OIL MAN

FOR TWO FLUTES, CLARINET, PIANO, DRUMS, BASS, AND NARRATOR

BY KYLE GANN

1981

Oil Man (1981)

for two flutes, clarinet, piano, drums, bass, and narrator

Performance Instructions:

The form is cumulative, adding a measure each time (rather, each third time), and constantly returning to the beginning.

Play:

m. 1	3 times, first time piano only
mm. 1-2	3 times
mm. 1-3	3 times
mm. 1-4	3 times
mm. 1-5	3 times
mm. 1-6	3 times
mm. 1-7	3 times
mm. 1-8	3 times
mm. 1-9	3 times
mm. 1-10	3 times
mm. 1-11	3 times
mm. 1-12	4 times, fading out and slowing down slightly the final time

Flutes and clarinet:

During most repetitions, you may play any of your four or five given lines. At the beginning, start with the top lines that only contain sustained notes, tending further and further toward the more melodic options as the piece progresses. In the very last repetition, play the line in your lowest system.

Drums and bass:

Improvise, tracking the meter and (on the bass) piano bass notes.

Narrator:

The text below is correlated to the piece's 12 sections, during each of which a certain number of measures is repeated three times. The narrator is silent during sections 1 and 6, which means no narration during the first three measures, nor during the section wherein mm. 1-6 are being repeated. At some point while mm. 1-2 are being repeated three times, text no. 2 is spoken. During the three repetitions of mm. 1-3, text no. 3 is spoken, and so on. Slashes in the text indicate pauses. The narration style is to be mellow, comforting, and impassive; no sense of drama should be implied.

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Oil Man is an homage to my father, Marvin Gann (1925-2006). The text, which I arranged myself, is drawn from letters my father wrote from Saudi Arabia when he was working there in 1981-3 as an office manager for Mobil Oil, and from other stories and texts relating to his life.

-Kyle Gann

Score is in C

Duration: 8 minutes

World premiere:
April 30, 1981, at Regenstein Hall, Northwestern University
Marcus McDaniel, narrator; Eugenia Smith, flute; Mary Beth Skaggs Malek, clarinet; Jim Gley, drums; John Miller, bass; Kyle Gann, piano

Oil Man: Text

1.

2. Hair receding at the temples.

3. The farm. / “Come away with me and you’ll never have to pick cotton again.” She did. It didn’t work. She was still picking cotton a week later.

4. Preaching to the neighborhood children, keep the money. The yard is covered with pecans in the fall. / Hola Ponda. / Deliver the telegrams on a bicycle. / The black band means death in the family.

5. My brother’s voice. The French girls wore too much makeup.

6.

7.Net income slipped to $181.3 million, or $2.20 a share, from $189.2 million, or $2.29 a share in the like period a year earlier. Sales rose to $2.95 billion from $2.79 billion. In the nine months, operating profit rose 3% to $534.7 millions, or....

8. Arabia. / Likely to be 16 to 18% below the levels the company was projecting before the announcement of Canada’s national energy program last October. Gas discoveries offshore Sable Island could be commercial and may still.... / What am I doing?

9. Yanbu is an old city. / There were so many things I wanted to say. Ten minutes goes by so fast. / In the afternoon it always gets dusty here. The wind comes up quickly. The young guys here think, “That old geezer is just showing off.” Some also believe Jeddah was the Garden of Eden. Tell Rita “happy birthday” on the 21st.

10. The wind. / Koreans are the best workers. Bachelors are not allowed to swim, see a camp movie, etc., with family-status men. Designated times are set for families and bachelors. Sometimes our work is mass confusion.

