She Sailed the Savage Seas

for String Quartet

JESSICA MEYER

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8'

PROGRAM NOTES

I had never been to Charleston before, but when I began researching what makes this town special, I discovered that it was a hot spot for pirates in the 1670s. I came across the story of Anne Bonny, one of the only female pirates in history. Her story is powerful and fascinating: She emigrated from Ireland as a teen to Charleston but was having a hard time accepting a woman's role in society at the time and knew she was destined for something more. Her fiery temper was well known, and after falling in love with a pirate, her father disowned her, so they hopped on a boat for Nassau—a sanctuary for pirates.

While drinking at various parties and taverns, she met the infamous pirate Calico Jack Rackham and became his partner as well as a member of his crew. She dressed like a man to blend in on the ship and held her own, fighting just as fiercely as anyone else. While aboard Calico Jack's ship, she met Mary Read —another female pirate disguised as a man who fought just as hard. It was then that the women started a new crew, embarking together on pirate's life in the Caribbean.

The women's career in swashbuckling only lasted a few precious years, for one evening, the men in their crew got too drunk to fight against a group of marauders determined to capture their sloop. Anne and Mary defended the ship as mightily as they could, but alas, all the pirates were captured and sentenced to death. While incarcerated, the women discovered they were pregnant. Both received stays of execution by "pleading with their bellies," but Mary Read died in prison of fever before anything could be carried out.

However, according to all written accounts, Anne Bonny disappeared before she could be hanged. There is much speculation over what exactly happened to her. Some say her father was able to help her escape, bringing her back home to Charles Towne, where she married and gave birth to ten children. Some say she opened a bar in the Bahamas and poured drinks and regaled folks with pirate stories for the rest of her years, and some even say she escaped to the shores of England.

Wherever she may have found herself after her pirating days were through, Anne Bonny remains a legend in Charleston and across the high seas.

Many, many thanks to Spoleto Festival USA and the St. Lawrence String Quartet for this amazing opportunity.

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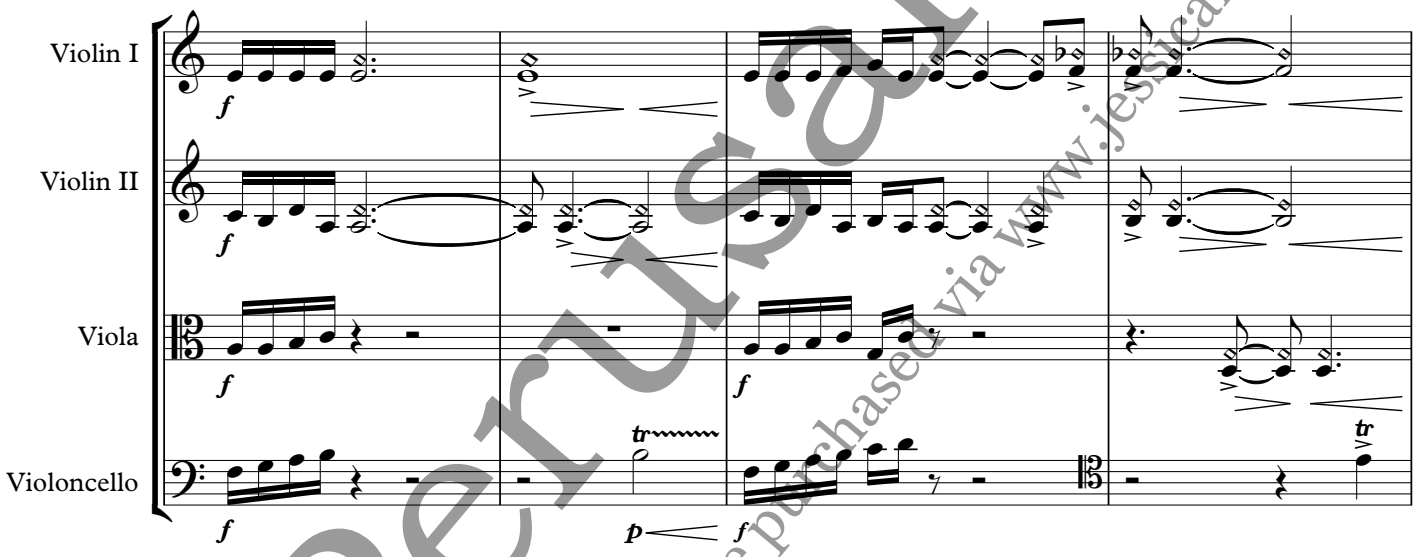
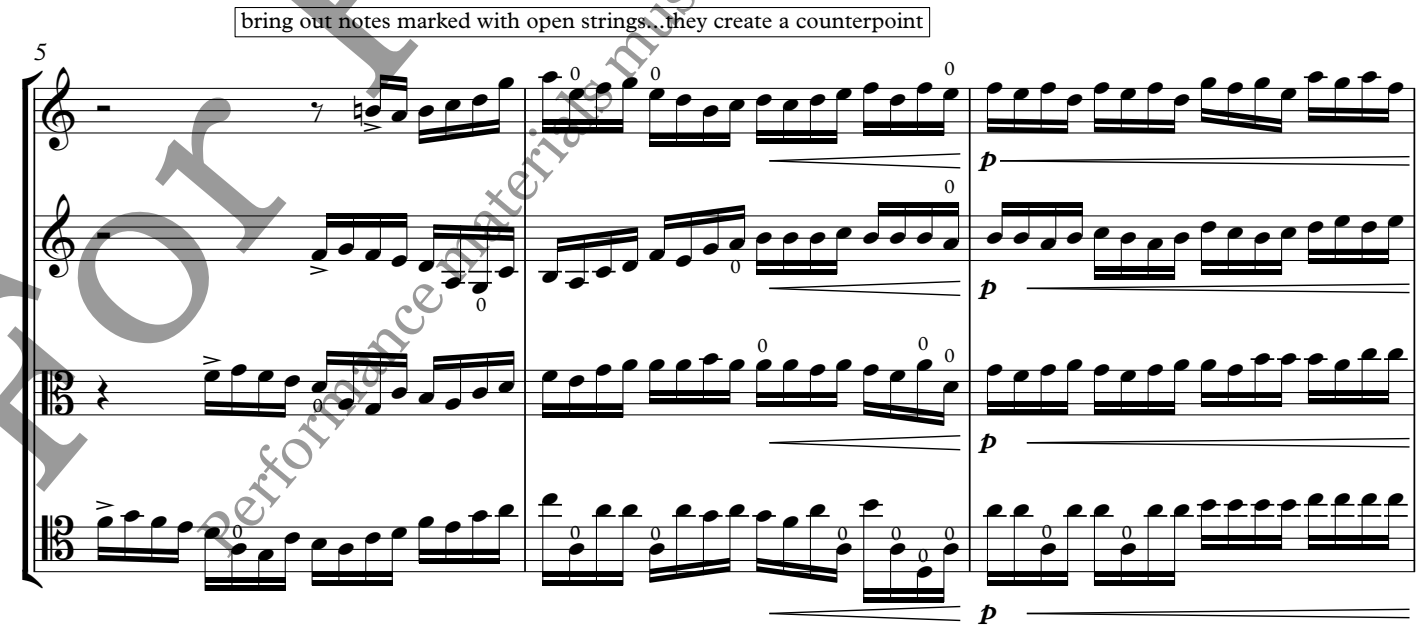
Commissioned by Spoleto Festival USA
for the St. Lawrence String Quartet
in honor of their 25 years in residence.

JESSICA MEYER

I. LEAVING CHARLES TOWNE

♩ = 120 **Urgent**





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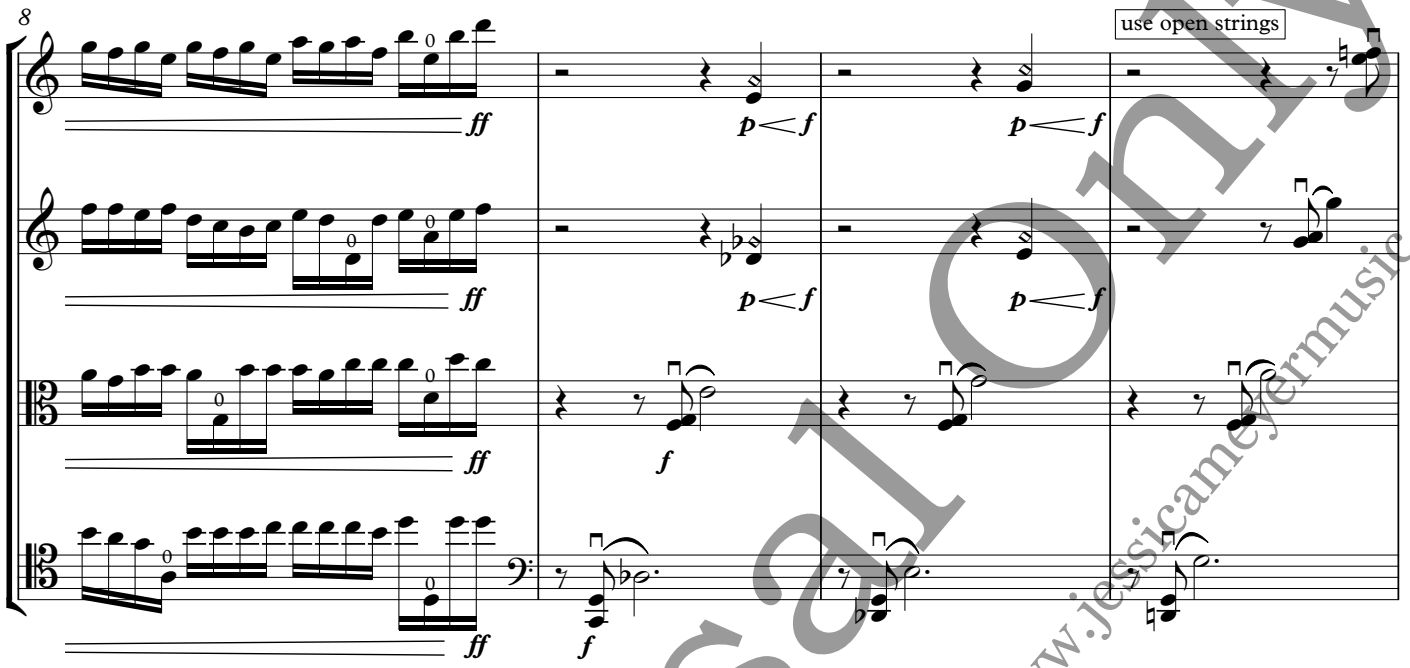

