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UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON

LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

BY

SAMUEL AYITEY LARTEY

AN ORIGINAL COMPOSITION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT FOR THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE MASTER OF ARTS DEGREE IN MUSIC

JUNE 2002

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To the memory of my beloved father James Caleb Lartey and mother, Mrs. Beatrice Dedei Alaba Lartey.

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DECLARATION

This is to certify that the present composition is my own work and that it has never been submitted, either in part or in whole, for another degree elsewhere

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I am also indebted to all those who in diverse ways contributed and made it possible for me to complete this work.

I would mention some few personalities. Mr Emmanuel Asiedu Yerenkyi, Head of the Drama Department, Professor Adenku, Head of the Dance Department, all of the University of Ghana, Mr. Francis Dowetin, Director of the Datus Complex Schools, Dansoman Branch, not forgetting Mrs. Agnes Ofori-Owusu, Director of the Tridot Limited, Accra, and the Headmistress of Datus Complex Schools, Dansoman Branch

My sincere gratitude goes also to my family, brothers and sisters who came to support me both morally and financially in time of need, to Sgt E.K Tukpe Eric, Mrs. Elizabeth Mensah and Ernestina Darmang who looked after our children during the course of my study

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ABSTRACT

The present composition, written for wind band, brass and percussion, is meant to explore ways of africanising military band repertoires by blending African elements with western techniques. It shows an awareness of pioneer works by Amu, Nketia and Akin Euba among others African composers who paved the way in which African music can be adapted for global advantage and use The rhythmic and melodic motives implemented in the 5 sections of this work consist of childhood reminiscences related to Labadi (Ga) traditions as well as to practices and behaviours inherited from scholarly exposure to Adagme and Ewe music

What is illustrated by this approach is that effectiveness in African Art Music may be considered as arising at the intersection between experiences of organized knowledge, learned techniques and a solid traditional background, with an extreme tolerance in the processes of implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

The objective for this composition is to show a way of blending African compositional principles with Western composition techniques in African Art Music

The scope covers research among the Ga of the Accra Greater Region of Ghana, the Ewe of the Volta Region and the Ga-Adangbe of the Eastern Region of Ghana. The publication of Dr. Ephraim Amu's Twenty-five African songs (1932) marks the beginning of a new era in musical practice of Ghana. Before it, it appeared that African music in Ghana had been practiced largely by oral tradition Attempts at writing down a few Ghanaian songs have been made by travelers and educators like Ward and "Professor" Grace of Cape Coast but it was the pioneering work of Dr Ephraim Amu rather than these that helped to establish both a tradition of written African music and an idiom of African music in Ghana (Nketia 1976) Akin Euba and Professor Nketia in African Pianism (1964) and (1973) respectively, show a way in which African music can be developed for piano. Professor Nketia used tunes from the Northern Region of Ghana and rhythms of Akan as well as Ewe songs for the piano and violin Akin Euba in his "Modern African Music" (1963:1) wrote for the orchestra and showed how the orchestra can be used in performing African Music. As Akin Euba said "my position is that all shades of new African expression are valid as long as they fulfill the canons of good music composed by Africans whether the idiom is radical or conservative" (Ibid) He showed a great tolerance about resources and implementation by African composers creating authentic forms of New African Music

In songs of the Akans (1932) and Akan songs (1954) Riverson showed a collection of Akan songs which can be used for schools and worship.

In this composition " Libation Chant for Nii " the focus is on the following traditional musical forms and techniques in the Ga, Adangbe and Ewe regions horn call and response, ostinato, multi-parts comparable to Western fugal style as well as choral singing resembling Western chorales

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ANALYSIS

The "Libation Chant For Nii" is composed of several sentences individually and harmonically amplified before being put together Those various sections correspond to various tempi, modulations and expression marks They will be designated by letters of the alphabet as follows:

A Home gathering.

B. Greetings of bereaved.

C Rendering of funeral songs,

D Pouring of libation and

F Departure of sympathizers

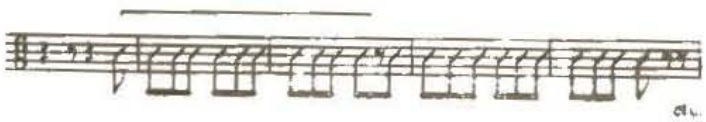
In the first section A (Home gathering) the African character of the piece is brought in by the double bar introduction of the wood block on a rhythmic motive common to the Ewe, Ga and Adangbe of Ghana:

In the first element, a short signal for a ritual (18 bars), a type of announcement is shared by a pair of woodwinds (two tenor recorders) and brasses (two horns in F), each pair harmonized in thirds This melodic sentence constitutes, with its repeat, the entire section

The second element, the percussion background, consists of two pairs of wood blocks providing an ostinato to rhythmic manipulations by a tom tom

The tempo of this announcement remains steady at 120 crotchets to a minute.

The melody is in Dorian mode sustained by a melodic rhythm compatible with the rhythmic background



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The combination of those features may be considered a way of blending traditional elements with Western techniques.

In the **second section** B (Greetings of Bereaved), the melody begins in triplets followed by a tied crotchet to a minim The opening two bars are imitated at different levels and are used throughout the first theme of this section. The flute, oboe, clarinet .in Eb, clarinet in Bb I and II open with the motive allowing the alto clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, horn in F I and II and euphonium to come in at bar 24 with a harmonic progression in Eb major This goes throughout until bar 50 At bar 51, there is variation of harmonic progression (I – II – I - VI+ - II – V - I). This is done through staccato and arpeggios by the lower pitched instruments throughout It is a kind of link (in Eb) to the in coming new theme The arpeggios sound like the wailing of the sympathizers in a bereaved style, which is common to the African of southern Ghana when mourning. This section ends at bar 76 in the key of Eb major. The main technique employed in this section is thus a kind of generalized imitation evoking the wailing of sympathizers in addition to western modulation that helps to avoid cyclic harmonies.

At bar 77, the **Section C**, Rendering of Funeral Songs, begins a multipart style of singing found among the Ga, Ewe and the Adangbe of Ghana It is introduced by the woodwind (flute, oboe and clarinets) The brass section reinforces the multipart with a harmonic progression until bar 86 The woodwind introduces a significantly doubled 7 bar pattern in dotted minims while the brass takes the melody to bar 92 an octave lower which is then repeated from bar 65 At bar 93, there is a cry by the high pitched instruments supported by a dance rhythm which is found among the Ga of Ghana. At bar 102 the lower pitched instruments join with a harmonic progression until bar 118 From bar 119 to 153, is a passage of changing meters (these can be found at bars 119, 120, 121, 122 123, 124, 126 and 153) The tempo is Allegro. It is a bridge that leads to bar 154 which begins in a tempo marked as *vivo* with a new theme introduced in multipart, a fugal style in which the subject is introduced by the woodwind section and supported by the brass section until bar 188. At bar 189, the alto clarinet, horn I and II, trombone, euphonium and bass clarinet provide an answer to the subject At bar 197, the brass takes over the

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subject until bar 198, answered after 7 bars by the woodwind in a fugal technique of music making found among the Ewe of Ghana The rhythmic background is provided by the double wood blocks

This interplay goes on till bar 225. Bar 226 begins with a new time signature, common time, in which both the woodwind and the brass take part, supported by the percussion at the background. The tempo is 90 crotchets to a minute. The first part of this section ends at bar 229 with a repeat The second half begins at bar 230 and ends at bar 237 with a repeat

In the **fourth section** D (Pouring of Libation), the melody is brought in by the woodwind (flute, oboe, tenor recorder, clarinets I and II) playing an octave apart against a percussion background on a motive common to the Ga of Ghana (see bar 238). The first element of the motive is shared by the flute oboe clarinet in Eb and Bb in a sort of call and response by the remaining woodwind (clarinet in Bb I and II alto clarinet, bass clarinet, contrabass clarinet) and brass (alto saxophone, tenor saxophone and horns in F). In the first element, the melody, the woodwind harmonized in thirds for the two first bars shares a type of call and response. The remaining brass joins in from the third bar of this section, the lower pitched instruments doubling the melody at an octave lower in typical thirds.

The tempo is 90 crotchets to a minute This section of the piece ends at bar 256 with a repeat at bar 258. The repeat ends at bar 283 with the percussion ending at bar 284.

As regards the **Section E**, Departure of Sympathisers, the African character relies on the introduction of a melody found among the Akan of Eastern region of Ghana with whom the Adangbe share traditional boundary and from whom they have adopted the melody. It is harmonized in thirds like the opening of the section A (Home Gathering) Similarly, the melody is in Dorian mode

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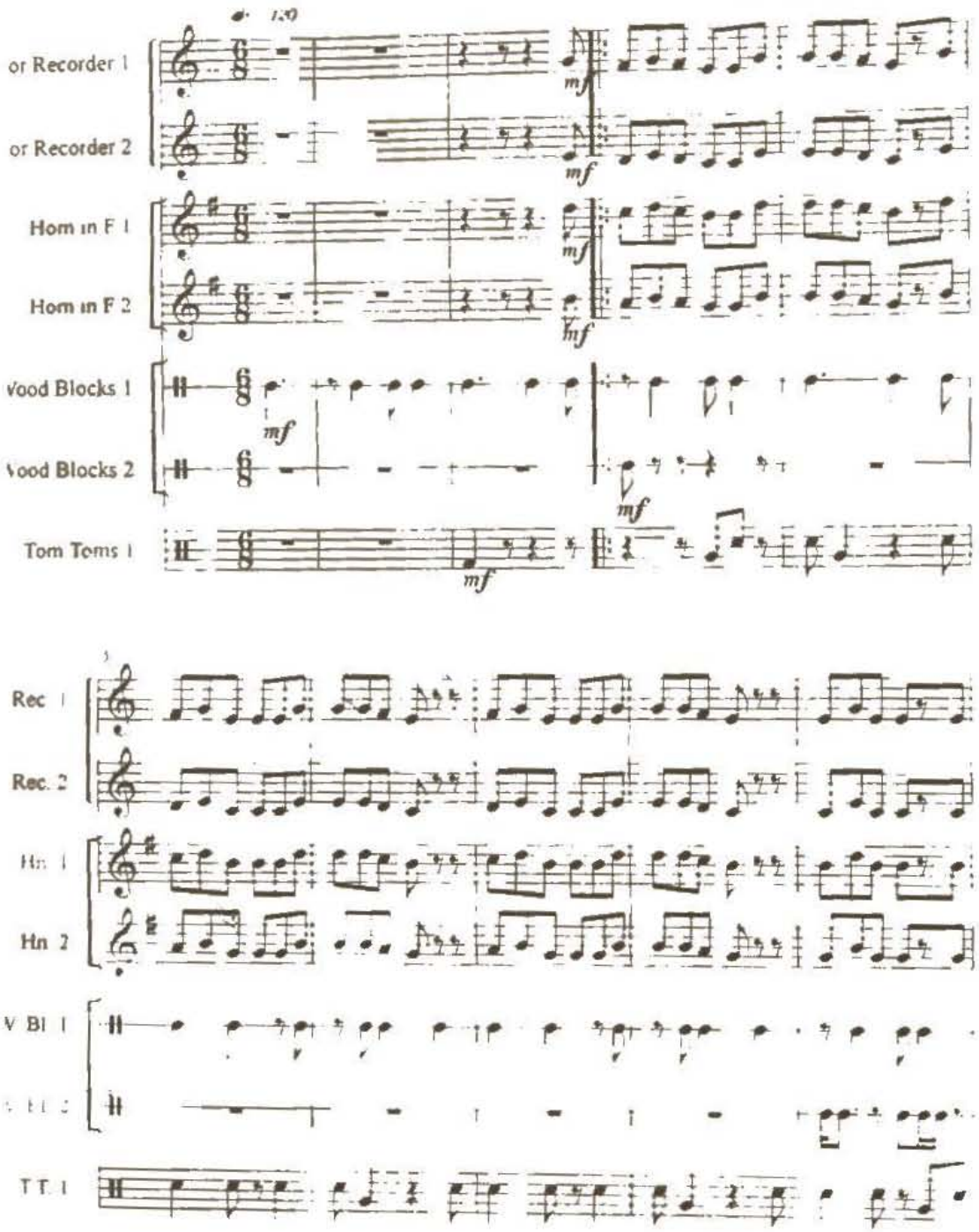
...ON CHANT FOR NII
...me gathering

10096851, Samuel LARTEY AYITEY



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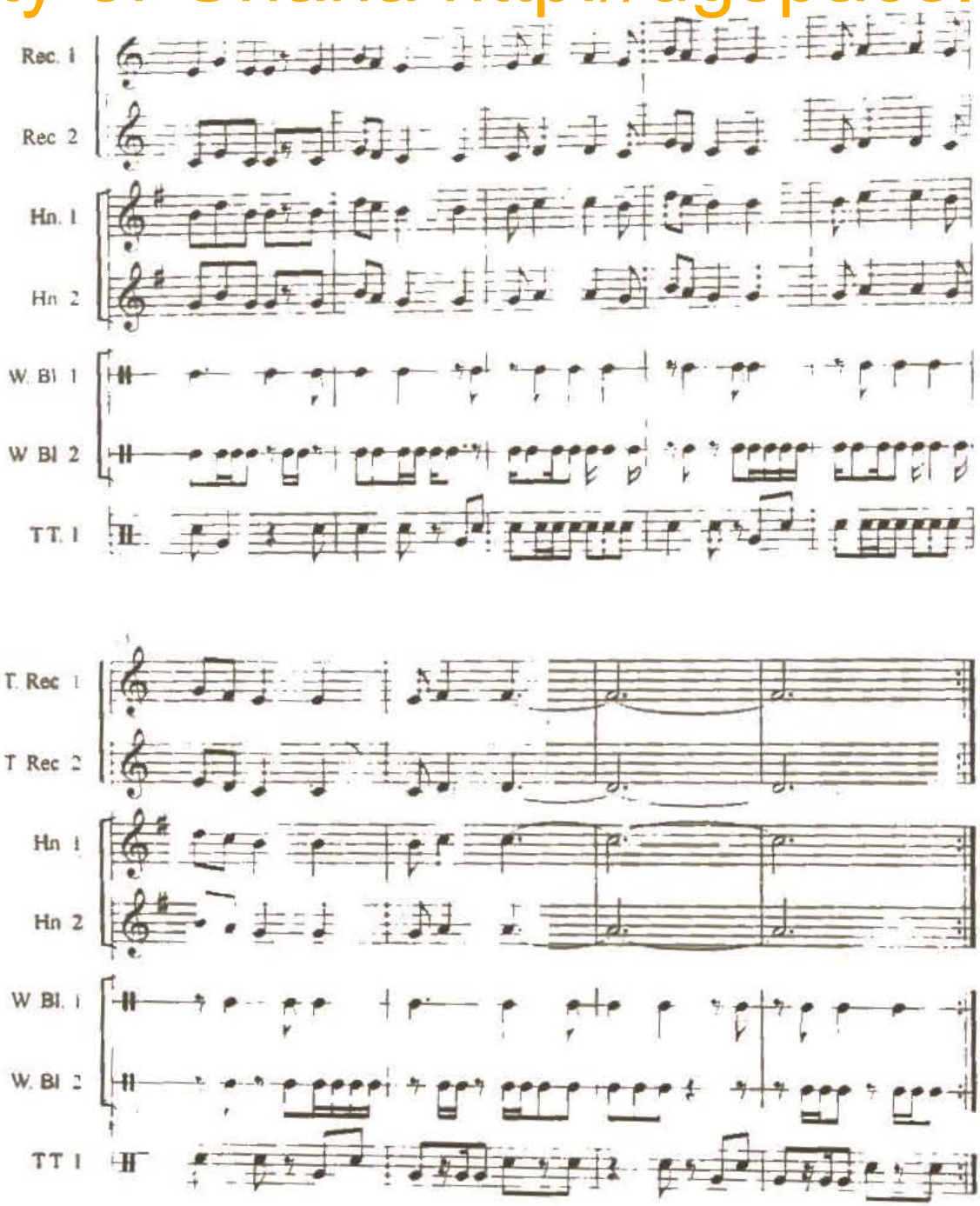

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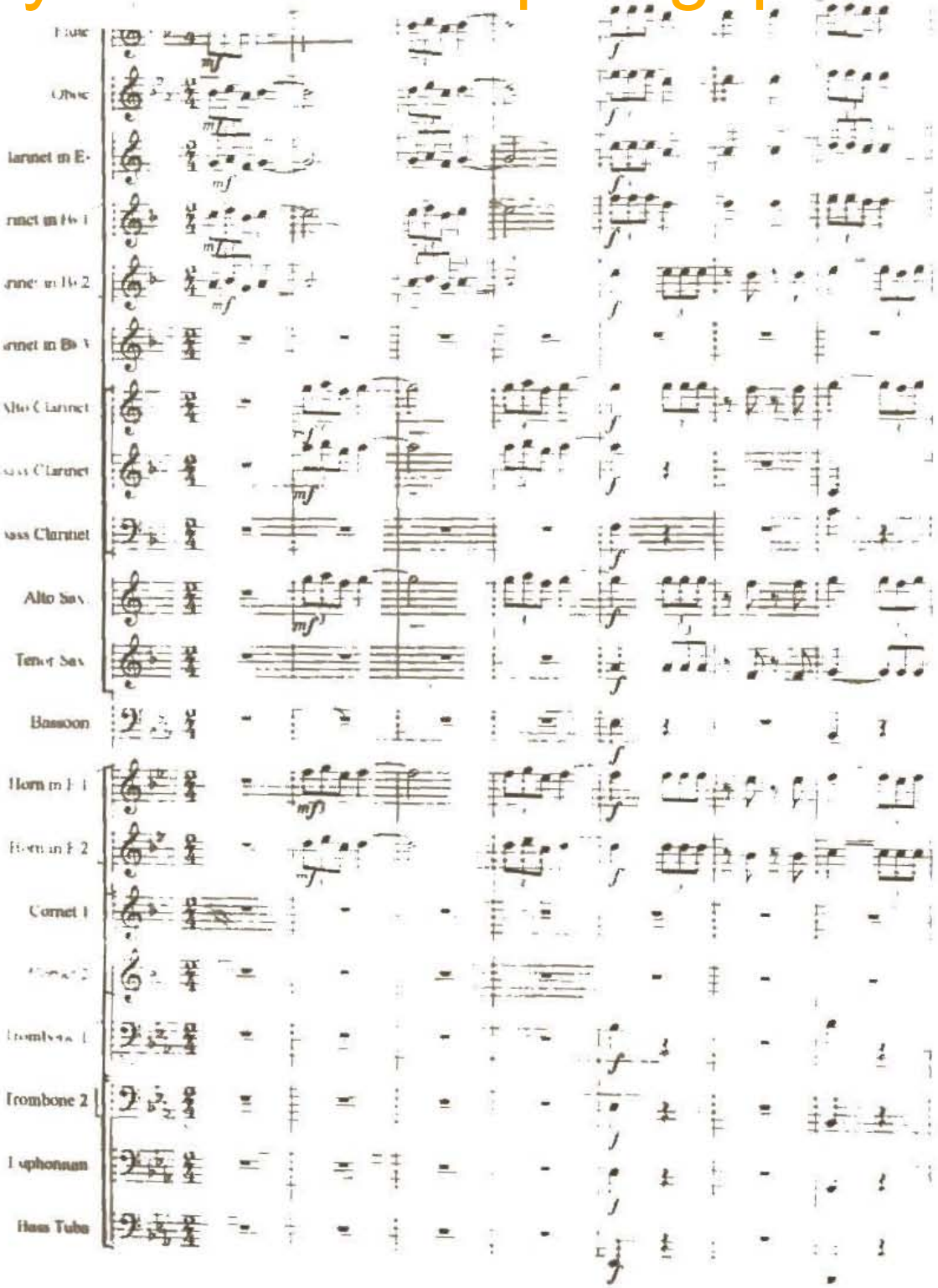

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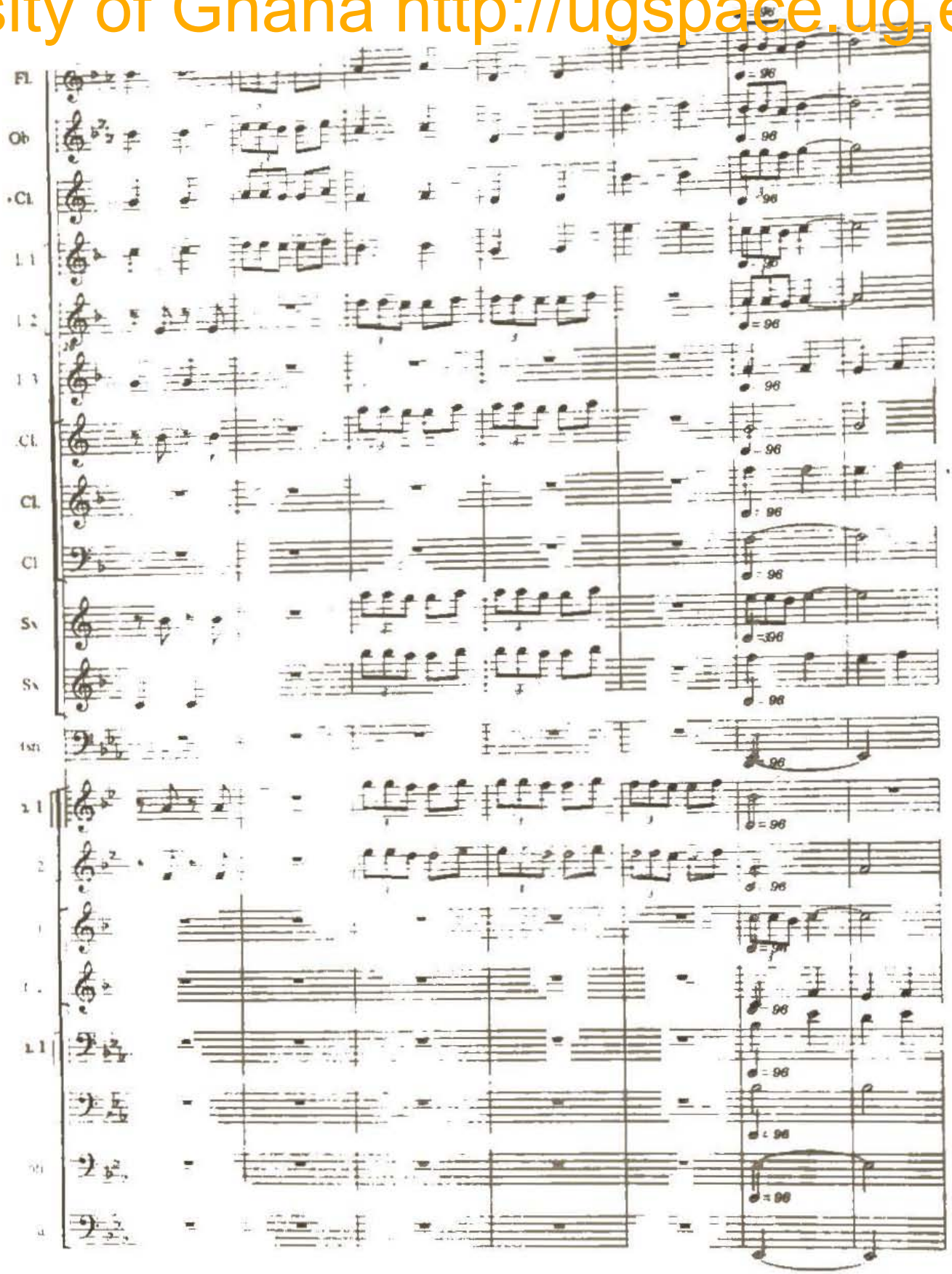

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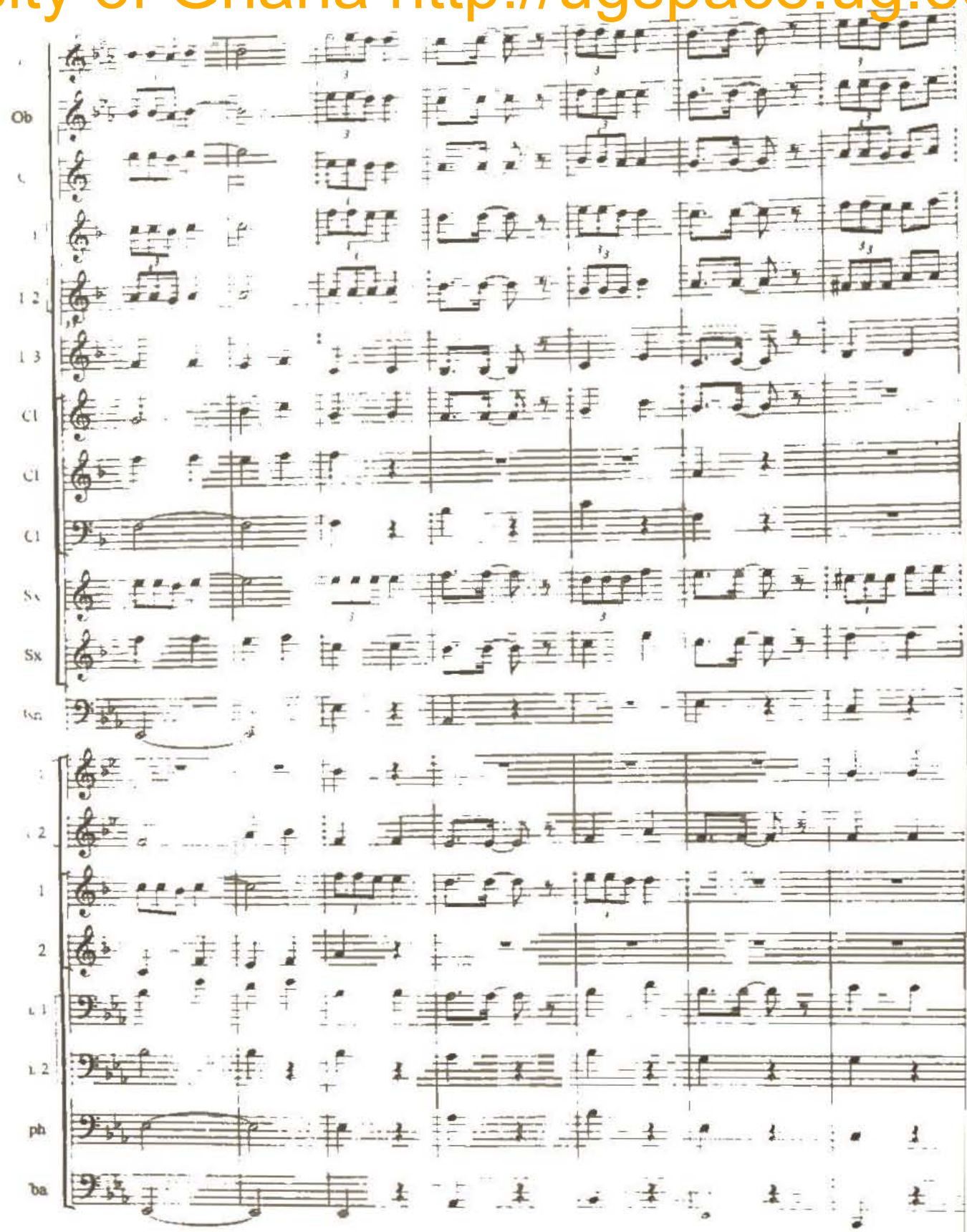

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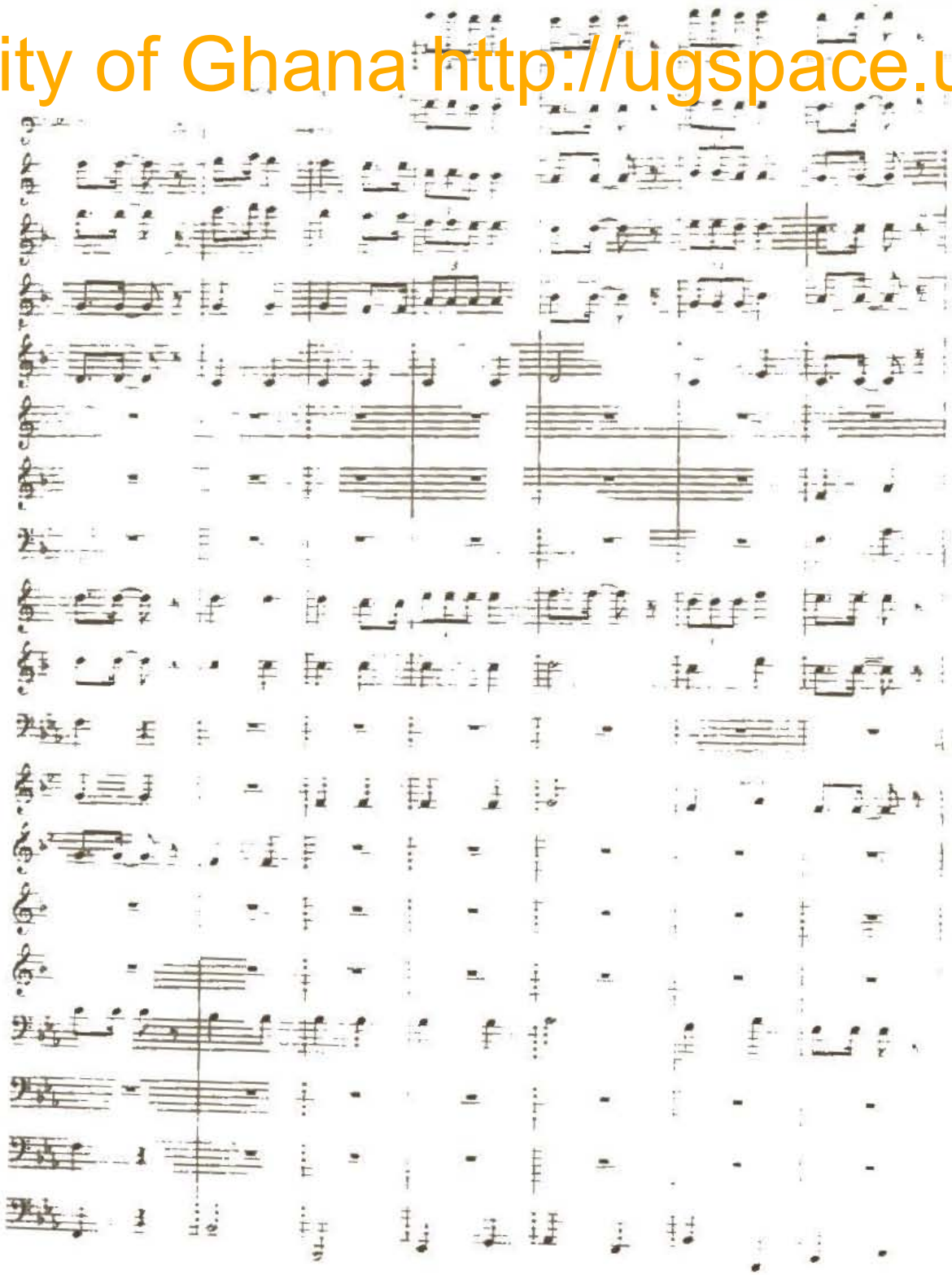

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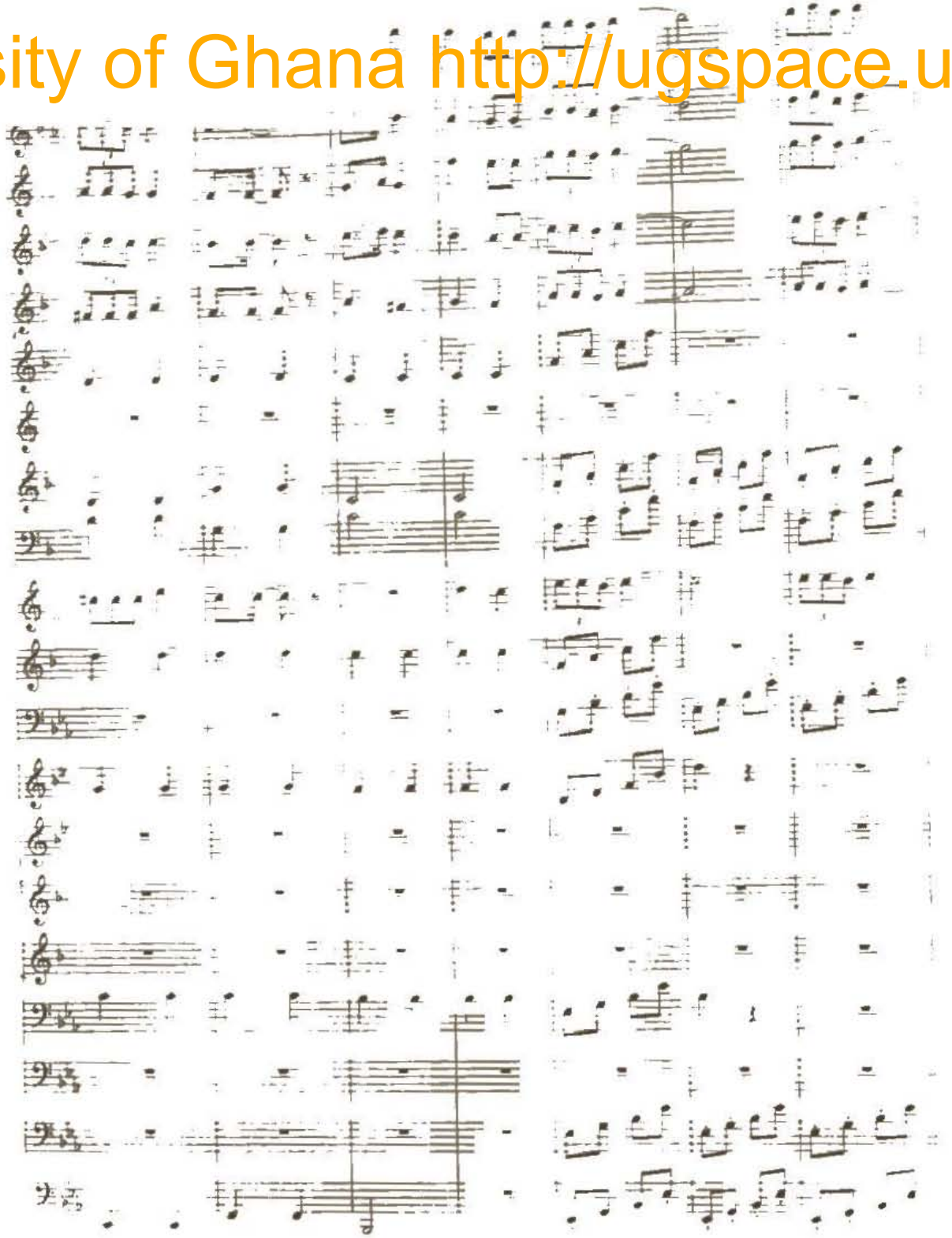

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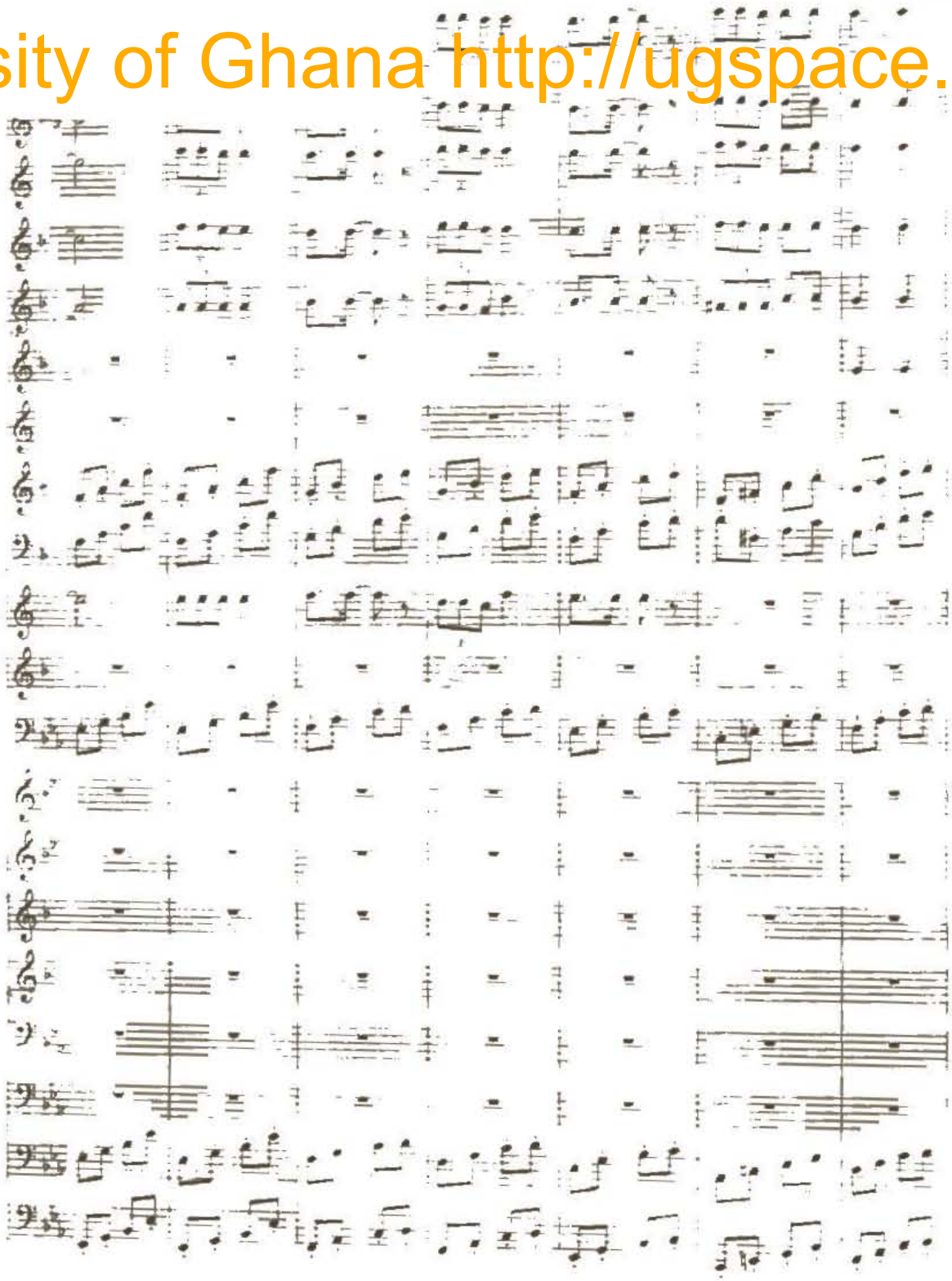

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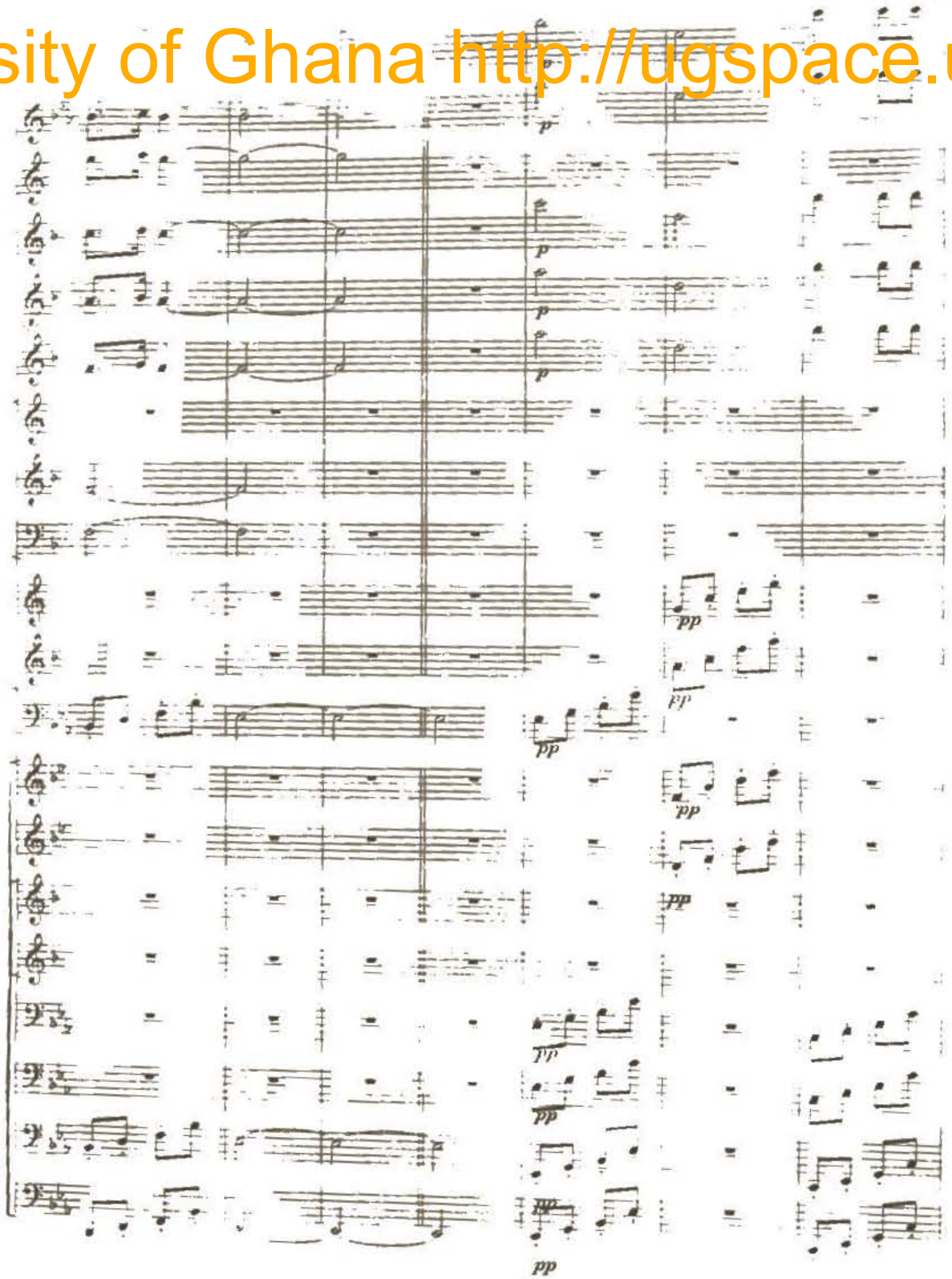

