Continental Divide

(Original: Keyboards and Related Instruments)
(Arrangement: Chamber Orchestra)

David Rosenboom

Denver, 1964 (original)
Santa Clarita, CA, 2001 (arrangement)

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A Few Performance Instructions

The patterns or repeated "cells" are to be played in order repeating each a large number of times. They are to be played at different temporal shifts or *phases*, all in the same tempo. In the version for chamber orchestra, each instrument should stay in the octave written. Do not multiply or divide speeds.

Individual players move ahead at will or on conductor's cue. The ensemble members should stay within two or three patterns of each other. After reaching bar 11, wait until all others are playing this 12/16 pattern. Then, groups of players drop out and play bar 12, the 7/4 pattern, against the background patters, perhaps following a conductor's cue. After playing this 7/4 pattern, players return to bar 11 and resume playing the 12/16 pattern. Eventually, on cue, players jump to bar 13 and continue through the piece as before. When everyone has reached the last pattern the piece will end on cue.

Note that during the first half of the piece, the pattern gets longer by adding a new note in each cell until the full, 12-note pattern is constructed. Then, during the second half, the pattern is shortened by removing a note from the beginning of the pattern in each cell, until only one note is left. The whole process creates a very long resolution of the opening tritone, which begins the piece.

In the orchestra version, instrumentalists should choose a line of music that matches the range and normal transposition key of their instrument. Pianists or other keyboard players should learn to play the left and right-hand patterns in all possible phases.

The brass parts and contrabass part – which could also be played by other low-range instruments – should be played softly as a background to the repeating patterns. These chorale parts, however, should always be played in synchrony with each other so as to maintain the harmonic relationships. They should not be played in freely selected phases, as is done with the sixteenth note patterns.

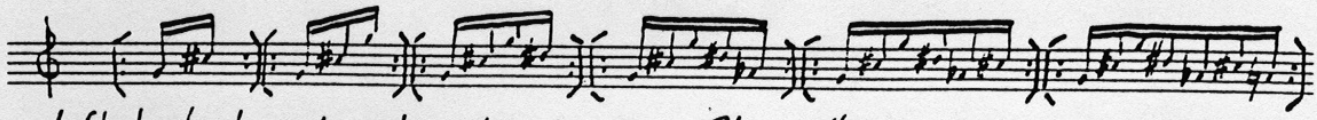
Additional plans for coordinating a performance may be made by the ensemble.

The first page of music is the original 1964 sketch. This arrangement for chamber orchestra was made in 2001.

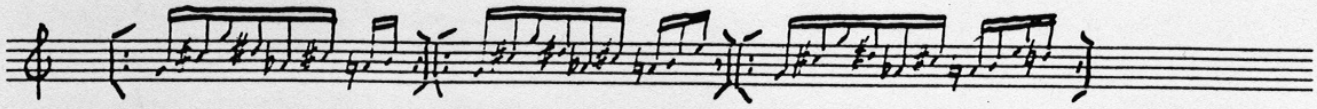
Continental Divide

David Rosenboom
Denver, 1964

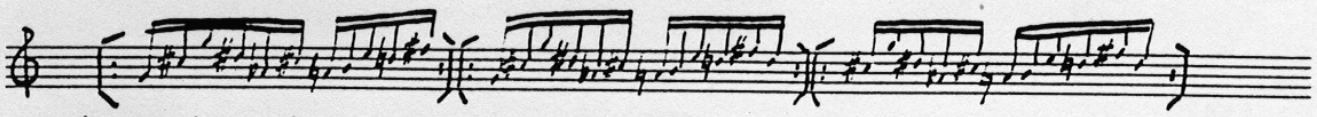
Fast



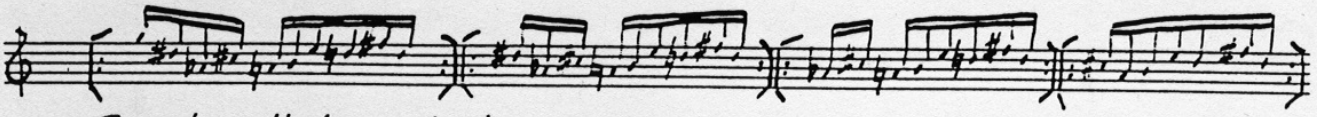
left hand plays two octaves lower in unison. Play patterns in order repeating each



