SDM608

NIGHT PIECE

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Not for Performance

Seán Doherty

2020

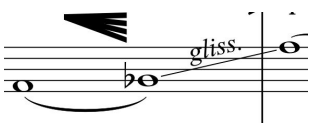
String Trio,
Actor (opt.)

Seán Doherty Music
seandohertymusic.com

PROGRAMME NOTE

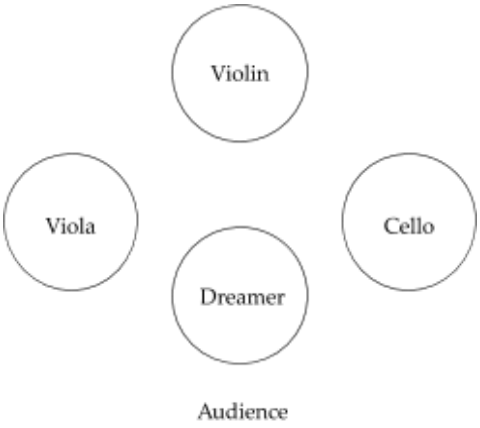
Night carries much symbolic weight in the German song tradition: in Schoenberg's *Verklärte Nacht* it is a liminal time in which societal mores are suspended; in Schubert's *Nacht und Träume* it is a place to find refuge in dreams. *Night Piece* is inspired by Samuel Beckett's last television play, *Nacht und Träume* (1982). In this wordless play the only sound is that of a voice humming the final bars of Schubert's lied of the same name, originally sung to the words 'Holde Träume, kehret wieder!' ('*Sweet dreams, come back*!'). Beckett conveys a feeling of deep pathos amid the silence and stillness. In *Night Piece* the final bars of 'Nacht und Träume' return and mark the Dreamer's passage through the various stages of sleep in which different types of dreams occur. Our inchoate desires reveal themselves in these half-forgotten dreams—the desire for atonement, for forgiveness, for consolation, for acceptance. This is not a lullaby but a howl of protest to be left alone in dreams, safe from reality, and enveloped in night.

PERFORMANCE NOTES

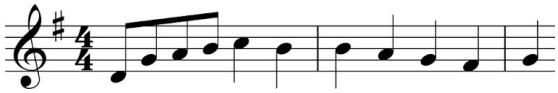
I, II, III, IV	Roman numerals indicate string numbers
s.t.	sul tasto
s.p.	sul ponticello
scratch tone	excessive pressure on bow to produce a grating sound
	a gradual change from one technique to another
	an unmeasured tremelo
	A group of notes with feathered, or fanned beams indicates gradual accelerando or rallentando within the duration. The number of stems in these feathered beams is limited for the purposes of clarity. The effect is that of a gradual accelerando/rallentando to/from an unmeasured tremelo; the exact number of notes is not important and left to the discretion of the performer.
	A feathered tremelo indicates the same effect and includes the alternation between two notes.
	Tremelo with second note, which also has simultaneous glissando to the indicated note, within the given duration.

Night Piece, Actor's Part (*optional*)

Letters correspond to Rehearsal Marks.
All movements extremely slow.
Actor (**Dreamer**) present on stage, facing audience.
Eyes open, hands flat on a small table or desk.



'Holde träume' Motif



A. Motif, Cello
   - Eyes get heavy and close.
   - Head rests on folded arms on desk. This is the sleeping position.

B. Motif, Viola
   - Raise head and chest, with eyes still closed.
   - Cup hands and sip from cupped hands.
   - Tilt head upward. Hold position.

C. Motif, Violin
   - Lower head and hands to sleeping position.

D. Motif, Viola
   - Raise head and chest, with eyes still closed.
   - Extend one hand out directly in front.
   - When arm is extended, face palm upwards.
   - Extend other arm with palm facing down, coming to rest on top of the first hand.
   - Move clasped hands to forehead. Slightly bow forehead. Hold position.

E. Motif, Violin
   - Lower head and hands to sleeping position.

F. Motif, Viola
   - Raise head and chest, with eyes still closed.
   - Cross hands diagonally on chest. Press hands into chest.
   - Move hands upwards until they clasp throat.
   - Tilt neck upwards and continue to move hands upward and past the chin.
   - Hold hands in crossed position and extend arms directly upwards.
   - At full extension, hold position.

G. Silence
   - Open eyes. Look around, bewildered, audible breathing. Lower arms.
   - **Dreamer** looks to **Cello** and nods head hopefully.
   - **Cello** shakes head, solemnly, in response.
   - **Dreamer** looks to **Viola**, who nods head solemnly.
   - **Dreamer** shakes head in disbelief.

H. First sound after silence
   - Dreamer closes eyes as they issue silent scream on the first note after the silence.
   - Leans forward as if crying in anguish.

I. Motif, Violin
   - Intensity gradually leaves face, until relaxed.
   - Lower head and hands to sleeping position.

J. Motif, Cello
   - Raise head and chest, eyes open.

Commissioned by Ortús Festival 2020 with support from the Arts Council of Ireland

Night Piece

SEÁN DOHERTY (b.1987)

A

Largo ♩ = 40

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

s.t.
IV

p *semplice*

3

III

→non arm.

pp

f *sub.*

pp

→non arm.

f *sub.*

5

s.t.

gliss.

pp

pp

→non arm.

f *sub.*

→non arm.

f *sub.*

→non arm.

pp

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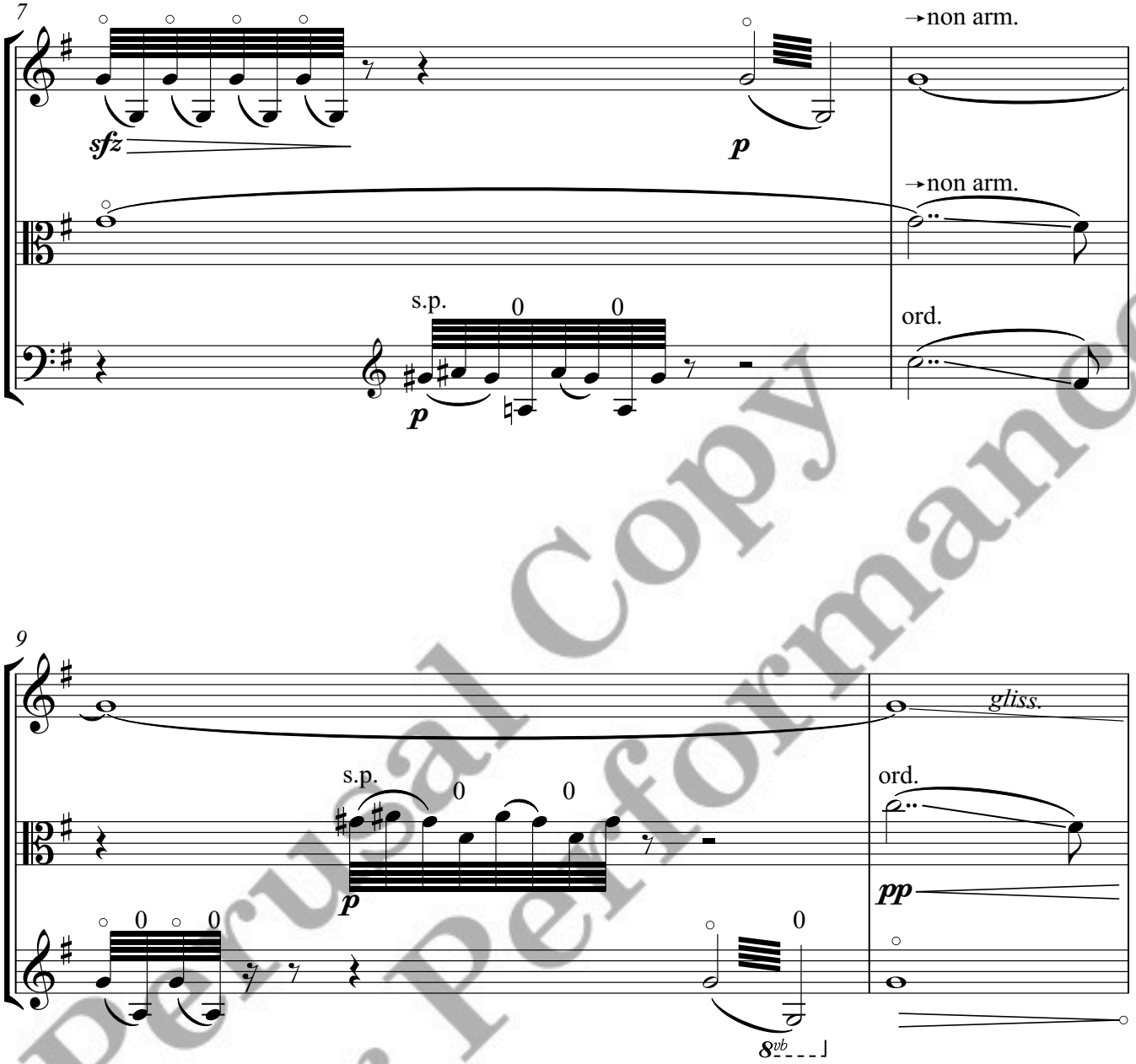

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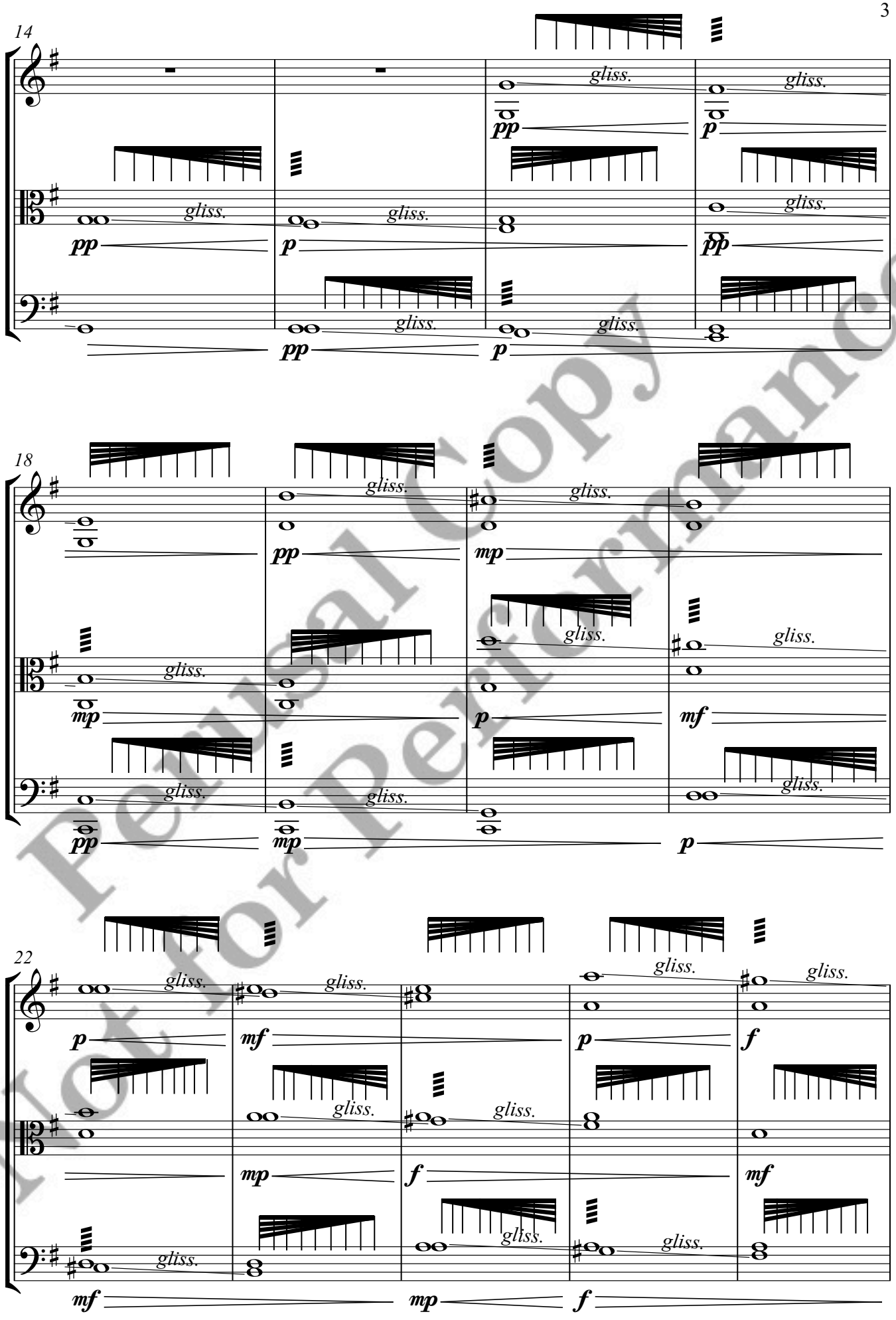

