IN THE END, THE SOPRANO ALWAYS WINS

soprano & fixed media

DAVID MORNEAU
BRANTLEY AUFILL

Notes

This one woman opera was composed for Monica Harte, based upon a concept she described in one of our first conversations. I recruited Brantley Aufill to write the libretto, and he turned in a great story.

The video playback files can be obtained by contacting me through my website.

David Morneau is a composer of an entirely undecided genre, a provider of exclusive unprecedented experiments. In his work he endeavors to explore ideas about our culture, issues concerning creativity, and even the very nature of music itself.

Find more online at http://5of4.com.

HOUSE LIGHTS DOWN, STAGE LIGHTS LOW

HOST comes out, goes to his/her podium. Checks the order of note cards, does other minor prep-work.

DIRECTOR (VOICE ONLY)

2 minutes.

Host walks to address the "studio audience"

HOST

Hello ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for coming to tonight's taping of The Color of Music. I'm Chris Notis, the host of The Color of Music. As you heard from our director just now, we are about 2 minutes away from starting our taping.

DIRECTOR

90 seconds.

HOST

Even less! A few things before we start. The monitors at the doors should have told you to turn off any cell phones or anything else that might make noise, but please check again. As this is a game show involving music, it would be a tad distracting to both the contestant and the TV viewers to hear Flight of the Bumblebee chirping in the background. Second, it should be no surprise to you to see we have an applause sign. Let me have our director flash it up for you.

Applause sign comes on. This could be practical or part of video projection.

HOST

There it is. Now, when you see that, please help us out and applaud enthusiastically, as if you're thrilled to be here, which I'm sure all of you are.

DIRECTOR

60 seconds.

HOST

Alright, very quick, let's give it a test run. Ready?

Applause sign lights up. Audience hopefully will applaud. Host should feel free to encourage them to do so.

HOST

Excellent. That's about it. Enjoy yourselves, and enjoy the music.

Host returns to the podium.

DIRECTOR
30 seconds.

Host does a few vocal/diction warm-ups under his/her breath.

HOST
(quietly)
To sit. To sit in solemn silence. Dull dark dock. Dull dark dock.

DIRECTOR
10 seconds. 9, 8, 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, 2.

Game show THEME MUSIC begins. Applause signs lights up.

ANNOUNCER (VOICE ONLY)
And now it's time for the game show with a voice, The Color of Music! And here's your host: Chris Notis!

Stage lights come up. Applause sign goes out.

HOST
Thank you and welcome to The Color of Music. Let's get right to it by introducing you to our first contestant: Leslie Jacobs!

Applause sign. Leslie comes out, shakes the host's hand, then goes to center stage, host following.

HOST
Hello Leslie, how are you?

LESLIE
I'm fine. Nervous.

HOST
Oh, I know you'll do great. Where are you from?

LESLIE
Baltimore.

HOST
Ah, Charm City they call it.

LESLIE
Yes.

HOST
Now, to remind you how we play. There are 5 rounds, each with four challenges. We'll play a piece of music, and it's up to you to respond to each correctly. The music will increase in complexity as the game proceeds, but so will the reward! At the end of each challenge you may keep your winnings and walk away, or risk them all to move on to the next! So are you ready?

LESLIE
I am.

HOST
Alright, then let's play: The Color of Music!

Applause sign. Host leaves Leslie center stage and returns to podium. Lights dim, with a spot on Leslie and Host.

HOST
Now, for $10,000 Leslie. Here is Round One.

BEGIN ROUND ONE

Leslie completes it easily.

END ROUND ONE

HOST
Leslie, that is correct, you've just won $10,000!

Applause sign.

HOST
Now, would you like to keep that $10,000, or risk it all for Round Two and $25,000?

LESLIE
I'll keep going.

HOST
I thought you might. Are you ready?

Leslie nods.

HOST
I can't hear you!

LESLIE
I'm ready.

HOST
Alright, for $25,000. Here is Round Two.

BEGIN ROUND TWO

Leslie again completes it perfectly.

END ROUND TWO

HOST
Leslie. (dramatic pause) That is correct for $25,000!

Applause sign.

HOST
So, Leslie. Before we move on, let's learn a little bit about you. What do you do in Baltimore?

LESLIE
I'm a teacher.

HOST
A teacher! Fantastic. Tell me, what's your favorite piece of music to sing?

Pause as Leslie thinks.

LESLIE
That would be (insert piece name here).

HOST
Beautiful. Beautiful. Well Leslie. You've won $25,000. Would you like to keep it, or play on for $50,000?

LESLIE
I'll play on.

HOST
Excellent! For $50,000. Here is Round Three.

BEGIN ROUND THREE

This round begins Leslie embellishing a bit, like a canon or a round with the music.

END ROUND THREE

Host gives a dramatic pause.

HOST
Leslie.

Another pause causes Leslie to look over at the Host, anxious. The Host milks it.

HOST
You've just won $50,000!

Applause sign. Leslie sighs with relief, still remains focused.

HOST
Just wonderfully done, Leslie. (to audience) Imagine having such a teacher!

Applause sign. Leslie smiles timidly.

HOST
So Leslie, tell us. If you win it all today, what would you do with the money?

LESLIE
I run a voice studio for young children. The landlord is raising the rent without notice, and...

HOST
It almost sounds like a bad movie!

LESLIE
I suppose it does, yes.

The Host smiles at the audience: "what a great joke I just made".

LESLIE
So there it is.

HOST
Well, I'm sure we're all pulling for you to give your story a happy ending today.

Applause sign.

HOST
So, Leslie. You currently have $50,000. The next round will be harder, much harder. And it is for $100,000. Tell us. Do you want to play on?

Long pause as Leslie stares, thinking. Then she nods slightly.

HOST
That's a yes?

LESLIE
Yes.

HOST
This one will be much more difficult, you're sure?

LESLIE
Yes.

HOST
Alright, ladies and gentlemen, she will play on!

Applause sign.

HOST
Now, for $100,000. Here is Round Four.

BEGIN ROUND FOUR

This round is indeed tougher. Leslie powers through, confident and strong, though might have missed a tiny bit at the end.

END ROUND FOUR

Silence. The Host looks out past the audience, unsure.

HOST
Hmmm. I'm being told that our judges will need to listen to that again to make sure, so we'll use this time to take a quick commercial break! Stay with us.

Applause sign. Stage lights come up to work light levels.

DIRECTOR
30 seconds.

Leslie still stands center. The Host walks over to her.

HOST
That was very beautiful, right up until the last bit.

LESLIE
I'm sorry.

HOST
No, we'll see. I'm sure it'll be fine.

Leslie nods. An awkward silence, neither sure what to say. After a moment:

HOST
So, you say you...

DIRECTOR
10 seconds!

HOST
Oops. Good luck.

The Host, pleased with the interruption saving the awkward moment, hussles back to his/her podium.

DIRECTOR
9, 8, 7, 6...

Leslie looks at the Host and forces a smile. The Host subtly nods his/her head and smiles back.

DIRECTOR
5, 4, 3, 2.

Stage lights up. Applause sign.

HOST
And welcome back to The Color of Music. We have Leslie Jacobs from Baltimore, who has just completed Round Four. And after a careful review, our judges say.....?

A dramatic pause, and then a BELL rings.

HOST
She's done it, for $100,000!

Applause sign. Leslie does not react, focused.

HOST
Now, Leslie. This next round is for all the marbles: $250,000. You can walk away now with $100,000 guaranteed, or you can play on. But, if you get this next and final round incorrect, you will lose. Everything.

Pause.

LESLIE
I'll play.

HOST
(milking the suspense)
Are you sure? Think of your studio, your students. You may lose... everything!

LESLIE
Not if I do it well.

The Host smiles at her.

HOST
I hope you're right, Leslie. She will play on!

Applause sign.

HOST
Leslie, for $250,000.

Leslie takes in a deep breath and exhales slowly.

HOST
This is Round Five.

Lights down to just a spotlight on Leslie.

BEGIN ROUND FIVE

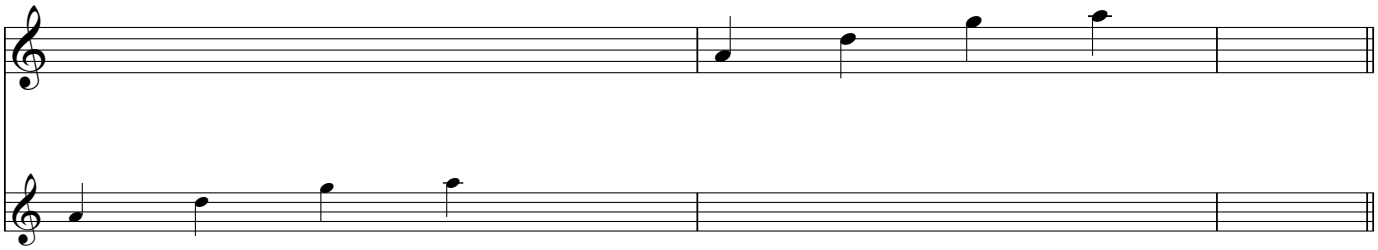
During this round, the video projection and stage lighting should all transport Leslie out of the game show. She's singing beautifully. Maybe this is how well she's really doing, maybe it's how she wants to sound. We shouldn't know. It builds and so does she, keeping up and doing it perfect.

