



MTO 26.2 Examples: Bhogal, Orchestral Tissue, Subordinate Arabesques, and Turning Inward in Maurice Ravel's Boléro

(Note: audio, video, and other interactive examples are only available online)

<https://mtosmt.org/issues/mto.20.26.2/mto.20.26.2.bhogal.html>

Example 1. Decorative melody, mm. 5–22

1° Solo
Fl. *pp*

Tamb.

1^{re} Fl.

Tamb.

1^{re} Fl.

Tamb.

1^{re} Fl.

Tamb.

1

Fl. *pp*

Example 2. Summary of stylistic overlaps and differences between decorative and arabesque melody

Decorative Melody	Arabesque Melody
Solo melody	Solo melody
Soft dynamics	Soft dynamics
Undulating registral motion	Undulating registral motion
(Largely) conjunct motion	(Largely) conjunct motion
Legato articulation	Legato articulation
Long phrase (usually regular)	Long phrase (frequently irregular)
(Frequently) metered	(Frequently) unmetered
(Frequently) harmonized	(Frequently) unharmonized
Can be accompanied by other instruments	(Frequently) unaccompanied
Can occur at any point of a composition	(Frequently) occurs at the opening of a piece or at a new section/formal juncture
Does not have to feature rhythmic instability	Always features duple/triple rhythmic conflict
Does not have to be associated with aspects of characterization, narration, and evocation	(Frequently) aligned with aspects of characterization, narration, and evocation

Example 3. Arabesque melody, Rehearsals 2–3

1° Solo

Bon

mp

Tamb.

1er Bon

3

Tamb.

1er Bon

3

Tamb.

1er Bon

Tamb.

Example 4. The harp contributes to the projection of metric ambiguity, Rehearsal 2, mm. 1–6

1st Fl.

Bsn.

Tamb.

Harpe

Violins

Violas

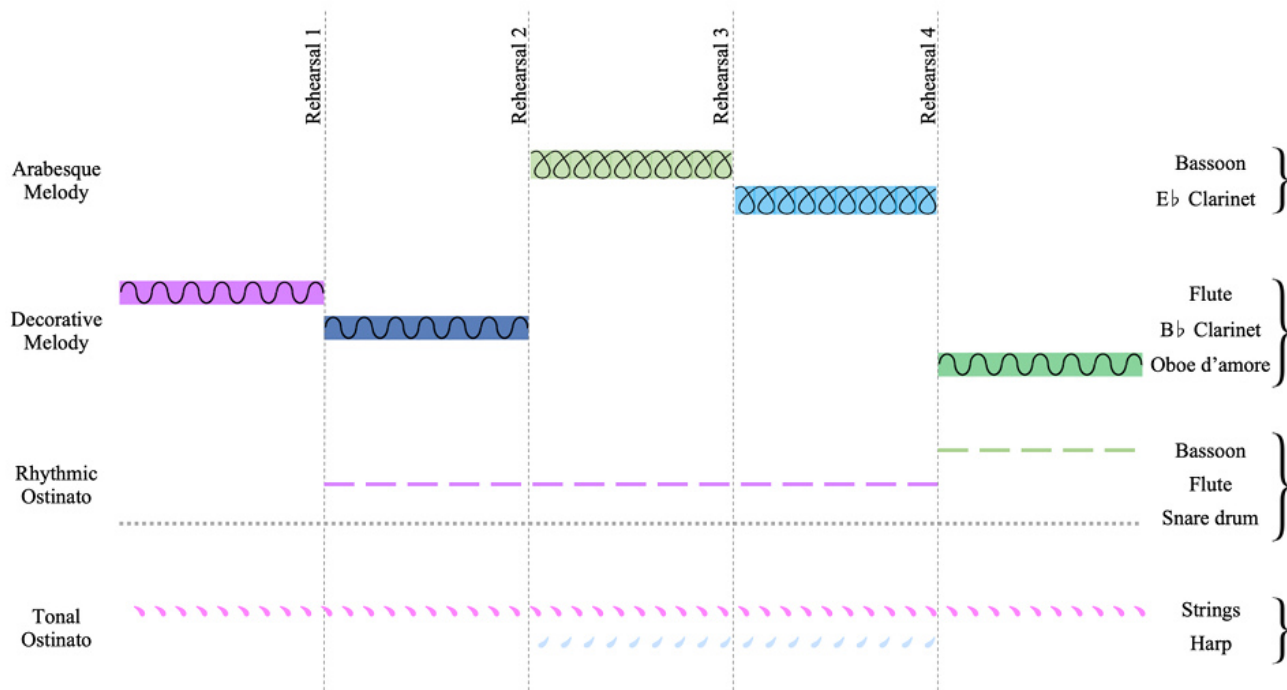
C.B.

