Composition Portfolio

by Tim Martin Chanter

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A portfolio submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree of Master of Music

South African College of Music

Faculty of the Humanities

University of Cape Town

2006

University of Cape Town

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously submitted in whole, or in part, for the award of any degree. It is my own work. Each significant contribution to, and quotation in, this dissertation from the work, or works, of other people has been attributed, and has been cited and referenced.

Signature: Tim Chanter Date: 24th August 2006

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Nine Beads on a Thread

Variations for String Quartet

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by Tim Chanter

Duration: 19 minutes

Nine Beads on a Thread - Performance Notes

- Nine Beads on a Thread is a set of variations intended to be as diverse as possible in terms of texture, tempo and intonation. It is important to bring out these differences to the greatest possible extent, so that each variation sounds fresh.
- By contrast, the unifying elements of the variations (the four-note pitch set upon which each is based, and the cross-references to each in the central section of its antecedent) are compositional devices only. They are not intended to be interpreted in any performance sense.
- I have used ordinary accents (along with the quaver-beaming) primarily to delineate the rhythmic structures - they are not intended to be overly pronounced. The marcato and sforzando marks are to be attacked vigorously.
- Pause briefly between variations.

Variation 1

- This serves as a short, fast, introduction
- The obsessively repeated discords must be played with an unremitting gritty intensity
- Dynamic contrasts, as marked, are extremely important in this variation

Variation 2

- The second variation is profoundly calm in tempo, harmony and texture.
- Ensure that the repeated long notes are attacked with clarity in order that the cross-rhythms are distinct

Variation 3

- The outer sections should feel light and crisp.
- Play as fast as possible, but maintain clear articulation throughout. The forte-pianos are not intended to be too strong accented.
- The cello part in the central section should be played with lavish rubato (in the style of the following variation)

Variation 4

- The cellist and 1st violinist have clear solos in the first and last sections respectively, and these should be played with expressive rubato. Do not rush the fast notes or grace notes, but play in a drawn-out fluid style.
- The very brief central section, by contrast, must be played with mechanical strictness.

Variation 5

- As per normal canonical practice, the 8 bar subject (initially played in the first 8 bars by the second violin) should be brought out each time it is repeated
- The intended feel is one of resolute purposefulness - do not play too fast.
- The grace notes ahead of the two final very loud chords should be played quickly and before the beat.

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Variation 6

- The outer sections of the sixth variation are to be played in traditional Viennese waltz style

Variation 7

- This variation must be intense and gritty – play very loudly bringing out the discords to the absolute maximum
- Do not play too fast
- Please observe the dynamic markings very carefully – the 'subito pianos' are as important as the very loud sections.
- A slightly longer pause is appropriate before the penultimate variation (as marked)

Variation 8

- This variation is breezy, swift and melodic
- The articulation of supporting chords must be crisp and clear (though not loud)
- The fortissimos are intended to be more brilliant than especially loud
- A constant pace and sense of motion are important

Variation 9

- The final variation is a coda – the initial slow harmonic bars gradually building up to a final climax.
- The deceleration into the final passage should be smooth and continuous (i.e. slow down the tempo in bars 655-658 from minim = 120 to minim = 60 in order that the pulse is *already* established at the start of bar 659).
- This final passage (bars 659 onwards) should be played *very very* loudly and assertively, and end without even the slightest diminuendo.

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Nine Beads on a Thread

I. Fast, with bite ♩ = 110

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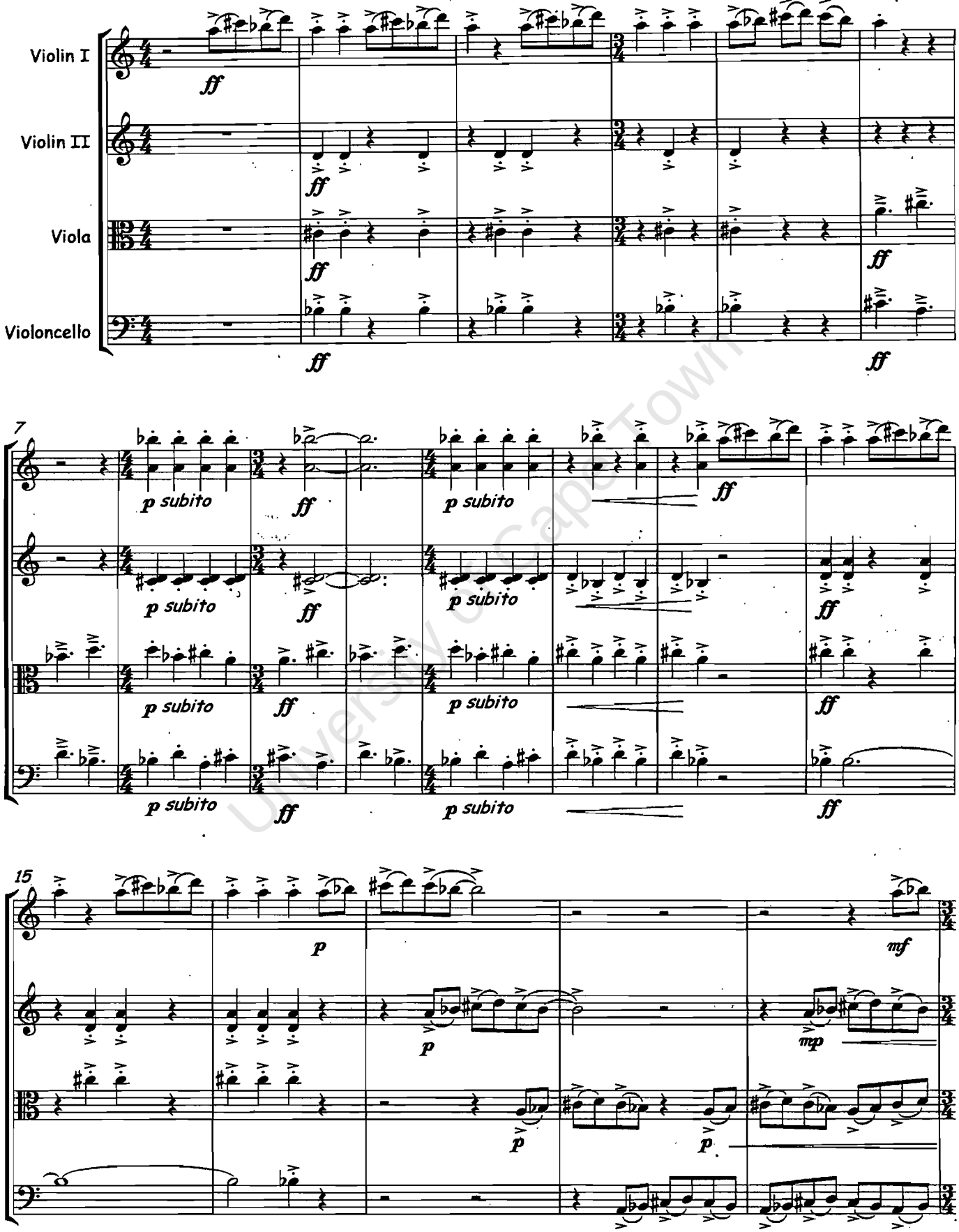

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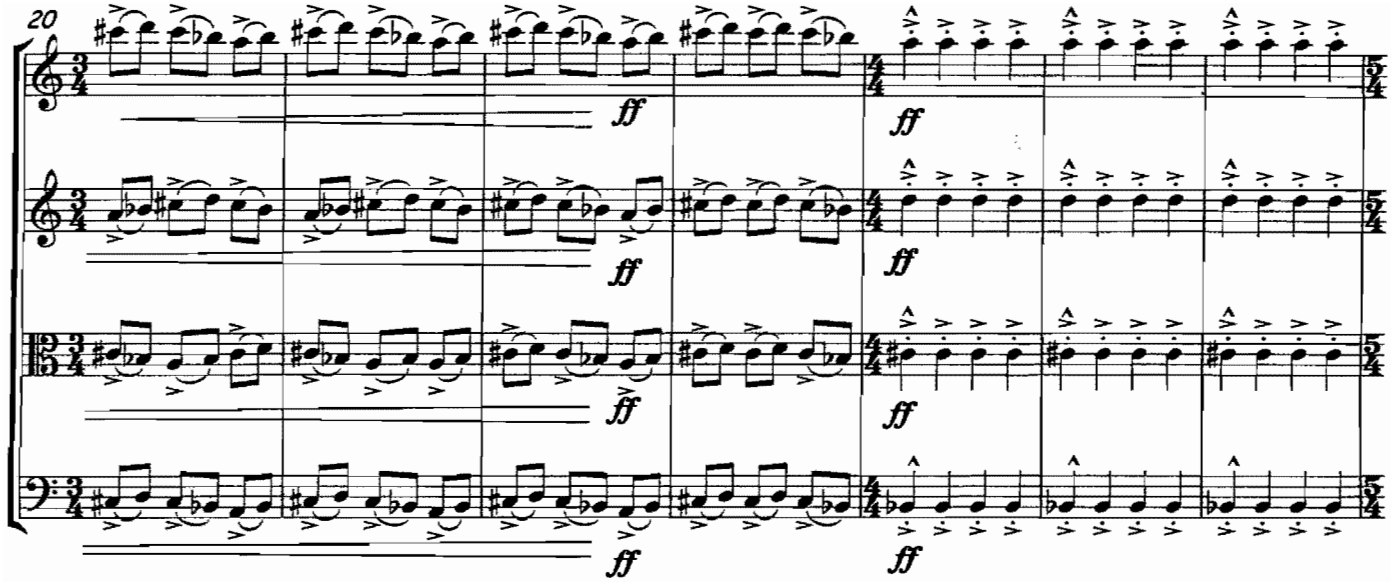

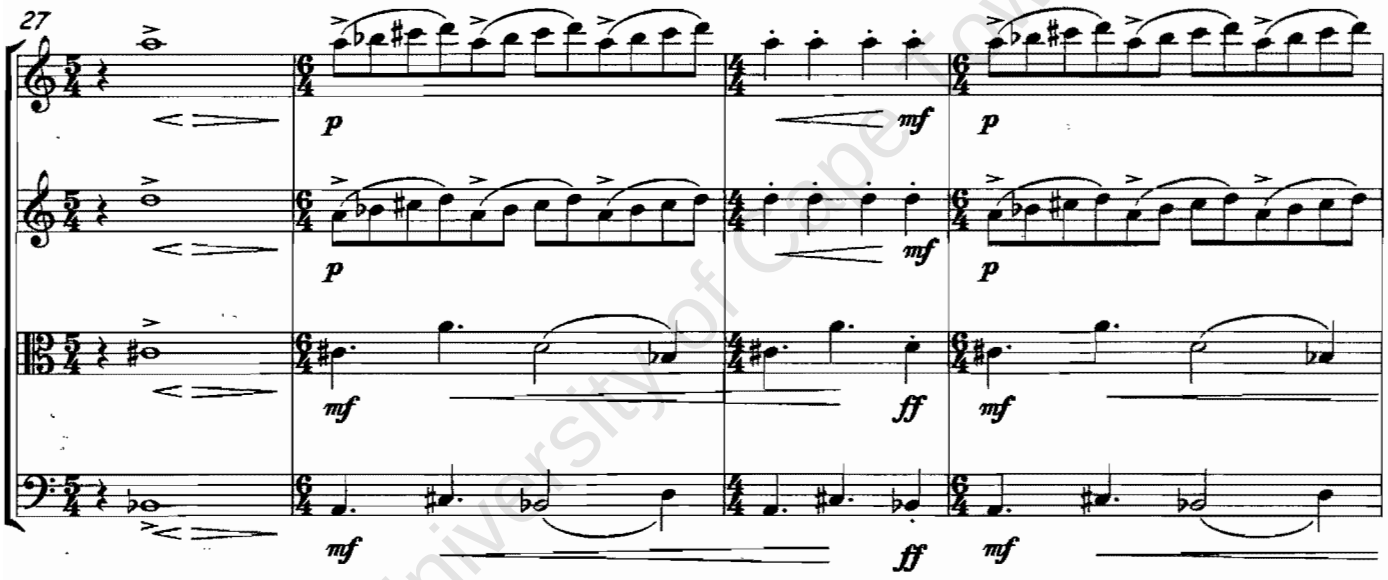

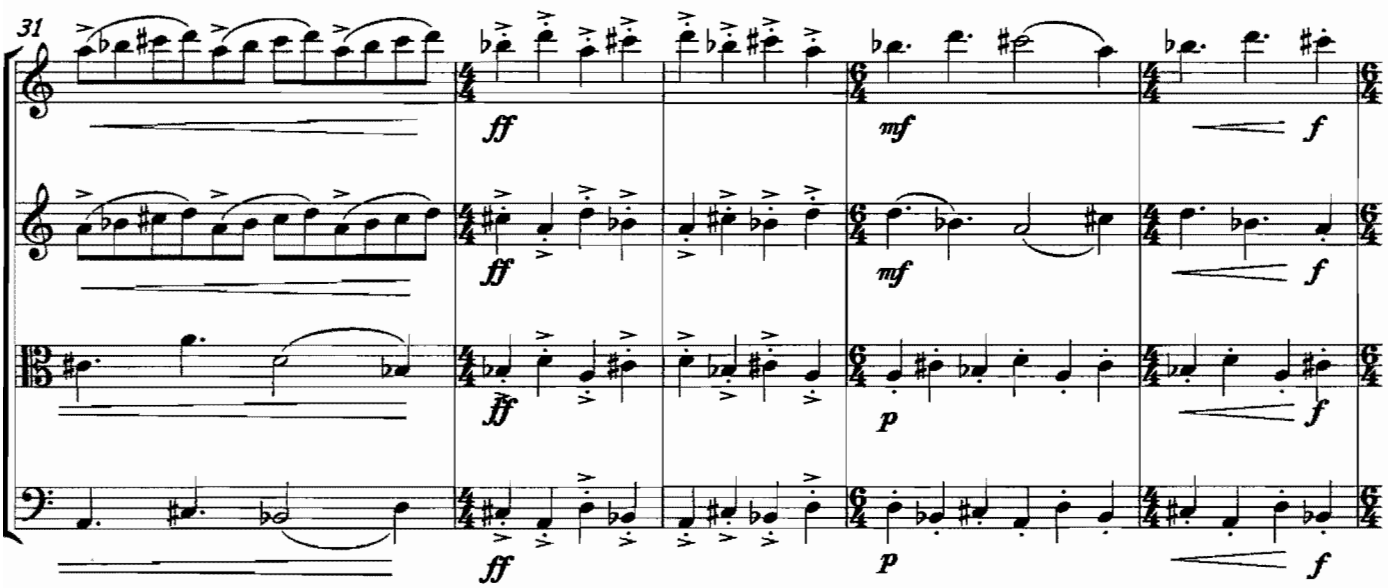

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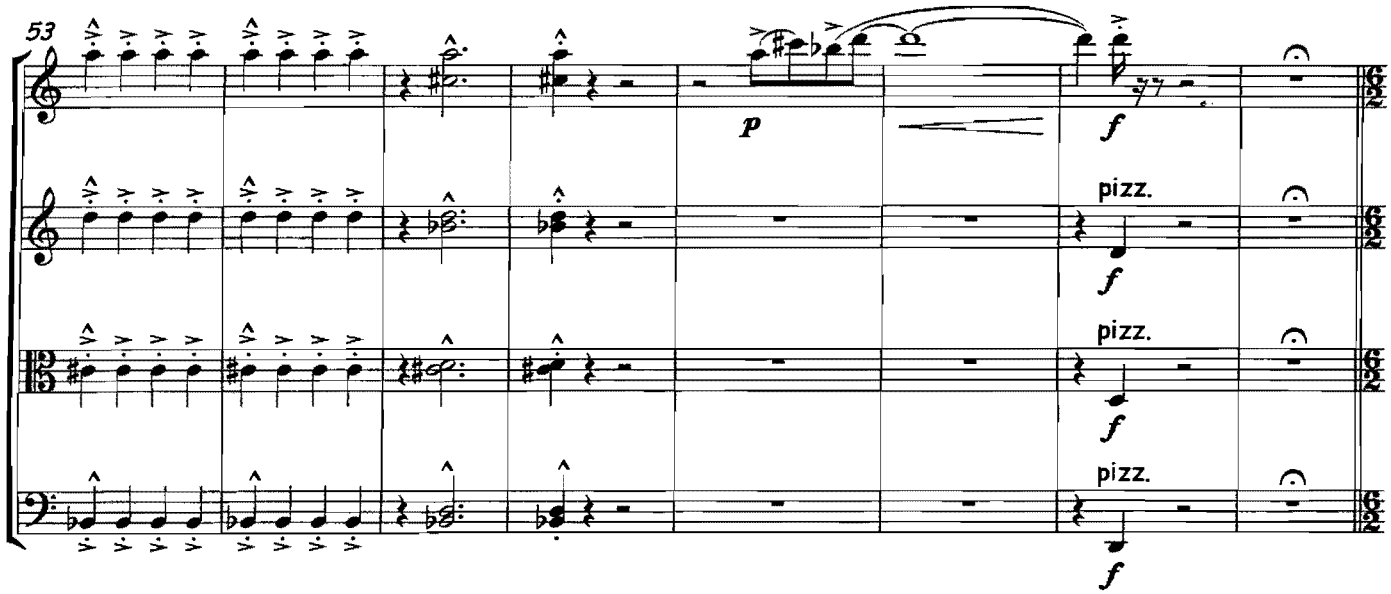
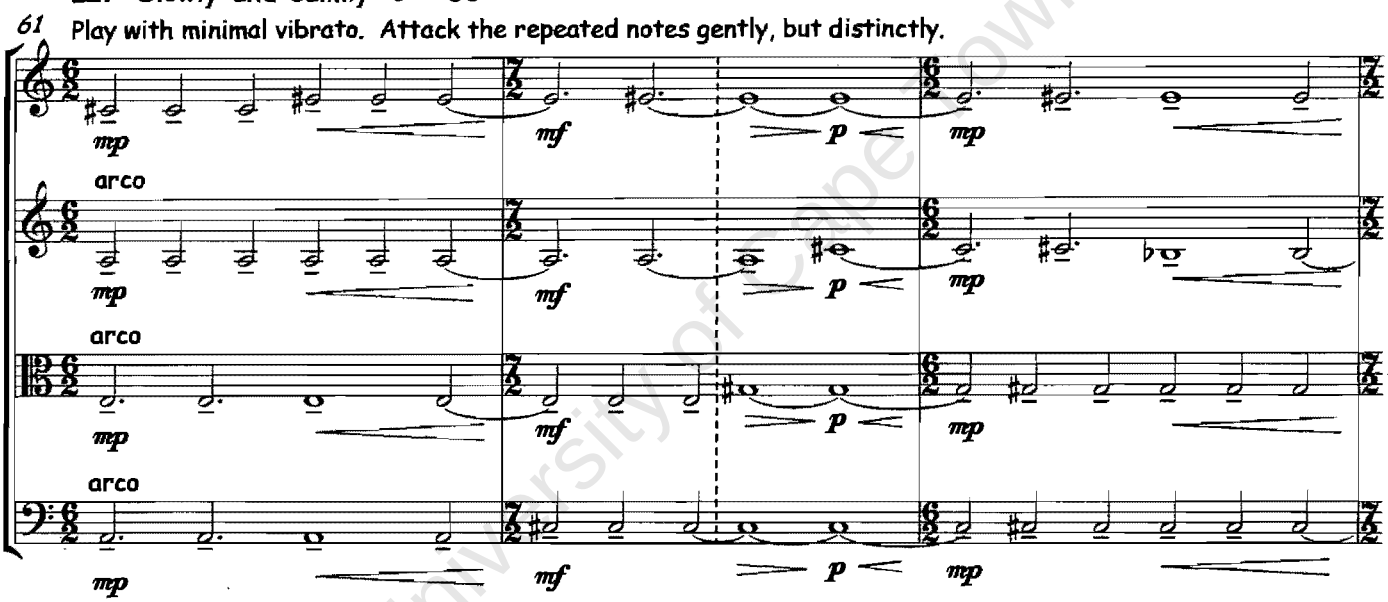
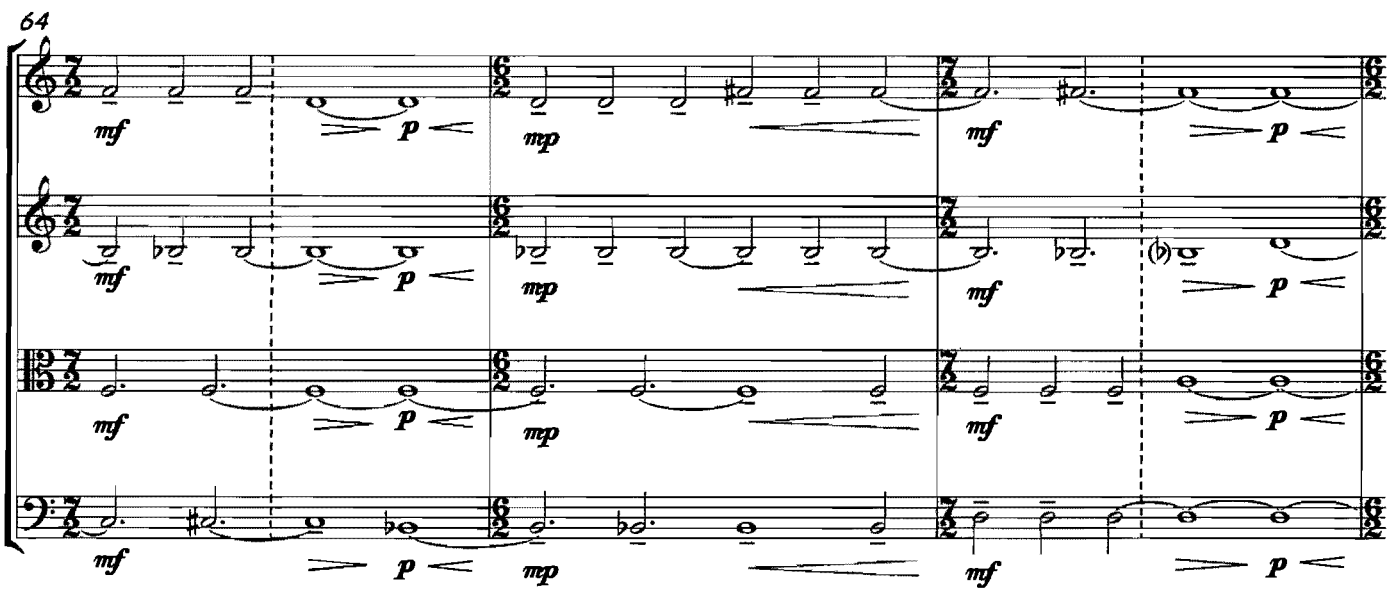


II. Slowly and calmly ♩ = 50





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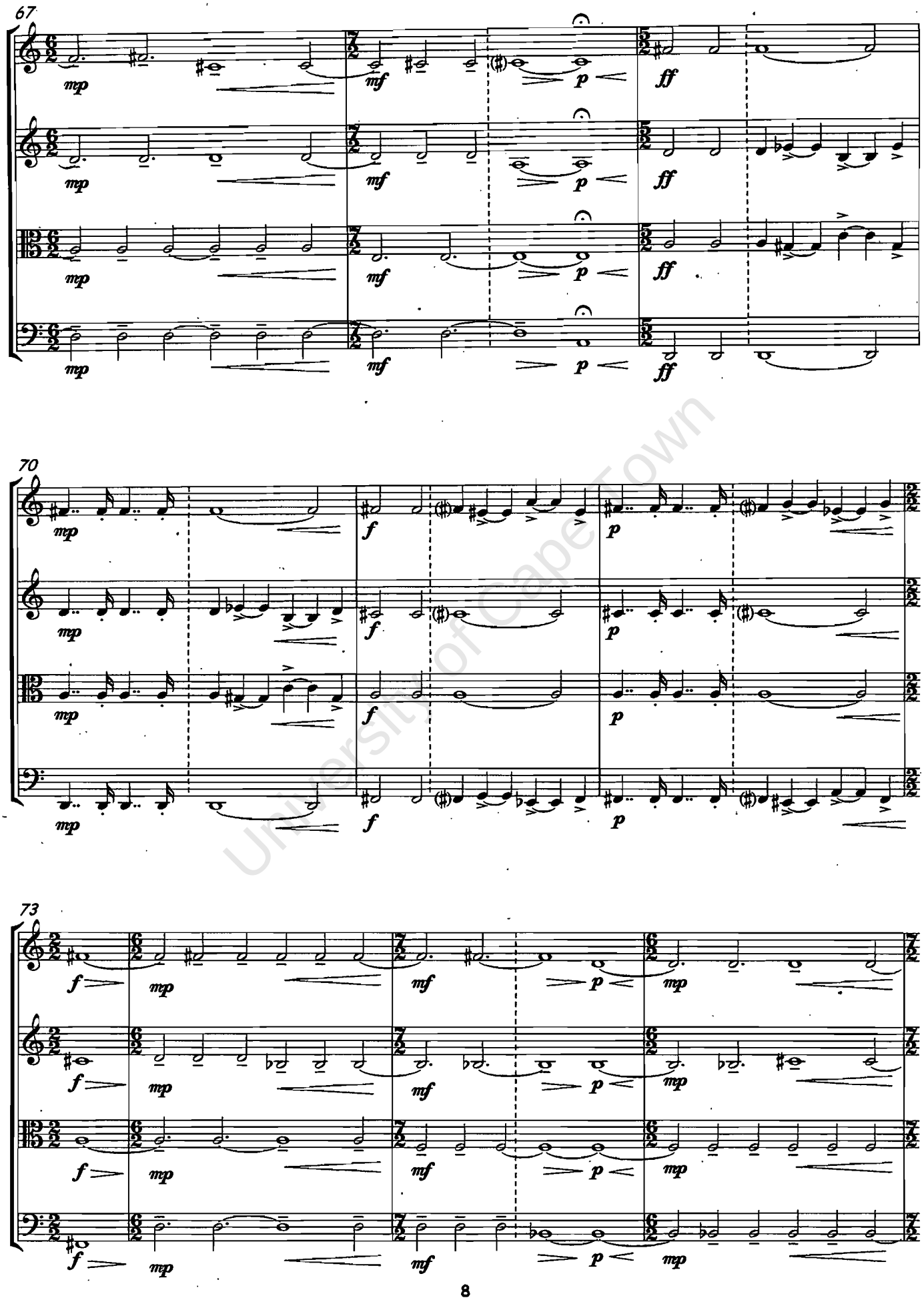

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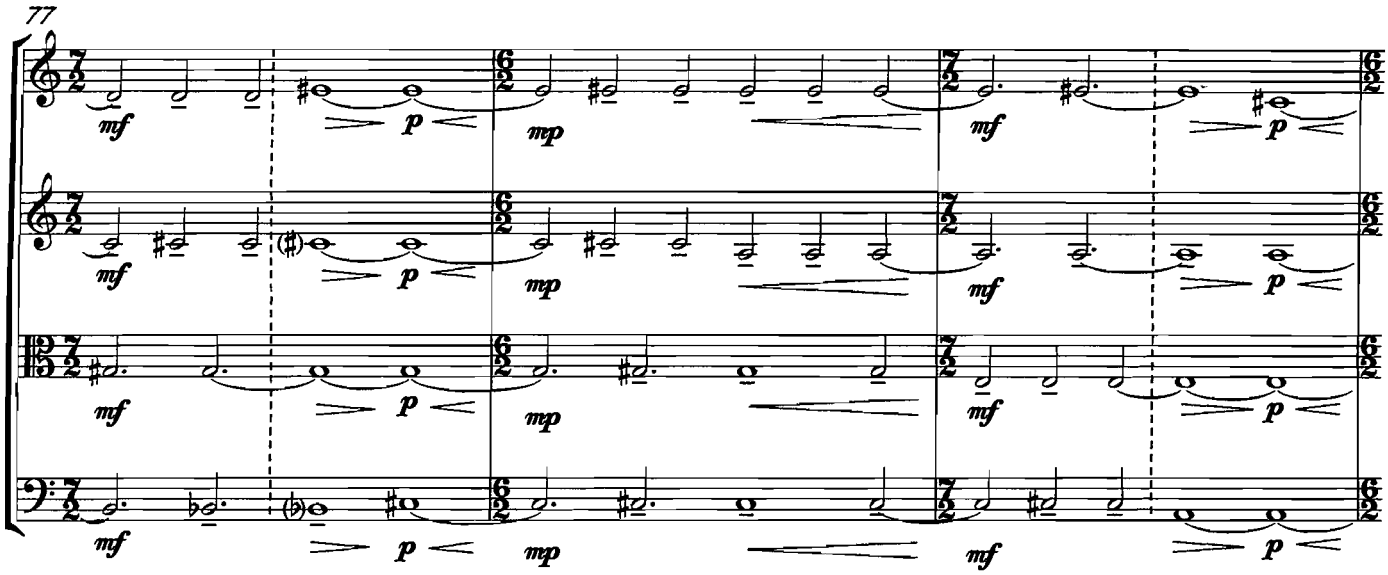
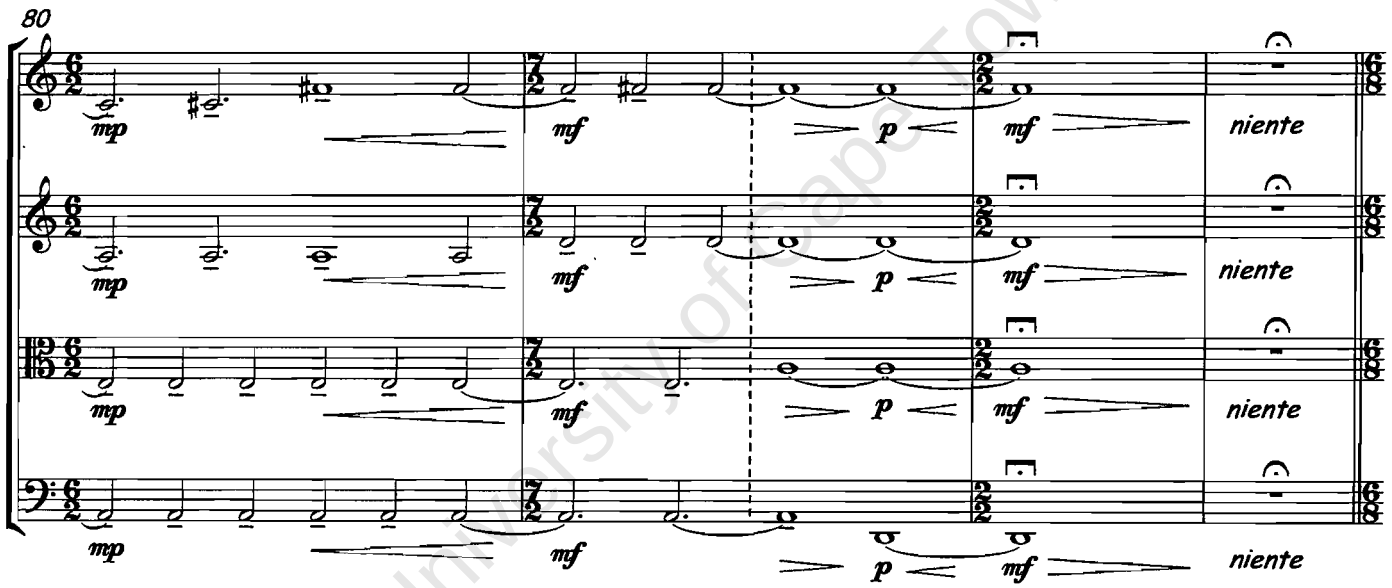
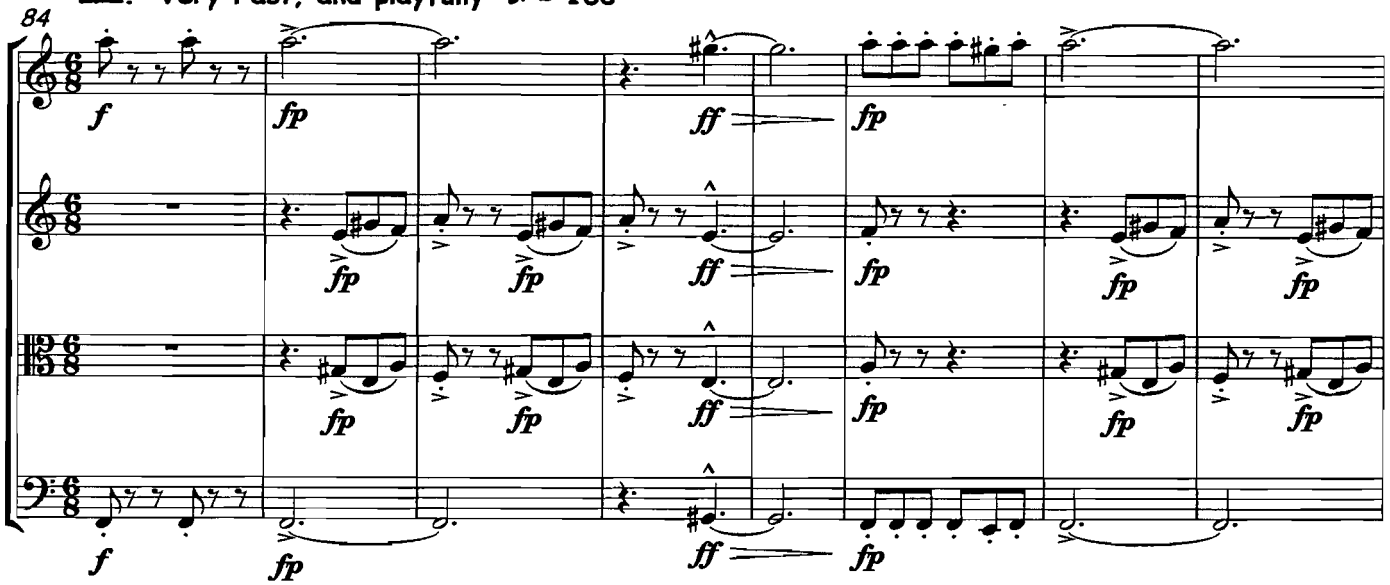




III. Very Fast, and playfully ♩. = 160



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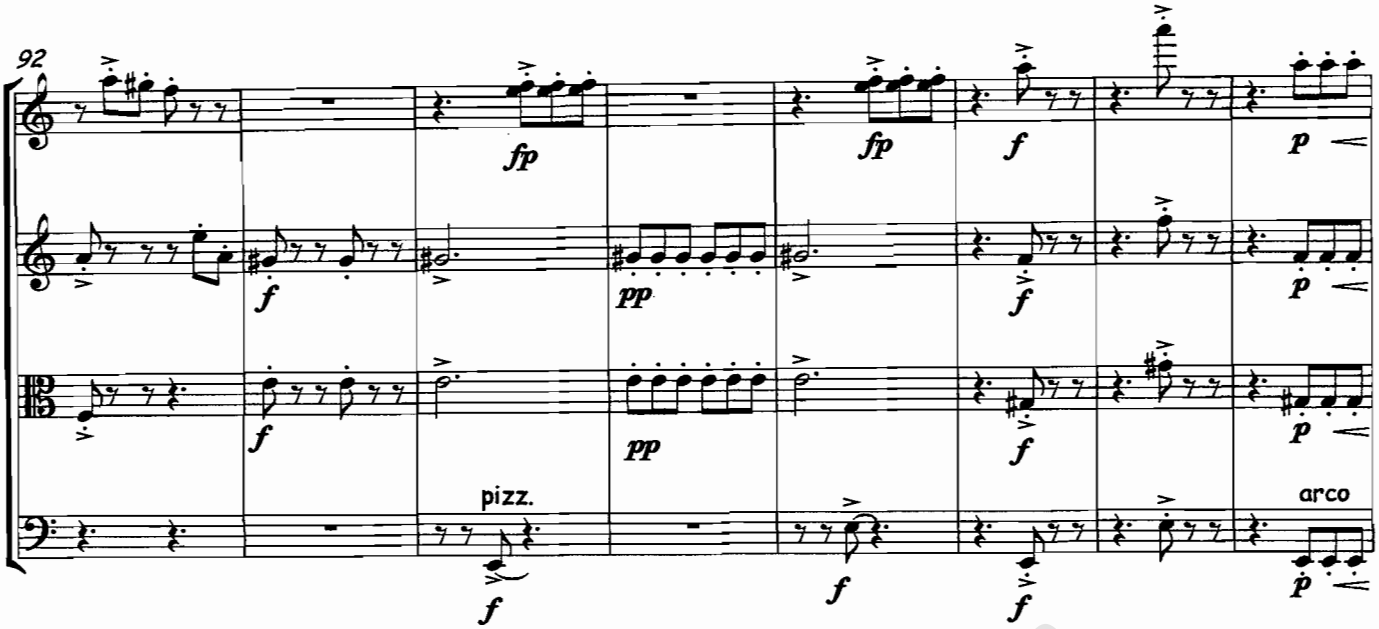

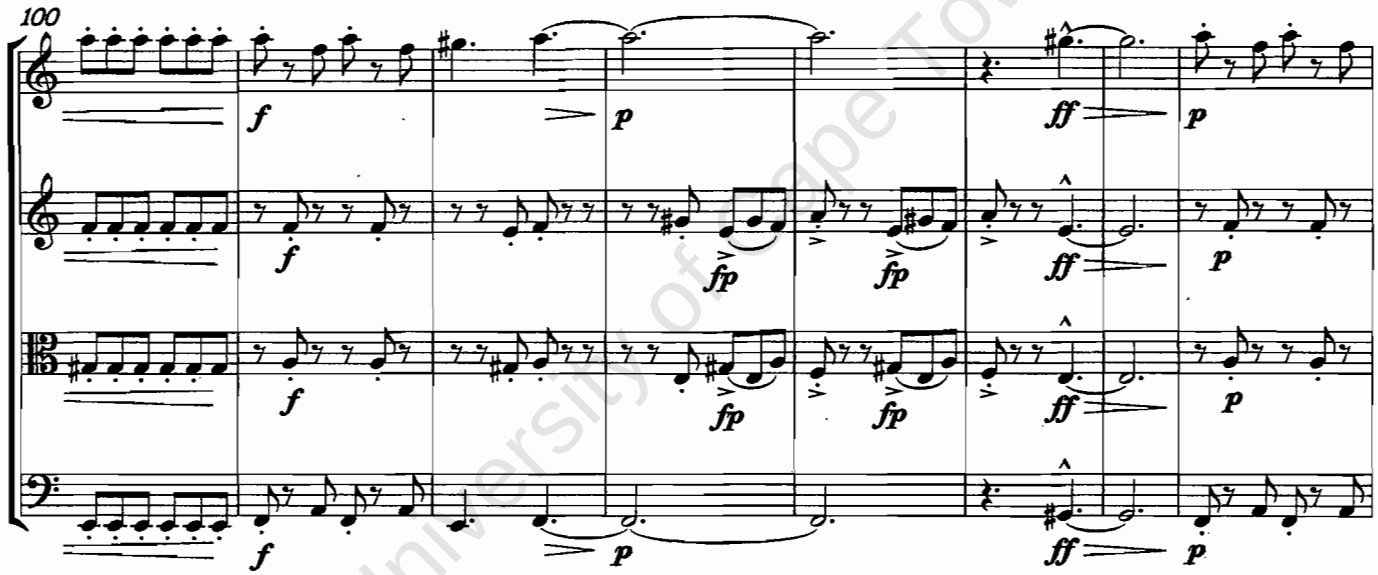

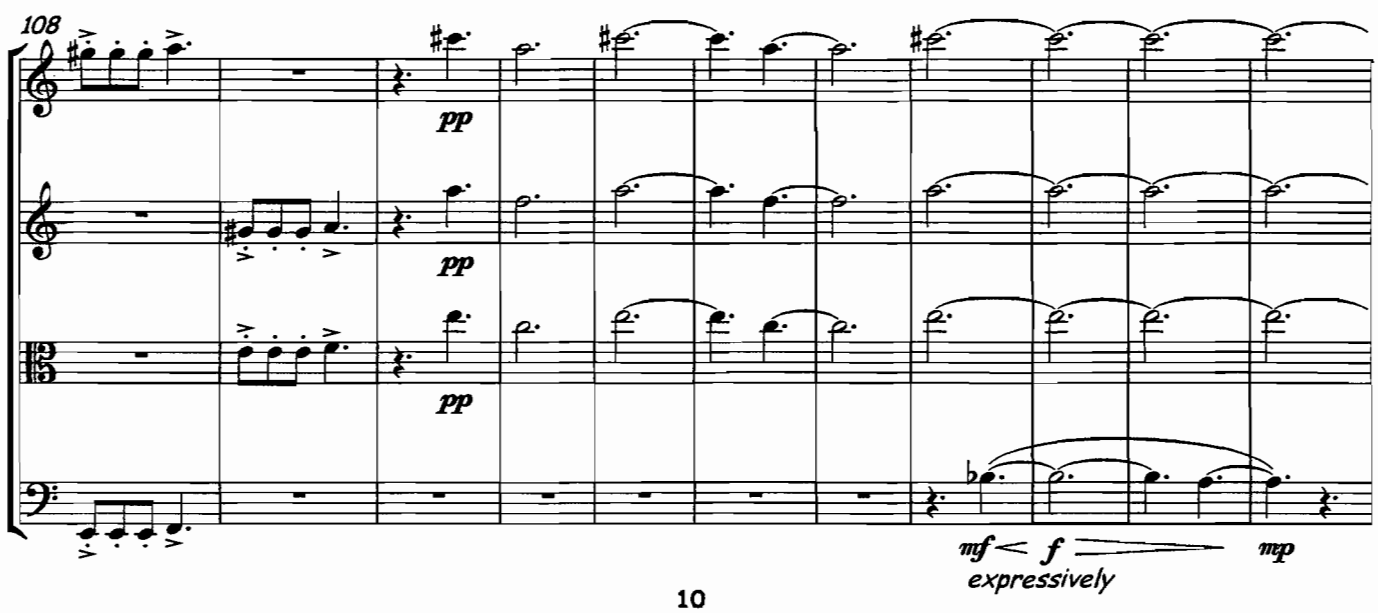

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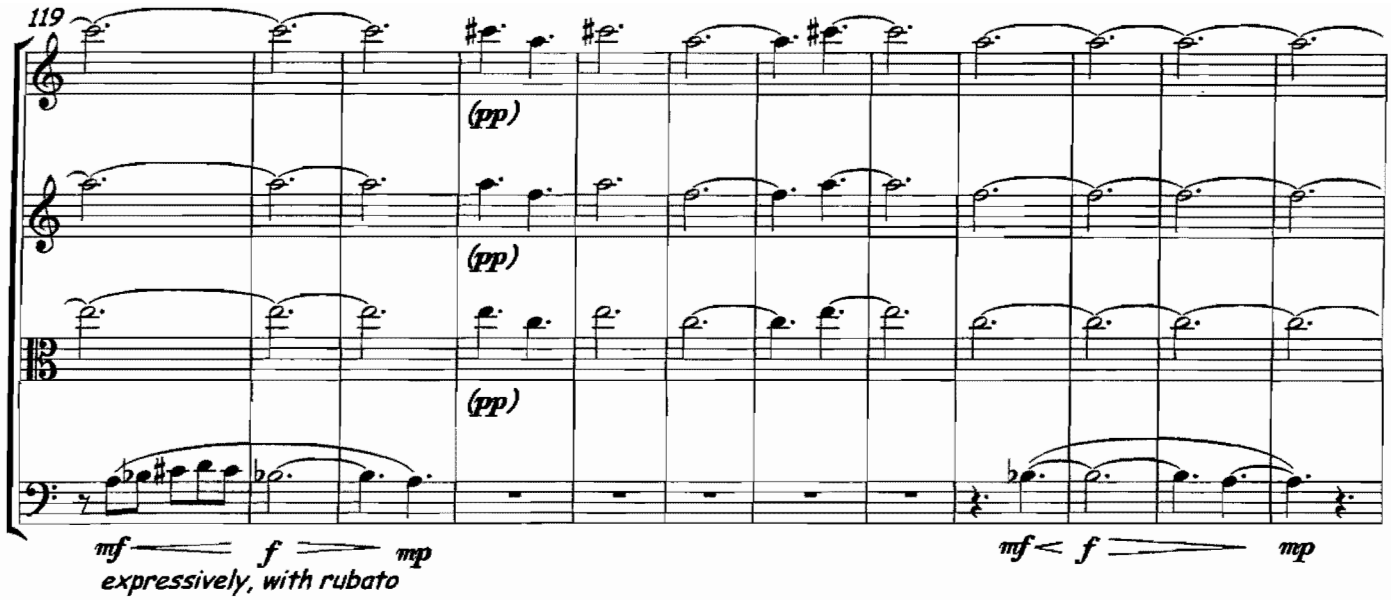

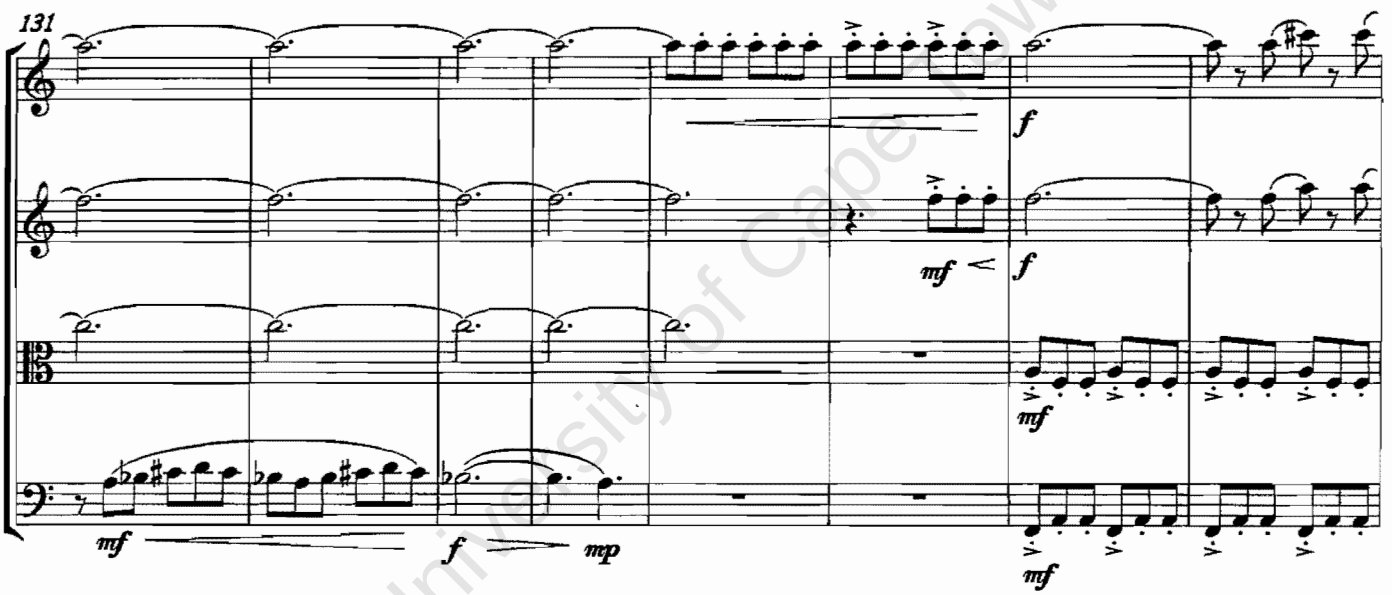

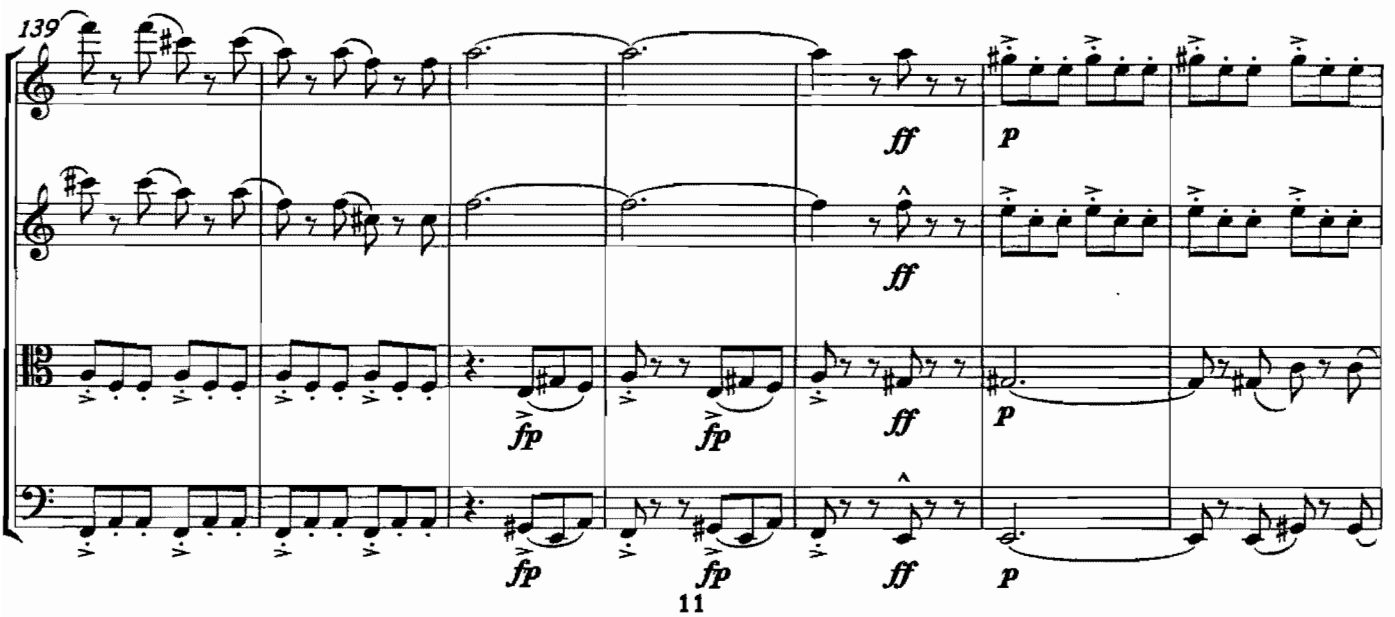

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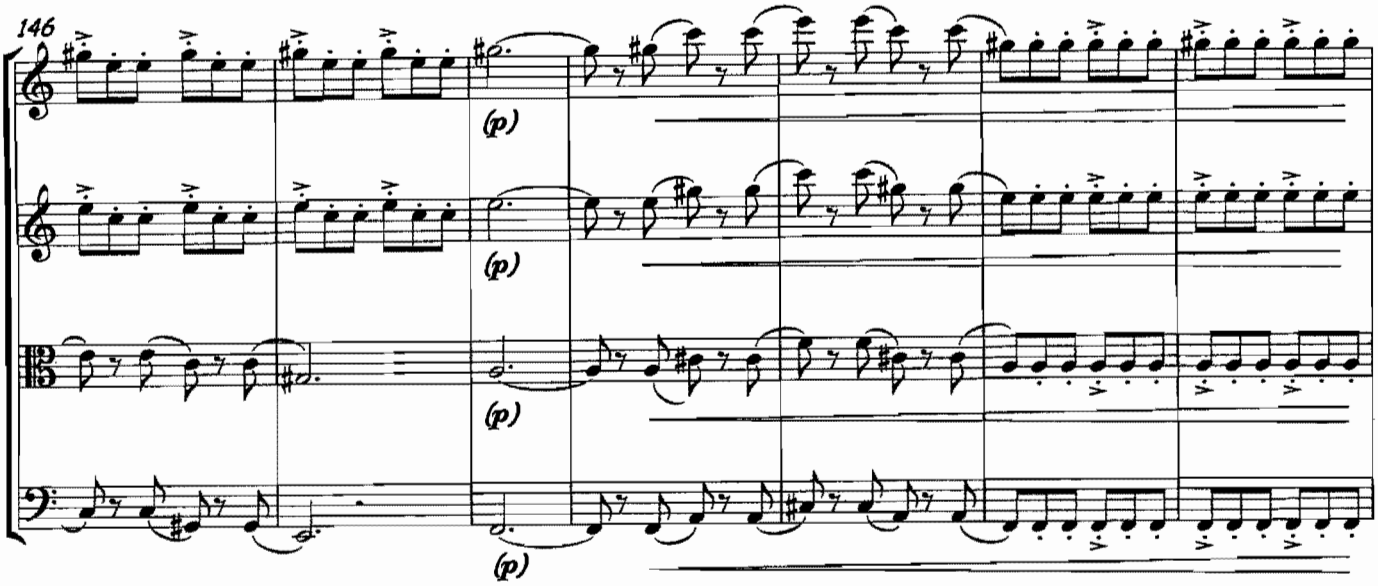

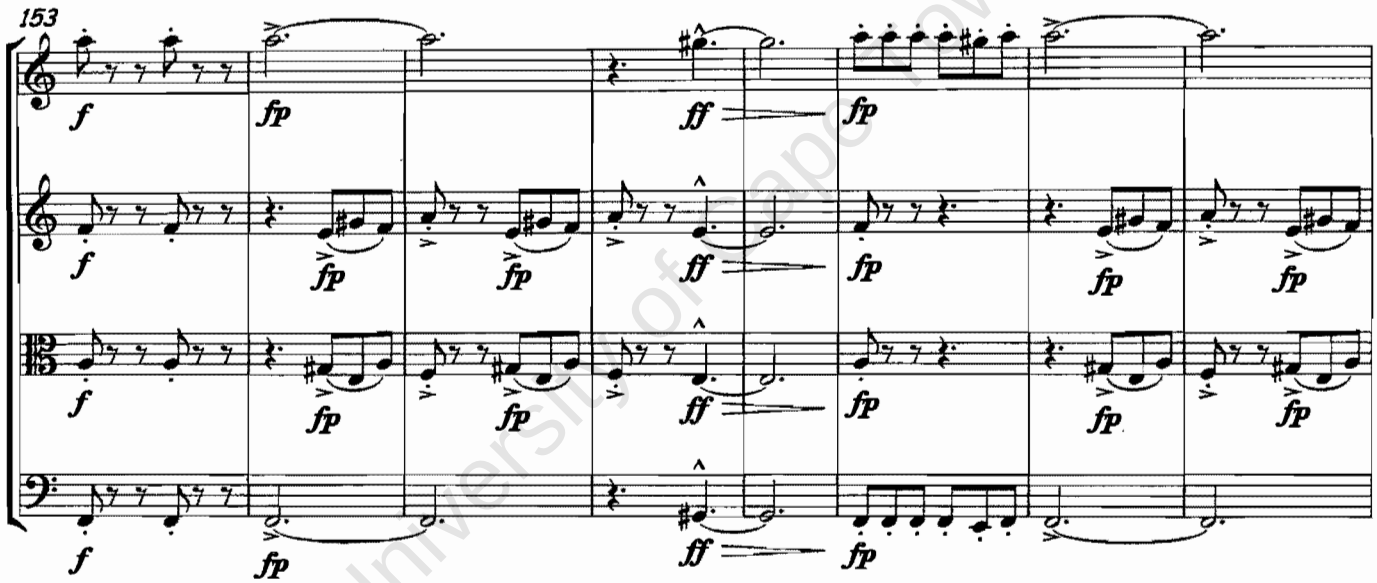

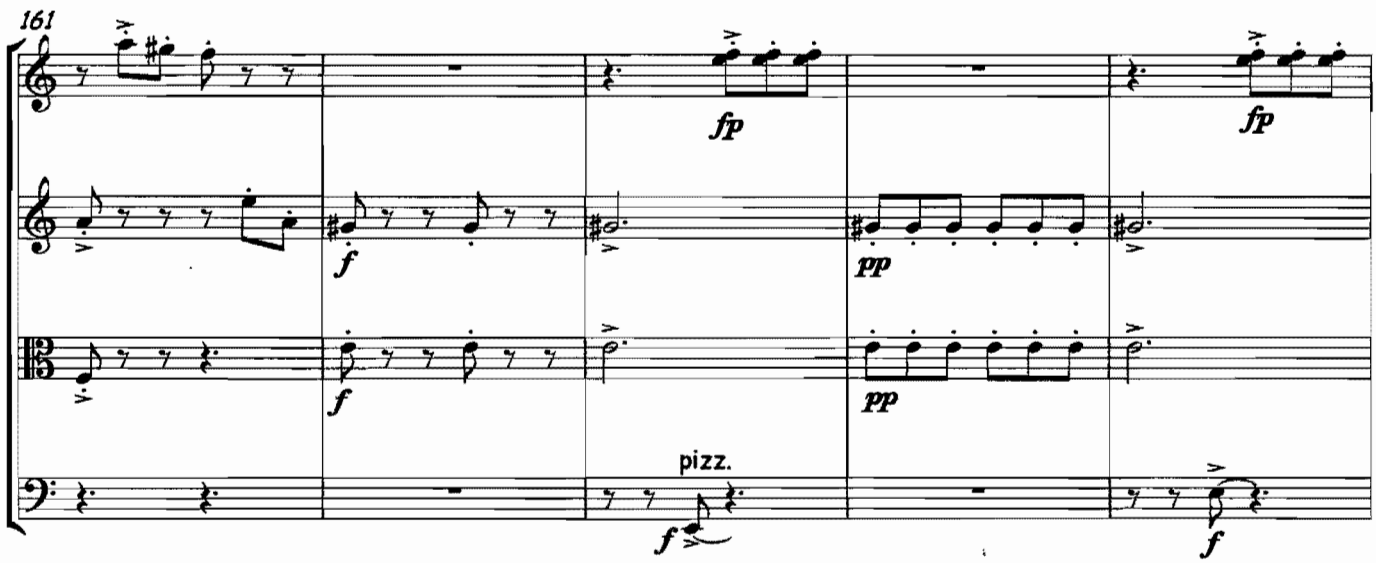

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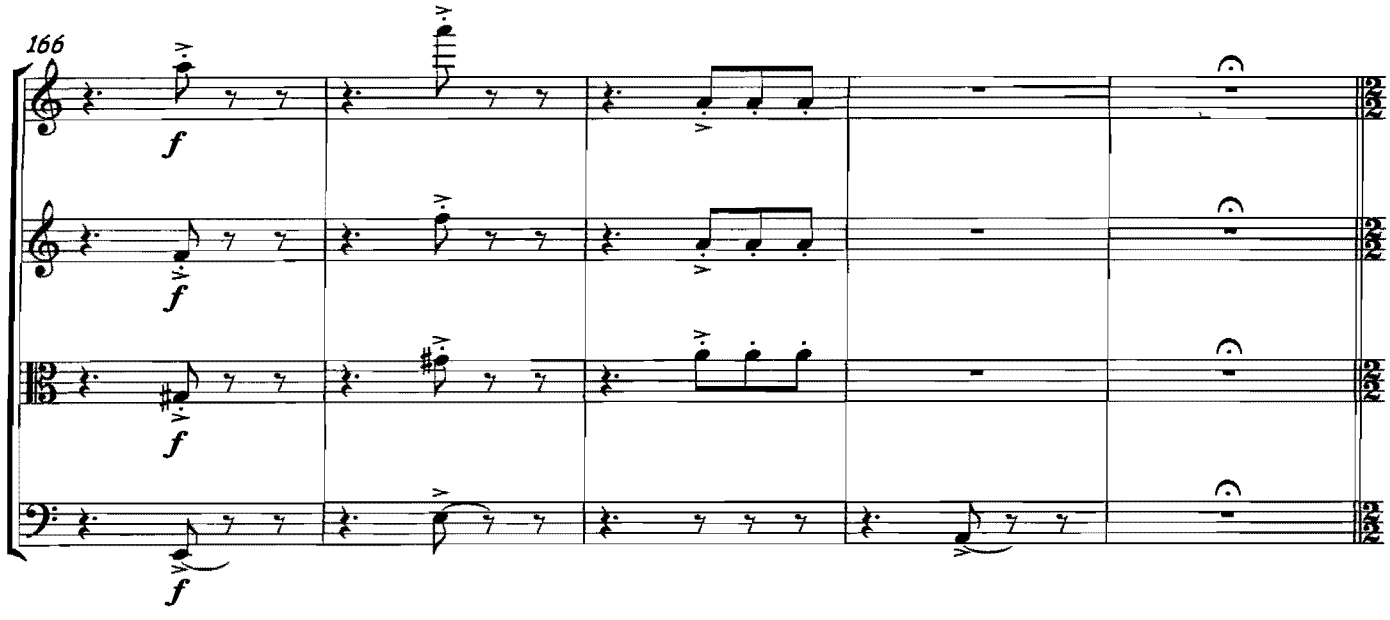
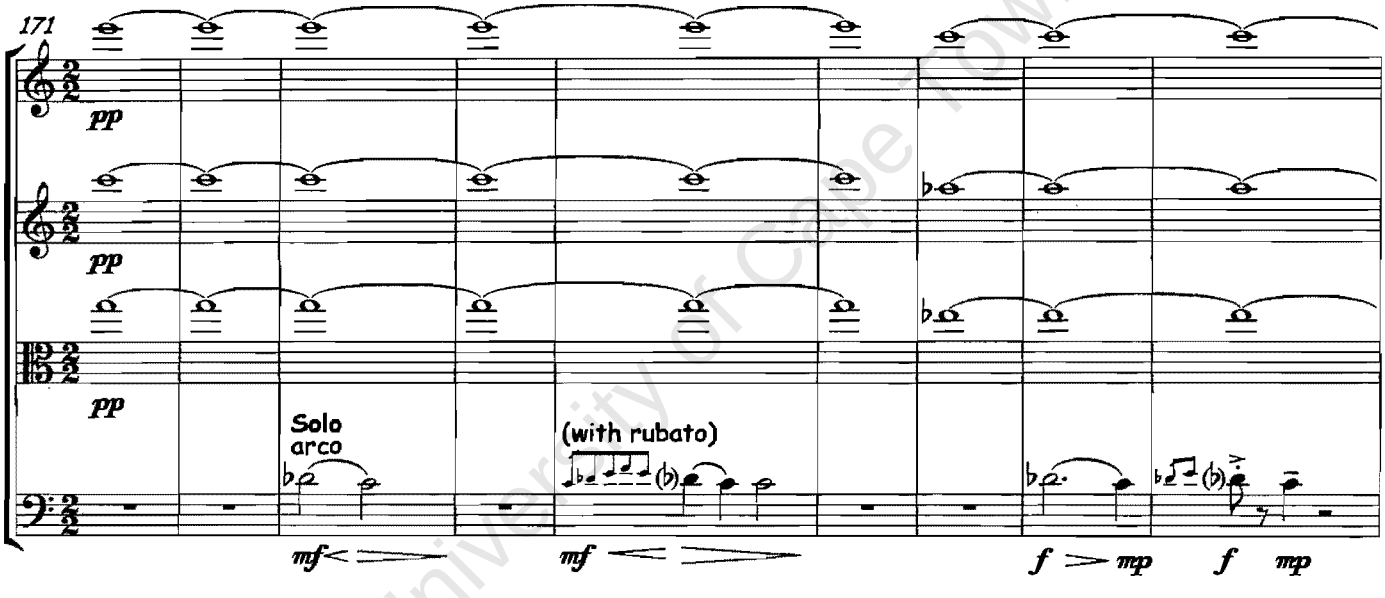
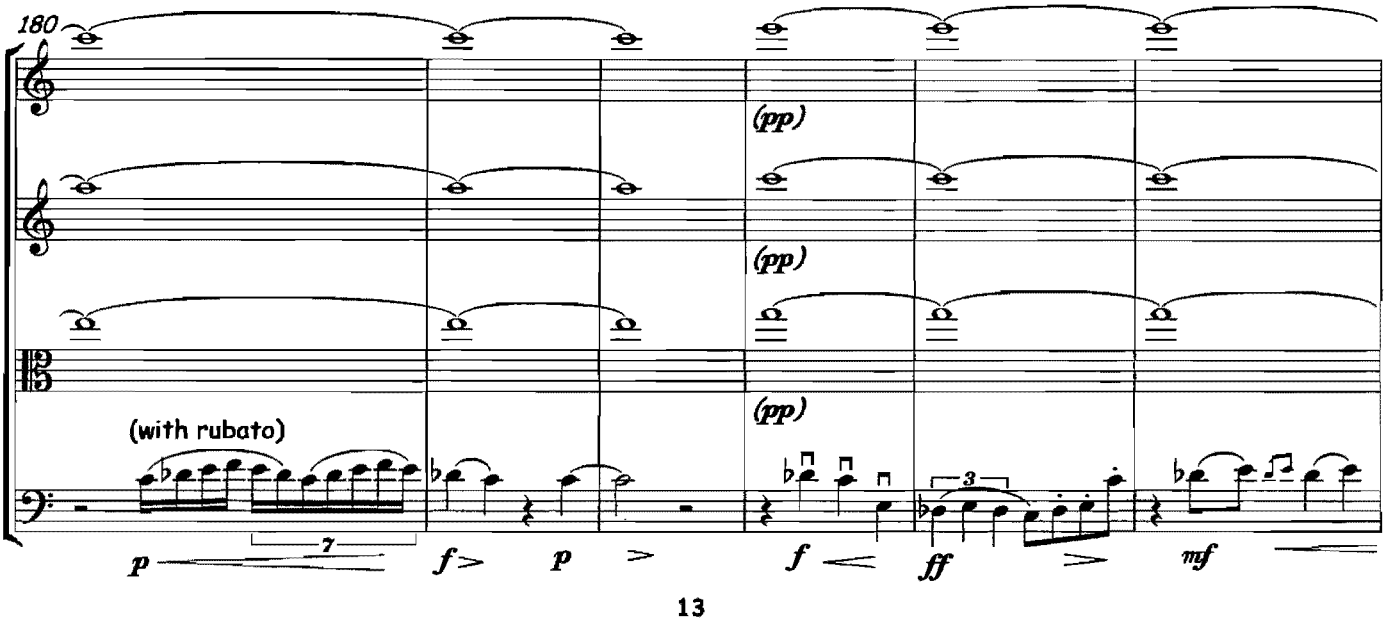


IV. Slowly, and expressively - with lavish rubato by the soloists ♩ = 45





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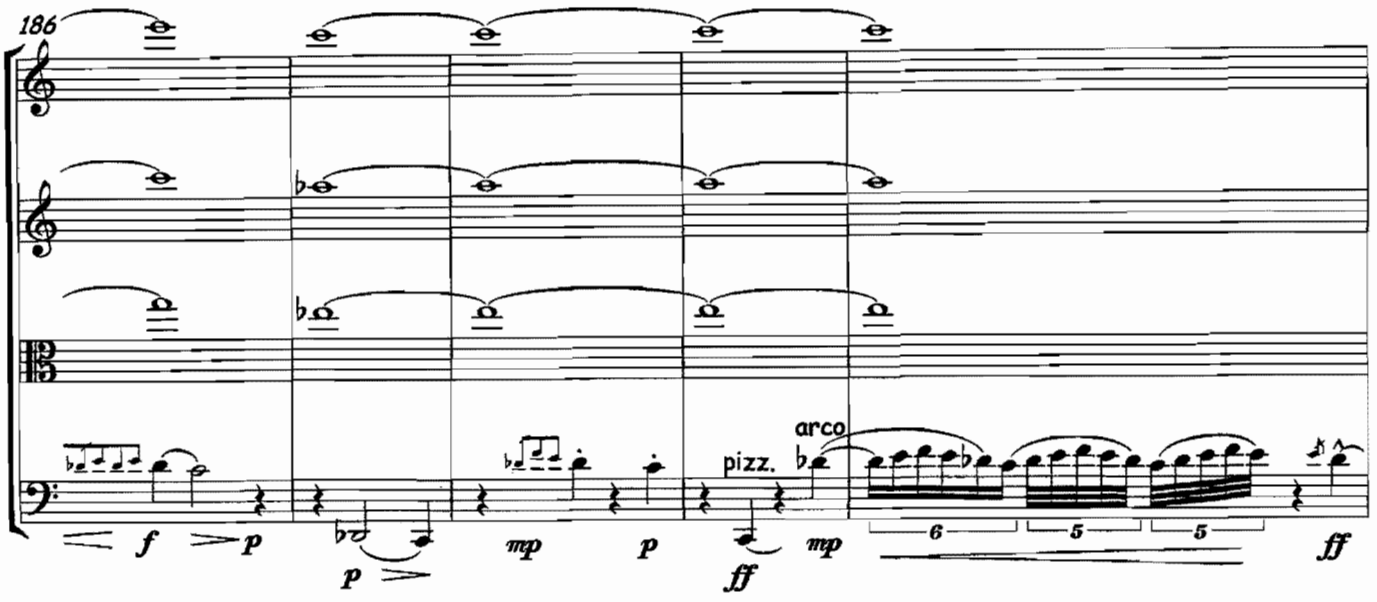

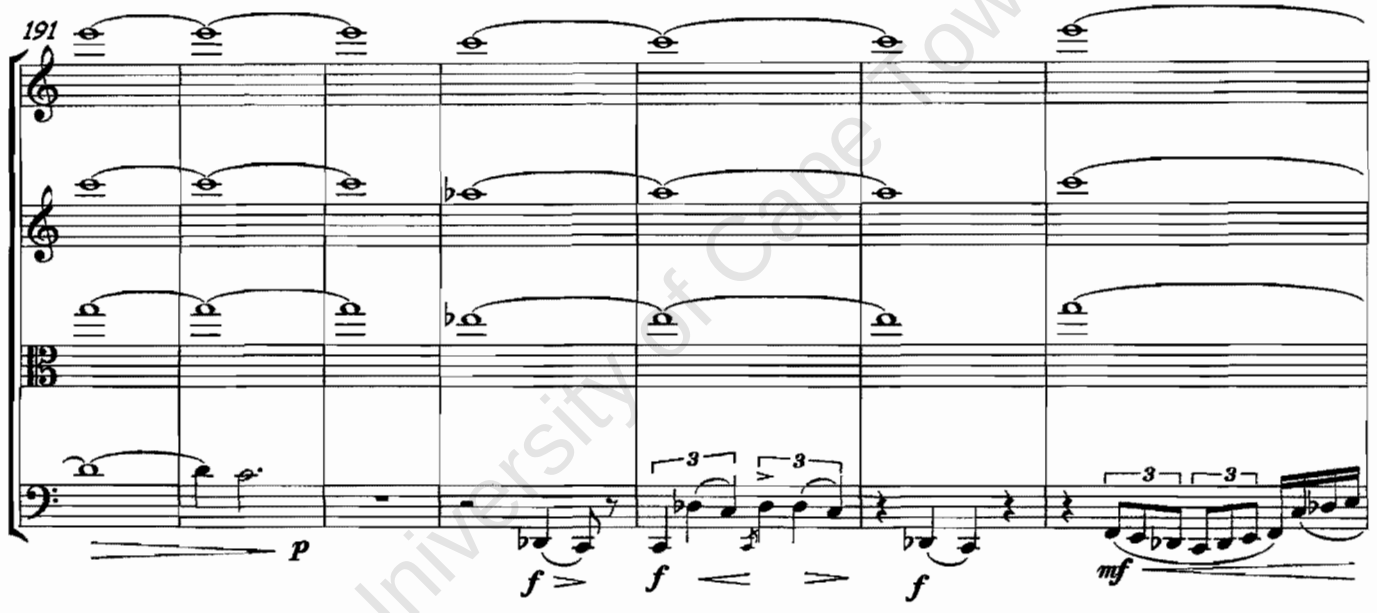

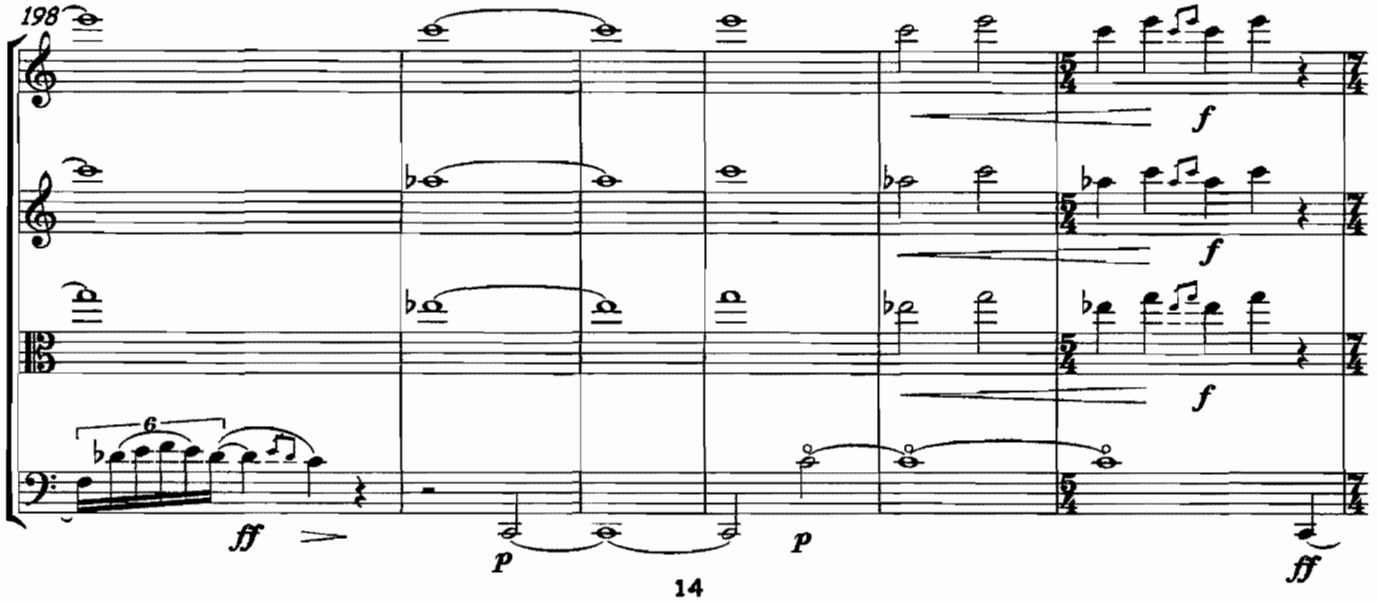

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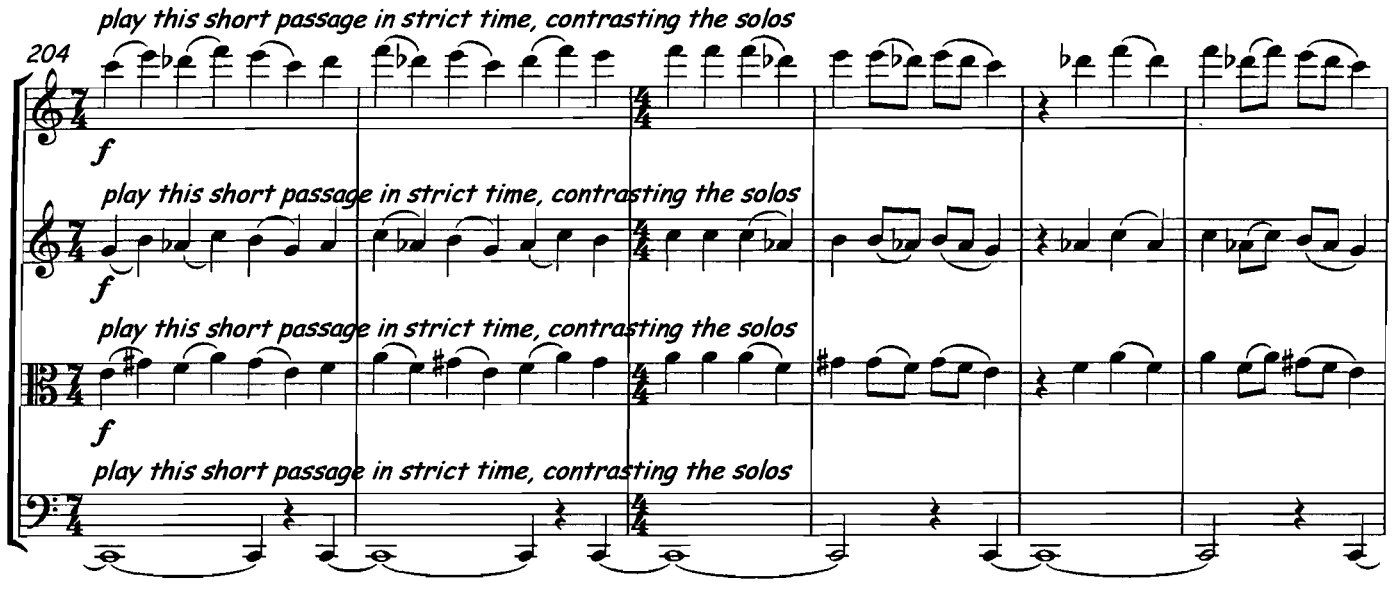

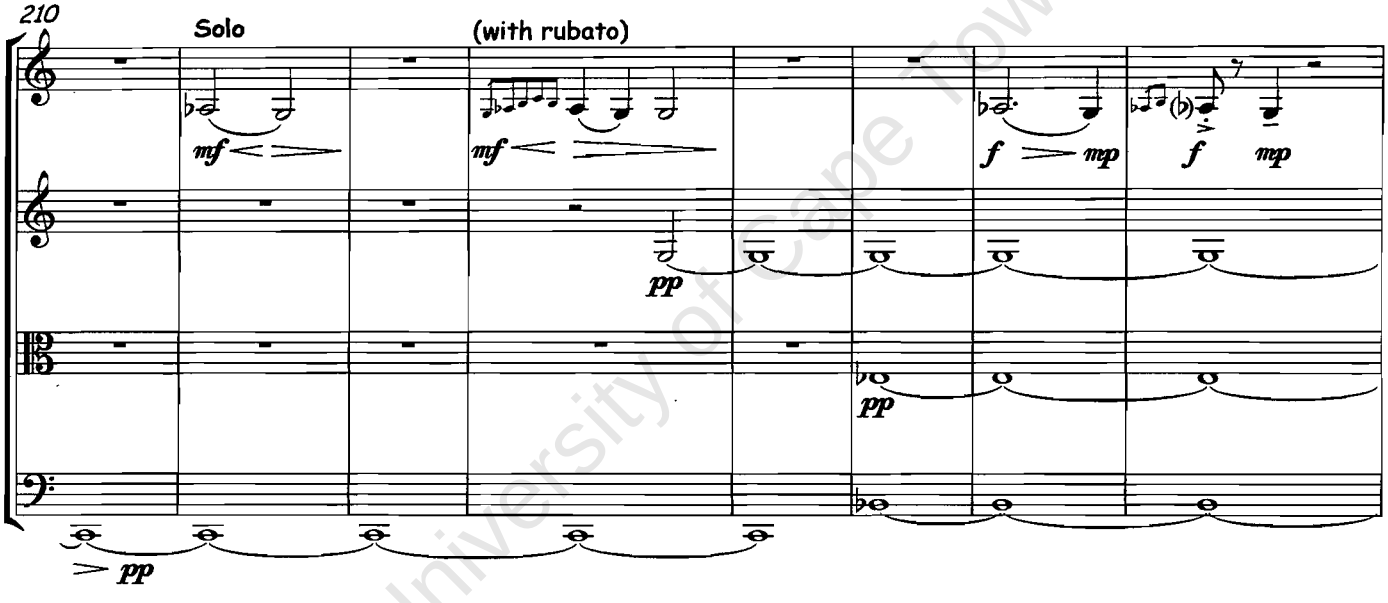

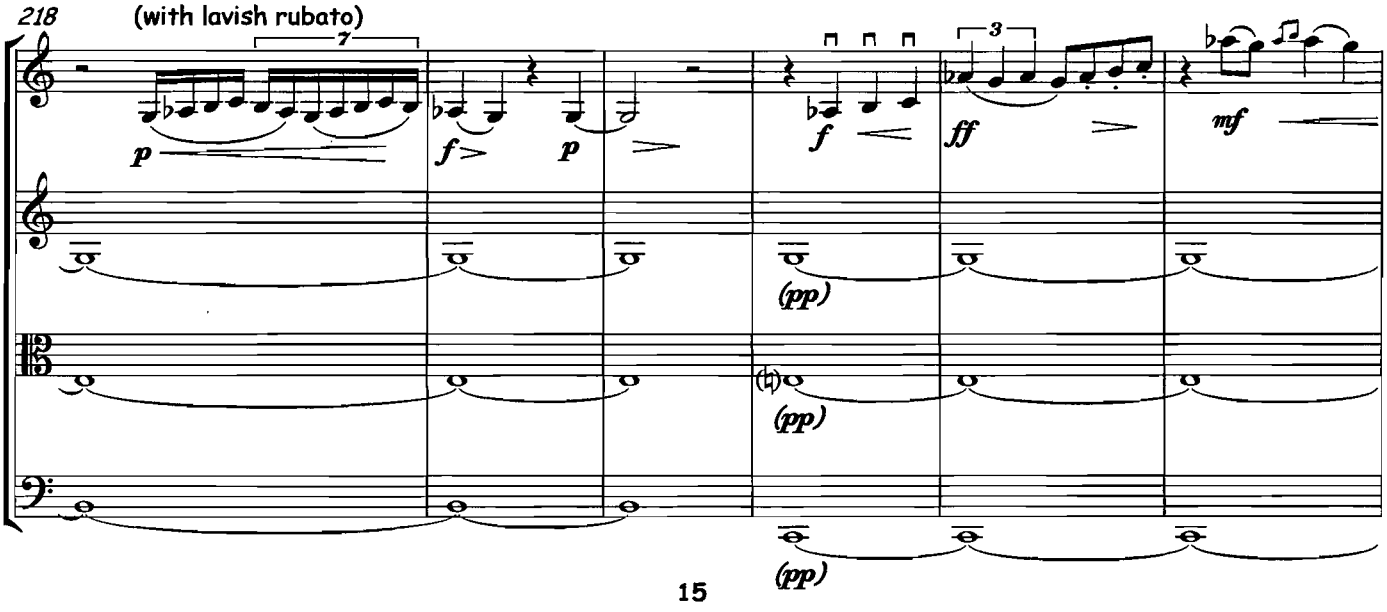

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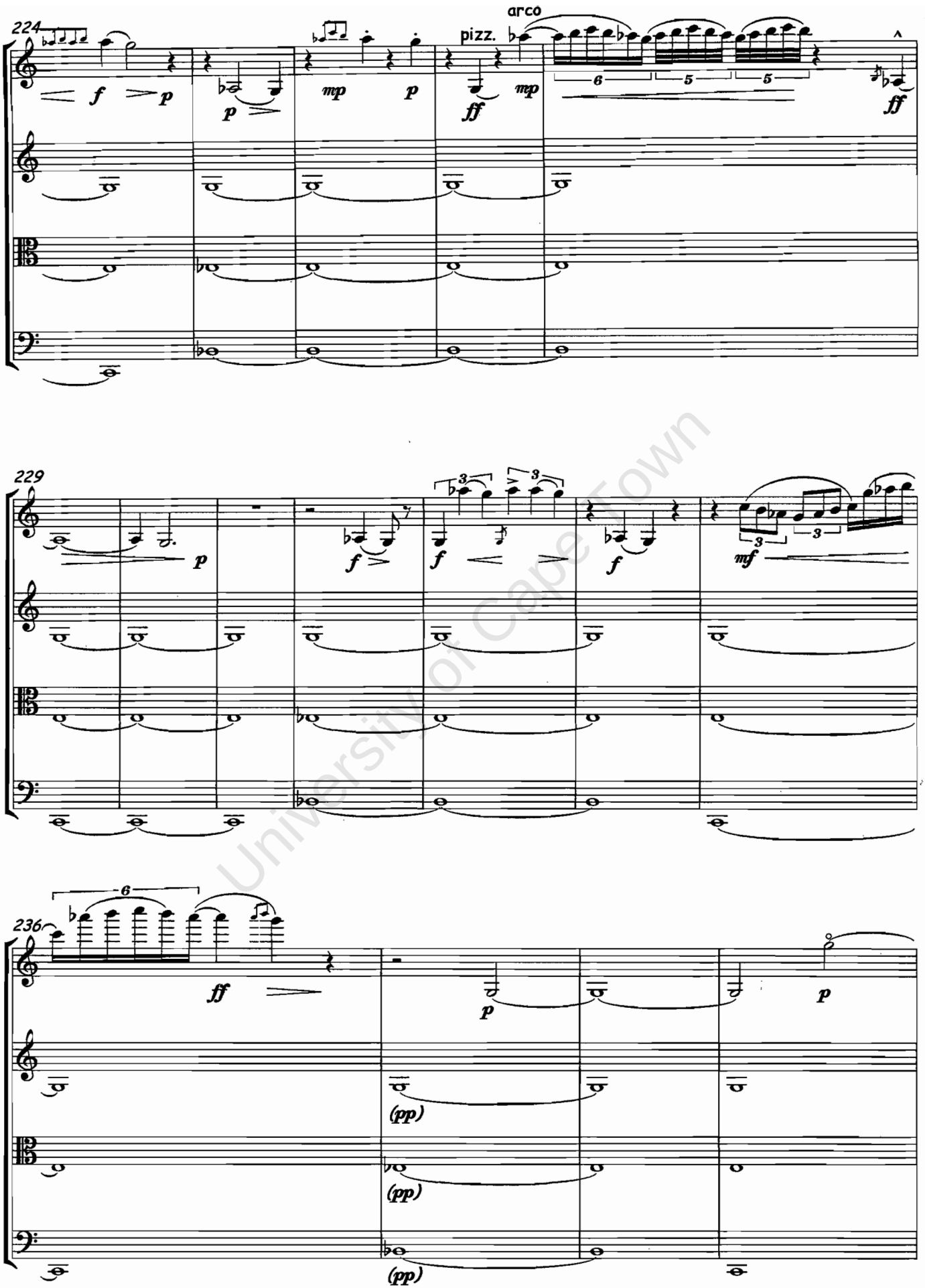