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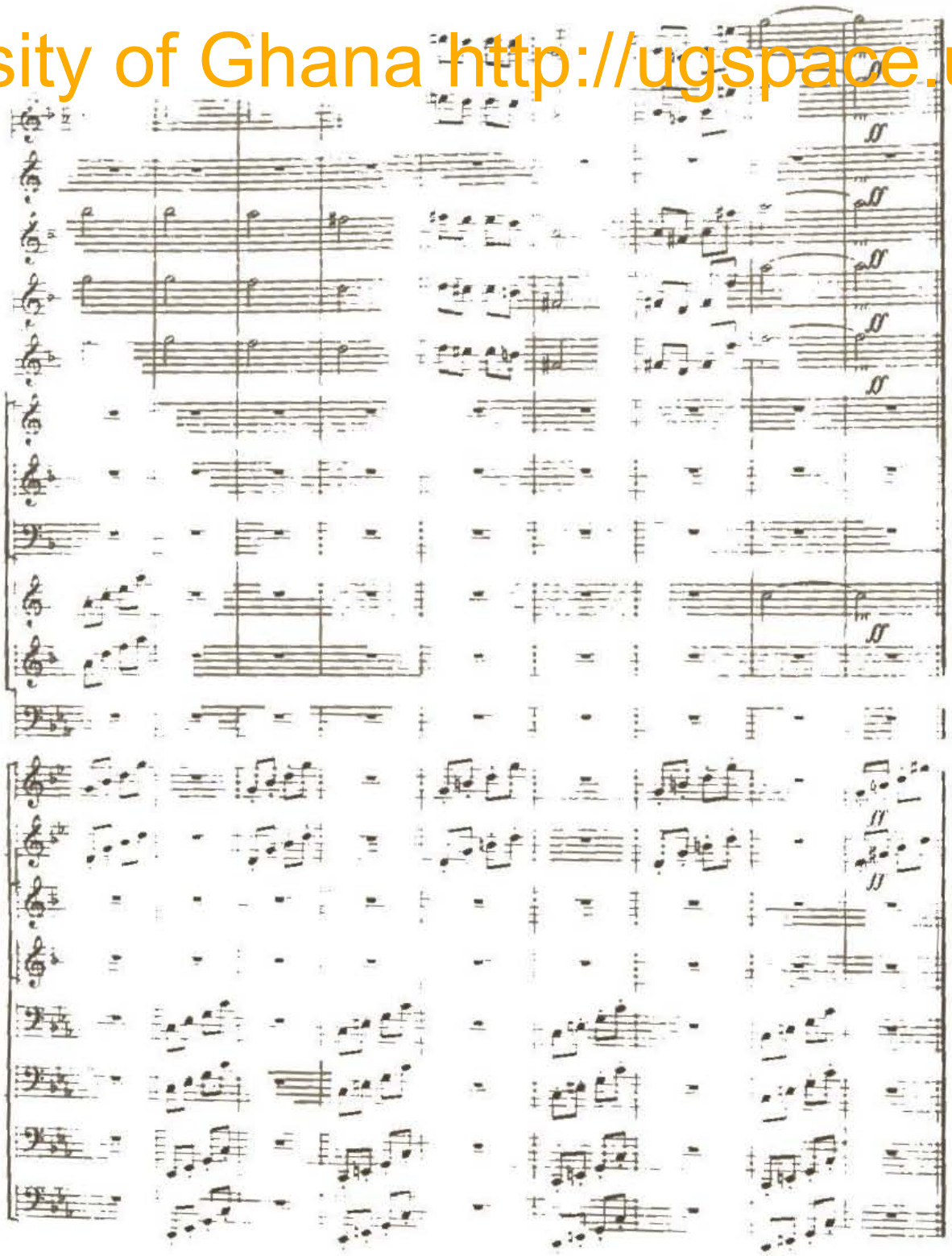

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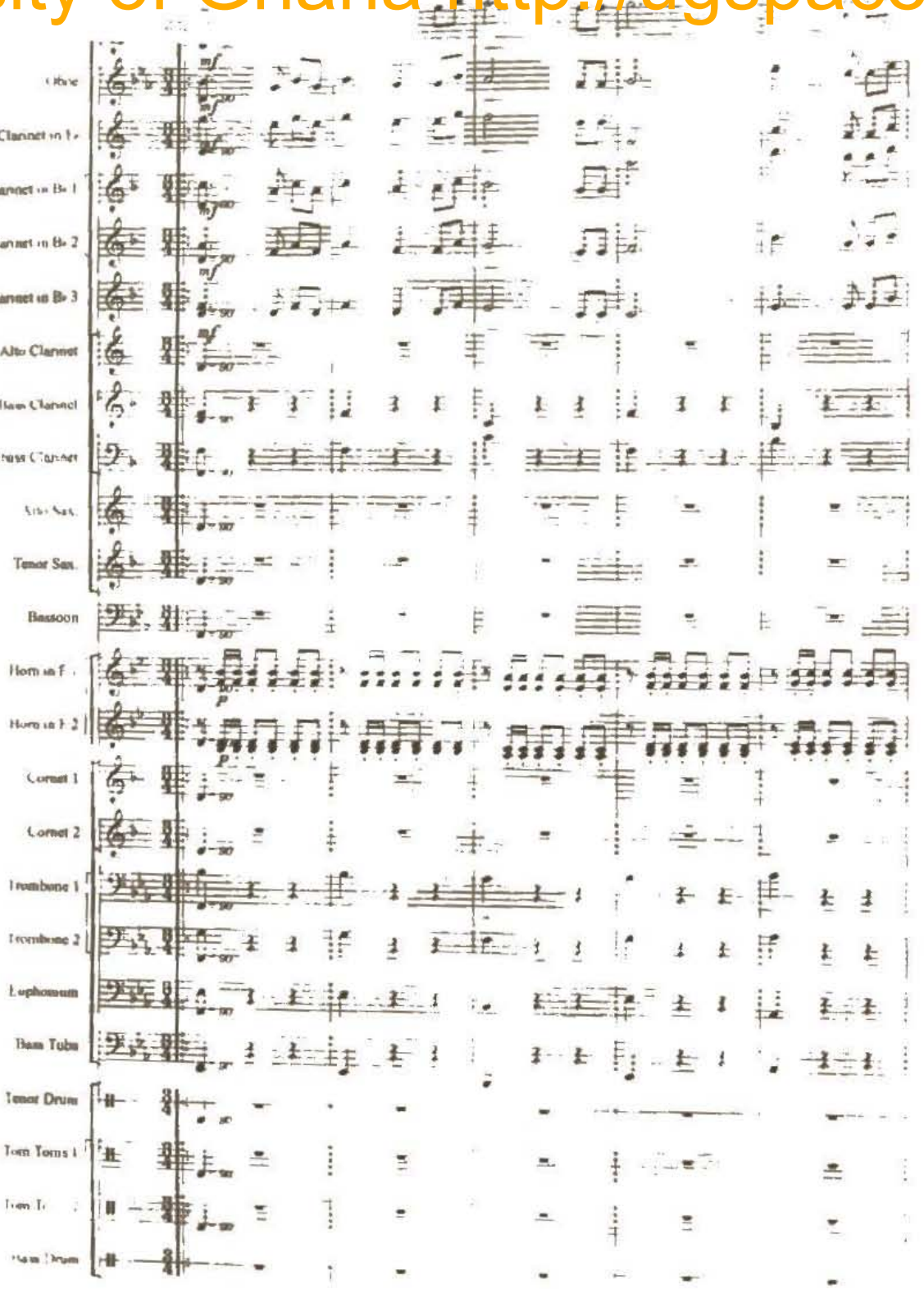

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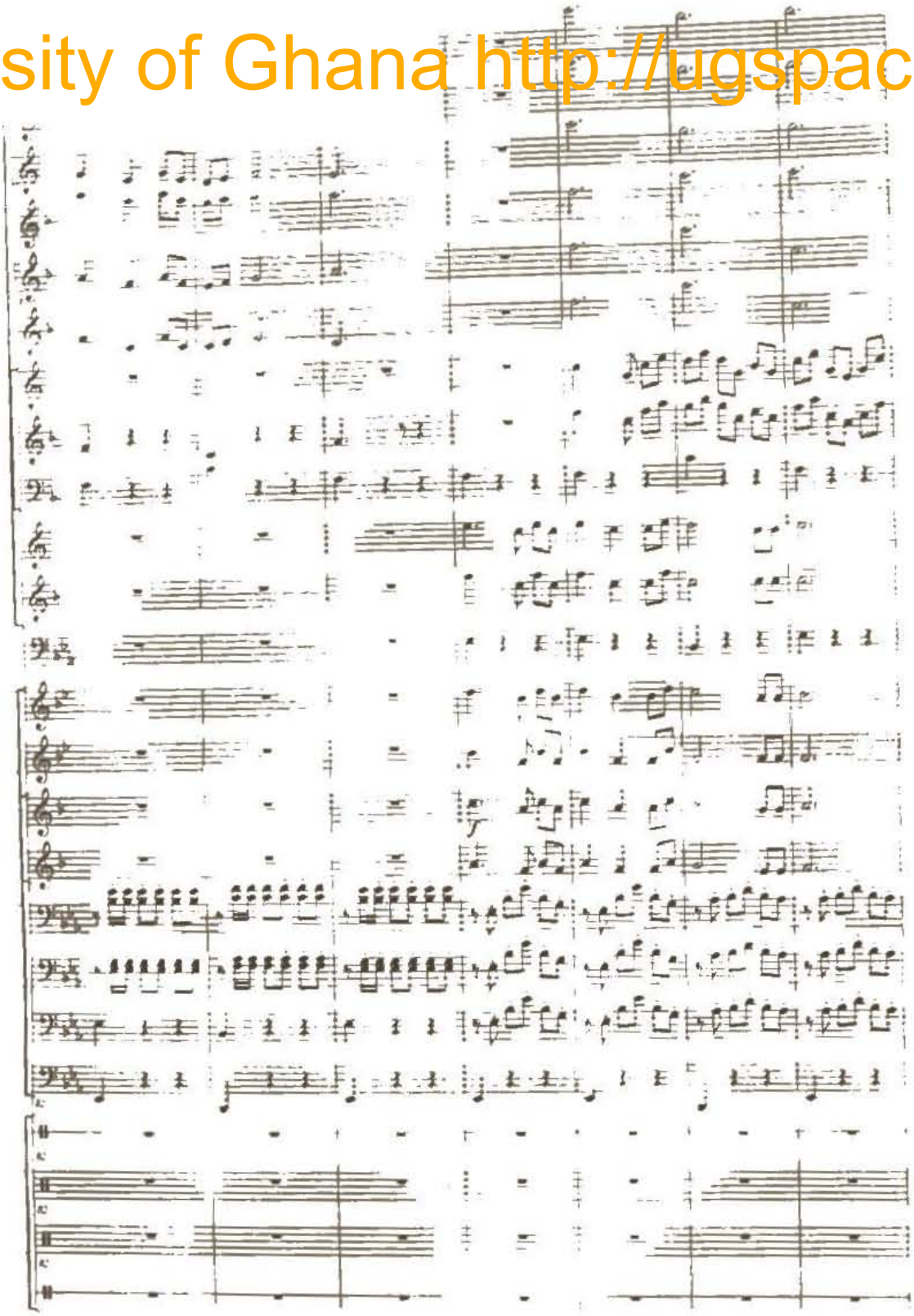

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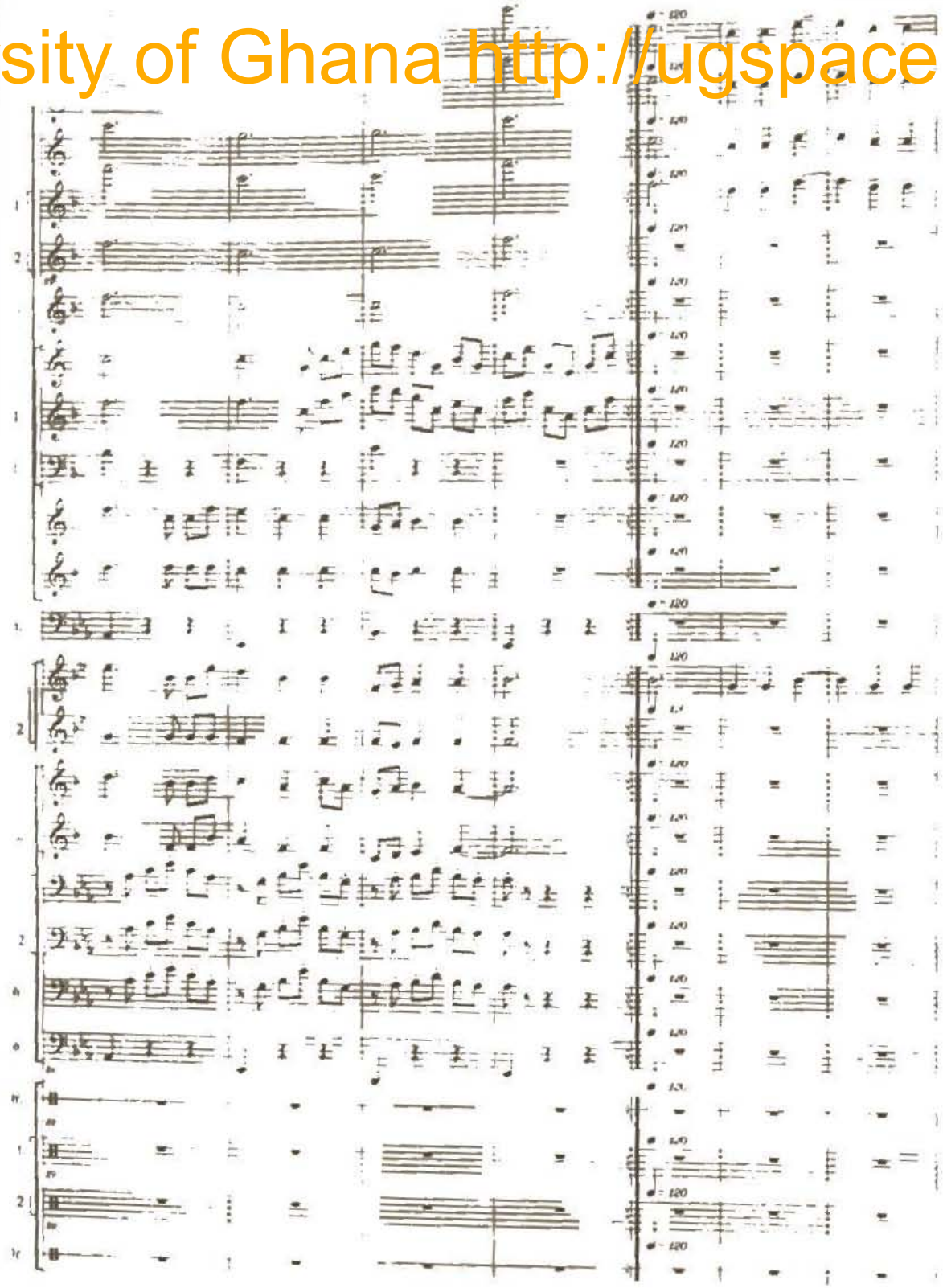

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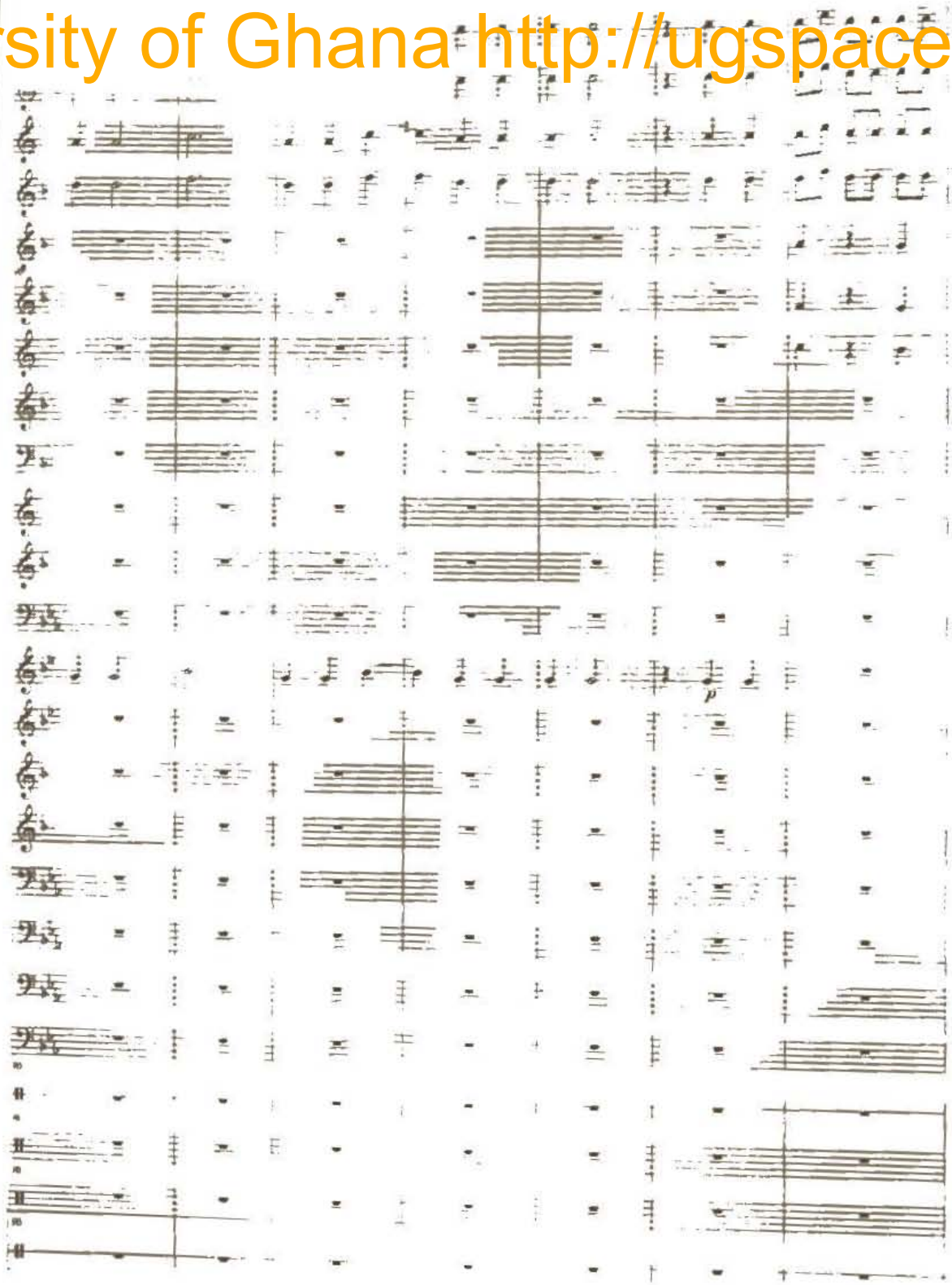

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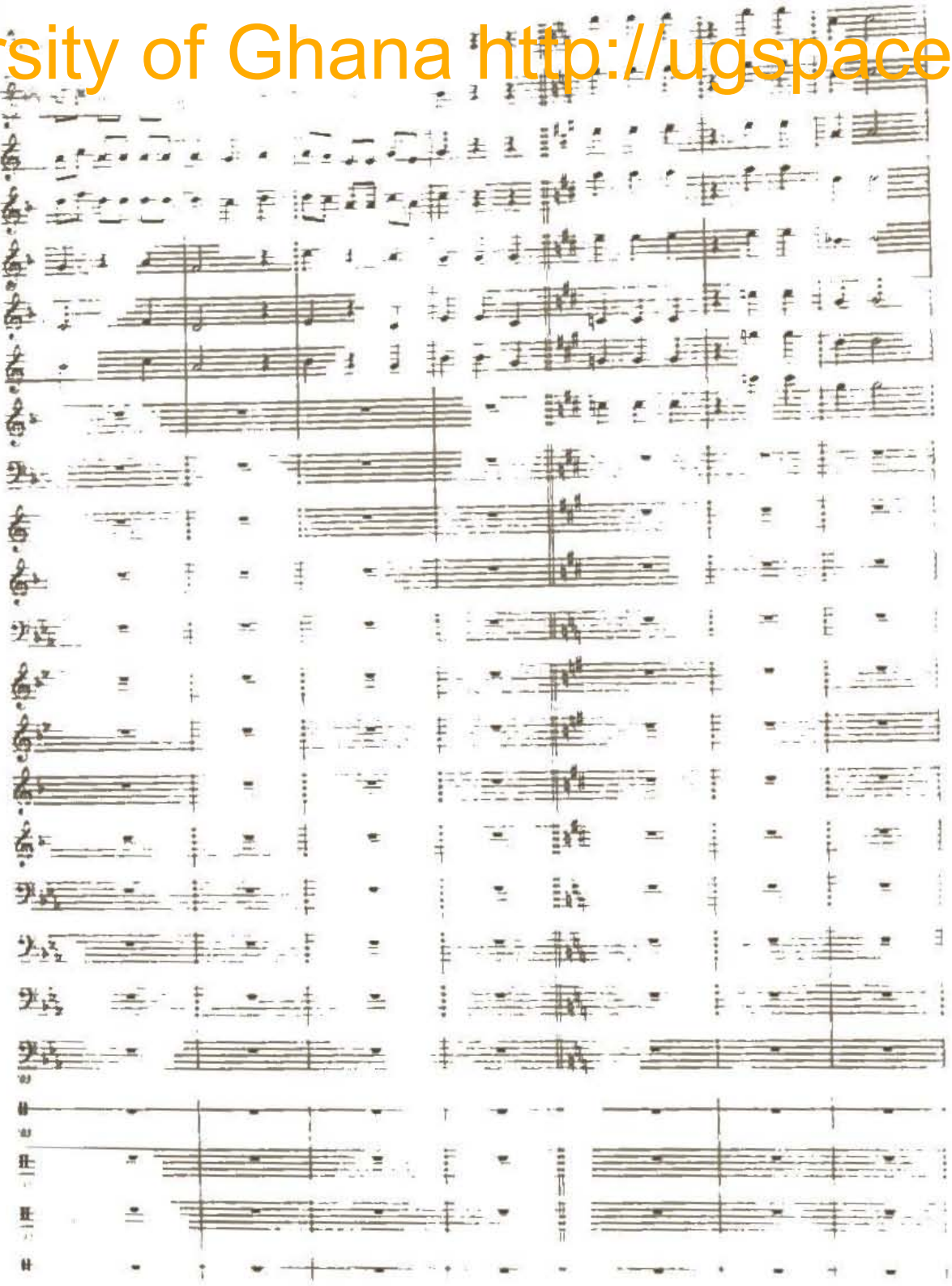

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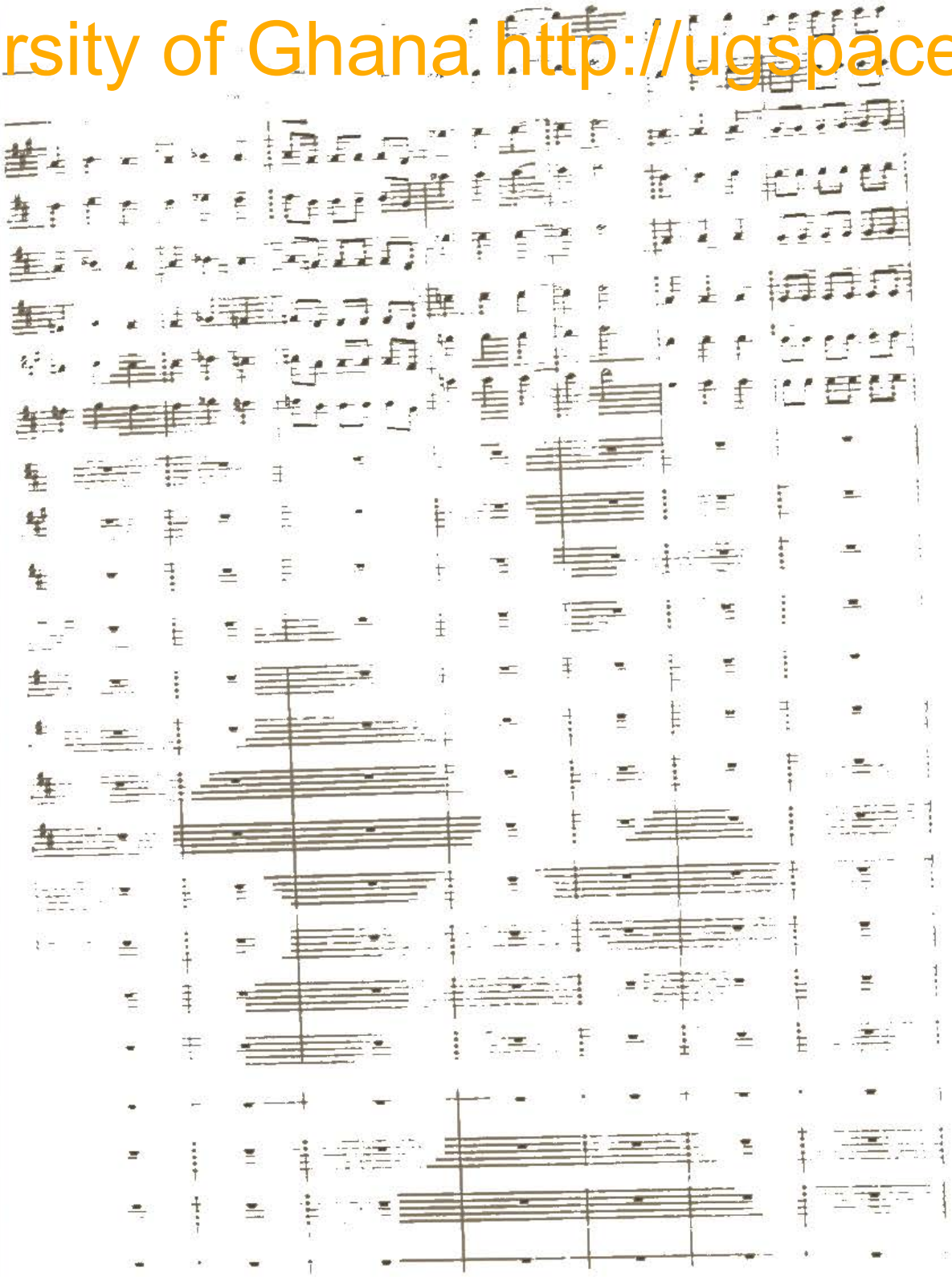

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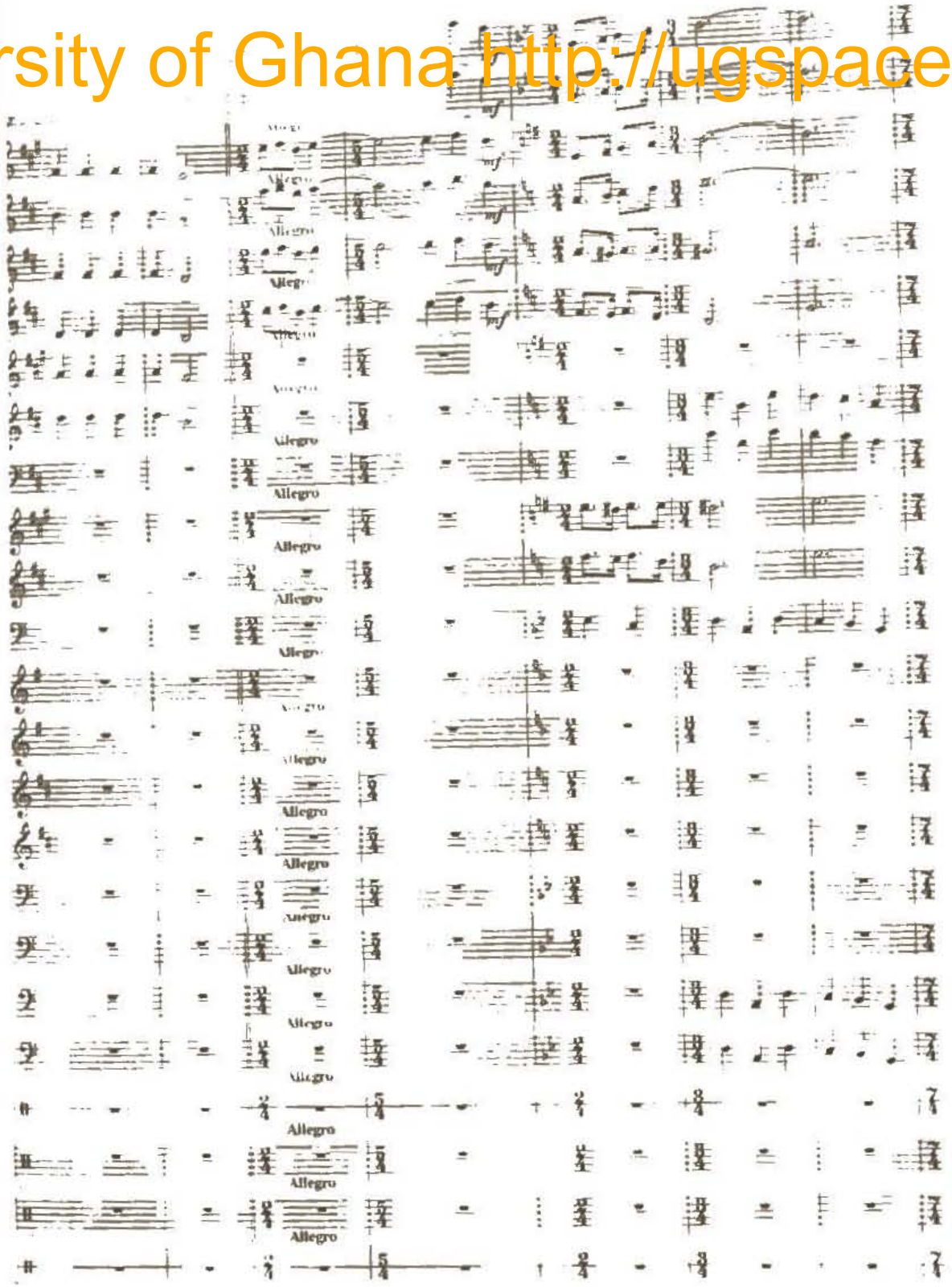

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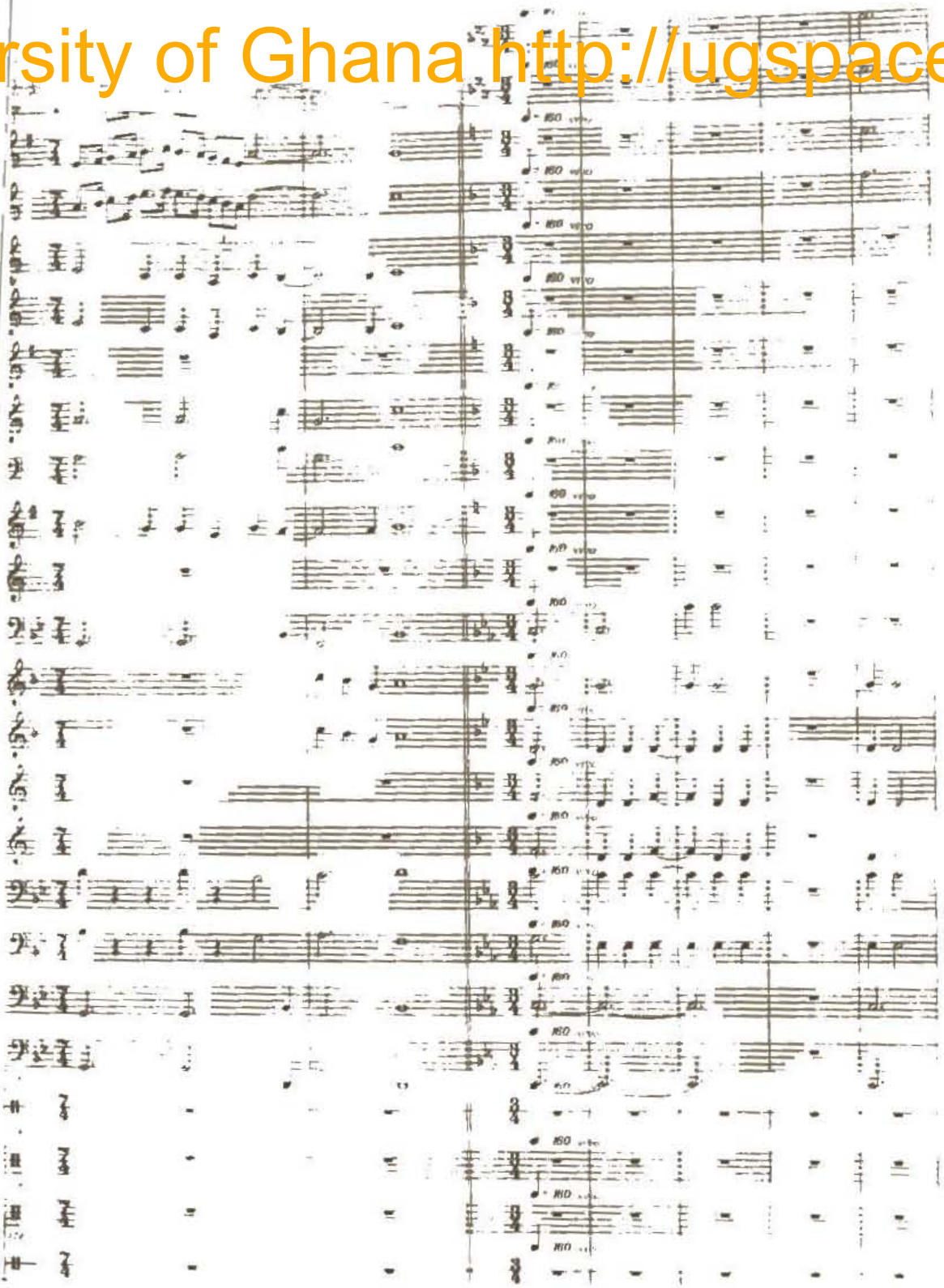

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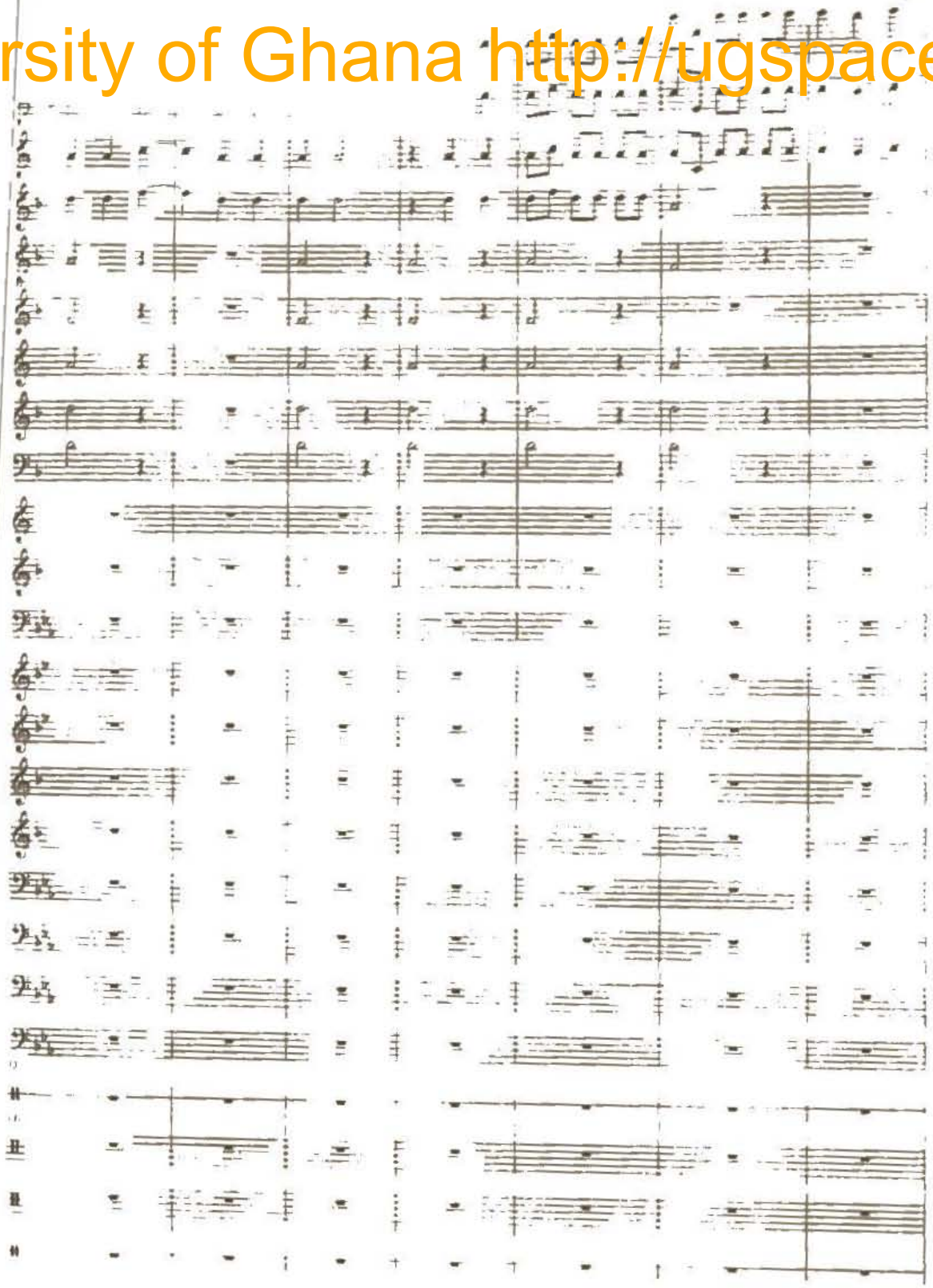

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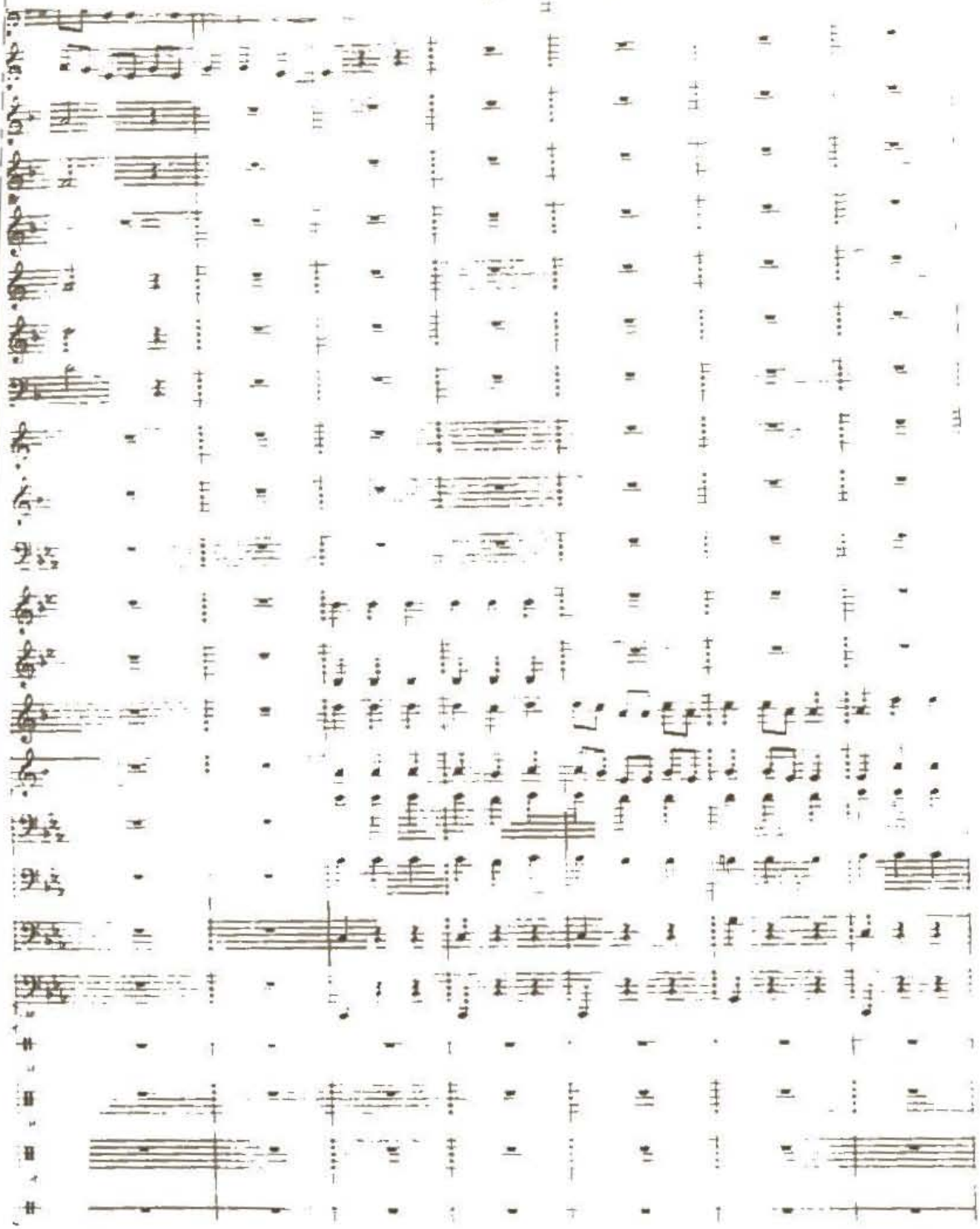

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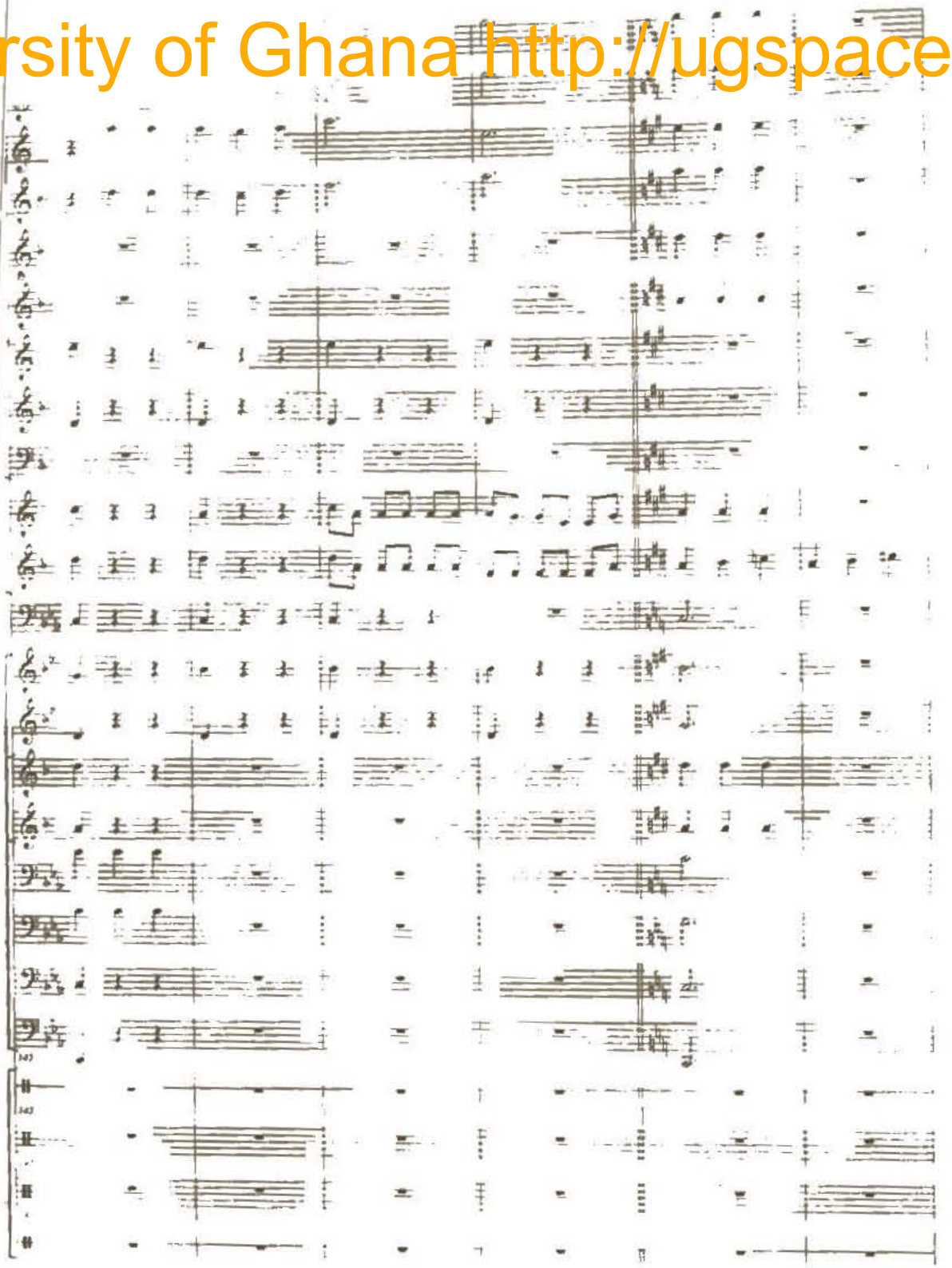