1st Solo

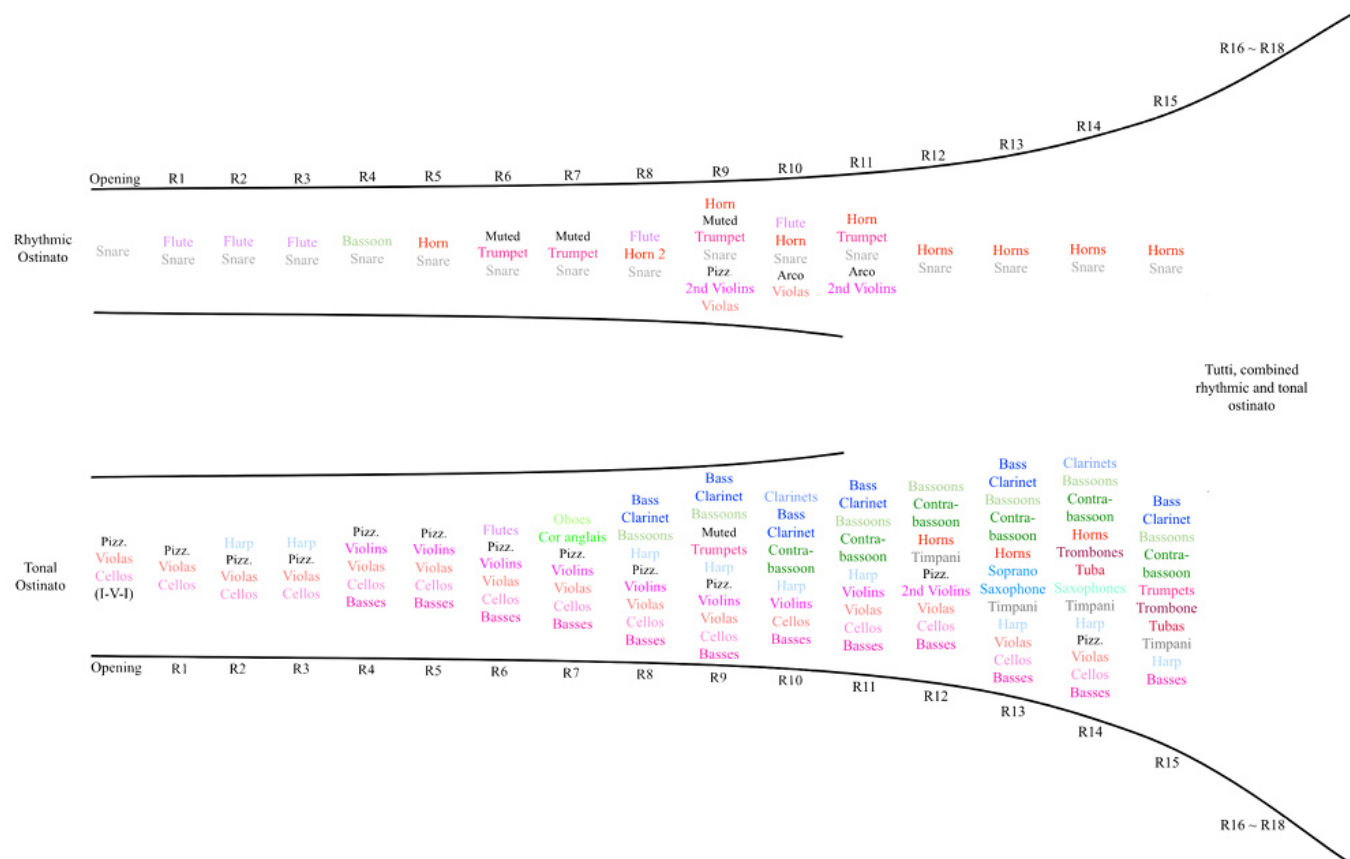
p

mp

Example 5. A visual impression of the emerging sonic tapestry as “orchestral tissue,” Rehearsals 1–4



