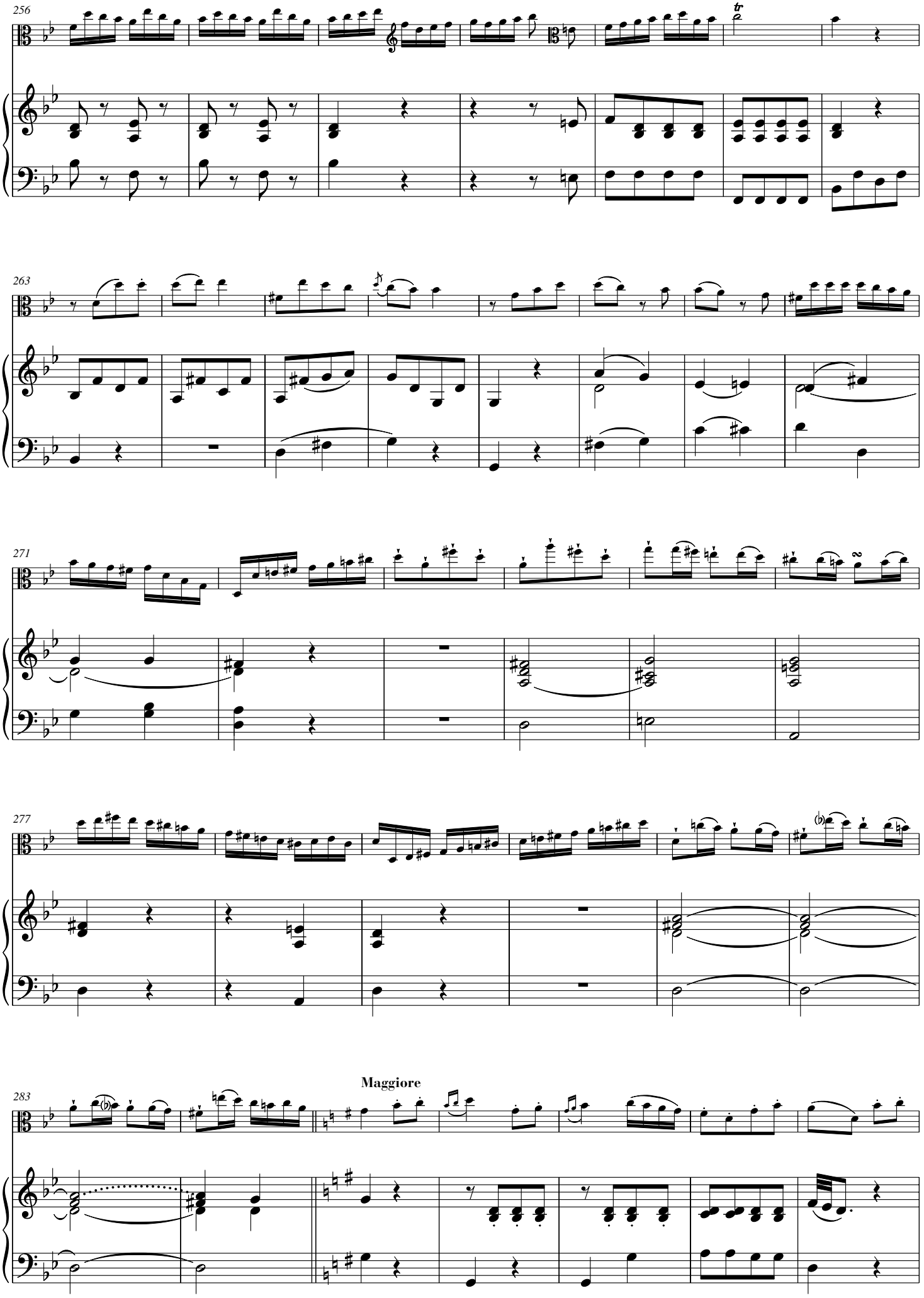
Tutti


217
Solo
Minore
(p)
225
234
tr
243
249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