Marc Sabat

John Jenkins

music for 2-manual harpsichord and six instruments
in 5-limit Just Intonation
based on Johann Sebastian Bach's
Ricercar a 6 from Musikalisches Opfer, BWV 1079

PLAINSOUND MUSIC EDITION

to Wolfgang von Schweinitz
with greatest appreciation and friendship

John Jenkins (2001/2011)

music for 2-manual harpsichord and six instruments in 5-limit Just Intonation
based on Johann Sebastian Bach's Ricercar a 6 from Musikalisches Opfer, BWV 1079

commissioned with the assistance of the Canada Council
by Continuum (Toronto) & Evenings of New Music (Bratislava)

The musical material has been taken from Johann Sebastian Bach's Ricercar a 6 in Musikalisches Opfer, BWV 1079 (1747), mm. 29-103 (all but the exposition). Bach's original pitches and durations remain for the most part unaltered, but their vertical relations have been disturbed by presenting the individual notes largely in sequential (rather than simultaneous) order. Like an unfolded architectural diagram, the resulting melodic material retraces Bach's harmonic and motivic constructions as a kind of projection onto two dimensions. This music (contained in its entirety in the keyboard part) undergoes a second projection back into the six non-keyboard instrumental parts, which may be realised by any six appropriately registered instruments of flexible tuning. Each of these parts largely retains its original pitches from the Bach, separated by silences, producing a new music in hocketed correlation with the other five parts.

This transformation of Bach's music has been notated in 5-limit Just Intonation based on a lattice of interlocking pure fifths and thirds, allowing all intervals between pitches to be exactly tuned by ear. This *intonation* is written up using the Extended Helmholtz-Ellis JI Pitch Notation, developed by Marc Sabat and Wolfgang von Schweinitz. A diagram of the pitches used, and a legend of the notation, are provided below. In the 2011 revised version, an additional "sotto voce" shadow music of sustained tones has been composed to facilitate the tuning of pitches by mostly simple JI consonances. The instruments should shift as smoothly as possible between the playing of foreground and background pitches (indicated by small noteheads), helping each other play as a purely tuned consort.

John Jenkins (1592-1678) was an English composer who wrote primarily instrumental consort music, often originally intended for home performances by amateur musicians. Unlike many other composers, who were in the employ of royal courts and/or the Church, Jenkins spent much of his life working privately for various families in remote country houses of eastern England. He is also known as the inventor of the "lyra consort", an exotic mixed ensemble consisting of violin, lyra viol, bass viol, theorbo, and harpsichord.

The melody is to be expressively phrased, with an abundance of local detail. The general sensibility is ornate and Baroque, with great attention to the collectively created phrases. Vibrato should be used very sparingly. Tones connected by slurs are to be played as a single connected gesture. A comma just before a note indicates the beginning of a new phrase; immediately after a note, or before a rest, it indicates the end of a phrase. Dynamics and articulations have been written to suggest and facilitate the natural flow of phrases, and may be interpreted freely by agreement of the performers.

John Jenkins was written at the request of Jennifer Waring (for Continuum, Toronto) and Daniel Matej (for Musica Aeterna, performing at the 2000 Bratislava Evenings of New Music). It was commissioned with the assistance of the Canada Council for the Arts.

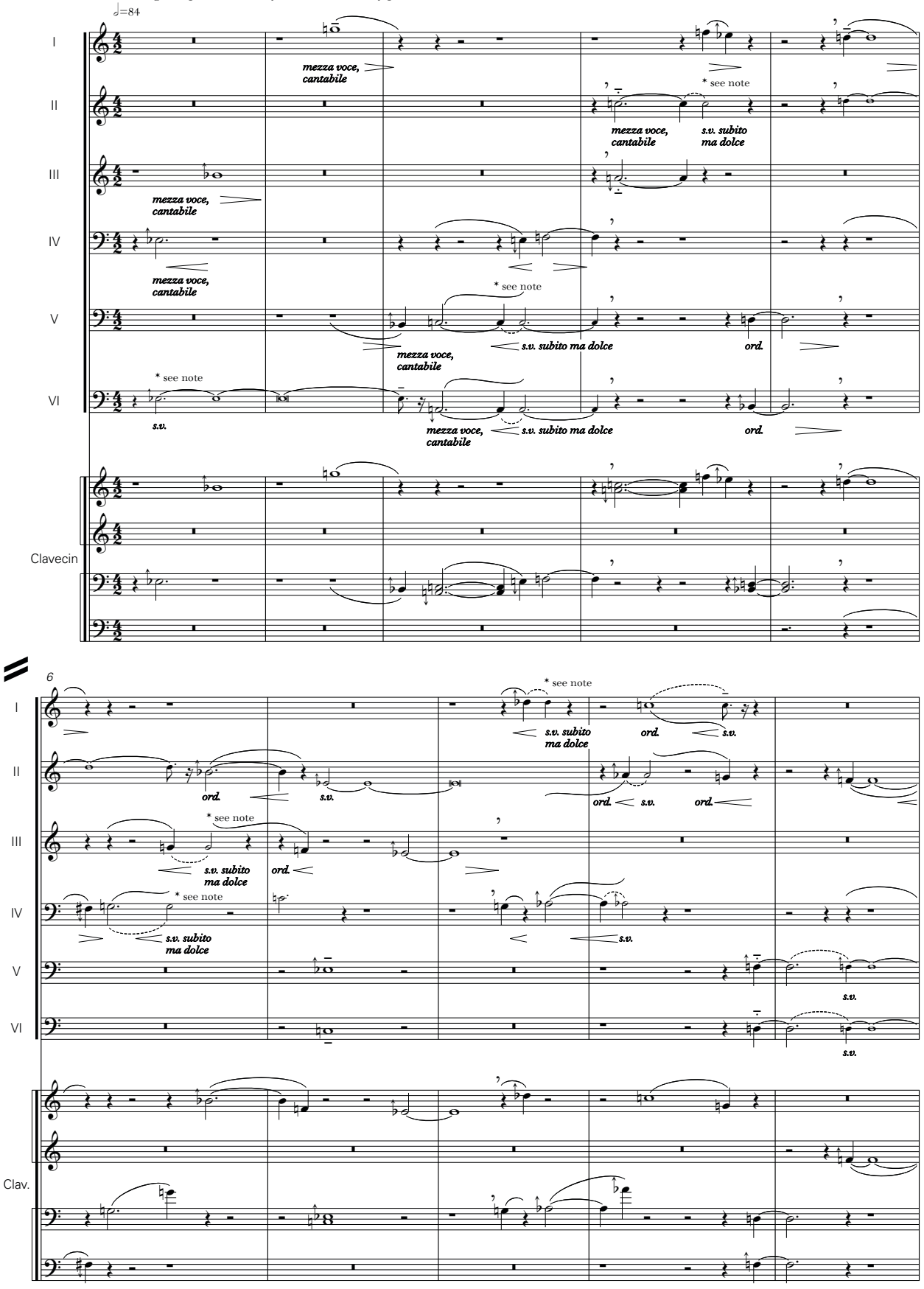
Berlin, 24 January 2011

Full Score (in C)

