J. Kimo Williams

Quiet Shadows

STRING QUARTET

Quiet Shadows for an instrumental quartet is my musical portrayal of four soldiers on guard duty in Vietnam. Guard duty began late in the afternoon while it was still daylight. I recall one particular duty that began as always.

First, I would arrive at my post and start inspecting my surroundings to become familiar with the jungle growth in front of the bunker before night. However, this bunker was situated near a very strangely-shaped tree, which I immediately sensed would fool me later into mistaking it for an enemy soldier. I tried to memorize its' shape, but, sure enough, when night fell, I knew that the tree trunk was the enemy. My apprehension overcame me, and I contemplated shooting up a flare to warn others. I realized that it was That tree. Rather than calming my fears, I thought about how much I missed home and continued to perceive other shapes as dangers in the darkness, which in the morning daylight proved only to be natural growths of nature in the jungle surroundings. I felt rather foolish until I shared my experience with the other soldiers on duty that night. However, most confessed to having had the same thoughts that I did about home and about what might be out there in front of us.

The performer's position on stage is the representation of those soldiers together yet apart with their thoughts, as they are keeping an eye out for danger. They know that they are protecting their fellow soldiers, which in turn protects the country they are serving (metaphorically, the audience).
The audience (those protected) never sees the soldier's face, but they know that these soldiers are safeguarding their way of life and are reassured.

This work has no restrictions on the performer's interpretation of these thoughts, other than the notes themselves. Dynamics, articulation, tempo, metric timing, and bar lines are none existent except in the performer's mind and his/her frame of reference based on the premise of the composition.

My purpose with this work is to create an interactive performance between the written notes and the instrumentalists who, hopefully, will bring his/her expressive interpretation of the thoughts of soldiers in this one unique situation.

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(Four soldiers on guard duty in Vietnam)
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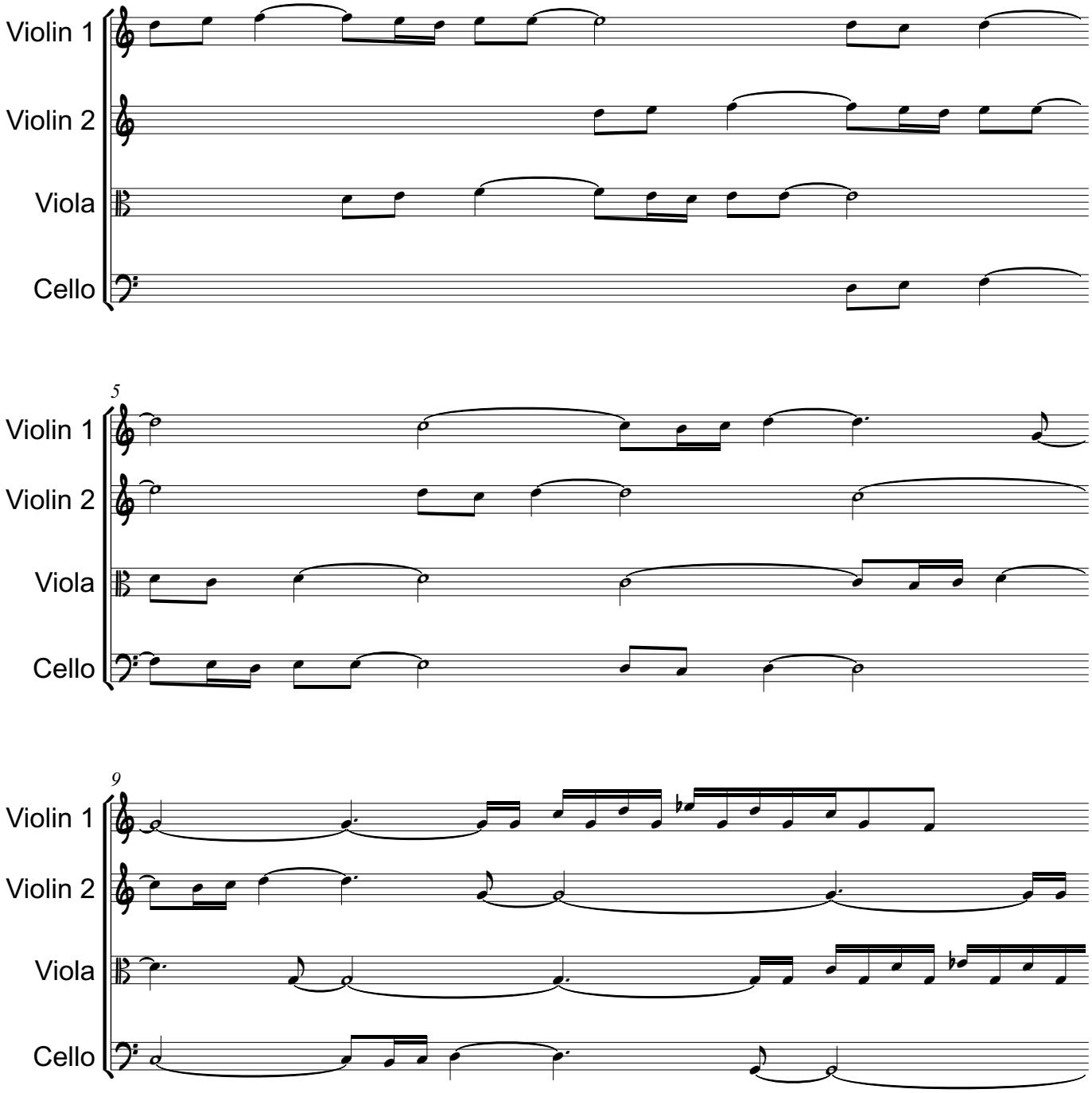

