How Slowly, Comes in the Light

For
Saxophone Quartet and String Quartet

(2020)

Michael Kahle

Movements

I.	Sentimental	1
II.	Lost	13
III.	Bitter	26
IV.	Hope	42

Duration: 19:30" (approximate)

Instrumentation

Soprano Saxophone
Alto Saxophone
Tenor Saxophone
Baritone Saxophone

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Cello

Program Note

How Slowly, Comes in the Light is a four movement work for Saxophone Quartet and String Quartet. Each movement has an emotional center that dictates the musical material presented in each movement. Though written in the year 2020, the piece is not explicitly inspired by the pandemic currently present all over the world, however, it is impossible to not include as a constructing force of the piece.

The piece begins with Sentimental, a movement dedicated to looking back to youth with nostalgia and some longing. Gently flowing in a 5/8 time signature, the music is lyrical but not completely centered. As if to be pulled back to yester year. The second movement flows directly from the first. Despite that, the movements are emotionally distant from each other despite connecting by notes in the last chord. Lost features prominent use of the tenor saxophone to drive a melancholy through a meandering and confused melody. This melody becomes more aggressive as the movement continues on to a climatic wail. After this aggression moves inward to end Lost, the third movement begins. Bitter is an acidic, and vitriolic movement that sardonically recalls a scherzo of yesteryear. There is a moment in the middle where the bitterness is relieved. However, this is cut short and swallowed by an even stronger feeling of sad, self-centered irony. After ending with a sarcastic perfect authentic cadence the final movement begins.

Hope is to be the pure anthesis of what has come before it. The movements prior seemed to be without hope, and this one is full of bright, pulsating, and joyful energy. This is supported by a theme of hope that is the emotional center of the movement, and the piece as a whole. In fact, even in the tough moments of Lost and Bitter, the theme of hope can be heard calling out. This movement closes as the music floats upward and away, towards the heavens full of light and beauty.

How Slowly, Comes in the Light is to be a reminder that no matter how slowly the light comes, it will come in the end. The title comes from a combination of lines from the poem *Say Not the Struggle Nought Availeth* by Arthur Hugh Clough. The last three lines of the poem are:

When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
But westward, look, the land is bright.

Performance Directions

Everyone: The change between Movement 1 and Movement 2 should be as quick as possible, however if a slight pause is needed to rearrange pages it is desired that the viola and cello hold their pitches. The conductor (if using one) should hold their baton in place until ready, then, without cutting the viola and cello off, begin Movement 2. If needed, the viola and cello can change bows, but should do so as discretely as possible.

Cello: In the beginning of Movement 3, the diagram below indicates an increase in bow pressure to create a scratching noise. The bow pressure should return to normal after the diagram.

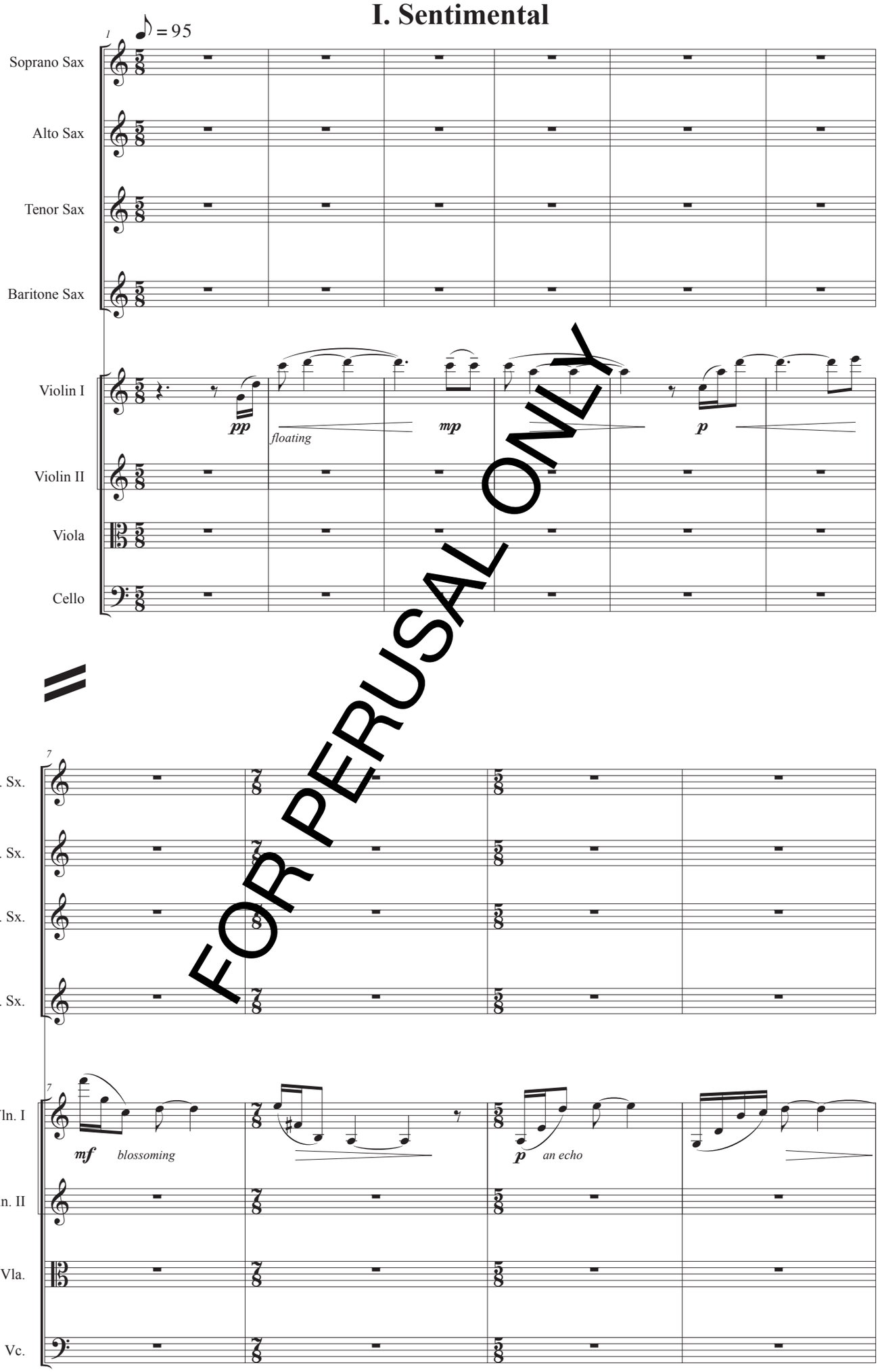
Transposed Score

How Slowly, Comes in the Light

for Saxophone Quartet and String Quartet

Michael Kahle

I. Sentimental



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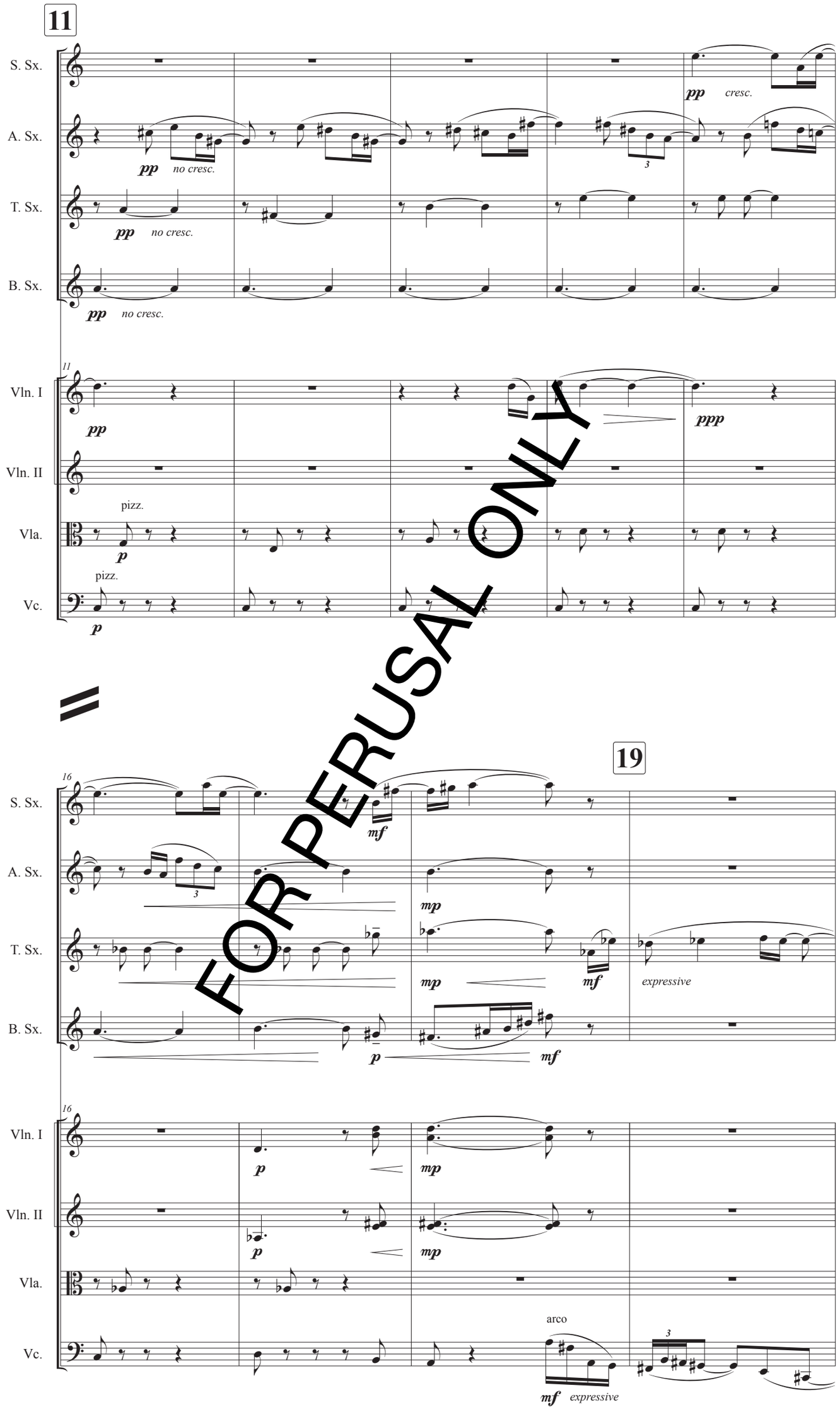

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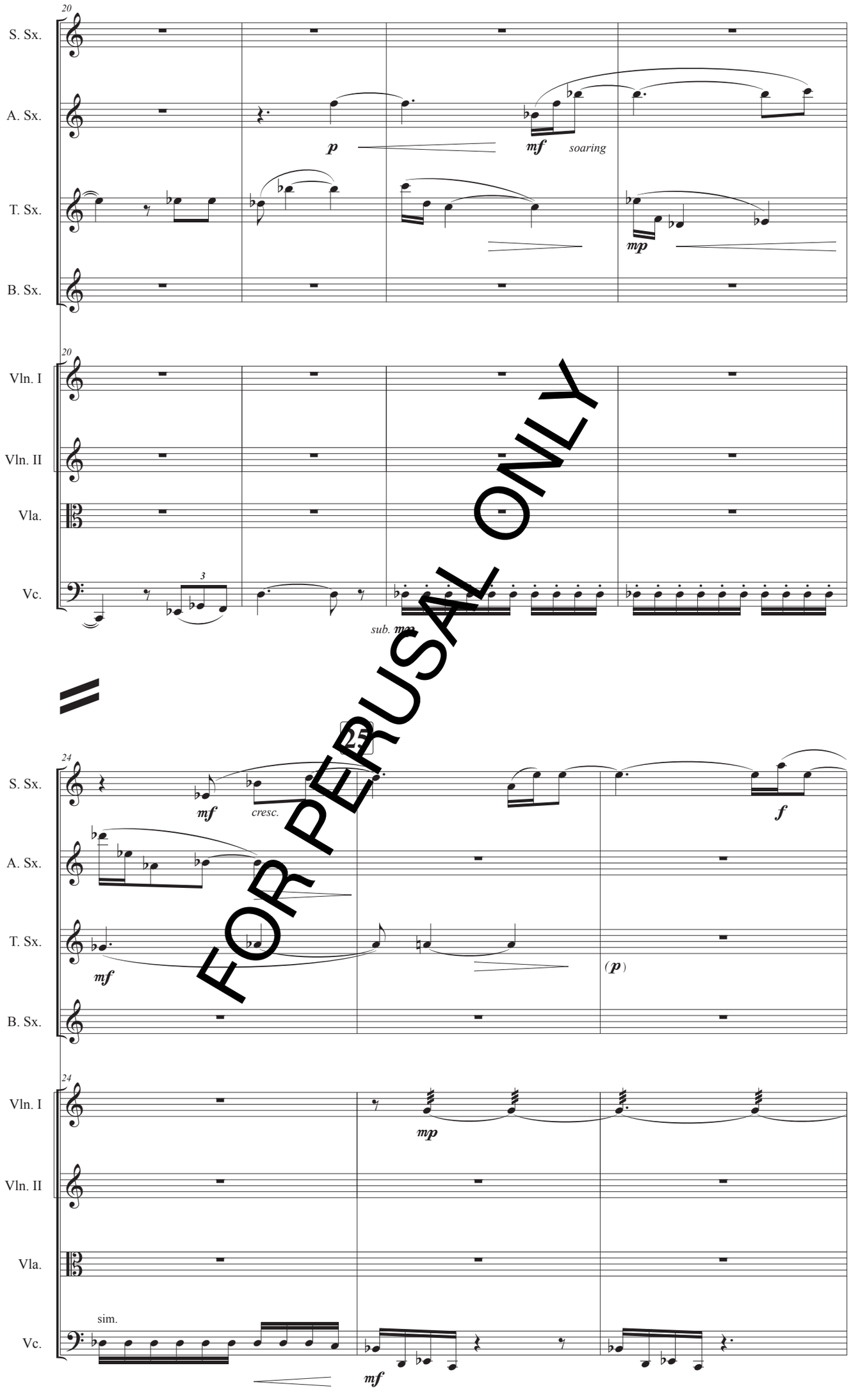

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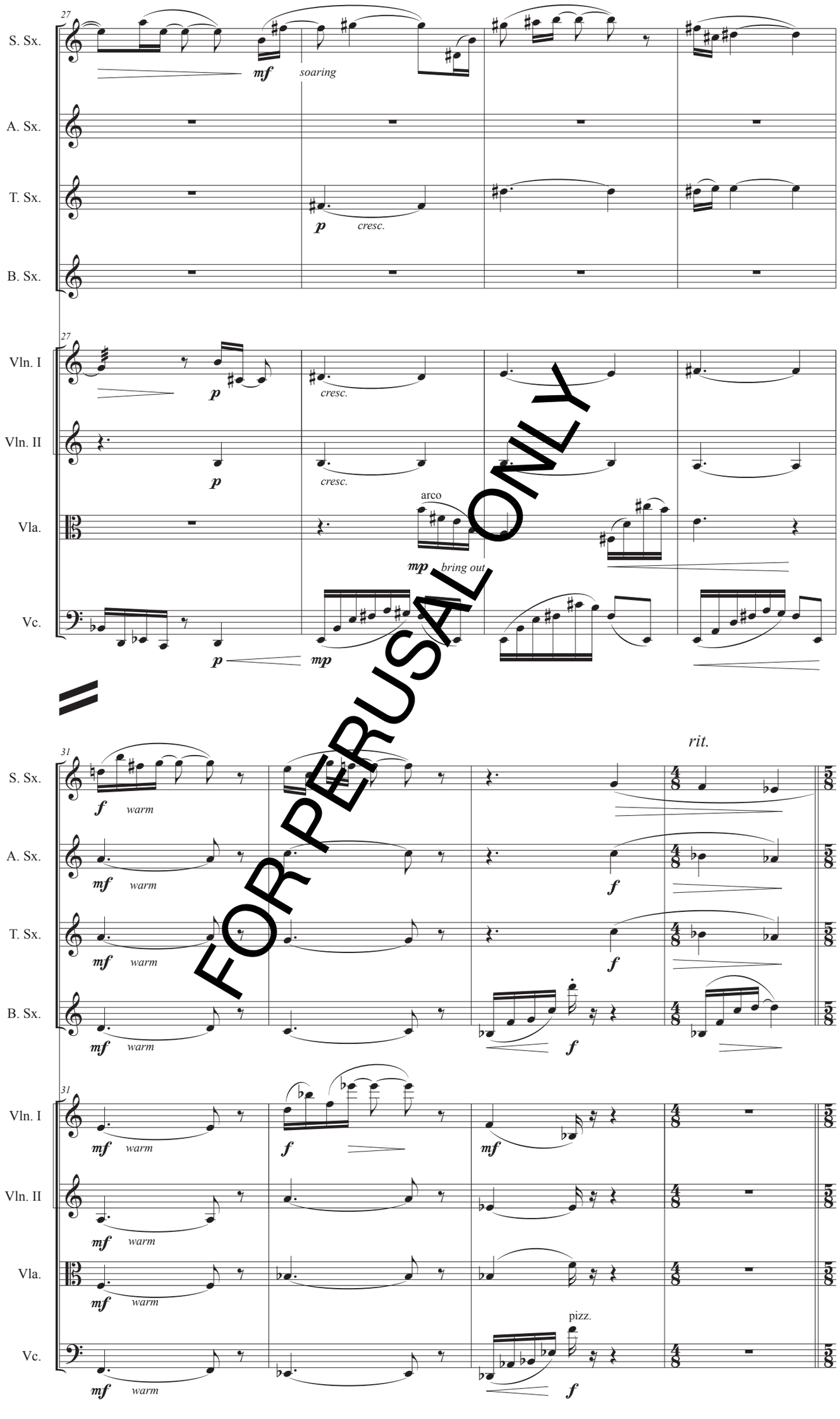

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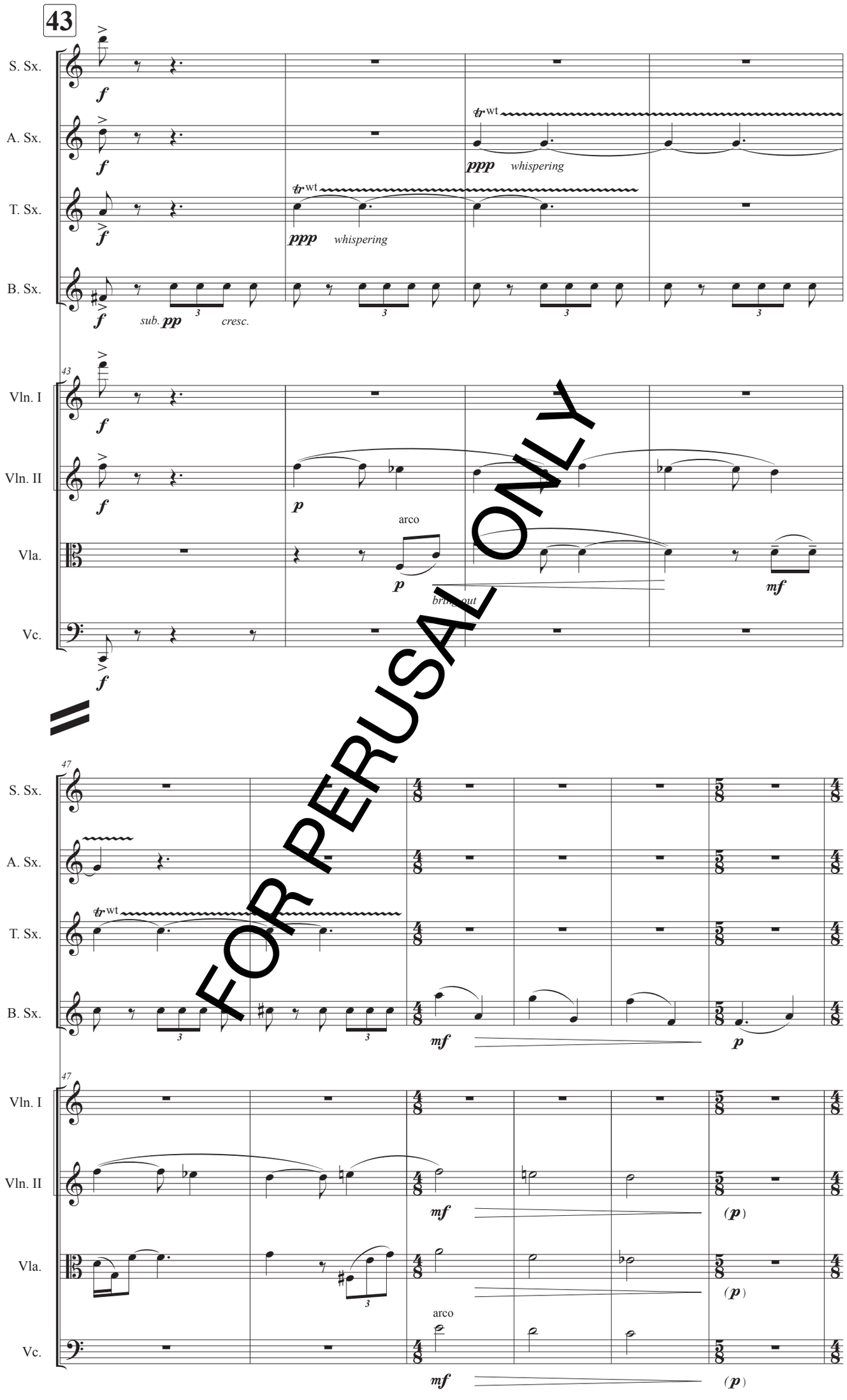

