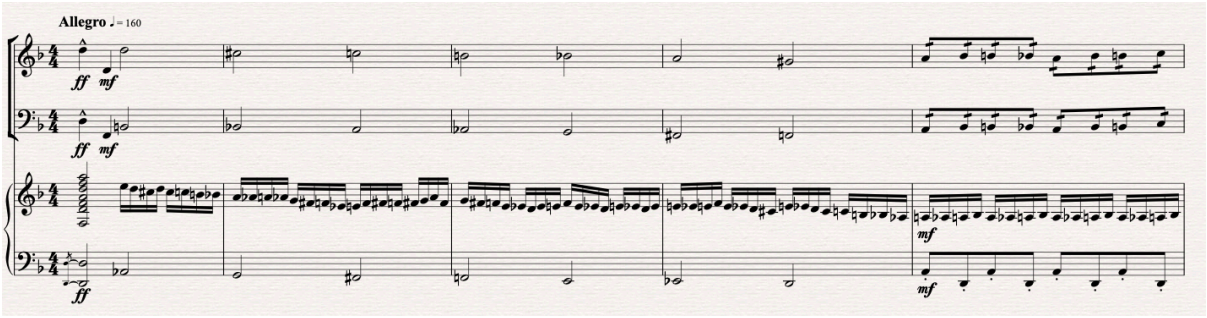
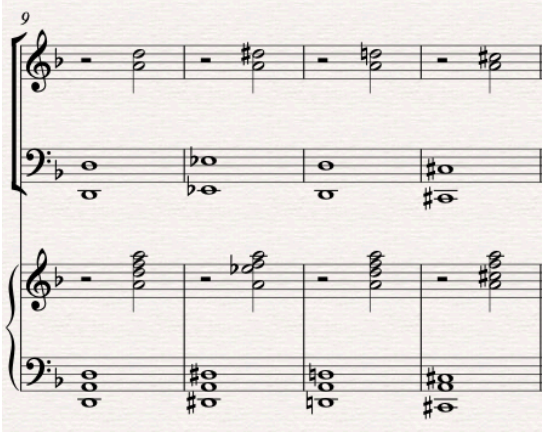
Commentary

For AT2, I decided to create a somewhat neo-romantic imitation piano trio of short length, both due to my compositional incapability and the time limits set for assignments. Only the first two movements were used for the purposes of time. My primary goal was to recreate the style of composers such as Camille Saint-Saëns, Sergei Rachmaninov, and to a lesser degree Dmitri Shostakovich. I went through some light reading of the works from these composers I most wanted to recreate while listening to them (a list of such works will be provided below this introduction), and attempted to mentally note on the most desired characteristics of each composer's style. A select few of these characteristics and techniques were then attempted to be transformed for the purpose of my trio. Much of the ideas put into the trio, if not all, were first formed by improv at the piano, usually with a general idea or style in mind, then written down with Sibelius. I find this approach to most allow for experimentation of ideas freely, without having to write/alter sheet music or MIDI notation in order to check how an idea would sound and fit into the piece.

Mvt I:

