Ursus Arctos

for String Orchestra

Grade 5

Mark A. Taylor

Ursus Arctos

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INSTRUMENTATION
Conductor Score
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

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To Austin Isaac and the Lake Braddock High School Orchestra students

May your artistic intent be realized through joyful work,
carefully calculated technique, and creative prowess

About the Piece

Ursus Arctos *for String Orchestra* is the formal Latin name for brown bear, grizzly bear, or bruin. The work is composed of modulations in and out of the musical characterizations that define the magnificent creature. After a ferocious opening statement, performers bring to life playful curiosity, a state of tranquility, majestic rises, and more before a powerful return to the beginning.

The piece was written for Austin Isaac and the Lake Braddock High School Orchestra program. Their mascot, the bruin, inspired the title but their artistically driven technical decisions and creative prowess inspired the composition. Having the pleasure of working with many of these incredible students, I kept them in mind as both the target audience and performers for the piece.

Technical Considerations

Ursus Arctos has fingerings provided that may be adjusted depending on the abilities of the performers and discretion of the director. Many passages in the second violin part might feel more comfortable in third position for advanced players, basses acclimated to "the box" will include more position work, etc. Execute the fast sixteenth cello pizzicato in measure 66 with two alternating fingers. The first violin and viola + in measure 73 indicates lefthand pizzicato. Mordents in the "Tranquillo" section may be performed by a single stand if needed for clarity.

Accents should align across sections of the orchestra but not necessarily across sections of the piece. The opening motive, for example, can be performed by all instruments in the lower part of the bow, with bow hair flat on the string, fairly close to the bridge to produce a gritty, aggressive tone for the "Furioso" passage. In contrast, accents in the "Curiously" passage may be played with more of a brilliant tone with less bow hair, bow placement based on the dynamic, etc. Performers should use their imaginations to picture what each section should sound like, then experiment with bow techniques that best bring their artistic visions to life.

About the Composer

Mark A. Taylor is an award-winning music educator and composer. He teaches orchestra at Centreville High School in Fairfax County, VA, conducts with The Capitol Symphony Youth Orchestras, serves as an adjudicator and clinician, and composes for all levels and genres. In addition to teaching and writing, Dr. Taylor plays cello under the direction of his father, F. Wayne Taylor, in the Friends & Family Chamber Orchestra.

He holds a BM from George Mason University, an MME from Shenandoah Conservatory, and a DMA in Composition from George Mason University where he studied under Dr. Glenn Smith. When he is not making music, Dr. Taylor enjoys spending time with his family and riding his bike wherever the roads might take him. While he once took an unsupported bike trip from Virginia to Alabama to raise scholarship money for his students, most trips encompass a much smaller radius. Mark, his wife Holly, daughter Jacqueline, and son Curtis reside in Centreville, Virginia.

Dedicated to the Lake Bradock High School Orchestra Program
Austin Isaac, Director of Orchestras

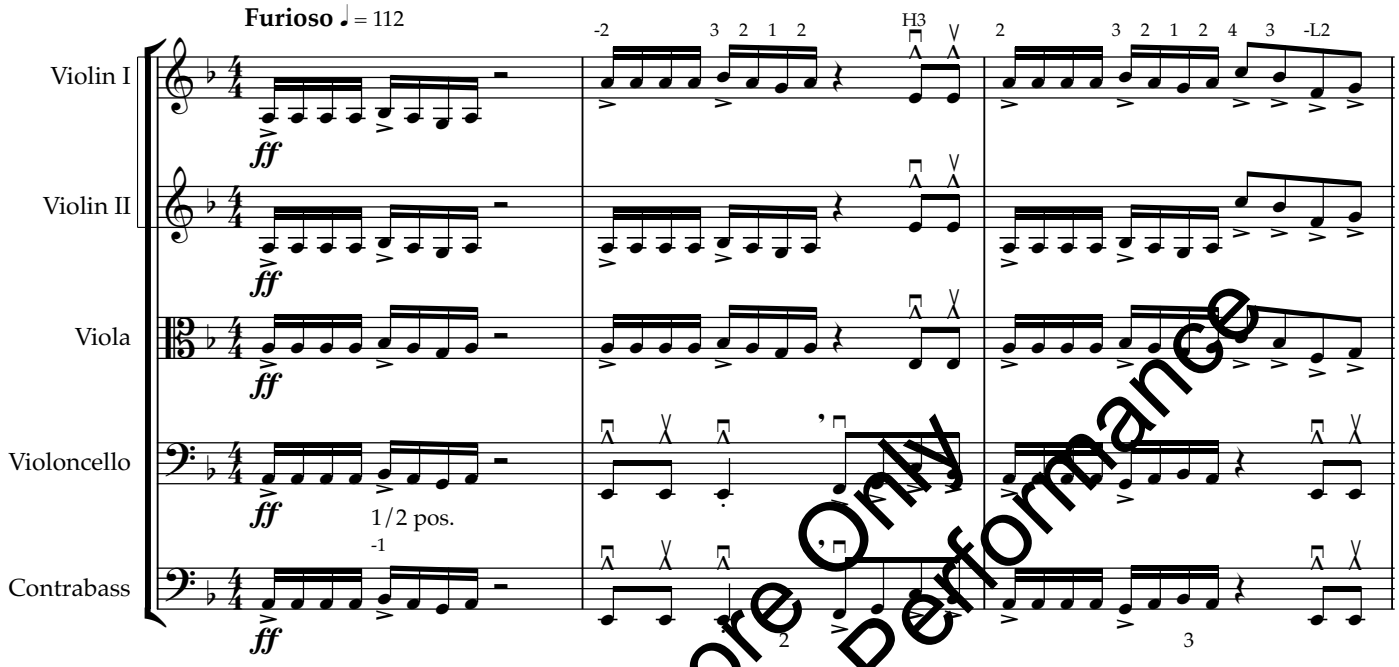
Ursus Arctos

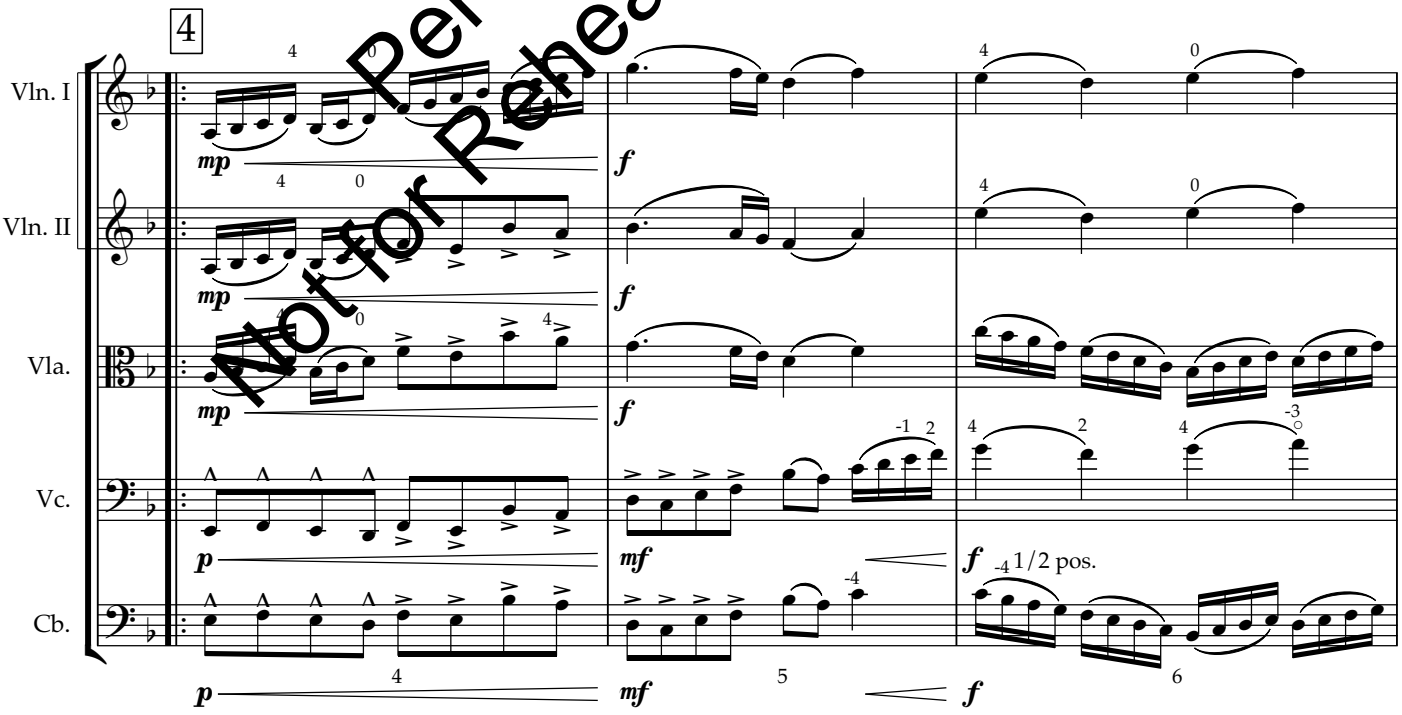
for String Orchestra

Mark A. Taylor

Duration: 5'00"

