Matt Geer

Noli me tangere

for flute and piano

2026

Full Score

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Programme note

Noli me tangere takes its title from Christ's words to Mary Magdalene after the Resurrection: "Do not touch me." The piece is concerned with the beauty and difficulty of approach: the desire to reach, to recognise, to touch, and the sacred restraint that prevents full possession. Rather than treating the flute and piano as a conventional melodic instrument with accompaniment, the two instruments inhabit the same devotional space while remaining structurally separate. The piano acts as a kind of harmonic icon, placing repeated chordal sonorities in time, while the flute enters later as a breath-like voice that moves independently across the surface of the system.

The piano part is built from a fixed permutational process. The piece lasts sixty bars in 6/4, at crotchet = 72, giving a duration of approximately five minutes. Its rhythm follows a repeating five-bar cycle: four crotchets and a minim; three crotchets and a dotted minim; two crotchets and a semibreve; three minims; and six crotchets. Every piano attack is a complete four-note chord, voiced as soprano, alto, tenor and bass. The harmonic field is centred on D major and its closely related modal colours, using open, suspended, quartal and added-note sonorities rather than functional progression. A nineteen-chord row is cycled continuously through the rhythmic structure, so that the five-bar rhythmic cycle and nineteen-chord harmonic cycle continually realign. The result is a music that feels steady and ritualistic, but whose internal harmonic order is constantly being renewed.

The chord voicing is controlled by registral rules. The soprano and alto are never separated by more than an octave, the tenor and bass are never separated by more than an octave, and the alto and tenor are never separated by more than a tenth. This allows the piano to remain spacious and resonant without becoming disconnected or merely decorative. The sonorities are intended to sound clear, delicate and bell-like, as though each chord is placed carefully into silence.

The flute follows a separate melodic system. It does not enter immediately, allowing the piano to establish its ritual process alone. When the flute does appear, it unfolds in long, detached phrases built from the same D-major/modal pitch world. Its phrases are organised as a seven-cell melodic cycle whose entry points deliberately do not coincide with the piano's five-bar pattern. This creates a gentle independence between the two instruments: they belong to the same harmonic light, but do not move as one body.

A central symbolic rule governs the flute line. For most of the piece, the flute avoids D, even though D is continually present or implied in the piano. It circles the note through C sharp and E, approaches it, withdraws from it, and sings around its absence. Only near the end does the flute finally touch D. This final arrival is not intended as a triumphant resolution, but as something quieter and more ambiguous: a moment of permission, memory, or grace.

Dr Matt Geer

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for flute and piano

Duration: 7’30’’

