joined_at_the_hip

for flute, clarinet, bass and djun-djuns

J. Simon van der Walt

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Composer's note

The given ensemble seems to be two pairs of instruments; the flute and clarinet ‘classical’, the percussion and bass world/jazz/rock. So, force the latter into the classical mold, or vice versa?

Neither; worlds collide. The djun-djun shapes the piece, a polyrhythmic pattern inside a puzzle of variations. The bass line is strung between ‘cadential’ pillars in the djun-djun part.

The winds have distorted classical gestures, further munged by having the transposing clarinet share a part with the concert pitch flute. A metanarrative (‘The History of Classical Music’) is distrusted (✓), with obscured quotations (✓) from the repertoire.

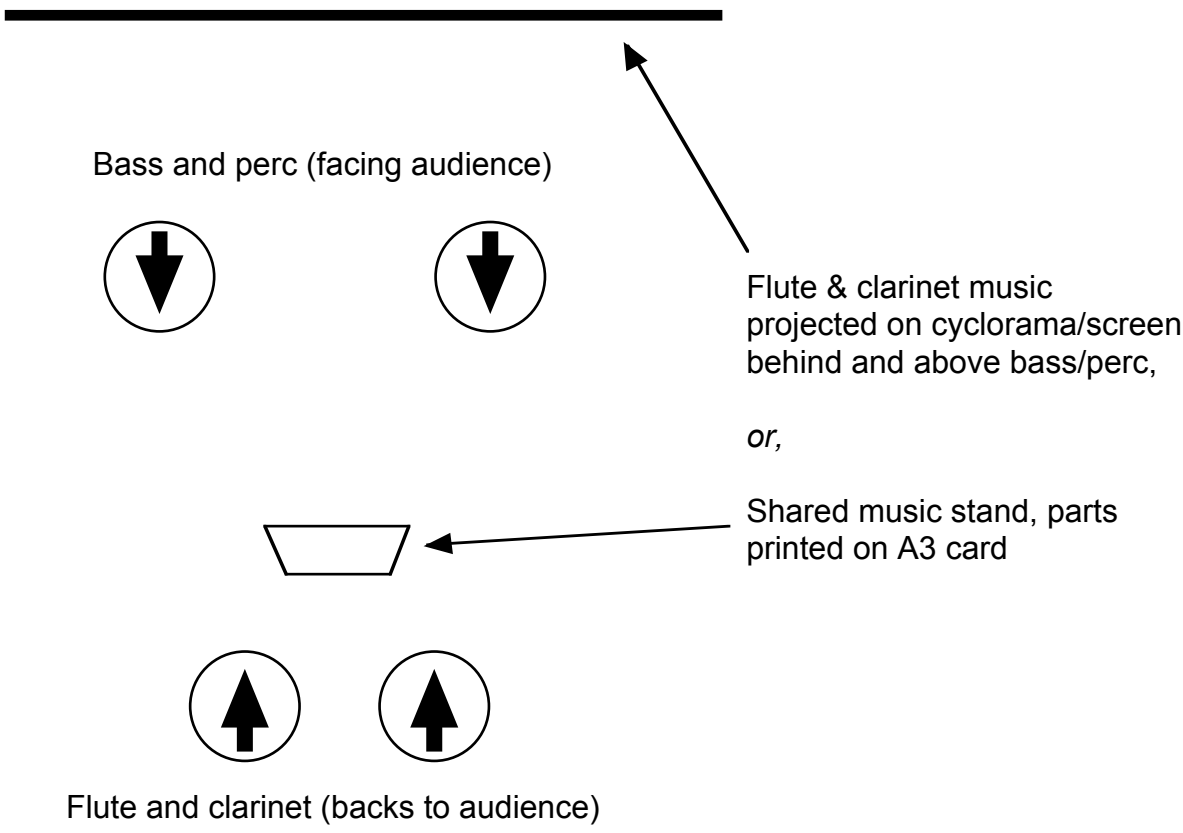
Preamble

No ‘score’ for this work exists, in the sense of a linear, vertically co-ordinated presentation of musical events in time. The ‘score’, in the sense of ‘the material originated by the composer from which a performance is to be constructed’, consists of these notes, an ‘overview’ (which doubles as a performance part for the djun-djuns and bass), and four ‘adhesions’ which comprise the performance material for the winds. Also supplied a very approximate audio demo of the piece, made with cheap samples. Use with caution.

Performance notes

Staging

It would be good if the audience could get some sense of the opposition between the two pairs of instruments, and could also see that the flute and clarinet are sharing the same music. Overleaf is one suggestion (schematic, not to scale);

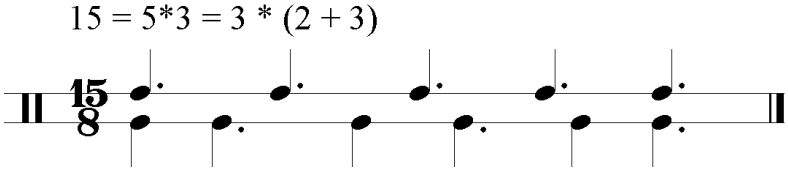


(Other stagings are possible - indeed, in an early incarnation of the piece, the music for the winds was to be stuck up at various points around the space, with the players walking to that spot for each cue; hence ‘Adhesion’.)

Djun-djuns

Three, low medium and high, arrayed horizontally before the player, on a chair or some such as convenient, the lowest below, then the mid and the high. To one of them, a bell is attached. The bell with the left hand, the djun-djuns with the right, except in the case of the flams, which are naturally played across the opposite heads of the drum. Not overloud; relaxed and loping.

It is advised that the player make a particular study of the fundamental polyrhythm in the piece;



until it is comfortably internalised. (The conceptual similarity to archetypal African polyrhythmic thinking (12 = 5+7 = 4*3 = 3*4 = 6*2) should be obvious.)

Bass

Electric bass; again, not overloud, balanced with the djun-djuns. Clean sound, finger not plectrum.

Djun-djun and bass

It is entirely possible and to no-one's detriment that these two parts may come adrift sooner or later! If either player gets lost, busk, but with a view to coming back together at the 'cadences', which are obligatory. The bass player could if so desired depart substantially from the given pitches and rhythms, provided the general character of the part remains. (Not a jazz solo, though.) Whatever happens, do not rush the tempo.

Be aware that the woodwind players have no score, and are listening out for the cadences. A helpful nod here and there?

Woodwinds

The 'wrong' transposition produced by having the players share a part is of course deliberate and should not be 'corrected'! The phrasings and articulations given are in the nature of helpful suggestions, and may be varied by the players, as long as both agree. Do not worry too much if the canonic passages drift apart somewhat.

Dynamics are generally loud; loud enough certainly to be heard reasonably clearly over the djun-djuns and bass, especially if the players have their backs to the audience as suggested. Amplification would be a possibility.

