SDM604

THE DEVIL'S DREAM

Seán Doherty
2015
String Quartet

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Seán Doherty Music
seandohertymusic.com

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PROGRAMME NOTE

I was introduced to music through the fiddle tradition of Donegal. The tradition is distinctive in Ireland: not like the languid lilt of the Clare style nor the light patter of the Galway style, the Donegal style looks outwards, across the sea, for its closest kin—to Scotland and to Nova Scotia. Aggressive and driving, the tunes are as stark as the bogland, and the bowing as jagged as the cliffs. A leading of exponent of this tradition was my teacher, the fiddle player James Byrne and this string quartet is loosely based on two tunes that I learned from his playing: *An Londubh* and *The Devil's Dream*.

James died on his walk home from a *seisiún* in the early hours of 8 November 2008 near his home in Mín na Croise. This piece imagines this walk. Half-remembered fragments of the slow air, *An Londubh*, slowly coalesce until its full form is reached, into which the reel, *The Devil's Dream*, intrudes as a *danse macabre* that demolishes the air. The air comes screaming back, only to be subsumed by the reel once more. After a quotation of the plainchant *Dies irae*, the reel itself disintegrates. From the ashes of the *Devil's Dream*, the air emerges in its final, transfigured, form.

This piece is written in memory of James Byrne (1946–2008), and for his partner Connie, and their daughters, Séana, Aisling, and Merle.

Performance Time: *c*. 14 mins

Commissioned by the Vanbrugh Quartet, with the support of the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon

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PERFORMANCE NOTES

- All fast material should be played with a light, natural swing.
- The treble bow is a right-hand figuration pervasive in the Donegal fiddle tradition, achieved by a quick flick of the wrist, using very little bow (1–2mm approx.) and heavy bow pressure. It should contain little pitch.

crescendo / diminuendo *al niente*

s.t. *sul tasto*

s.p. *sul ponticello*

change very gradually from one way of playing to another

glissando

independent repetition for duration of trill line

independent repetition for duration of beam line, and stop at any time that is convenient before next entry

as high as possible

headless notes show approximate pitch

Not for

in memory of James Byrne

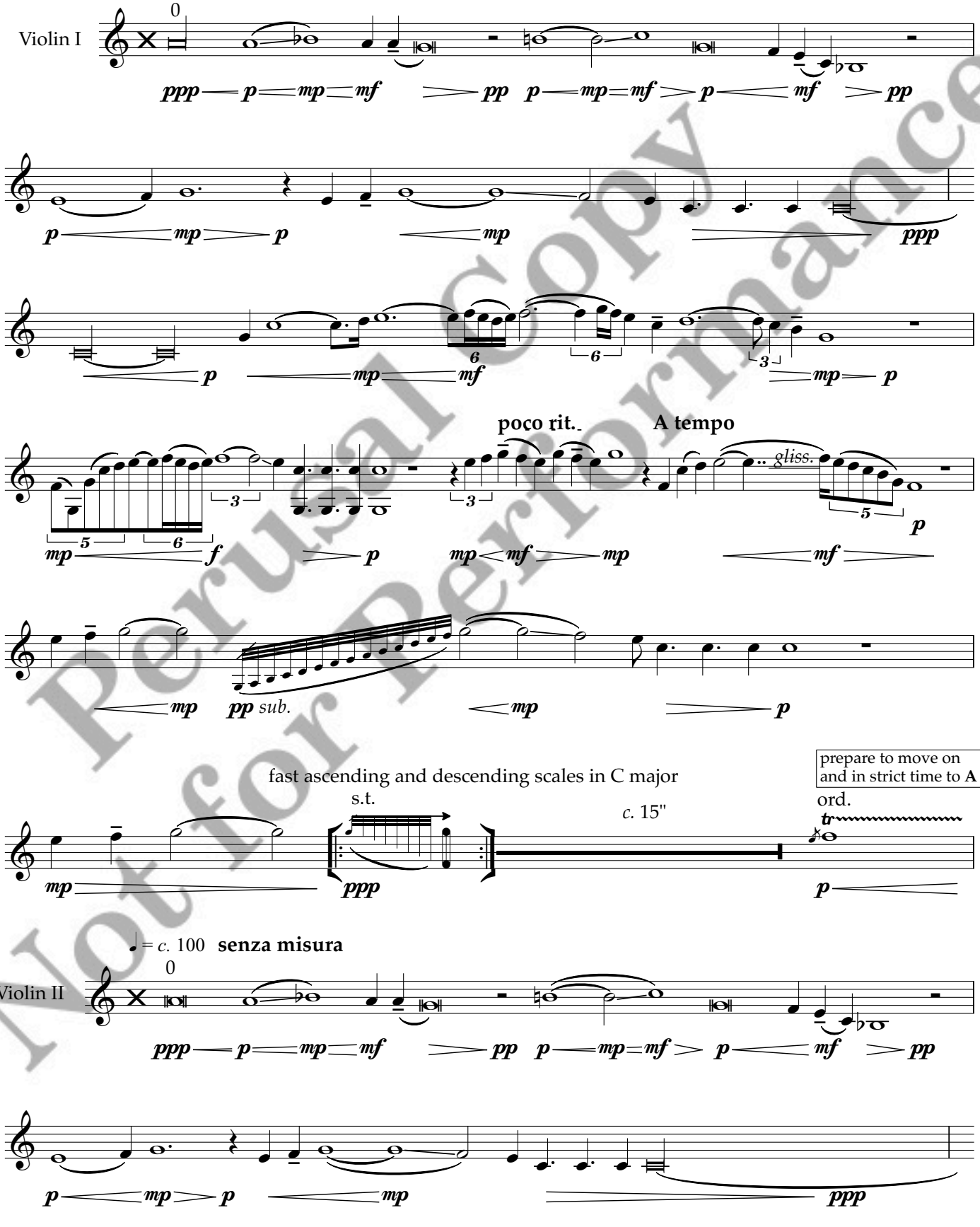
The Devil's Dream

Seán Doherty

The material until rehearsal mark **A** is intended not to be preciesly co-ordinated.
The players are independent, although they play in approximately the same tampo.
This is a document of the contents of each part, laid out in separate sections.
Begin together and incorporate first note into tuning-up procedure *ad lib.*, as if beginning informally.

♩ = *c.* 100 **senza misura**

Violin I



♩ = *c.* 100 **senza misura**

Violin II

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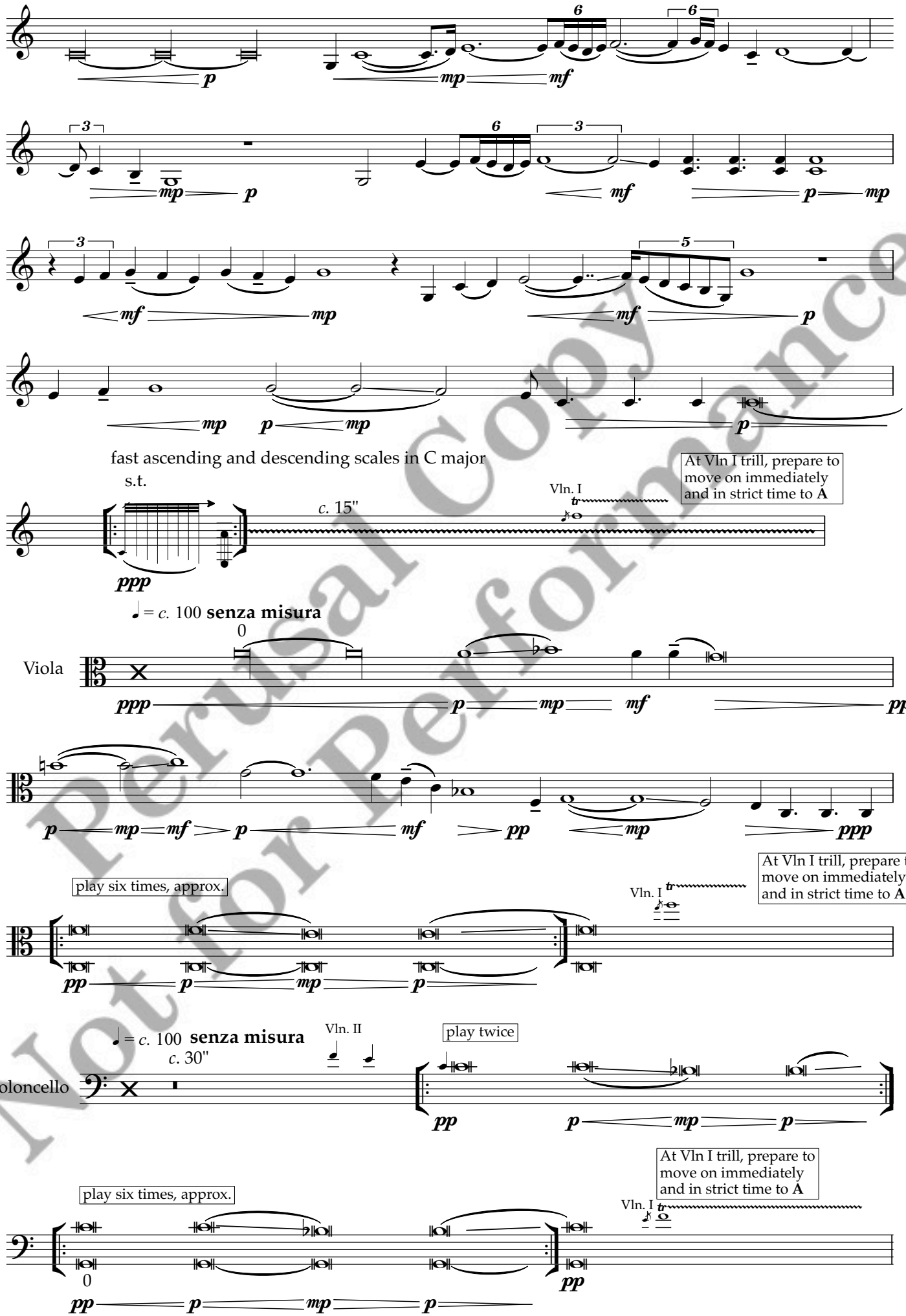

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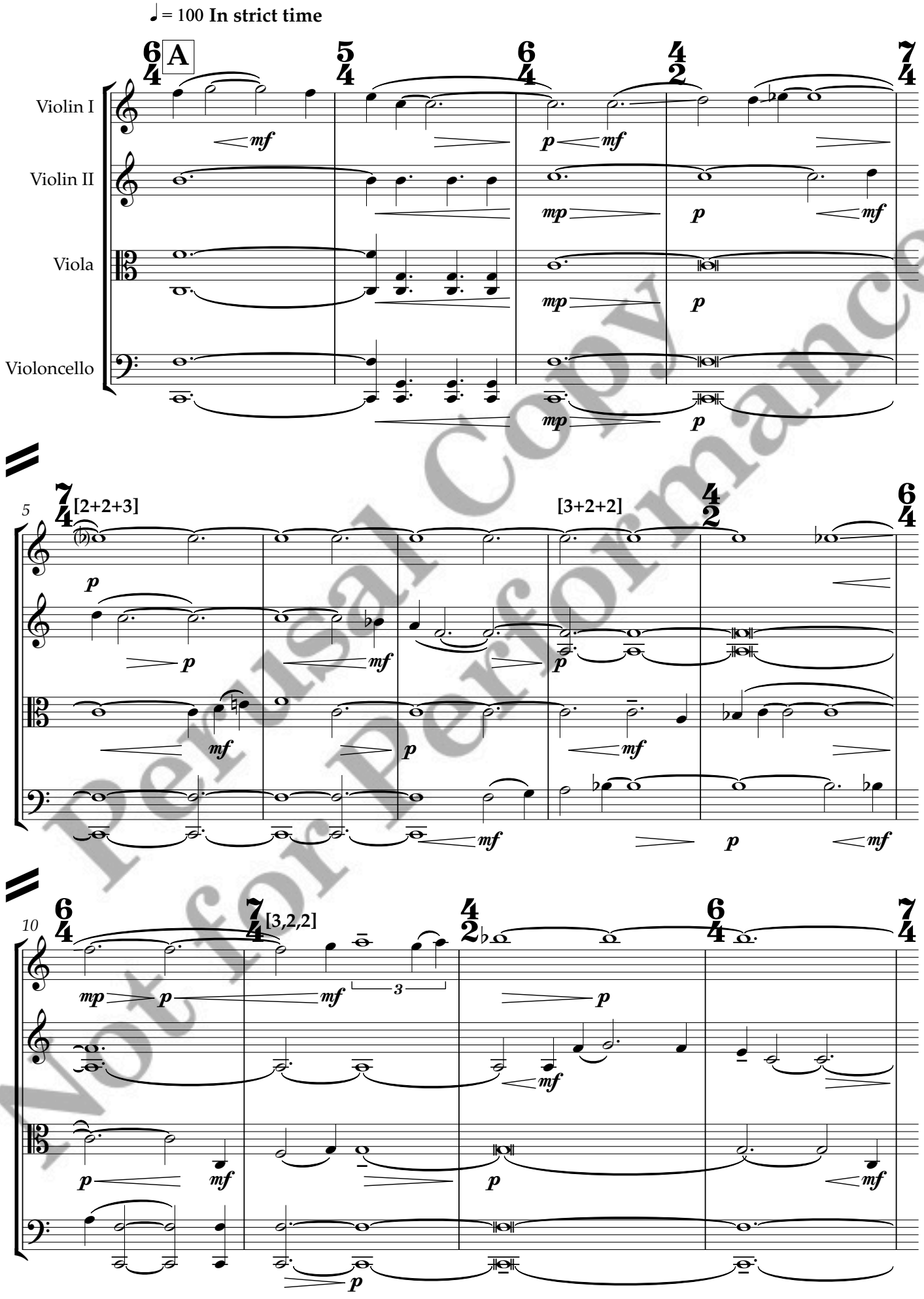

