ROBIN HAIGH

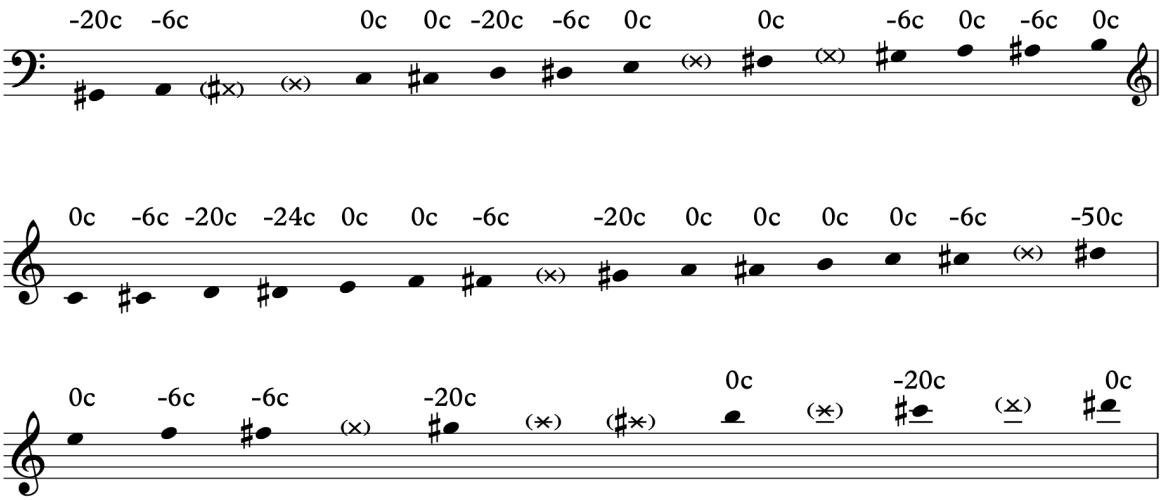
MORROW

for TouchKeys keyboard
2022

MORROW was commissioned by Zubin Kanga with the support of a UKRI Future Leaders Fellowship and Royal Holloway, University of London. It was premiered by Zubin Kanga on [date and venue details].

Patch

The following keys should be made to trigger samples of individual piano pitches. Several of the samples are to be permanently microtonally flattened as shown - some keys are not used (x noteheads) and may be left unassigned.



While held down, the sample should play on a continuous loop. The (vertical) TouchKeys sensors should be made to control two parameters - the duration of the loop, and the volume of the sample.

The higher the finger on the key, the faster the loop and the higher the dynamic. At the very bottom of each key, the loop should play back at around 0.5 notes per second, at a ***PP*** dynamic. At the very top, the loop should play at around 20 notes per second, at an ***FF*** dynamic.

By sliding the finger from the bottom to the top of a key, an accelerando/crescendo effect should occur, with the reverse action resulting in a ritardando/diminuendo effect.

Additionally, one other sample is required for the end of the piece, in which a pitch accelerates to such an extreme degree that the rhythm "becomes pitch". This should be prepared to match the timbre of the other keys exactly, but may be triggered in any way the performer wishes - an ideal way would be to assign it to the unused D natural in the treble clef.

Notation

Boxed numbers indicate the position of fingers on keys - 9 represents the very highest point, and 1 the very lowest point. Diminuendoing to 0 represents sliding the finger off of the bottom of the key.

This is understood to be an approximation, and the rhythms produced in this way are intended to be essentially aleatoric - for example, if several notes are marked “5”, it is not expected that they will sound in rhythmic unison. A dense, unpredictable polyrhythmic texture is expected and desired.

Which hands and fingers are to be used for specific notes is left to the discretion of the performer.

Composer’s note

Despite being entirely mechanical, the piano has a reputation as an instrument well suited to expressive, “human” performances. Keyboard players do not physically touch the sound-making part of the instrument, and therefore our understanding of their expressivity comes through their tiny variations in volume and rhythm.

In writing **MORROW**, I was given the chance to rethink this. I was asked to write for a new sort of piano, a keyboard upon which the performer’s minutest touch can directly influence the sound, via an array of TouchKeys sensors.

I chose to use this opportunity to have the fingers’ positions minutely control both volume and rhythm - those elements of pianism deemed so crucial for expressivity. A piano for the future, excessively enhanced and reconfigured, playing a sort of sad ballade.

