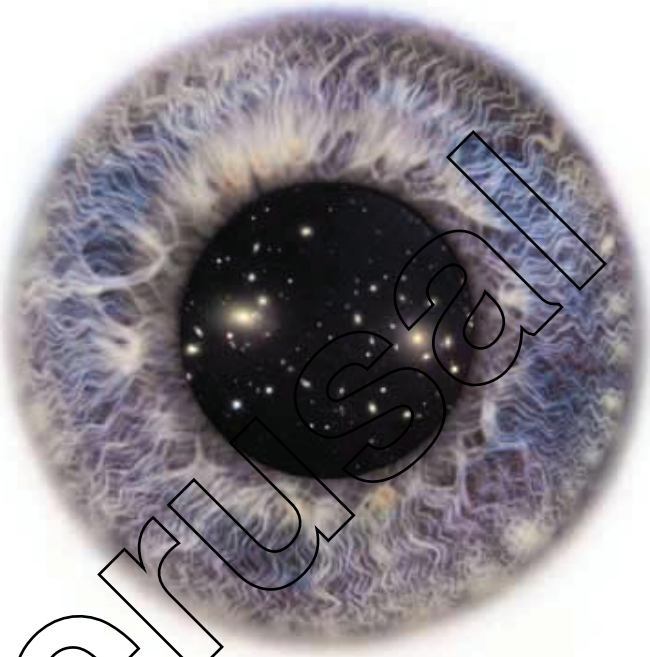
David Bruce

The Eye of Night

for flute harp and viola



Perusal

Commissioned by Art of Elan, San Diego
Dedicated to Gordon Brodfuehrer

The Eye of Night

The Eye of Night was commissioned by Art of Elan in San Diego and is dedicated to Gordon Brodfuehrer. It is a series of four tender movements, each in their own way a kind of nocturne. The night and in particular the night sky has long held a fascination for me. We all know the awe-inspiring site that awaits us if we are lucky enough to find ourselves away from the city lights in front of a cloudless night sky - I think the awe we experience on such occasions is not just because of the beauty and grandeur of the spectacle - but because it one of the very few times we are directly faced with the vast mystery of the universe. I have made an oath to myself that at least once every year I will make a pilgrimage to somewhere where I am able to lose myself in such a spectacle.

Continuing a source of inspiration from one of the songs in my song-cycle for Dawn Upshaw, *The North Wind was a Woman* (a series of songs conveying the painfully melancholy points of view of inanimate or incorporeal objects: snow, wind, night, the moon and a mountain), I have been drawn to the image, first discovered in a short story by Aimee Bender, of the night sky as a giant eye looking down on us, unblinkingly. The image fascinates me because it captures the complexity of feelings one experiences when staring up into space - it is friendly, familiar and constant, whilst at the same time being overwhelming, dizzying and quietly terrifying.

The first of the pieces has a dark atmosphere, that falls somewhere between sensual and plaintive. The melodic flute lines draw inspiration from the ornamental style of Indian bansuri flute playing. I am very grateful to Alex Housego, a British -born flute player who spent much of his childhood in India and so is familiar with both western and Indian traditions. His advice in finding areas of bansuri-flute technique which would translate adequately to a modern western flute was invaluable.

The second, very short movement has a sweeter atmosphere, showing a more tender and blissful side of night. The third, while still in a largely *piano* or *pianissimo* dynamic register is move active and flowing. The final piece is a lullaby, or 'song without words' inspired by William Blake's Cradle Song where he imagines the 'little sorrows' and 'quiet desires' of a sleeping baby.

David Bruce 11 July 2010

Peters

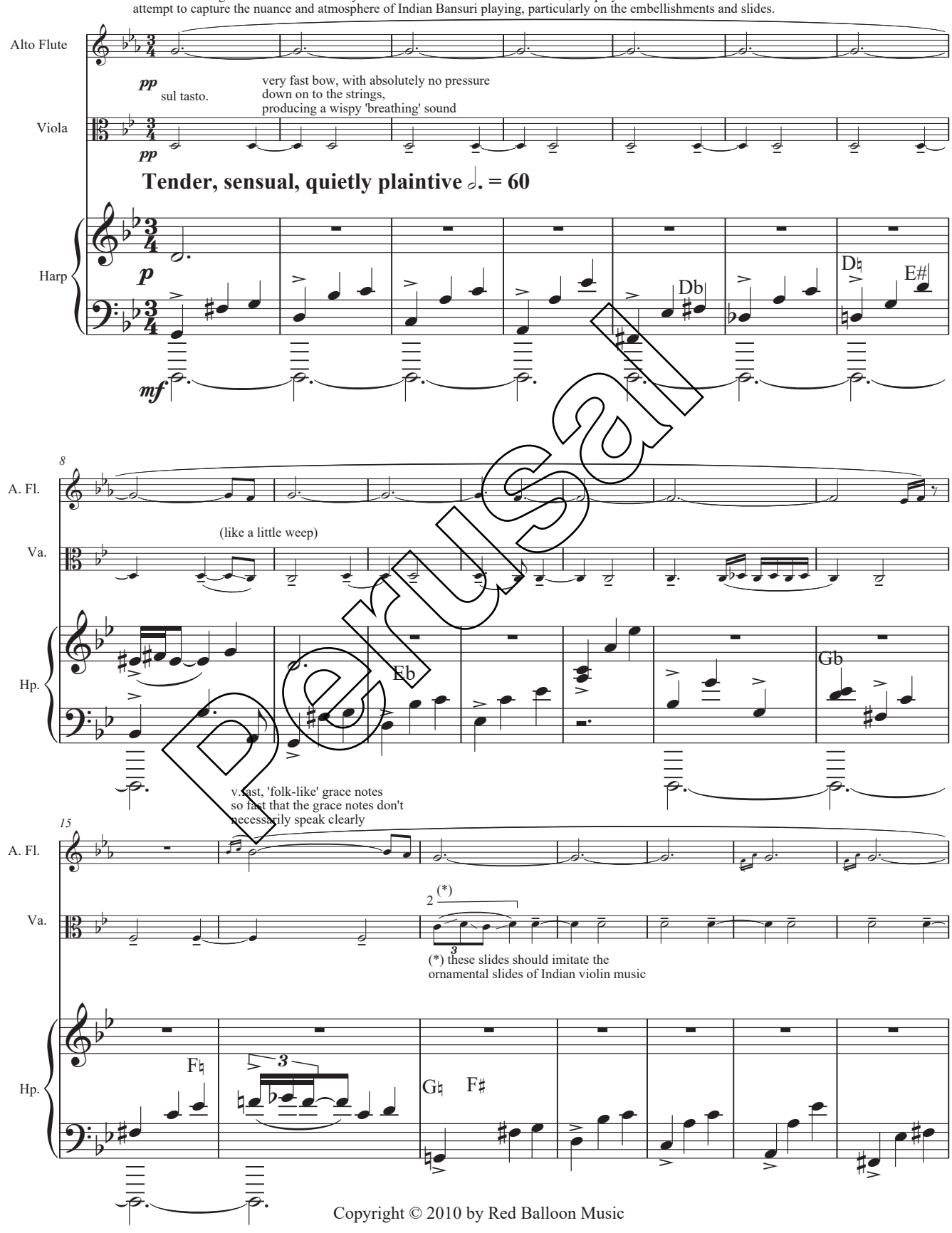
The Eye of Night

David Bruce

I.

Tender, sensual, quietly plaintive ♩. = 60

Throughout the piece, but especialy in the first movement, the flute writing draws inspiration from the Indian Bansuri flute. Whilst it is recognised the Bansuri is very different from a modern Western flute, the player should nevertheless attempt to capture the nuance and atmosphere of Indian Bansuri playing, particularly on the embellishments and slides.



Perusal

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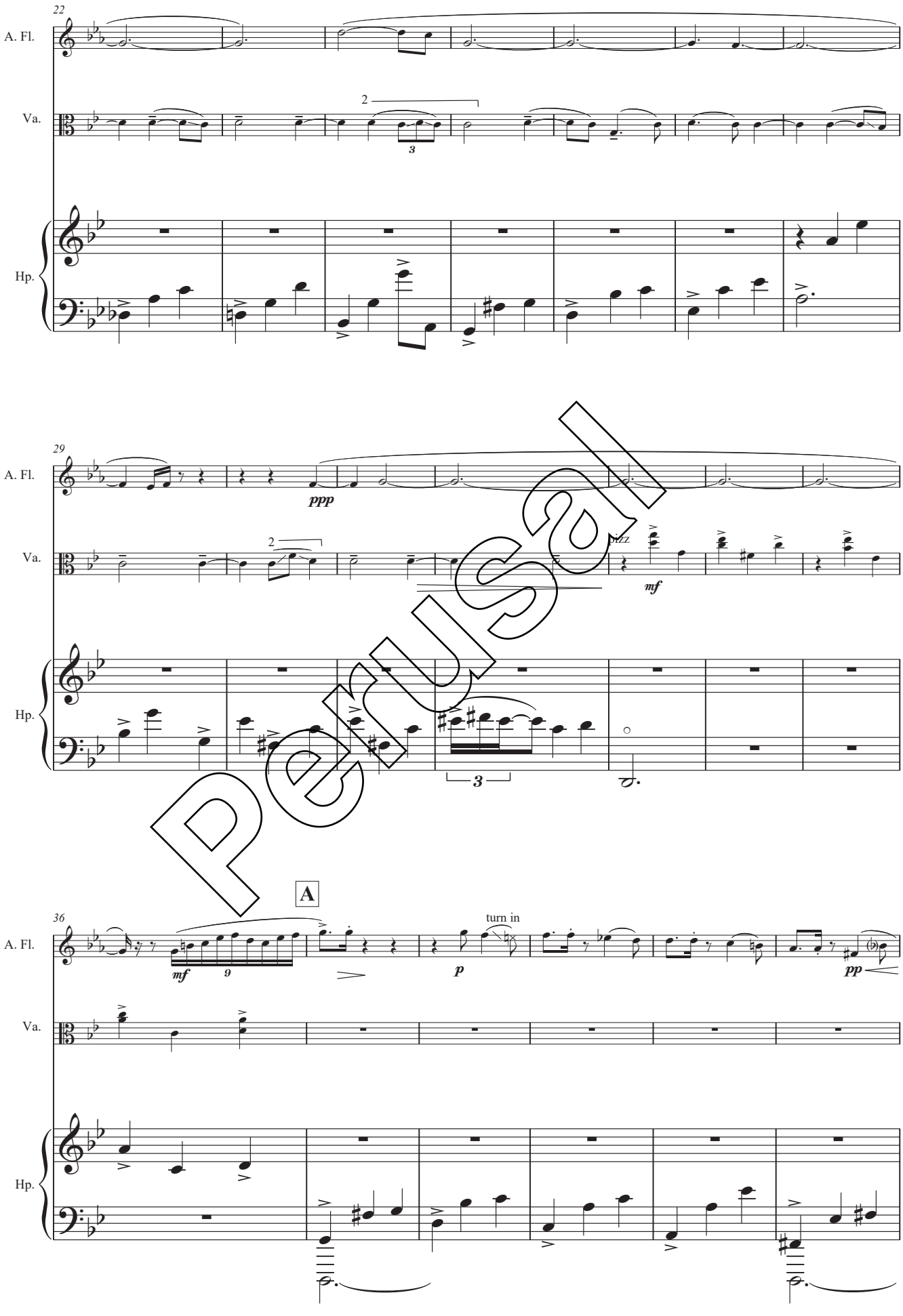

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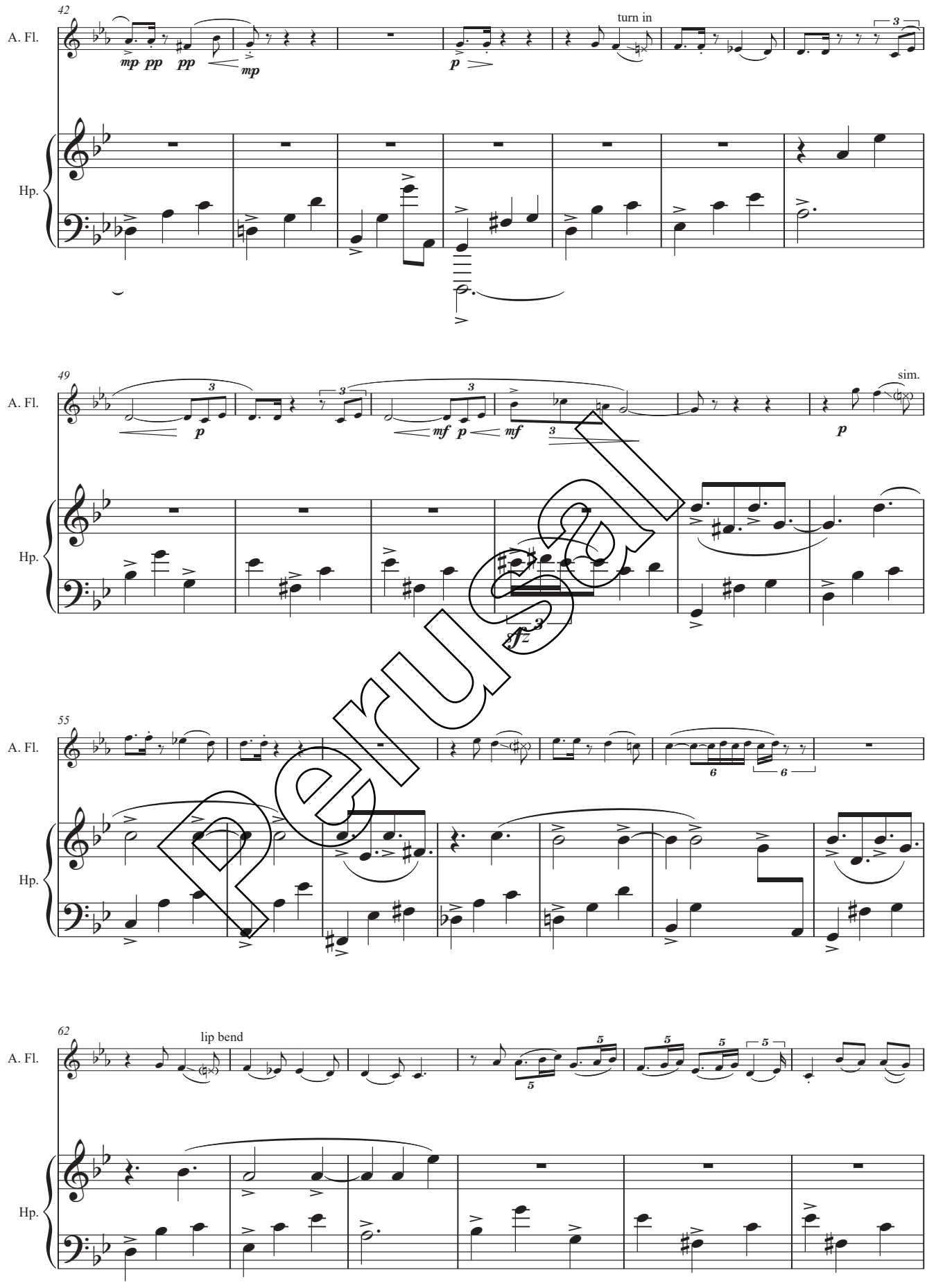
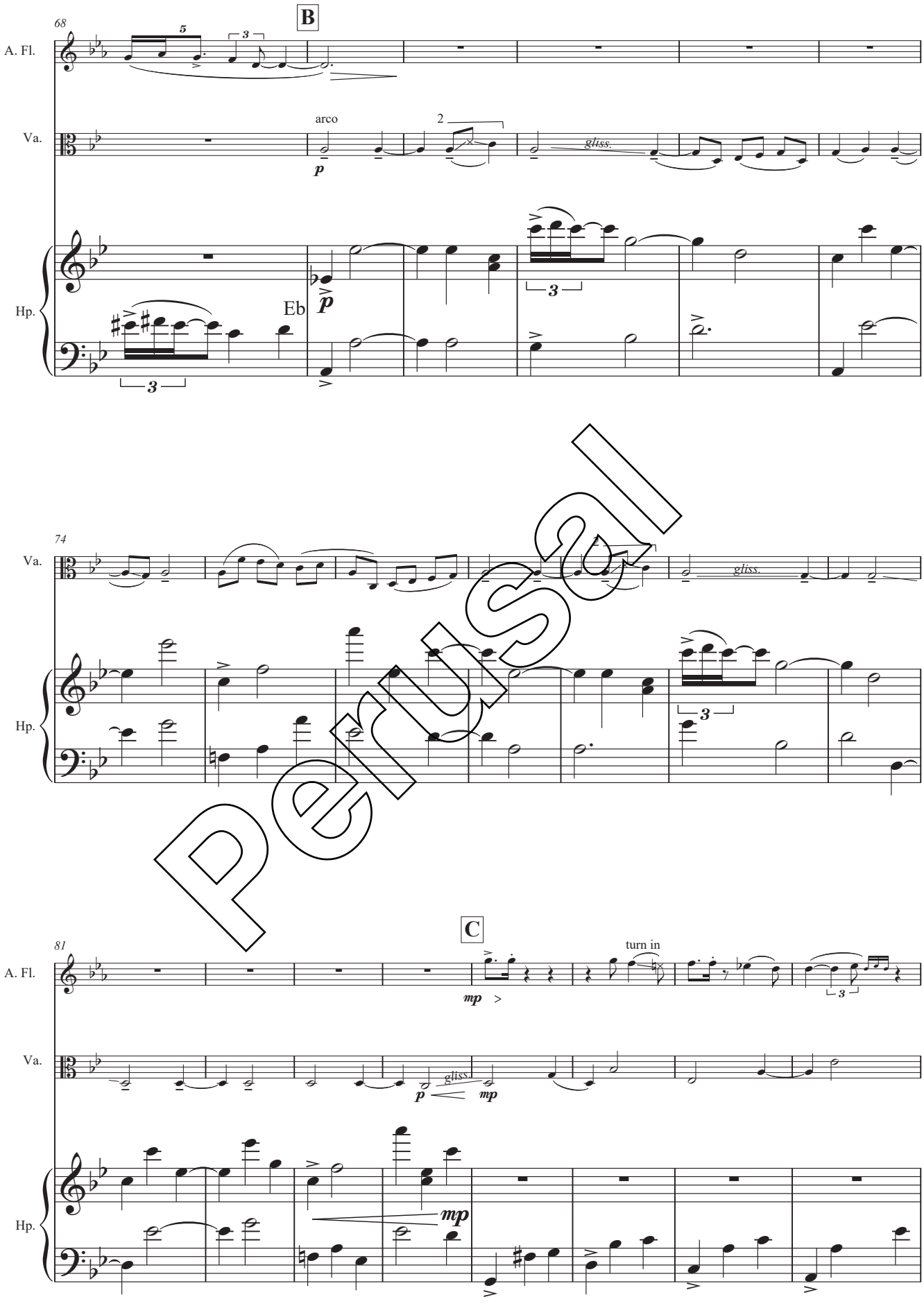
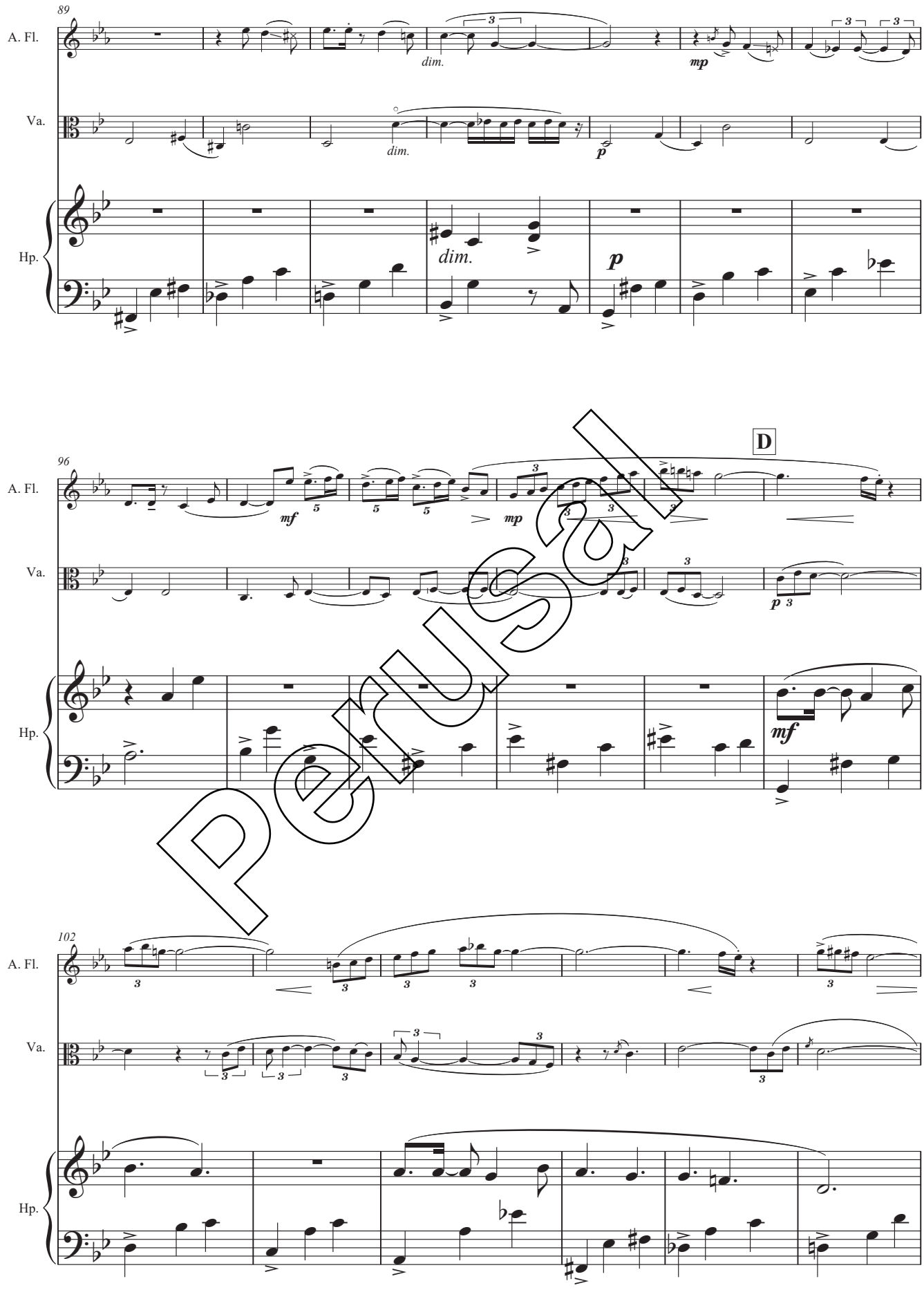