Example 6. Rhythmic and tonal ostinati compete for textural prominence before merging at Rehearsal 16



Example 7. Metric ambiguity in the rhythmic ostinato, mm. 1–2

Tempo di Bolero, moderato assai ♩ = 72

2 Flûtes

2 Tambours

1^{er} Violons

2^{ds} Violons

Altos

Violoncelles

Contrebasses

pizz.

pp

1

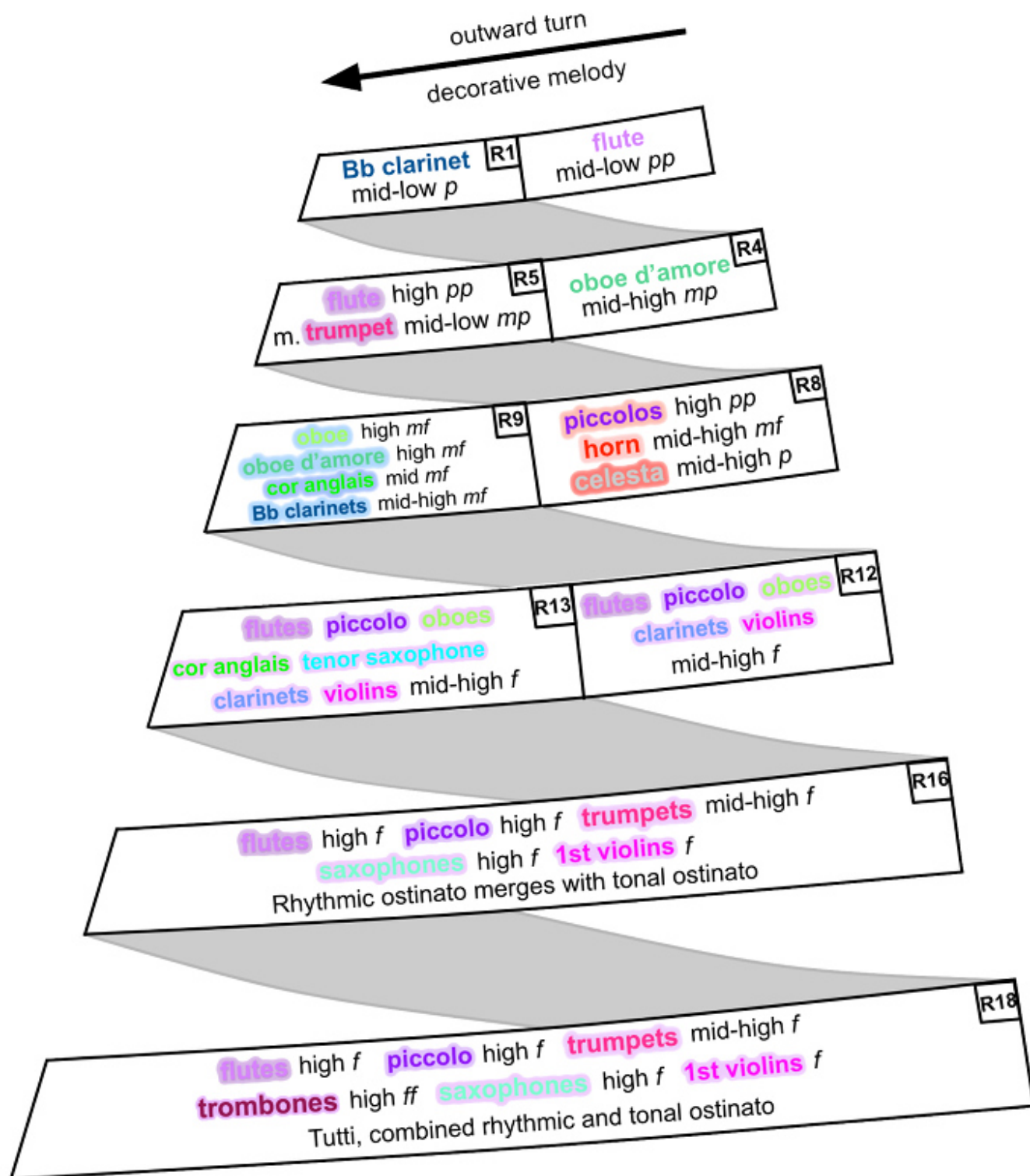
2

3