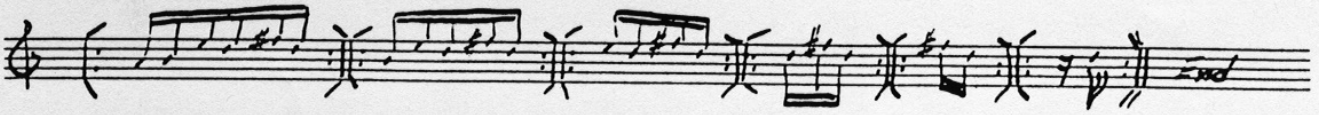
a large number of times. Several pianos may play together in different



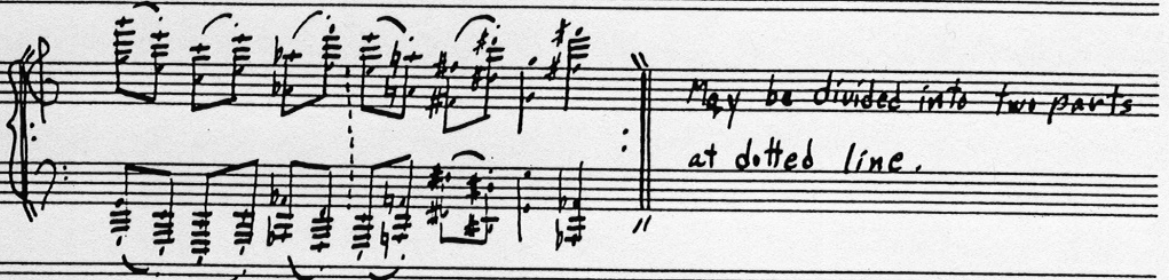
temporal shifts or "phases", all playing in the same tempo and octaves.



Do not multiply or divide speeds.



Second part which may be played by other pianos during center section:



Treat as other patterns with shifts.

Patterns at 14,000 feet.

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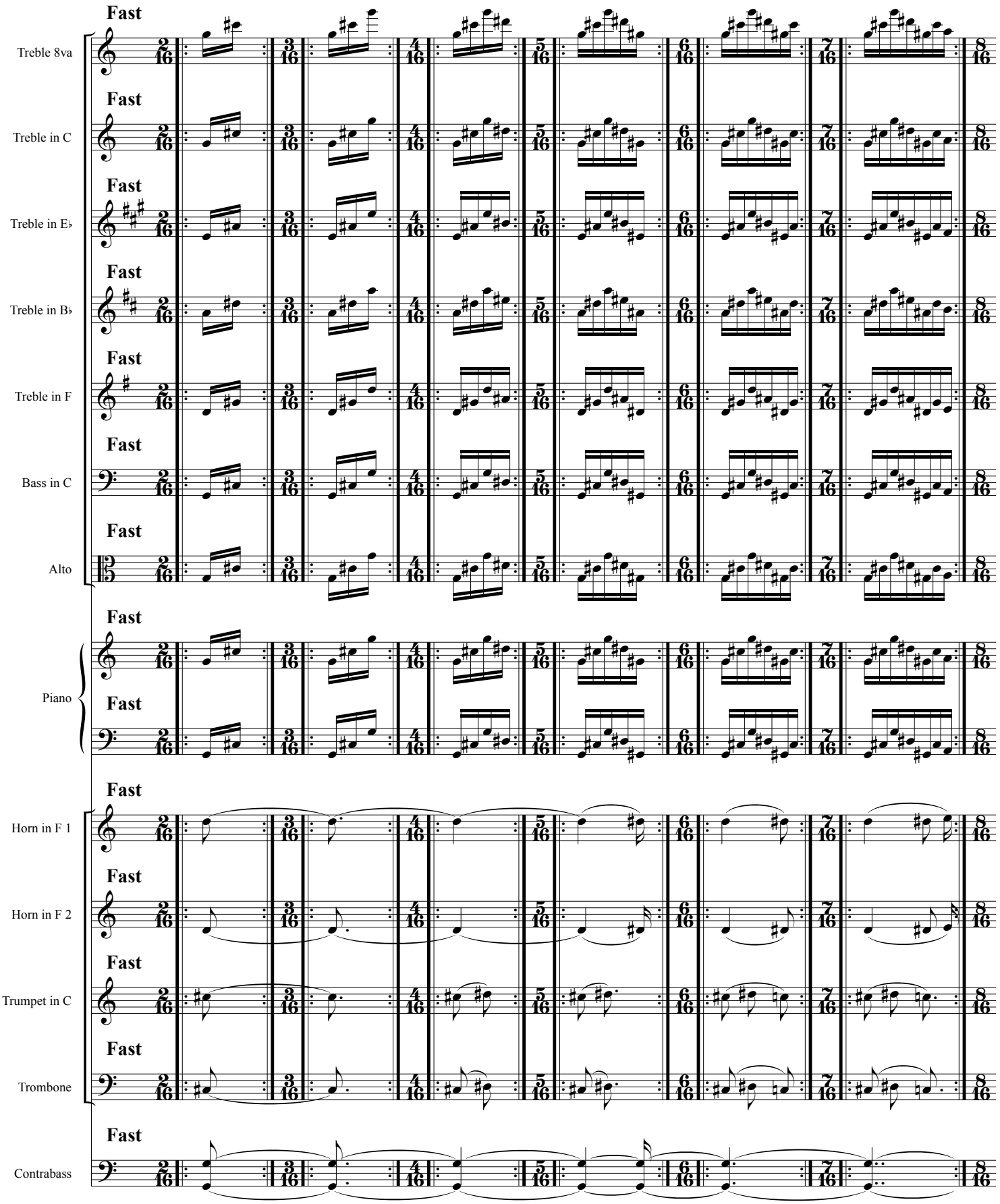
Play patterns in order repeating each a large number of times. Play at different temporal shifts or "phases," all playing the same tempo. Stay in the same octave. Do not multiply or divide speeds.

