March 30, 2010
New Haven, CT

for Paul Machlin and the Colby College Chorale

Performance Notes

Percussion: The piece calls for two types of percussion: a "drum," used to keep a steady quarter note pulse throughout the performance; and pitched "bells," used to provide important pitches to the singers and highlight the polyrhythmic organization of the music.

> The drum part may be taken by any non-pitched percussion instrument capable of creating a clear attack. While certain resonant options are technically acceptable (such as a cymbal), it may be best to choose an instrument with a fairly fast decay (such as a woodblock, or any kind of hand drum).
>
> The bell parts may be taken by any instrument or group of instruments capable of producing the required pitches (Ab2, B2, C#3, F3, G3, C4, F4, G4, B4, C#5, E5). Preferably this/these will be fairly resonant. Options include a piano, two guitars (probably amplified, electric guitars would be fine), suspended metal rods or discs struck with a mallet, or handbells (which, in order to have the best possible control over the attack and volume, might also be struck with a mallet). A reduction of the bell parts is provided, which may prove useful in rehearsal and/or performance.

Form: The piece is presented in two large complementary parts. After a short introduction where the "drum" establishes the tempo the first section gradually builds to a choral tutti from the "inside" out (i.e., starting with inner voices and working in a wedge until the outer voices are in place). As the section continues each part rotates through a succession of syllables until all parts come together on "ah." Finally, the parts gradually drop out leaving only the outer voices. The second section begins with the outer voices moving to a new pattern and then the gradual "filling in" of the chorus, with each part also presenting a new (but related) pattern. After again rotating through a series of syllables and coming to agreement on "ah," the parts gradually drop out from "outside to in." After the last part drops out the drum continues for a few more measures, balancing the introduction.

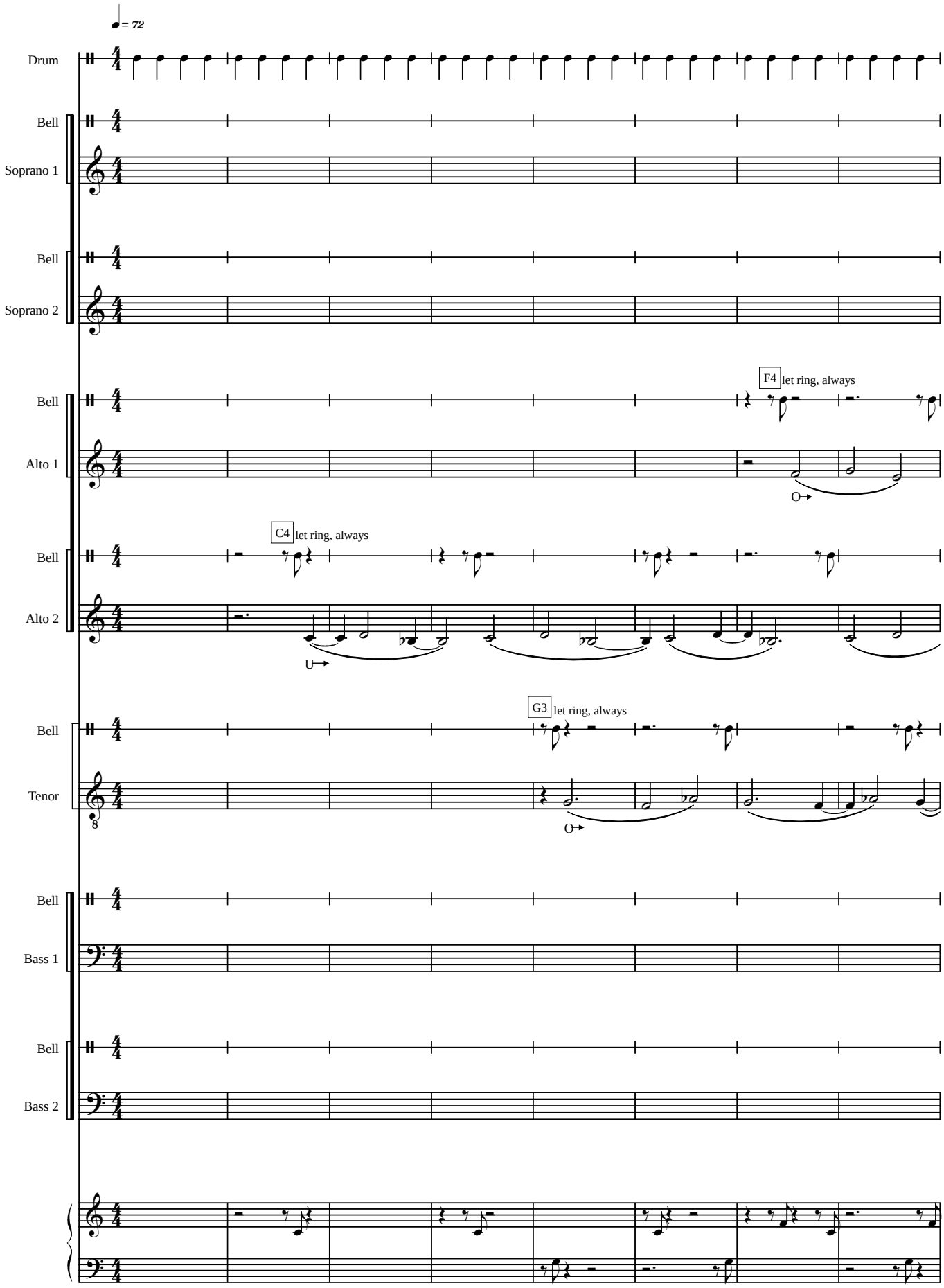
Pitch-Rhythm Cells: Each vocal part is made up of two distinct motivic cells. These two cells have the same pitches, but present them in a different order and with a different rhythm. In each section, the cell is repeated over and over again, occasionally changing from one syllable to another. Each iteration is always introduced by a strike of the bell, playing the first note of the cell, an eighth-note before that first note. Presuming that each part is properly cued as to when to enter, when to change syllables, and when to stop singing; and presuming that each singer keeps with the tempo provided by the drum; the singers need not concern themselves with the other parts. The piece consists of the ever-changing interaction of these seven independent strains of music.

Syllable Abbreviations: There is no text for this piece, instead, the singers simply sing "pure" vowel sounds - these should be as natural and uniform as possible. The different vowels are represented as follows:

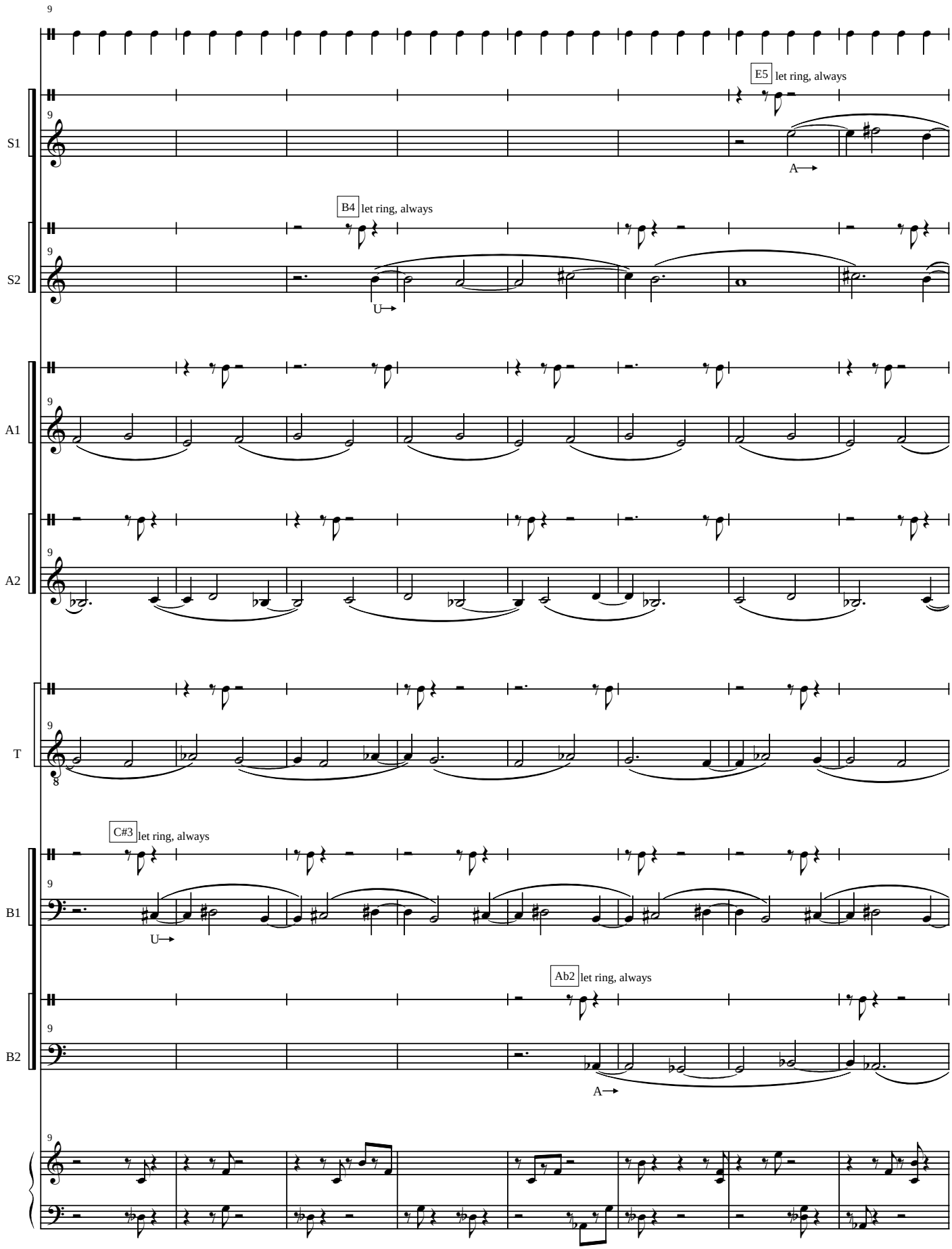
A = "ah" (as in I saw) O = "oh" (as in dough) U = "oo" (as in you)