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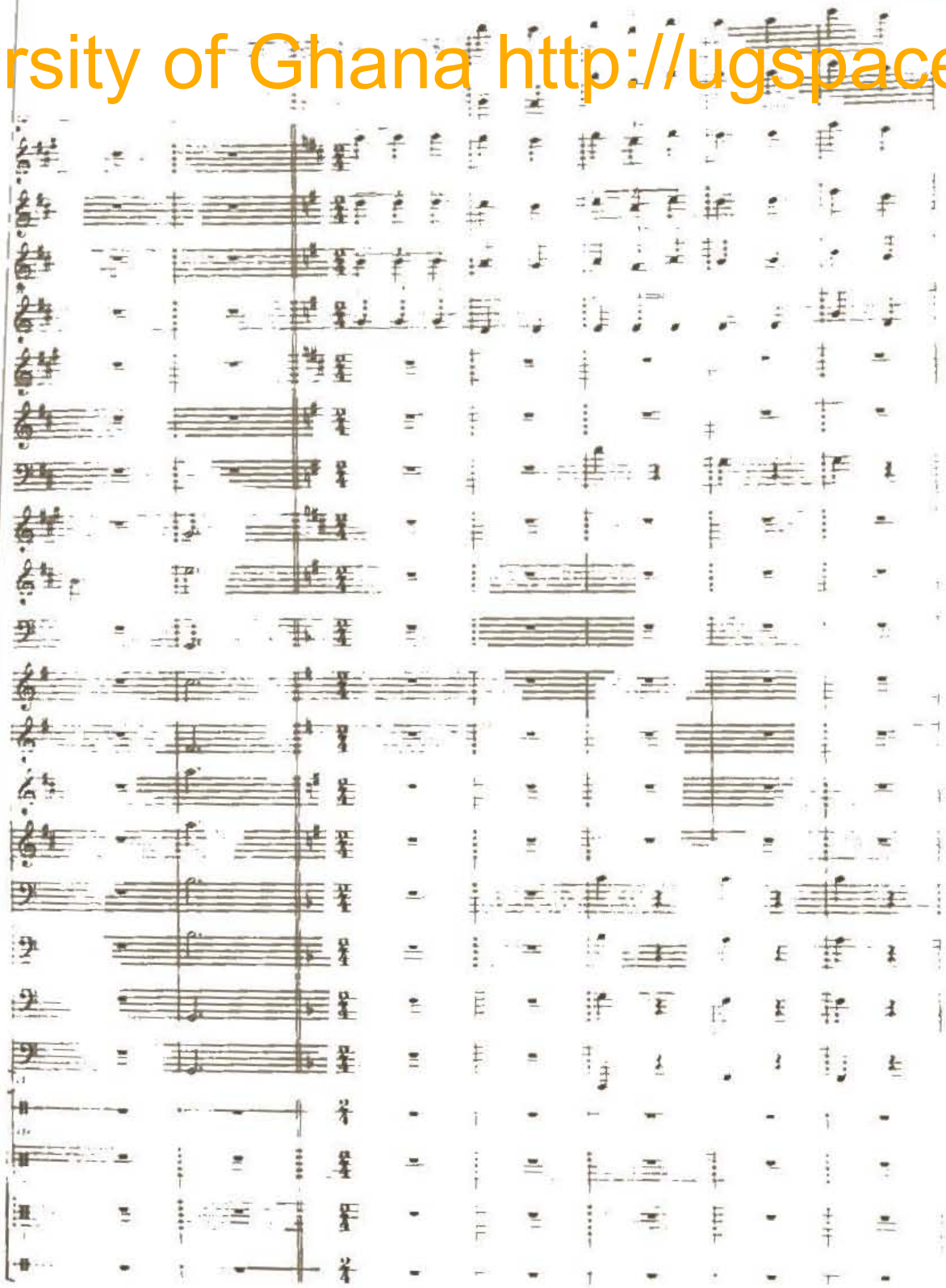

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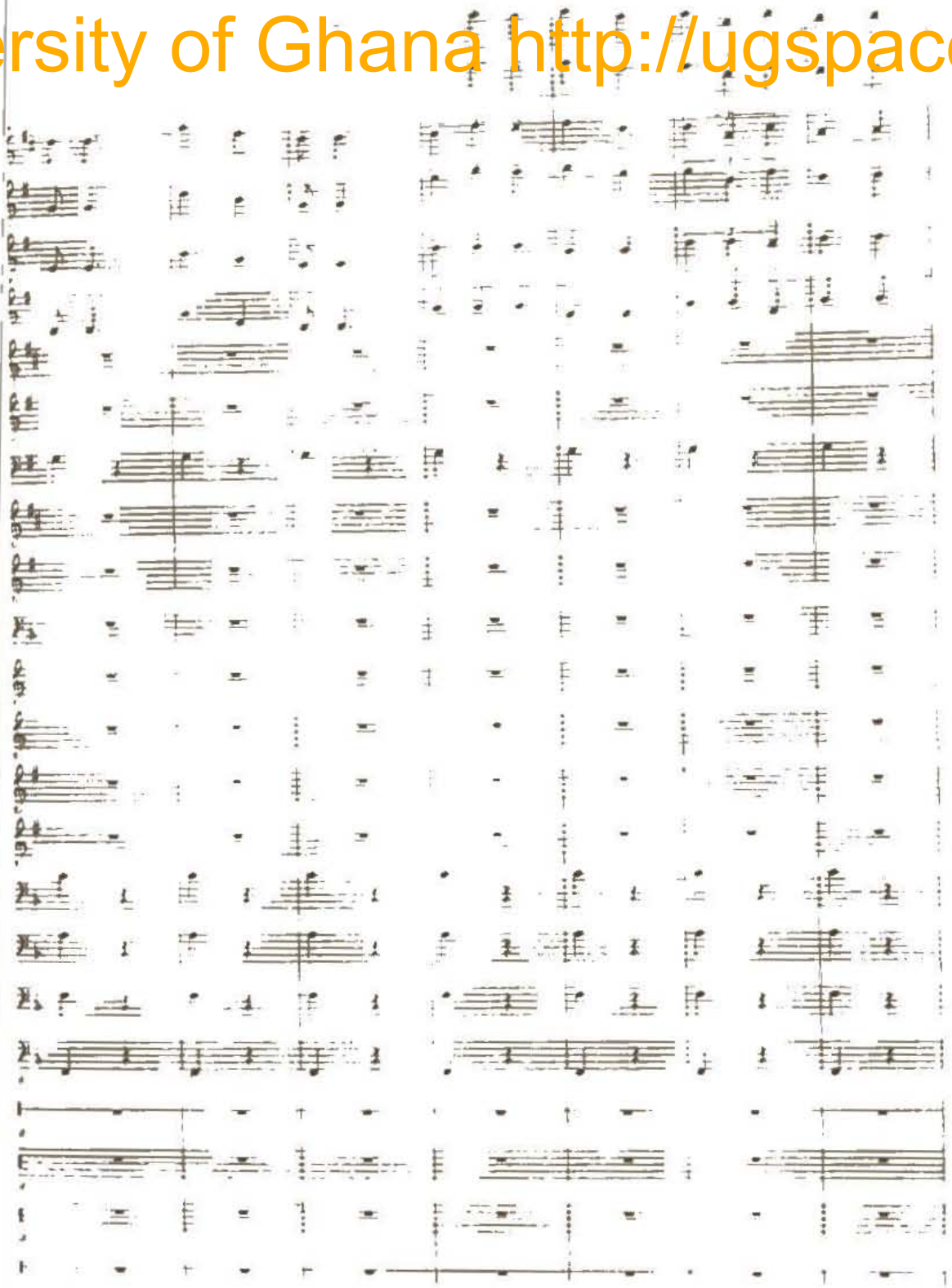

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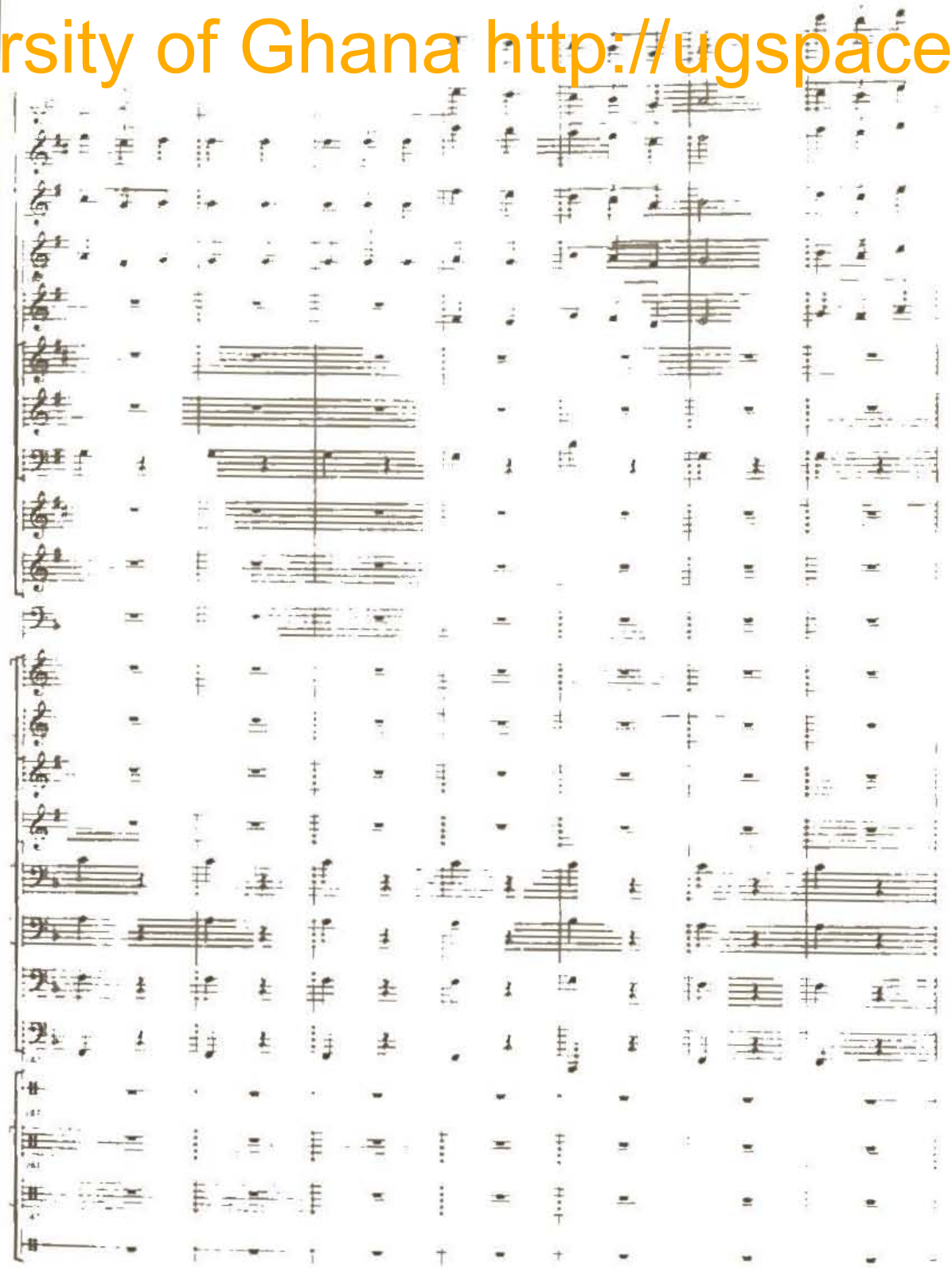

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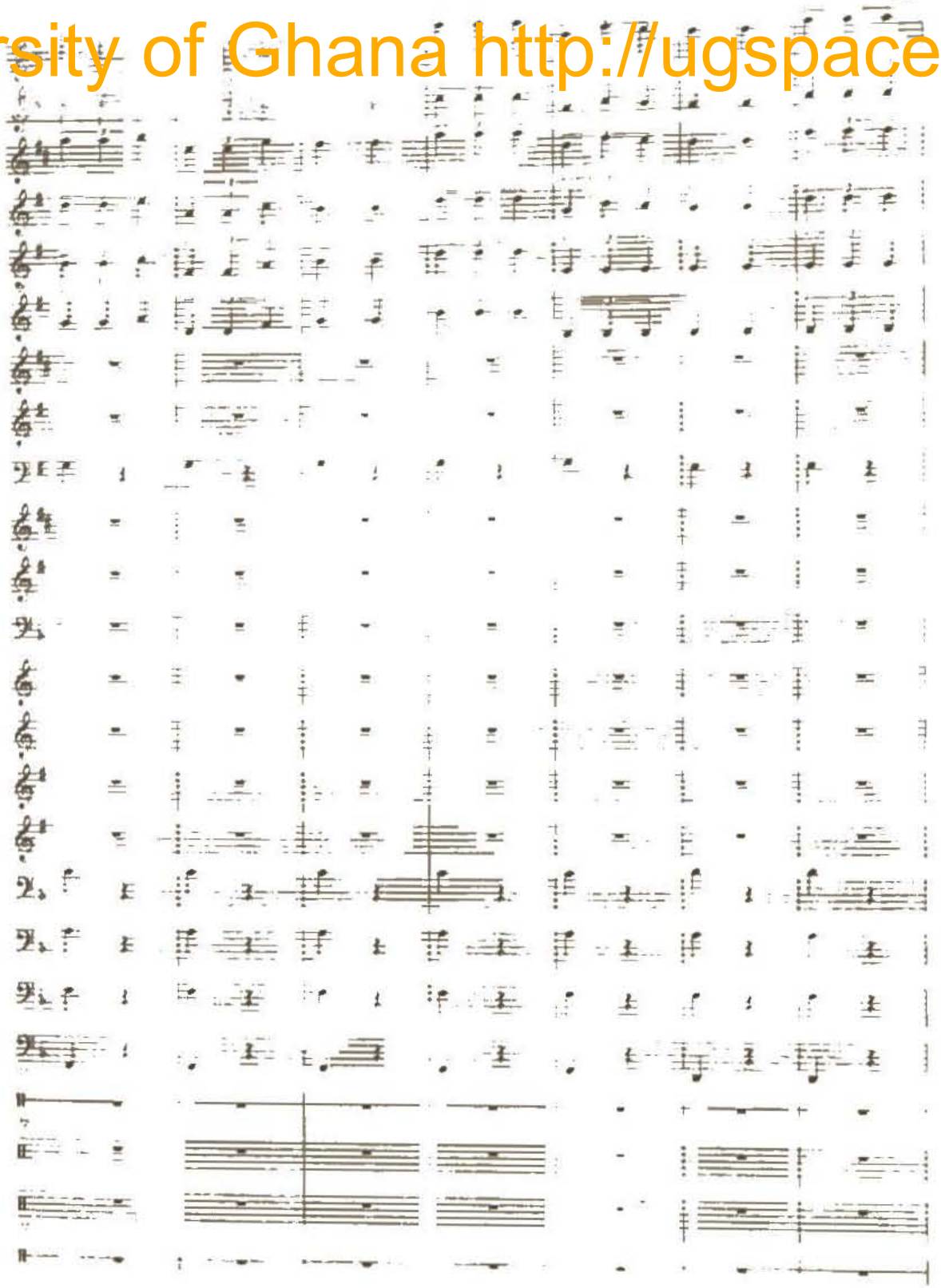

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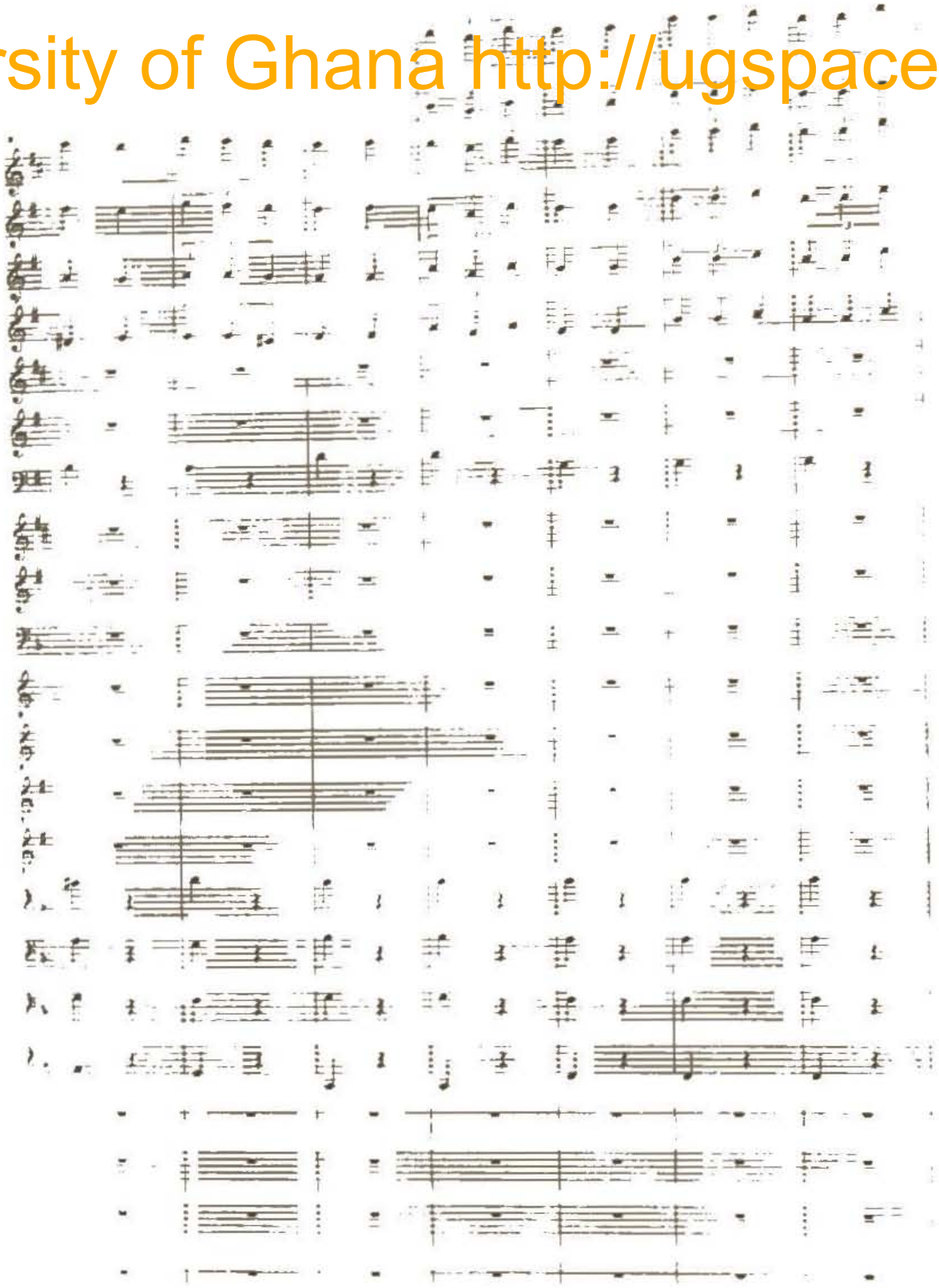

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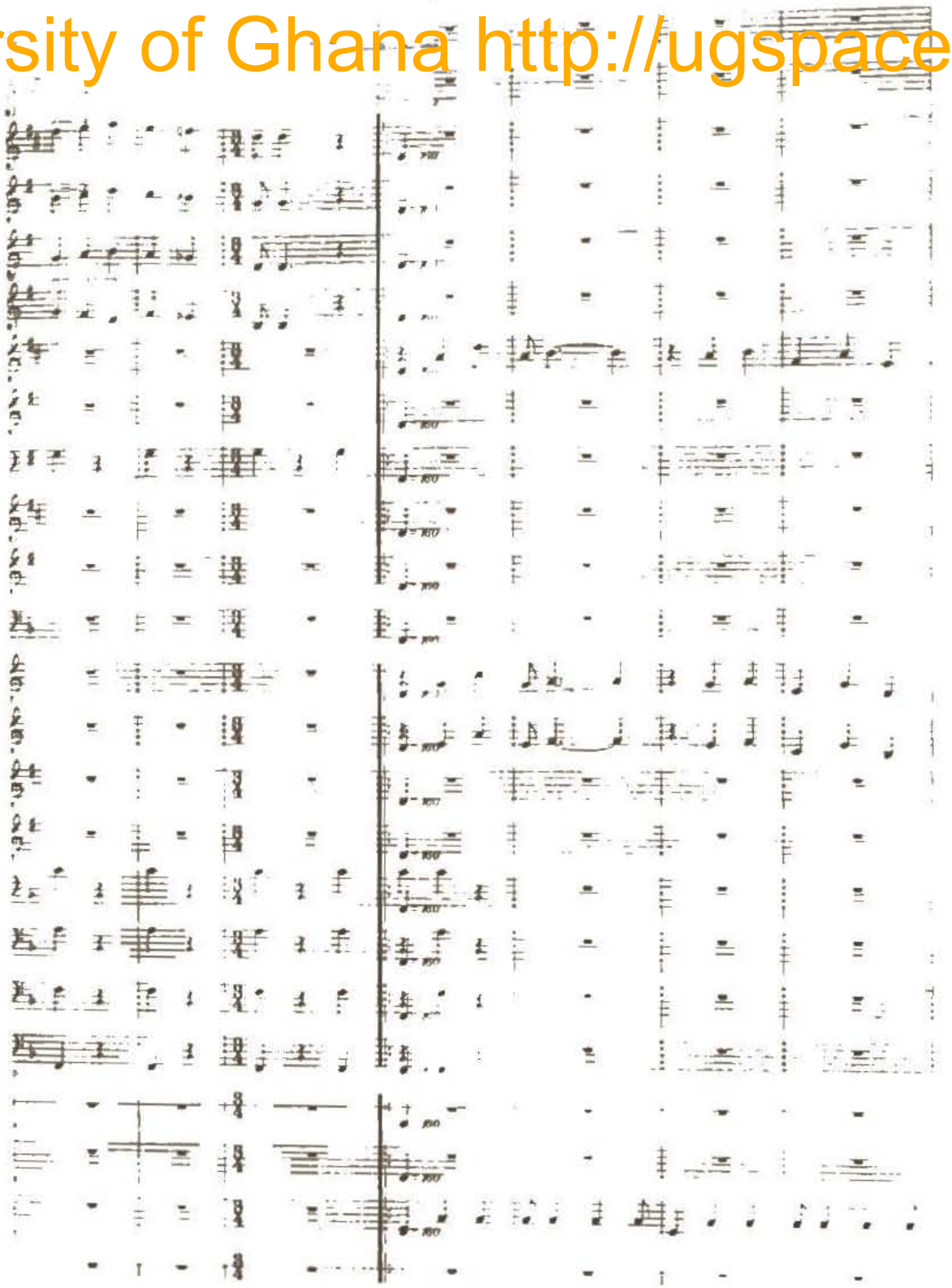

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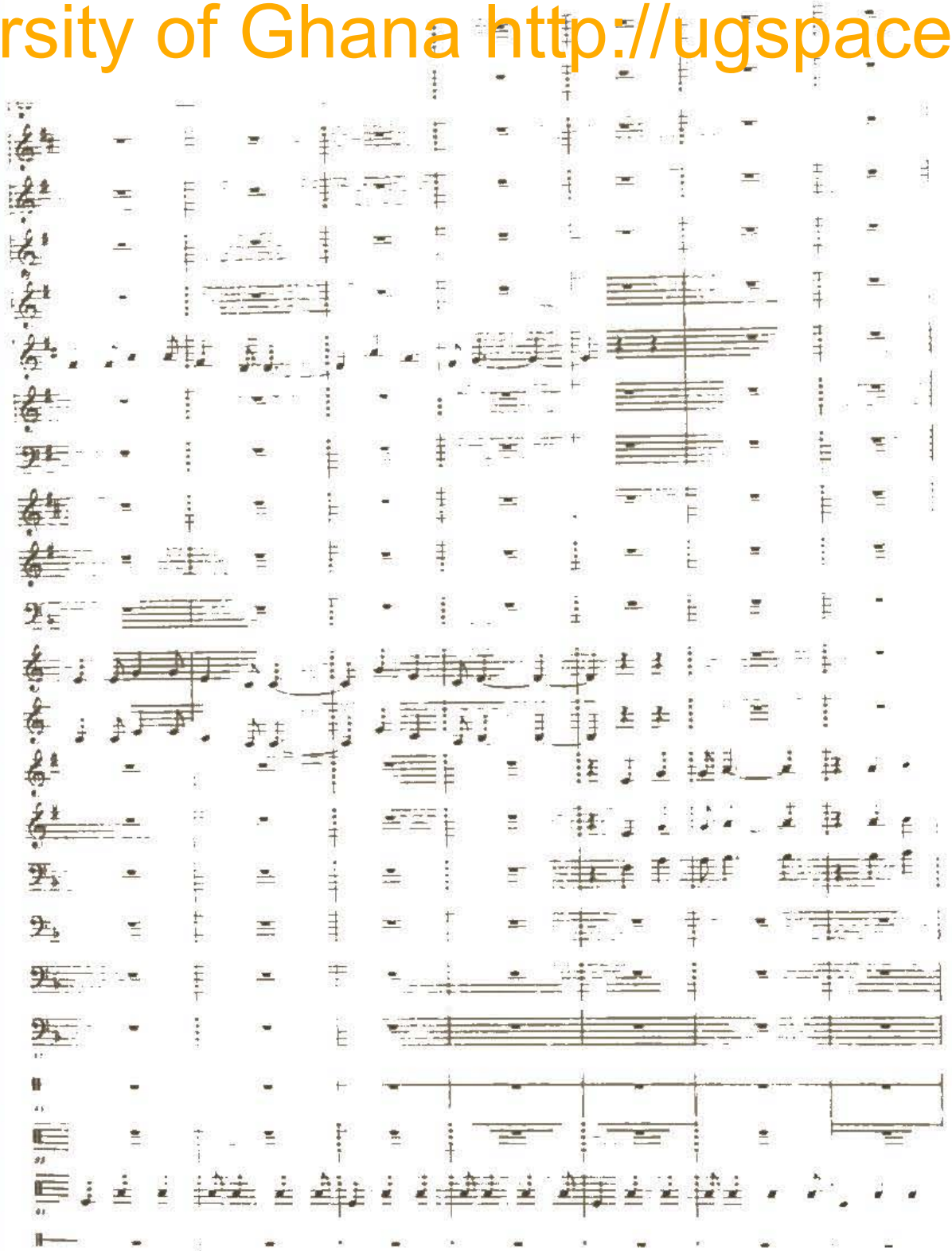

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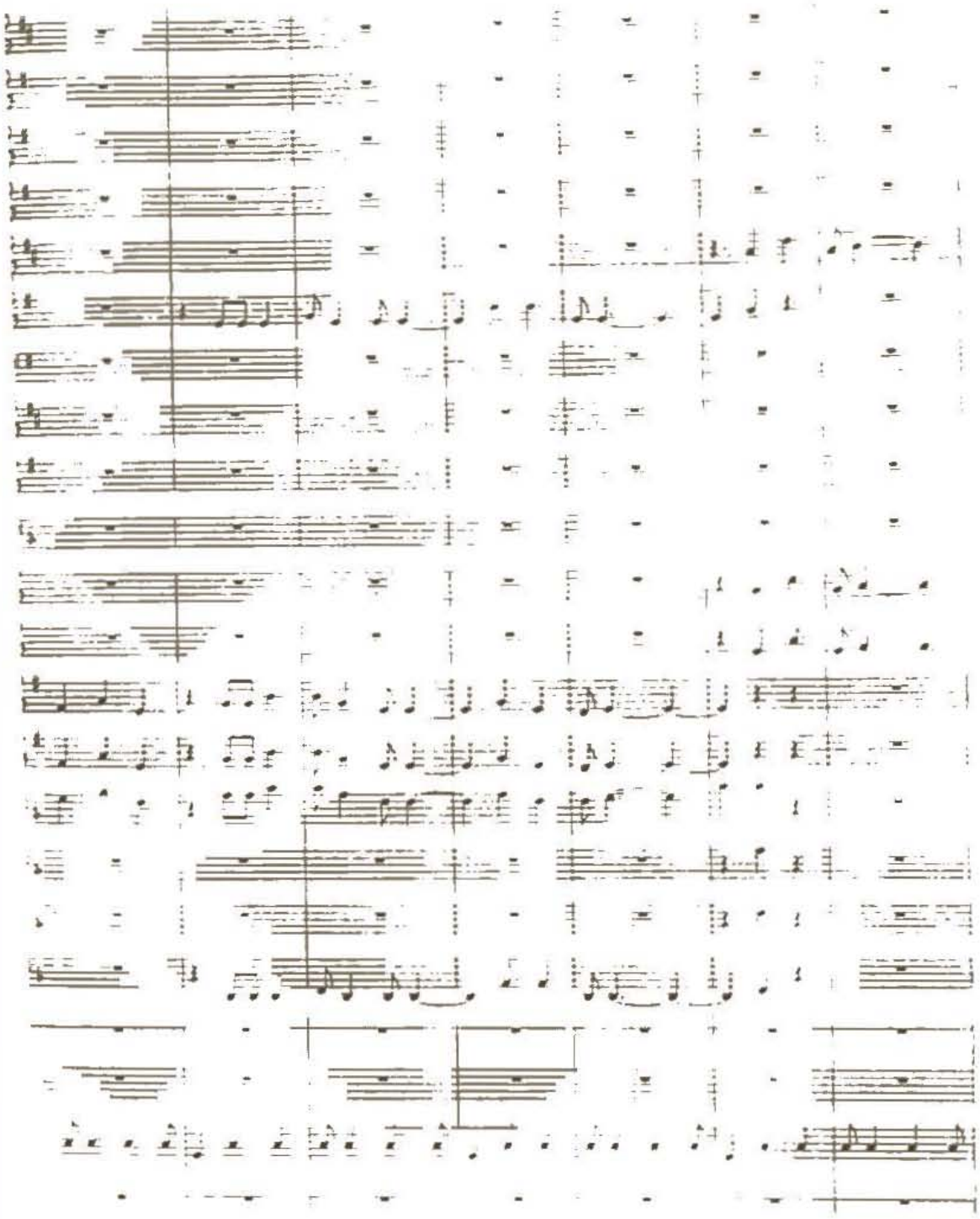

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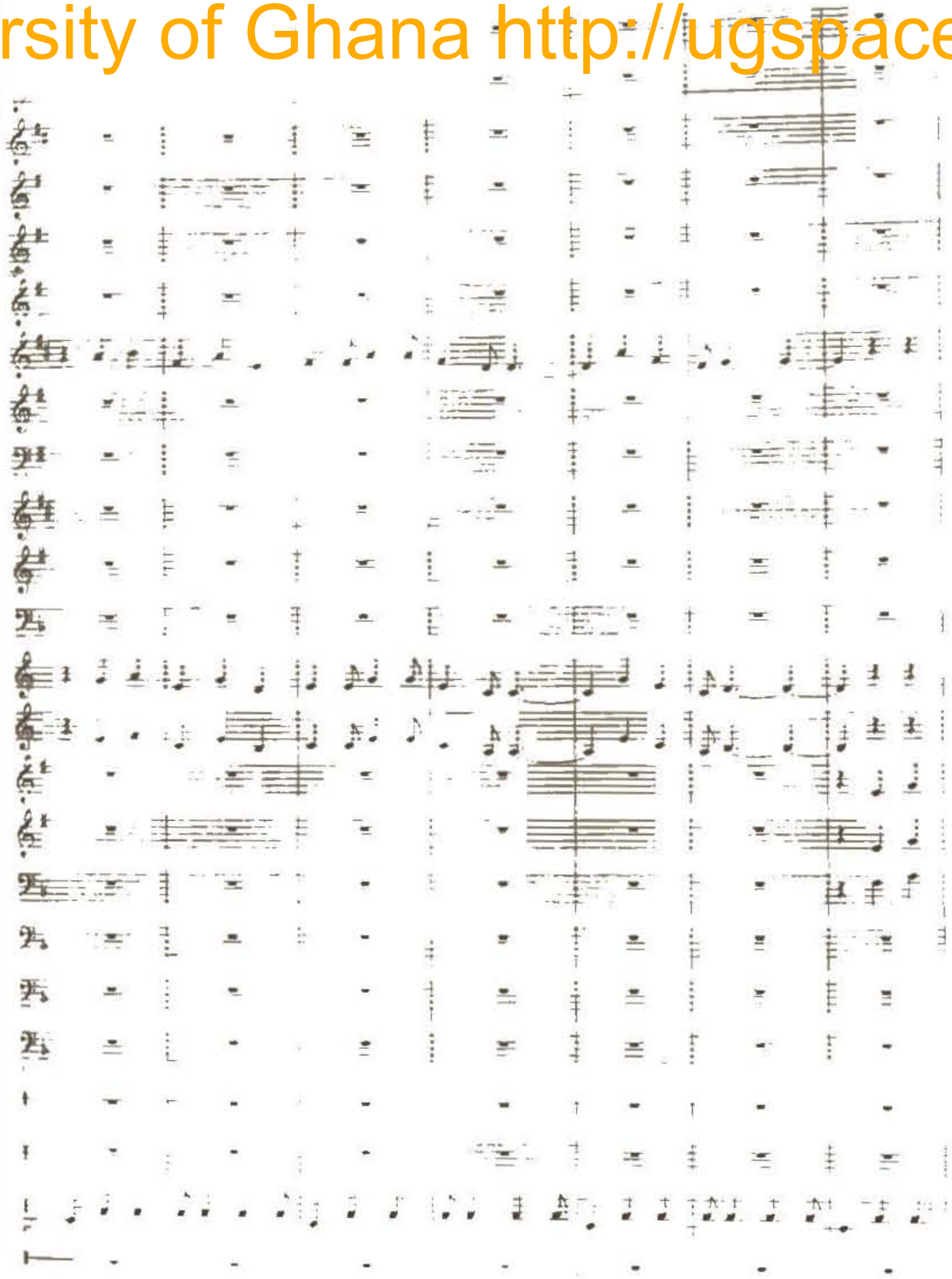

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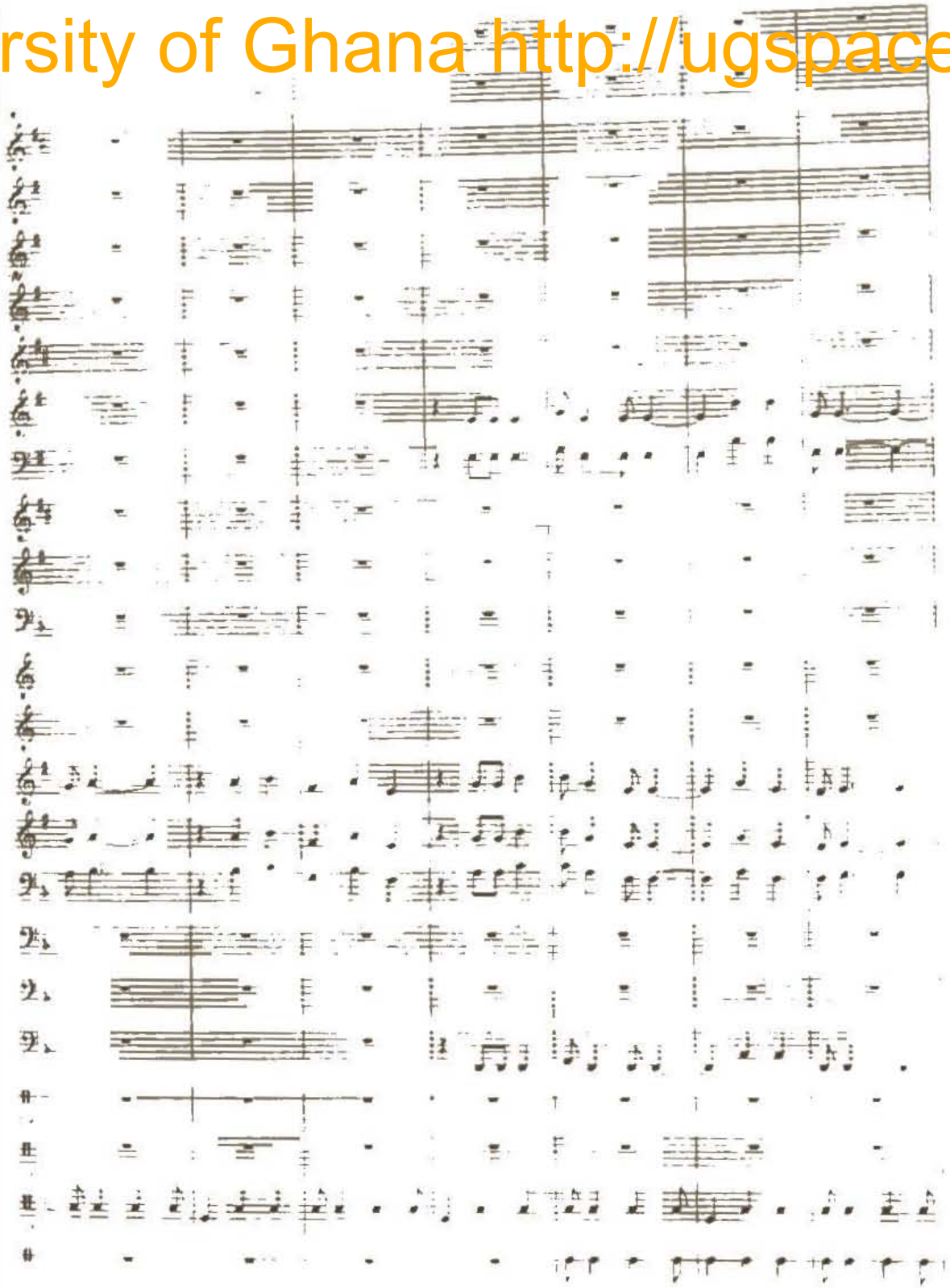

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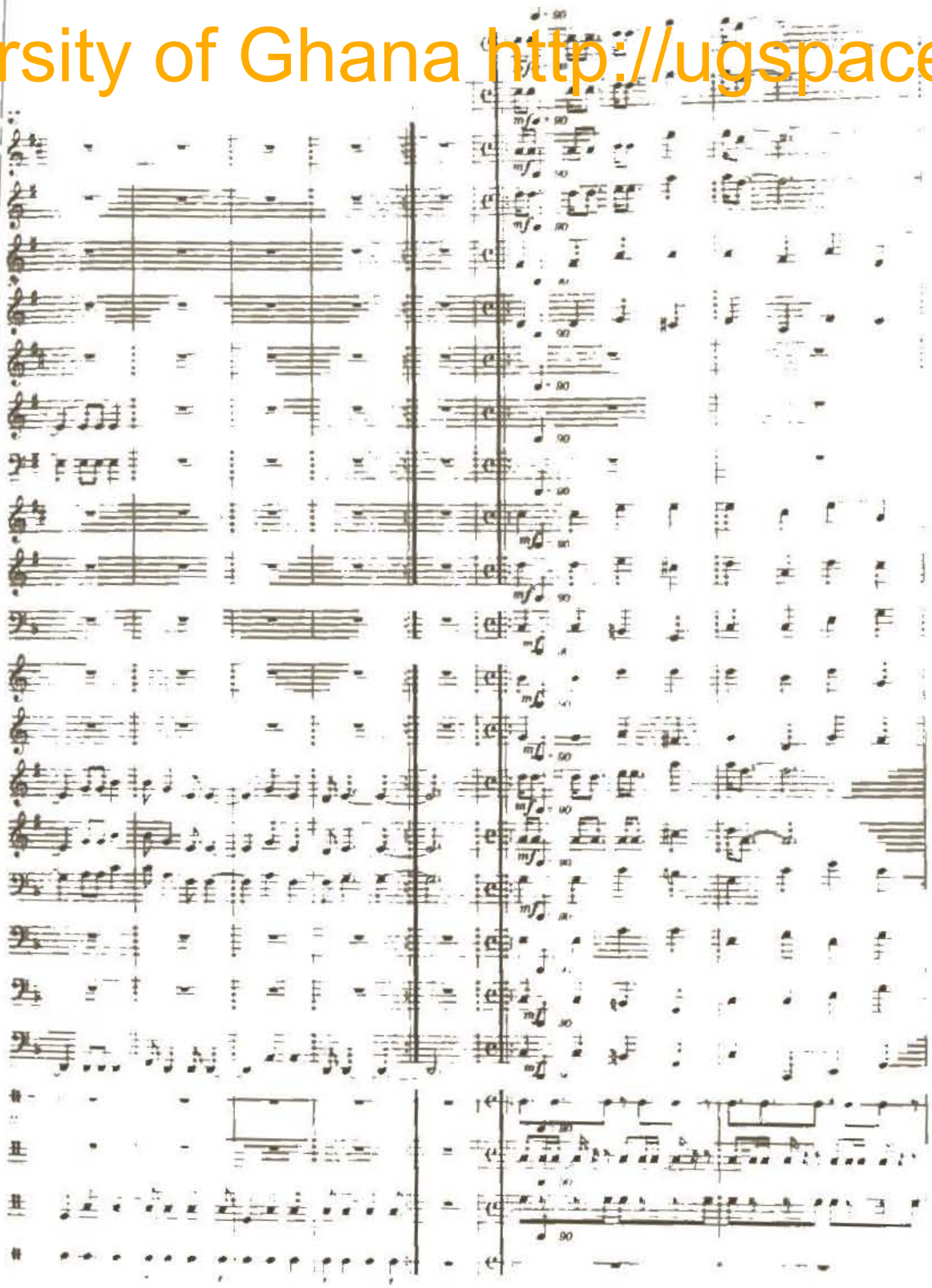

