# GOLD'S FOOL A TALE OF KING MIDAS AND THE GOLDEN TOUCH

LIBRETTO CHARLES PELTZ

FREELY ADAPTED FROM NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE'S "A WONDER-BOOK FOR GIRLS AND BOYS"

> Music KATHRYN SALFELDER

> > Kon Brio Music (ASCAP) www.kathrynsalfelder.com

Program Listing:

Gold's Fool: A Tale of King Midas and the Gold Touch (2013)

Program Note:

*Gold's Fool: A Tale of King Midas and the Golden Touch* is a musical retelling of the journey of King Midas and his lust for gold, scored for children's chorus, narrator, and chamber ensemble.

I first encountered the story of King Midas as a small child. I remember listening to the tale read aloud, transfixed by Midas and his daughter, Marygold, yet completely taken aback by the notion that a wish or dream could come true...but lead to unforeseen disaster. When approached by Boston Musica Viva to write a new work for a family concert, I turned to King Midas's story as told by Nathaniel Hawthorne in the 1852 collection, "A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys". Librettist Charles Peltz freely adapted Hawthorne's text, crafting a riveting and expressive libretto that takes us into the mind and heart of our title character.

Instrumentation:

Flute Clarinet in Bb Violin Violoncello Piano Percussion (tibetan bowl (C4), glockenspiel (small brass mallets), ride cymbal (brushes), tambourine, set of house keys, vibraphone (med. & hard yarns, bow), bass drum, brake drum, tom-toms (2))

Children's Chorus (SSA)

Narrator

Duration: ca. 20'

Premiere: February 9, 2014, Boston University's Tsai Performance Center PALS Children's Chorus, Andy Icochea Icochea, artistic director Boston Musica Viva, Richard Pittman, conductor Gold's Fool: A Tale of King Midas and the Golden Touch Charles Peltz Freely Adapted from Nathaniel Hawthorne's "A Wonder-Book for Girls and Boys"

CC = Children's Chorus N = Narrator

#### I

CC - Glitter, glitter, glitter, all, all, gold, gold, gold (etc.)

N - All that glitters may be gold, And that is why this story is told. There is a truth seldom understood, About how glitter blinds to good. And how wishes too, when easily gained, Can make one's heart more easily stained.

#### Π

Once in a time most long ago, There lived a rich man, a King besides, whose name we are told was Midas. His fondest love was shallow though, For in his heart a deep greed did reside: A steed of gold with greed's madness astride.

Midas he did keep a small place in his heart In which dwelled his daughter Marygold. This child aptly named he so loved, For her gleaming sweetness and light were manifold. Her love for a rose in its simple beauty, Mirrored her heart in its simple purity. A wish for this girl Midas held with pleasure, To give her great wealth in golden measure.

#### III

CC - As time passed he took a narrow view And began to dream of how each thing he knew Would be worth more to him if turned into gold: The flowers to gold The leaves to gold The bowers to gold The trees to gold The sunbeams to gold The starlight to gold The clear streams to gold Even the night to gold All should turn from its present beauty To a solid and glittering golden body. N - King Midas sat in his dungeon 'mongst the treasure he needed; For with each nugget and coin he counted, he pleaded: "more and more and more!" his voice resounded, Off the cold damp silent walls by which he was surrounded.

When one day from the shadows a shaft of light surged And from it soon a radiant stranger emerged. Midas thought, might this bright ghost be a savior, Come not to do harm but bring me favor? "Why comest thou?" Asked Midas, as he begged reply. With a knowing smile, the stranger did comply:

"You are a wealthy man, King Midas I doubt whether any other four walls contain as much gold as these."

Said Midas in reply: "It is but a trifle, when you consider that it has taken me my whole life to get it together; If one could live a thousand years, he might have time to grow rich!"

"What, then you are not satisfied?" exclaimed the stranger. "And pray what would satisfy you? Just for the curiosity of the thing, I should like to know."

Midas was drawn into thought by this. This companion he was eager to please He imagined then mountains of golden bliss, Which prompted this brightest of ideas:

"I am weary of collecting my treasures with so much trouble and to have so little to show for the effort..... I wish everything that I touch to be changed to gold!"

The stranger now smiled more broadly and bright, So bright that like gold it illumined, "The Golden Touch!" he exclaimed, to confirm he heard right......

"But are you quite sure it will satisfy you?"

"How could it fail?" asked the King.

"And you will never regret the possession of it?" the stranger queried.

"I ask nothing else to render me perfectly happy."

"Be it as you wish, then," replied the compliant stranger. "Tomorrow you will have the Golden Touch."

And with these words in a blinding blaze Our stranger did depart. And though now gone from Midas's gaze, The words danced wildly in his heart.

The following morn in grayest dawn, Midas awoke from uneasy dreams. Eagerly he tried to touch, but none Of the objects he touched would gleam.

#### V

CC - But upon first golden rays of light, Which brightly beamed through morning's cold, The bedsheet on which his hand alights, Is furrowed folds of gleaming gold. A radiant cloth of brilliance and bright Stymied the monarch's disbelieving sight. *(with increasing fervor until "cried he")* 

What joy! What happiness! What dream fulfilled! Now empowered did the regal hand unbound reach forth, In a frenzy did the royal body fly about the room: The bedpost from wooden beam to golden gleam transformed The paper book humbled by golden pages now reborn.

Then to Marygold's playground, her roses, he ran To bring to her petaled treasures his plan. To their living soft rainbow of hues, He did bring the killing hardness imbues -Gold! Gold ! Gold ! Everywhere! Everything! Gold! Gleaming Glorious; Brilliant Brandishing; Radiant Ravishing; Gold!

N - As our King his breakfast table he approached,His plates of delicious food presented:A lovely fish, a favorite treat, and so divinely poachedAwaited the royal grab, but soon the King's hand relented.

For as he touched every morsel, The toothsome treats became Inedible golden gill and dorsal, Hard as gilded rock obtained.

CC - And so it goes and goes and goes, As every task and object he meets The Golden Touch always bestows The same shining inedible, unusable treat.

And then as the Touch spins out of control, who rushes in with thorn and petal, what once was a rose of true beauty now shorn and garishly leafed in golden metal?

Marygold. The object of Midas' heart's loving place, To his arms she runs to embrace. Though heartbroken at seeing her flower revealed As abused and defiled by glittering steel She sees at the first her father's ordeal. By her decent spirit and absent greed She offers him love in his time of need.

N - Her forehead he kisses as one of a thousand daily given.

