JUDITH SHATIN

Elijah's Chariot

String Quartet & Electronics

Mendigo Music

Program Note

Elijah's Chariot was inspired by the Biblical story of the prophet Elijah, who was whirled up to heaven on a chariot of fire drawn by horses of fire. He was a prophet who wrought miracles and many tales exist of his return to earth to help Jews in trouble. It is also Elijah who is supposed to blow the shofar to announce the coming of the Messiah. The folk melody *Eliyahu HaNavi*, often sung during the close of the Sabbath, is woven into *Elijah's Chariot*. The opening phrase of this melody forms a melodic thread in Elijah's Chariot, emerging clearly at one point, and obliquely at others.

The scoring for string quartet and electronics reflects the story. The electronics, created from a recording of a shofar (ram's horn), represent God's call to Elijah. The string quartet mediates between this, sometimes imitating the calls, and the story of Elijah on earth. The original recording, by Dr. Mel Siegel of Minneapolis, was of shofar blasts played during the High Holidays. *Elijah's Chariot* was commissioned by the Kronos Quartet, with support from the National Endowment for the Arts and is dedicated to the memory of Adam Francis Harrington. The Kronos Quartet toured it internationally, presenting it throughout Europe, the Middle and Far East, and the US, including the Next Wave Festival at BAM. –JS

World Premiere
Kronos Quartet
Theatre Artaud
San Francisco, CA
5/9/1996

Duration: 19:45

Performance Notes

The electronic playback for *Elijah's Chariot* was designed to create a flexible relationship between the live and electronic parts. It is organized in multiple cued segments that allow fluid pacing. The cues can either be managed by one of the performers using a foot pedal, or by a separate electronics performer. The score gives specific events to listen for, but there was no attempt to notate all of the electronic sounds. The score is also marked with relative dynamic levels for playback in the event that some adjustment is necessary in the performance mix. The string quartet should be amplified in most venues, with the sound lightly mixed with that of the electronics for playback.

Glossary

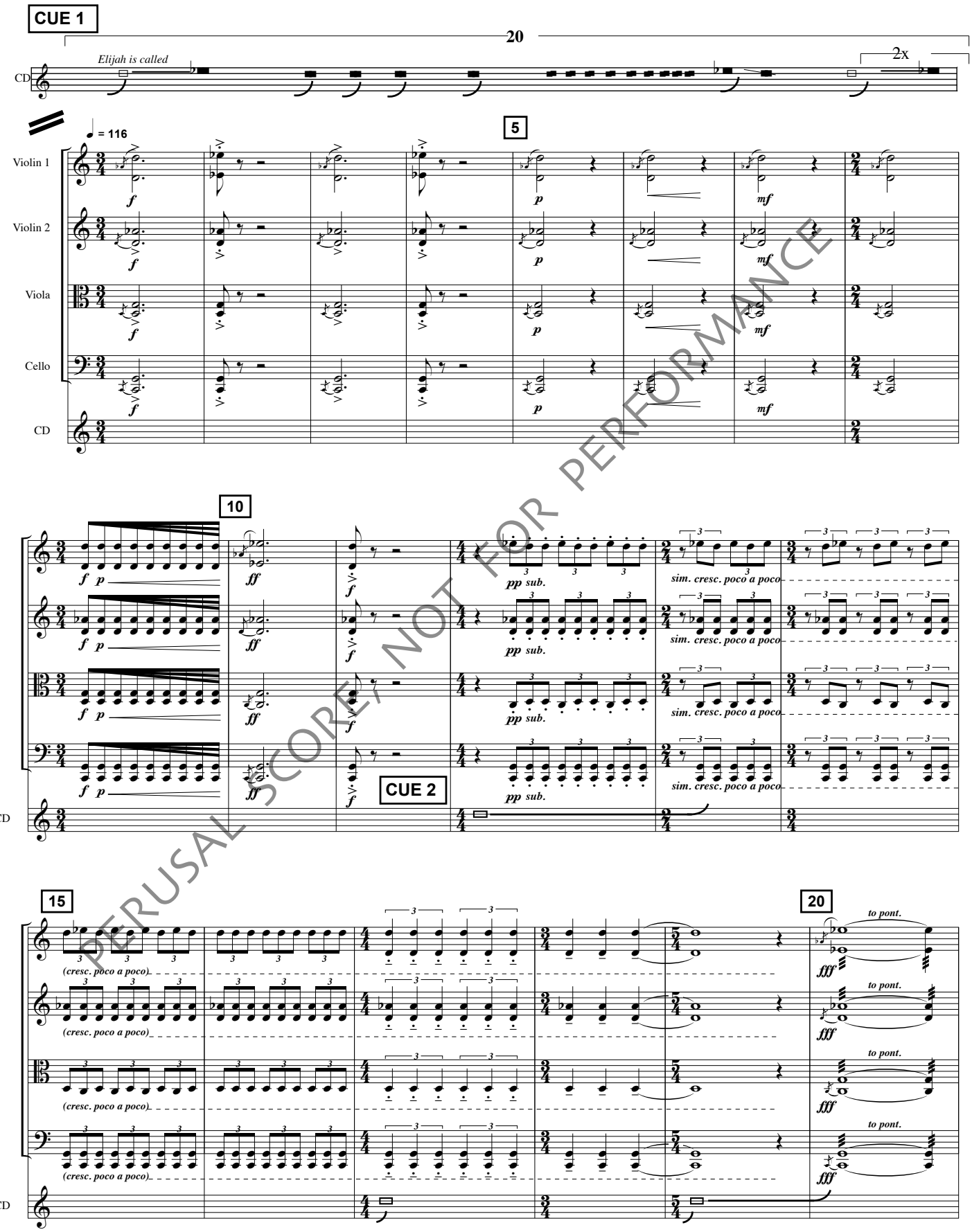
Square notes in the electronic part indicate approximate pitch. Unfilled notes are longer than filled ones, though exact durations are not given. Vertical arrows above a note indicate pitch 1/4 tone above or below depending on the direction of the arrow.

1/2 cl indicates 1/2 col legno; play with 1/2 hair and 1/2 wood.

A peaked hold indicates a short fermata, while the traditional fermata signifies a longer one.

ELIJAH'S CHARIOT

JUDTH SHATIN



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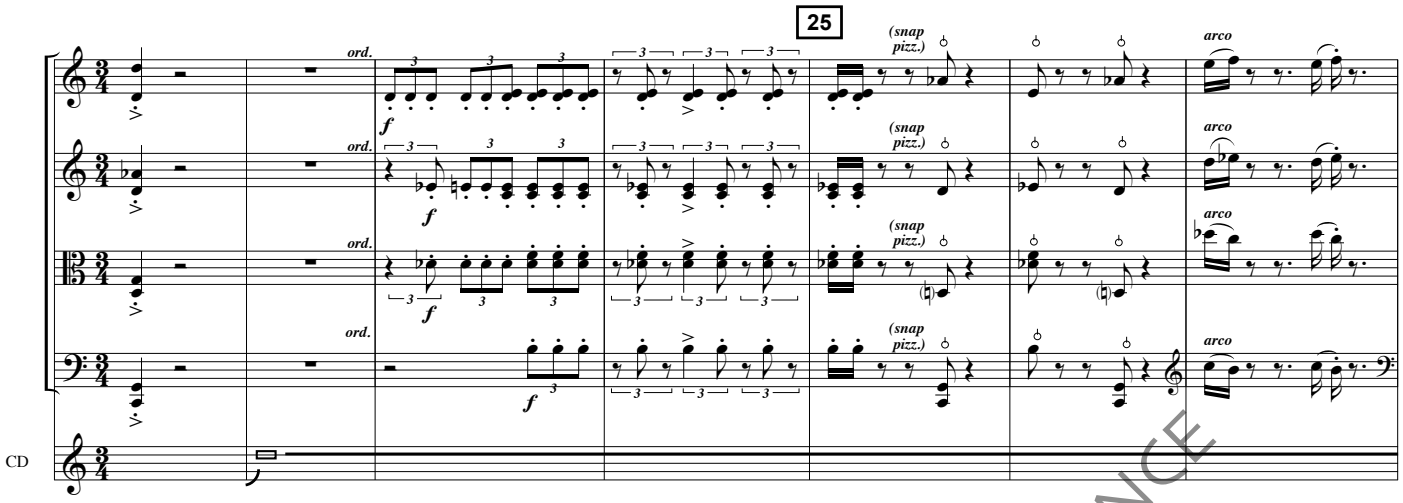