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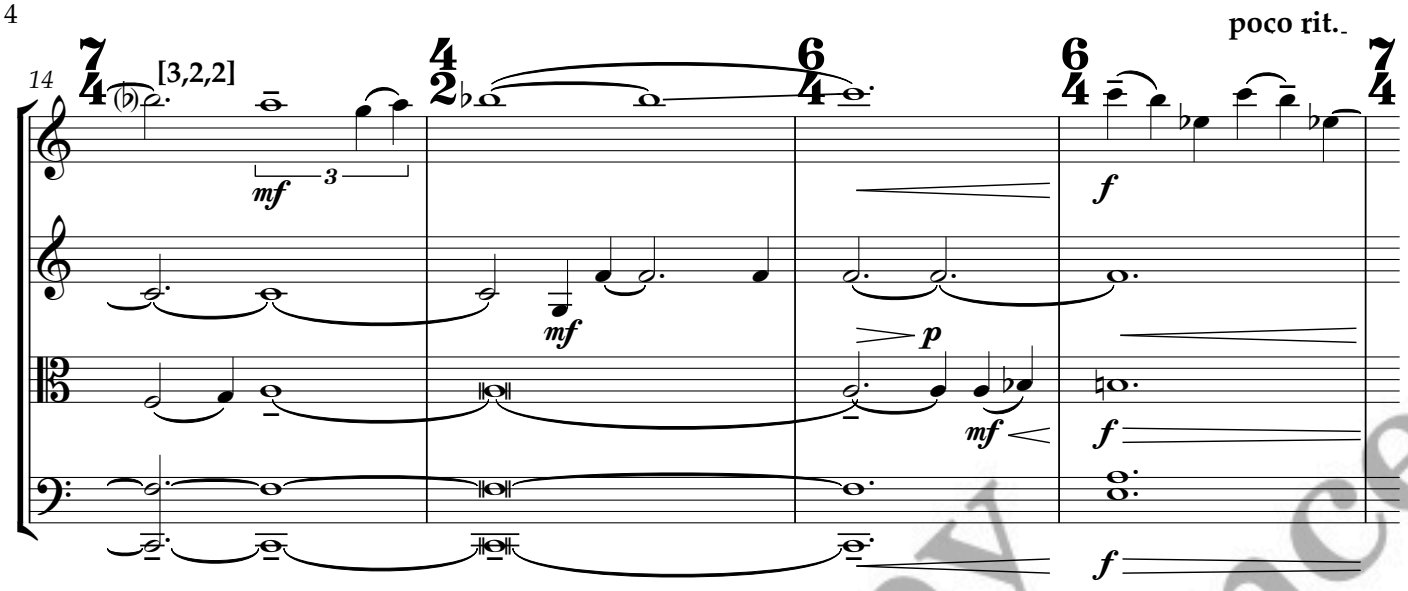

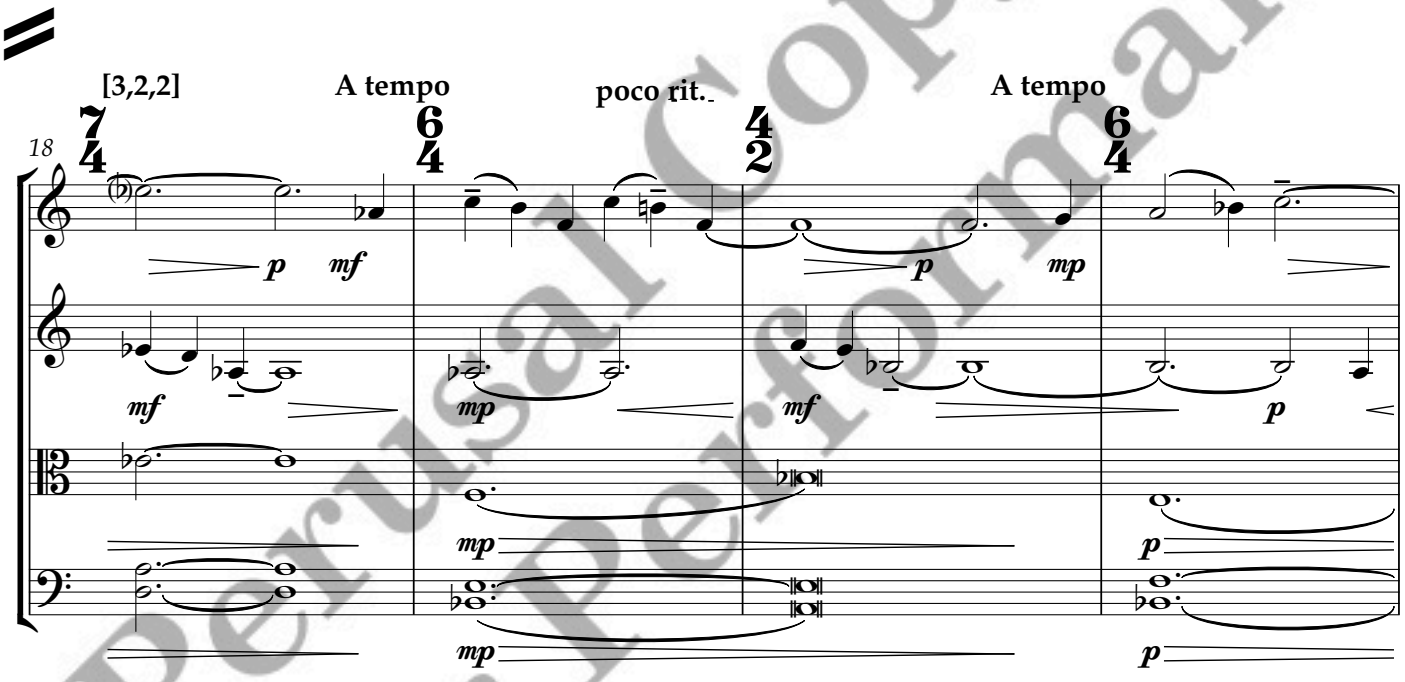

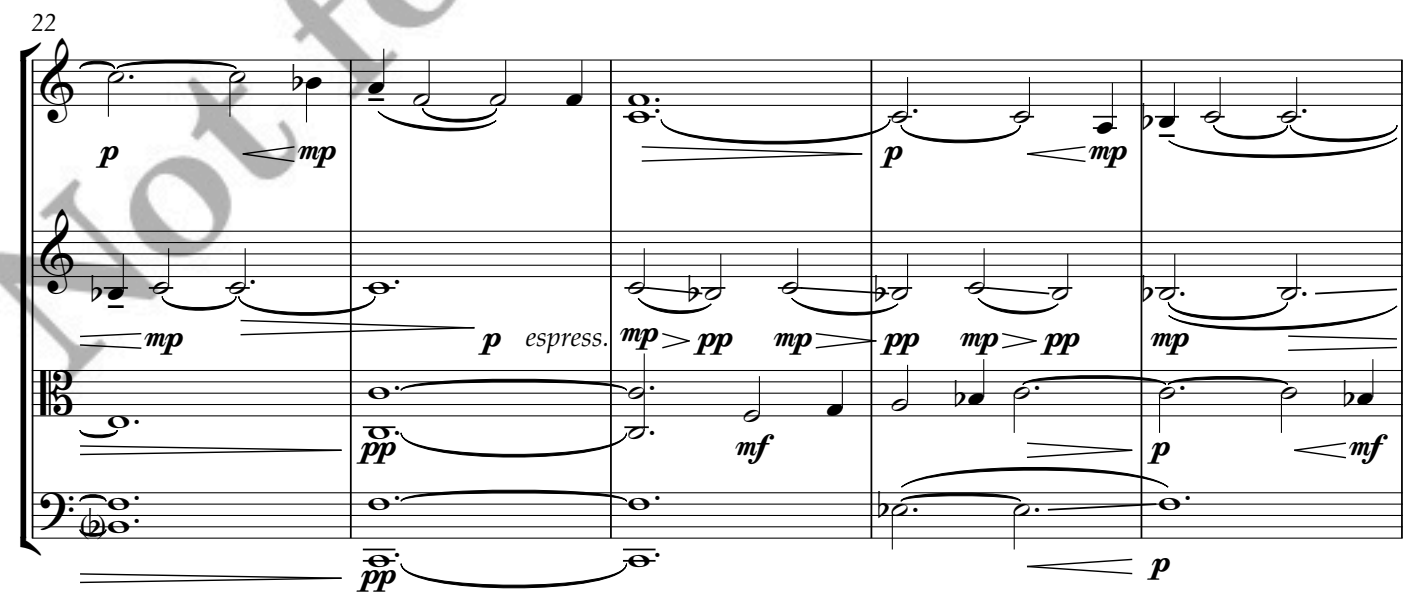

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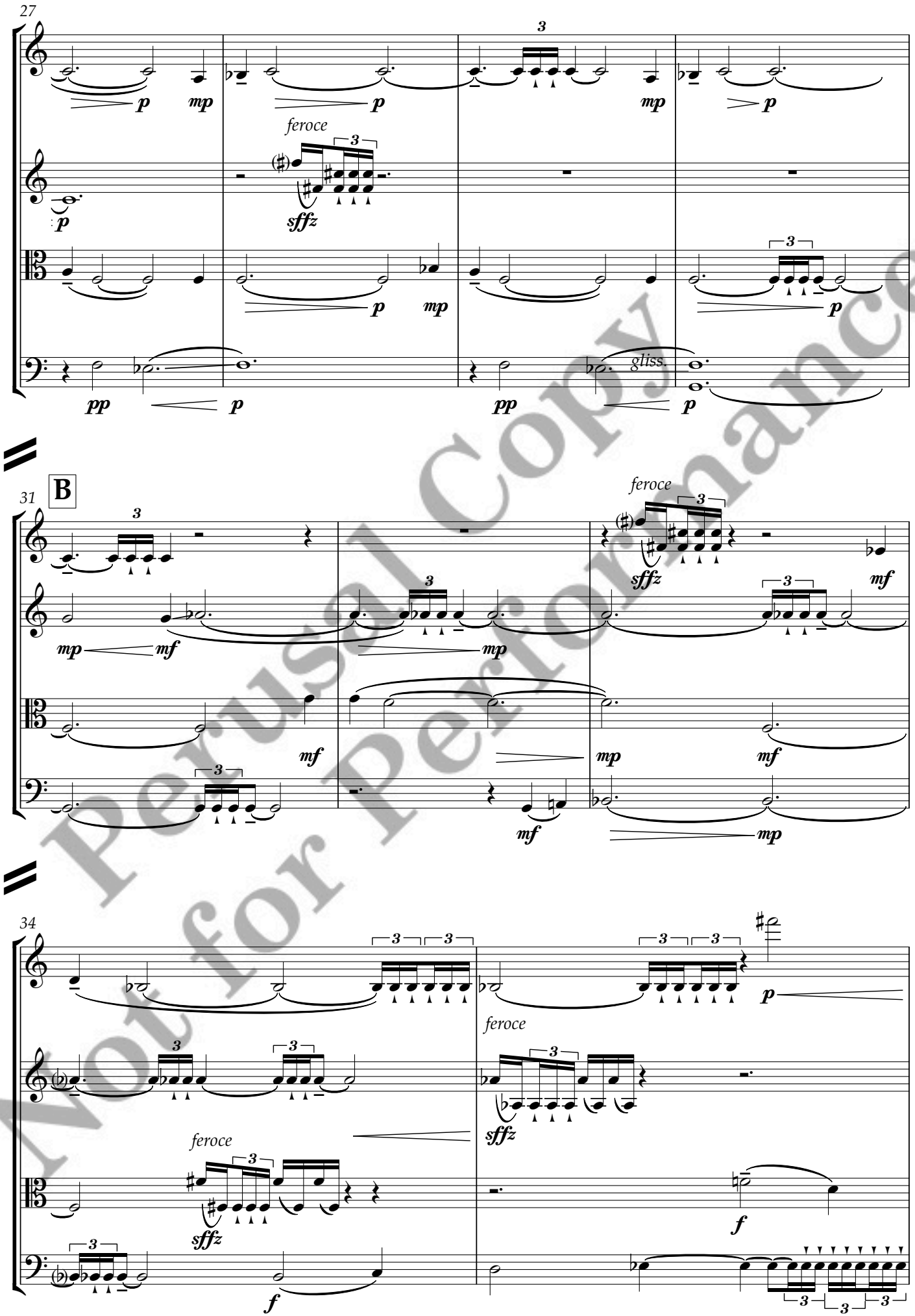

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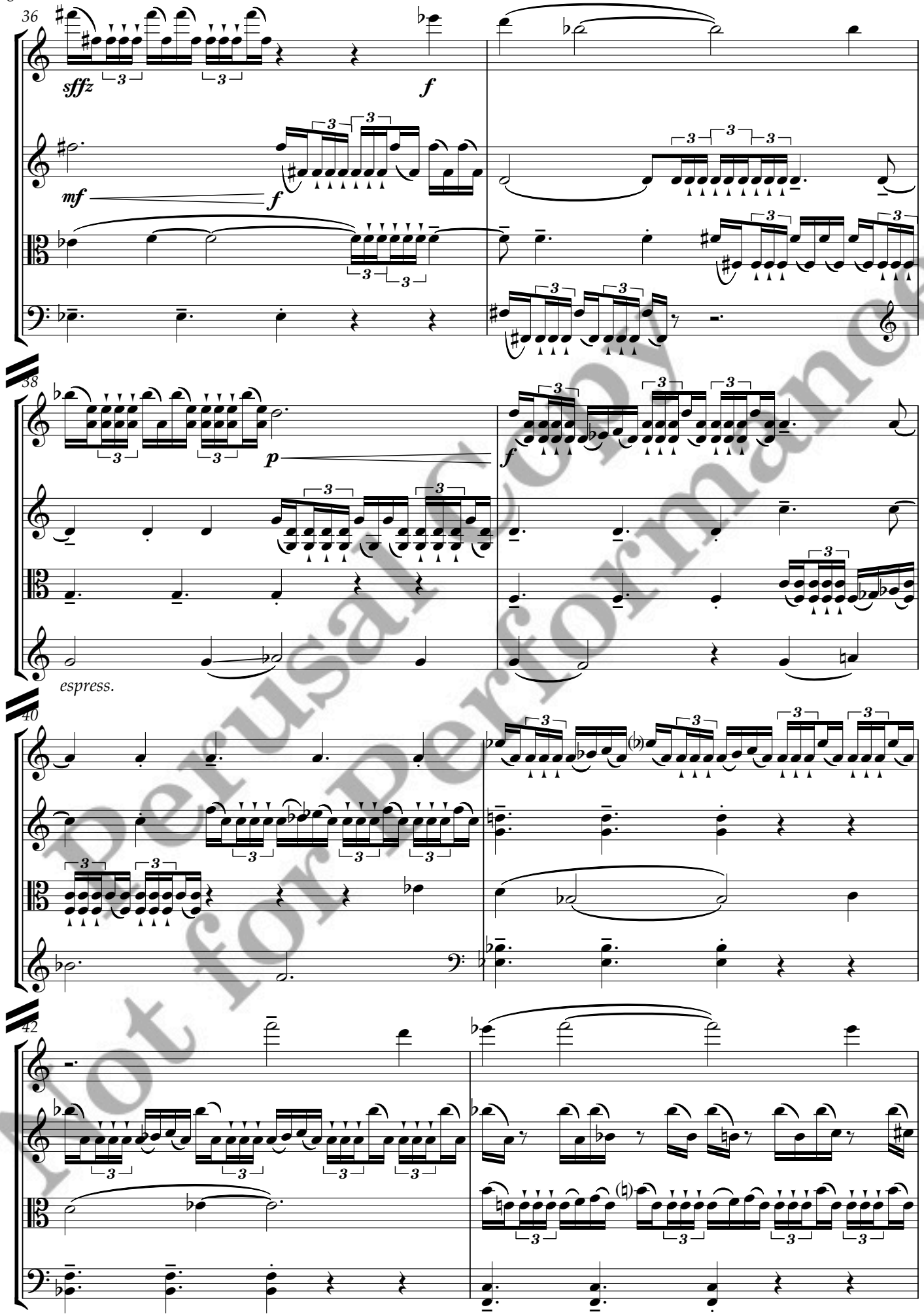