Duration: ca. 6 minutes

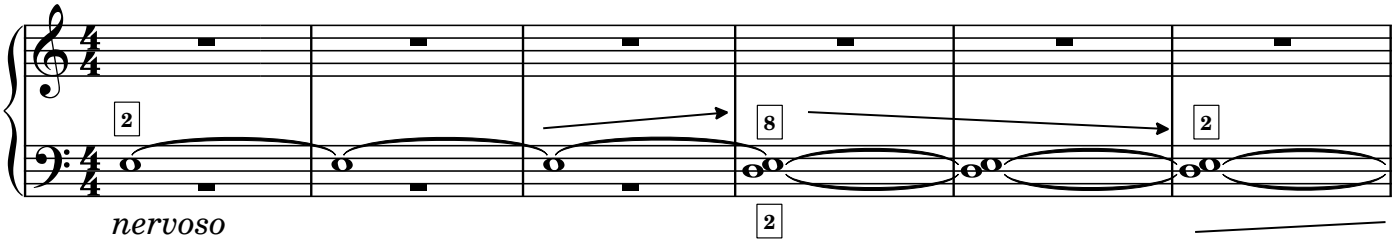
for Zubin Kanga

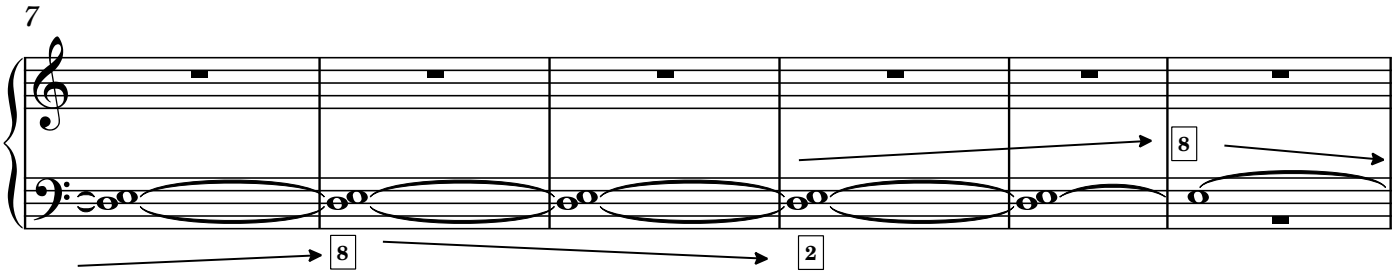
MORROW

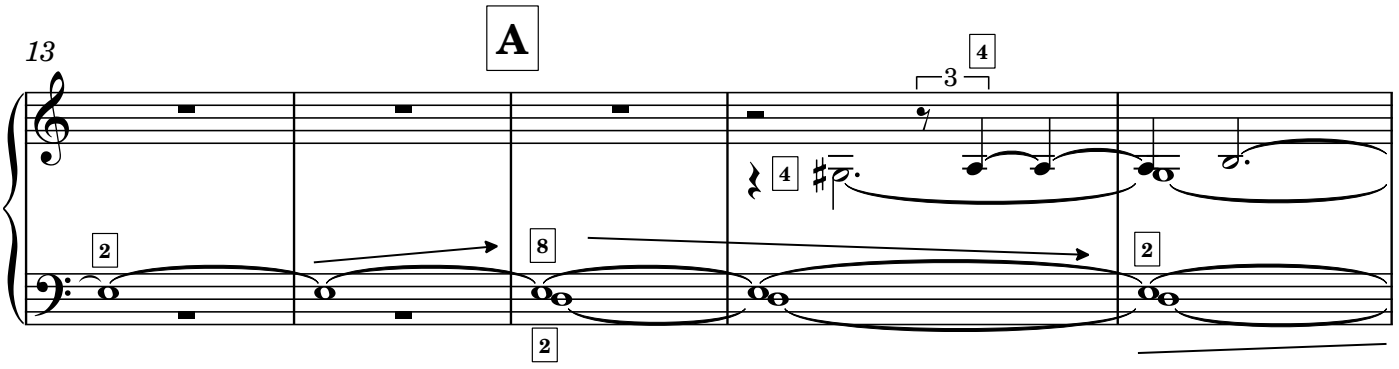
ROBIN HAIGH

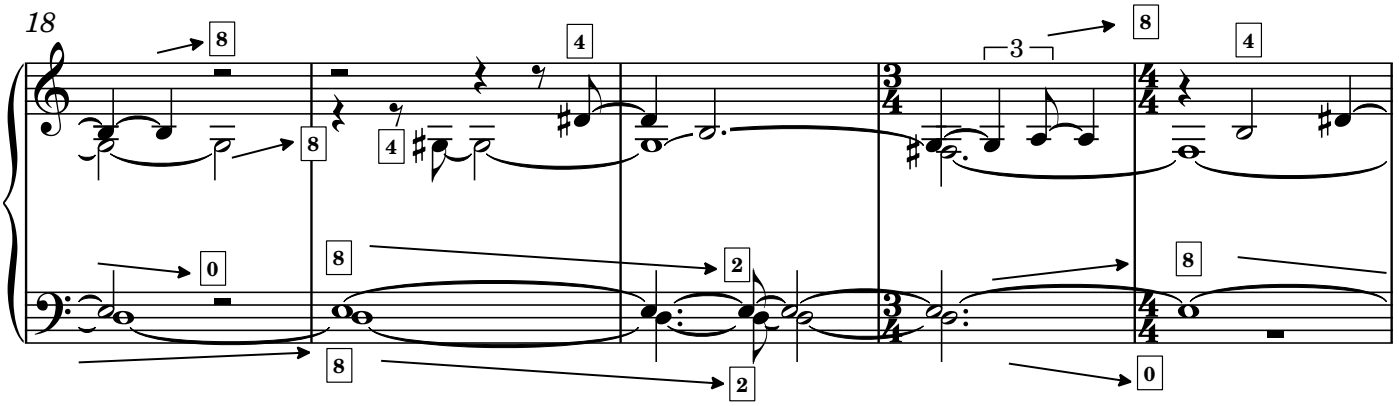
Andante ♩ = 80

Very expressive, not too slow









