ABOUT THE COMPOSER

Alec Wilder was born in Rochester, New York, February 16, 1907. His formal education in music was confined to two years of counterpoint at the Eastman School of Music, but he is otherwise self-taught as a composer.

Wilder has written in every form of music, from the popular song – of which he has written a large number of "classics" – to instrumental solos, chamber music, works for orchestra and wind ensemble, musical comedies, film music, even operas. Gunther Schuller has summed up one fellow musician's reaction to Wilder's music thus: "What so many of us respect in Alec Wilder is his absolute independence as an artist. For years, Alec has written music of taste and quality with the personal melodic touch that is all his own, undaunted by musical fashion or fads. And who else has been as devoted to the musician in providing a playable, functional literature for all those instrumental ensembles whom most composers generally ignore? It has almost been a mission in Alec's life to assuage the thirst for good music of orchestral instrumentalists, particularly the woodwinds and brass – and at all technical levels, from the beginner to the advanced virtuoso. In short, Alec is the musician's friend and an American 'original'."

ABOUT THE MUSIC

As the titles imply, four of the six movements feature different soloists of the brass quintet, with the final two movements given over to the full ensemble. Thus the first movement provides soloistic exposure for both trumpets, while the second movement finds the horn in its traditional lyric, singing role, this time with a touch of melancholy. The next movement puts the tuba through its paces, followed by an urbane, elegant trombone solo. The work ends up with *two* brilliant finale movements, as if after writing the *Toccata* – often a traditionally exuberant way to end a suite – Wilder had still another lively *Finale* movement in him. The work, although called ***Brass Quintet***, uses one of Wilder's favorite forms, the Suite, inspired this time by the specific talents and personalities of the members of the famous New York Brass Quintet, for whom the work was written in 1959 (Robert Nagel and John Glasel, trumpets; Fred Schmitt, horn; John Swallow, trombone; and Harvey Phillips, tuba).

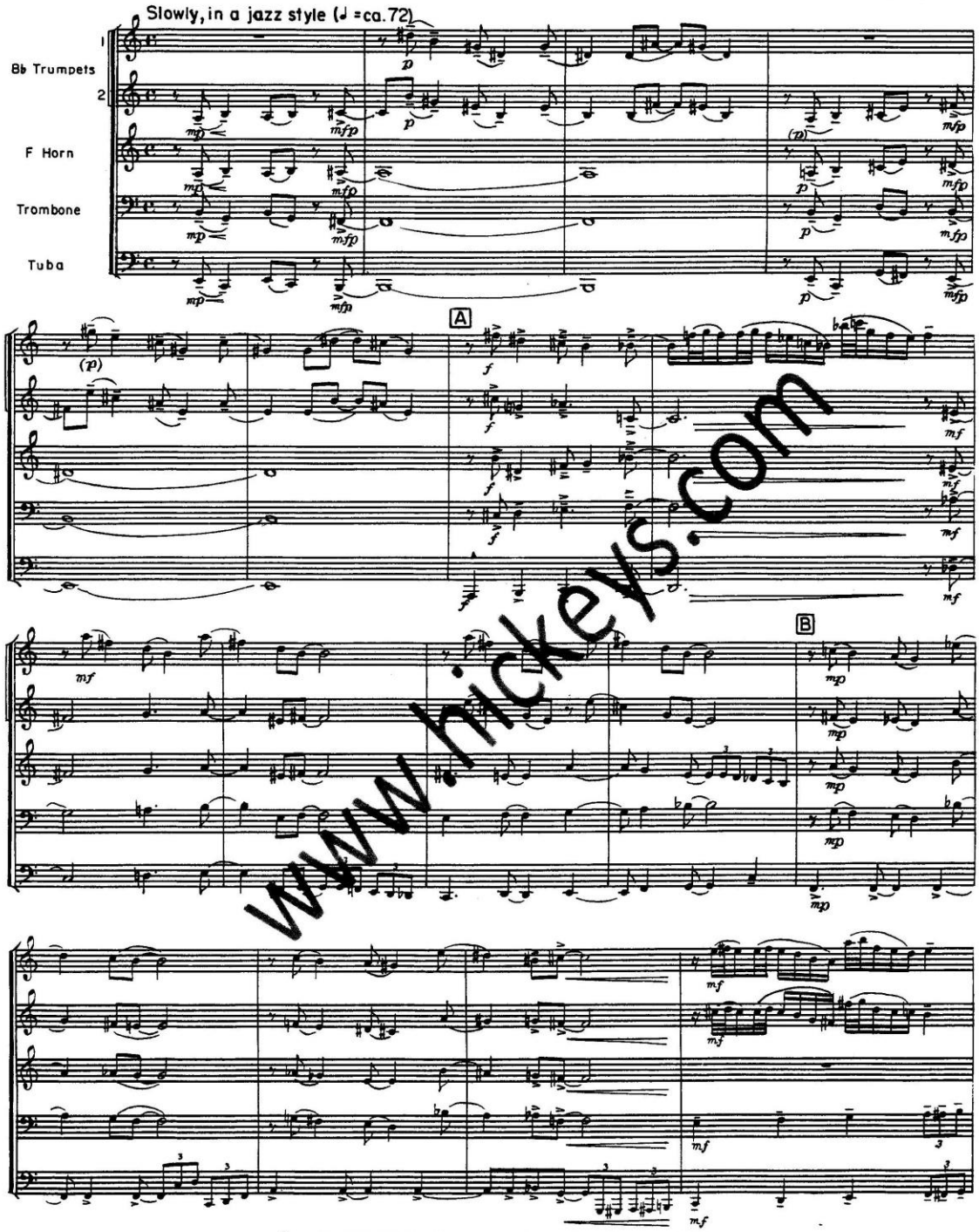
The ***Quintet*** is cast in Wilder's familiar easy-going style, mixing jazz elements with more traditional "classical" gestures and moving easily between deeply expressive moods and virtuosic instrumental displays.

It might also be suggested that the first four movements of this suite may be performed separately on solo recitals.

