Pulses

Open Score for any 5 or more melodic instruments

Jordan Nobles

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Pulses

by Jordan Nobles

Information on the Piece

ABOUT THE PIECE

Pulses was written in March of 1999 for the **Motion** ensemble of Fredericton, New Brunswick, and has since been performed by them, **Next New Music**, **Ensemble Symposium** and other groups.

The technique of 'metric modulation' is applied to a series of thirteen systems. Each system has it's own key, character, and tempo. The players move through the open score independently, making decisions on the spot about which cells to play , when and in what octave, creating a different version of the piece with each performance. The piece is always recognizable even though no two performances sound exactly alike.

INSTRUMENTATION

Pulses can be performed by any 5 or more 'melodic' instruments. That is, instruments capable of chromatic melody (as opposed to drums or modal harps). Mixed ensembles are best but convincing performances can be made by groups with similar instrumentation.

DURATION

Although the recorded version of the piece (by **Ensemble Symposium**) is 16 minutes The duration of the piece can be adjusted to anywhere from **8-25 minutes** long by adjusting, not the tempo, but how many cells the performers play in each system. (see performance notes) In the recorded version, each performer is playing 4-5 cells before moving on to the next system but they could play all of the cells or only one of them (per system) without changing the character of the piece. Playing all seven of the cells in each system is not recommended in mixed ensembles however, as some cells may prove to be awkward for some instruments and they should be able to skip them. It should be agreed upon ahead of time how many are cells are to be played and each player should stick with this decision.

PROGRAM NOTES

In ***Pulses***, the technique of 'metric modulation'; moving to a different pulse related to the current one, is applied to a series of thirteen sections, each in a different character and key. The players move through the open score independently, making decisions on the spot about which cells to play , when and in what octave, creating a different version of the piece with each performance.

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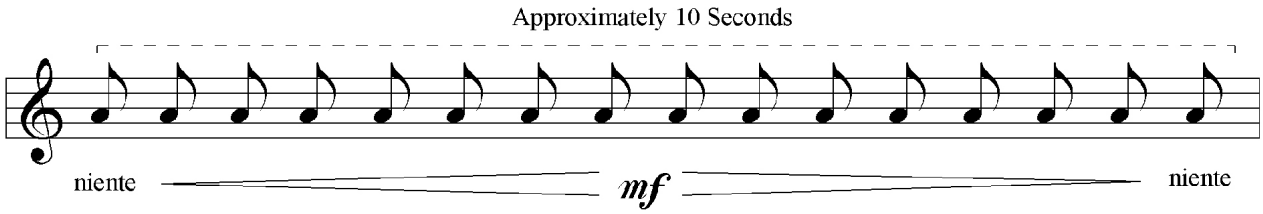
Performance Instructions

- ***Pulses*** can be performed by any melodic instruments.
- Players enter one at a time in any order starting with the first cell.
- Cells should be played in any order, each one repeated for approx. 10 seconds
- The repetitions should fade in and out over the 10 seconds
- N = niente (as quiet as possible)

For example, cell #1 should sound like this...



- Cells can be played in any octave as long as the dynamics can be maintained
- Players should change octaves frequently
- Some cells contain diads (such as #13). Single line instruments such as woodwinds playing these cells can choose to play either note during each repetition. Polyphonic instruments are encouraged to play both notes.
- Players move through the piece independently but no player should be too far ahead.
- Each system is a different pulses rate. Related to the one before it and the one after it but not necessarily to any other systems. So all performers SHOULD BE ON THE SAME SYSTEM before anyone moves on to the next.
- When switching from one system (pulse) to the next, all players should agree on where that pulse is and synchronise with each other. Basically whomever moves first onto the new system establishes the beat.
- Performers need not play all the cells. they should play between 1 to 6 from each system but they should still proceed in order if at all possible. Performers should agree on how many cells to play in each performance and play the same amount as each other to ensure that they more easily stay together throughout the piece. The duration of the piece can be modified in this way. If an ensemble is playing 5-6 cells per system the piece could last up to 25 minutes but if they only play 1-2 cells per system then the piece would be considerably shorter, about 8 minutes.
- When the final cell (#78) has been reached, the players should repeat it (fading in and out in different octaves) until everyone has arrived on it, then each player fades out at their discretion.

Jordan Nobles, Vancouver, March 1999

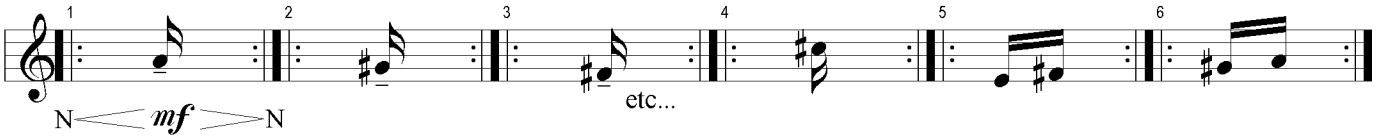
Pulses

(C Score)

Jordan Nobles

Legato

= 240 repeat each cell for about 10 seconds



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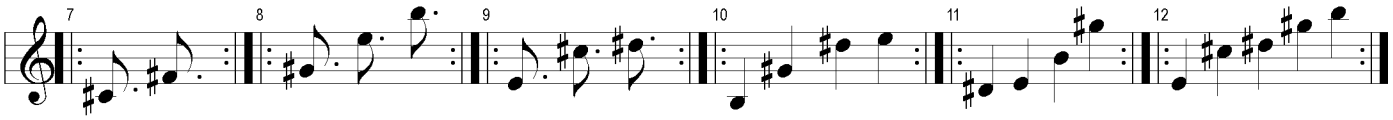