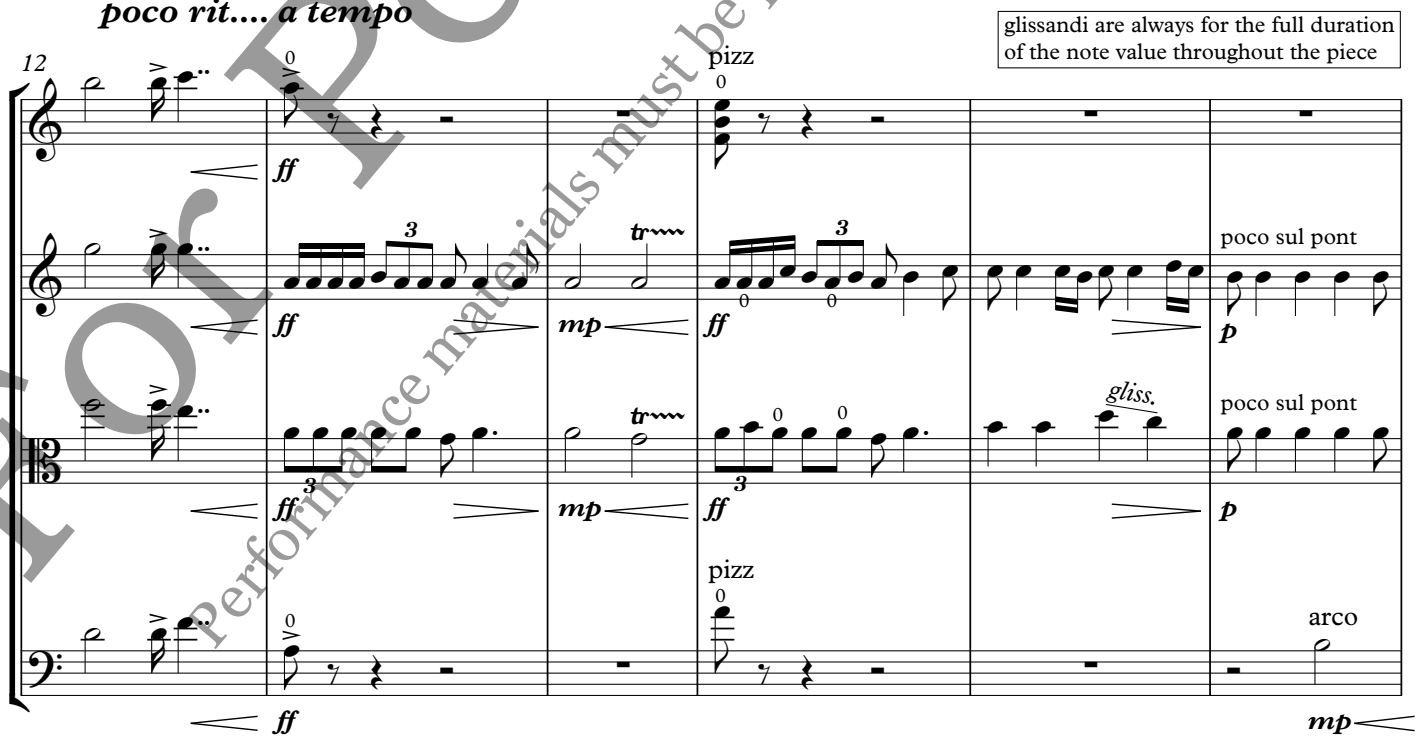

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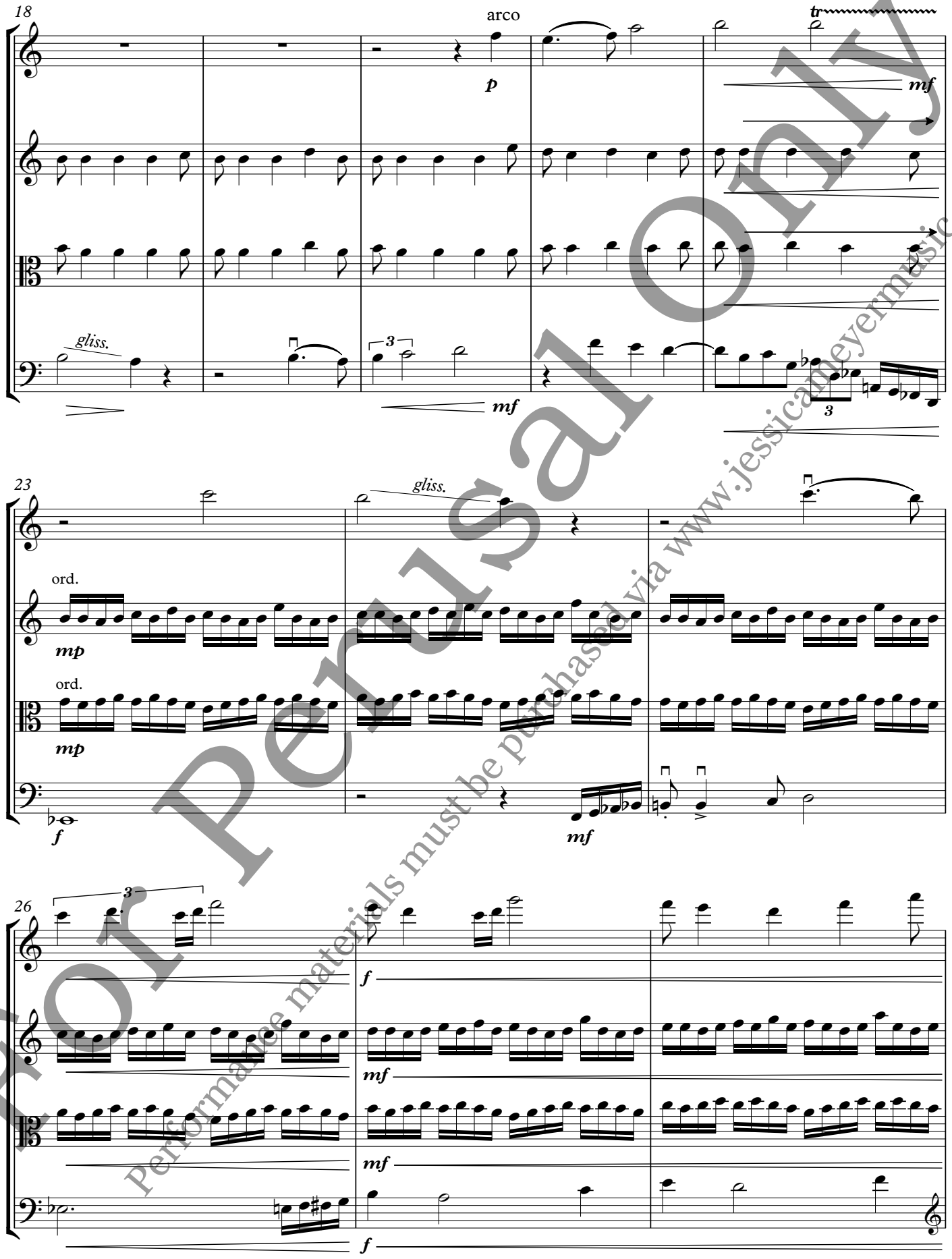

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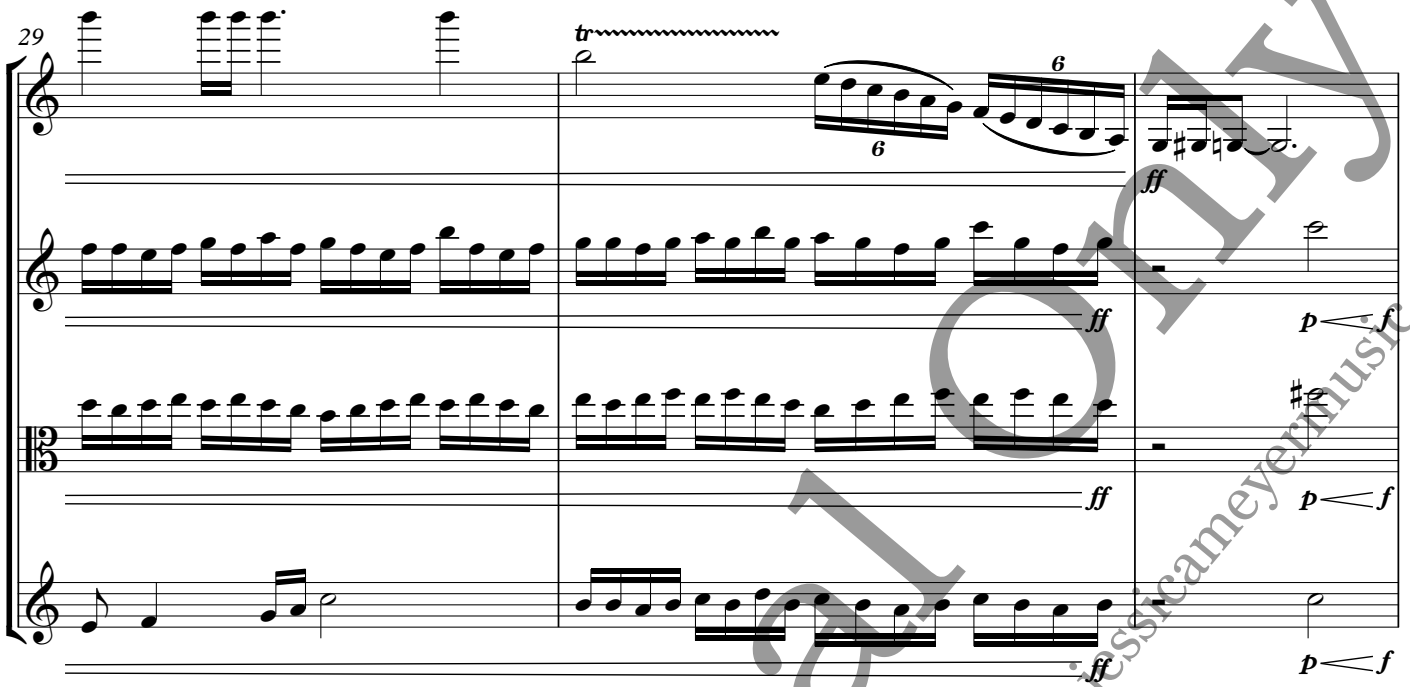
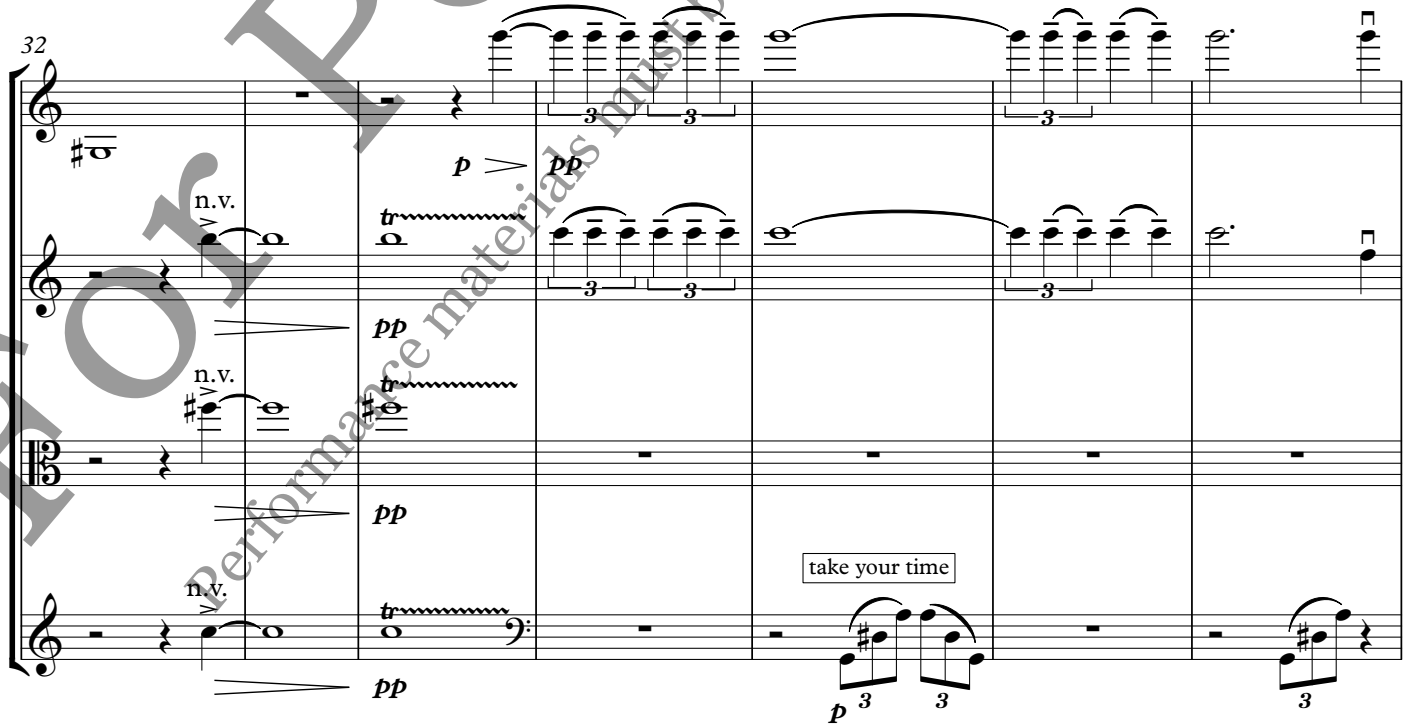


♩ = 110 **A Glimpse of what's to come…**



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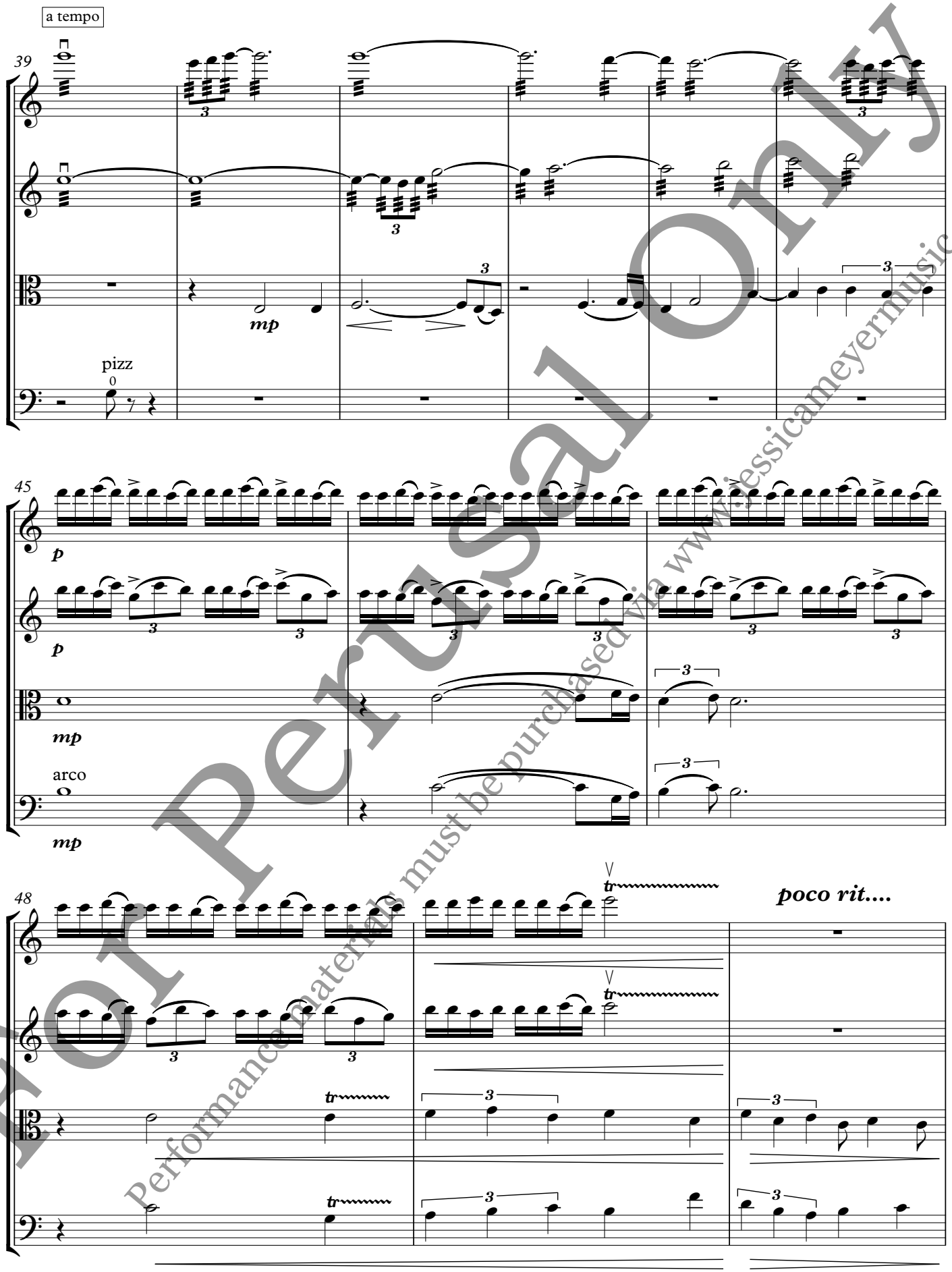

