Simon Løffler

Animalia I

For 2, 4, 6…etc. birds

Dedicated to Jennifer Torrence.

Performance Notes

Accessories

The following items are needed to play this piece:

Beak
The bird beak is made of Worbla. A tension spring connects the upper and lower part so that the beak opens by itself, which makes a rapid open and closing movement possible with a minimum of force. A with a thin mouthguard on the upper part to place the teeth in makes the beak firmly placed in the mouth. A finger cymbal is also placed on the upper part in front of the mouthguard.
Instructions for making your own will follow.

Whistles
The word whistle is misleading as the following sound emitters are struck with the fingers, not blown into. All three “whistles” are attached to an elastic band that can be wrapped around the thighs. The “whistles” are positioned underneath the thighs, thereby concealing as far as possible the movement of the hands when played on.

House sparrow whistle:

Starling whistle:

Common blackbird whistle:

Ear rings

Two finger cymbals are attached to a steel wire that is wrapped around both ears. An elastic band connects the ears behind the head for stability.

Shoulder

On the outside of player 1's left shoulder, and player 2's right shoulder, a small piece of cardboard or something similar is placed, which is scraped on with the beak. (see picture below).

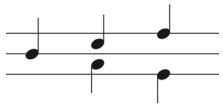
Sitting posture and dressing

The performers sit very close and slightly turned towards each other. Their arms are held tight against the sides of their body, and the hands are underneath their thighs where the whistles are placed.

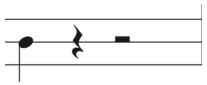
They wear a bolero on top of a differently coloured t-shirt, approximating wings that are a different colour from the bird body.

The whole set-up then looks like this:

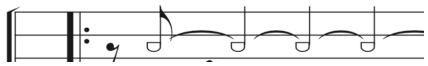
Staff and Note heads



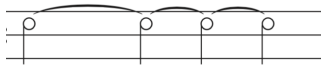
The centre staff line indicates to look straight ahead.
In between the centre staff line and the upper staff indicates to look ca. 30 degrees to the right.
In between the centre staff line and the lower staff indicates to look ca. 30 degrees to the left.
The upper staff line indicates to look ca. 80 degrees to the right, whilst the lower staff line indicates to look ca. 80 degrees to the left.



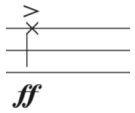
Black note heads indicate closed mouth.



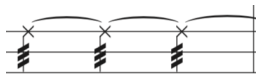
Half-rounded note heads indicate half-open mouth (only used in 1 bar by player 2).



Round note heads indicate mouth wide open.

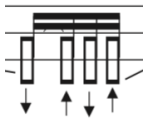


Clapping the beak together fast and hard, causing the beak to make a short tremolo on its own.

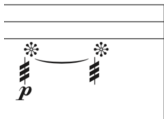


Beak tremolo, played with the jaw. Let the beak bounce up from the lower teeth with a minimum of movement by the jaw.

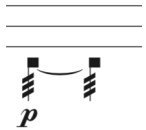
Fast tremolo on the edge of the other players beak where a washer is attached. This occurs in an interlocking formation where player 2 bites the upper beak of player 1, while player 1 bites the lower side of player 2´s beak. It is necessary that player 1 opens the beak wide a microsecond before player 2´s action start.



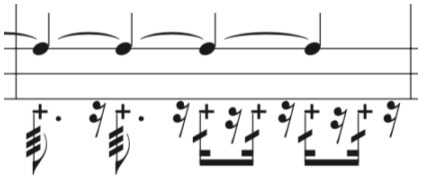
Scraping with the beak on the outside of the other players shoulder blade, where a resonating surface is placed, such as cardboard or similar.



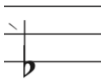
House sparrow whistle, attached under the left thigh. When played, the hand movement barely visible.



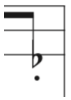
Staling whistle, attached under the right thigh. When played, the hand movement barely visible.



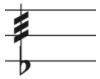
The plus note head indicates the common blackbird whistle, attached under either the left or right thigh.