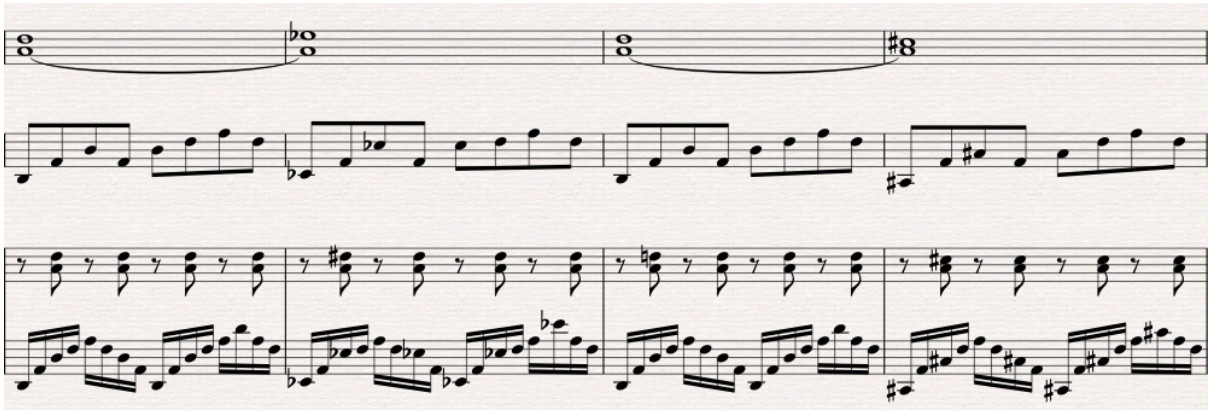


The piece begins with a quick acciaccatura-ornamented chord, providing something a jump to the start in order to swiftly move into a mostly chromatic piano RH semiquaver run with energy kept throughout. This run continues the burst of energy provided by said tonic chord, and provides movement along with the accompanying chromatic minims in the strings and piano LH. These minims descend chromatically to the b5 before smoothly lifting back to the fifth in the next passage for cohesion while ensuring resolution of tension.

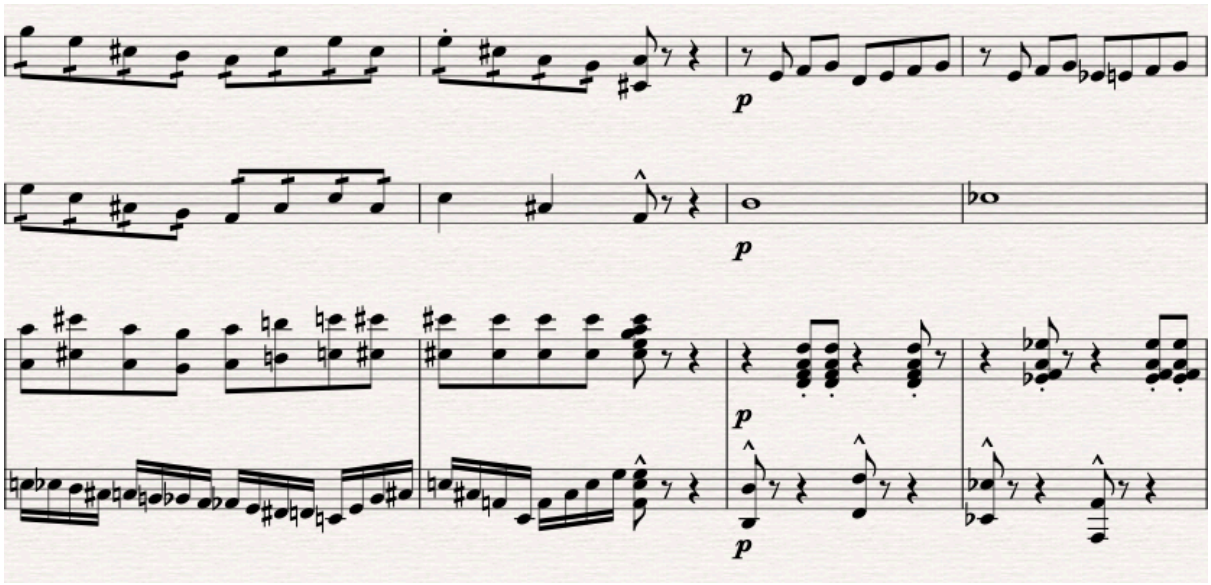


Shortly after, the piece halts on a set of minims, slowing the rhythmic quality of the introduction and providing something of a rest point for it. An important point to this