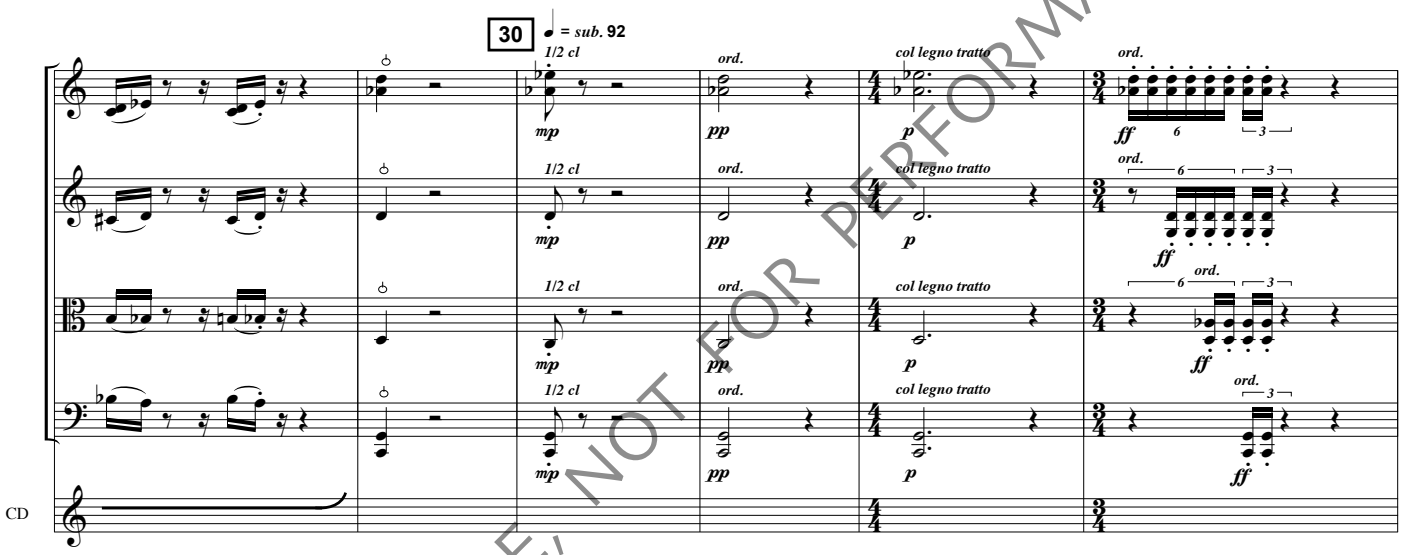

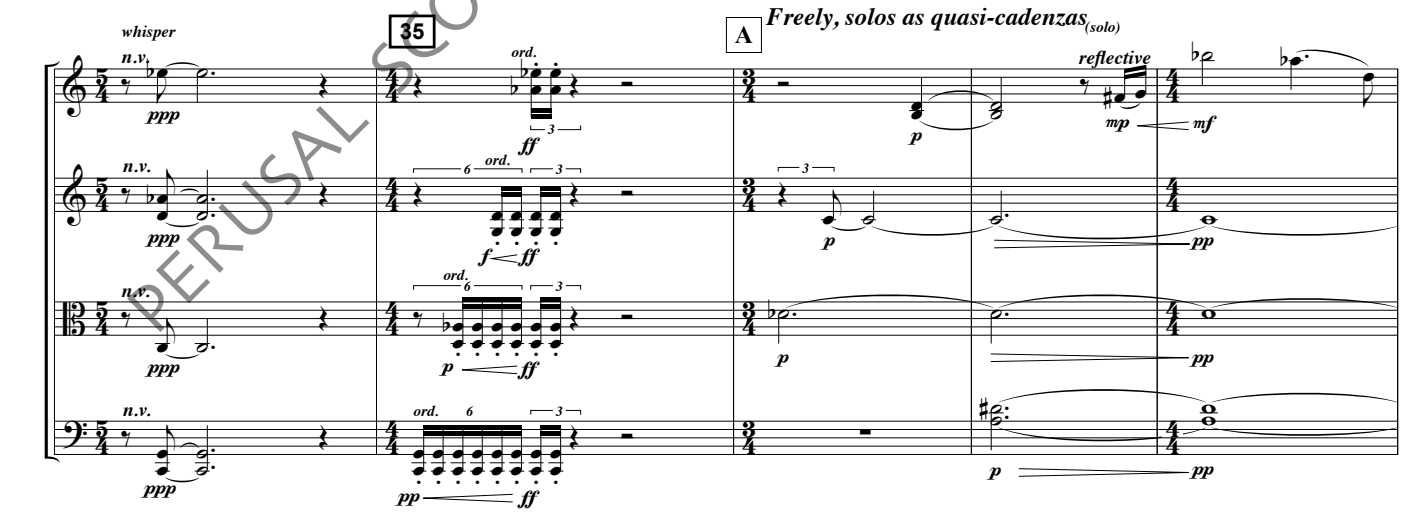

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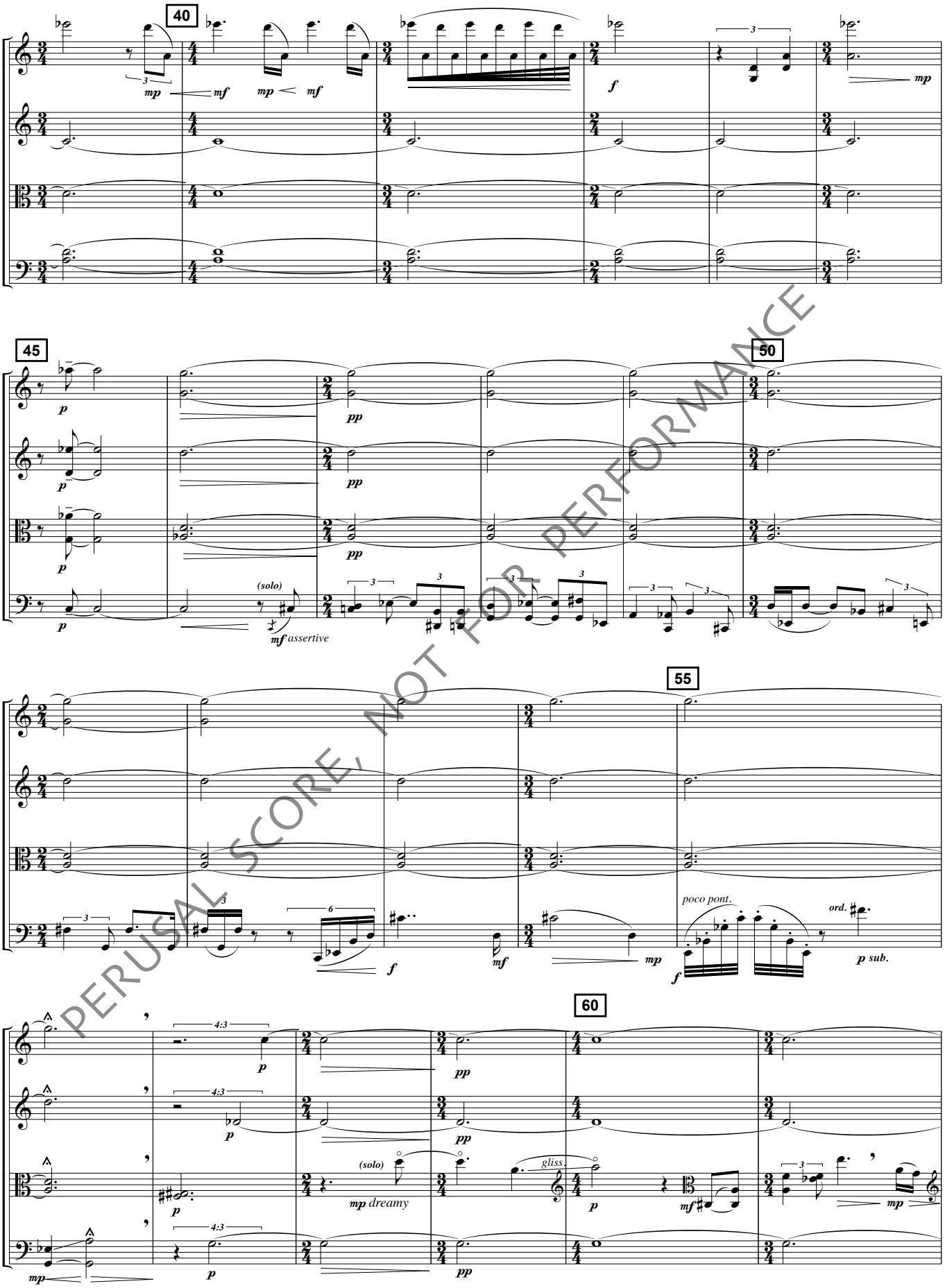

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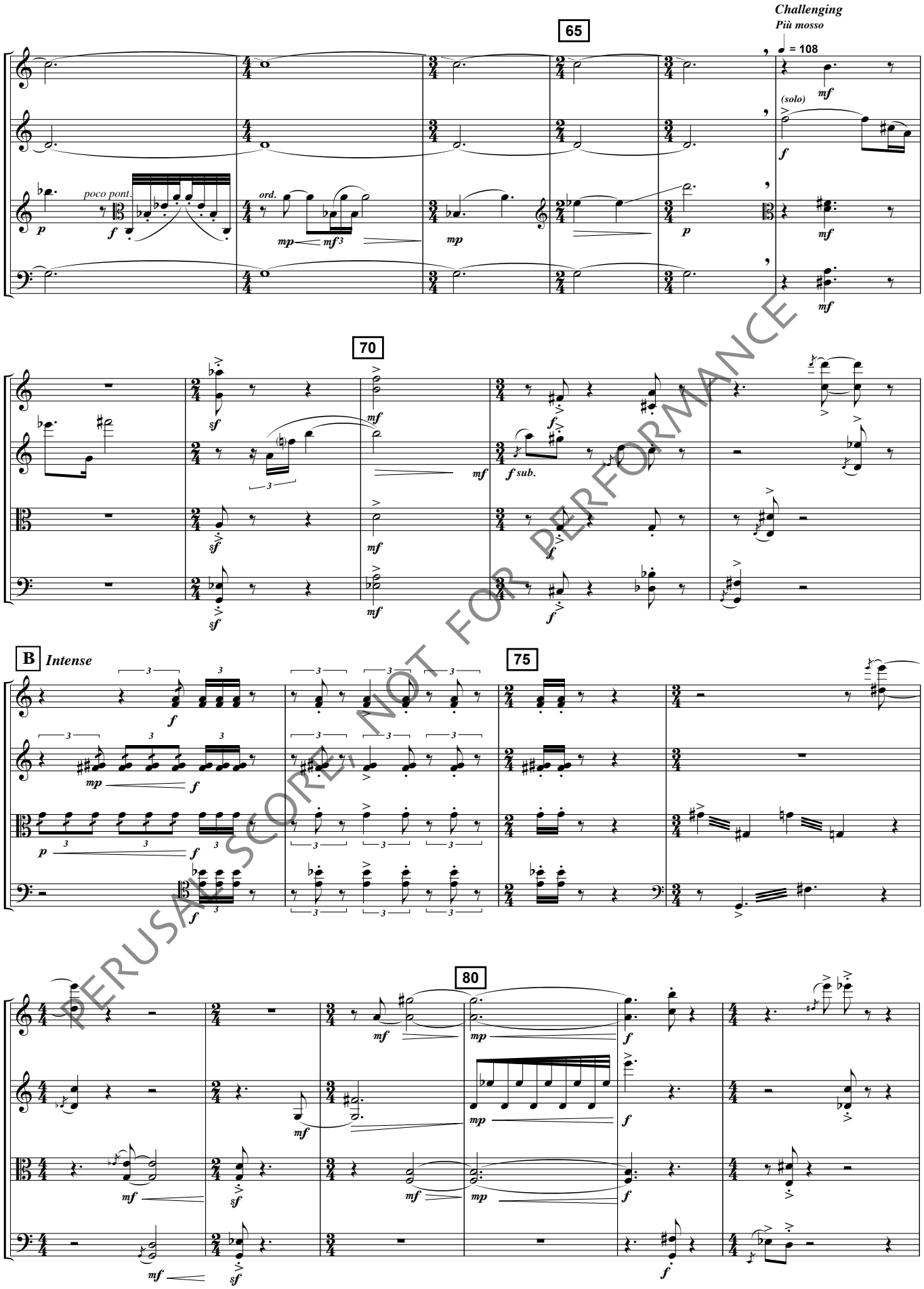

