Ascent of an Ancient Empire

for Young Band

J. Aaron Stanley

Ascent of an Ancient Empire

for Young Band

by J. Aaron Stanley

Composed 2020
Duration: c. 2.5m
Grade c. 1.5

Included Parts:

Flute1
Flute 2
Oboe (opt.)
Clarinet in B♭ 1
Clarinet in B♭ 2
Bass Clarinet in B♭ (opt.)
Bassoon (opt.)
Alto Saxophone 1
Alto Saxophone 2
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone (opt.)

Trumpet in B♭ 1
Trumpet in B♭ 2
Horn in F
Trombone
Baritone T.C. & B.C. (opt.)
Tuba

Glockenspiel
Timpani
Crash Cymbal
Suspended Cymbal
Tam-tam
Snare Drum
Bass Drum

Instrumentation Notes:

This work contrasts the brass with the woodwinds, and the highs against the lows. Ideally, there will be both lows and highs of *both* brass and winds, but cues are provided in the event there is a shortage of one versus the other.

Oboe is doubled in other instruments, and can be considered optional.

Bass Clarinet, Bassoon, and Baritone Saxophone each play the same part, and are cued (or doubled) in the low brass should they be lacking.

Trombone and Baritone play the same part, but are cued in the low woodwinds, or doubled in other parts, should *they* be lacking.

Horn is 100% doubled in the Tenor Saxophone part for strength and security.

About the work:

Ascent of an Ancient Empire came right on the heels of my previous piece for young band, *Deep Space Voyage*. In that piece, I used quartal harmonies in the march section to depict the coldness of space. Here, I wanted to write a follow-up piece that used quartal harmonies much more extensively as an alternative to the abundance of plain vanilla tonal works for young band.

To many of us, quartal harmonies (particularly parallel 4ths and 5ths) sound older and more ancient—and indeed early polyphonic music often considered 3rds to be dissonant compared to the "perfect" fourths and fifths. But perhaps we can also attribute that association to film composers who have often used stark quartal harmonies to evoke a more ancient sentiment. Oddly enough, quartal harmonies can sound fresh, modern, and sophisticated at the same time, which is an interesting paradox.

Like in *Deep Space Voyage*, I used mental imagery to help inspire the musical ideas and give it a cinematic feel, but the piece isn't programmatic. Instead, I encourage students to create their own imagery and story lines as their own personal reaction to the music.

My hope is that students will find *Ascent of an Ancient Empire* a fun and exciting piece that ignites their imagination, and inspires them to rise to the challenge of performing it successfully.

Notes to the conductor.

Dynamic contrast will be important to successfully performing this piece, making it a good selection to teach that concept. There is also a bit more independence than is typical in Grade 1 music, which should be a fun challenge for your students, without it being too difficult.

The piece begins with a big fanfare at *forte* that pits the woodwinds against the brass and evokes the pomp and ceremony of an ancient emperor. It then moves into a stately procession at bar 10, which should come all the way down to *piano*.

Another fanfare—back to *forte*—transitions us to a new tonal area by bar 27, where another processional melody is introduced. The dynamic here should be slightly higher than the previous procession.

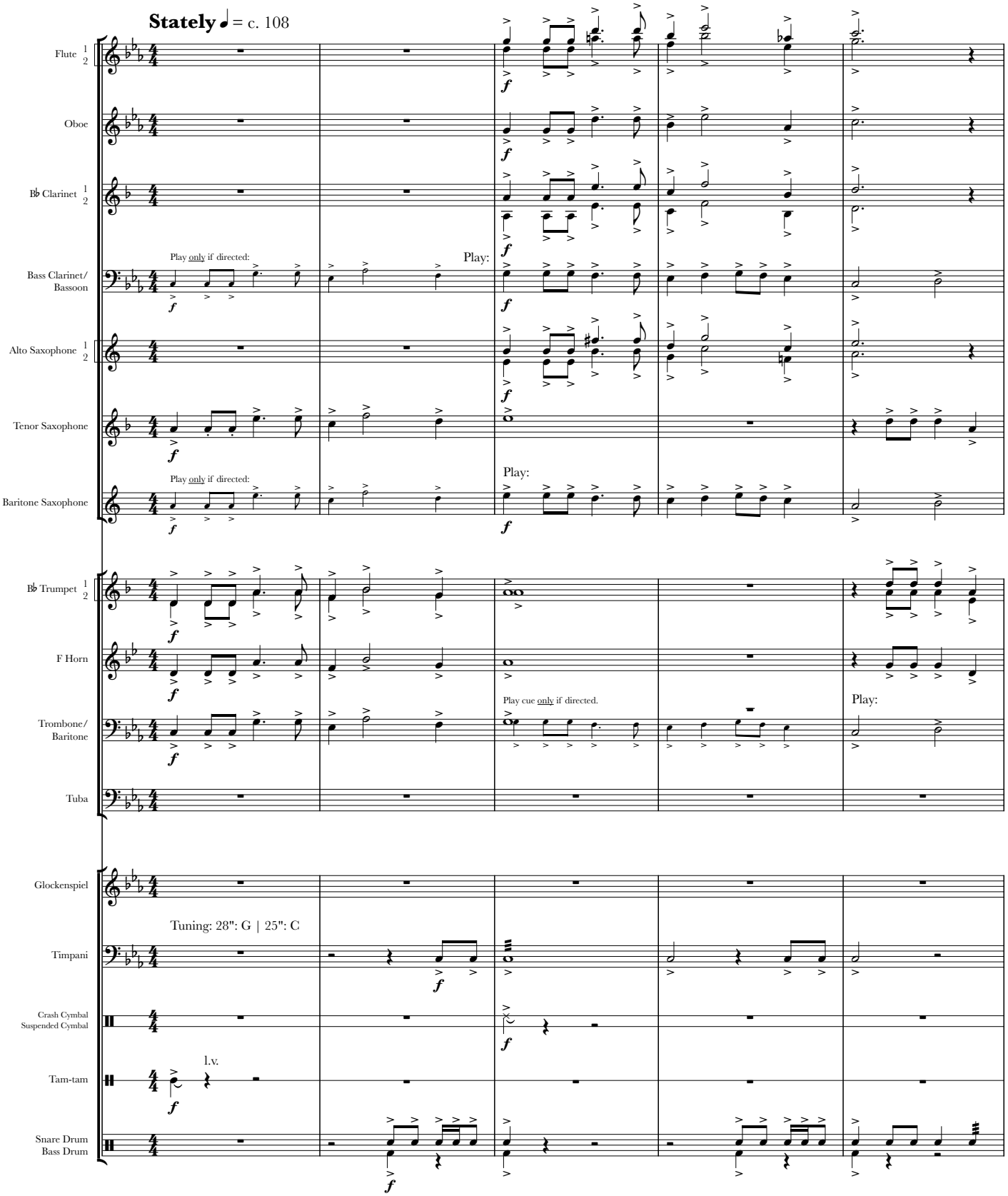
The big opening fanfare then returns at bar 40, and this time the *forte* is sustained as the two previous melodies are combined into one grand procession. The Coda, beginning at bar 62, can even be a notch louder, so students may be instructed to "save it" for the ending.

