Shadow Songs

for tenor, violin, cello, and piano

JESSICA MEYER

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16'

PROGRAM NOTE

I have been delving deeply into my own personal growth over the past few years. During that journey I have been learning a lot about various attachment styles and how our early childhood and adolescent experiences can form the programming that we unconsciously turn to throughout our adult lives, if we let it. I was reading more about 20th Century psychologist Carl Jung and his seminal work on the concept of our "shadow" self: the parts of us we have suppressed since childhood because at some point in time we "learned" from those around us that those parts of our personality/self are not acceptable/lovable. Fast forward to this set of poems about a relationship ending and the moving on afterwards, and this piece became a catalyst for taking a serious look at the patterns one can repeat until one finally reconciles what life experiences have prompted them.

I have known poet Giancarlo Latta as a fellow string player, and I used to read aloud to the audience the first poem of this series whenever I played my piece "Touch" for viola and loop pedal in my solo shows. When Music Mondays was looking specifically for a set of songs that capture the Upper West Side, I immediately thought Giancarlo's work was a great fit. While using both Riverside Drive and Central Park as a multi-seasonal backdrop for these songs, I hope this combination of words and music gives us a deeper connection to not only the great city we live in, but also with the inner reaches of ourselves.

It is a dream to write and collaborate with tenor Paul Appleby on this piece and an honor to write for the Claremont Trio, whom I have known about for quite some time. I remember rehearsing in the Bruskin/Wunsch apartment when our kids were little. I dedicate this work to my son: a lifetime New Yorker who is now away at his first year of college, slowly but surely figuring himself out as an adult, already light-years ahead in his personal awareness compared to his parents.

Commissioned by the Andromeda Foundation,
Robert and Jane Morse, Trustees, for the Claremont Trio and Paul Appleby.
World Premiere presented by Music Mondays in New York City, May 19, 2025

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I.

Riverside Park, Late Summer

If, at that moment when the sun burns the
tops of the trees and gold filters down,
mottling the pavement like day-old snow—
If, sitting then beside you, watching a
glittering pearl of sweat run alongside
the delicate vein in your temple—
If, perhaps for the last time, you reach out
and place your hand, palm to the sky, on my
bare knee, turning your head to look
not at me but into the moment just beyond—
Is this, then, a space for all the words
that have gone unsaid?
—that belong to each
other? Take them, but if you cannot hold on,
raise your cupped palm, give them to the breeze.

II.

Interlude (Snow Angel)

First a paralysis
covers pulled tight, gasping
for breath on the stumbling
edge of dreams…

Come lie down on my shadow
Come fold into my outline

Then a loosening
the dark thins, waking
to a world ghost-lit
through sheer curtains…

Come fall into the dented space
My body has carved out

Sleep and dust
still in the eyes, cold
rising off the windowpanes and
the snow dense, silver, luminous…

I am
not there

My absence
makes this space

for you

And the snow dense, silver, luminous…

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III.

Spring

Walking along the reservoir, I think how depth
begins a mystery. A billion gallons of water
beneath but the surface calm, vinyl-black
and unbreakable like the record
has finally come to an end.

Memory is a wide boulevard in the
opposite direction – the room becoming
thicker with smoke as time wears on. As a child
I sailed a toy boat on this same water. Other kids
laughed and played around me but I couldn't let go,
the water would swallow my boat whole.
The surface didn't fool me: I knew already then
that something beautiful could crack.

Now, I want to be consumed. Deep inside
the park, far away from the city streets, I like it best
when there are only specks of sky. The trees' greening
is its own kind of dizzying intimacy.

And I know that if there is a beauty in being
consumed there is, too, in the emergence after.
How when the light dances, finally, on the water, and
everything takes on a sparkling new reality,
I think of the city, history, you.

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- Glissandi are always for the entire length of note value
- Trills are to the next natural note unless otherwise notated
- Exaggerate accents and swells
- Consider less vibrato and more release in the bow in a Baroque style to make room for singer text

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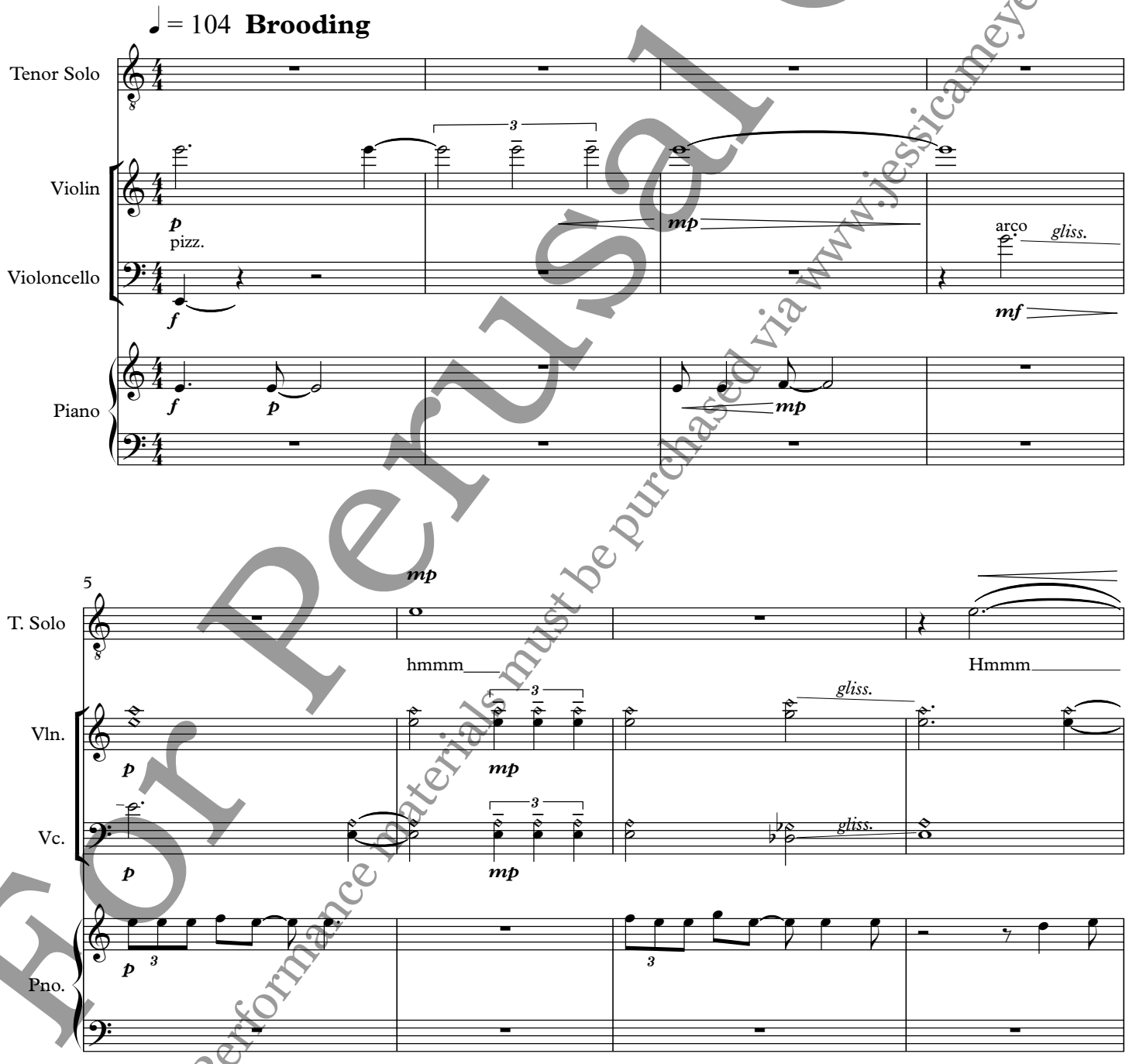
GIANCARLO LATTA

JESSICA MEYER

I. Words unsaid

(Riverside Park, Late Summer)



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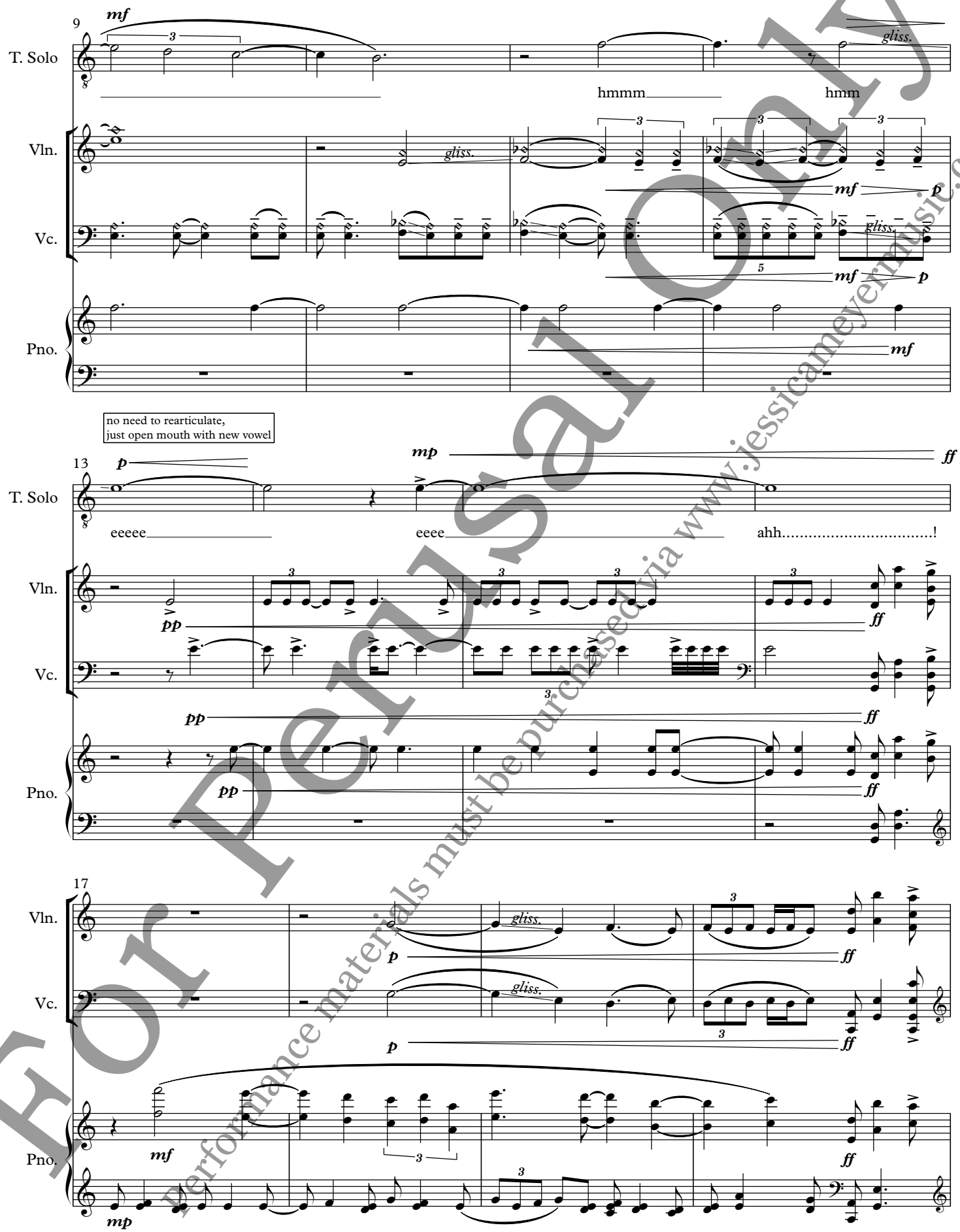

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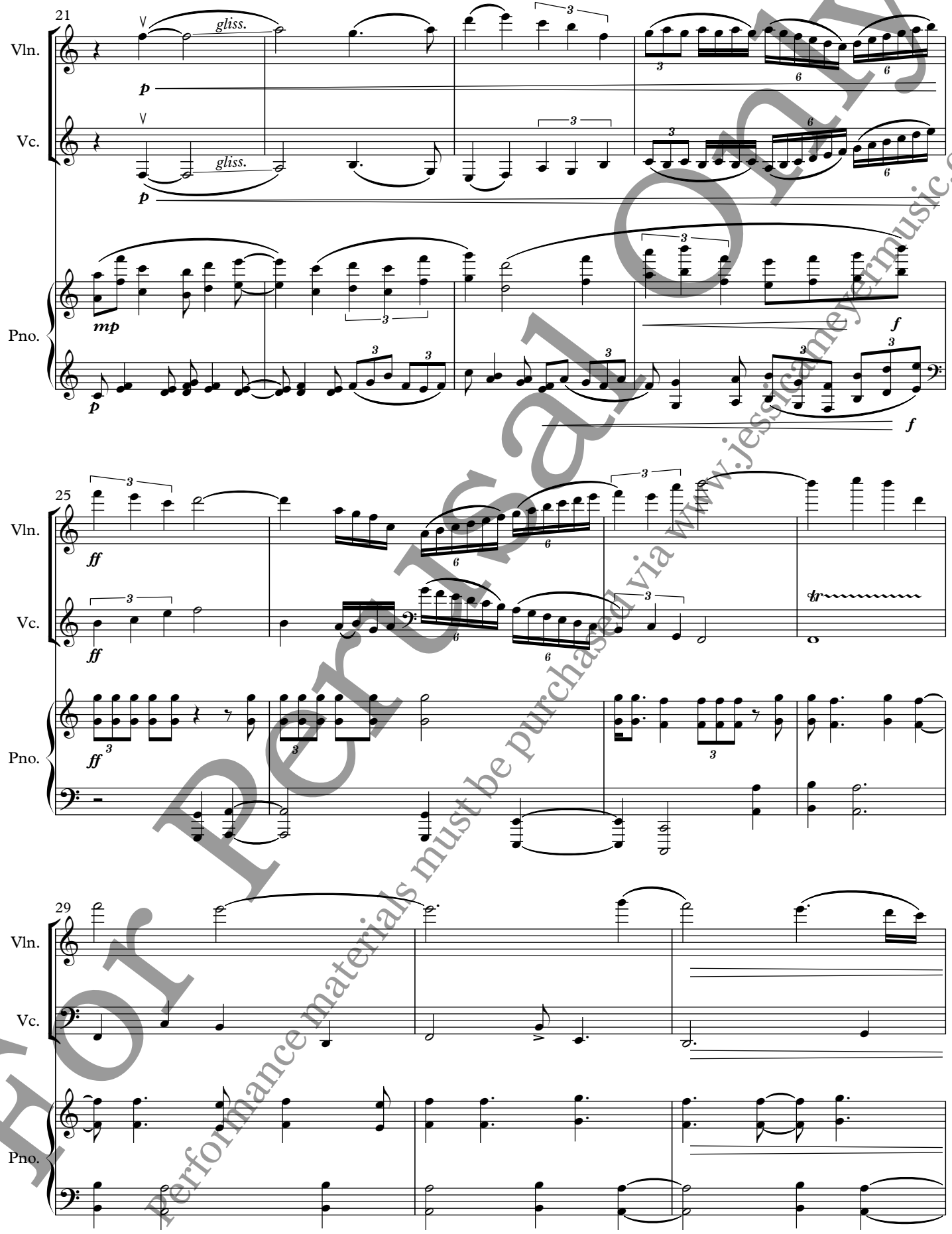