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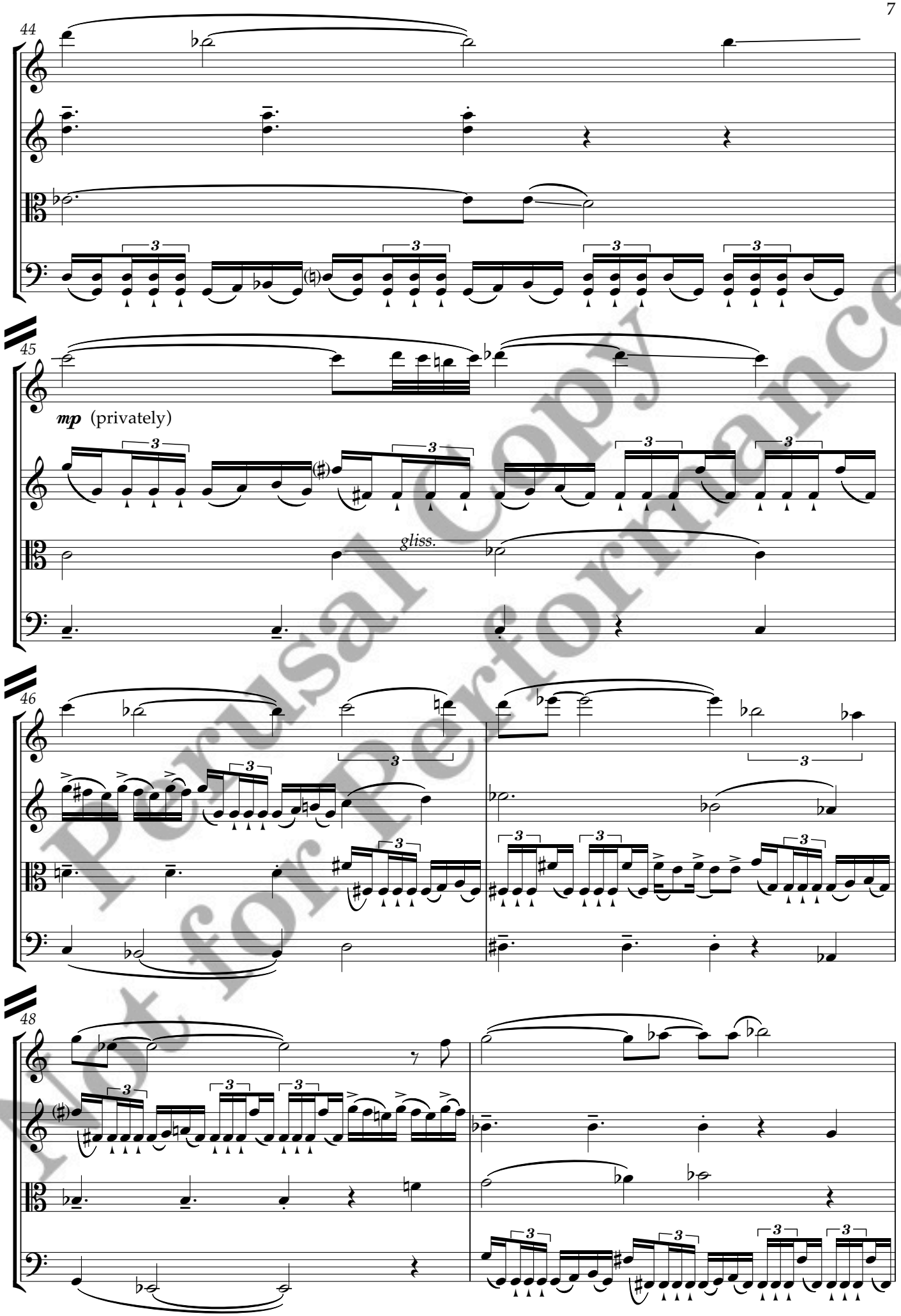

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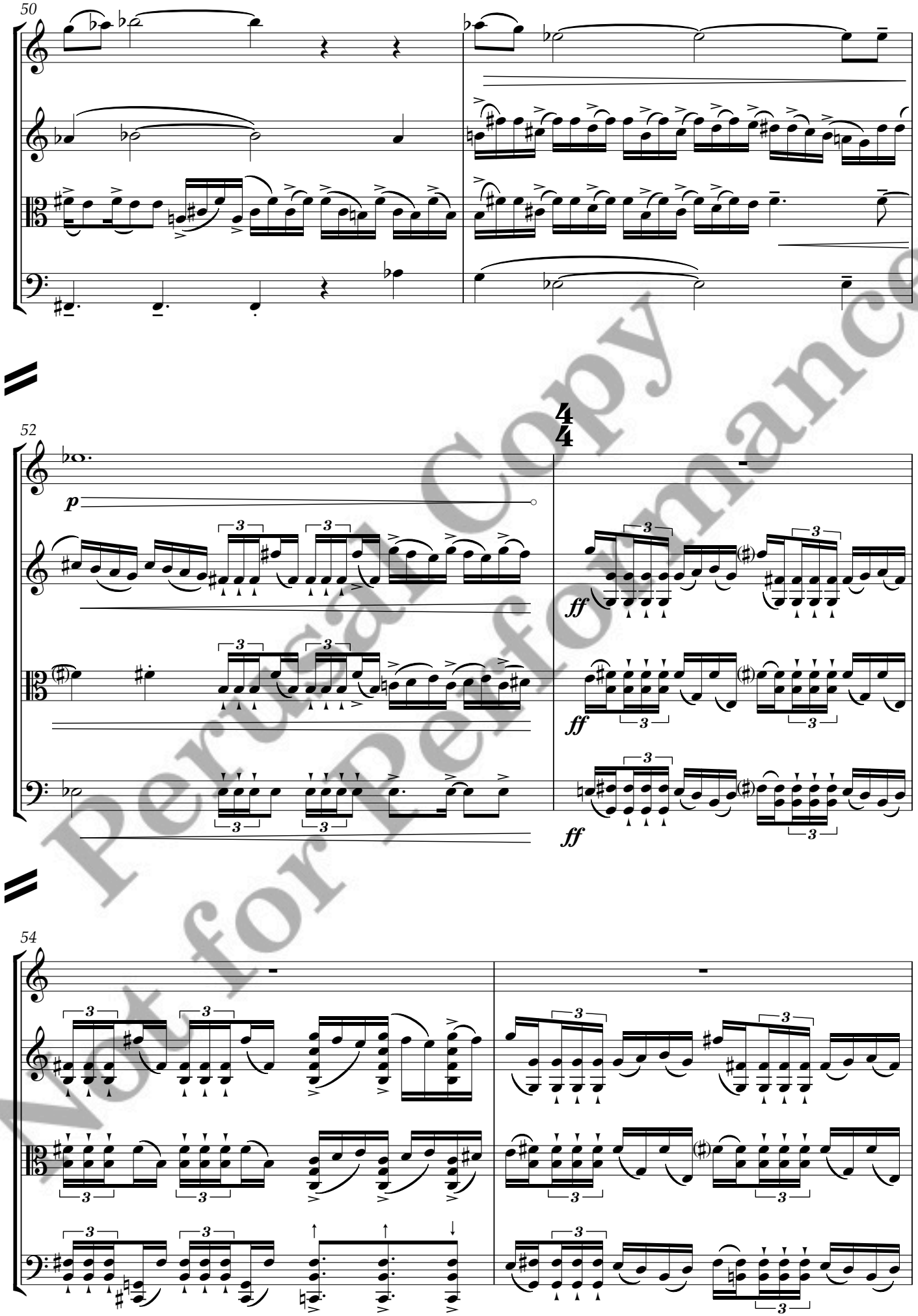

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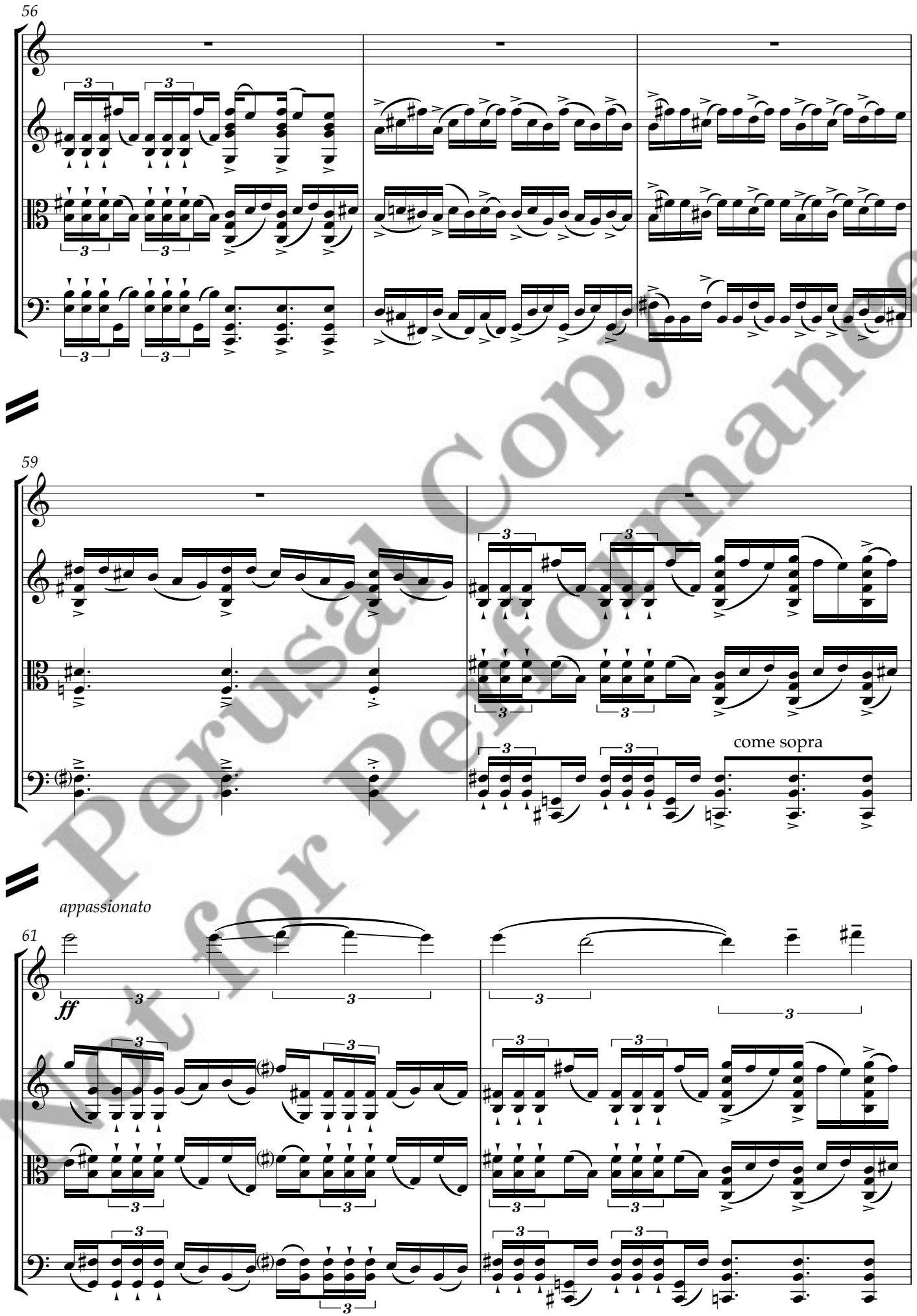

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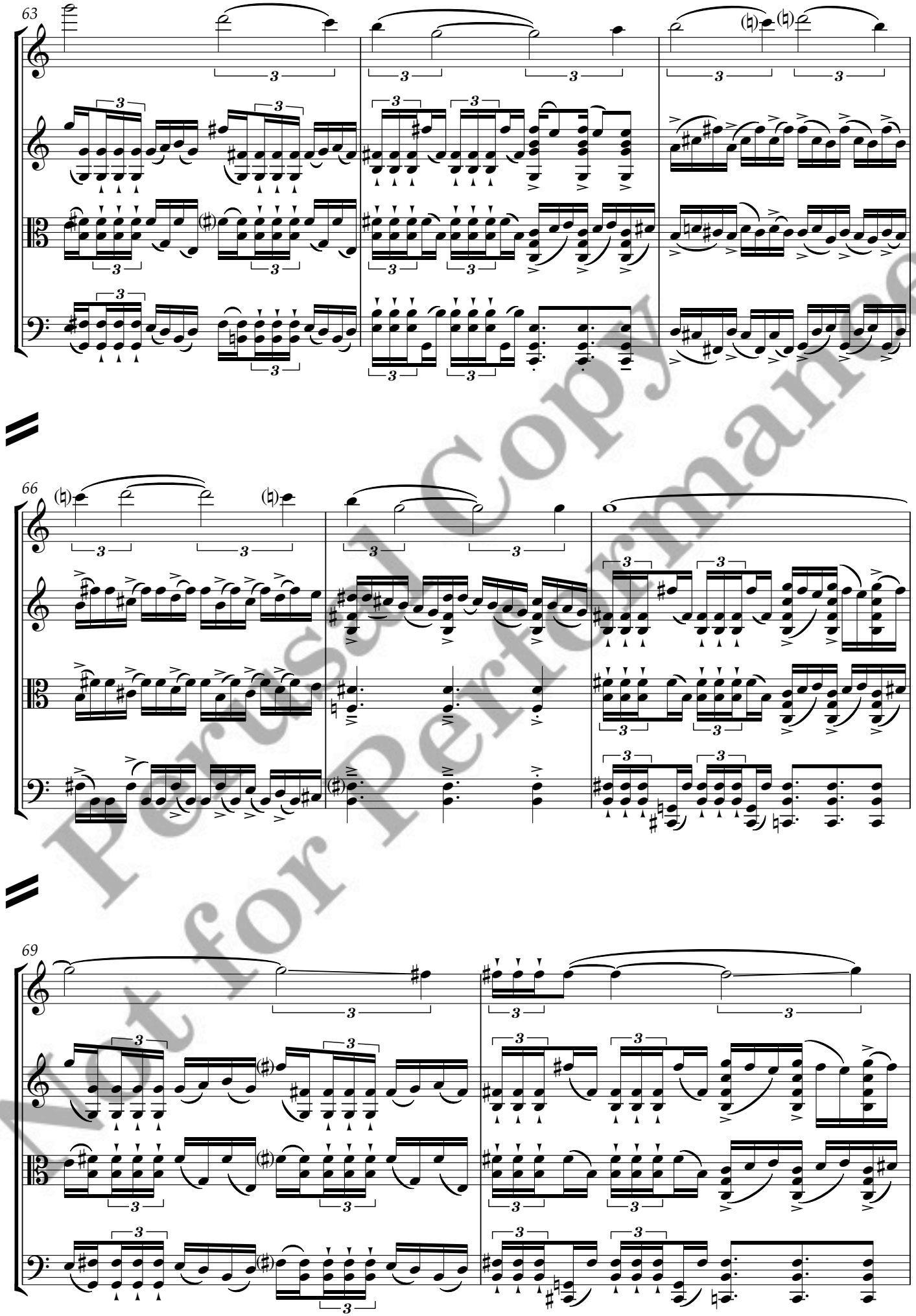