BRASS QUINTET NO. 1

I. Trumpet Prelude

Alec Wilder
(1959)



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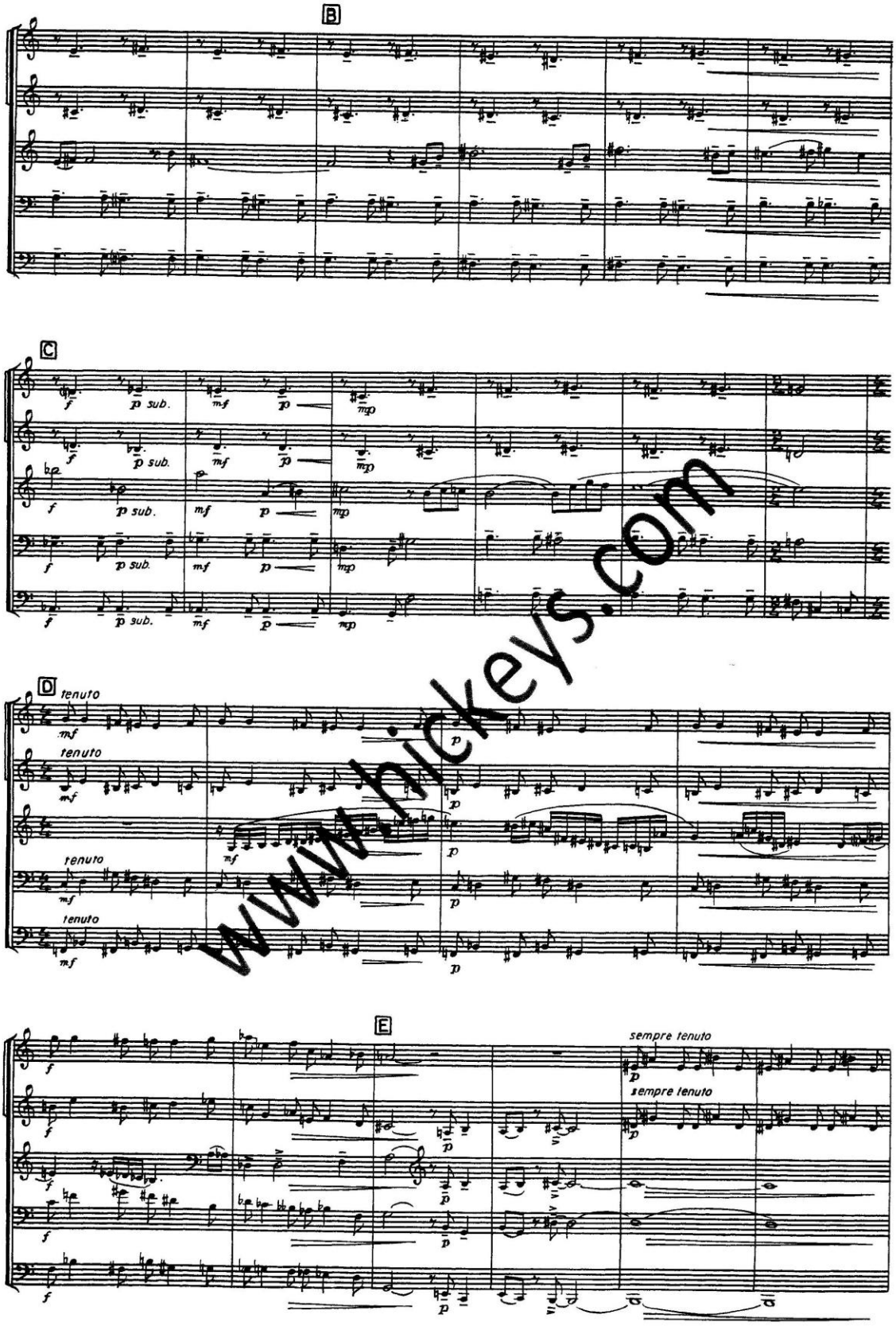

