MIND FIELDS
for
oboe, french horn and piano
James M. Stephenson
Stephenson Music
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js James Stephenson

Mind Fields

Trio for Oboe, French Horn and Piano

by James M. Stephenson

duration - c. 15 '

Program Notes - by the composer --

Mind Fields was a commission led by Dione Chandler and Richard Sparrow for premiere at the International Double Reed Conference to be held in July of 2019 in Tampa, FL. I had primarily known Dione from my earlier years as an orchestral musician in Naples, Florida, and subsequently met her husband Richard. Upon being awarded a performance spot at the conference in 2019, they reached out to me with the idea of a new piece. The result is Mind Fields. The co-supporters of the work are listed below.

About the music.
It's interesting how life works out, and how coincidences are sometimes unexplainable, unpredictable, and in this case, rather upsetting. In writing the first two movements of this work, I found myself intrigued by the inner workings of the brain, and of our thoughts. The first movement - Intersections - plays with the idea of synapses, and the brain firing on all cylinders. It mimics different thoughts that come together and meet, and represent an active mind full of energy and promise. The different instruments play different patterns at the outset, meeting every once in a while on unison notes, crystallizing thoughts (even if only for a millisecond) and confirming that ideas should move forward. Lyrical melodies burst forth, always with energetic and optimistic rhythmic accompaniment, and conversing with one another. Sometimes the ideas forge together in unison; other times they are in canon, but always propelling the music forward confidently until all agree on that one final note: F.
The second movement - Secret Harbors - explores the inner deep recesses of the mind; perhaps the places we'd rather not reveal to the public. It's private music; it gnaws at us; not necessarily that which we want to talk about. It's relatively simple music, by design, but it's dark; lonely.
And lastly - Strokesongs. I didn't want to call it this. I didn't even know I would write this music. But my father suffered a stroke just as I set down to finish this piece. Watching him afterward has been very painful. He's a brilliant man, but right now, he can't express himself. So - this song tries to be happy, positive, but it can't find all the right notes. It's a tune we know, but there's always something getting in the way. The dots can't connect. Every time it tries to get into a groove, it just can't keep it going. Finally, it ends sadly, with a question mark, because the future is uncertain.

Jim Stephenson; June 22, 2019

Generous additional support given by:

Keri E. McCarthy, Washington State University
ROCO (River Oaks Chamber Orchestra)
Dr. ToniMarie Marchioni, University of Kentucky
Jane Murray and Cathryn Cummings, University of Rhode Island
Benjamin Lieser & Jamie Strefeler, University of Central Florida
Gene Berger and the Ball State University Horn Studio
Mirabelle Trio: Jared Hauser, oboe; Leslie Norton, horn; Melissa Rose, piano - Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University
Margaret Tung
Jeffrey Snedeker, Central Washington University
Sarah Schouten
Gail M. Williams
Alexander Shuhan, Ithaca College
Sarah & Erich Peterson
Clayton, Peter, David, and Jim Sparrow
Holly Sparrow
Margaret McClellan, Elizabeth, Trevor, Ryan, Drew, and Michael Sparrow
Joy and Glenn Chandler
Corey Merenda
Tod Bowermaster
Lisa Kozenko and the New York Chamber Music Co-Op

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Commissioned by Dione Chandler and Richard Sparrow, with support from co-commissioners