11. Ten minutes goes by so fast. / Yanbu is an old city.

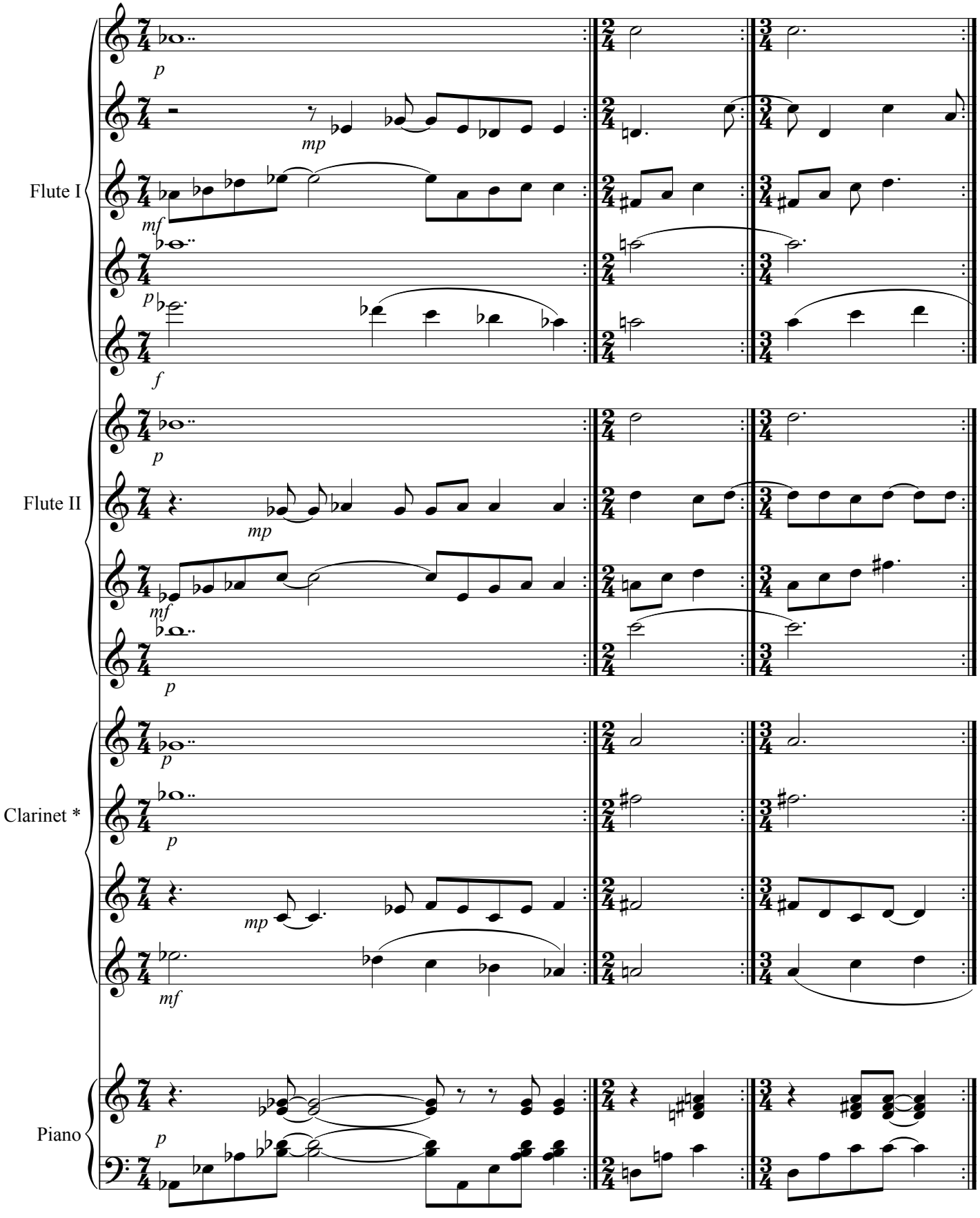
12. As D says, “It’s a whole new world out there.”