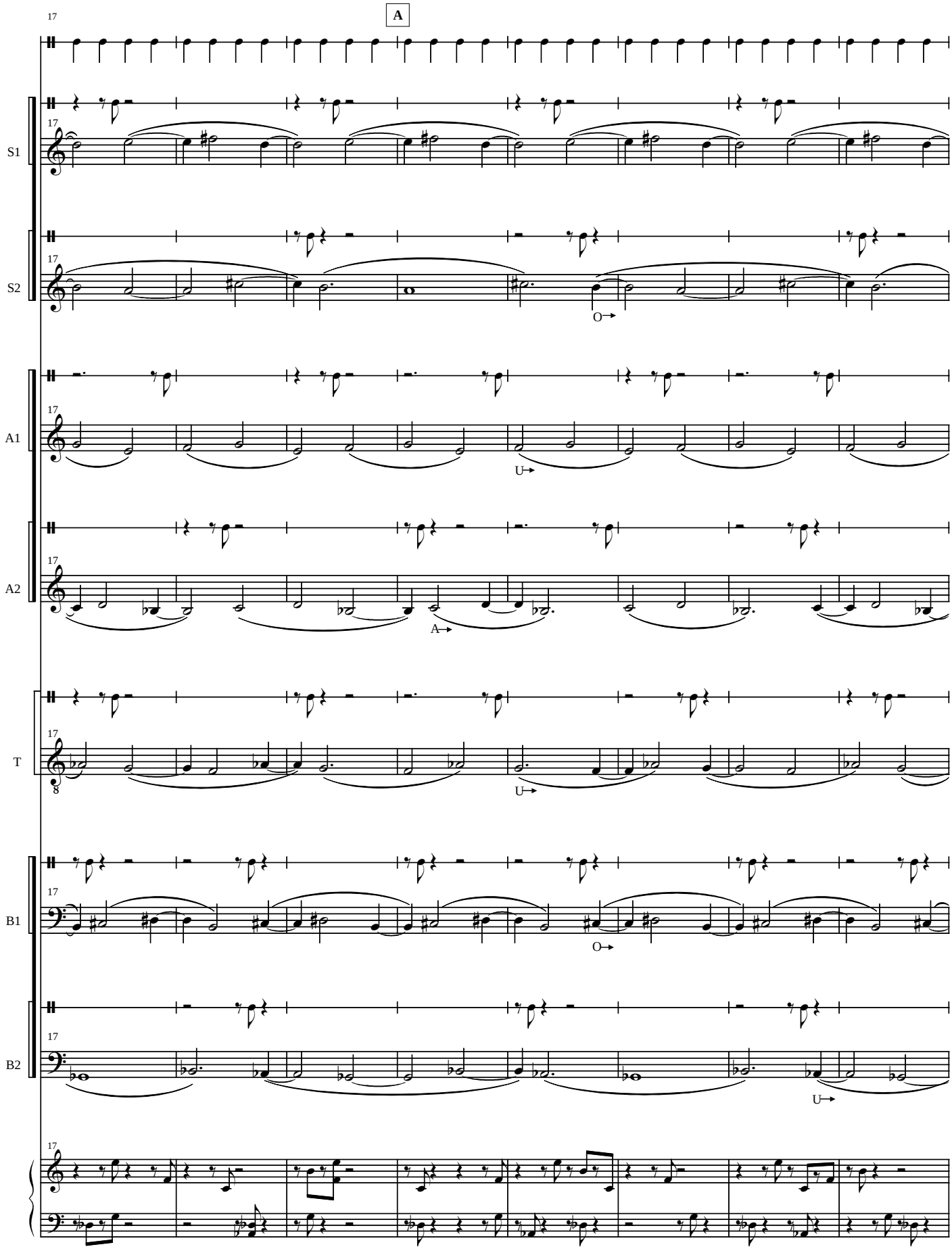
Dynamics: No dynamics are given in the score. This is not to indicate that no dynamic decisions should be made, or to suggest that no changes in dynamics would be appropriate, but rather in order to leave those decisions up to the conductor/performers. One suggested scheme would have the dyamics "mirror" the textural shape of the piece: starting soft, getting louder as the voices enter, getting softer as the voices drop out, and repeating that scheme in the second section. Another scheme might do the reverse. Another might pursue one option in one section and the other in the next. It is perfectly acceptable for a single dynamic to persist throughout the entire performance. It might be suggested that dramatically different dynamics not be assigned to different parts at the same time, such that the textural complexity of the piece is prevented from sounding through.

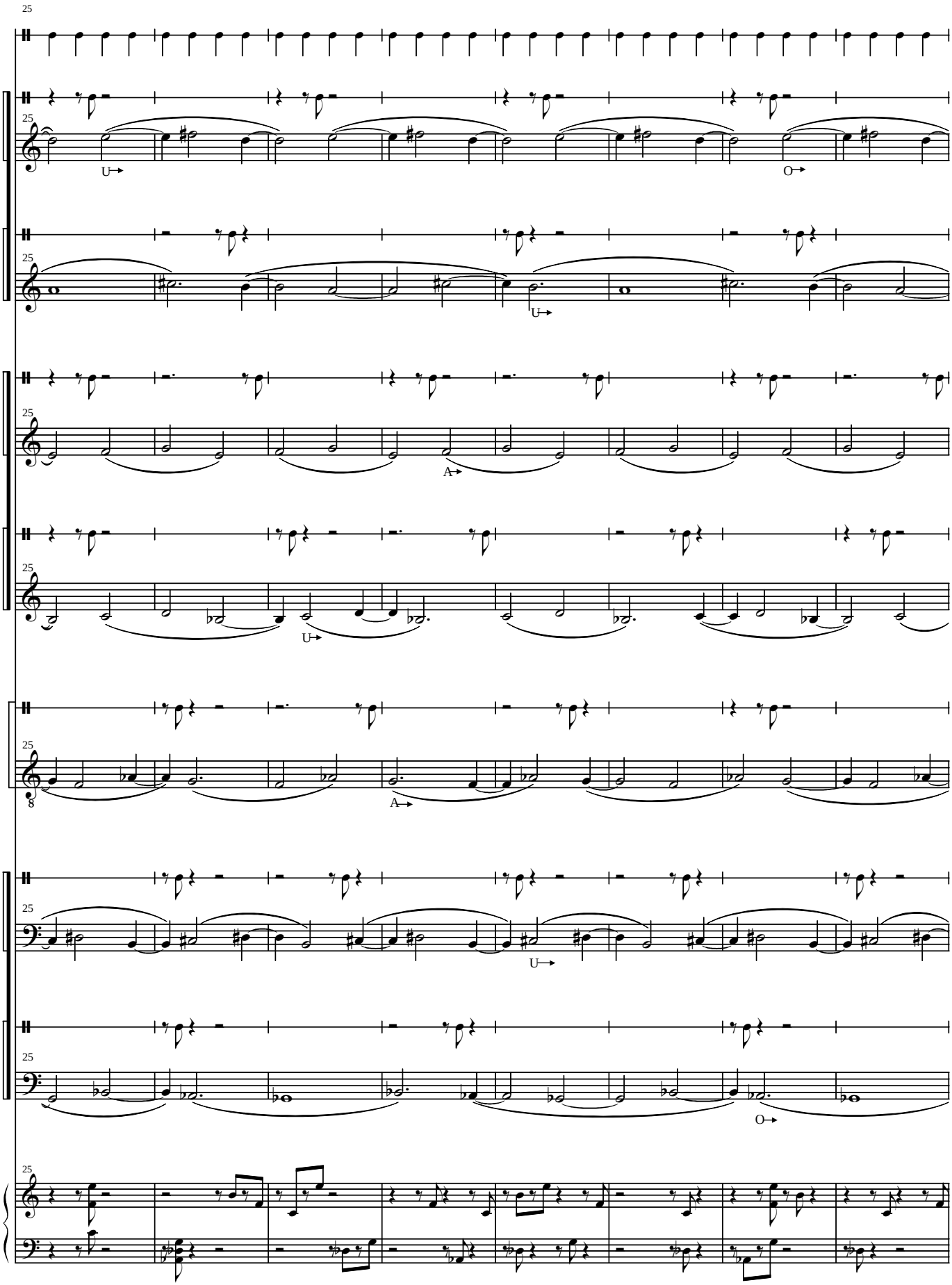
Stage Planning, etc.: The conductor/performers are free to explore any possible arrangement in space. In addition, the possibility of movement throughout the performance need not be dismissed. The piece might begin "outside" of the space, and see the singers gradually enter the space as the first section proceeds, and then gradually exit the space as the second section comes to an end - or start outside and end in, or vice-versa. In general, the potentialities of arranging the singers about the space, but keeping them stationary throughout the performance may prove more interesting than the practice of moving about during the performance.



