Anders Vinjar

"plus/minus"

for 3 percussionists and tape

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1 Instruments

The percussionists play partly on usual percussion-instruments and partly on other sounding objects.

In particular, in sections **A**, **C** and **E**, the players are challenged to expand the range of suitable sounds *in addition to* normal drums, playing or shaking instrument-stands, boxes with mallets, floors, walls and other suitable objects. Chosen sounds should preferably have rather short decays except otherwise notated. Objects with long decays may be muted when hit.

The players are free to choose suitable sticks and mallets unless explicit indications are given in the score.

Player 1

- Snare Drum
- Sizzle Cymbal (alt. Ride-cymbal with chain hung over cup)
- Crash Cymbal
- small Metal Chimes
- 2 Toms of varying size
- 1 large Floor-Tom

Player 2

- 2 Sizzle-Cymbals (alt. Ccymbals with chain hung over cup)
- Maracas
- Kabasa
- Belltree
- tenor/bass Wooden Chimes
- Tambourine
- 6 Membranophones (Toms, Bongos) — low to high

Player 3

- Gran Cassa
- large Floor-Tom
- 1 Crash Cymbal
- 1 China Cymbal
- 2 other Cymbals
- Tambourine
- Maracas

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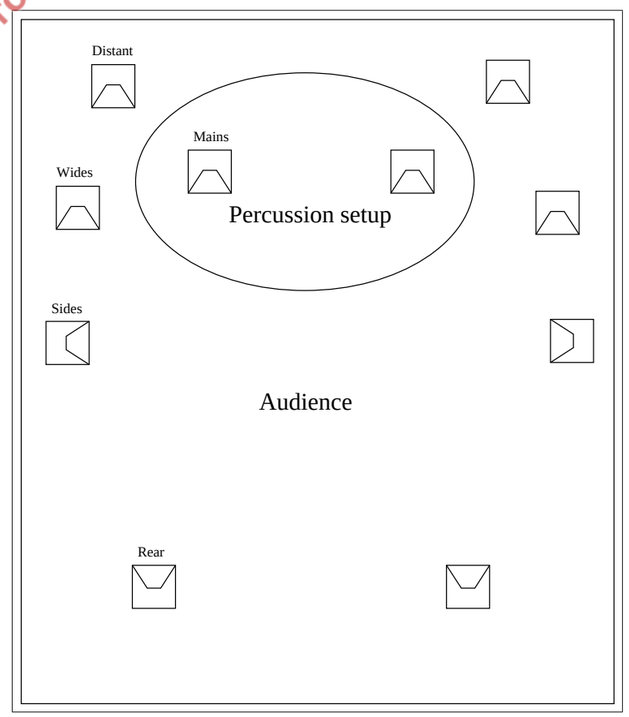
2 Loudspeakers

Percussion-instruments should be amplified to achieve an acoustic expansion around the performers, and to secure the necessary balance between the tape-part and the live-performers.

The stereo tape-part should be performed by a diffusionist trained in performing electroacoustic music with a loudspeaker-orchestra. The tape-part should be played on a loudspeaker-orchestra consisting of high-quality speakers with a flat response, preferably large studio-monitors. A sub-bass speaker is probably needed to get sufficient bass-response. Special care should be taken to achieve a well-tuned response throughout the frequency-range according to the hall where the concert is taking place.

Suggested placement of speakers is **main-front, distant-front, wides, sides** and **rear** in symmetrical pairs. The diffusionist and mixer should be placed amongst the audience, as close to the center of the concert-hall as possible:

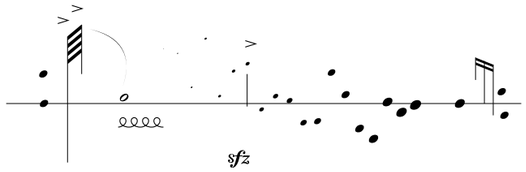


3 Further requirements

- Timer synchronized to the CD or DAT player playing the tape-part. Timer-devices must be visible to all players at all times.

4 The score

In sections **A**, **C** and **E**, notation is *proportional and iconic* — with a fixed duration for each line, with icons suggesting register, dynamics and playing modes, ie:



Time is indicated with **minutes:seconds** above the system.

Cues are marked by circled notes, arrows and dashed lines.

In the measured sections — **B**, **D** and **F** the notation is symbolic. *Meter* and *tempo* are indicated in a traditional way, and *time* is indicated with **minutes:seconds** in parentheses above the system.

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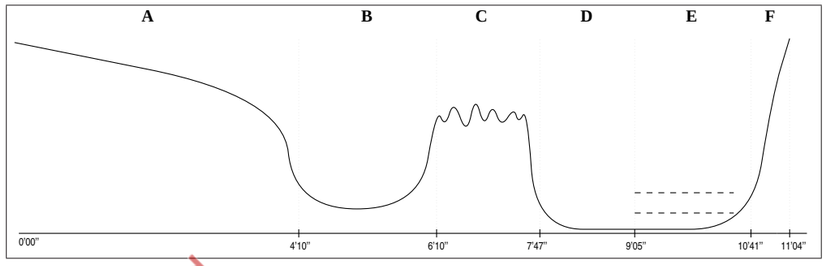
5 The sections

A	–	*"High"*	–	unmeasured	–	0′00″	⟶	4′10″
B	–	*"Low"*	–	measured	–	4′10″	⟶	6′10″
C	–	*"Motion"*	–	unmeasured	–	6′10″	⟶	7′47″
D	–	*"Stasis"*	–	measured	–	7′47″	⟶	9′05″
E	–	*"Tautology"*	–	unmeasured	–	9′05″	⟶	10′41″
F	–	*"Totale"*	–	measured	–	10′41″	⟶	11′04″



The composition generates and moves between various levels of entropy according to the curve shown.

Entropy is a measure of the degree of uncertainty in a system. The greatest antidote to entropy is perhaps *redundancy* — the repetition of elements within a message to insure communication of information. *Negative entropy* may occur in instances in which incomplete or blurred messages are received intact because of the ability of the receiver to fill in missing details and to recognize, despite distortion or a paucity of information, both the intent and content of the communication.

One possible *stage appearance* of each section is suggested below with the indications starting with *"The setting…"*

5.1 Section *A* — *"High"*

Time: 0′00″ ⟶ 4′10″

Play free-bag with a virtuoso touch, hinting at the underlying structure never allowed to surface. Give a clear focus to each sound.

Use non-musical and musical objects — in particular instrument-stands, boxes with mallets, resonating parts of the stage, fast-decaying objects such as rims of drums, muted cymbals etc.

Play swirls by scraping with Tambourines, Maracas and similar objects on resonating surfaces.

The points in the score connected with dotted lines and arrows should be carefully synchronized between all players. The section gets tighter and denser towards 4′10″, where the players should take care to be in exact sync.

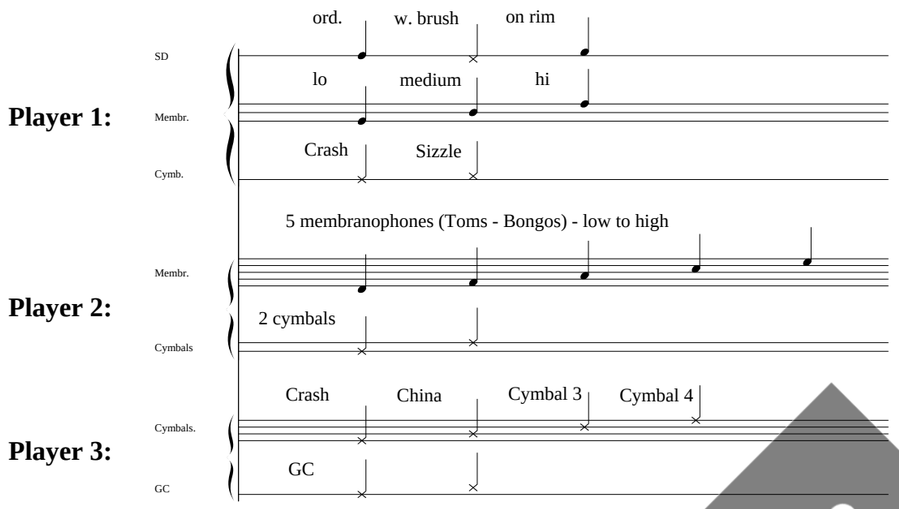
The setting is one of *disorder*. Before **time=0** in the score, the players may move around on stage or

in the hall, occasionally hitting objects lying around on the stage, dropping mallets on the floor, throwing them around etc., gradually approaching a terser playing-style towards **time=0** where the tape starts running.

5.2 Section *B* — *"Low"*

Time: 4′10″ ⟶ 6′10″

Per player notation:



The underlying pulse is clearly apprehensible

The setting here is *order*, with a slight feeling of uncertainty. The strictly opposite to the disorder in the previous section.

5.3 Section *C* — *"Motion"*

Time: 6′10″ ⟶ 7′47″

Play molto *pianissimo*. No sharp sounds.

Player 3: A **tambourine** should be laid on top of a tilted **GC**, so as to resonate when the **GC** is played. The **GC** should always be allowed to decay throughly.

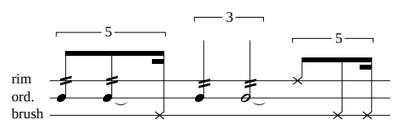
The setting is one of expressiveness. Use gestures and movements to underline the expressiveness of the music.

5.4 Section *D* — *"Stasis"*

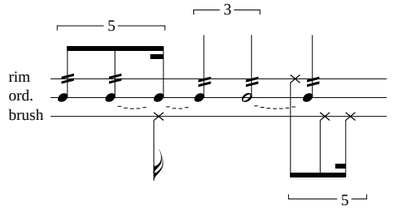
Time: 7′47″ ⟶ 9′05″

Player 1: Use 3 sticks — one hand holding a wood-stick and a wire-brush, the other holding a wood-stick. Care should be taken to hold the rolls marked by the ring-token – "◡" – as long as is possible, overlapping the next note:

notation:



performance:



Rips are played with the wire-brush.

The setting is one of stasis. Players should freeze all movement except for whats needed to play the drums.

5.5 Section *E* — *"Tautology"*

Time: 9′05″ ⟶ 10′41″

The score doubles the tape-part, either as an anticipation or as a reminiscent. Deviation in time between tape-part and players should be in the range of 1.0 to 3.0 seconds. Players should strive to get their sounds close to the sounds on tape.

The setting is one of apprehension, transparency. The focus moves from player to player according to the phrasings on tape and in the score.

5.6 Section *F* — *"Totale"*

Time: 10′41″ ⟶ 11′04″

The section is played exactly as notated. Care should be taken to reach the last, tacit attack exactly when the tape ends.

The setting is a movement towards *maximum entropy*, expressed by the final, tacit attack, only perceivable in the minds of the audience. At the top of the upward motion of arms before what would be a normal strike on the drums, the players let go of their mallets, making them fly up in the air instead of striking the drums on the final attack.

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The **duration** of **‘‘+/-’’** is 11’04”

‘‘+/-’’ was commissioned by **SISU Percussion Ensemble** with fundings from the **Norwegian Council for Cultural Affairs** and **Fondet for skapende tonekunst**

Oslo, October 1999

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Revised instructions pr. feb. 2007

Based on experiences with groups rehearsing and playing ``+/−'' there are a couple of comments and revisions to be made to the original instructions. Please include the following additions to the original instructions.

1 Instruments

When setting up instruments, work with the tape-part and assemble rigs of instruments/sounds which merges well with the sounds on tape. Pay special attention to section 5: *"Tautology"*, where musicians and tape-part should resemble each other very closely.

In section 5 *"Tautology"*, you can safely ignore the instruments specified at various places in the score, just follow the general instruction about trying to resemble the sound and gestures on tape.

2 Loudspeakers

Percussion-instruments should be amplified to achieve an acoustic expansion around the performers, and to mix well with the tape-part.

3 Further requirements

3.1 Click-track

Using a click-track as a metronome in the metered sections seem to be a preferred way to keep players and tape in sync. Click-track is available as a separate third channel together with the stereo-tape part.

When playing with click-track a multi-channel player (ie. computer) is needed, to play the stereo tape-part in sync with the click-track.