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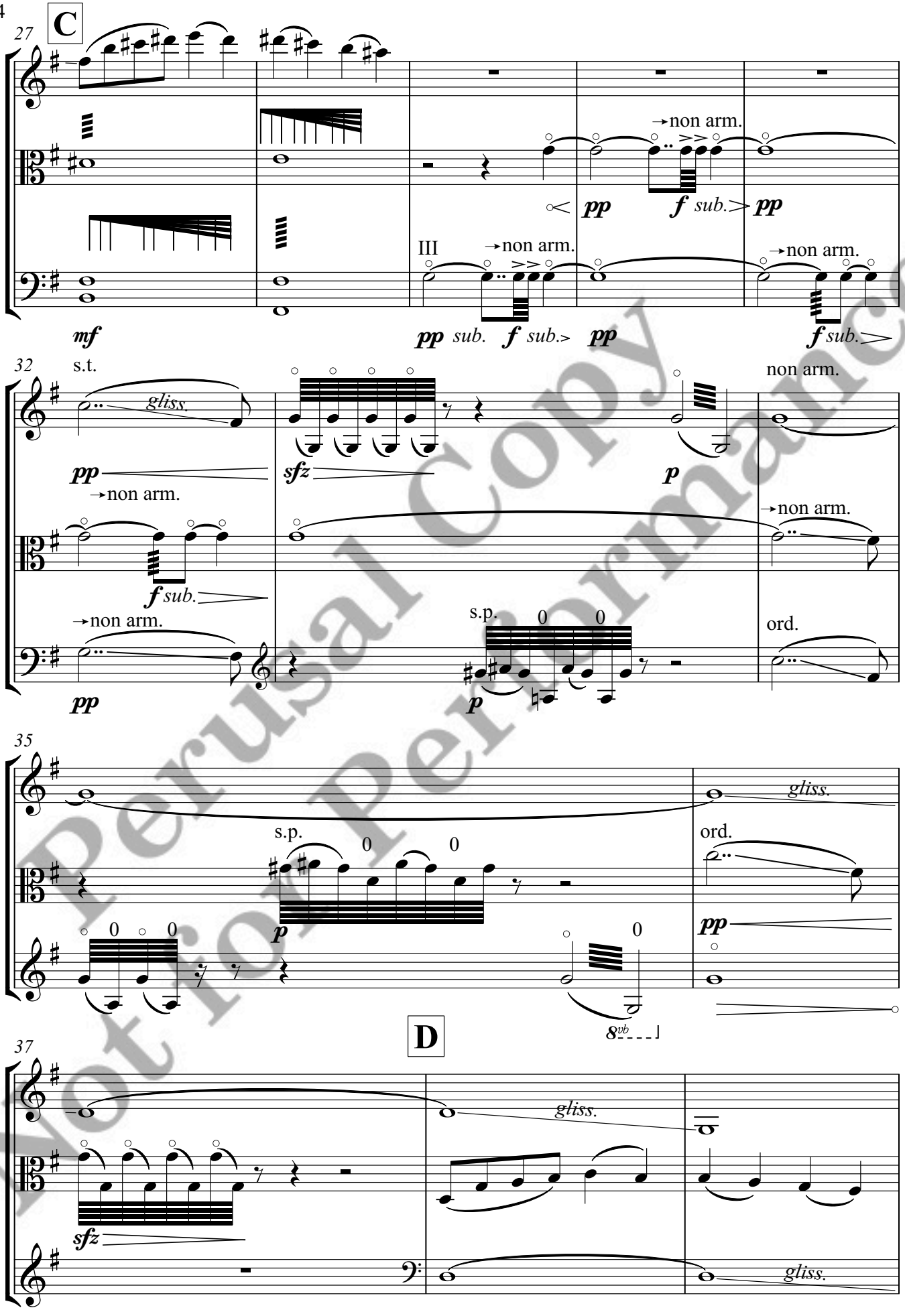

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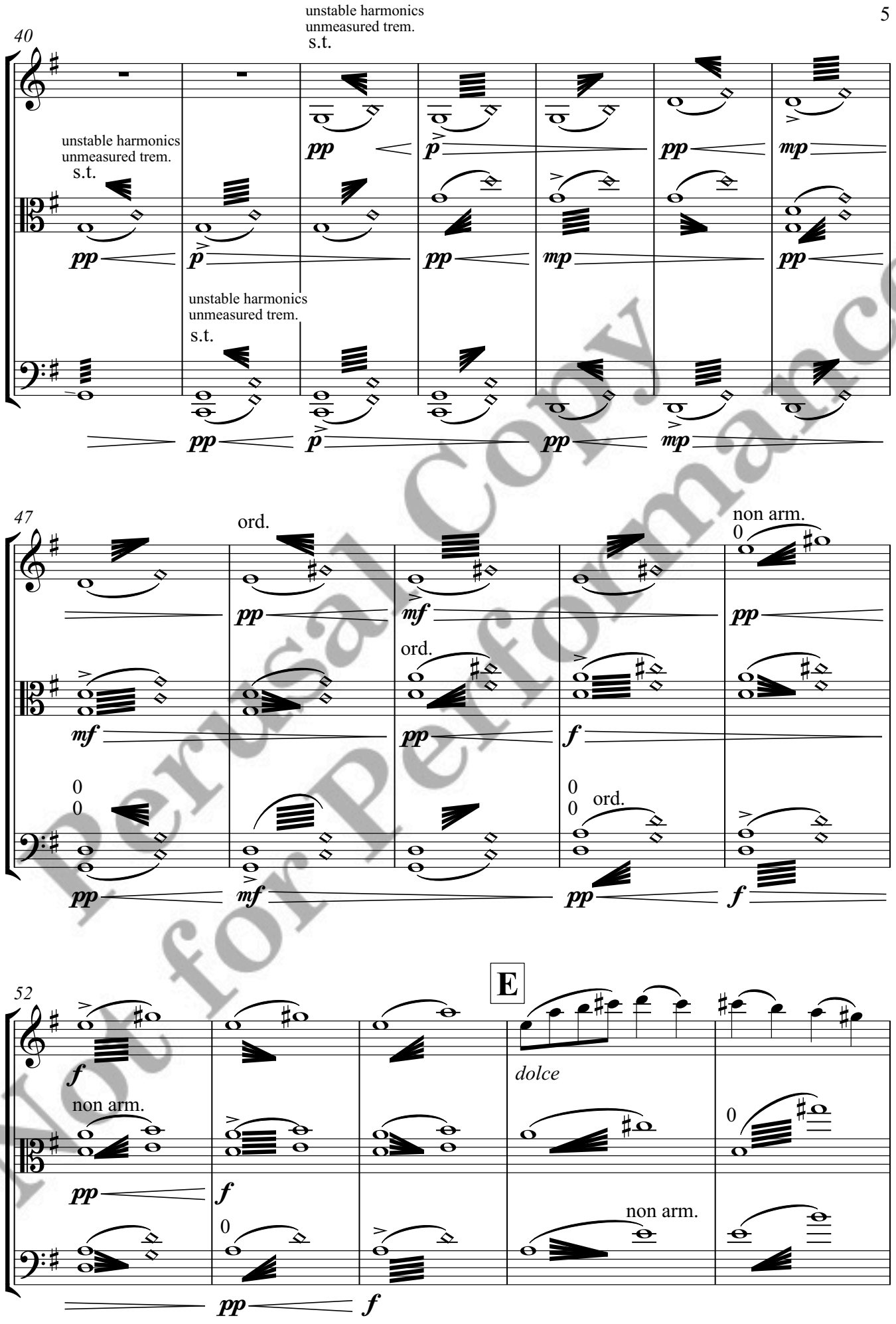

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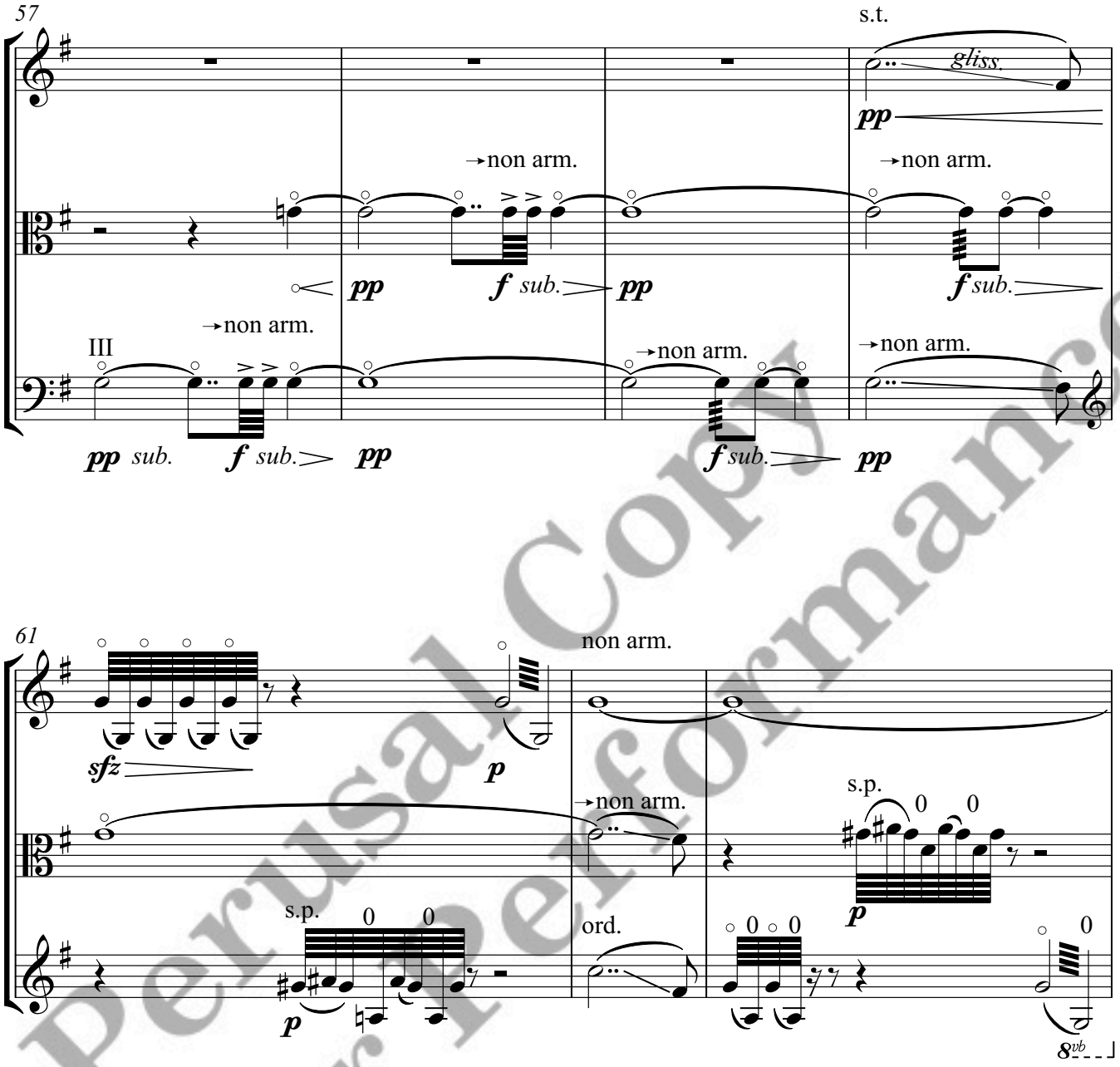