Note: This piece is untitled


9
E5 let ring, always
S1
A
B4 let ring, always
S2
U
A1
A2
T
C#3 let ring, always
B1
U
Ab2 let ring, always
B2
A


A
17
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2
O
U
A
U
O
U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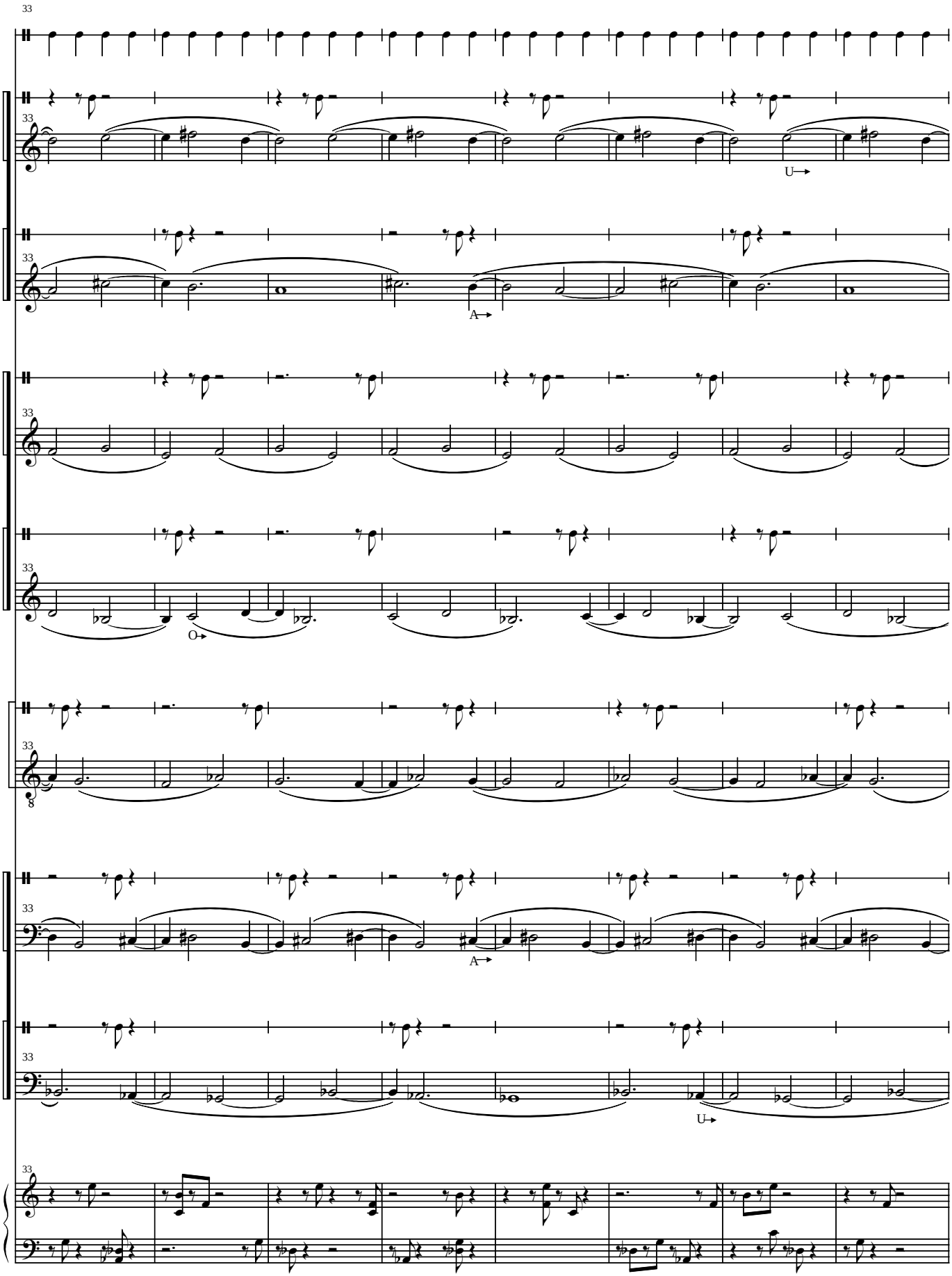
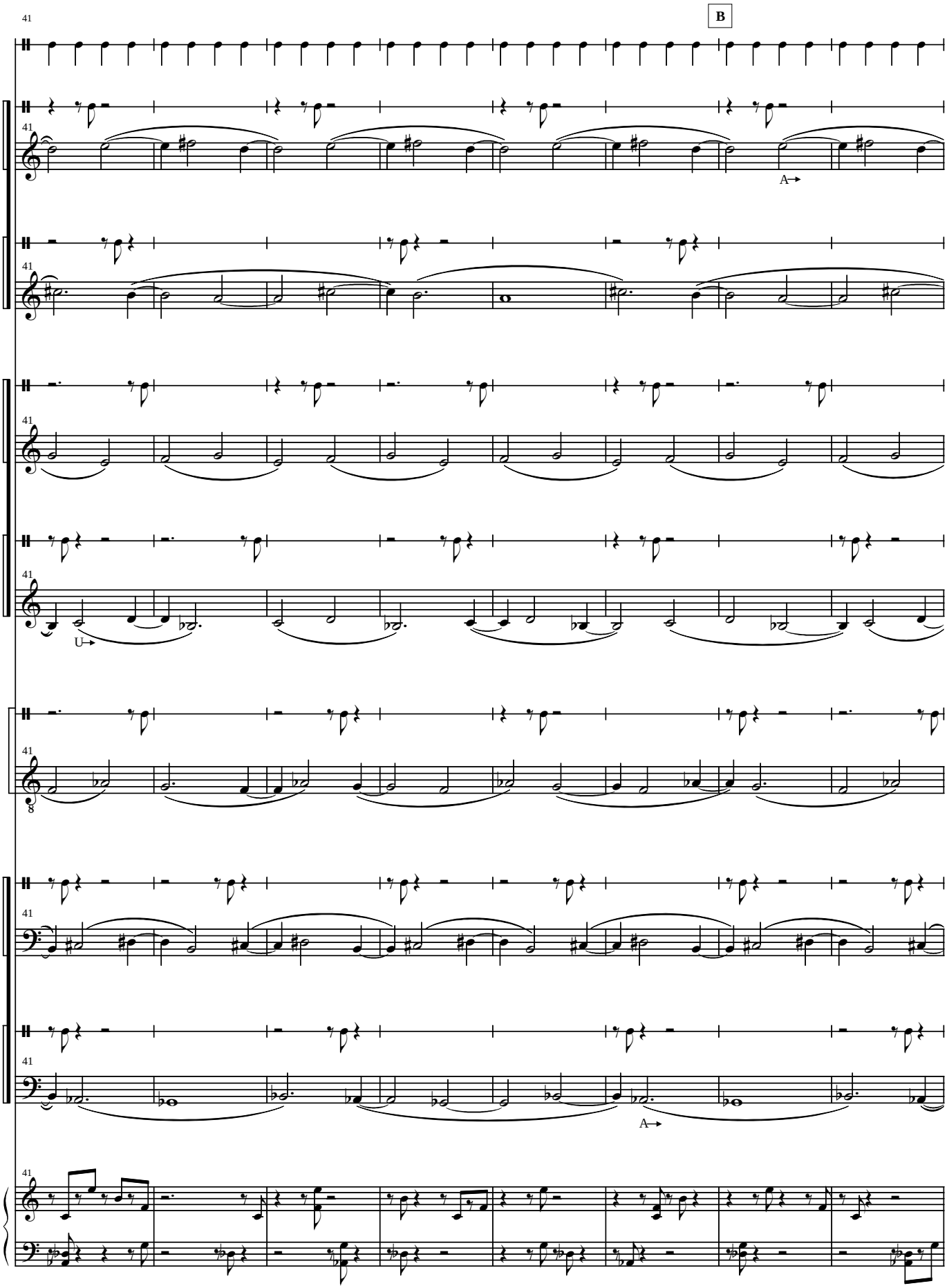
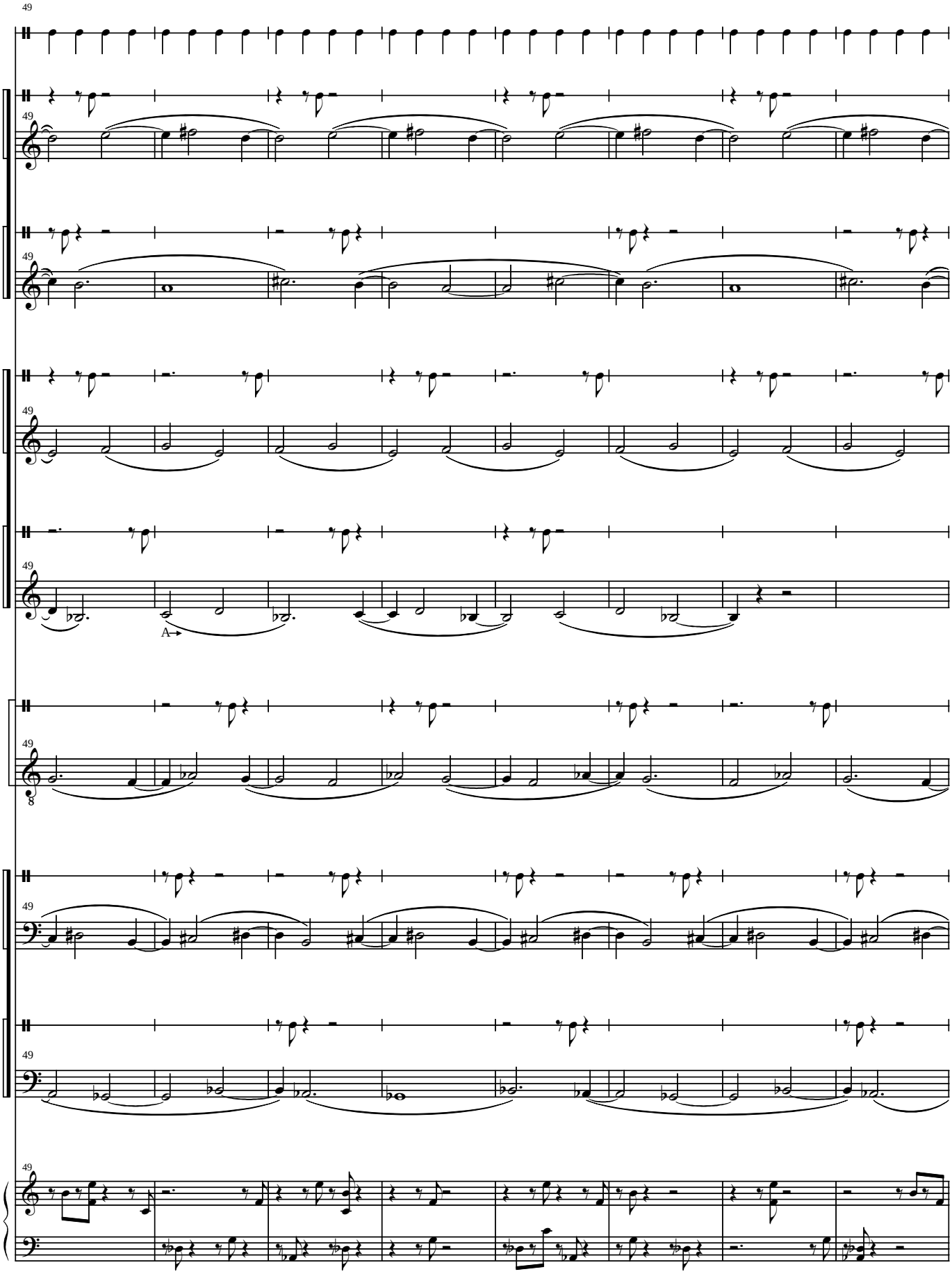
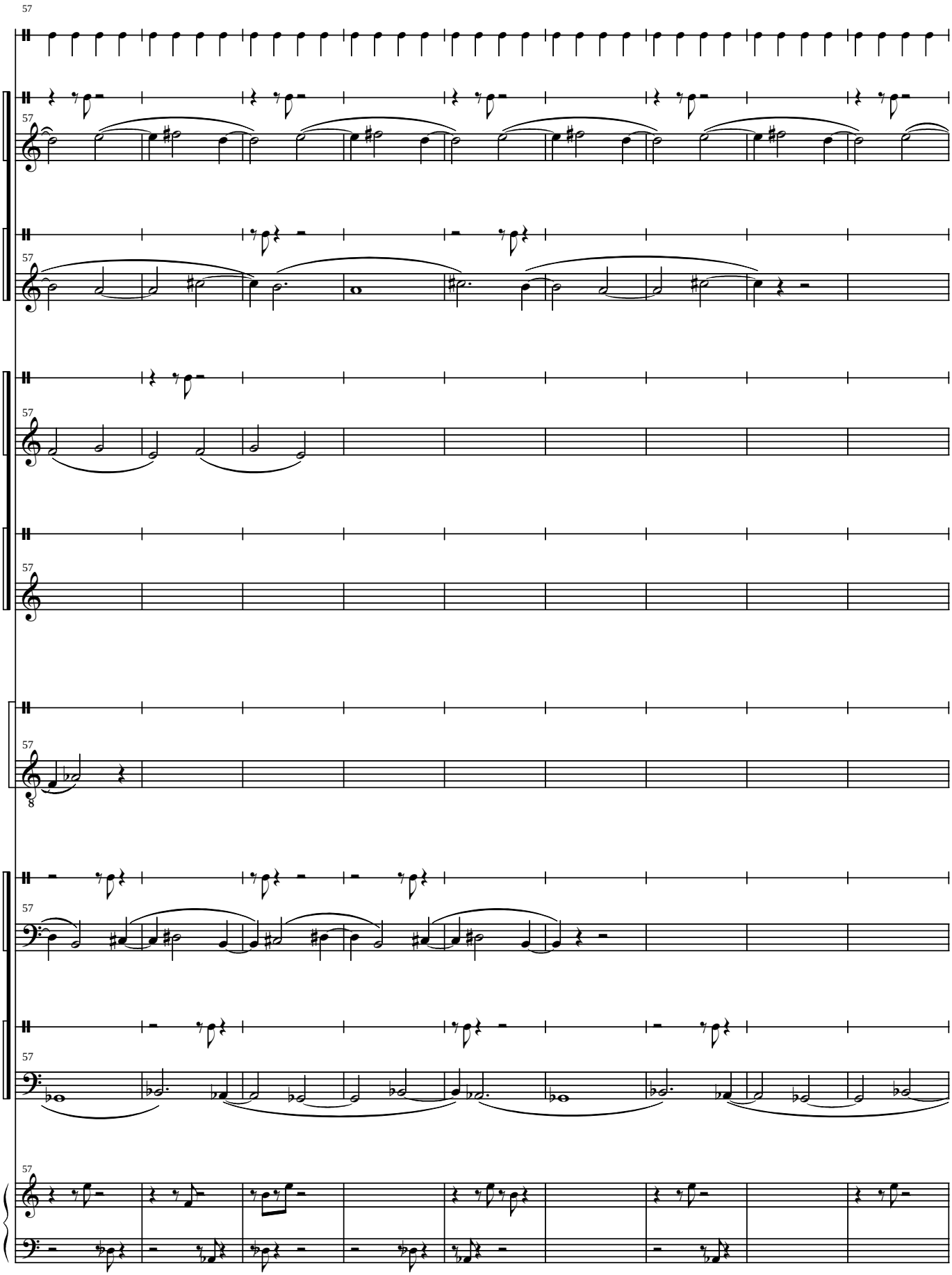
S1
U
O
S2
U
A1
A
A2
U
T
8
A
B1
U
B2
O