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4 The score

5 The sections

5.1 Section *A* — *"High"*

Players are requested to find instruments, sounding objects, playing modes which approaches the sound-world on the CD.

In general the dynamics should follow an expenential distribution, staying in the *pp*-end most of the time.

5.2 Section *B* — *"Low"*

5.3 Section *C* — *"Motion"*

Play *sempre pianissimo*.

Player 3: Choose a **GC** which gives a deep, sustaining bass-sound, played with a soft mallet.

5.4 Section *D* — *"Stasis"*

5.5 Section *E* — *"Tautology"*

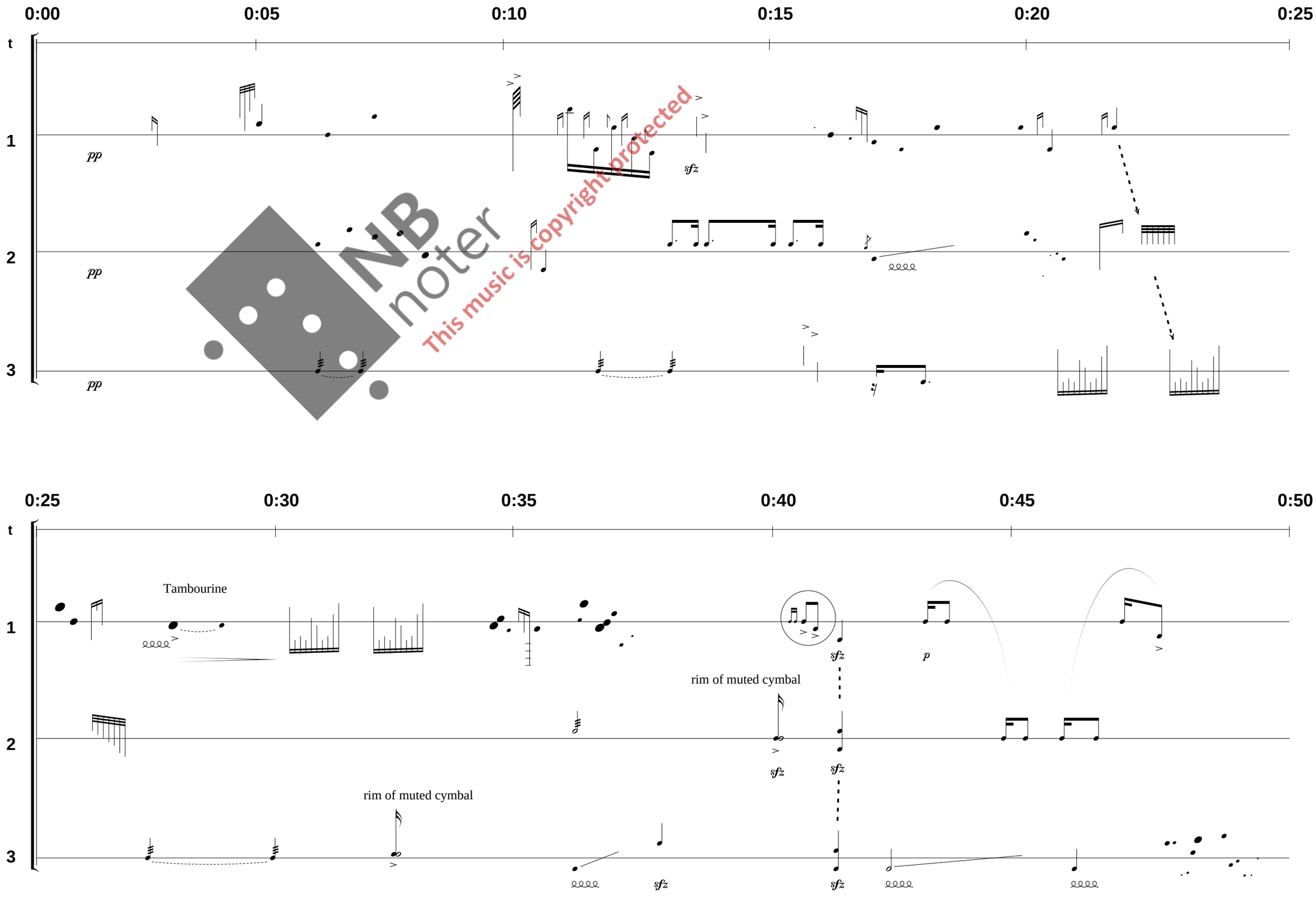
5.6 Section *F* — *"Totale"*

Oslo, February 2007

PLUS/MINUS

Anders Vinjar - 1999

‘‘High’’



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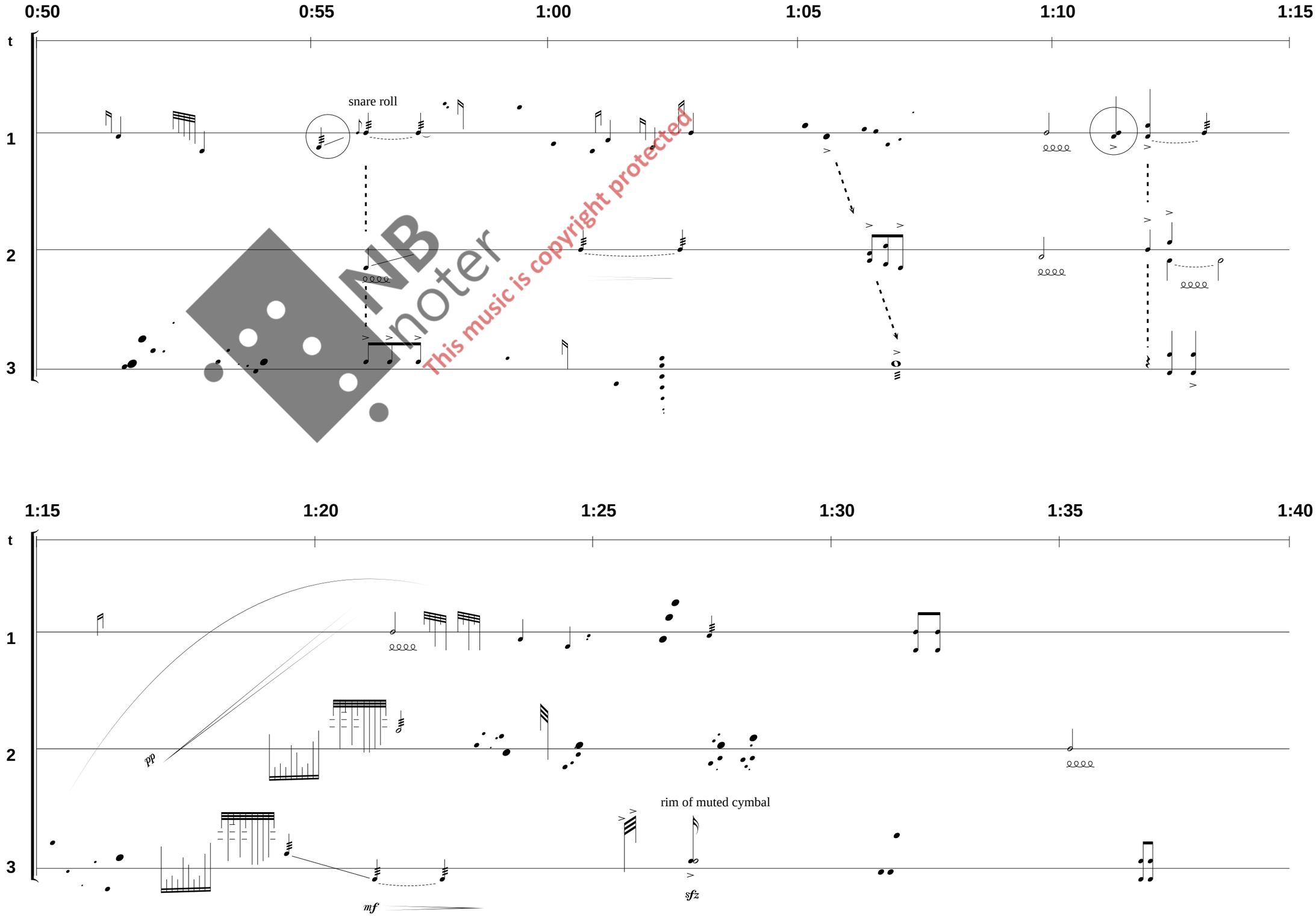

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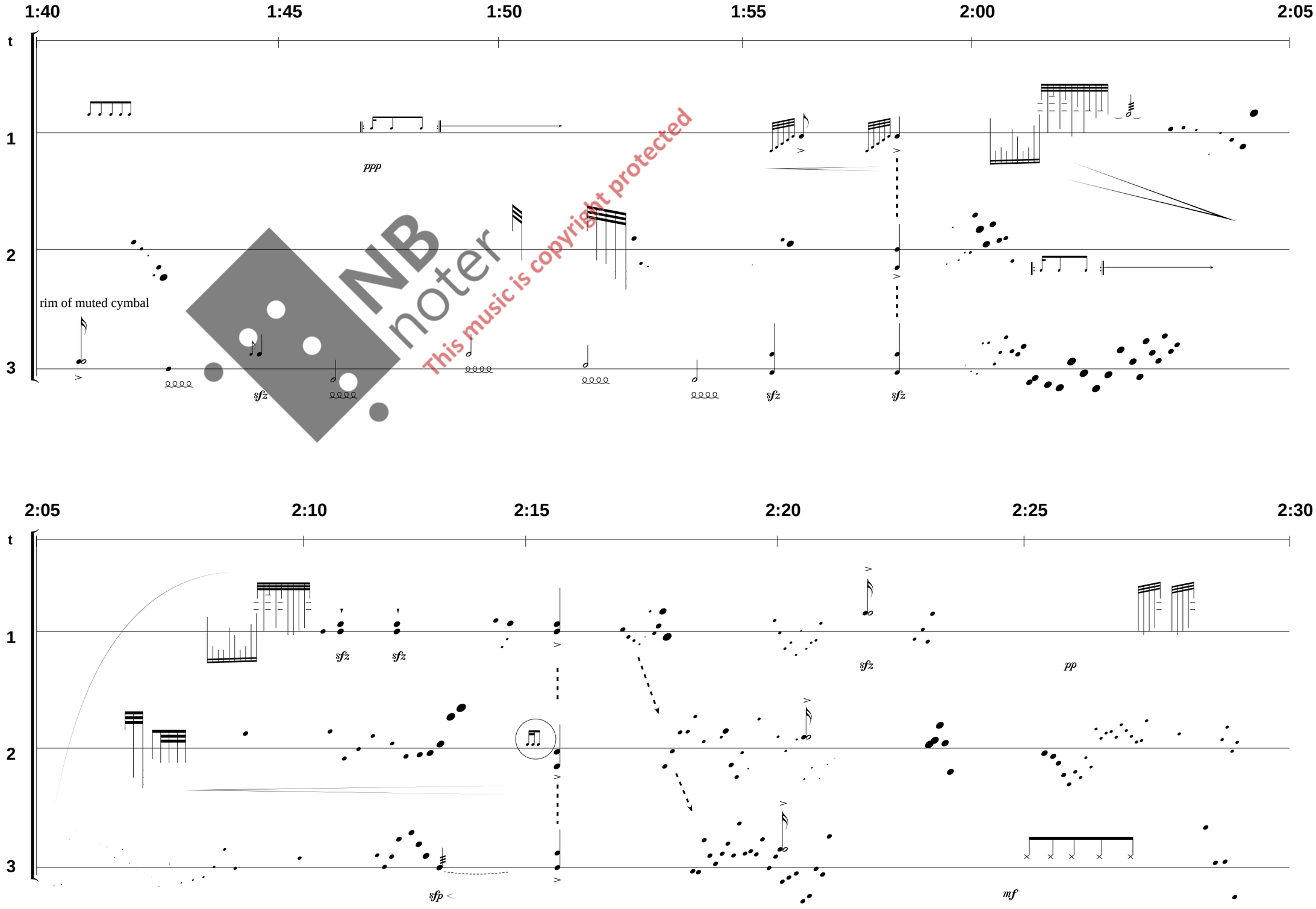

