String Quartet

No. 1

Jake Berran

(2023)

PERUSAL

Program Notes

Around the time this string quartet was written, I found it difficult to feel a connection to my work because of the unhealthy workload I had lined up for myself. In an attempt to get over this and speak on American work culture in general, I decided to use the "4-7-8" breathing technique as the impetus for this piece, since deep breathing is one of the most basic ways to resist overexertion and its negative effects. To start, the first measure—a "stressor"—is followed by a literal orchestration of "4-7-8" breathing. Early on, the numbers 4-7-8 are also used motivically as pitch classes. Throughout the piece, a couple other goals I had were to overcome my aversion to triple meters (it worked!) and to create a language of semantic relationships—such as the the "instigating" jeté technique—and use this language in service of narrative and dramatic tension. The ending brings together many different ideas from the piece, attempting to make sense of it all as one entity. While the work may have strayed from its initial inspiration, I hope there's still a kernel in there that some can find relatable.

Duration: 12 minutes

Performance Notes

• Glissandi between two notes should begin immediately on the first note. Portamenti should begin near the end of the first note.

• When possible, staccati should be played off the string, and generally very short.

• Notes marked jeté () should last as long as possible, but no longer than the given rhythmic value.

• The marking "ord." only cancels "sul pont." and "sul tasto" or variants thereof. It does not cancel other playing techniques like "jeté."

• The cellist is asked to tune the C string down to B in mm. 198-203, and back up to C in mm. 243-248. Suggestions for how to perform the changes are given, but the cellist may do whatever is most convenient at whichever dynamic is most helpful.

PERUSAL

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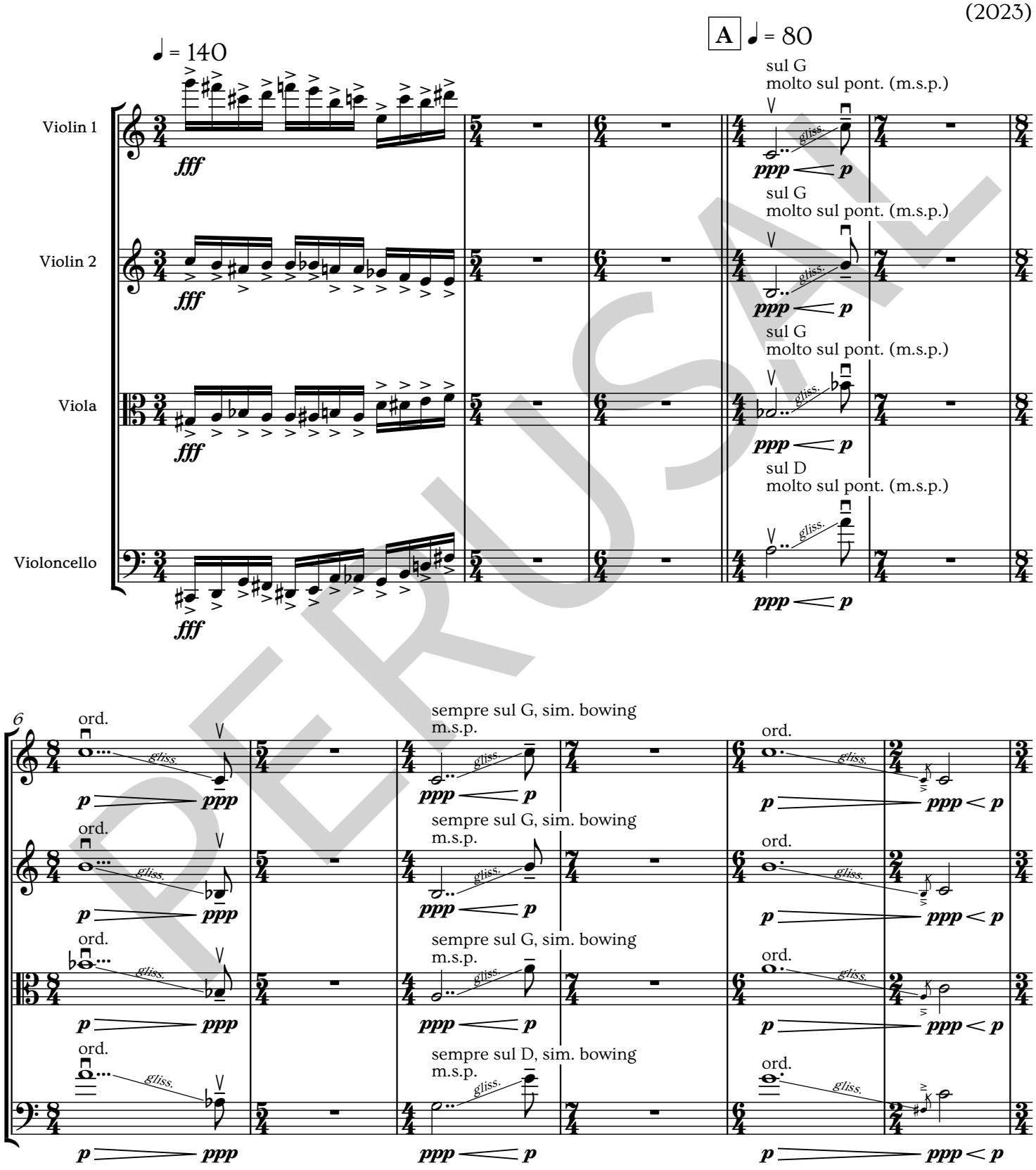

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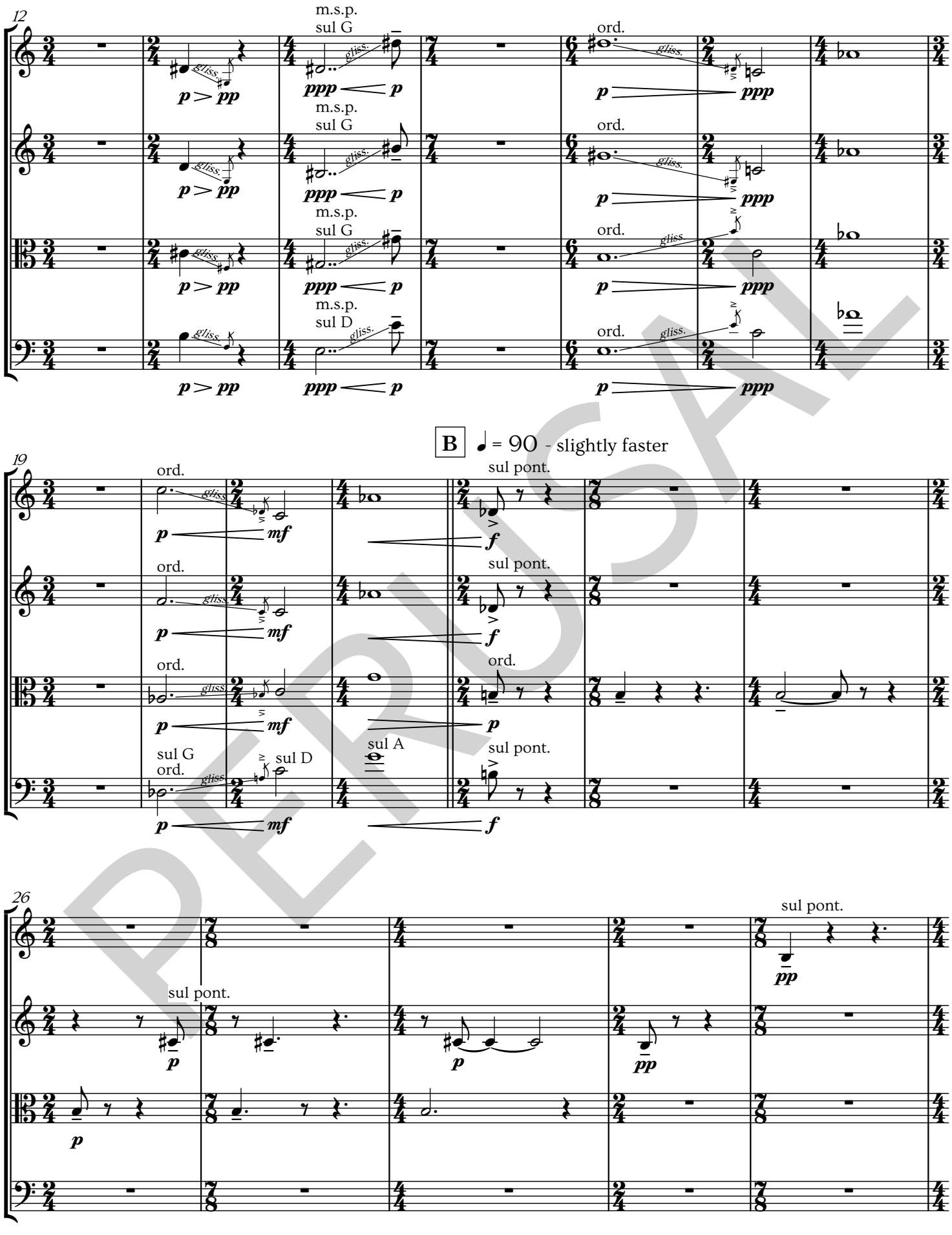
12
m.s.p.
sul G
gliss.
p > pp
ppp < p
ord.
p ppp
m.s.p.
sul D
B
♩ = 90 - slightly faster
19
ord.
p mf
sul pont.
f
sul G
sul D
sul A
26
sul pont.
pp

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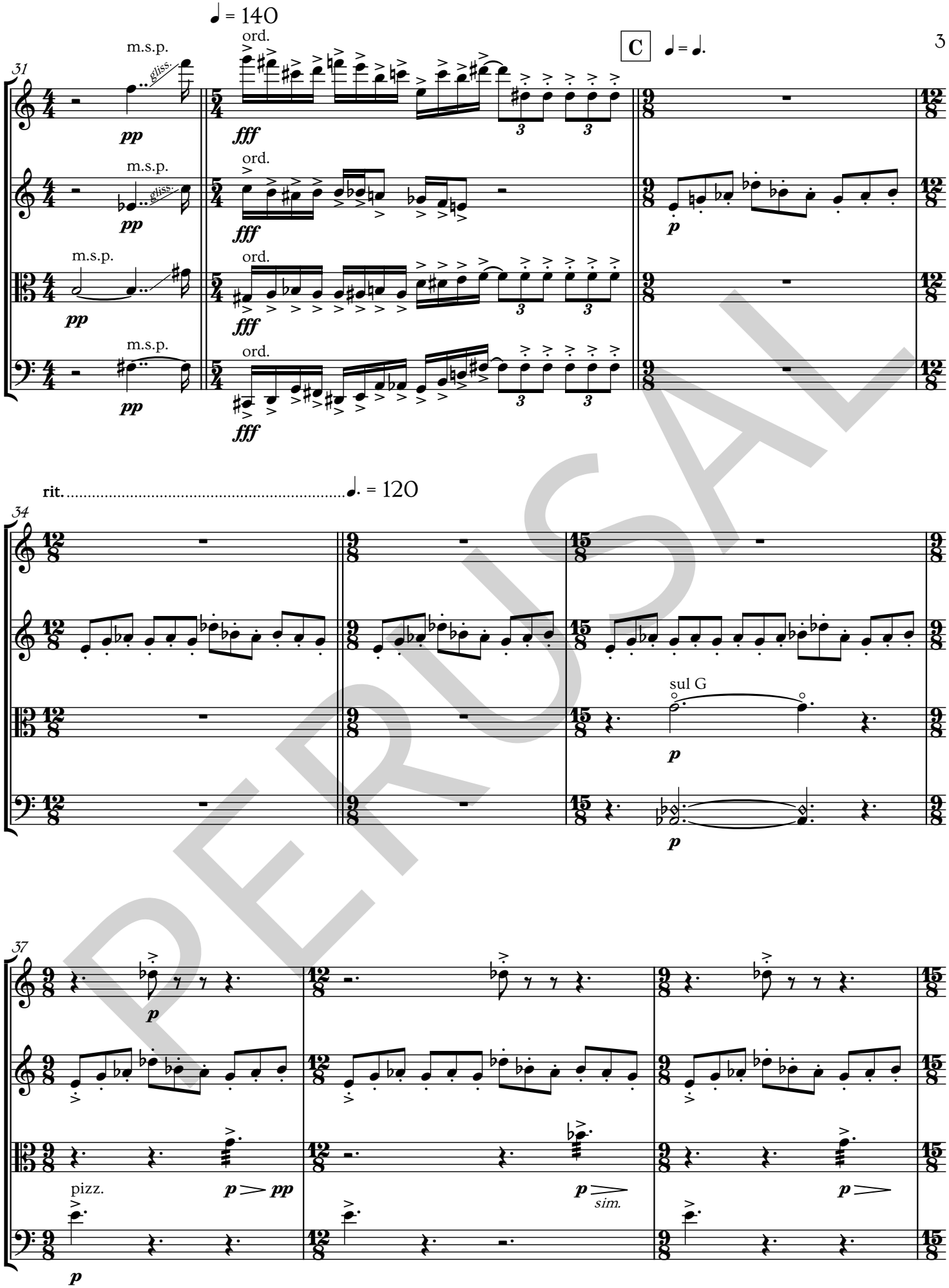

