Two Songs from the Sacred Harp – Barbara Harbach

The Morning Trumpet for String Orchestra is based on the melody, "The Morning Trumpet," 1844, composed by Benjamin Franklin White (1800 - 1879), a singing master and compiler of the shape-note hymn book known as *The Sacred Harp*. Harbach has always been fascinated with early American hymn tunes, and set many of them throughout her compositions.

> Oh when shall I see Jesus,
> And reign with Him above,
> And shall hear the trumpet sound in the morning?
> And from the flowing fountain
> Drink everlasting love,
> And shall hear the trumpet sound in the morning?
>
> Chorus
> Shout, Oh glory! for I shall mount above the skies,
> When I hear the trumpet sound in the morning.

The Morning Trumpet for String Orchestra is a multi-sectional form. The first section alternates unison and lush chords. This leads into the second section with the poignant tune in the viola with a solo violin beginning its counter melody less than a half beat later with the lower strings softly pizzicato. The cello takes over for the second half of the verse, and then the viola finishes with the melody of the chorus. The opening material returns leading into the first fugue with the melody taken from the first phrase of the hymn tune. All but the double bass participate in the fugue. A short transitional section precedes a new statement of the chorus with the melody in the violas and cellos. A new fugue begins with the entrances two beats apart in a stretto manner. Unison writing alternating with chords returns before a short coda quotes the first and last phrases of the hymn.

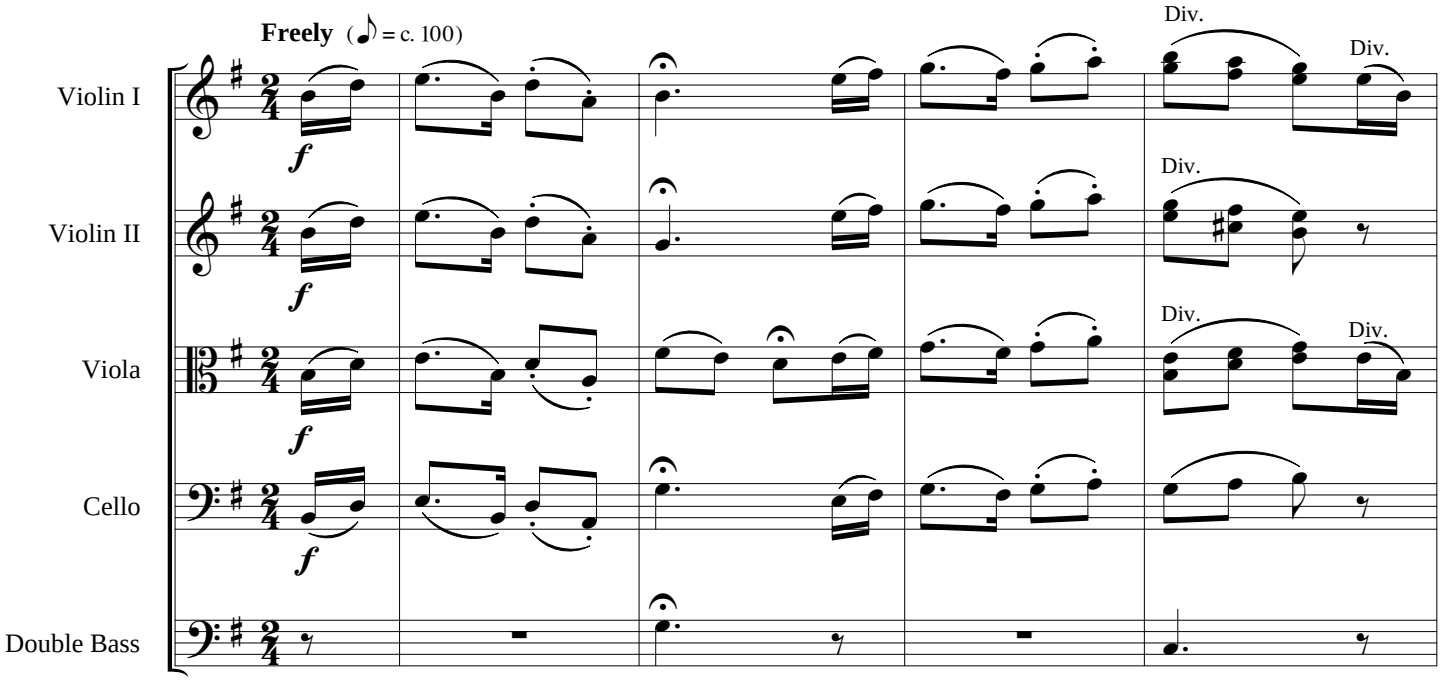
Early American composer, William Billings (1746-1800), wrote the tune **Chester** with his own patriotic text and it became unofficially national anthem of the American Revolution. In music, he was largely self-taught, a tanner by trade. His New England Psalm-Singer (1770) was the first collection of music entirely by an American