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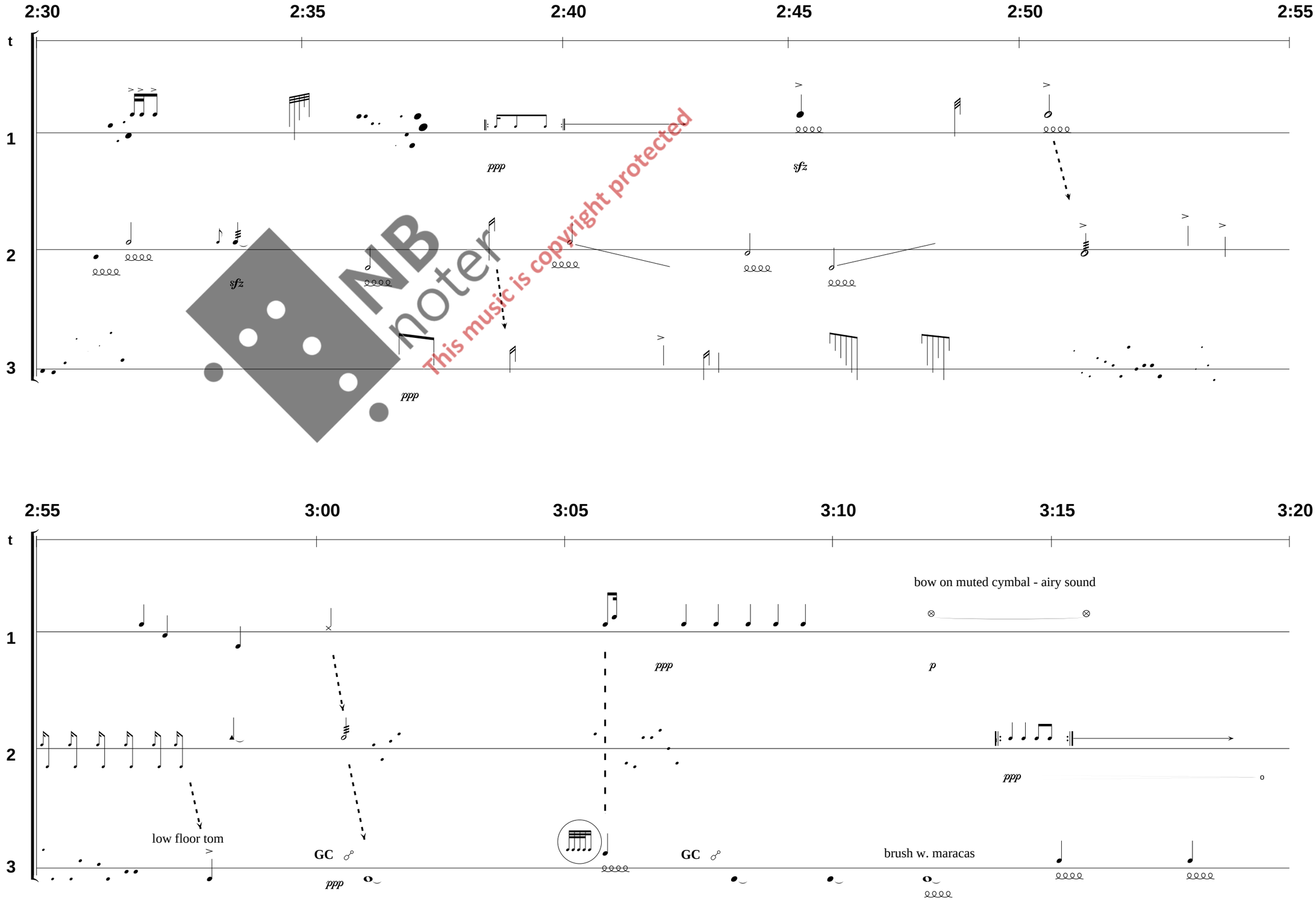
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bow on muted cymbal - airy sound
ppp
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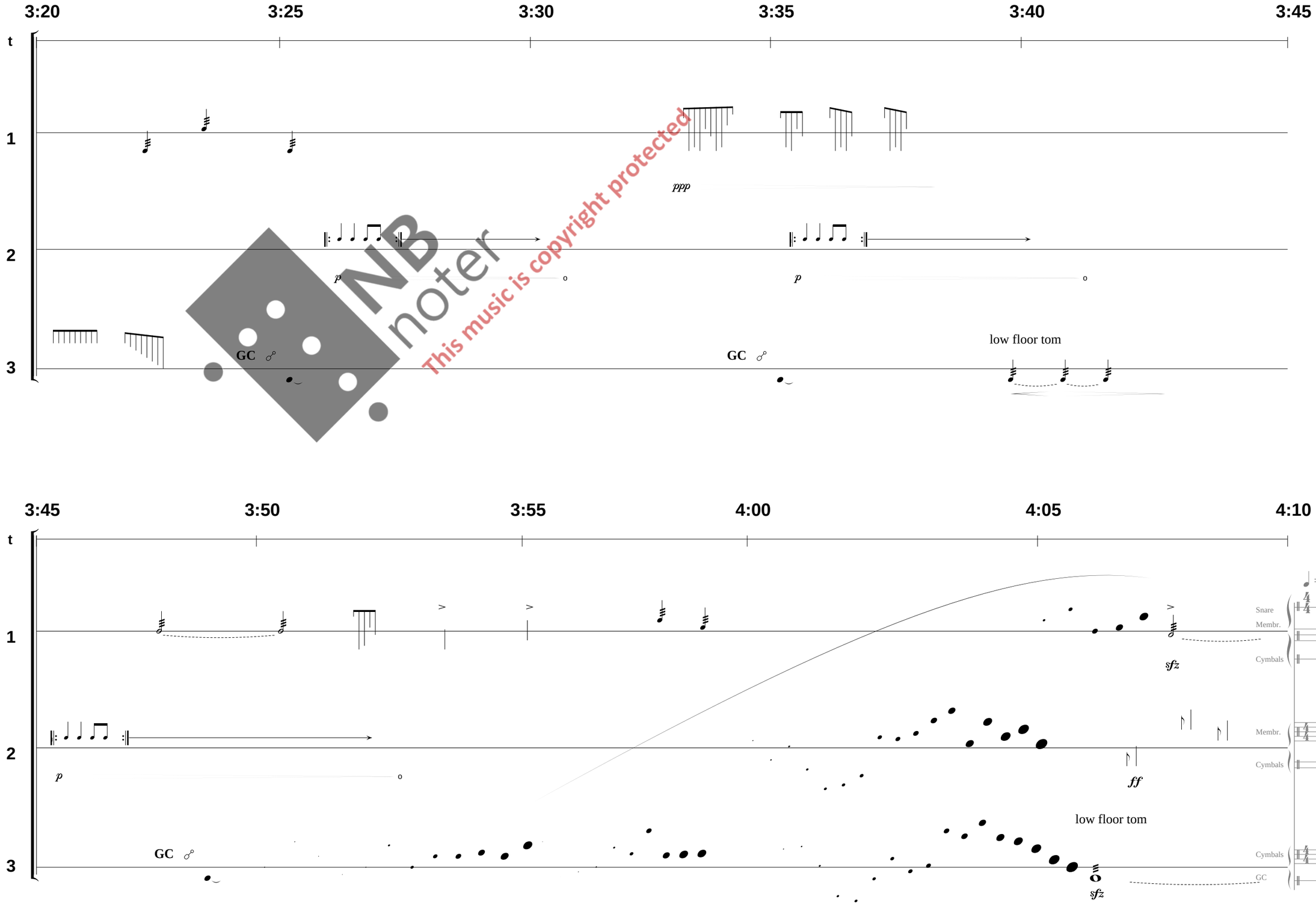
low floor tom
GC
ppp
GC
brush w. maracas



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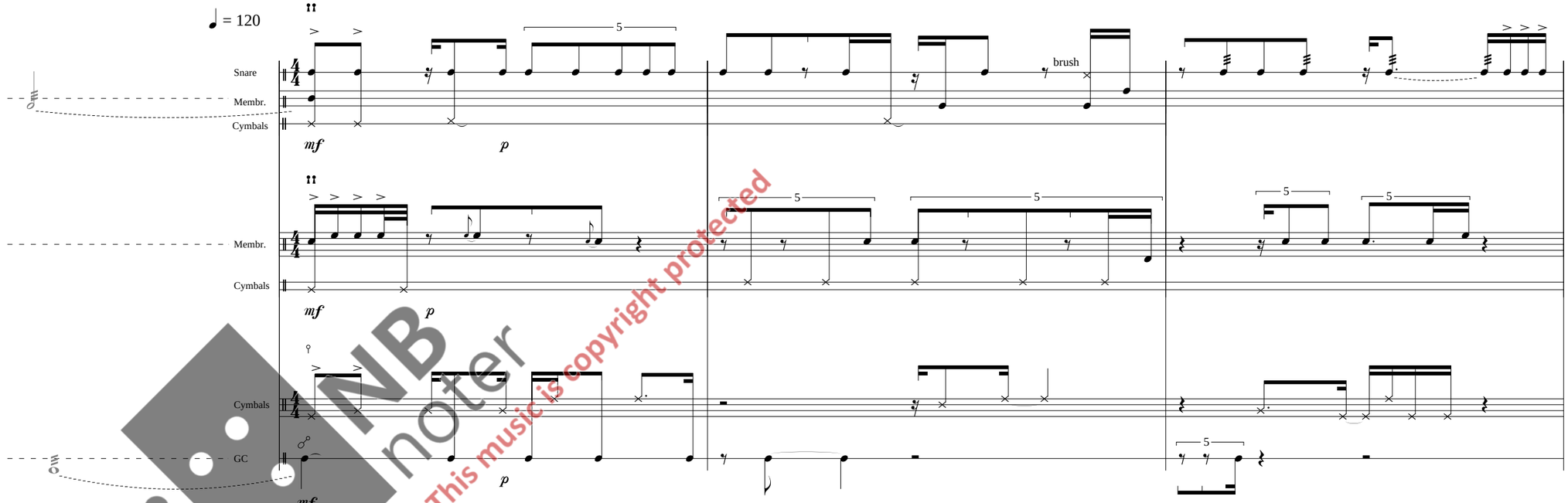
(4:10) *‘‘Tacit Low’’*



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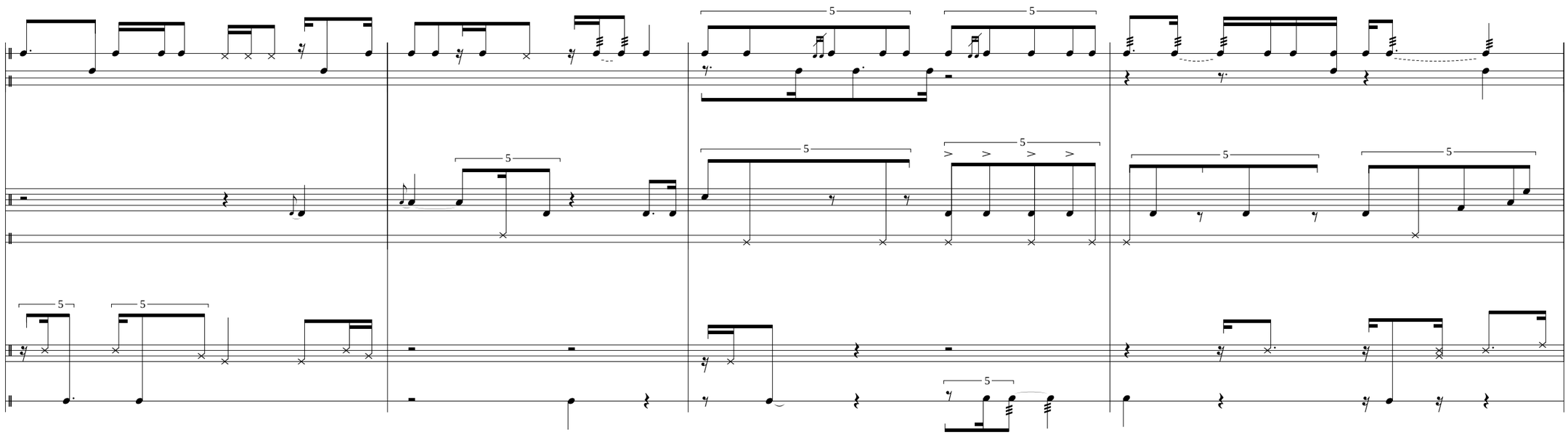