Place the beak by the other players' right ear bell, before the ensuing action on the next beat.
The designation "right" is always from the perspective of the player who is playing.
The reverse symbol denotes the left ear.



Bite the right ear bell of the other player, causing it to resonate.
The reverse symbol denotes the left ear.



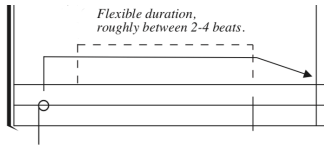
Bite the right ear bell rapidly.

Strike the bell that is placed on the other players´ beak with a quick down-up motion of the lower jaw.

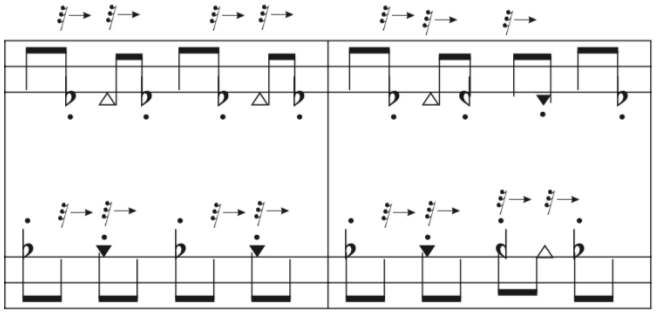
Indicates that the other player is striking the bell on top of your beak, meaning that you must place your beak underneath his/hers a fraction of a second before the action (see further explanation below).

Movement

All head movements are instantaneous, without being hectic, unless specified otherwise.



First tilt the head upward in a quick motion so that the beak points towards the sky, then turn slowly towards the other player with beak still in the air, the duration of which can vary according to what is written above the stippled line, then lower the beak 1 beat towards the ensuing action at the beginning of the next bar.



In section E, the two players strike each other's ear rings and beak bells continuosly, which requires a high degree of coordination. For want of a better way to notate the implied movements, a small 32nd rest with an arrow above a note head indicates that as soon as the action on the beat has happened, one moves immediately to where the next action will happen.

If the head movements of the two performers can appear to be instantaneous and synchronised, the aesthetic result will be all the more pleasing.

Bird piece

Simon Løffler

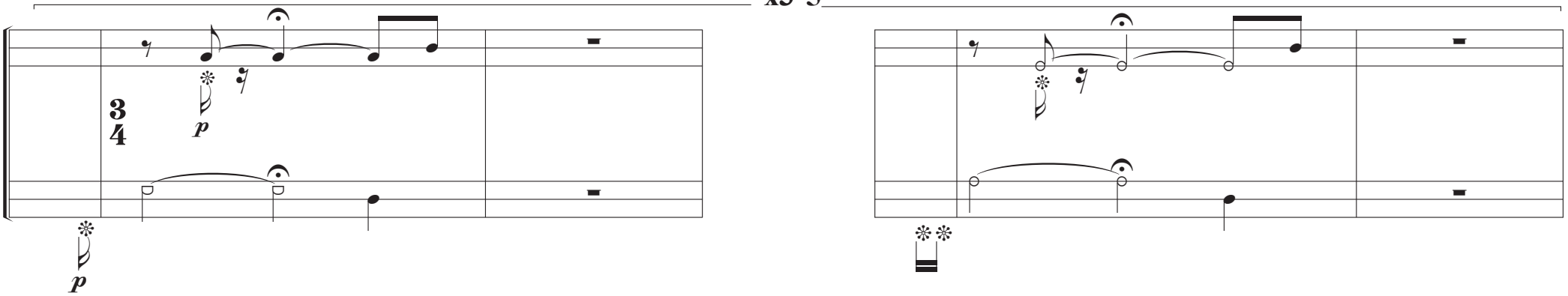
ca. 40´

A

For about 40 seconds, the two performers sit still and occasionally tilt their heads slightly to the left or right and back to center, as if they are birds.
The head movements should be very small and abrupt, no more than 5 centimeters. The eyes should be completely stiff in the center of the eye, only moving with the head.
Player 2 signals to move on by playing 1 16-note upbeat to section B.