(The exception to the generally loud dynamic is the final diminuendo, where the sound of the winds should gradually become submerged below that of the rhythm secion. When the latter stop, the woodwind duet is heard to emerge, now very quiet.)

Duration

~ 5 mins

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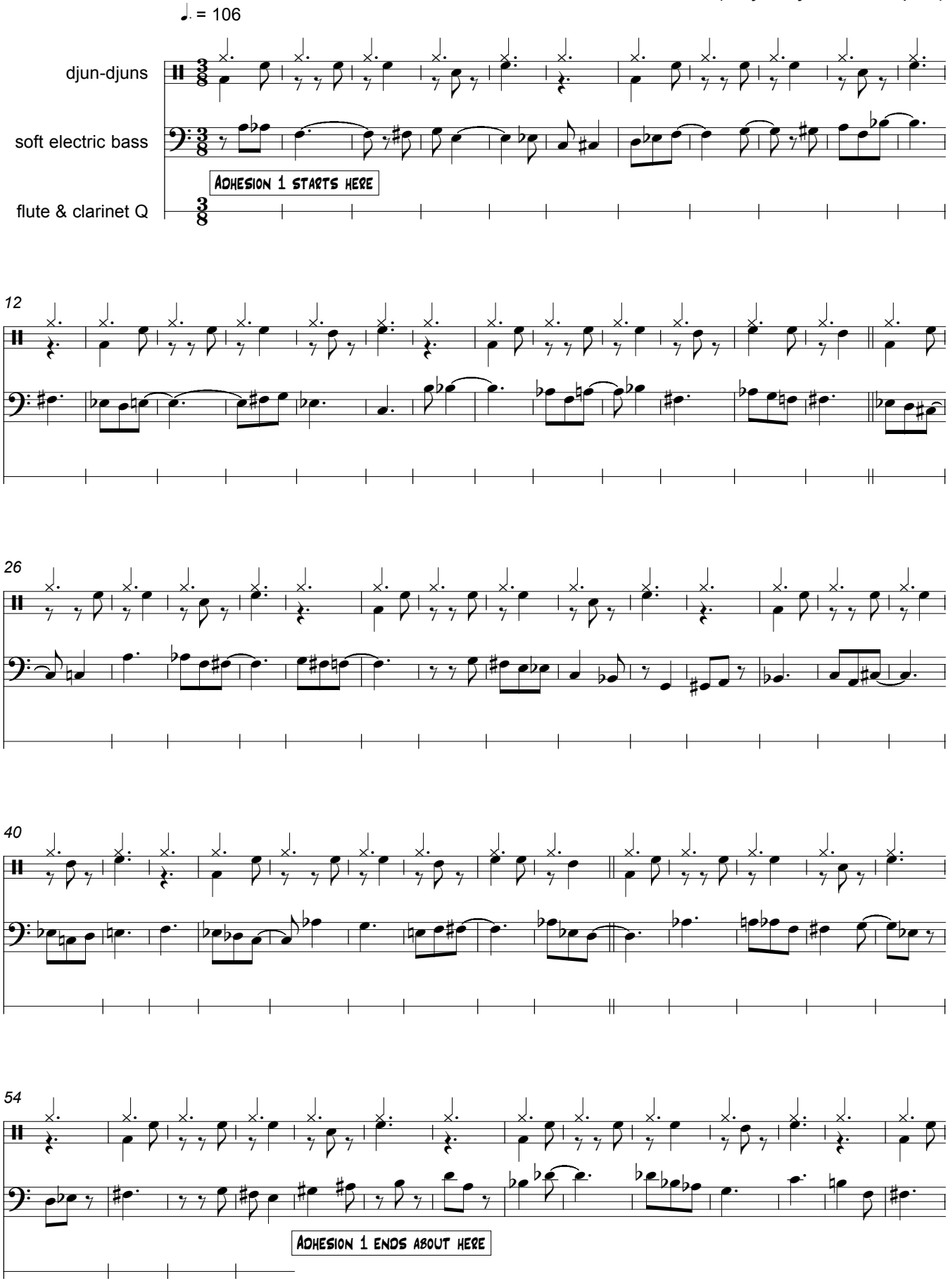
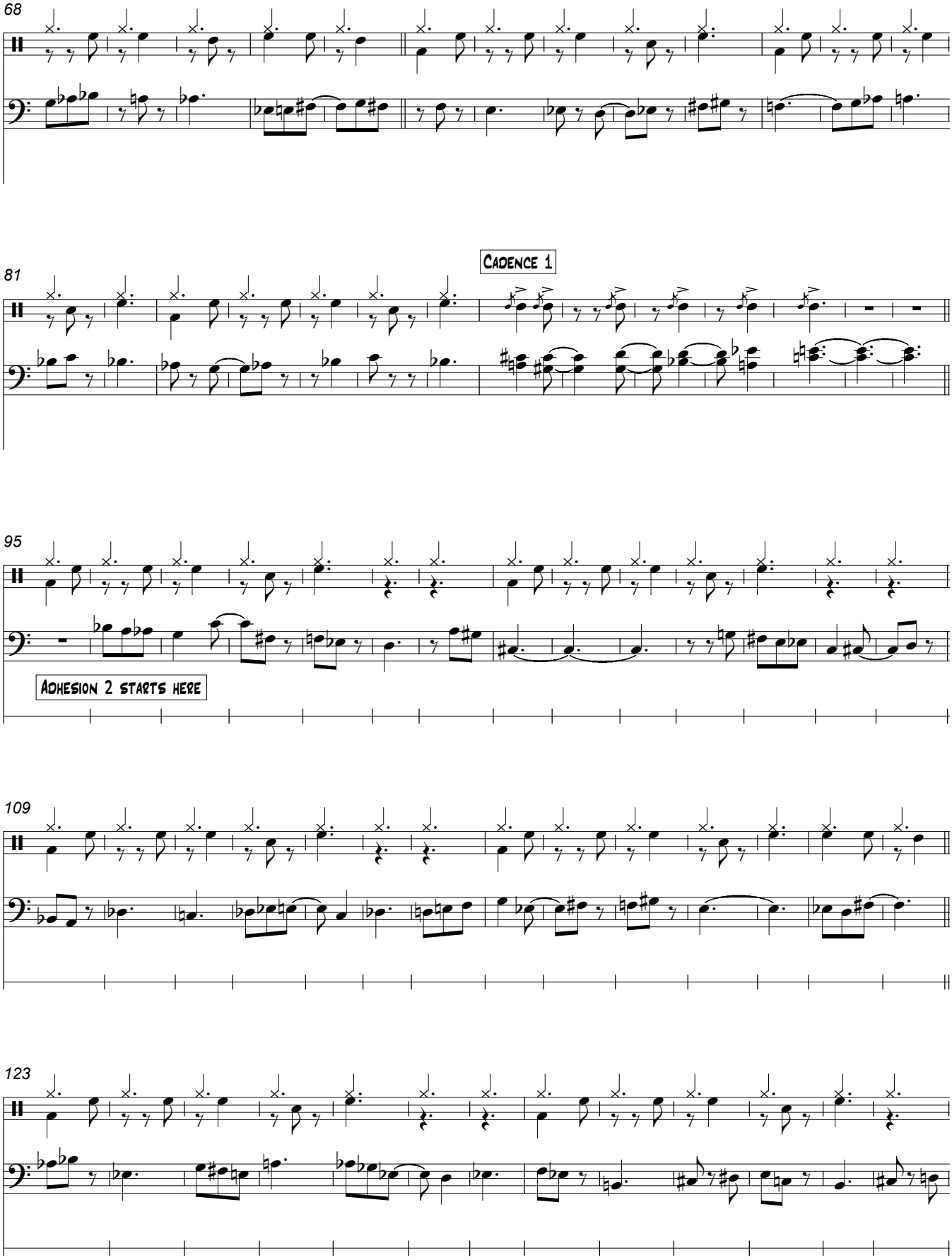
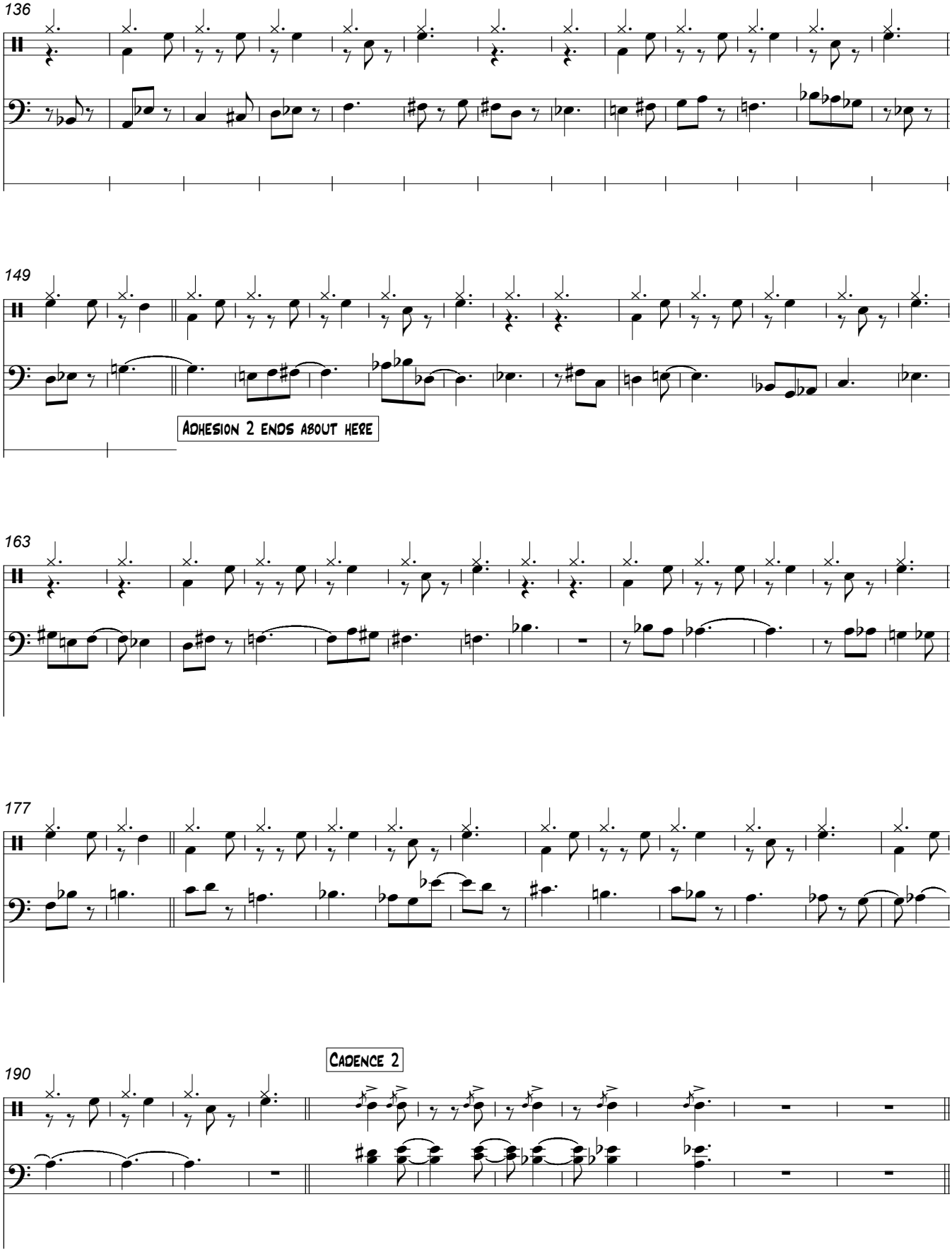
Overview (= djun-djun & bass part)