33
S1
U
S2
A
A1
A2
O
T
B1
A
B2
U


41
B
S1
A
S2
A1
A2
U
T
B1
B2
A


49
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2
A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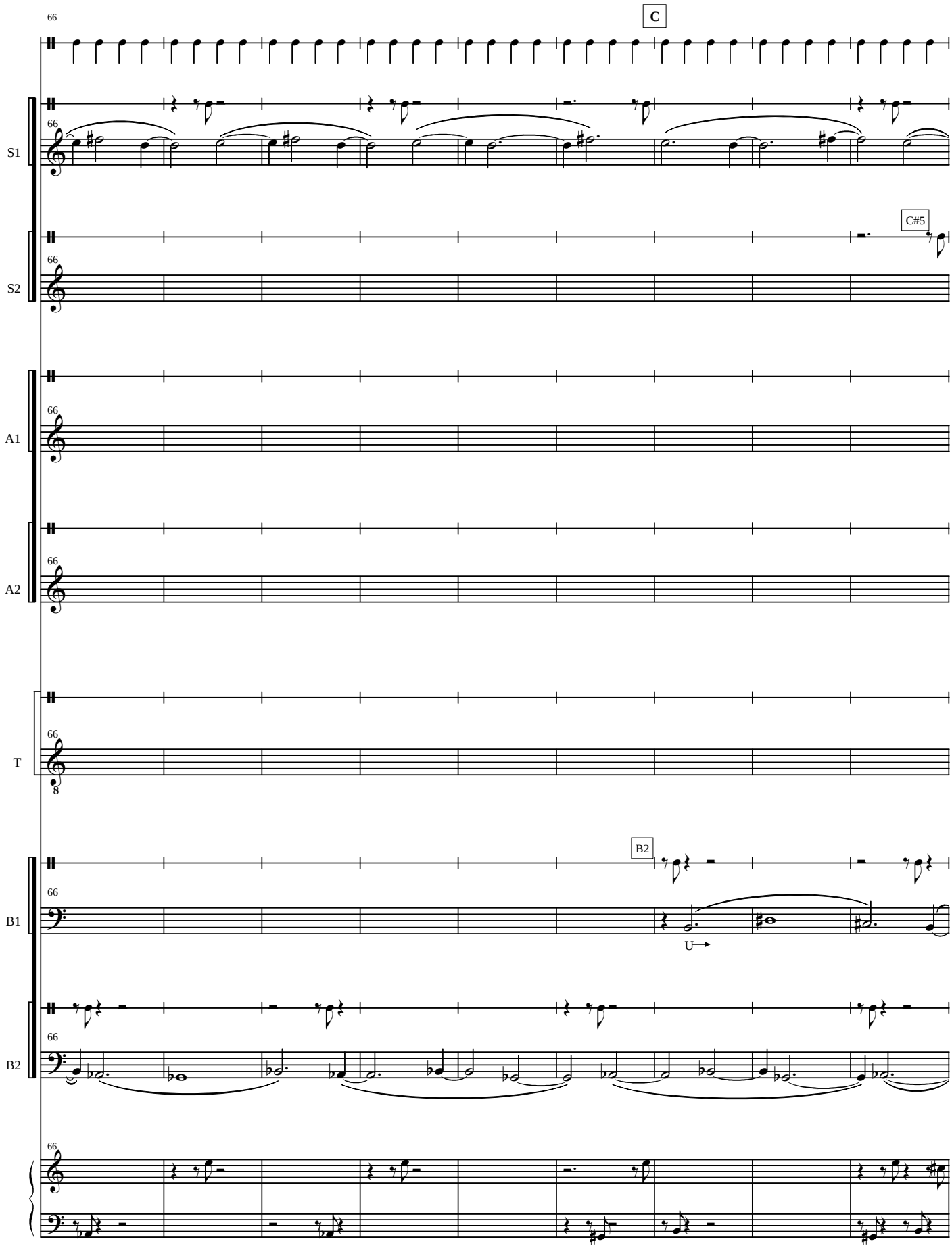
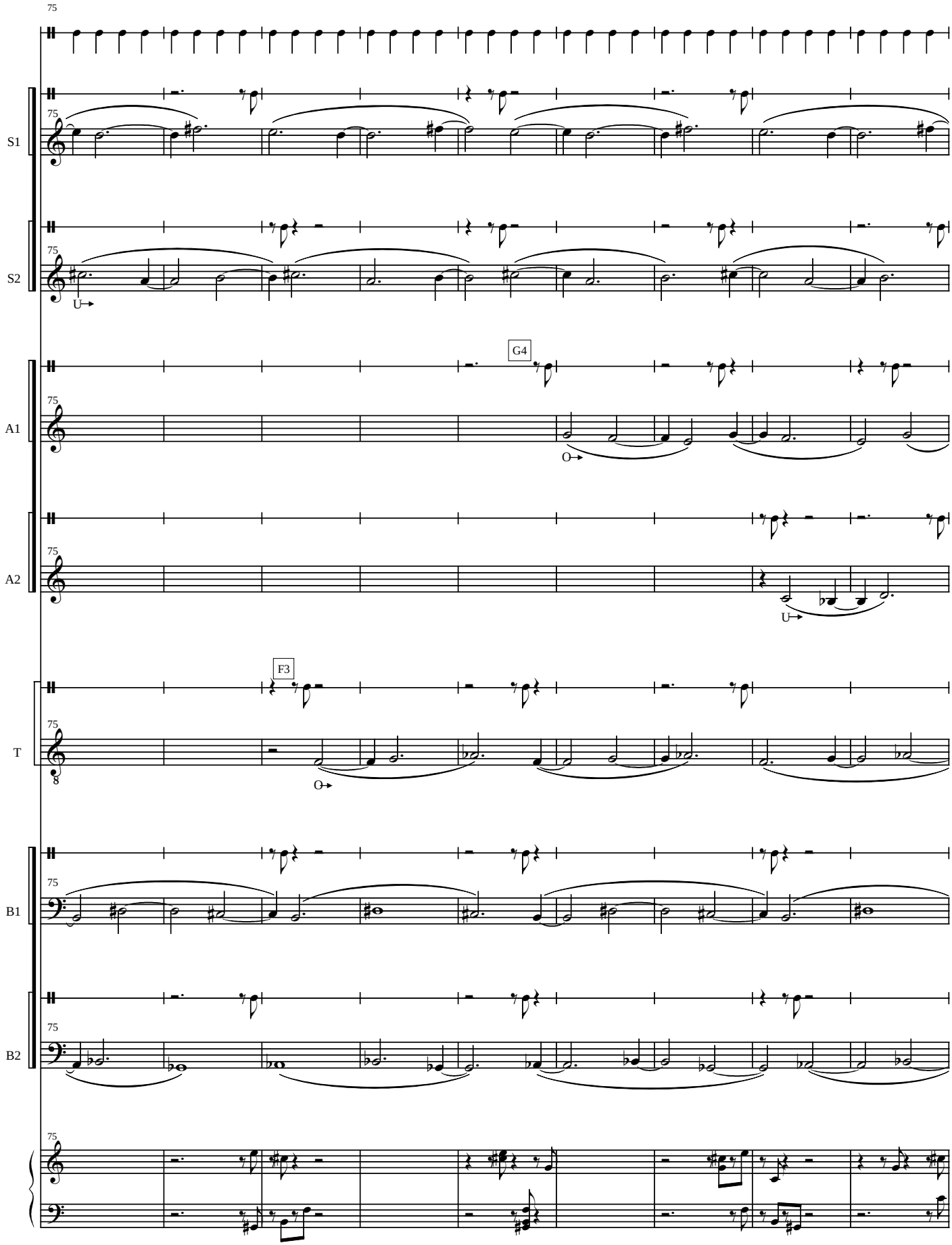
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2