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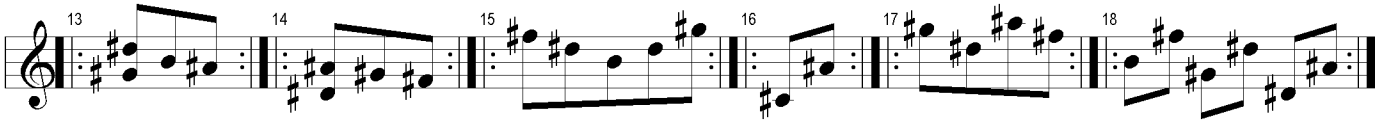

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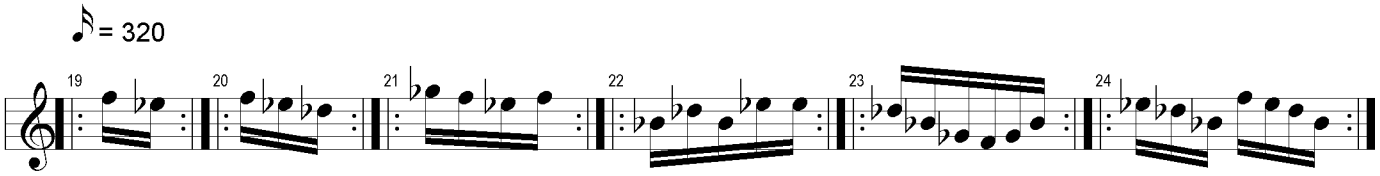

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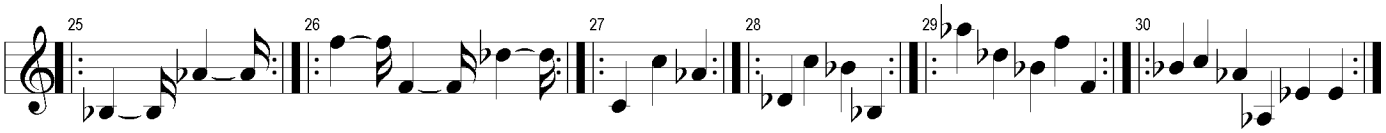
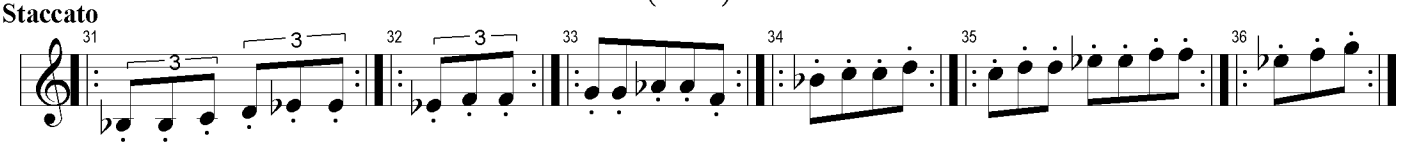
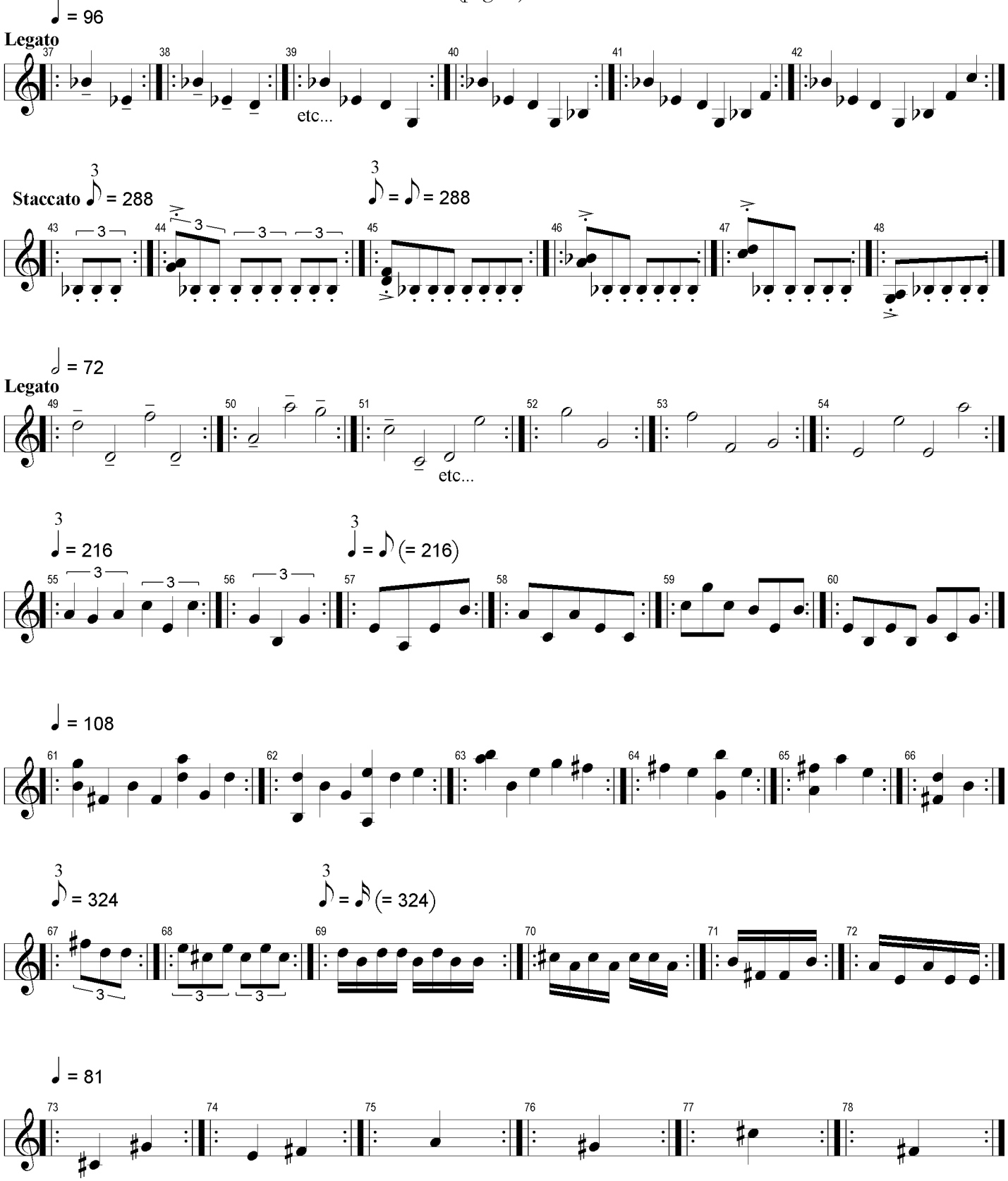


