Eric Galluzzo

Trudging Grimly through the Snow

for orchestra

For perusal only

June 2025

Instrumentation

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
English Horn
2 Clarinets in B♭
Bass Clarinet in B♭
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
3 Trumpets in B♭
3 Trombones (2 tenor, 1 bass)
Tuba

4 Timpani (32", 29", 26", 23"; or 2x29", 26", 23"; see Performance Notes)
4 Percussion
- Percussion 1: Xylophone
- Percussion 2: Snare Drum
- Percussion 3: Bass Drum, Sleigh Bells
- Percussion 4: Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal

Harp (optional)
Piano/Celesta (optional)

Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass (C extension or fifth string required for all players)

Duration

ca. 5'30"

Program Notes

What if Shostakovich had written Jingle Bells? Apart from being half an hour long, we certainly wouldn't be "dashing through the snow...laughing all the way," we'd be trudging grimly through the snow, lamenting the frailty of the human condition all the way — hence the title. This piece originated after representatives from three different orchestras asked me for a longer version of the Shostakovich Jingle Bells variation that I had written and published online in December 2024.

Happily, this piece doesn't last for half an hour, but I did divide it into two sections showcasing different sides of Shostakovich's style. The initial, slower section uses the "dashing through the snow" part of Jingle Bells as its main motivic material, along with the famous DSCH (D E♭ C B) motive that Shostakovich so loved. I attempted to treat the motives as he would have, with inversion and occasional augmentation in the accompaniment. And I did try quite hard to capture his unique styles of harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. The latter, faster section uses the famous "Jingle Bells" refrain in an expanded version of the original variation I wrote. It prominently uses the ♫ rhythm that Shostakovich employed in so many works, and there is a fugal section similar to those that Shostakovich included in several of his symphonies. There's even a fun little section with sleigh bells, xylophone and pizzicato violins, a nod to Shostakovich's light-hearted works like the Jazz Suites. And finally, the piece ends with a nice satisfying coda in D major.

Performance Notes

The score is transposed. Despite the music meandering frequently through distantly related keys in true Shostakovich fashion, I've used a key signature, as he always did, to indicate the primary key.

The harp, celesta and piano are all optional. The celesta in particular contributes to a colder, more Christmas-like atmosphere; but all the notes these instruments play are doubled by other instruments.

There are many tied notes in the strings that cannot realistically be played in a single bow stroke. As per customary practice, players should feel free to stagger their bow changes during these notes. Similarly, at the end of the piece, the flutes and piccolo play trills for several measures. They should breathe between the marked ties as necessary.

In the last few bars of the piece, the timpani play the "jingle all the way" motive, with drums tuned to B♭, C, D and F. Some 32" timpani may be unable to reach the B♭, especially if they do not have an extended collar. There are a few different solutions to this problem. First, one could just live with the note being slightly flat. Of course, this isn't ideal, but since the note is doubled by the trombones and tuba, it may well not be noticeable. Second, one could use a second 29" timpano instead of the 32" timpano, since there are no particularly low notes in this piece are out of range of a 29" timpano. However, this may incur extra rental cost for orchestras that do not own a second 29" timpano. Thirdly, one could use only three timpani, with the B♭ and D both played on the 26" timpano, since there aren't any other passages in the piece with four different notes in quick succession, nor any that require the lower range of a 32" timpano. This solution would require quite a bit of rapid pedaling and damping, but it should be possible for a very skilled timpanist.

Revisions

Reviesion 2, June 2025:
- Cleaned up some dynamics throughout
- Made some slight engraving and condensing tweaks

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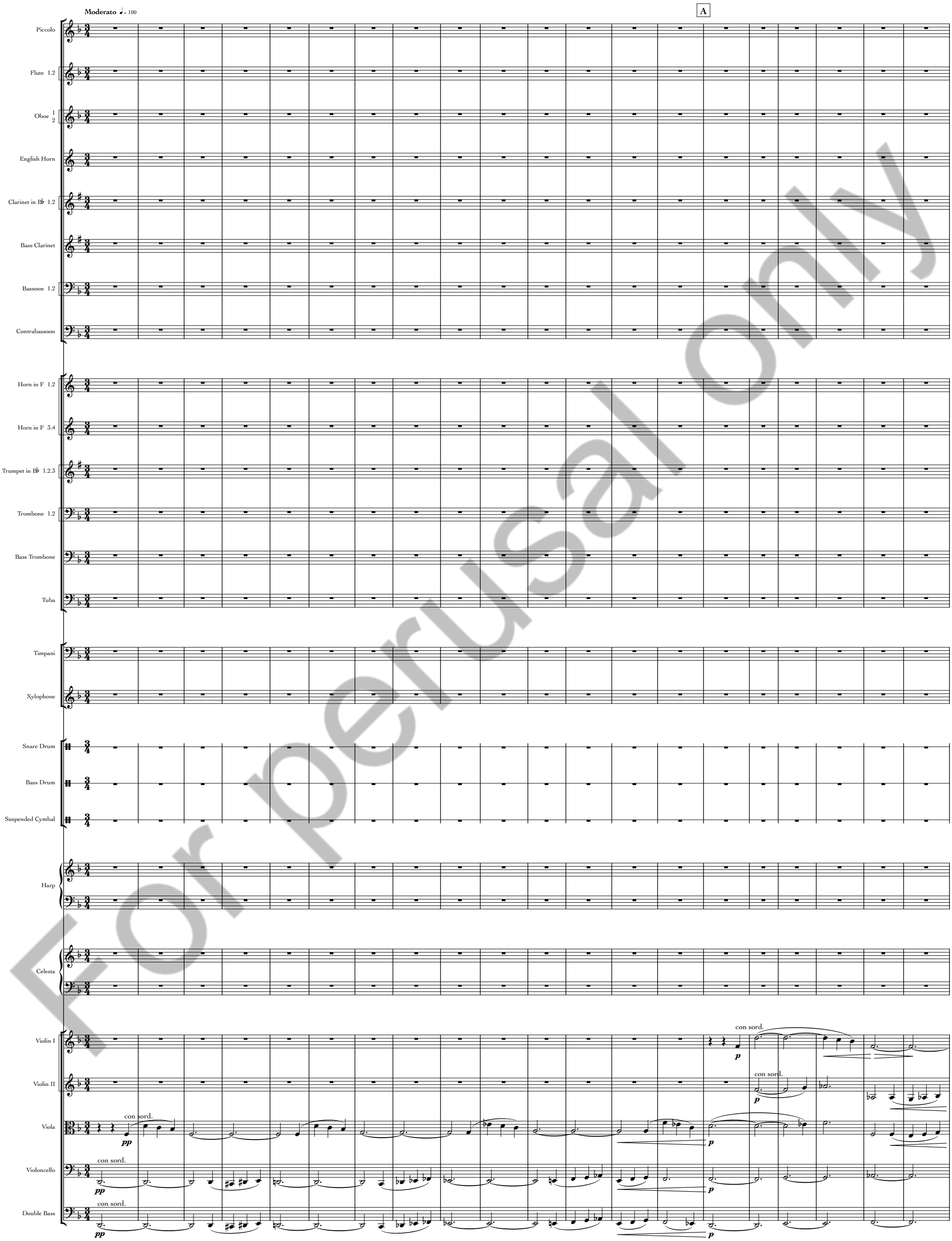