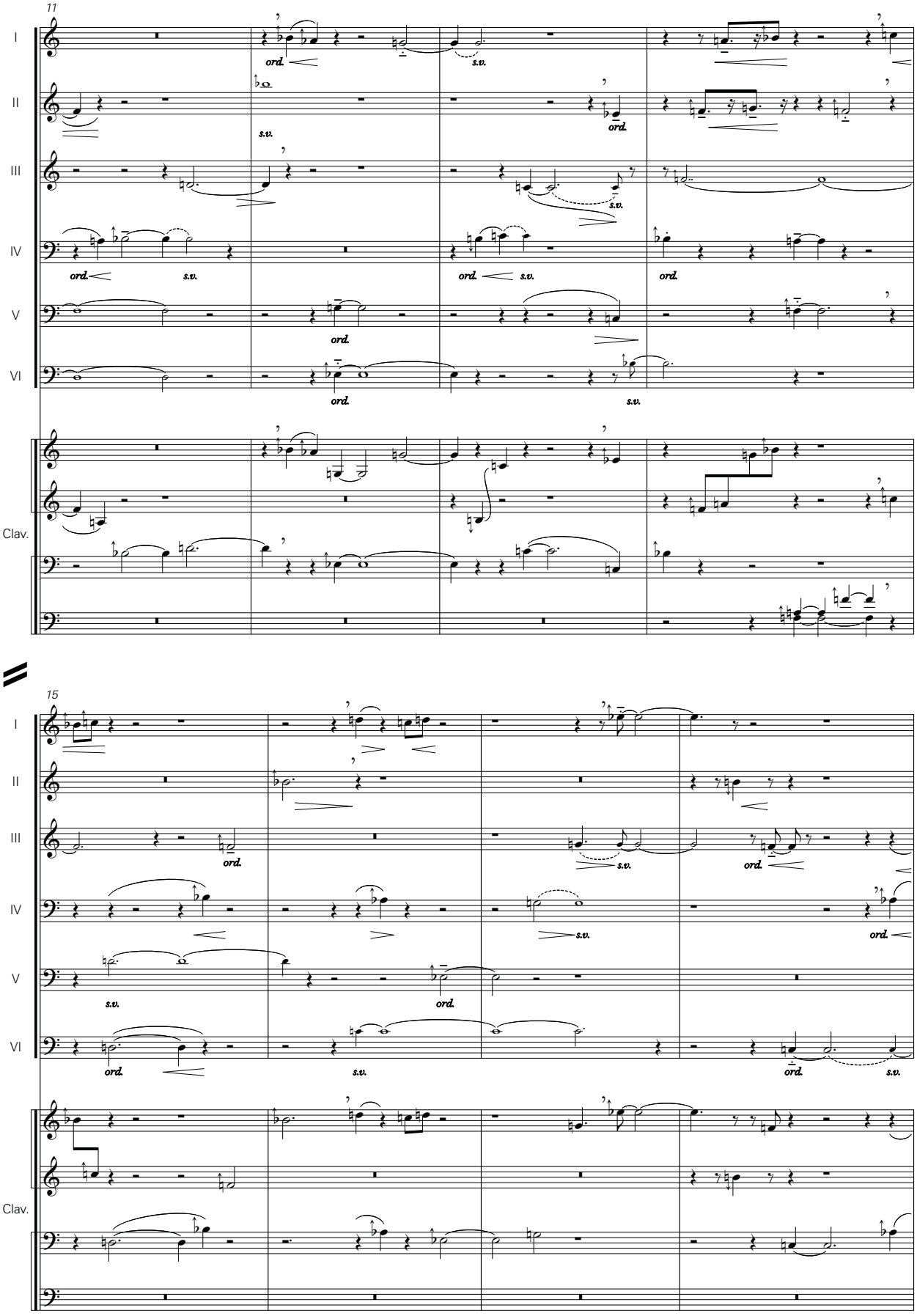
John Jenkins

Flowing and precise, exactly tuned and sweetly phrased

Marc Sabat



* small notes always sotto voce, like shadows, connected smoothly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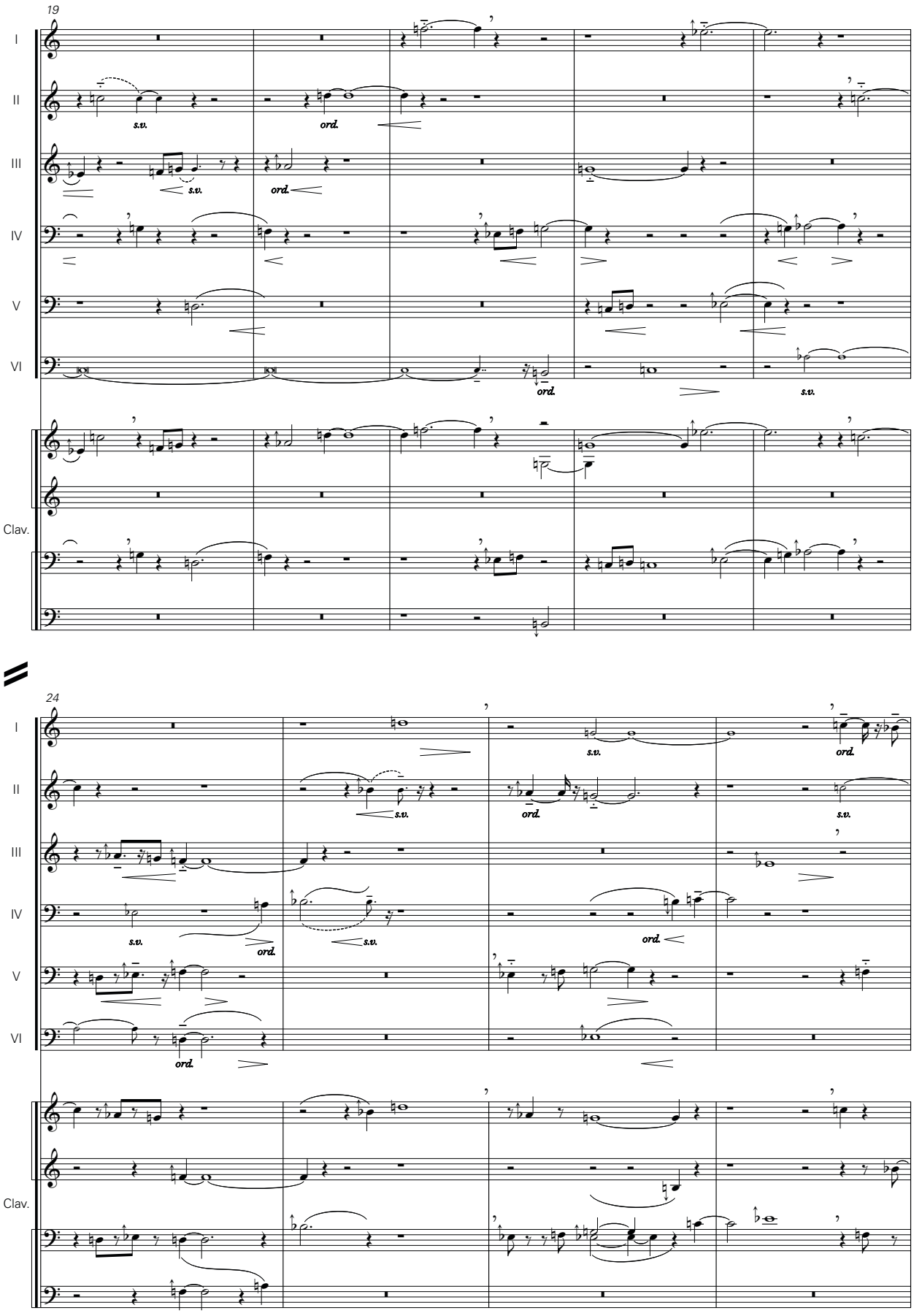
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
Clav.
ord.
s.v.
15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I
II
III
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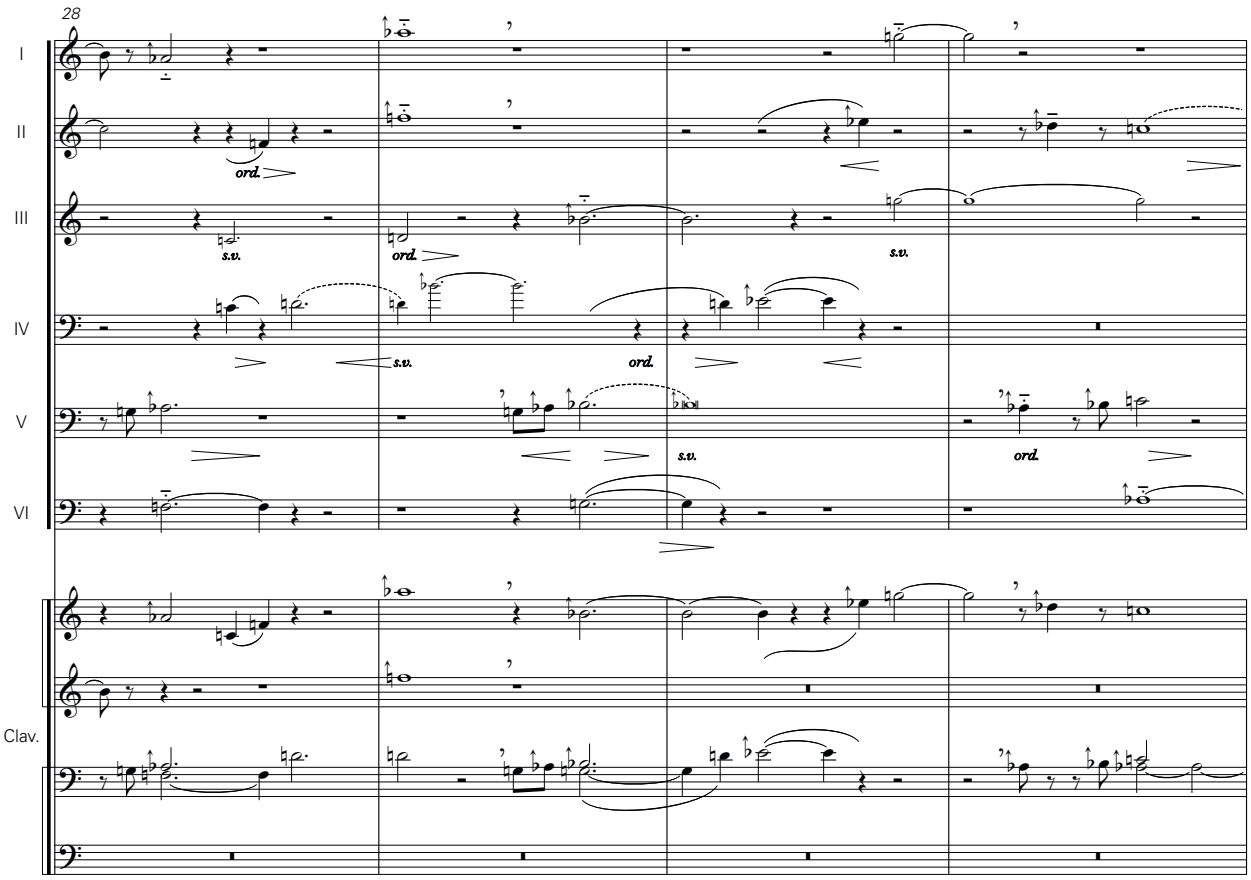
V
VI
Clav.
s.v.
ord.
24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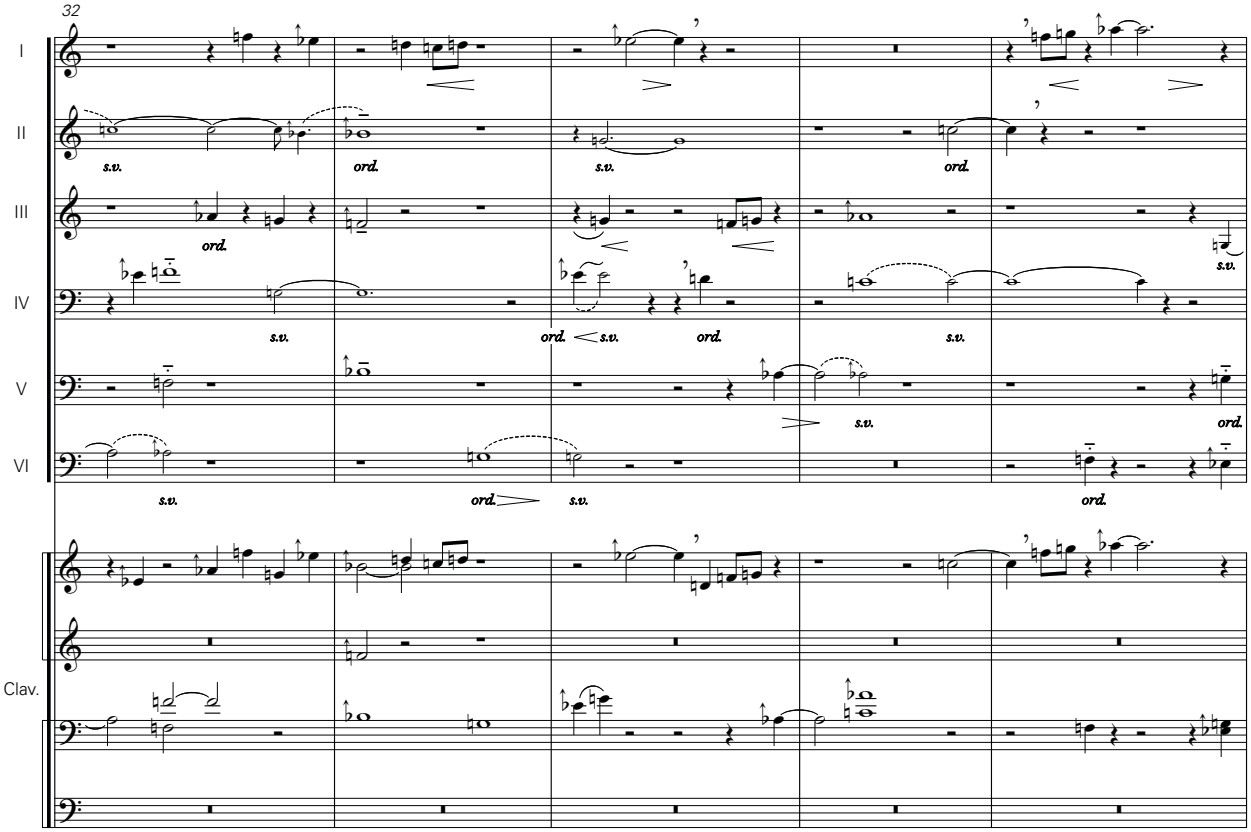
VI
Clav.
ord.
s.v.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II
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V
VI
Clav.
s.v.
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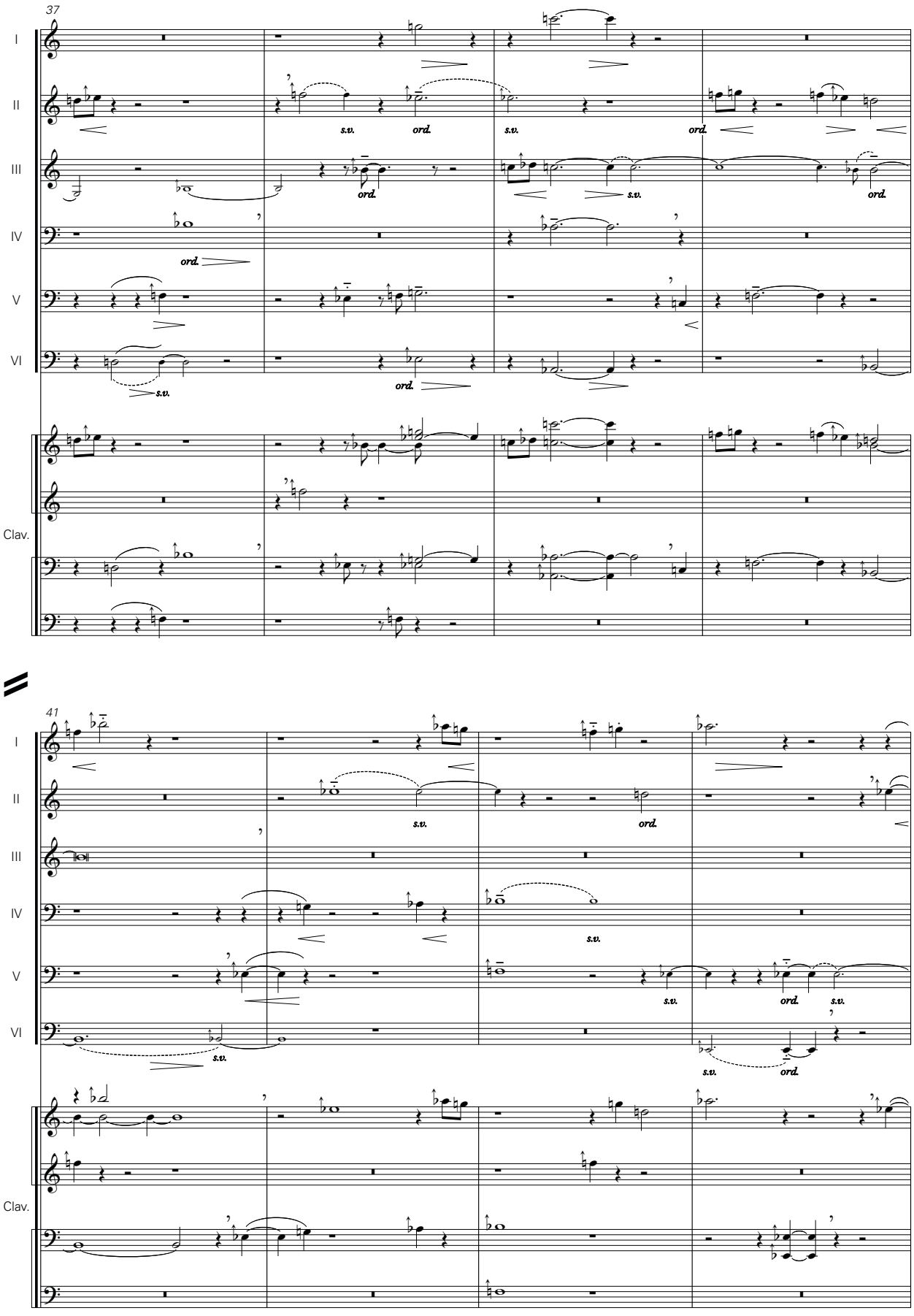
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Clav.
s.v.
ord.
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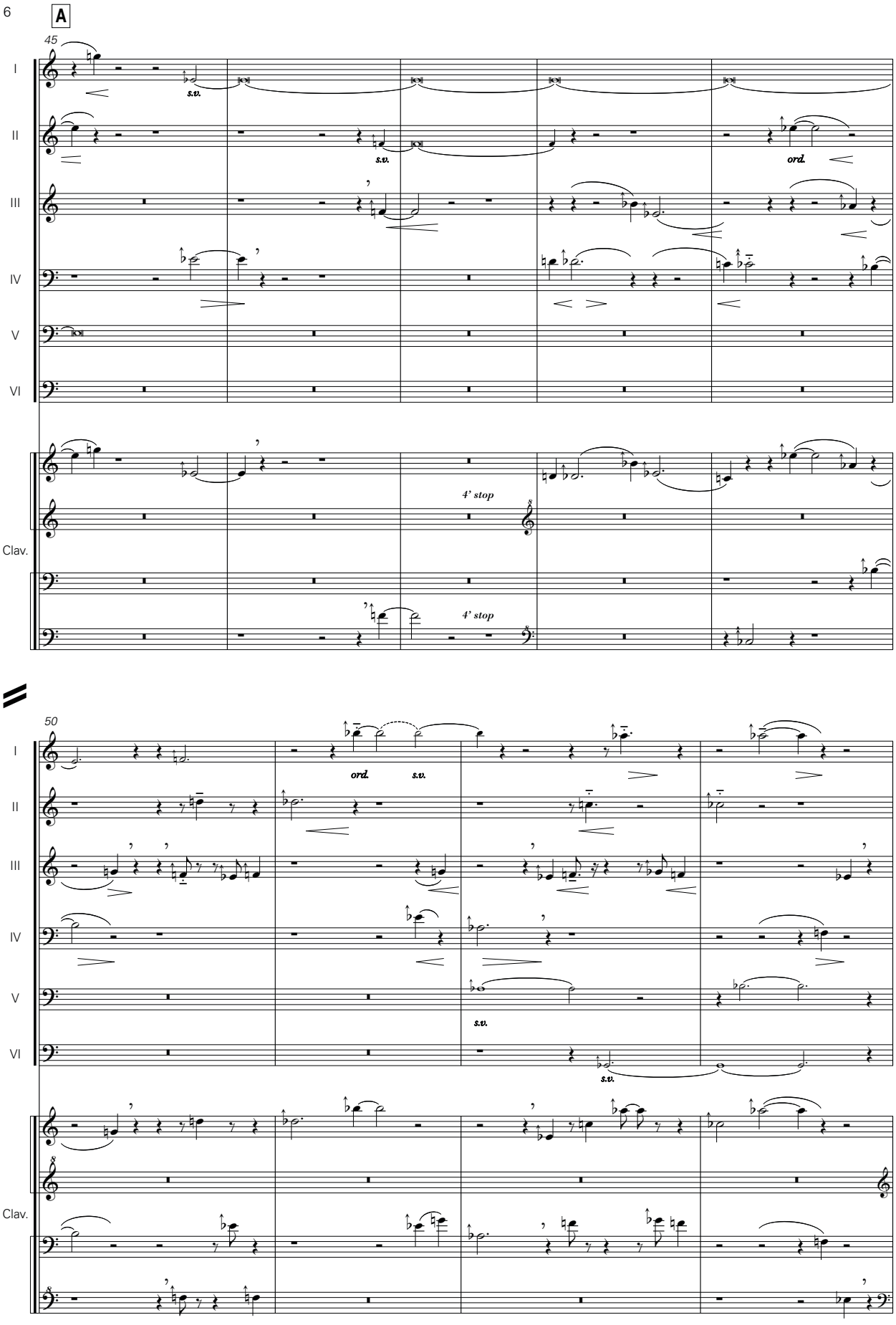
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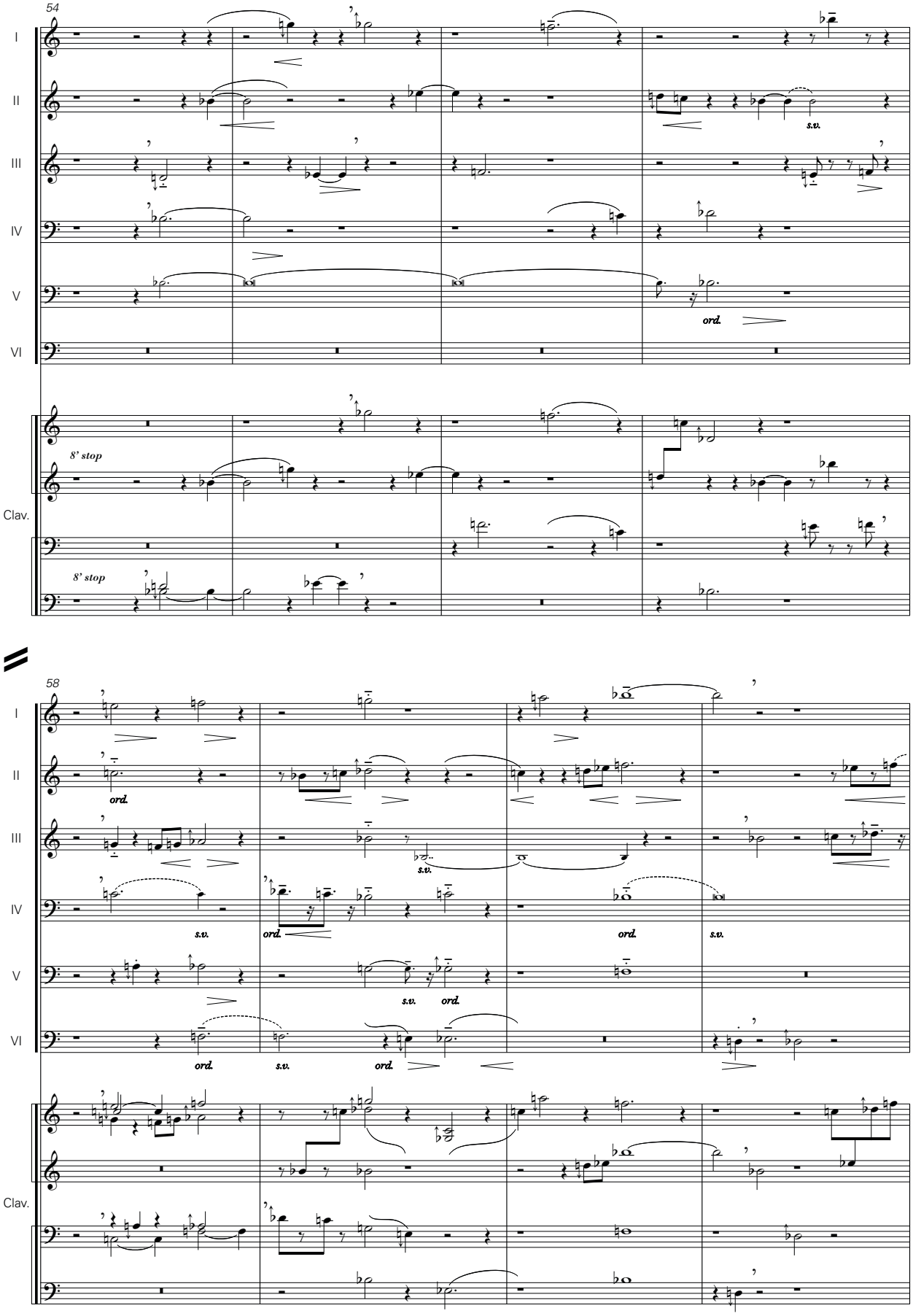
s.v.
ord.
4' stop
50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I
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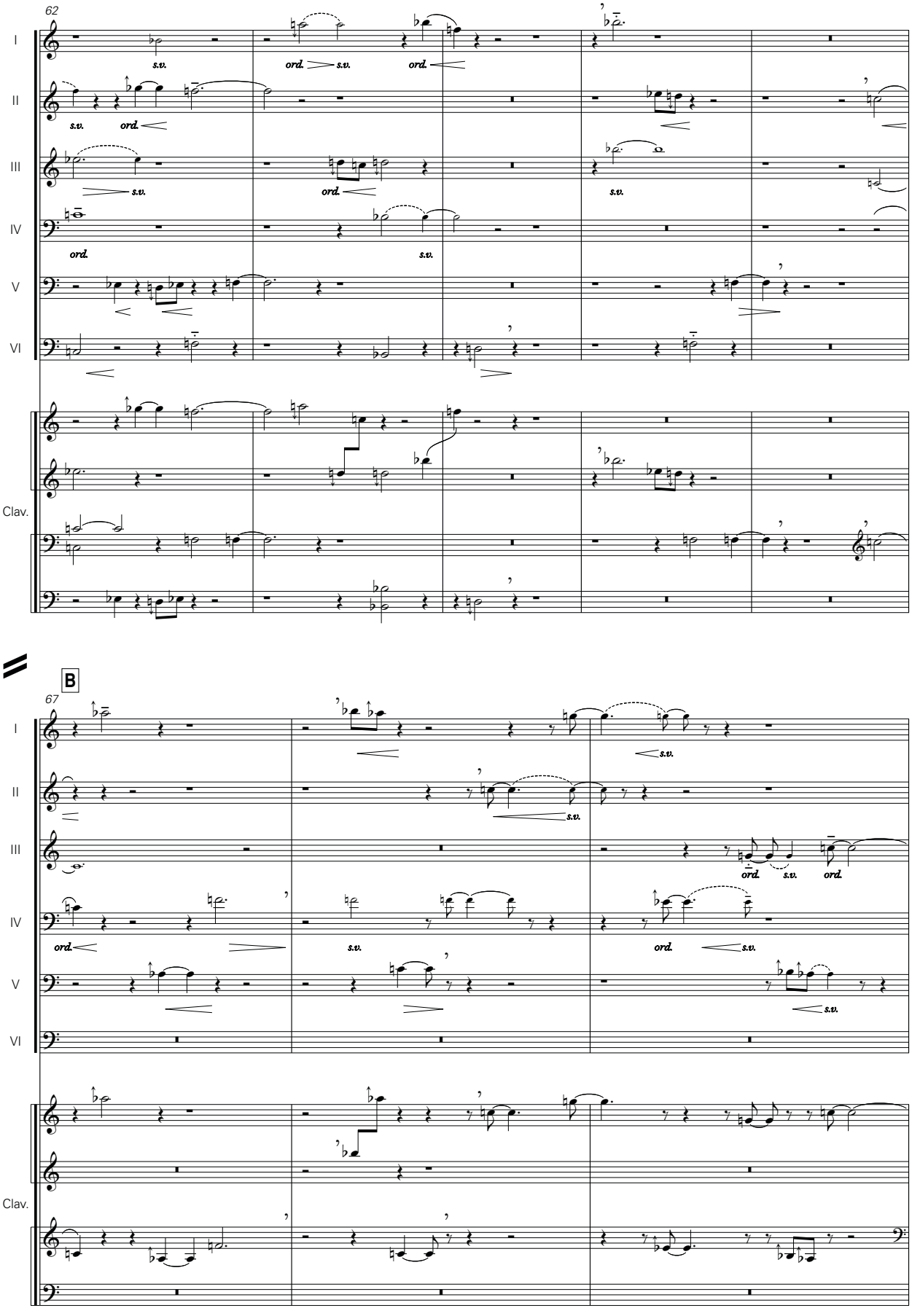
III
IV
V
VI
s.v.
ord.
8' stop
Clav.
8' stop
58
ord.
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
ord.
Clav.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I
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IV
V
VI
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s.v.
ord.
B
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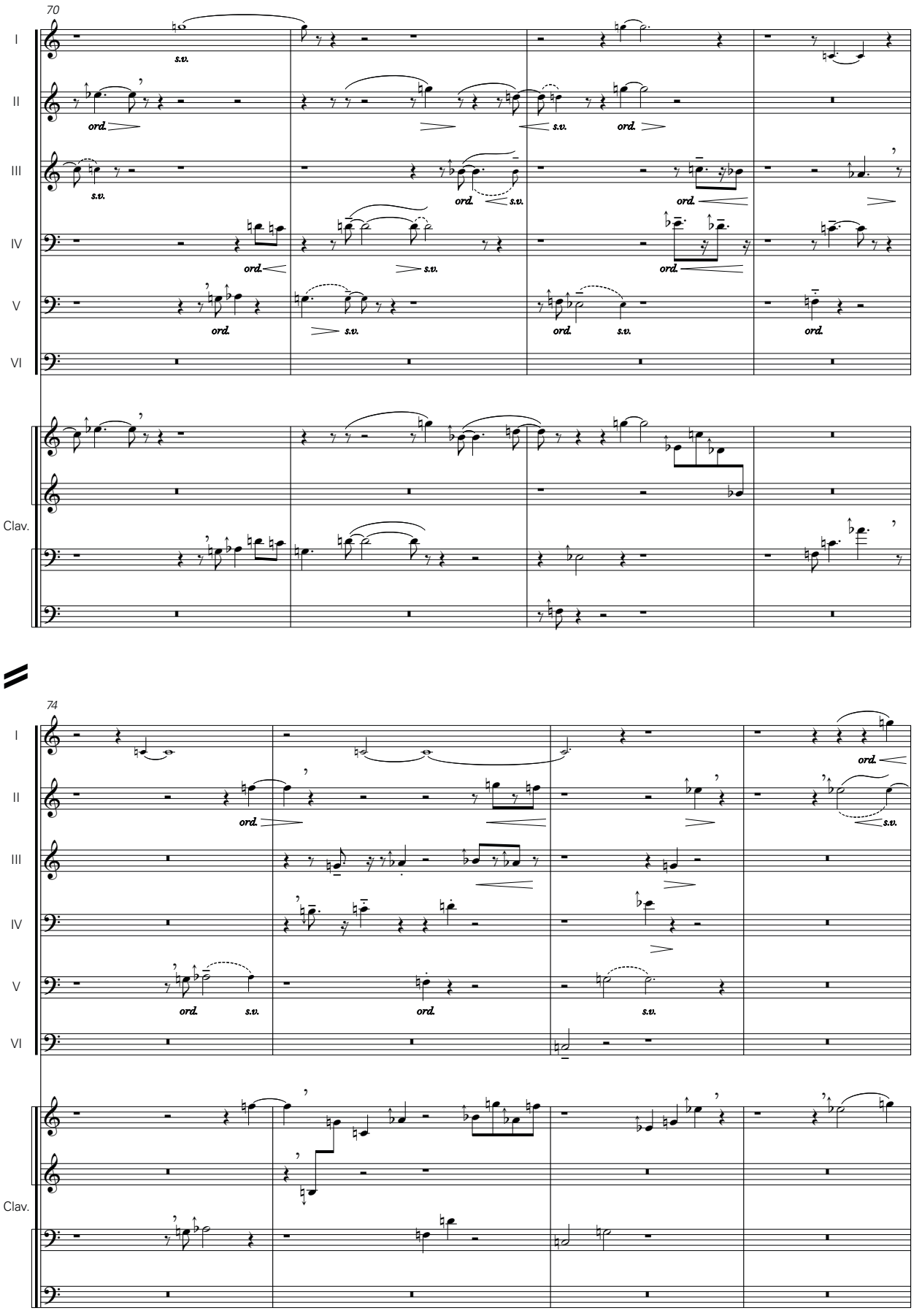
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s.v.
ord.
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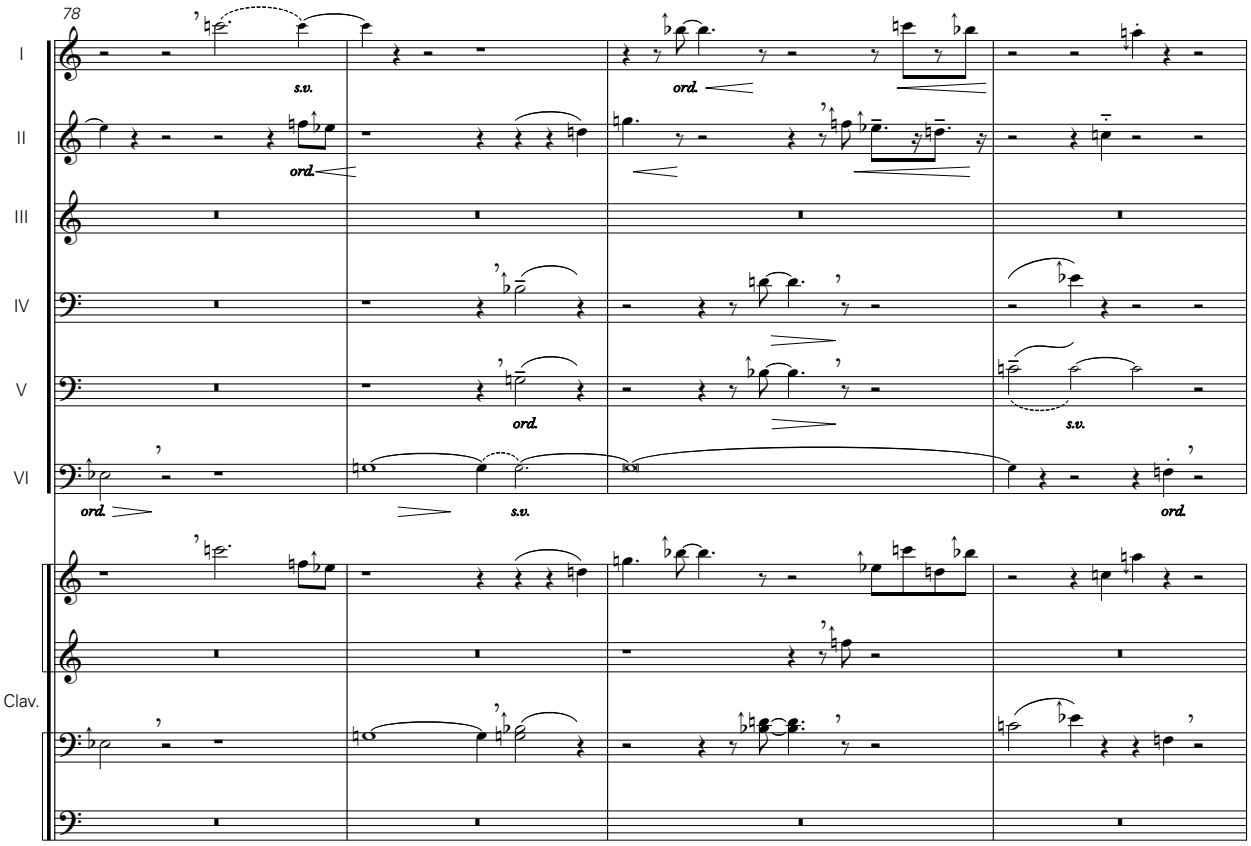