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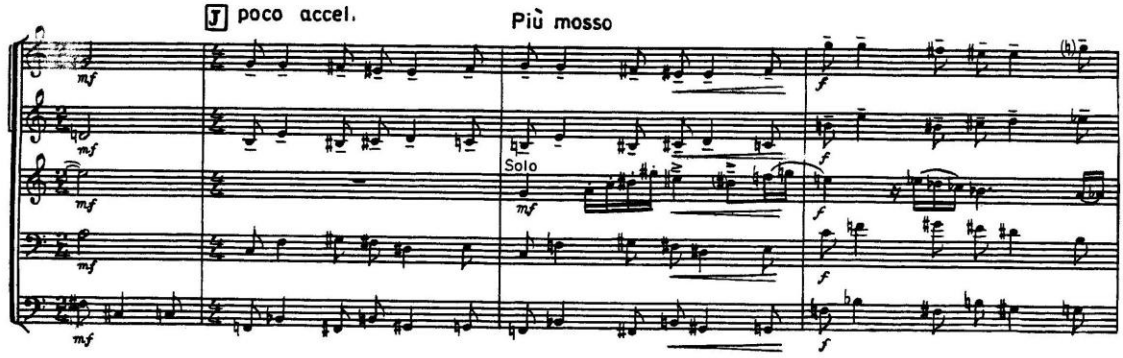
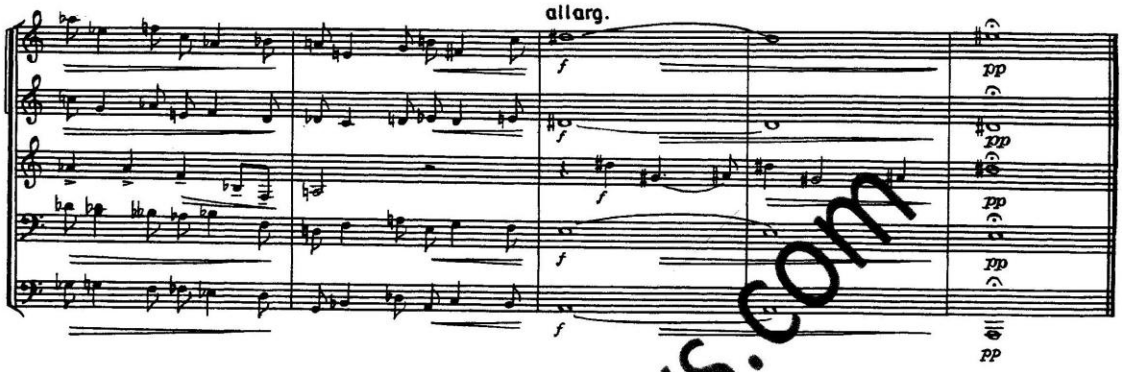
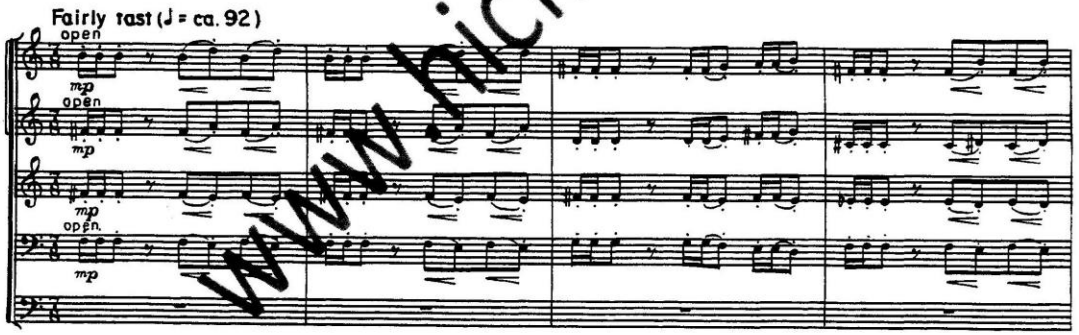
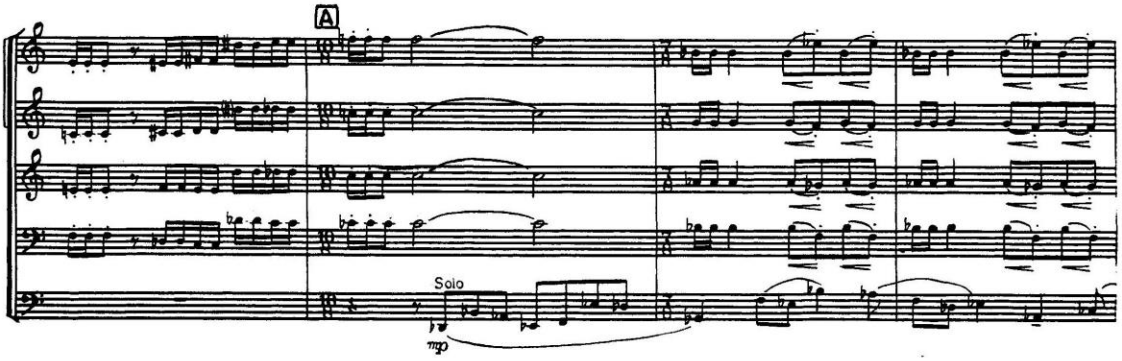




III. Tuba Showpiece





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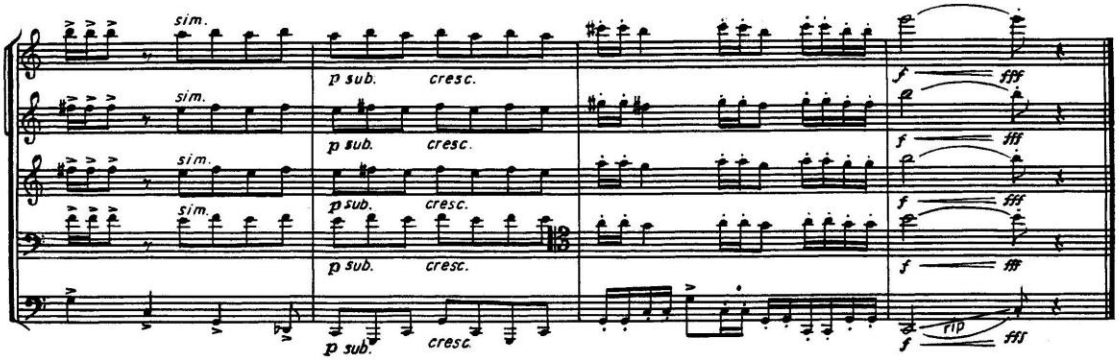
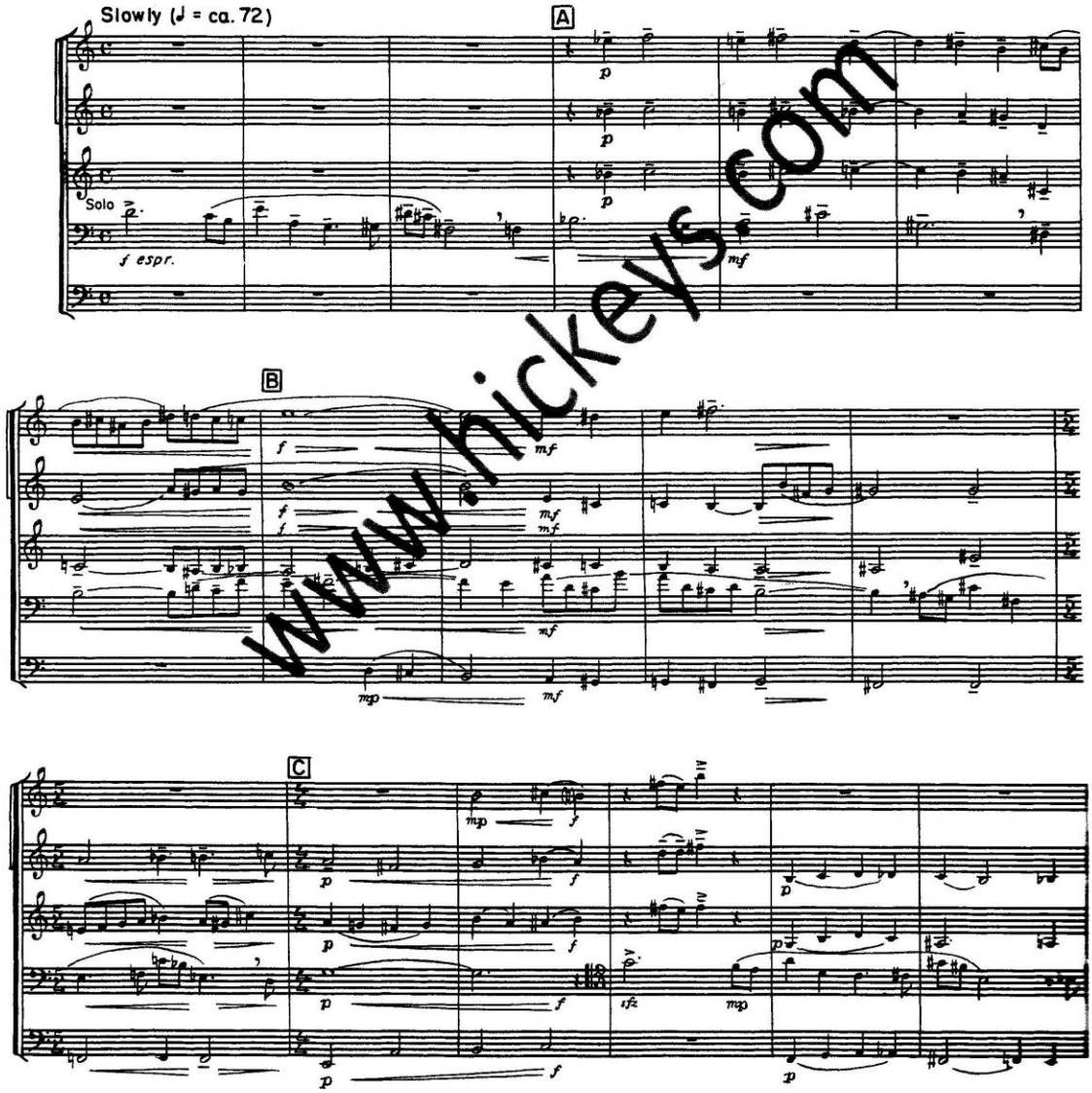


