Chthonic Fragments

For Symphonic Band

Benjamin R. Fuhrman

Circa Ten Minutes.

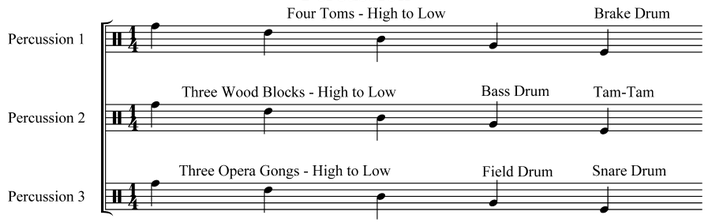
Instrumentation

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in Bb
Bass Clarinet
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone
Bassoon

Horn in F
Trumpet in Bb
Trombone
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba

Glockenspiel (with mallets and bows)
Vibraphone (with mallets and bows)
Marimba

Percussion



Piano

Notes on Performance

When performing the *Fragments*, the conductor must first decide on the order in which they are to be played. While the **Introduction** and the **Coda** have set positions at the end, the remaining ten fragments can be ordered in any way that the conductor sees fit by alternating numeric and alphabetic fragments. However, purely sequential orderings (1 – A – 2 – B – 3 – C – 4 – D – 5 – E, 5 – E – 4 – D – 3 – C – 2 – B – 1 – A, 1 – E – 2 – D – 3 – C – 4 – B – 5 – A, or 5 – A – 4 – B – 3 – C – 2 – D – 1 – E) are to be avoided as the use of a sequential pattern essentially absolves the conductor of any [albeit limited] compositional responsibility. Finally, no fragment should be skipped, repeated, or otherwise reused in a performance.

Performance Order

Introduction - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - Coda

Program Notes

Chthonic – adj. – in, of, under, or otherwise pertaining to the earth.

Chthonic Fragments is in some ways a stark departure from my normal compositional style. There are no computers, no live video feeds, or even any non-standard percussion instruments used. Instead, it is a work grounded in traditional compositional technique (albeit a little warped to suit the musical narrative) that explores the idea of interactions. Primarily, the ways in which the composer interacts with self-imposed rules, how the conductor interacts with the ensemble, and most importantly – how the musical fragments interact with each other.

The twelve fragments are created as independent entities in their own rights that are to be ordered in any way the conductor sees fit based on the alternation of alphabetic and numeric labels between the introduction and coda phrases. This allows for a conductor to recompose the piece for every performance, giving it new traits, and a new interpretation each time it's performed, without having to make changes to the musical material itself.

Within the individual fragments, there is a great deal of variety in terms of orchestration, tempo, harmonic structures, and melodic exposition. Yet there are recurring motivic devices that occur throughout the course of the piece that are drawn from the introduction. This serves to create a sense of unity throughout, grounding the myriad interpretations and ordering of the fragments in similar material.

In essence, *Chthonic Fragments* is equal parts mosaic and tessellation – a puzzle for the conductor to try and solve in order to find the most interesting interactions between musical ideas, while still retaining motivic similarities that help the larger picture to develop.

To Grant Gould and the Magnolia West High School Band.

Chthonic Fragments

Introduction - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - ___ - Coda

Score

Benjamin R. Fuhrman
June 2009 - January 2010

Attaca any numeric fragment

INTRODUCTION **Strident, intense** ♩ = 92

Flute
Oboe
Clarinet in B♭
Bass Clarinet
Alto Sax.
Tenor Sax.
Baritone Sax.
Bassoon
Horn in F
Trumpet in B♭
Trombone
Bass Trombone
Euphonium
Tuba
Glockenspiel
Vibraphone
Marimba
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Piano