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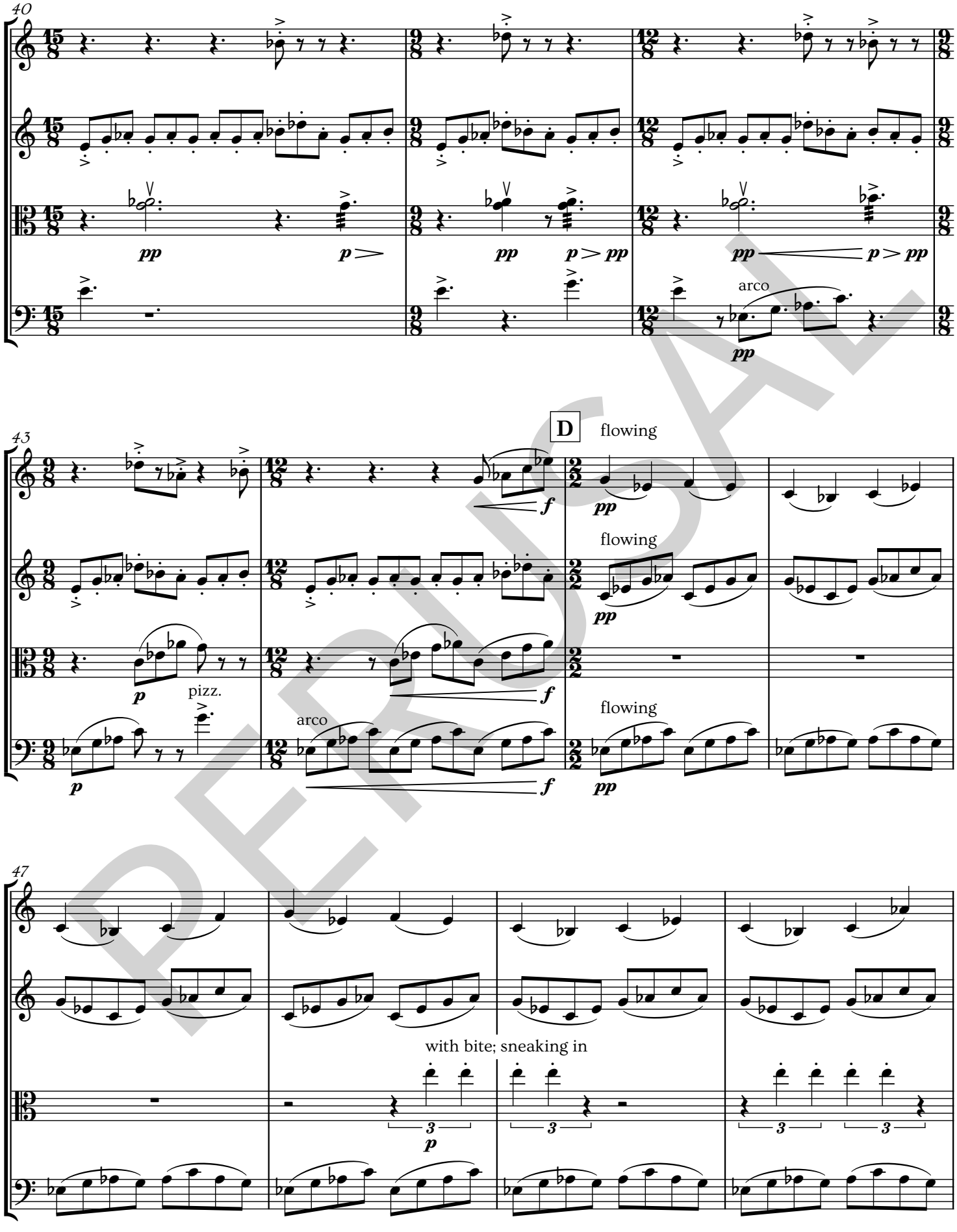
40
pp
p
pp
p pp
pp
p pp
arco
pp
43
D
flowing
f
pp
flowing
pp
p
pizz.
f
flowing
arco
p
f
pp
47
with bite; sneaking in
3
p
3
3
3
3

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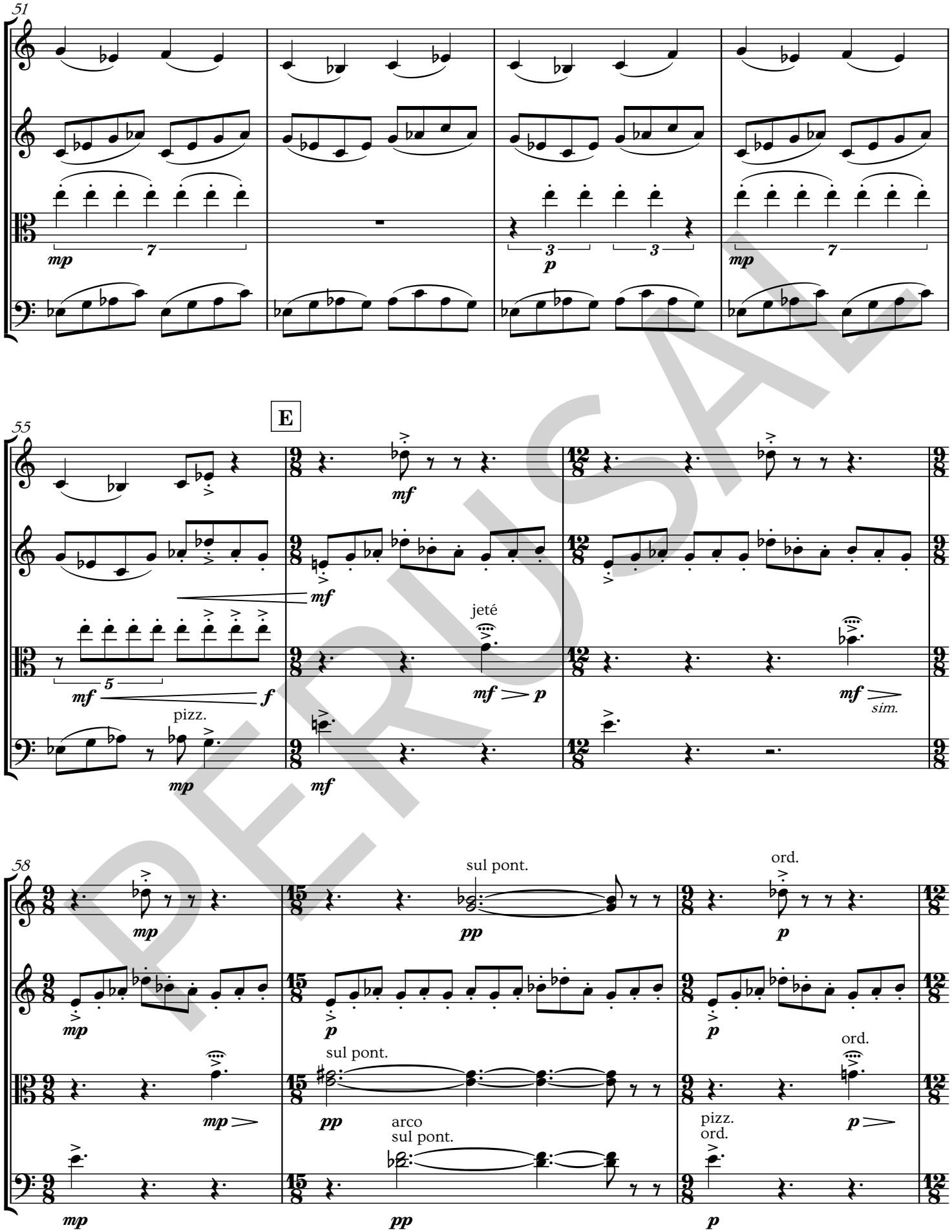
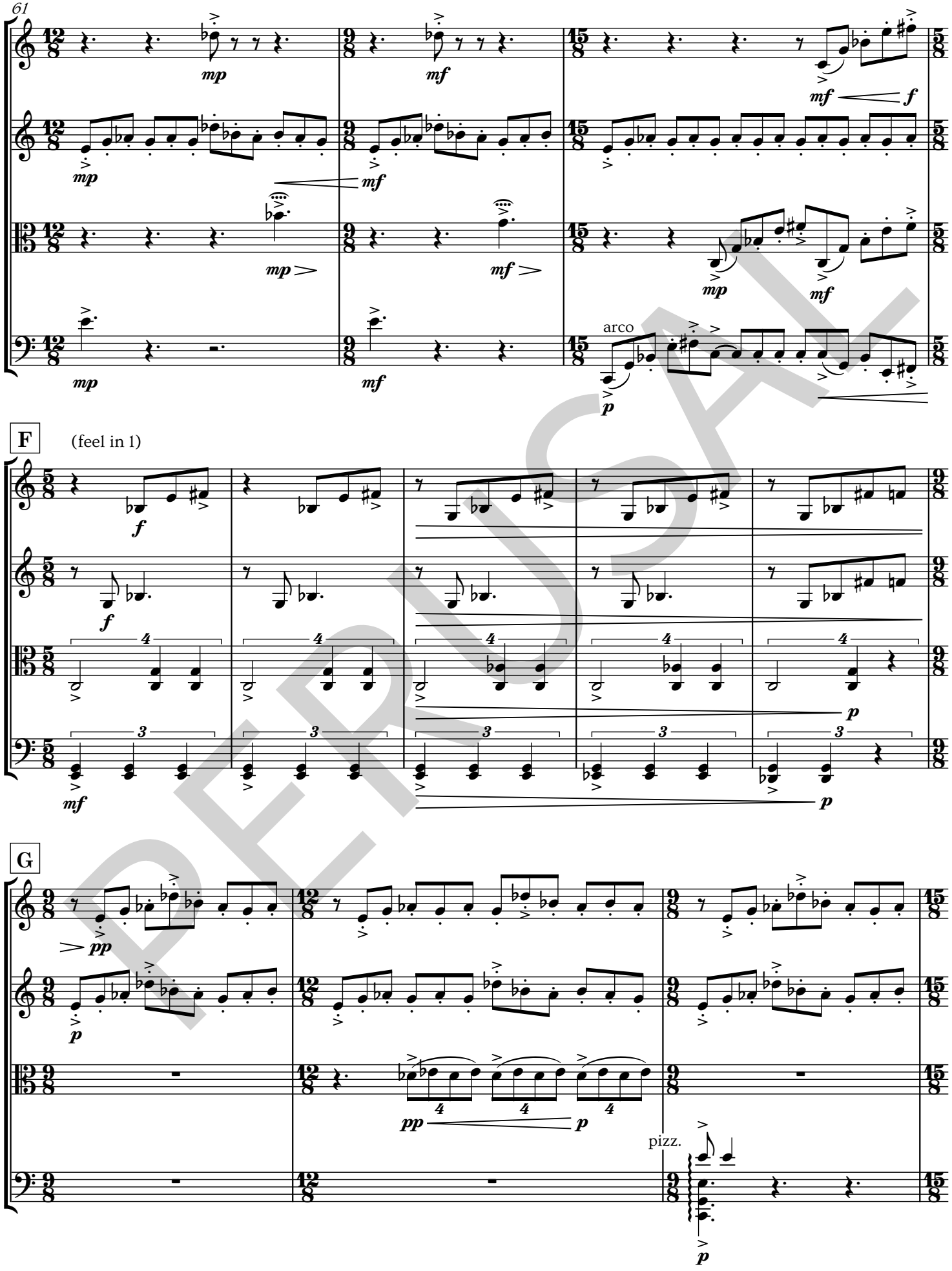
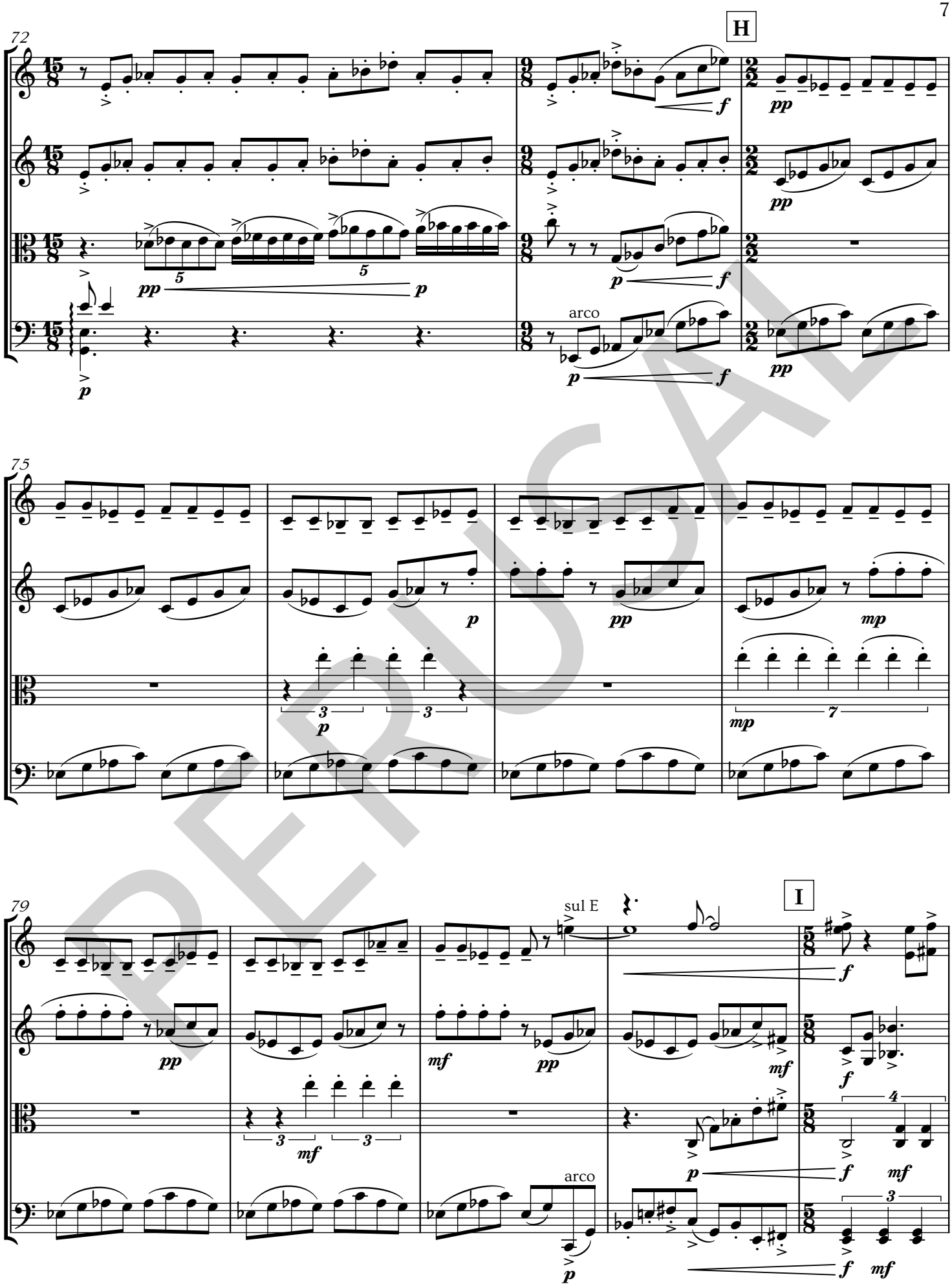