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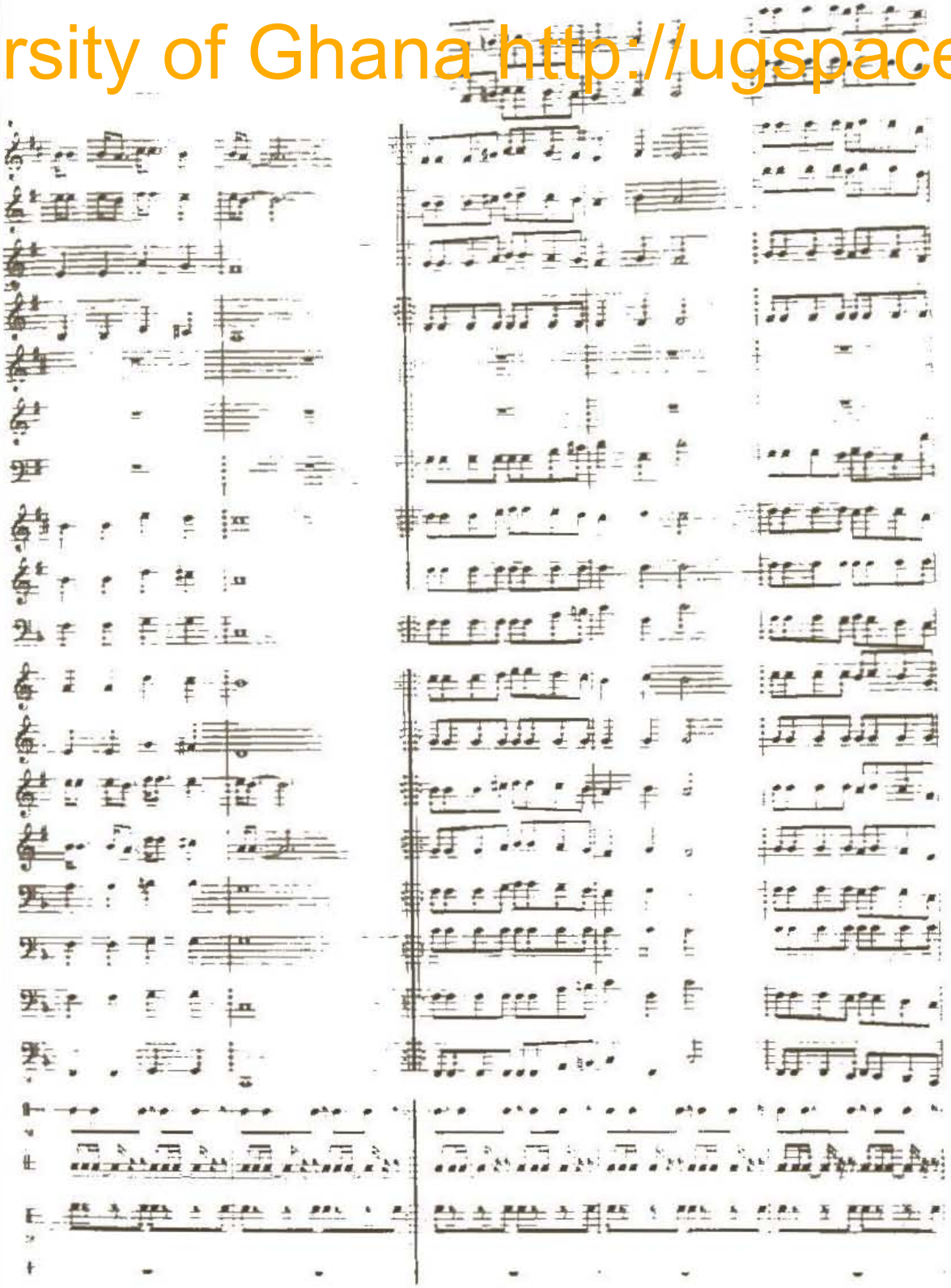

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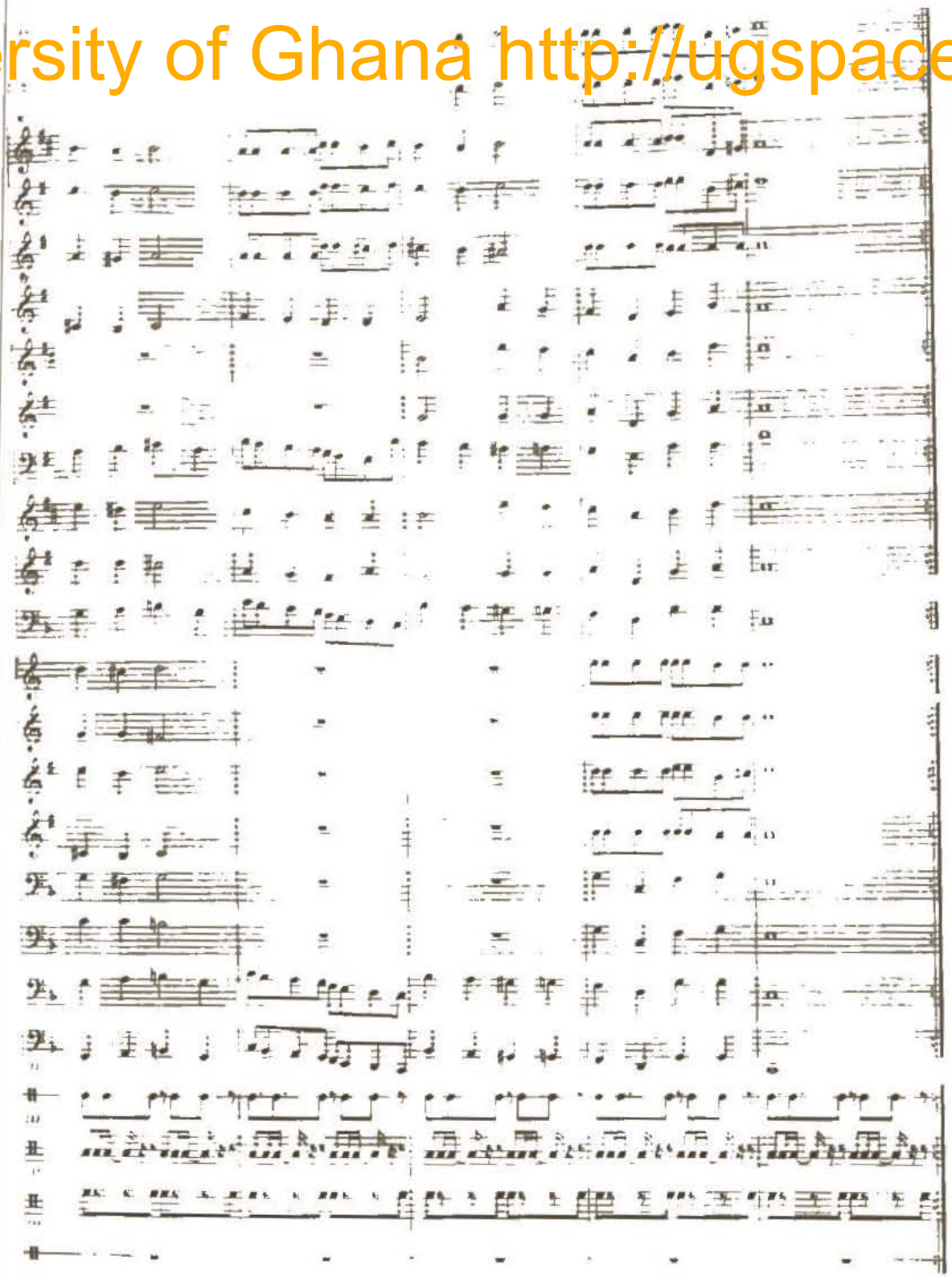

Pouring of Libation

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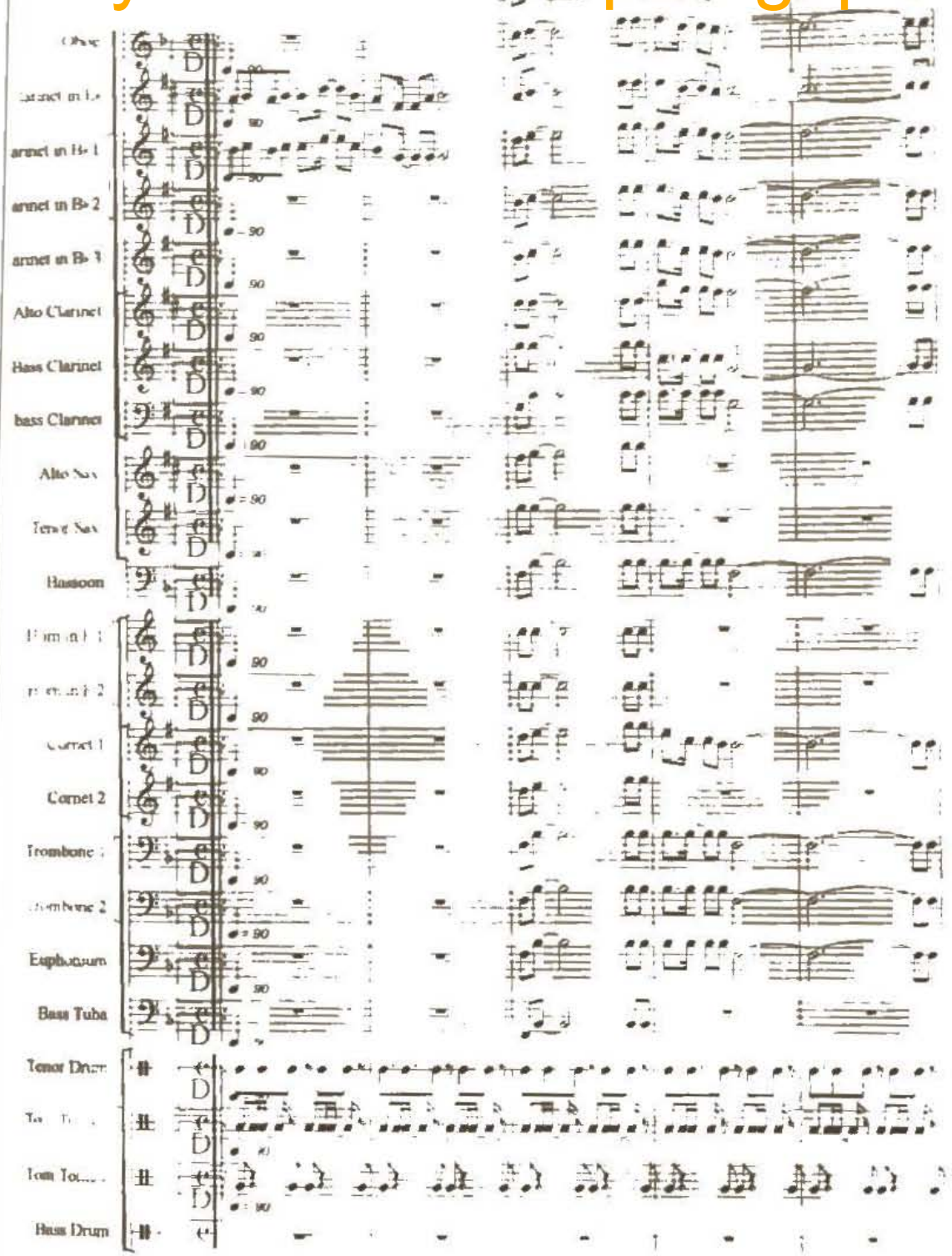

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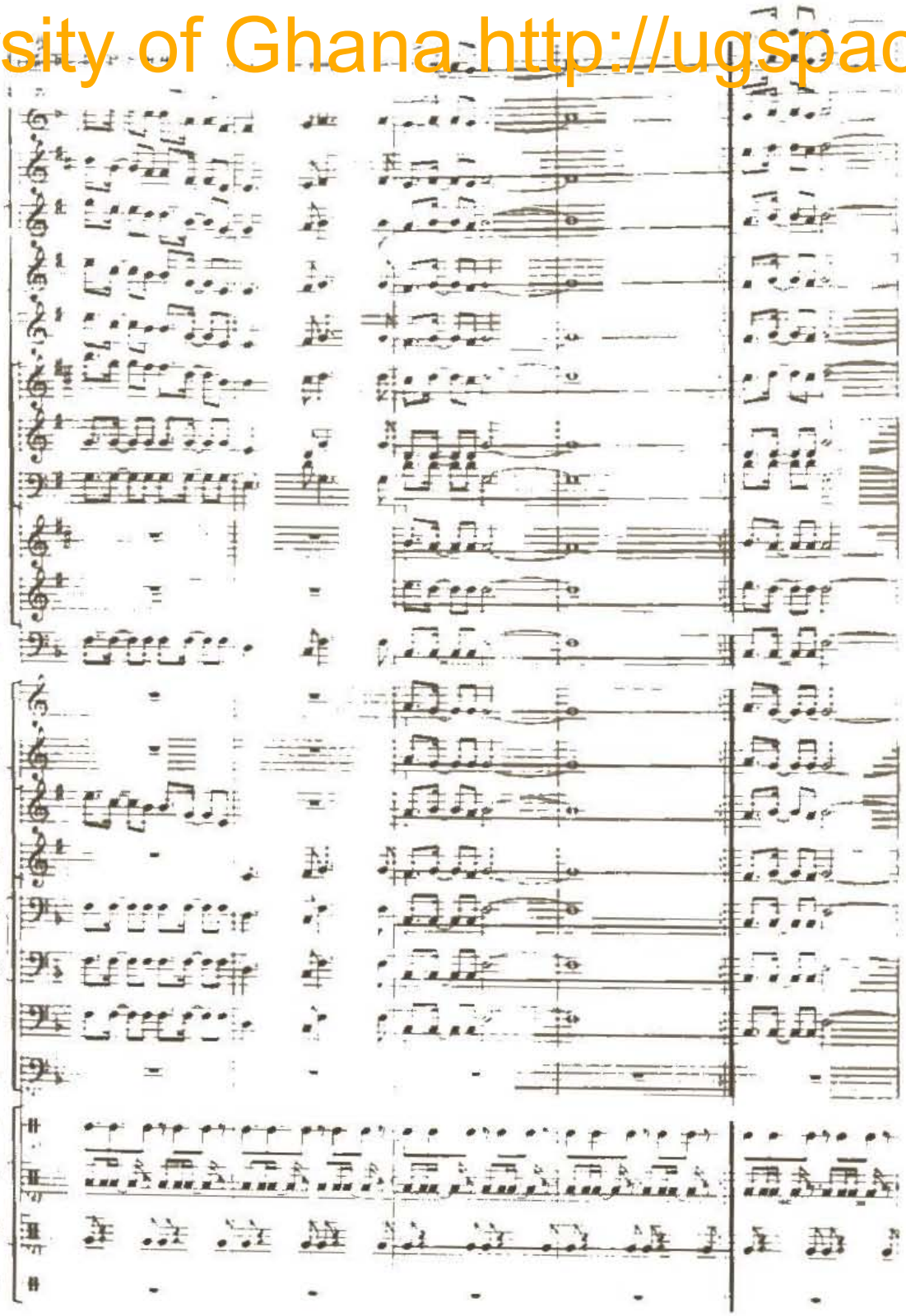

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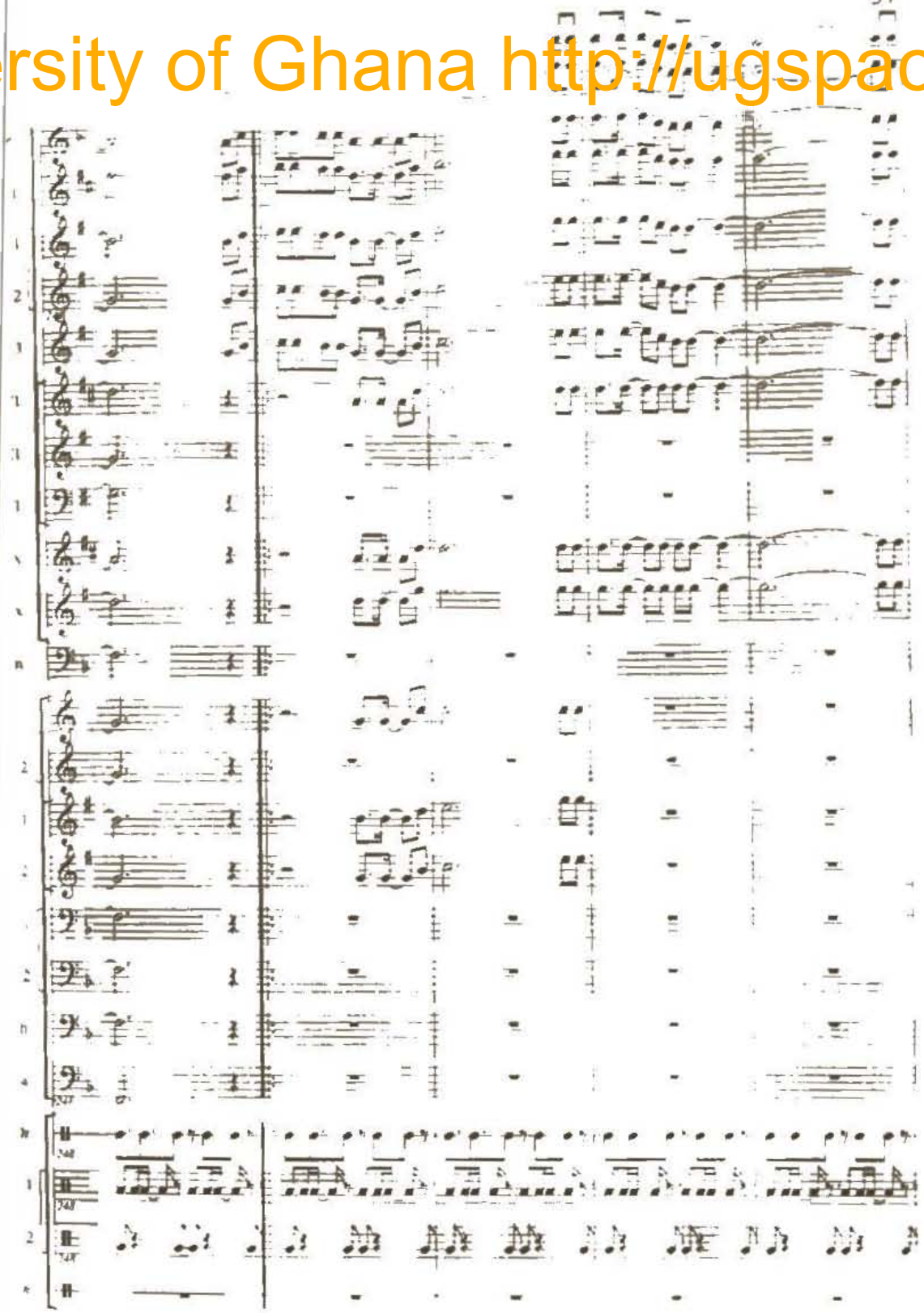

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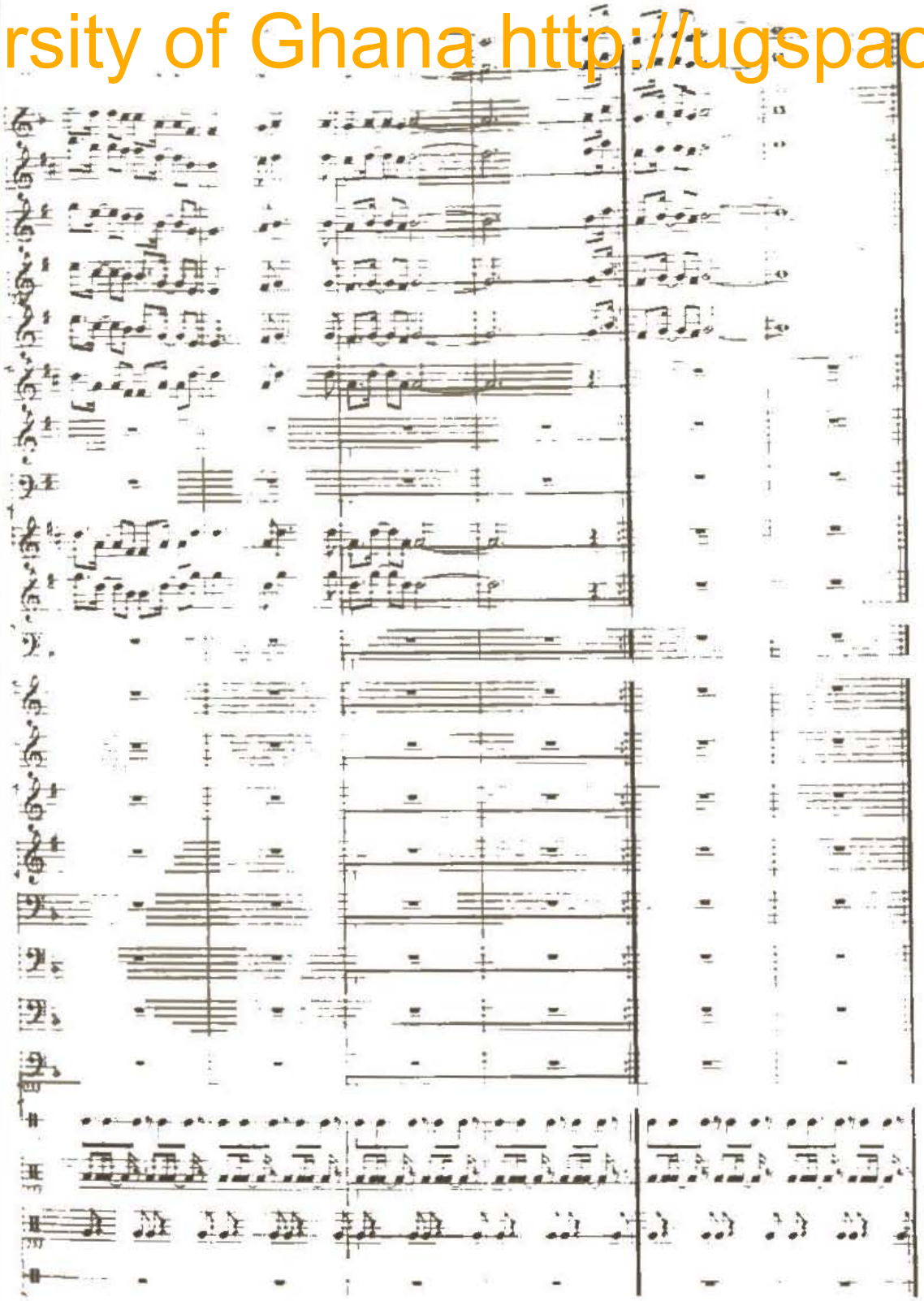

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FULL SCORE

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SCORES OF INDIVIDUAL PARTS

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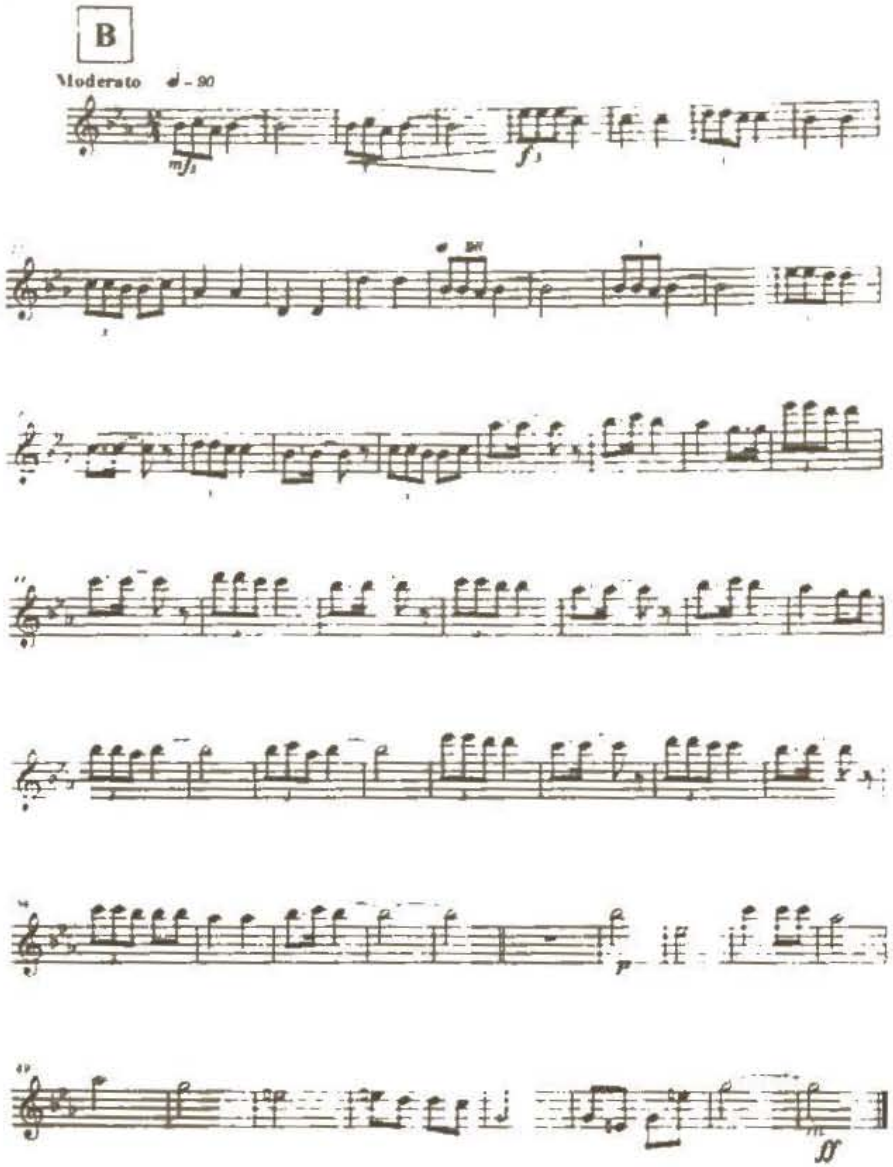
Flute

Greetings of Bereaved



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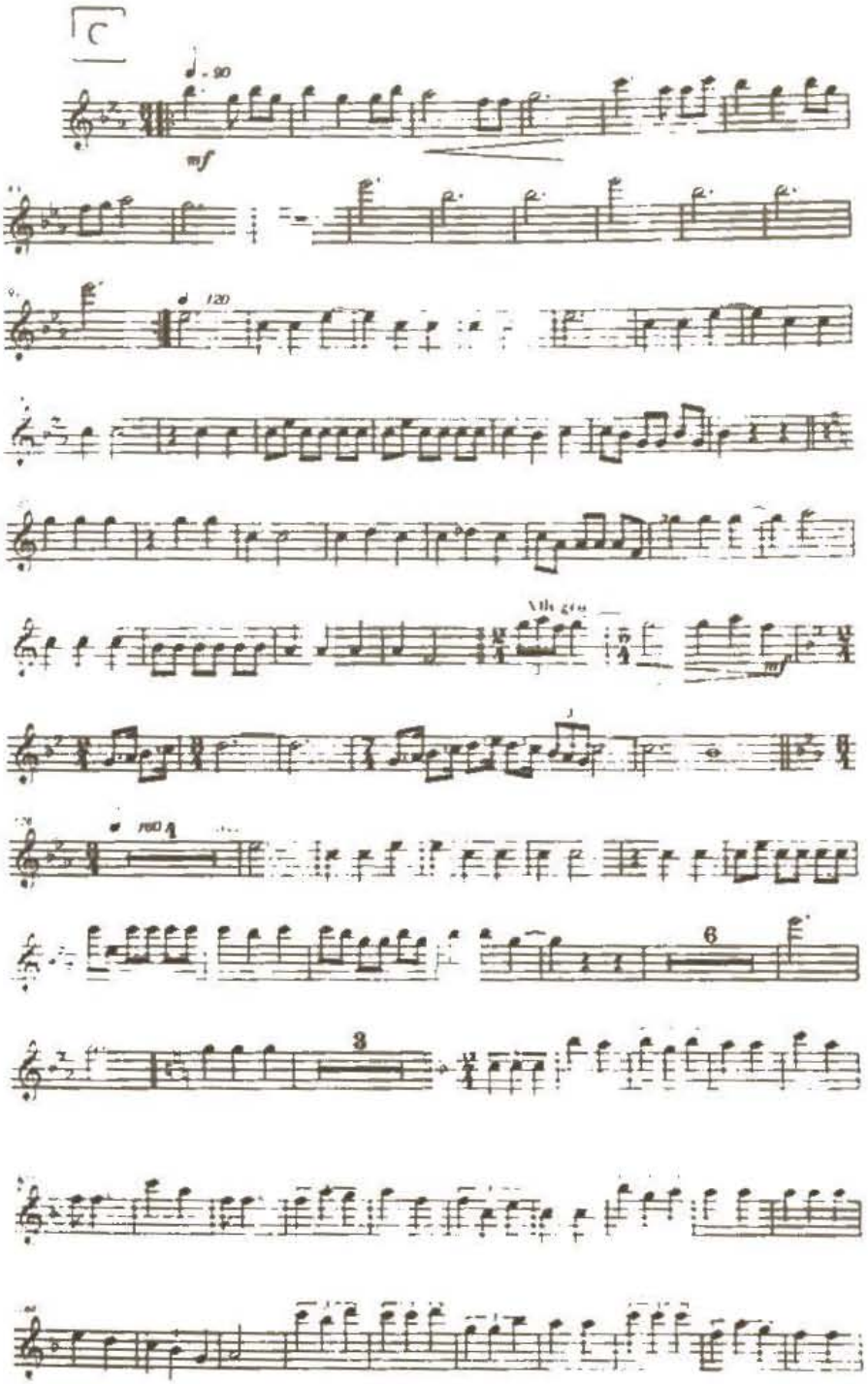
Flute

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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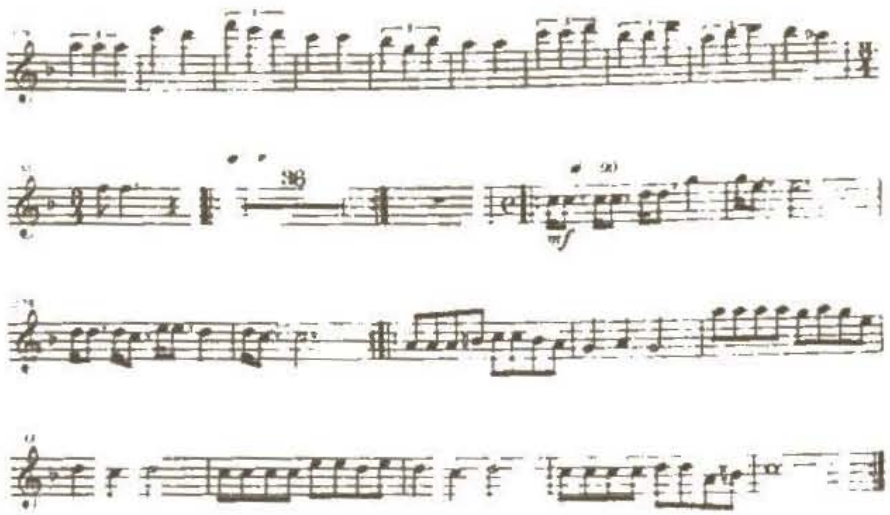
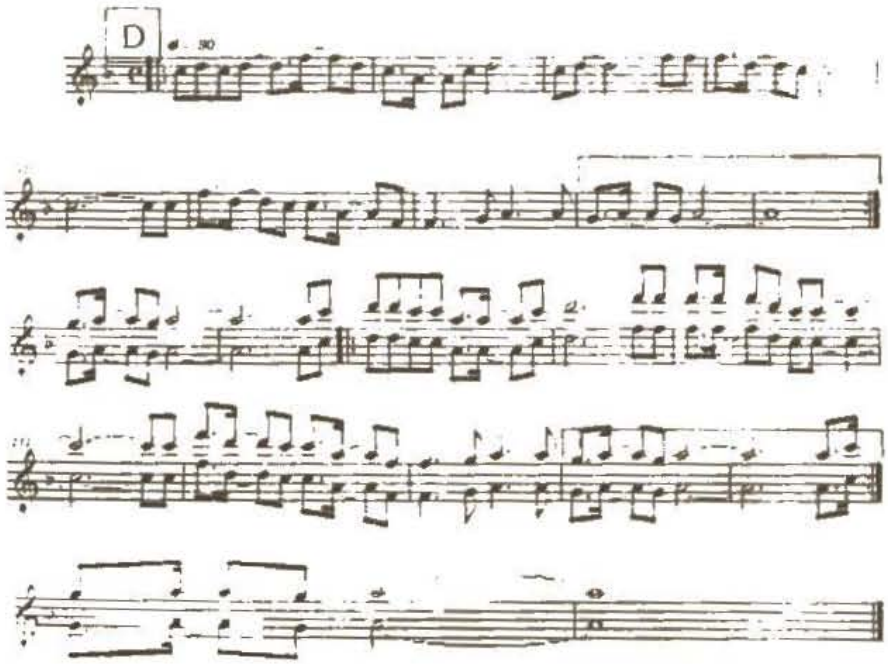


Pouring of Libation

Flute &
Tenor Recorder



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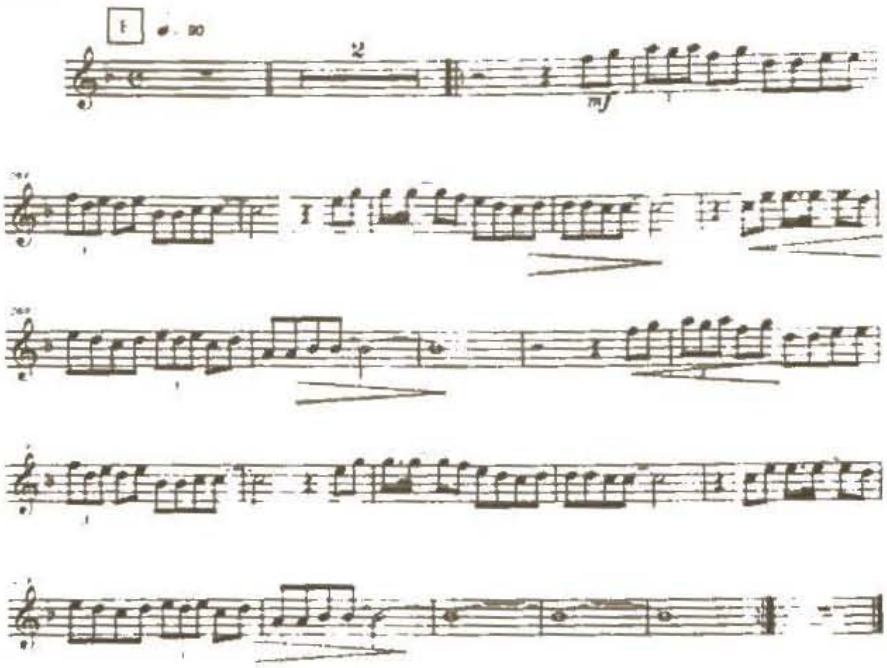
Departure of Sympathisers

Flute



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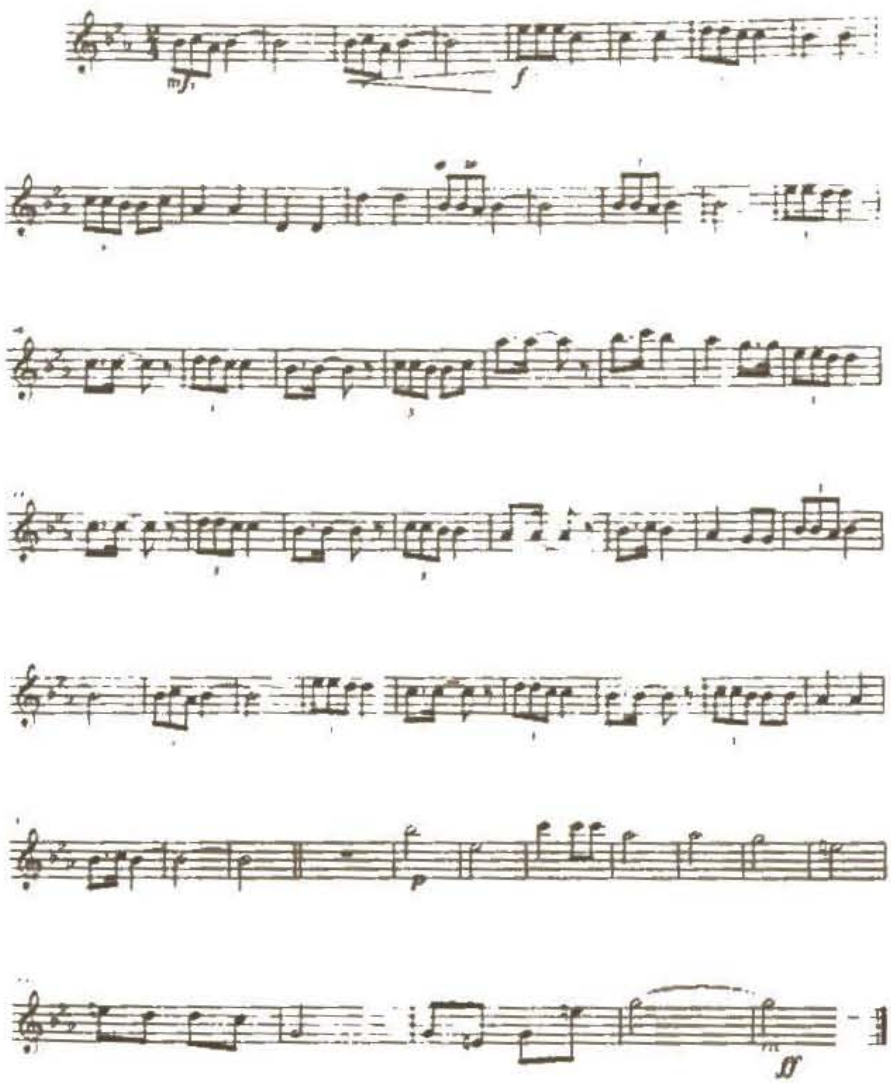
Oboe

Greetings of Bereaved



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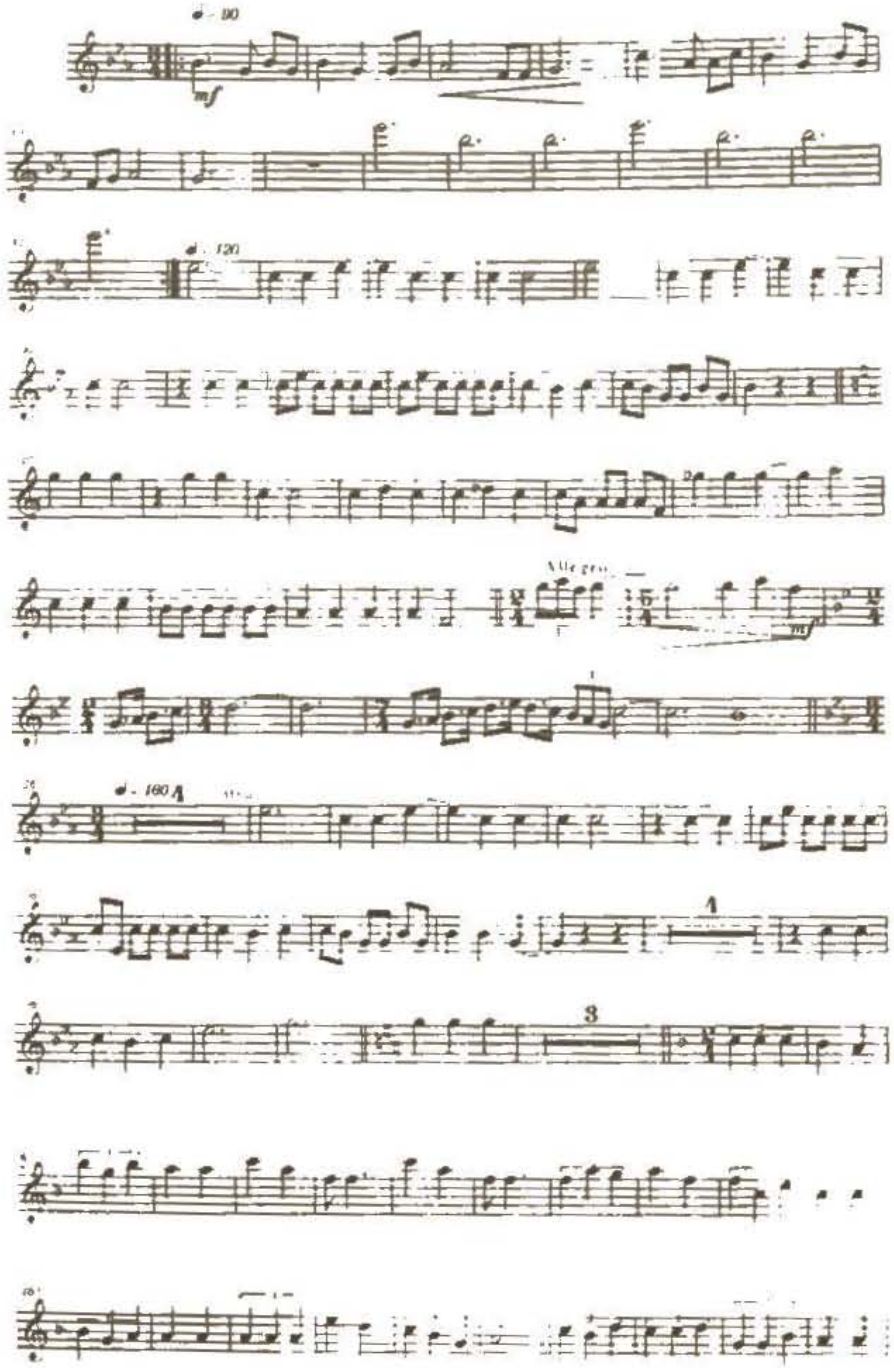
Oboe

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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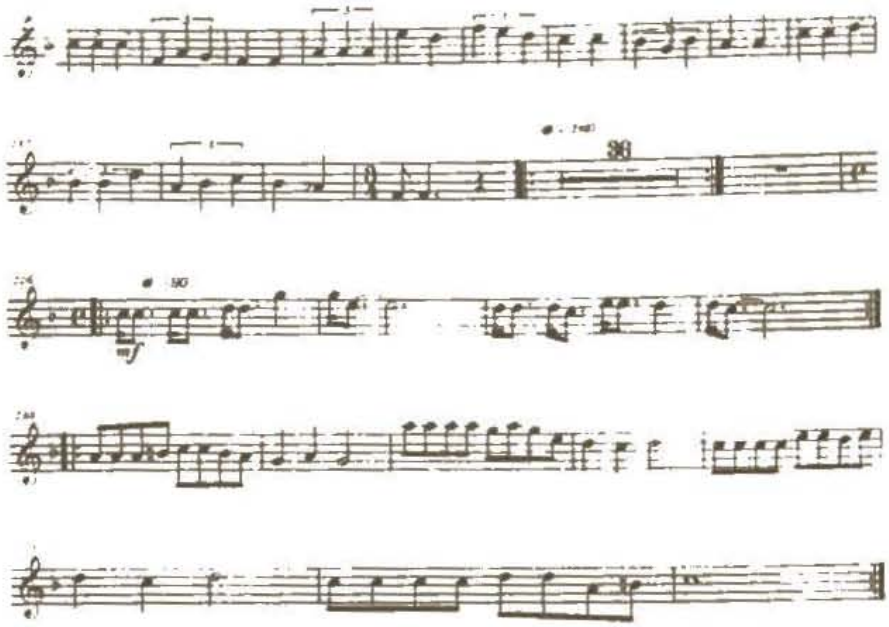
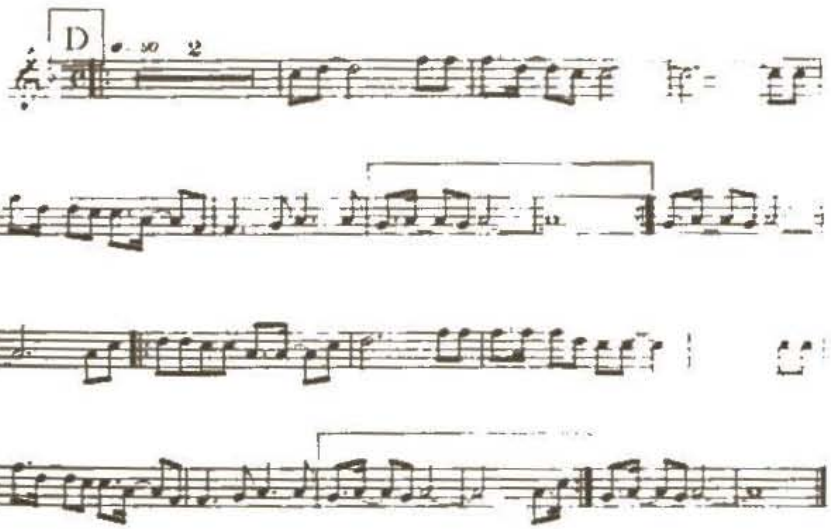


