Partita for Mixed Dectet “Steampunk”

Score 2:

Instrumentation, Performance Notes, Interlude Scores, Aria Cello Part

Instrumentation:

Flute (doubling flute, piccolo, alto flute)
Clarinet (doubling B-flat clarinet, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, B-flat contrabass clarinet)
Bassoon (doubling bassoon, contrabassoon)
Horn in F

1 Percussionist:
chimes
paper (see performance note)
4 temple blocks
vibraslap
various metallophones (see performance note)
2 brake drums (high and low)
2 cowbells (high and low)
triangle

Keyboard:
either synthesizer, acoustic instruments, or combination of both (see performance note)

Violin
Viola
Cello
Double bass

Vocalist
(see performance note)

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Performance Notes

Partita is inspired by a variety of principles of the steampunk aesthetic: anachronism, impracticality, foregrounding of technology, and improvisation. The piece is in seven movements, to be performed in the following order:

1. **Preludio:** The Gilbourne Line Takes on Horses at Kingsfirth for an Additional 3 Shillings

   Interlude: Trio in B-Dur, op. 24 (Allegro), von Herr P. A. Kreusser

2. **Passacaglia:** The Clock Tower in Ploughman's Square Has 4 Faces and 17 Storeys

   Interlude: A Ballade by M. Coppée - "Pour modifier notre patraque"

3. **Aria:** Aviatrix Geertje van Wieren's Airship Floats Eternally Over the Thulean Ice Floes

   Interlude: Variations Brillantes on a French Popular Song, by Mr. Tolhurst (Miss Fieldhouse)

4. **Fuga:** Professor Granville P. Hartwick's Quadruple Aeolipile Fails to Serve Any Earthly Purpose

The four "partita proper" movements (Preludio, Passacaglia, Aria, and Fuga) are inspired by archetypal steampunk technologies. These involve all the players and will almost certainly require a conductor. These four movements should be performed in the usual 20th/21st-century classical concert manner.

The three interludes, written (mostly) in the style of pieces likely to be found on 19th-century programs, use subsets of the full ensemble and should not be conducted. During these interludes, any players not playing (including the conductor) should sit with the audience and emulate a 19th-century (especially early 19th-century) audience, speaking freely with other members of the audience, entering or exiting mid-piece, reacting audibly (either positively or negatively) during and after the end of the movement. There is no need to be aggressively theatrical or over-the-top: what works best is to be as "natural" as possible: greet friends in the audience and have real conversations with them that you might have under other circumstances; introduce yourself to people you don't know; discuss the music that you're listening to; and, at times, simply listen quietly. This will likely be very disruptive to the rest of the audience, so do what you can avoid pulling the focus completely from the performers – always maintain the role of an audience member. (Keeping the conversation volume relatively low can help with this.) The idea is to play up the tension between two distinct modes of audience etiquette, not to relegate the music entirely to the background.

Some notes for specific instruments:

Strings:

All four string instruments should use a distortion pedal with a pickup microphone and standard PA speakers. (If absolutely necessary, the piece can be played without distortion. In this case, the cello should be off stage for movement 3.) No specific brand or setting (gain, level, etc.) is recommended, as

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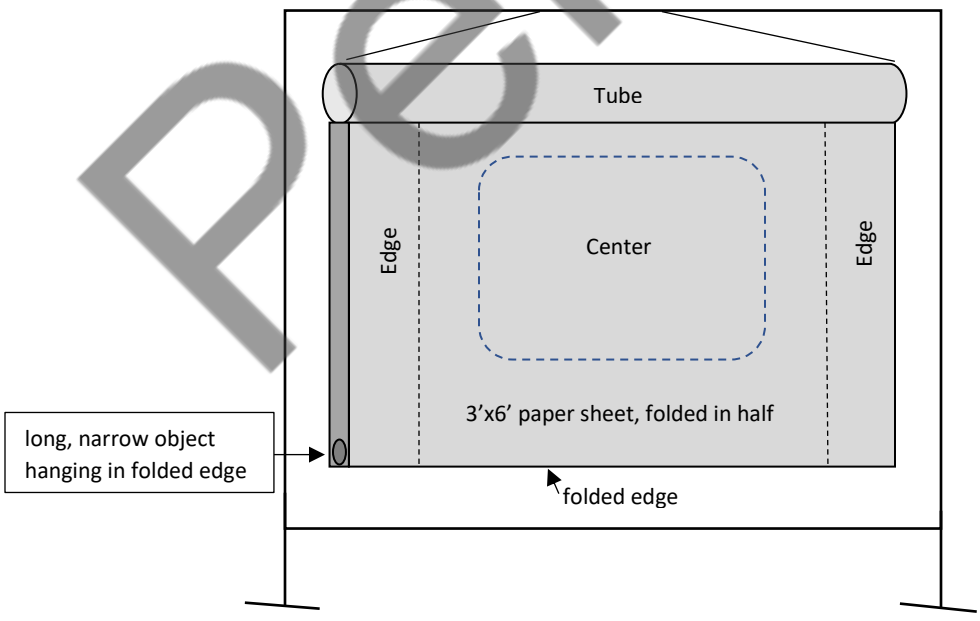
these may need to vary from situation to situation. The goal should be to find the right balance between tone quality and volume: the most possible distortion without drowning out the other instruments. Violin and viola should use distortion on movements 1 and 4; bass on movements 1, 3, and 4.

Cello should also use distortion on movements 1, 3, and 4; on movement 3 the equalization should be adjusted to maximize high frequencies and minimize low frequencies. (At the premiere, the low EQ was turned all the way down, mid all the way up, high halfway up.) Again, if no distortion is used, the cello should play this movement off stage.

No distortion should be used on the first Interlude.

Percussion:

Preludio: The paper instrument is made from a roll of standard heavy postal wrapping paper, approximately 3 feet wide. The center cardboard tube should be removed from the roll and should have twine or wire strung through its center, from which it is hung horizontally from a tam-tam frame, or something like it. (It is easiest to play if it's at eye level.) A sheet roughly 3' x 6' should be taken from the roll and folded in half (resulting in a roughly 3'x3' square), and then suspended below the tube. The "meeting" edges of the sheet should be attached to the tube (tape is fine) and the folded edge should be at the bottom, with some kind of long narrow object (like a dowel or curtain rod) hanging inside the fold to keep the sheet from moving too easily. This instrument should be played with dowel rods (AKA bundle sticks, Hot Rods, etc.) in three locations: the 3-inch strips along the right and left edge of the sheet (resulting in a splashier, brighter sound), the center of the sheet (a darker, more muffled sound), and the tube itself. It may be necessary to amplify the instrument. See illustration.



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In the part, the edge is notated on the bottom staff, the center on the middle staff, and the tube on the top staff, in order to correspond roughly to vertical position of the places on the instrument. Experimentation with construction, size, and performance is encouraged. If for some reason, using this instrument is absolutely impossible, three drums (also played with dowel rods) may be substituted: small snare for the edge part, large snare (snares off) for the center part, and large field drum (without snares) for the tube part.

Passacaglia: This movement is very difficult for one player. At minimum, some sort of mount will be required for the vibraslap, and all but the most accurate percussionists may wish to have some kind of flat, wide surface attached to the vibraslap ball which widens the striking area of the instrument without stifling the vibration. At the premiere, the vibraslap part was played by the conductor.

Aira: This is all improvised – see the notation in the score. The actual instruments used are at the discretion of the performer. Some adjectives for the part might be sparse, floating, atmospheric, spacious, airy, etc.

Keyboard:

This part may be played on a synthesizer (such as a Nord), acoustic instruments, or a combination of both. A combination of both provides the best effect.

Preludio/Fuga: While theoretically playable on harpsichord, not all instruments will have the range or action necessary to execute it. At the premiere, these movements were played on a Nord, with the RM effect adding a distortion-like effect. (See score)

Passacaglia/Interlude 3 (Variations): Best on a typical acoustic grand piano. If on synthesizer, use standard grand piano sound.

Interlude 2 (Ballade): Best on an out-of-tune upright. If on synthesizer, use upright piano sound. (While it may not be possible for the synthesizer to be out of tune, feel free to adjust whatever settings are necessary to make the instrument sound as low-quality as possible.)

Aria: Celesta, or celesta sound on a synthesizer.

Vocalist:

Ideally, the vocalist for Interlude 2 should be a member of the ensemble, though it isn't necessary. Versions for high and low voice are included; male voice is preferred. At the premiere, this movement was sung by the conductor.

Partita was made possible by a grant from Idaho State University and written for Dr. Shandra Helman and the Idaho State University music faculty. The premiere took place at ISU's Goranson Hall on January 21, 2017. The piece was subsequently performed at the National Association for Music Education Northwest Division Conference in Bellevue, WA on February 18, 2017.

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Partita for Mixed Dectet "Steampunk"

by Grant Harville

Perusal

Score 2 (Interludes, Aria Cello Part)

1. Preludio: The Gilbourne Line Takes on Horses at Kingsfirth for an Additional 3 Shillings

Interlude: Trio in B-Dur, op. 24 (Allegro), von Herr P. A. Kreusser

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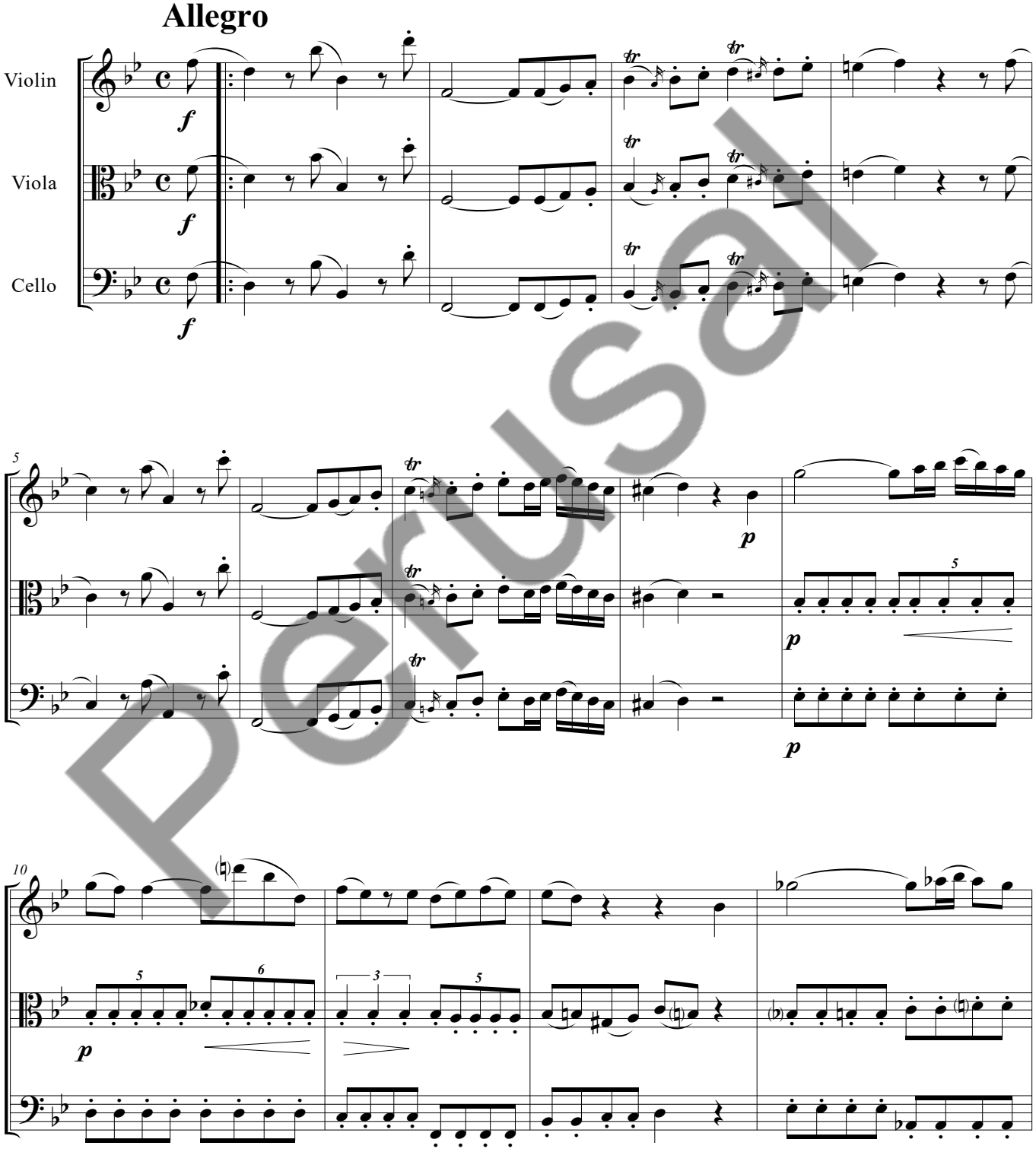
Interlude: Trio in B-Dur, op. 24 (Allegro), von Herr P. A. Kreusser

for violin, viola, and cello



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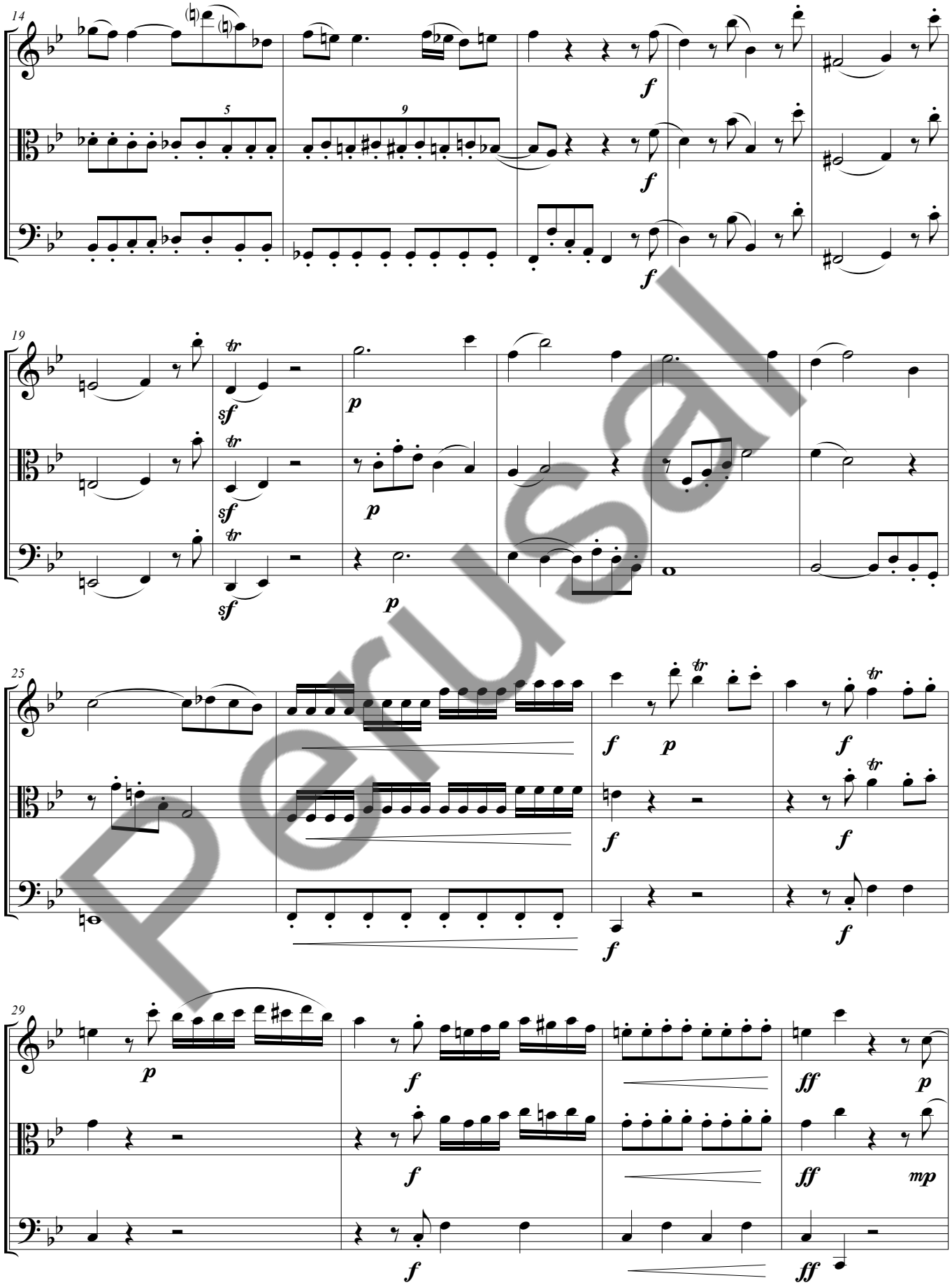

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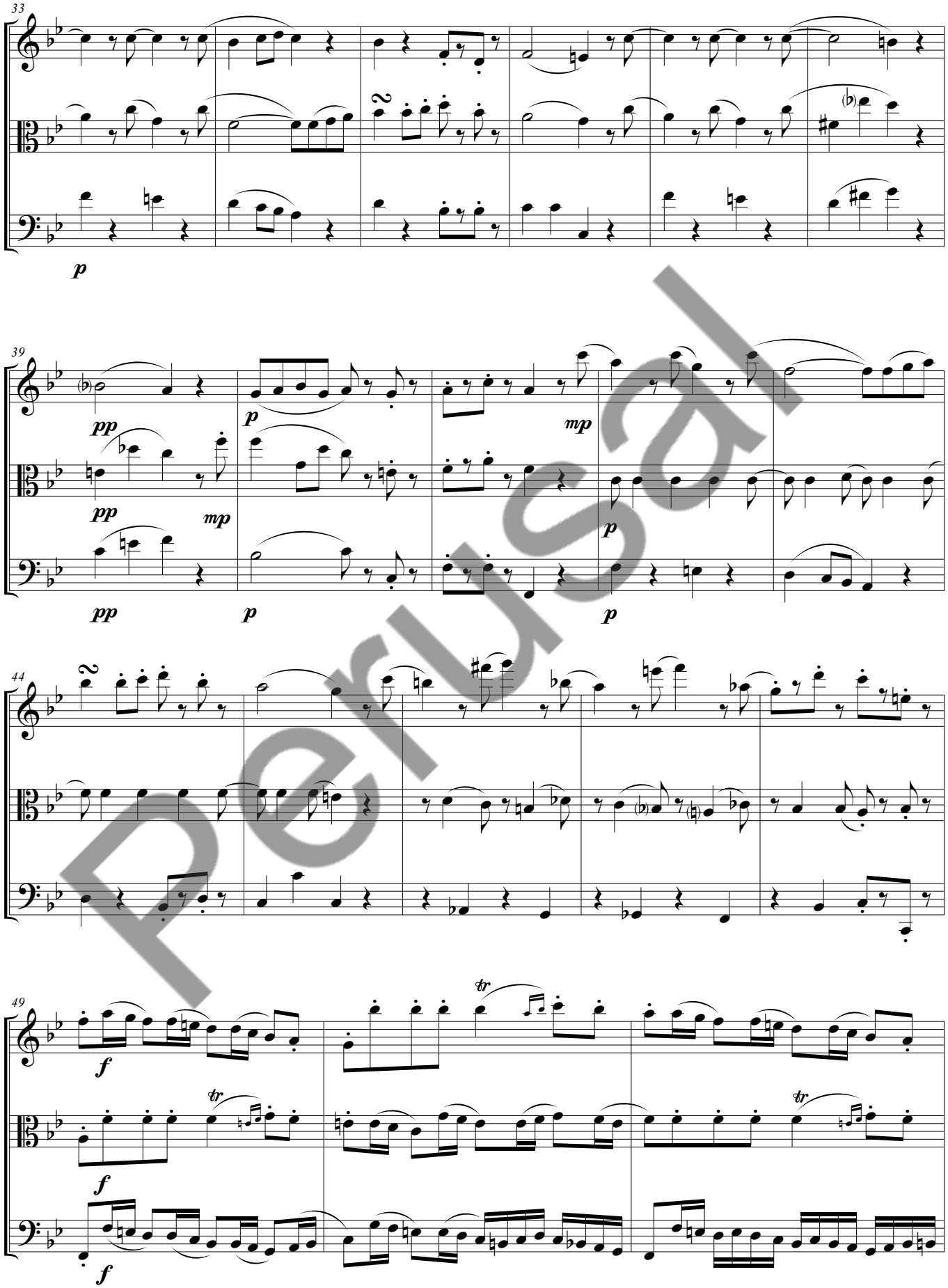