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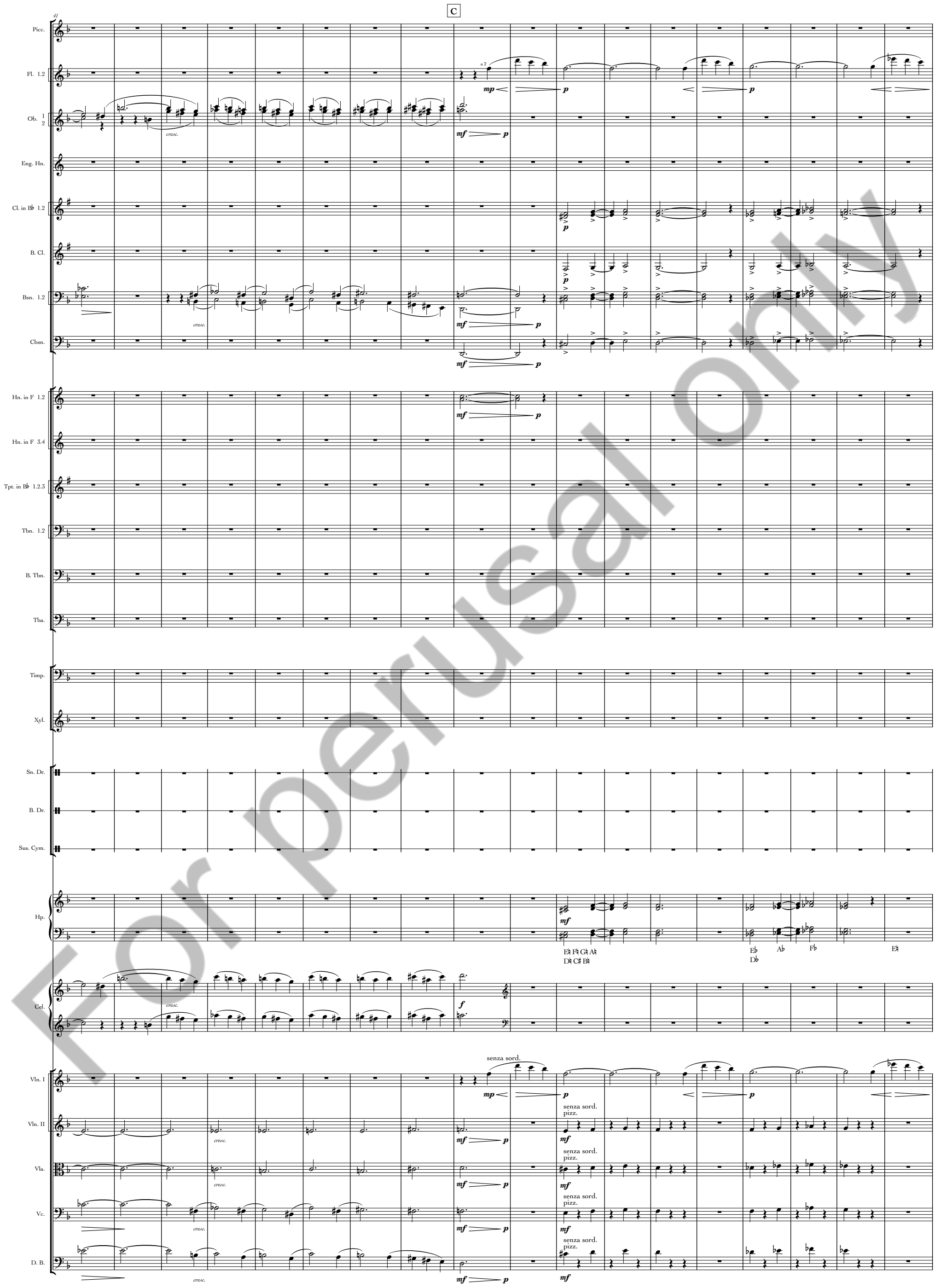

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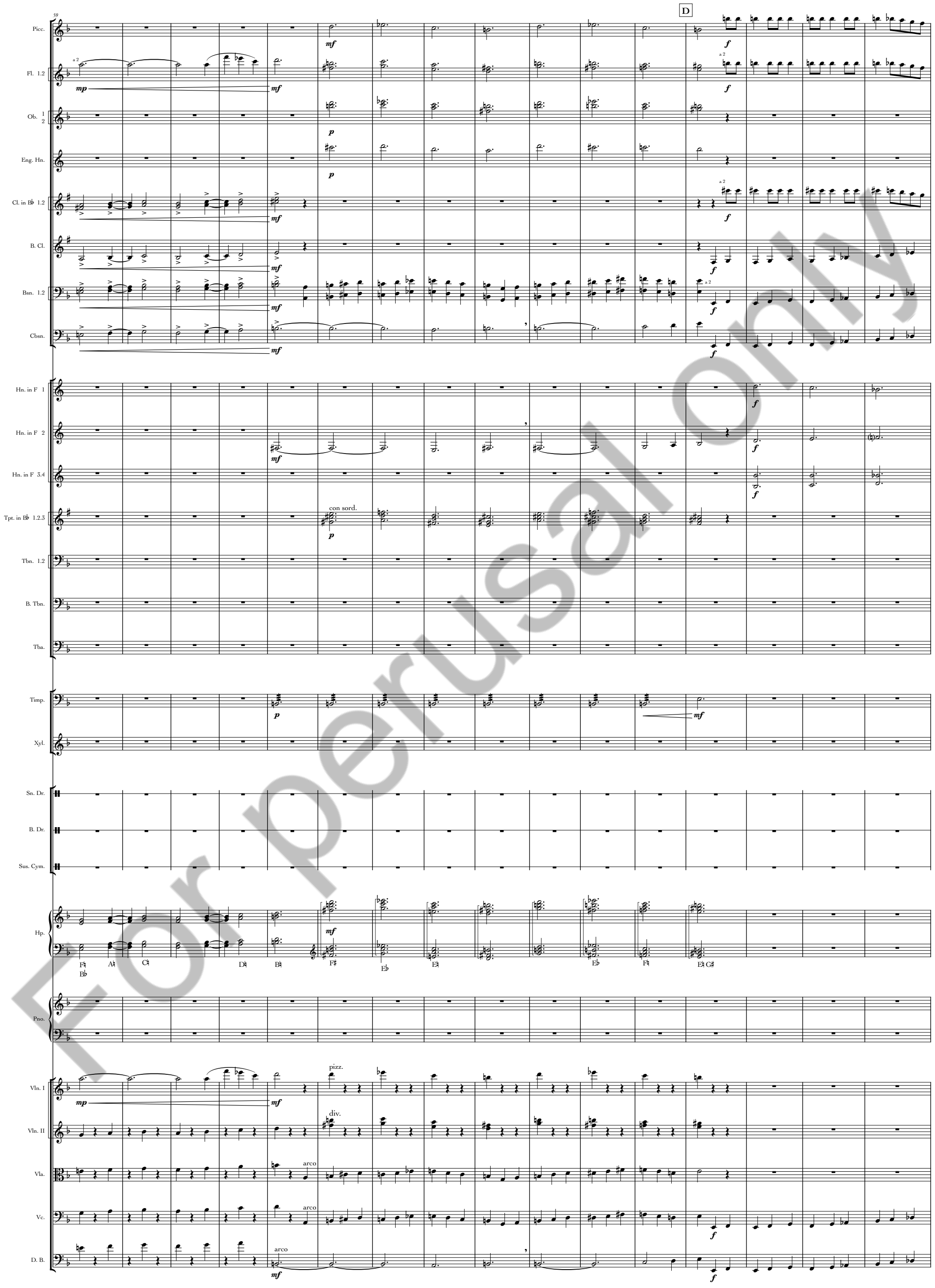

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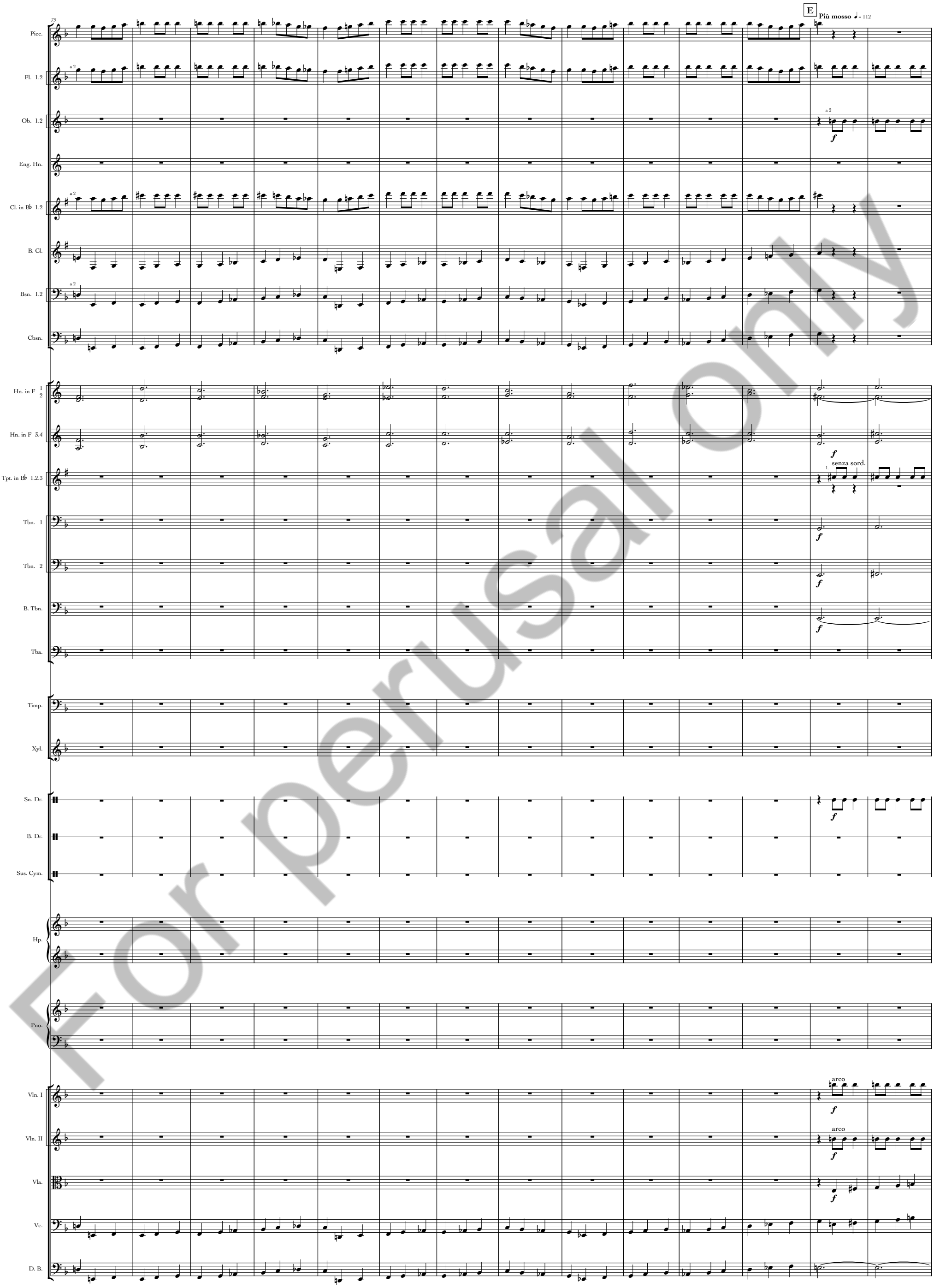