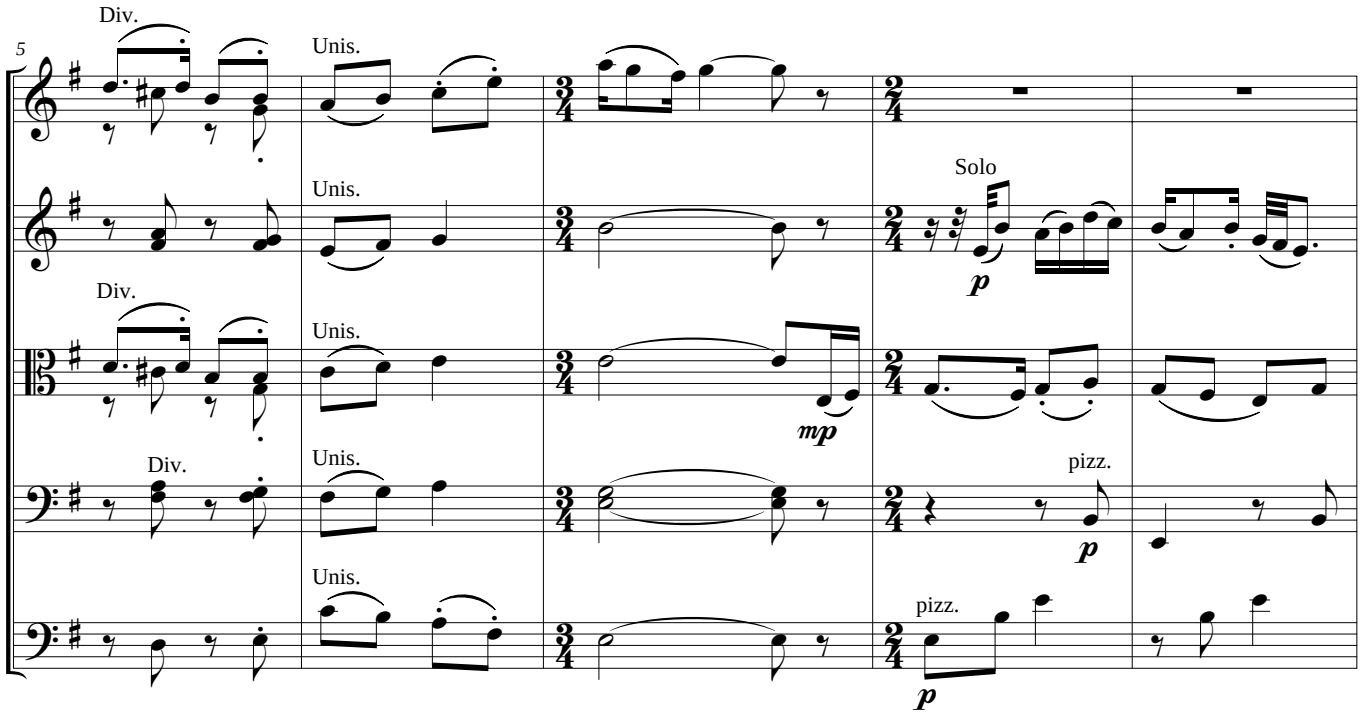
> Let tyrants shake their iron rods. And slavery clank her galling chains.
> We fear them not, We trust in God. New England's God forever reigns.
>
> The foe comes on with haughty stride, our troops advance with martial noise,
> Their veterans flee before our youth, and generals yield to beardless boys