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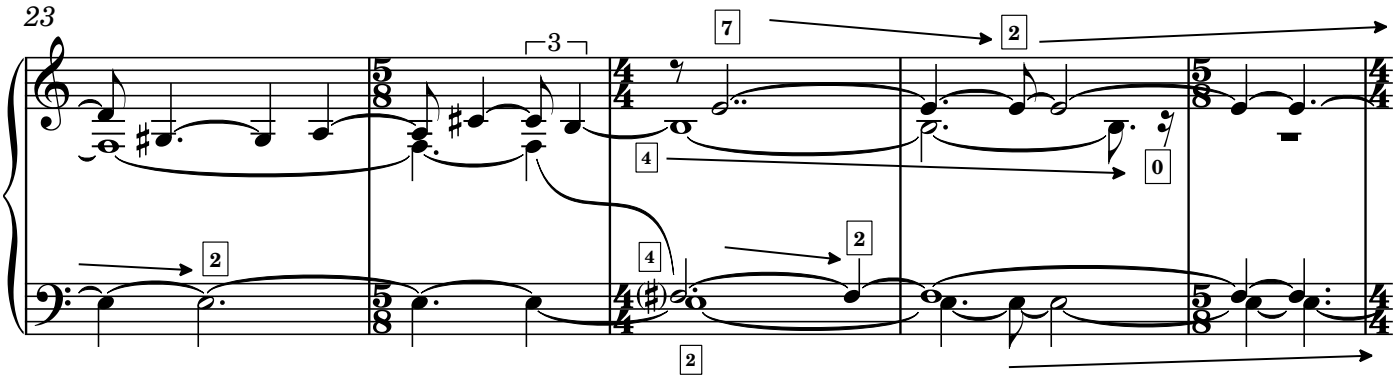
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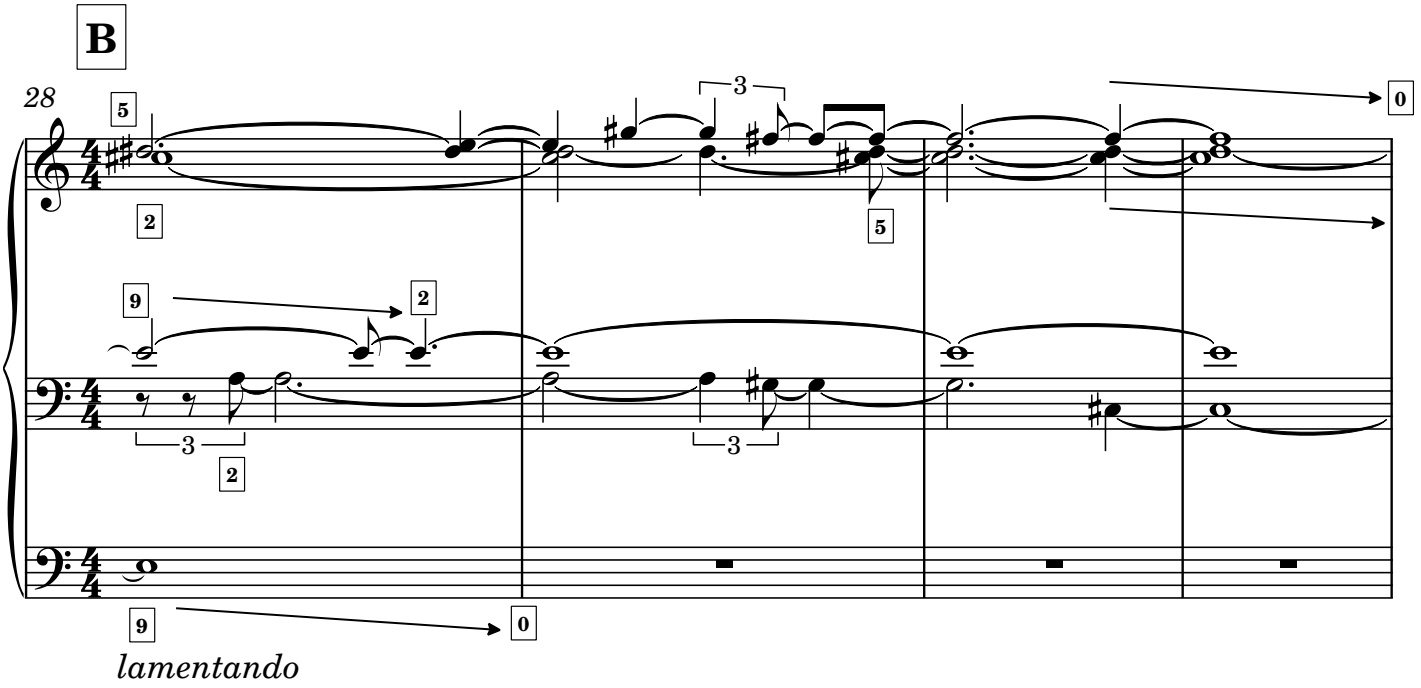
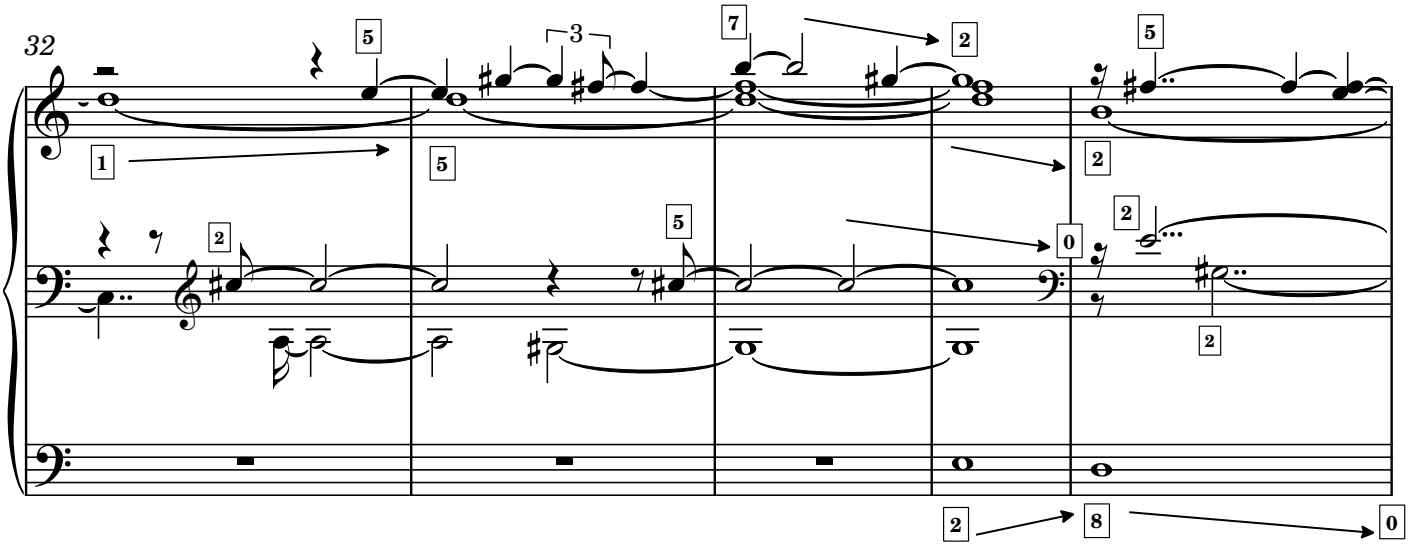
3
7
2
4
0
2
4
2
2