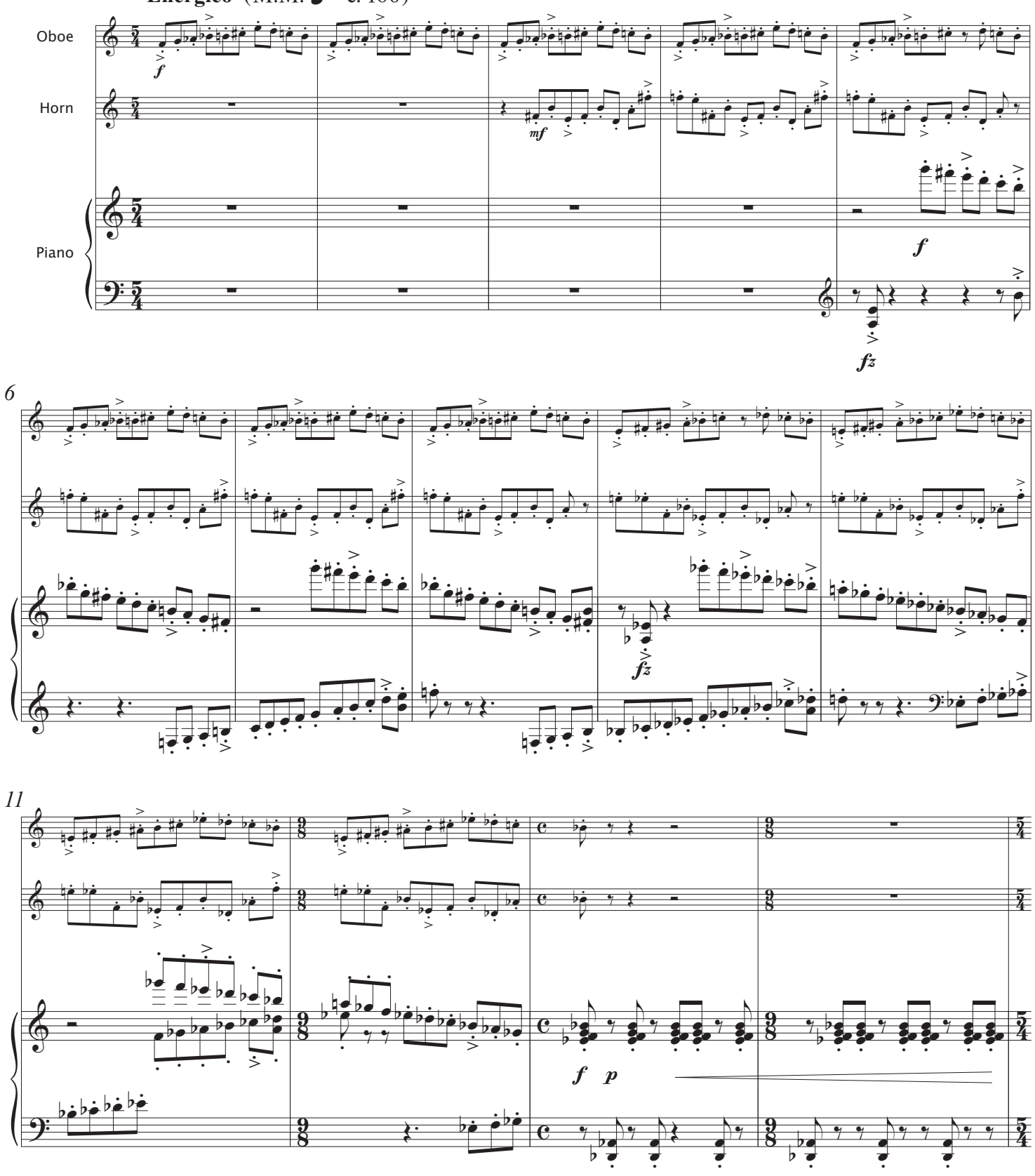
Score

Mind Fields

Trio for Oboe, French Horn and Piano

James M. Stephenson

I. Intersections



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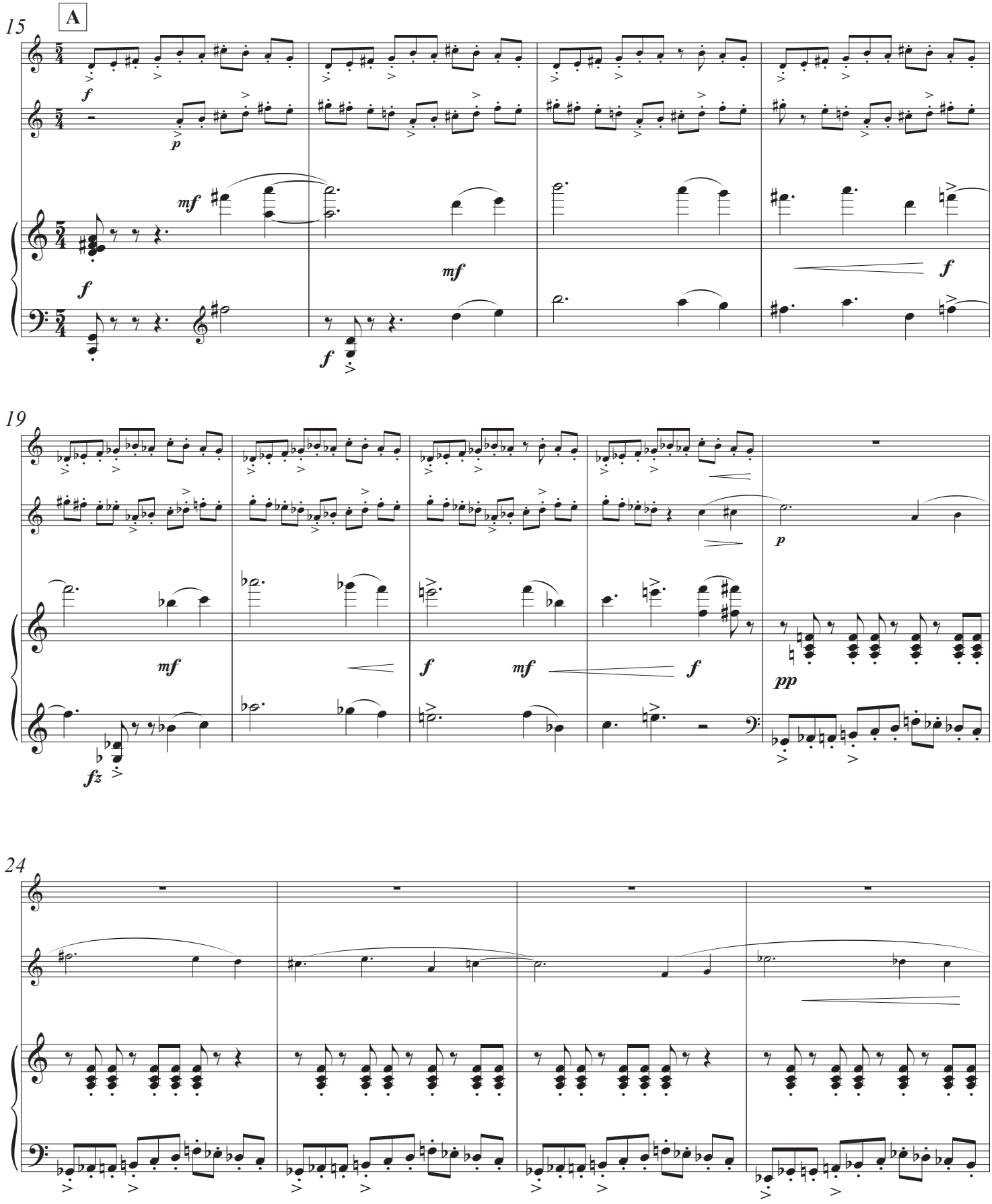