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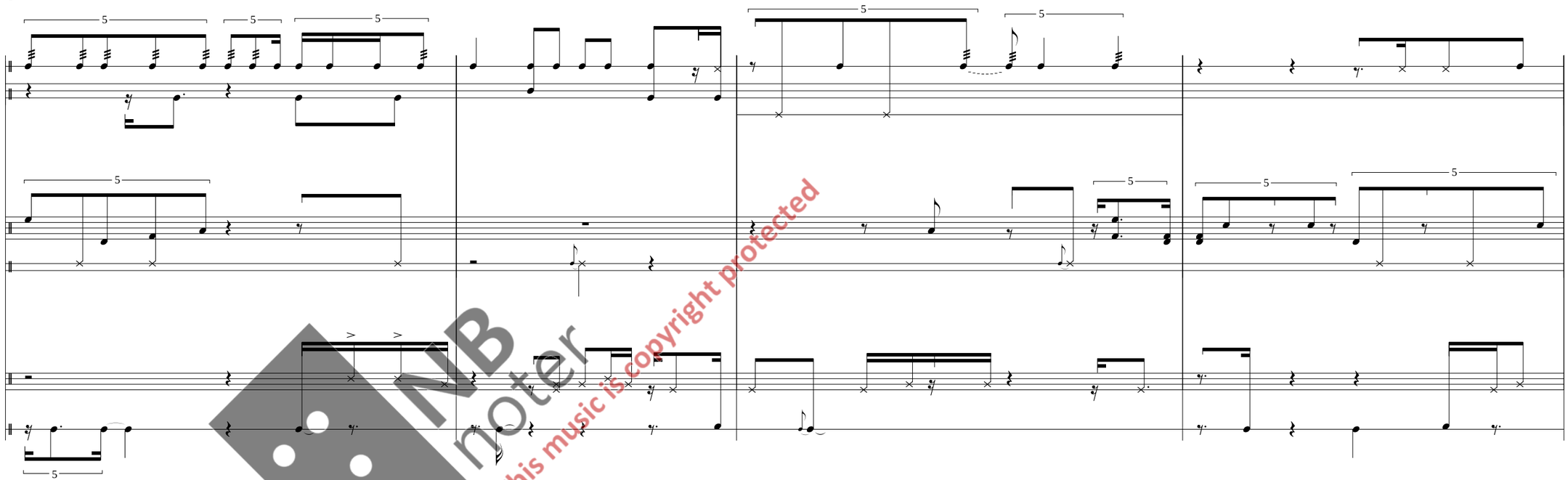

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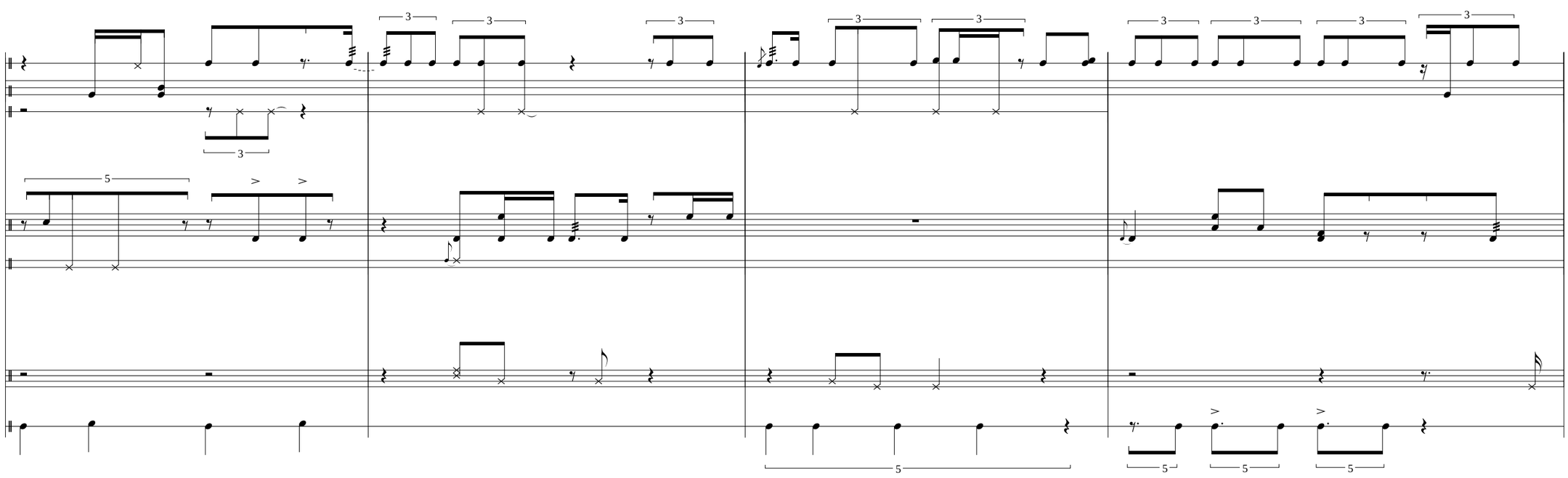

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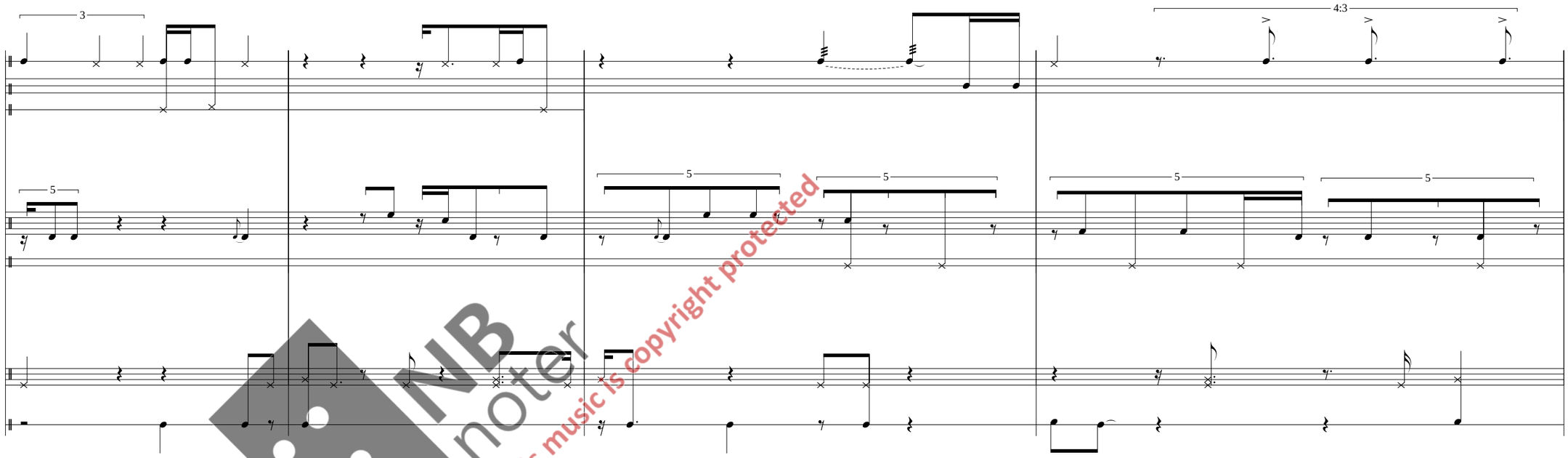

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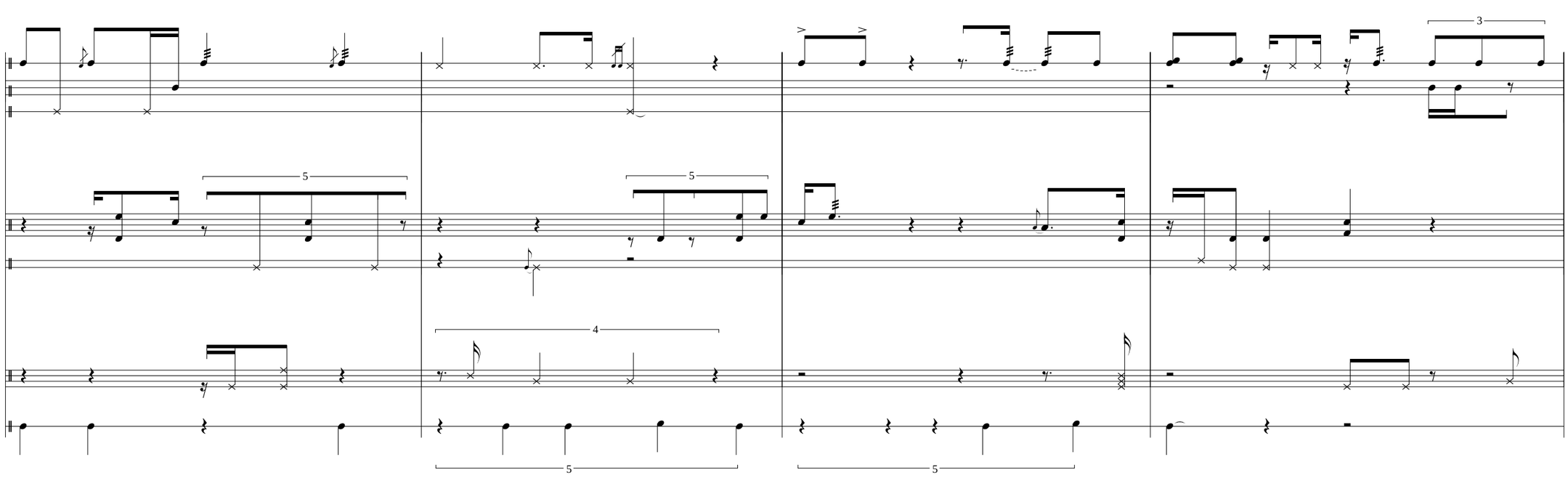

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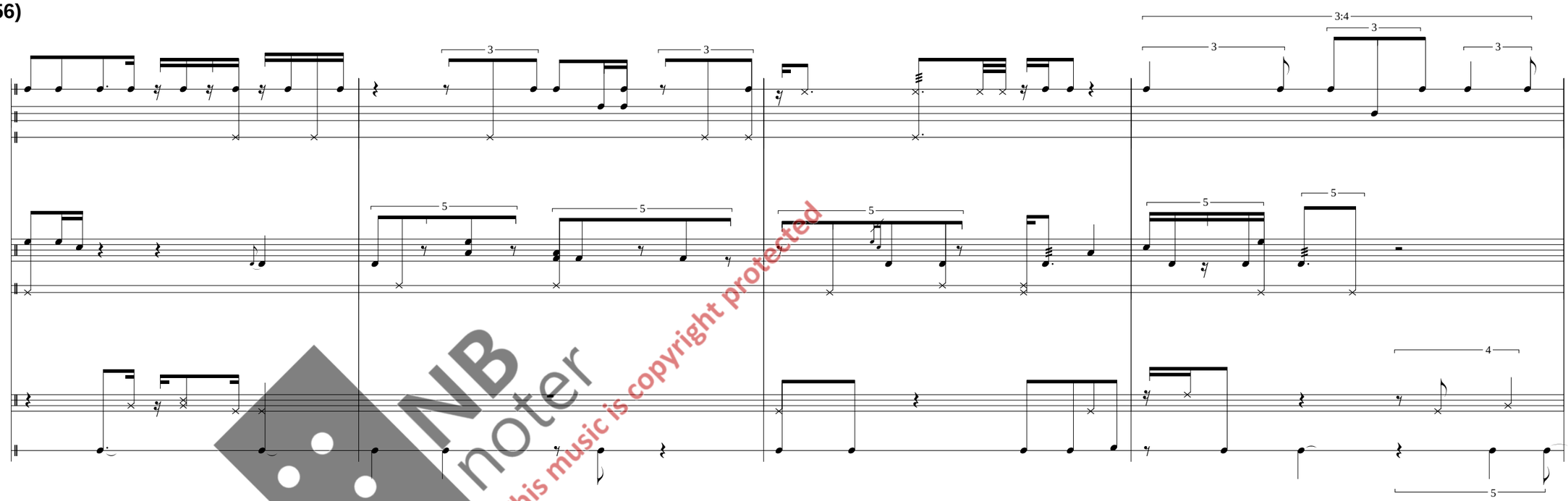