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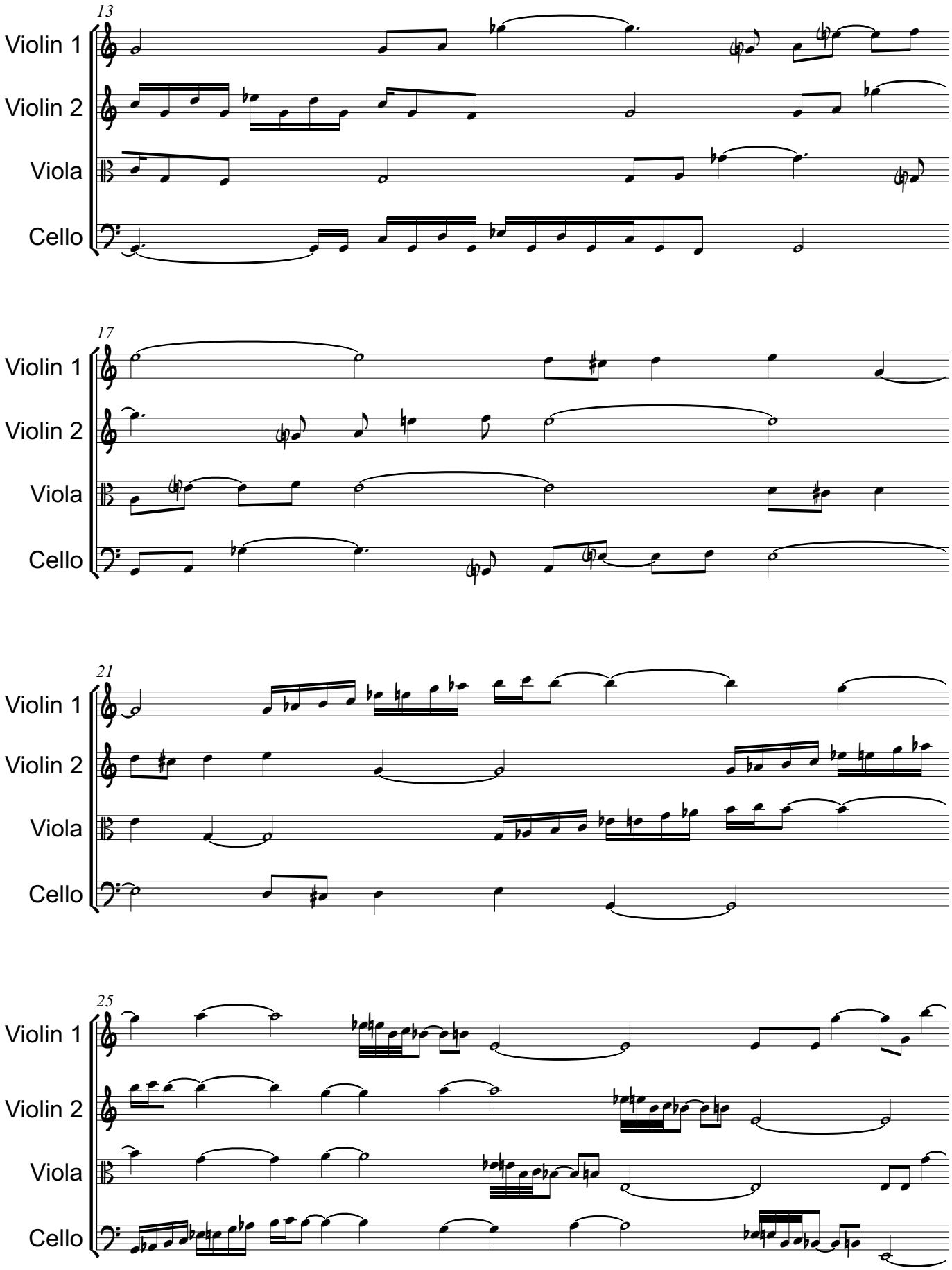
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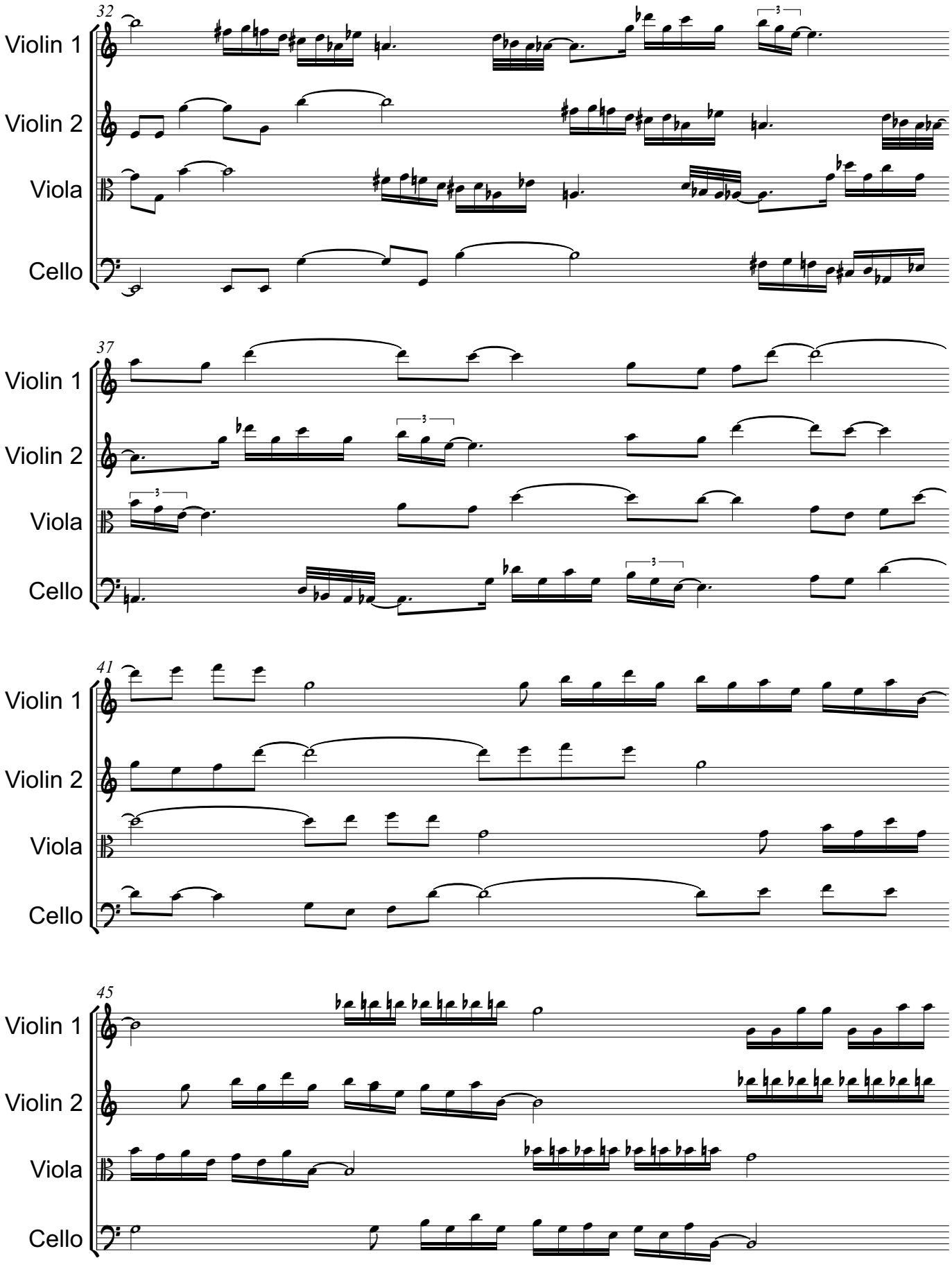
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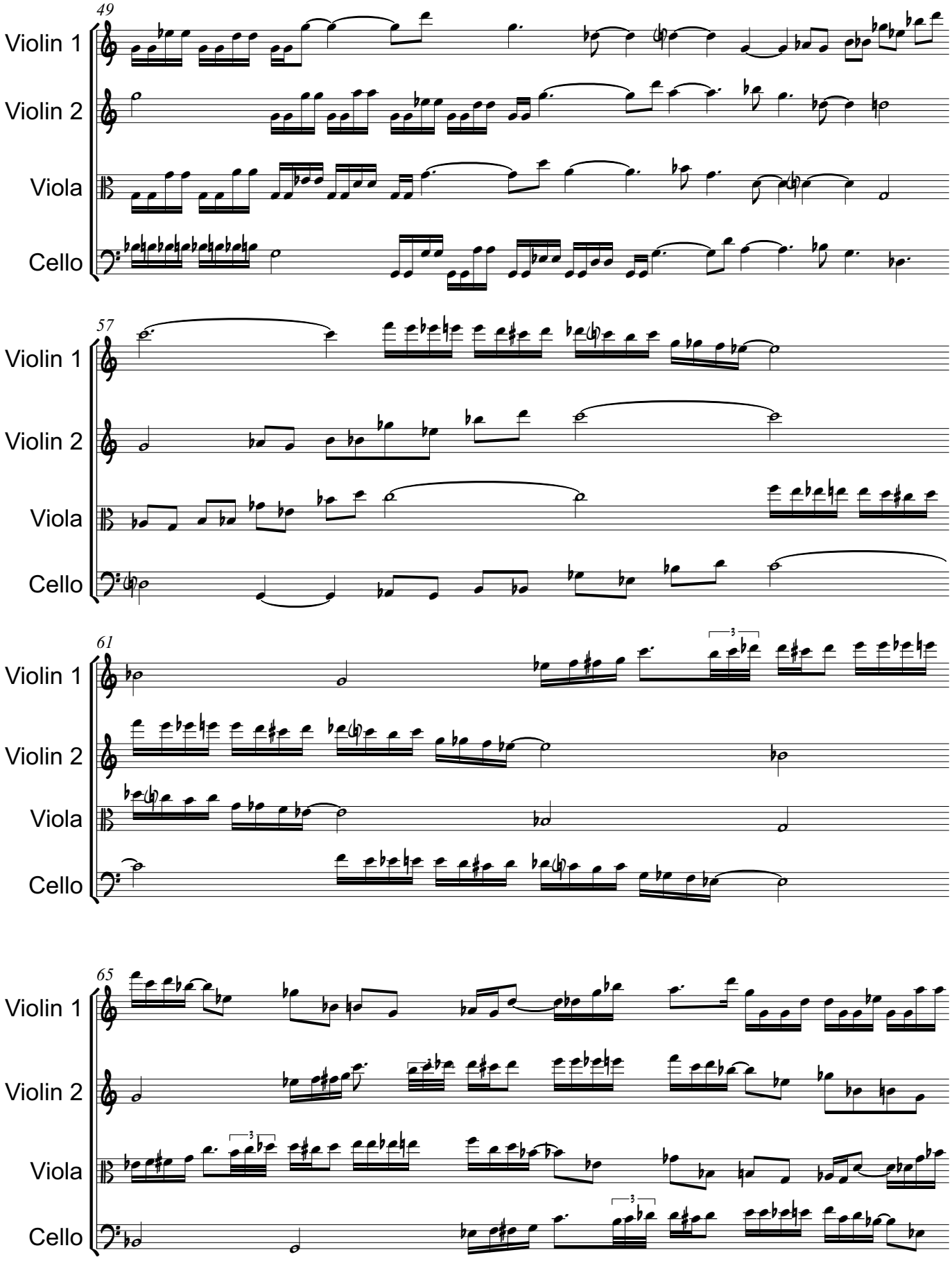