On the last notes:

BLACKOUT

ROUND 1

1



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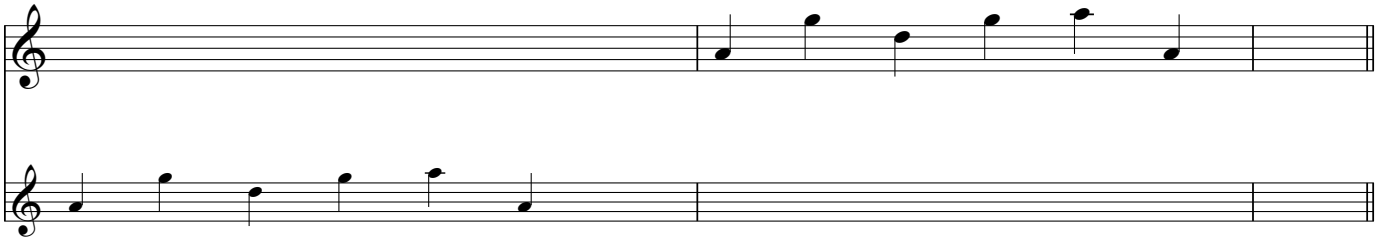

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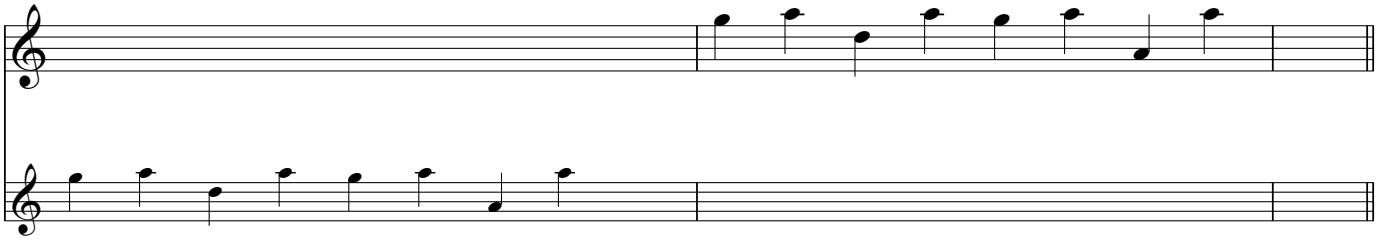

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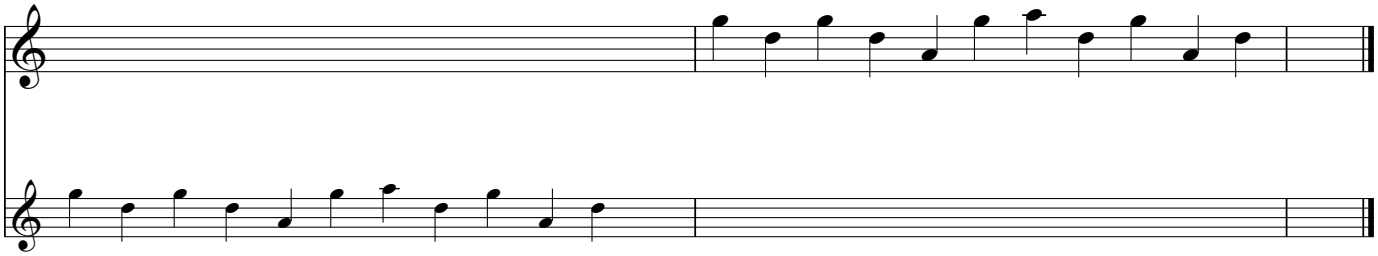
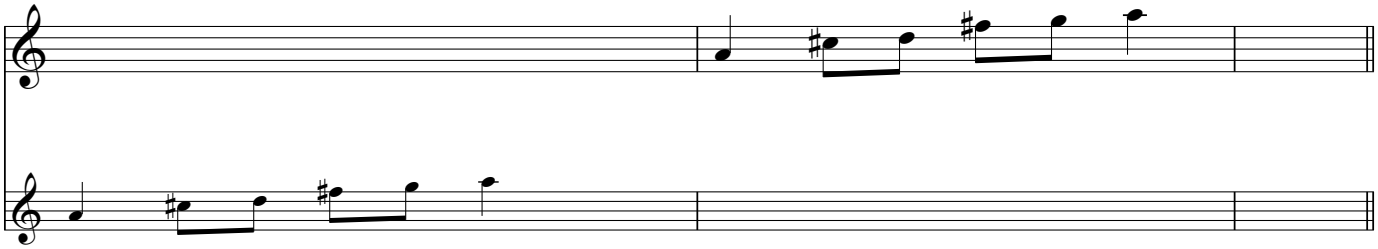


ROUND 2

1



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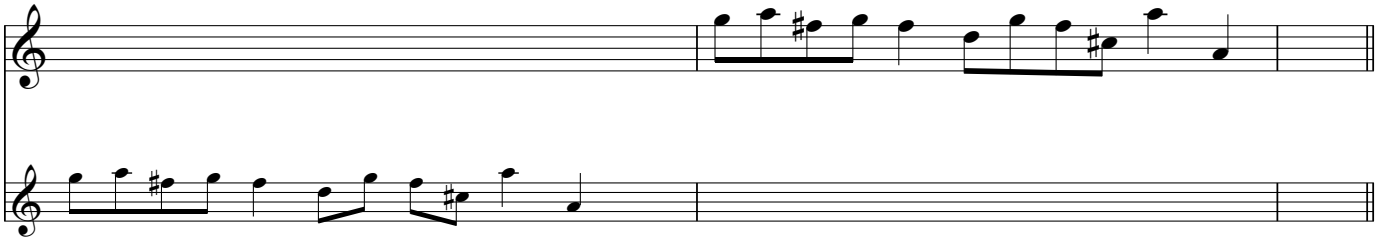

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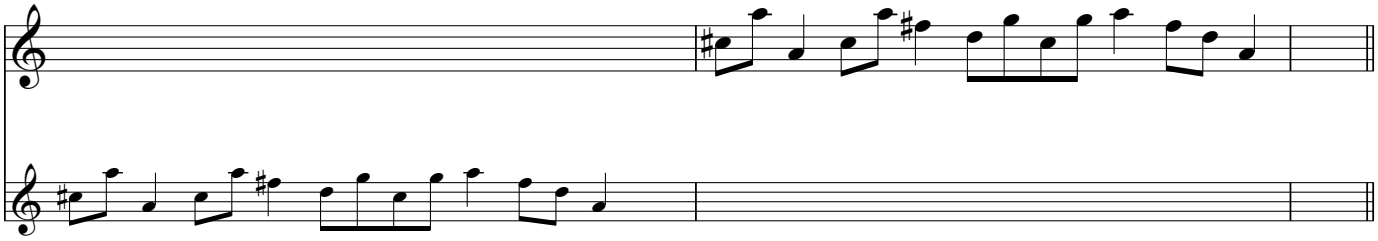

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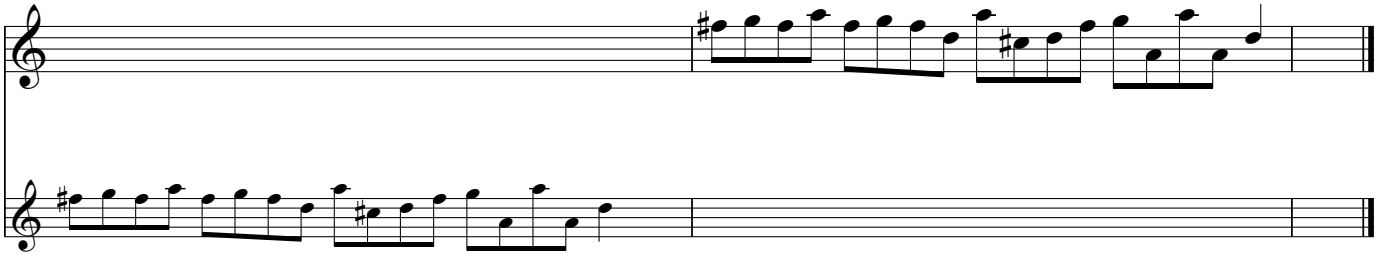

ROUND 3

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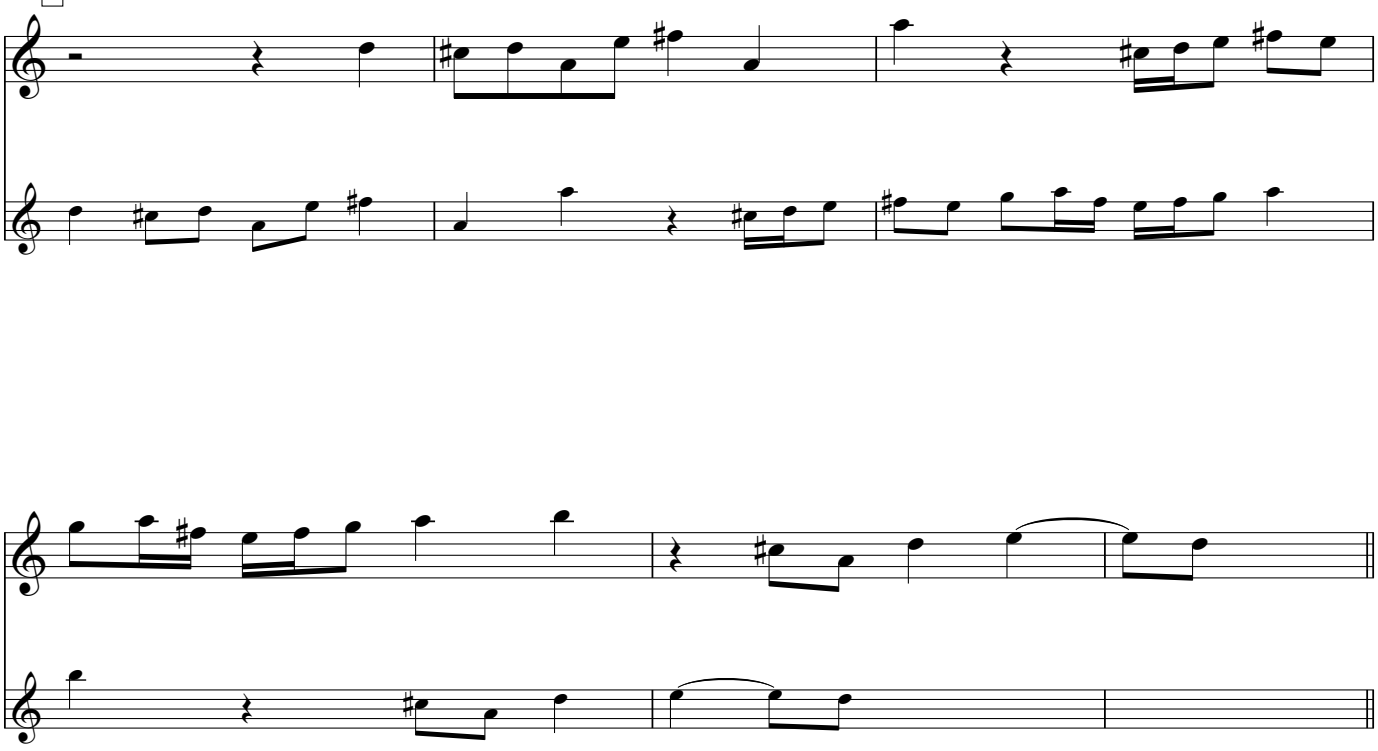