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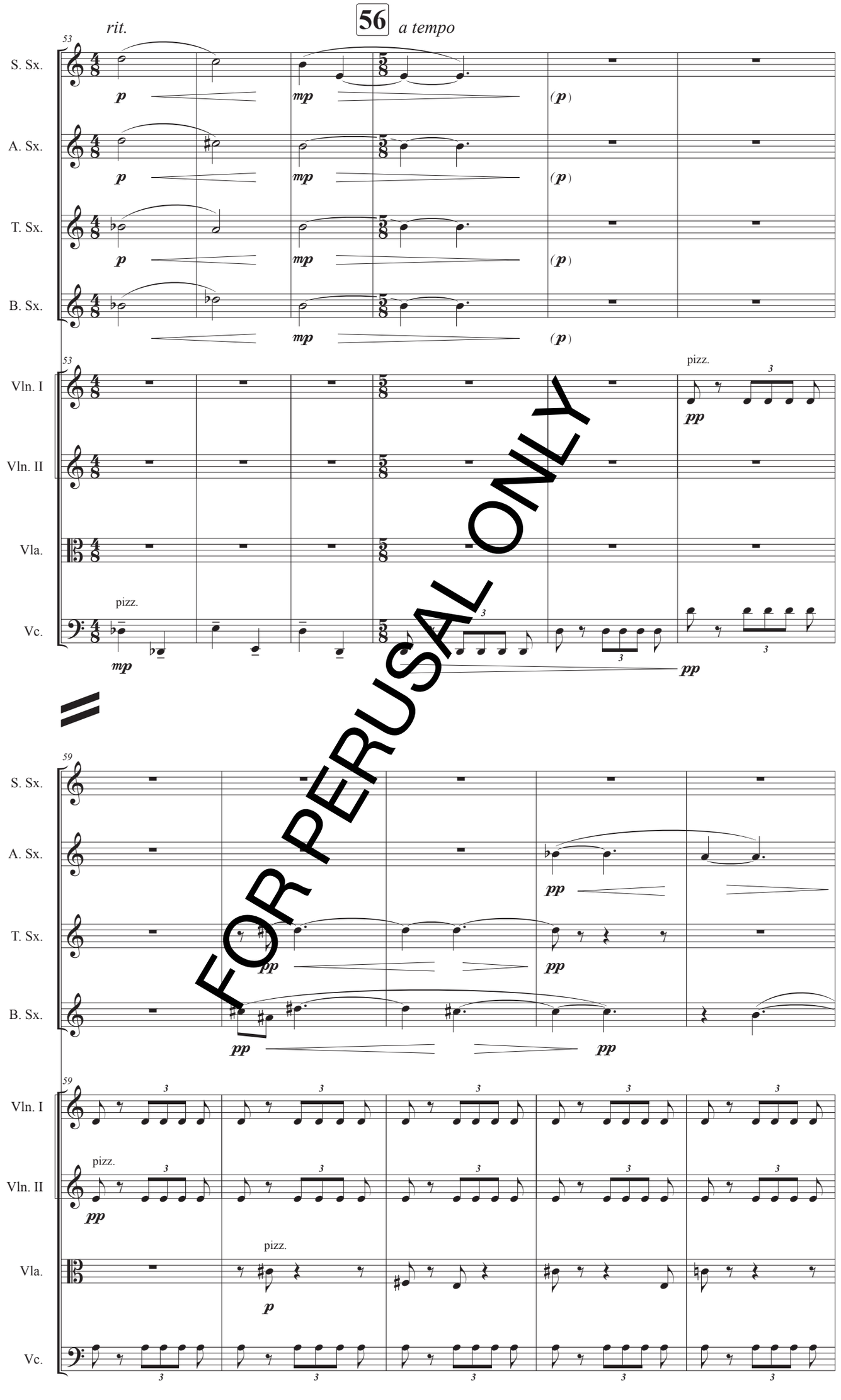

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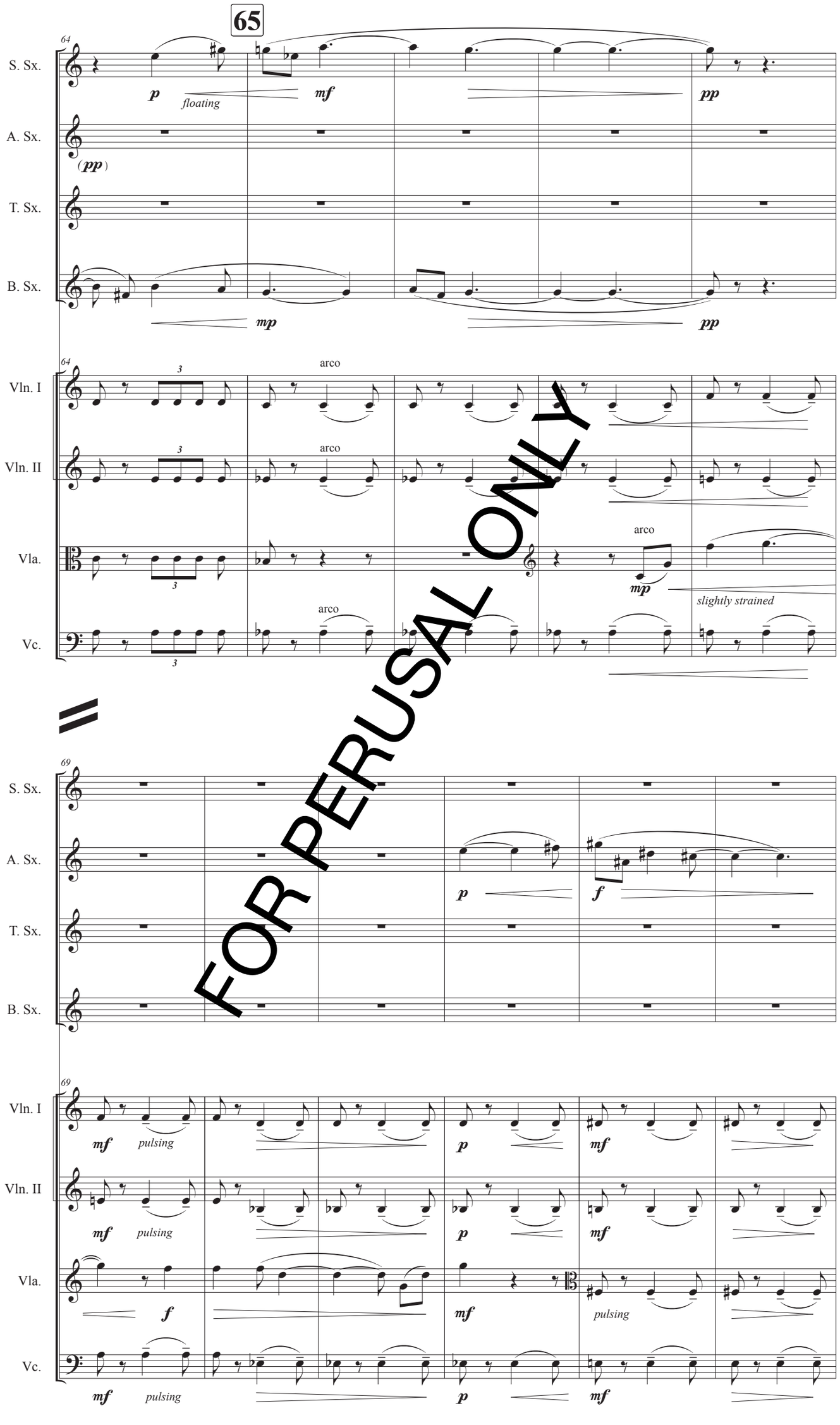

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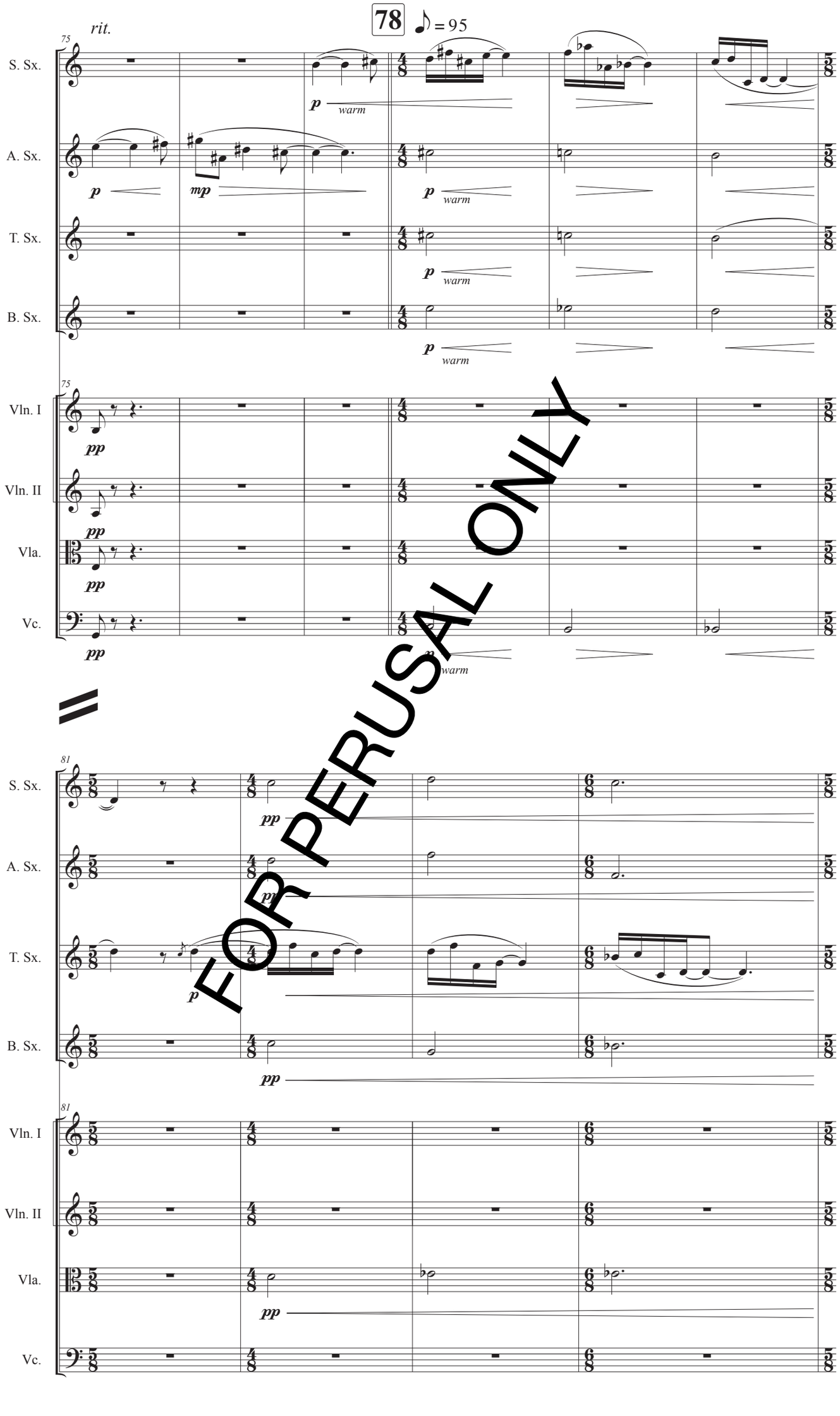

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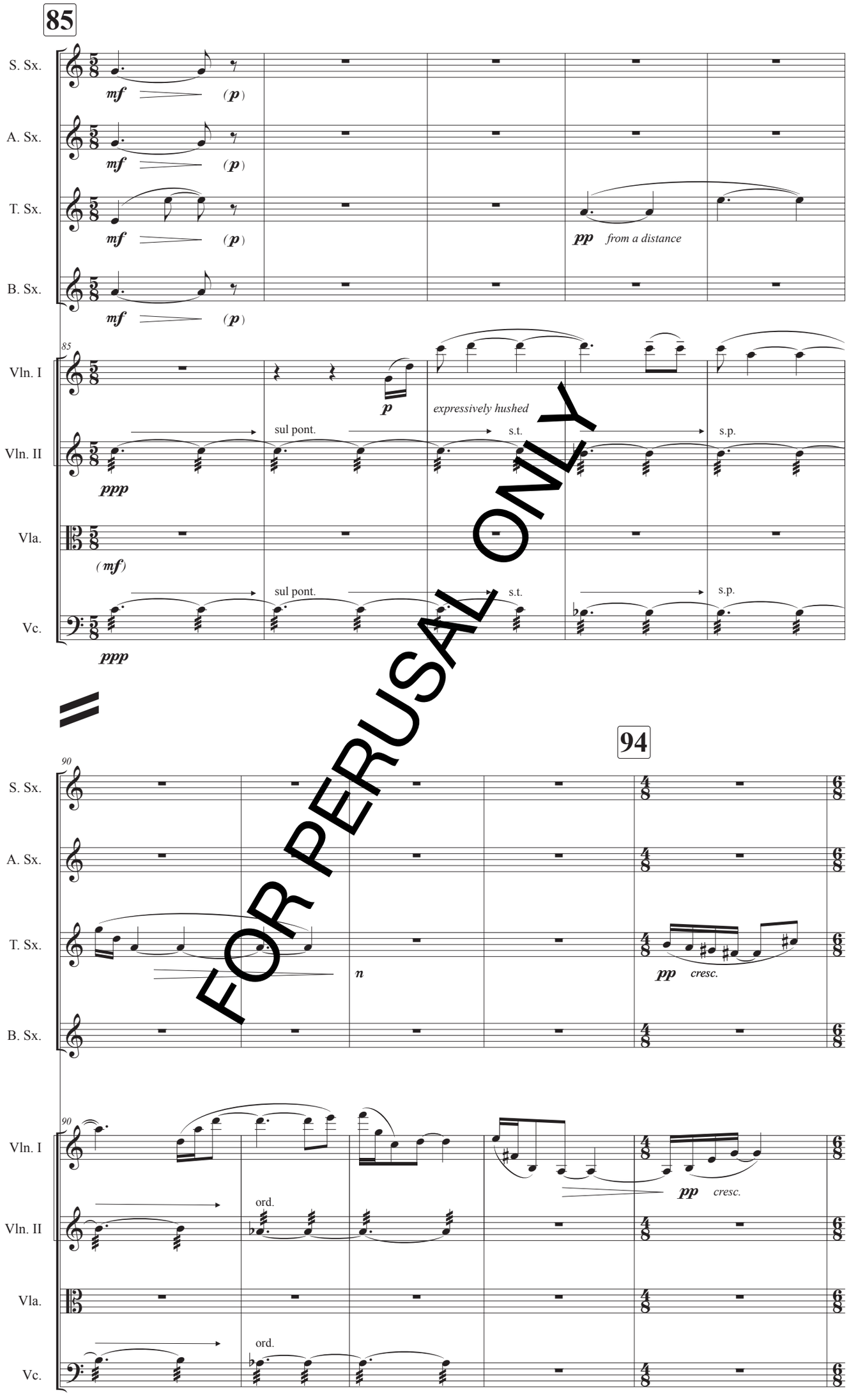

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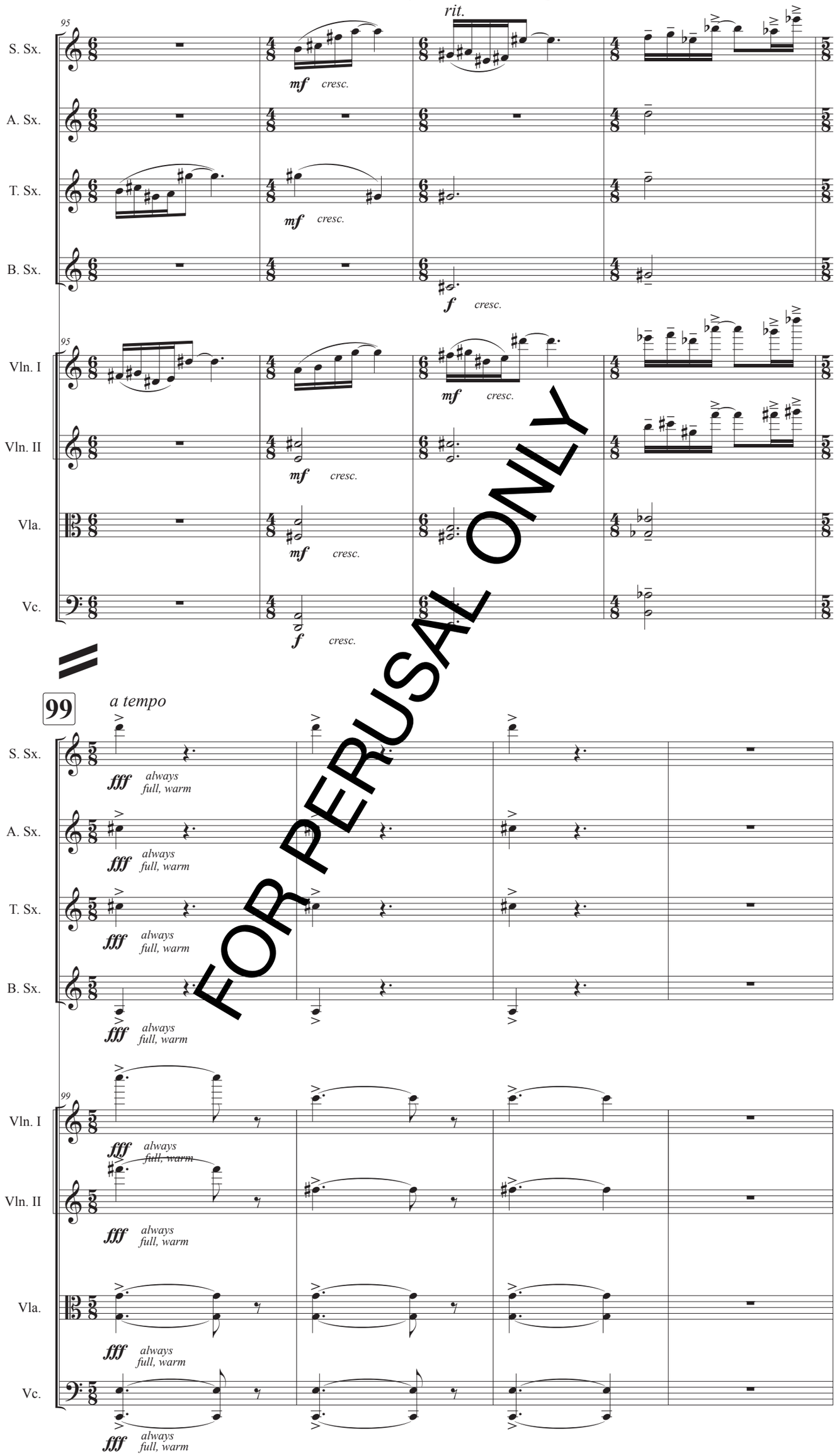

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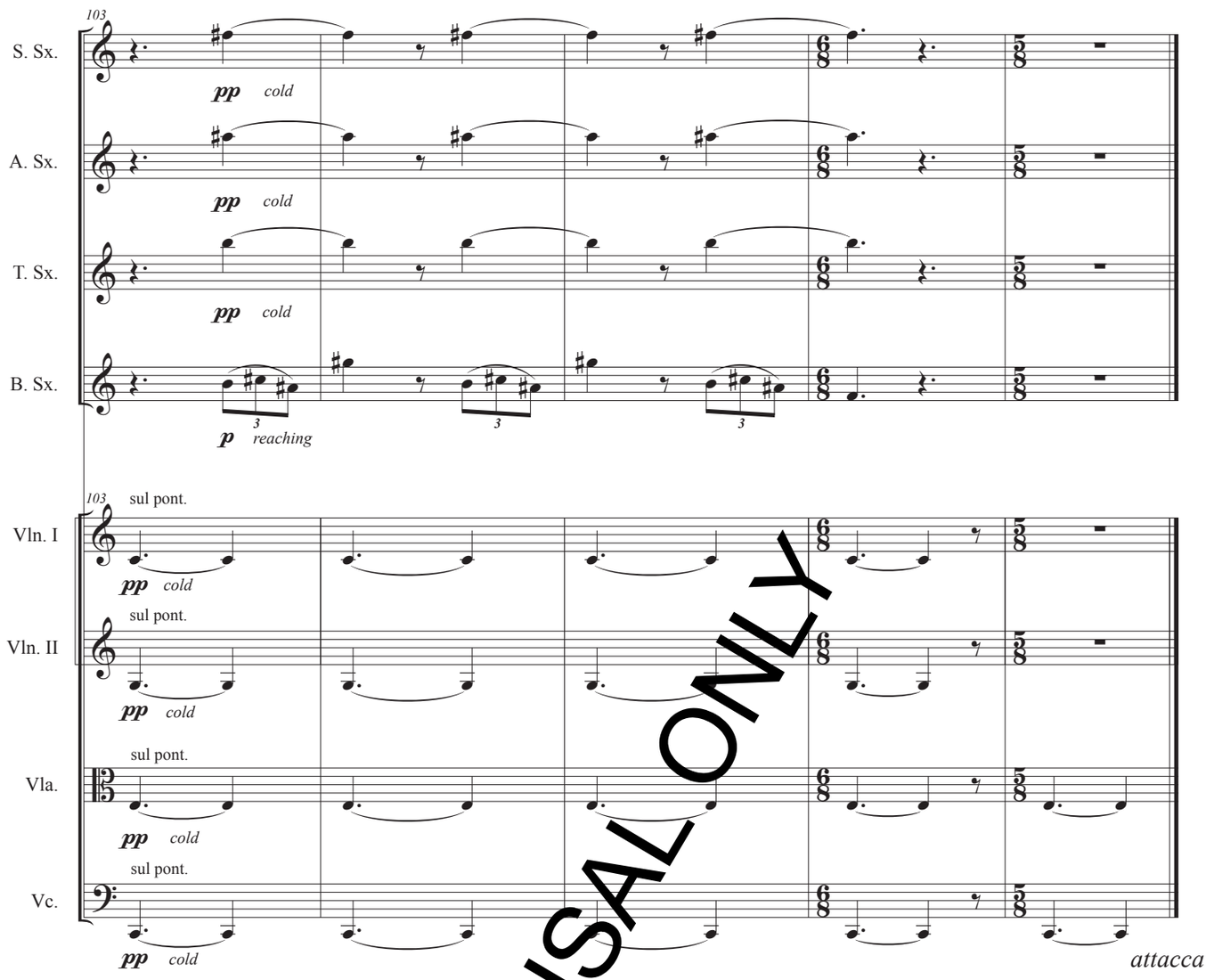