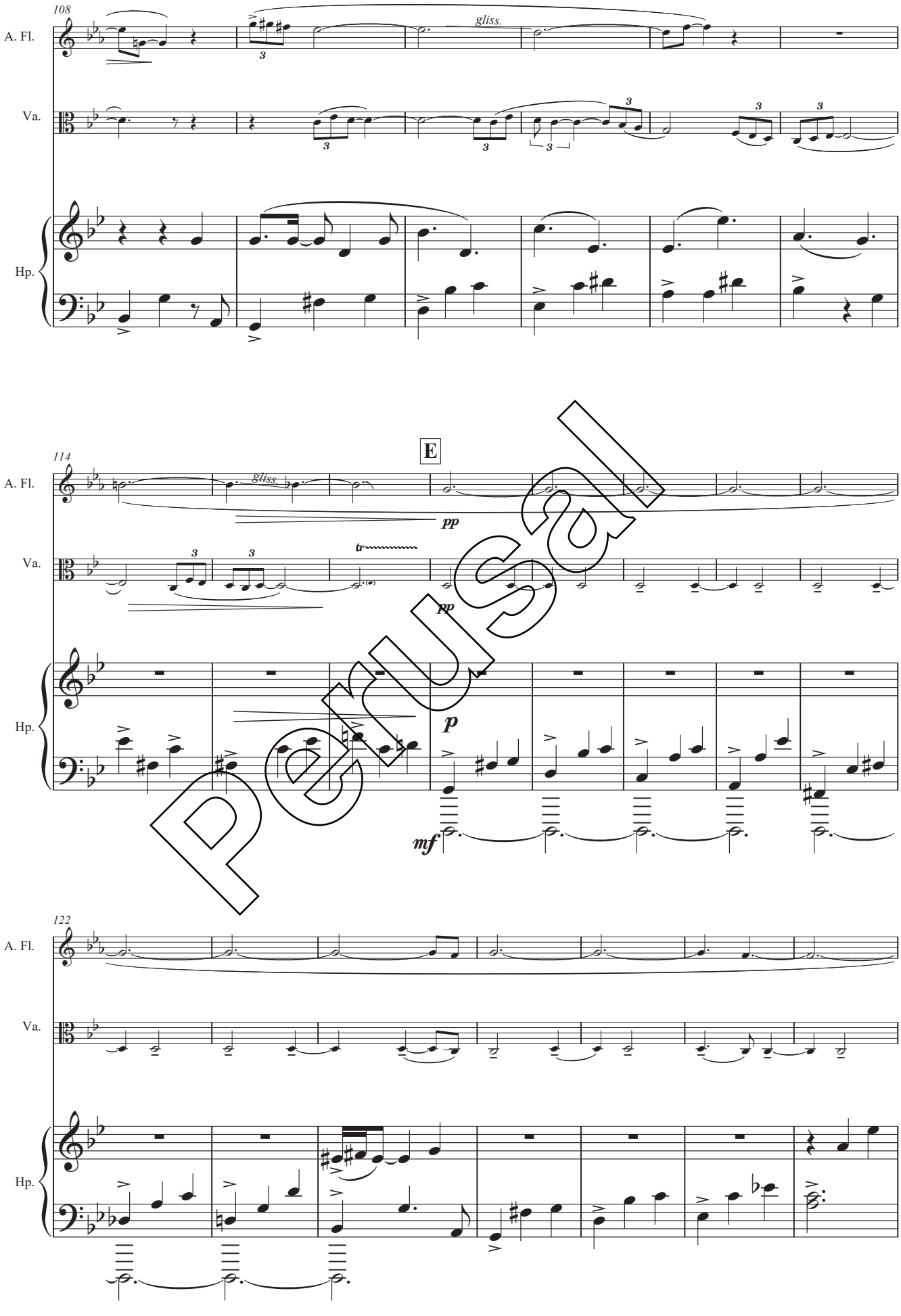
Perusal


68
B
A. Fl.
Va.
arco
gliss.
Hp.
Eb
74
Va.
gliss.
Hp.
81
C
A. Fl.
turn in
Va.
gliss.
Hp.

Perusal



Perusal



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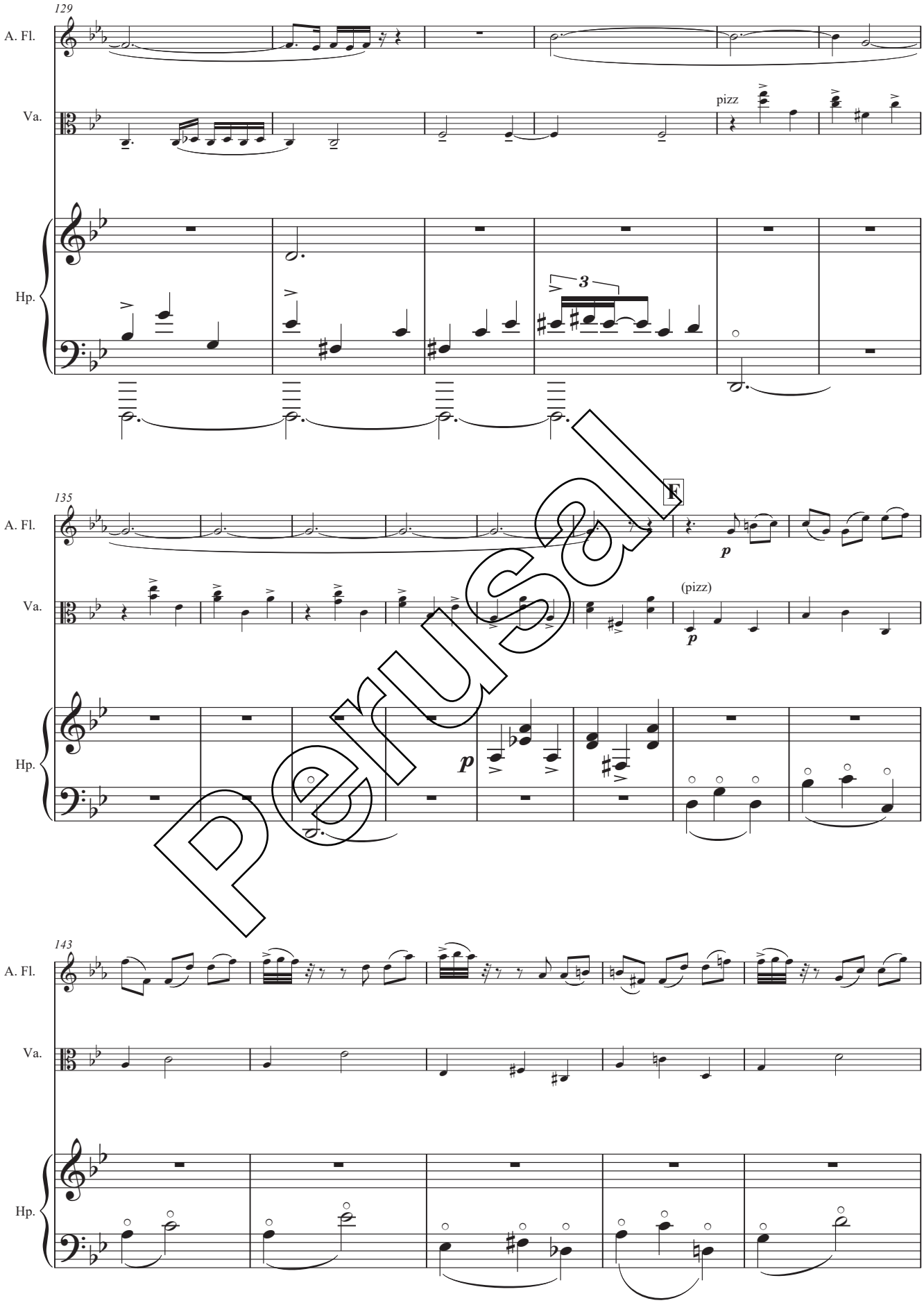
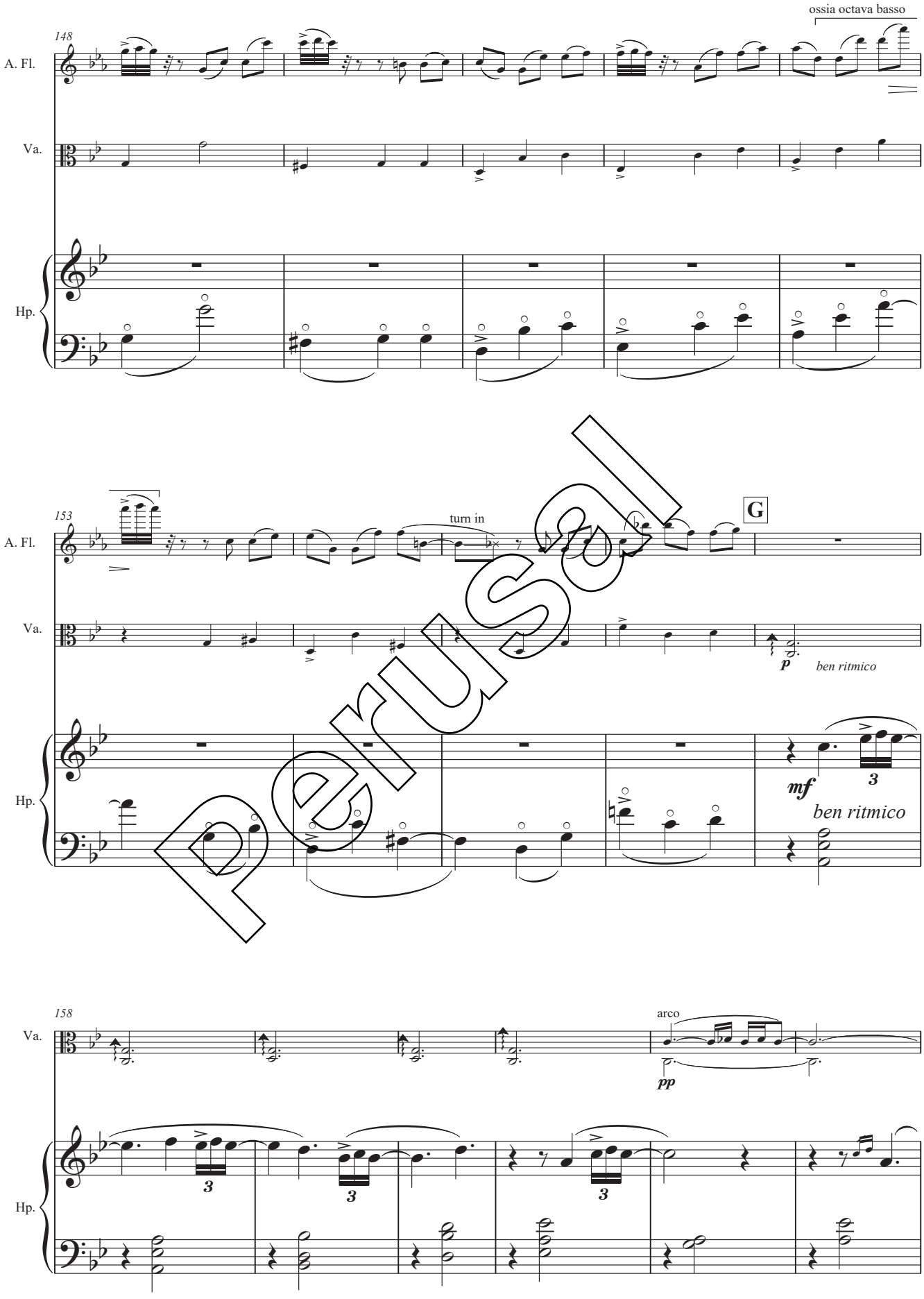
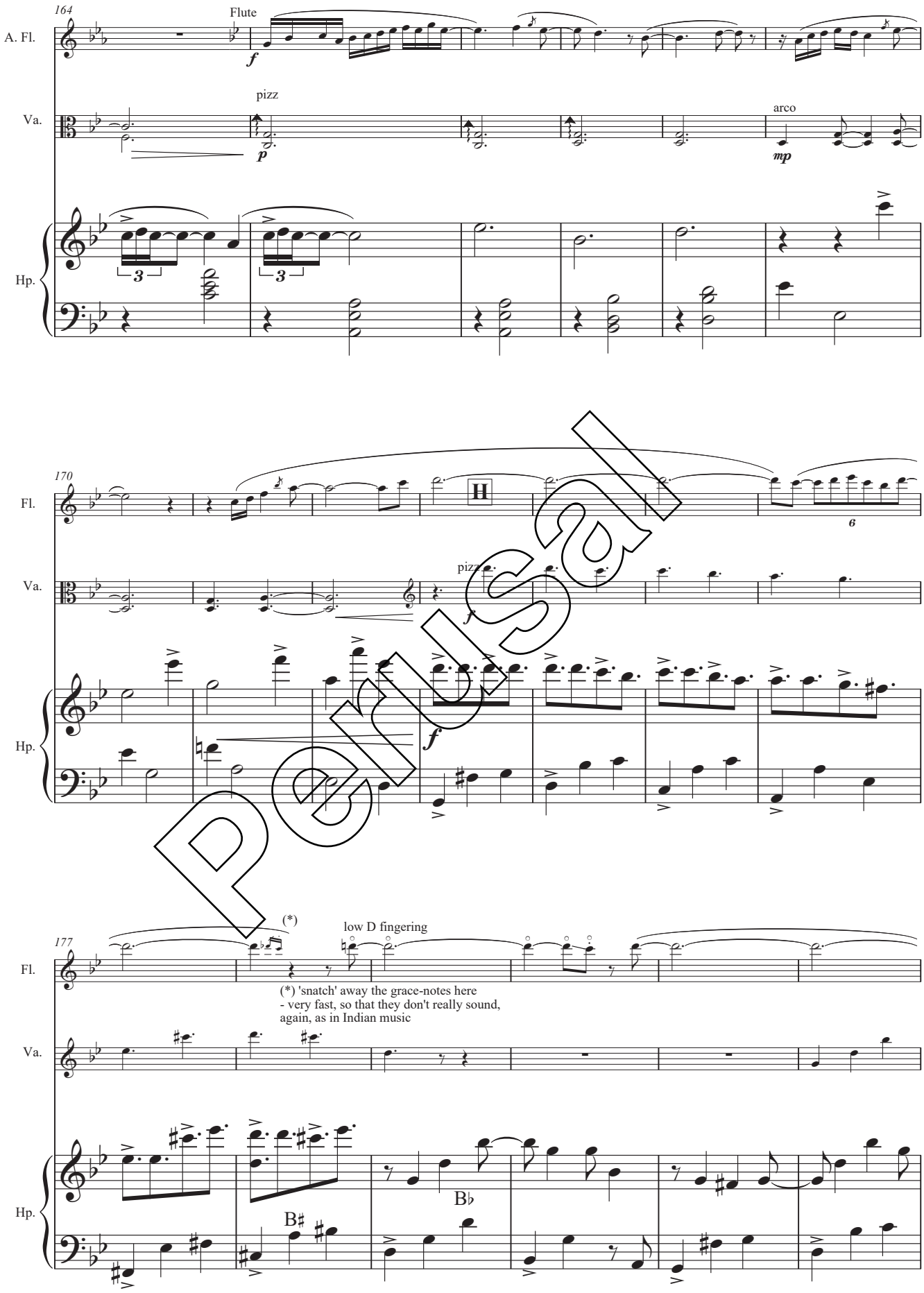