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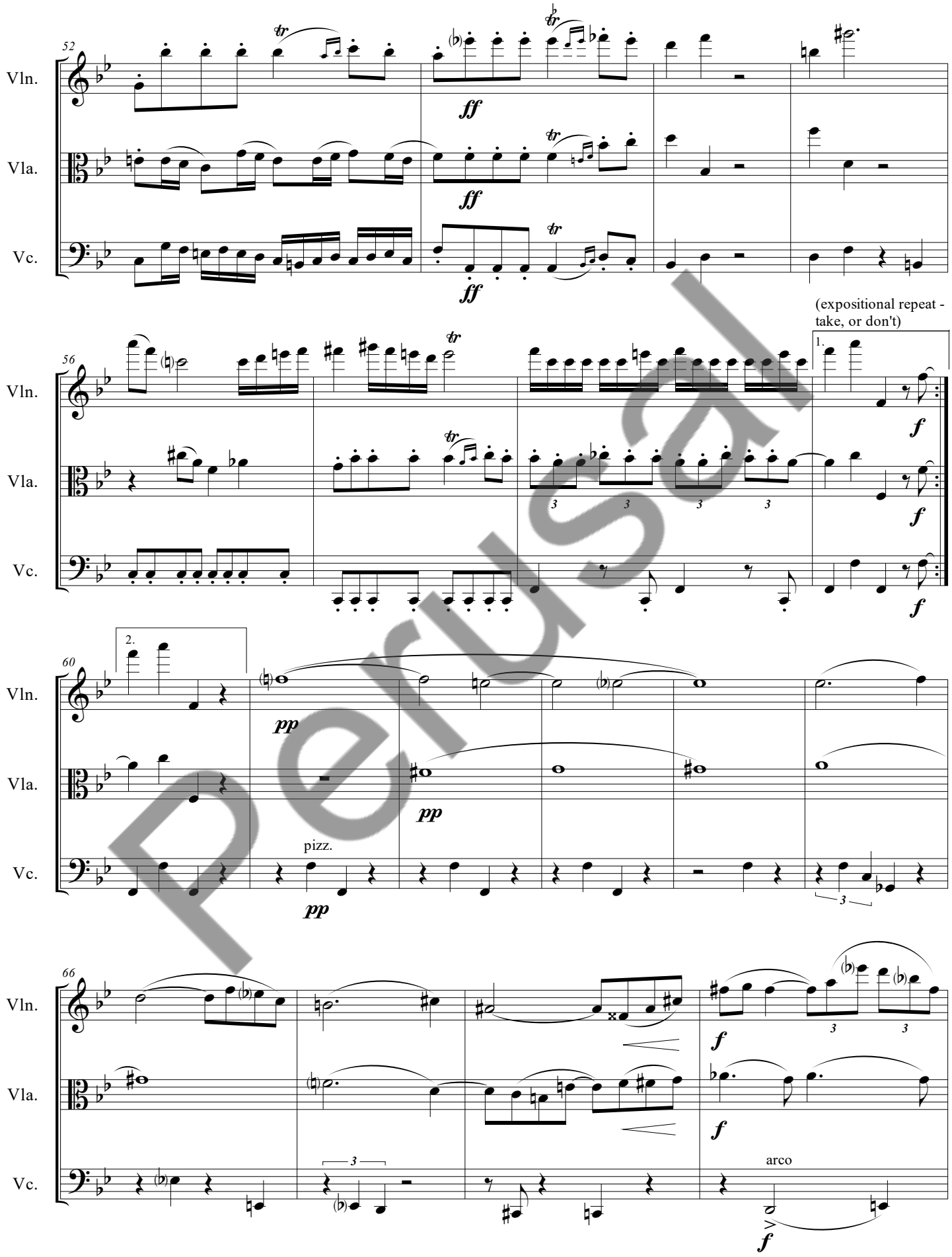
52
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
ff
56
(expositional repeat - take, or don't)
1.
f
2.
60
pp
pizz.
66
arco

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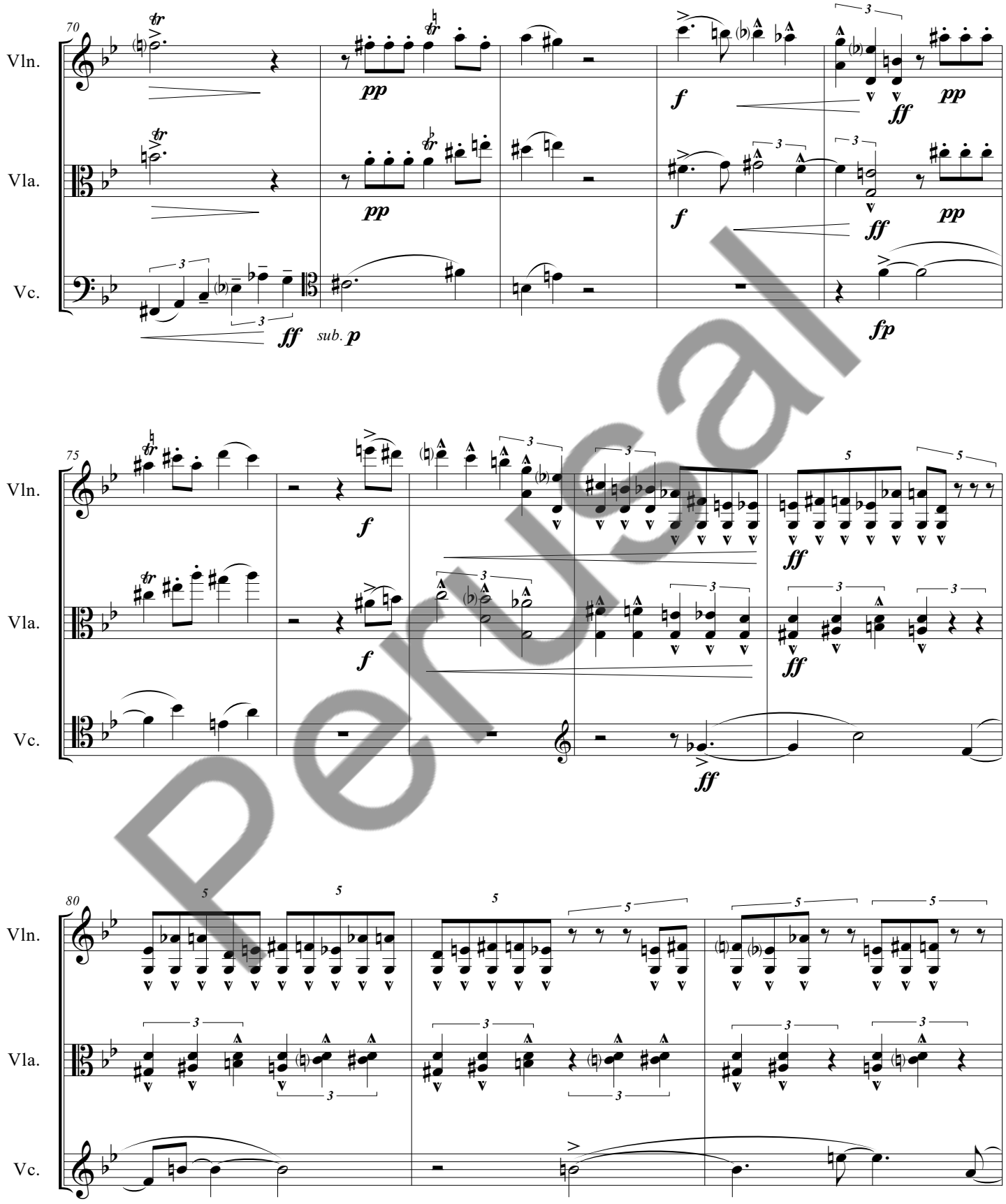

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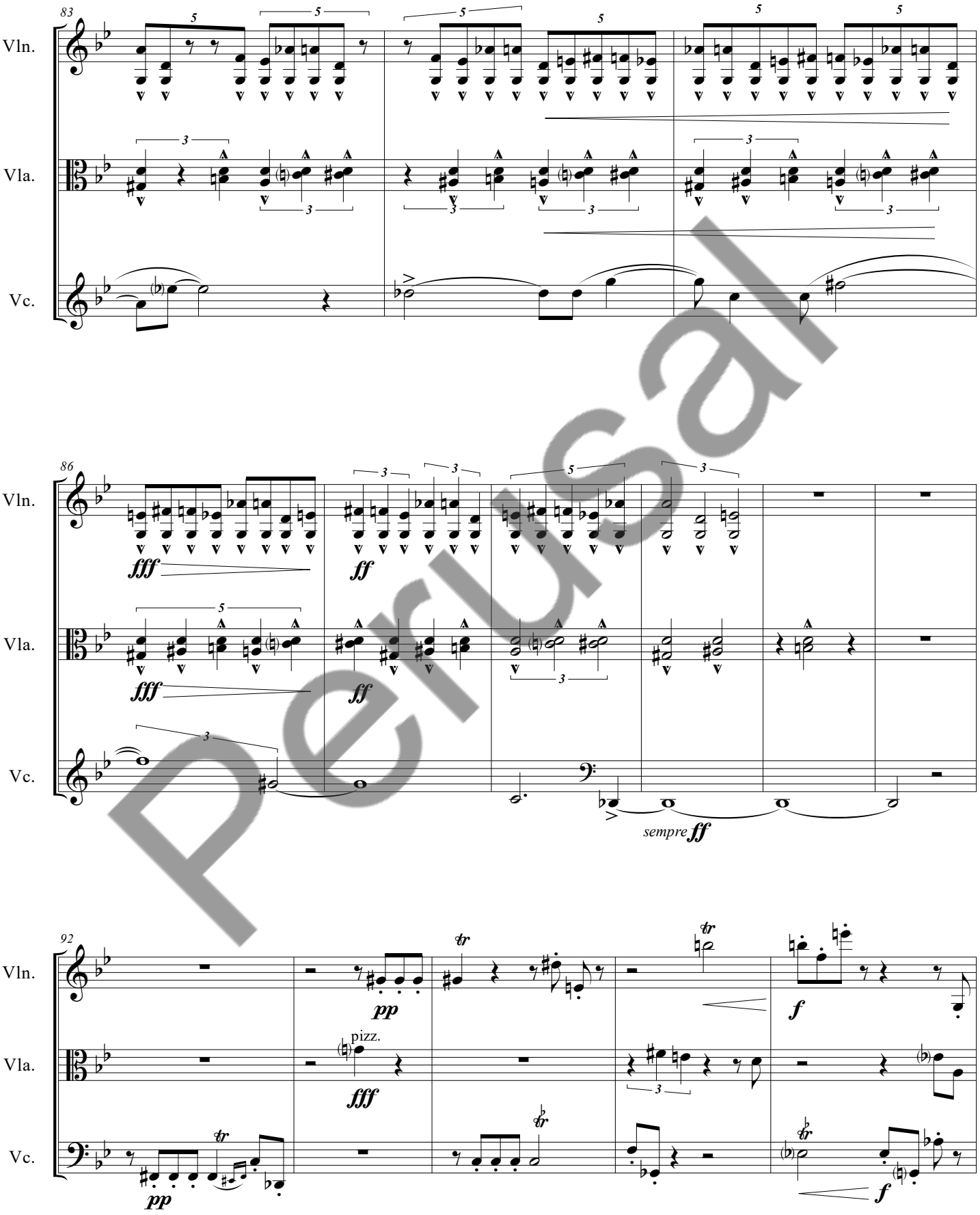

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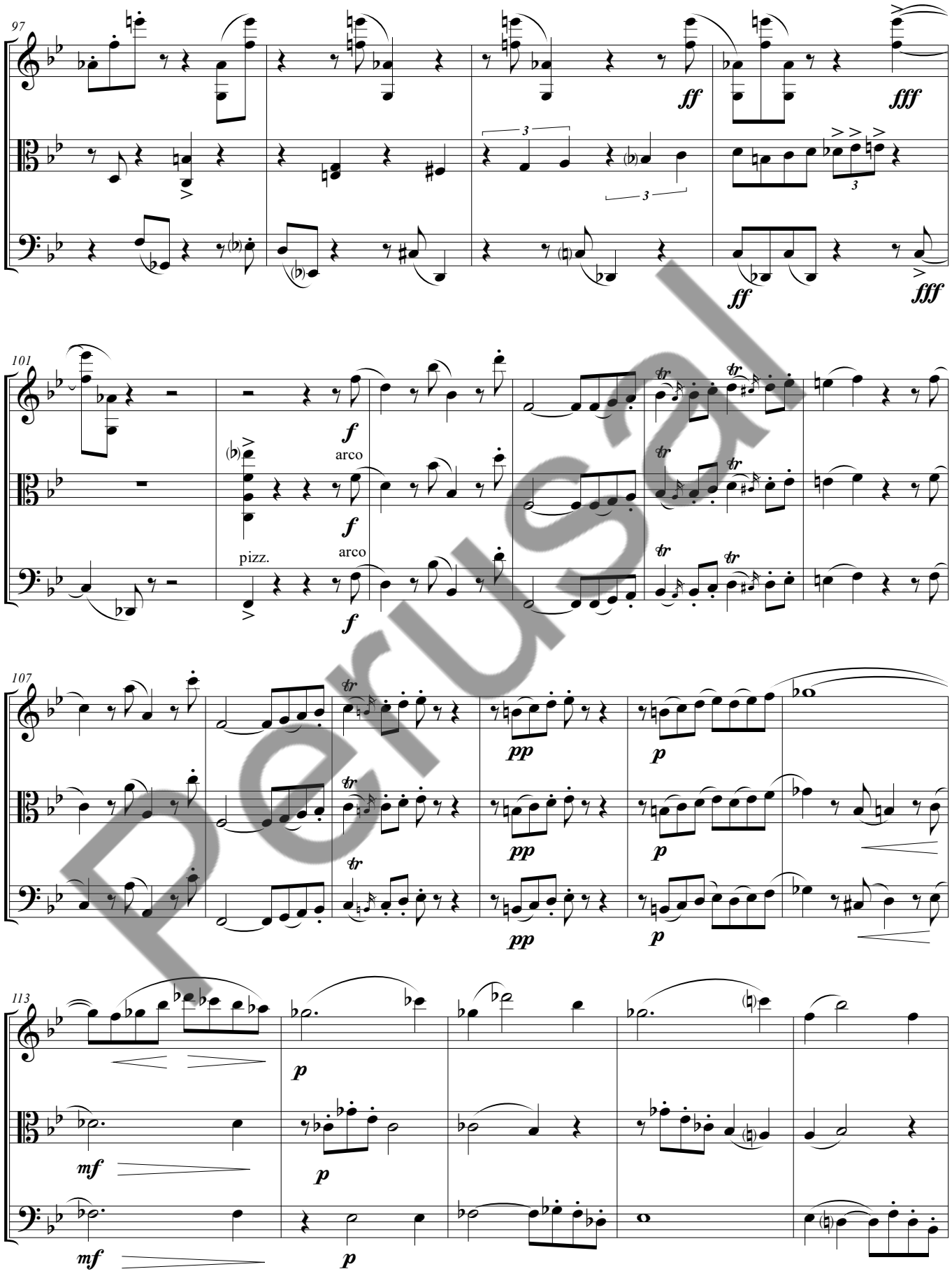