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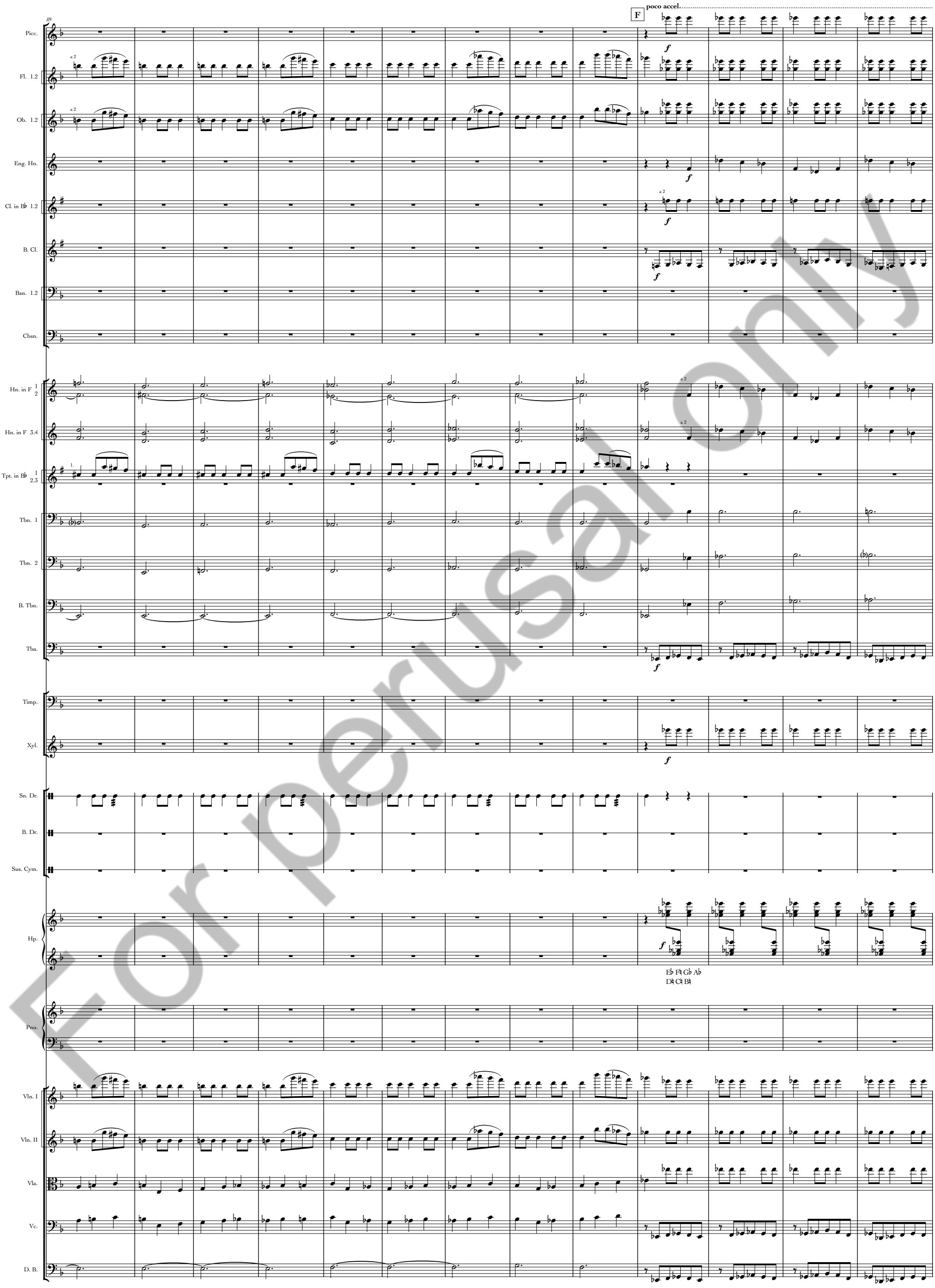

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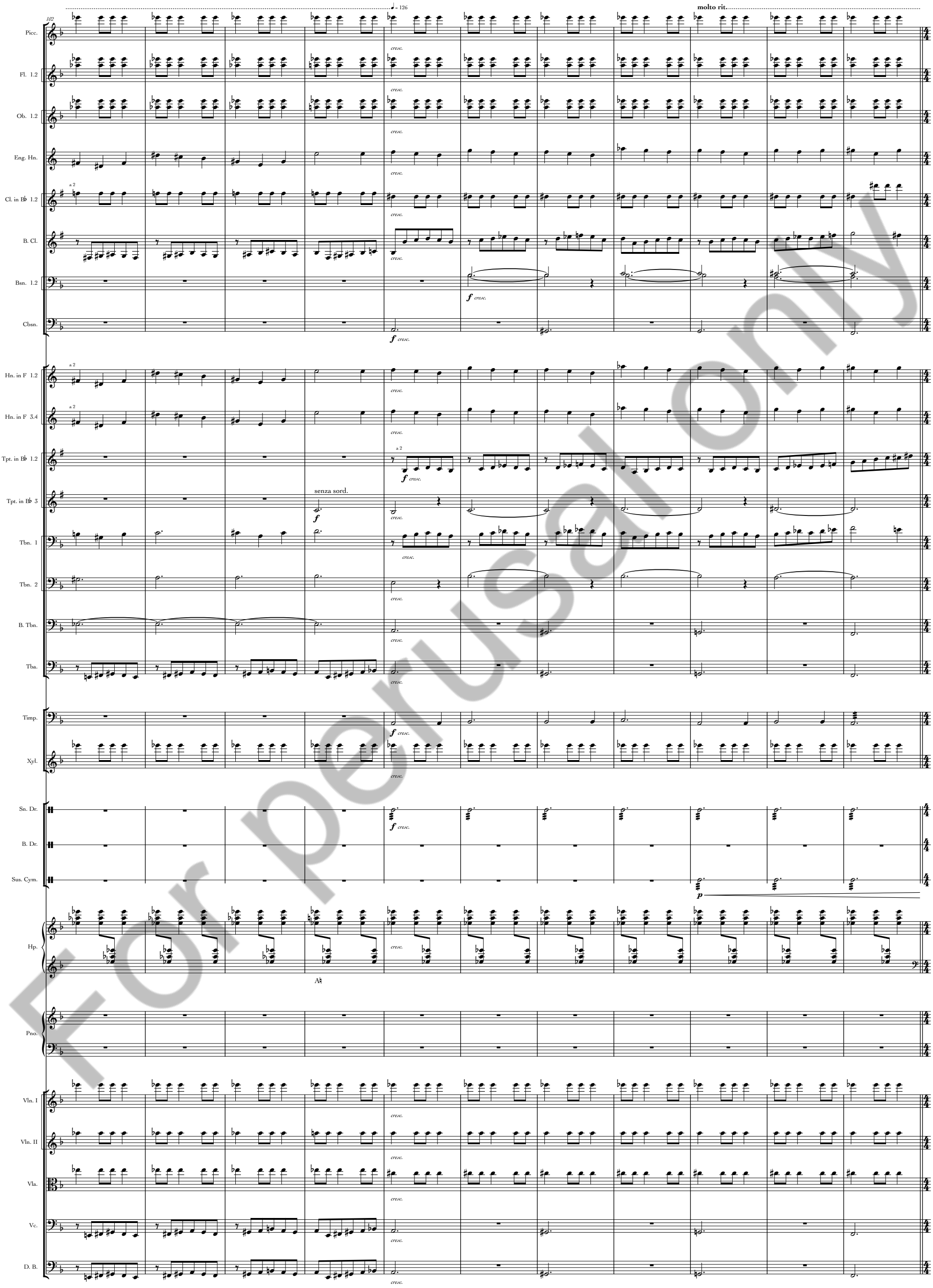