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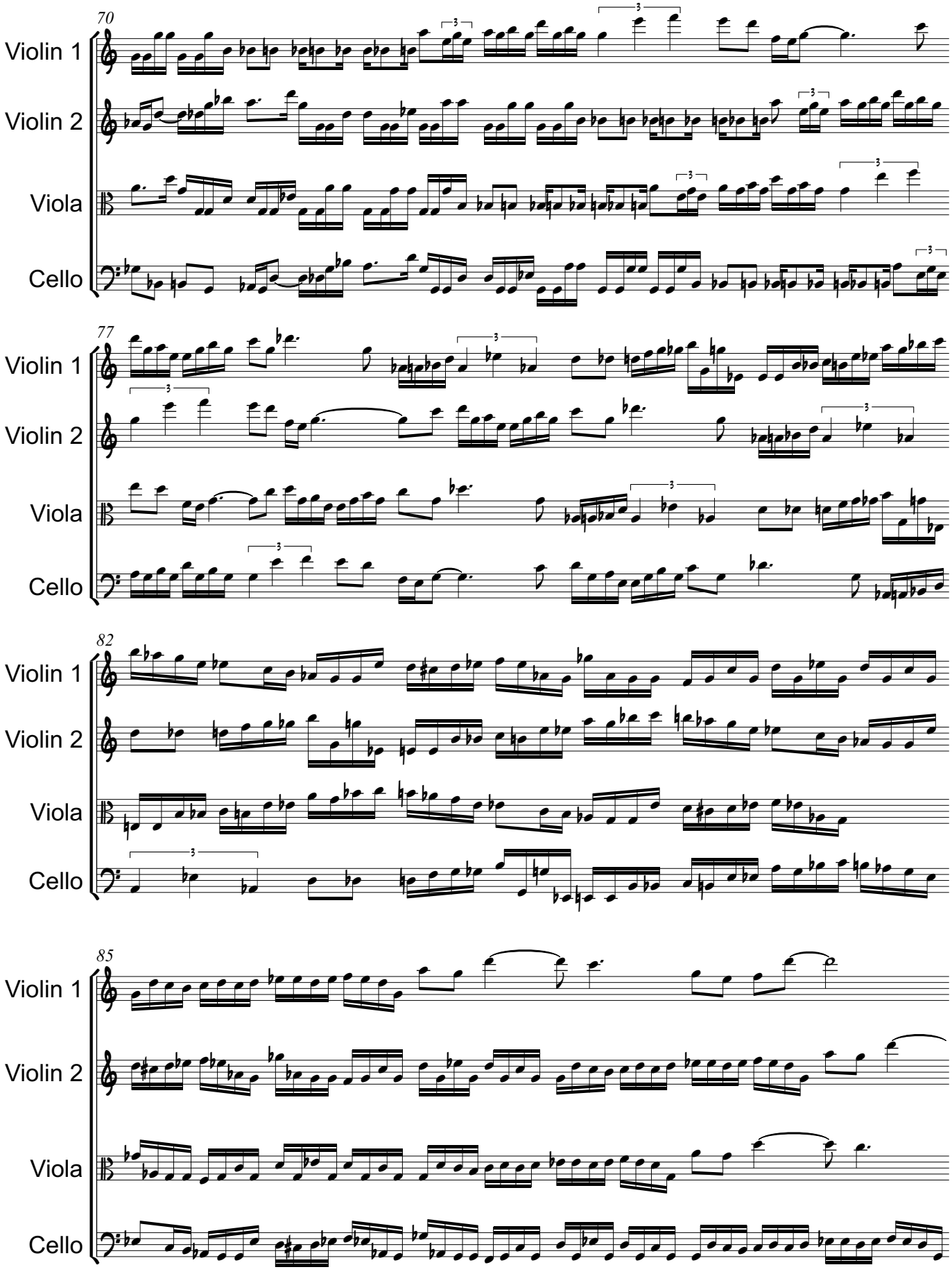
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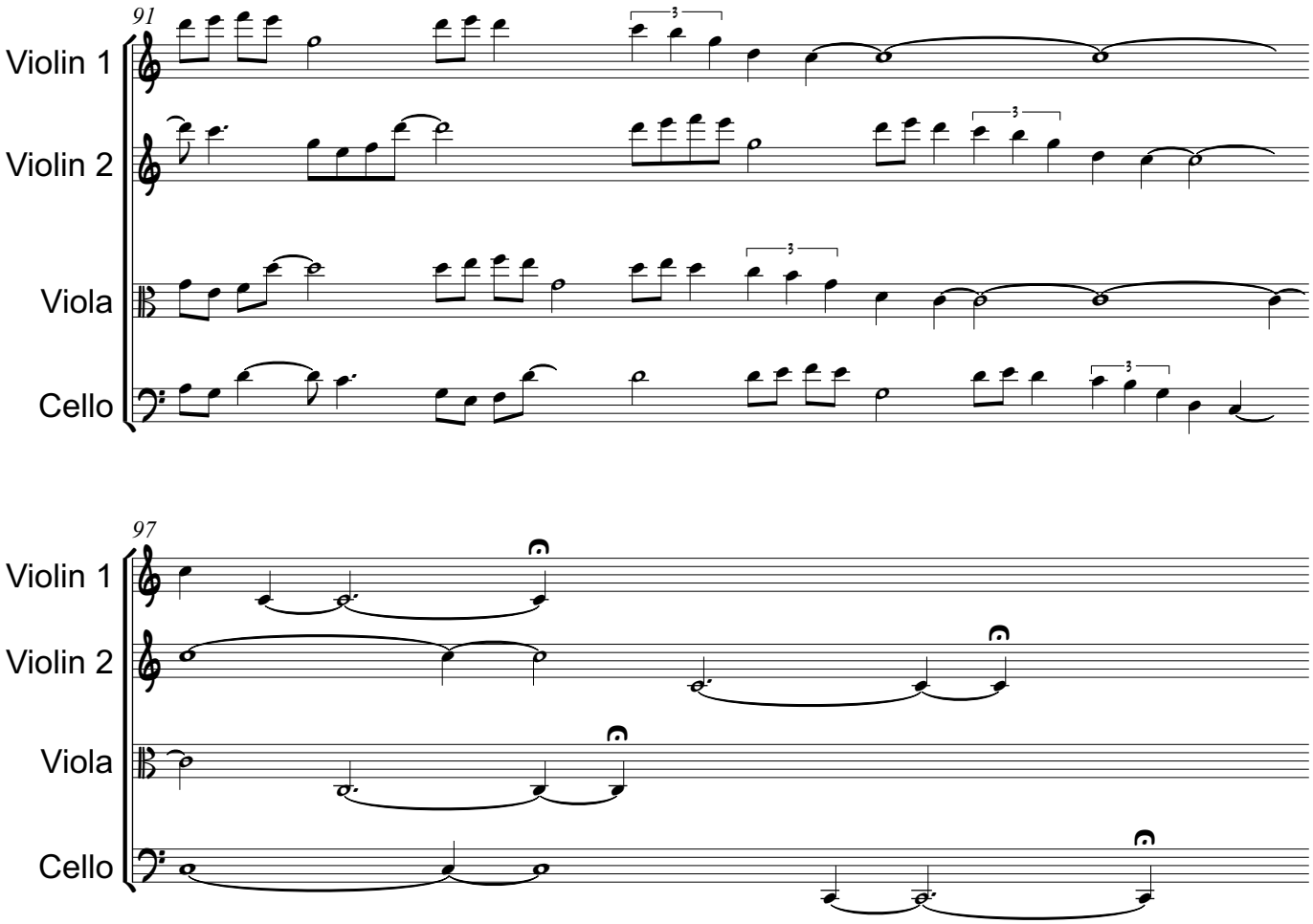
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Viola
Cello