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Clav.
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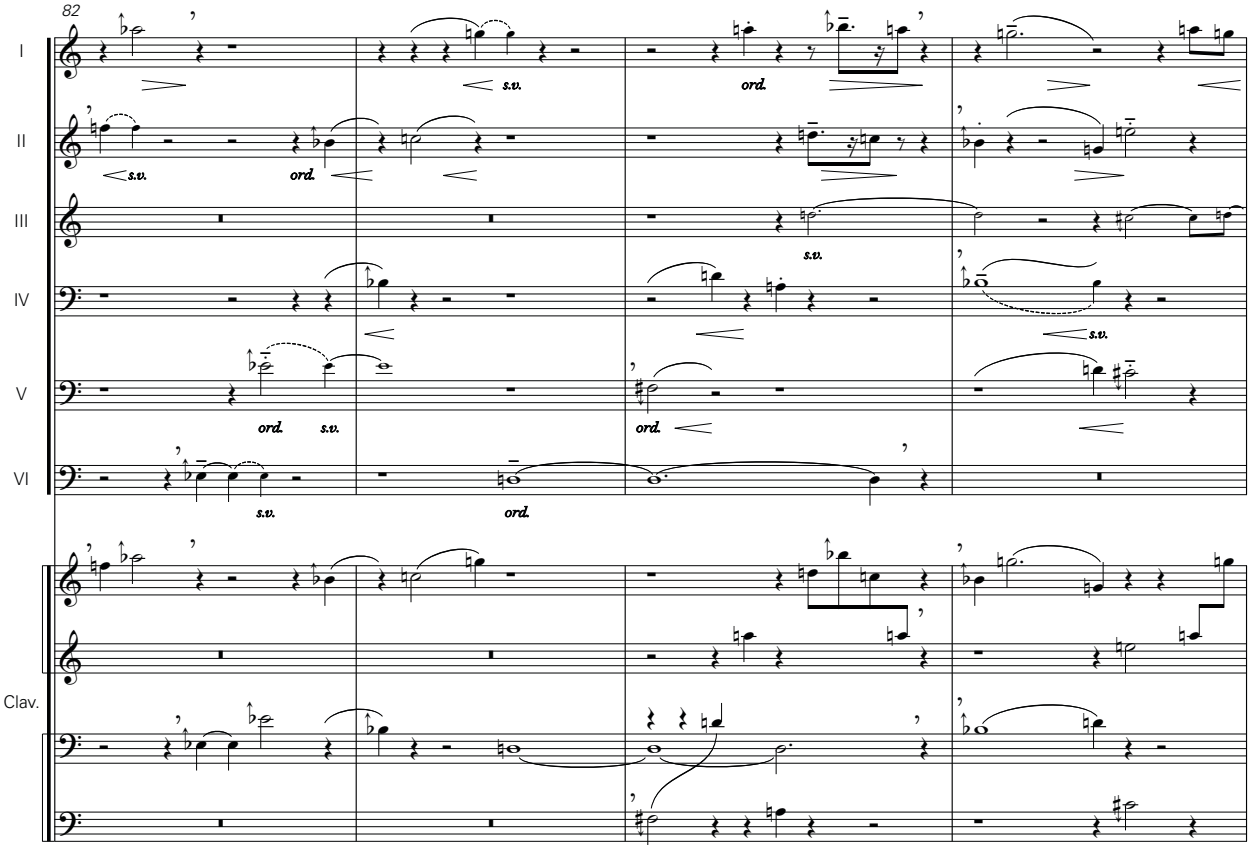
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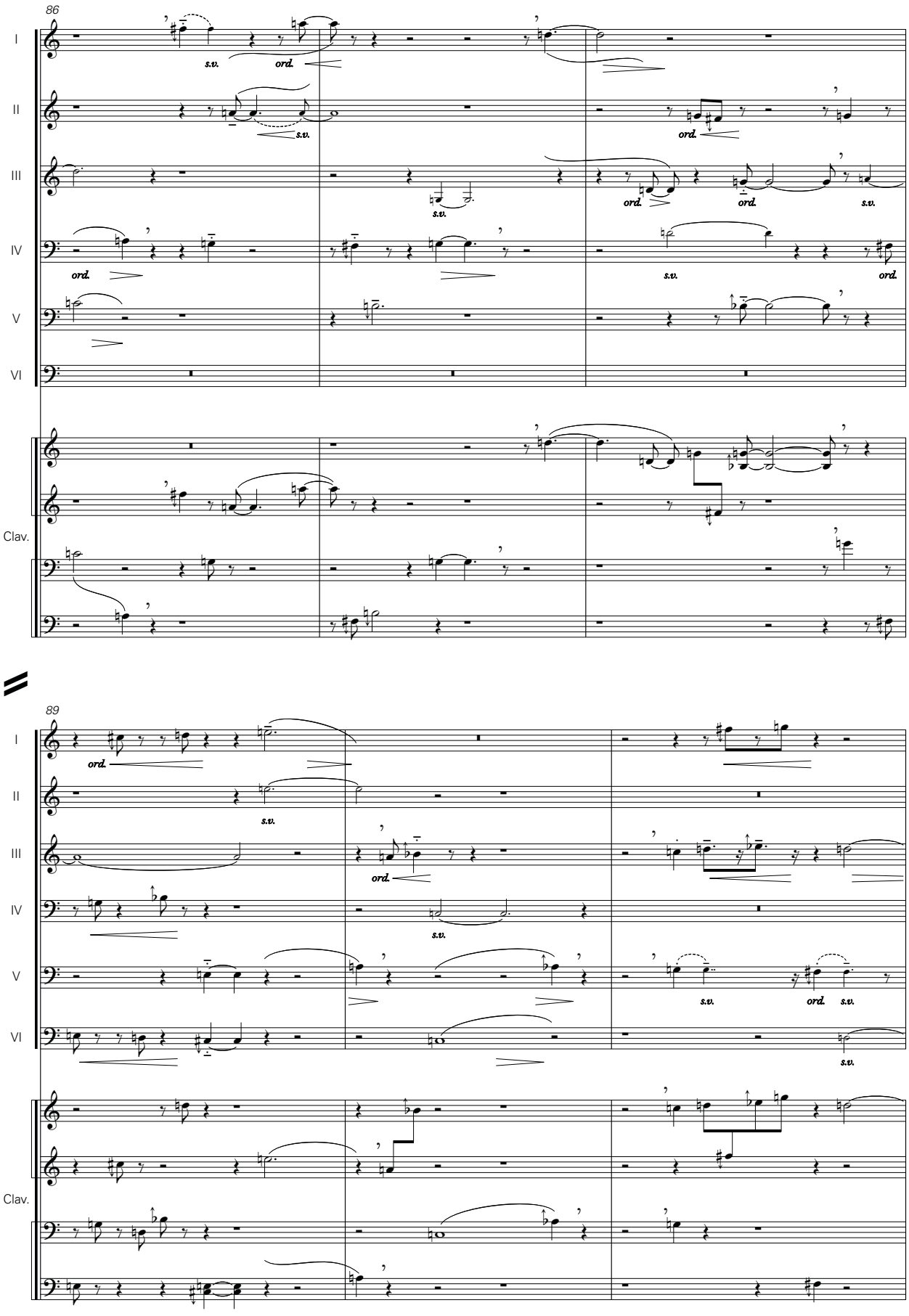
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IV
V
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Clav.
s.v.
ord.
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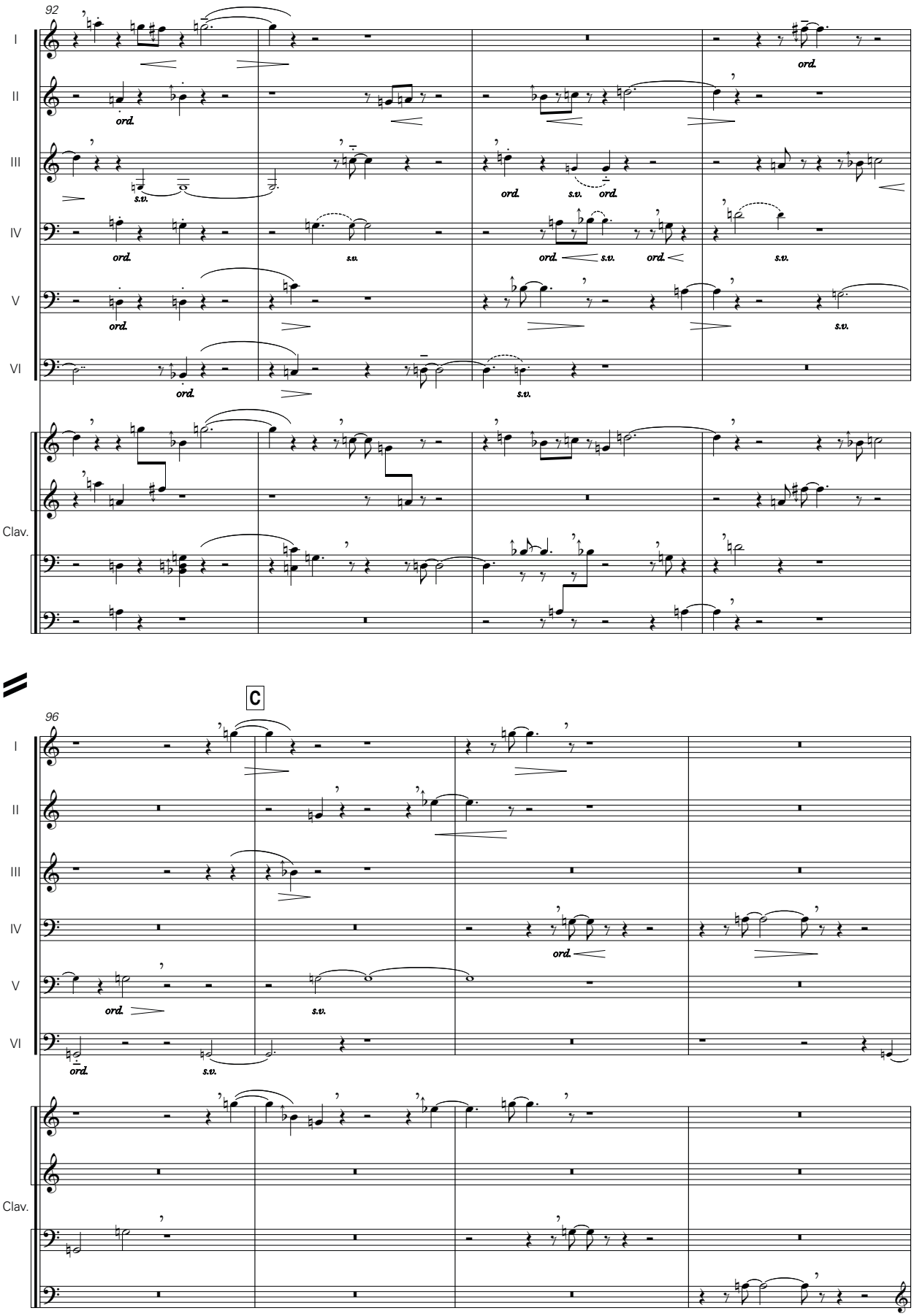
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VI
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s.v.
C
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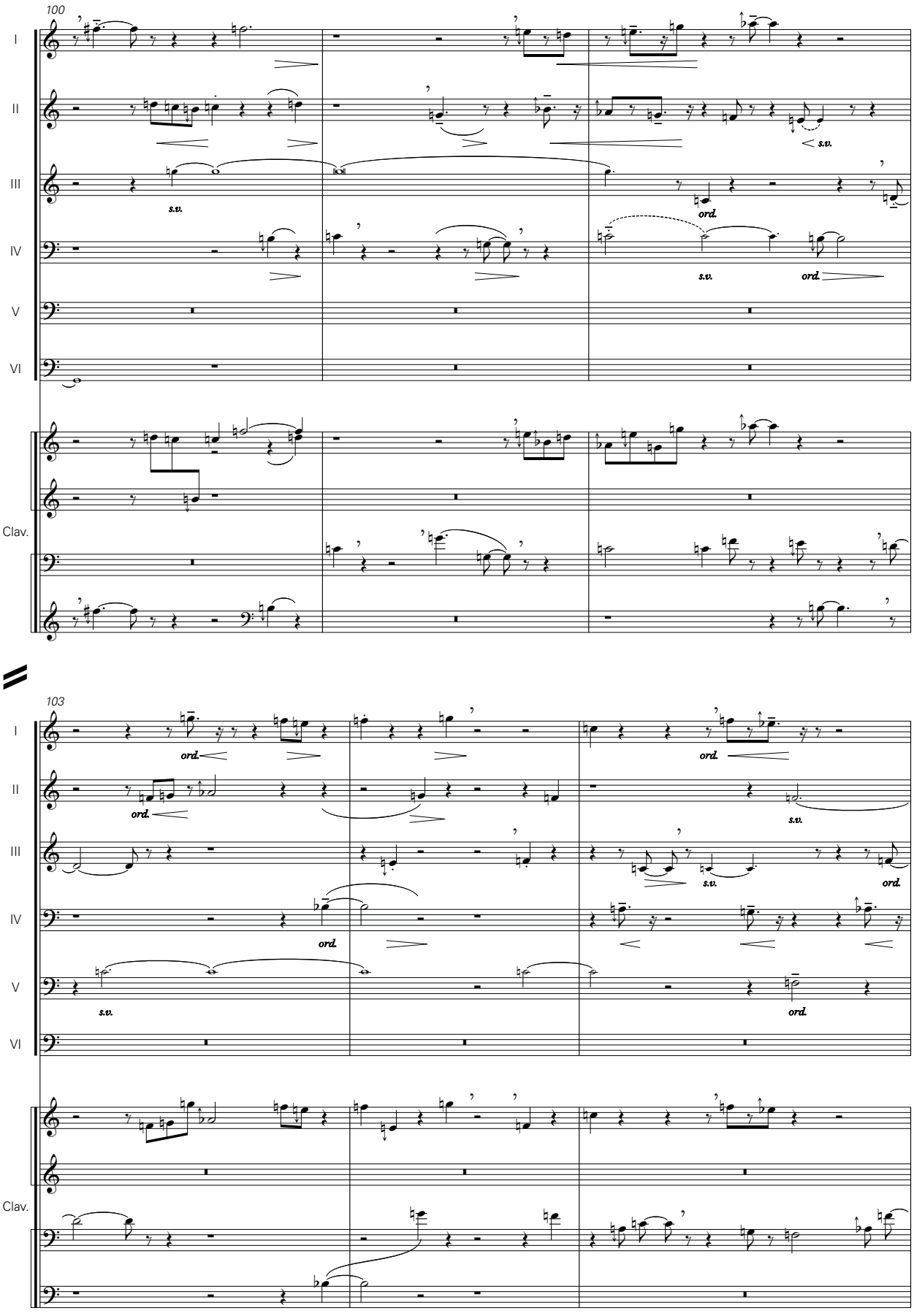
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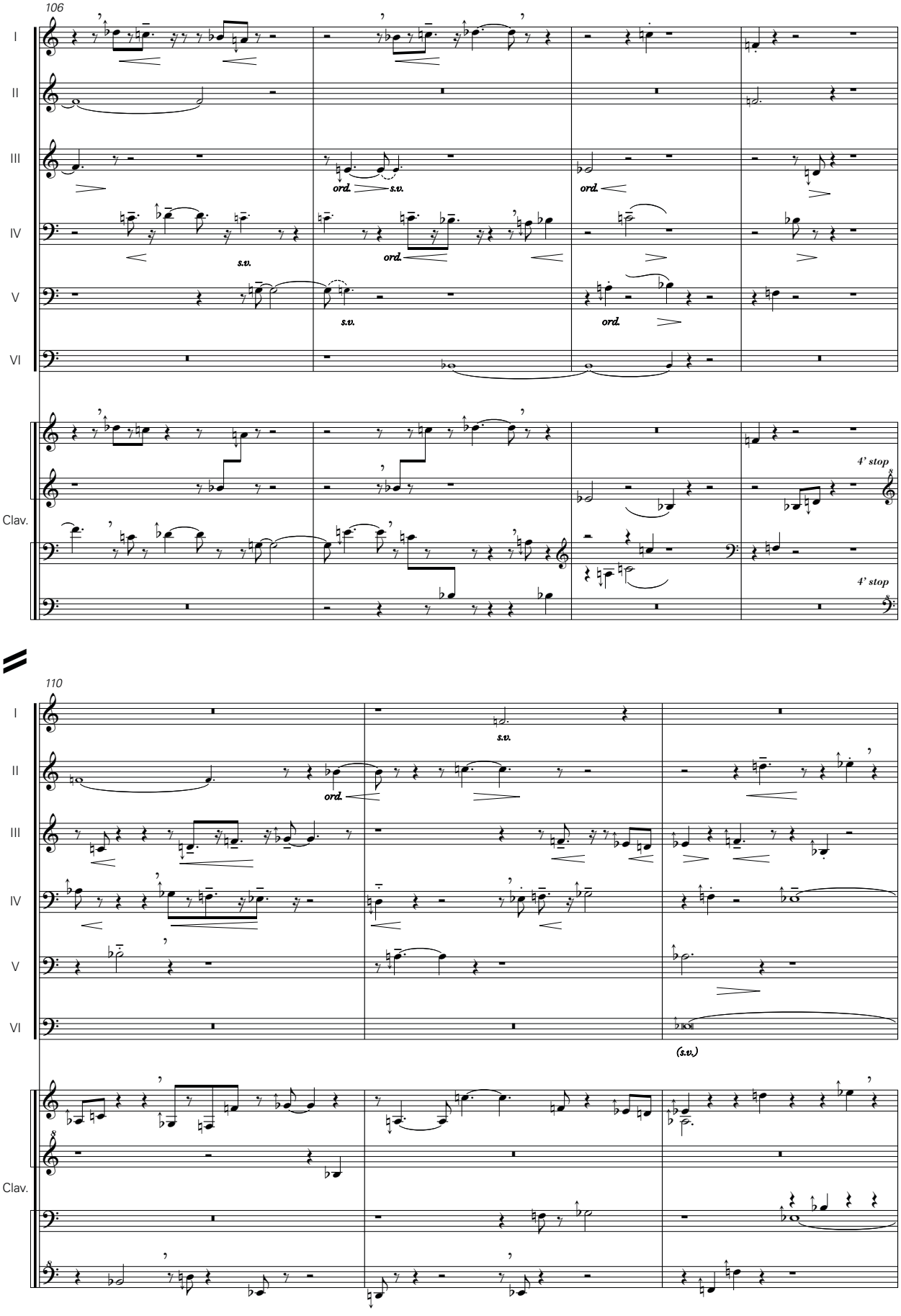
Clav.
s.v.
ord.
103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I
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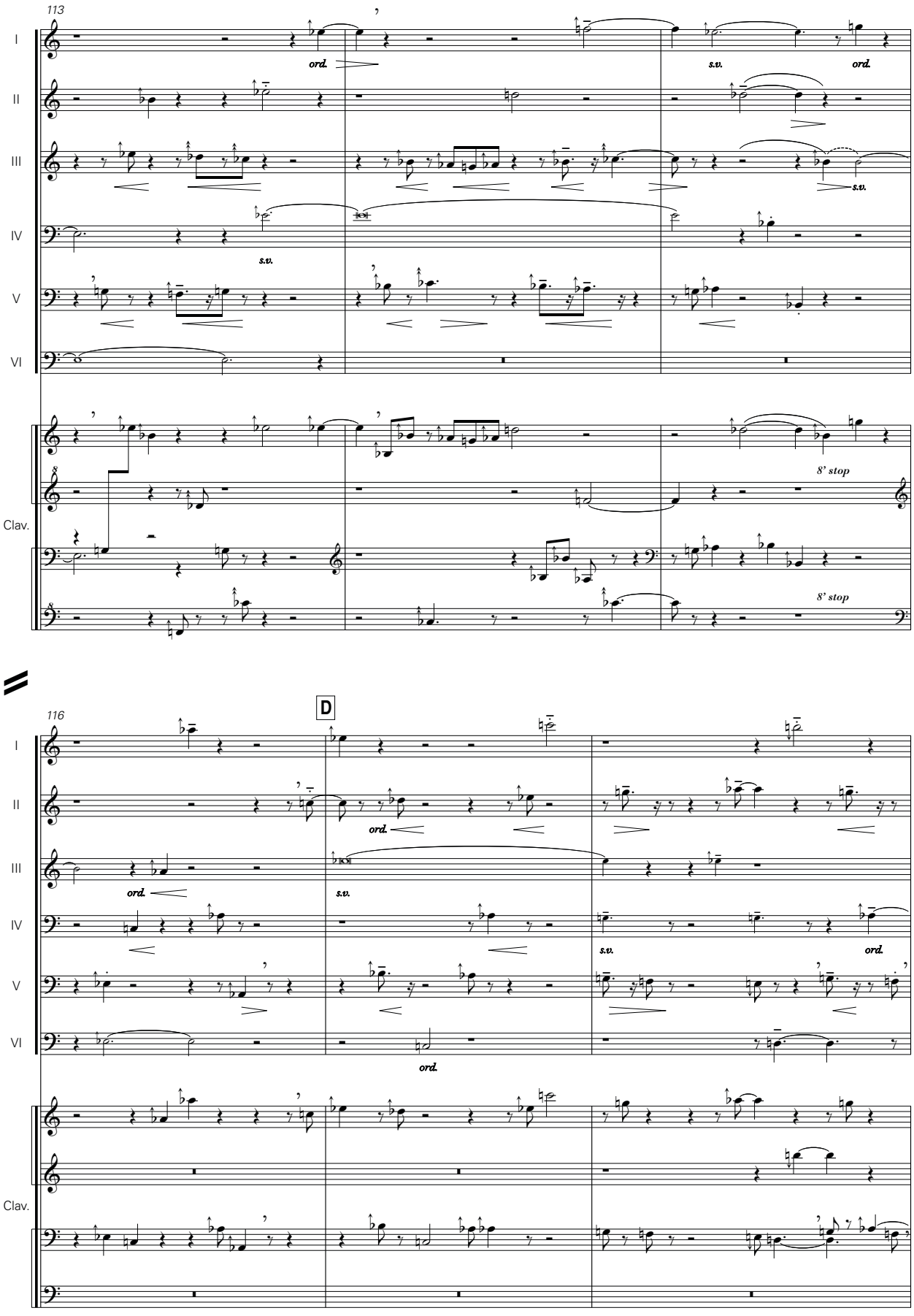
Clav.
ord.
s.v.
4' stop
110
(s.v.)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I
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Clav.
ord.
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
s.v.
8' stop
8' stop
116
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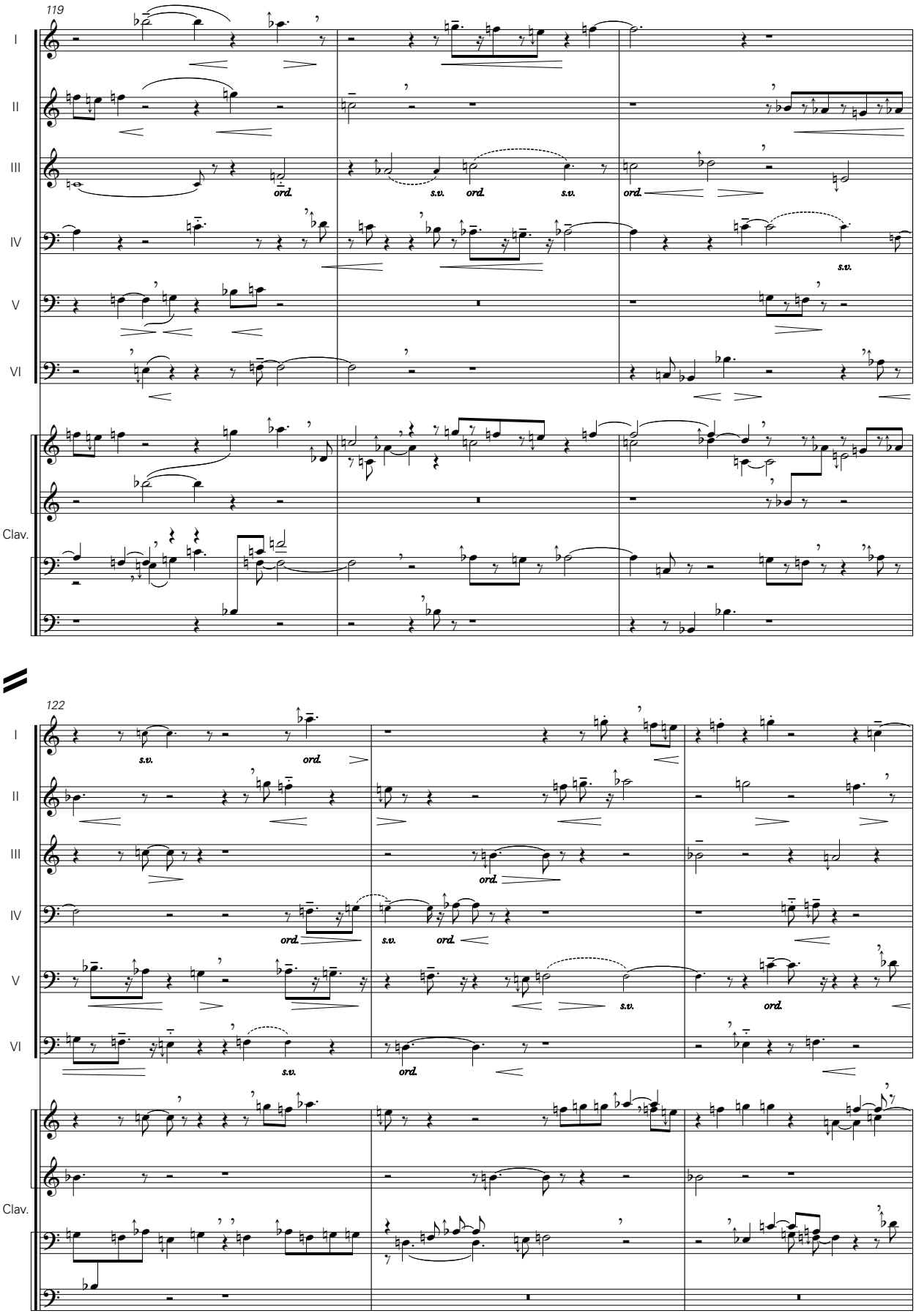
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s.v.
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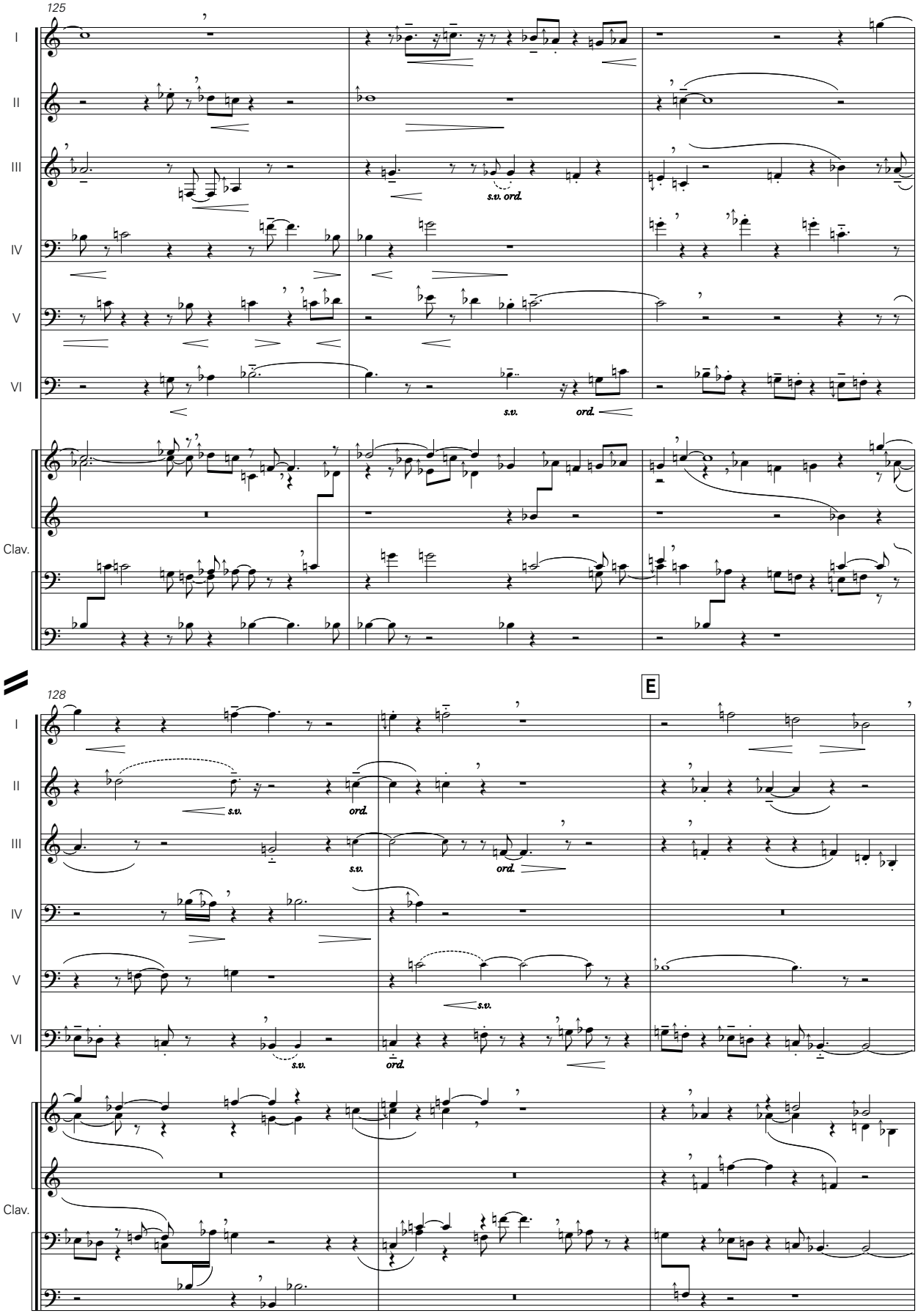
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I
II
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s.v.
ord.
Clav.
128
E
s.v.
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s.v.
ord.
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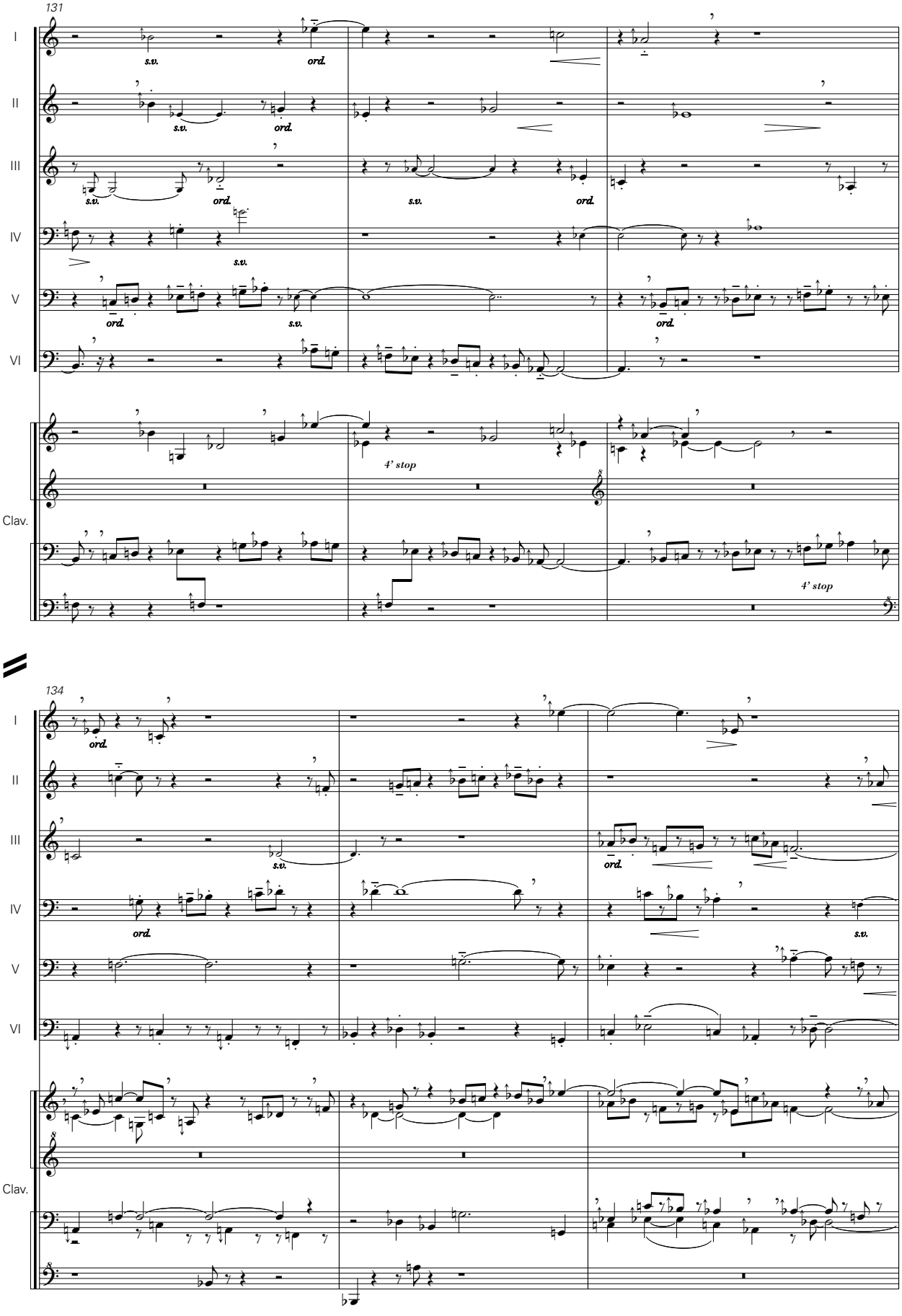
ord.
Clav.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Clav.
s.v.
ord.
4' stop
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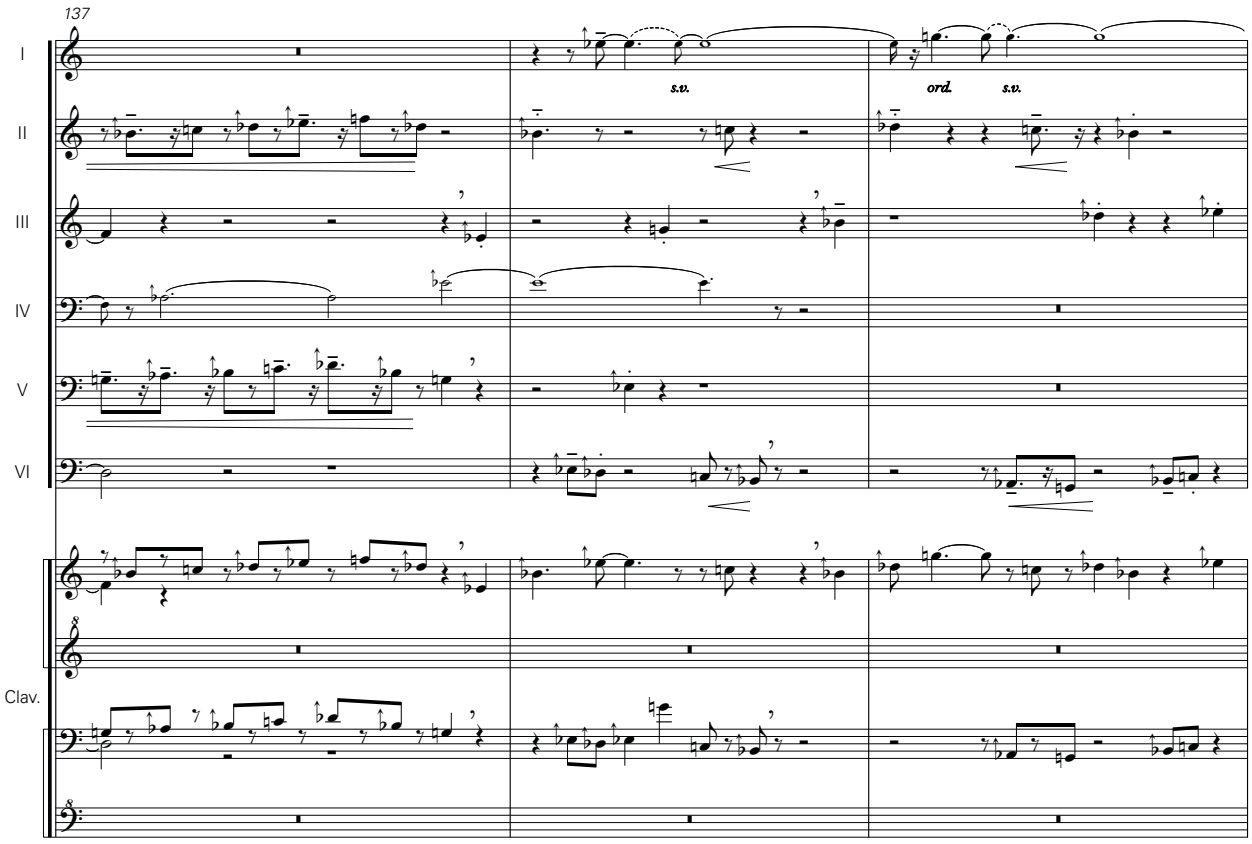