3 3 = (= 192)

Staccato




♩ = 96
Legato
etc...
Staccato 3 ♪ = 288
3 ♪ = ♪ = 288
♩ = 72
Legato
etc...
3 ♩ = 216
3 ♩ = ♪ (= 216)
♩ = 108
3 ♪ = 324
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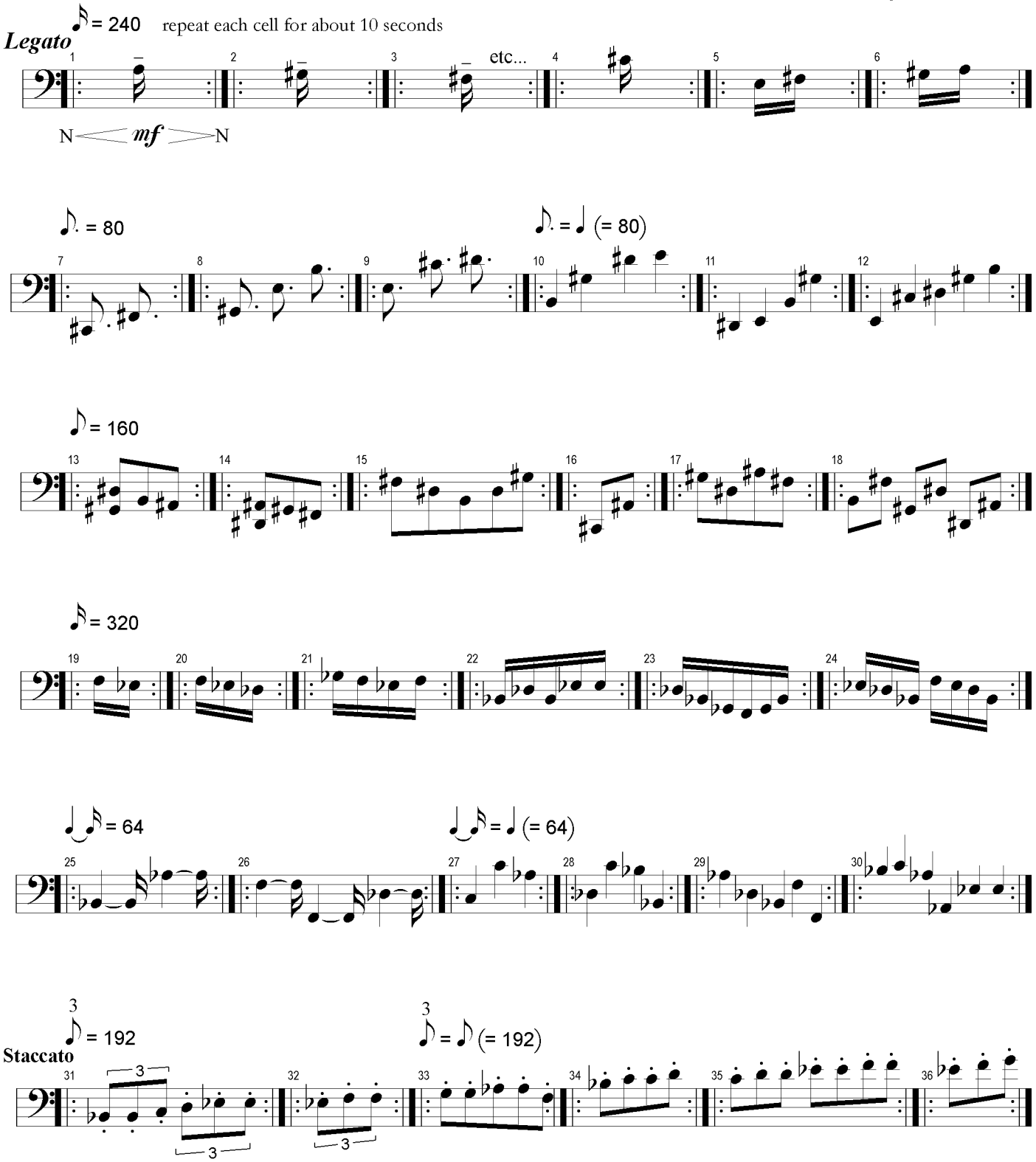
♩ = 81