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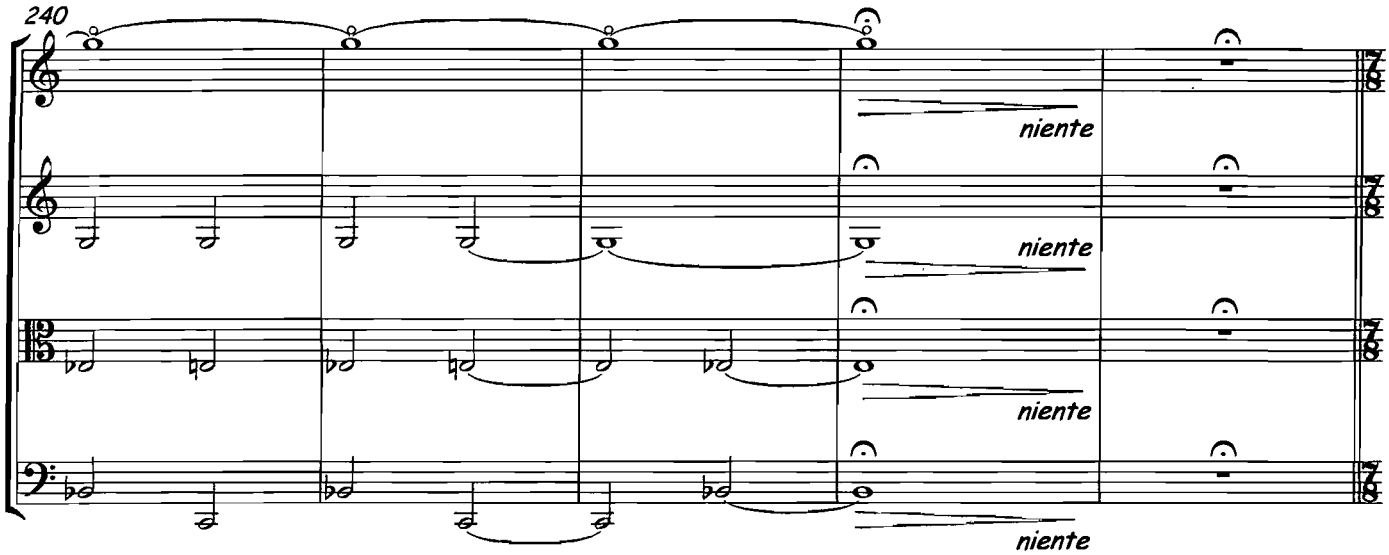

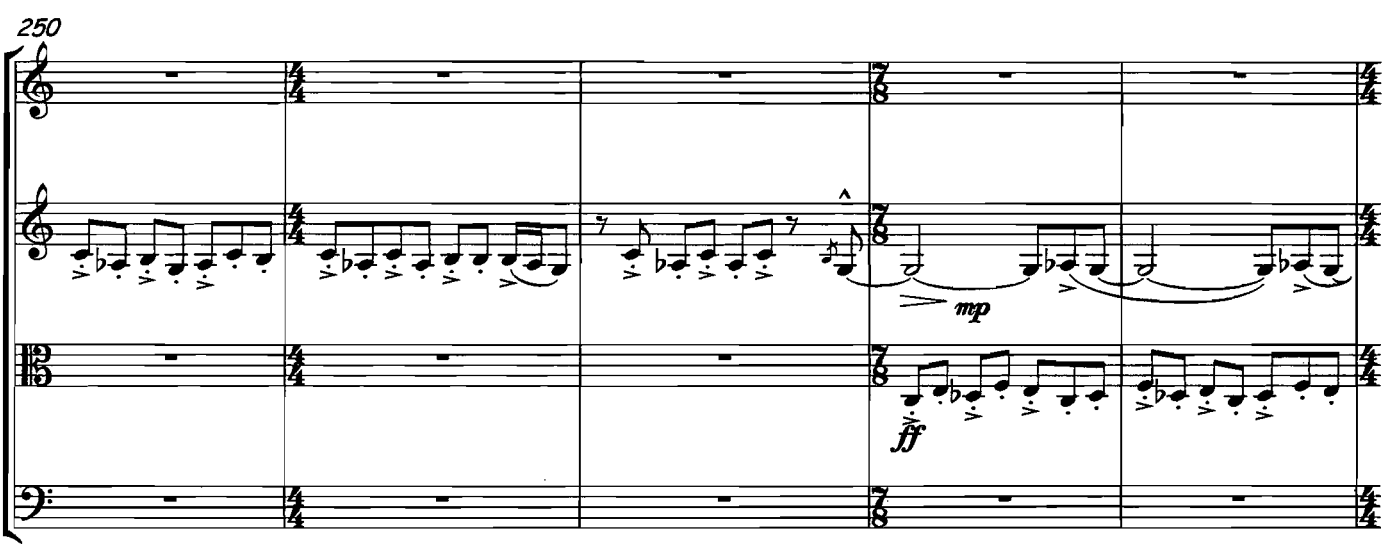

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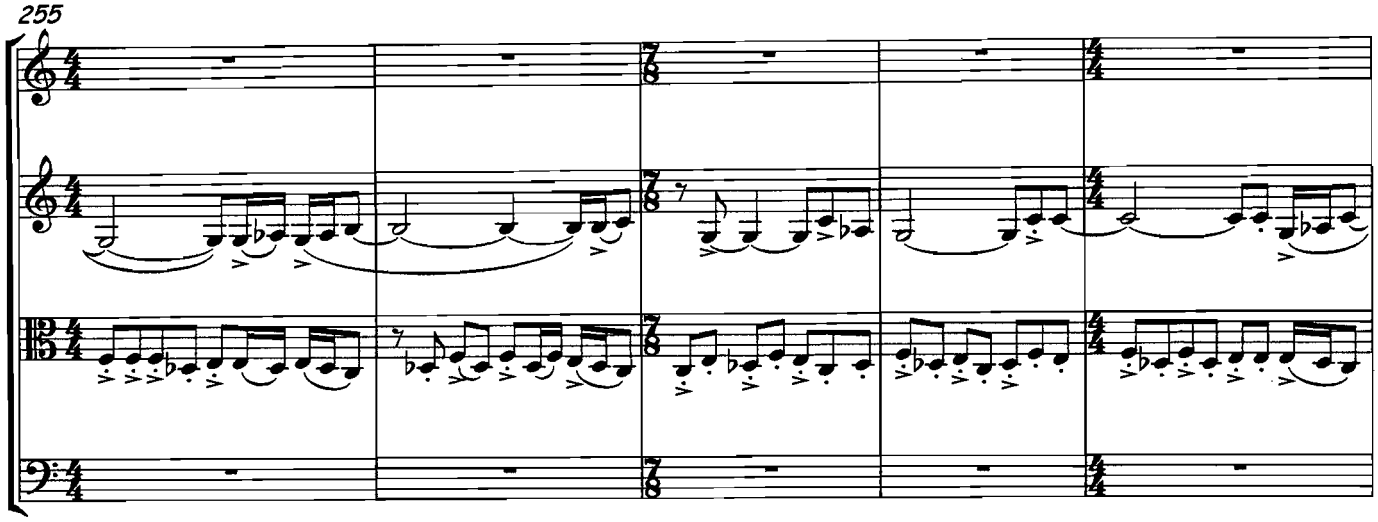

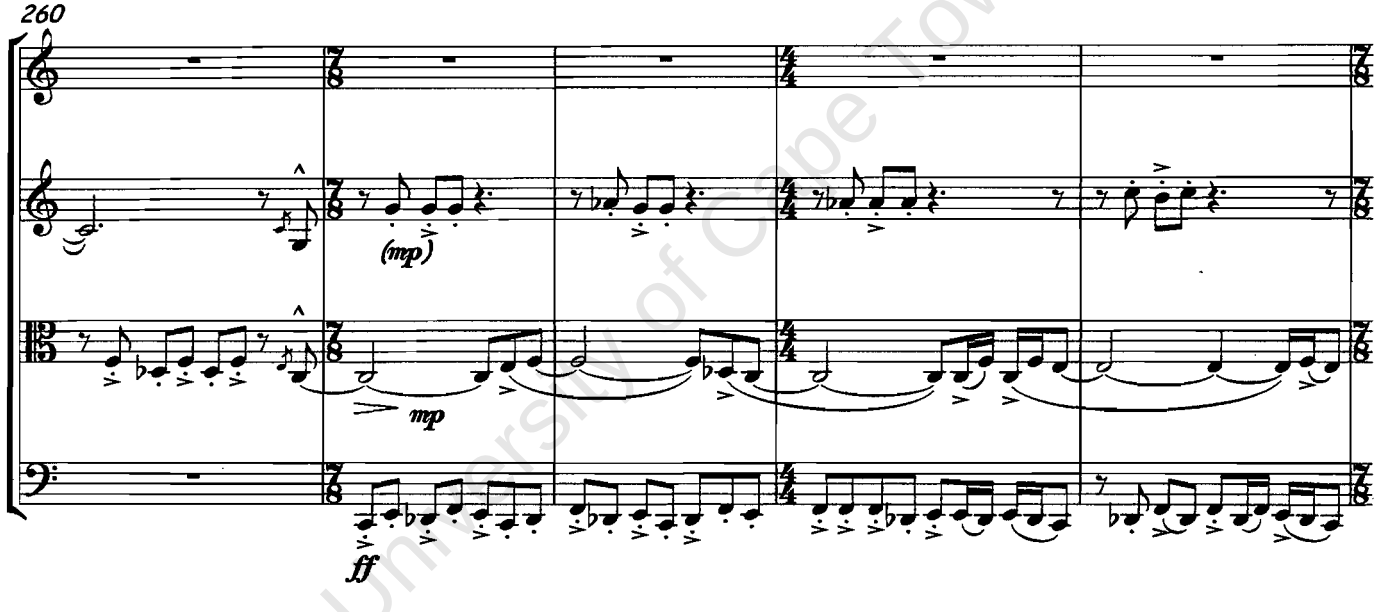

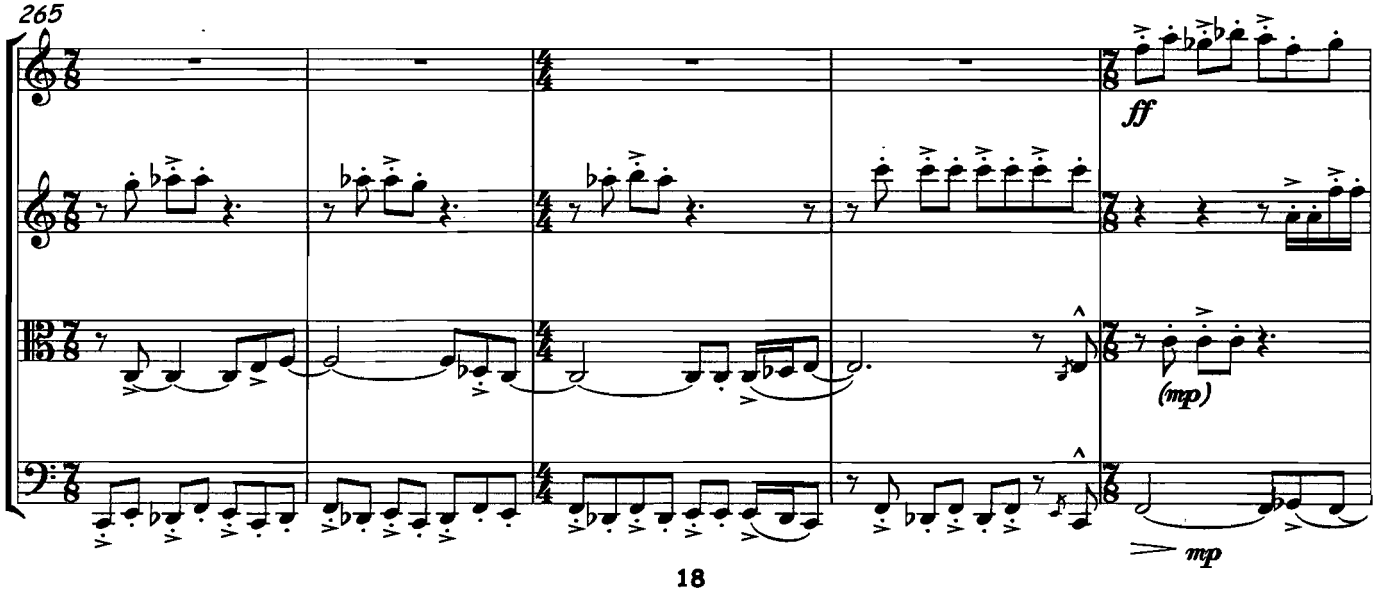

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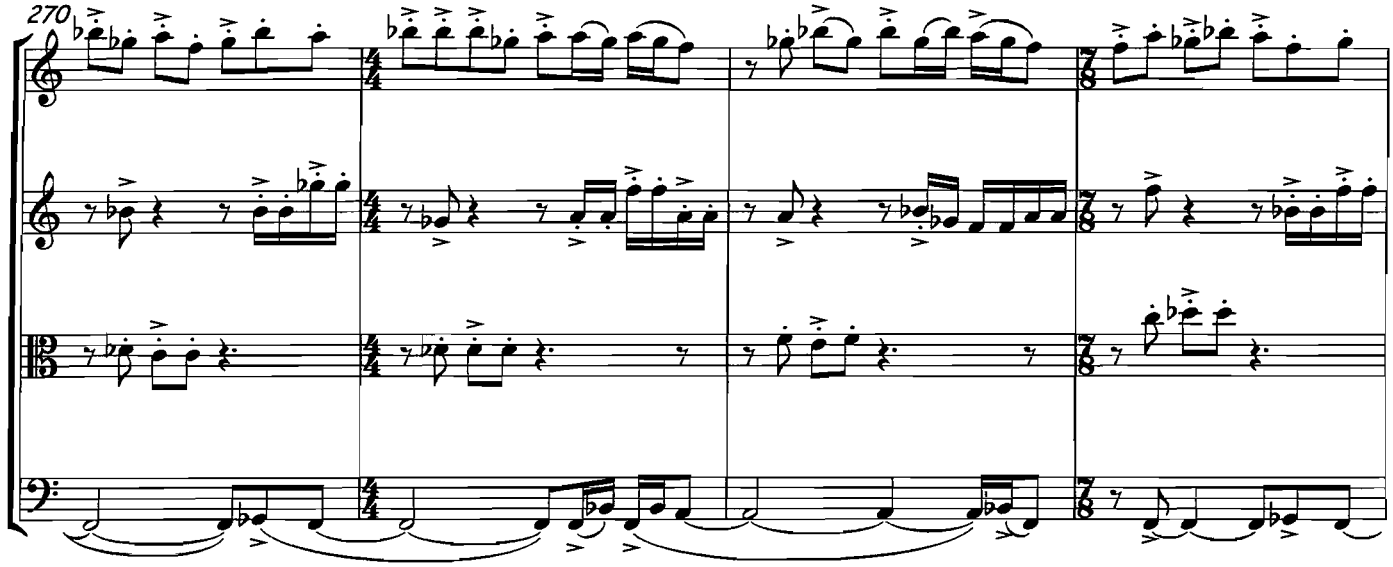

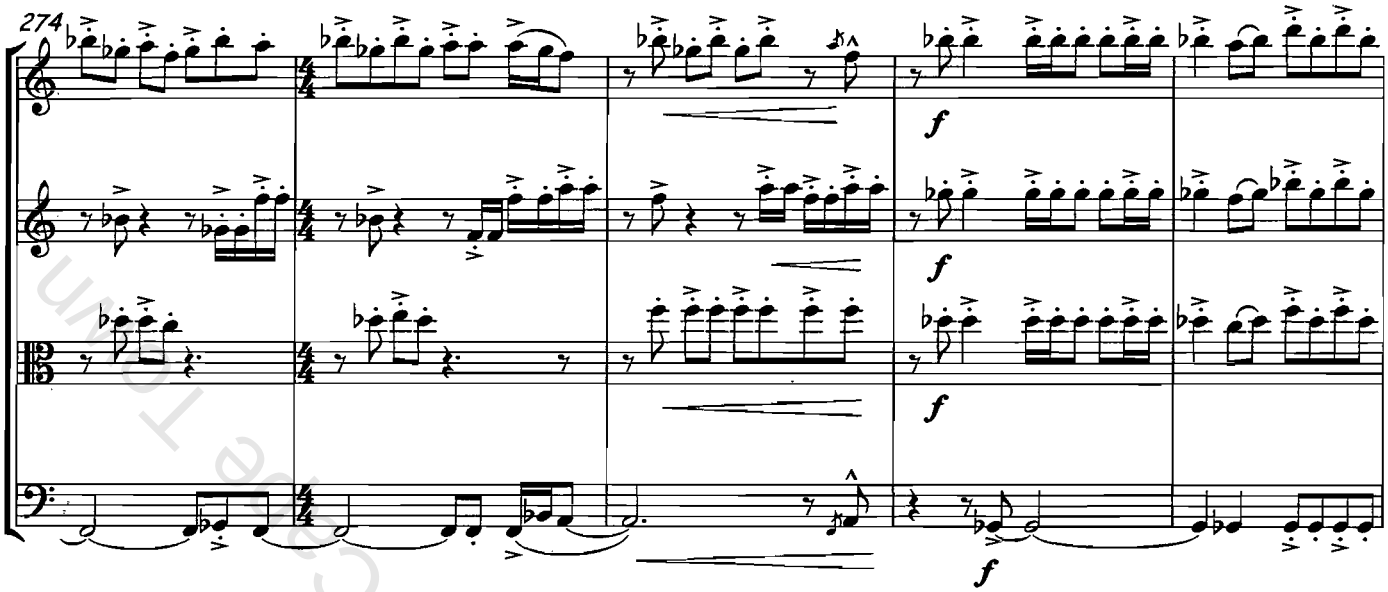

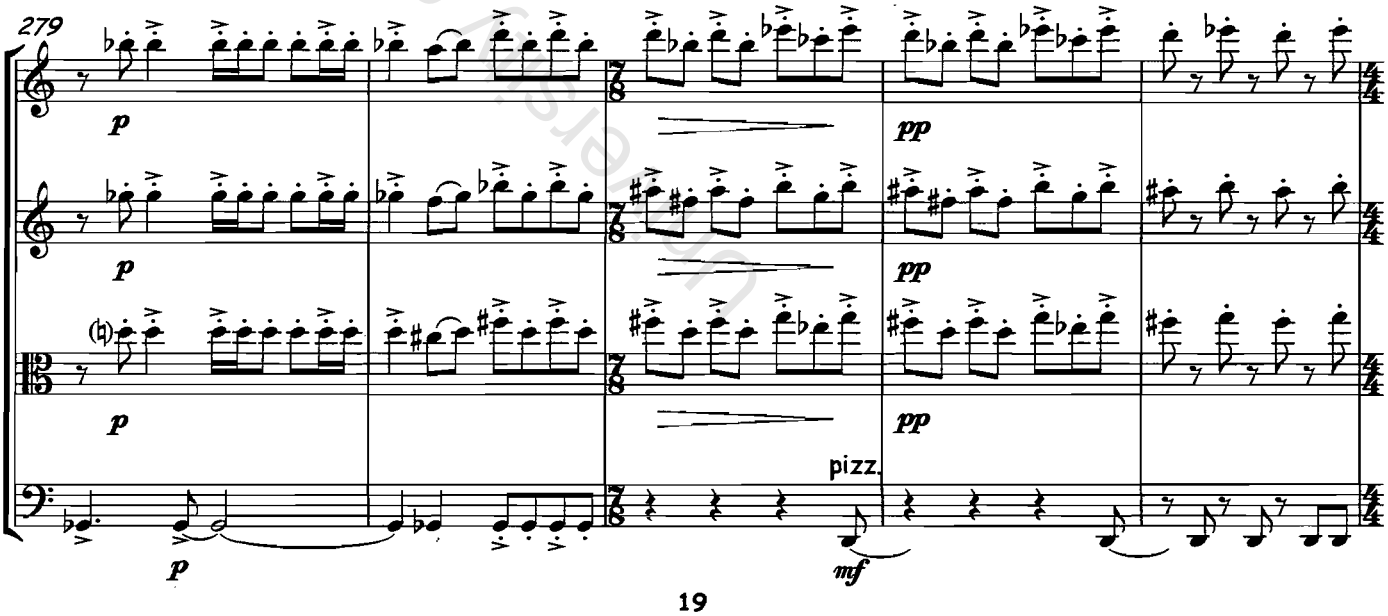

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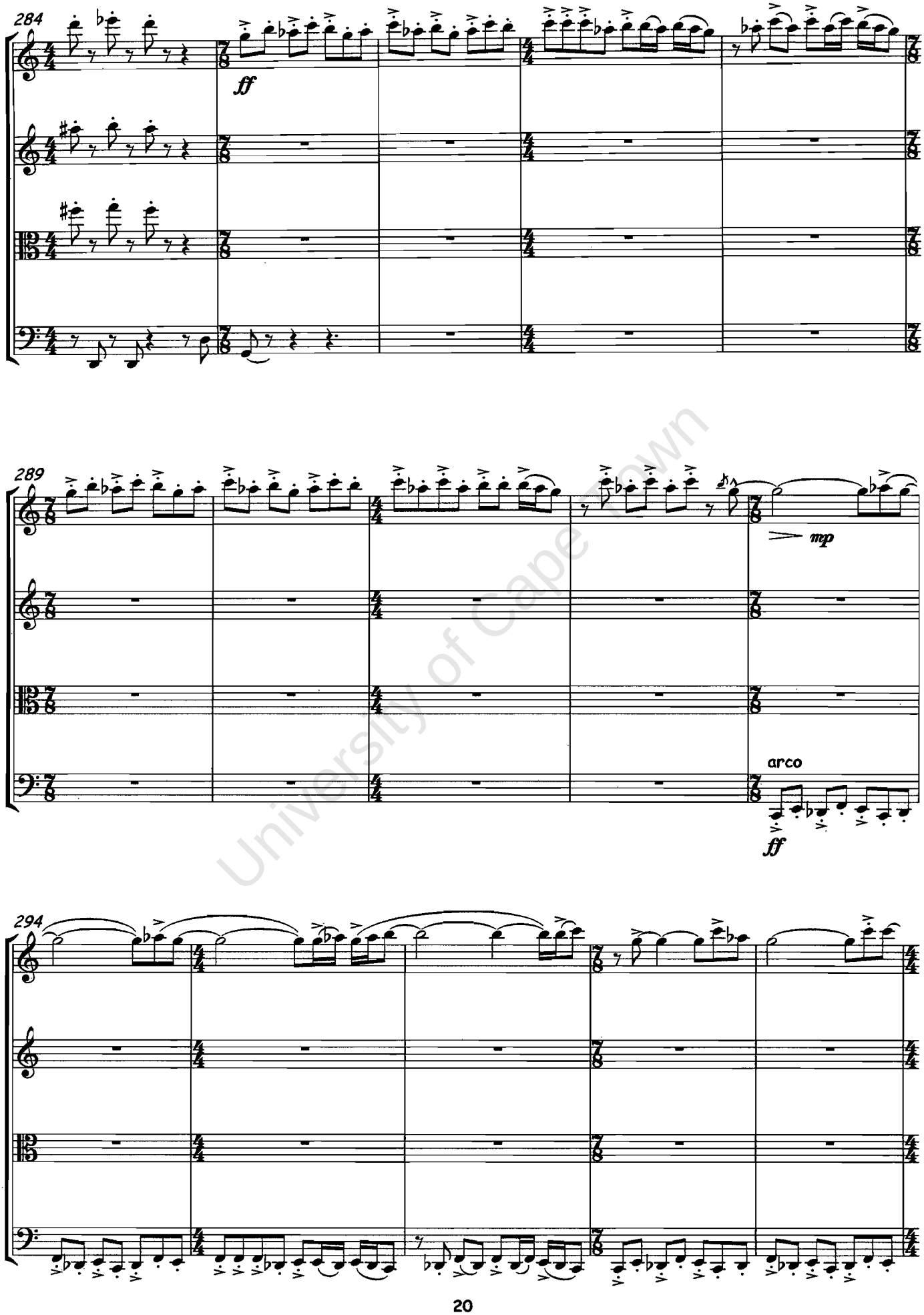

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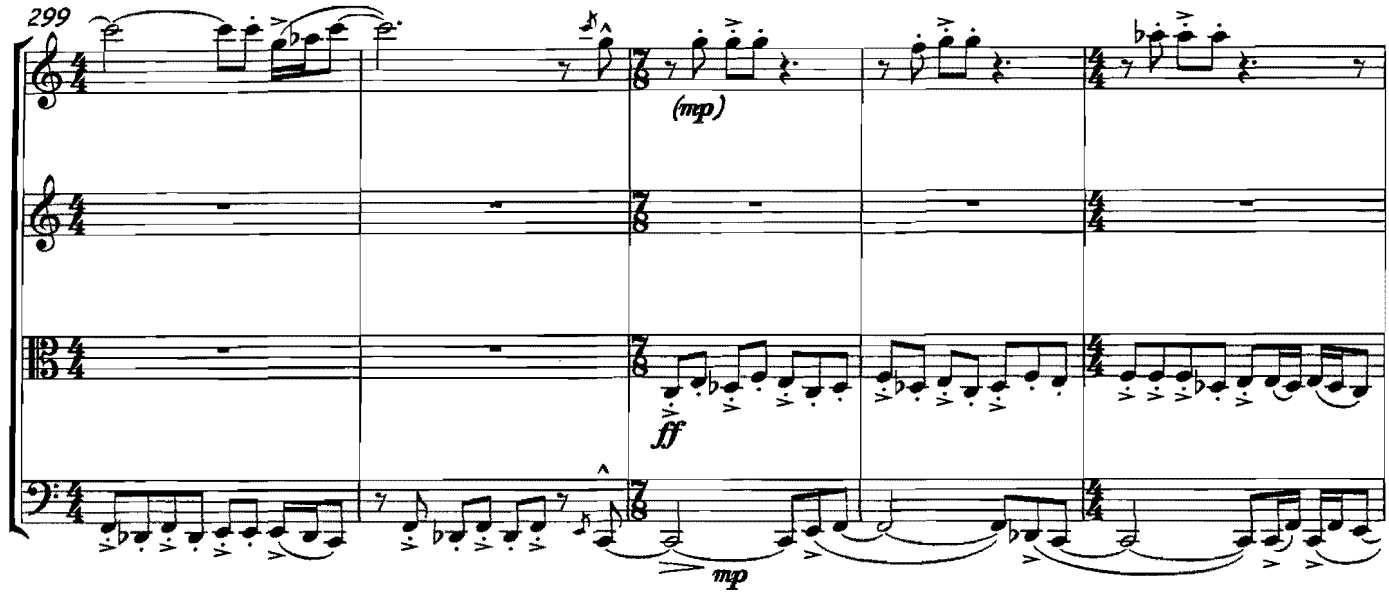

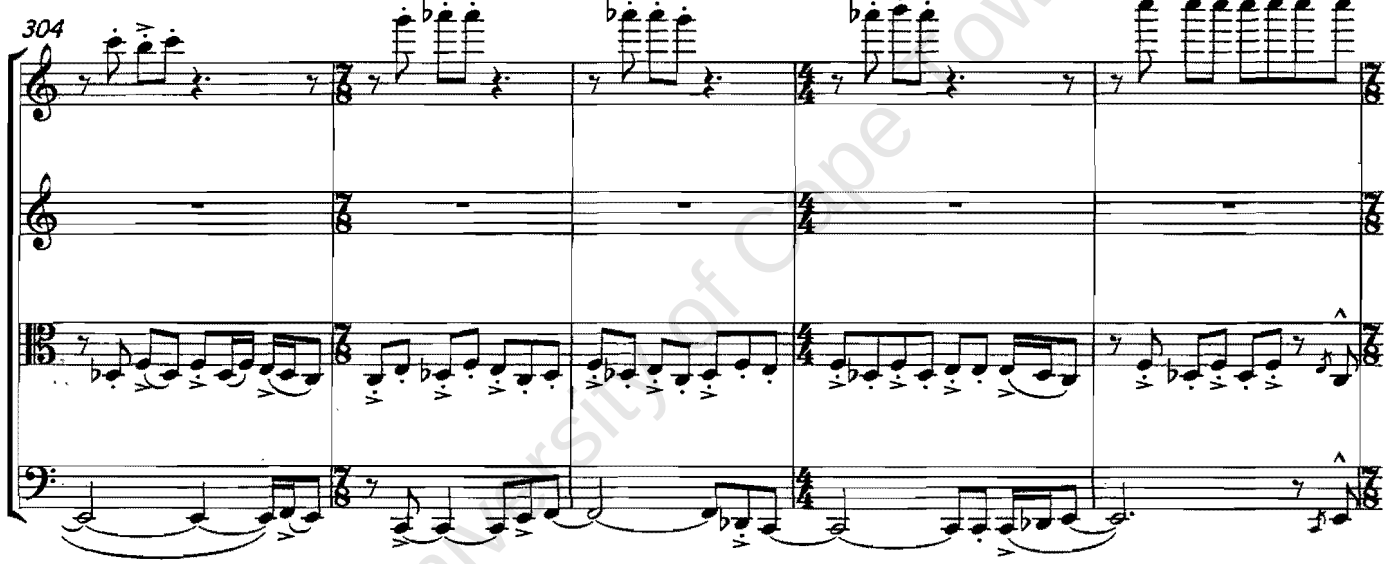

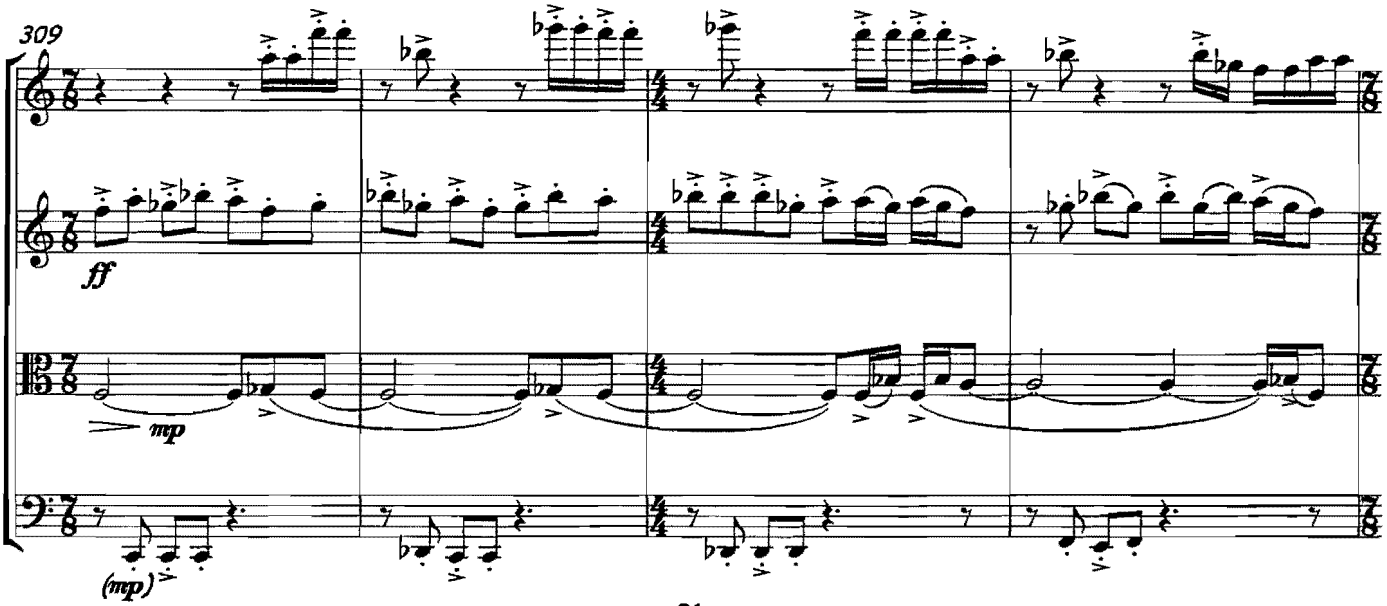

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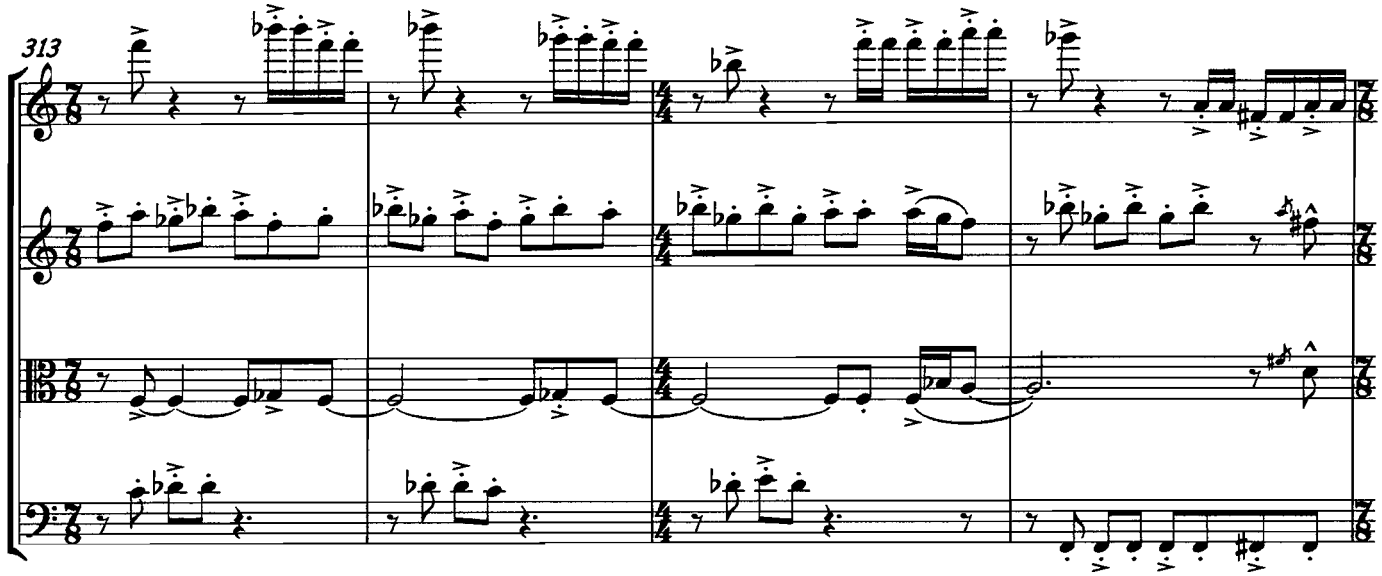

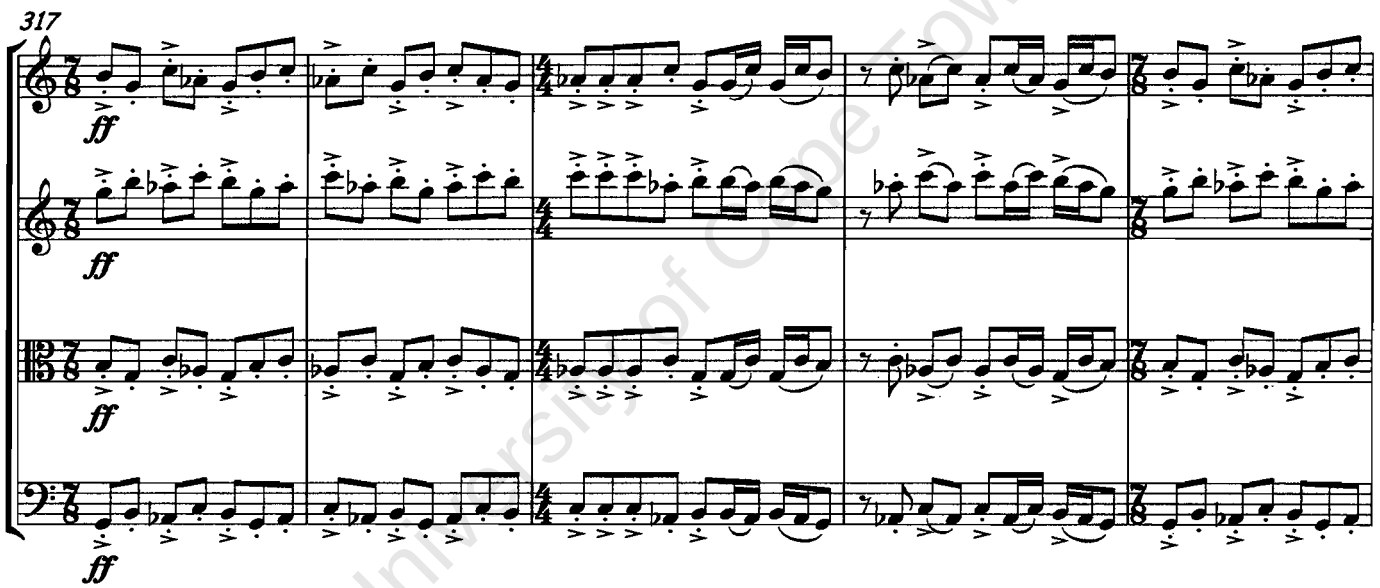

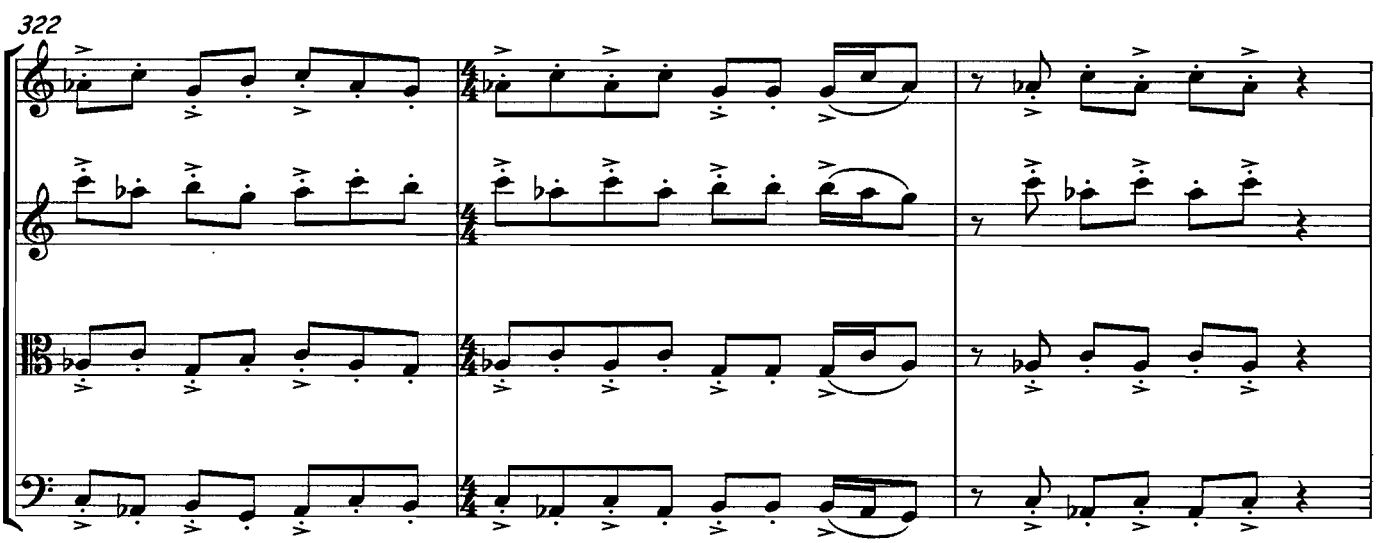

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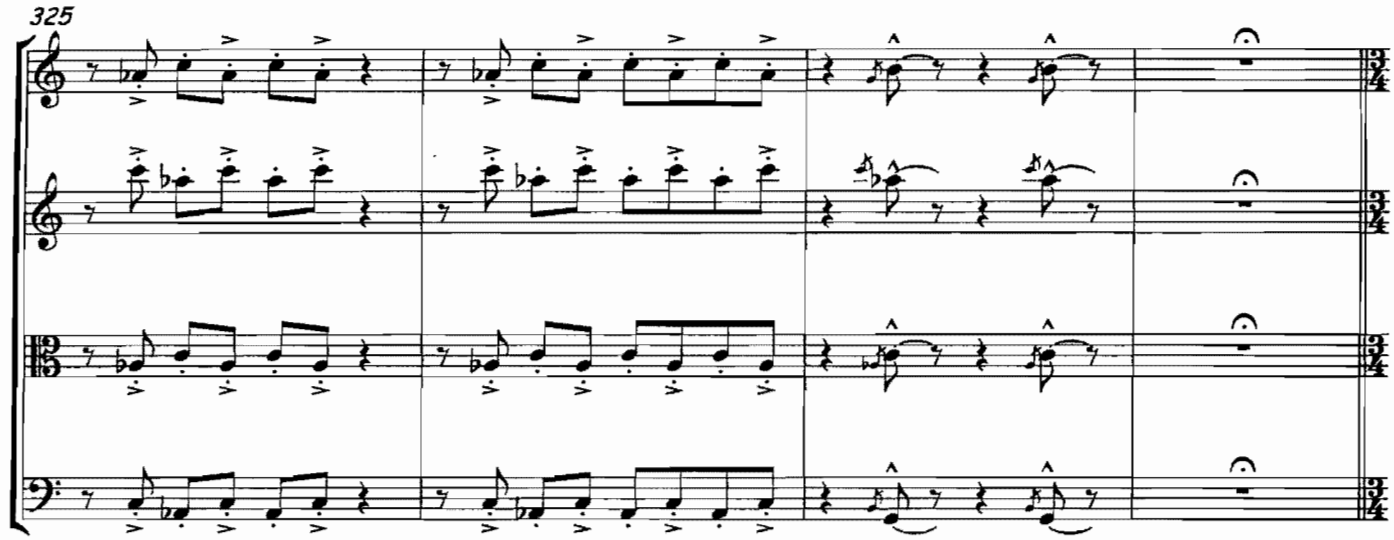

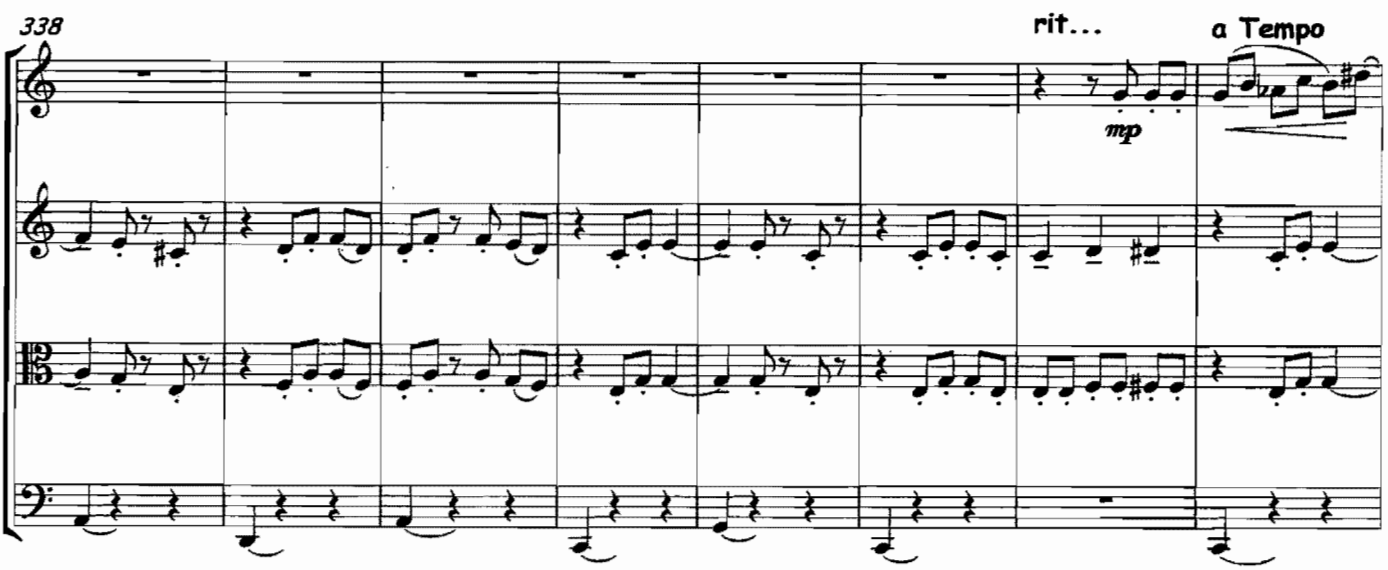

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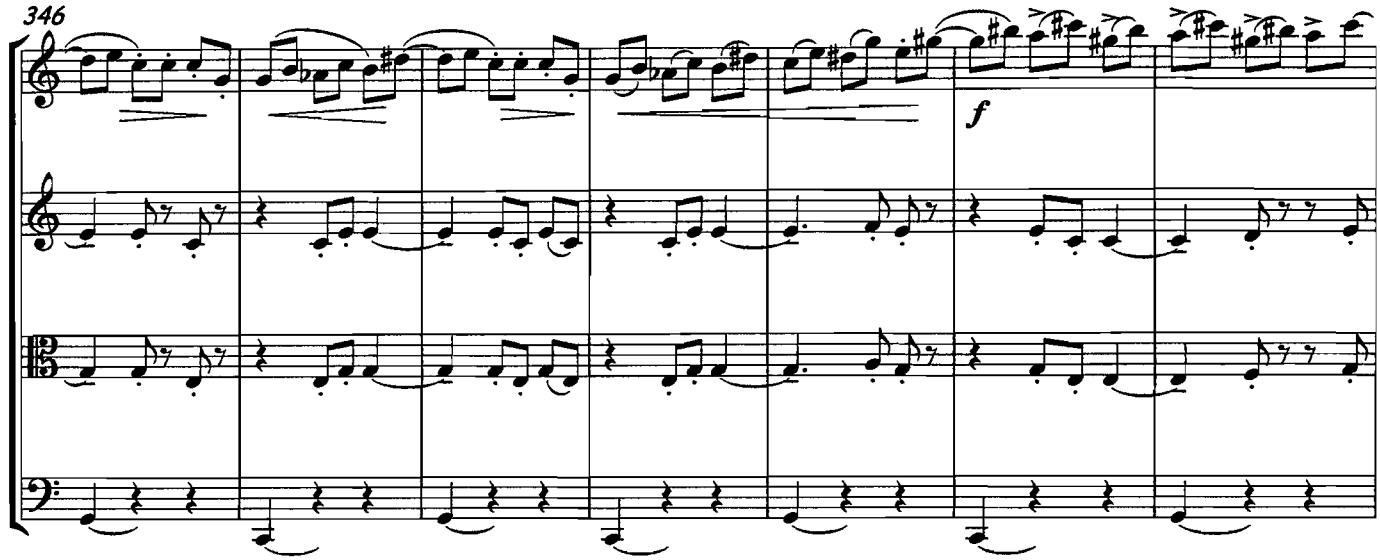

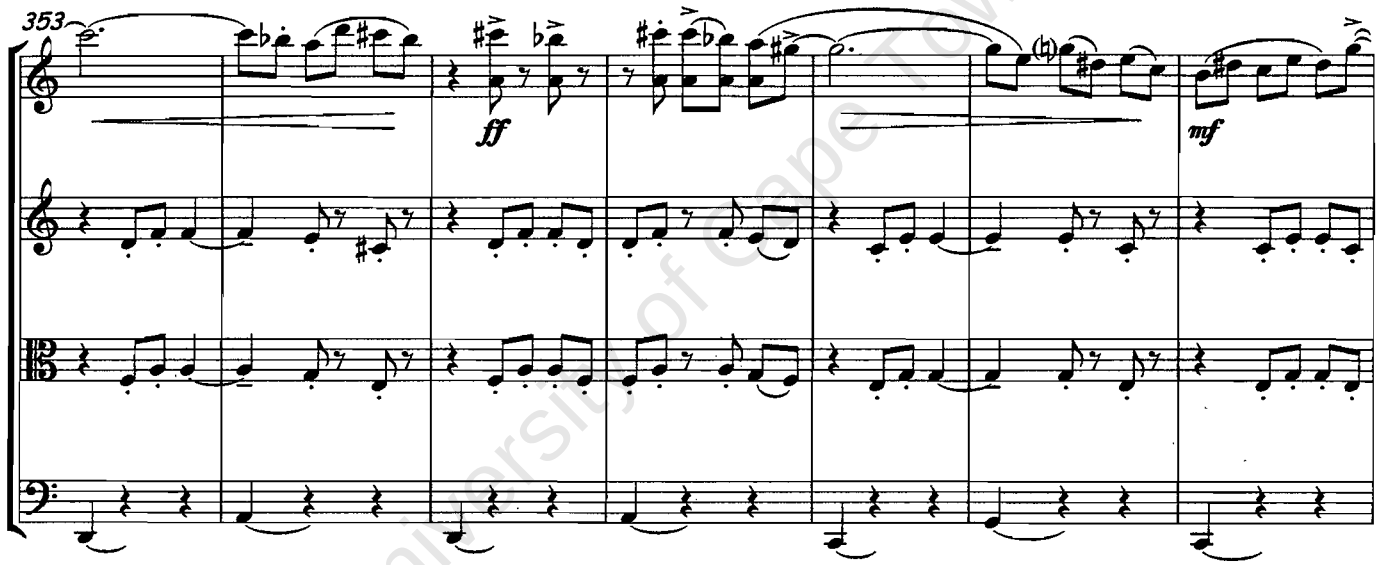

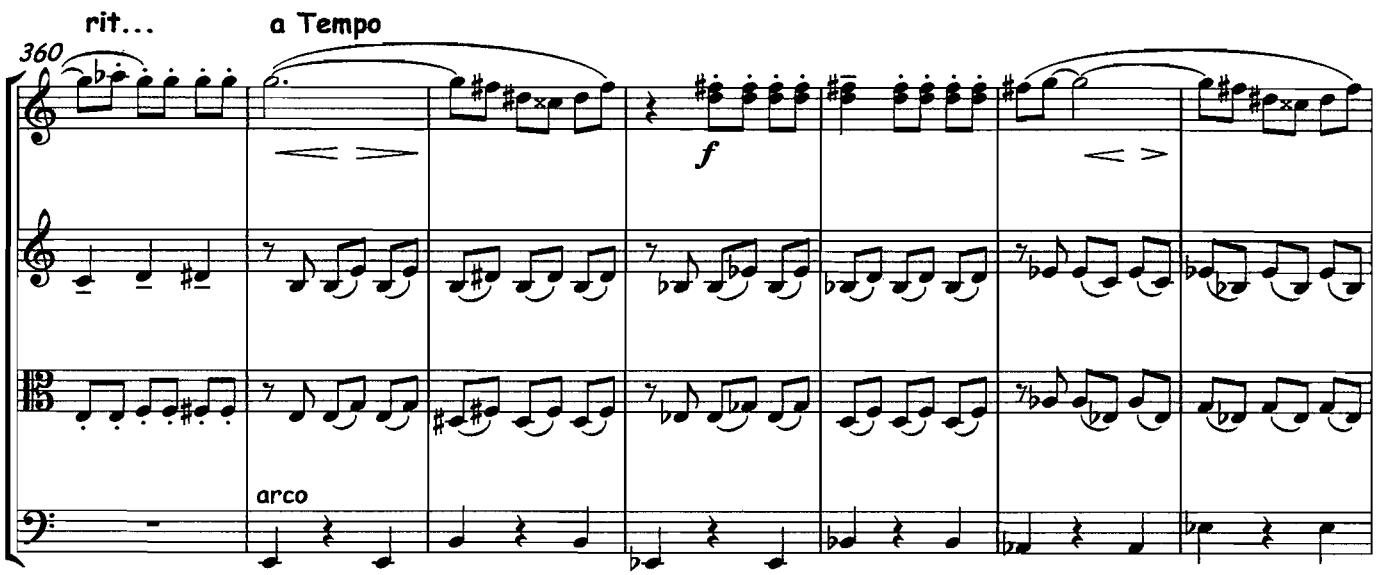

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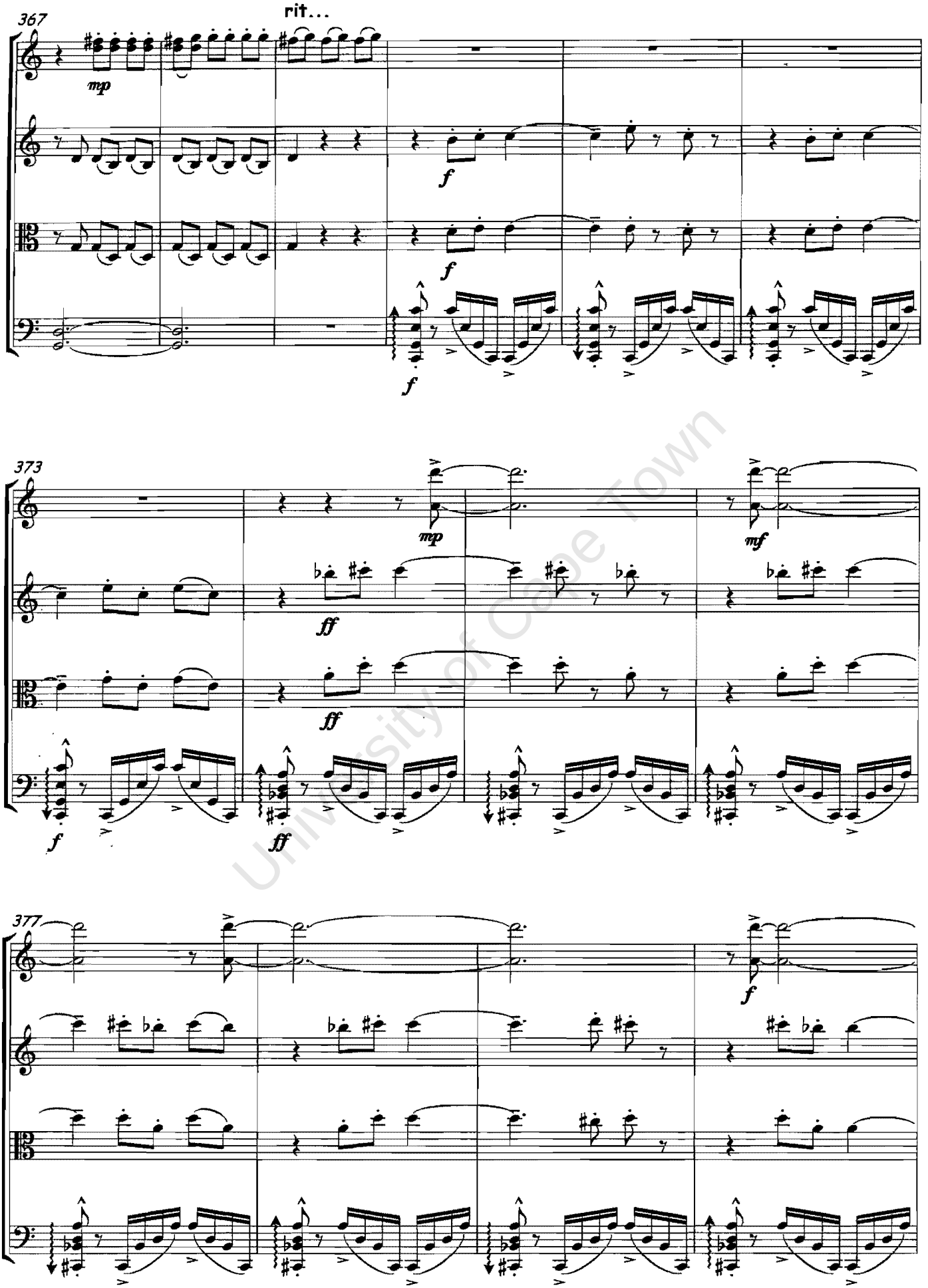

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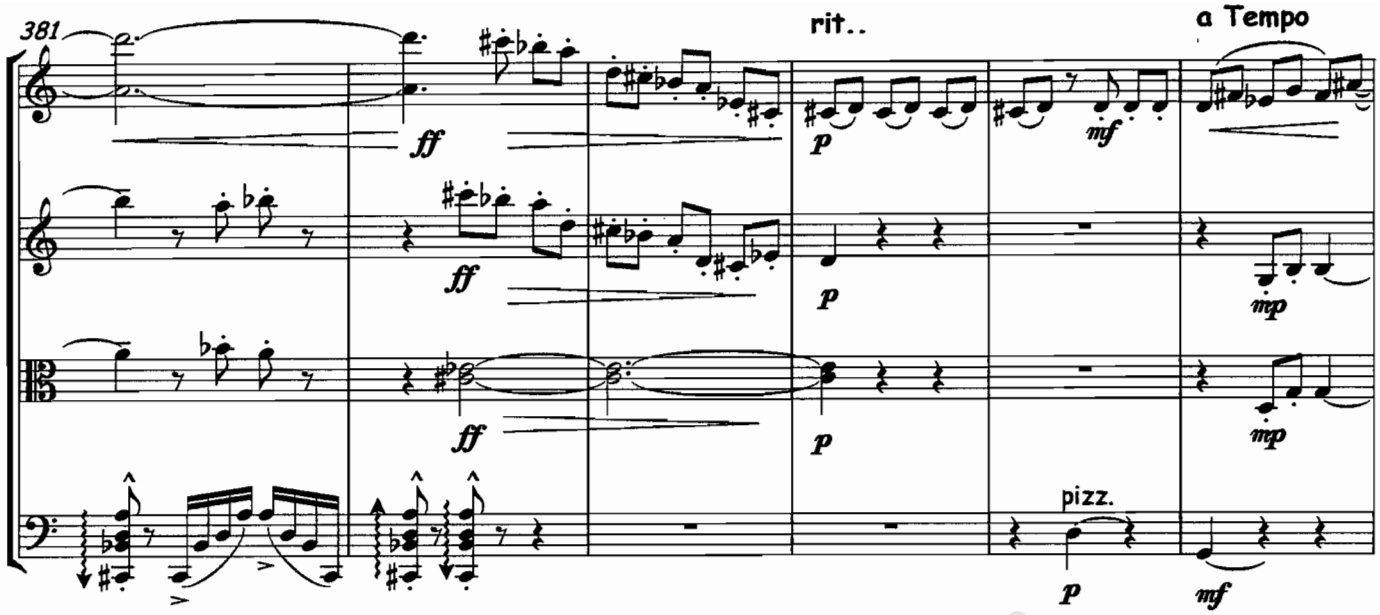

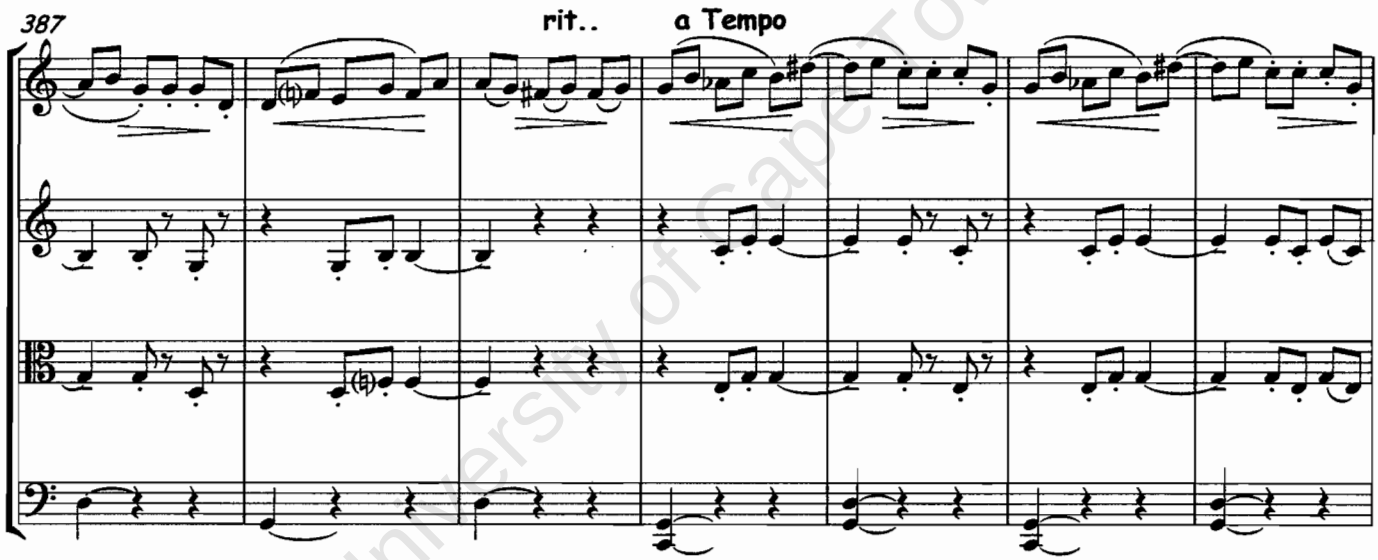

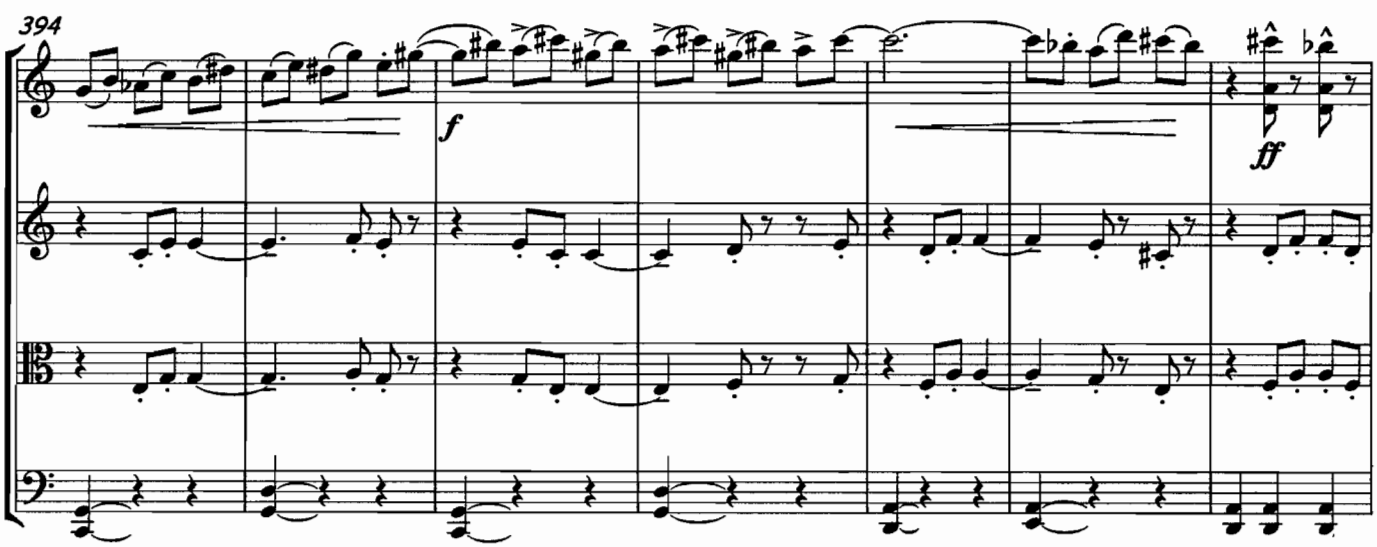

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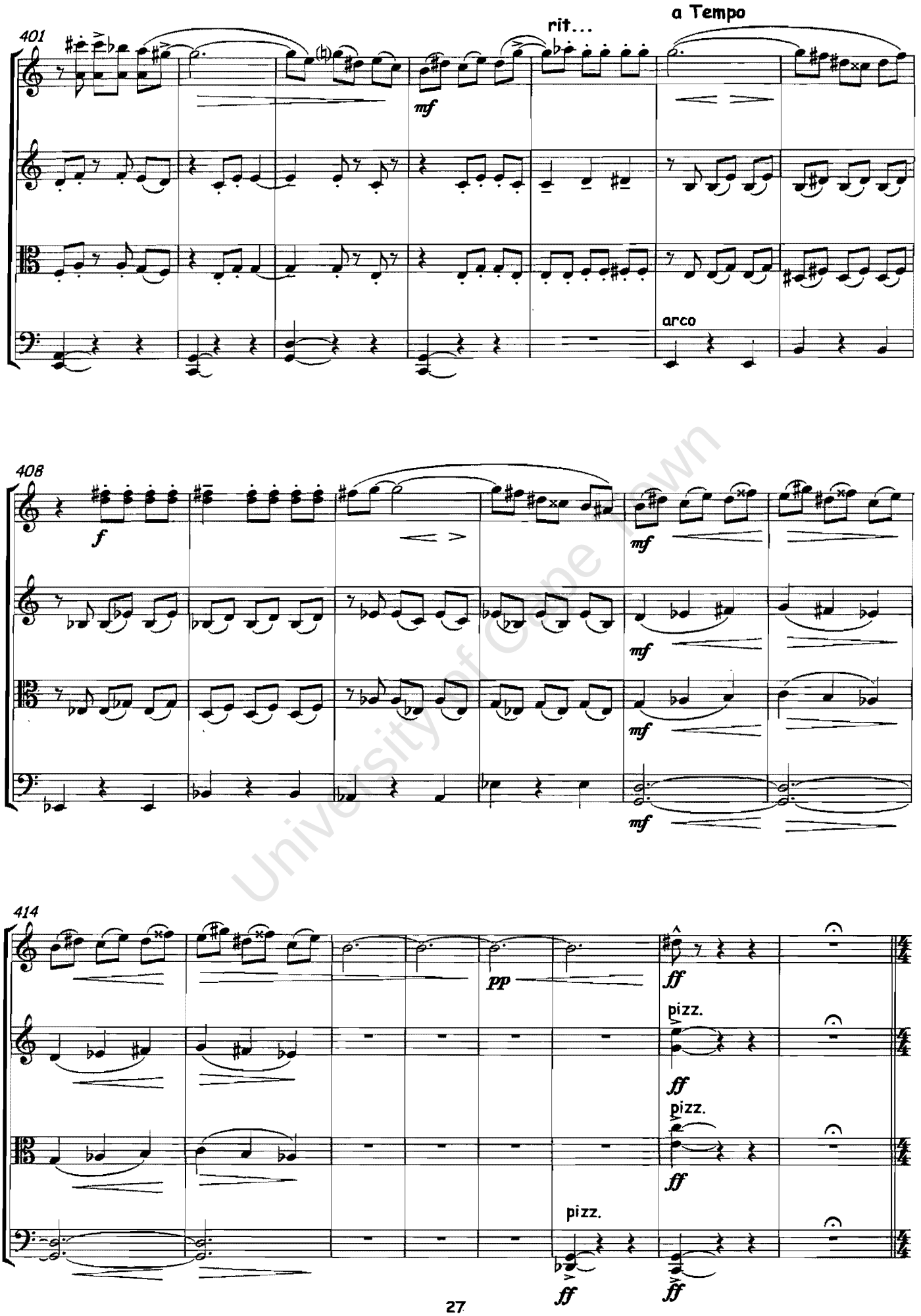

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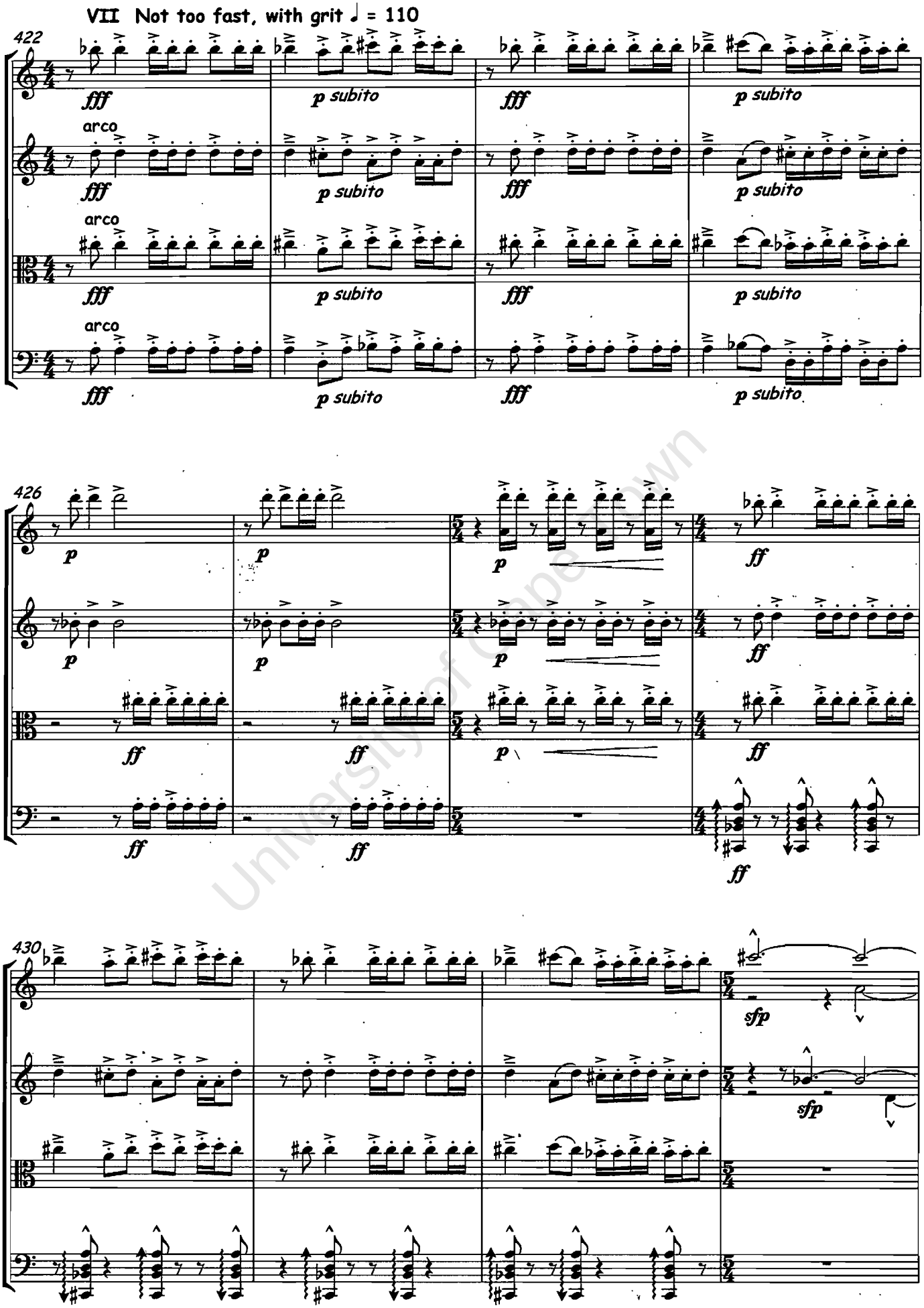

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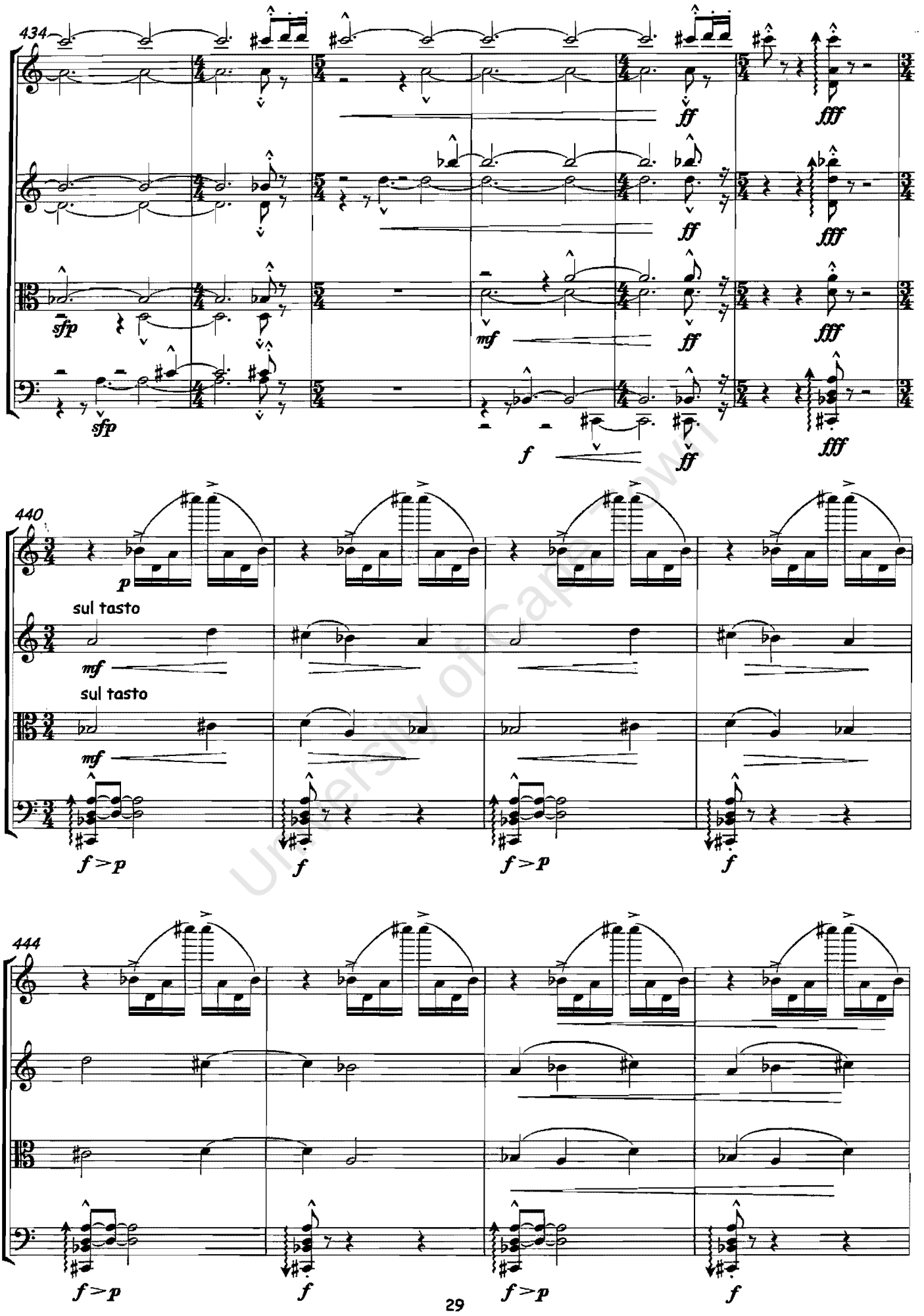

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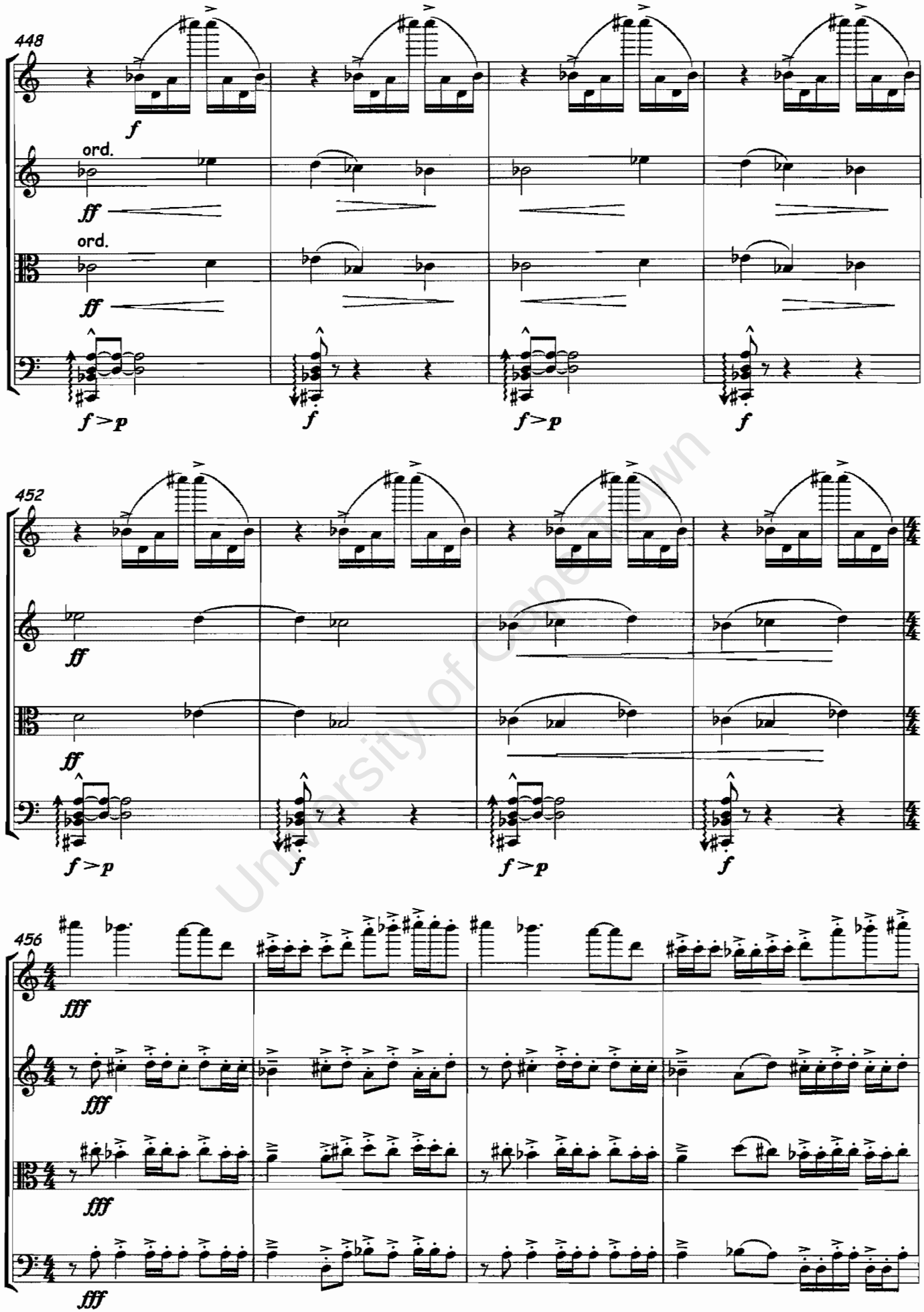

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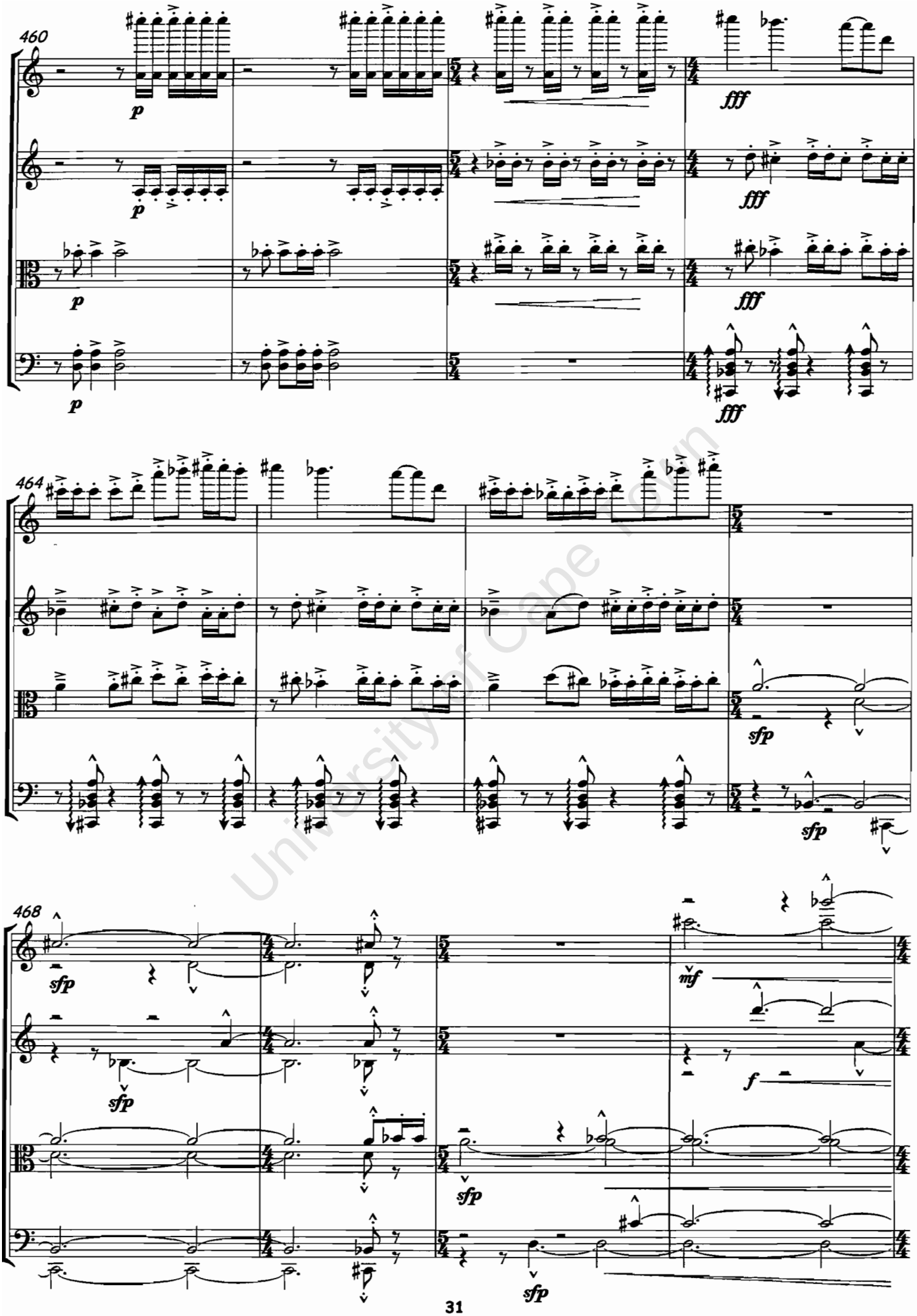

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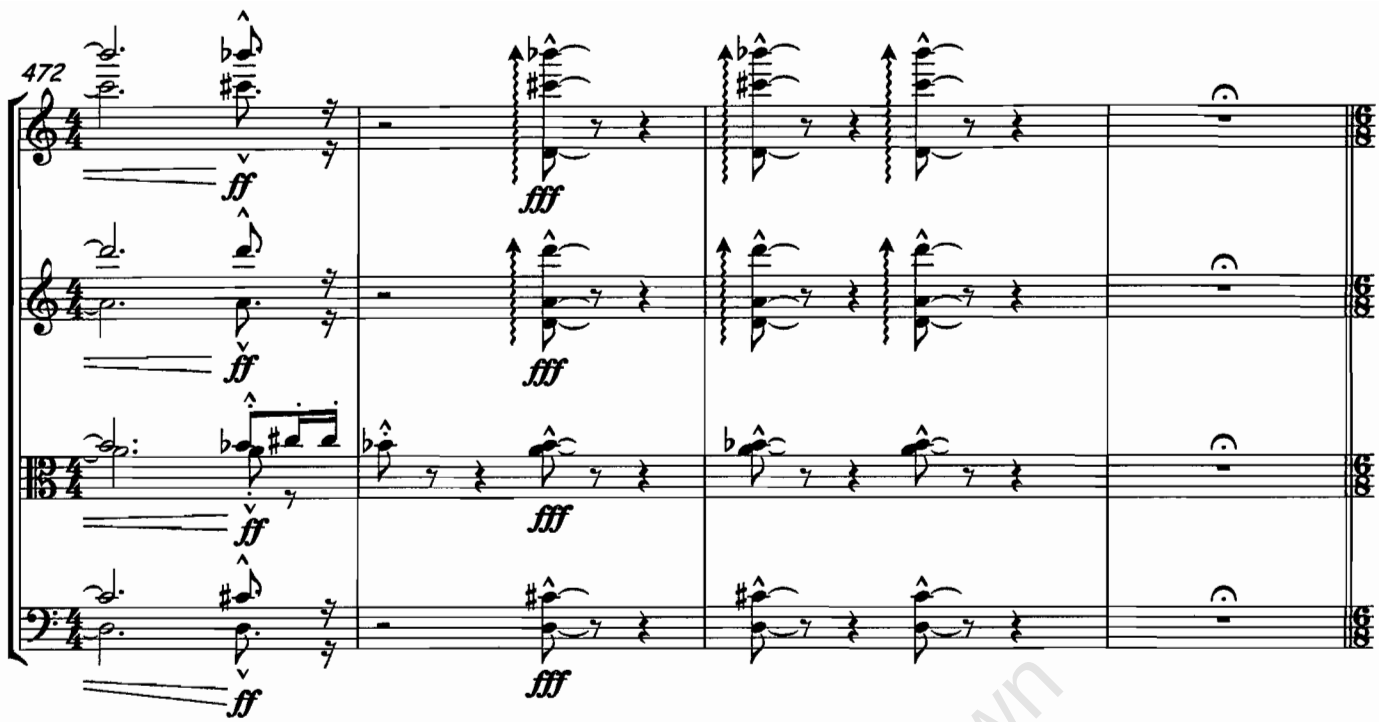