Two Songs From the Sacred Harp
for String Orchestra

I. The Morning Trumpet

B.F. WHITE (1800-1879)
BARBARA HARBACH





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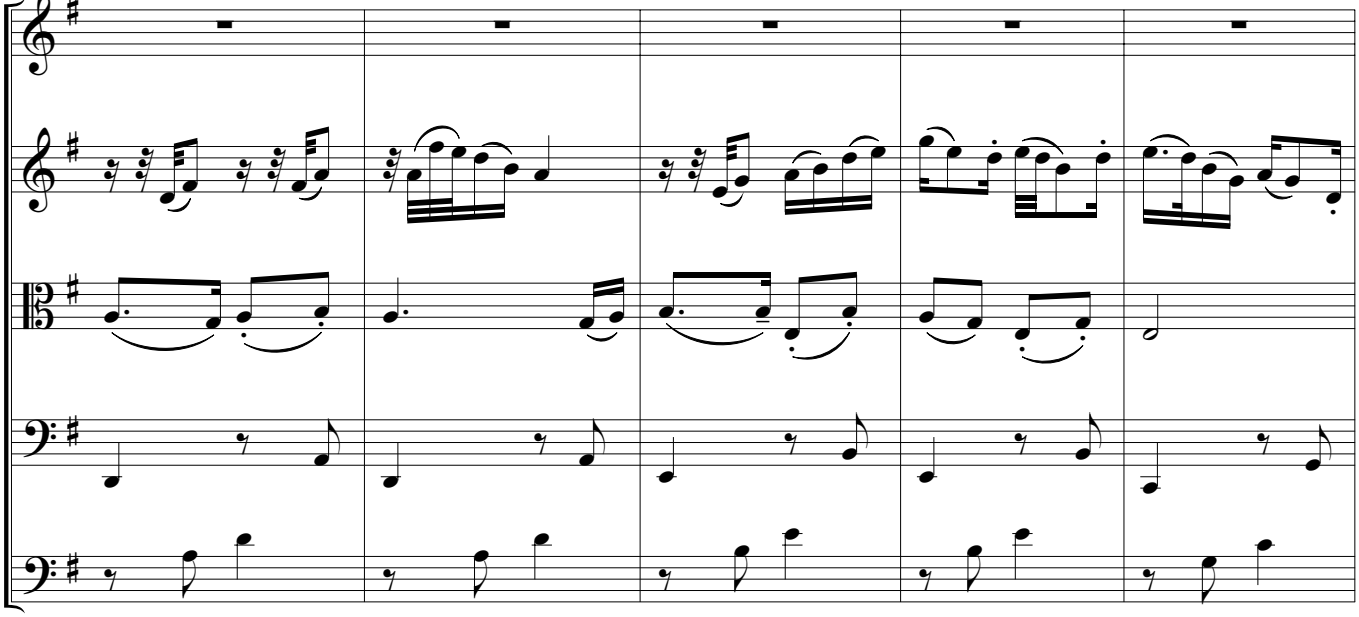