B ♩ = 74 Player 2 signals which of the two phrases to play by playing either 1 or 2 16-notes as an upbeat. Player 2 furthermore signals when to go on to bar 9 by playing the 16-note triplet upbeat.
Everything is played in time.

x3-5



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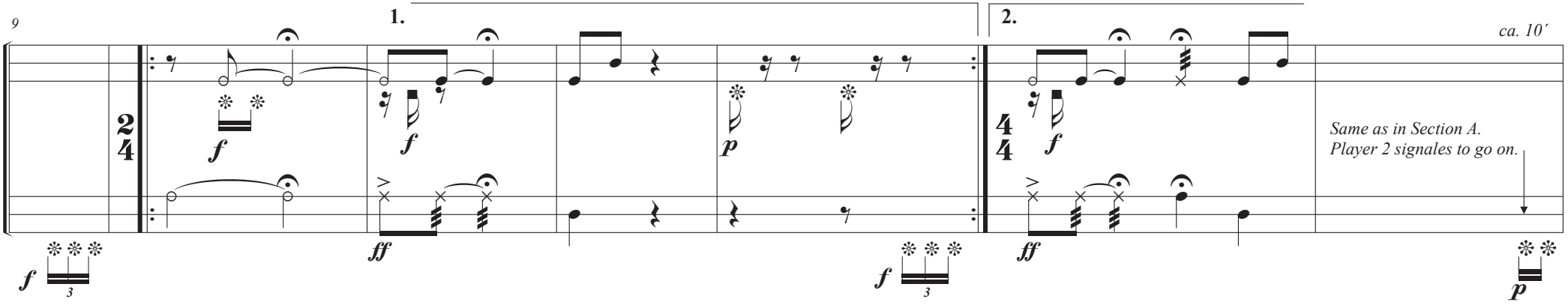
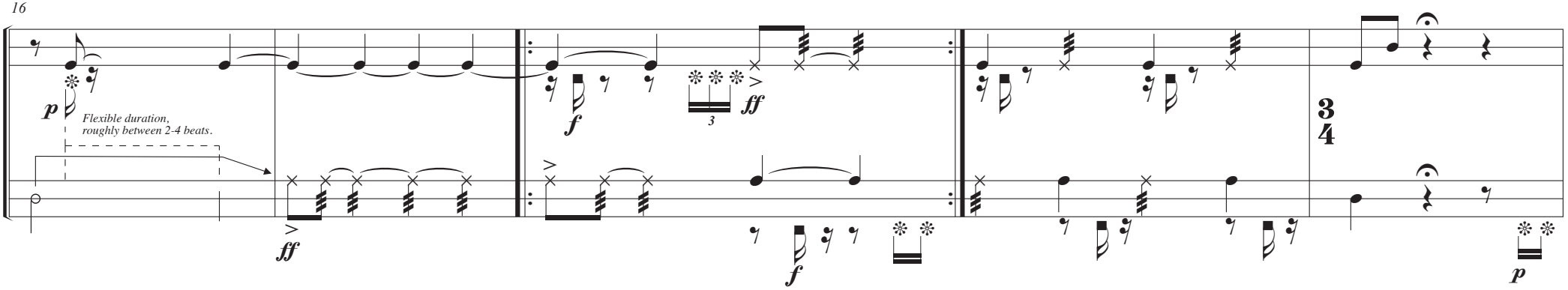