Practical learning objectives:

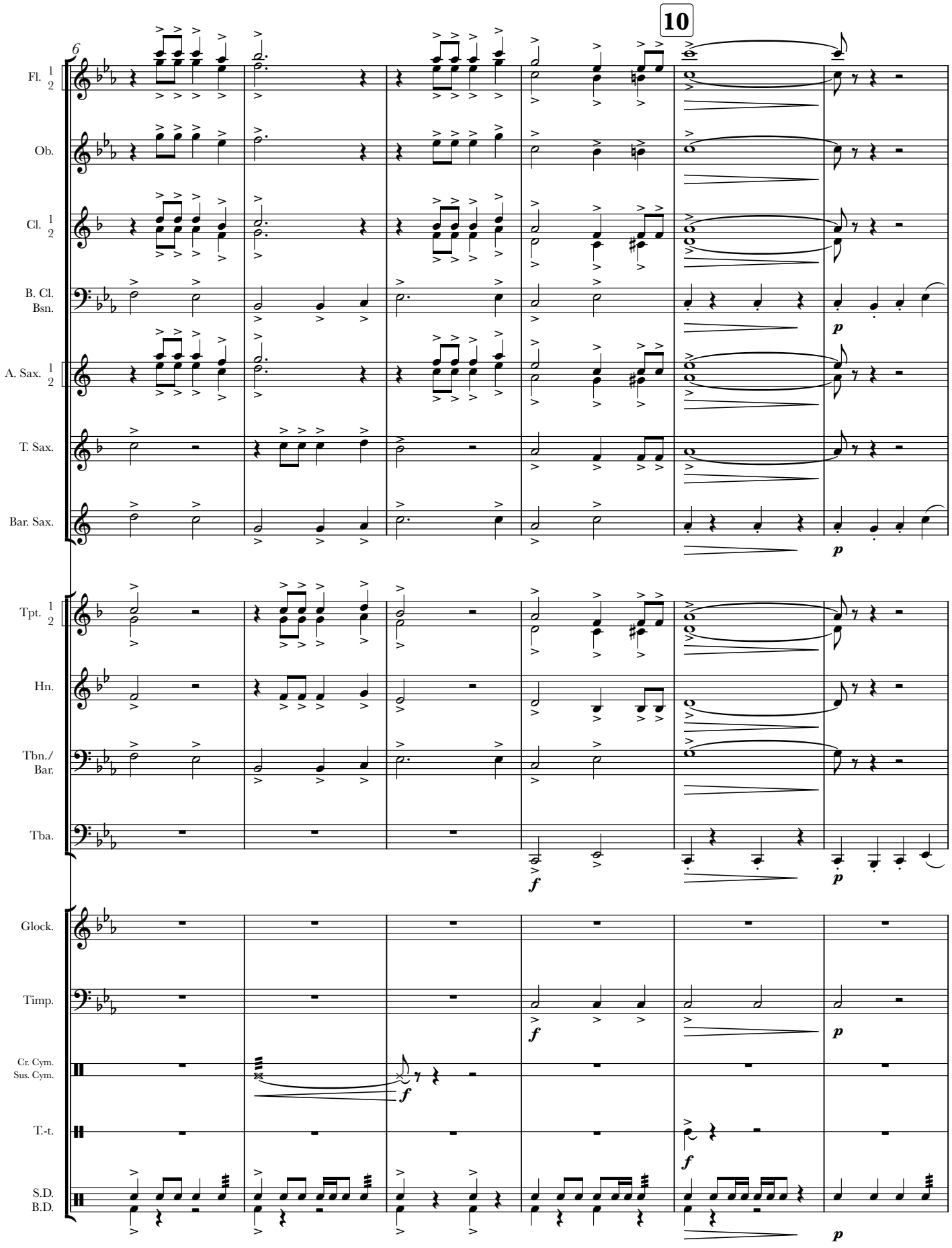
- Dynamic contrast with crescendos / decrescendos (***p*** to ***f***)
- Articulations: normal attack, accent, and slur
- Rhythms: up to 8th notes in winds, 16th notes and rolls in snare drum
- Phrasing and good tone production
- Gaining confidence with more independ ent parts
- Stretching the ear with quartal harmonies and some chromaticism rather than purely standard tonal harmonies.
- Non-musical tie-ins: ancient history, civilizations, and warfare; state parades and processions; etc.