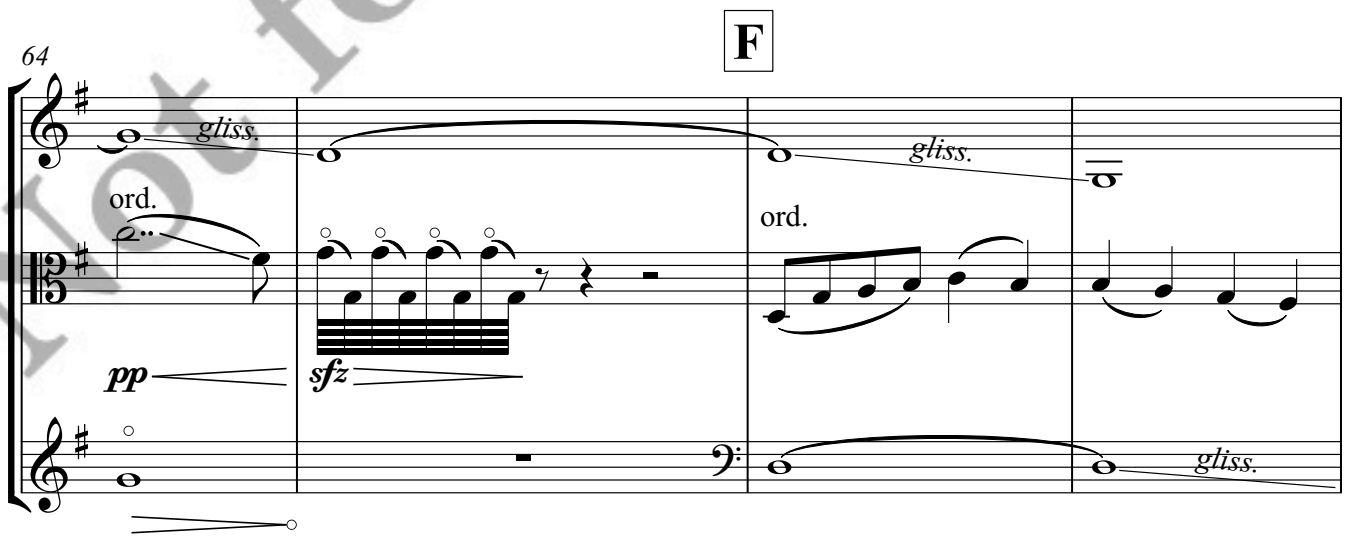

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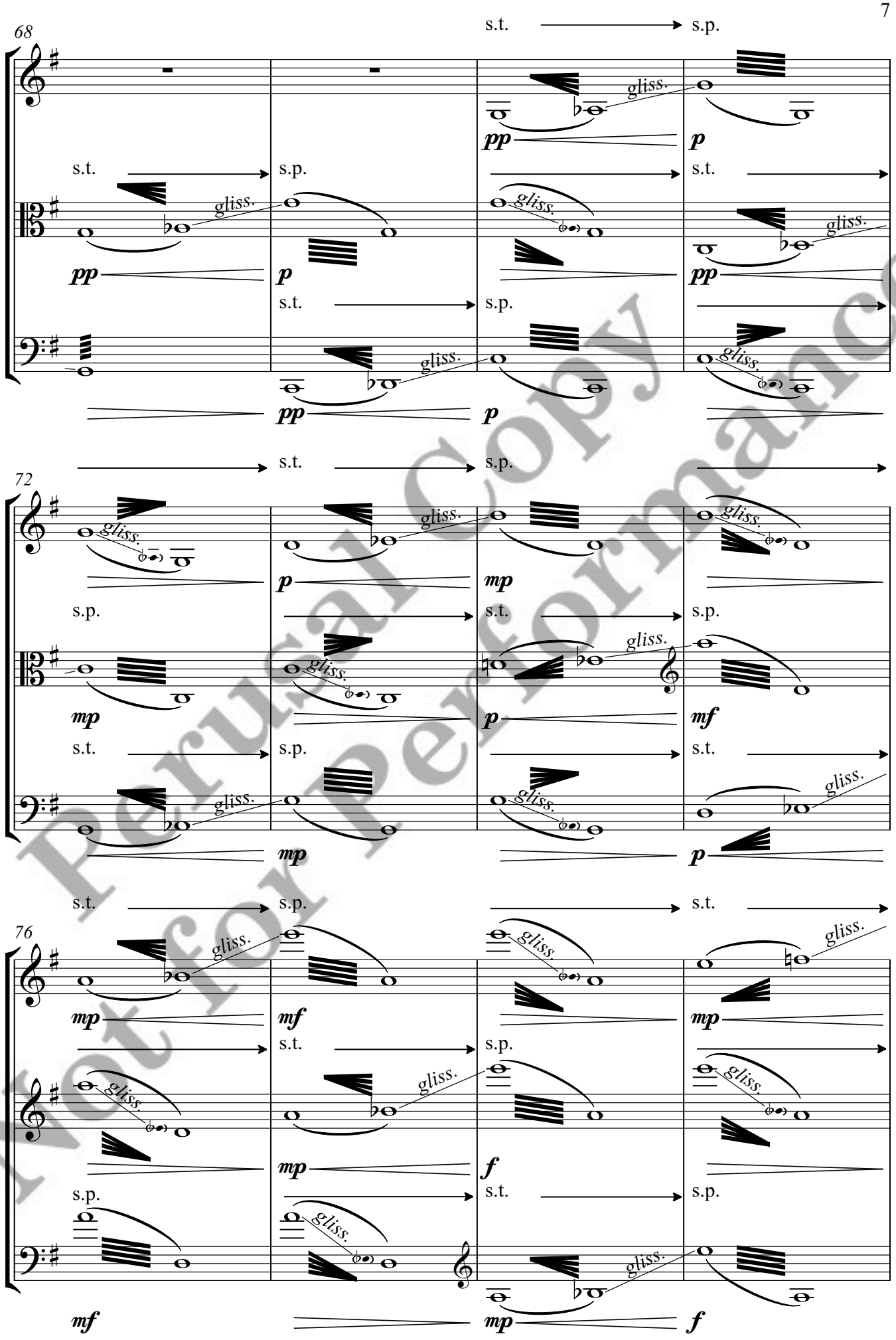

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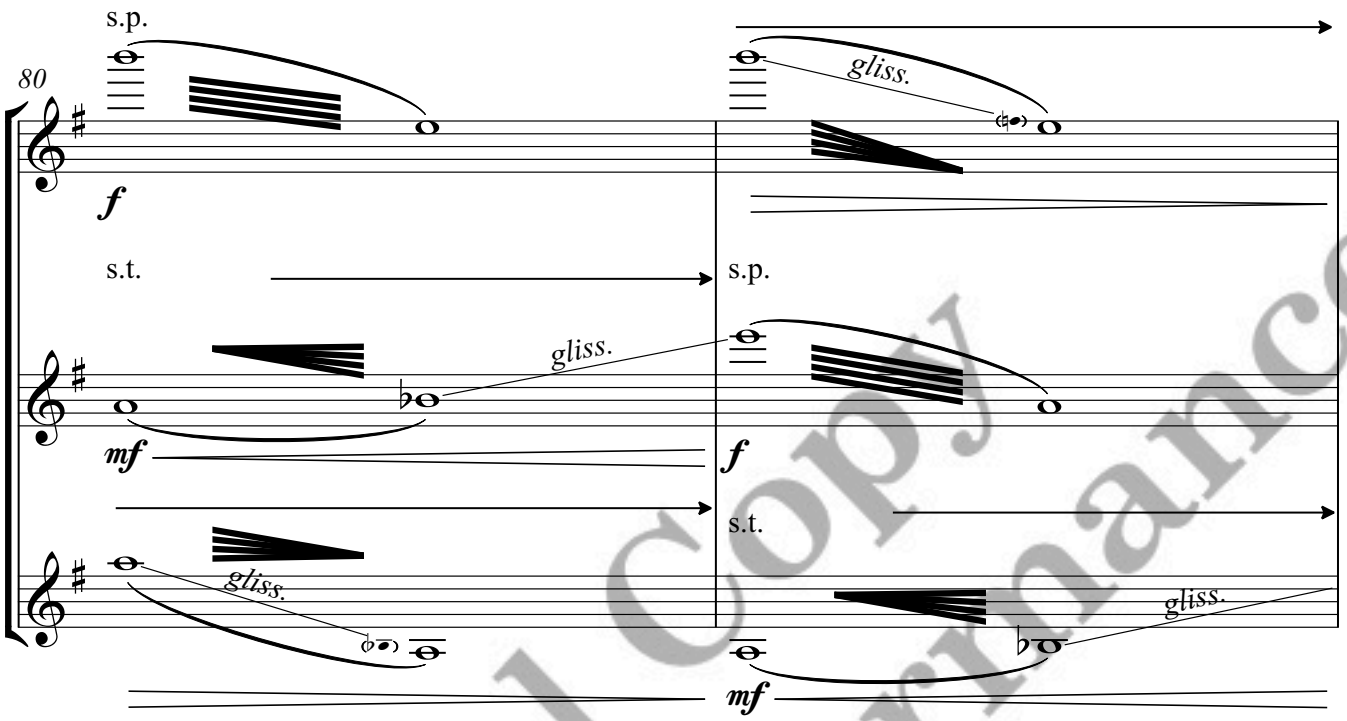