IV. Lyric Piece for Trombone



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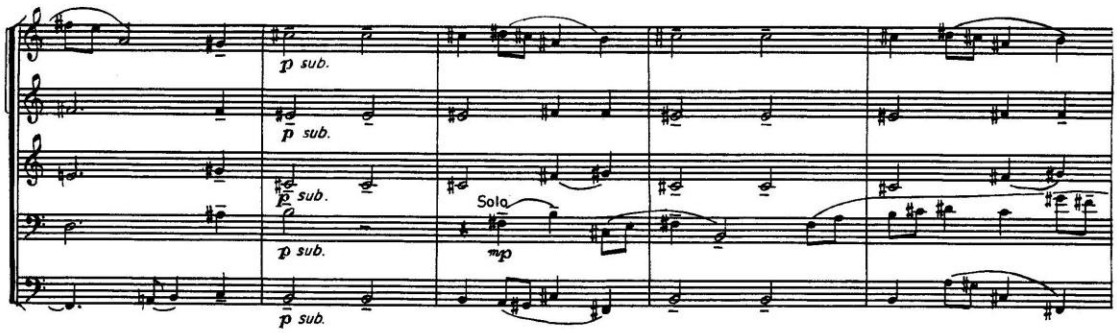

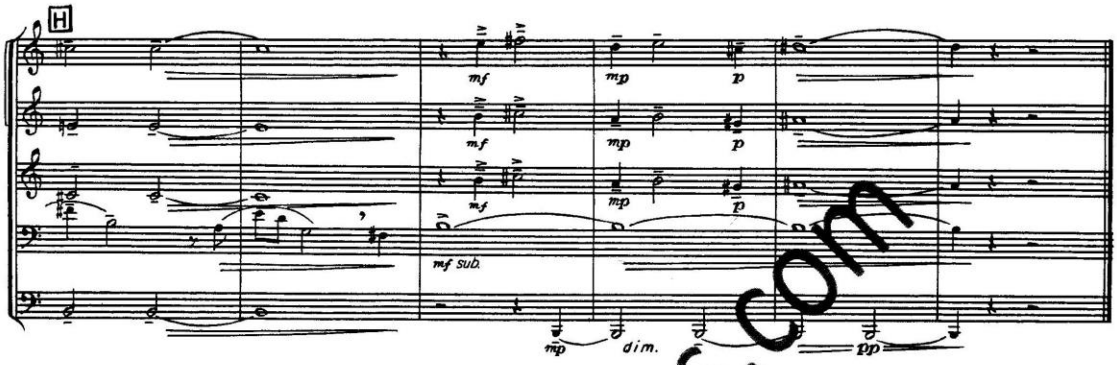

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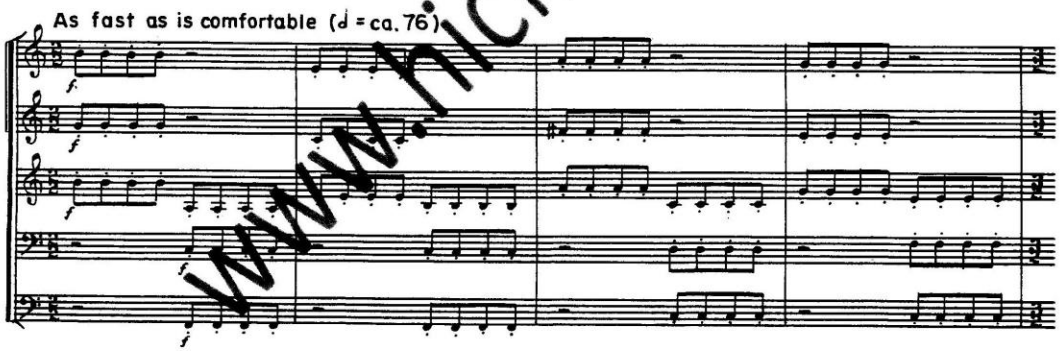