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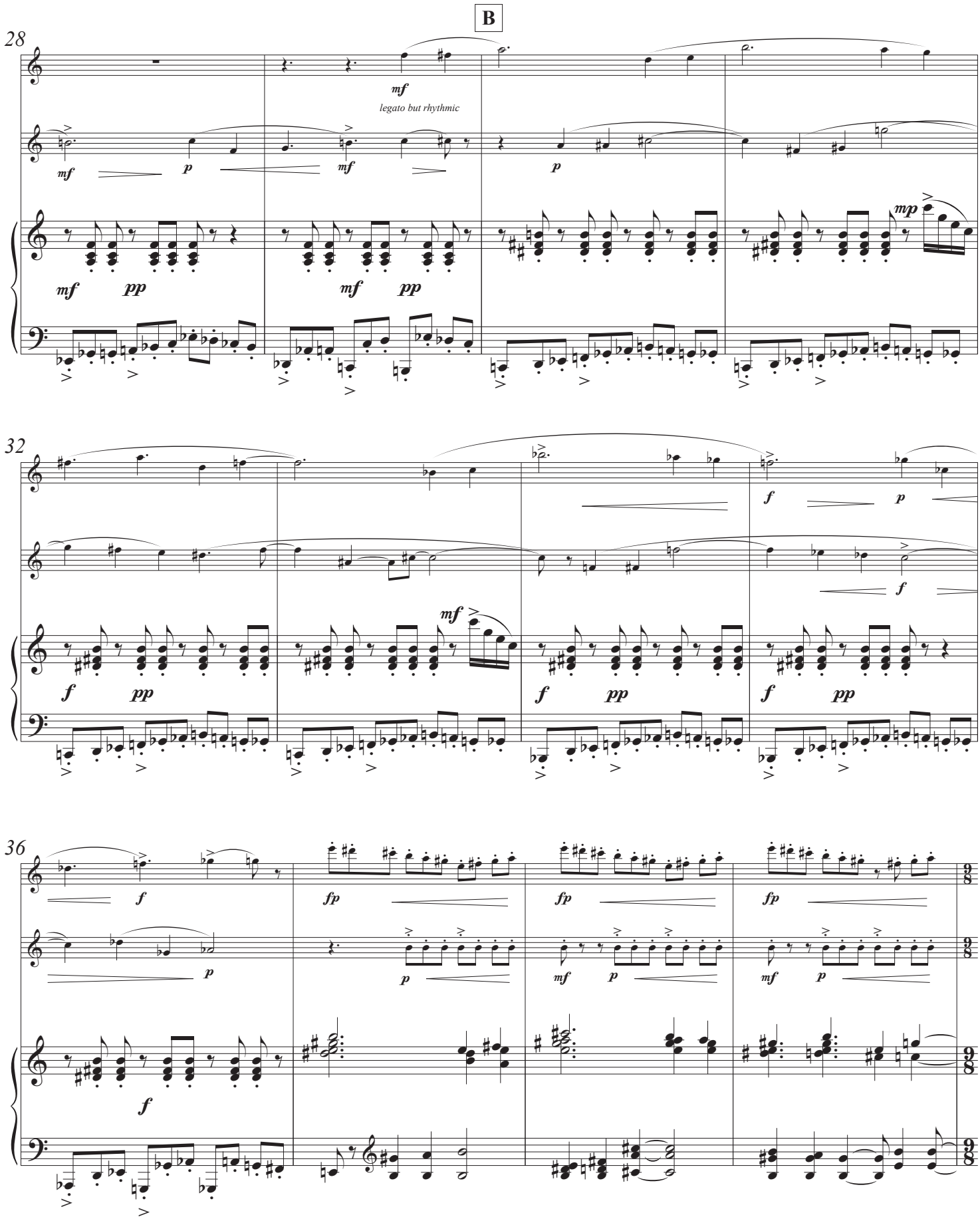
B
28
mf
legato but rhythmic
p
mf
p
mf
pp
mf
pp
mp
32
f
p
f
mf
f
pp
f
pp
f
pp
36
f
fp
fp
fp
p
p
mf
p
mf
p
f
f