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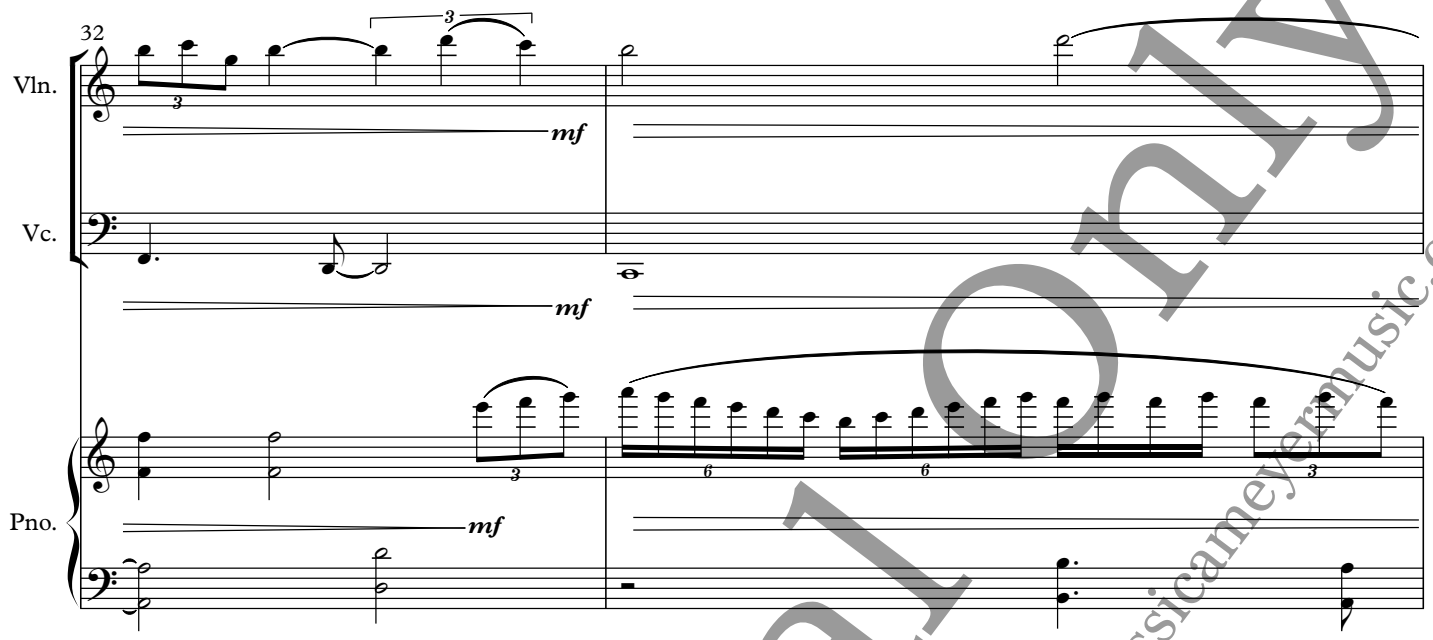

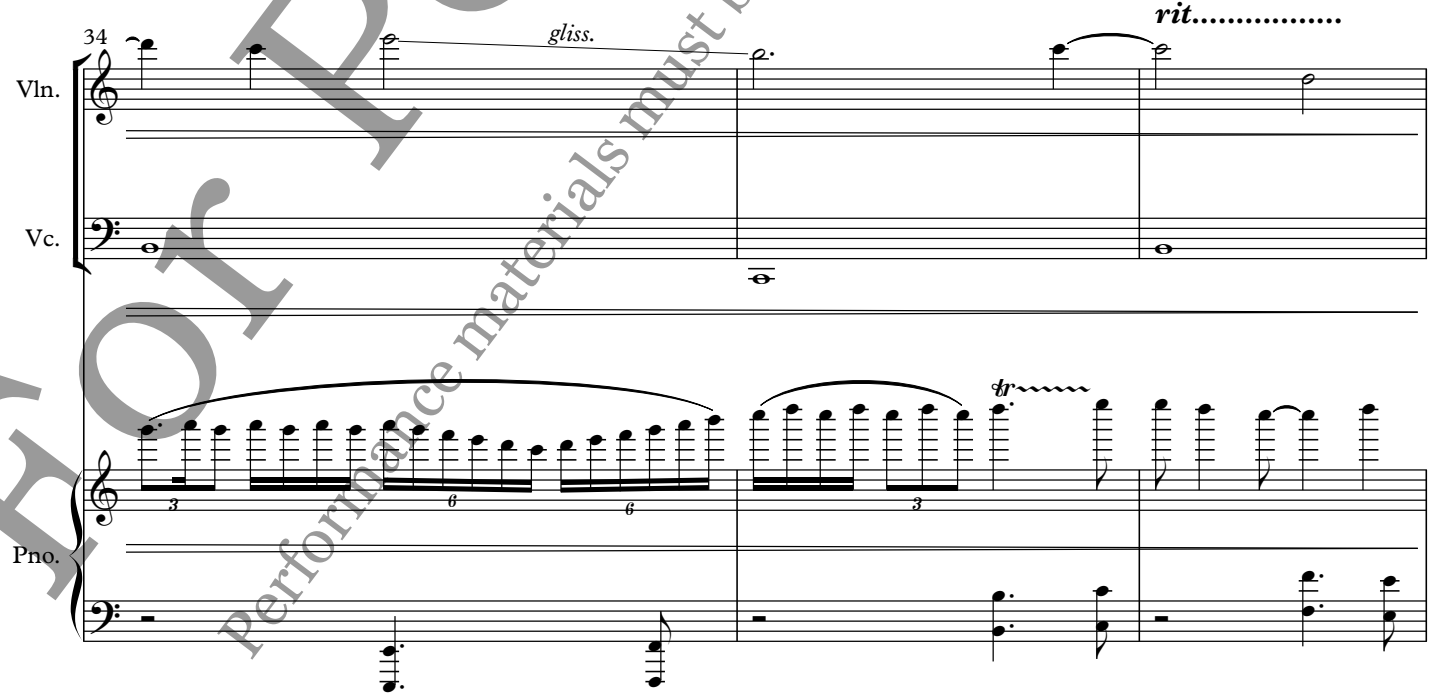

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♩ = 96 **Lovelorn**

37

T. Solo: *mp* If at that mo-ment when the sun burns the tops of the trees and

Vln.: *pp* *gliss.* *p*

Vc.: *pp* pizz. *mp*

Pno.: *pp*

43

T. Solo: gold fil - ters down mot-tl-ing the pave - ment like

gliss.

Vln.: 3 3 3 4

Vc.:

47

T. Solo: day - old snow **If,** sit-ting-then be -

Vln.:

Vc.:

Pno.: *p*

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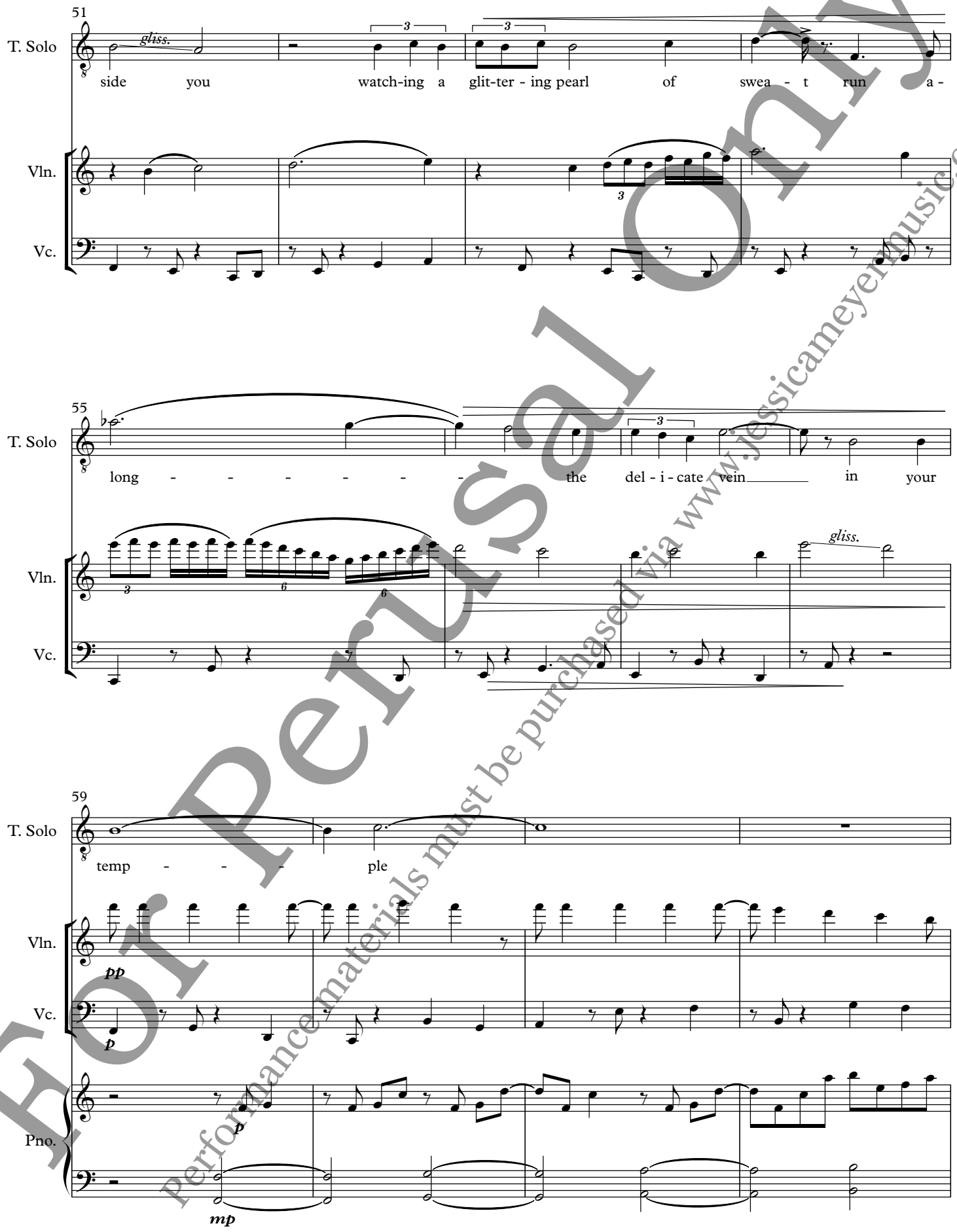

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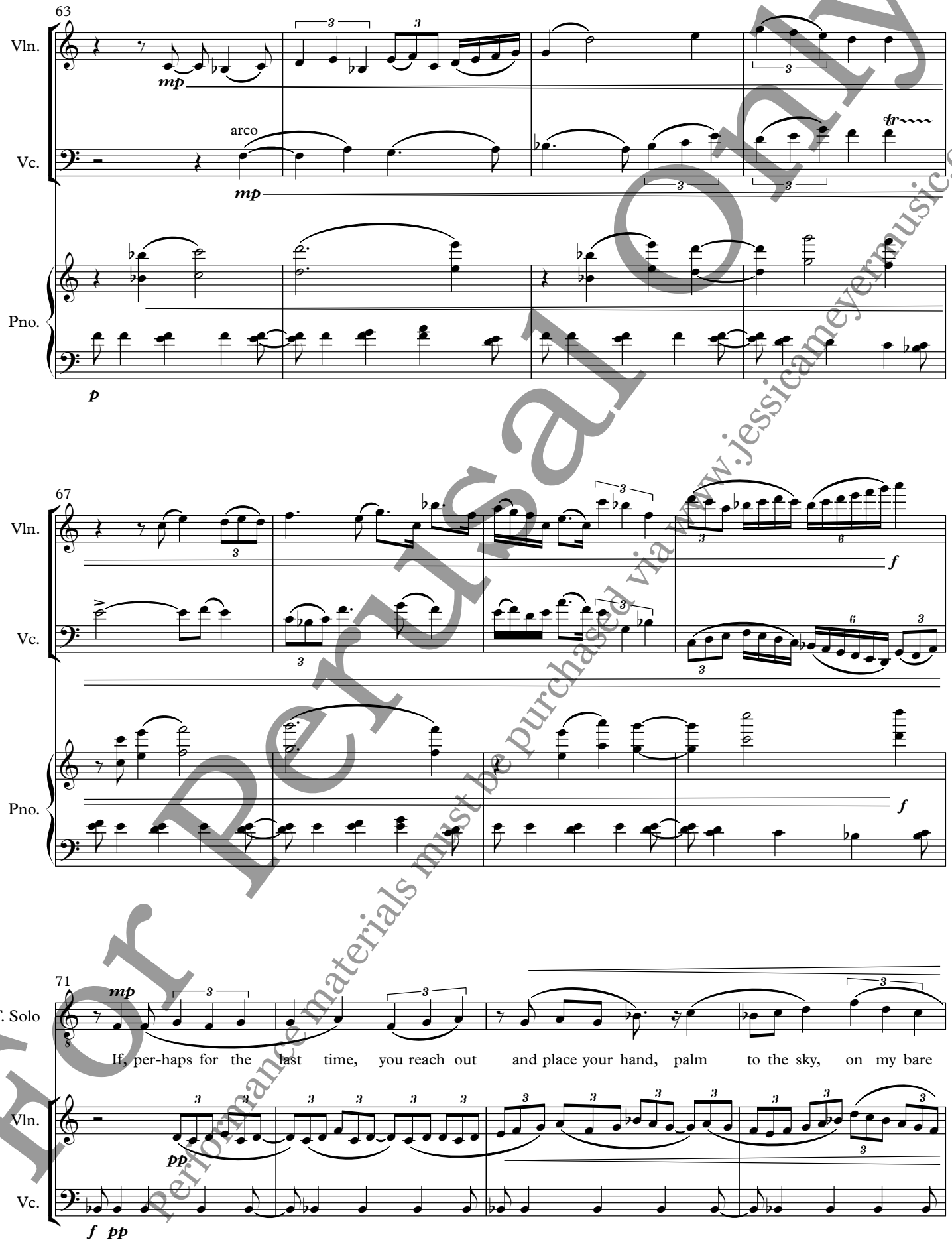

