Mozart Clarinet Concerto: III Rondo: Allegro

Context

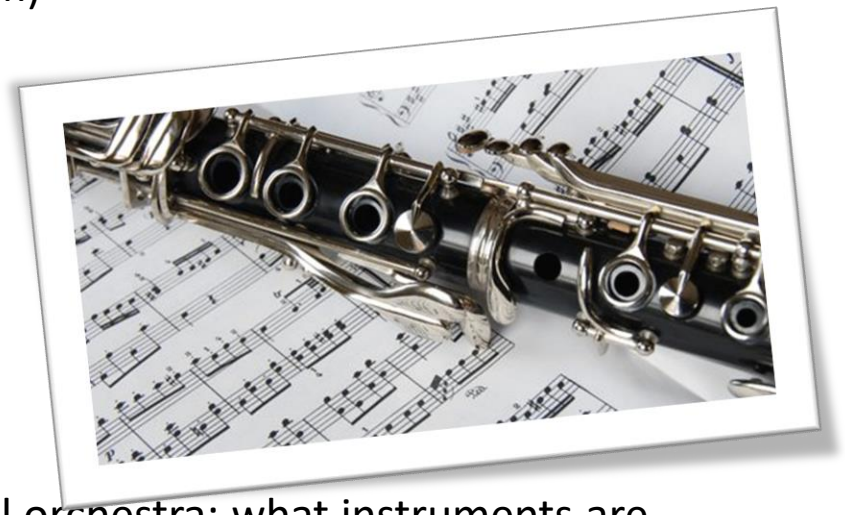
The Clarinet Concerto in A Major was completed in Autumn 1791 and premiered with Anton Stadler as its soloist on October 16 at the National Theatre in Prague. It was adapted from an earlier unfinished work for Basset Horn (an early version of the clarinet that was much bigger and in F). Most of the music from that earlier work was adapted into the first movement of the concerto. It was the last instrumental music piece Mozart wrote before his death two months later.

The concerto follows the typical three movement structure of fast-slow-fast.

I. Allegro (in A major and in sonata form)

II. Adagio (in D major and in ternary form)

III. Rondo: Allegro (in A major and in rondo form)



It is scored for:

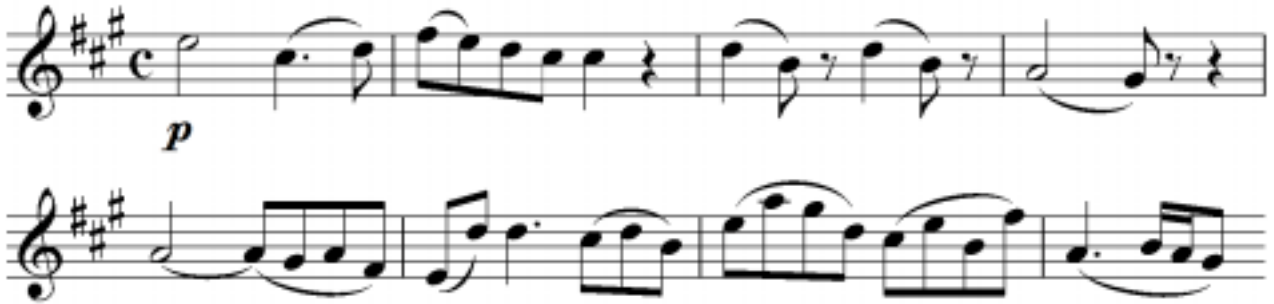
- 2 flutes
- 2 bassoons
- 2 horns and
- Strings

Note: This is smaller than the standard Classical orchestra: what instruments are missing?

First movement

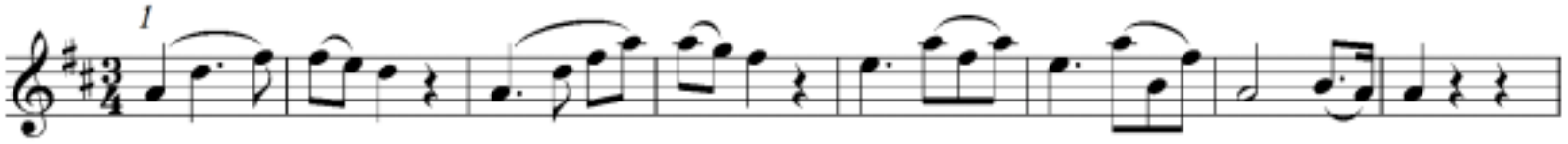
- Allegro (fast)
- In common time (C) which is another term for 4/4
- A major (tonic key)
- In sonata form
- Extended orchestral exposition with melody in violins; solo clarinet not heard until bar 57. The soloist then repeats and extends the previous material.
- Uses balanced 8 bar phrasing for melodic ideas: typically Classical
- Exploits full range and athleticism of the clarinet

First subject/melody:

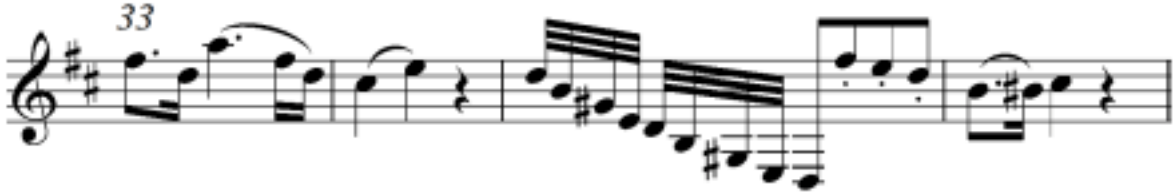


Second movement

- Adagio (slow)
- 3/4 time
- In D major (subdominant key)
- Ternary form
- Solo clarinet starts immediately with simple, lyrical 8 bar melody that is immediately repeated by the orchestra, before continuing to a new idea:



- Middle section contains lots of quick motion and contrasts the simple first melody:



- There is a pause marked for a possible cadenza towards the end, before a final repeat of the first melody

Overview of 3rd Movement

- Rondo theme (main melody) is 8 bars long
- This theme is repeated several times and the overall structure is A – B – A – C – A
- Starts and ends in tonic of A Major (F# C# G#)
- The soloist is playing a clarinet in A so has a key signature of C major - although it sounds like A major.
- In 6/8; this time signature is compound so is counted in two groups of three quavers (1 and a 2 and a)

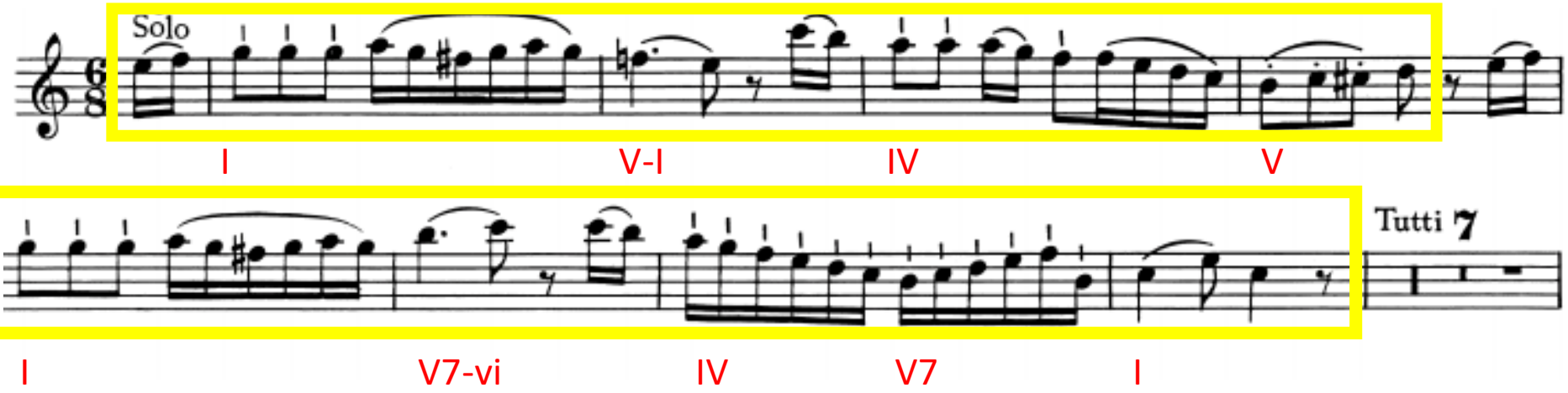
Melody: The Rondo Theme

Starts with anacrusis (upbeat)