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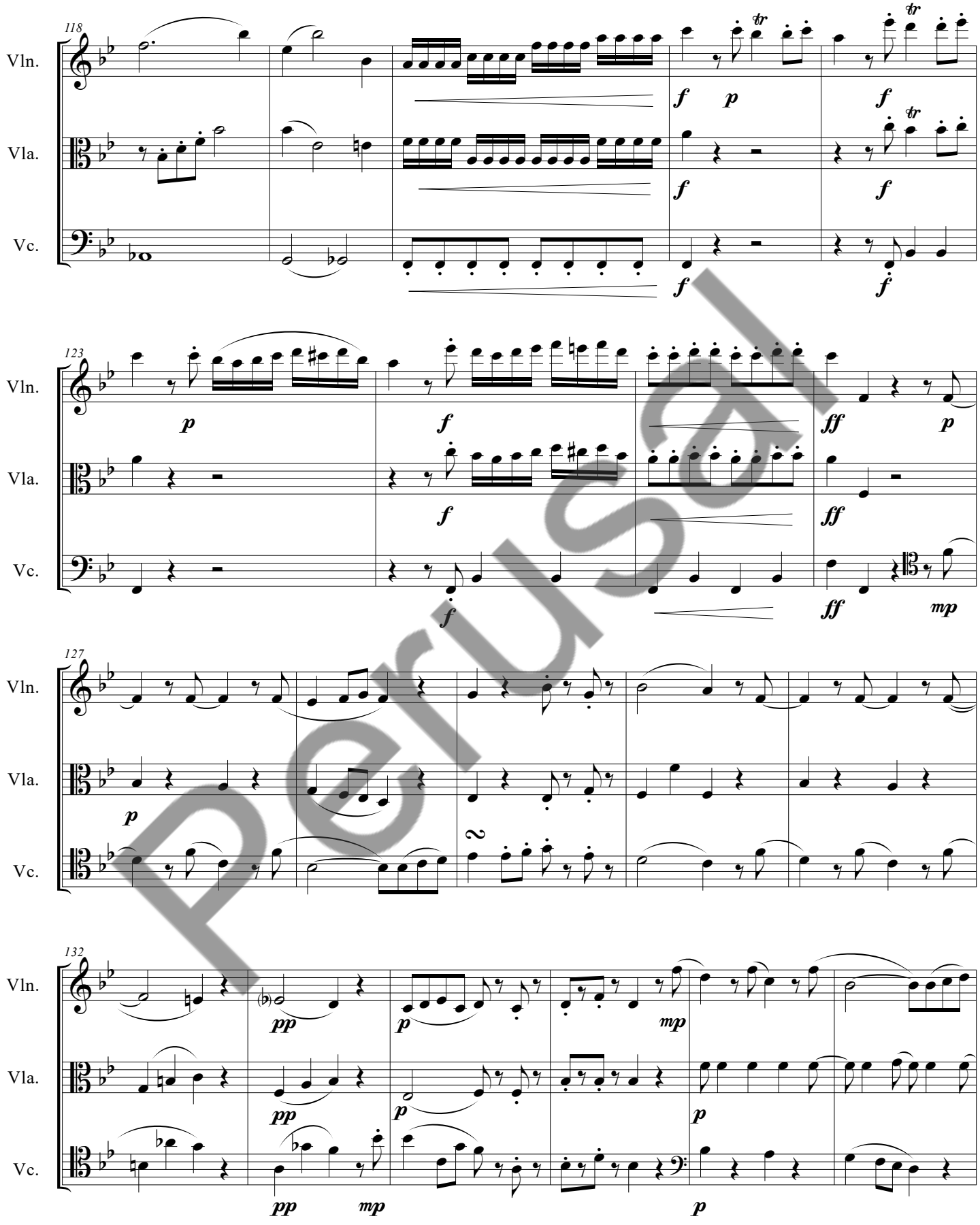
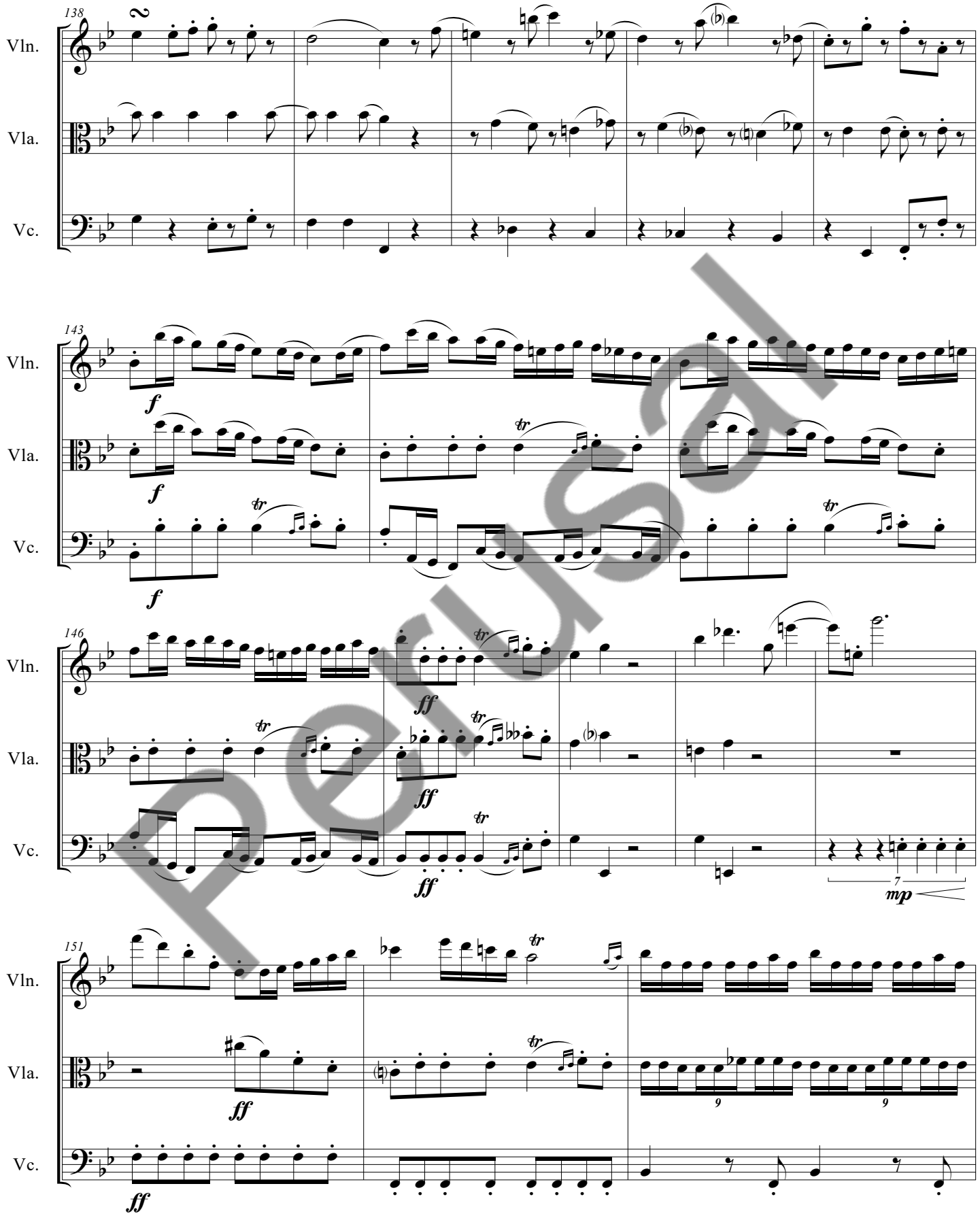

118
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
f
p
f
f
f
f
f
123
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
f
ff
p
f
f
ff
f
ff
mp
127
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
p
2
132
Vln.
Vla.
Vc.
pp
p
mp
pp
p
p
pp
mp
p

Perusal



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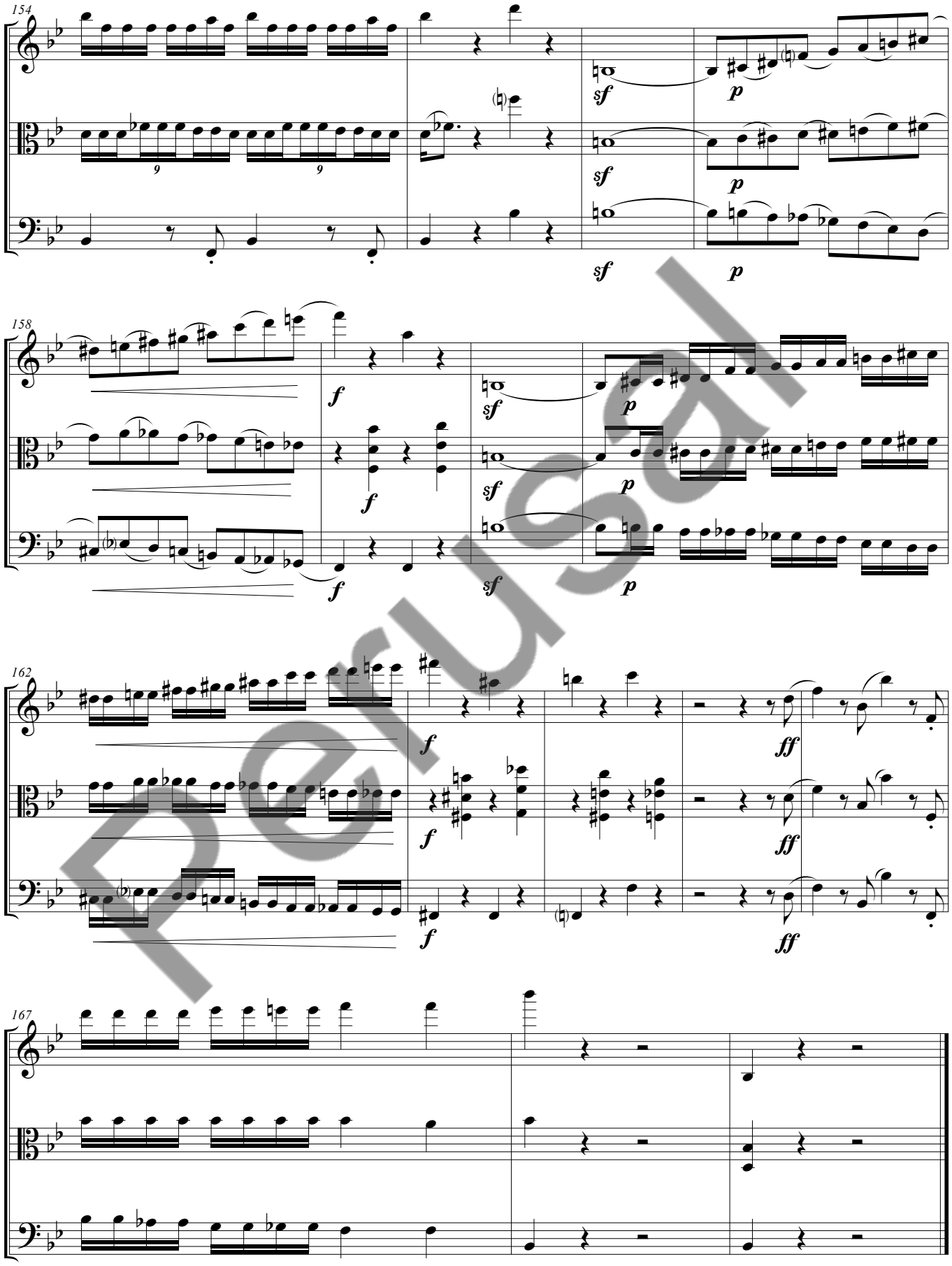
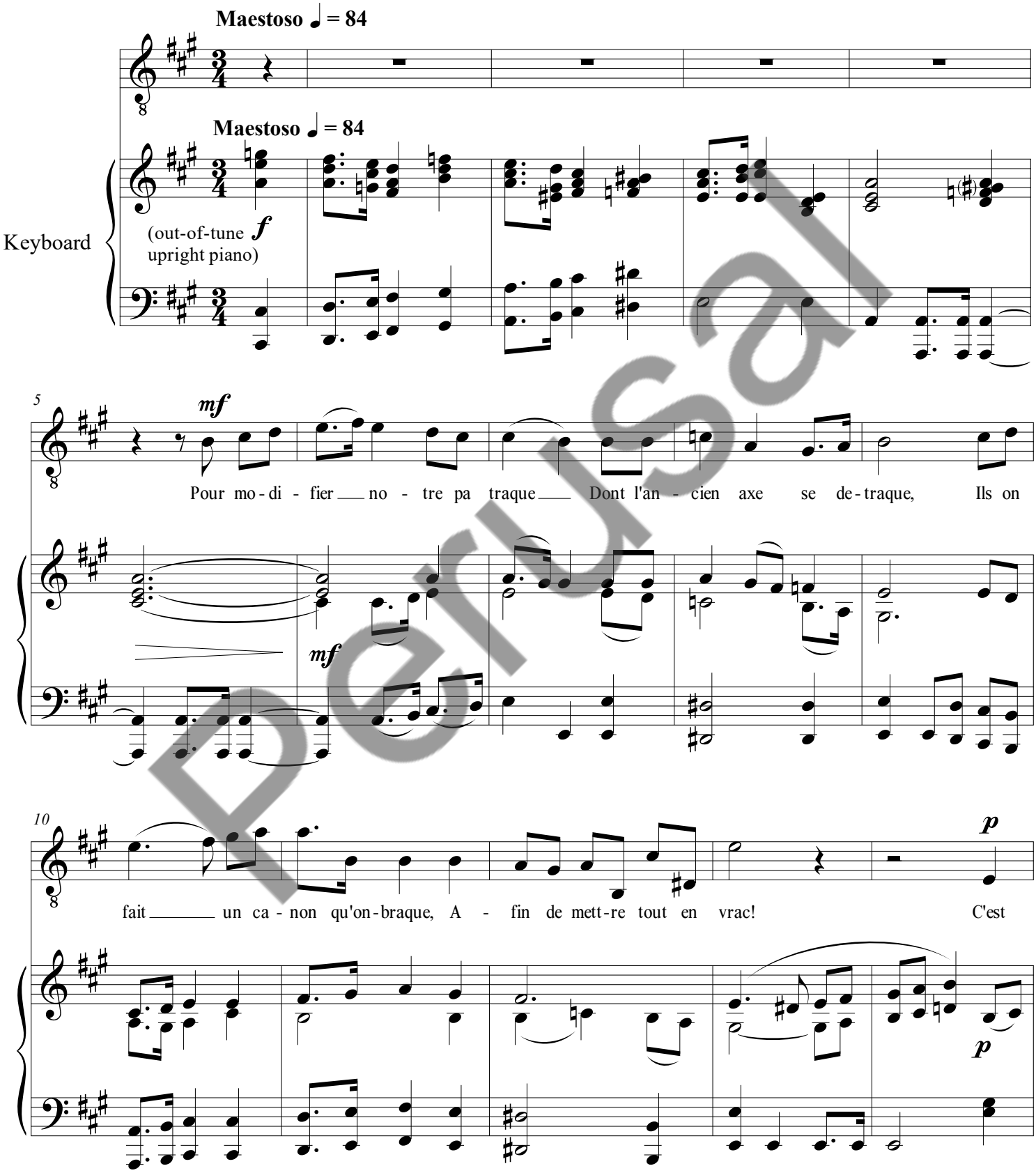


Perusal

Interlude: A Ballade by M. Coppée - “Pour modifier notre patraque”