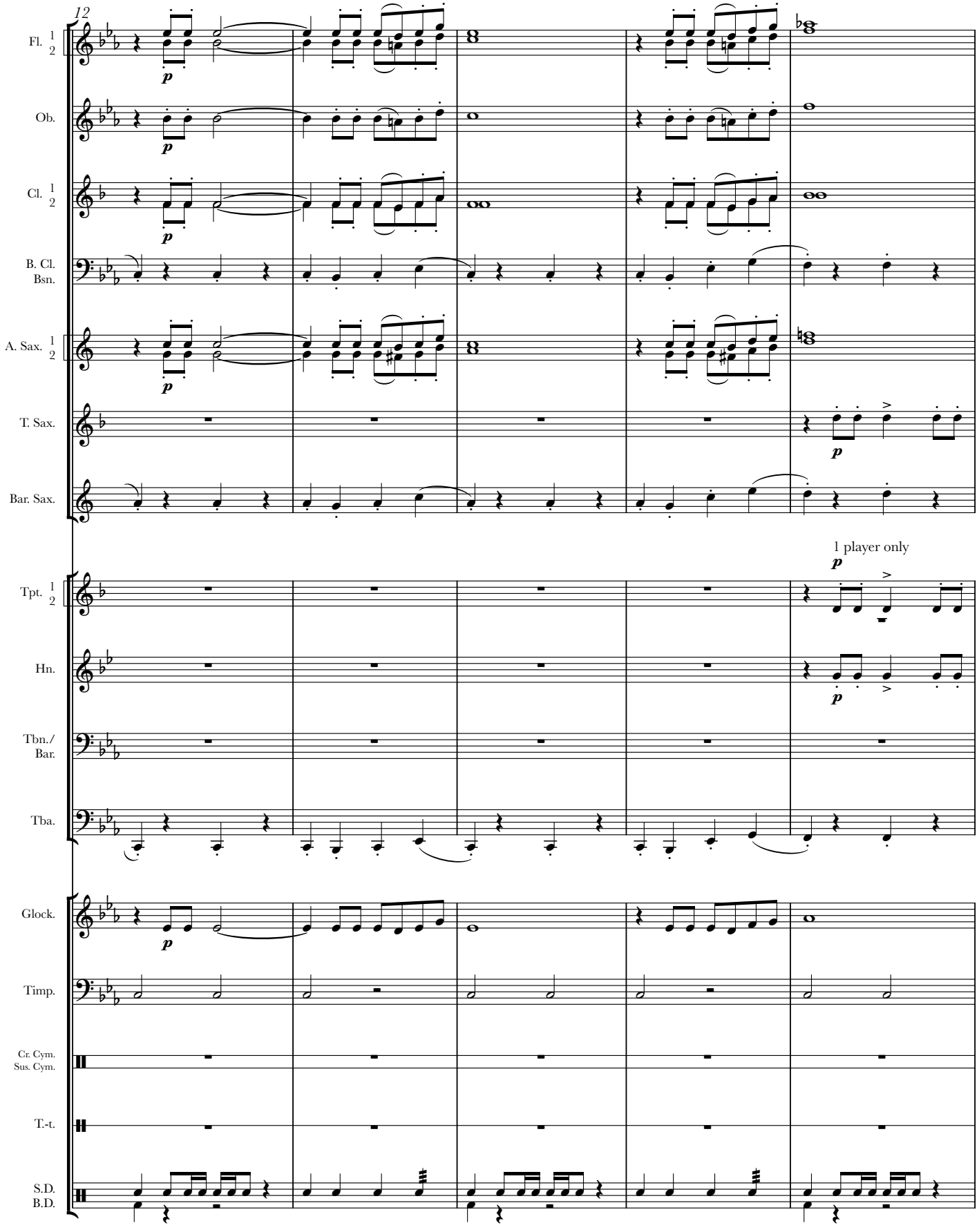
Ascent of an Ancient Empire

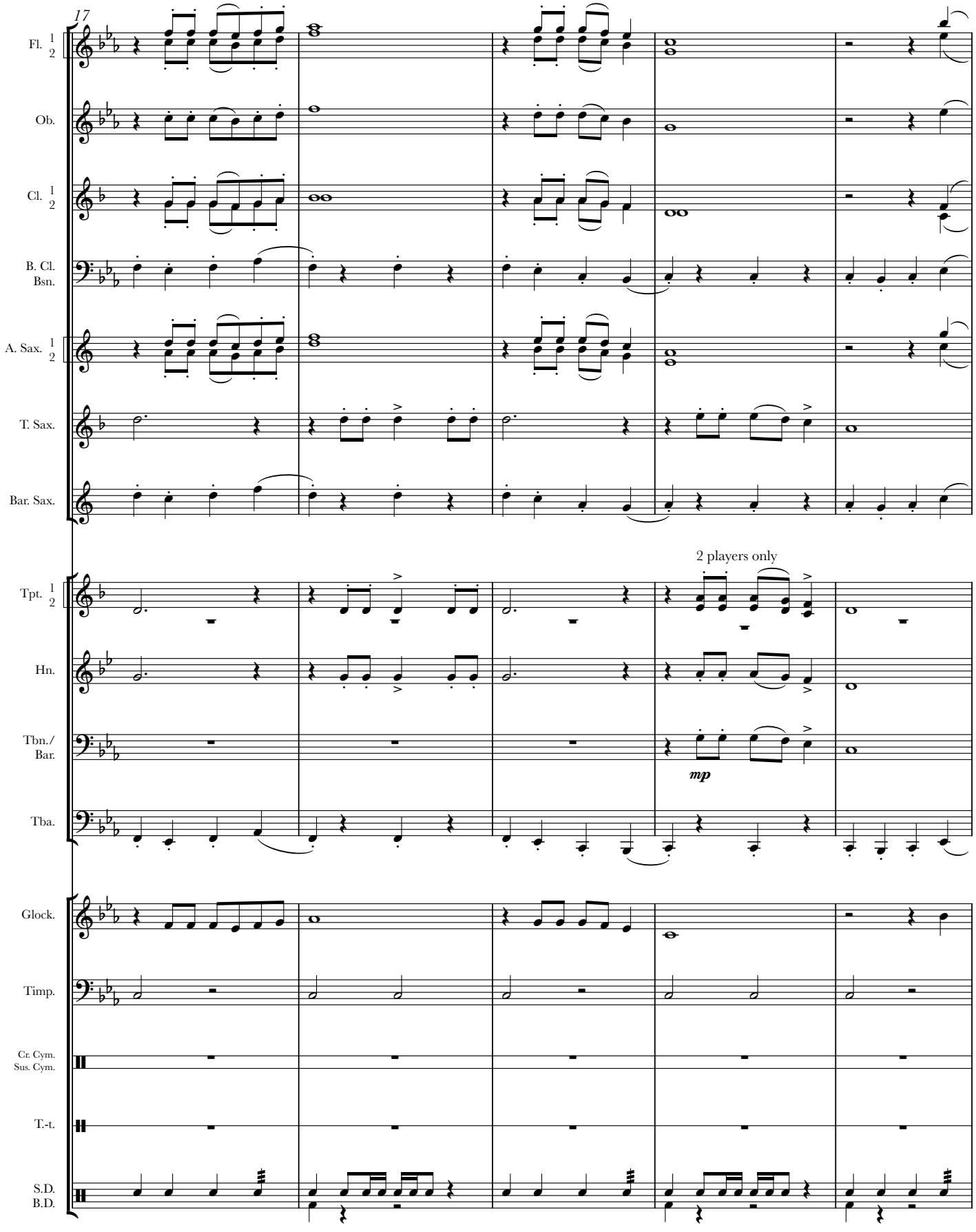
J. Aaron Stanley (b. 1975)