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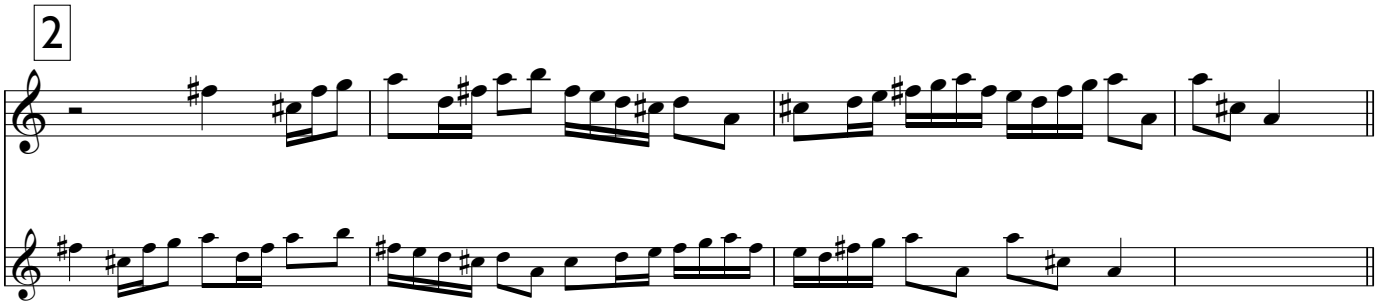

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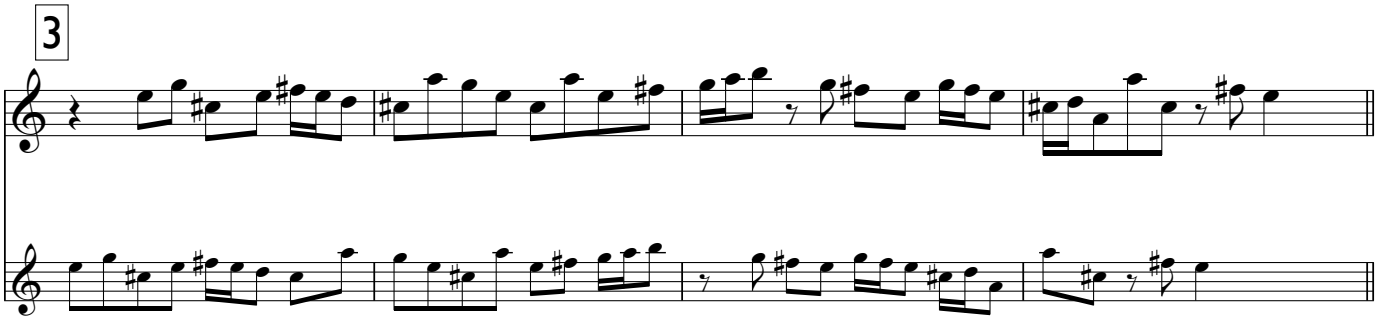

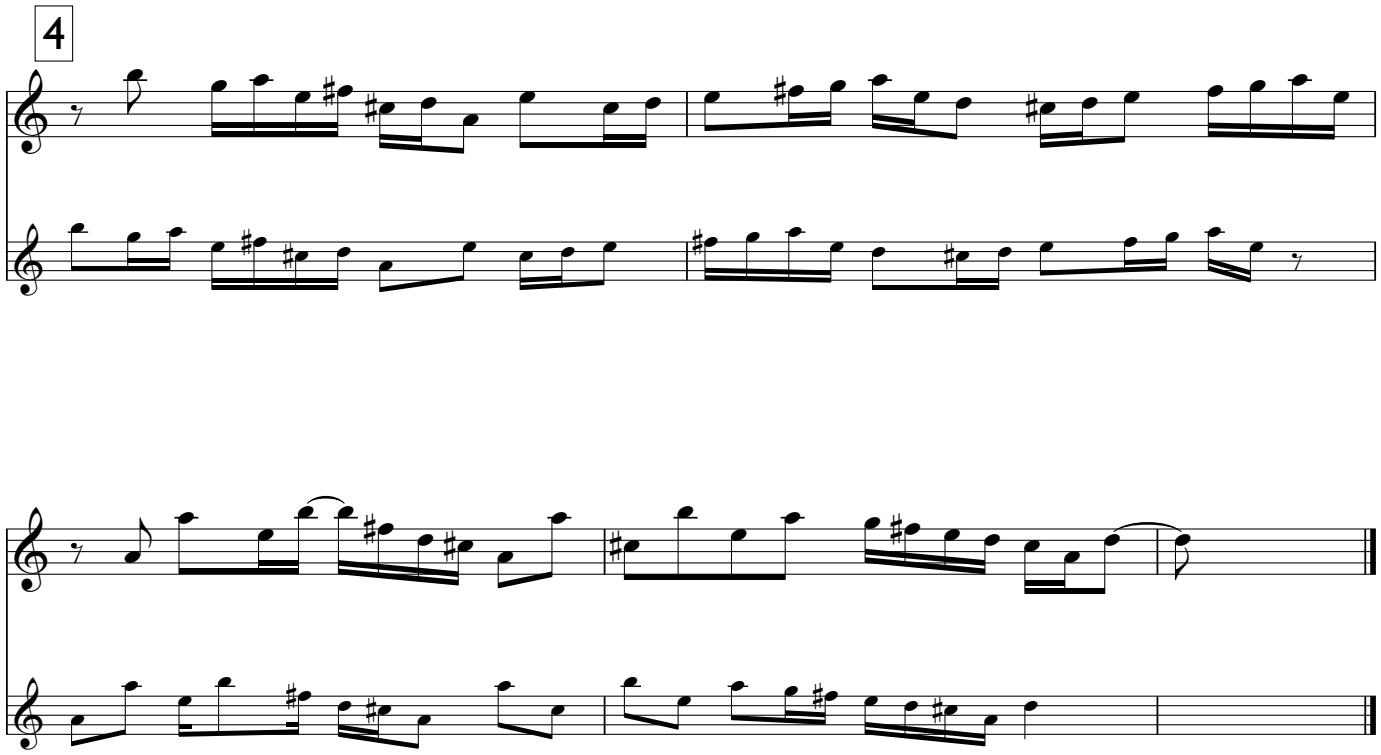
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ROUND 4

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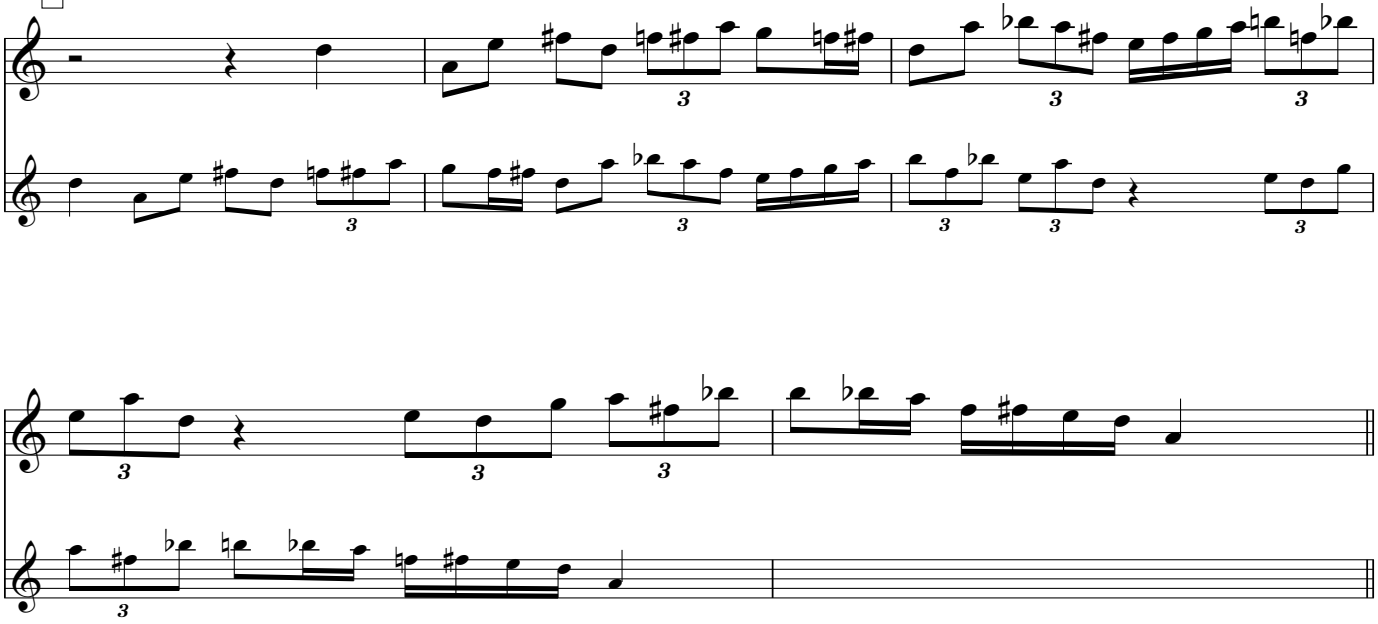