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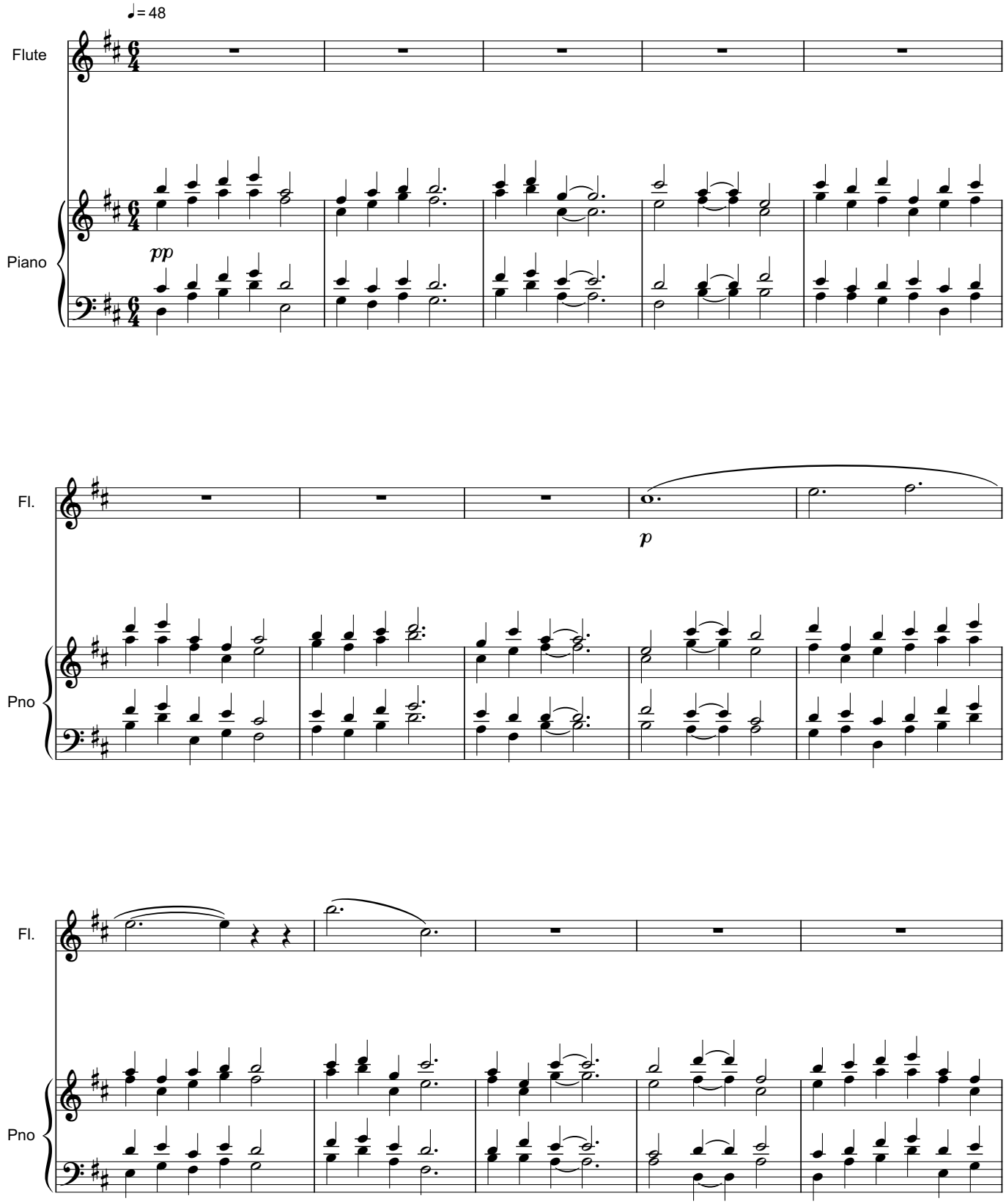

