Process and Projection in Abrahamsen's *Schnee*

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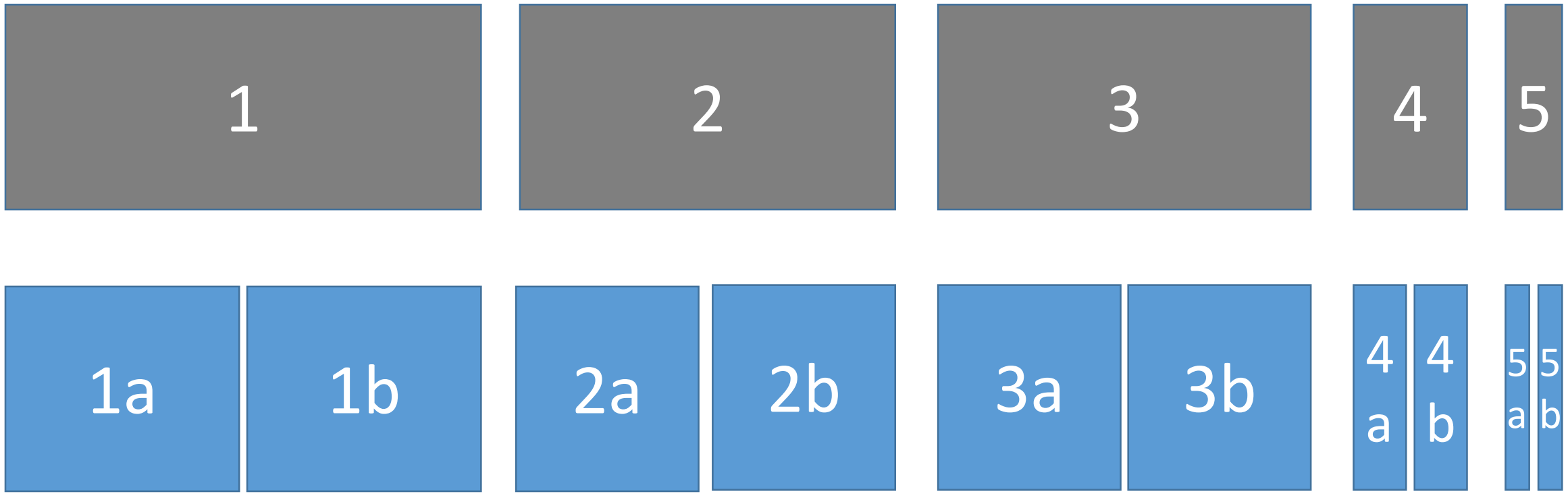
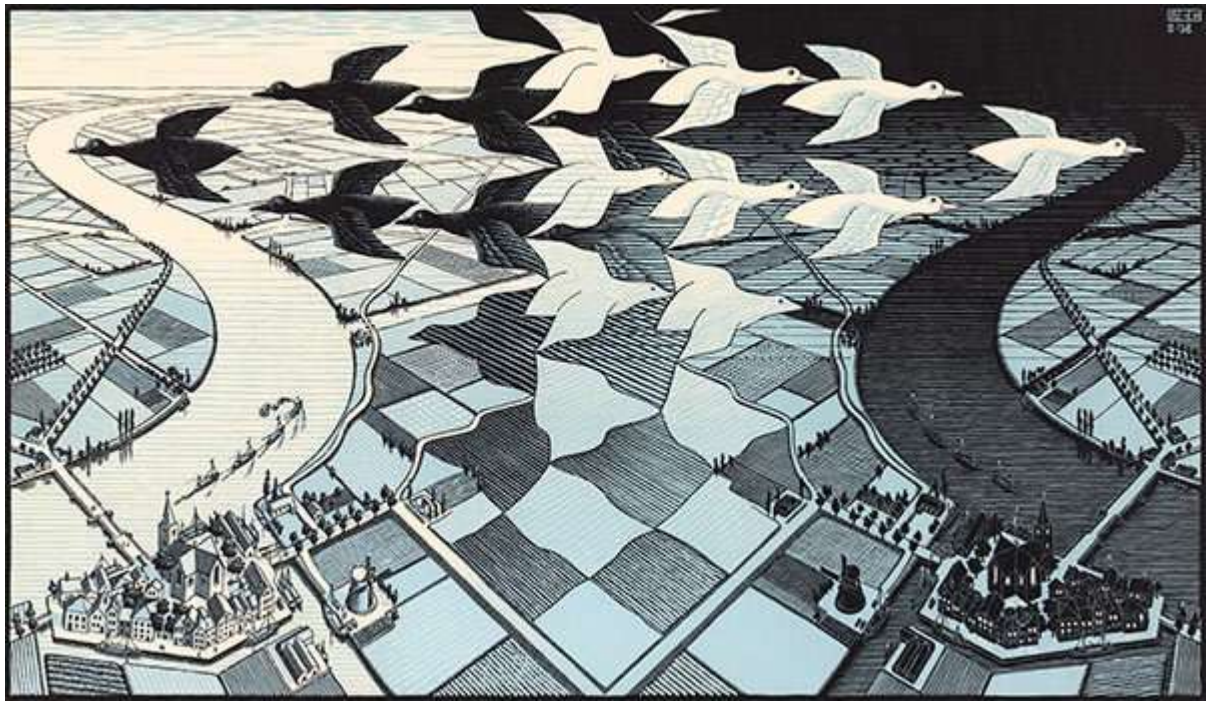
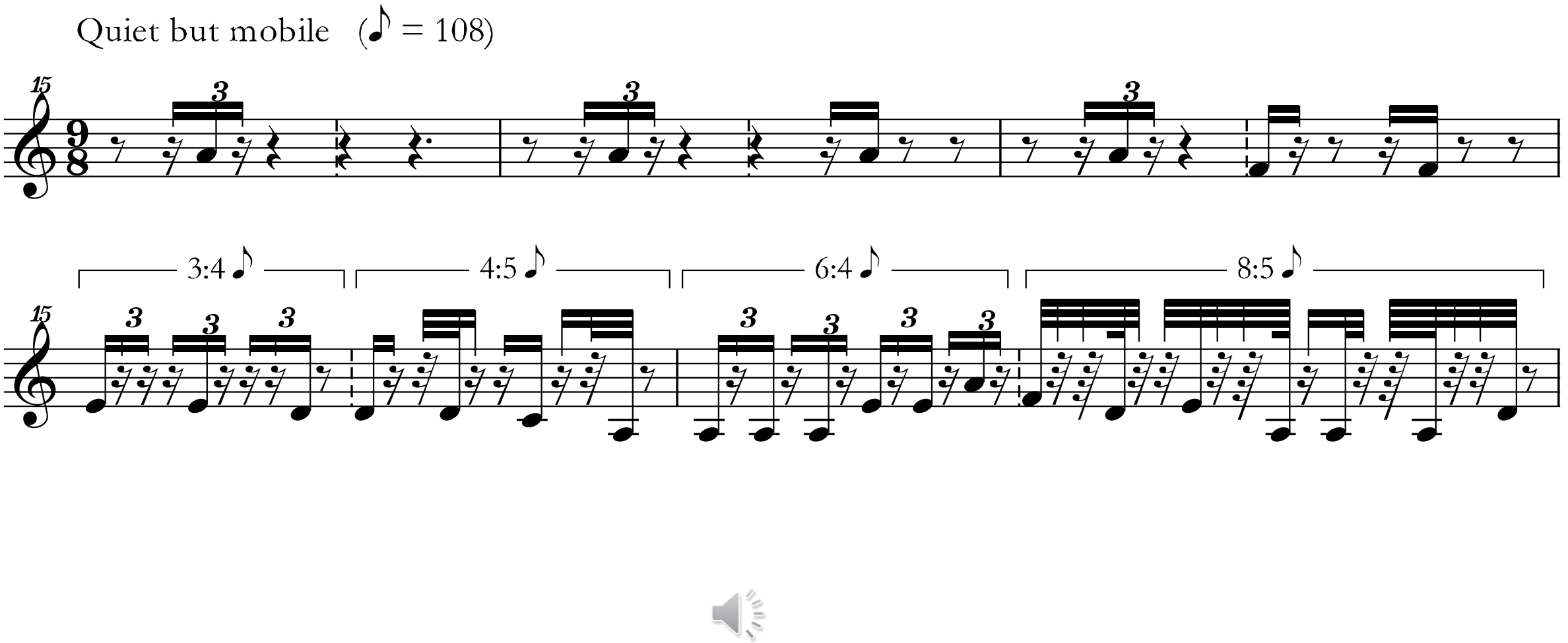


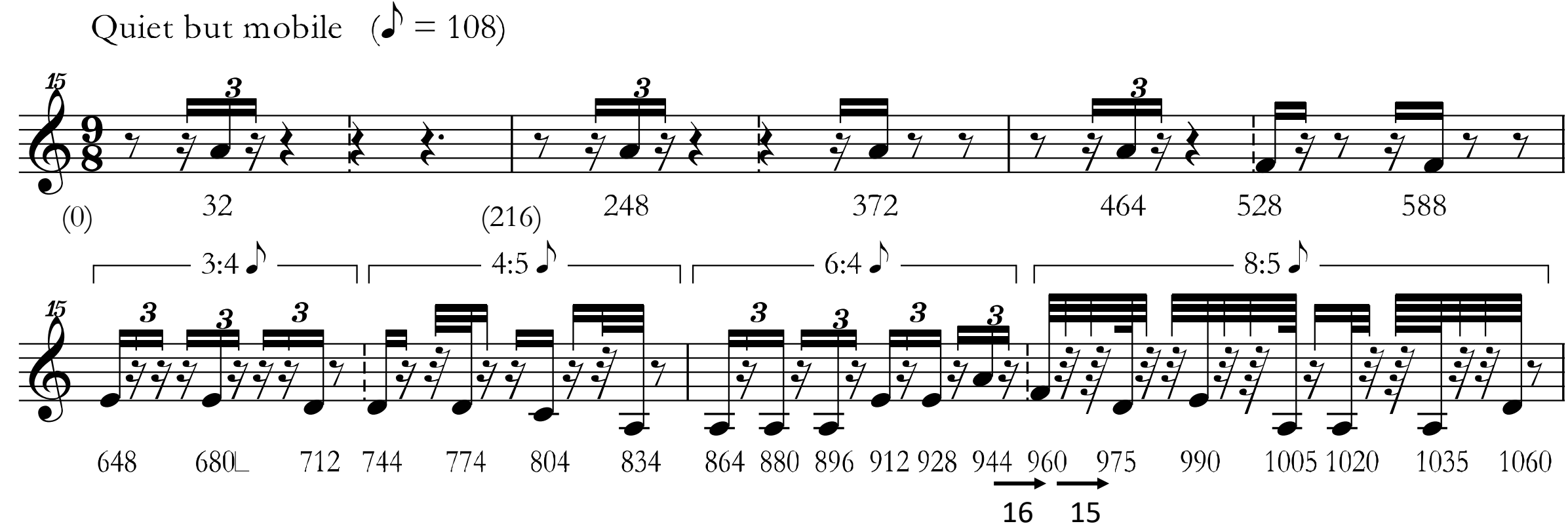
Outline of *Schnee*'s large-scale form

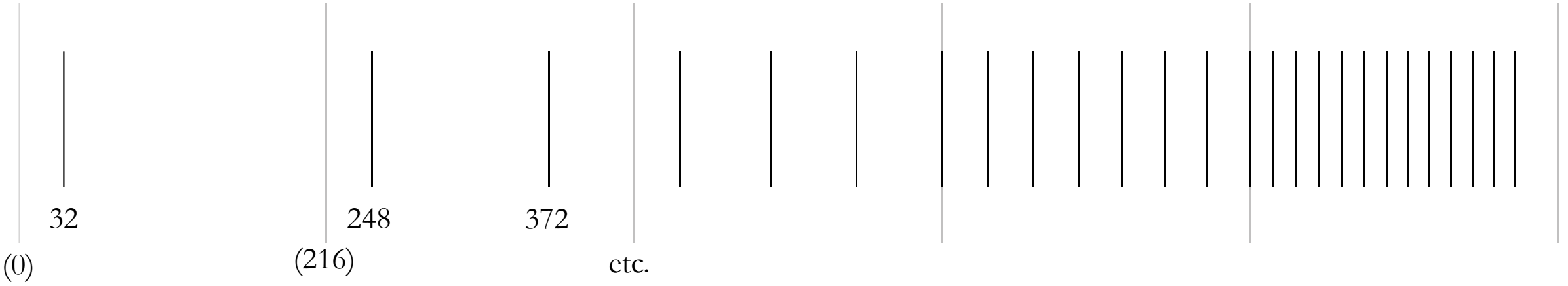
The initial phrase becomes the closing phrase, and vice versa—rather like the world of Escher's pictures, where a white foreground on a black background on one side of the picture becomes a black foreground on a white background on the other.





