ANDREA GABRIELI

?1532/3–1585

Canzona ariosa

a keyboard canzona

for two Trumpets in C or B♭ and two Trombones

from Il terzo libro de ricercari … tabulati per ogni sorte di stromenti da tasti
1596

Edited, with editorial dynamics, preface, and commentary,
by Christopher Delgado

SCORE

Performing edition. Musical text not collated with the 1596 print.

TRUMPETOWN EDITION

Andrea Gabrieli, *Canzon ariosa*, for keyboard. From *Il terzo libro de ricercari … tabulati per ogni sorte di stromenti da tasti* (1596).

Performing edition. The musical text is a modern arrangement for brass quartet of a keyboard piece and has not been collated with the 1596 print. The dynamics, which are all editorial and printed in square brackets, and the preface and commentary are the present editor's.

Editorial dynamics, preface, and commentary: © 2026 Christopher Delgado, released under CC BY-SA 4.0.

Facsimile plate reproduced from a public-domain scan of Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sacrae symphoniae* (1597) (IMSLP).

Parts available: Trumpet 1 and Trumpet 2, each in C and in B♭; Trombone; Bass Trombone.

TRUMPETOWN EDITION

TE-006

Arrangement after M. Rondeau, IMSLP (Werner Icking Music Collection), CC BY 3.0.

PREFACE

The source, the instruments, and the question of dynamics

The source

Andrea Gabrieli, the Venetian composer and organist who was the uncle and teacher of Giovanni Gabrieli, died in 1585. The *Canzon ariosa* appeared eleven years later in *Il terzo libro de ricercari … tabulati per ogni sorte di stromenti da tasti* (1596), a book of pieces "tabulated for every kind of keyboard instrument."[1] It is therefore a keyboard piece, and the four-part brass texture of this edition is the arranger's distribution of it. The 1596 print has not been consulted for this edition, and no facsimile of it is reproduced.

Brass players have good reason to play it. Venetian ensemble music around 1600 was played above all on cornetts and trombones, the core of the instrumental establishment at San Marco, alone or doubled by strings and organ, and canzonas passed freely between keyboard and ensemble.[2] A quartet of two trumpets and two trombones is a modern descendant of that sound.

The question of dynamics

The print has not been consulted, so it cannot be said here whether it carries dynamic indications; the arrangement used for the musical text has none. Silence in a source of this period would not, in any case, be evidence that the music was played at one level. As Matthias Thiemel puts it in *Grove Music Online*, dynamic variation "can normally be assumed even when indications for it are mainly or even entirely absent from the notation," and already in the Renaissance "dynamic values were reflected in changes in the number of voices and their registers."[3] Andrea's nephew Giovanni is the best witness. In the *Sacrae symphoniae* of 1597 he printed the words *Pian* and *Forte* in the parts of the *Sonata pian e forte* (Plate 1), and the placement is systematic: a single choir sounding alone is marked *pian*, and the two choirs together are marked *forte*. Dynamic level follows the number of choirs sounding.

Michael Praetorius, writing in 1619 for German musicians learning the new Italian music, confirms the principle. The Italians, he reports, mark *forte* and *piano* in their parts "because of the changes in both voices and choirs," a practice he approves, provided it is used with moderation.[4] The instruments were equal to it. Girolamo Dalla Casa, the first director of instrumental music at San Marco, wrote in 1584 that the cornett "is played piano and forte and in every sort of key, just as the voice." Jamie Savan, who translates the passage, suggests that the two words described tone quality, soft and hard, as well as level.[5]

Every dynamic in this score is therefore editorial, every one is printed in square brackets, and each is justified in the Commentary. The edition follows the practice Thomas Hiebert singled out for praise, in which editorial suggestions are "clearly differentiated" from the source.[6] Players who prefer the bare text can ignore the brackets.

1 David Bryant, "Gabrieli, Andrea," *Grove Music Online* (2001; this version 25 February 2021), §1 and work-list (keyboard; RISM 1596[19]), https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.40692. Grove gives the title as *Canzon ariosa*; the arranger's is *Canzona ariosa*. Modern edition: P. Pidoux, ed., *Intonationen für Orgel* (Kassel, 1941; 2nd ed., 1967), 29.

2 For the instrumentalists at San Marco see Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra of St Mark's," *Early Music* 4, no. 2 (1976): 153–58, at 155, and her *Venetian Instrumental Music from Gabrieli to Vivaldi*, 3rd rev. ed. (New York: Dover, 1994). For a canzona of Giovanni Gabrieli preserved both for ensemble and in keyboard and lute versions, see the work-list in Bryant, "Gabrieli, Giovanni," *Grove Music Online*, nos. 186 and 194.

3 Matthias Thiemel, "Dynamics," *Grove Music Online* (2001; bibliography updated 2013), §1, https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.08458. Thiemel cites Josquin's *Missa "Pange lingua"*, where paired imitation builds from two voices to four.

4 Michael Praetorius, *Syntagma musicum III* (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), trans. and ed. Jeffery T. Kite-Powell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); quoted from Hans Lampl, trans., "Praetorius on Performance: Excerpts from *Syntagma Musicum III*," selected with commentary by S. E. Plank, *Historic Brass Society Journal* 6 (1994): 244–68, at 248–49.

5 Girolamo Dalla Casa, *Il vero modo di diminuir* (Venice: Angelo Gardano, 1584): "Questo stromento si adopera piano, & forte, & in ogni sorte di Tuono, si come fa la voce"; trans. Jamie Savan, "Unlocking the Mysteries of the Venetian Cornett: *ad imitar piu la voce humana*," *Historic Brass Society Journal* 28 (2016): 31–56, at 50. On Dalla Casa's post see Selfridge-Field, "Bassano and the Orchestra," 153.

6 Thomas Hiebert, review of *Salzburger Hornduette*, ed. Johannes Brand, *Historic Brass Society Newsletter* 10 (1997): 38.