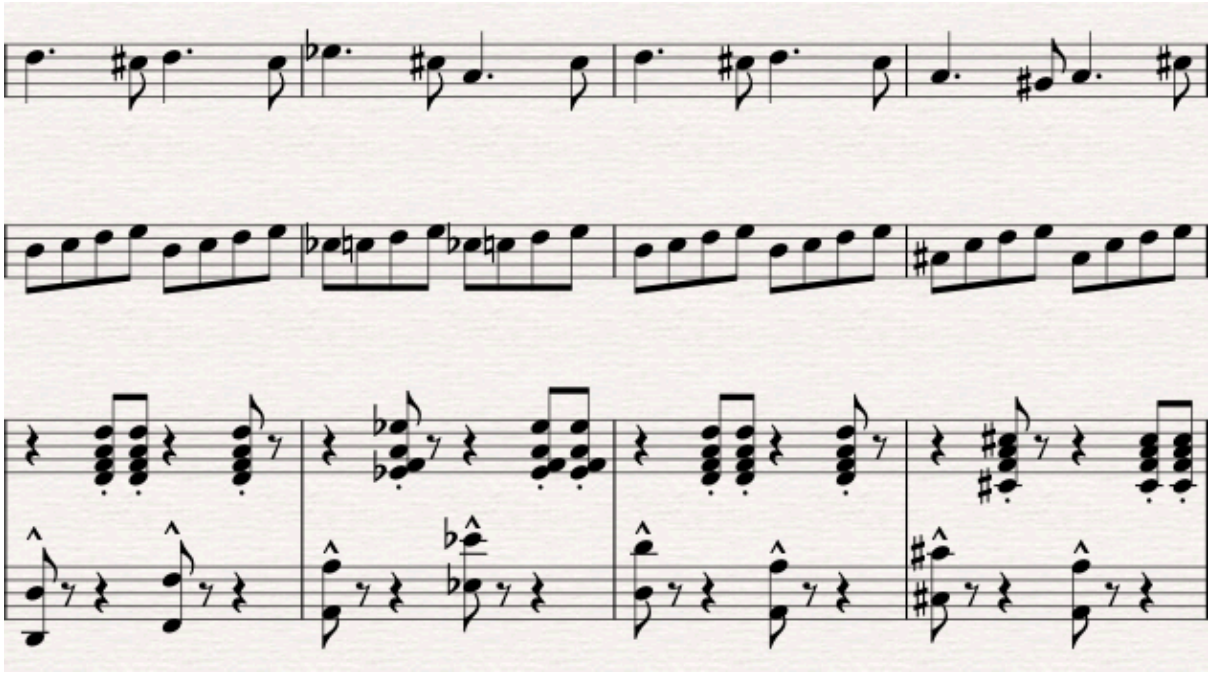
section is the clear outlining of the 1-2b-1-7# motif, which although used all throughout the first movement is most obviously presented in this passage, establishing this central element before continuing the frantic introduction.



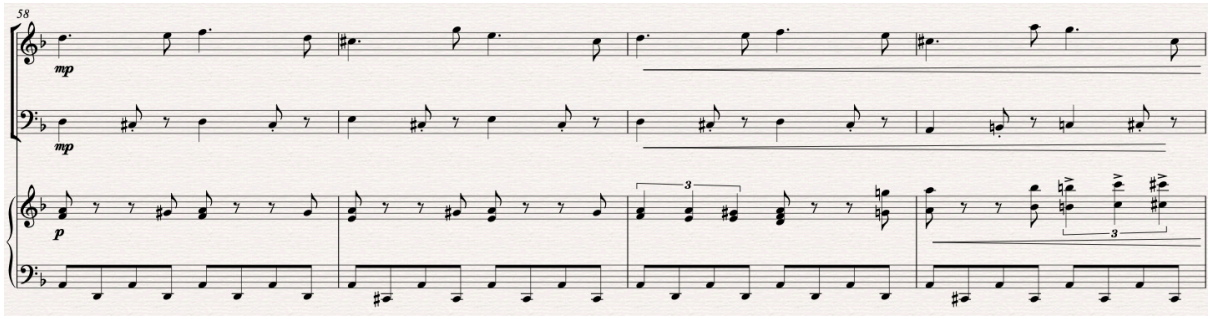
The intro continues reinforcing the previously stated motif (1-2b-1-7#), which will for the sake of clarity and ease of reading shall be referred to as DSDIS from here on. The return to the standard quaver and semiquaver mix along with a slower accompaniment part (violin in this case) refreshes the constant movement of the introduction.