66
C
S1
C#5
S2
A1
A2
T
B2
B1
U
B2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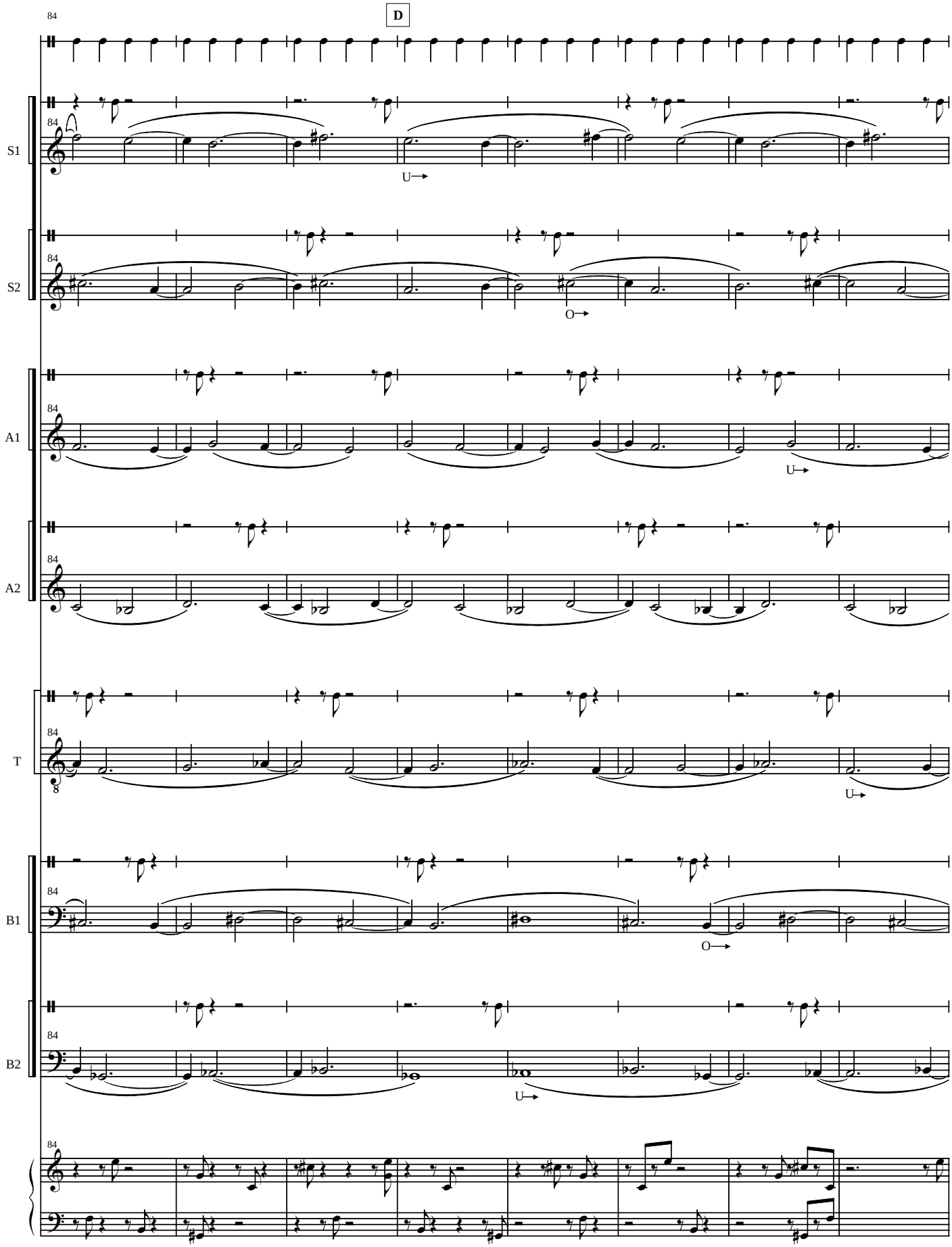
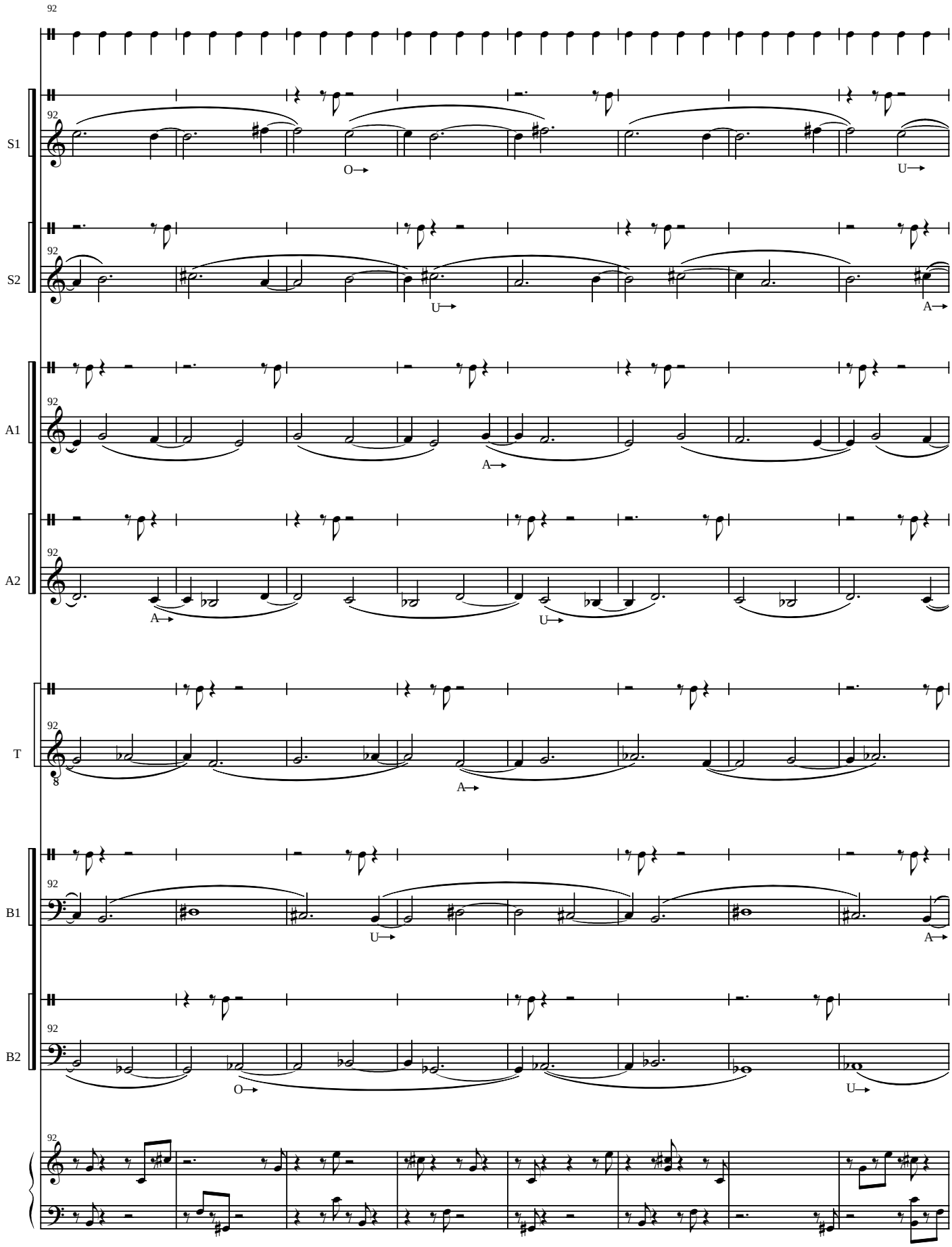