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Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello

Violin 1

Quiet Shadows

(Four soldiers on guard duty in Vietnam)

FOR STRING QUARTET

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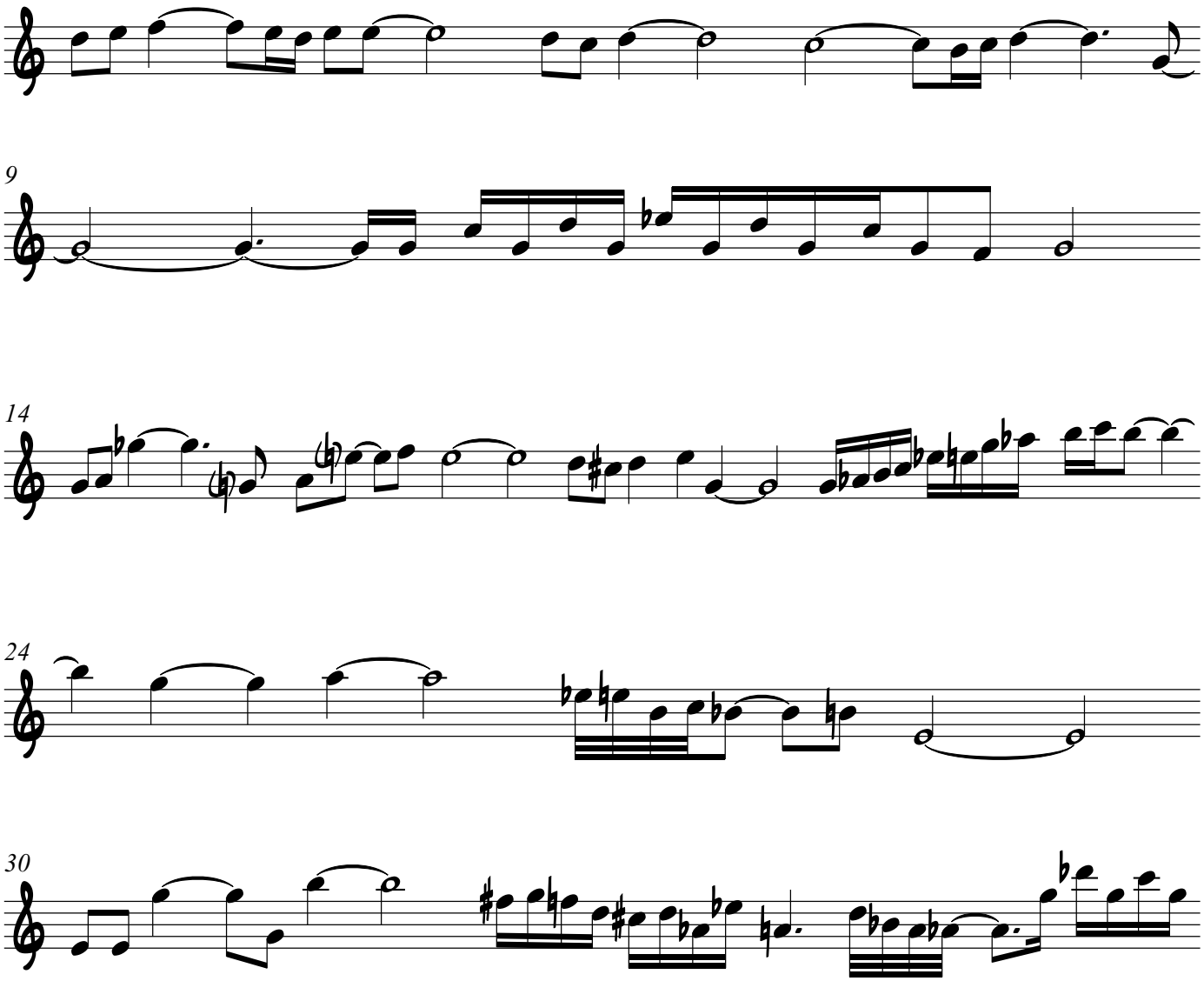
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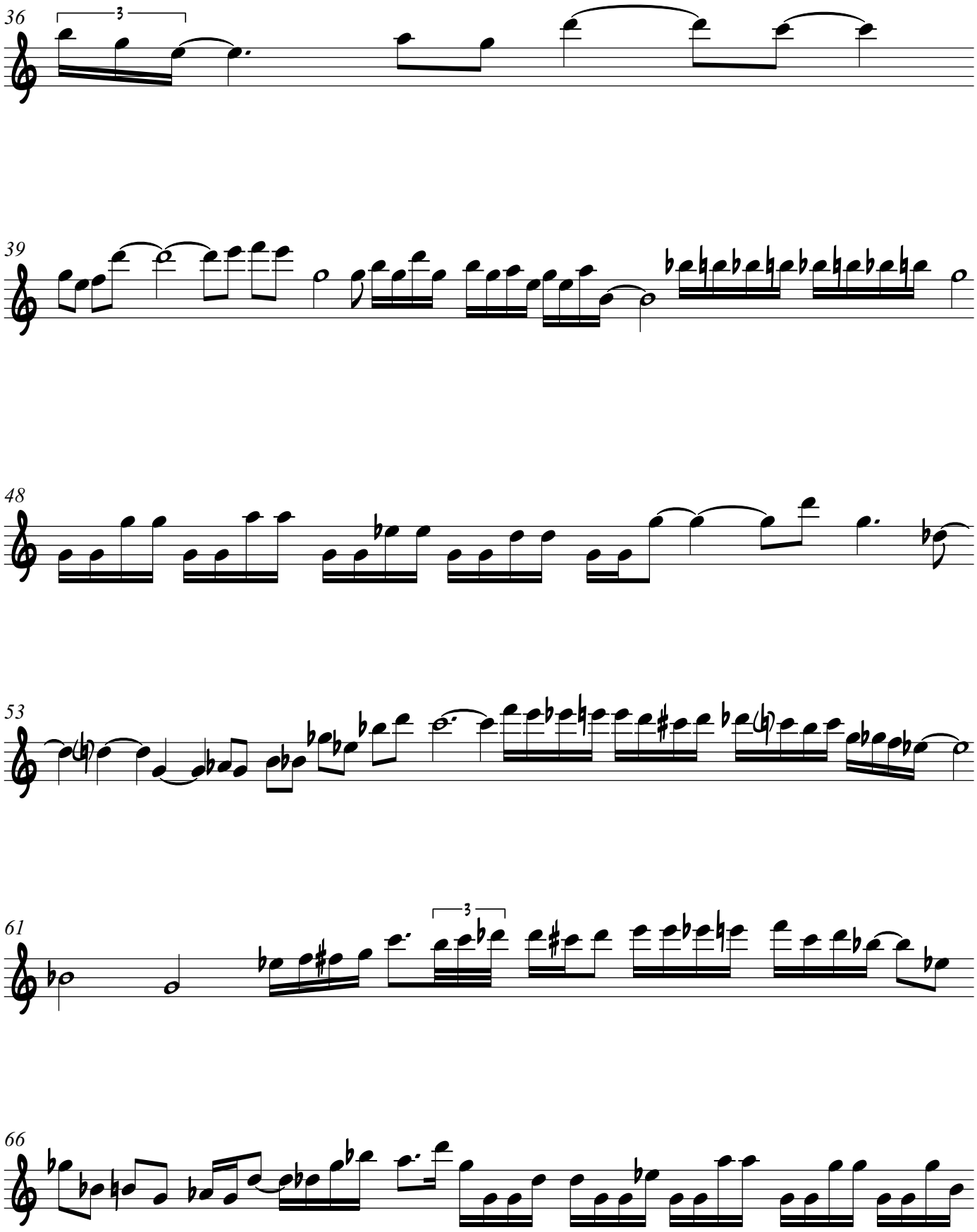
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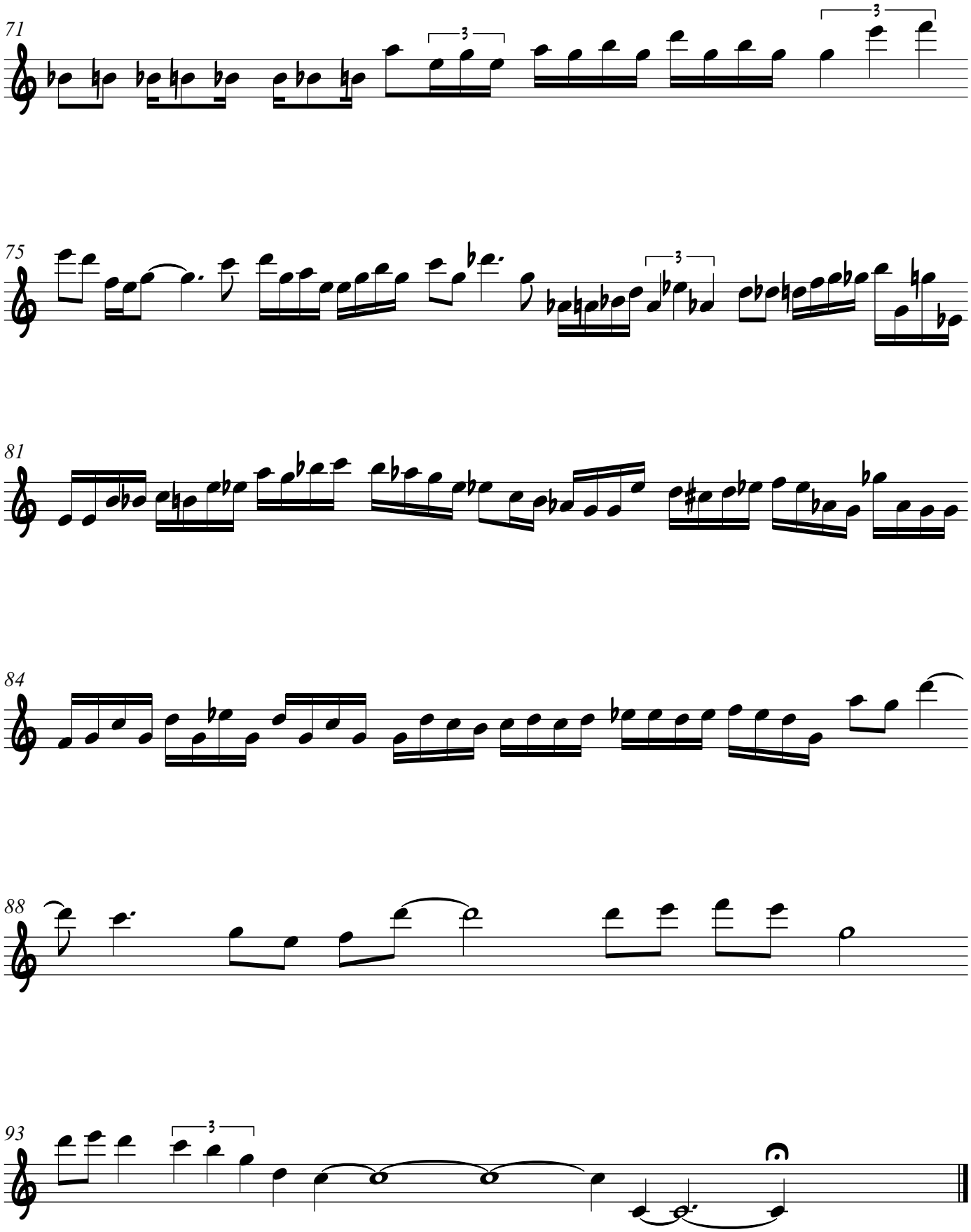
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Violin 2