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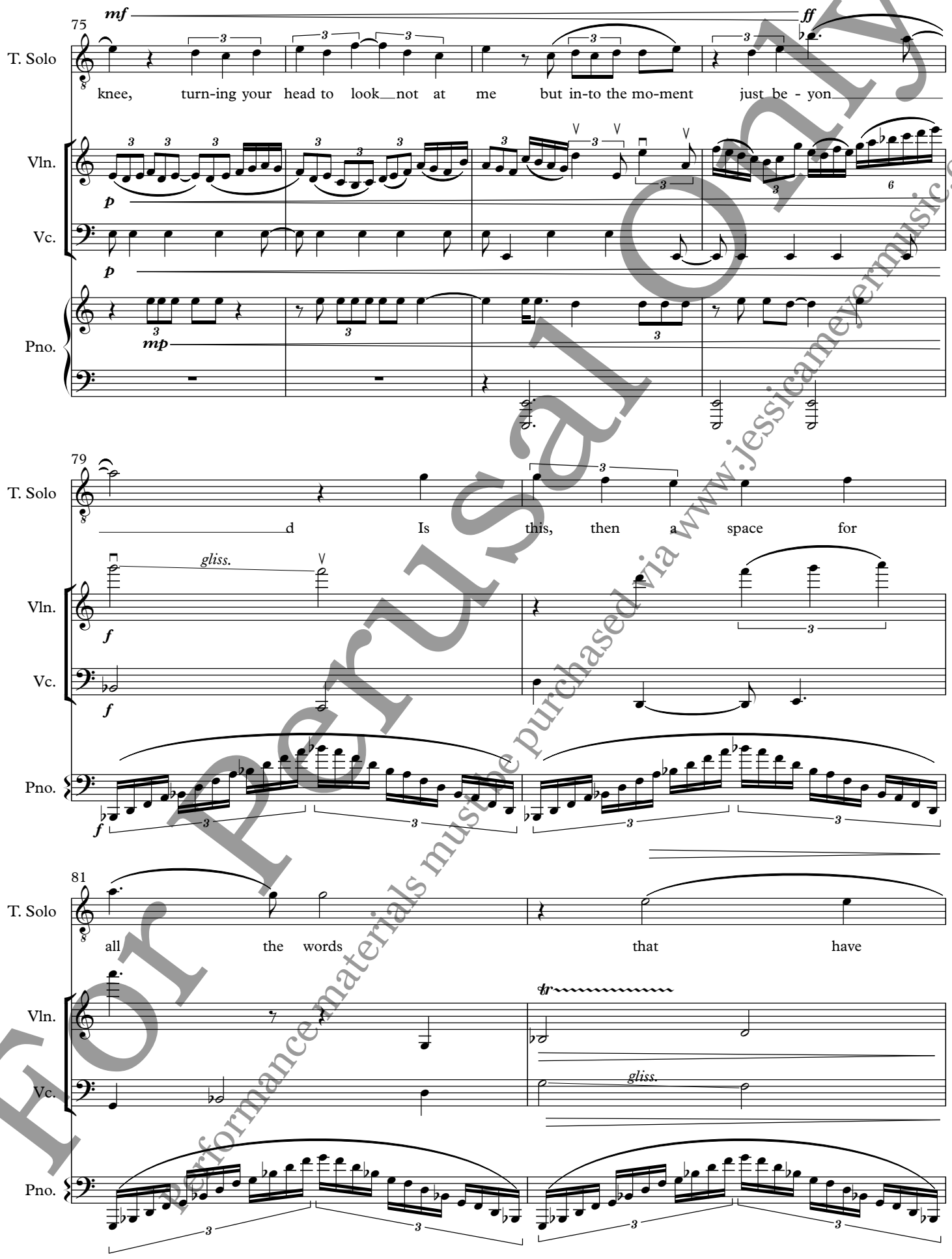

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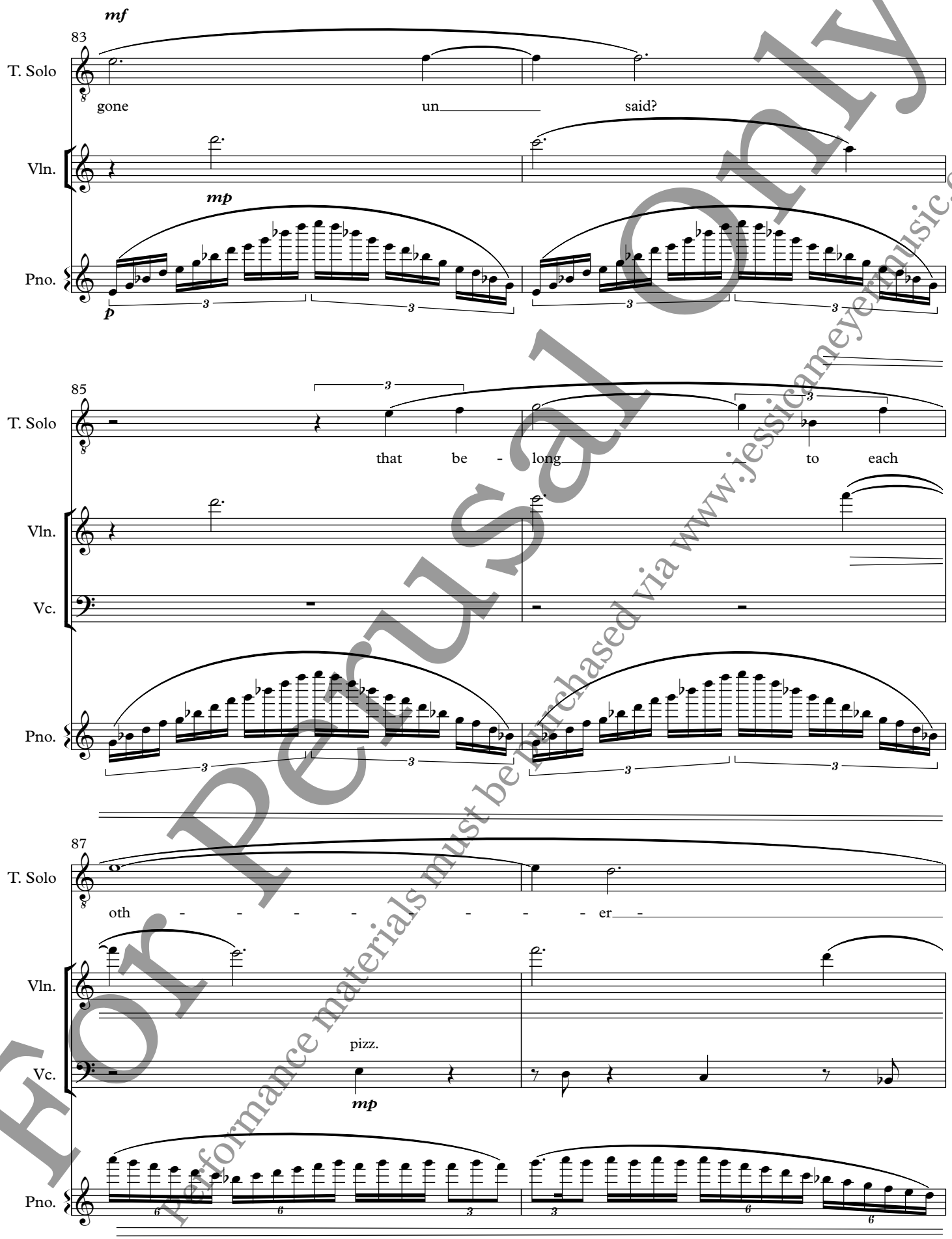

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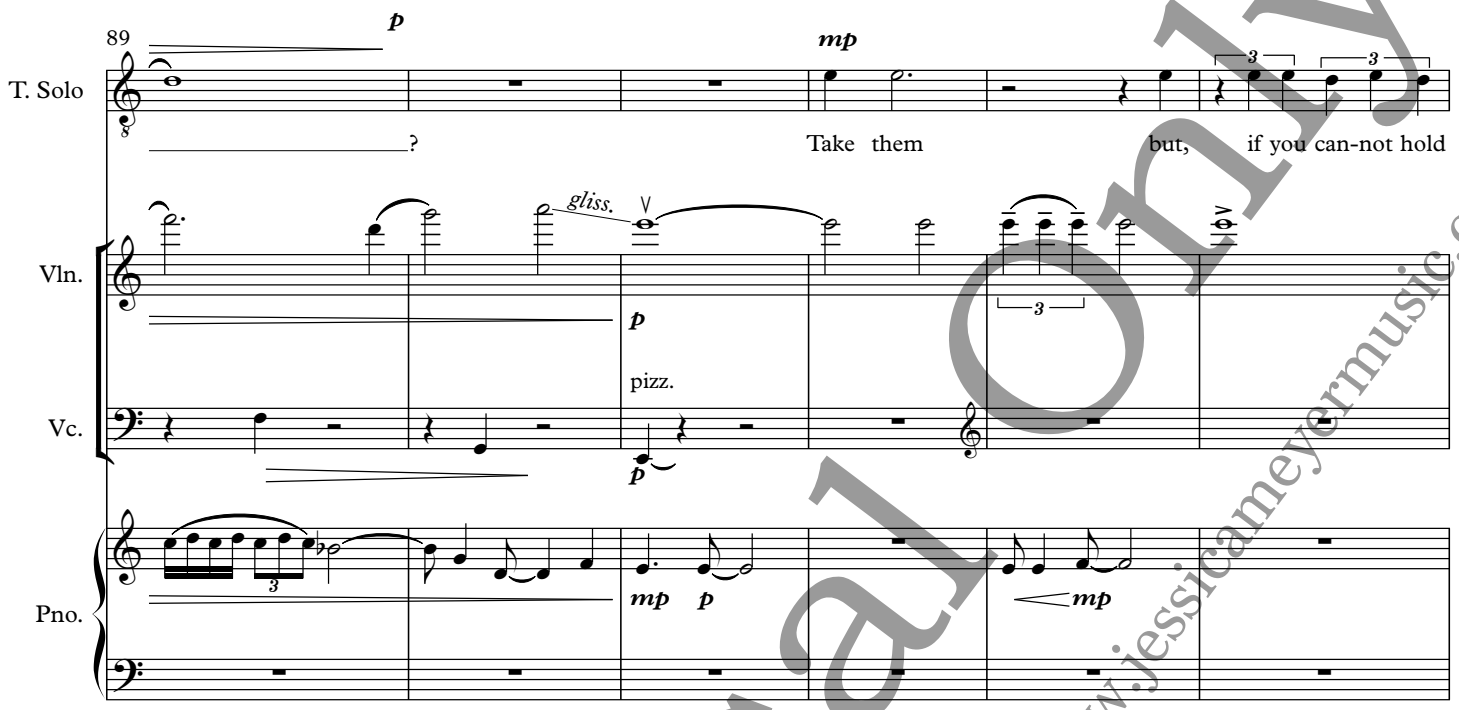
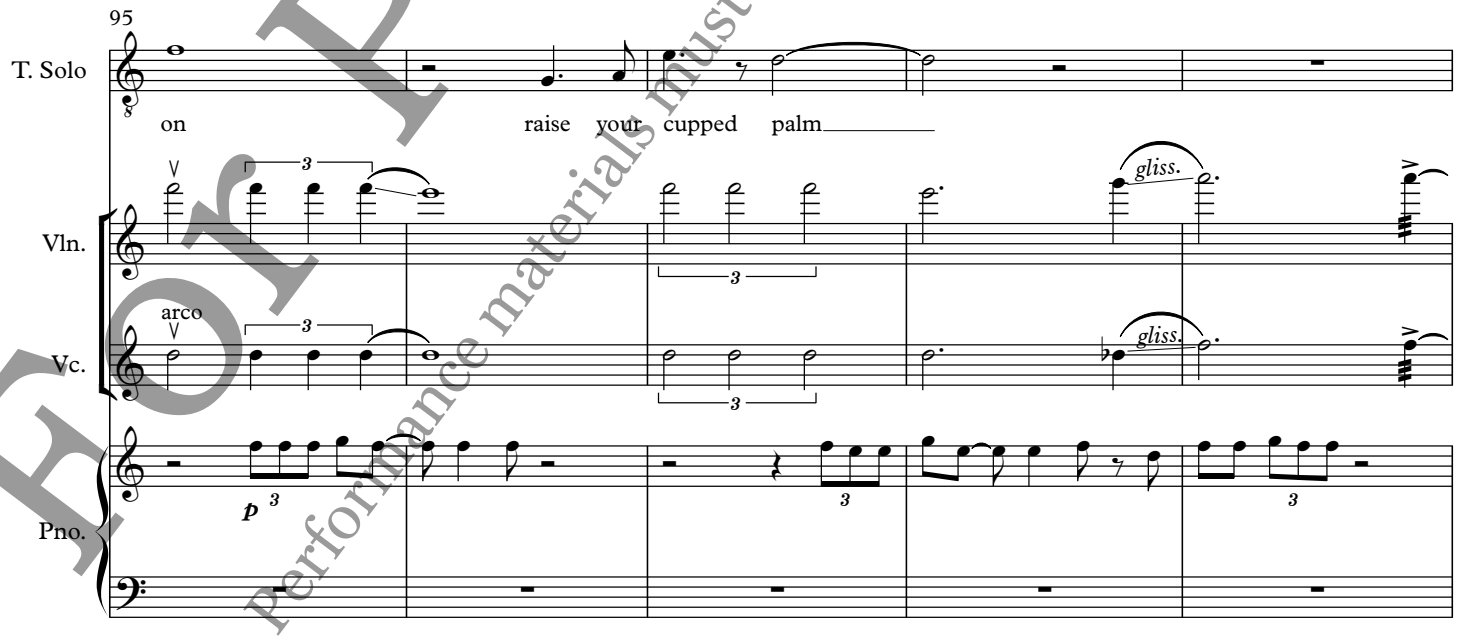
rit..... ♩ = 88 **Resigned**





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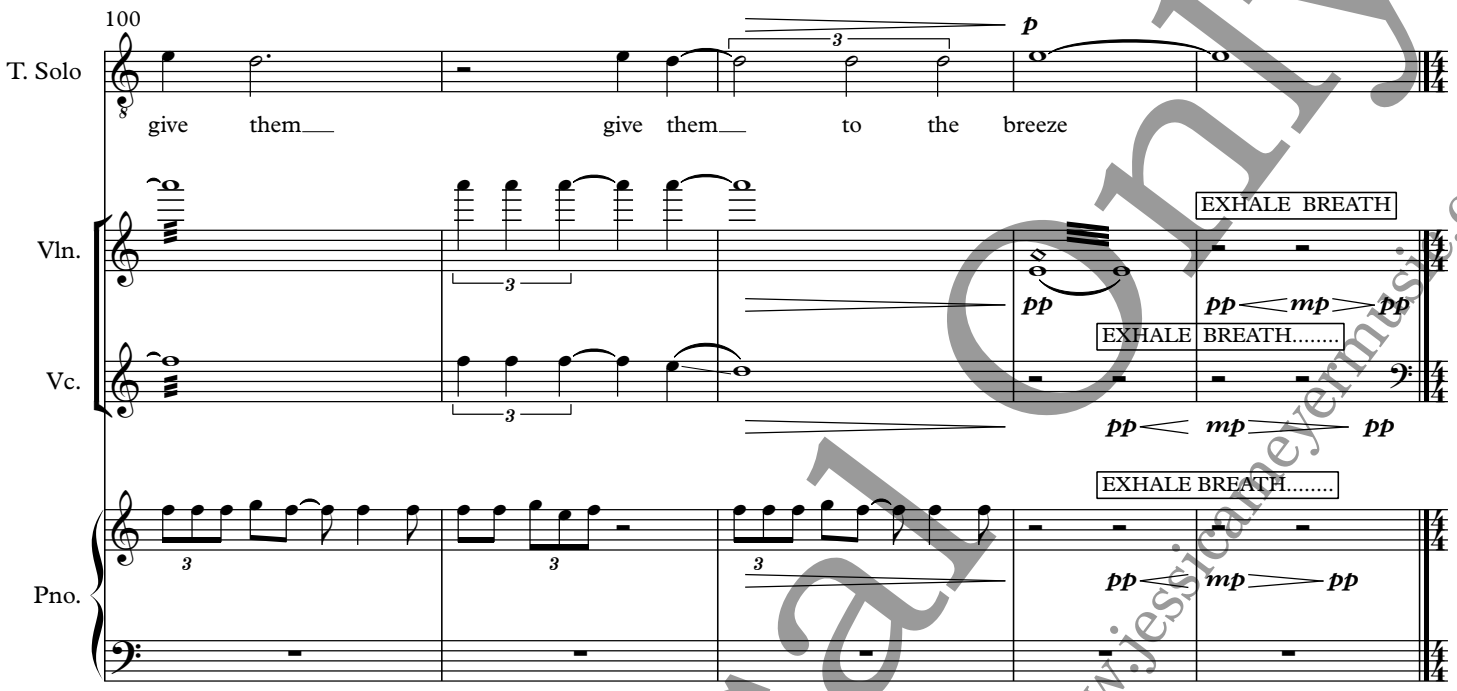