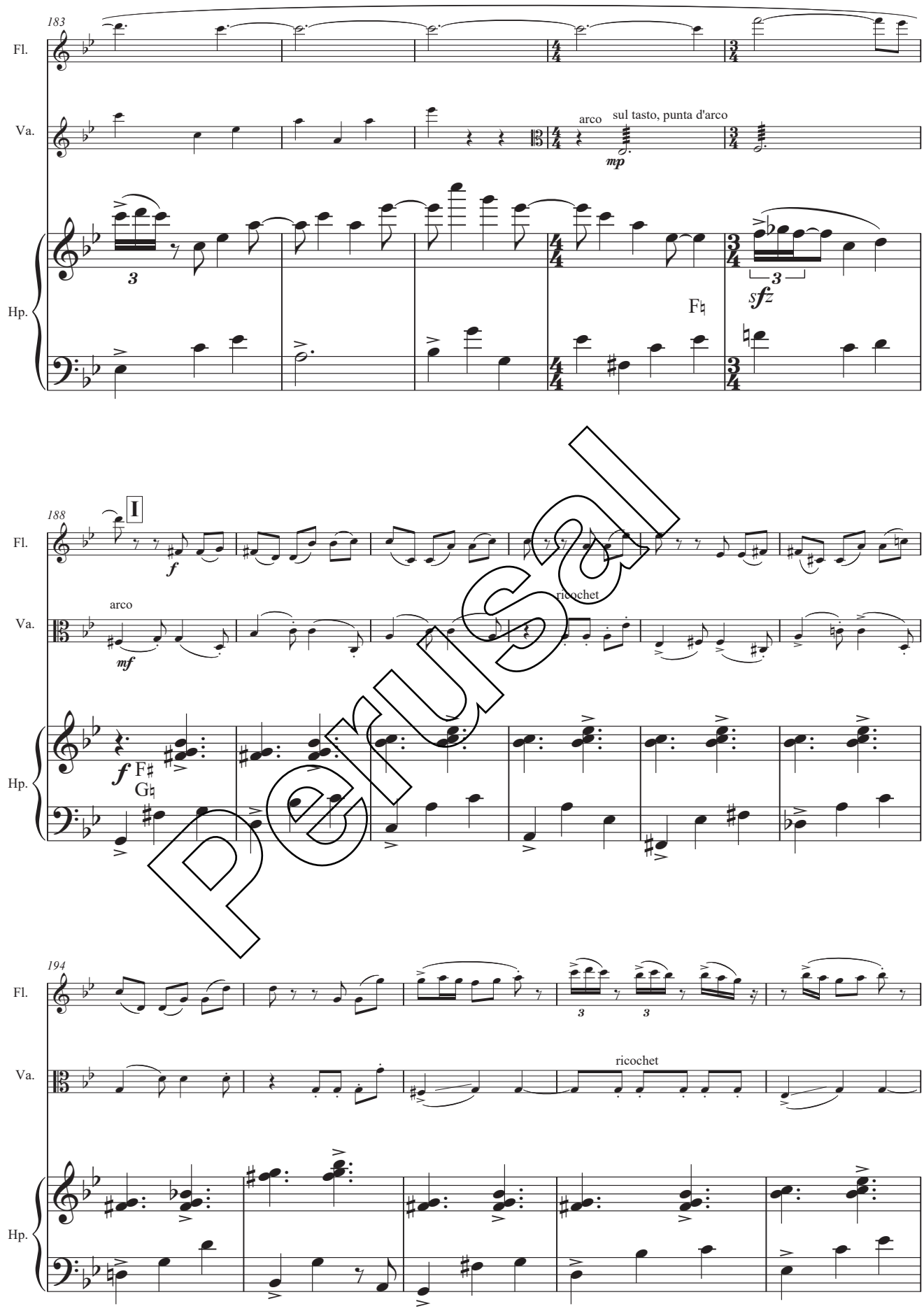
Perusal


148
ossia octava basso
A. Fl.
Va.
Hp.
153
turn in
G
p
ben ritmico
mf
3
ben ritmico
158
arco
pp
3
3
3

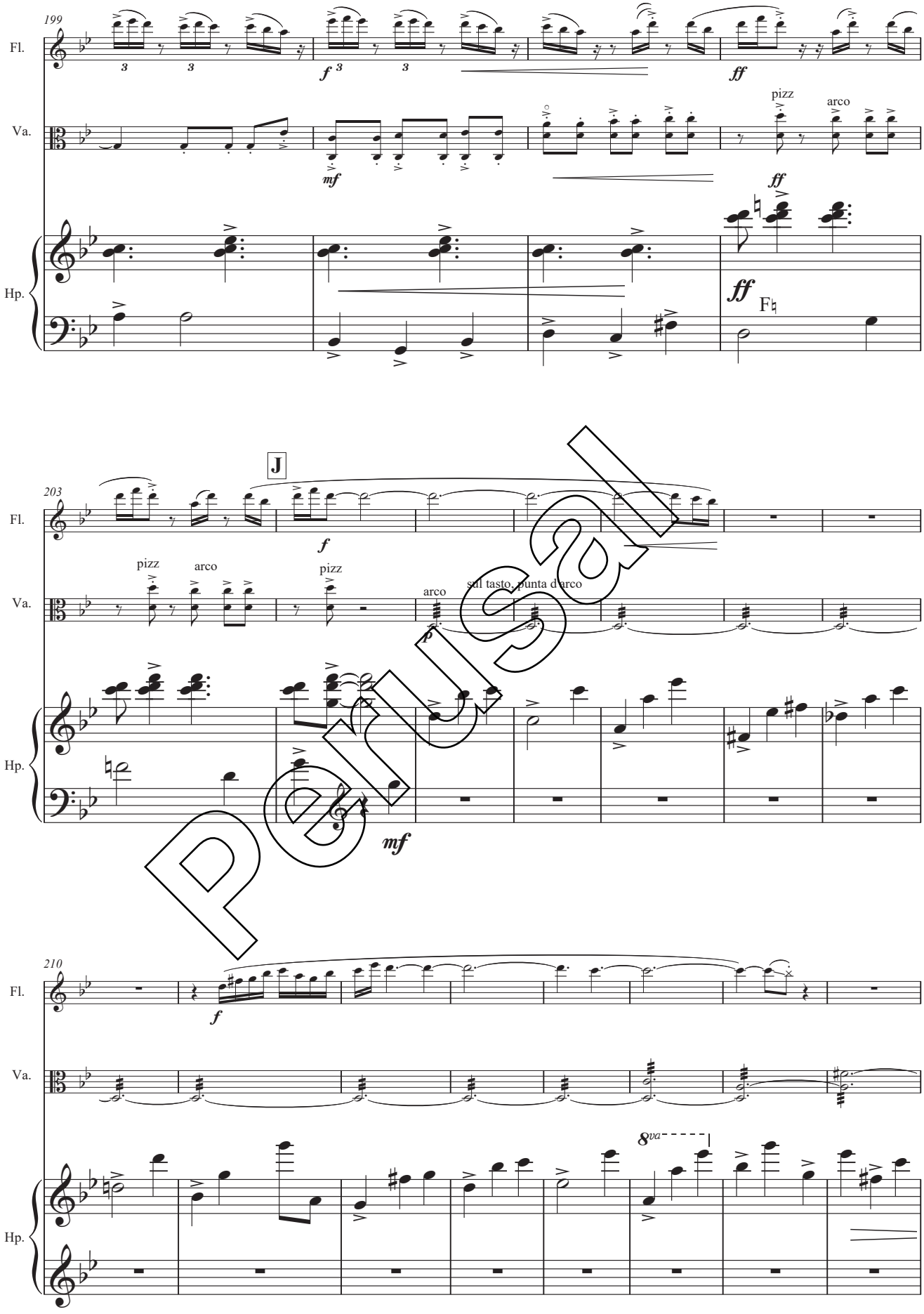
Perusal


164
A. Fl.
Flute
f
Va.
pizz
p
arco
mp
Hp.
3
3
170
Fl.
H
6
Va.
pizz
f
Hp.
f
177
Fl.
(*)
low D fingering
(*) 'snatch' away the grace-notes here
- very fast, so that they don't really sound,
again, as in Indian music
Va.
Hp.
B♭
B♯

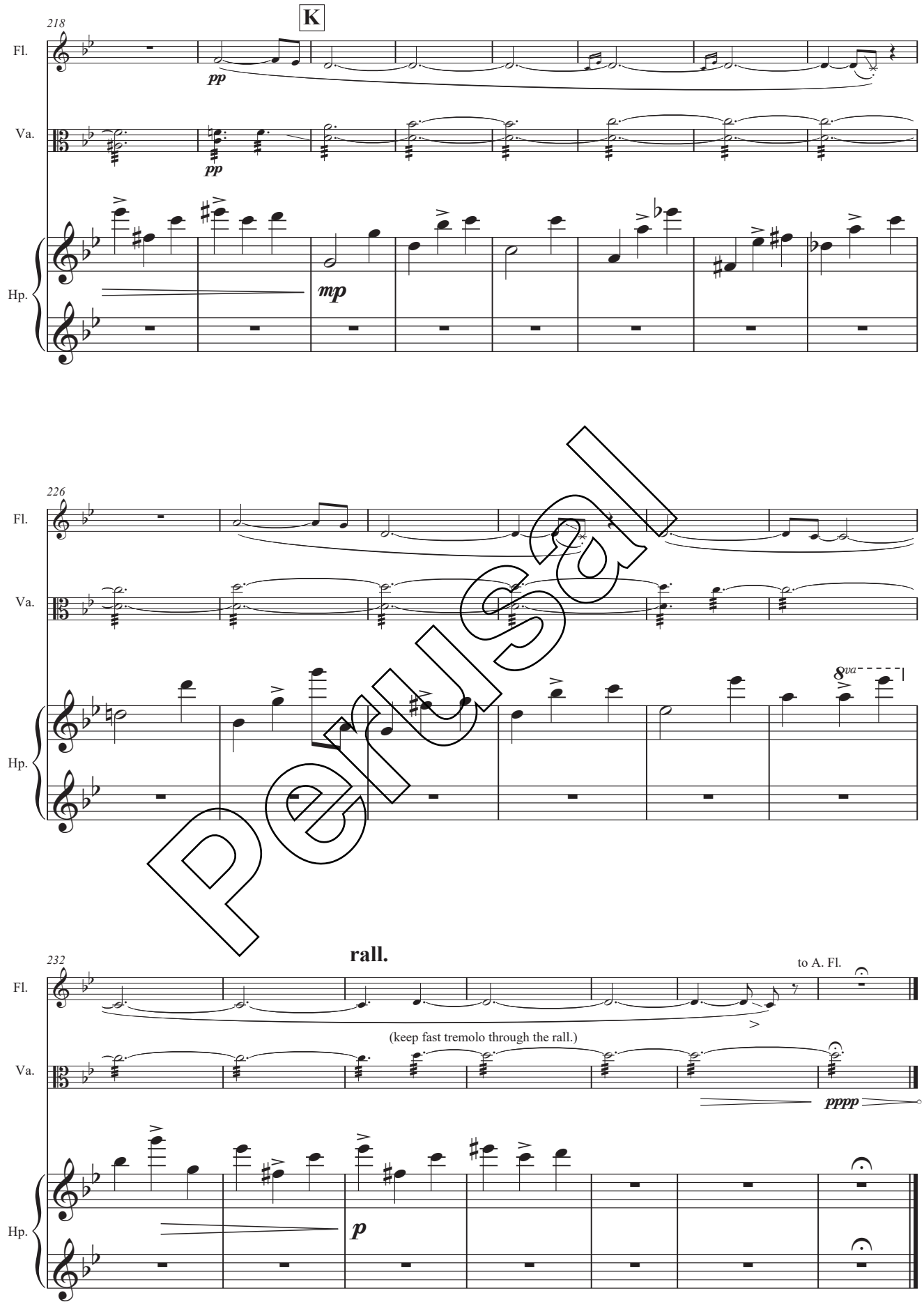
Perusal


183
Fl.
Va.
arco
sul tasto, punta d'arco
mp
Hp.
3
3
sfz
F♮
188
I
Fl.
f
Va.
arco
mf
ricochet
Hp.
f
F♯
G♮
194
Fl.
3
3
Va.
ricochet
Hp.