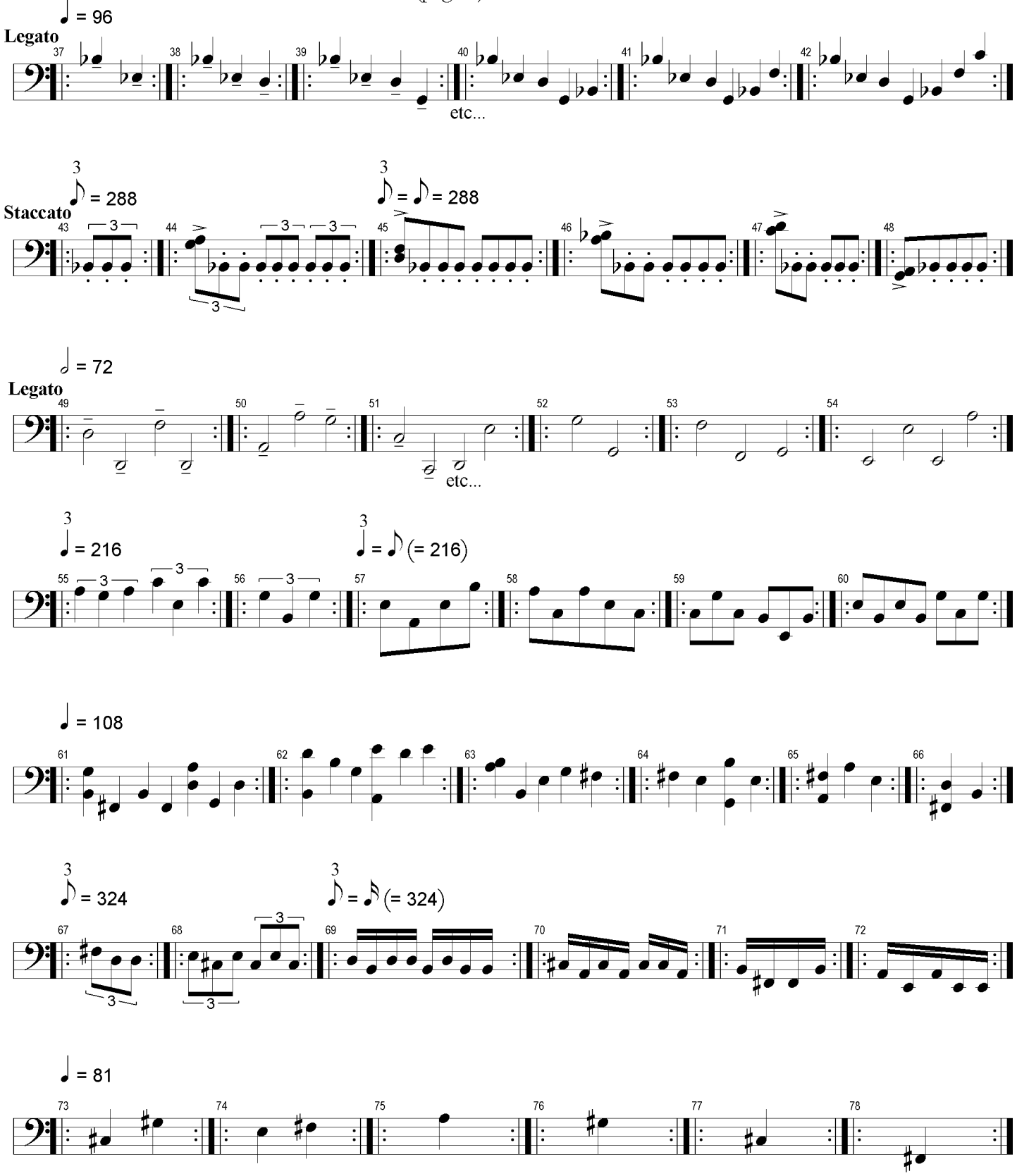
Pulses

(C Score - Bass Clef)

Jordan Nobles



Pulses (page 2) C score - Bass Clef



Jordan Nobles, Vancouver, March 1999

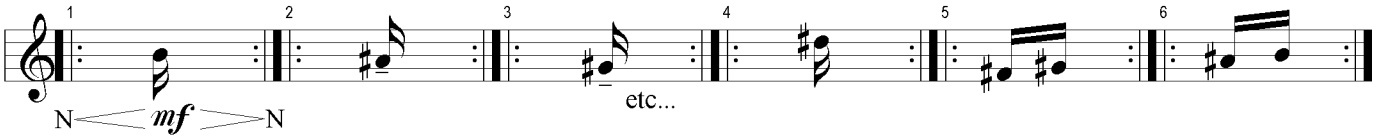
Pulses

(Bb Score)

Jordan Nobles

Legato

= 240 repeat each cell for about 10 seconds



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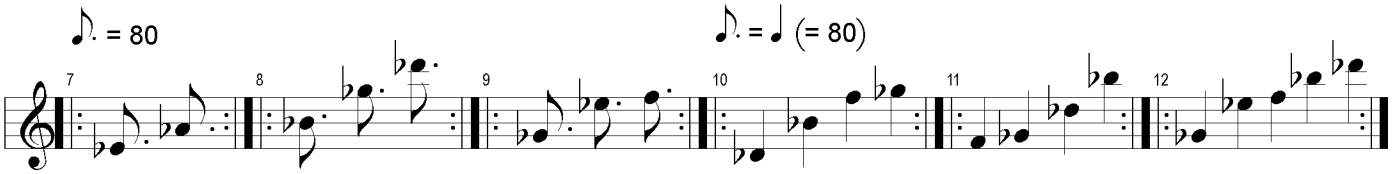