Quiet Shadows

(Four soldiers on guard duty in Vietnam)

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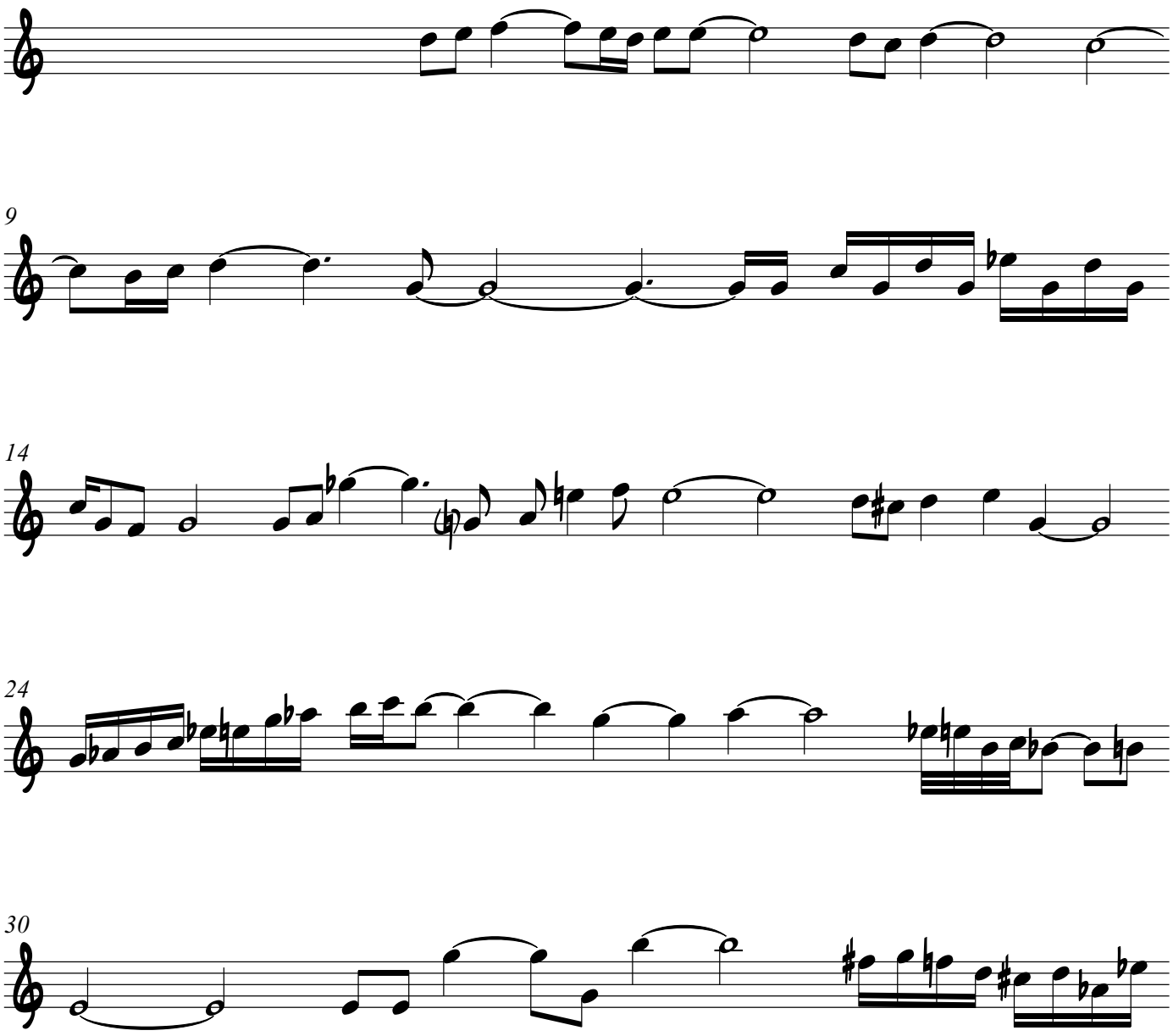
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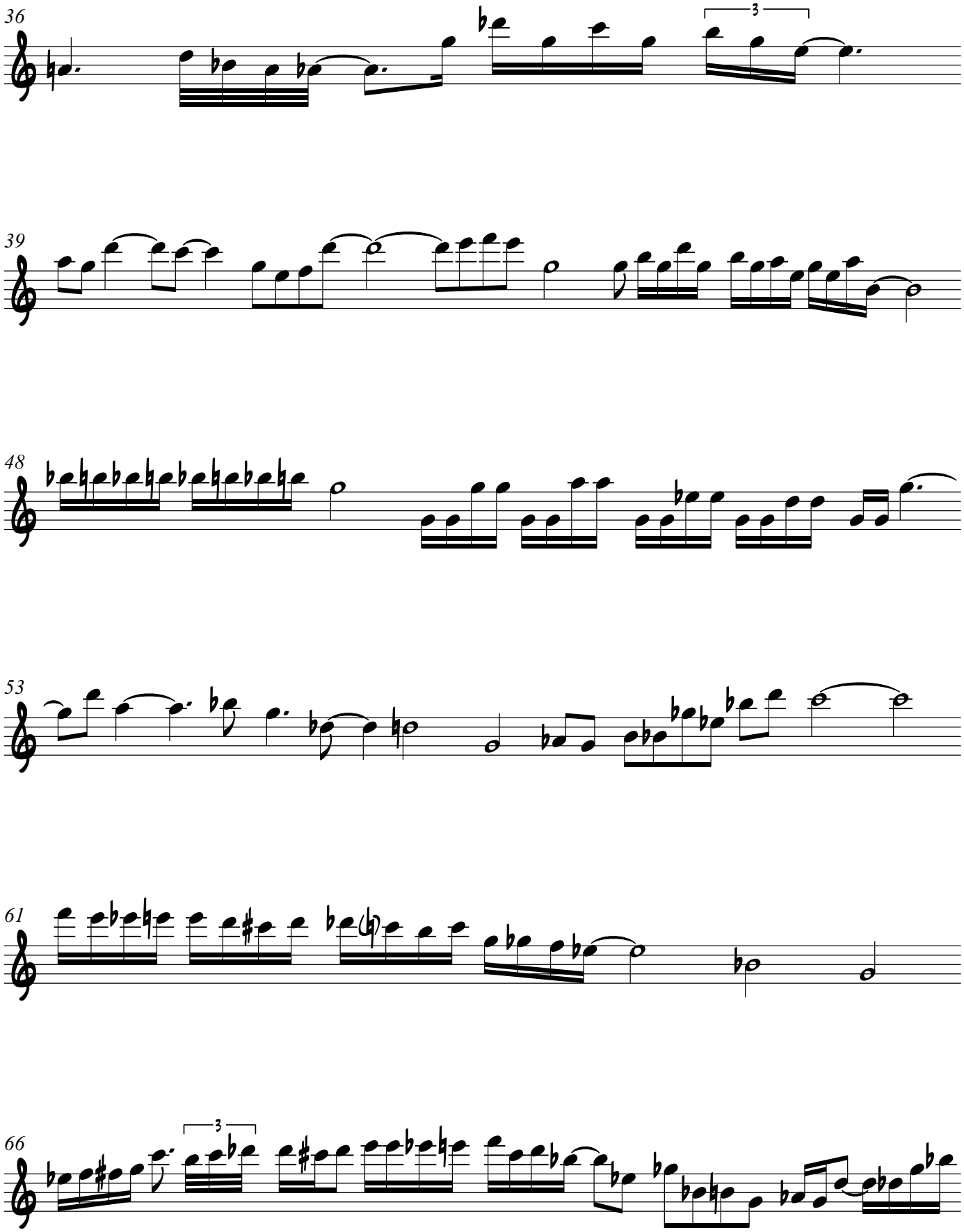
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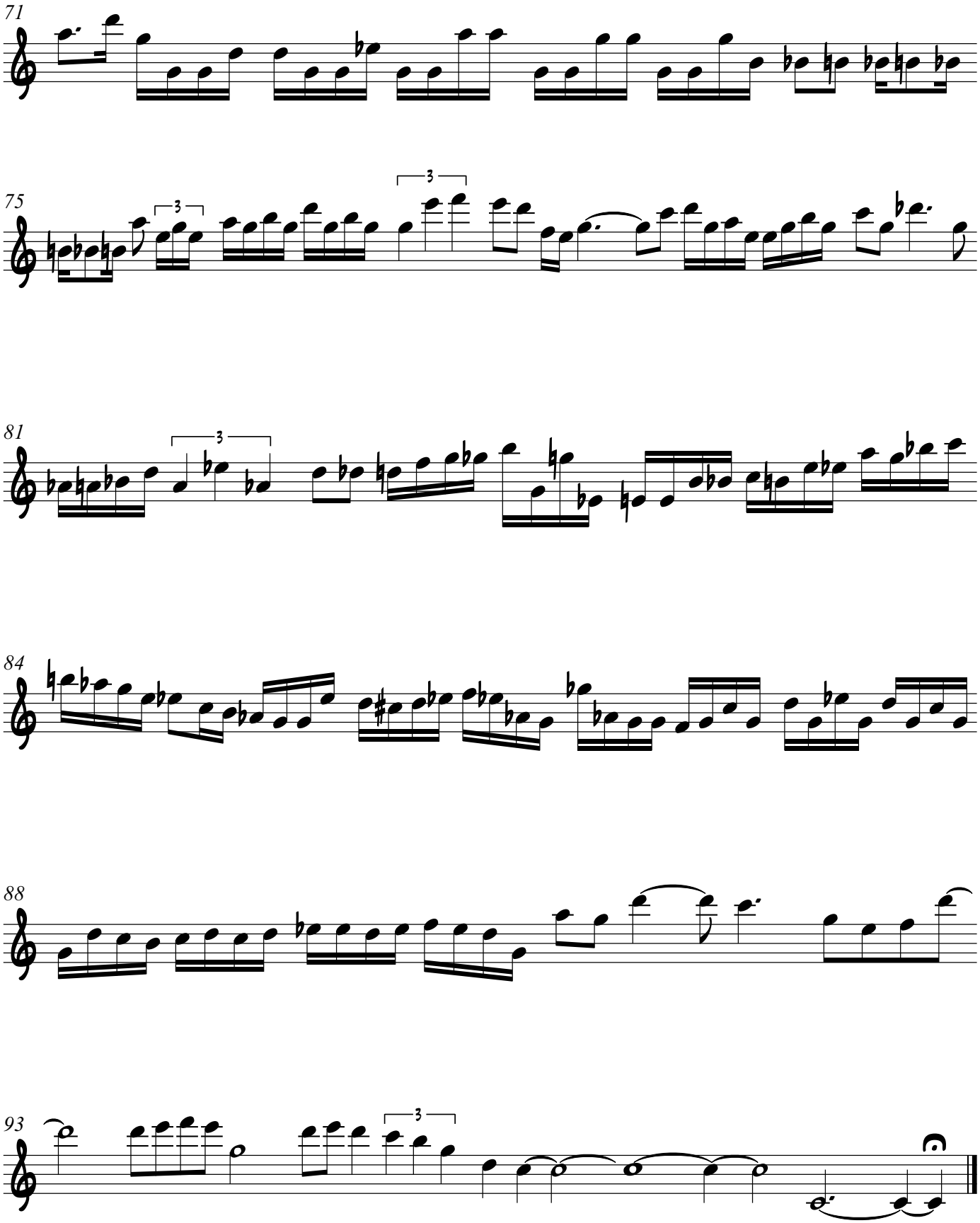
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Viola