68
81
Cadence 1
95
Adhesion 2 starts here
109
123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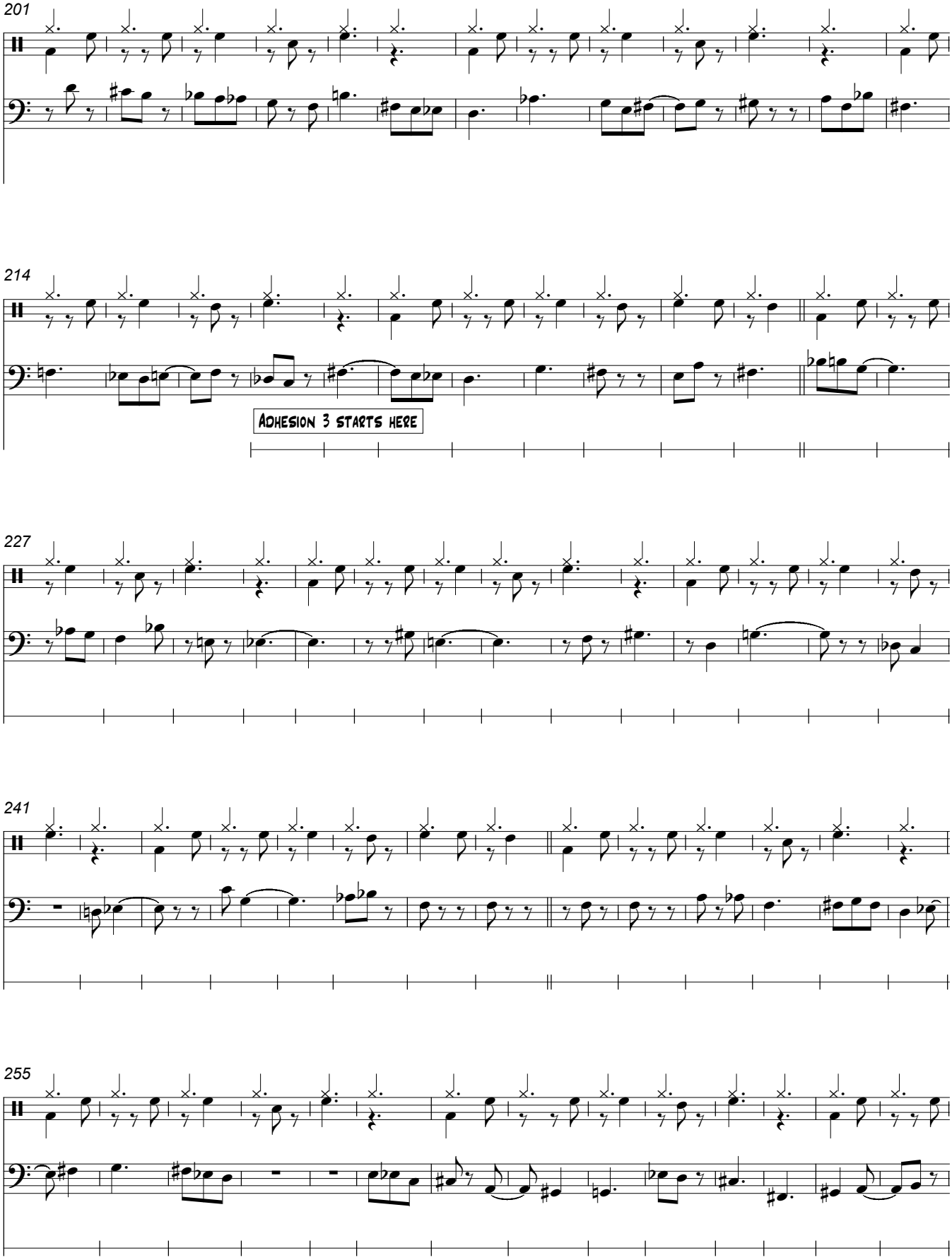
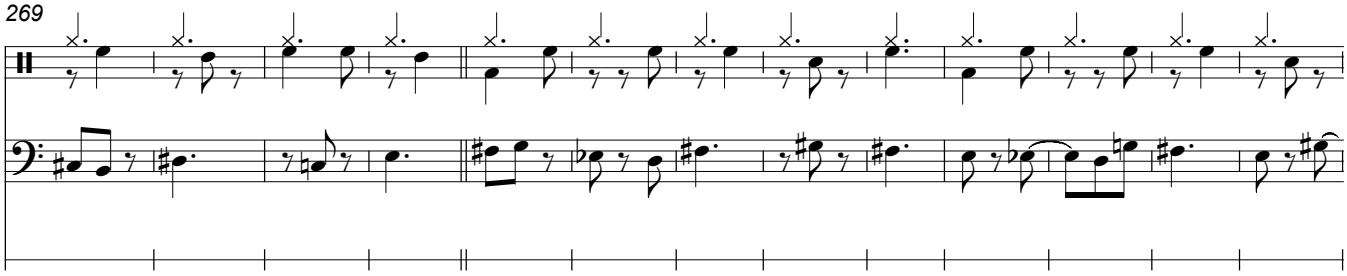
149
ADHESION 2 ENDS ABOUT HERE
163
177
190
CADENCE 2