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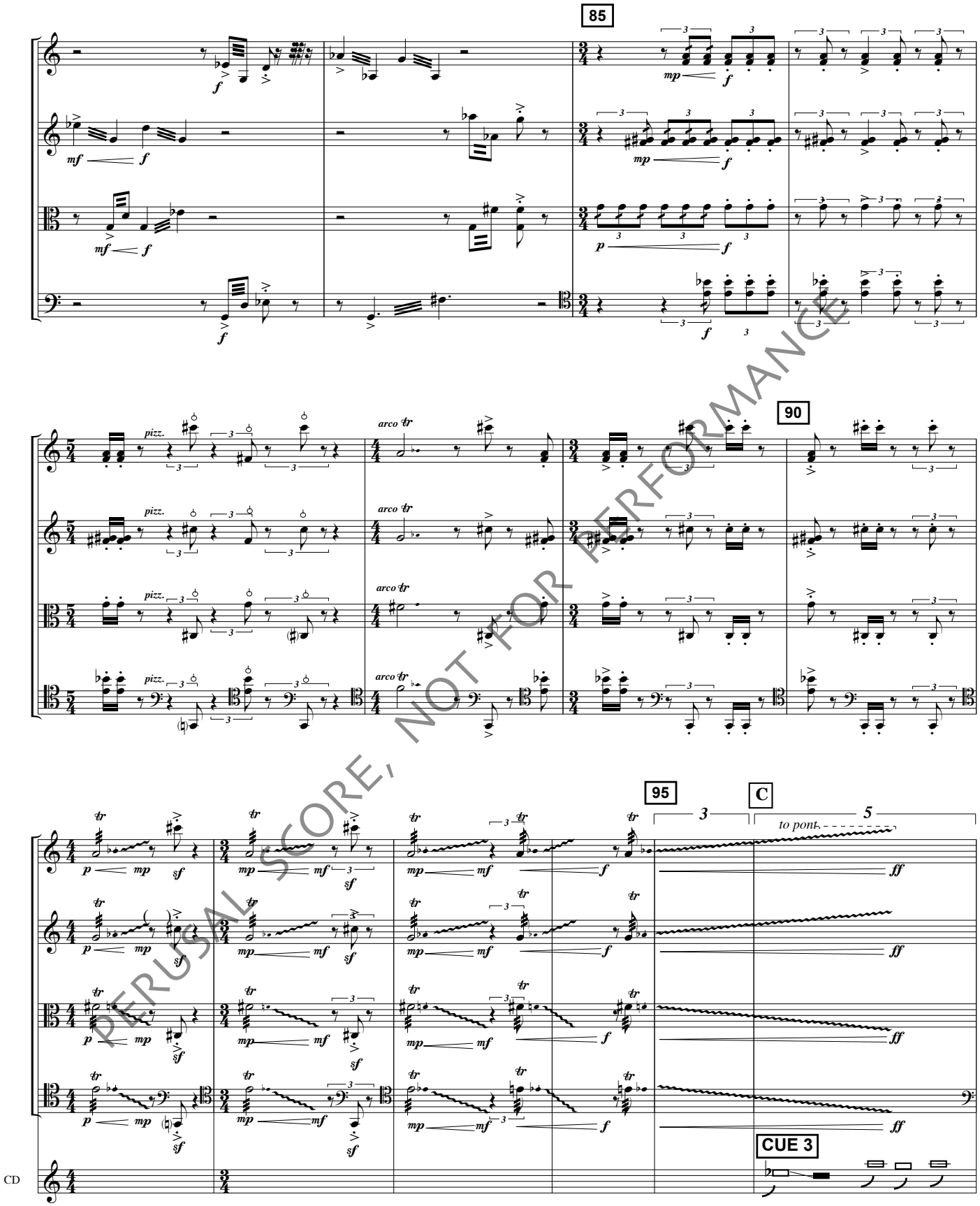

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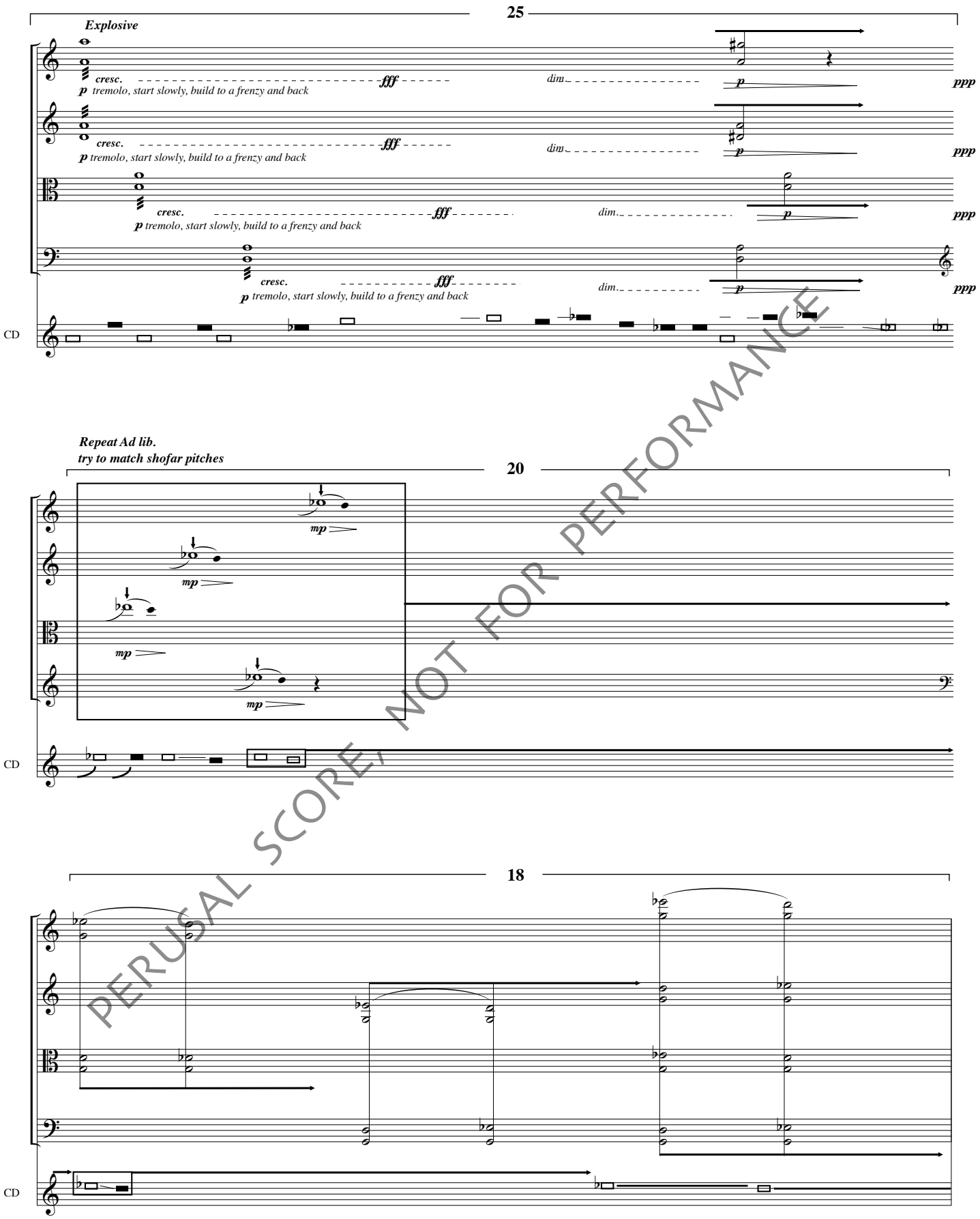