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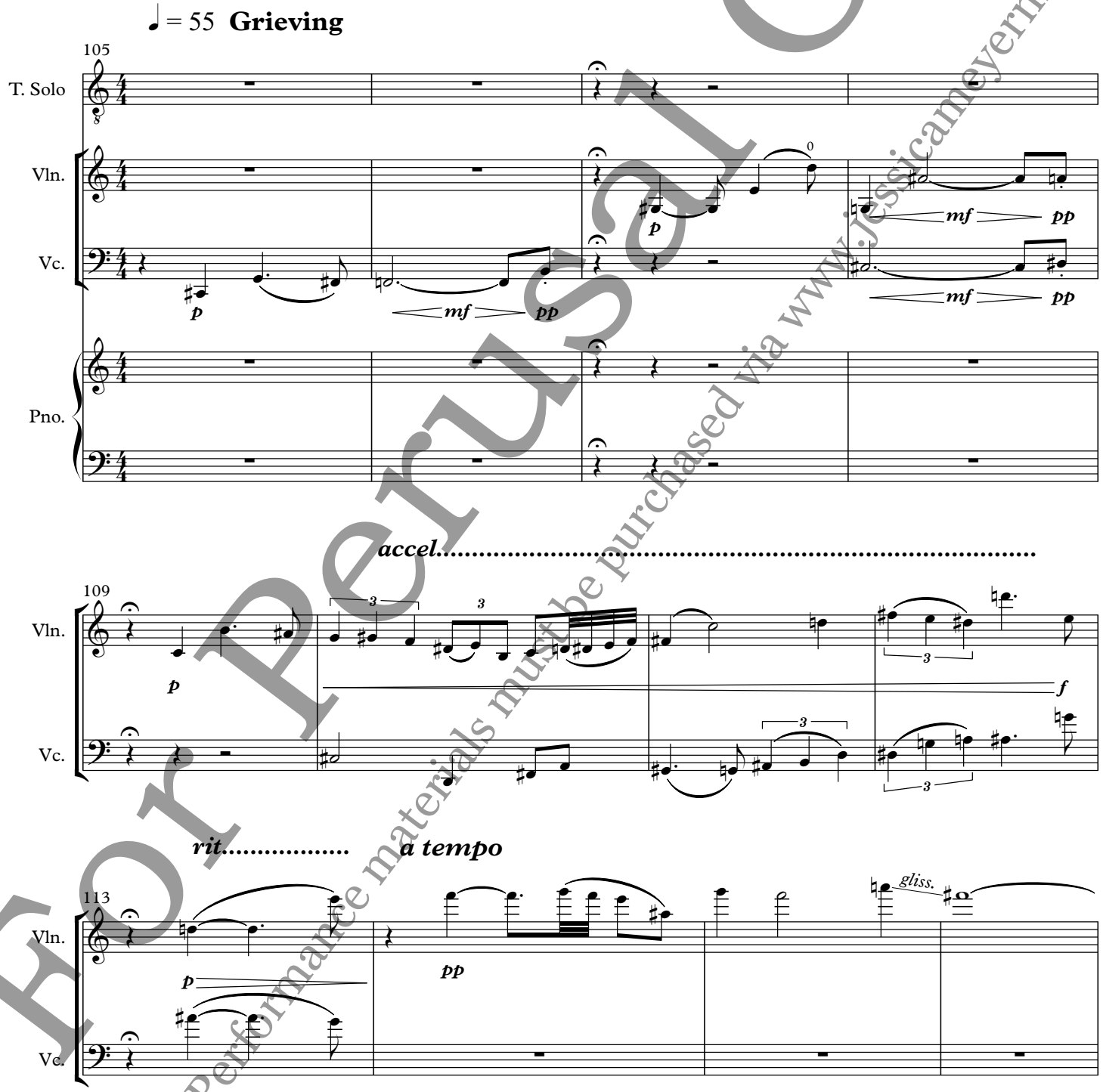
II. On the stumbling edge of dreams...

(Interlude - Snow Angel)



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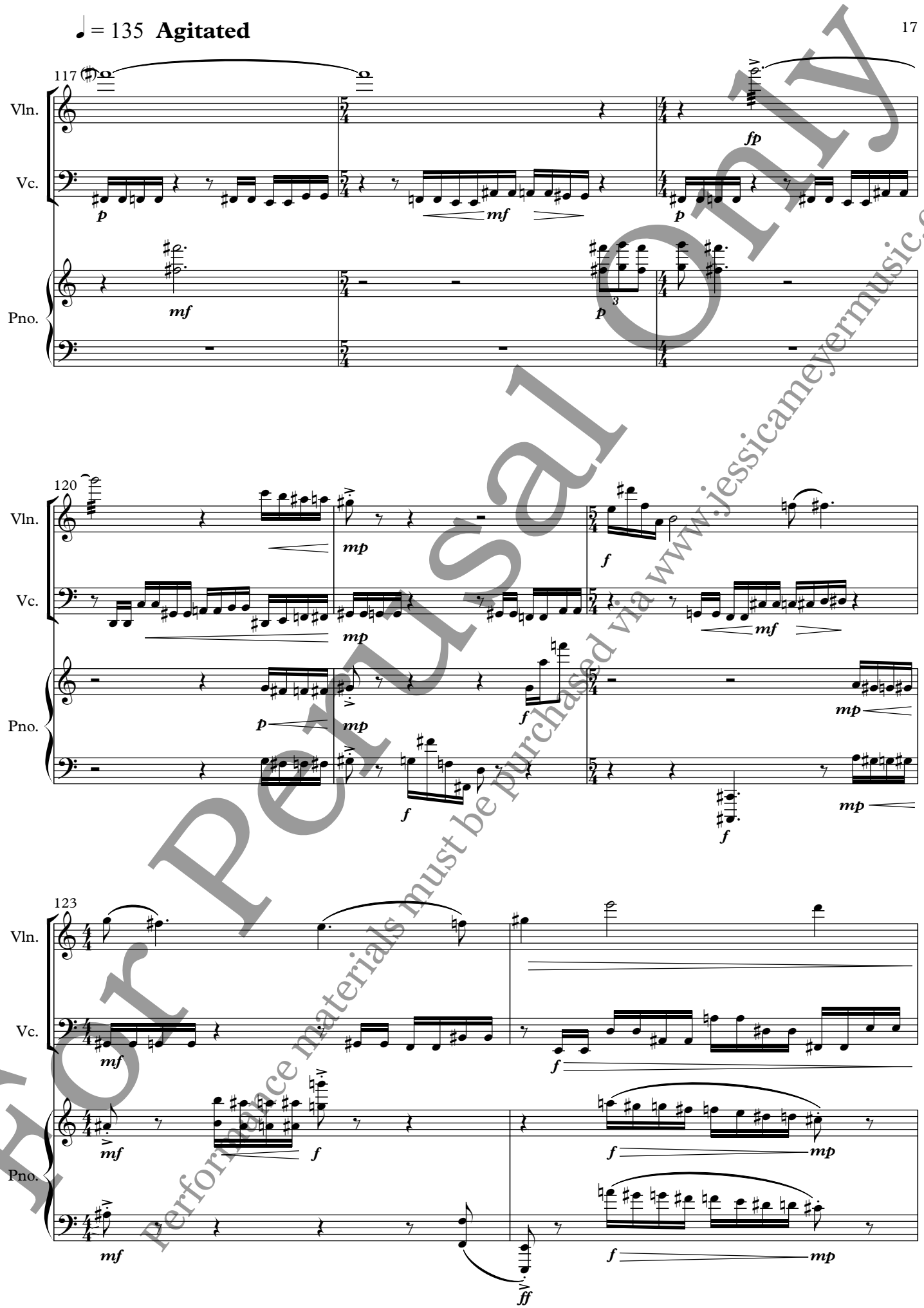

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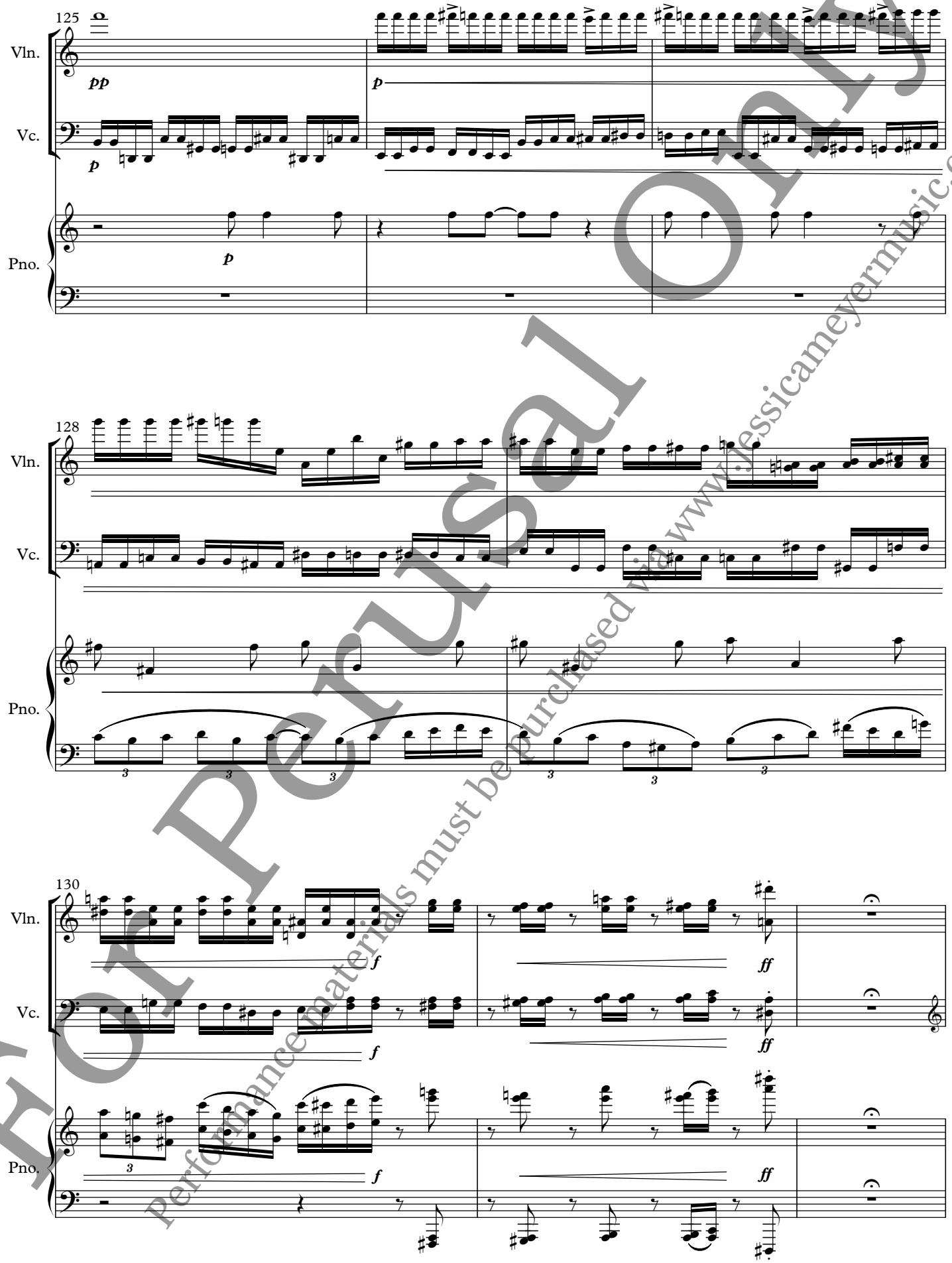

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♩ = 120 **Breathless**

133

T. Solo — *mf* — First a par-al-y-sis cov-ers pulled tight gas-ping for breath

Vln. — *pp*

Vc.

137

T. Solo — on the stum-bling edge of dreams...

Vln.

Vc.

♩ = 135

139

T. Solo

Vln. — *p*

Vc. — *p*

Pno. — *mp* — *p*

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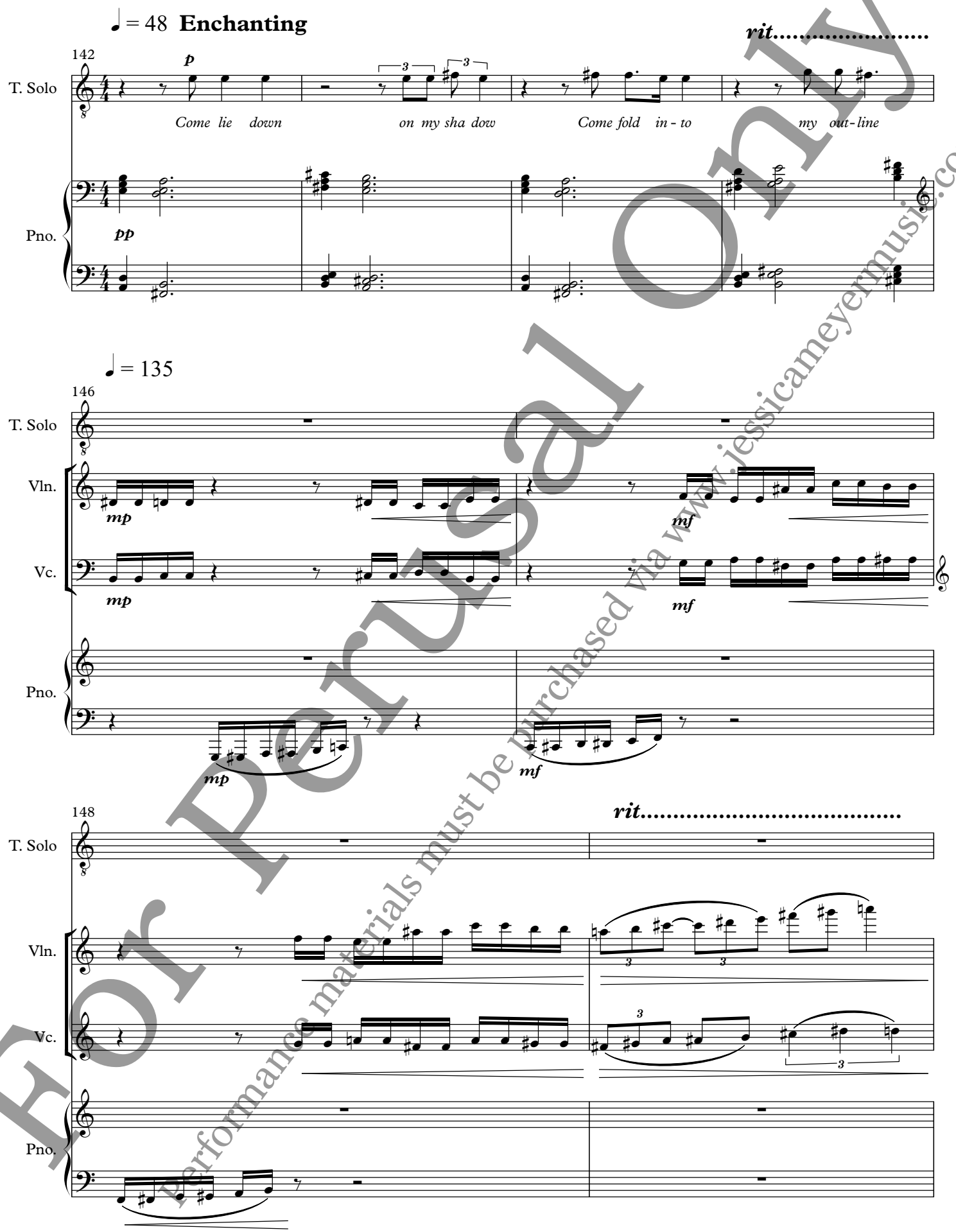

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♩ = 90 **Hopeful**

150

T. Solo — *mp*

Then a loo - sen-ing the dark thins, wa-king to a

Vln. — *p*

Vc. — *p*

♩ = 110 **Glistening**

154

T. Solo

world ghost - - lit through

Vln. — *sim.* — 1st pos.