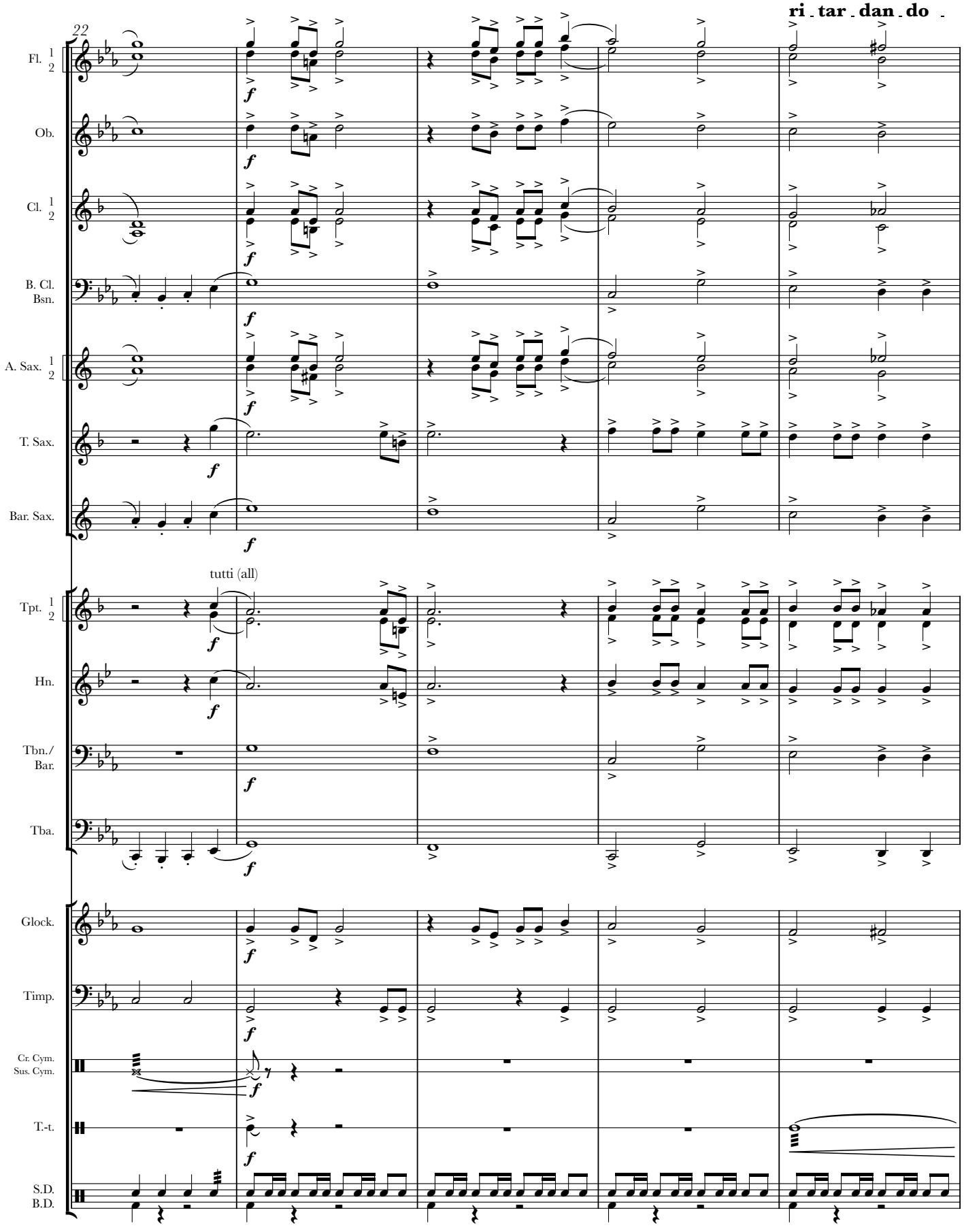


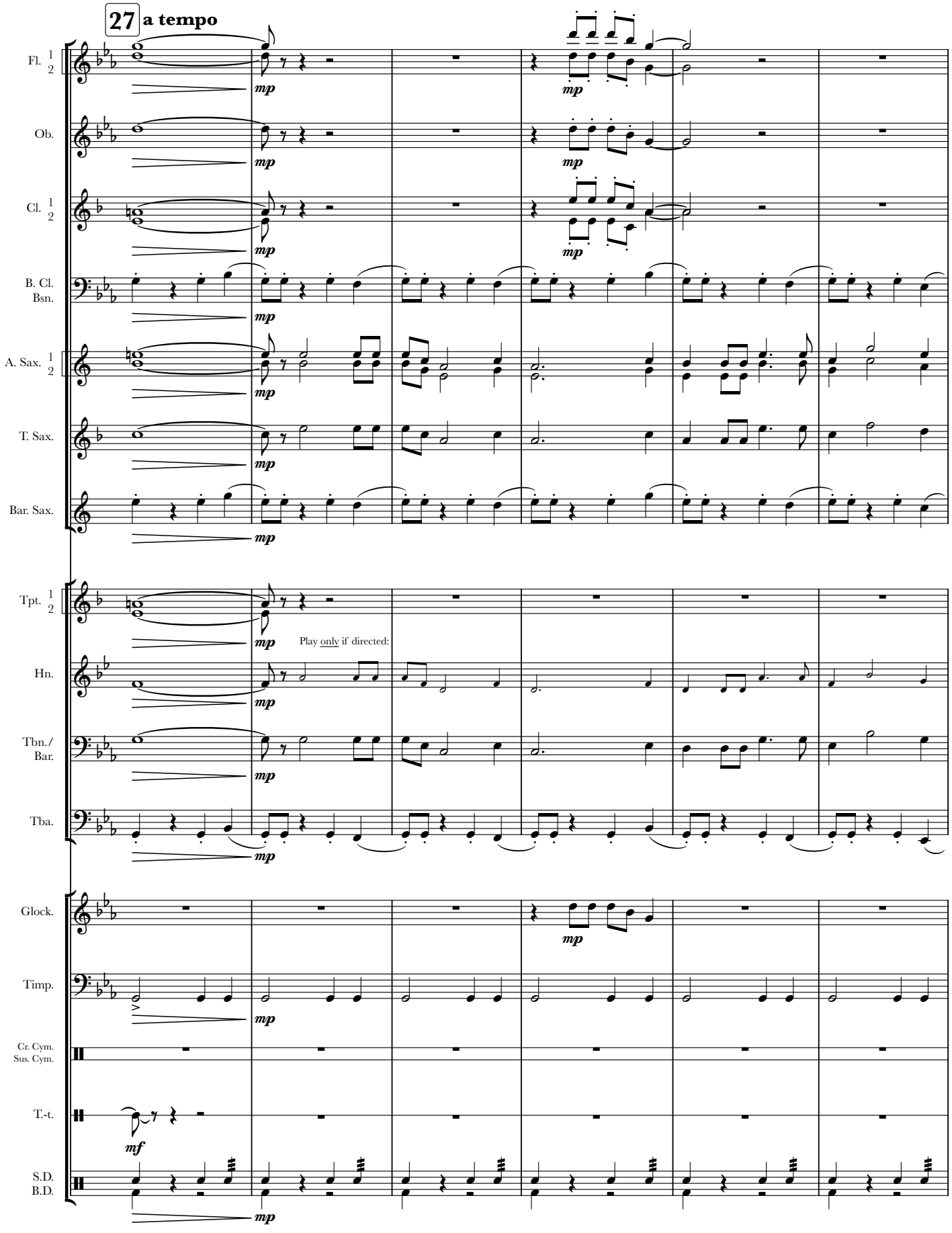
©2020 J. Aaron Stanley (ASCAP), Soul Journey Music (ASCAP: SoJoMu Publishing). All rights reserved. www.jaaronstanley.com