51
mp
7
3
p
3
mp
7
55
E
mf
mf
mf
5
f
jeté
mf
p
mf
sim.
pizz.
mp
mf
58
mp
sul pont.
pp
p
ord.
mp
p
p
sul pont.
ord.
mp
pp
arco
sul pont.
pizz.
ord.
p
mp
pp
p

PERUSAL



PROOF



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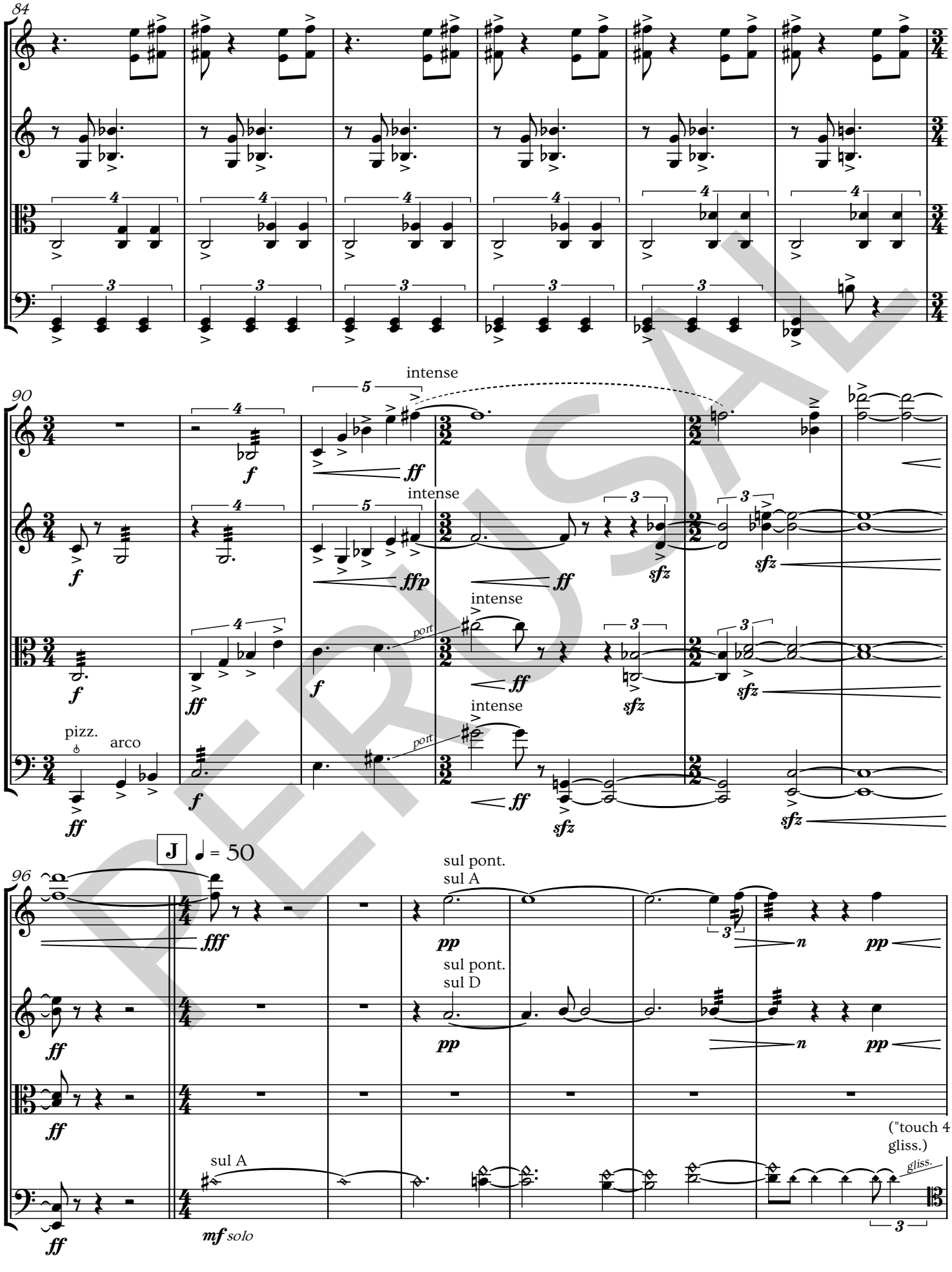
84
90
intense
intense
intense
intense
pizz.
arco
port
port
J = 50
96
sul pont.
sul A
sul pont.
sul D
sul A
("touch 4"
gliss.)
gliss.
mf solo

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♩ = 60 - slightly faster

103

ord.
jeté (sustain until bow stroke finishes)

ord.
jeté (sustain until bow stroke finishes)

ord.
jeté (sustain until bow stroke finishes)

ord.
jeté (sustain until bow stroke finishes)

109

113

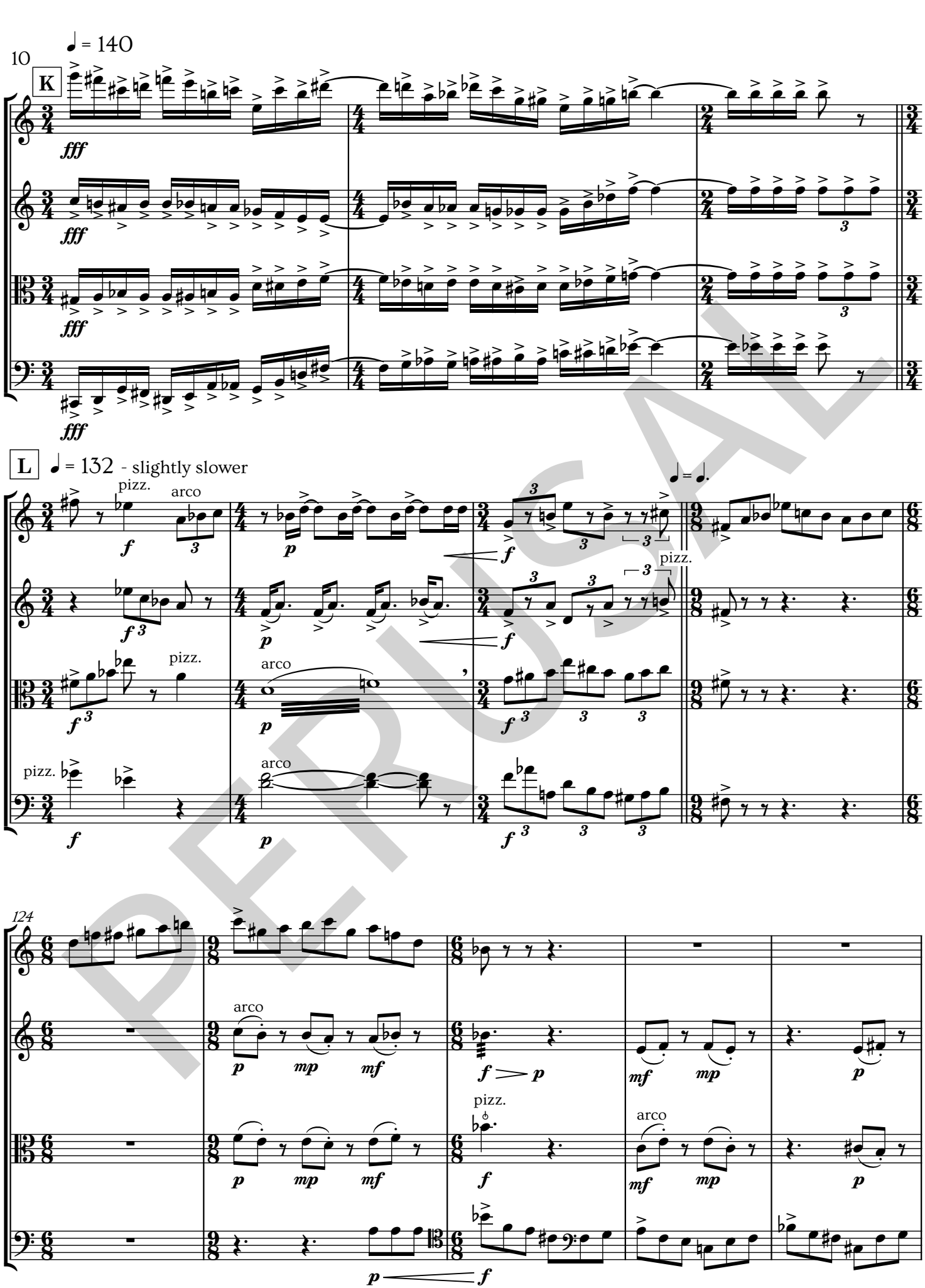
sul tasto - exact polyrhythm unimportant