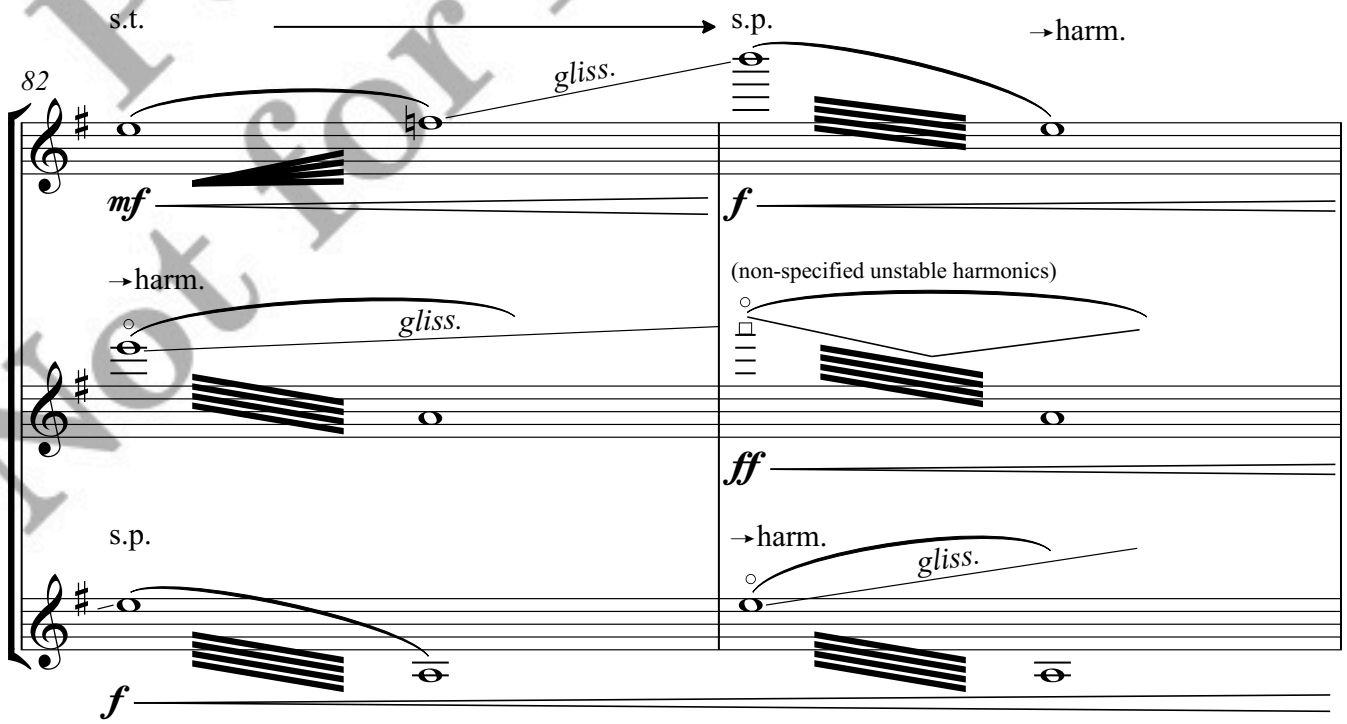

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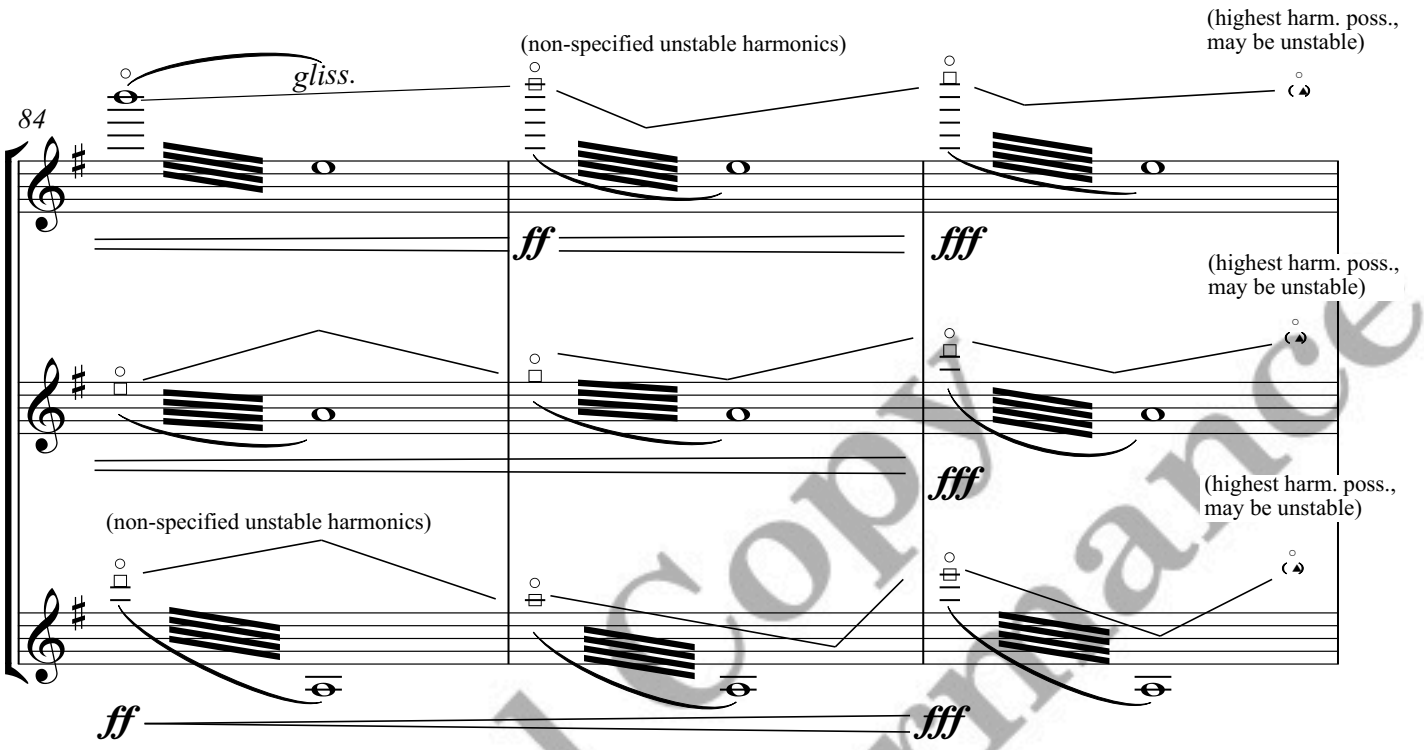

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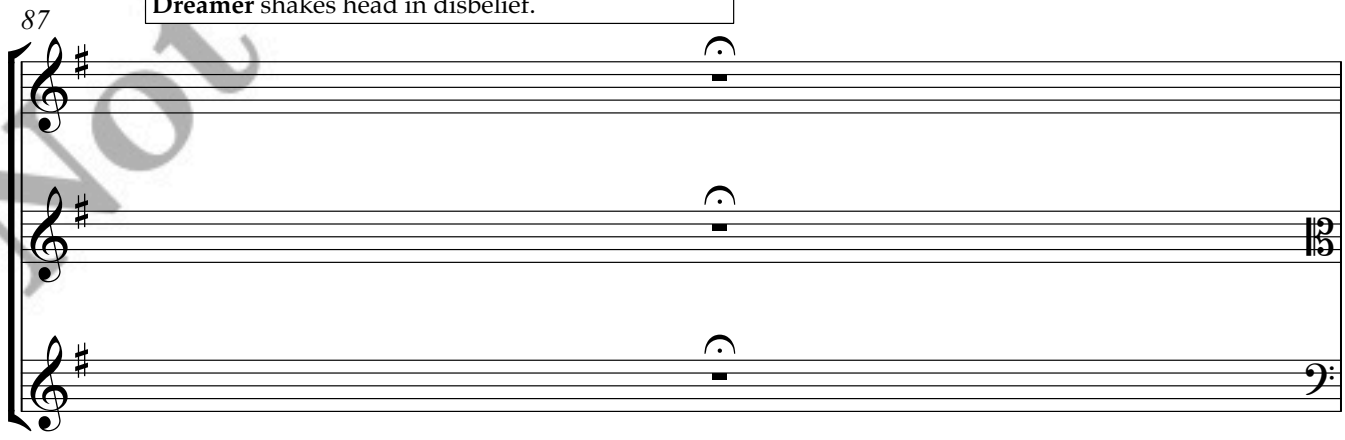
G

Optional cut to Rehearsal Mark **H** (non-staged performance)

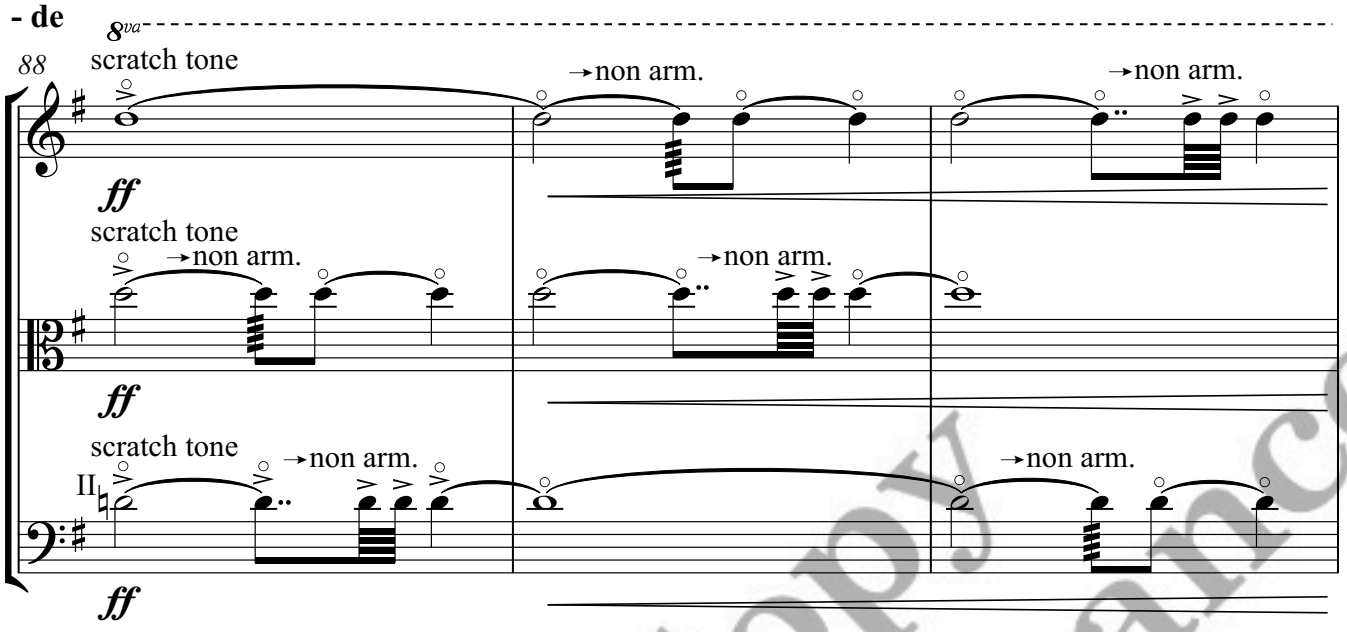
vi -

Dreamer looks to **Cello** and nods head hopefully.
Cello shakes head, solemnly, in response.
Dreamer looks to **Viola**, who nods head solemnly.
Dreamer shakes head in disbelief.