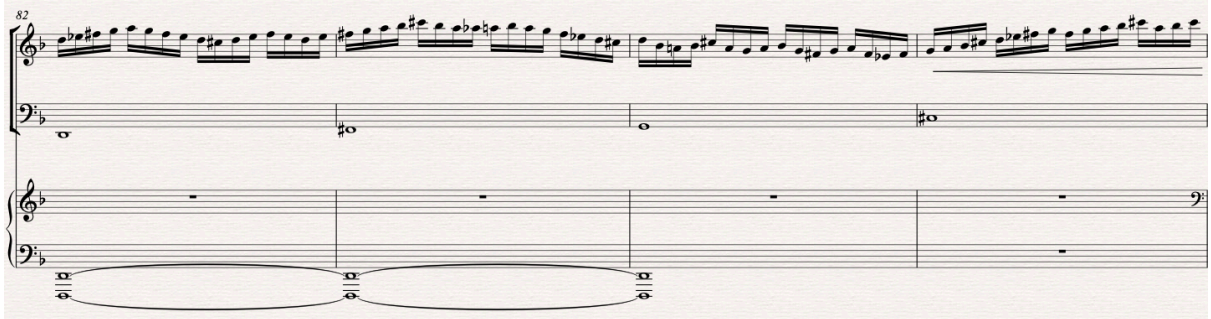
The introduction concludes with a clean break in the music, a rest separating a typical V^7 - I movement in order to split the introduction section apart while demanding a continuation in the music with the pull of the dominant. A march-like line in established in the piano, with sharply accented LH hits reinforcing the harsh military imitations of Shostakovich. The DSDIS motif is continued here, providing the underlying harmony.



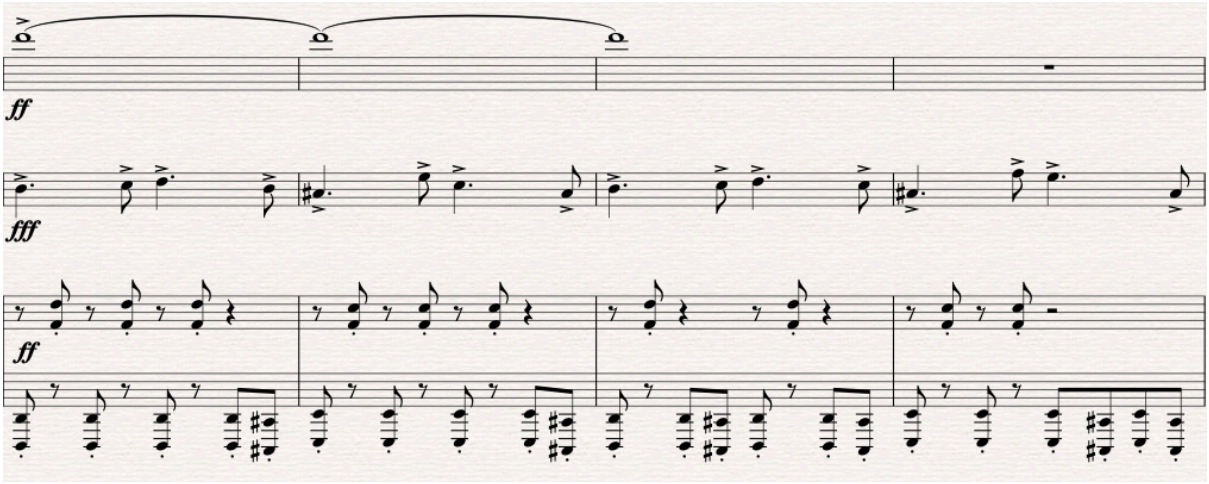
Finally, the first main motif (other than the underlying DSDIS pattern) is established, designed to fit alongside the DSDIS line. The repetitive and simplistic rhythmic qualities provide extreme clarity and cohesion between the instruments, further enforcing the style of an aggressive march while allowing for clear outlining of the melody.