"My precious, precious Marygold!" cried he.

But Marygold gave no answer.

CC - Alas what had he done? How fatal was the gift bestowed? The moment that the lips had touched The change had taken place. Her sweet face, the ringlets of hair, Her very form, soft and tender, And even, yes even the tears on her cheeks of gentle rose; all now hard and inflexible. Gleamingly, glitteringly gone was the child.

N - "She was worth her weight in gold," the King had always said. He realized only now that The love of Marygold's heart Exceeded all wealth on earth.

#### VII

N - It would be too sad a story to end it here With Midas and the fate he'd brought to bear. And wishing now that he were poor but free Of the heartsick he was now forced to wear.

But end it we shall not; for in his grief he saw By one of his now golden walls a figure standing tall. The Stranger! Back to taunt him, yes? To mock him in his deep distress?

"Well friend Midas, pray how did you succeed with the Golden Touch?"

"I am very miserable."

"Very miserable, indeed! And how happens that? Have I not faithfully kept my promise with you? Have you not everything your heart desired?"

"Gold..... is not everything. And I have lost everything my heart really cared for."

And by these words the Stranger knew That Midas's heart was now more true. And so three questions, to really make sure, Were posed to the King to make change inured:

"Would you wish the Touch or a drink of pure water?"

"My parched throat yearns for the simple blessing of water."

"The Touch or a crust of bread?"

"My aching stomach begs for a simple crumb."

"The Touch or your Marygold?"

"Oh my child, my dear child! I would not have given that one small dimple on her chin for the power of changing this whole big earth into a solid lump of gold!"

"You are wiser than you were! Do you sincerely desire to rid yourself of the Golden Touch?"

And with this question our Midas saw His moment of redemption near; And grasping now at this hopeful straw He begged the stranger, "yes, so clear!"

And because it was not sufficiently good To stop the Touch from doing harm, The Stranger offered, as he should, The means to undo the alchemy's harm:

CC - "Go to the river and plunge right in and washed away this sin will be. And of that water a vessel fill and sprinkle it on all that you see that has been turned to gold by greed. And those on whom the droplets fall Their former being will revive And join with you in joyous song Of a life for good, from love derived.

And remember when upon the star you ask Your wishes to come real and true, That wishes by coming true may pack Within themselves the seeds of ruin."

N - Our King rushed to the clear cool stream, And diving in its deepest pool, Emerged a different, better man Whose touch no longer was gold's fool.

His vessel he now duly filled And brought it back with glee, And blissfully baptized the prisoners Now from golden cages free. The last of the most precious drops He saved for Marygold; And when her rosy cheeks renewed, His joy most overflowed.

And ends now well the "Golden Touch" The story of Midas now repeated. It is the telling of goodness - much -And of greed by love defeated.

# GOLD'S FOOL

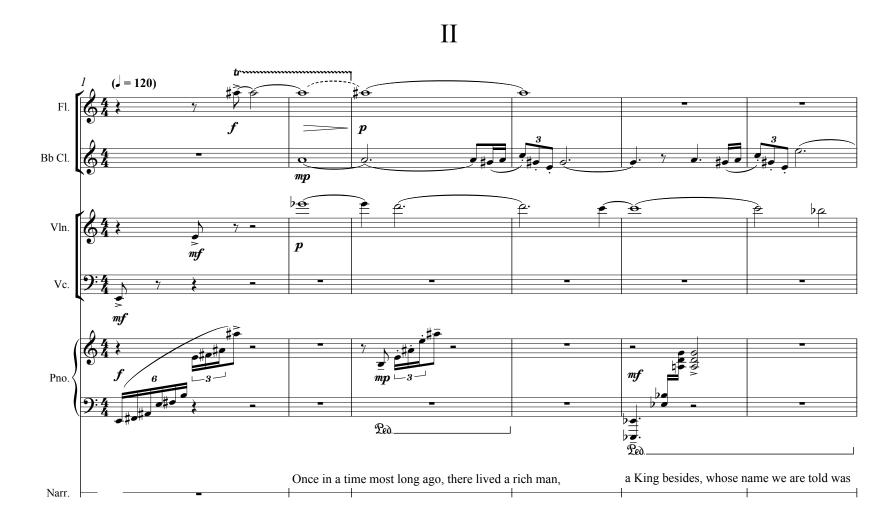
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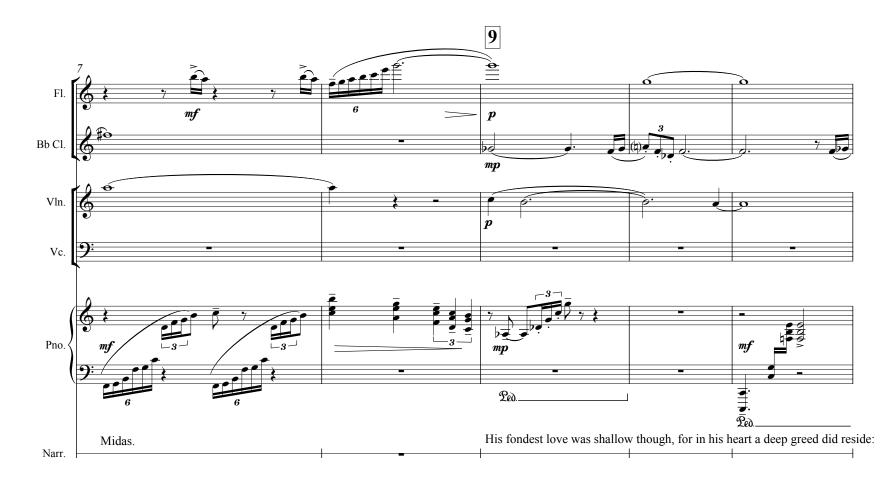