Principles of the editorial dynamics

Giovanni Gabrieli's *Sonata pian e forte* is written for two choirs; this canzona is written for a single keyboard player. The edition extends the principle of the sonata to a single four-voice texture by analogy, and states openly that it does so. The rules are those of the first volume of this series (TE-001), applied to a canzona built from sharply contrasted sections.

Texture determines level. Where voices drop out and a new point of imitation is entered by single voices, the level is [*p*] or [*mf*]. Where all four parts join in rhythmically unified writing, it is [*f*]. Where the scoring alone produces the increase, as in the opening exposition, no marking is printed; [*f*] appears only where the voices also move together.

Changes of level fall at the seams. Changes of level fall at cadences and at the start of new points of imitation, not in the middle of a phrase. Where a voice runs on across a cadence, its marking is placed at the start of its next phrase. This is not a claim that the music was played in flat blocks of sound. Thiemel calls the twentieth-century idea of "terrace dynamics" erroneous, and the period sources describe the swelling and fading of the voice and of wind instruments: Caccini's *crescere e scemare della voce*, and Fantini's instruction of 1638 that long notes on the trumpet be held "in a singing fashion," swelling to the middle of the note and fading again.[7] The brackets mark only the level from which such shaping starts. No hairpins are printed; the shaping is left to the players.

The opening. The subject enters in the trombone (bar 1), second trumpet (bar 2), first trumpet (bar 4), and bass trombone (bar 7), and after the cadence on F in bar 13 a second point on repeated crotchets runs through all four parts. Both are [*mf*]; only the entries of the first point are marked.

A dialogue of pairs. After the cadence on F in bar 27 the trumpets play bar 28 alone; the trombones carry bar 30, with the first trumpet silent until its last beat and the second silent throughout; the trumpets are alone again in bar 32. Each pair sounding alone is treated as a choir sounding alone and marked [*p*], both pairs the same, and the level holds through the four-part writing of bars 34–39.

A decorated repeat. Bars 49–53 are a varied repeat of bars 40–44, decorated with semiquaver figures in the manner of the period's diminution practice. The repeat is not an echo, and it keeps the [*mf*] of bar 40.

Chordal blocks and a lighter middle. Bars 57–61 and 78–82 open with all four parts in repeated-crotchet chords and are [*f*]. Between them a short figure of repeated notes and a turn passes between the trumpets over a held trombone note, and then to the trombone itself, with the bass trombone silent from bar 63 to bar 68; this lighter writing is [*p*].

Balance on modern instruments

The trumpet and trombone of today are louder and more brilliant than the cornett and sackbut, and the cornett in particular was prized for its likeness to the human voice. The bracketed dynamics should therefore be read as relationships, not as absolute levels. A bracketed [*f*] in this music is the full, rounded sound of a cornett and sackbut ensemble, not a modern orchestral forte. Period-instrument players have argued for more range, not less: the cornettist Jean Tubéry, recalling "what Dalla Casa says about playing loud and softly," suggested that players "can go further in that direction."[8] Modern players should explore the full range between [*p*] and [*f*] while keeping the relationships between the parts.

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7 Thiemel, "Dynamics," §§1–3; Giulio Caccini, *Le nuove musiche* (Florence, 1602), preface, ed. H. Wiley Hitchcock (Madison: A-R Editions, 1970; 2nd ed., Middleton, WI: A-R Editions, 2009); Girolamo Fantini, *Modo per imparare a sonare di tromba* (Frankfurt, 1638), 3, as translated in Steven E. Plank, "Trumpet and Horn," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter, rev. and expanded by Jeffery Kite-Powell, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 143–44. A sign for the swell and decay of a single note appears in print only later, in Domenico Mazzocchi's madrigals of 1638.

8 Susan Smith, "A Cacophony of Cornettists," *Historic Brass Society Newsletter* 9 (1996): 26–32, at 28. Conversation with Michael Collver, Bruce Dickey, Stephen Escher, Douglas Kirk, Jean Tubéry, and Jeremy West.

Dynamics in the hands of players

Musicians of Giovanni Gabrieli's generation added dynamics to his music where the print had none. In a score book begun in 1599, the Augsburg composer and teacher Adam Gumpelzhaimer copied Gabrieli's ten-voice motet *Domine exaudi orationem meam* from the *Sacrae symphoniae* of 1597. The book names its players, on instruments that include cornetts, trombones, and a bassoon, and Gumpelzhaimer supplied dynamic indications throughout, alternating *Pian* and *Forte*. Richard Charteris, who describes the source, reads it as "a record of how the instrumentalists treated this work."[9] Bruce Dickey notes that *piano* and *forte* in music of the period usually mark echo effects or the contrast of tutti and solo sections, and Gary Towne writes that dynamic markings of the period "merely signal to players the size of the ensemble playing at any given moment," and warns against over-interpreting them.[10]

The instruments and their model

In their practical guide of 1975 to Giovanni Gabrieli's instrumental music, Clifford Bartlett and Peter Holman observe that he and his contemporaries treated the cornett and the violin as alternatives, and conclude that it is "far better to replace them with violins than with anachronistic oboes or trumpets."[11] This edition answers the objection in how the trumpets are played. Dickey, writing for players of the cornett and sackbut, names the human voice as "the principal model (and not the modern trumpet or trombone!)" for tone, articulation, and dynamic range.[12]

Bartlett and Holman call the organ "the obvious accompanying instrument" in church music of the period.[13] For a canzona printed for keyboard, an organ doubling the bass line joins the brass to the kind of instrument it was printed for.

Articulation

Dickey identifies articulation as the area in which modern and historical playing differ most. Wind players of the period used pairs of unequal syllables, *te che*, *te re*, and *le re*, in a kind of double tonguing whose aim was not evenness but inequality: metrically strong, consonant "good" notes slightly stressed, weak and passing "bad" notes unstressed. Dickey recommends a compound tonguing for "all notes of the speed of eighth notes or faster," with repeated and leaping notes single-tongued; for *re* he suggests the soft *t* of a relaxed American "water."[14] If, as in his arrangements of Giovanni Gabrieli's canzonas of 1608, the arranger has halved the original values, Dickey's eighth notes are the semiquavers of this score.