Furioso ♩ = 112





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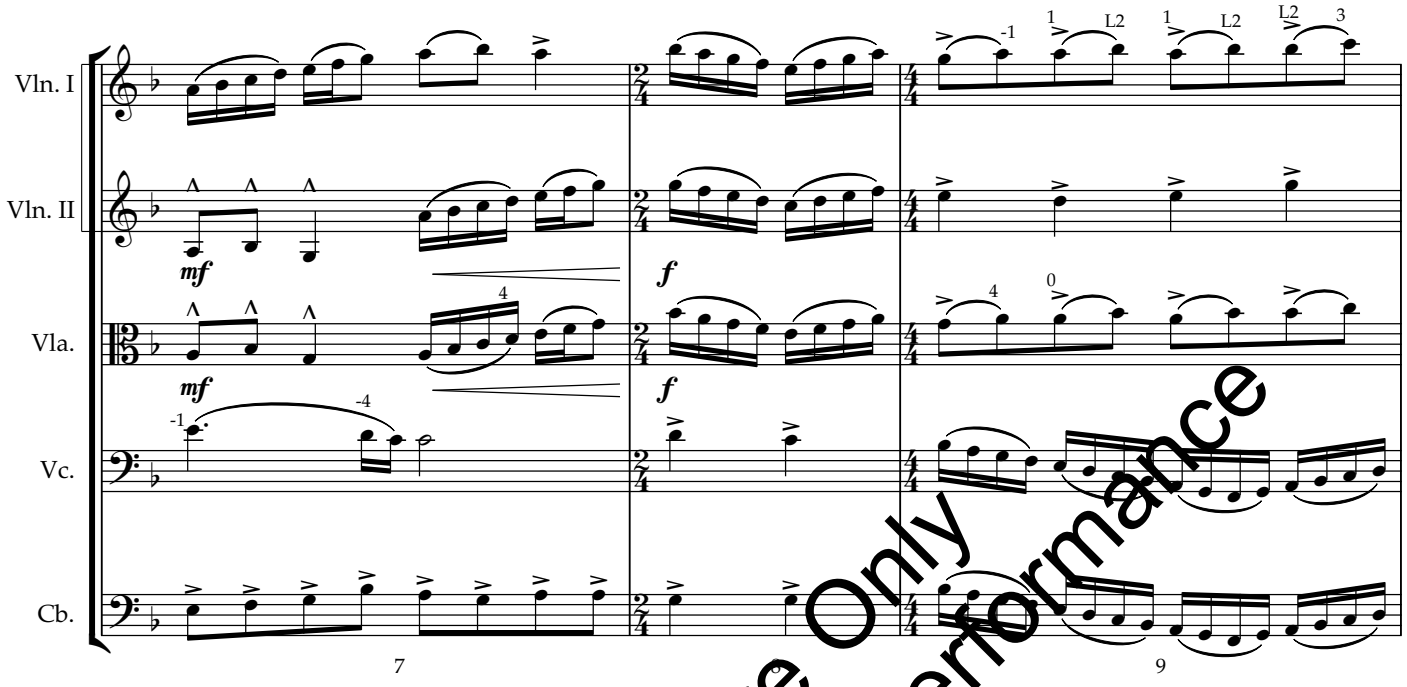

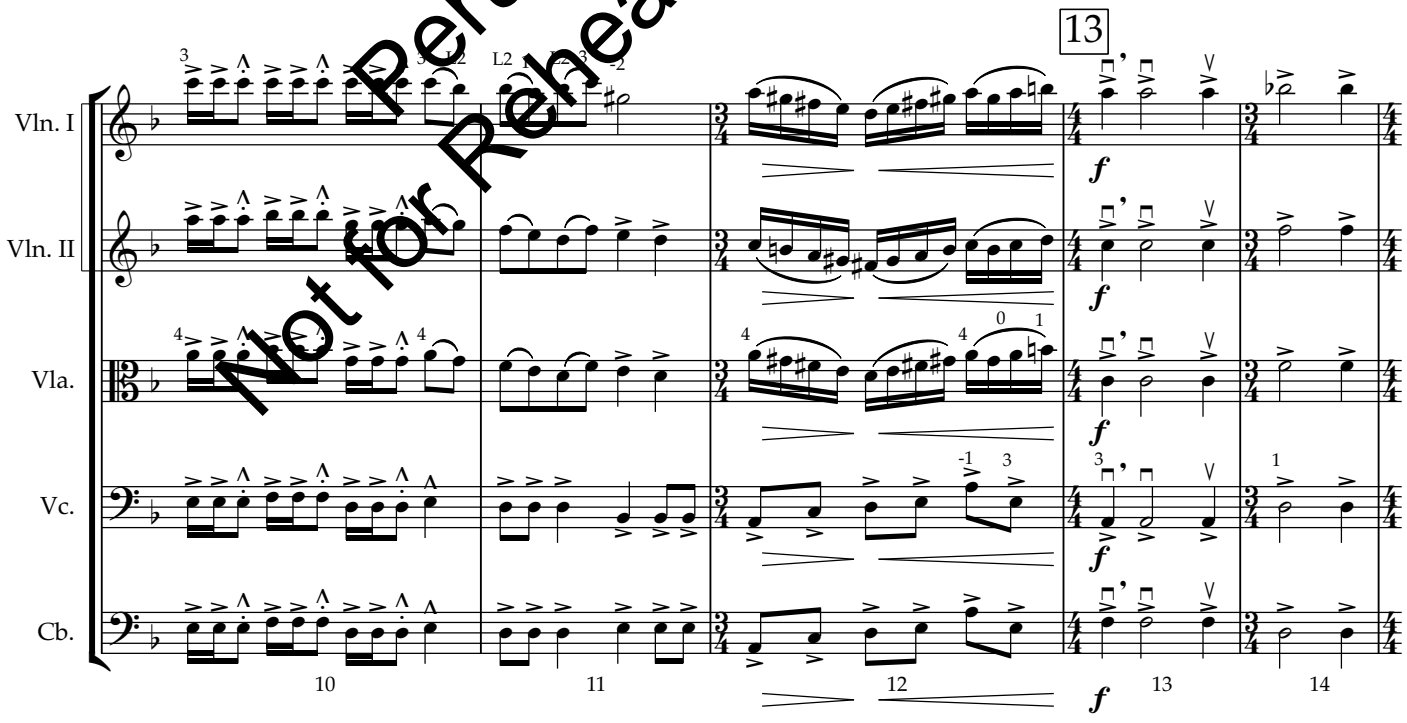

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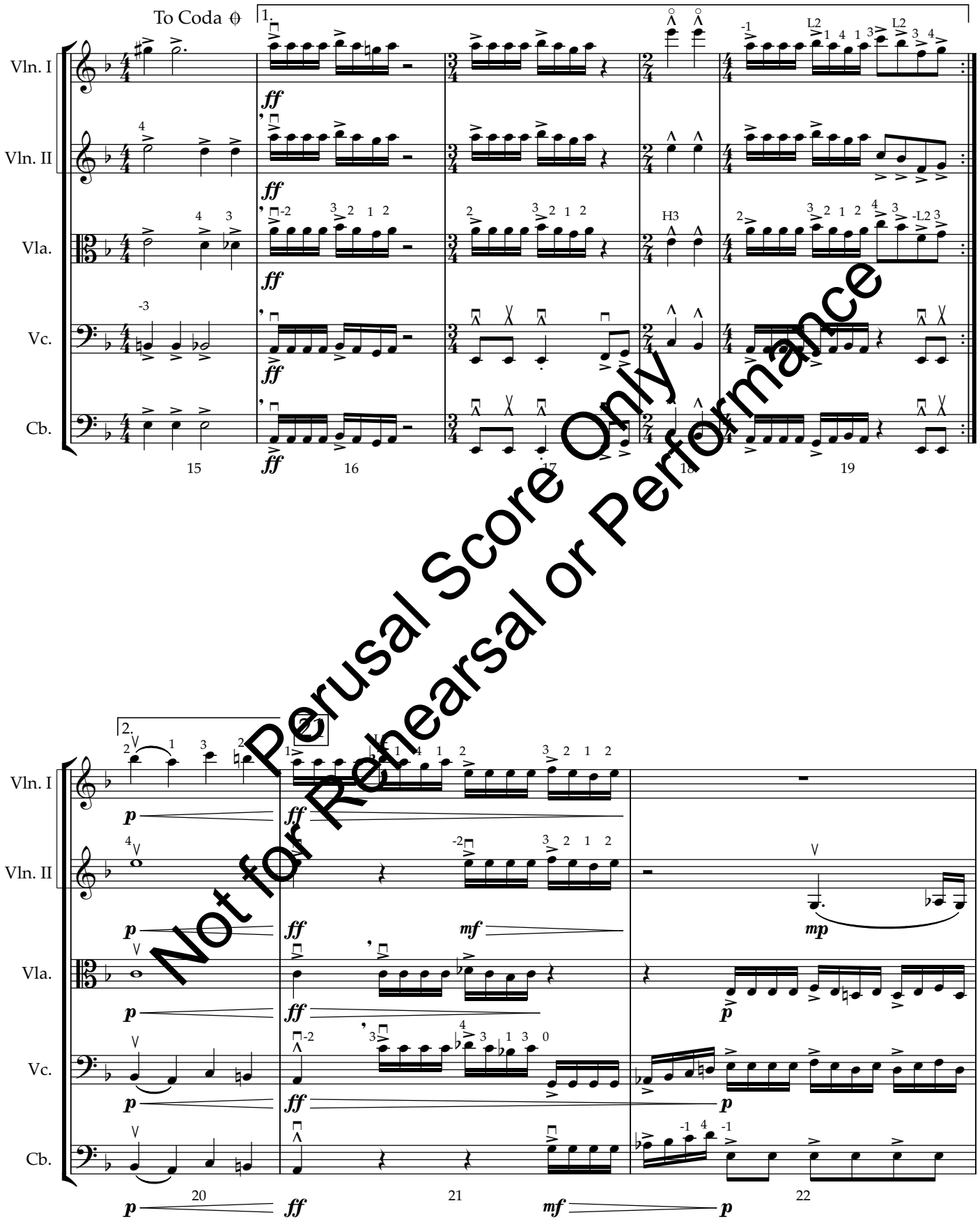