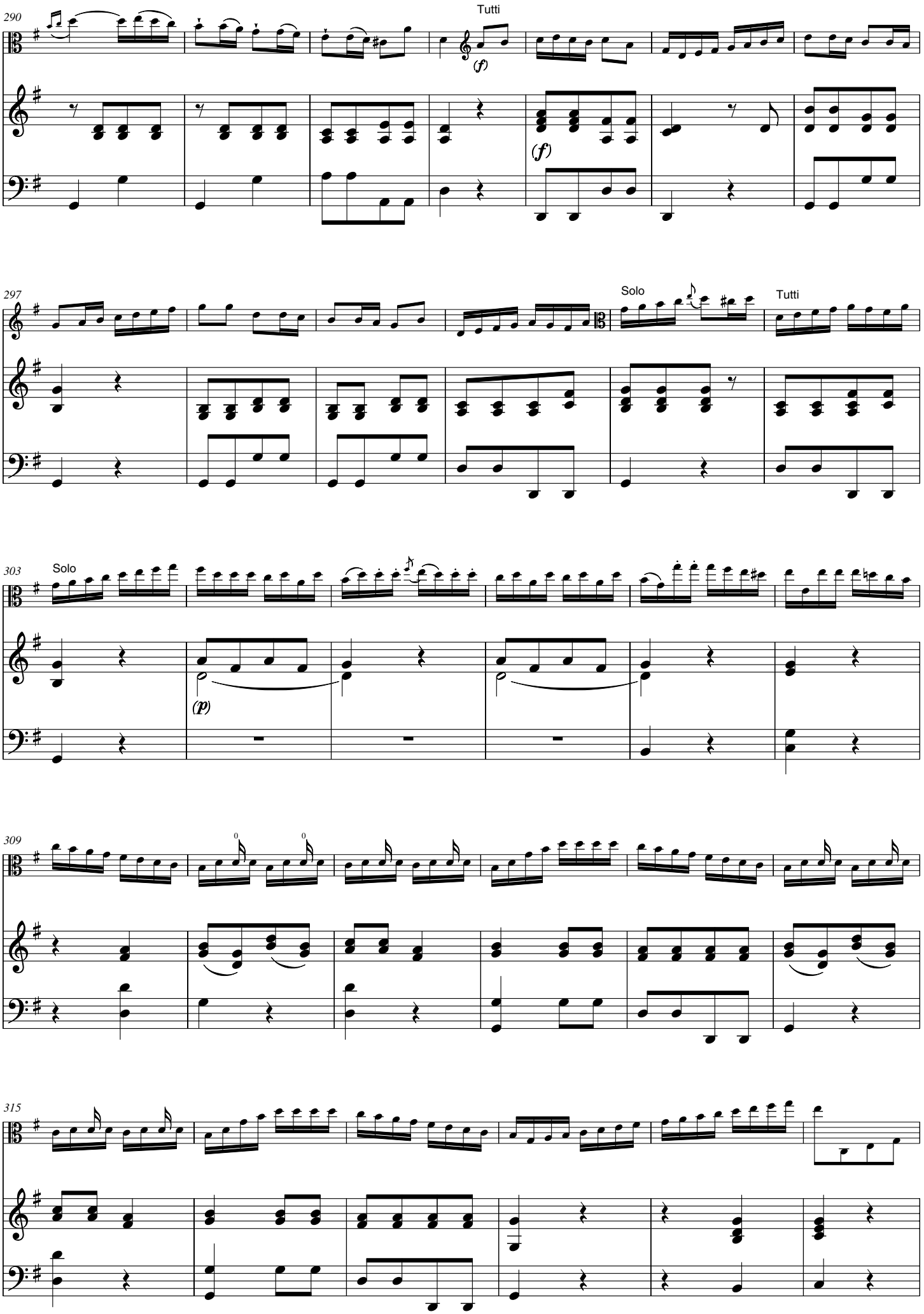
283
Maggiore


290
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