B
28
5
3
0
2
5
9
2
3
2
3
9
0
lamentando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5
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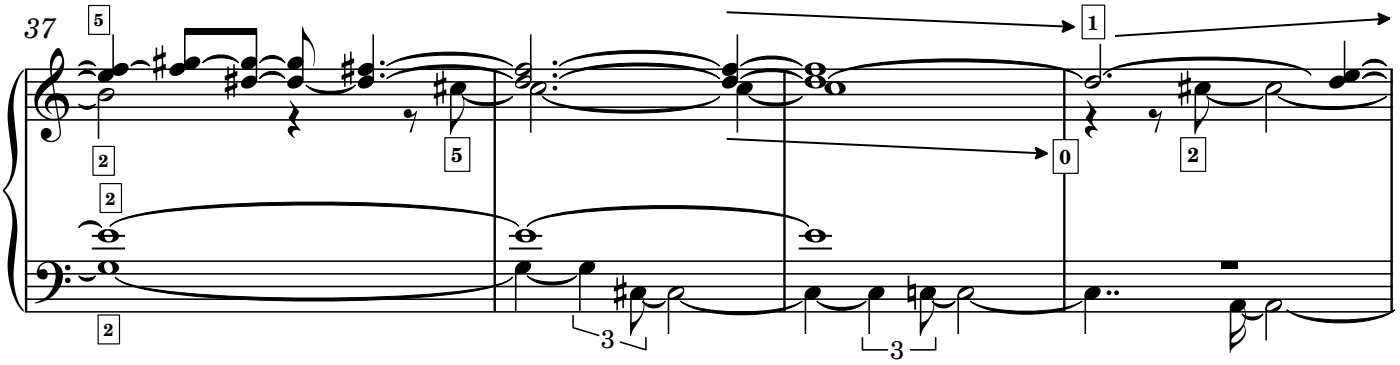
2
2
2
8
0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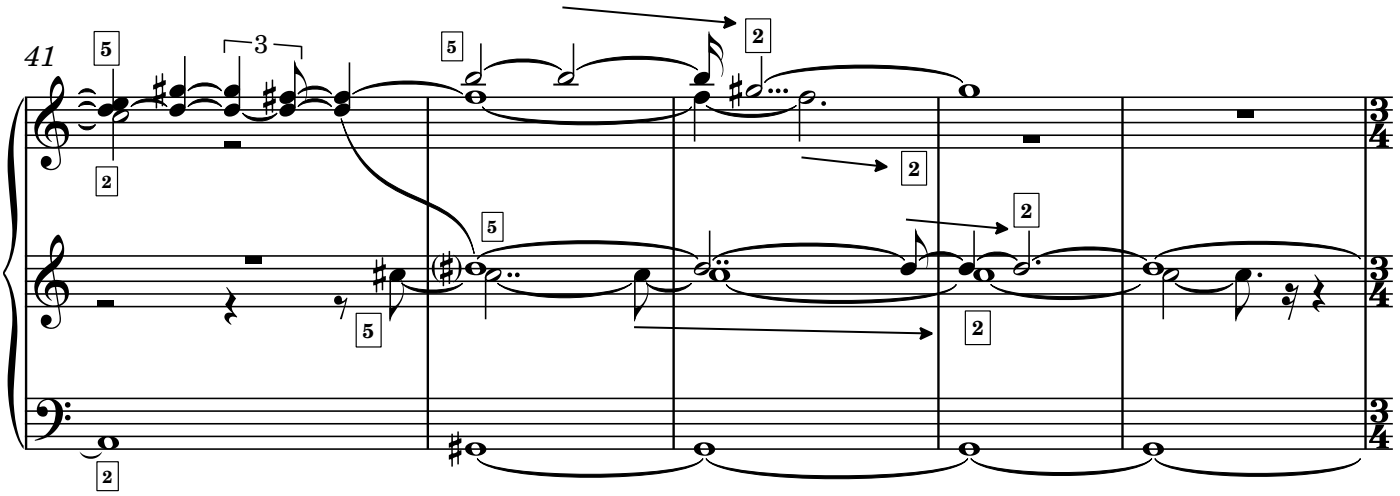