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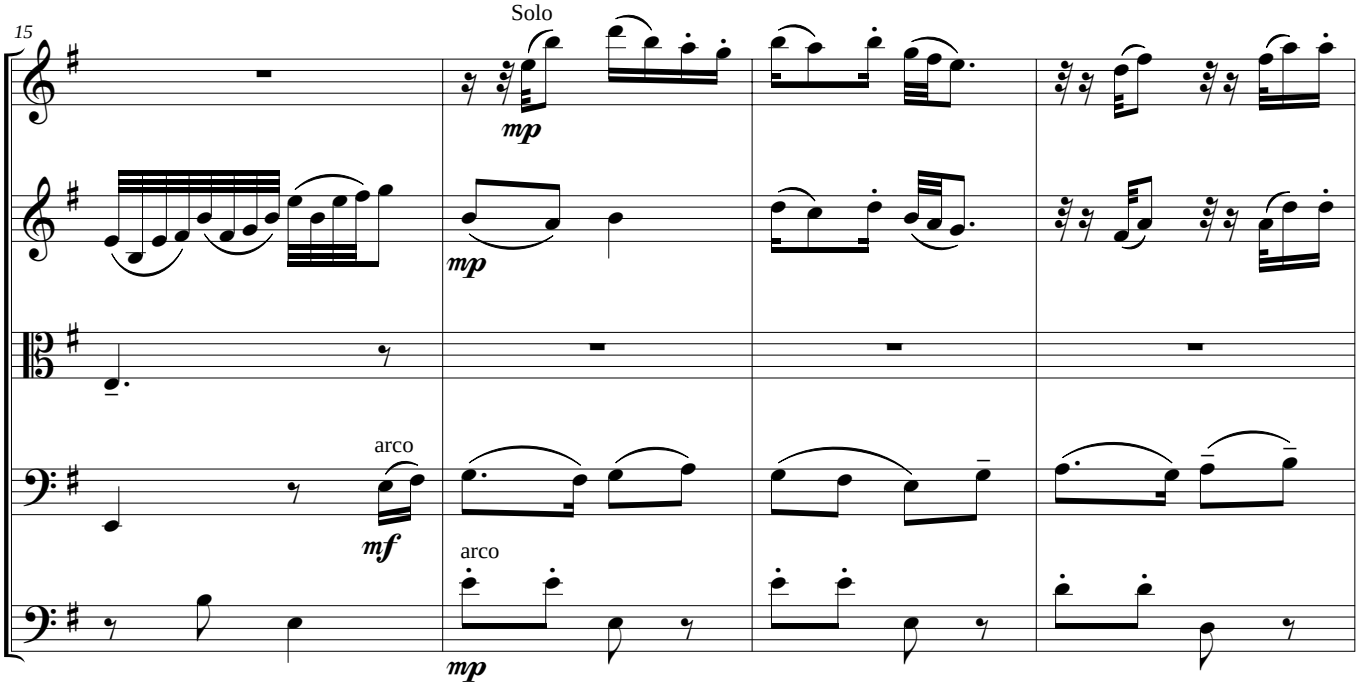