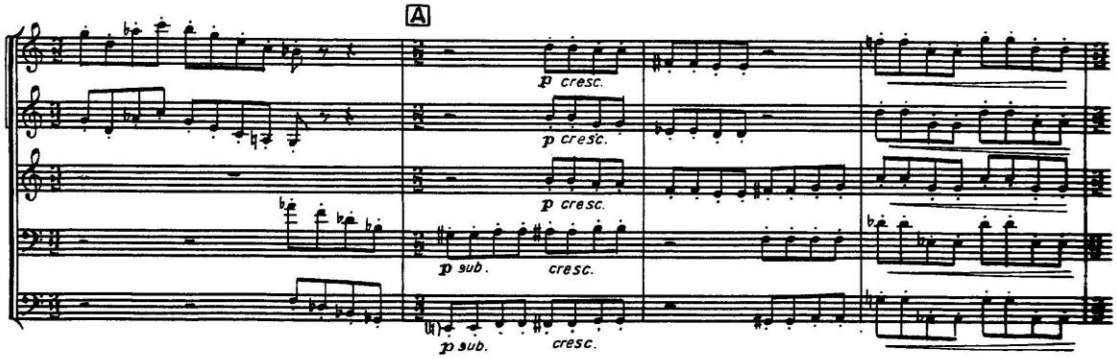

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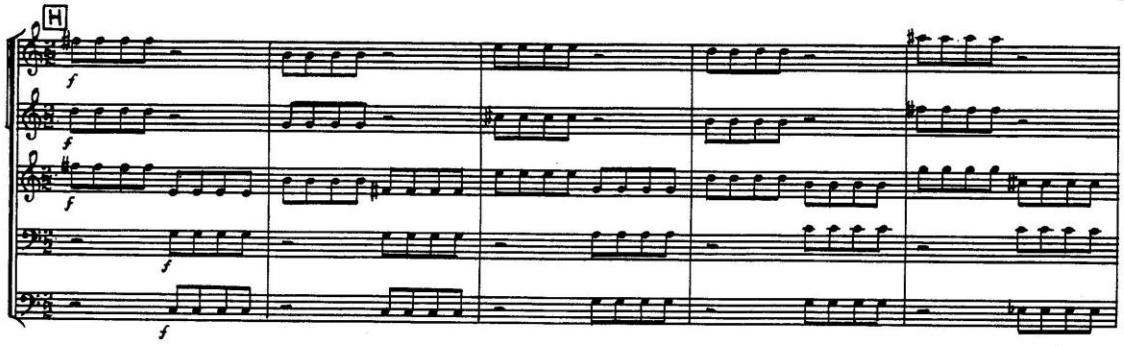
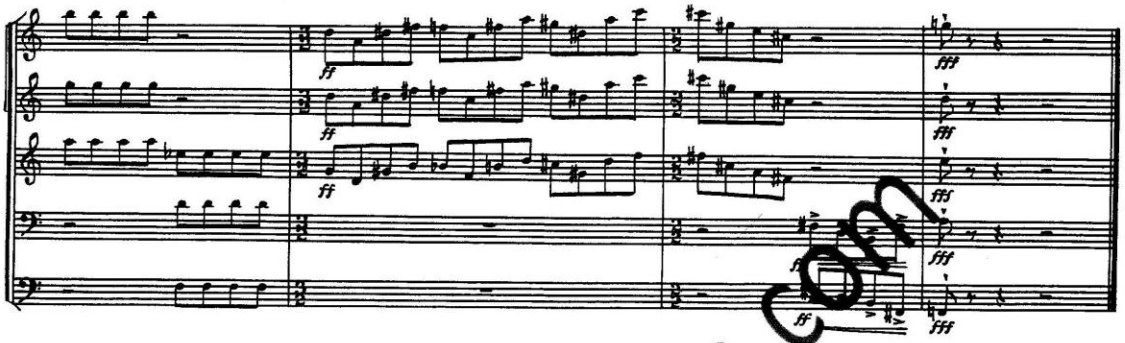
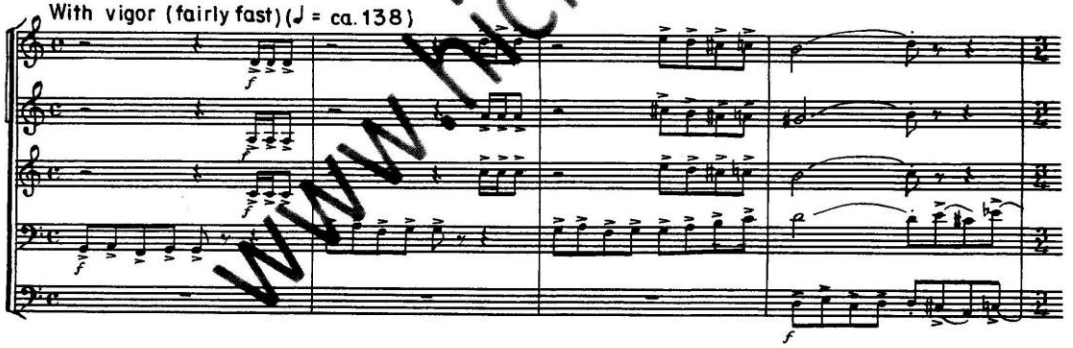
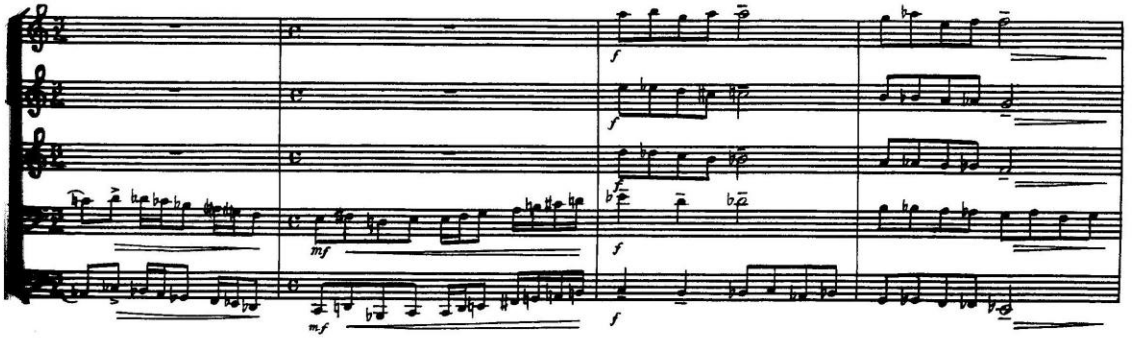