201
214
ADHESION 3 STARTS HERE
227
241
255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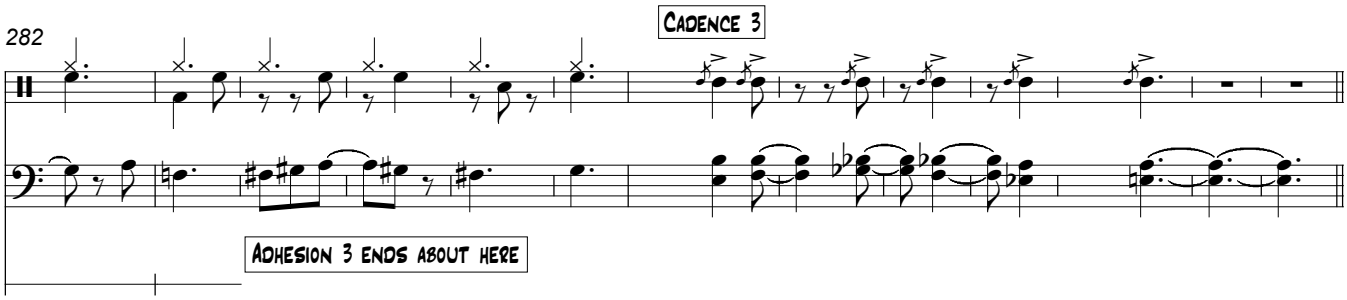
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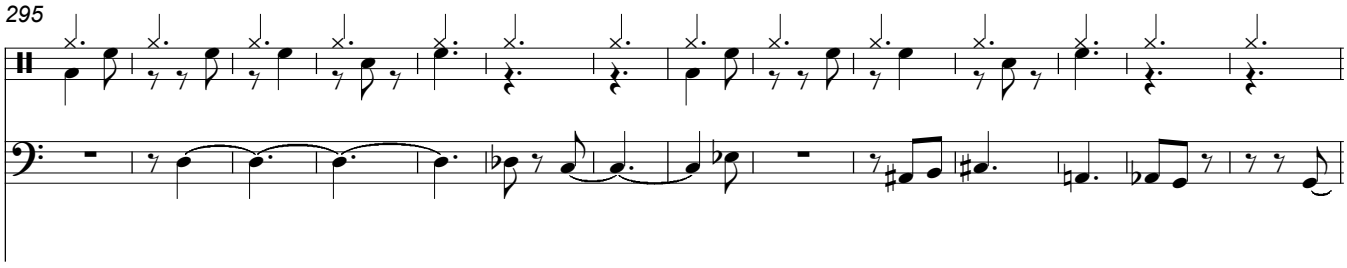
Cadence 3
Adhesion 3 ends about