Pouring of Libation

Oboe



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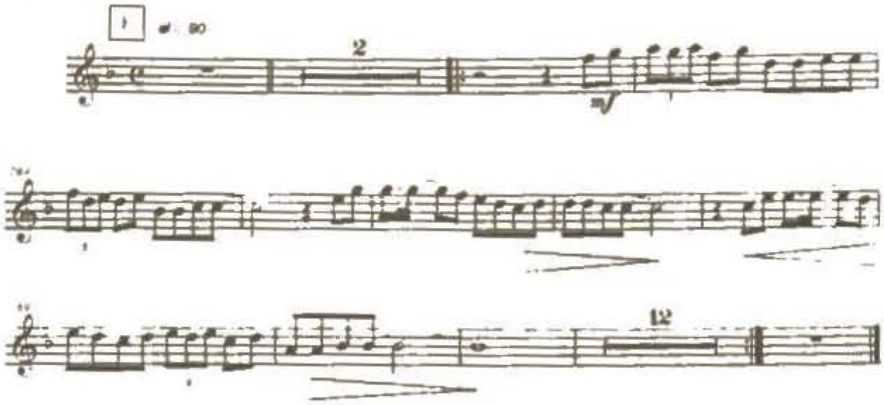
Departure of Sympathisers

Oboe



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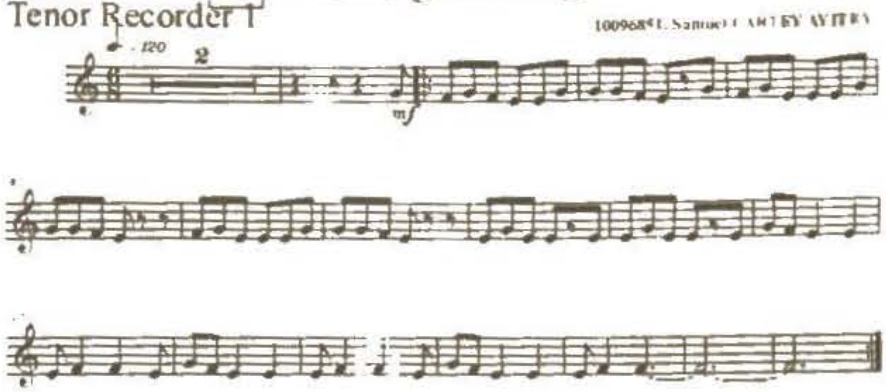
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

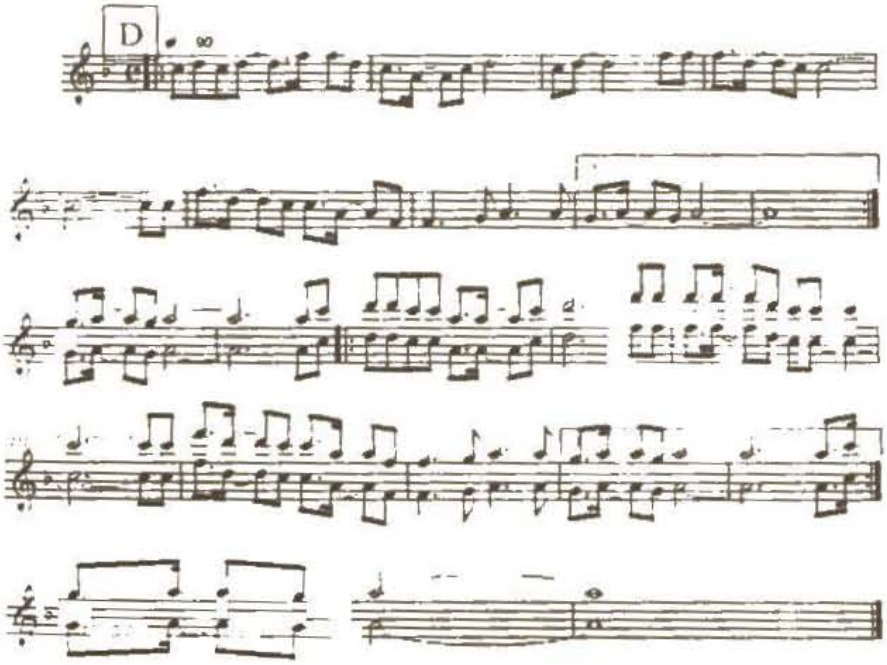
A **Home gathering**

Tenor Recorder I



Pouring of Libation

Flute &
Tenor Recorder



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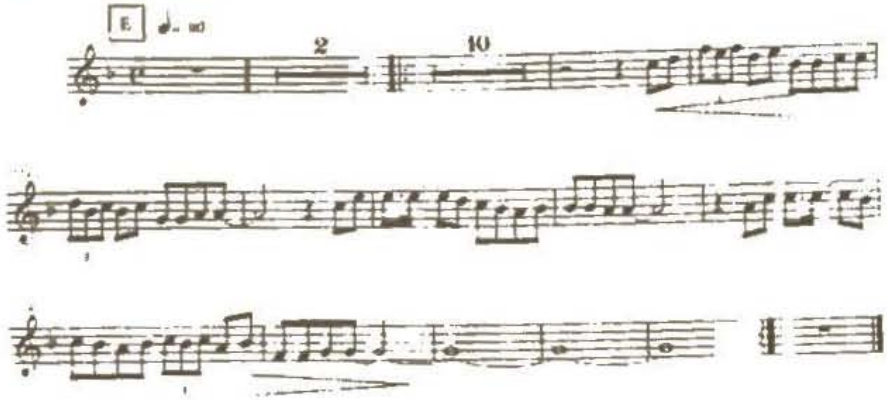
Departure of Sympathisers

Tenor Recorder



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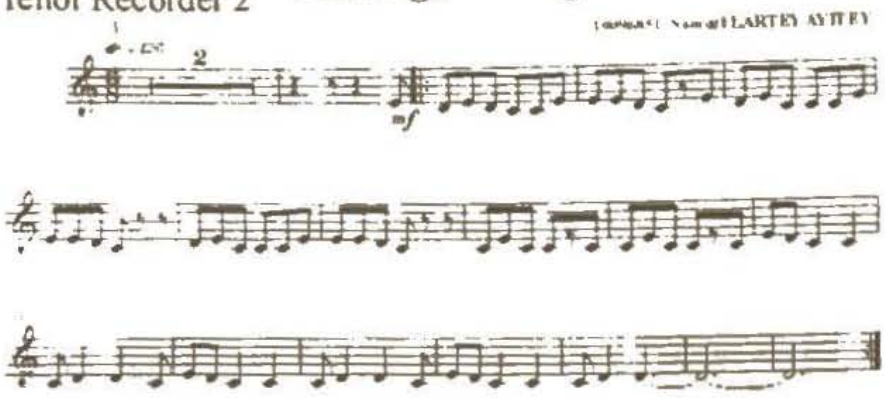
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

Home gathering

Tenor Recorder 2



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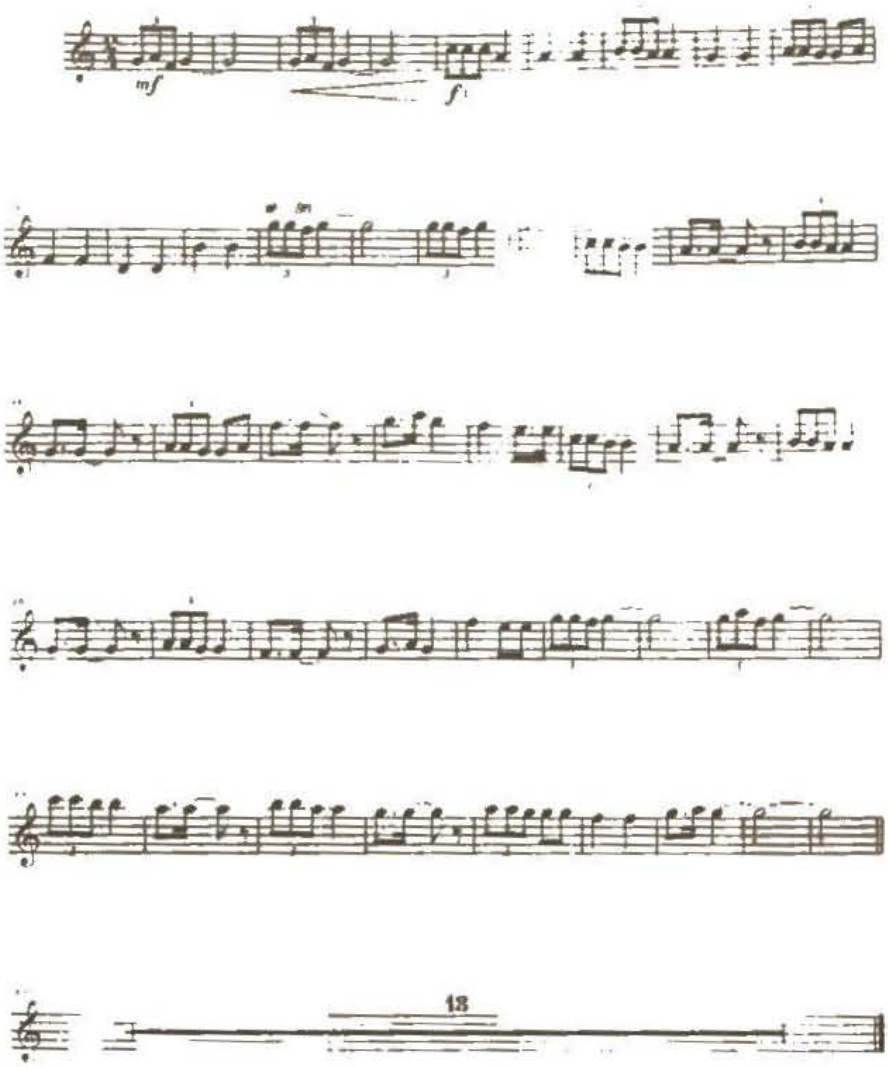
Clarinet in E♭

Greetings of Bereaved



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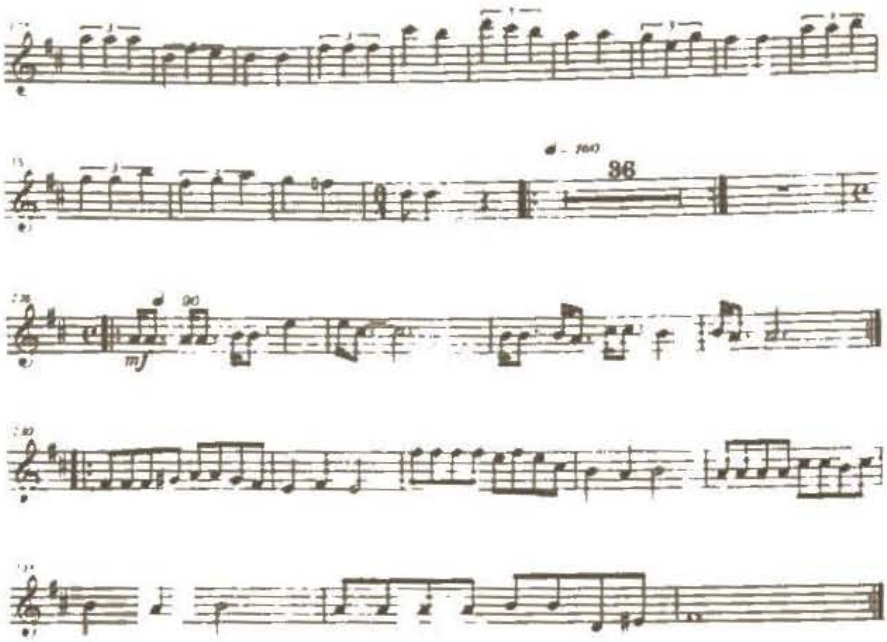
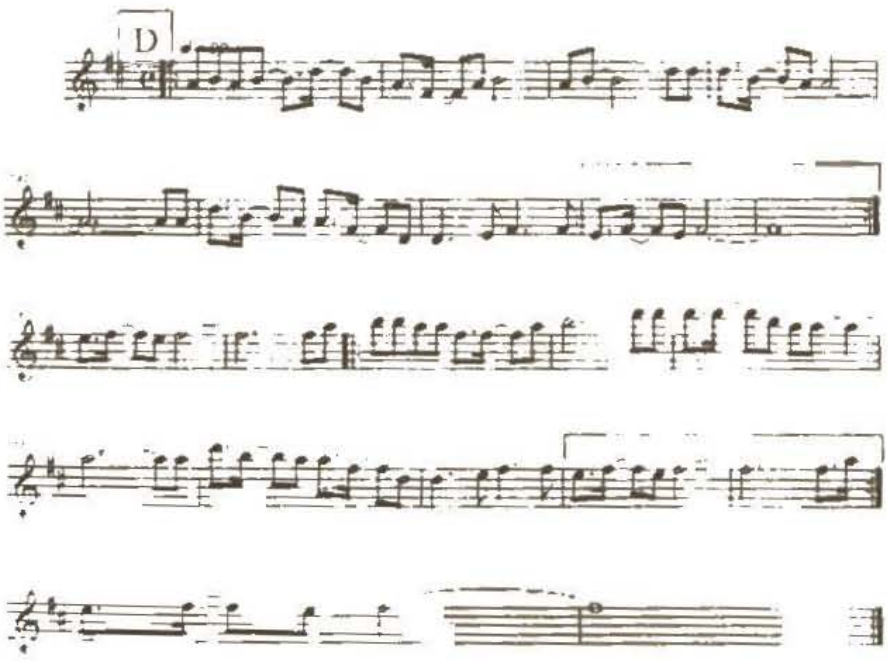


Pouring of Libation

Clarinet in E♭



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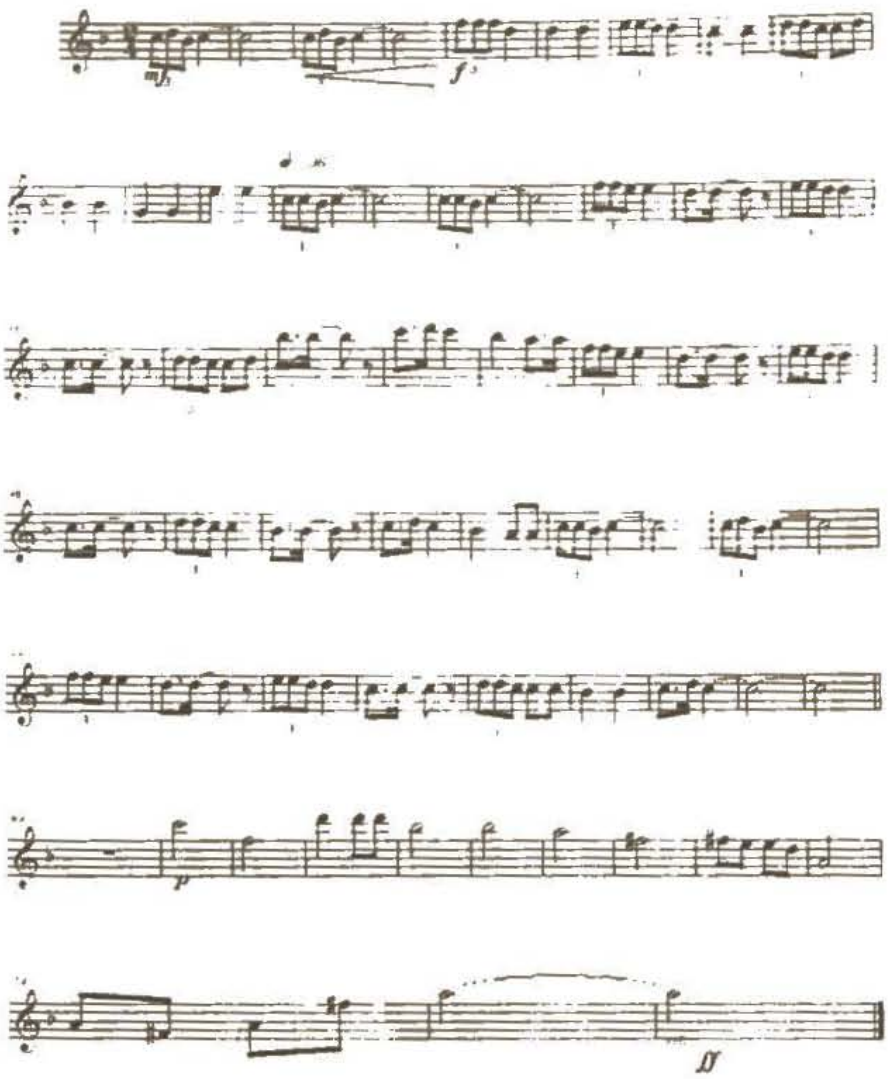
Clarinet in B♭ 1 **Greetings of Bereaved**



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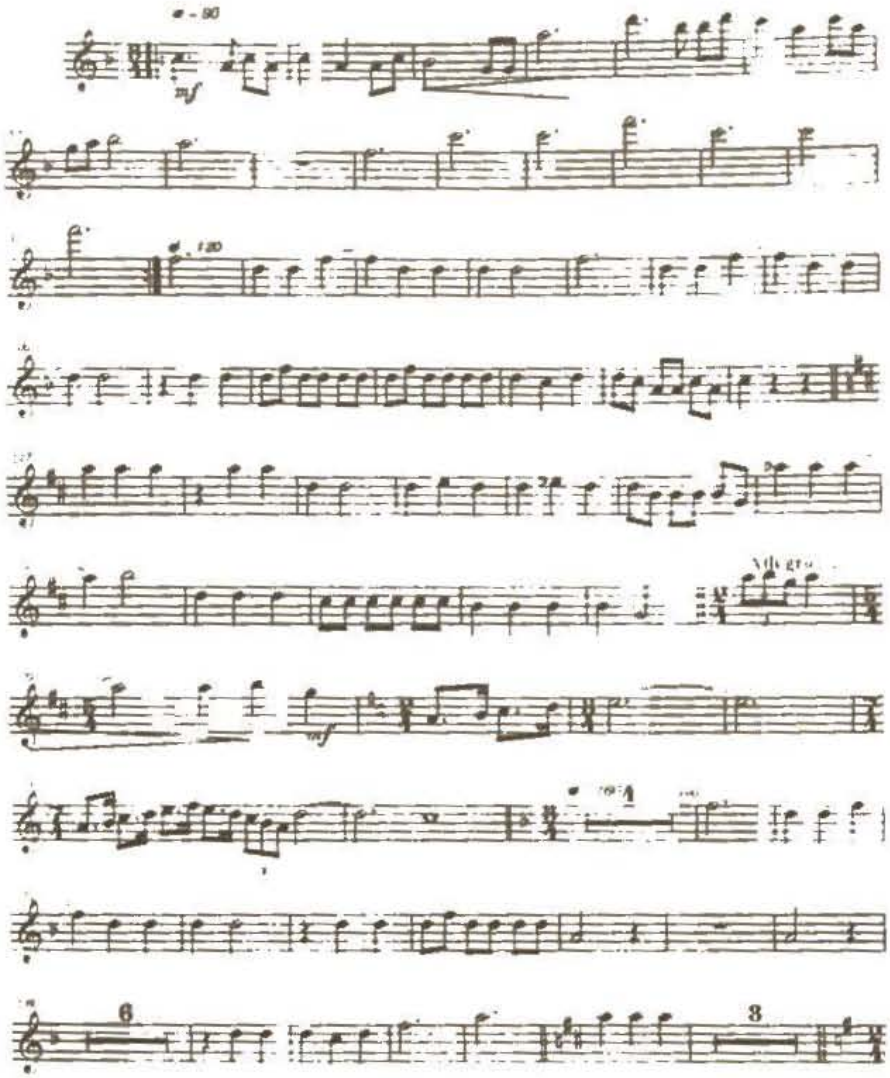
Rendering of Funeral Songs

Clarinet in B♭ I



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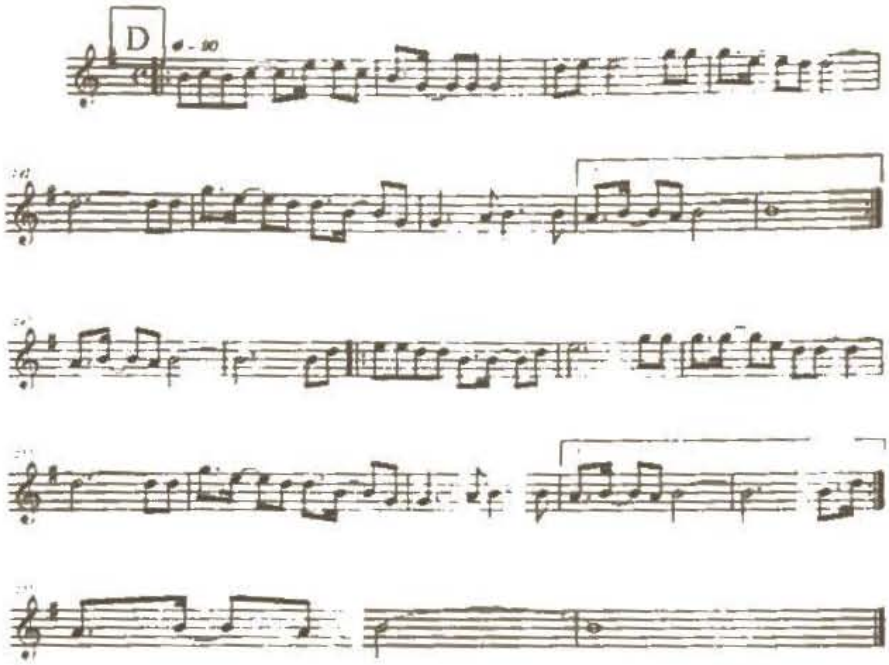
Pouring of Libation

Clarinet in B♭ 1



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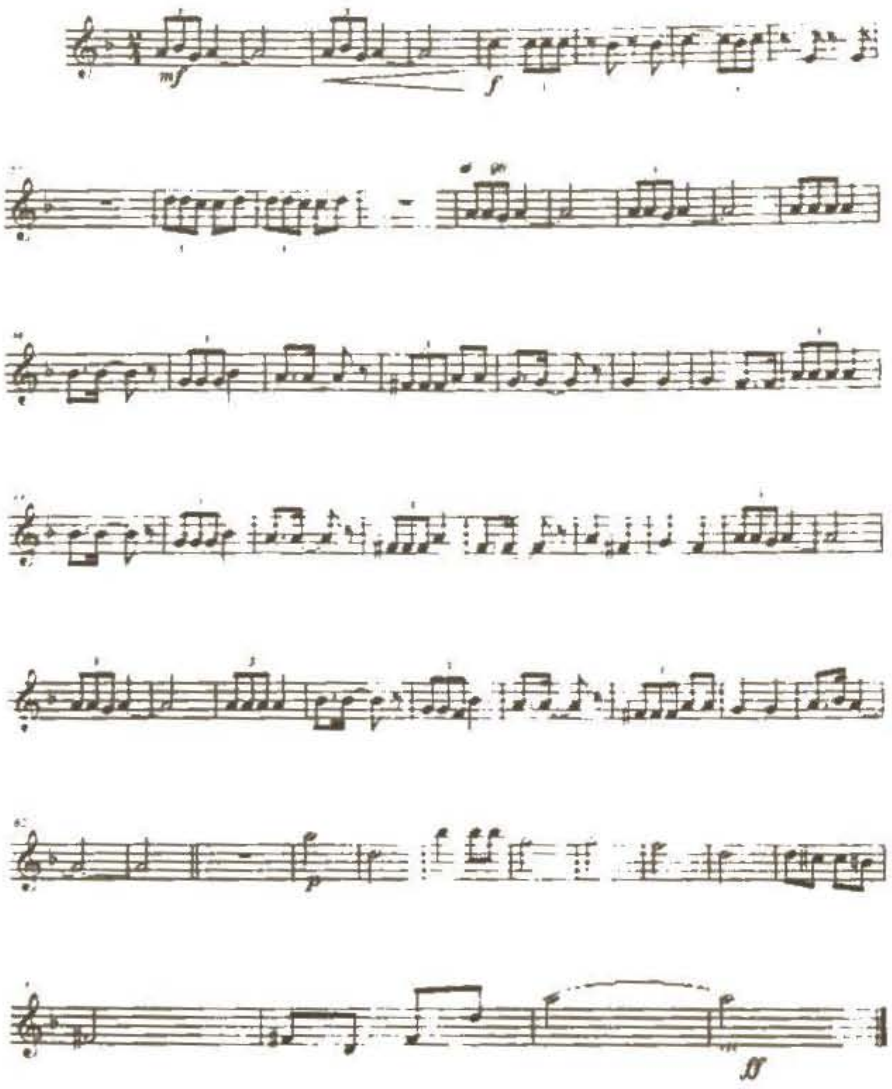
Clarinet in B♭ 2 **Greetings of Bereaved**



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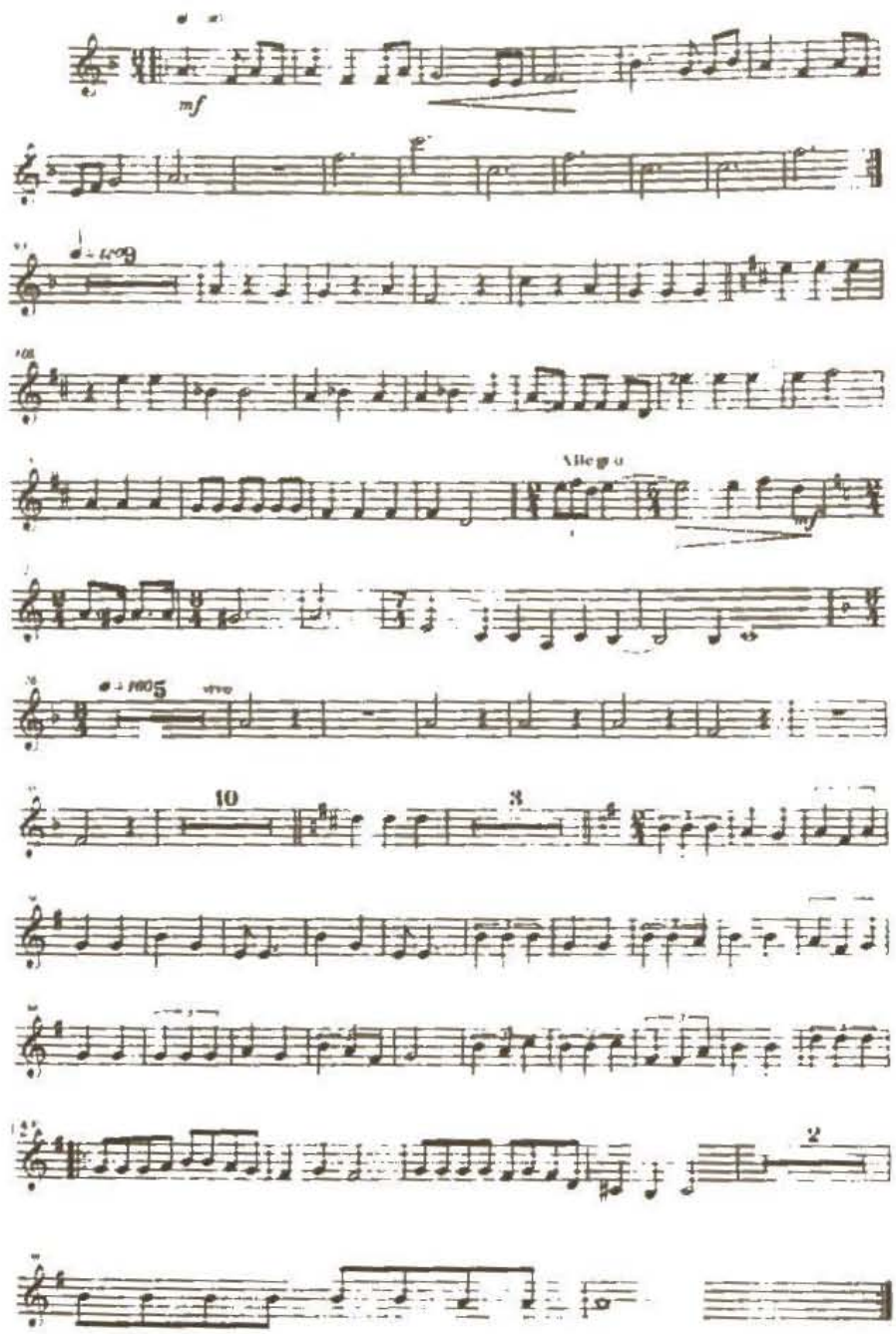
Rendering of Funeral Songs

Clarinet in B♭ 2



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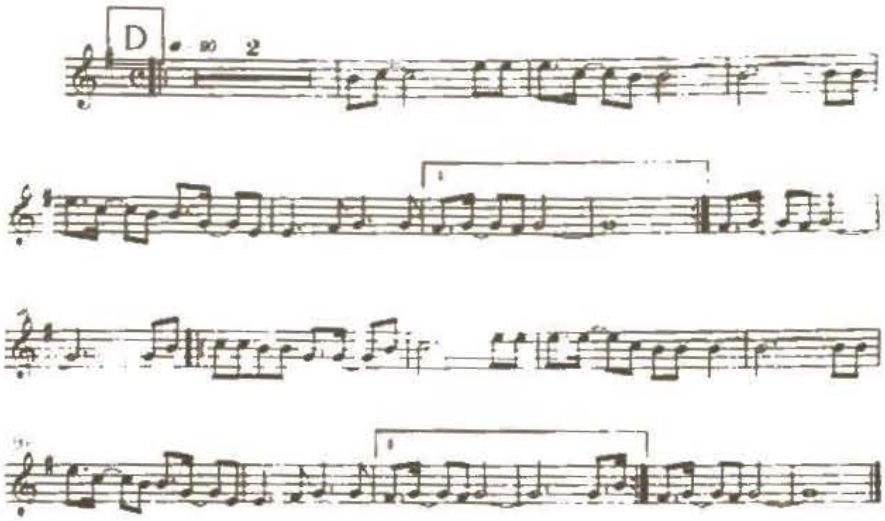
Pouring of Libation

Clarinet in B♭ 2



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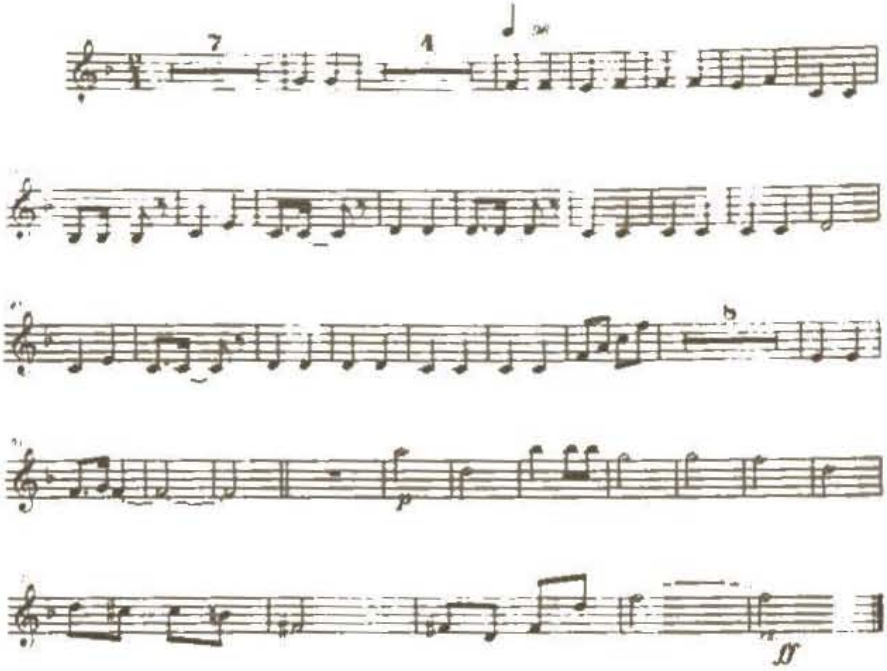
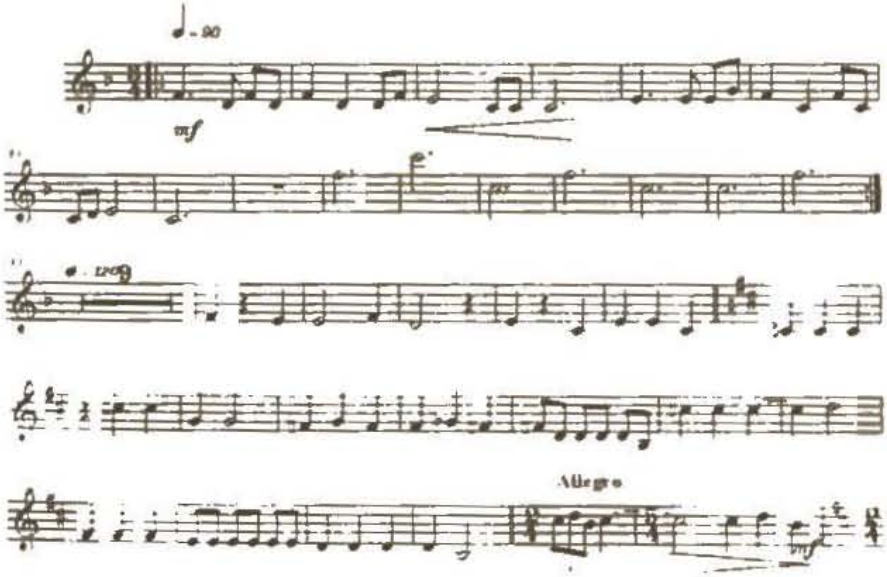
Clarinet in B♭ 3 **Greetings of Bereaved**



Rendering of Funeral Songs

Clarinet in B♭ 3



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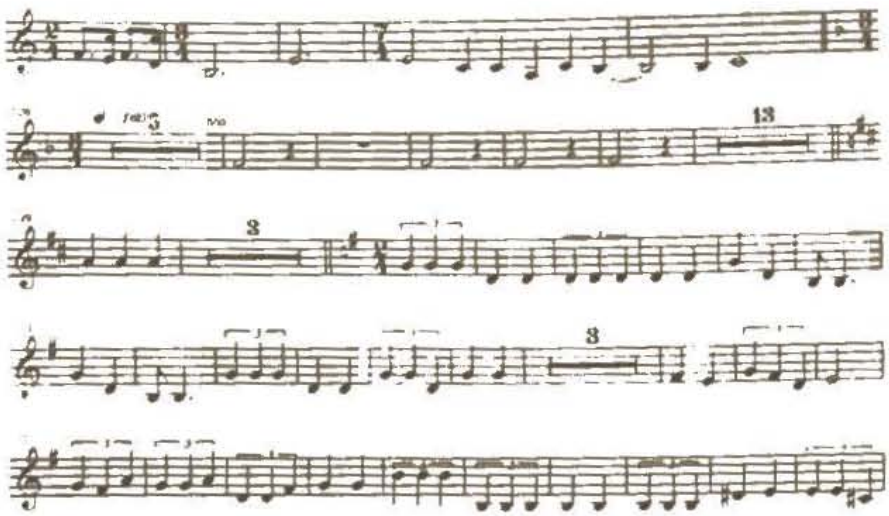
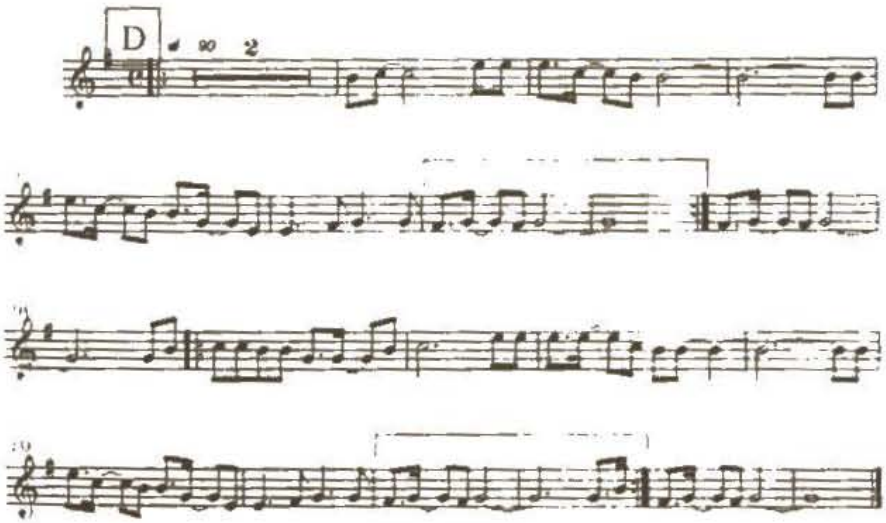


Pouring of Libation

Clarinet in B♭ 3



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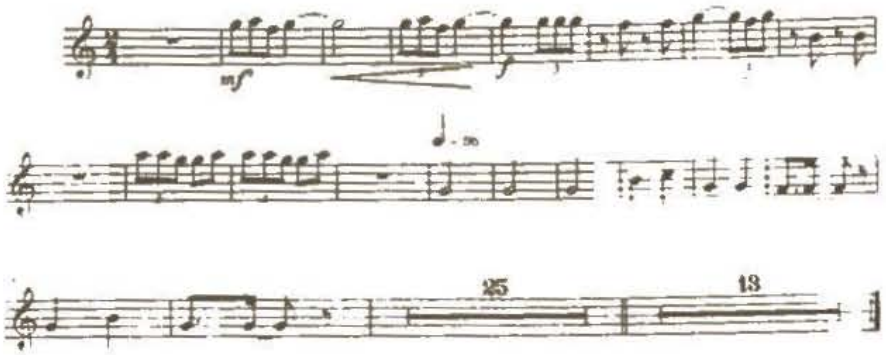
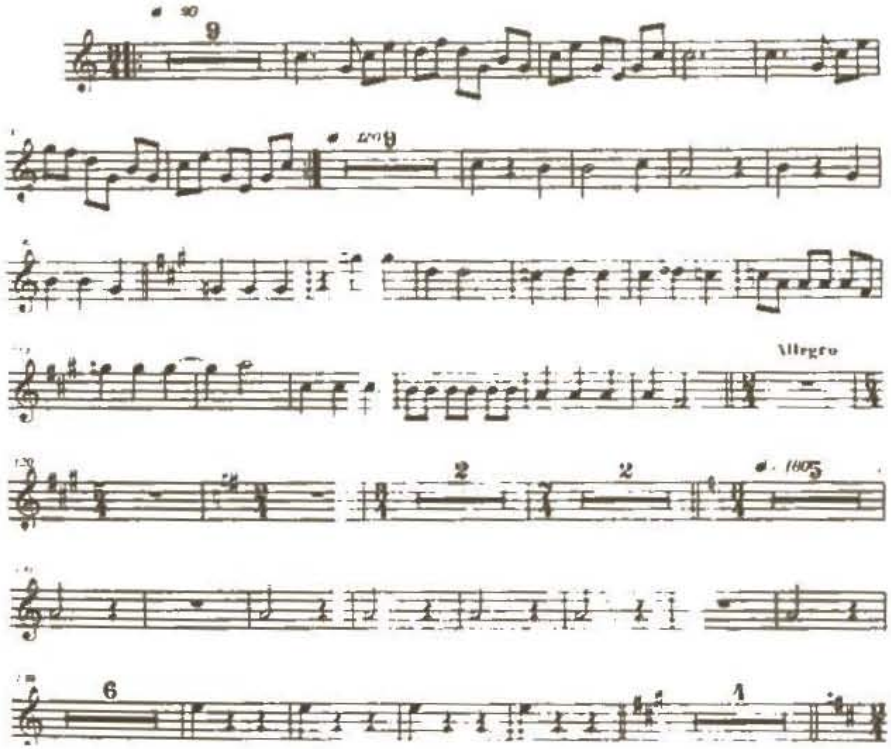
Alto Clarinet **Greetings of Bereaved**



Alto Clarinet **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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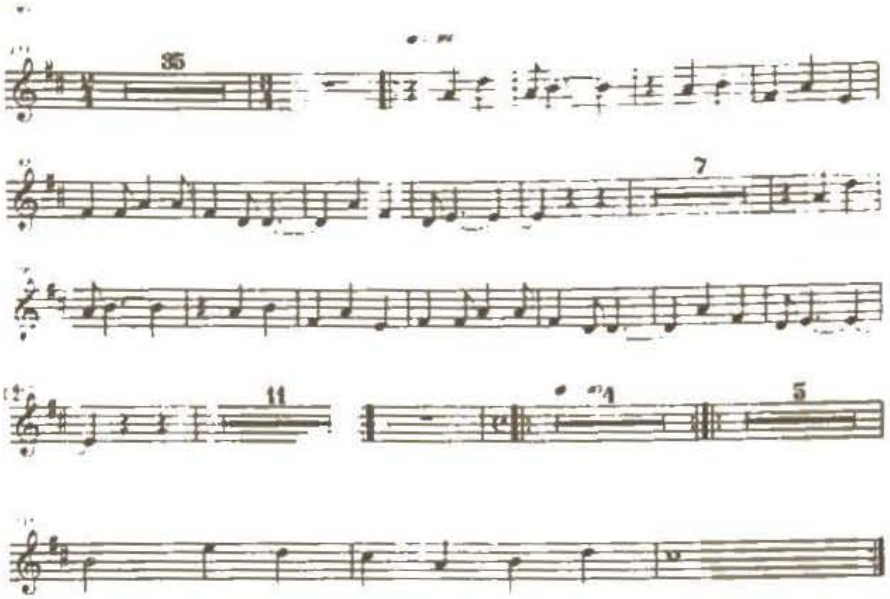
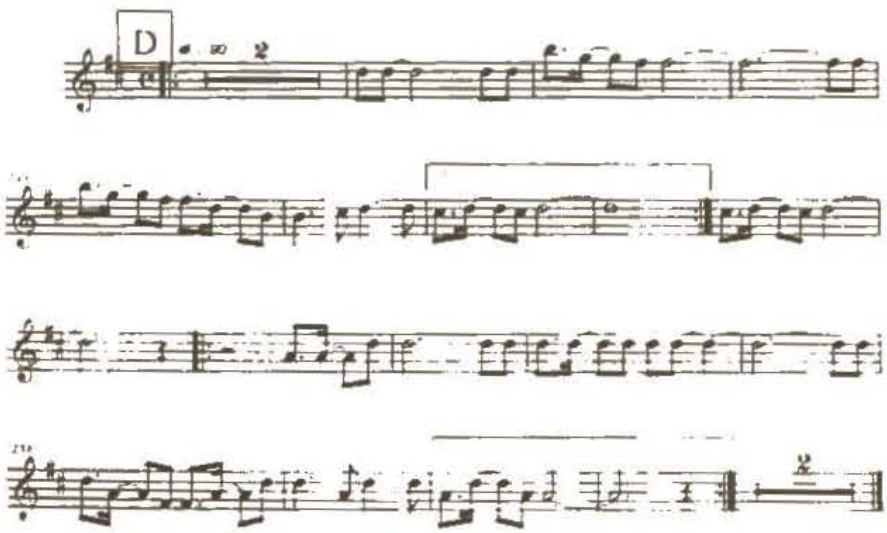