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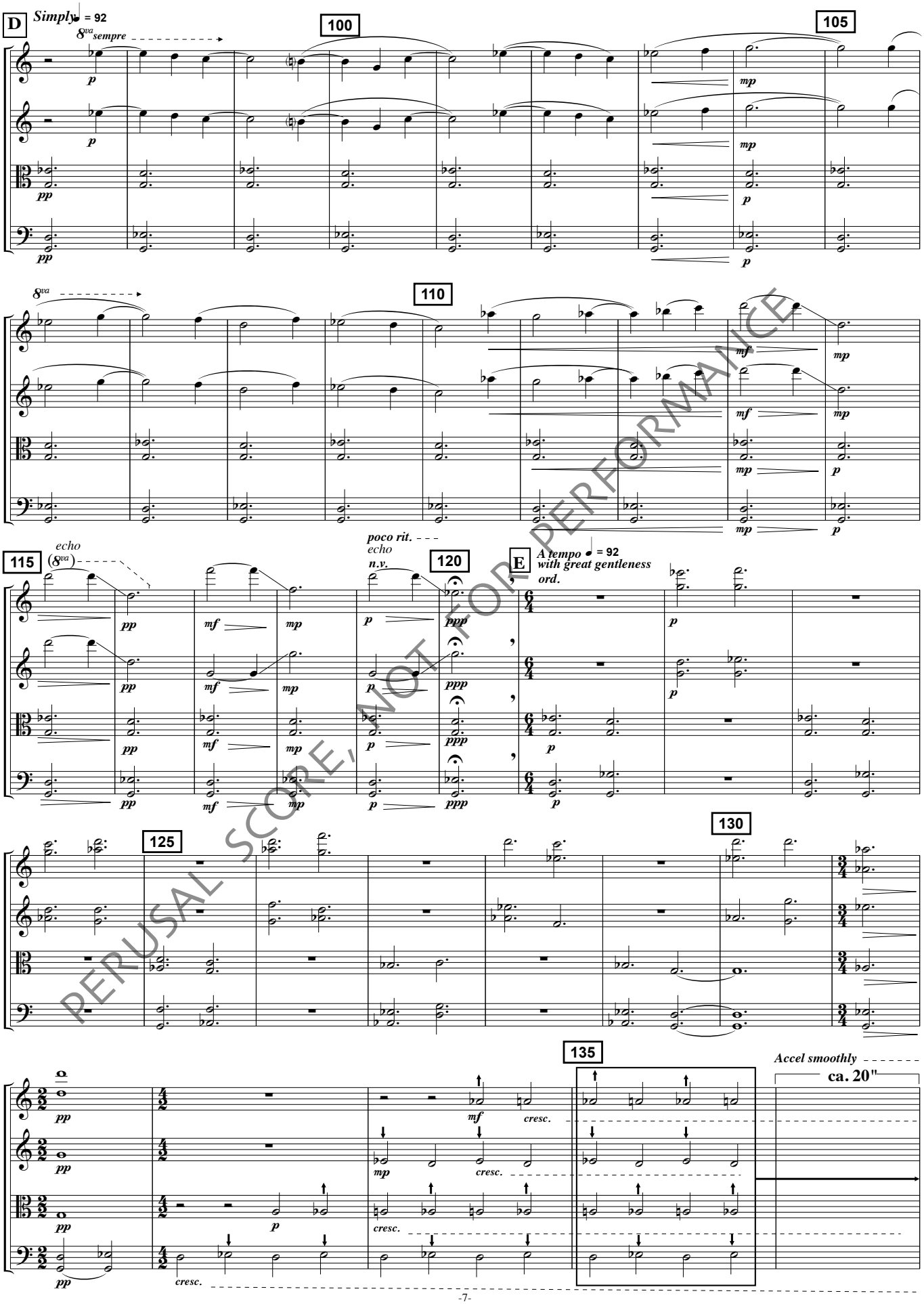

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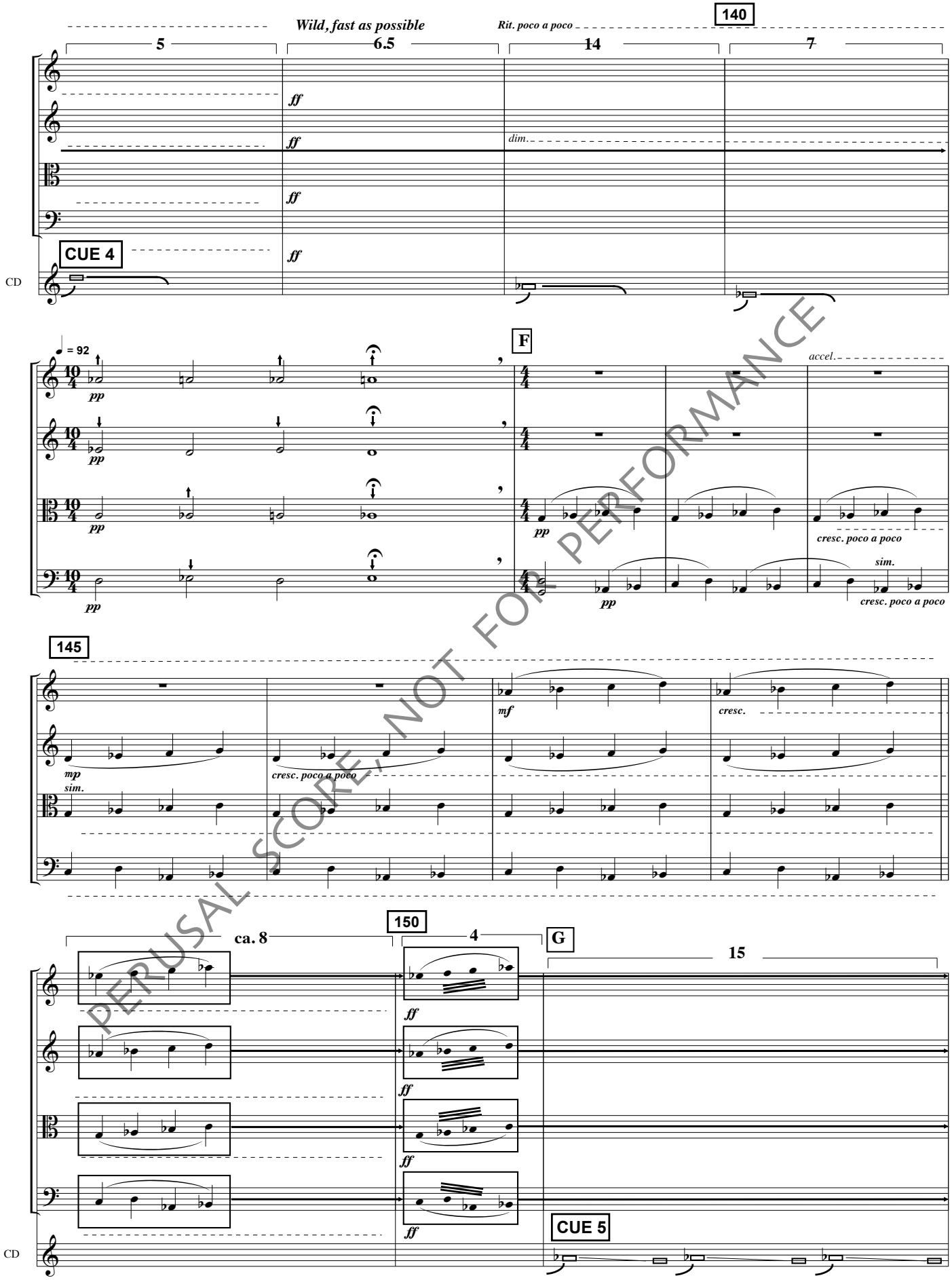

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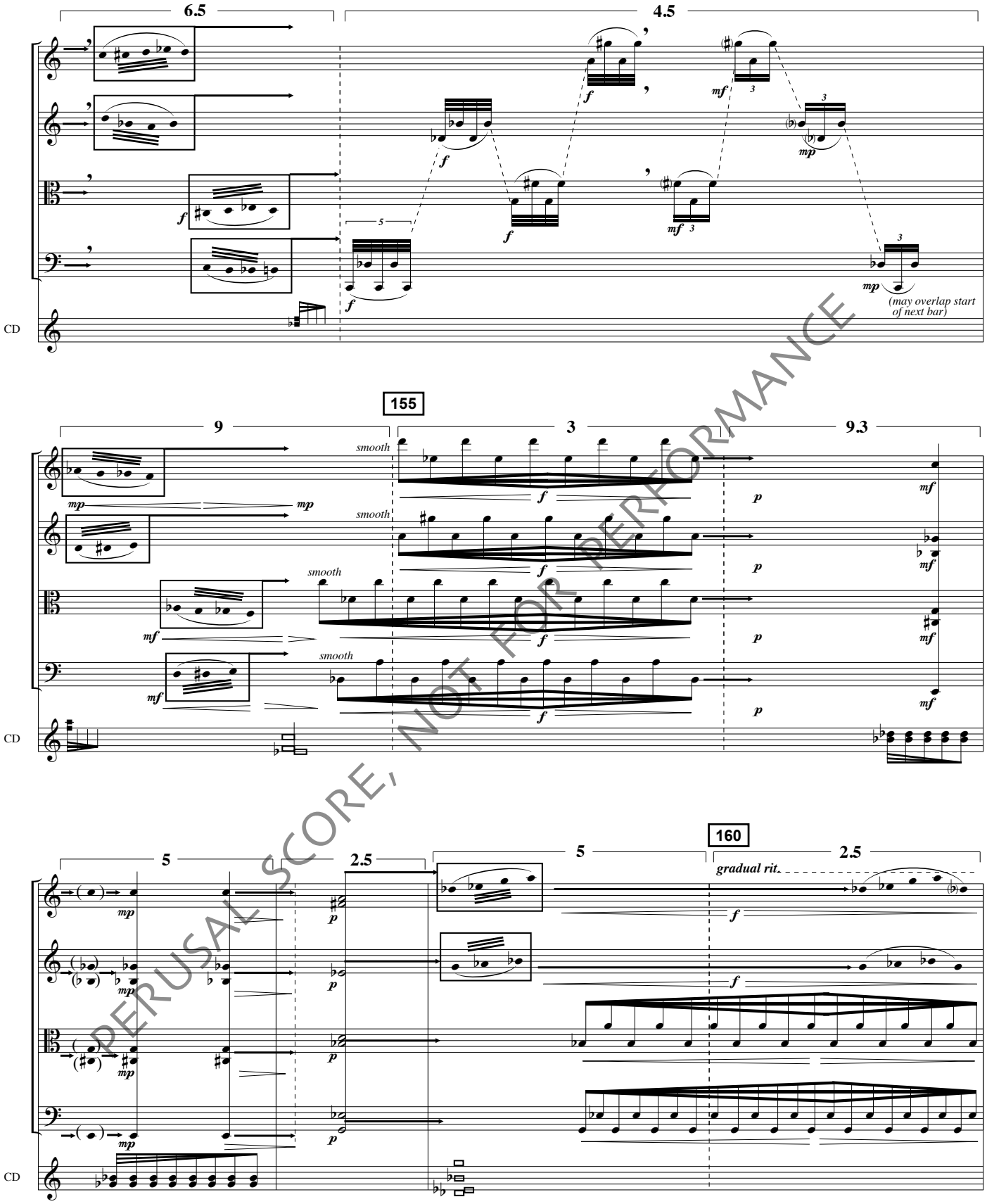