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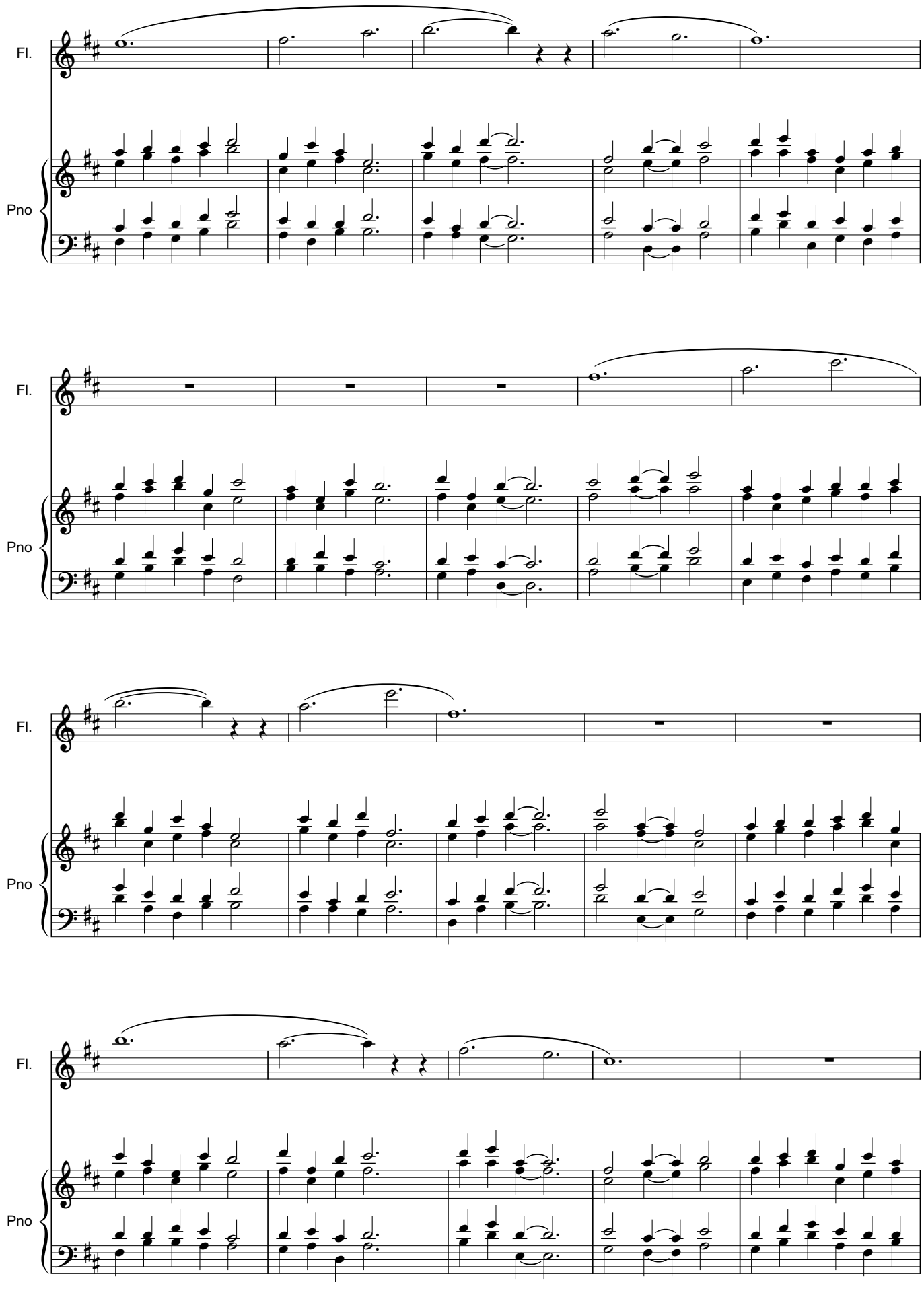
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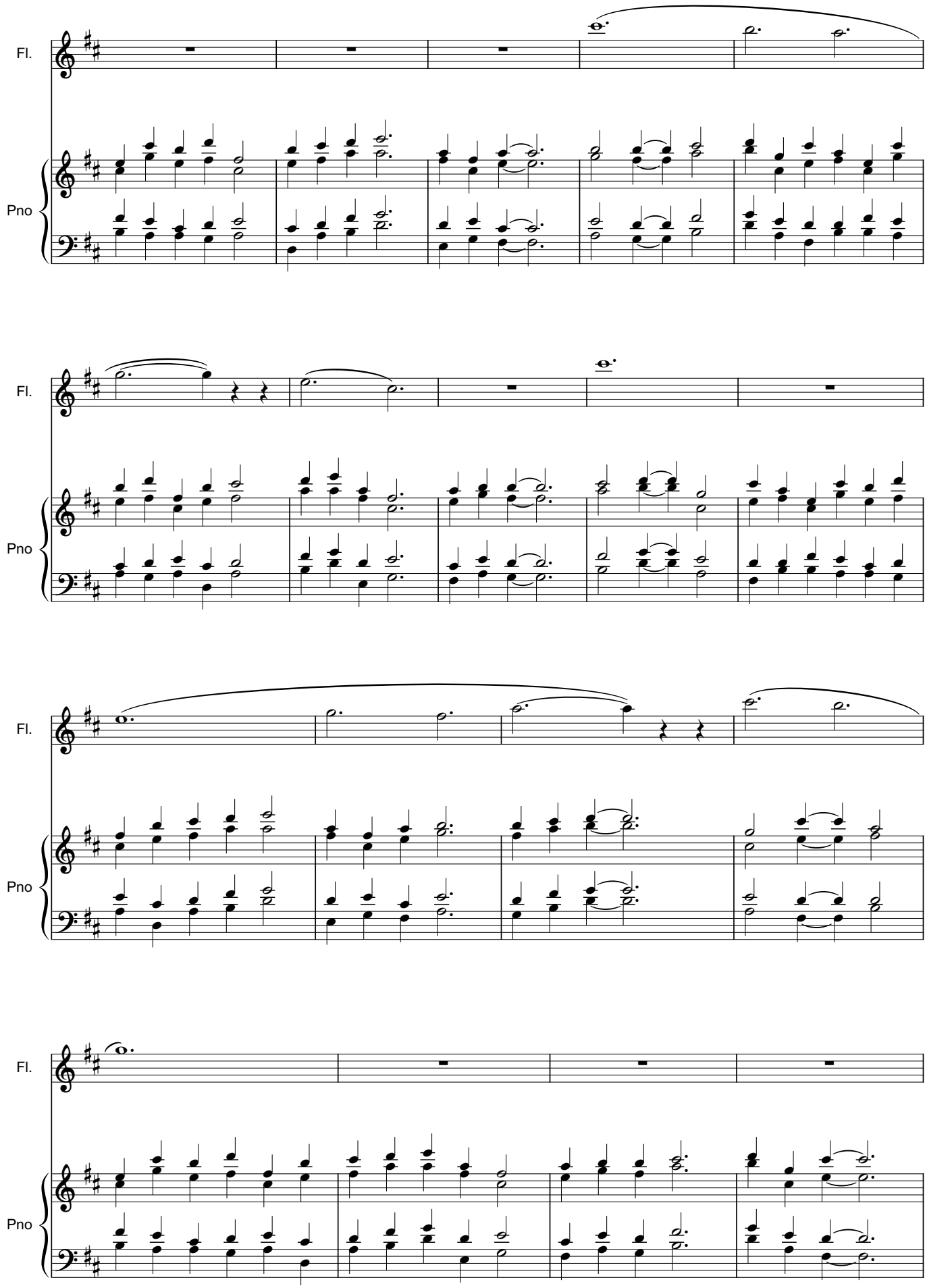
