

Peter McKenzie Armstrong

[CTT-95]

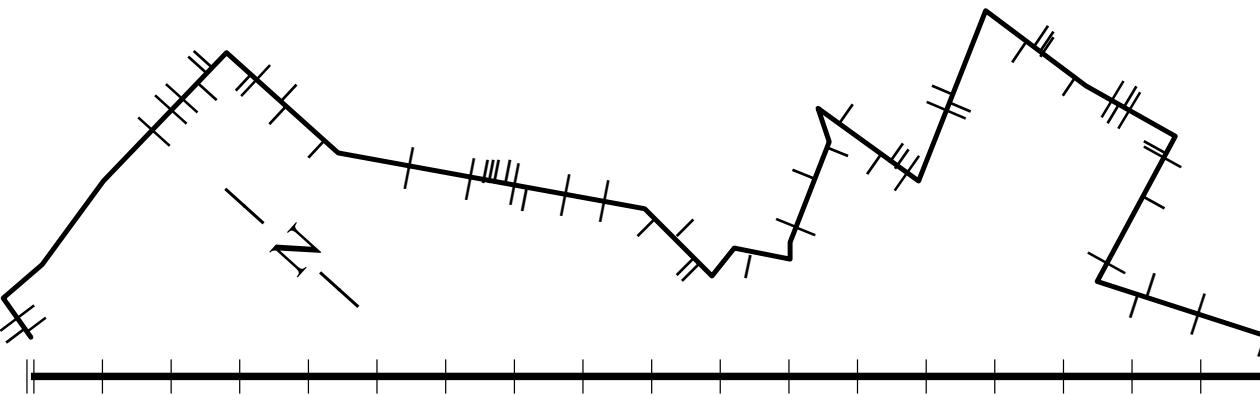
Bus Ride over a Bach Bass

for mixed digital quartet

2012

Edition Ottaviano Petrucci

NOTES



Circumstances obliged me recently to take a bus -- the CTTransit local from Hartford's Constitution Plaza, across the Connecticut River and south to Glastonbury. The ride would have gone unremarkably, had not something just before made me unusually vulnerable to distraction. A conversation, calling to mind the Air from Sebastian Bach's D-major Orchestral Suite, had sparked an irresistible urge to run this sublime music through my head. Soon more irresistible, however, was the lurching bus's cacophony of whines, rumbles and squeaks. My urge went down in defeat, and I vowed revenge: to concoct a musical busride powerless against JSB's Air. Back home, after a frenzy measuring Rand McNally and tinkering with Merriam Webster syllabifications, a strategy emerged, which I summarize here to describe the outcome.

Taking as point of departure the Air's 4-part layout: replace main melody (Violin I) with a rattletrap engine (steel drums); preserve fully the original bass line (Continuo); move inner-voice ranges (Violin II, Viola) to the outside instead (two xylophones, one too low to exist) for squeaks & rumbles respectively.

Derive content entirely from the names of streets, taken in two groups: those driven on (18, coincidentally the number of bars in the Air), and those intersected (~70 total, on L or R only or on both). Map these names to the chromatic scale by spelling and to meter by their relative syllabic stresses. Set each Group-1 (drums) phrase as a single voice iterating perpetually once per beat, each time parrot-whipped by its inversion. Set each Group-2 (xylophone) phrase as a voice pair, sounding once only, painfully augmented.

Apply global controls as follows. Move the engine's tessitura to parallel the bus's north-easterly height (see map). Vary tempo, slightly but often, with the relative stop-to-stop distances. Scale with complementary fractions to make the engine's "perpetual" beats seldom in fact quite equal. As its tessitura attempts dangerous heights, down-shift the stressed engine via transposing canon. And through all, ensure that the Air's bass line, while not unaffected by tempo instability, proceeds unperturbed to completion.

The score, while not humanly playable or performance-speed readable, has served to auto-sequence for MIDI and to discipline my efforts. Its dedicatee, please note, I made up, with an extra character honoring August Emil Daniel Ferdinand Wilhelmj, the nineteenth-century violinist who commandeered this Air to immortalize his G string.