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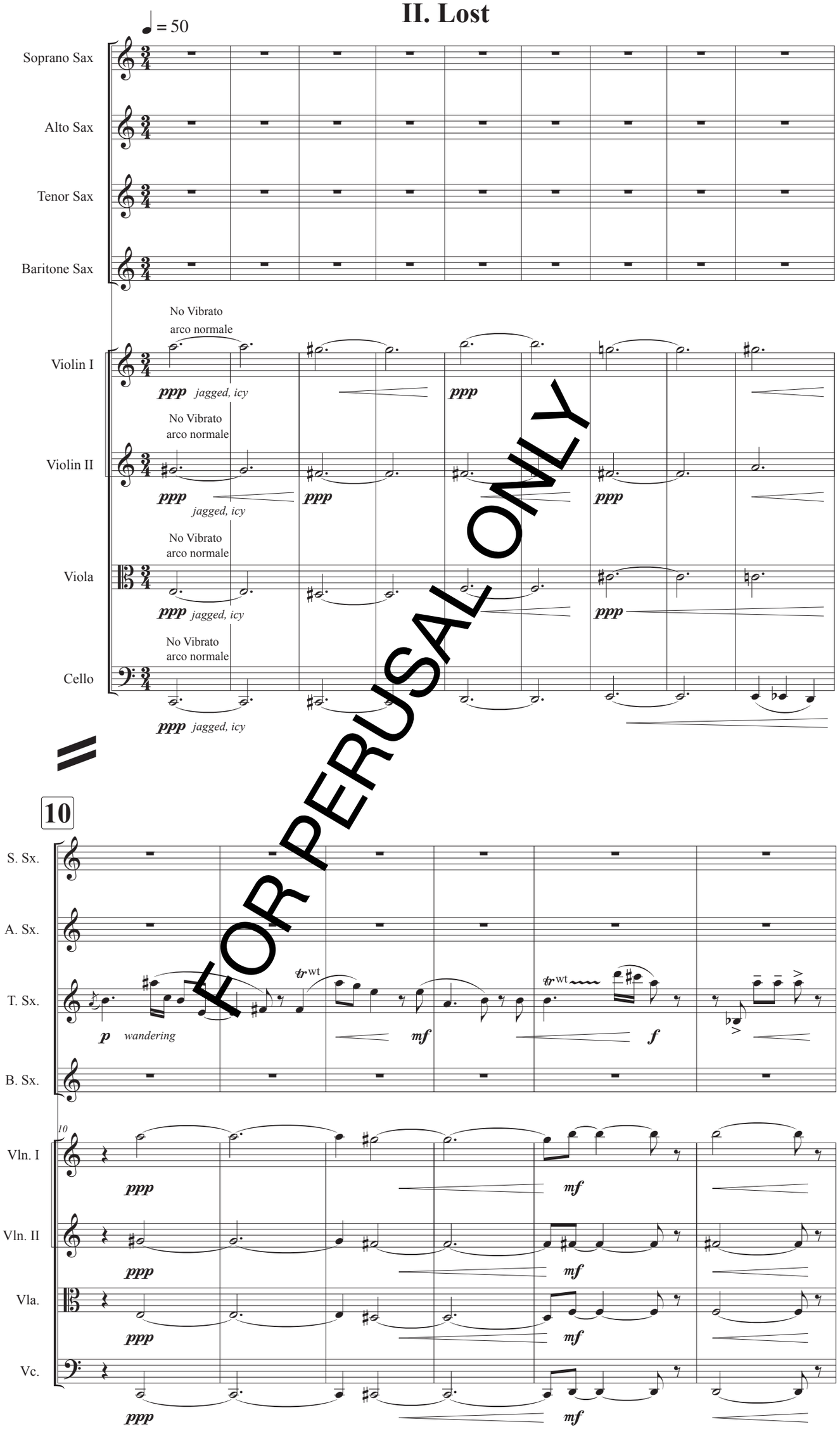

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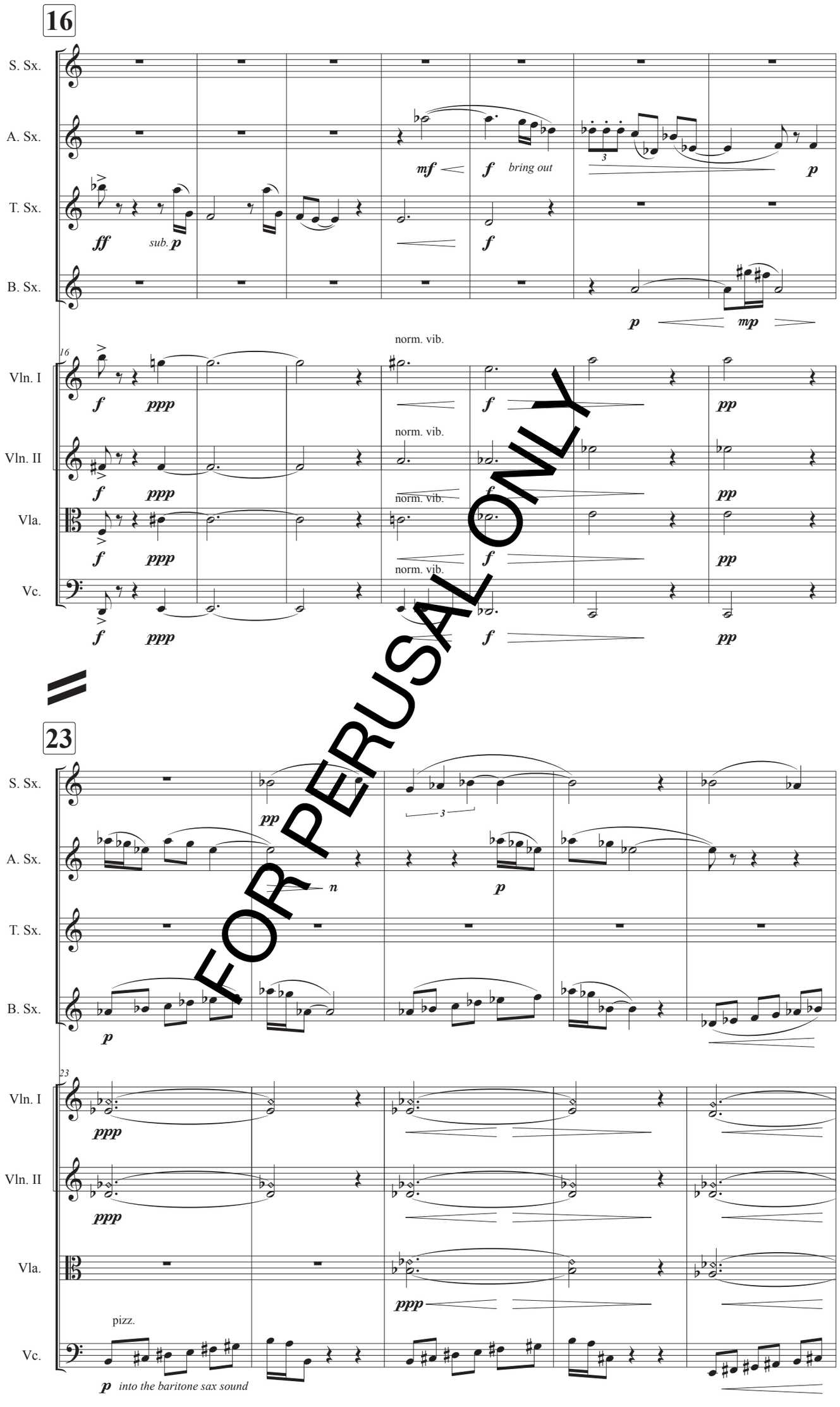

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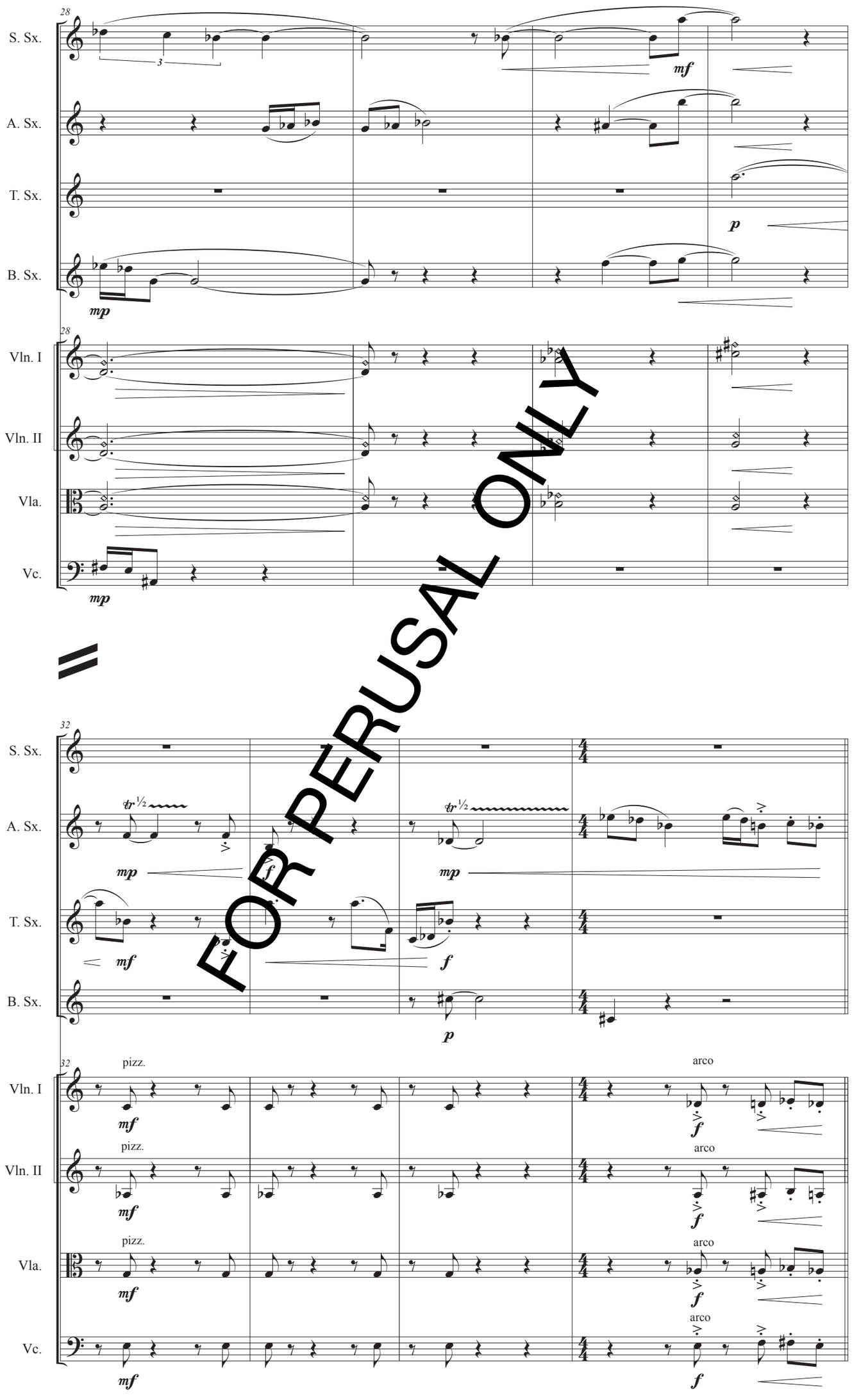

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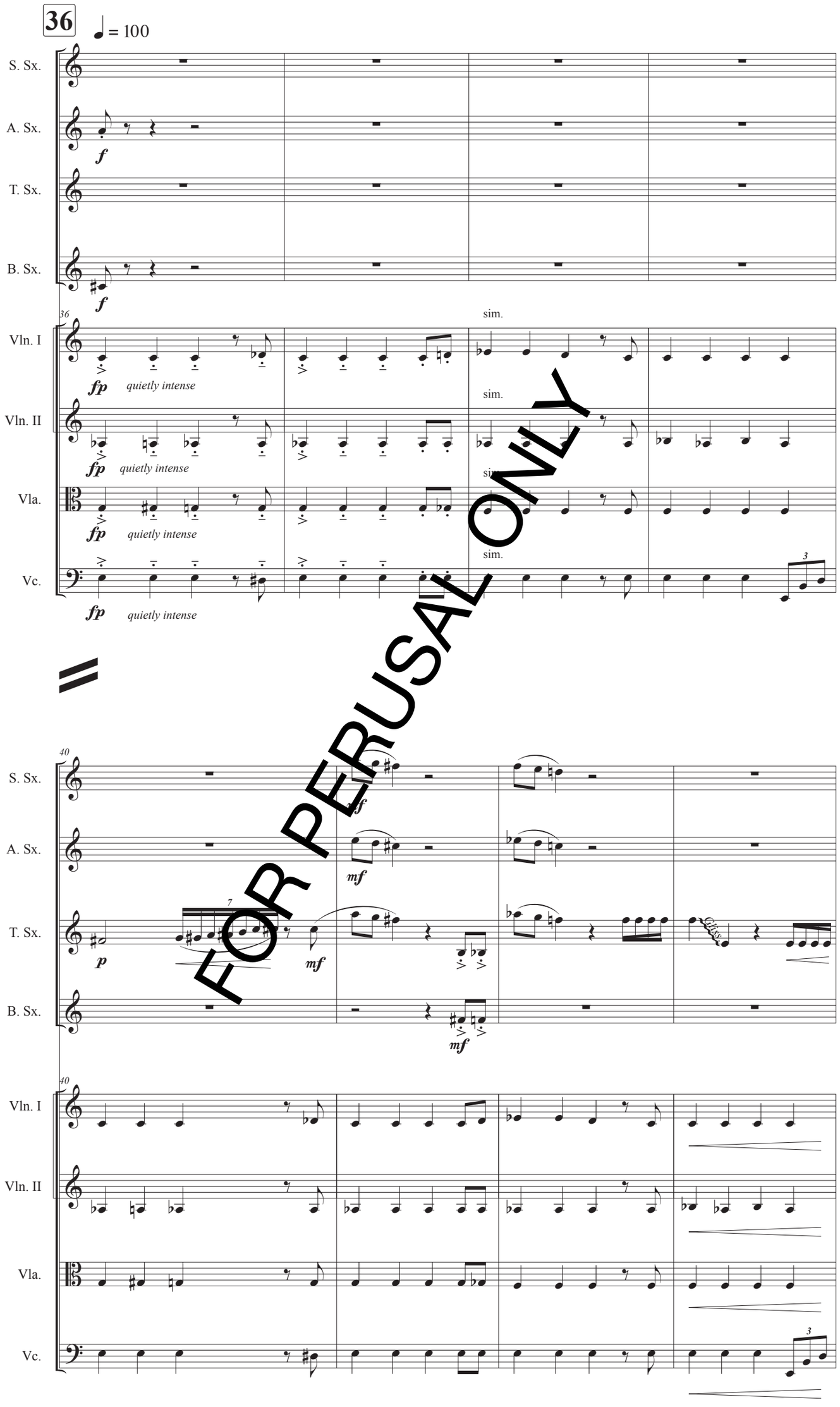

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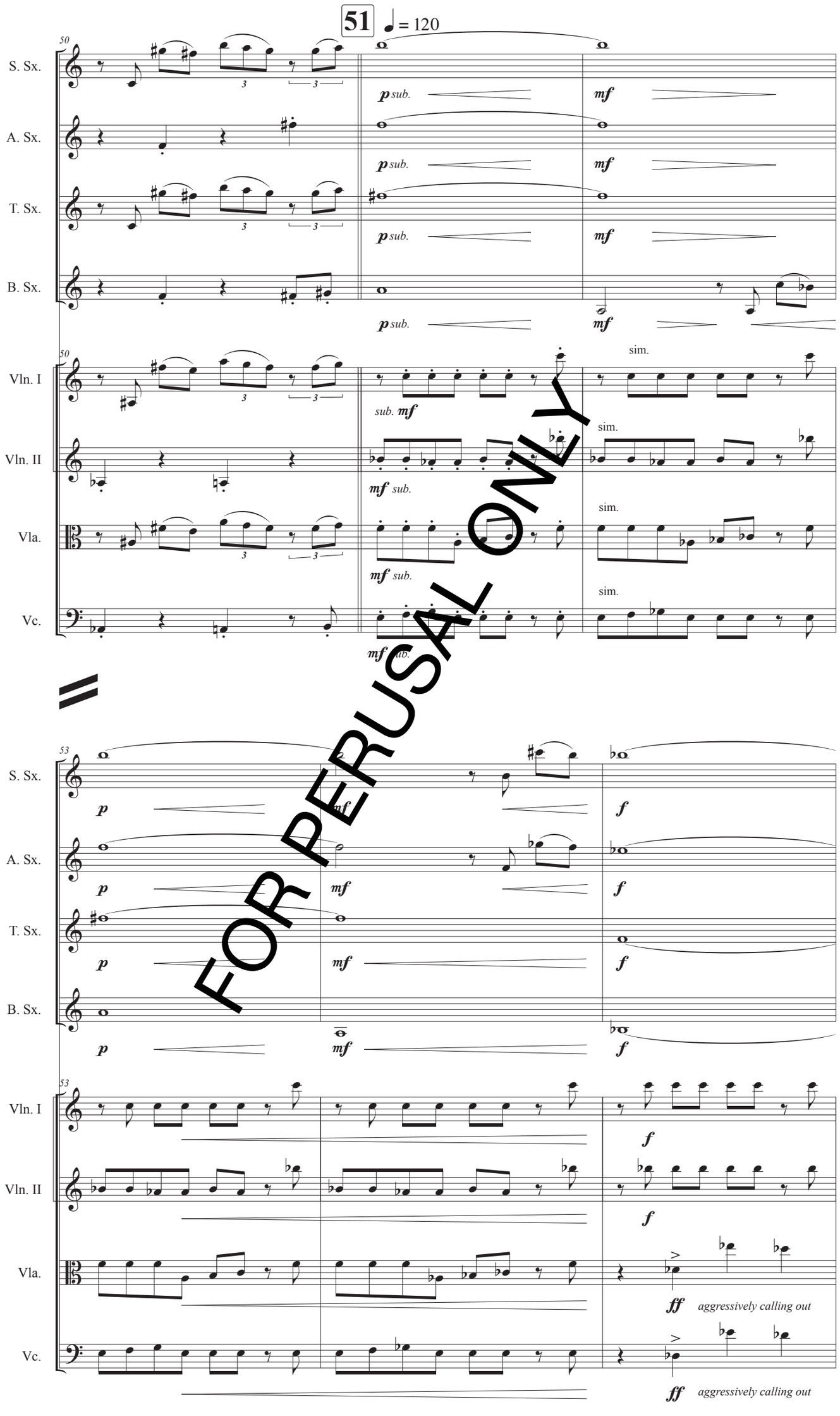

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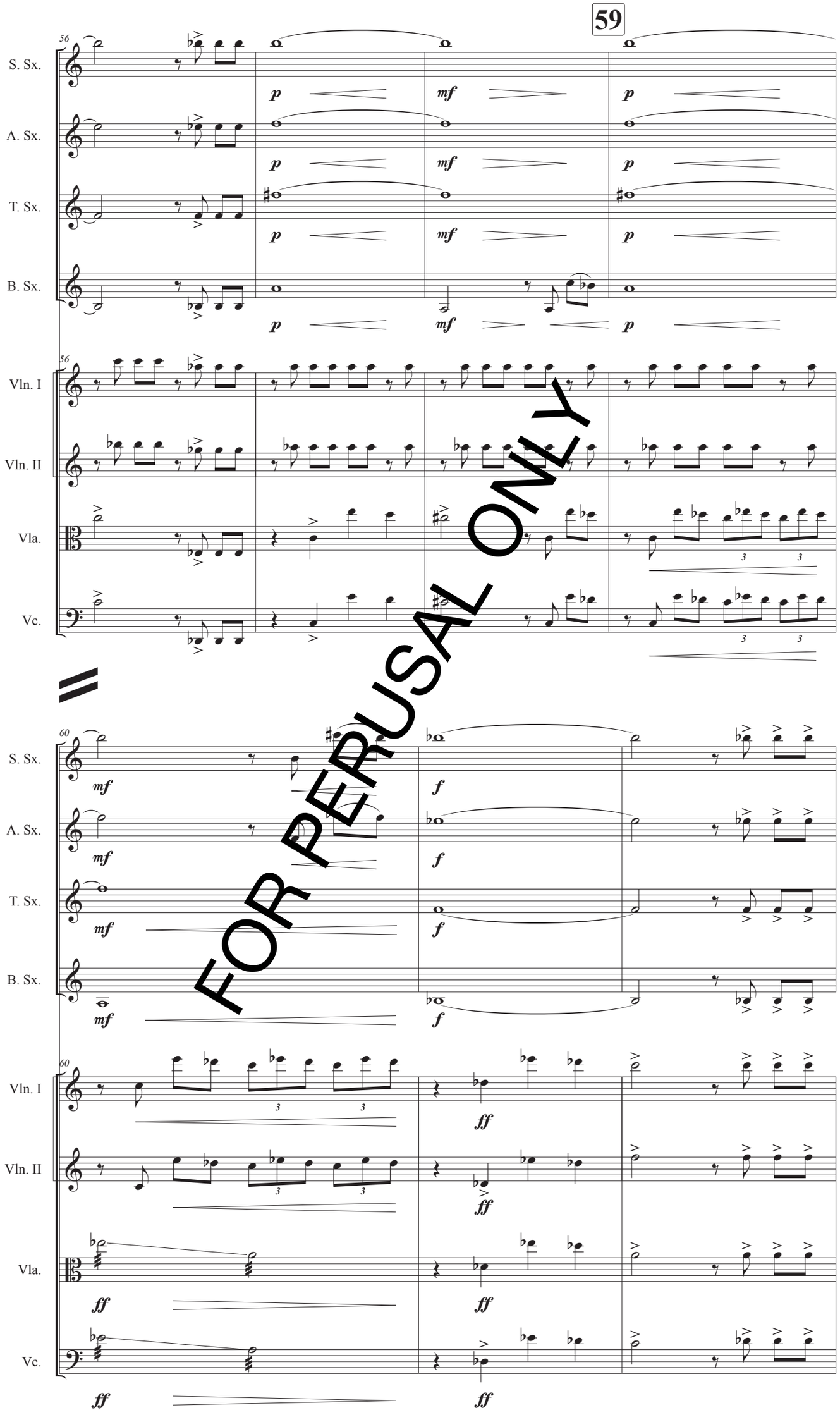

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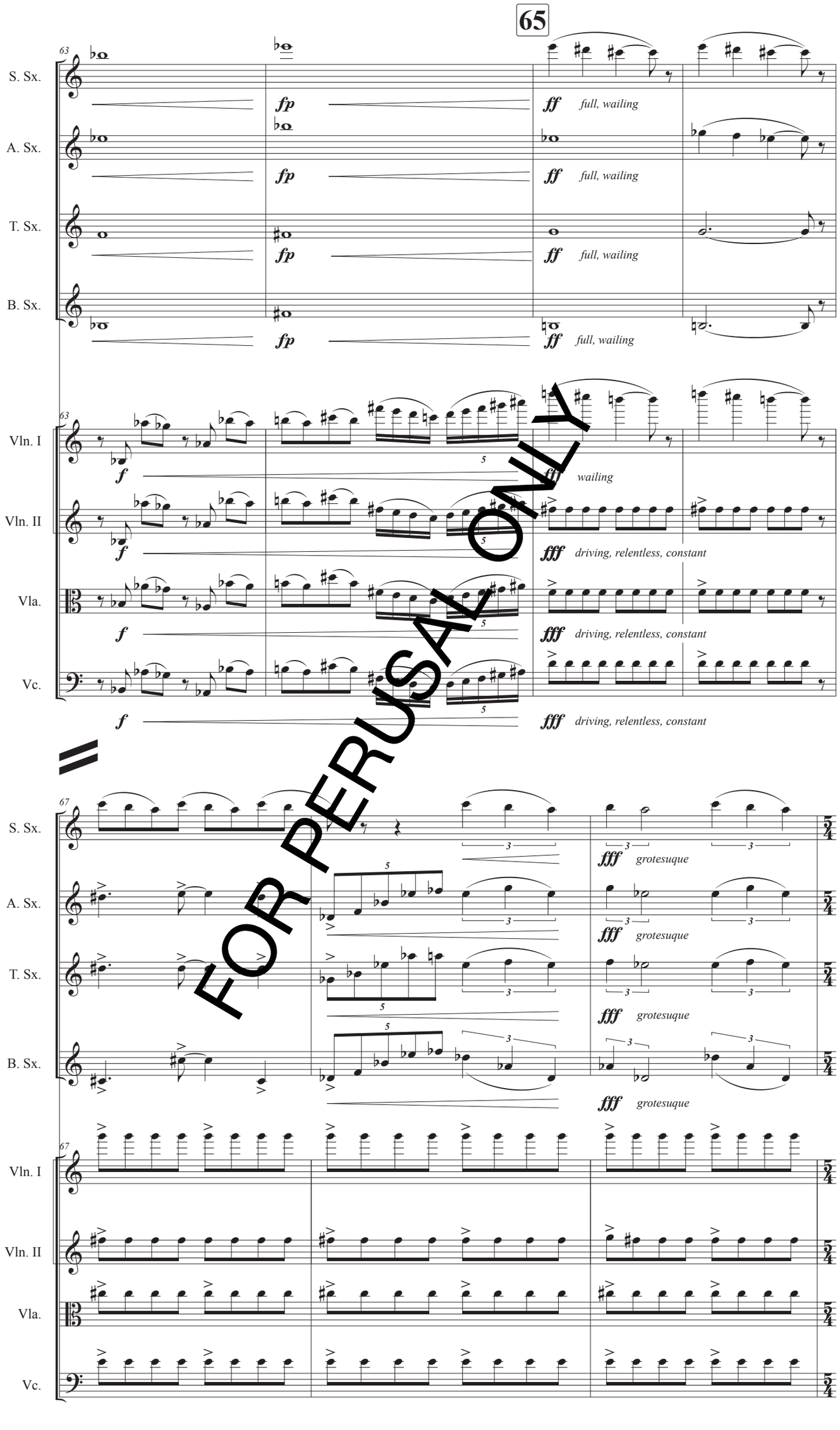