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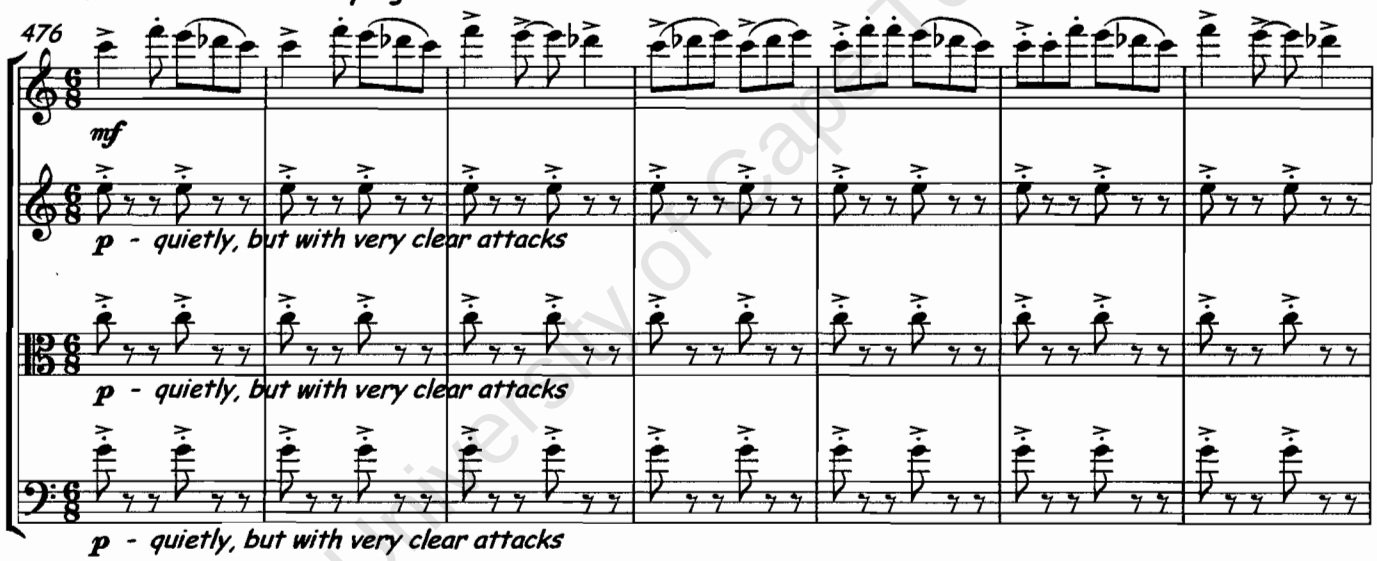

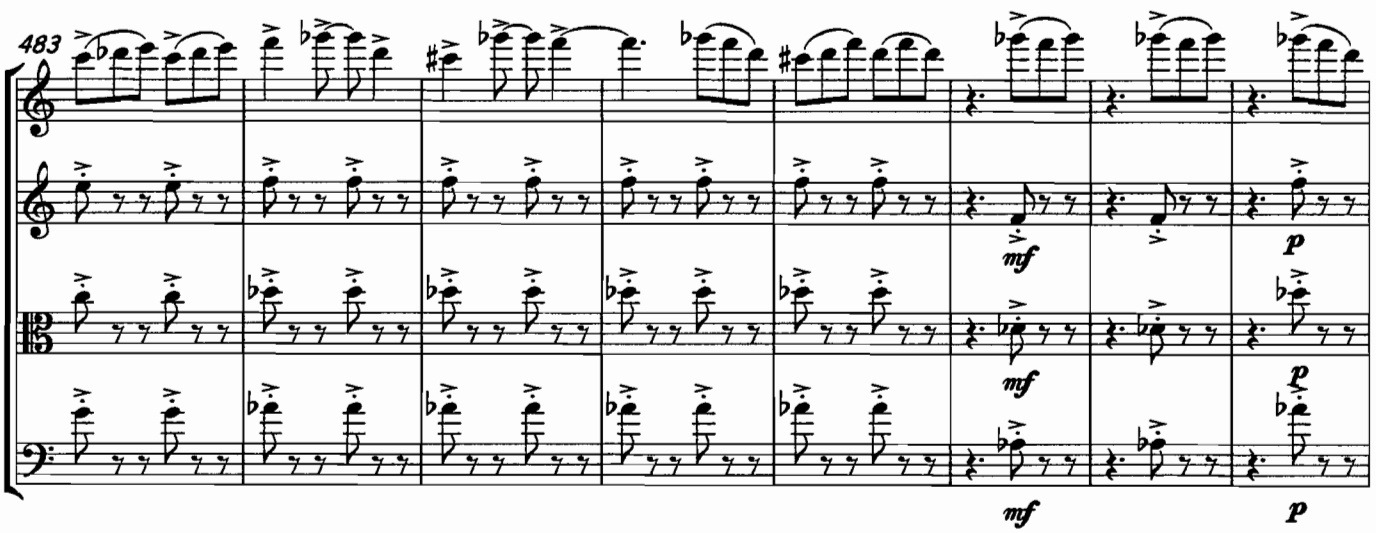

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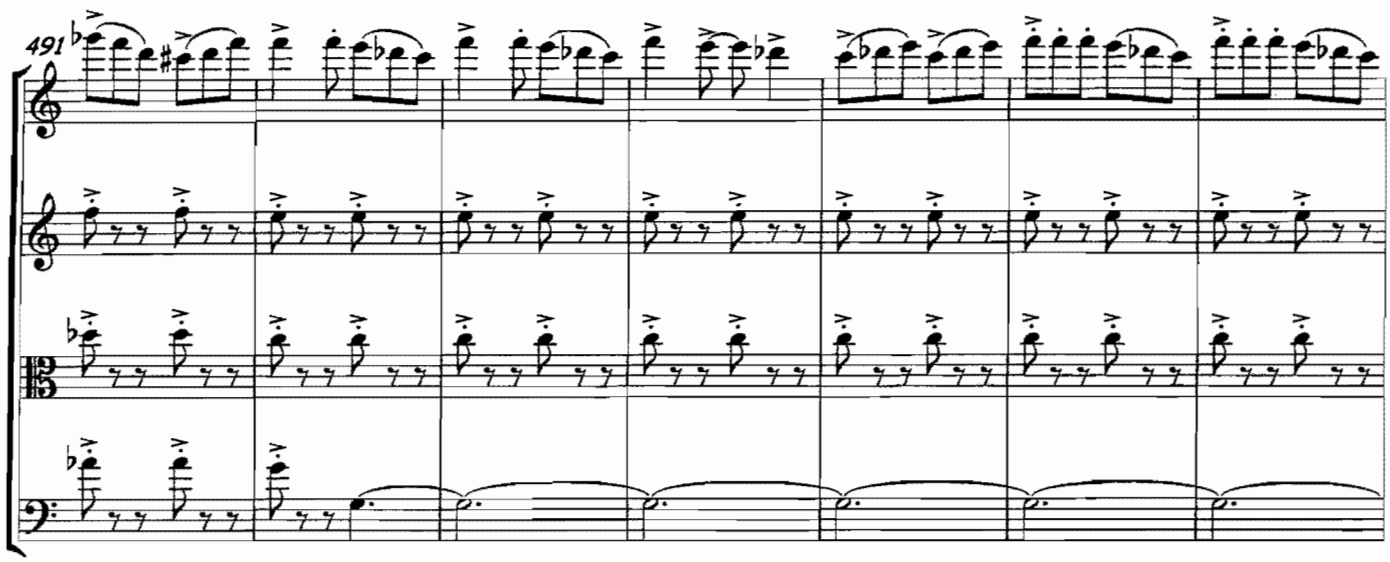

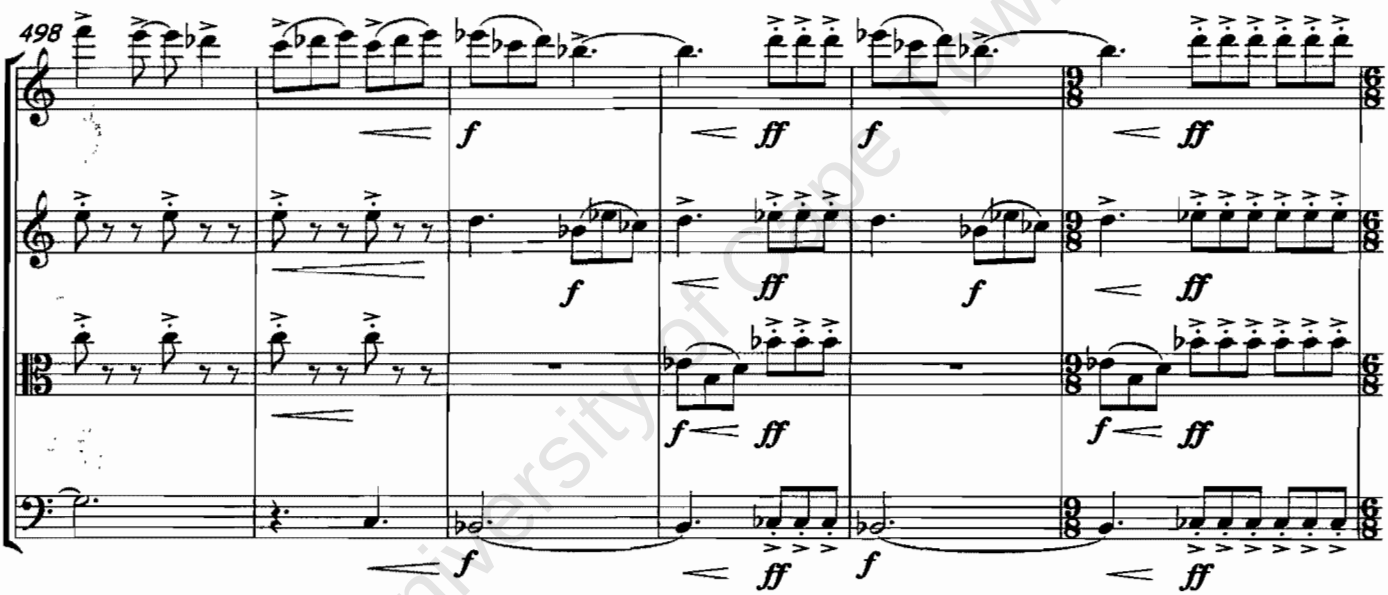

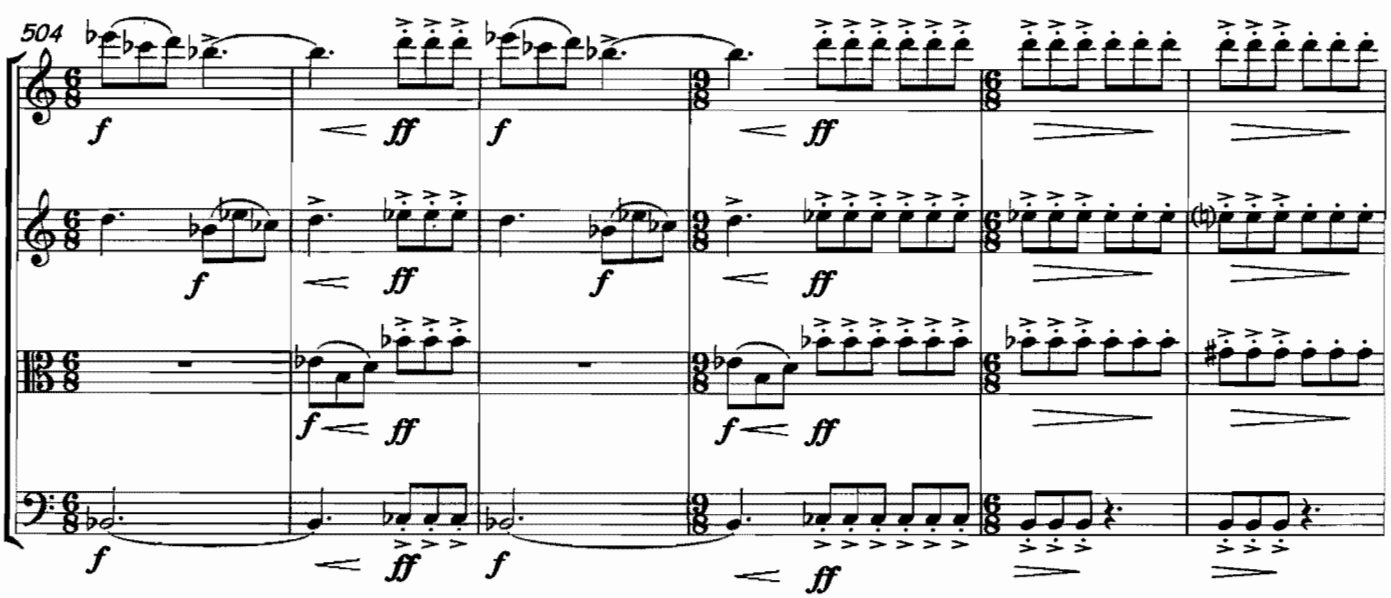

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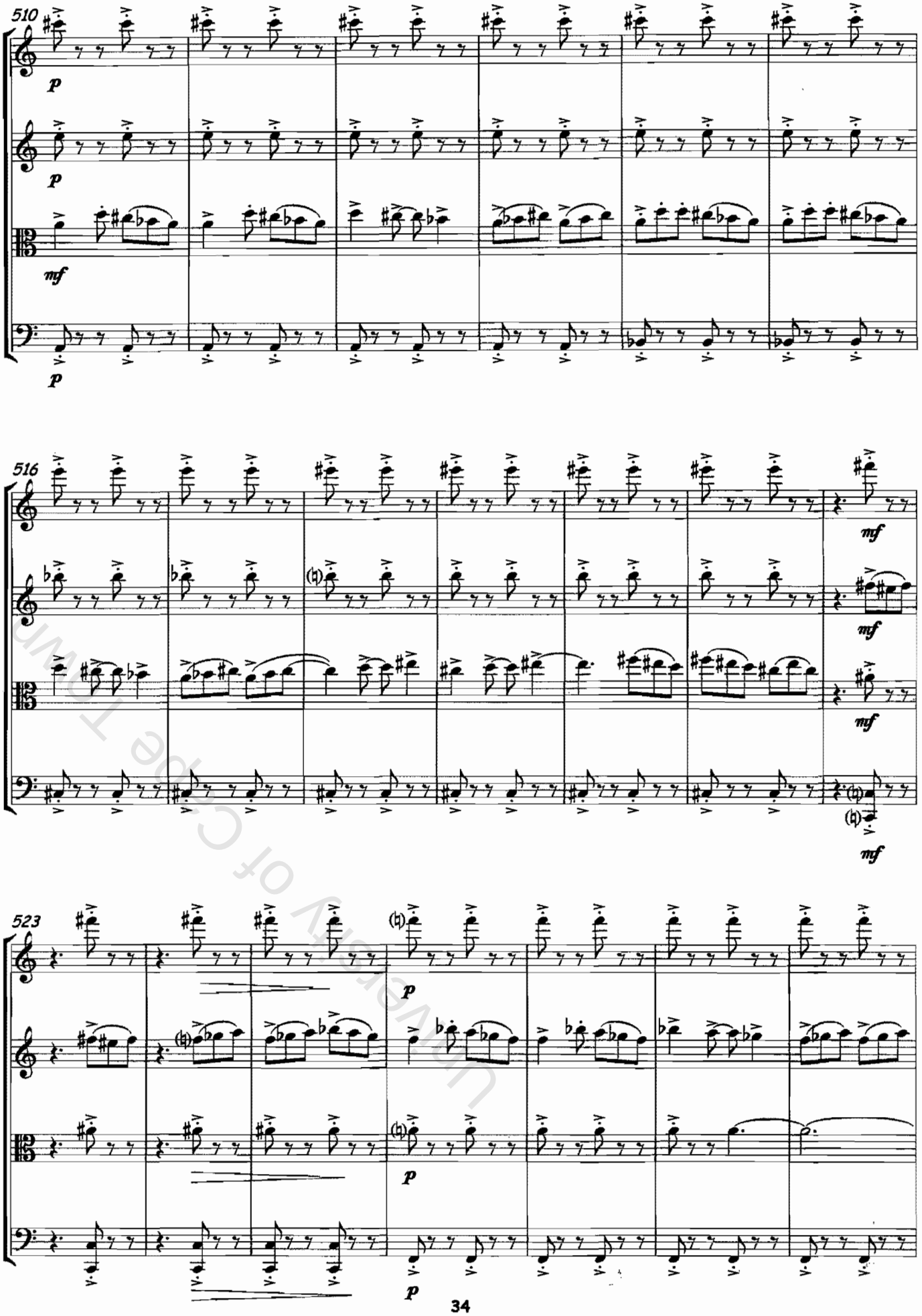

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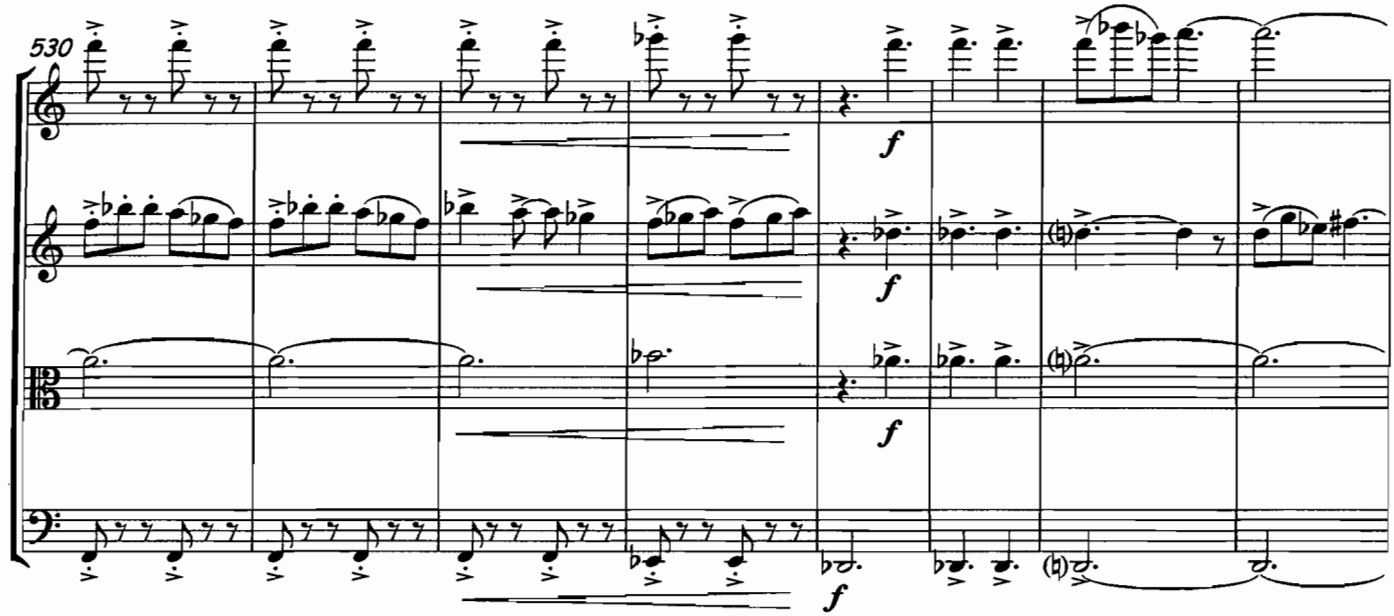

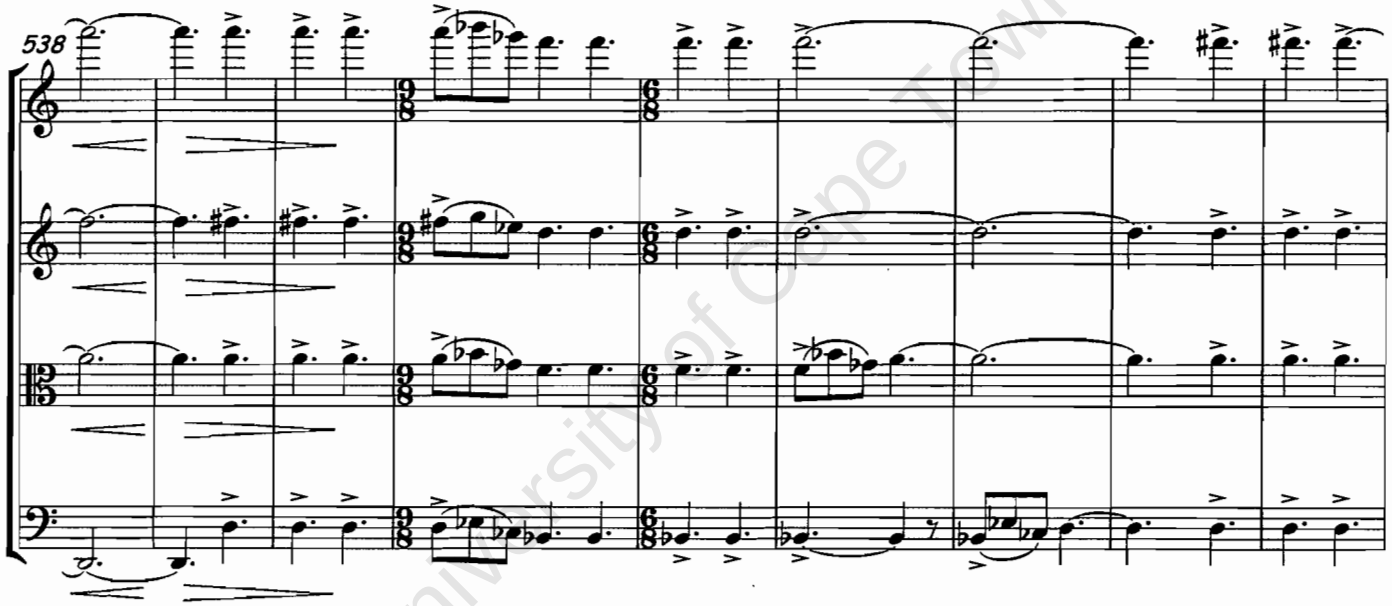

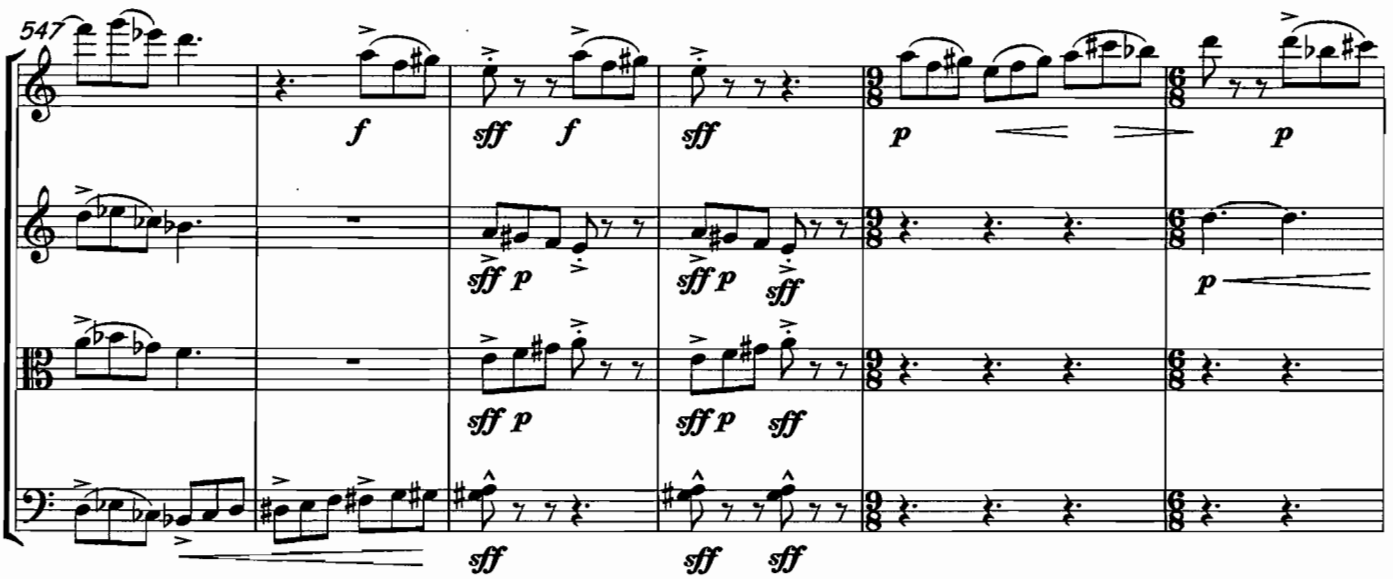

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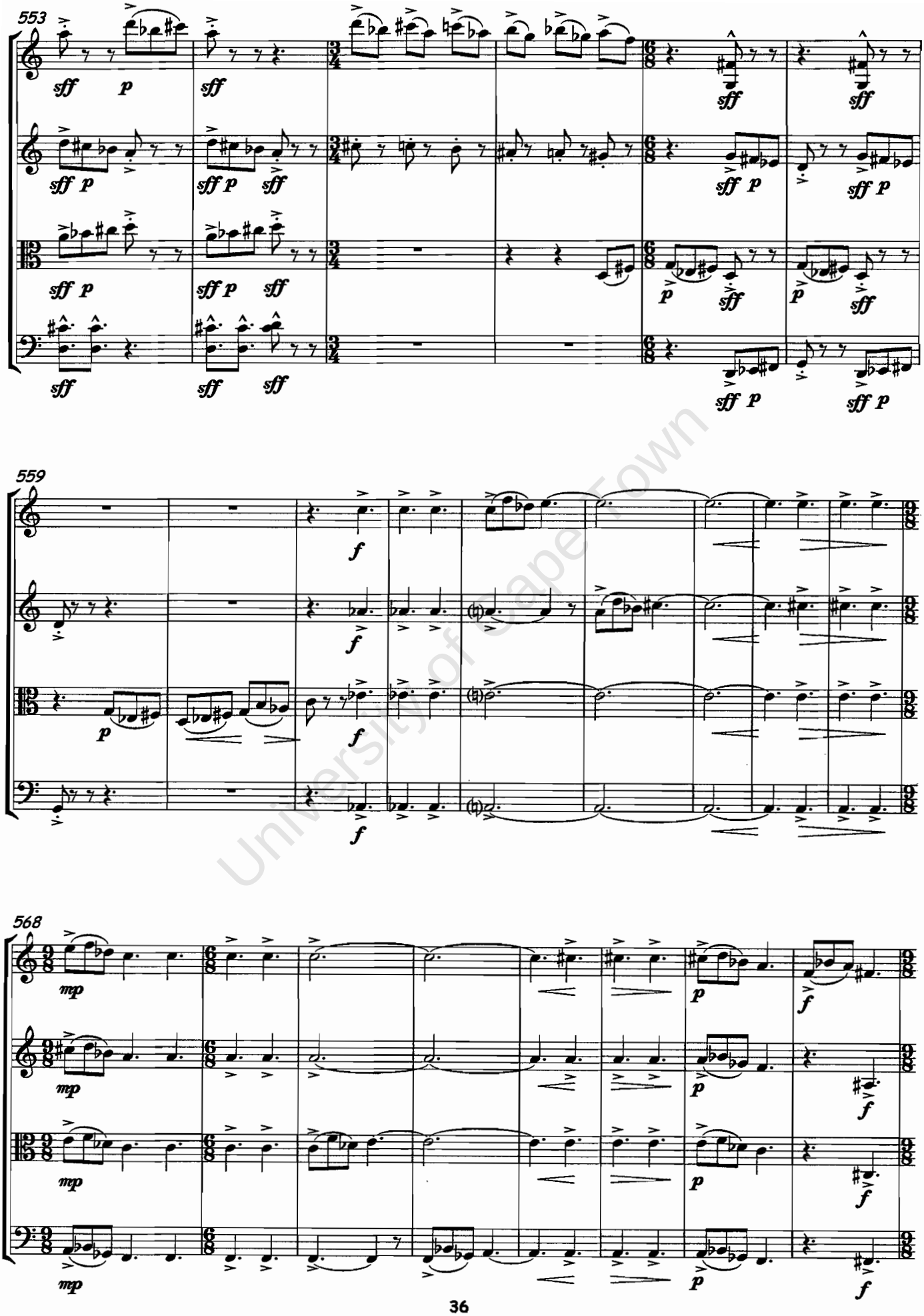

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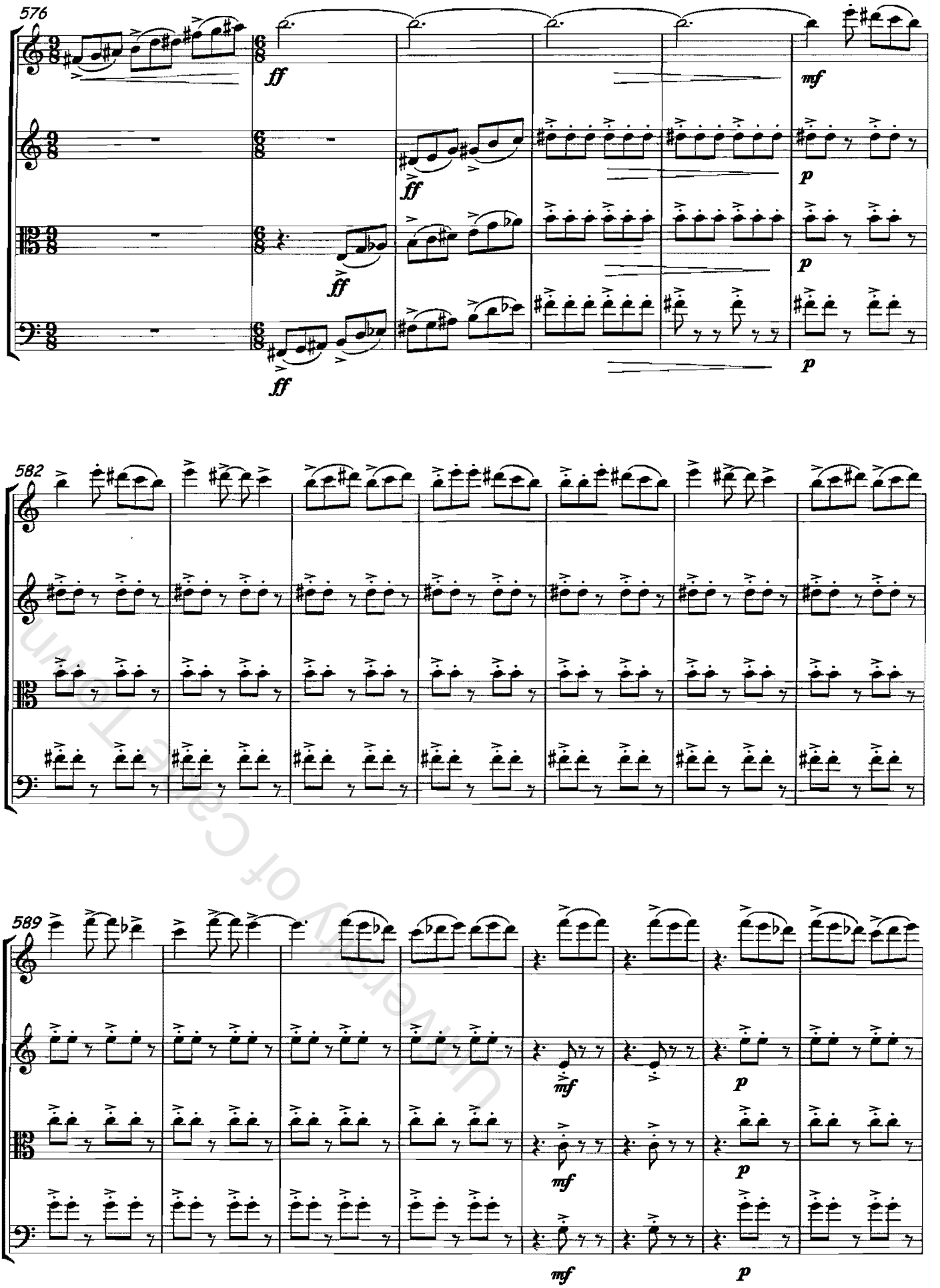

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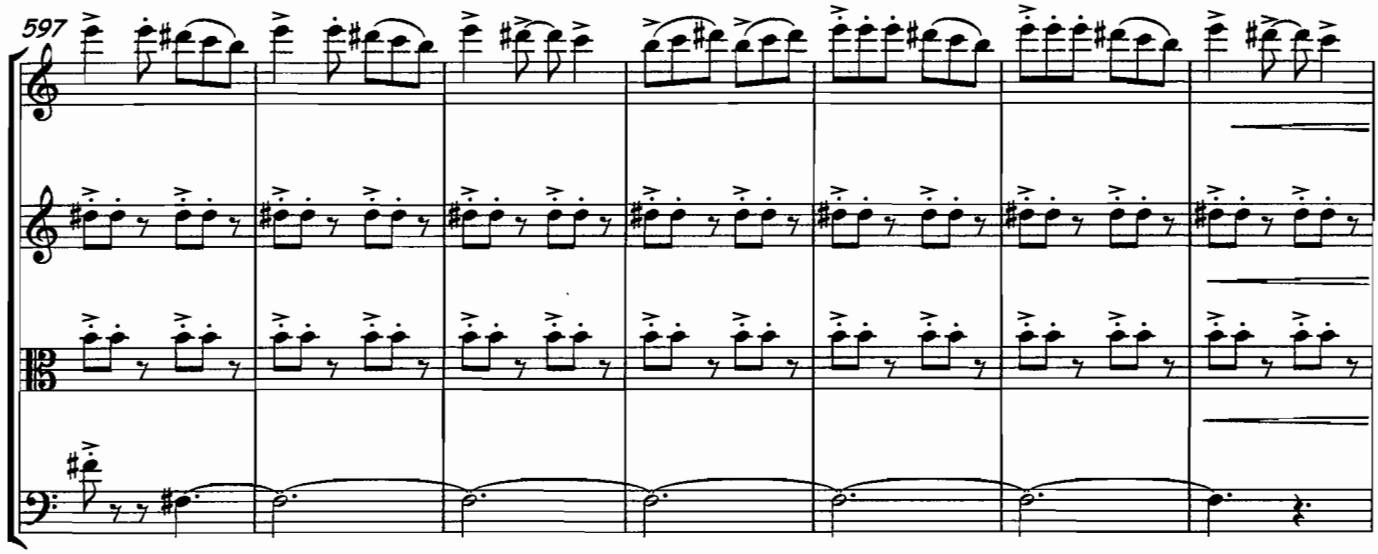

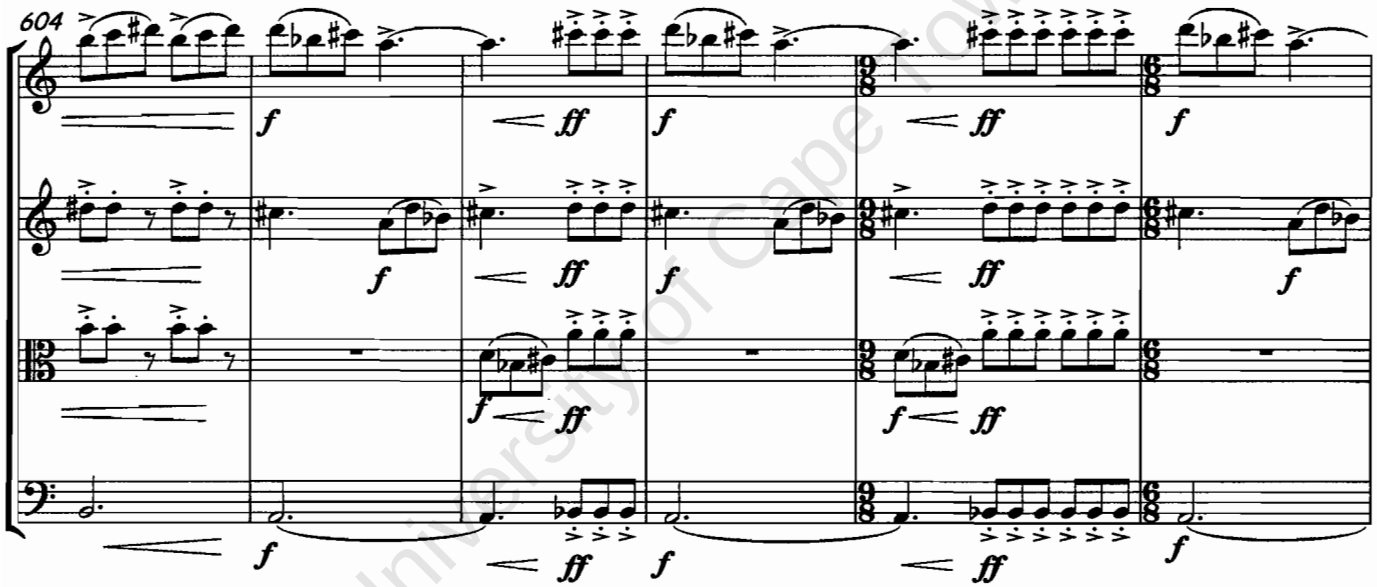

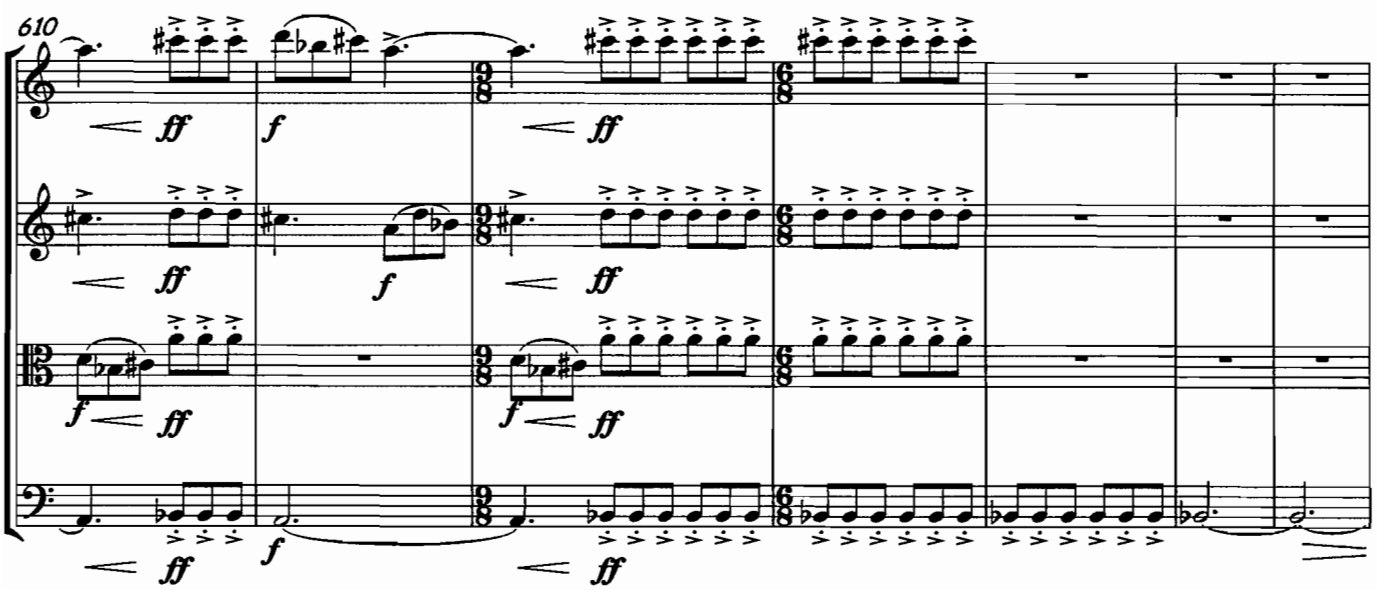

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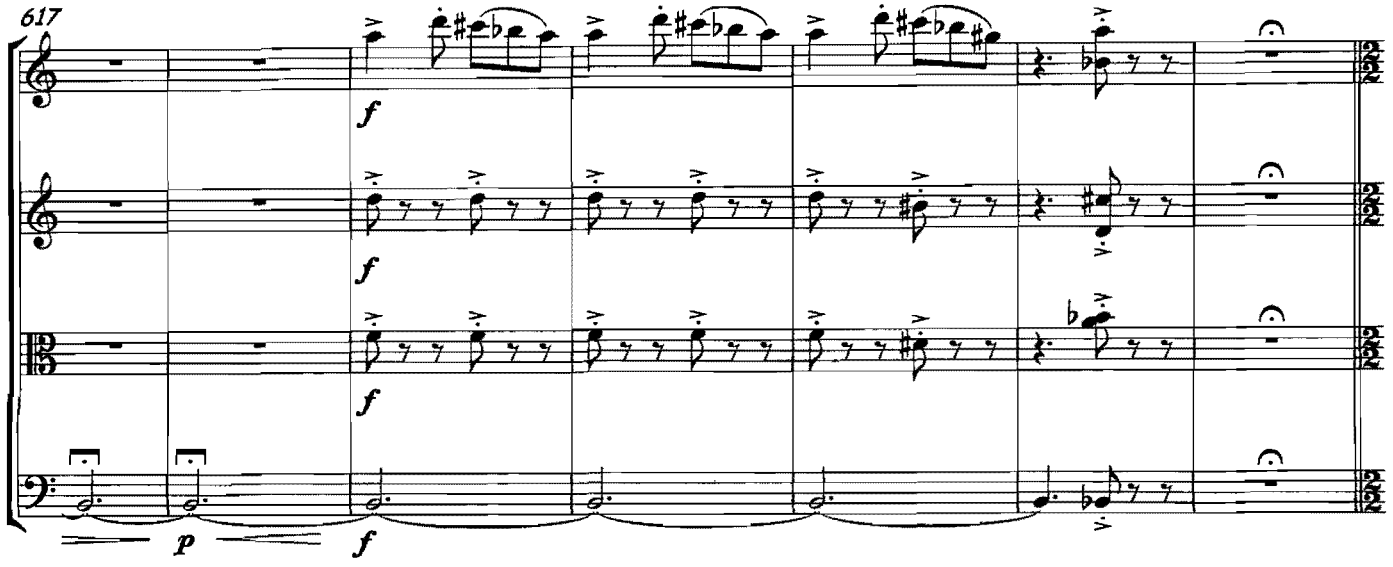

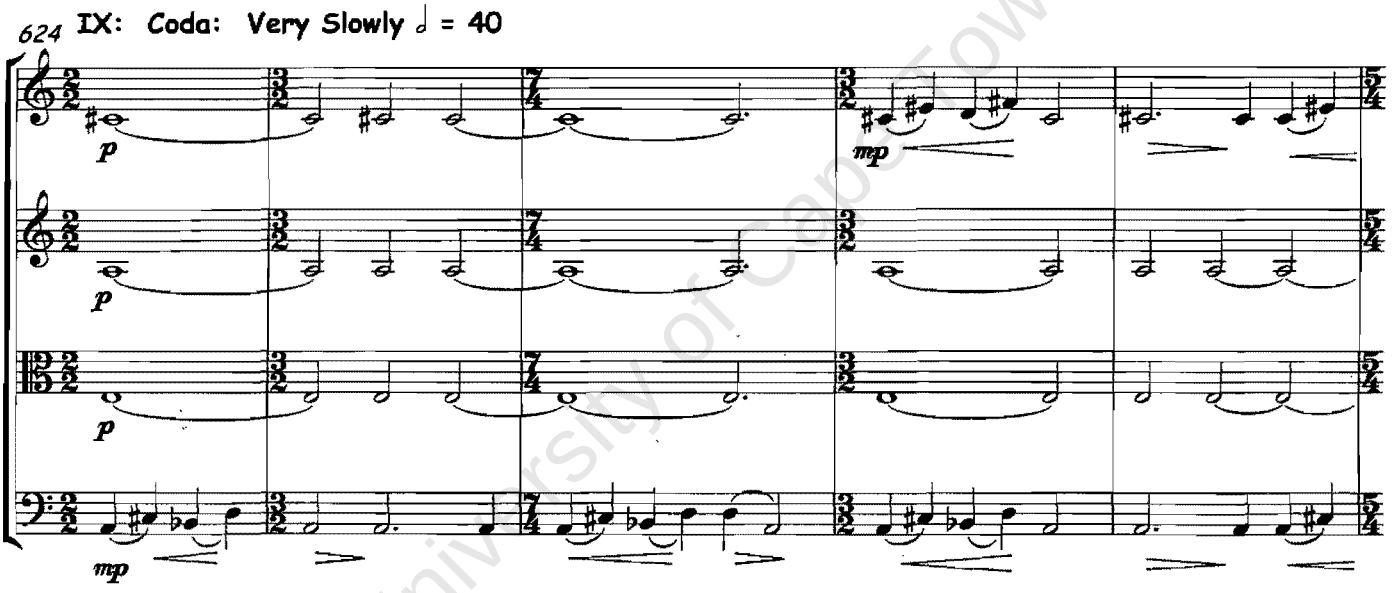

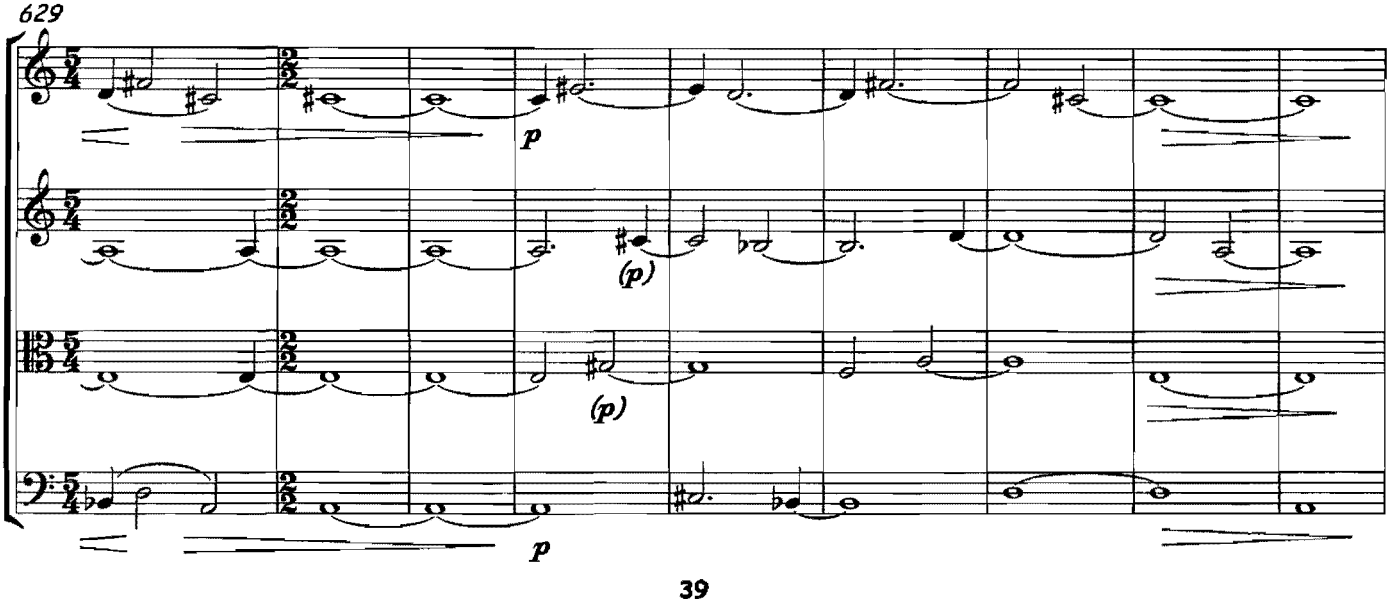

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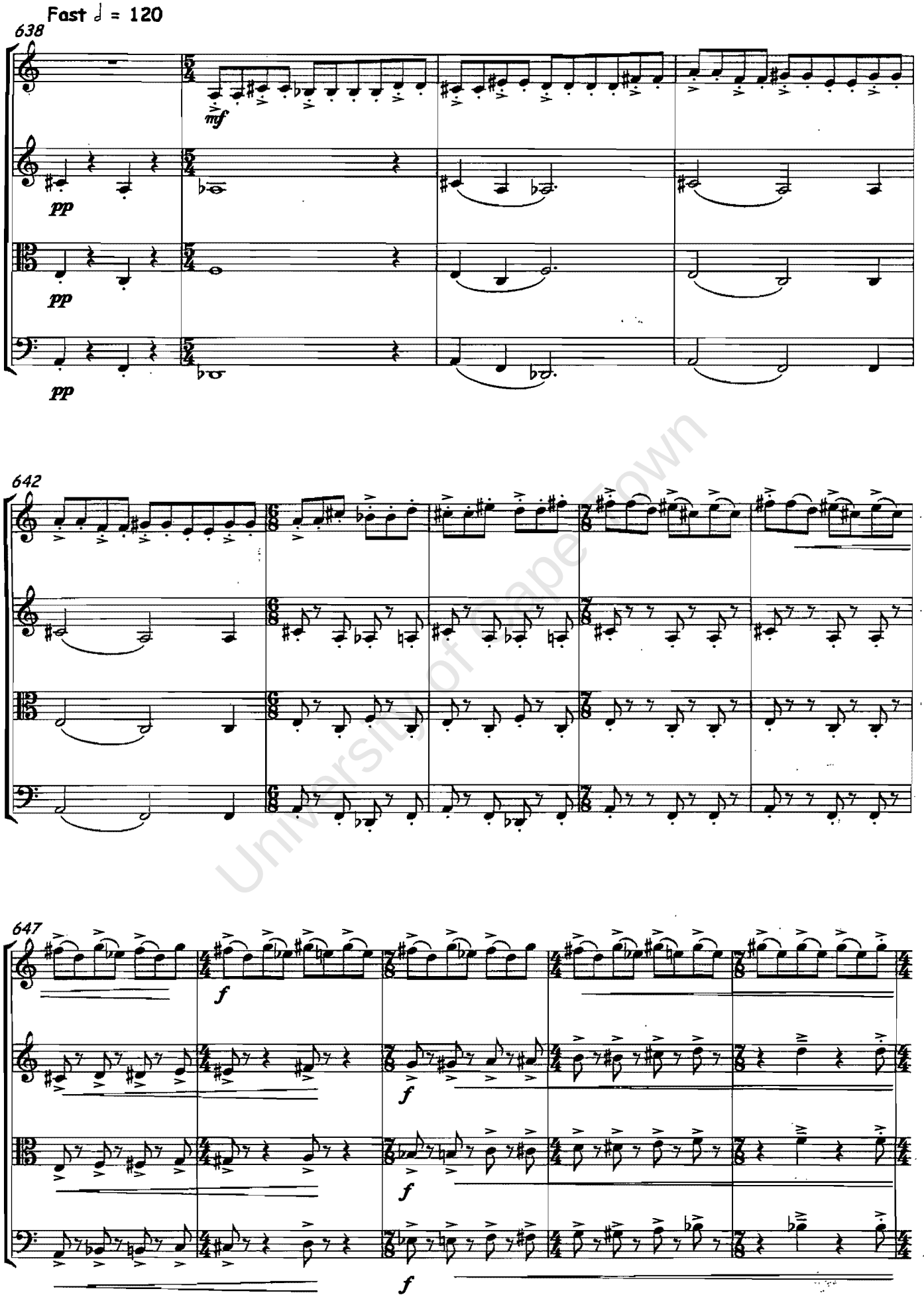

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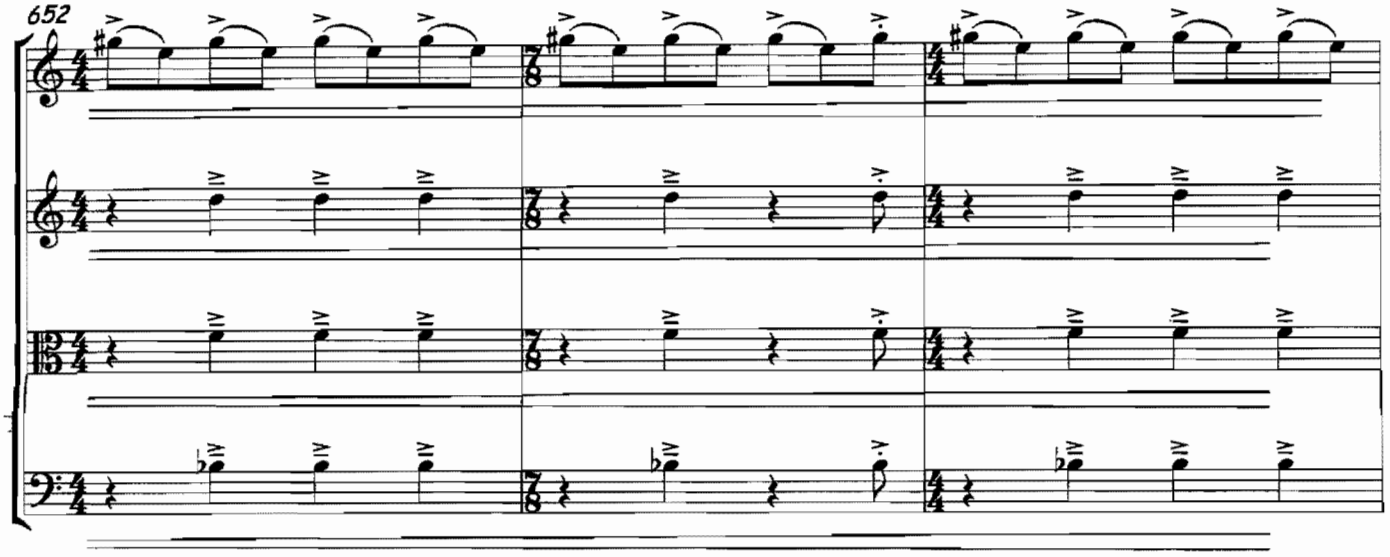

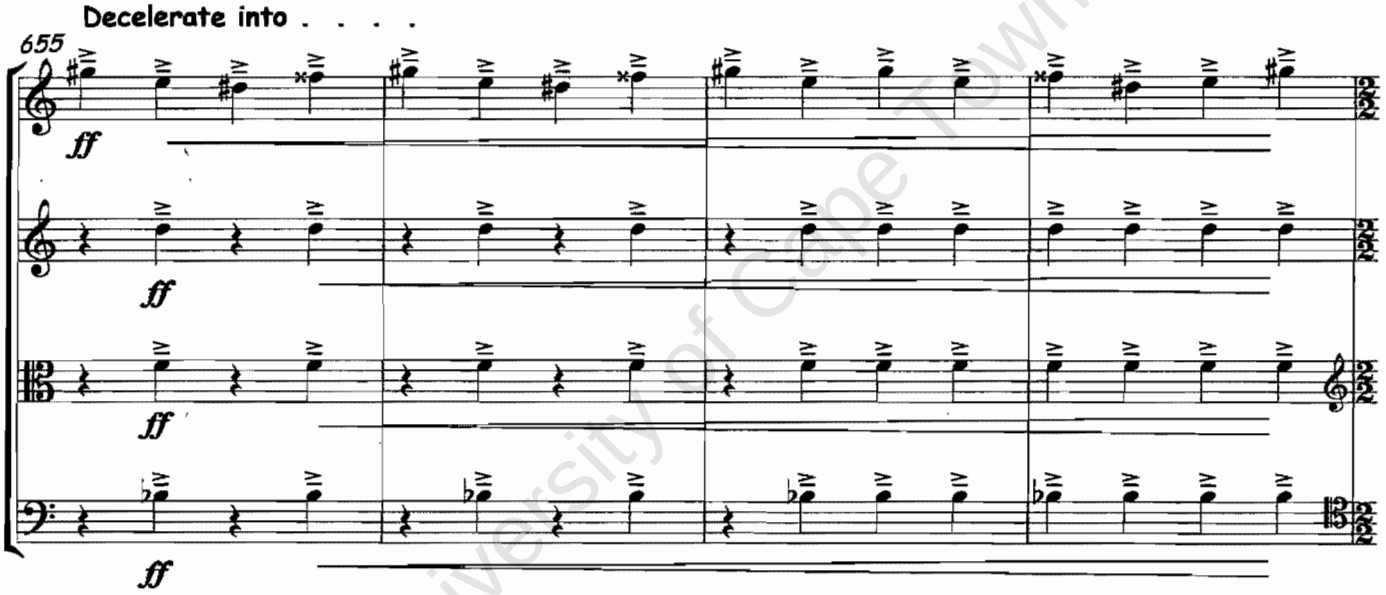

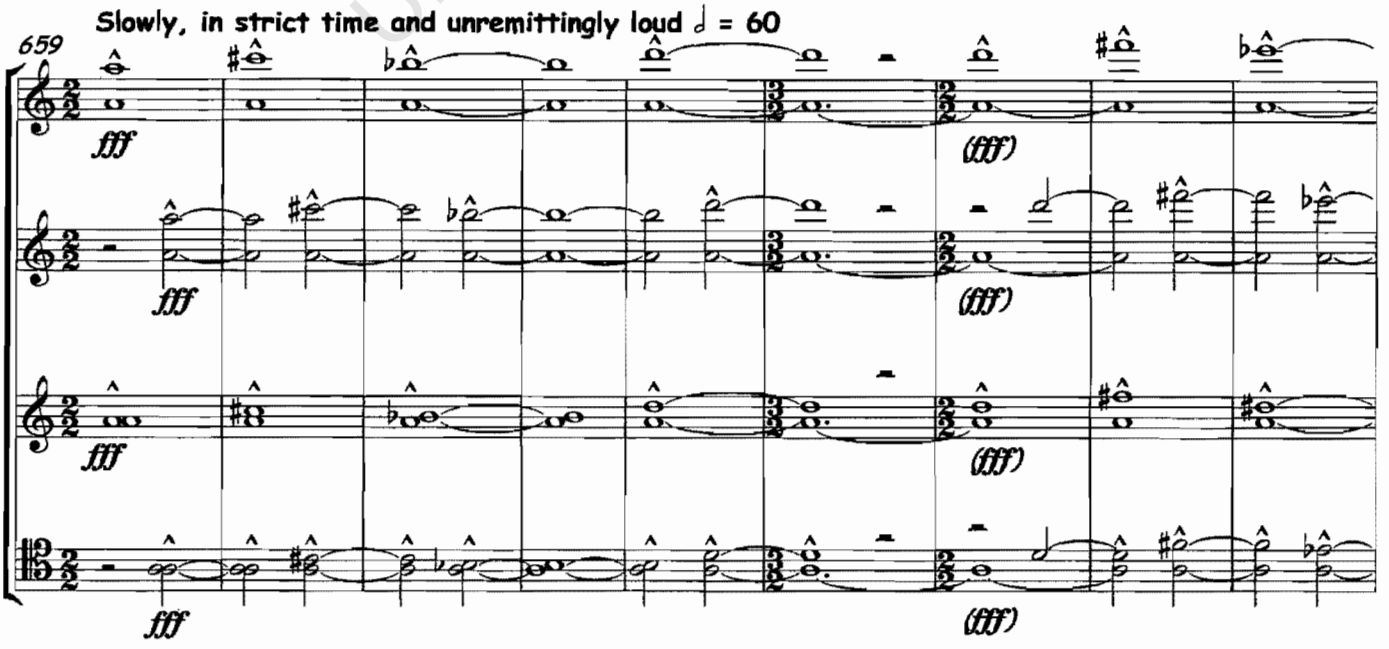

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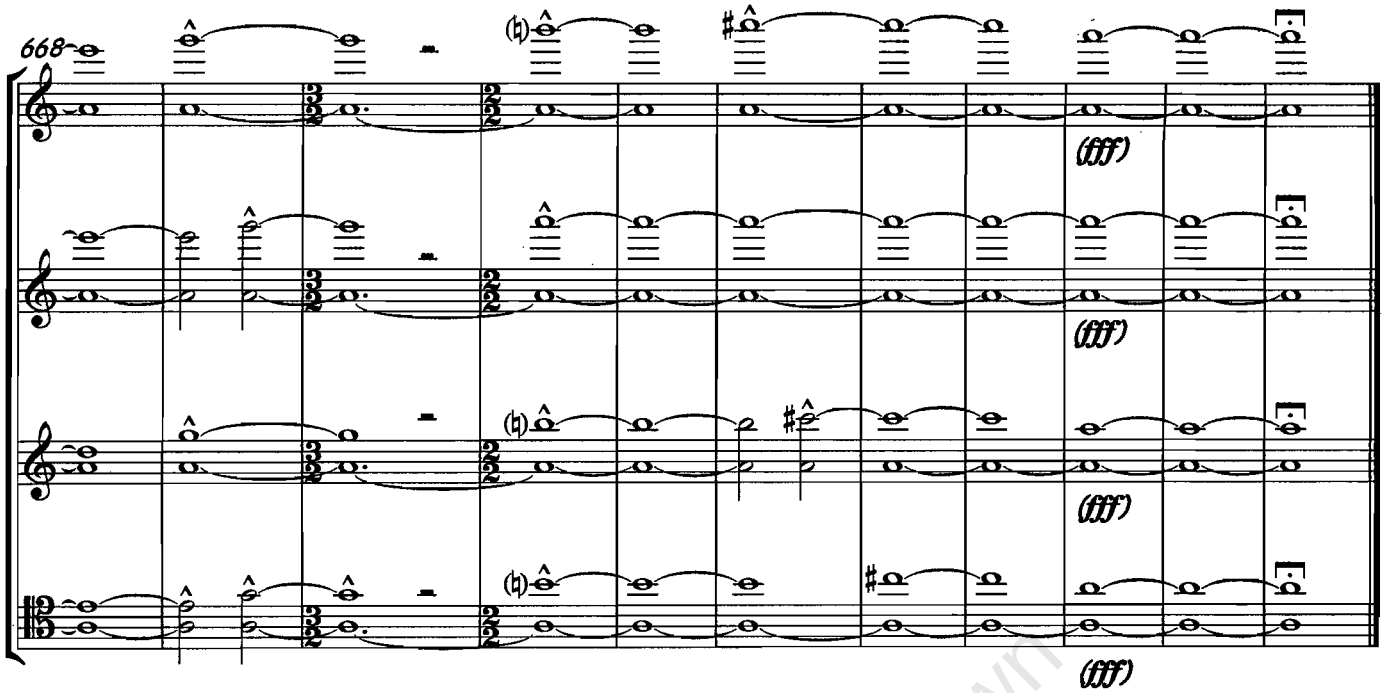

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The Hairy Goblin Freak

for Piano Solo

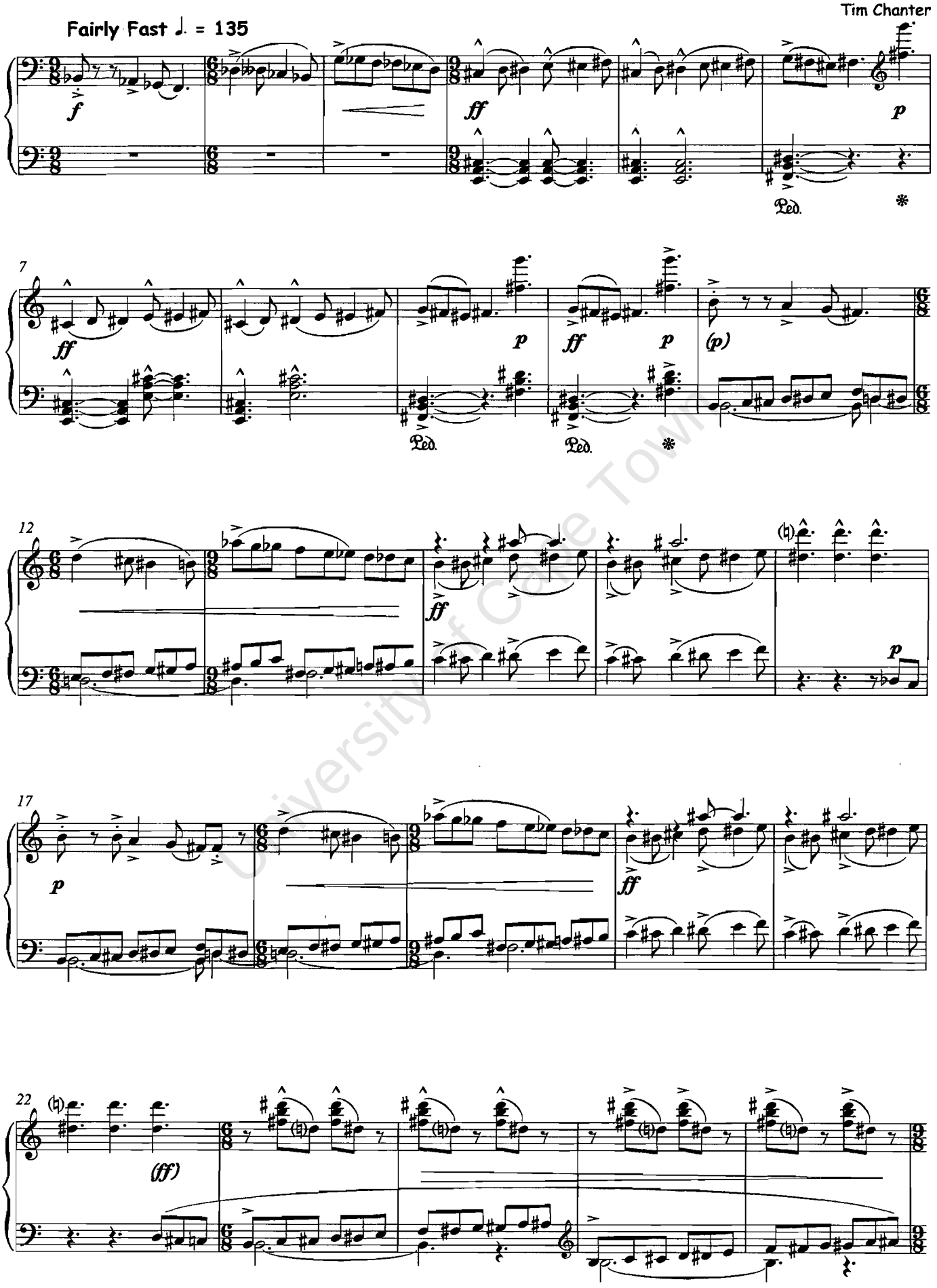
University of Cape Town

by Tim Chanter

Duration: 8 minutes

The Hairy Goblin Freak

Tim Chanter



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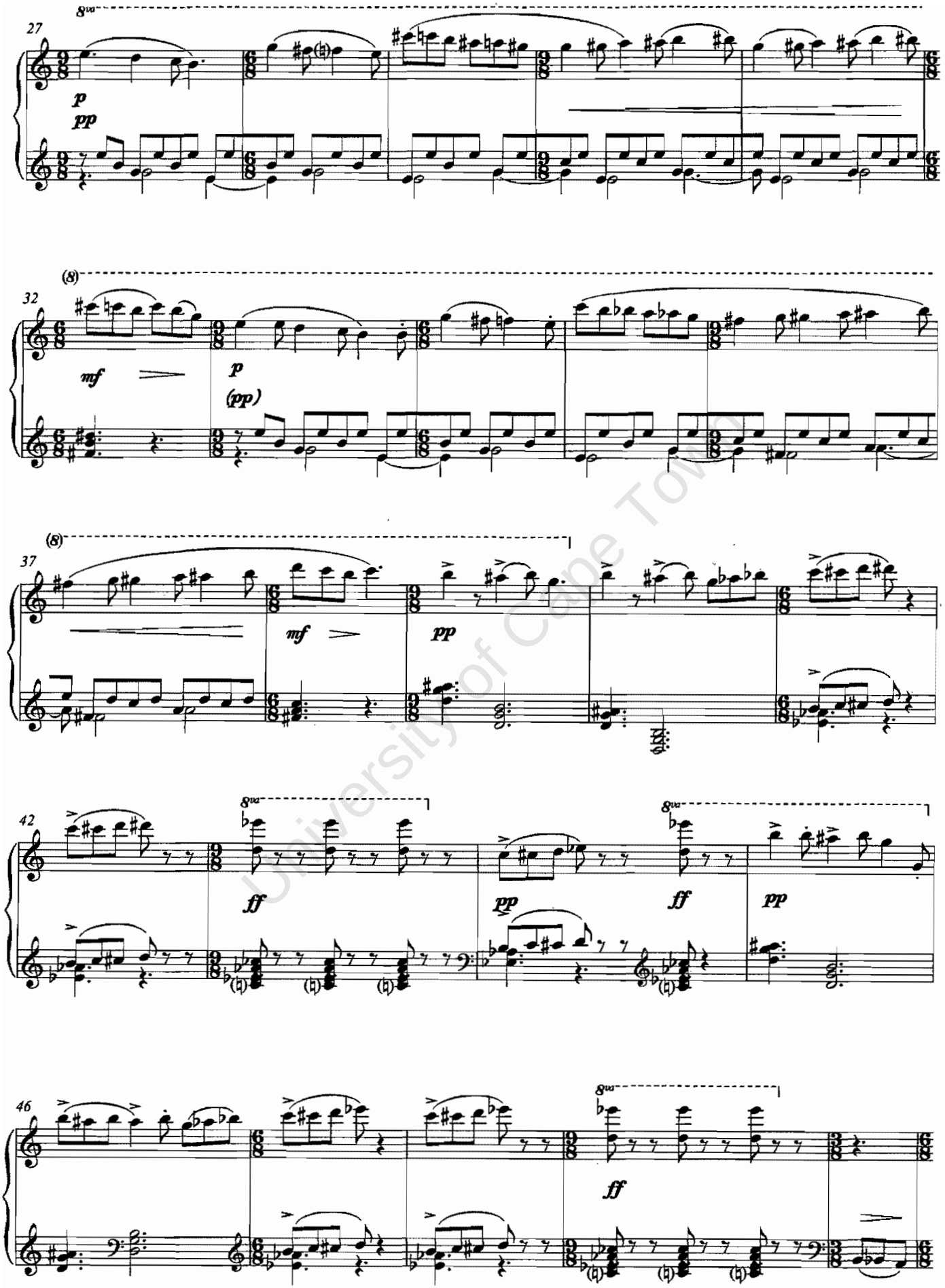

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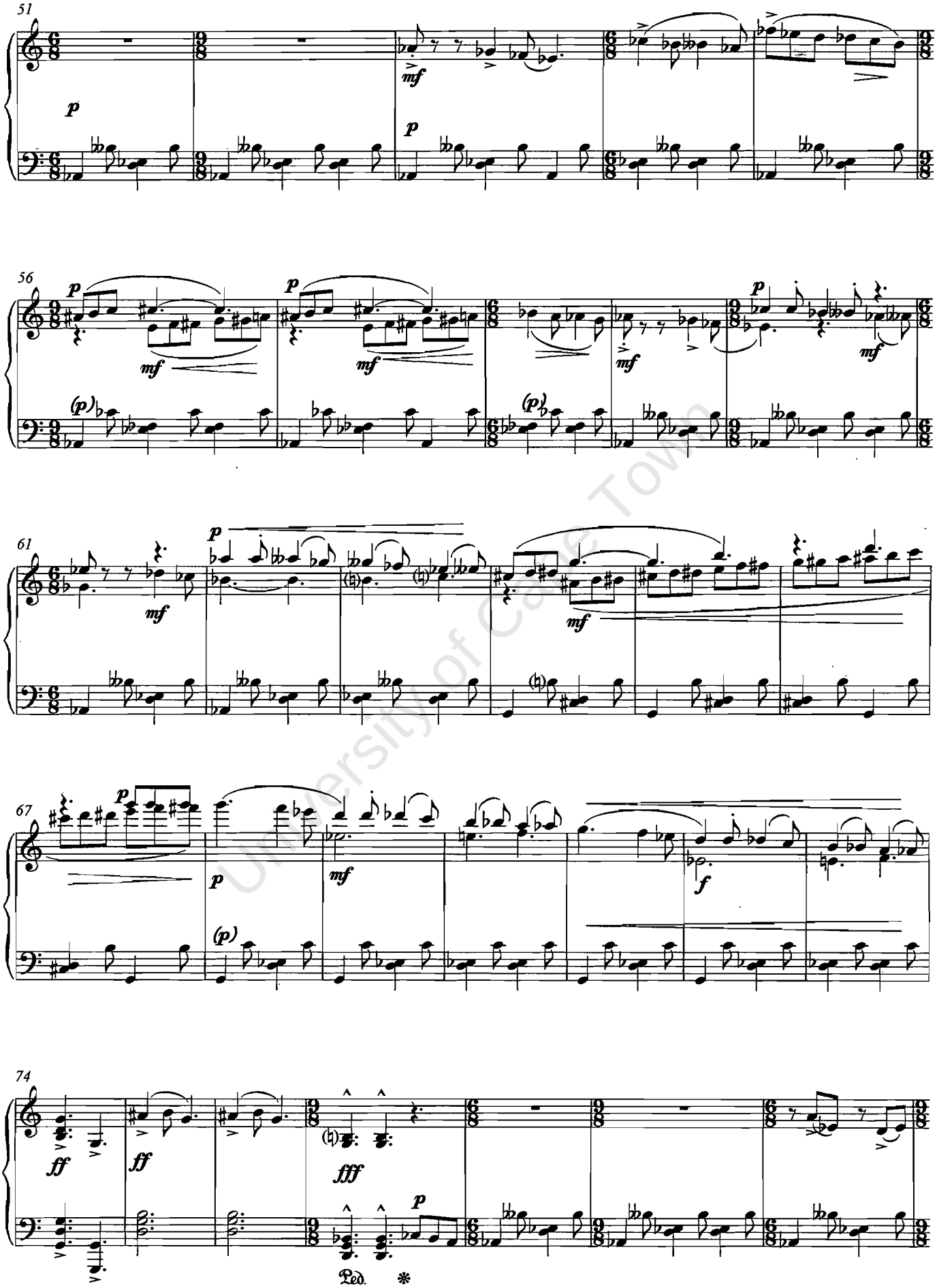

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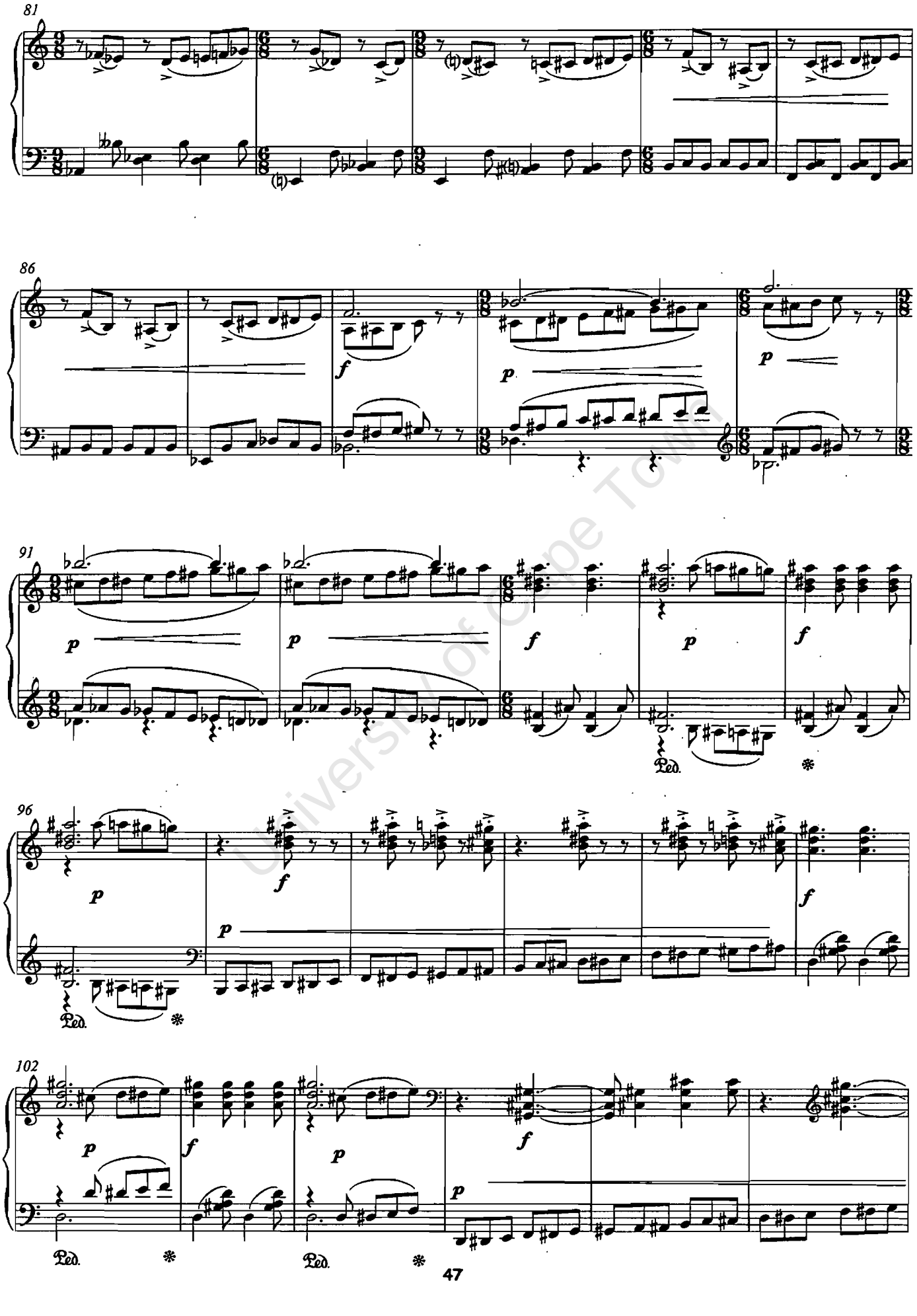

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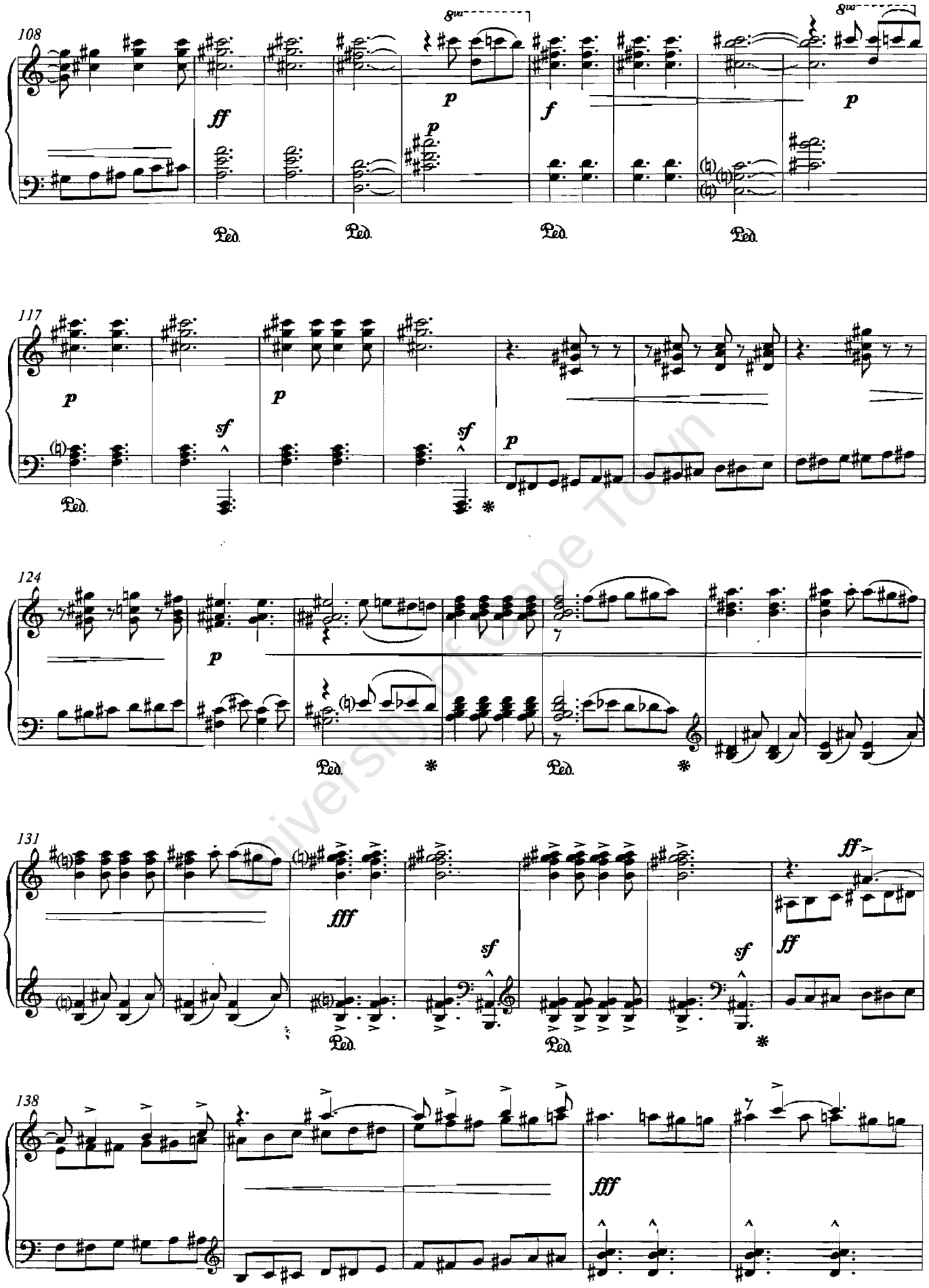

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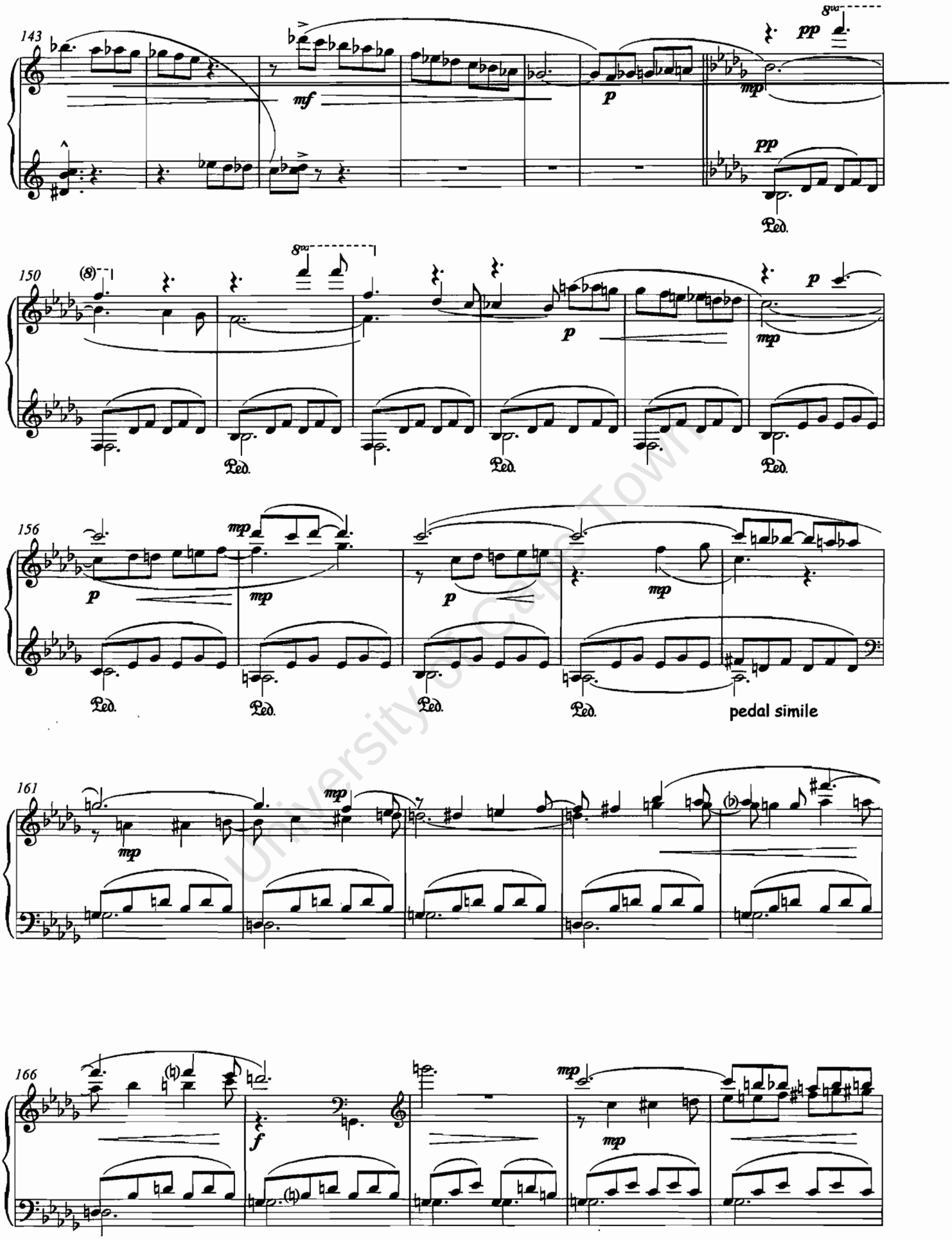