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Clav.
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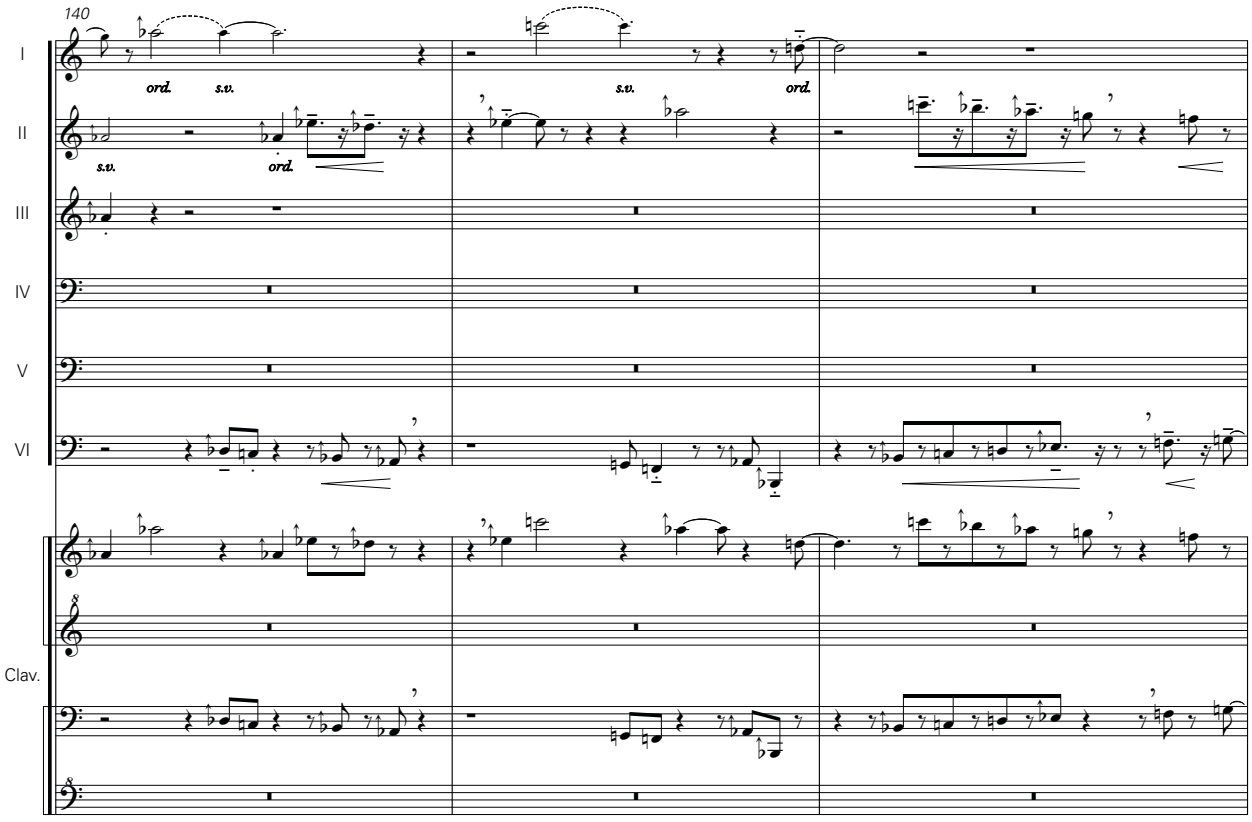
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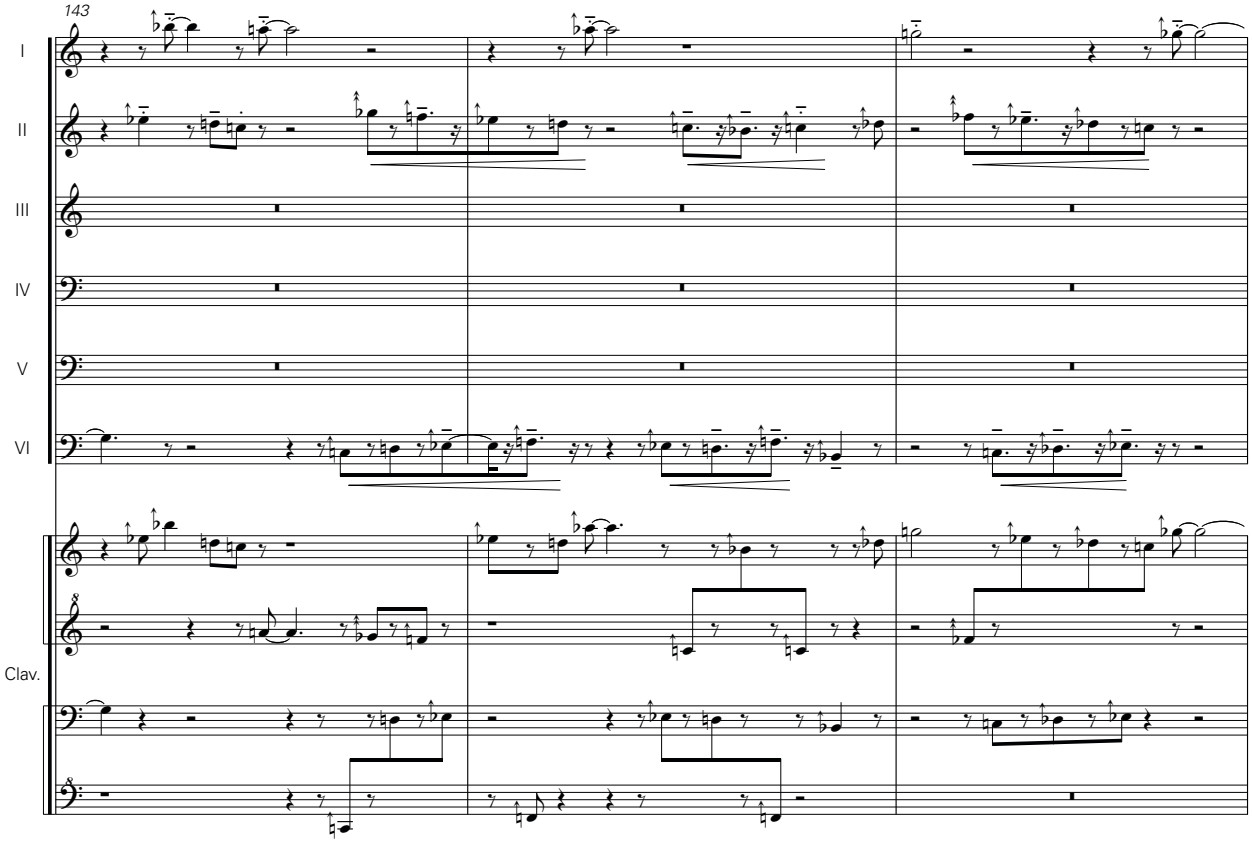
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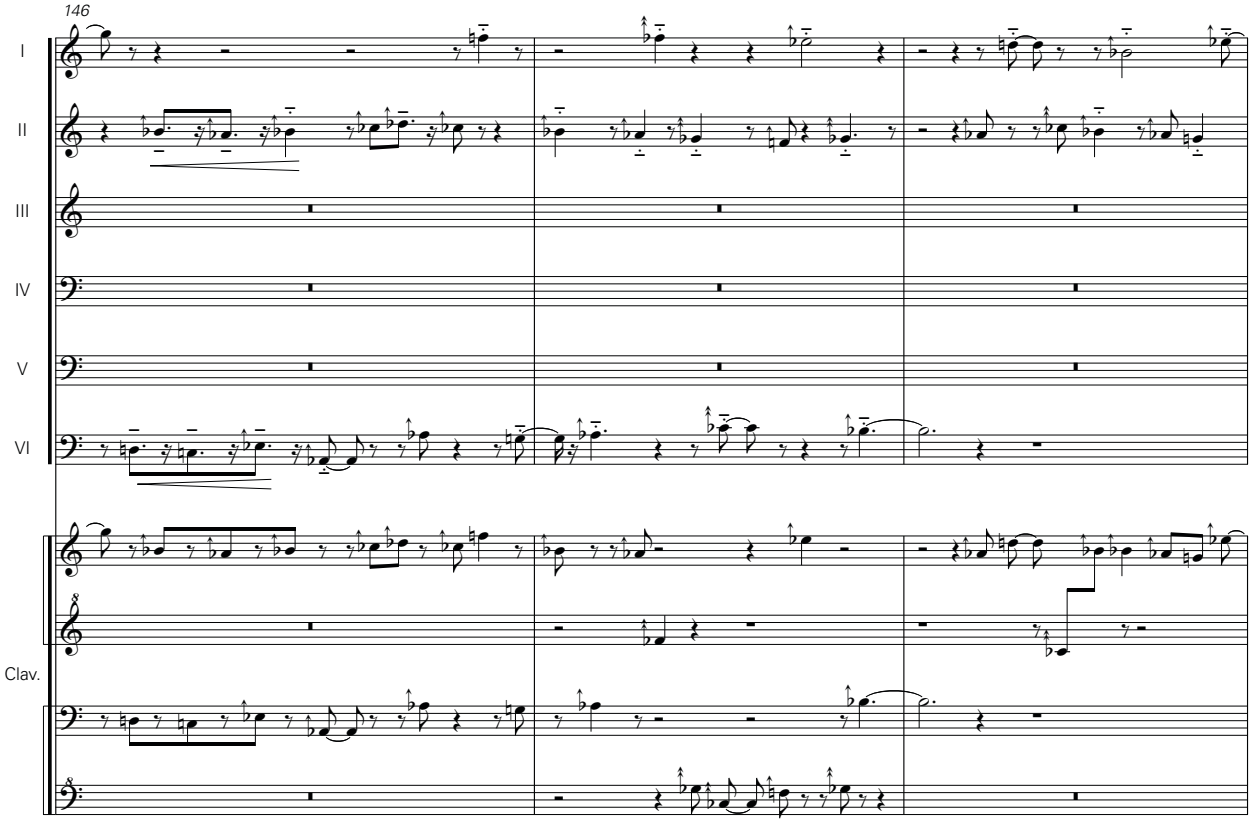
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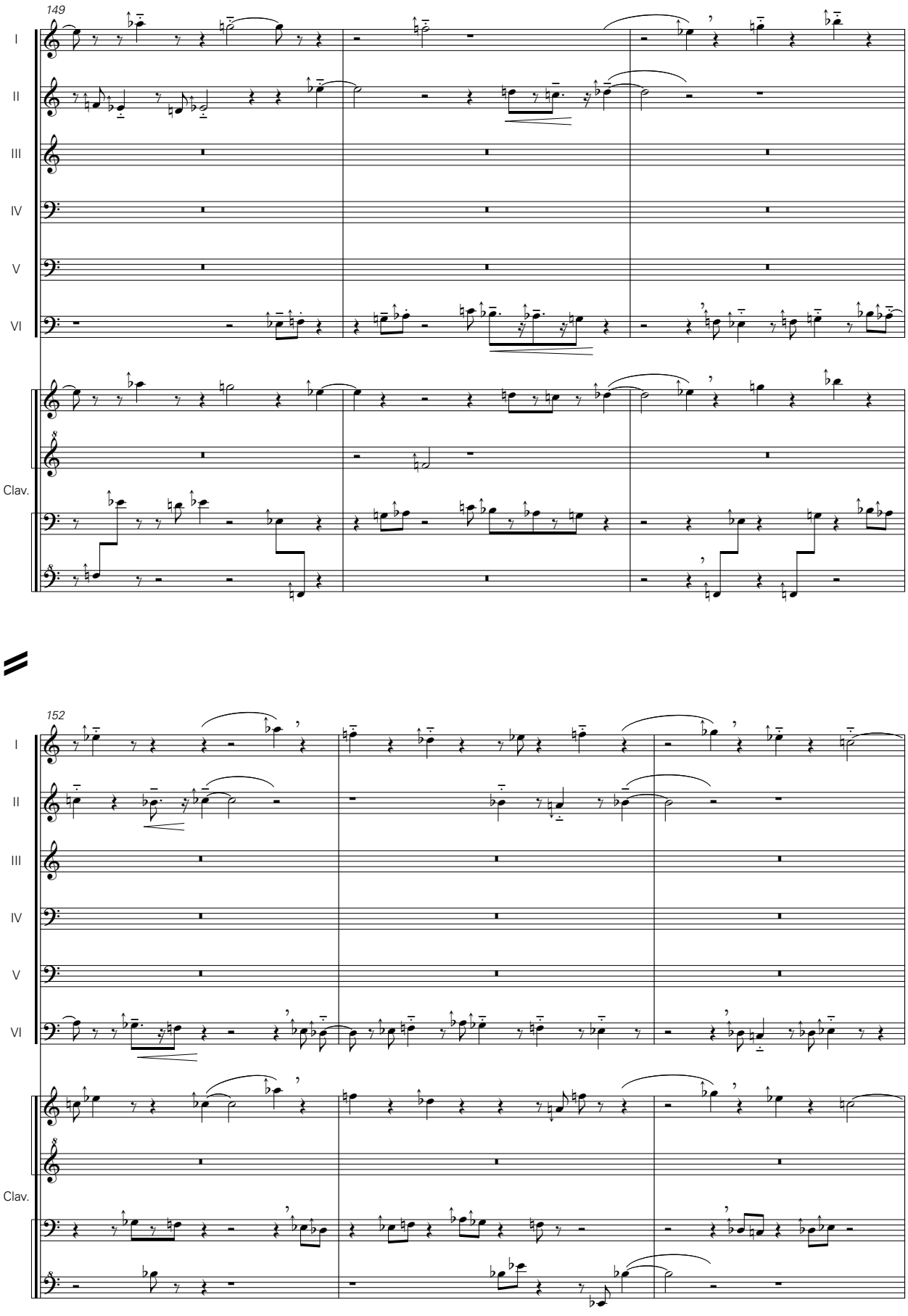
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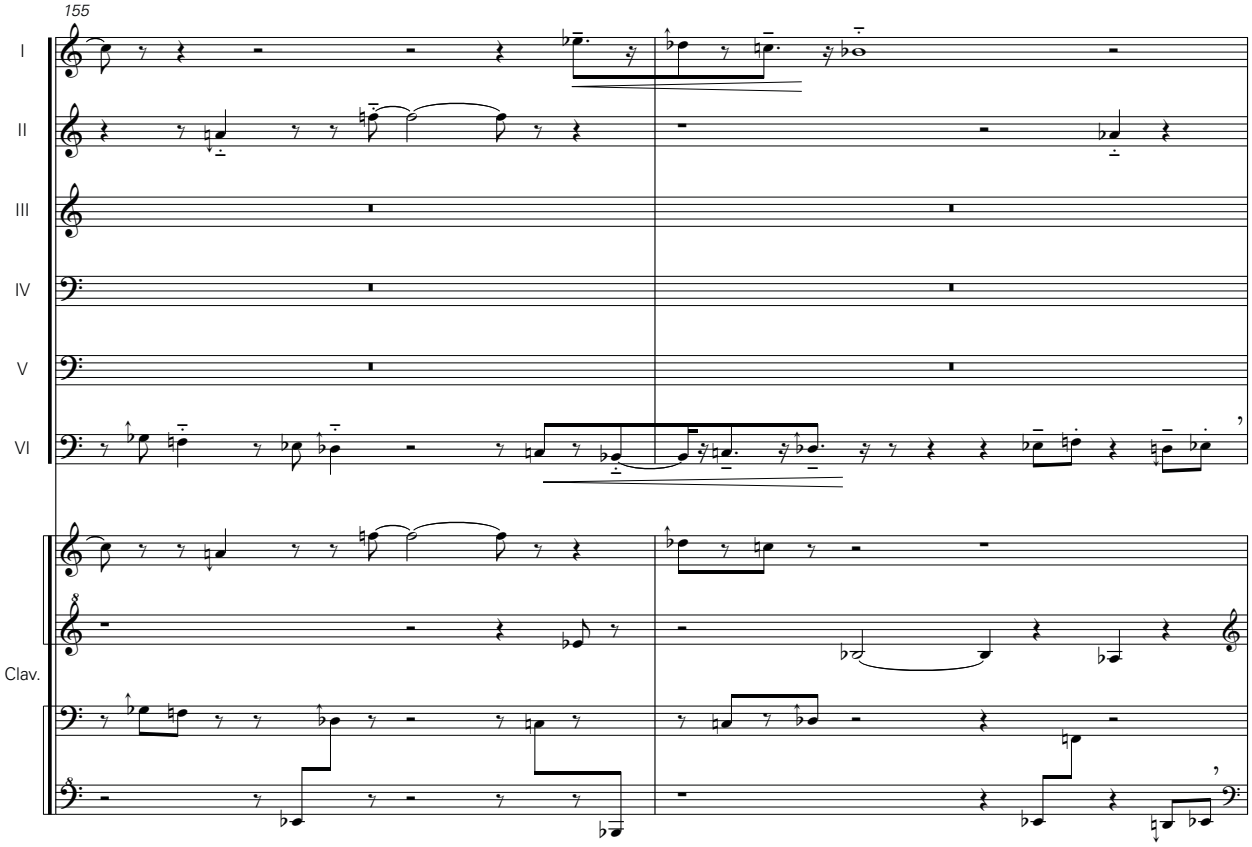
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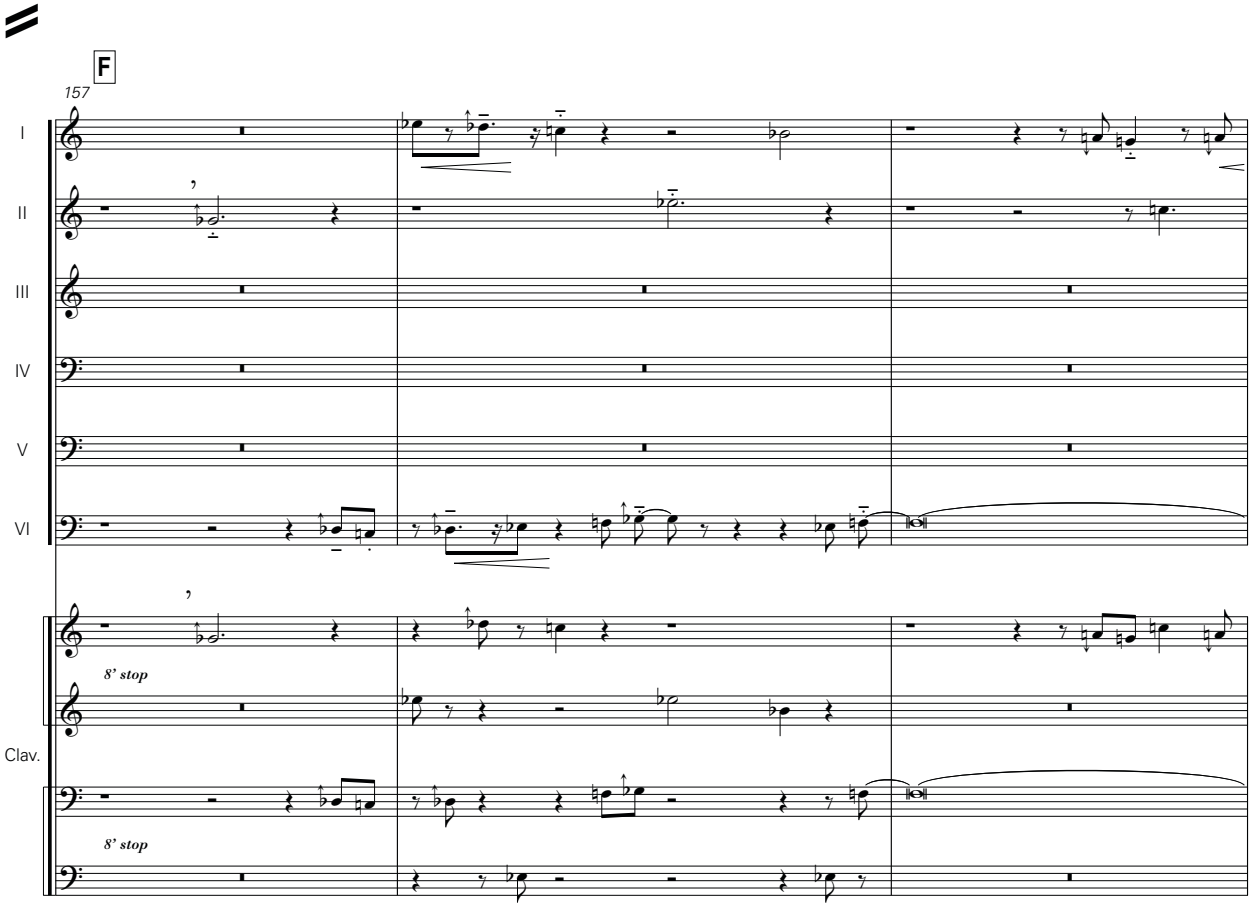
F
157
I
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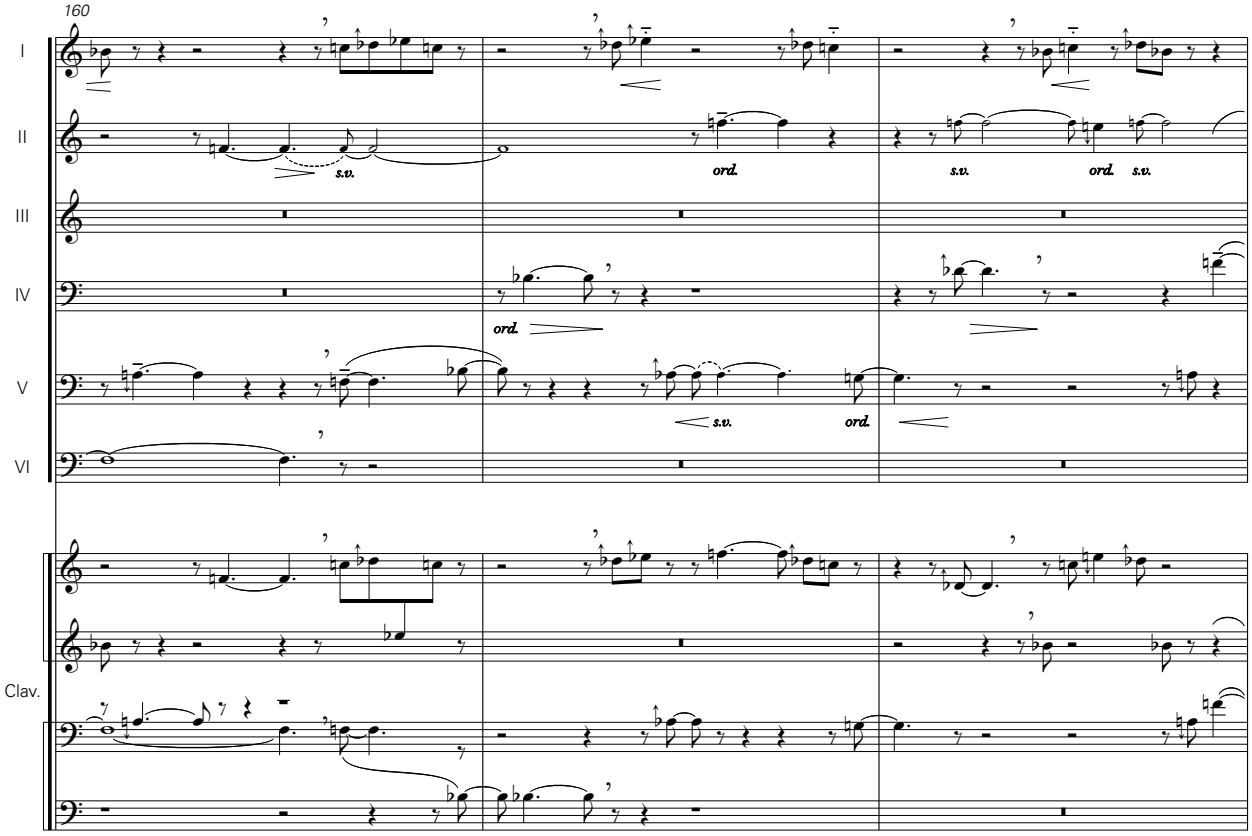
VI
8' stop
Clav.
8' stop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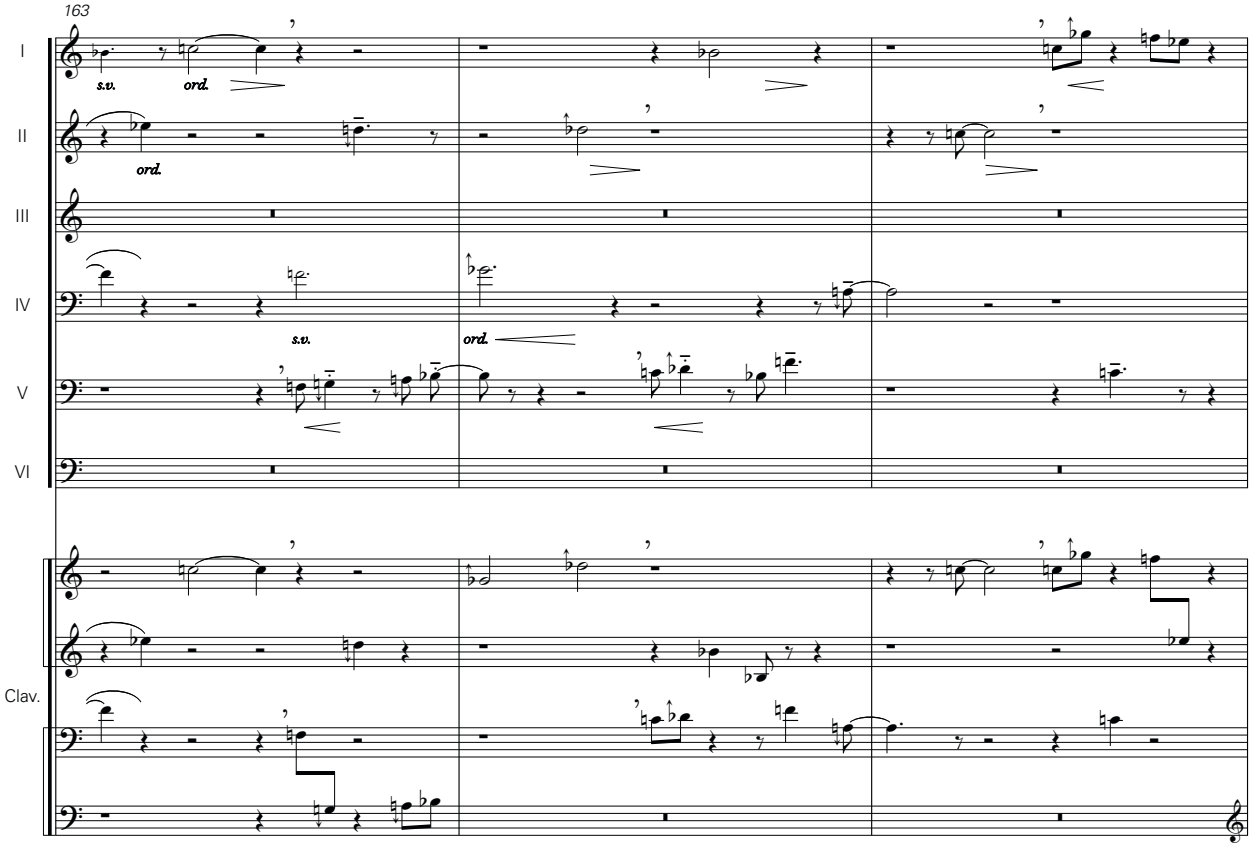
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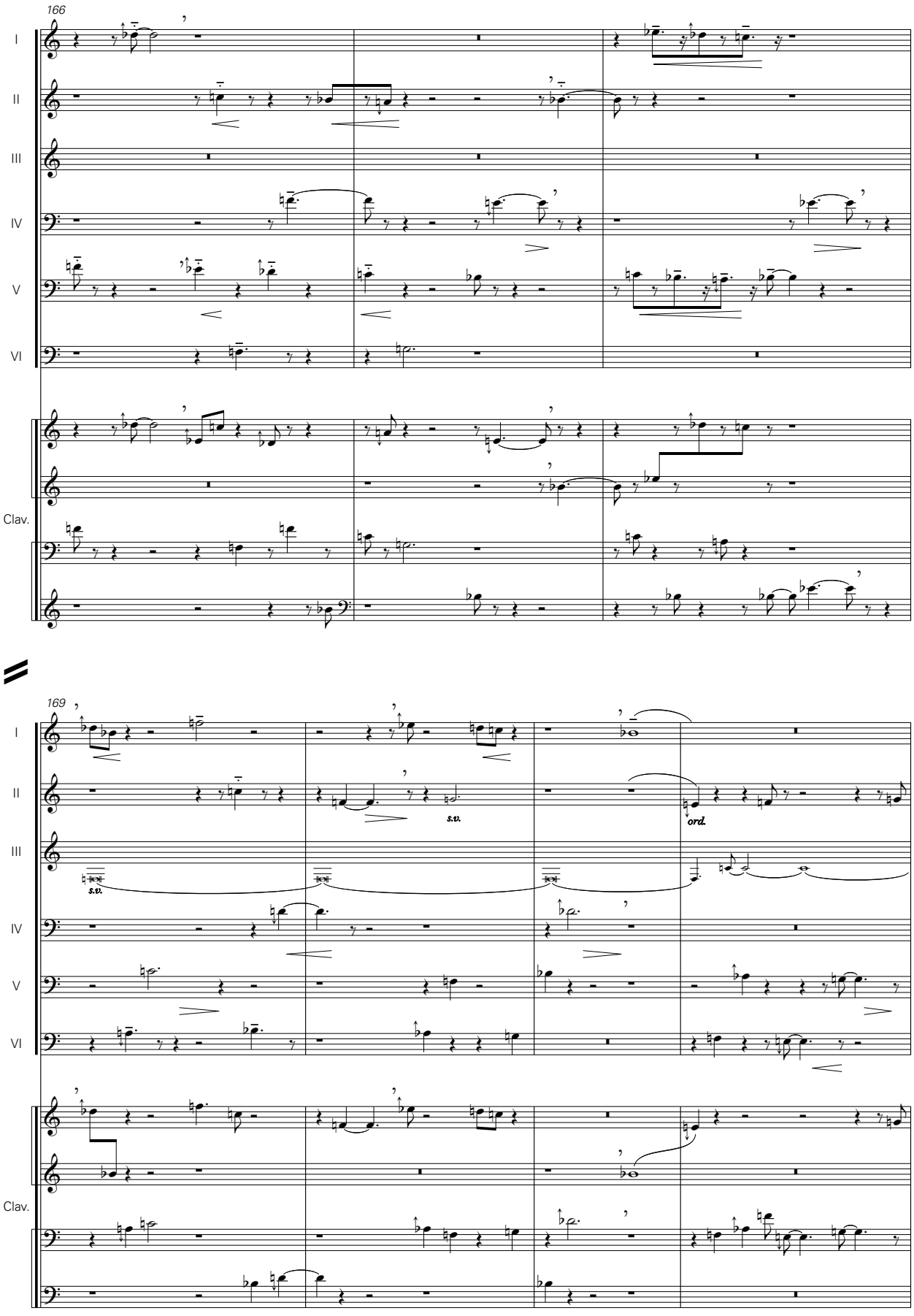
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Clav.
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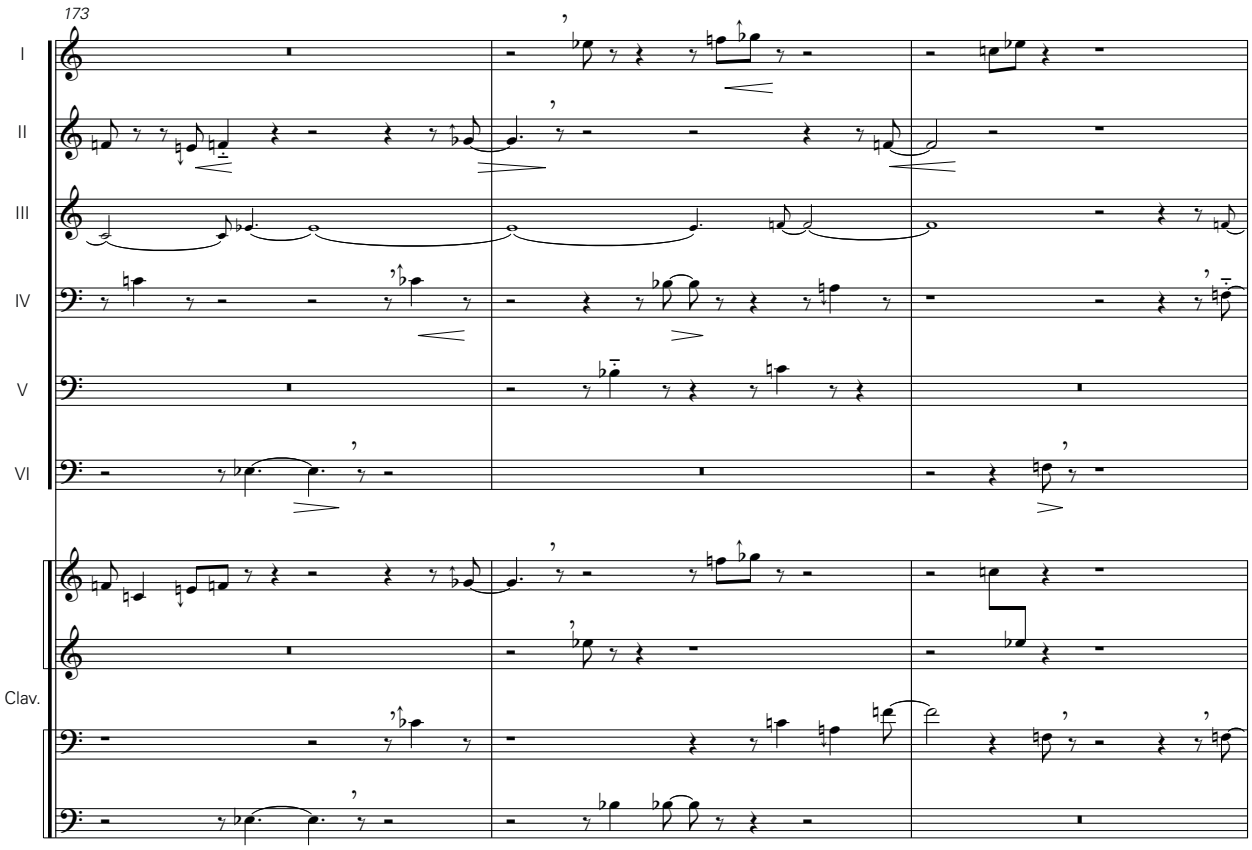
s.v.
s.v.
ord.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I
II
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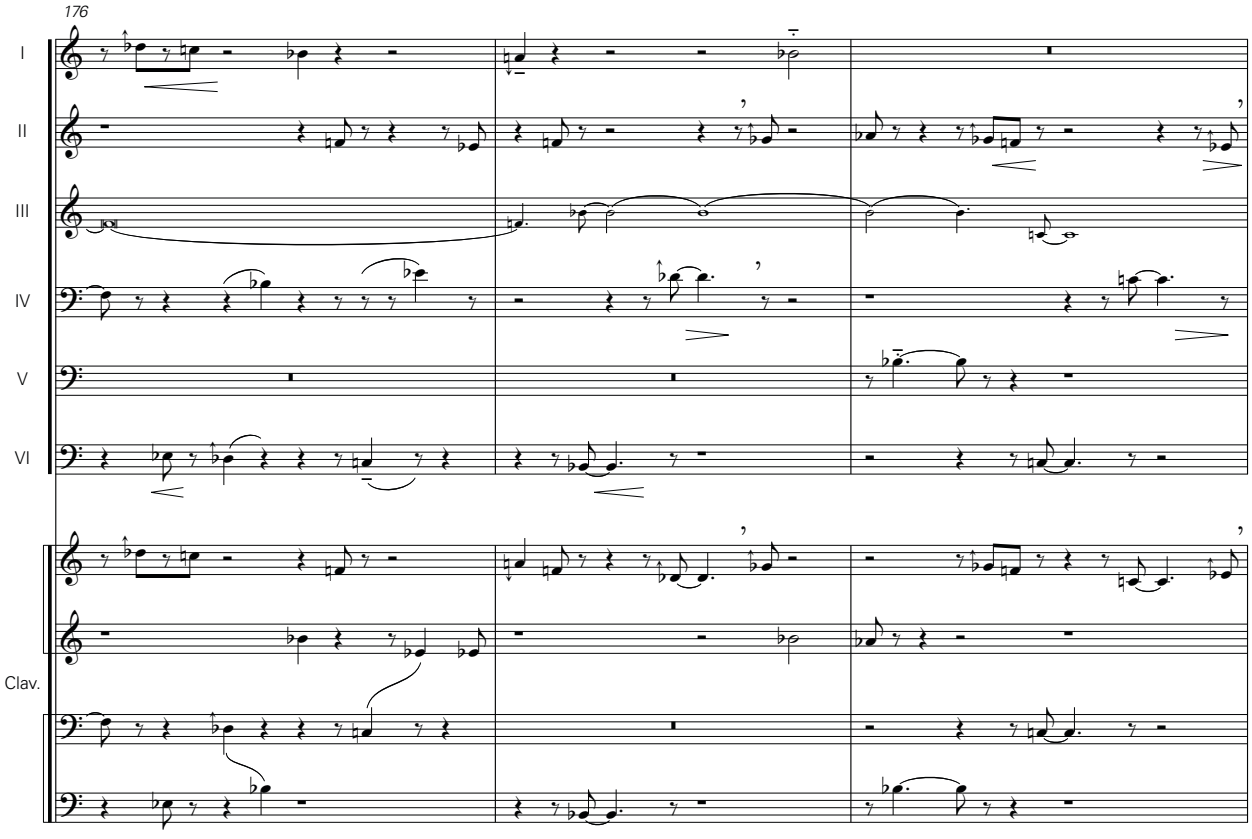
V
VI
Clav.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I
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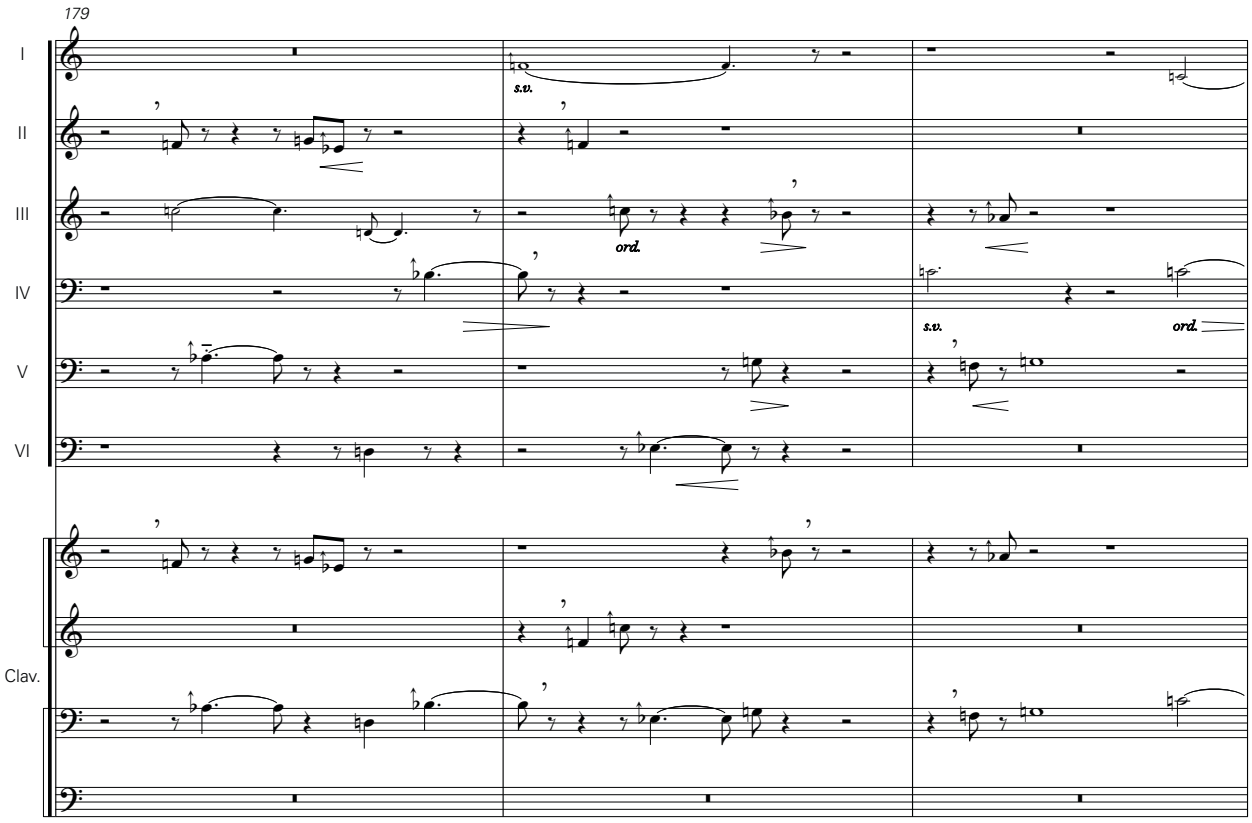
Clav.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I
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Clav.
s.v.
ord.
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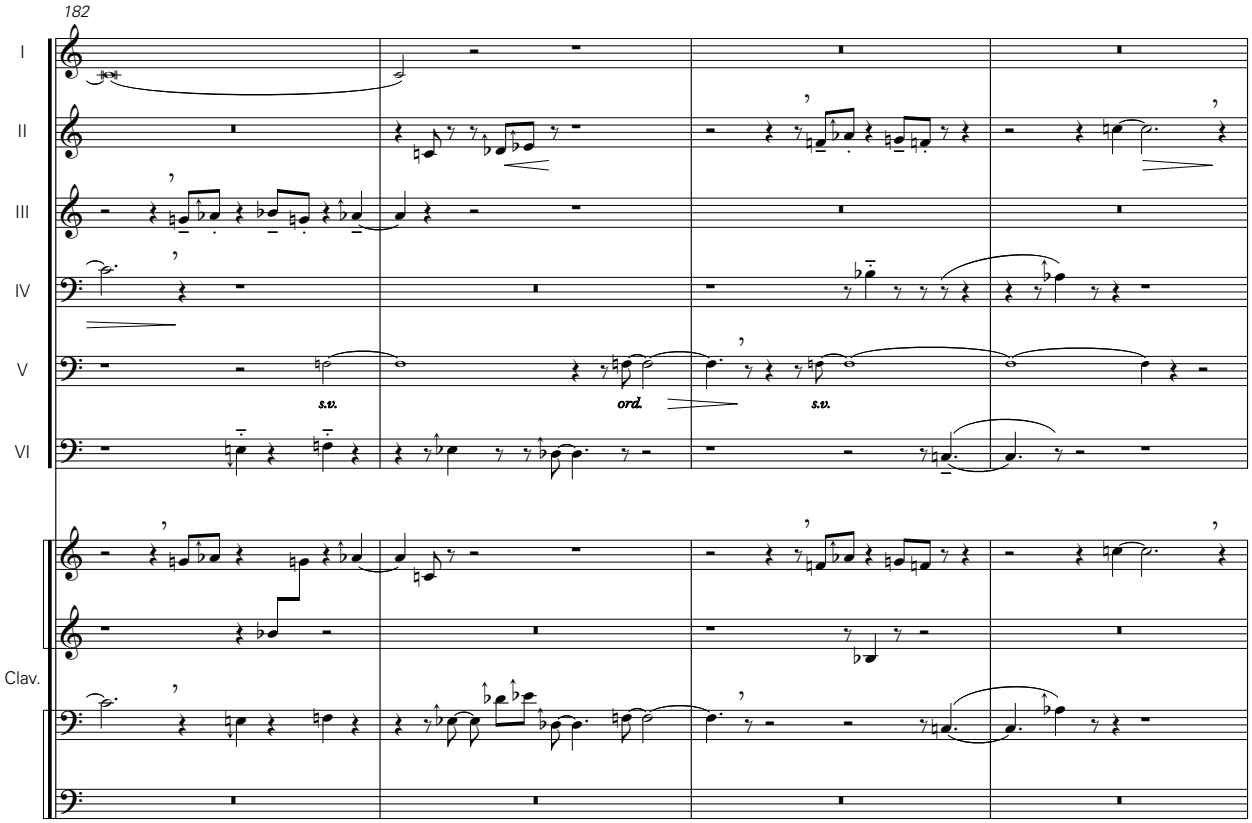
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Clav.
s.v.
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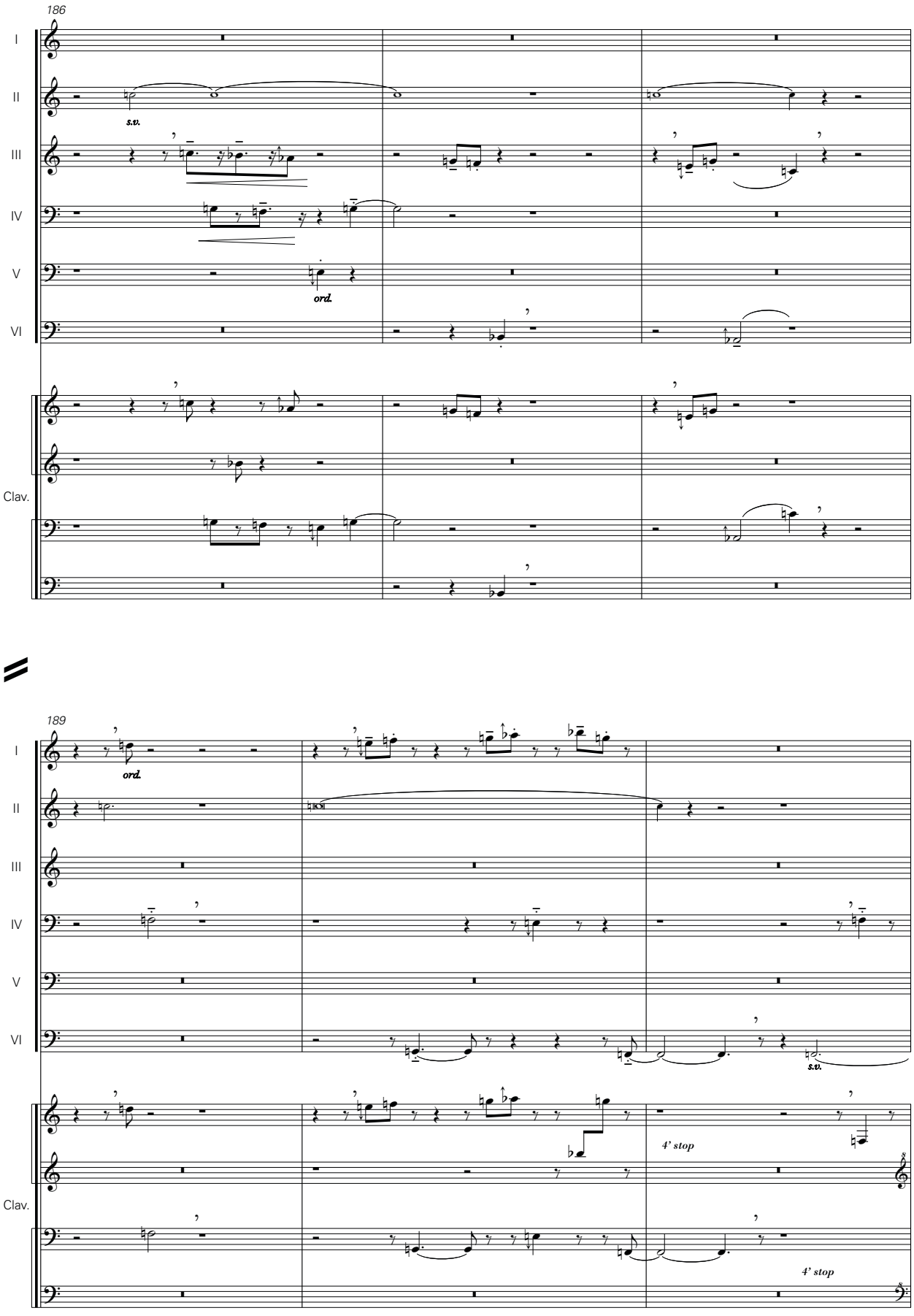
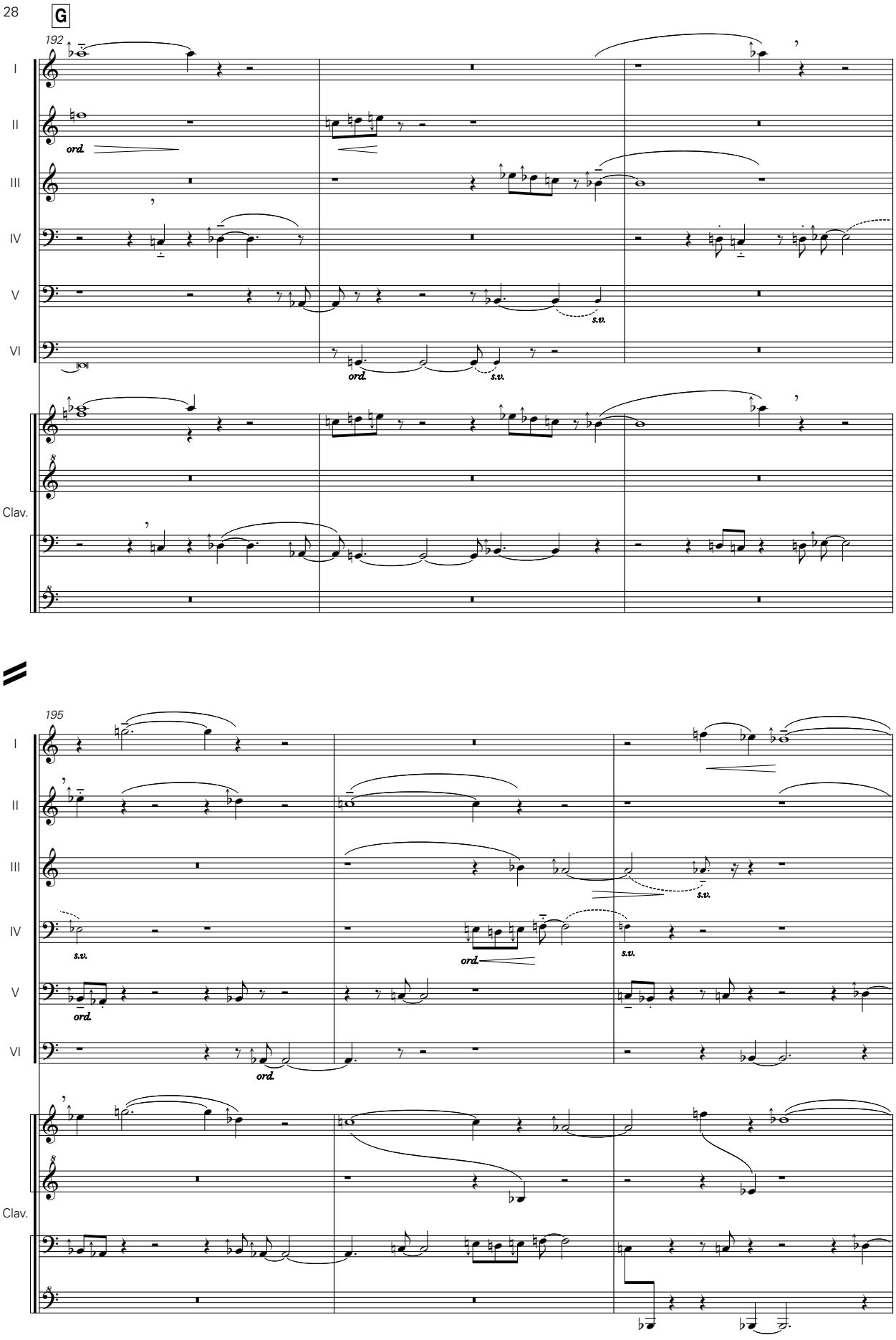
s.v.