here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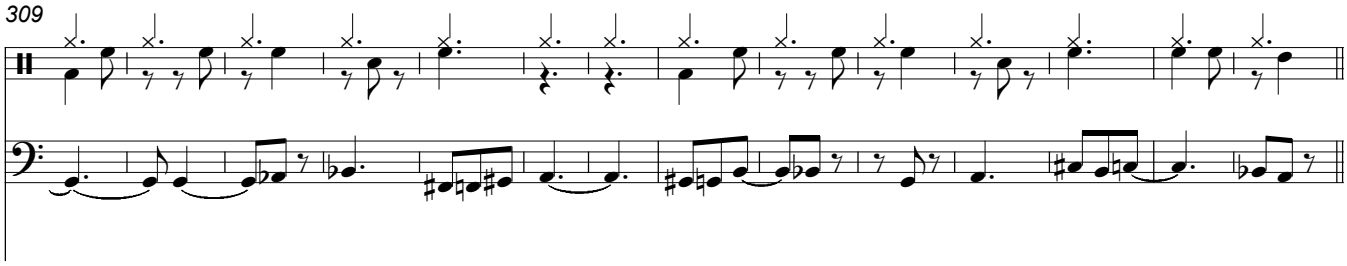
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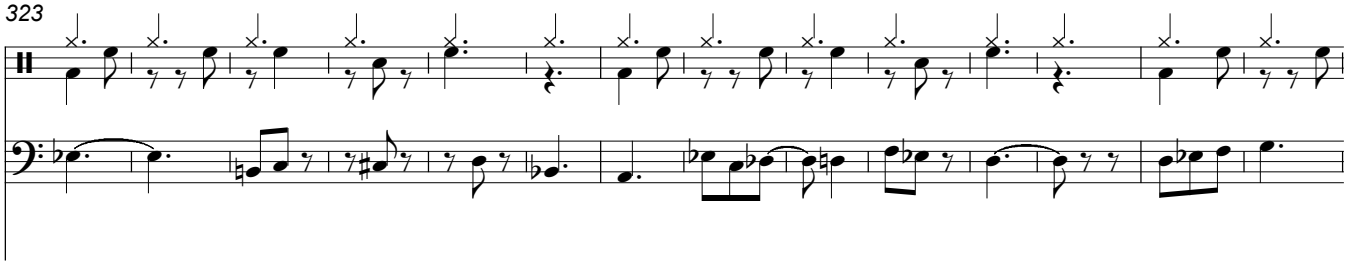
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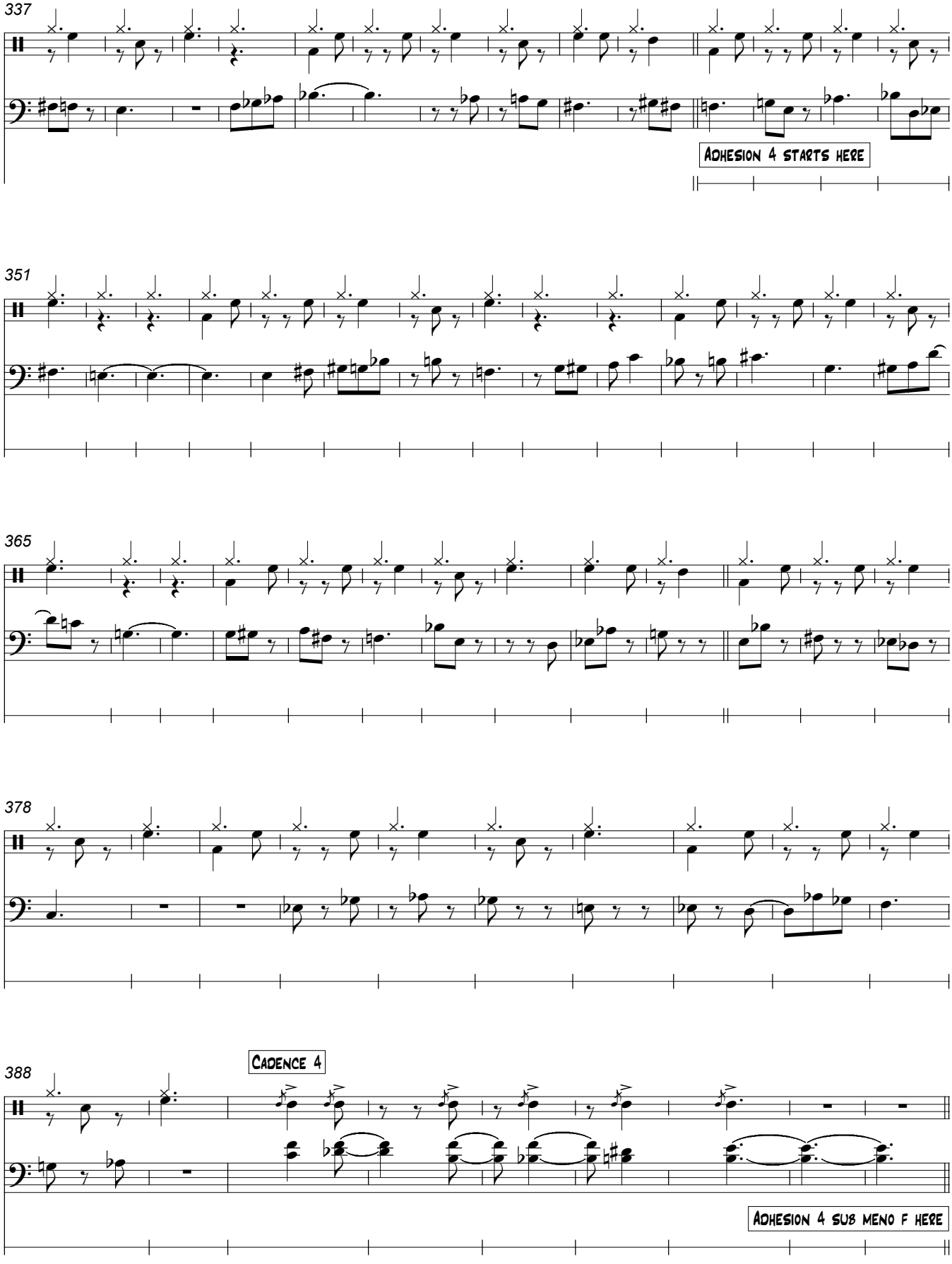
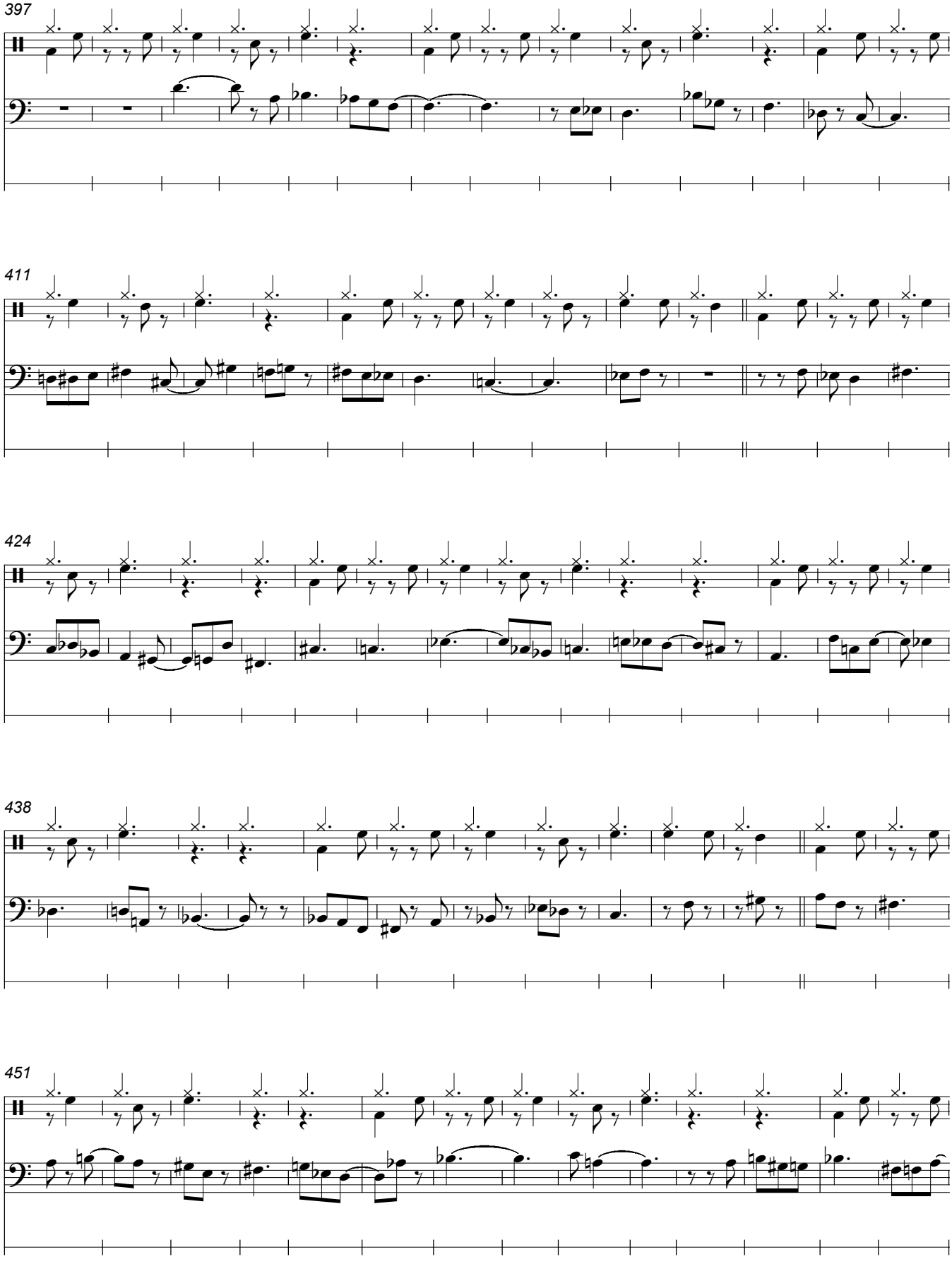