Vc.

I II III
sounds
B4

rit.....

157

T. Solo

sheer cur - - - - tains

Vln. — *sim.* — II — *pp*

Vc. — *pp*

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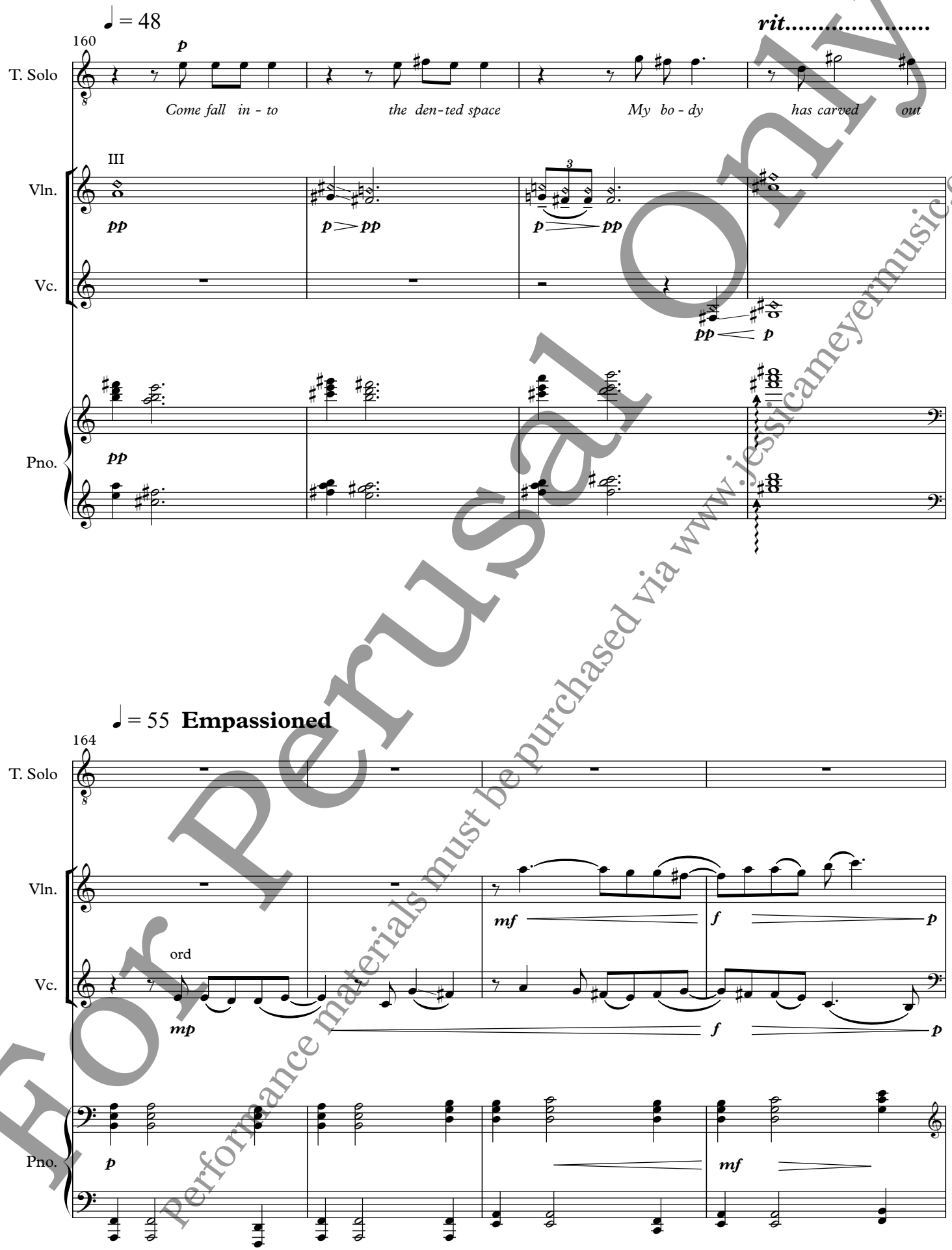

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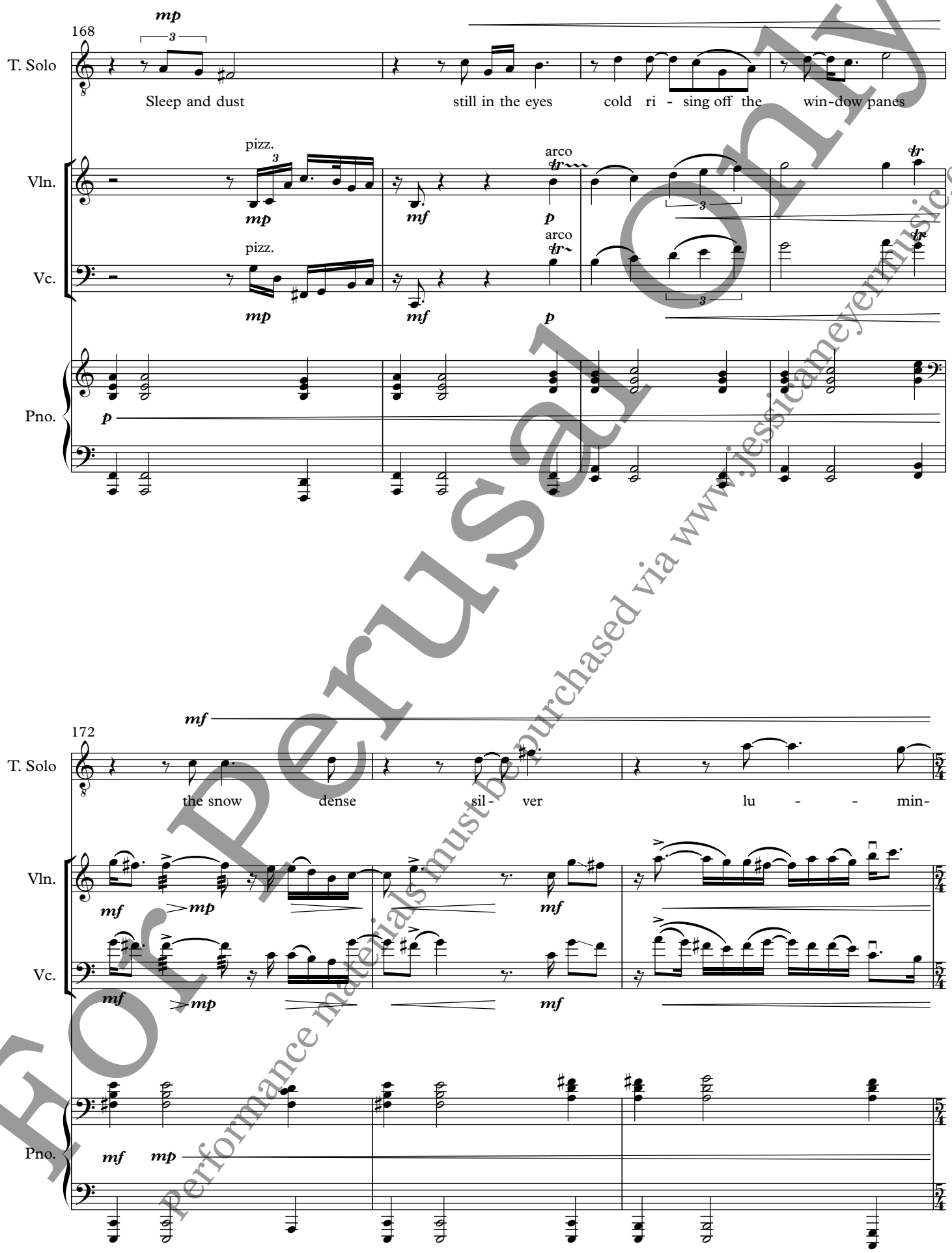

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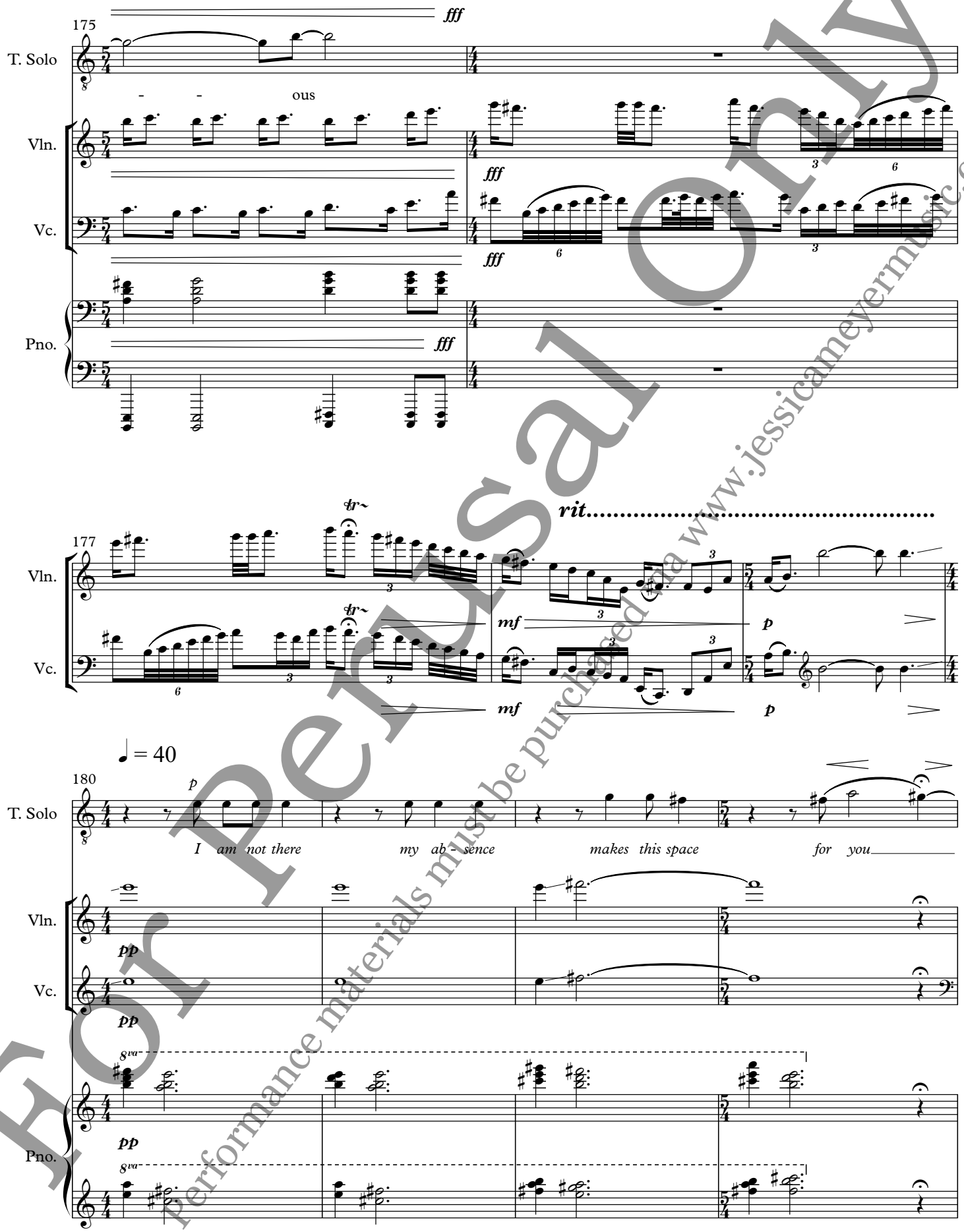

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♩ = 135 **Luminous**

184

T. Solo

Vln.

Vc.

pp

p

And the

187

T. Solo

snow dense sil - ver

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

8va

p

190

T. Solo

lu min

Vln.

Vc.

Pno.

(8)

pp

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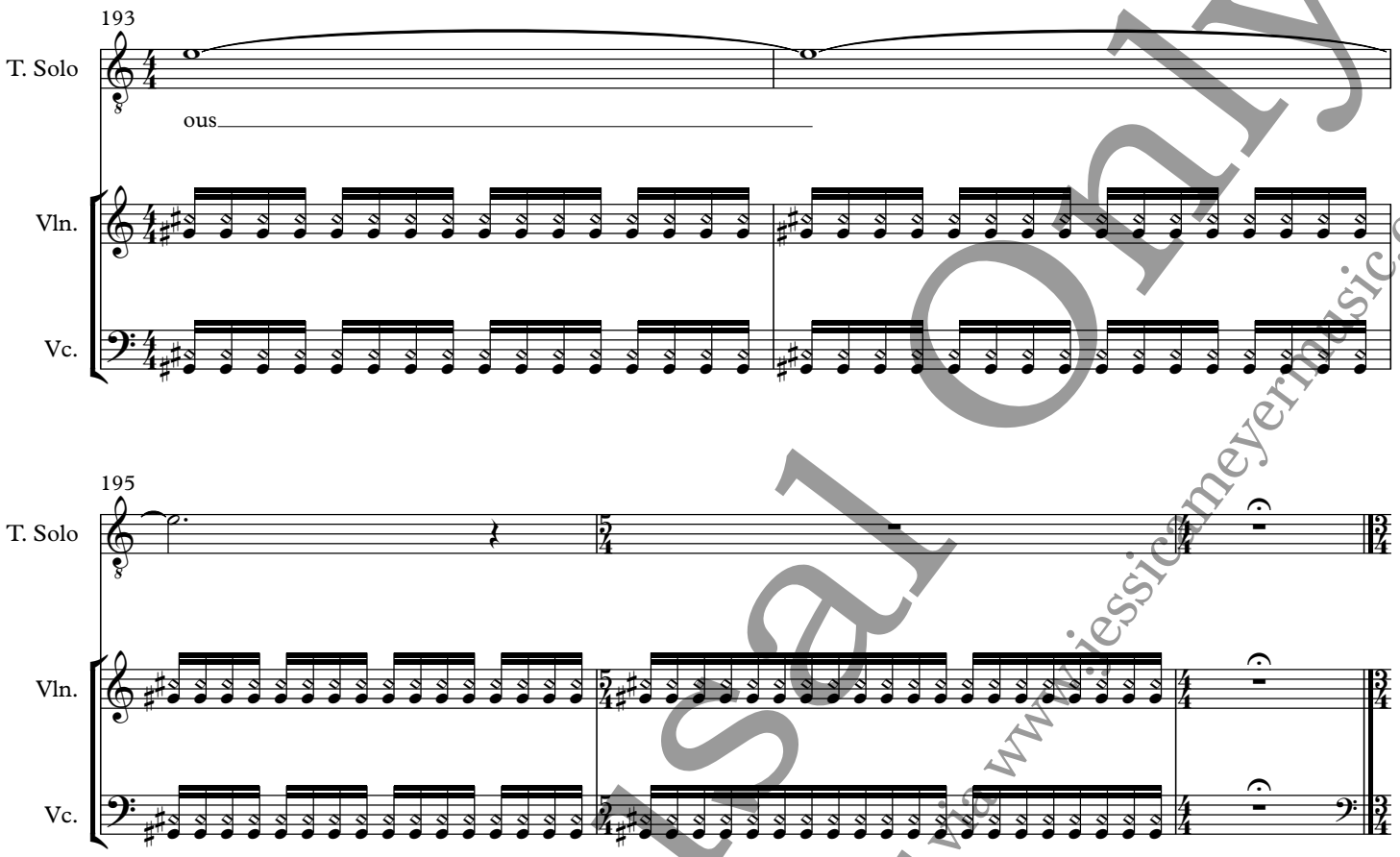