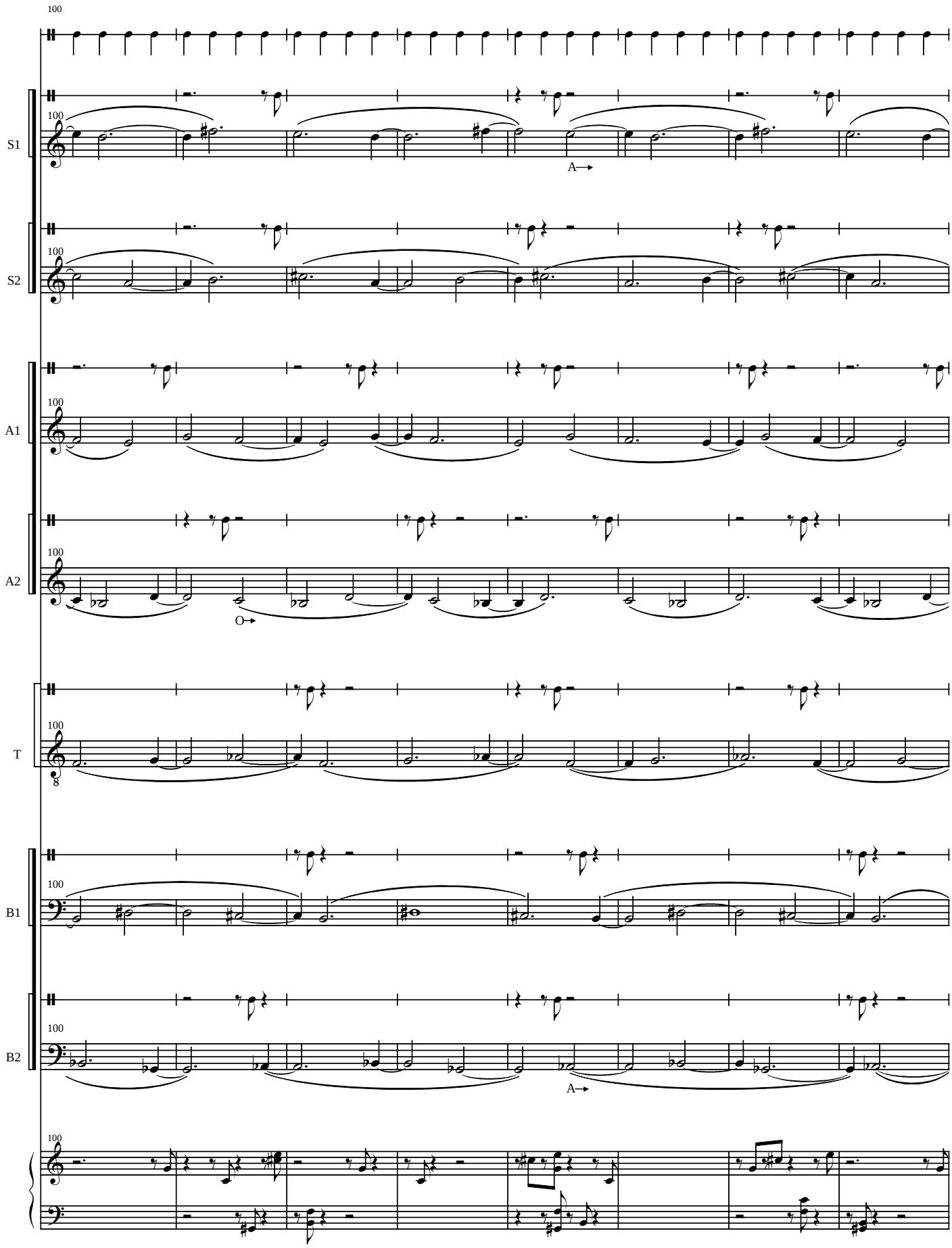
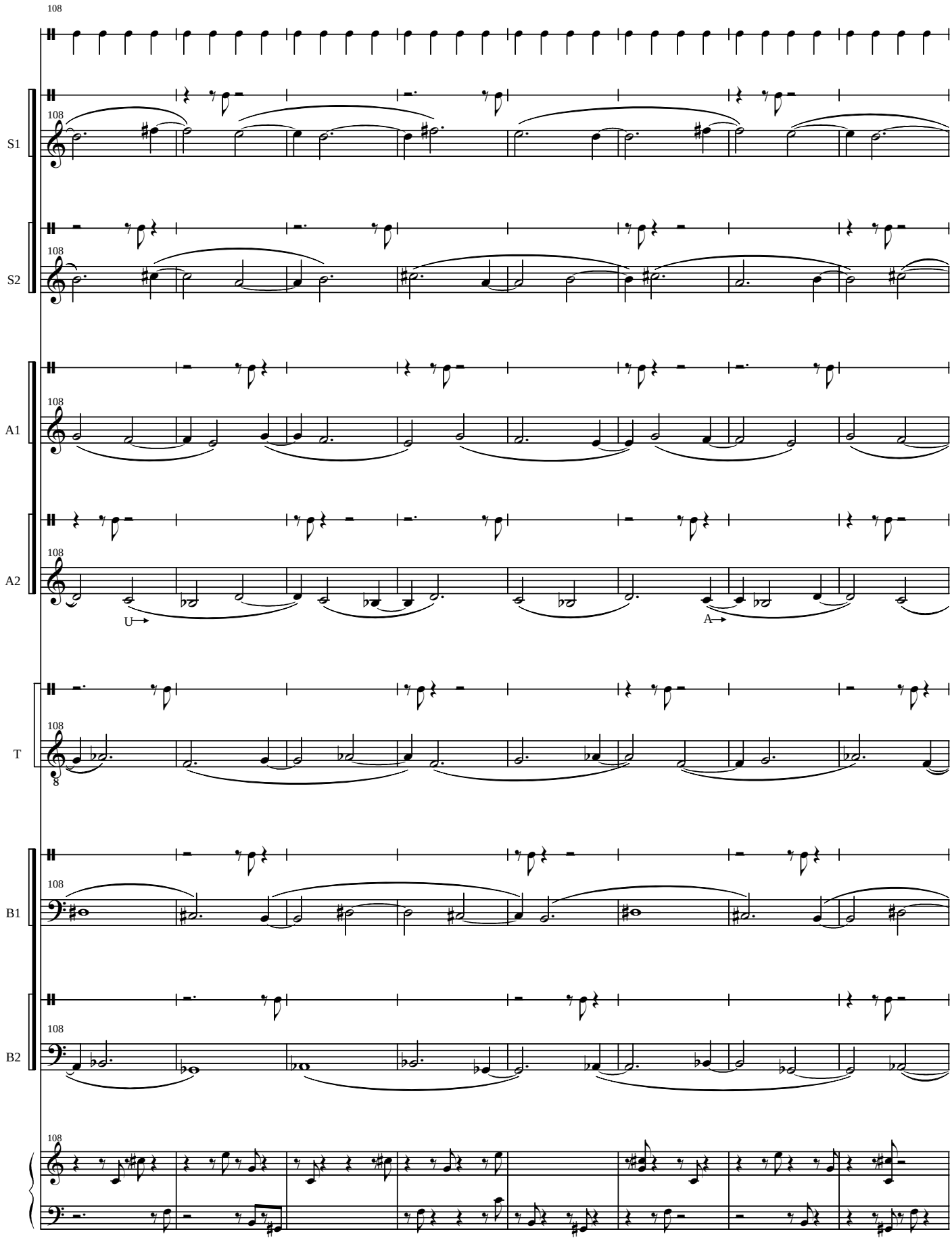
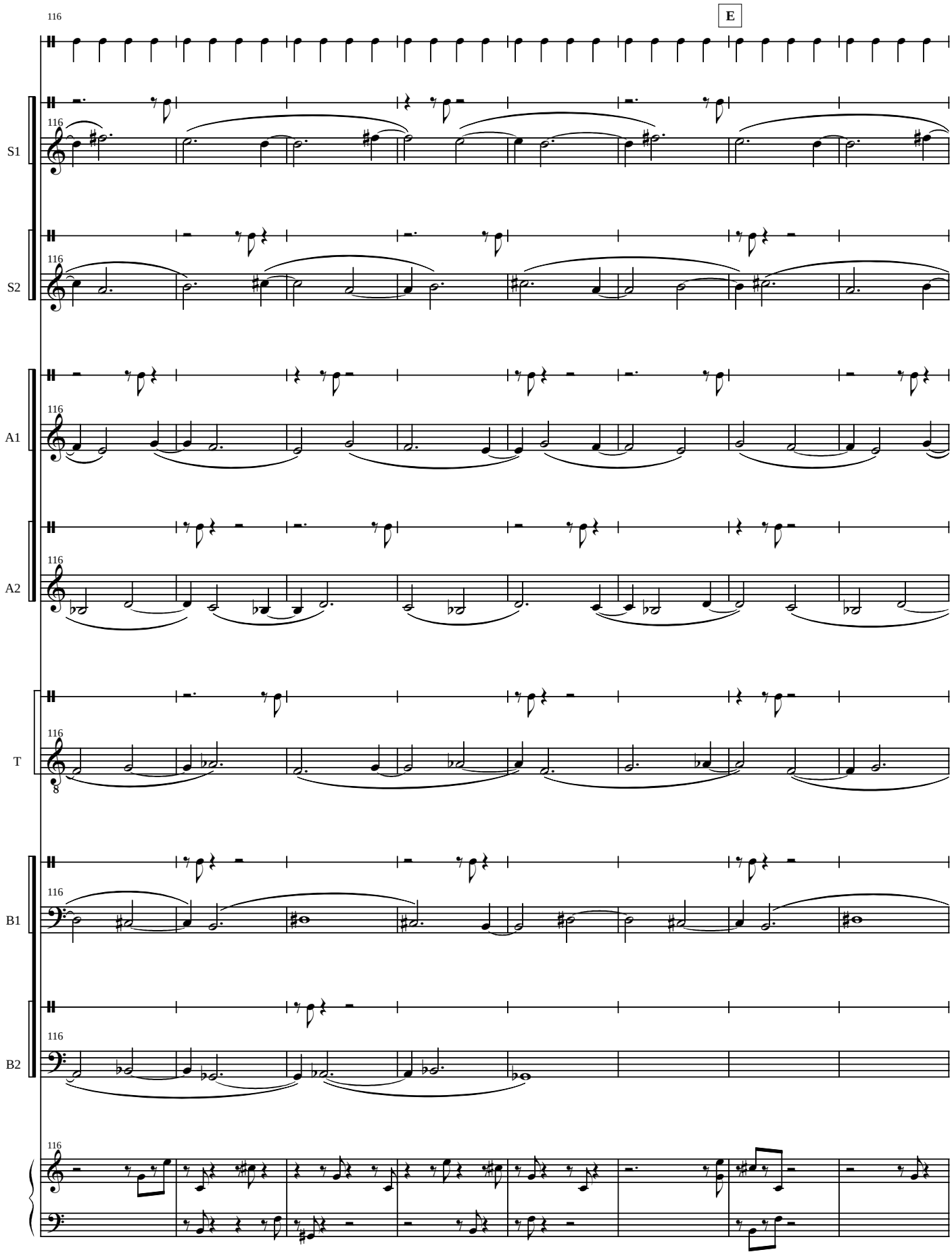
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2
G4
F3