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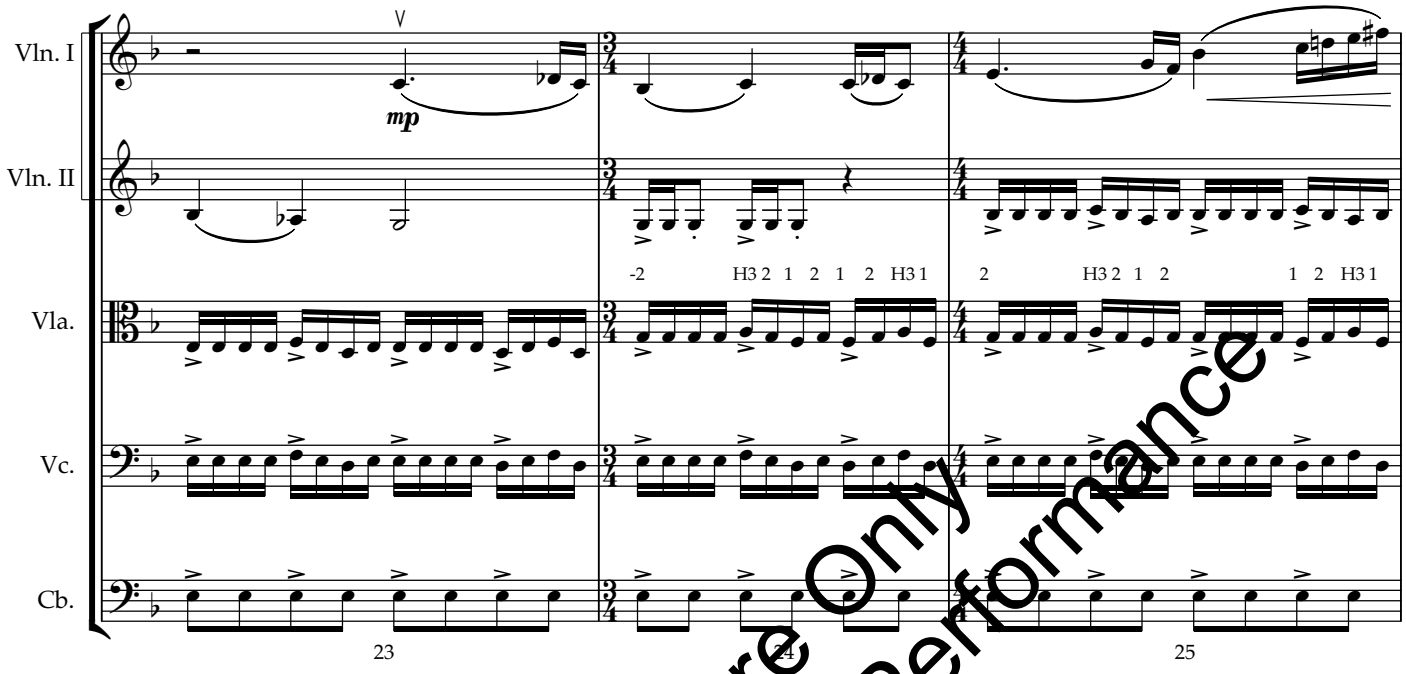

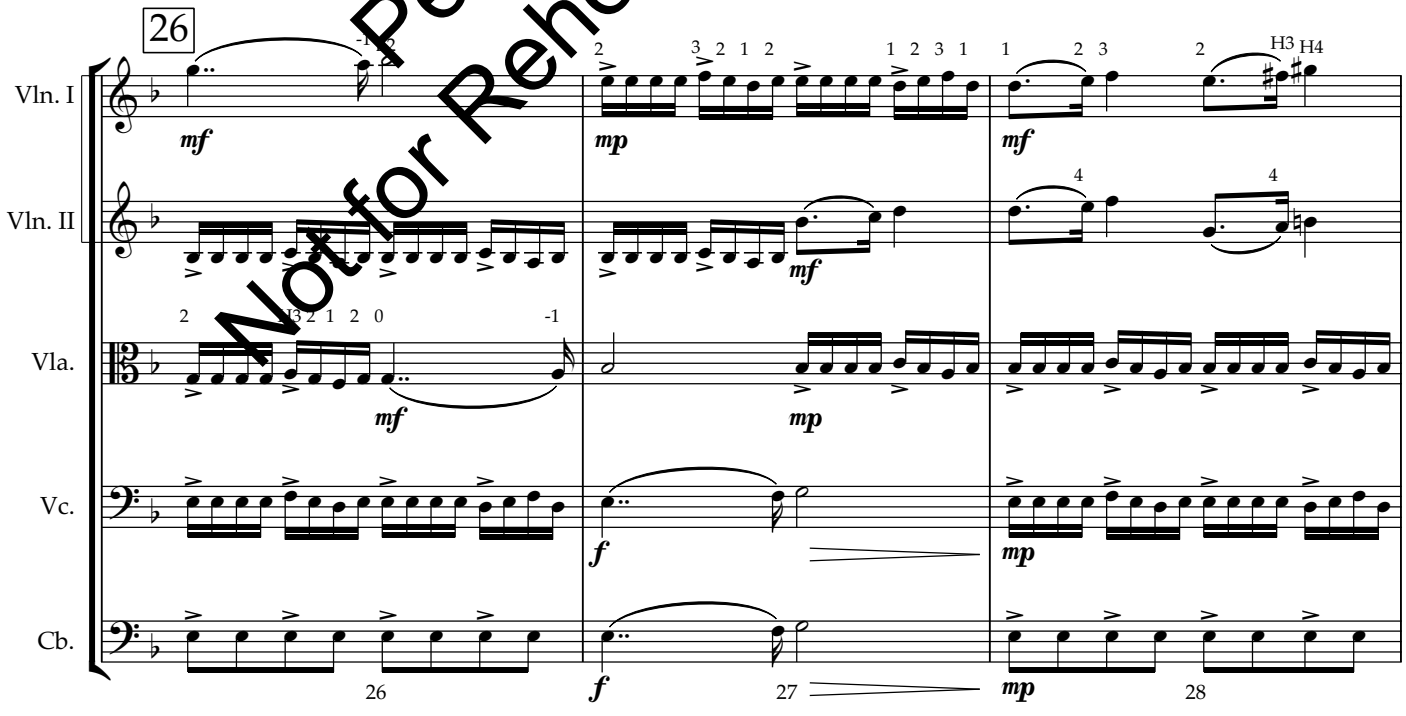

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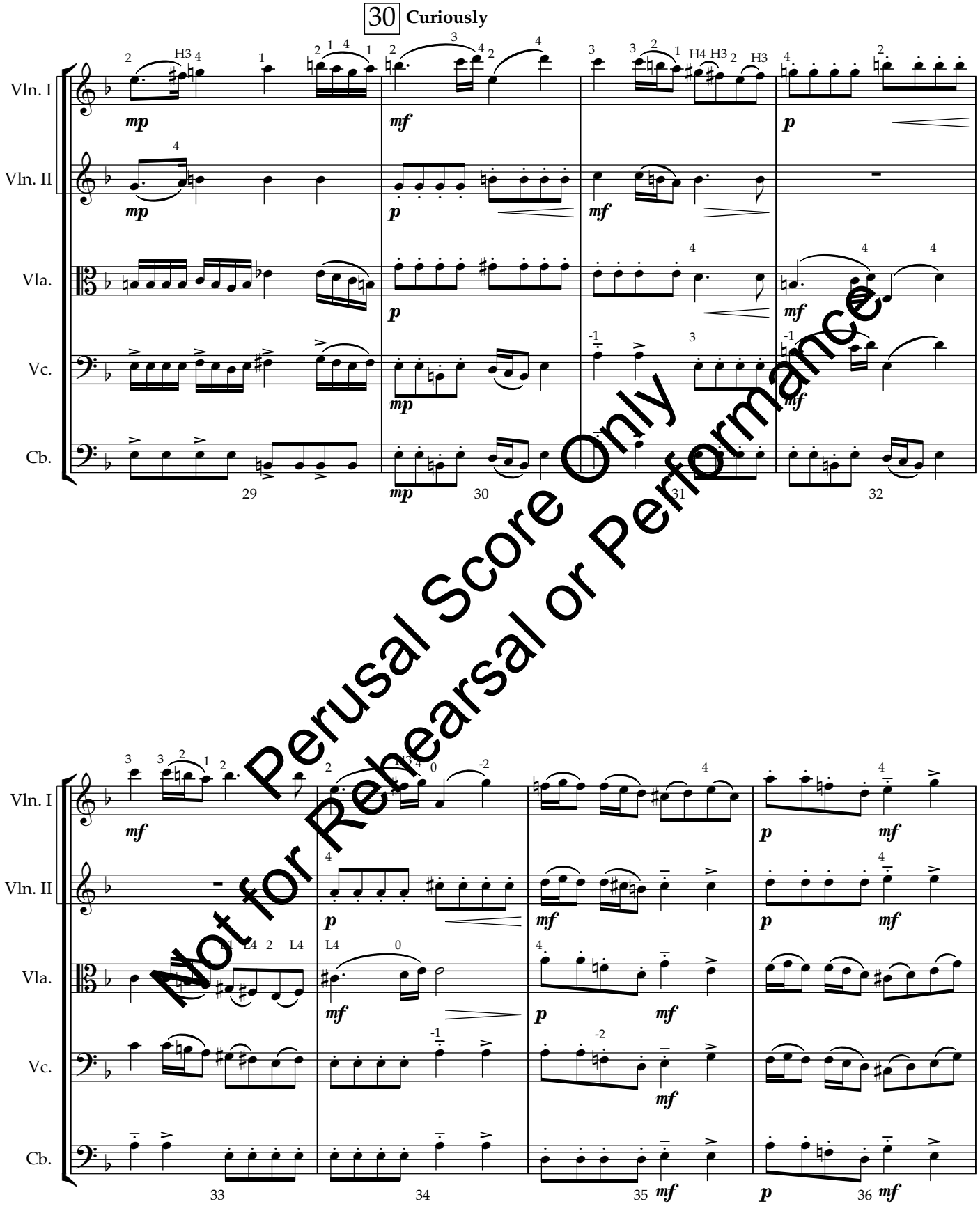