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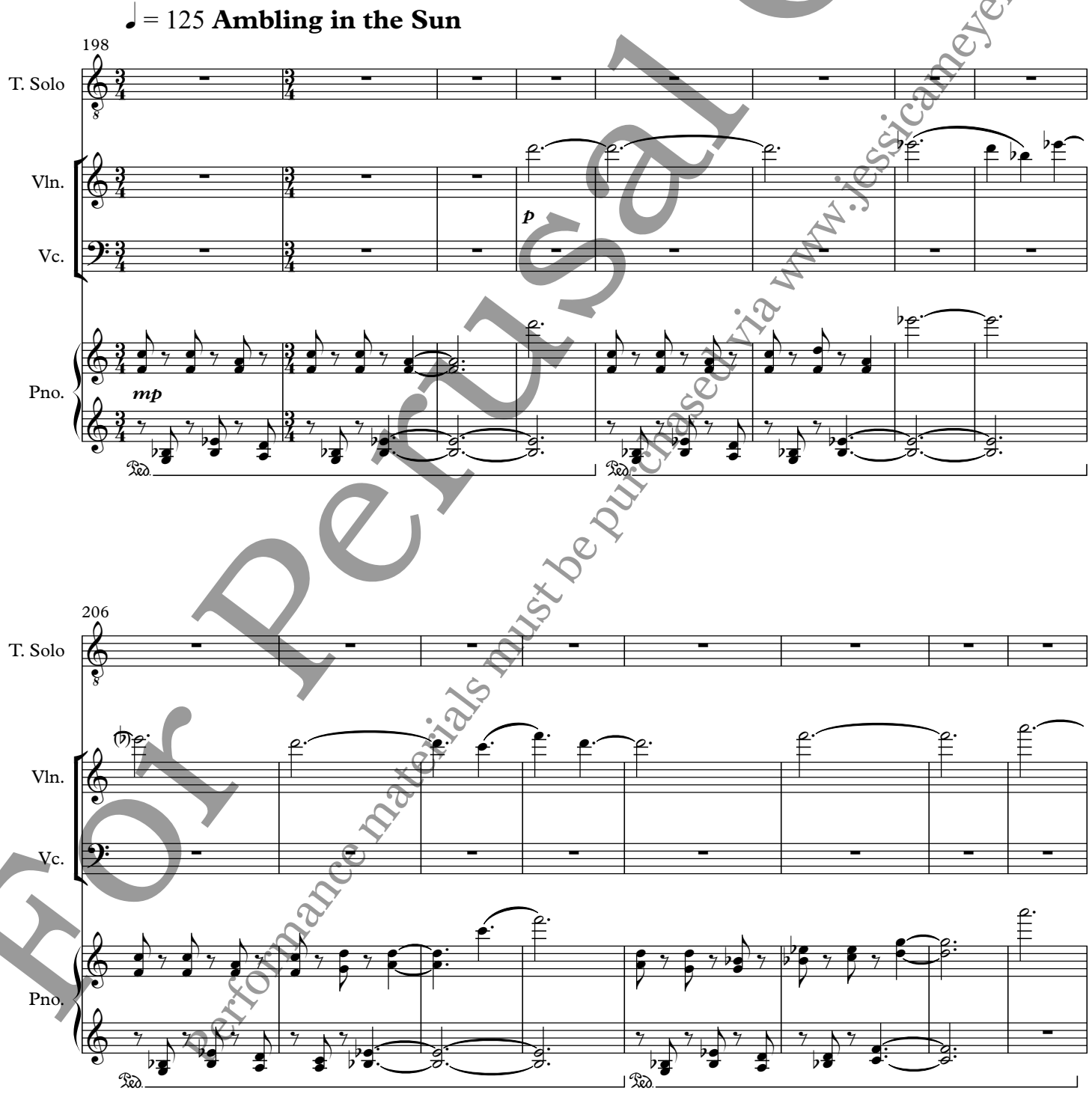
III. Depth begins a mystery
(Spring)



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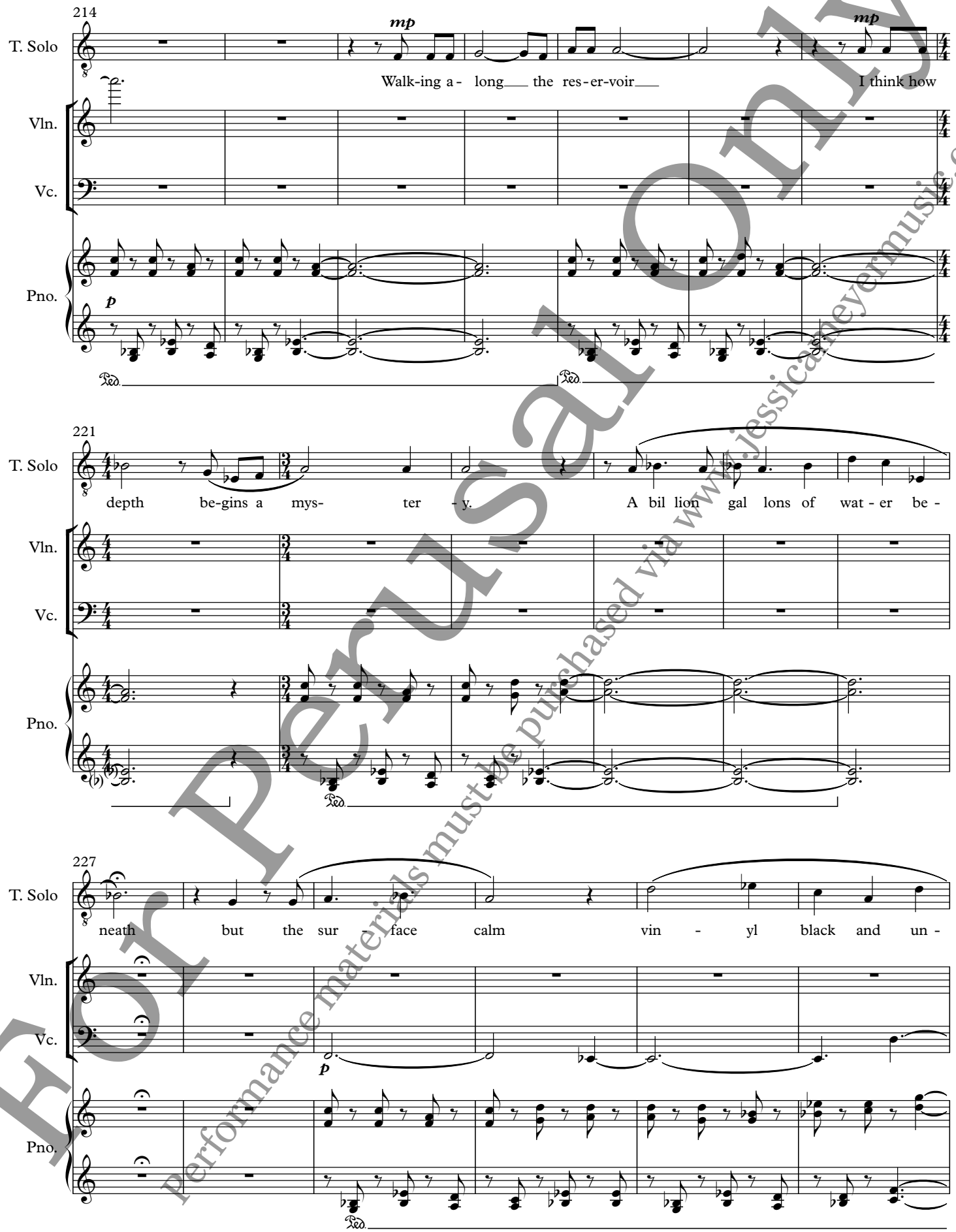

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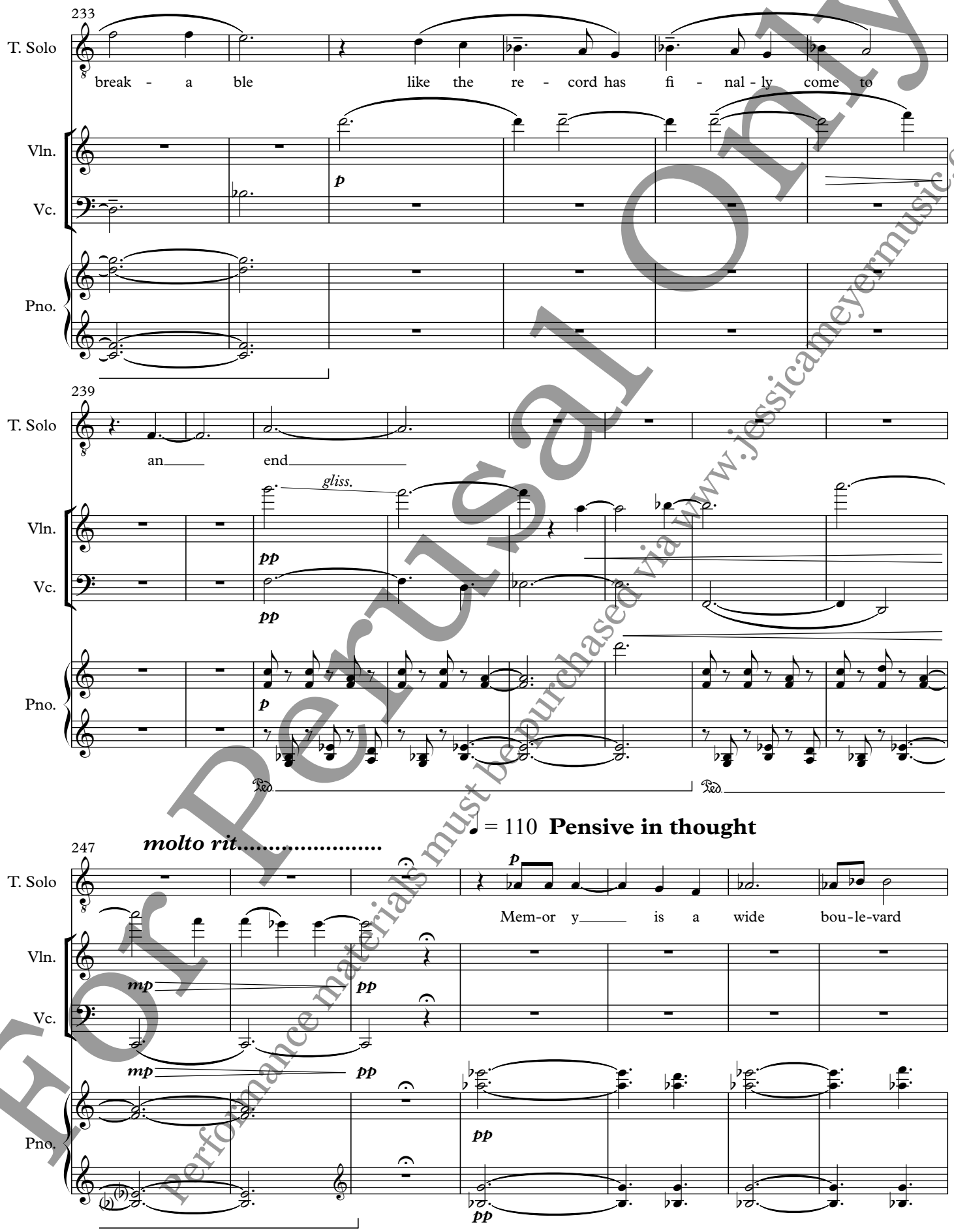

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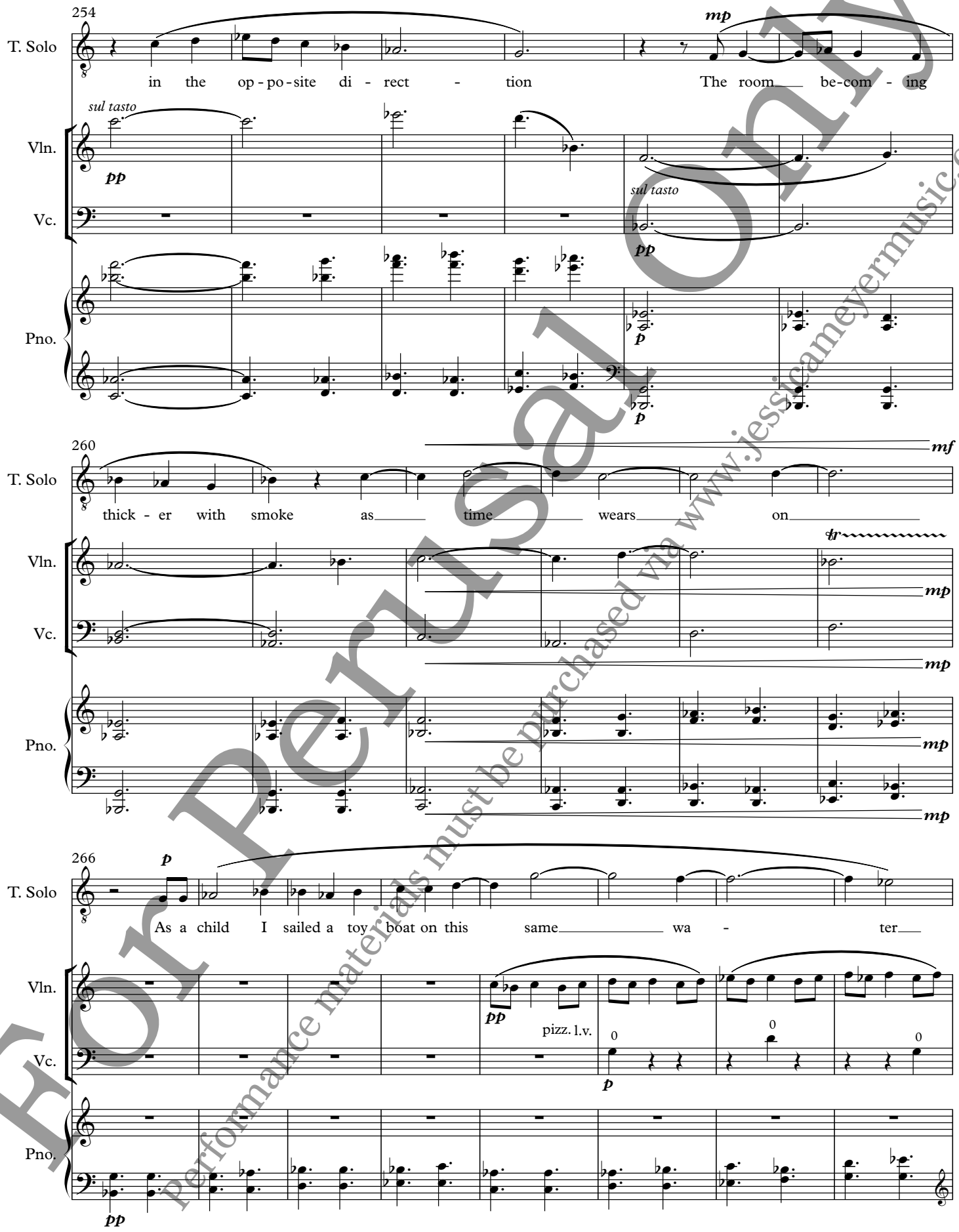