Tempo

Without the print, neither its mensuration sign nor its note values can be reported here. George Houle explains that music in "canzona style," notated in small values, was beaten with the tactus on the semibreve, taken slower than in music notated in long values, "so as not to rush the fast notes"; he cites Marin Mersenne's normative tactus of 1636, "about MM 60."[15] The arranger's *Allegro*, crotchet = 120, is his own. If he has halved the original values, one tactus is one minim here, and his marking puts it at 60 a minute: Mersenne's norm, not the slower canzona tactus Houle describes. Players may prefer a broader pulse.

9 Richard Charteris, "The Performance of Giovanni Gabrieli's Vocal Works: Indications in the Early Sources," *Music & Letters* 71, no. 3 (1990): 336–51, at 342. The score book is Berlin, Staatsbibliothek Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Mus. ms. 40028.

10 Bruce Dickey, "Ornamentation in Early Seventeenth-Century Italian Music," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, ed. Stewart Carter, rev. and expanded by Jeffery Kite-Powell, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2012), 308; Gary Towne, "Choral Music in Italy and the Germanic Lands," ibid., 63.

11 Clifford Bartlett and Peter Holman, "Giovanni Gabrieli: A Guide to the Performance of His Instrumental Music," *Early Music* 3, no. 1 (1975): 25–32, at 27.

12 Bruce Dickey, "Cornett and Sackbut," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, 109.

13 Bartlett and Holman, "Giovanni Gabrieli," 27.

14 Dickey, "Cornett and Sackbut," 111–12.

15 George Houle, "Meter and Tempo," in *A Performer's Guide to Seventeenth-Century Music*, 353.

Christopher Delgado
New Jersey, November 2026

COMMENTARY

The editorial dynamics, bar by bar

Sources. *P* = *Il terzo libro de ricercari … tabulati per ogni sorte di stromenti da tasti* (1596), the keyboard source (Bryant, "Gabrieli, Andrea," *Grove*, work-list); not consulted. *SS* = Giovanni Gabrieli, *Sacrae symphoniae* (Venice: Angelo Gardano, 1597), *Sonata pian e forte*, cited as the model for texture-based dynamics. *T* = the modern arrangement used for the musical text (see imprint).

Abbreviations. Tpt 1, Tpt 2 = Trumpets (parts in C and in B♭); Tbn = Trombone; B Tbn = Bass Trombone (in the score: Tpt. in C 1, Tpt. in C 2, Tbn., B. Tbn.); all = all four parts. Bar numbers follow *T*.

Bar	Part	Marking and rationale
1, 2, 4, 7	Tbn, Tpt 2, Tpt 1, B Tbn	[*mf*] at each entry of the subject (Tbn bar 1, Tpt 2 bar 2, Tpt 1 bar 4, B Tbn bar 7). The exposition builds from one voice to four; the increase is written into the scoring, so no further marking is printed. The second point after the cadence in bar 13 (Tpt 2 bar 13 beat 2, Tbn bar 14 beat 2, Tpt 1 bar 16 beat 2, B Tbn bar 19 beat 2) stays at this level.
27, 29	Tpt 1, Tpt 2; Tbn, B Tbn	[*p*] after the cadence on F in bar 27: Tpt 1 bar 27 beat 2, Tpt 2 bar 27 beat 4, Tbn bar 29 beat 2, B Tbn bar 29 beat 4, each after its cadence note or rest. Trumpets alone in bars 28 and 32; trombones carrying bar 30 (*SS*: *pian*). The level holds through the four-part writing of bars 34–39 to the cadence on F in bar 39.
40, 41	Tpt 1, Tpt 2, Tbn, B Tbn	[*mf*] at the new point after the cadence on F in bar 39: Tpt 1 bar 40, Tpt 2 bar 40 beat 2, Tbn bar 41, B Tbn bar 41. The trombone's F in bar 40 completes the cadence of bar 39 and keeps its [*p*]. The decorated repeat of bars 49–53 stays at this level (see Preface).
57	all	[*f*]. Repeated-crotchet chords in all four parts (bar 57), leading to the cadence on C in bar 61. *SS*: both choirs together = *forte*.
61, 62, 63, 64, 69	Tpt 2, Tpt 1, Tbn, B Tbn	[*p*] at the start of the lighter section: Tpt 2 bar 61 beat 2, Tpt 1 bar 62 beat 2, each after a rest; Tbn bar 63, where it restrikes its held C, and bar 64 beat 2, after a rest; B Tbn bar 69, after its rests from bar 63. The trombones' cadence notes of bars 61–62 belong to the [*f*] block.
78	all	[*f*]. The chordal music of bars 57–61 returns and closes the piece. Tbn and B Tbn on beat 1, where their repeated crotchets begin on the cadence on F; Tpt 1 and Tpt 2 on beat 2, after the cadence note, where their repeated chords begin.

Markings deliberately not added

No hairpins (see Preface). No echo for the decorated repeat of bars 49–53 (see Preface). No dynamic for the final fermata. No articulation has been added to *T*.

Editorial method

This is a performing edition. The musical text is a modern arrangement for brass quartet (see the imprint page) of a keyboard piece. Its distribution of the keyboard texture into four parts, pitch level, note values, barring, metre signature, tempo indication (*Allegro*, crotchet = 120), and final fermata belong to the arrangement. The text has not been collated with the 1596 print, which has not been consulted. The present editor's contribution is confined to the bracketed dynamics, the preface, and the commentary.