Quiet Shadows

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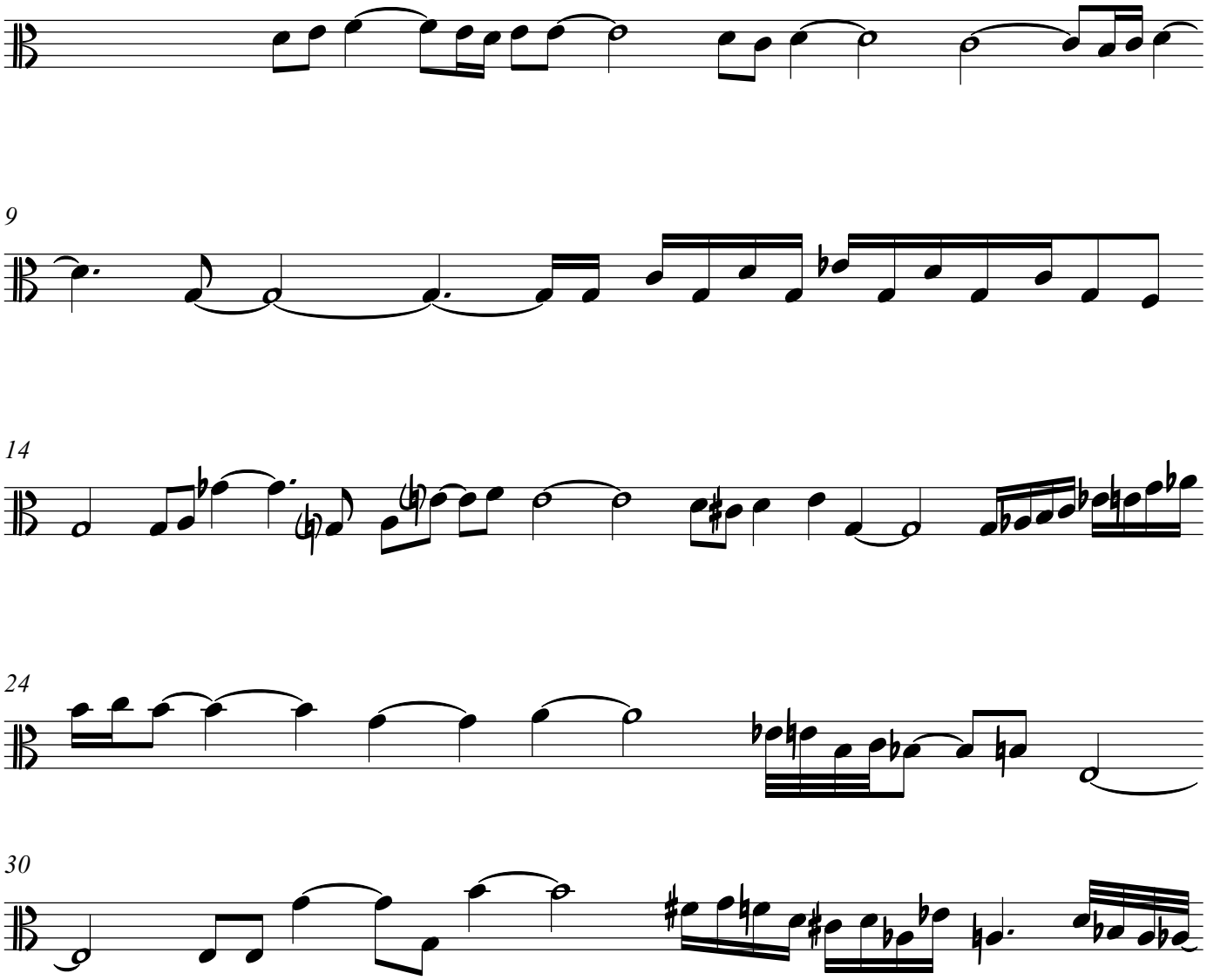
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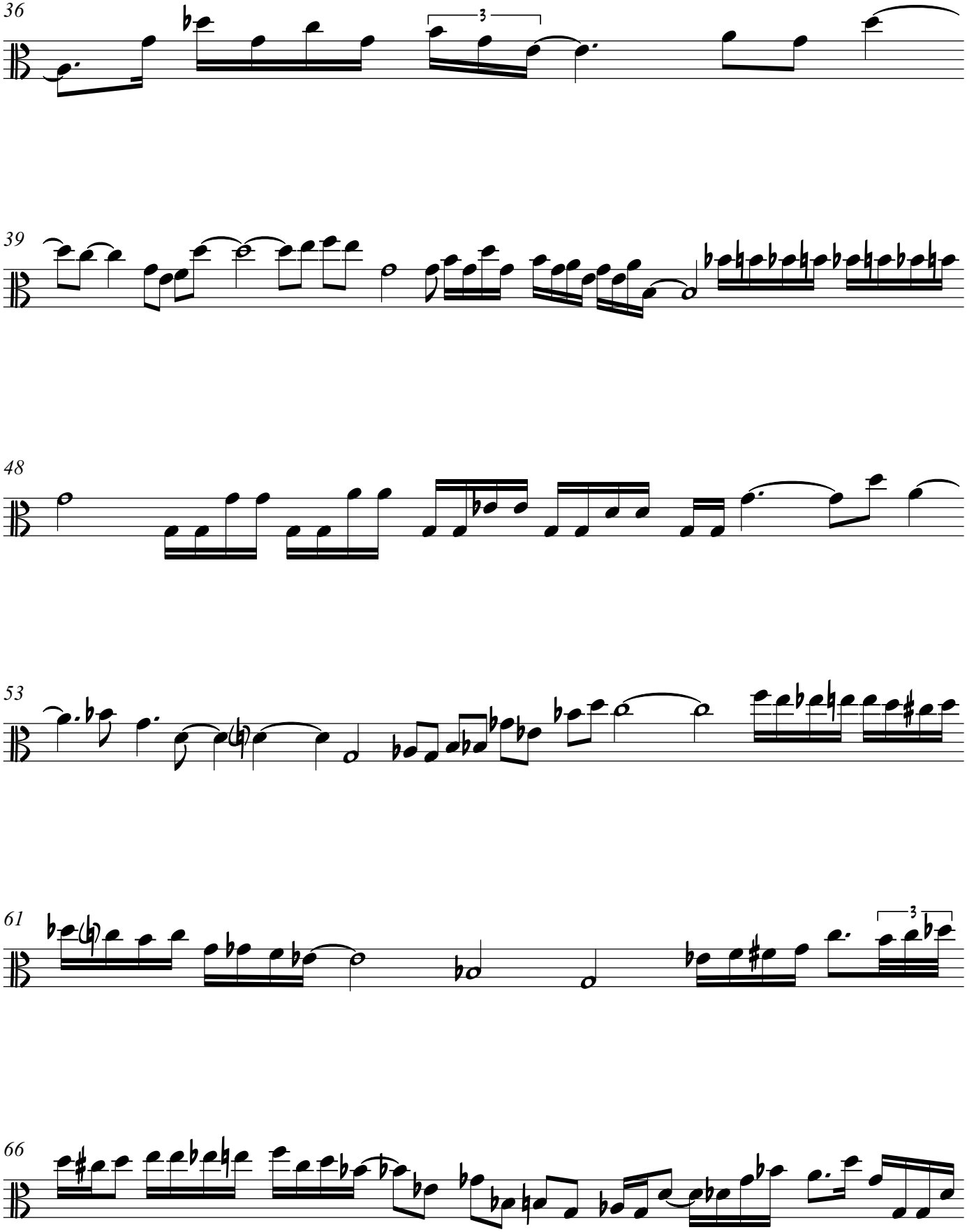
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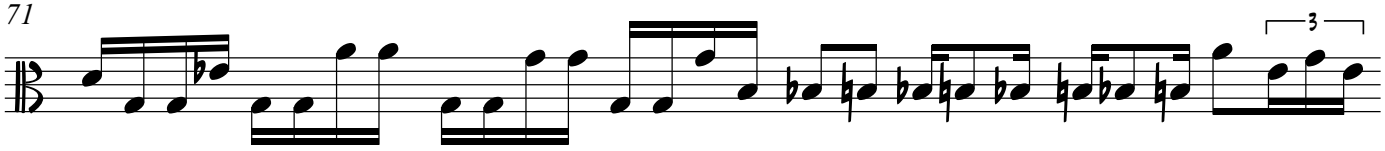
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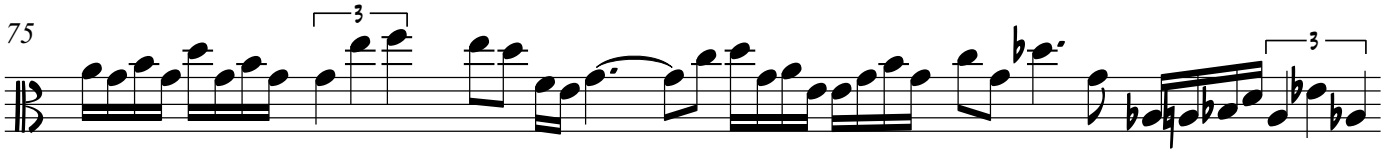
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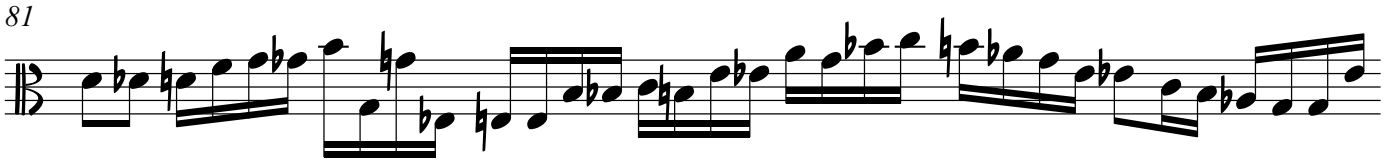
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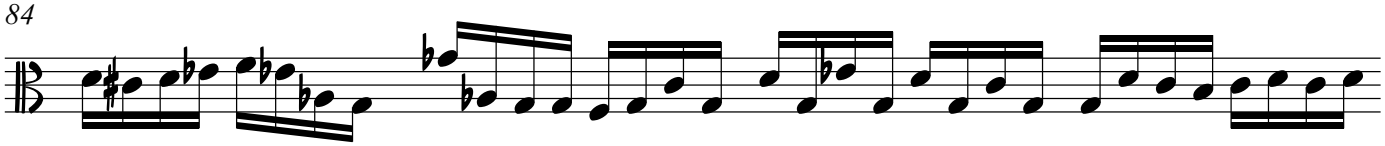
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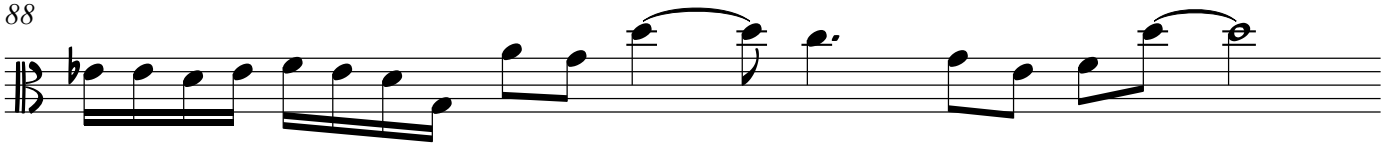