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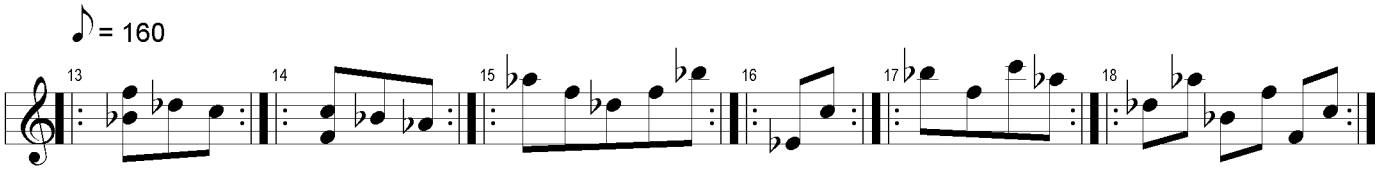

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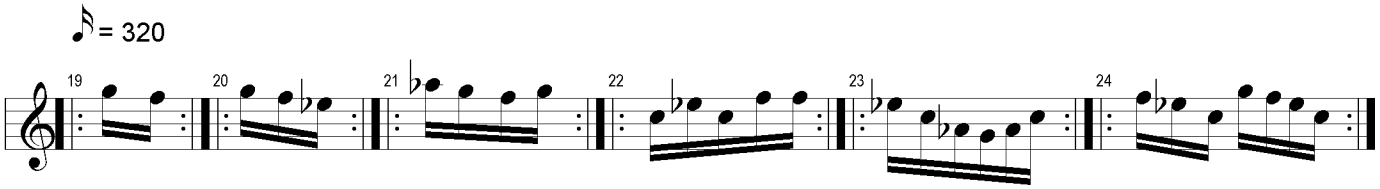

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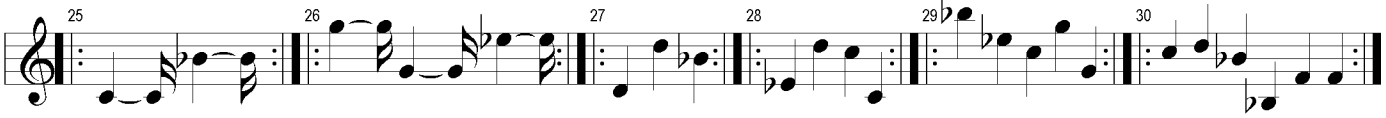