KATHRYN SALFELDER



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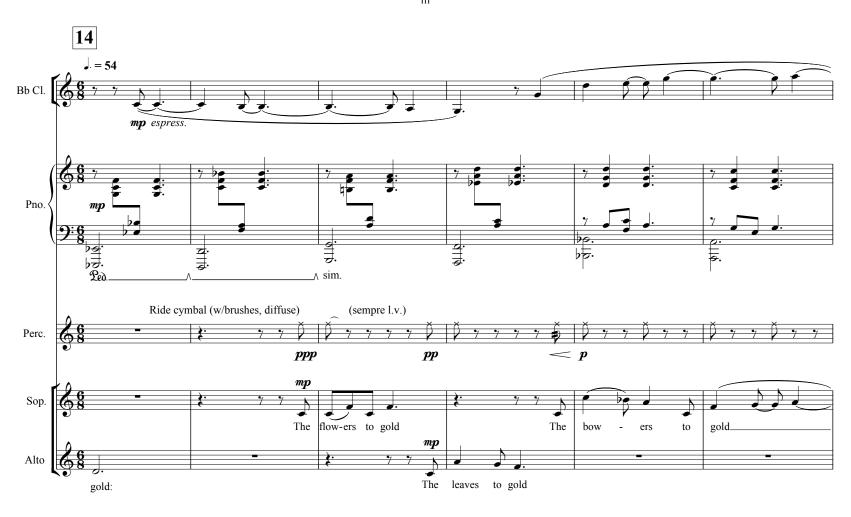