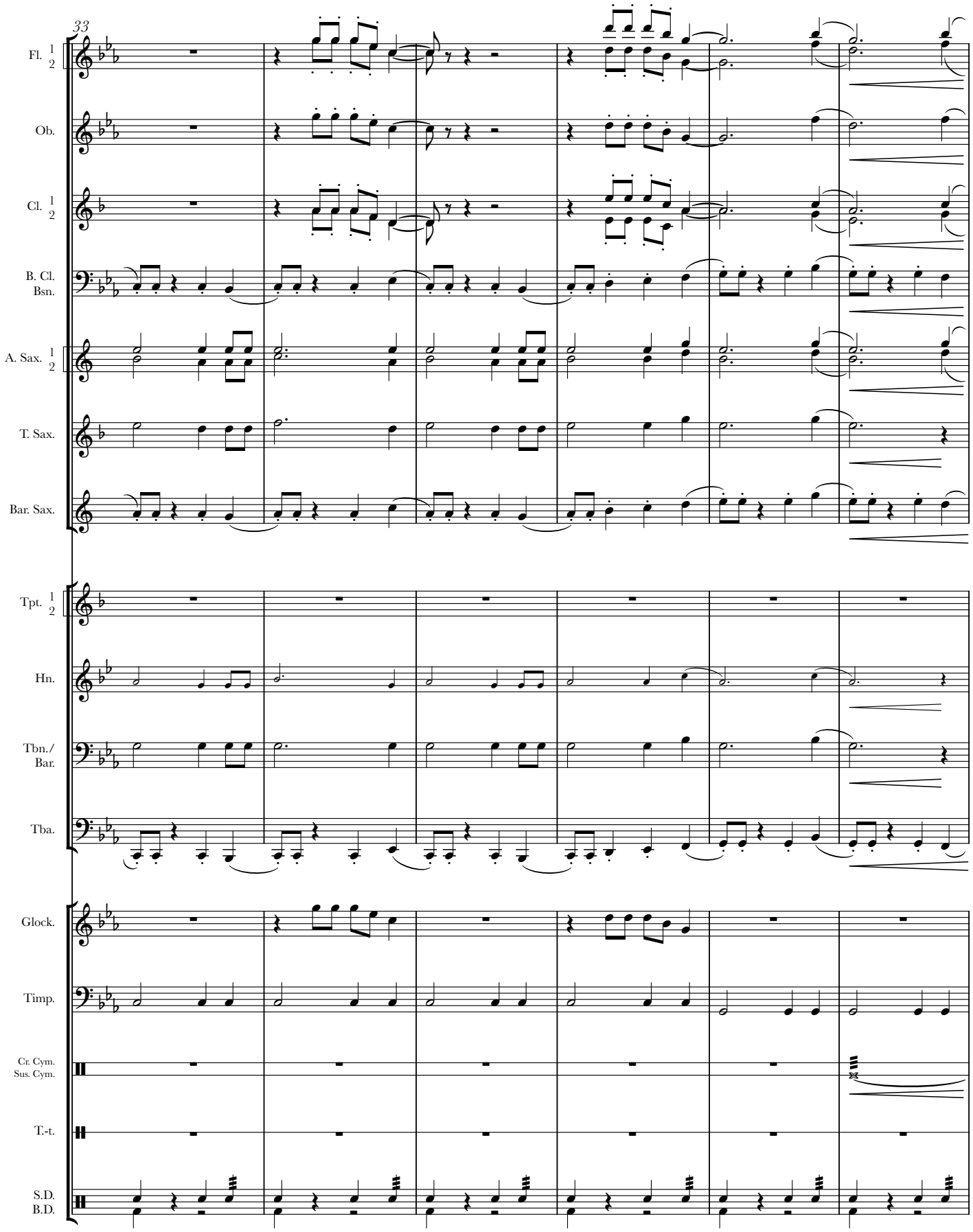

10
6
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./
Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym.
Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D.
B.D.
p
f

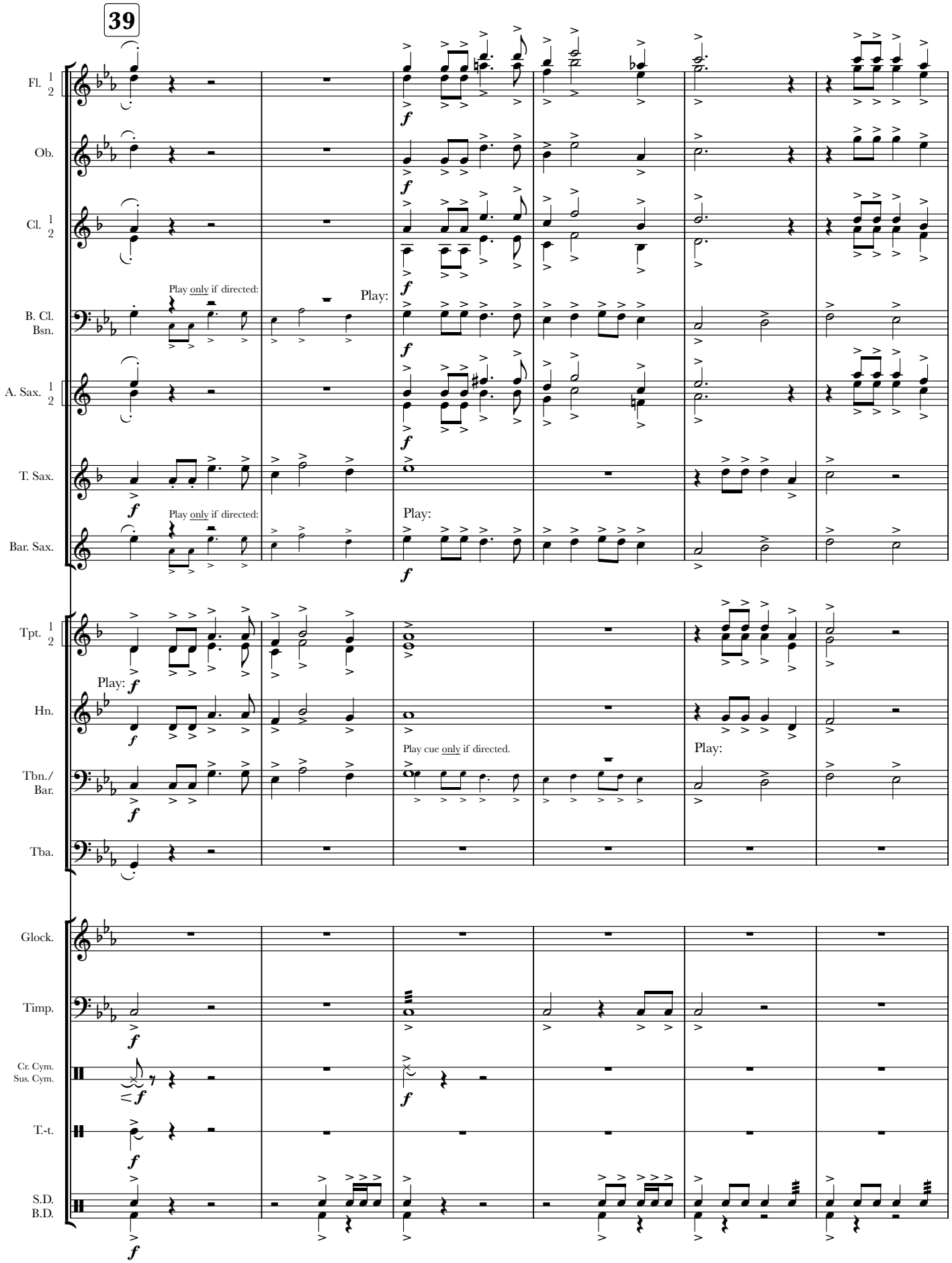

12
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
1 player only
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.