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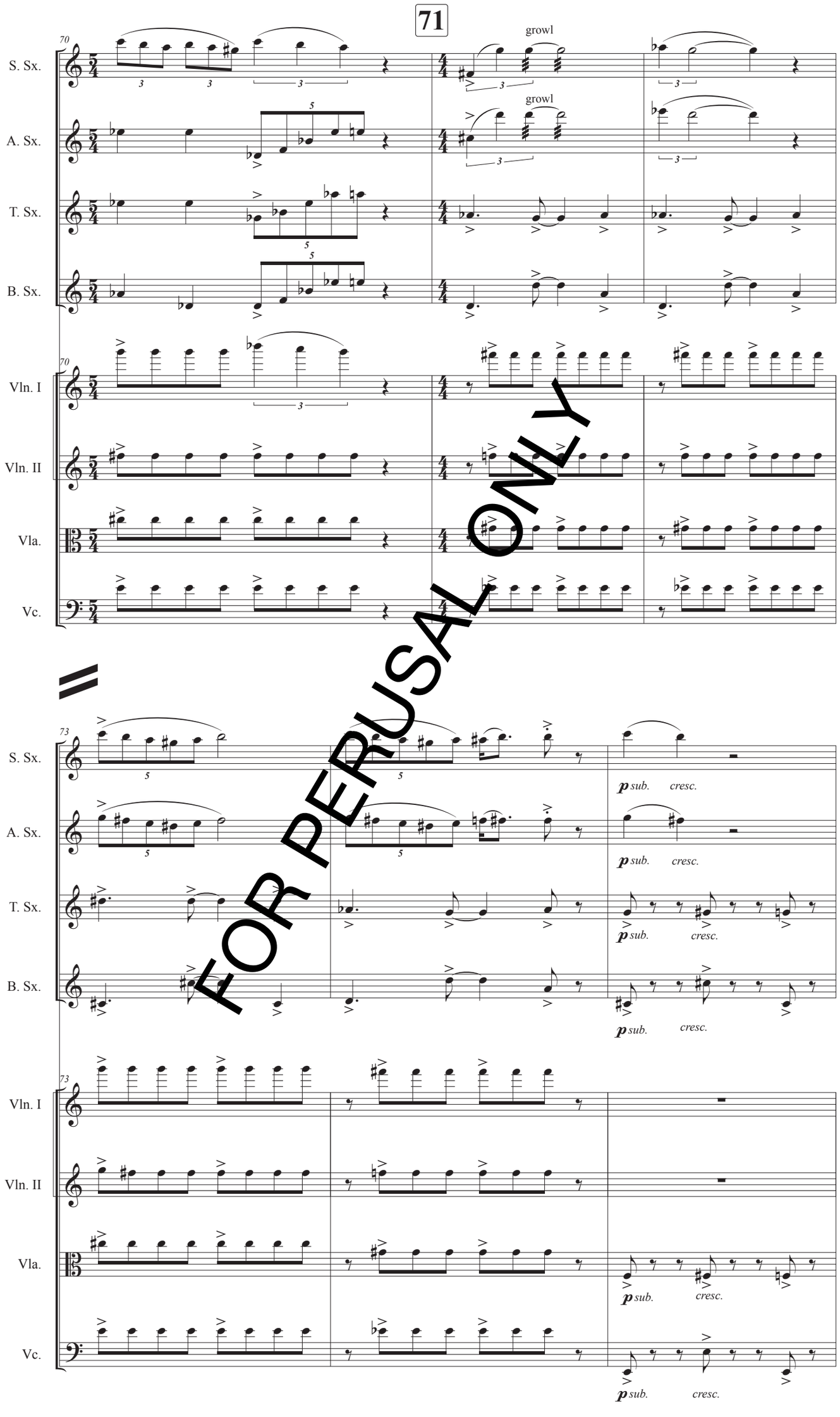

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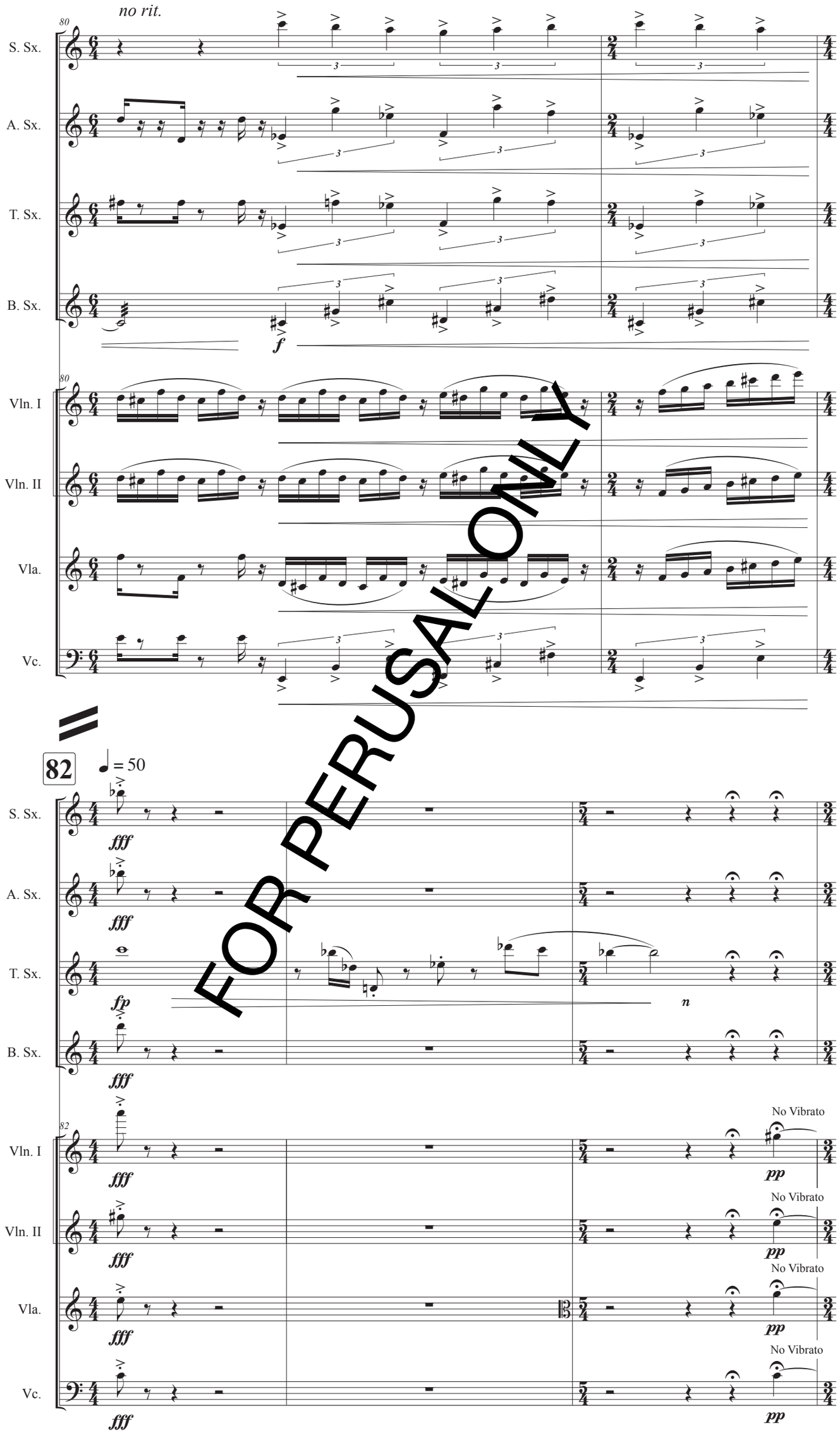

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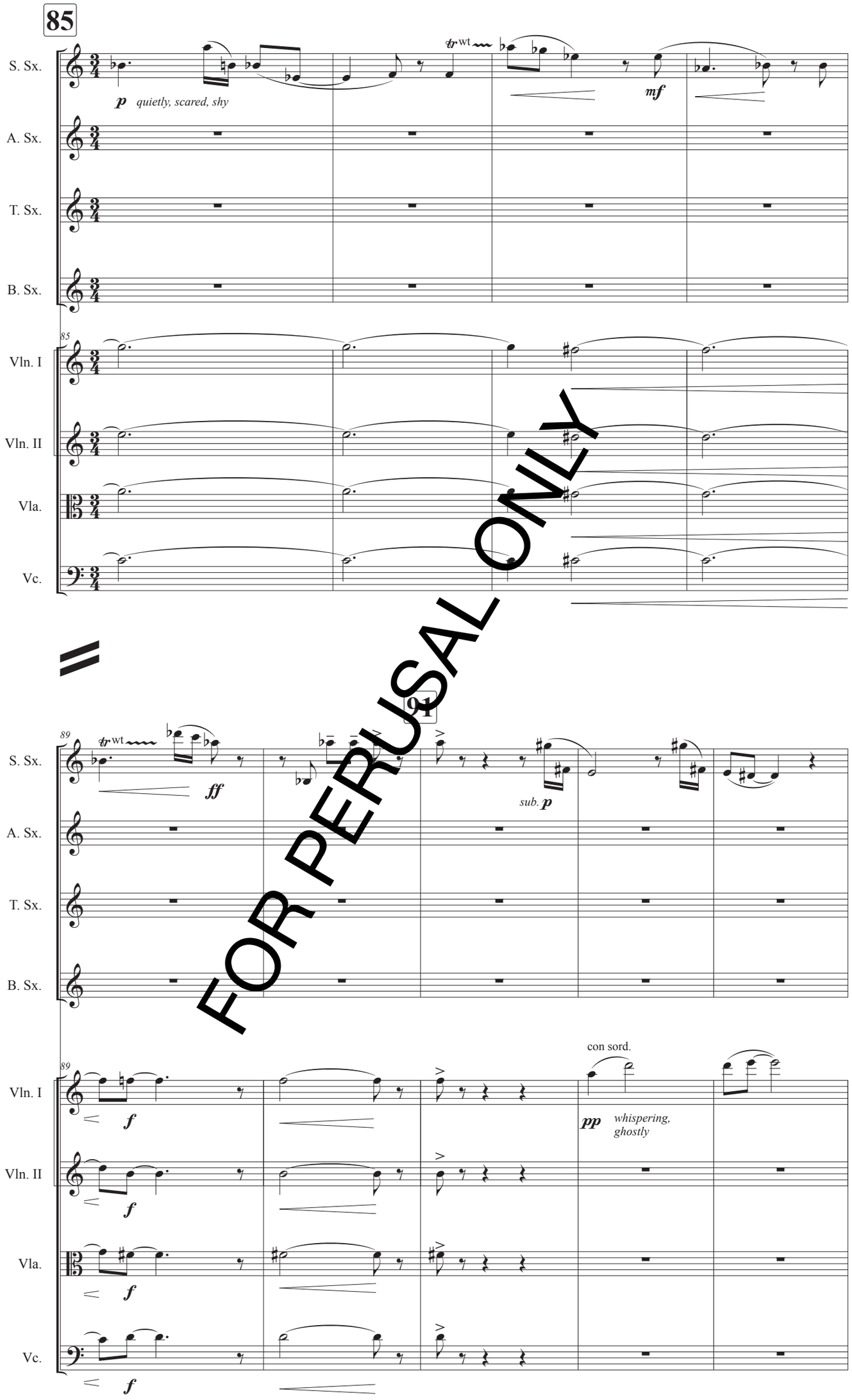

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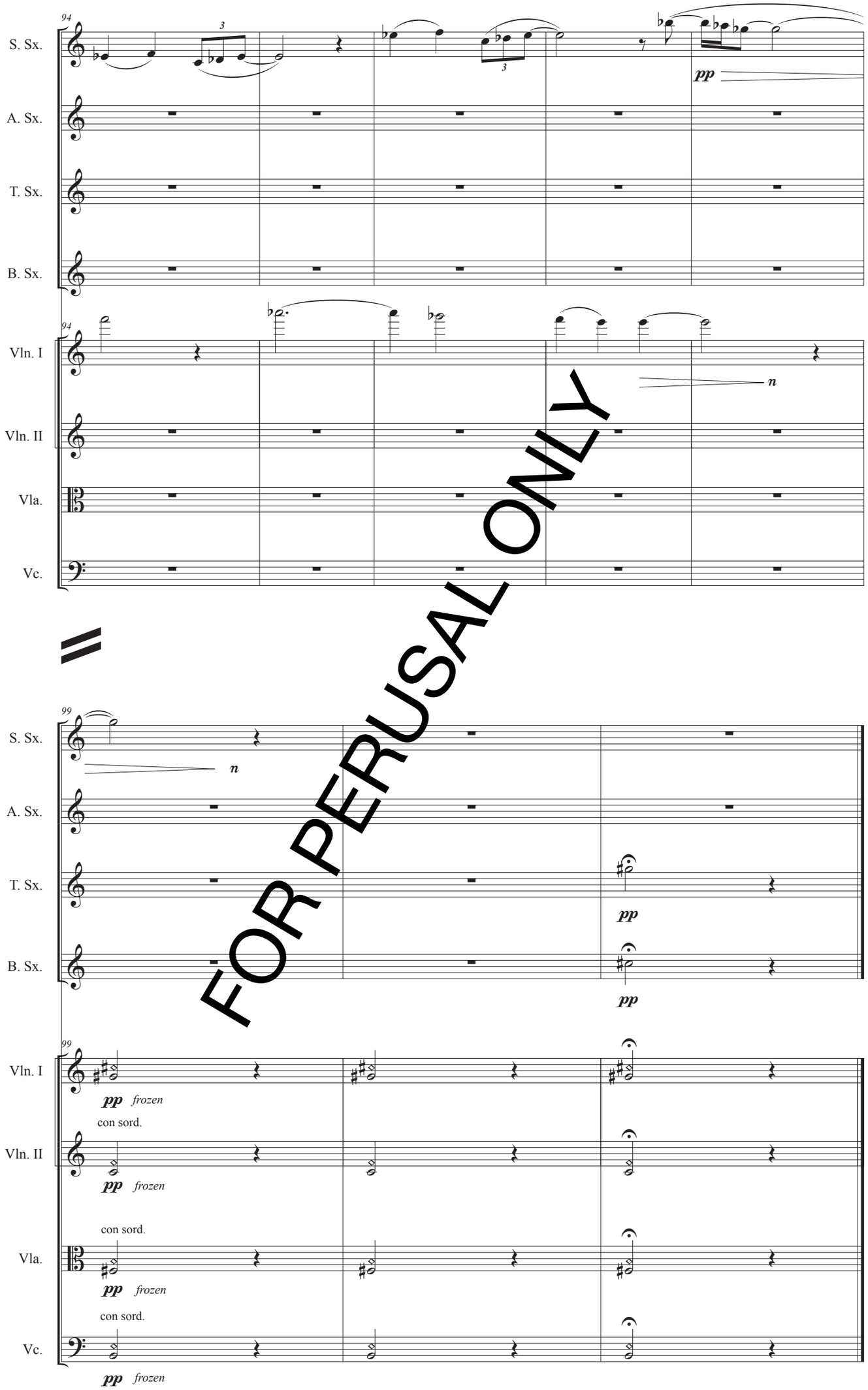

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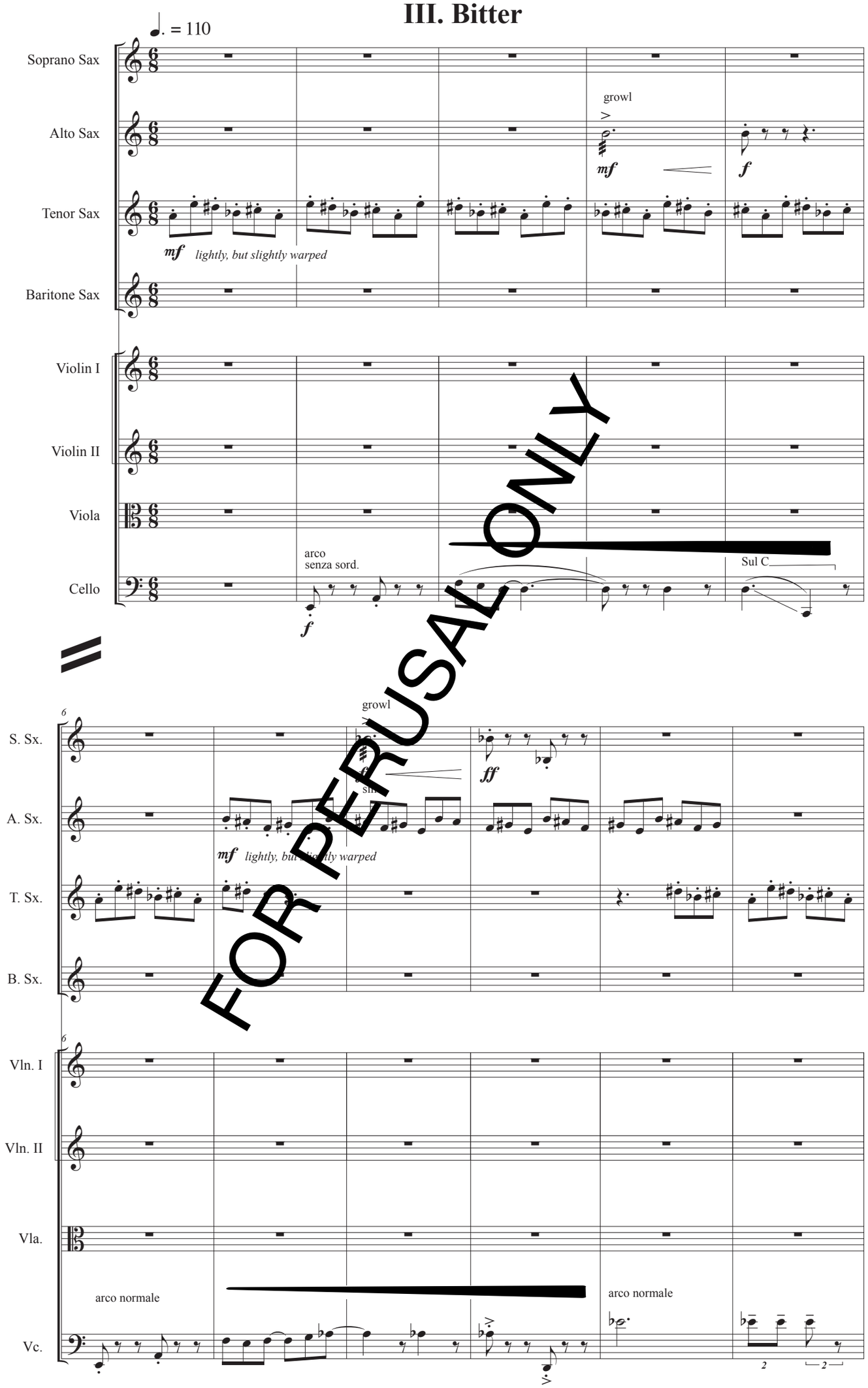
III. Bitter



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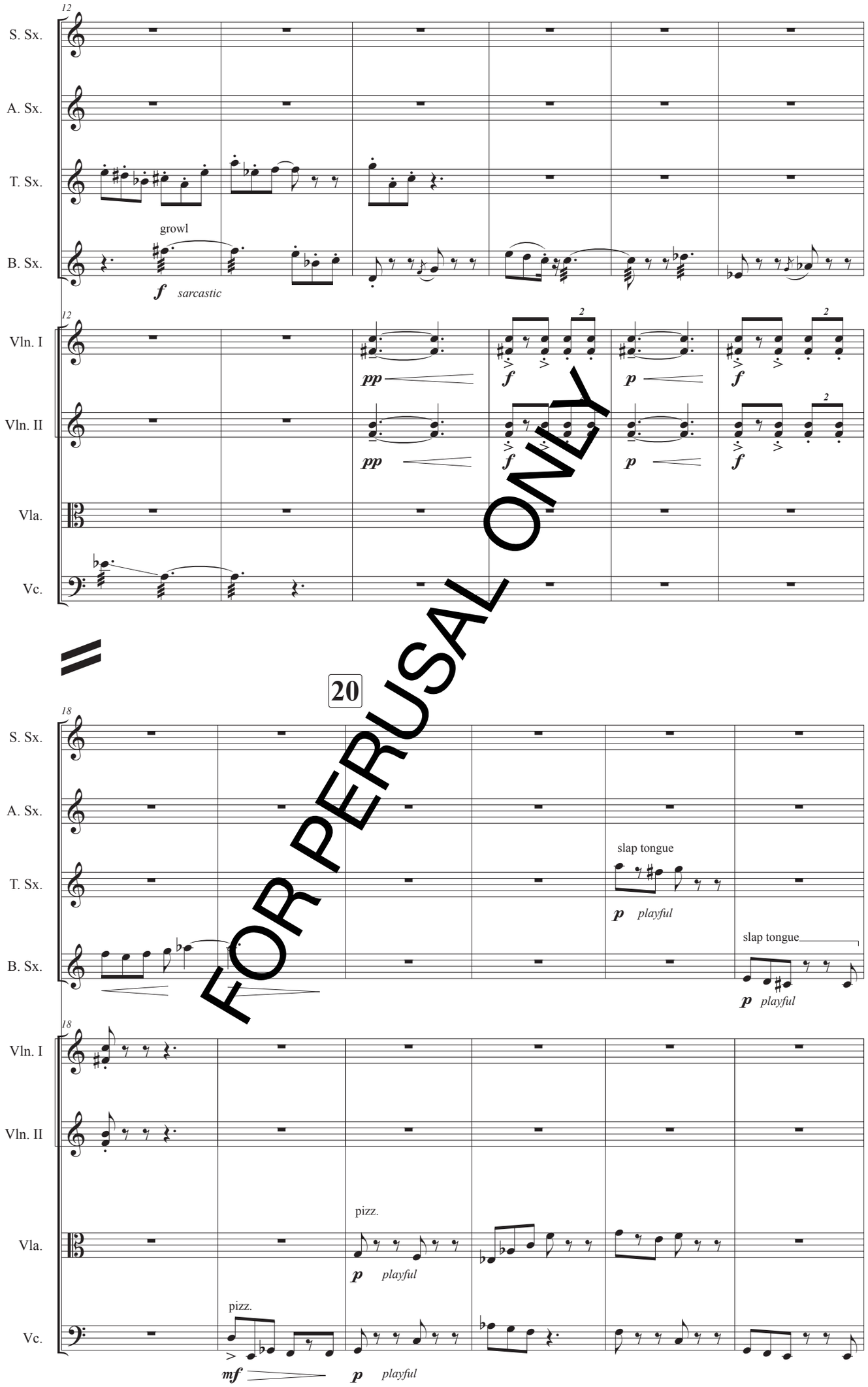