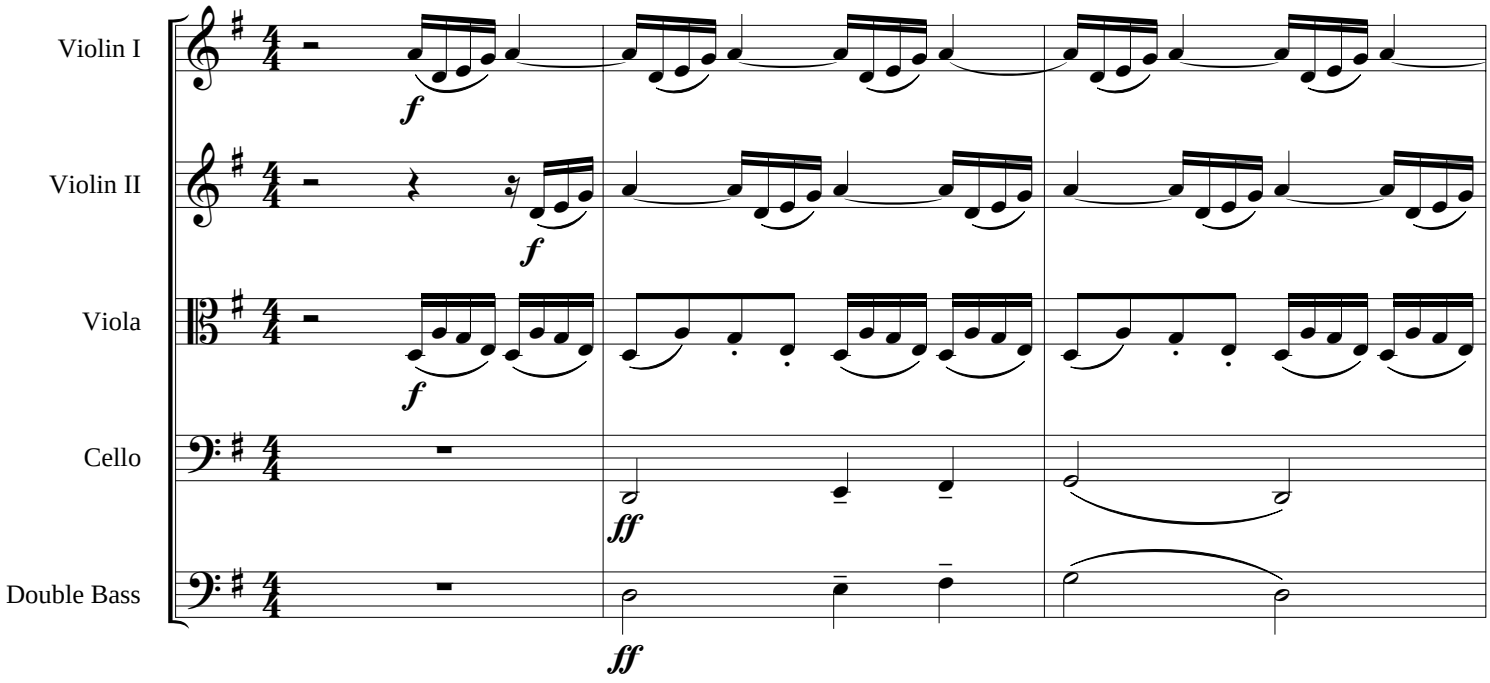
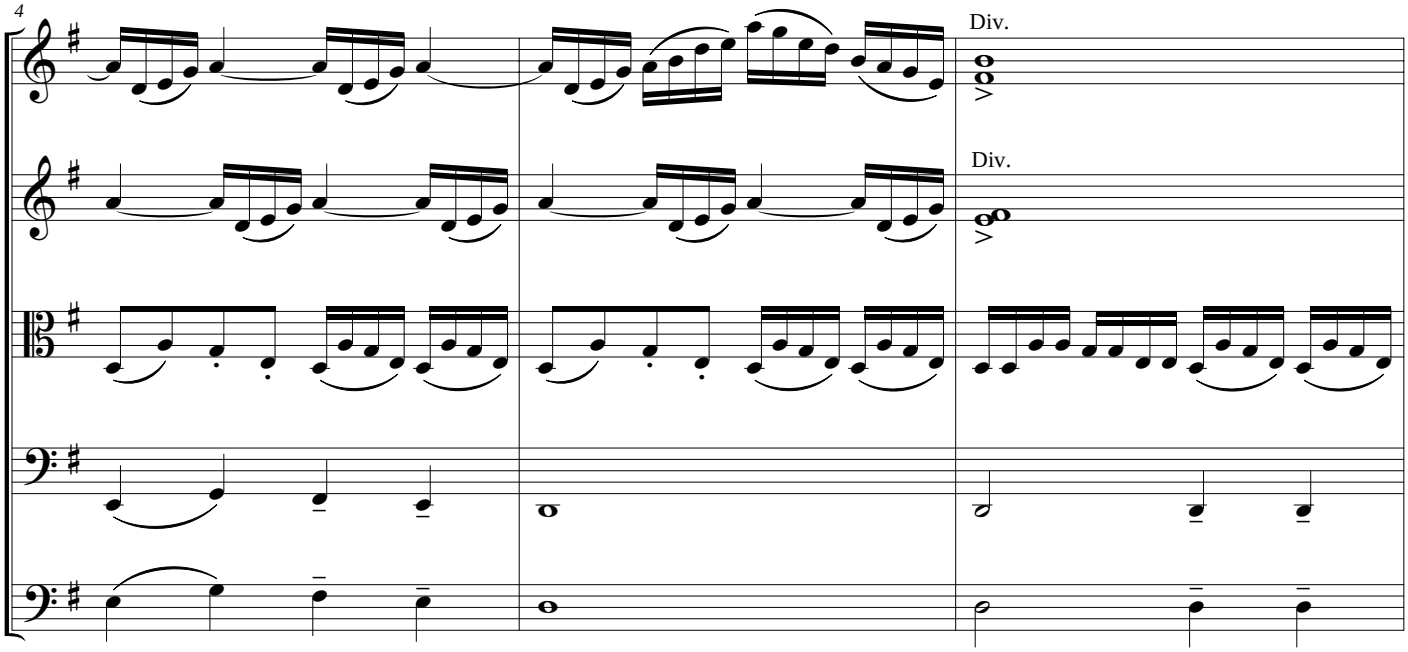