sul tasto - exact polyrhythm unimportant

sul tasto

sul tasto

PERUSAL



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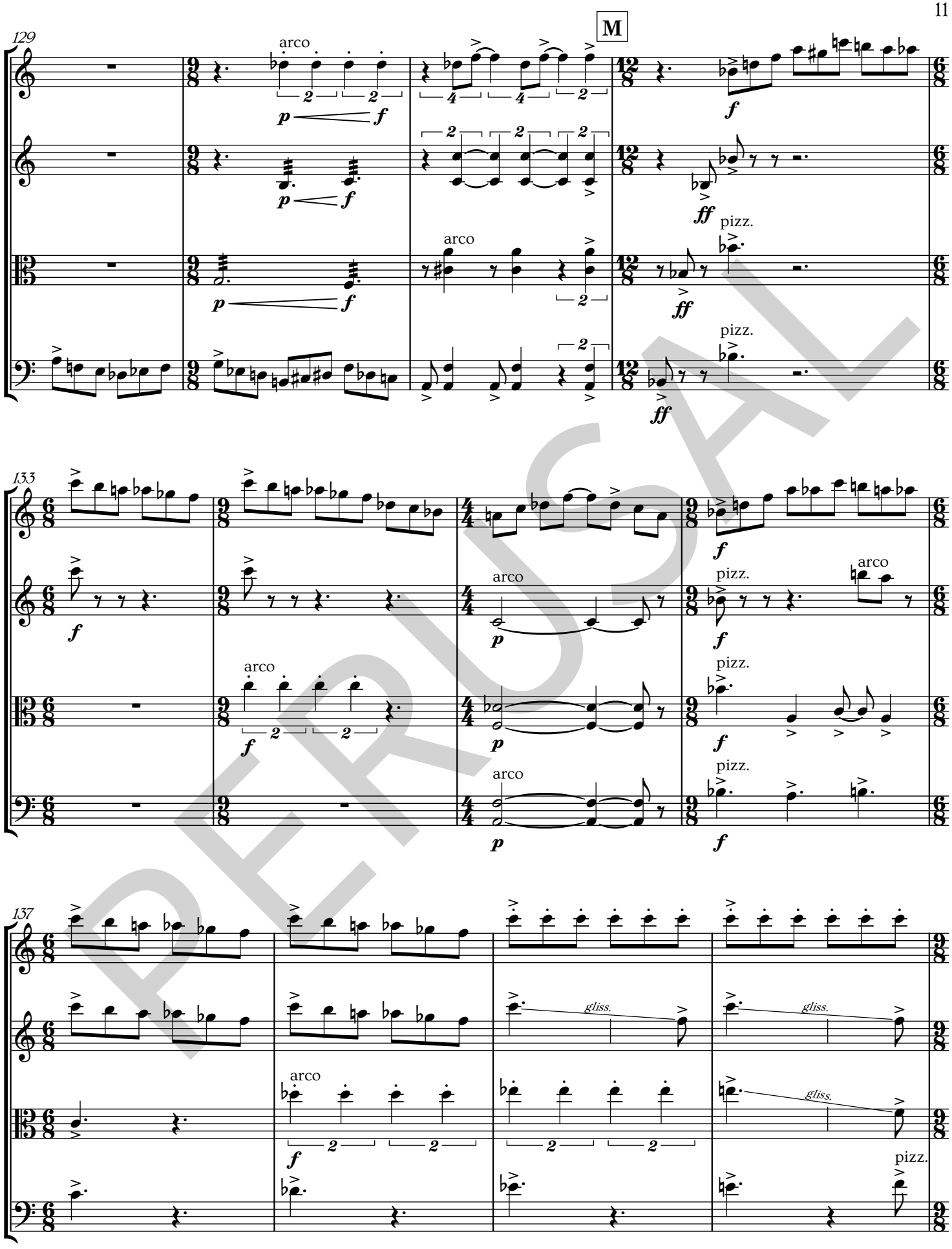
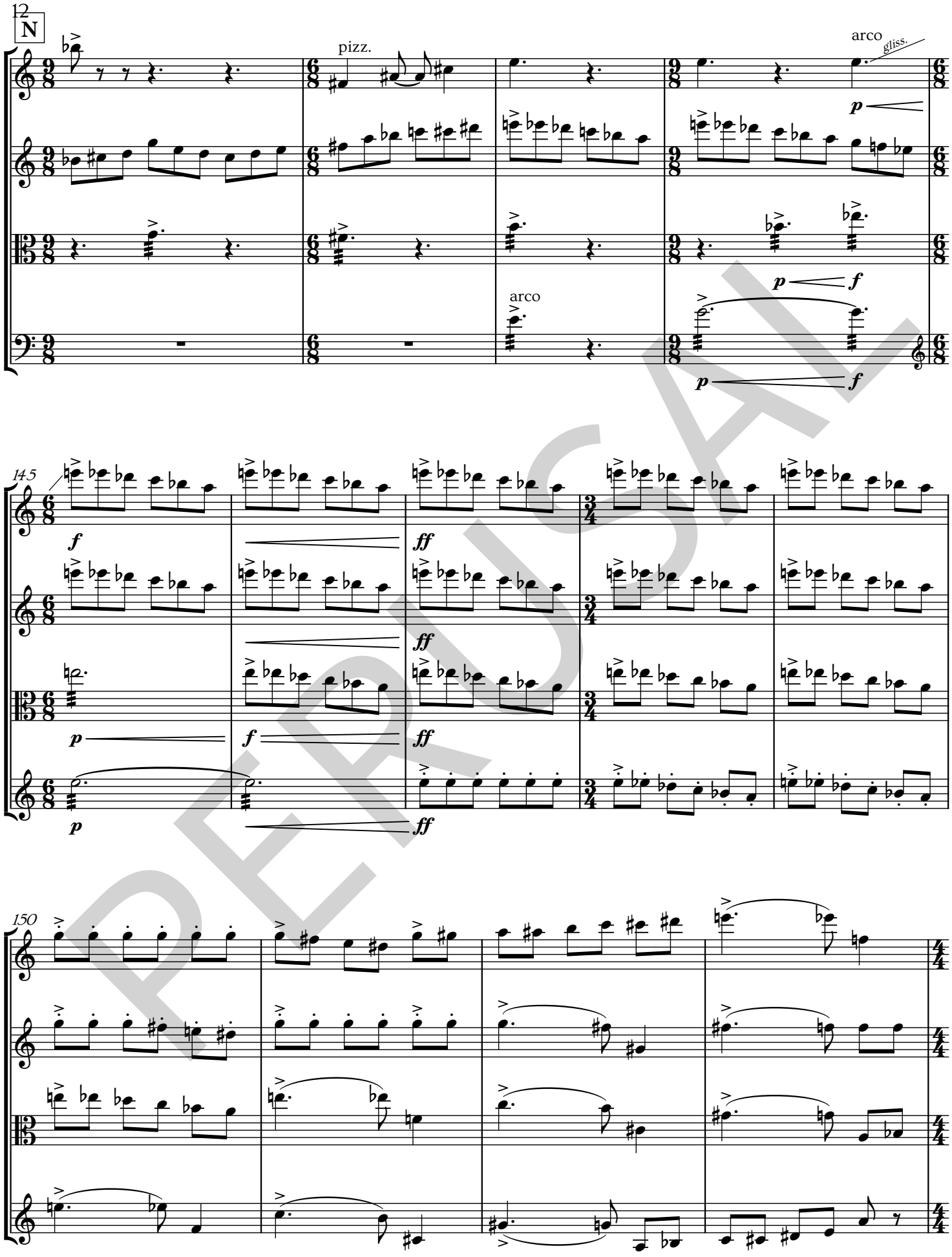


PROPOSAL



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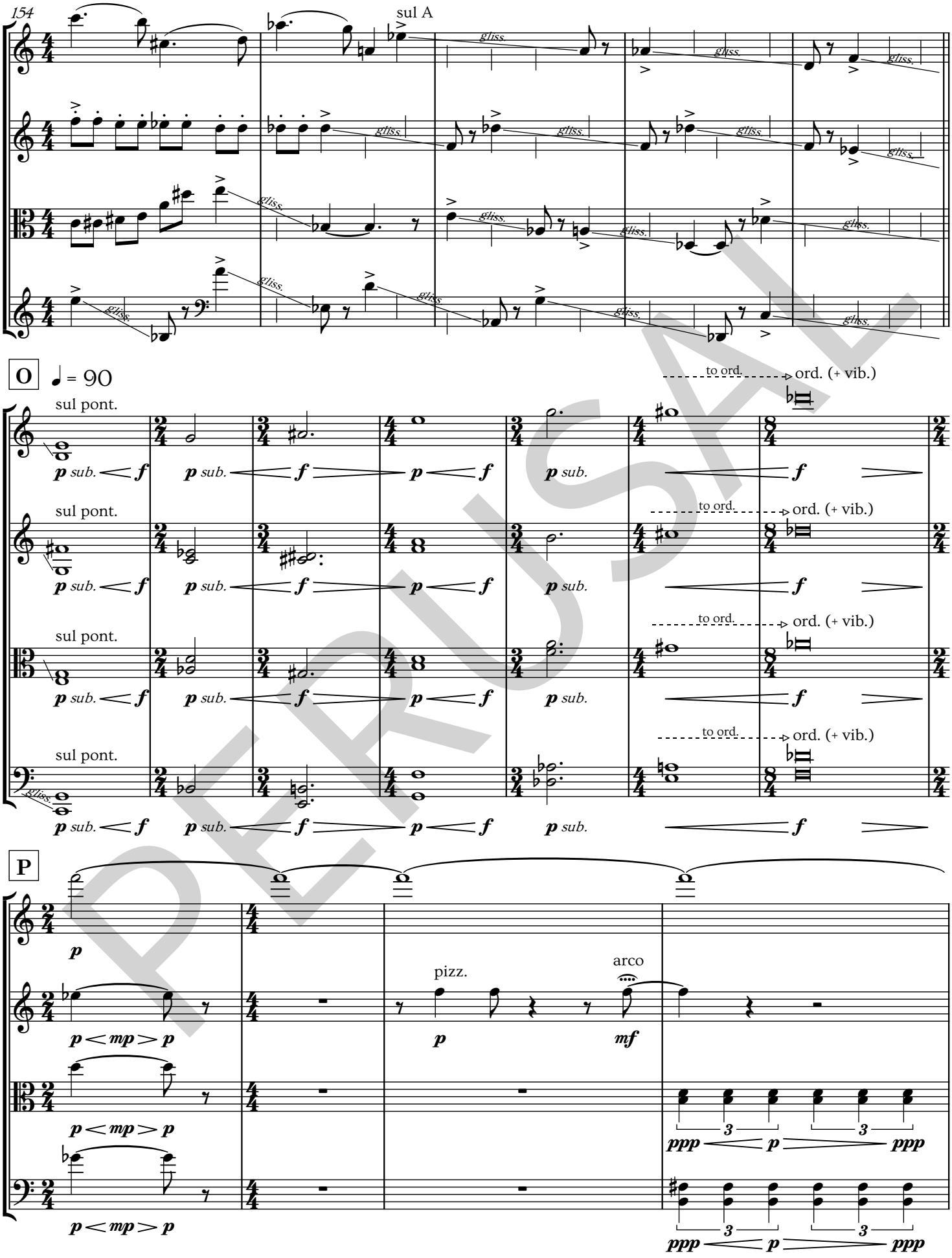
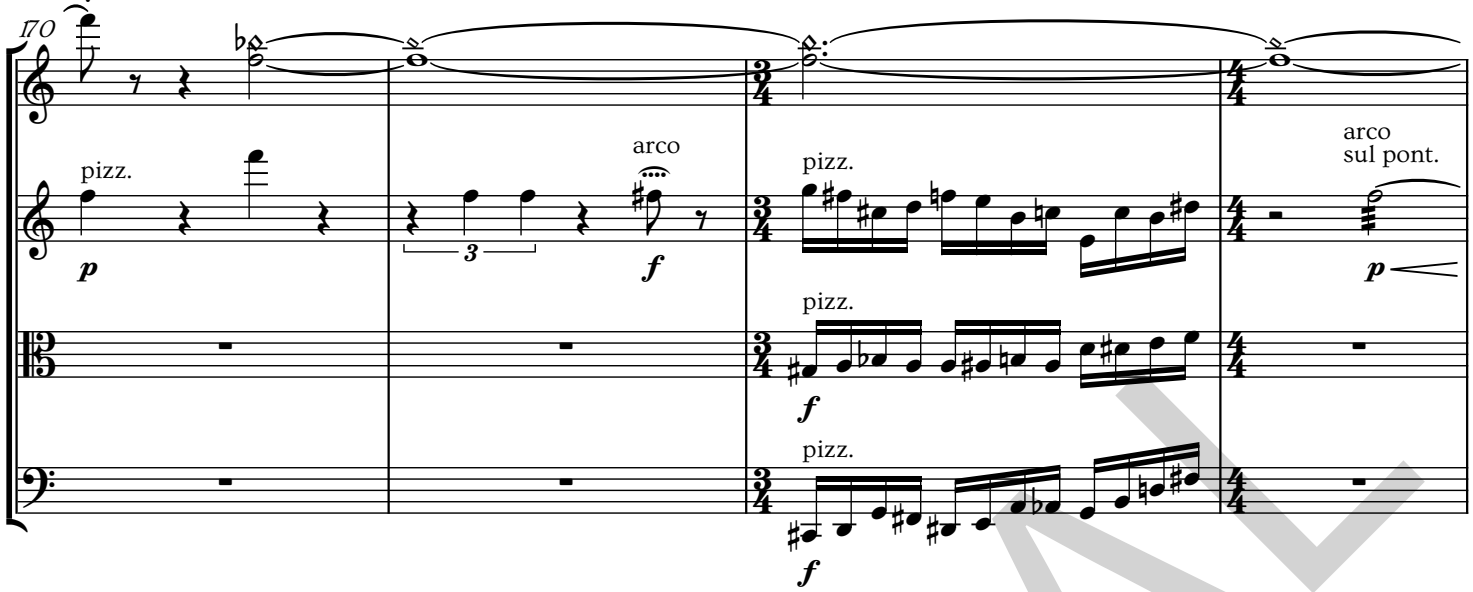
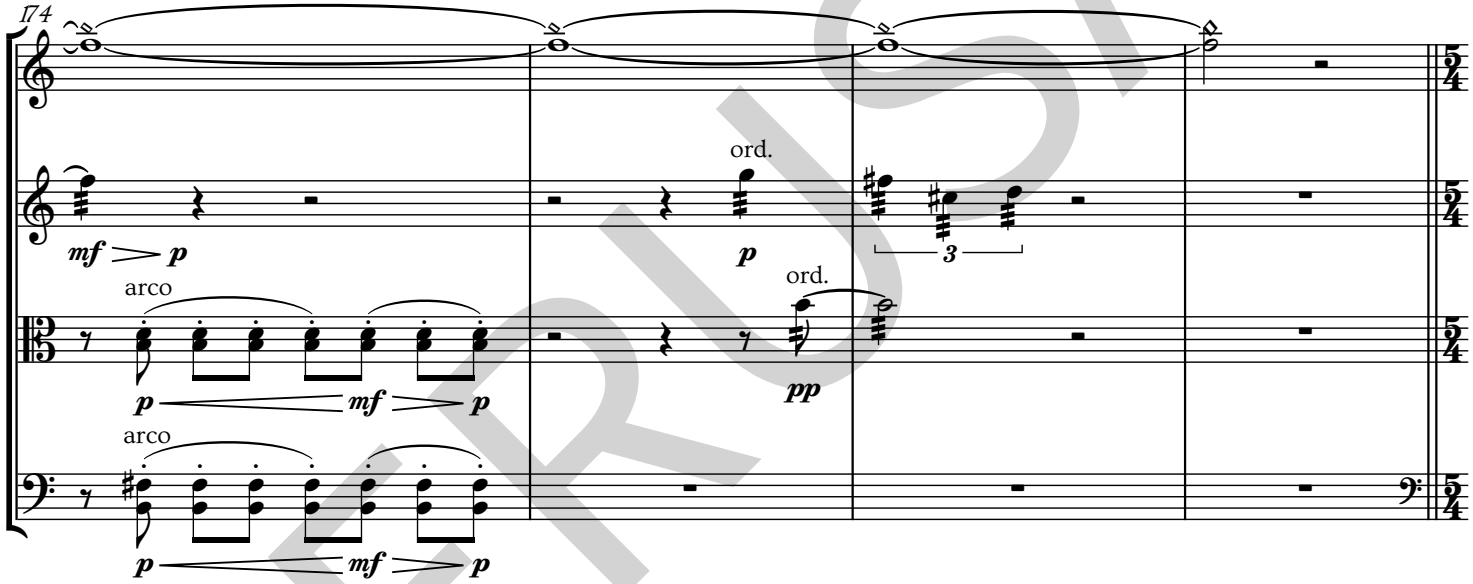
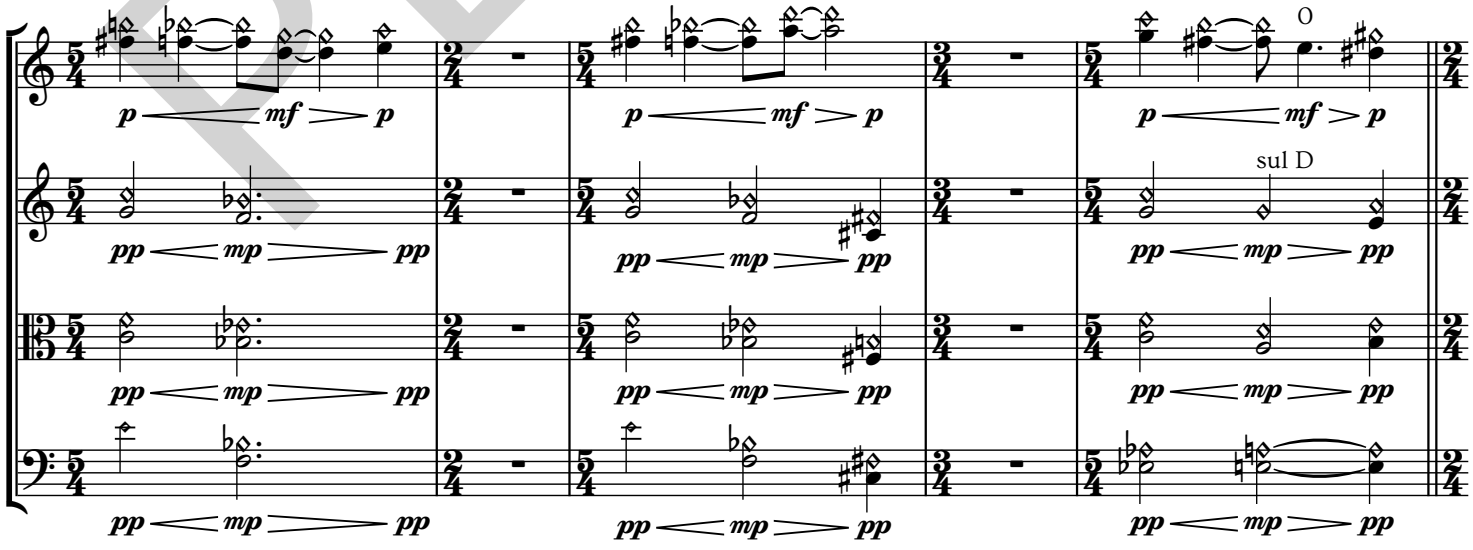