Challenge to the Listener: Can you imagine, perhaps hum, the Air melody -- from memory, of course, and in sync with its sounding bass here -- without losing track?

- PMA

to Nikola Gharzumj

[CTT-95]

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For Mixed Digital Quartet

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The musical score consists of four staves, each representing a different instrument or voice part:

- Xylophone I.**: The top staff, written in common time (indicated by a 'C') and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It starts with a rest followed by a dynamic instruction $\text{d} = 159$. The first section ends with a measure of sixteenth-note patterns labeled [Temple St.].
- Steel Drums.**: The second staff, also in common time and one sharp. It features a section labeled [Market St. at Constitution Plaza] with complex sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 6, 15, 16, 3, 16, 17, 6, 3, 16, 15, 6, 3, 16, 14, 6.
- Celli Pizzicato.**: The third staff, in common time and one sharp. It contains a single dynamic instruction f .
- Xylophone II.**: The bottom staff, in common time and one sharp. It features a section labeled [Kinsley St.] with sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 6, 12, 6.

A vertical bar line divides the score into two halves. The right half continues with the following sections:

- [Talcott St.]**: The Steel Drums. staff continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 6, 3, 6, 3, 6.
- [Chapel St.]**: The Xylophone II. staff begins a new section with sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 2, 3, 15, 6.
- [Morgan St.]**: The Steel Drums. staff continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 2, 3, 16, 15, 6, 3, 16, 17, 6, 3, 15, 16, 6, 3, 15, 14, 6.
- [Morgan St.]**: The Xylophone II. staff continues with sixteenth-note patterns. Measures are grouped by brackets with counts 3, 2, 3, 16, 6, 3, 16, 6.

2

5

[Bulkeley Bridge]

This section features two staves. The top staff is in common time (indicated by 'c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains six measures of sixteenth-note patterns with various grace note markings. The bottom staff is also in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#), with three measures of quarter notes.

7

This section continues with two staves. The top staff is in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The bottom staff is also in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#), with three measures of quarter notes.

$\text{♩} = 148$

[Blacksmith Ln.]

This section starts with a tempo marking of $\text{♩} = 148$. It features two staves. The top staff is in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The bottom staff is also in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#), with three measures of quarter notes.

[Connecticut Blvd.]

This section features two staves. The top staff is in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The bottom staff is also in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#), with three measures of quarter notes.

[East River Dr.]

This section features two staves. The top staff is in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#). It contains four measures of sixteenth-note patterns with grace notes. The bottom staff is also in common time ('c') and has a key signature of one sharp (F#), with three measures of quarter notes.

Musical score for two staves (Treble and Bass) across four systems (measures 11 through 14). The score features complex rhythmic patterns with many sixteenth-note figures and rests. Measure numbers are provided above each staff.

Measure 11: The Treble staff has a continuous pattern of sixteenth notes with various grace note markings. The Bass staff has a single eighth note at the beginning of the measure.

Measure 12: The Treble staff begins with a sixteenth-note pattern followed by a sustained eighth note. The Bass staff has a sustained eighth note.

Measure 13: The Treble staff continues its sixteenth-note pattern. The Bass staff has a sustained eighth note.

Measure 14: The Treble staff concludes with a sixteenth-note pattern. The Bass staff has a sustained eighth note.

Text Labels:

- [Thomas St.] appears in the middle of Measure 12.
- [Ash St.] appears in the middle of Measure 5.
- [Governor St.] appears twice: once in the middle of Measure 13 and once in the middle of Measure 14.
- [Governor St.] appears again in the middle of Measure 15.

4 [Prospect St.]

14

[South Prospect St.]

[Harrison Place] $\text{♩} = 130$

[Lynn St.] $\text{♩} = 121$

[Ward St.]

[Main St.] $\text{♩} = 131$

[Central Av.] $\text{♩} = 132$

[Main St.]

[Chapel St.]

[Garvan St.]