Frequent contrast between legato and staccato

First 4 bar phrase (antecedent/question) ends on dominant chord & imperfect cadence

Chromaticism



Second 4 bar phrase (consequent / answer) starts the same but ends on tonic for a perfect cadence

- Exactly 8 bars long (you never count the anacrusis)
- Balanced phrases; they are the same length and the first phrase rises at the end and the second phrase falls
- Bouncy and lively in character

Analysis: Colour Key

Melody

Harmony & tonality

Tempo

Rhythm

Structure

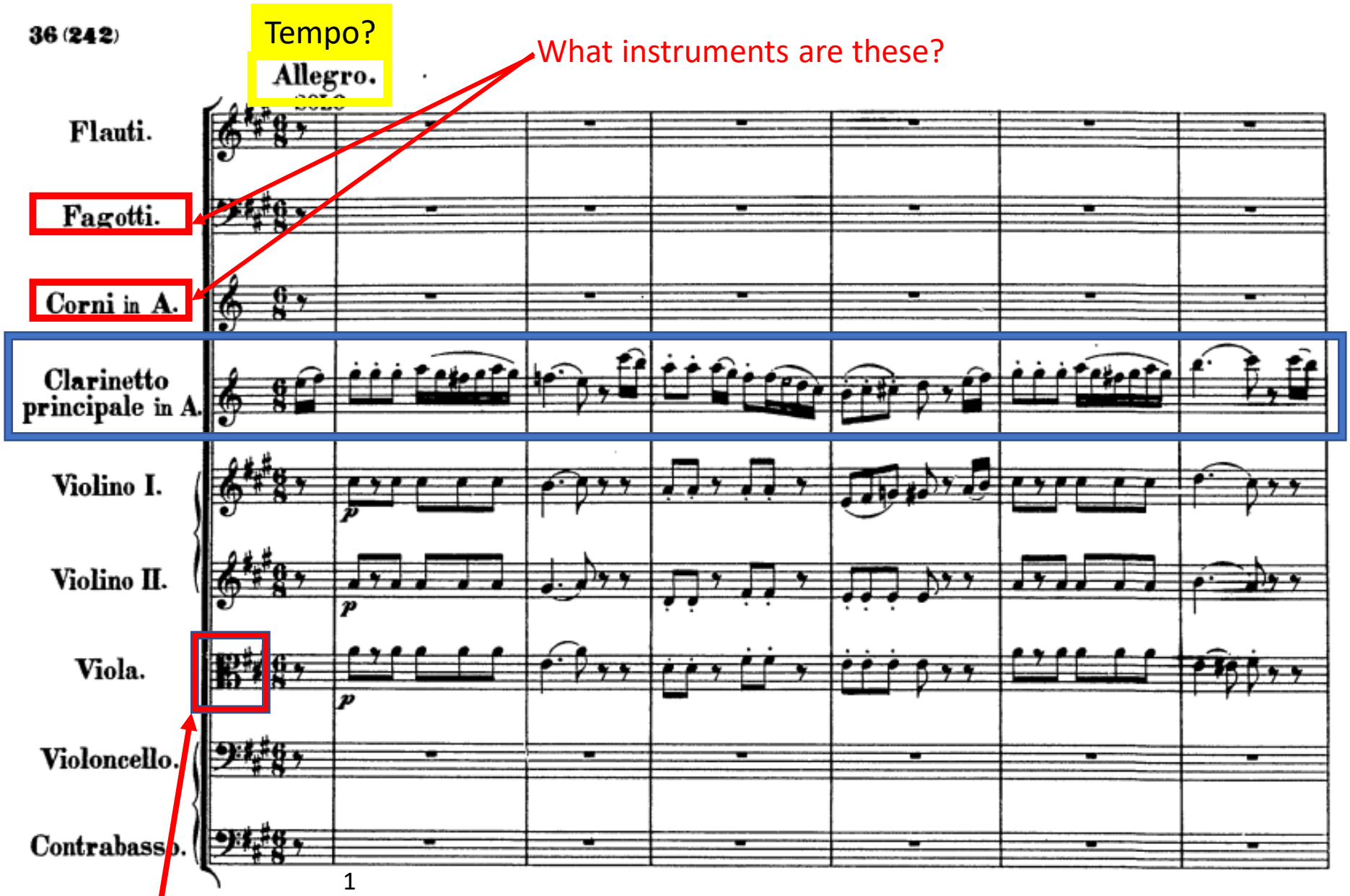
Texture

Dynamics

Instrumentation/Timbre

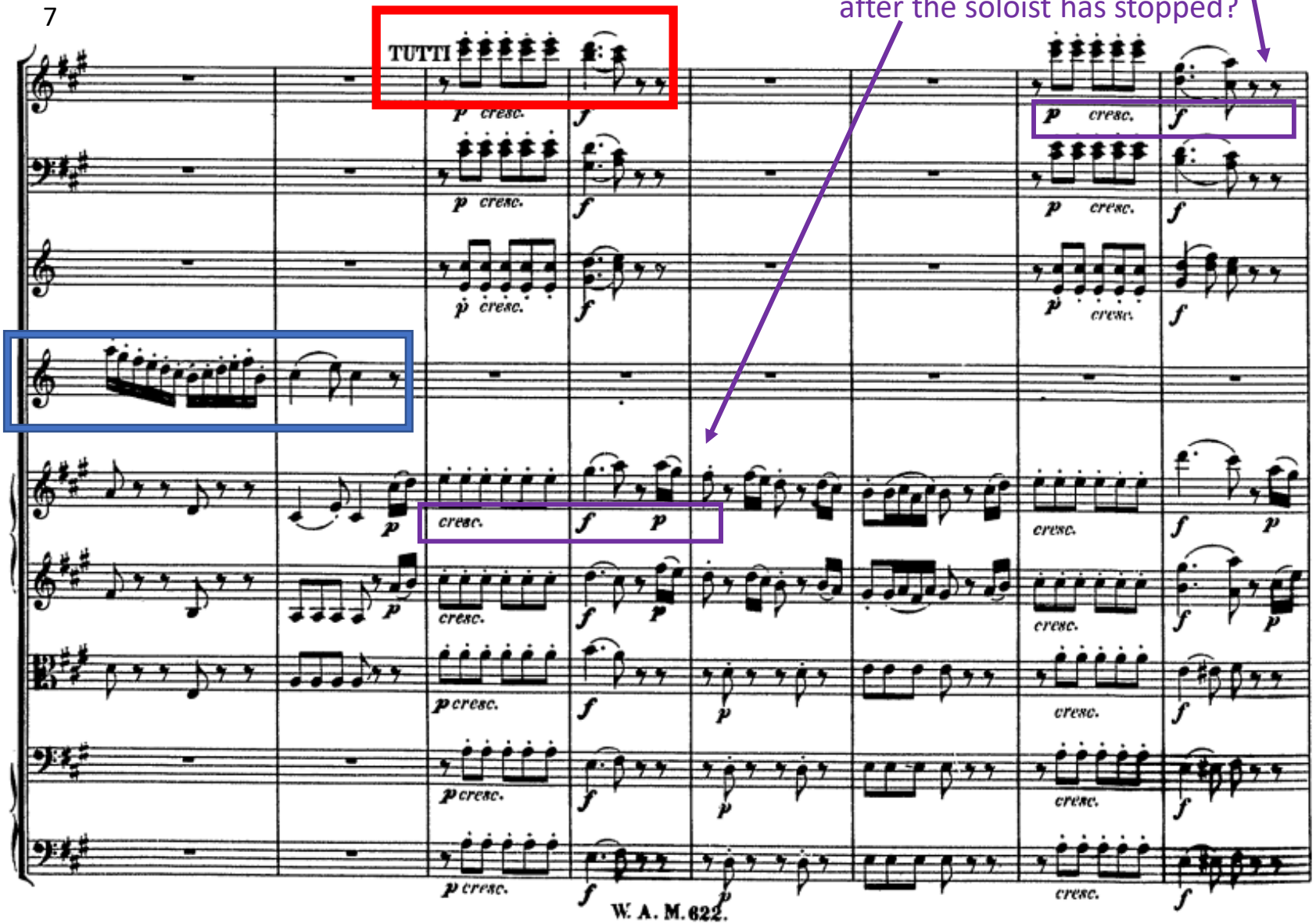
I have annotated my score with the analysis making sure each feature is the right colour.