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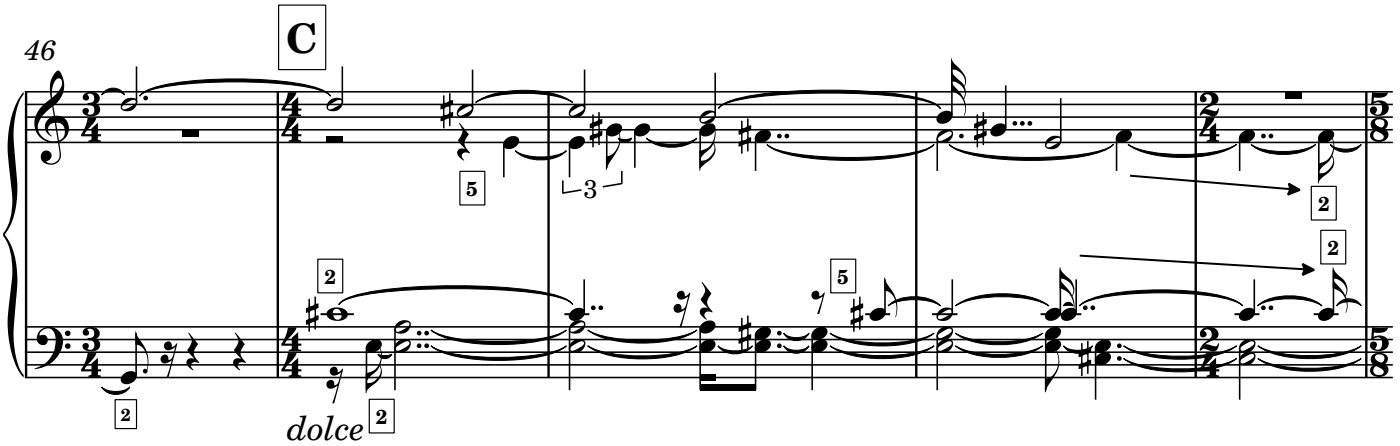
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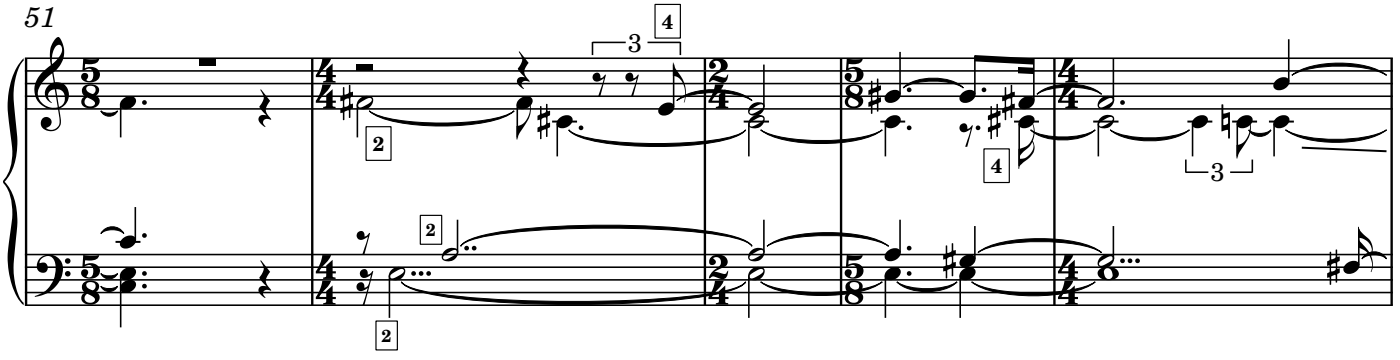
C
dolce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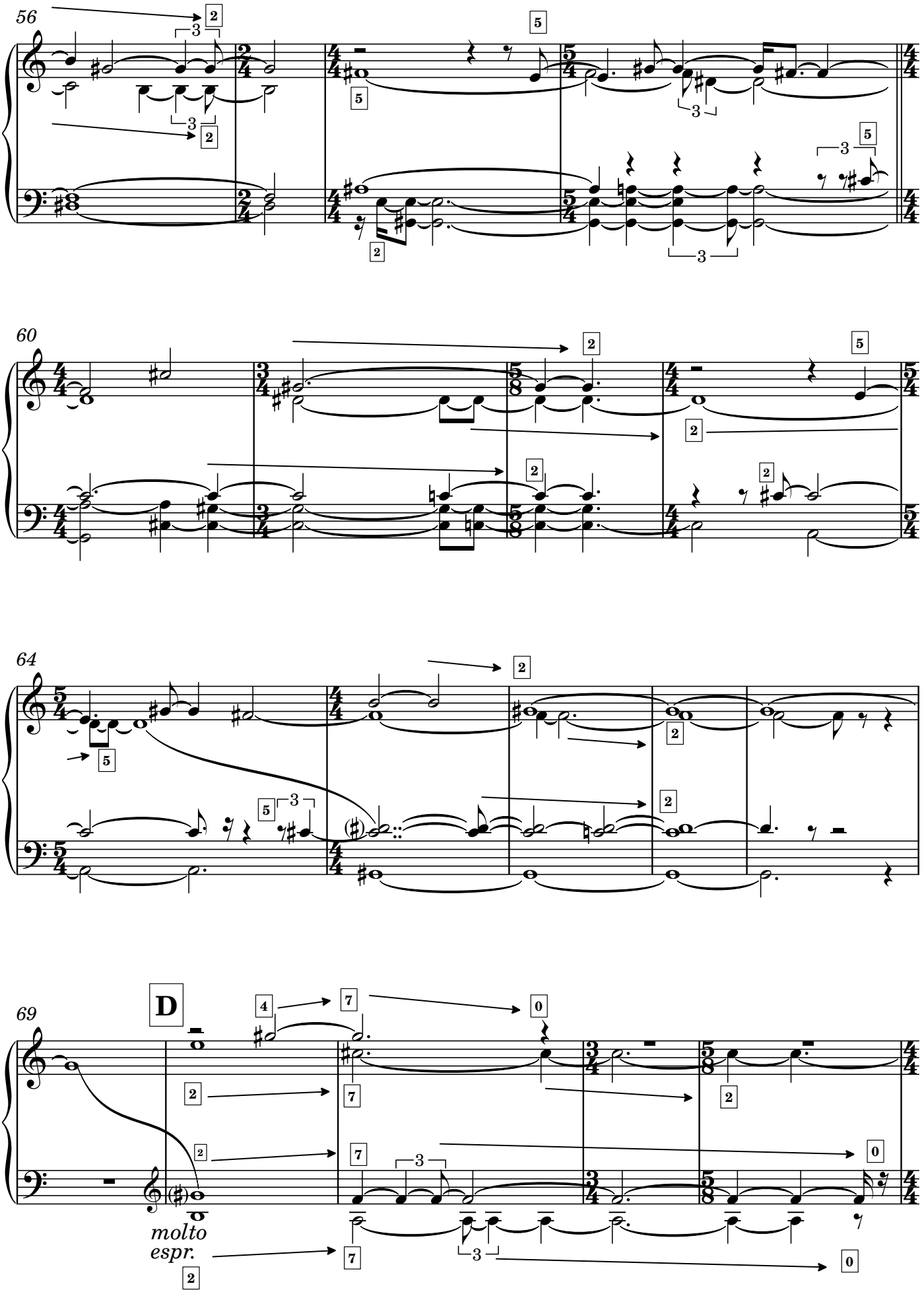