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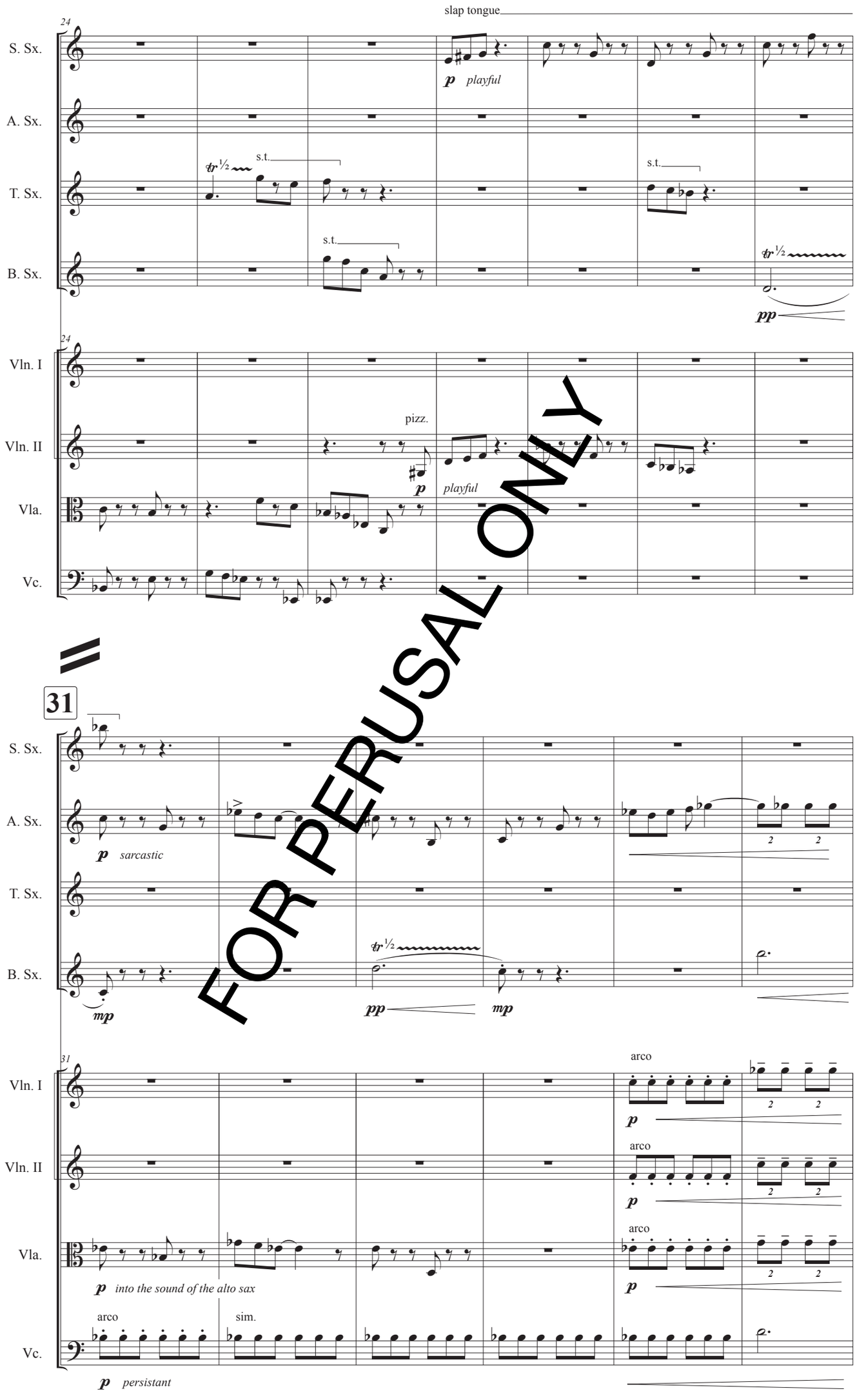

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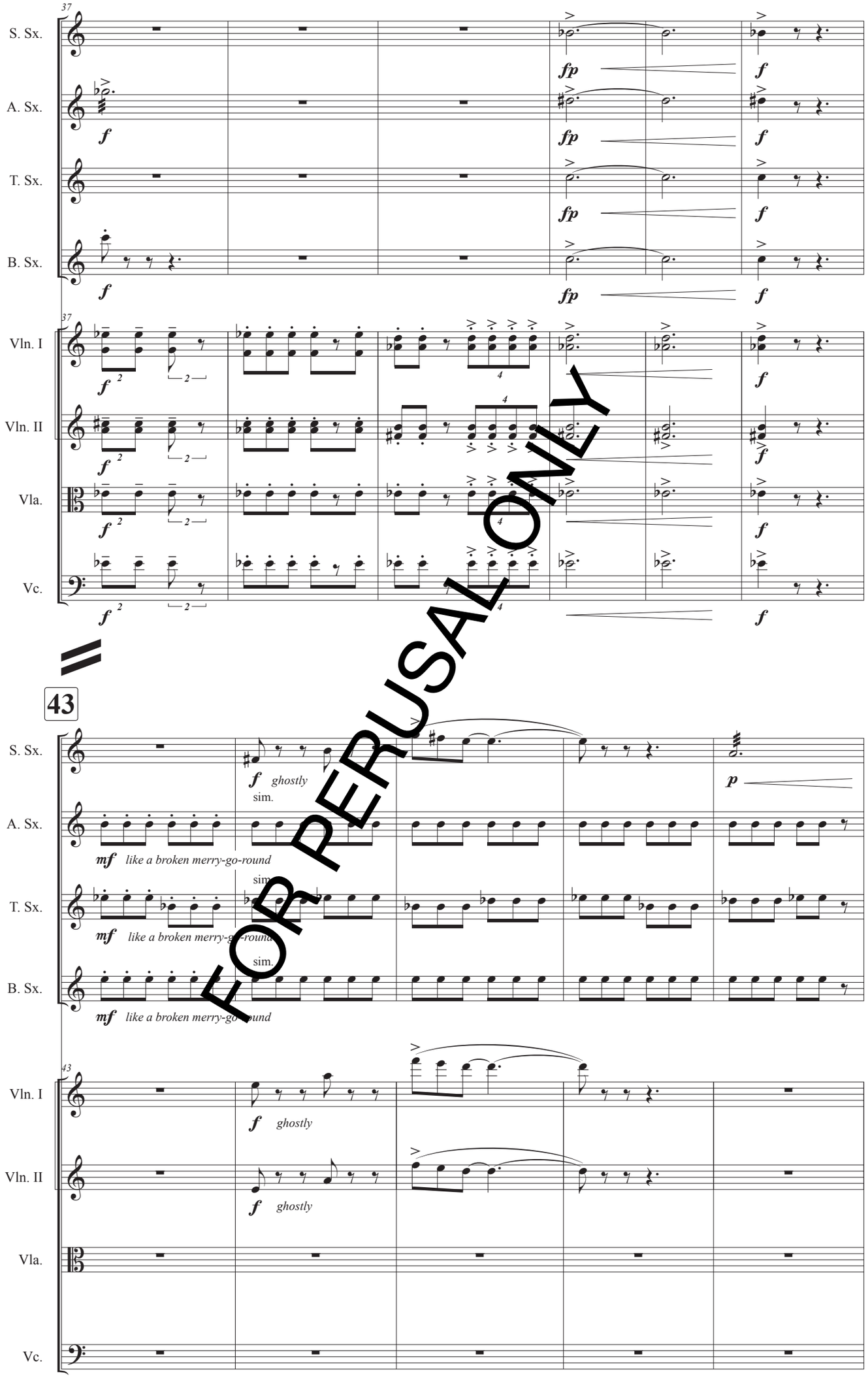

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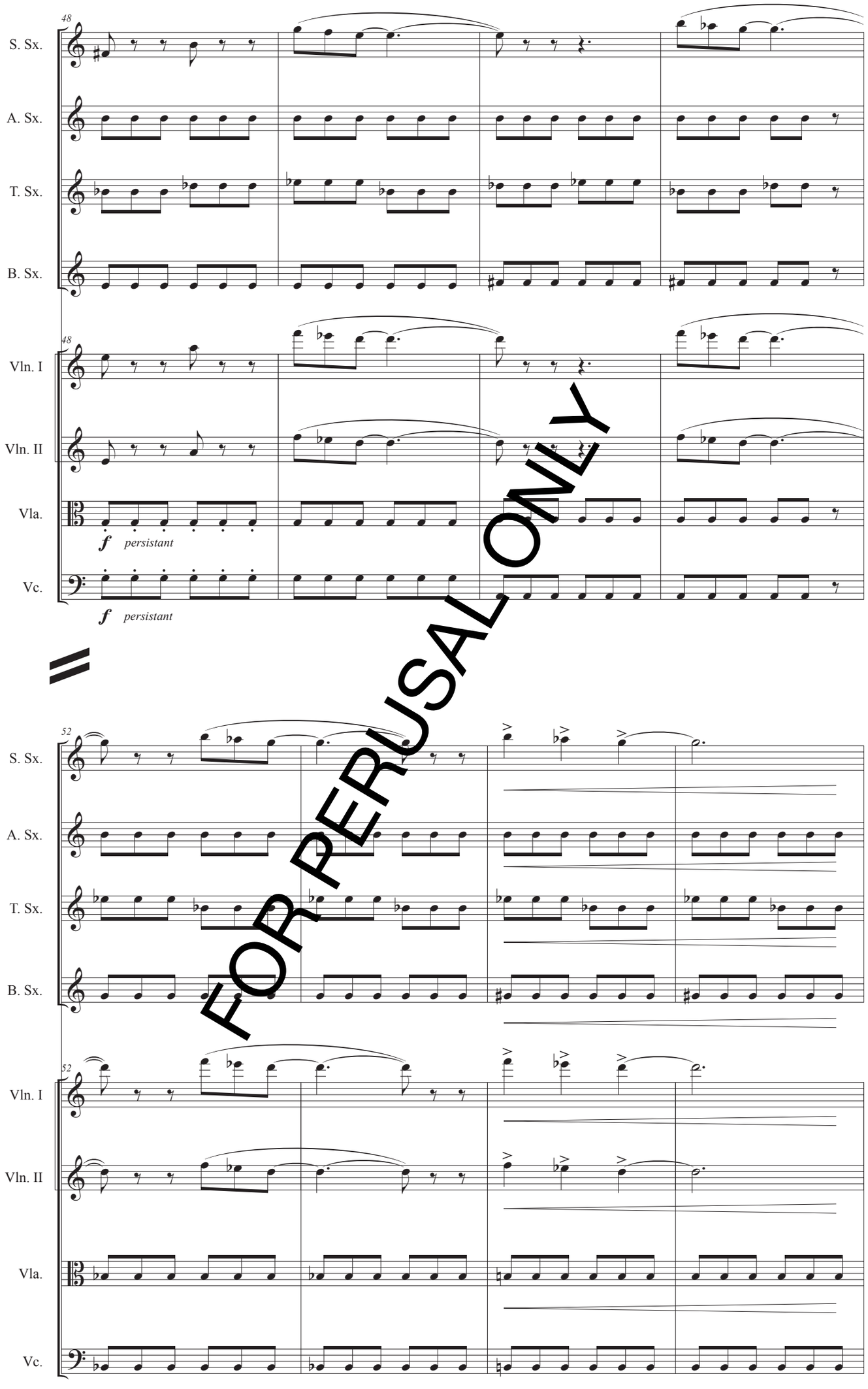

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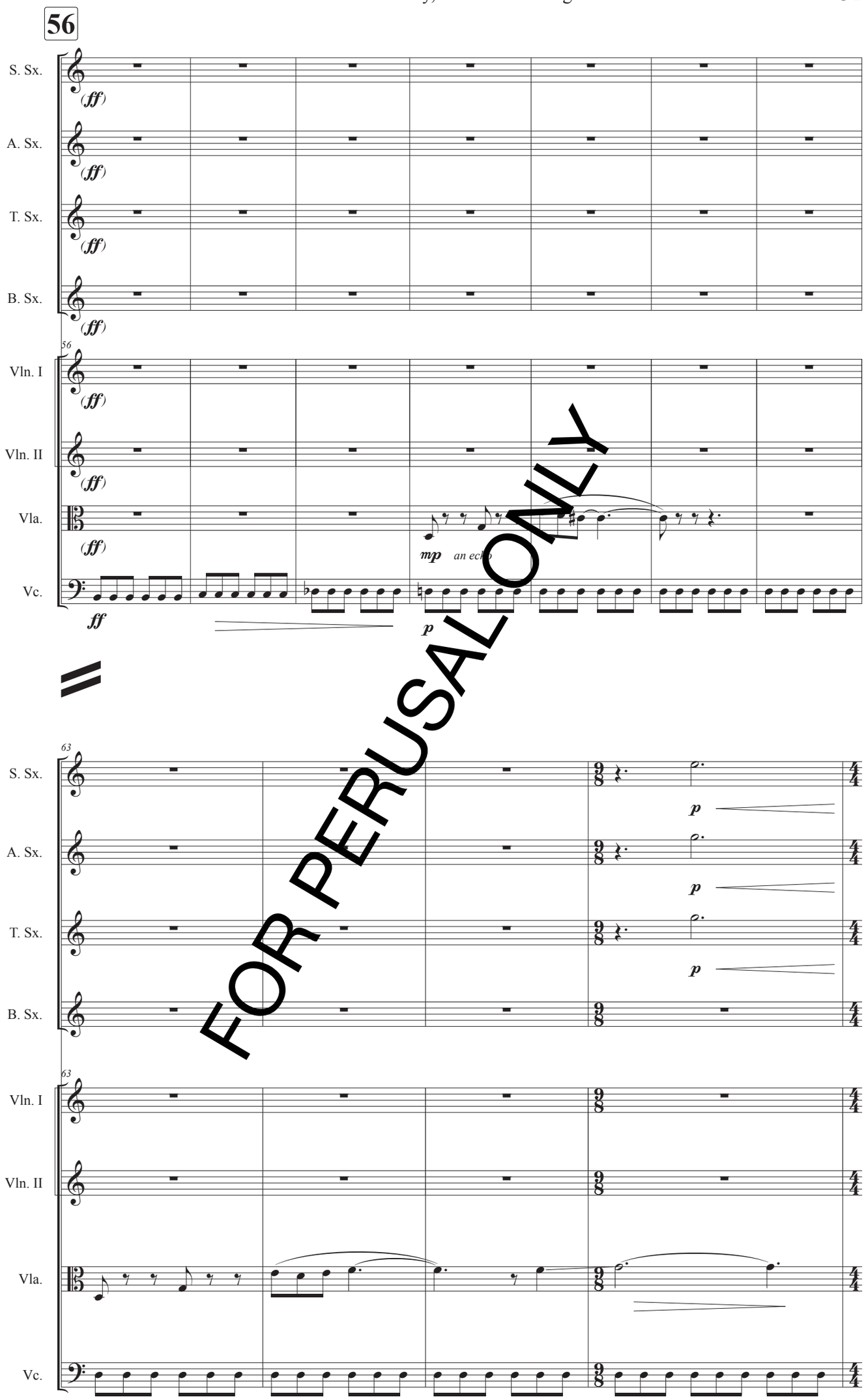

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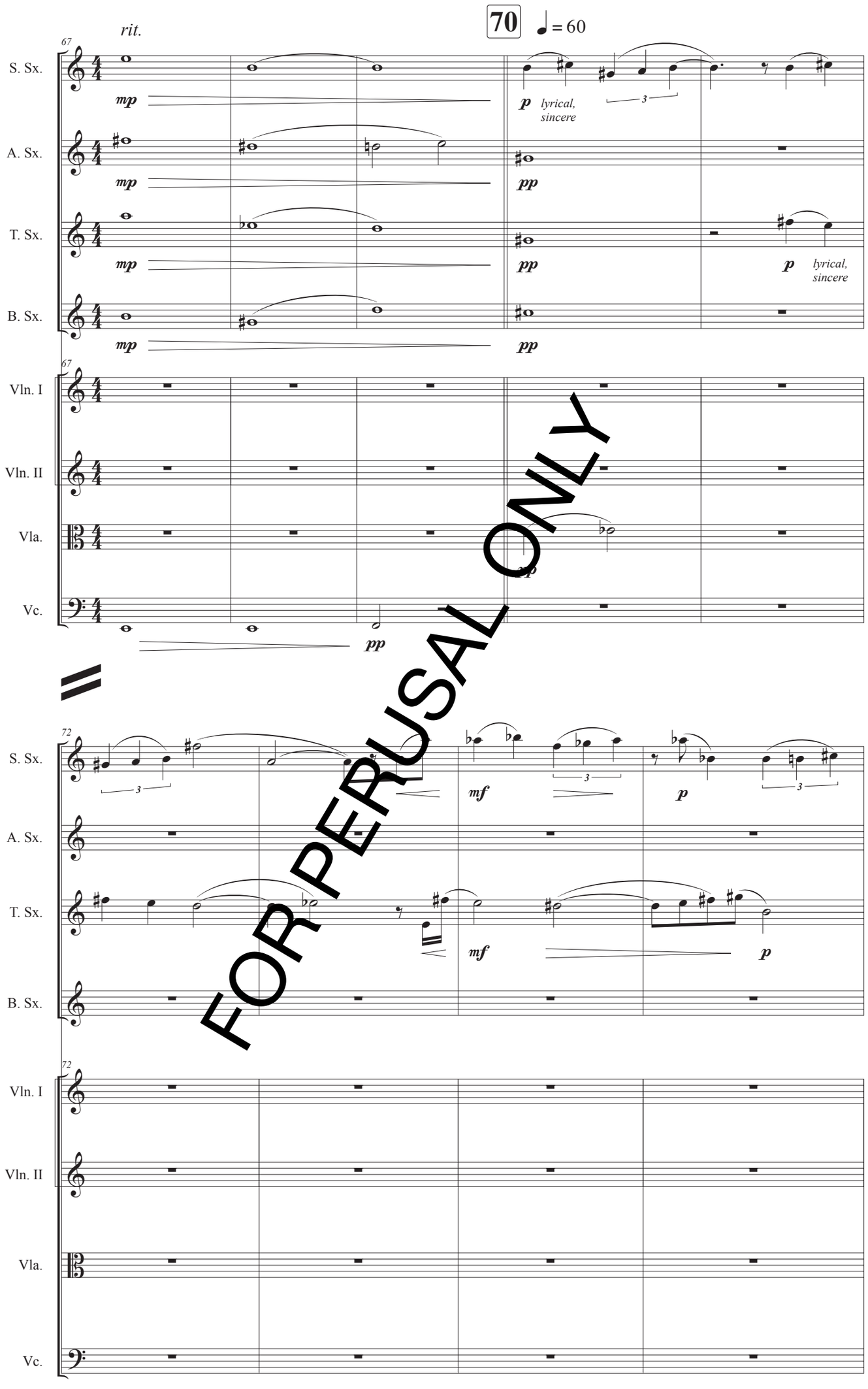

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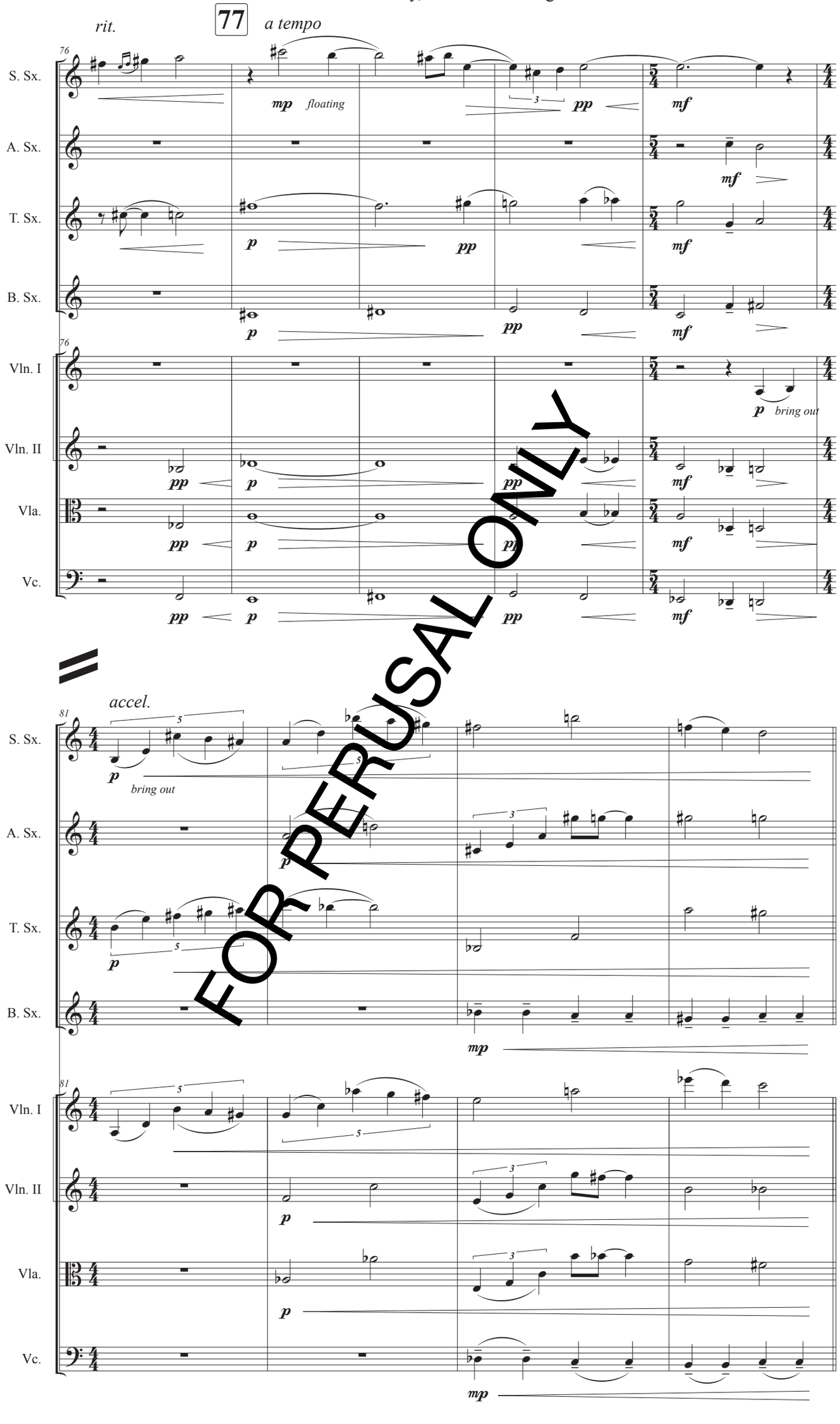