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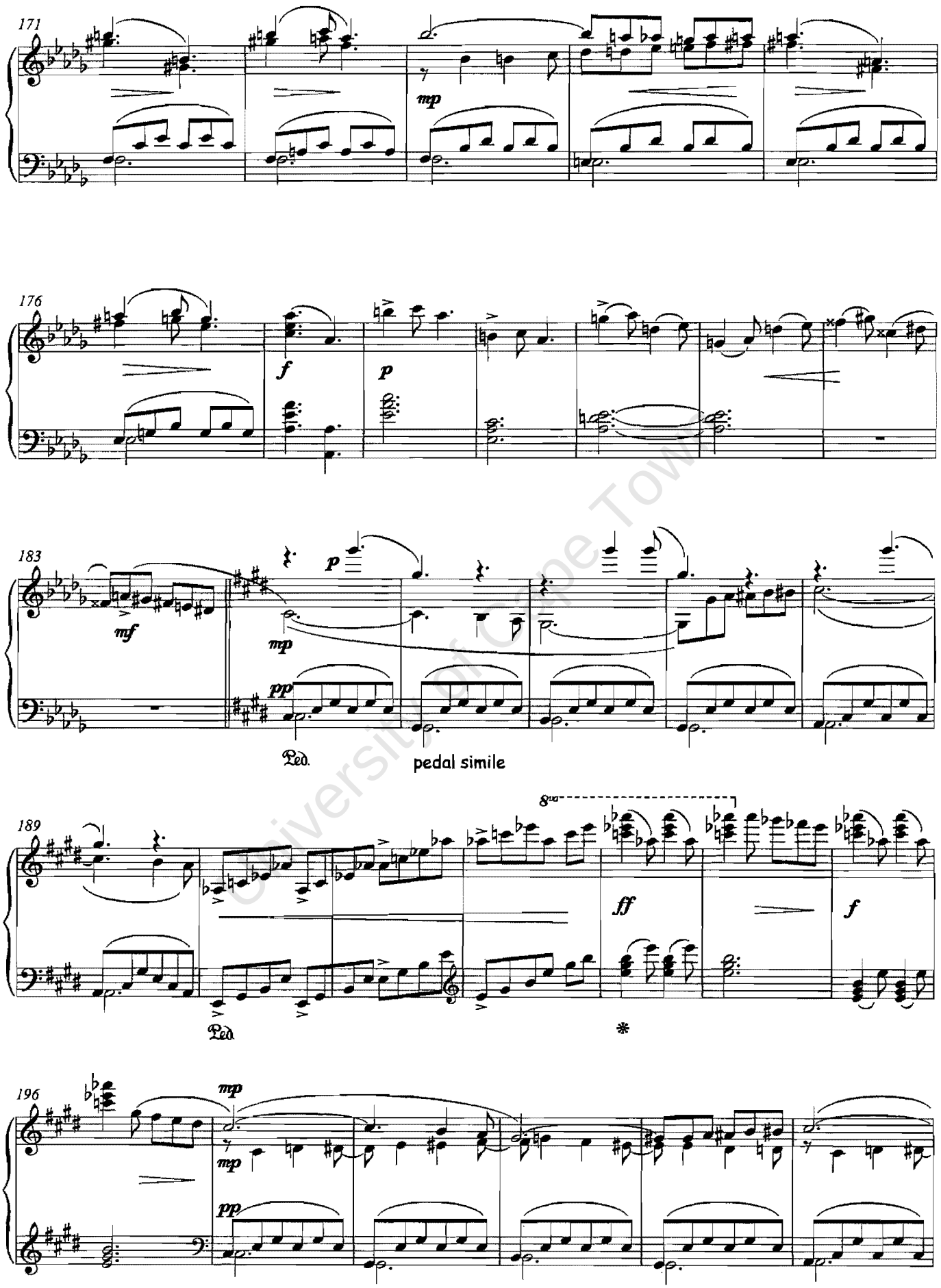

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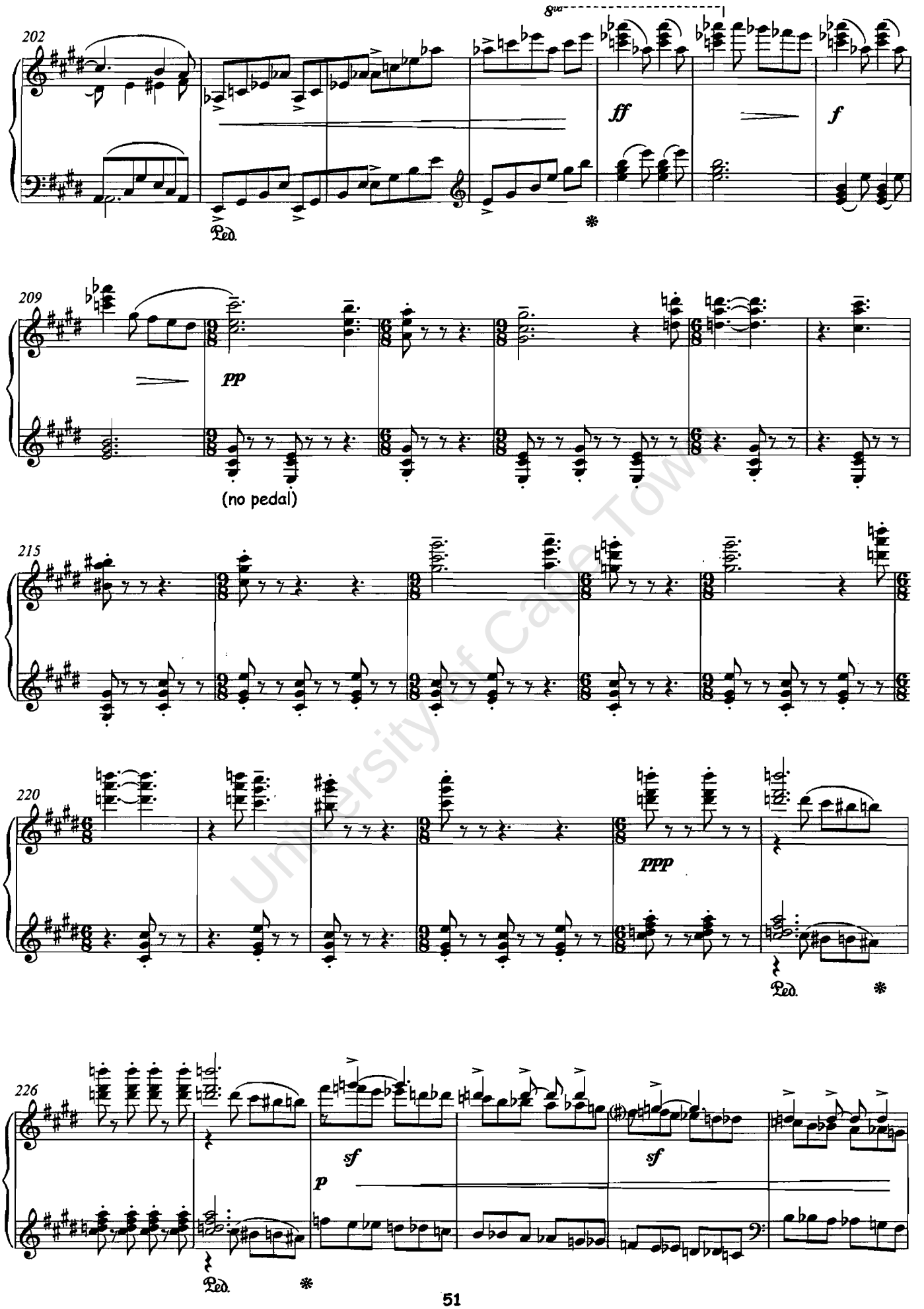

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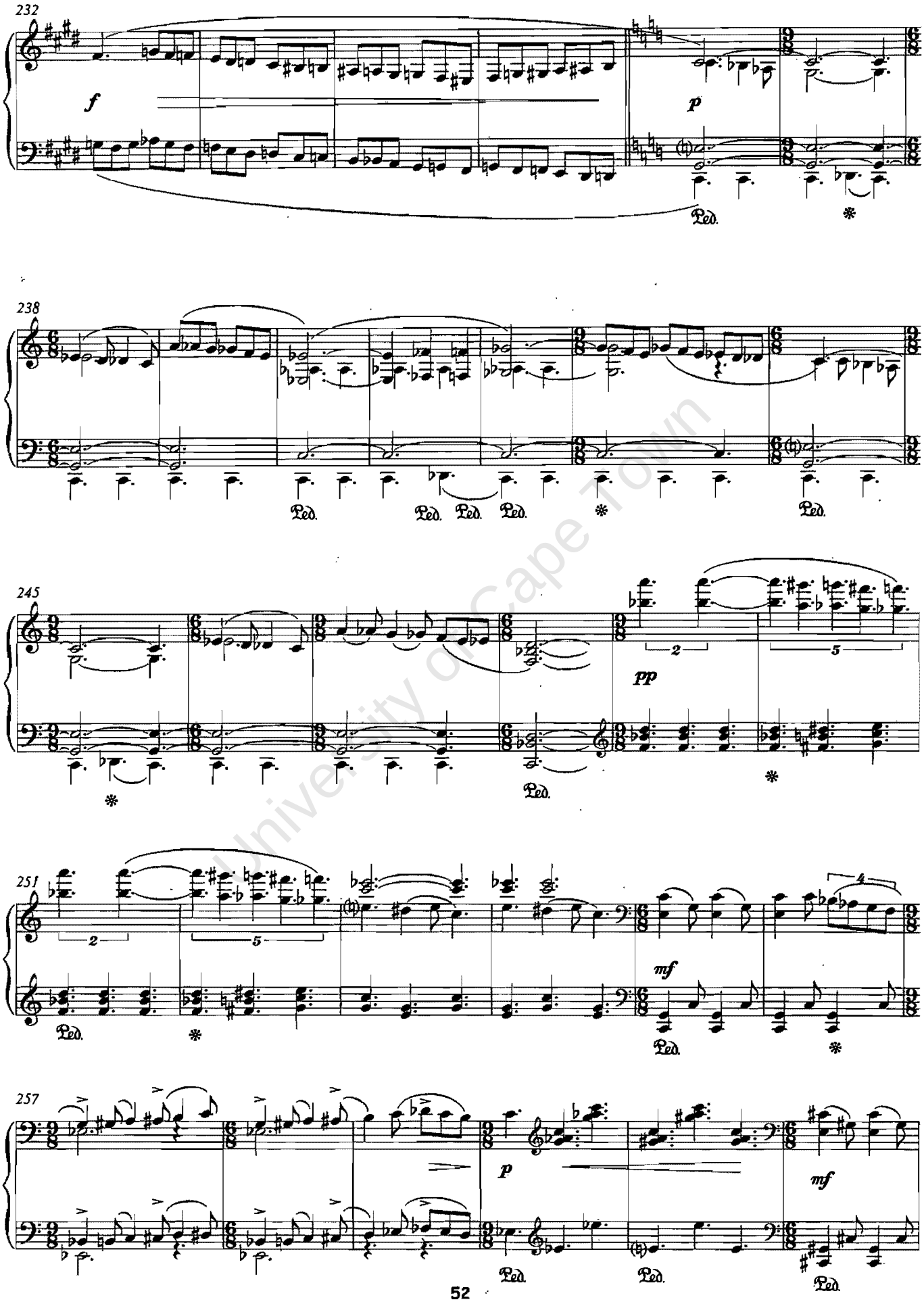

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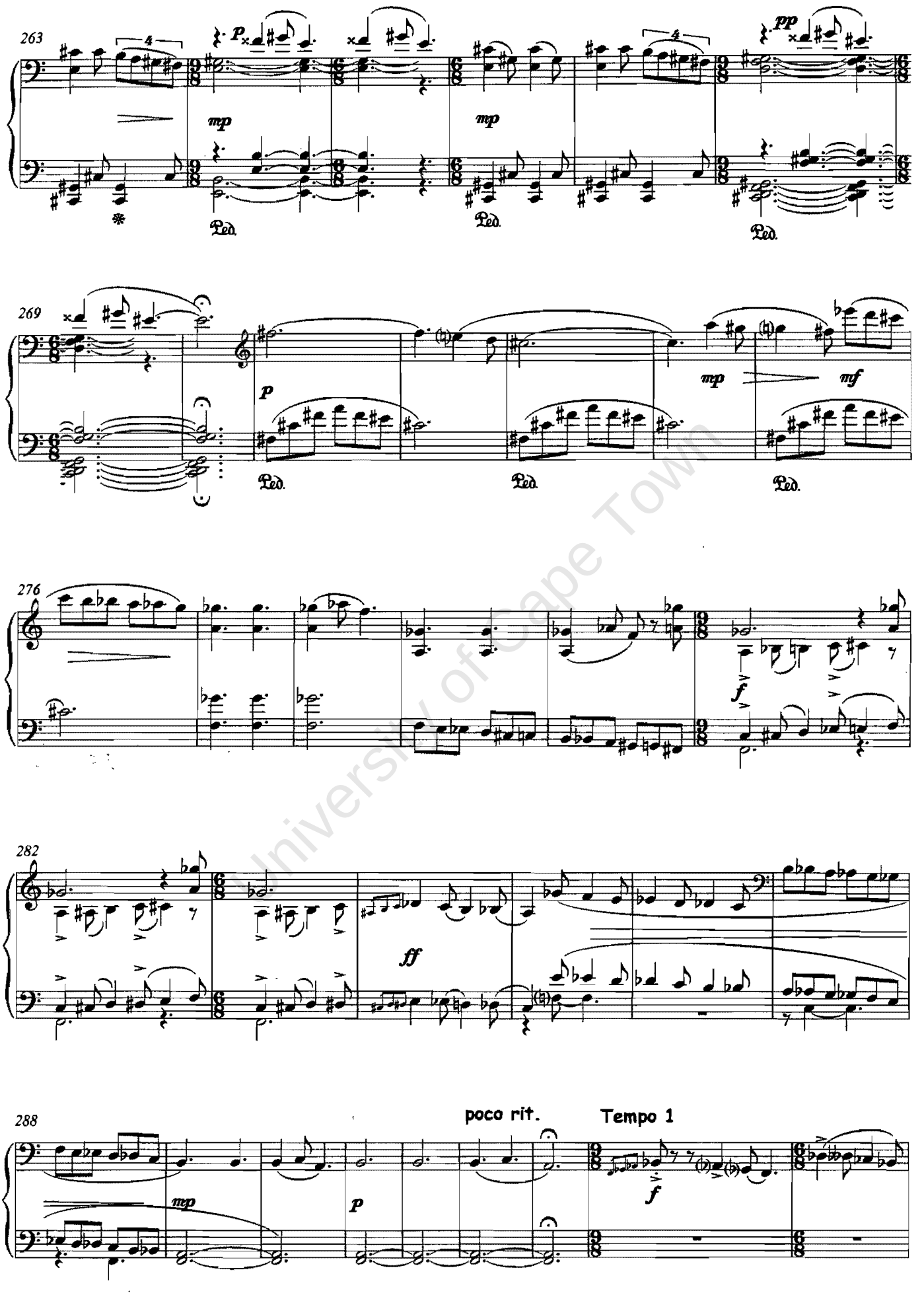

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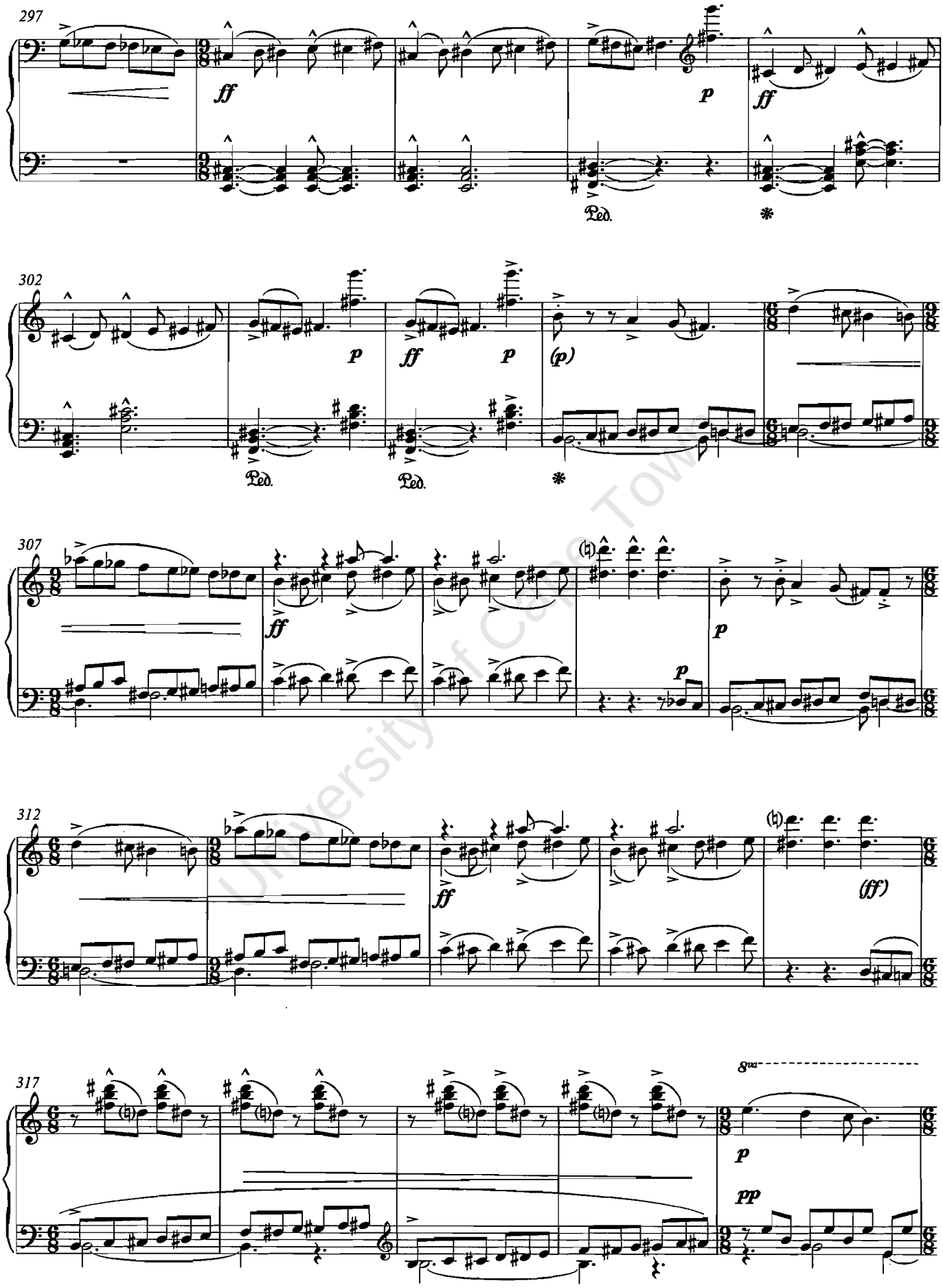

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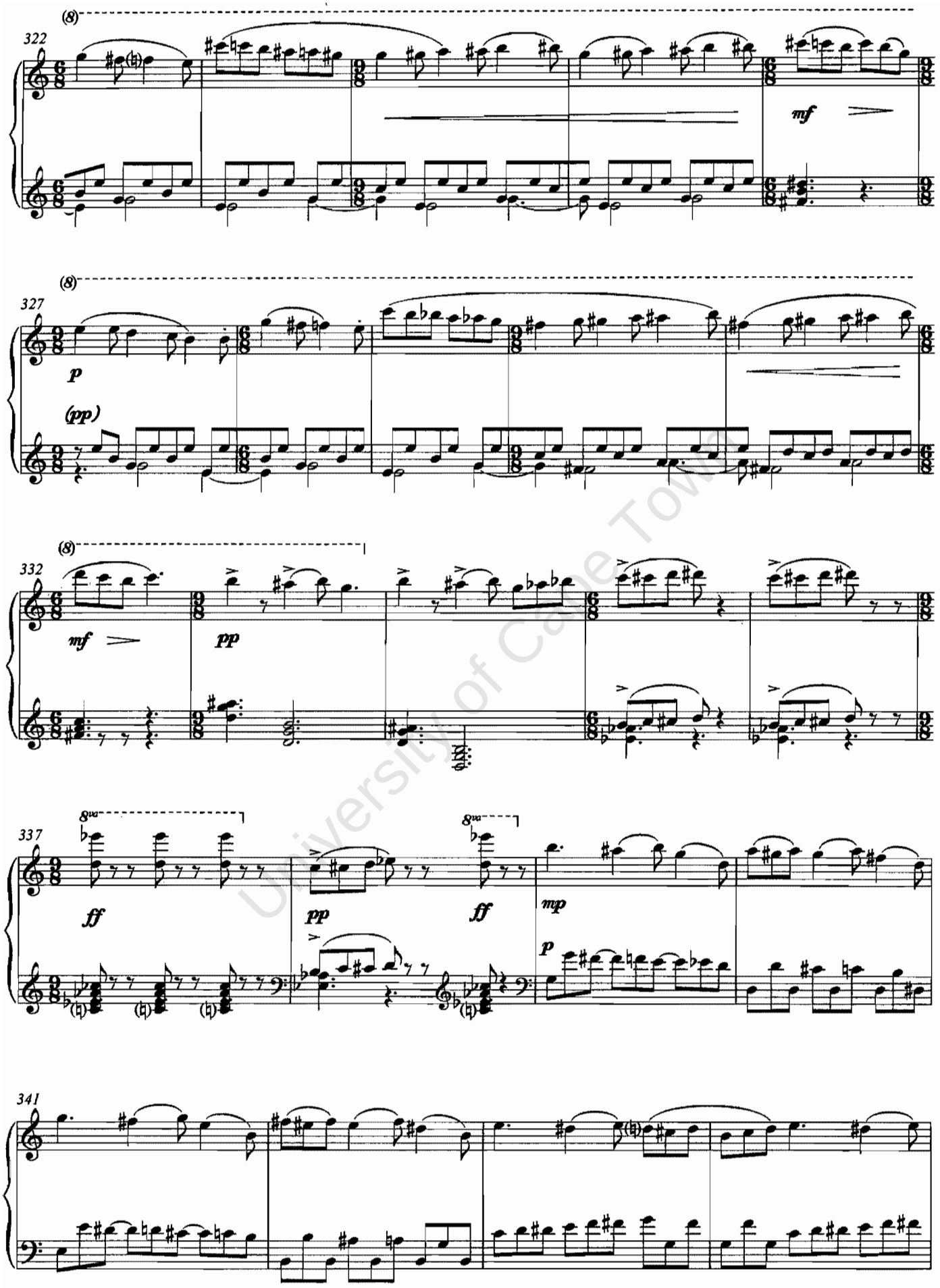

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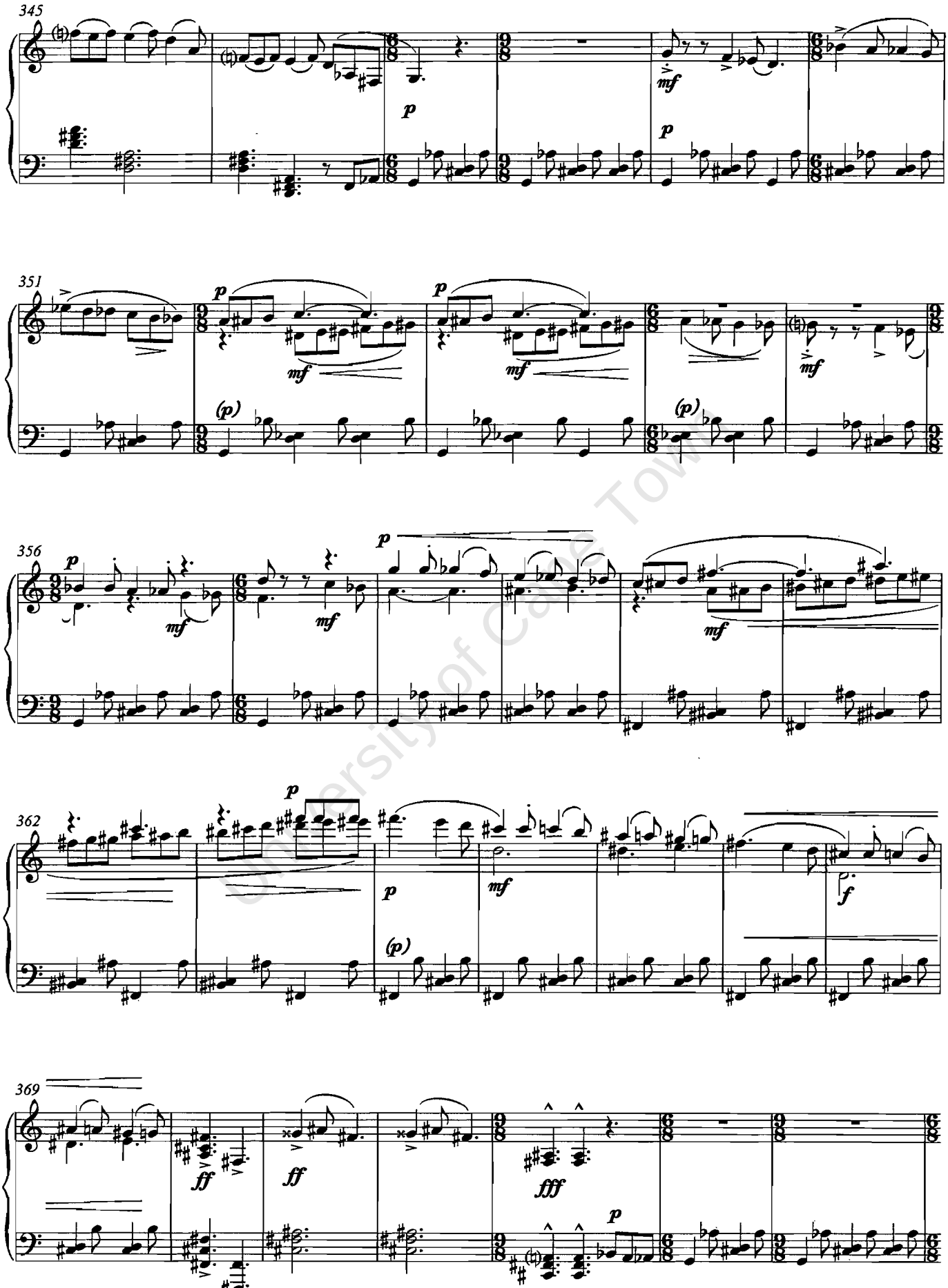

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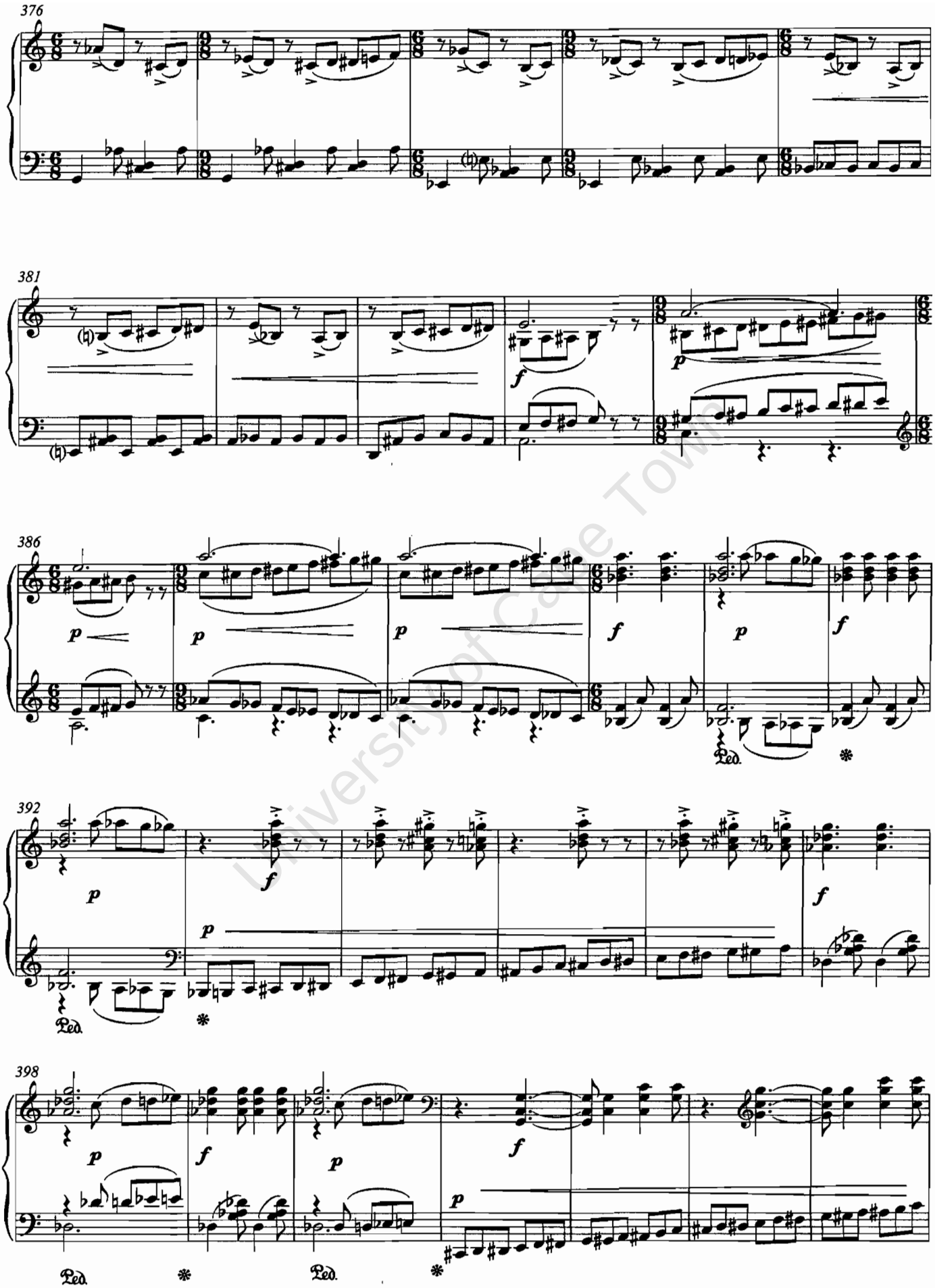

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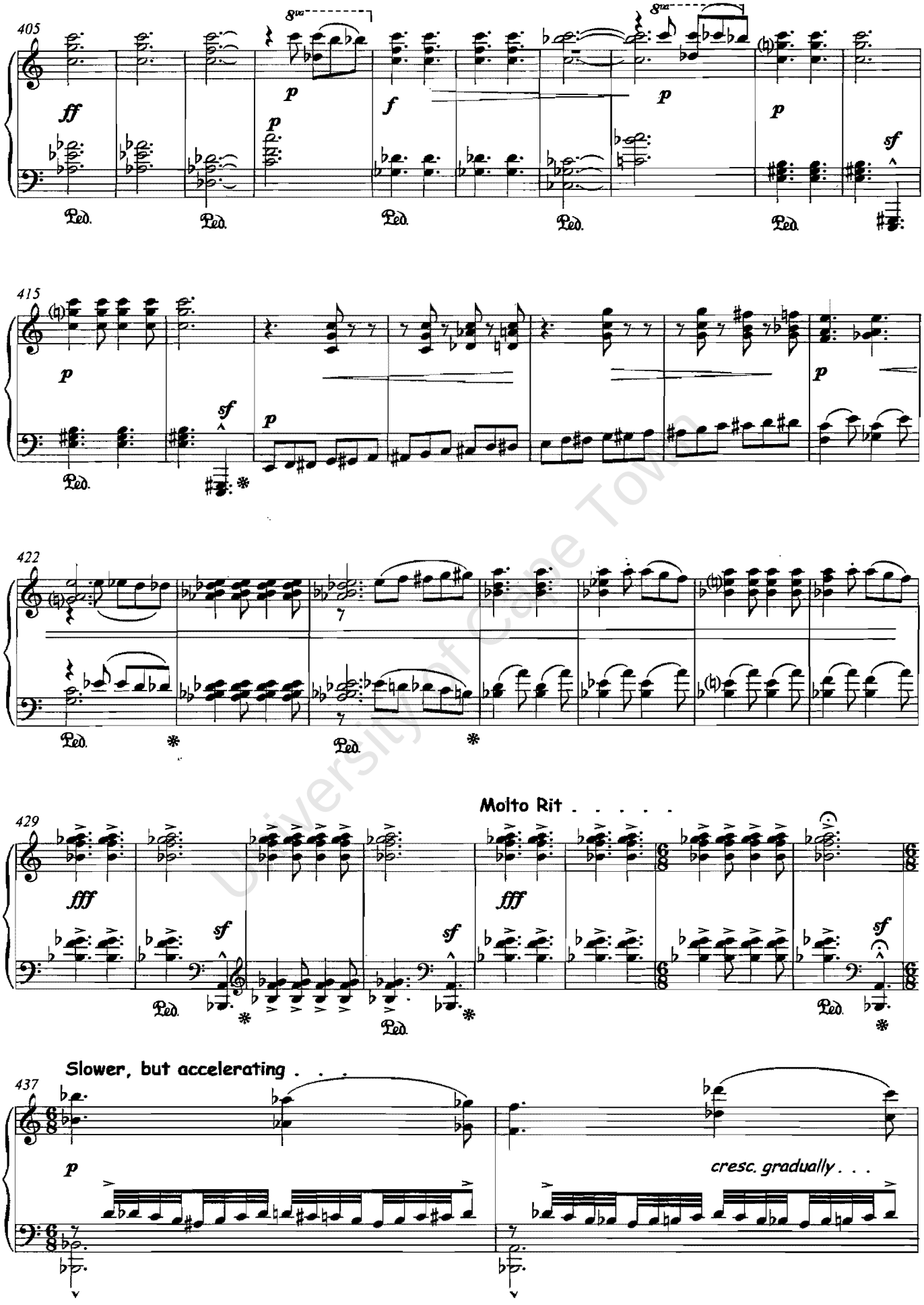

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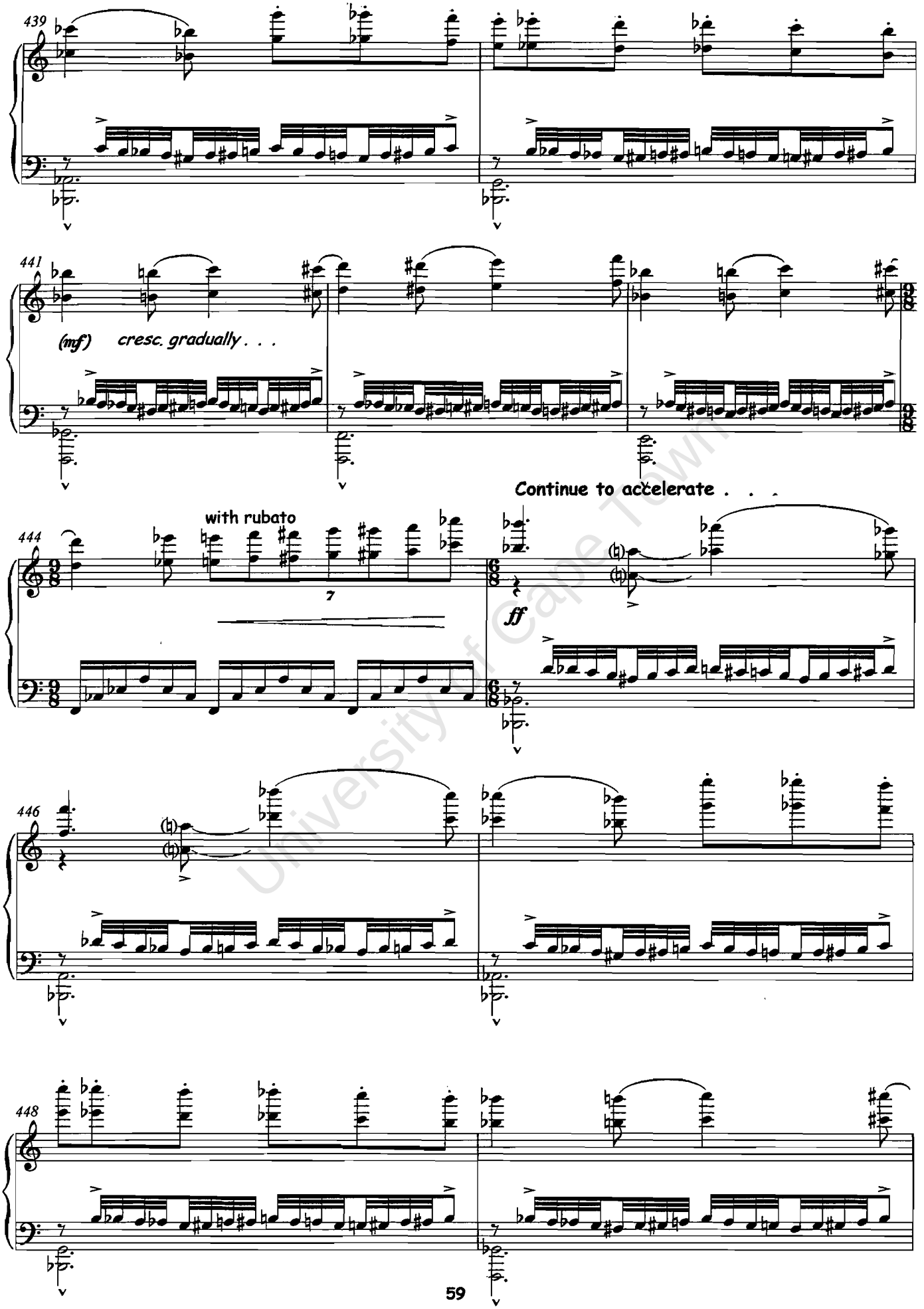

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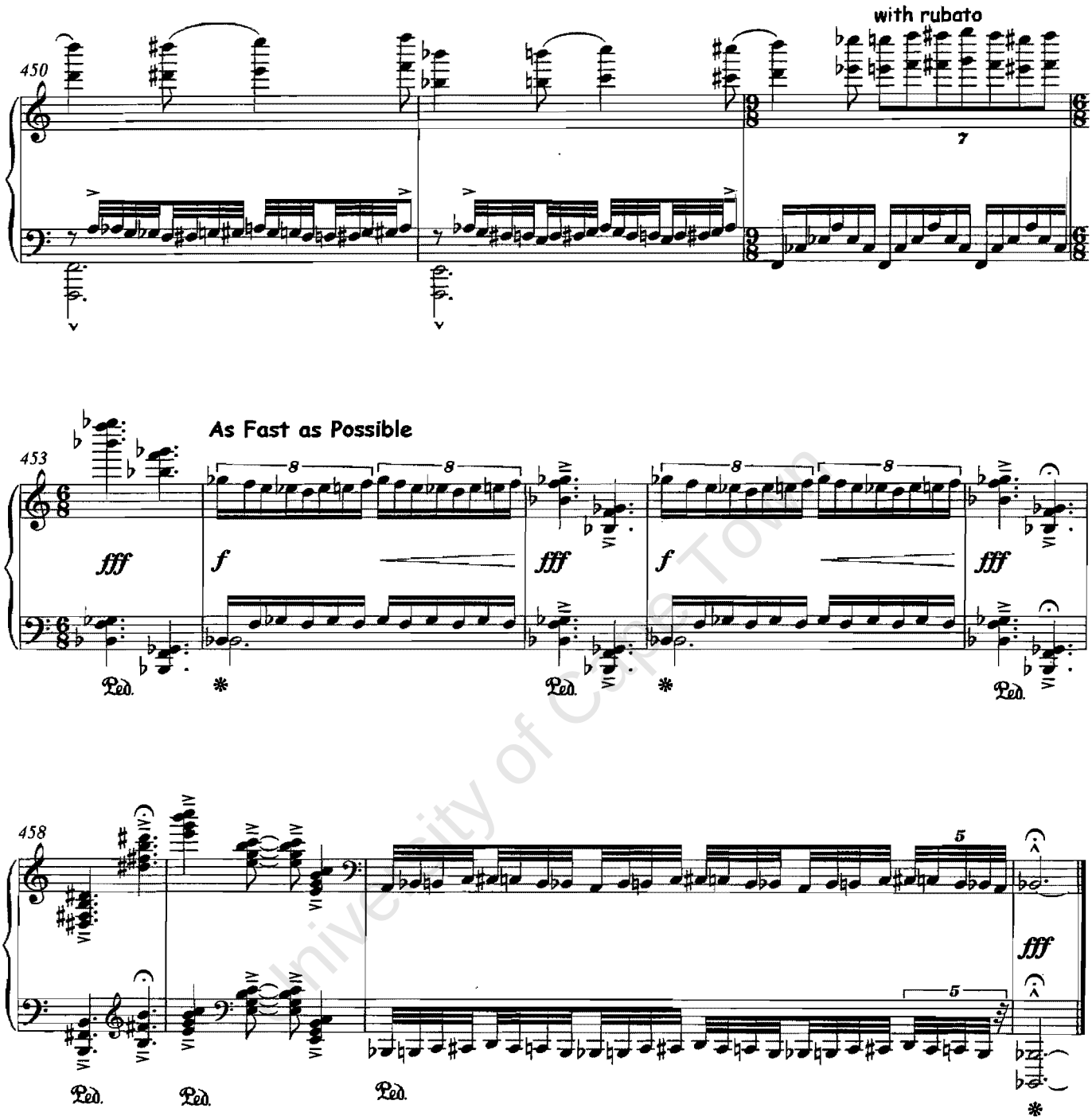


University of Cape Town

My Mother Phoned Today

for Choir (in 8 parts) and Tubular Bells

by Tim Chanter

University of Cape Town

Duration: 7½ minutes

My Mother Phoned Today

'My Mother Phoned Today' is the setting of a short poem by Sean Joyce[1] for choir and tubular bells, and is written in memory of my late mother:

> My mother phoned today.
> Strange but nice since she is dead.
> I didn't answer but still felt
> It was sweet of her to call.
>
> **Sean Joyce**

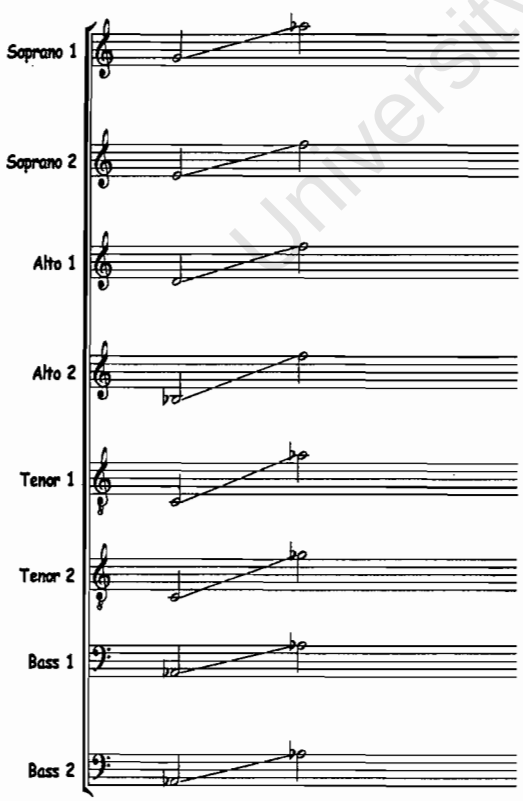
For the purposes of clarity in the score, I have not written out dynamics separately for each vocal part: rather the large dynamic markings apply to all staves underneath them (for example the dynamics above the 1st soprano line in bars 4-20 apply to all four upper parts; the dynamics above the 1st bass part in bar 20 apply to both bass parts etc.)

Some of the long notes will be impossible to sustain without pausing for breath: care must be taken to break separately.

Despite the slow tempo, rhythmic accuracy is very important in this piece: the recurring triplet motif in particular must be performed with precision.

A standard set of bells (range C to G) is required: relatively soft mallets are preferred

Vocal Ranges:



[1] http://www.poemhunter.com/p/m/poem.asp?poet=124569&poem=2145856

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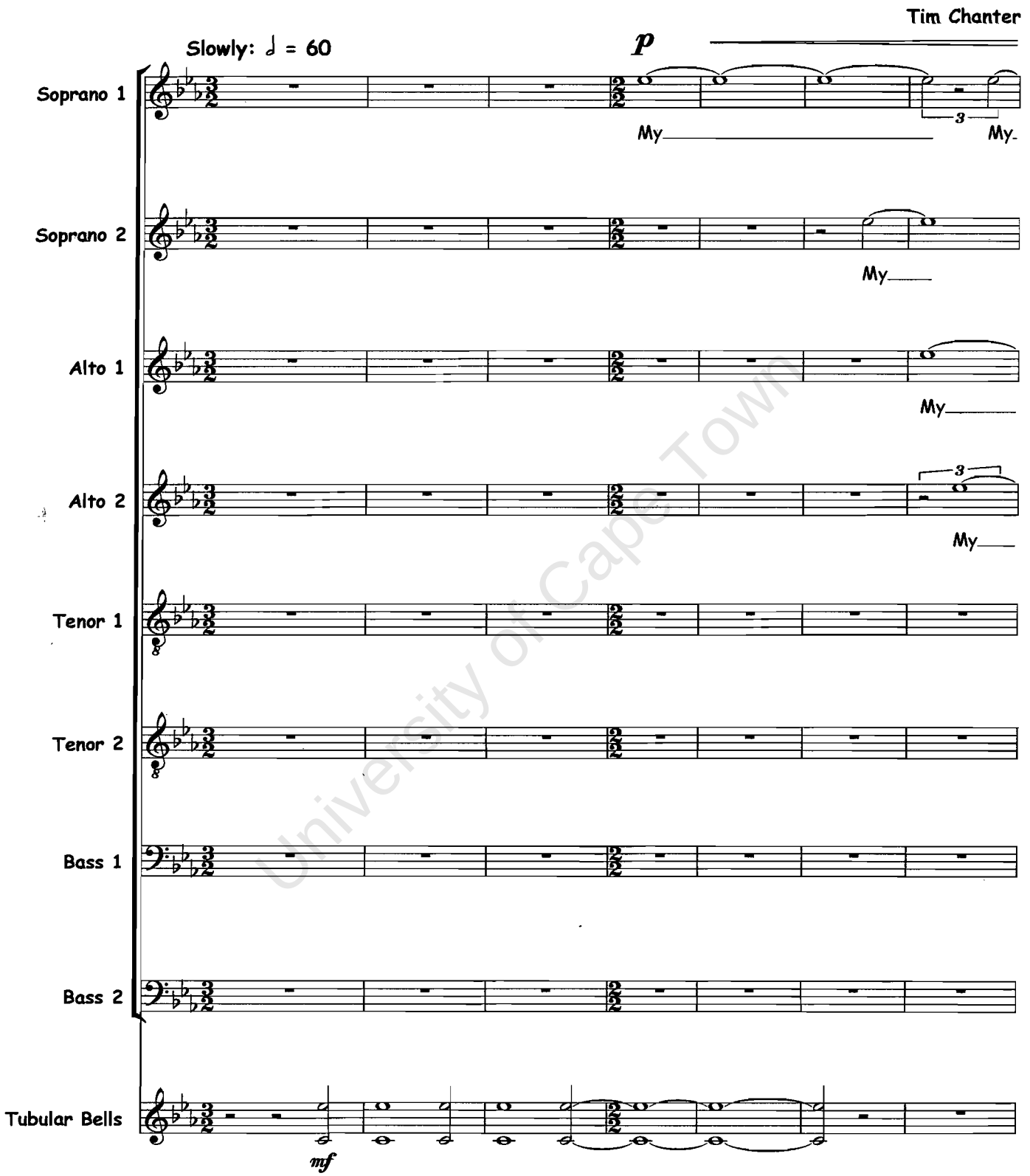
My Mother Phoned Today



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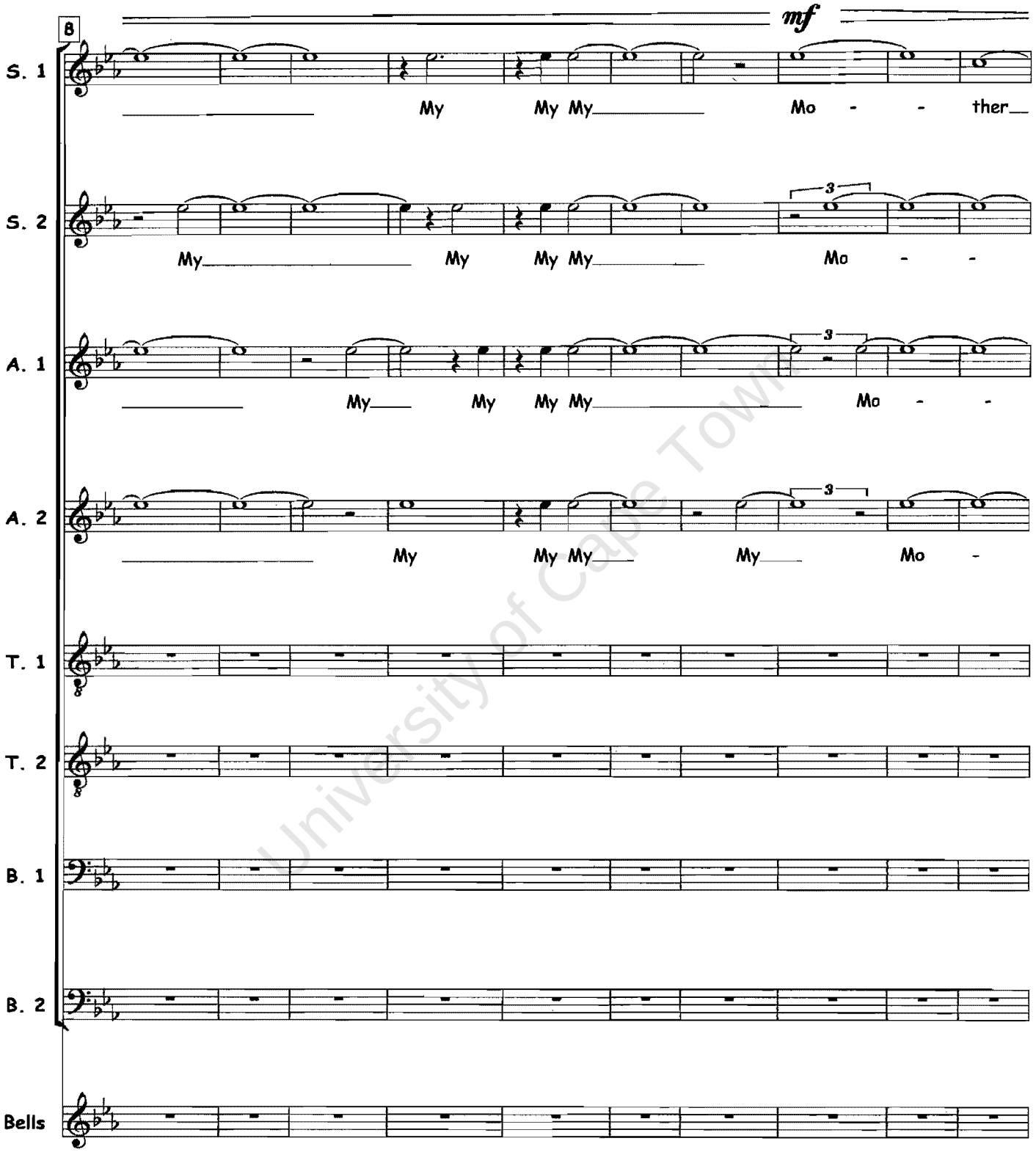

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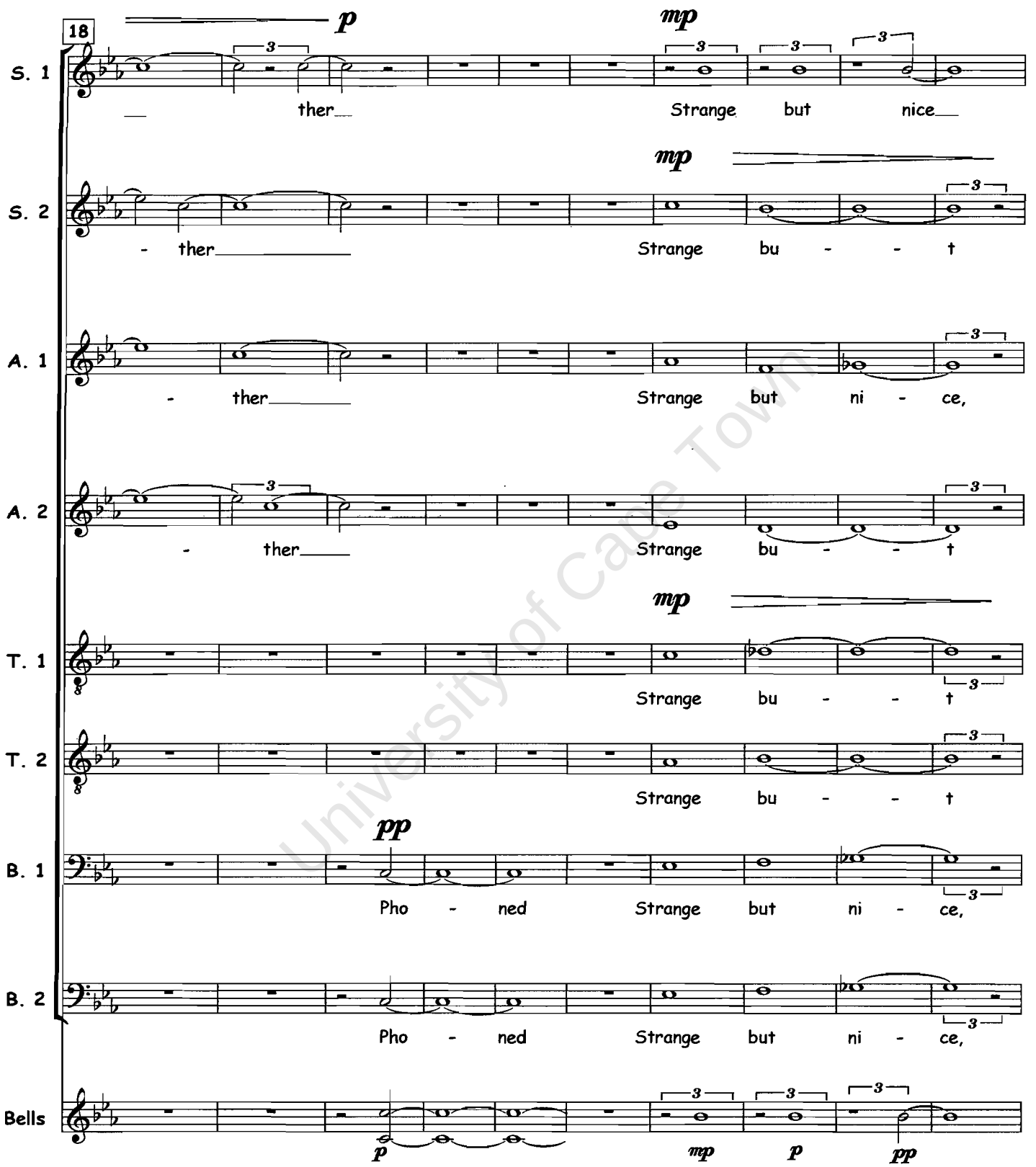

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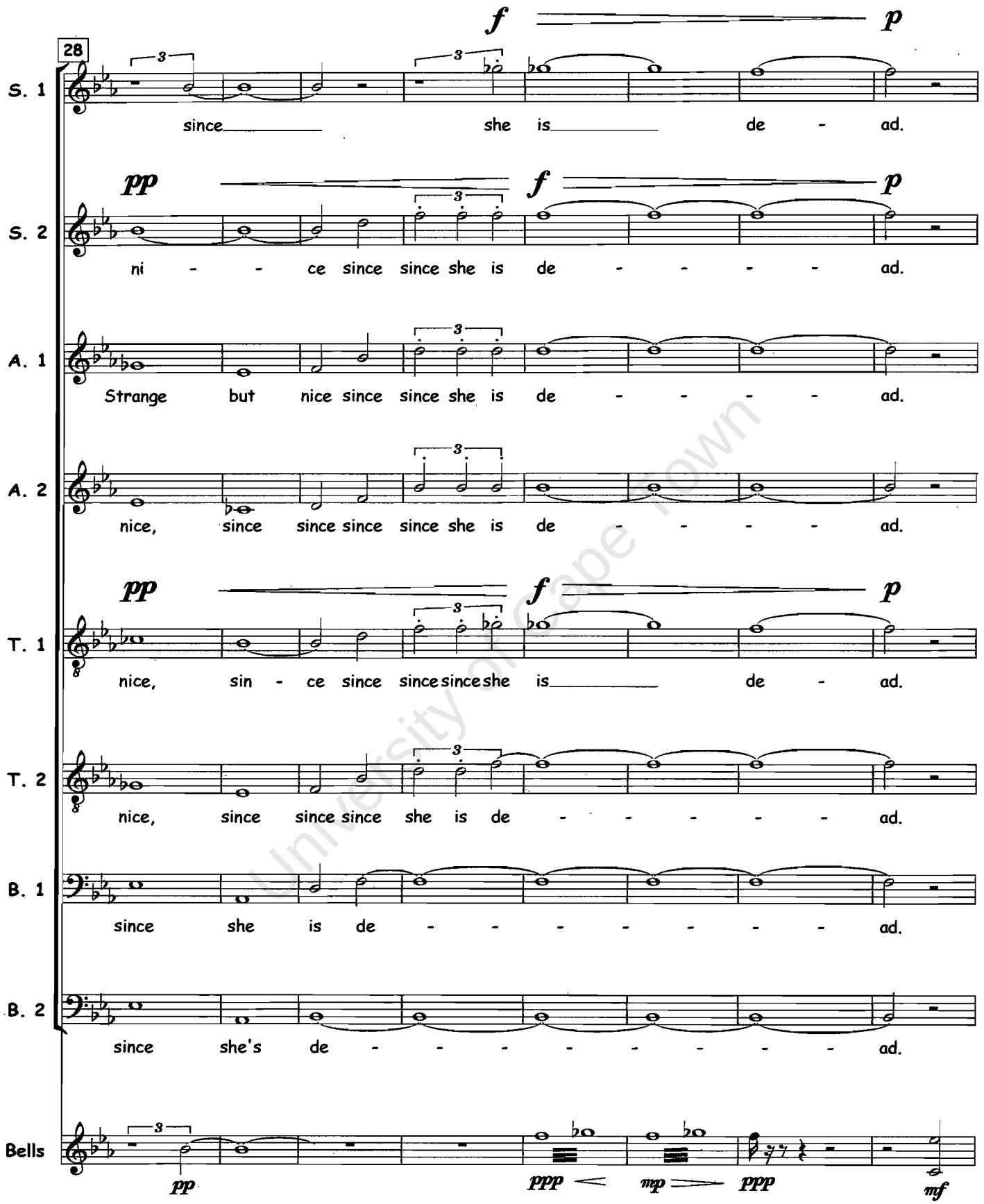

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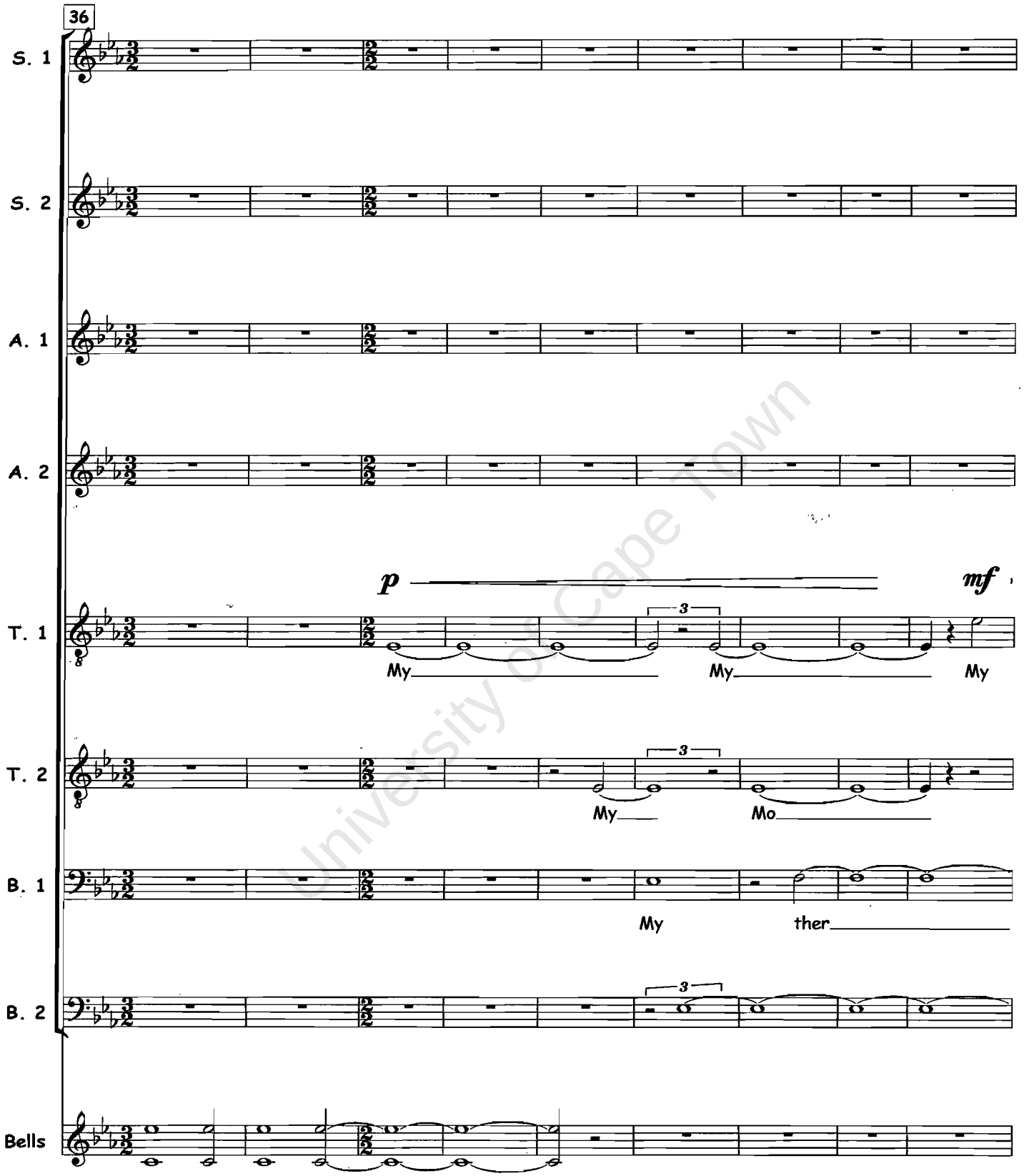

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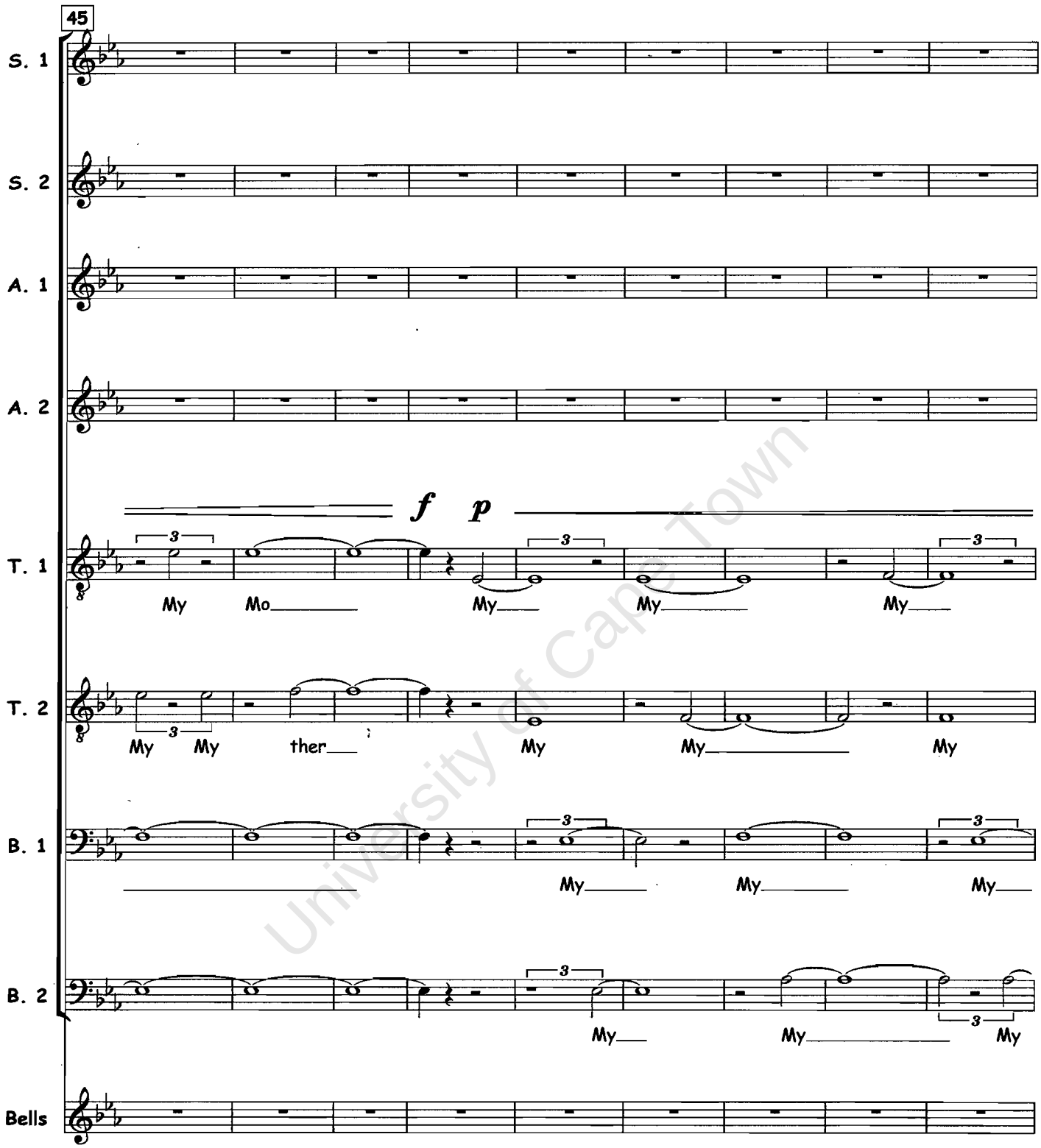

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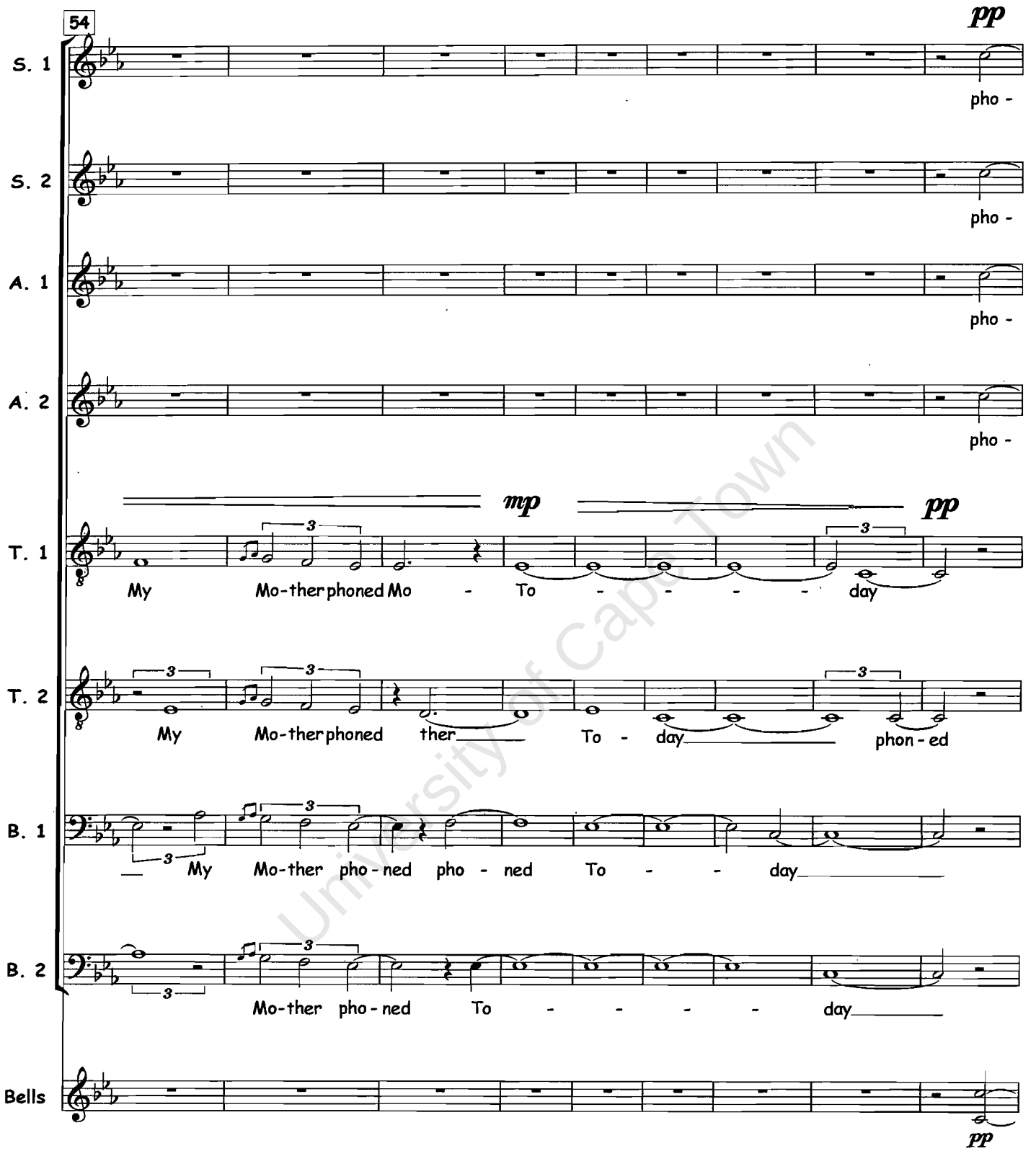

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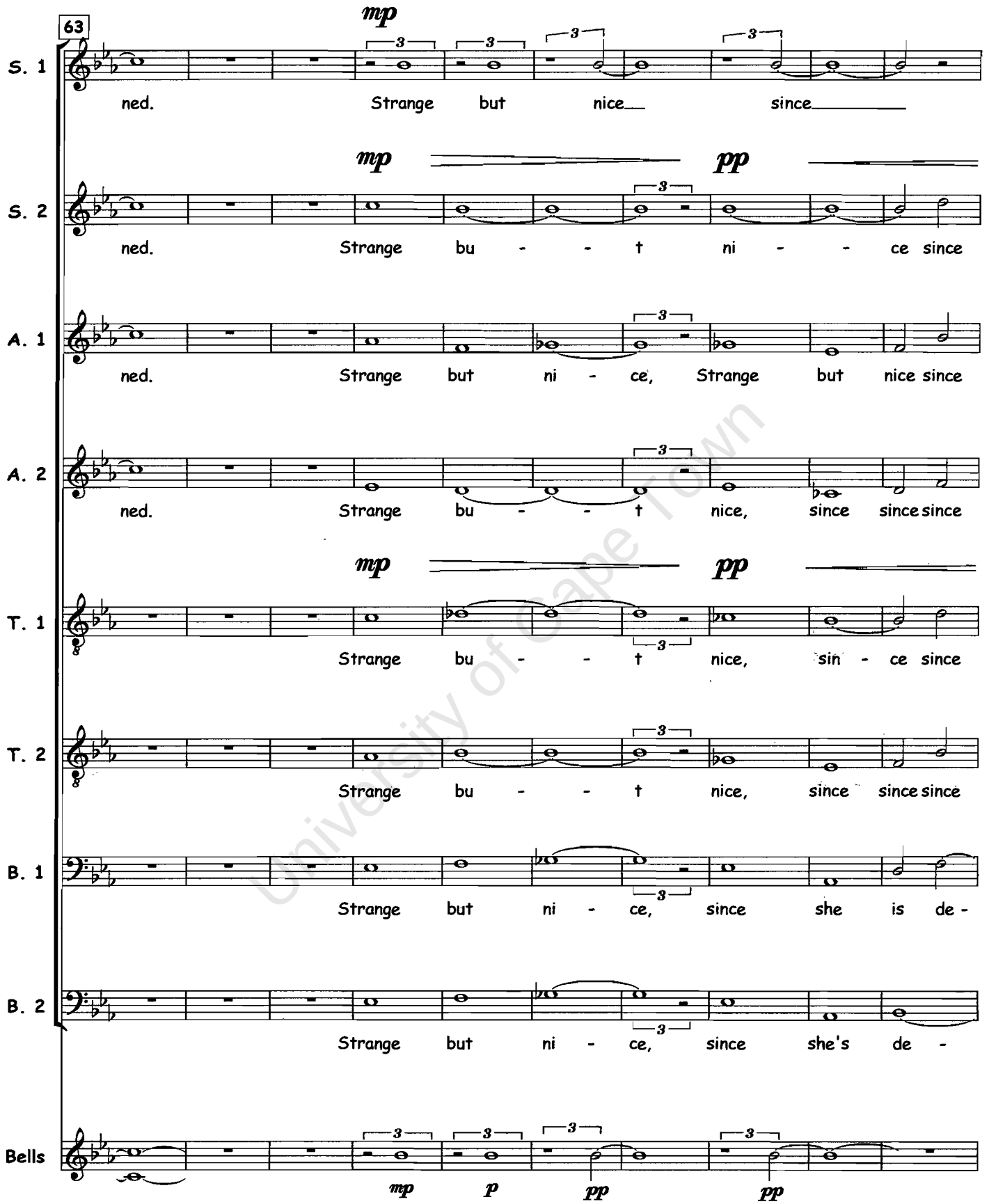

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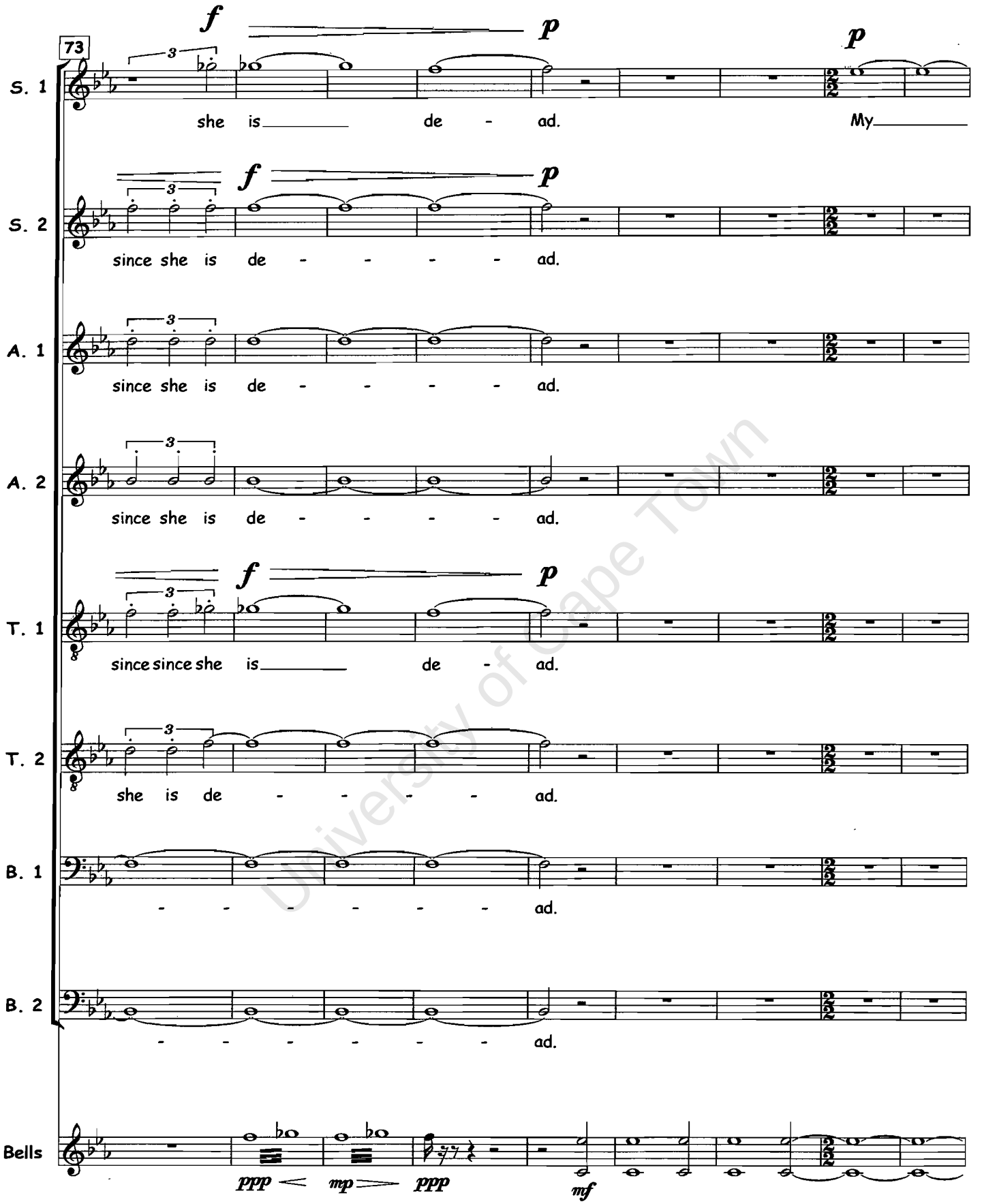

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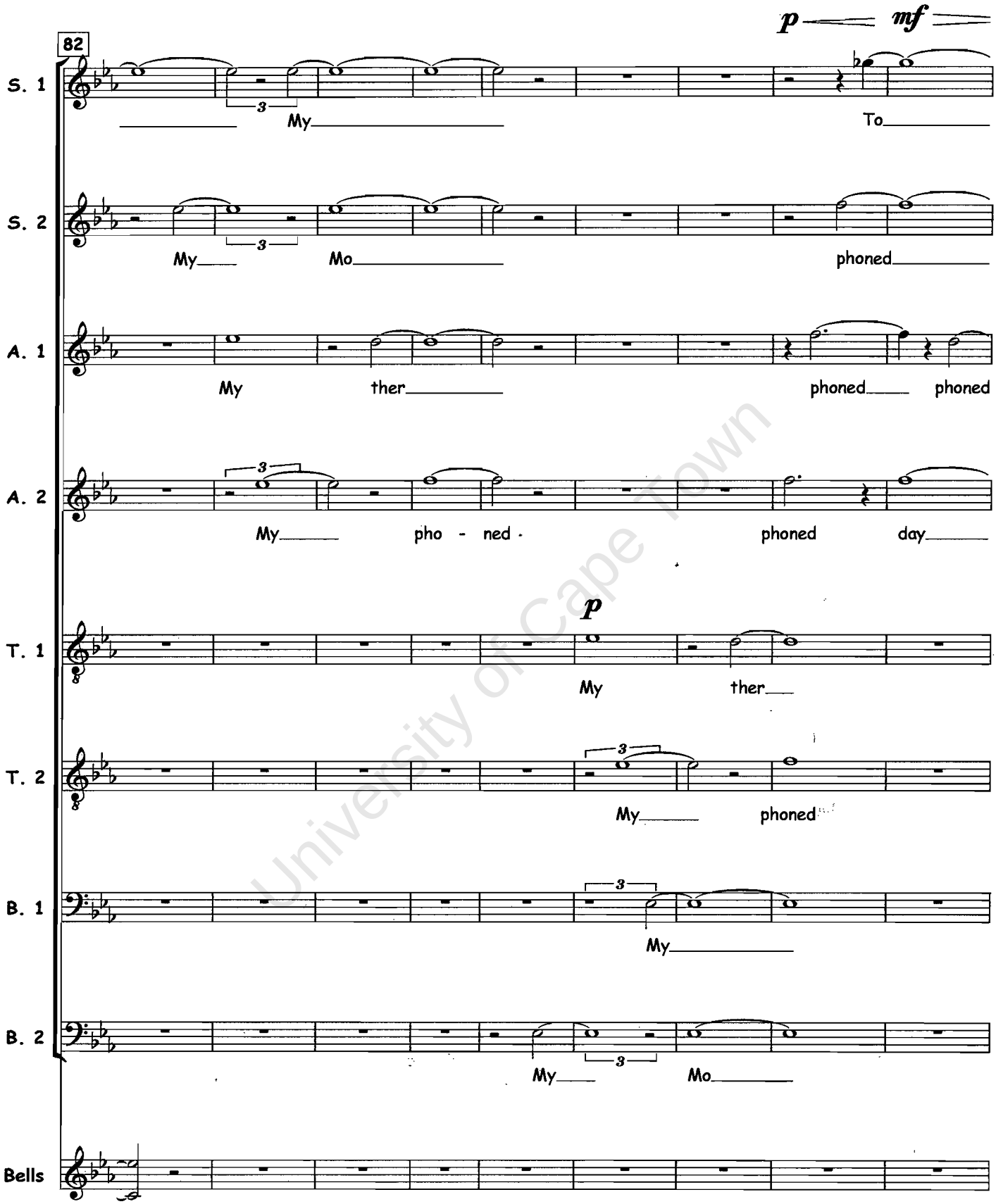

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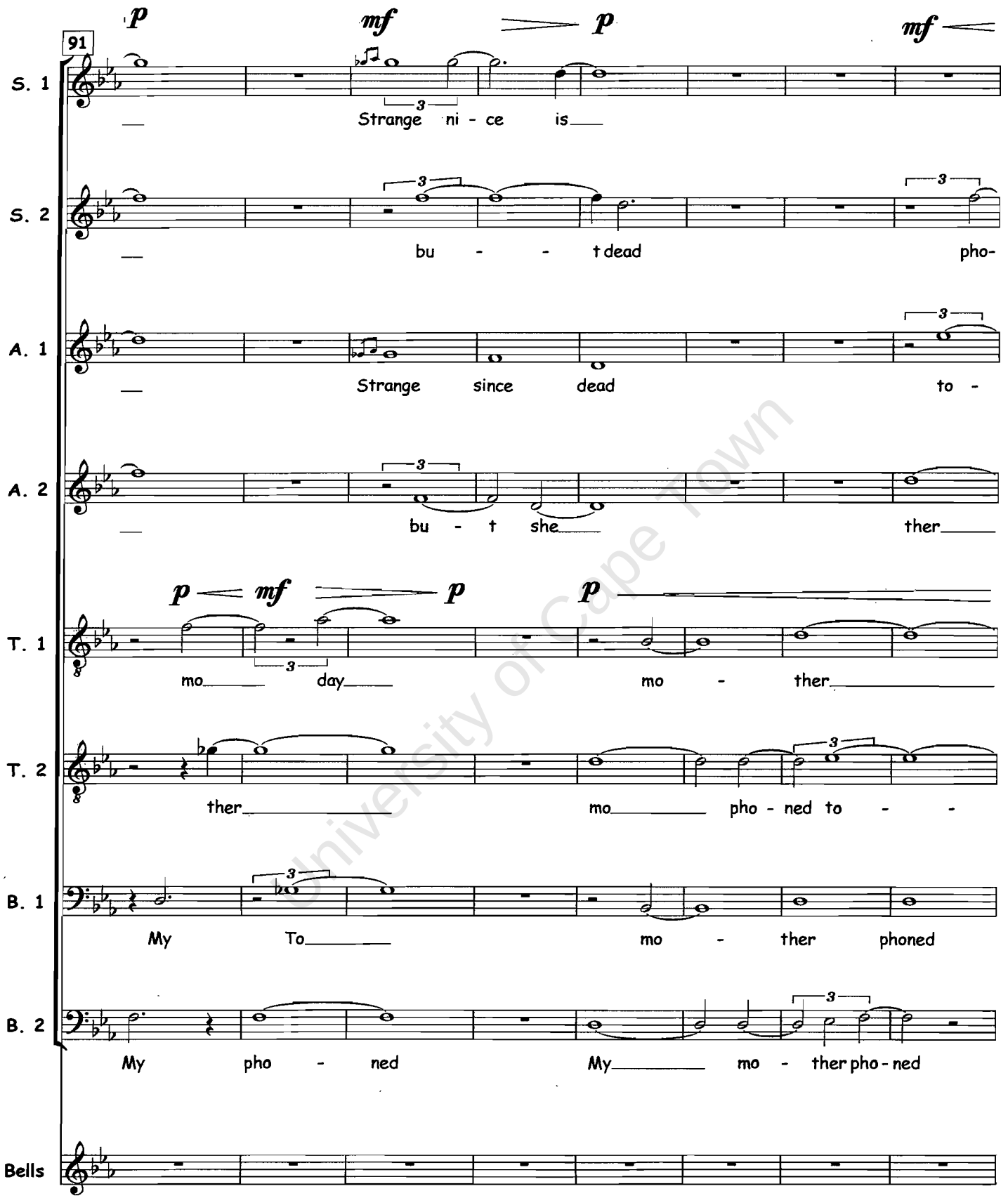