I strongly suggest you do the same!

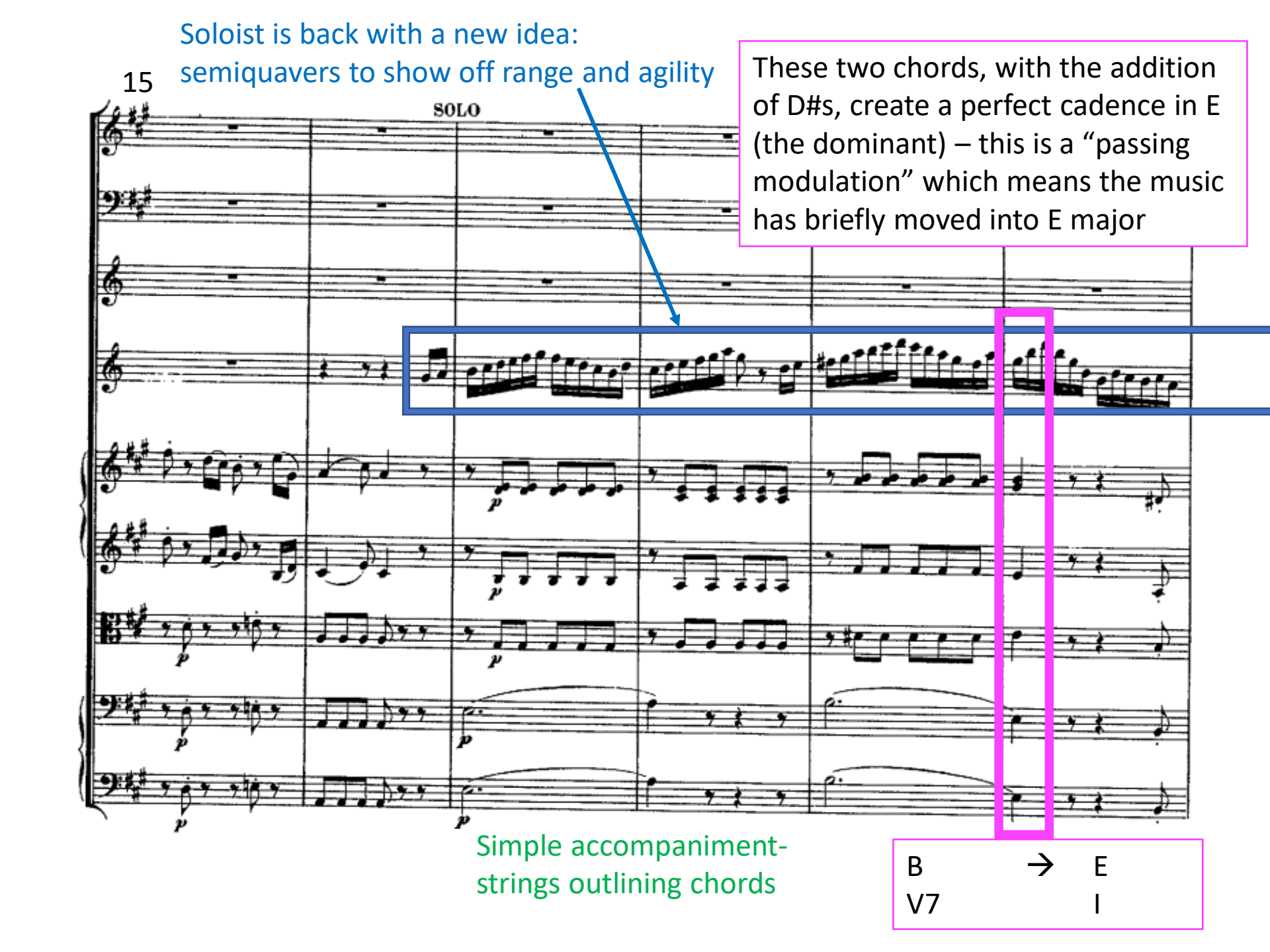

36 (242)
Tempo?
Allegro.
What instruments are these?
Flauti.
Fagotti.
Corni in A.
Clarinetto principale in A.
Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola.
Violoncello.
Contrabasso.
p
1
What clef is the viola using?
How would you describe the texture?

What does tutti mean?

How would you describe the dynamics after the soloist has stopped?

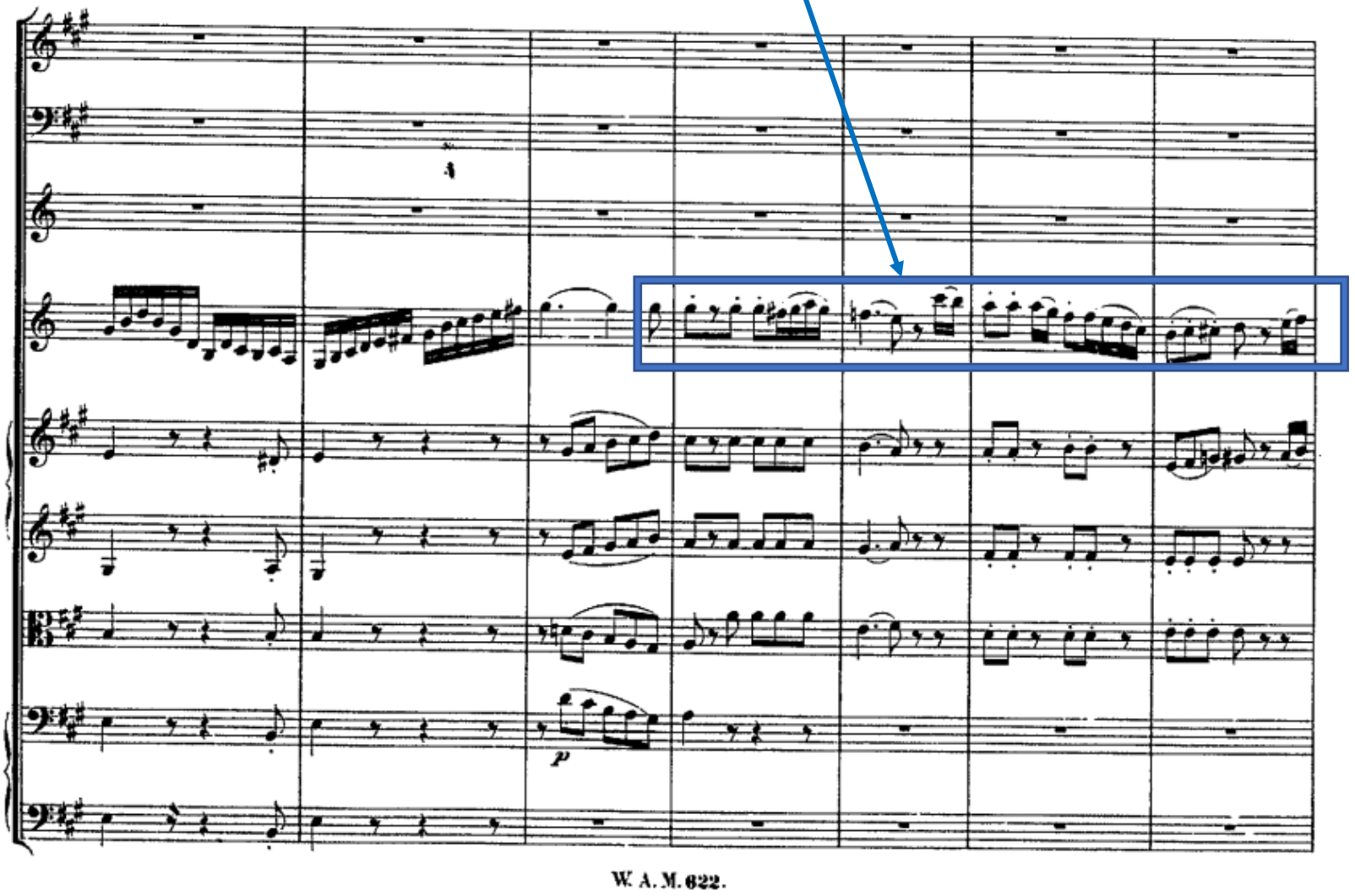


Where does the melody go? How is it altered?