154
sul A
gliss.
O
♩ = 90
sul pont.
p sub. < f
to ord.
ord. (+ vib.)
P
p
p < mp > p
pizz.
arco
mf
3
ppp < p > ppp

PERUSAL


170
pizz.
arco
pizz.
arco
sul pont.
pizz.
pizz.


174
ord.
ord.
arco
arco


Q
♩ = 50
O
sul D

PERUSAL

R

♩ = 60 - slightly faster

183

m.s.p.

ord.

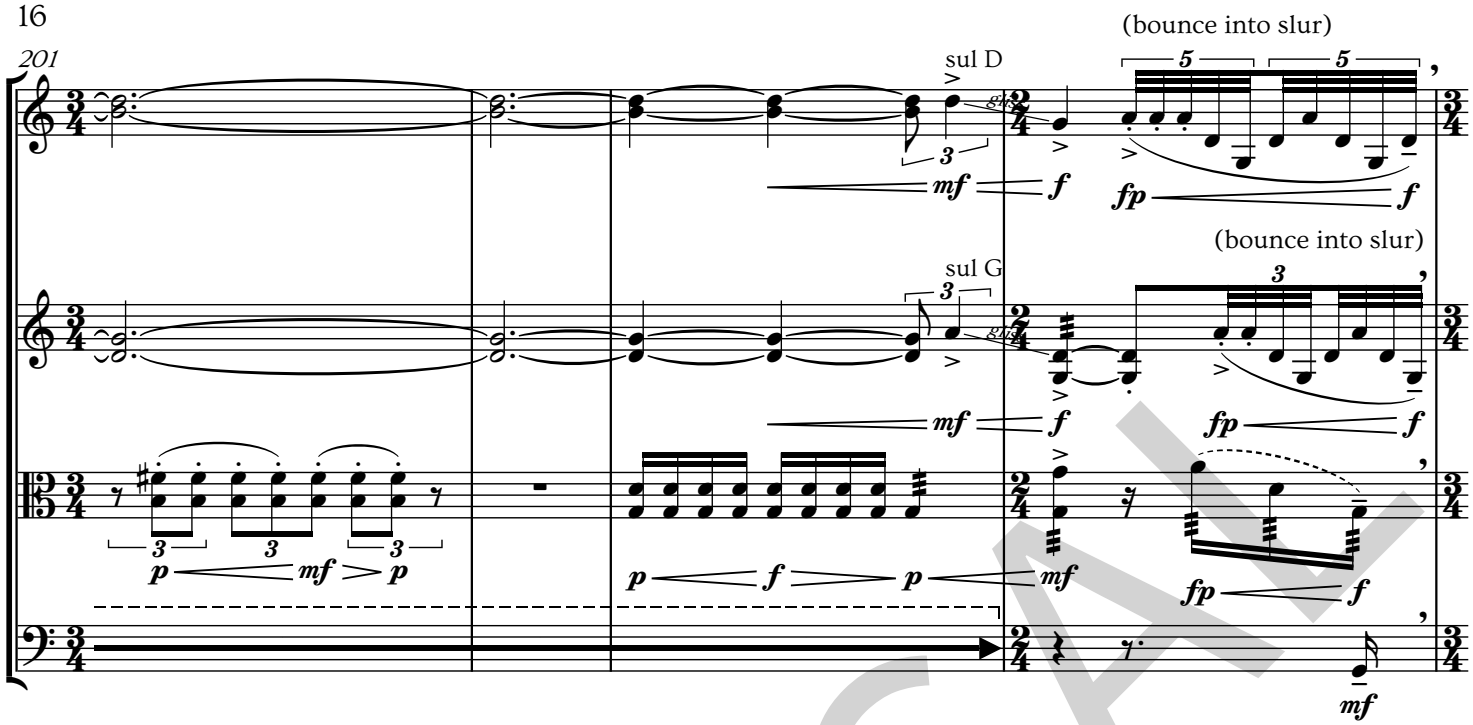
gliss.

190

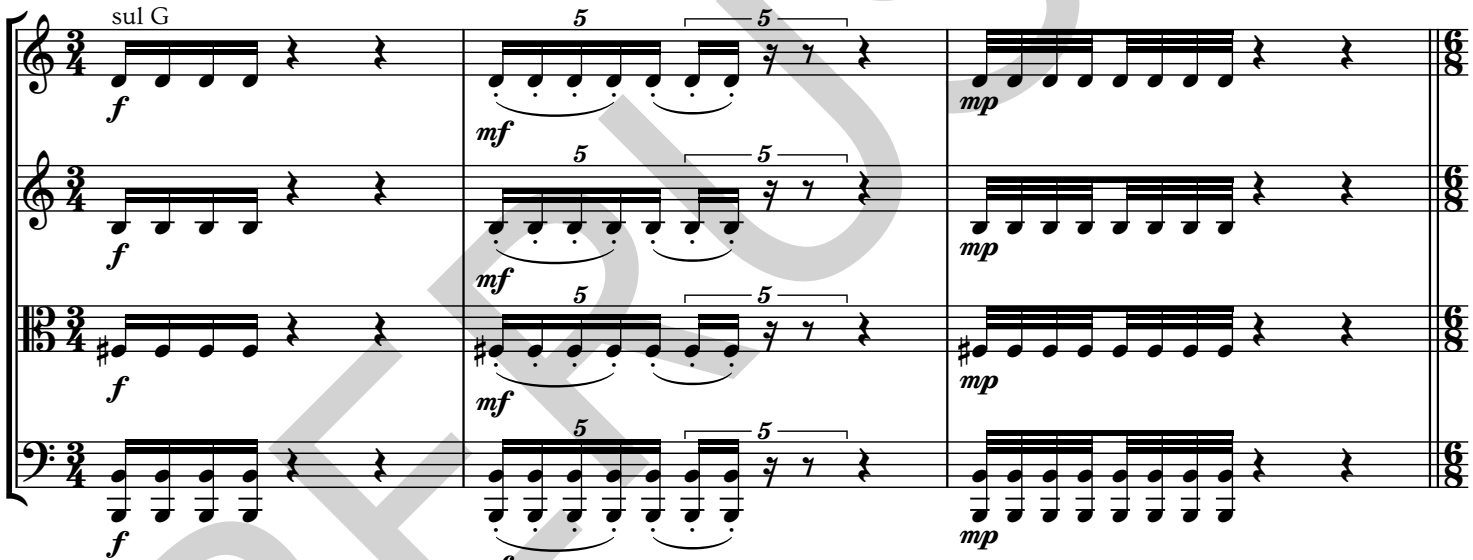
196

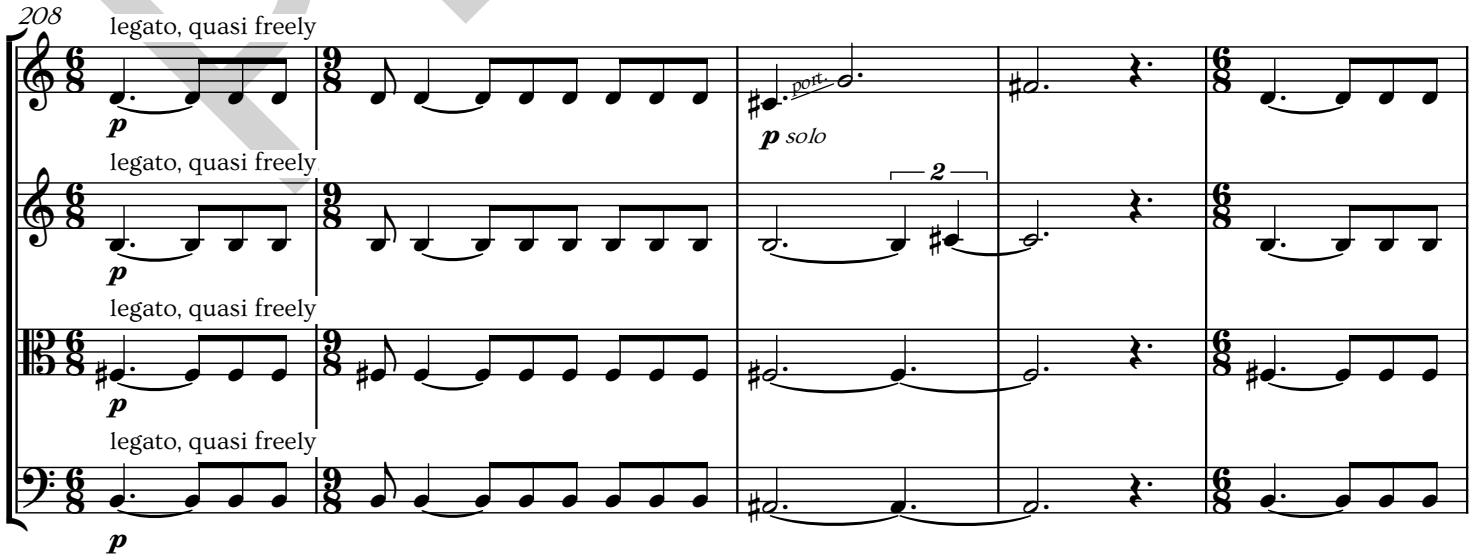
Tune C string down to B (ad lib.); fine tune others as needed; try to be smooth