C

16



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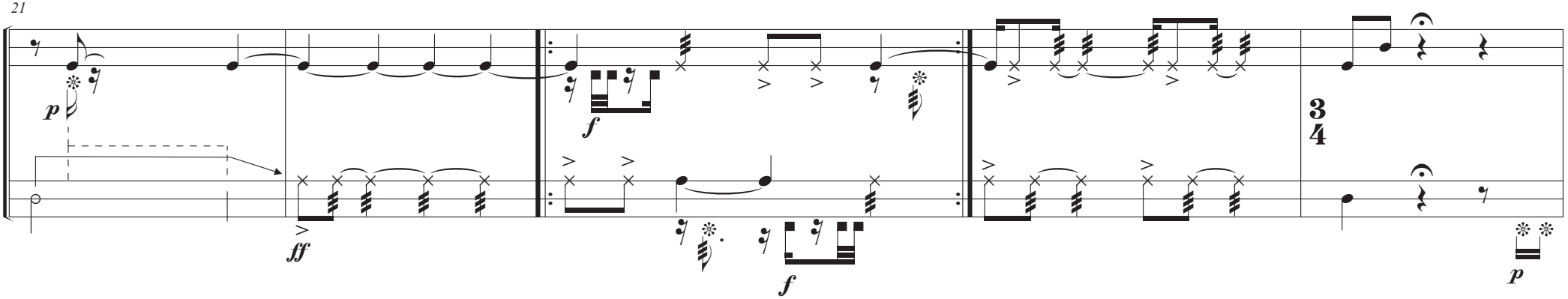
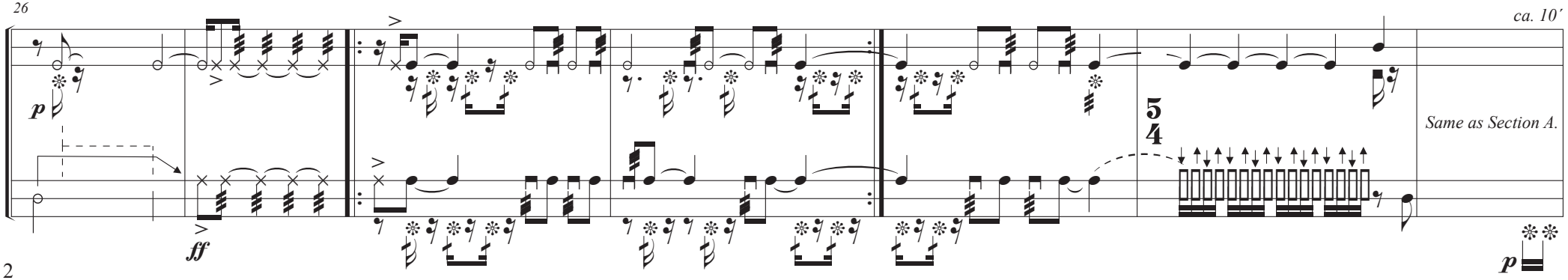


26

ca. 10′



D

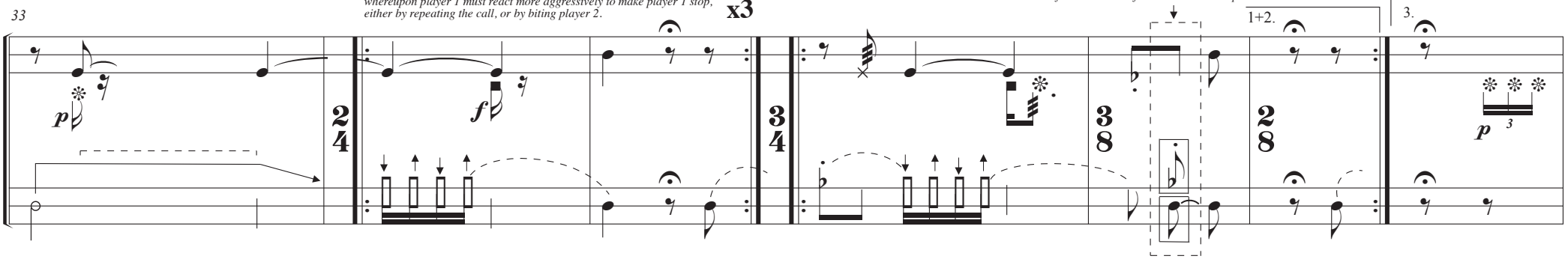
33

Can be played more freely in the following way:
Player 2 extend the "scraping gesture", ignoring the call sound of player 1,
whereupon player 1 must react more aggressively to make player 1 stop,
either by repeating the call, or by biting player 2.