Soloist is back with a new idea:
semiquavers to show off range and agility
15
SOLO
These two chords, with the addition of D#s, create a perfect cadence in E (the dominant) – this is a "passing modulation" which means the music has briefly moved into E major
Simple accompaniment- strings outlining chords
B → E
V7 I

21

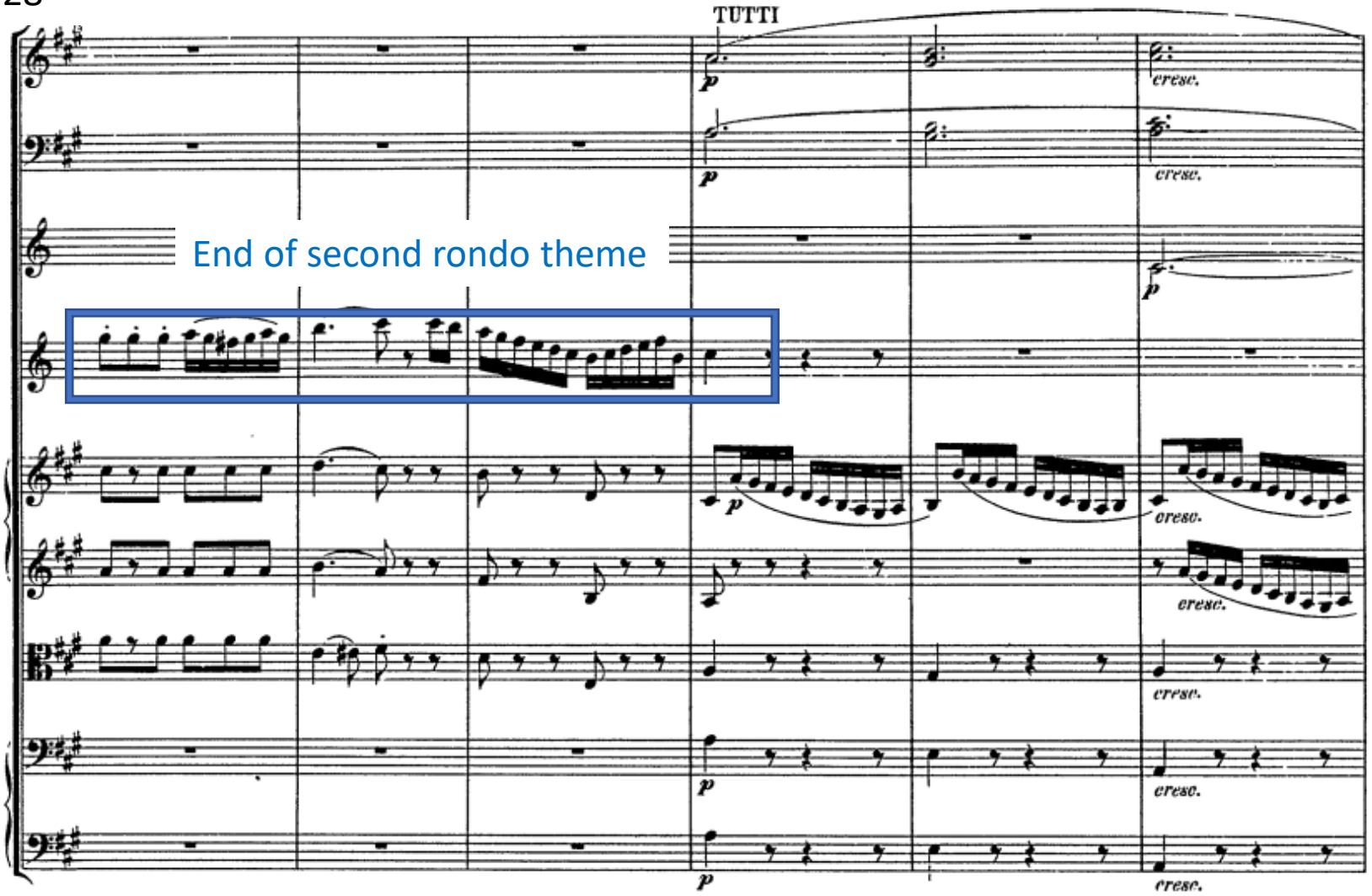
Rondo theme is back!
Is it exactly the same?



Back in A major: how can you tell?

Start of **link section.** Overlaps with end of rondo theme. How would you describe the main features?

28



What rhythmic technique?

Answered by solo clarinet – lots of interaction in this section

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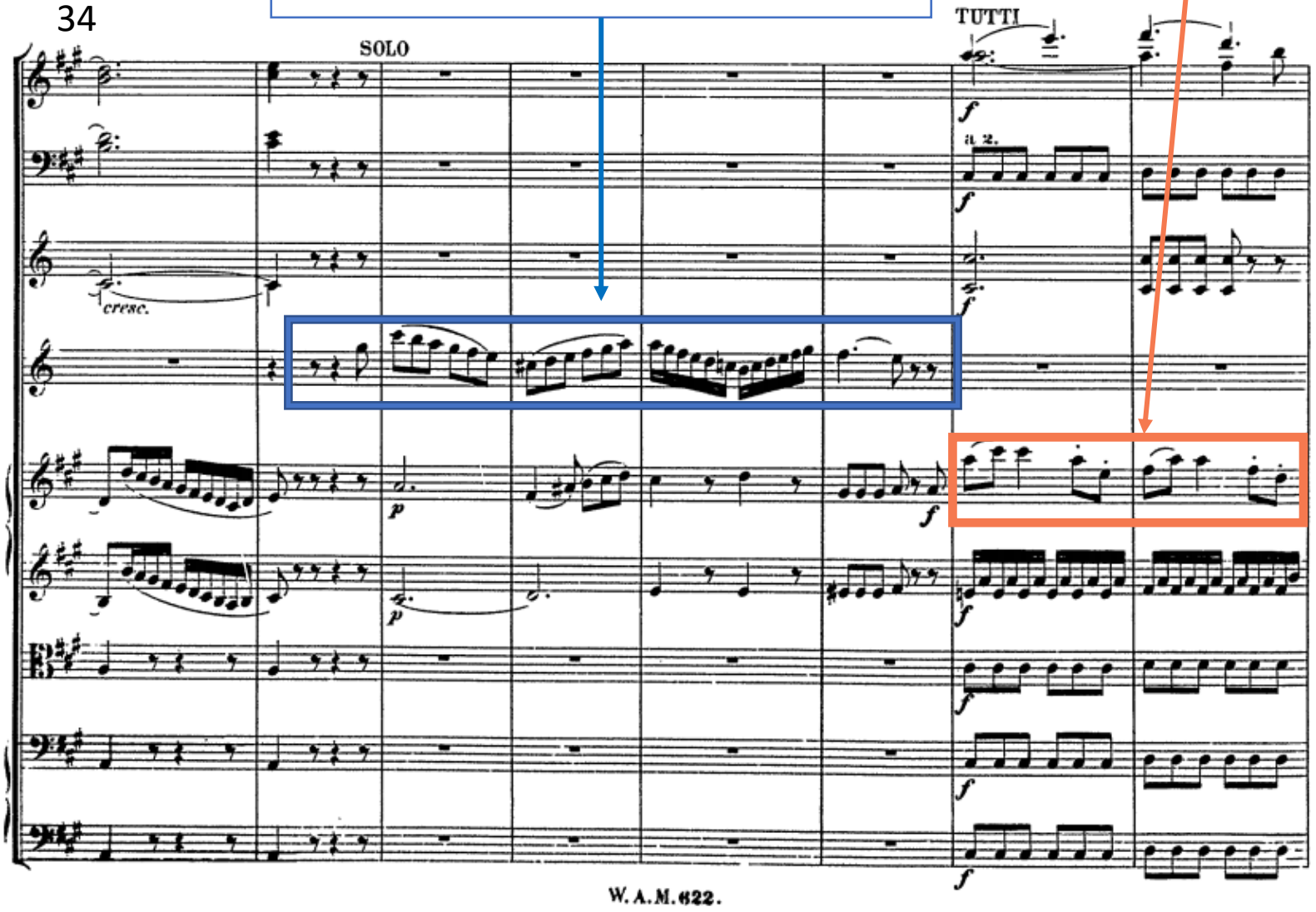