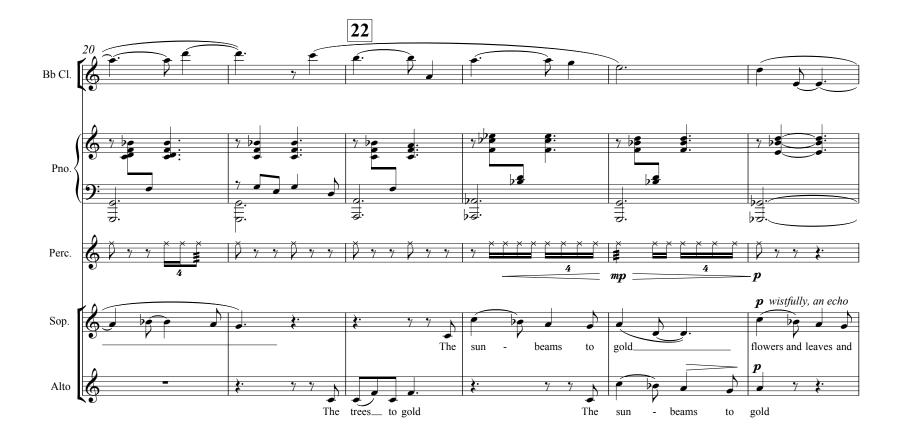




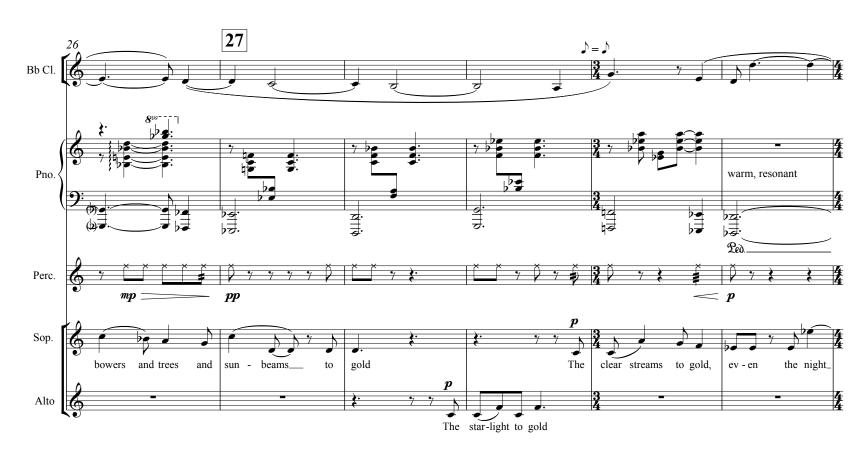


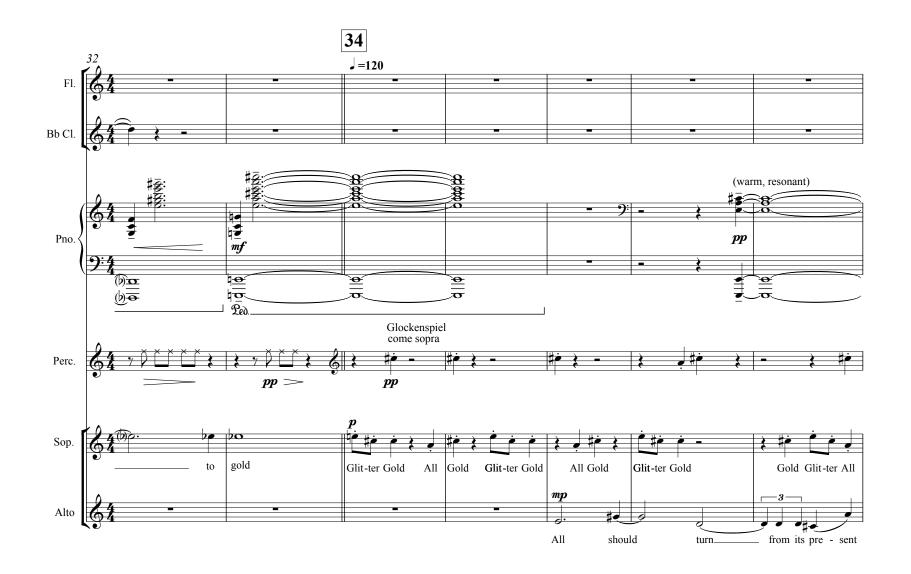


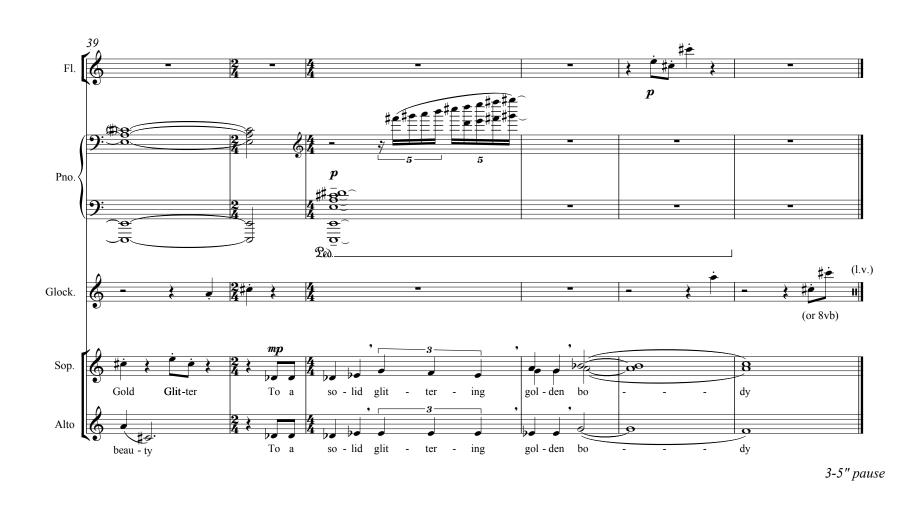




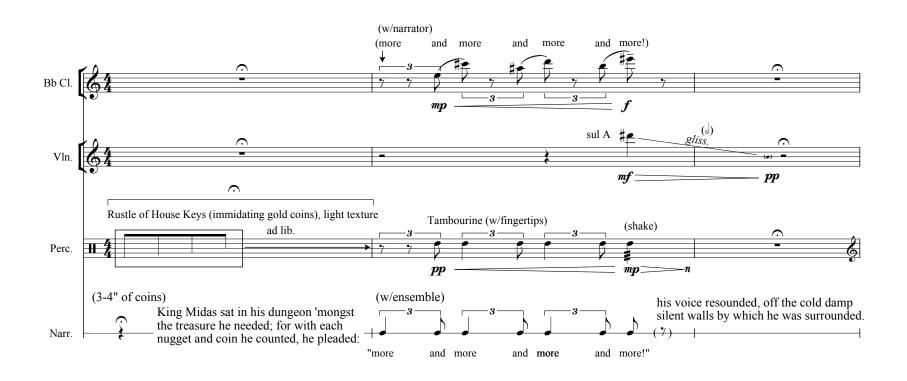
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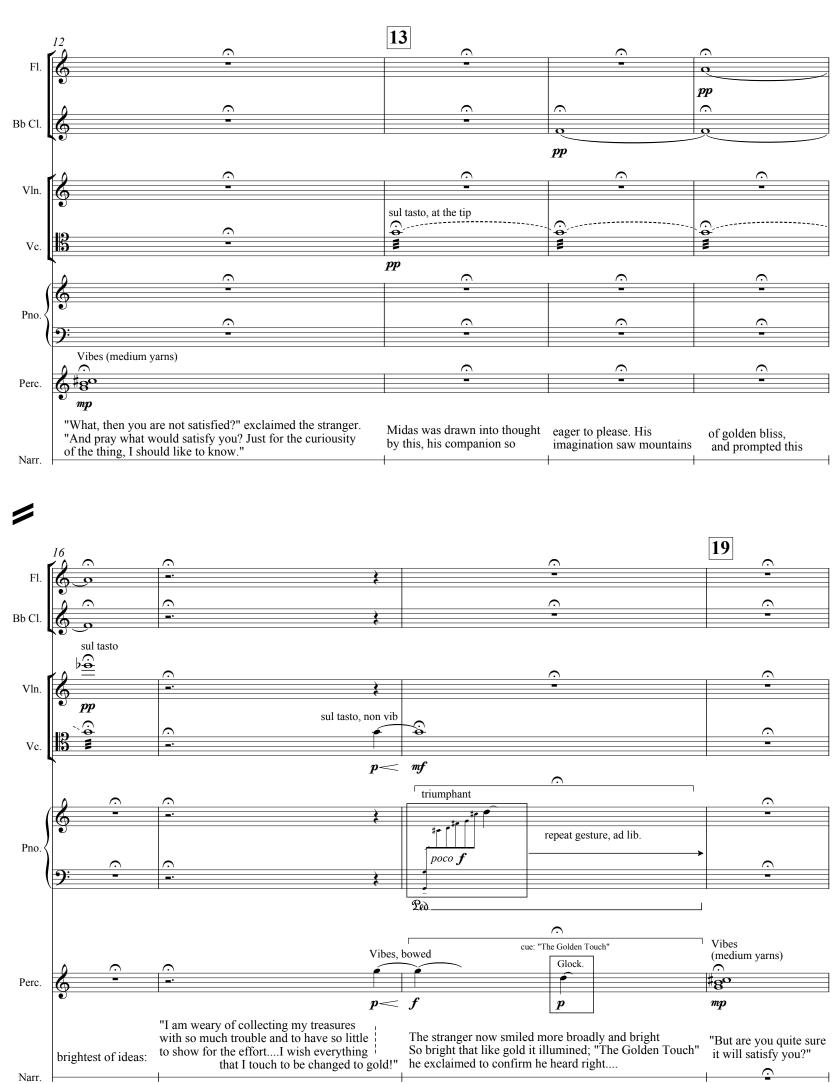


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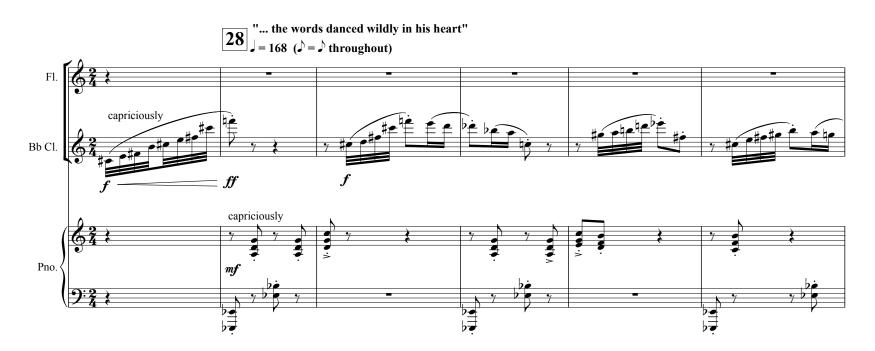




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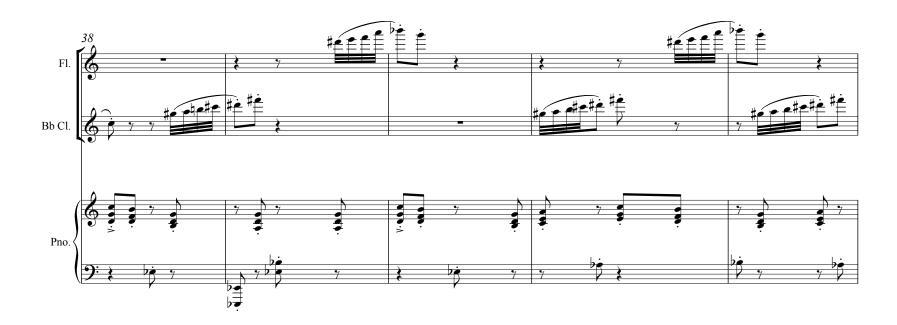