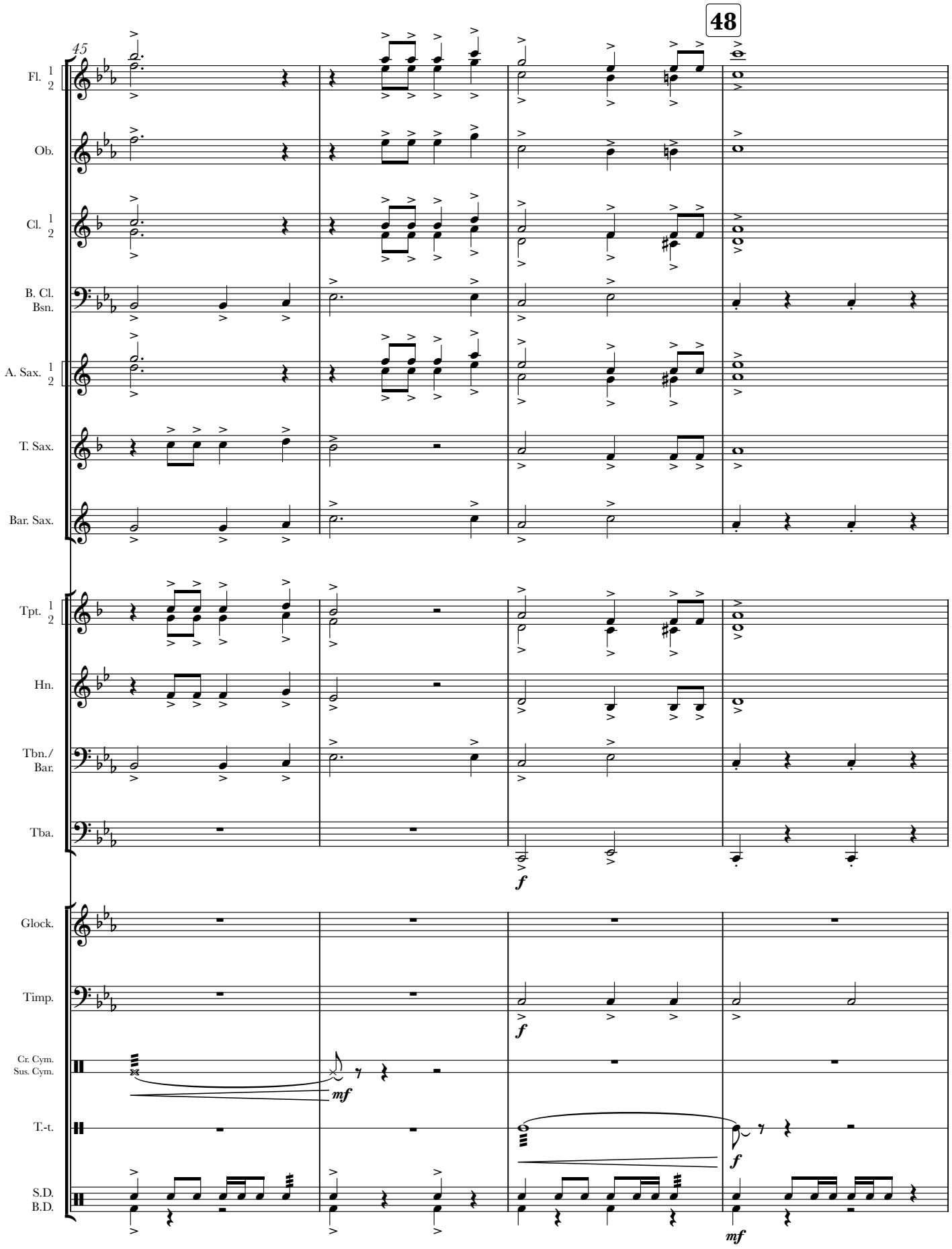

17
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
2 players only
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
mp
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.