x3

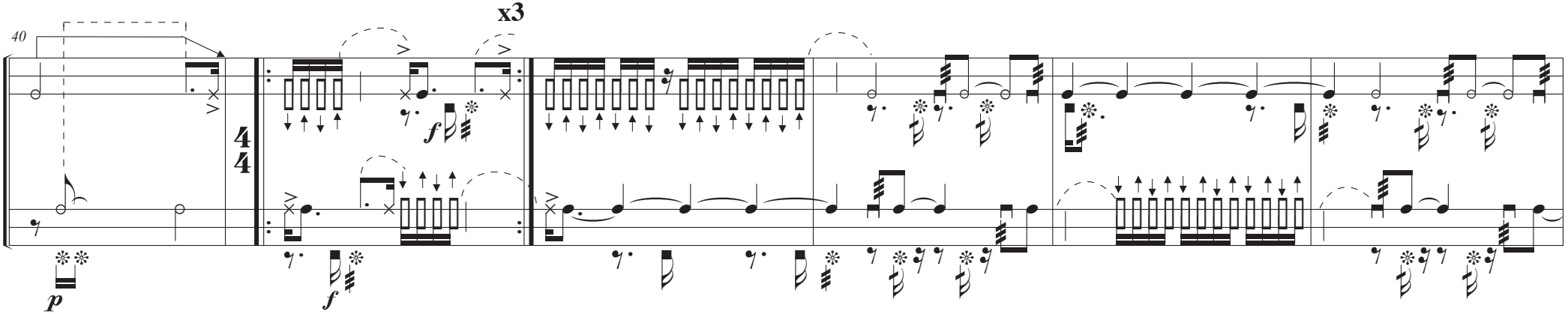
On the 2nd beat of this 3/8 bar, player 2 can choose to bite back or not.
If chosen to do so, player 1 can choose to bite back again or not,
and so forth until one of them decides to stop and return to the center.

1+2. 3.



40

x3



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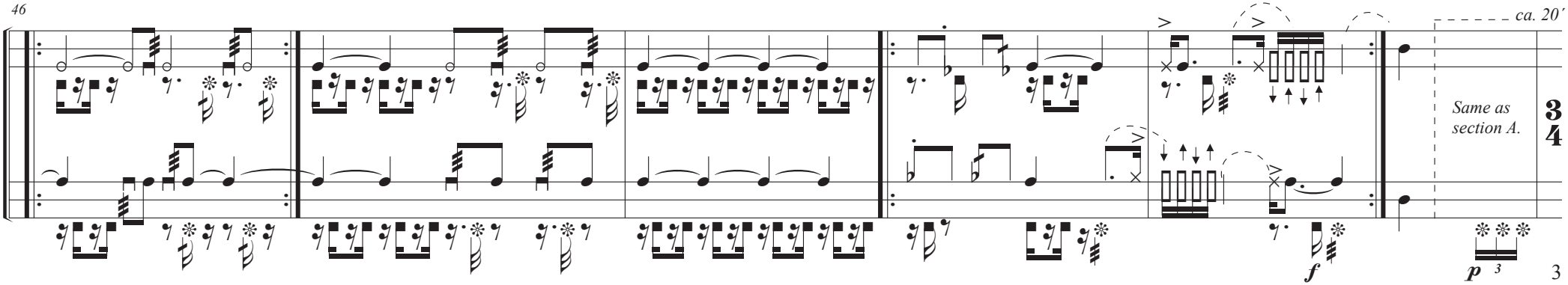
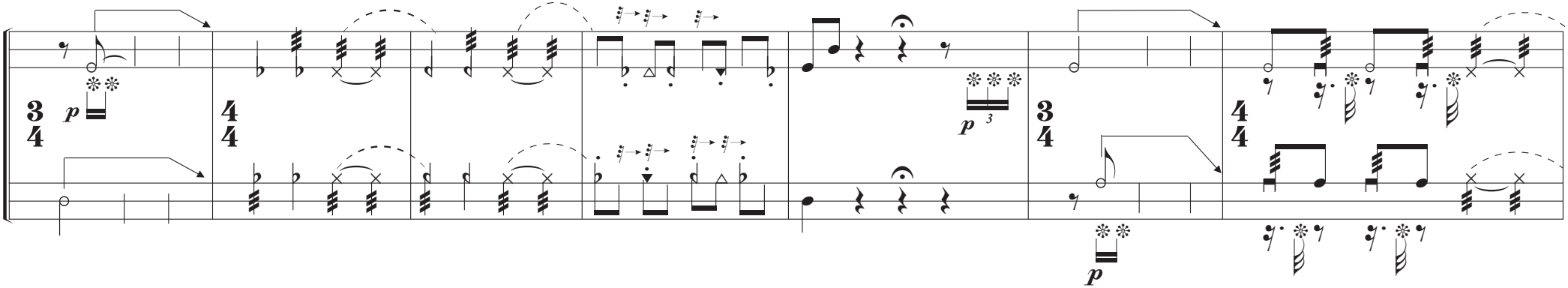