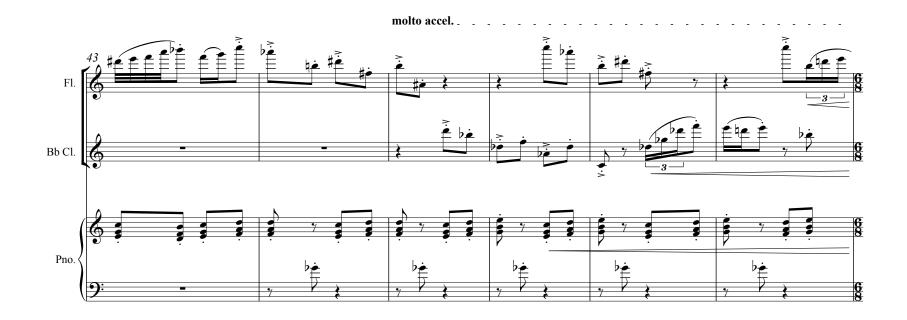


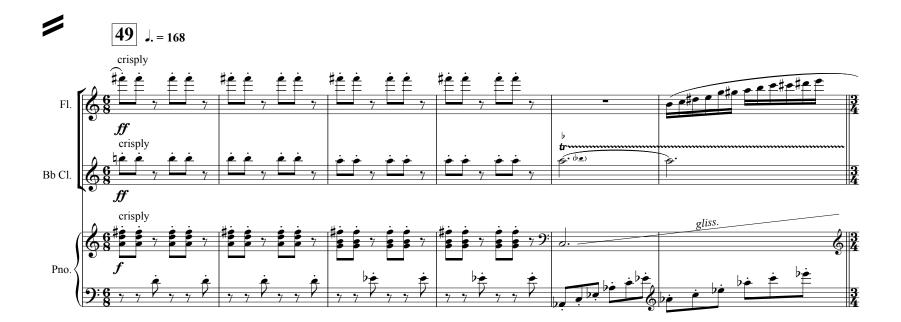
















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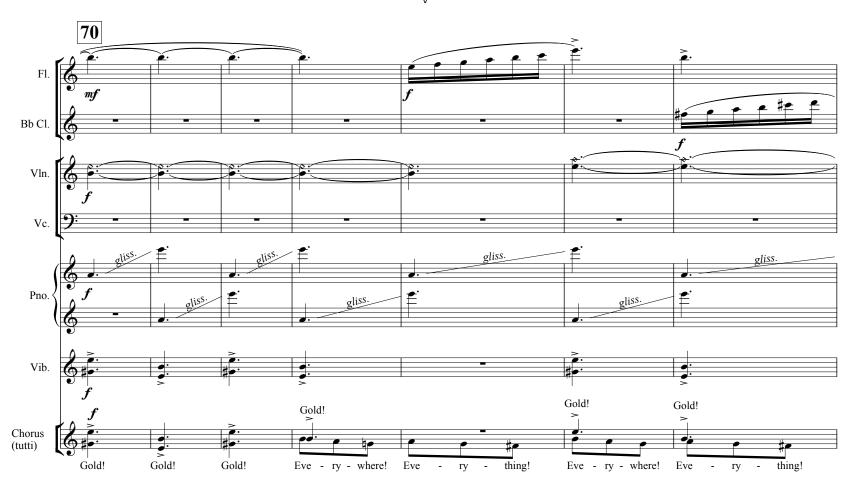