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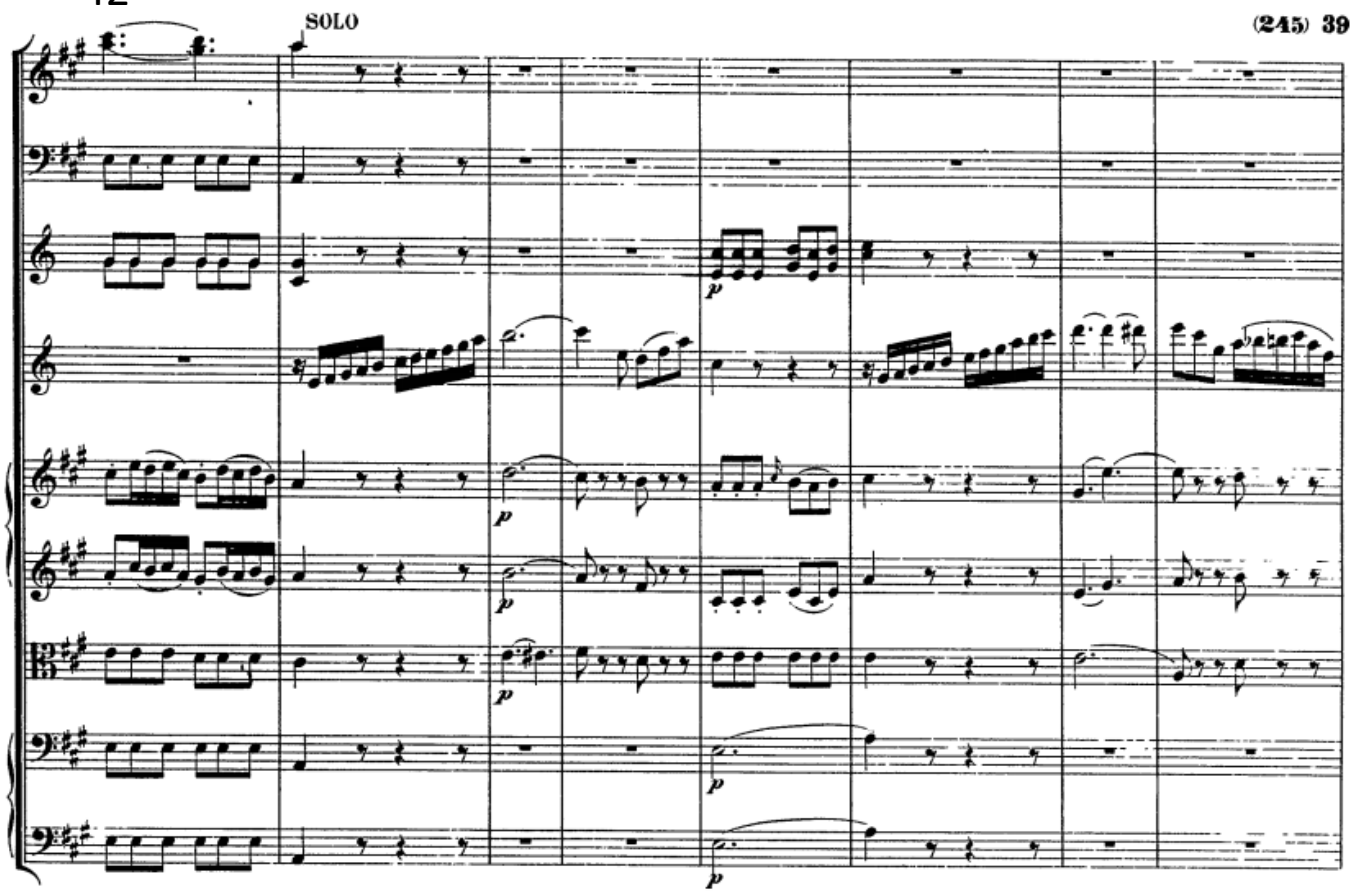
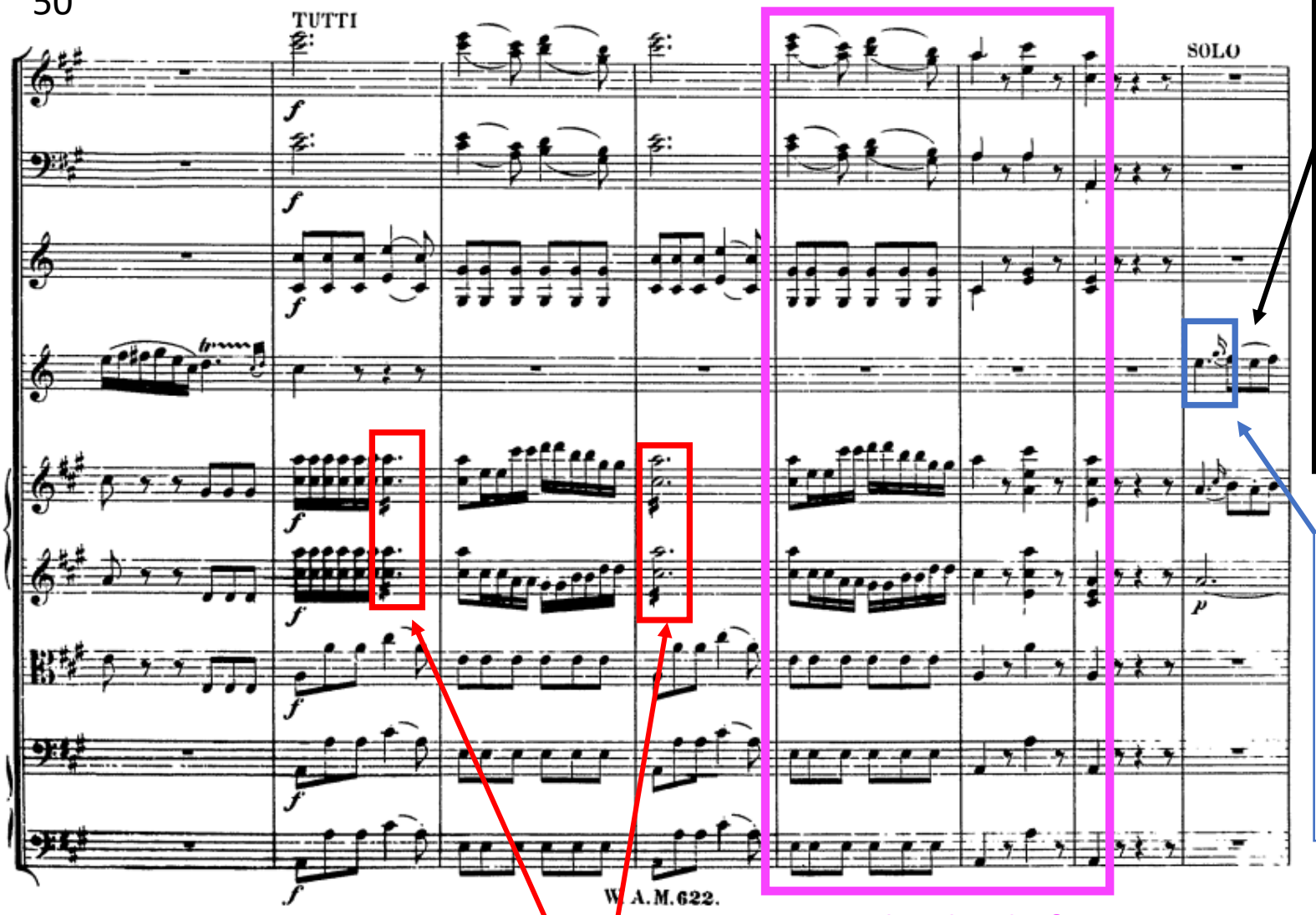




Bar 57: start of a new section called the **"First episode"** after a rare moment of silence.