186
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
s.v.
ord.
Clav.
189
ord.
s.v.
4' stop
4' stop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VI
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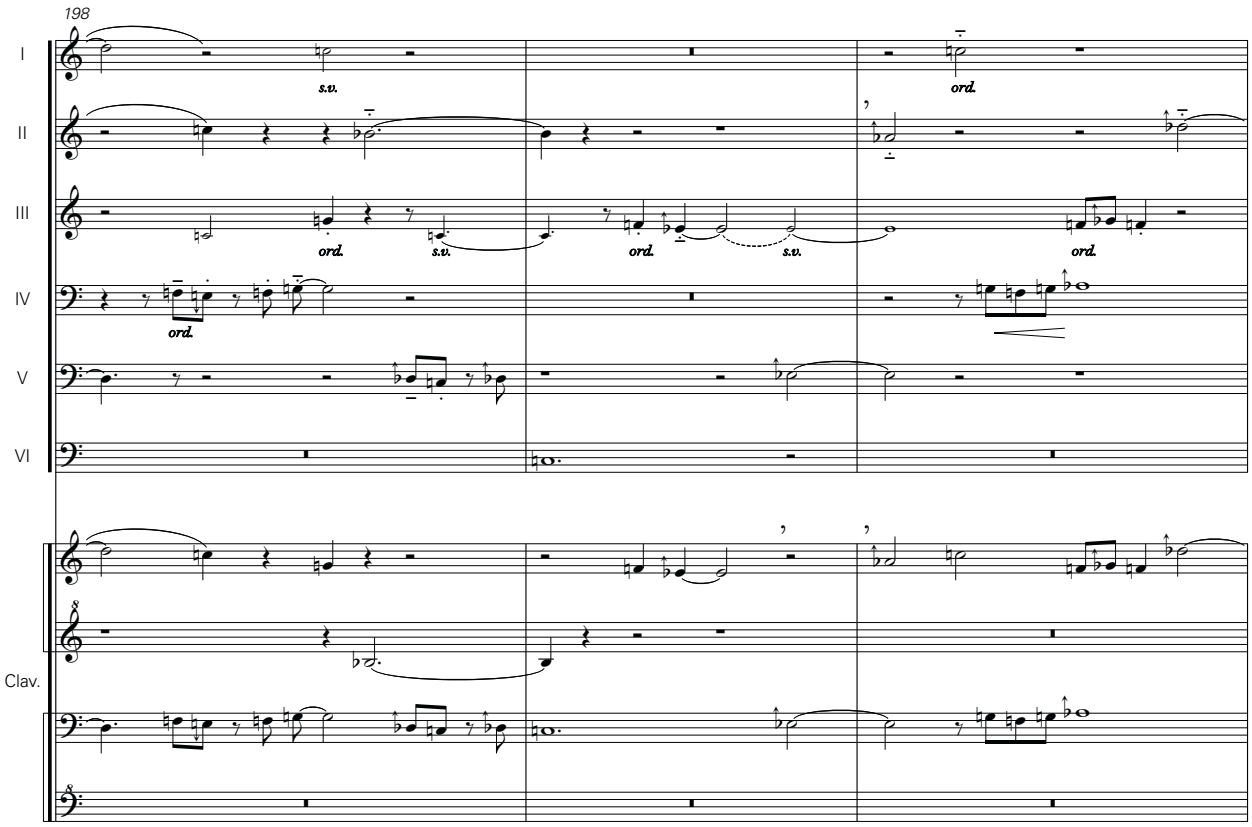
s.v.
Clav.
195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Clav.
s.v.
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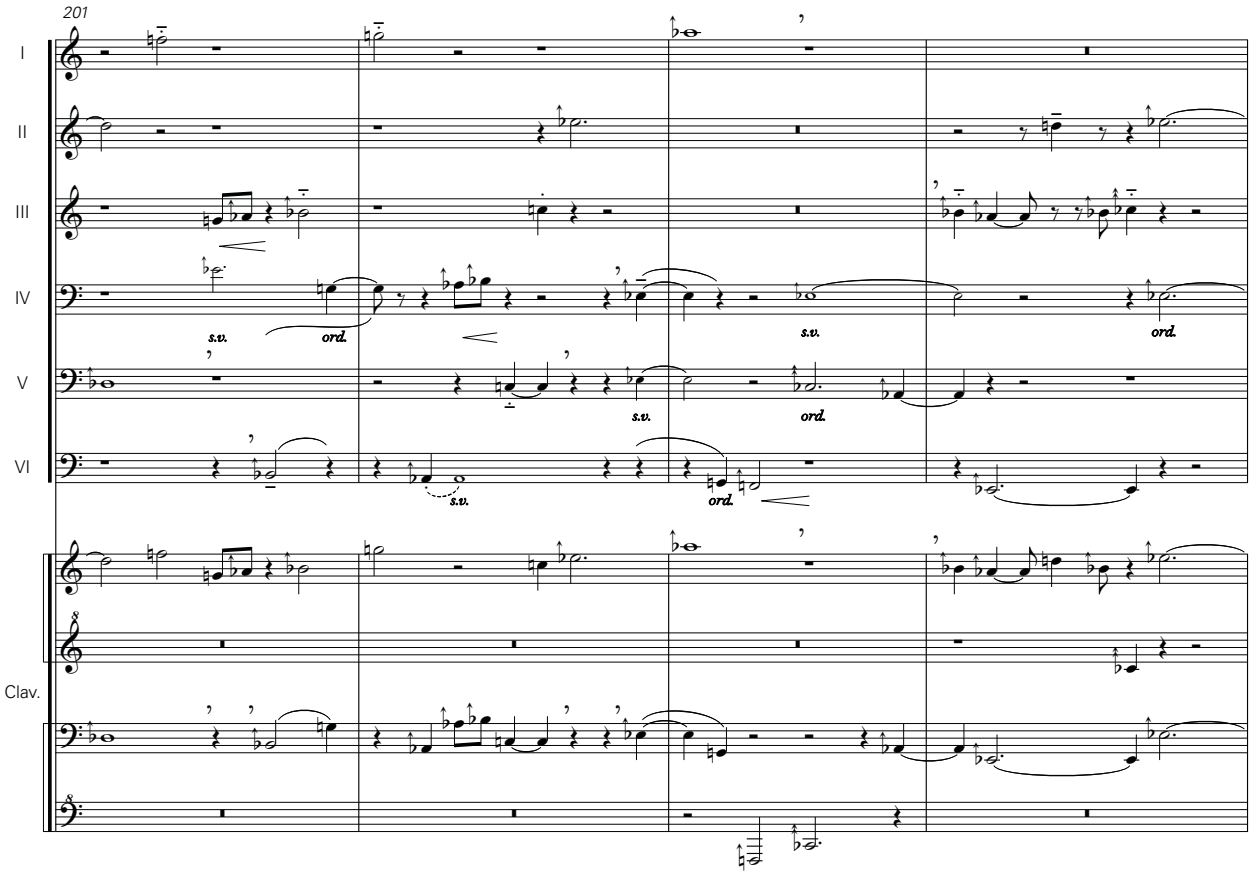
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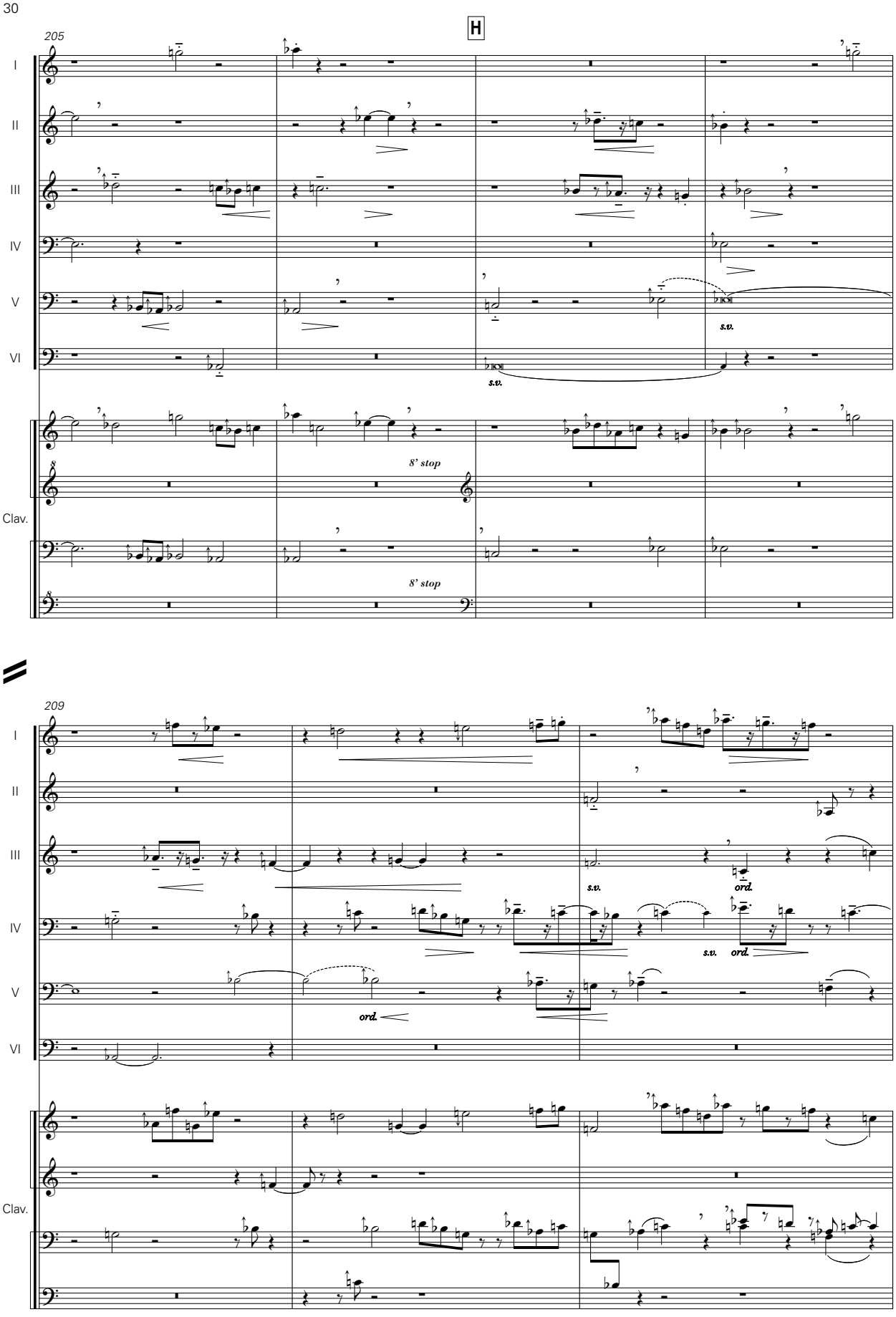
H
205
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
s.v.
s.v.
8' stop
8' stop
Clav.
209
I
II
III
IV
V
VI
s.v.
ord.
s.v.
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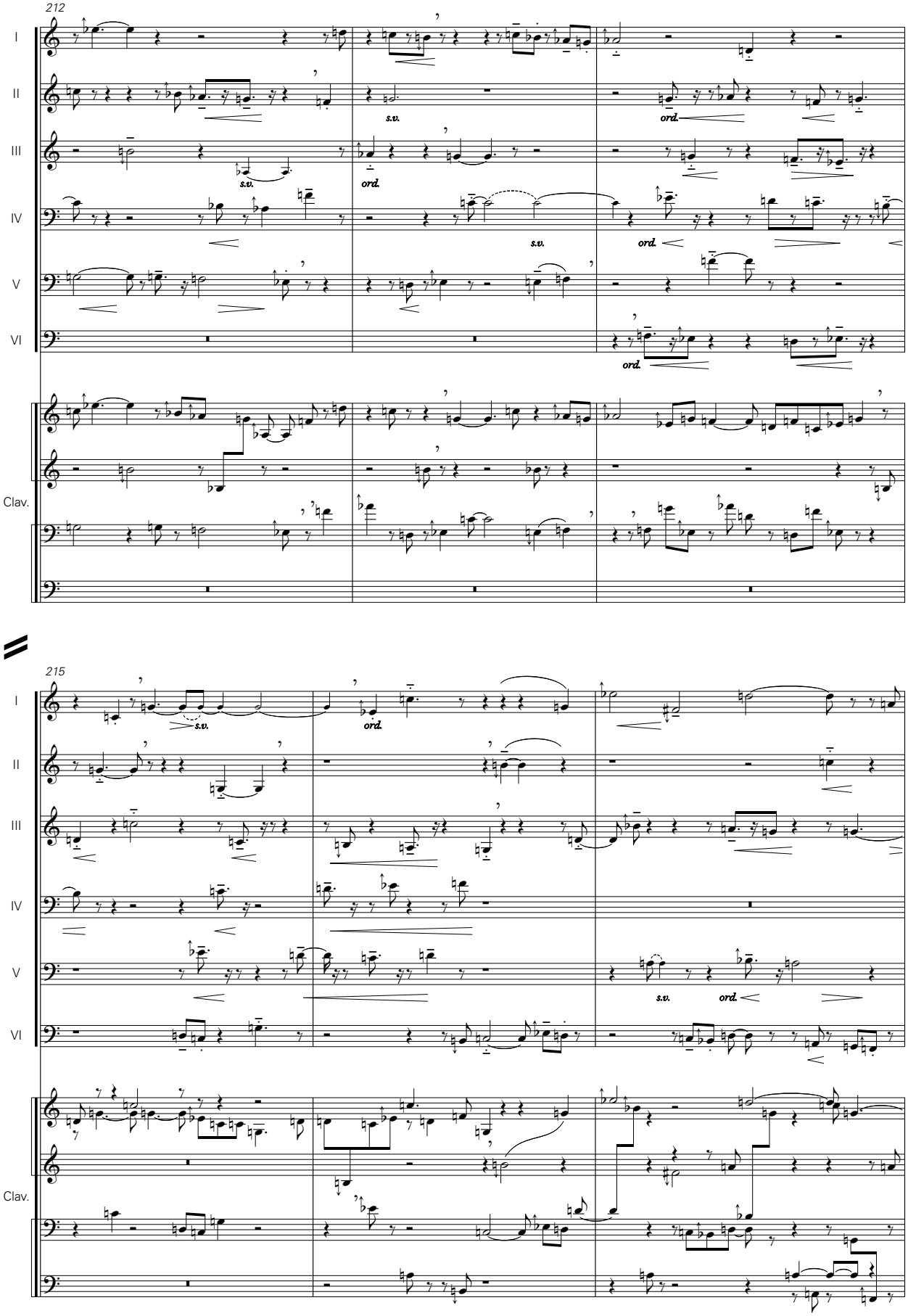
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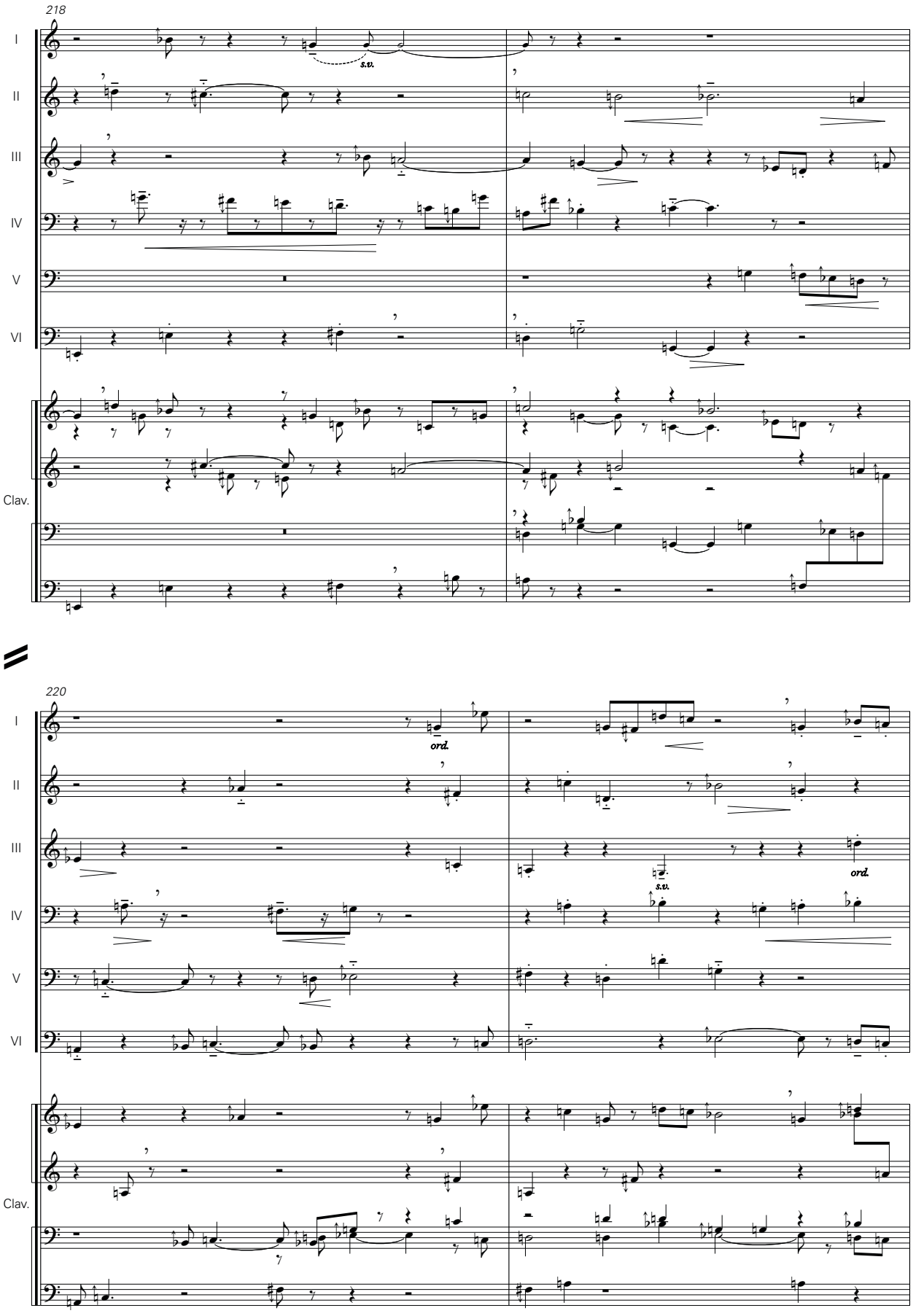
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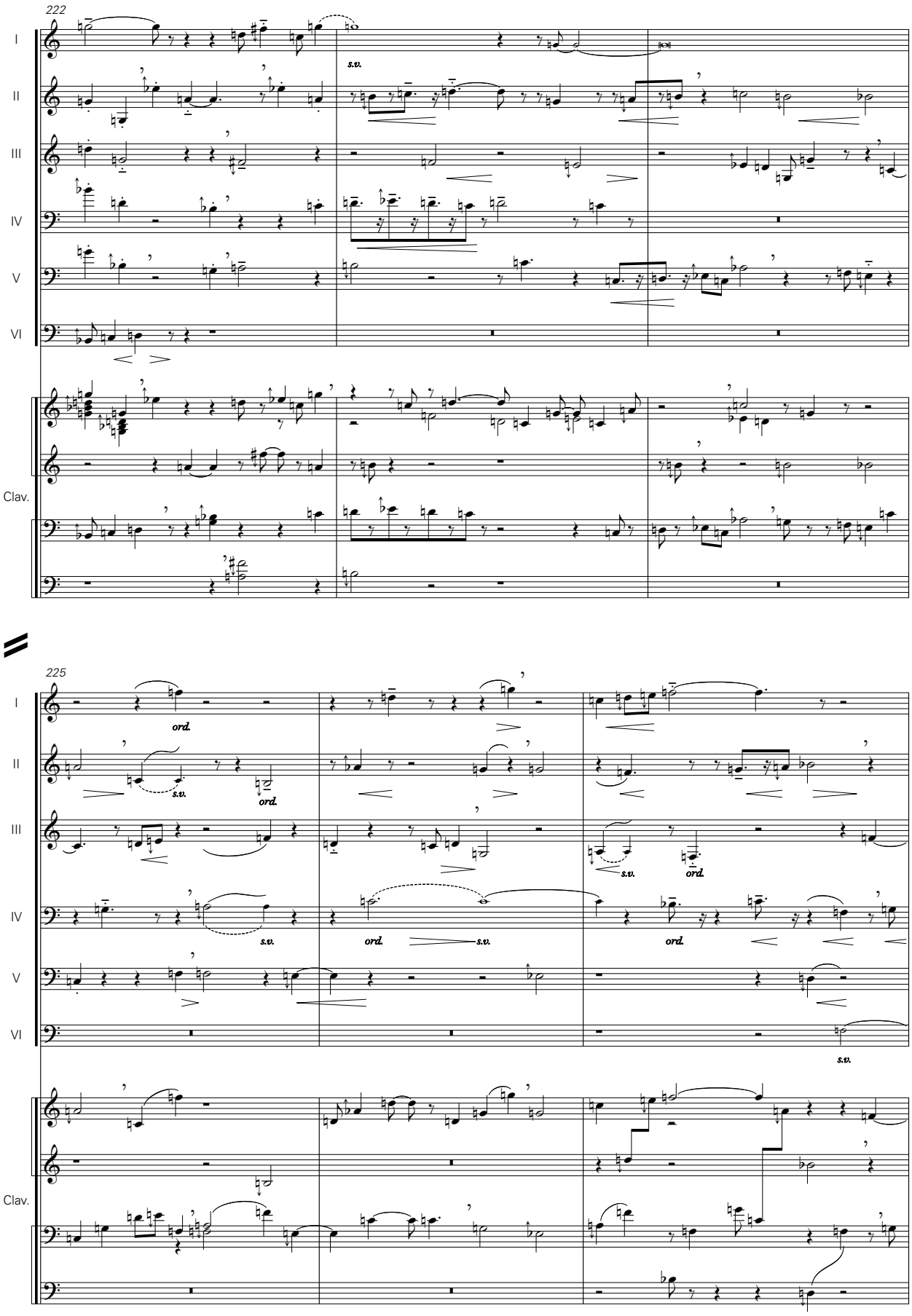
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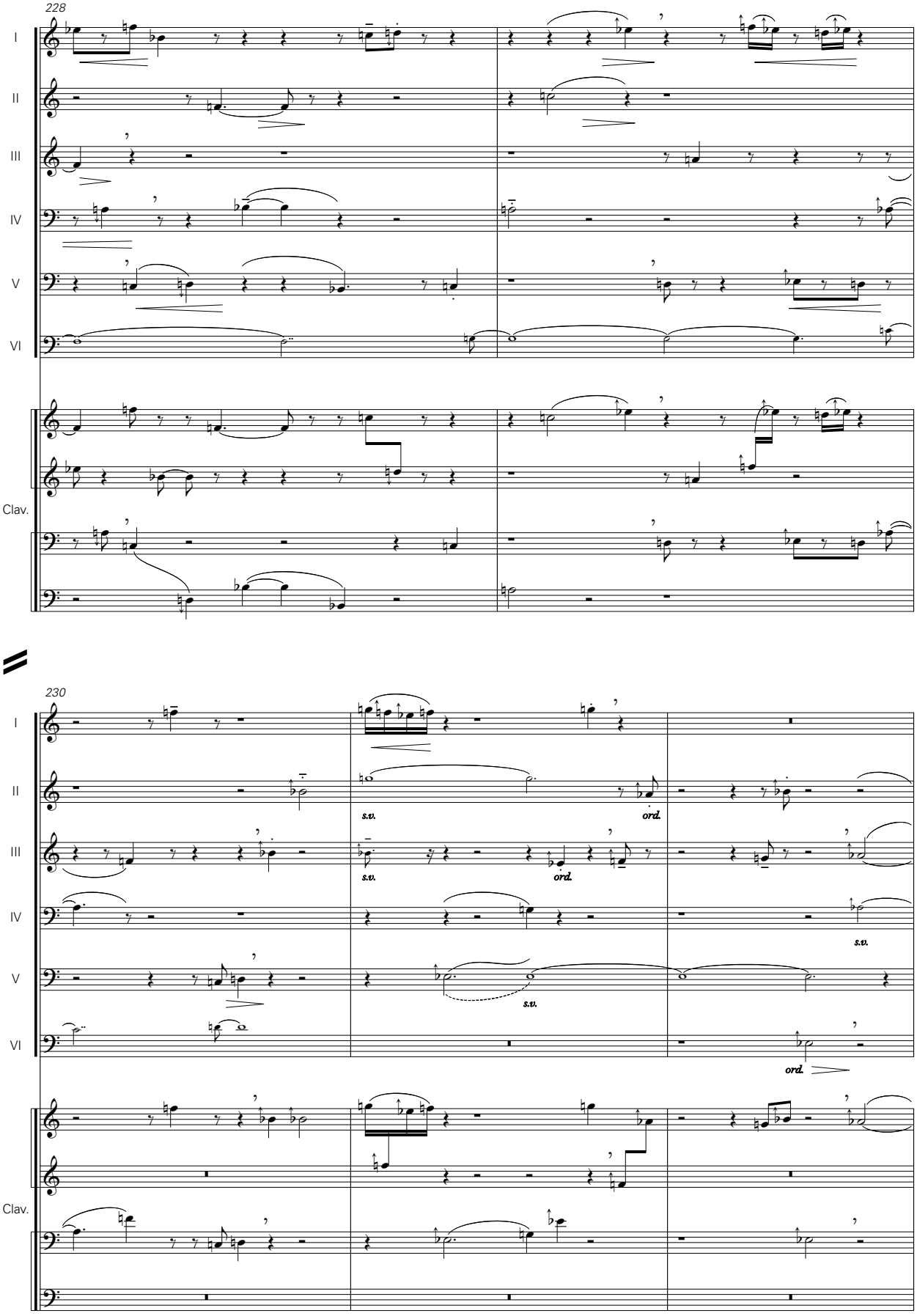
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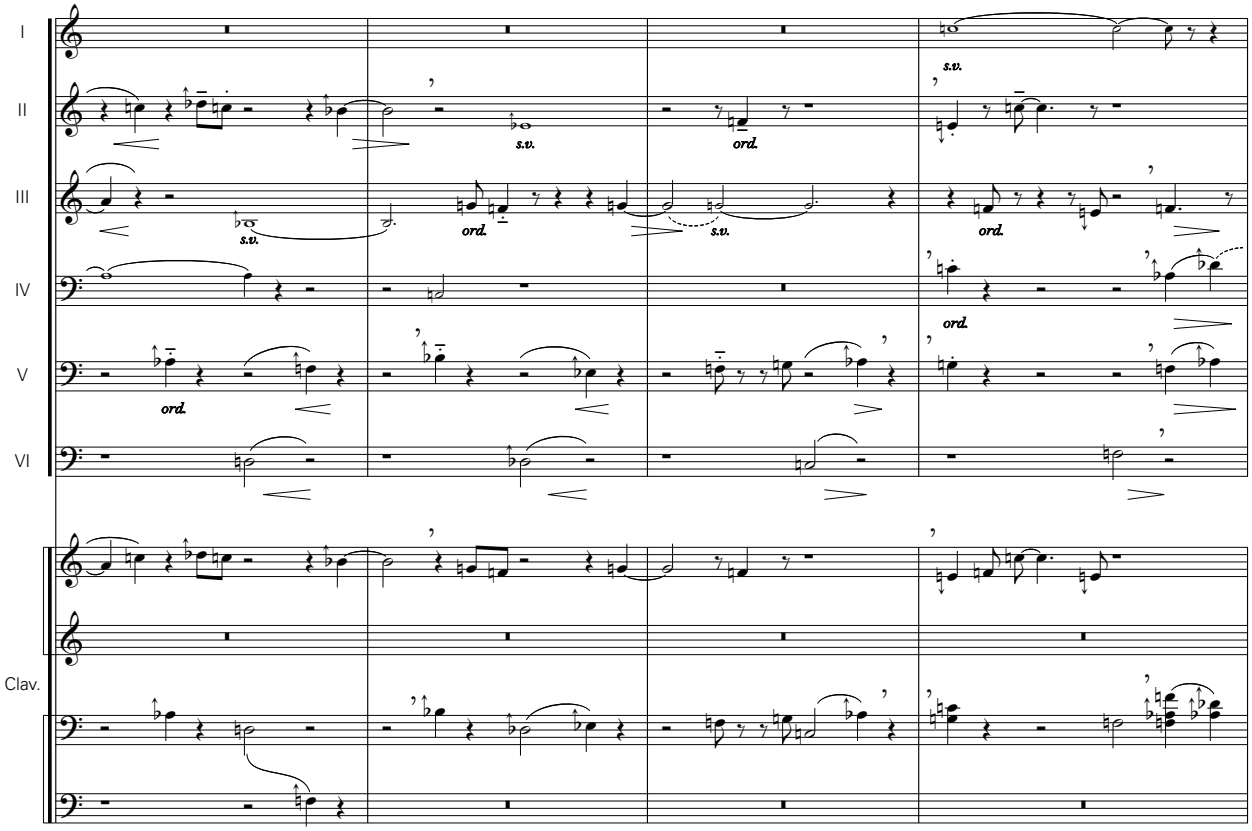