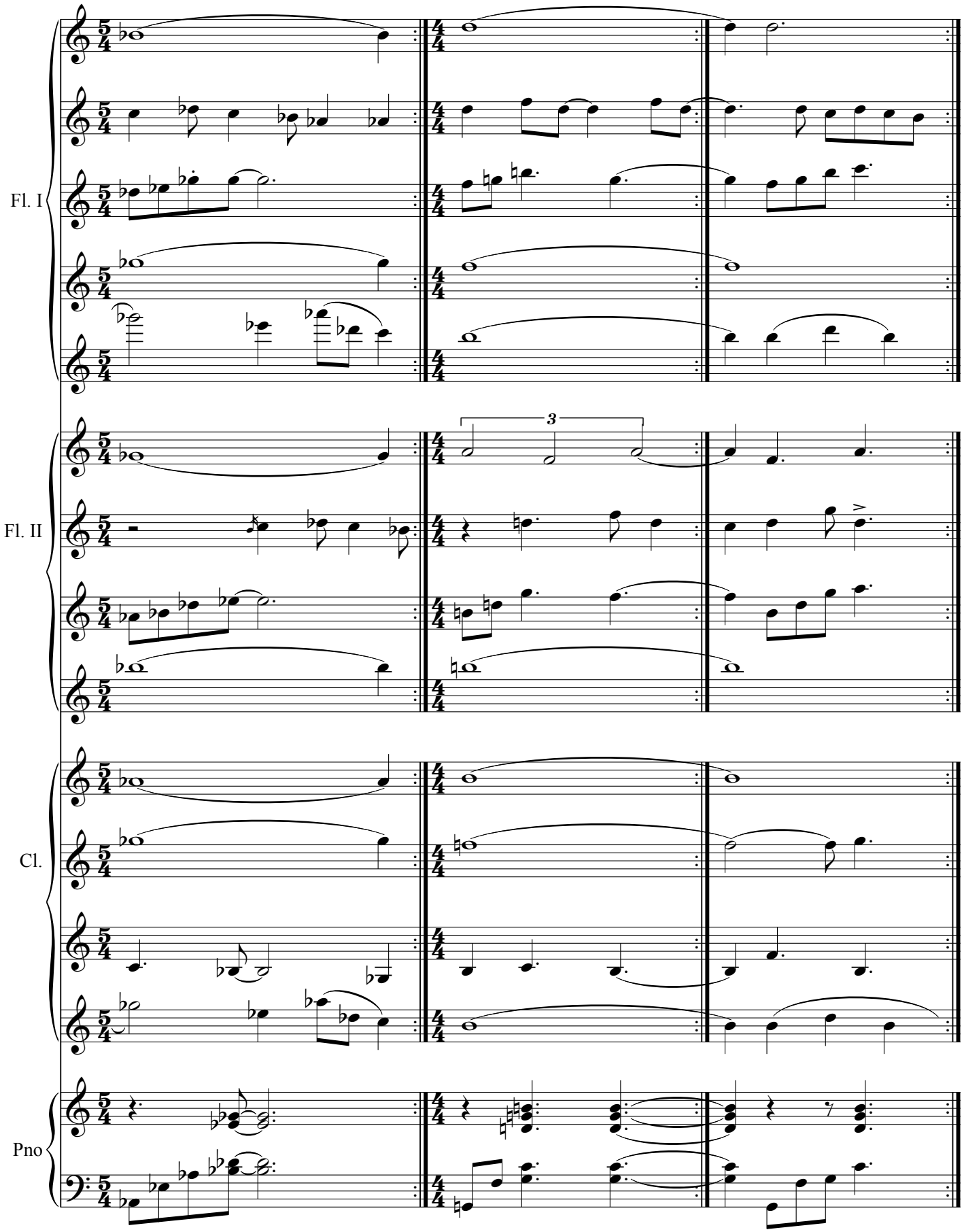
To my father, Marvin Gann

Oil Man

With a mellow energy,
not too fast
♩ = 116

Kyle Gann
1981

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