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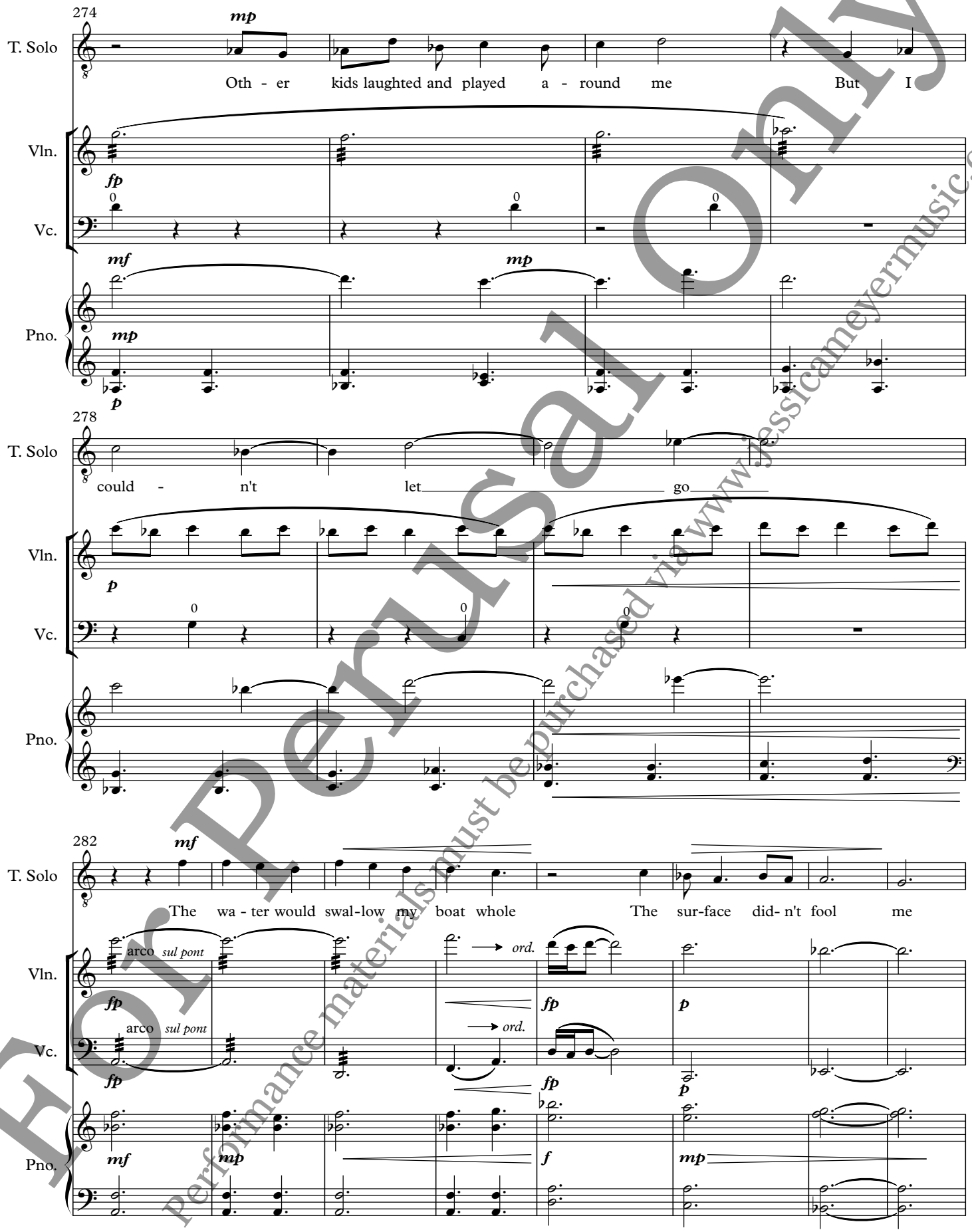

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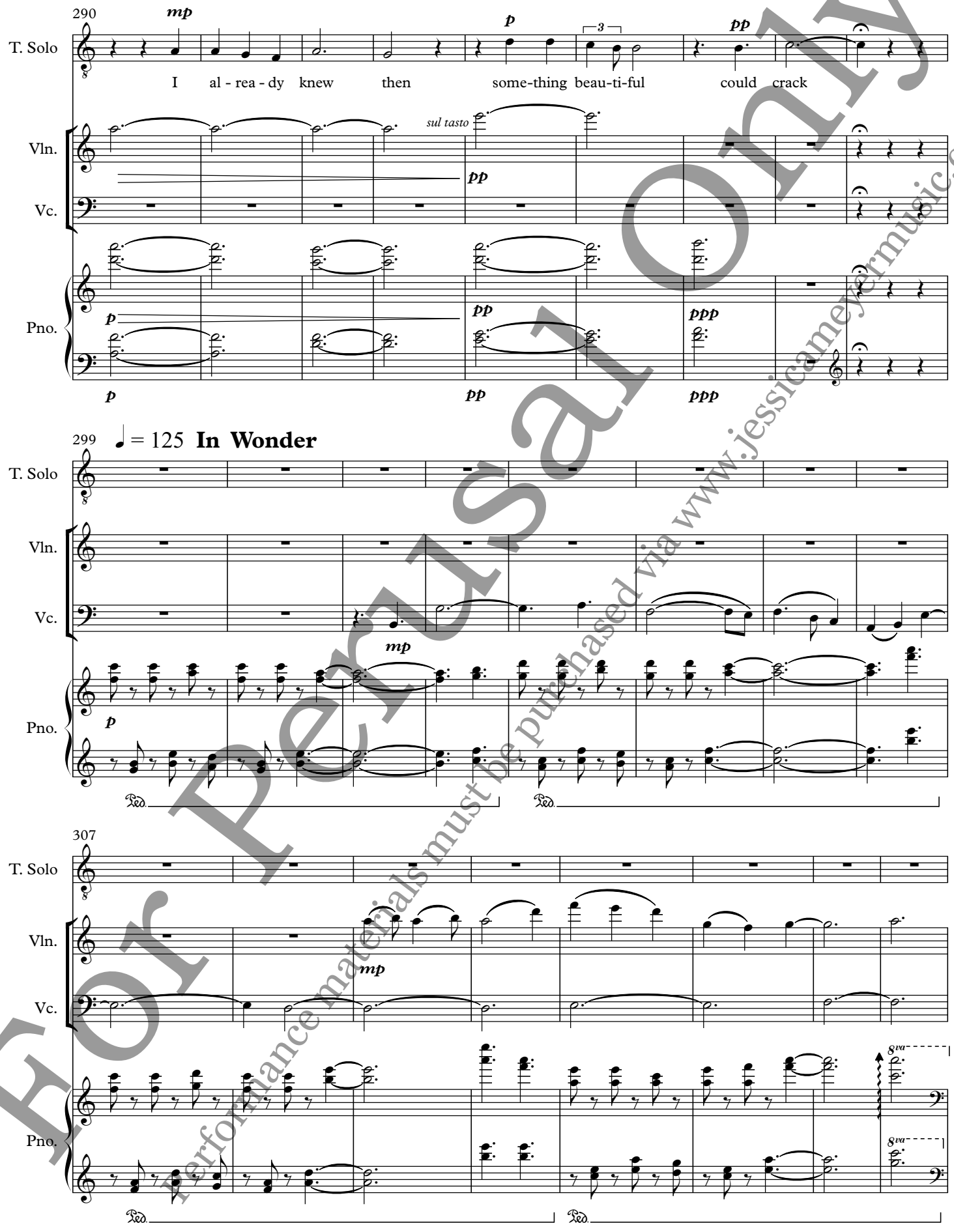

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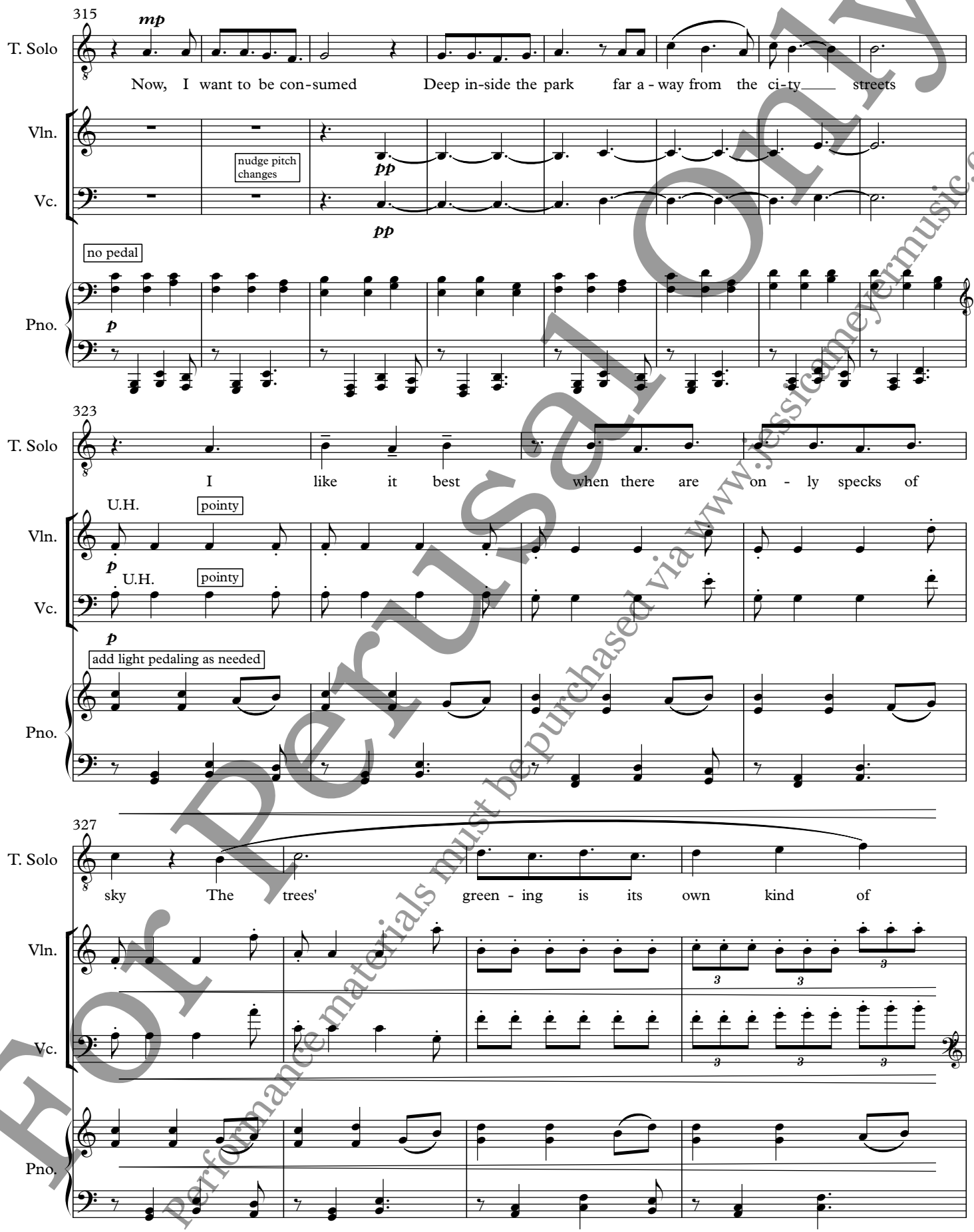

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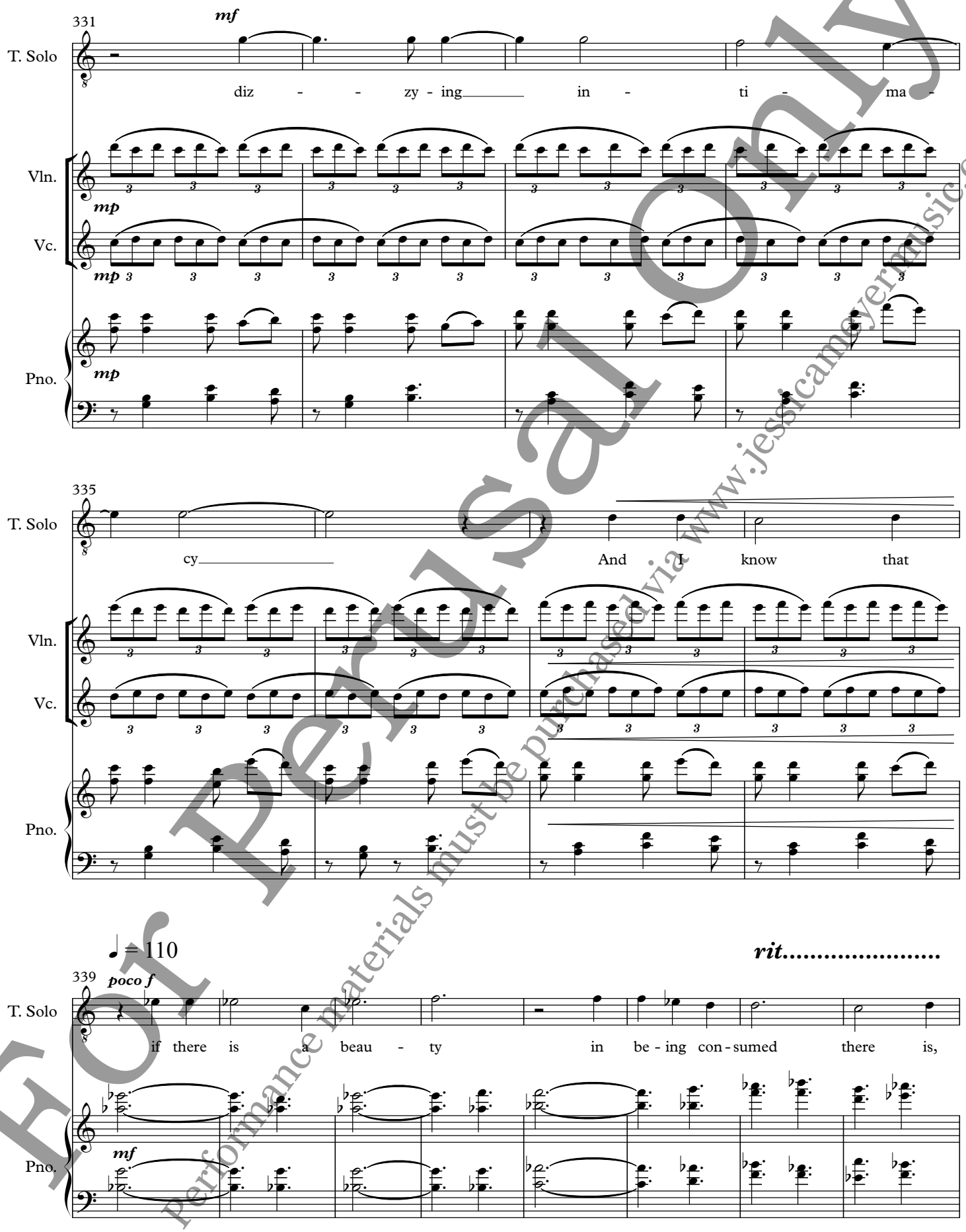