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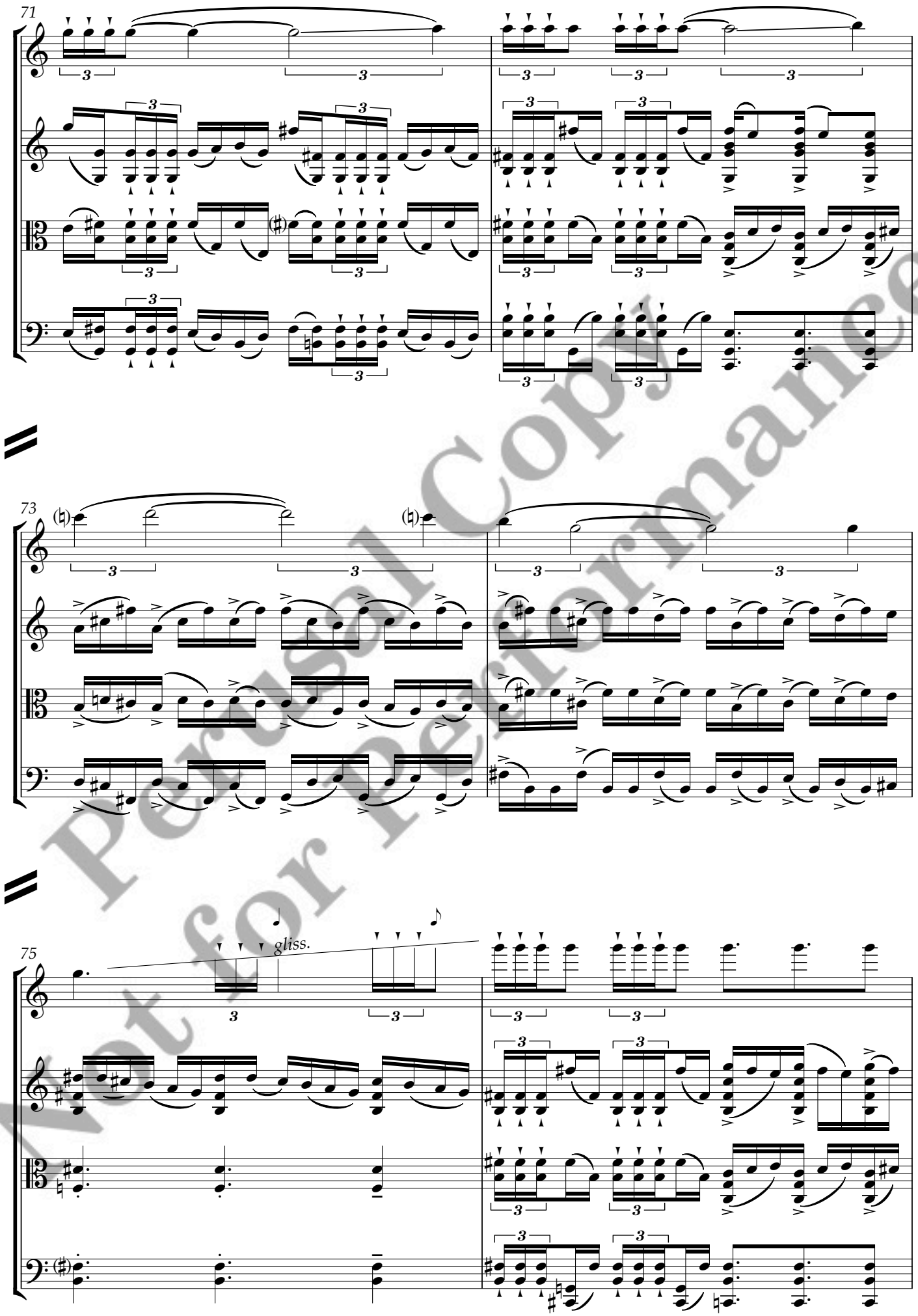

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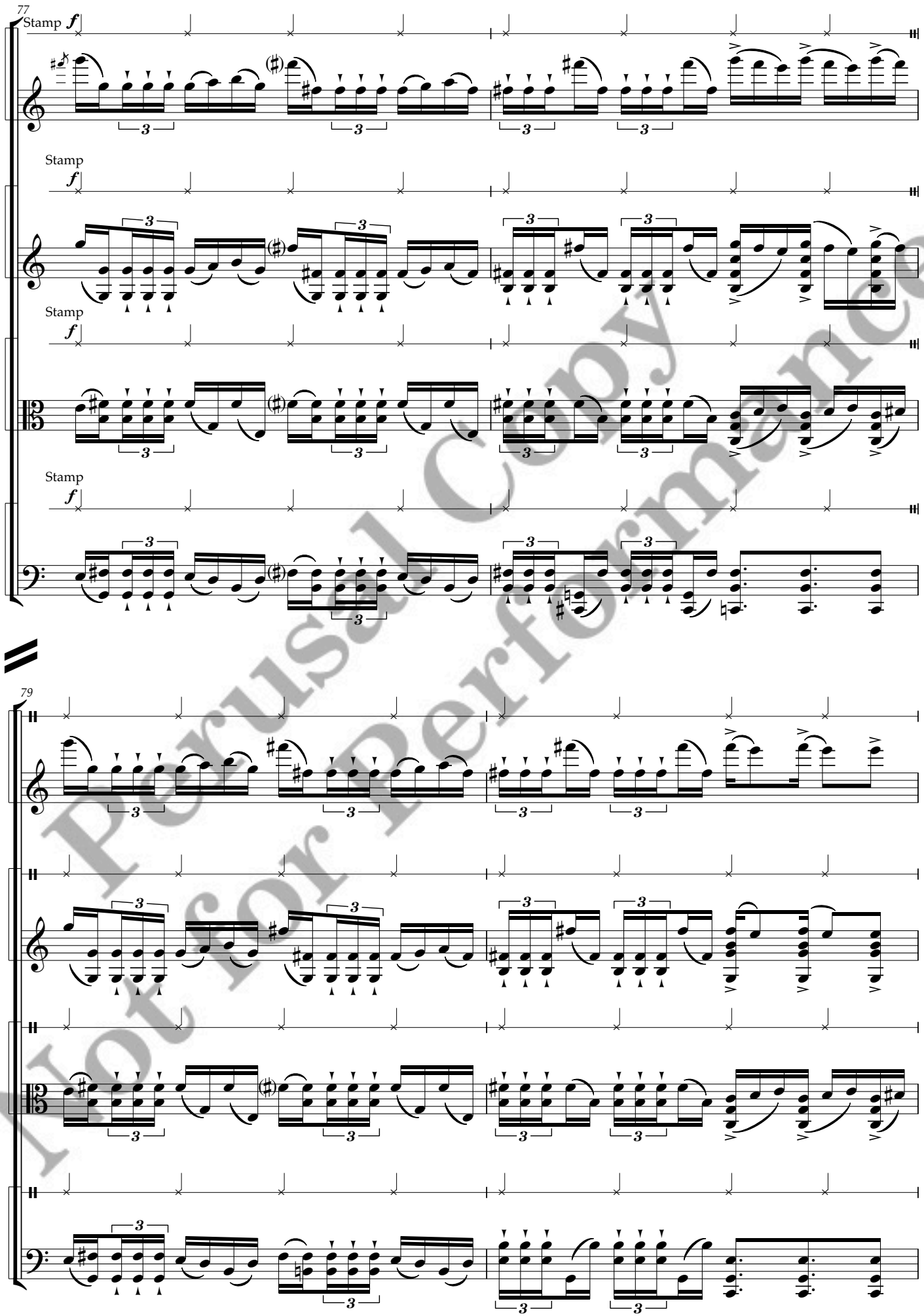

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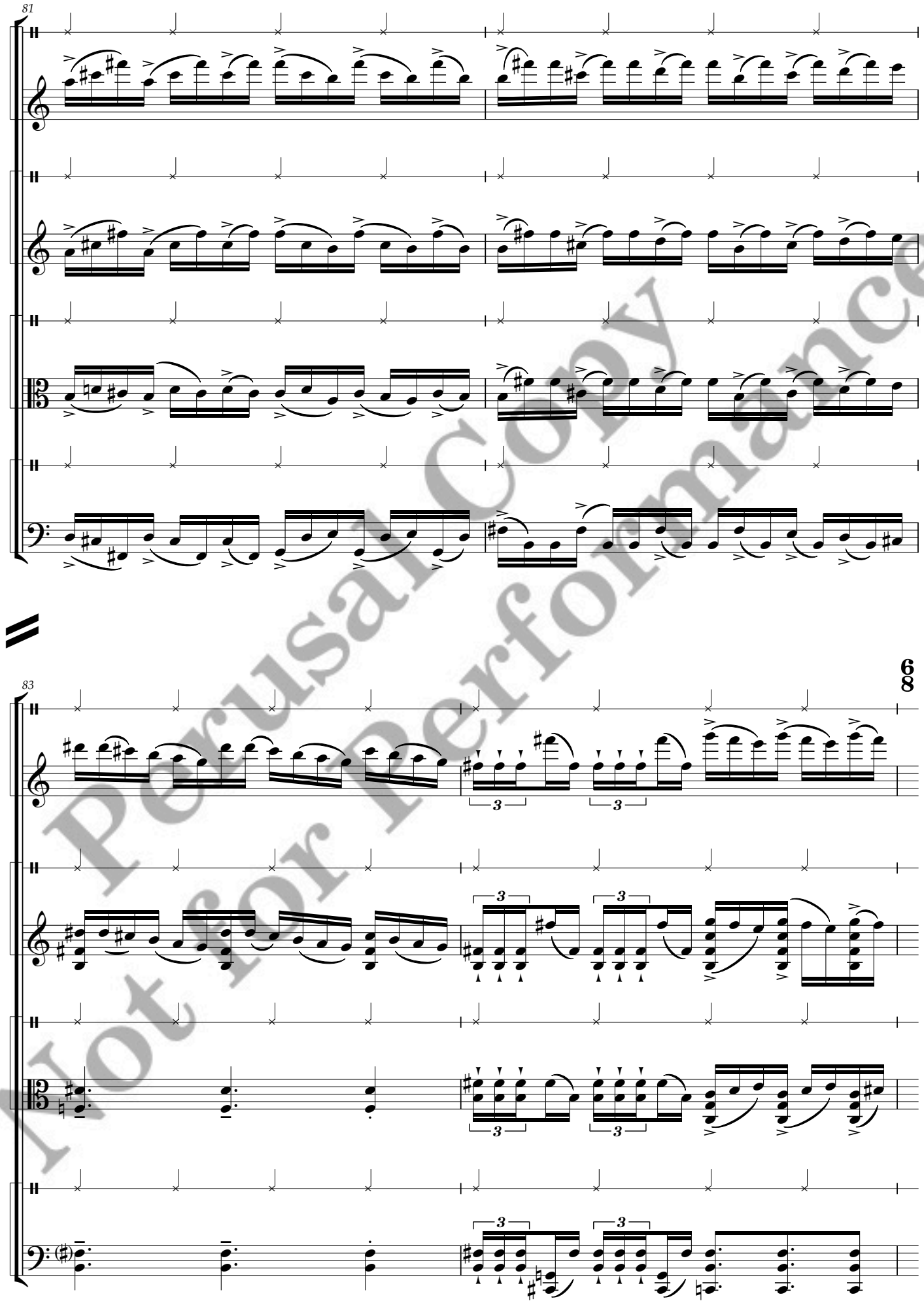