version for high voice and keyboard

Text: Jules Verne



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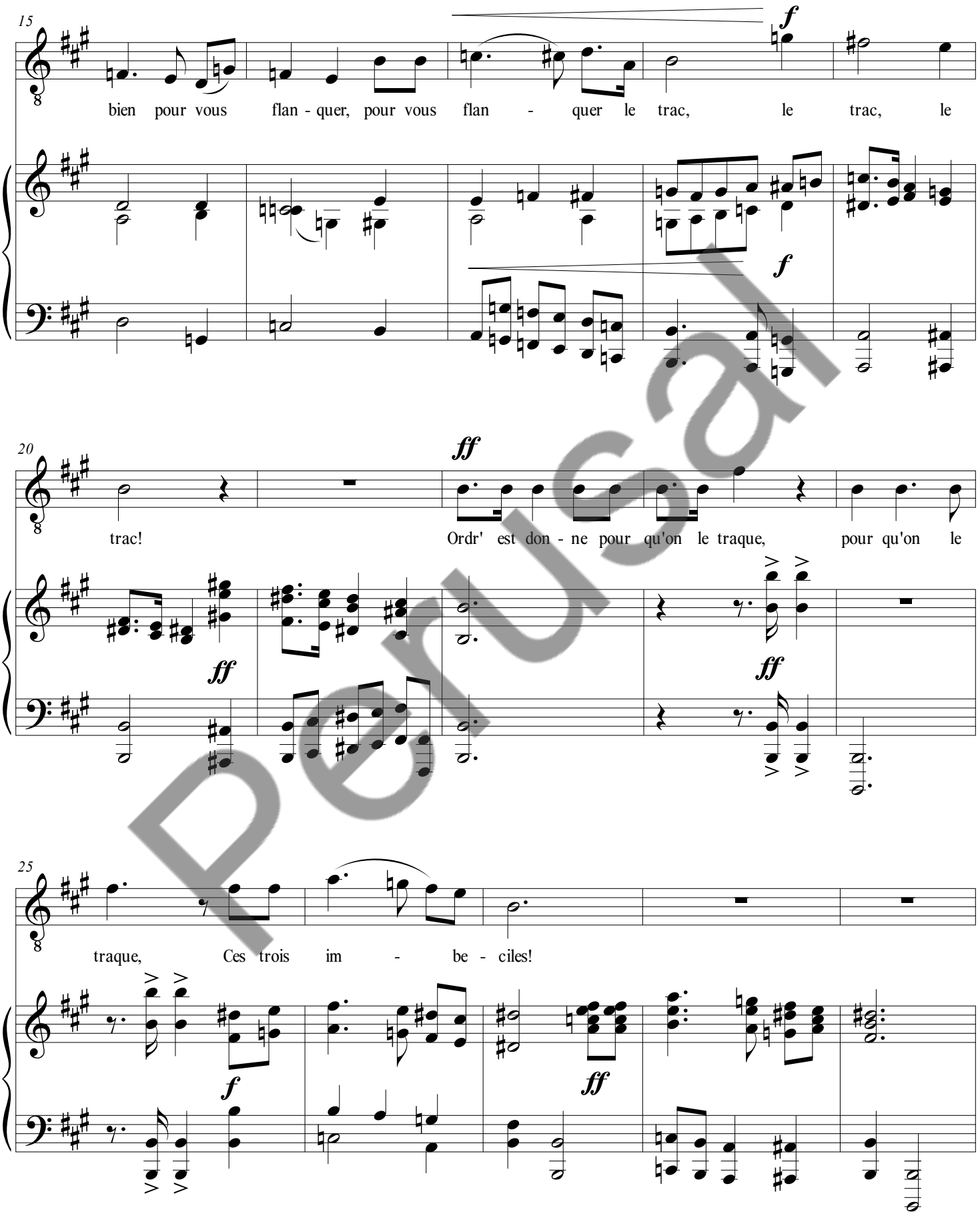
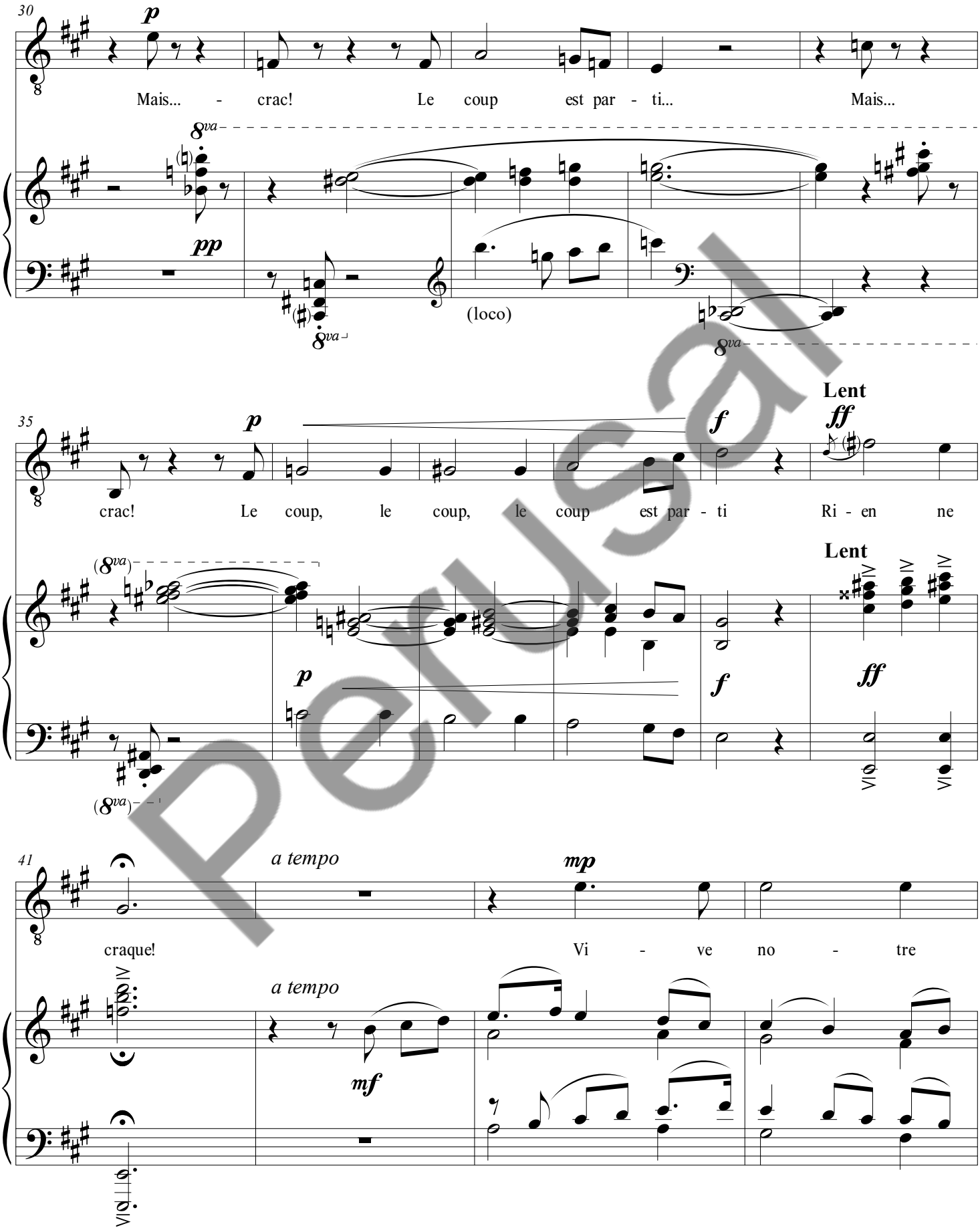
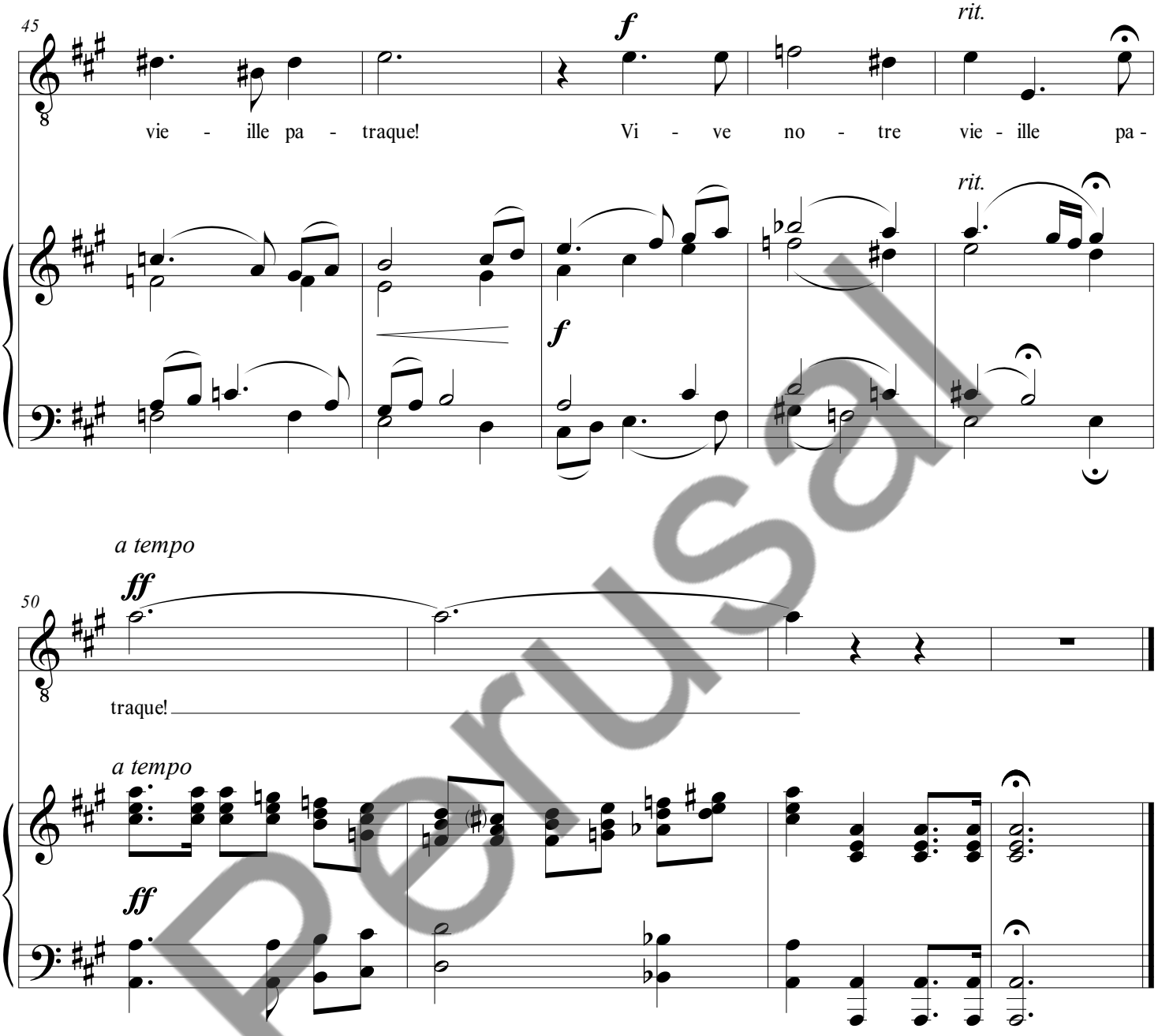

15
bien pour vous flan - quer, pour vous flan - quer le trac, le trac, le
f
f
20
trac!
Ordr' est don - ne pour qu'on le traque, pour qu'on le
ff
ff
ff
25
traque, Ces trois im - be - ciles!
f
ff

Perusal


30
p
Mais... - crac! Le coup est par - ti... Mais...
8va
pp
(loco)
35
p
f
Lent
ff
crac! Le coup, le coup, le coup est par - ti Ri - en ne
(8va)
Lent
p
f
ff
41
a tempo
mp
craque! Vi - ve no - tre
a tempo
mf

Perusal

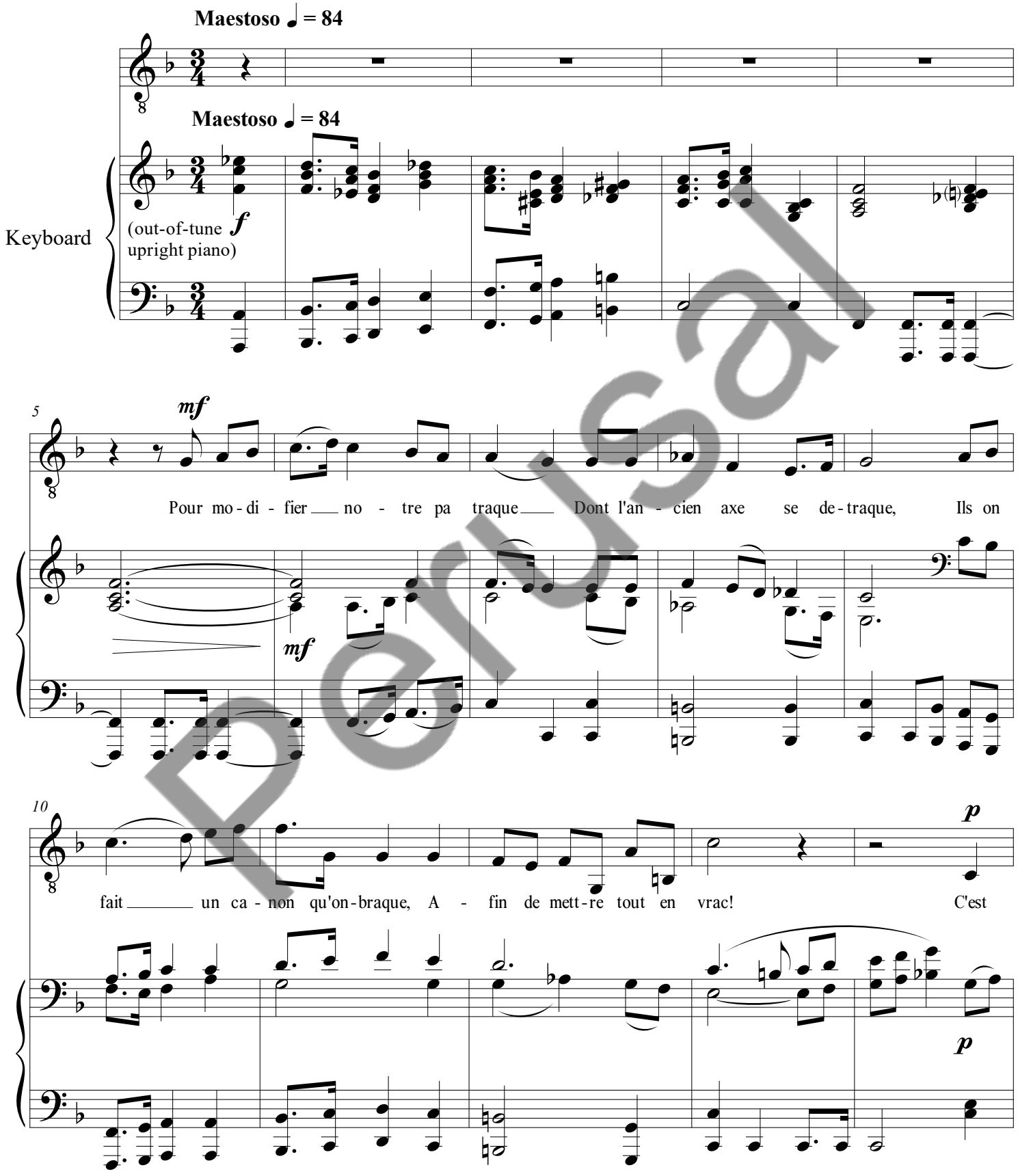

45
f
rit.
vie - ille pa - traque!
Vi - ve no - tre vie - ille pa -
rit.
f
a tempo
ff
50
traque!
a tempo
ff

Perusal

Interlude: A Ballade by M. Coppée - “Pour modifier notre patraque”

version for low voice and keyboard

Text: Jules Verne



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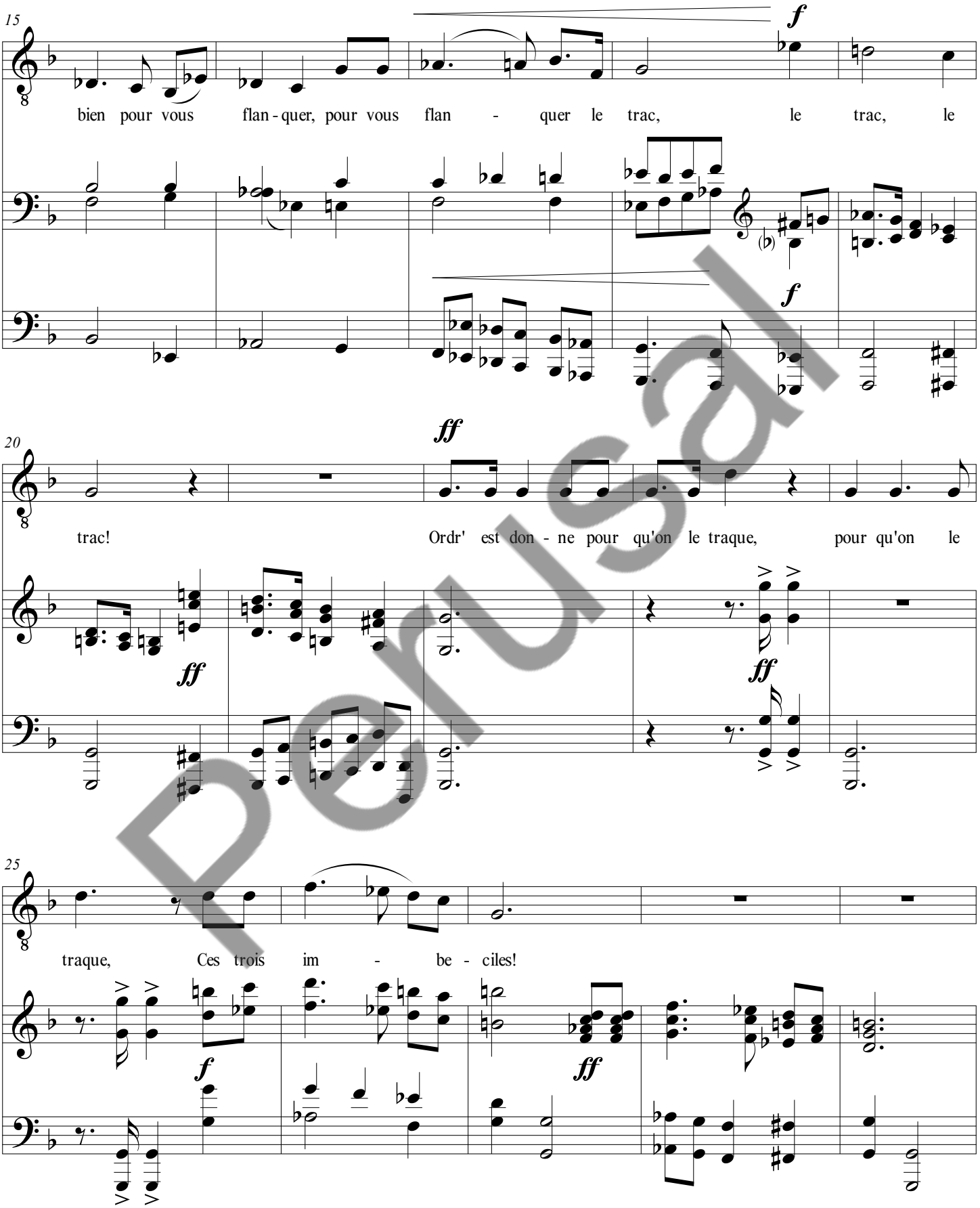
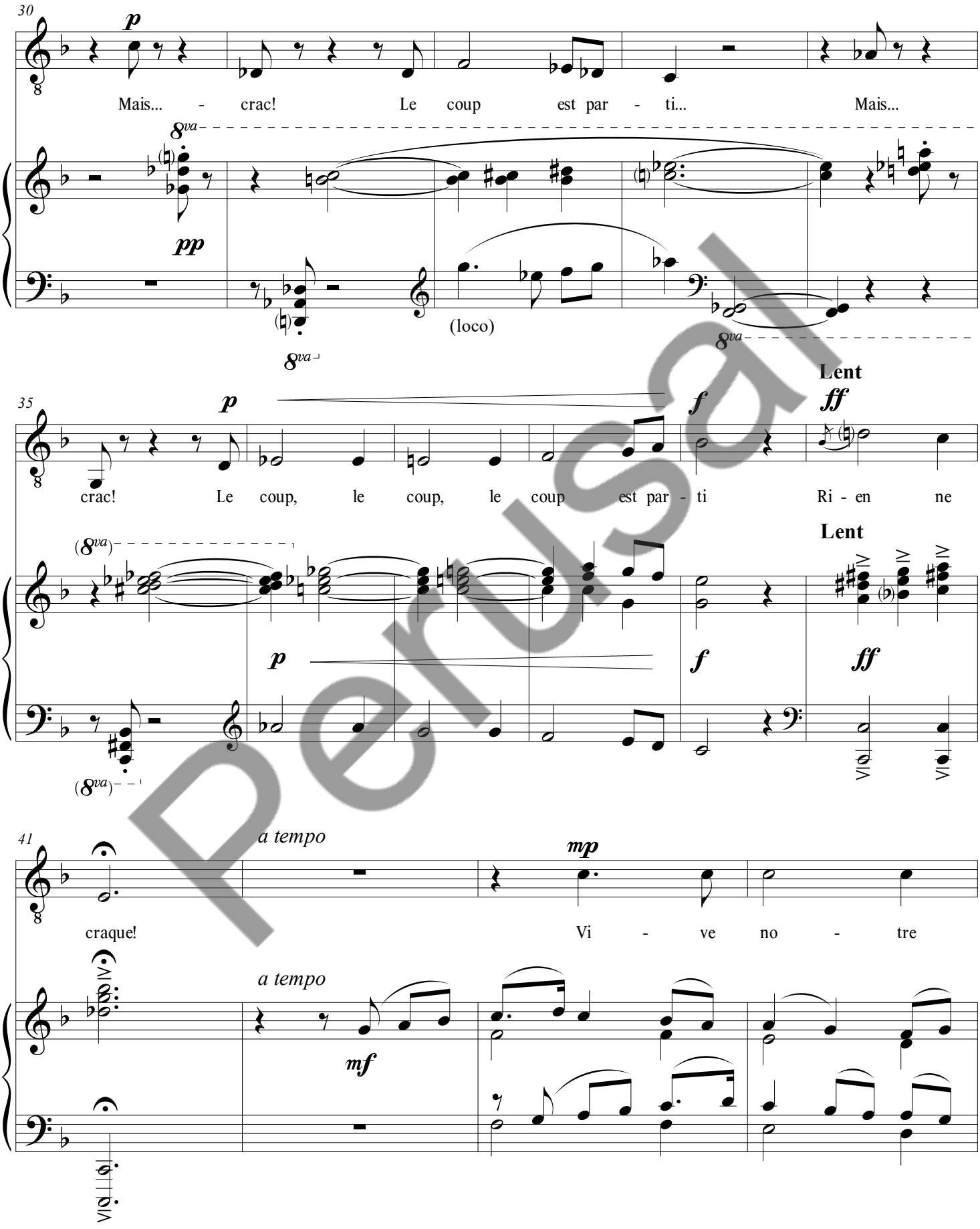
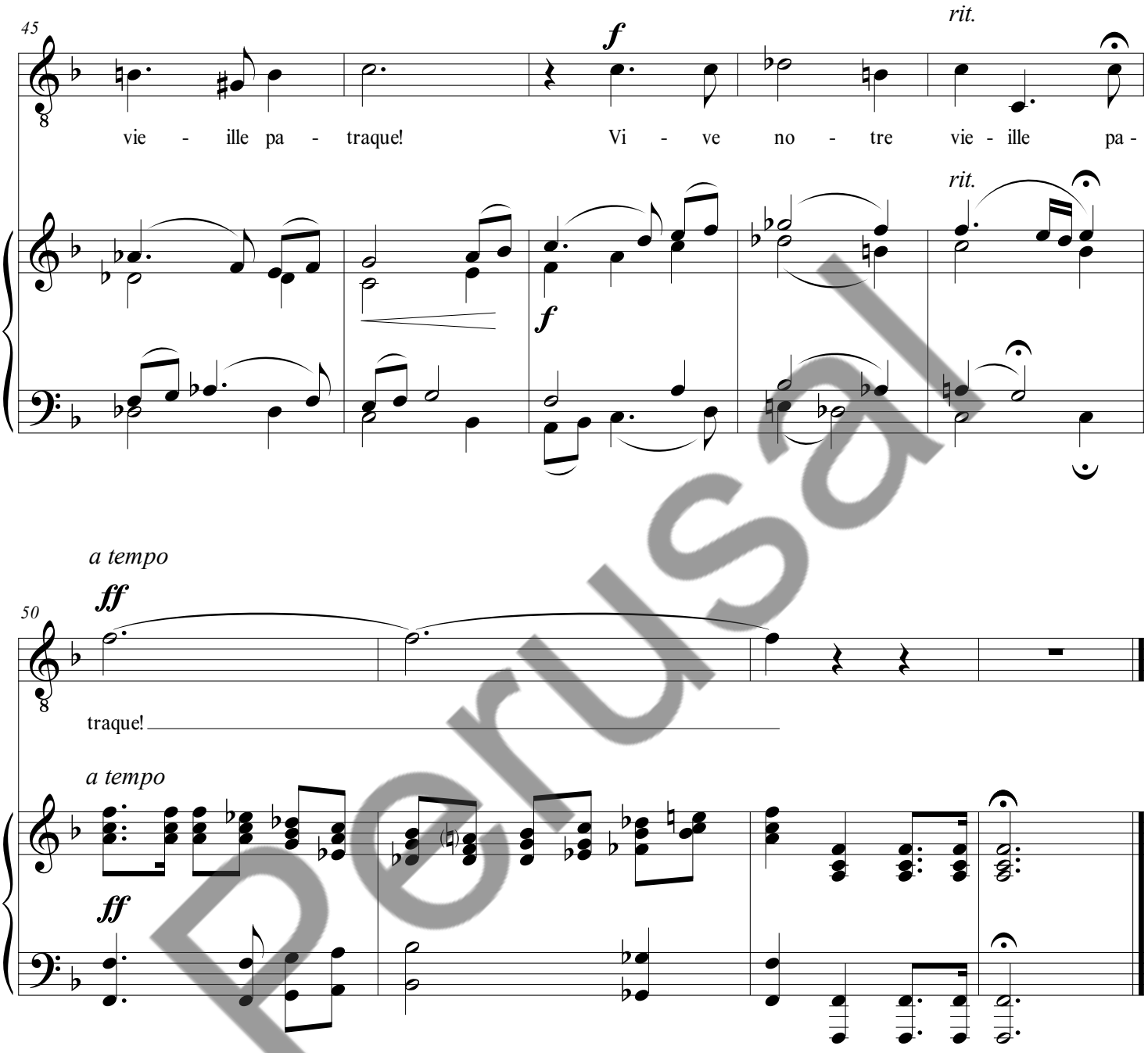