Perusal

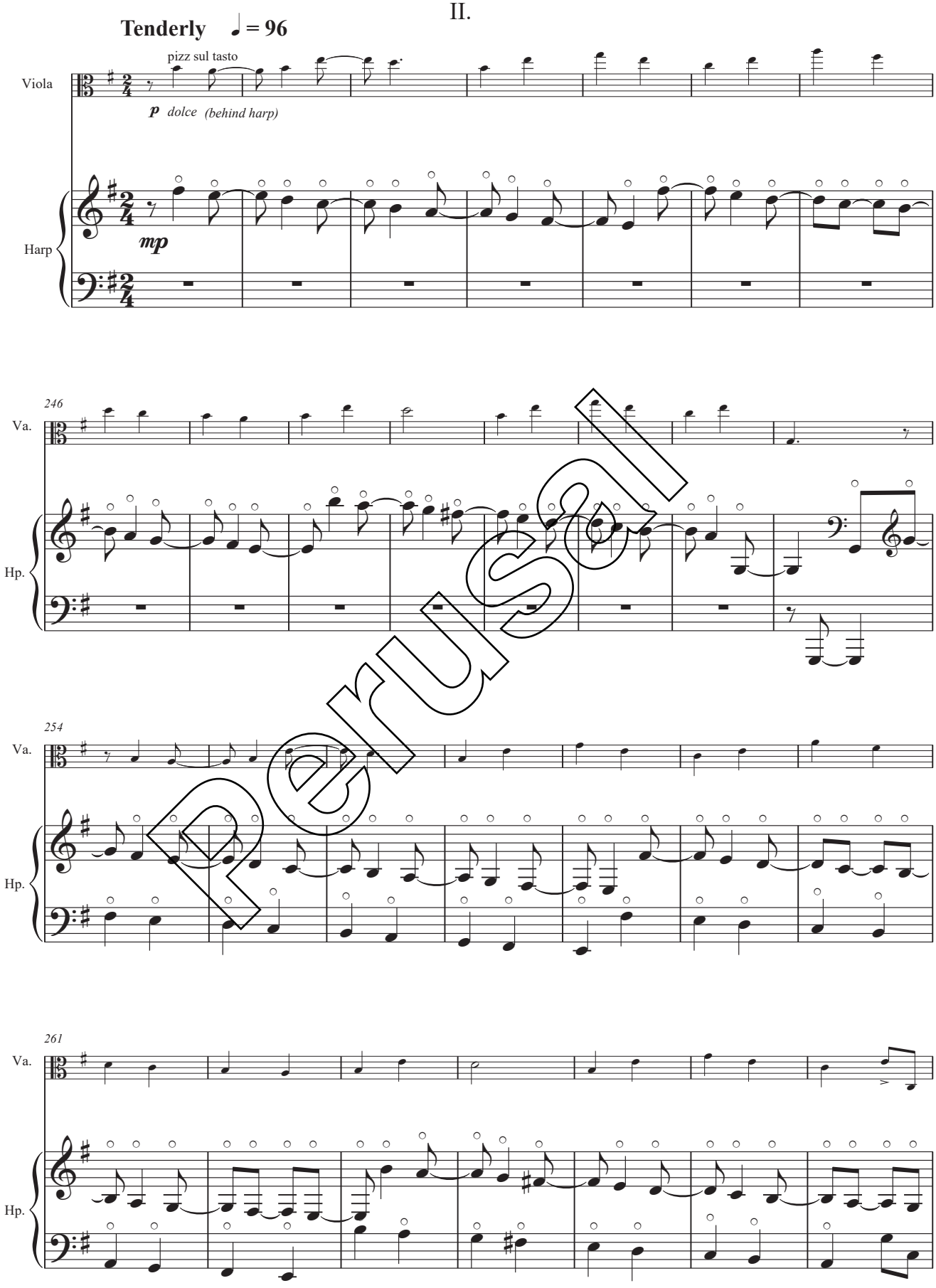


Perusal

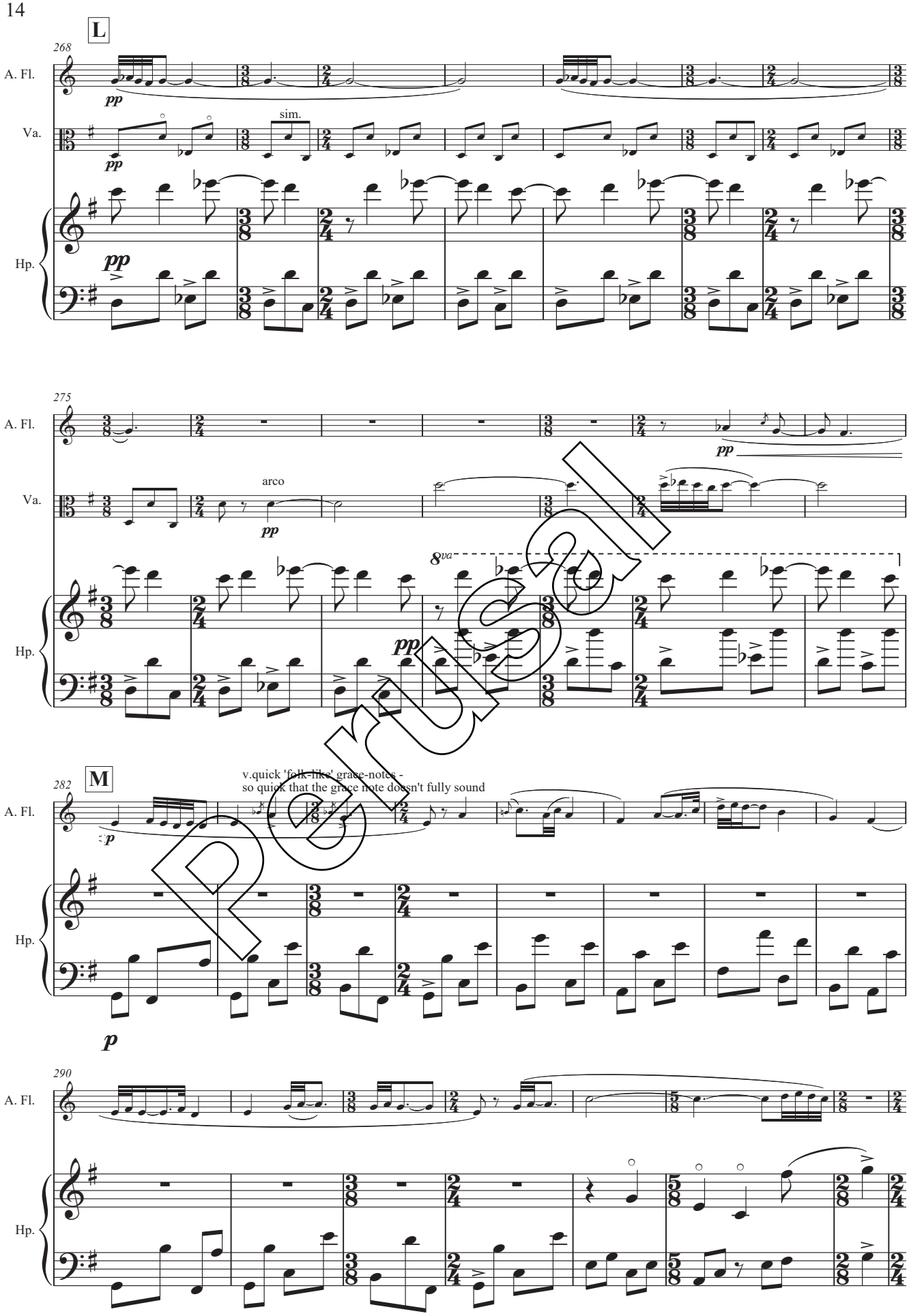

218
K
Fl.
pp
Va.
pp
Hp.
mp
226
Fl.
Va.
8va
Hp.
232
rall.
to A. Fl.
Fl.
(keep fast tremolo through the rall.)
Va.
pppp
Hp.
p

Perusal

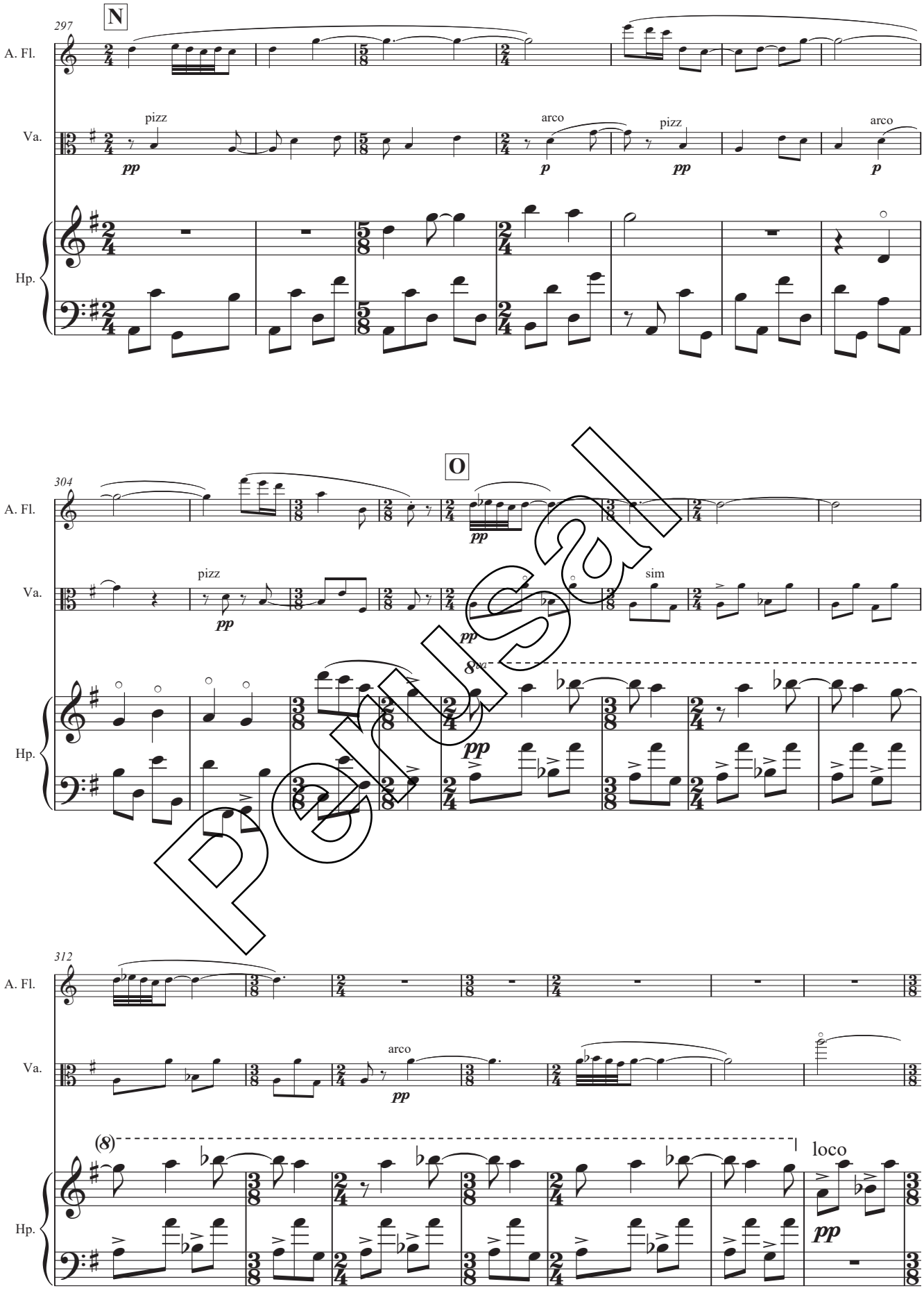
II.


Tenderly ♩ = 96
pizz sul tasto
Viola
p dolce (behind harp)
Harp
mp
246
Va.
Hp.
254
Va.
Hp.
261
Va.
Hp.

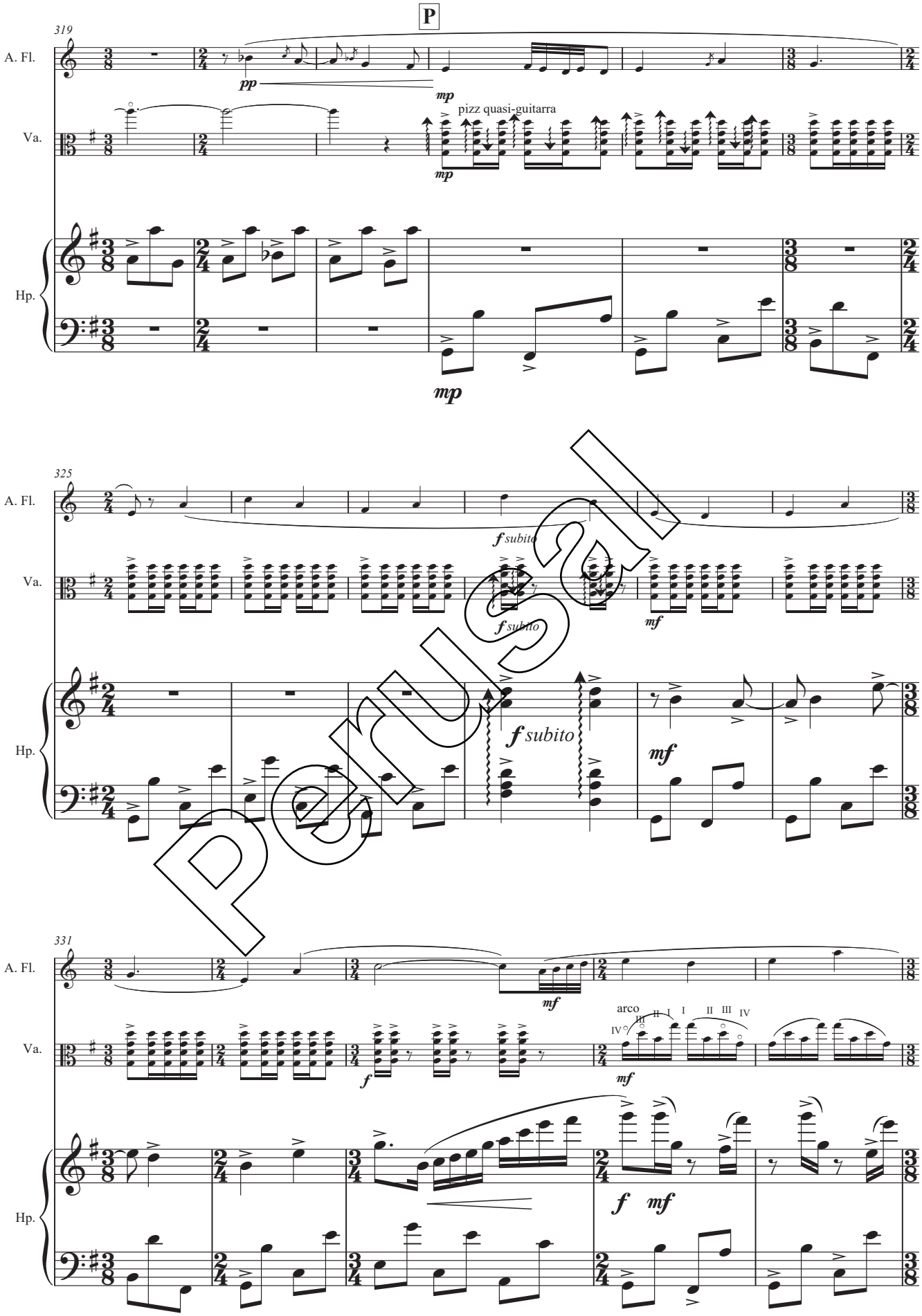
Perusal


L
268
A. Fl.
Va.
Hp.
pp
sim.
275
arco
8va
M
282
v.quick 'folk-like' grace-notes -
so quick that the grace note doesn't fully sound
p
290

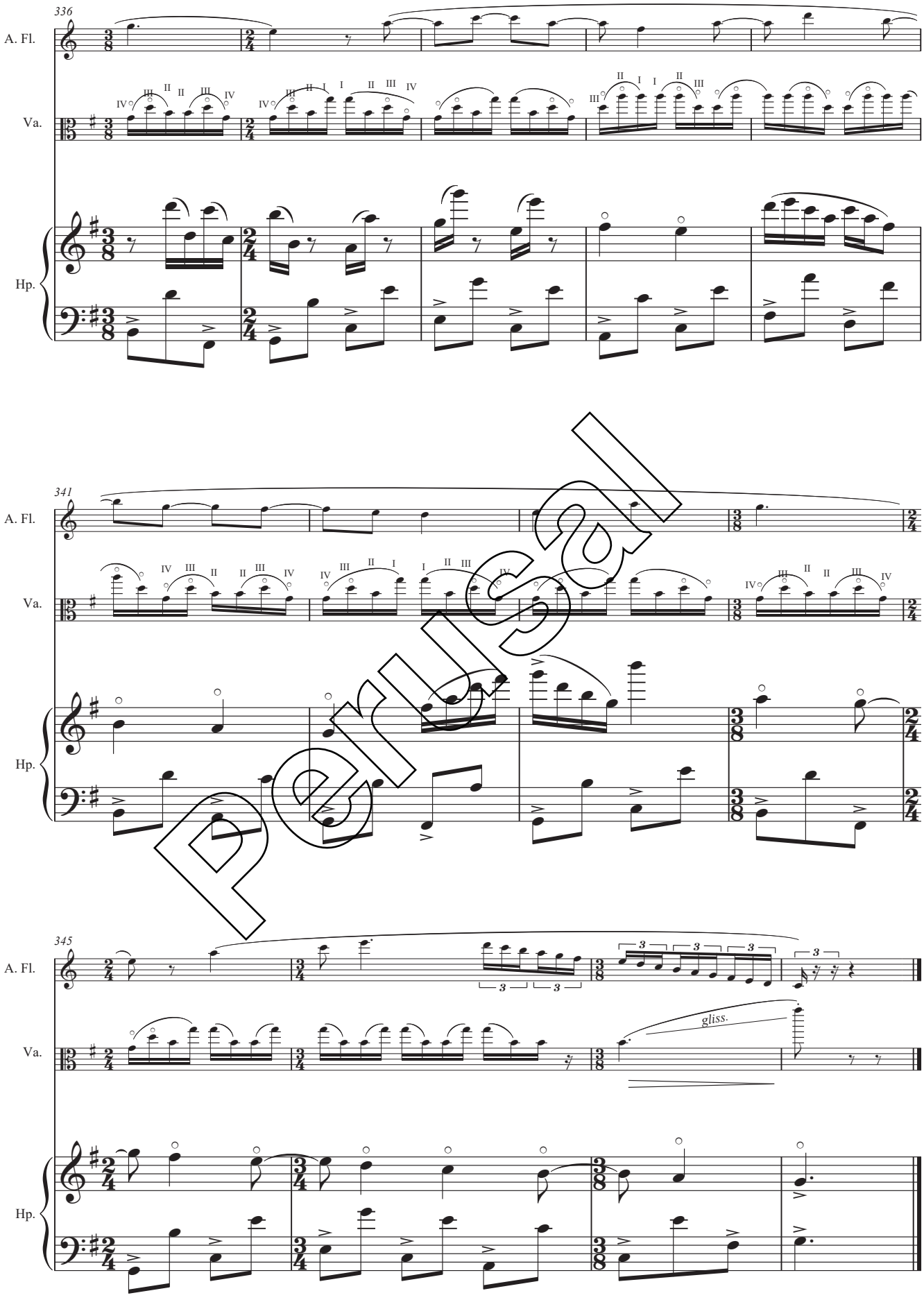
Perusal


297
N
A. Fl.
Va.
pizz
pp
arco
p
pizz
pp
arco
p
Hp.
304
O
A. Fl.
pp
Va.
pizz
pp
pp
sim
8va
Hp.
pp
312
A. Fl.
Va.
arco
pp
(8)
loco
Hp.
pp