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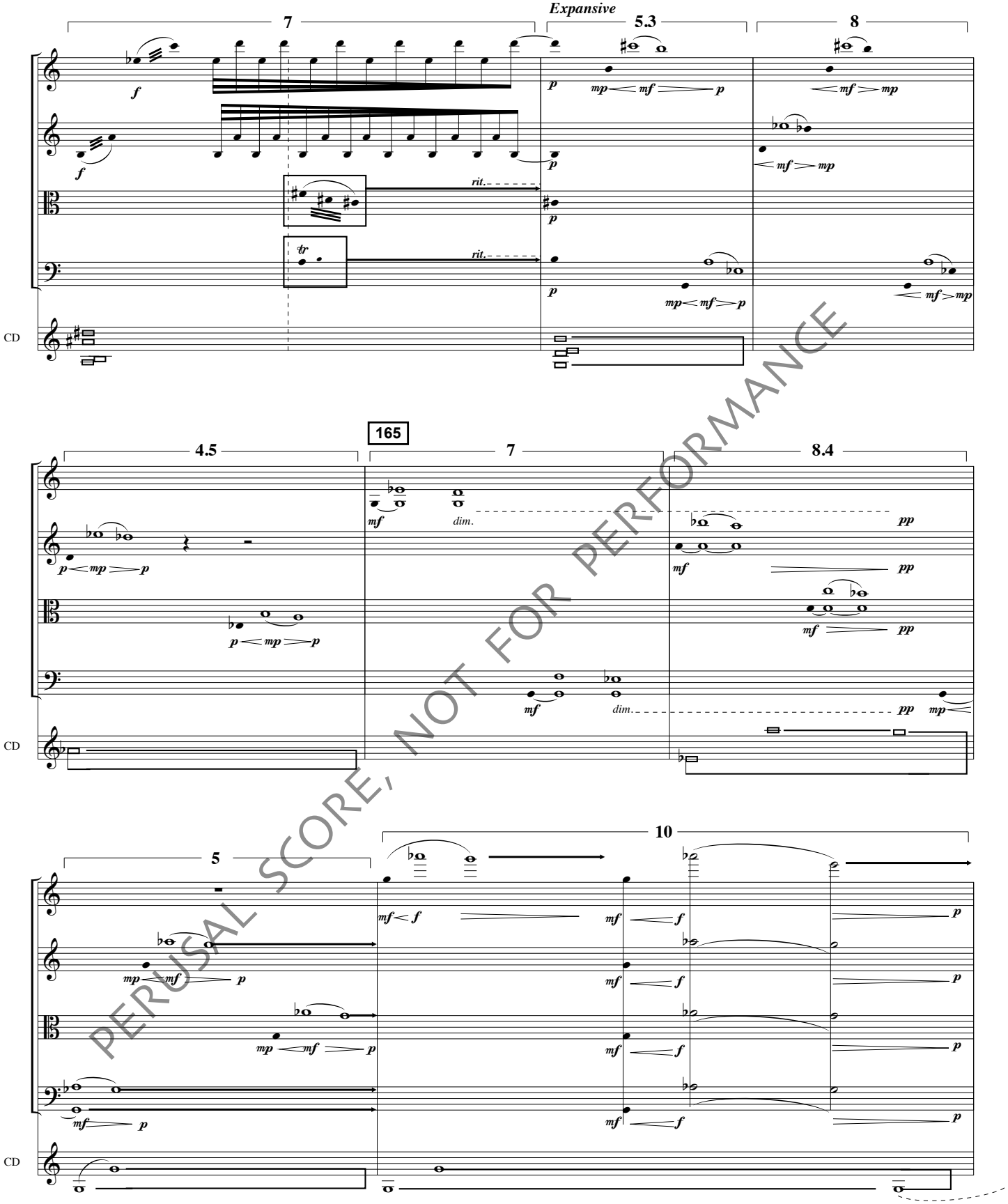

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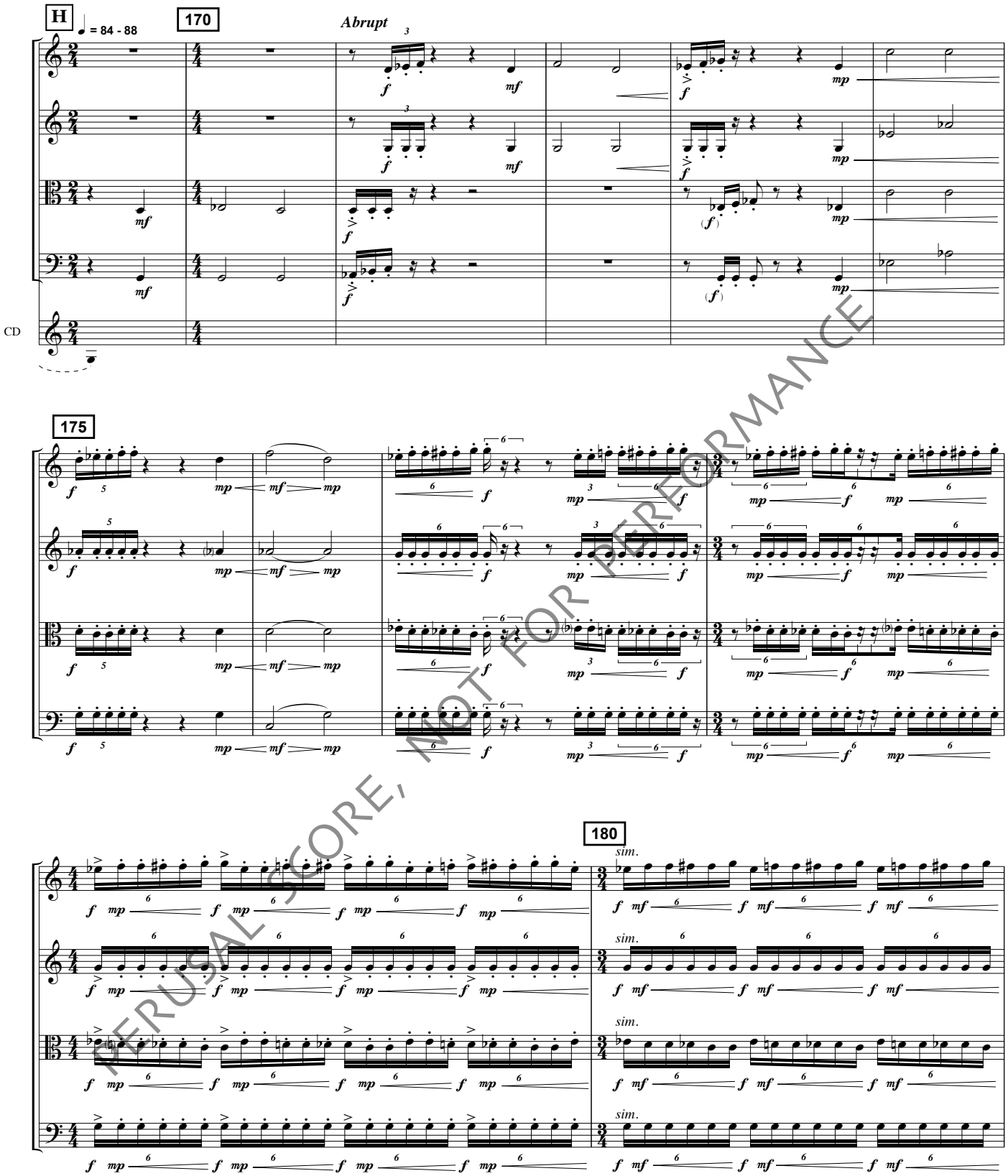

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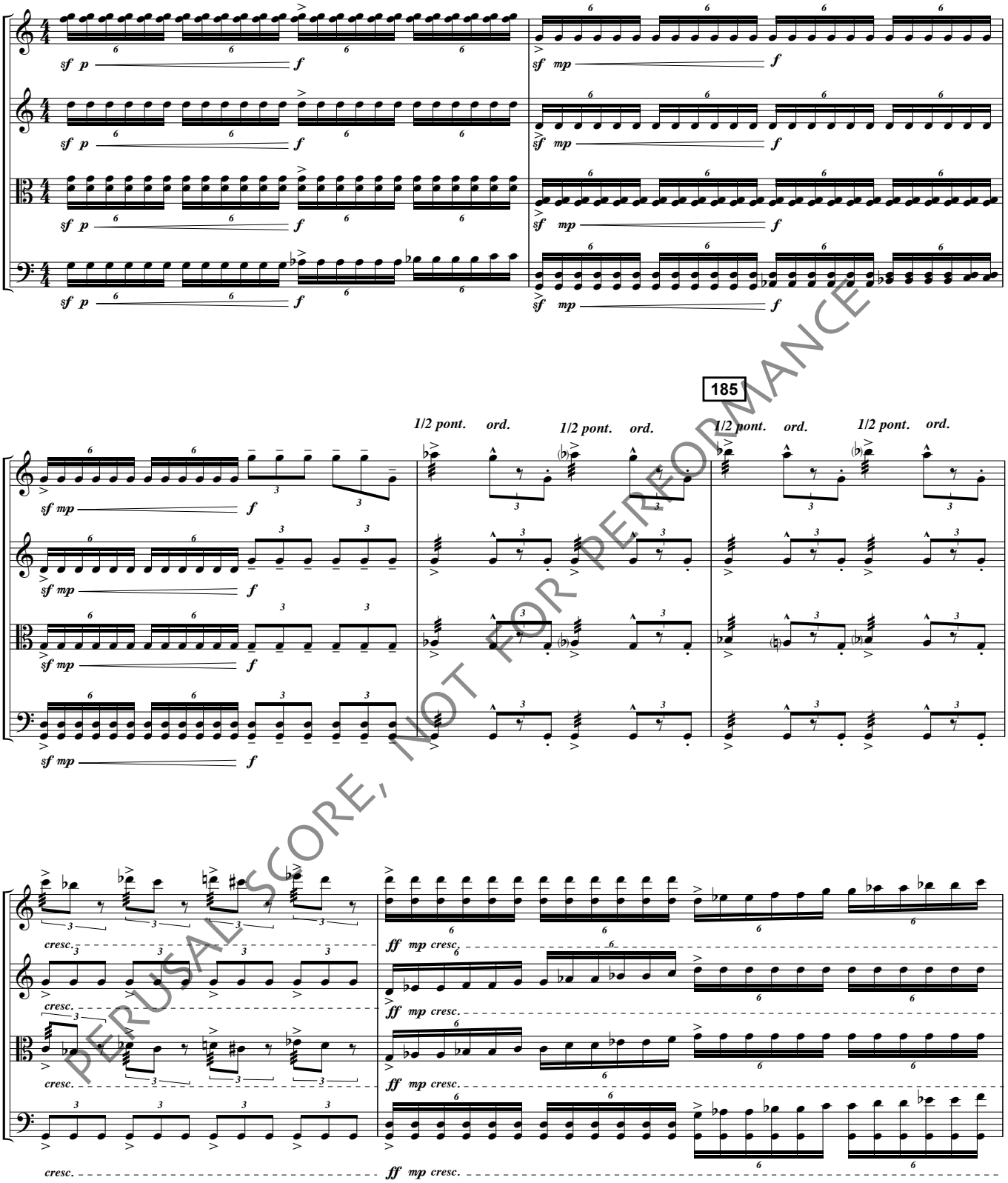