SOURCES AND LITERATURE

Works cited in the preface and commentary

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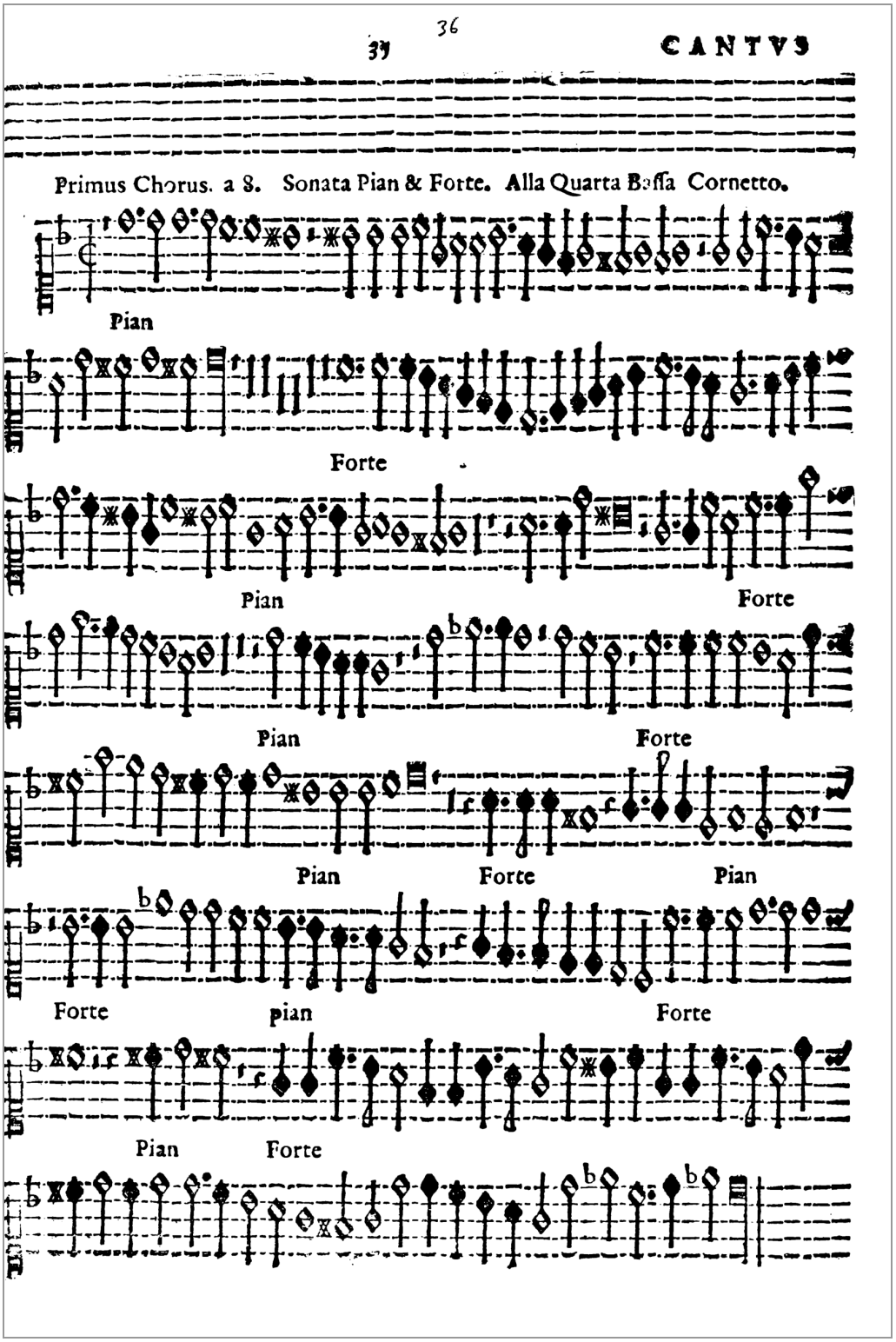
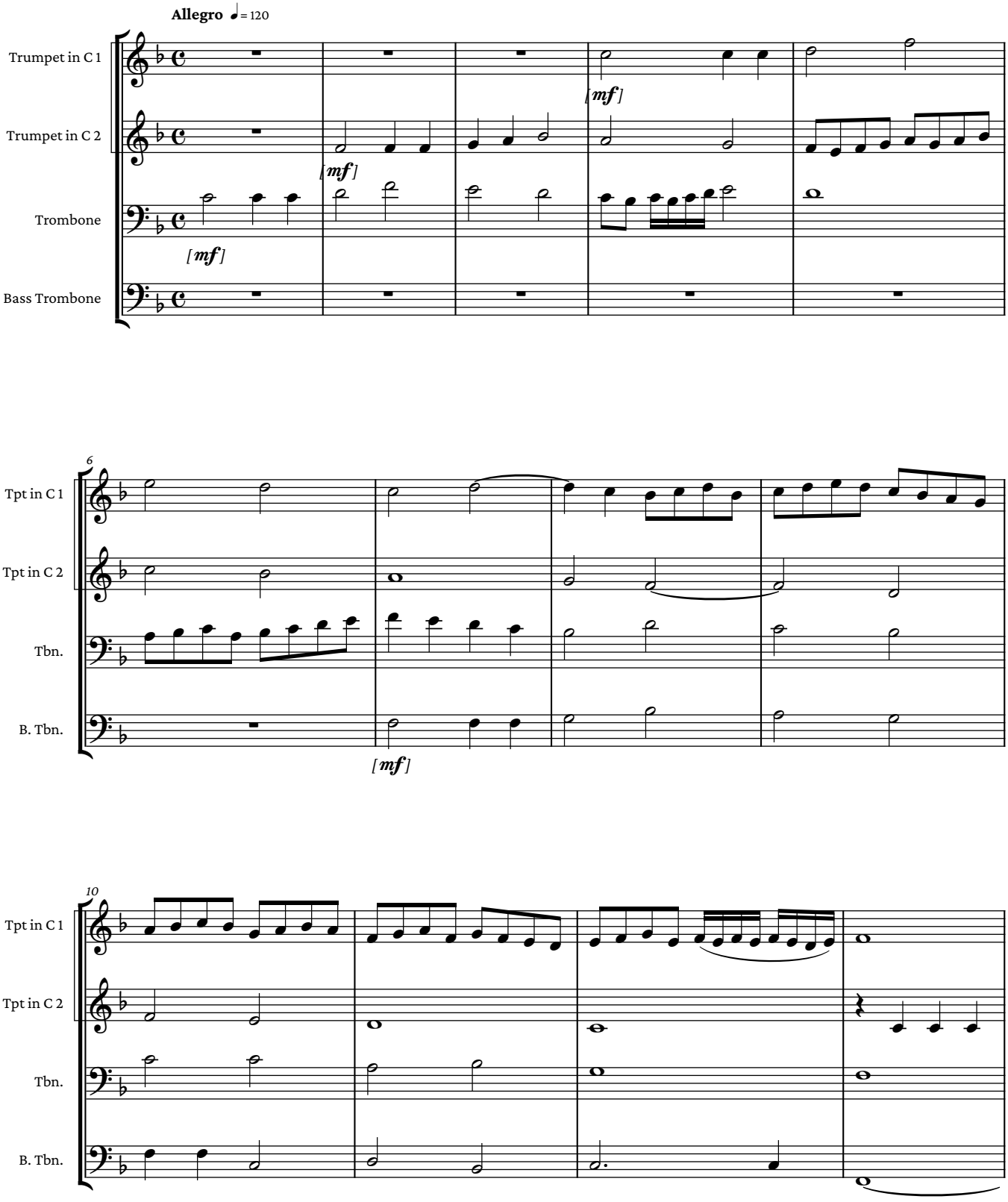