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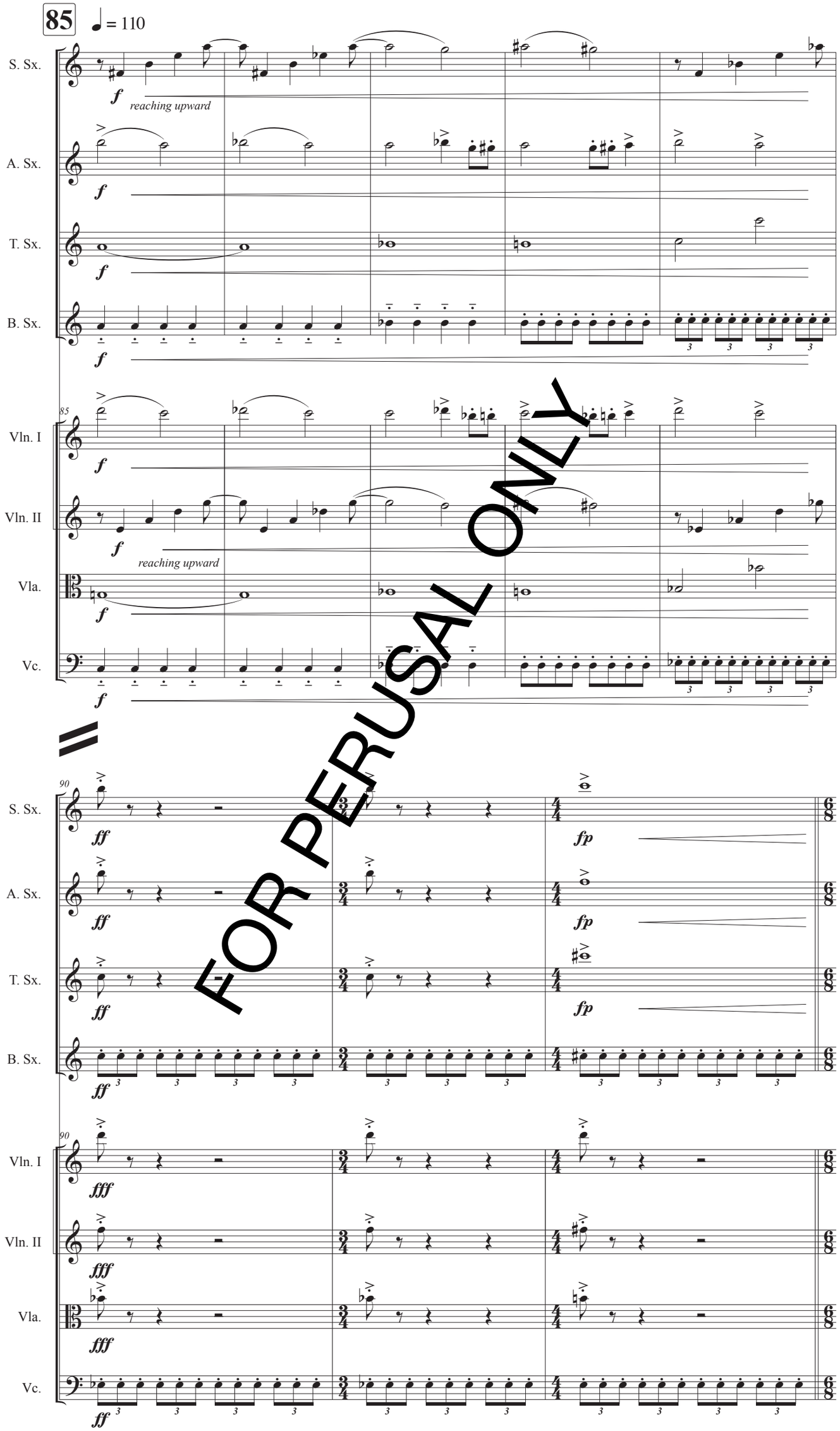

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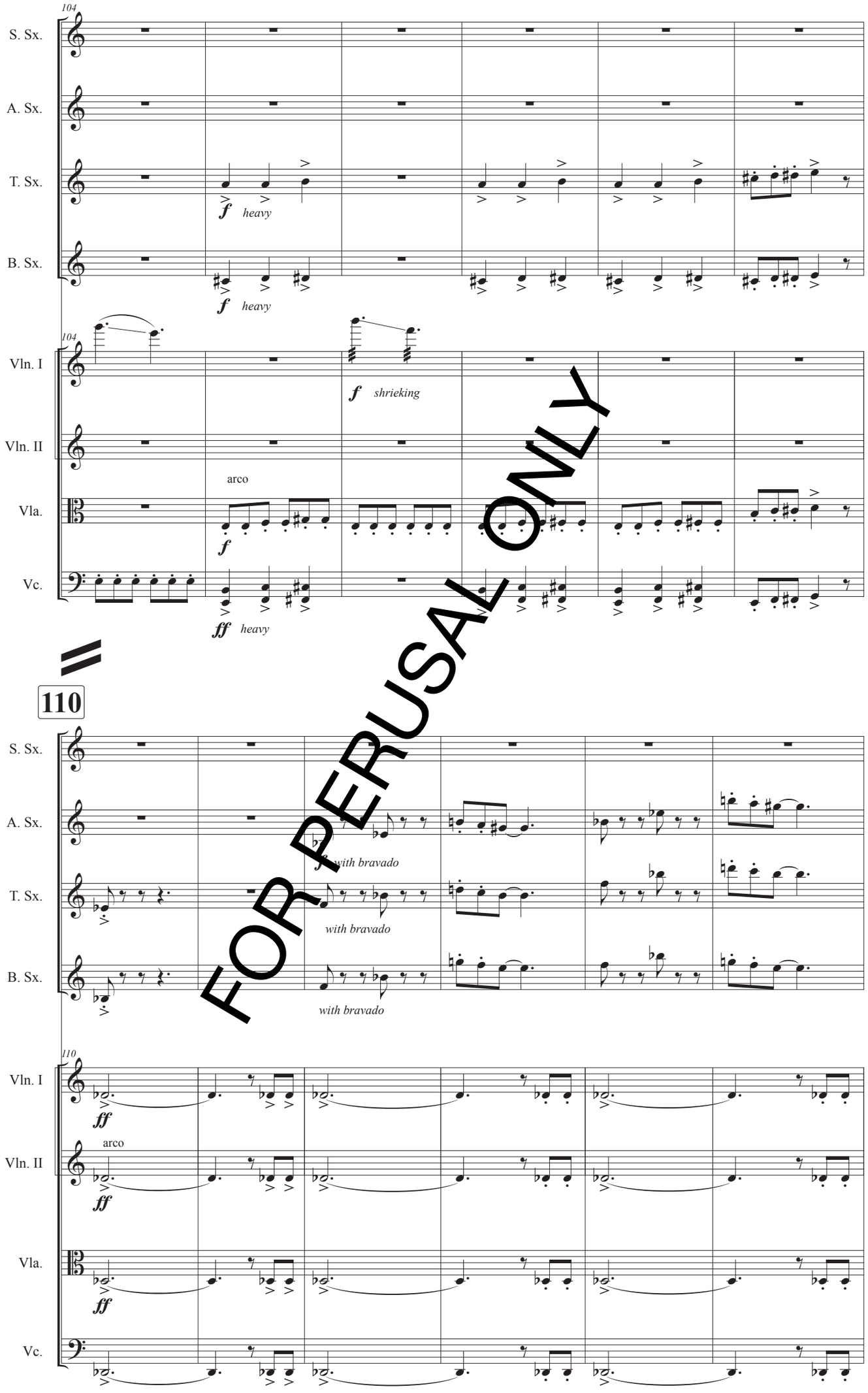

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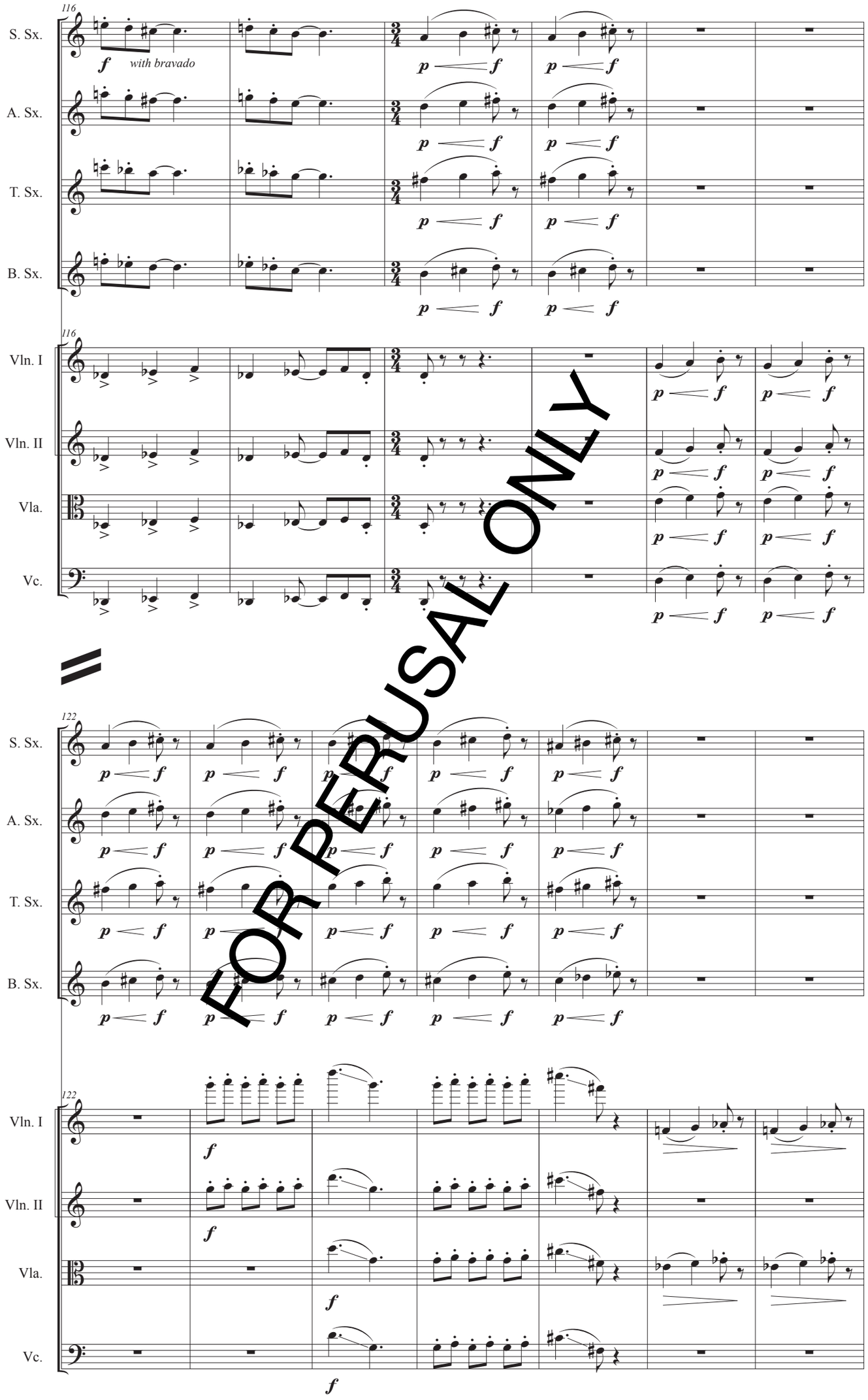

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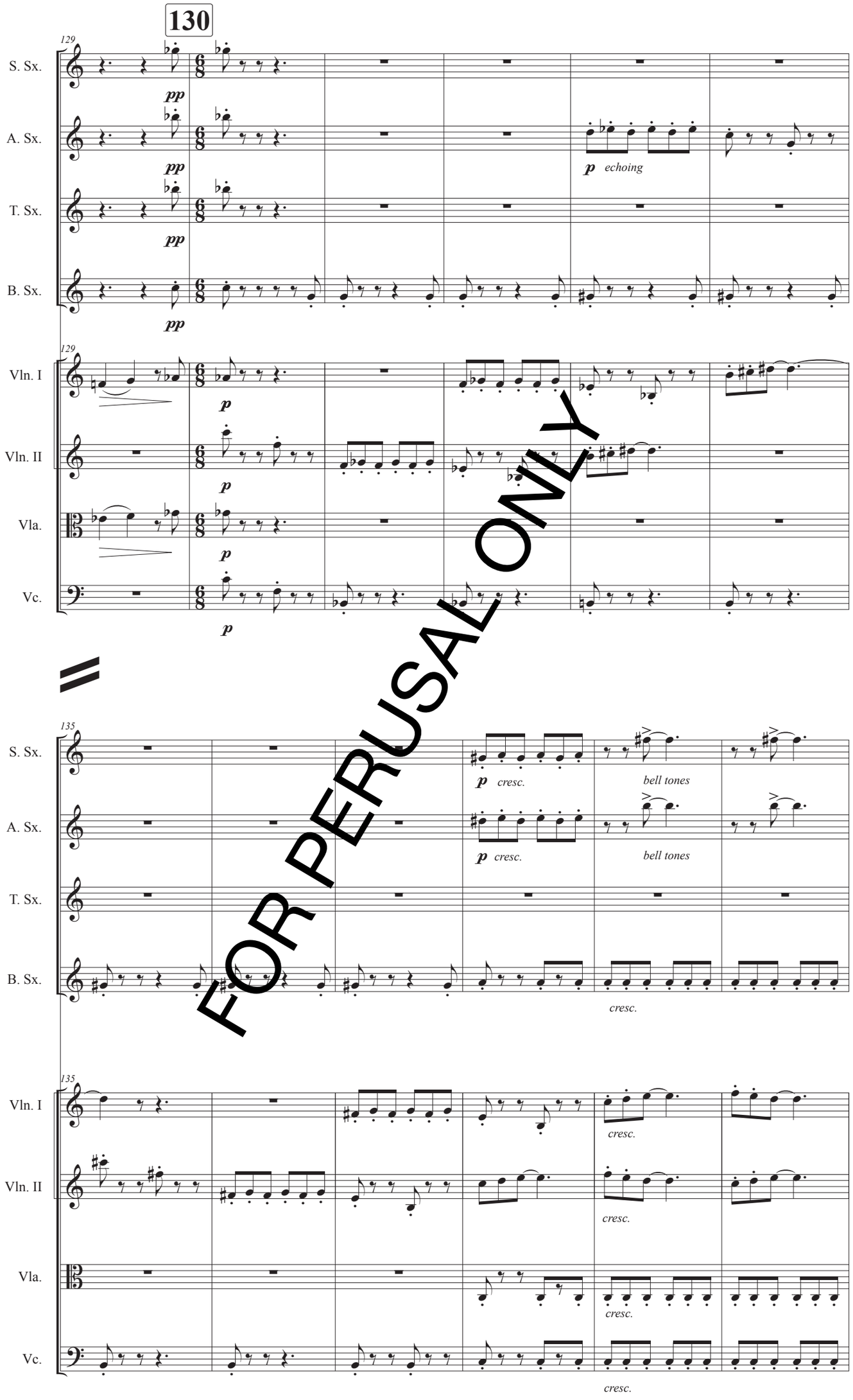

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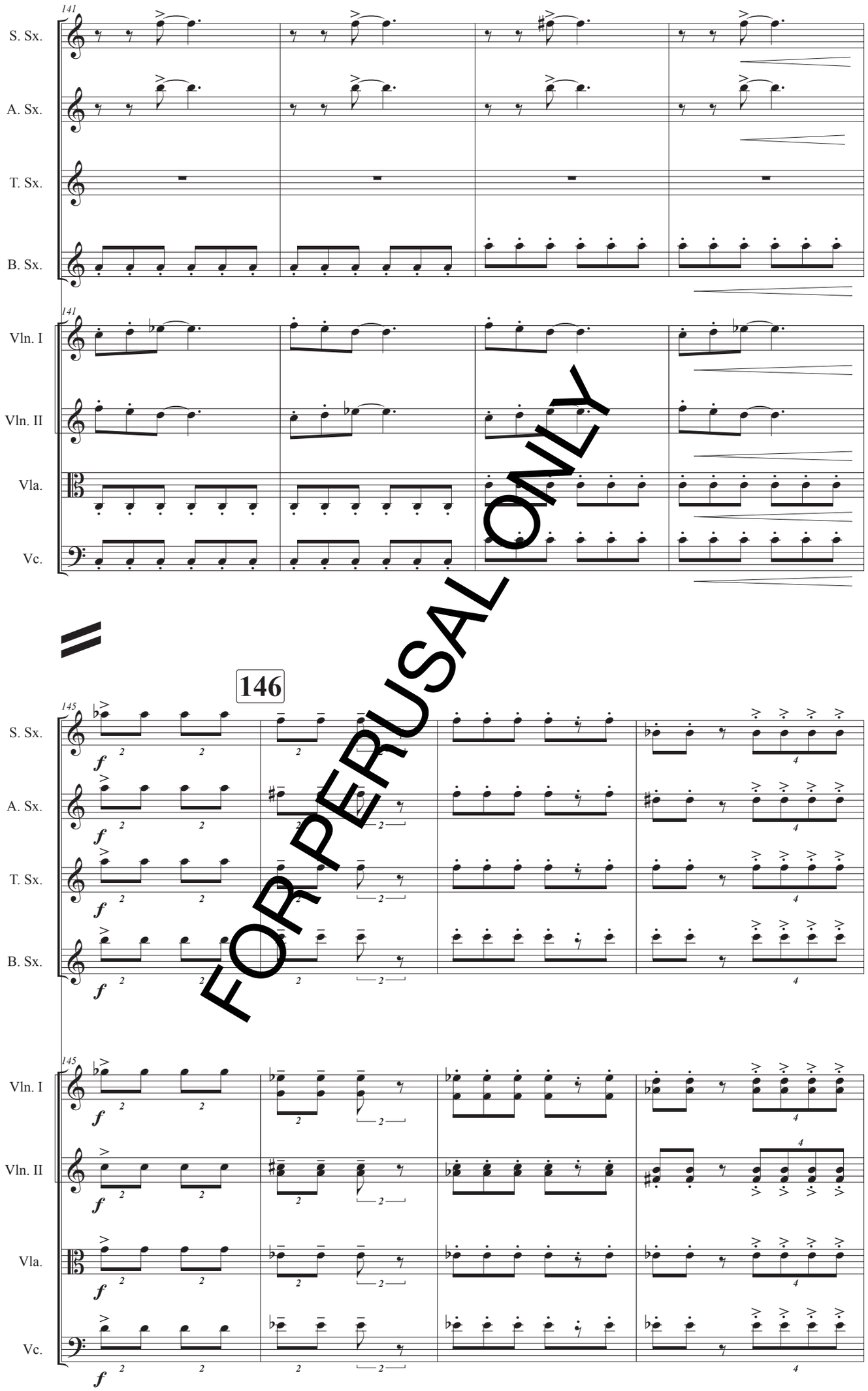

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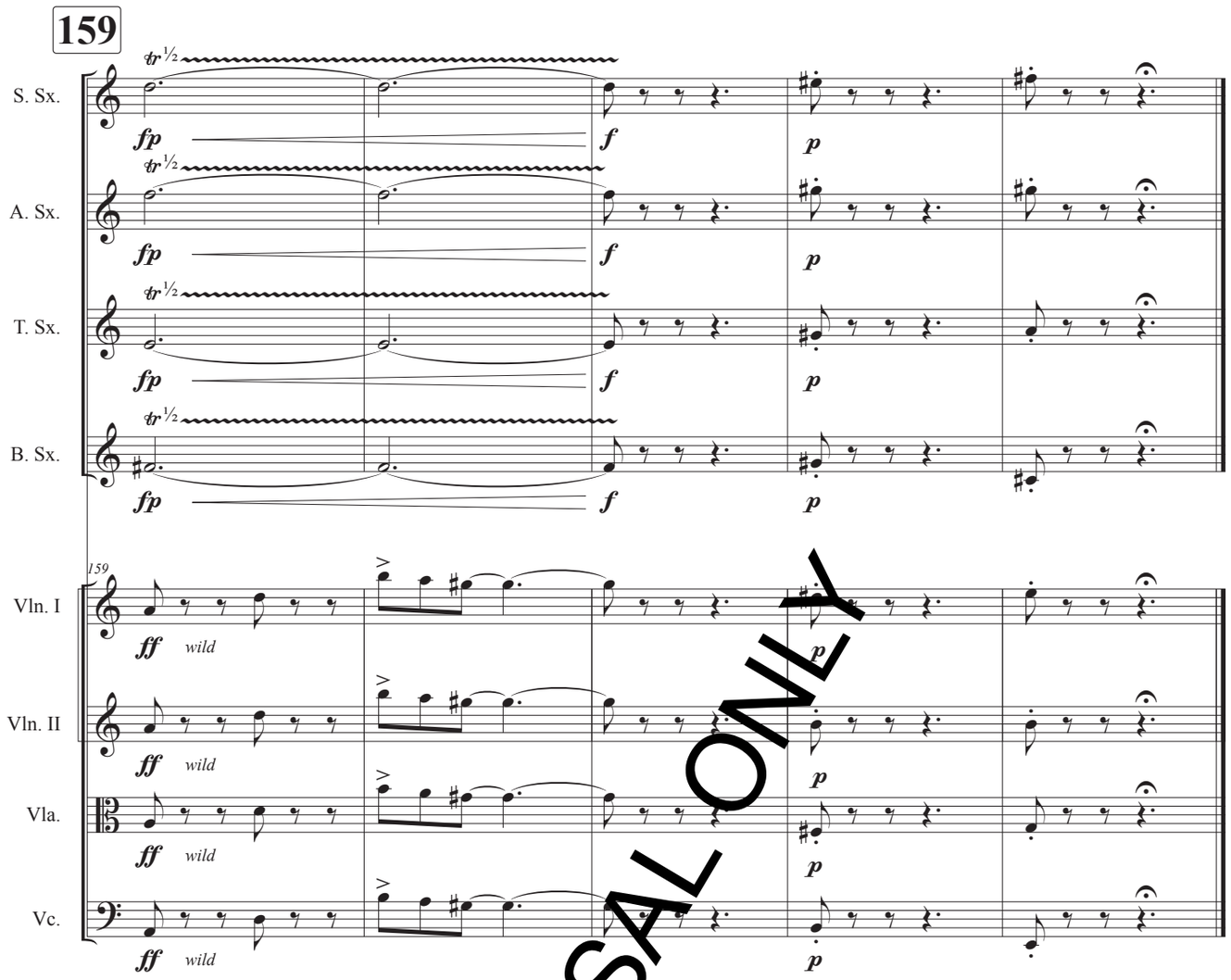