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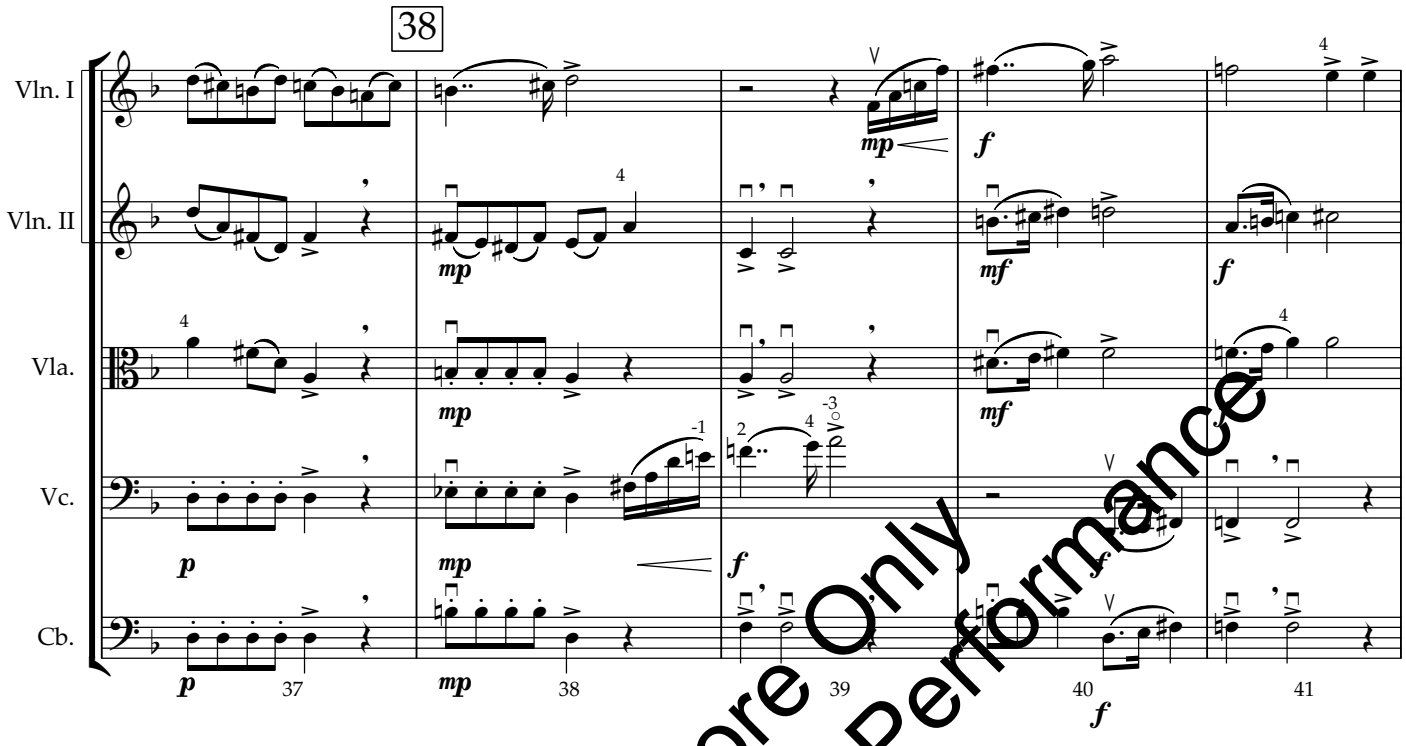