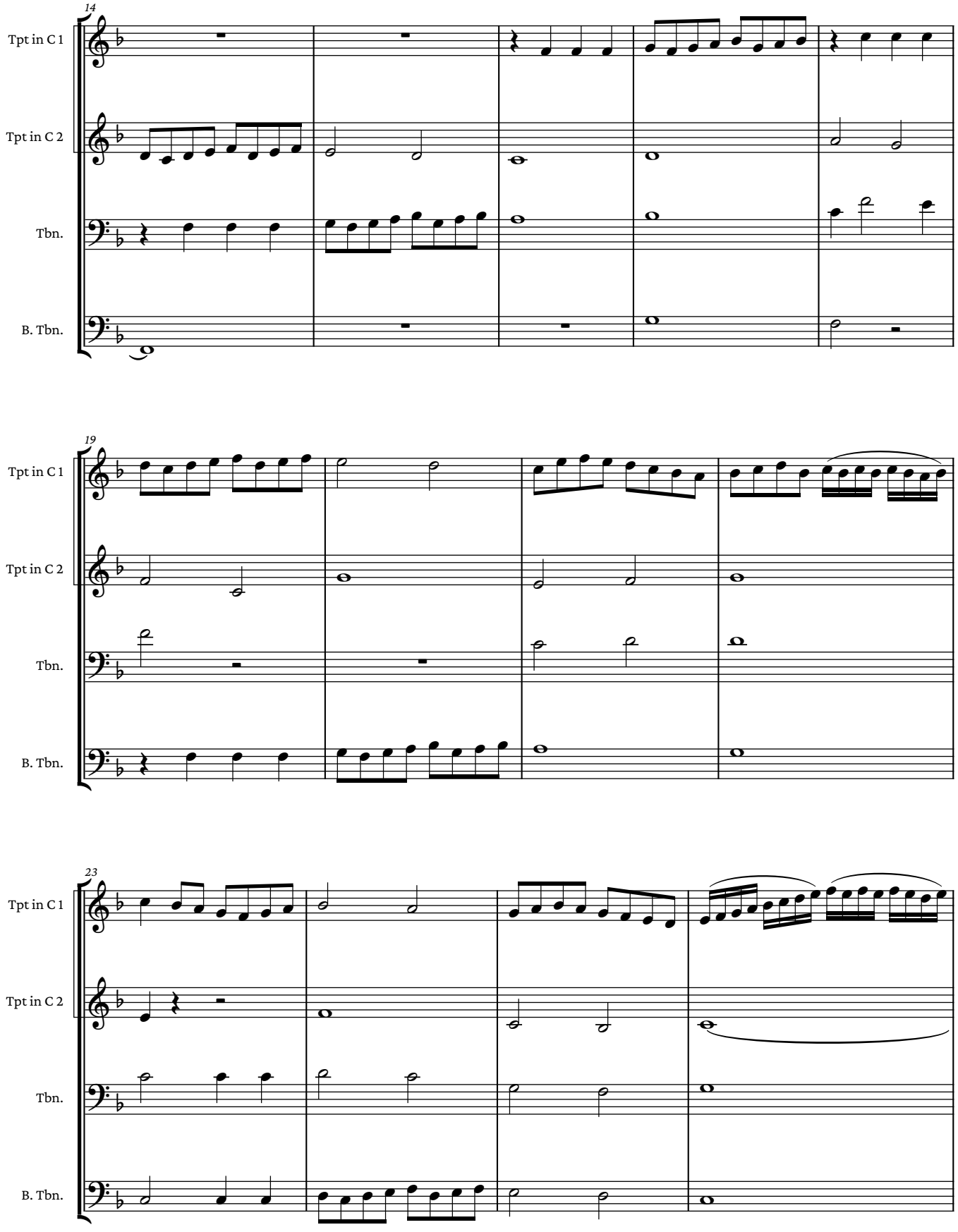
Plate 1. *Gabrieli, Sacrae symphoniae (Venice, 1597), Cantus partbook, Sonata pian & forte, Choir I cornetto part: the printed Pian and Forte mark where this choir plays alone and where both choirs sound. Vienna, ÖNB.*