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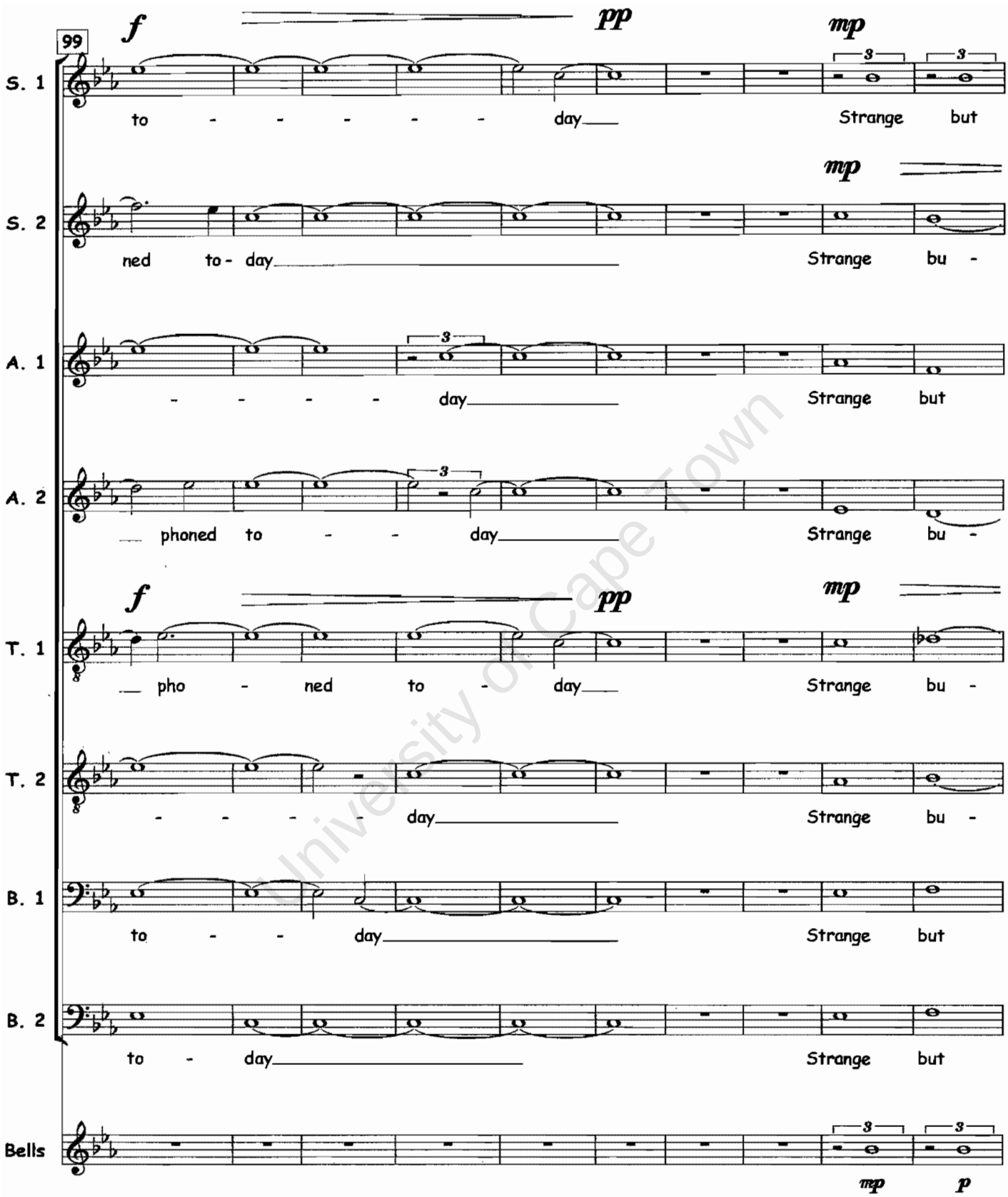

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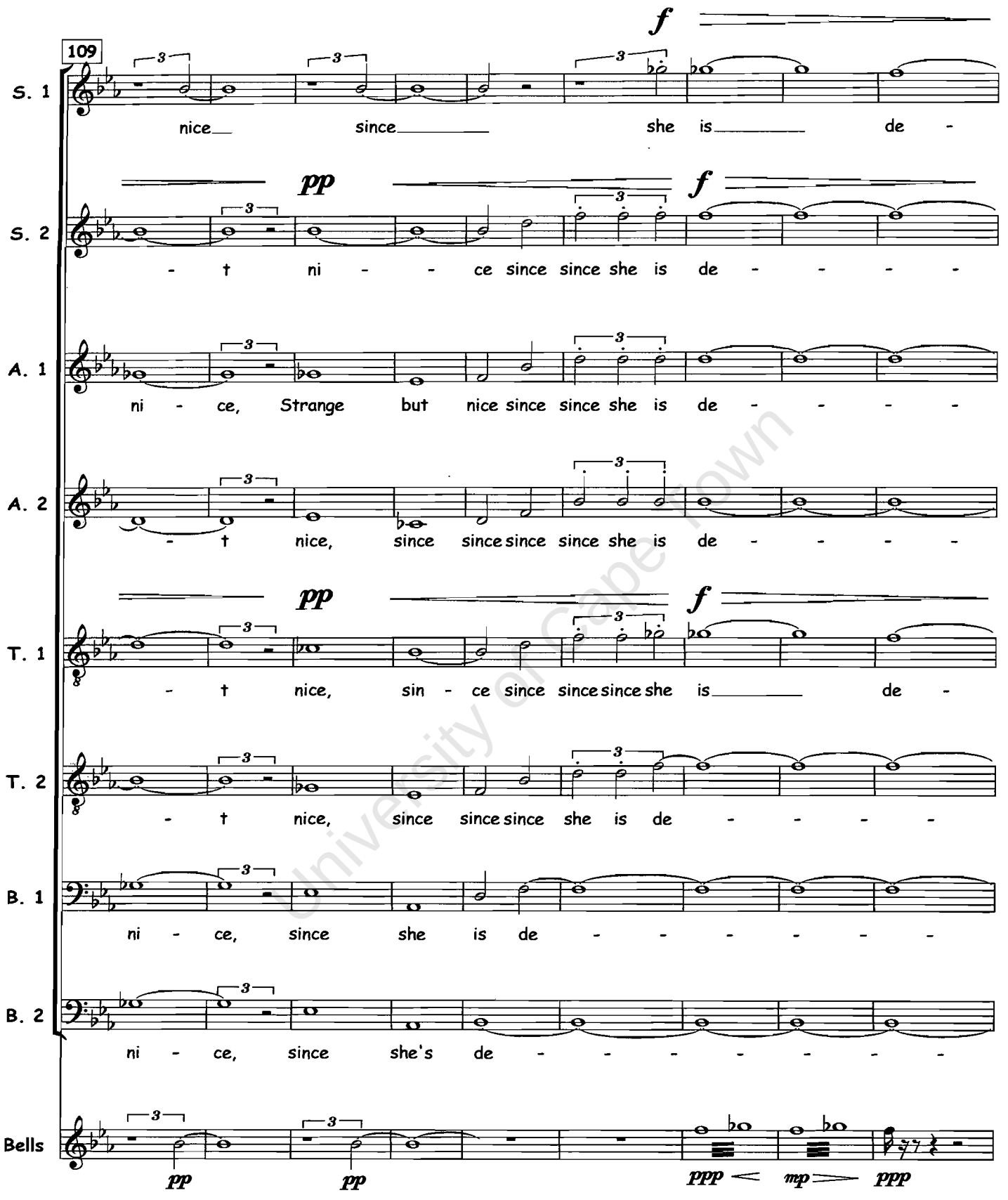

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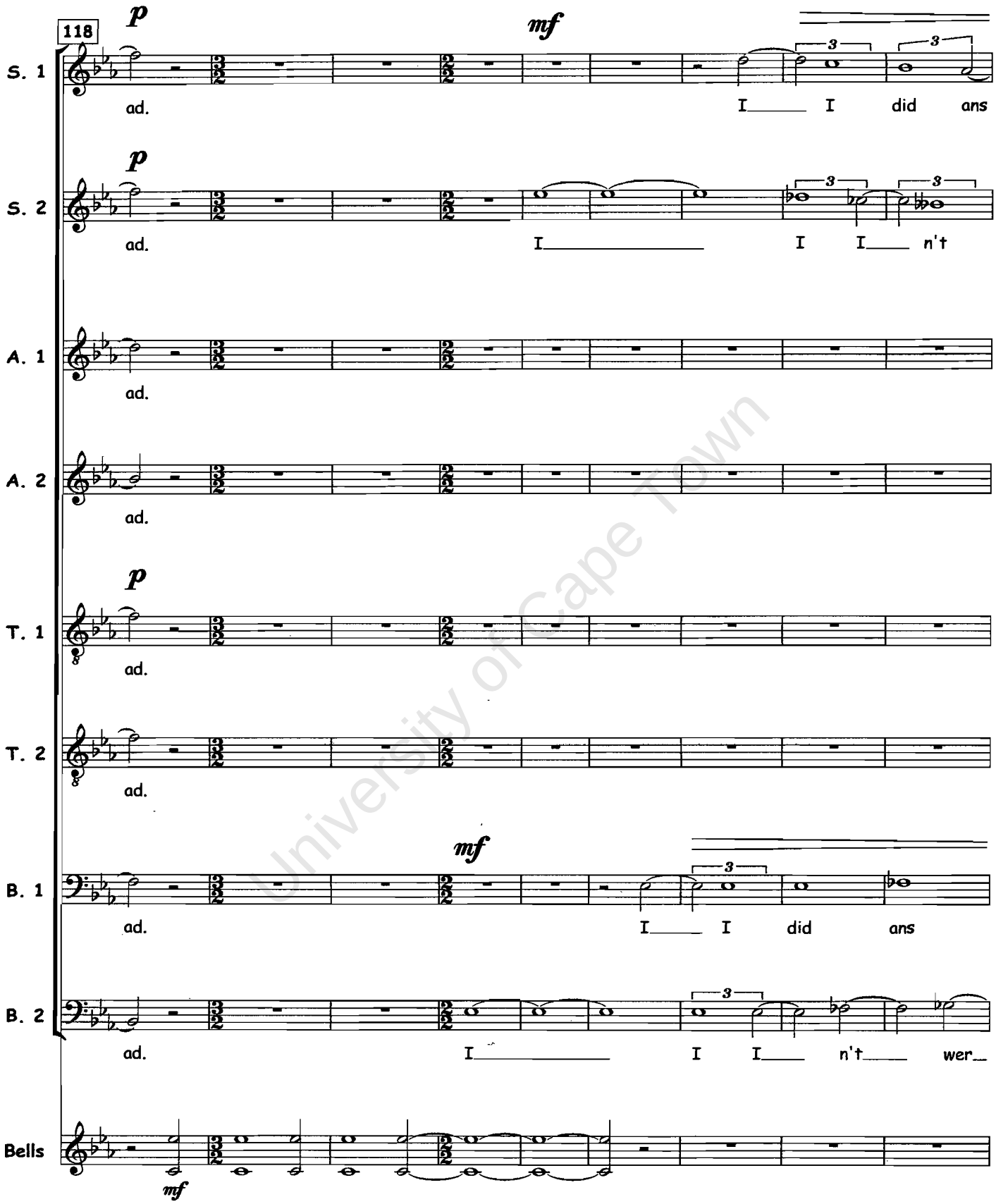

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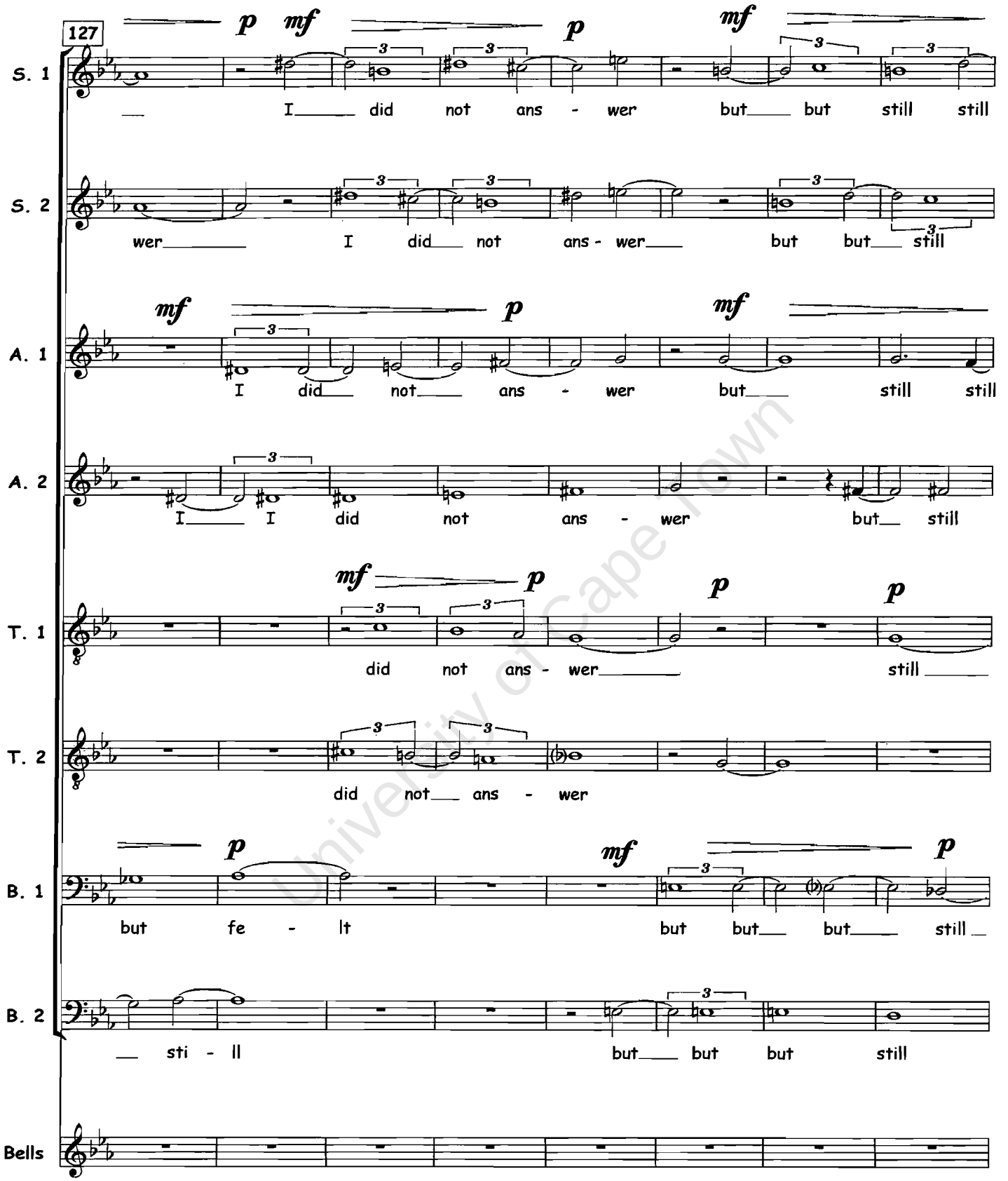

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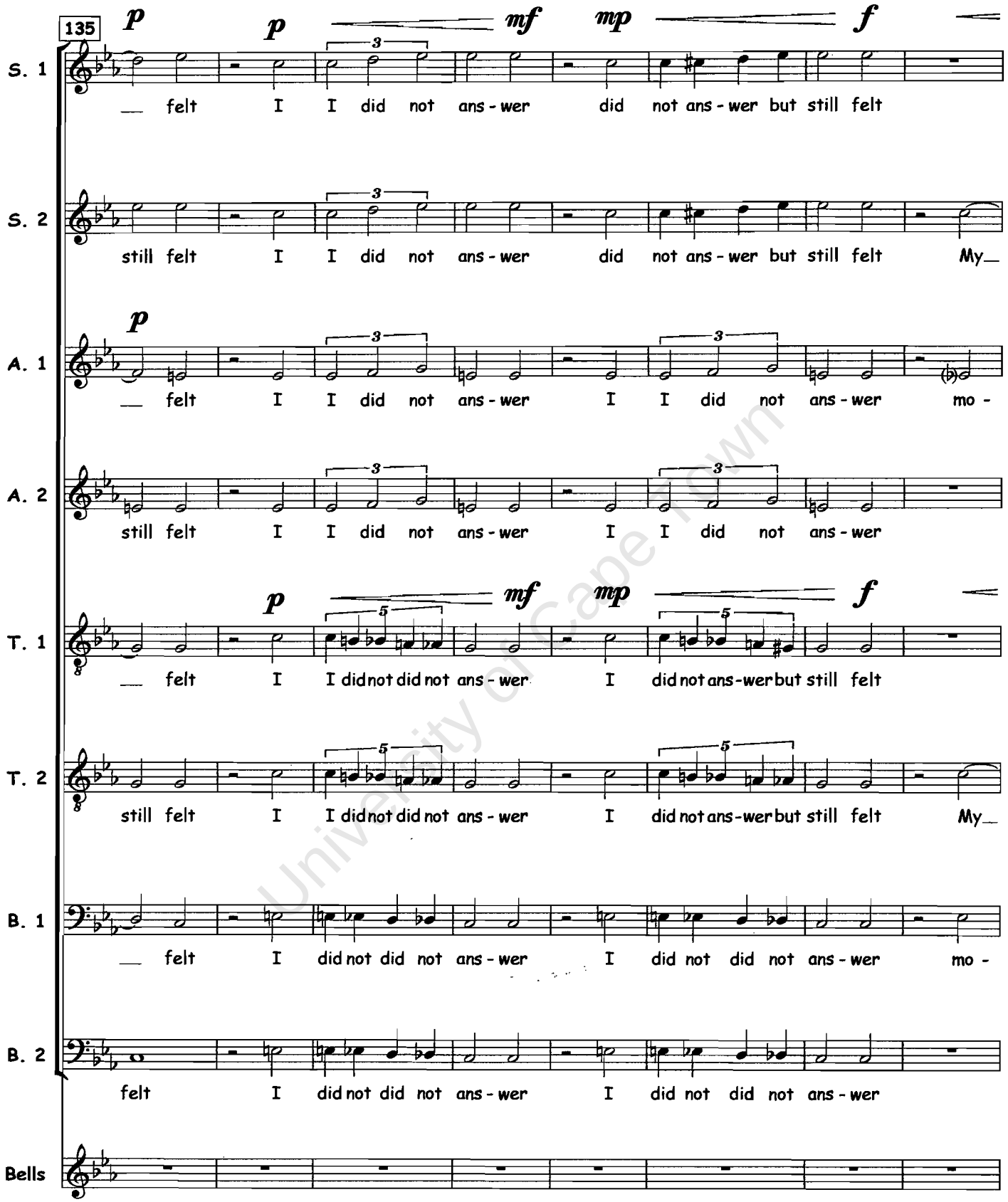

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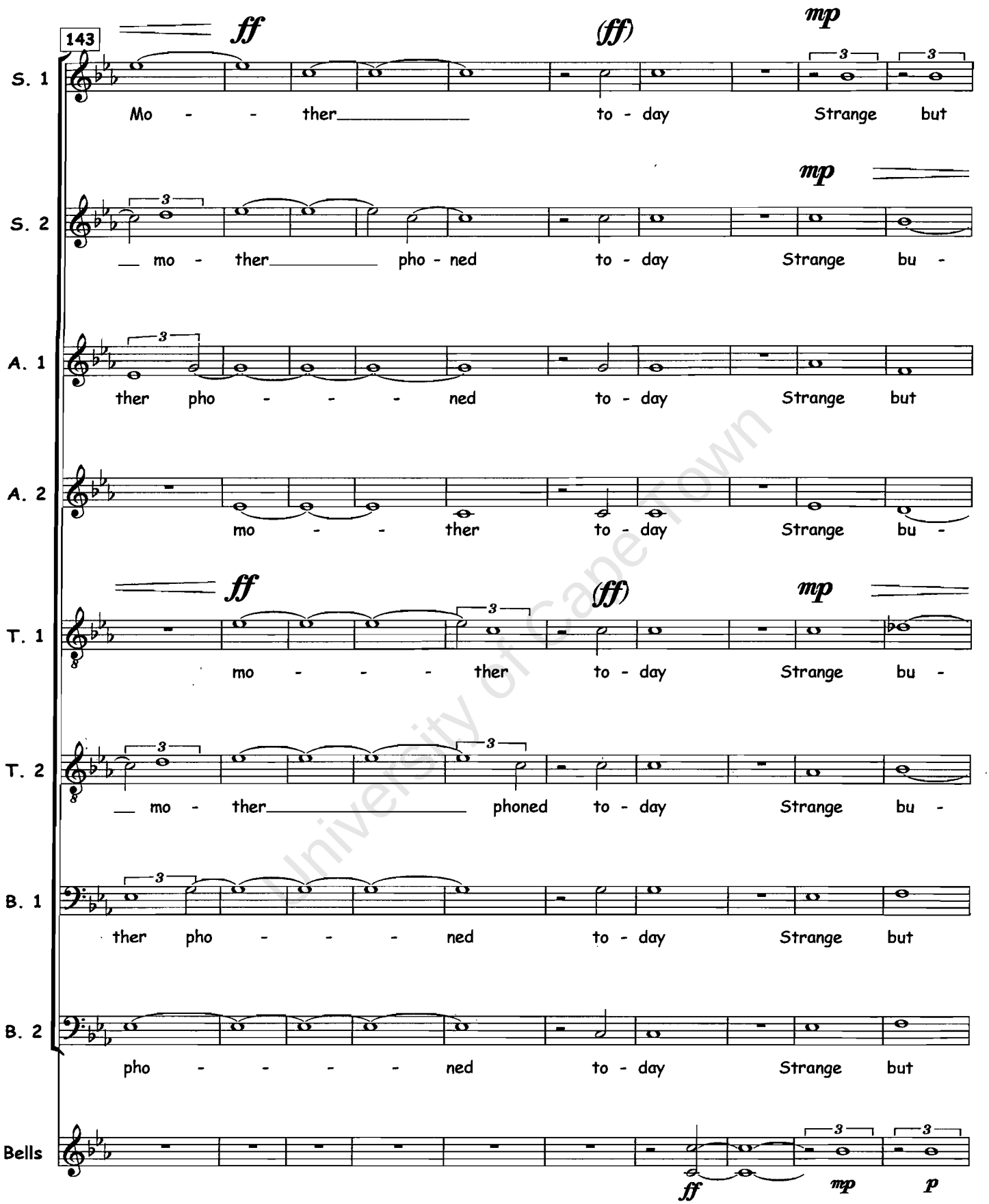

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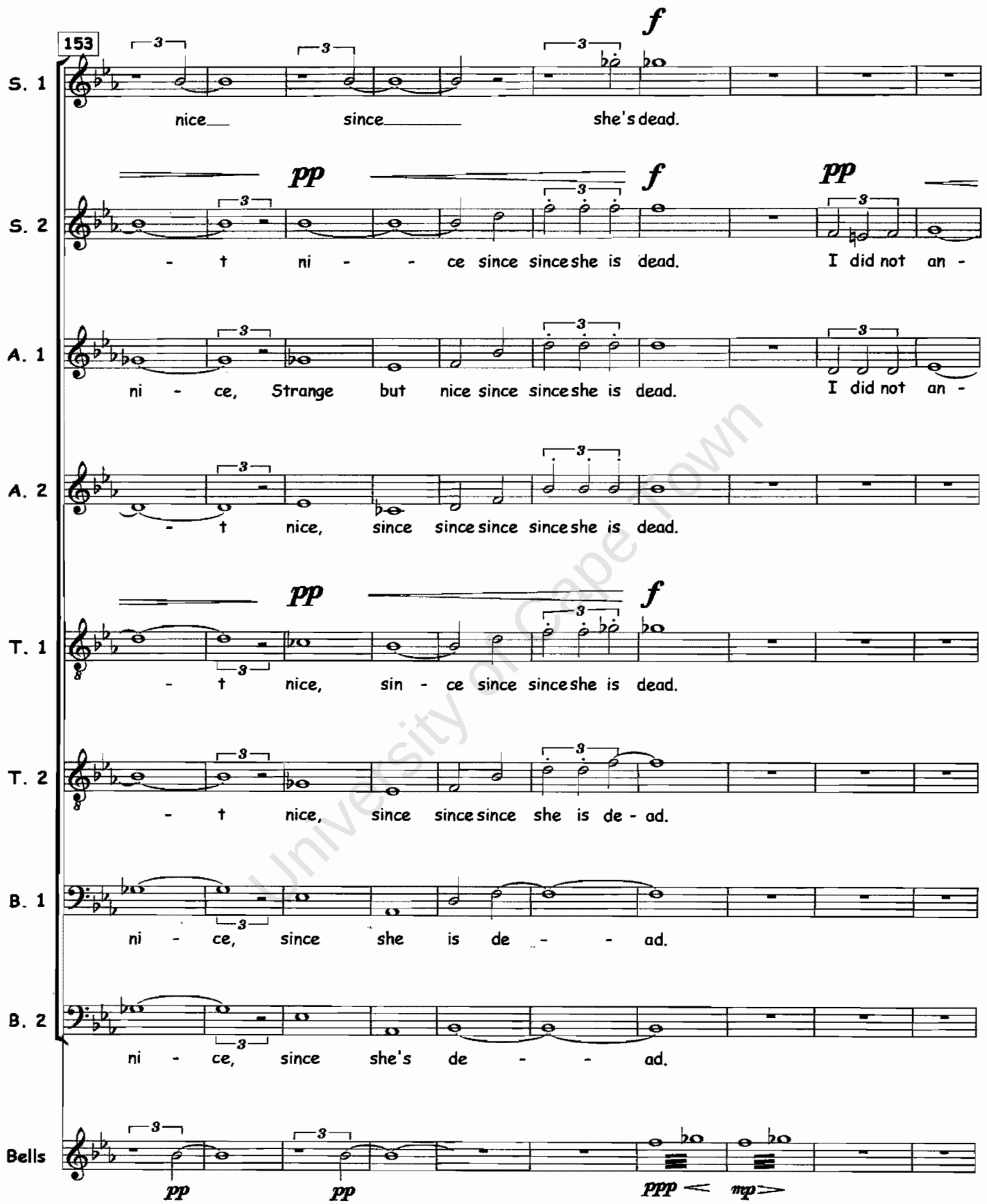

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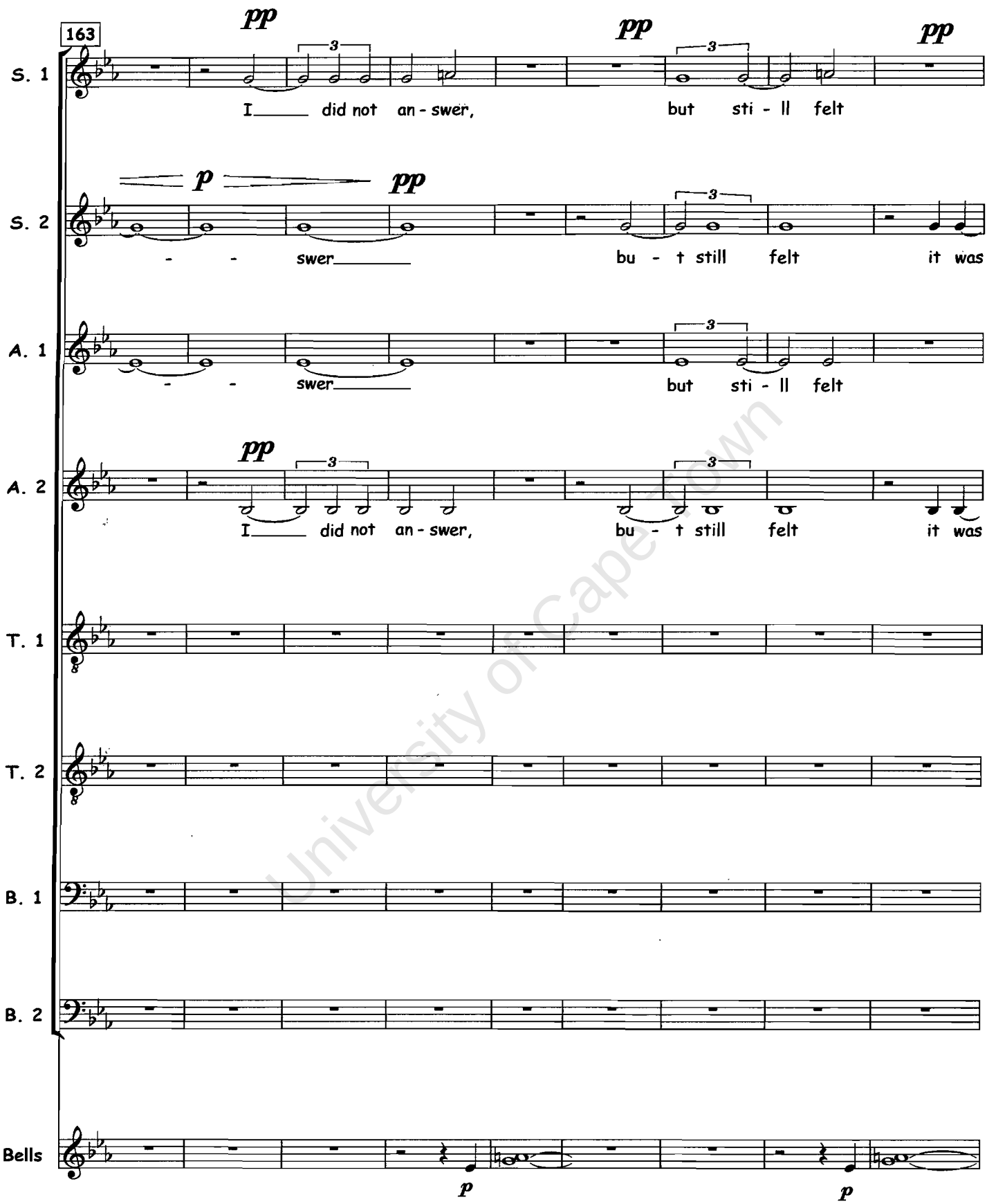

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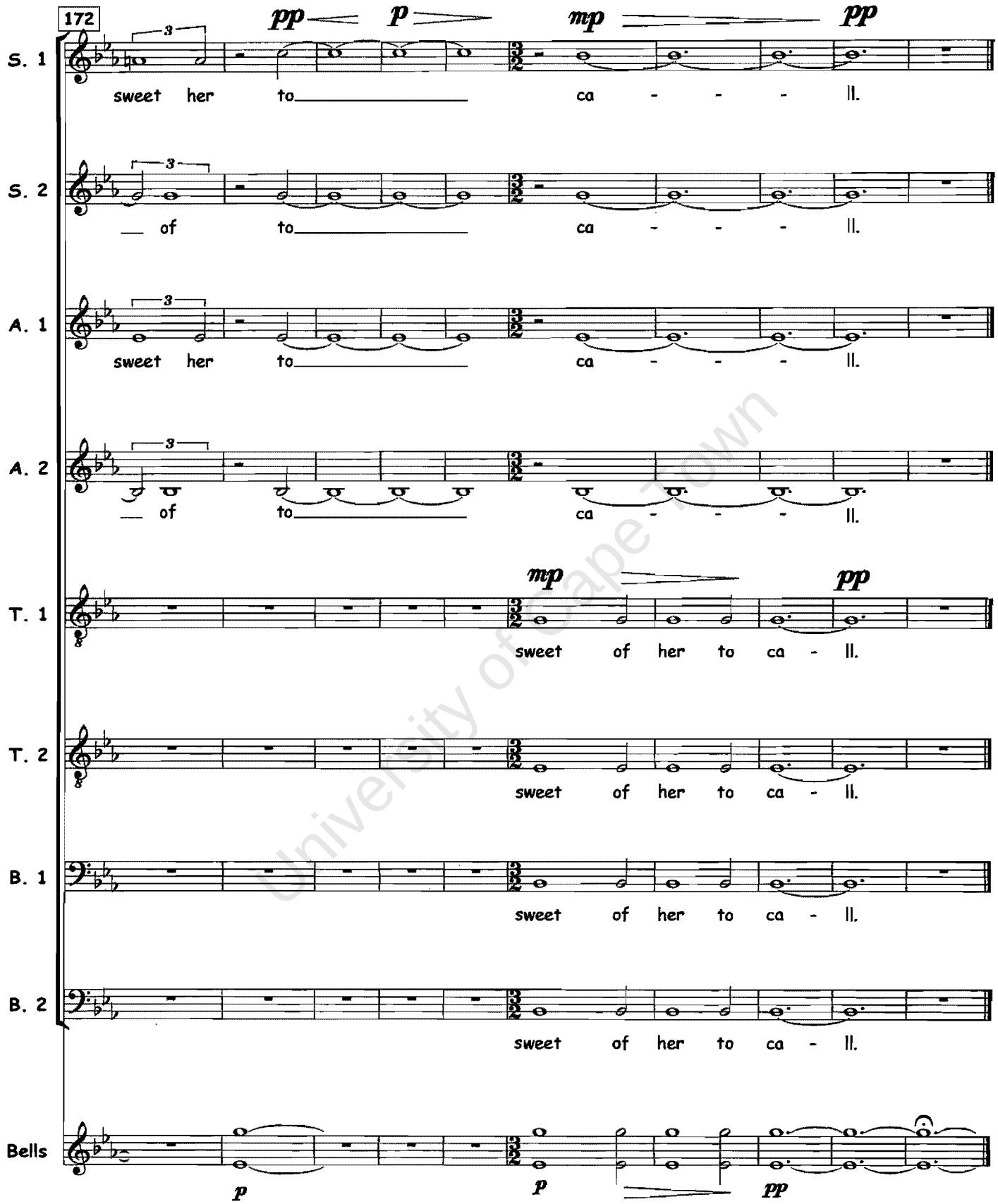

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Ostin Allegro

A Percussion Quartet

University of Cape Town

by Tim Chanter

Duration: 11 minutes

Instrumentation

Player 1
- Snare Drum
- Tom-Toms (4)
- Bass Drum
- Suspended Cymbal
  (the above are anticipated to comprise a drum kit)
- Tambourine
- Low Woodblock
- Maracas
- Tam-Tam

Player 2
- 2 Congas and 2 Bongos
- Sizzle Cymbal
- Tambourine
- Temple Blocks (5)
- High Triangle
- Guiro

Player 3
- Two Timpani (smallest and largest available)
- Suspended cymbal
- Pair of cymbals
- Tambourine
- High Woodblock
- Medium Triangle
- Cowbell
- Whistle (exact type is not important)

Player 4
- Field Drum / Tenor Drum
- Cymbal disc (suspended, to be struck with beaters). A crotale can be used as a substitute.
- Tambourine
- Pair of Claves
- Whip
- Cabasa or Ratchet

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Beaters

The following symbols have been used for different types of beaters, the precise selection of which is left at the players' discretion:

Hard beaters (wooden for drums, cymbals, cowbell; hard timpani sticks for timps)

Rubber beaters (for temple blocks and woodblocks)

Soft beaters (felt for drums, cymbals and cowbell; soft timpani sticks for timps)

Metal beaters (for cymbals and cowbell)

Wire brushes (for cymbals)

Hands (for tom-toms and congas / bongos)

Cello or Double Bass bow (for bowing cymbals)

(Note: triangles, the tam-tam and the bass drum are all to be played with standard instrument beaters - there are no specific markings in the score)

Performance Notes

- The piece takes the form of an ostinato, uninterrupted except in the final few bars. I have placed the rehearsal marks at each starting point of the ostinato by way of orientation (and the ostinato figure is marked throughout the parts)
- Triangular note-heads in the ostinato (first occurring for player 1 in bar 3, and for all players in bar 21) are intended to be a contrasting (and quieter) sound than the rest of the ostinato. I have suggested playing methods / attacks at the first occurrence for each instrument – but players can substitute alternatives if they wish.
- Timpani: the exact tuning of the timpani is not important: rather one very high note which can articulate the rhythmic structure clearly and one very deep note must be selected (I have notated the piece for middle C and low D)
- Tom-toms: a standard set of four tom-toms, notated in the staff spaces
- Temple-blocks: a set of five temple-blocks notated on the staff lines
- Congas / bongos: a set of two of each, collectively notated in the staff spaces (in the score I just refer to bongos for short)
- The vocal marks (bars 325-336 and in the final bar) are to be spoken / shouted (rather than sung on a pitch)
- The dynamic markings are extremely important. Players are asked to note that:
    - the overall dynamic level is, for the majority of the piece, restrained
    - in many sections different players do not play at the same dynamic level, and that crescs. and dims. do not necessarily occur simultaneously for all players
- A fairly quick pace is essential (at least 140 crotchets per minute as marked)

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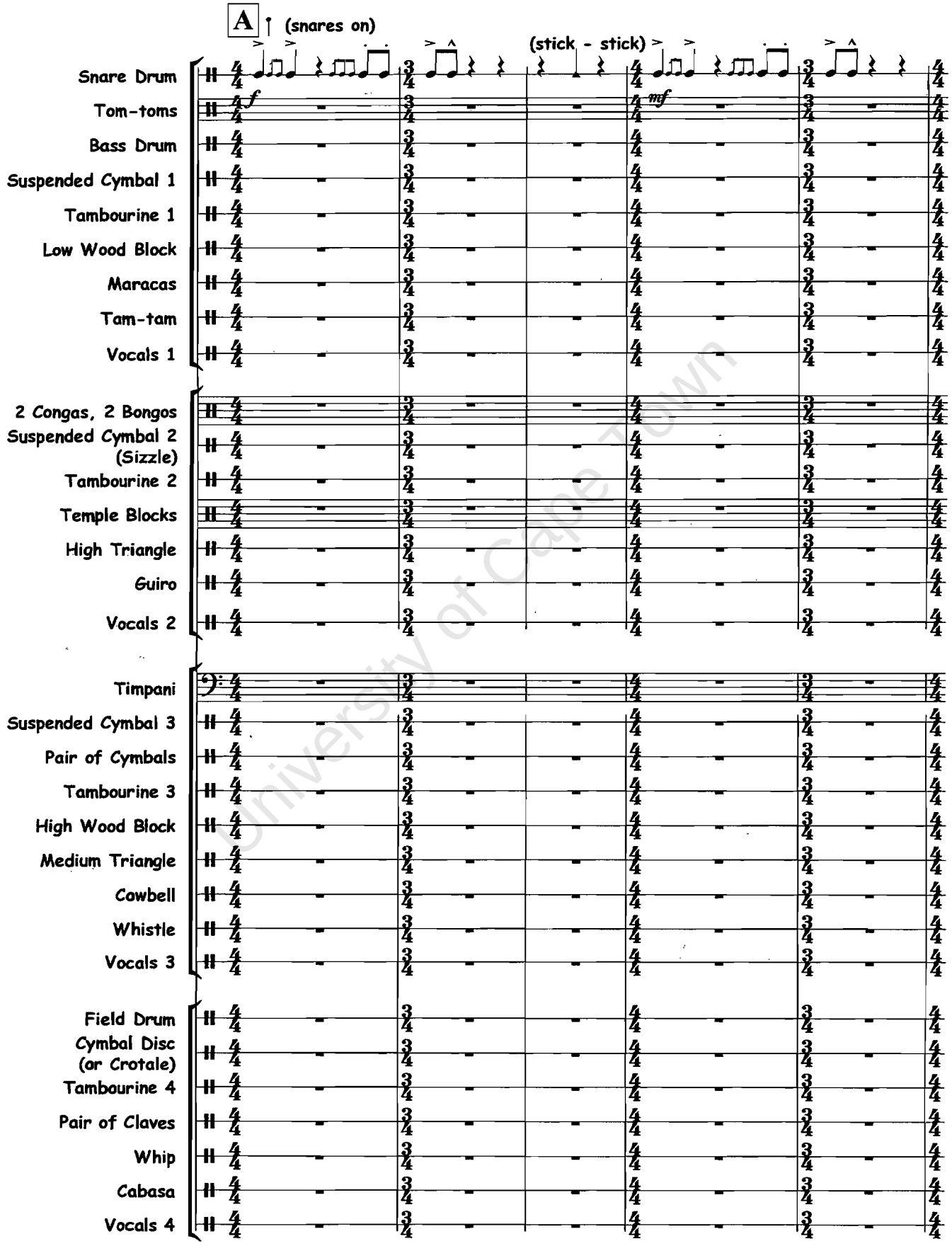
Ostin Allegro

Allegro: ♩ = 140

by Tim Chanter



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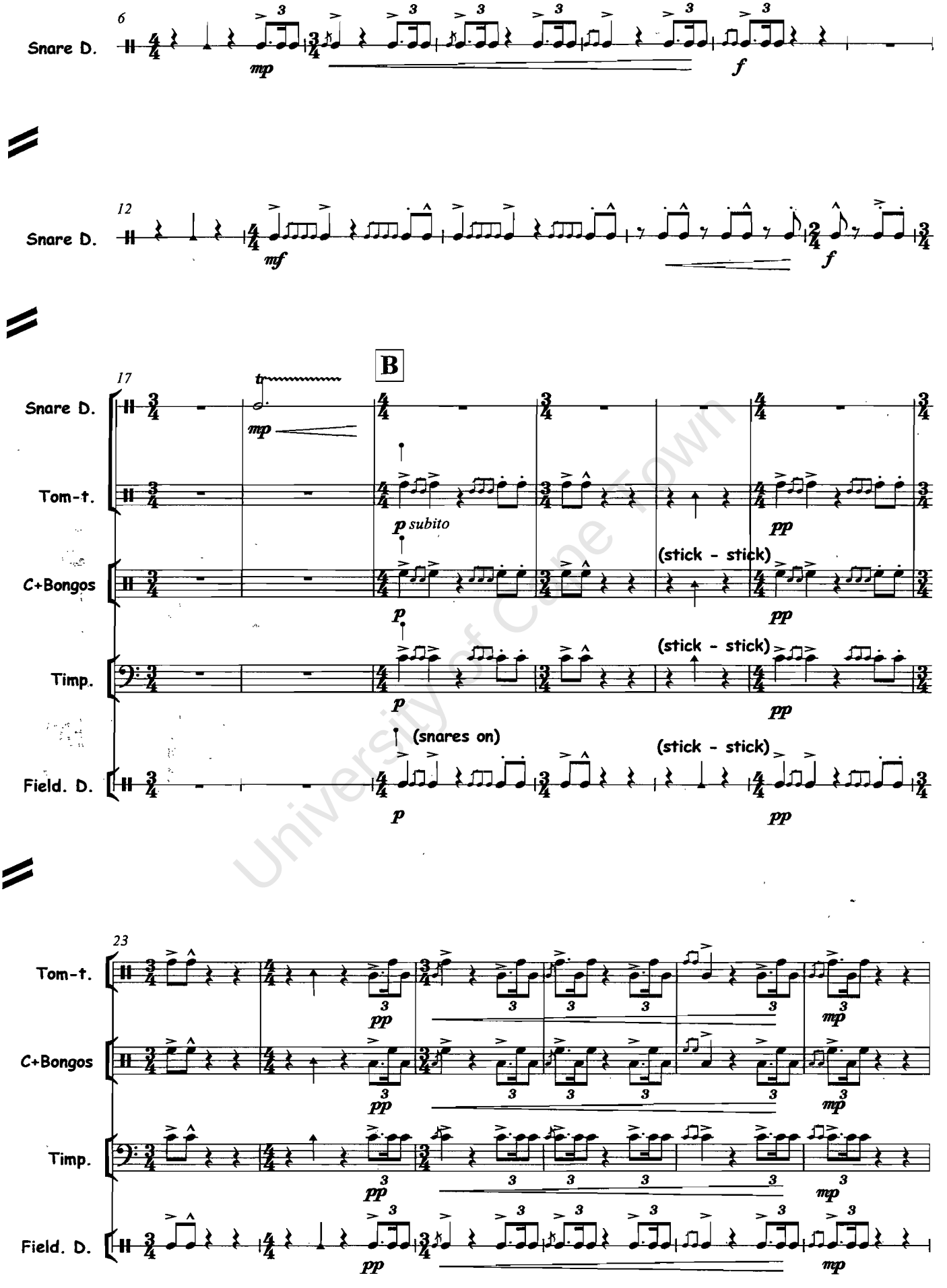

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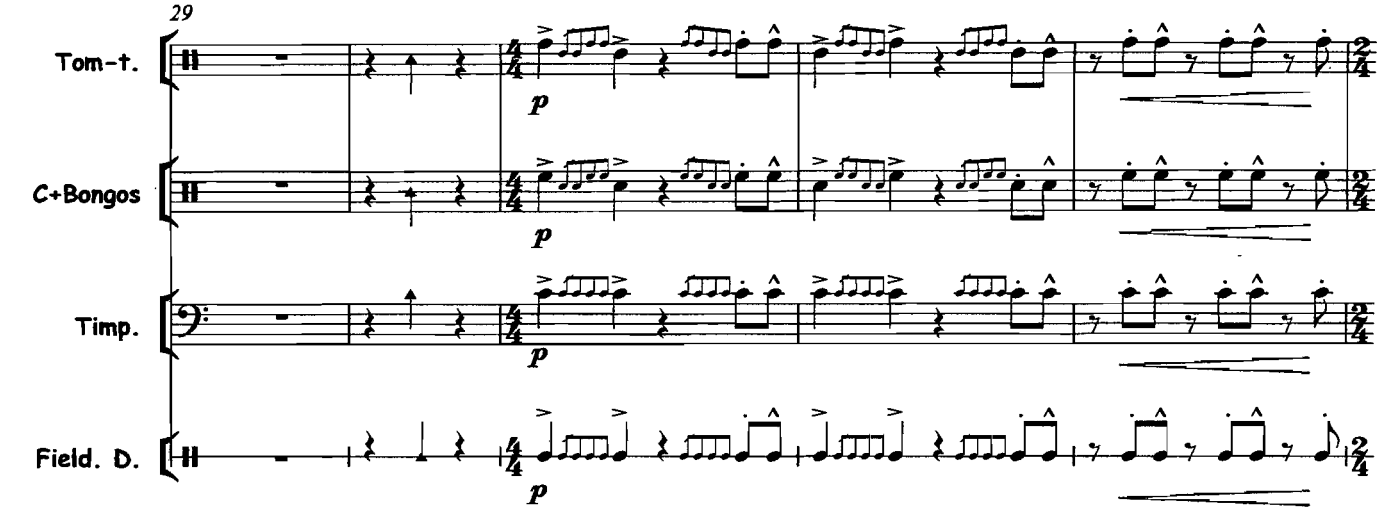

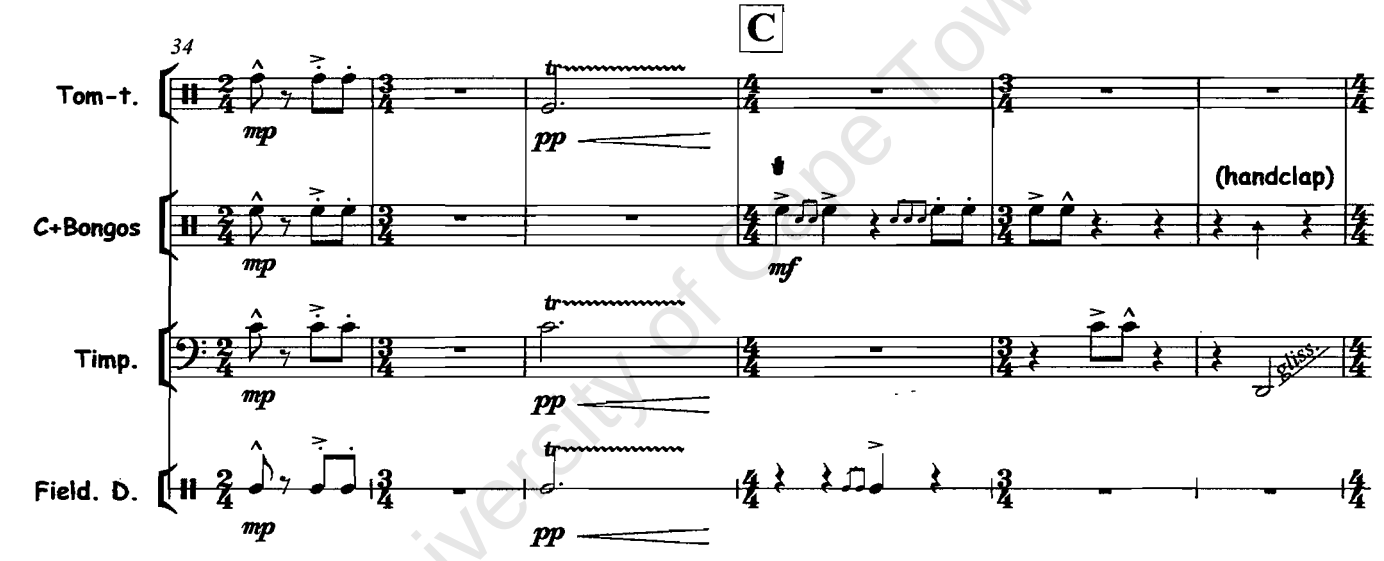

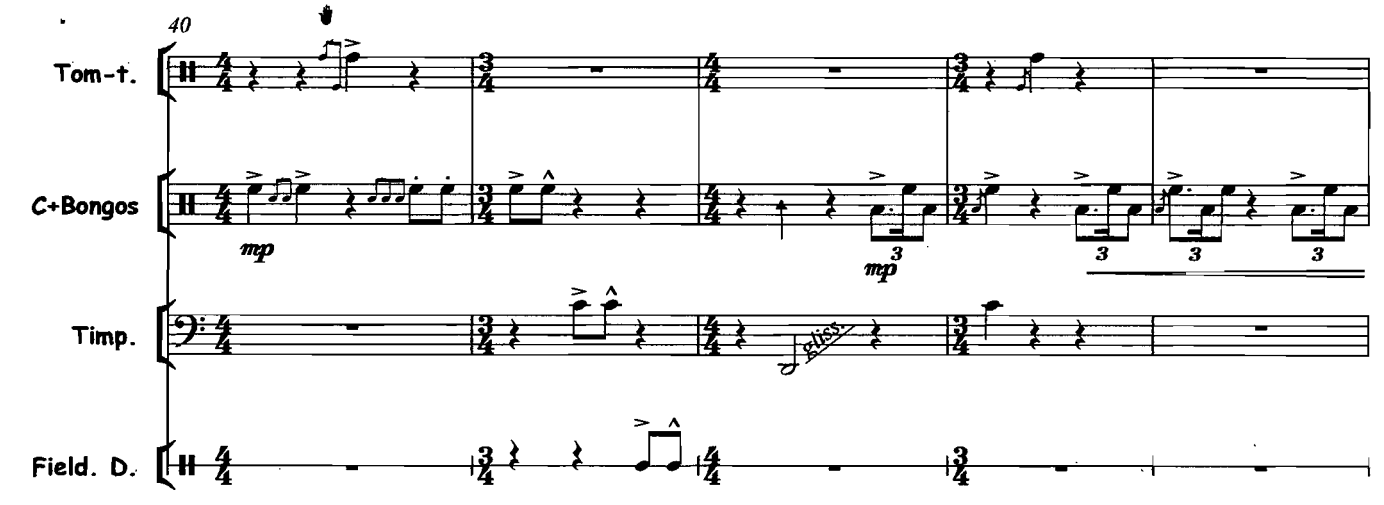

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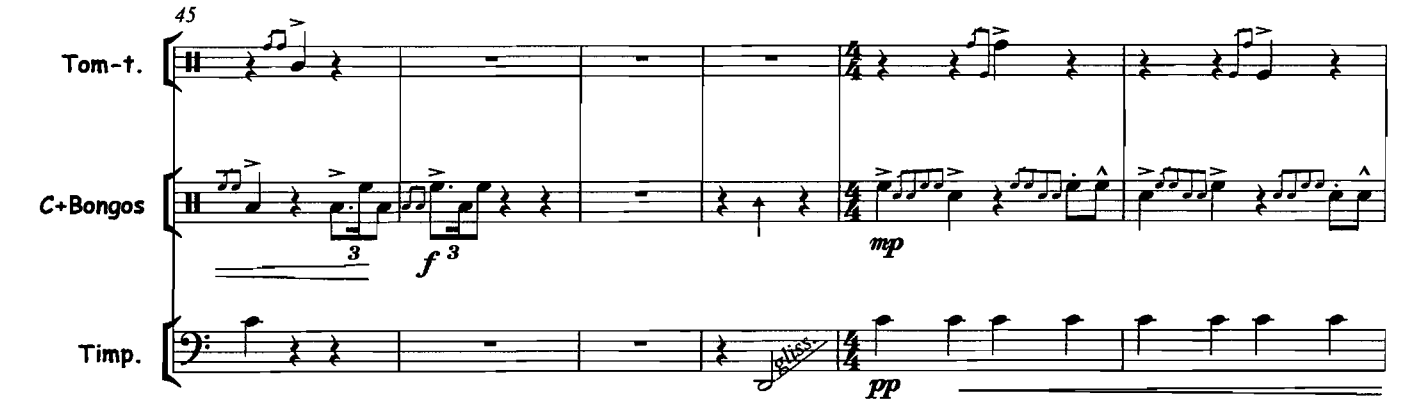

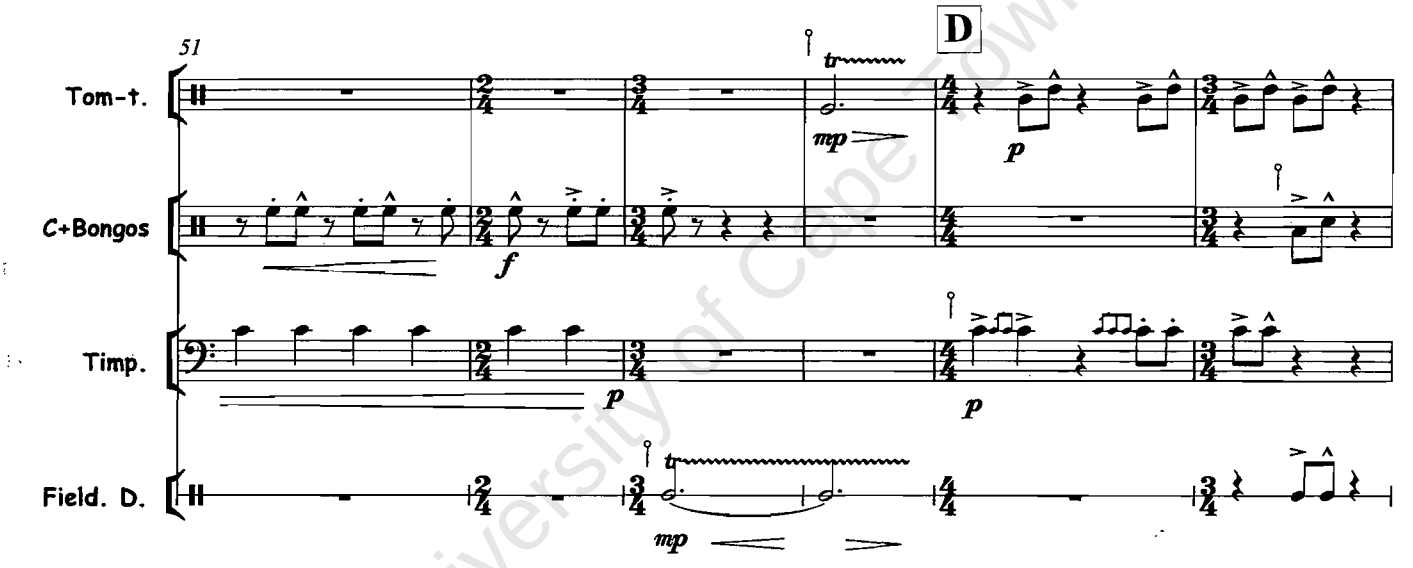

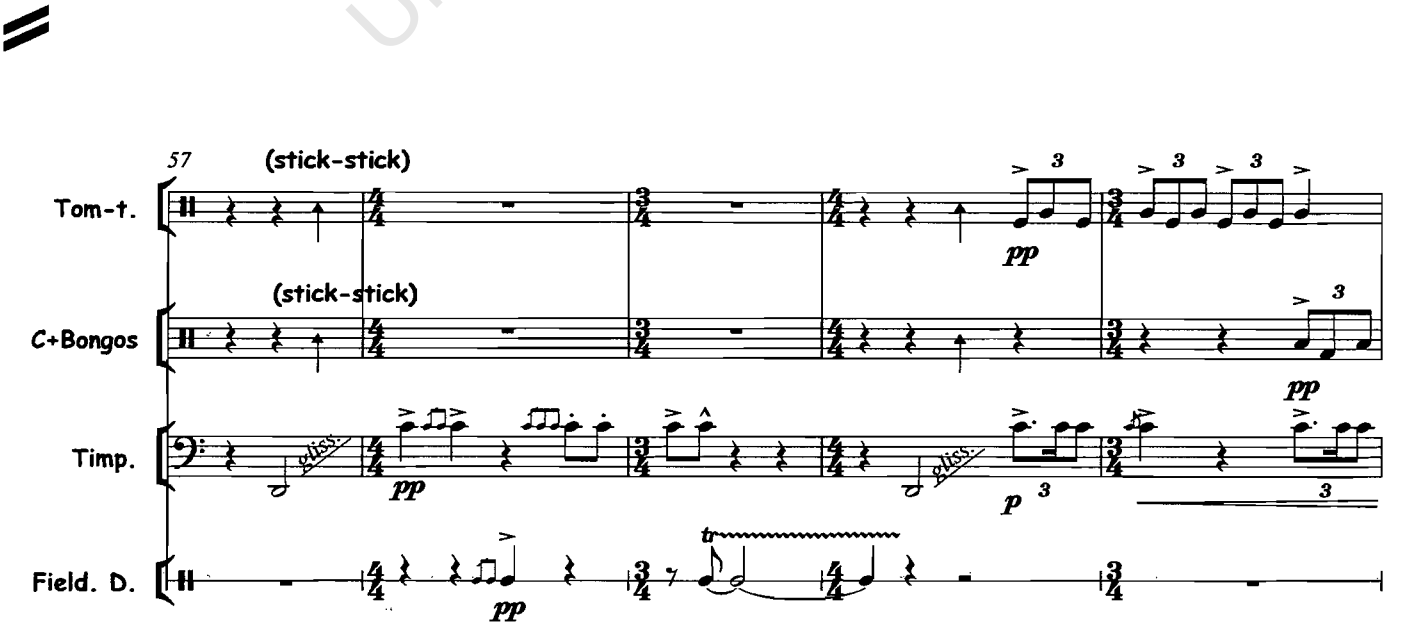

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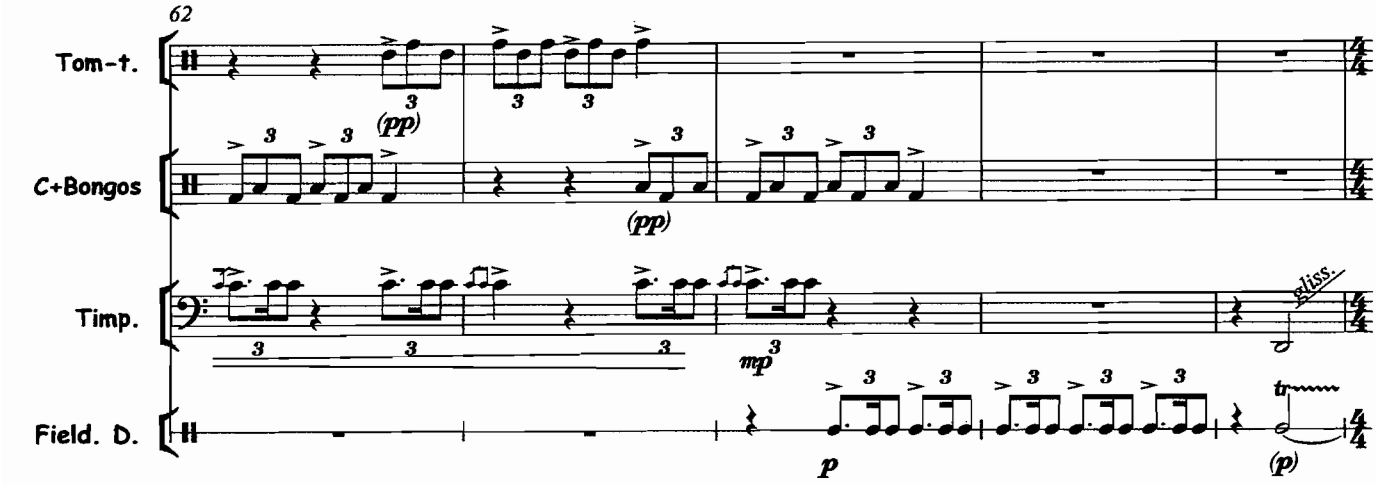

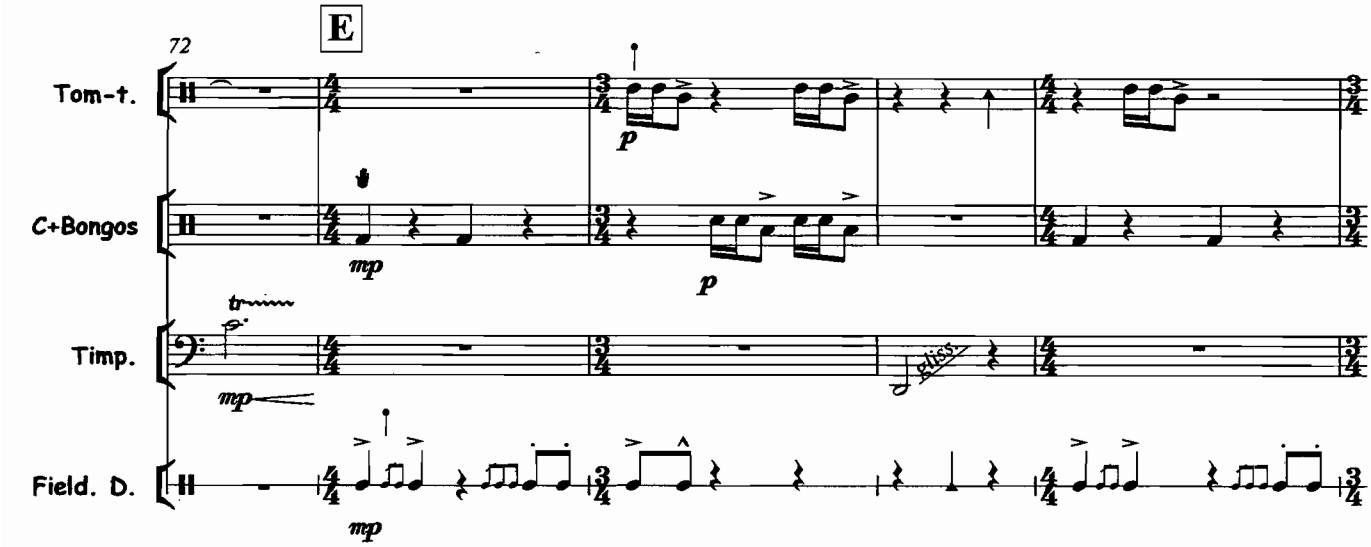

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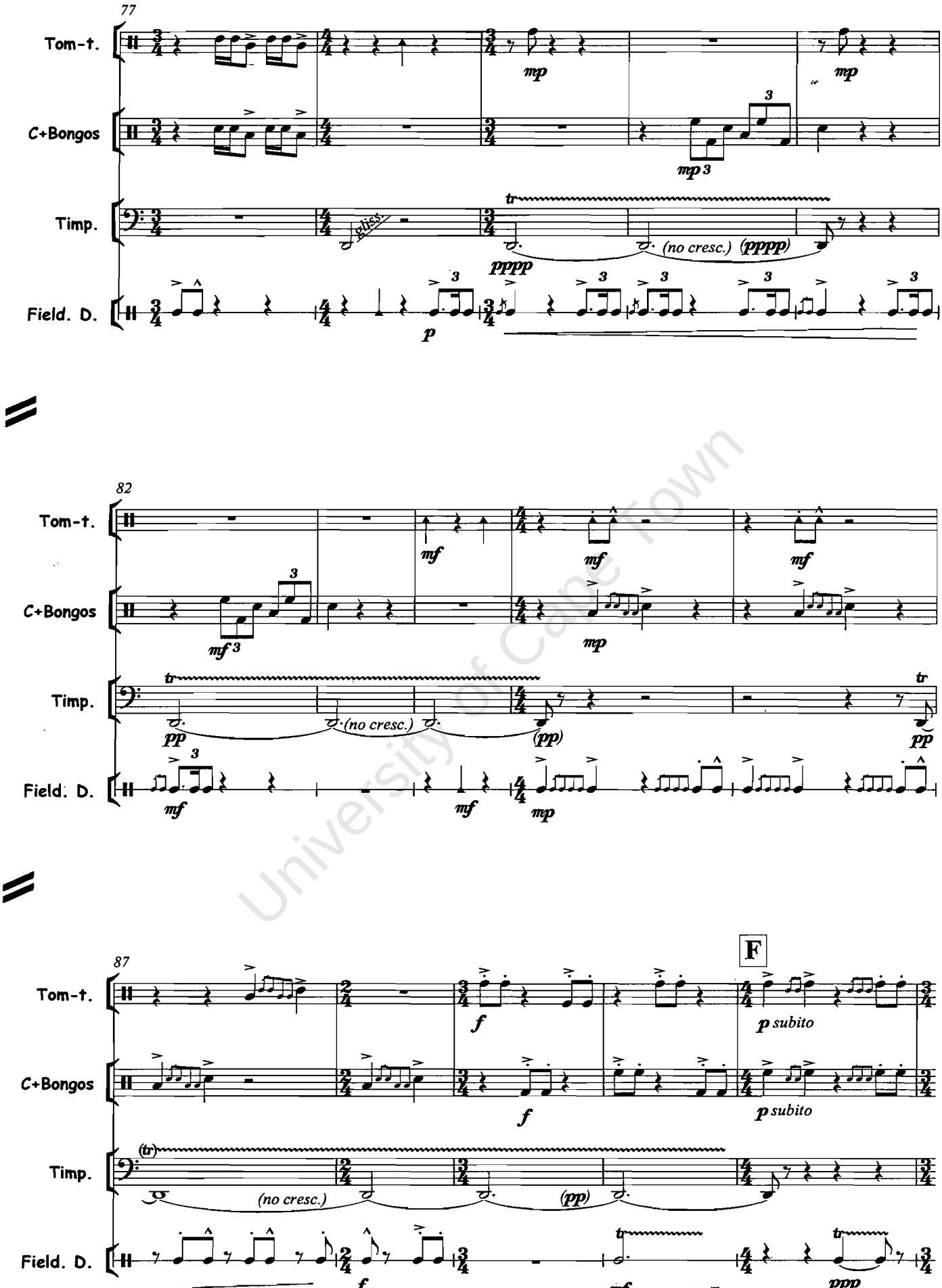

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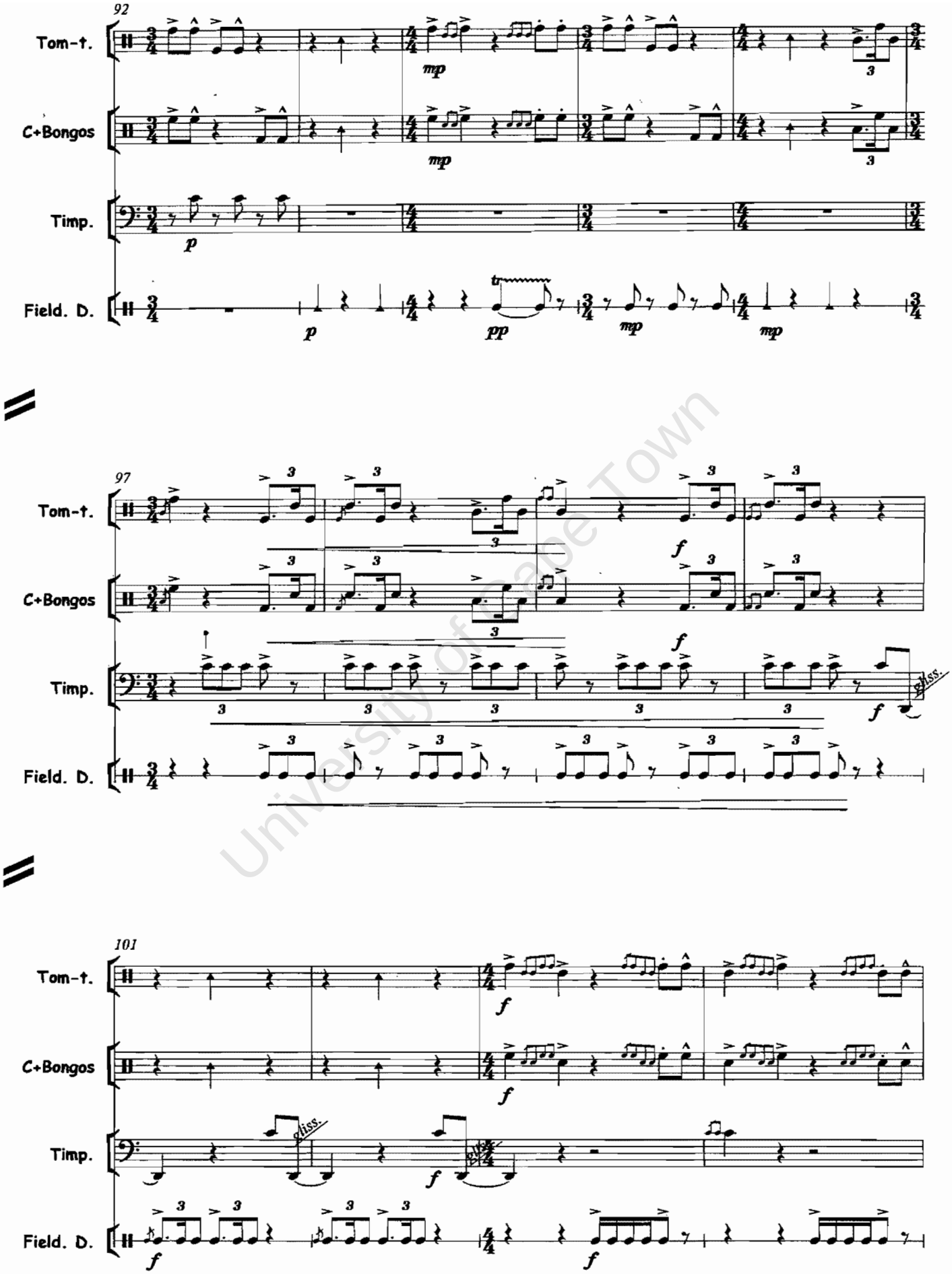

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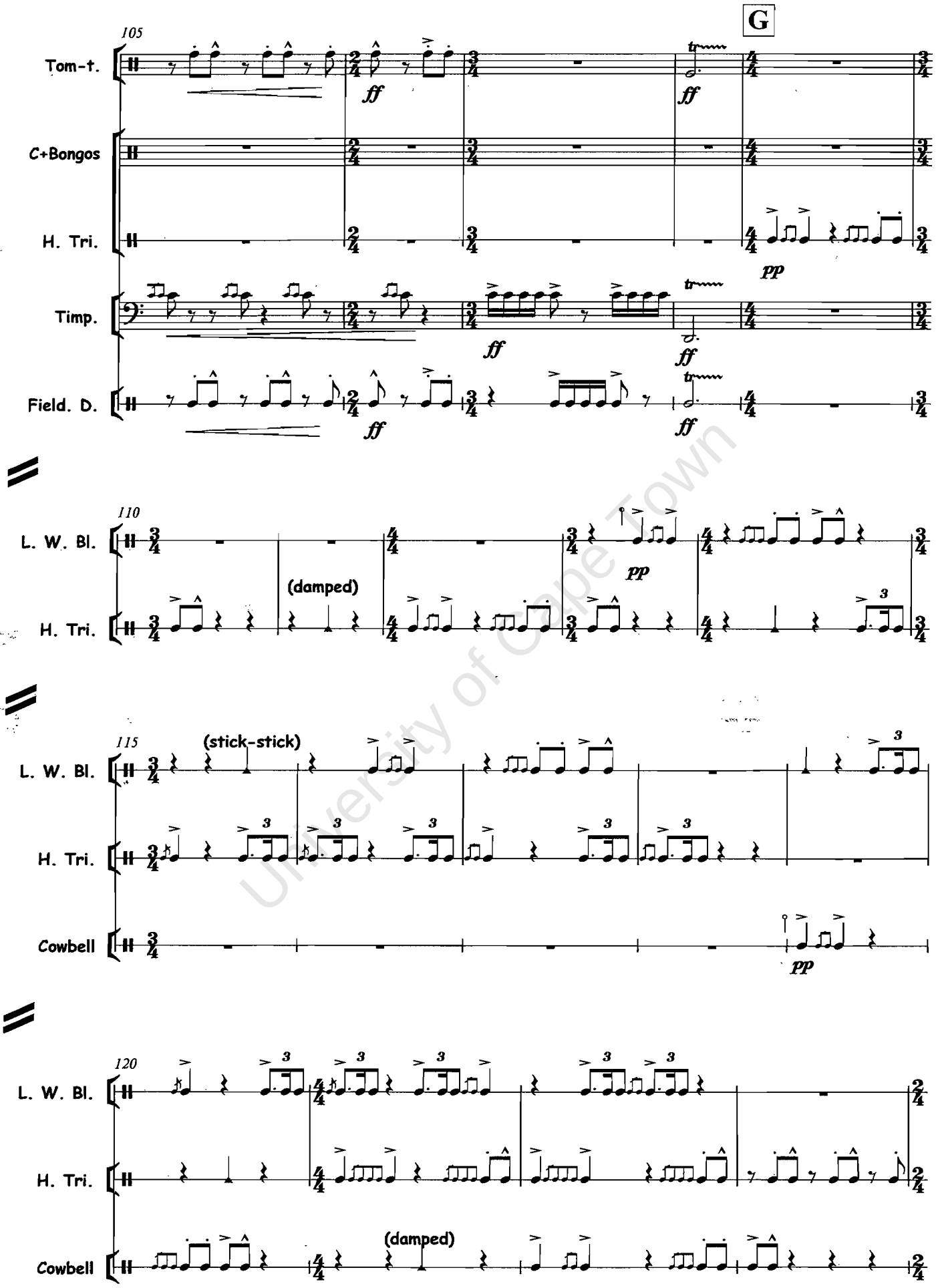

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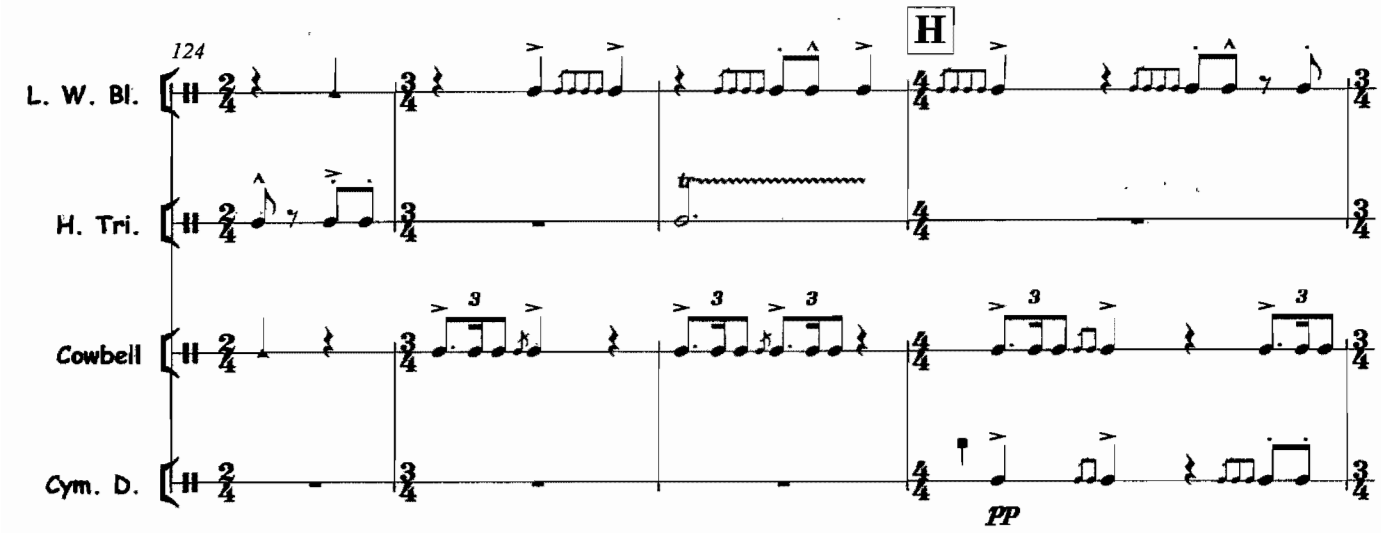

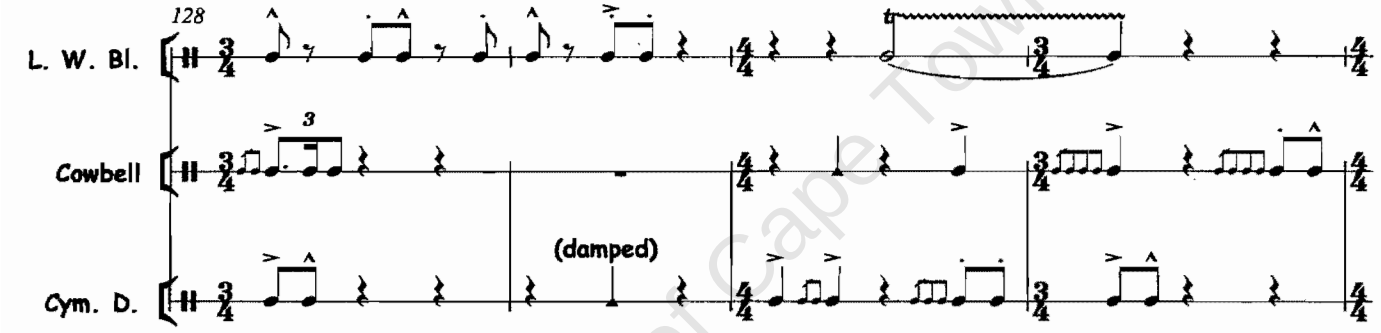

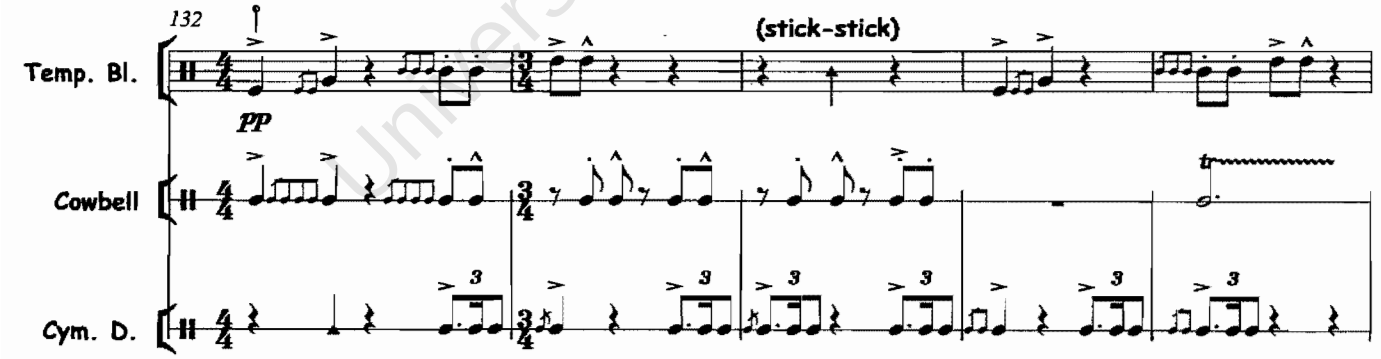

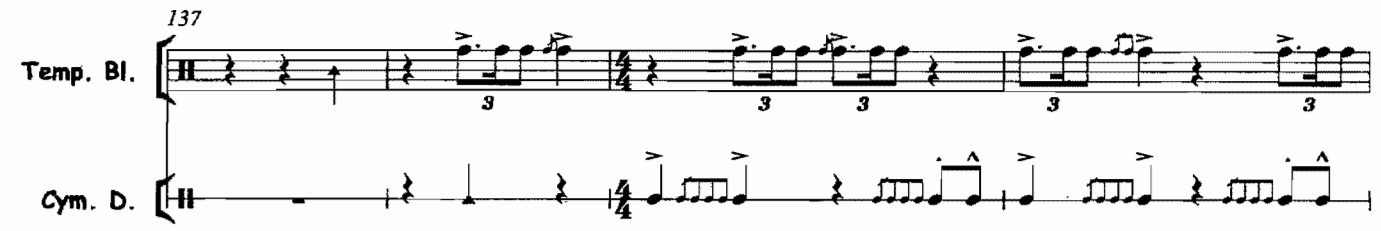

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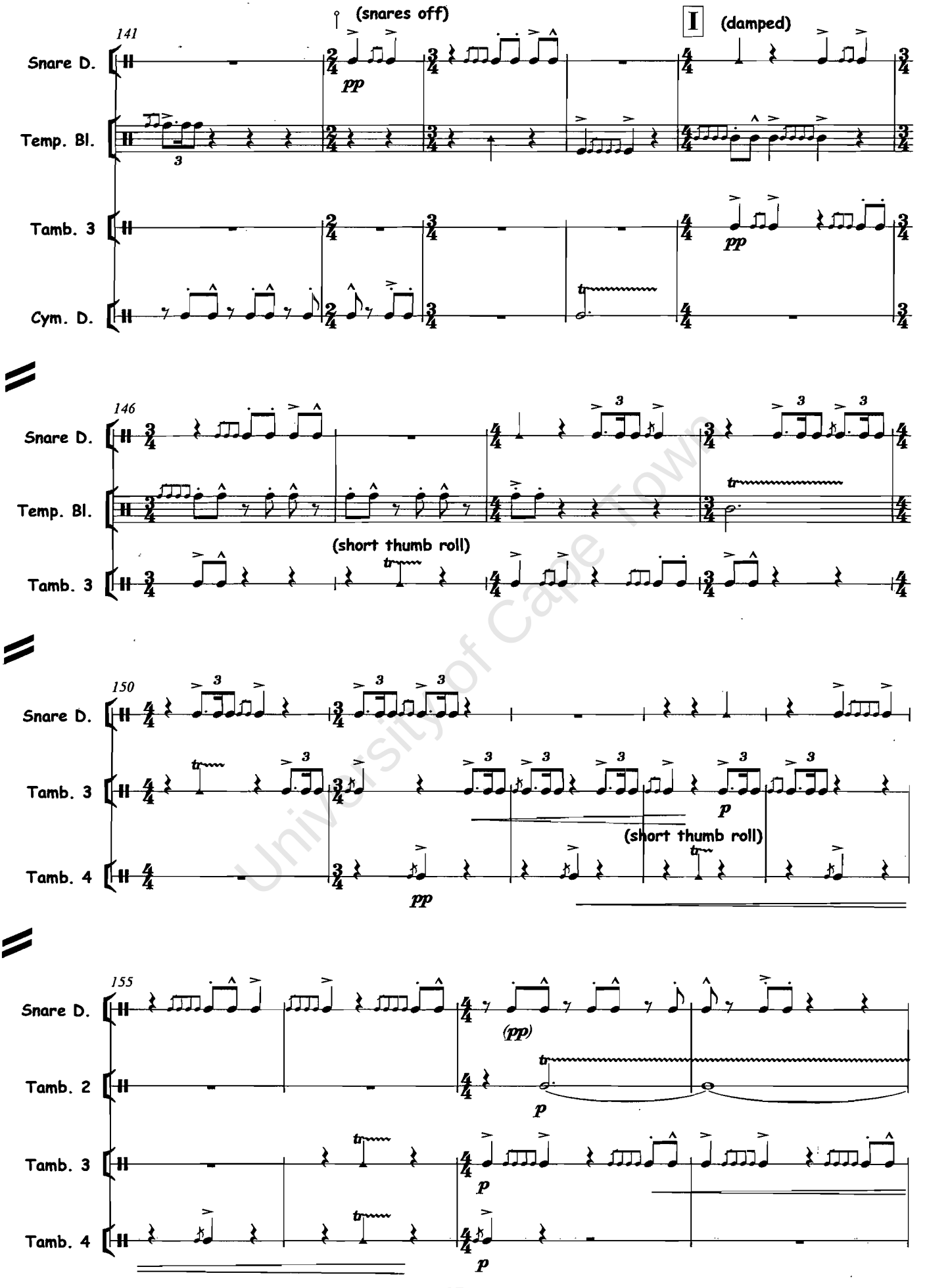