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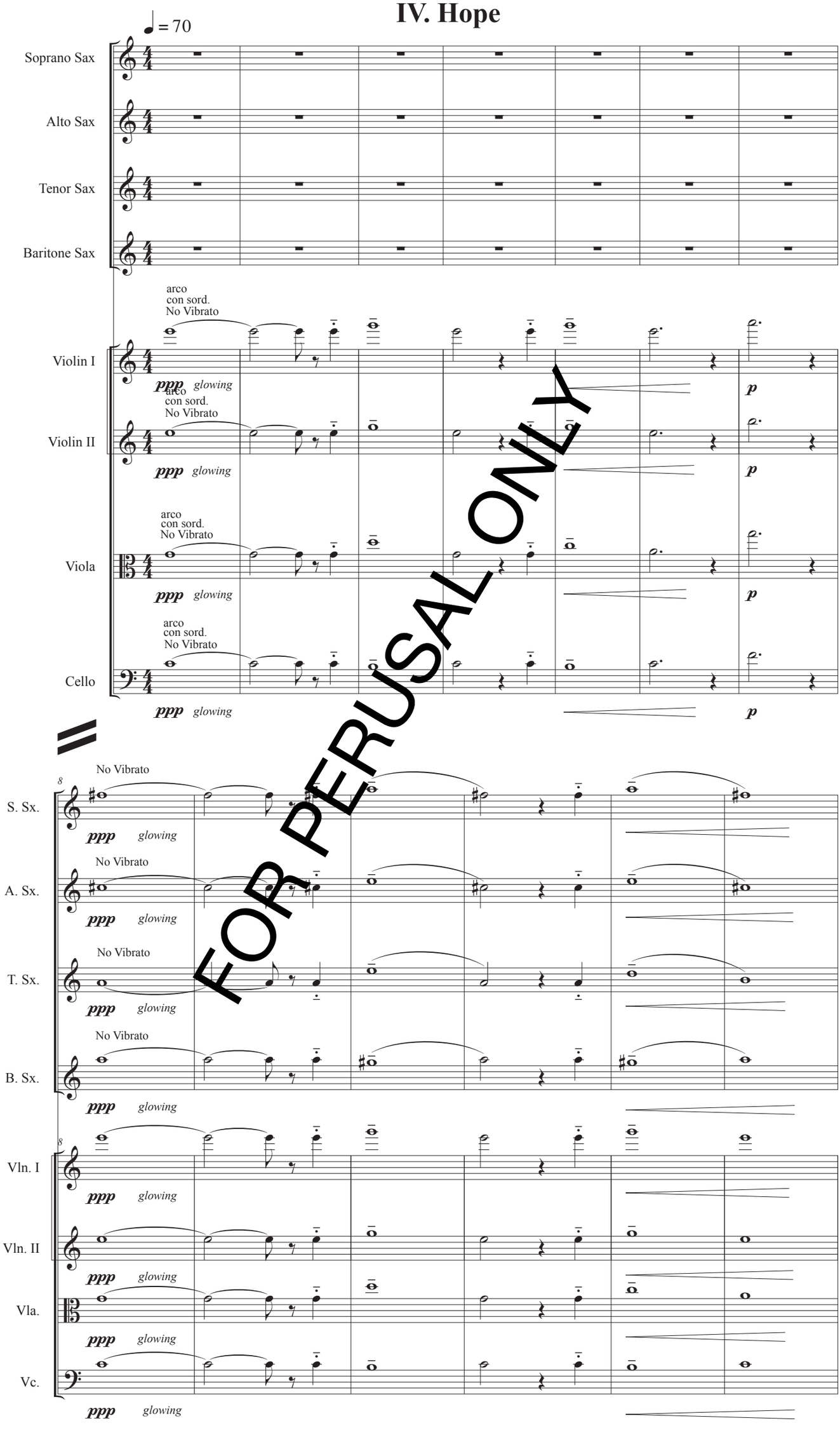

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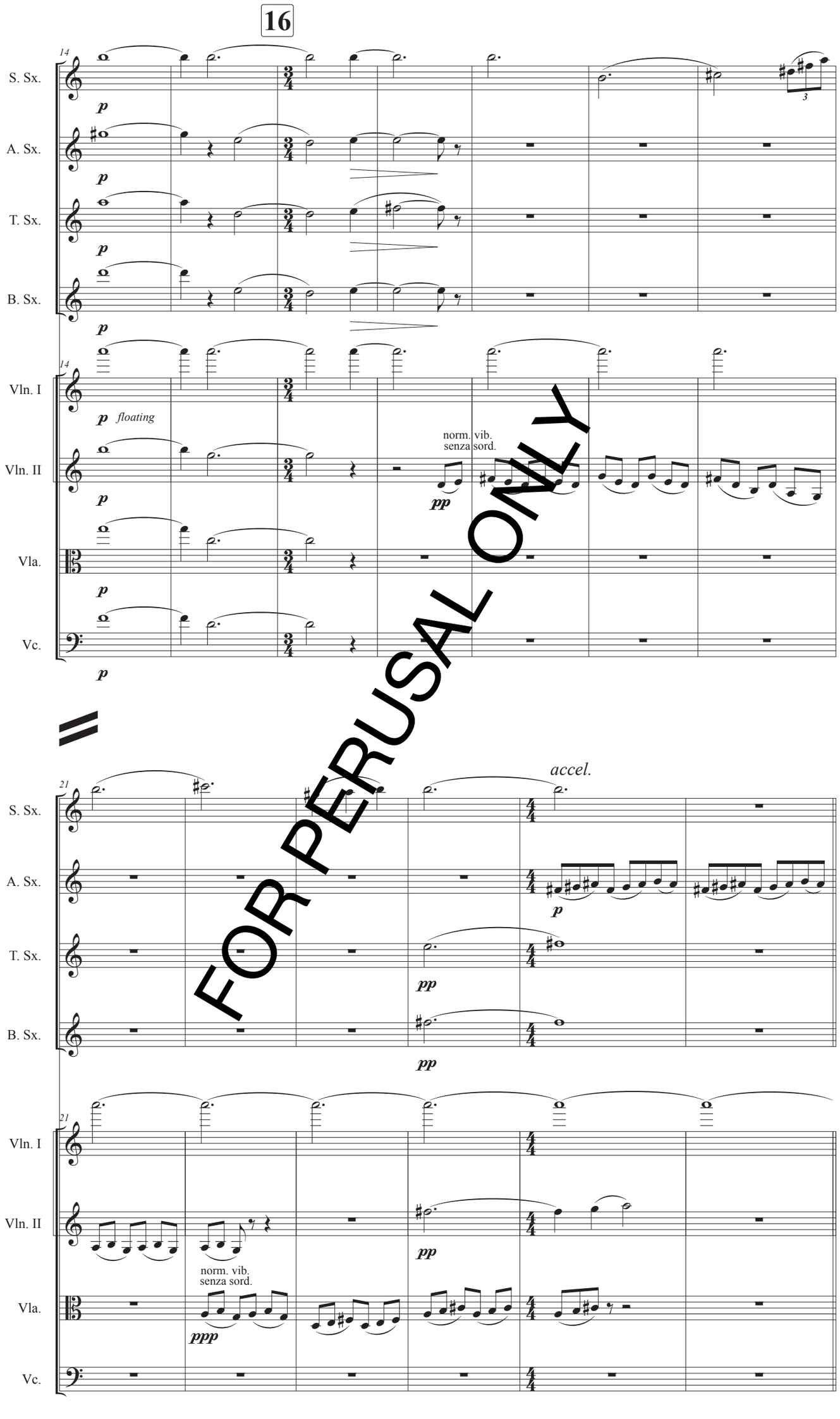

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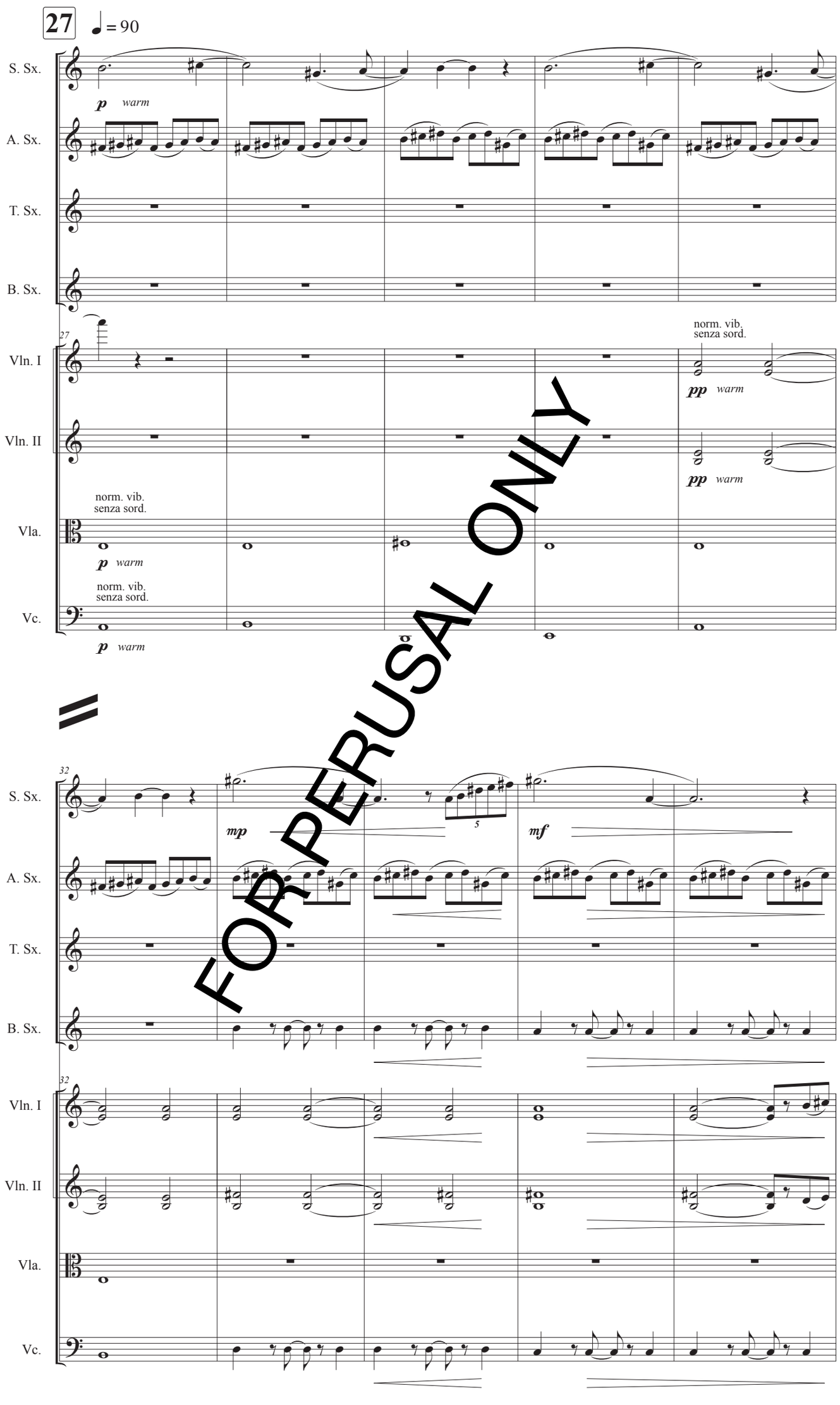

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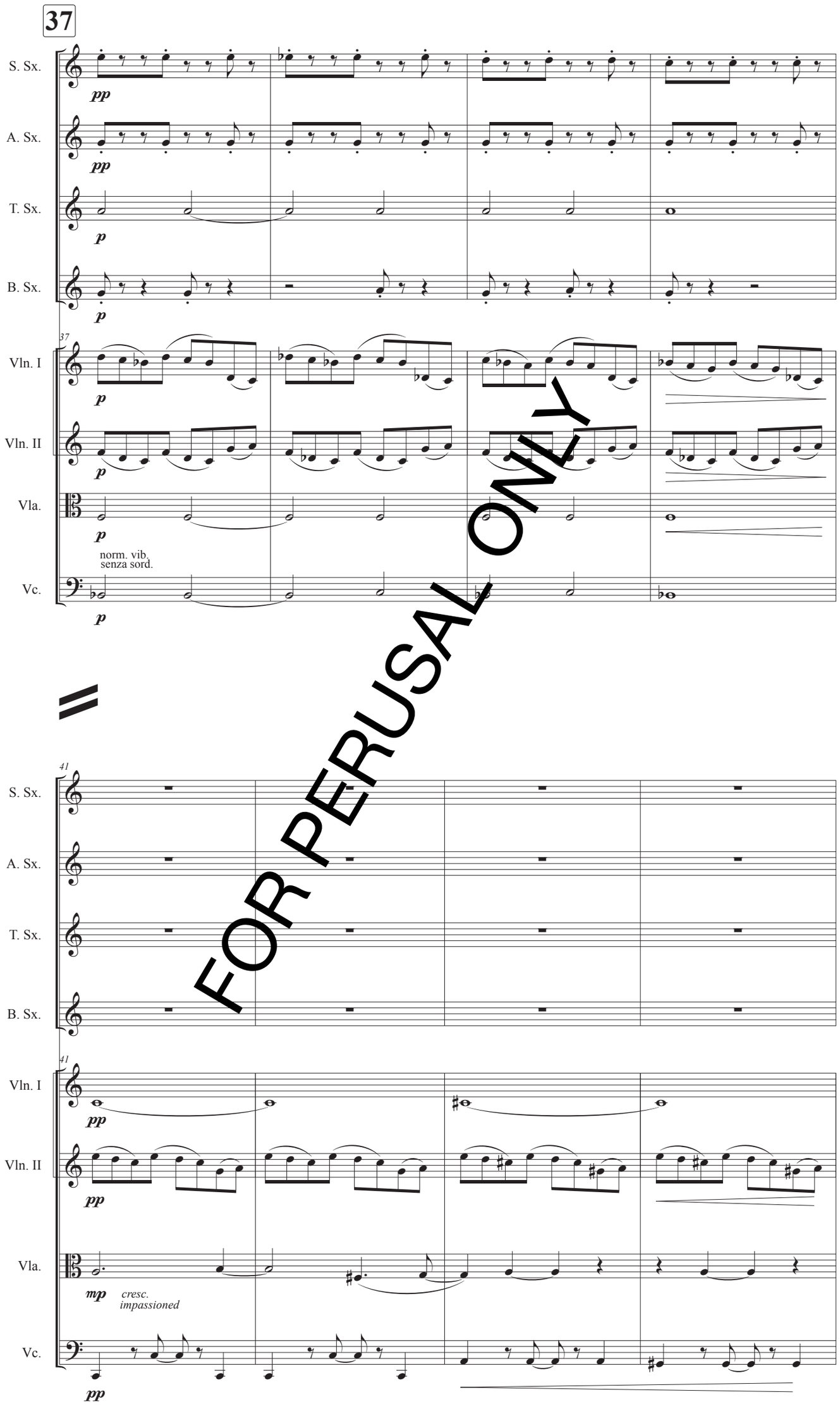

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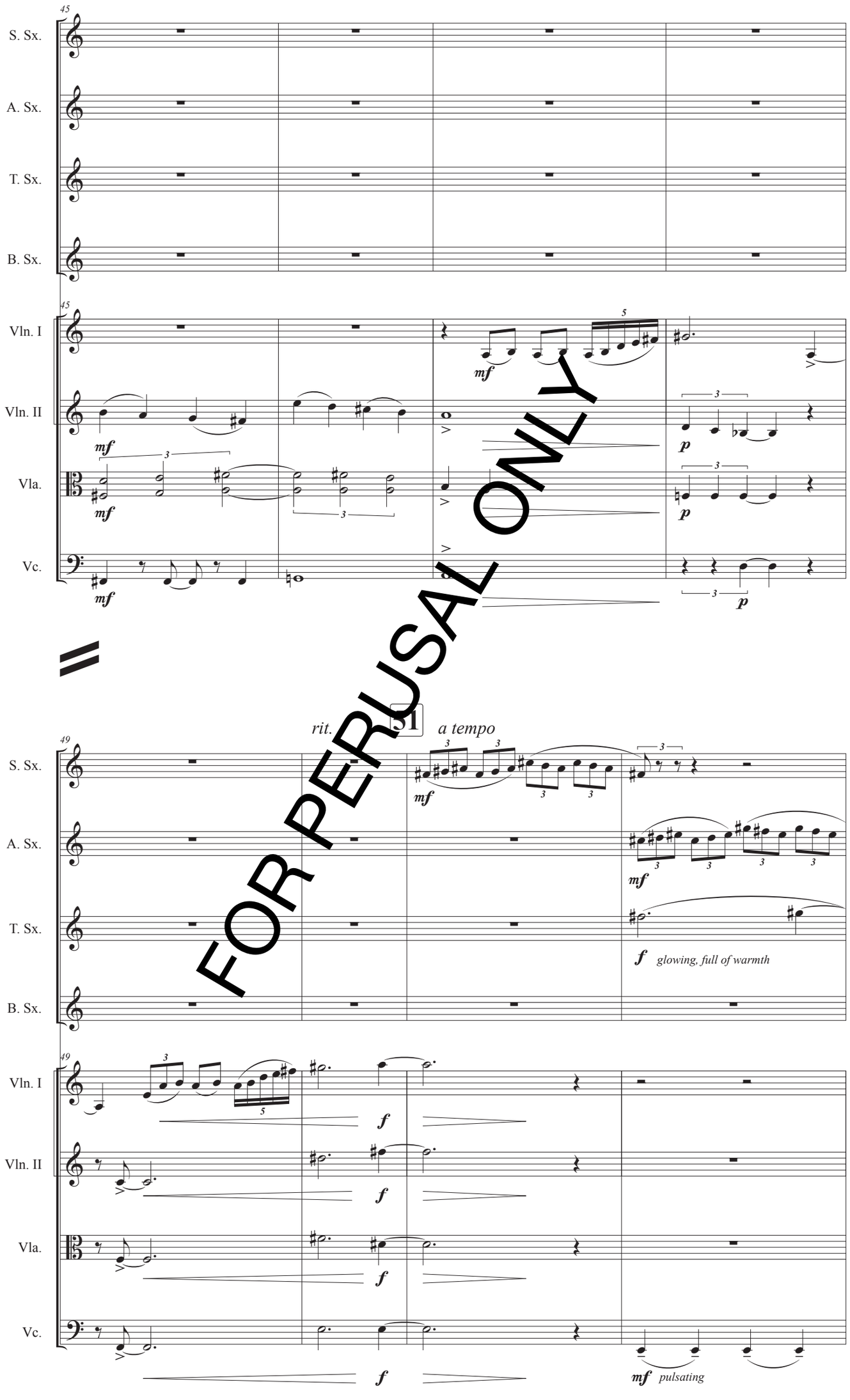

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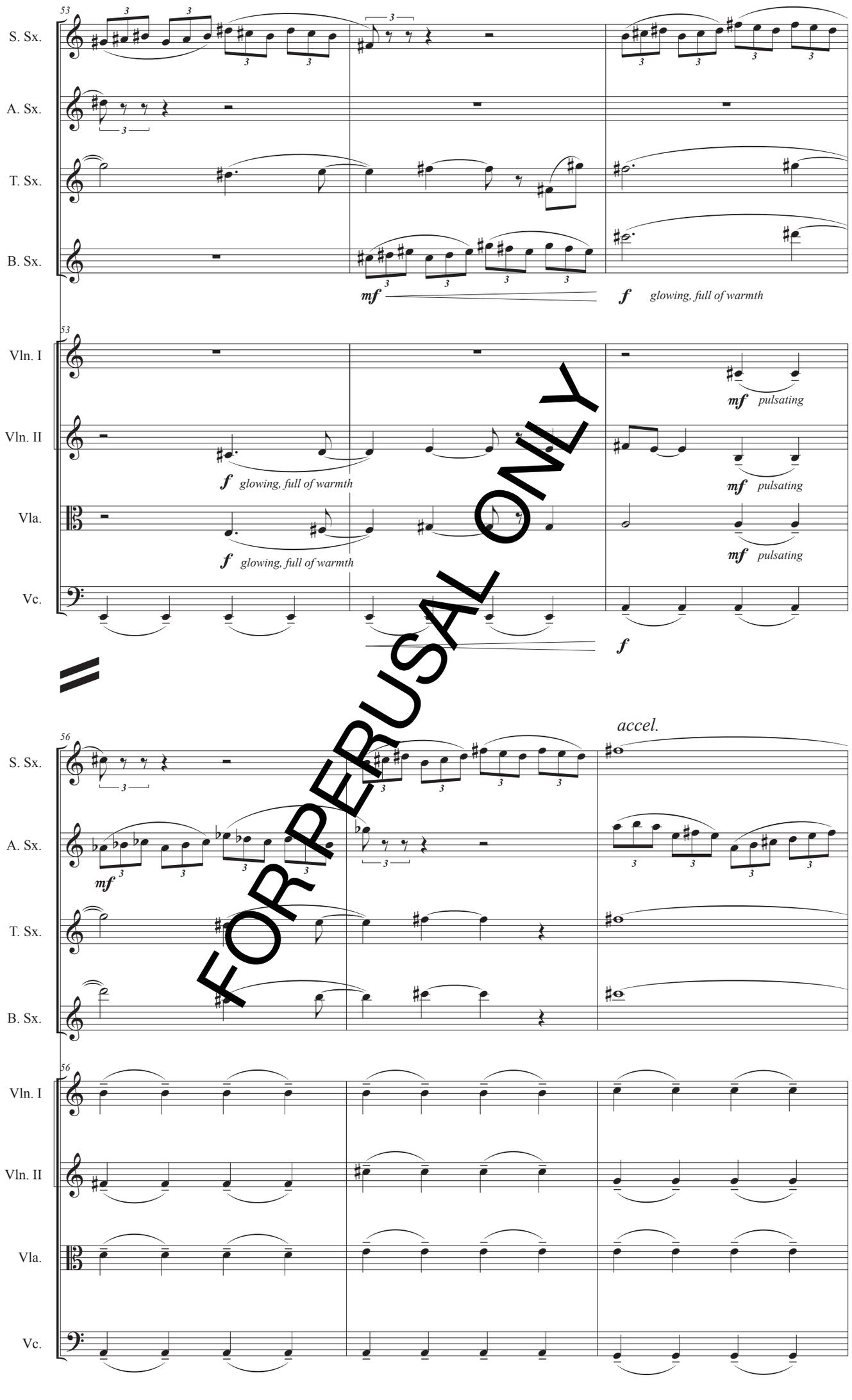