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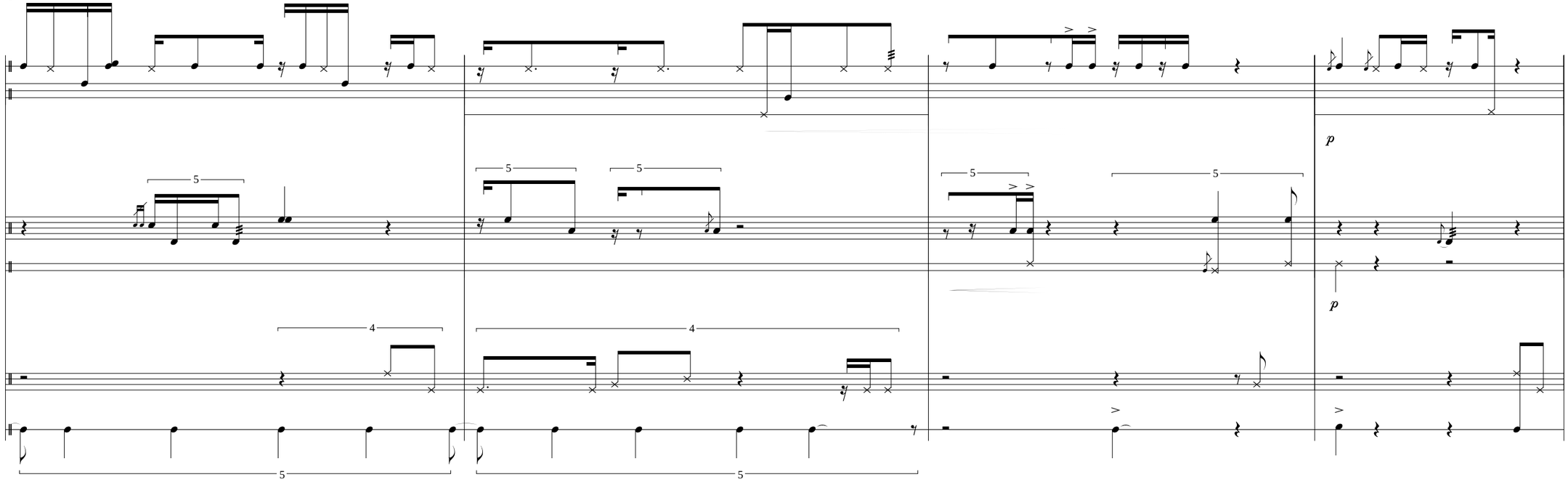

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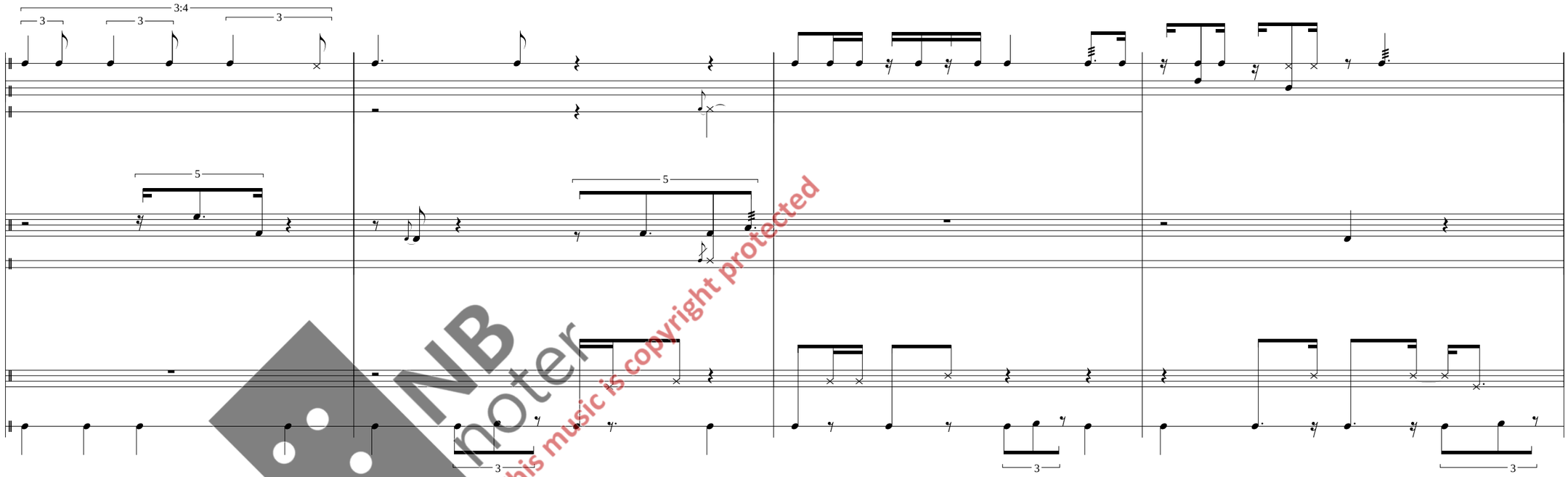

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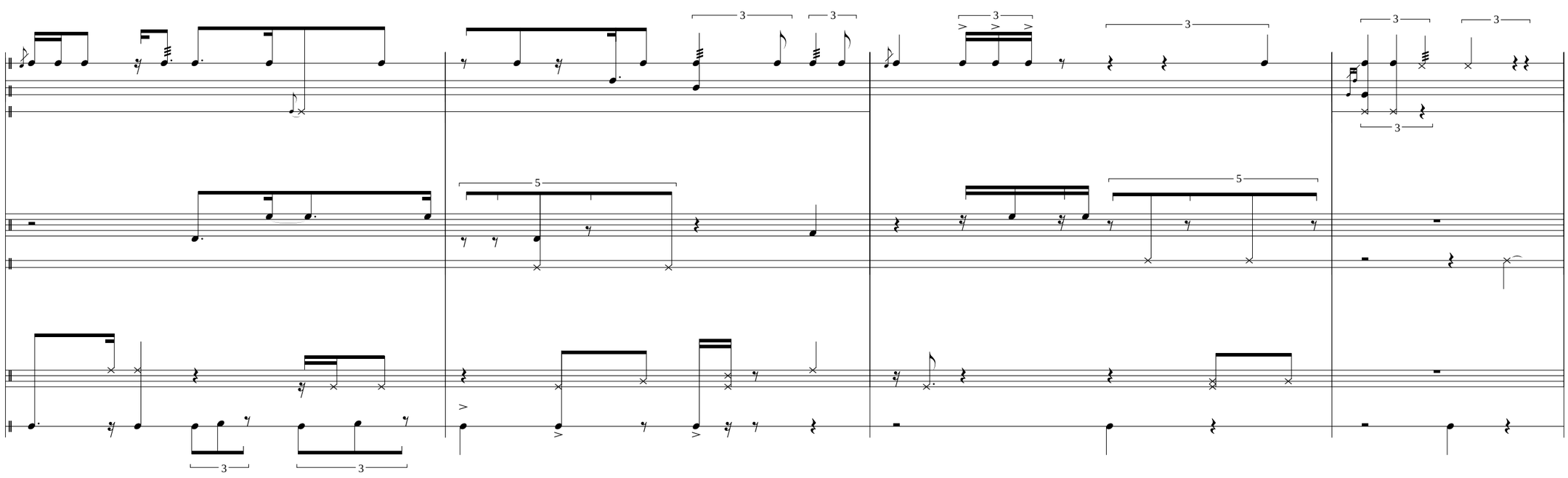

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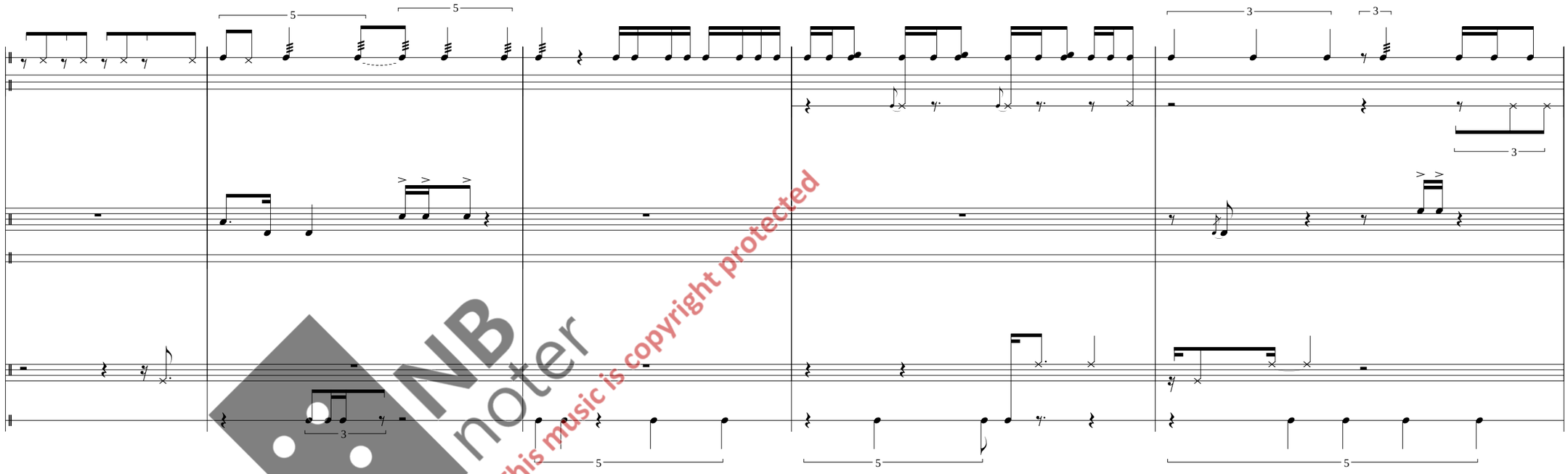

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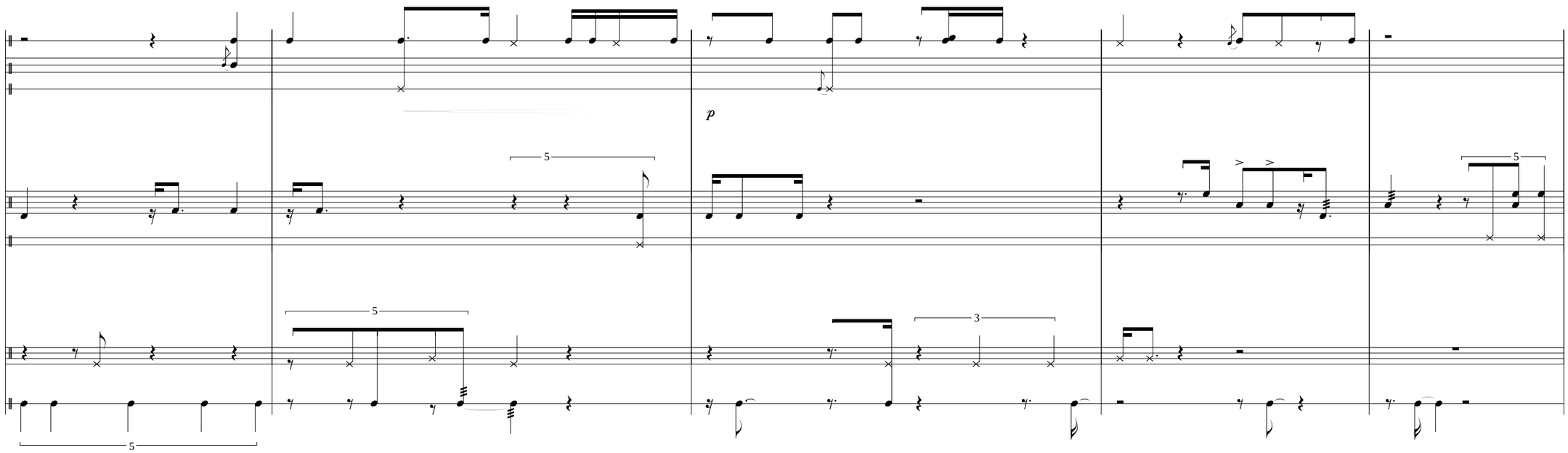