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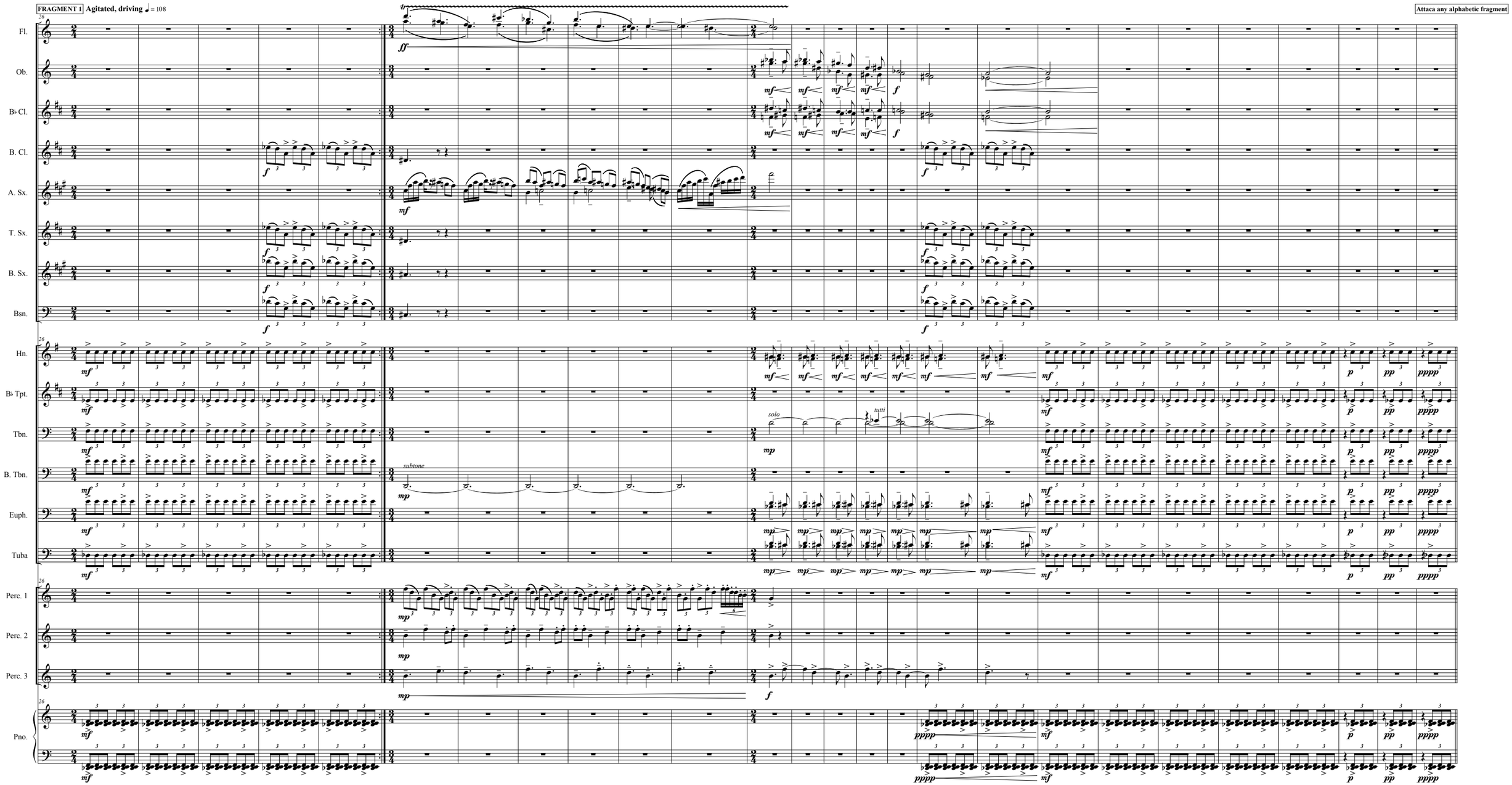
Chthonic Fragments



Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT A **Pastoral** ♩ = 70 (♪ = 140)

Attaca any numeric fragment

53

Fl. Ob. B♭ Cl. B. Cl. A. Sx. T. Sx. B. Sx. Bsn.