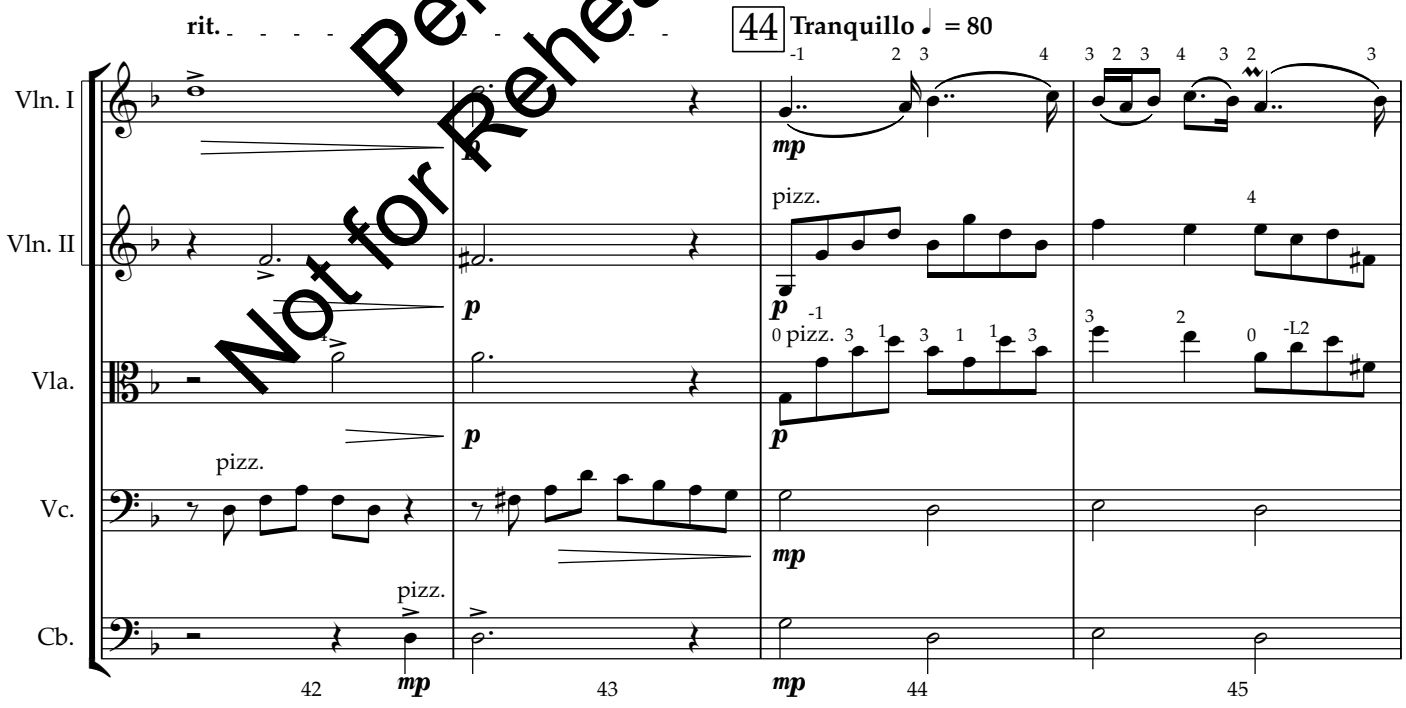

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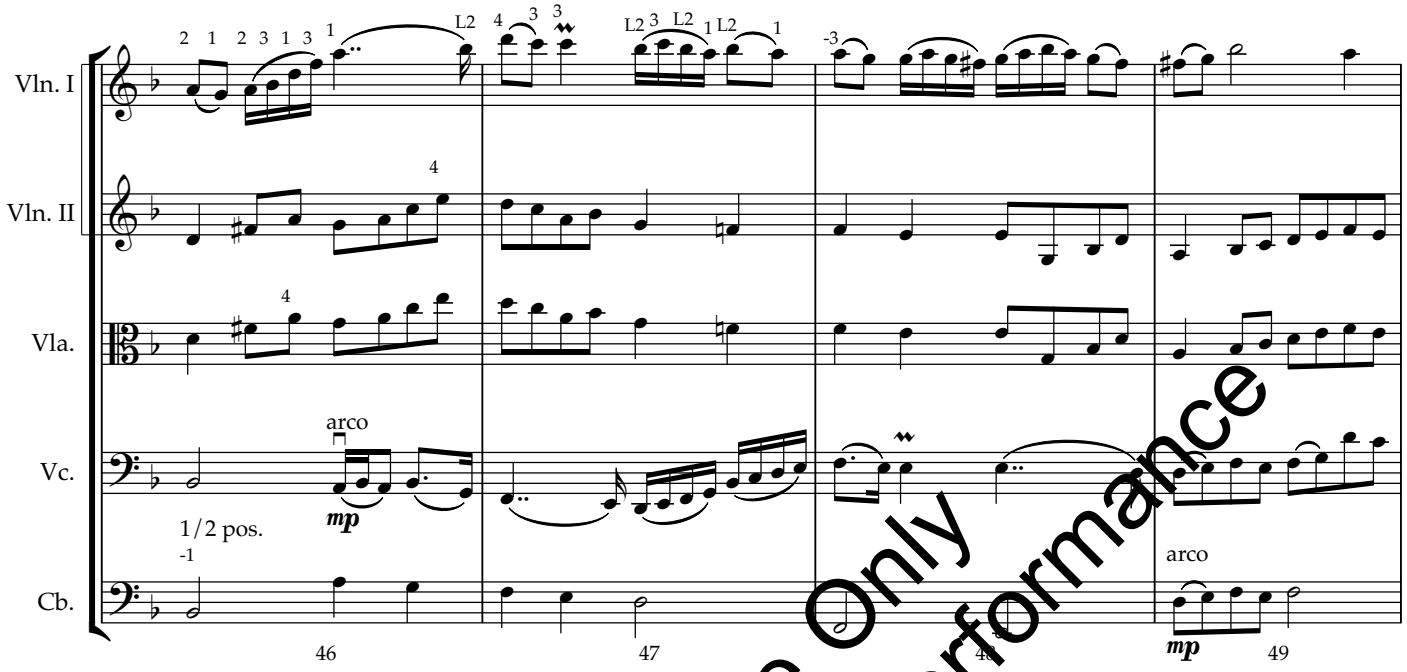

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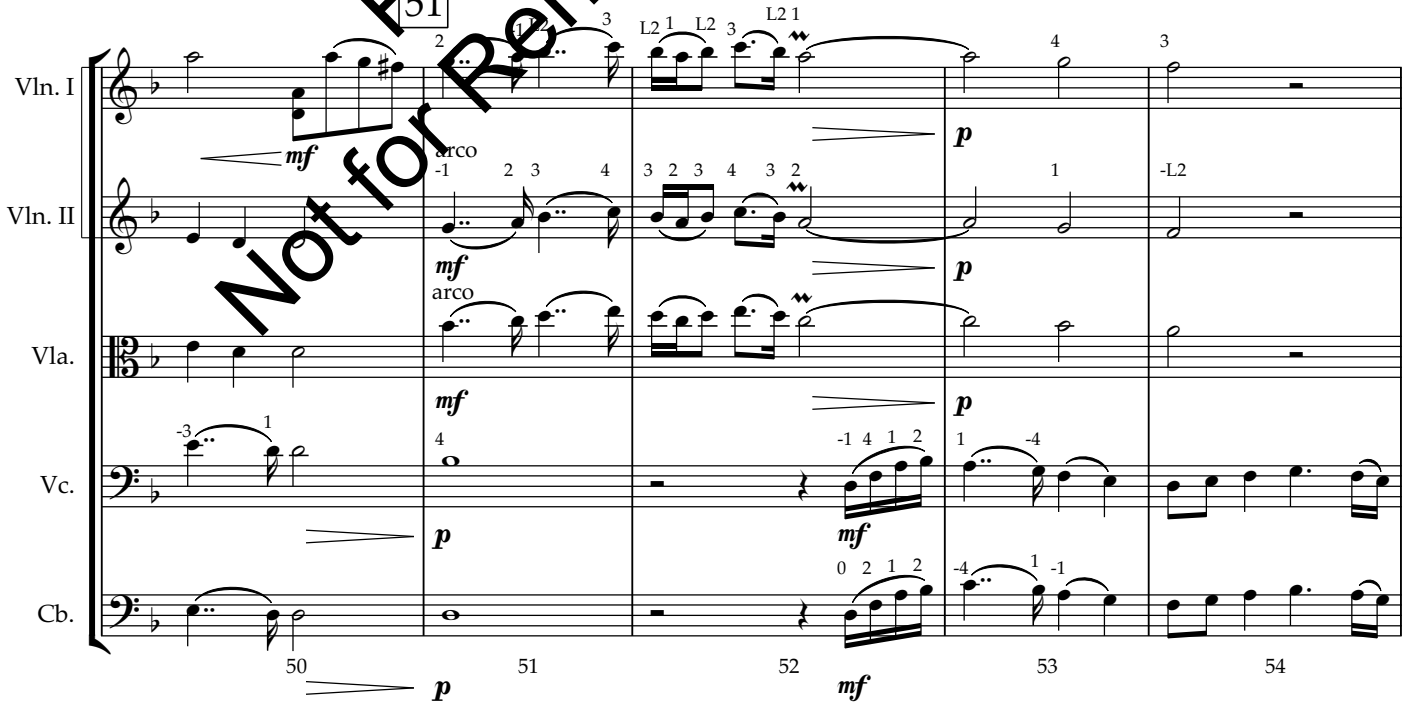