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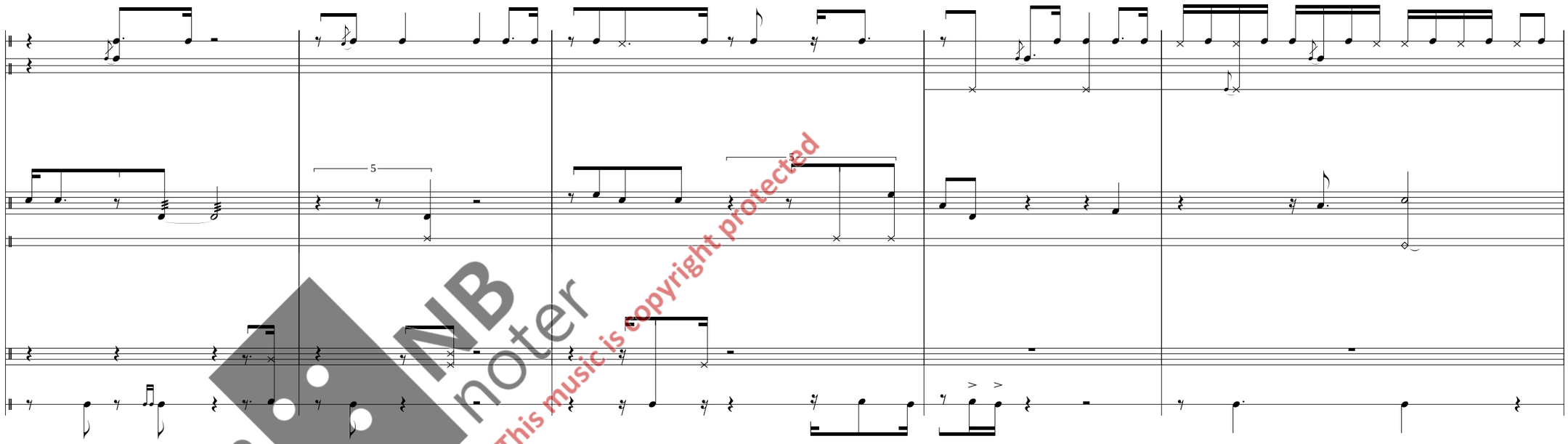

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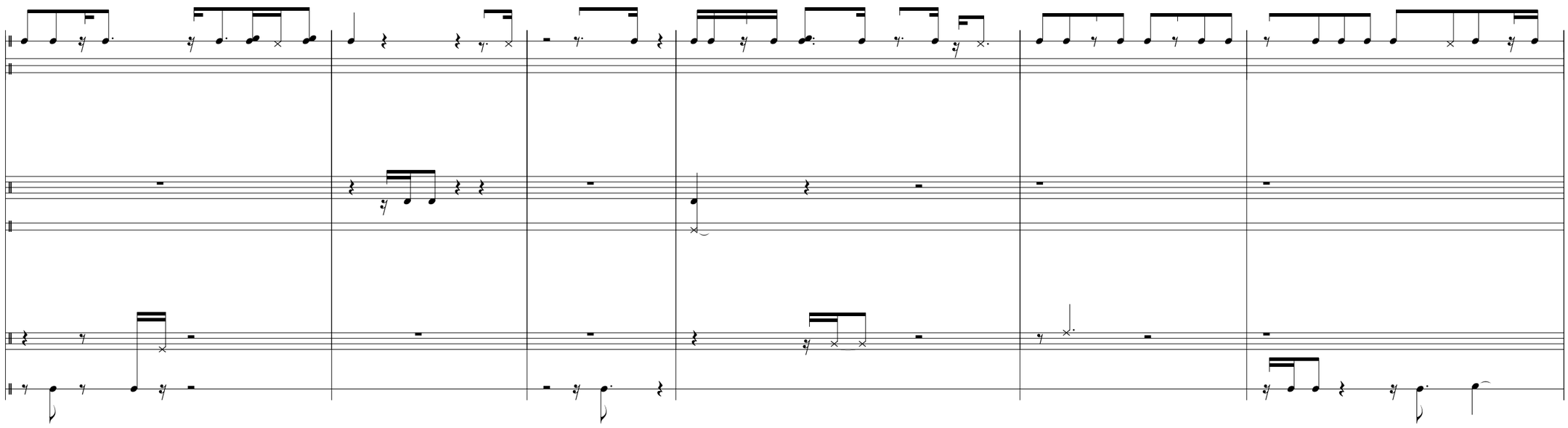
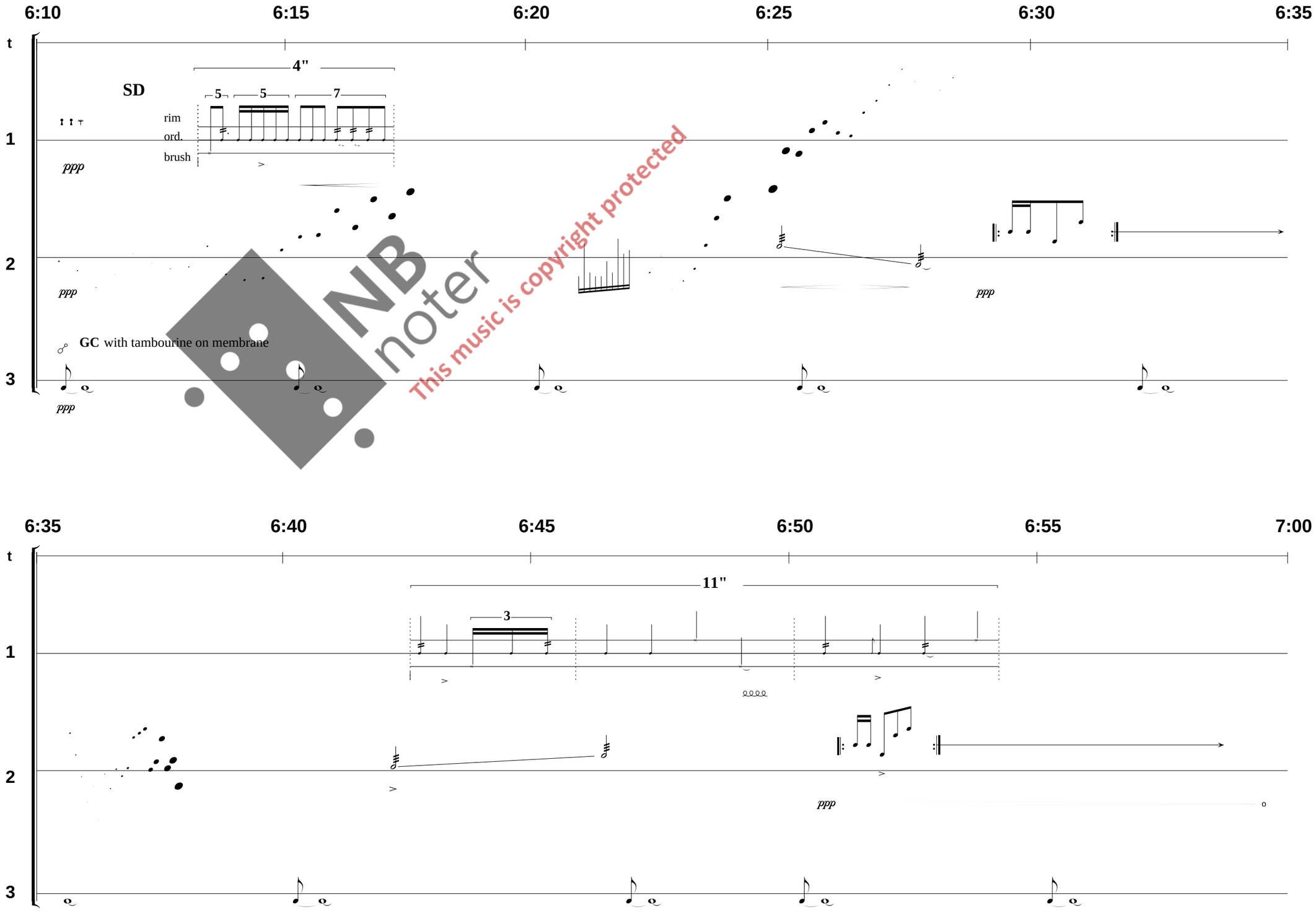


‘‘Motion’’



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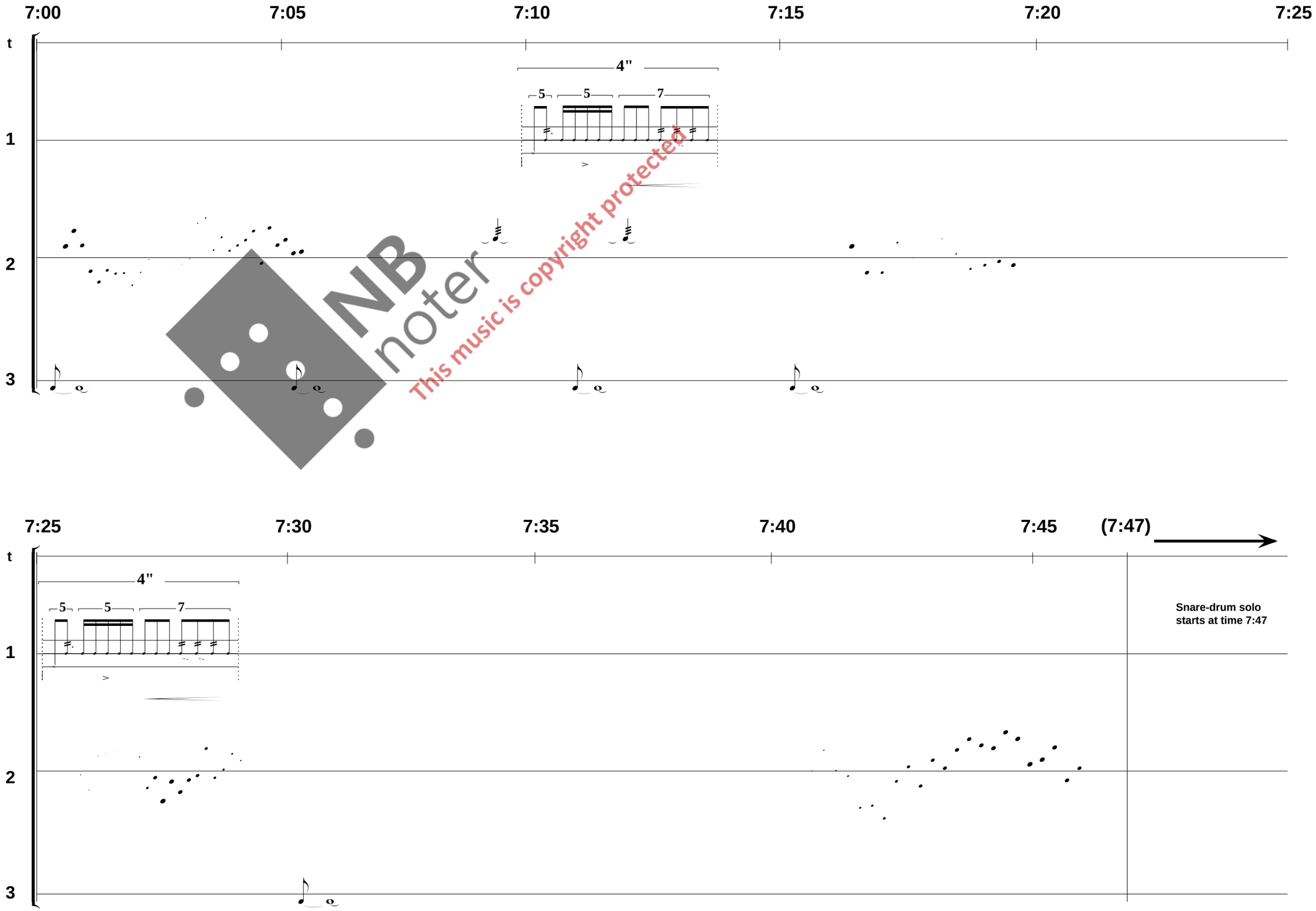

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‘‘Stasis’’