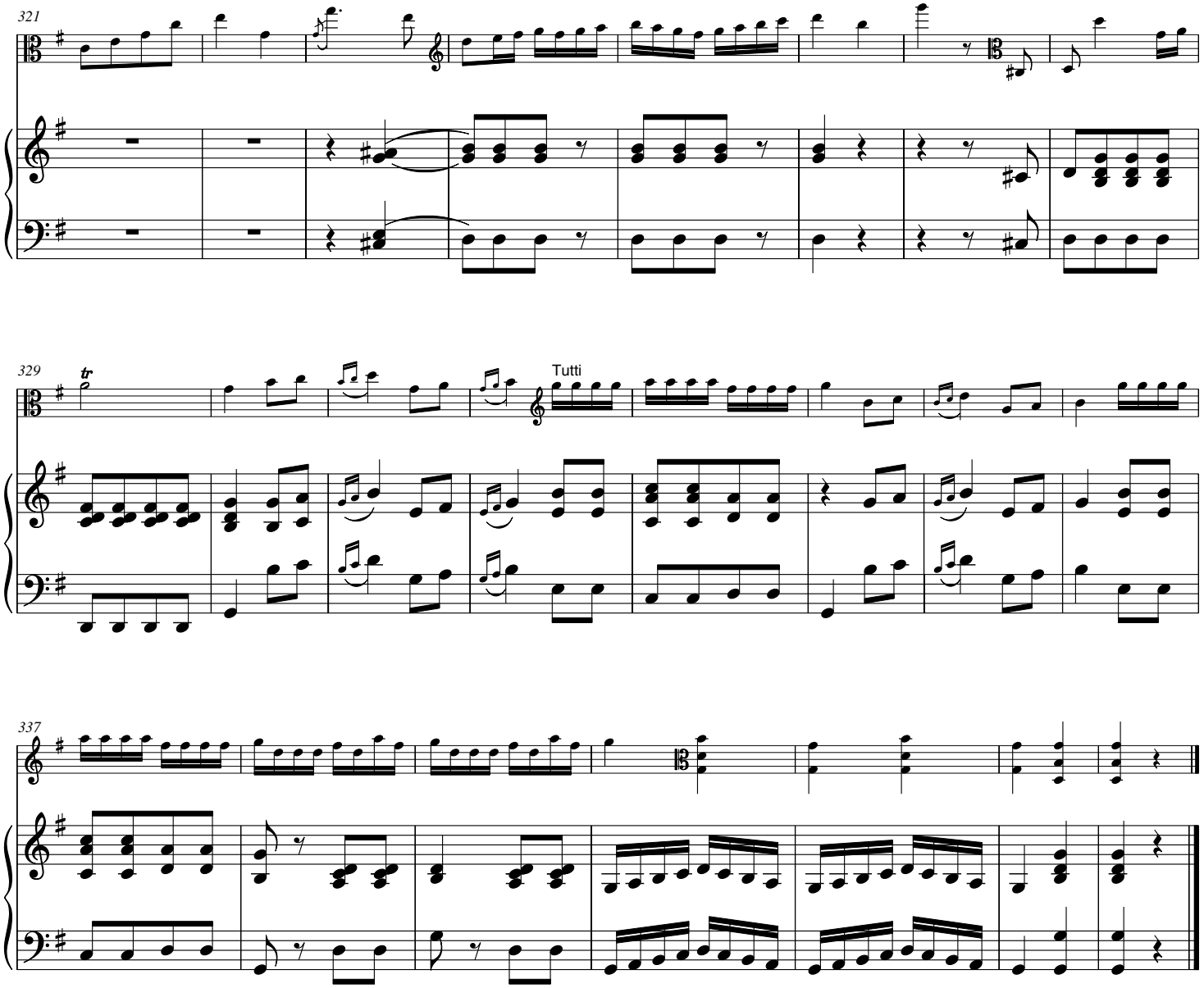
(f)
(f)
297
Solo
Tutti
303
Solo
(p)
309
315


321
329
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Tutti
337