Perusal

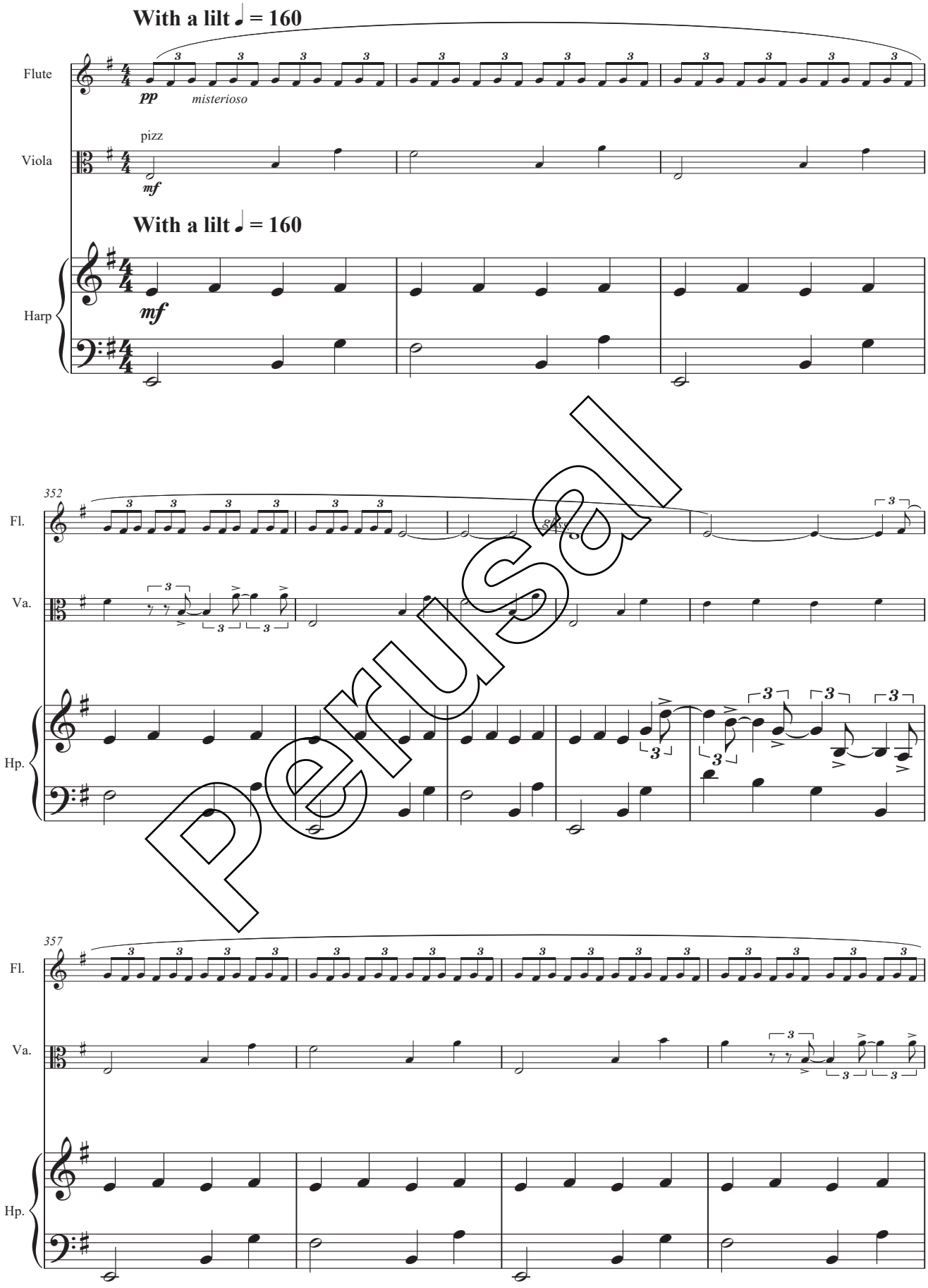

P
319
A. Fl.
pp
mp
Va.
pizz quasi-guitarra
mp
Hp.
mp
325
A. Fl.
f subito
Va.
f subito
mf
Hp.
f subito
mf
331
A. Fl.
mf
Va.
arco
f
mf
Hp.
f mf

Perusal

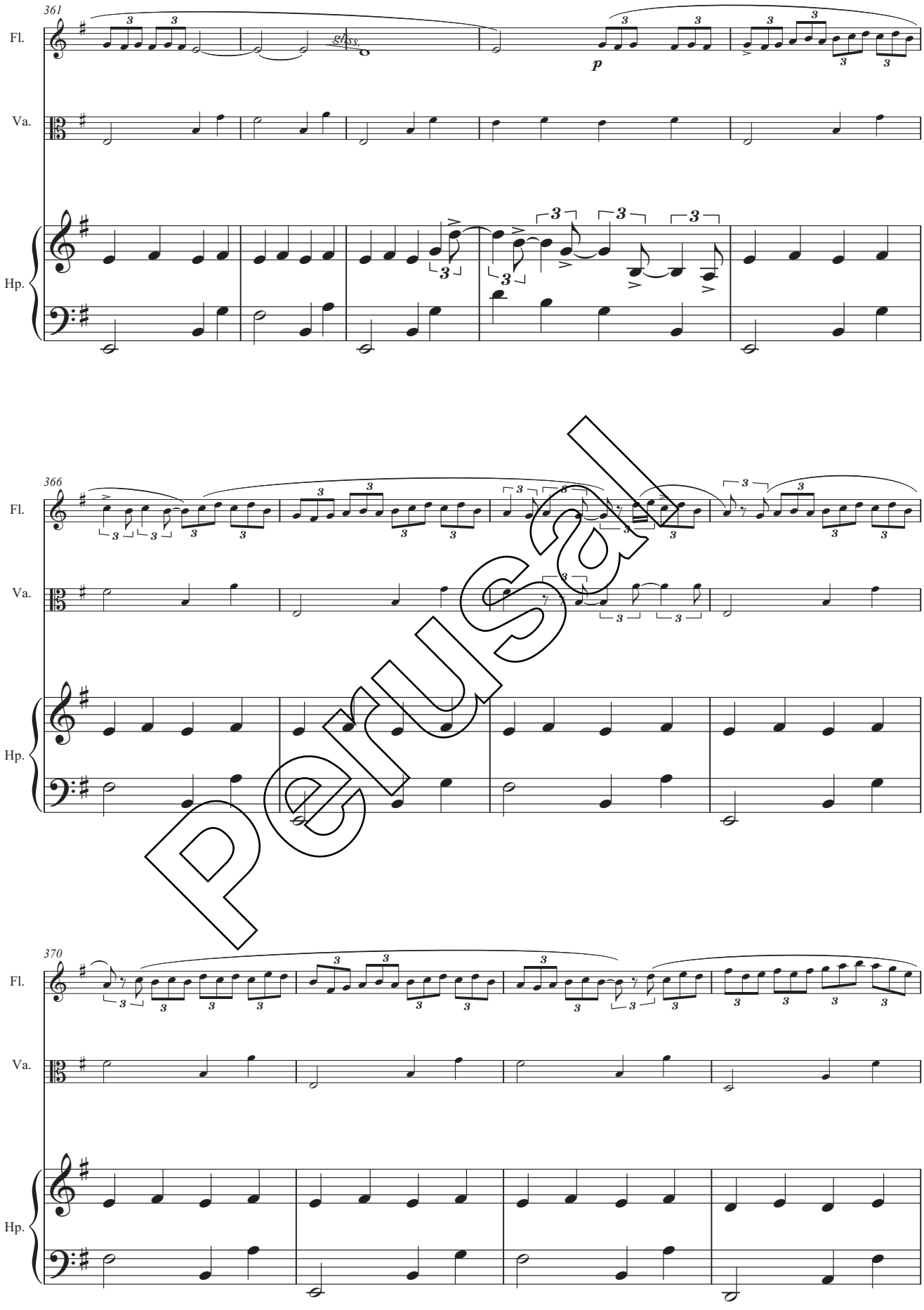


Perusal

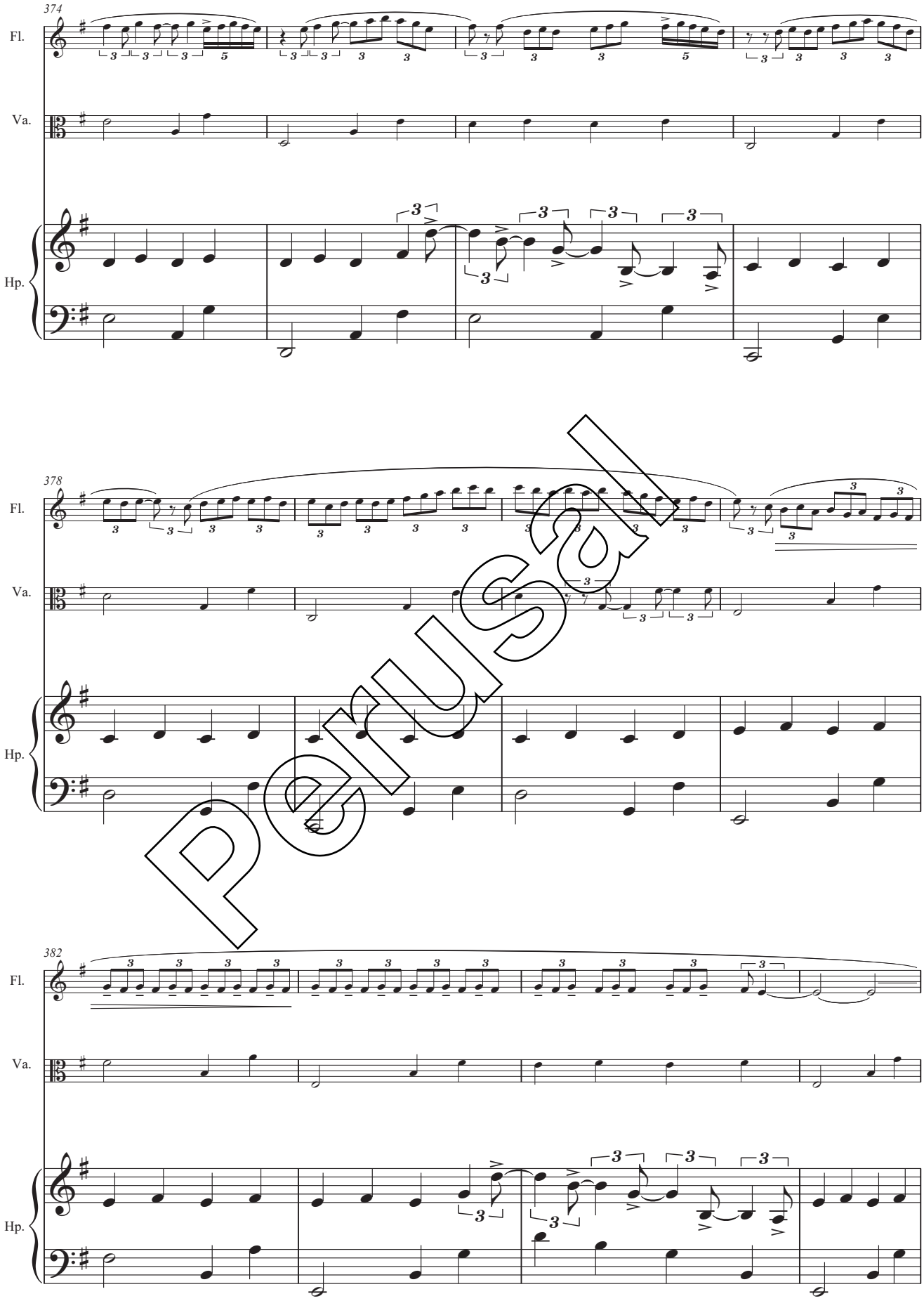
III.


With a lilt ♩ = 160
Flute
pp
misterioso
pizz
Viola
mf
With a lilt ♩ = 160
Harp
mf
352
Fl.
Va.
Hp.
357
Fl.
Va.
Hp.