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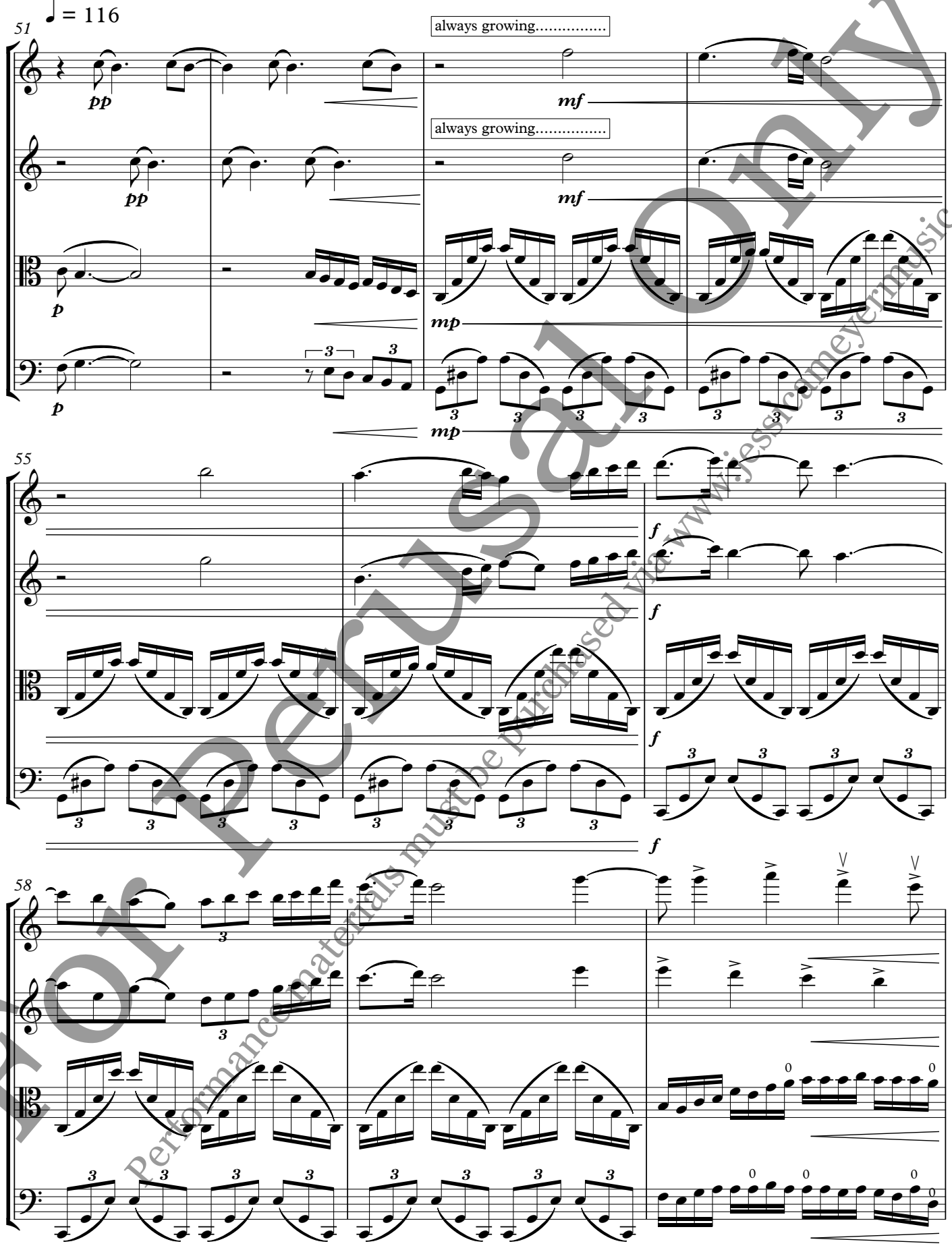

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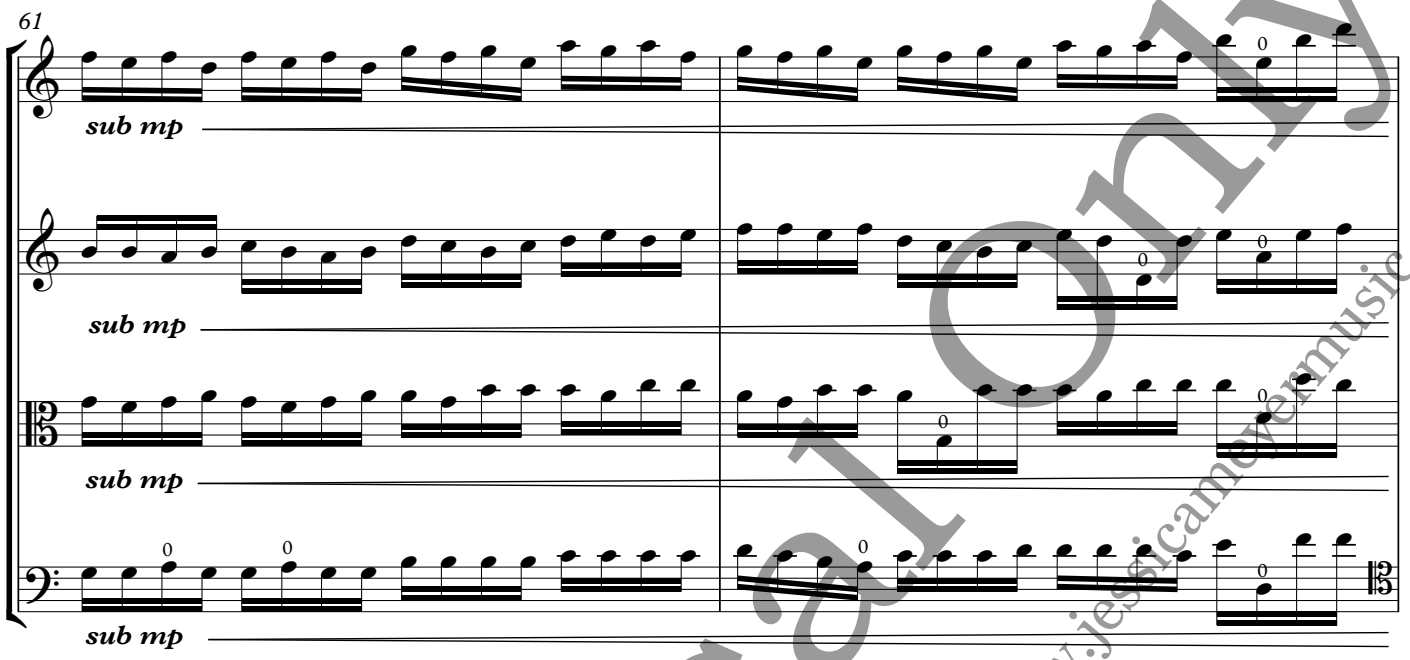
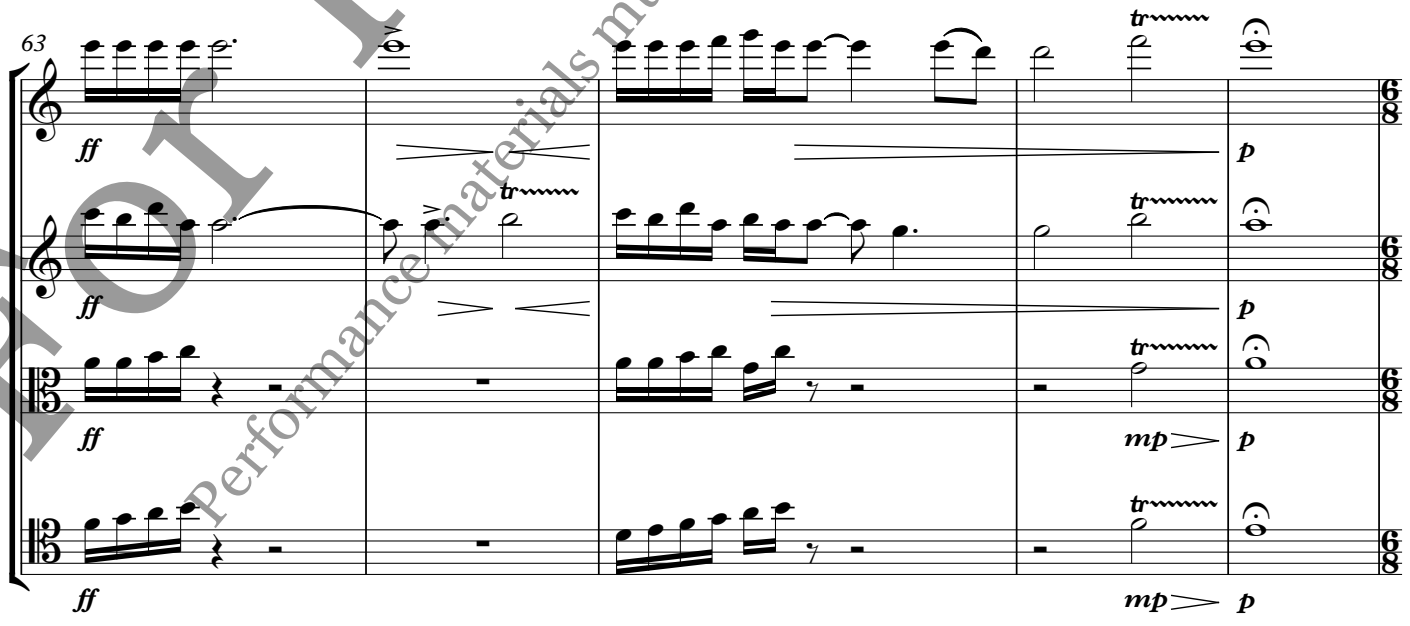


♩ = 120



attacca...

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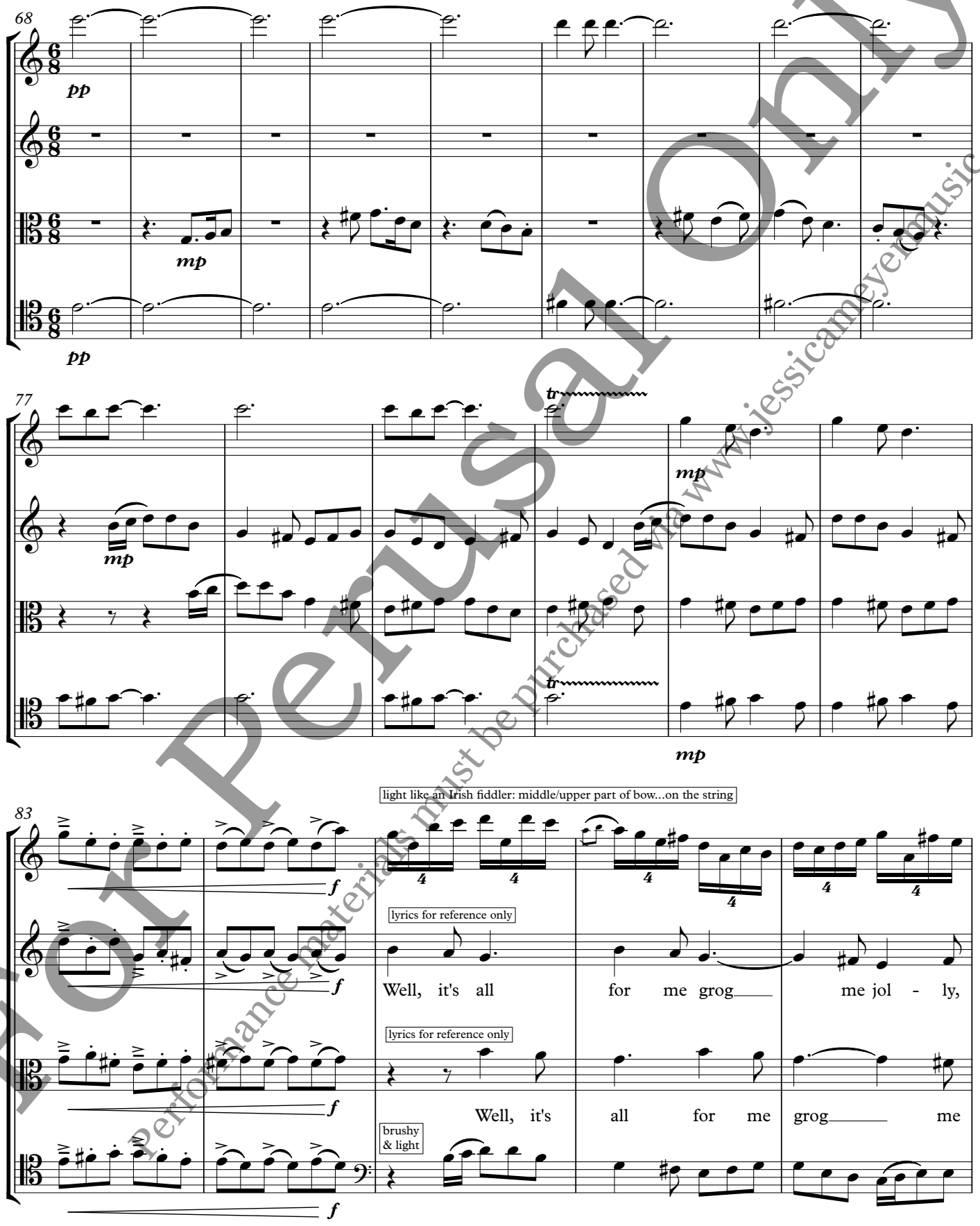
II. IN THE TAVERN