This new melody includes decoration in the form of acciaccaturas

What kind of cadence?

What does this mean?

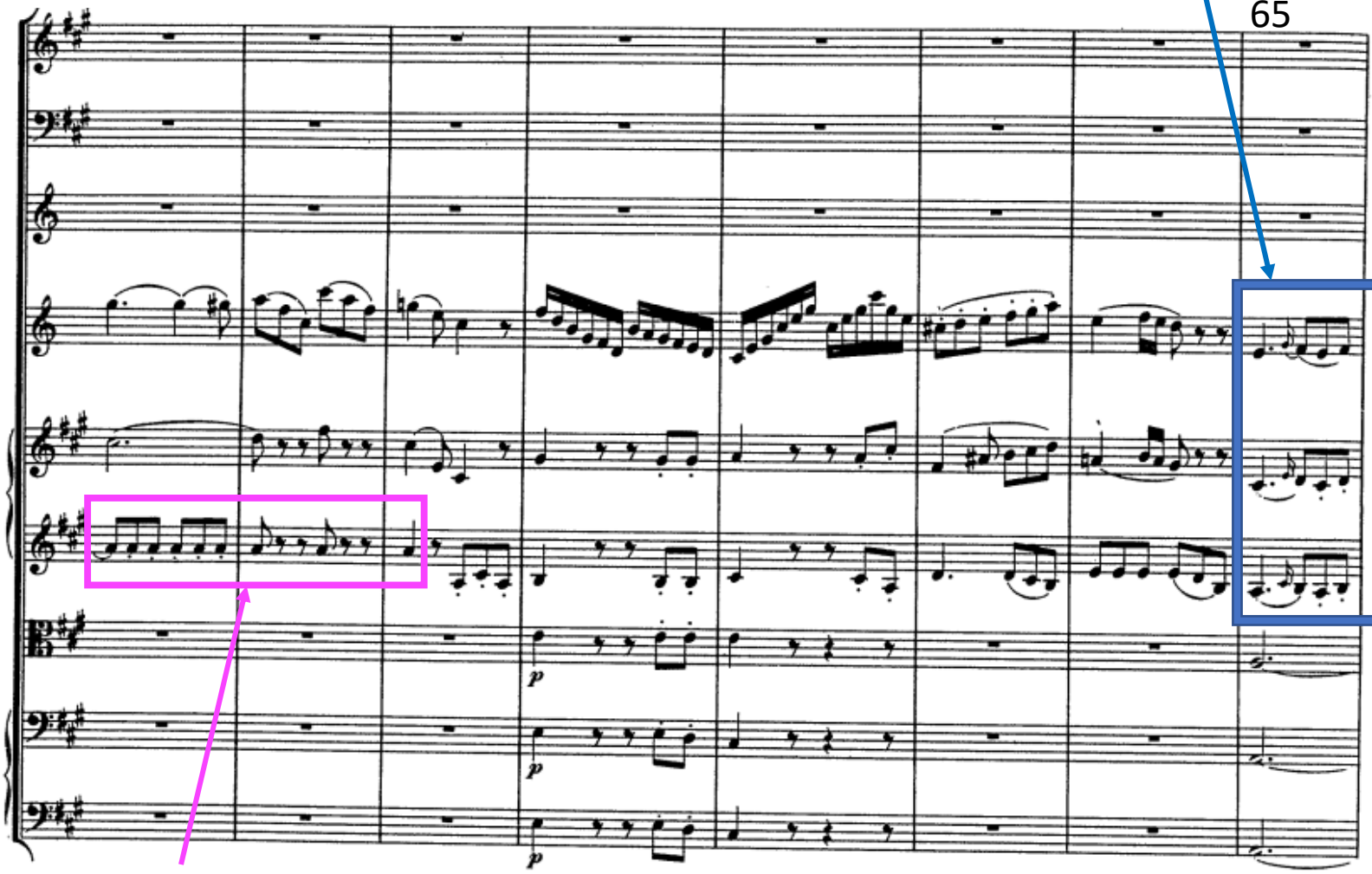
First episode cont'd…

First episode melody repeated with strings: how is it different?

Sparse texture: like chamber music

58

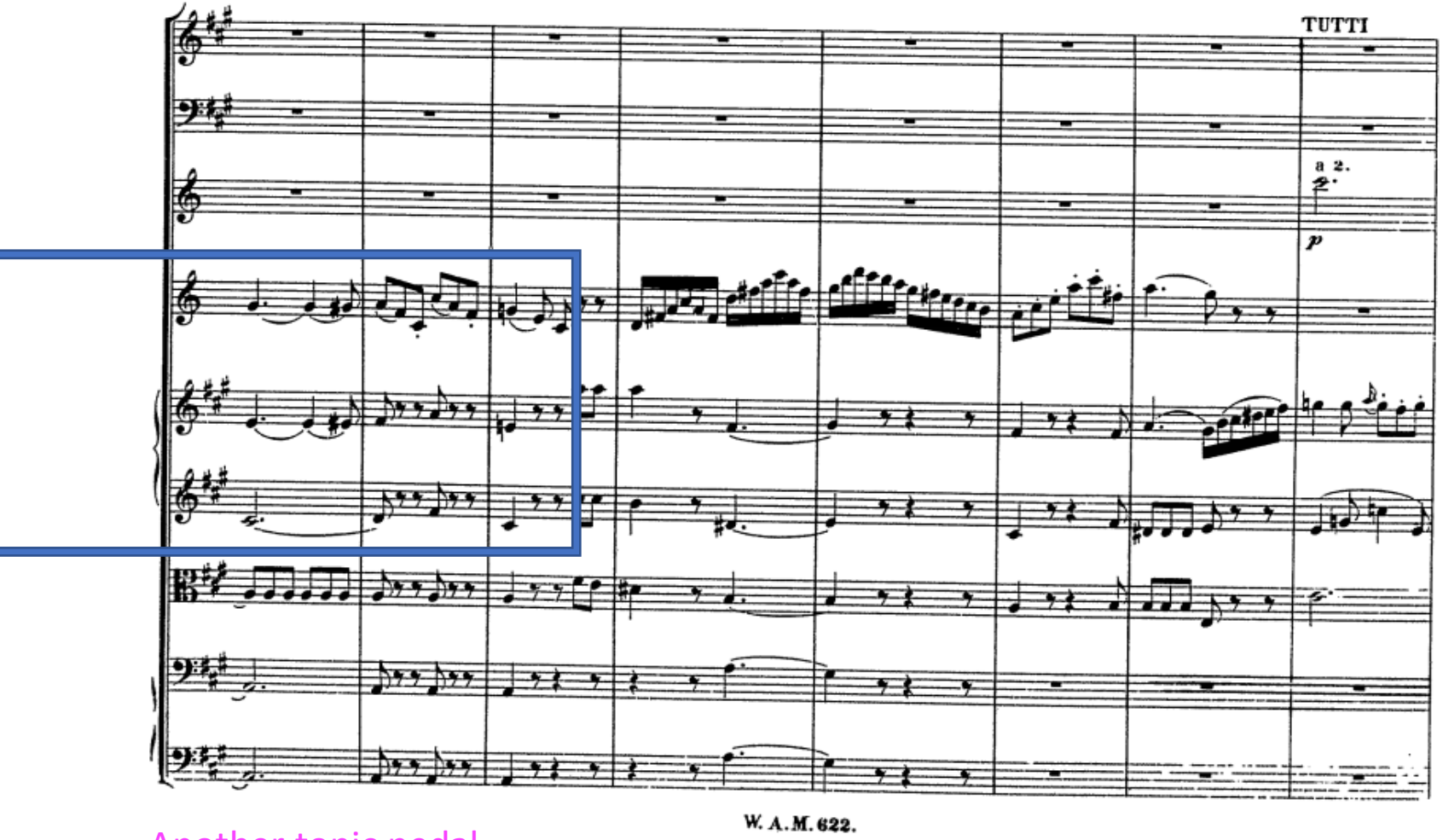
65



What note is the second violin playing from 57-61? What is the term for this?