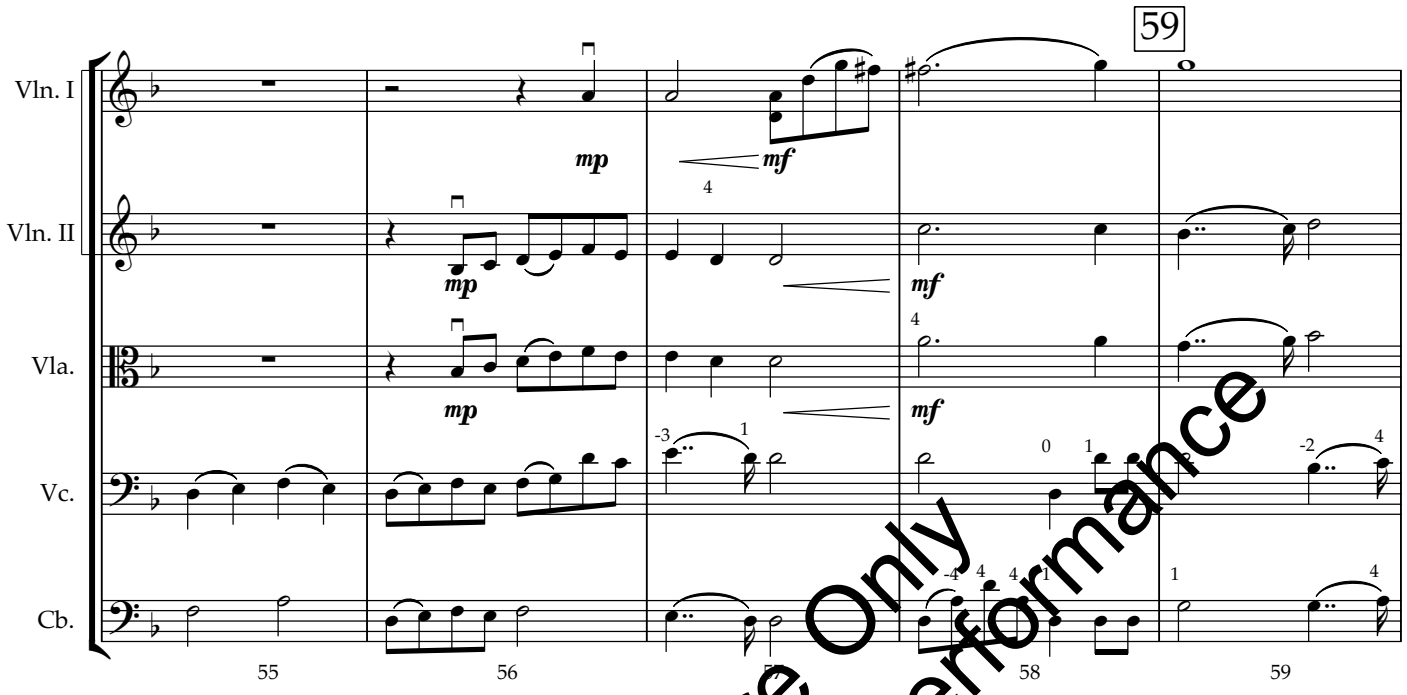

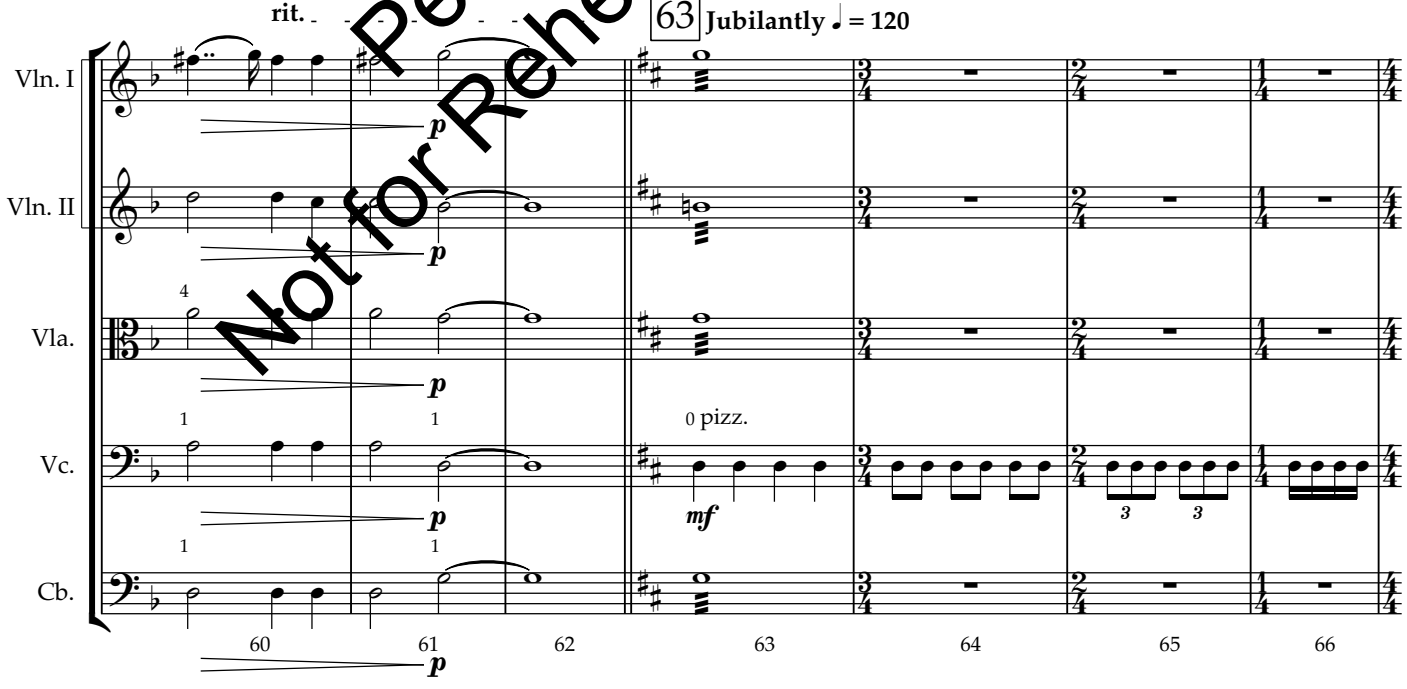

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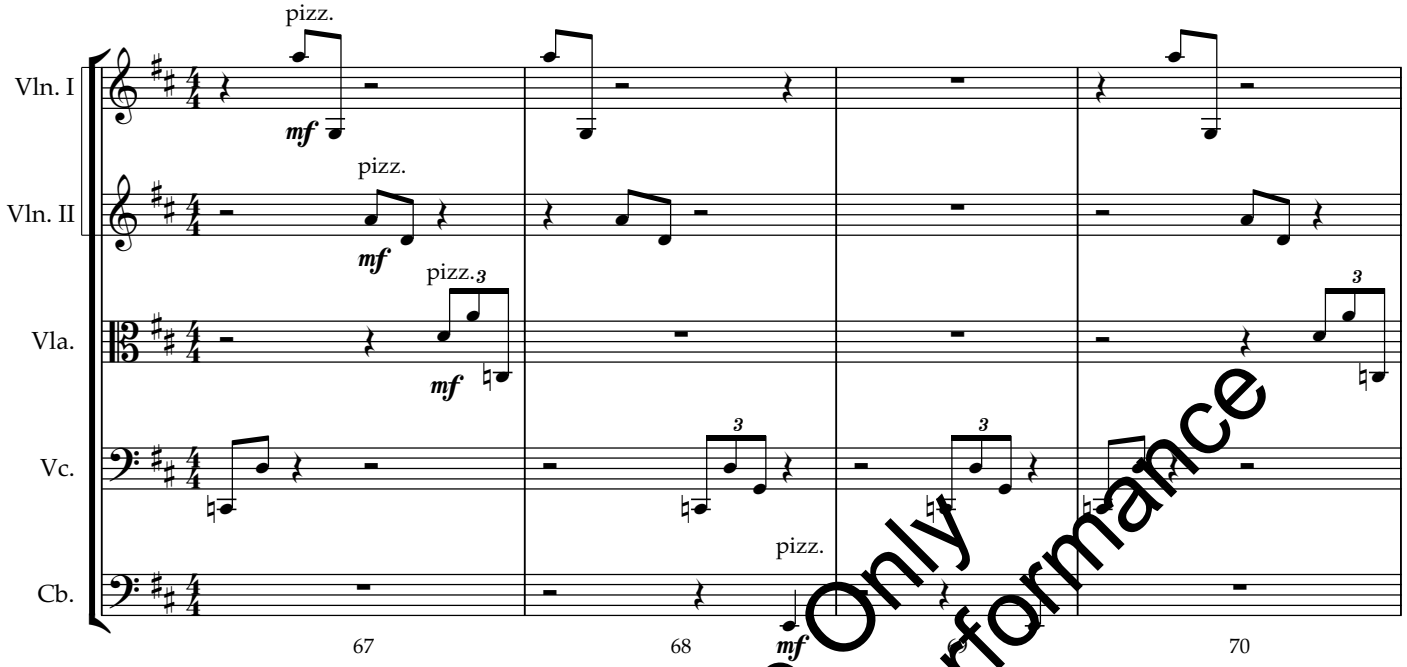