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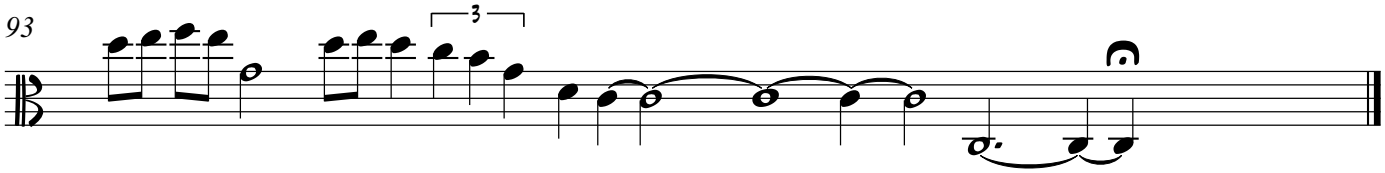

Cello

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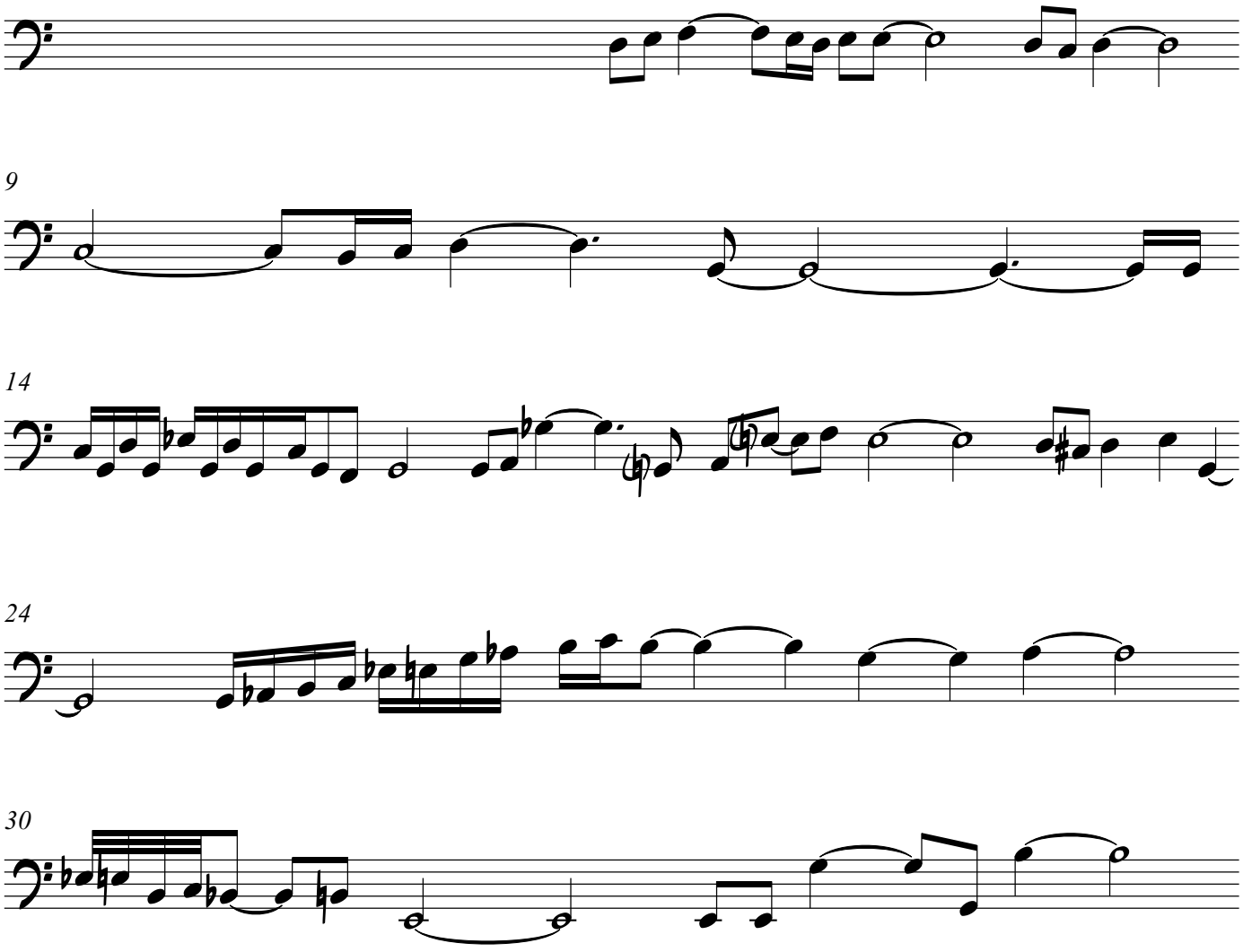
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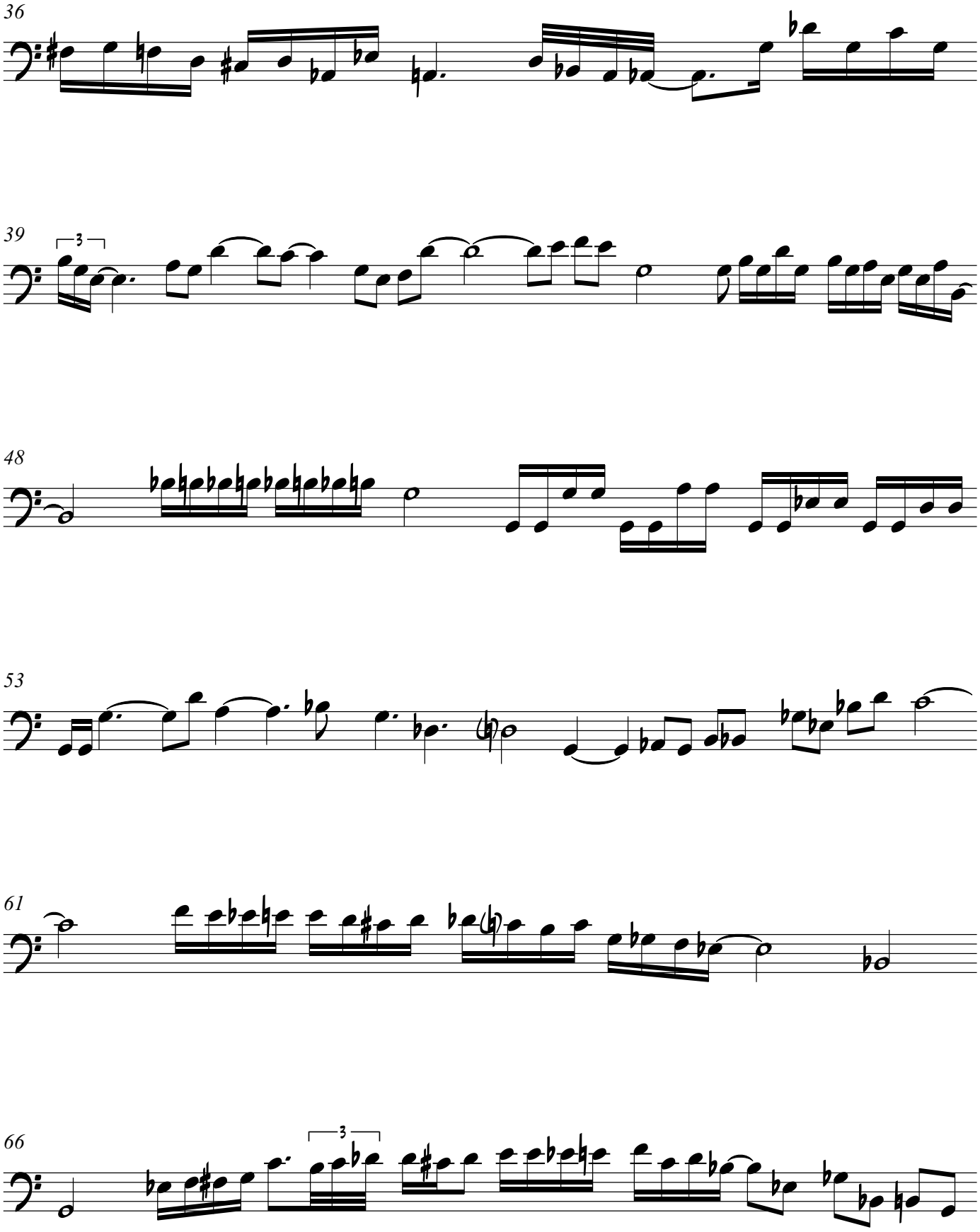
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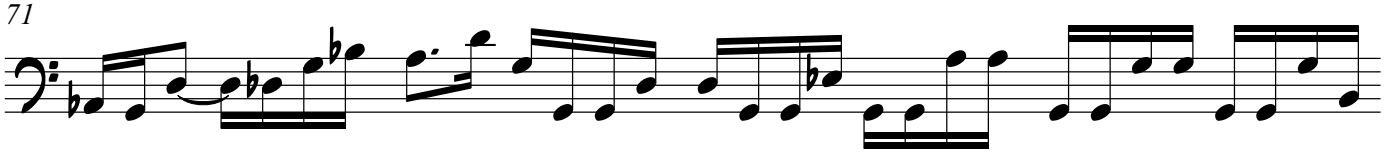