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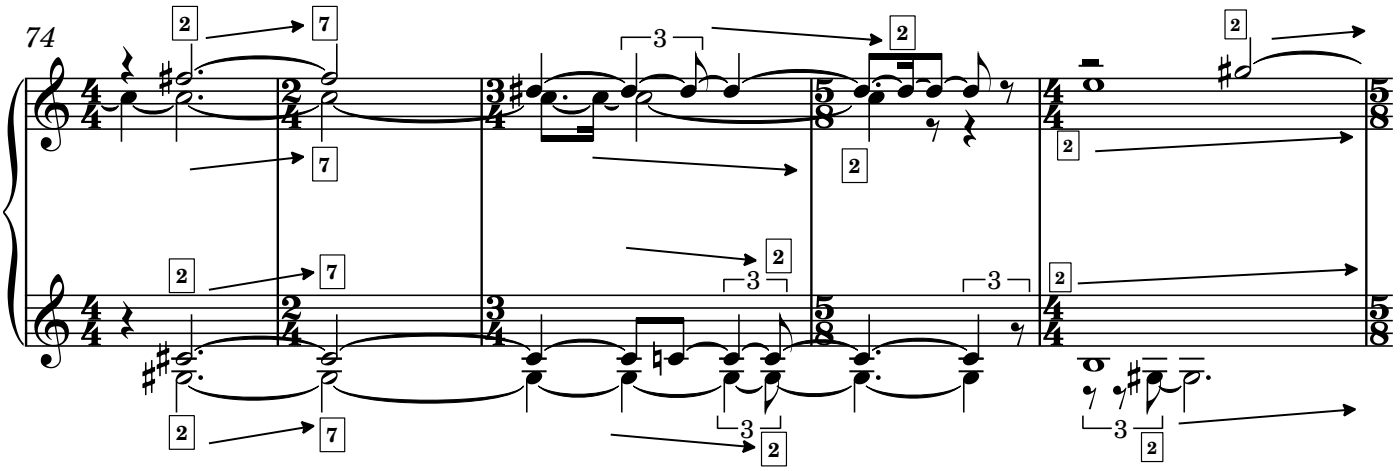
60
64
69
D
molto
espr.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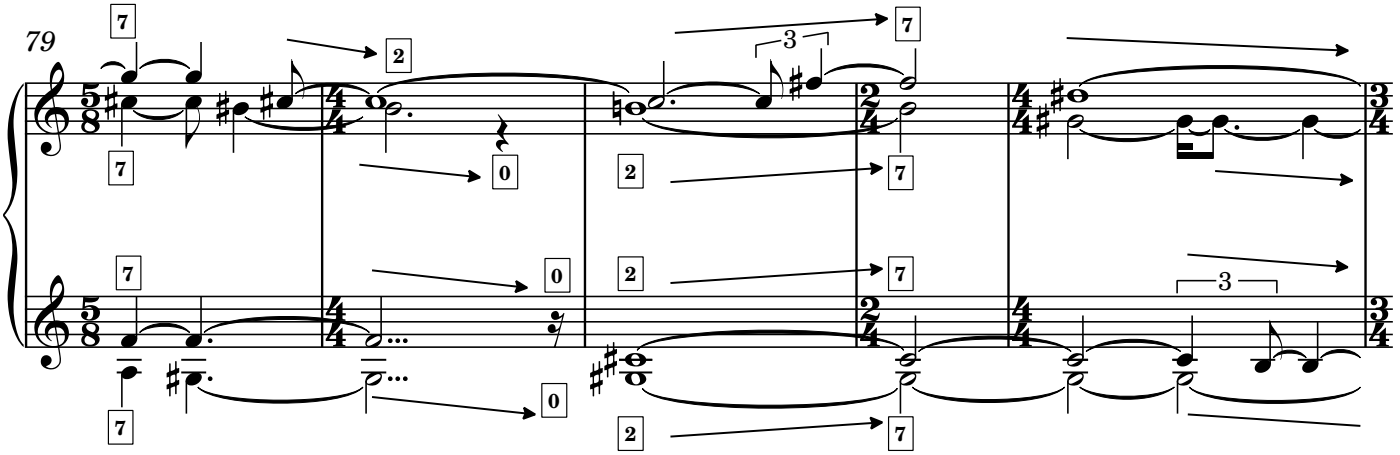
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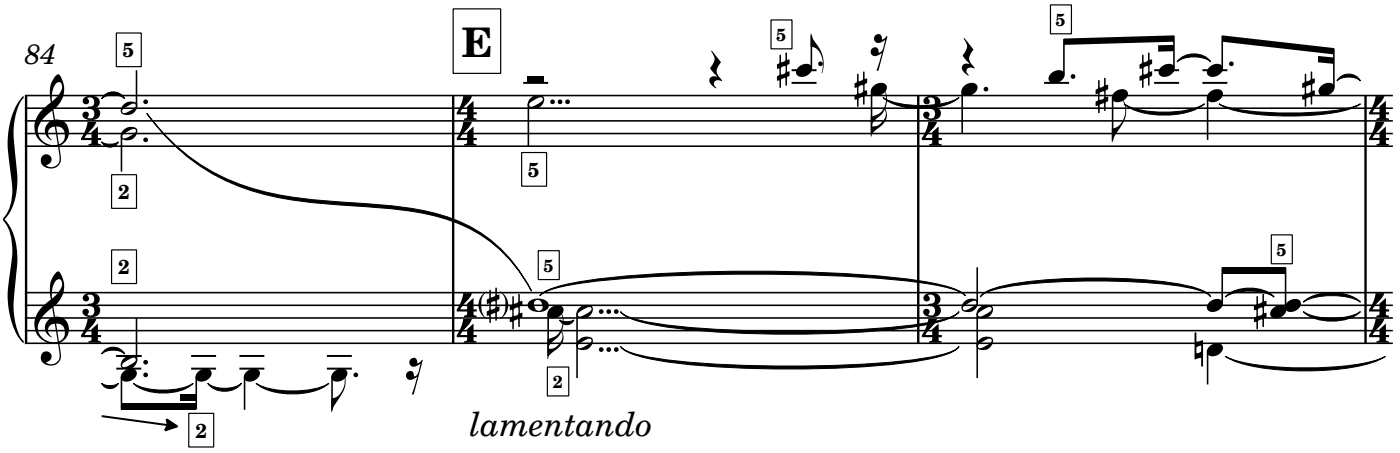
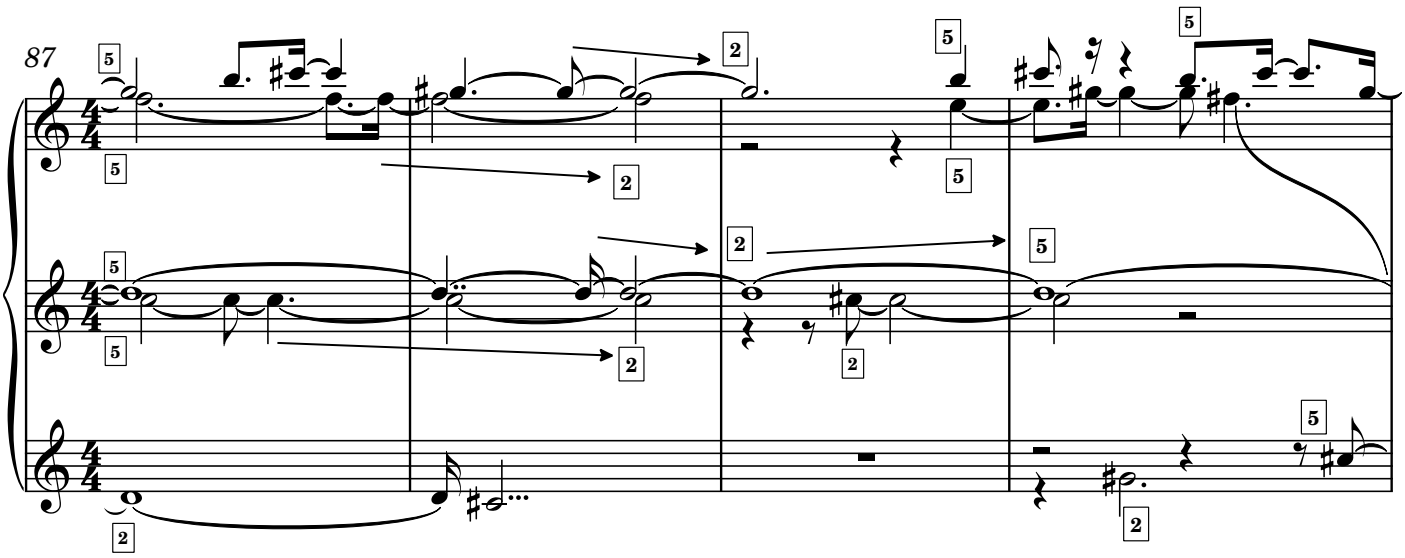