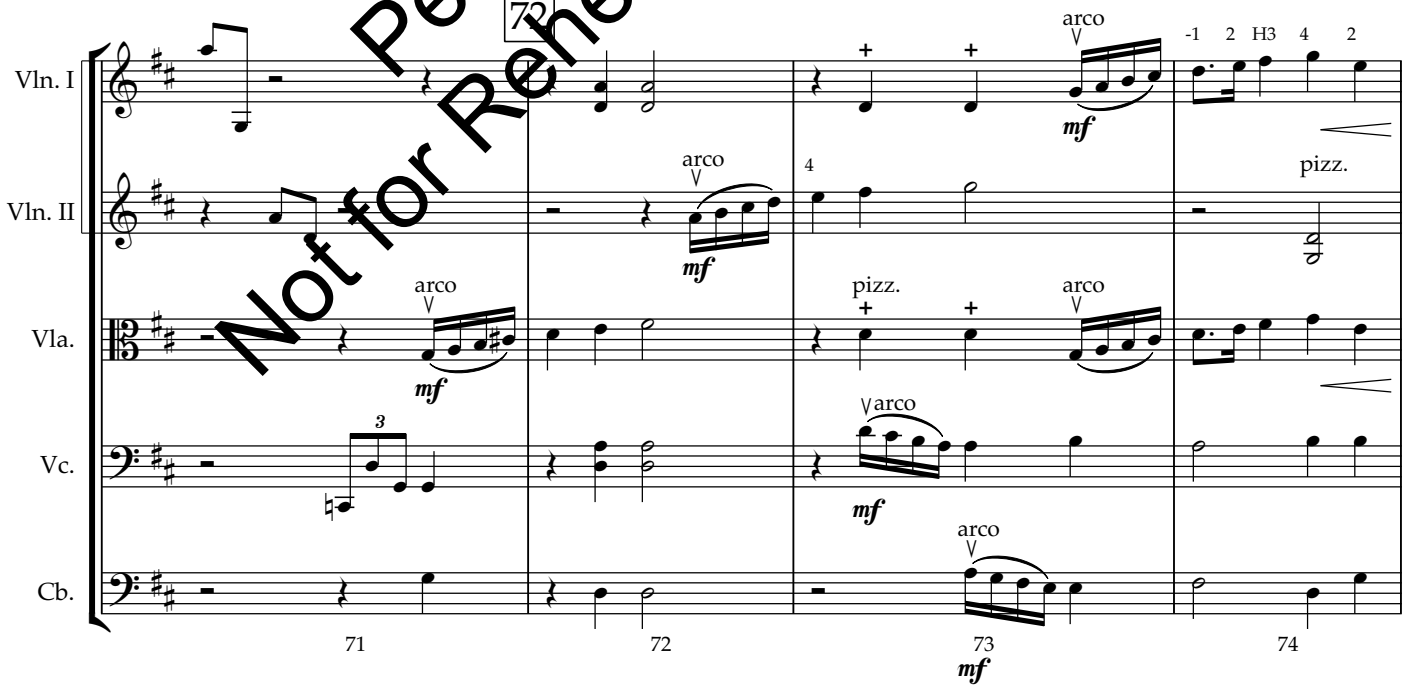

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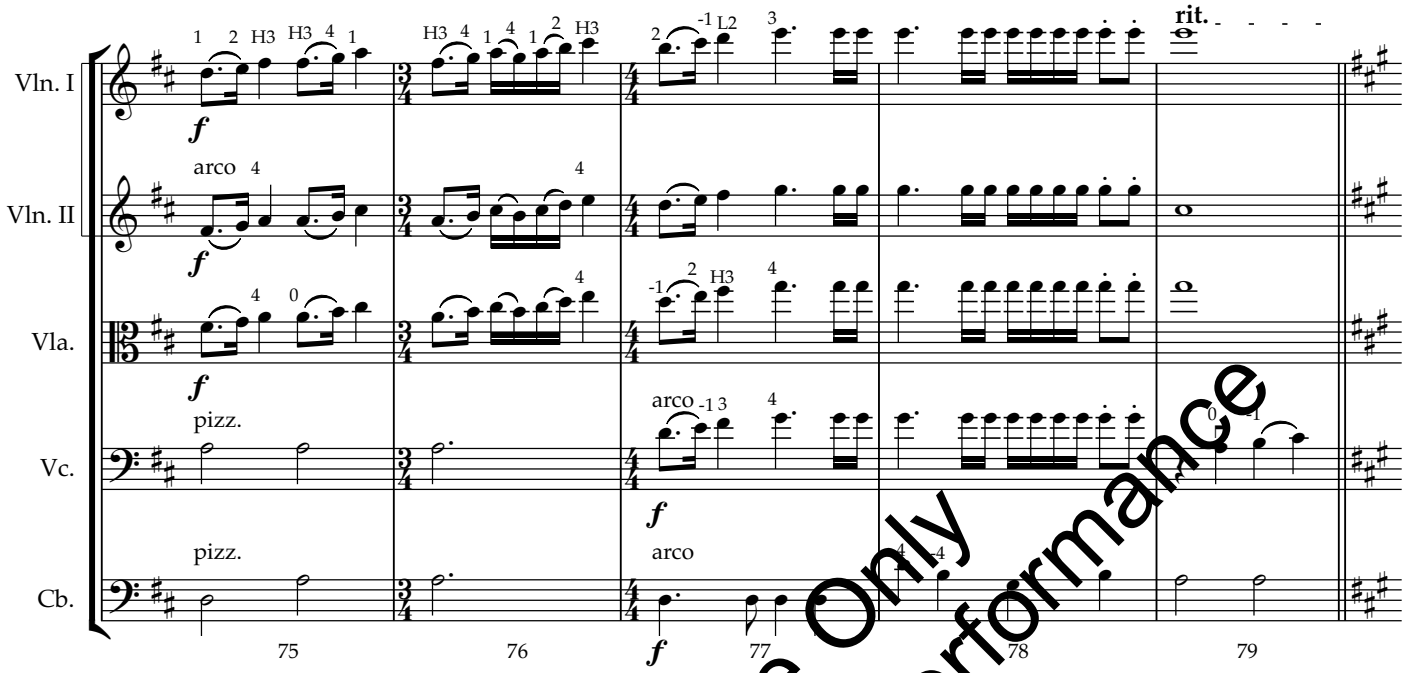

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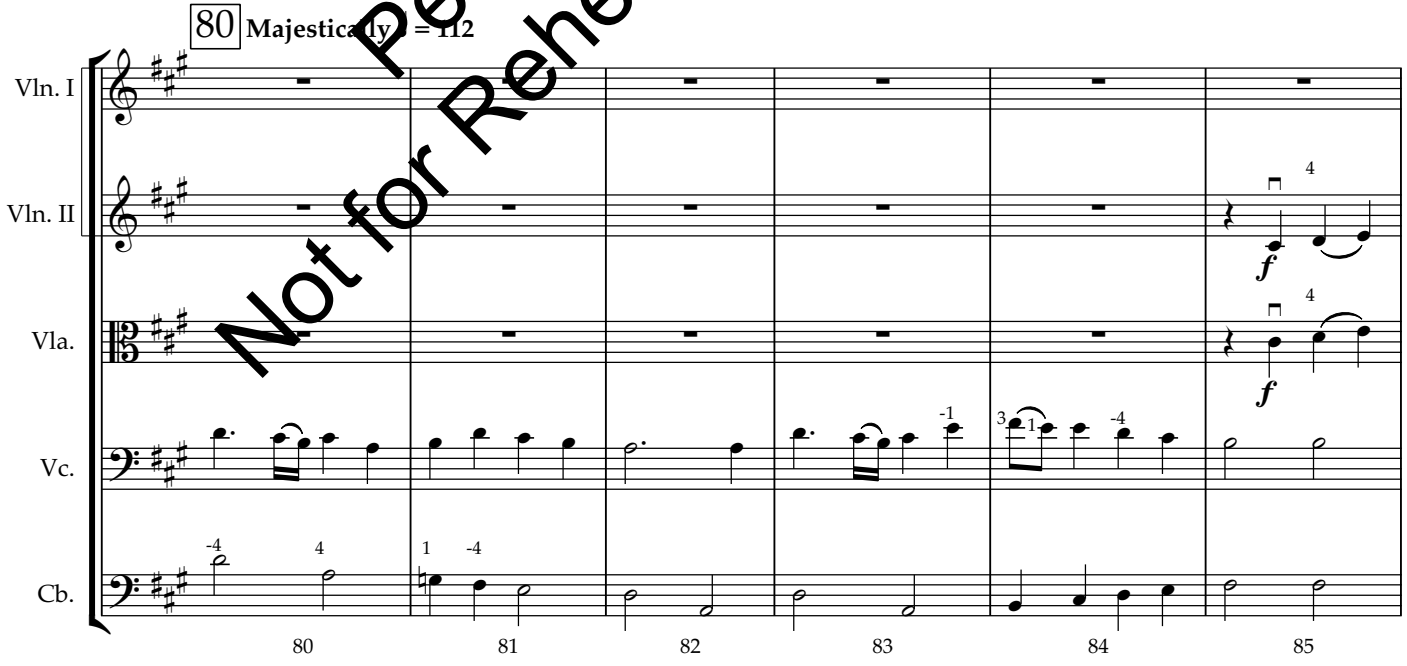