52

Glk. Vib. Mrb. Pno.

delicate

bow all notes in this fragment

palm clusters

Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT 2 **Strictly in tempo** ♪ = 172 (♩ = 86)

Attaca any alphabetic fragment

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tuba
Glk.
Vib.
Mrb.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Pno.

Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT B **Presto, violent** ♪ = 194

87

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Bsn.

Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tuba

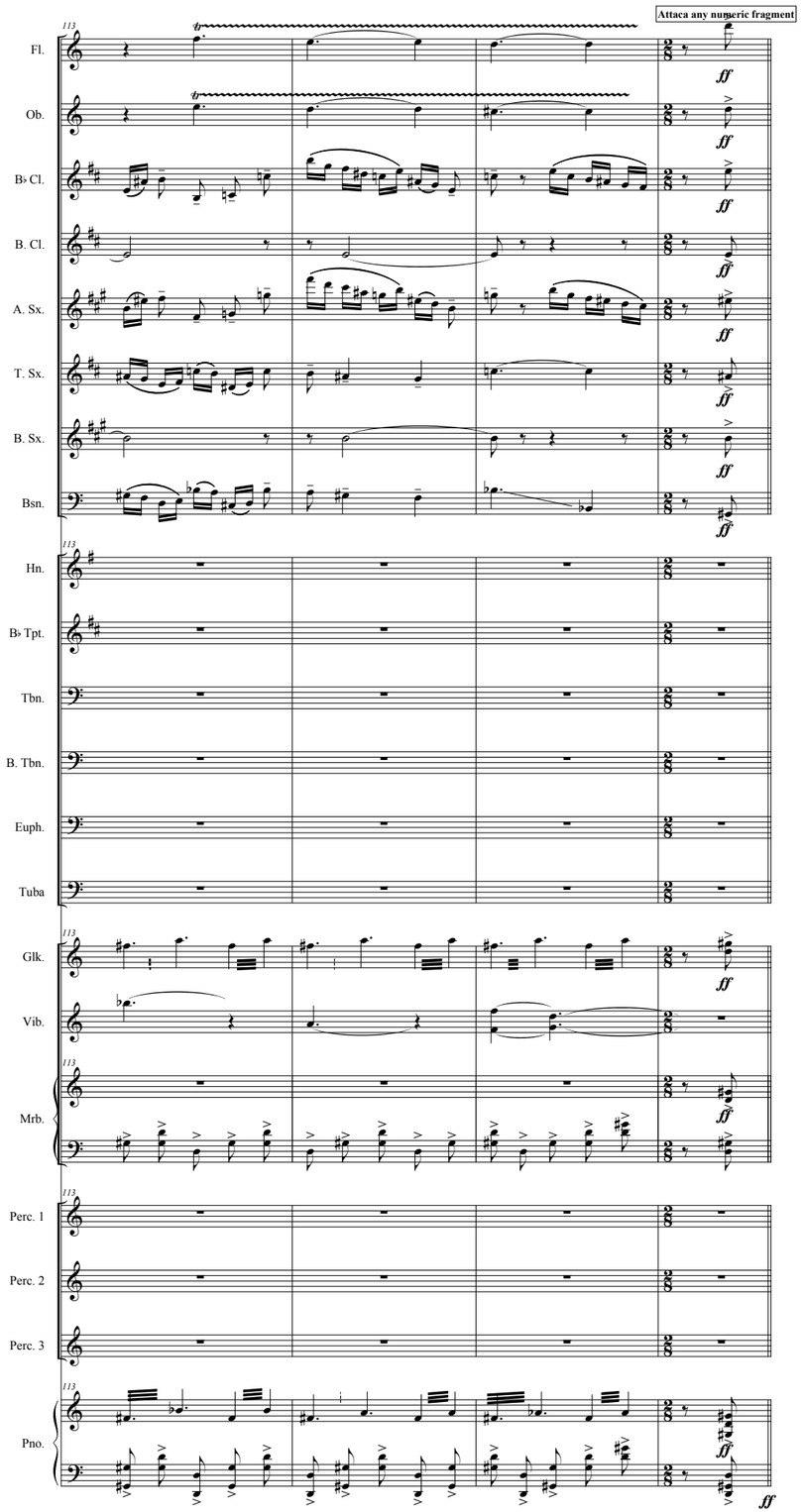
Glk.
Vib.
Mrb.

Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3

Pno.

mp *bow all notes in this fragment*

Chthonic Fragments



Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT 3 **Hymn-like** ♩ = 66

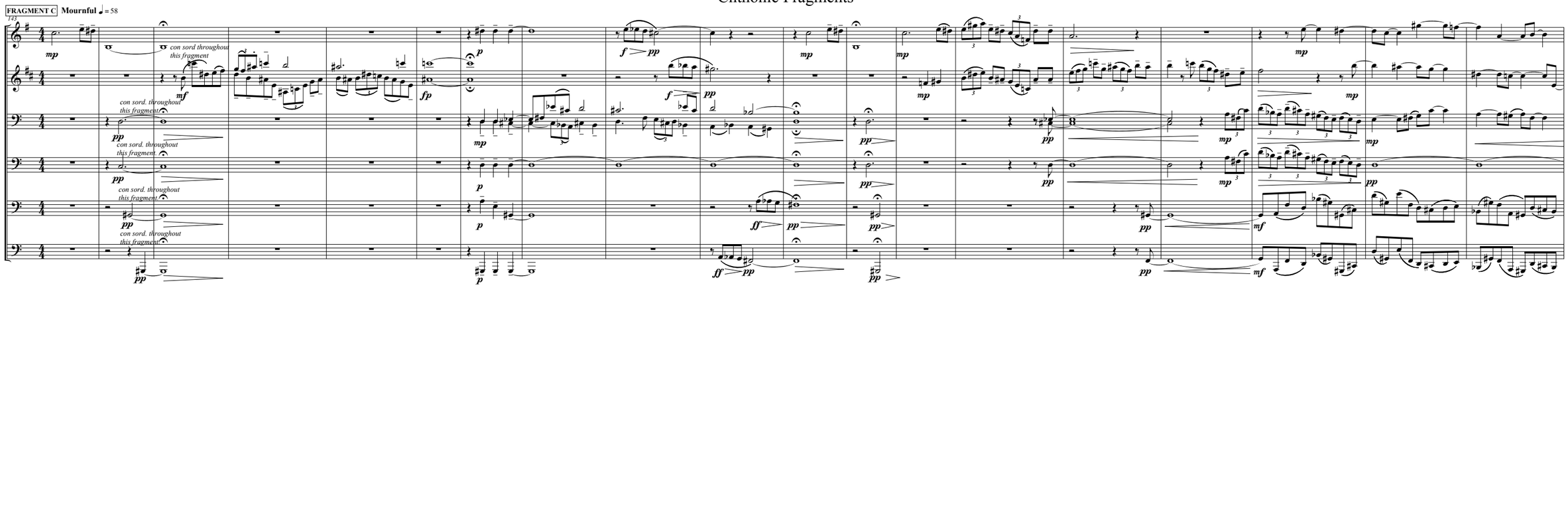
Attaca any alphabetic fragment

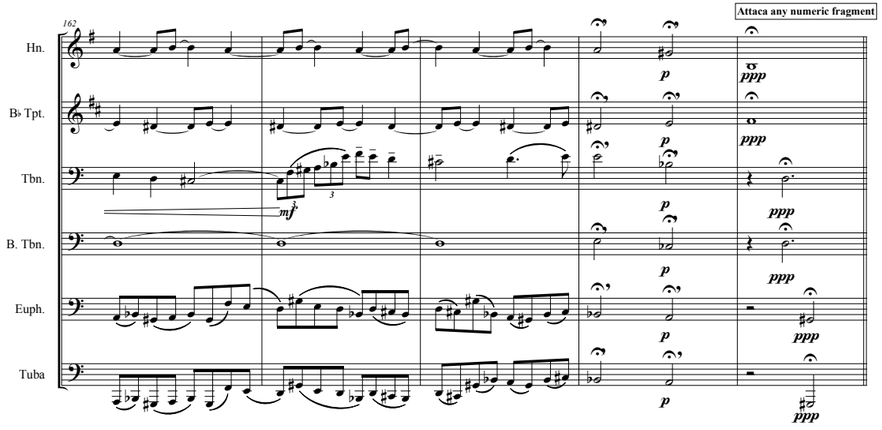
117

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tuba

p *pp*

Chthonic Fragments





Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT 4 **Driving** ♩ = 96

Glk.

Vib.

Mrb.

Pno.