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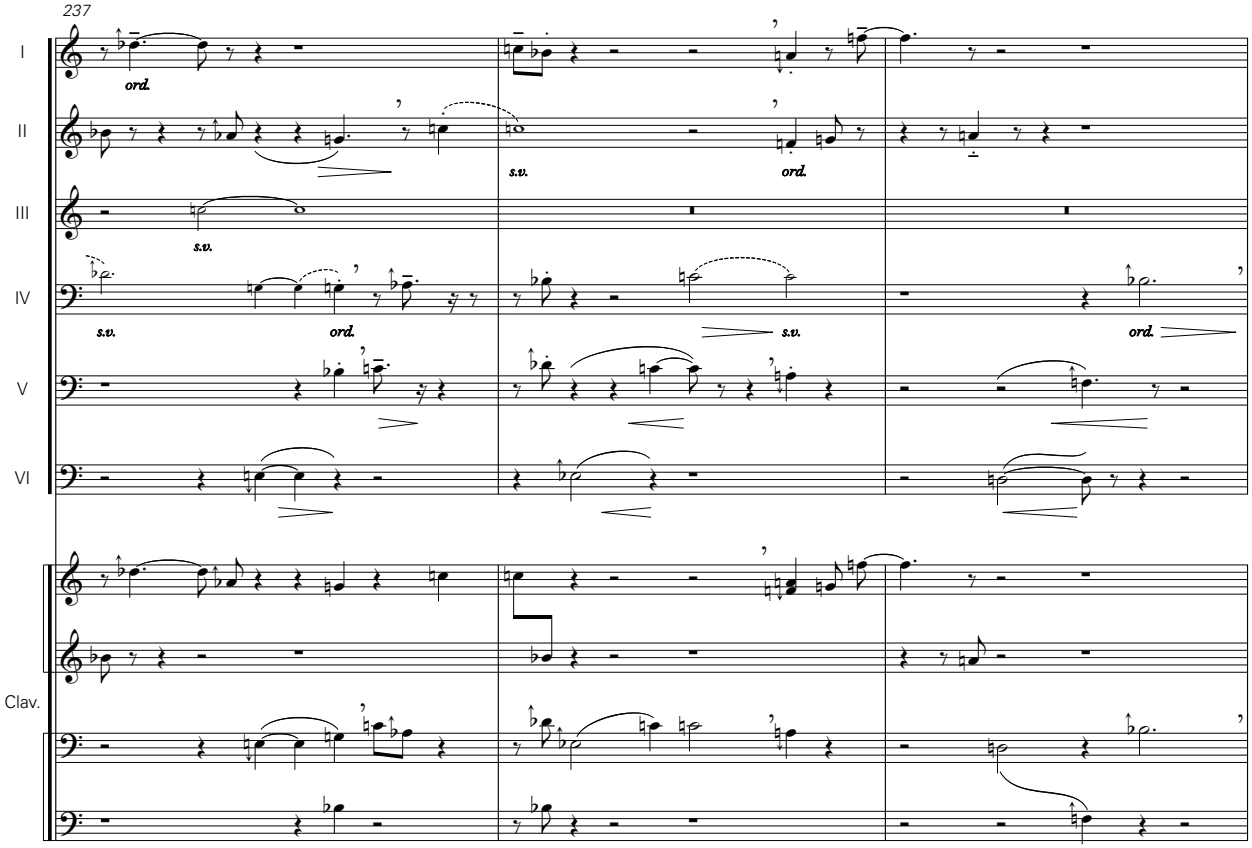