The musical score consists of six staves of music. Staff 1 (top) starts with a treble clef, a key signature of two sharps, and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 130$. It features a series of eighth-note patterns with various rests and dynamic markings like z and x . Staff 2 (second from top) starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 121$. Staff 3 (third from top) starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 132$. Staff 4 (fourth from top) starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 131$. Staff 5 (fifth from top) starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 130$. Staff 6 (bottom) starts with a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp, with a tempo of $\text{♩} = 130$. The score includes several labels for streets: Prospect St., South Prospect St., Harrison Place, Lynn St., Ward St., Main St., Central Av., Chapel St., and Garvan St. The music is divided into measures by vertical bar lines and contains various rests, including sixteenth-note and eighth-note rests.

[Saunders St.]

18

14:15 6 14:16 6 14:17 6 15:16 6 15:17 6 15:18 6

16:18 149

16:19

[Carroll Rd.]

19

1:2 6

3:2 1:2

[Blinn St.]

20

[State Highway 517]

5:4 3 11:12 3 11:10 3 12:11 3 12:12 3

15:8

[Pitkin St.]

3:2 3 1:4 6 1:5 6

1:6

[Silver Ln.]

21

9:7 3 14:11 3 9:11 3 14:17 3 13:15 3 6:5 3 6:7 3 6:8 3 13:11 3 13:12 3

14:1

[East River Dr. Ext.]

3:2 3 5 1:4 3 1:4

1:5

6

23

$\text{♩} = 134$

[Brown St.]

25

Judson Av.

Lilac St.

[Willys St.]

[Sisson St.]

$\text{♩} = 136$

Risley St.]

$\text{♩} = 136$

Willow St.]

$\text{♩} = 12$

Willow St.]

$\text{♩} = 135$

Crosby St.]

$\text{♩} = 135$

Colt St.]

$\text{♩} = 135$

Crosby St.]

$\text{♩} = 135$

[Ensign St.]

$\text{♩} = 132$

30

1.5

1.5

6

$\text{♩} = 131$

31

1.3

6

1.3

[Ensign St.]

$\text{♩} = 135$

32

9:10

9:8

10:11

10:9

12:13

11:12

11:10

12:11

[High St.]

[Carriage Ct. Dr.]

$\text{♩} = 132$

[Brewer St.]

1.4

1.4

6

1.4

14:15

13:14

13:12

14:13

16:15

15:14

16:17

15:16

[Pent Rd.]

[High Ct.]

1.2

1.2

1.3

1.3

The musical score for page 8 is divided into three main sections. The first section, starting at measure 30, is labeled [Ensign St.] and has a tempo of $\text{♩} = 132$. It consists of two staves: a treble staff with a key signature of one sharp, and a bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The second section, starting at measure 32, is labeled [High St.] and [Carriage Ct. Dr.] and has a tempo of $\text{♩} = 135$. It also consists of two staves: a treble staff with a key signature of one sharp, and a bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The third section, starting at measure 34, is labeled [Brewer St.] and has a tempo of $\text{♩} = 132$. It consists of two staves: a treble staff with a key signature of one sharp, and a bass staff with a key signature of one sharp. The score features various sixteenth-note patterns and rests throughout the measures.

[Carter St.]

$\text{♩} = 136$

36

[Main St.]

$\text{♩} = 134$

[Carter St.]

[Main St.]

[Wadsworth St.]

[Sutton Av.]

$\text{♩} = 131$

38

[Cambridge Dr.]

[Millbrook Dr.]

$\text{♩} = 134$

[Cambridge Dr.]

[Oxford Dr.]

[Millbrook Dr.]

This page contains two staves of musical notation. The top staff begins with a treble clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 136$. It features a section labeled "[Carter St.]" with a 32nd-note pattern. This is followed by a section labeled "[Main St.]" with a 16th-note pattern. The bottom staff begins with a bass clef, a key signature of one sharp, and a tempo of $\text{♩} = 134$. It features a section labeled "[Carter St.]" with a 32nd-note pattern. This is followed by a section labeled "[Main St.]" with a 16th-note pattern. The page then continues with sections labeled "[Wadsworth St.]", "[Sutton Av.]", "[Cambridge Dr.]", "[Millbrook Dr.]", "[Cambridge Dr.]", "[Oxford Dr.]", and "[Millbrook Dr.]". Each section includes a 32nd-note pattern. The music is divided by vertical bar lines and includes various rests and dynamic markings.