PERUSAL

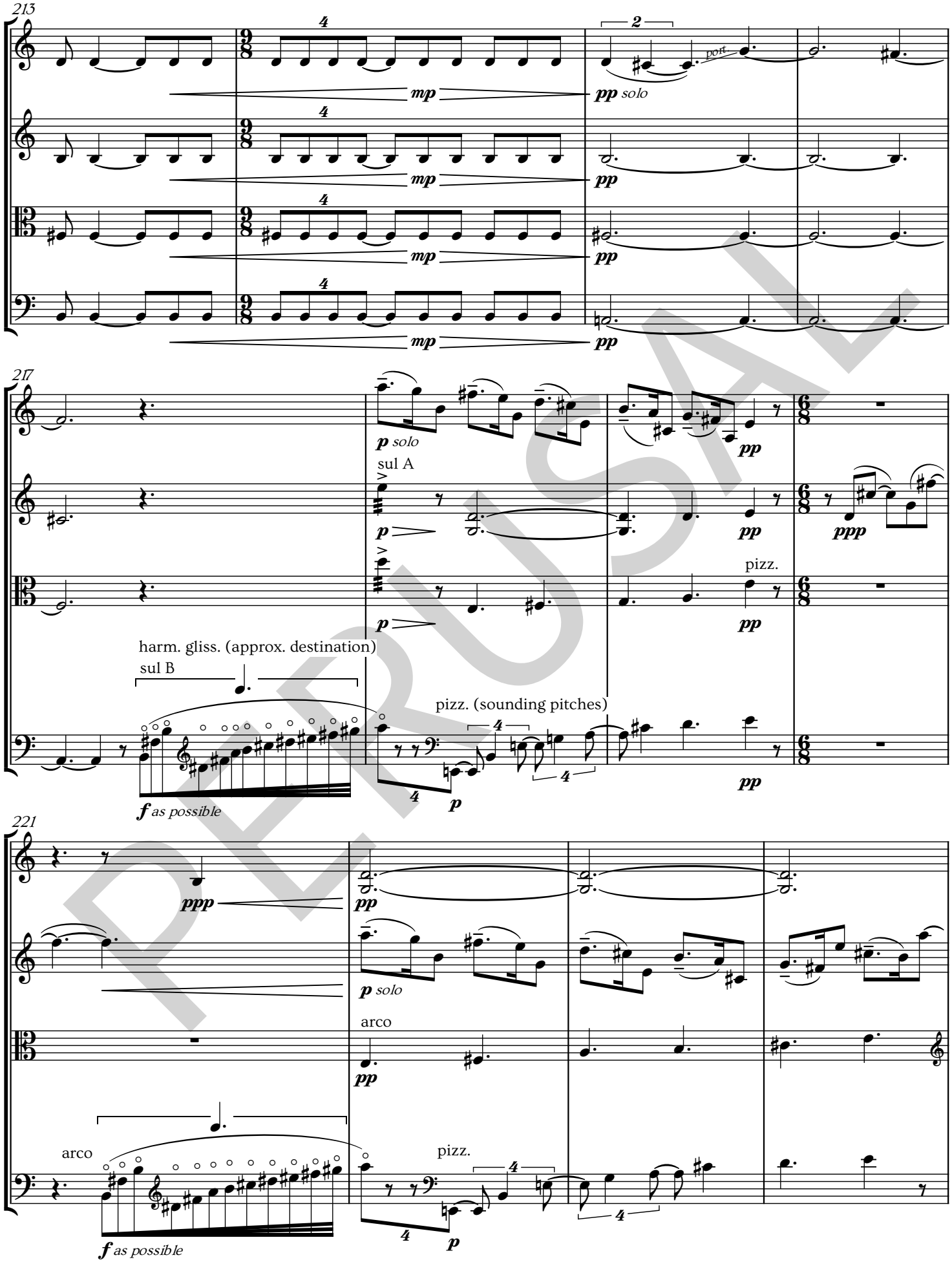

201
sul D
(bounce into slur)
sul G
(bounce into slur)

S

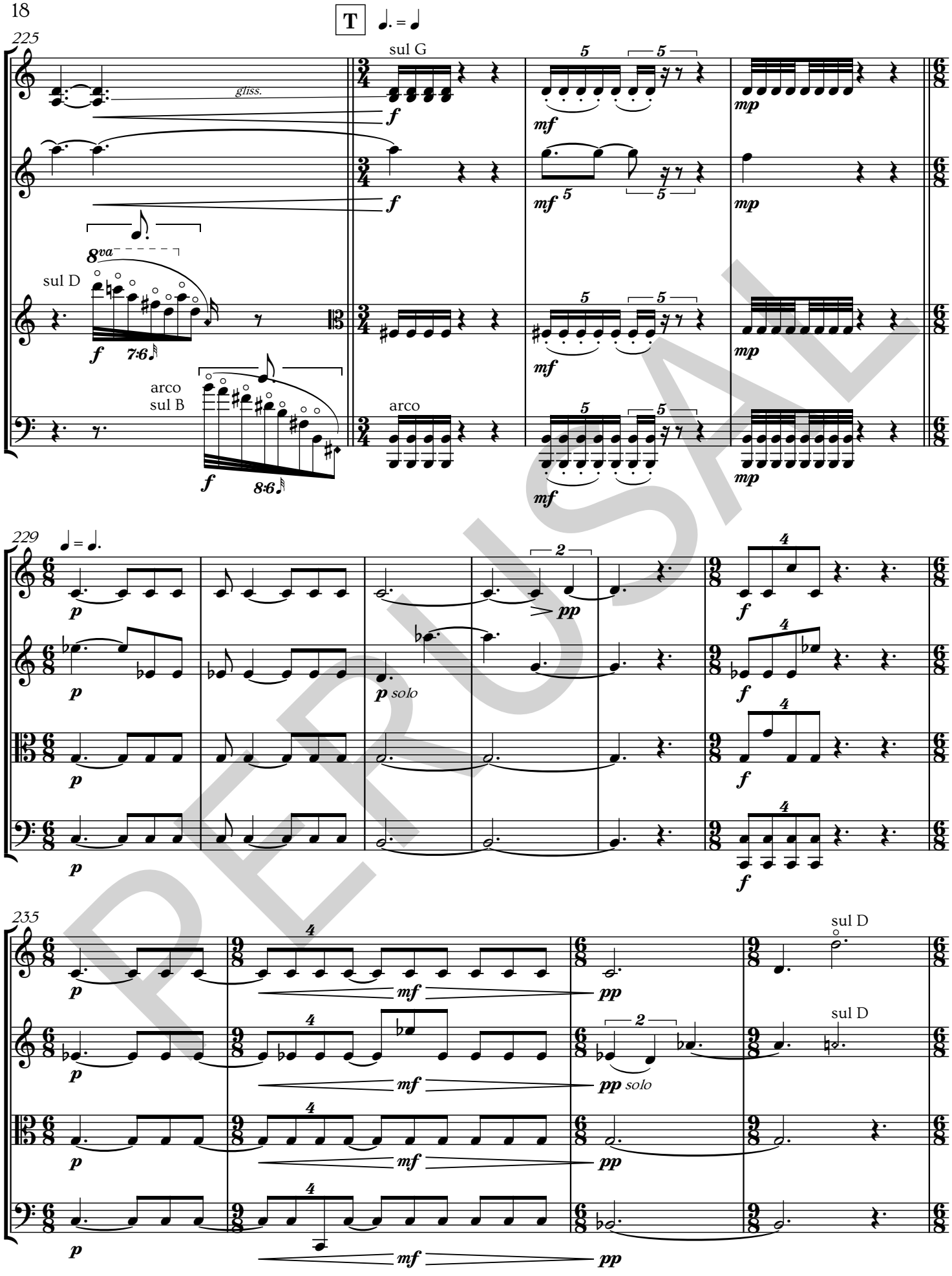

sul G


208
legato, quasi freely
legato, quasi freely
legato, quasi freely
legato, quasi freely
p solo

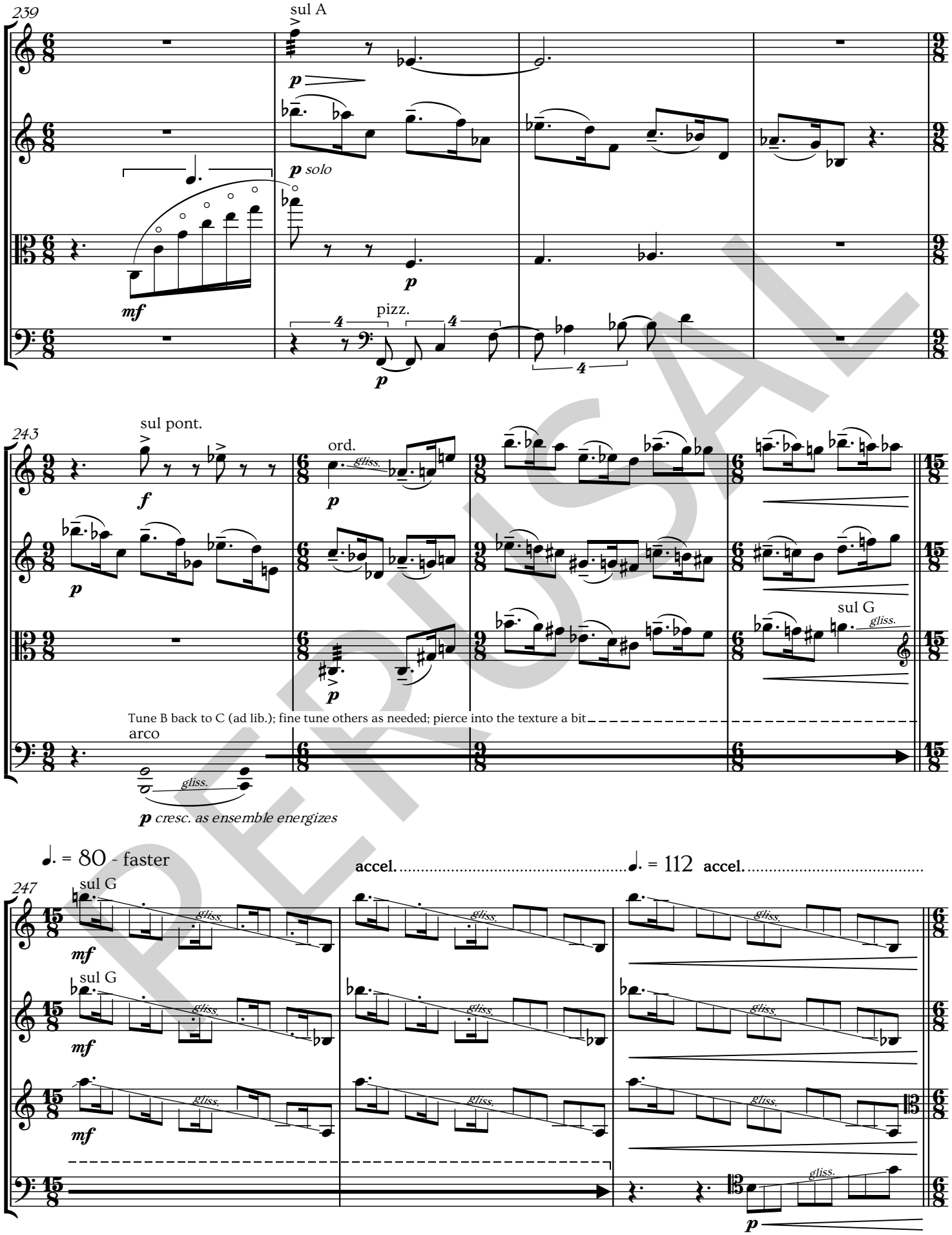
PERUSAL


213
mp
pp solo
pp
217
p solo
sul A
pp
ppp
pizz.
harm. gliss. (approx. destination)
sul B
pizz. (sounding pitches)
f as possible
221
ppp
p solo
arco
pizz.
f as possible