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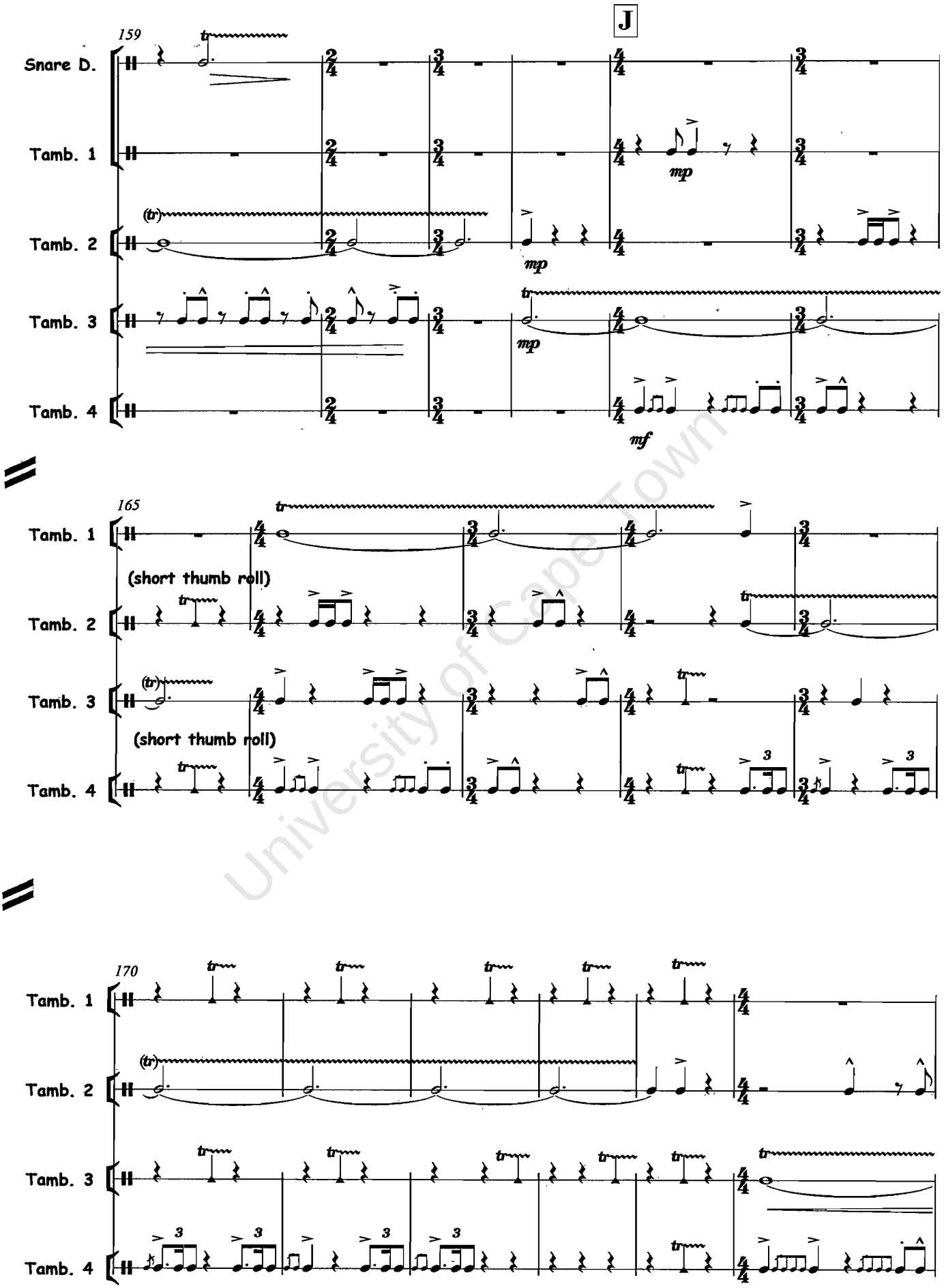

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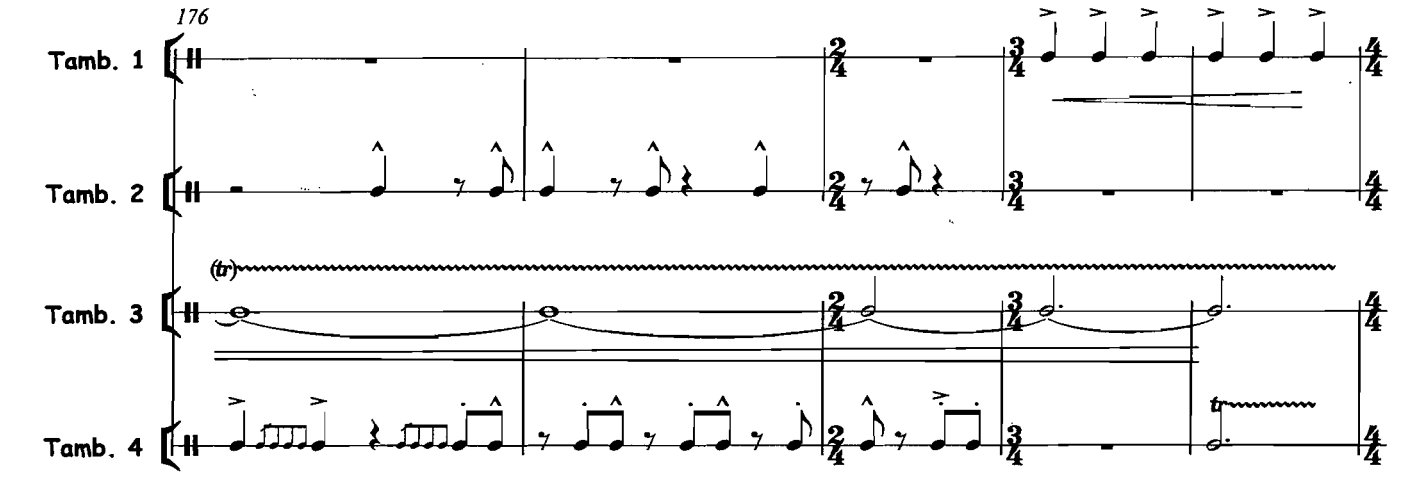

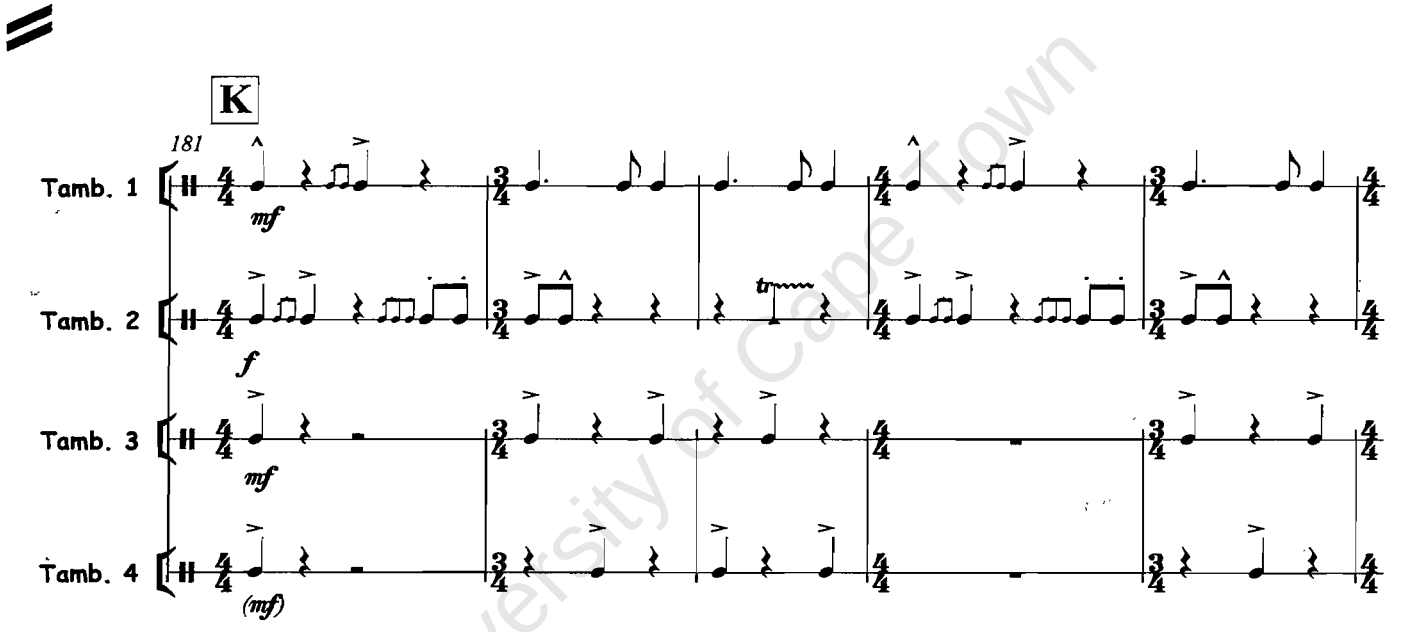

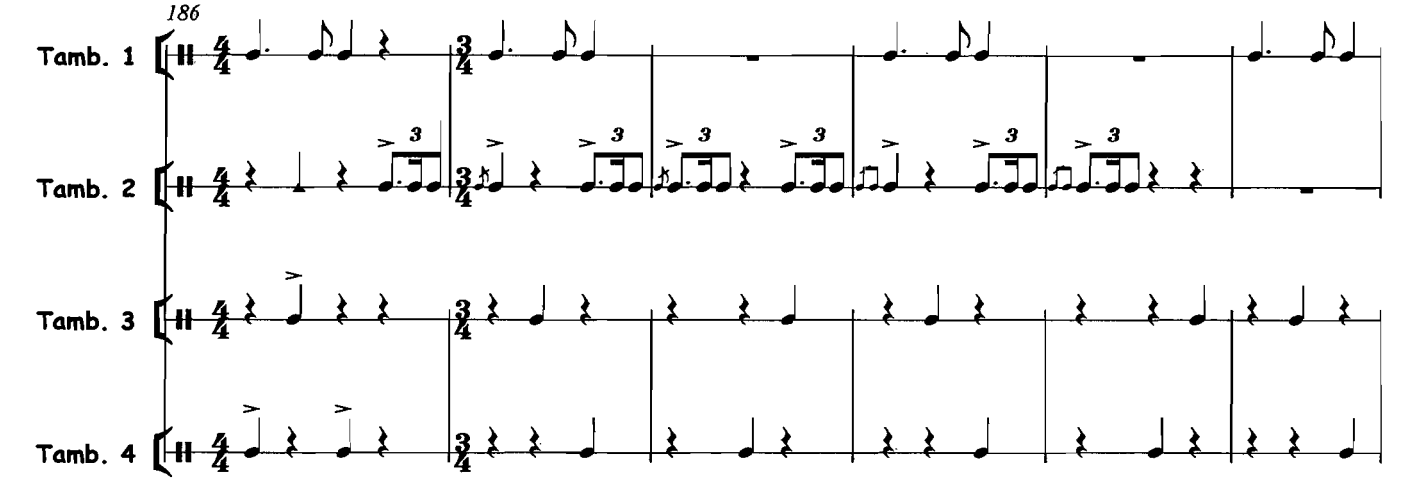

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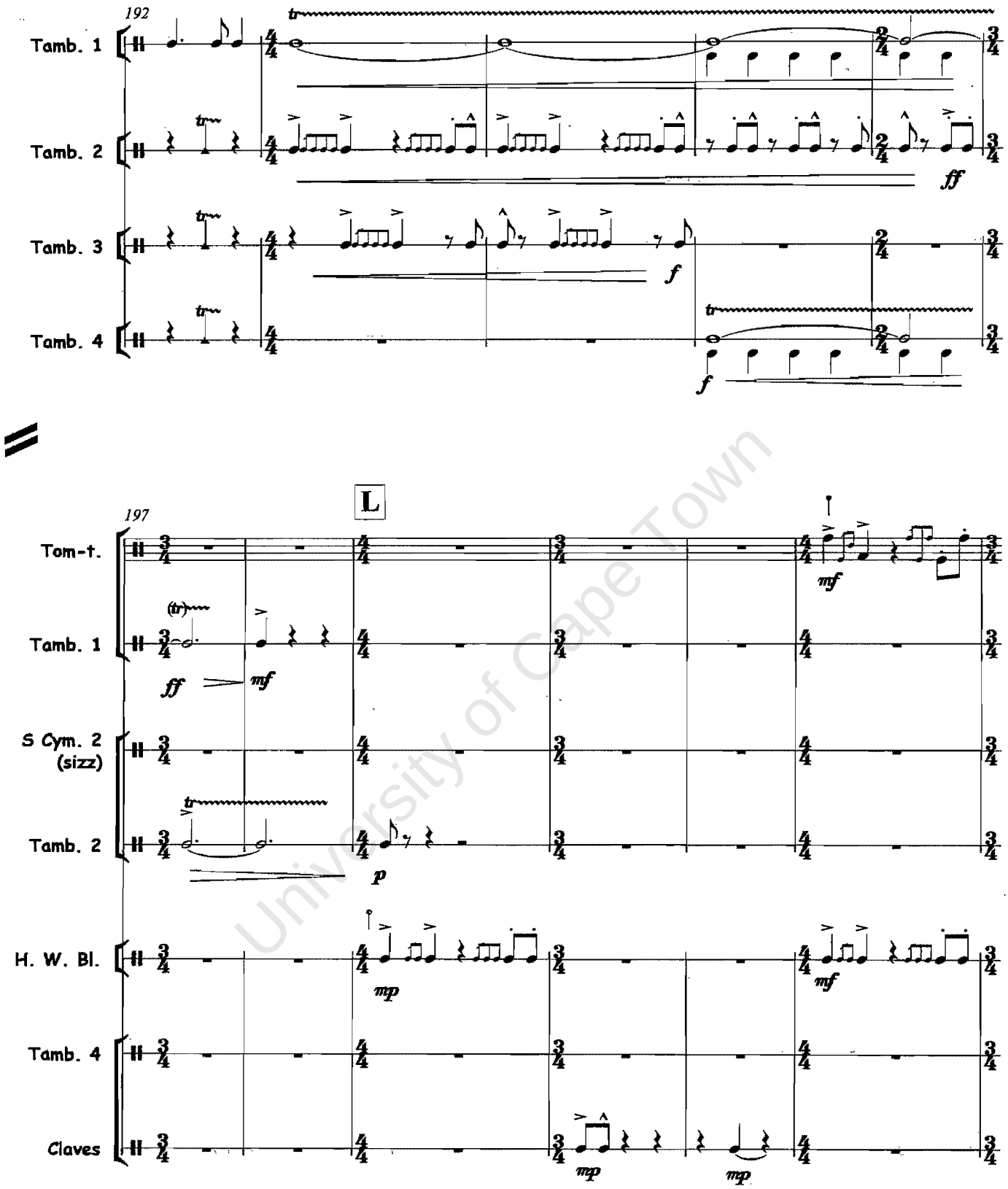

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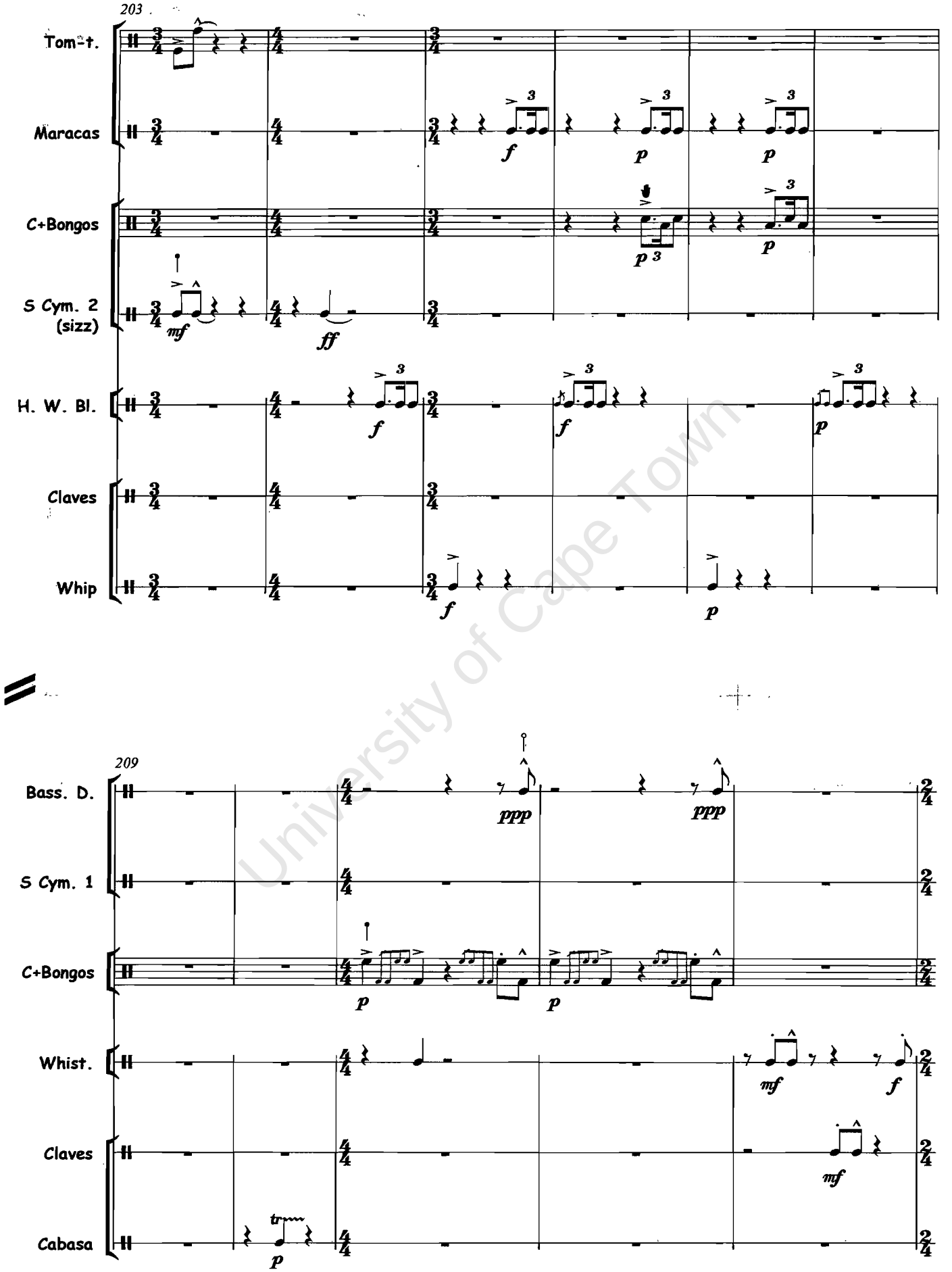

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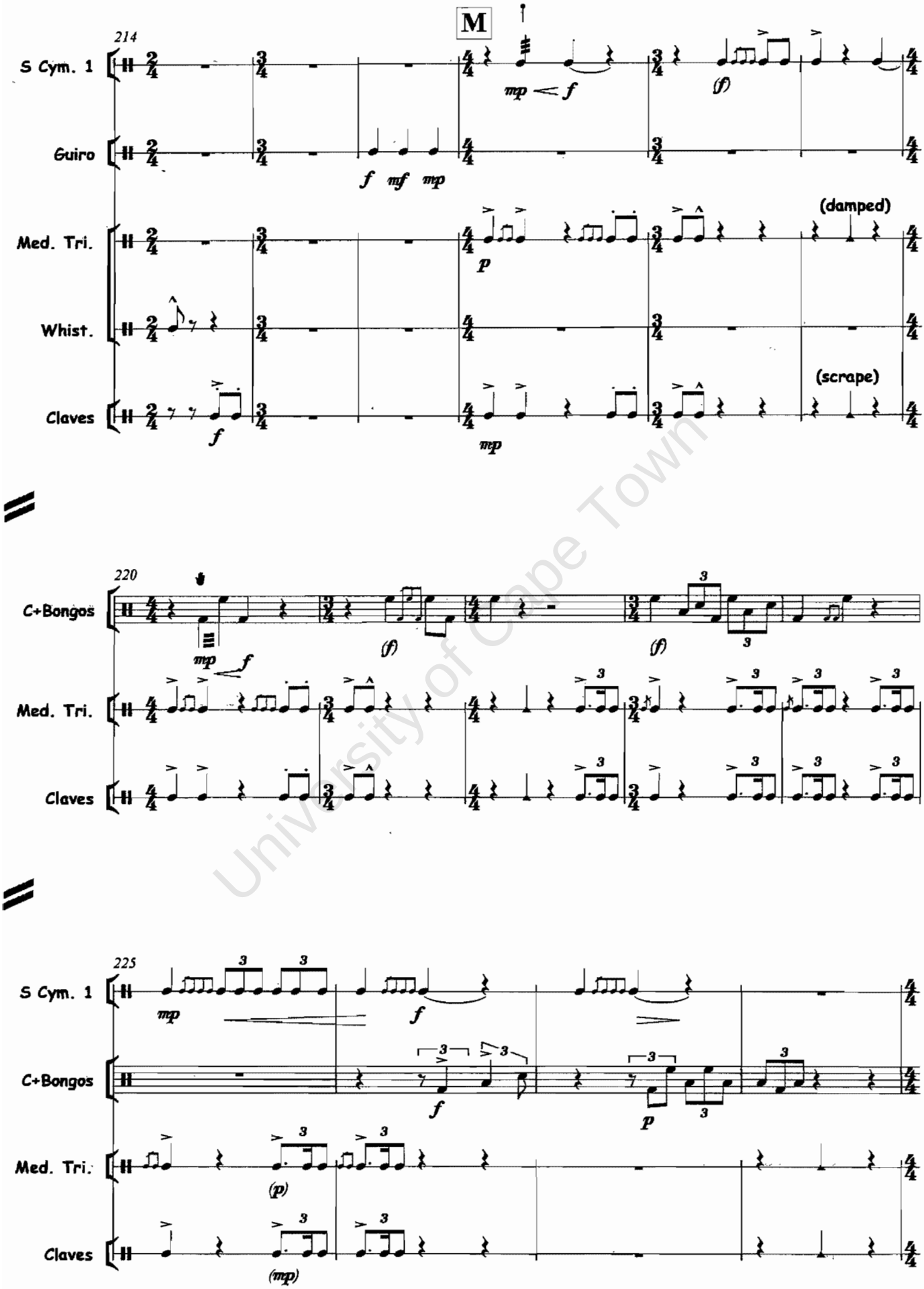

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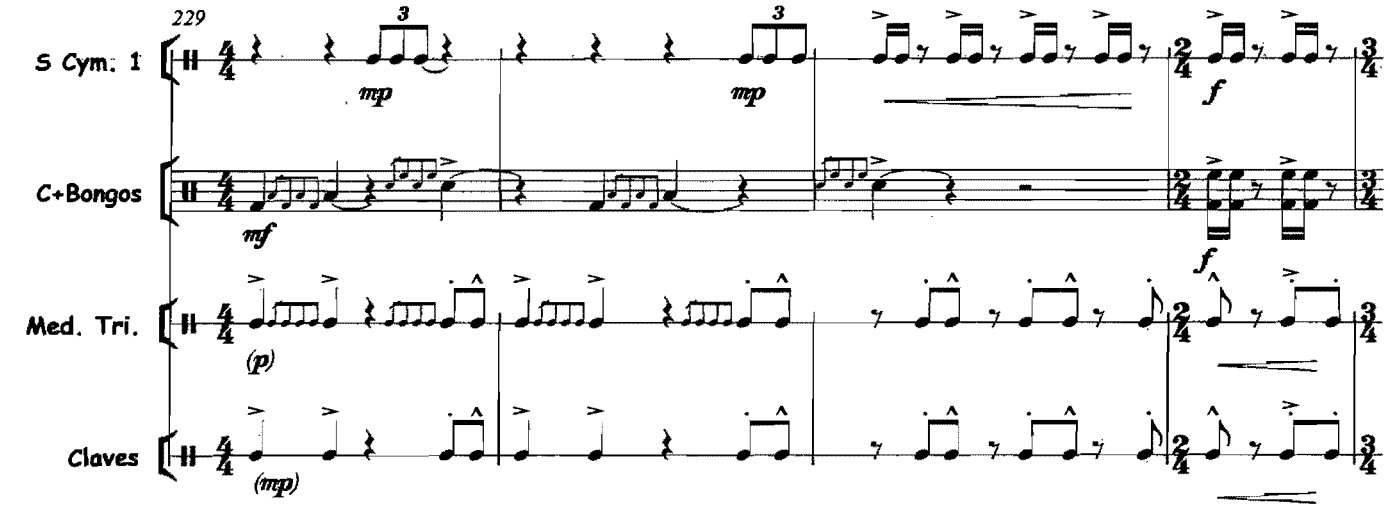

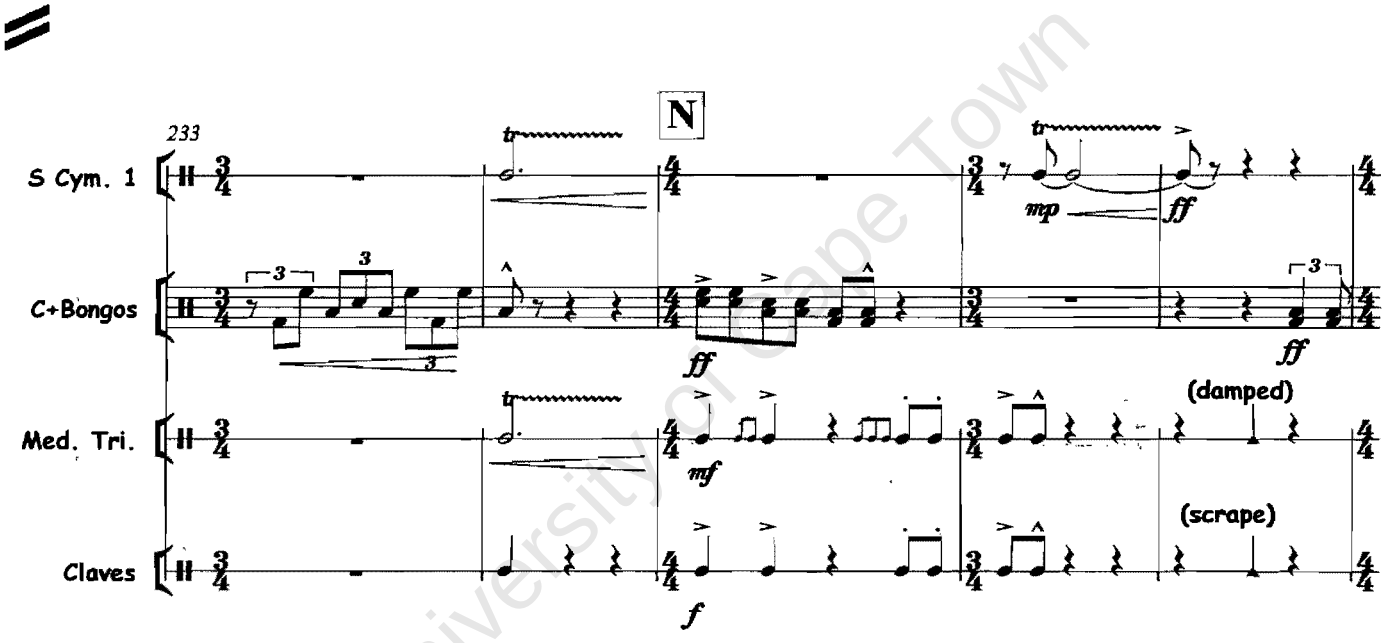

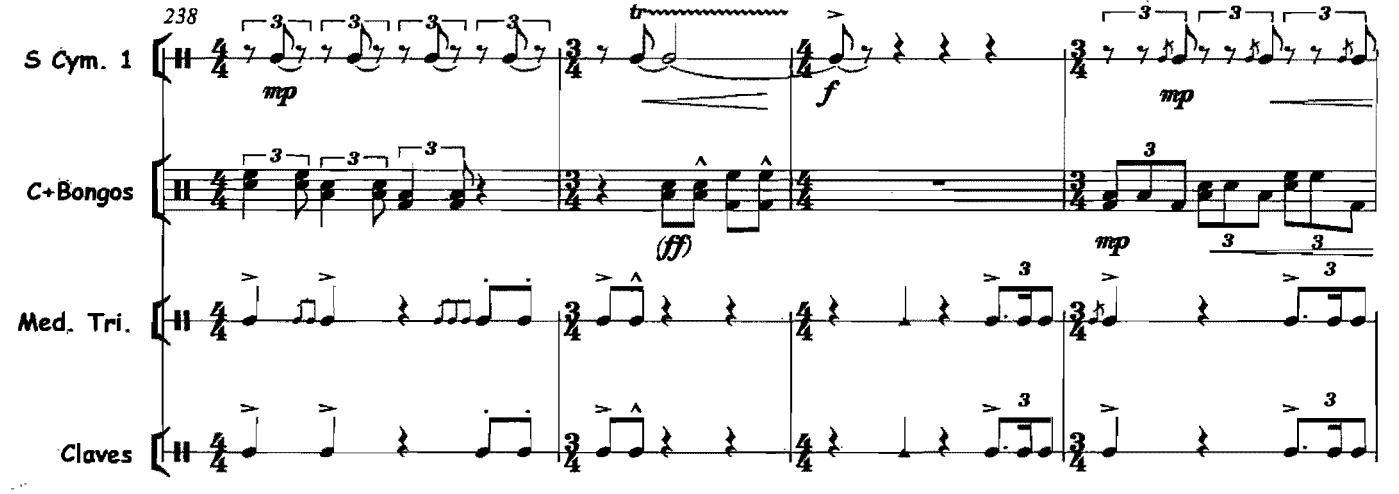

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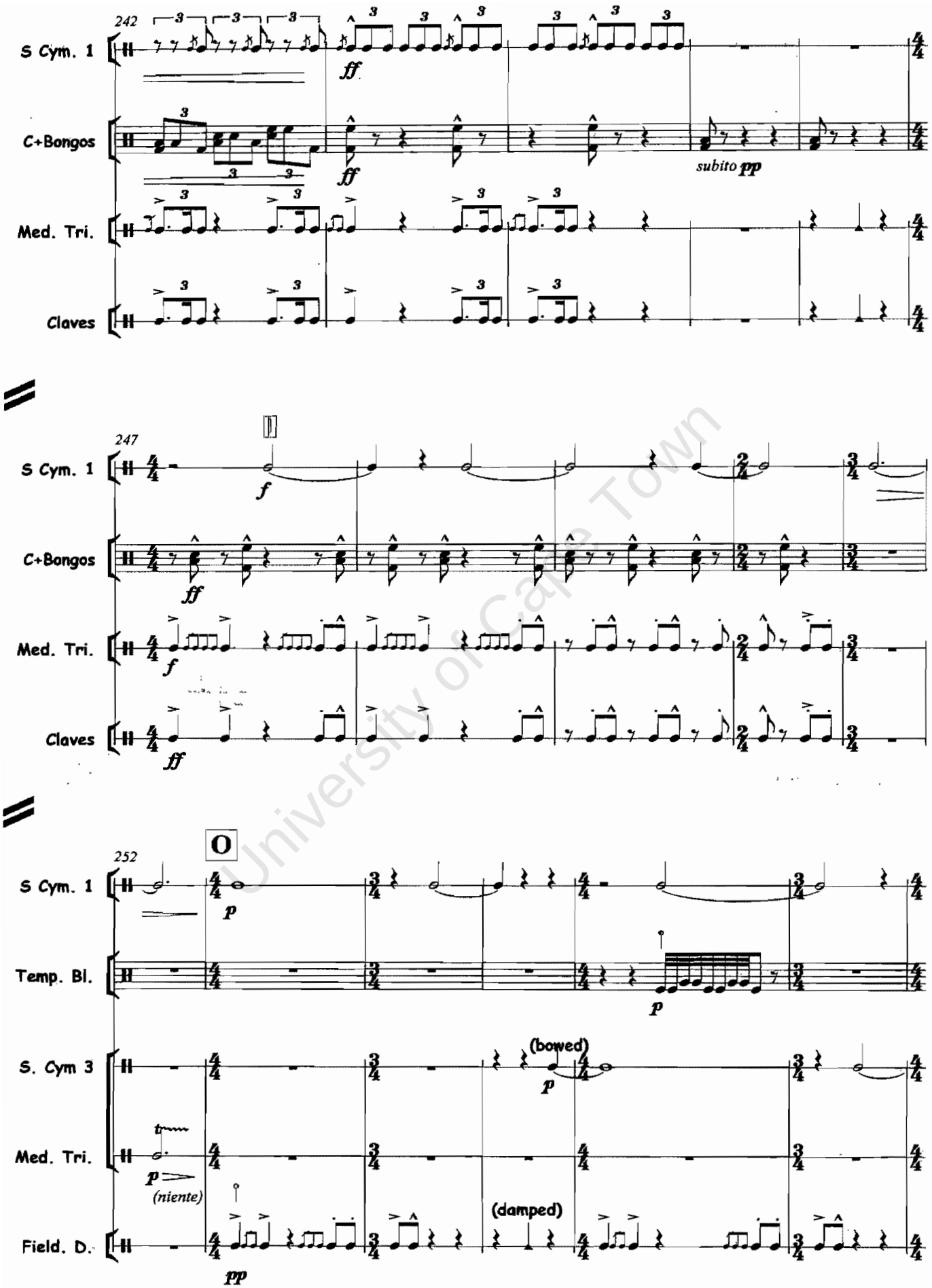

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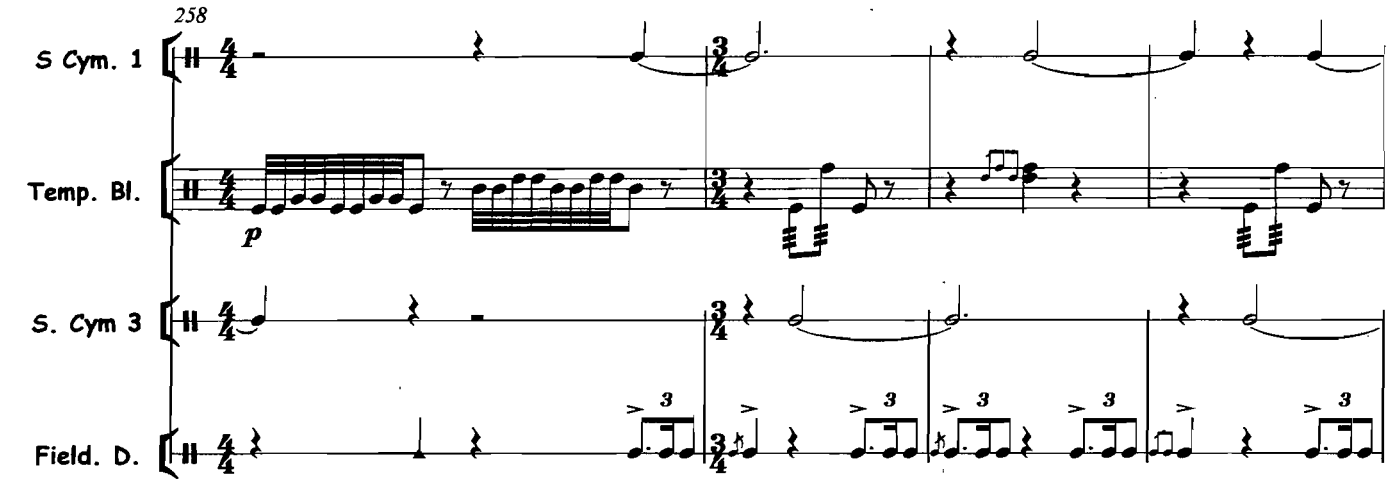

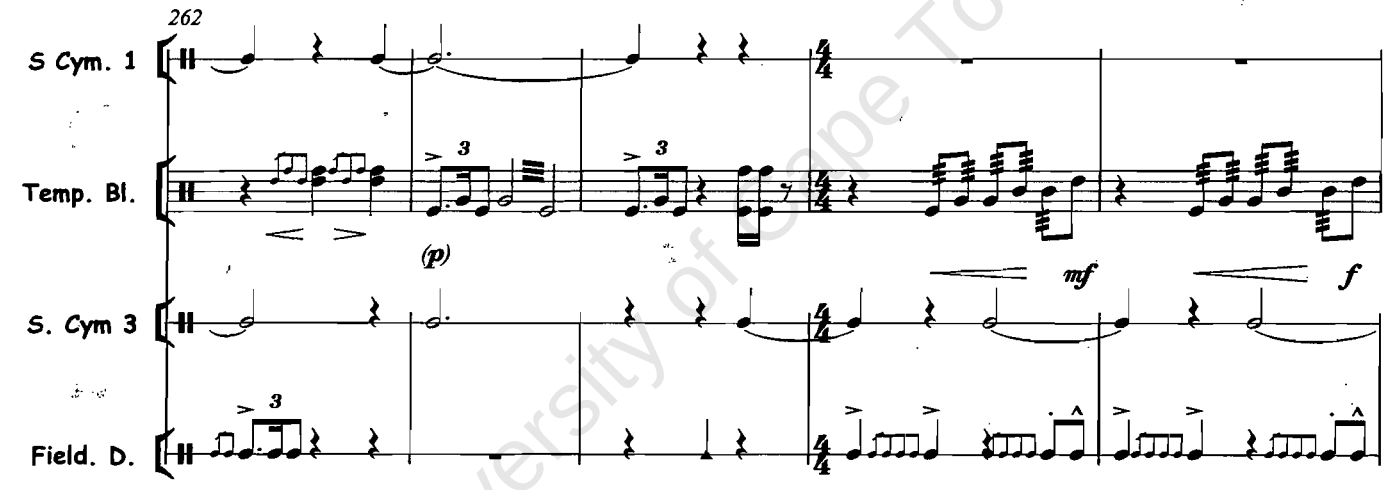

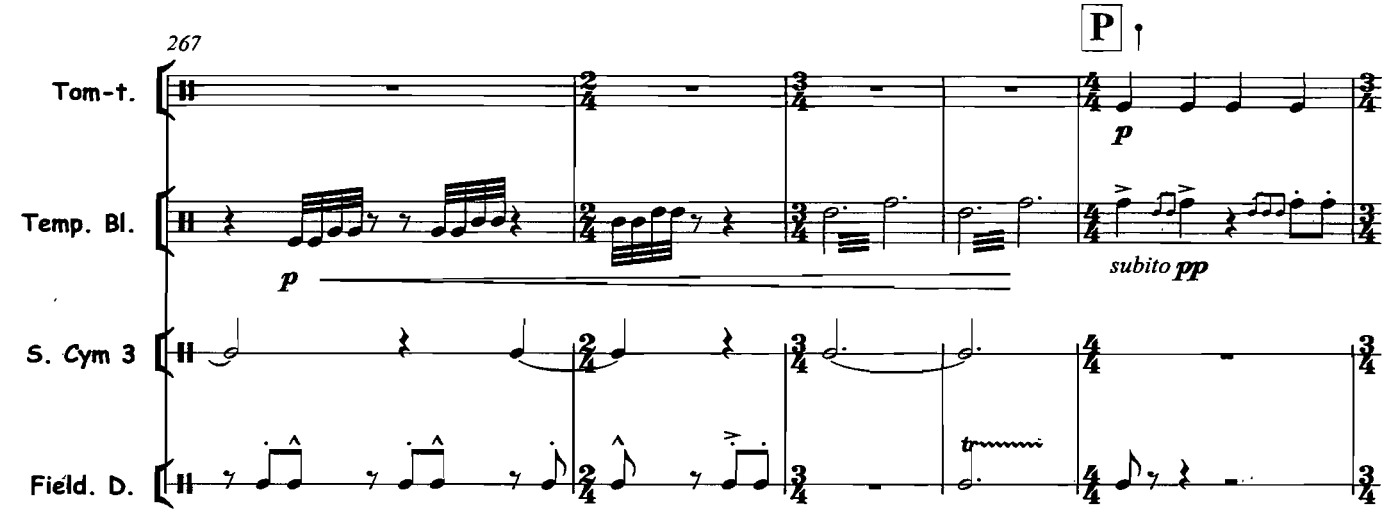

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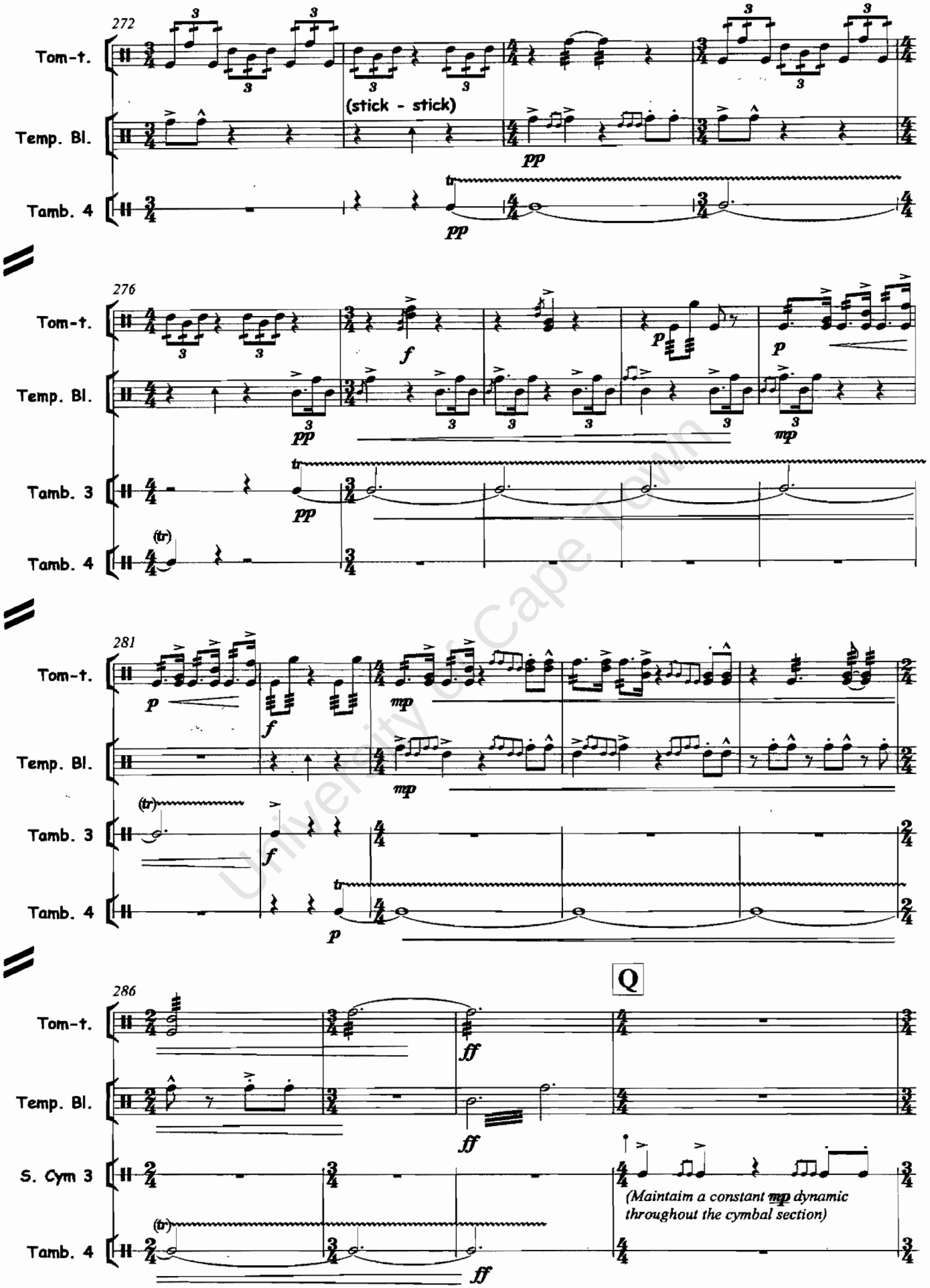

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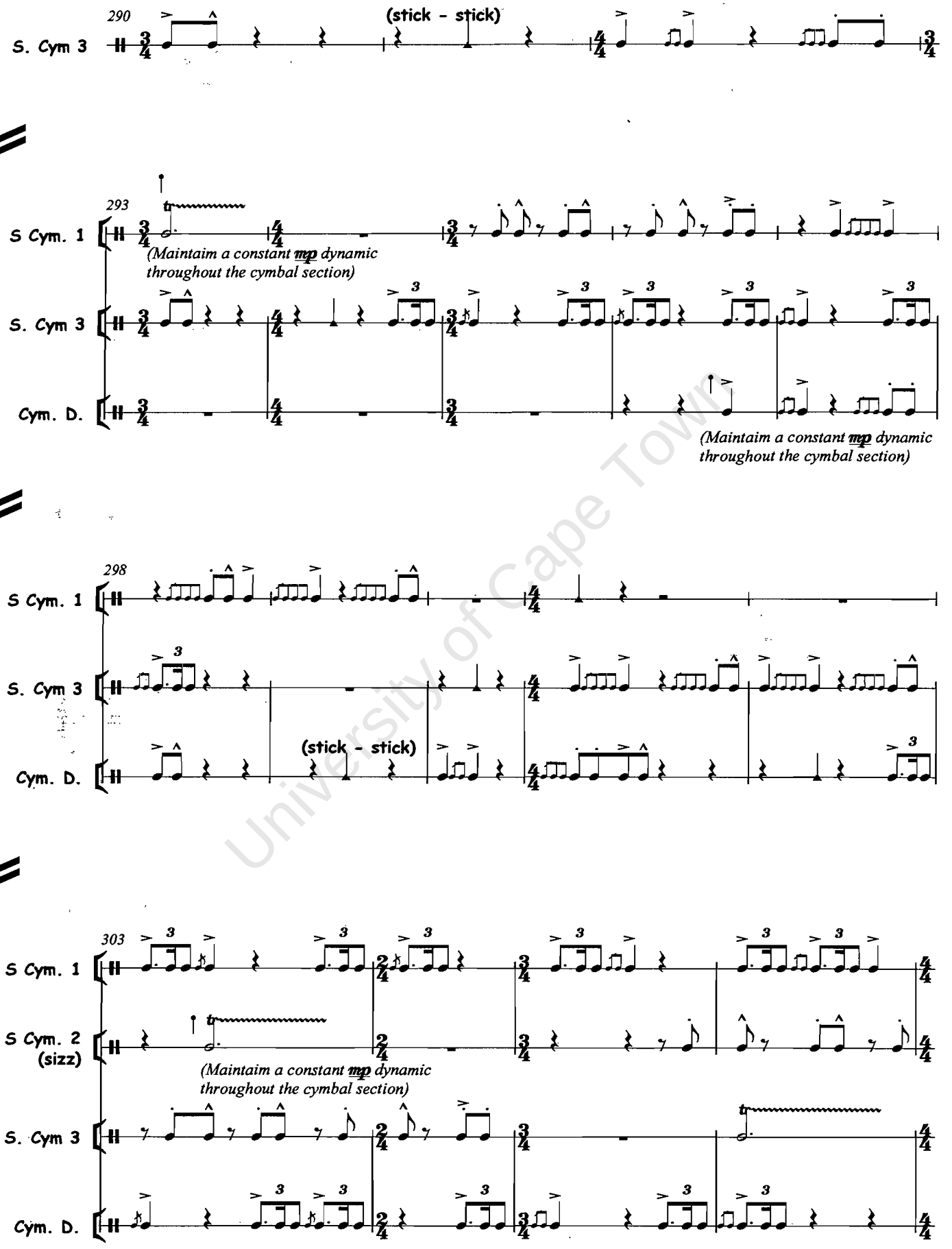

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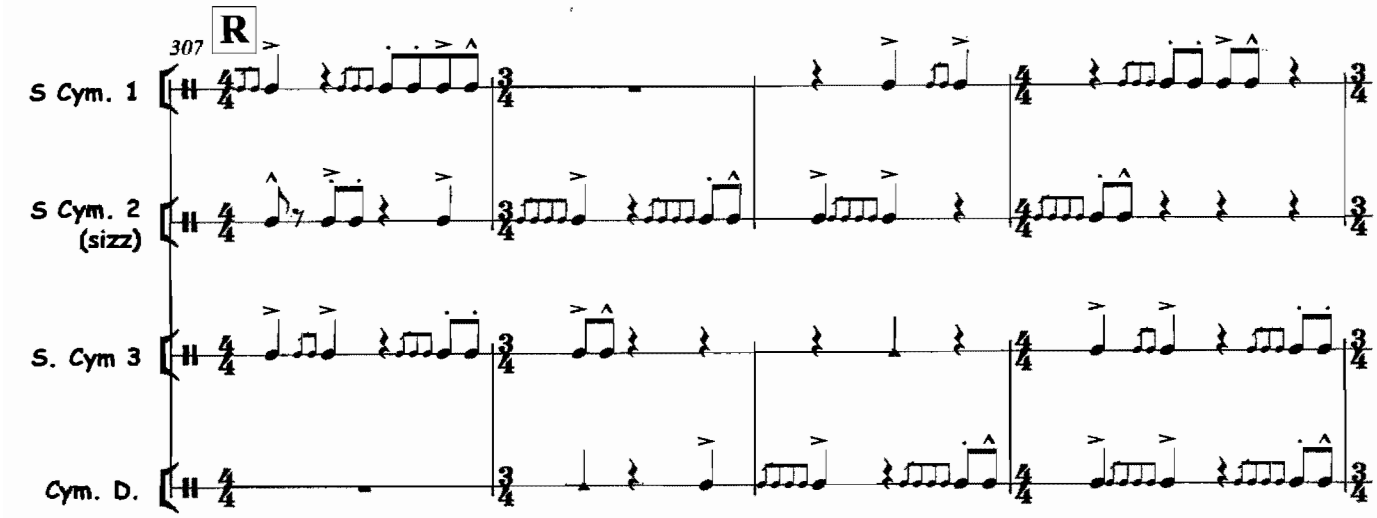

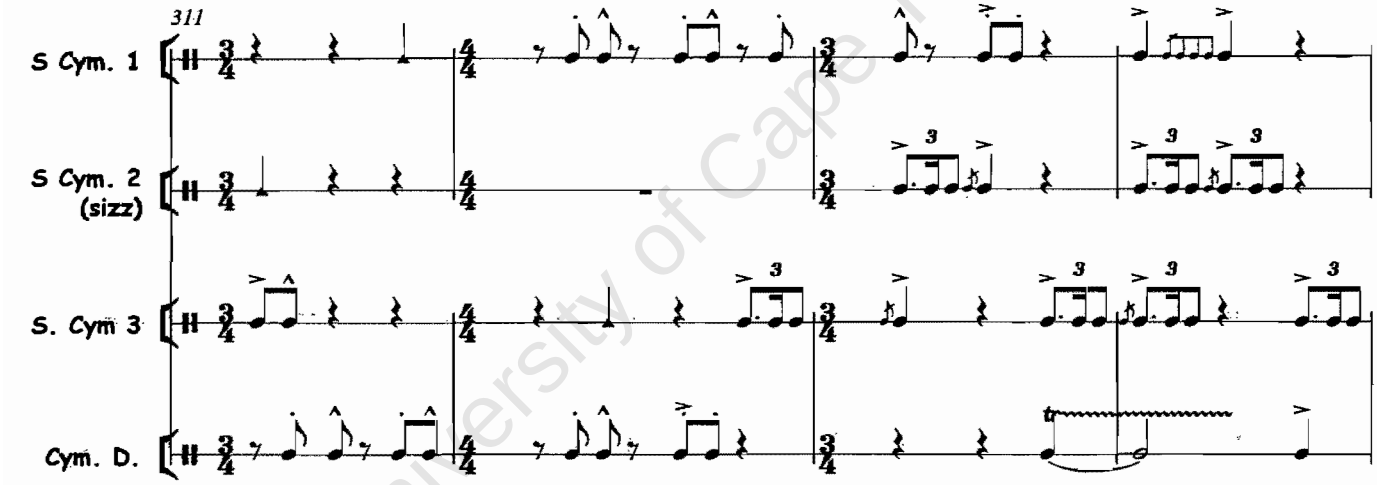

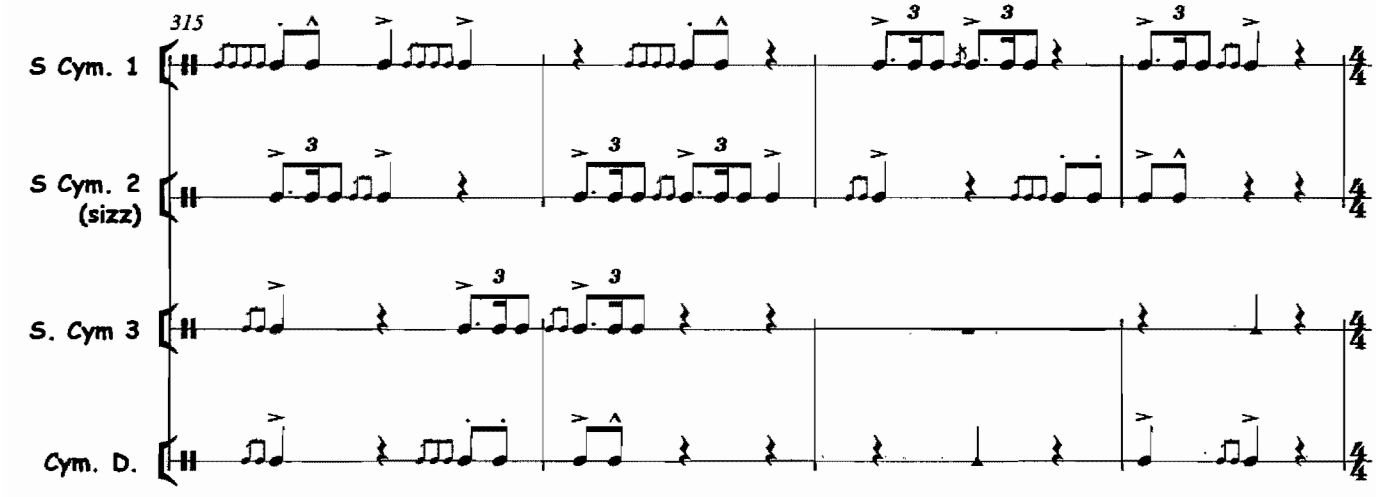

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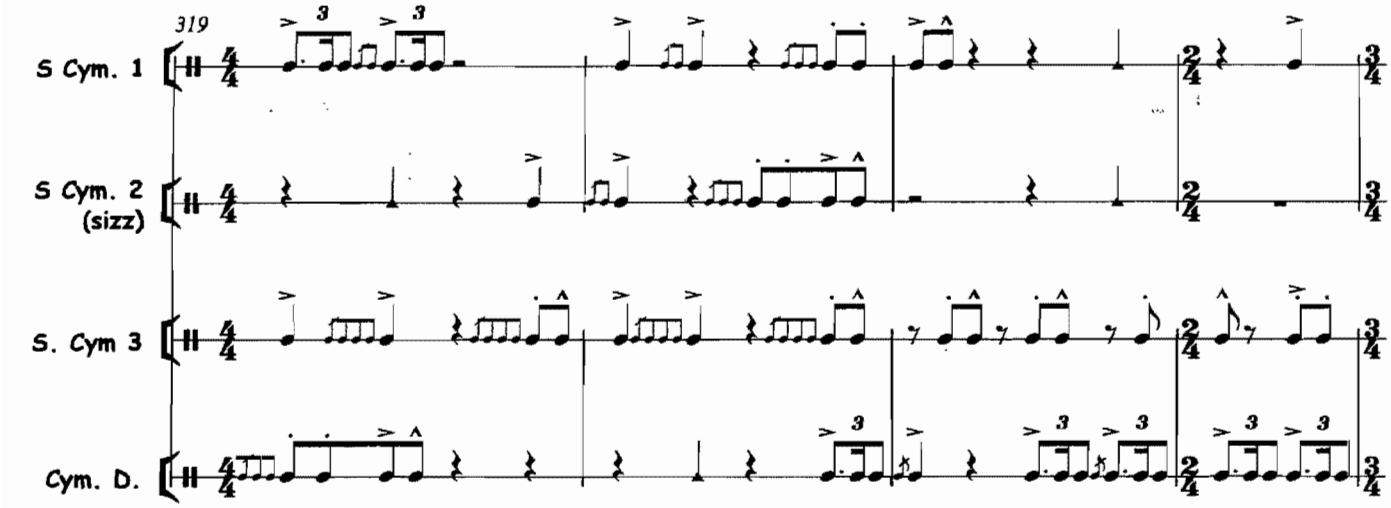

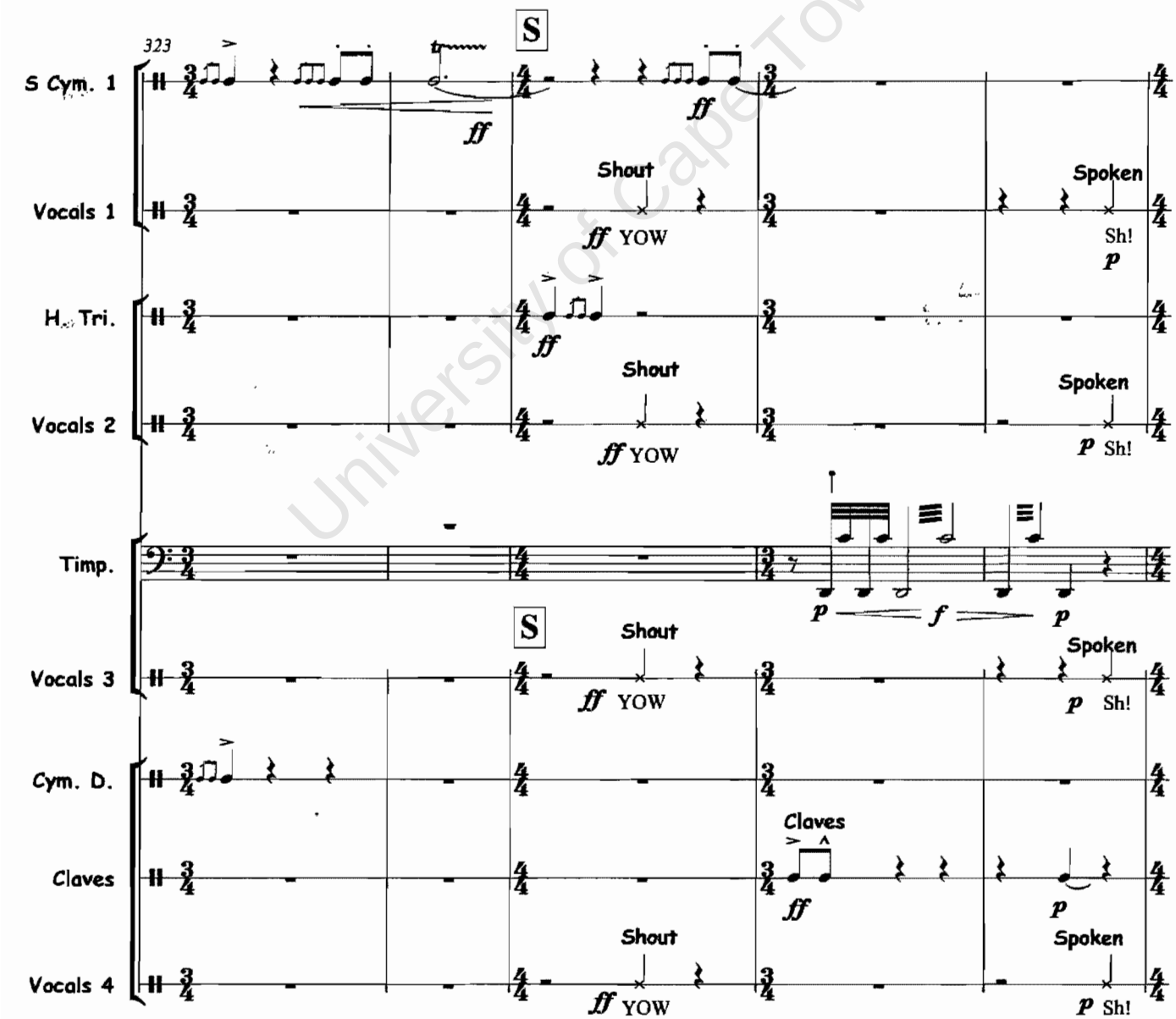

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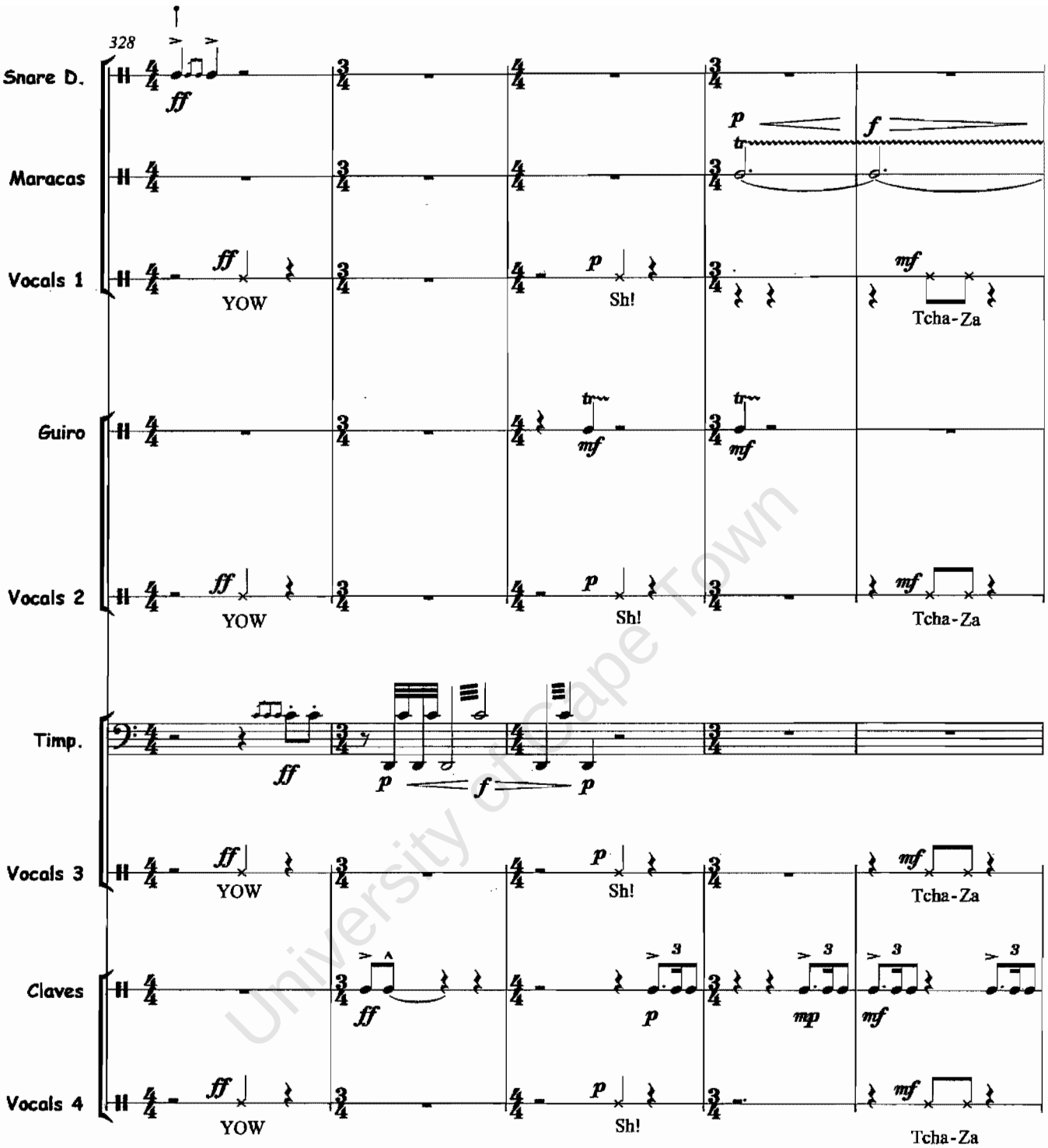

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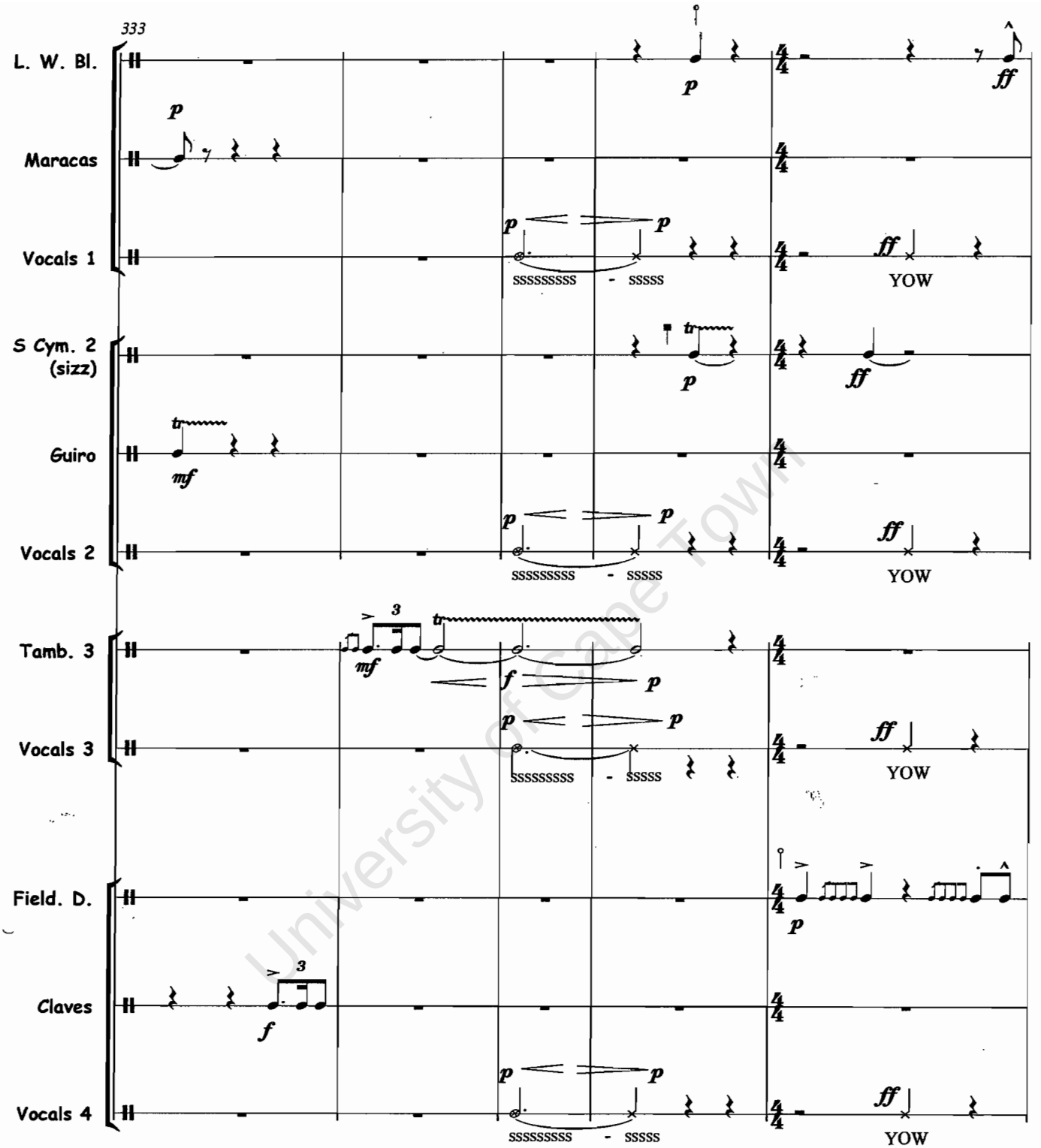

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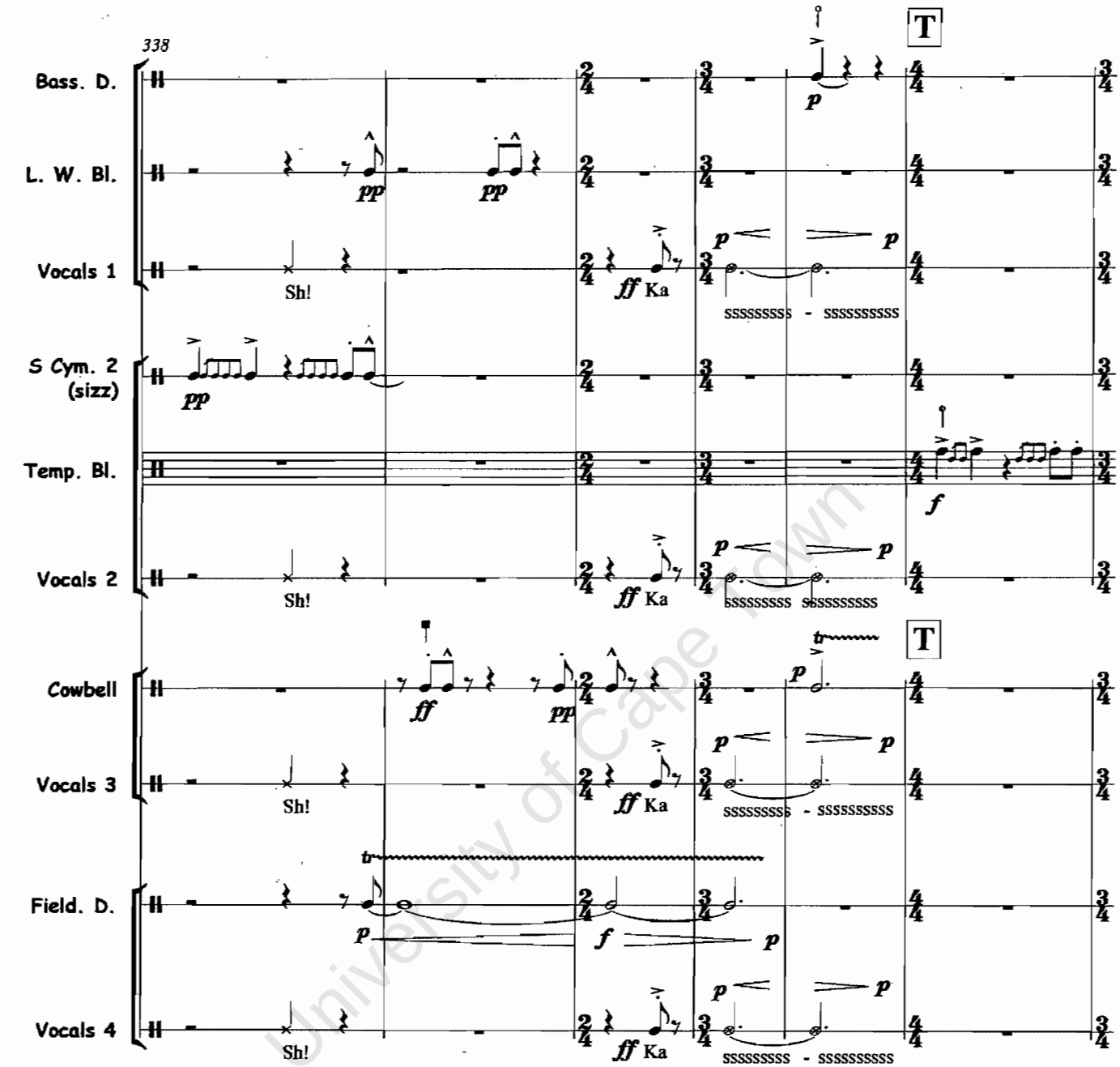

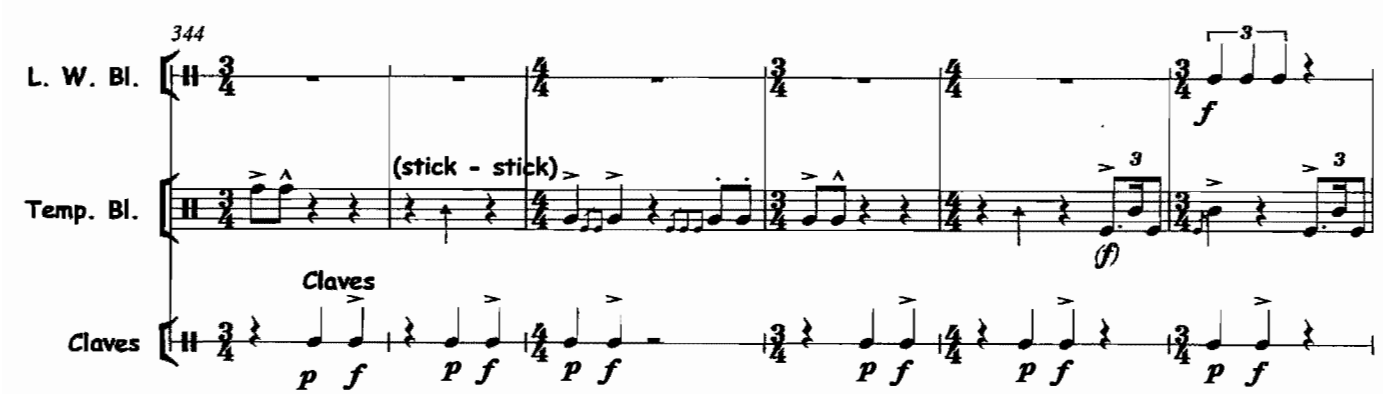

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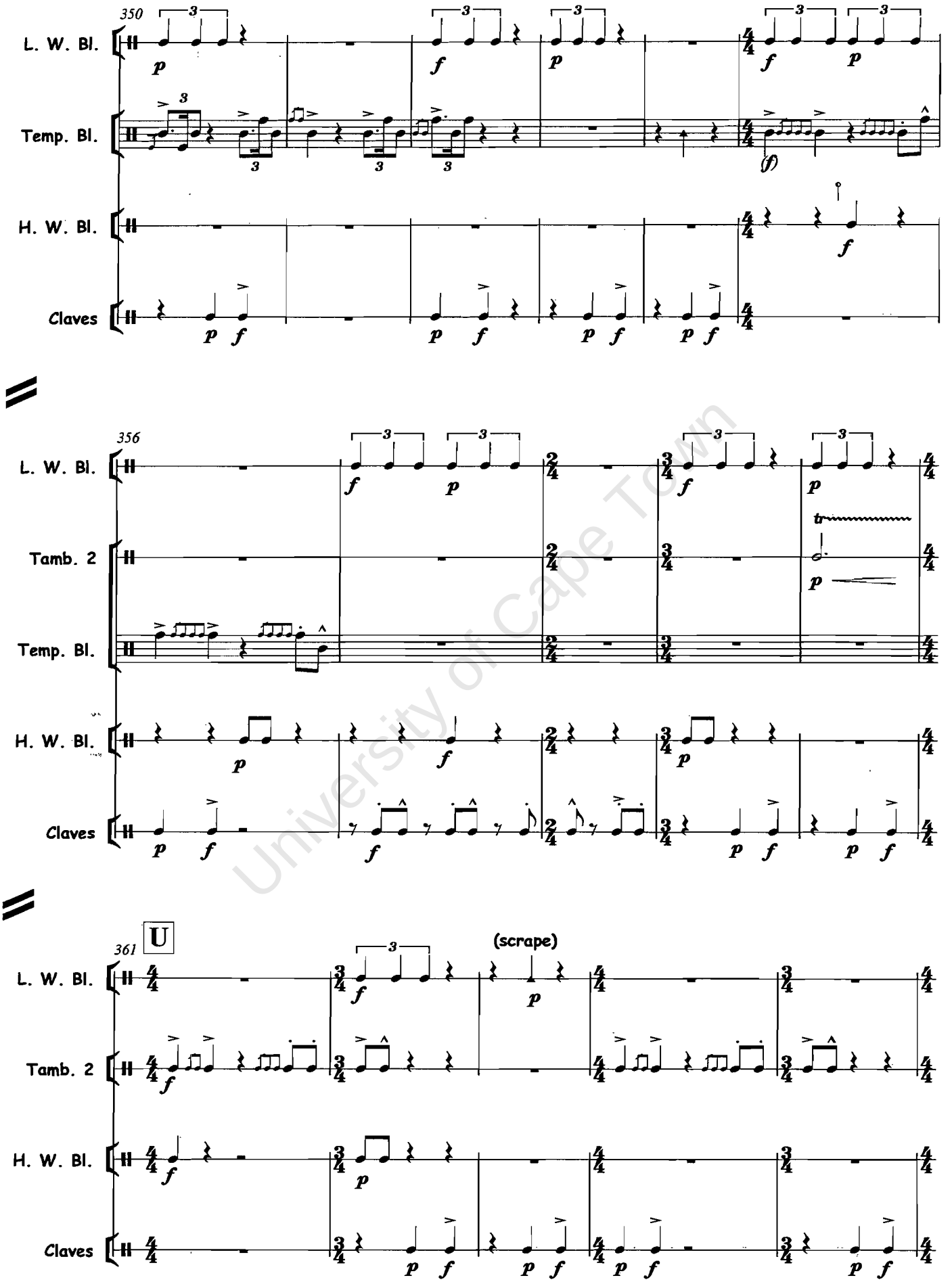

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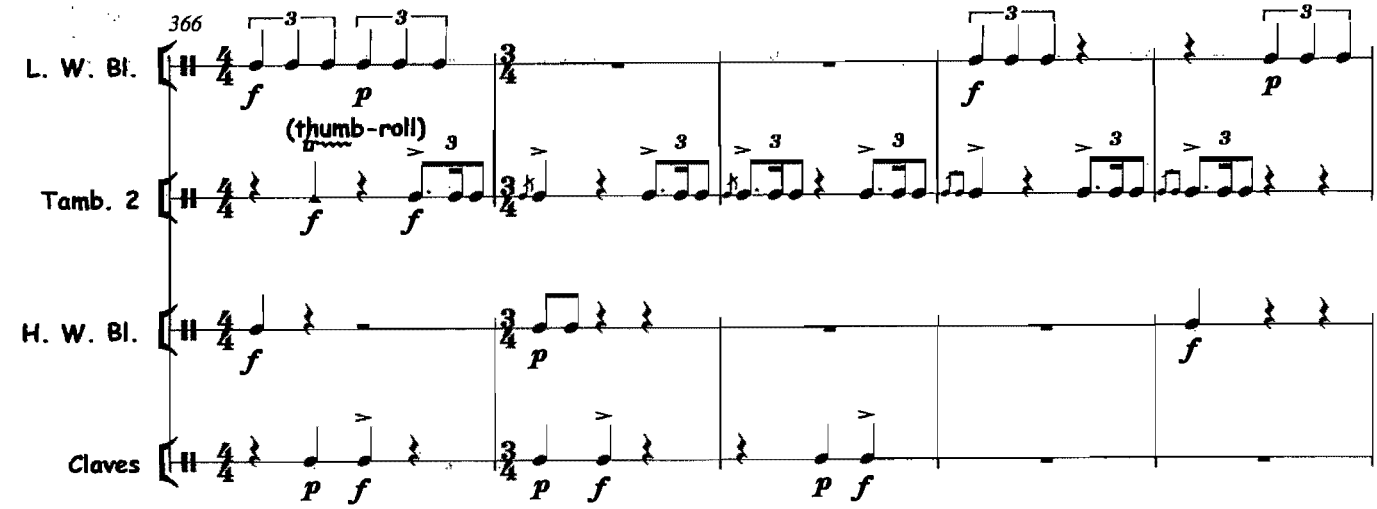

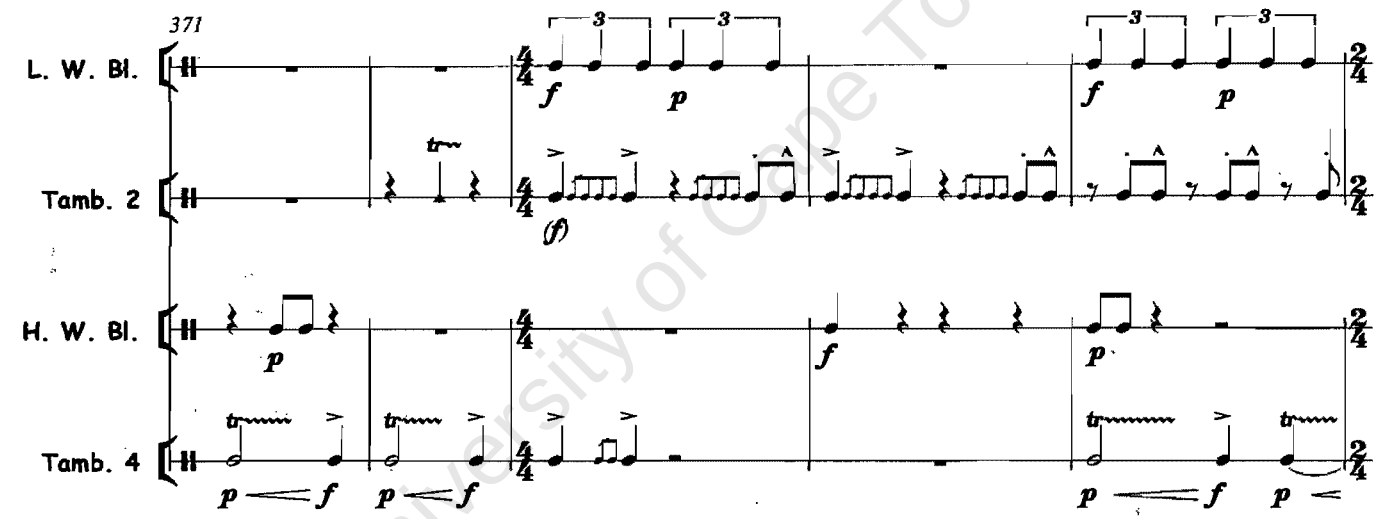

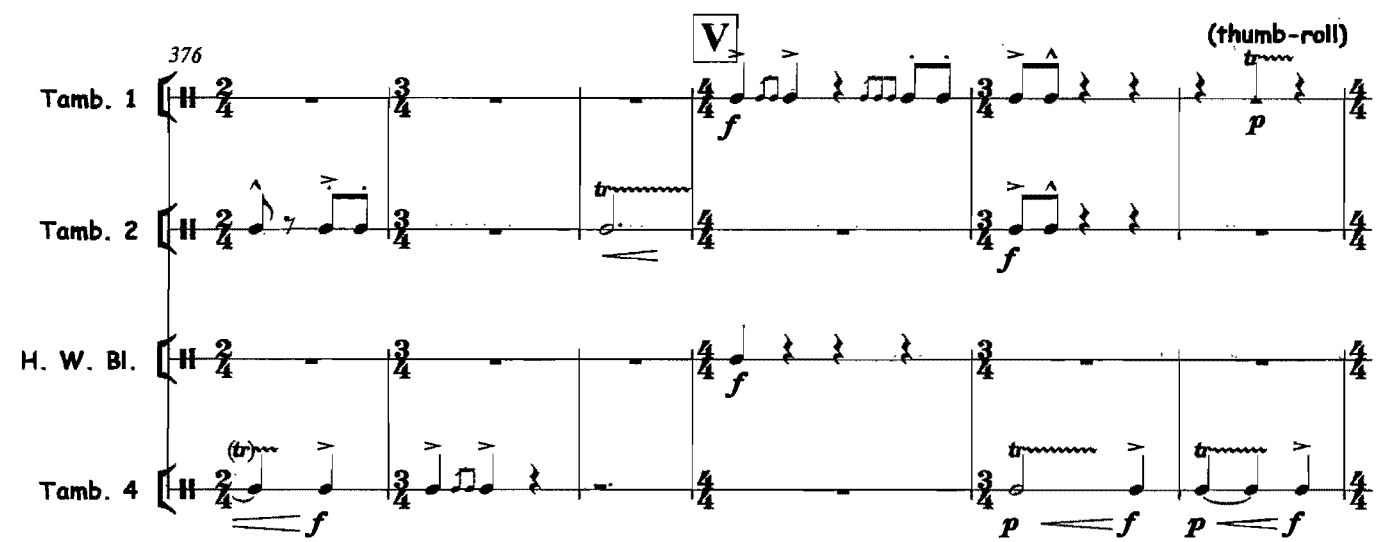

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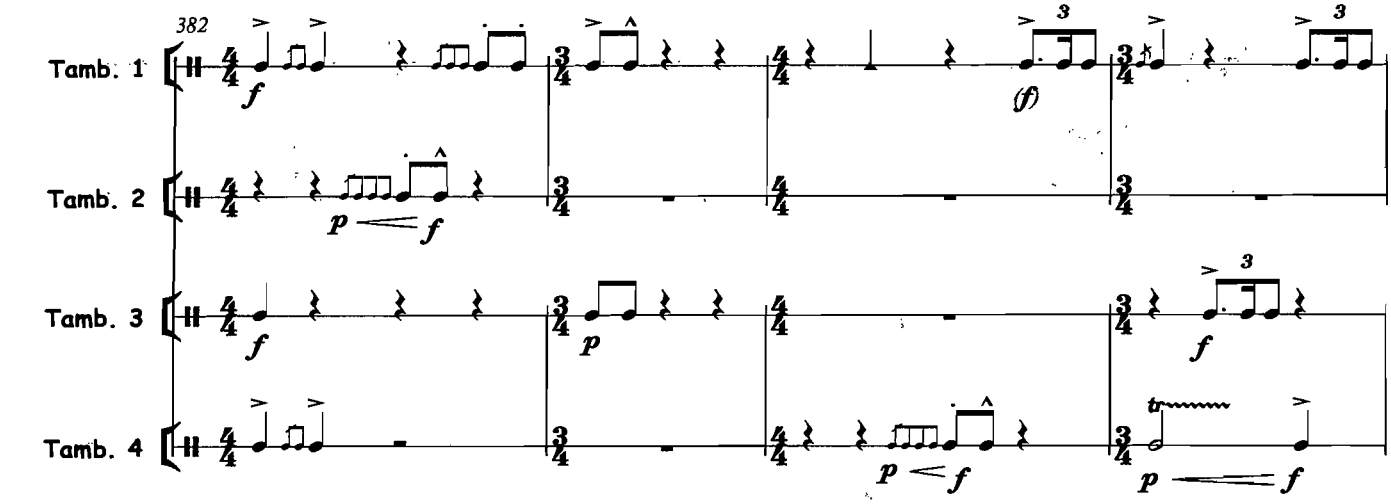