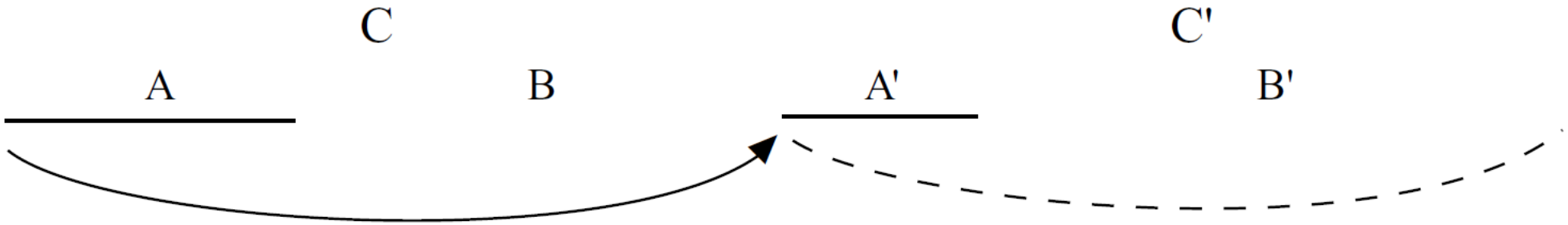
Canons 1, Theme 1





All onsets of theme, shown in proportional notation

Canons 1, Theme 1

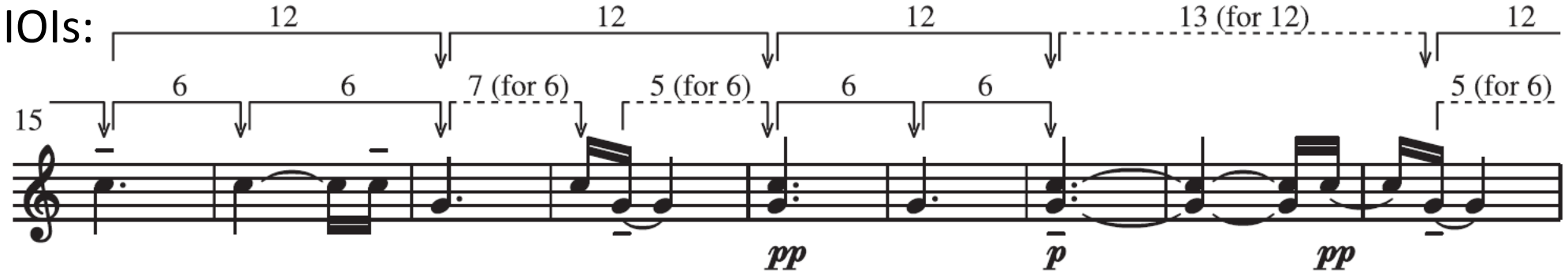


duration = inter-onset interval = IOI

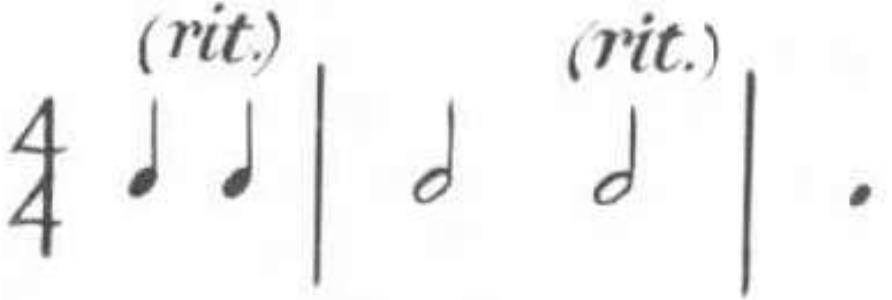
from Hasty 1997

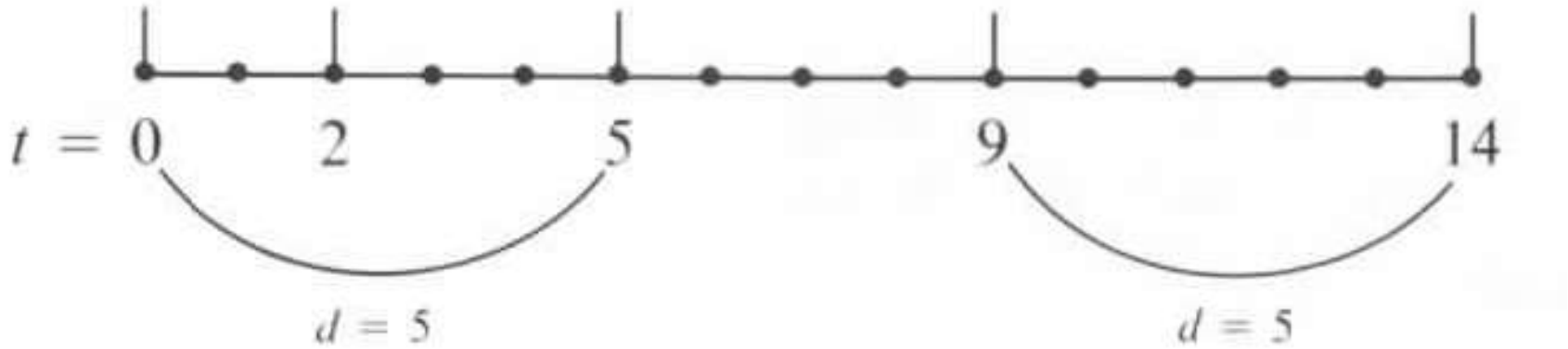
quasi-metric continuity (projective continuity)

IOIs:



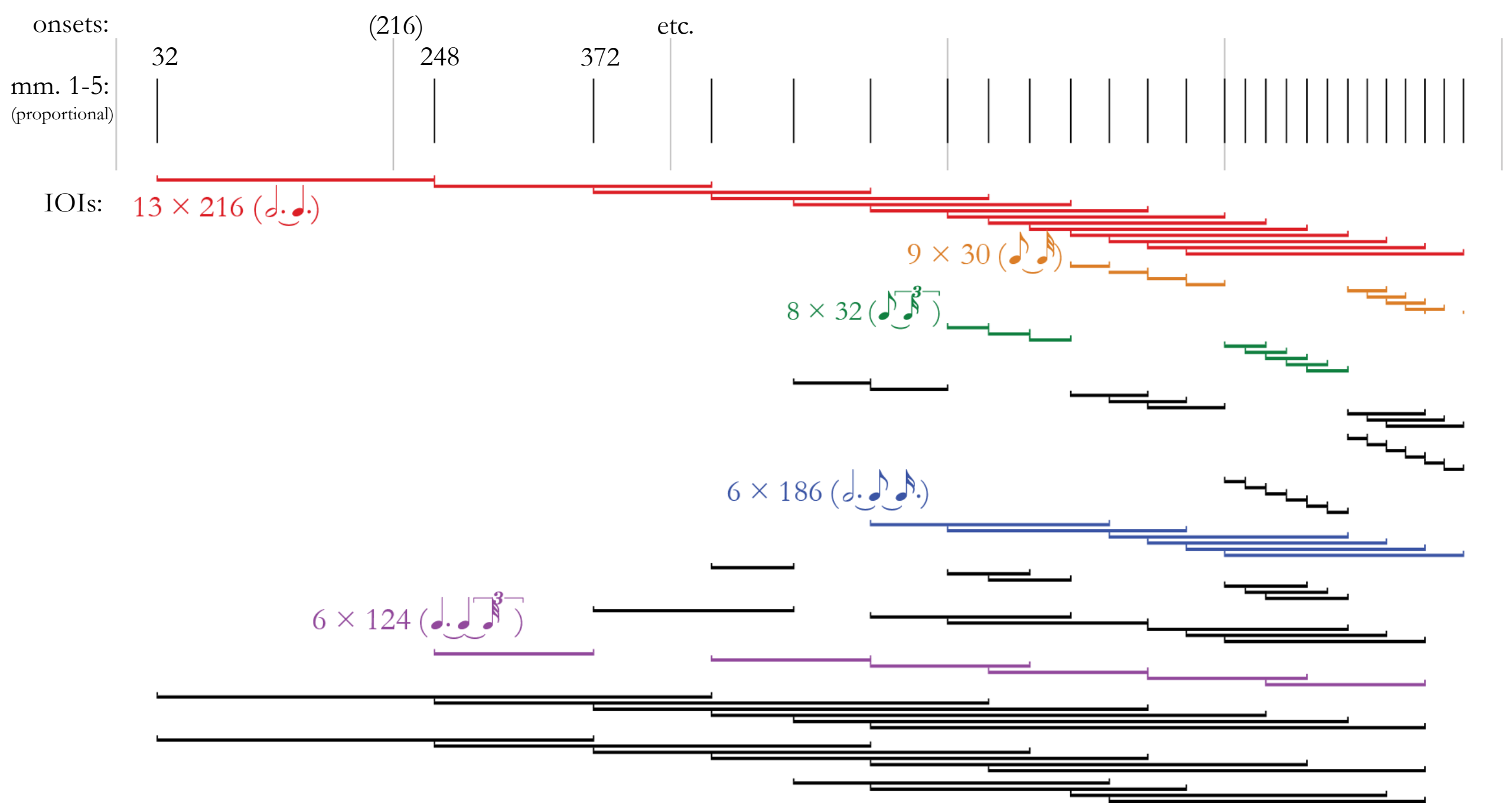
from Roeder 2006





d = duration = inter-onset interval = IOI

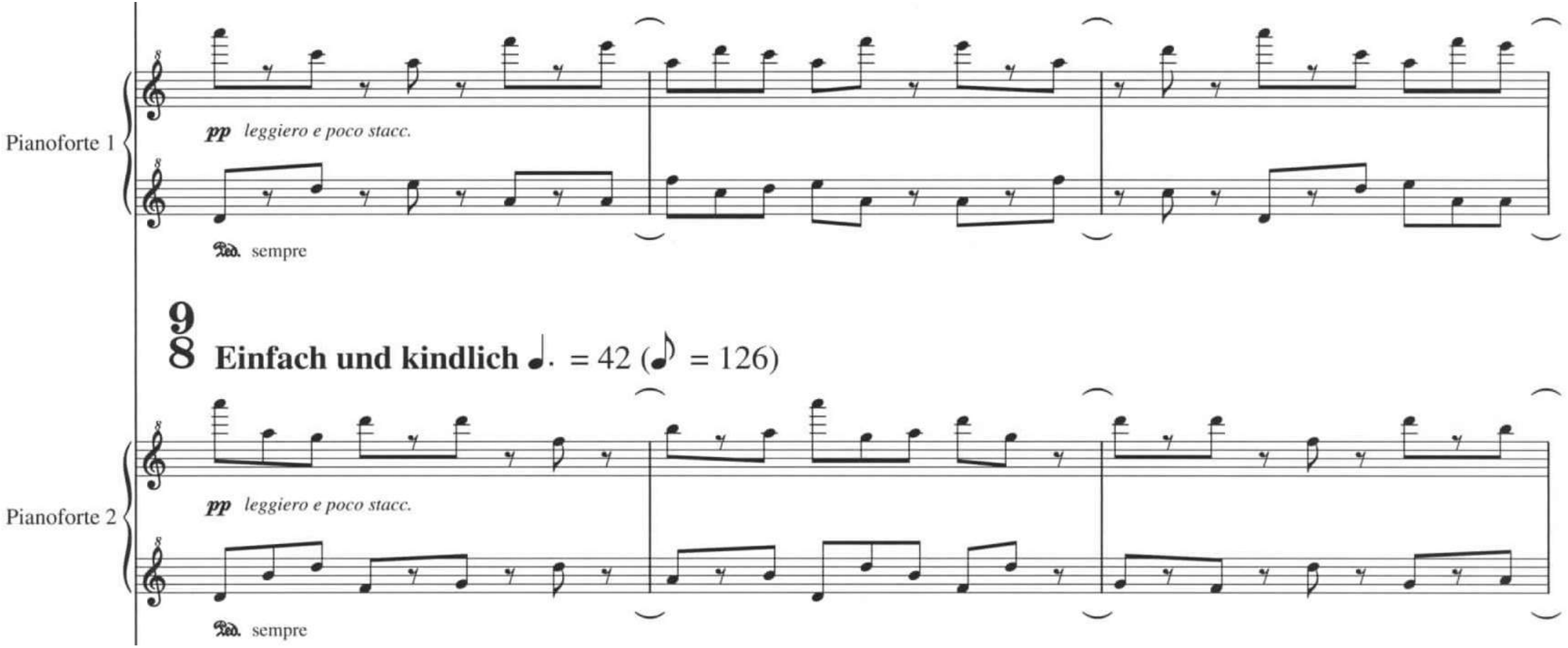
from Lewin 1981



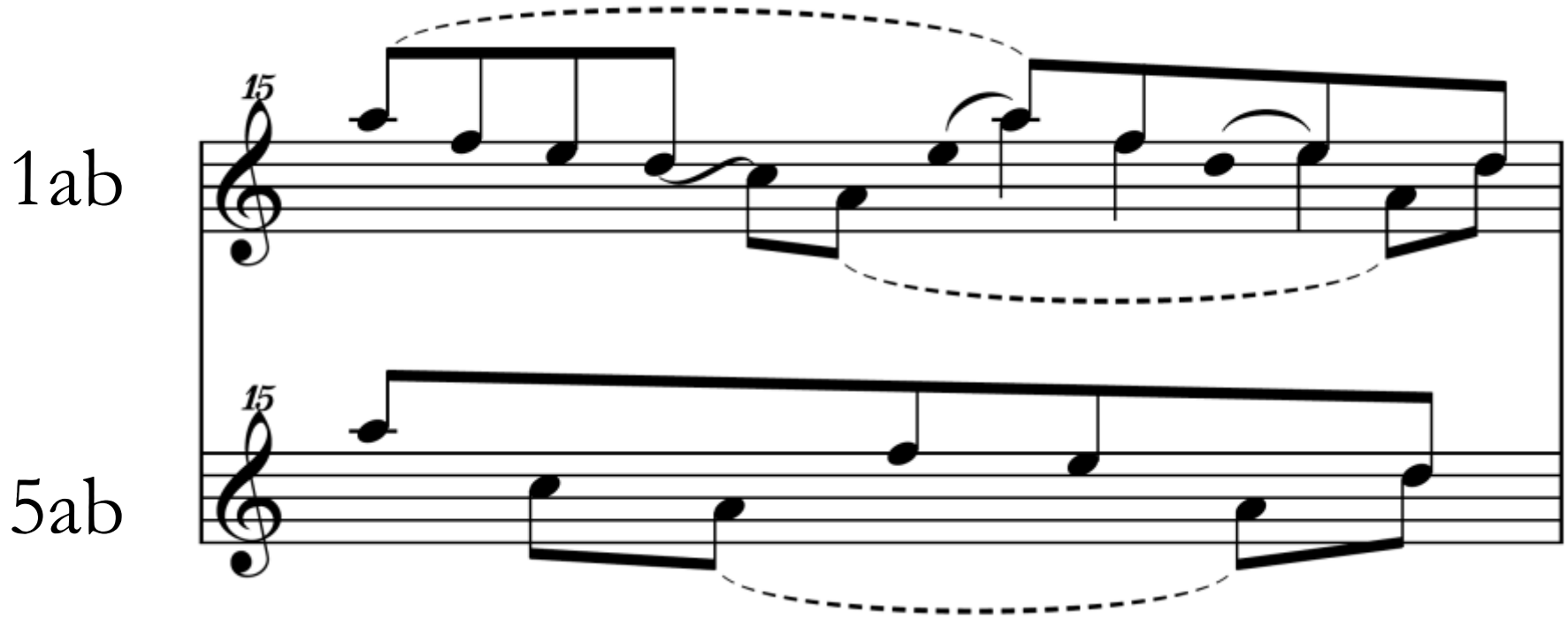
Canons 1, Theme 1, IOI analysis

Outline

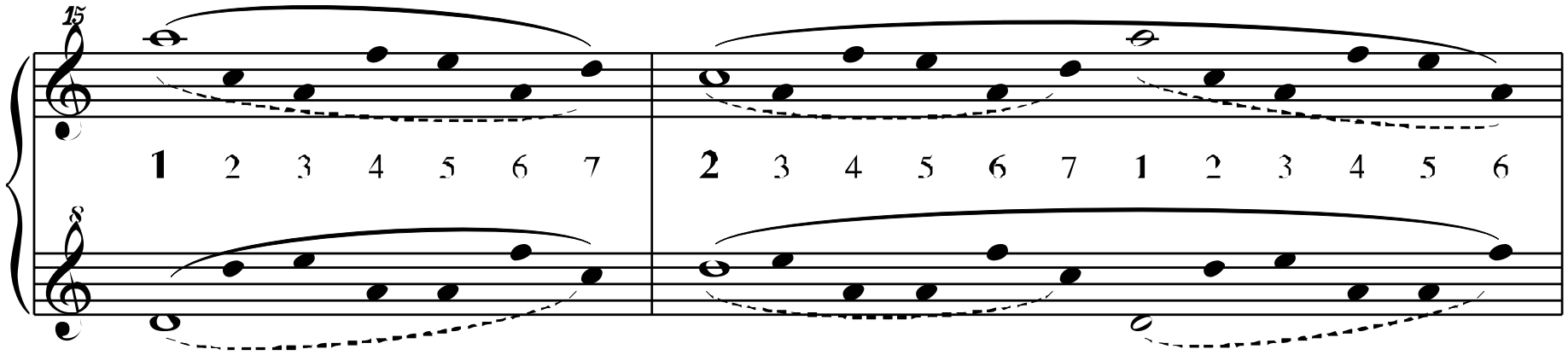
- The Problem and Potential Tools
- Canons 1 and 5
- Interpreting Orchestration and Process
- Close-Reading of Canon 1b
- Repetition and Hearing