E

Moving in a big arch from right side of head to left side.



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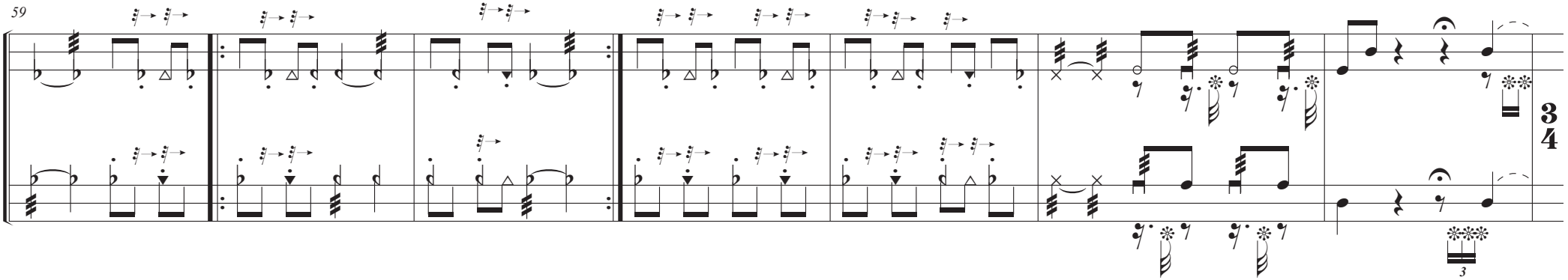