[Nassau Ln.]

43 $\text{J} = 133$

13
32
6 12
32 5
32 11
11 10
5
32 6 12 11
5

[Millbrook Dr.]

$\text{J} = 134$

3
6
5
3
6
5
3
6
5

[Evans Av.]

45 $\text{J} = 133$

3
2
3
3

[Handel Rd.]

$\text{J} = 132$

3
2
3
1
2

[Handel Rd.]

2, 2, 3, 16, 17, 3, 3, 2, 3, 15, 16, 3, 3, 2, 3, 15, 14, 3, 3, 2, 3, 16, 15, 3, 3, 2, 3, 16, 15, 3

[Woodycrest St.]

$\text{J} = 134$

5
1
4
6

[Evans Av.]

3
2
3
3

[Handel Rd.]

3
2
3
1
4

[Norwich Ln.]

$\text{J} = 142$

3
5
3
6

[Canterbury St.]

3, 2, 15, 14, 3, 2, 15, 16, 3, 2, 16, 17, 3, 3, 2, 16, 15, 3

[Evans Av.]

3
2
3
3

[Suffolk Dr.]

3
2
3
3

[Maple St.]

51

52

53

$\text{d} = 148$

54

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

[Maple St.]

[Maple St.]

[Maple St.]

[Clayton Rd.]

Holly St.

[Spaulding Cr.]

[Spaulding Cr.]

[Forbes St.]

57

58

59

$\text{J} = 131$

[Landers Rd.]

[Forbes St.]

[May Rd.]

[O'Connell Dr.]

[Heritage Ln.]

[Woodmont Dr.]

[Prospect St.]

[Long Hill Dr.]

$\text{J} = 133$

[Linwood Dr.]

[Montclair St.]

[Madison Rd.]

The score features various musical dynamics and articulations, including slurs, grace notes, and fermatas. Measures 57-59 contain numerous sixteenth-note patterns and eighth-note chords. Measures 60-62 show more complex rhythmic patterns, including sixteenth-note figures and eighth-note chords.

63

1.3

5 1.3

13:14 6 13:12 6 13:14 6 13:12 6 14:13 6 14:13 6 14:15 6

6 12:13 13:14 6 13:12 6 14:13 6 14:15 6

[Willys St.]

$\text{J} = 137$

[Lancaster St.] [Shelley Ln.] 1.3

3 3 6 1.3

15:14 6 15:14 6 16:15 6 16:15 6 16:17 6 16:17 6 15:16 6

6 14:15 15:14 6 16:15 6 16:17 6 15:16 6

[Harris St.]