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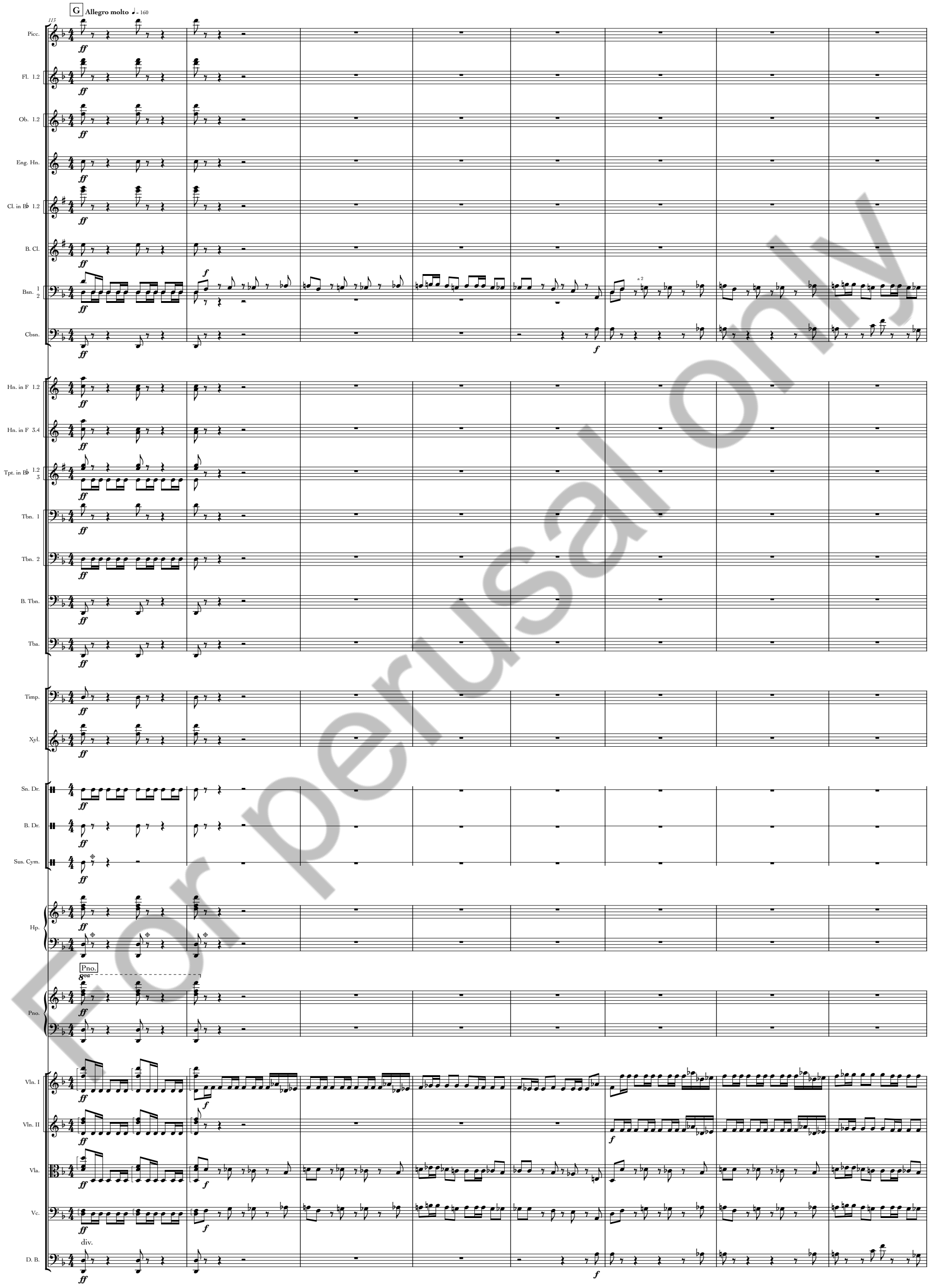

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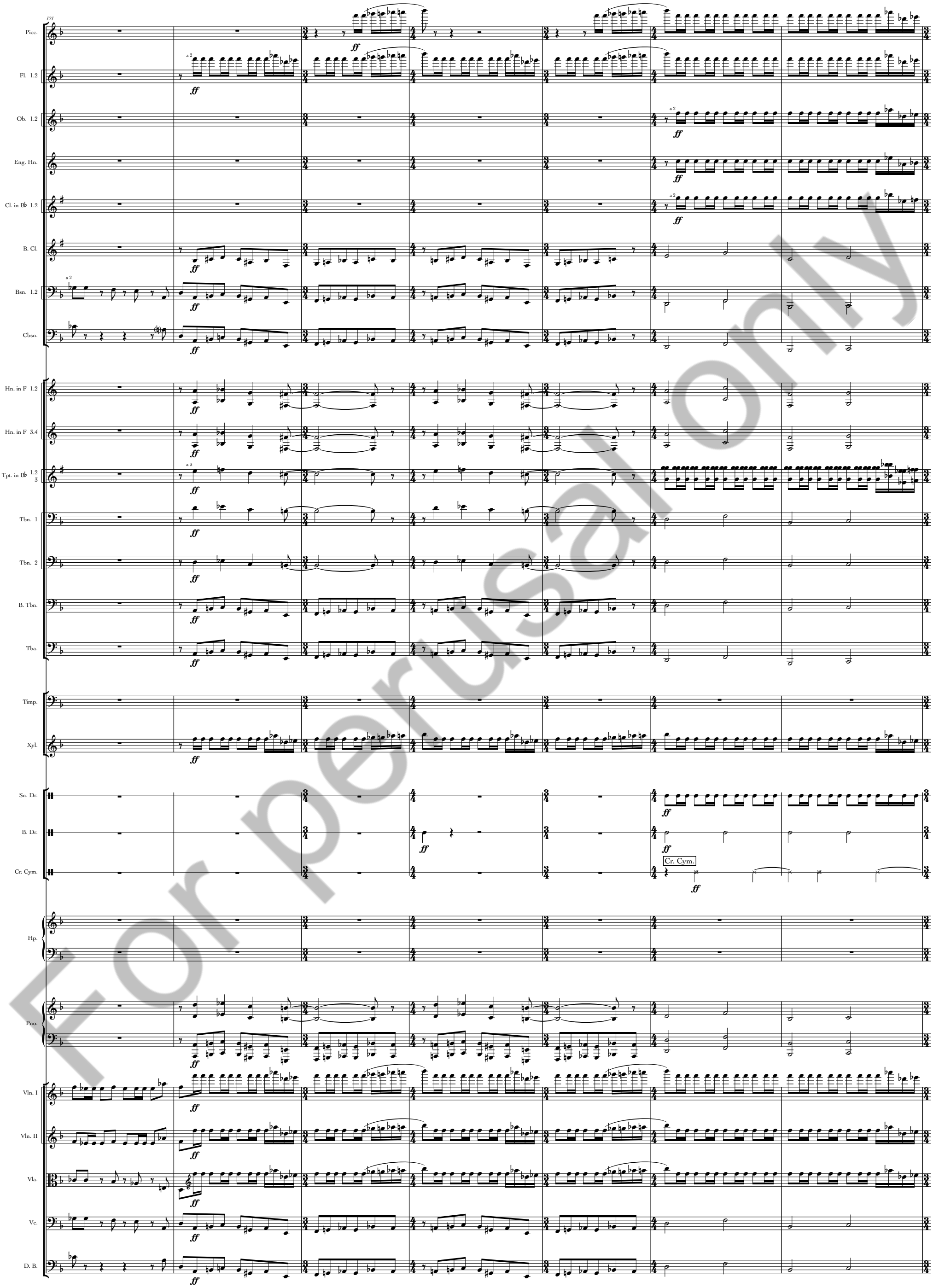

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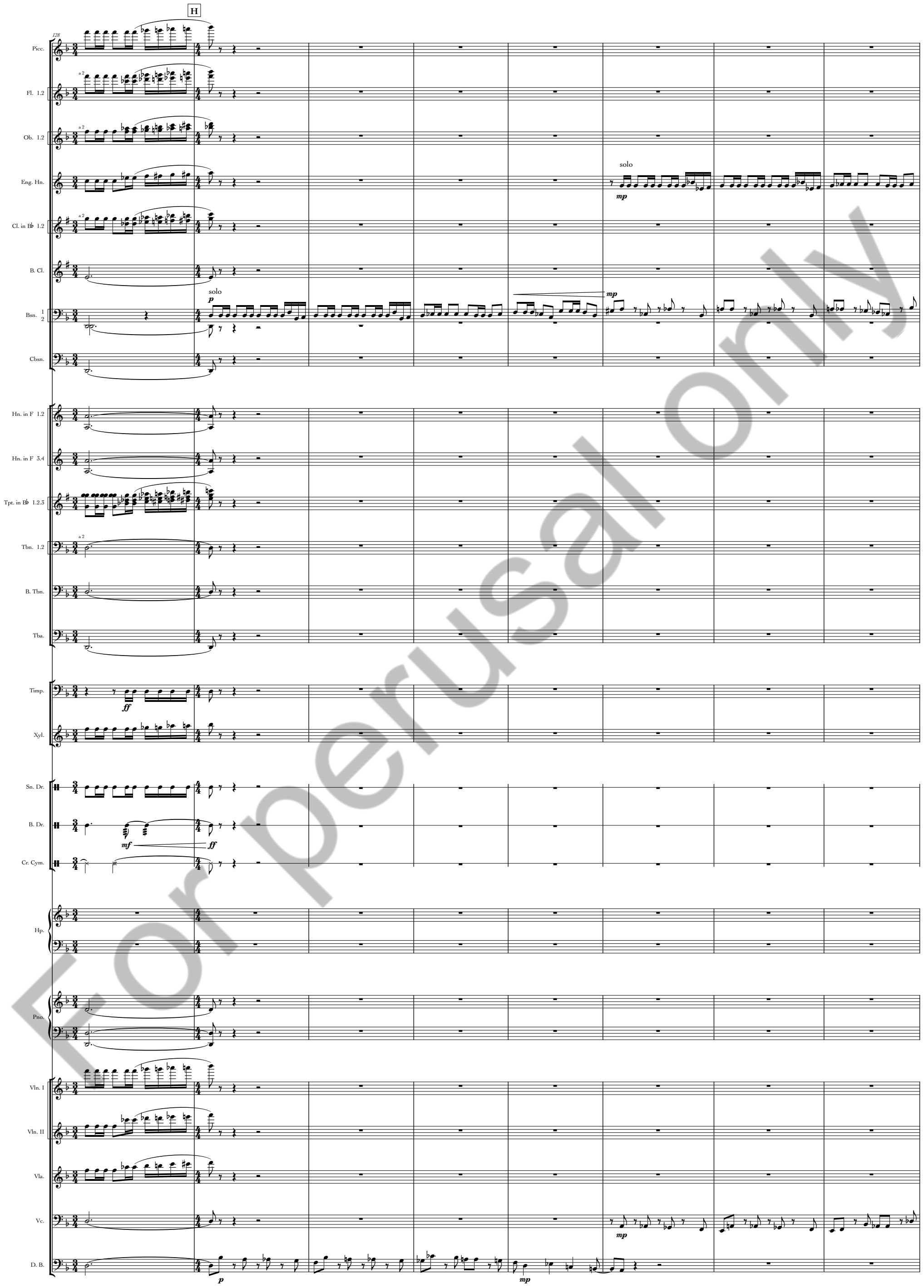