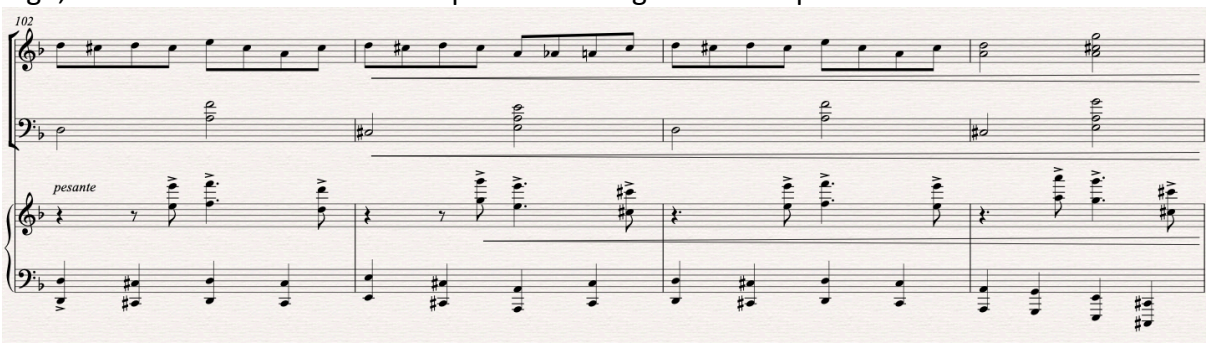
Following a short transitionary soli, the movement arrives at its second primary melody, similar in nature to the first albeit different enough to be recognisable individually. Once again, this consistency serves the style of a march while providing rhythmic cohesion to the movement as a whole.



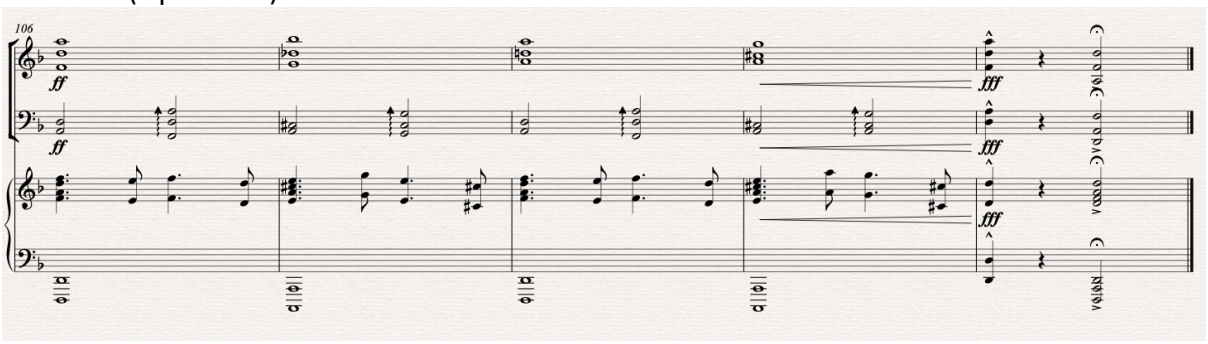
This second melody then leads into a violin solo passage (with light accompaniment from the cello) featuring a rapid run through the Romanian minor scale - the fourth mode of harmonic minor. This scale was used lightly throughout the prior bars for the sake of consistency.



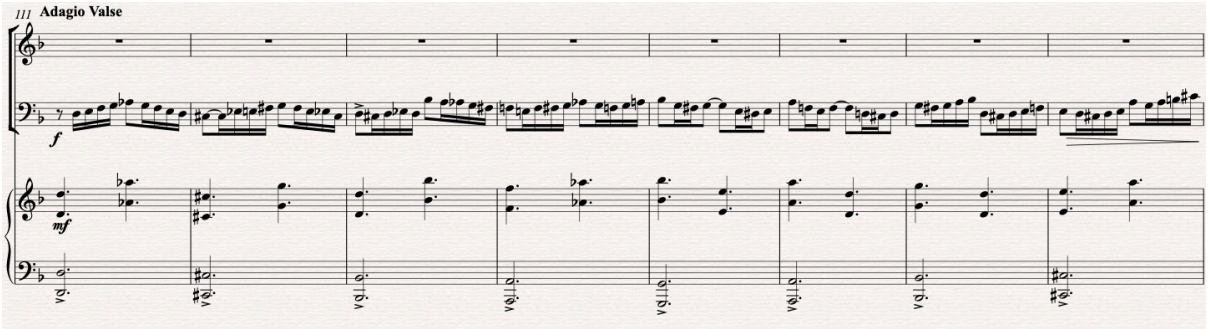
Here the movement reaches its apex, stabbing out aggressively rhythmic octaves in the piano LH and outlining harmonic information - namely the DSDIS motif - in the RH. The cello once again outlines the second melody, being supported by violin in octaves following a high, accented D for stress and emphasis with regards to the prior run.