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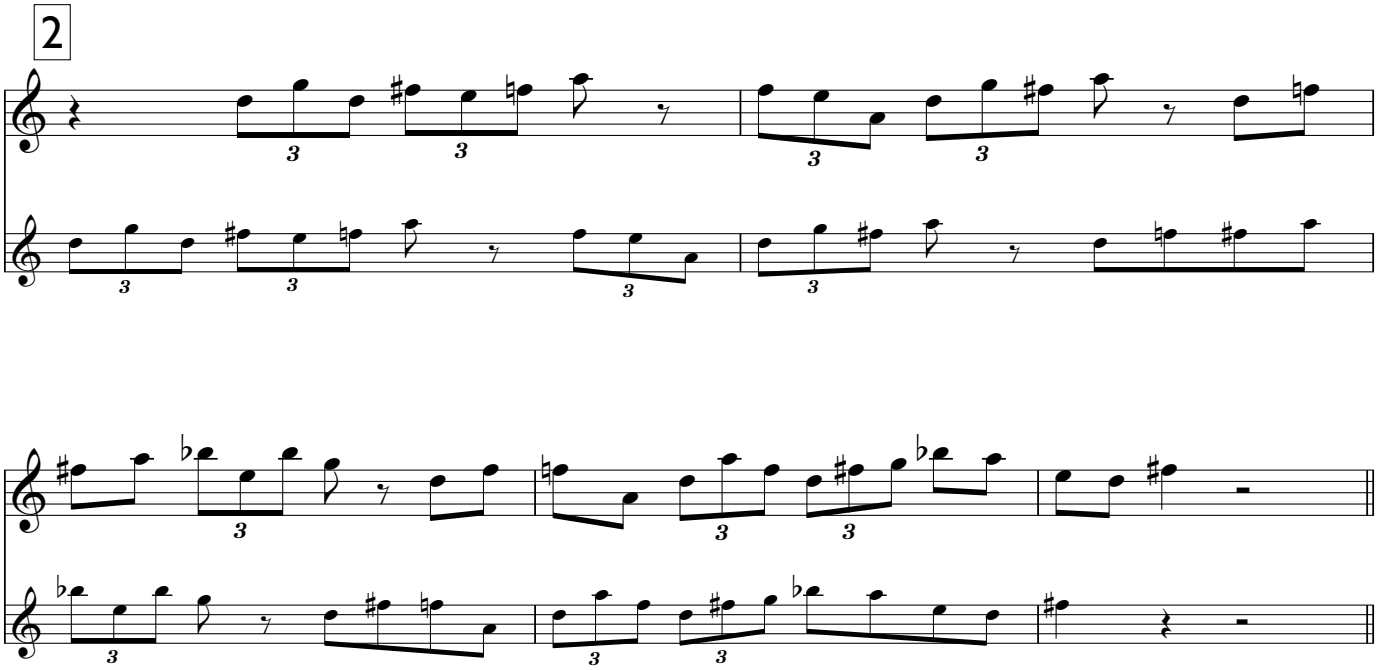

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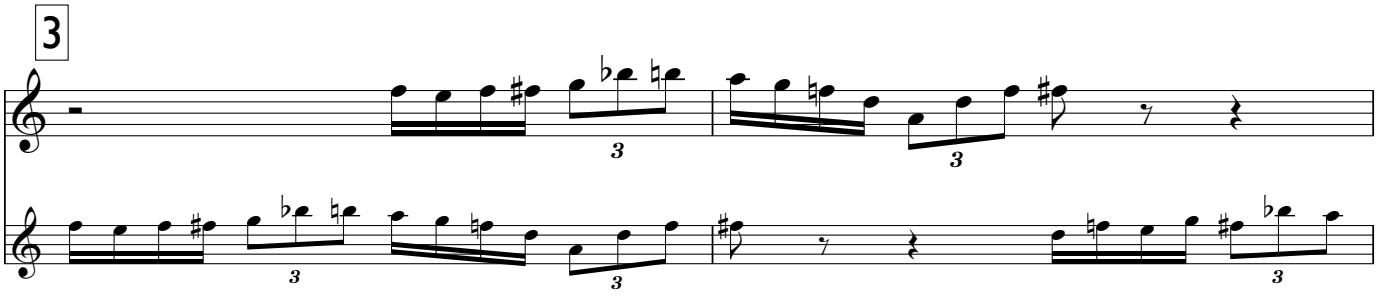