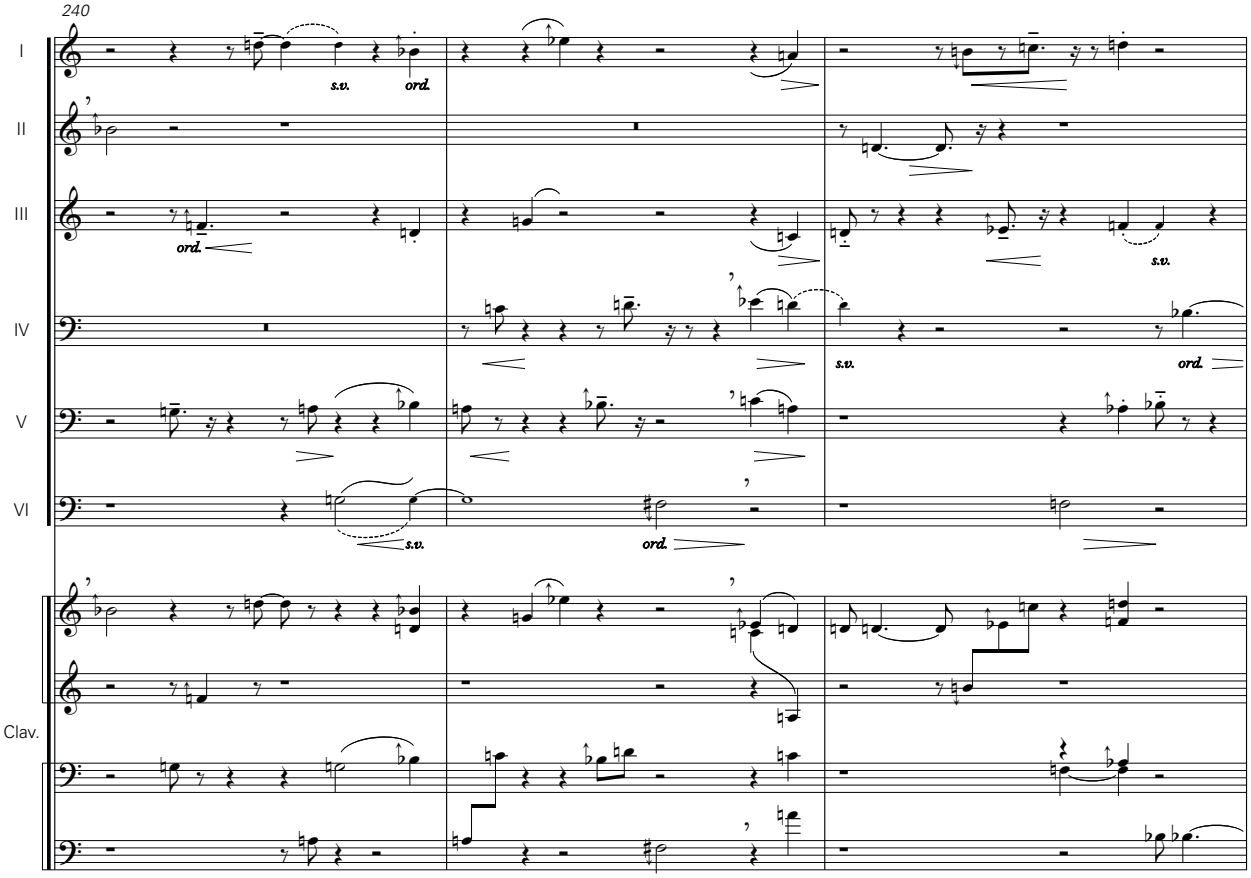
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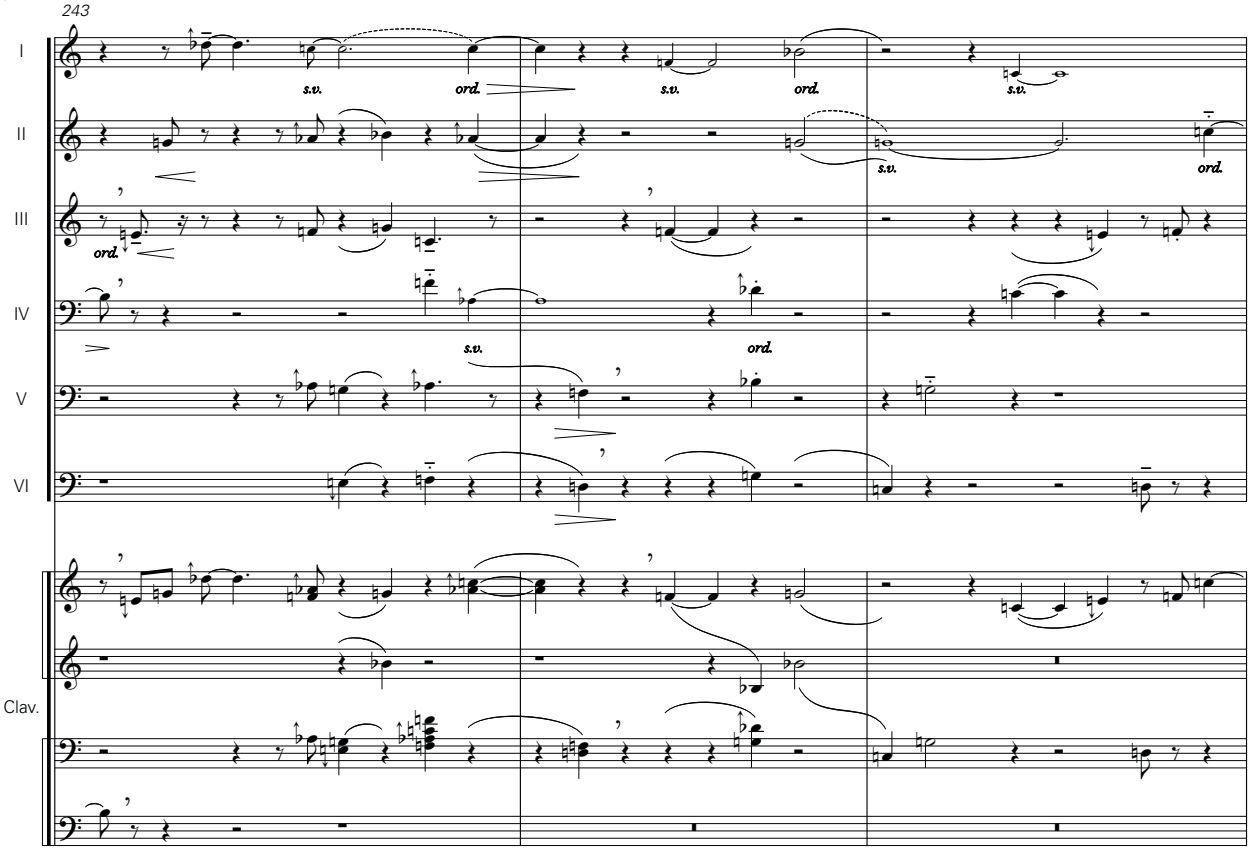
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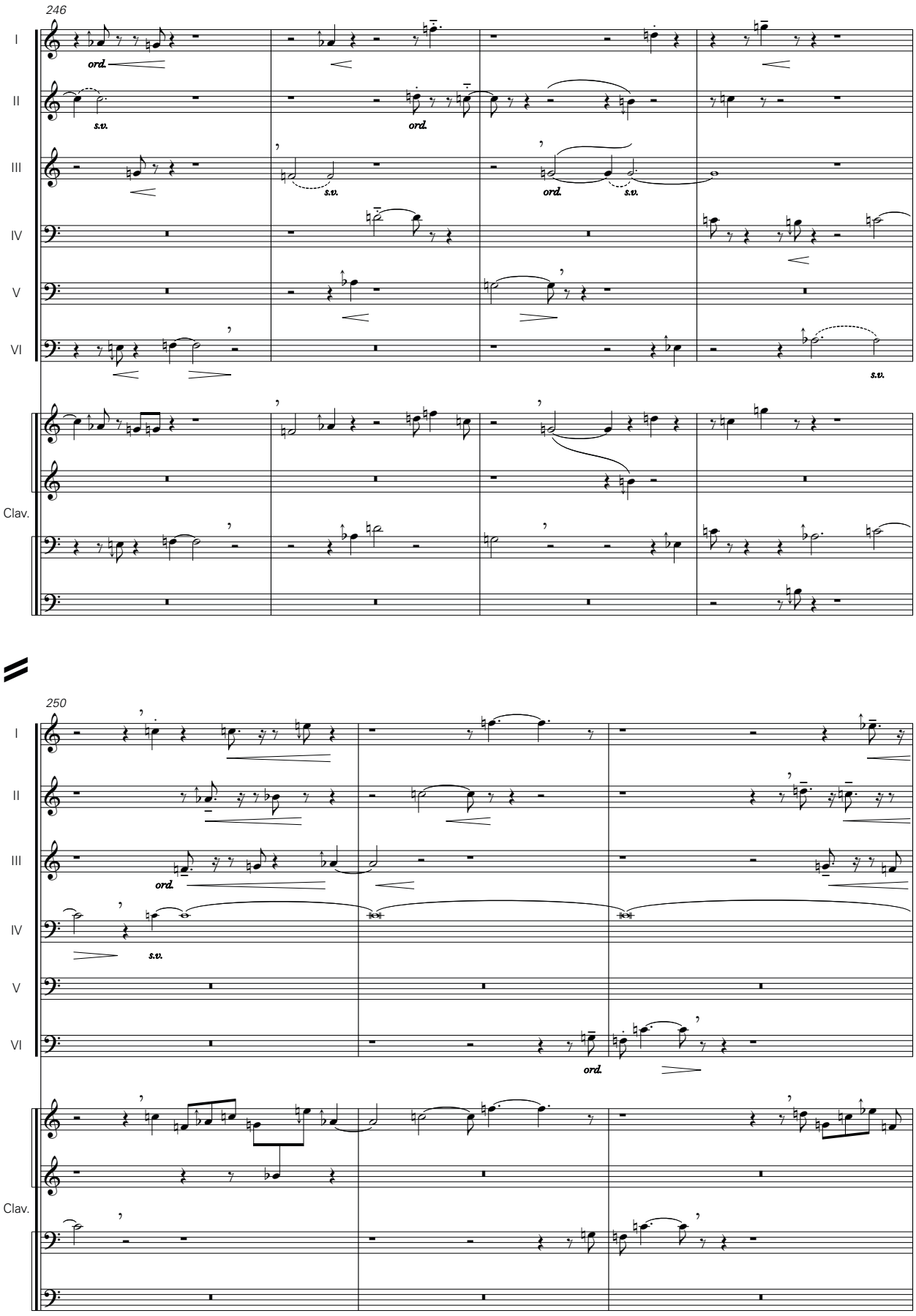
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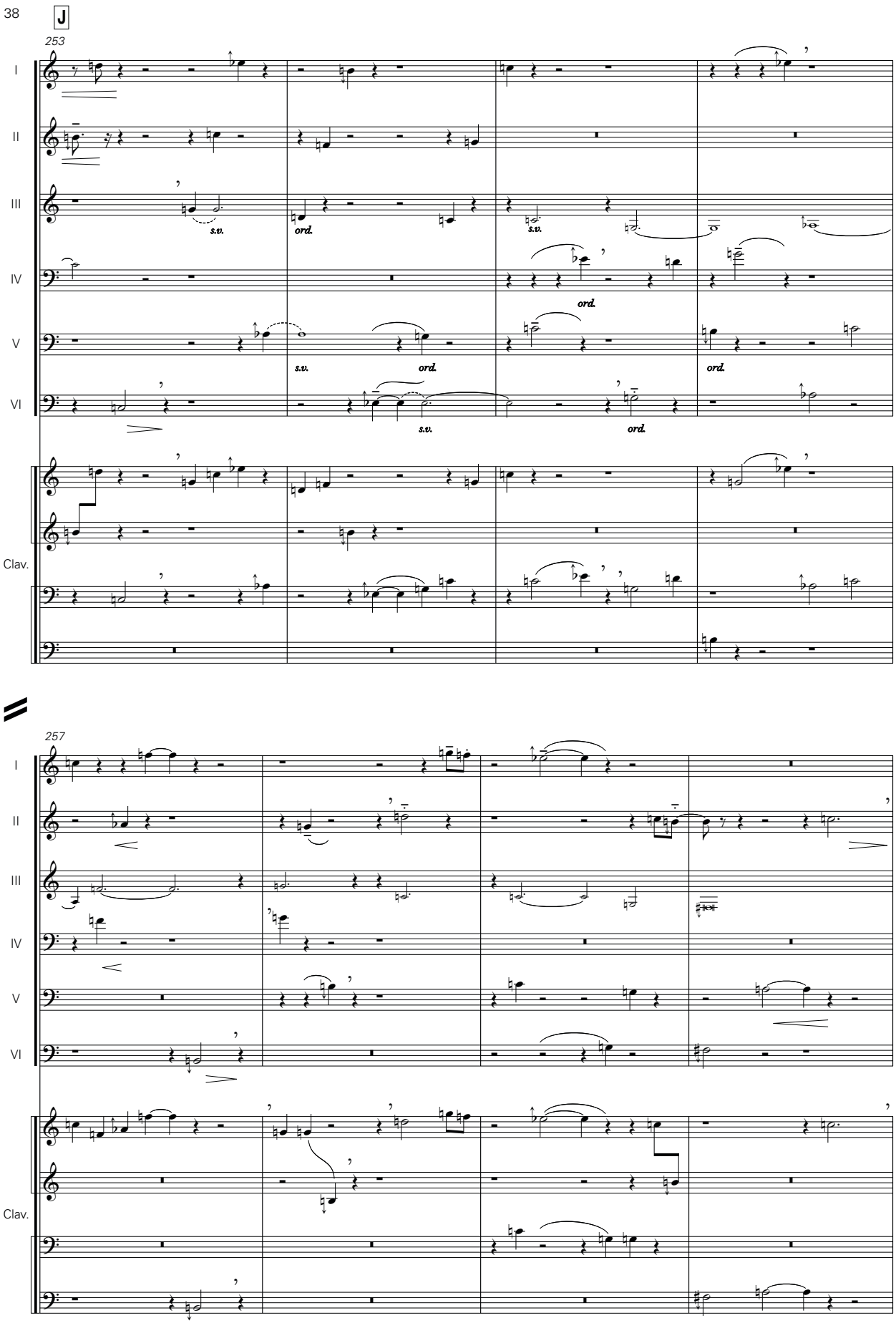
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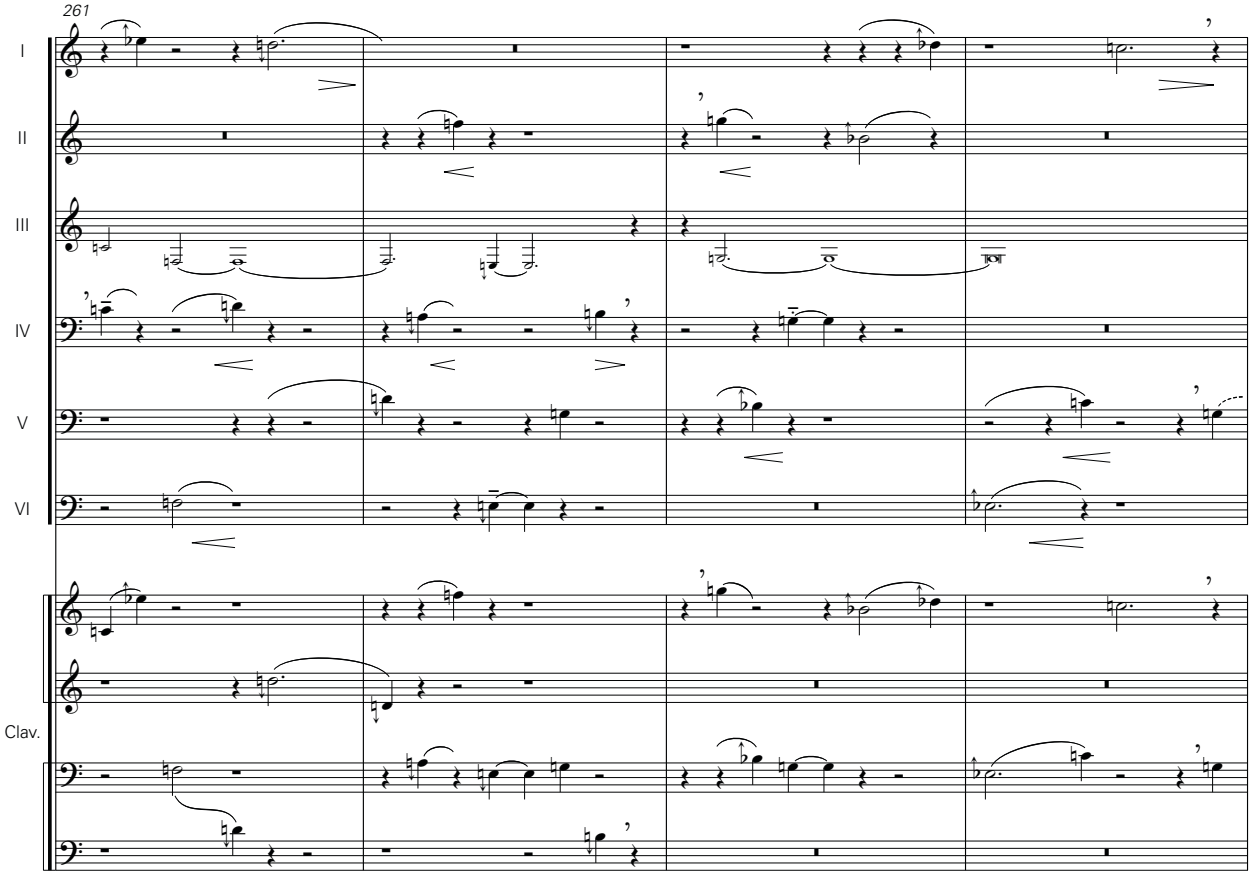
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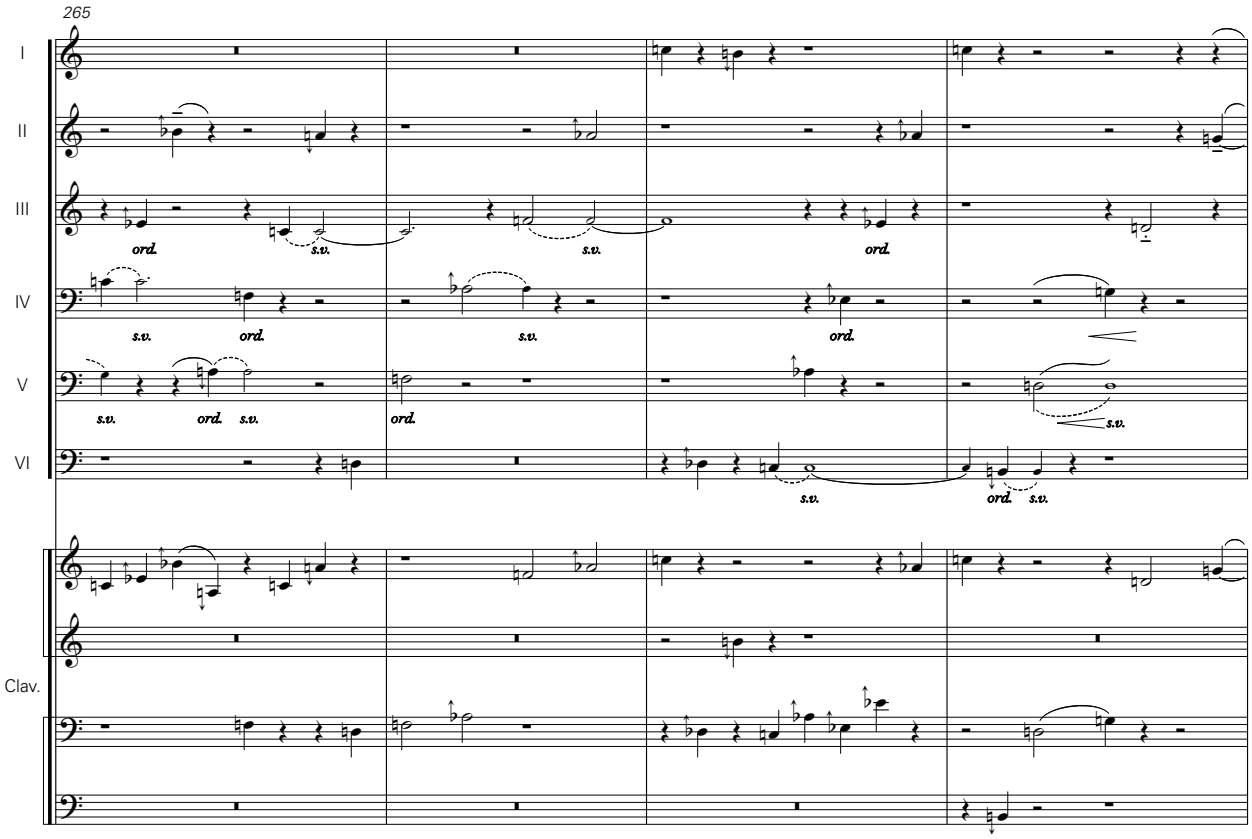
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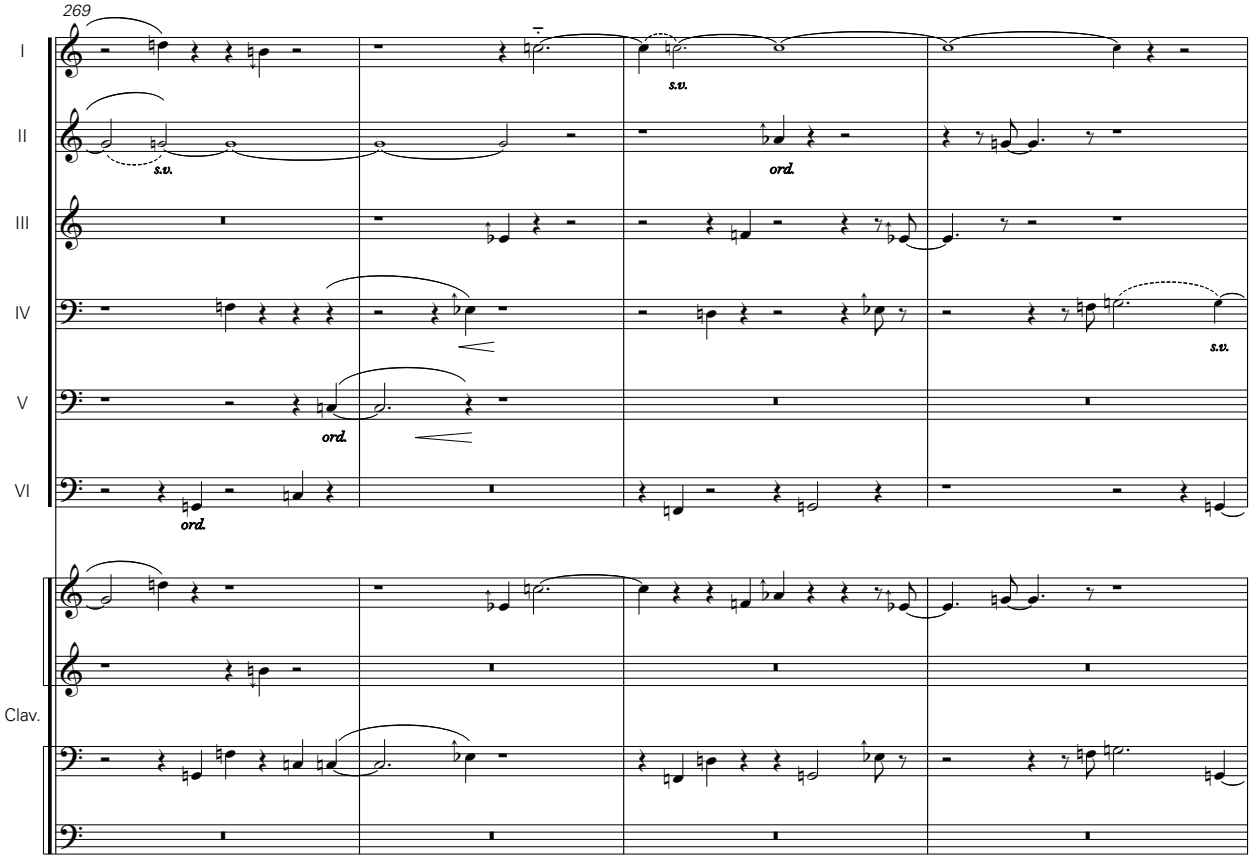