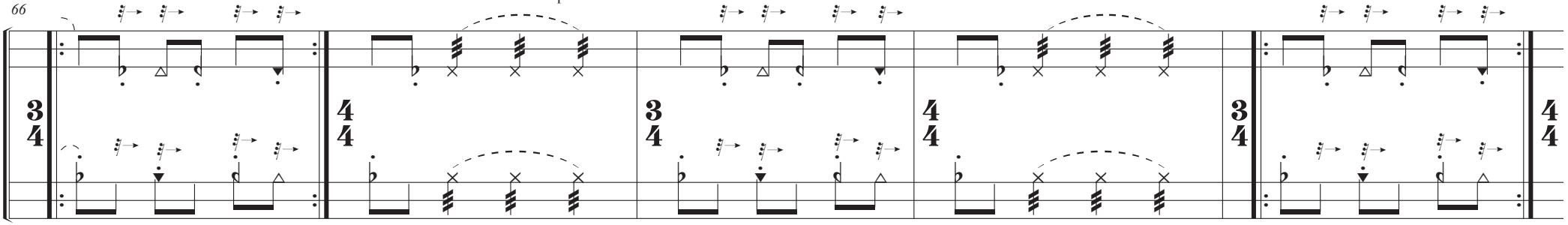
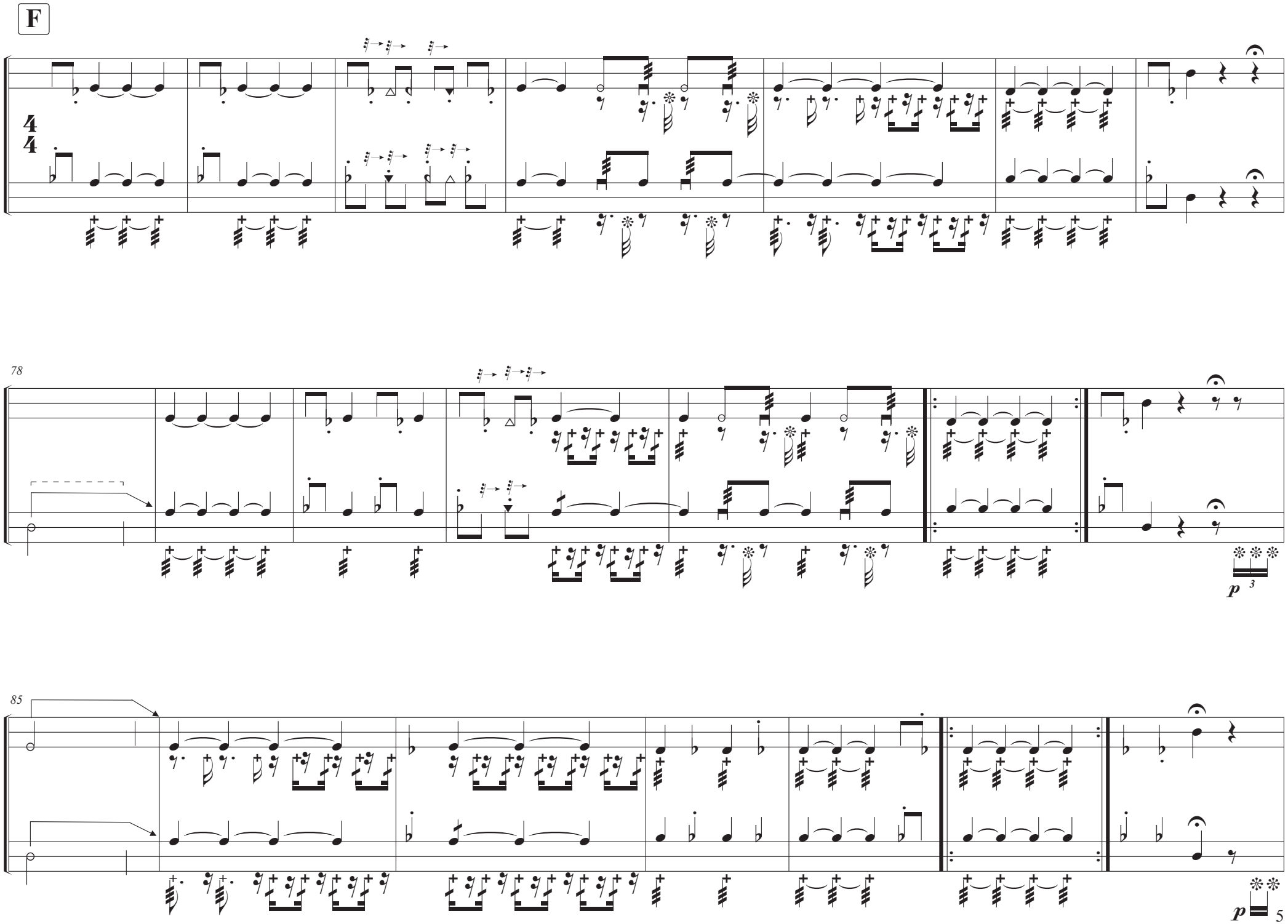


Staying on the right side, moving the head up and down in an arch-like shape.