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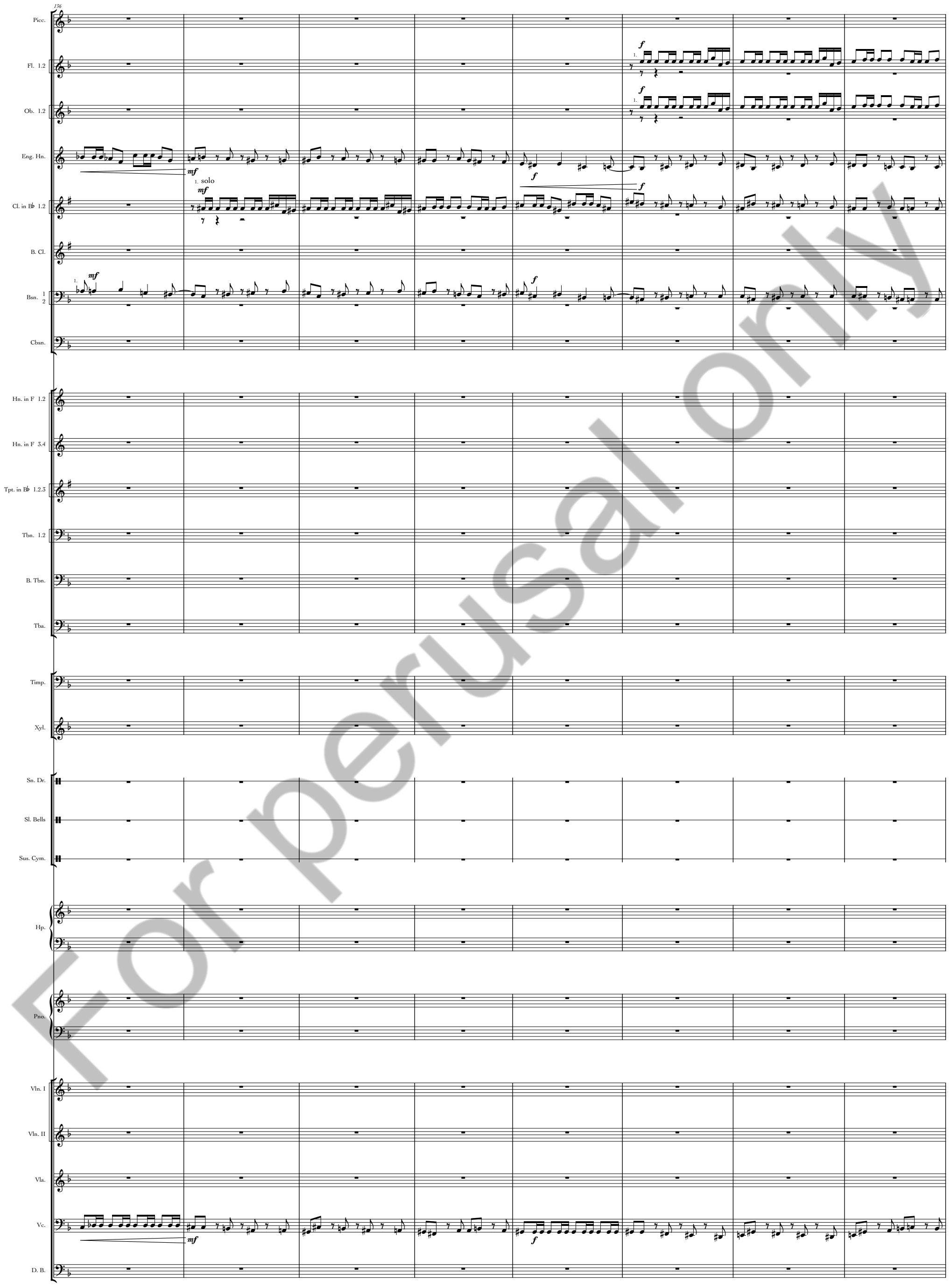

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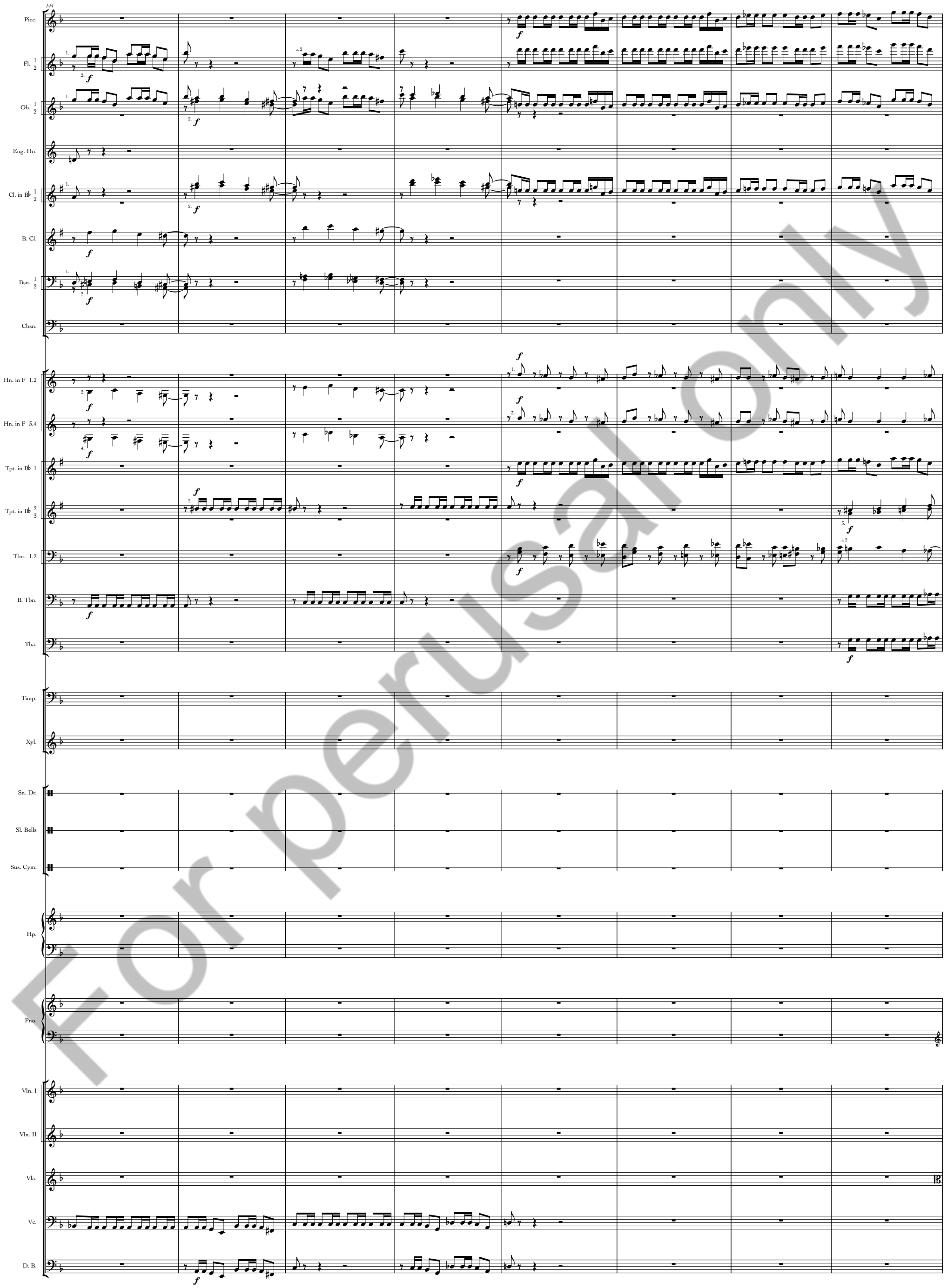