15
bien pour vous flan - quer, pour vous flan - quer le trac, le trac, le
f
f
20
trac! Ordr' est don - ne pour qu'on le traque, pour qu'on le
ff
ff
ff
25
traque, Ces trois im - be - ciles!
f
ff

Perusal


30
p
Mais... - crac! Le coup est par - ti... Mais...
8va
pp
(loco)
35
p
f
ff
Lent
crac! Le coup, le coup, le coup est par - ti Ri - en ne
(8va)
41
a tempo
mp
craque! Vi - ve no - tre
mf

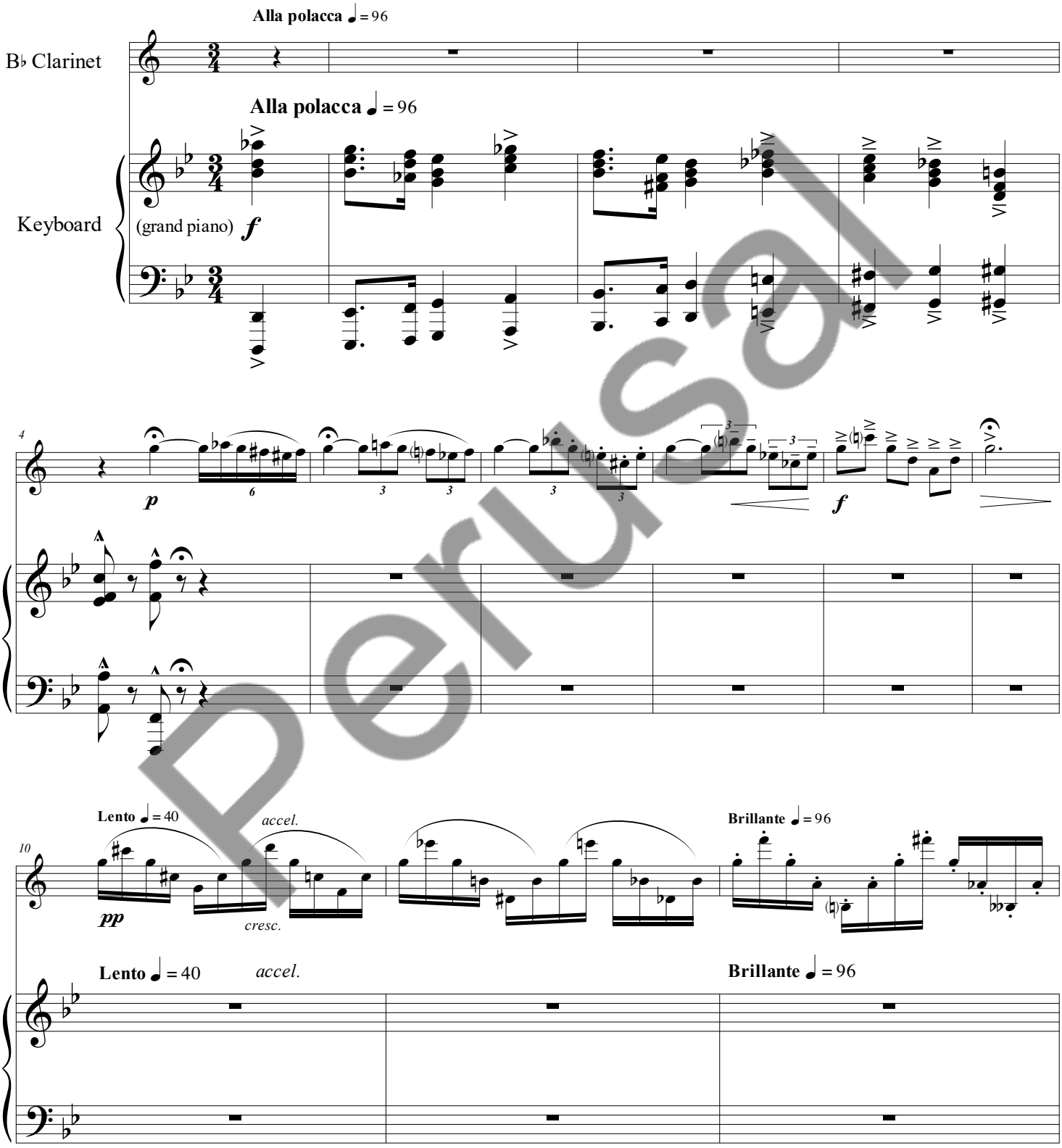
Perusal


45
f
rit.
vie - ille pa - traque!
Vi - ve no - tre vie - ille pa -
rit.
f
a tempo
ff
50
traque!
a tempo
ff

Perusal

Interlude: Variations Brillantes on a French Popular Song, by Mr. Tolhurst (Miss Fieldhouse)

for clarinet and keyboard



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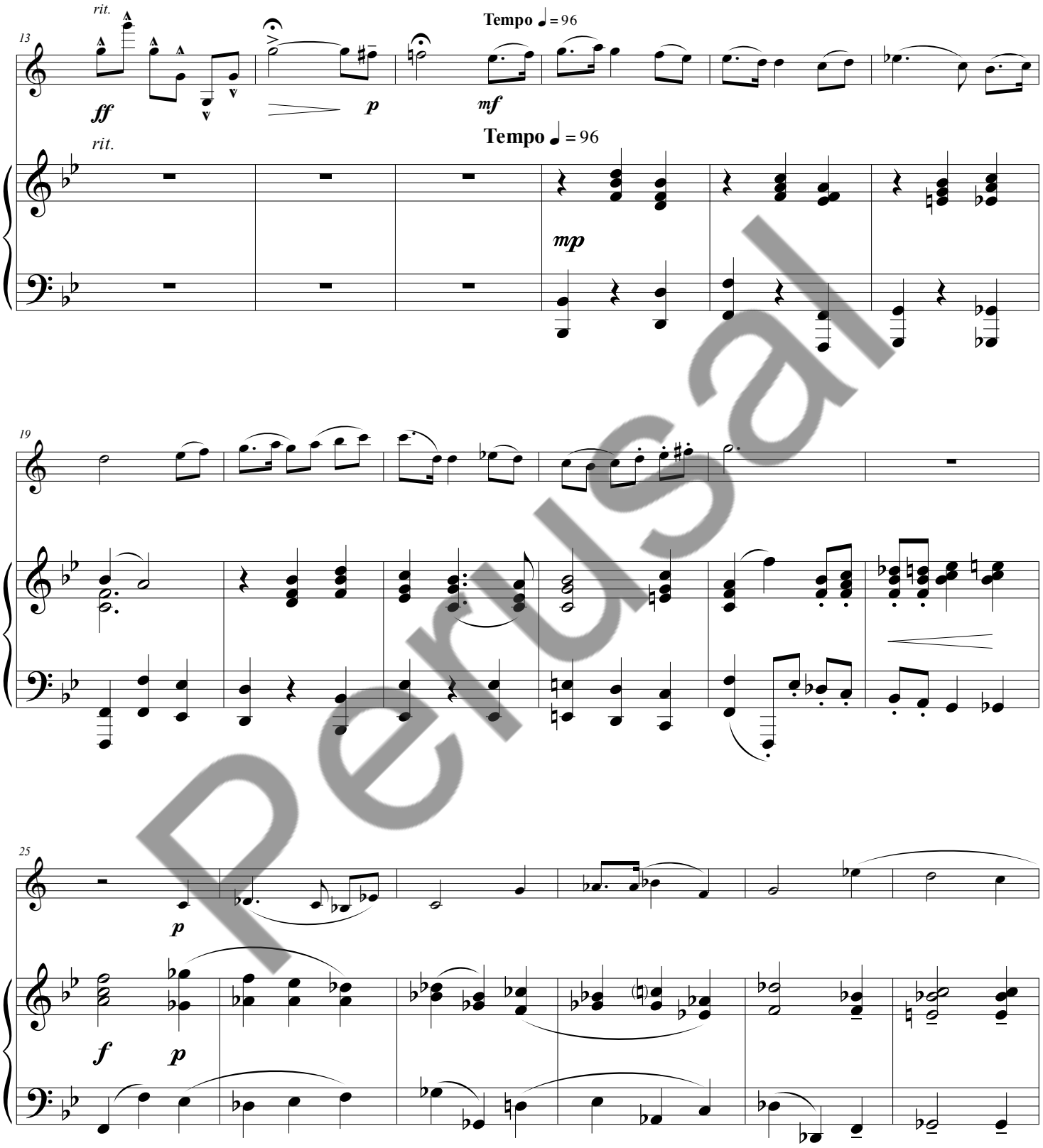

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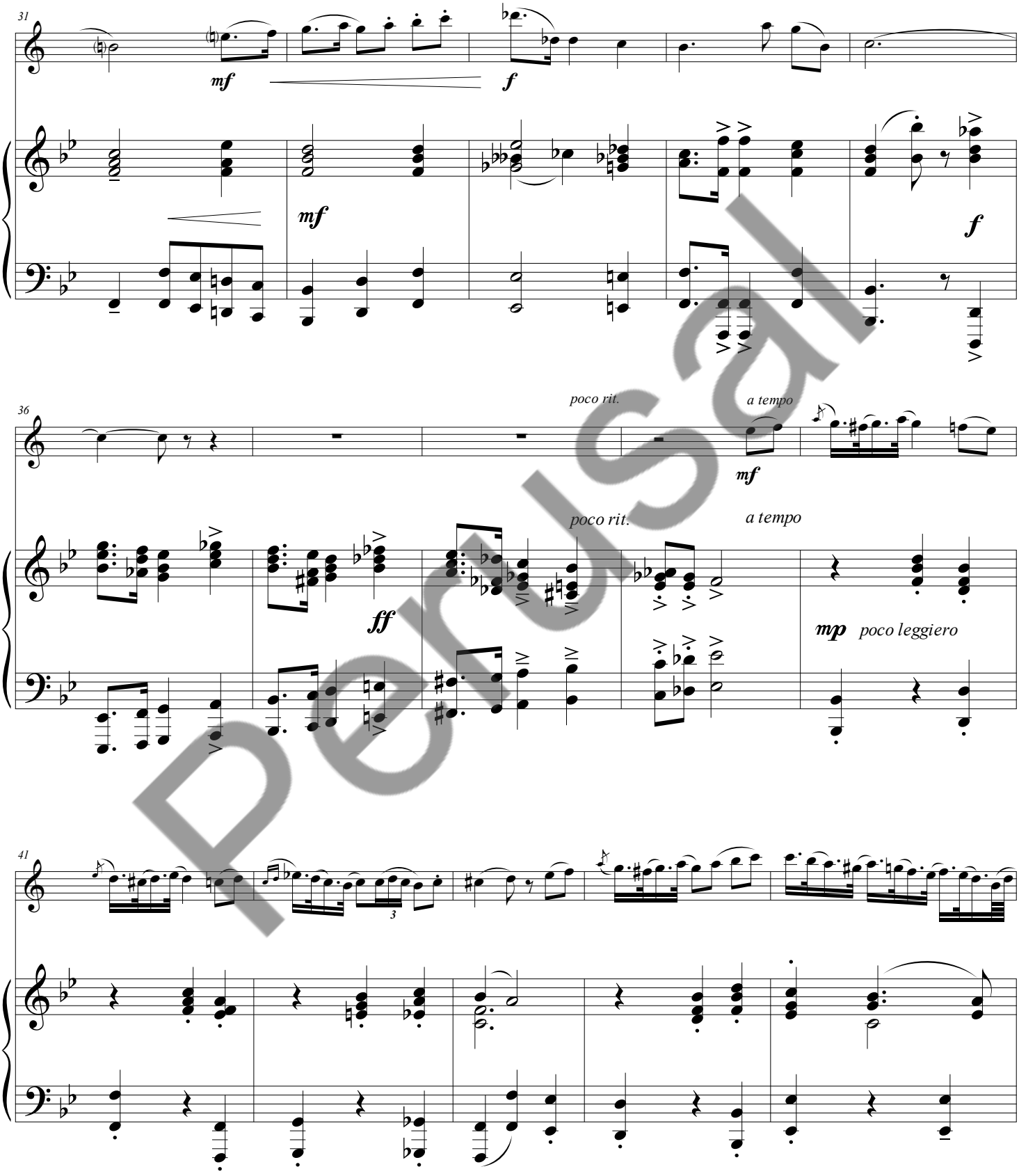
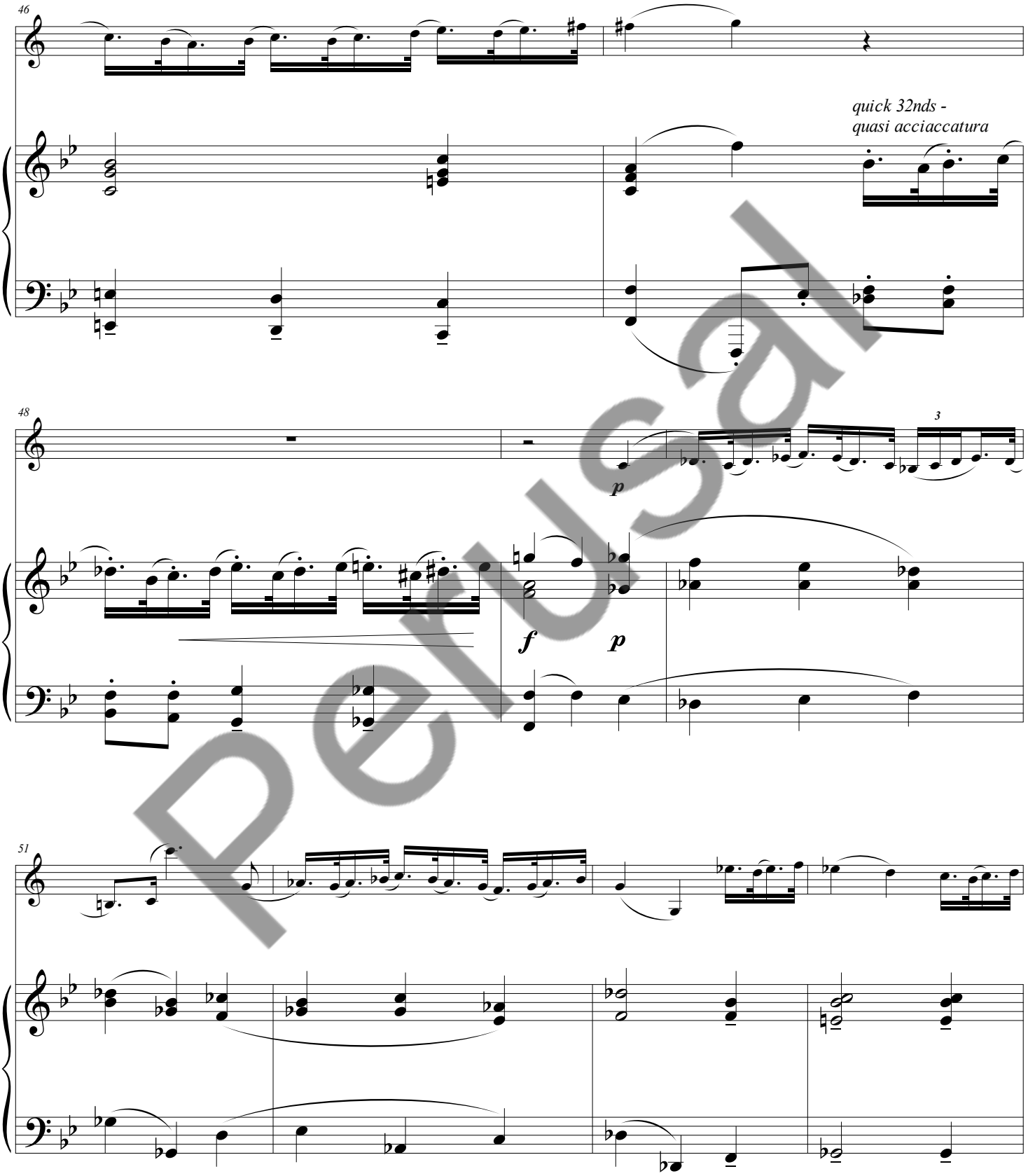