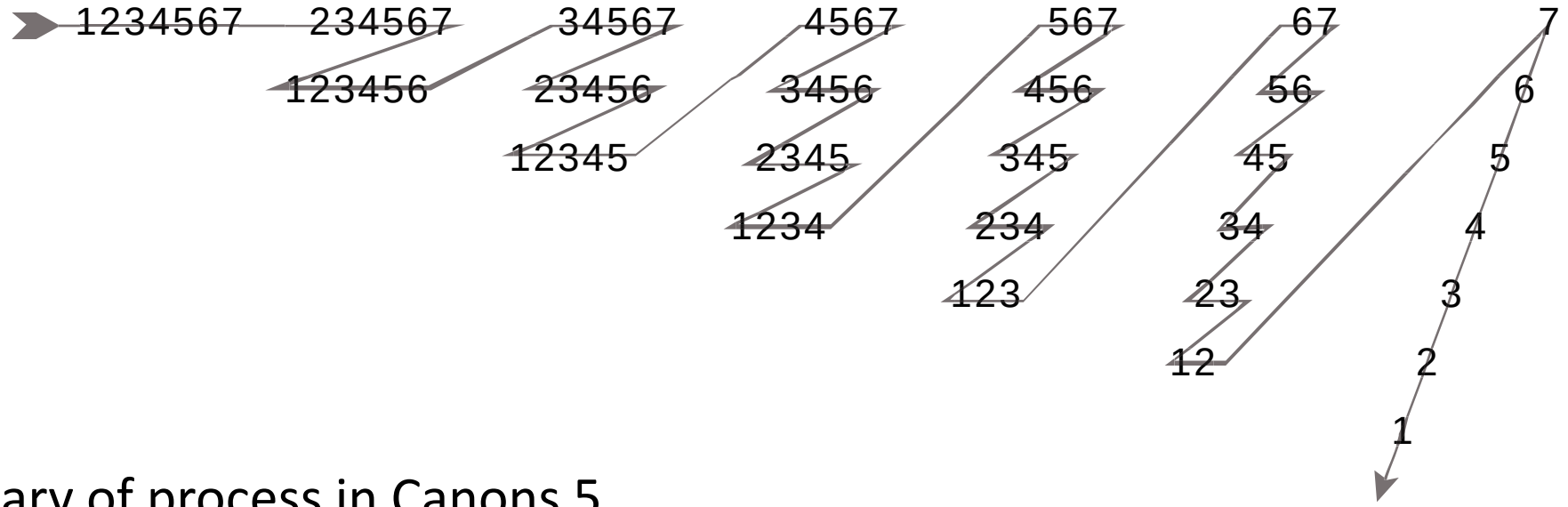


opening of Canon 5b



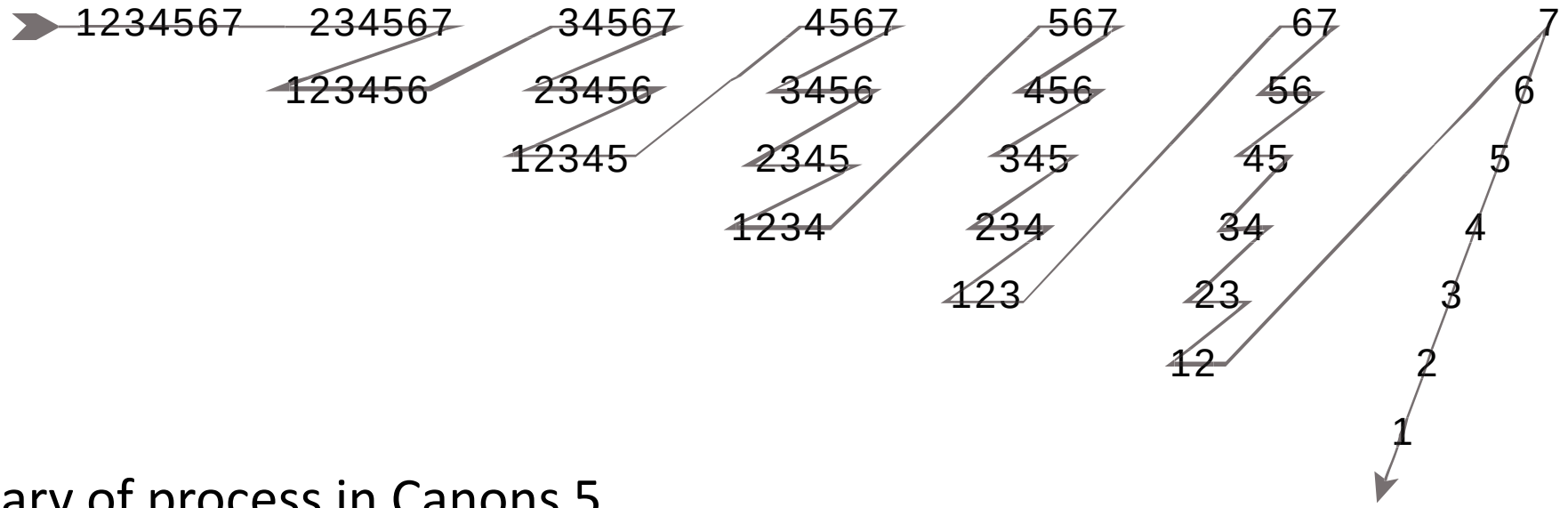
motivic connections between Canons 1,5



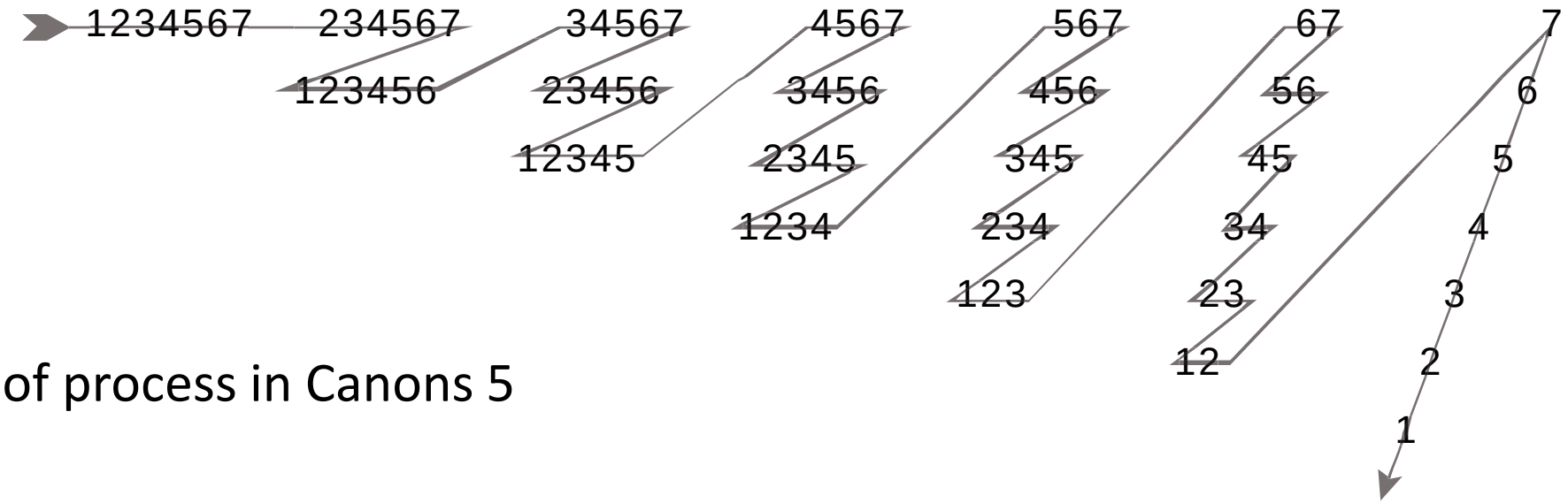


summary of process in Canons 5

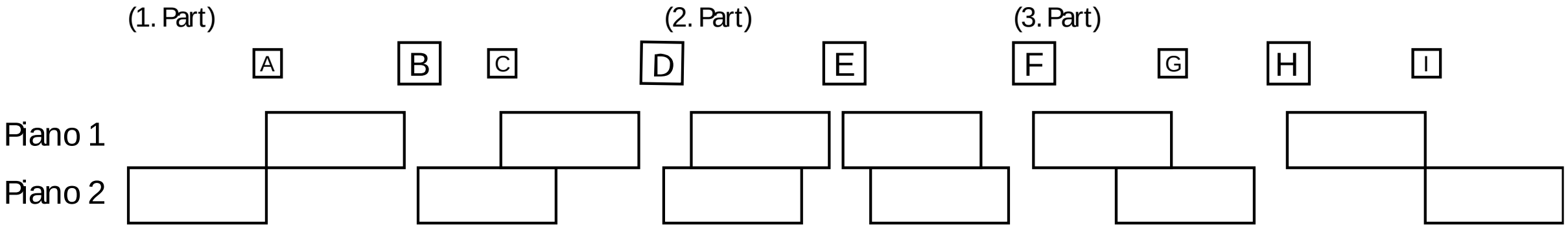
Although the winds and strings could easily be dismissed as merely doubling the piano, their specific alignments clarify the process.



summary of process in Canons 5

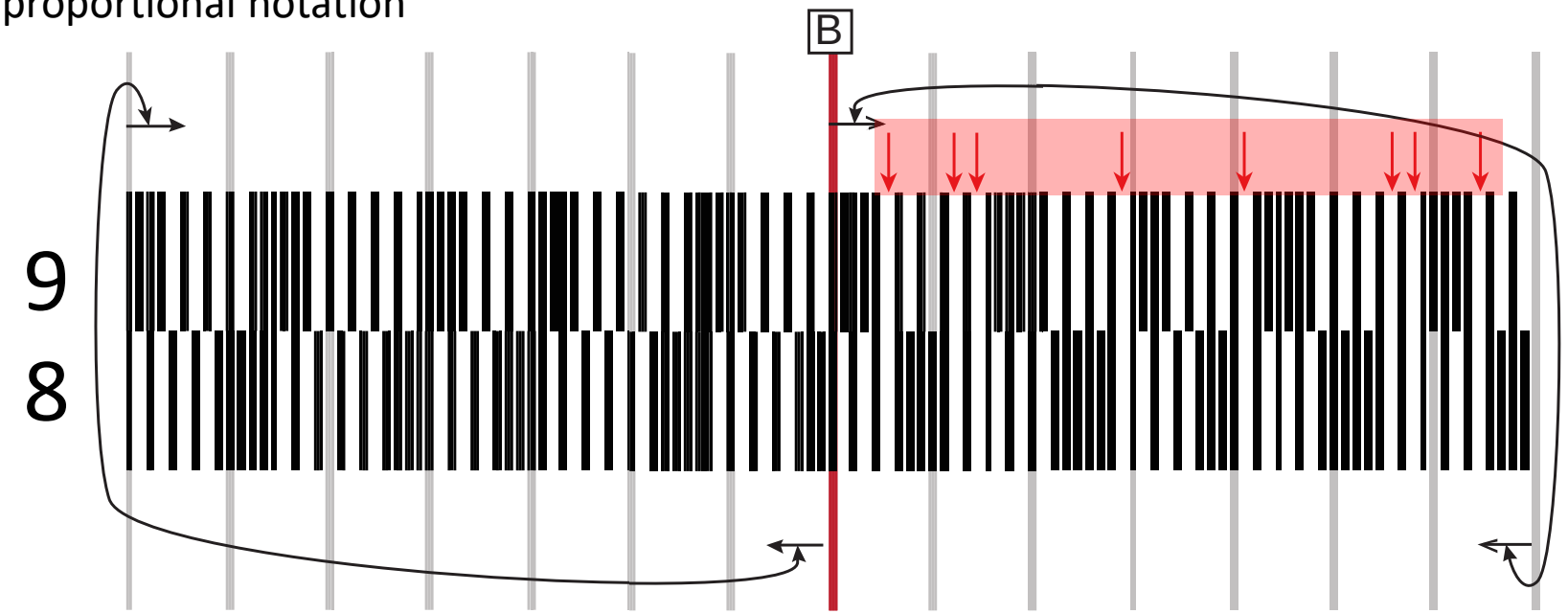


summary of process in Canons 5

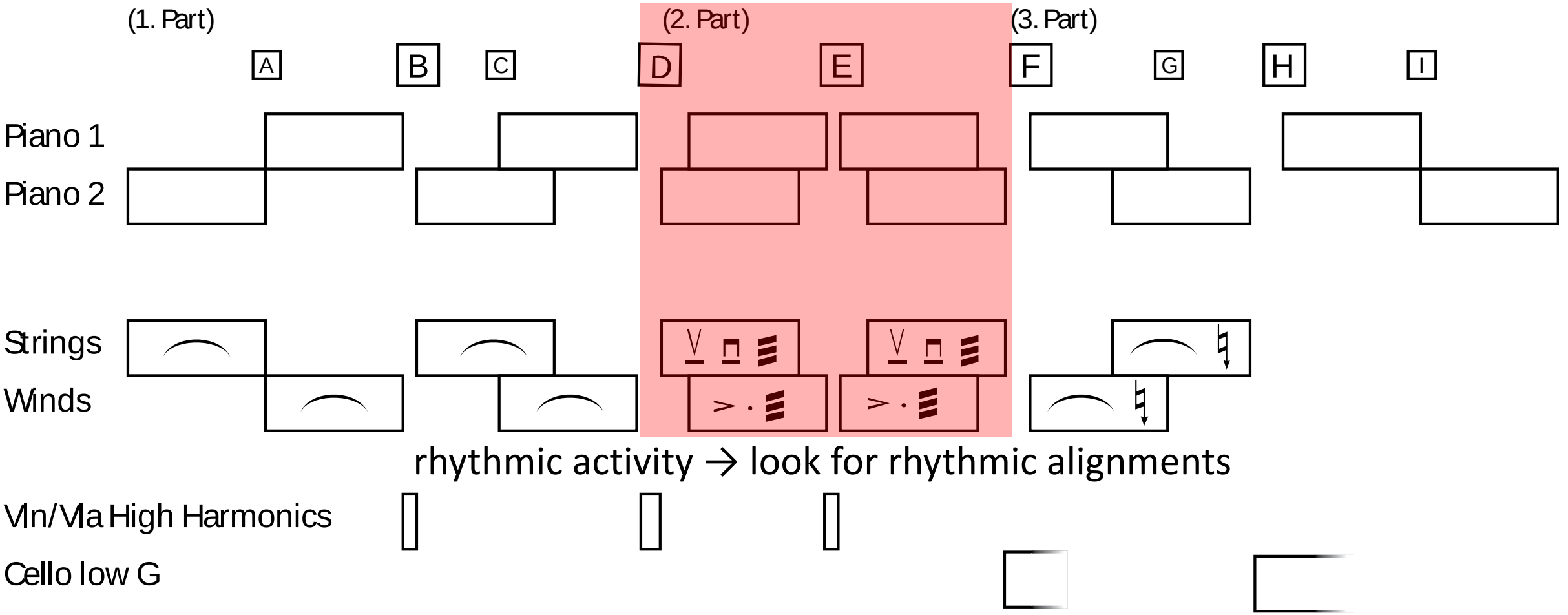


summary of process (“increasingly close stretto”) in Canons 1

Canons 5, proportional notation



Rhythmic alignments, especially when marked by accents, structure our hearing.