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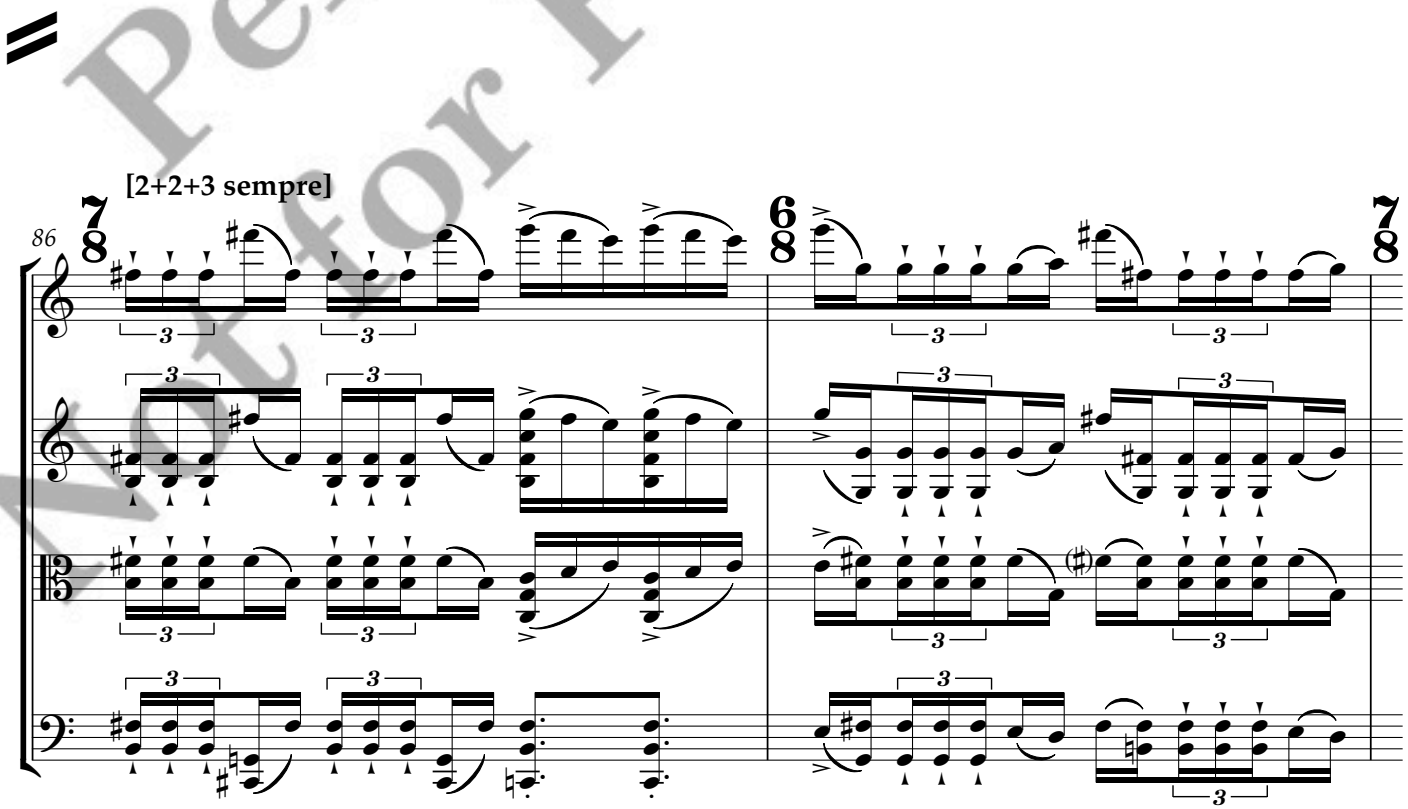

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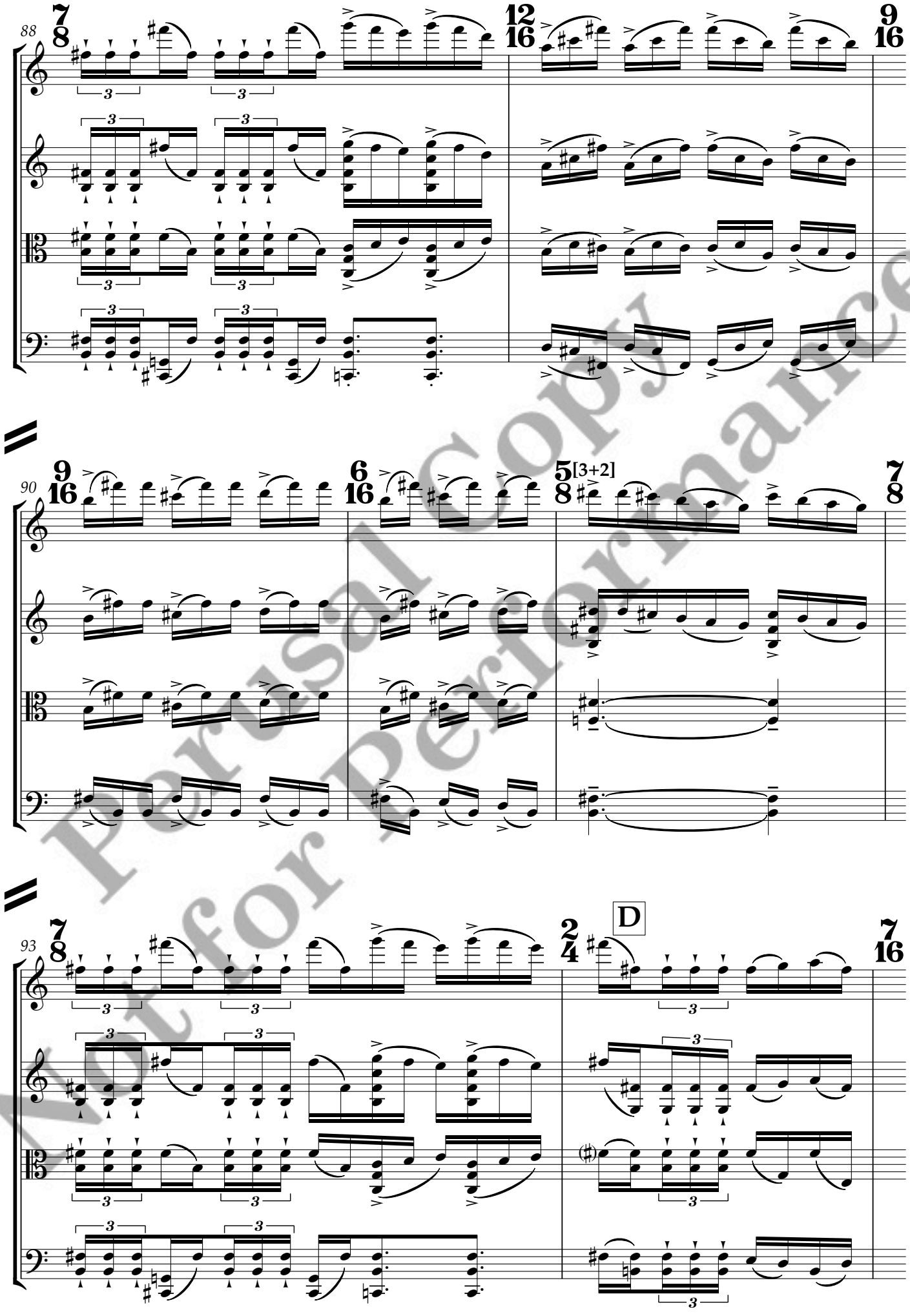

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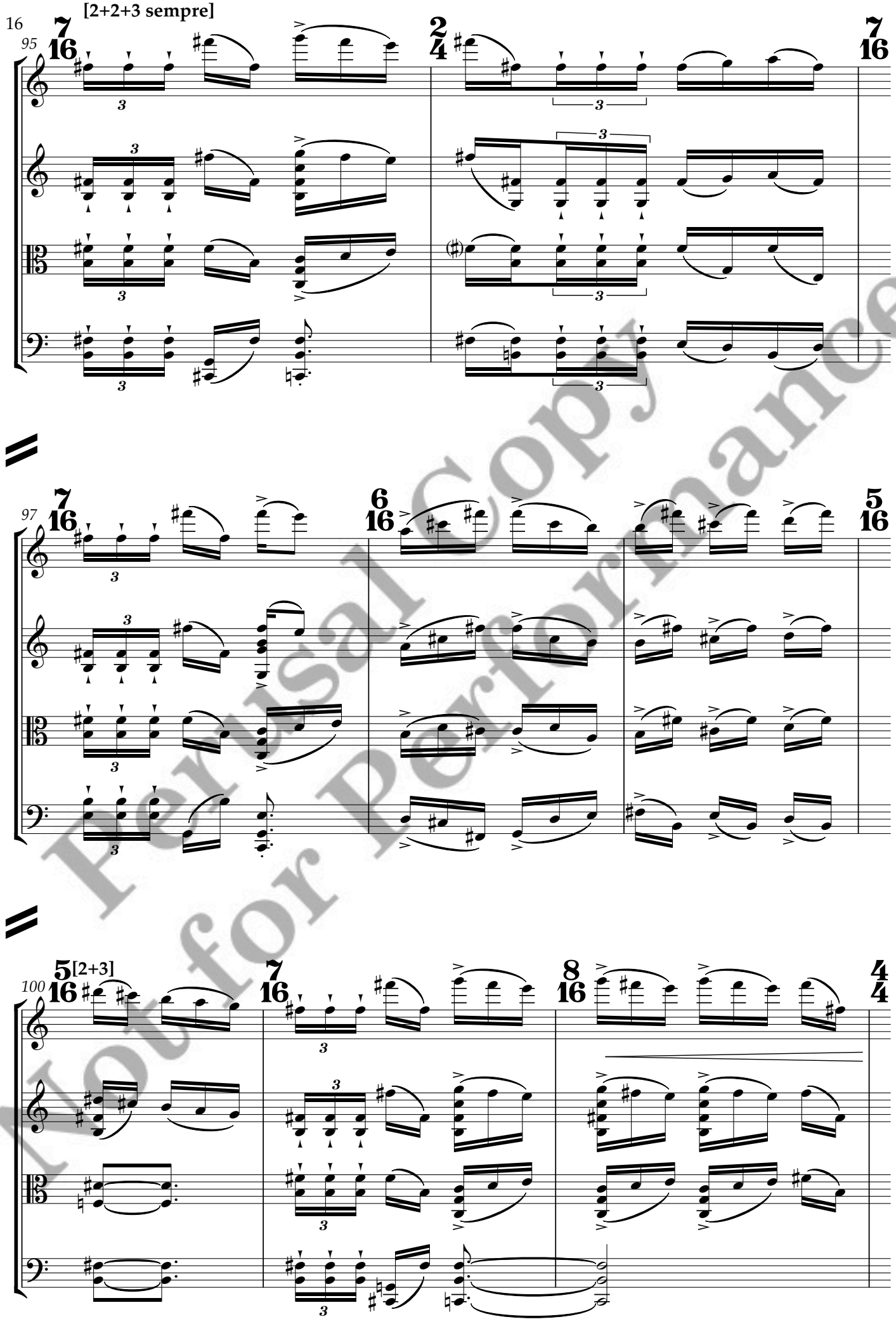

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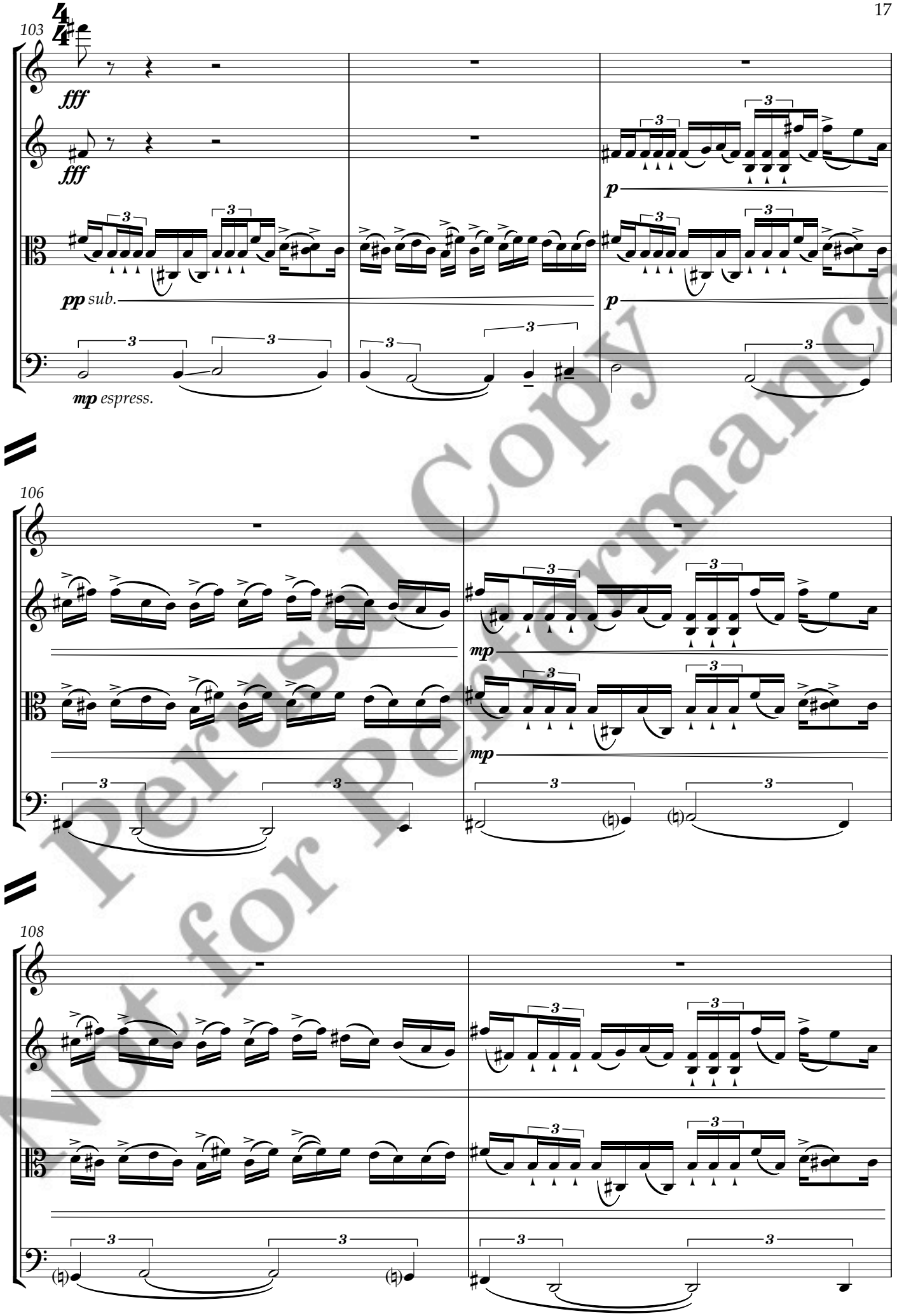