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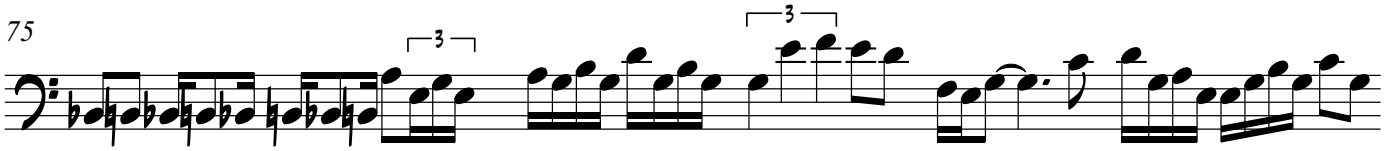

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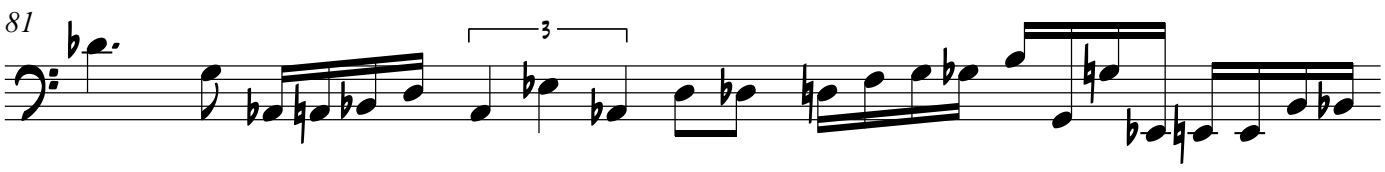

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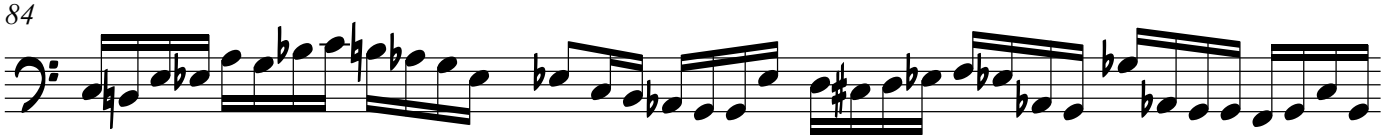
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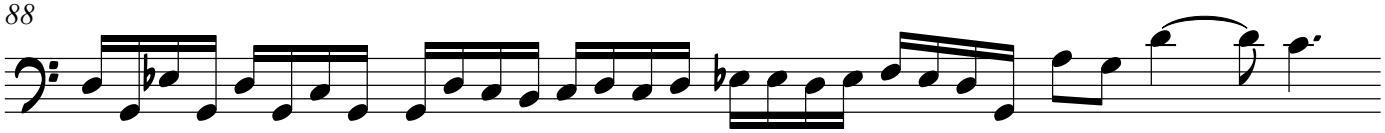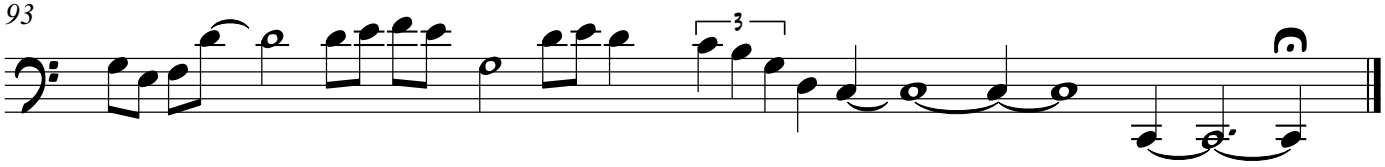
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