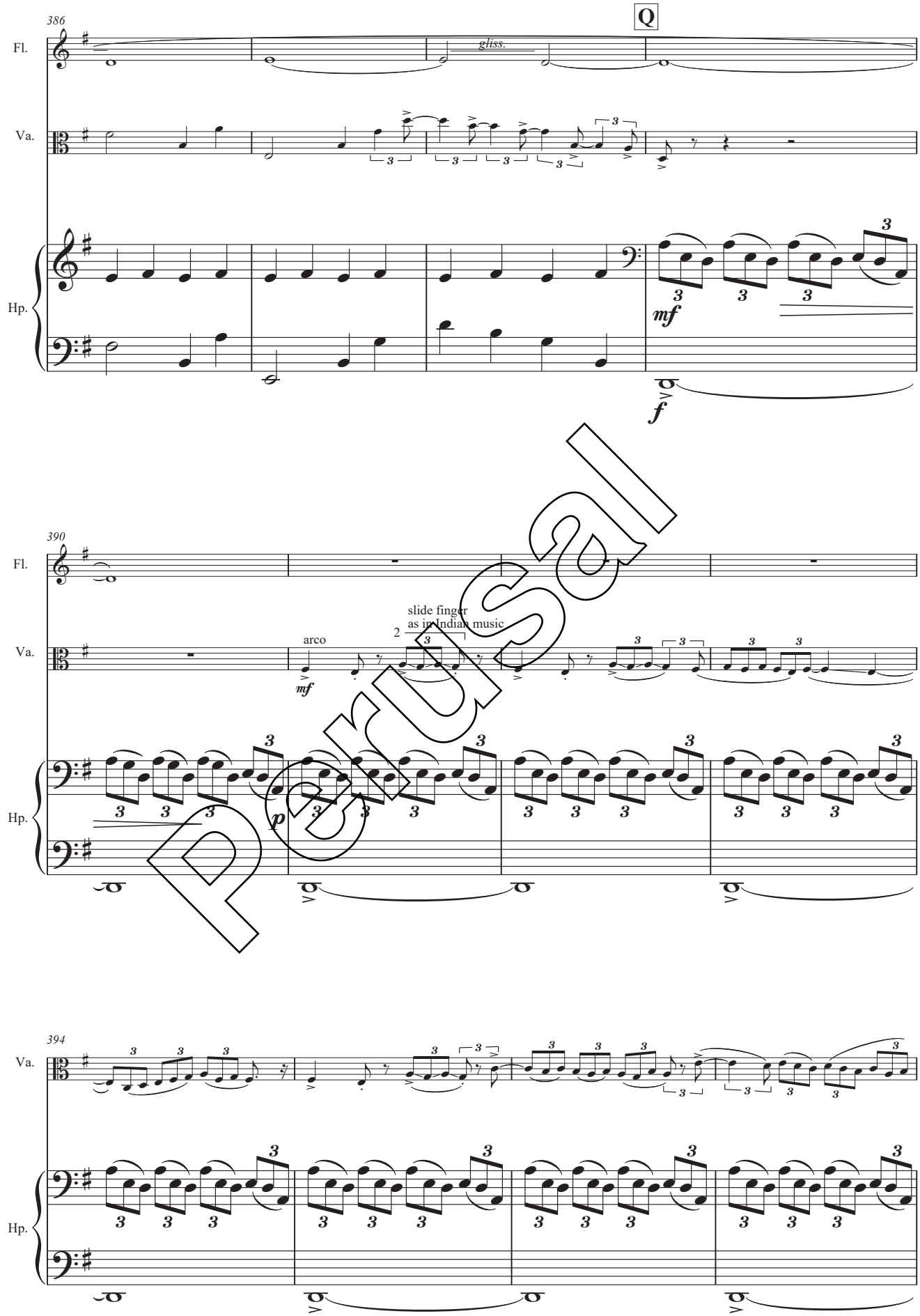
Perusal



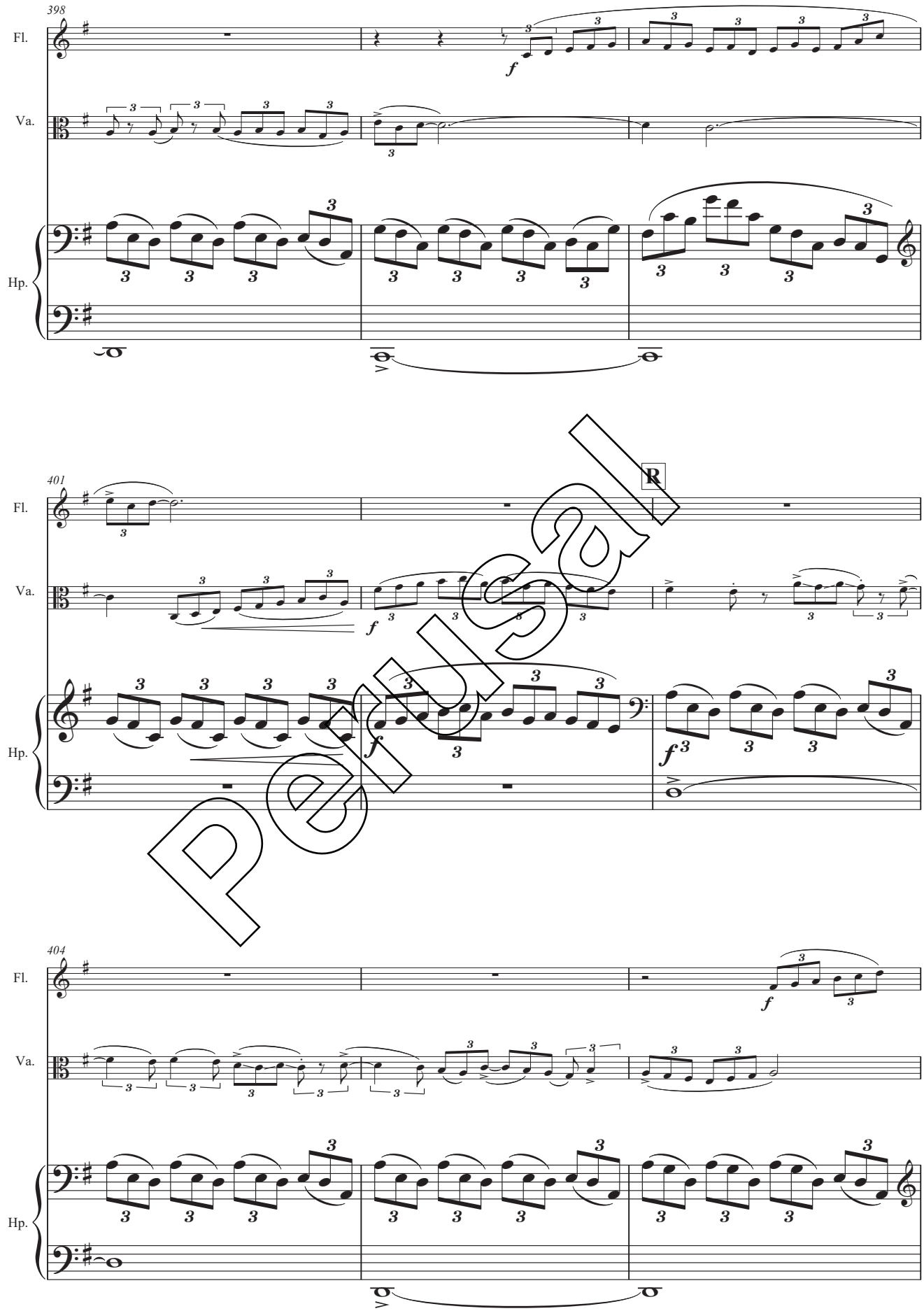
Perusal



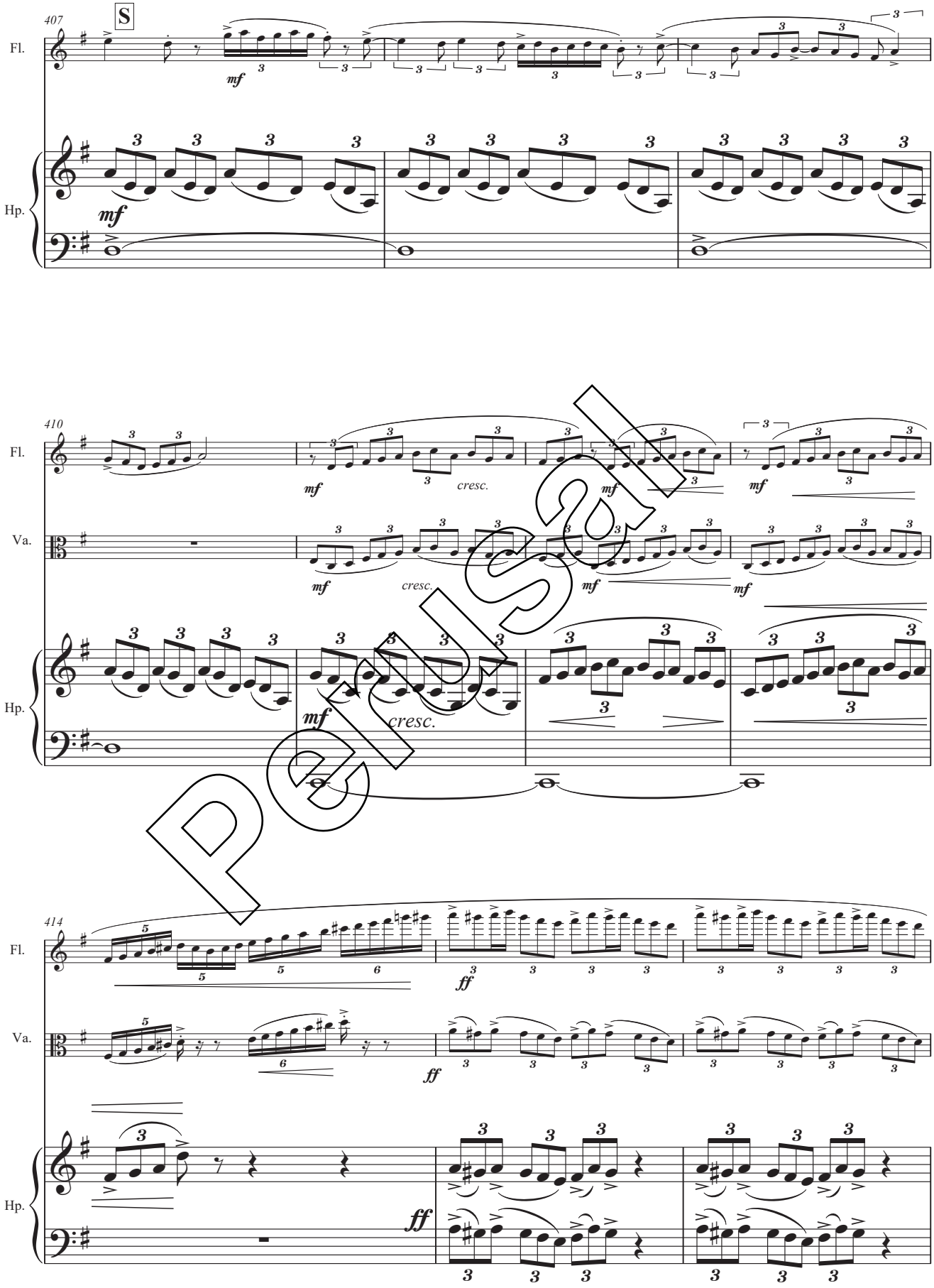
Perusal


386
Q
Fl.
gliss.
Va.
Hp.
mf
f
390
Fl.
slide finger
as in Indian music
Va.
arco
mf
Hp.
p
394
Va.
Hp.

Perusal



Perusal



Perusal

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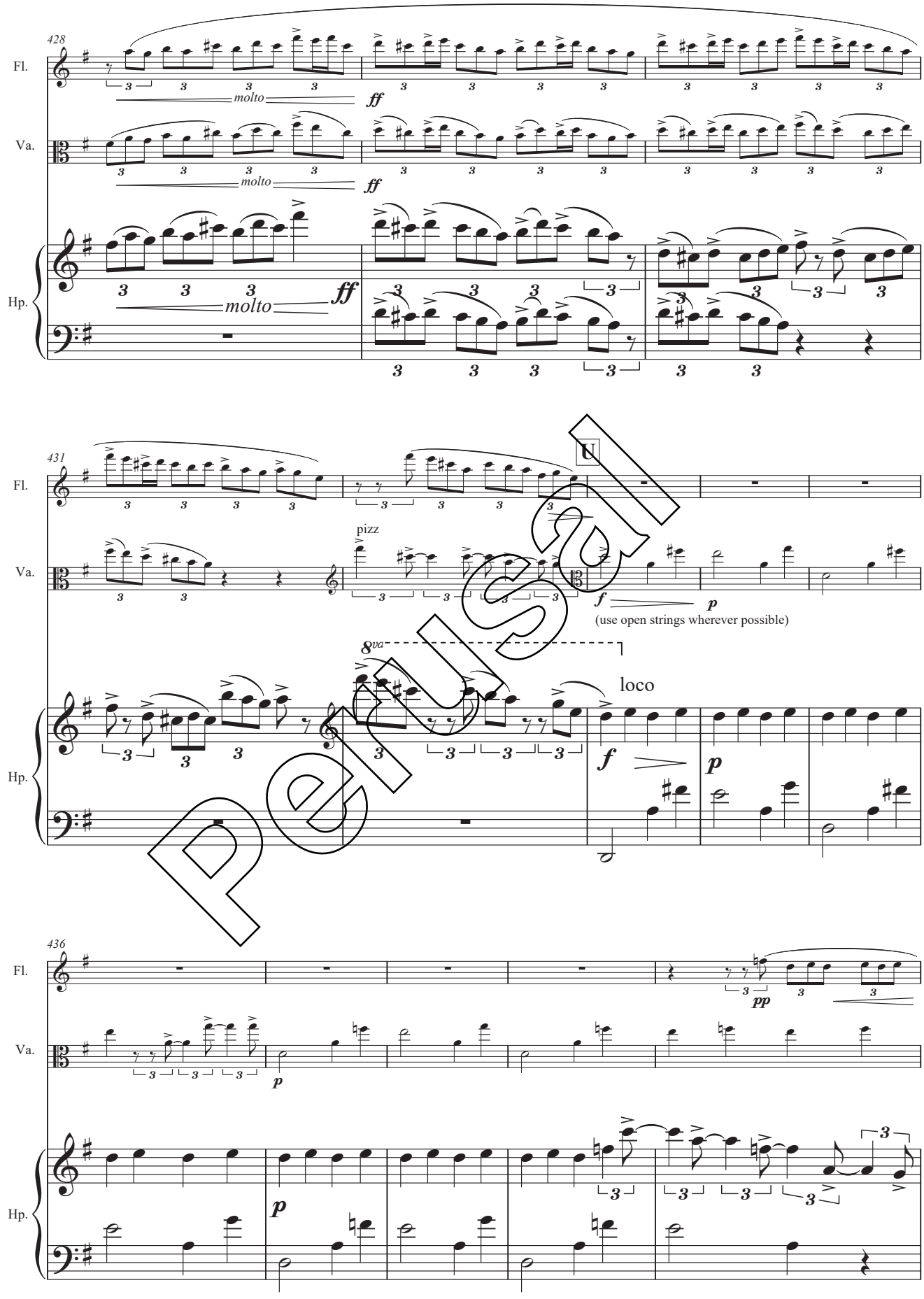
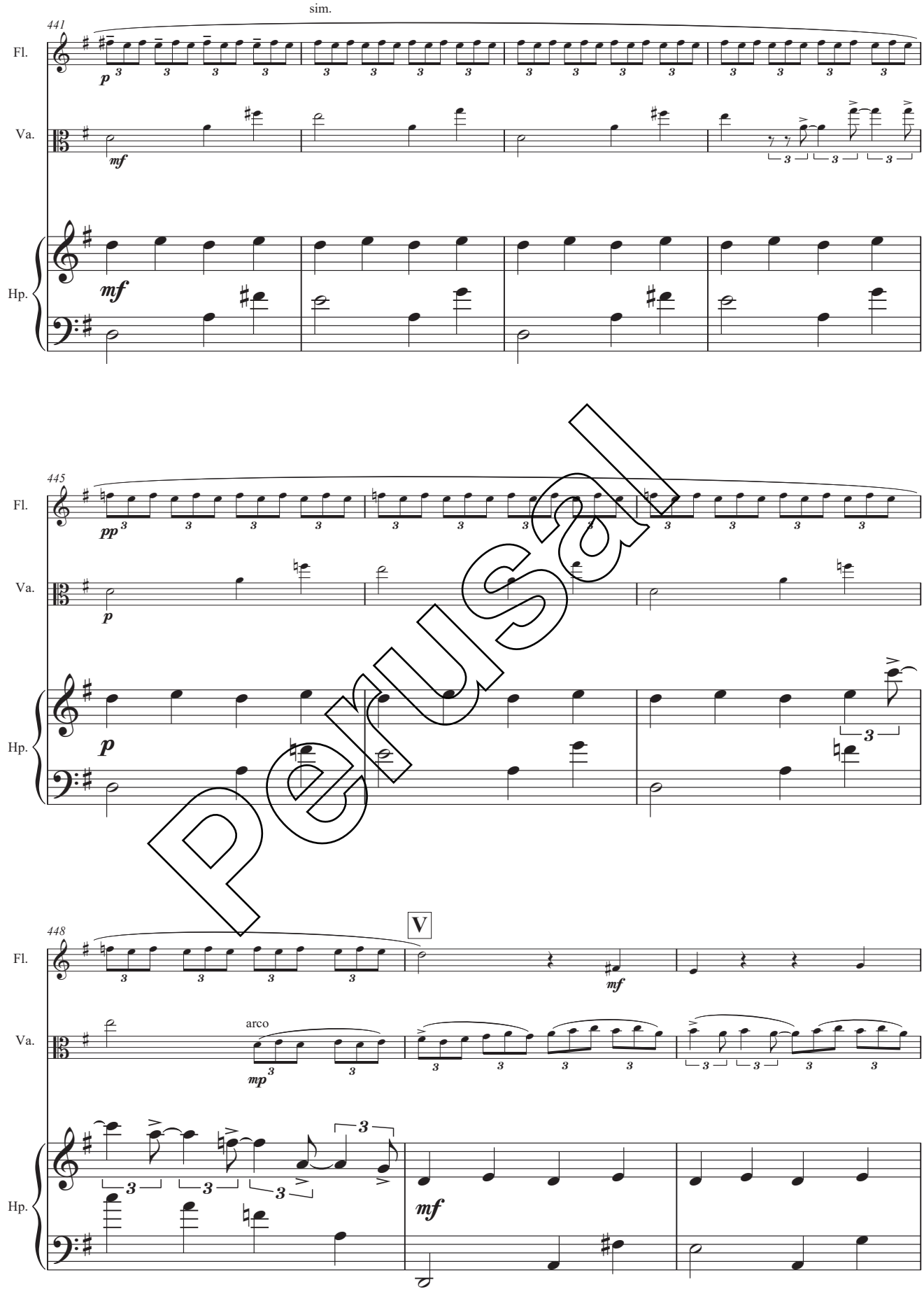
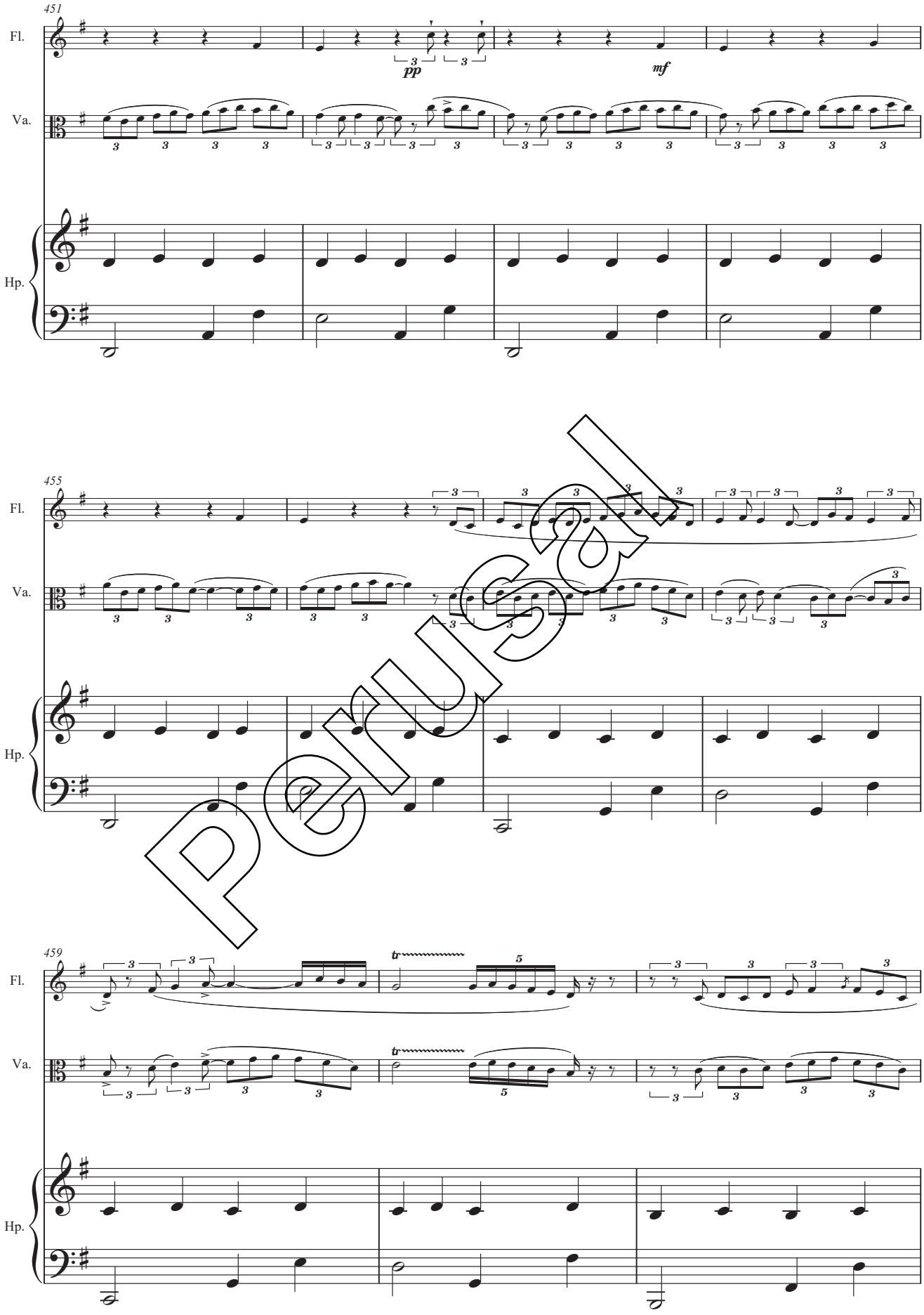