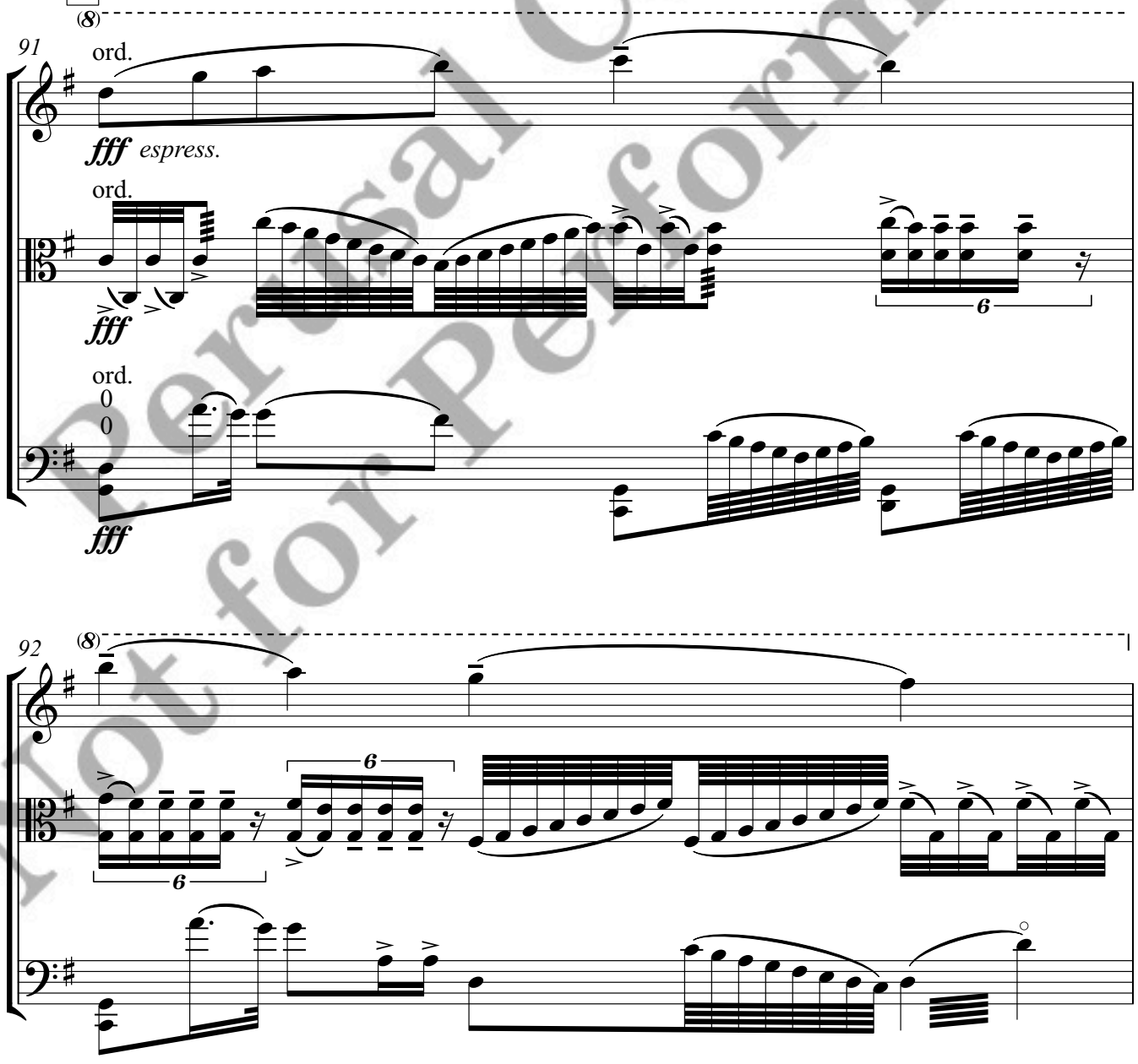


H

- de



I



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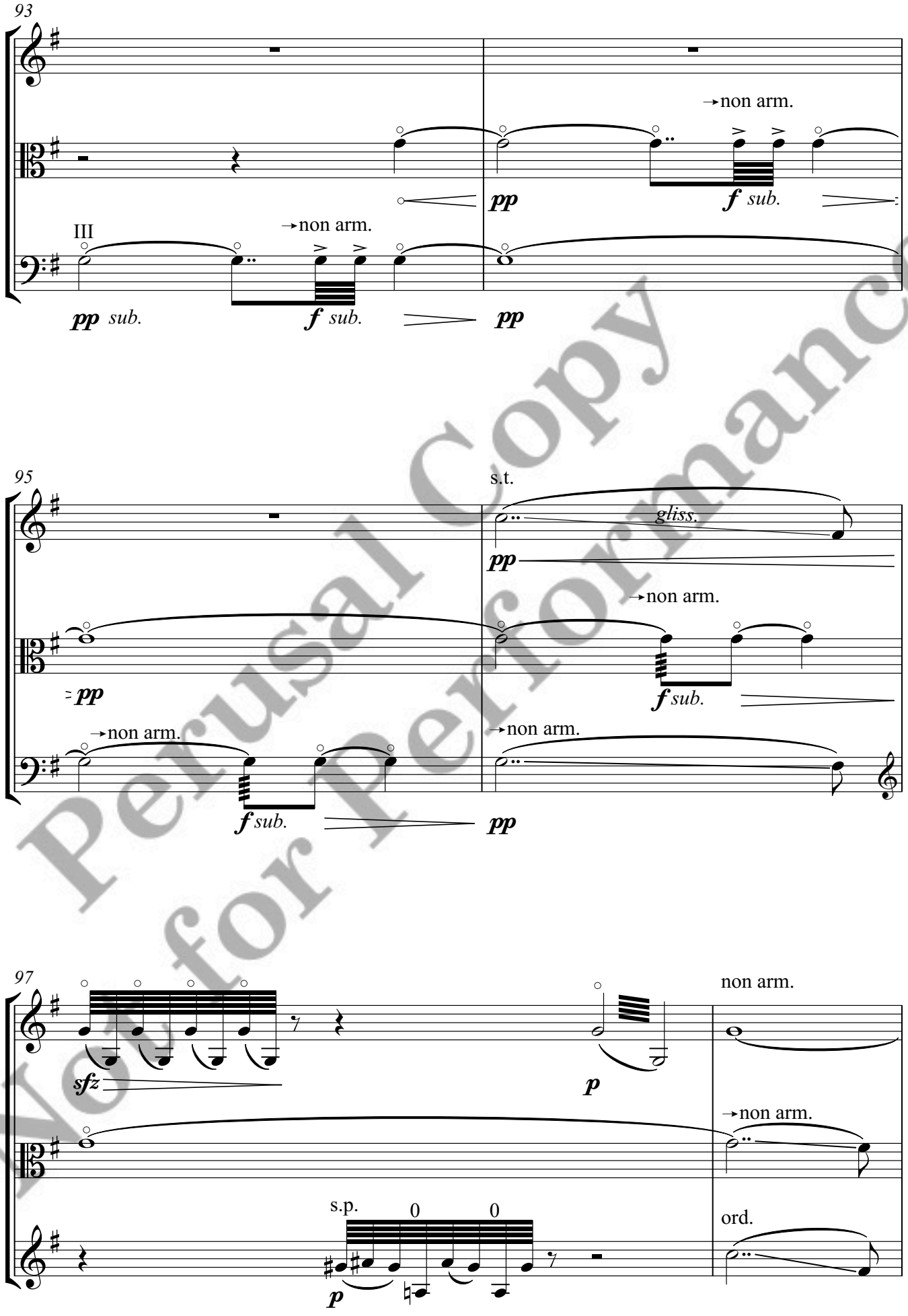

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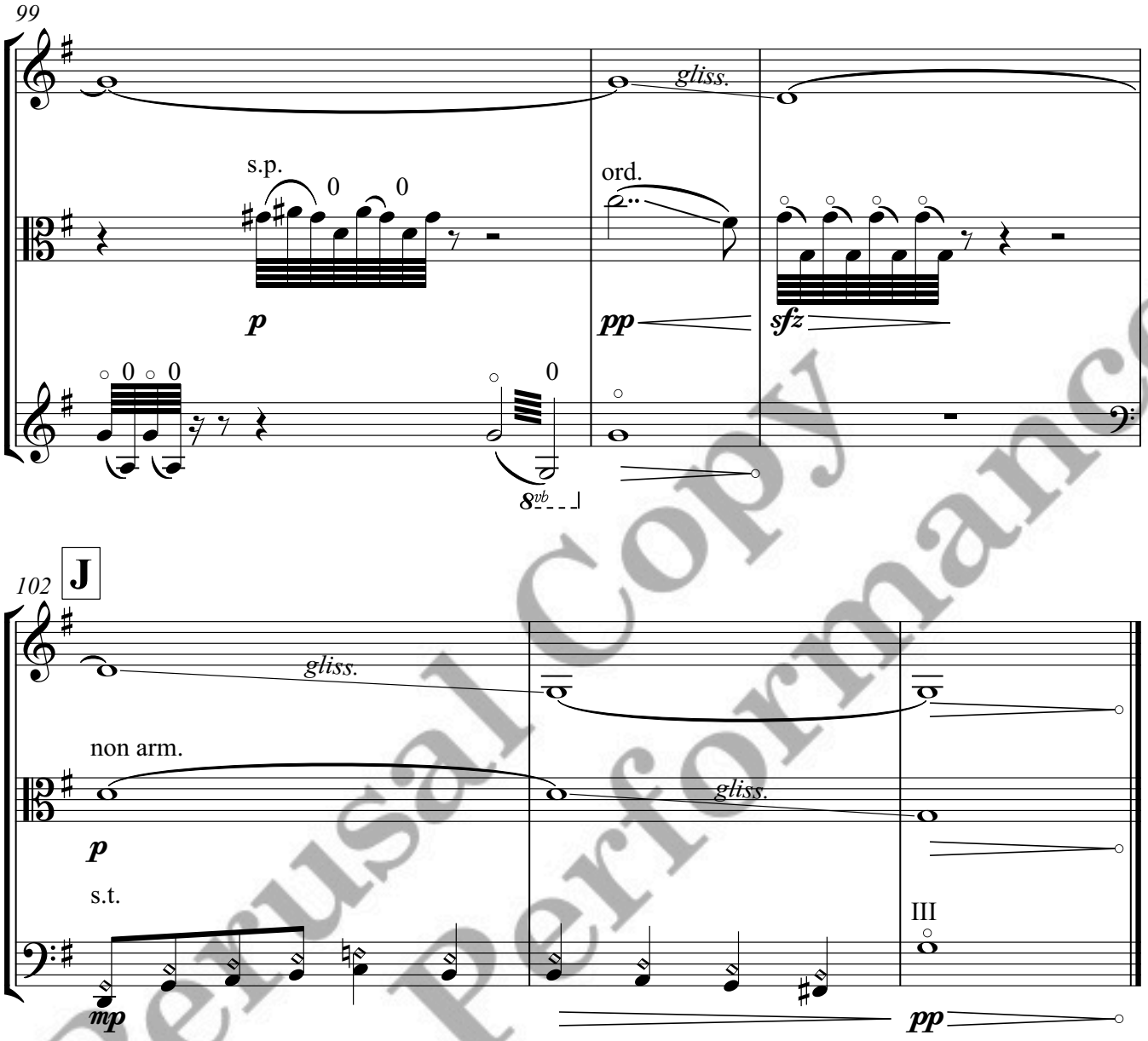