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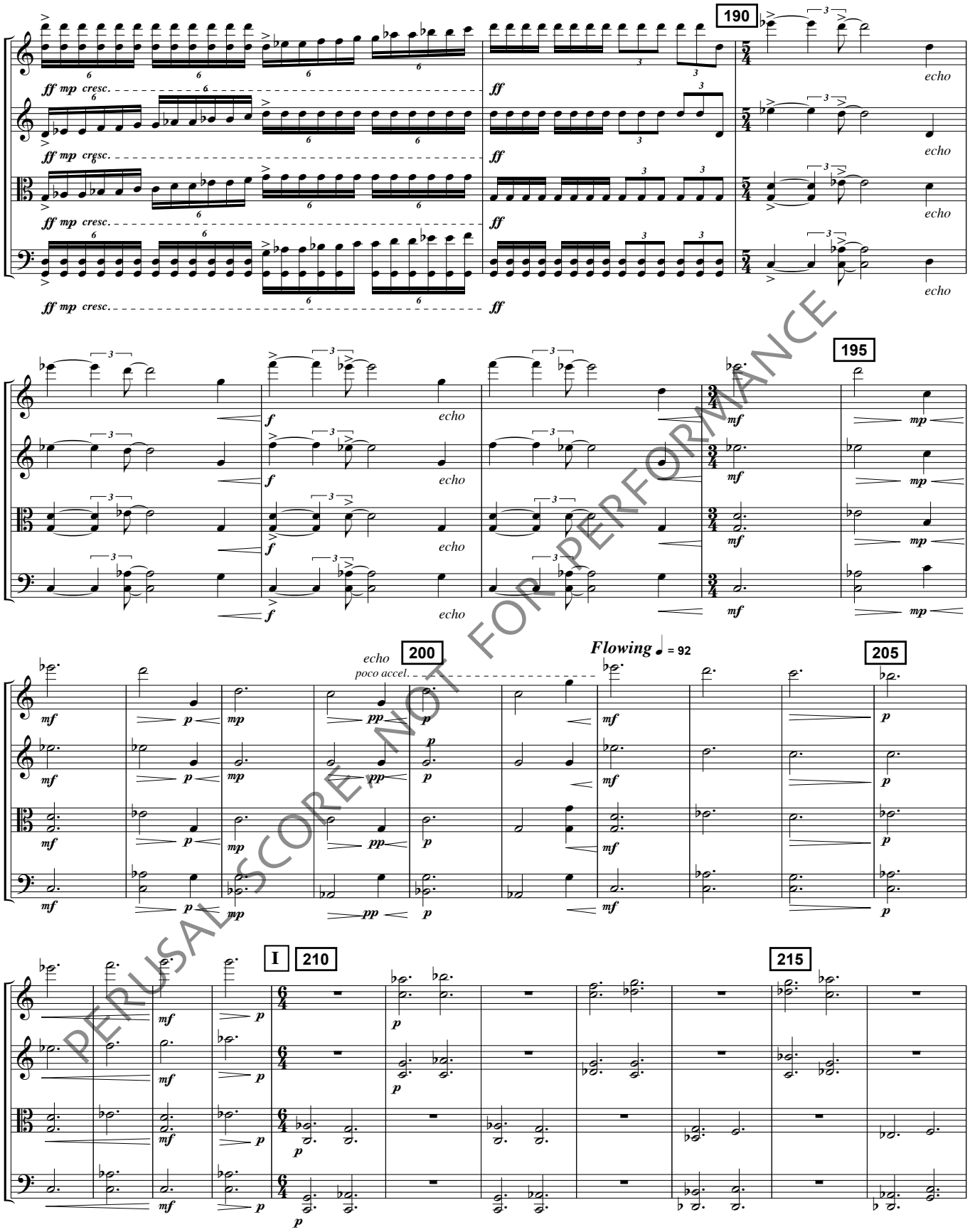

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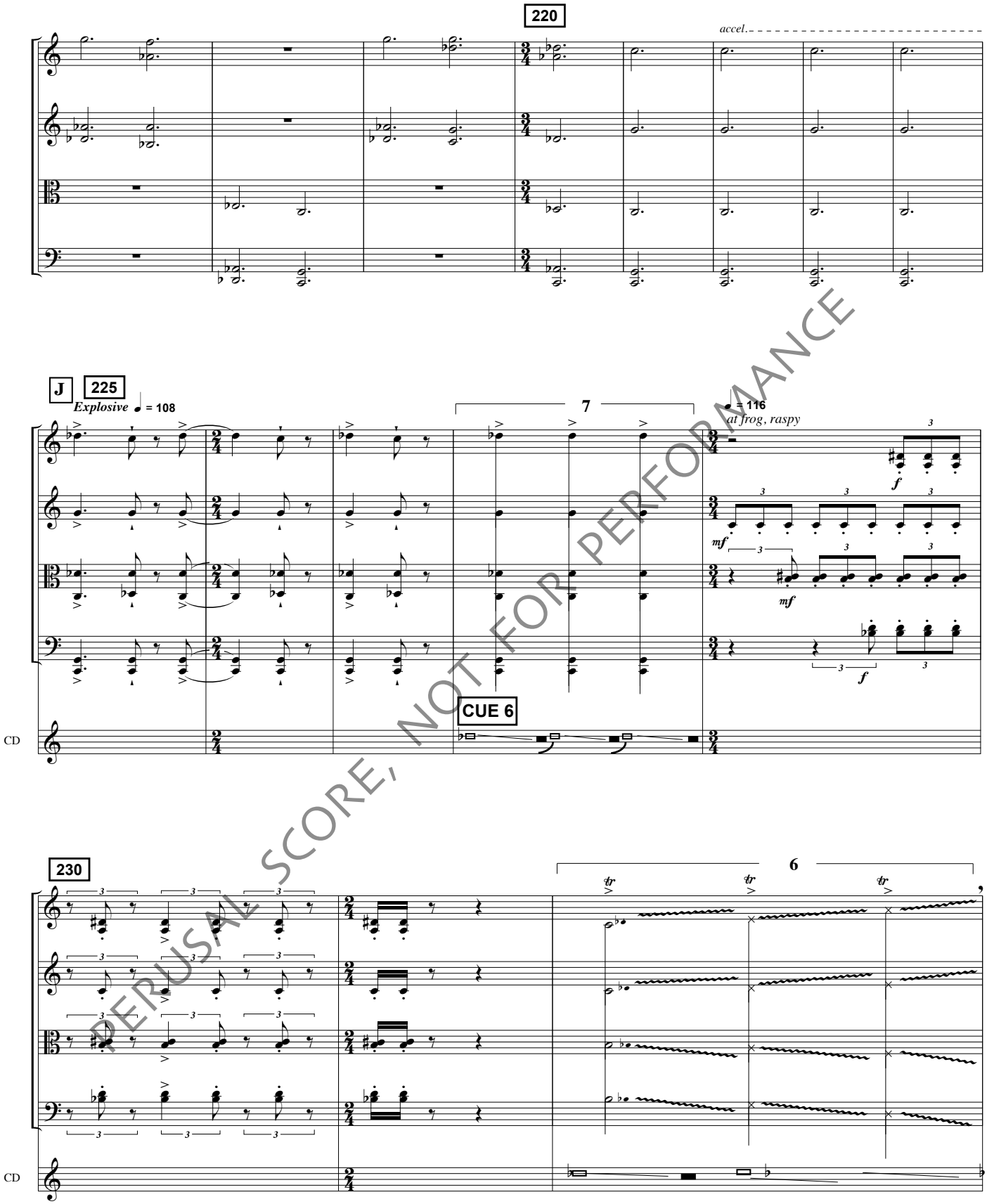

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Responses to the rising Shofar swirls come from the following group. The order is by choice except that all should conclude with the series of rising jeté glissandi. Pitches should be inspired by the electronic sounds. Timbre should range from ord. to sul pont. ad lib. Think of the music as prayers rising.

Play at the frog, forte and feroce; add pizz. LH & RH ad lib; RH should move freely between pizz. and arco notes; swirl through the registers. Dance on the fingerboard.

Bounce across all four strings in a gradually rising motion; vary the articulation, sometimes staccato, sometimes slurred; the timbre can range from ord. to harsh sul pont. Also vary the density of the group of rises.

Gliss. all 4 LH fingers up and down while bowing across all 4 strings, using dbl. stops ad lib., vary the speed of the gliss. and how much fingerboard you cover; spread across the registers and tremolo a piacere.

(Everyone end with this one) Start in low register with jeté gliss. (some doublestop gliss., some on one string); gradually expand the register, increasing intensity and density of the gliss. Intersperse with jeté behind bridge. Gradually move into a higher register; shrink the registral band, while moving even higher; as you move into the last glissandi, use somewhat less jeté, smoother gliss. with slight hold on last pitch; rise into the stratosphere and fade as the Shofar sounds end.