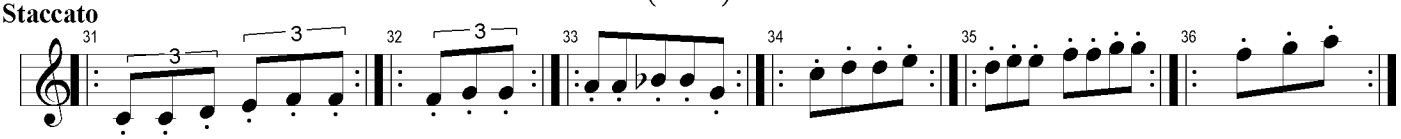
3

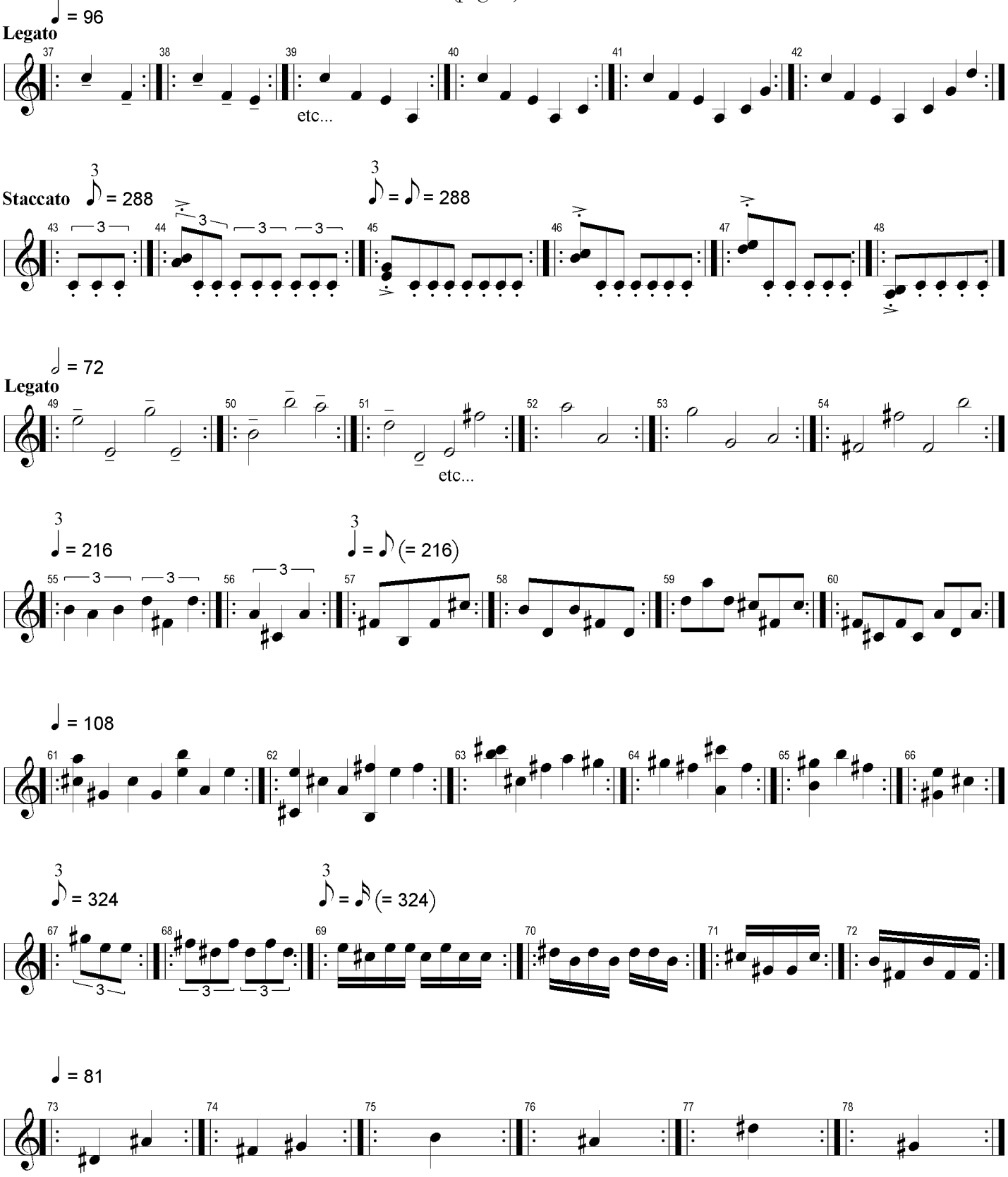
= 192

3

= (= 192)