66

73

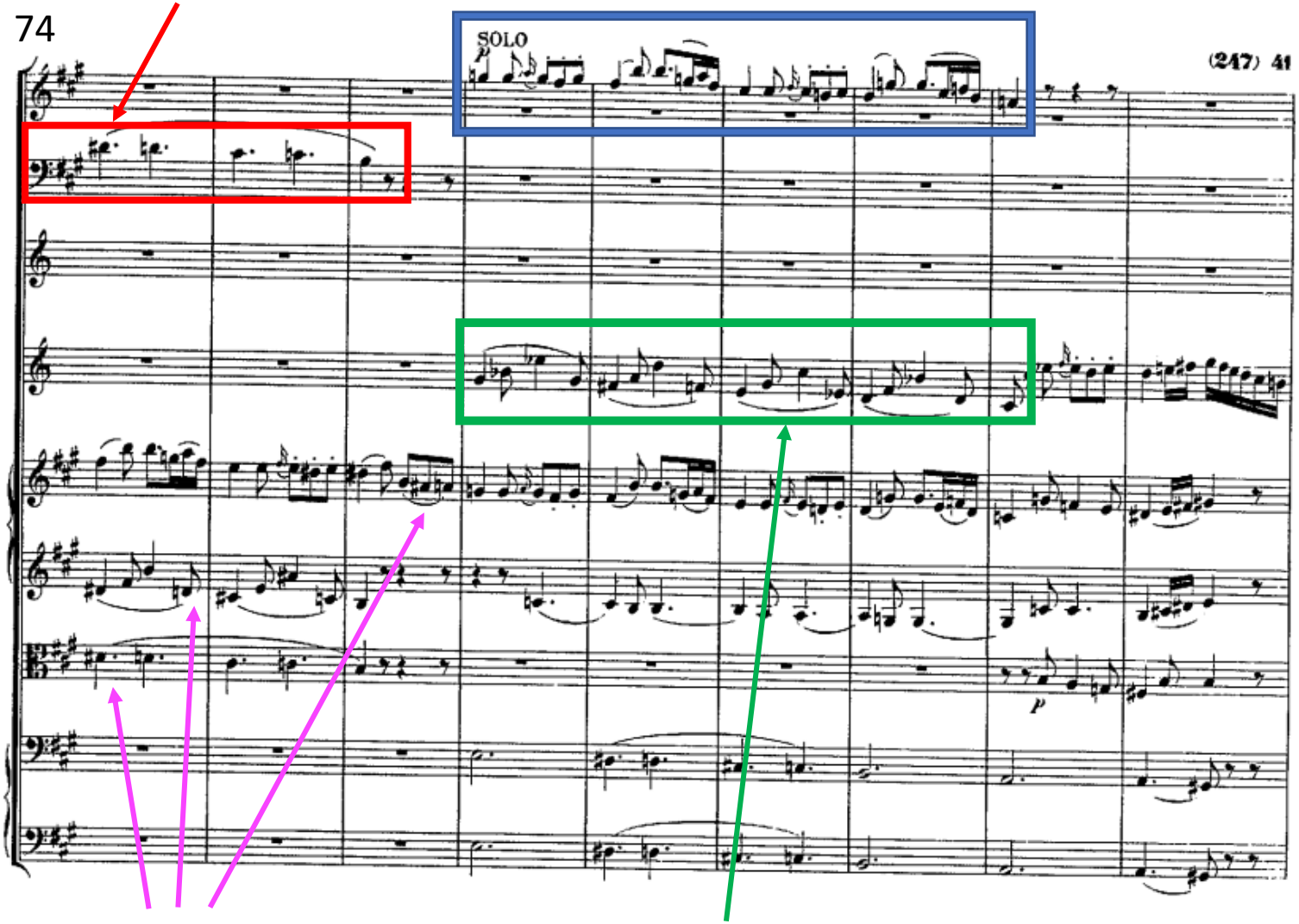


Another tonic pedal (lots of A's)… but in which instrument/s?

74

Bassoons added for new colour

Melody moves to flute



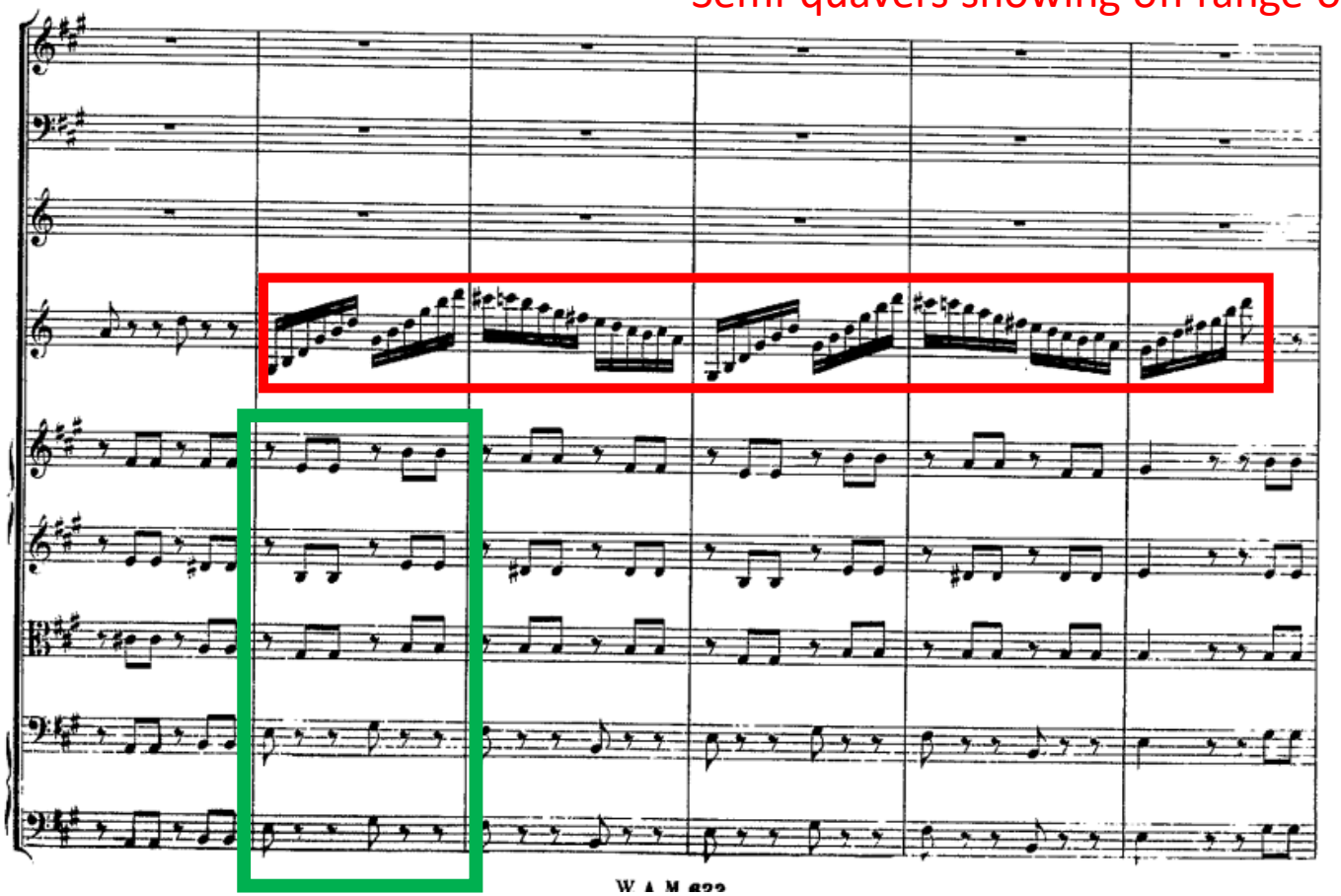
Lots of chromaticism: falling semitones

Clarinet now accompanying - playing descending sequence that was heard in the 2nd violin

What key are we in now?
How do you know?