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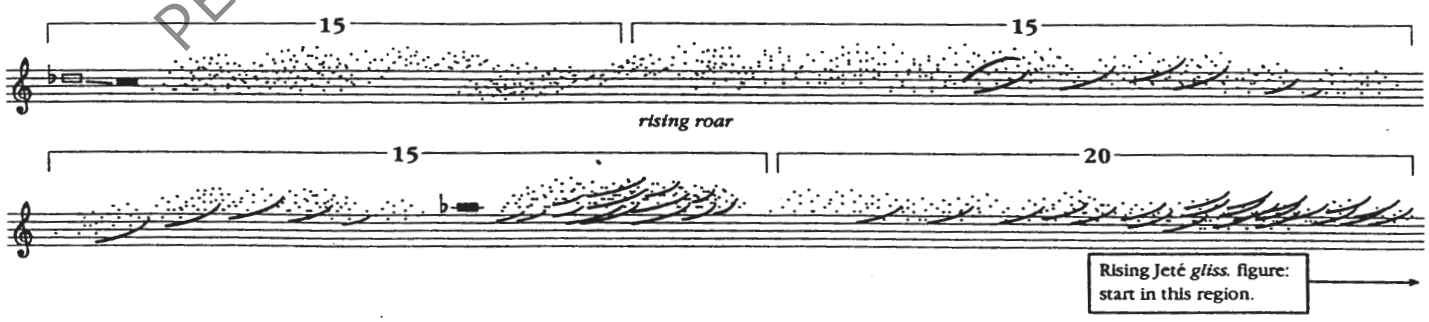

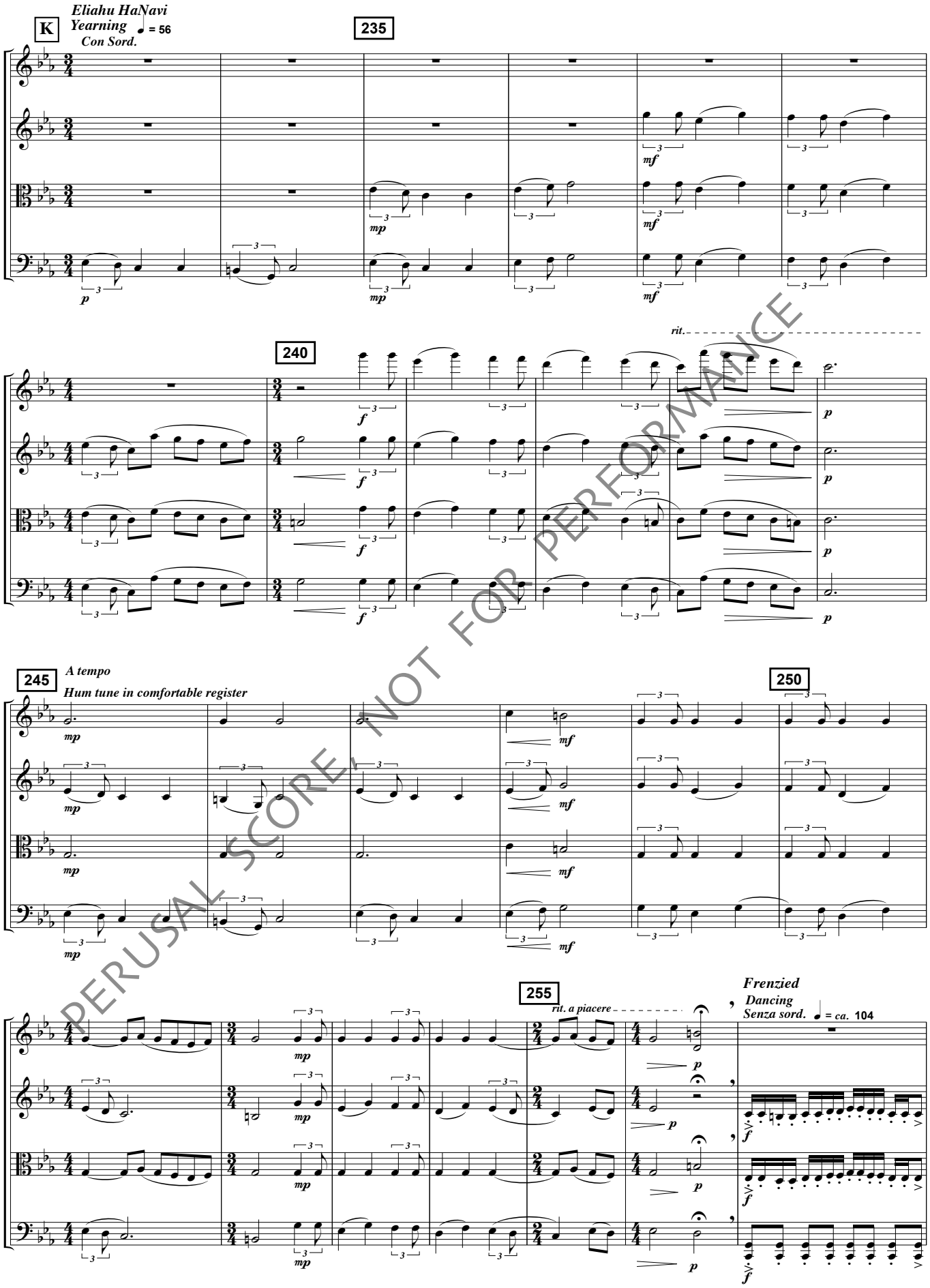

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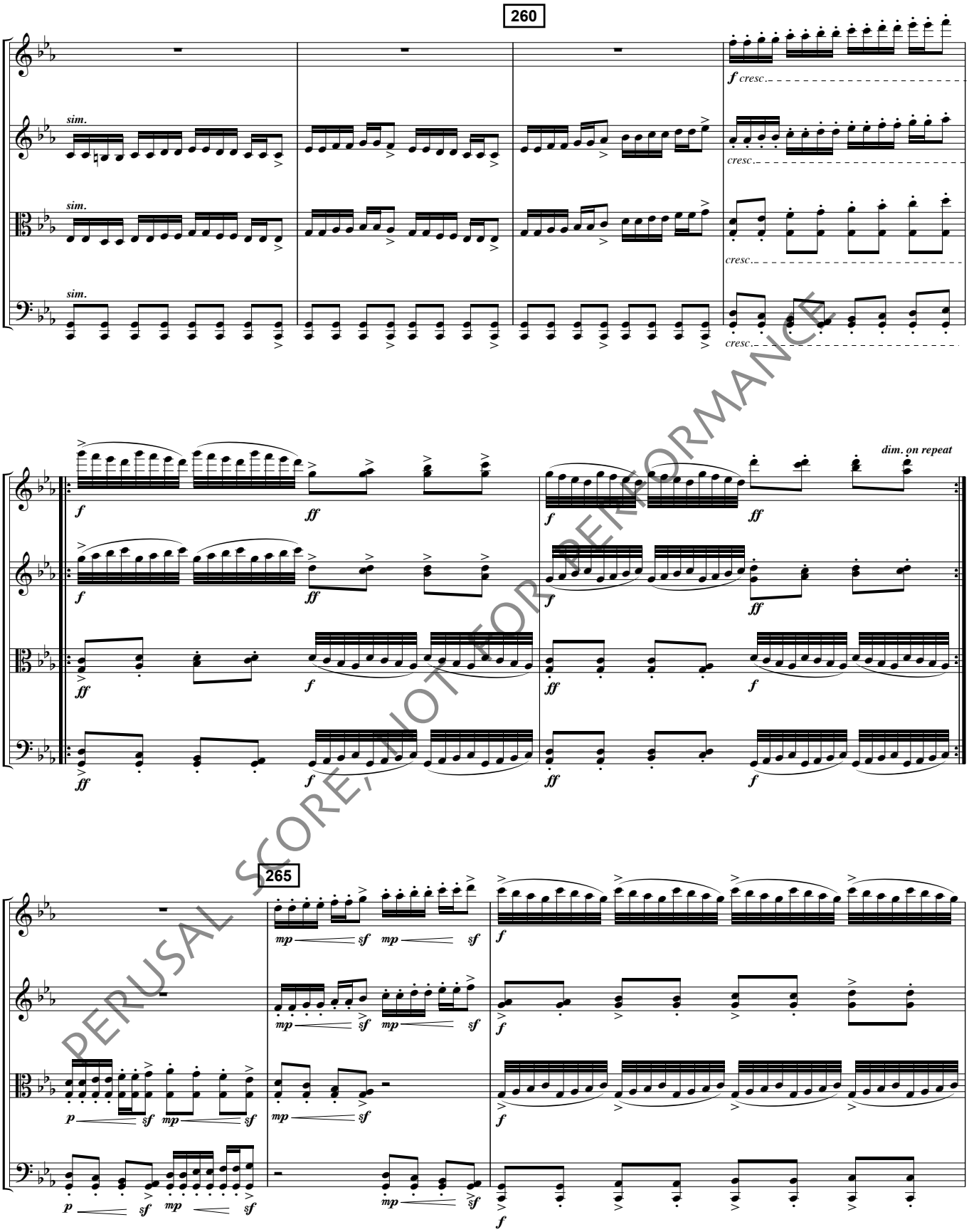