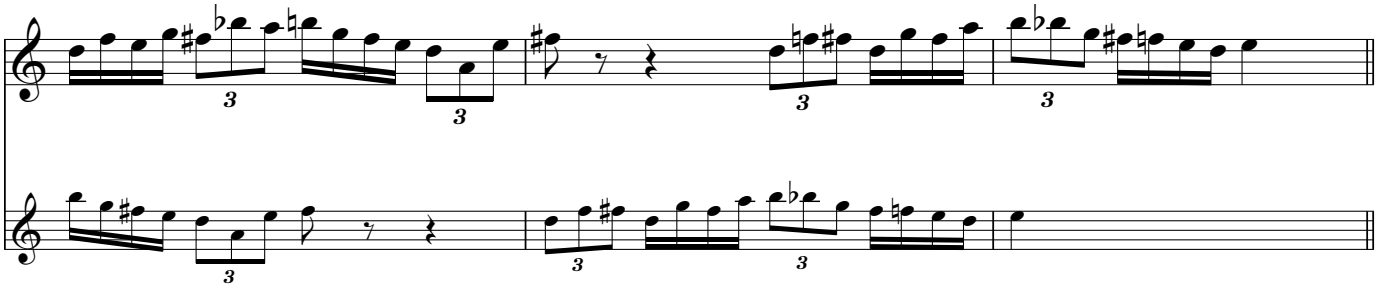

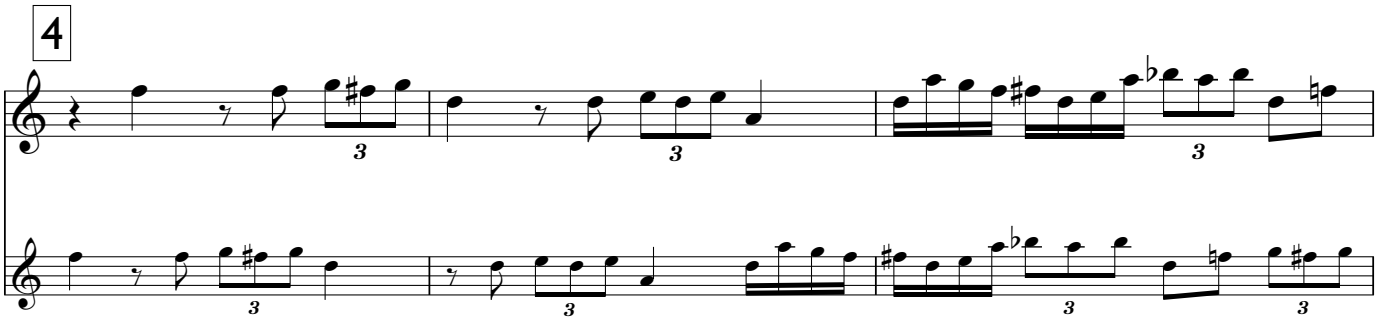
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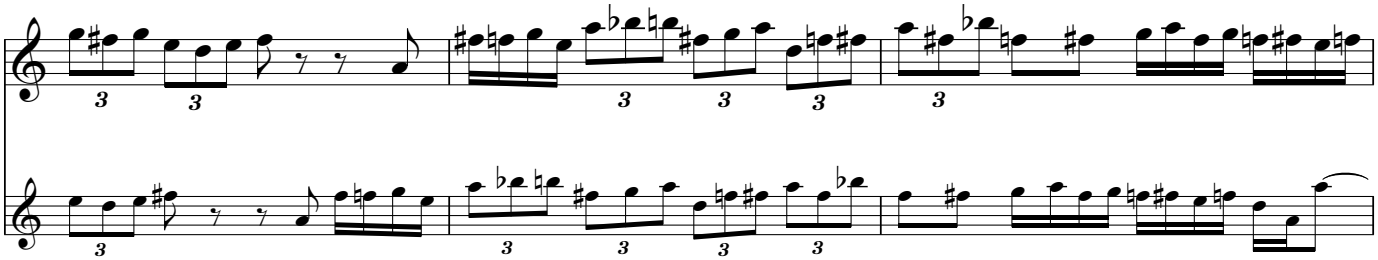
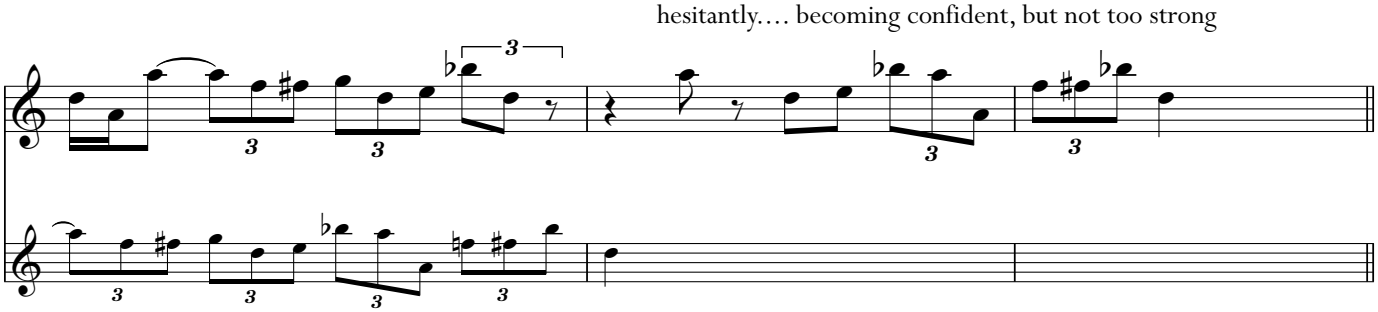
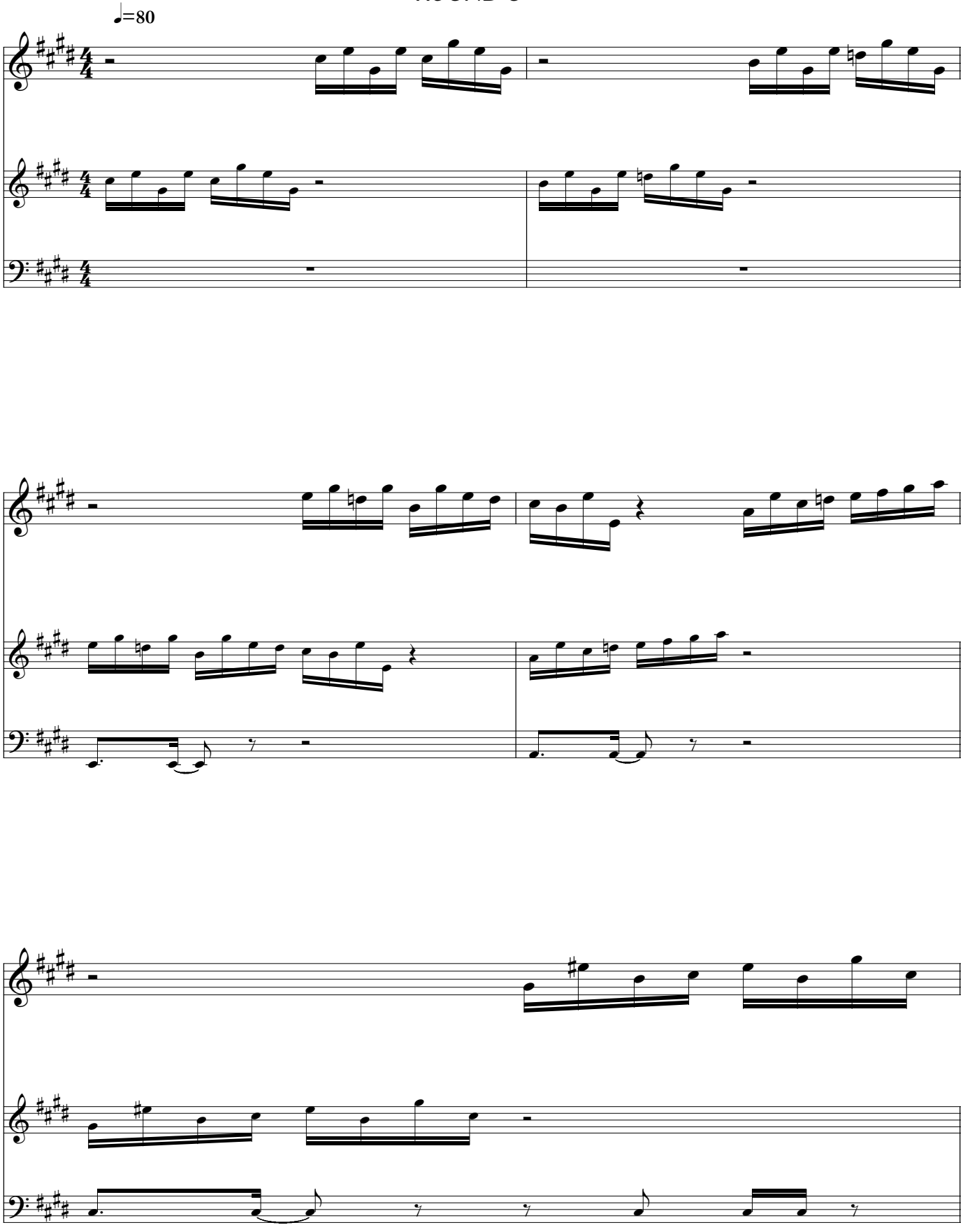
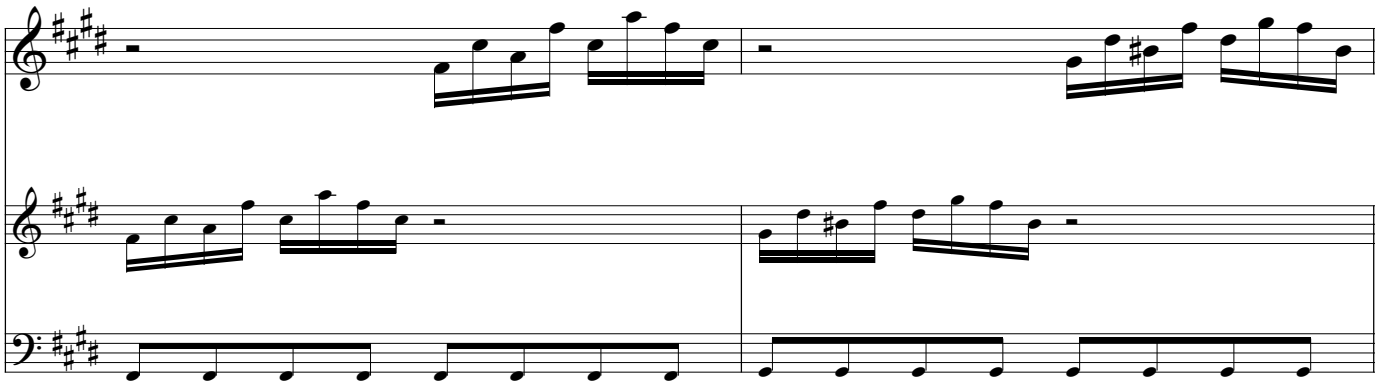
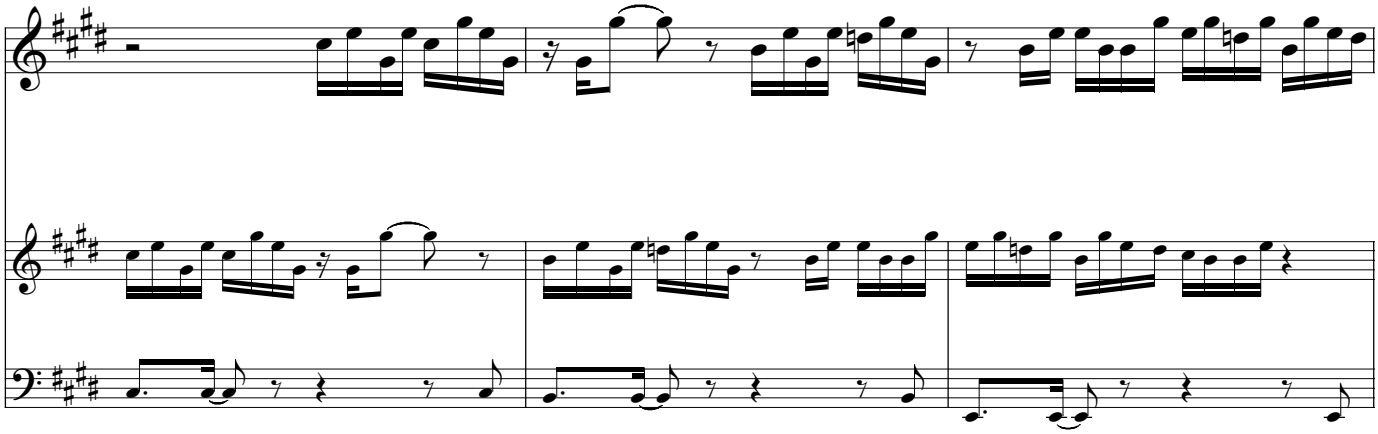