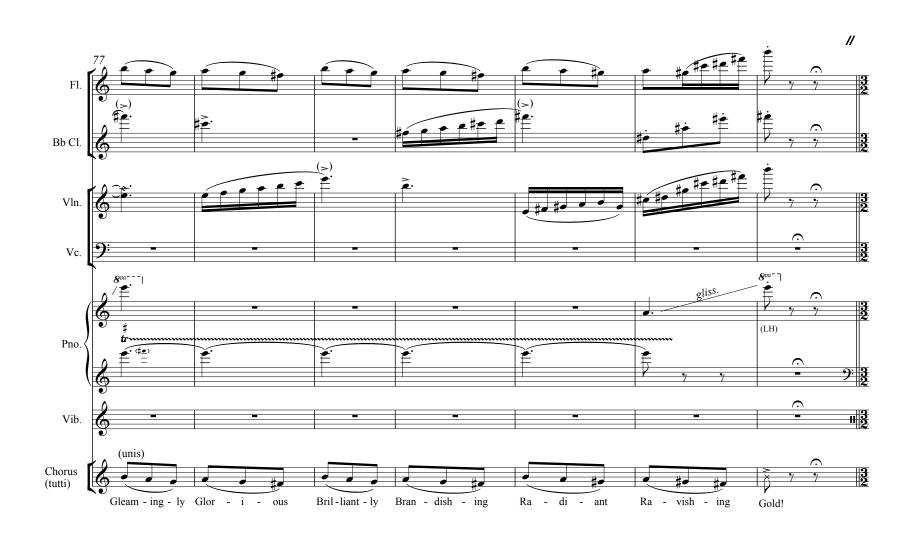




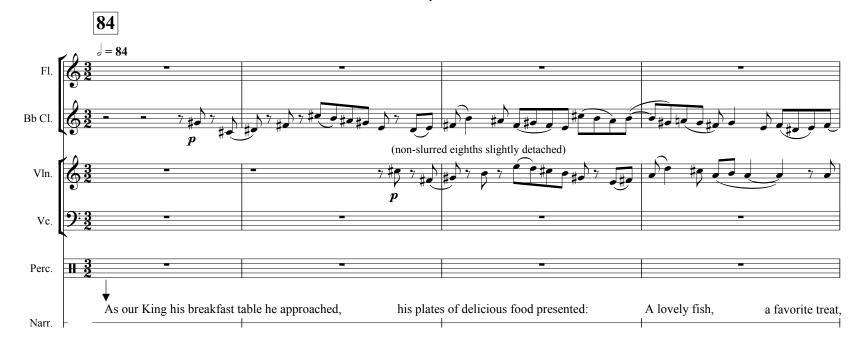




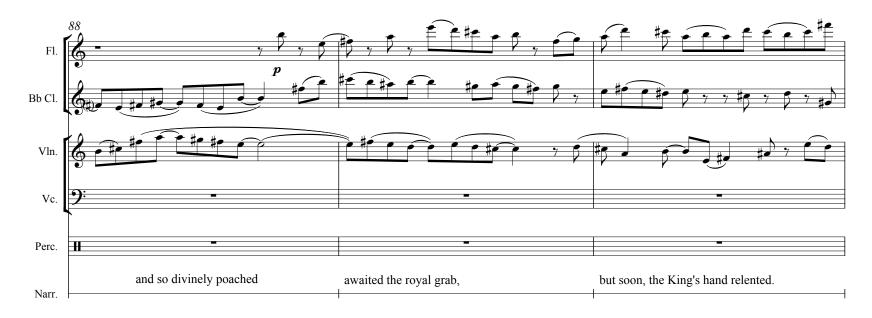




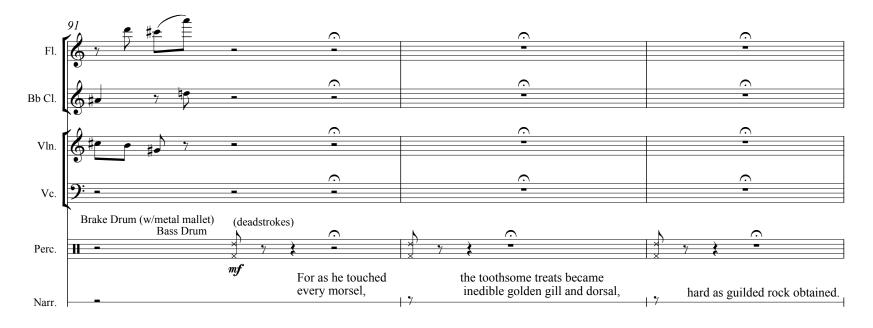
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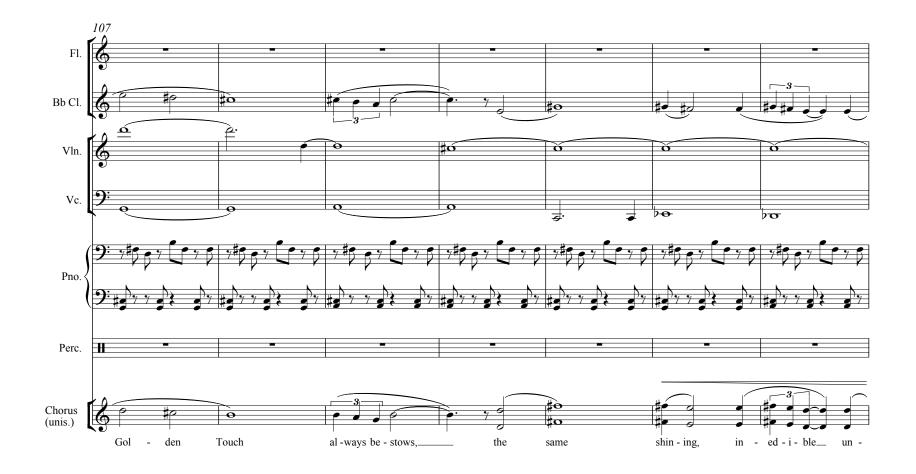








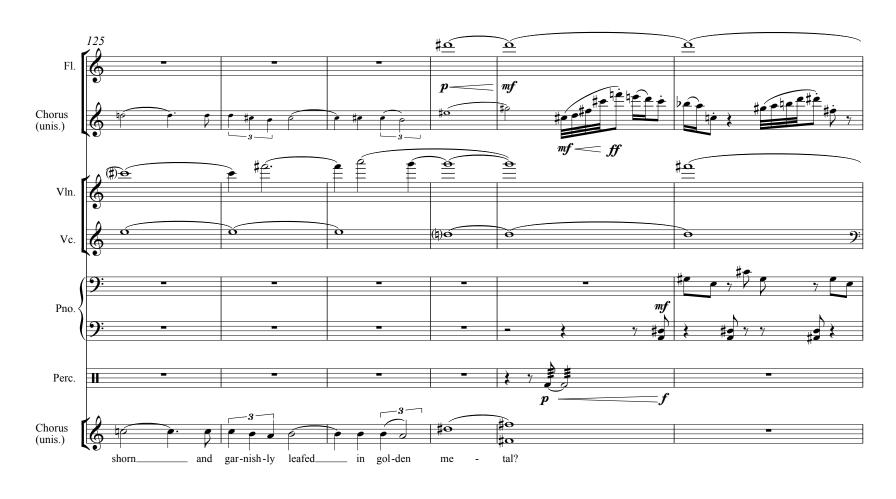




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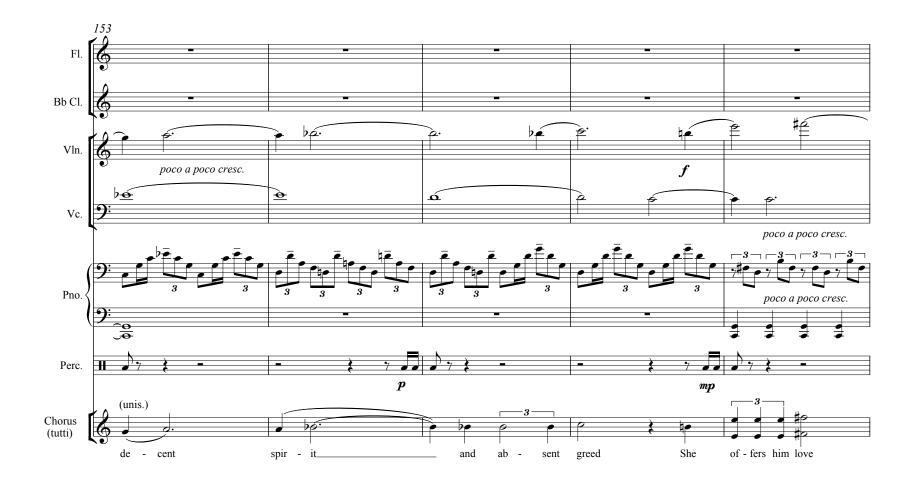