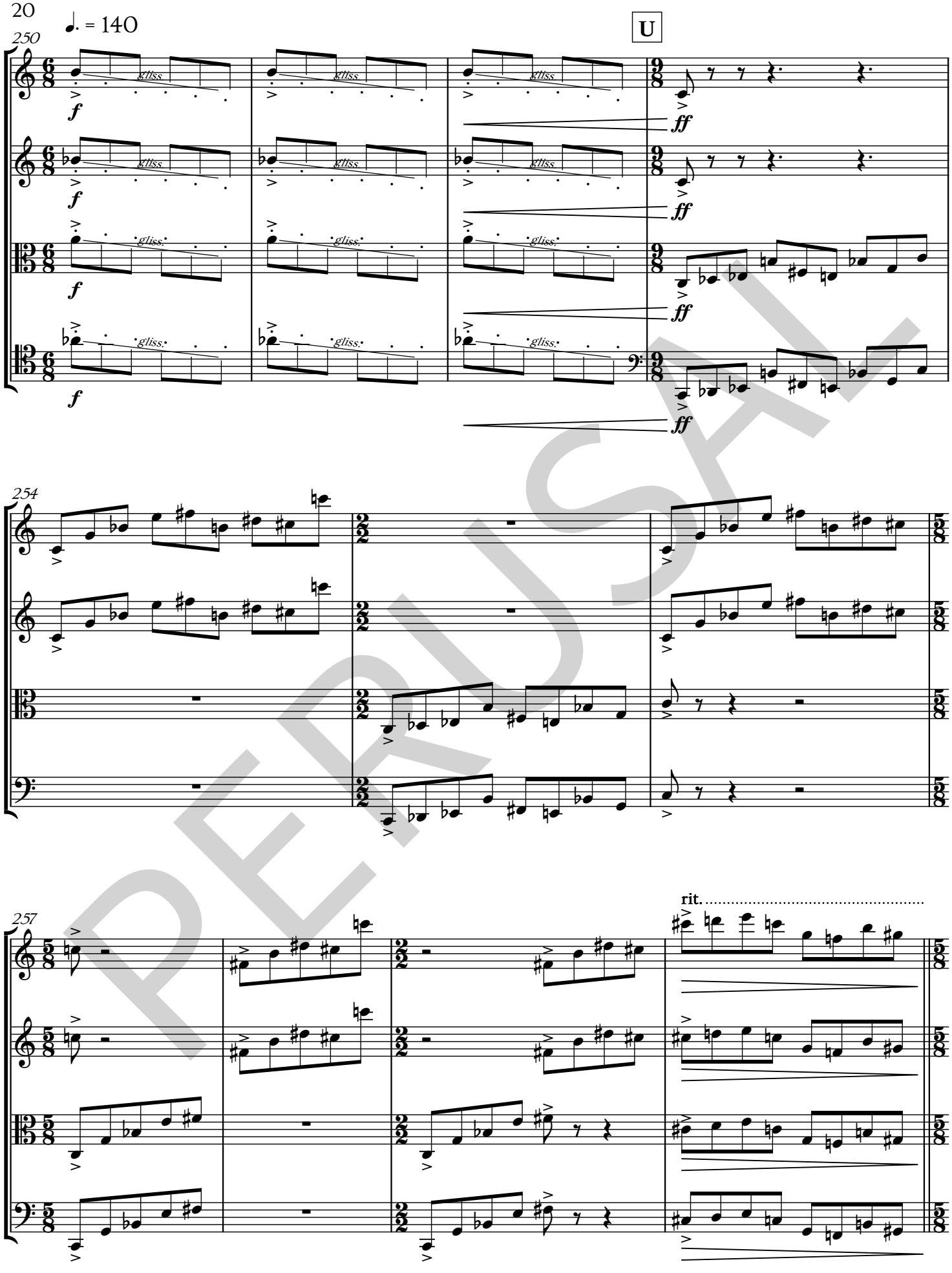
PERUSAL


T
225
gliss.
sul G
8va
sul D
arco
sul B
arco
229
solo
235
sul D
sul D
solo

PERUSAL


239
sul A
p
p solo
mf
p
pizz.
4
4
4
243
sul pont.
f
ord.
gliss.
p
p
sul G
gliss.
p
Tune B back to C (ad lib.); fine tune others as needed; pierce into the texture a bit
arco
gliss.
p cresc. as ensemble energizes
♩. = 80 - faster
accel.
♩. = 112
accel.
247
sul G
gliss.
mf
sul G
mf
mf
p

PROPOSAL



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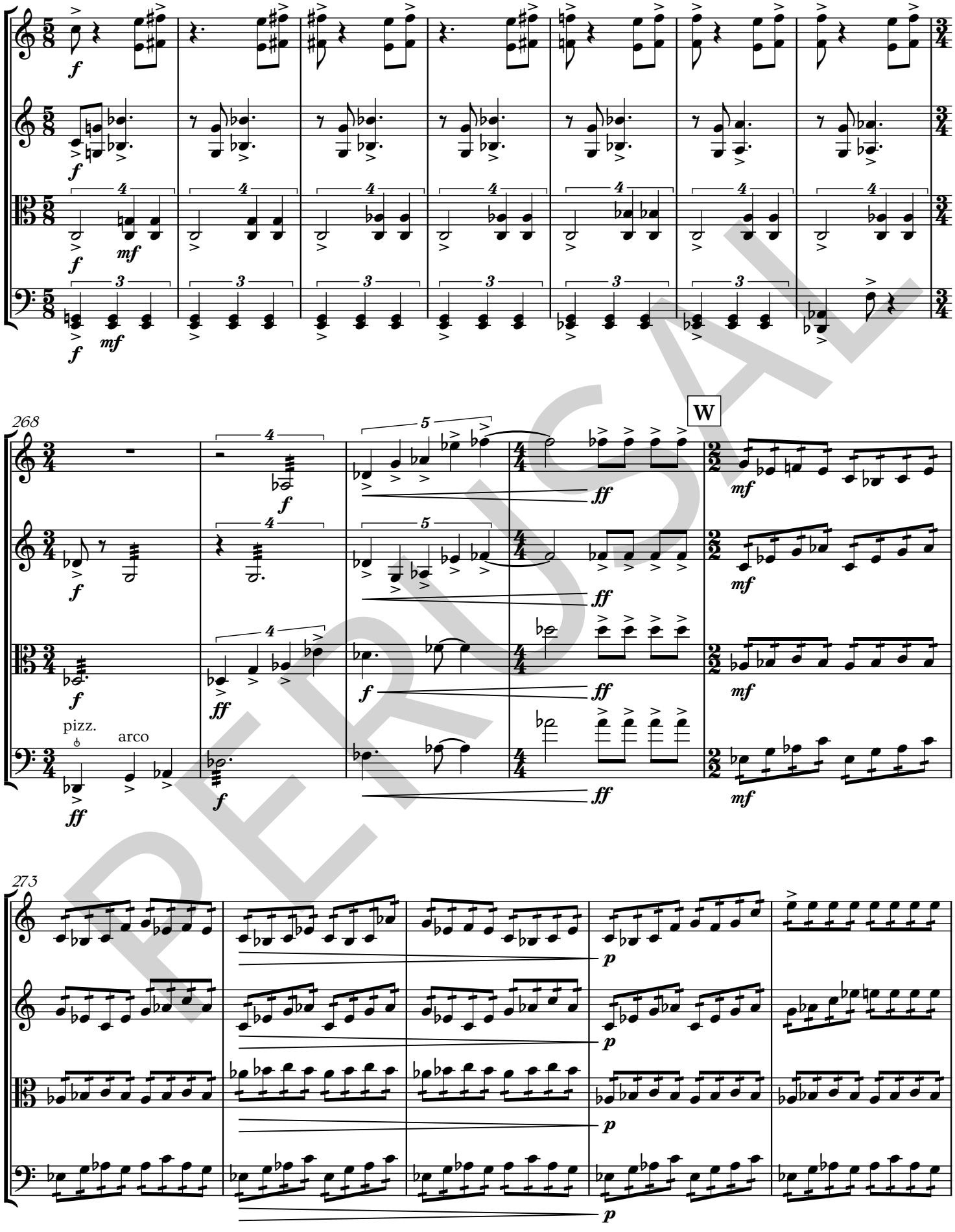

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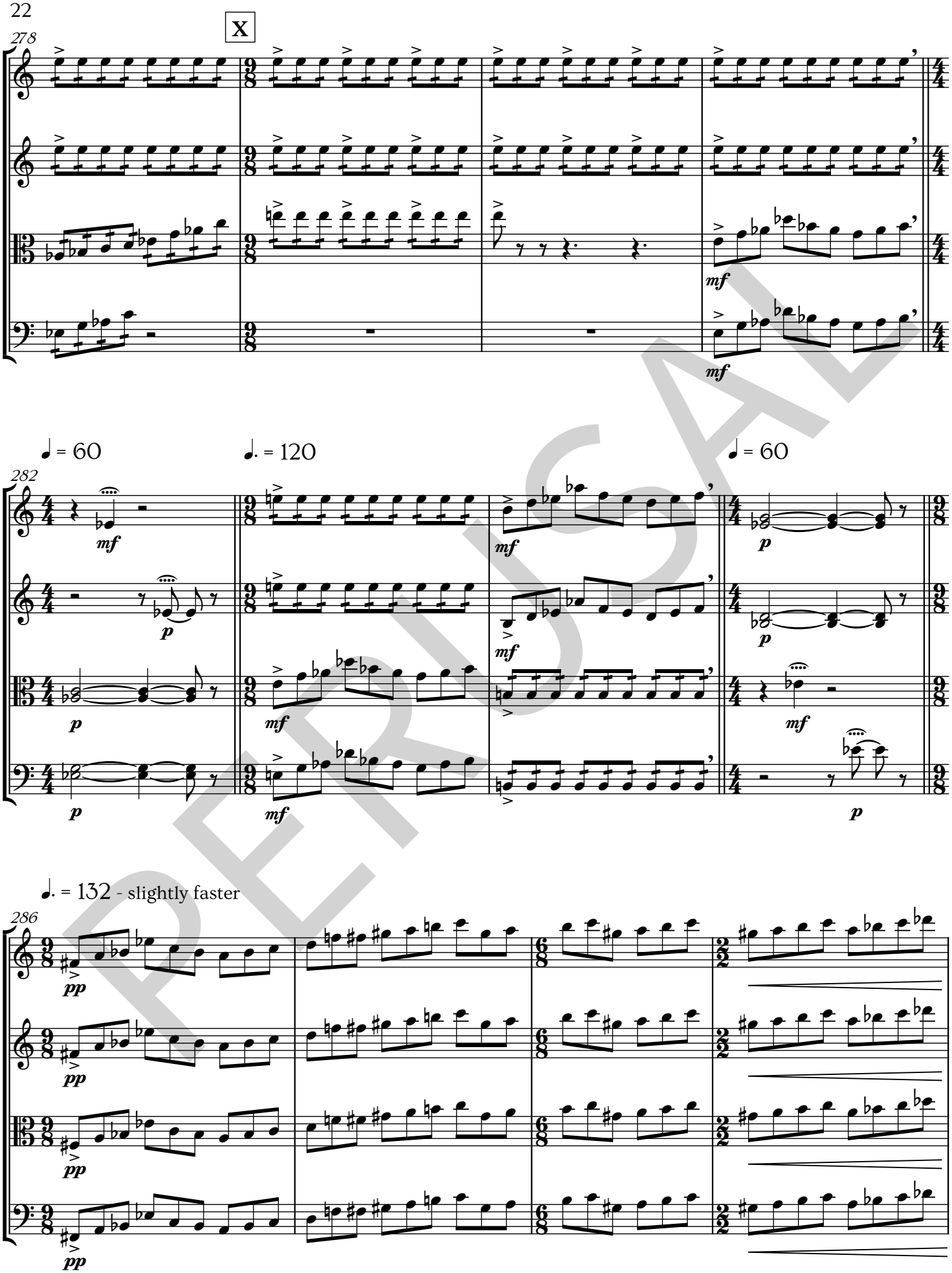
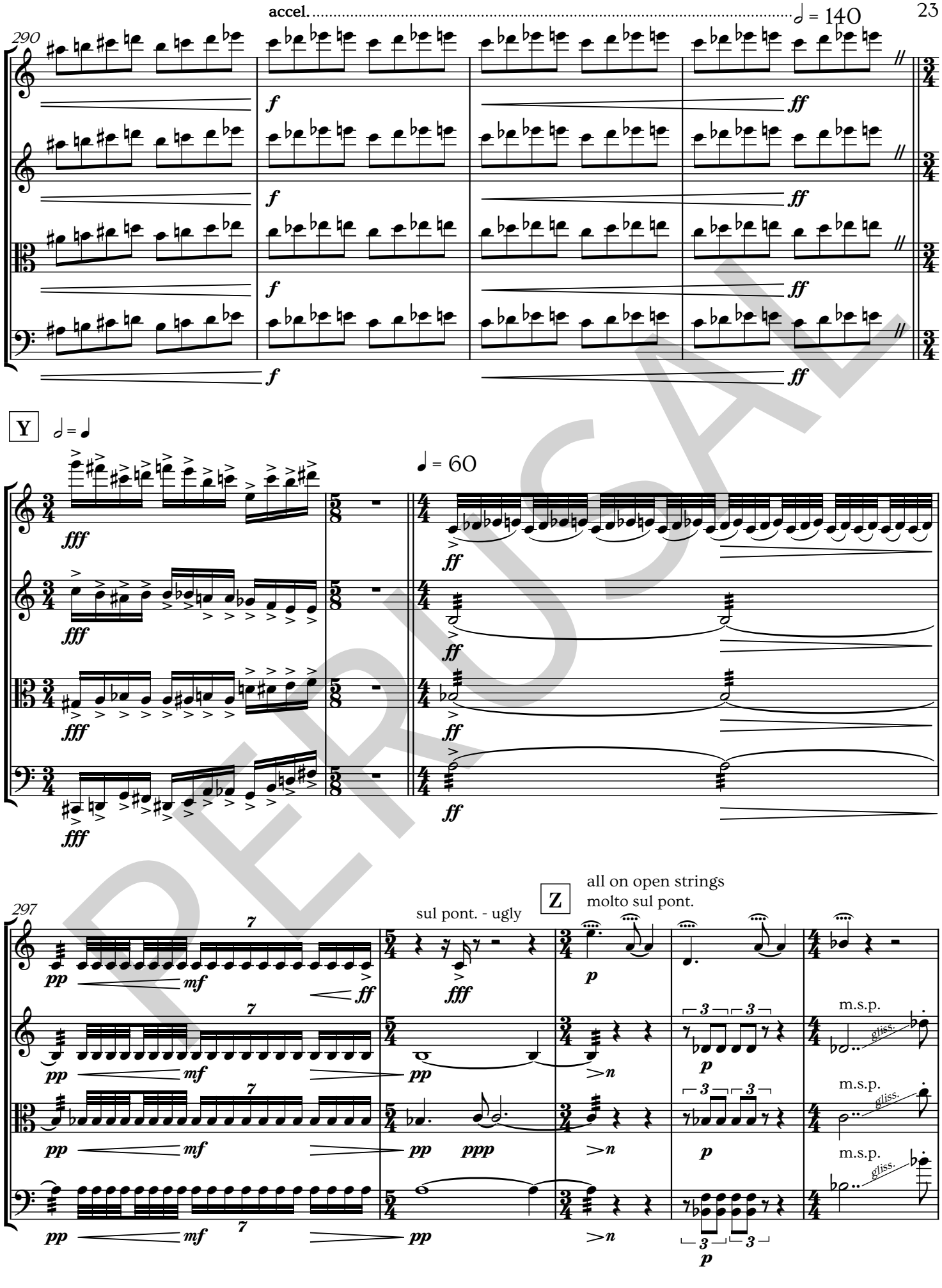
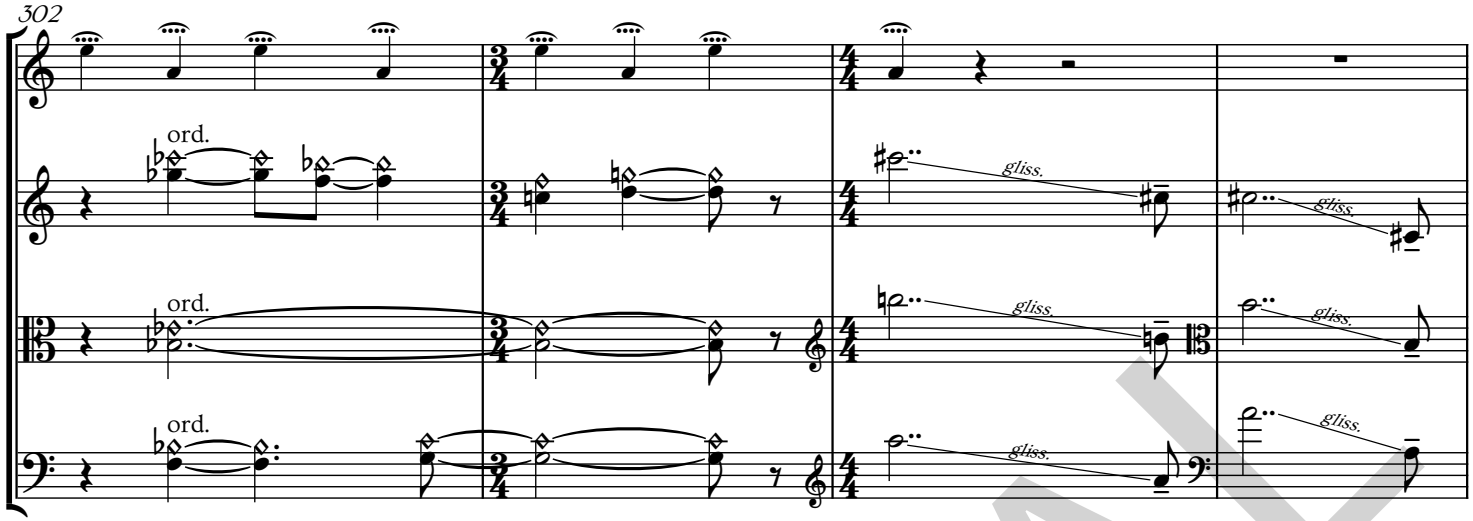
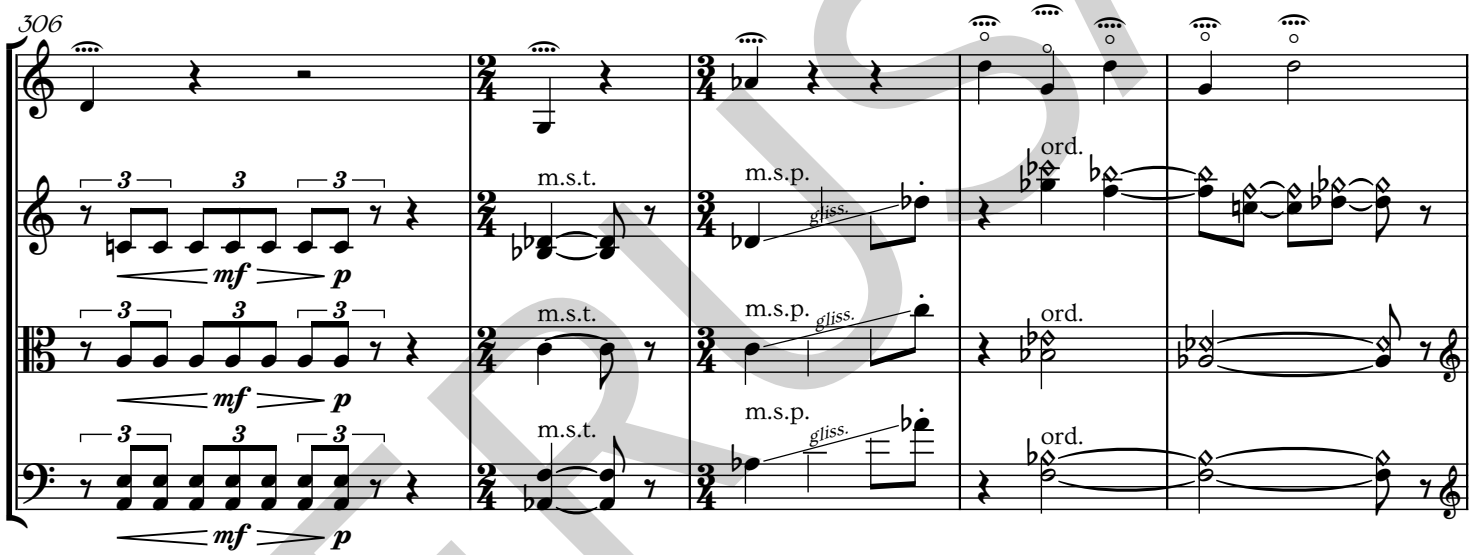