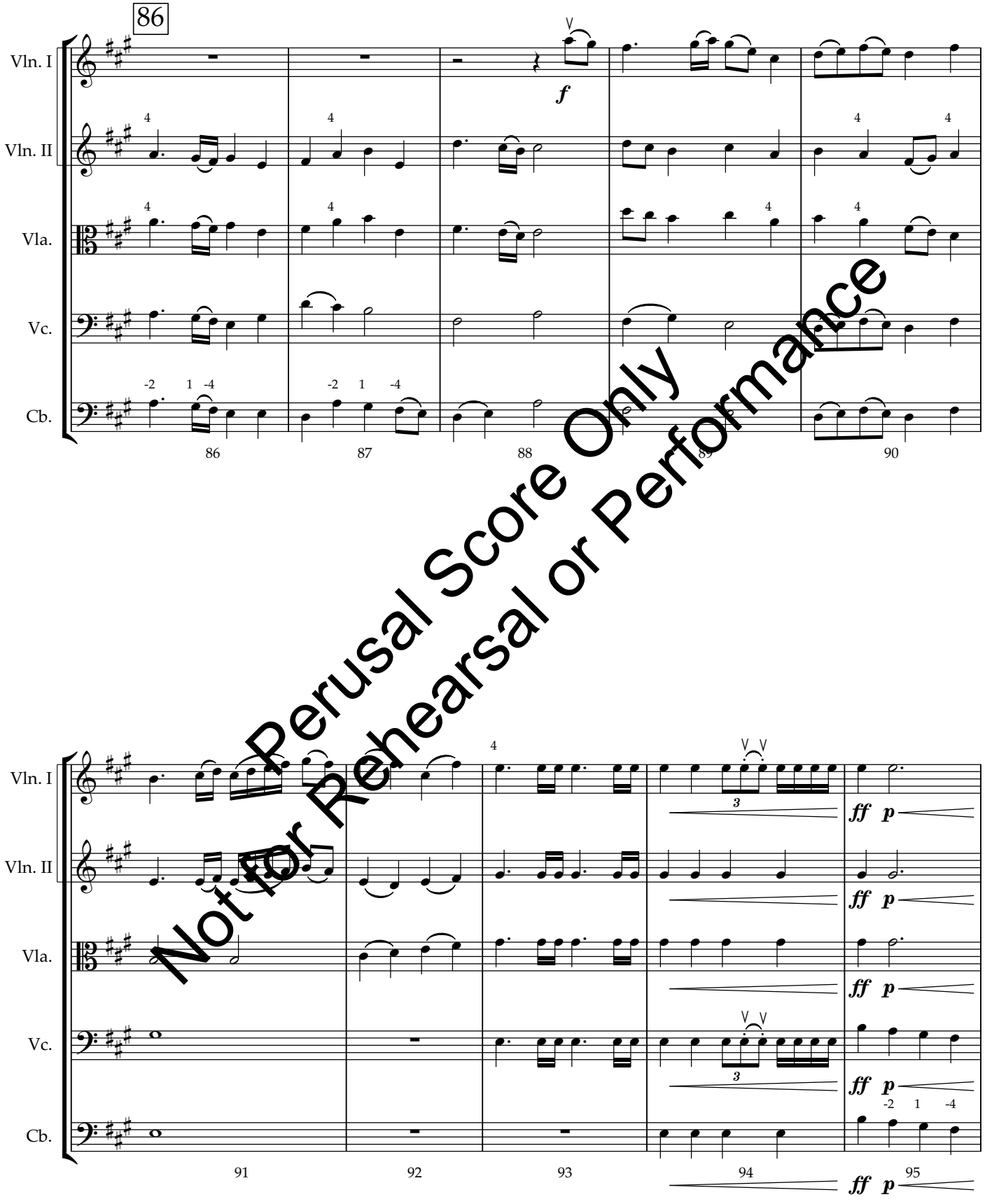

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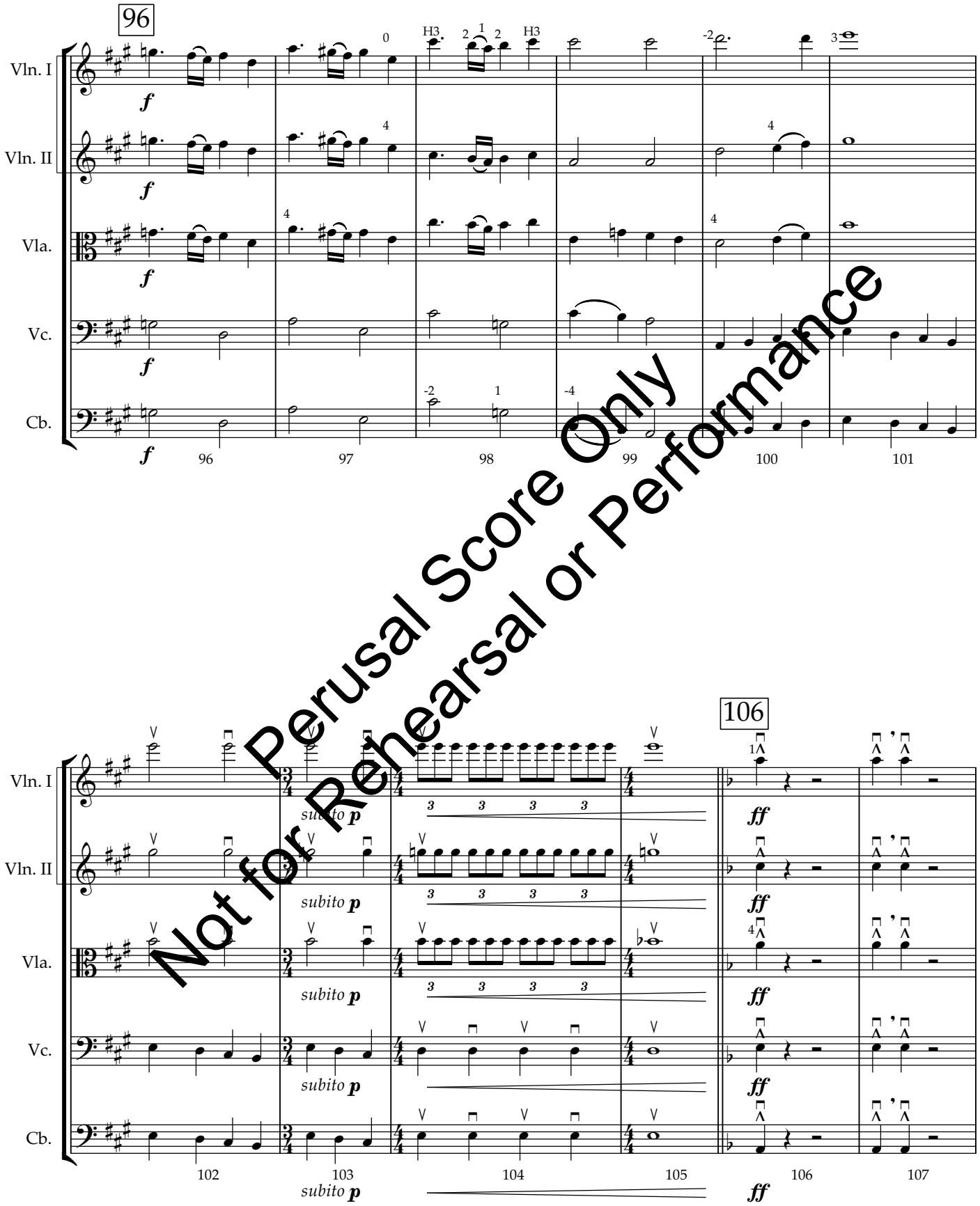

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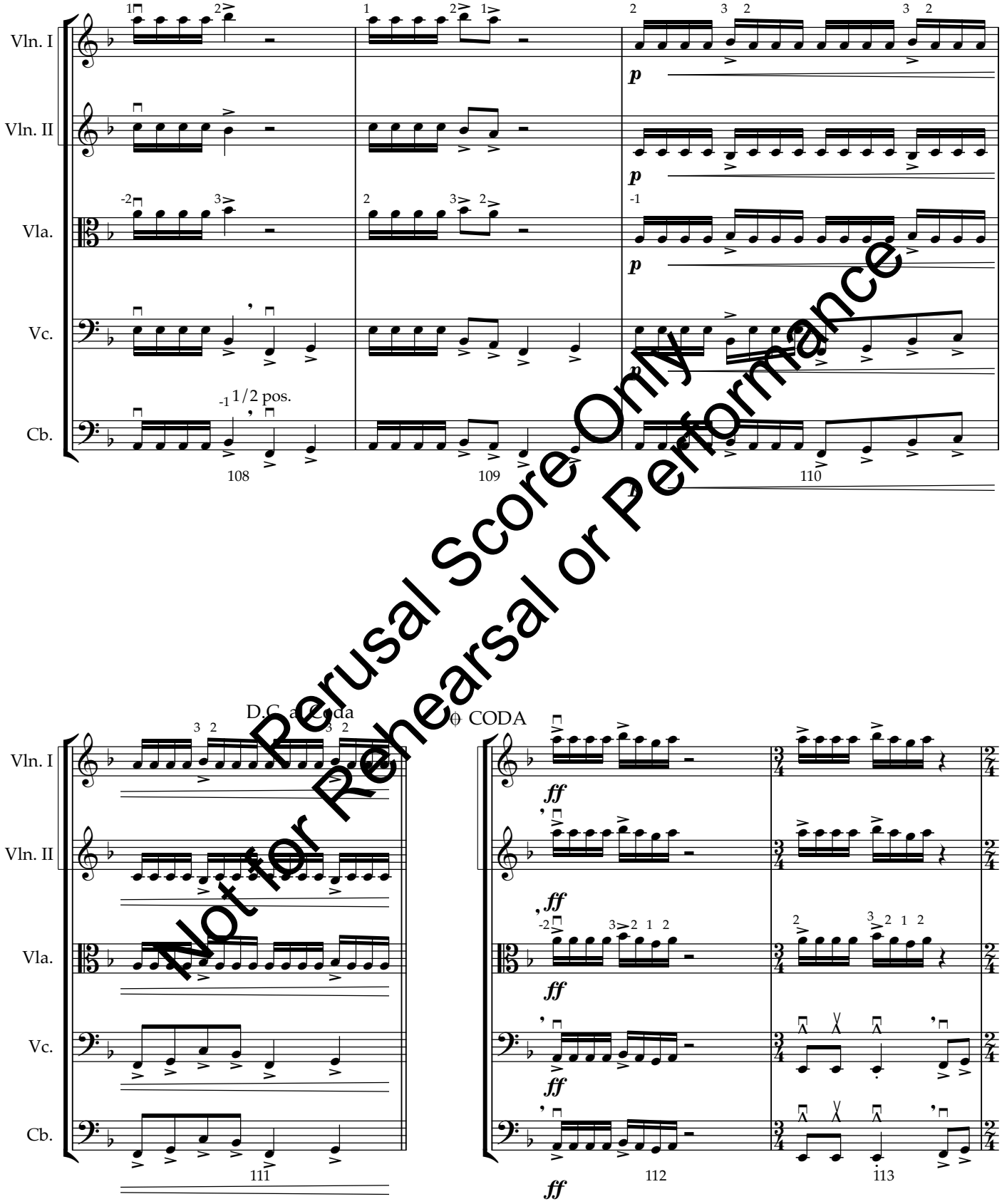

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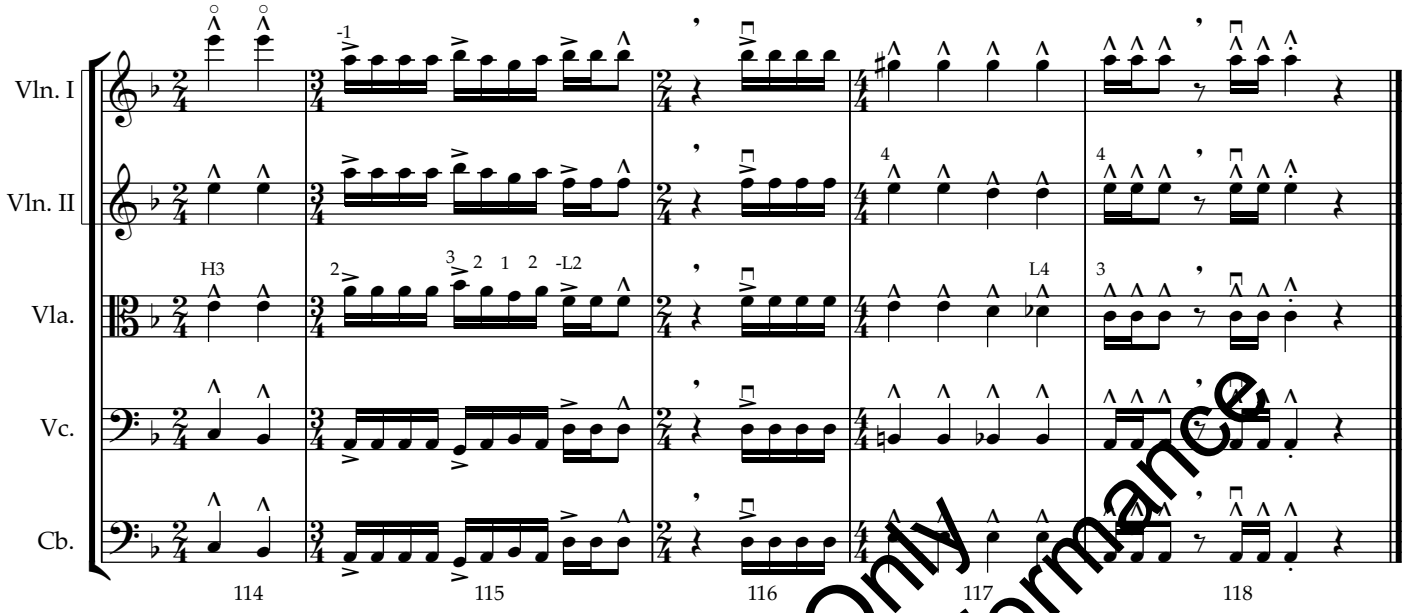

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