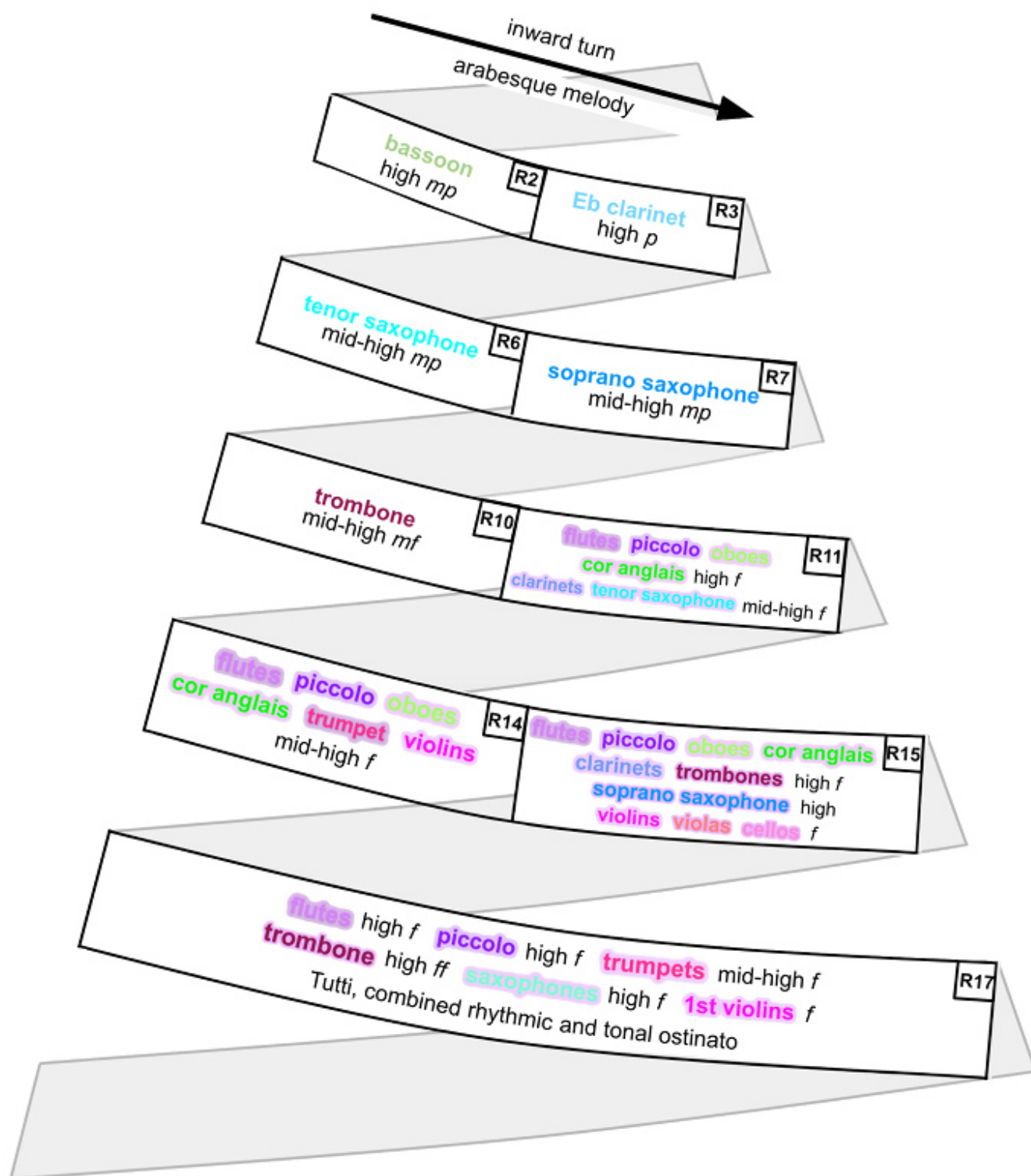
1

2

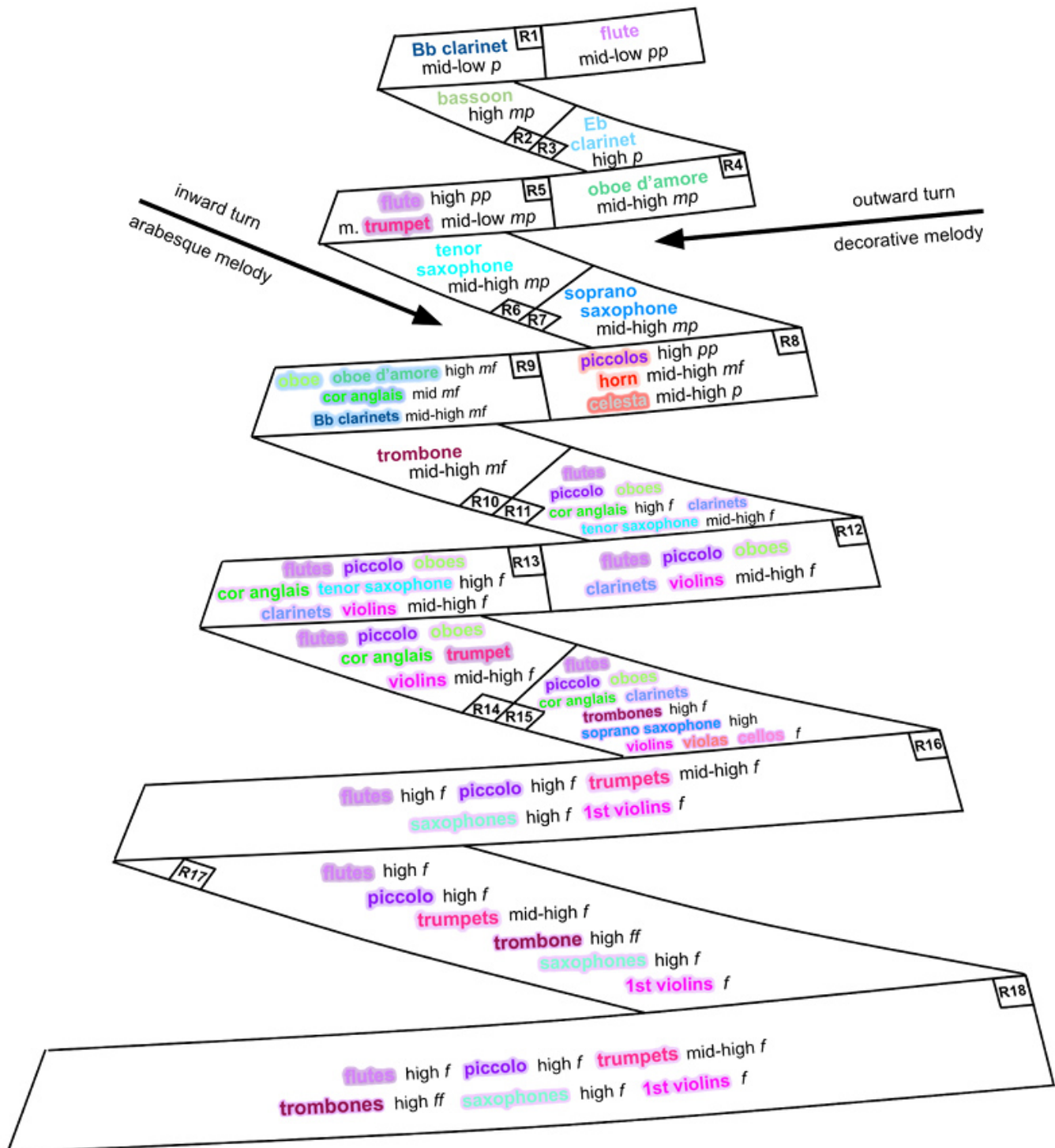
Example 8. A spiral view of outward turning melodies



Example 9. A spiral view of inward turning melodies



Example 10. A spiral view of both melody types



Example 11. A comparison of the original arabesque melody with the version that emerges at Rehearsal 17

Original melody at Rehearsal 2

1st Solo

Bon

mp

Transformed melody at Rehearsal 17

2nd phase

3

18

3rd phase

prolonged 3rd phase

re-starting 3rd phase

decorative melody returns

Example 12. Triplet figure undergoes timbral transformation in the final four measures

1^{er} et 2^e Trb.

3^e Trb.

Tuba

Sax.

T.

Timb.

Tamb.

T - T.

Cymb.

Gr. C.

Harpe

① ② ③ ① ② ③

VII^e

VI^e