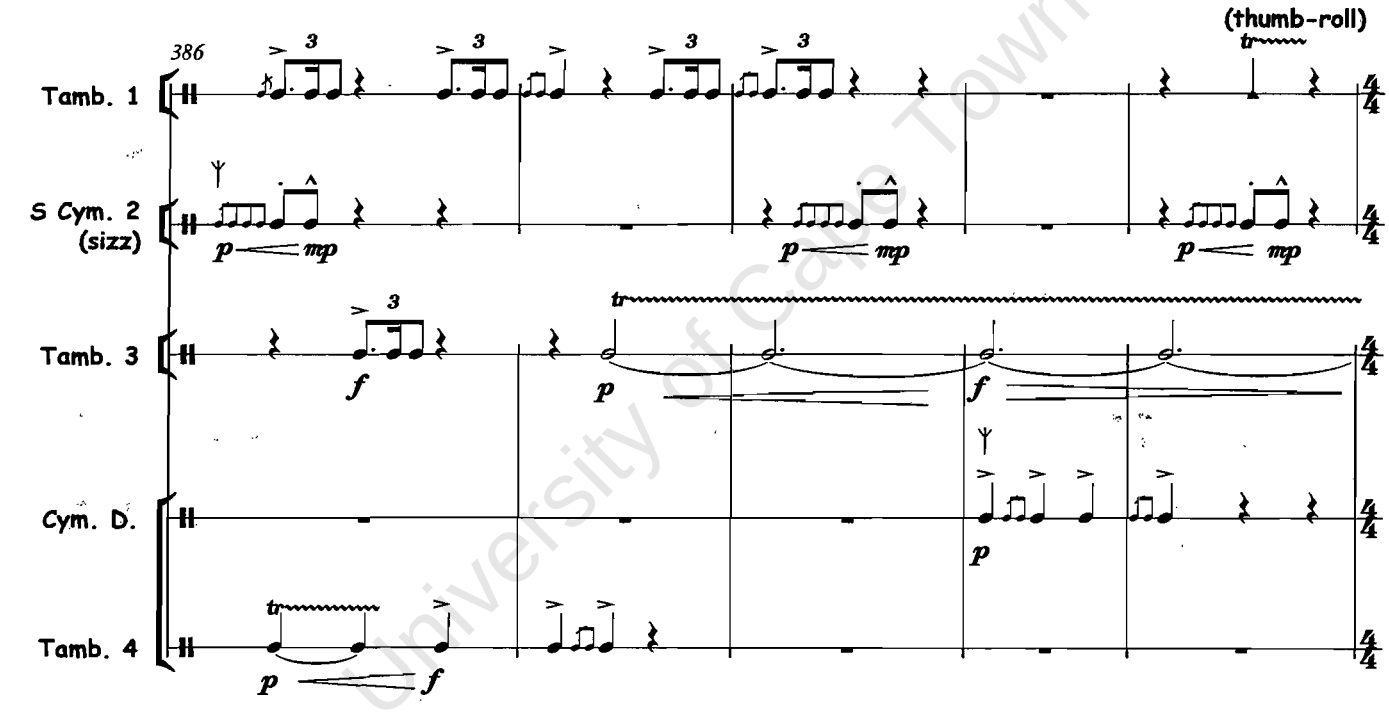

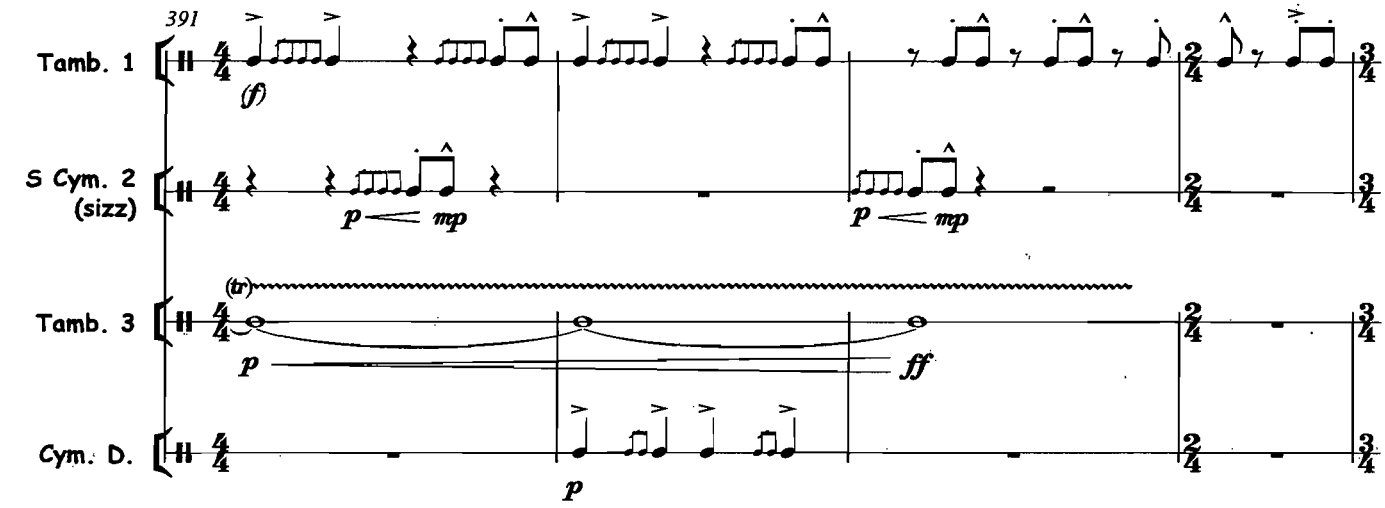

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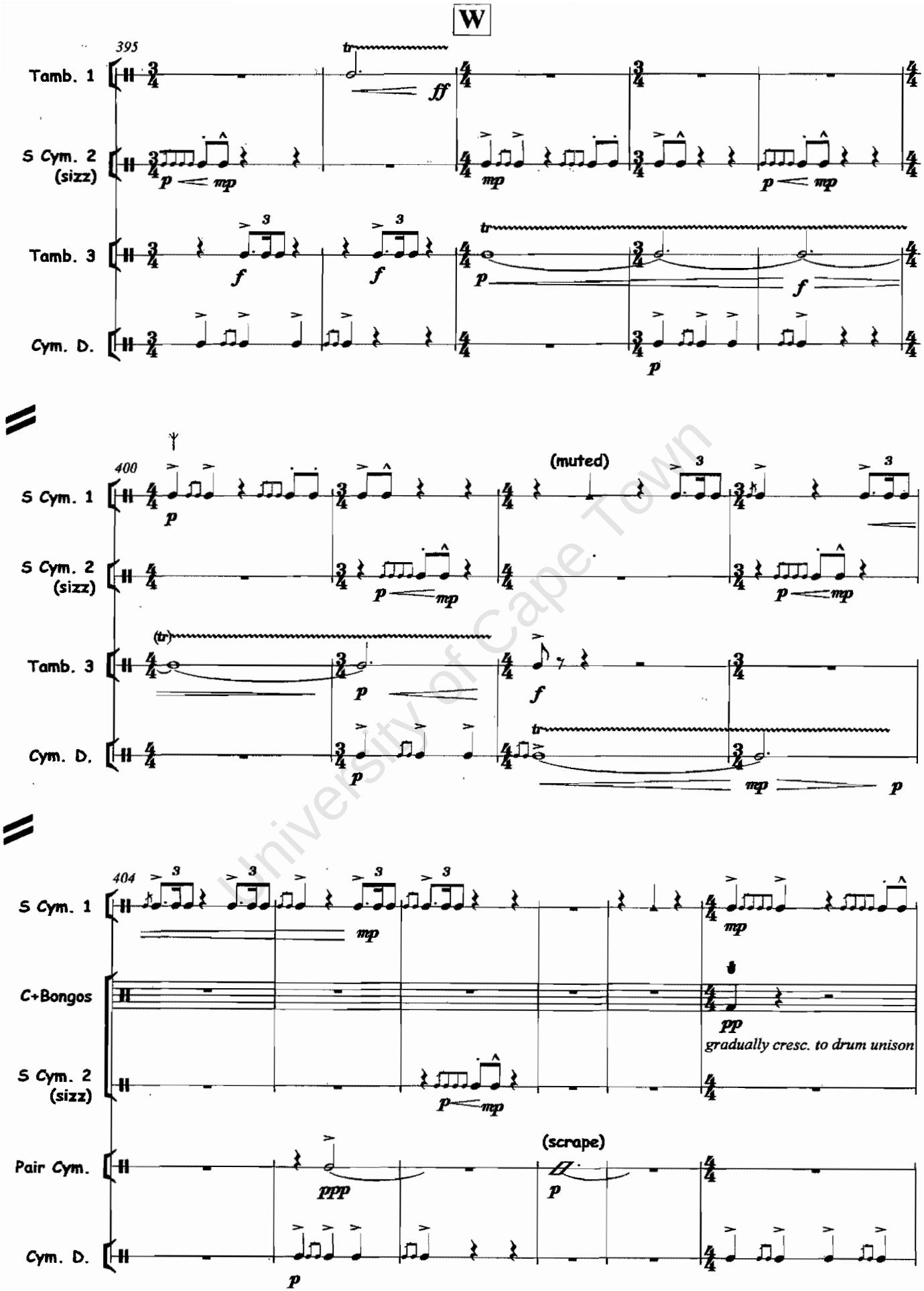

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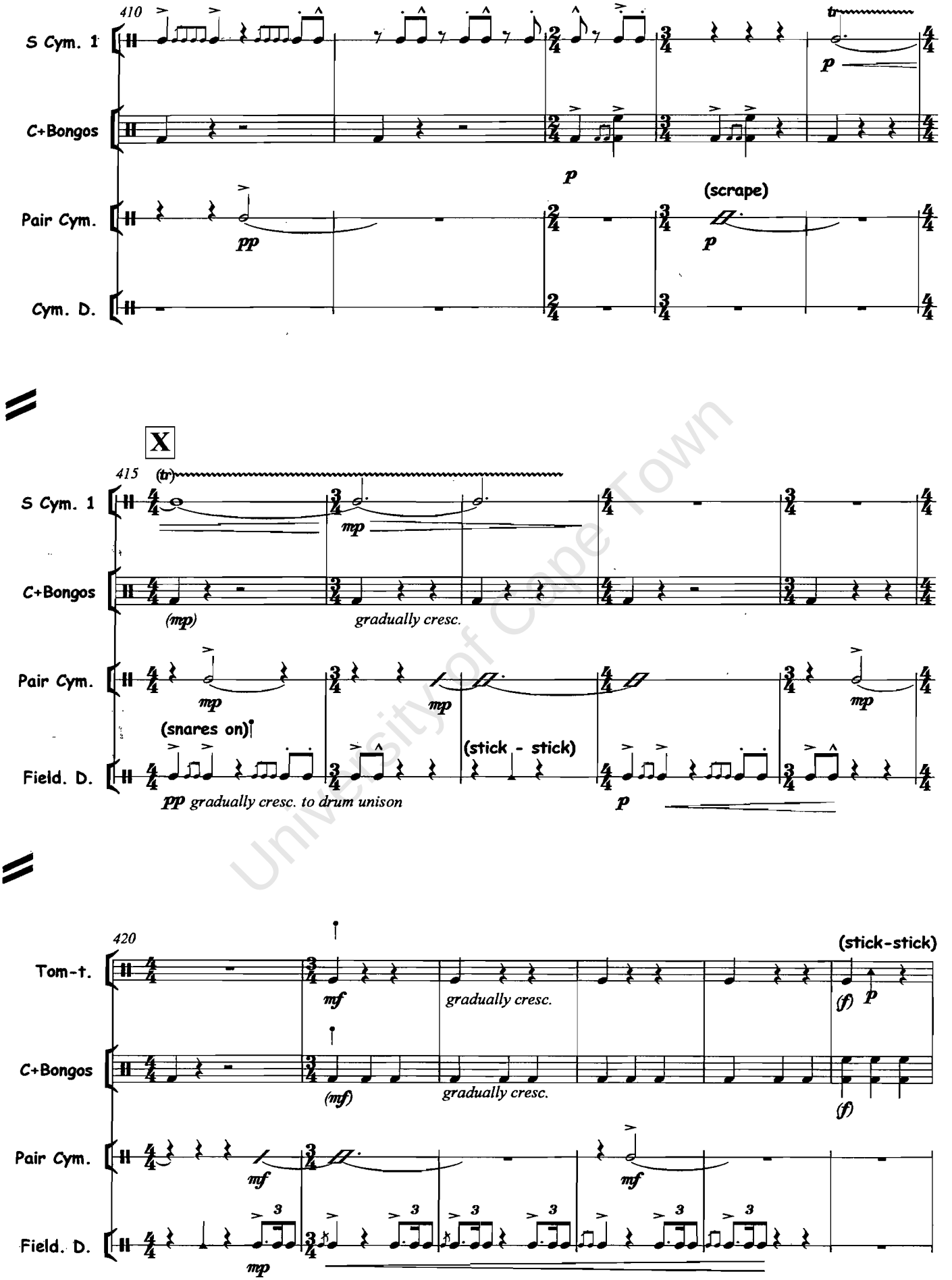

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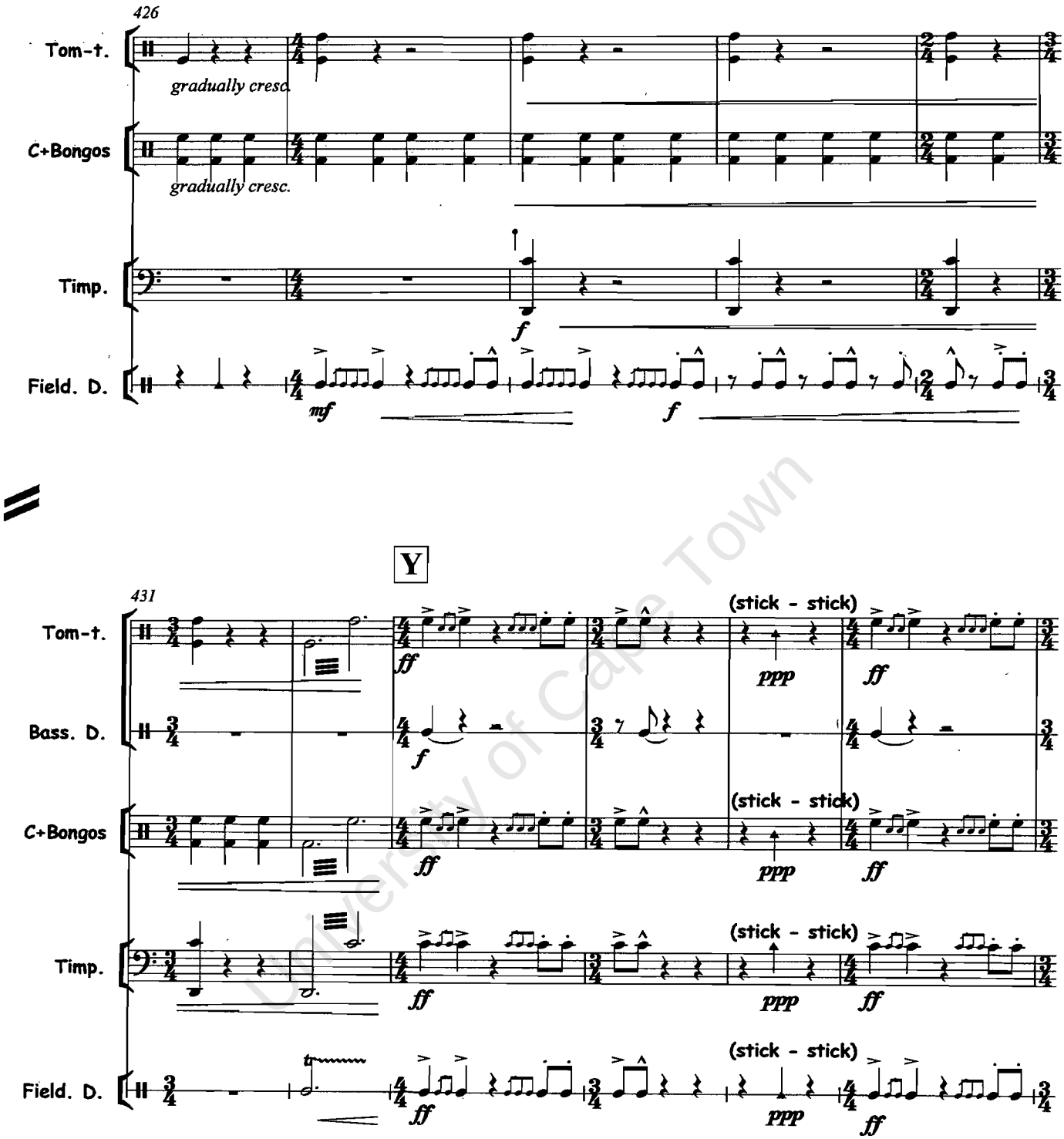

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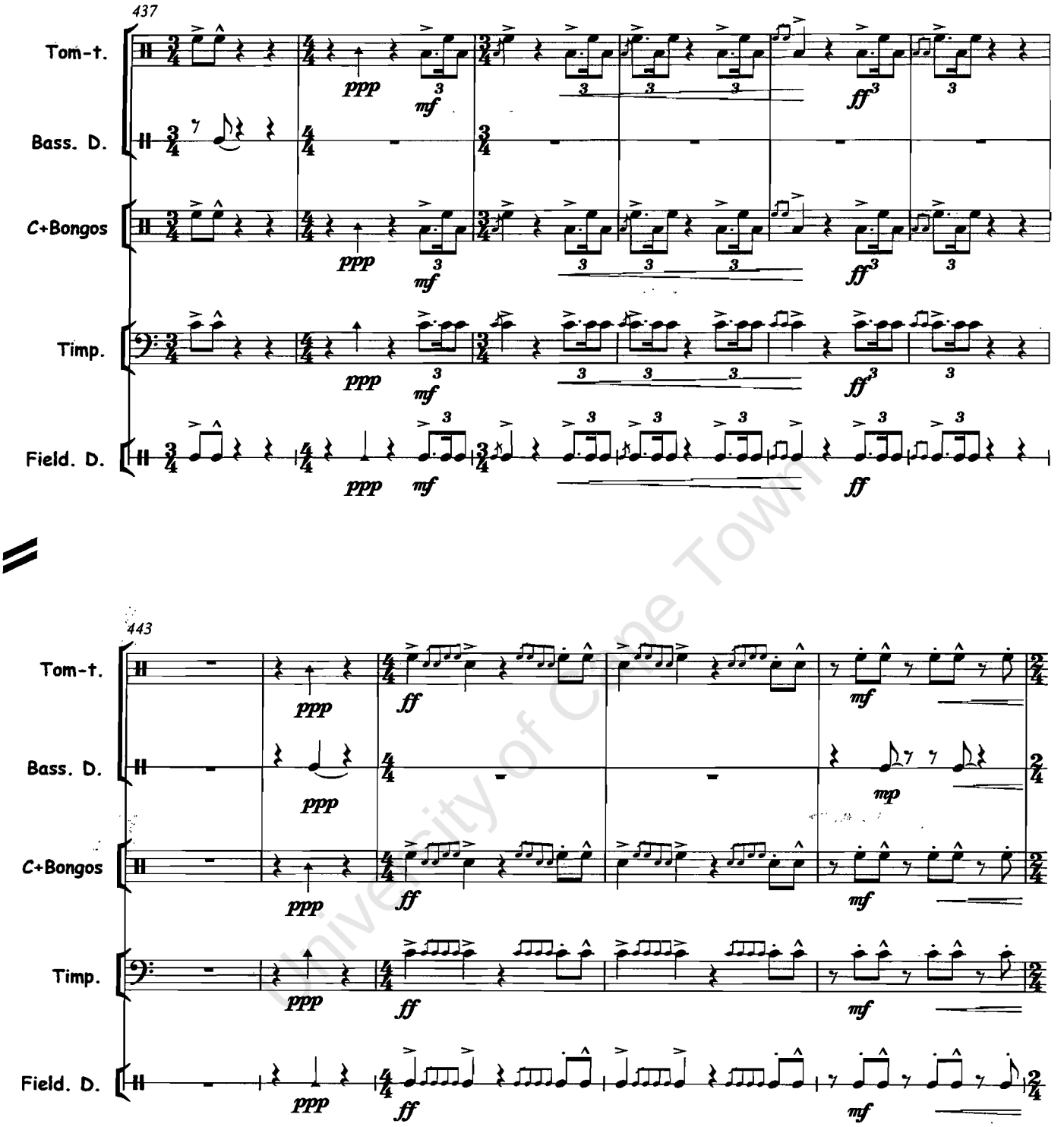

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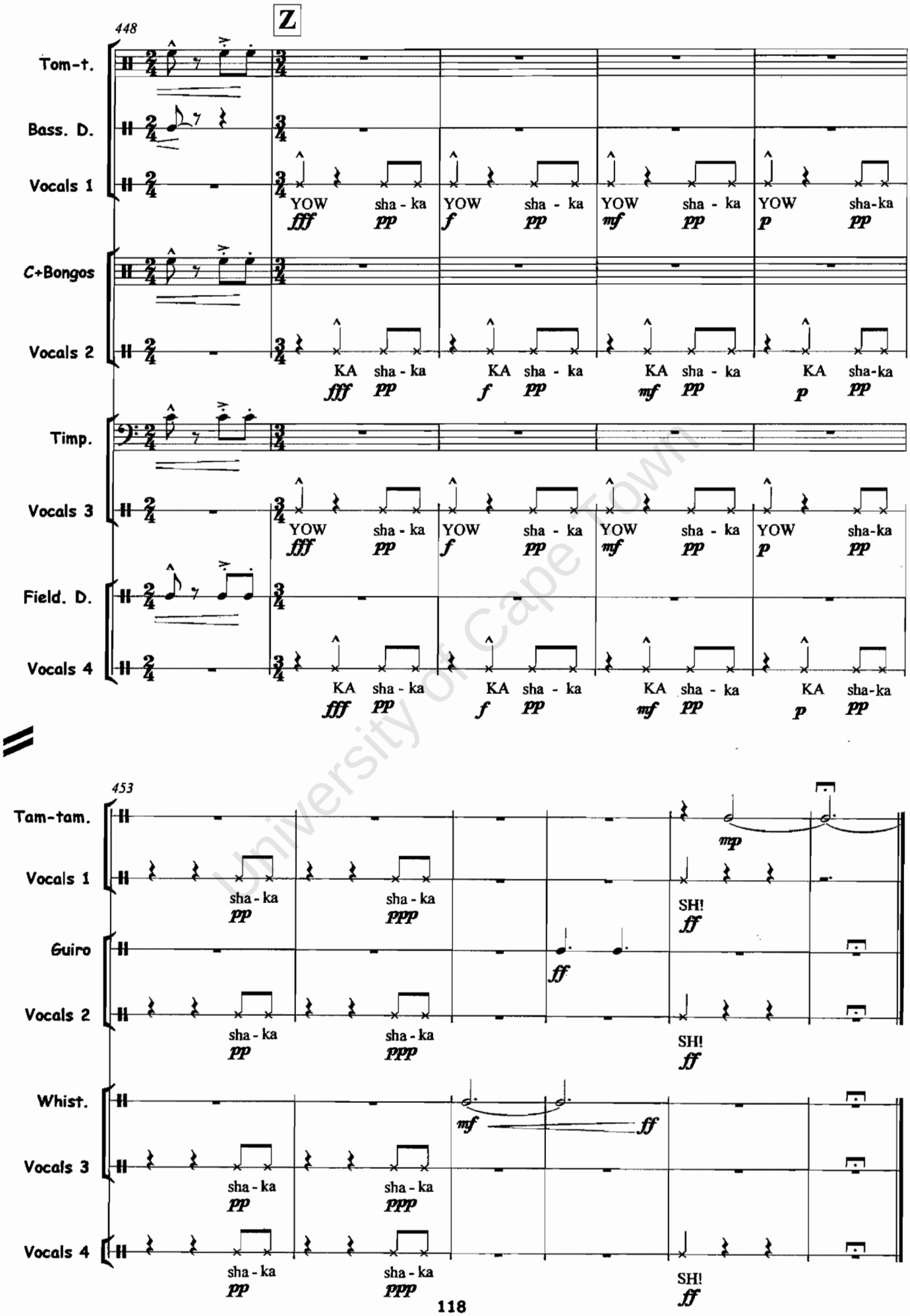

University of Cape Town

Horn Quartet

by Tim Chanter

Duration: 14 minutes

University of Cape Town

Performance Notes

Allegro

- This movement is intended to have rhythmic drive – it is important to play it at a sufficient pace to create and sustain a strong forward momentum, and with a high degree of rhythmic precision
- The ordinary accents (e.g. on the first quavers of all three lower parts, and the first quaver in bar 6 of the 1st horn part) are not intended to be strongly pronounced – but to show the shape of the rhythm. I have also beamed quavers in accordance with the intended rhythm (e.g. bar 9 is intended to have a 2+3 metrical shape)
- The microtones (first occurring in bar 37) are intended to be about a quarter of a tone sharp or flat – but the precise pitching is less important than giving the overall musical effect of starting the glissandi in the 'wrong' direction before reversing to the cadential note
- The acciaccaturas in the two melodic sections (bars 82 - 109 in the first horn part, and bars 154-179 in the second horn part) are meant to be played before the beat: the full note then being sounded in exact time
- These same two sections are intended to be played without any rubato – the melodies being strictly governed by the crotchet pulse set by the 4th horn player
- The final climax (starting at bar 202, reaching its peak in 217) is intended to be very powerful (more so than the former similar build-ups in bars 26 - 36 and 63 – 75), then quickly diminishing before a quiet and hanging cadence leading into the Lento
- [To assist with the difficulty of such frequent metre changes, the first horn players part is copied in full as a cue in the other players' parts. The first horn therefore acts as a conductor]

Lento

- The overall mood of the movement is one of quiet calm, and the relative climaxes are meant to be swells rather than fortissimos. Even the point of greatest tension – the discord in bars 57 - 59 - should not reach more than a forte
- The melody line, shared between the first and second players, is intended to be played with a subtle rubato – the other players following time accordingly [In the parts, the melody phrases of the 1st and 2nd players are marked as cues, to assist with this]
- The acciaccaturas in the melody phrases are not meant to be too short – rather they should be played with some license and extended into the musical line
- Please do not pause too long before the recap (bar 41) and do not slow down too much at the 'poco rit' (bars 56 – 59): the movement is slow, but must not falter

Presto

- Play as fast as possible
- As in the Allegro, I have used ordinary accents primarily to delineate the rhythmic shape. In contrast the marcato and sforzando marks are meant to be sharply attacked

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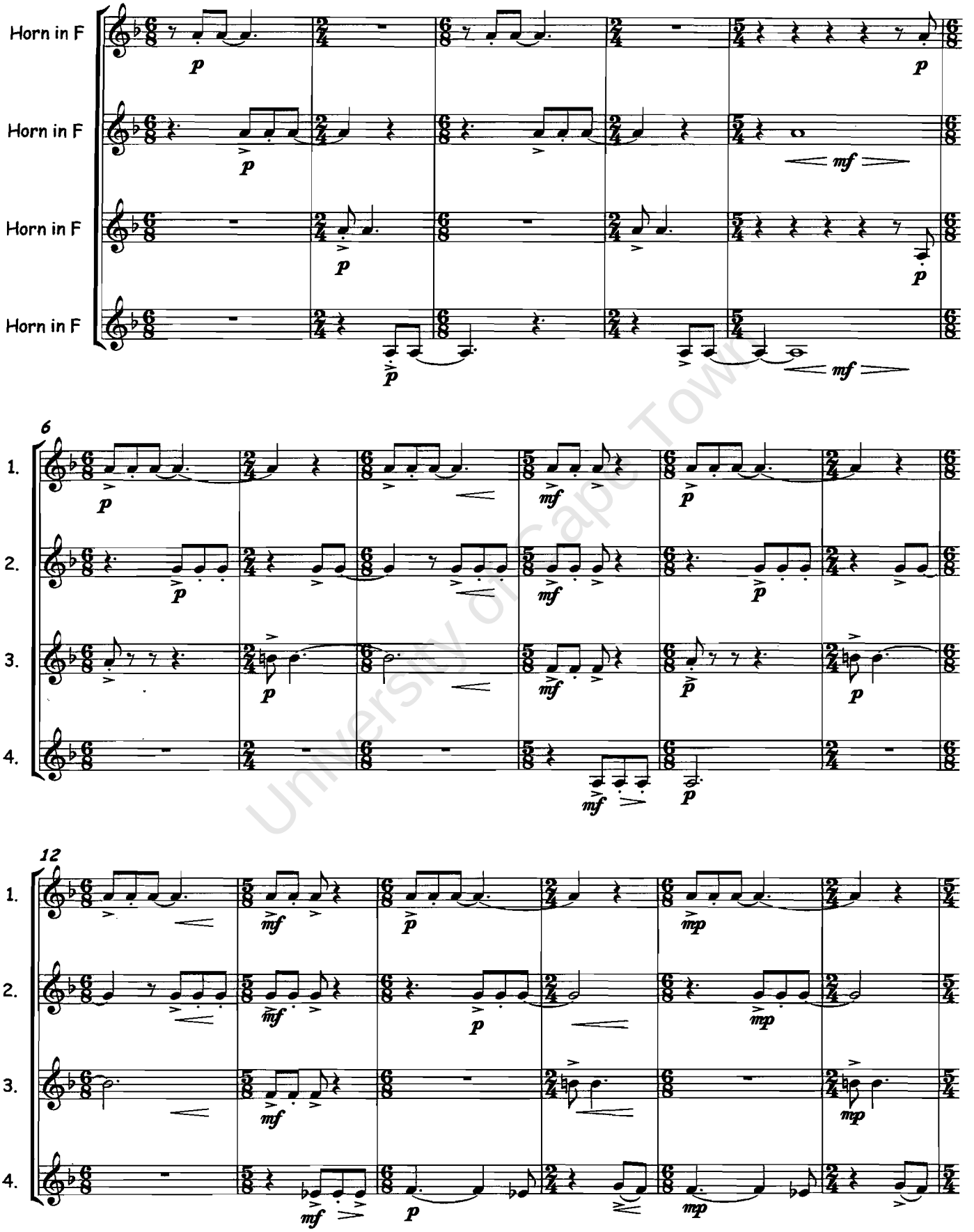
I. Allegro

Fast ♩. = 110

~ by Tim Chanter



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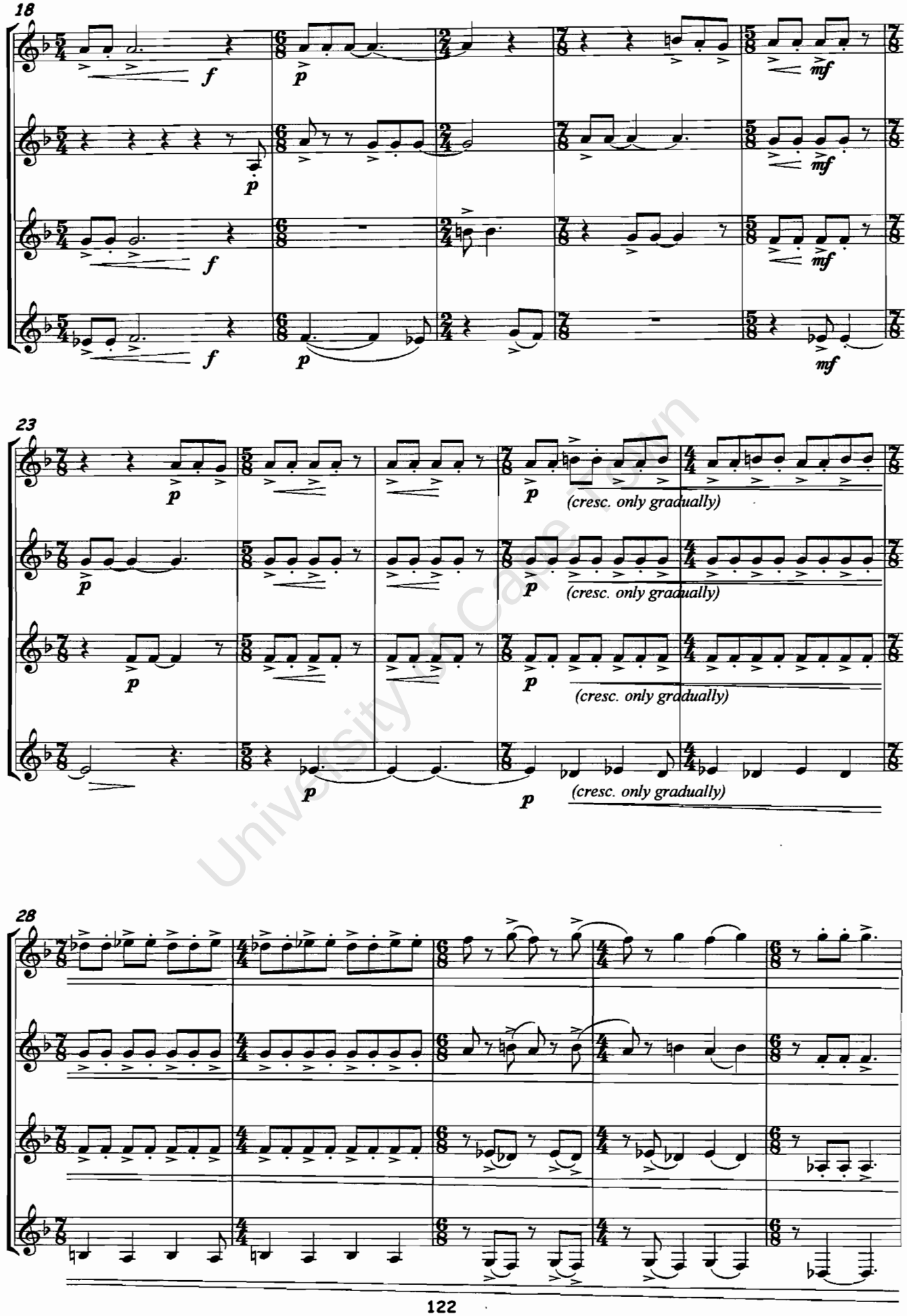
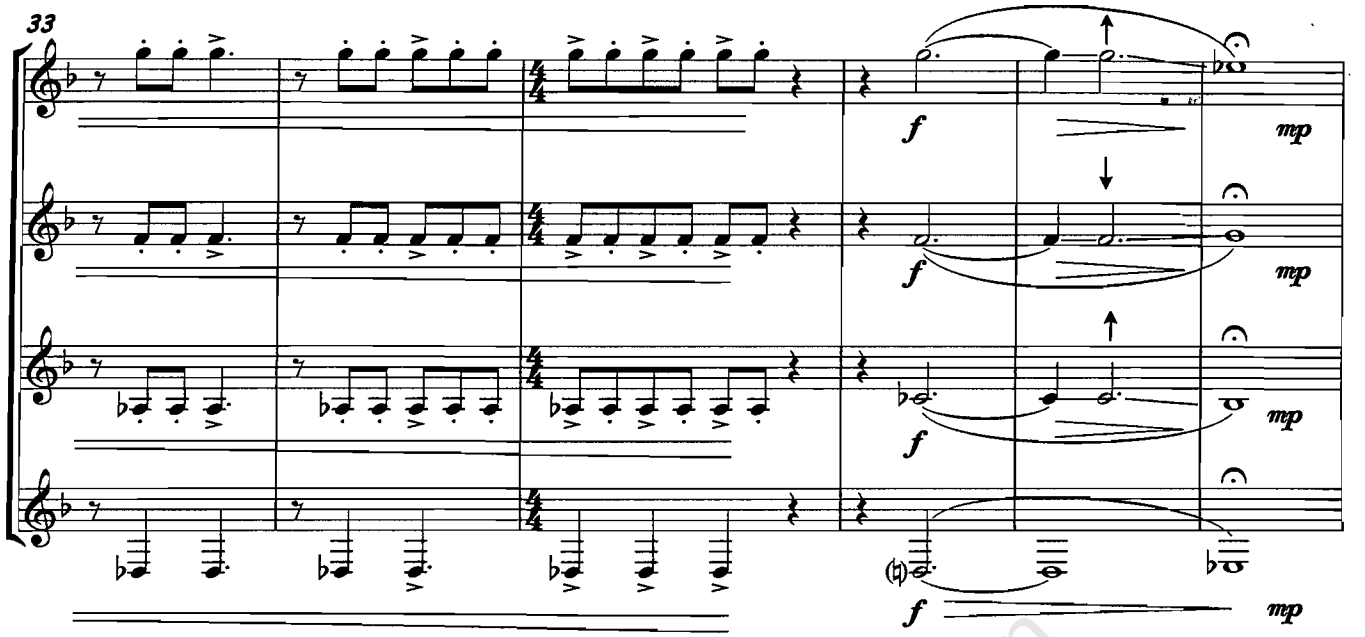
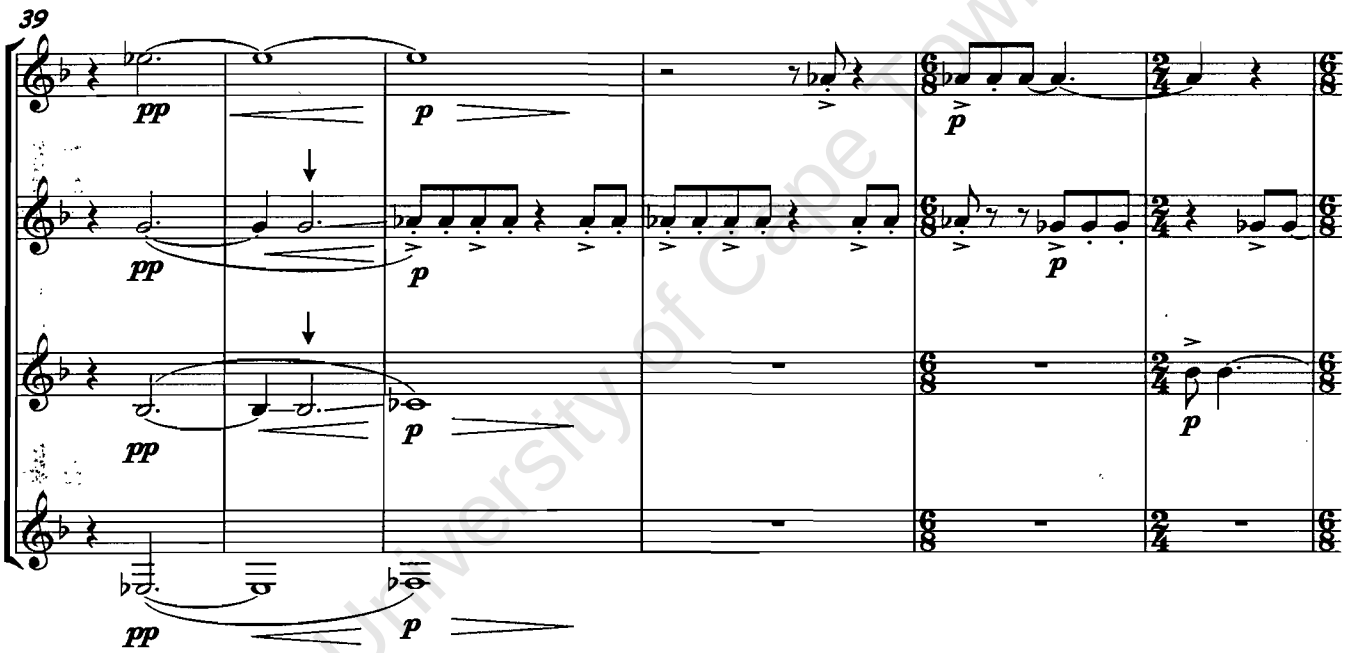
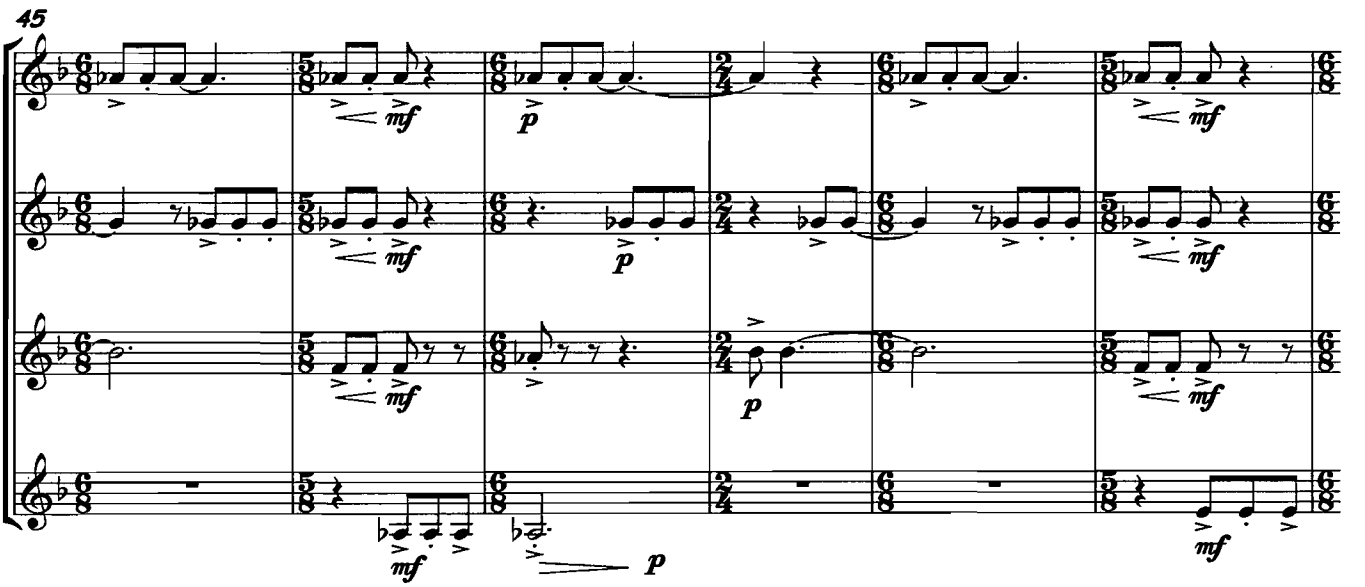


University of Calgary







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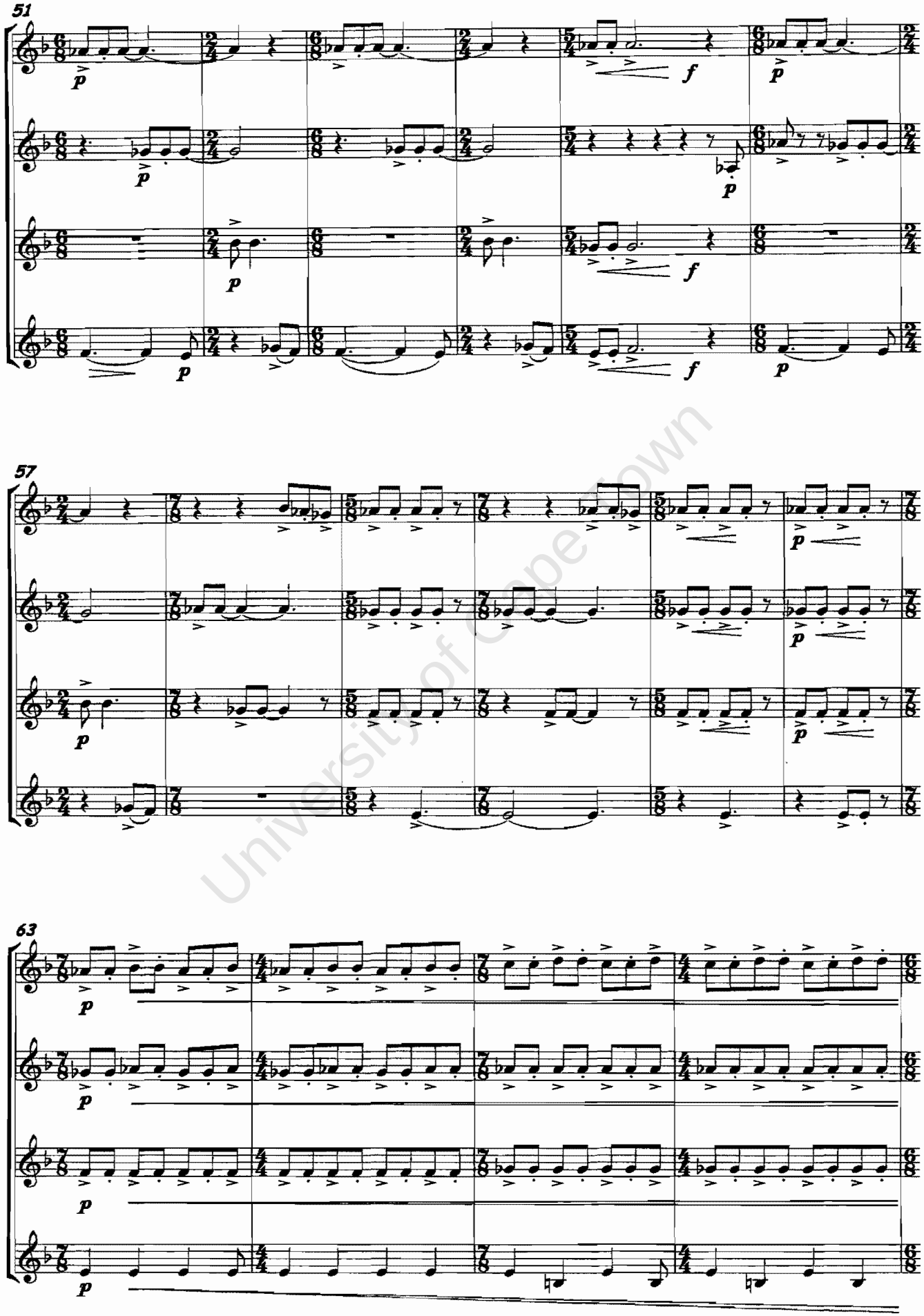

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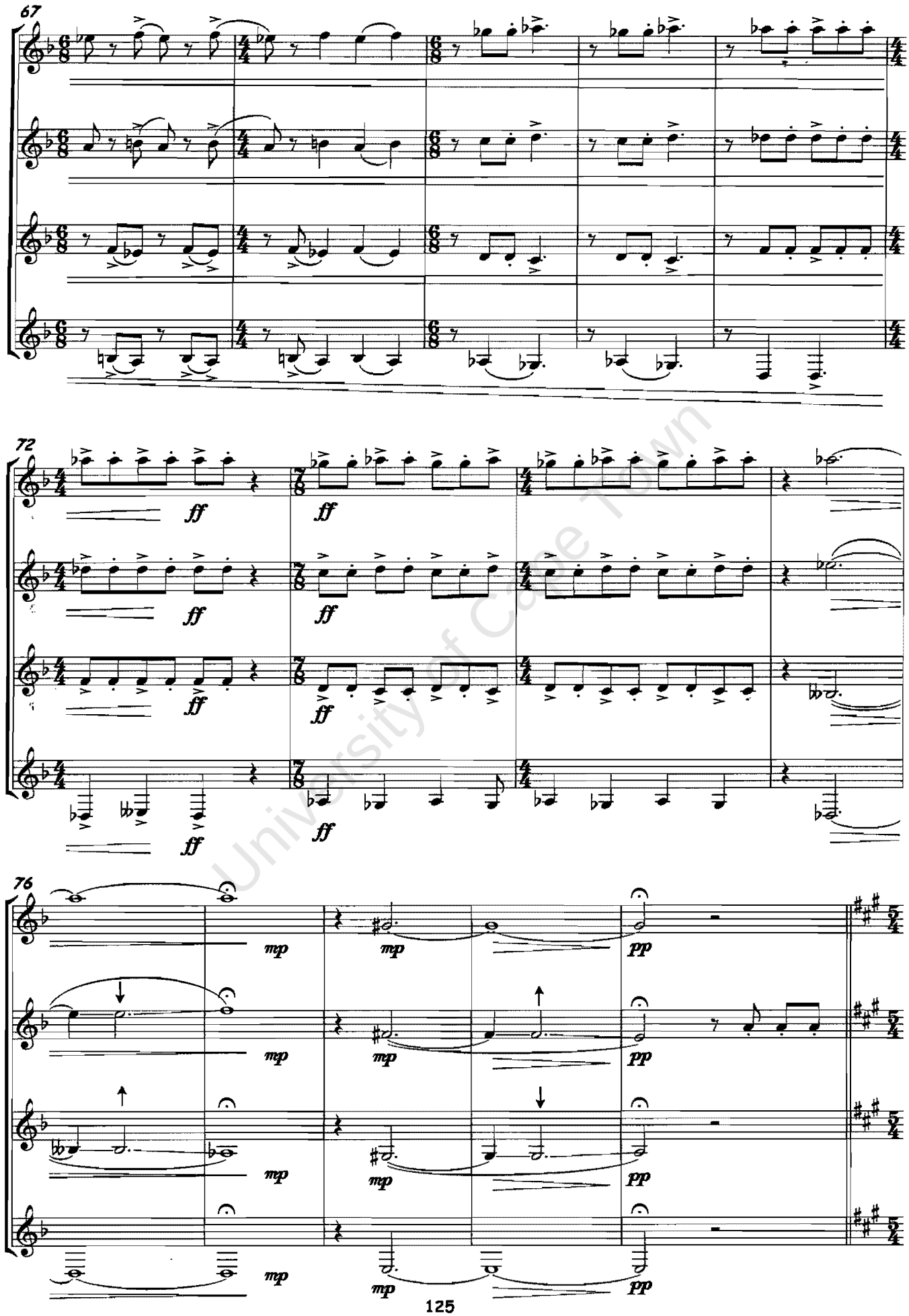

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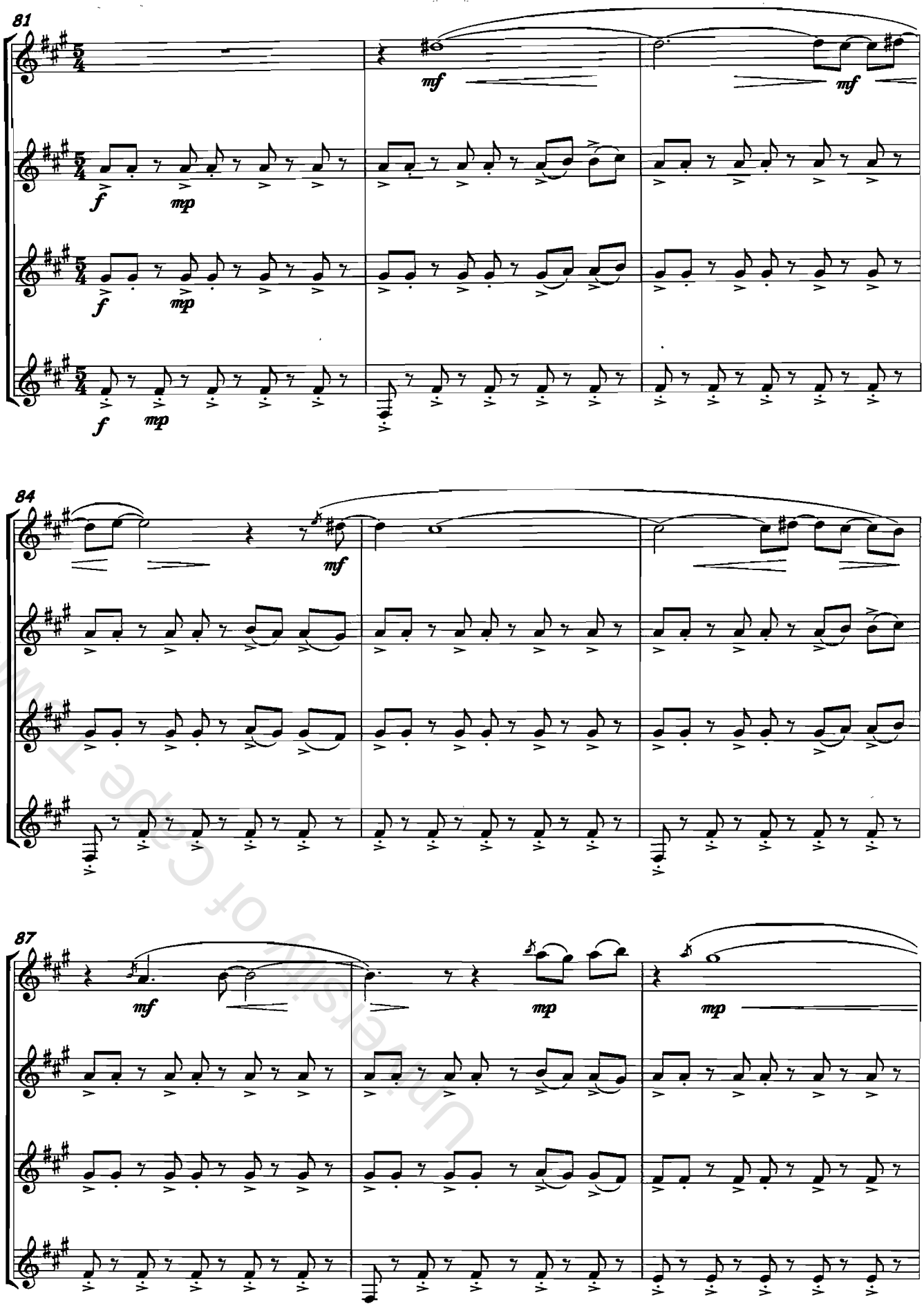

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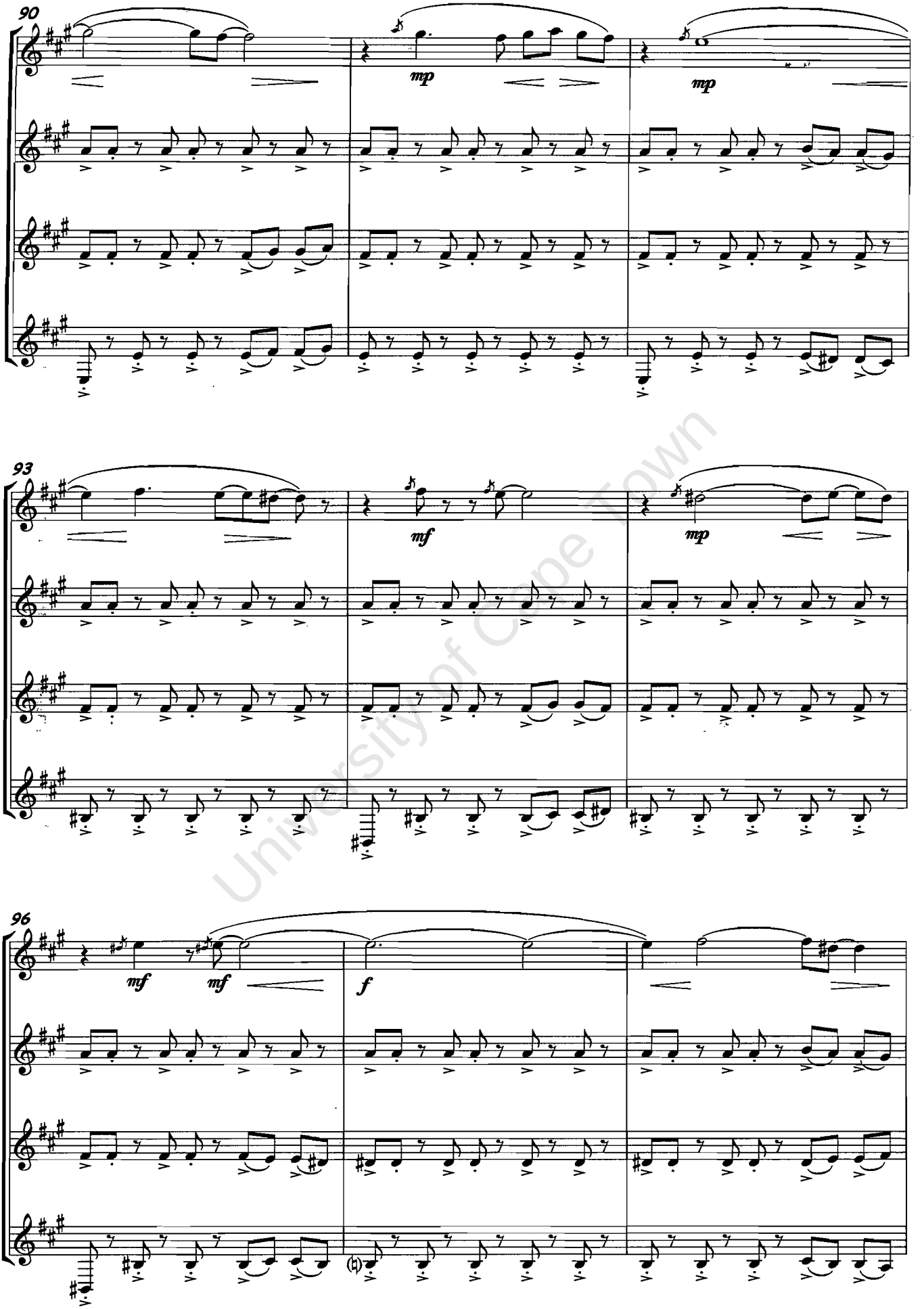

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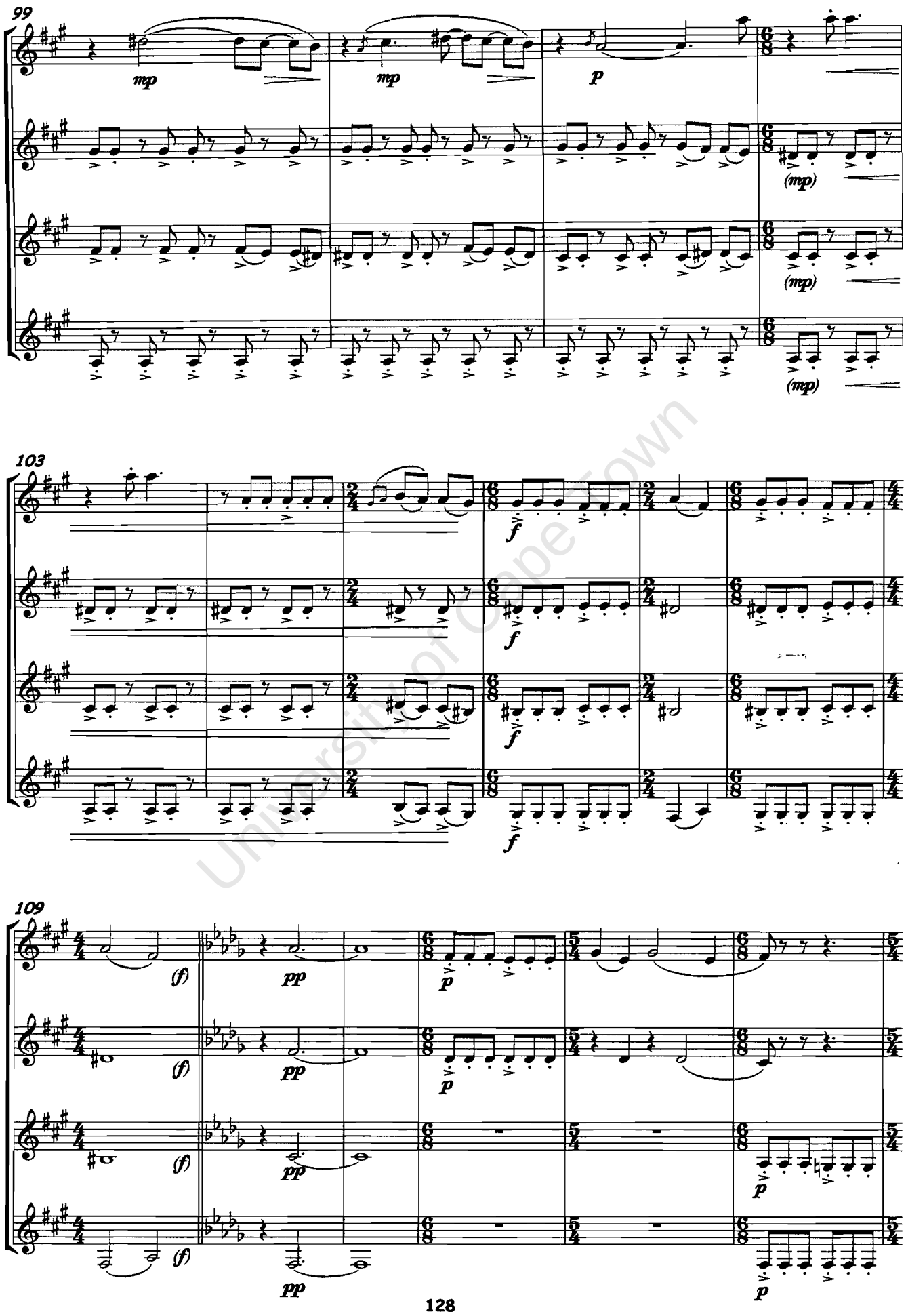

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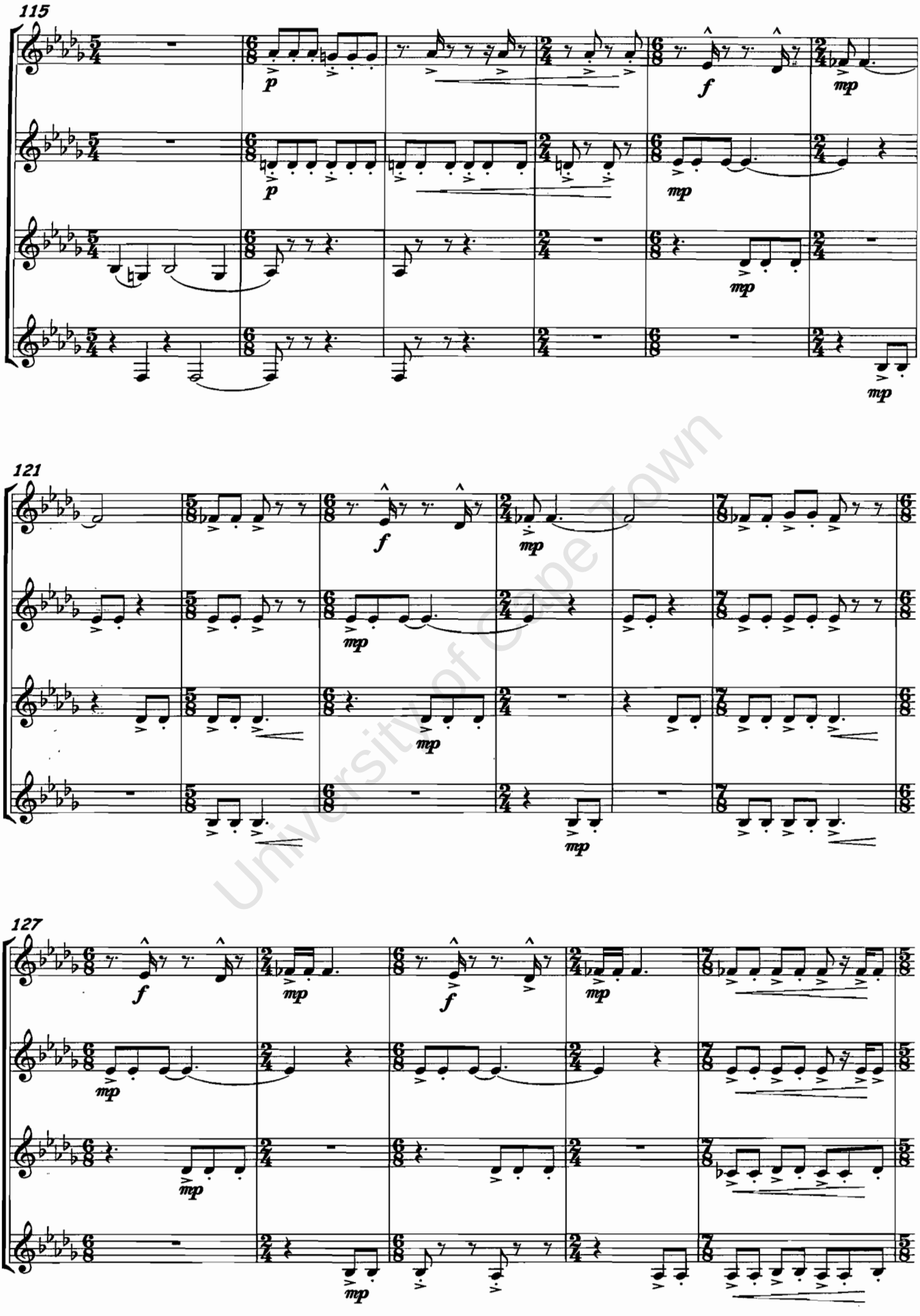

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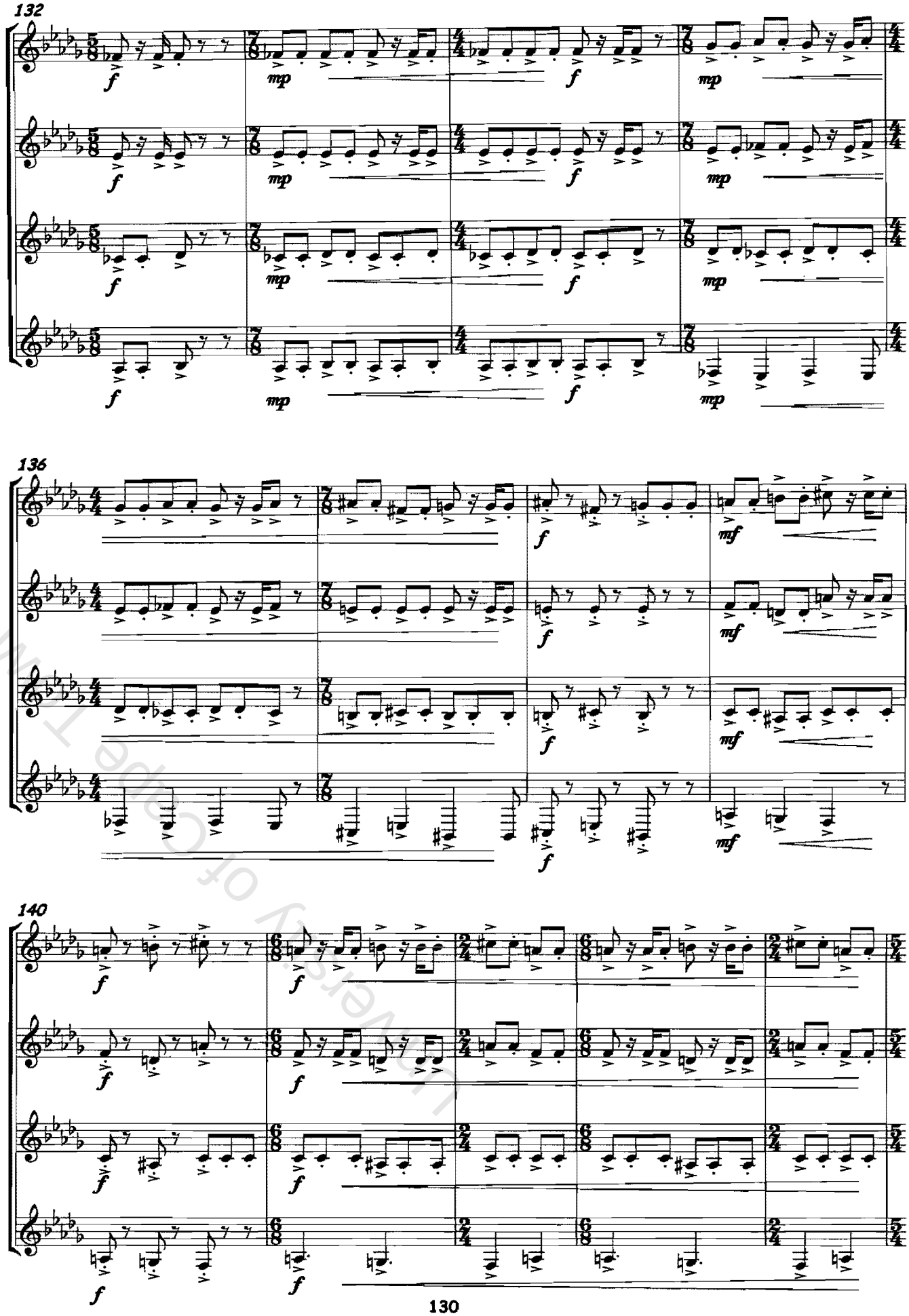

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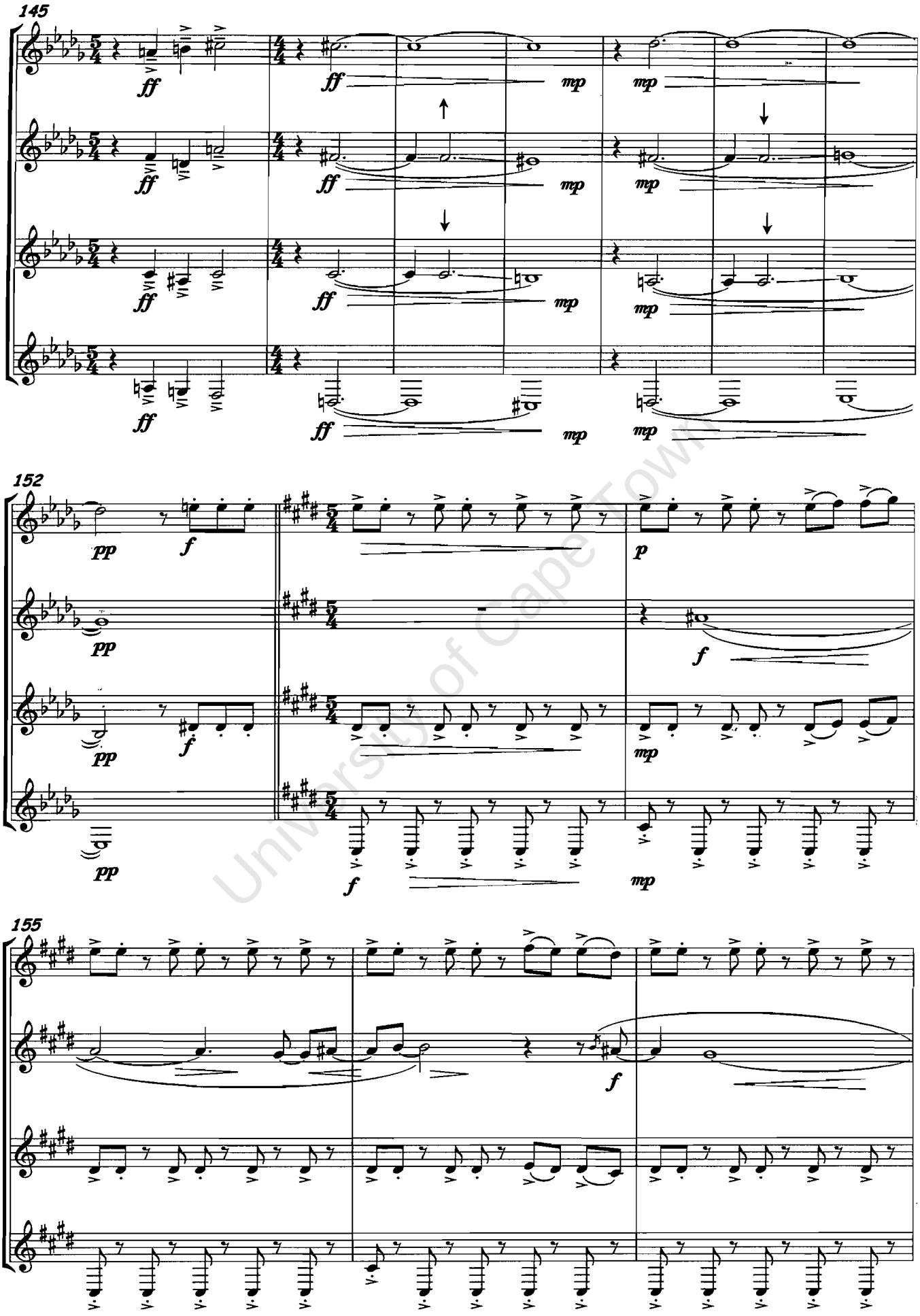

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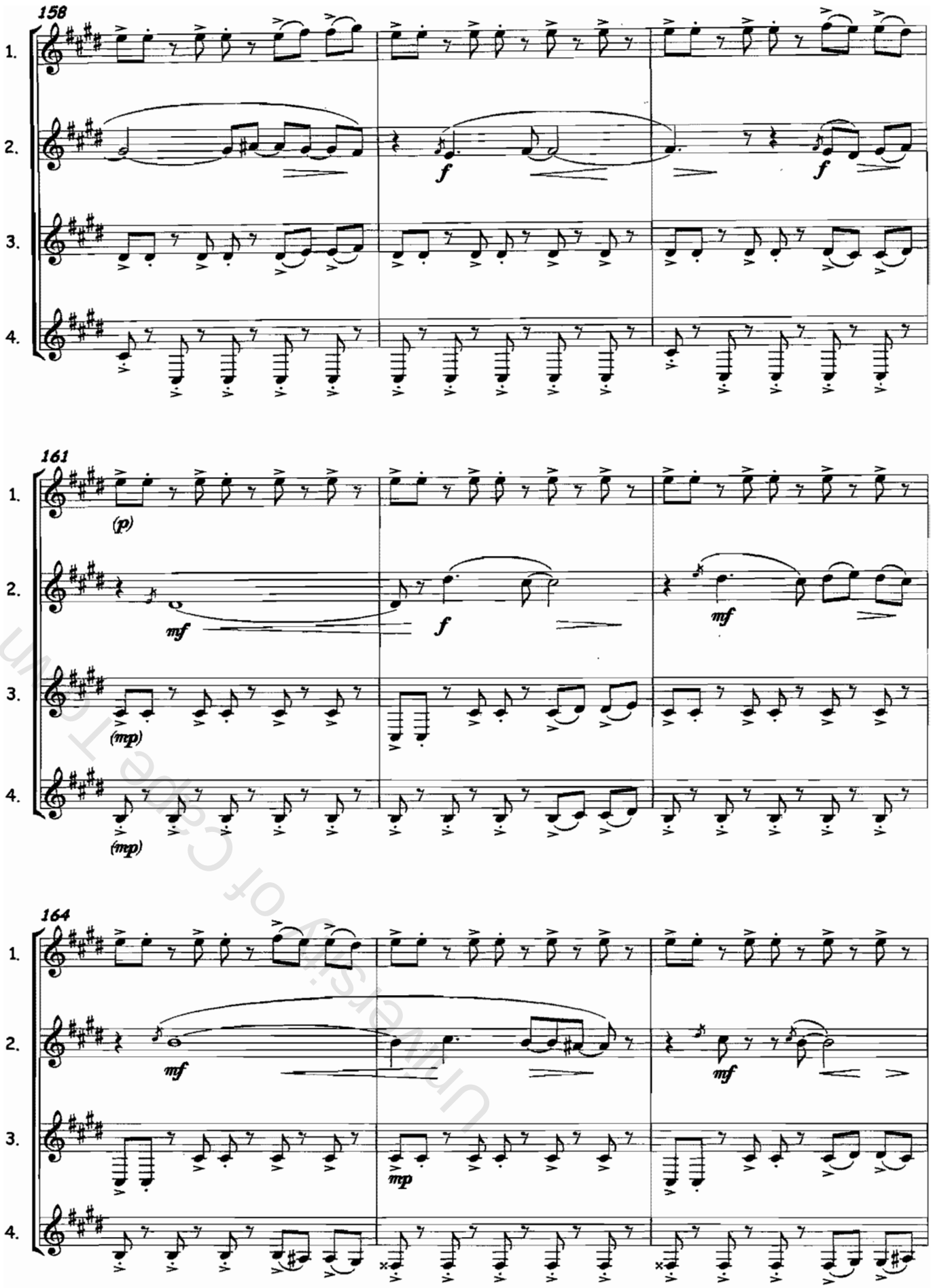

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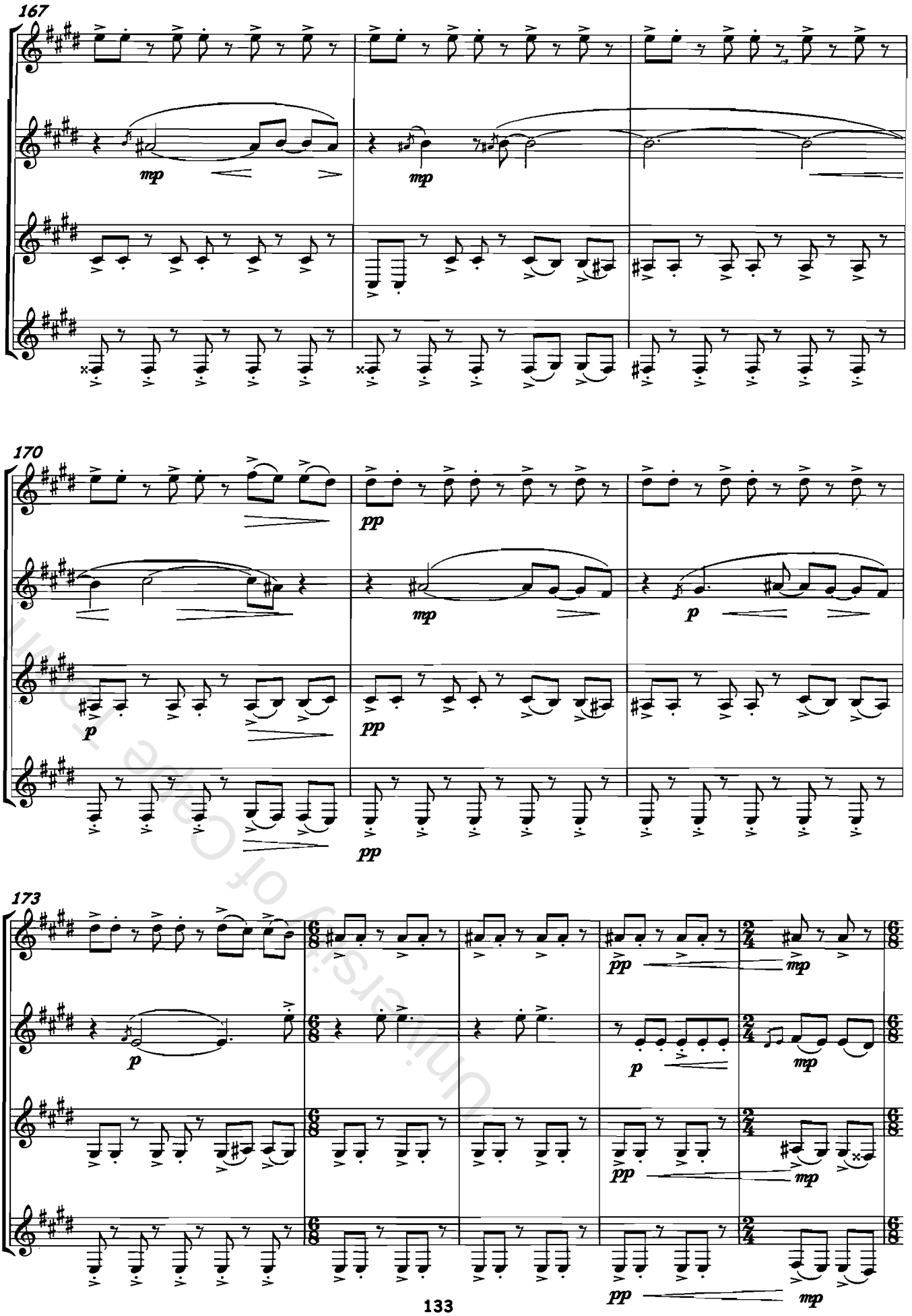

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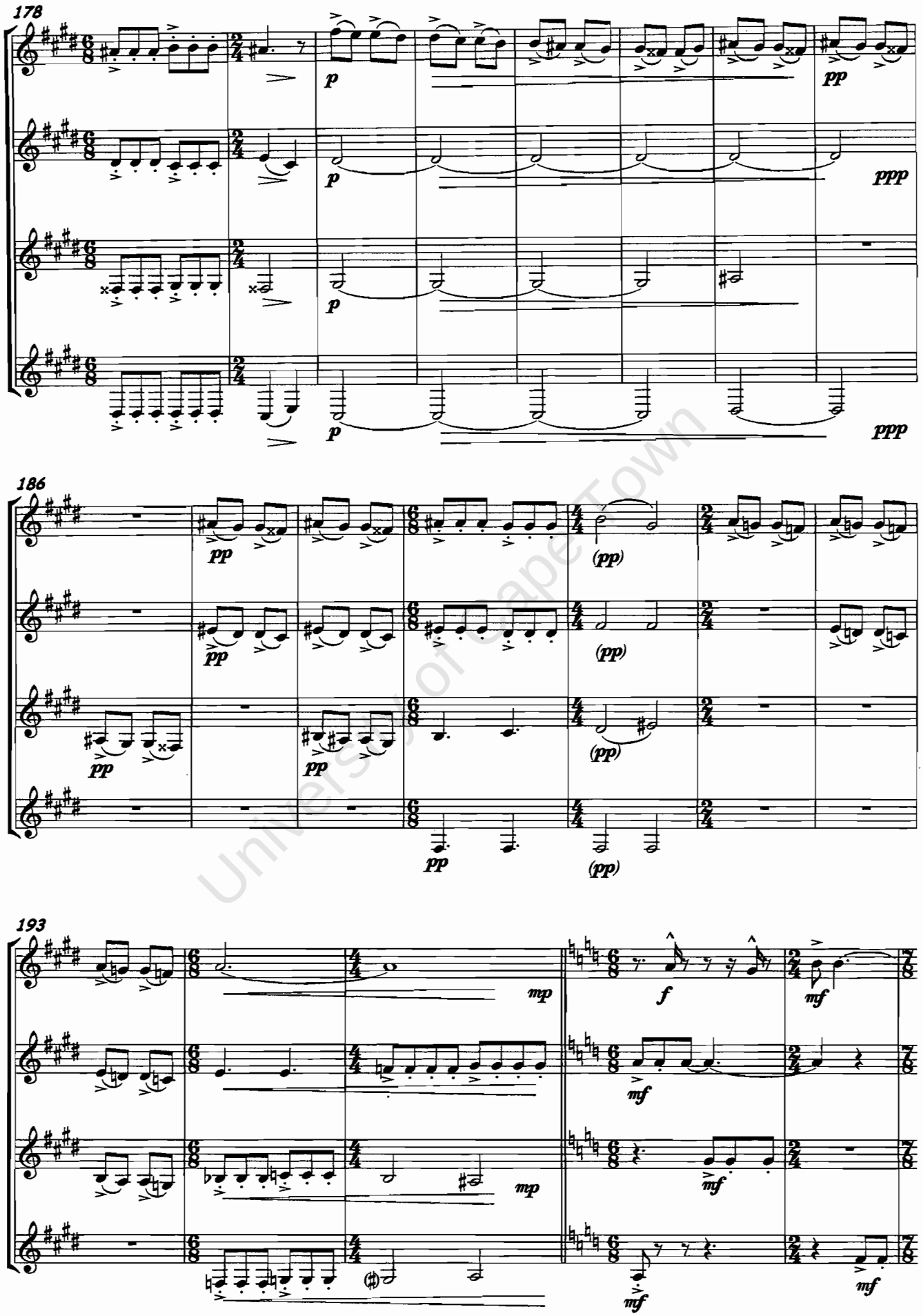