Staccato





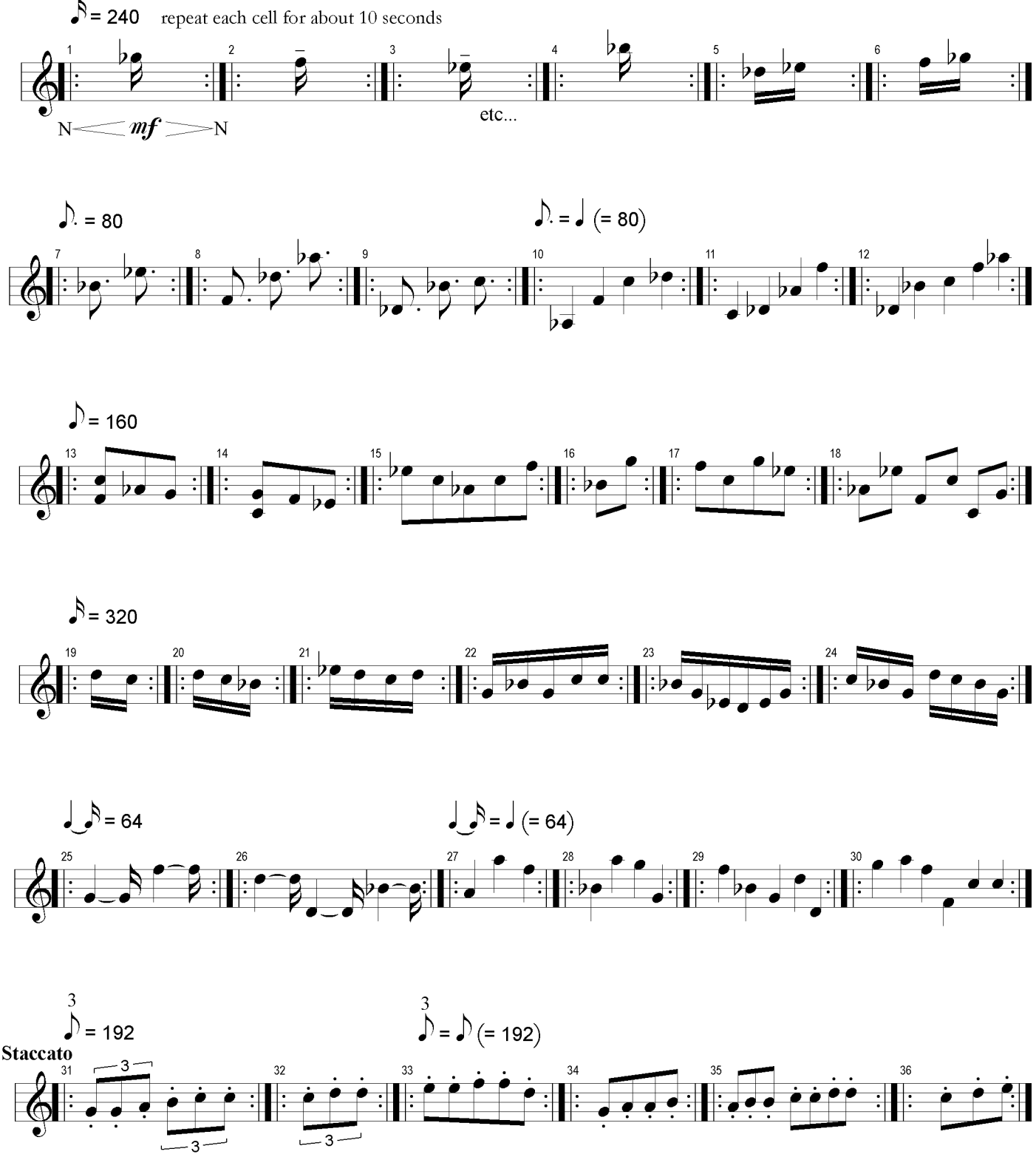
Jordan Nobles, Vancouver, March 1999

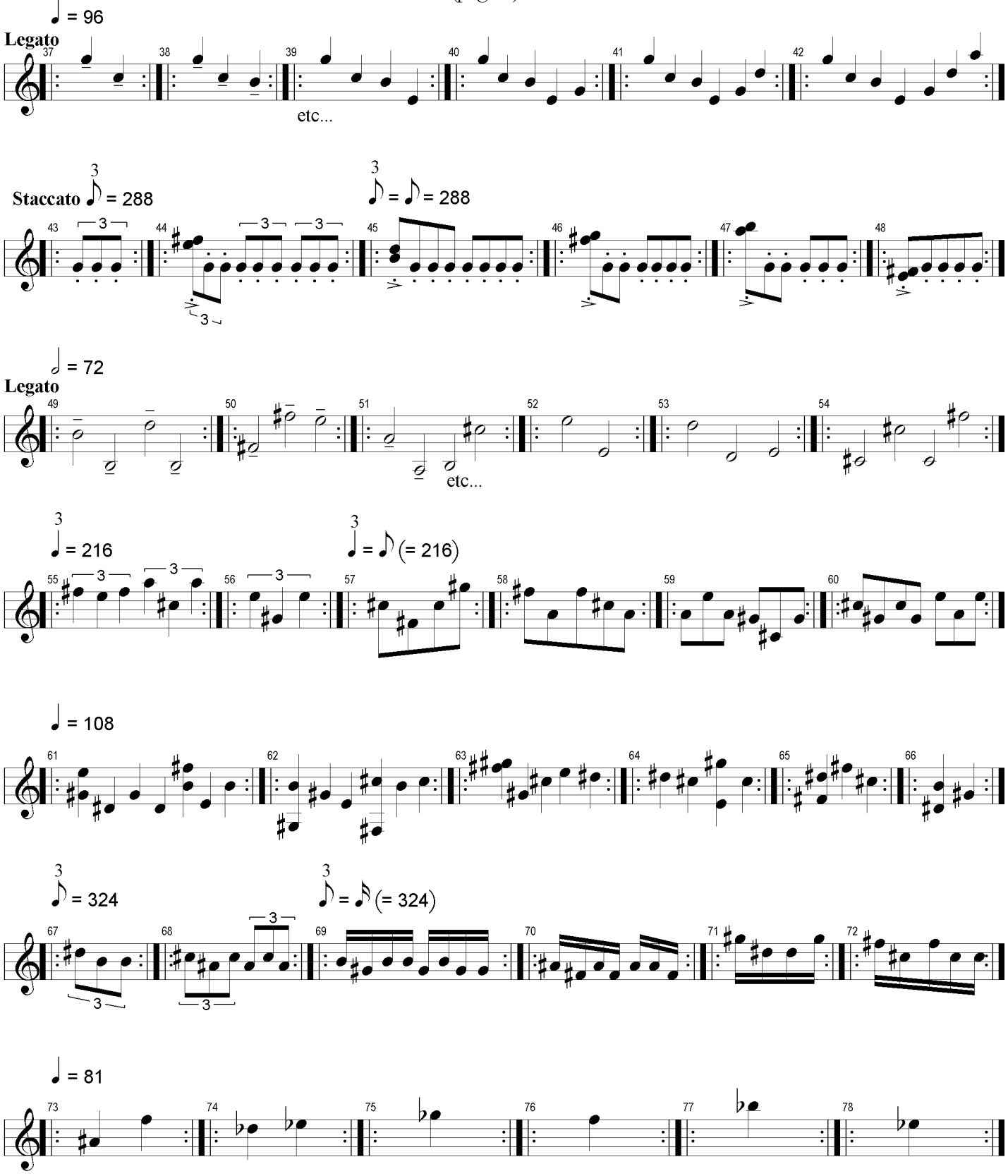
Pulses

(Eb Score)

Jordan Nobles

Legato




♩ = 96
Legato
etc...
Staccato 3 ♪ = 288
3 ♪ = ♪ = 288
♩ = 72
Legato
etc...
3 ♩ = 216
3 ♩ = ♪ (= 216)
♩ = 108
3 ♪ = 324
3 ♪ = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 (= 324)
♩ = 81