428
Fl.
Va.
Hp.
molto
ff
431
pizz
f
p
(use open strings wherever possible)
8va
loco
436
pp

Perusal



Perusal



Perusal

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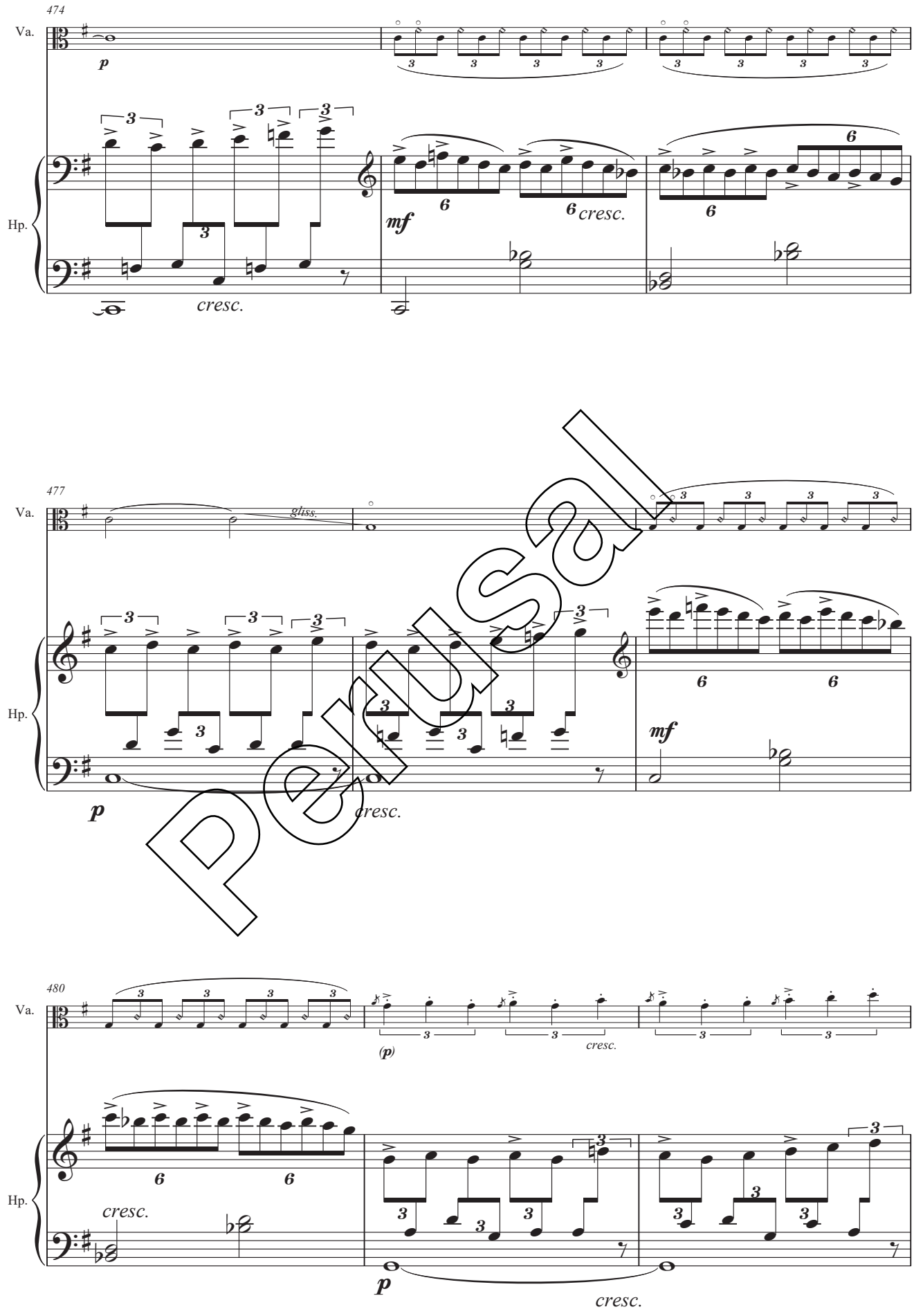

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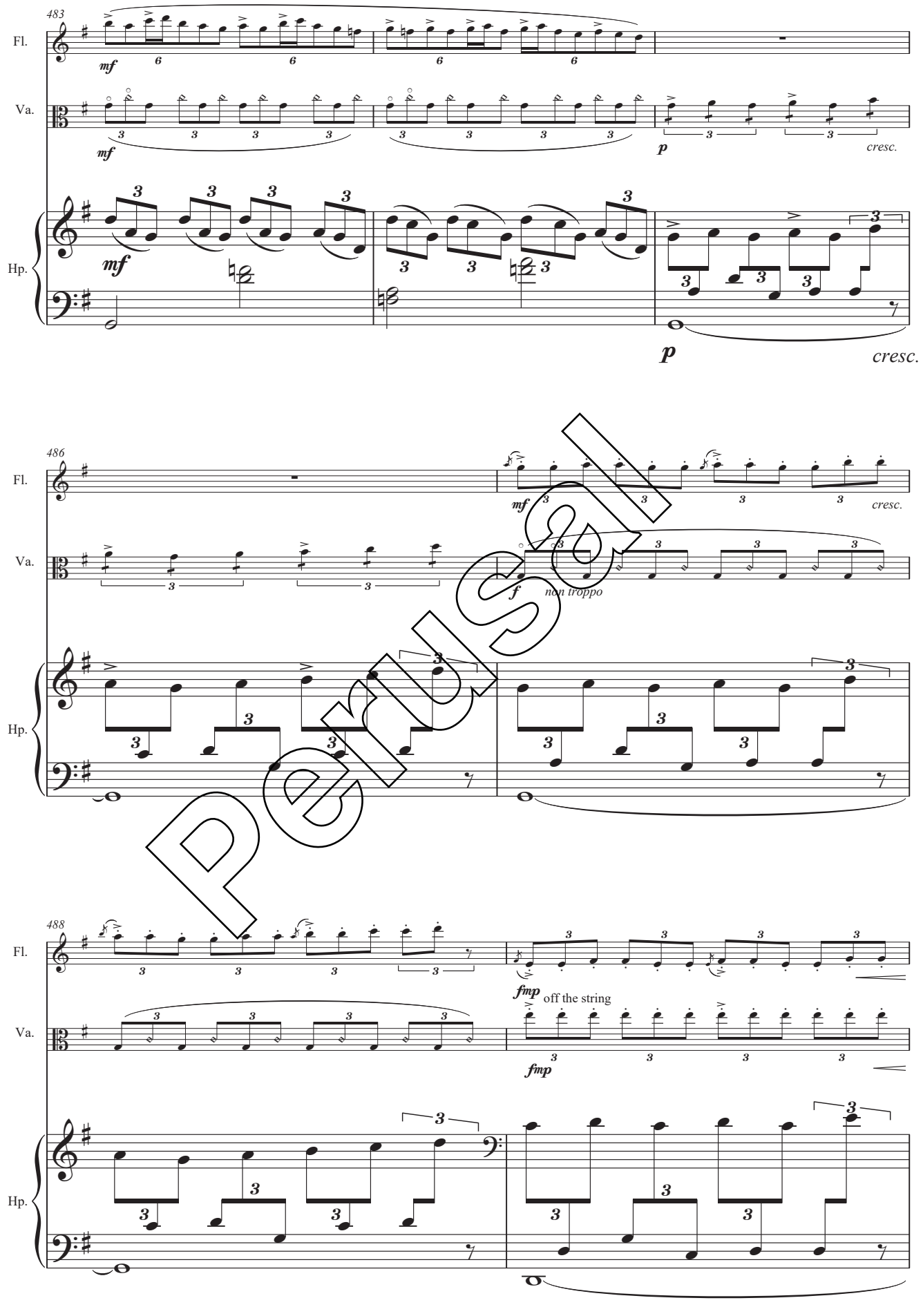

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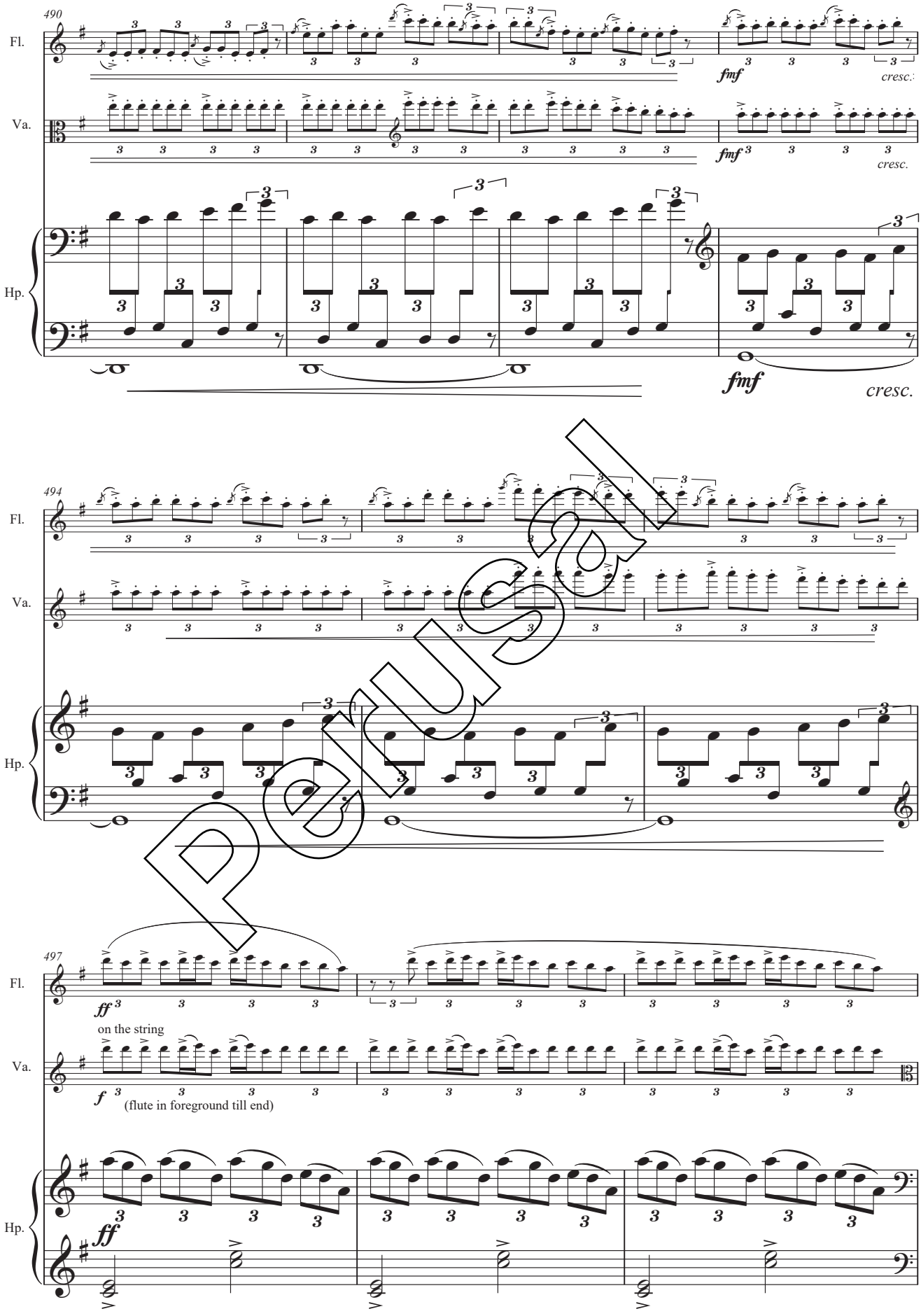
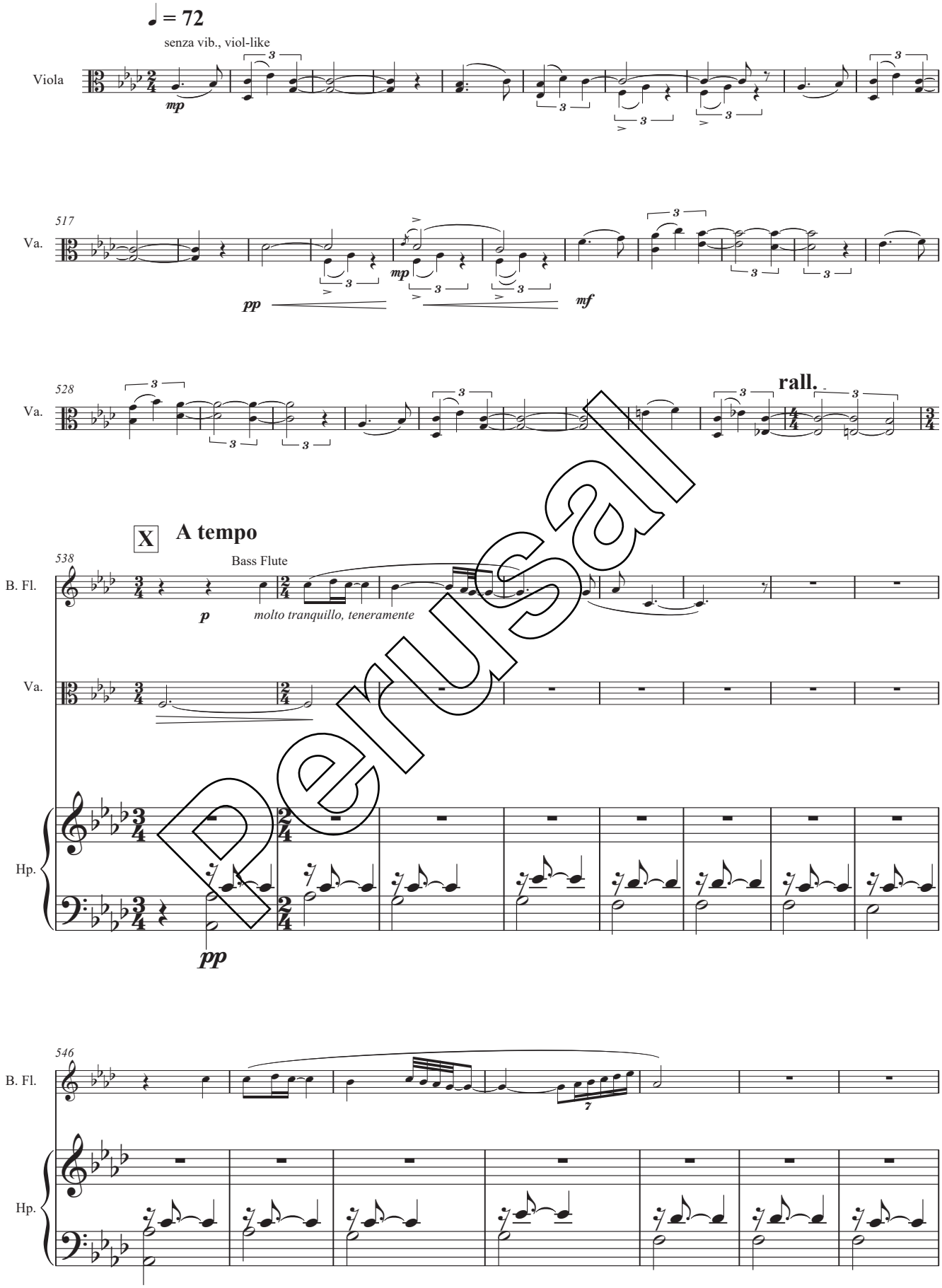