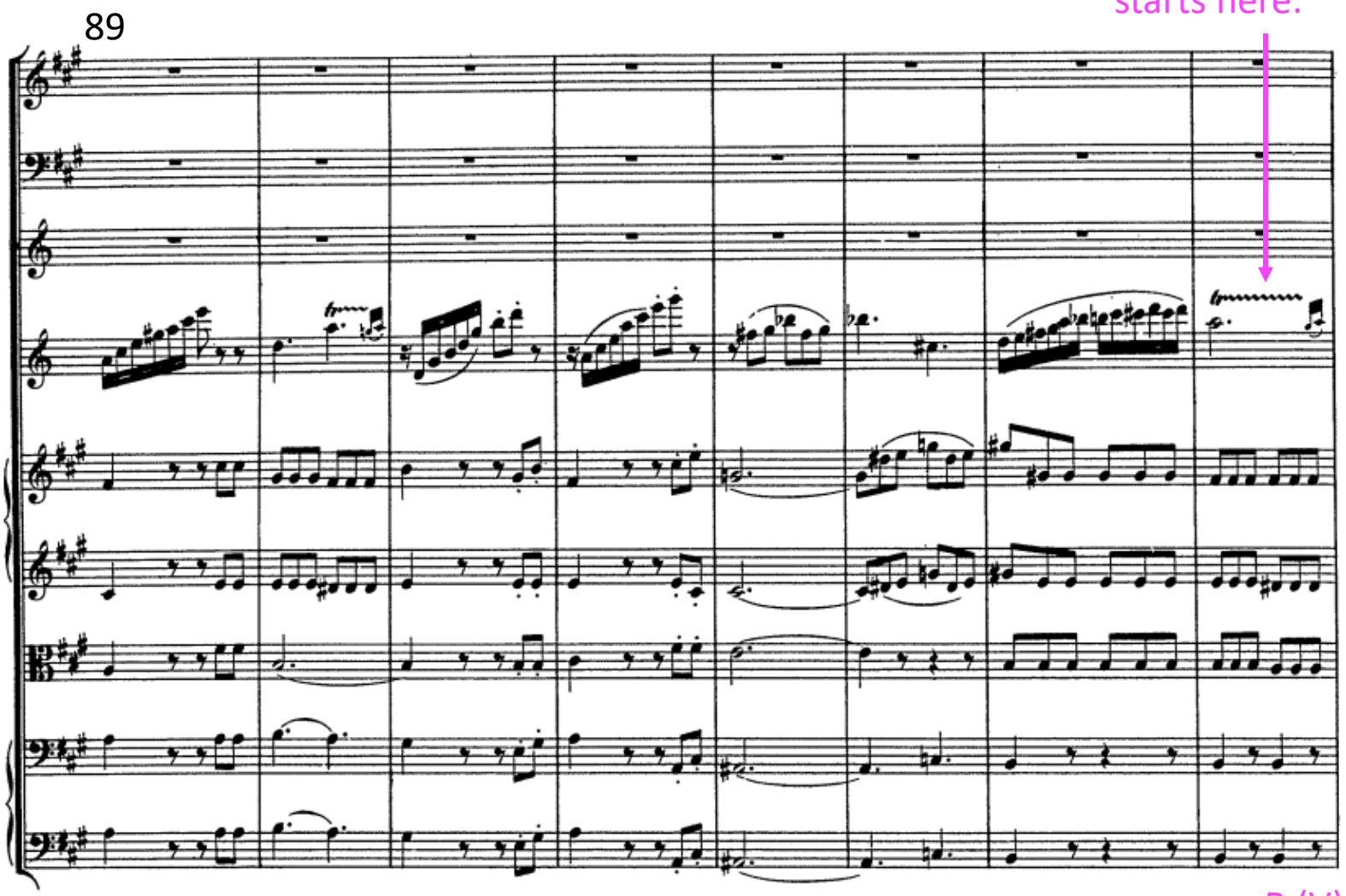
83

Semi-quavers showing off range of clarinet



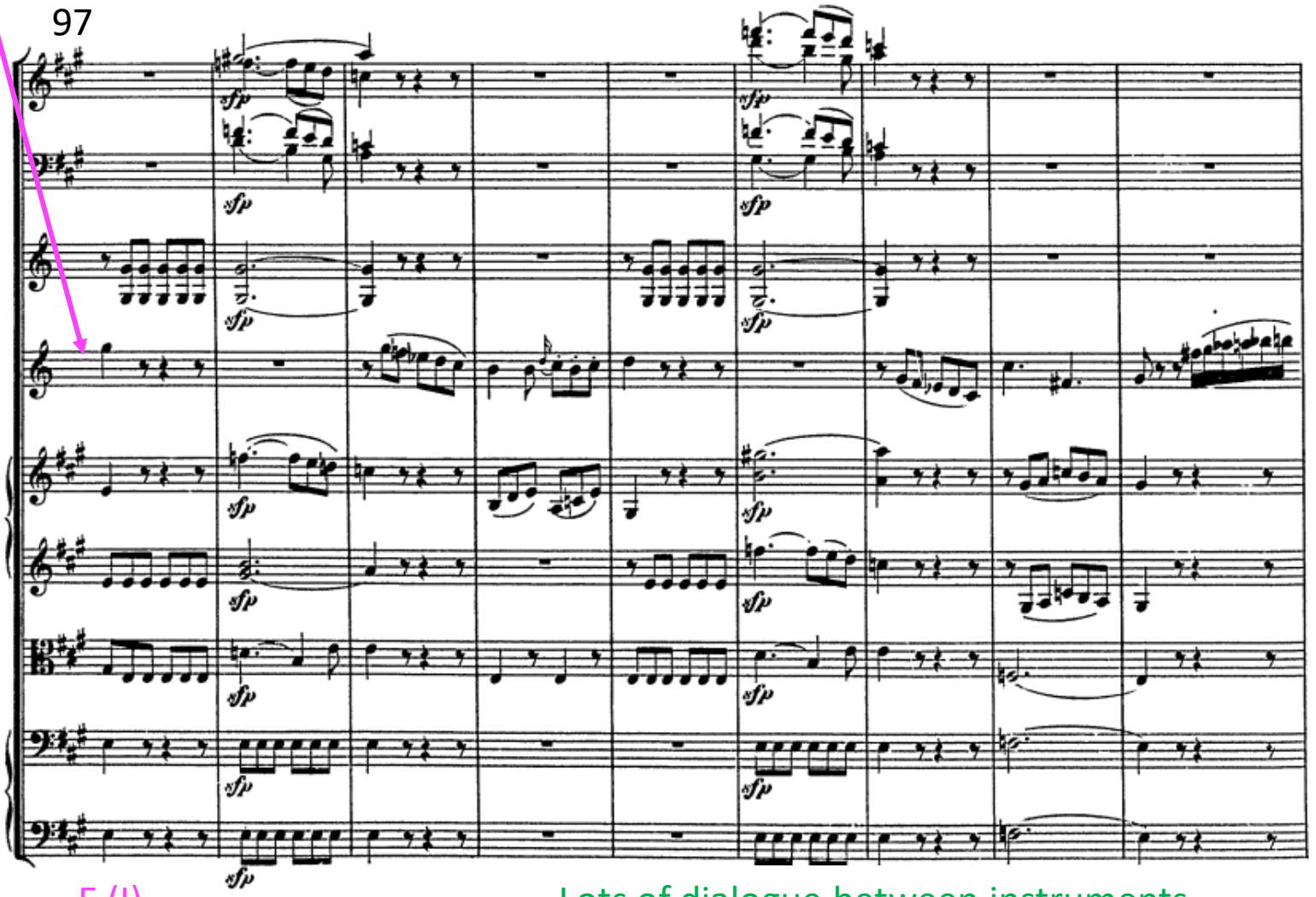
Waltz-like oom-cha-cha accompaniment

Perfect cadence
for end of section
starts here:



And ends here

This is another **linking section** to take us back to the Rondo theme



E (I)

Lots of dialogue between instruments