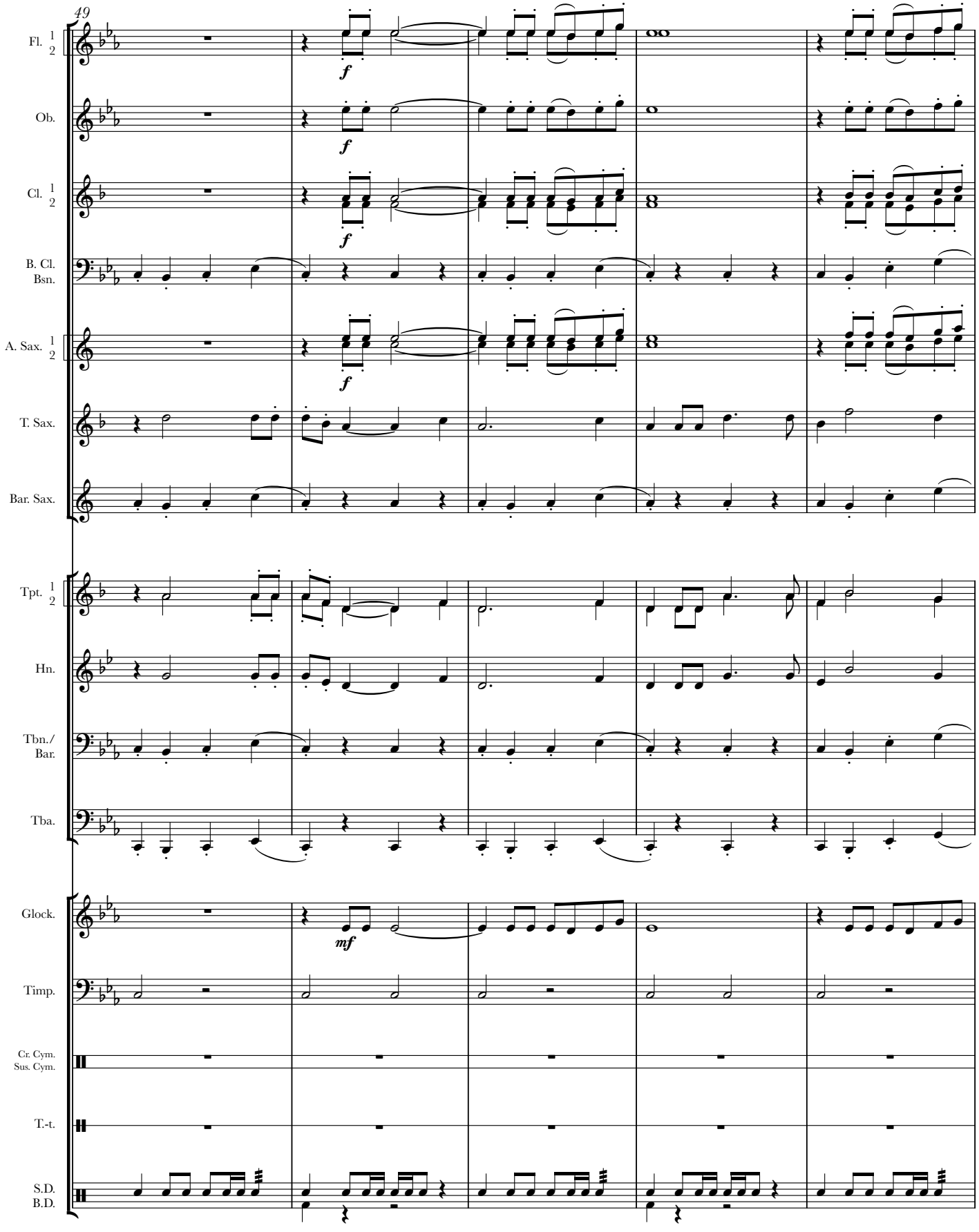

ri - tar - dan - do -
22
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
tutti (all)
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./
Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym.
Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D.
B.D.

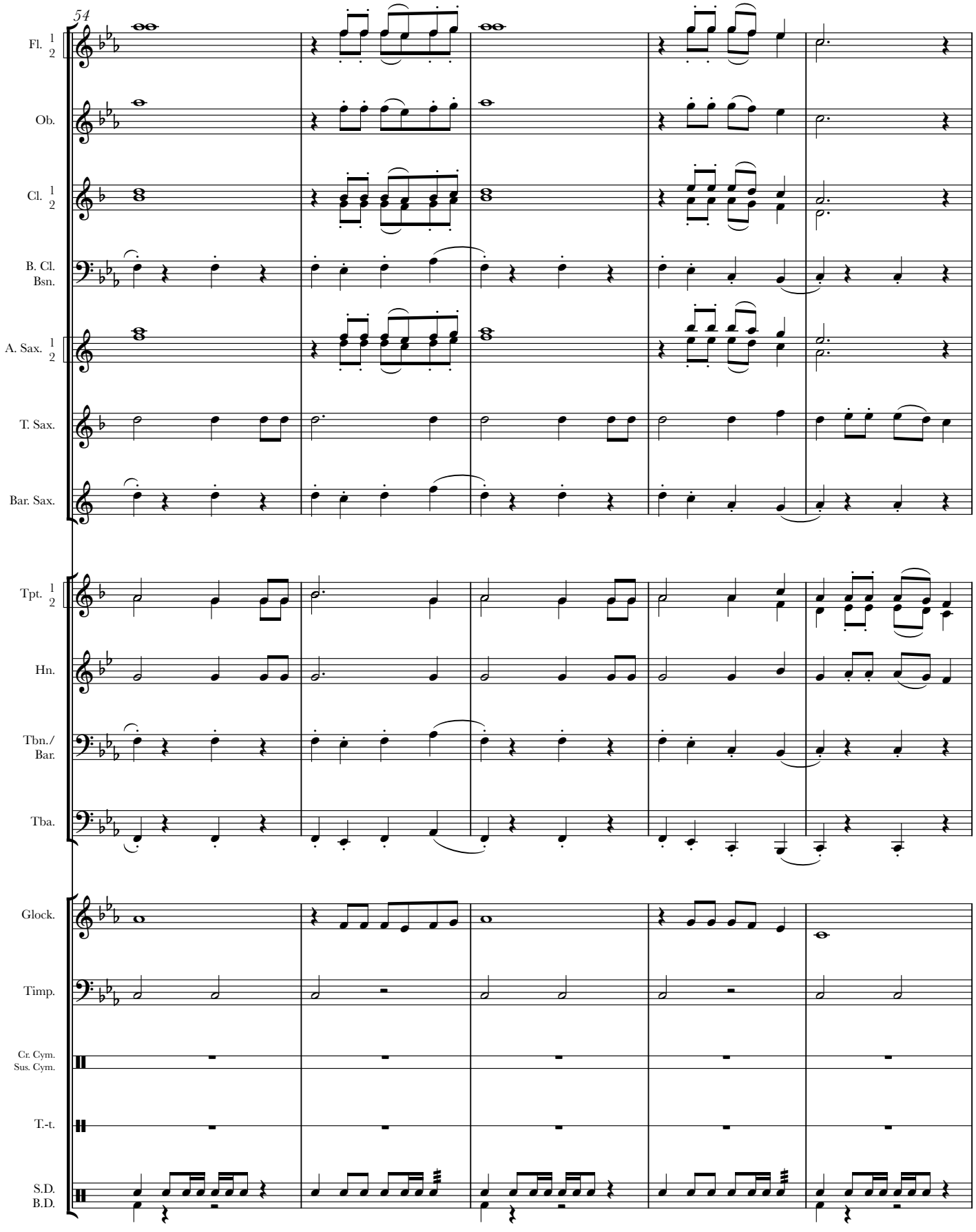

27 a tempo
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Play only if directed:
Hn.
Tbn./
Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym.
Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D.
B.D.
mp
mf