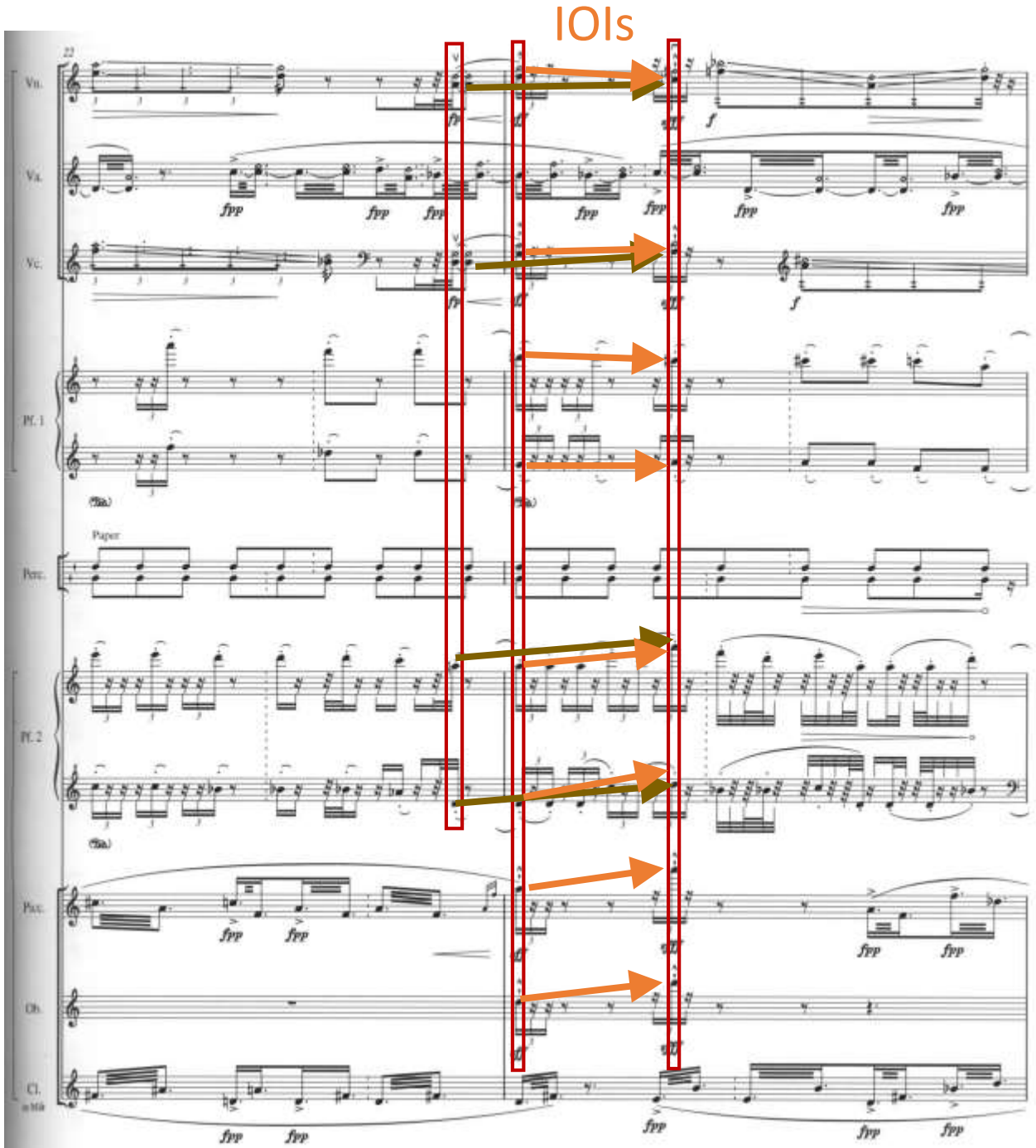


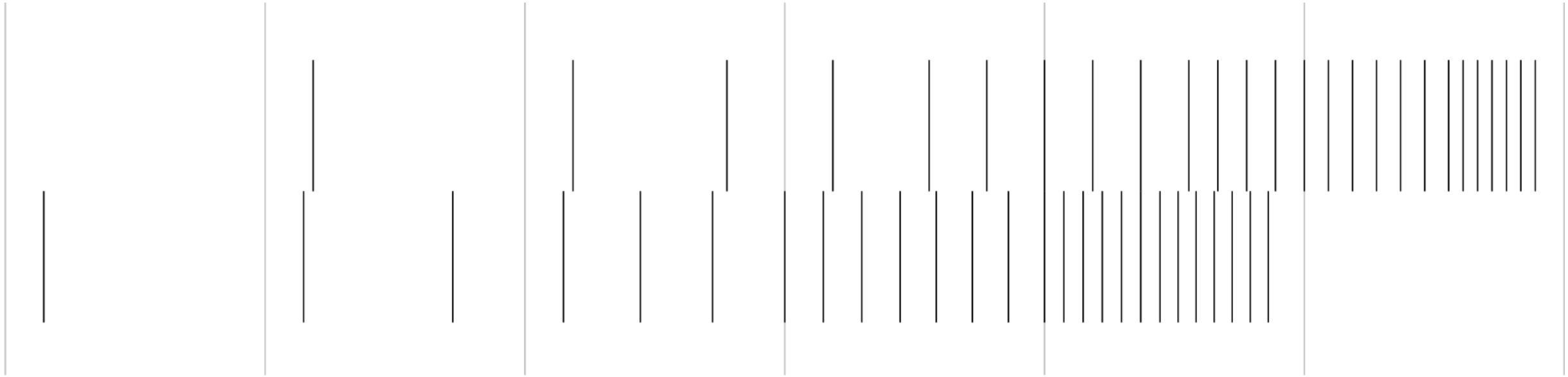
summary of process and orchestration in Canons 1

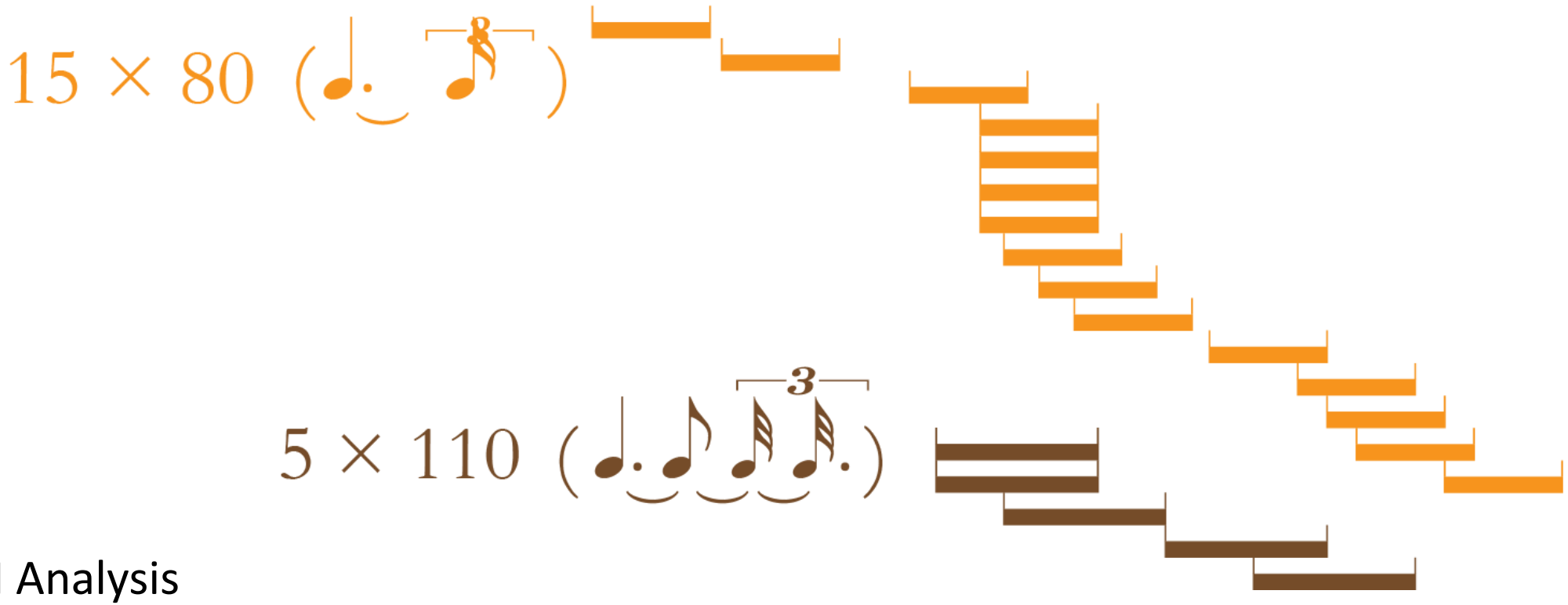
Canon 1b, **D**:

Pf. 1
"Guiro"
Normale
Paper (greaseproof paper)
on table 3
Perc.
sempre sim.
D (2. Part)
Etwas unruhig und aufgeregt
Normale
Pf. 2
Picc.
Ob.

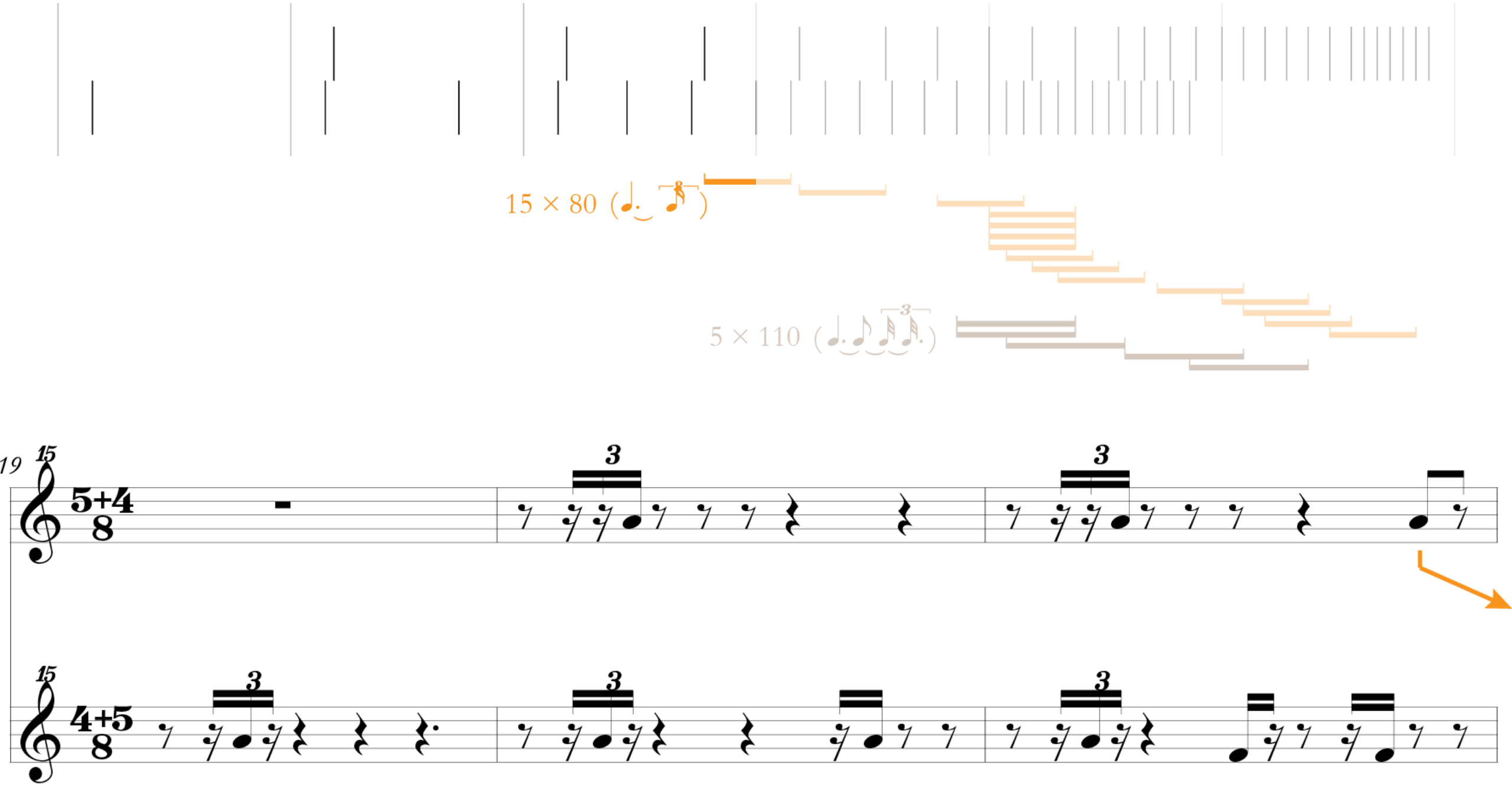
Canon 1b, **D**:



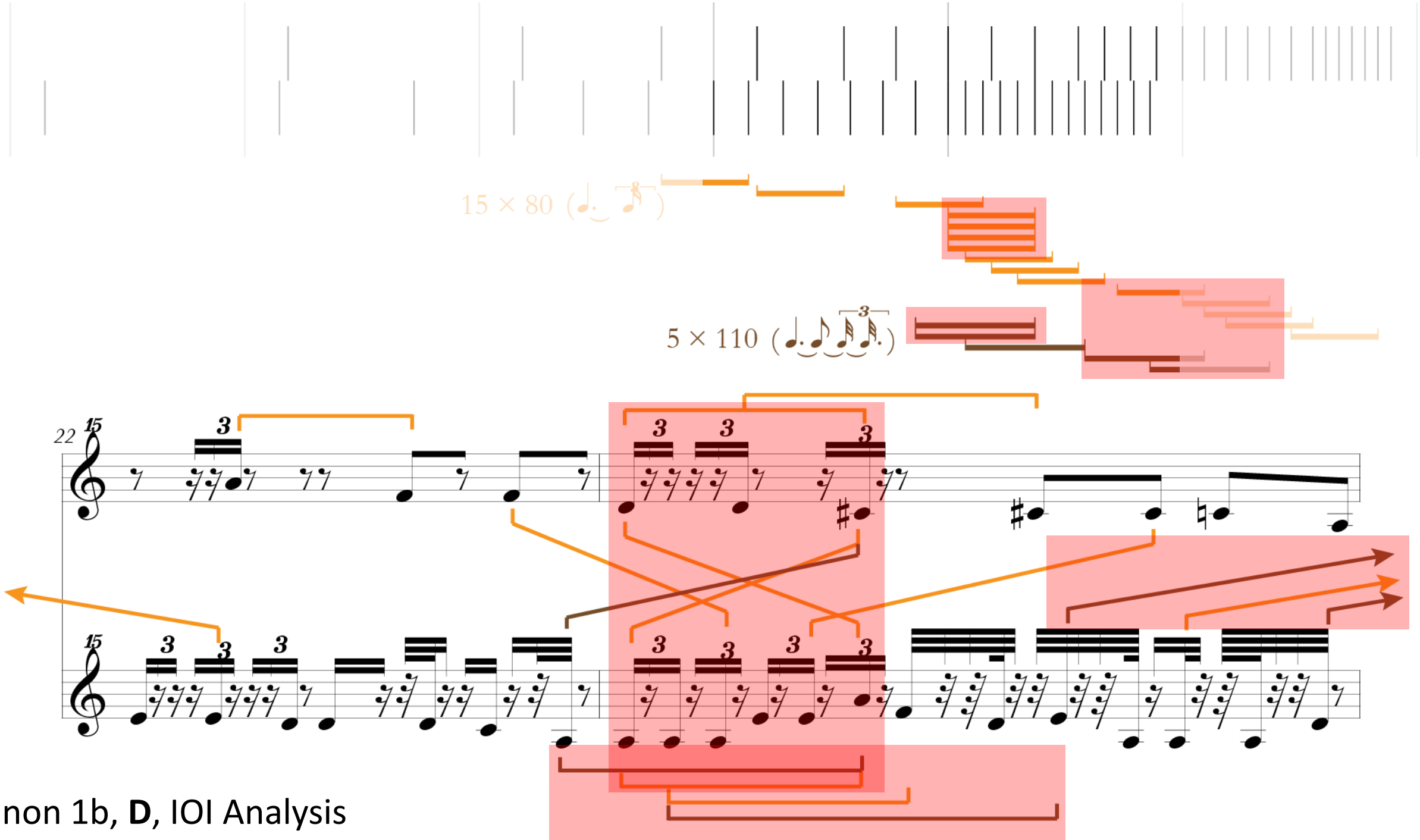




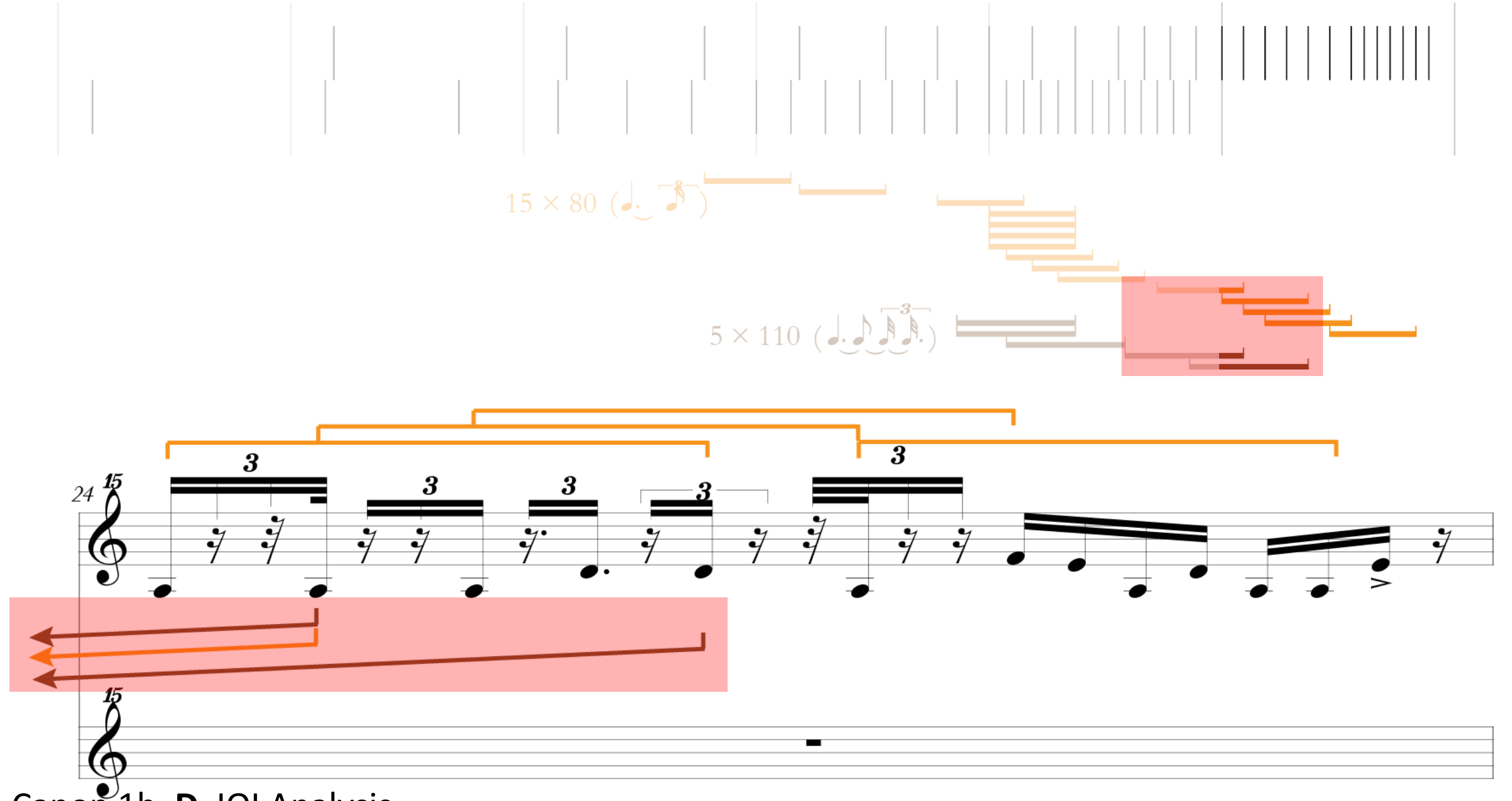
Canon 1b, **D**, IOI Analysis



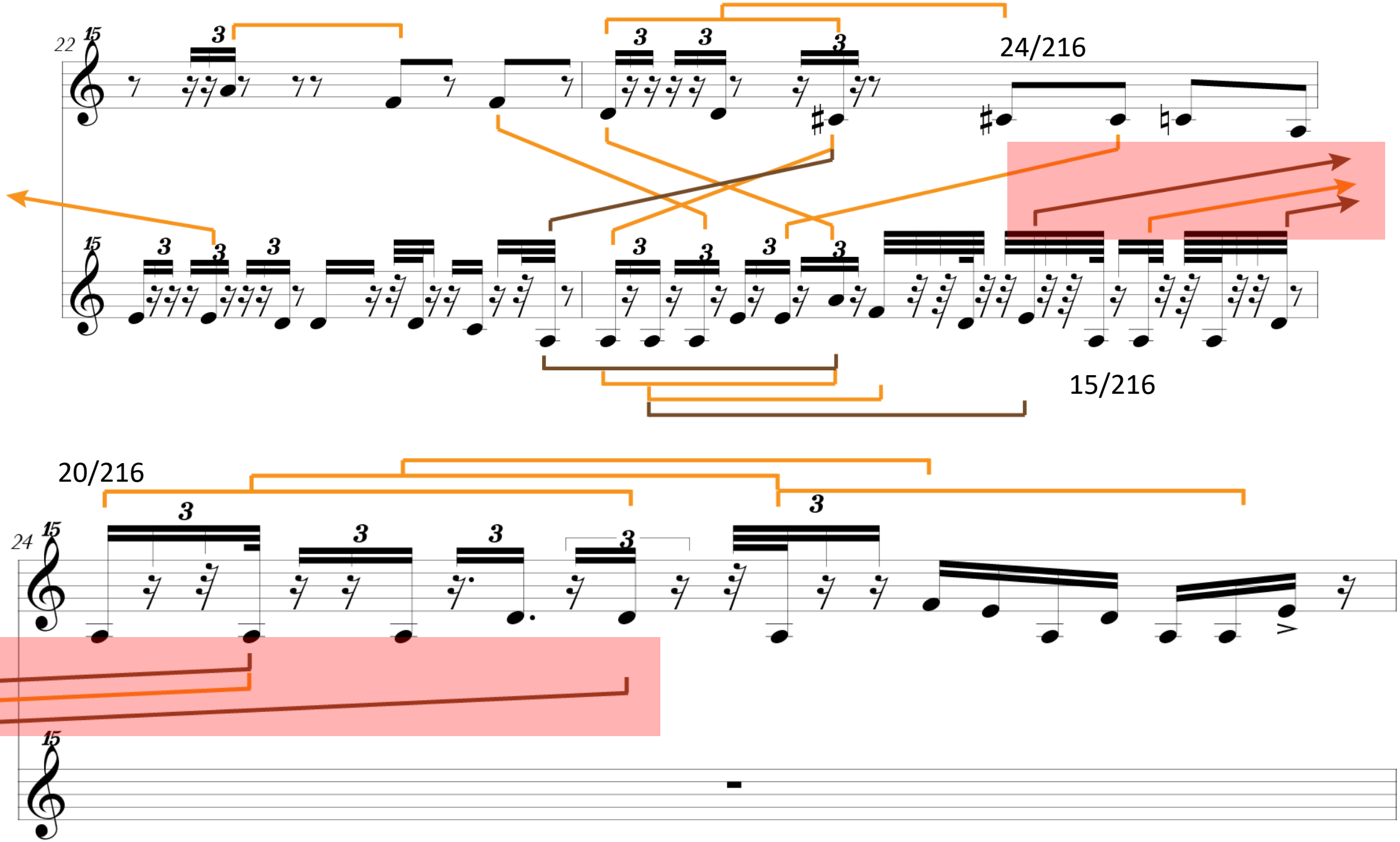
Canon 1b, **D**, IOI Analysis



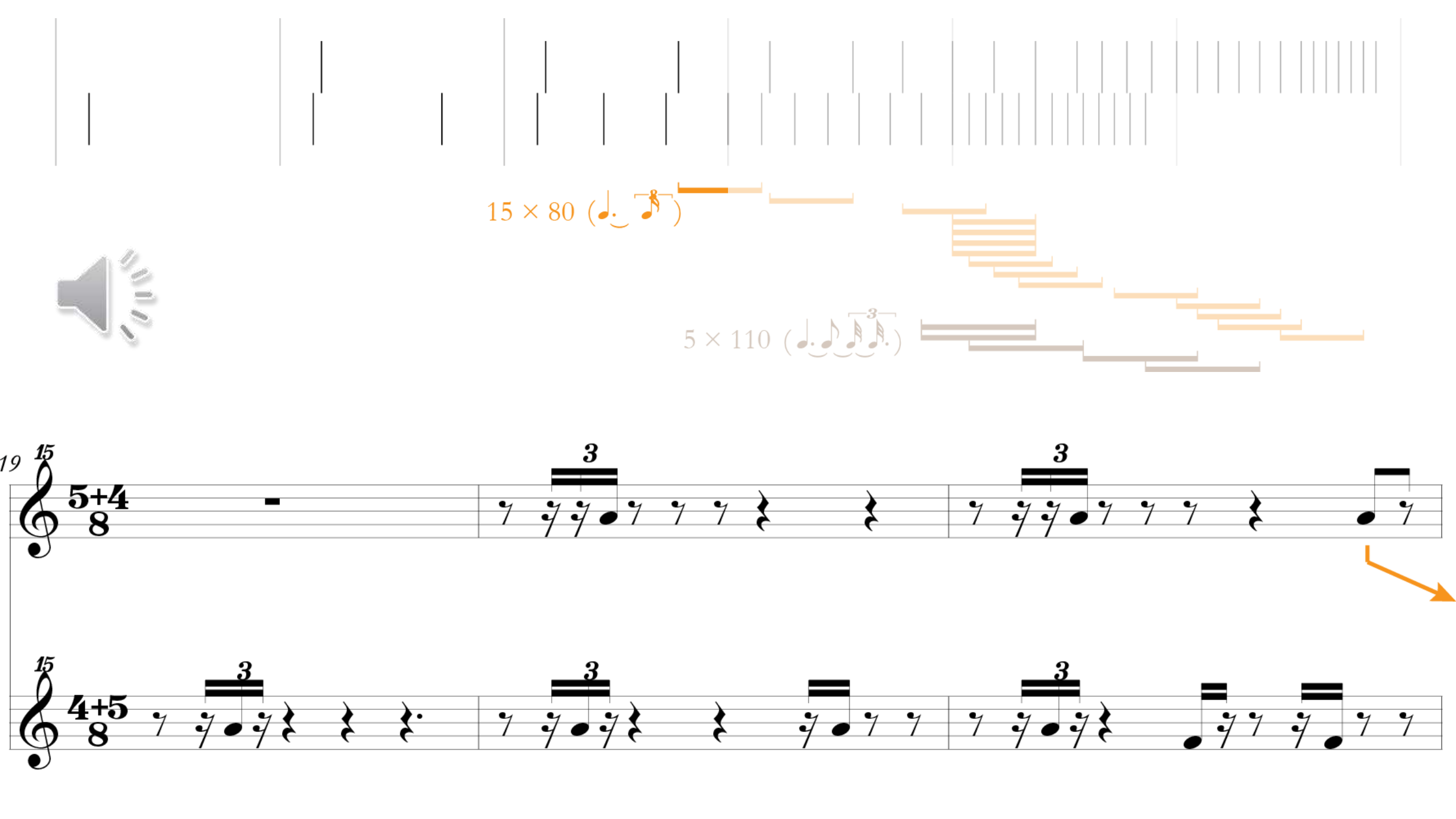
Canon 1b, **D**, IOI Analysis

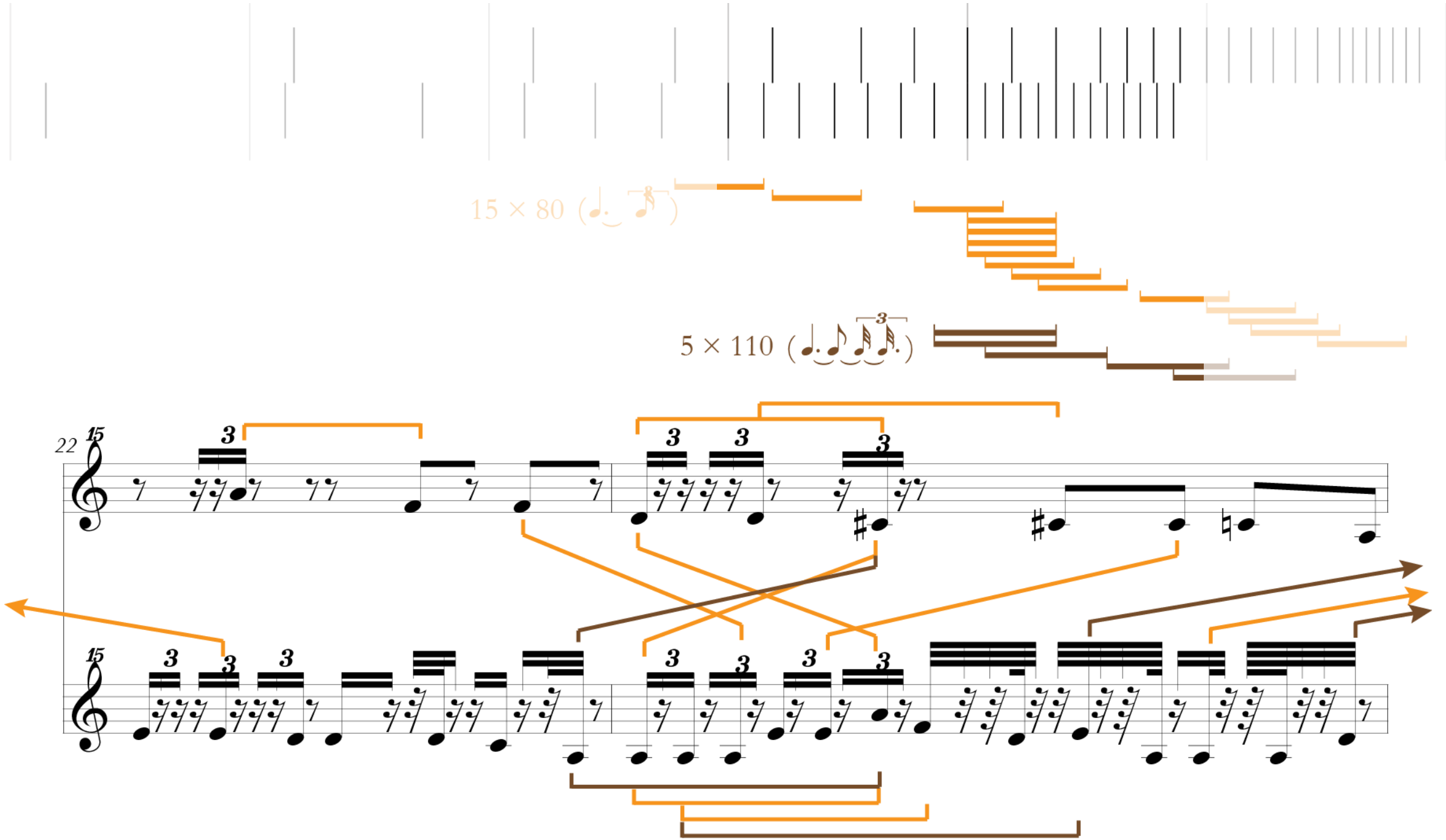


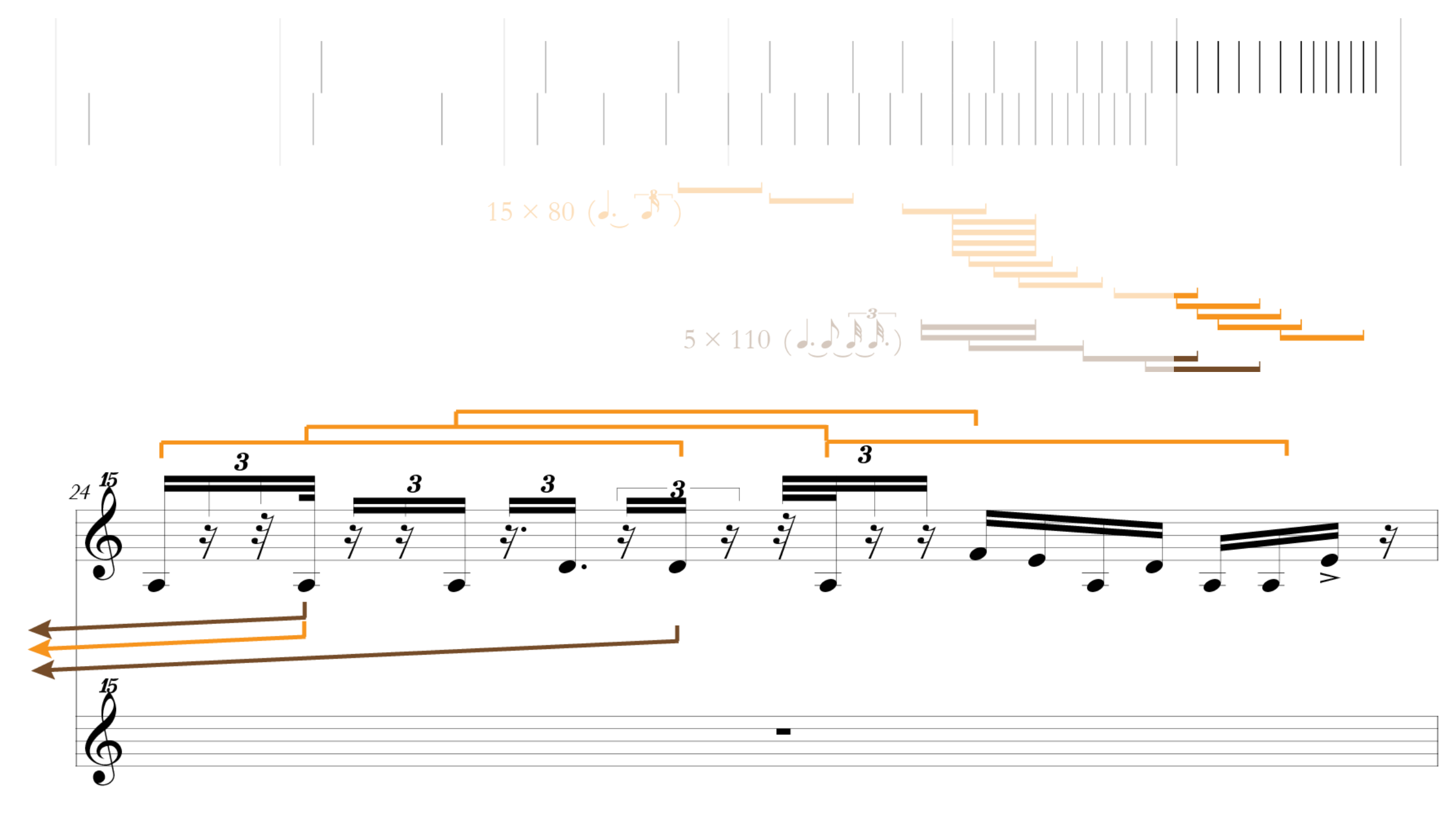
Canon 1b, **D**, IOI Analysis

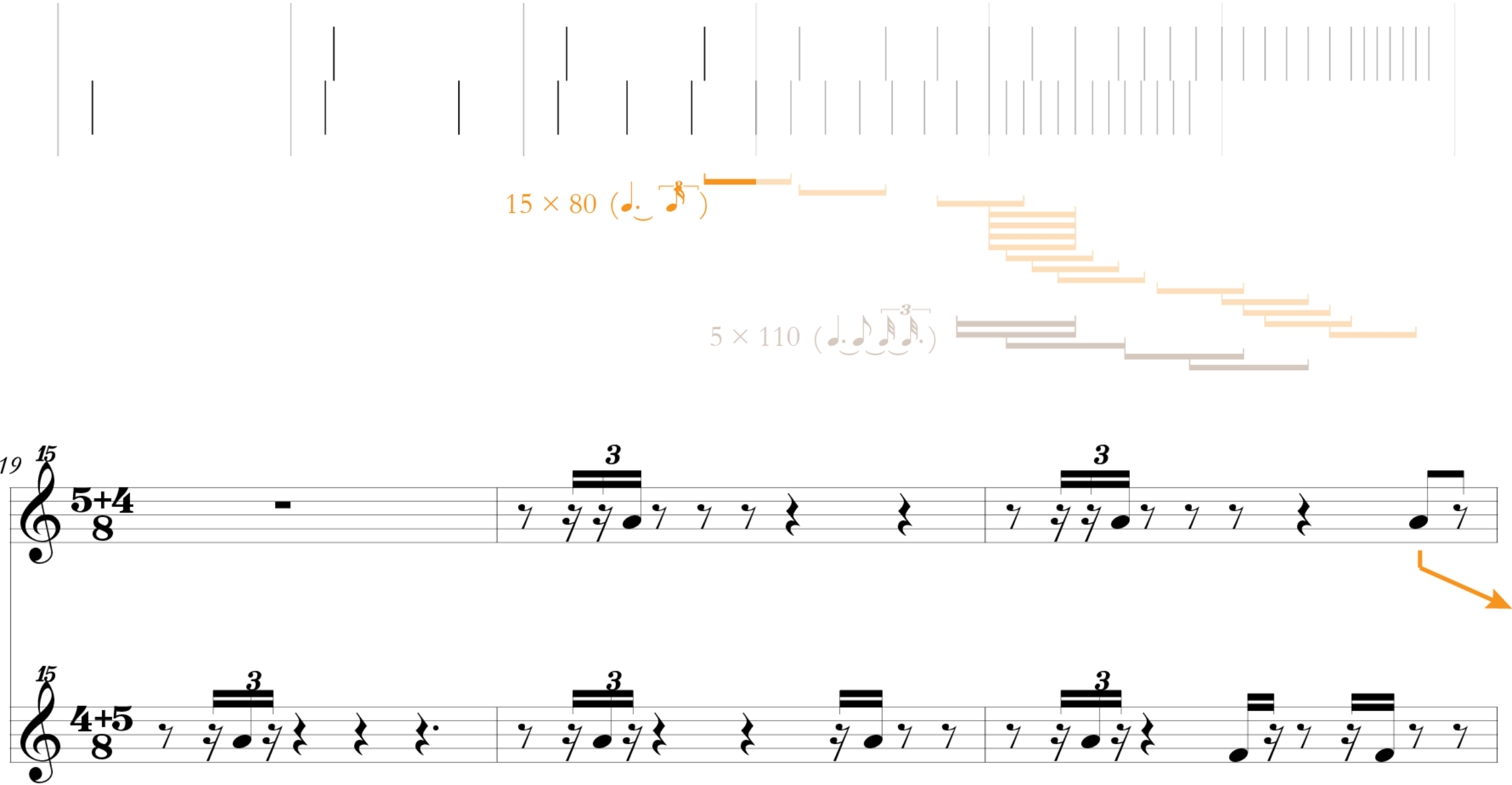