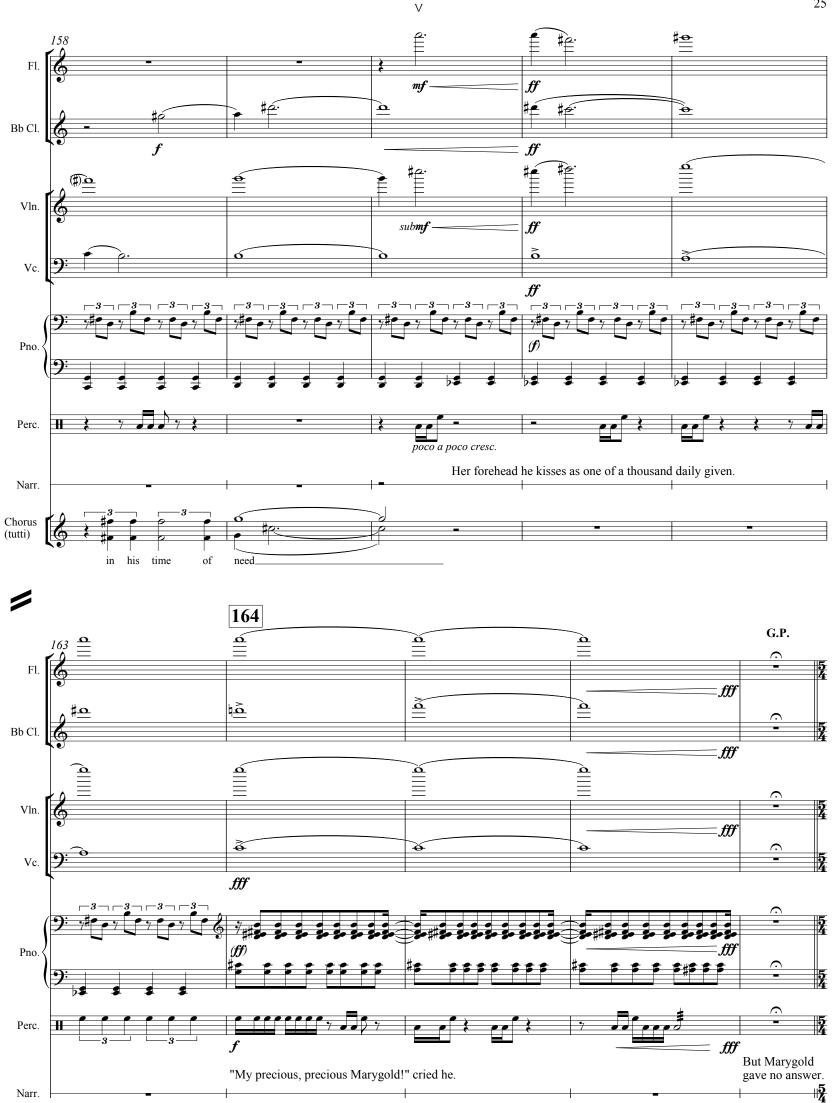


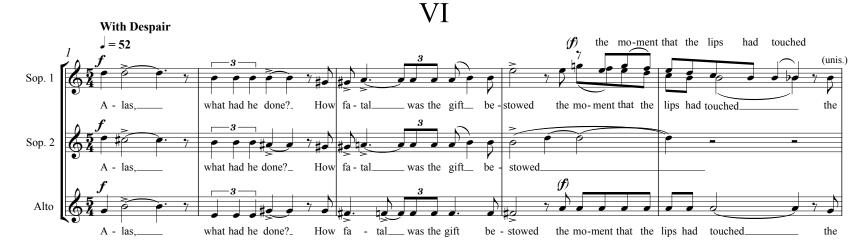
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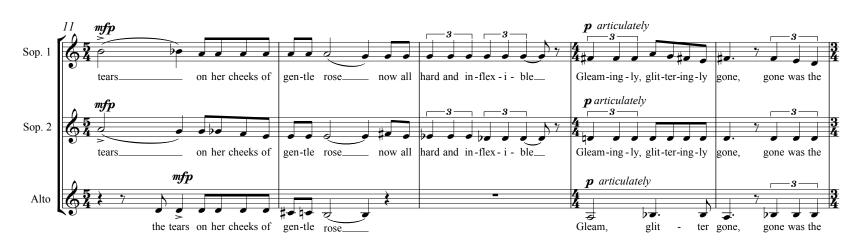


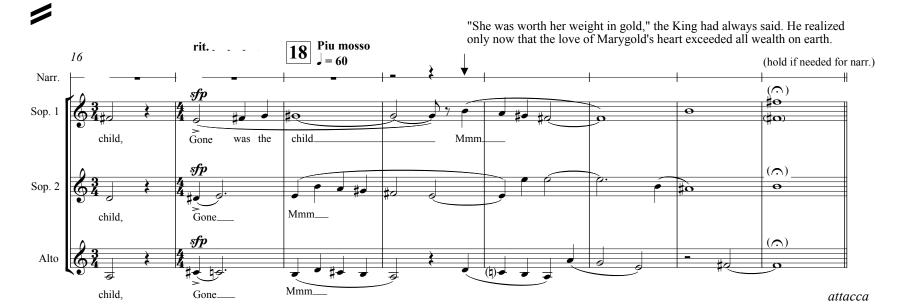


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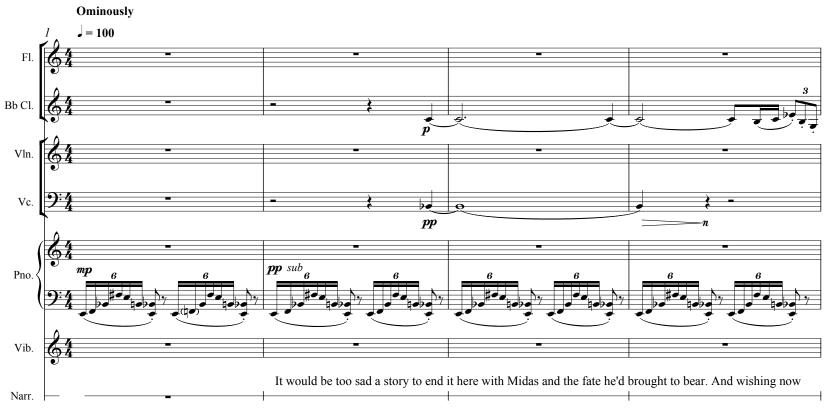
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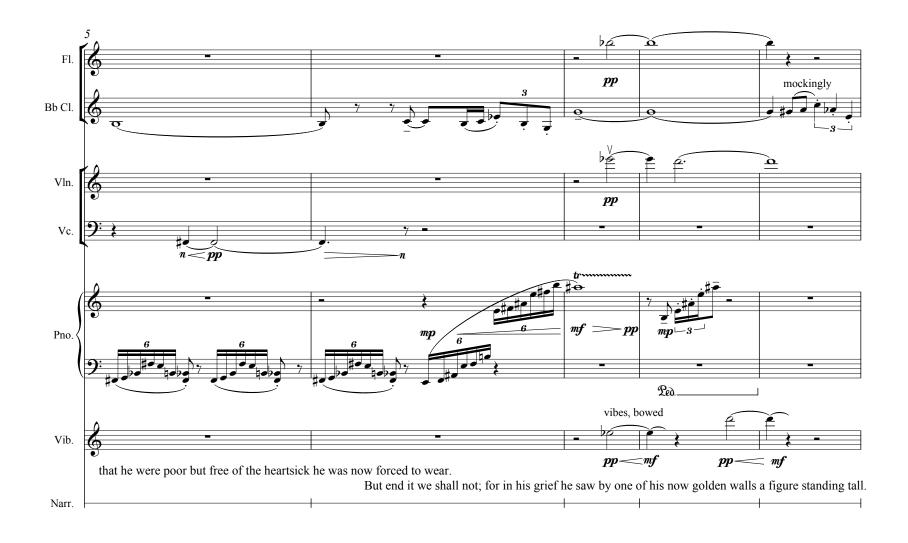