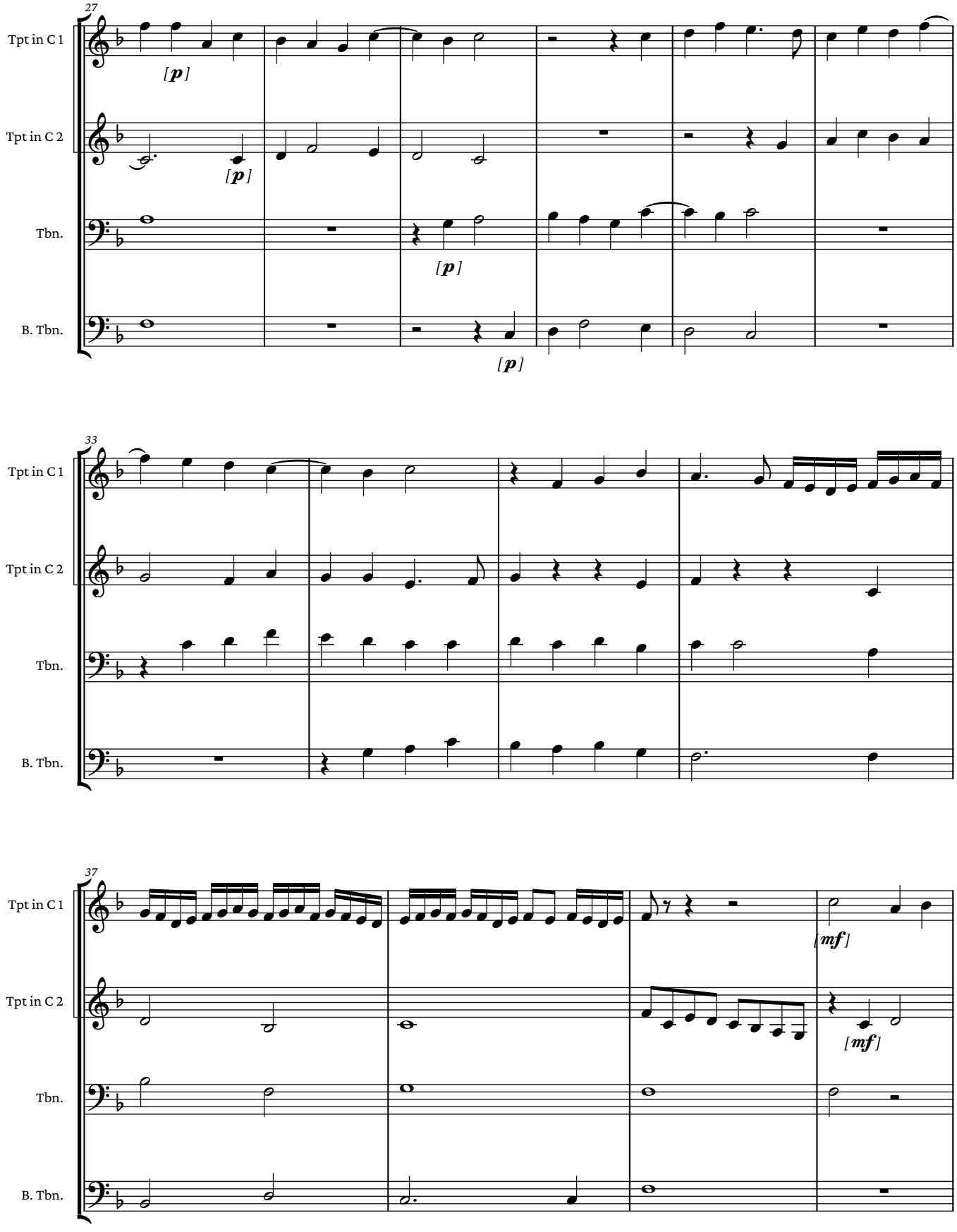
Canzona ariosa

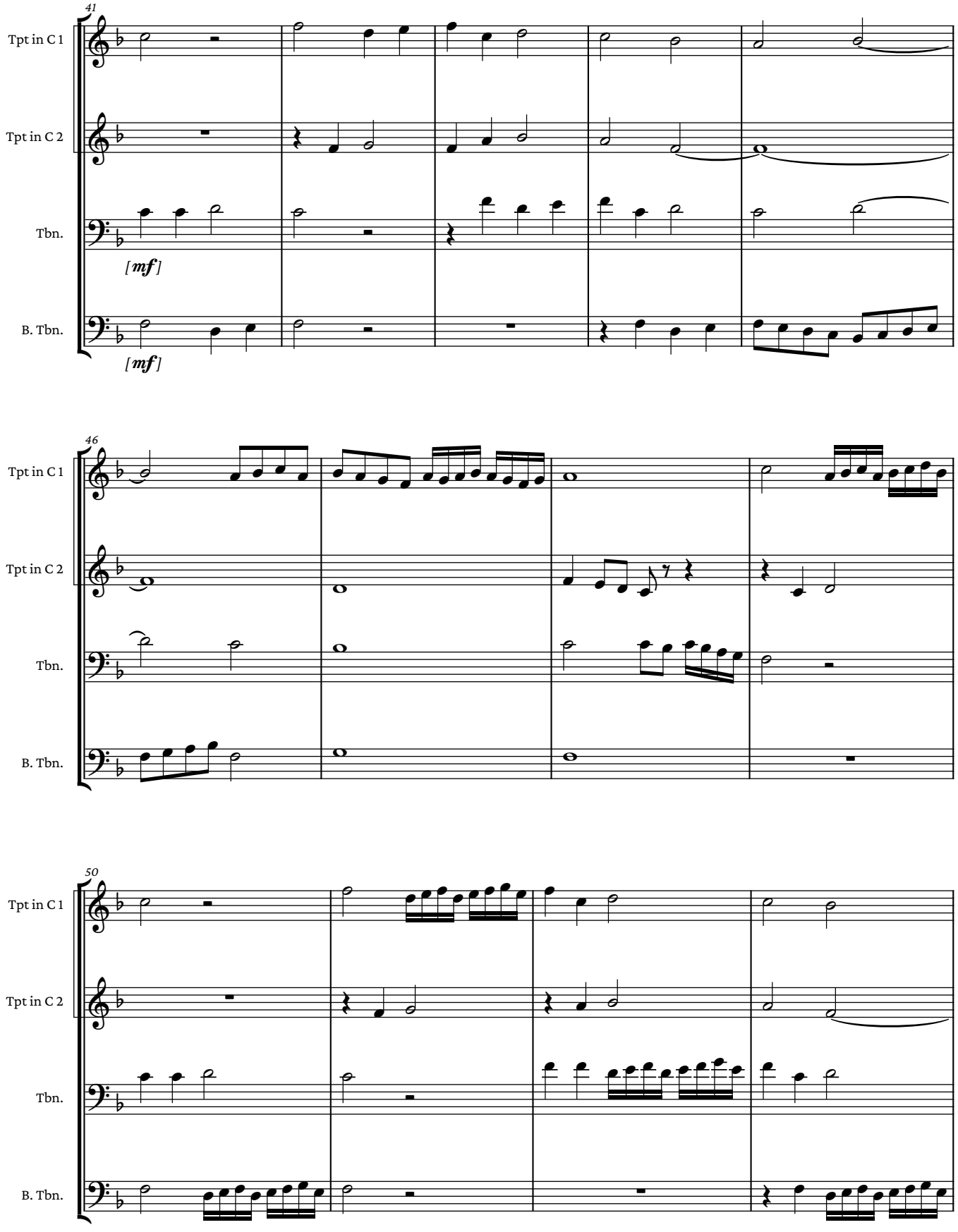
Andrea Gabrieli (?1532/3–1585)
Edited by Christopher Delgado