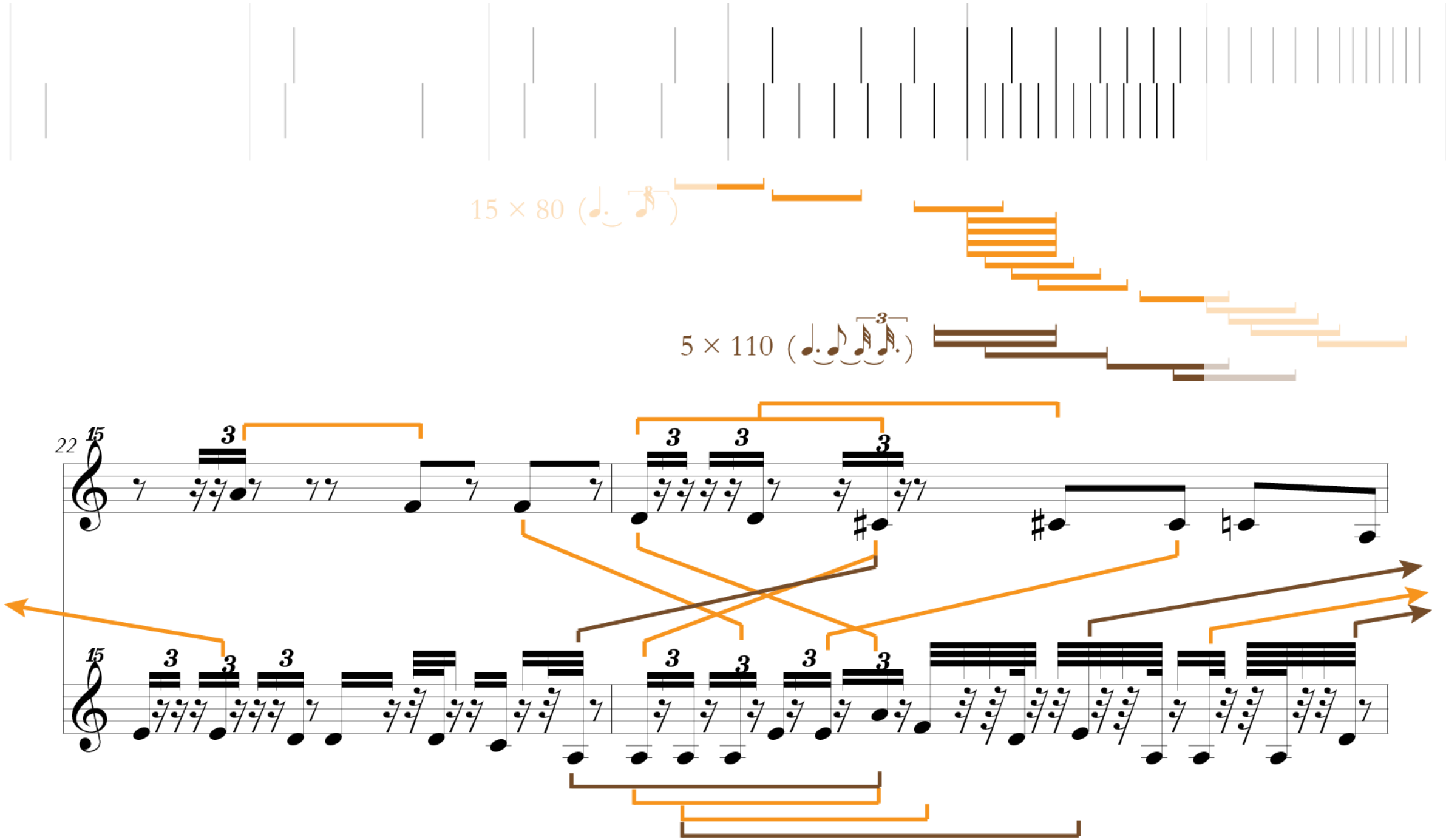
Canon 1b, **D**, IOI Analysis

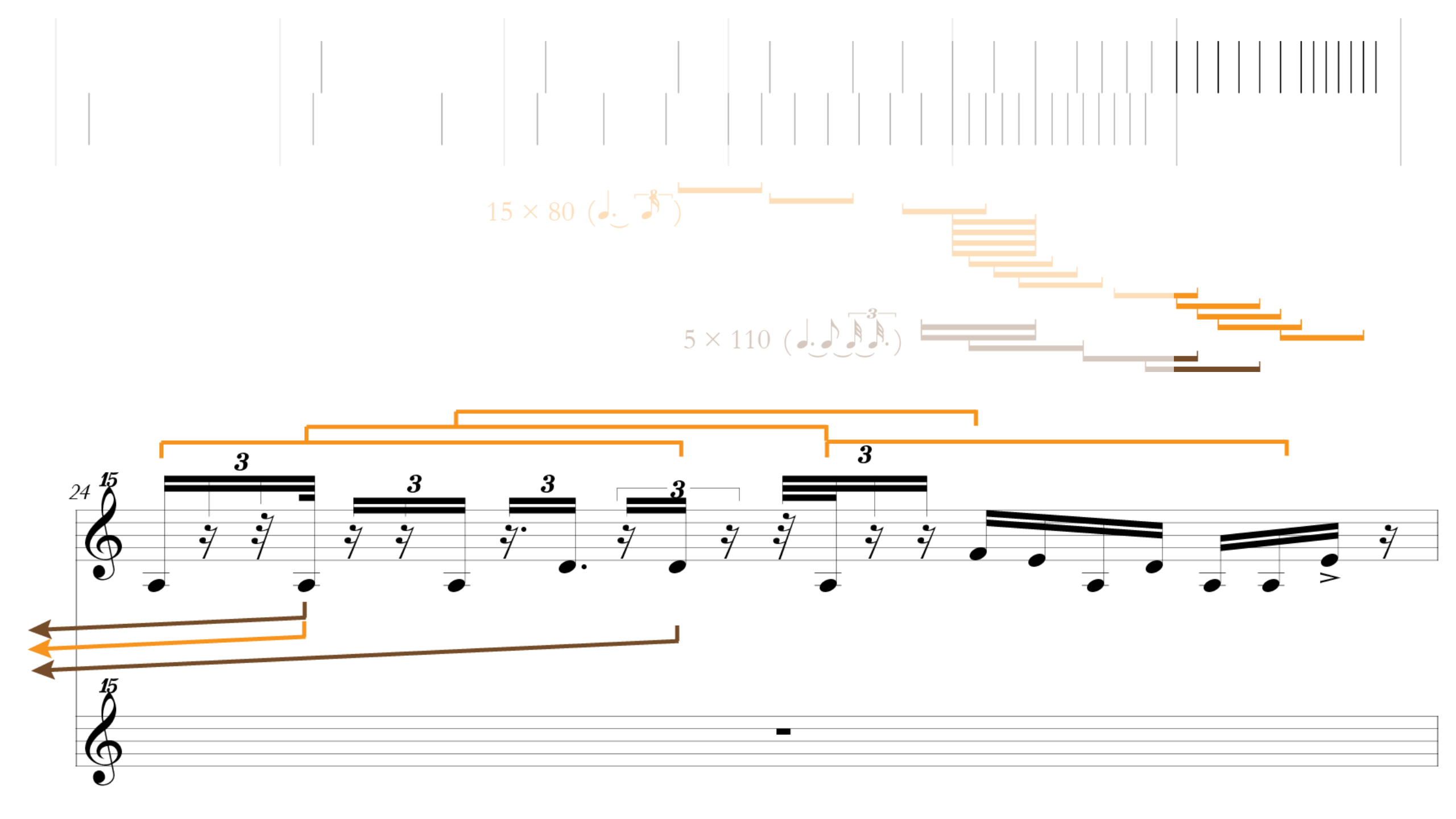

15 × 80 (♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯)
5 × 110 (♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯𝅘𝅥𝅯 ♩.)
19
15
5+4
8
3
3
15
4+5
8
3
3
3


15 × 80 (♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯)