♩. = 110 **Playful Scherzo**

always feel the swing of the 6/8 meter



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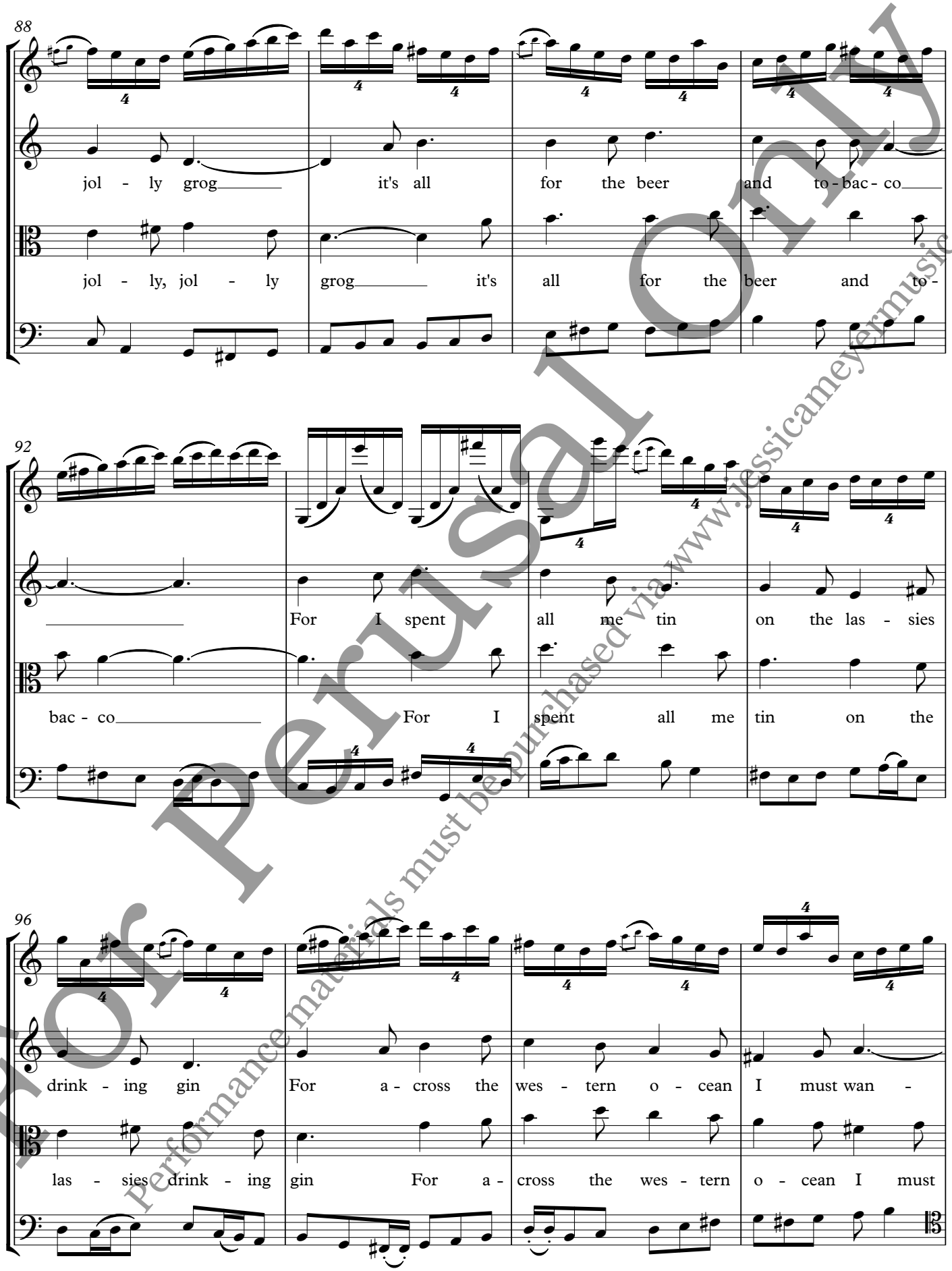

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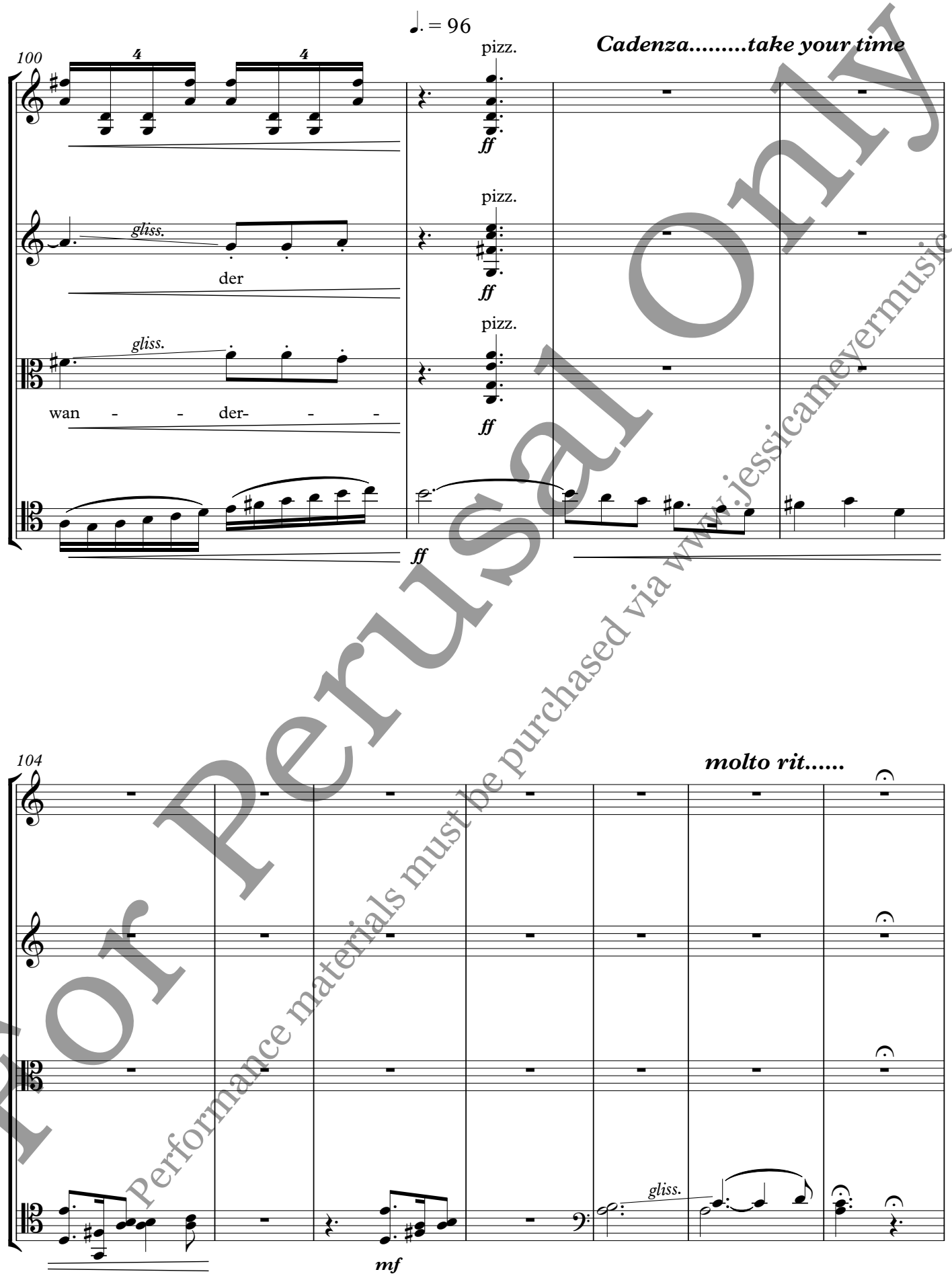

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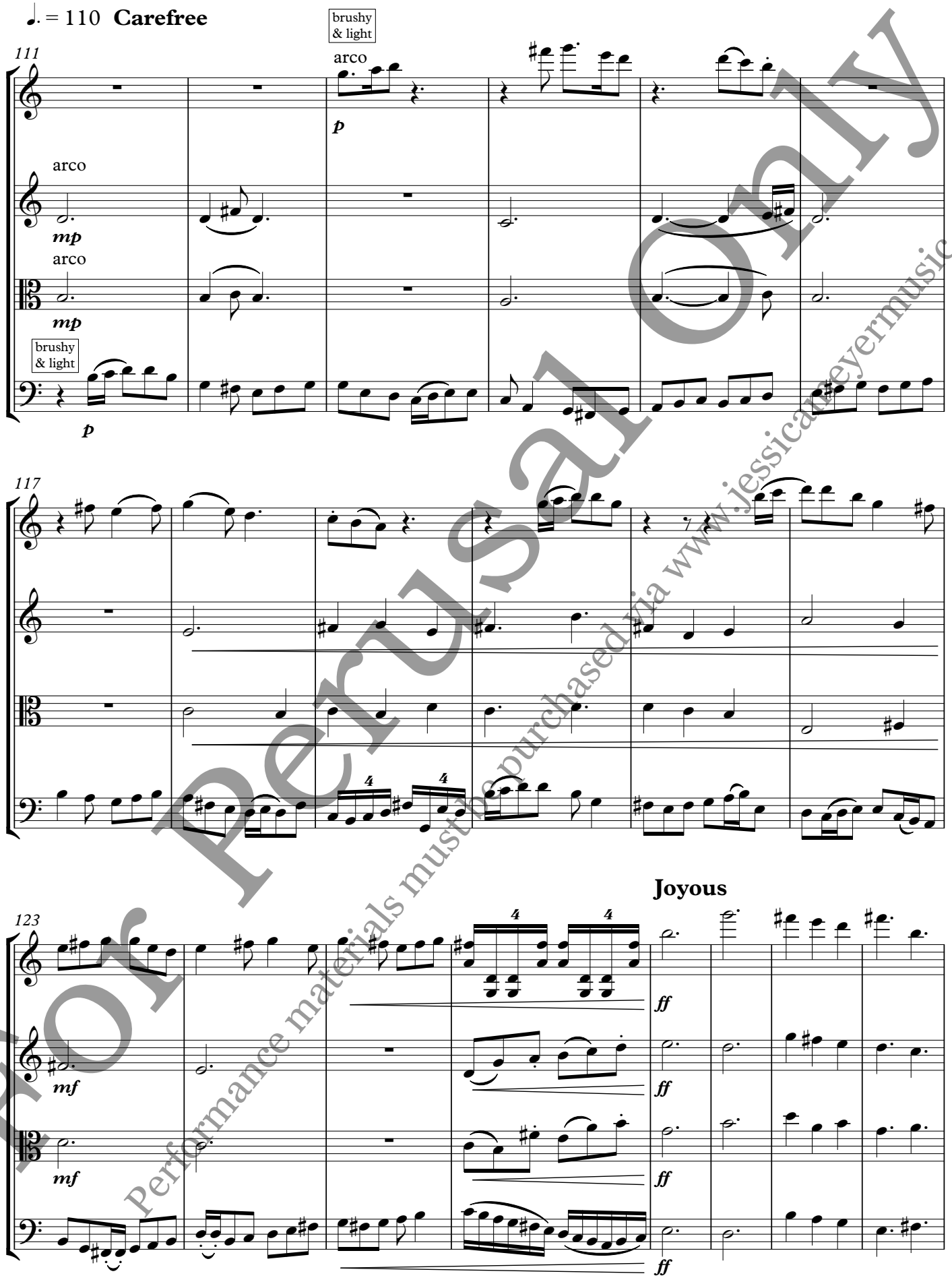