31
mf
f
mf
f
36
poco rit.
a tempo
mf
poco rit.
a tempo
ff
mp poco leggiero
41
3

Perusal



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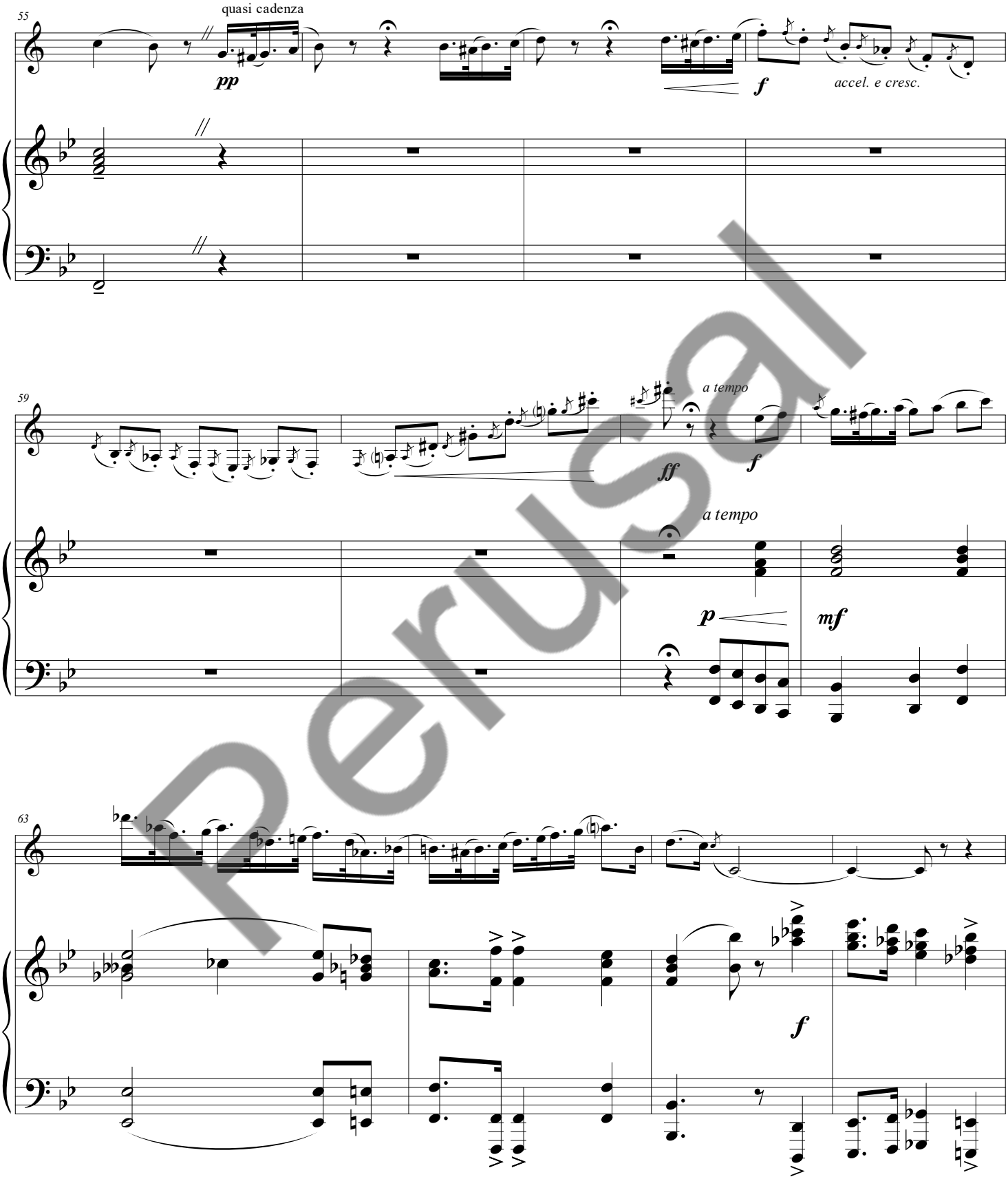
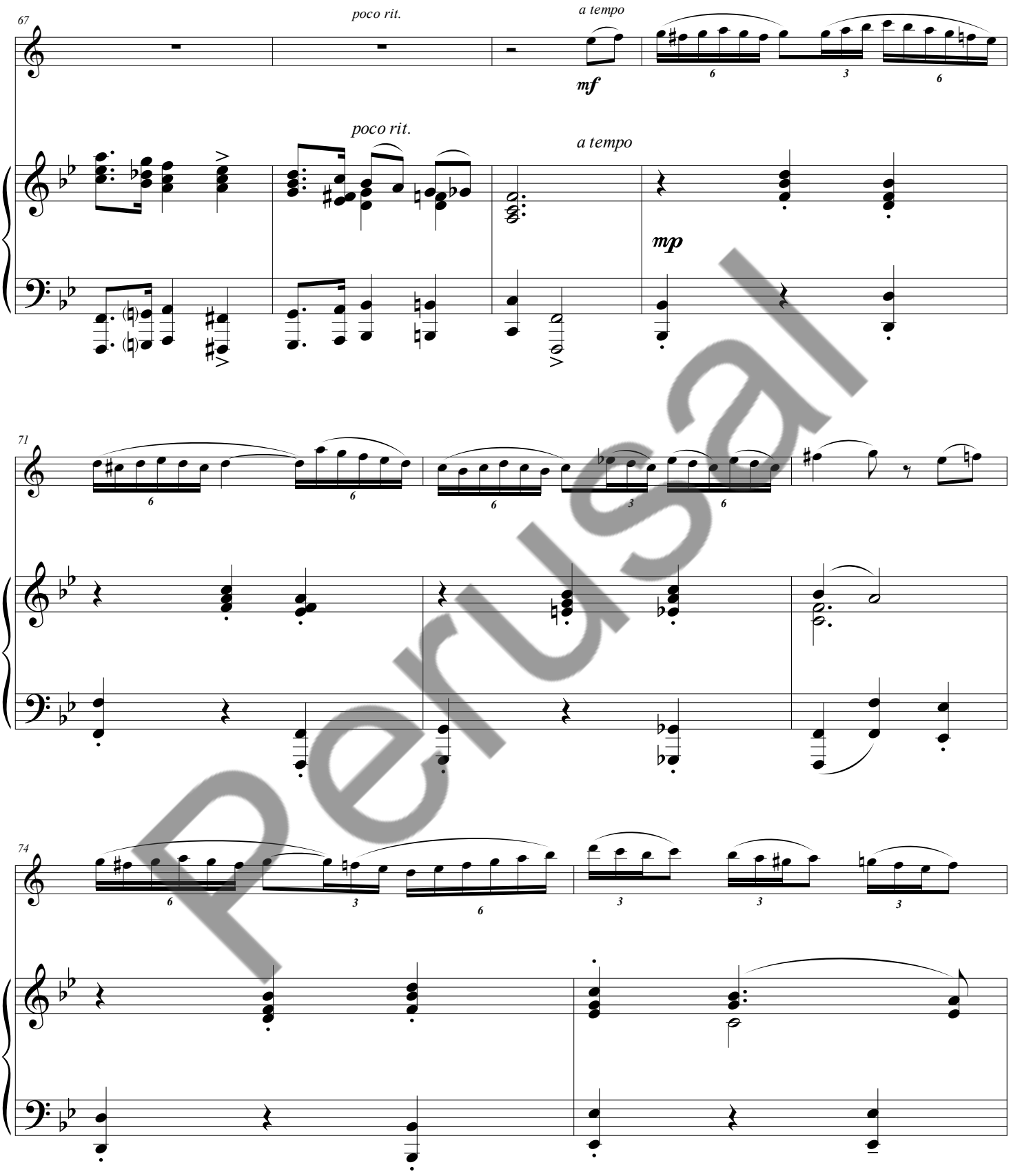

55
quasi cadenza
pp
f
accel. e cresc.
59
a tempo
ff
f
a tempo
p
mf
63
f

Perusal



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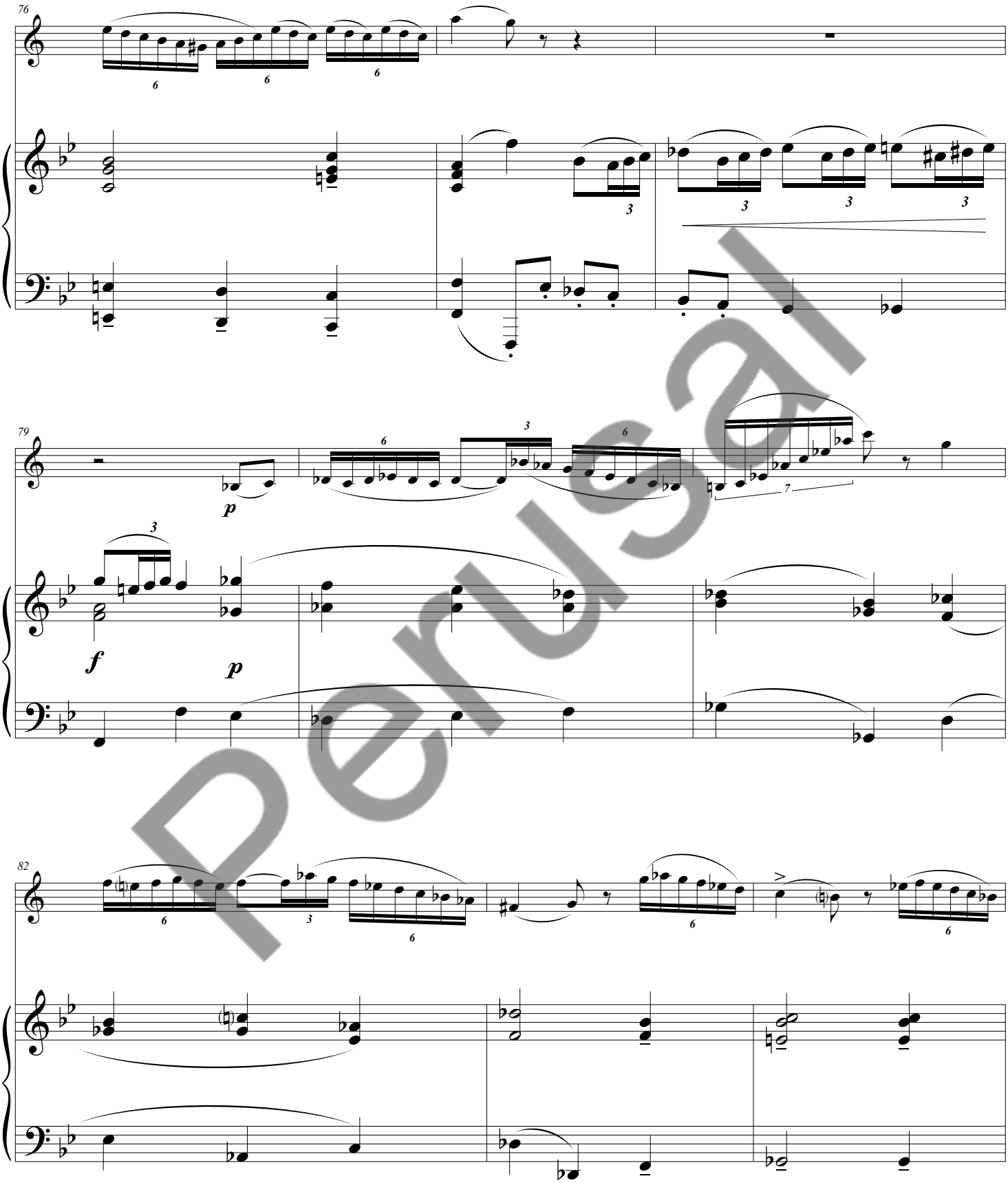

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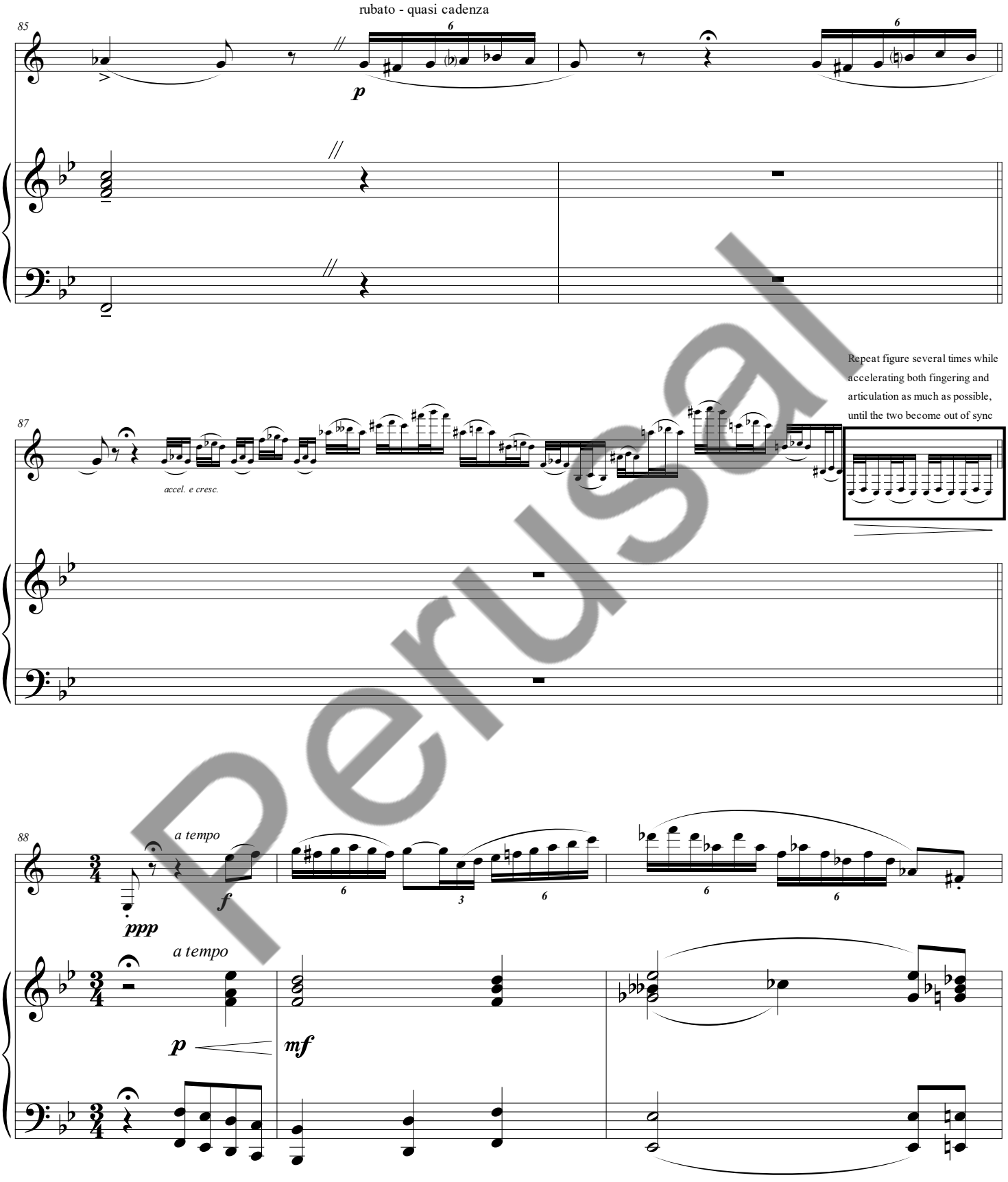
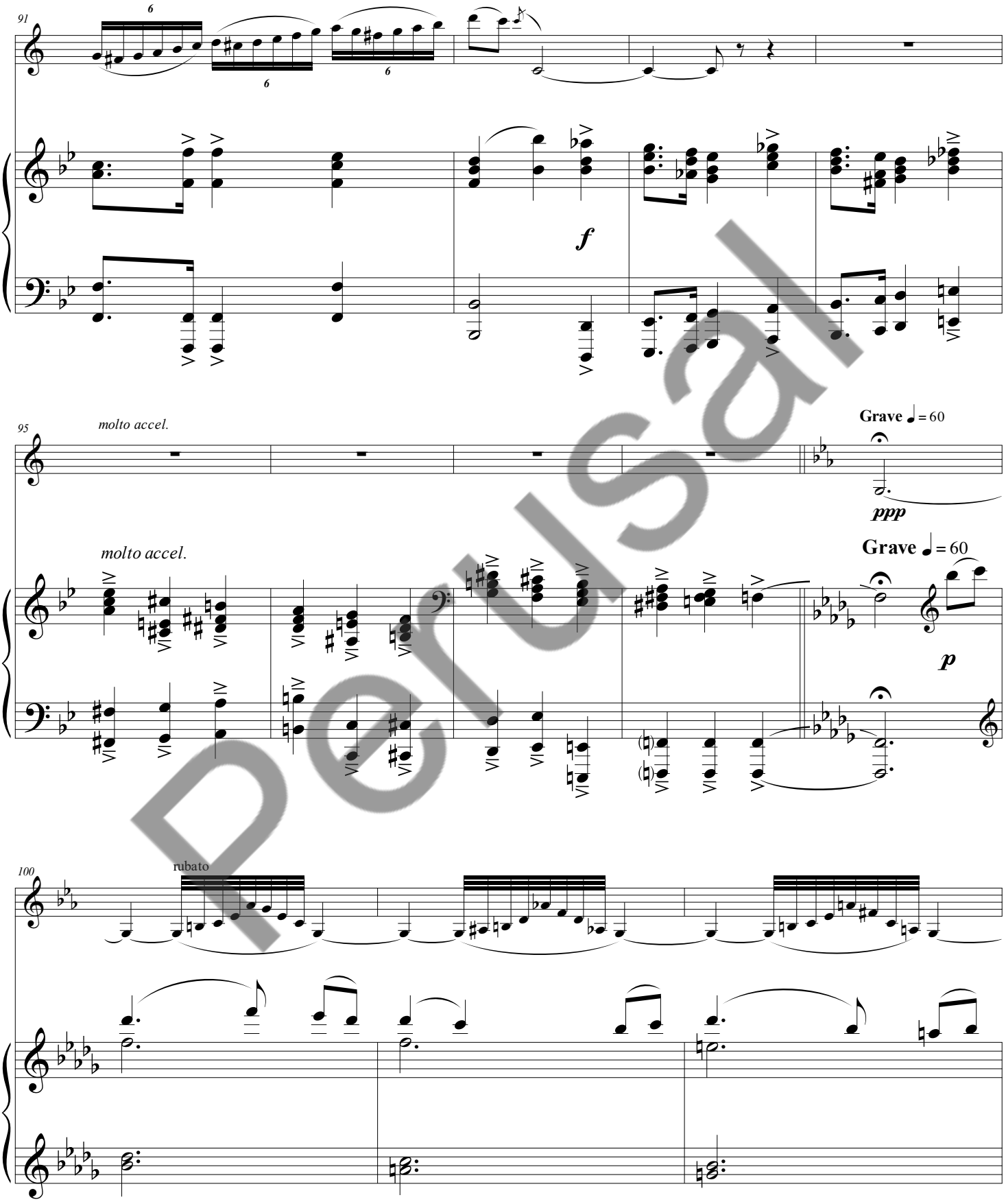
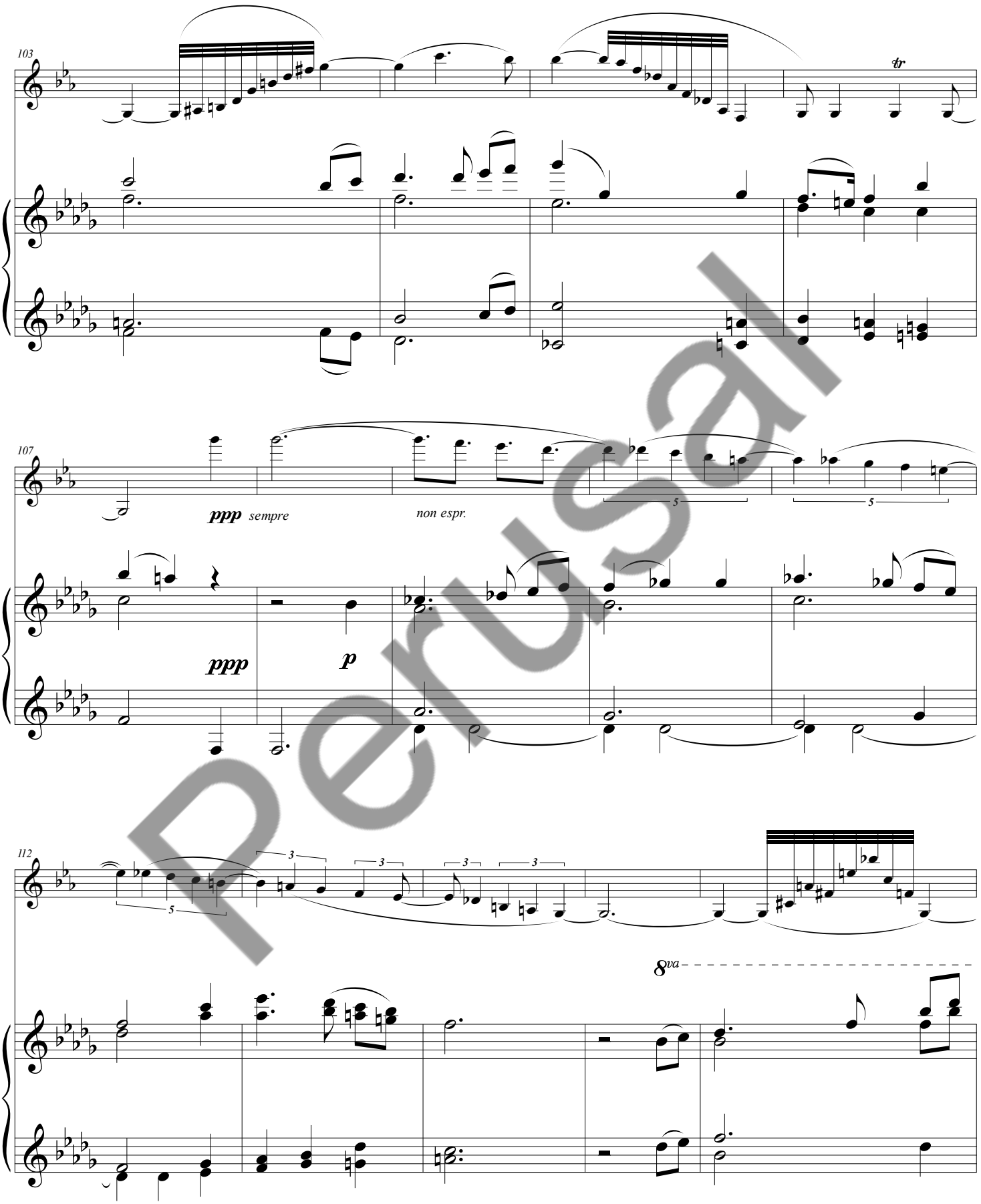