5 × 110 (♩. ♪ 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯.)
22


15 × 80
5 × 110
24
15
3
3
3
3
3
15


15 × 80
5 × 110
19
15
5+4
8
3
15
4+5
8
3


15 × 80 (♩. 𝅘𝅥𝅯)
5 × 110 (♩. ♪ 𝅘𝅥𝅯 𝅘𝅥𝅯.)
22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3
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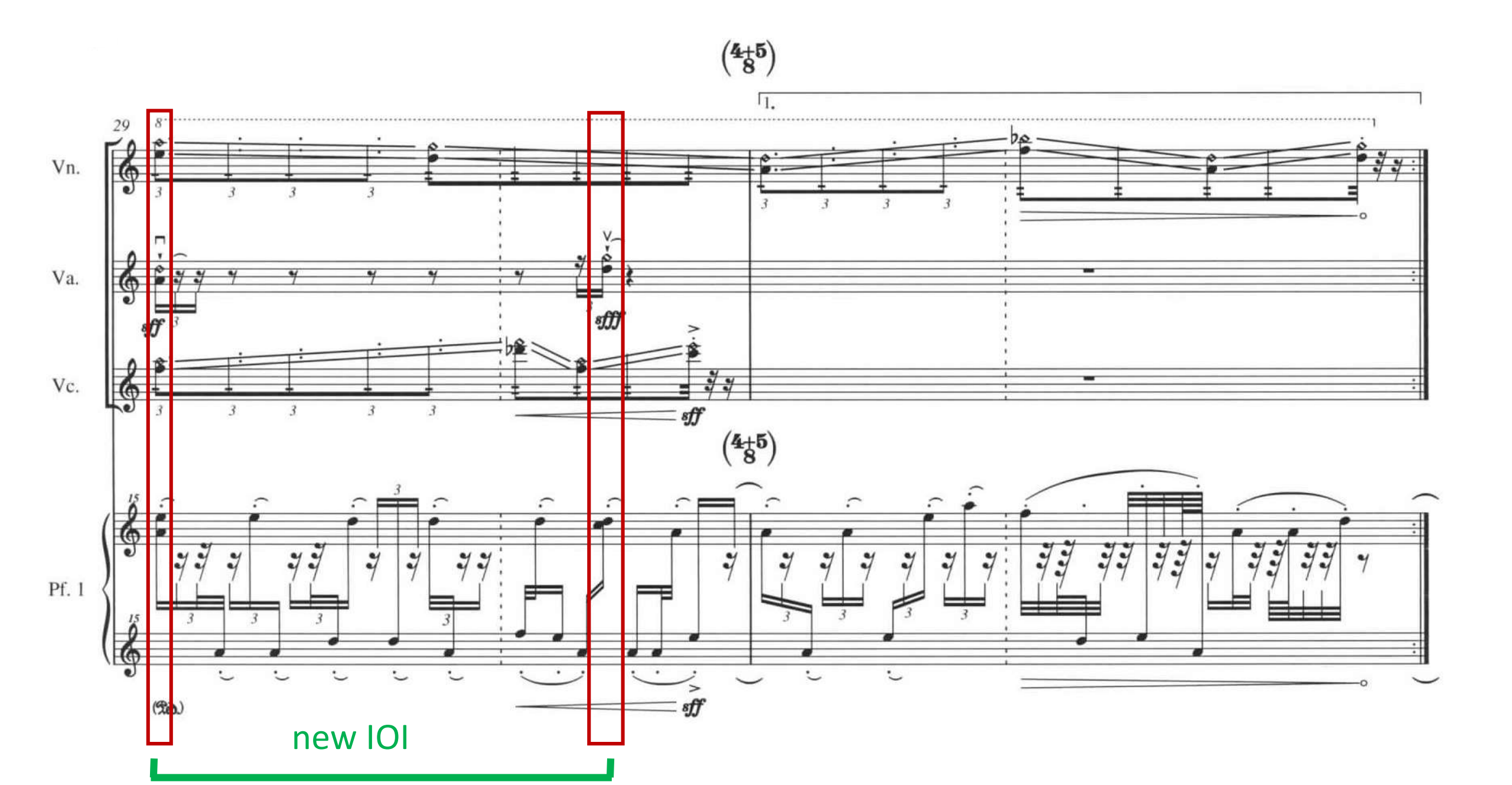
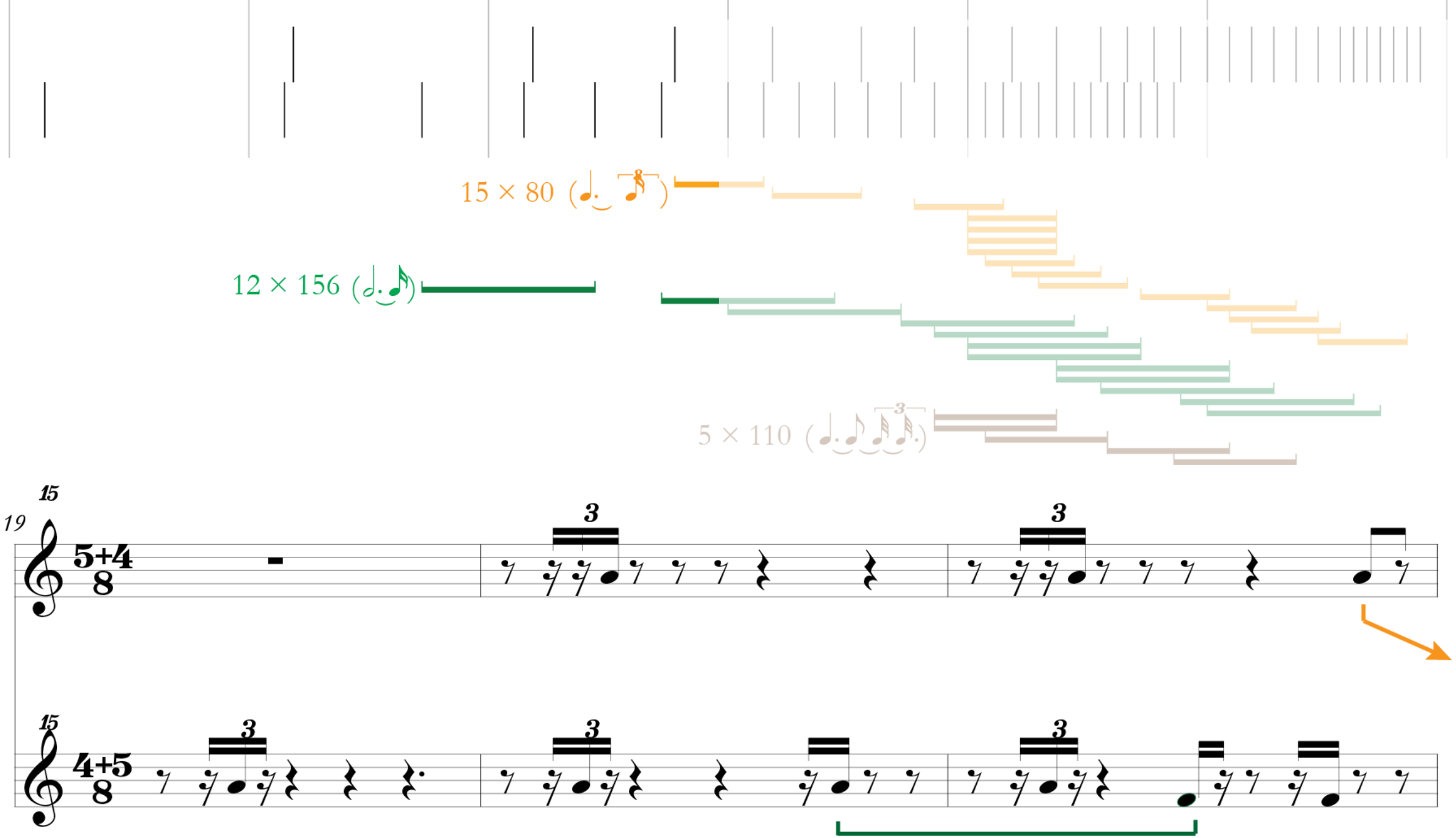
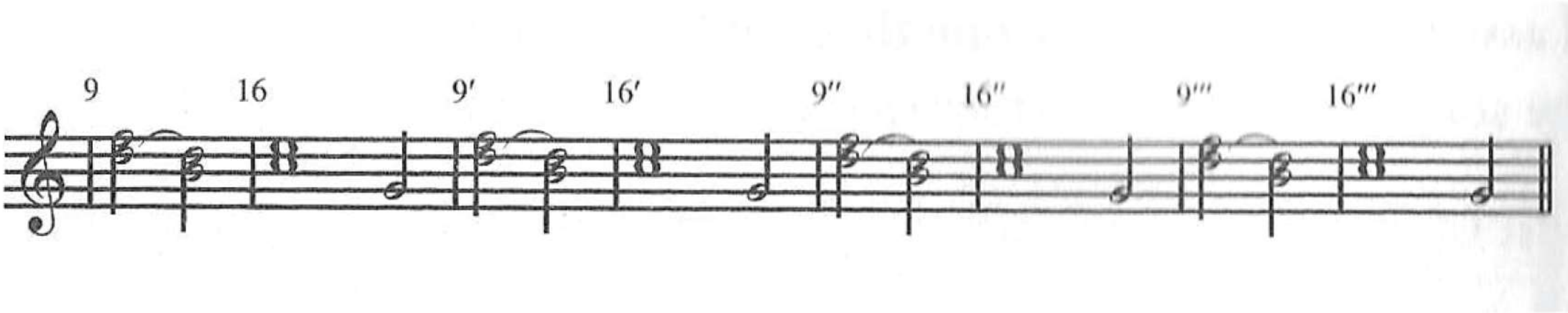
15