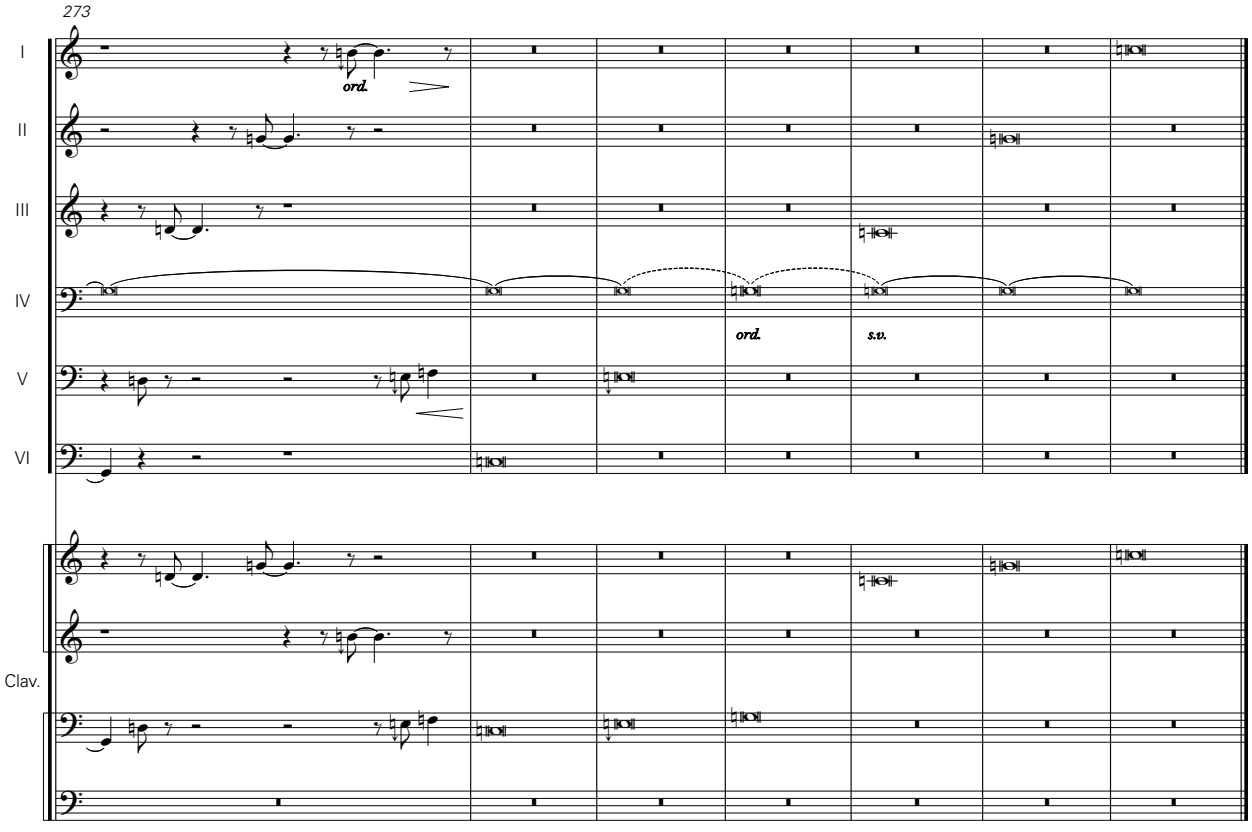

Berlin, October 1999 - June 2001 / Seidmar, September 2001 / revised Los Angeles and Berlin, January 2011