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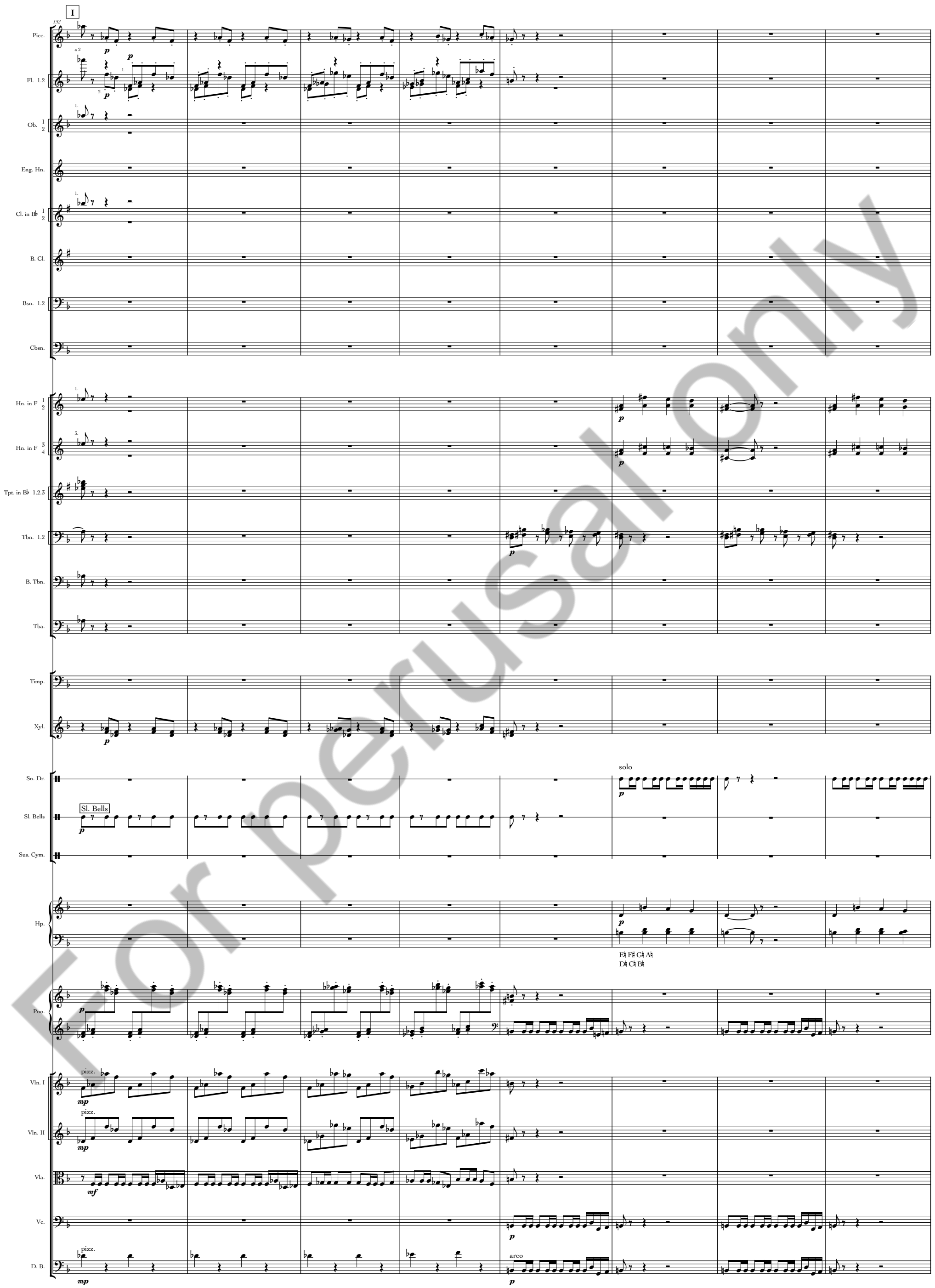

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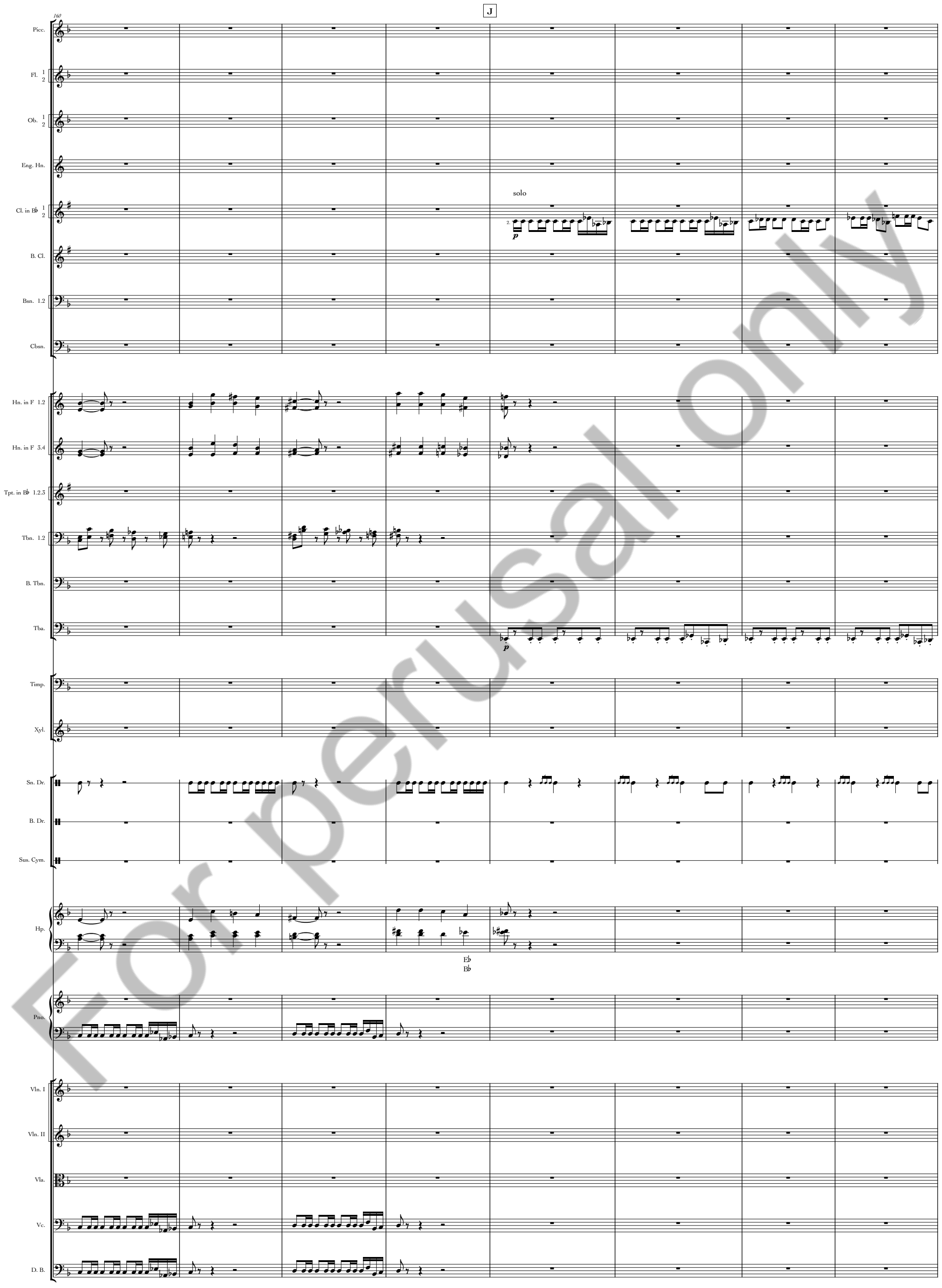