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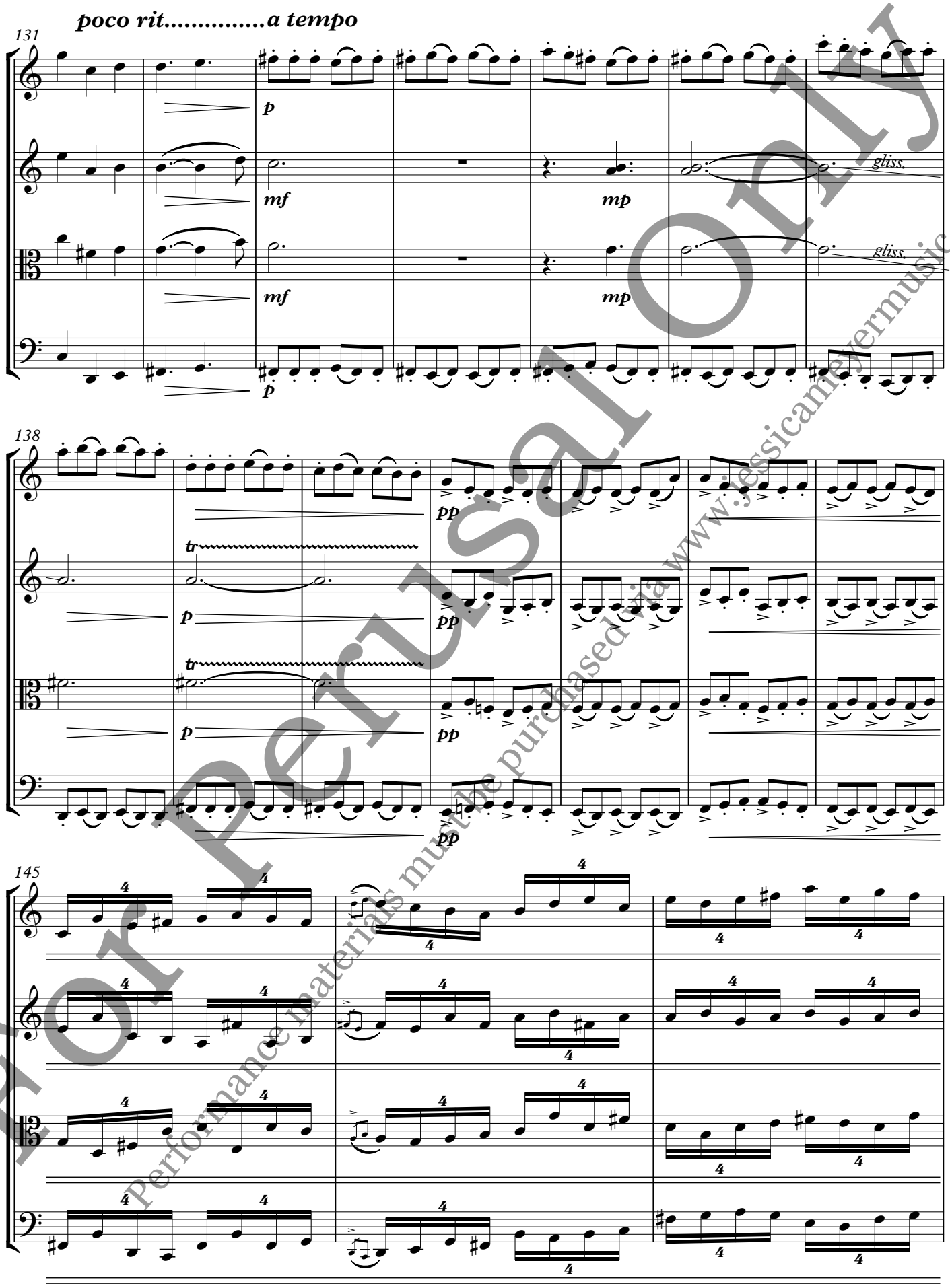

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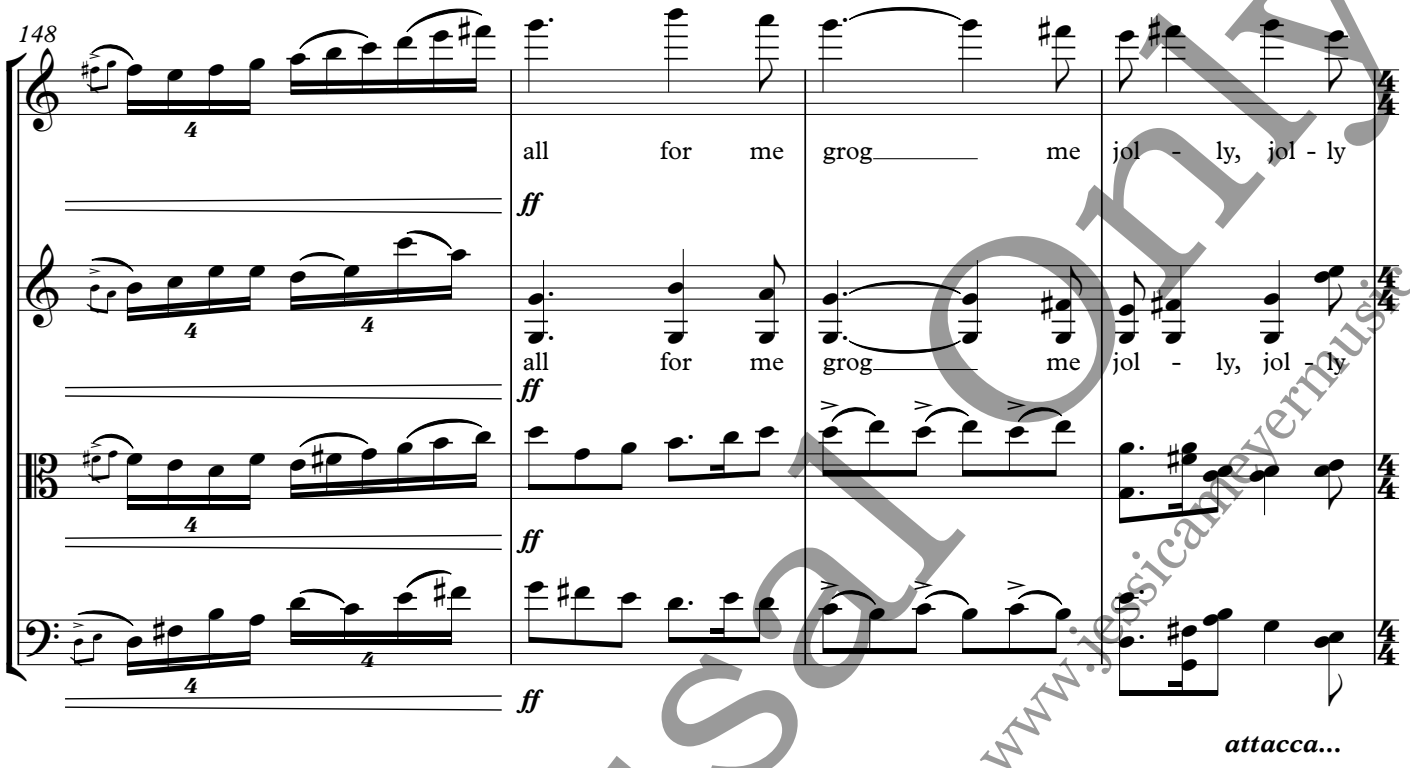
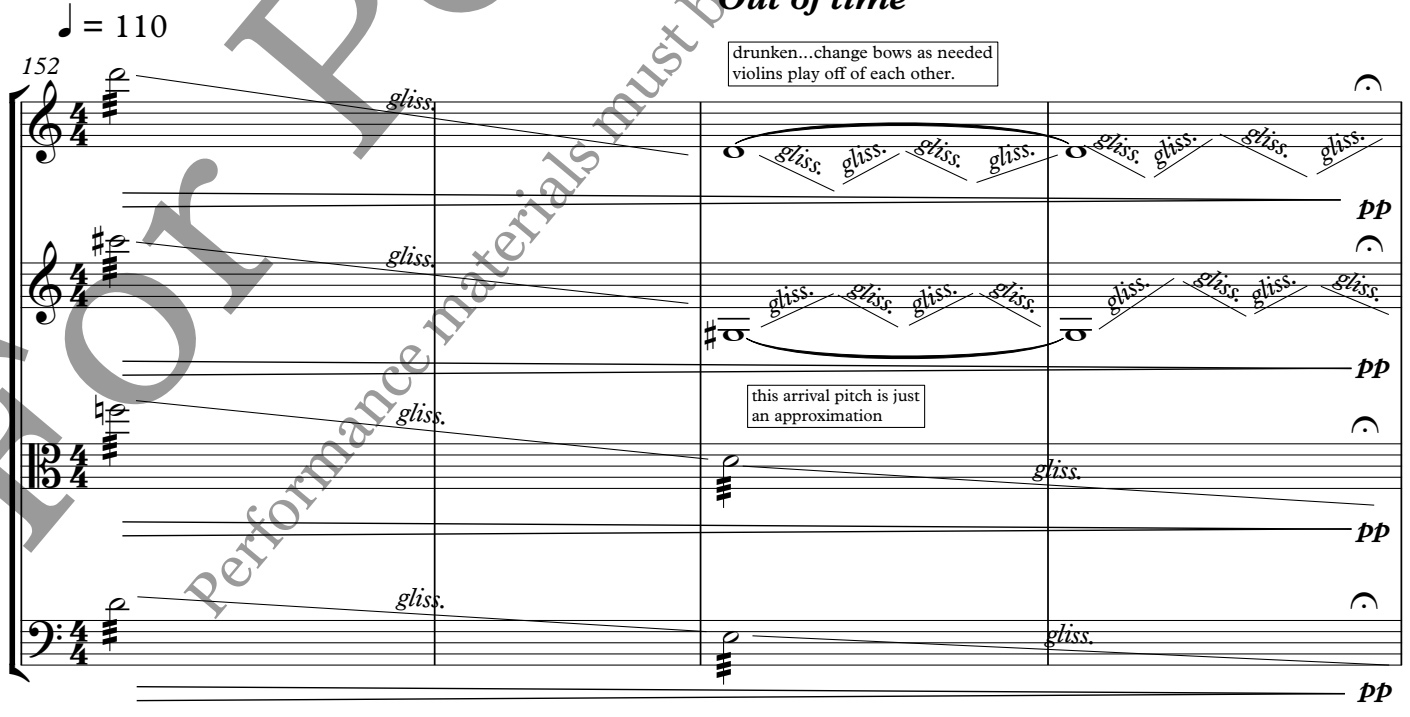


III. THE TAKING OF THE SLOOP



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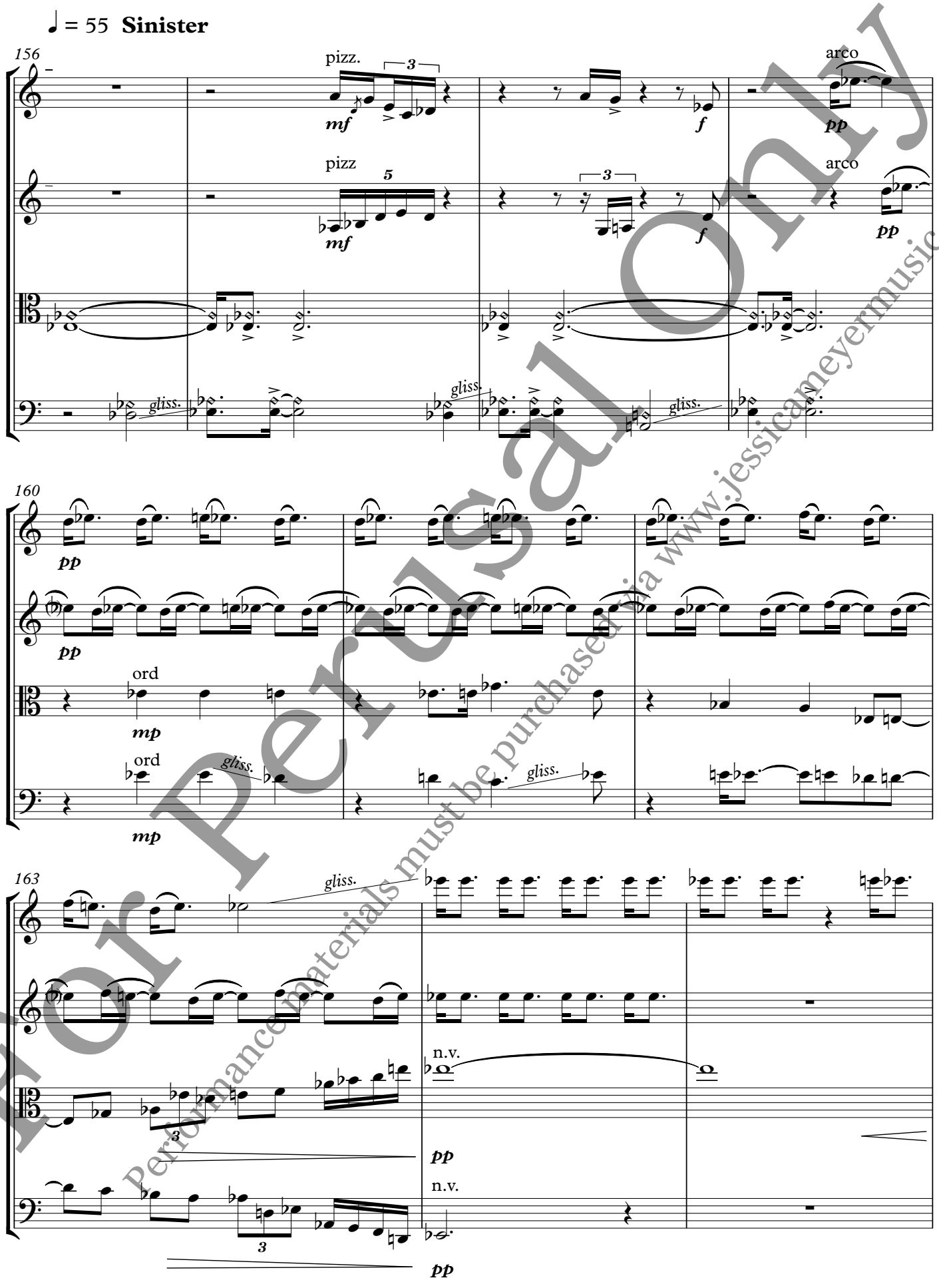