337
ADHESION 4 STARTS HERE
351
365
378
388
CADENCE 4
ADHESION 4 SUB MENO F HERE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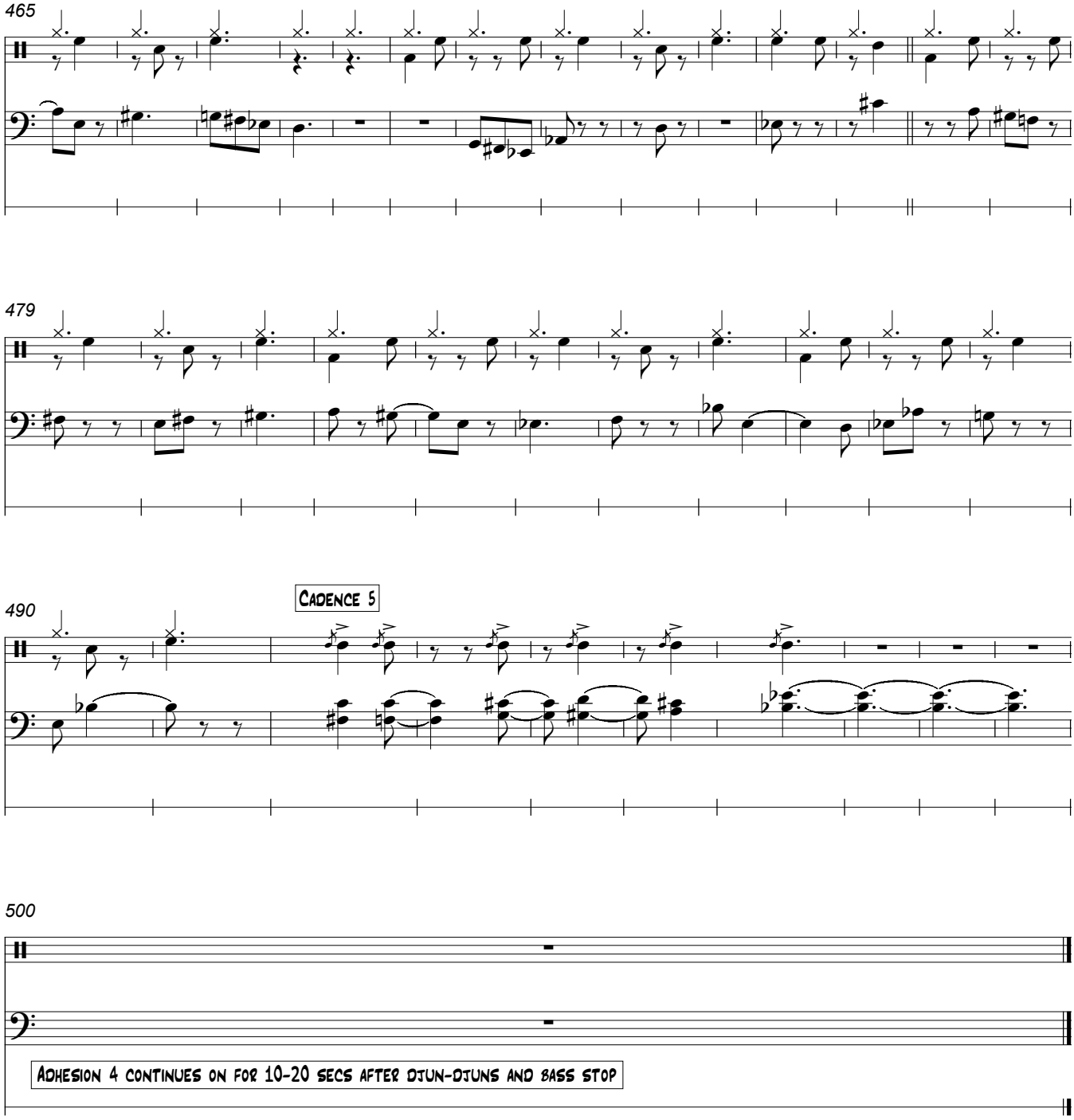
411
424
438
451