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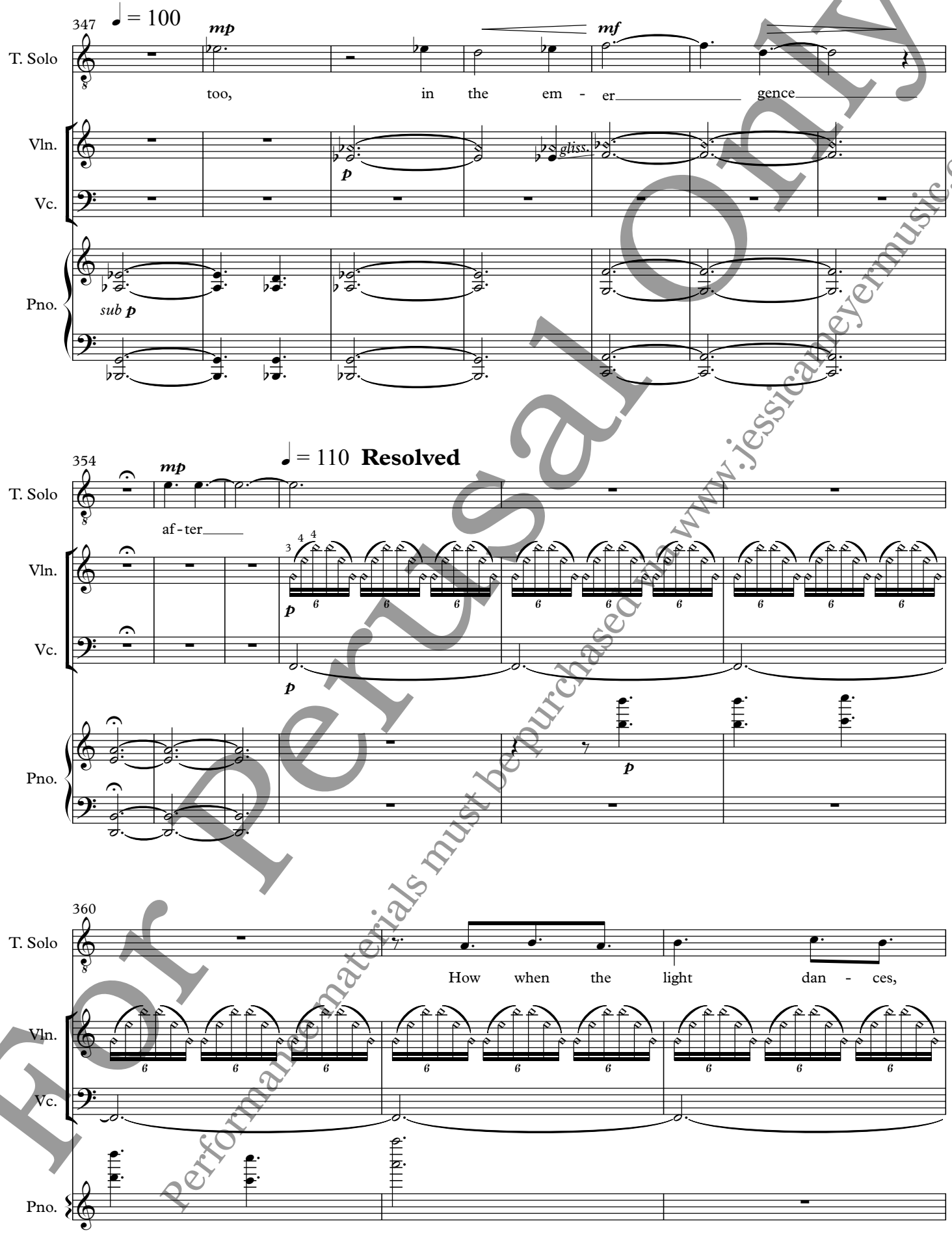

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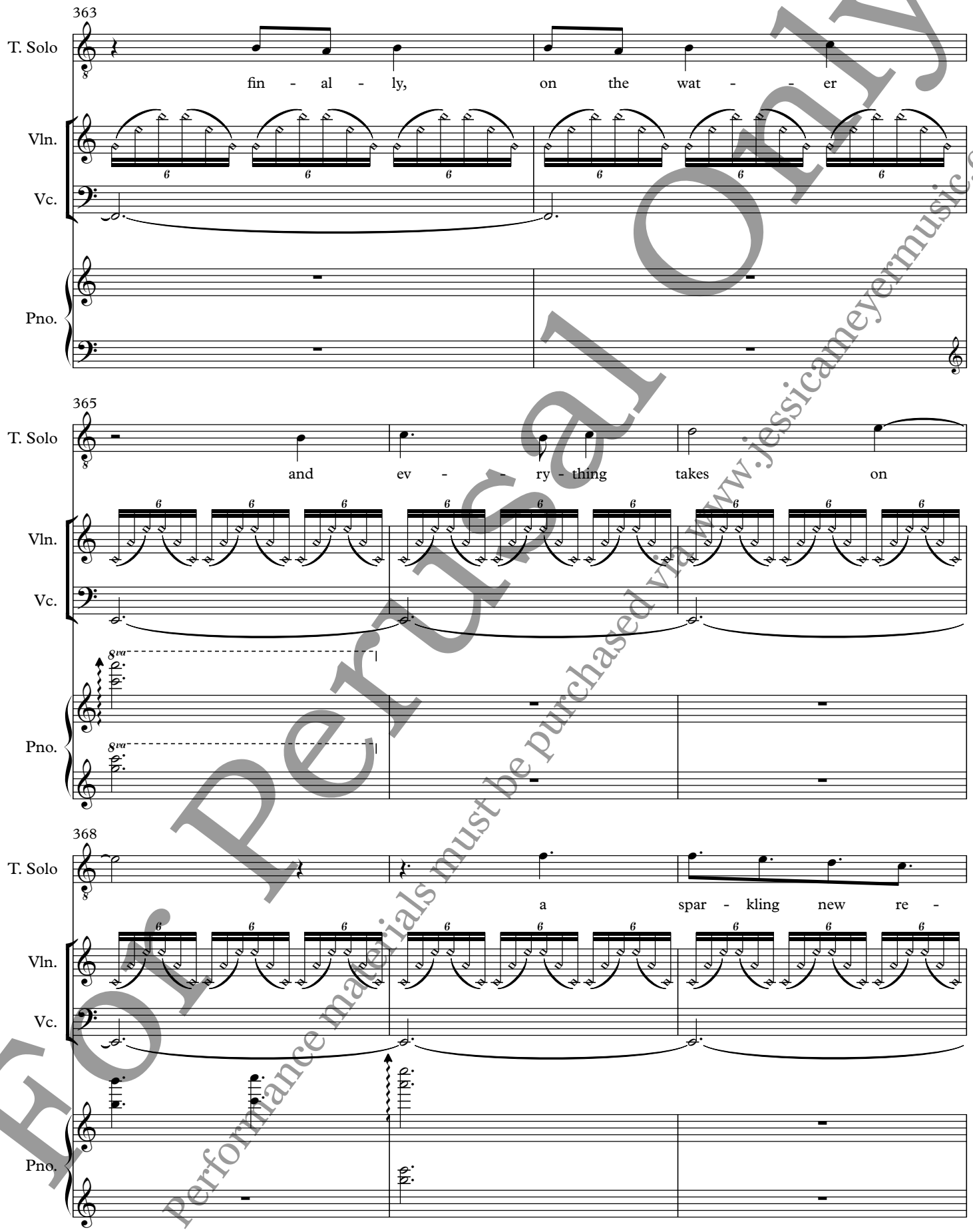

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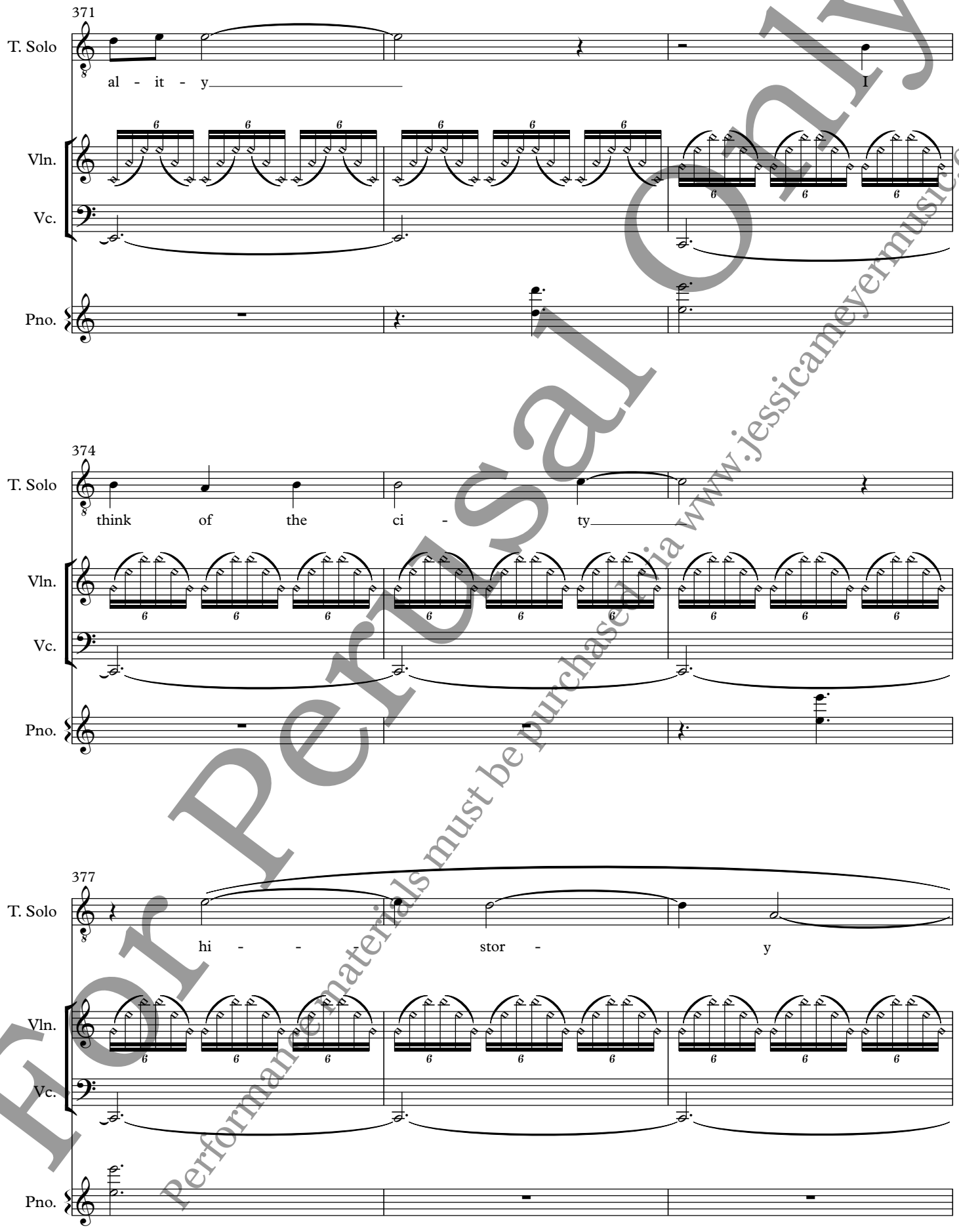

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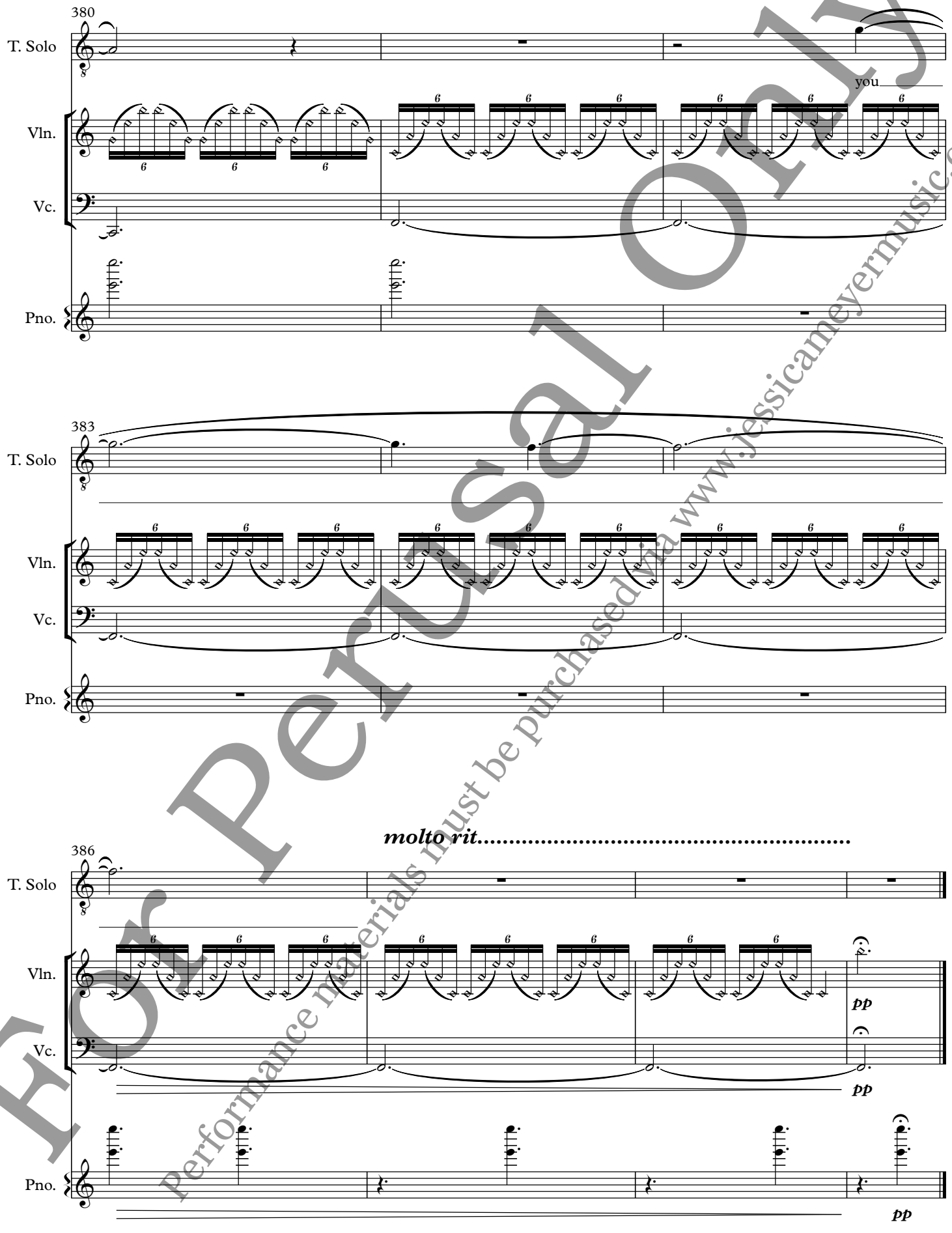

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