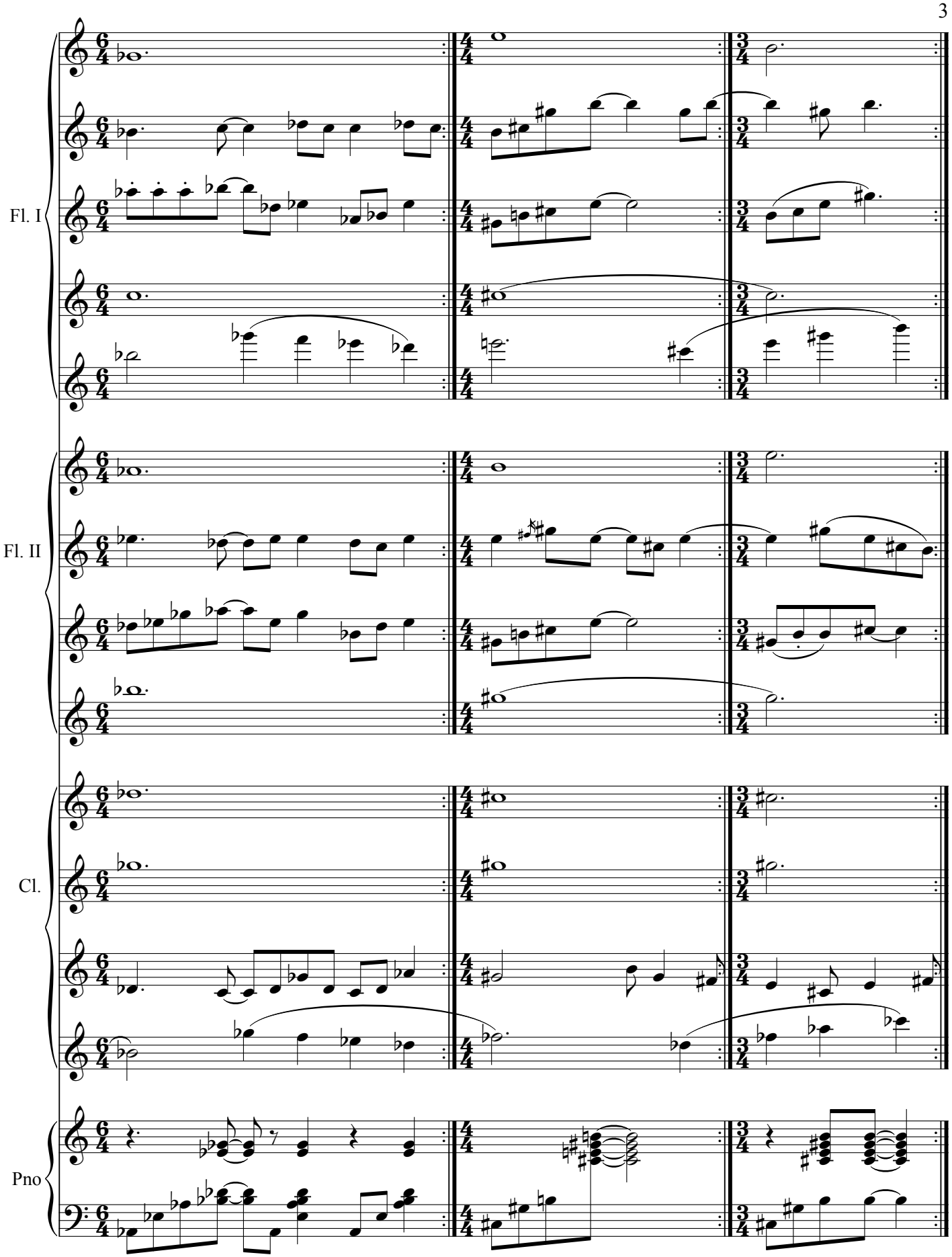
3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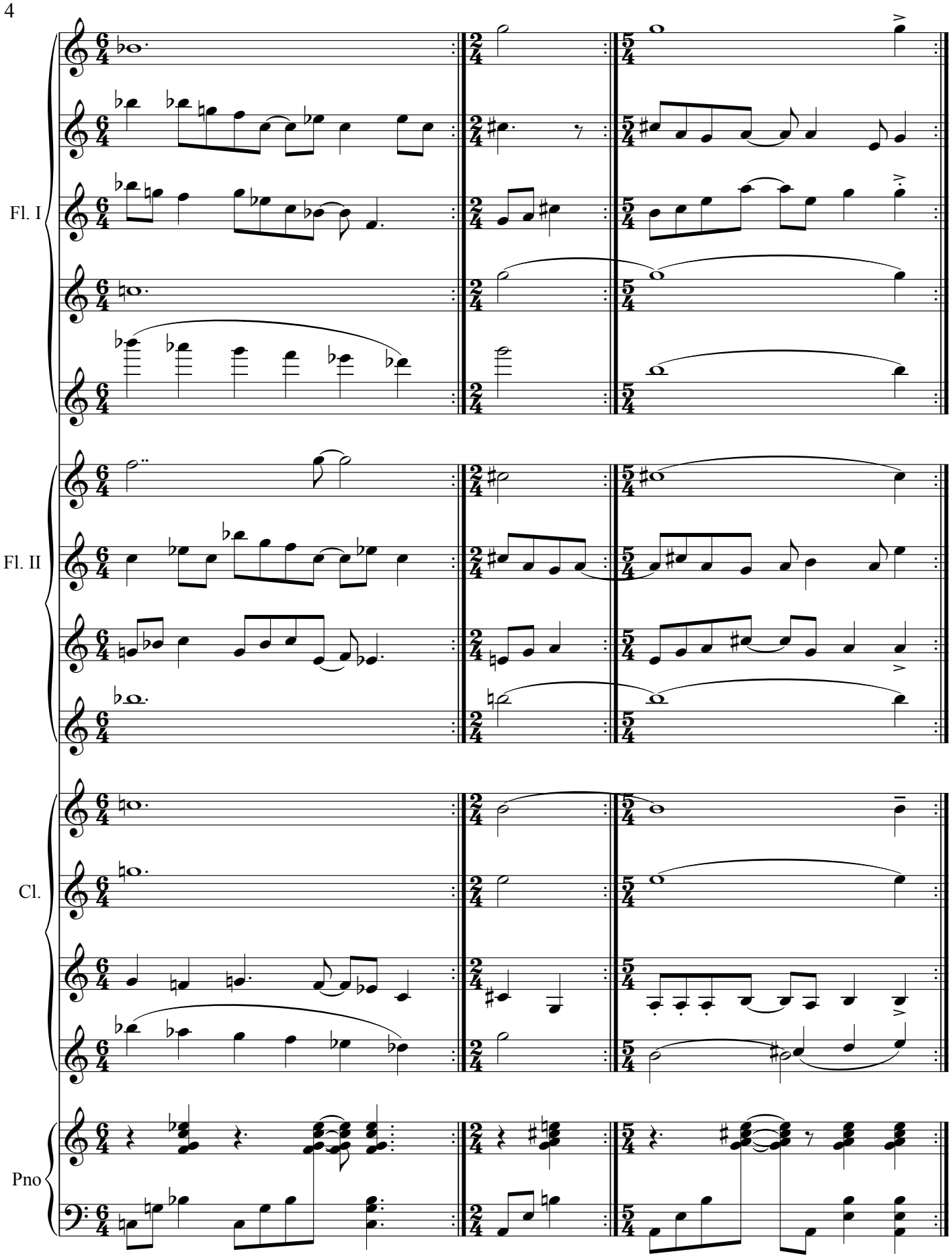
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