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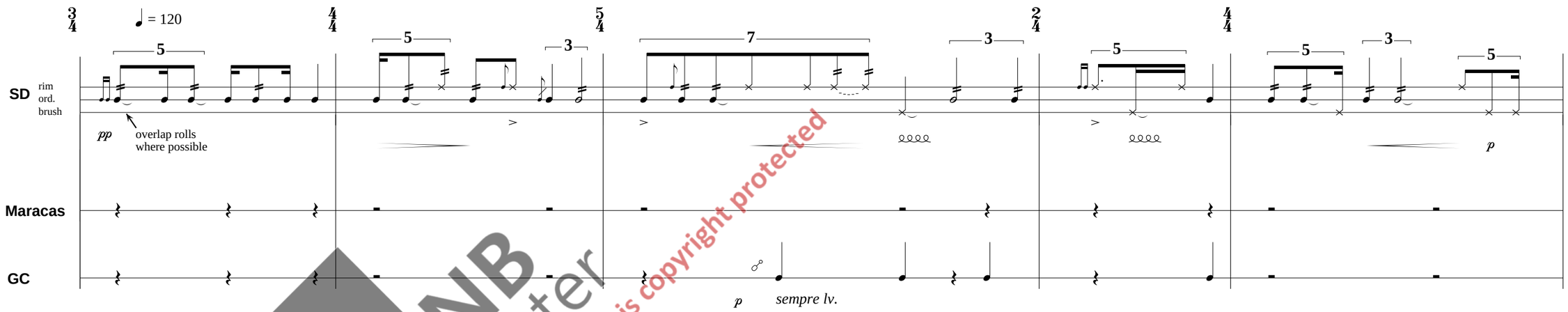

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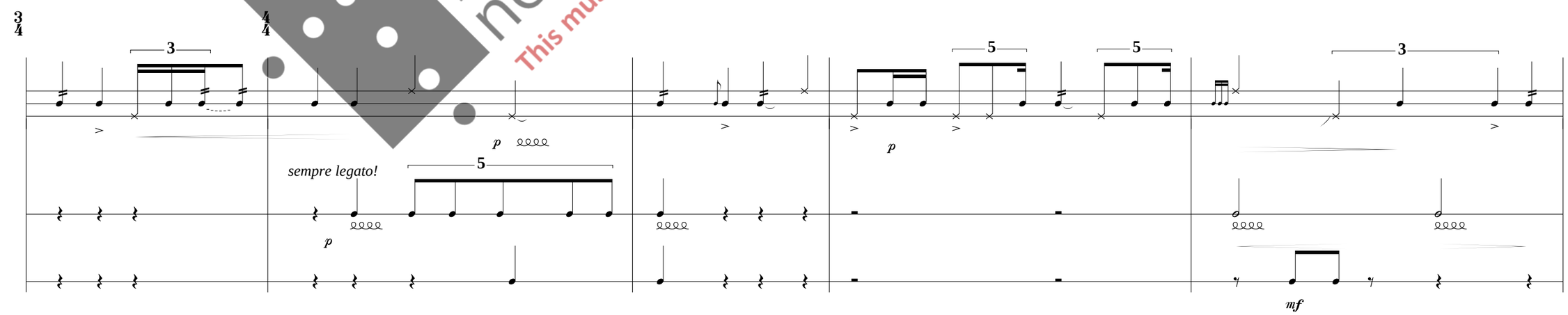

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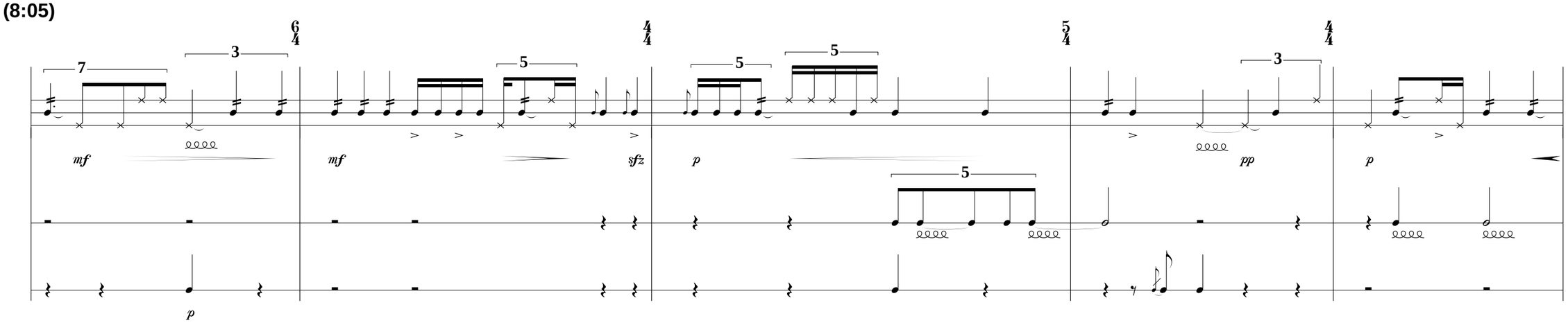

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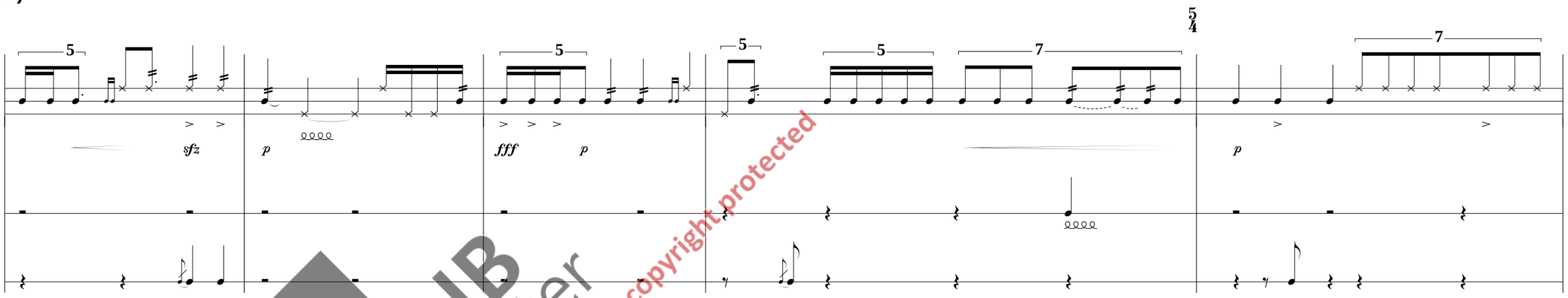

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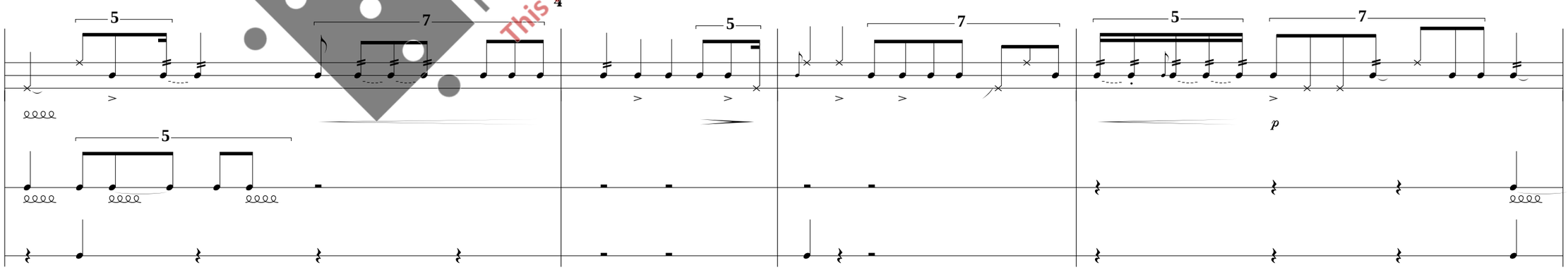

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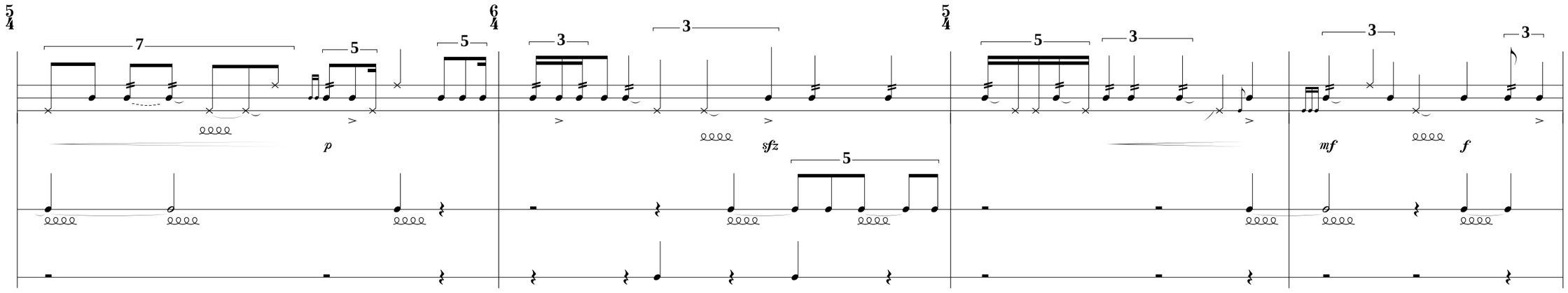

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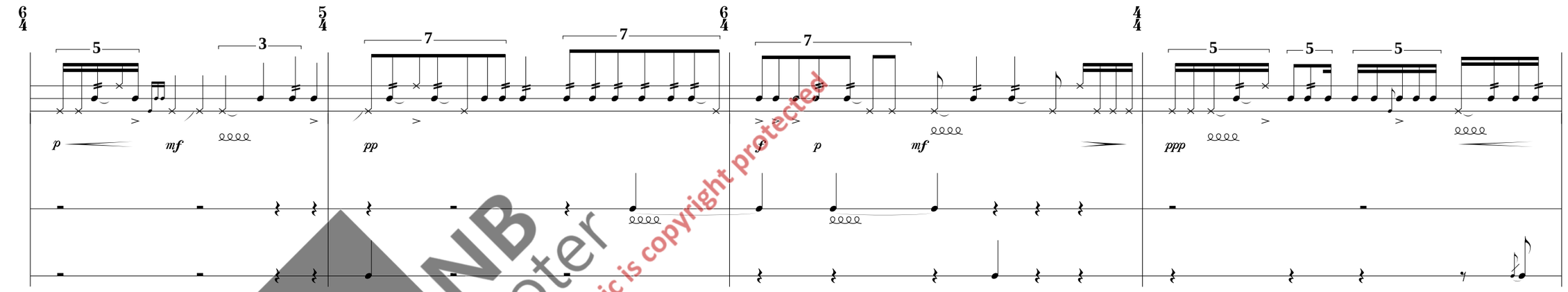