84
E
lamentando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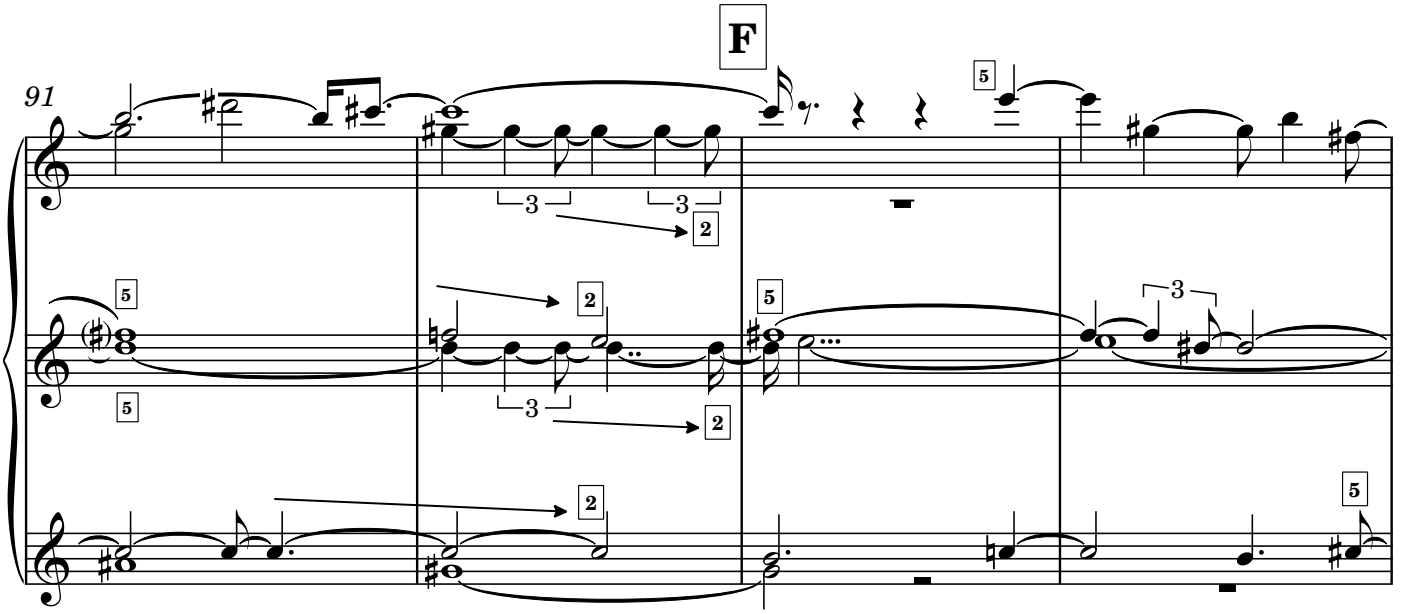
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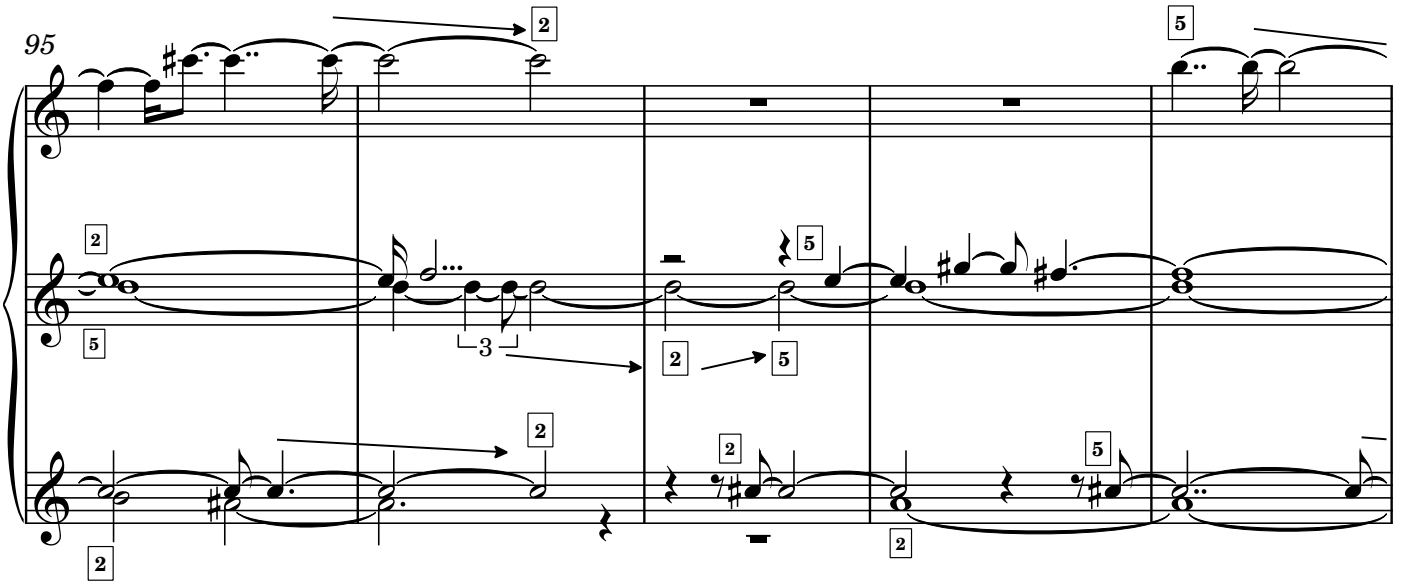
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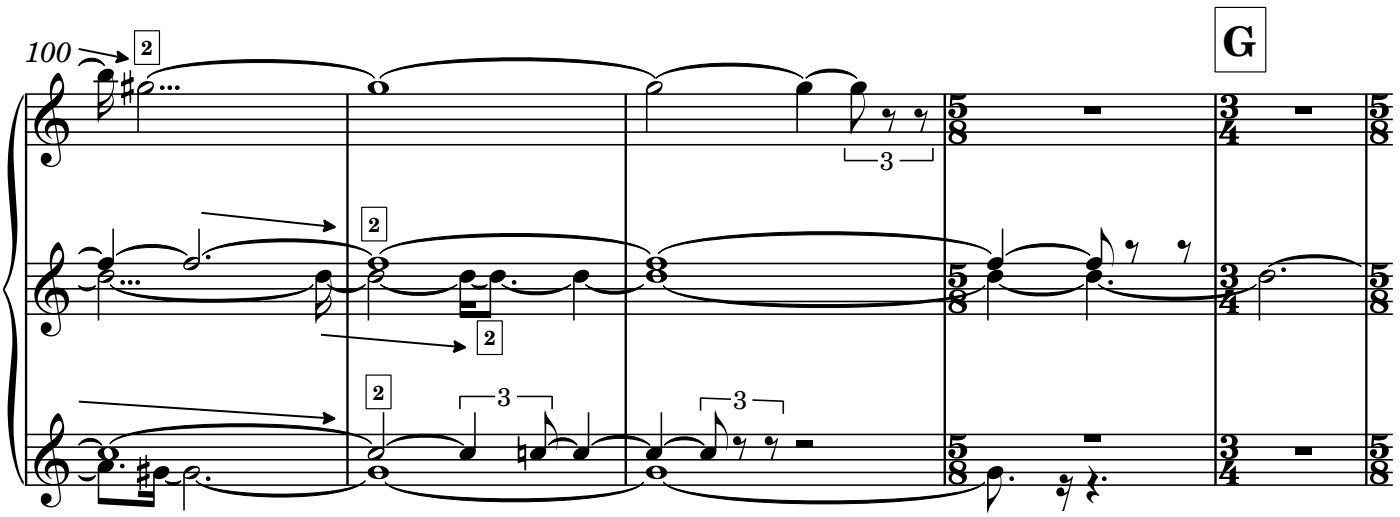