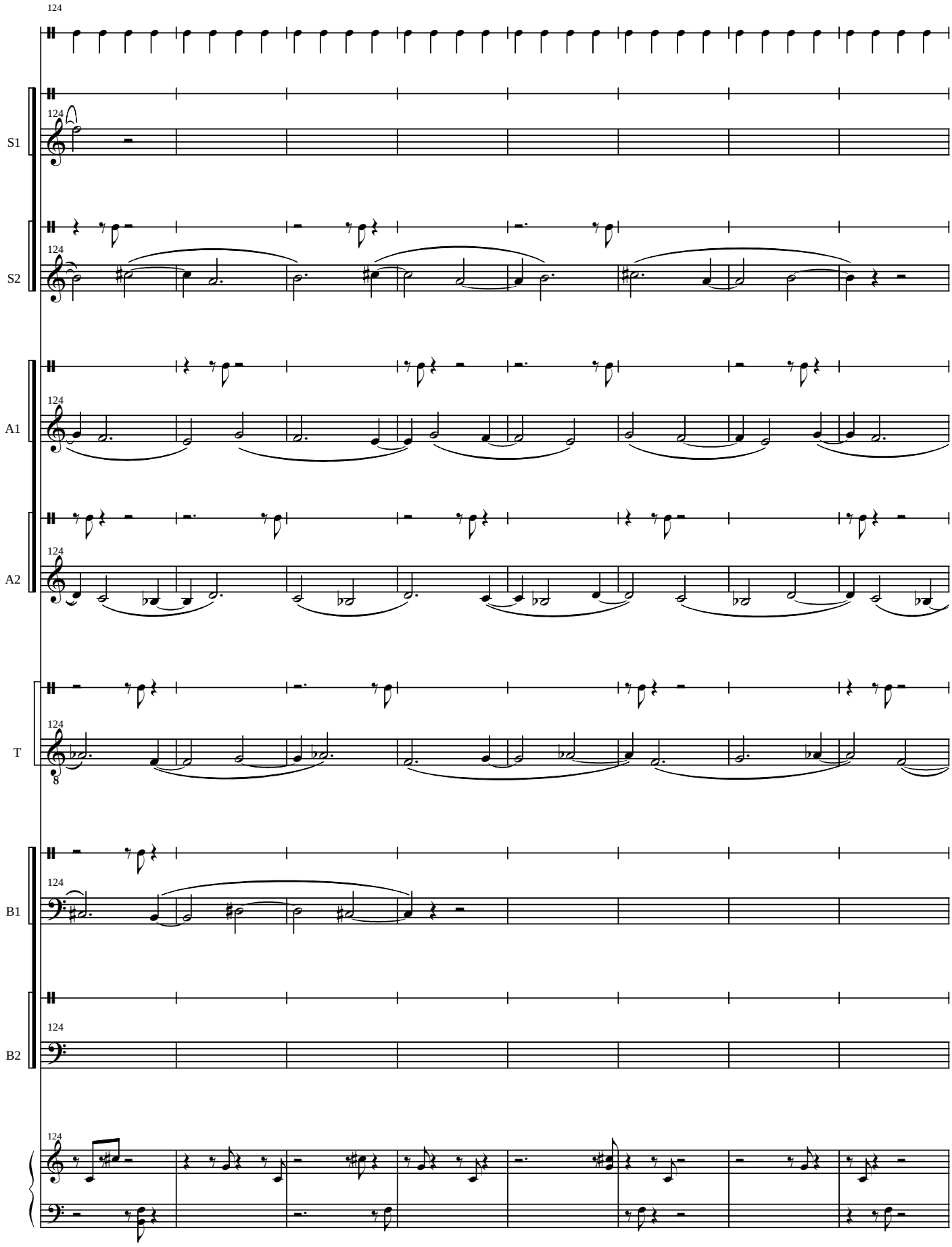

84
D
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2
U
O

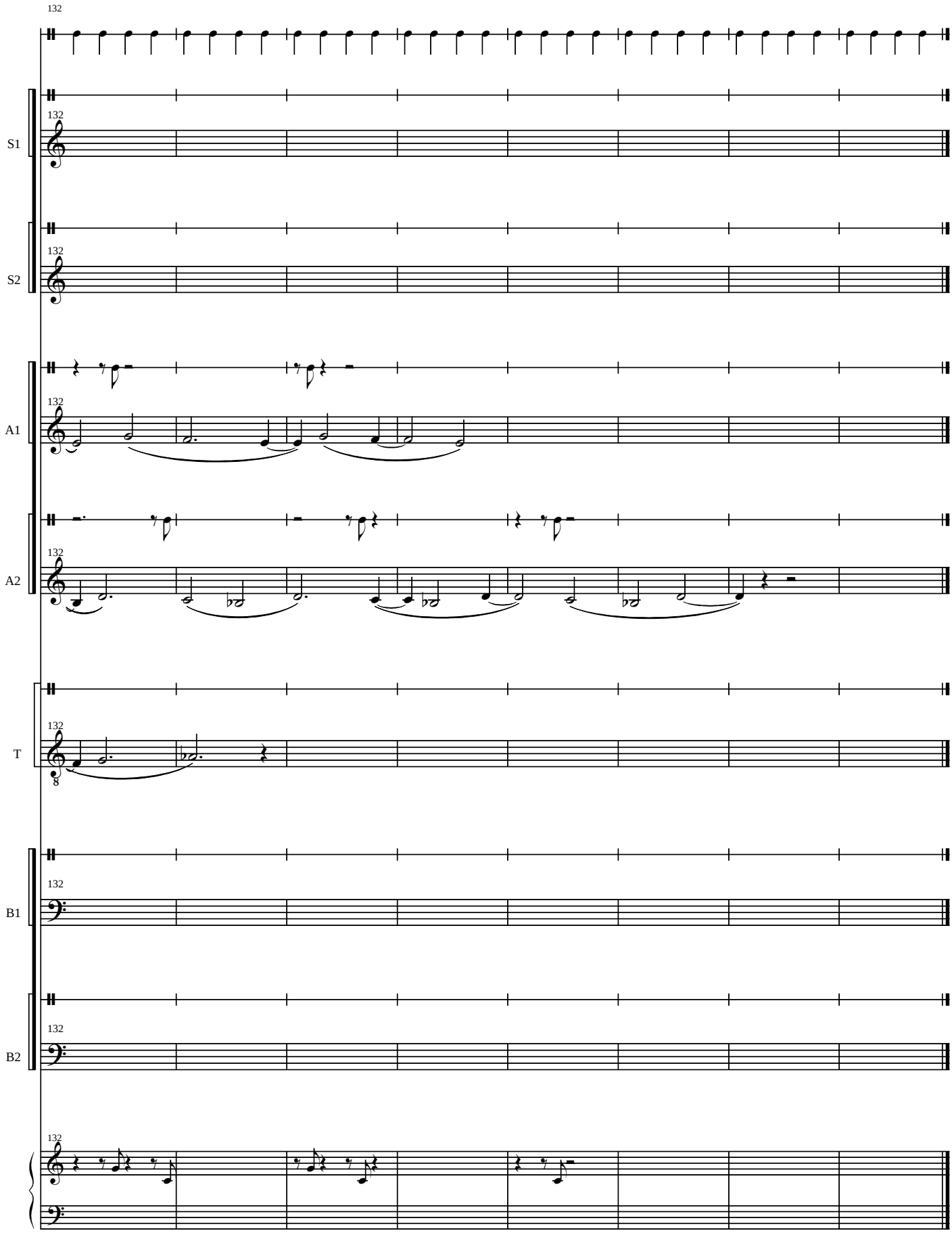

92
S1
O
U
S2
U
A
A1
A
A2
A
U
T
A
B1
U
A
B2
O
U


100
S1
A
S2
A1
A2
O
T
B1
B2


108
S1
S2
A1
A2
U
A
T
B1
B2


116
E
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2


124
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2


132
S1
S2
A1
A2
T
B1
B2