Continental Divide

(Orchestra)

Patterns at 14,000 Feet

David Rosenboom
Denver, 1964



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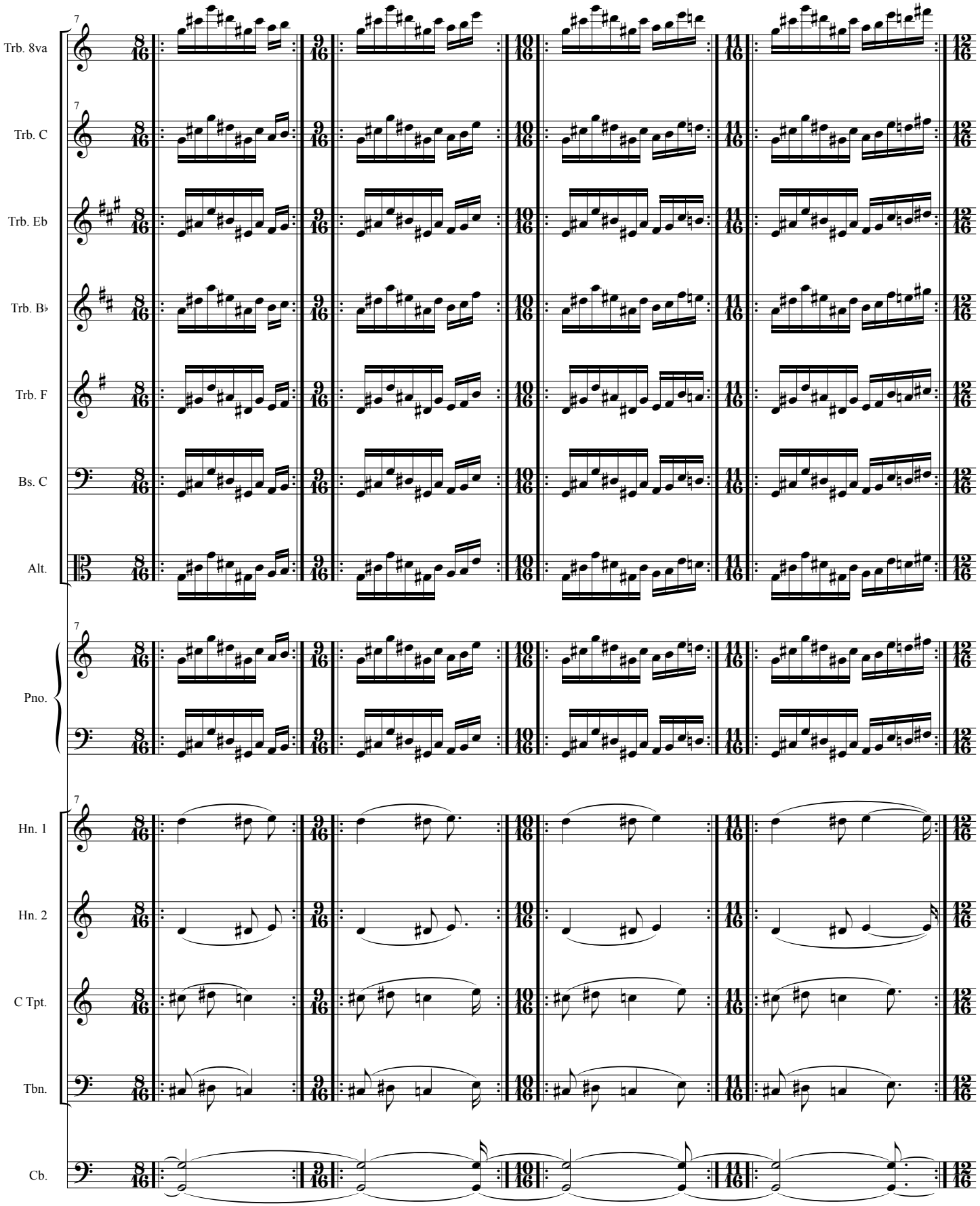