VI. Finale





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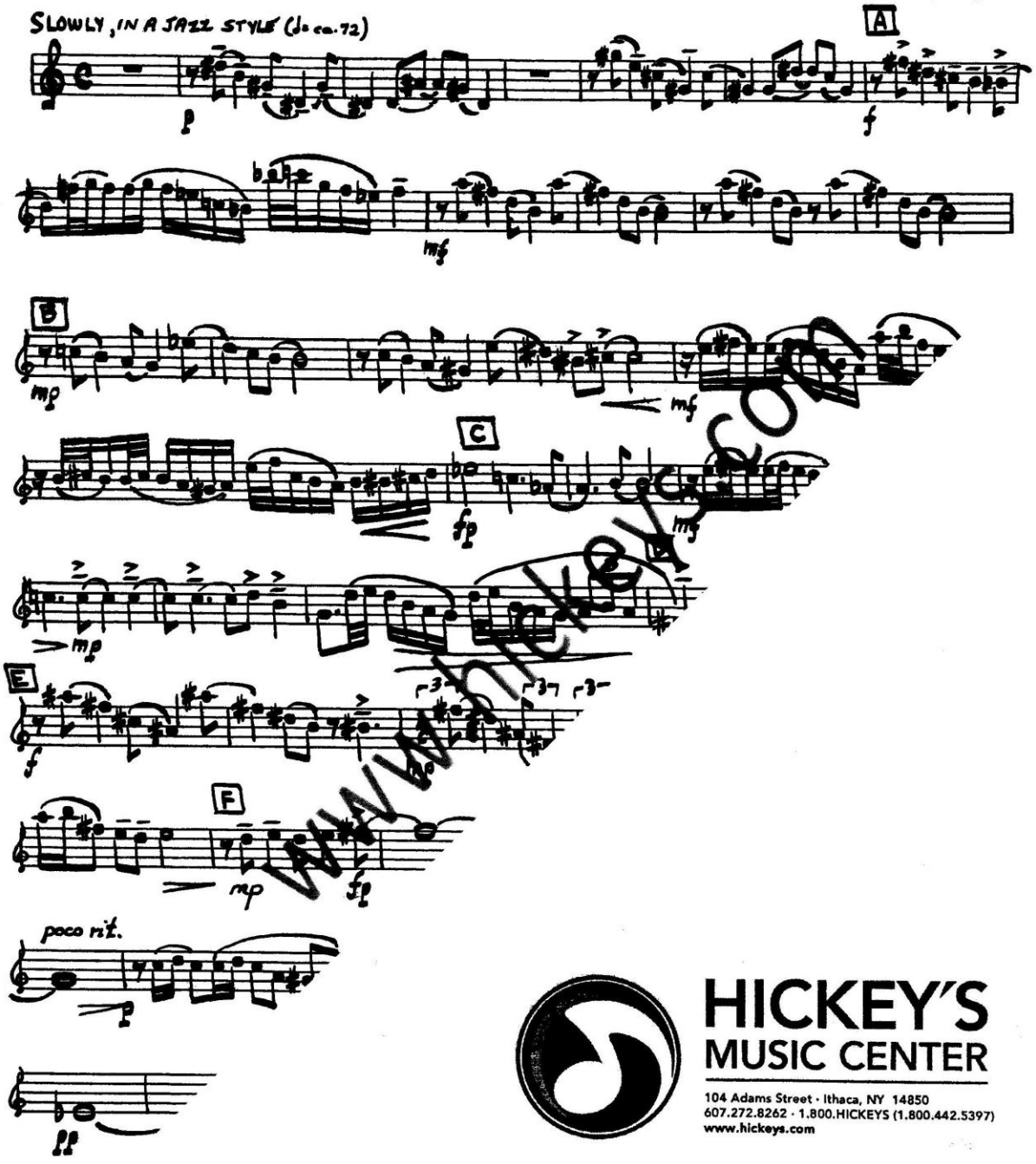
Alex Wilder
(1959)