490
Fl.
Va.
Hp.
fmf
cresc.
494
Fl.
Va.
Hp.
497
Fl.
ff
Va.
on the string
f
(flute in foreground till end)
Hp.
ff

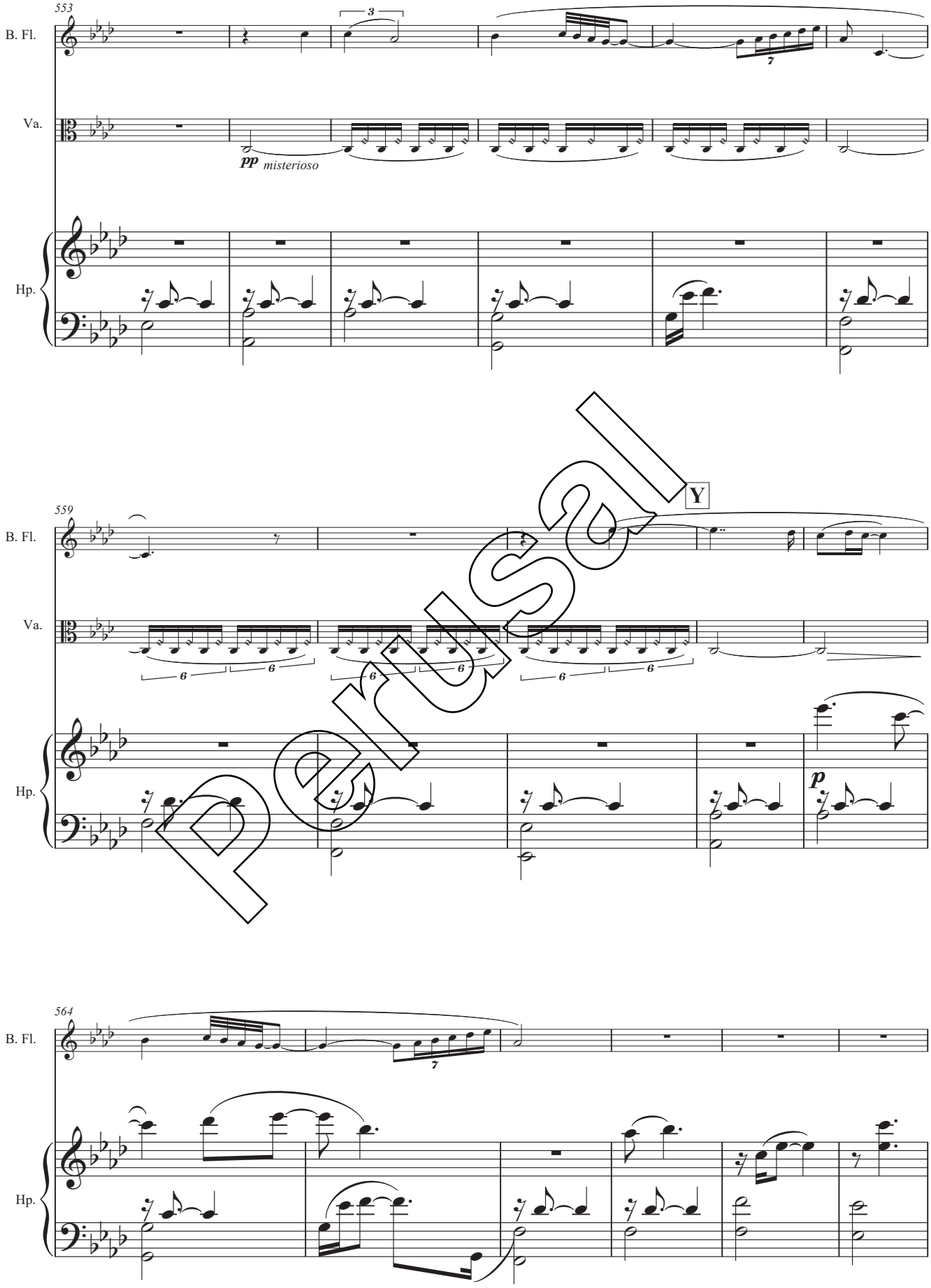
Perusal

Perusal

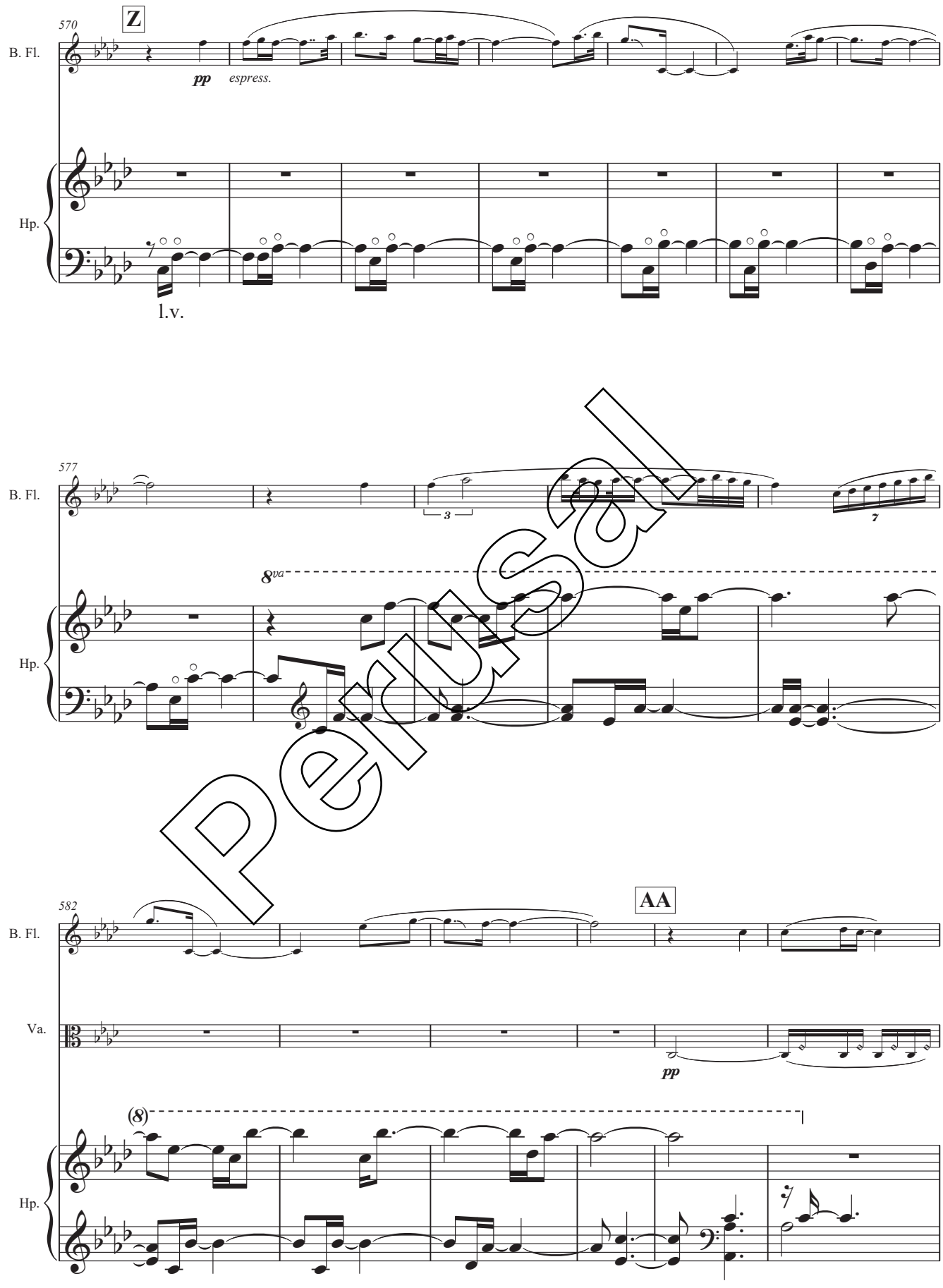
IV.


♩ = 72
senza vib., viol-like
Viola
mp
517
Va.
pp
mp
mf
528
Va.
rall.
X
A tempo
538
Bass Flute
B. Fl.
p
molto tranquillo, teneramente
Va.
Hp.
pp
546
B. Fl.
Hp.

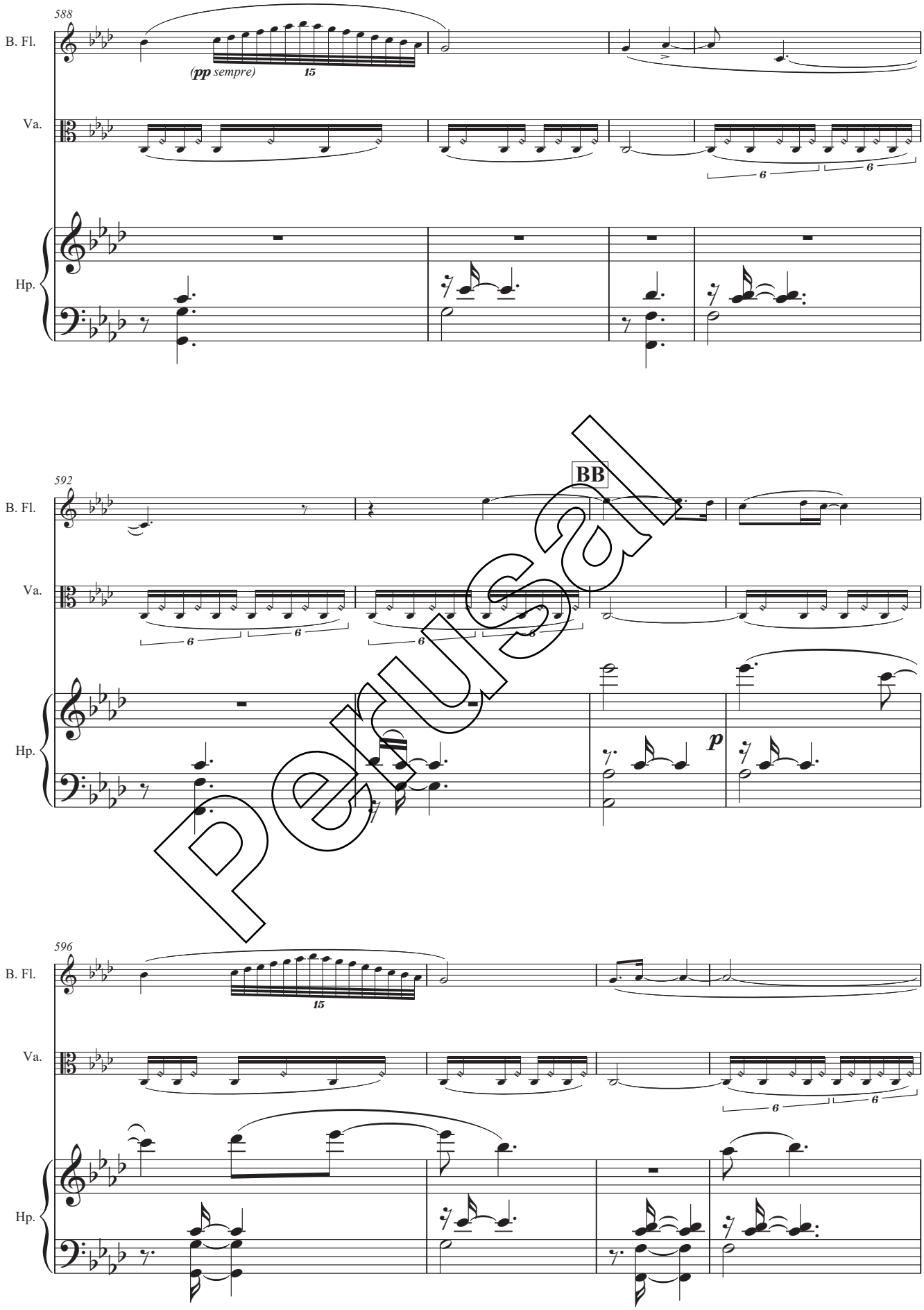
Perusal



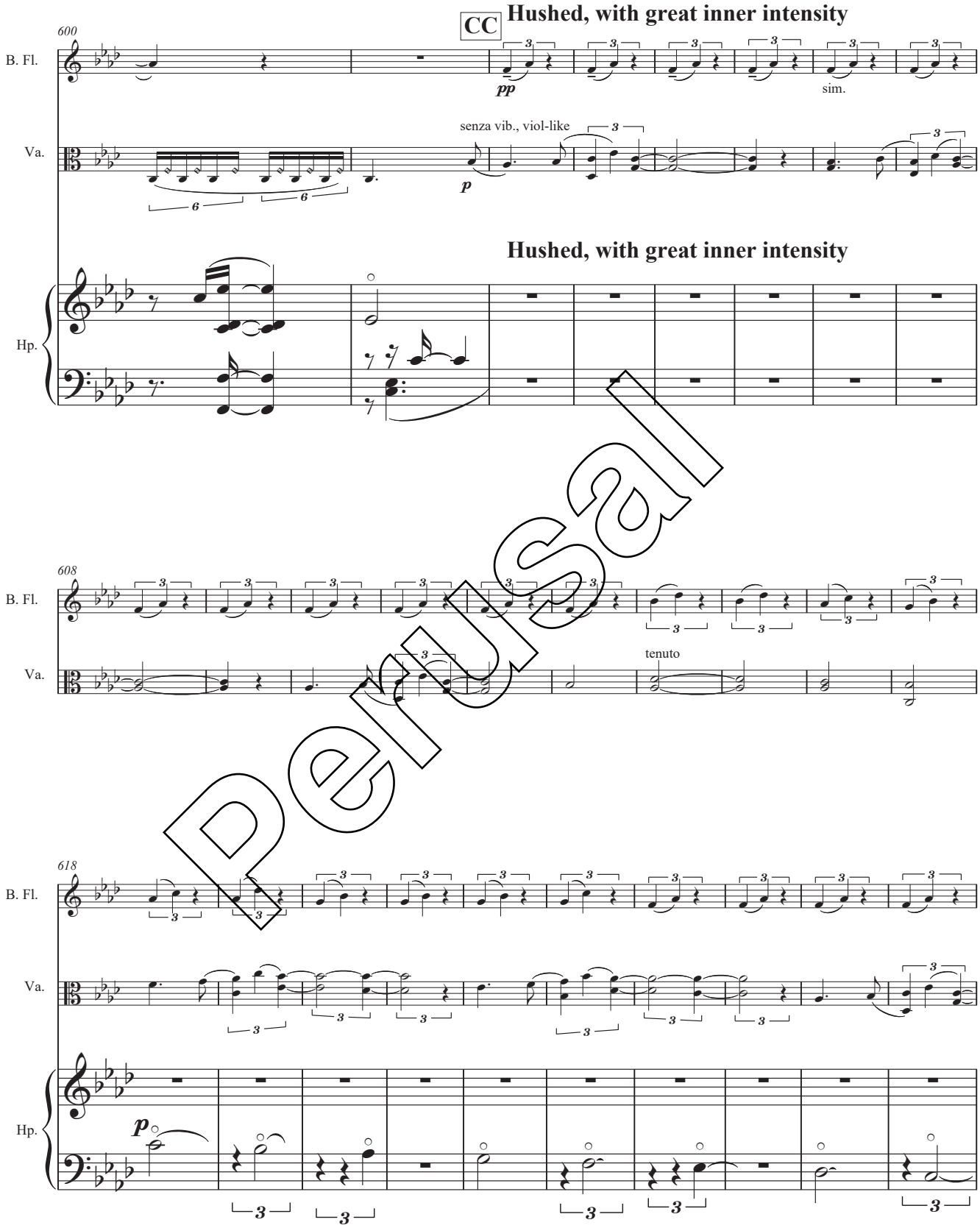
Perusal



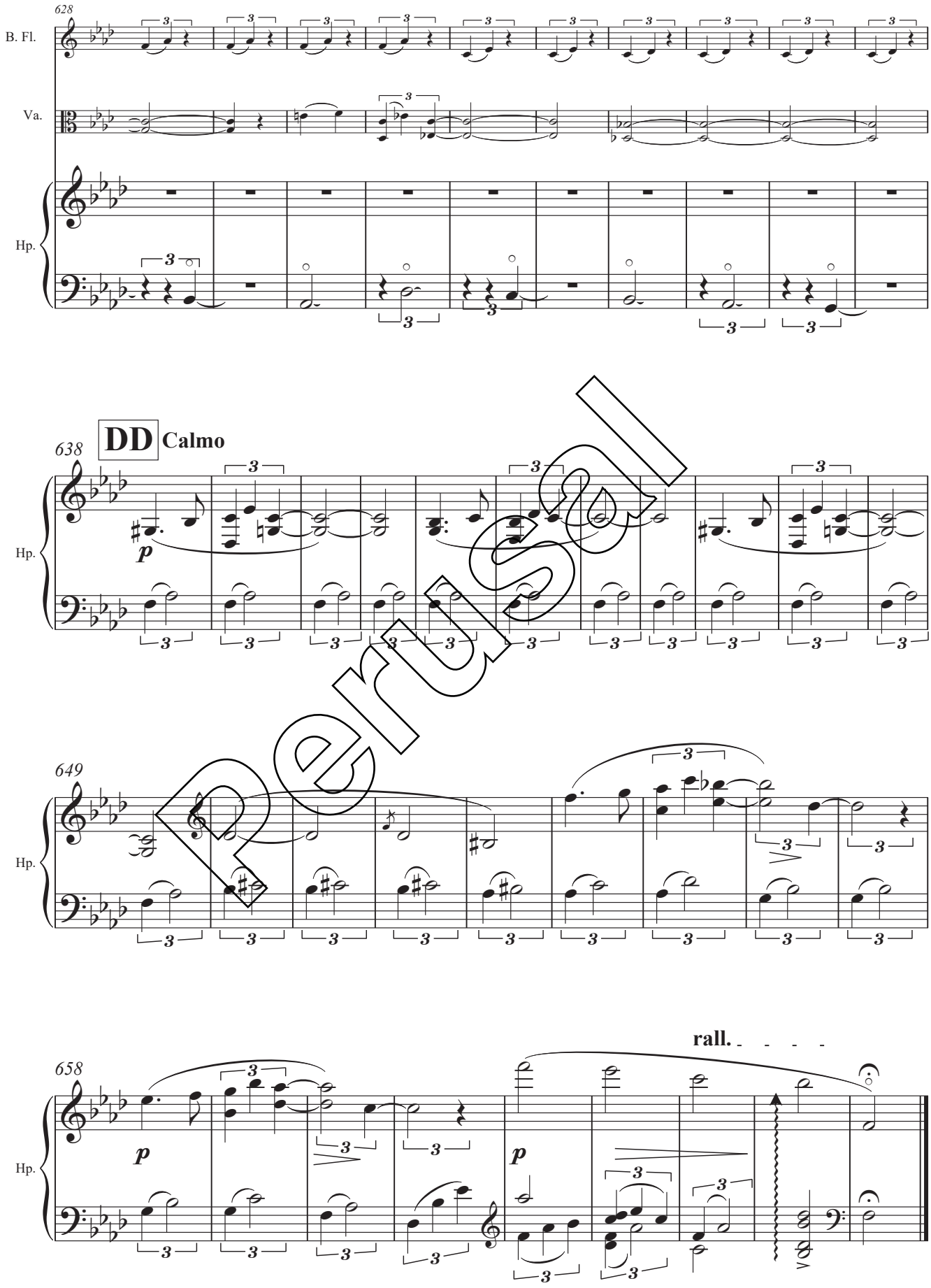
Perusal


588
B. Fl.
(pp sempre)
15
Va.
6
6
Hp.
592
BB
B. Fl.
Va.
6
6
6
6
Hp.
p
596
B. Fl.
15
Va.
6
6
Hp.

Perusal


CC
Hushed, with great inner intensity
600
B. Fl.
pp
sim.
Va.
senza vib., viol-like
p
Hushed, with great inner intensity
Hp.
608
B. Fl.
Va.
tenuto
618
B. Fl.
Va.
Hp.
p

Perusal



Perusal