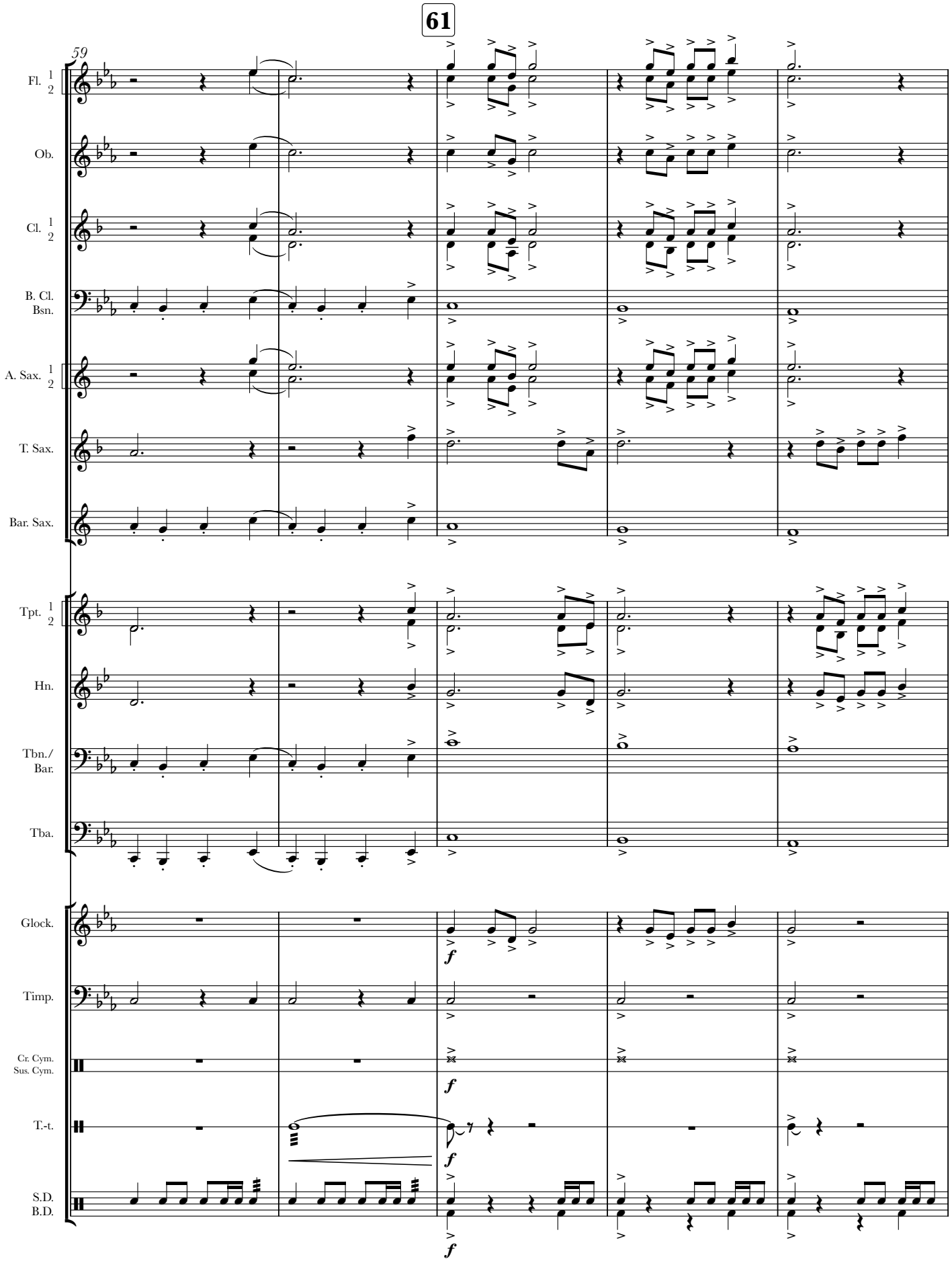

33
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.

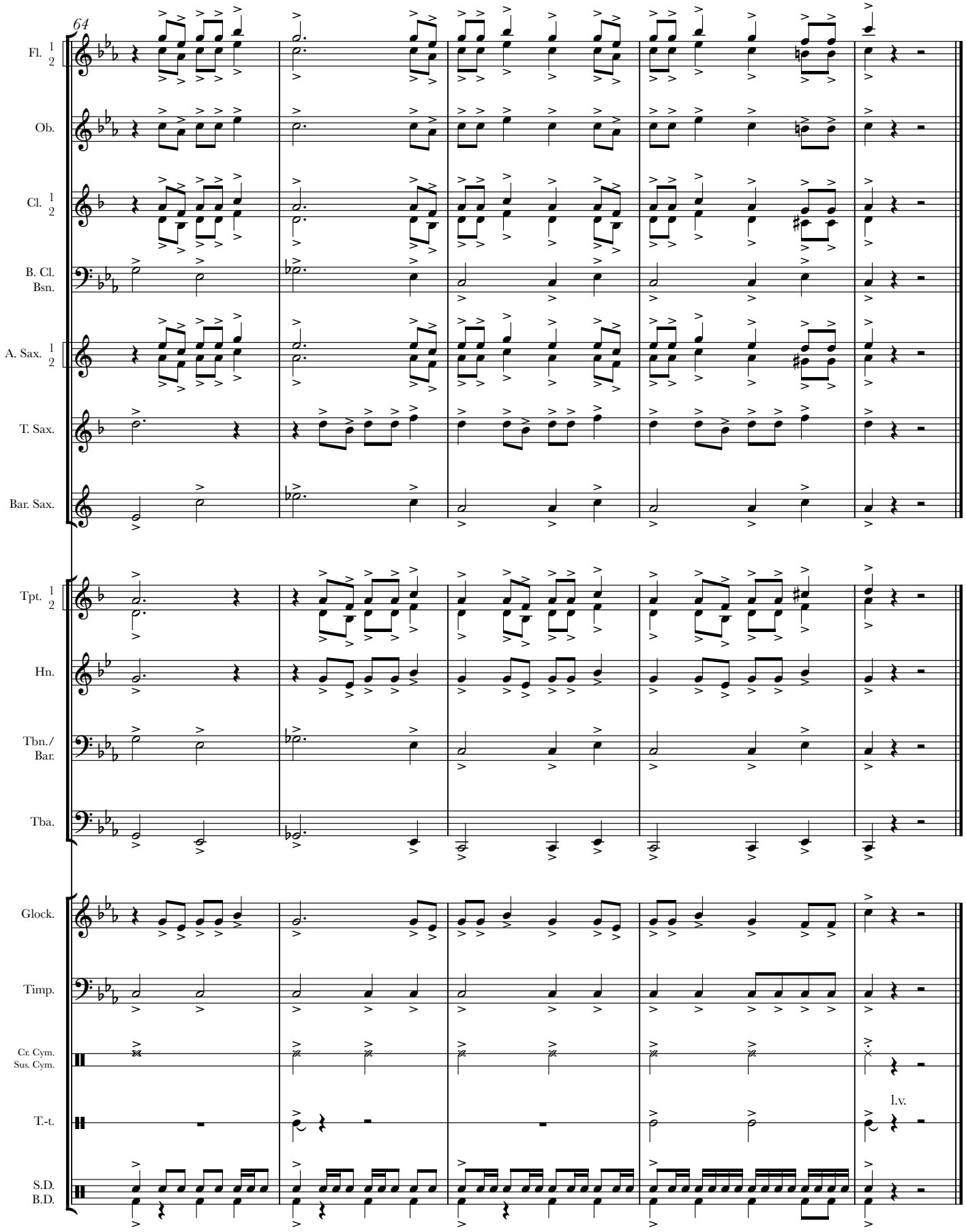

39
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl.
Bsn.
Play only if directed:
Play:
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Play only if directed:
Play:
Tpt. 1 2
Play:
Hn.
Tbn./
Bar.
Play cue only if directed.
Play:
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym.
Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D.
B.D.


48
45
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl.
Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./
Bar.
Tba.
f
Glock.
Timp.
f
Cr. Cym.
Sus. Cym.
mf
T.-t.
f
S.D.
B.D.
mf


49
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.
f
mf


54
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.


61
59
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
S.D. B.D.
f


64
Fl. 1 2
Ob.
Cl. 1 2
B. Cl. Bsn.
A. Sax. 1 2
T. Sax.
Bar. Sax.
Tpt. 1 2
Hn.
Tbn./ Bar.
Tba.
Glock.
Timp.
Cr. Cym. Sus. Cym.
T.-t.
l.v.
S.D. B.D.