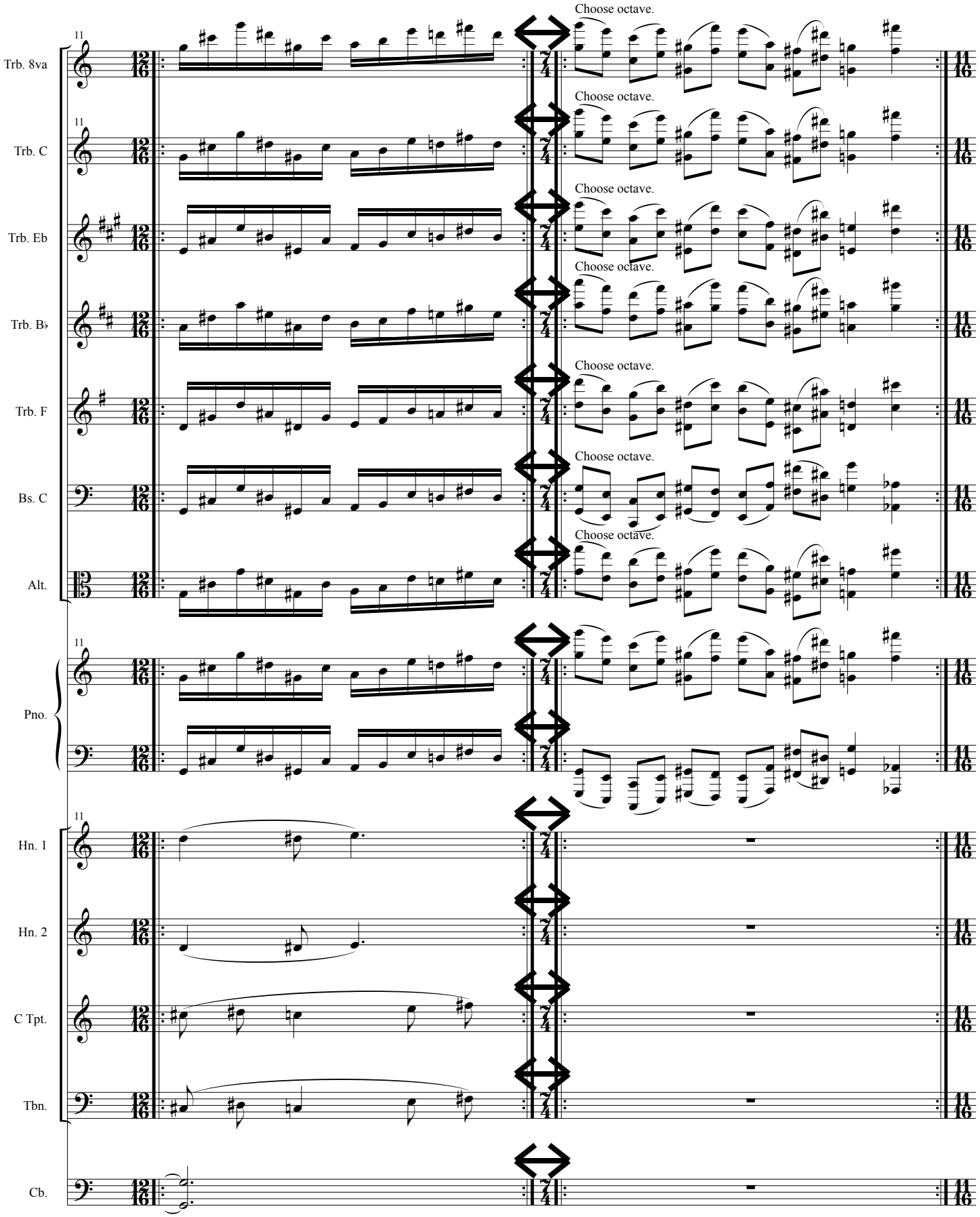
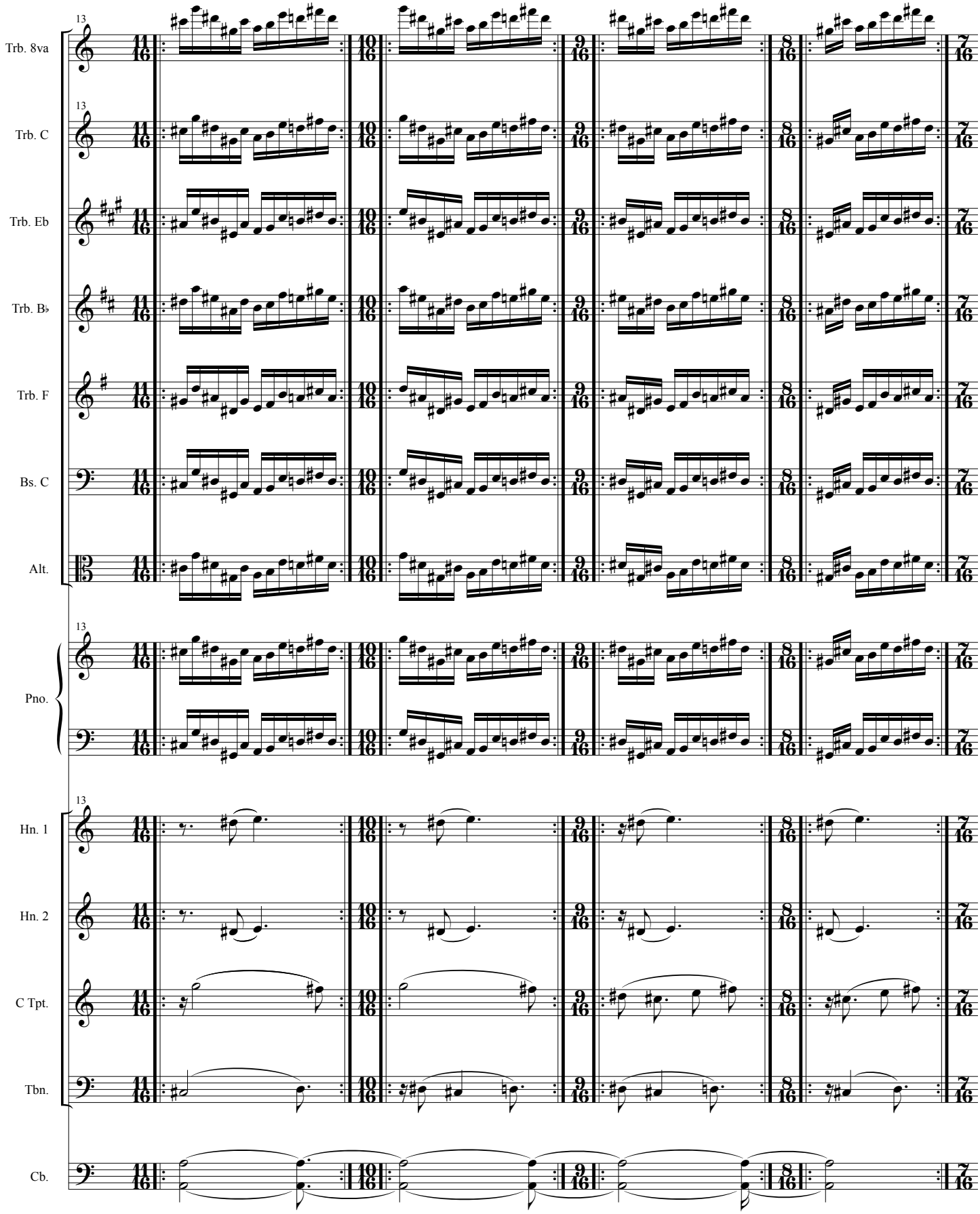
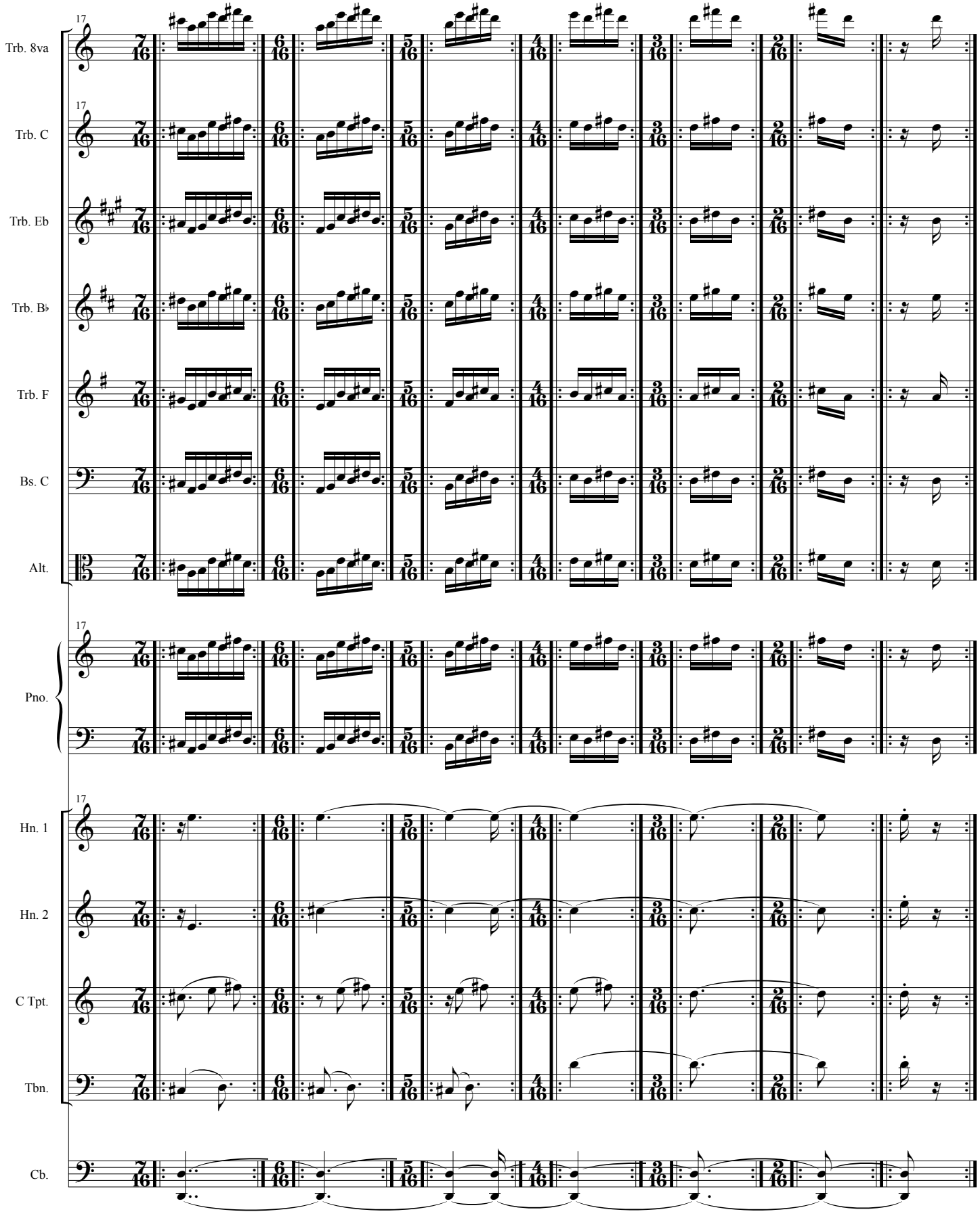

Trb. 8va
Trb. C
Trb. Eb
Trb. B♭
Trb. F
Bs. C
Alt.
Pno.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Cb.


Trb. 8va
Trb. C
Trb. Eb
Trb. B♭
Trb. F
Bs. C
Alt.
Pno.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Cb.
11
Choose octave.


13
Trb. 8va
Trb. C
Trb. Eb
Trb. B♭
Trb. F
Bs. C
Alt.
Pno.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Cb.


17
Trb. 8va
Trb. C
Trb. Eb
Trb. B♭
Trb. F
Bs. C
Alt.
Pno.
Hn. 1
Hn. 2
C Tpt.
Tbn.
Cb.