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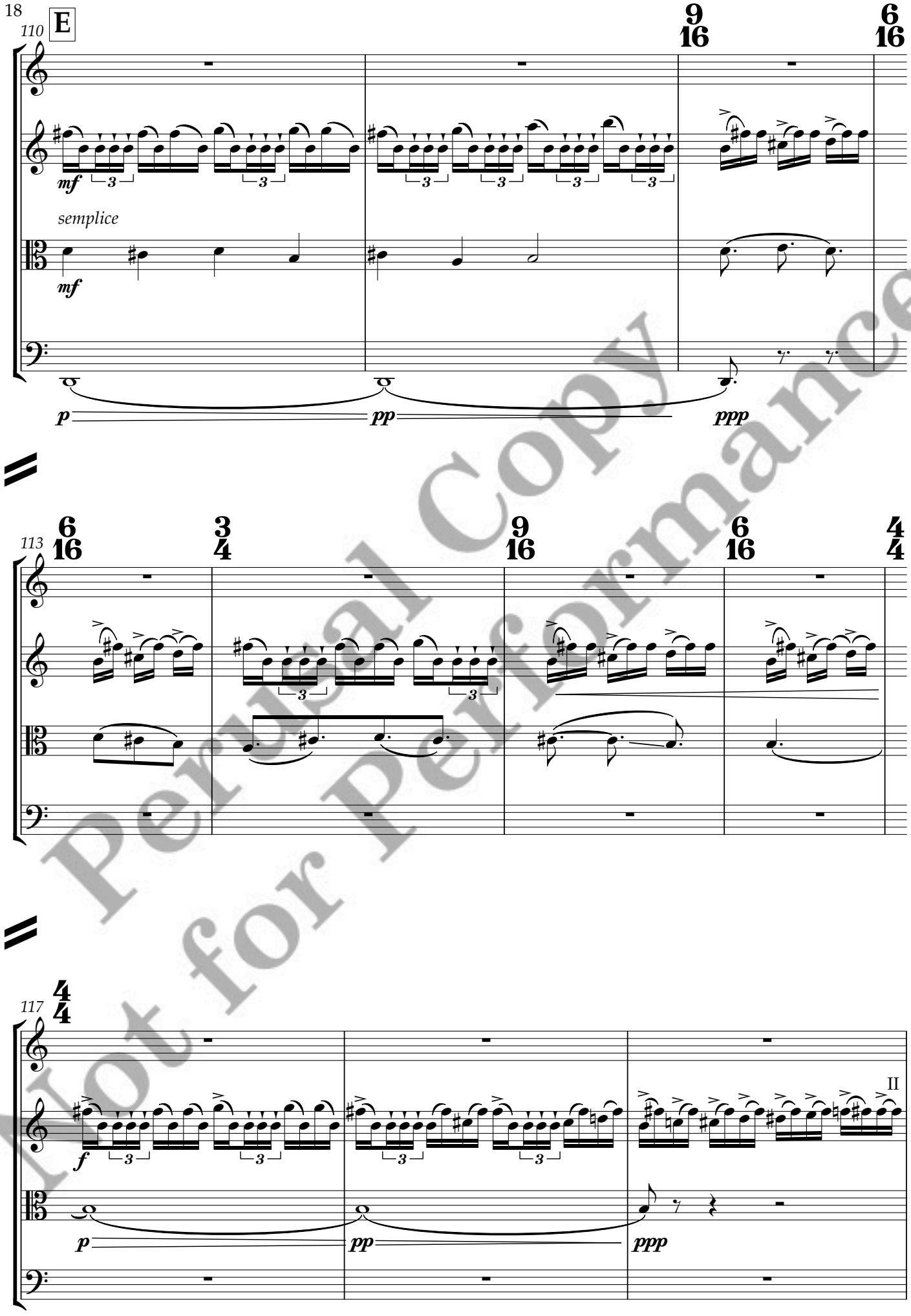

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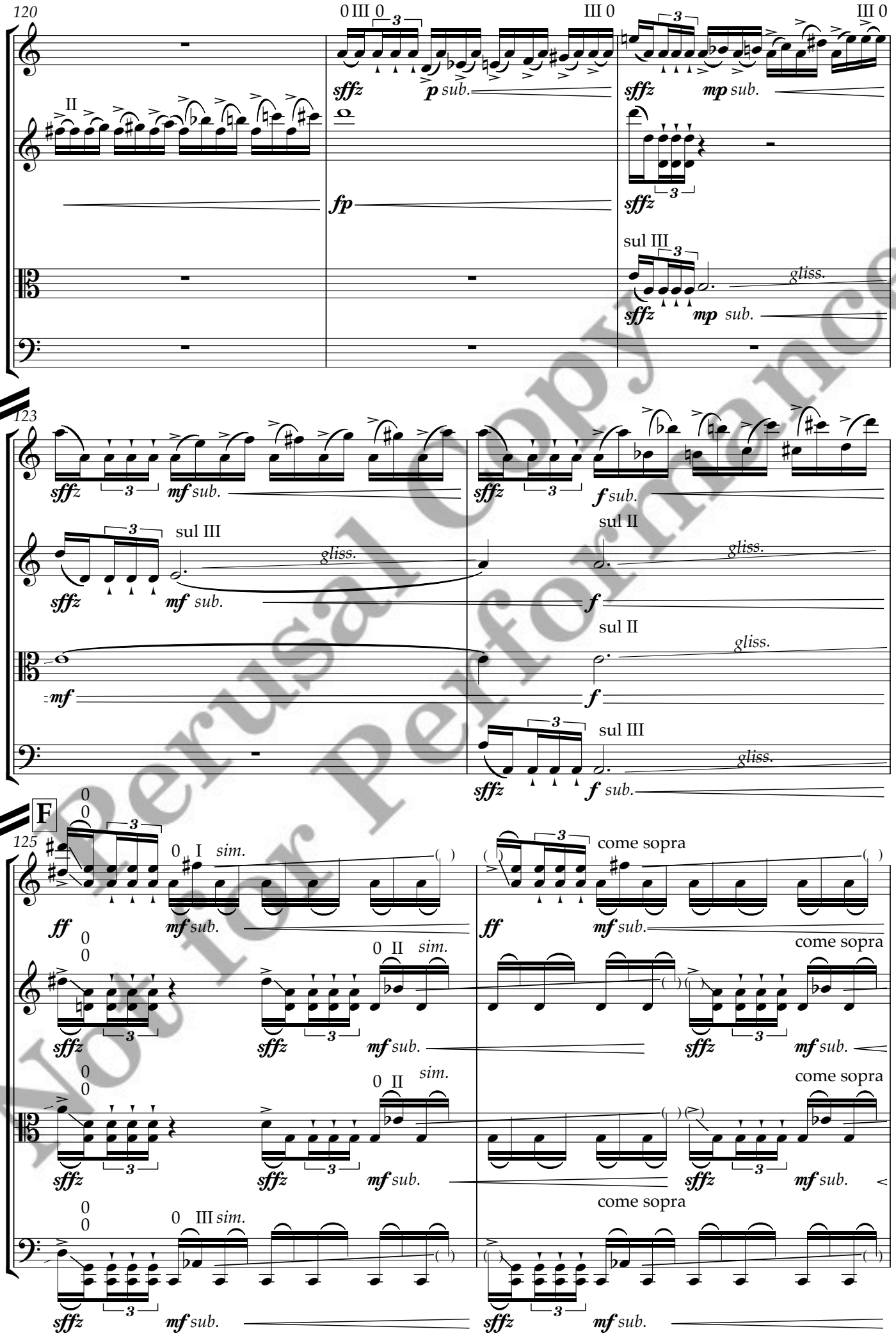

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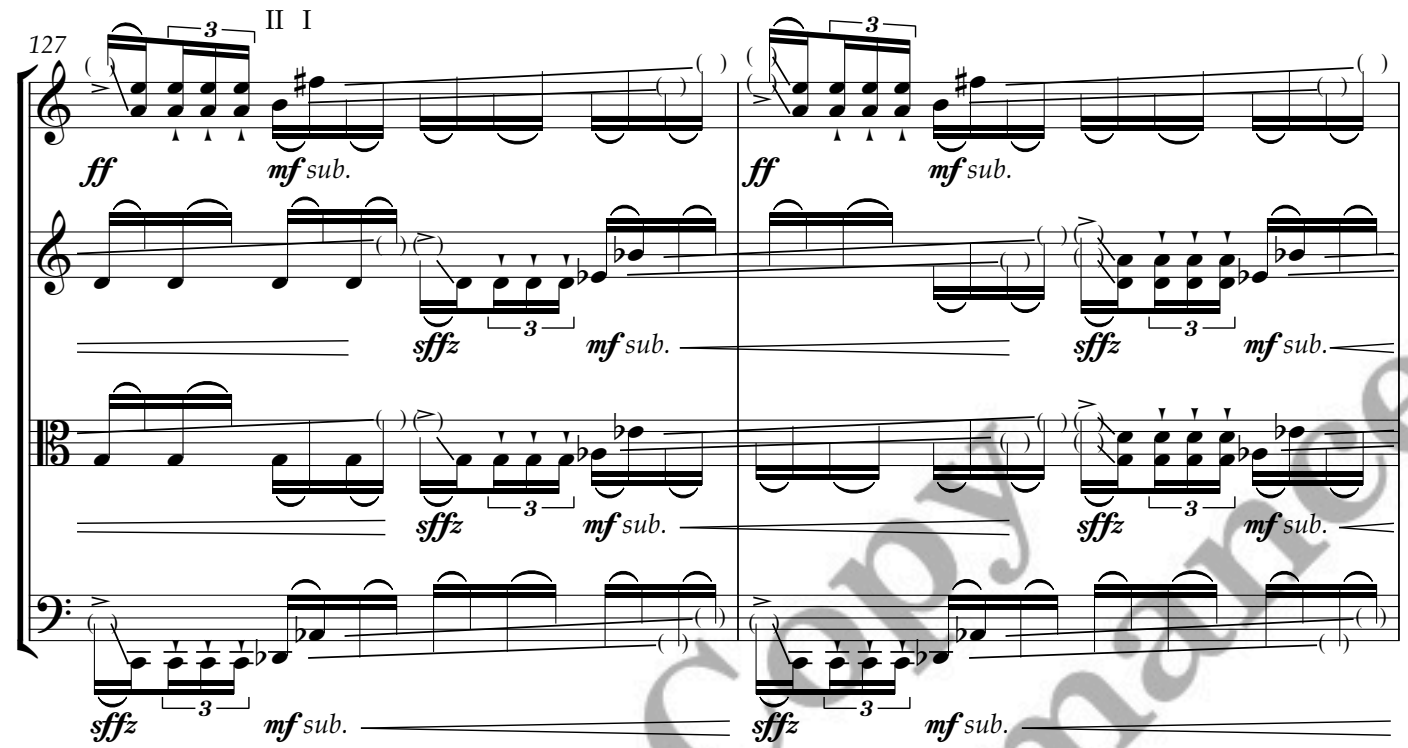