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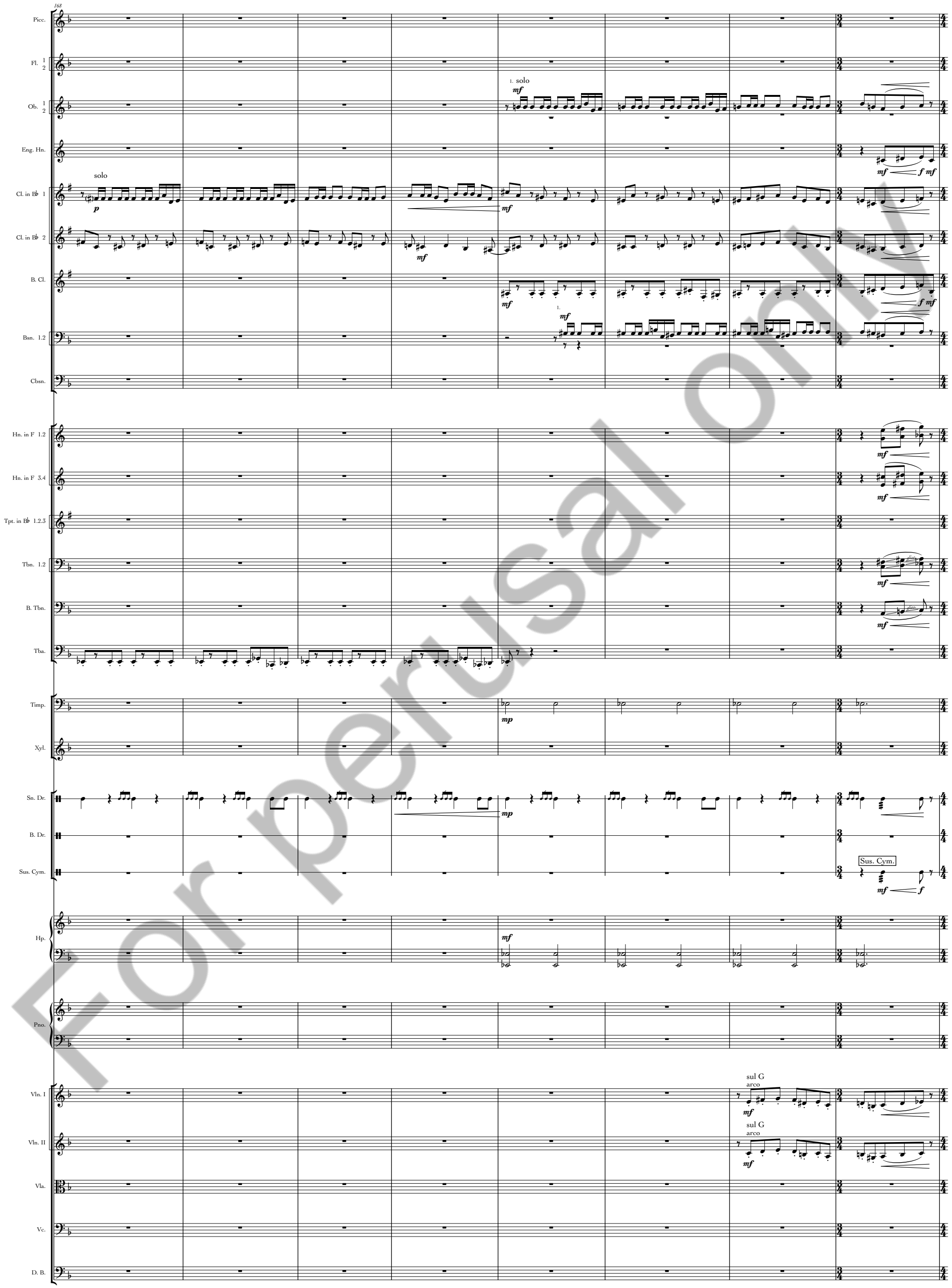

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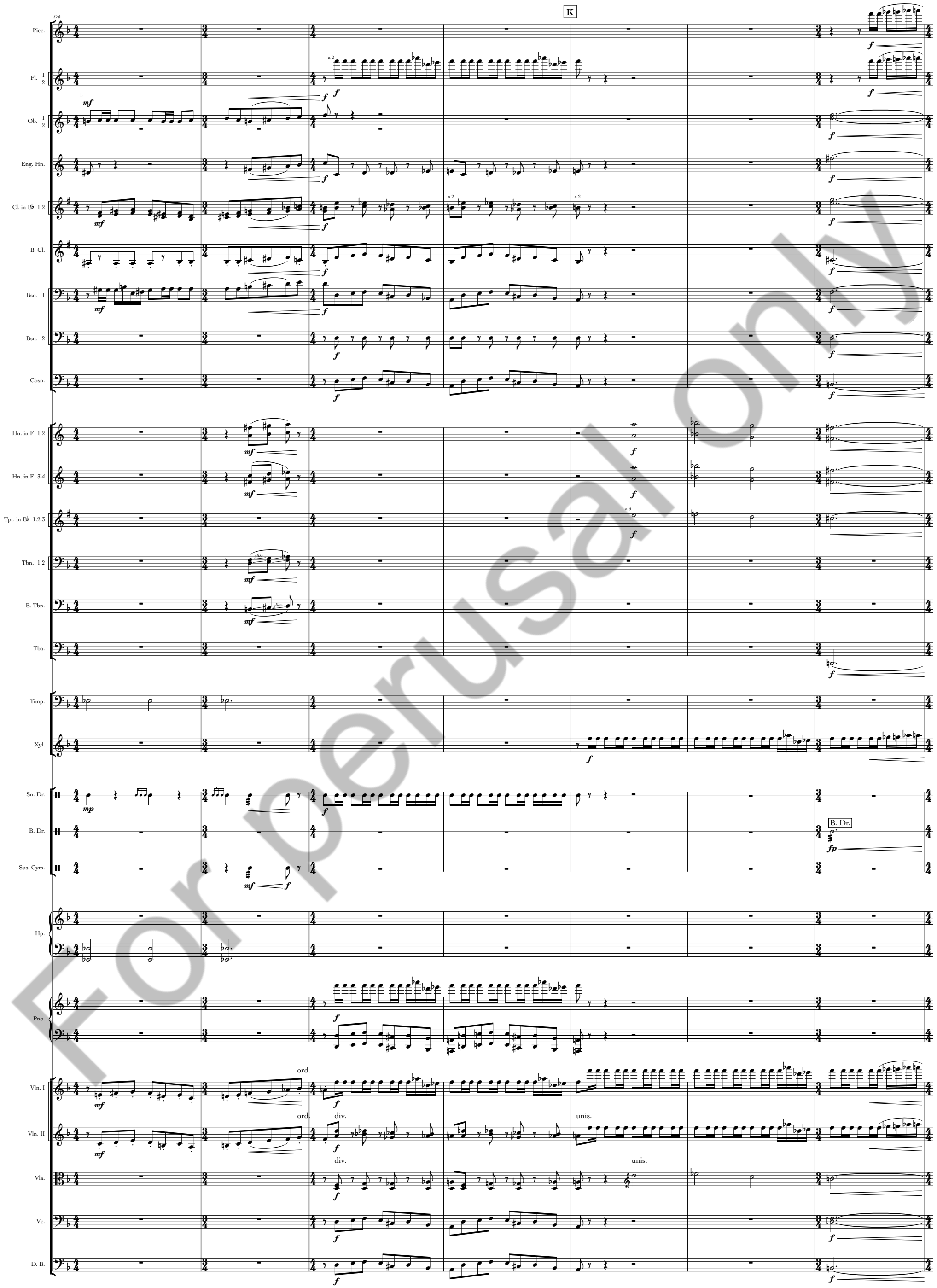

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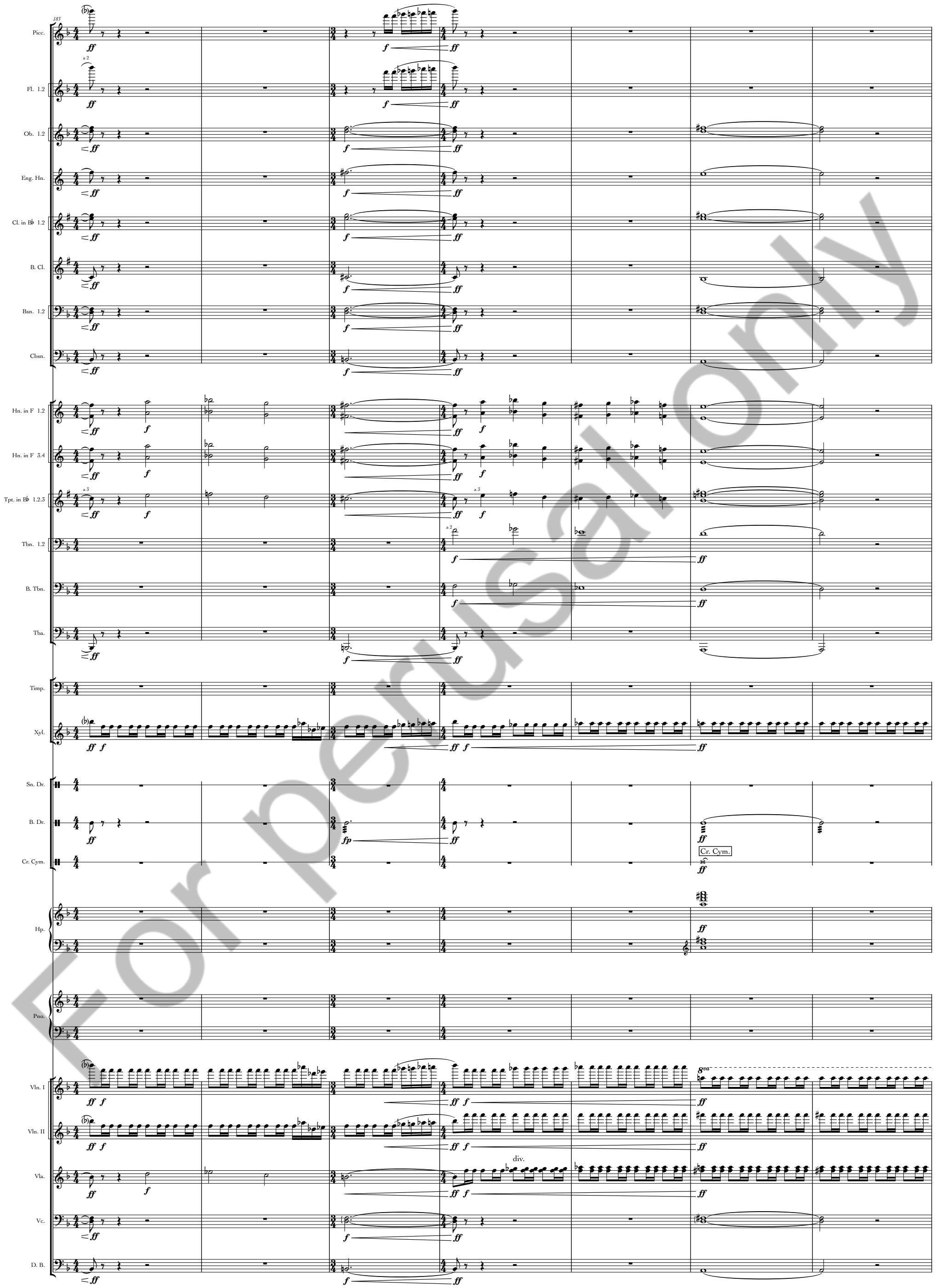