rubato - quasi cadenza
85
p
87
accel. e cresc.
Repeat figure several times while accelerating both fingering and articulation as much as possible, until the two become out of sync
88
a tempo
ppp
f
a tempo
p
mf

Perusal


91
6
6
6
f
95
molto accel.
molto accel.
Grave ♩= 60
ppp
Grave ♩= 60
p
100
rubato

Perusal



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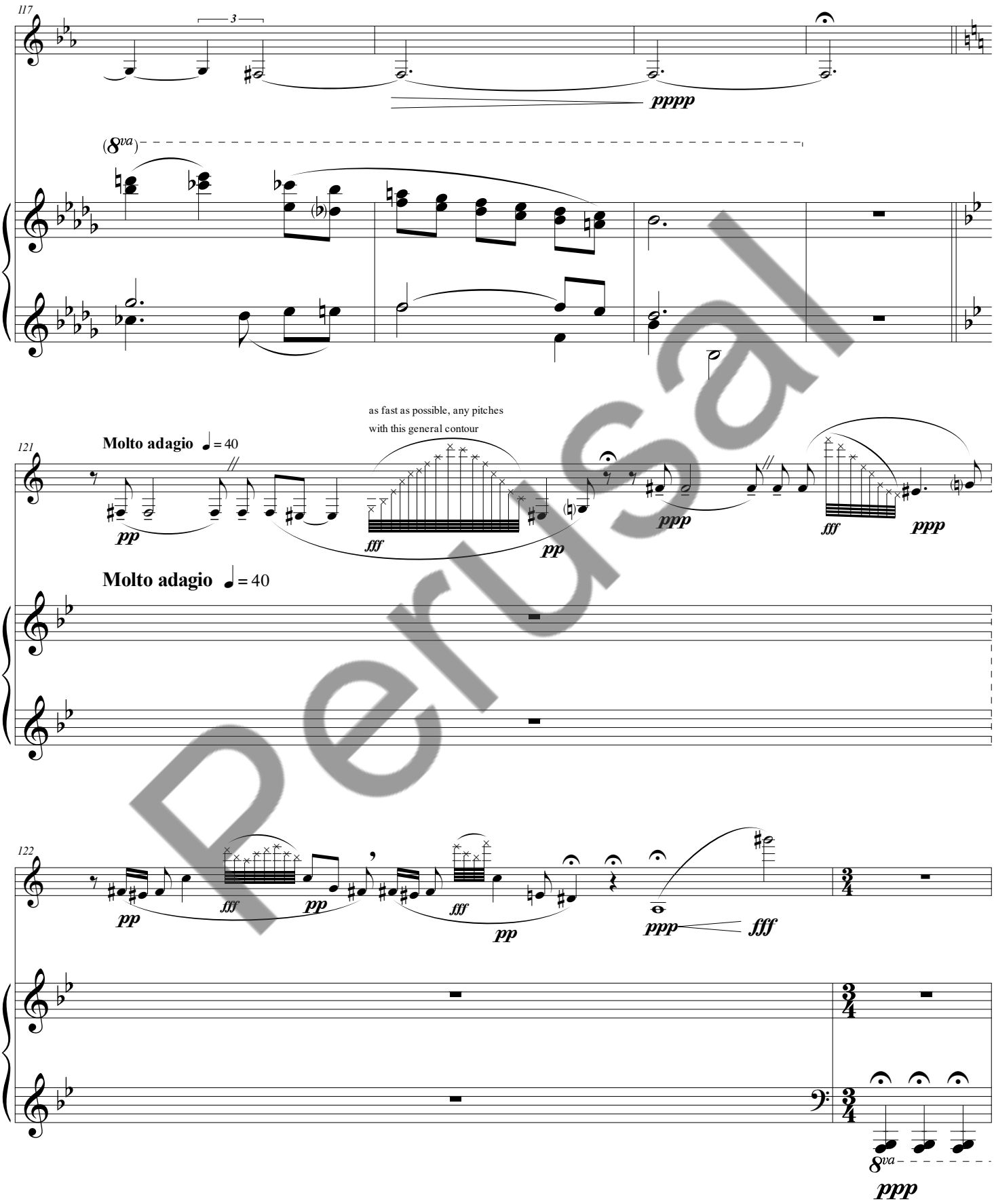
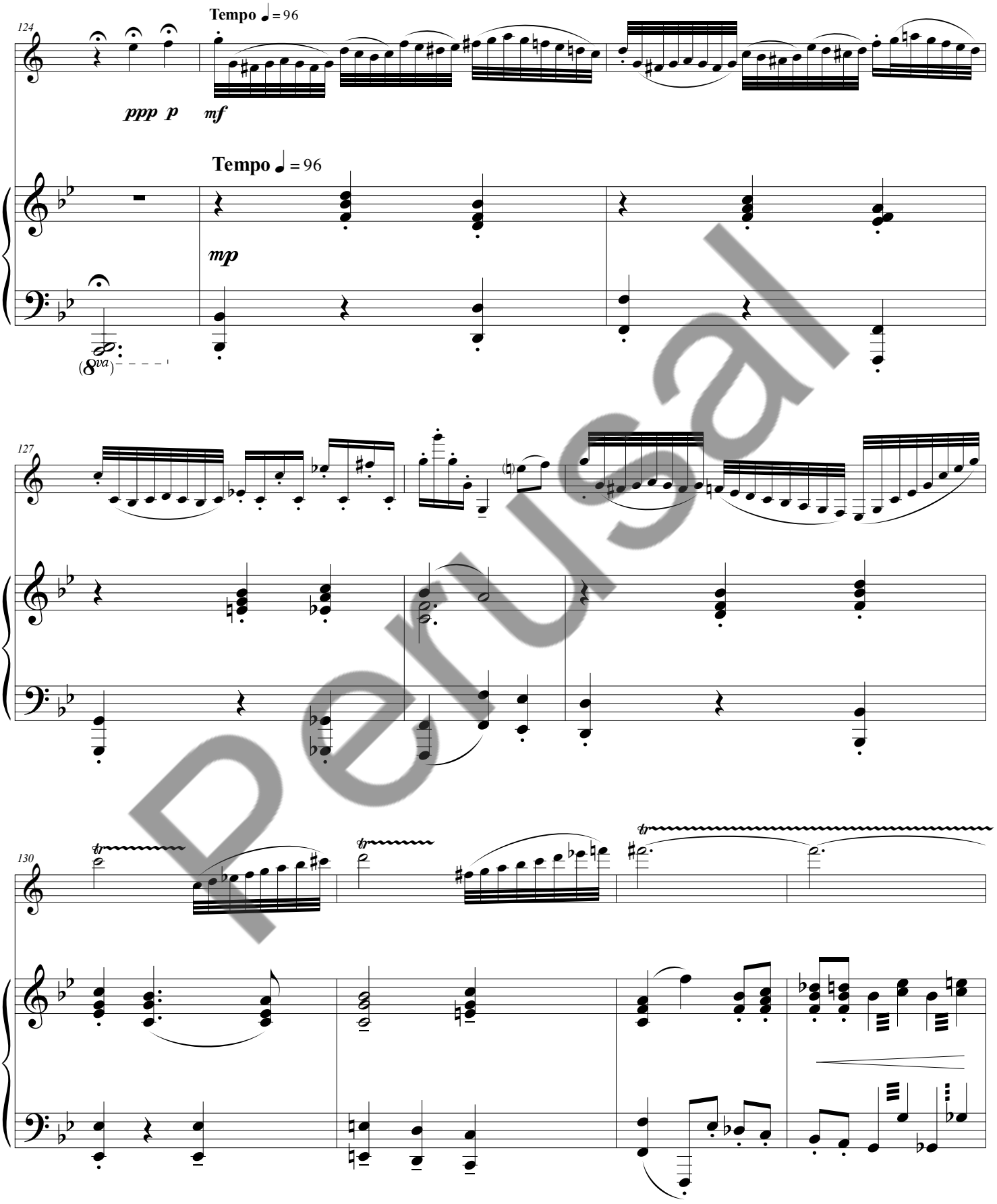

117
3
pppp
(8va)
121
Molto adagio ♩= 40
pp
as fast as possible, any pitches
with this general contour
fff
pp
ppp
fff
ppp
Molto adagio ♩= 40
122
pp
fff
pp
fff
pp
ppp
fff
8va
ppp

Perusal



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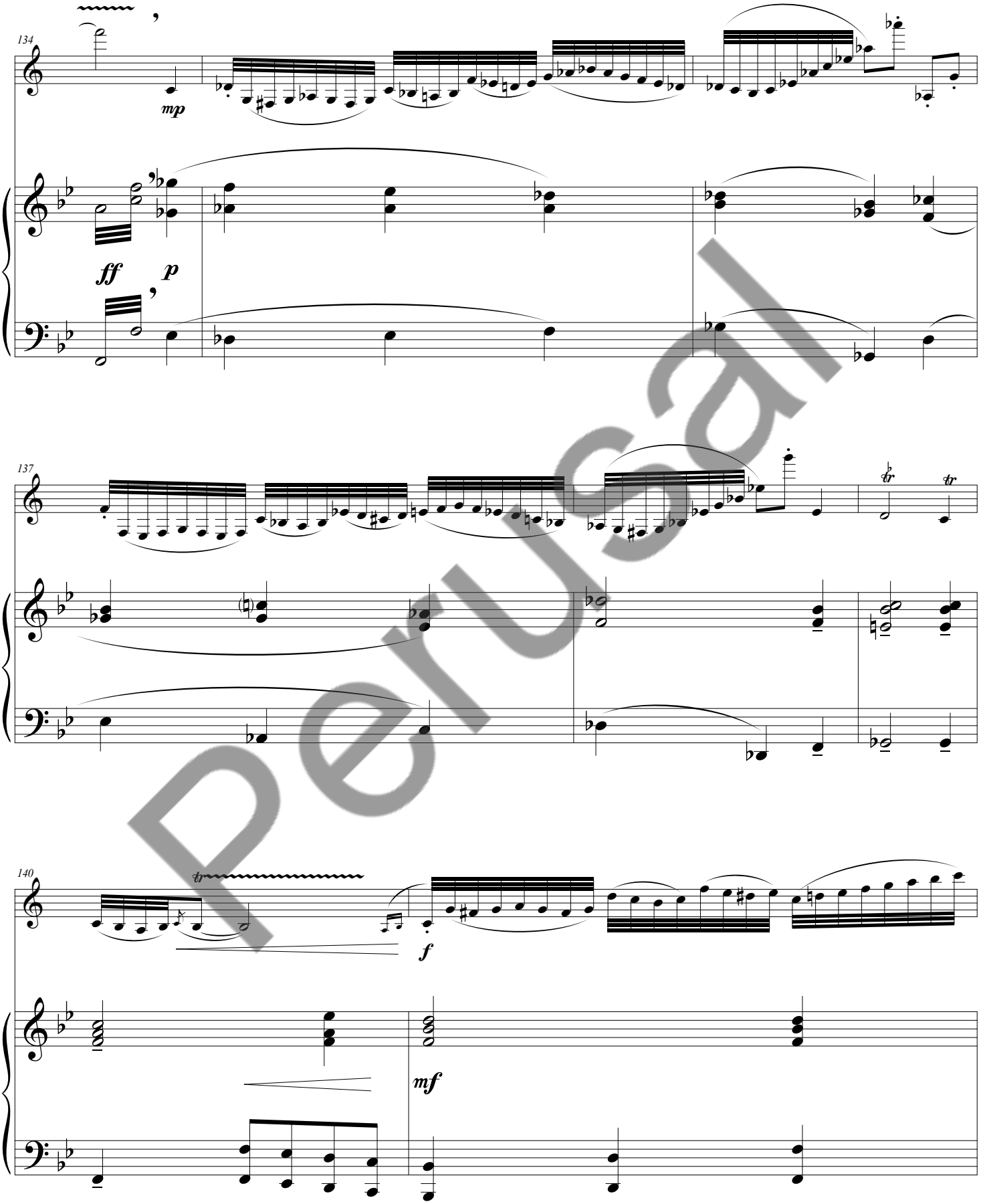
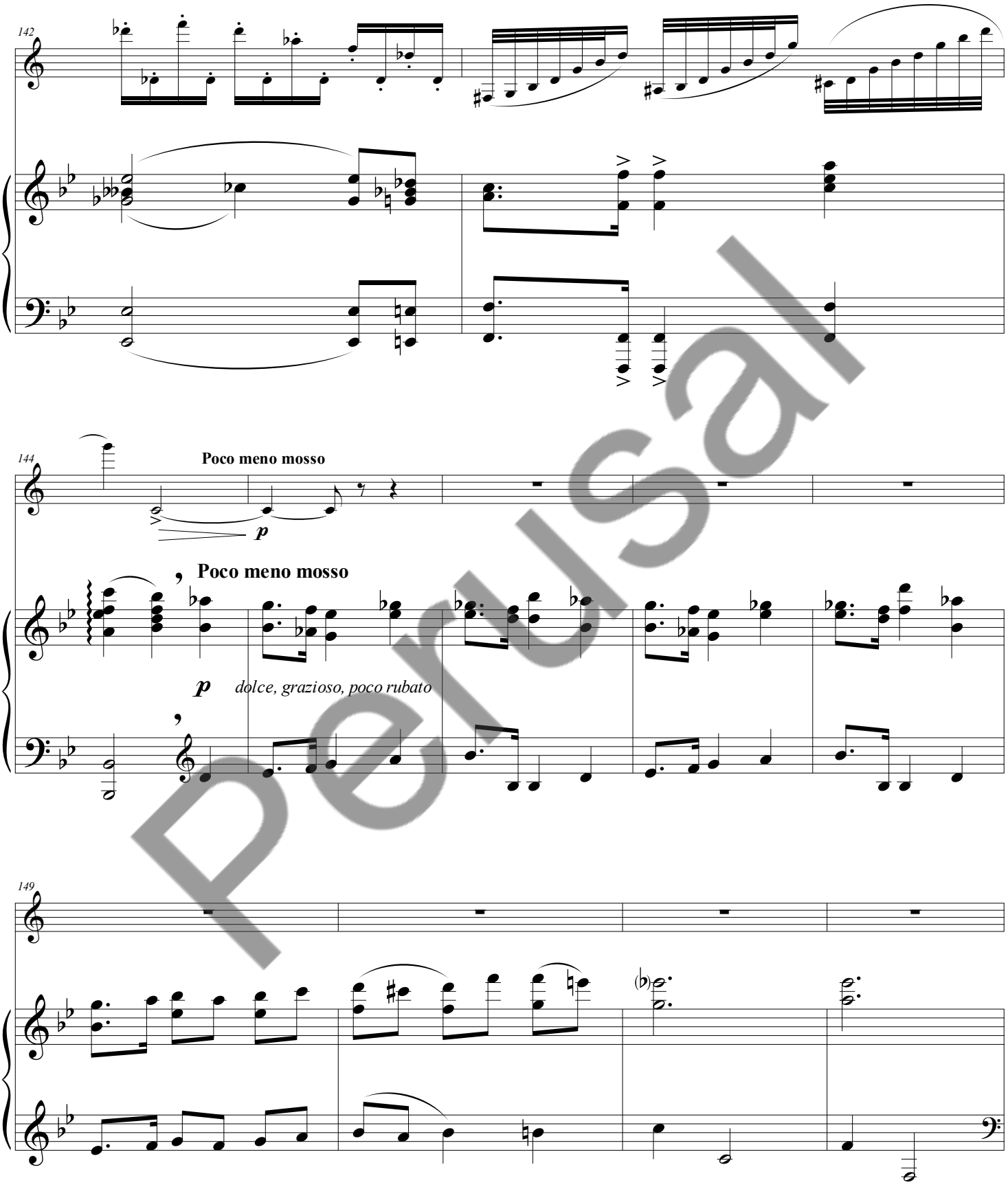
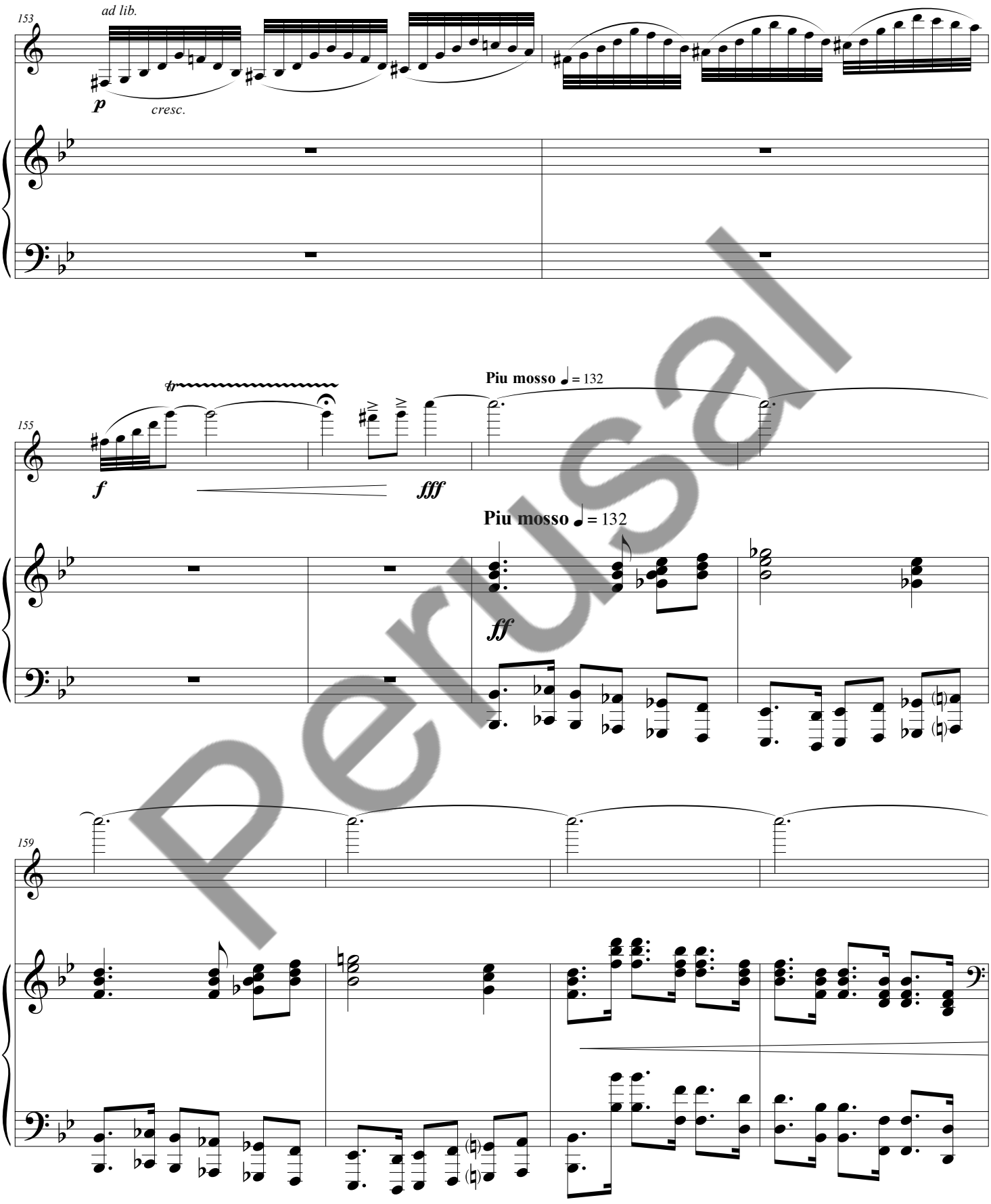