x4

66



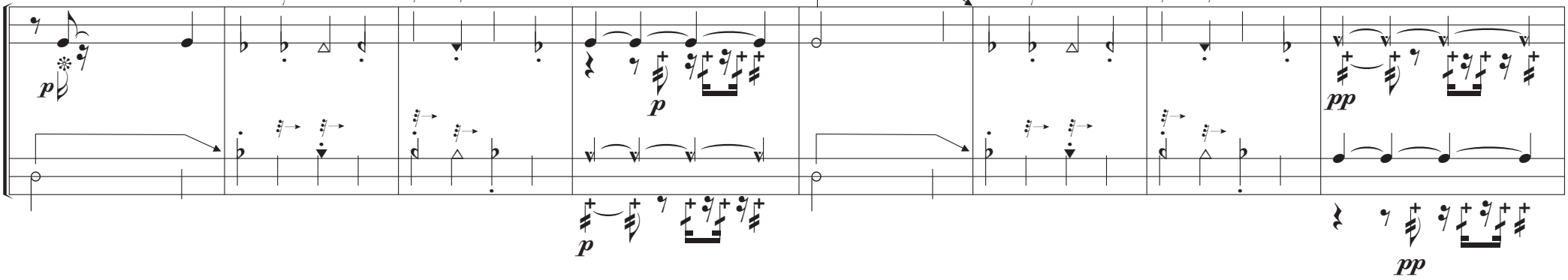

F
78
85
p
3
p

92

Gentle.

Player 2 gently places beak on top of player 1´s,
and slowly they lower their beaks downwards together.

Player 1 gently places beak on top of player 2´s,
and slowly they lower their beaks downwards together.



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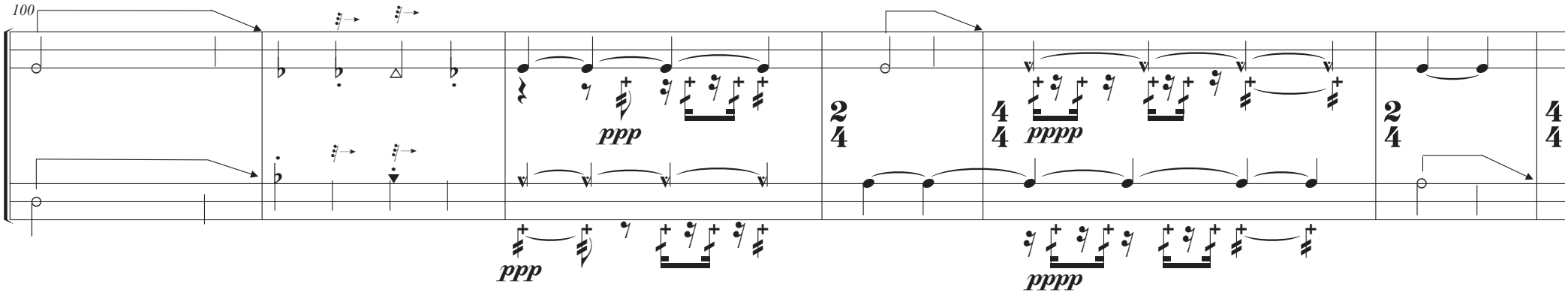
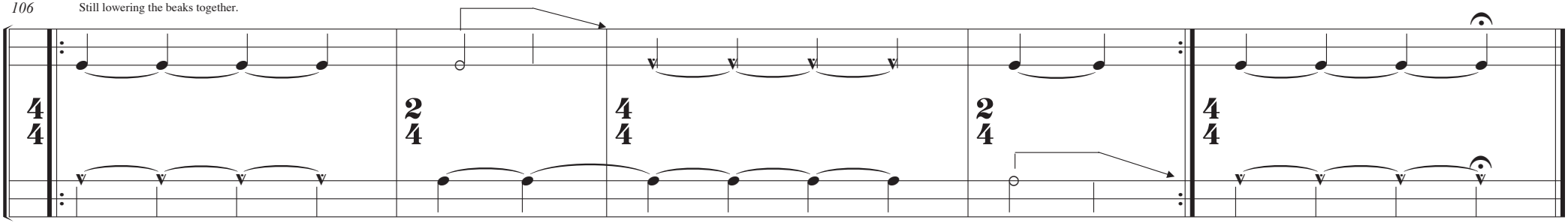


Ritardando al fine.

106

Still lowering the beaks together.