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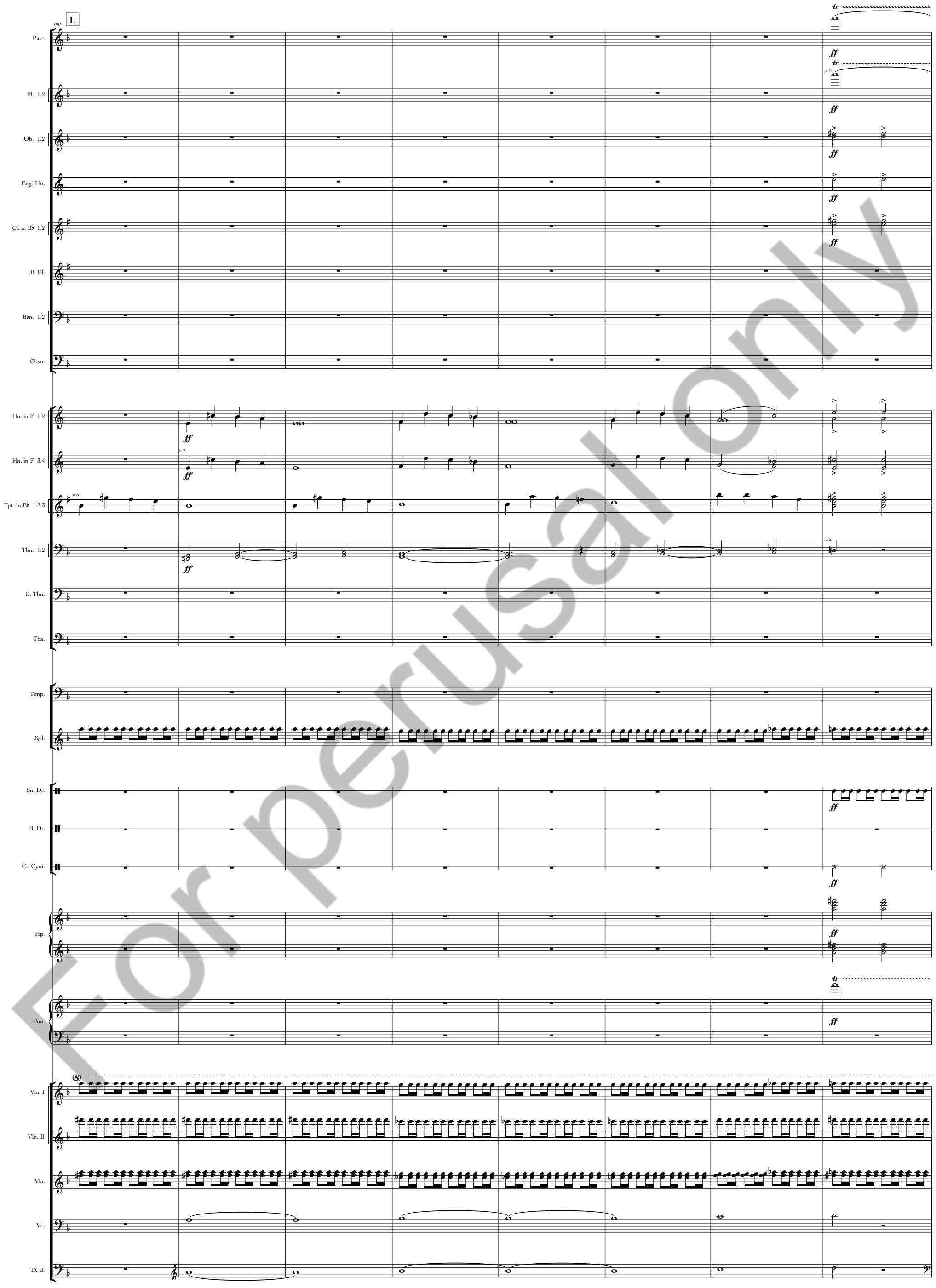

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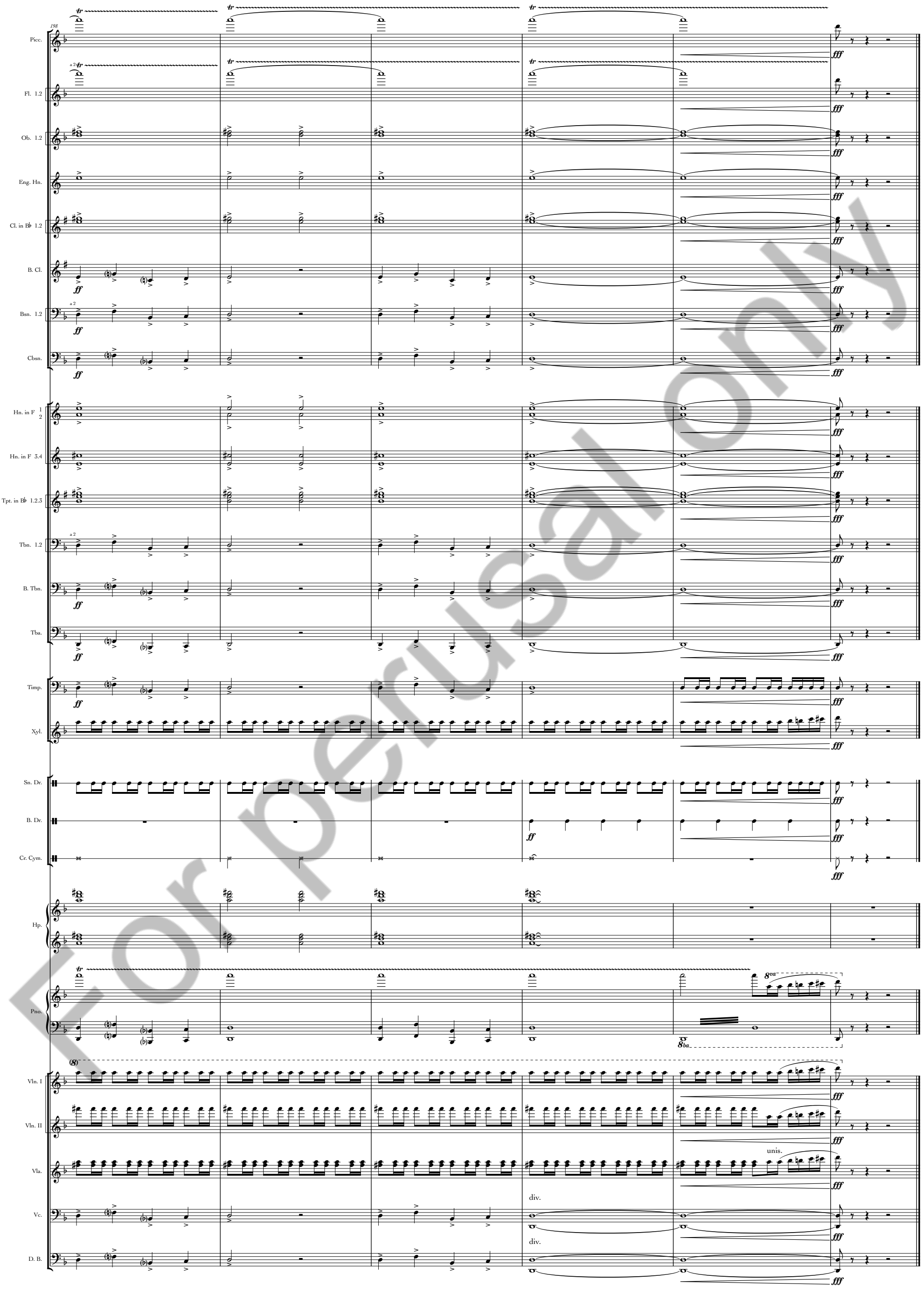

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