465
479
490
Cadence 5
500
Adhesion 4 continues on for 10-20 secs after djun-djuns and bass stop

Adhesion 1

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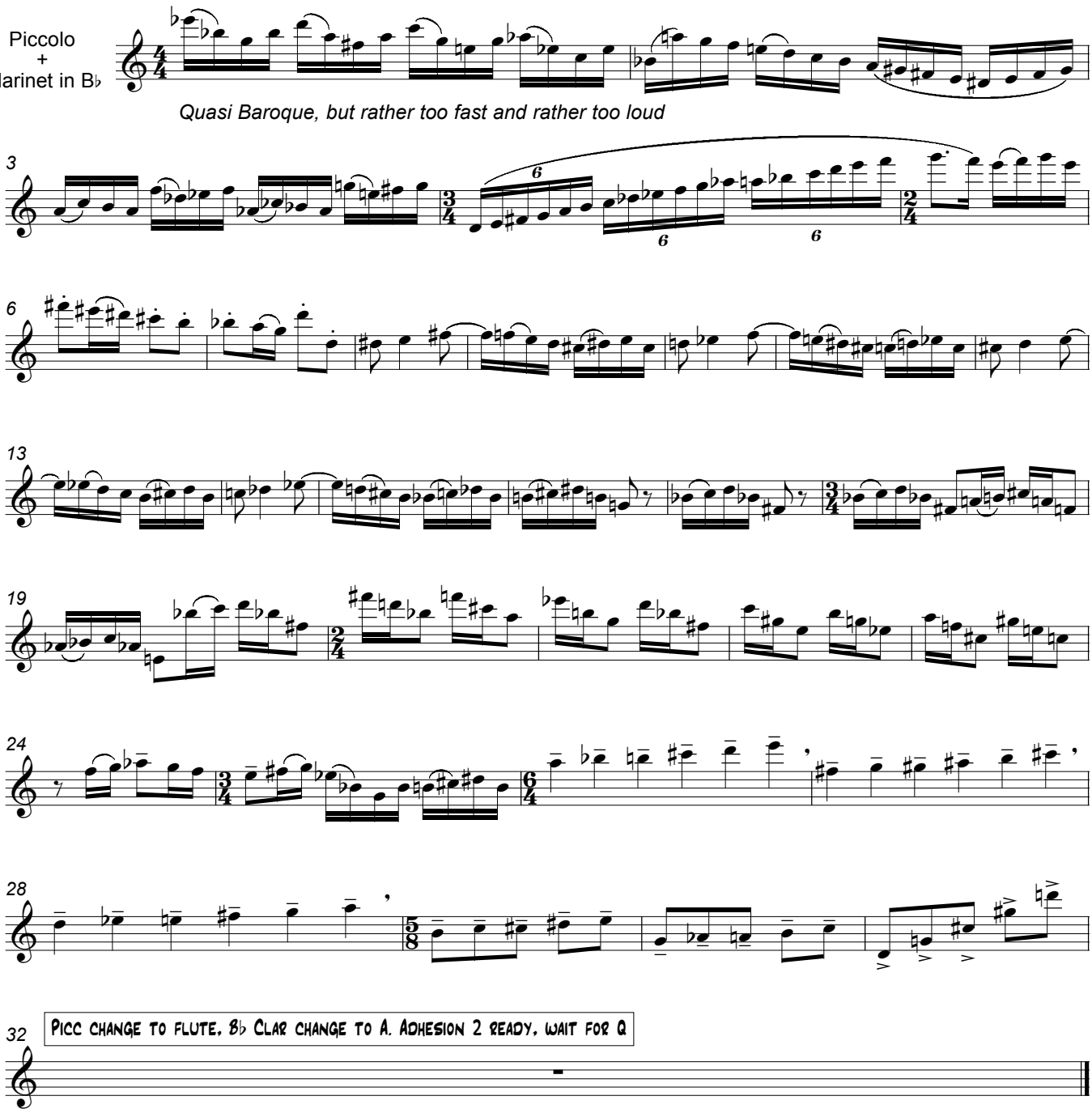
Start together with djun-djuns and bass, but at own tempo

♩ = 160 or faster

Piccolo
+
Clarinet in B♭

Quasi Baroque, but rather too fast and rather too loud



Adhesion 2

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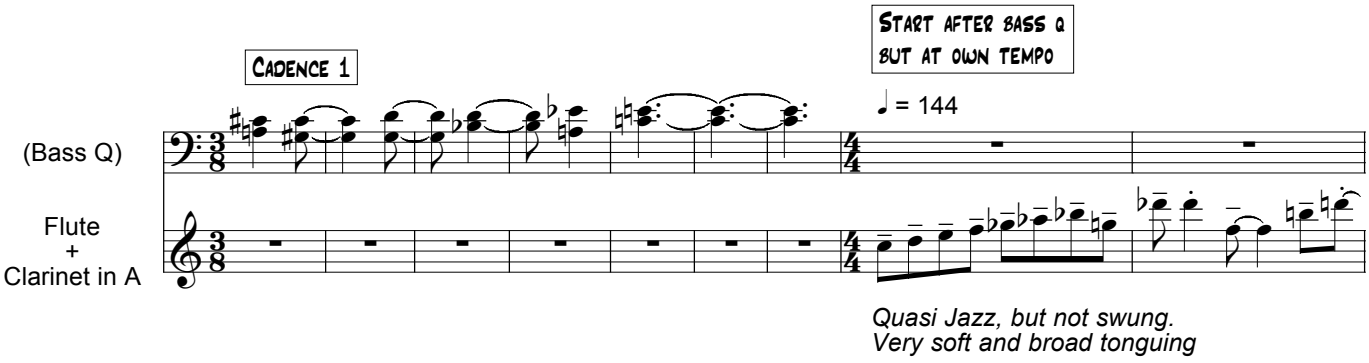