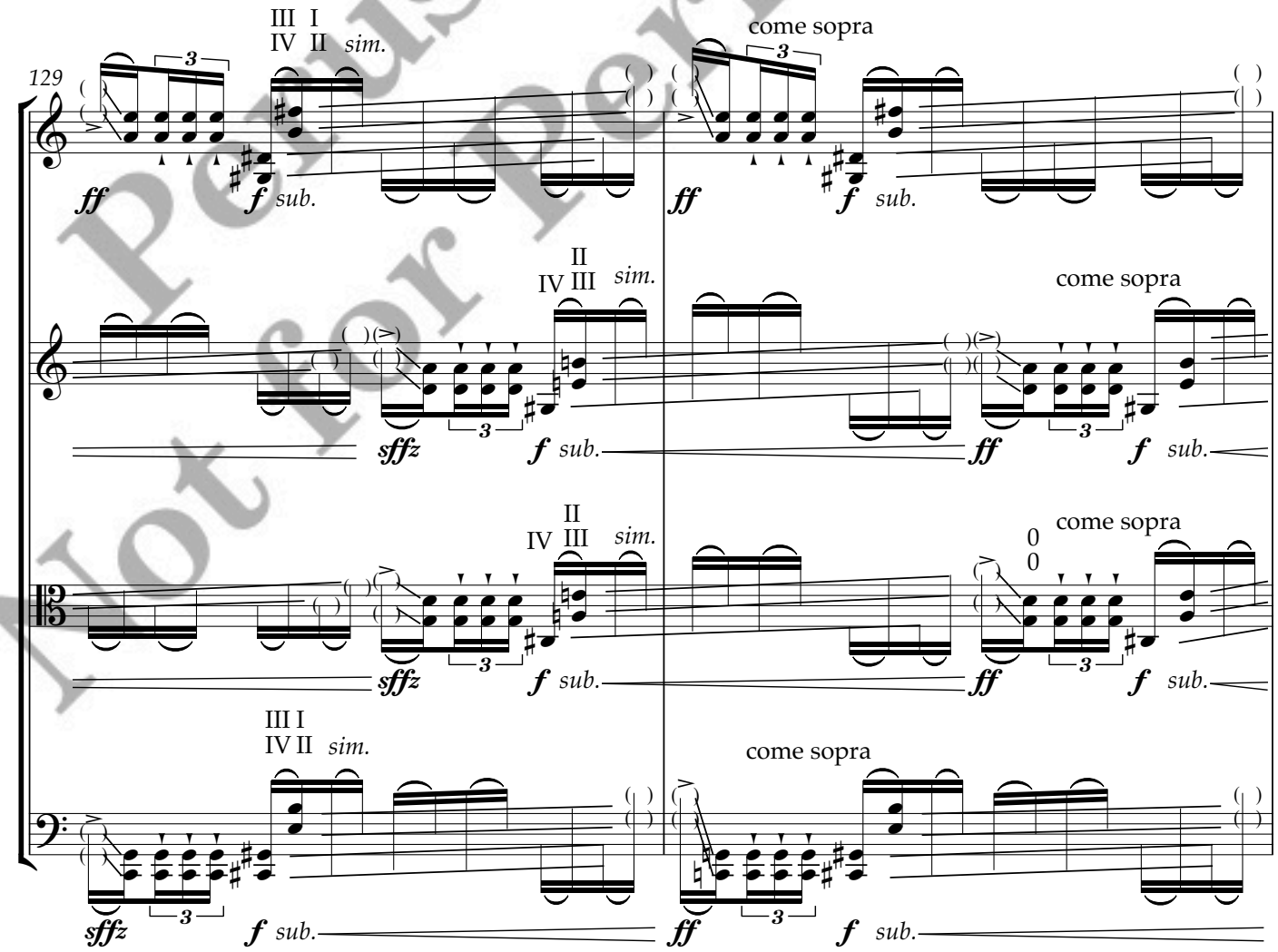

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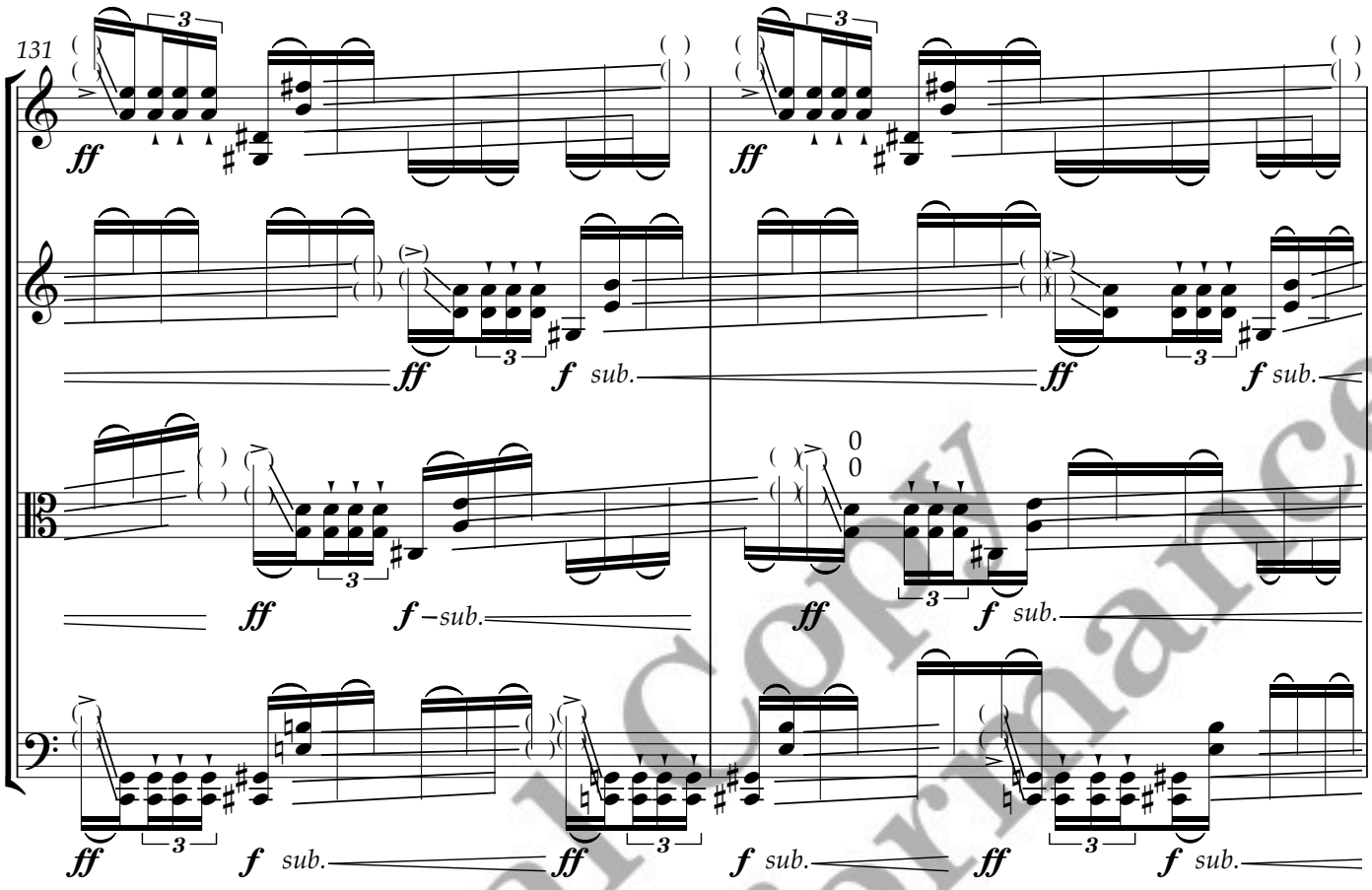

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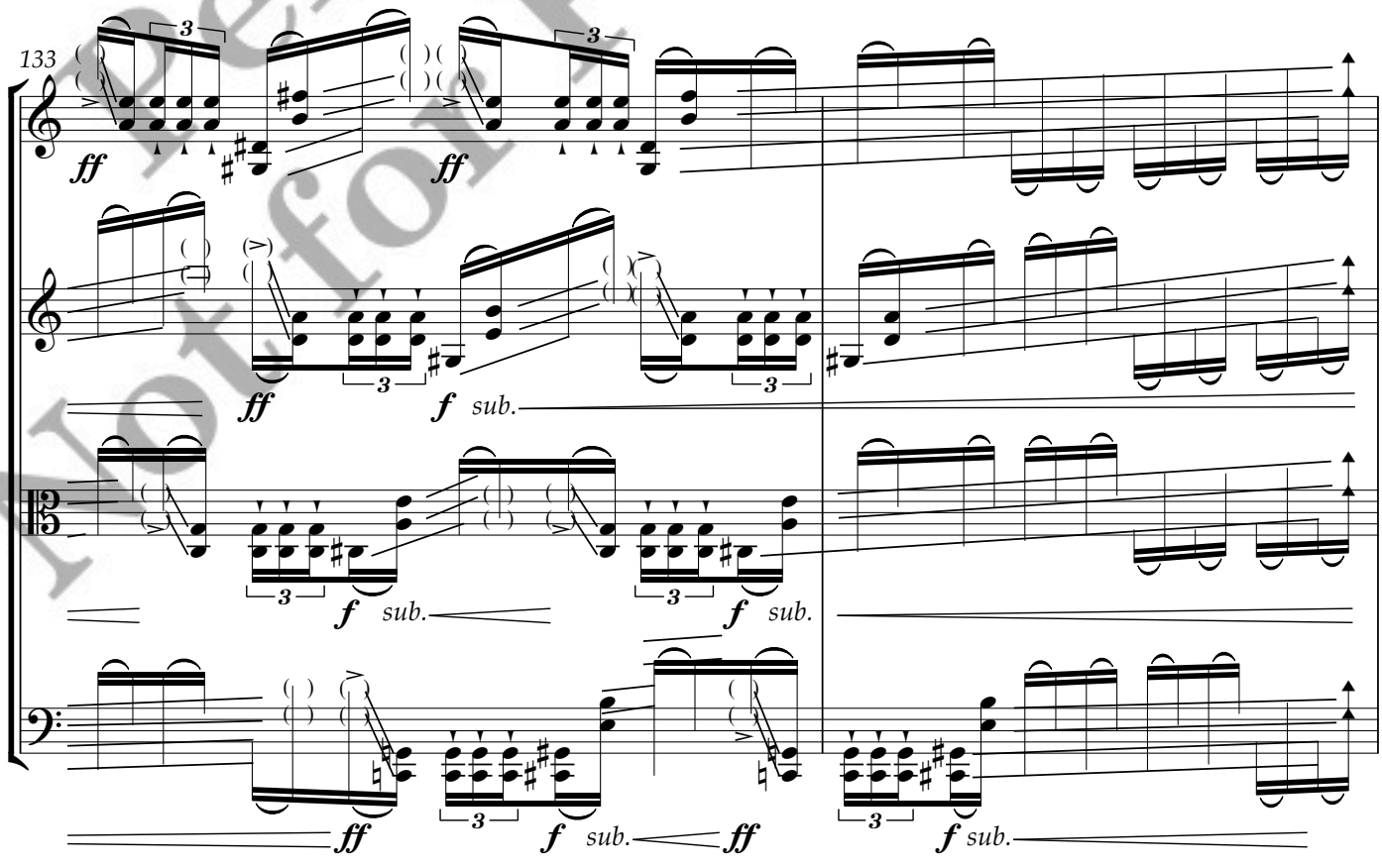

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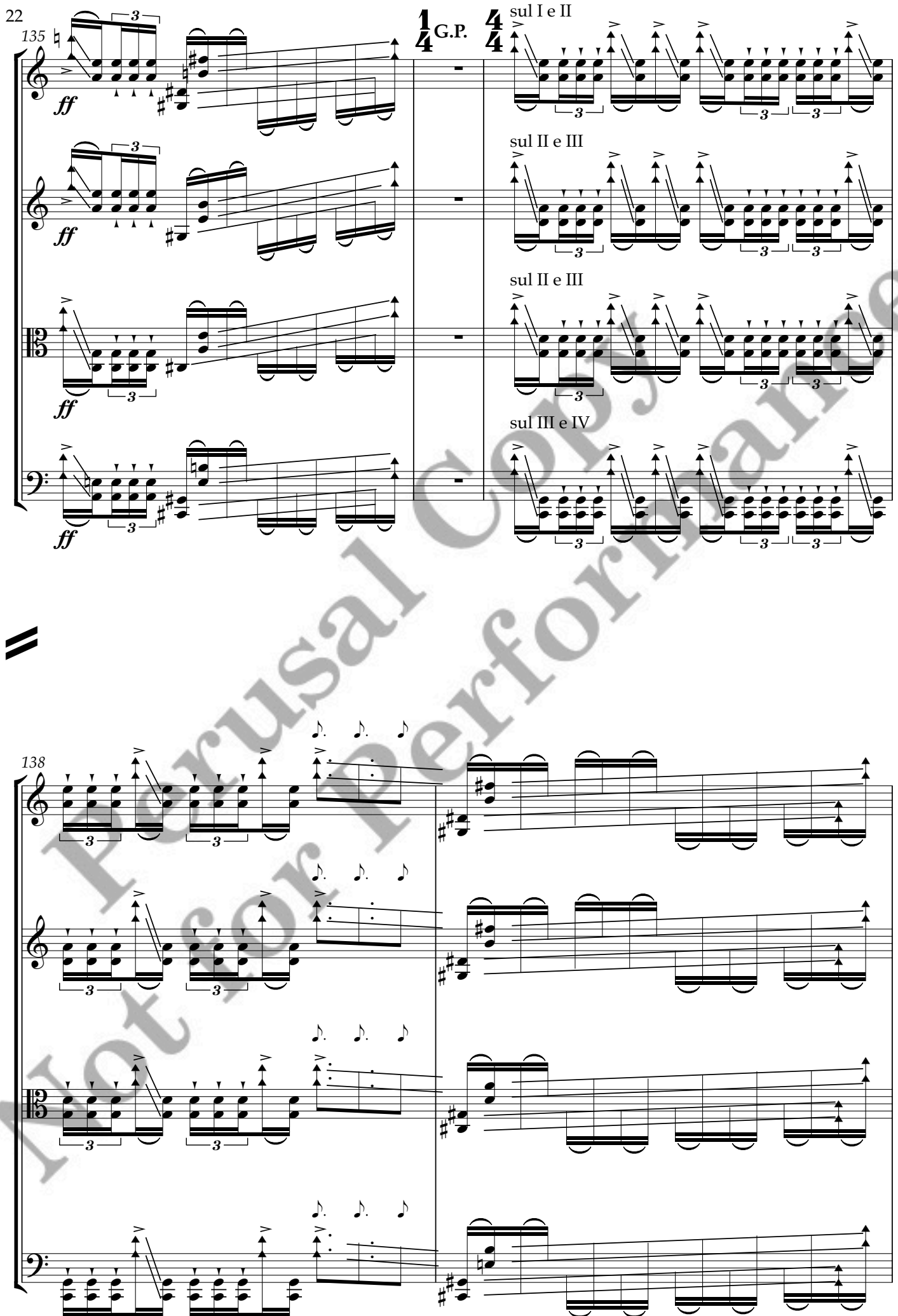

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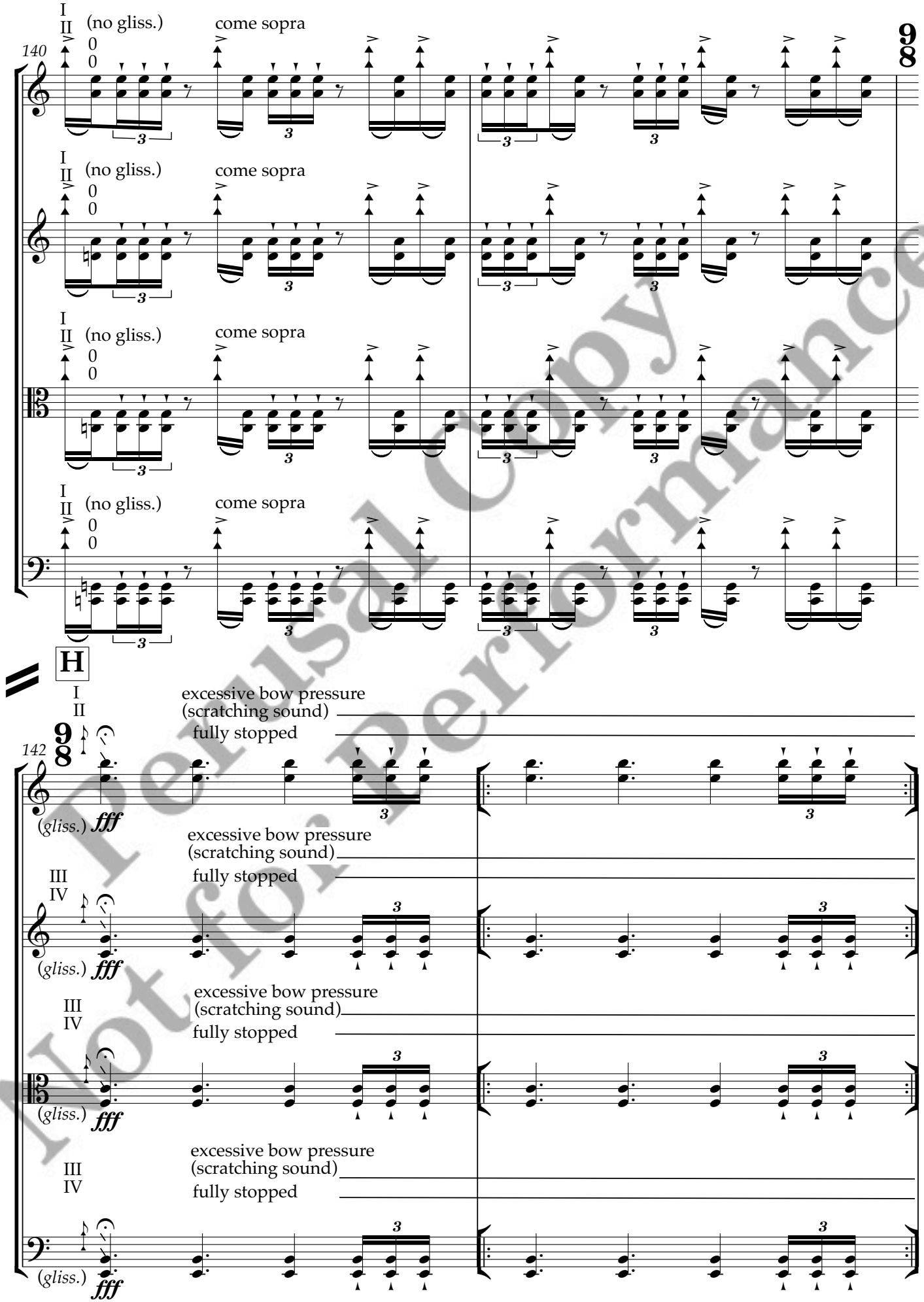