X
278
mf
mf
♩ = 60
♩. = 120
♩ = 60
282
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
mf
p
♩. = 132 - slightly faster
286
pp
pp
pp
pp

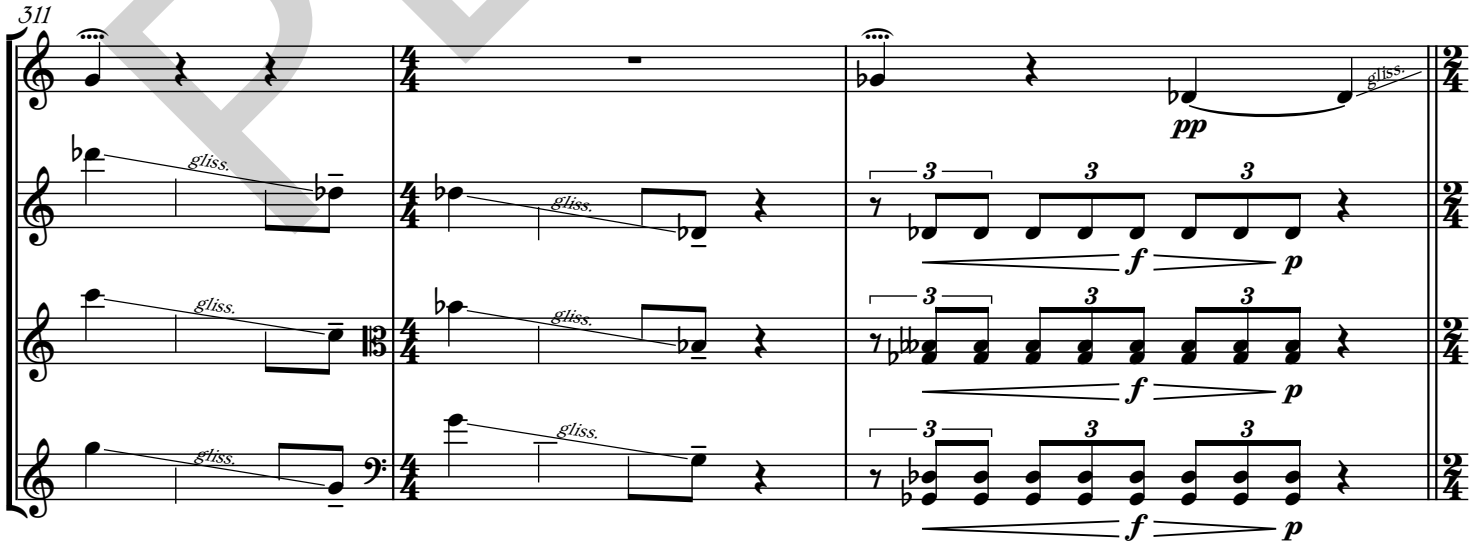
PERUSAL


accel.
♩ = 140
290
f
ff
Y
♩ = ♩
♩ = 60
fff
ff
297
Z
all on open strings
molto sul pont.
sul pont. - ugly
pp
mf
ppp
p
m.s.p.
gliss.

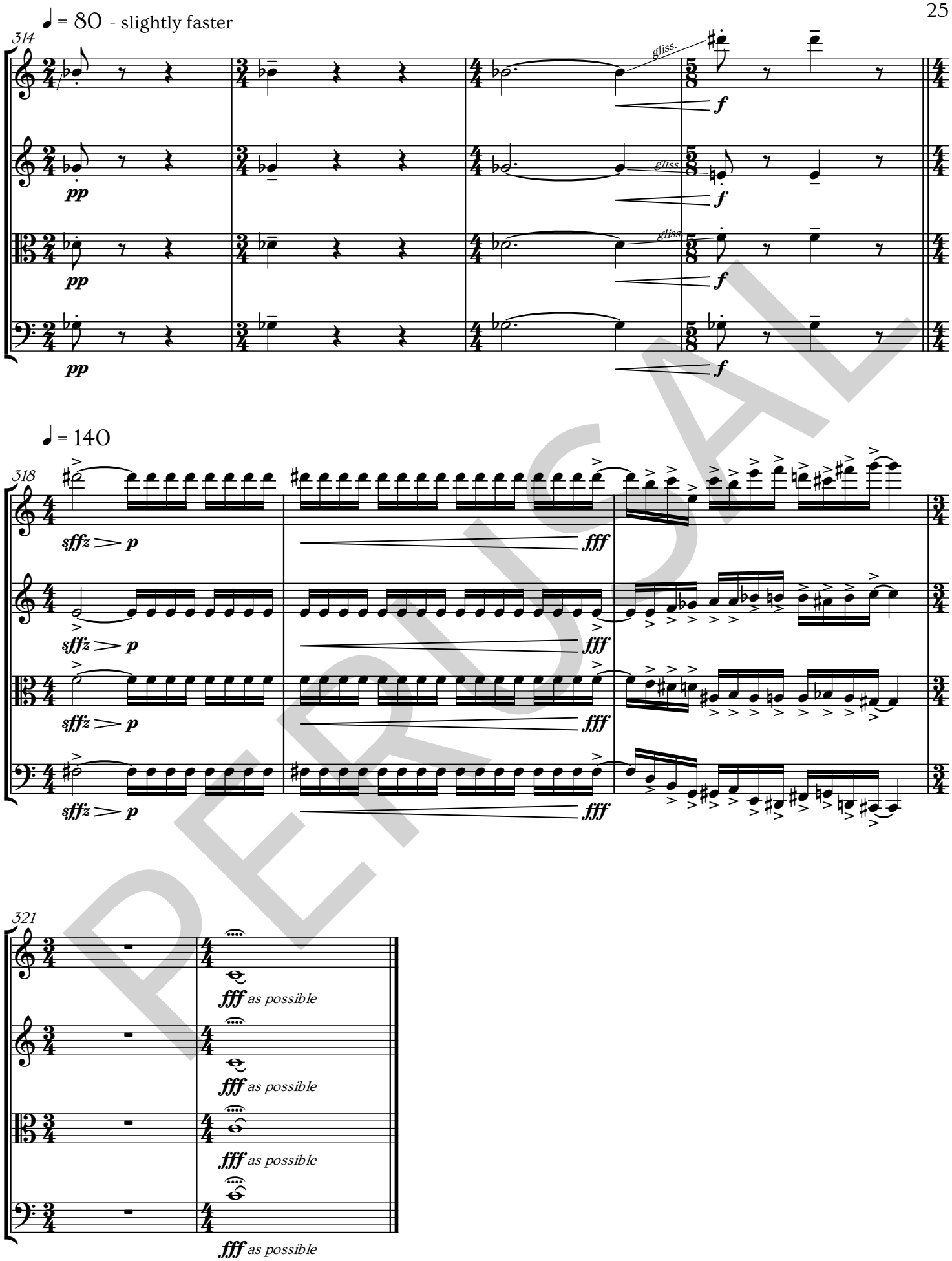
PERUSAL


302
ord.
ord.
ord.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.


306
m.s.t.
m.s.t.
m.s.t.
m.s.p.
m.s.p.
m.s.p.
ord.
ord.
ord.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
mf
p


311
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
gliss.
pp
f
p

PERUSAL


♩ = 80 - slightly faster
314
gliss.
pp
f
♩ = 140
318
sffz
p
fff
321
fff as possible

PERUSAL