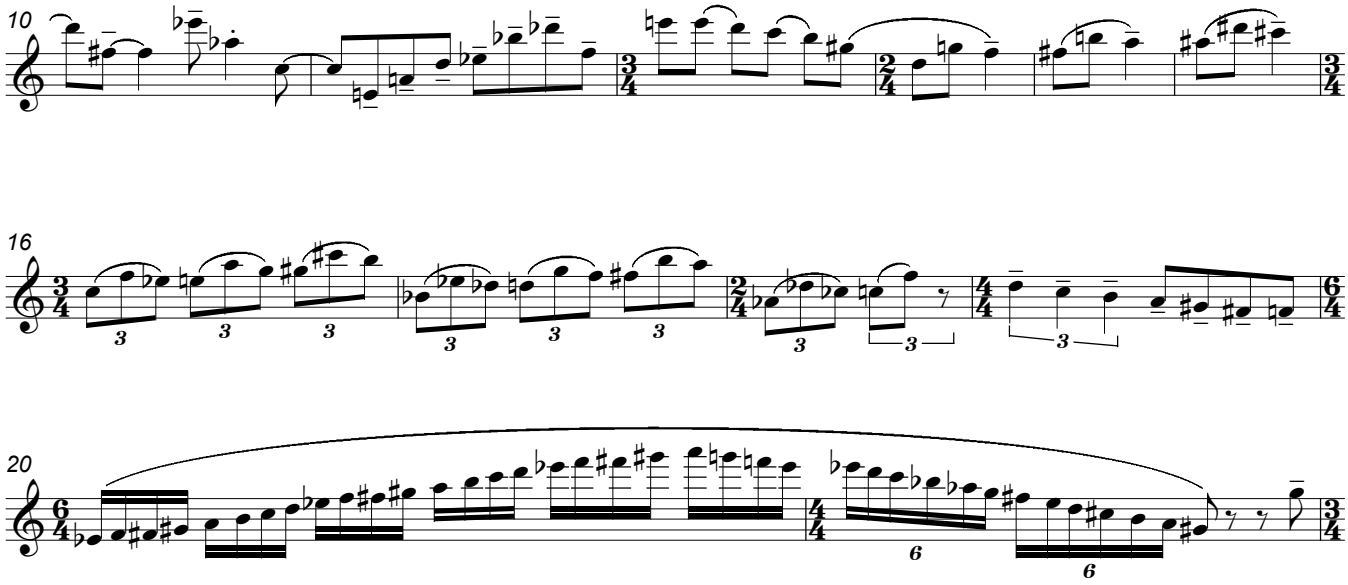

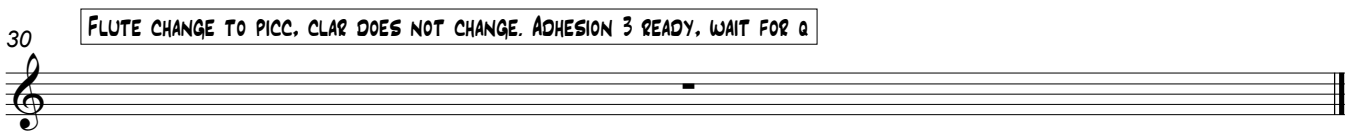

Adhesion 3

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Cadence 2

(Bass Q)

Piccolo
+
Clarinet in A

8

Count about 16 bars of groove before starting, at own tempo as always

In canon - clar one crotchet behind picc

9 ♩ = 120

Quasi Romantic

14

19

23

25

26

27

28

31

Start counting 64 bars of 3/8 groove. Picc change to flute.
A Clar change to B♭. Ready adhesion 4, still counting...

Adhesion 4

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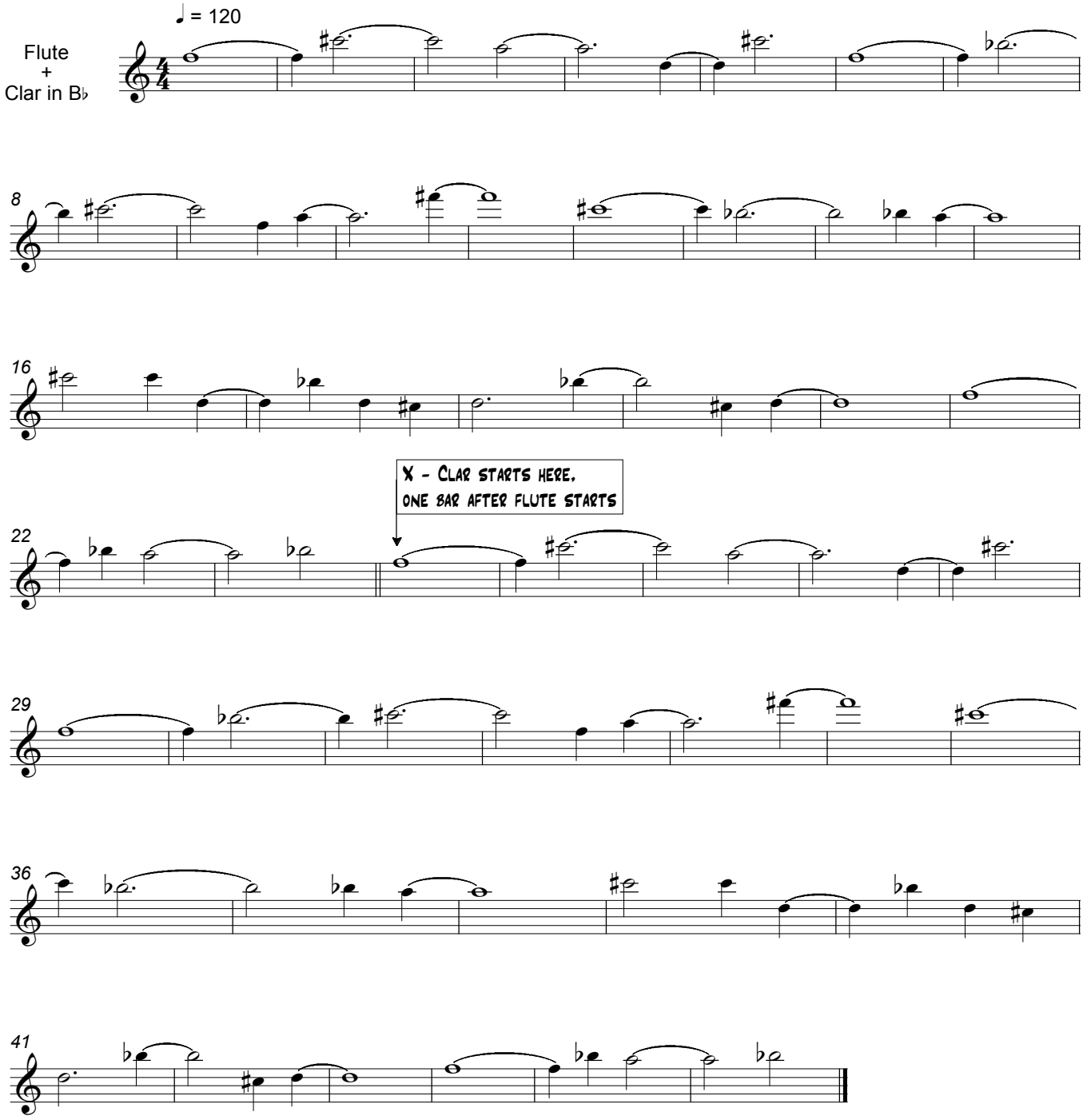
Start (approximately) 64 bars after the end of adhesion 3.
In canon: flute starts at top of page. After one bar of flute, Clar starts playing from X.



... etc - both players DC, remaining in canon. Listen out for Cadence 4. In the two bars at the end of the cadence, get significantly quieter. Then, continue to diminuendo very gradually to the end of the piece. When the groove stops, play about another 4-6 bars solo, before coming to rest on some mutually agreeable (or disagreeable) dyad.