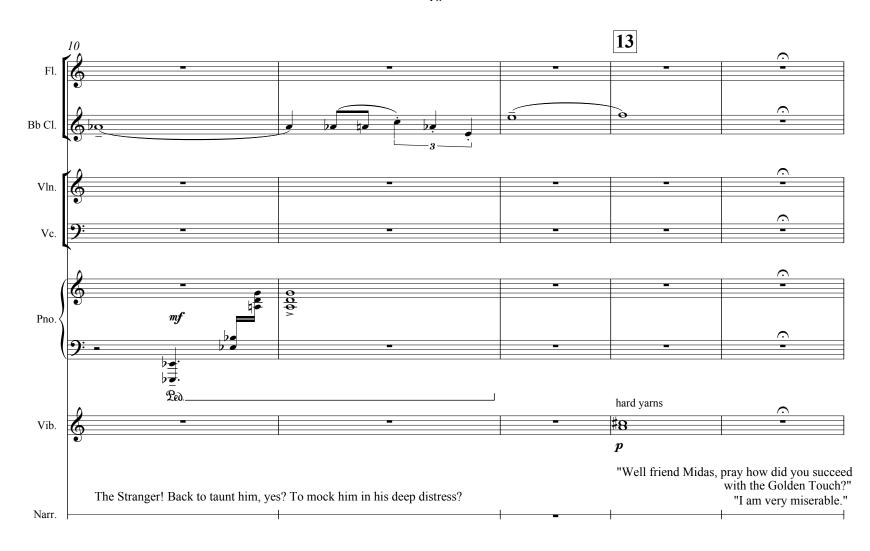




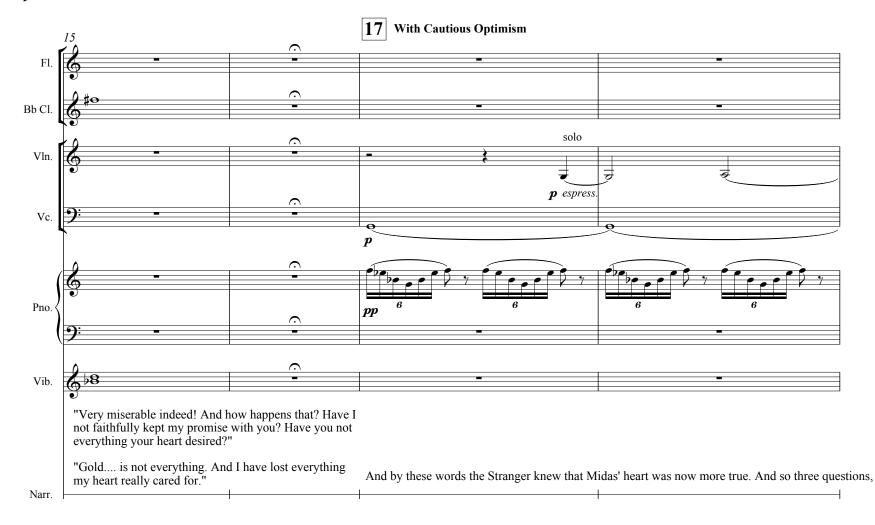




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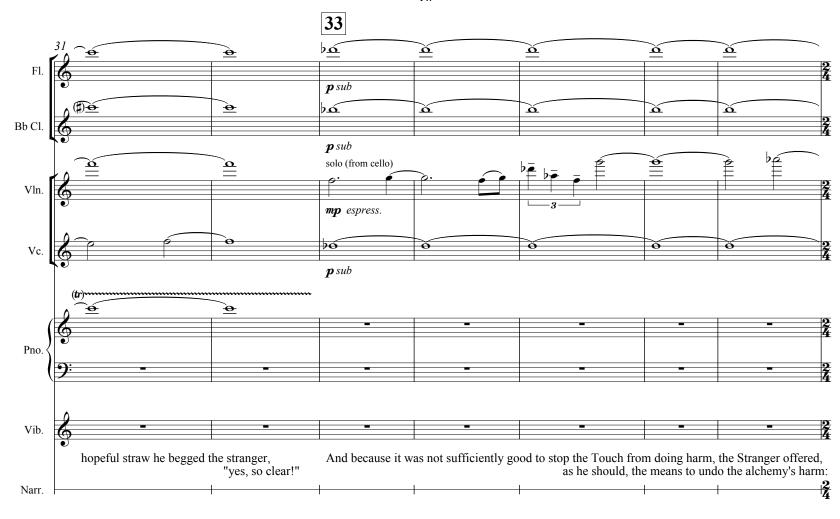


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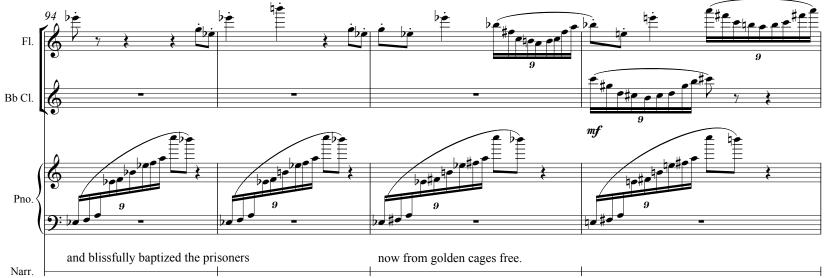
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## Gold's Fool: A Tale of King Midas and the Golden touch $$\operatorname{VII}$$



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