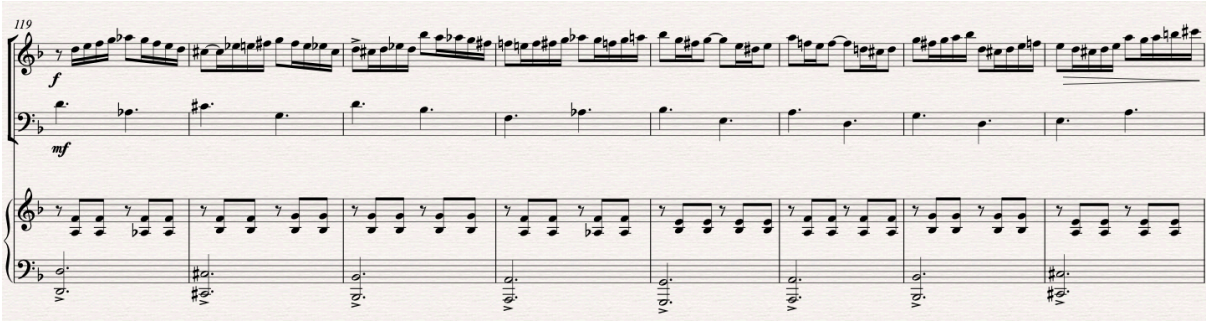
The movement then concludes soon after with a light imitation of Rachmaninov's *Prelude in C# Minor* (Op.3 No.2).



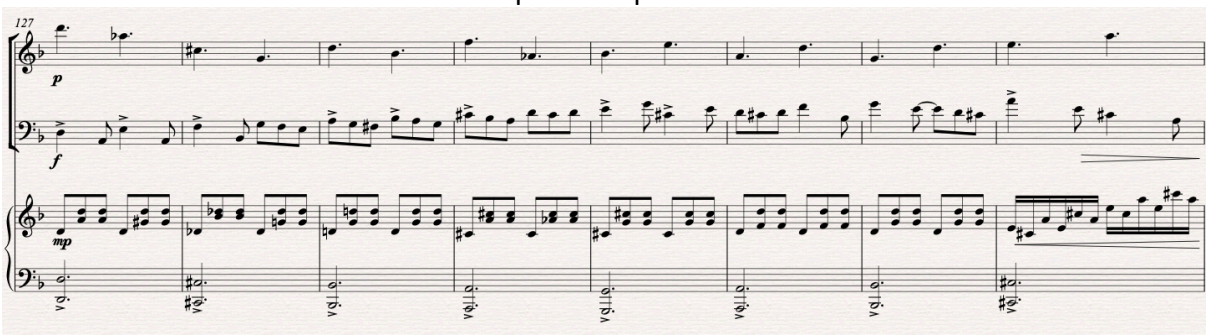
Mvt II:



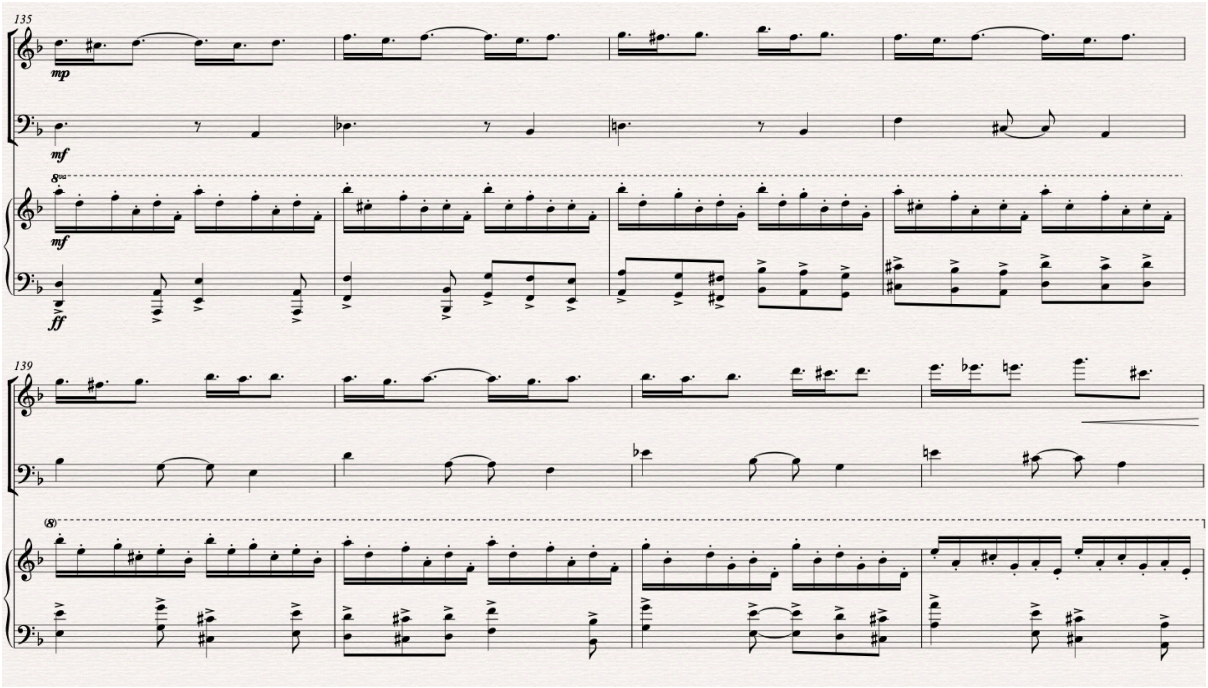
The second movement provides contrast through the use of a 6/8 time signature, slower tempo and longer 8 bar passages. These changes also lend to the style of the movement, being a slow waltz that drastically differentiates itself from the aggressive march of the first movement. Due to time restraints the movement begins immediately with a melodic statement from cello, while the piano LH plays a bassline that is repeated throughout most of the movement from here on - akin to a passacaglia such as Bach's *Passacaglia in C Minor* BWV 582.



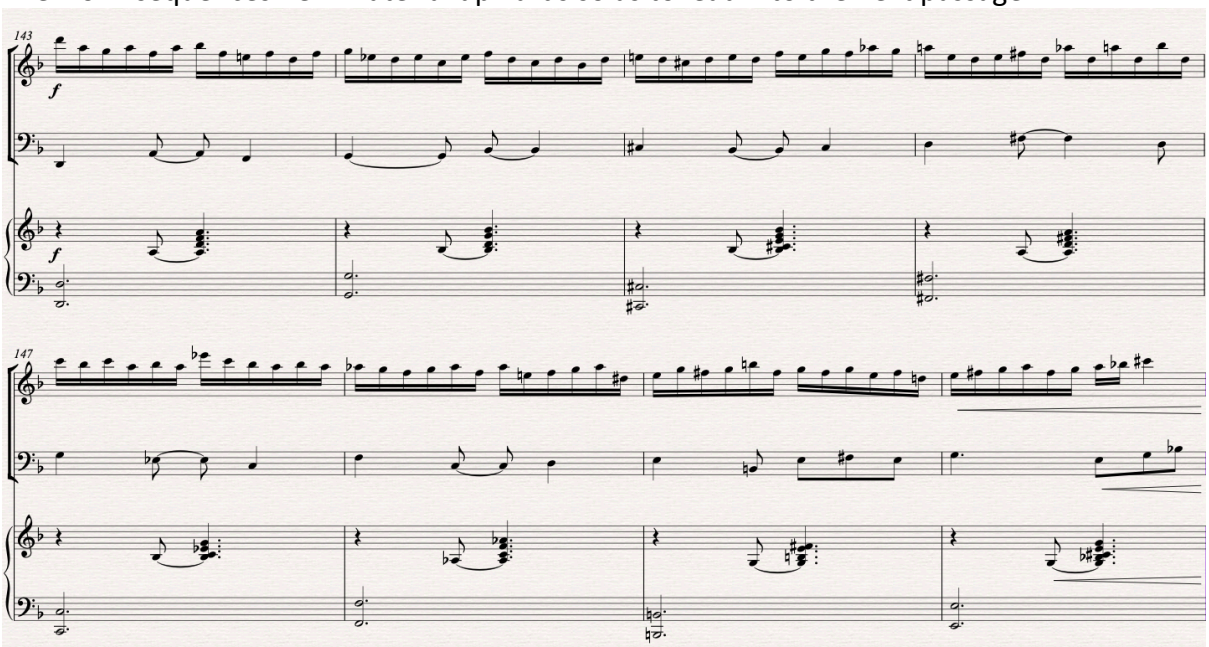
Following the intro a waltz line is established in the piano, as the melody is passed onto the violin so that the cello can fill in for the previous piano RH line.