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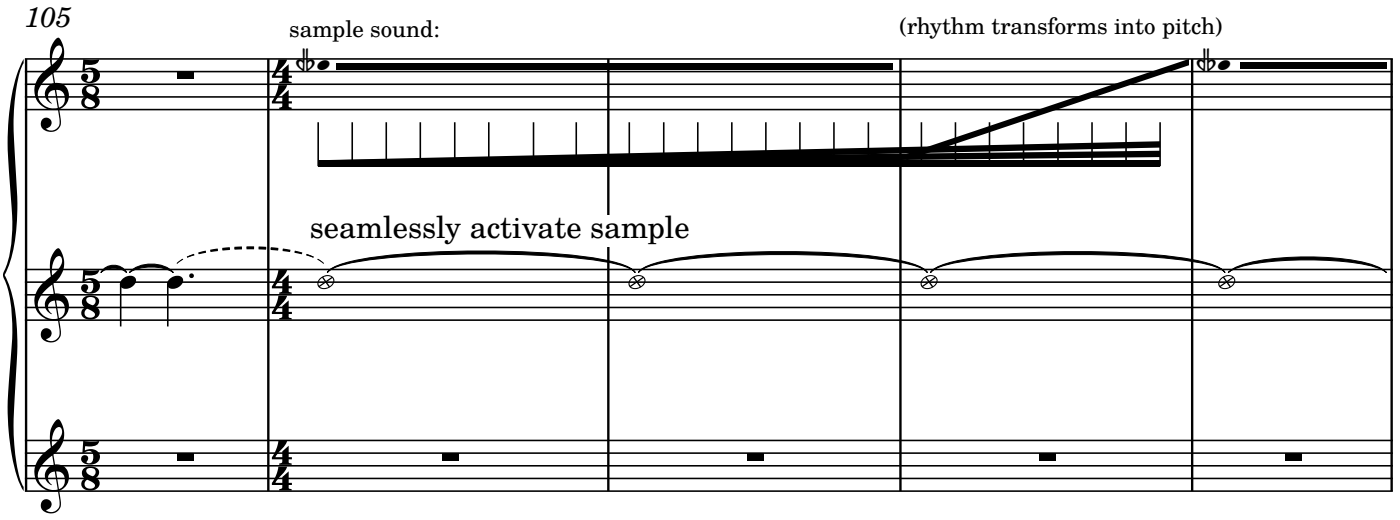
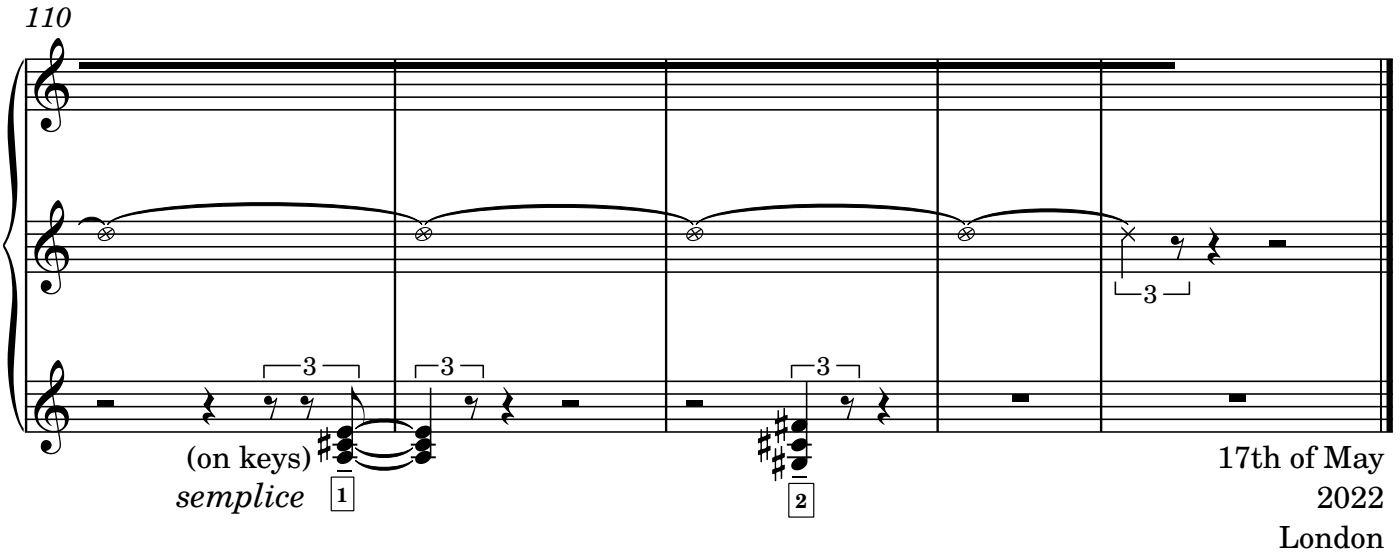
G


105
sample sound:
(rhythm transforms into pitch)
seamlessly activate sample


110
(on keys)
semplice
17th of May
2022
London