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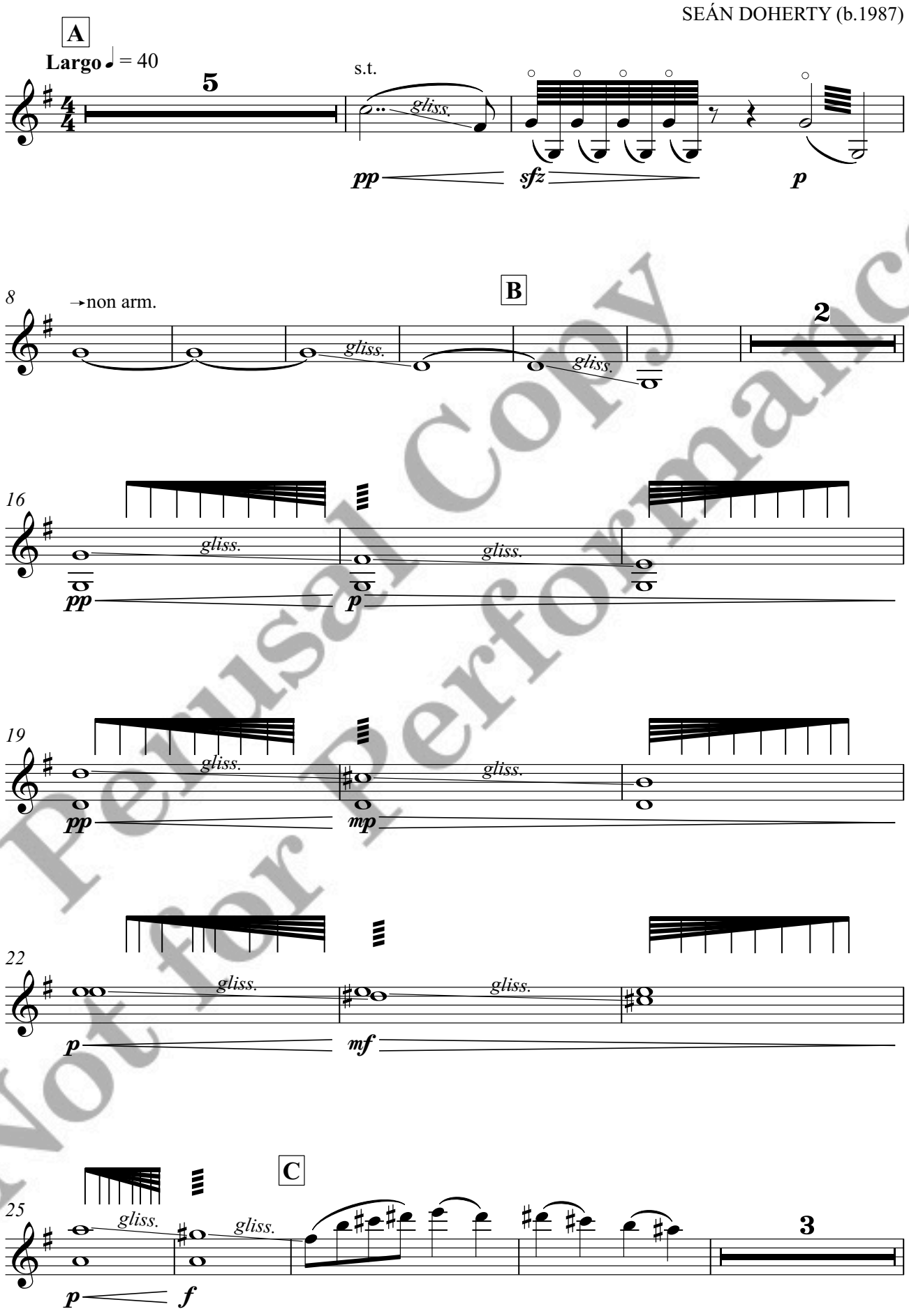
Night Piece

Violin

SEÁN DOHERTY (b.1987)



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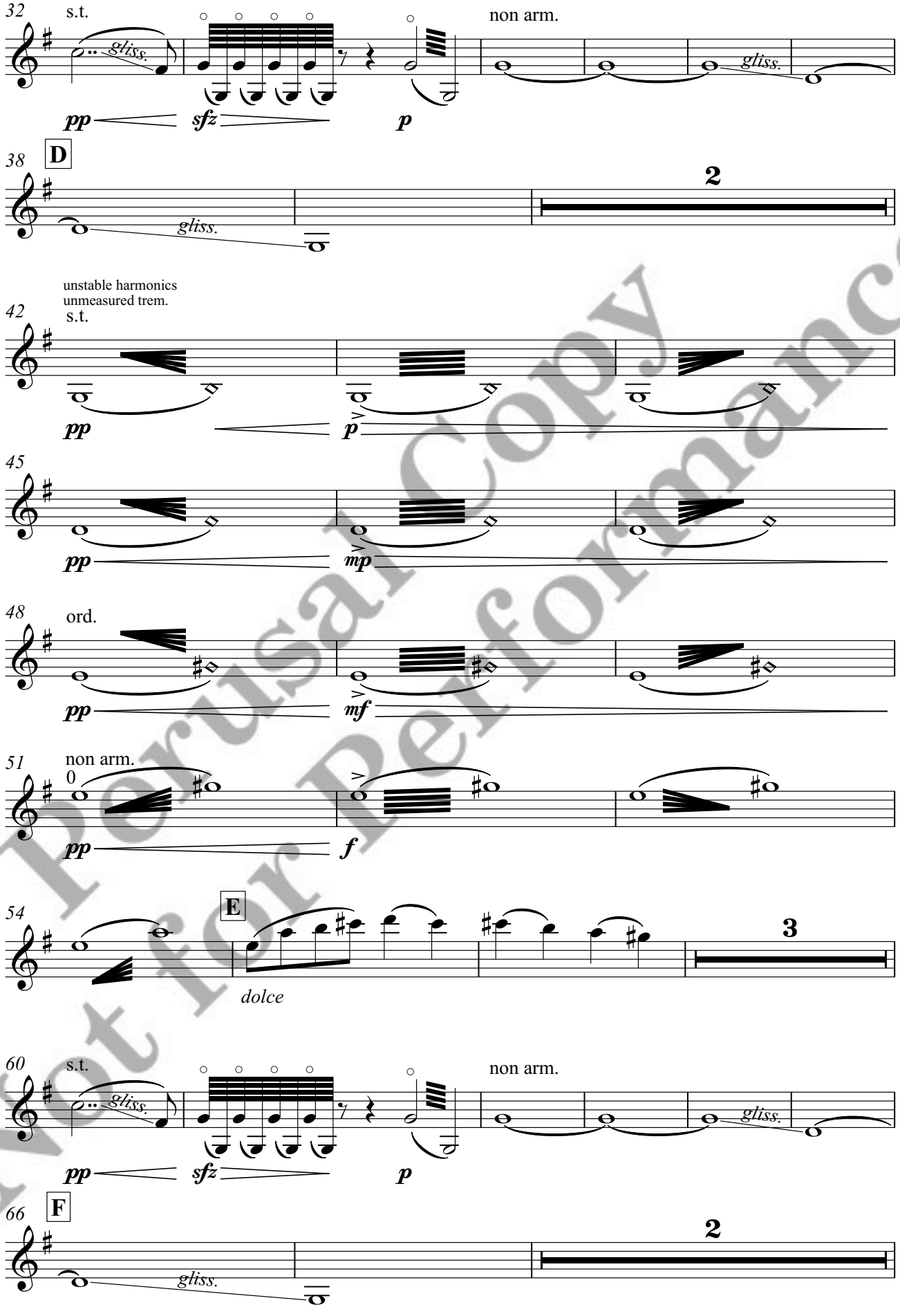

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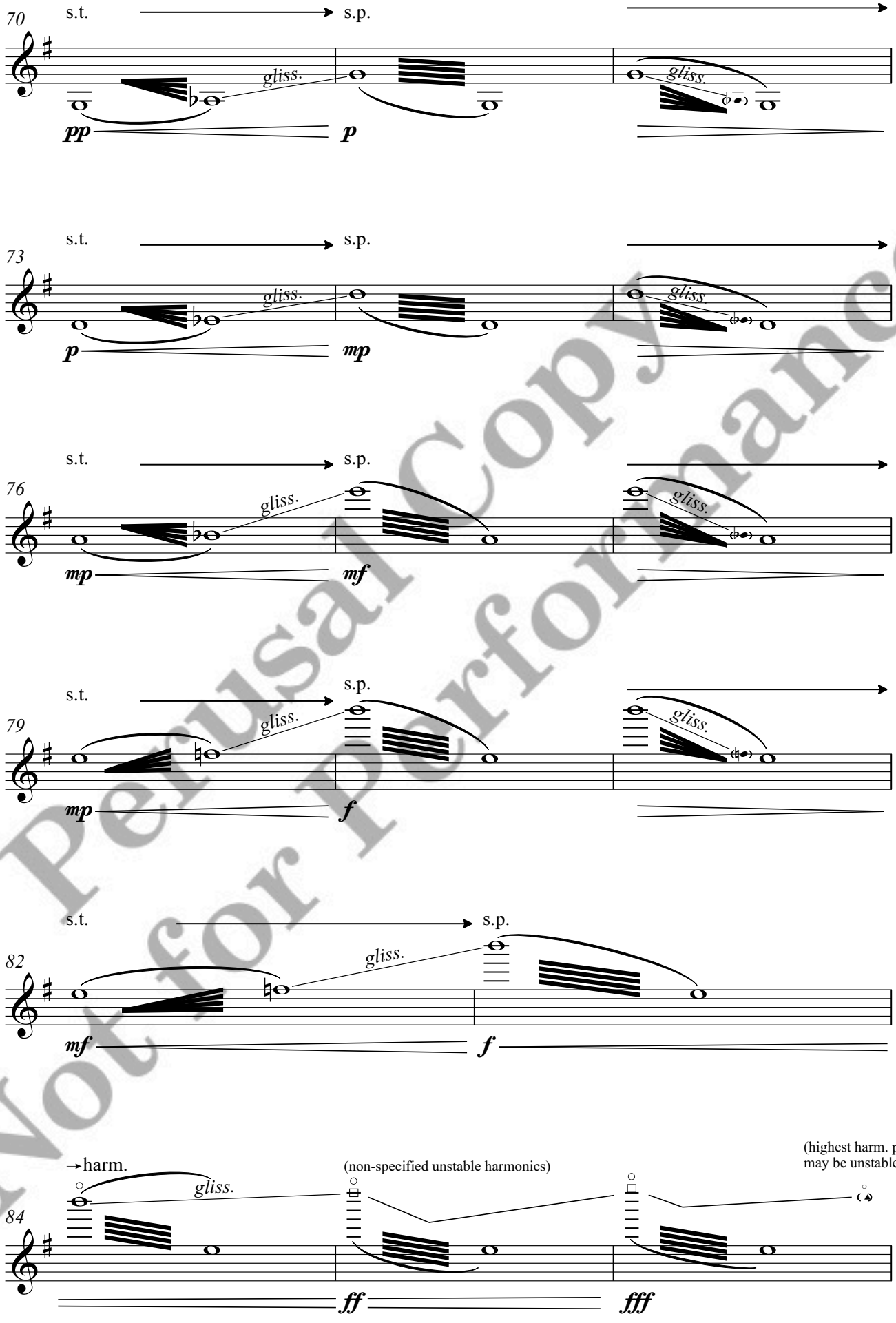

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87

- de

H

8va

88 scratch tone →non arm. →non arm.

ff

I

91 (8) ord.

3

fff *espress.*

96 s.t.

gliss.

pp *sfz* *p*

98 non arm.