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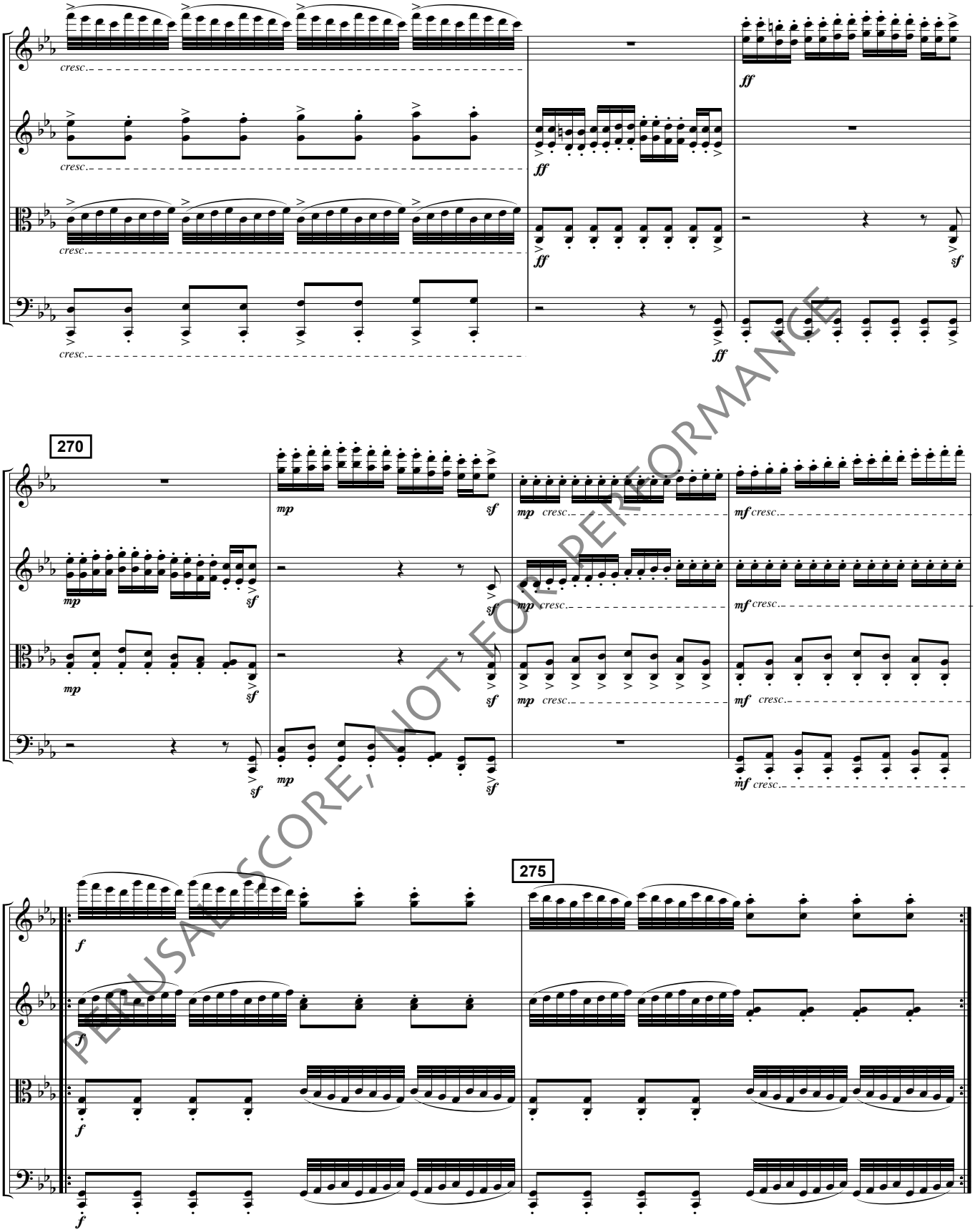

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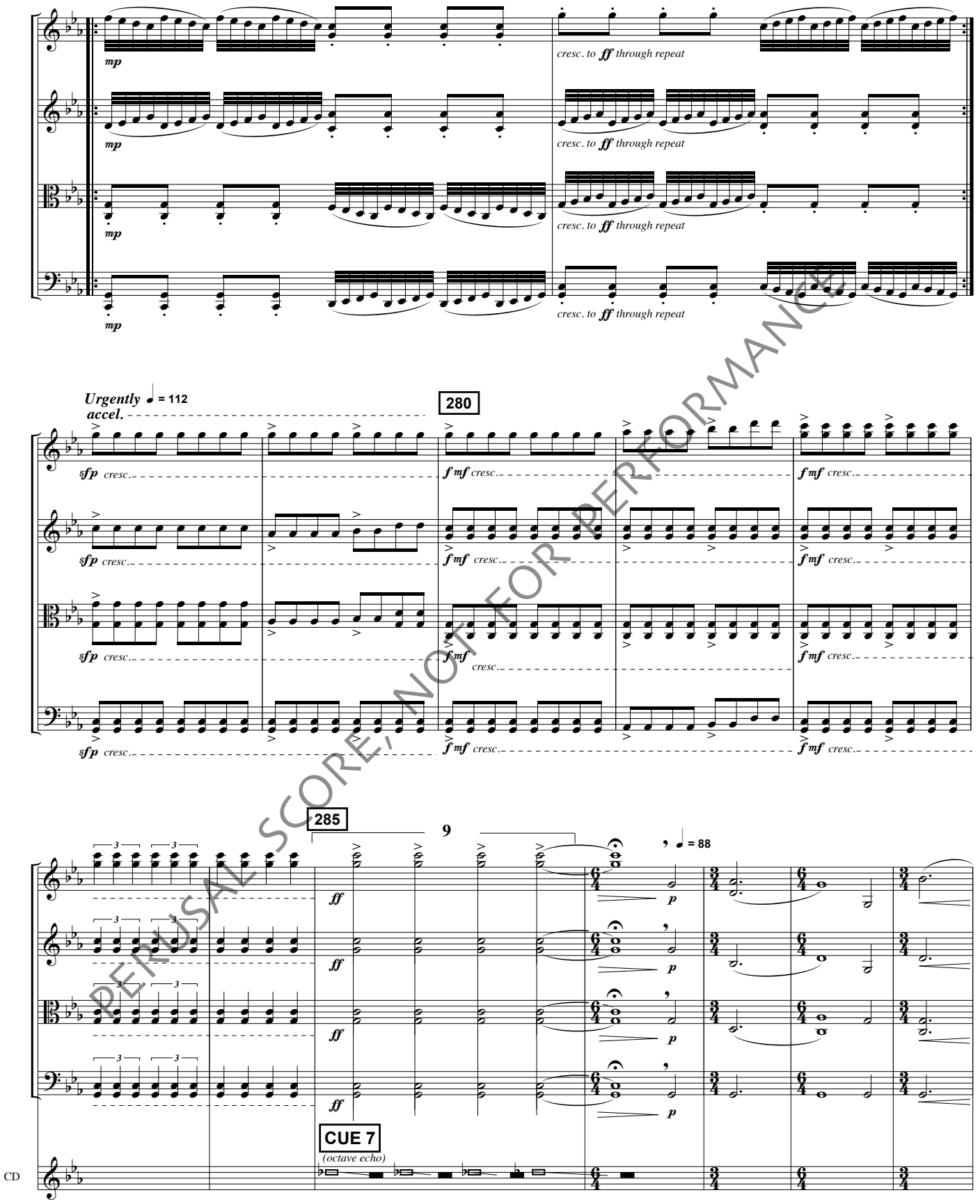

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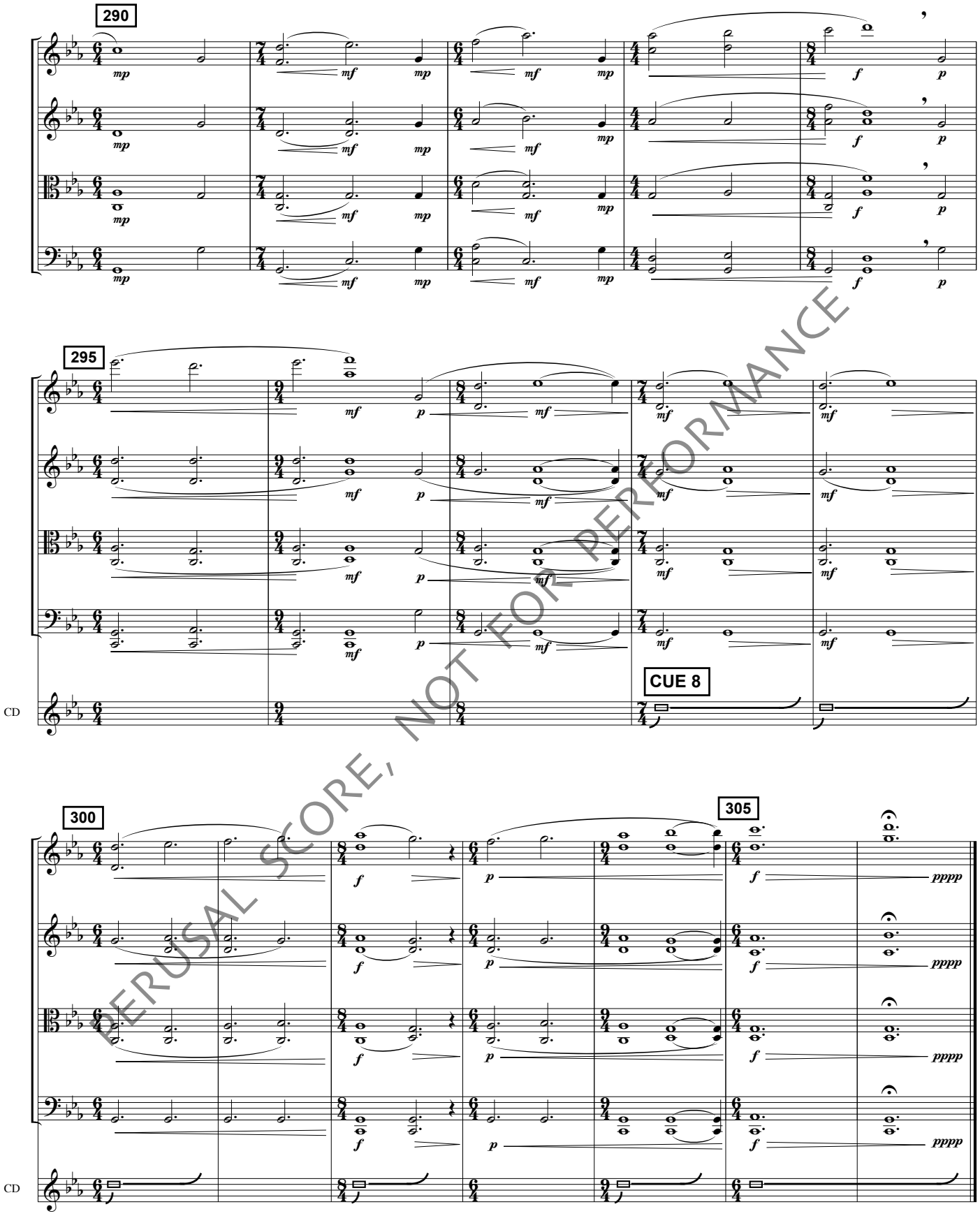

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