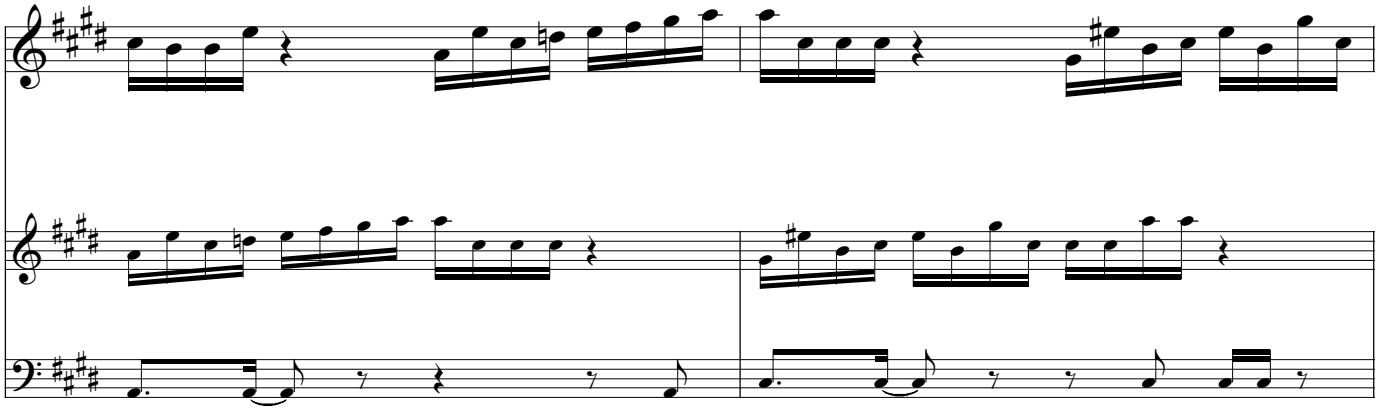

hesitantly.… becoming confident, but not too strong

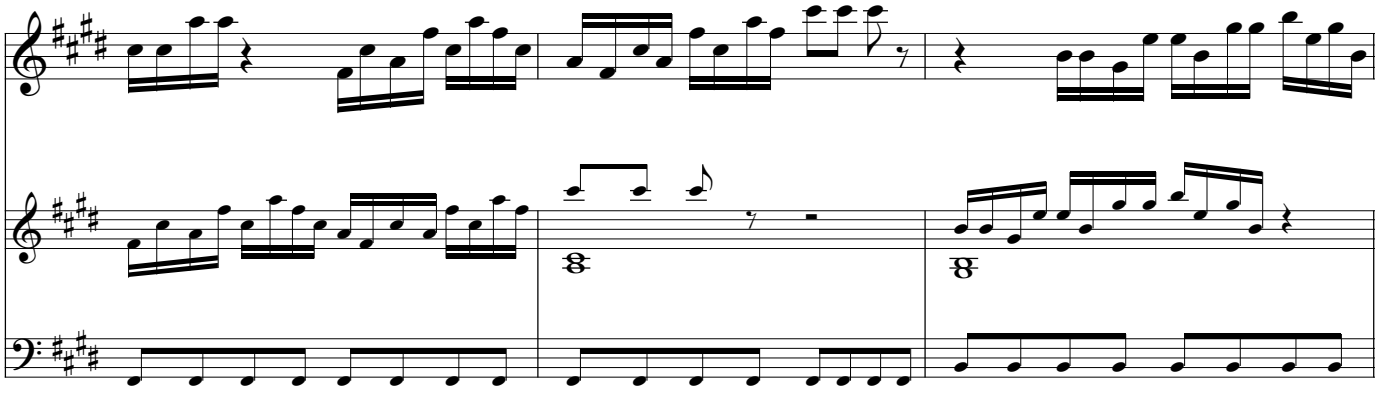
ROUND 5

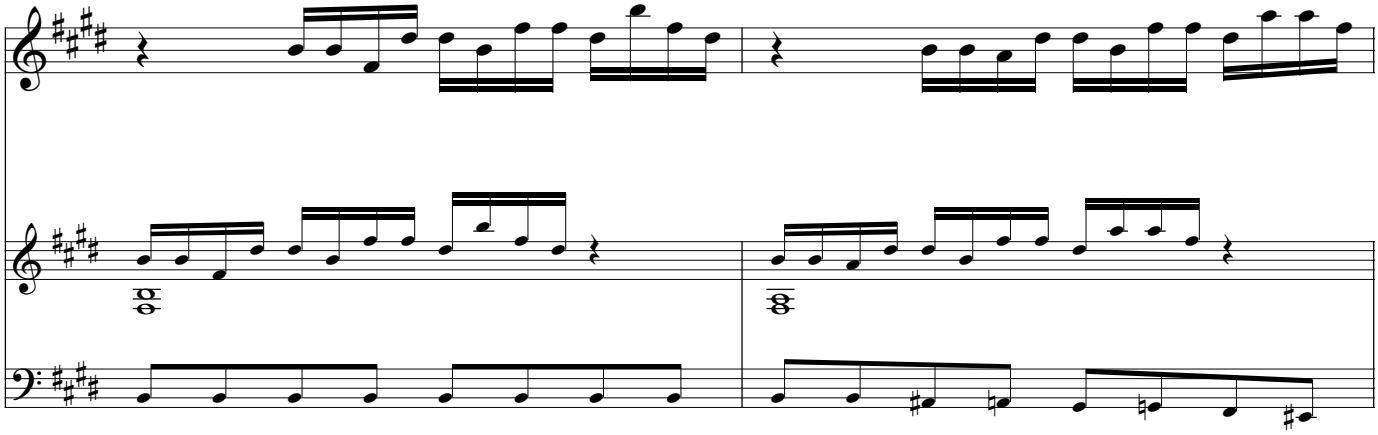


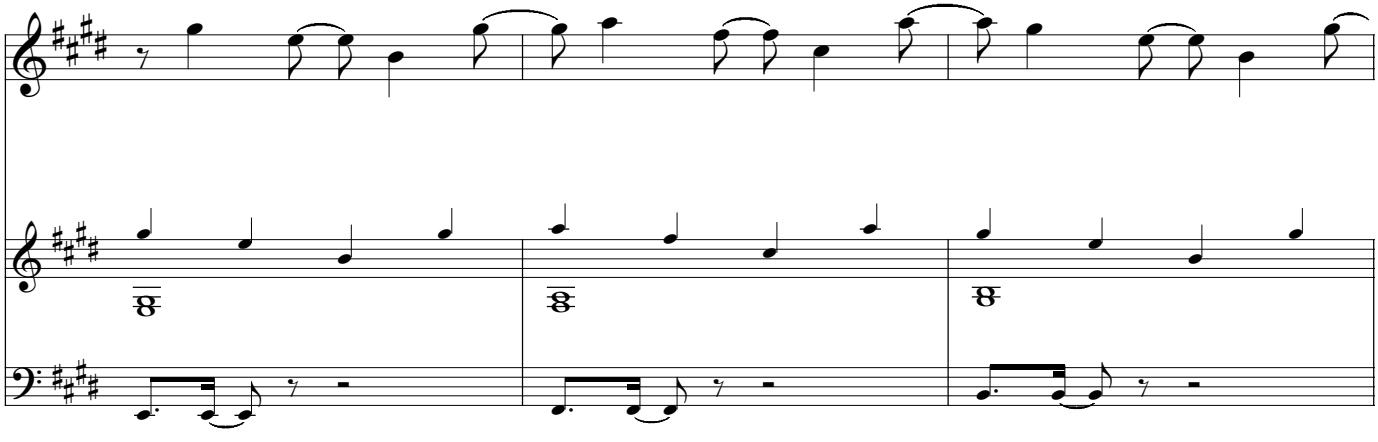


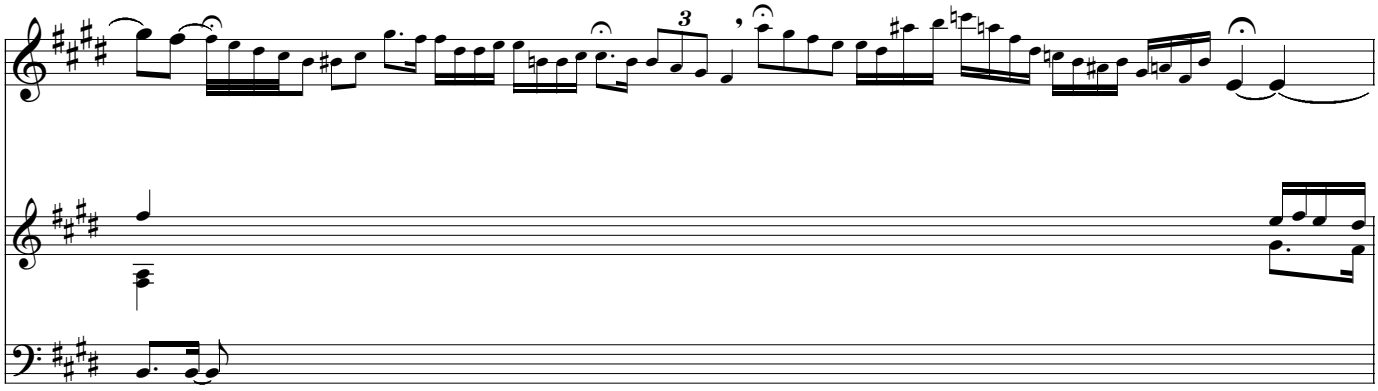
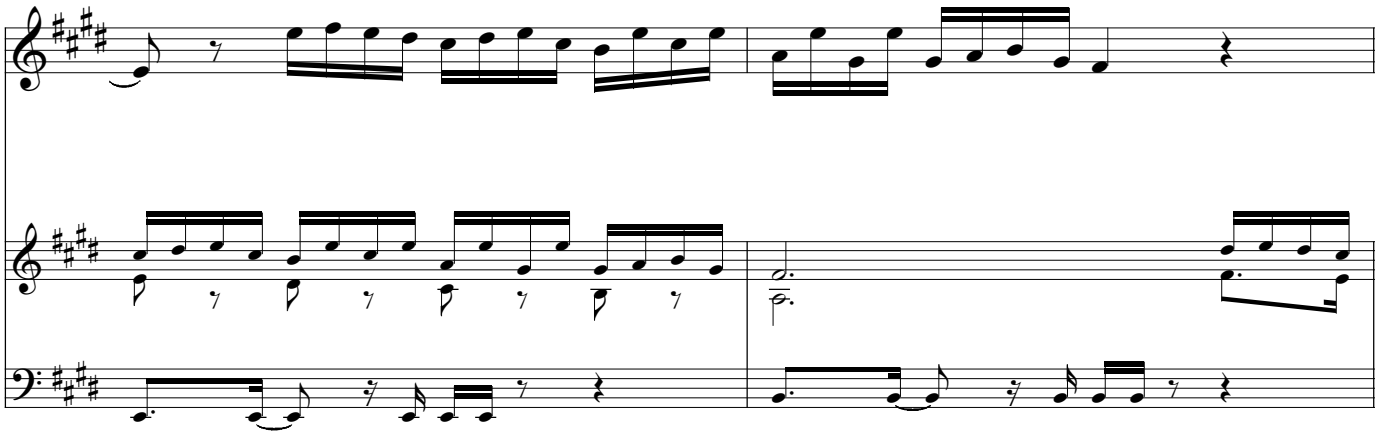
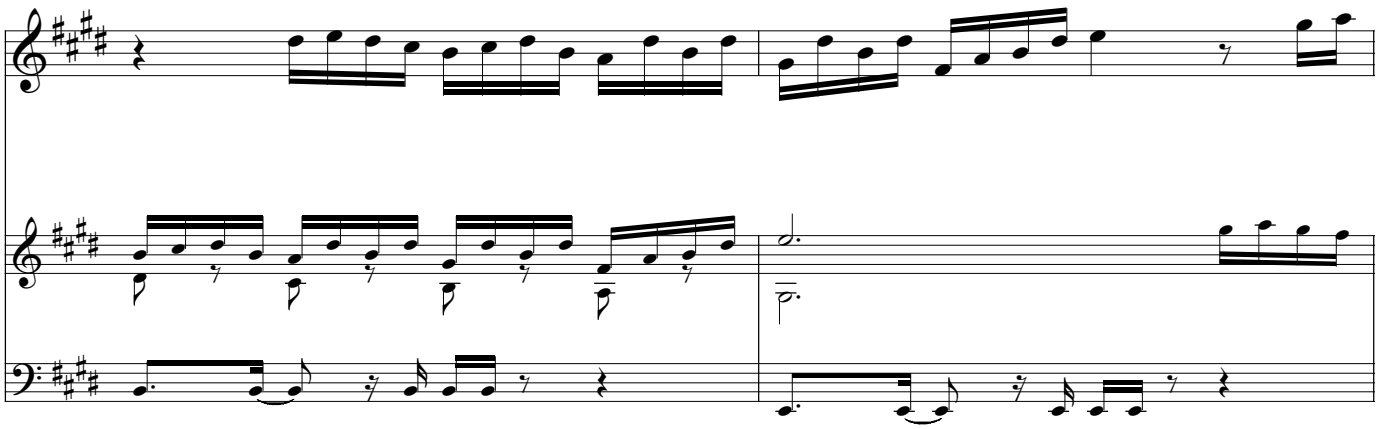