J

gliss. *gliss.*

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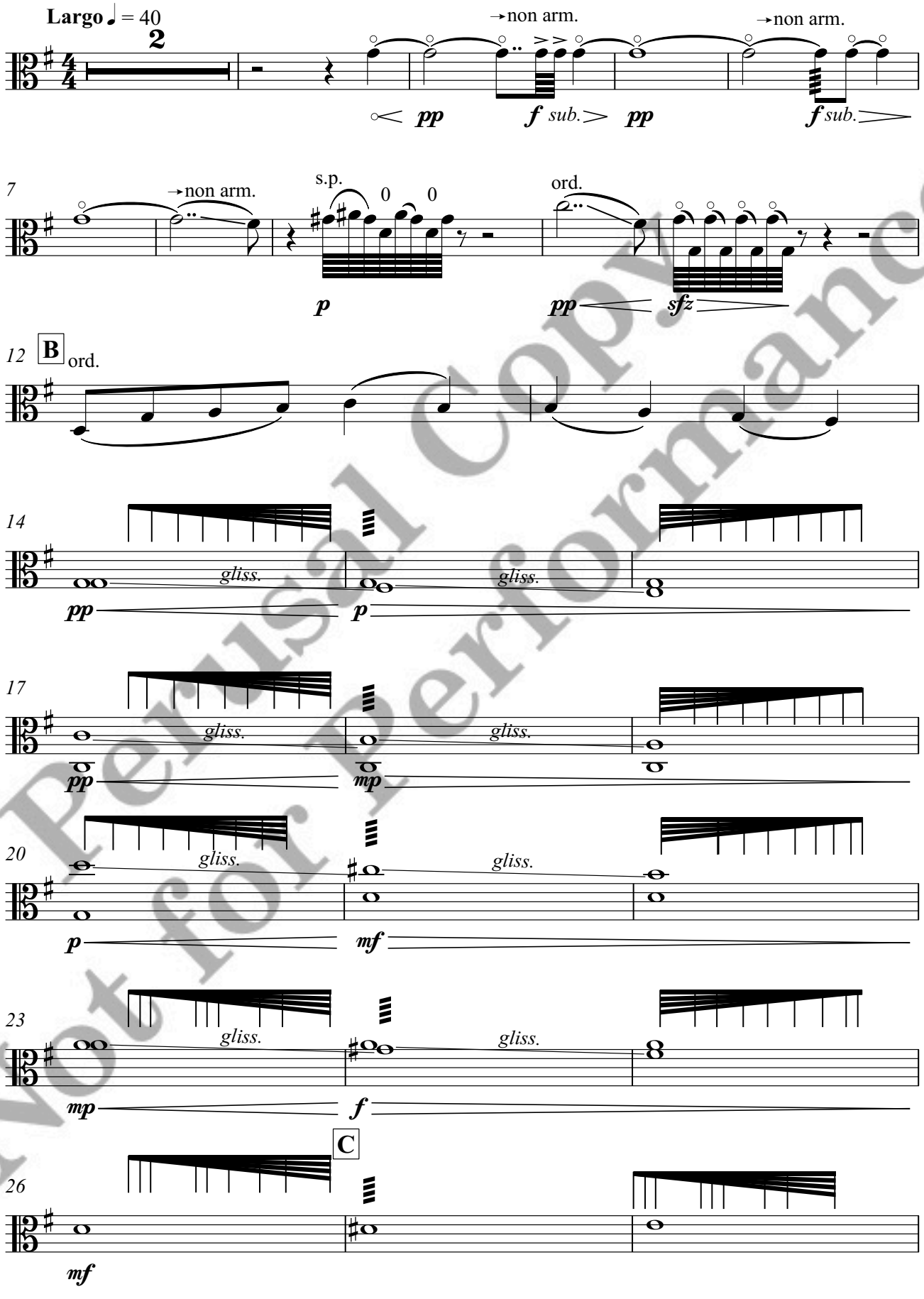
Night Piece

Viola

SEÁN DOHERTY (b.1987)



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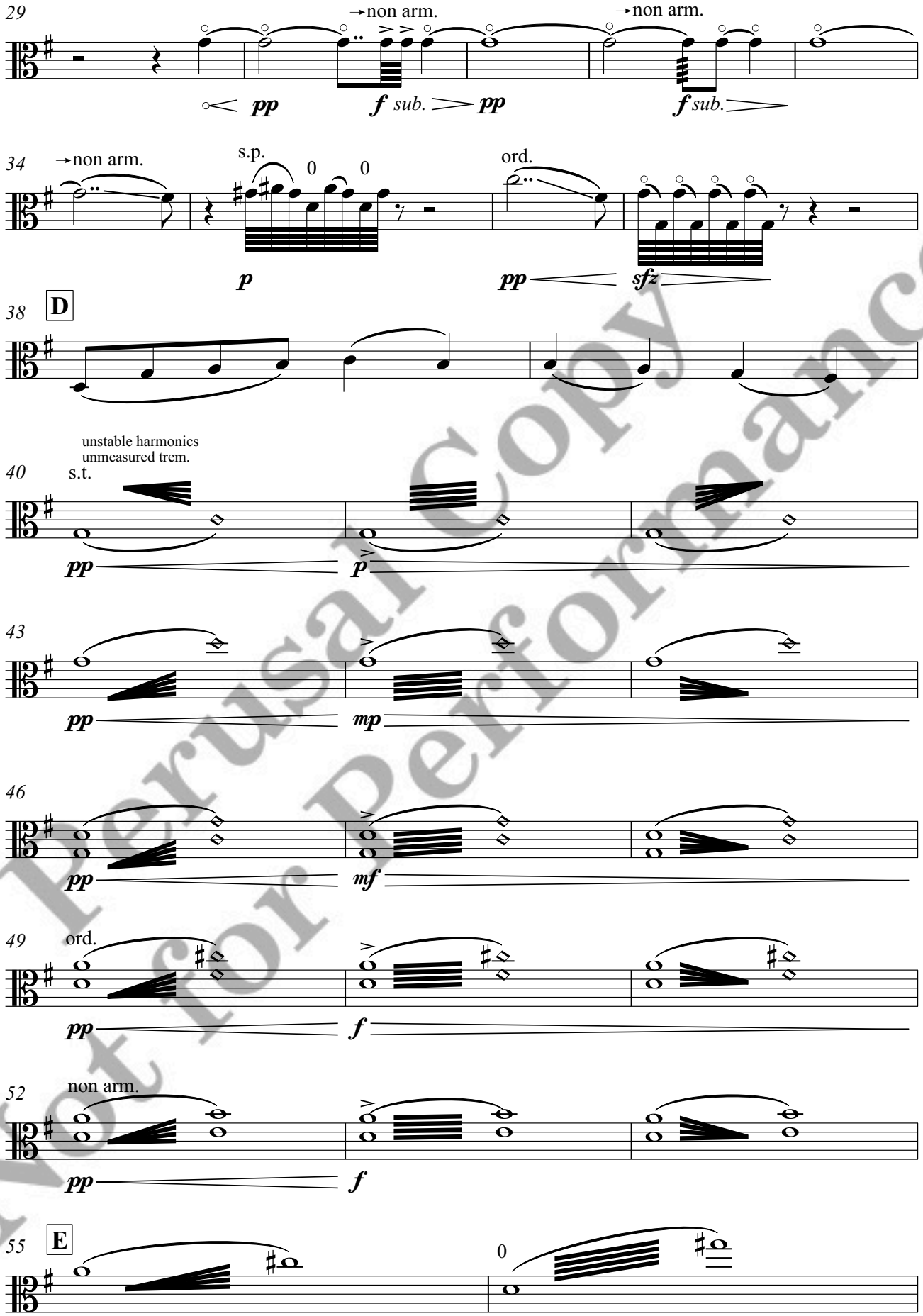

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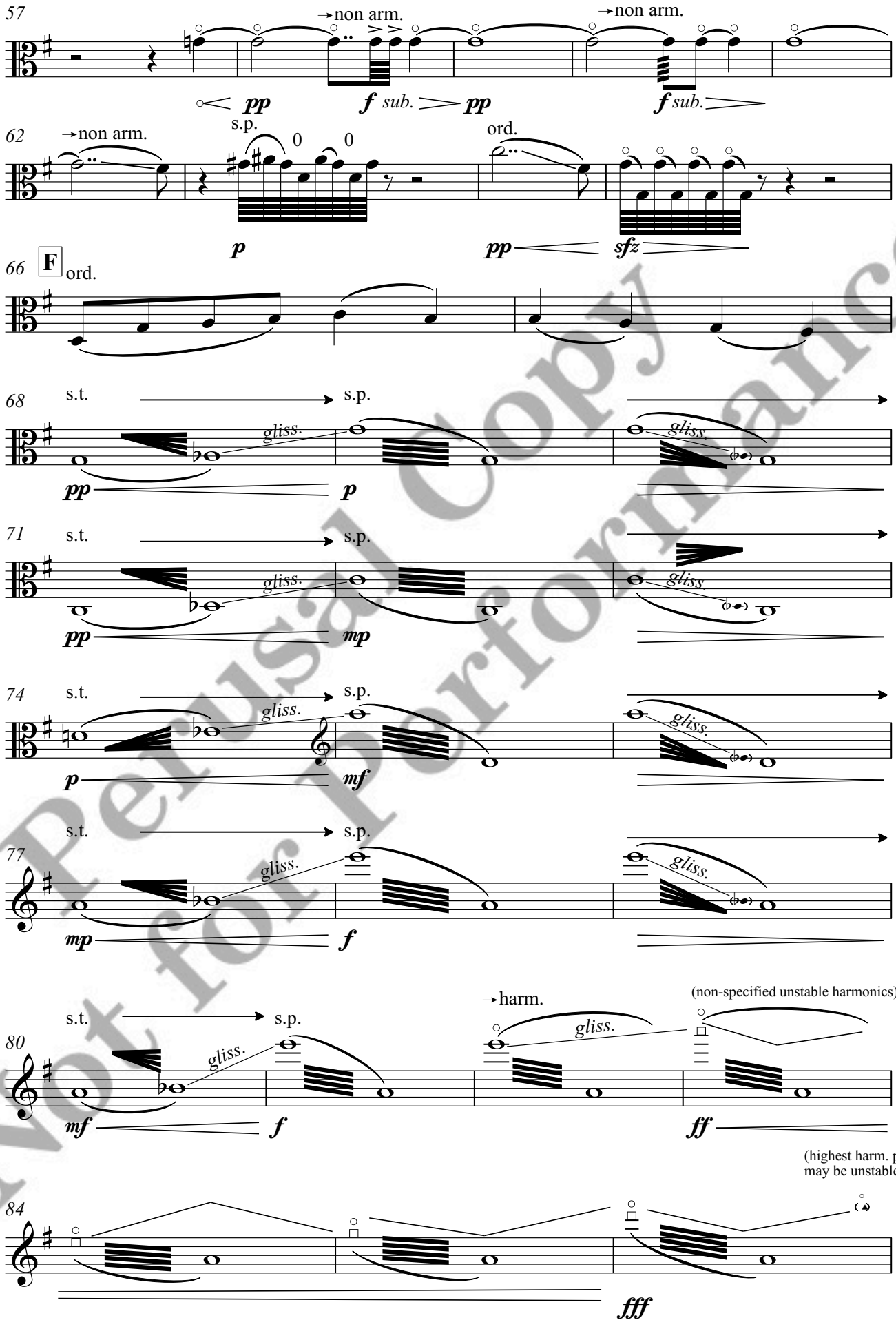

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87

- de scratch tone

H

88 →non arm. →non arm.

ff

I

91 ord.

fff

92

93 →non arm. →non arm. →non arm.

pp *f sub.* *pp* *f sub.*

99 s.p. 0 0 ord.

p *pp* *sfz*

J

102 non arm.

gliss.