Pouring of Libation

Alto Clarinet



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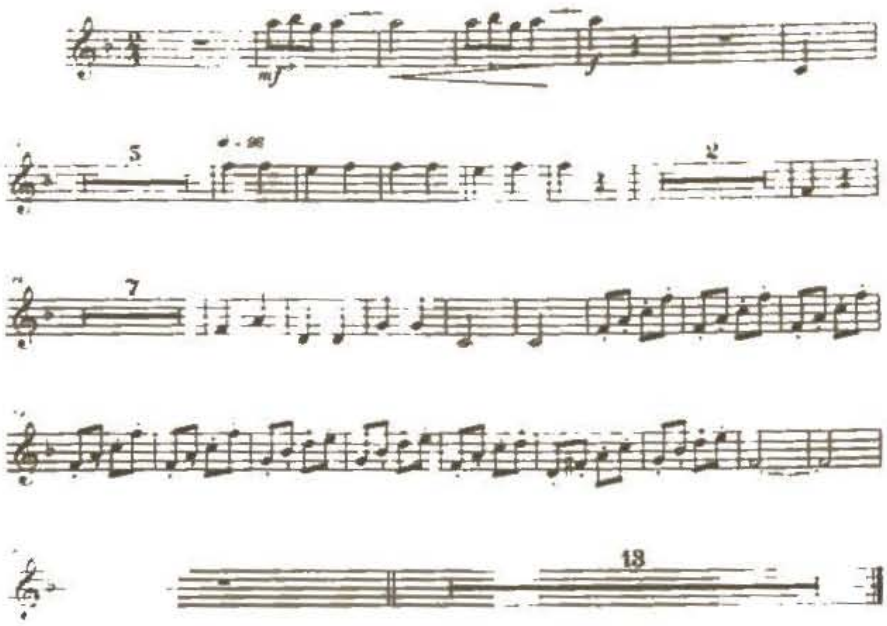
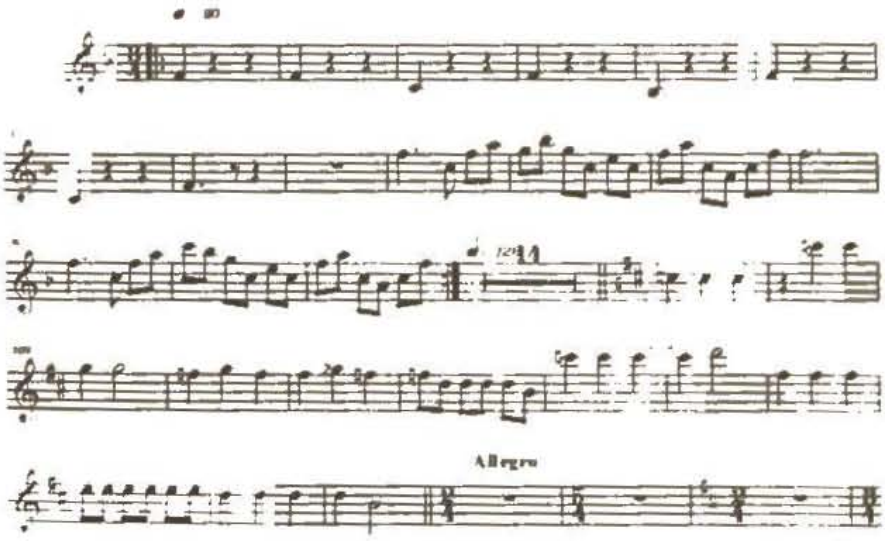
Bass Clarinet **Greetings of Bereaved**



Bass Clarinet **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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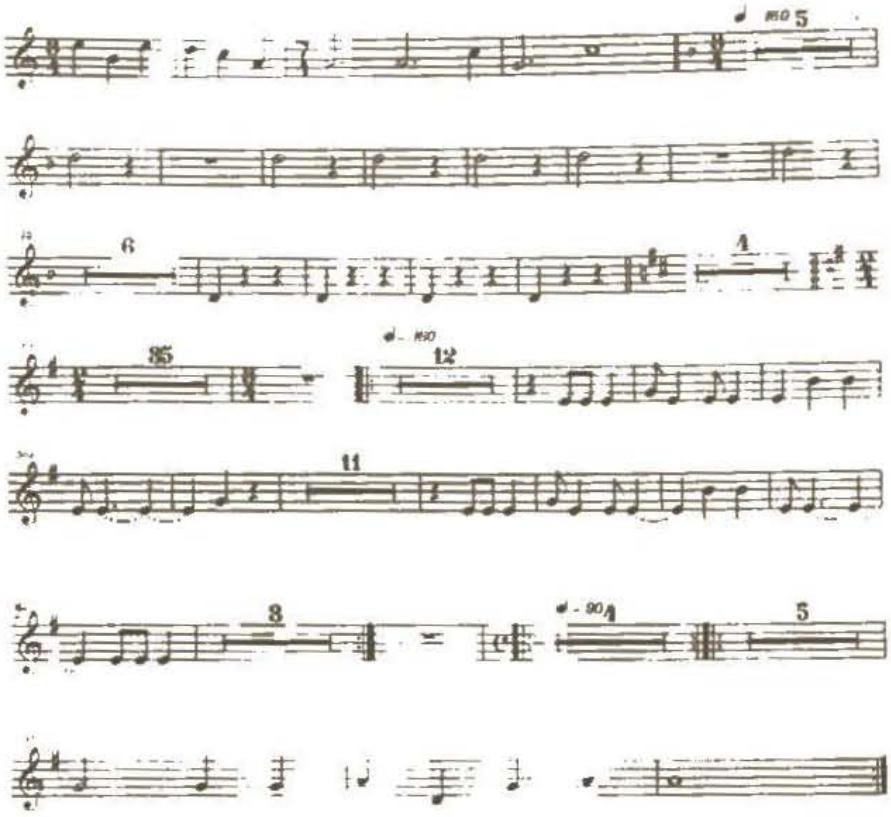
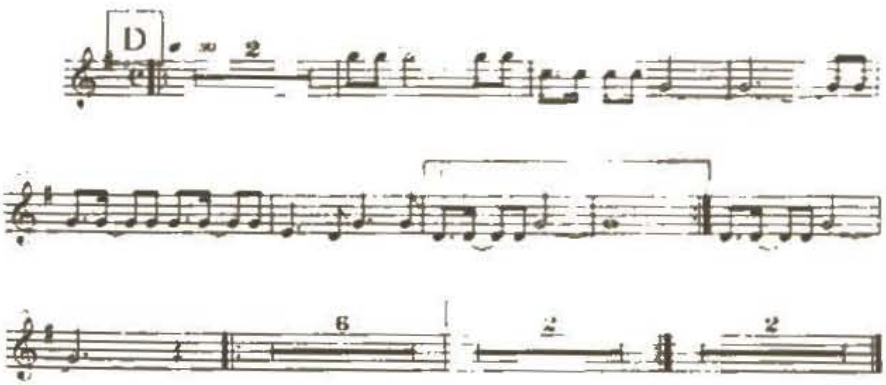


Pouring of Libation

Bass Clarinet



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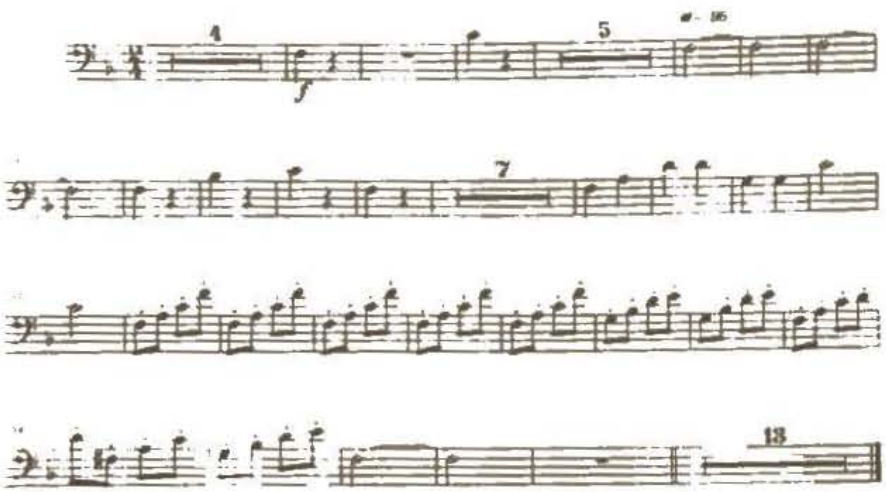
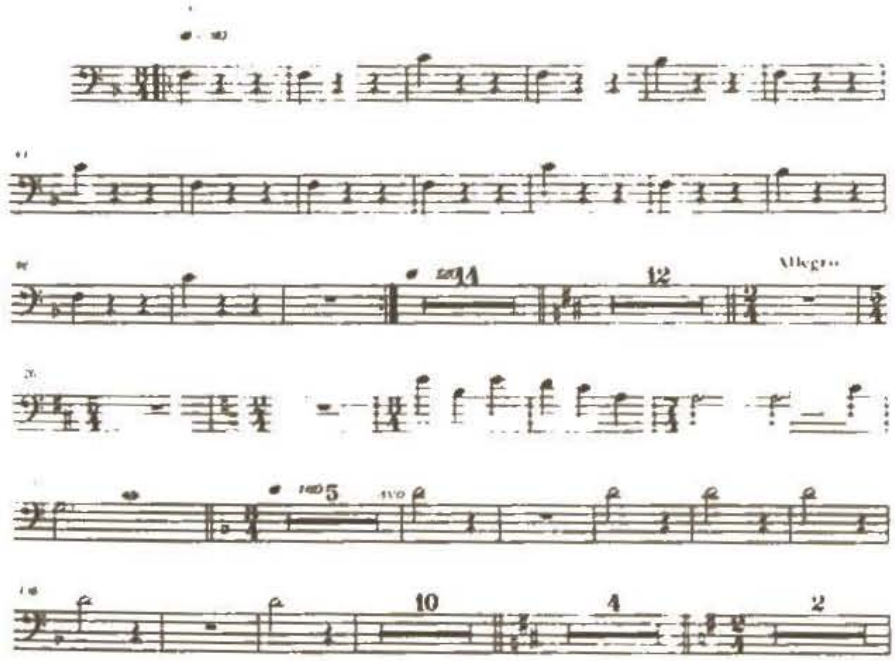
Greetings of Bereaved

Contrabass Clarinet



Rendering of Funeral Songs

Contrabass Clarinet



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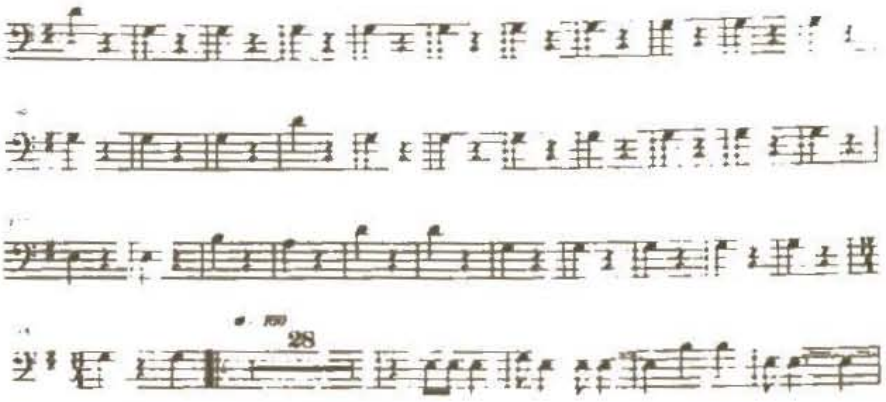
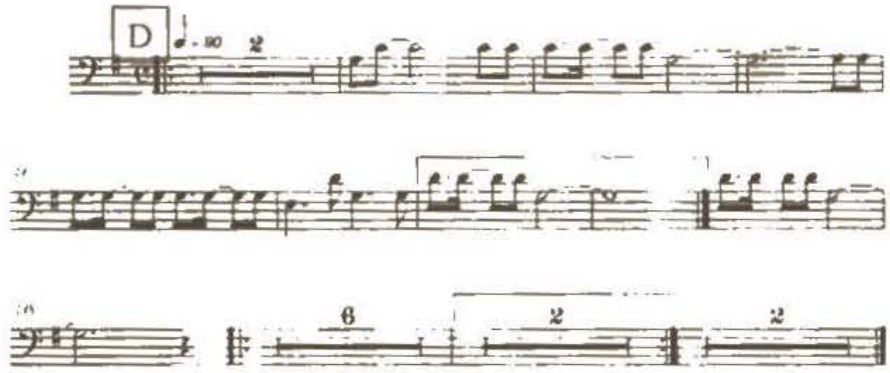


Pouring of Libation

Contrabass Clarinet



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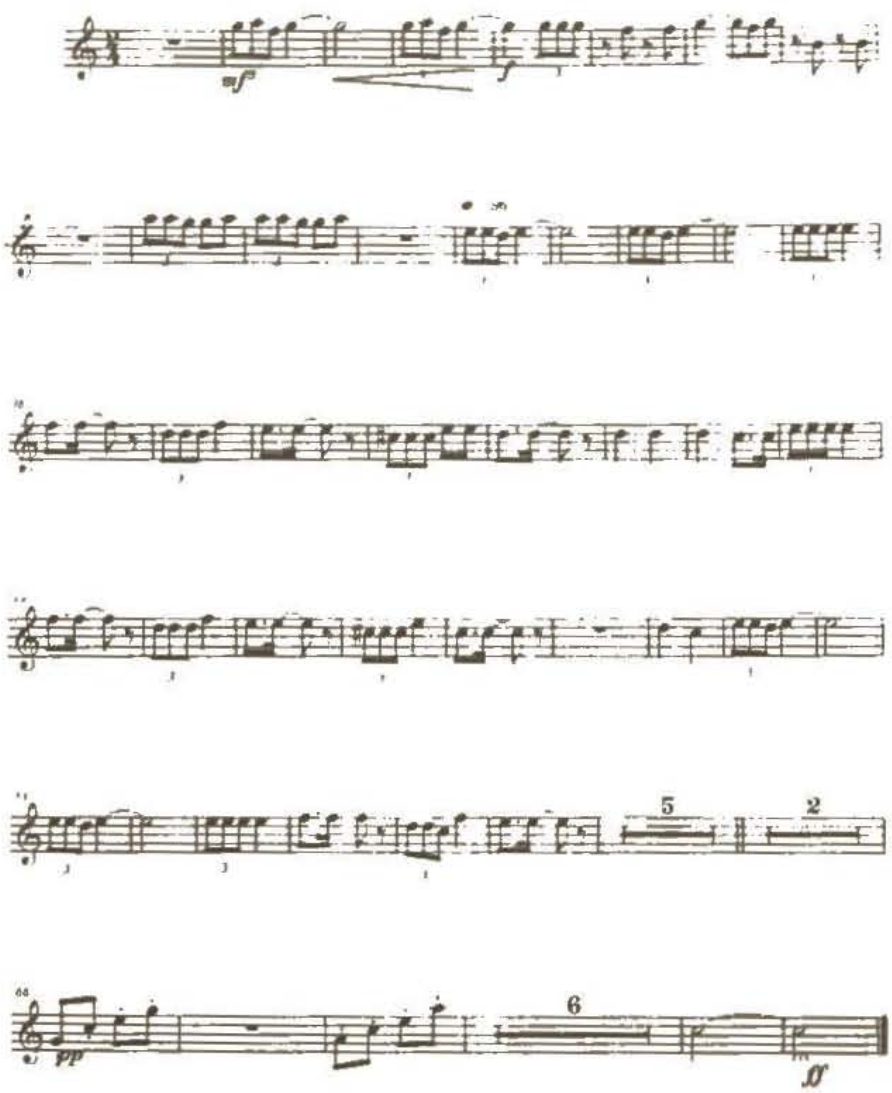
Alto Sax.

Greetings of Bereaved



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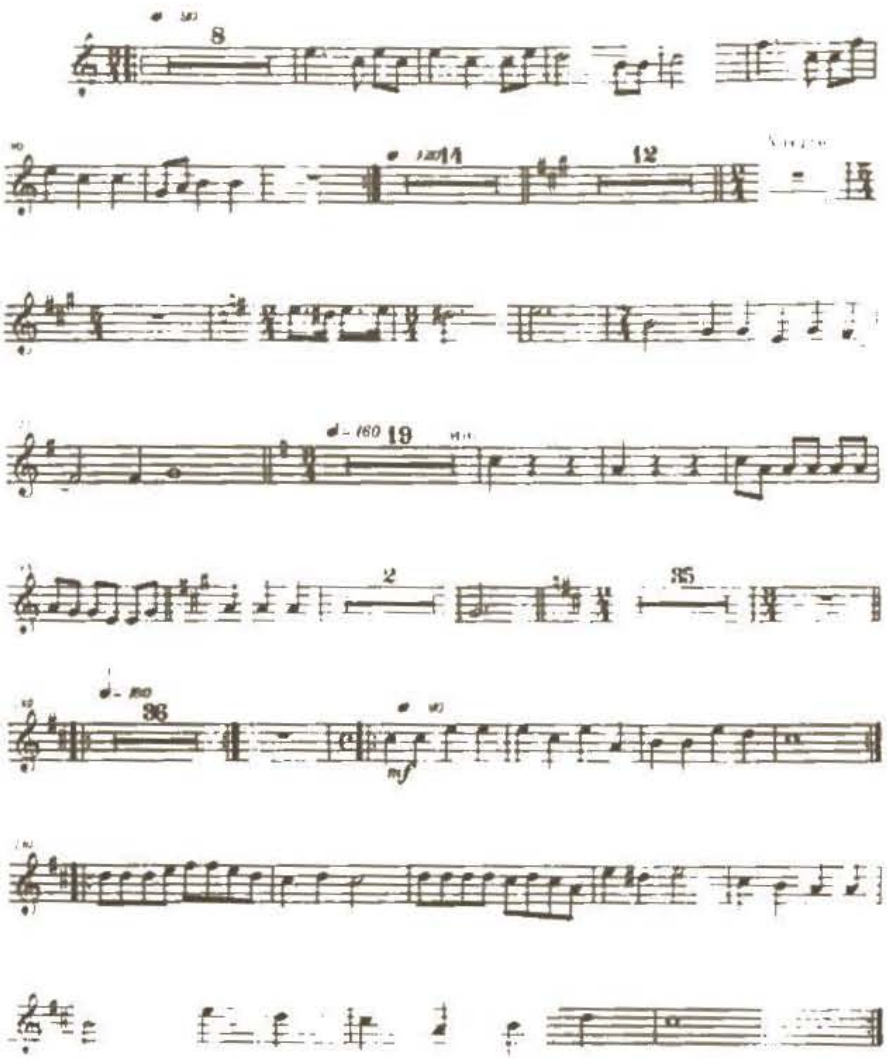
Alto Sax

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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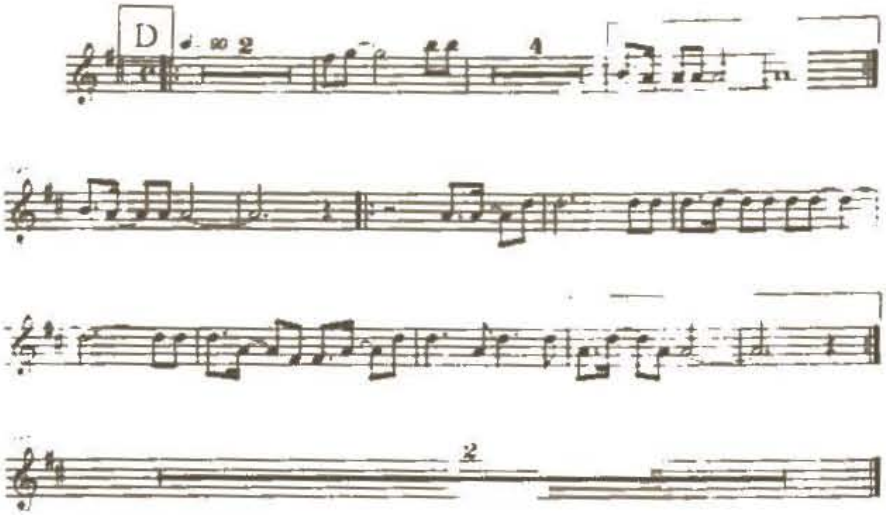
Pouring of Libation

Alto Sax.



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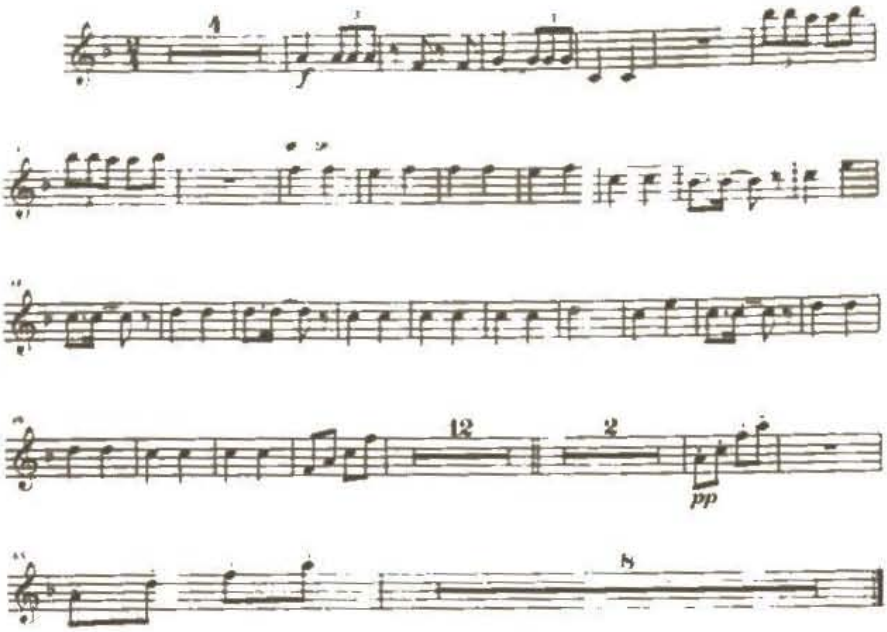
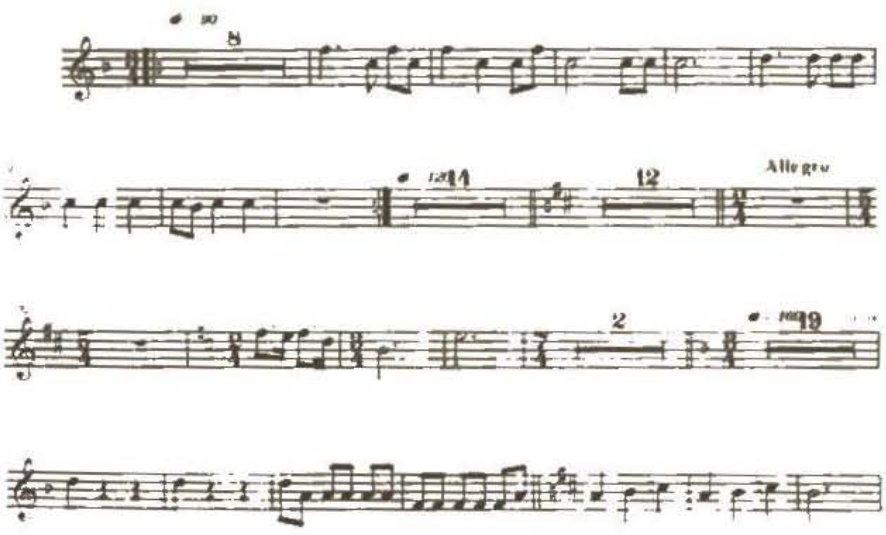
Tenor Sax.

Greetings of Bereaved



Tenor Sax.

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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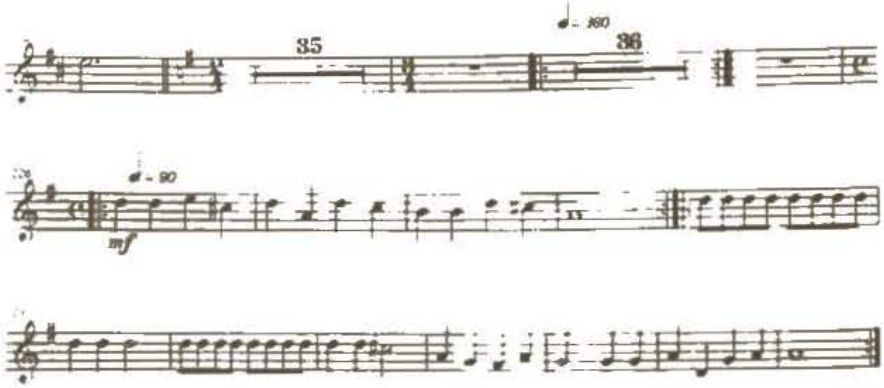
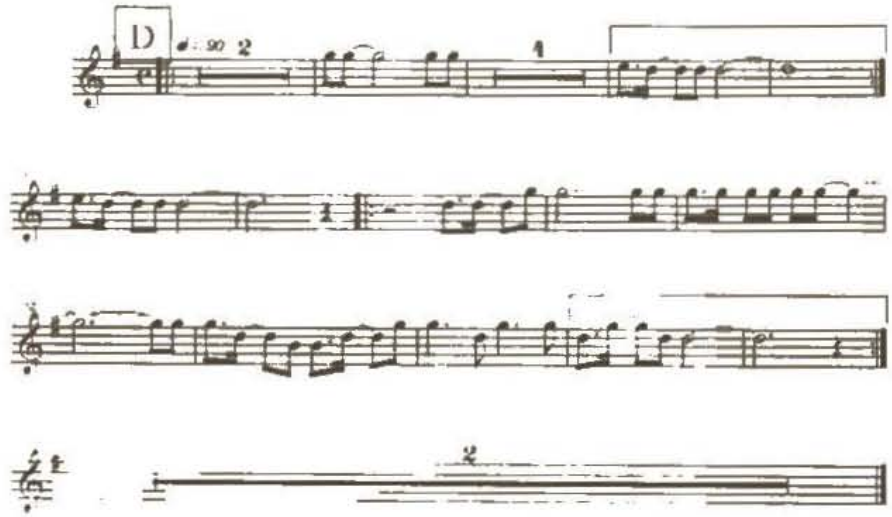


Pouring of Libation

Tenor Sax.



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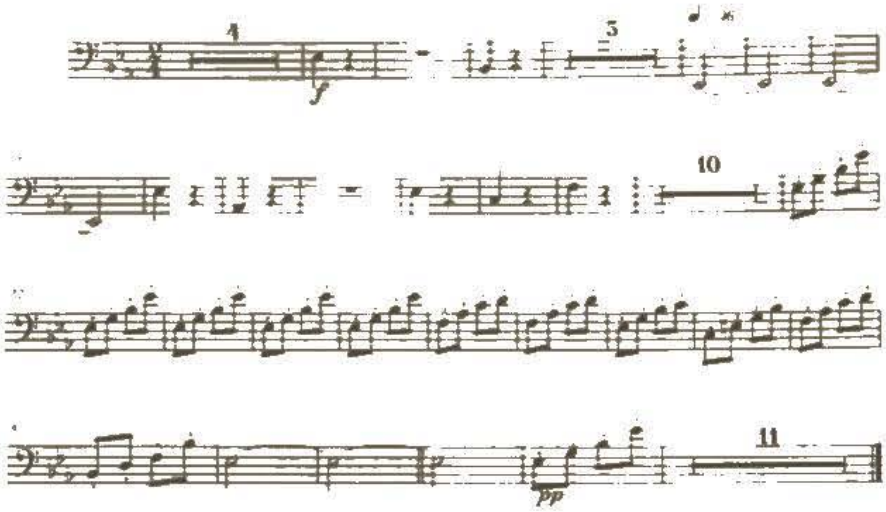
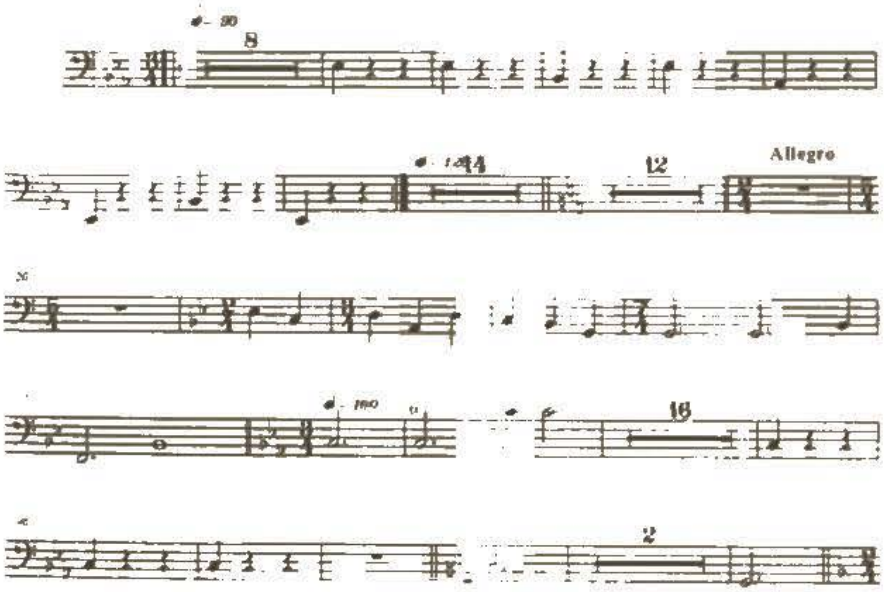
Bassoon

Greetings of Bereaved



Bassoon

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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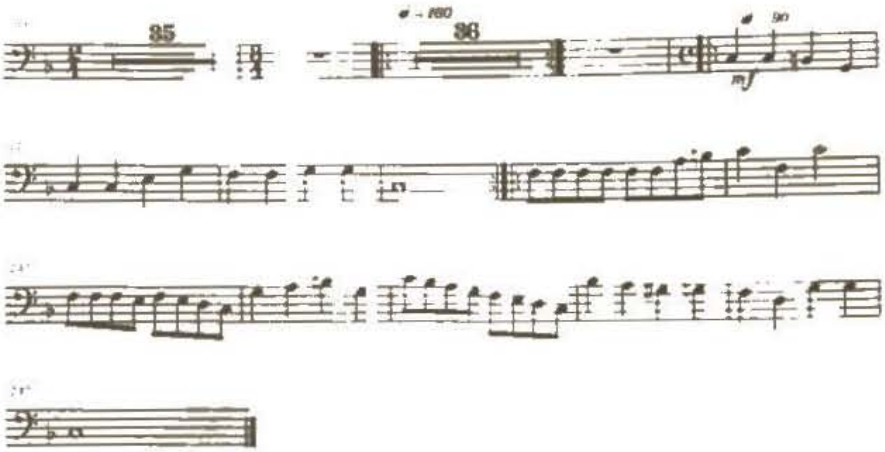
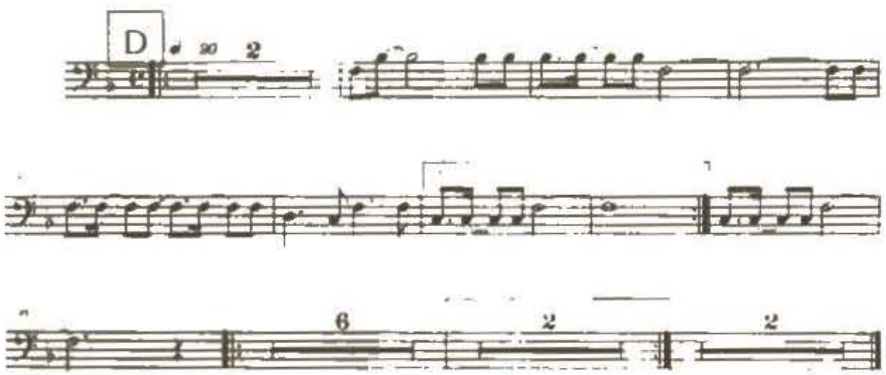


Pouring of Libation

Bassoon



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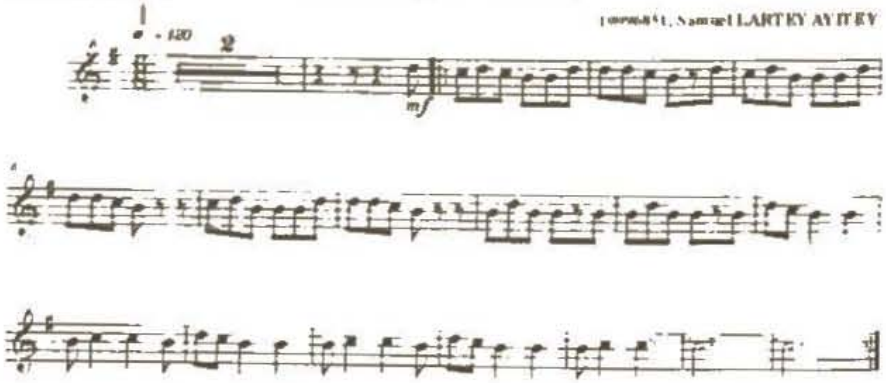
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

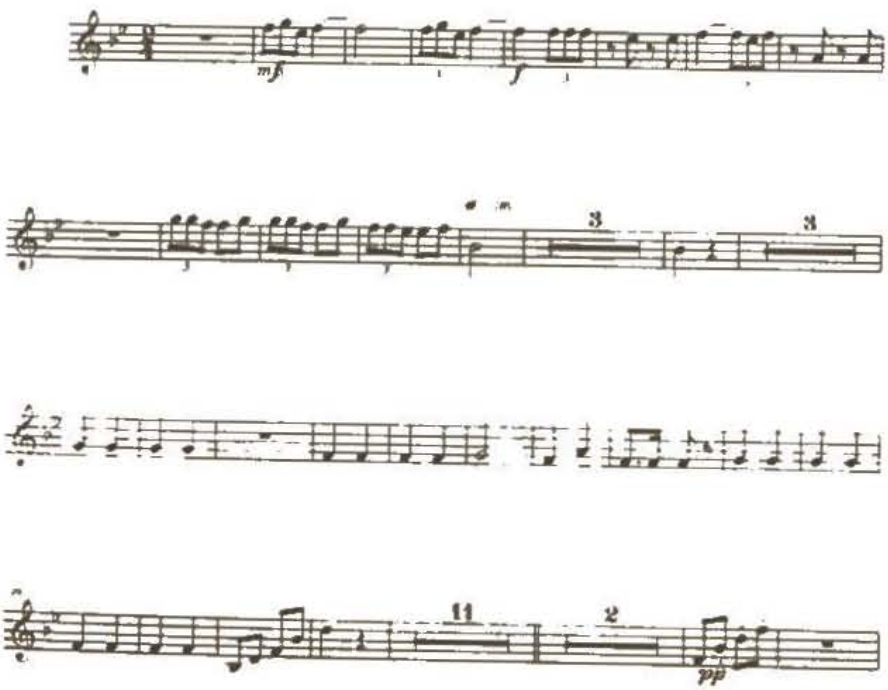
Home gathering

Horn in F 1



Greetings of Bereaved

Horn in F 1



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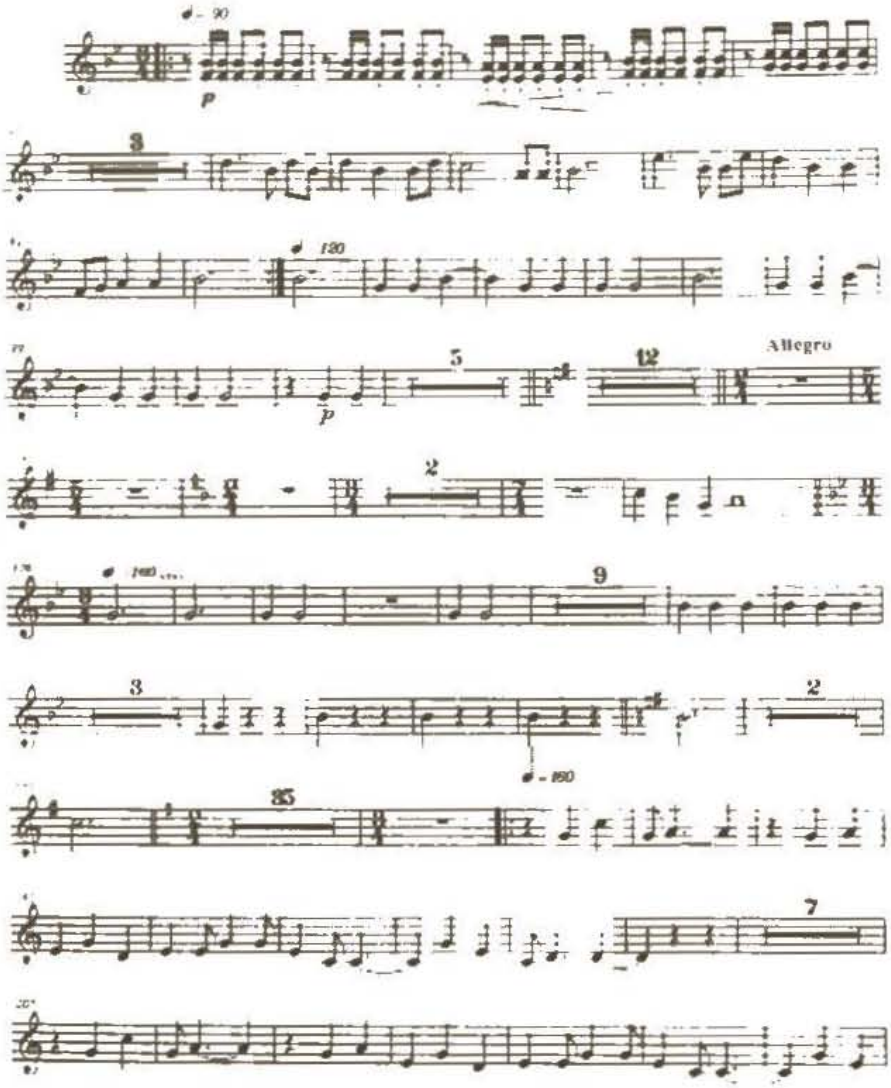
Horn in F 1

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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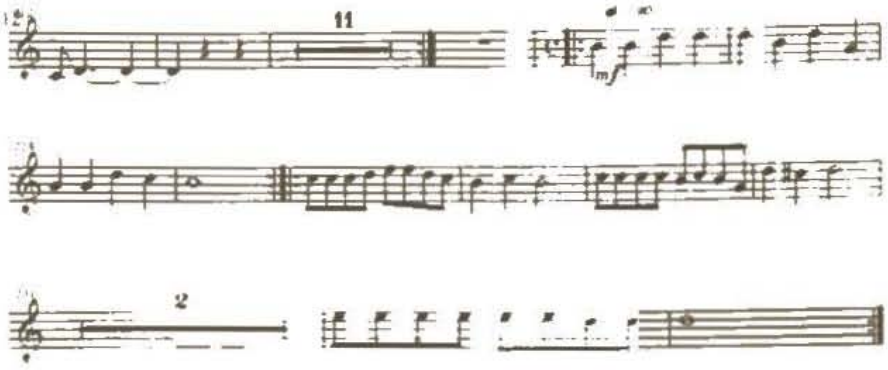
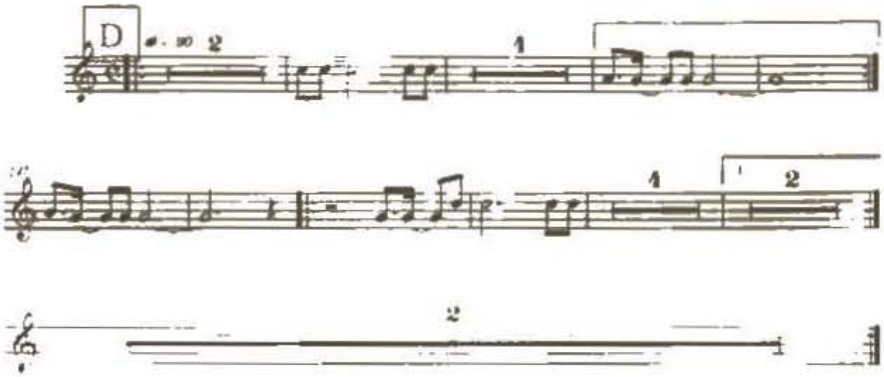


Pouring of Libation

Horn in F 1



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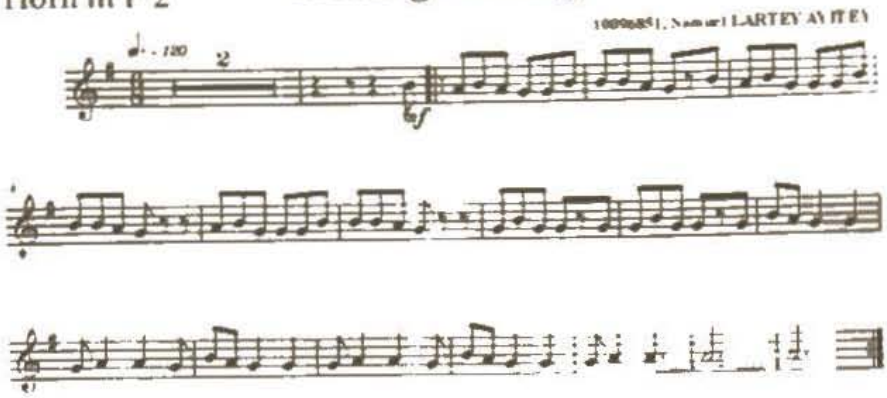
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