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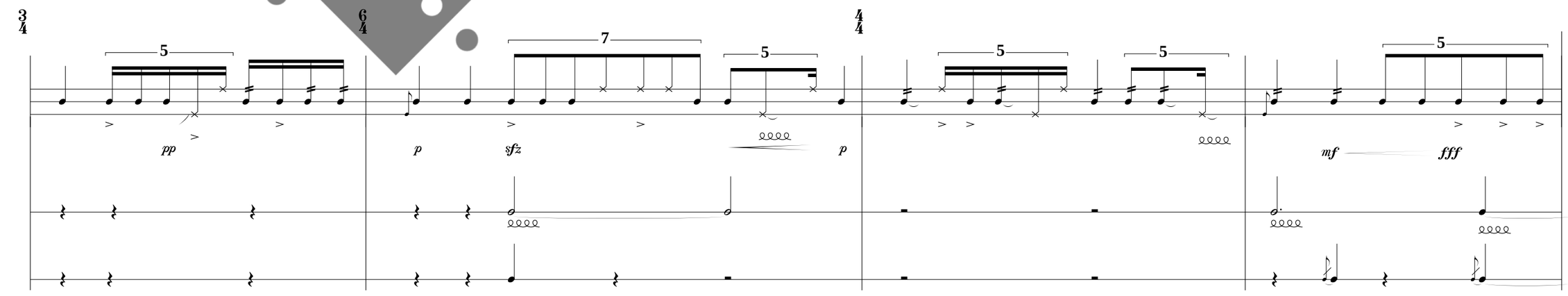
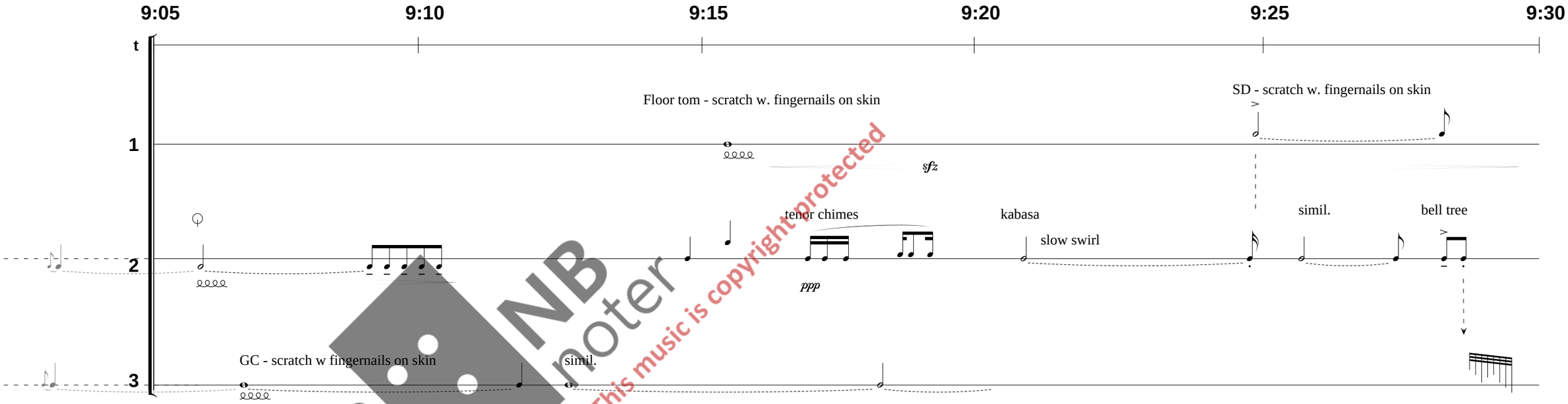


‘‘*Tautuology*’’



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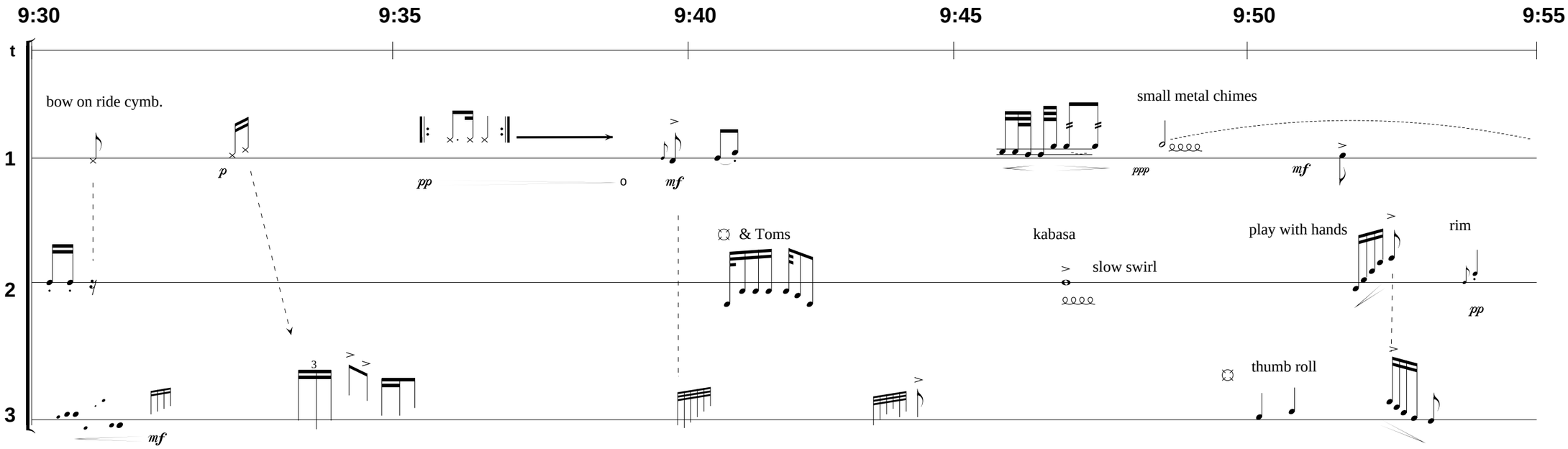

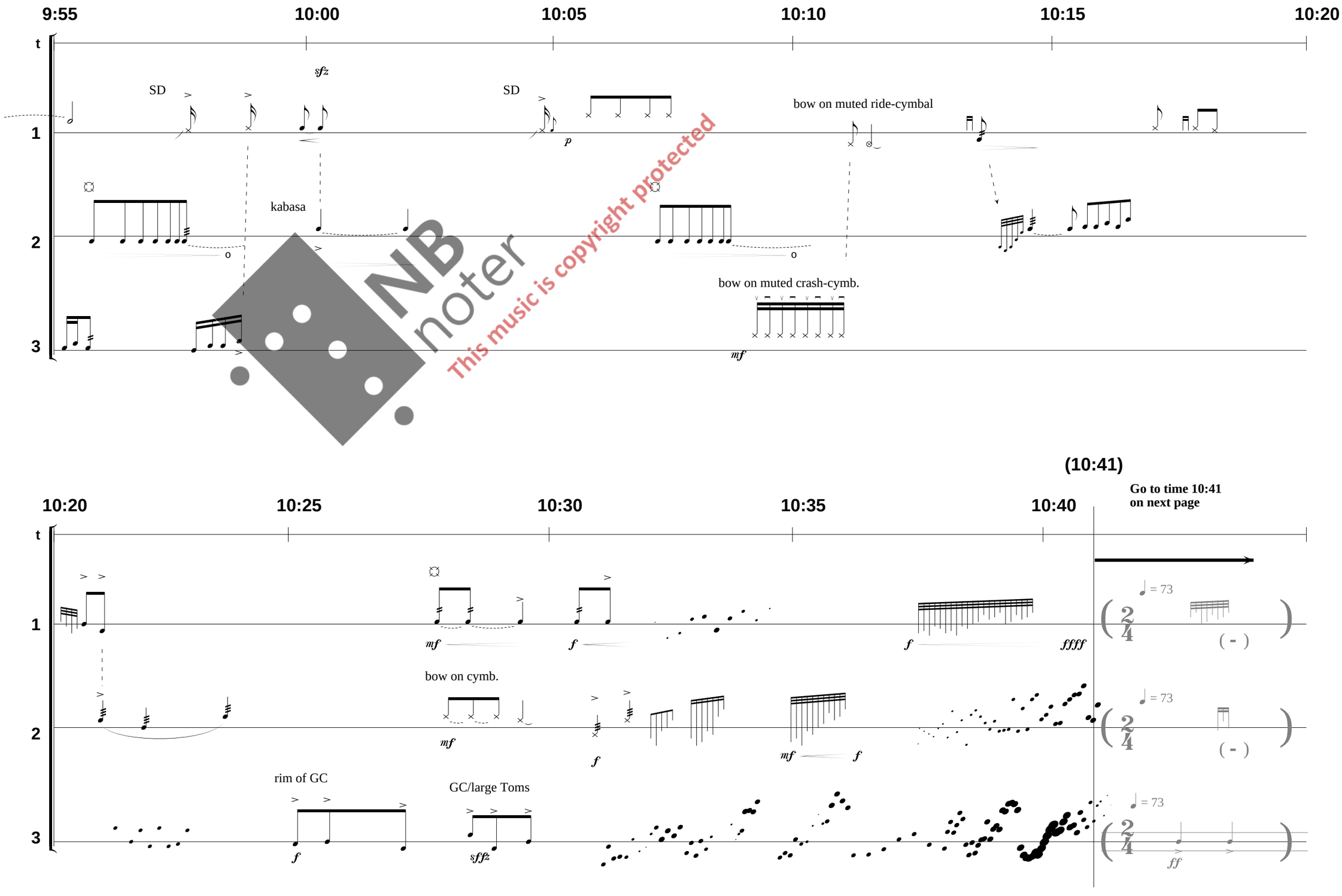

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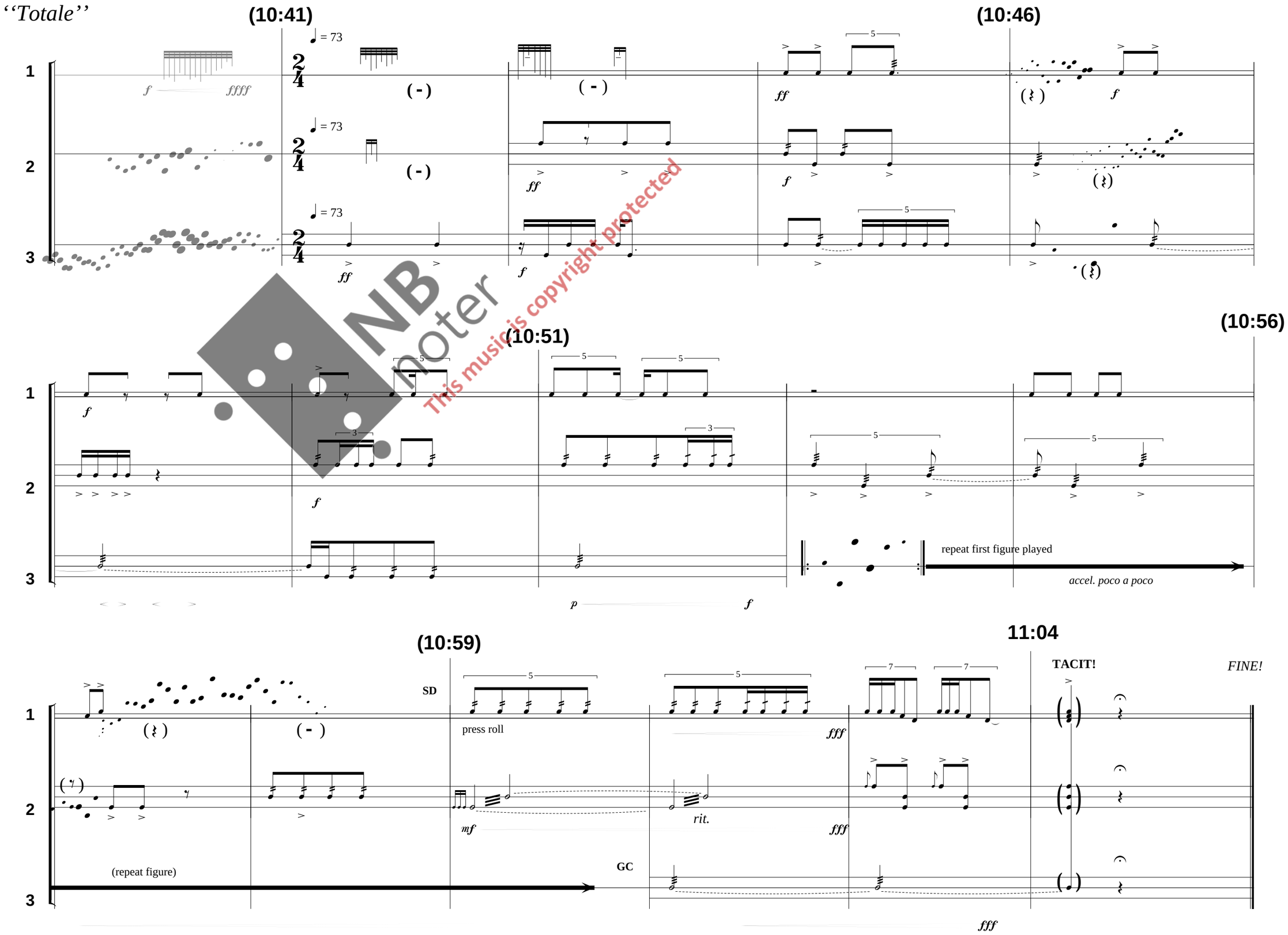

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Oslo - September 1999