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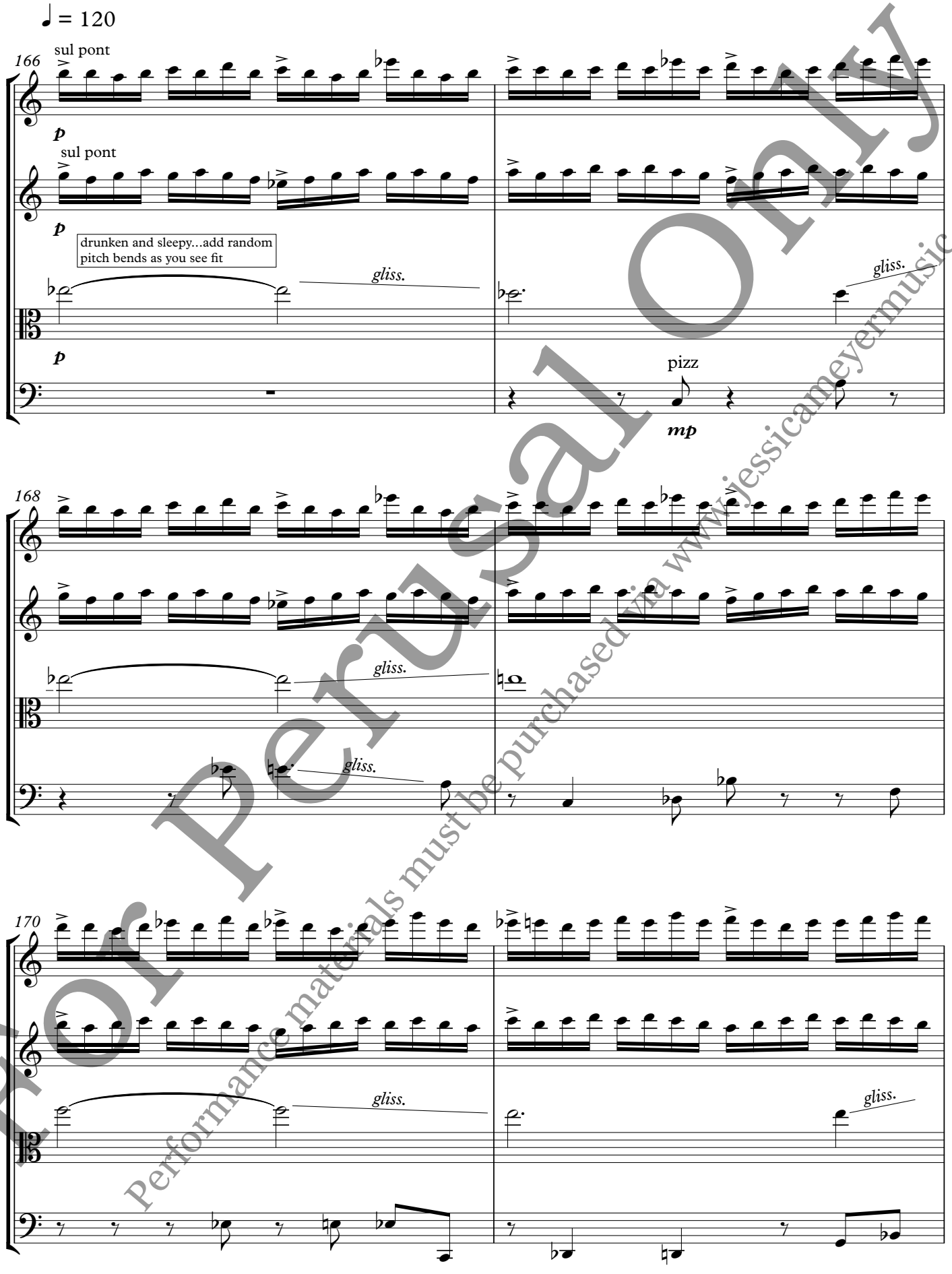

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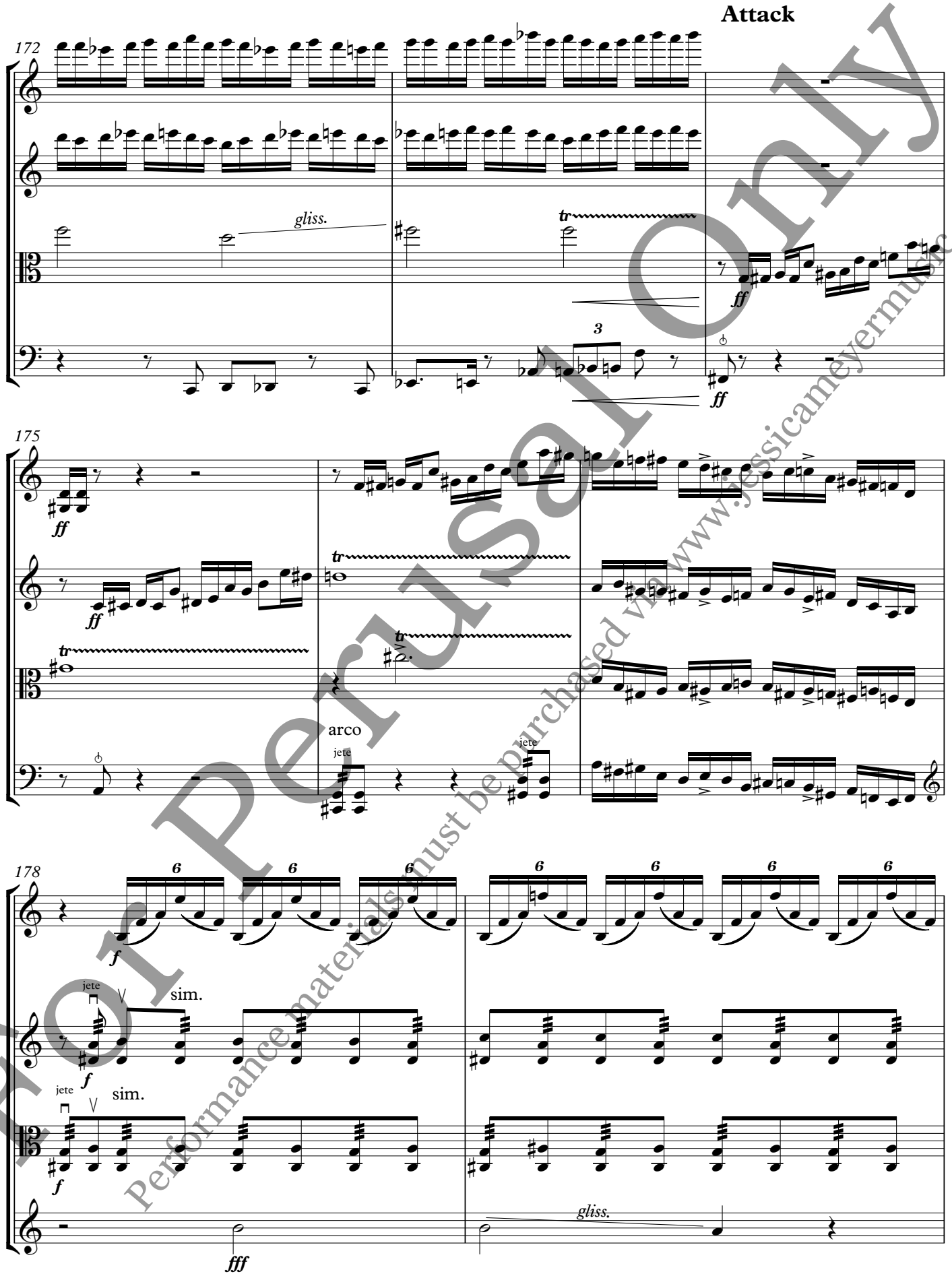

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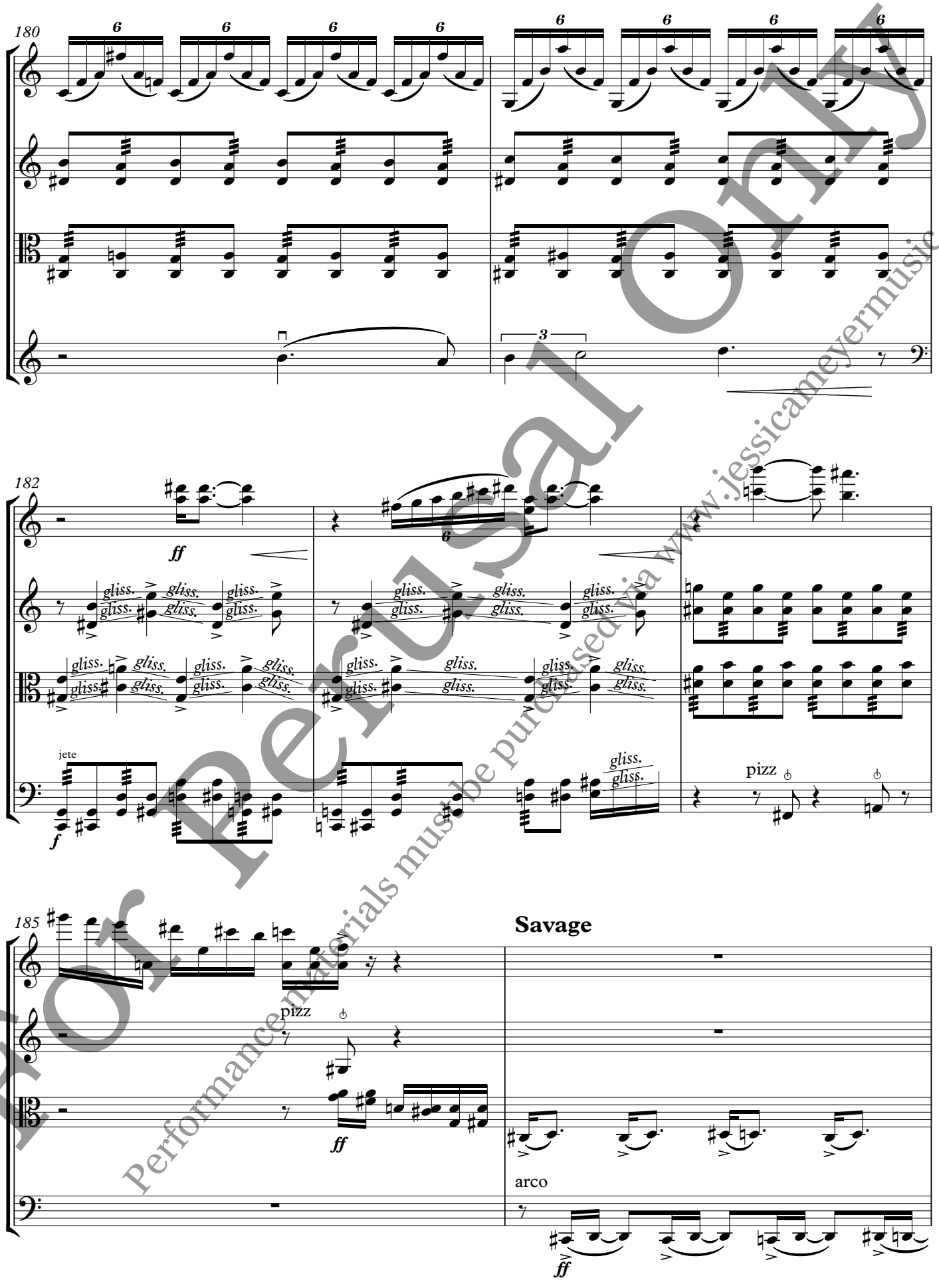