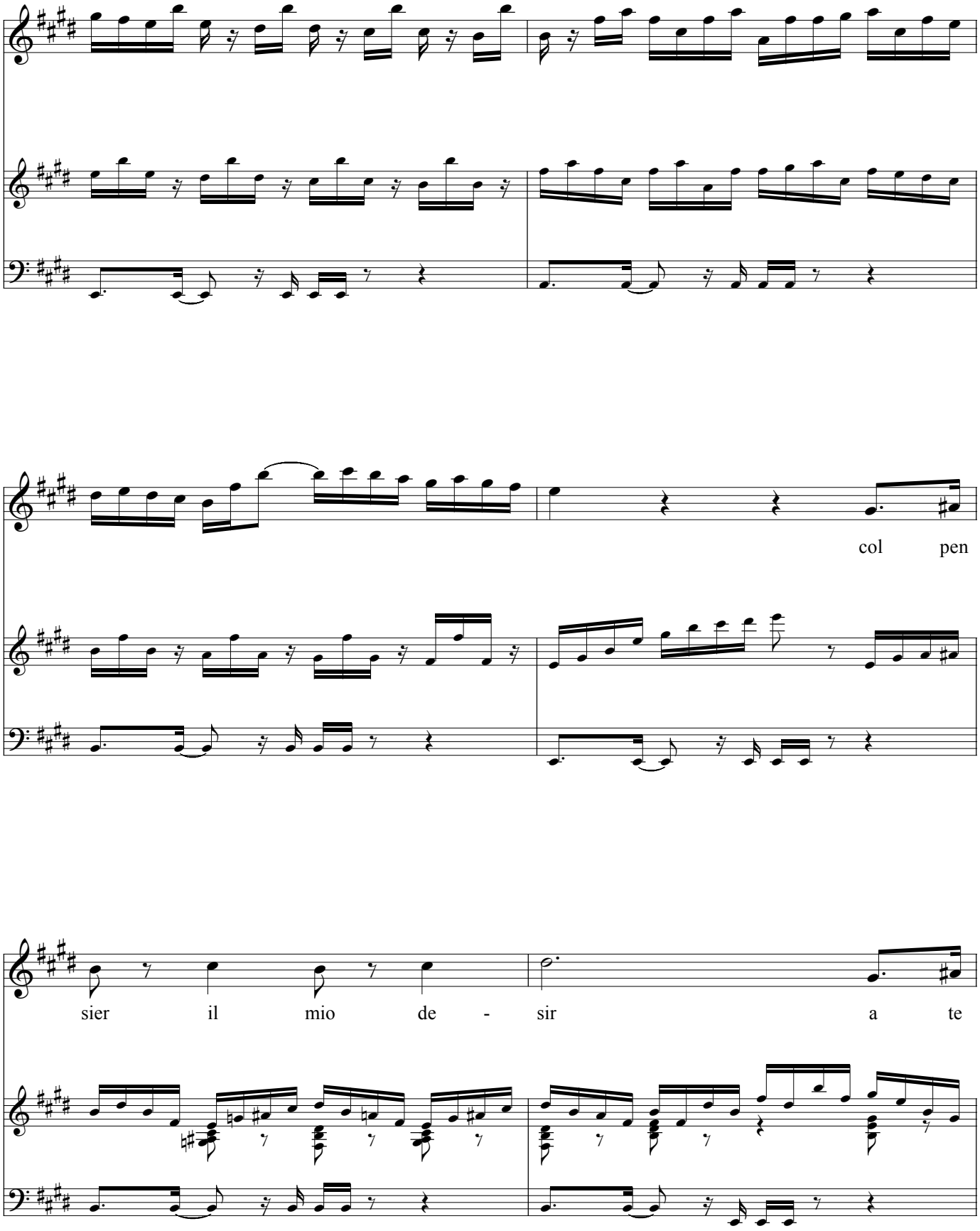






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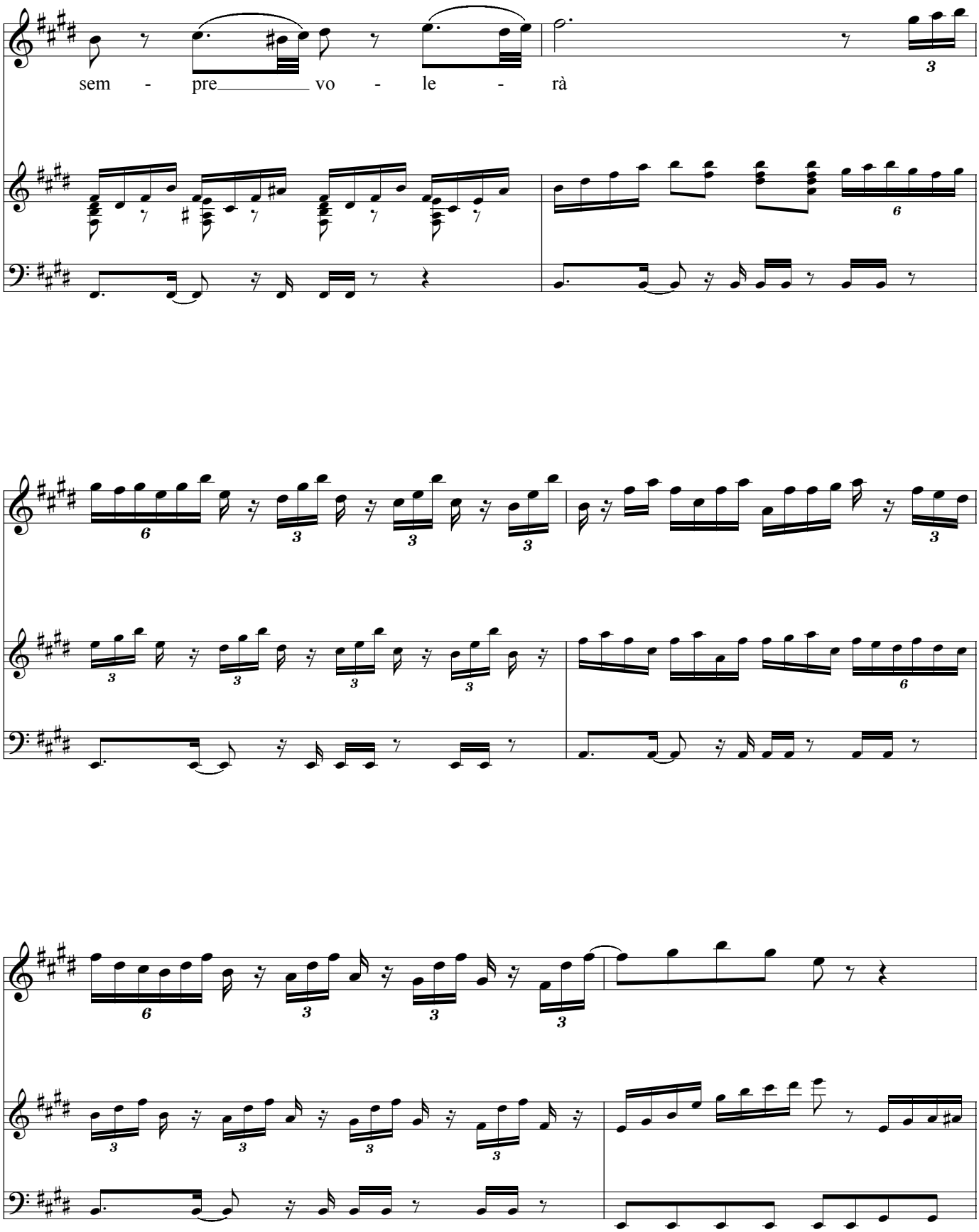
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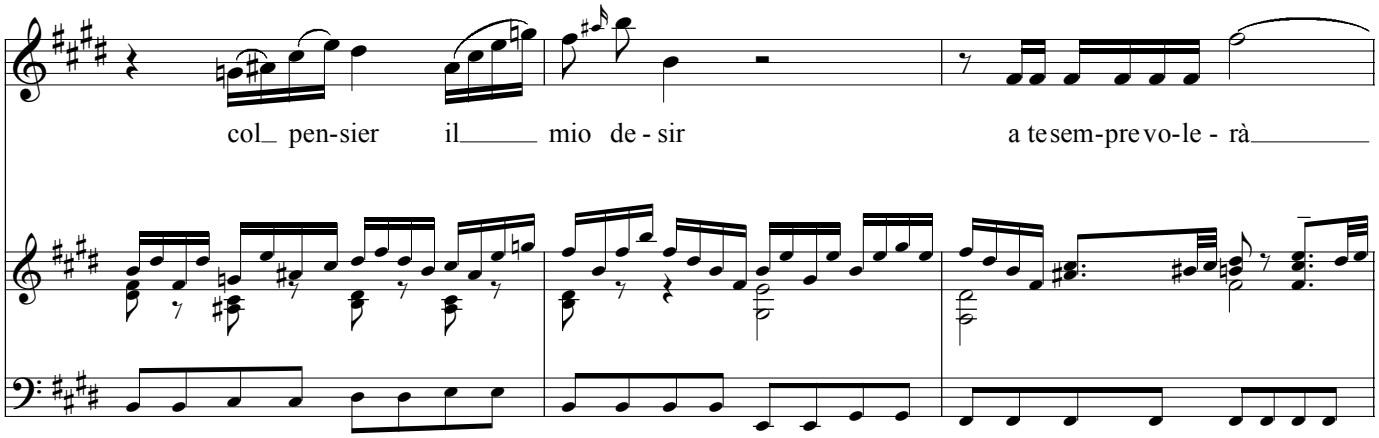
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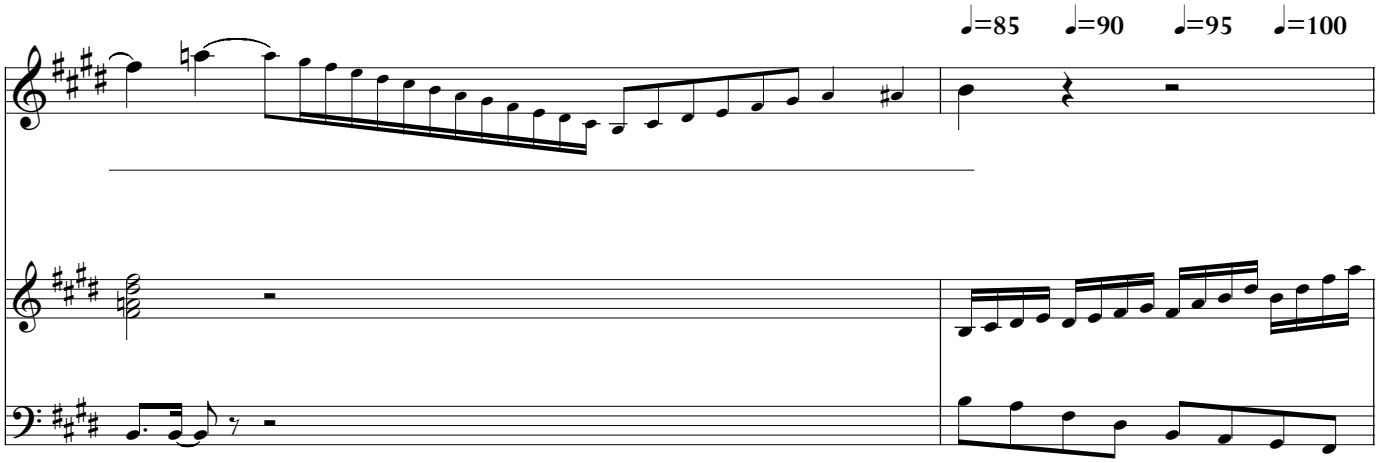
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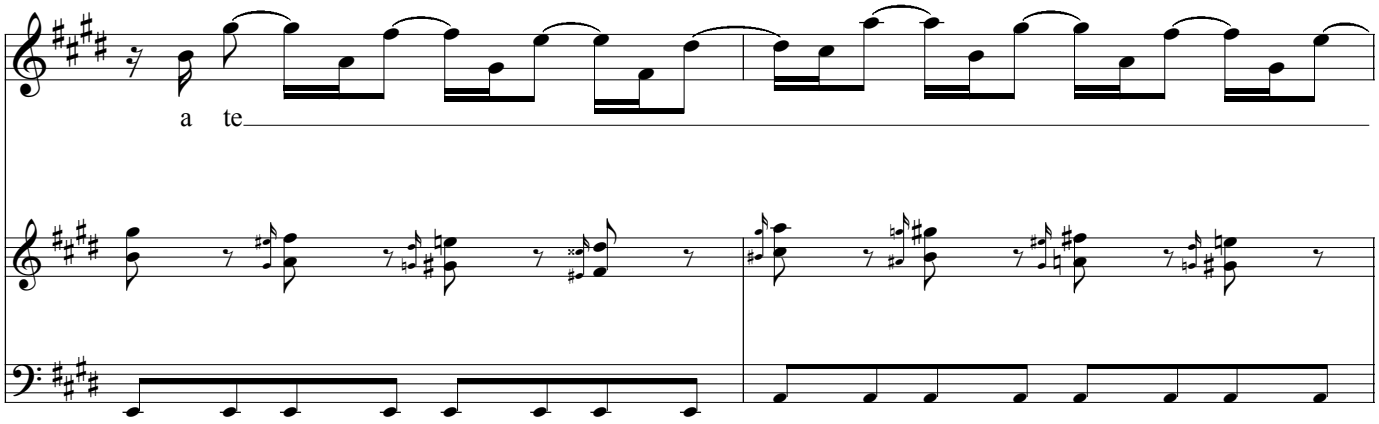