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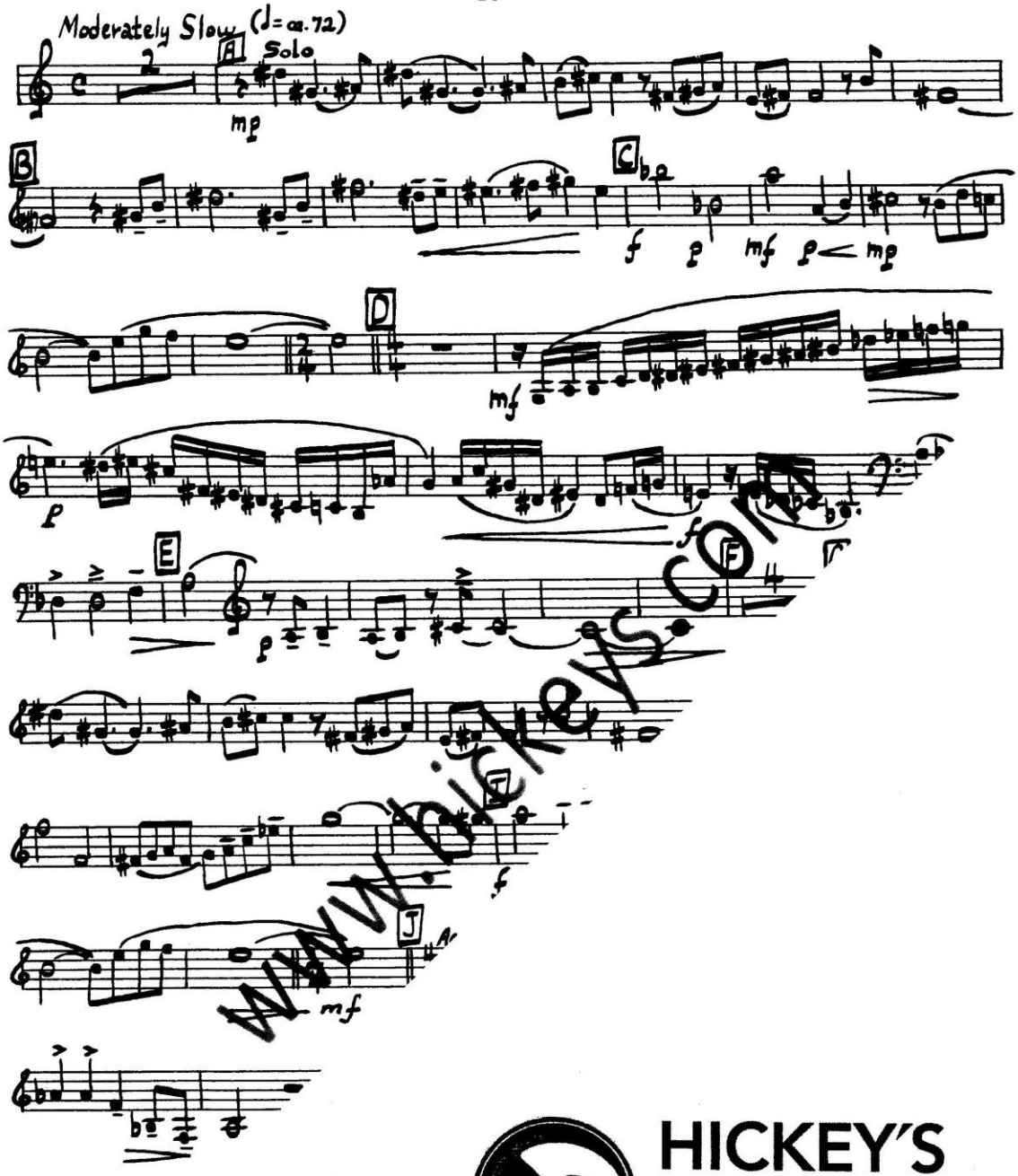
II. Elegy for Horn



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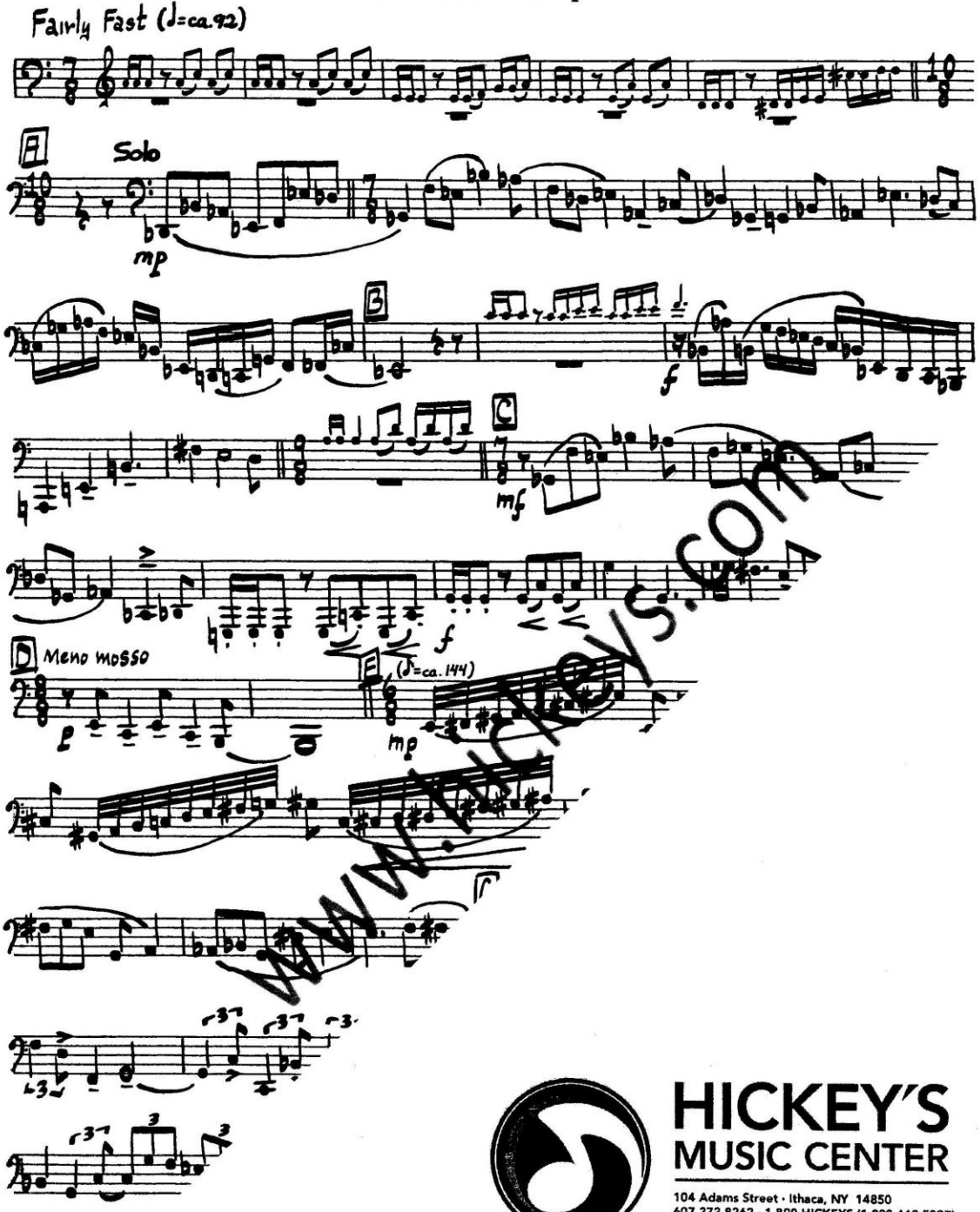
III. Tuba Showpiece