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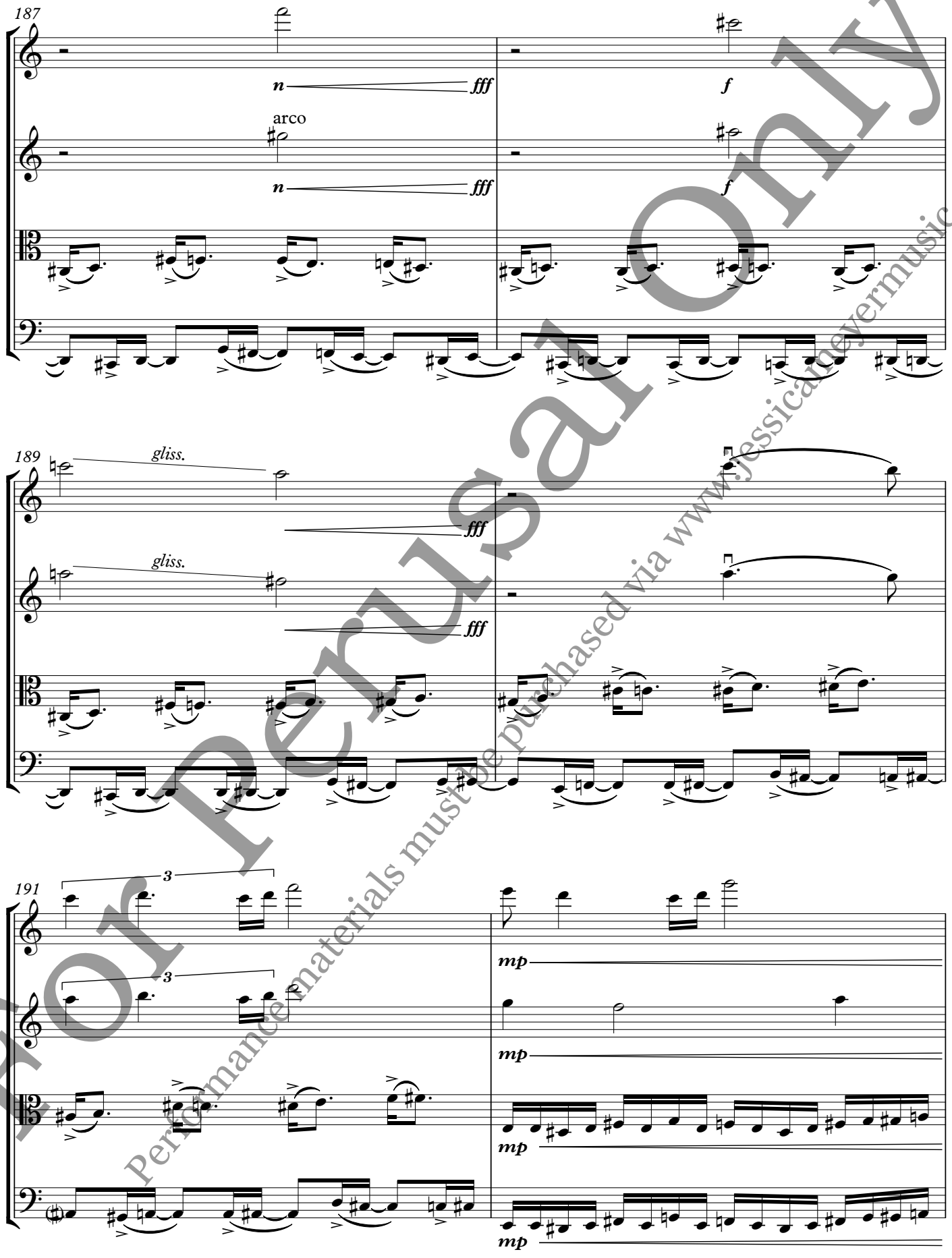

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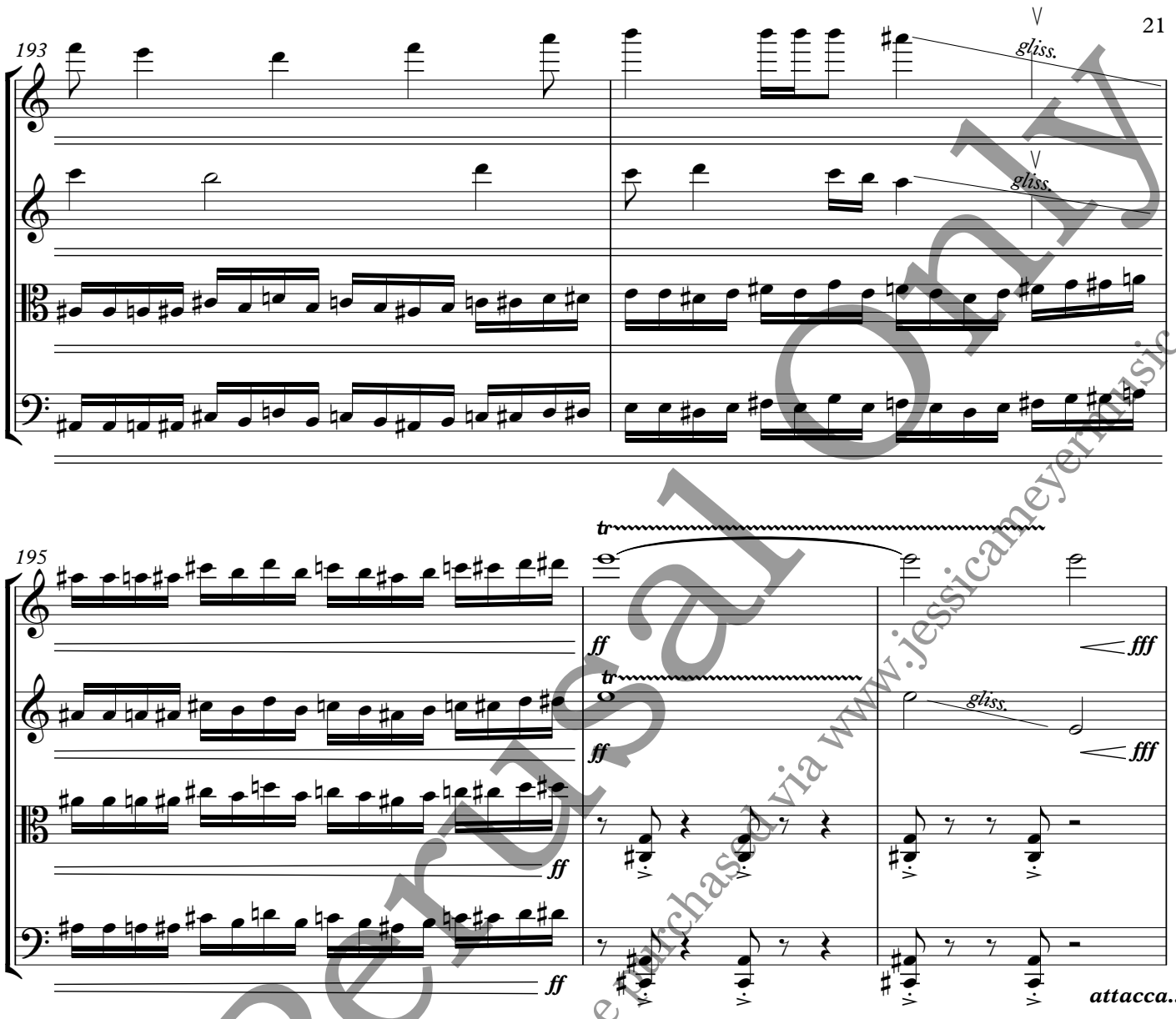
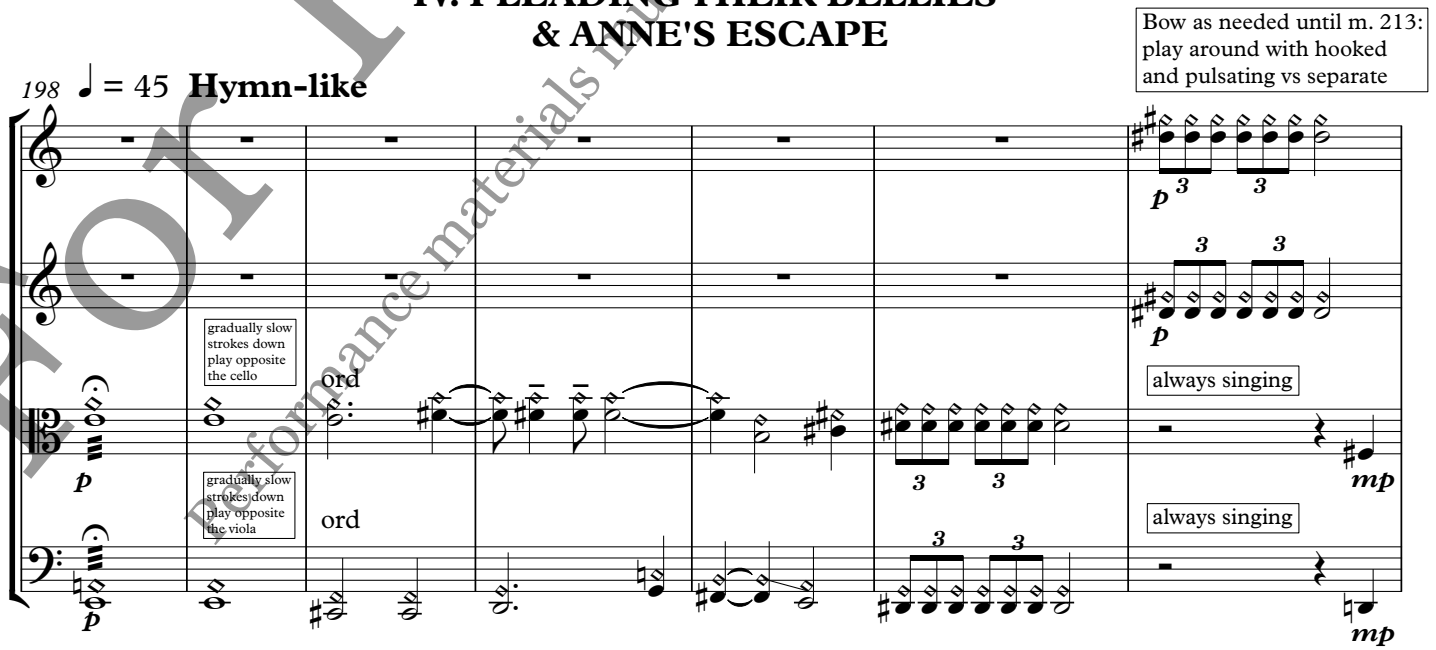


IV. PLEADING THEIR BELLIES & ANNE'S ESCAPE



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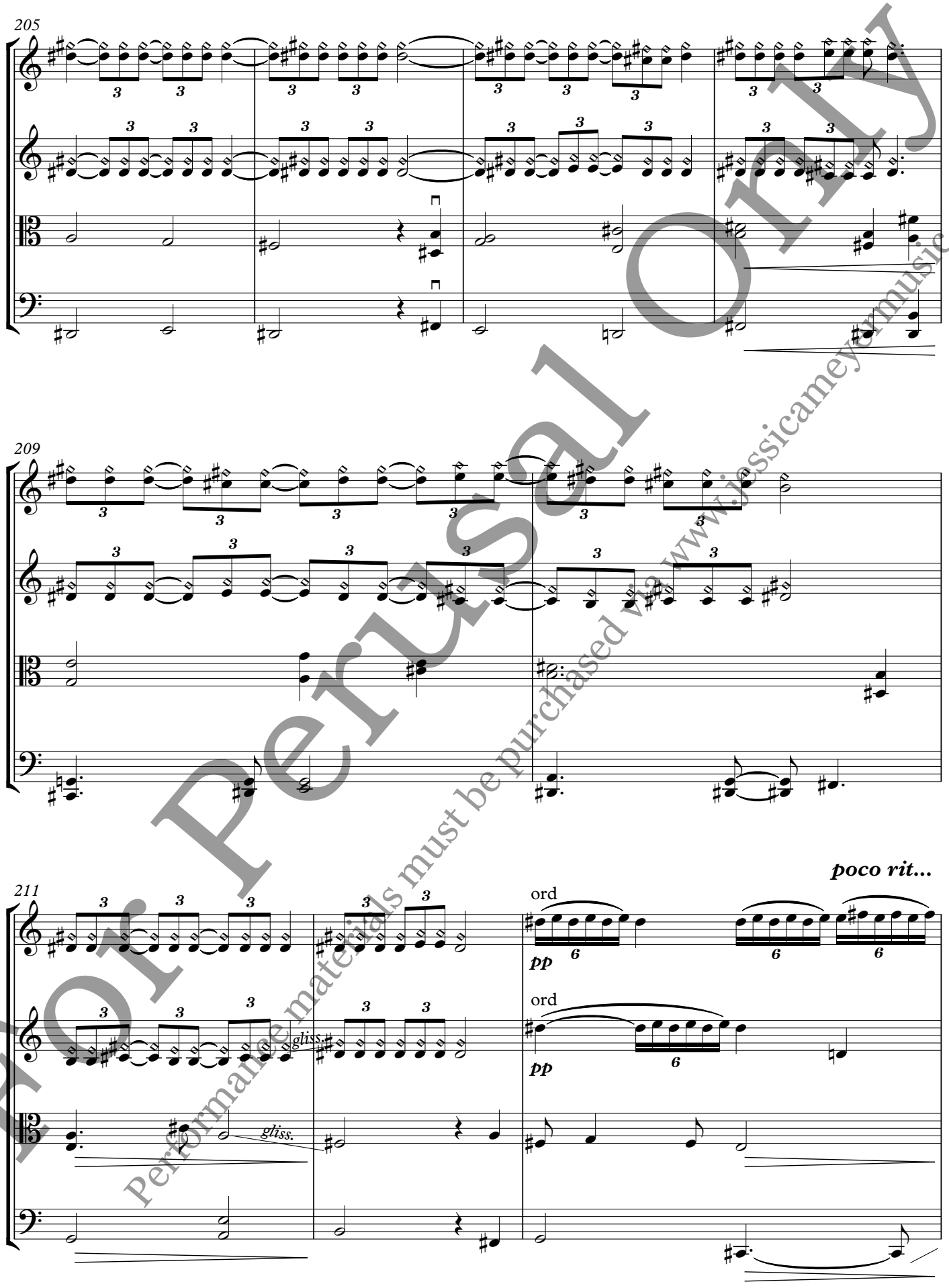