Canon 1a, **E**

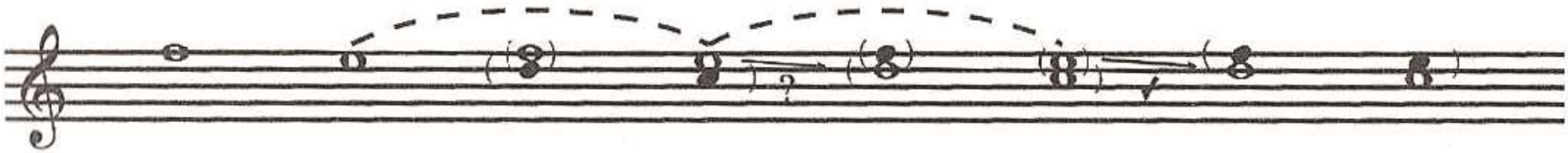


Canon 1b, **D**, alternate hearing



repetition and assimilation to structure

from Lewin, Bard-Schwartz, and Cohn 2005 (“Morgengruss” essay)



repetition and assimilation to structure

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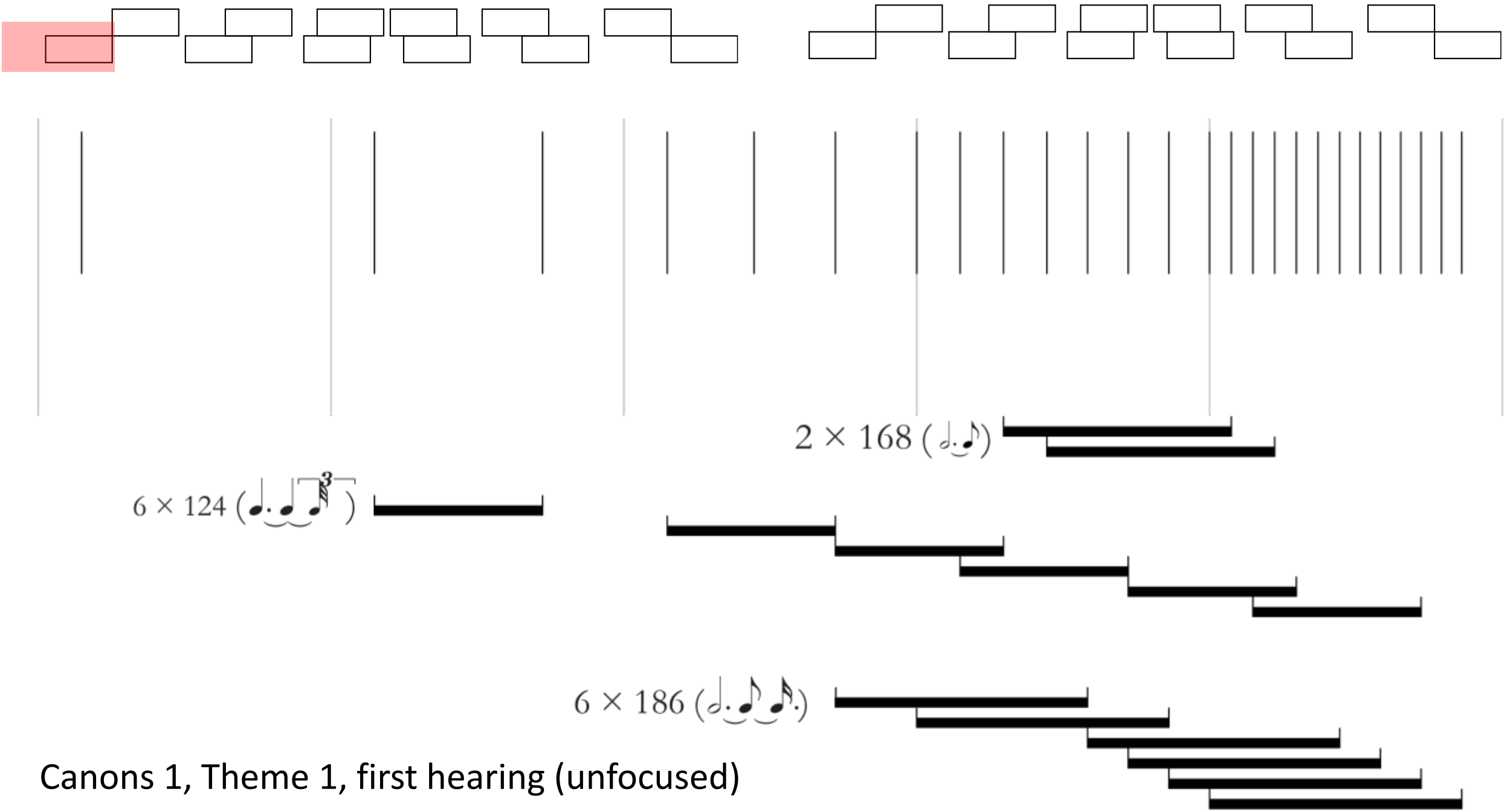
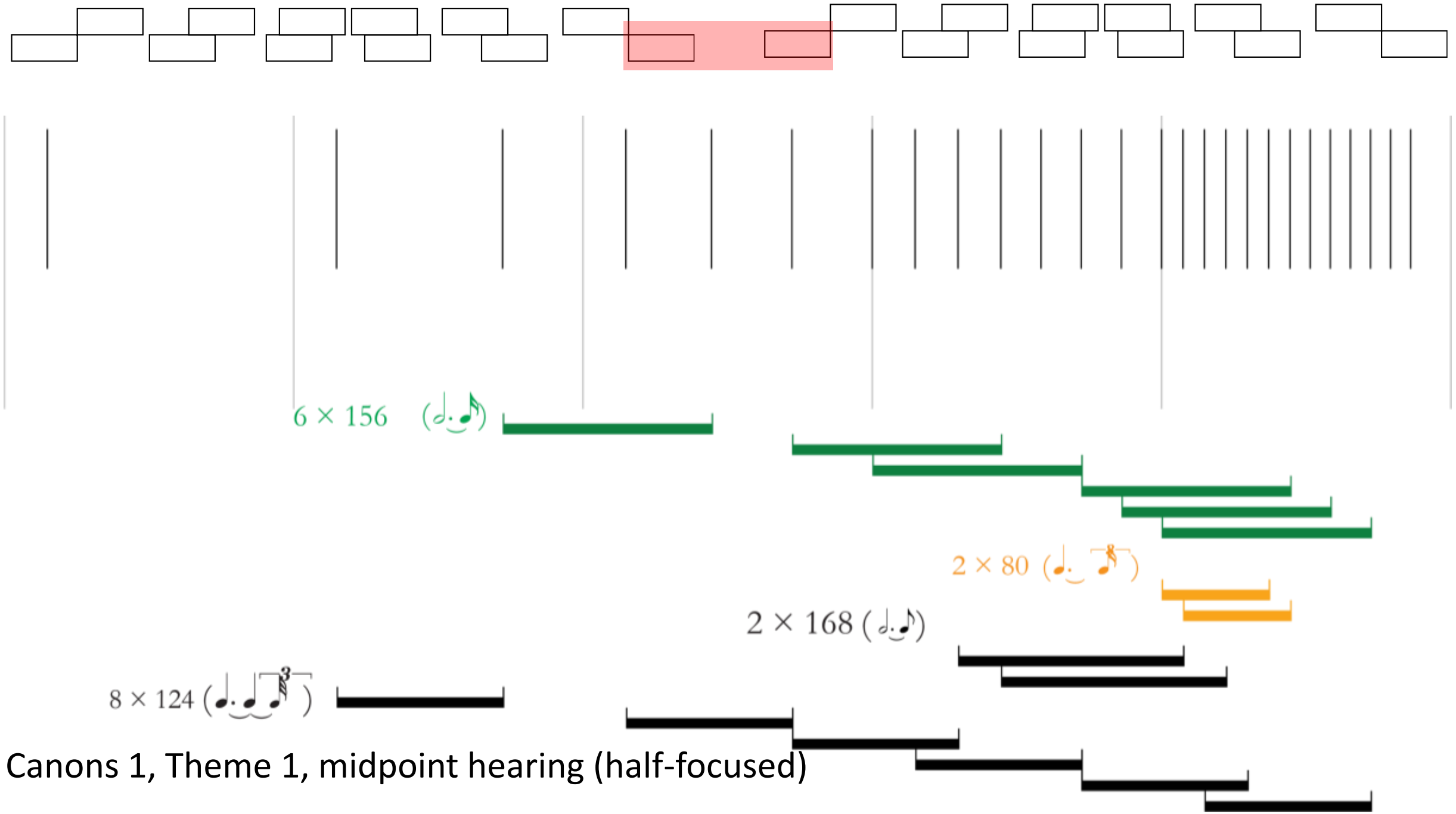
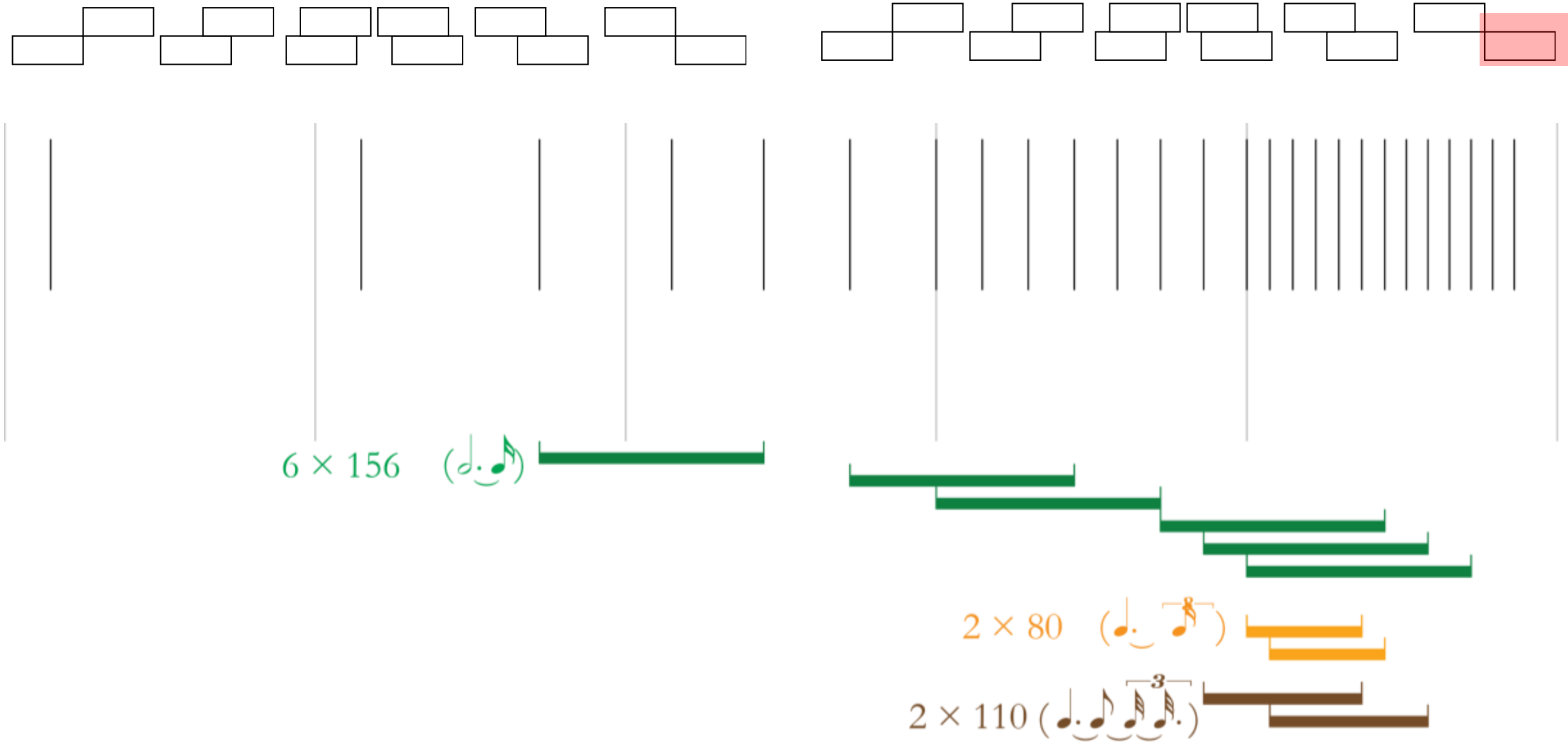


Canons 1, Theme 1, first hearing (unfocused)



Canons 1, Theme 1, midpoint hearing (half-focused)

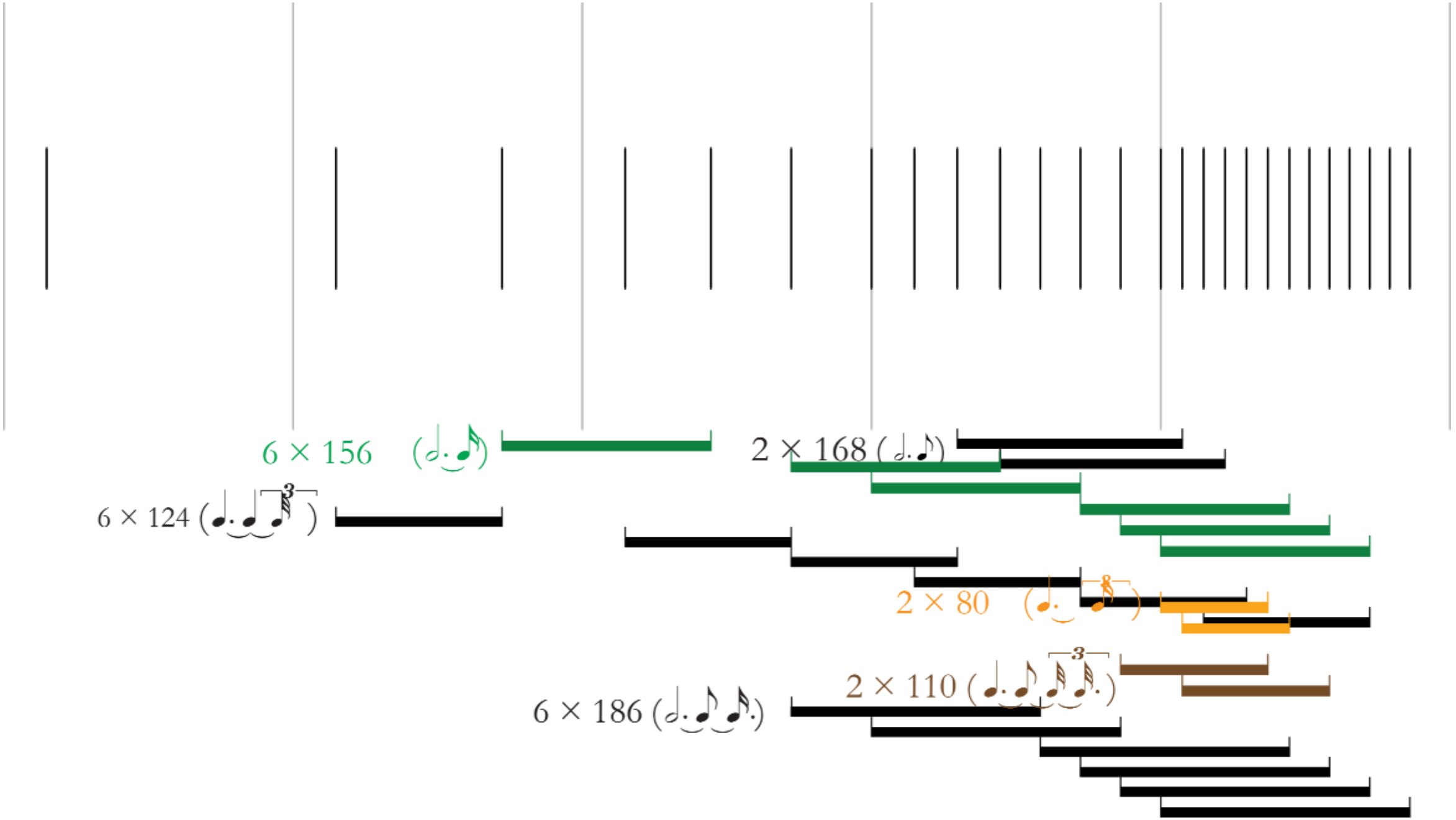


Canons 1, Theme 1, final hearing (fully focused)

When I saw these novel, quasi three-dimensional pictures at the start of the nineties, I was very interested, and especially by the old stereoscopic technique from the late 19th century, where two almost identical pictures, photographed with just a small spatial displacement between them (like two stereo microphones), are placed next to one another**. If one looks at them in an unfocussed way, one sees a magical three-dimensional picture in the middle, as the sum of the other two.**

[…]

At any rate, that's what I attempt here, partly on a small scale, as in the repetitions of Canon 1a, and partly on a large one, since Canon 1b is a 'double' of 1a (which is for Group 1), but this time for all nine instruments. **It is basically the same music, but with many more canonic levels superimposed. So the two form a pair, and should be heard as such. They are like two big musical pictures which, heard with distant, unfocussed ears, may produce a third, three-dimensional picture.**


6 × 156
2 × 168
6 × 124
2 × 80
2 × 110
6 × 186

Selected Bibliography

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