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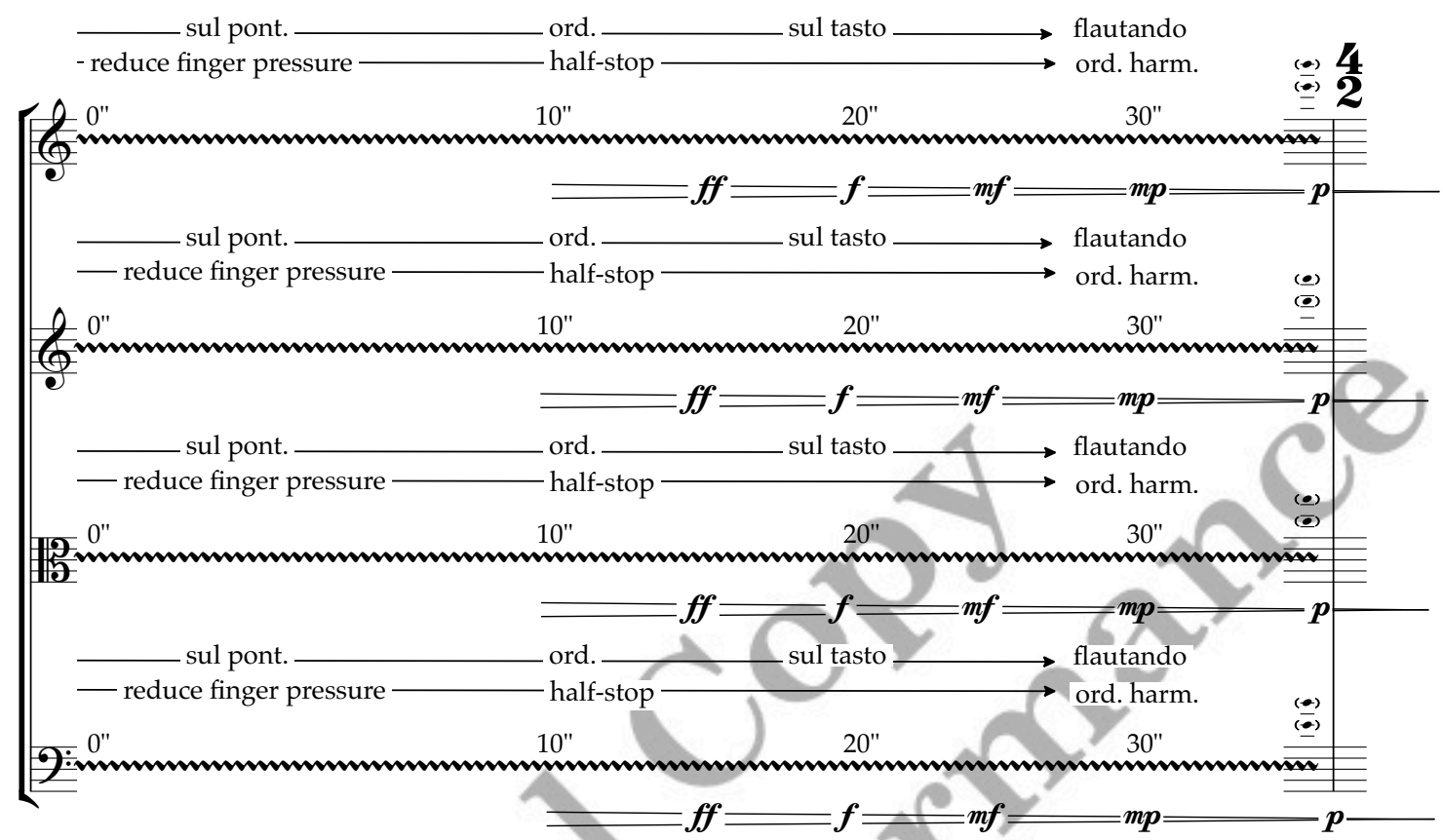

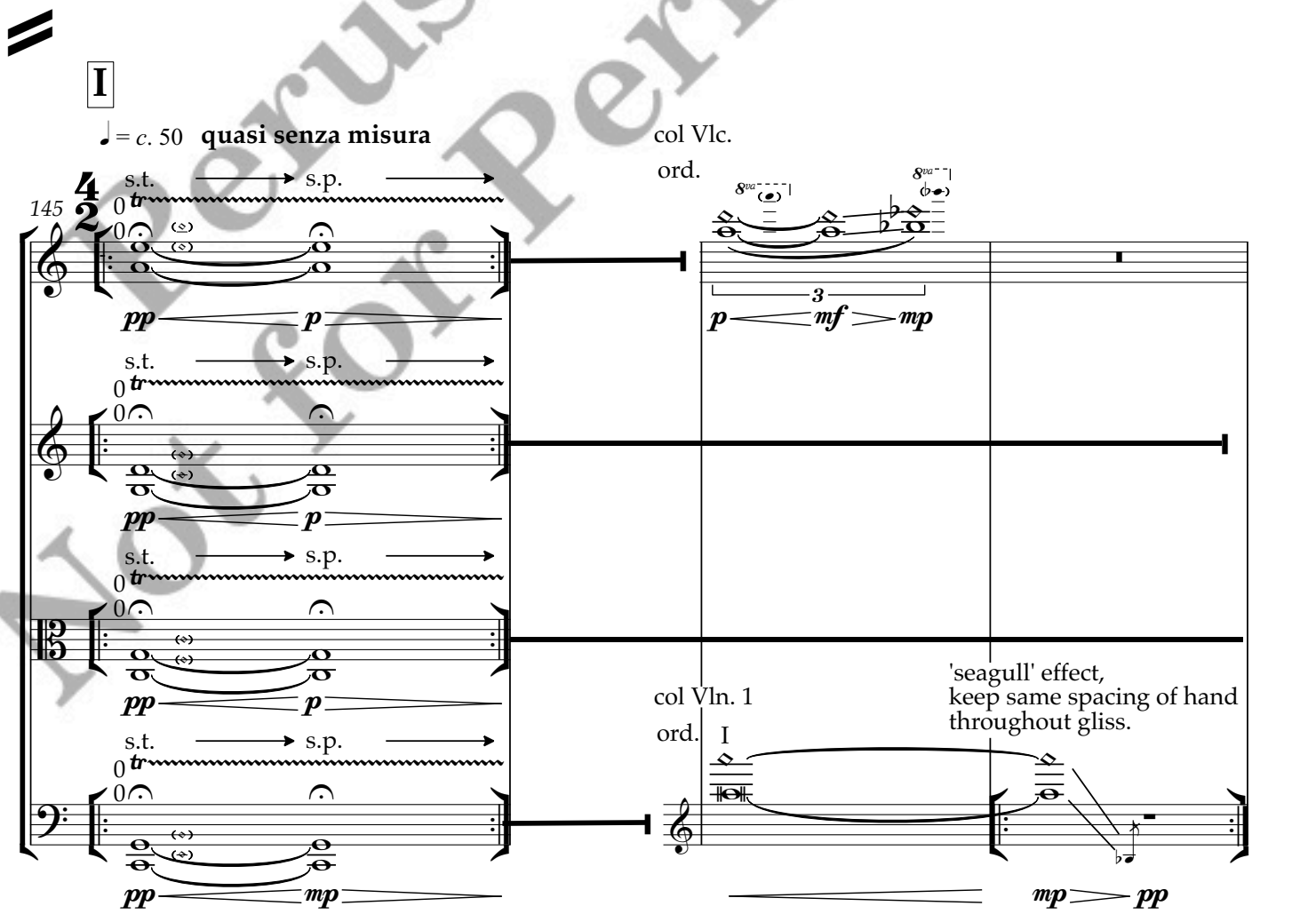

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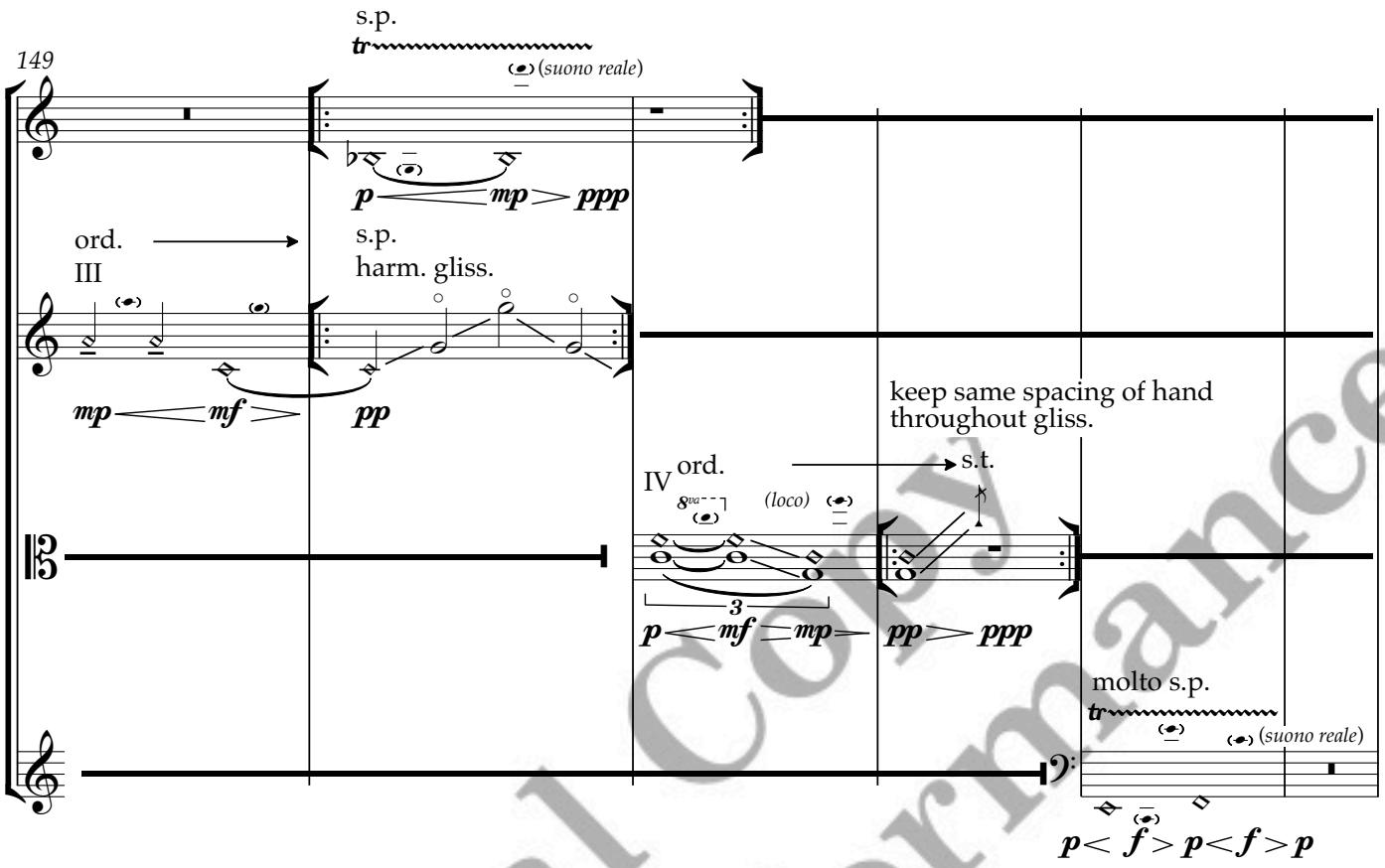

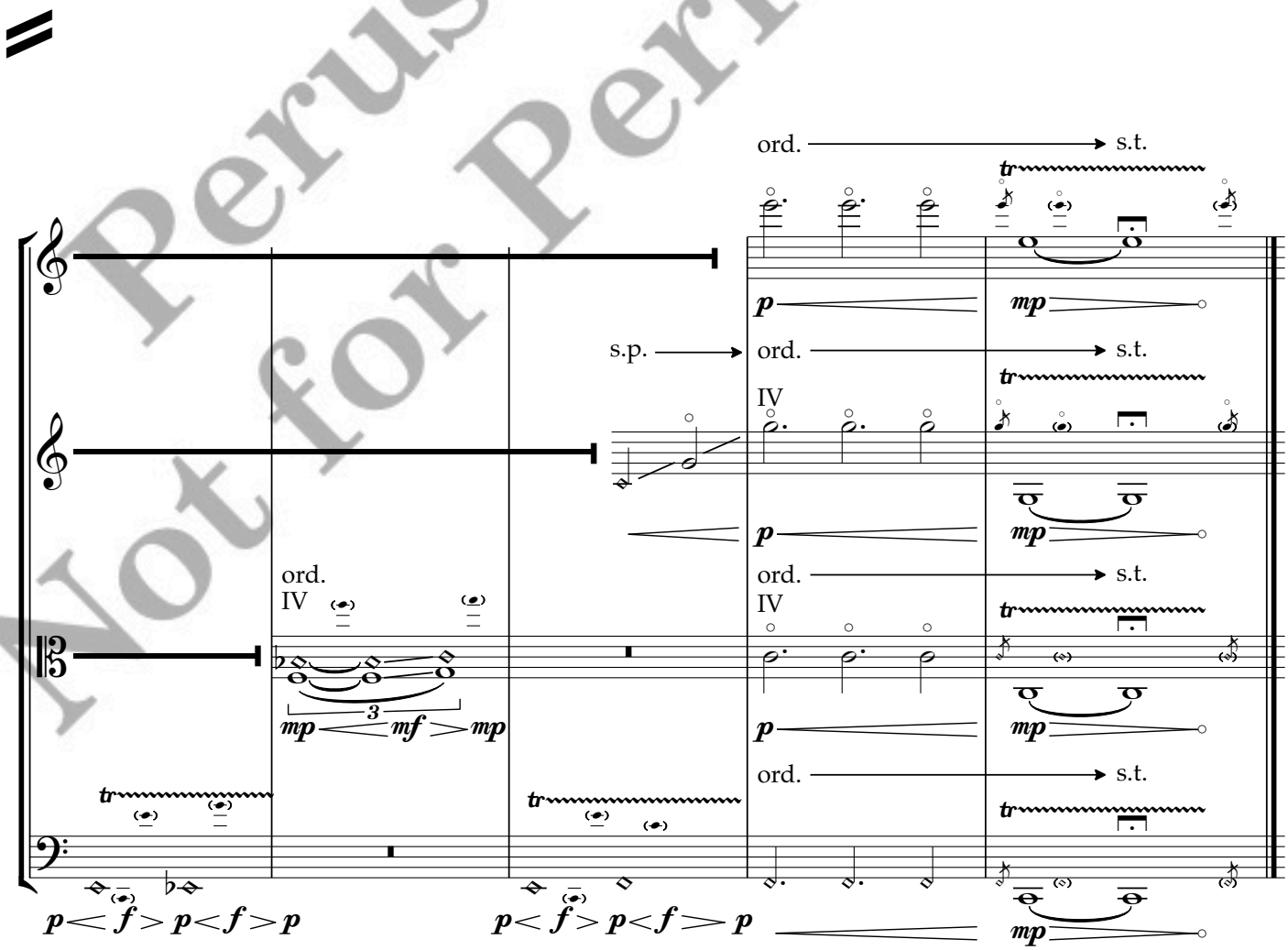

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