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a tempo...really hold it at 45

214

pp

gliss.

v2: bring this out of the texture just a little

pp

pp

pp

216

218

slow to fast

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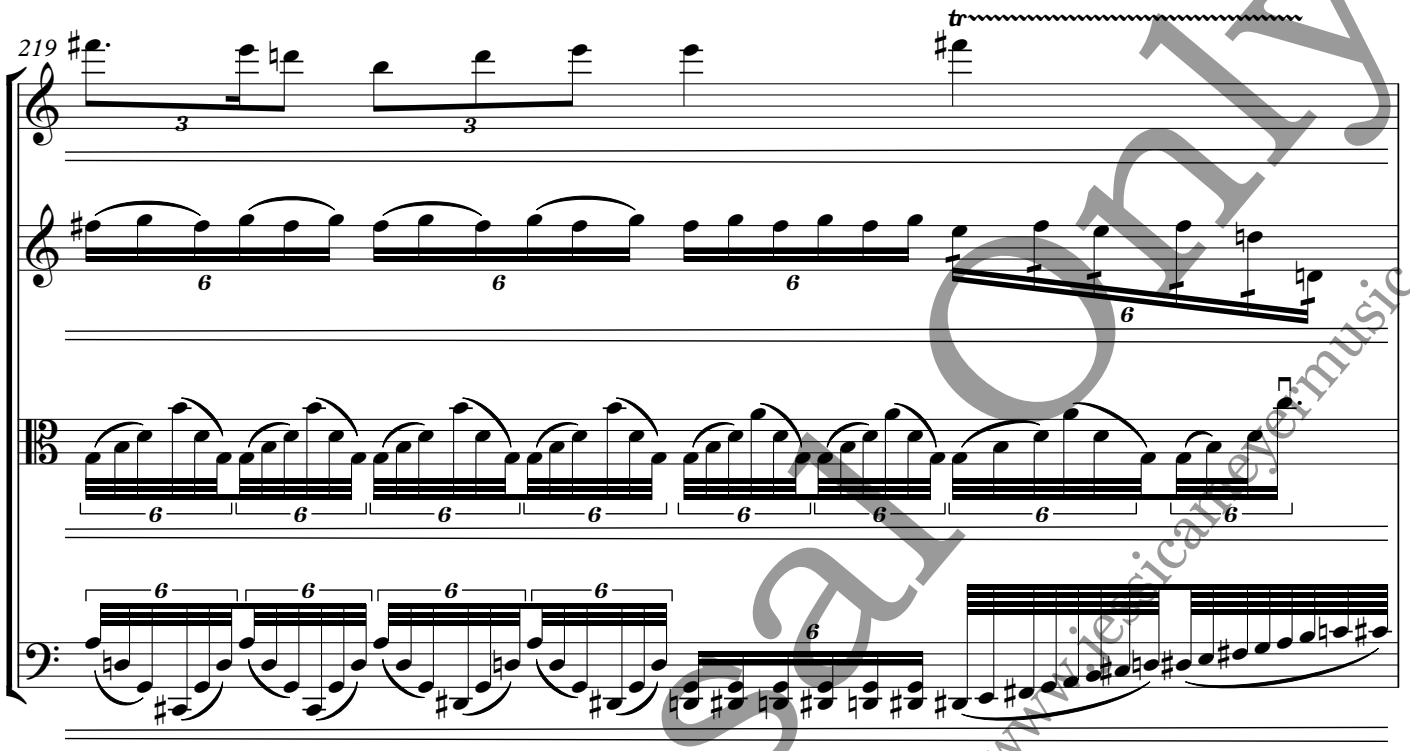
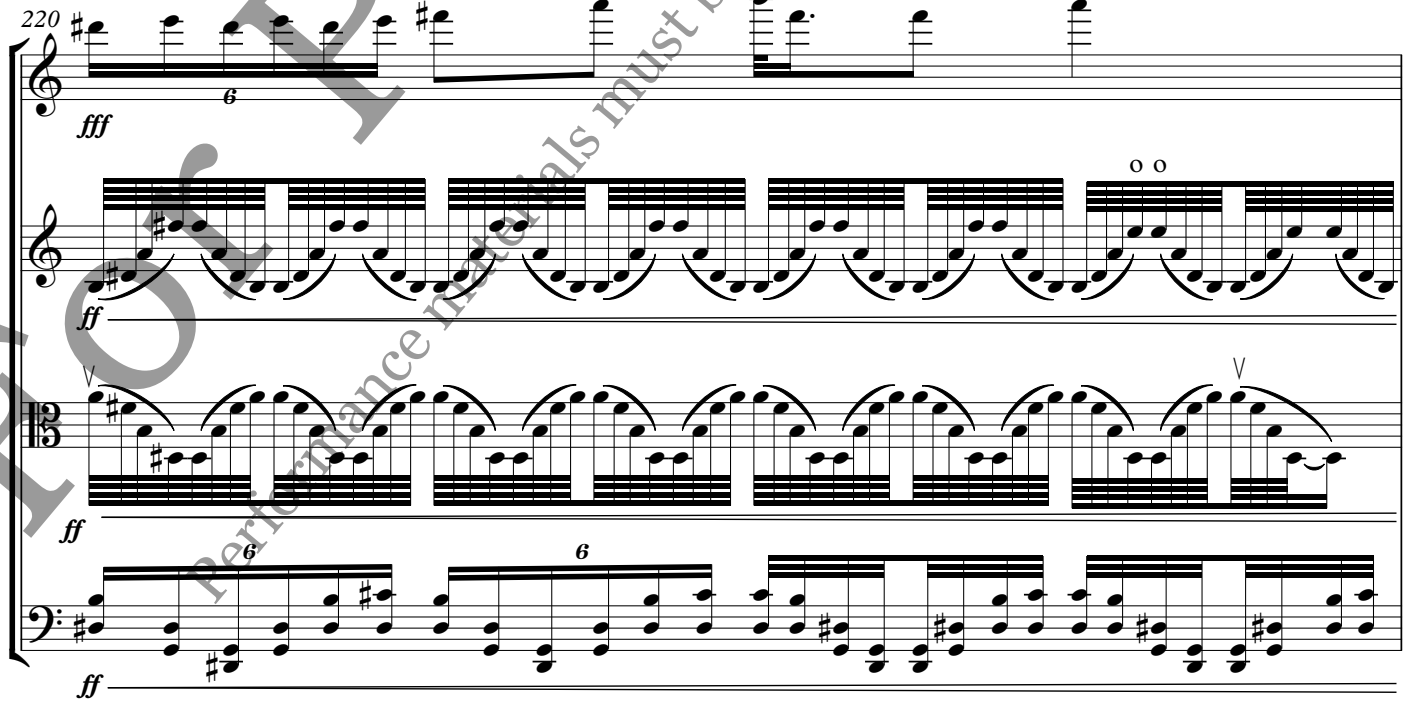


Fearless



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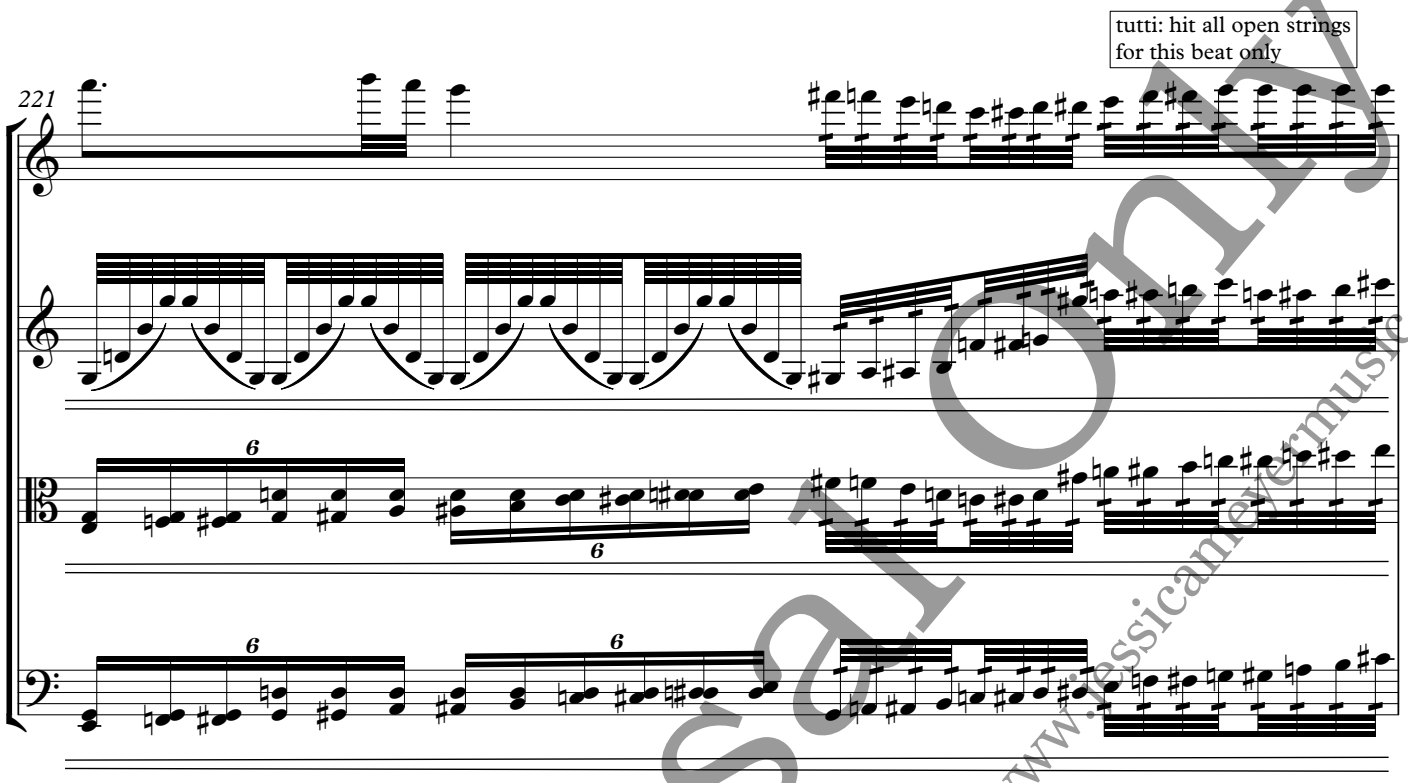

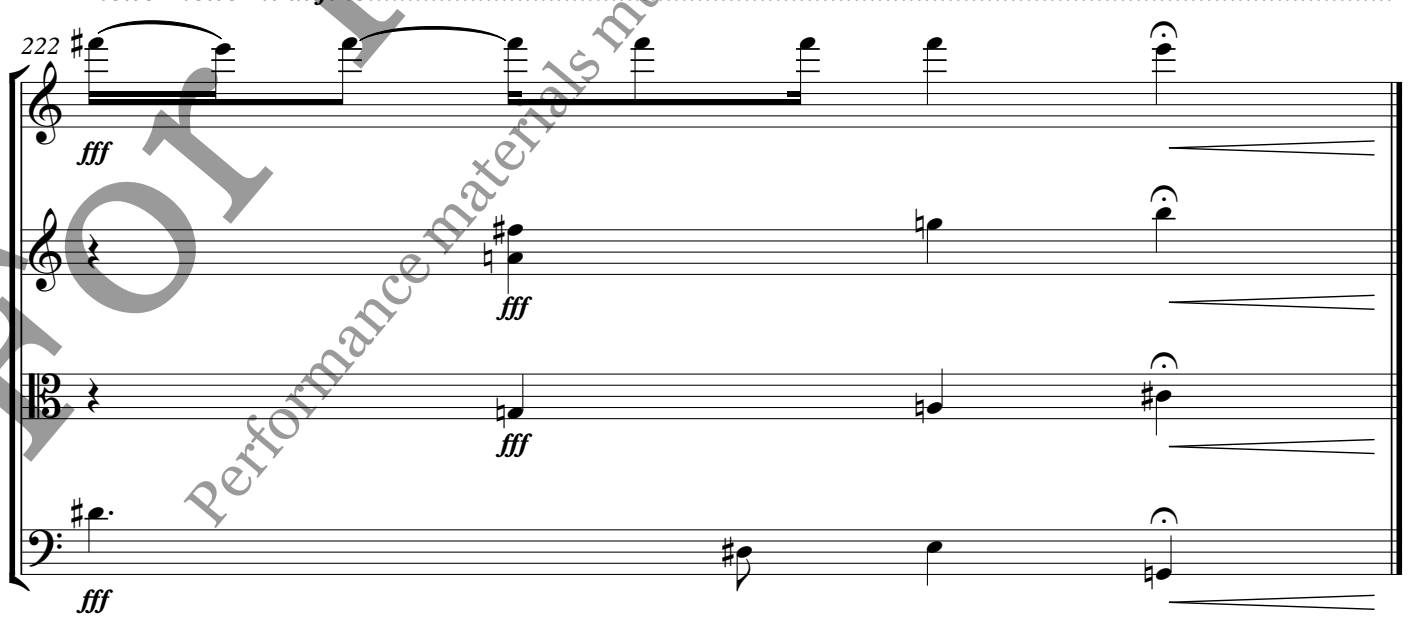

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