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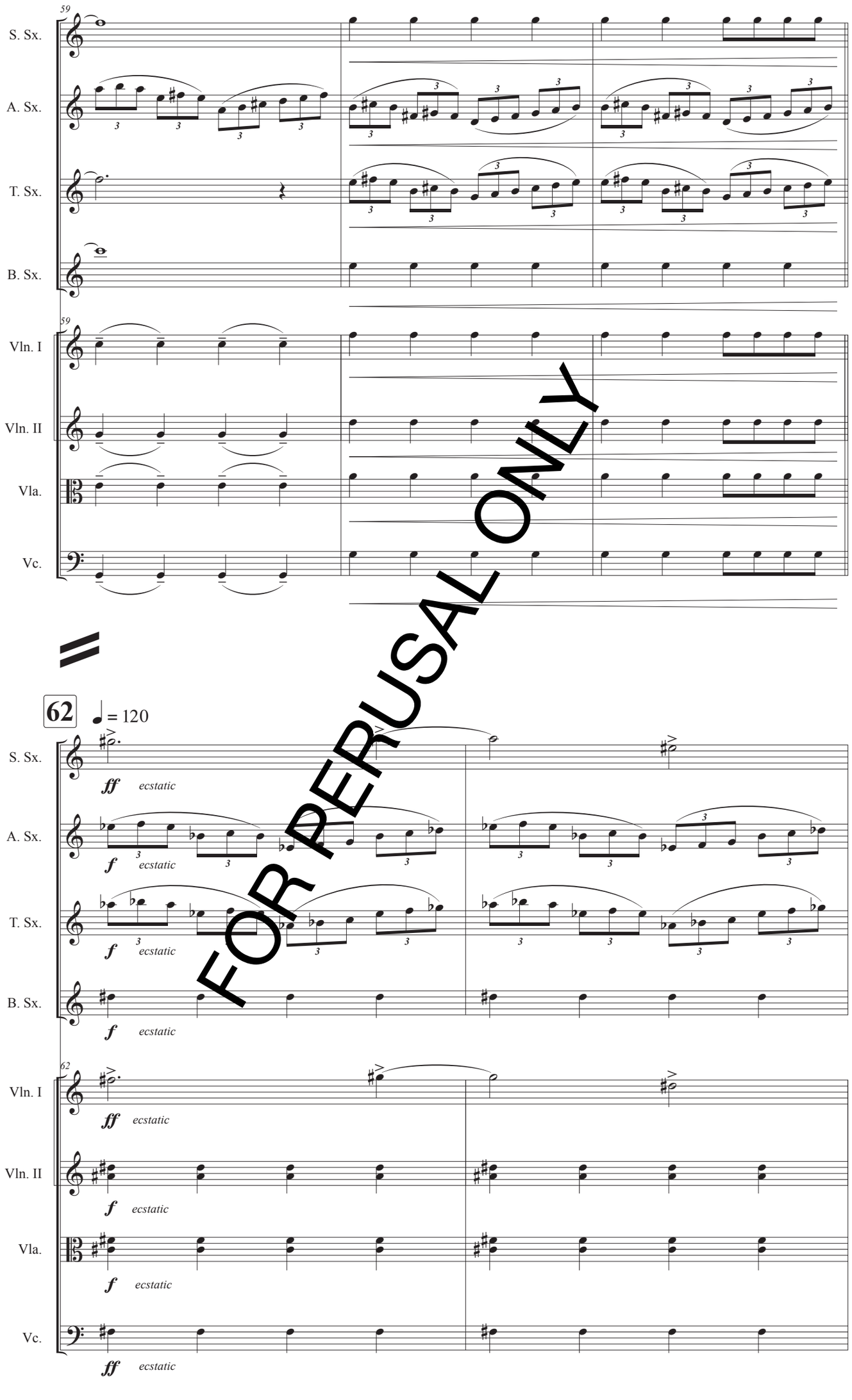

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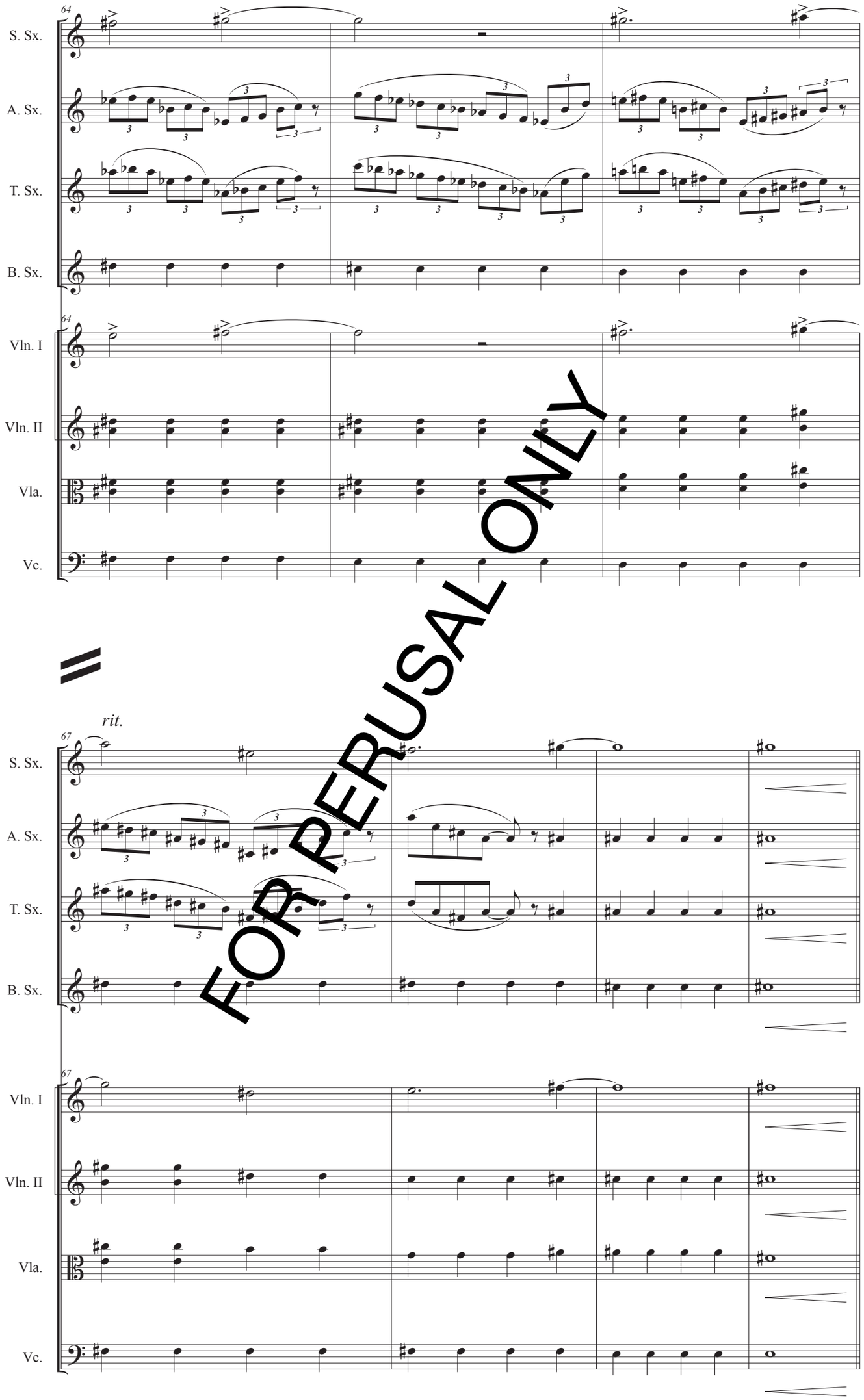

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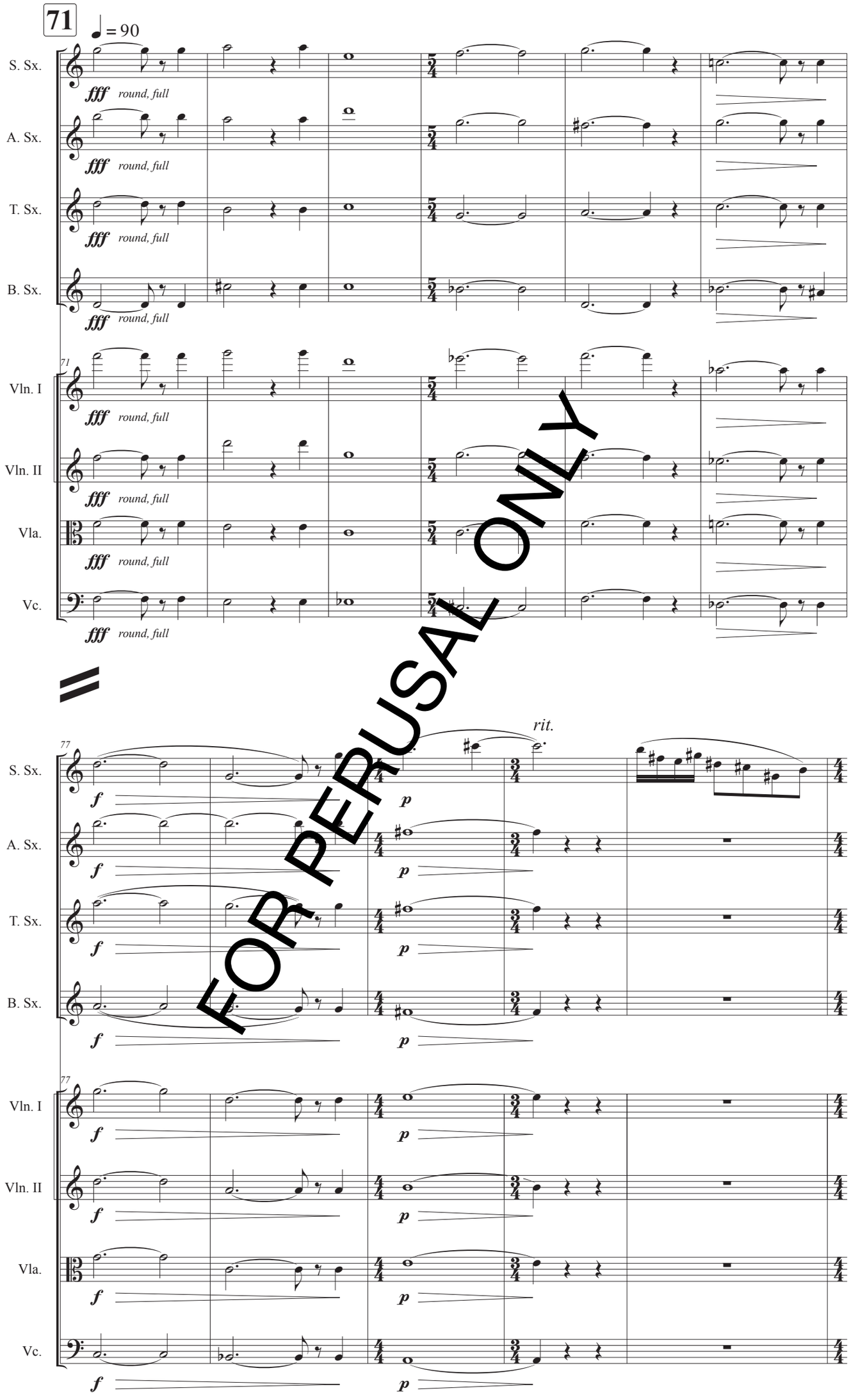

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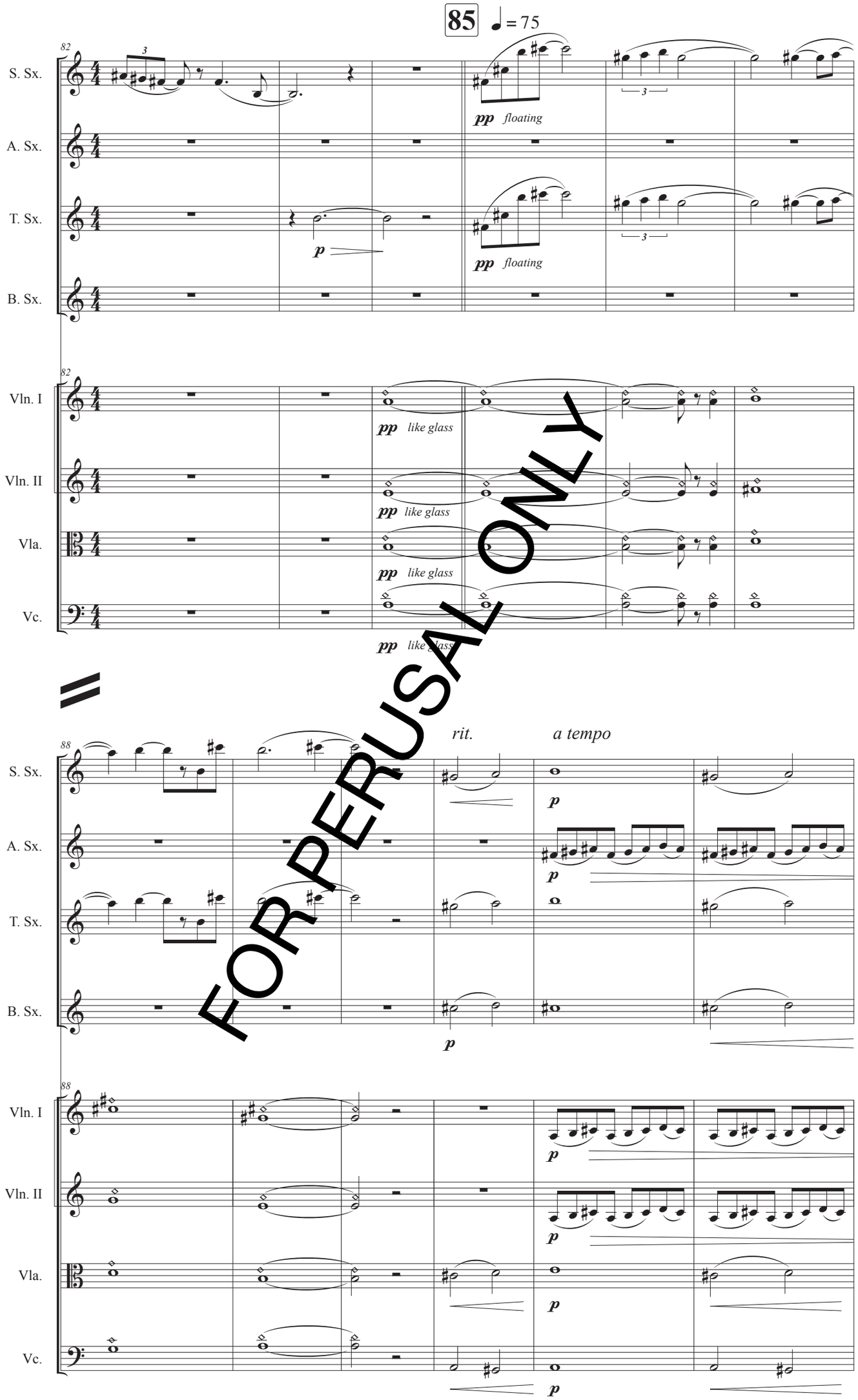

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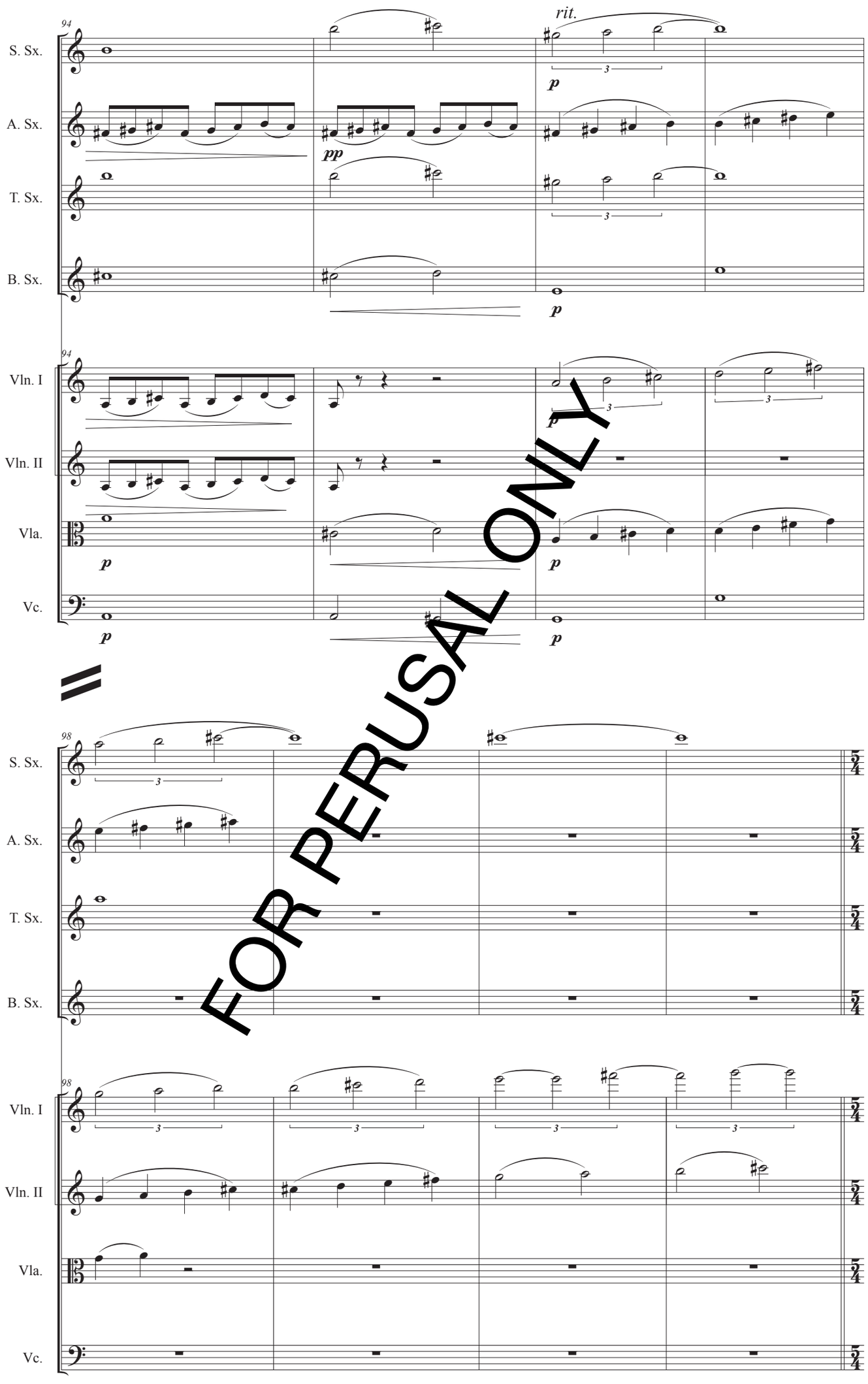

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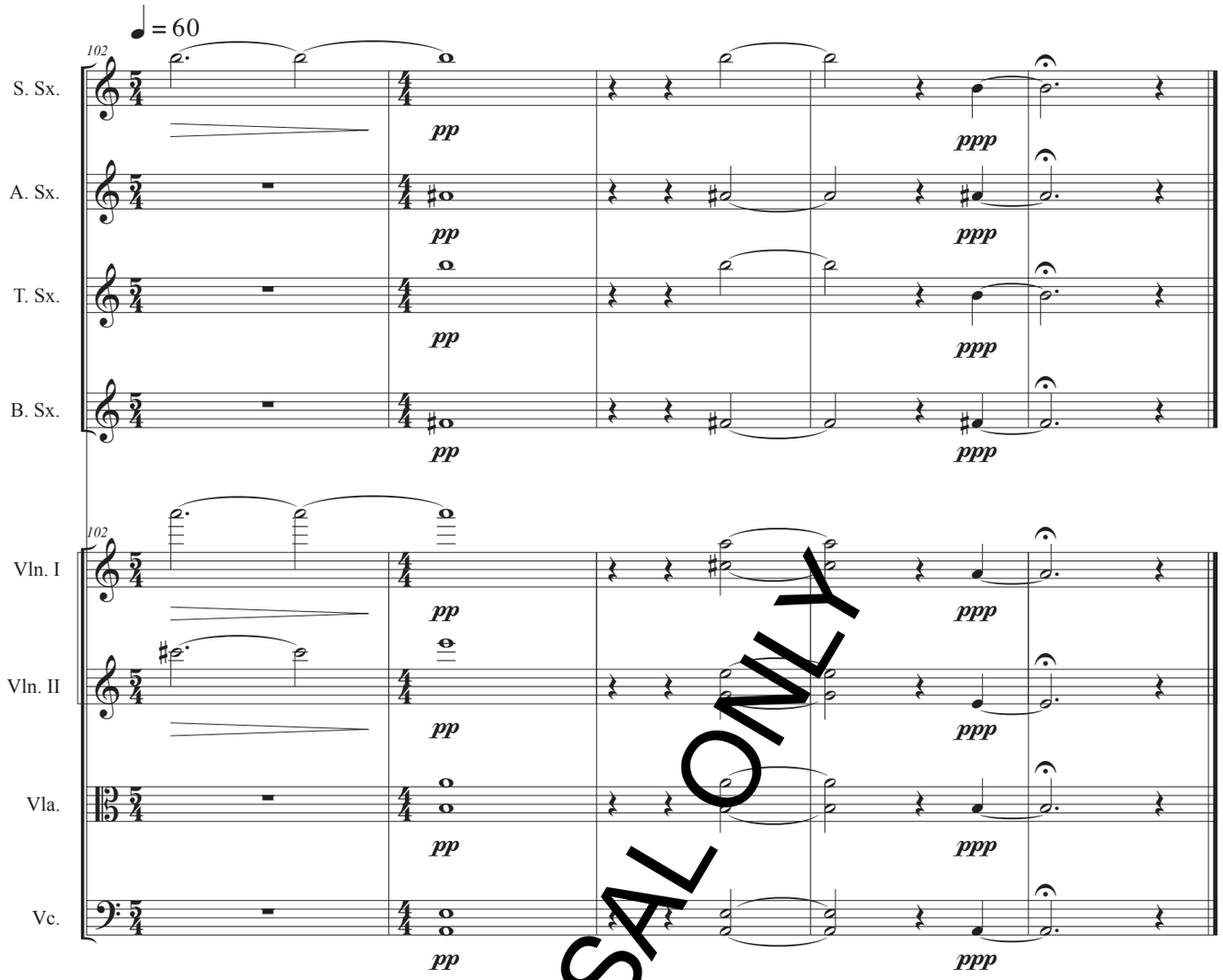

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