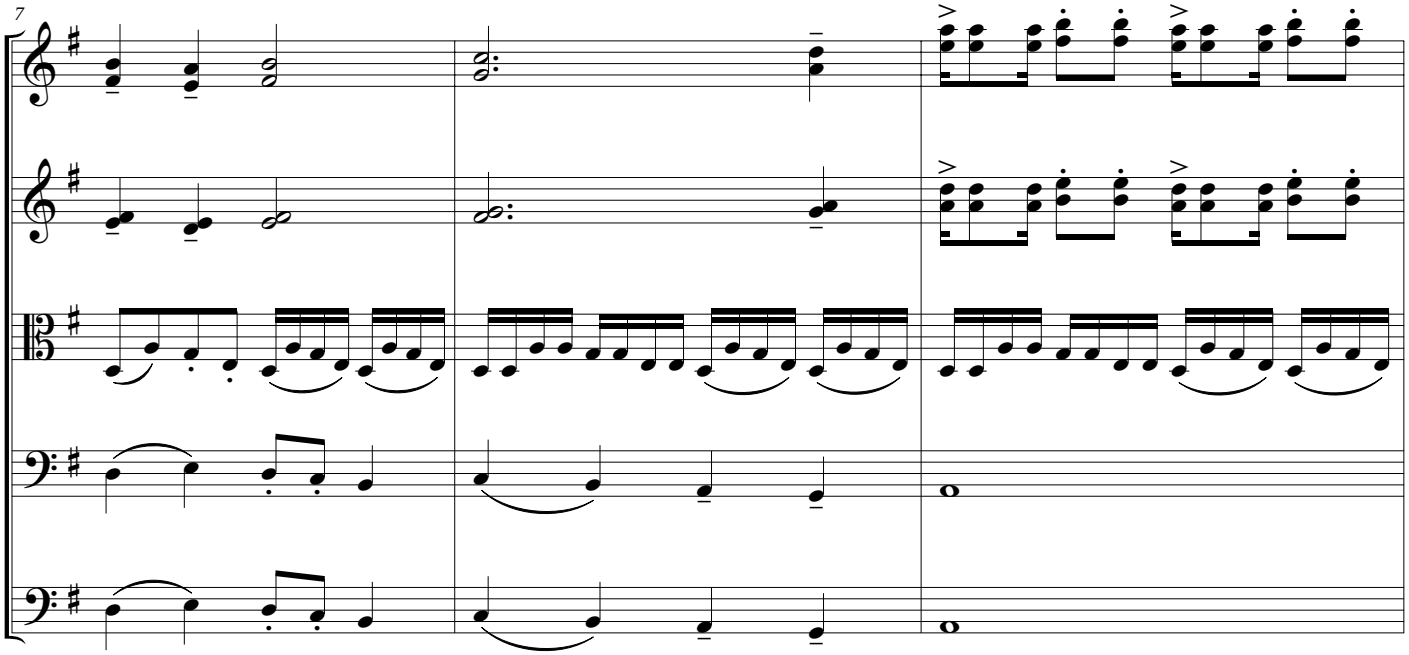
II. Chester

WILLIAM BILLINGS 1746-1800
BARBARA HARBACH

Vivace (♩ = c. 116)