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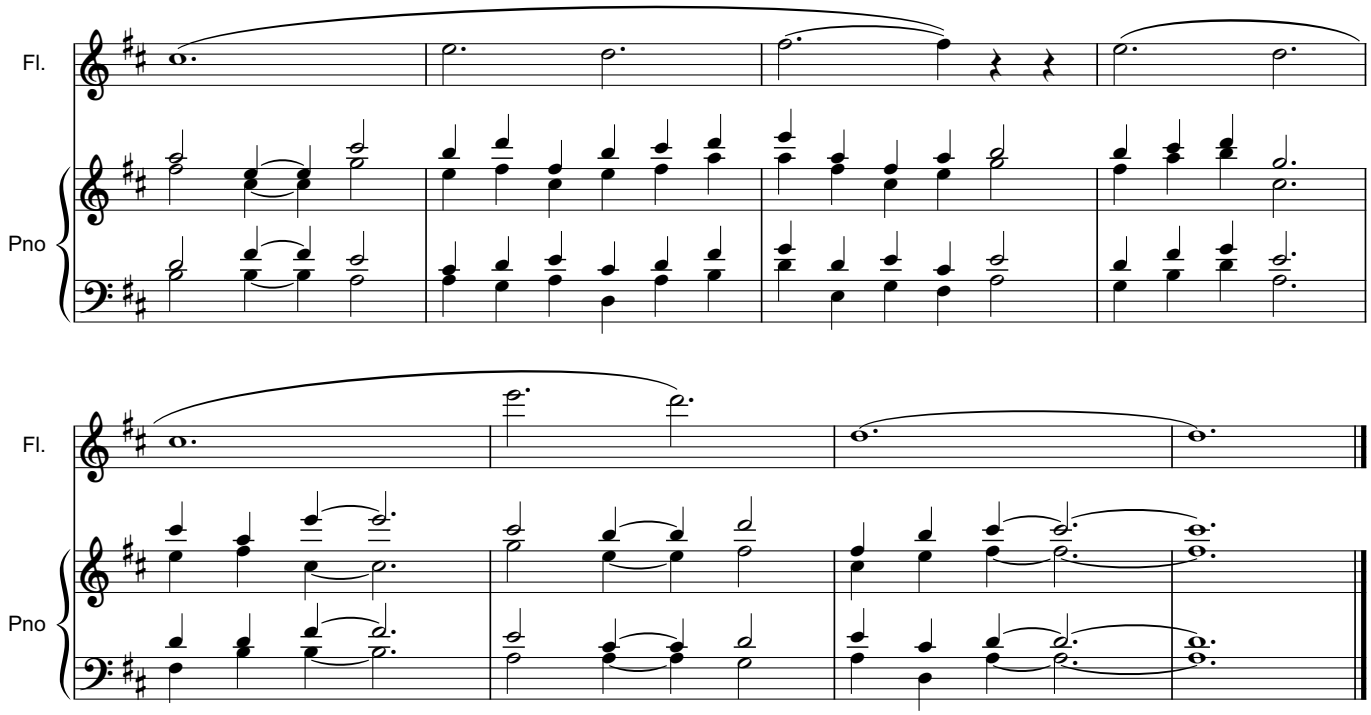
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