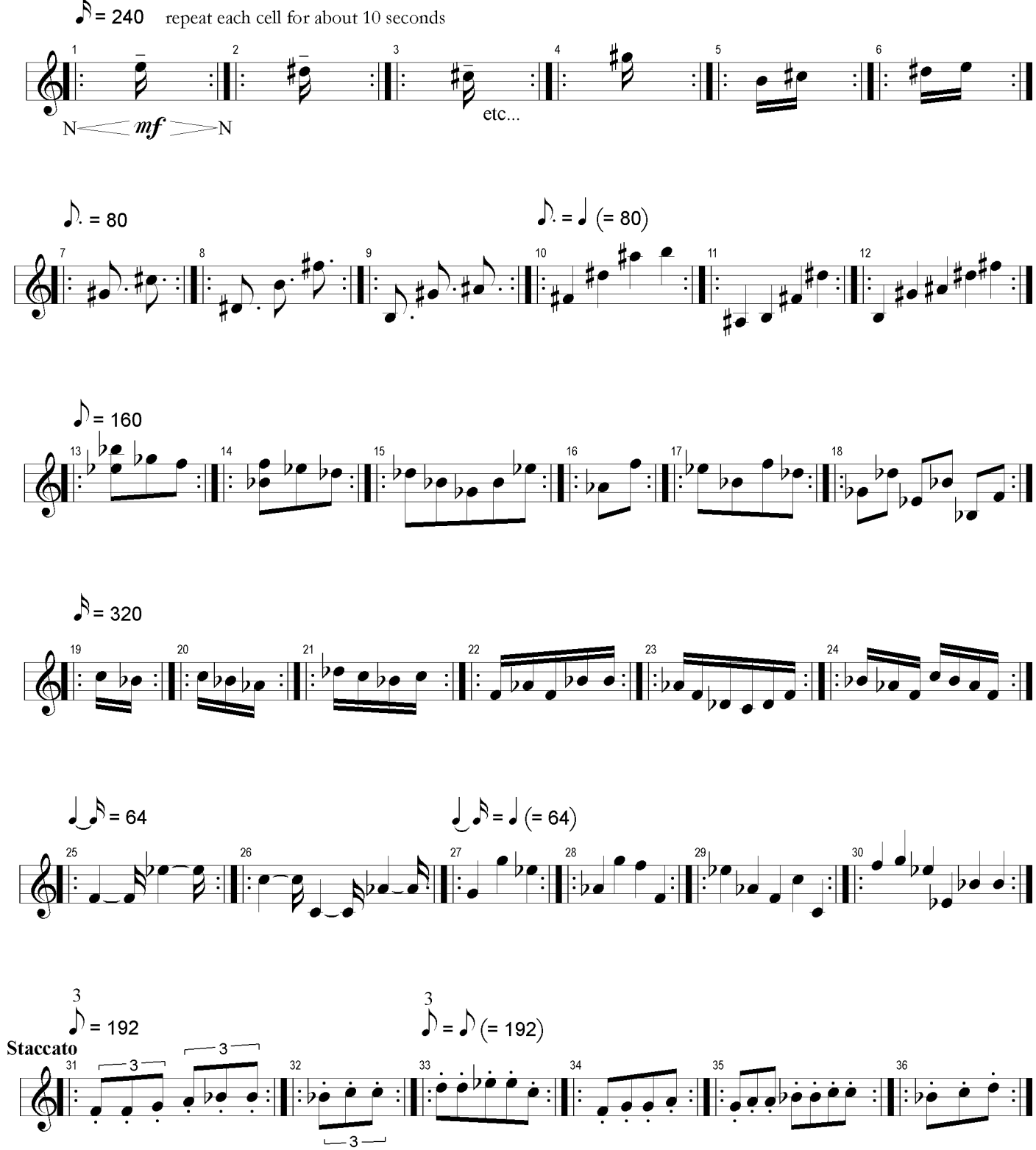
Pulses

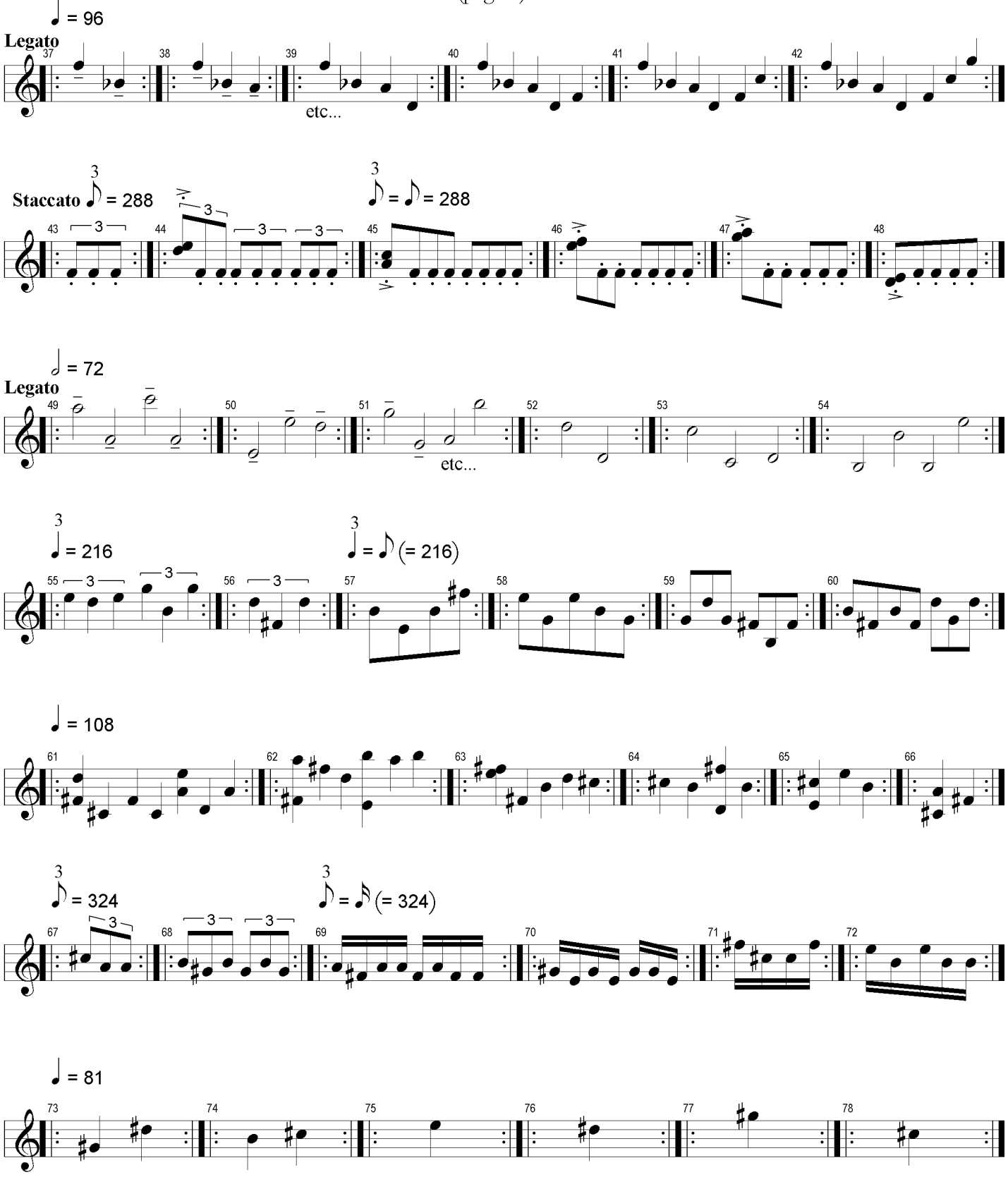
(F Score)

sounds a fifth lower or a fourth higher

Jordan Nobles

Legato




♩ = 96
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etc...
Staccato 3 ♪ = 288
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3 ♩ = 216
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♩ = 108
3 ♪ = 324
3 ♪ = 𝅘𝅥𝅯 (= 324)
♩ = 81