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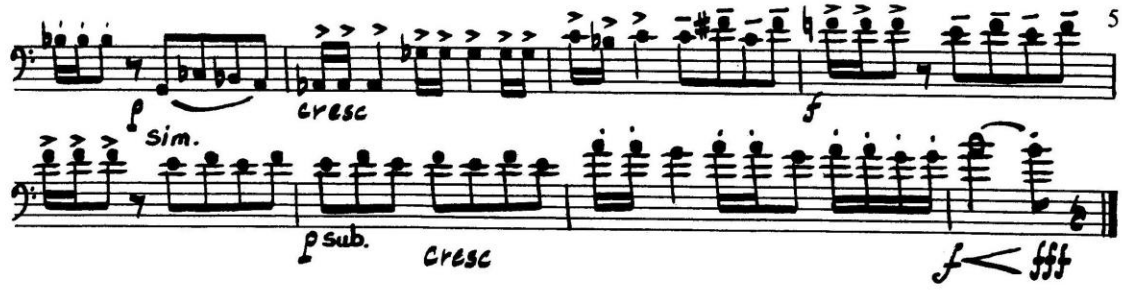

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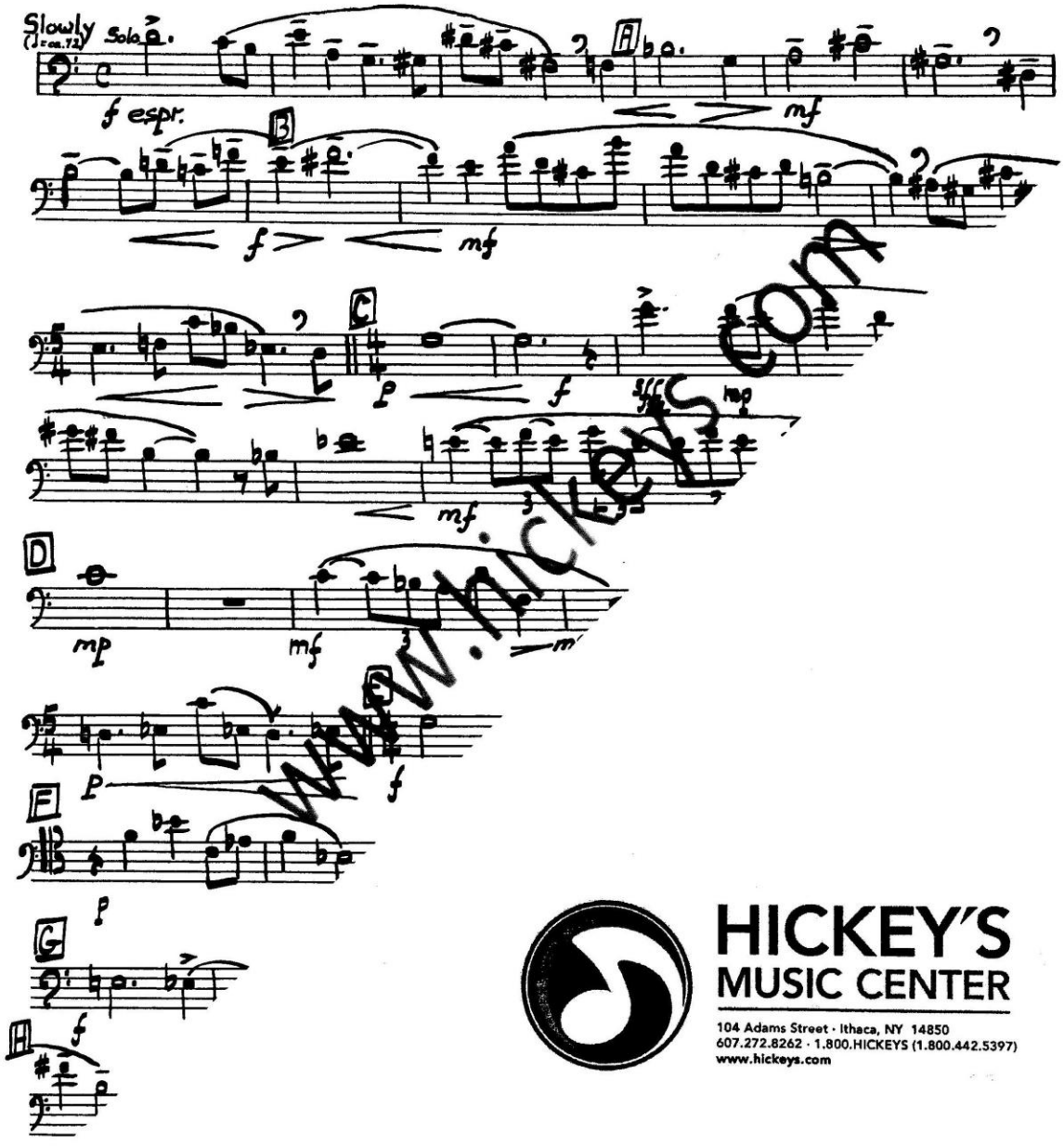

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