167

mf

pppp

f

ff

mp

bowed to the end of the fragment

dead stroke

palm clusters

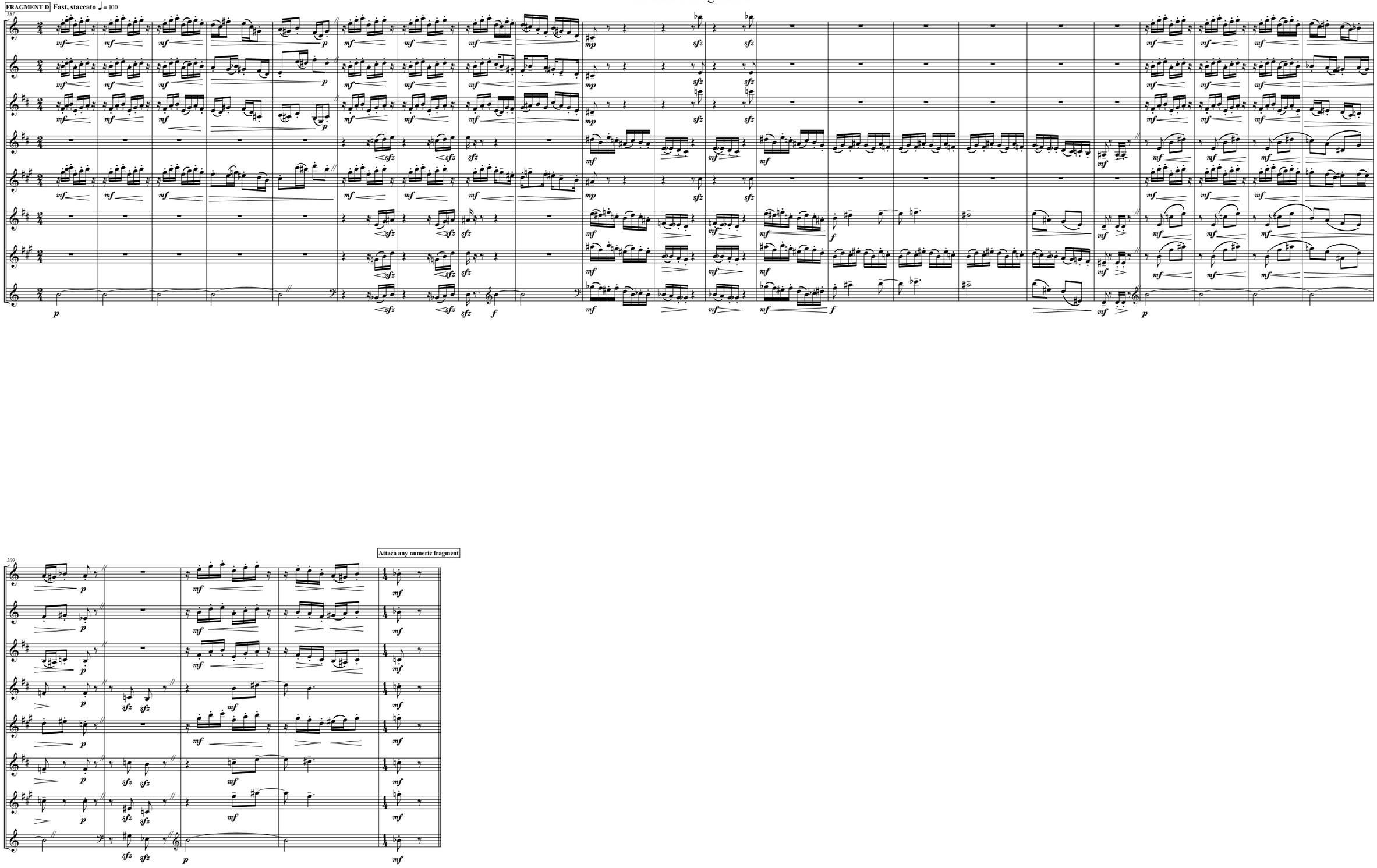
182

Attaca any alphabetic fragment

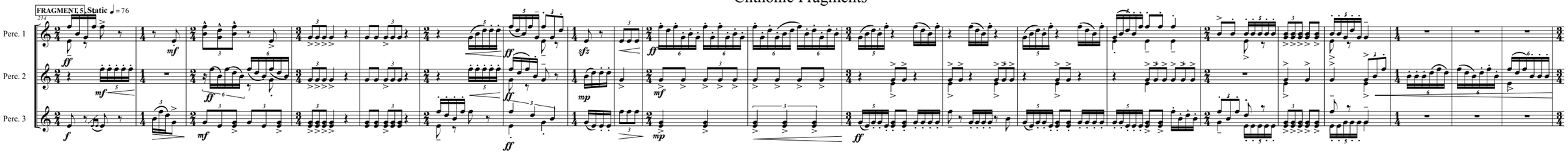
dead stroke

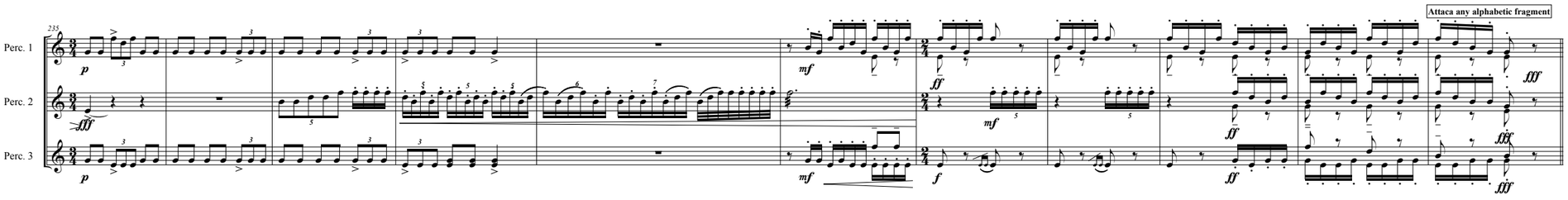
dead - no sustain

Chthonic Fragments



Chthonic Fragments





Chthonic Fragments

FRAGMENT E **Quick, spritely** ♪ = 156 (♩ = 78)

Attaca any numeric fragment

246

Fl.

Ob.

B♭ Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sx.

T. Sx.

B. Sx.

Bsn.

246

Hn.

B♭ Tpt.

Tbn.

B. Tbn.

Euph.

Tuba

246

Glk.

bow all notes in this fragment

Vib.

246

Mrb.

Chthonic Fragments

CODA **Strident, intense** ♩ = 92

264

Fl.
Ob.
B♭ Cl.
B. Cl.
A. Sx.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Bsn.
Hn.
B♭ Tpt.
Tbn.
B. Tbn.
Euph.
Tuba
Glk.
Vib.
Mrb.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Pno.

solo *tutti* *solo al fine* *bowed* *L.V.*