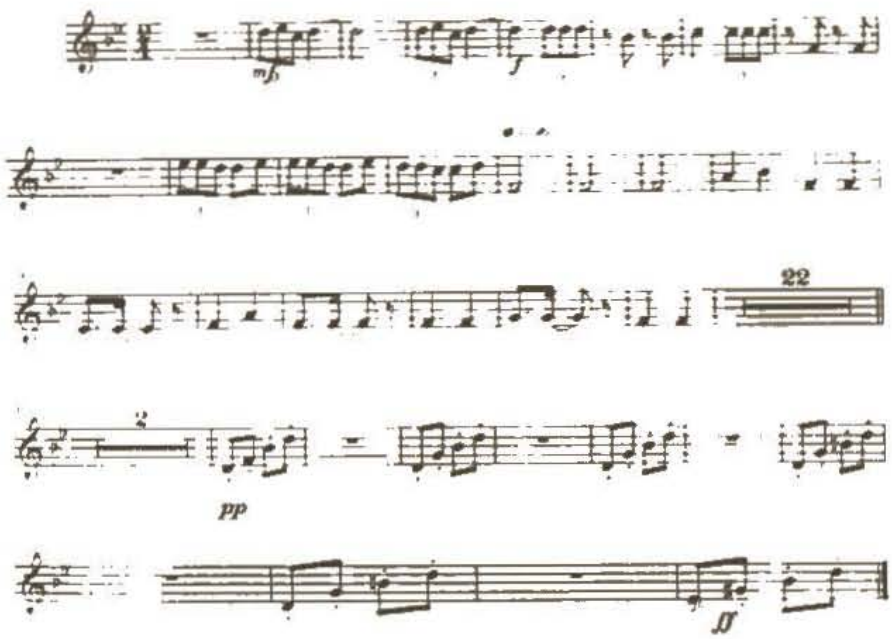
Home gathering

Horn in F 2



Greetings of Bereaved

Horn in F 2



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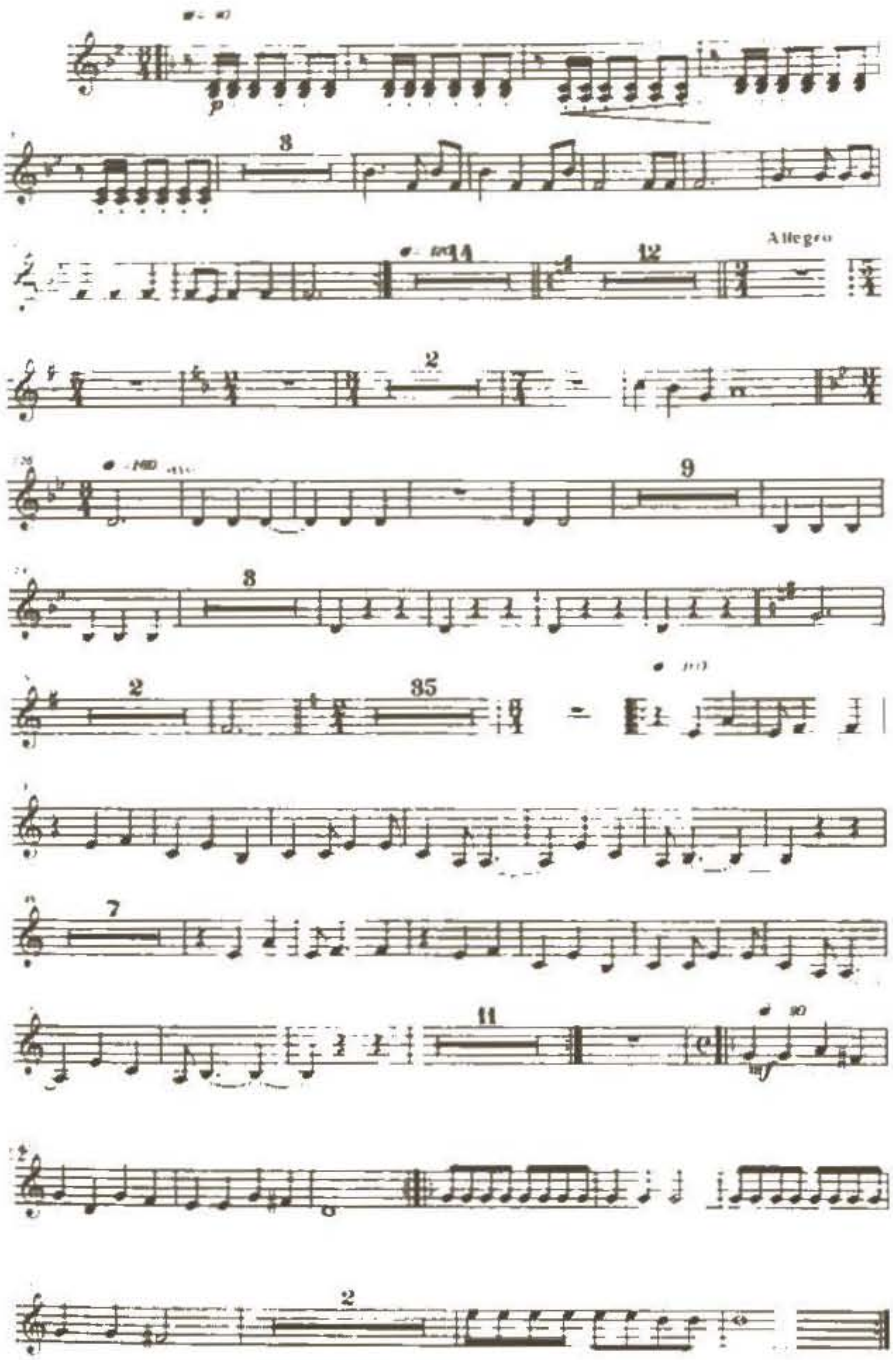
Horn in F 2 **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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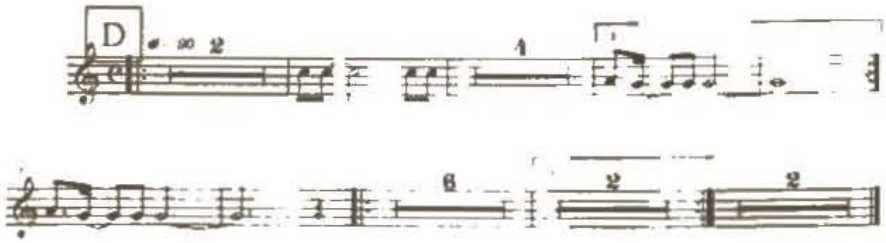
Pouring of Libation

Horn in F 2



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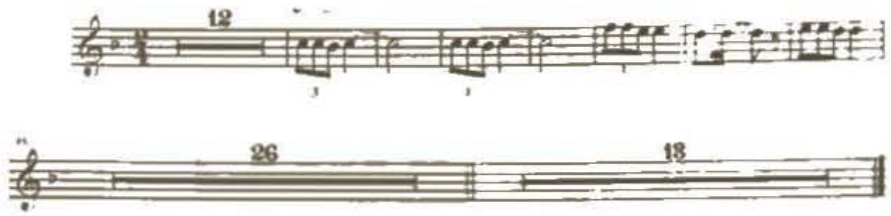
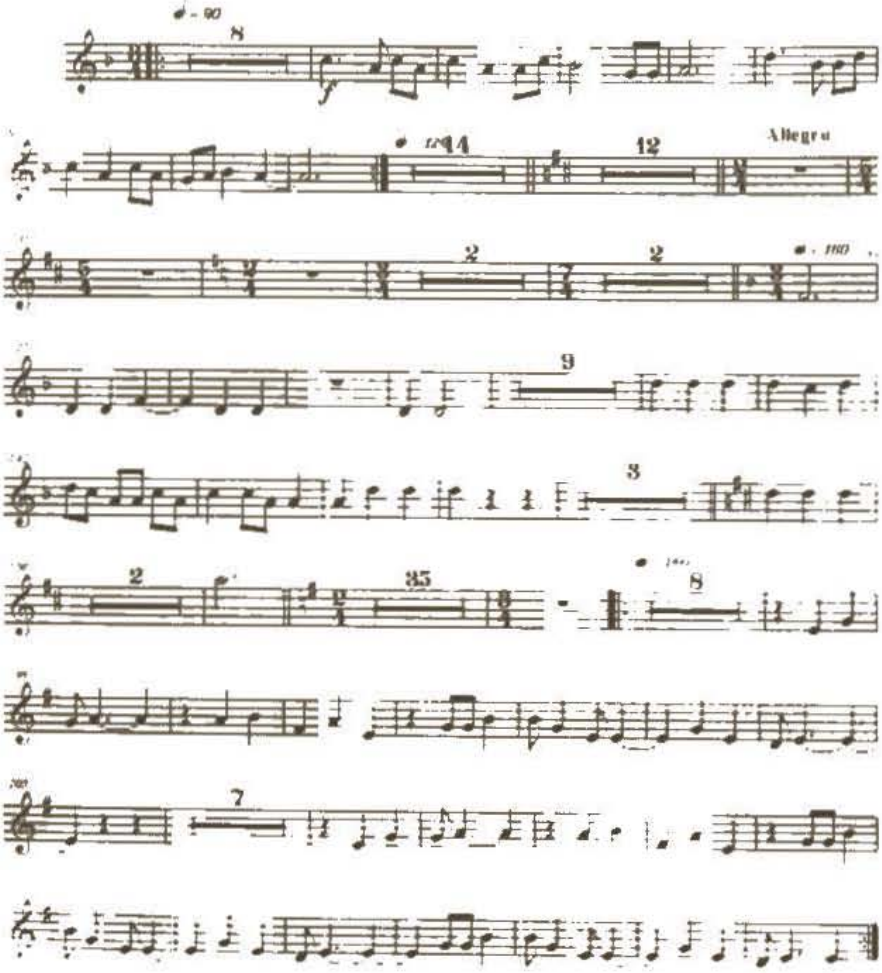


Cornet 1

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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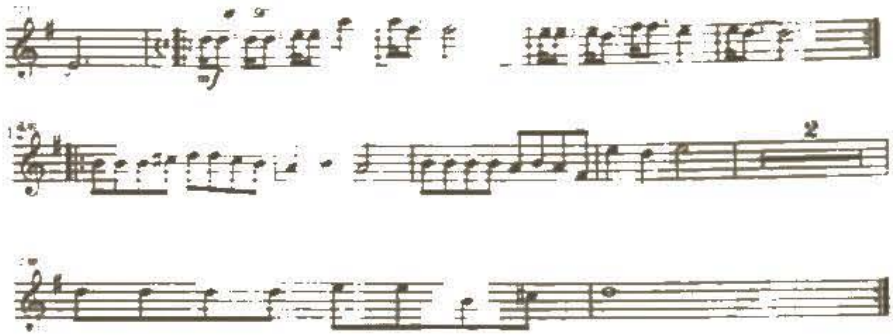
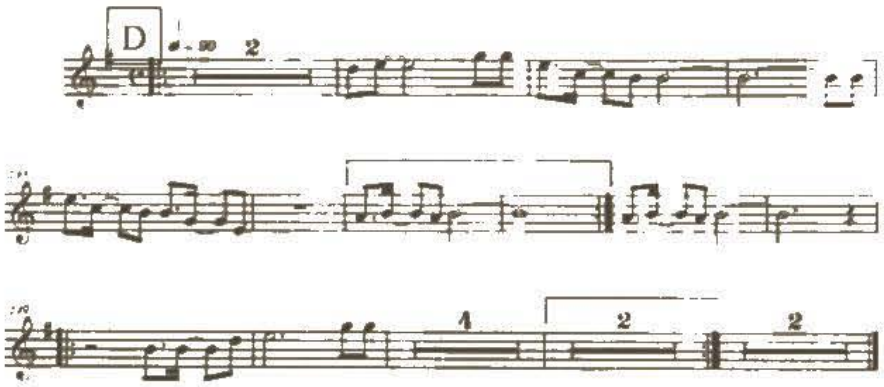


Pouring of Libation

Cornet 1



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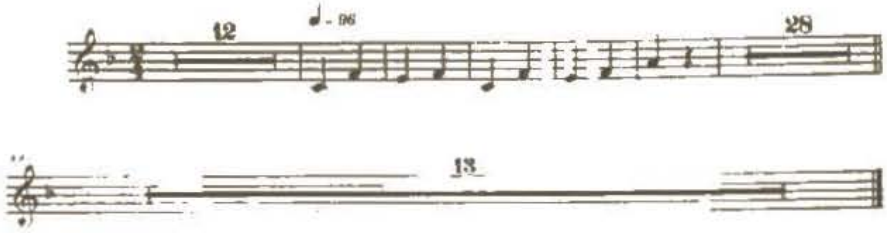
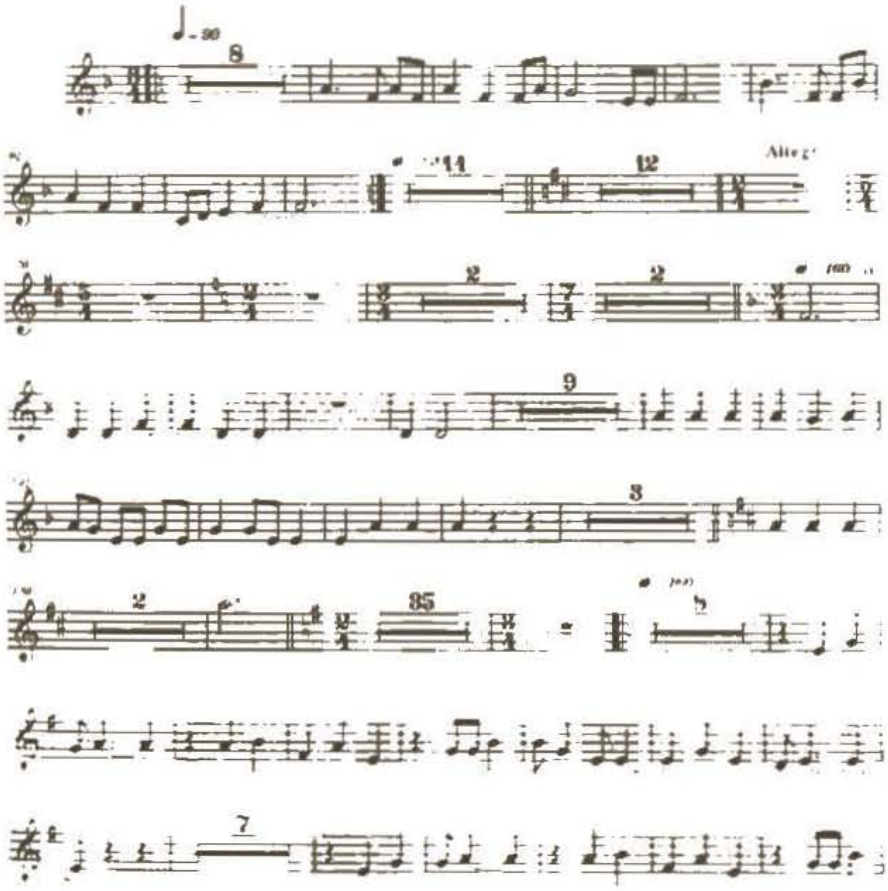
Cornet 2

Greetings of Bereaved



Cornet 2

Rendering of Funeral Songs



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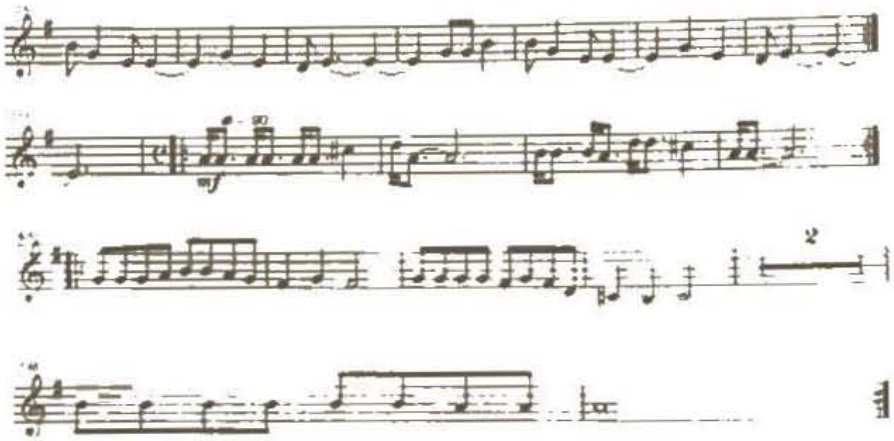
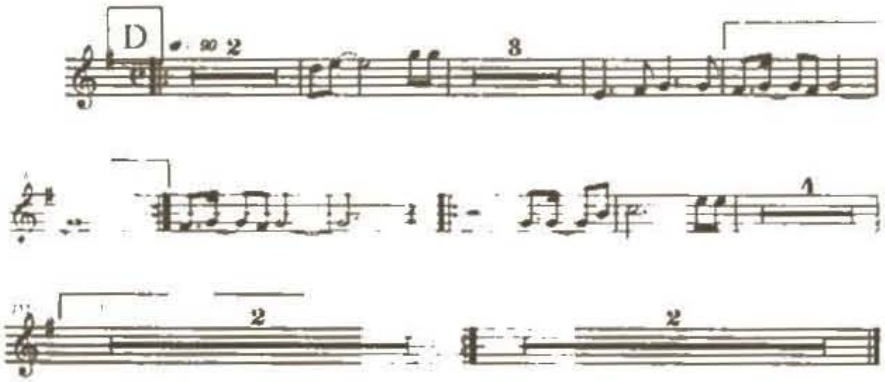


Pouring of Libation

Cornet 2



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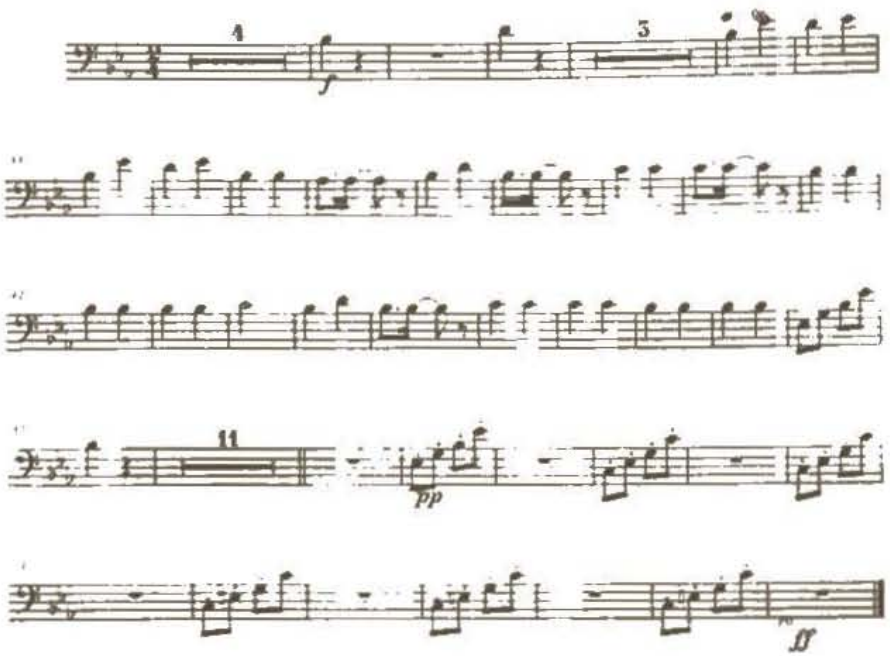
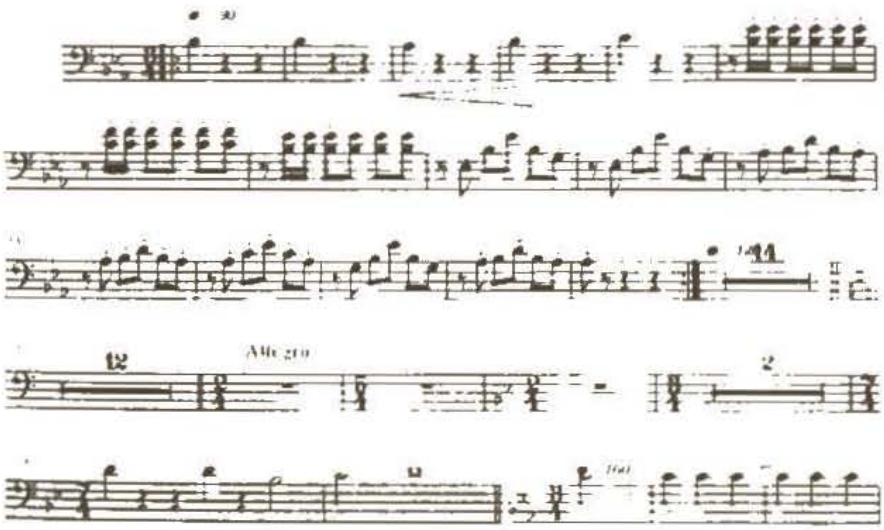
Trombone 1 **Greetings of Bereaved**



Trombone 1 **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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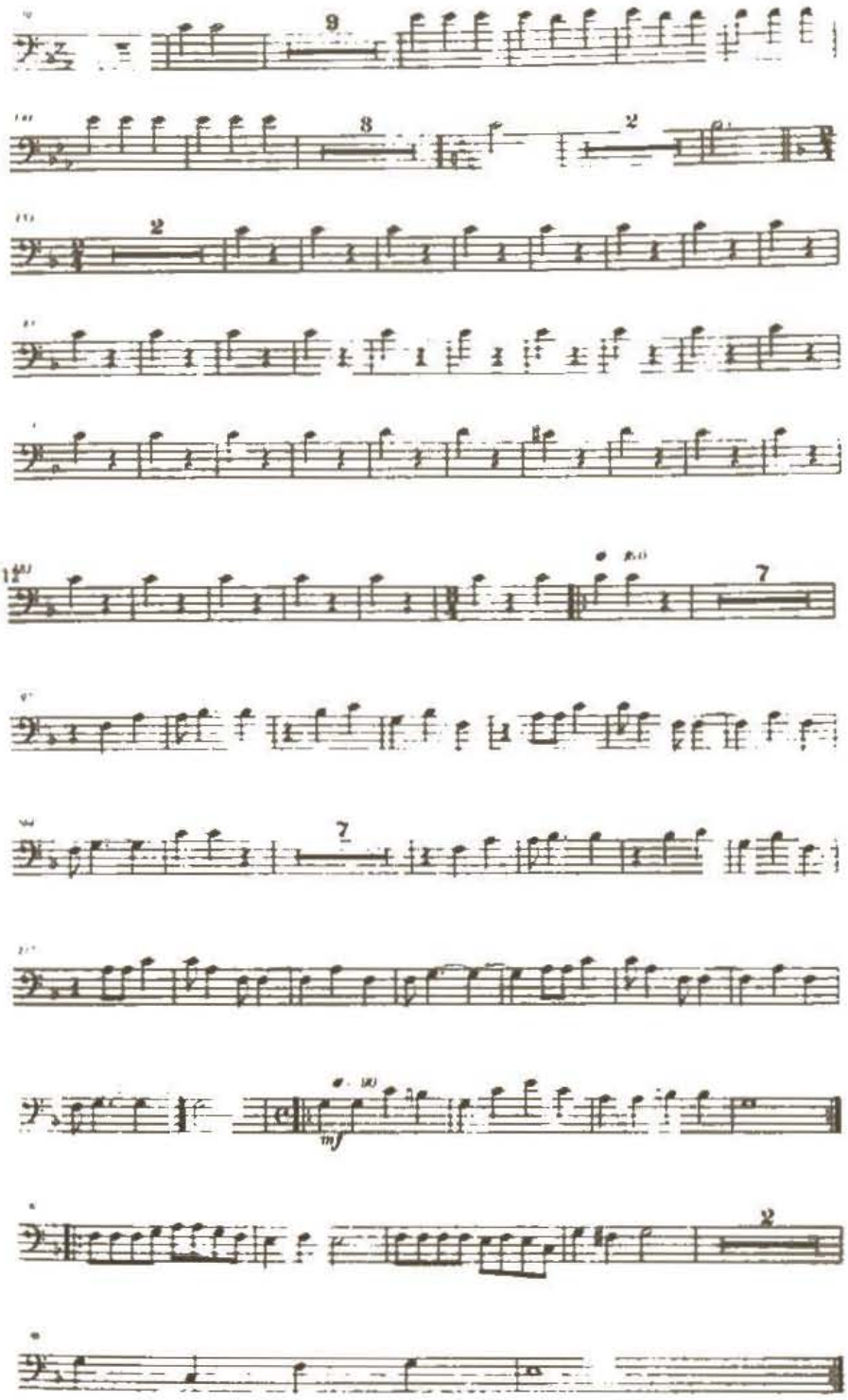

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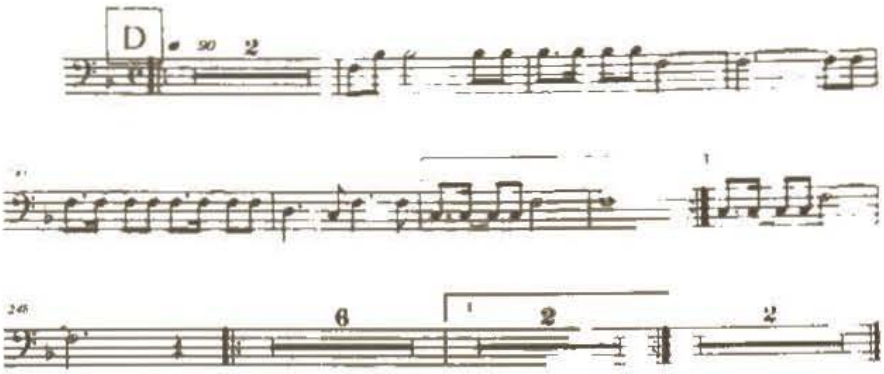
Pouring of Libation

Trombone 1



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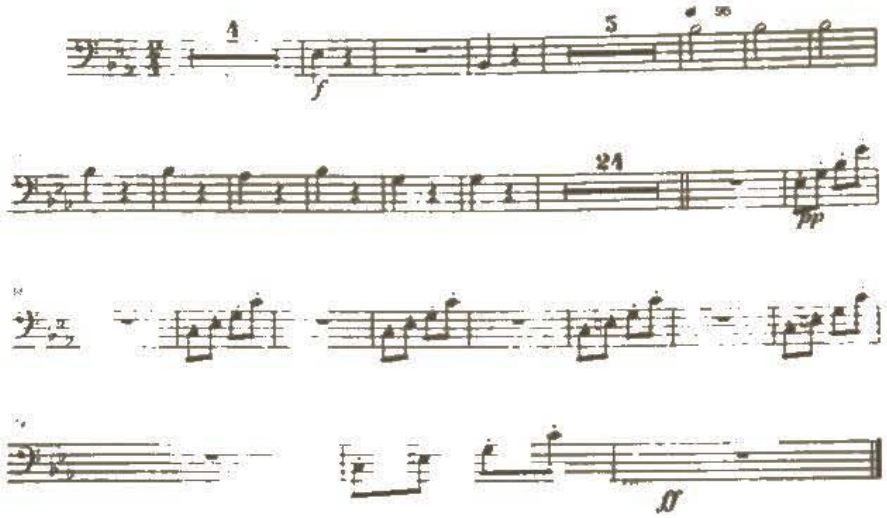
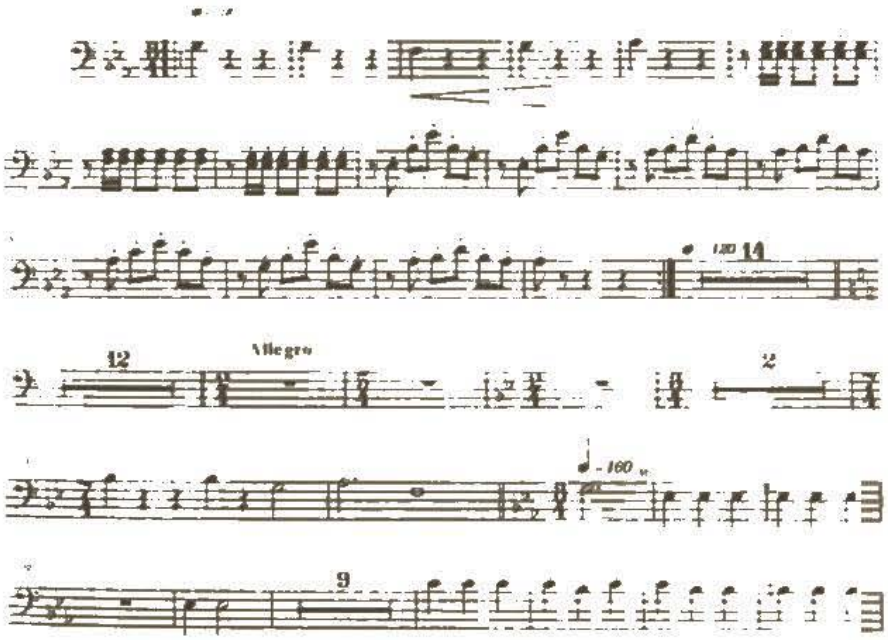
Trombone 2 **Greetings of Bereaved**



Trombone 2 **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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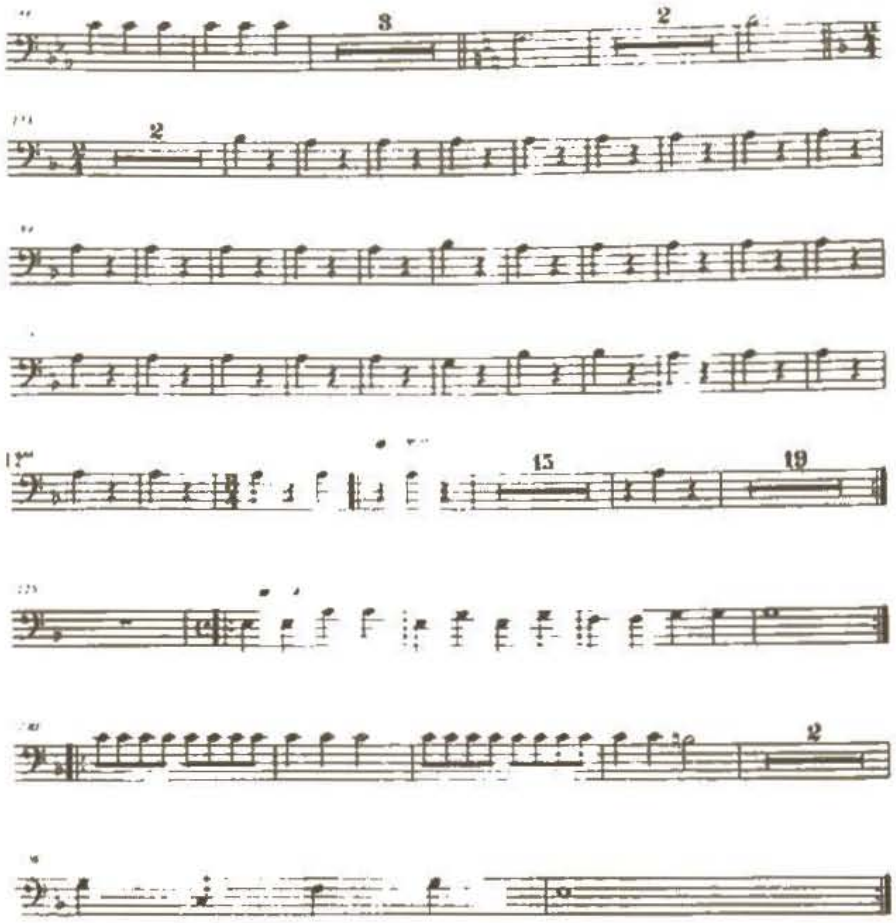
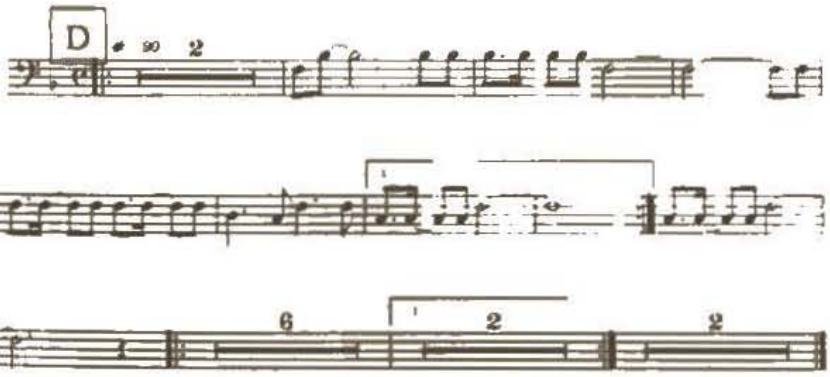


Pouring of Libation

Trombone 2



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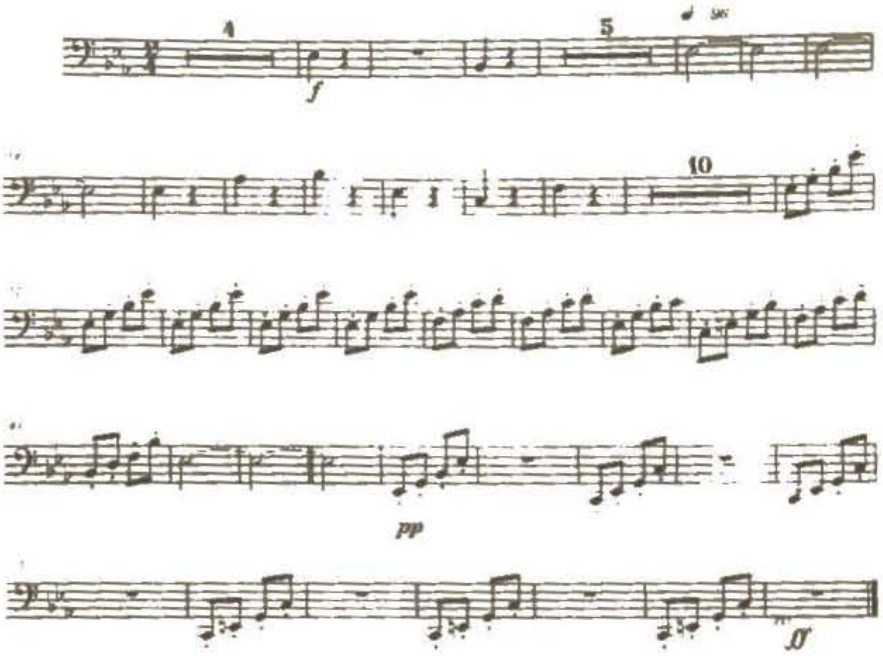
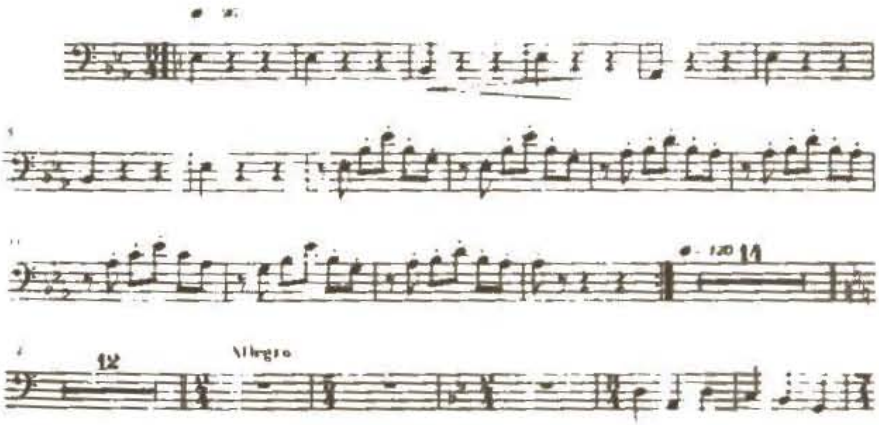
Euphonium **Greetings of Bereaved**



Euphonium **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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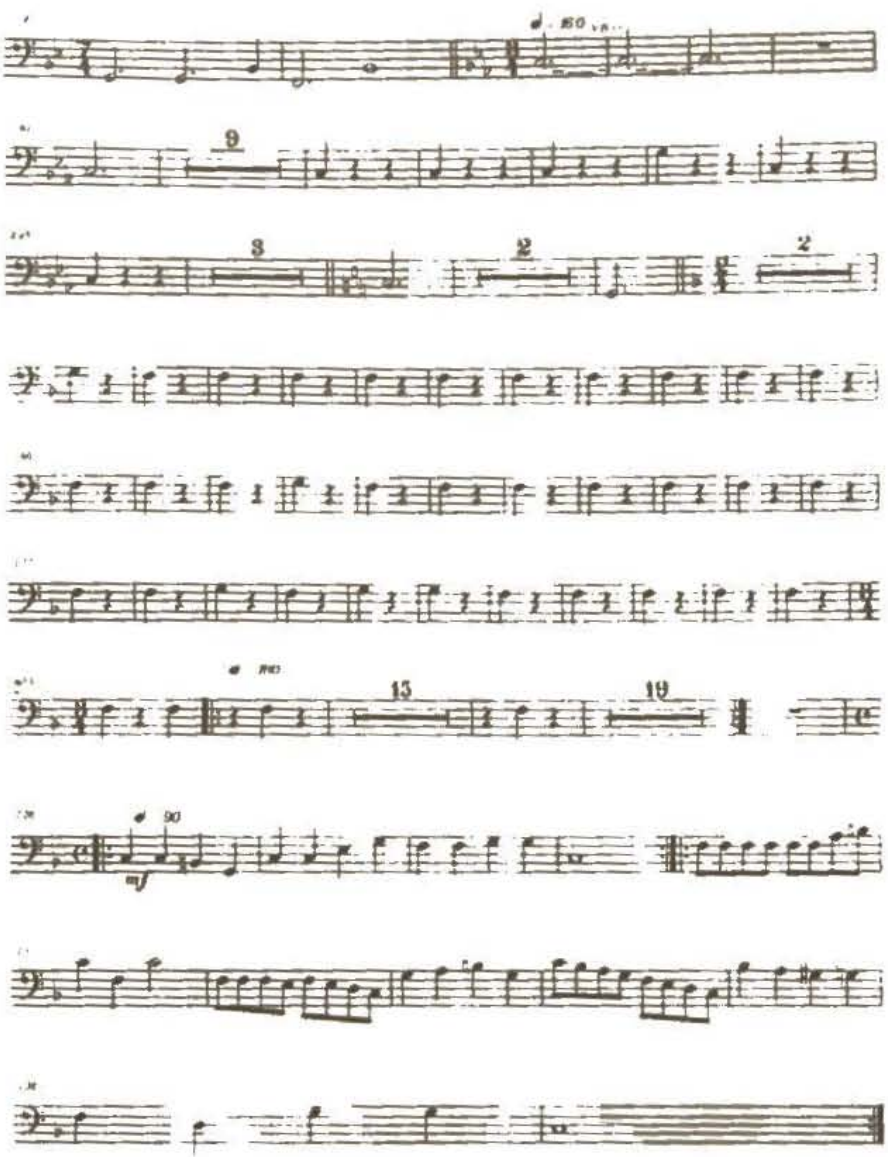

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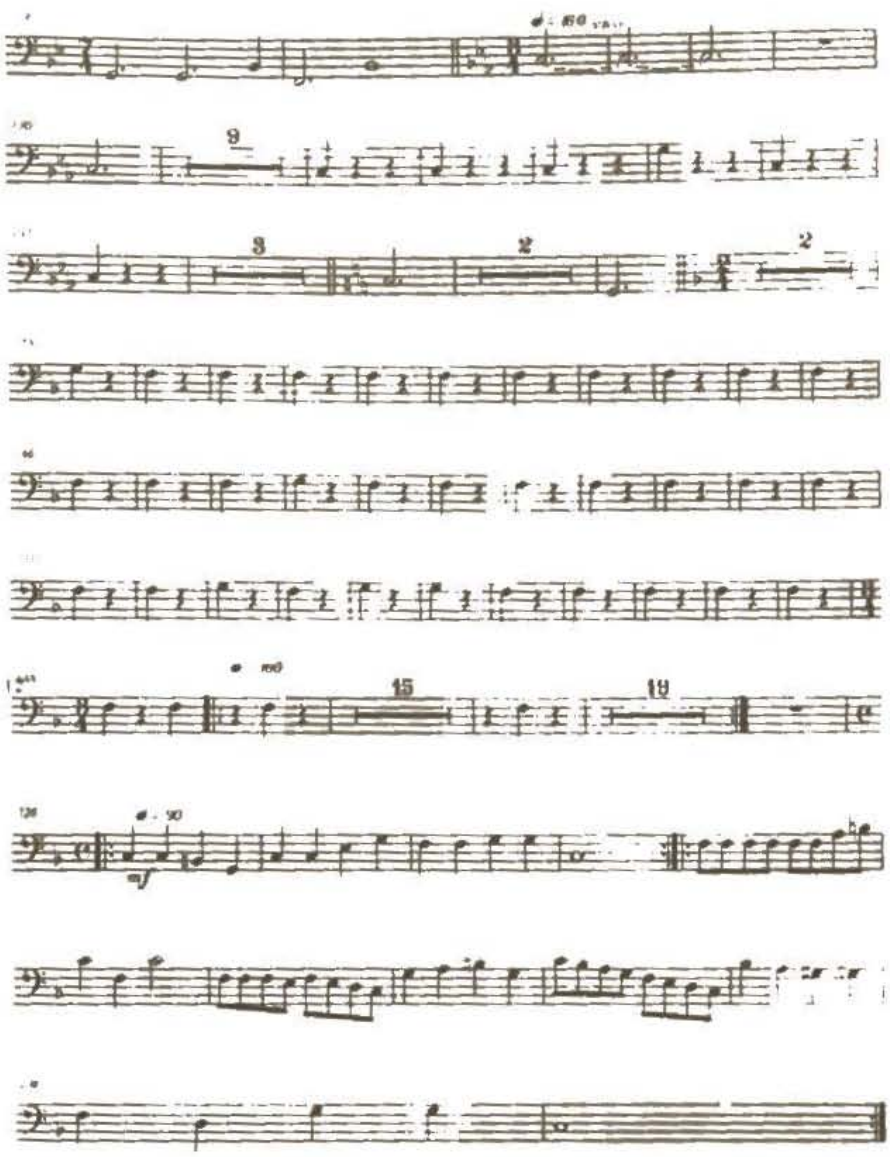