3 2 3 6 1.3

1.3

[Griswold St.] 1.2

1.2 6

1.2 6 17:19 6 17:15 6 8:7 6

6 8:9 6 17:19 6 17:15 6 8:7 6

$\text{J} = 135$

5 4:3

1.3

1.3

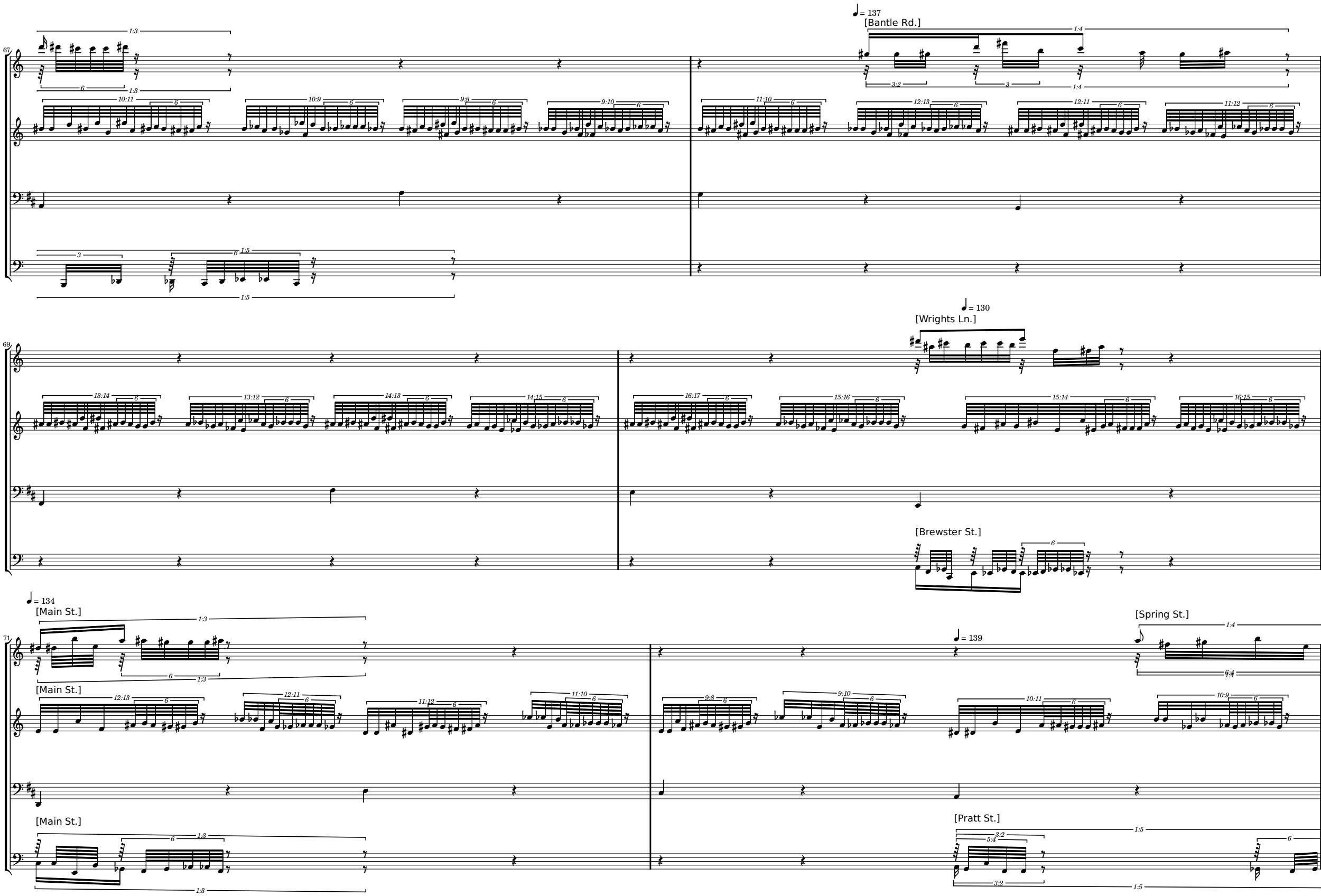
[Griswold St.] 6

[Salem Ct.] 3 5 1.3

[Harris St.] 3 2 1.5 1.3

1.5

ff:16



[Bantle Rd.]

$\text{♩} = 137$

1.3
6
1.3
10.11
6
10.9
6
9.8
6
9.10
6
11.10
6
12.13
6
12.11
6
11.12
6

3.2
3
1.4

1.4

[Wrights Ln.]

$\text{♩} = 130$

3
6
1.5
1.5

13.14
6
13.12
6
14.13
6
14.15
6
16.17
6
15.16
6
15.14
6
16.15
6

Brewster St.]

[Main St.]

$\text{♩} = 134$

1.3
6
1.3

[Main St.]

12.13
6
12.11
6
11.12
6
11.10
6
9.8
6
9.10
6
10.11
6
10.9
6

[Spring St.]

$\text{♩} = 139$

1.4
9.4

[Main St.]

6
1.3

[Pratt St.]

3.2
5.4
1.5
3.2
1.5
6

73

14

6:4

6 14

14:15 6

13:14 6

14:13 6

13:12 6

15:14 6

16:15 6

16:17 6

15:16 6

6

1.5

1.5

$\text{♩} = 120$

[New London Tpk.]

3:2

14

3:2 3:2 3

17:19 6

8:9 6

17:15 6

8:7 6

6

6

6

1.2

6:4

1.2 6

[Welles St.]

3:2

14

3 3

14 3

[Naubuc Av.]

3:2

14

3 3

14 3

[Welles St.]

6:4

1.2 6

1.2