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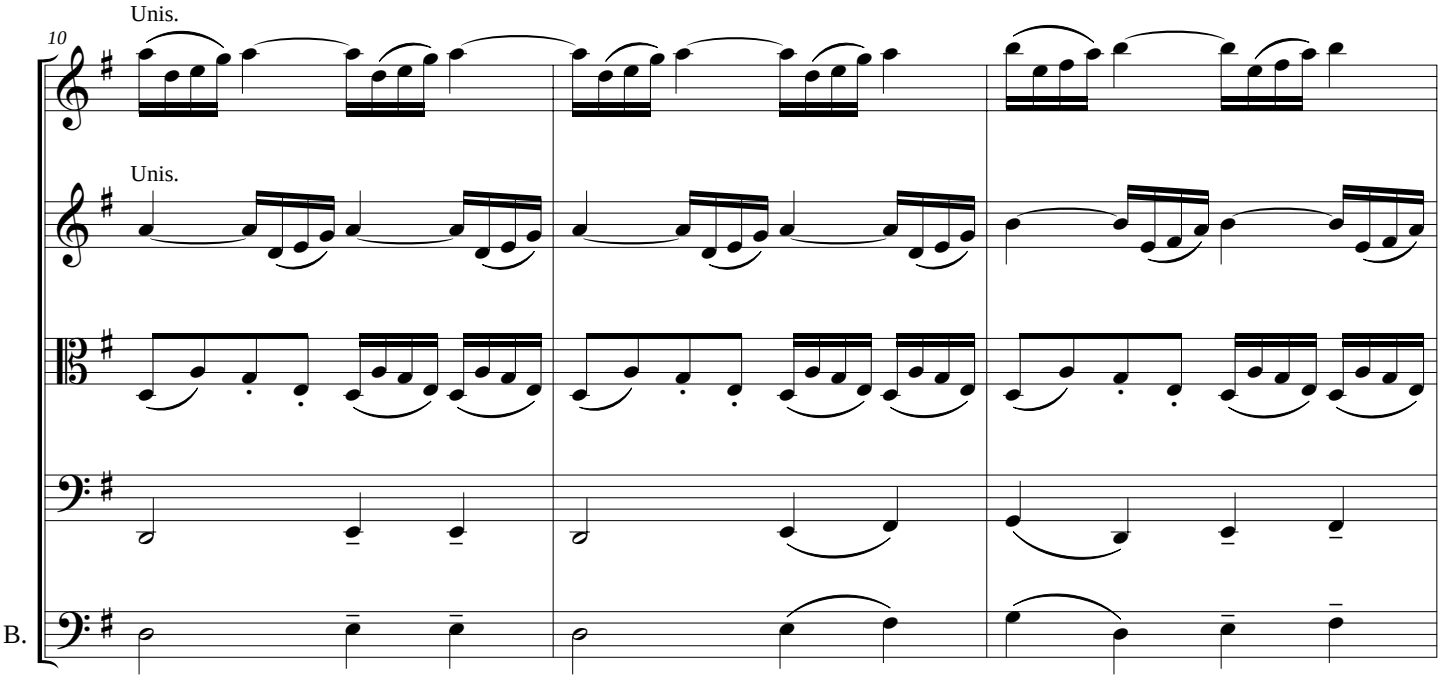
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