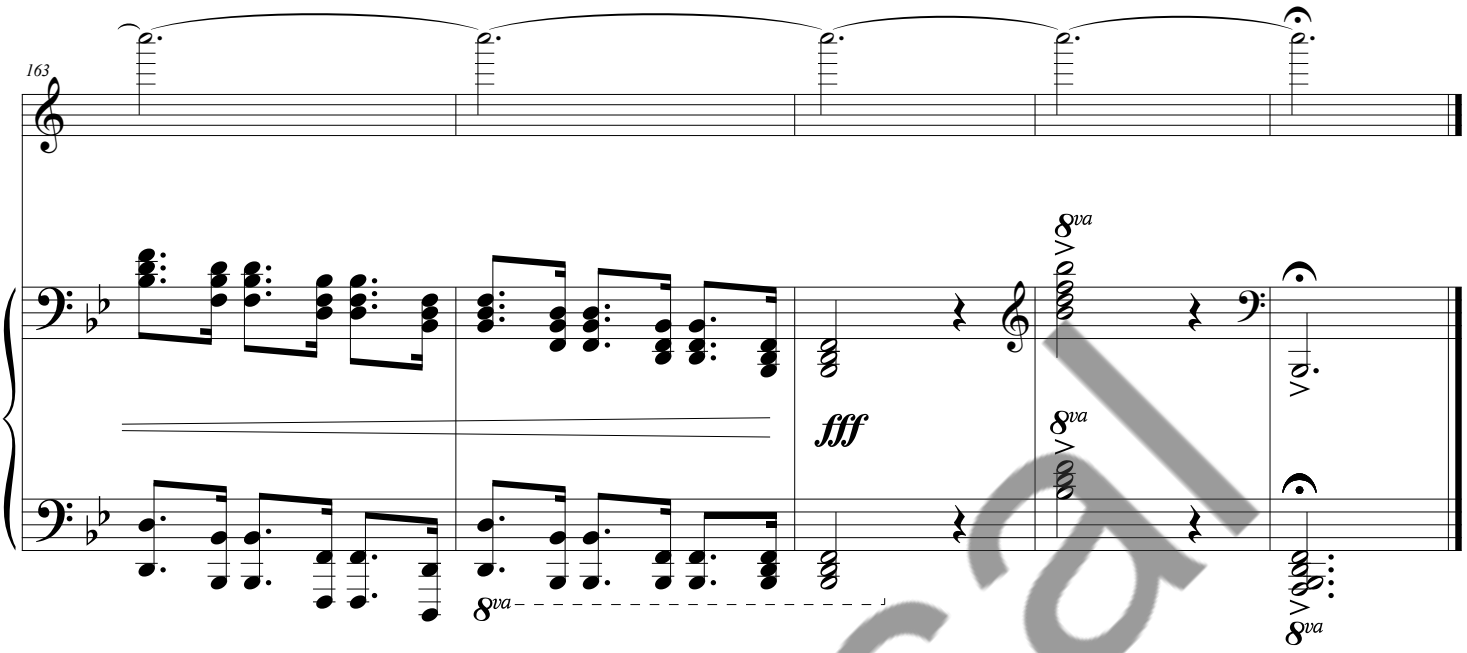
Perusal


142
144
Poco meno mosso
p
Poco meno mosso
p dolce, grazioso, poco rubato
149

Perusal


153
ad lib.
p
cresc.
155
tr
f
fff
Piu mosso ♩= 132
Piu mosso ♩= 132
ff
159

Perusal



Perusal

Cello

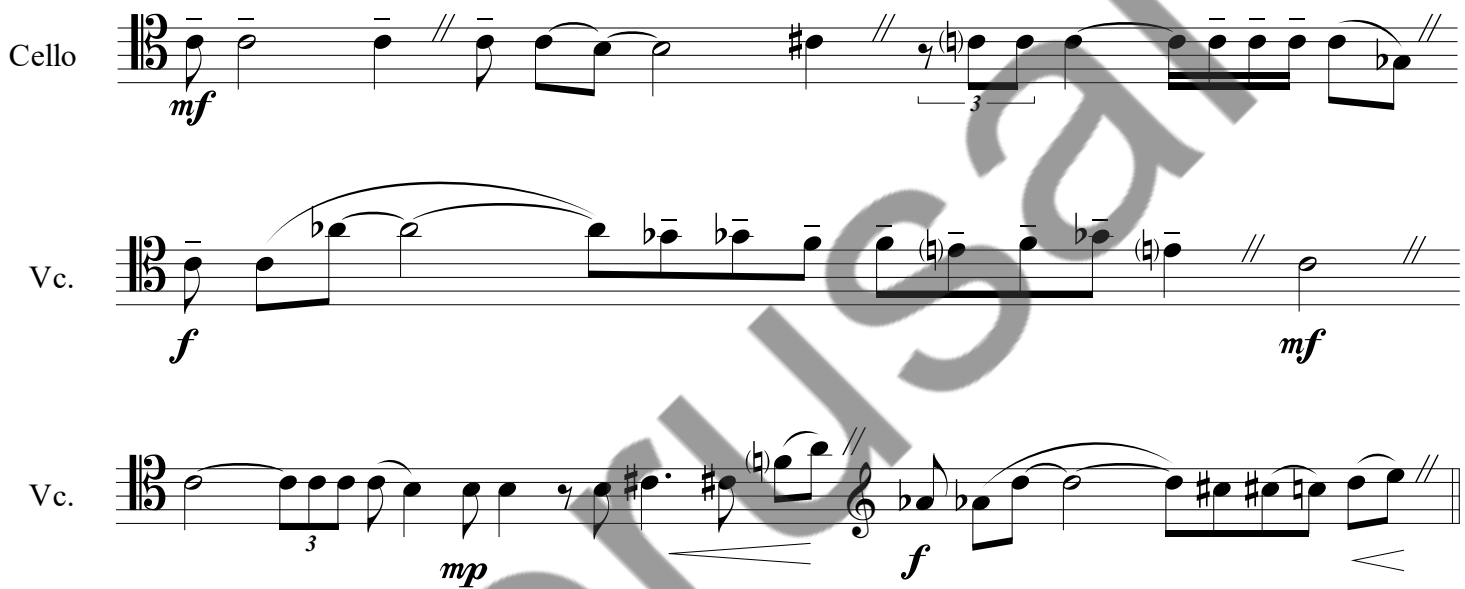
3. Aria: Aviatrix Geertje van Wieren's Airship Floats Eternally Over the Thulean Ice Floes

This part is to be played in time independent of all other parts, like an oration. Each verse should begin when indicated (the conductor can help); the ending measures should give a sense of how quickly the passages should be played. A few run-throughs should indicate whether there's a tendency to play too quickly or slowly.

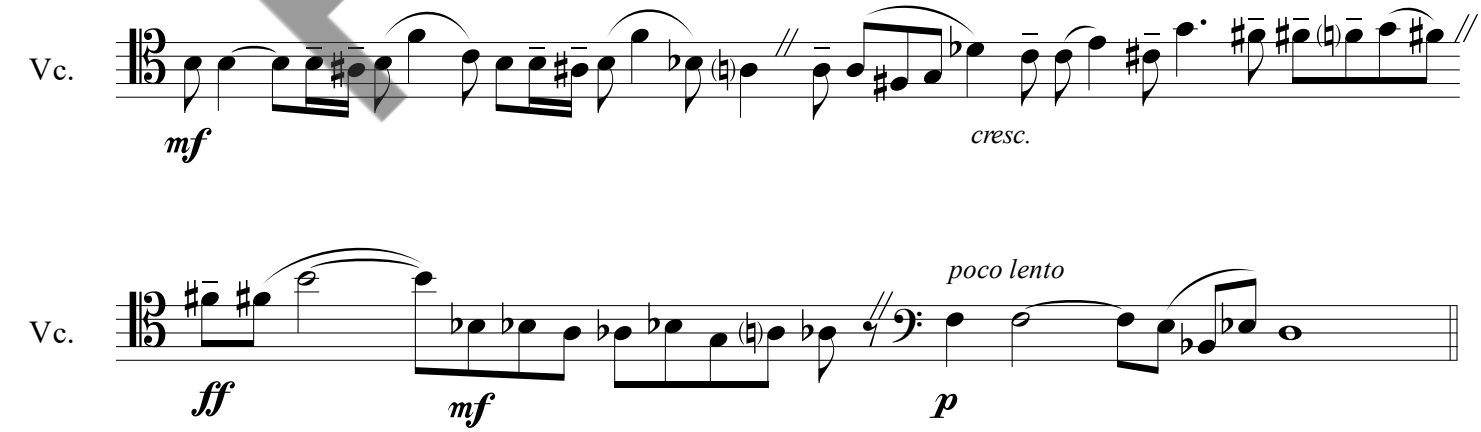
With distortion: Low frequency turned all the way down, mid/high frequency all the way up

Rubato, quasi recitativo: declamatory without dragging

Verse 1: Ms. 15 (beat 3) to 26

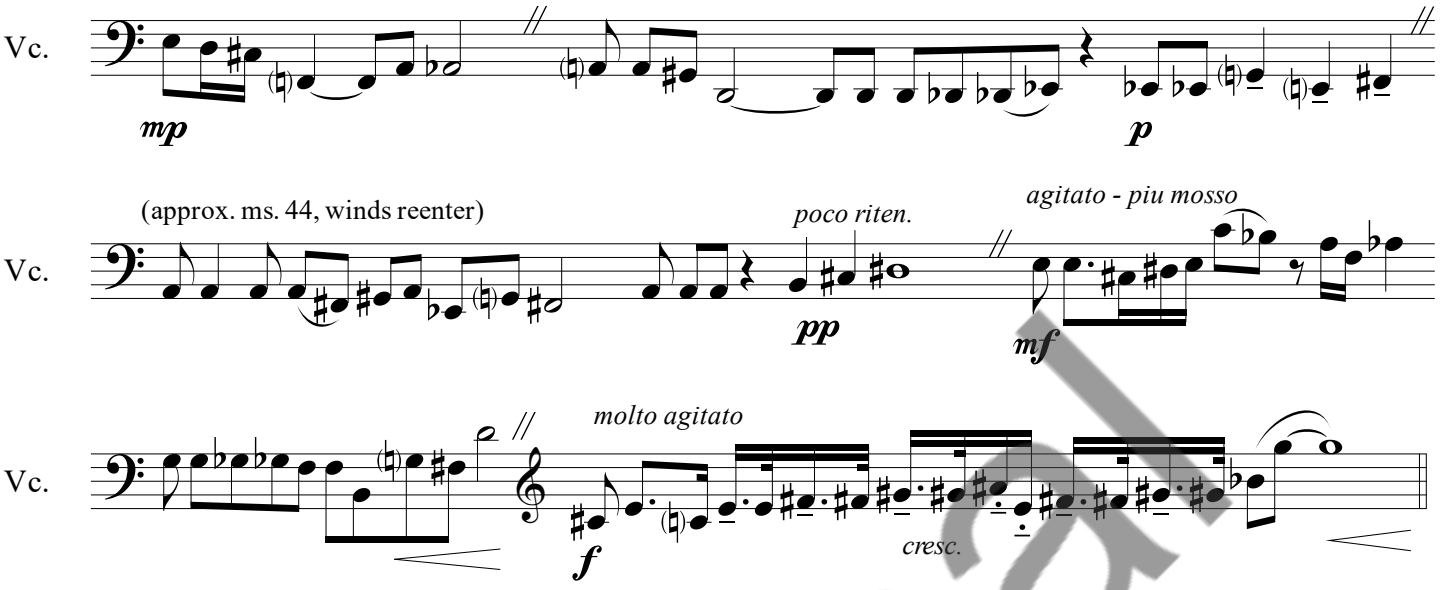


Verse 2: Ms. 28-36

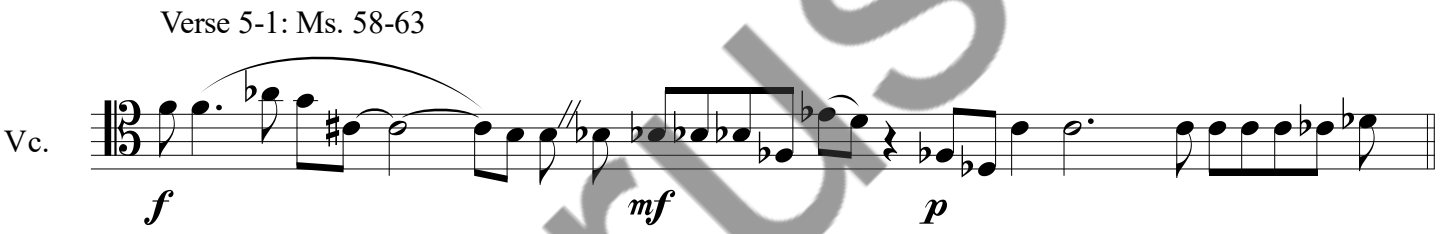


Perusal

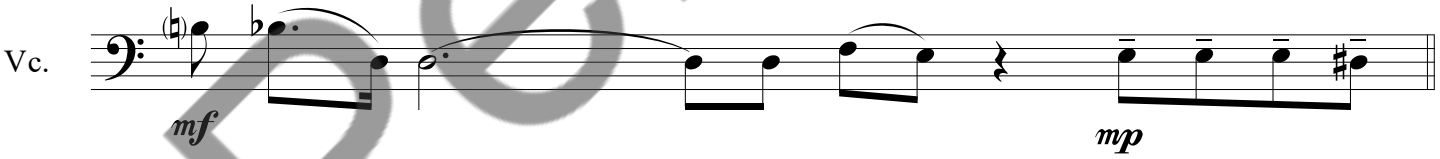
Verse 3/4: Ms. 39 (beat 2) to 51



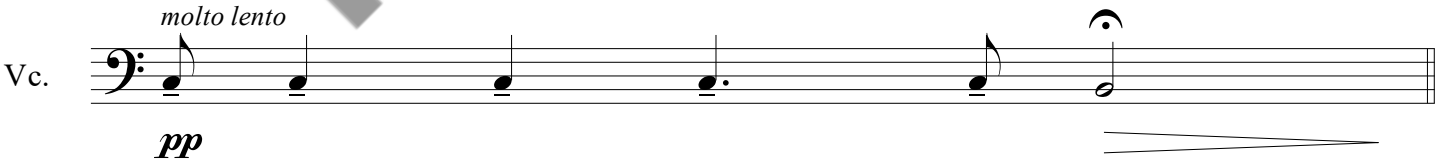
Verse 5-1: Ms. 58-63



Verse 5-2: Ms. 65-68



Verse 5-3: Ms. 70-73



Perusal