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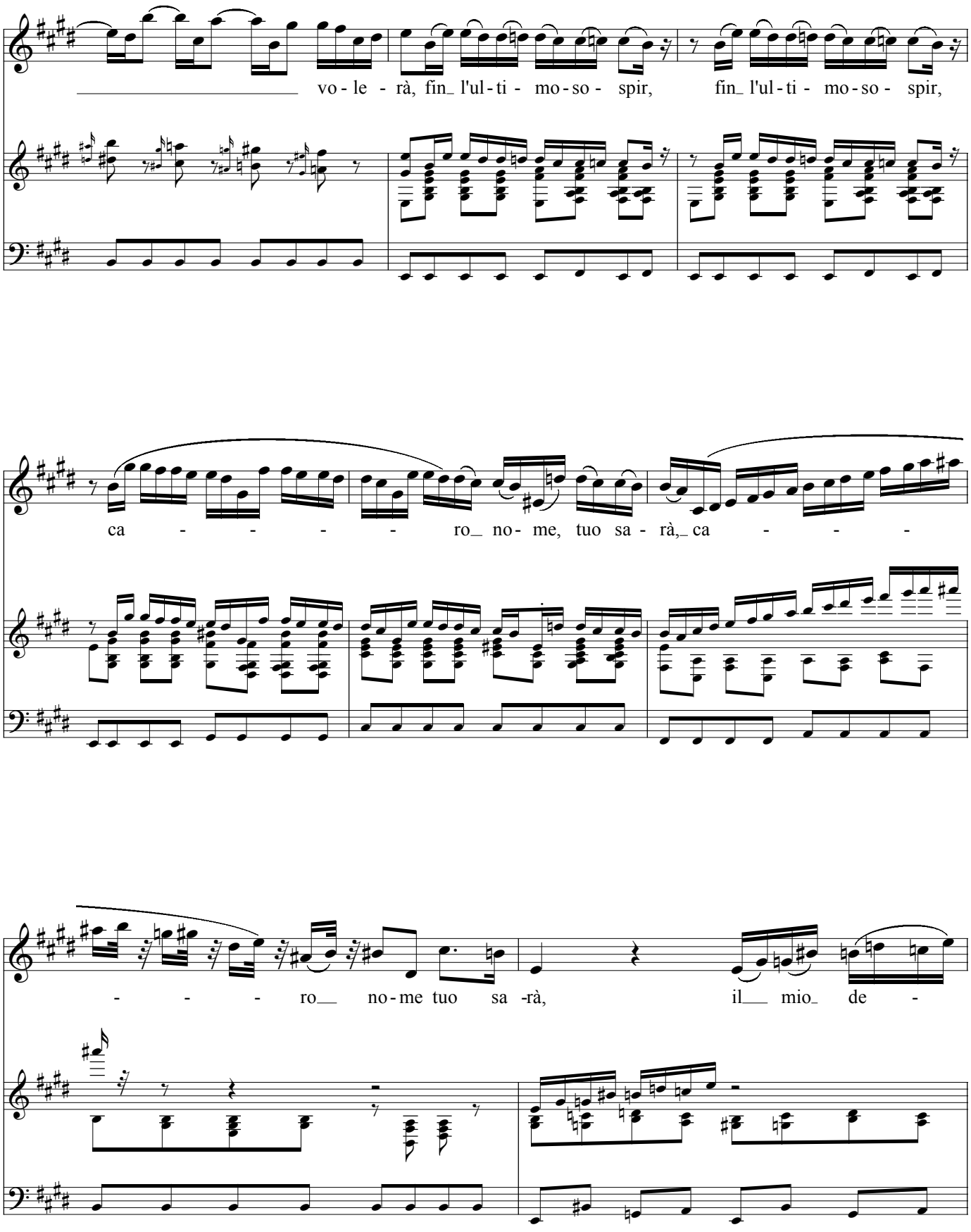
vo - le - rà, fin_ l'ul - ti - mo - so - spir, fin_ l'ul - ti - mo - so - spir,
ca - - - - - ro_ no - me, tuo sa - rà,_ ca - - - -
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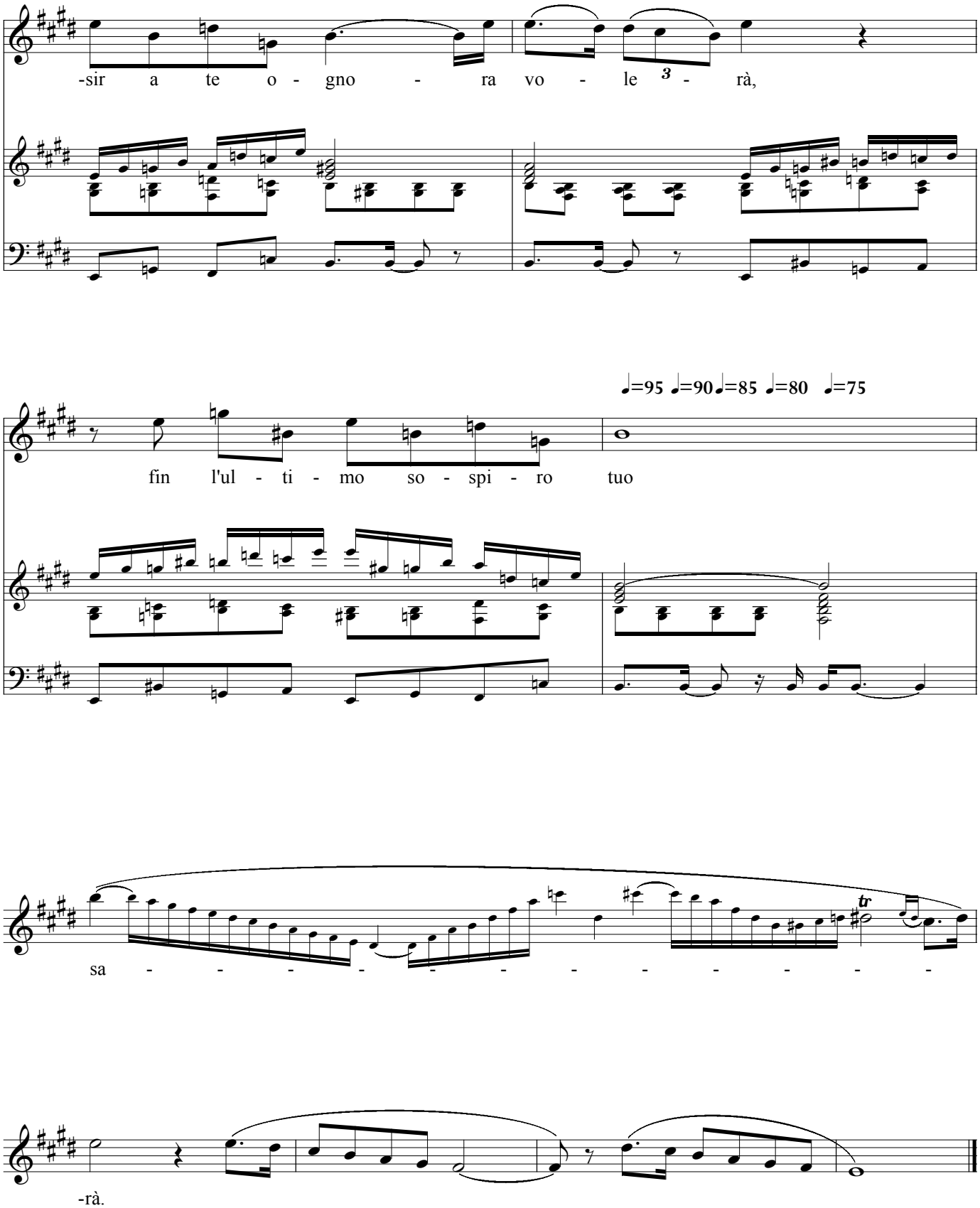
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