p

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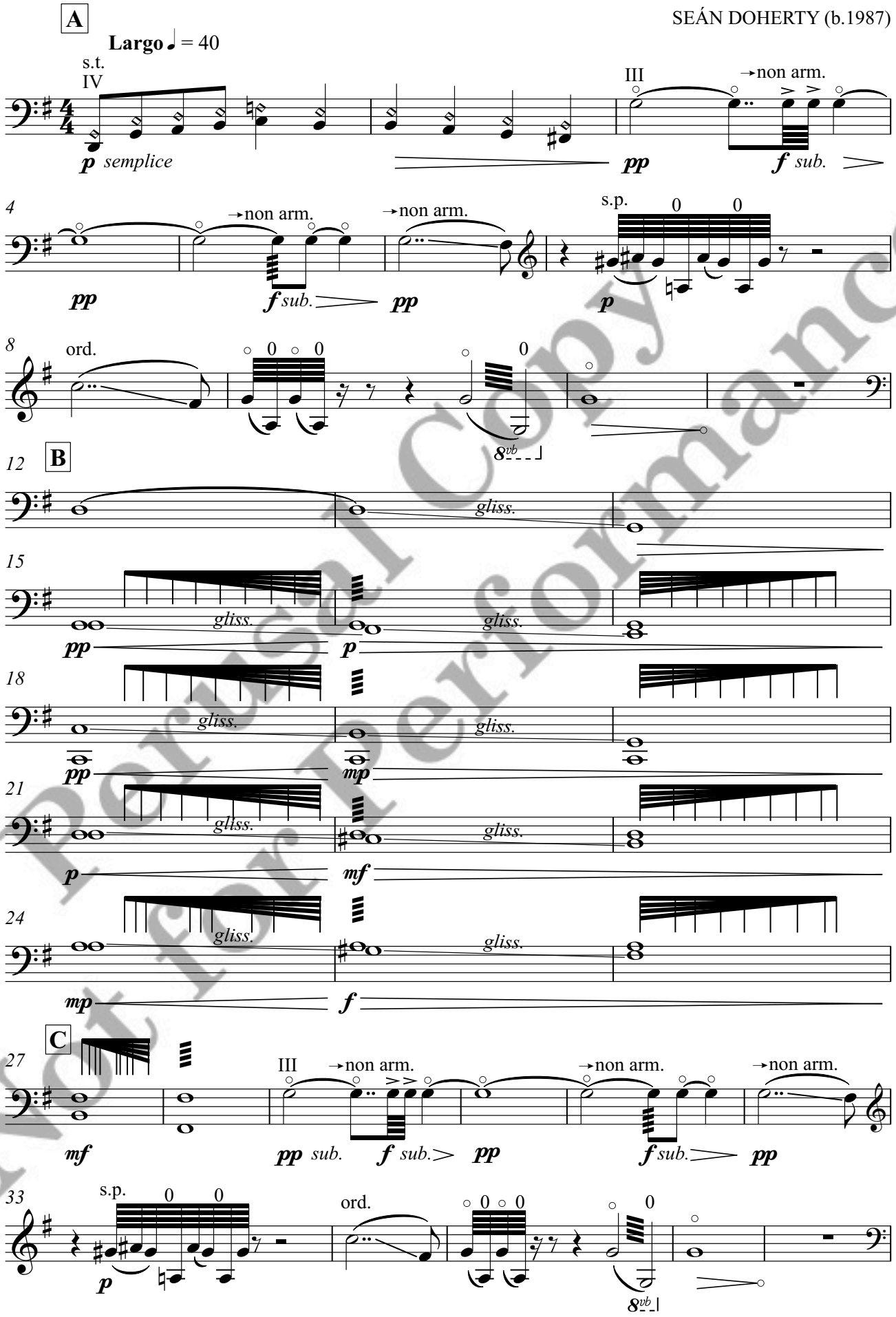
Night Piece

Violoncello

SEÁN DOHERTY (b.1987)



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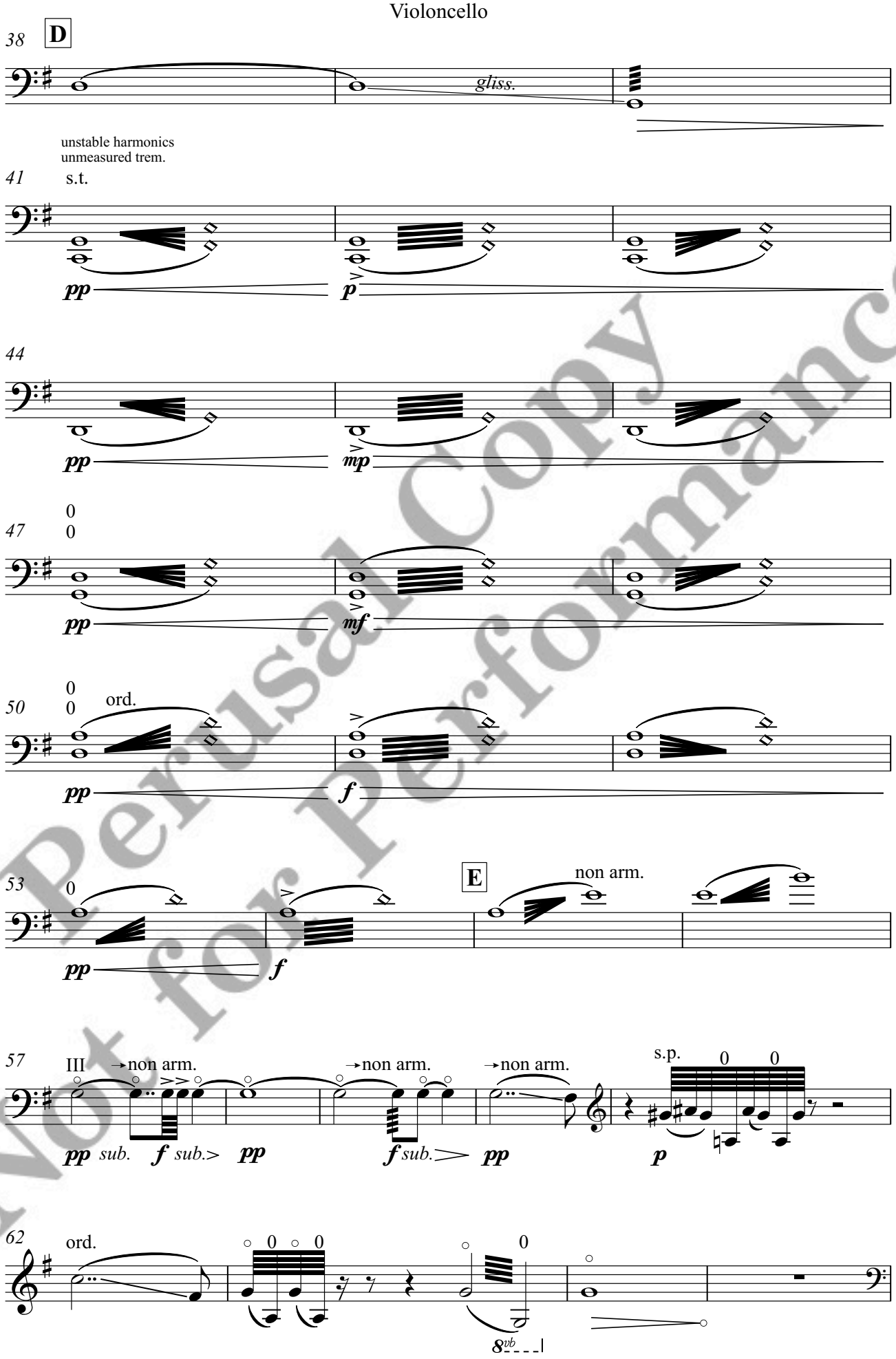

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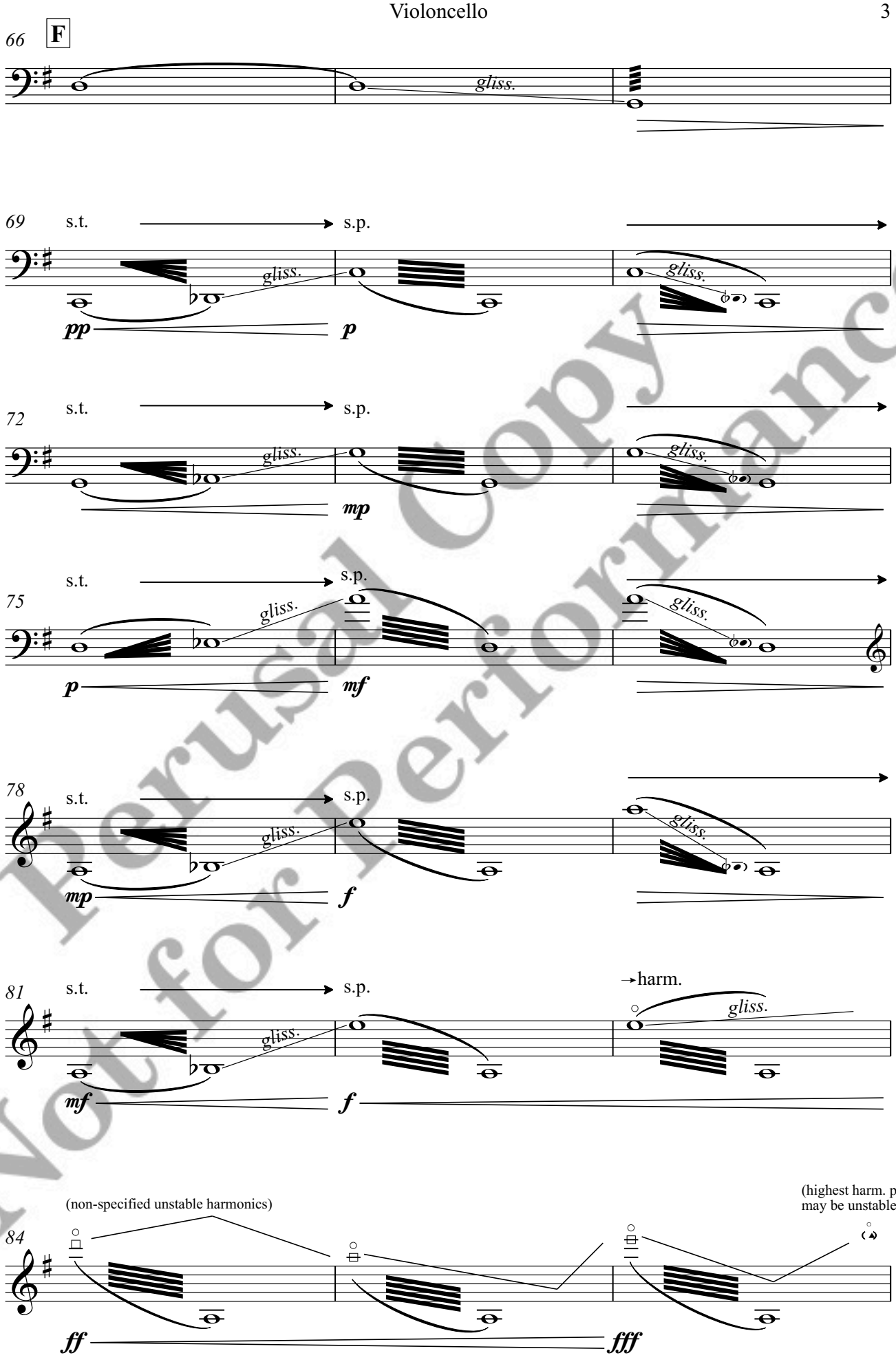

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Violoncello

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Dreamer shakes head in disbelief.

87

H

- de

88 scratch tone II →non arm. →non arm.

ff

91 **I** ord. 0 0

fff

92

93 III →non arm. →non arm.

pp sub. *f sub.* *pp* *f sub.*

96 →non arm. s.p. 0 0 ord.

pp *p*

99 0 0 0

8vb

J

102 s.t. III

mp *pp*

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