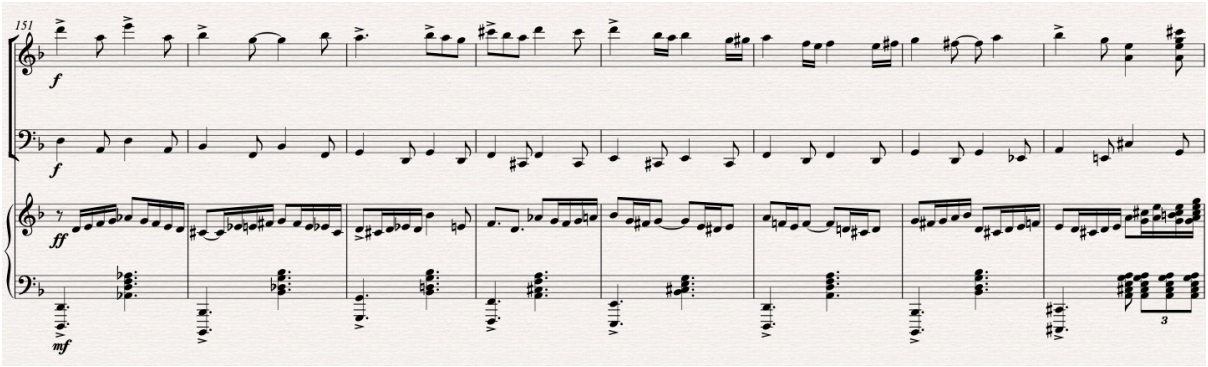
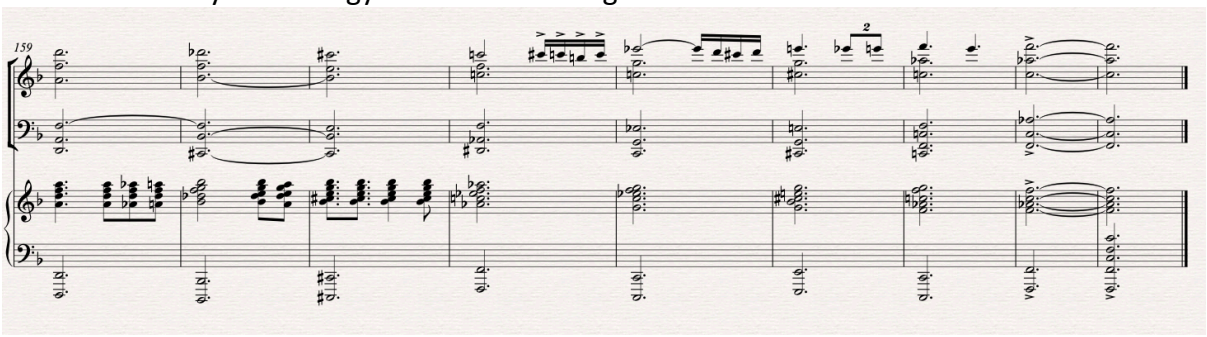
The dotted crotchet line is finally moved to violin, as the waltz line is strengthened by an additional note at the start of each set. A new melody is brought in by the cello, designed to fit with the previous one for later purposes, and so harmony is kept much the same. This repetitive harmony is reinforced and justified by the passacaglia bassline in piano LH.



This new melody continues in a low register, now occupying the piano LH as the RH continues a harp-like set of arpeggios that was led into in the bars just prior to this passage. The violin sequences new material upwards so as to lead into the next passage.



This sequencing leads into a transitionary section, lacking in clear melodies and more harmonic in nature so as to provide tension and energy for the upcoming apex



Finally the apex is reached, imitating a technique used to great extent in Saint-Saëns' second piano trio (final movement) in which two previously established cohesive melodies are mixed for finality and energy before concluding with a set of block chords.