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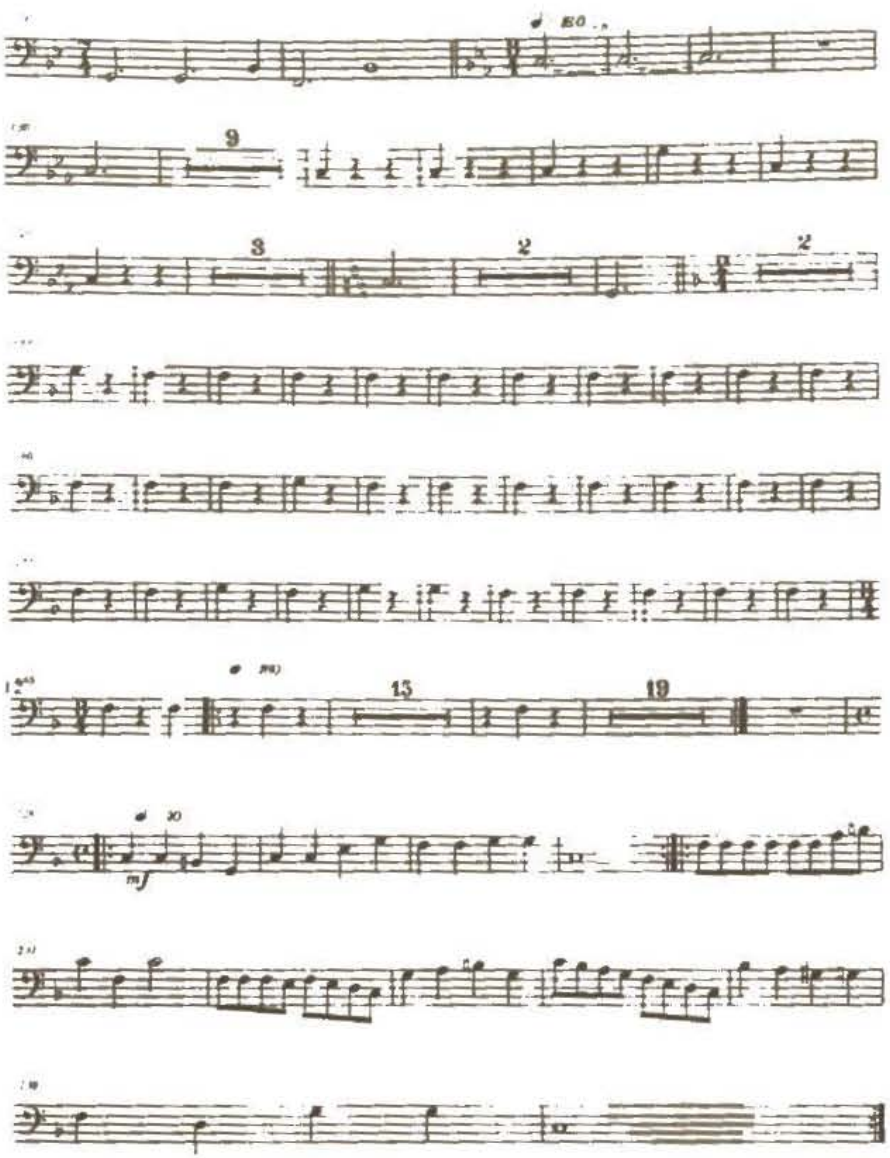

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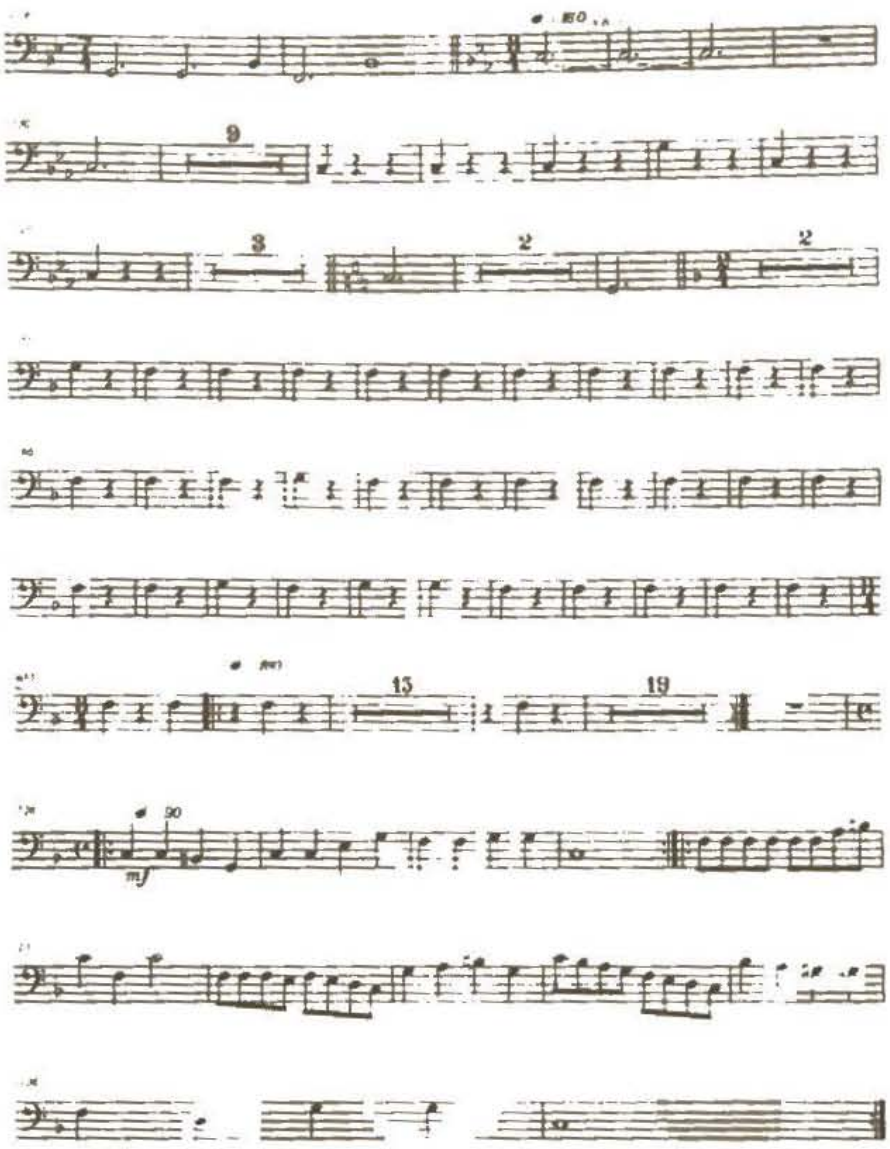

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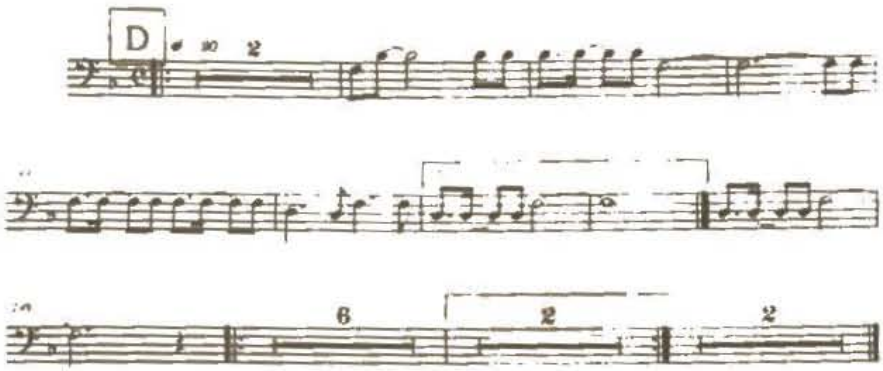
Pouring of Libation

Euphonium



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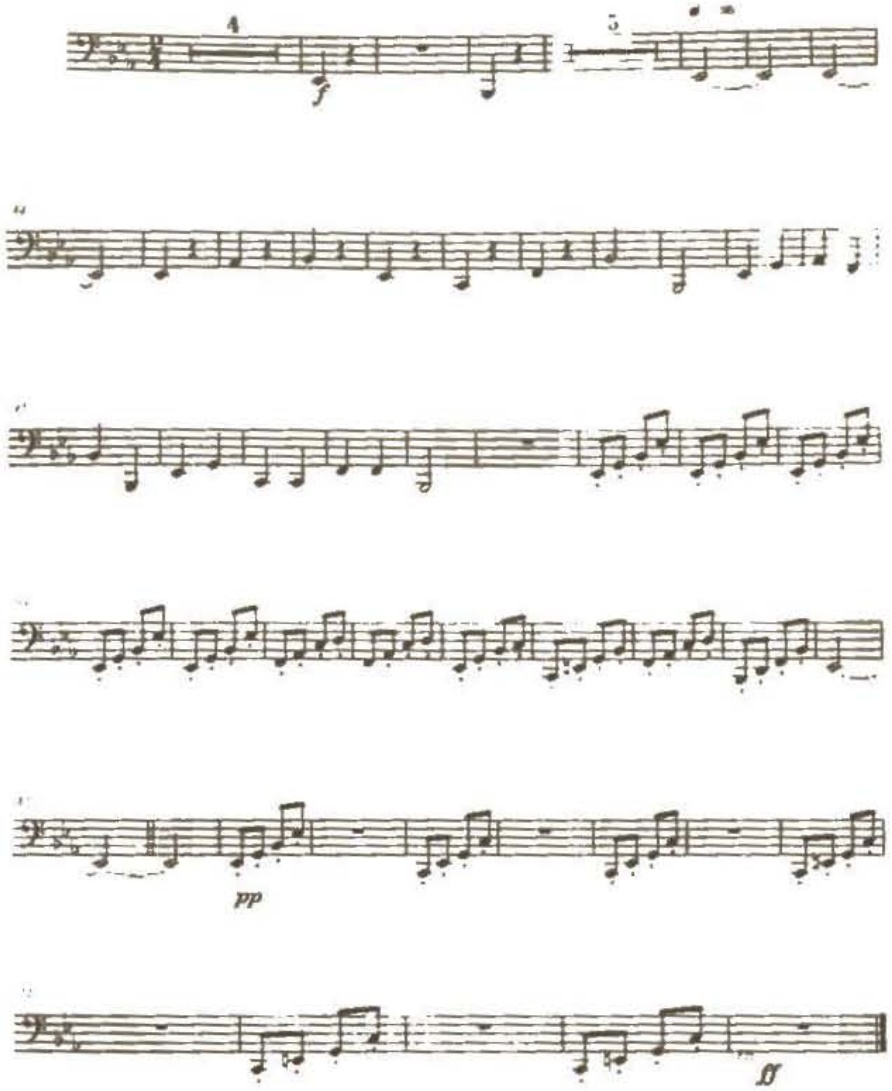
Bass Tuba

Greetings of Bereaved



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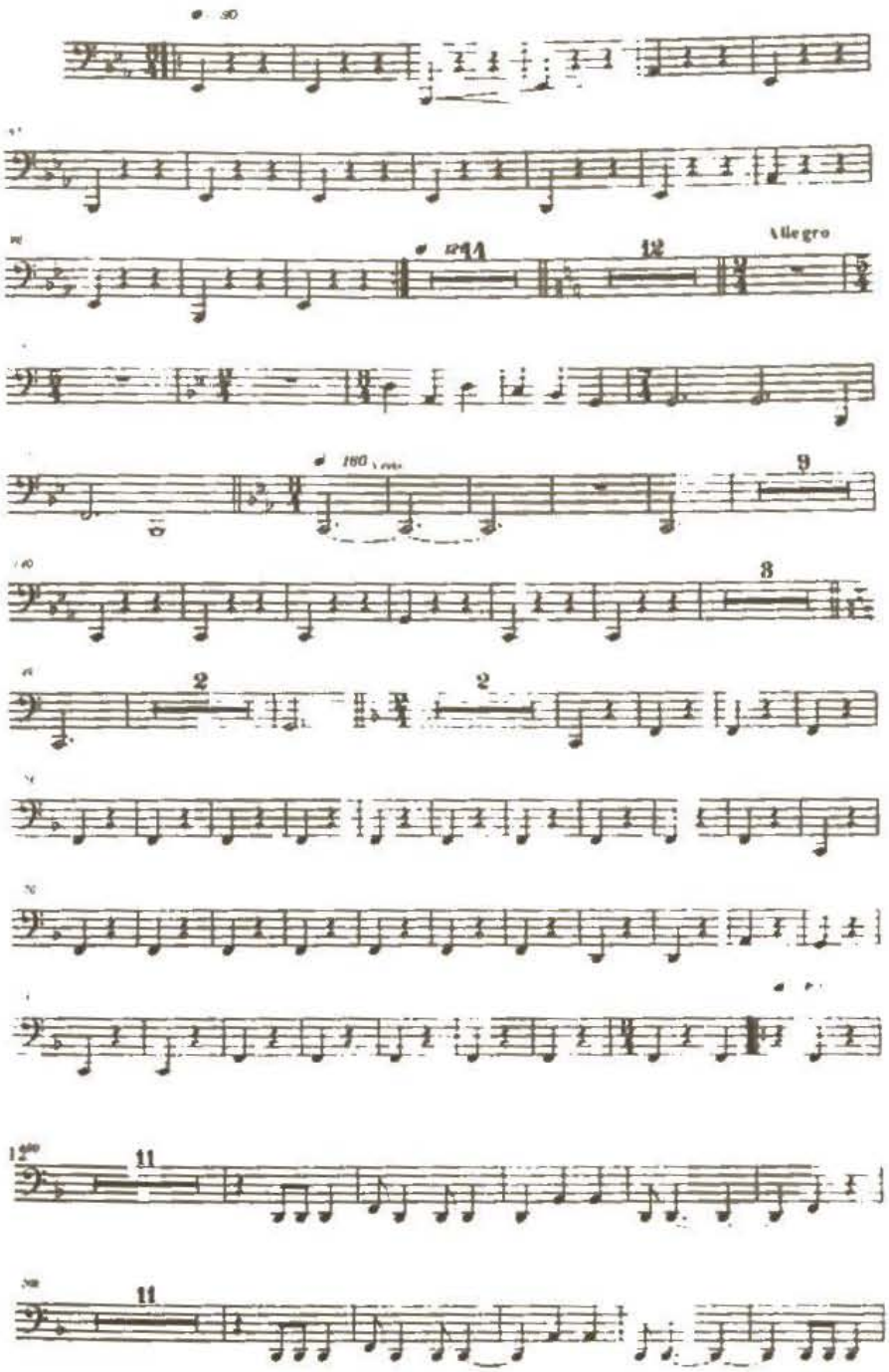
Bass Tuba **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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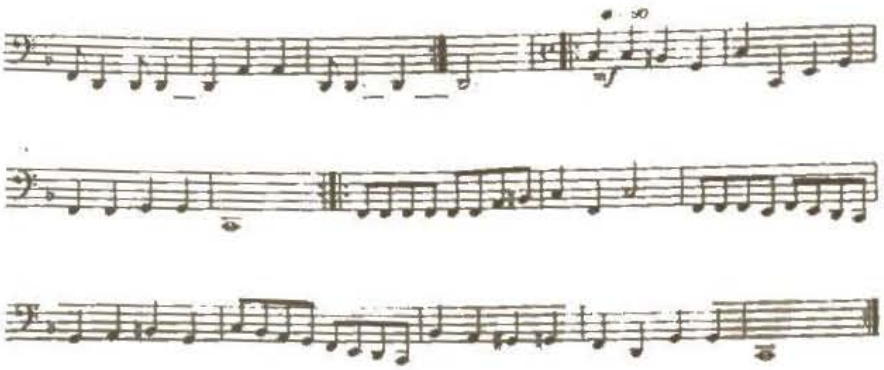

Pouring of Libation

Bass Tuba

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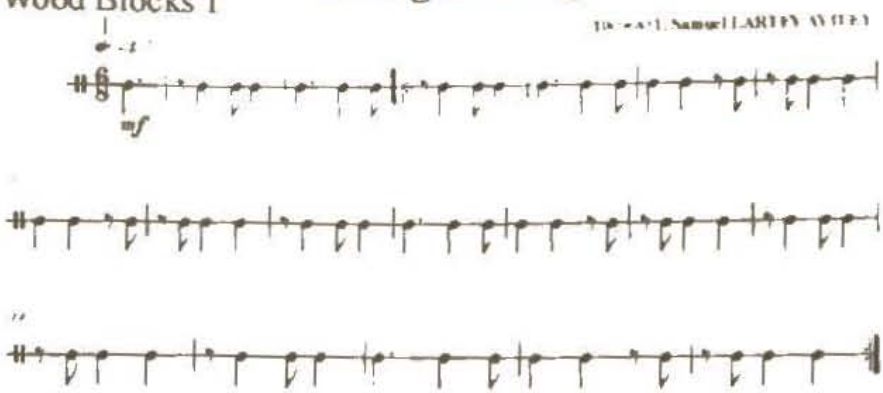
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

Home gathering

Wood Blocks 1



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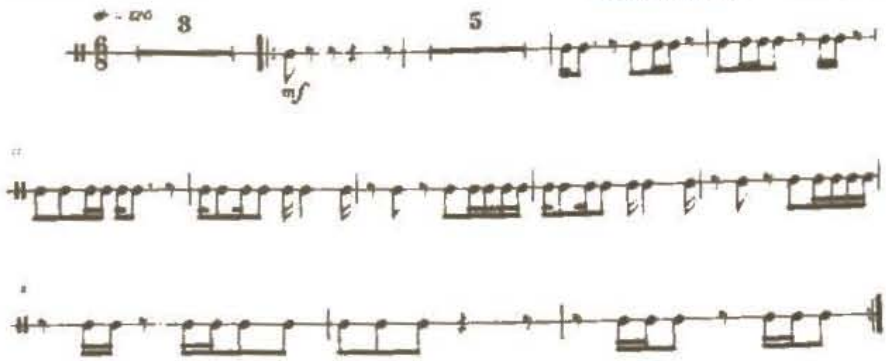
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

Home gathering

Wood Blocks 2

10090851. Samuel LARTEY AYITEY



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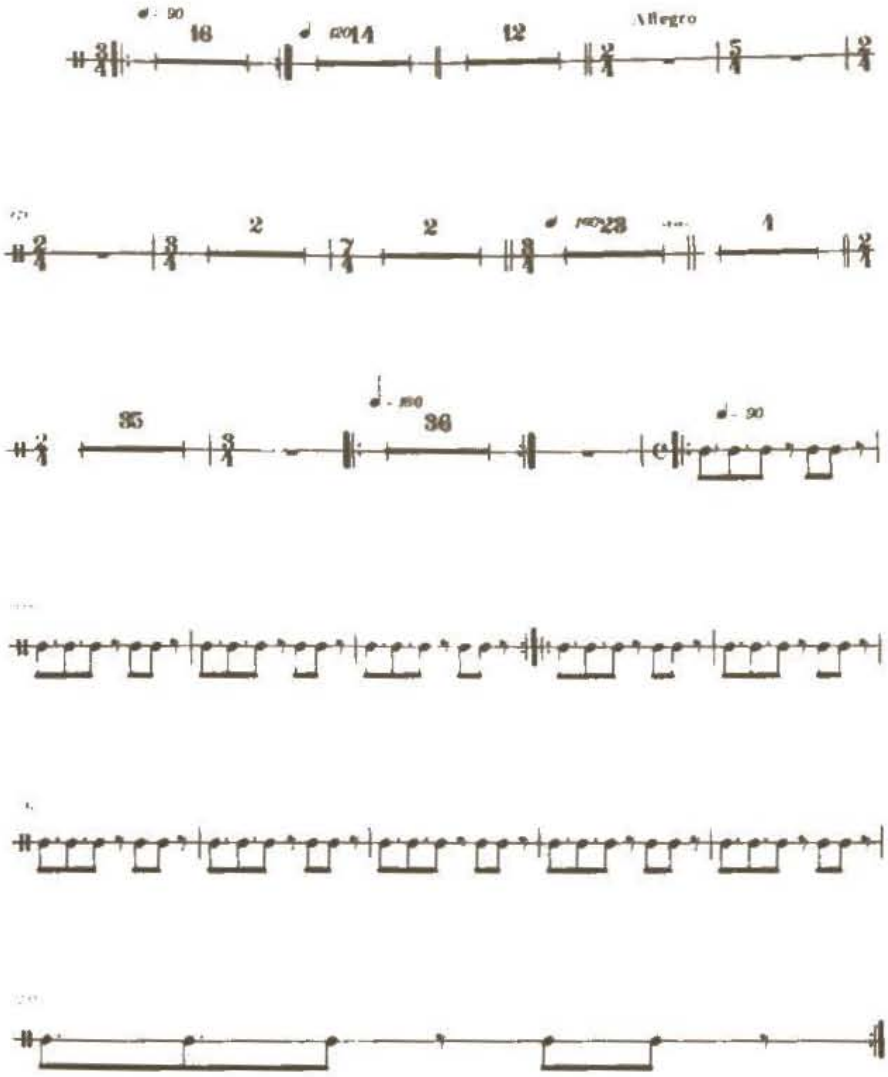
Tenor Drum **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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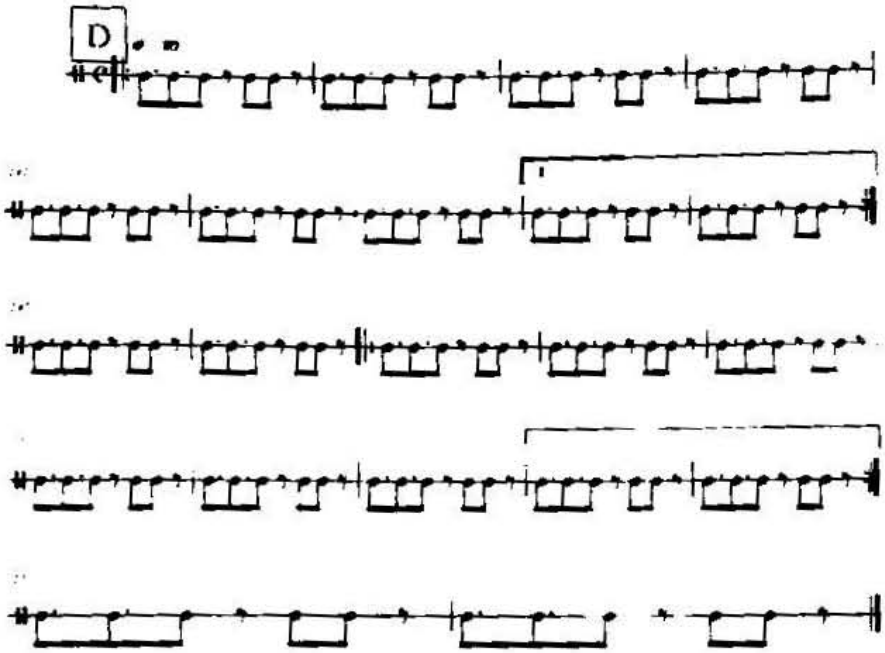
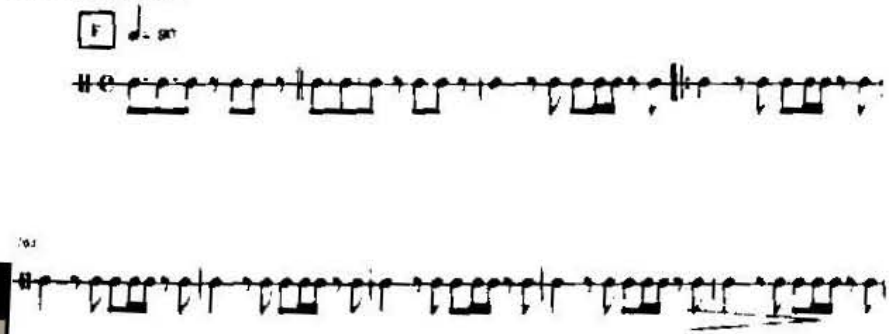
Pouring of Libation

Tenor Drum



Departure of Sympathisers

Tenor Drum



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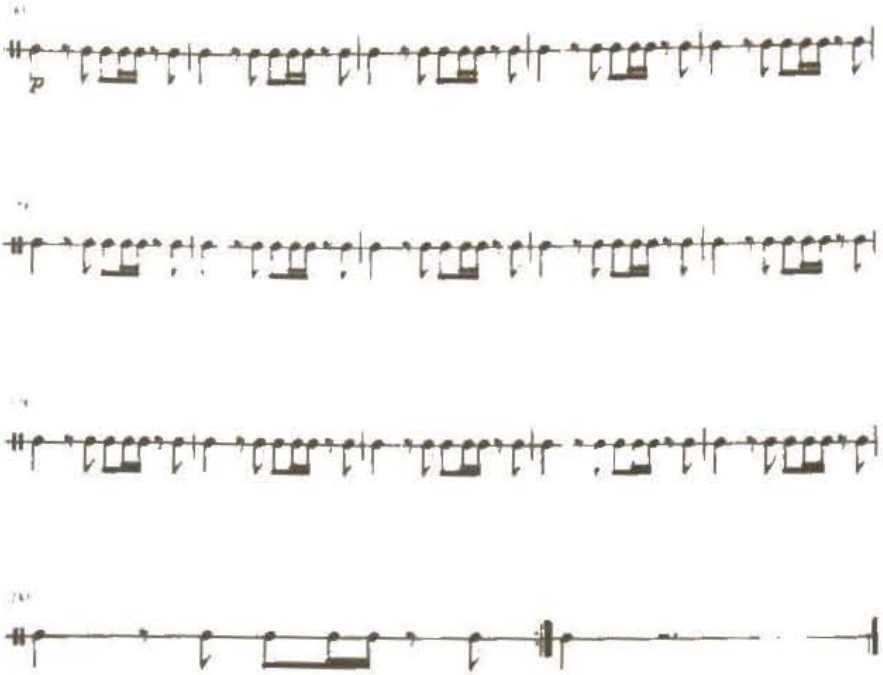

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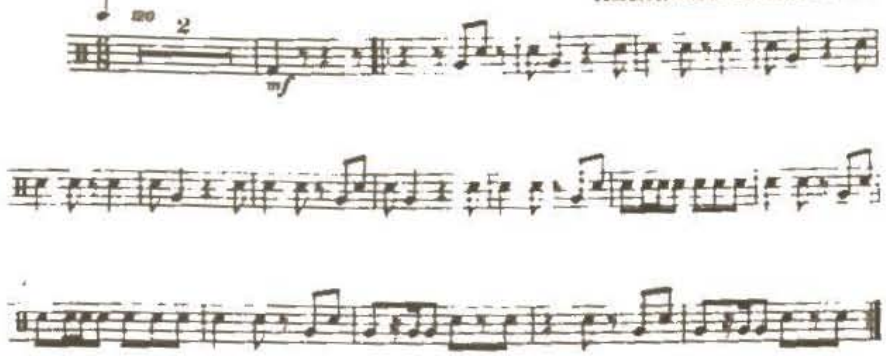
LIBATION CHANT FOR NII

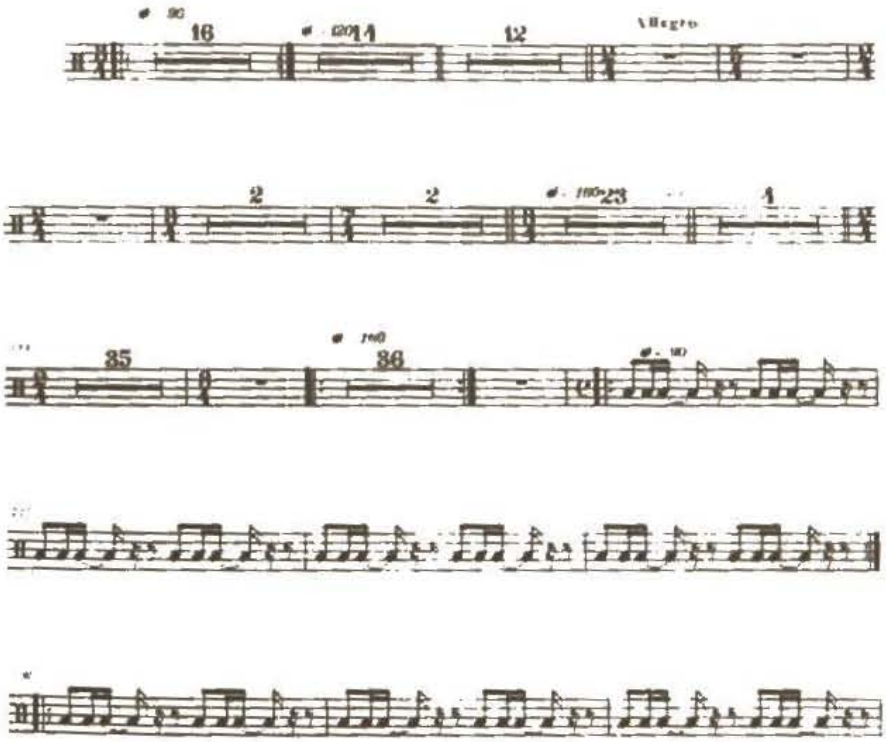
Home gathering

Tom Toms

10096851, Samuel LARTEY AYITEY



Tom Toms 1 **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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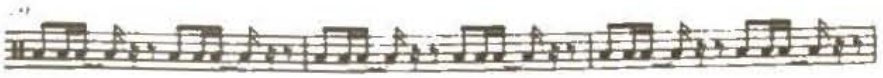
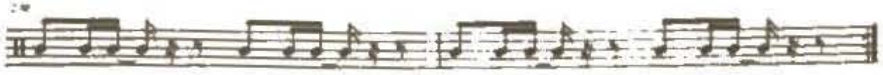
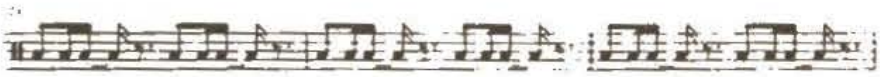
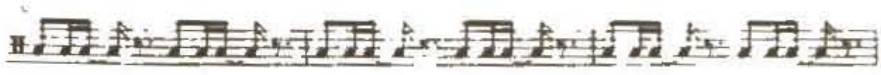




Pouring of Libation

Tom Toms 1





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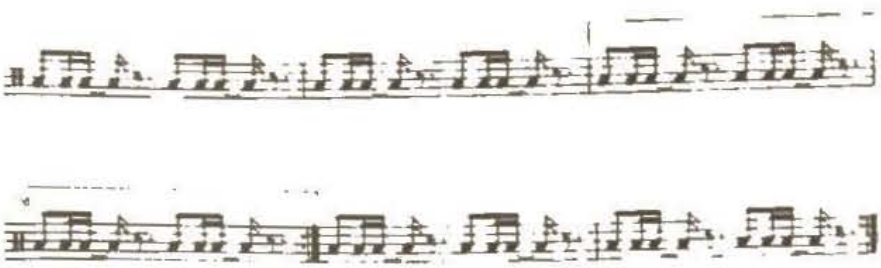
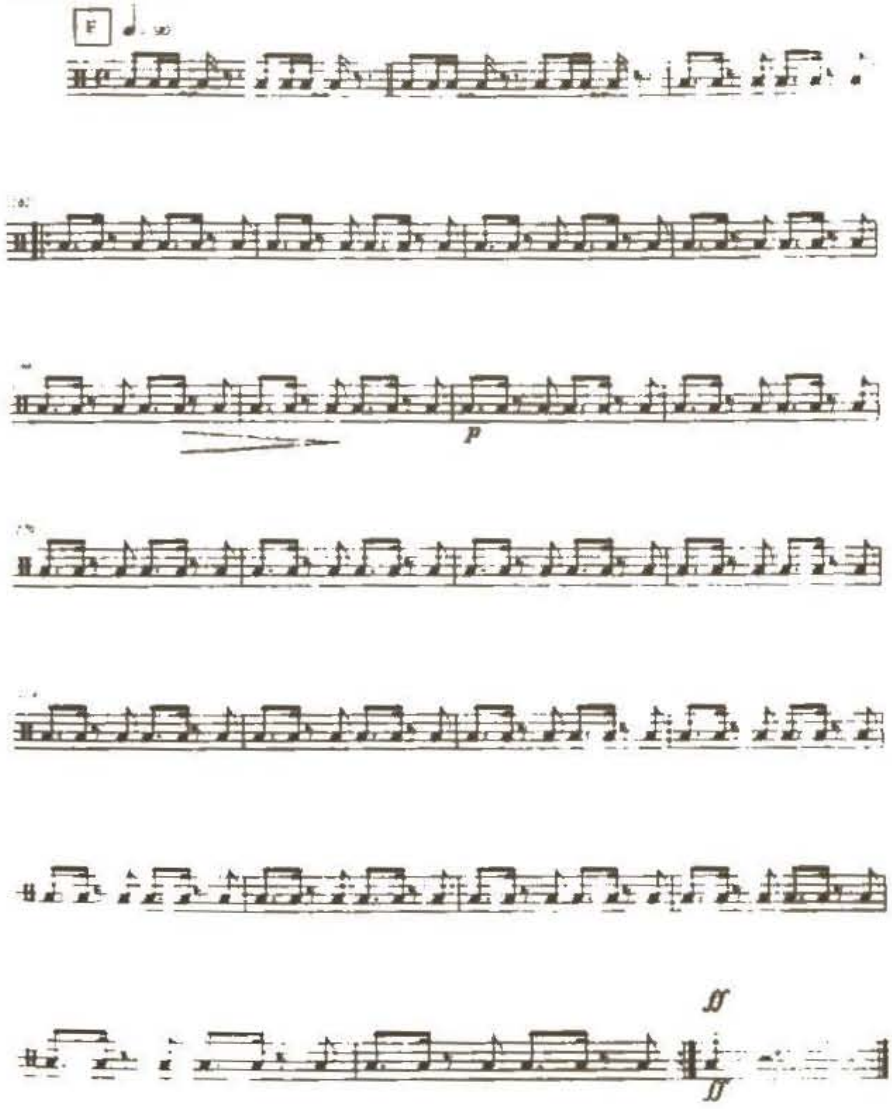


Departure of Sympathisers

Tom Tom 1



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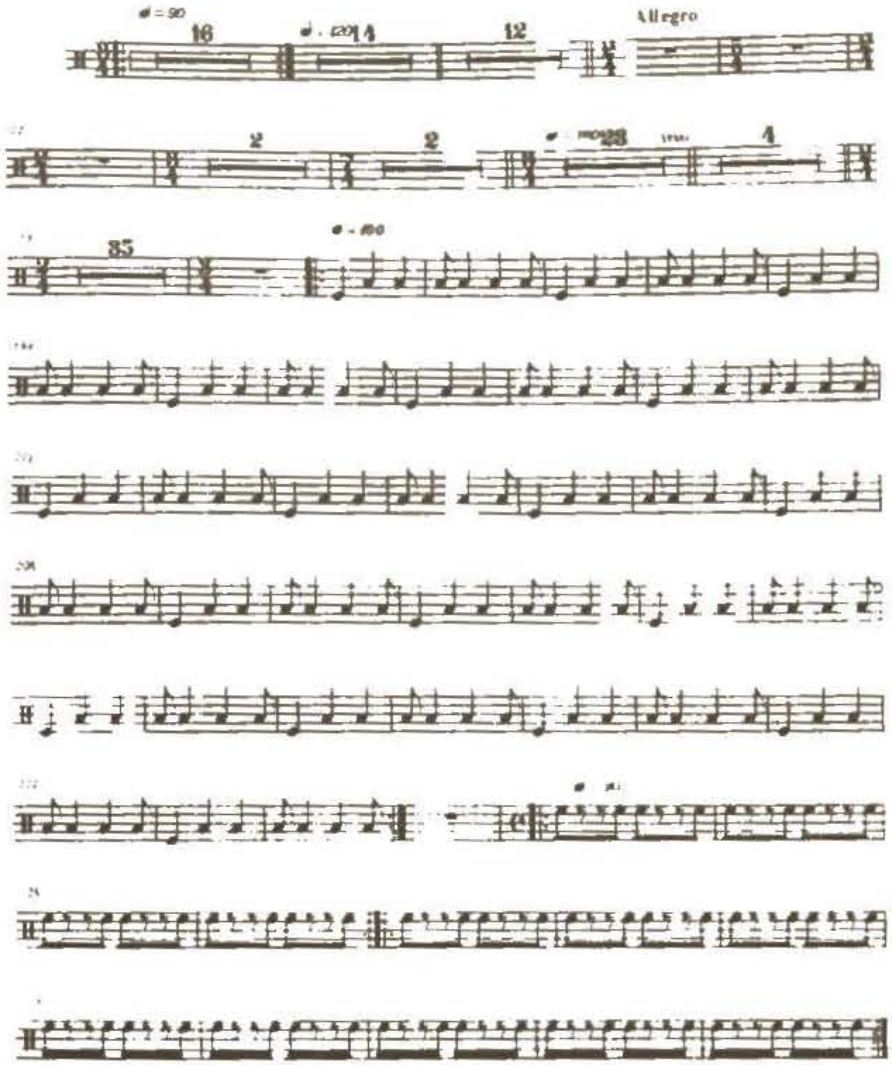
Tom Toms 2 **Rendering of Funeral Songs**



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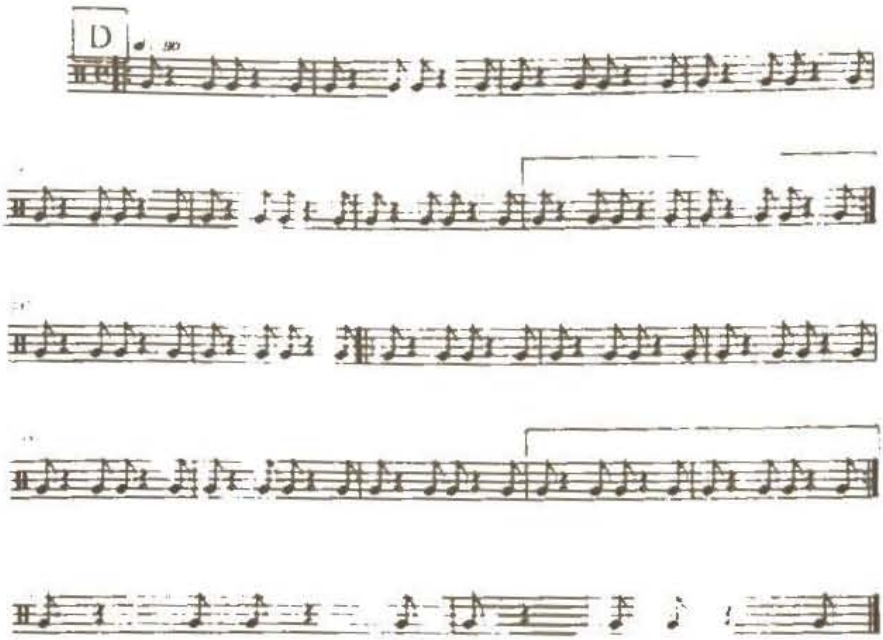
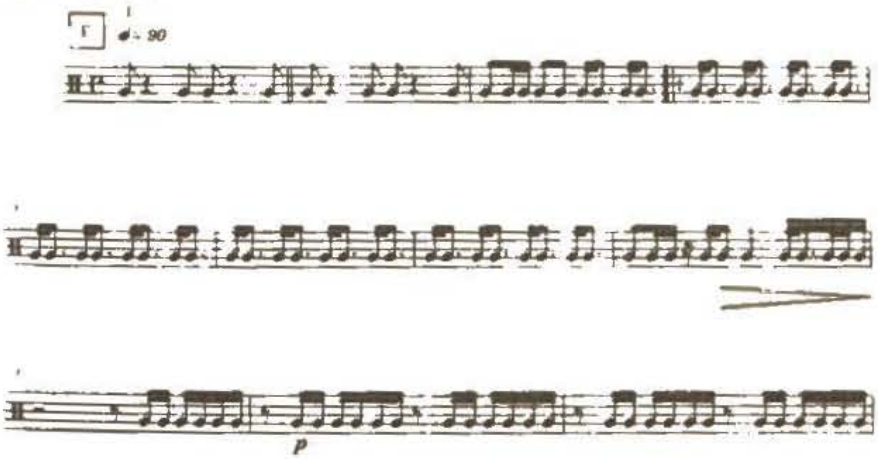
Pouring of Libation

Tom Toms 2



Departure of Sympathisers

Tom Tom 2



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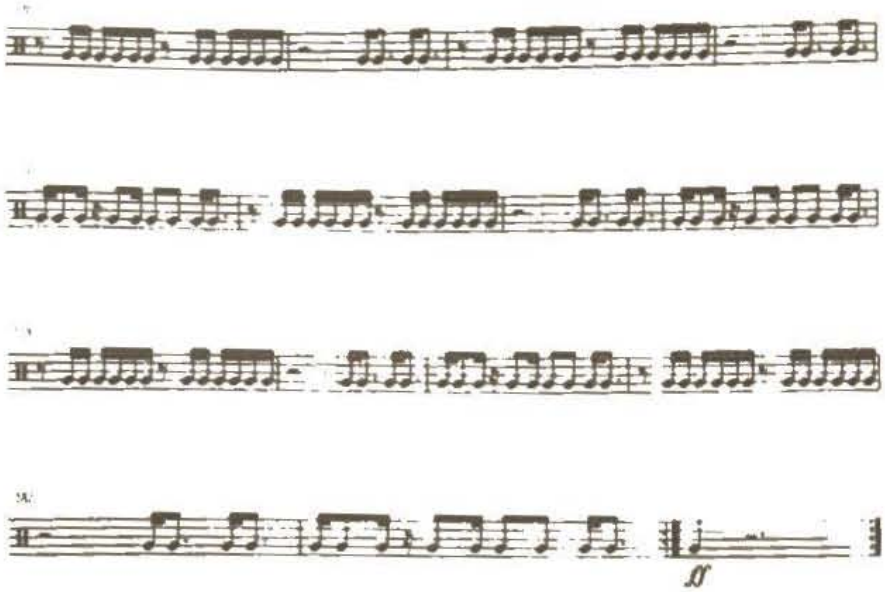

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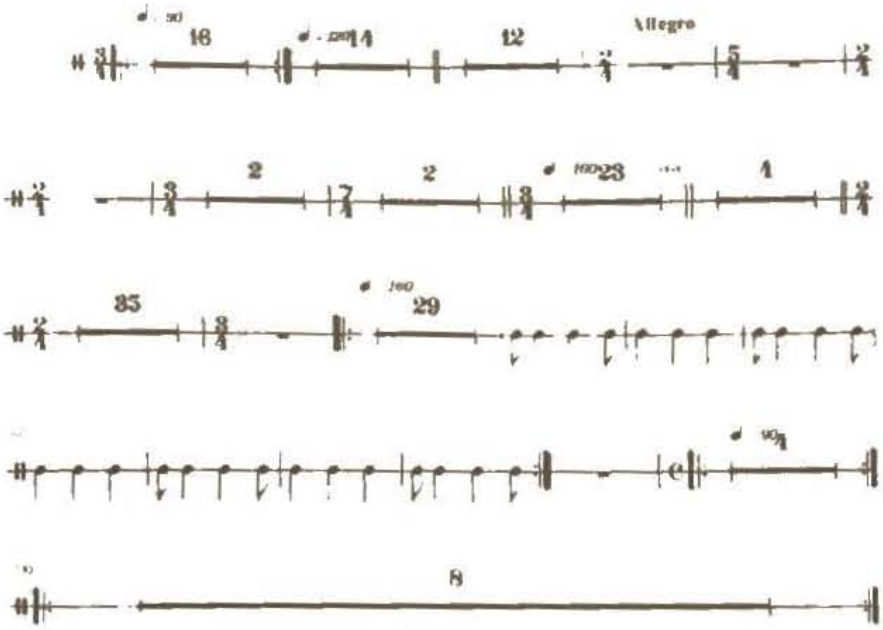
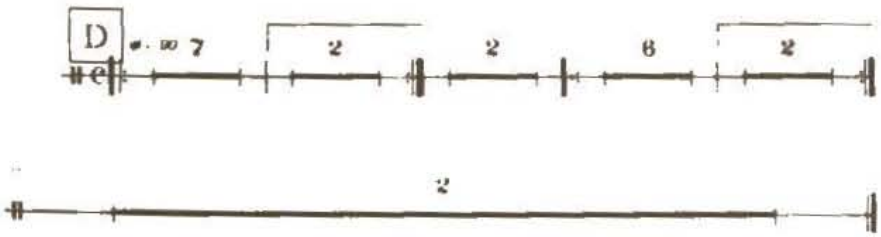
Bass Drum

Rendering of Funeral Songs



Pouring of Libation

Bass Drum



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