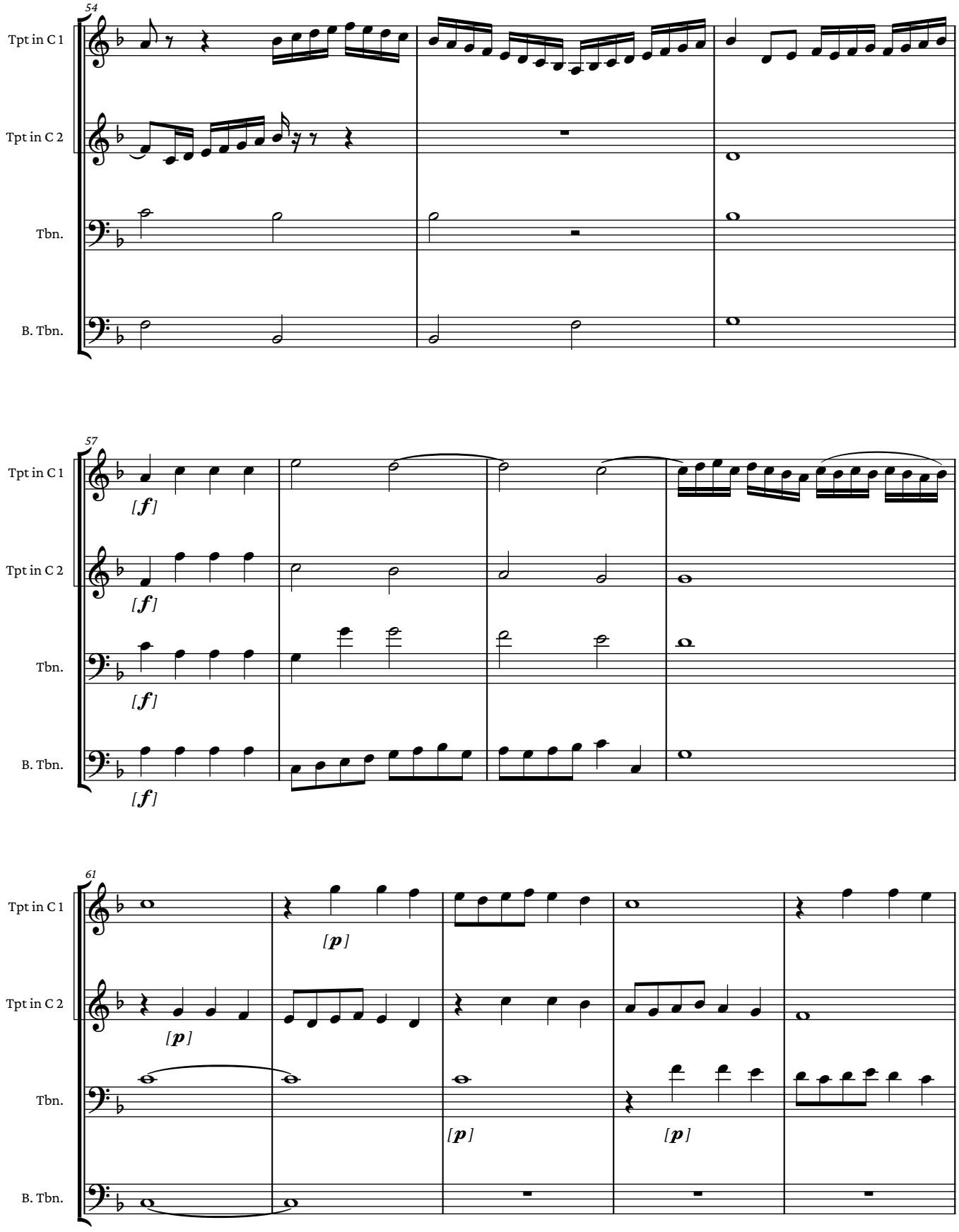


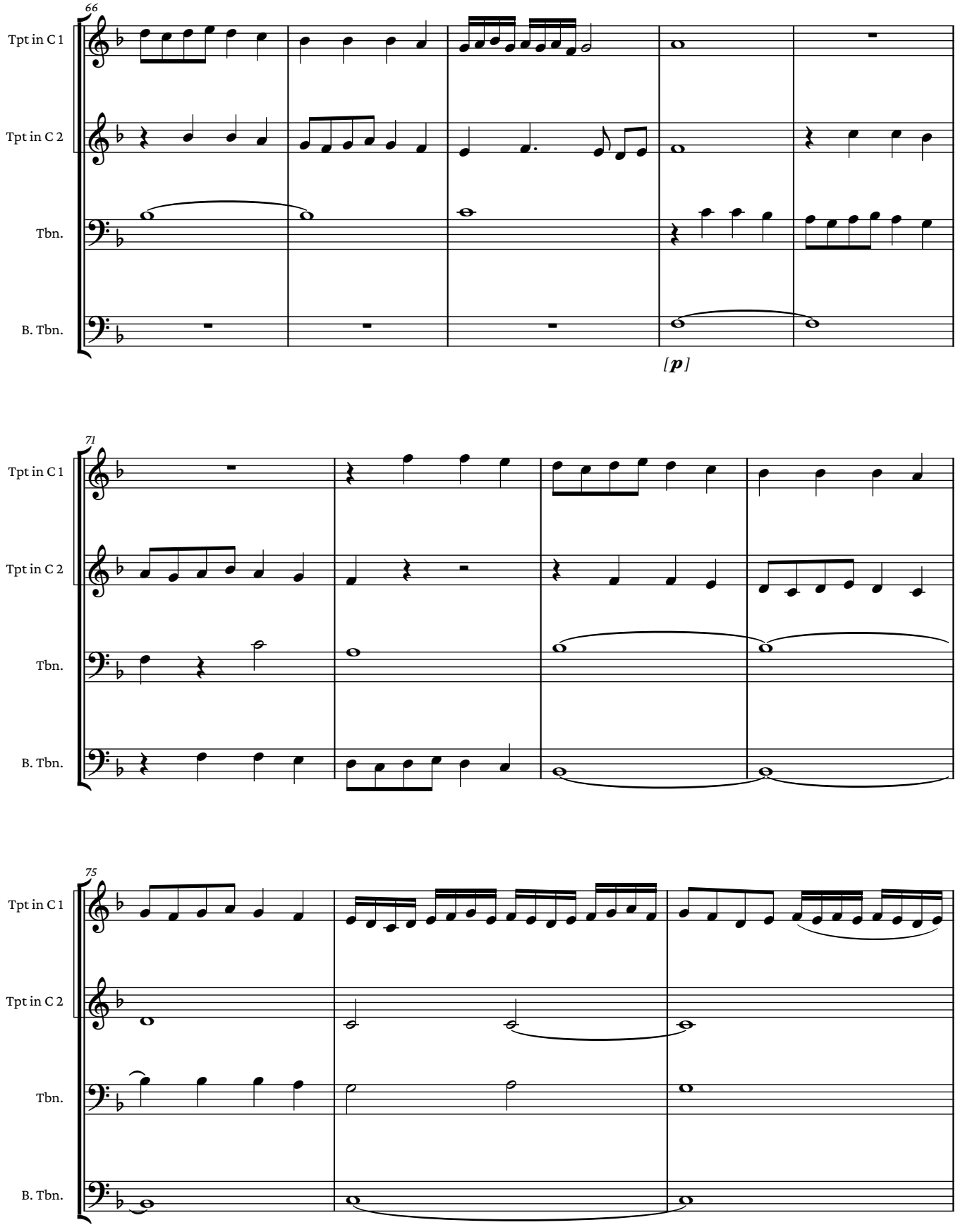
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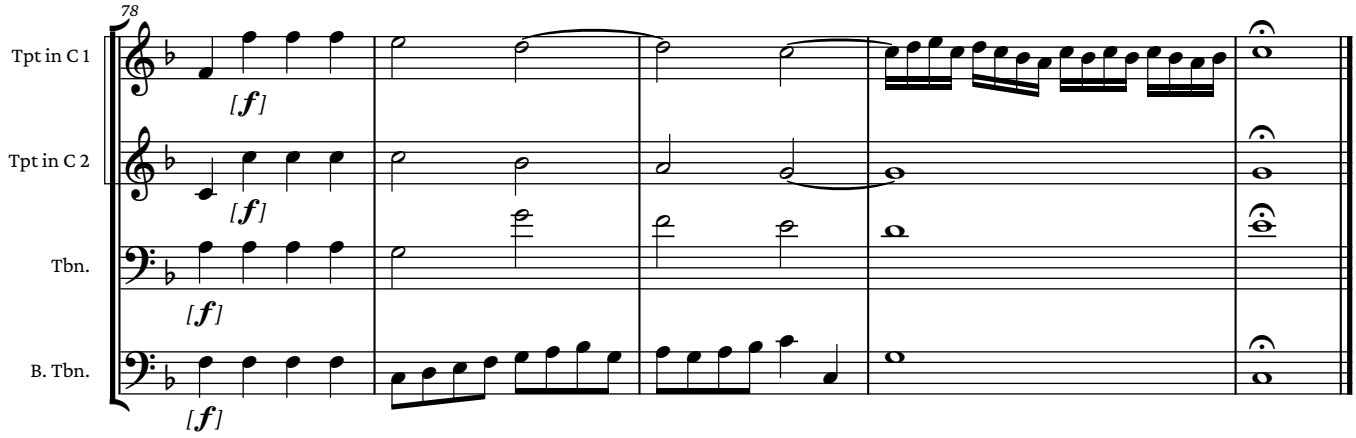

14
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
19
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
23
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.


27
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
[p]
[p]
[p]
[p]
33
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
37
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
[mf]
[mf]


41
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
[mf]
B. Tbn.
[mf]
46
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
50
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.


54
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
57
[f]
61
[p]


66
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
[p]
71
Tpt in C 1
Tpt in C 2
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
75
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78
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