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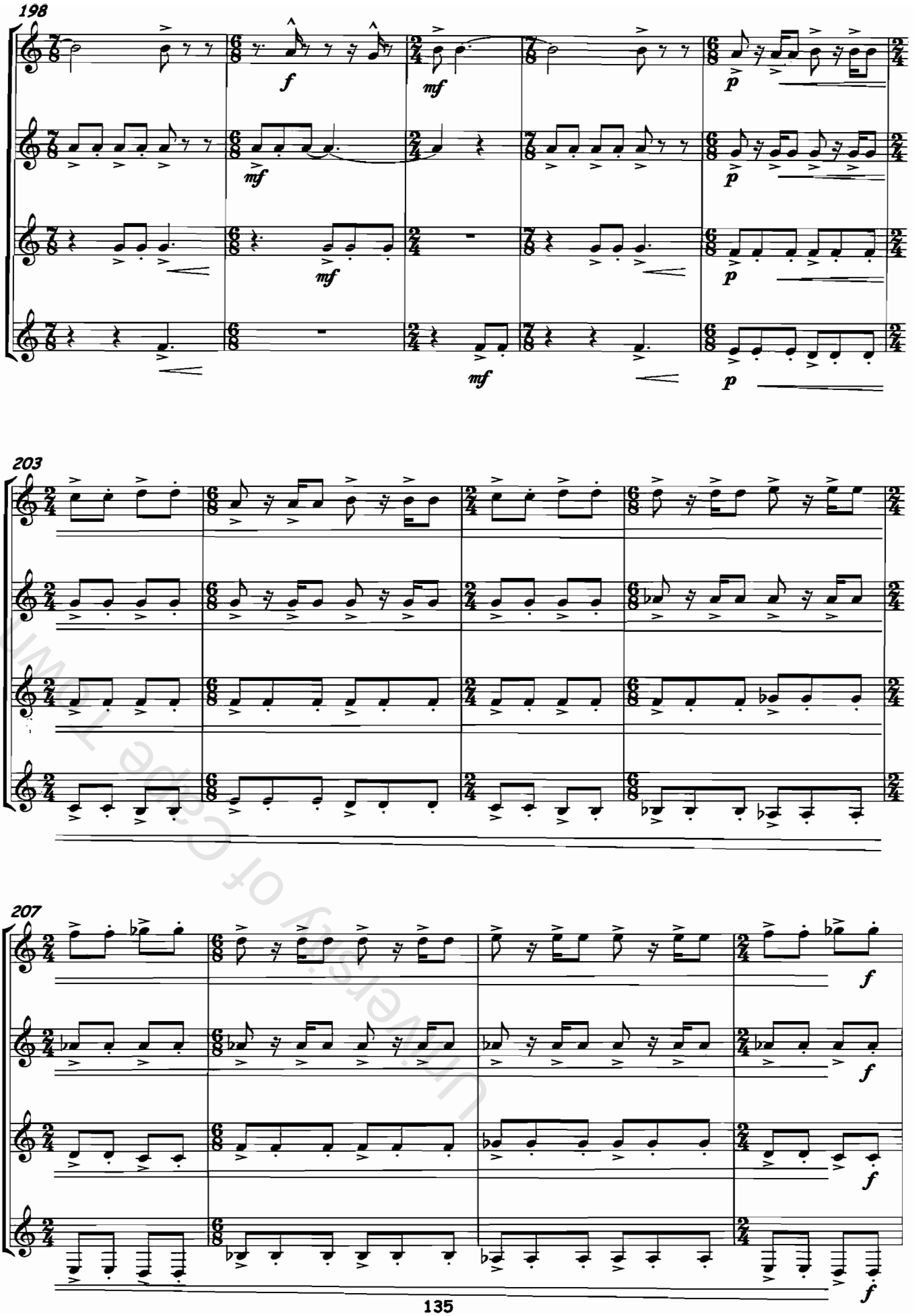

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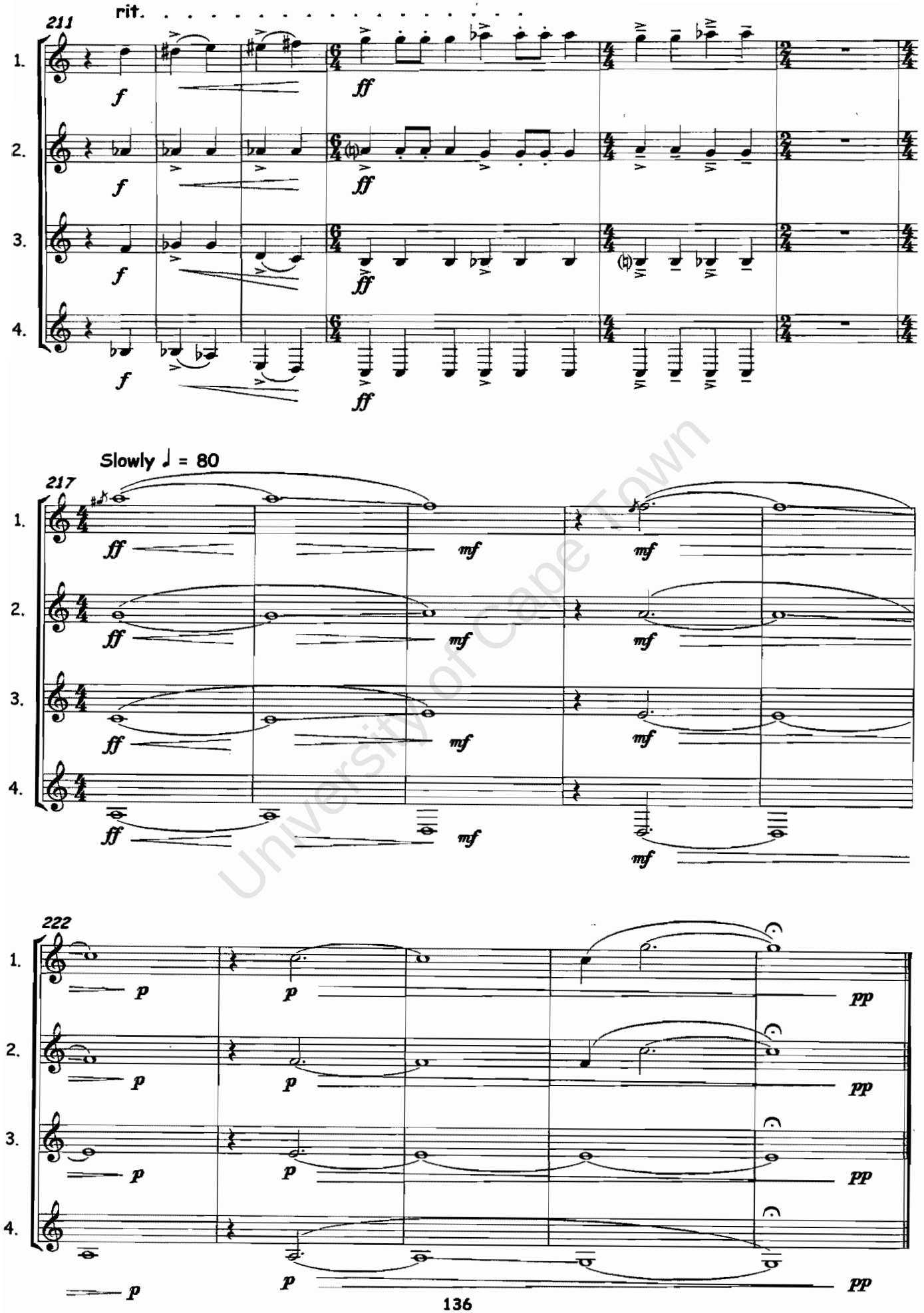

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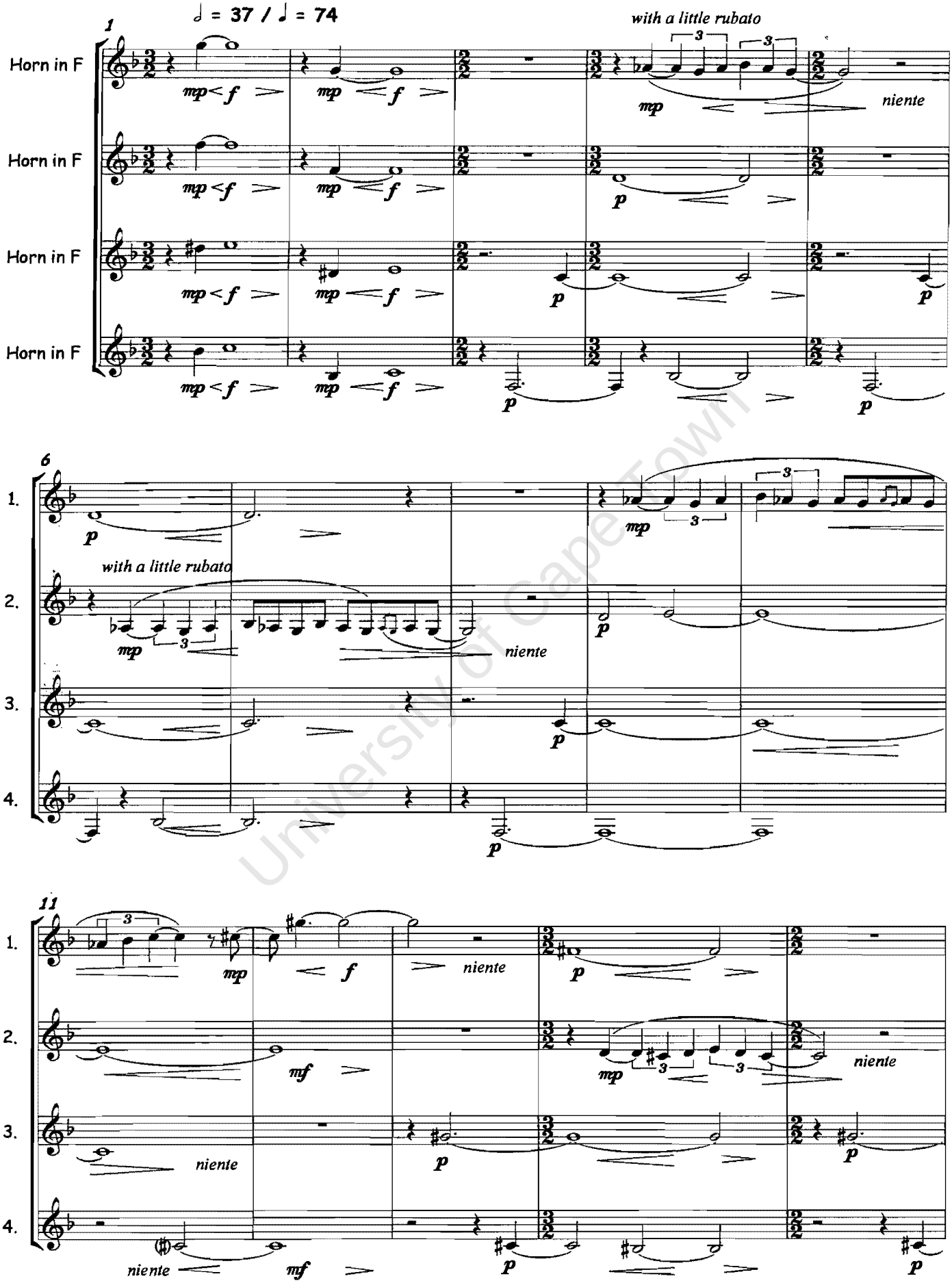
II. Lento



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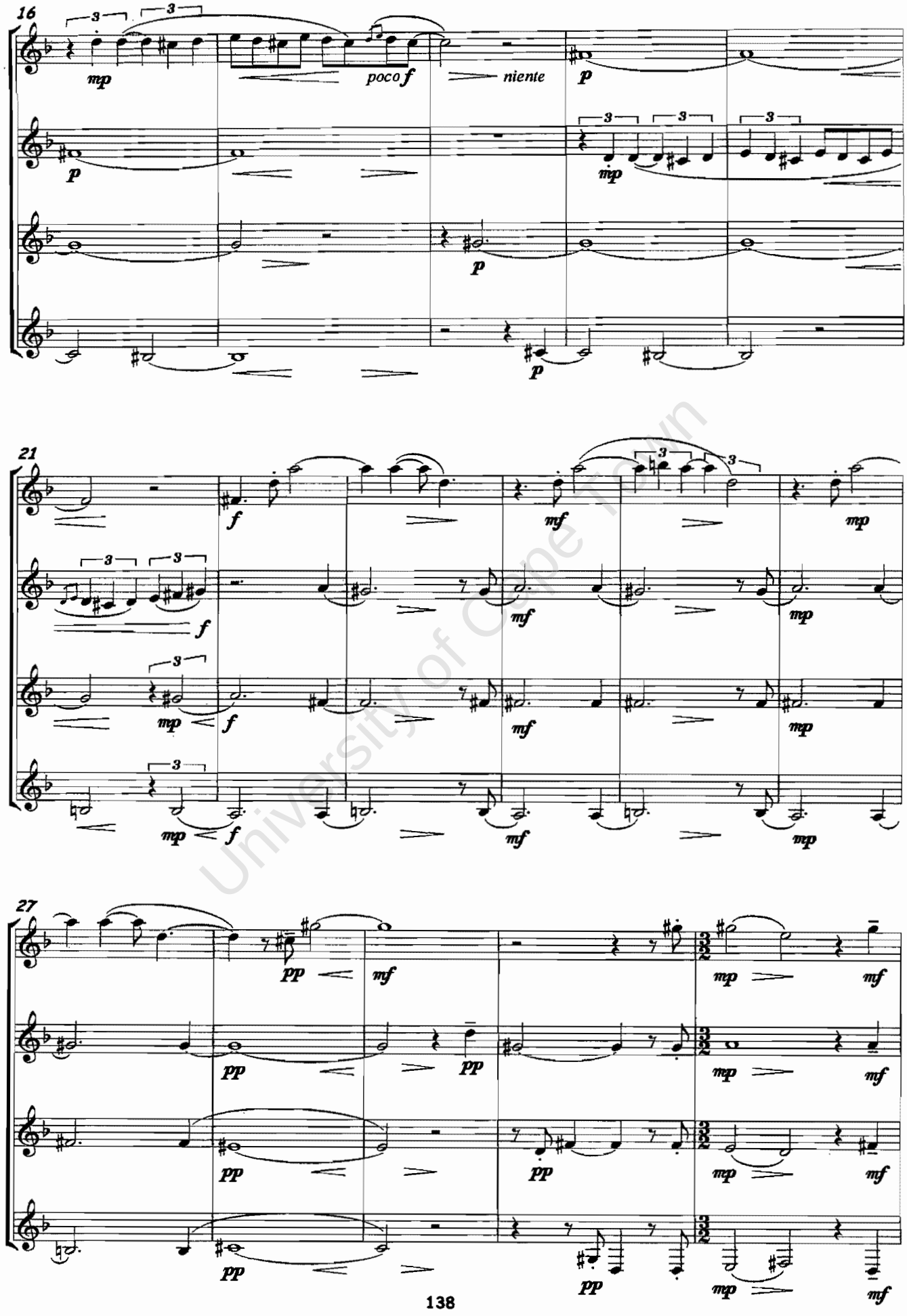

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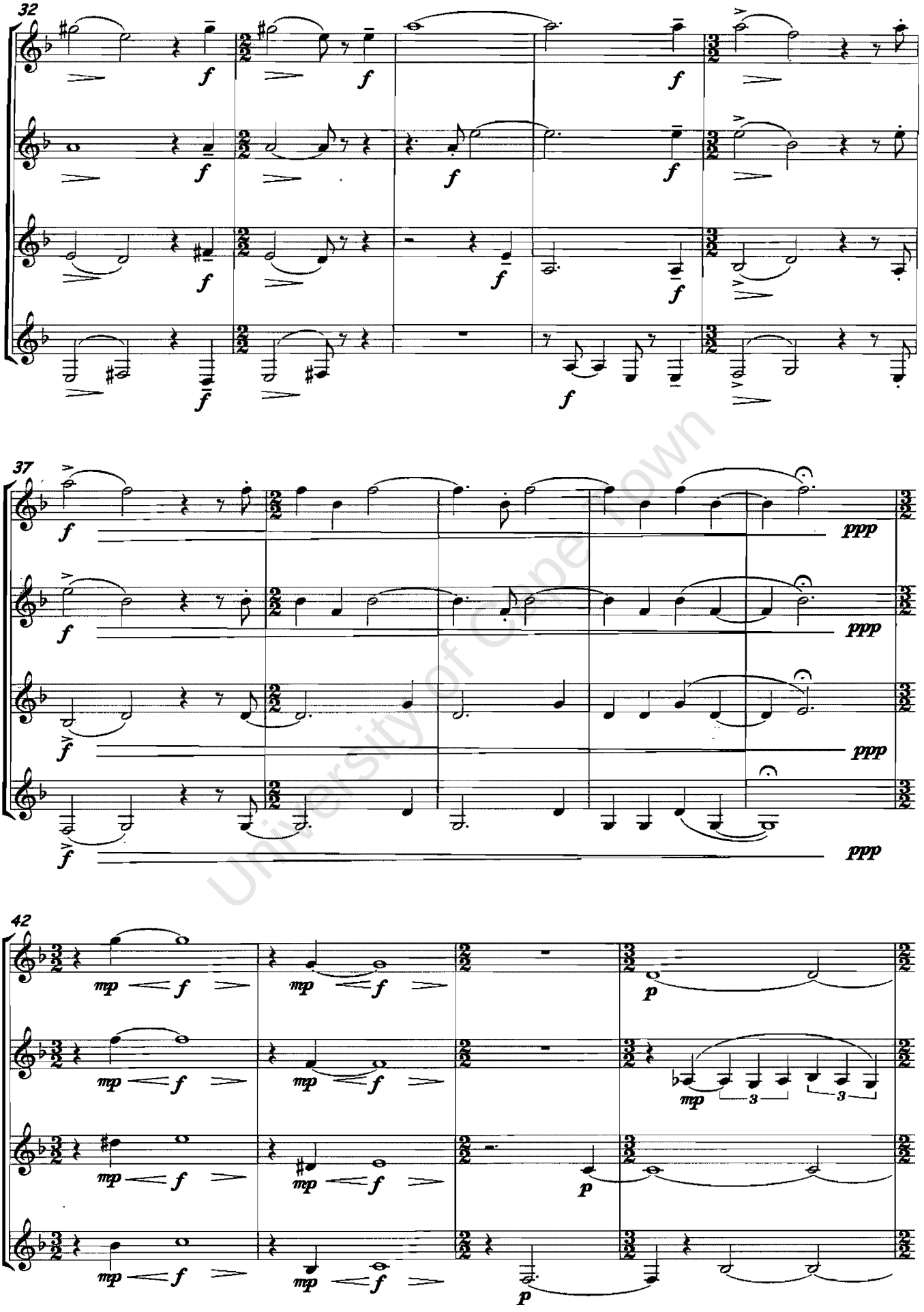

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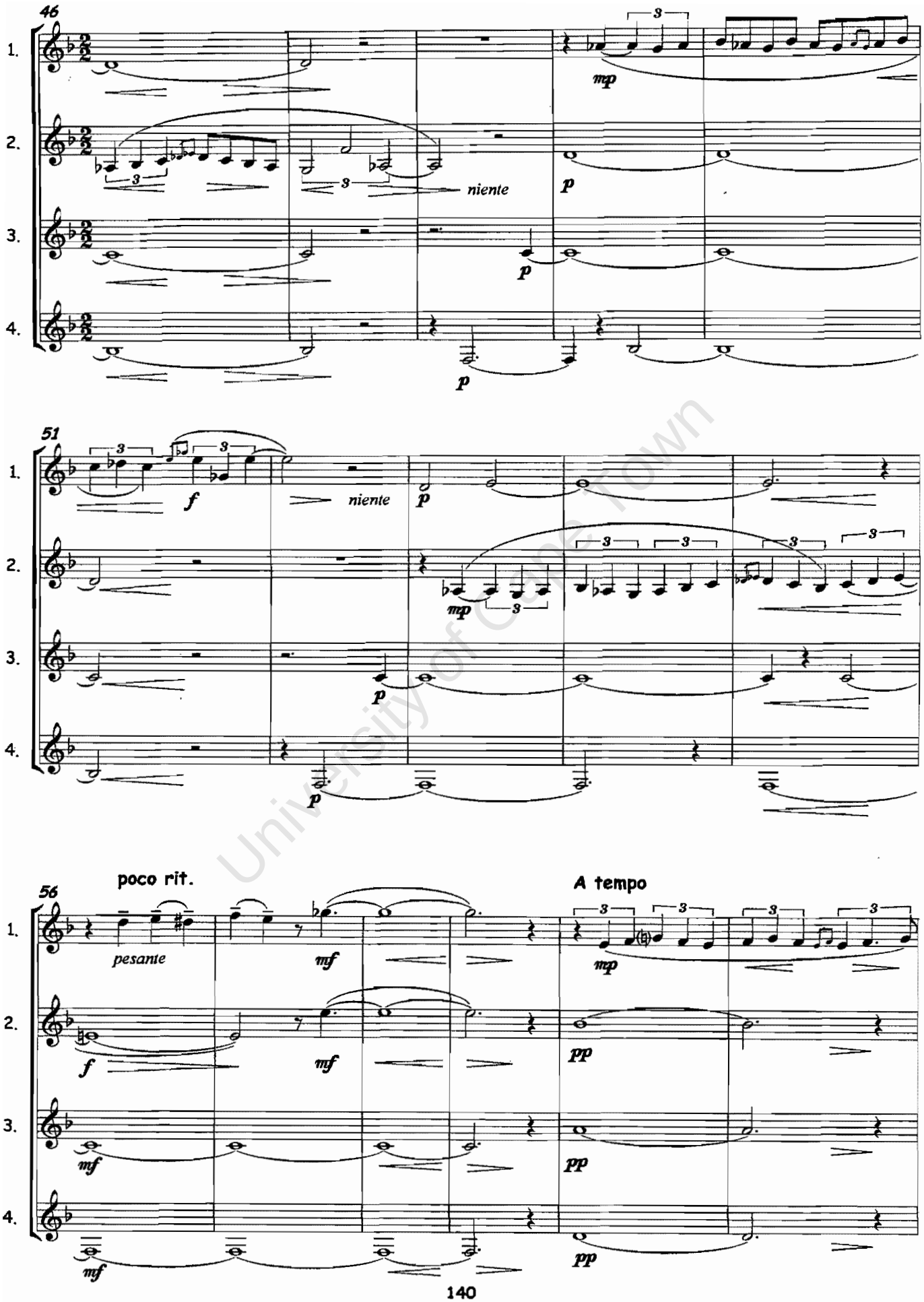

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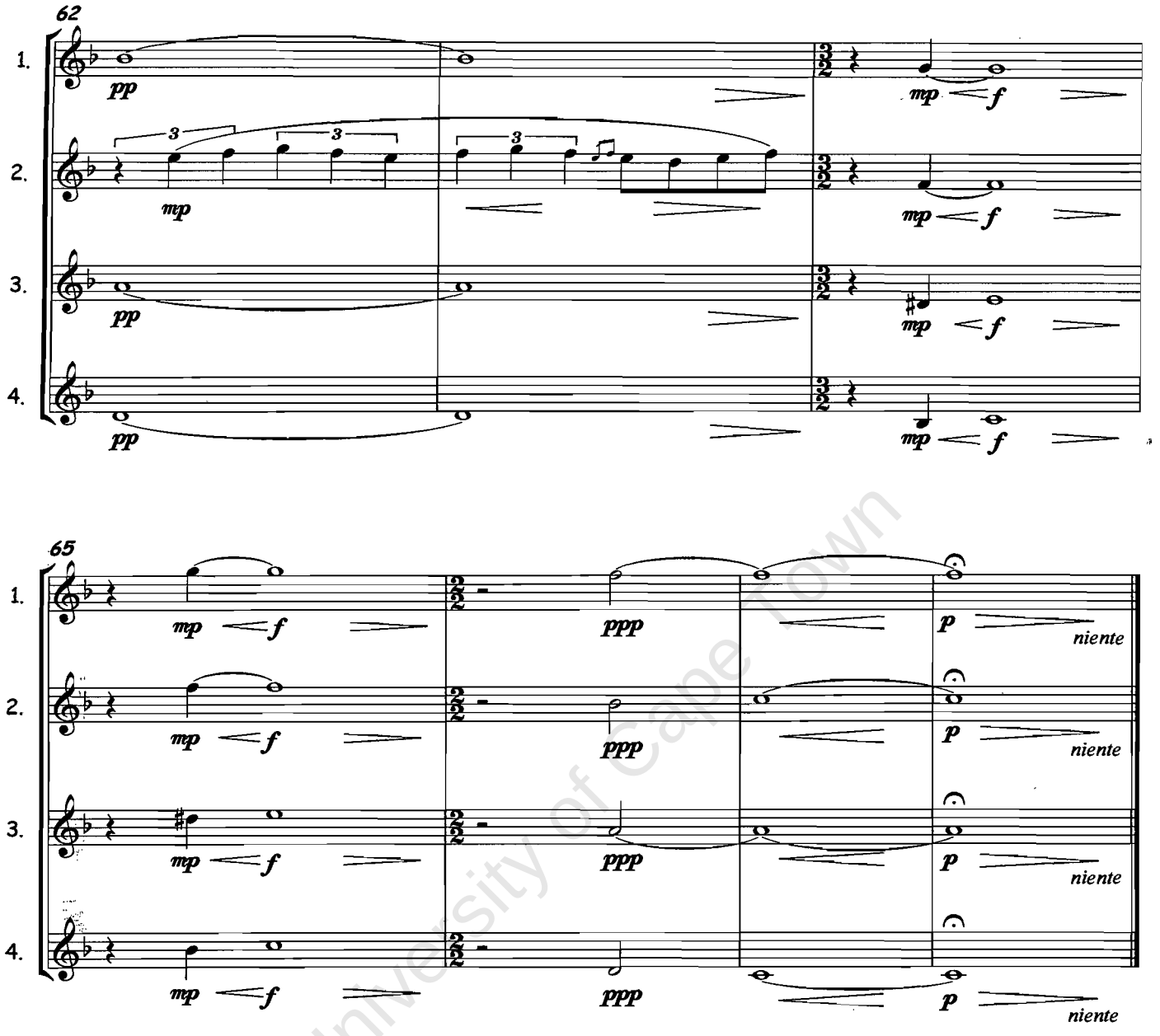

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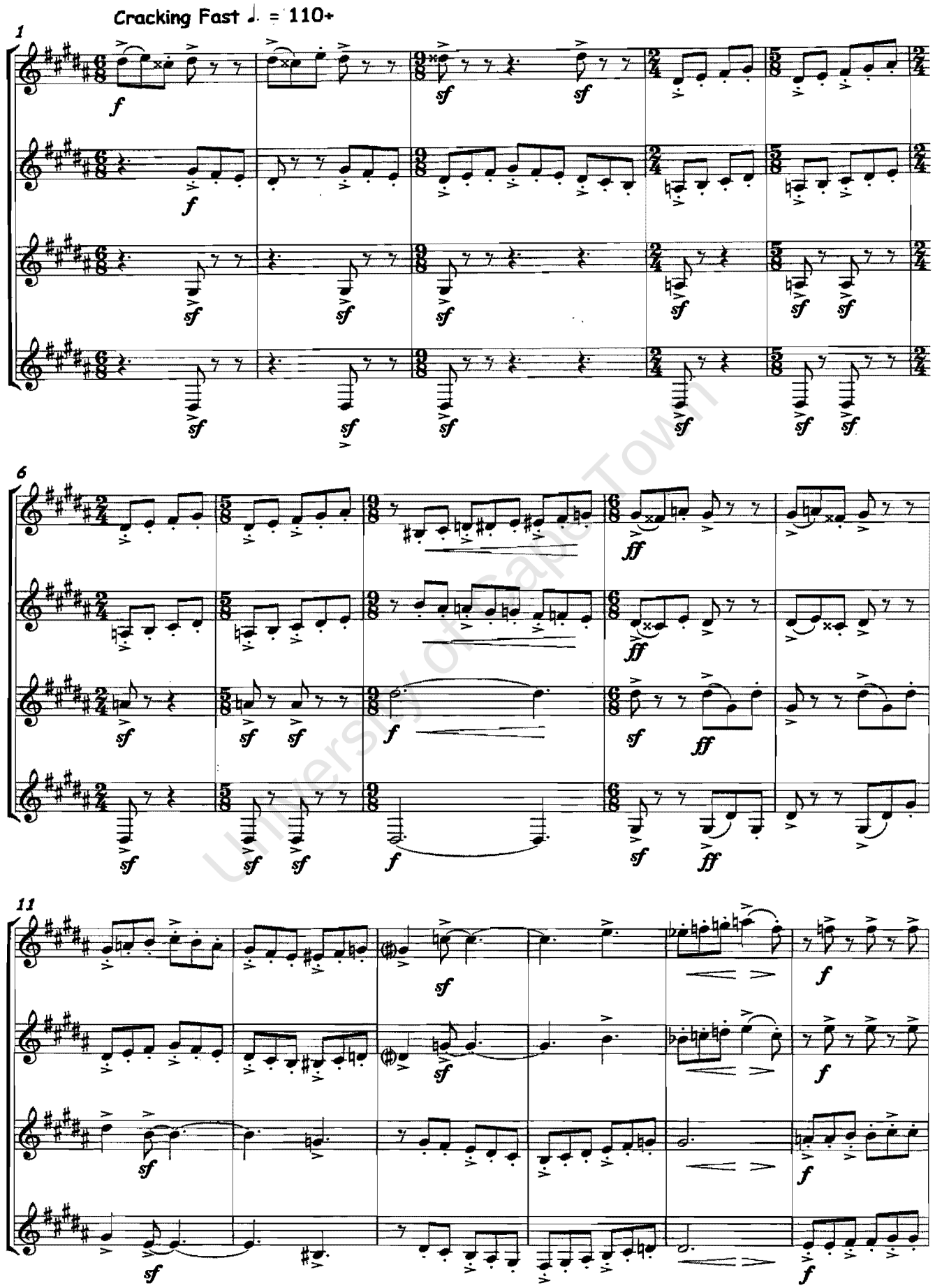
III. PRESTO



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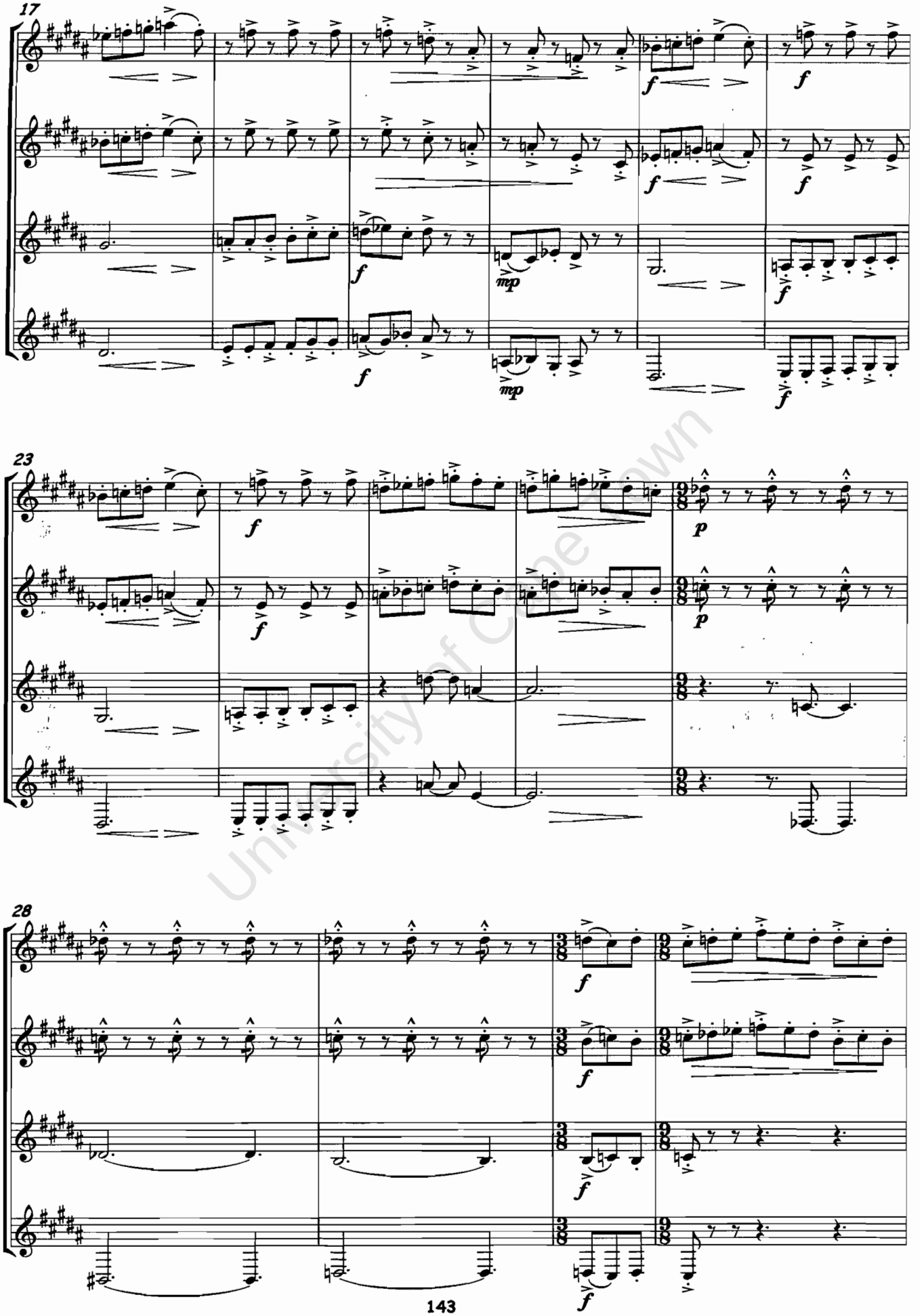

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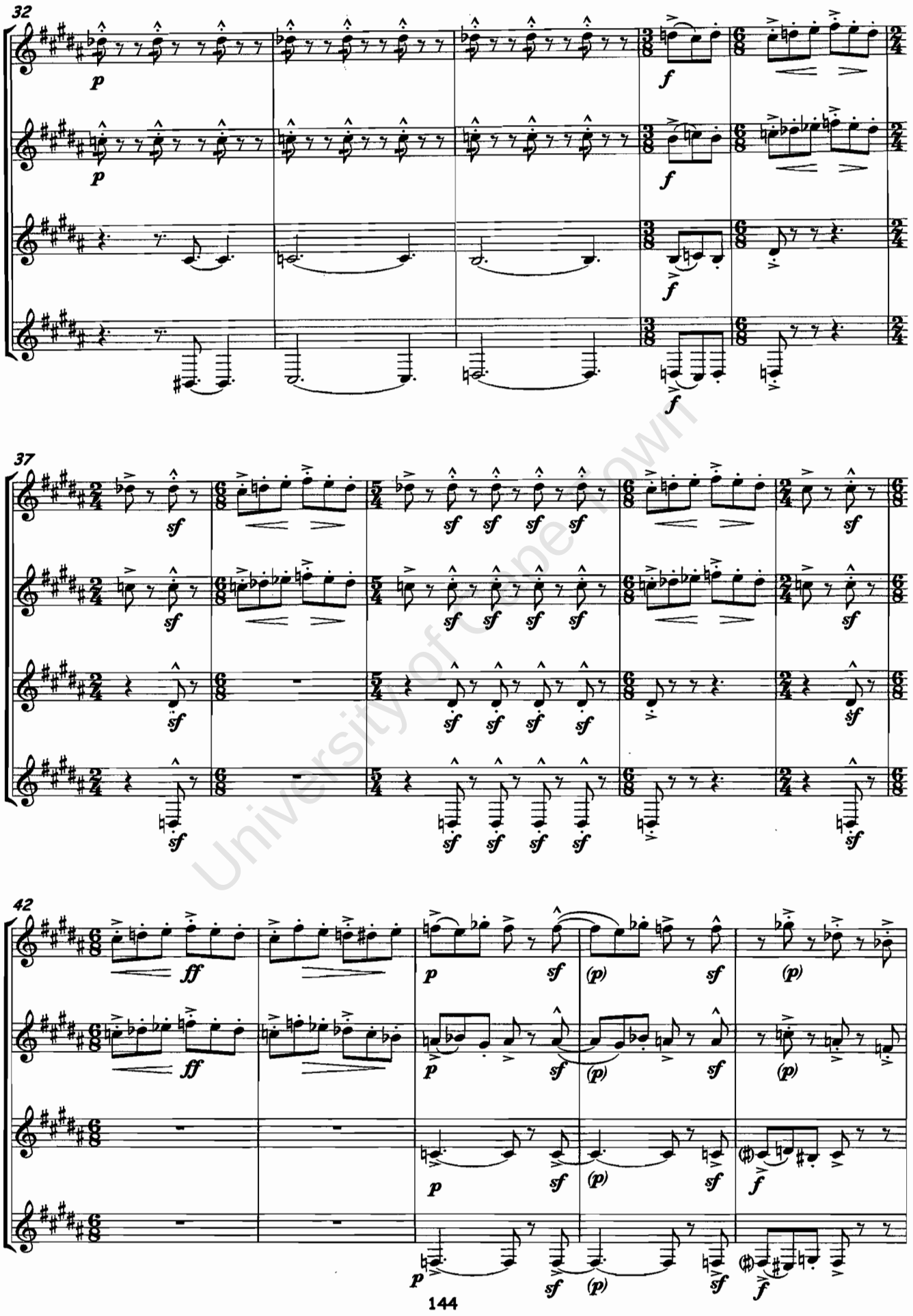

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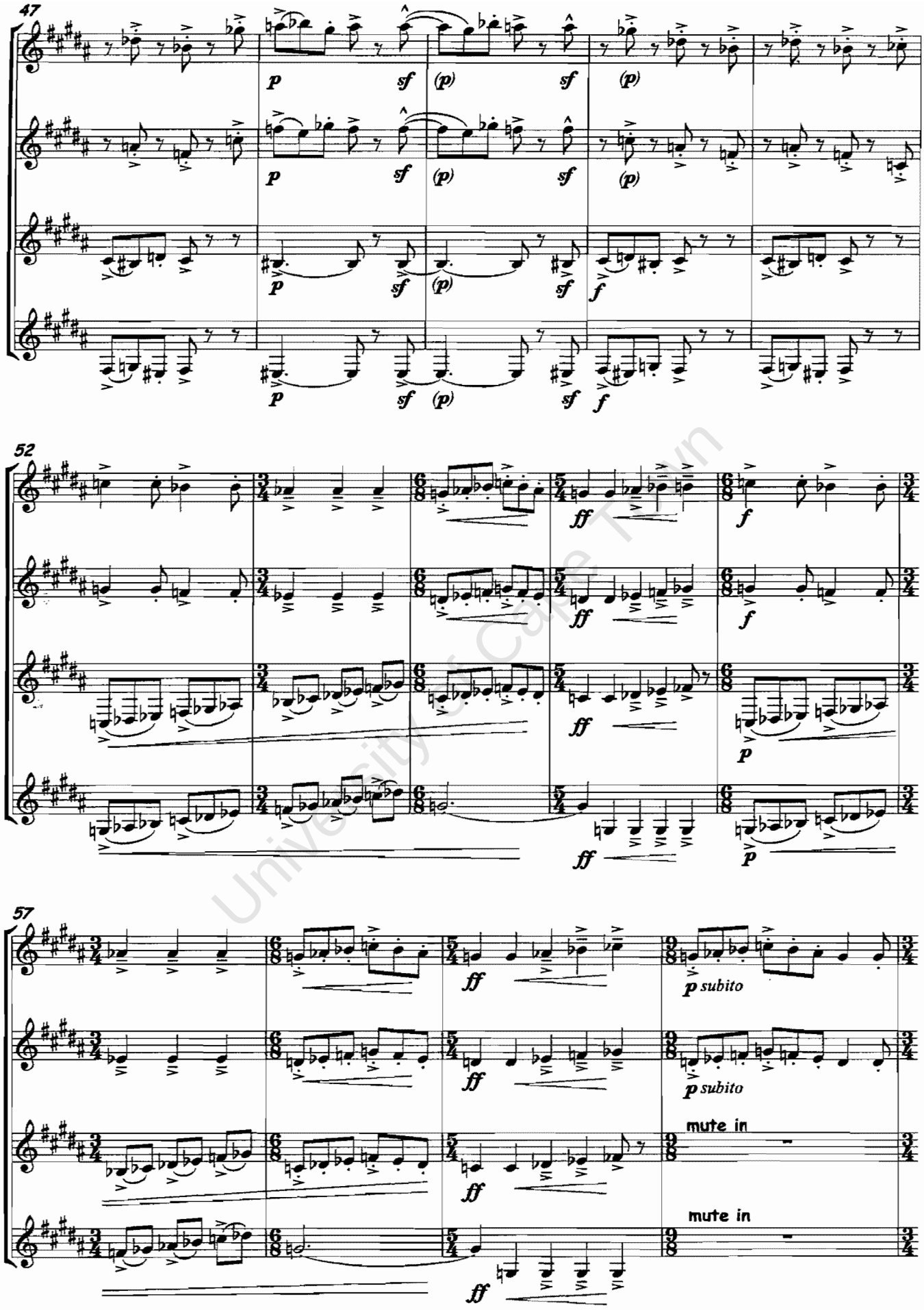

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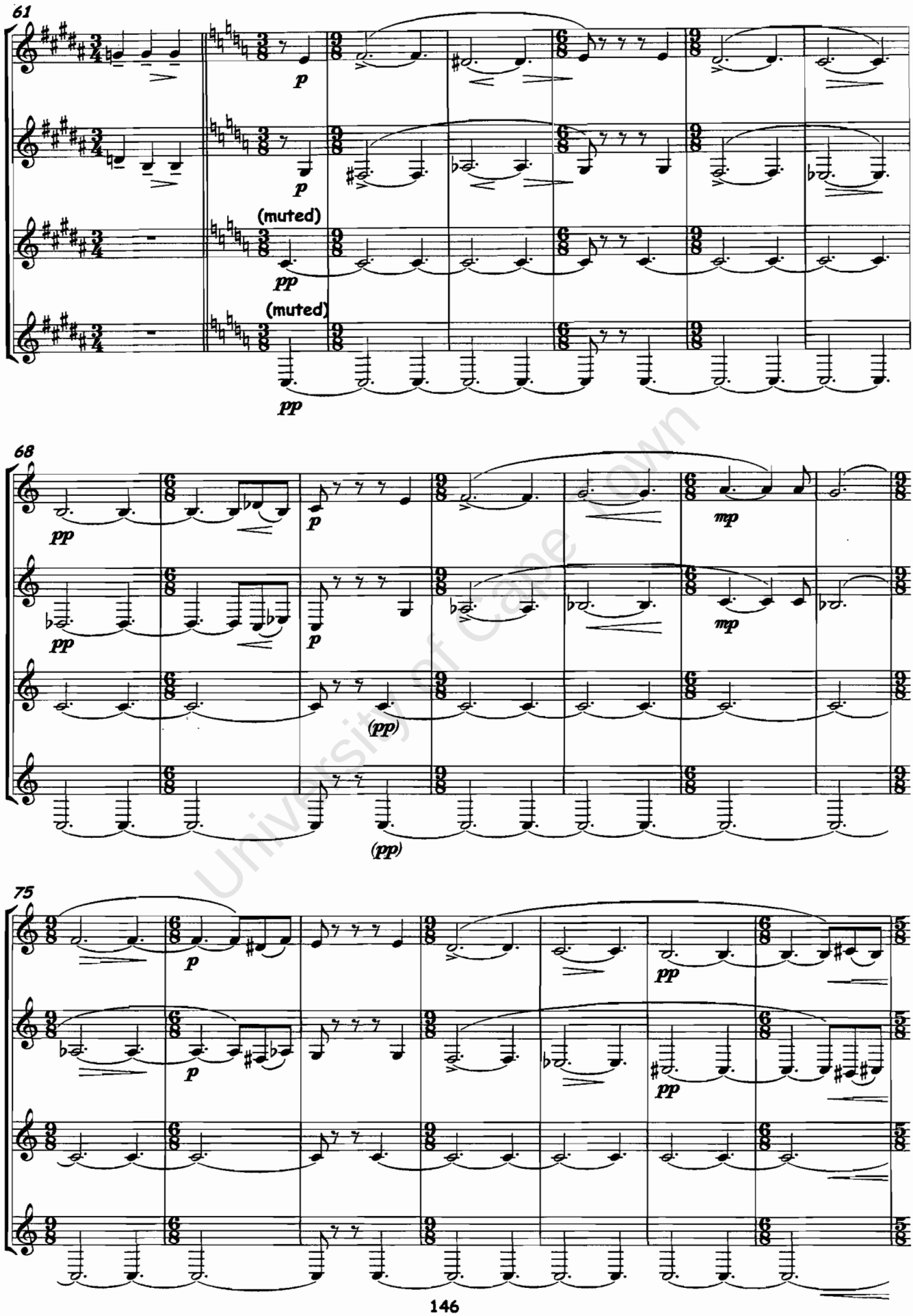

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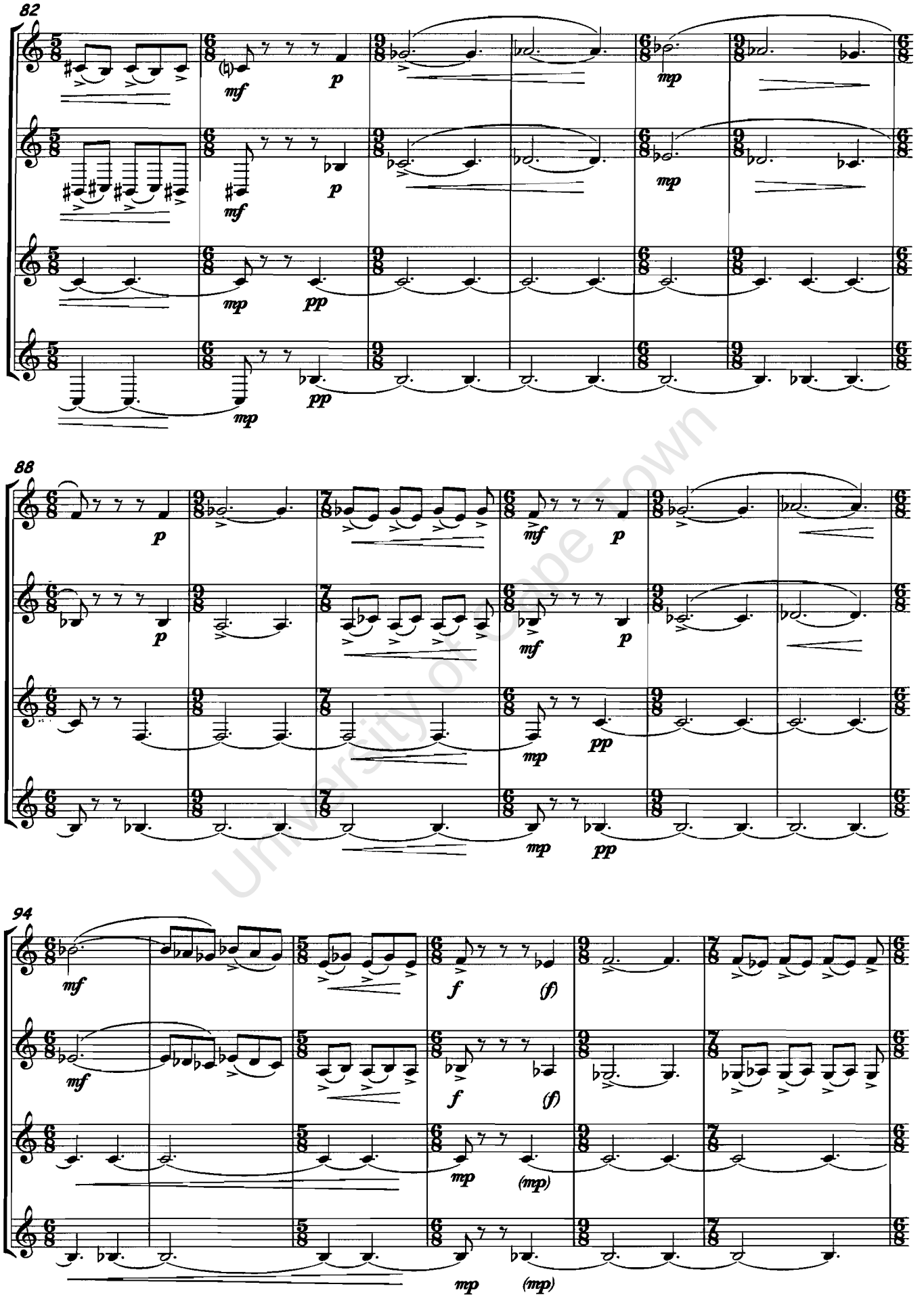

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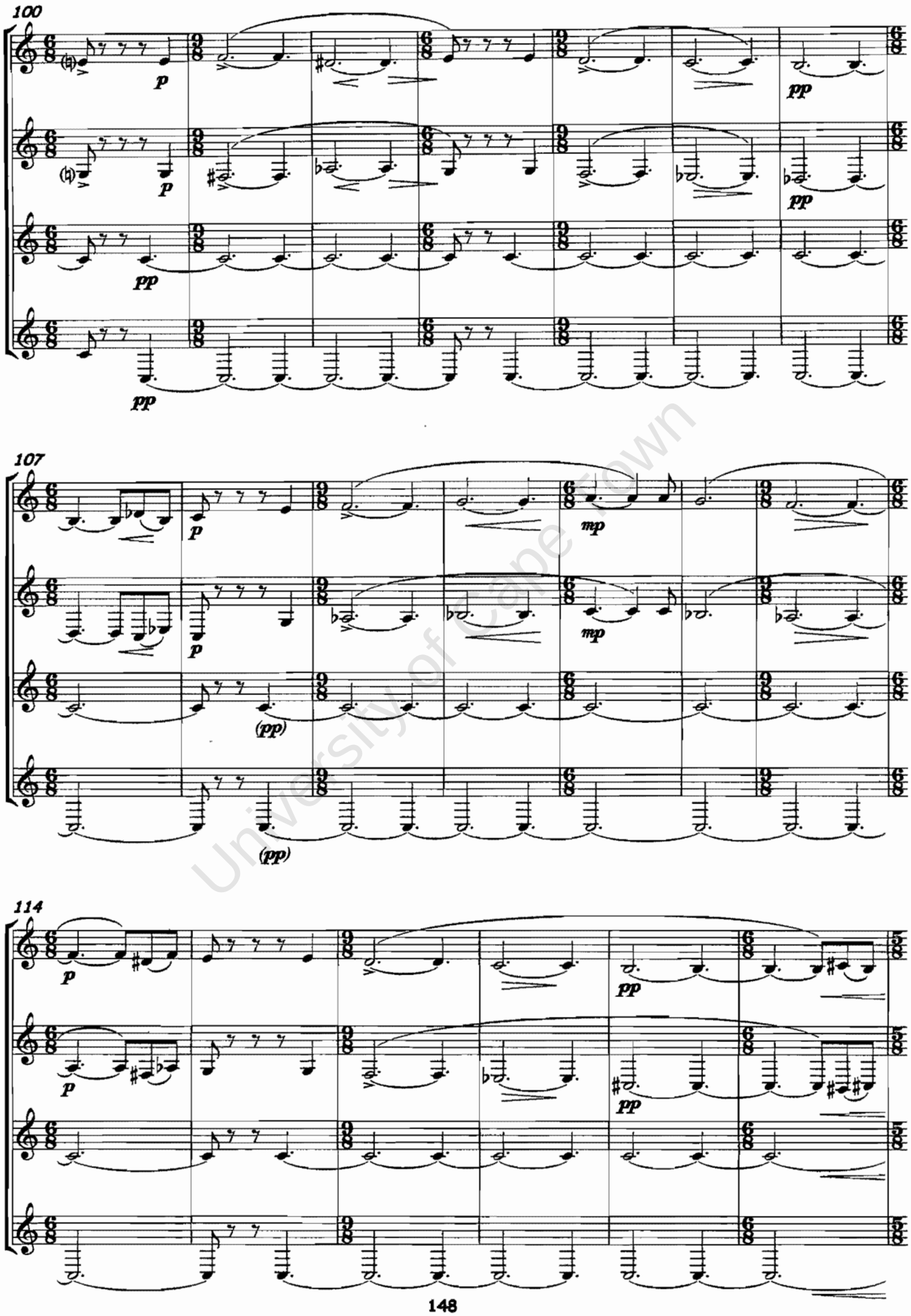

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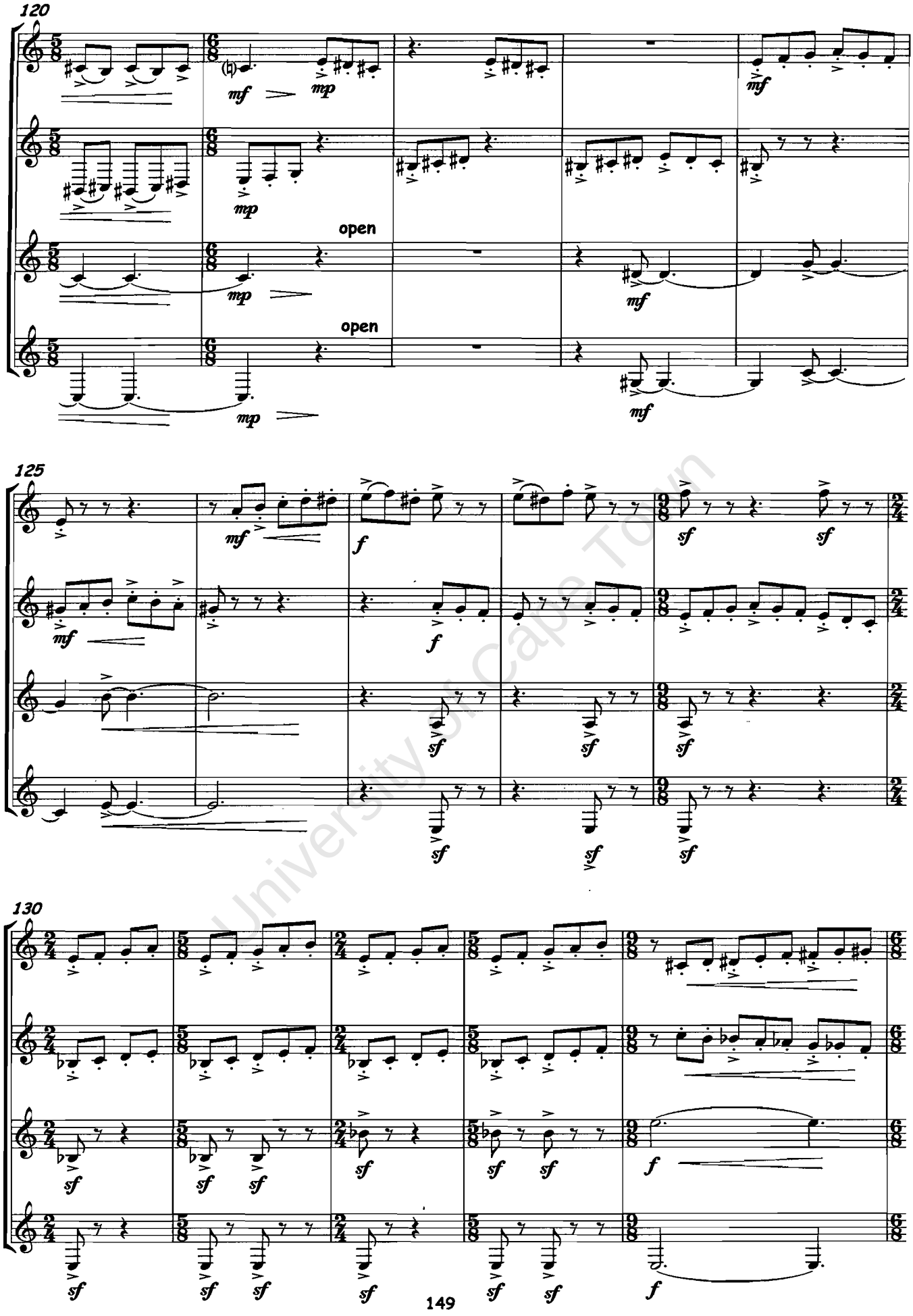

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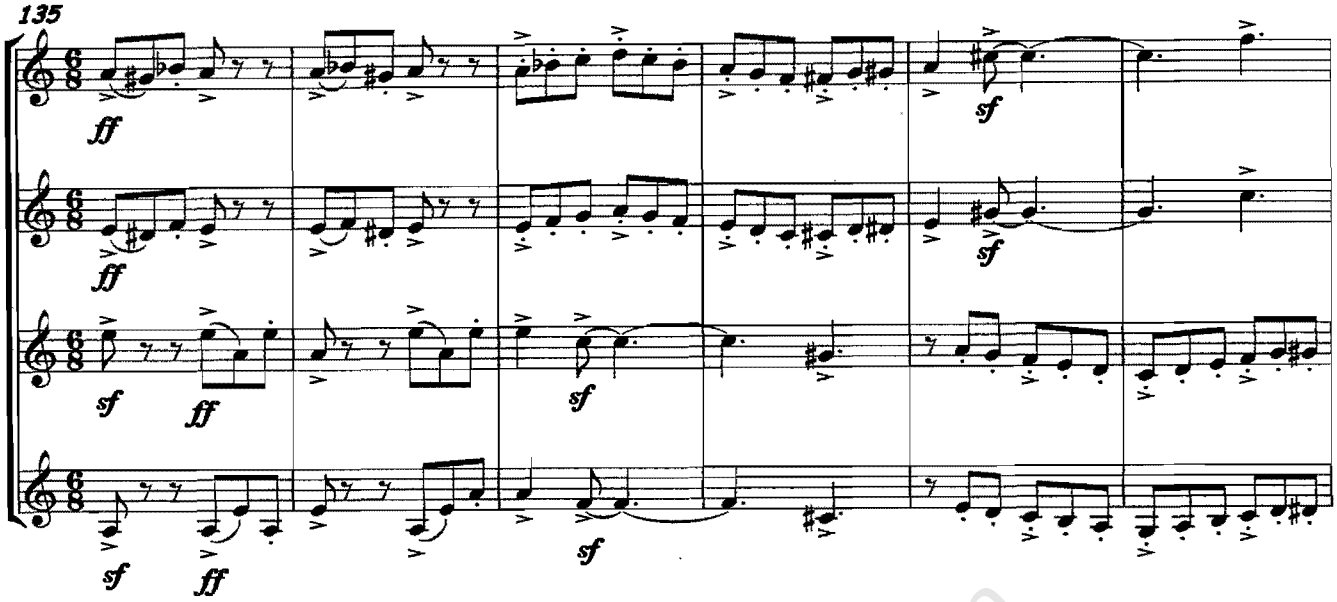

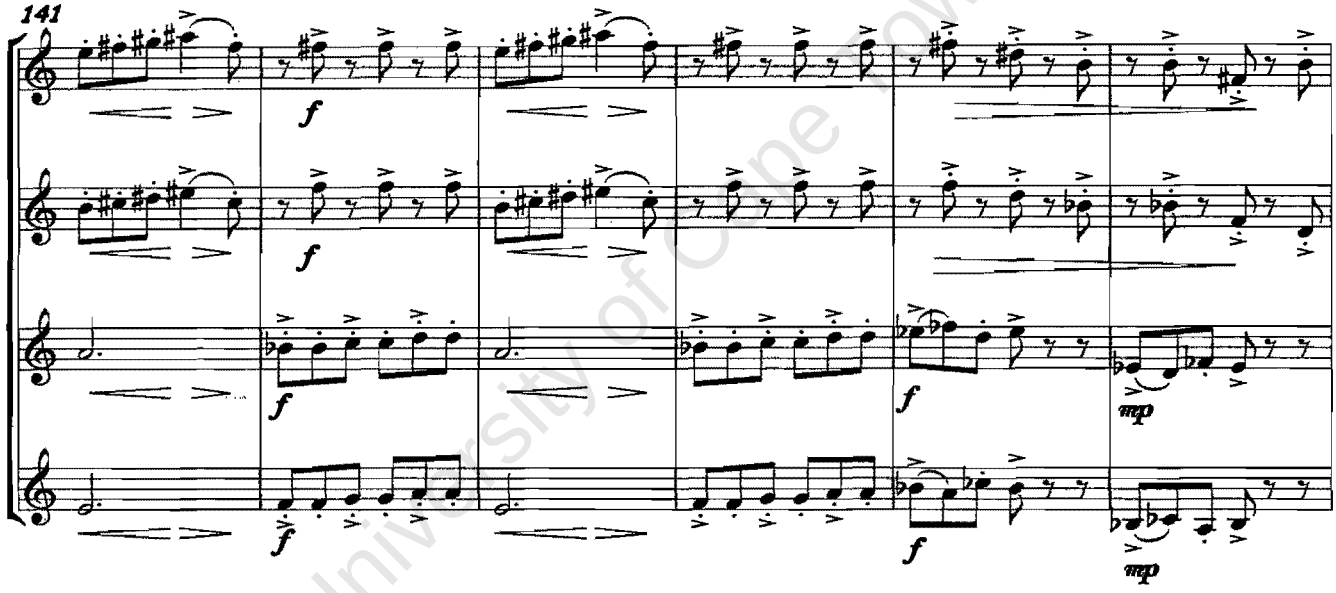

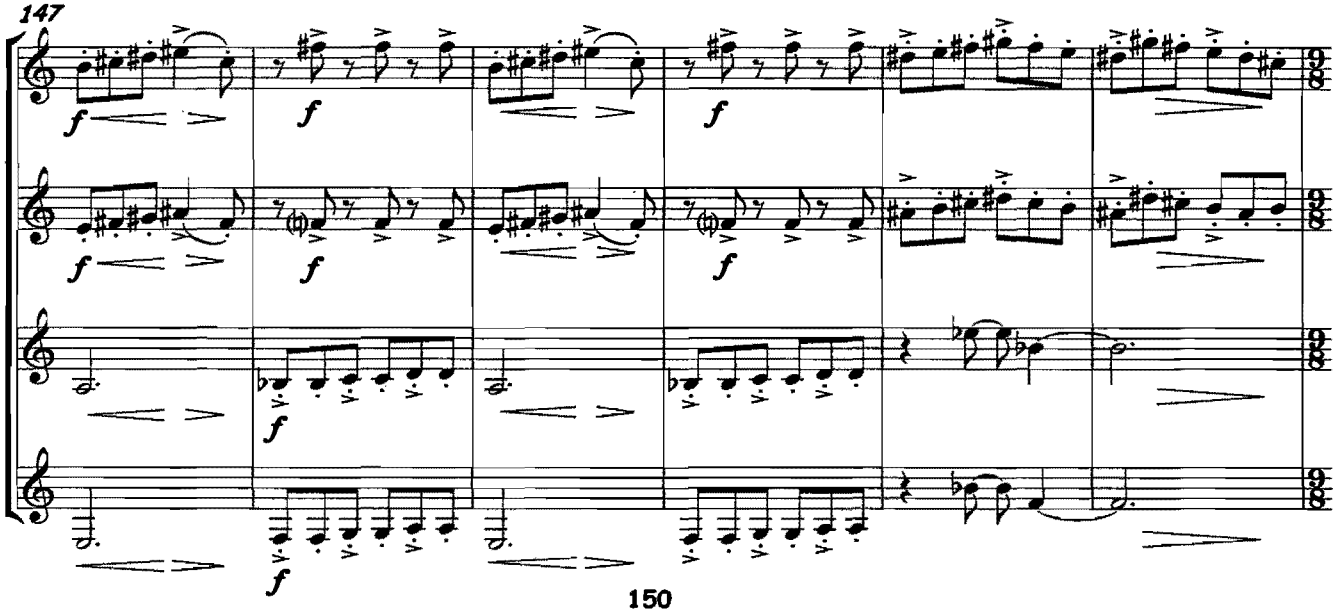

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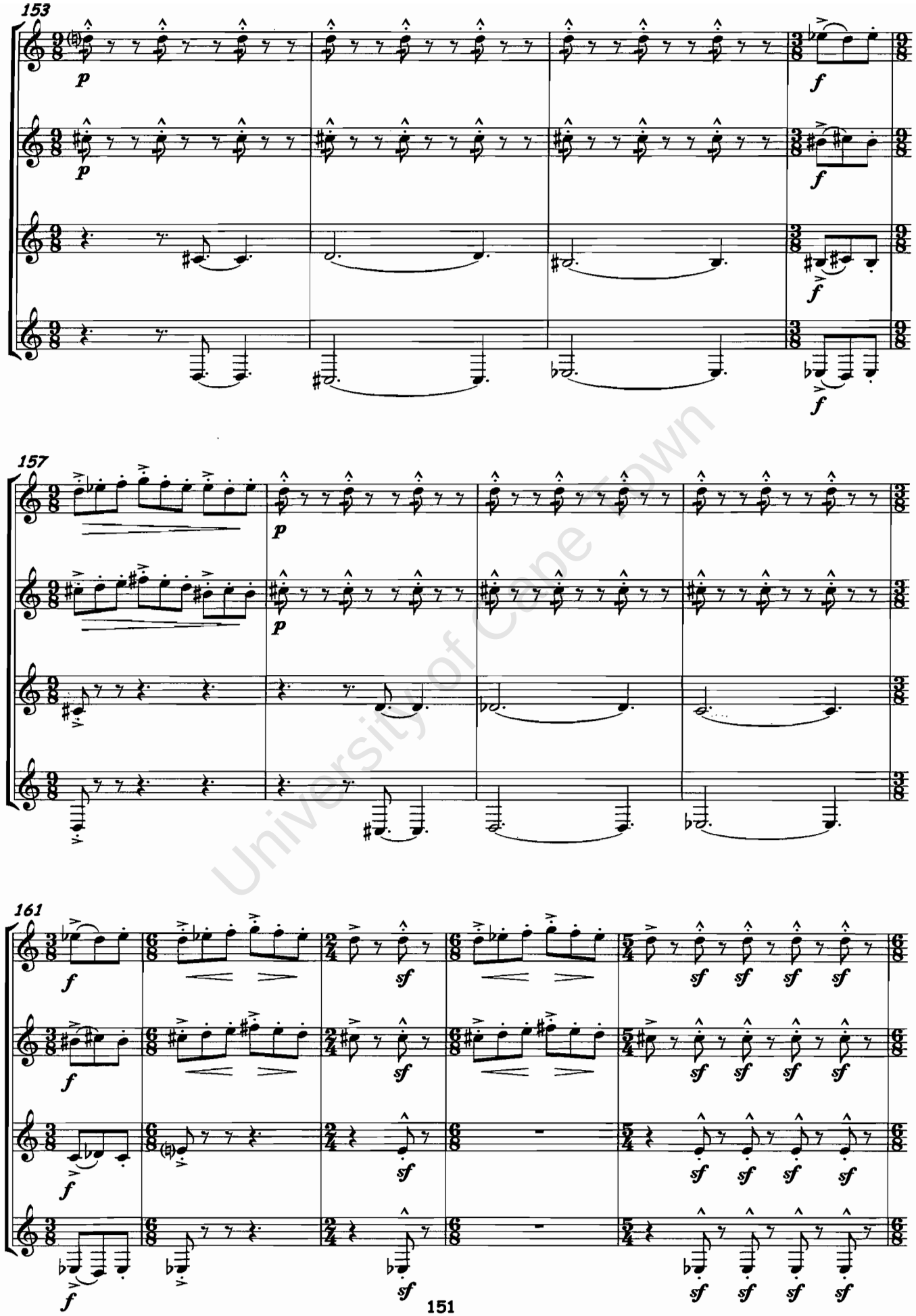

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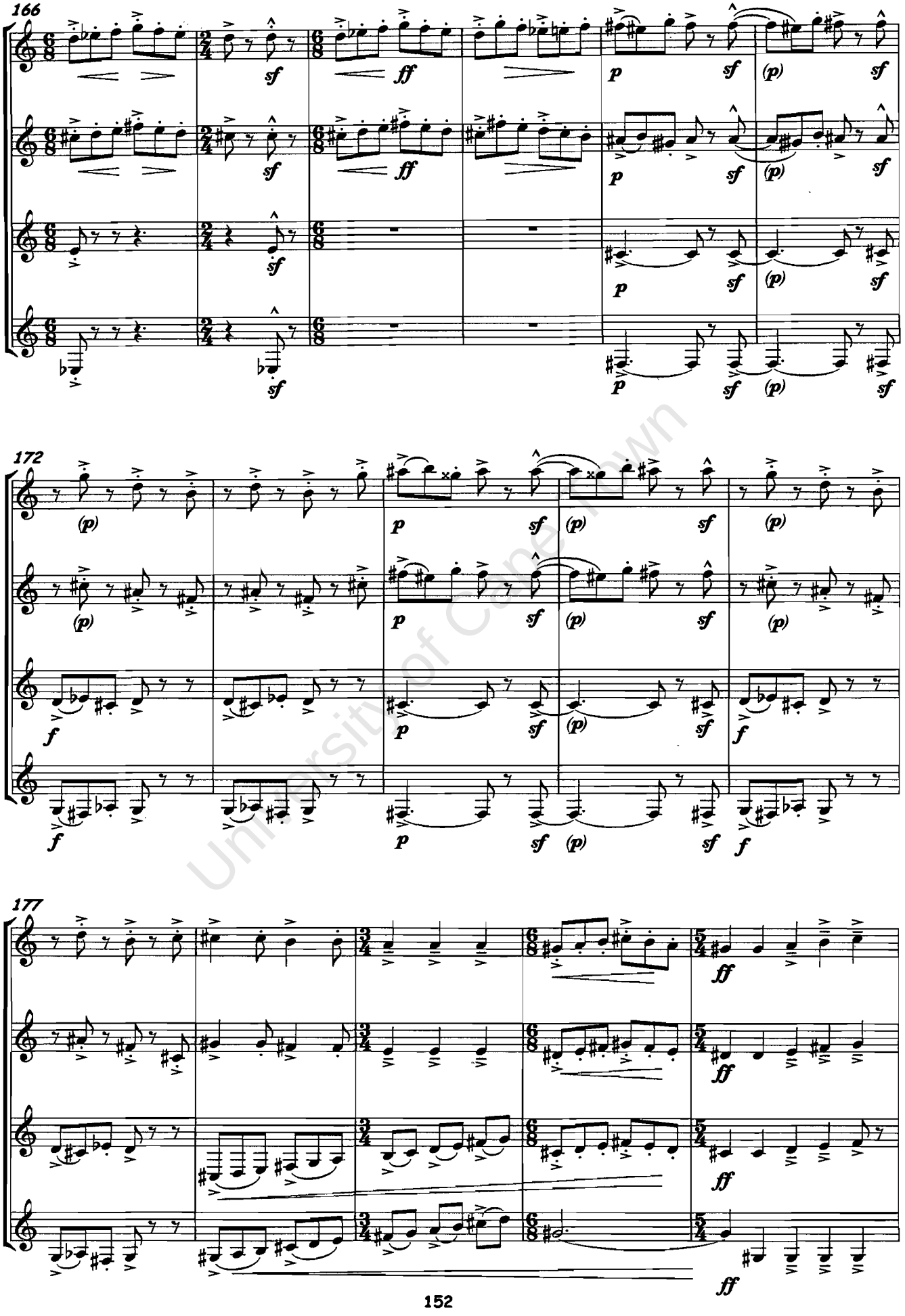

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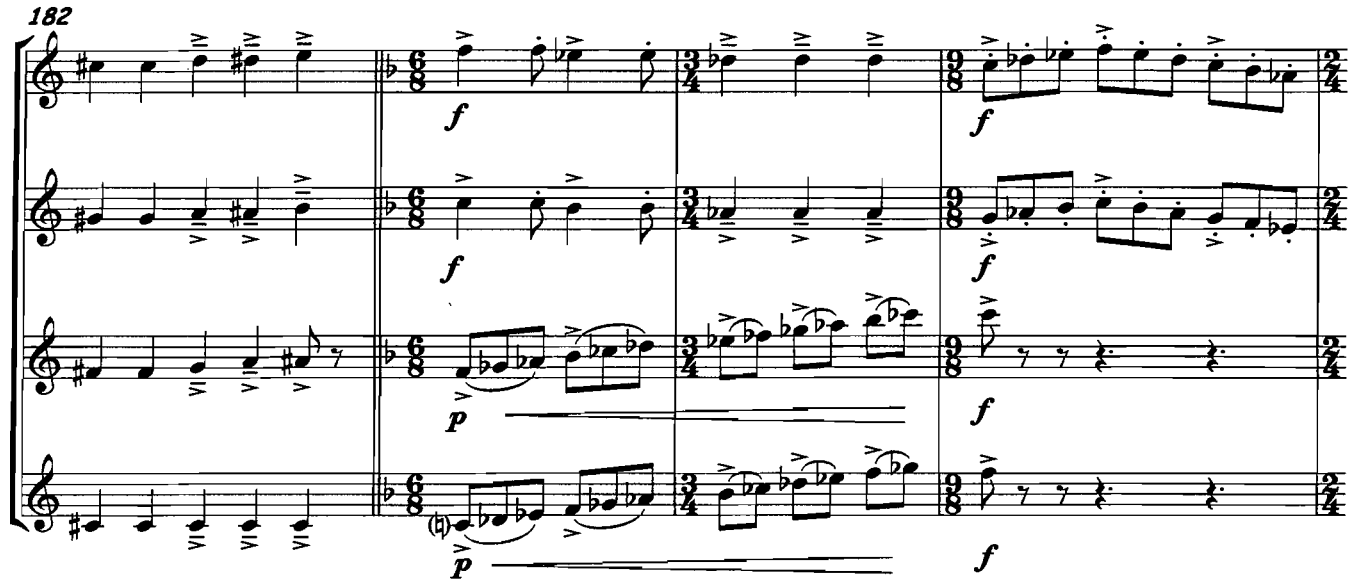

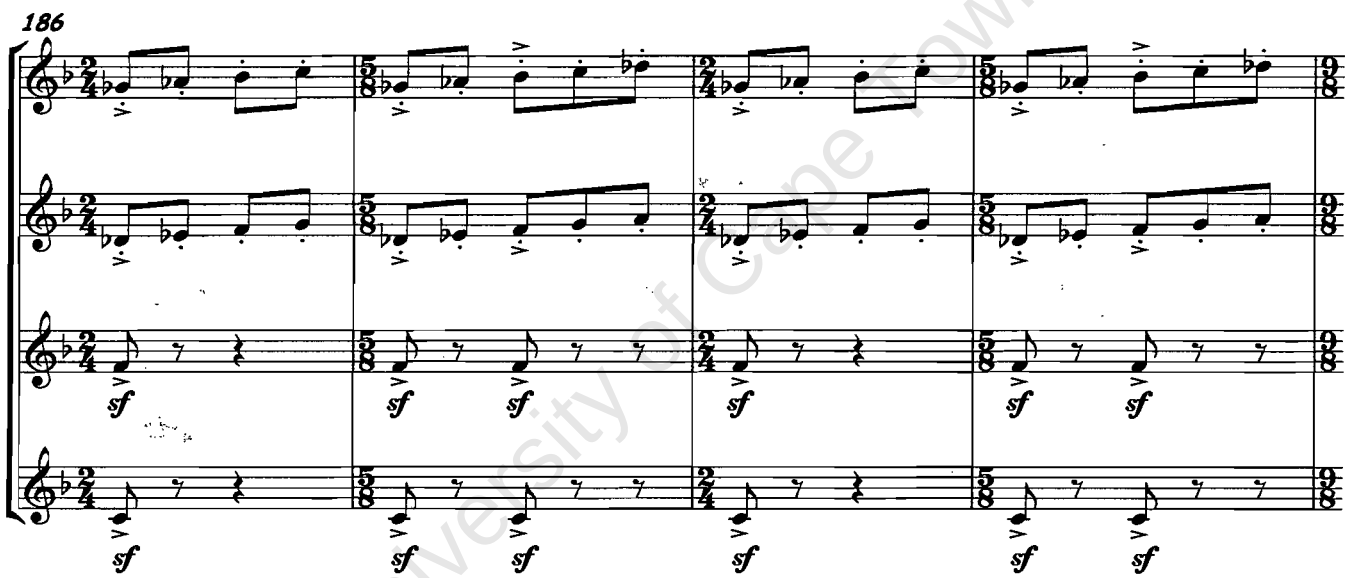

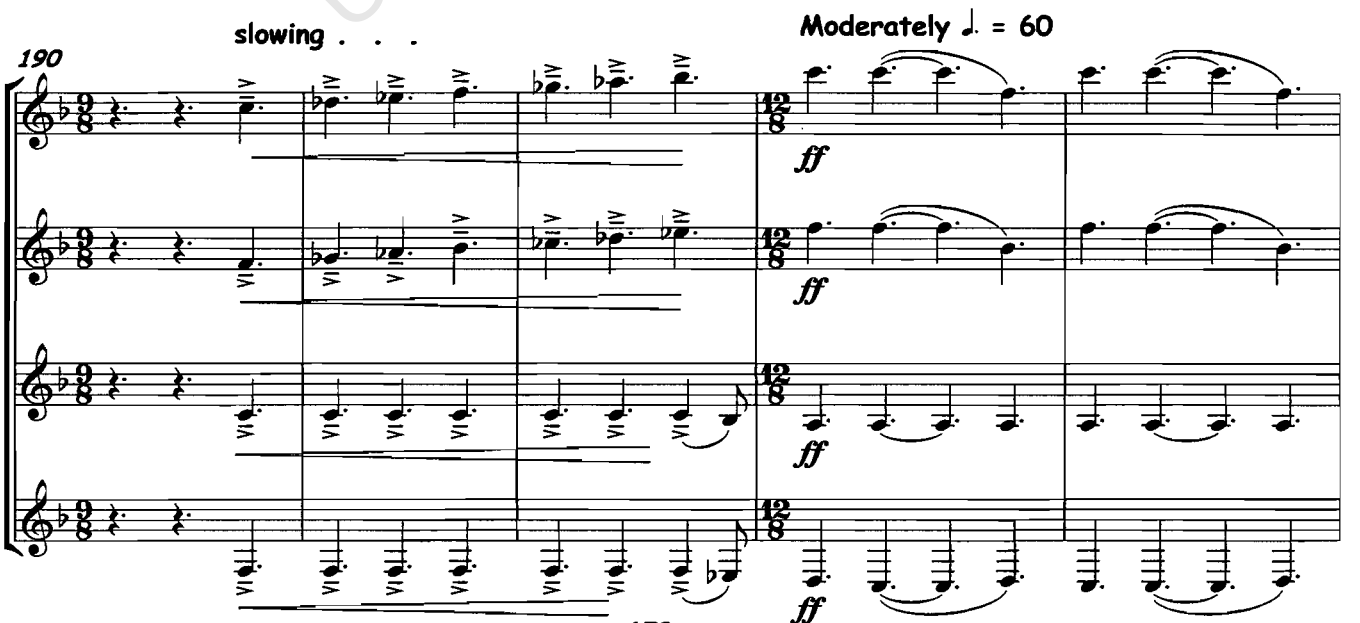

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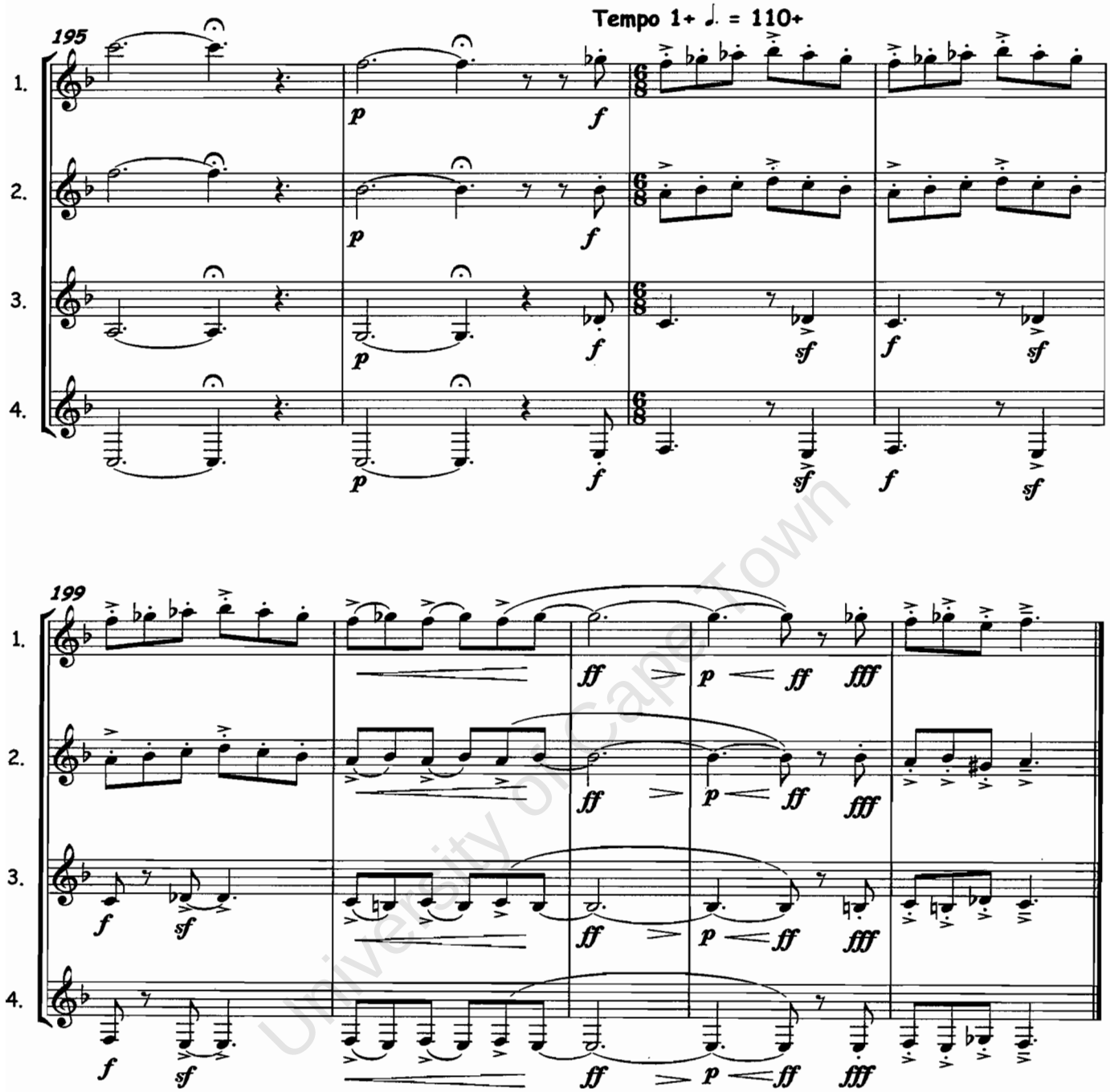


University of Cape Town

Tight as an Owl

for soprano and piano

University of Cape Town

by Jon Chanter (lyrics)
and Tim Chanter (music)

Duration: 3½ minutes

Tight as an Owl

This piece is the setting of a dark comic poem by Jon Chanter (my cousin) concerning the macabre art of taxidermy:

So it once was sweet and dishy,
Now it just smells slightly fishy -
Let me fondle it and maybe have a root.

If you want a real stuffin'
From someone who'll stuff enough in
Let me stuff your owl and make it feel cute.

I'm not some tacky taxidermist
My taxidermy firm is
A taxidermic house of high repute.

My taxidermic axiom
Is 'stuff "em to the maximum"
Be they pachyderm or palmated newt.

So for your owl to pack a thrill in
I'm the woman to do the fillin'
I can fill it till it's full enough to hoot

Jon Chanter

University of Cape Town

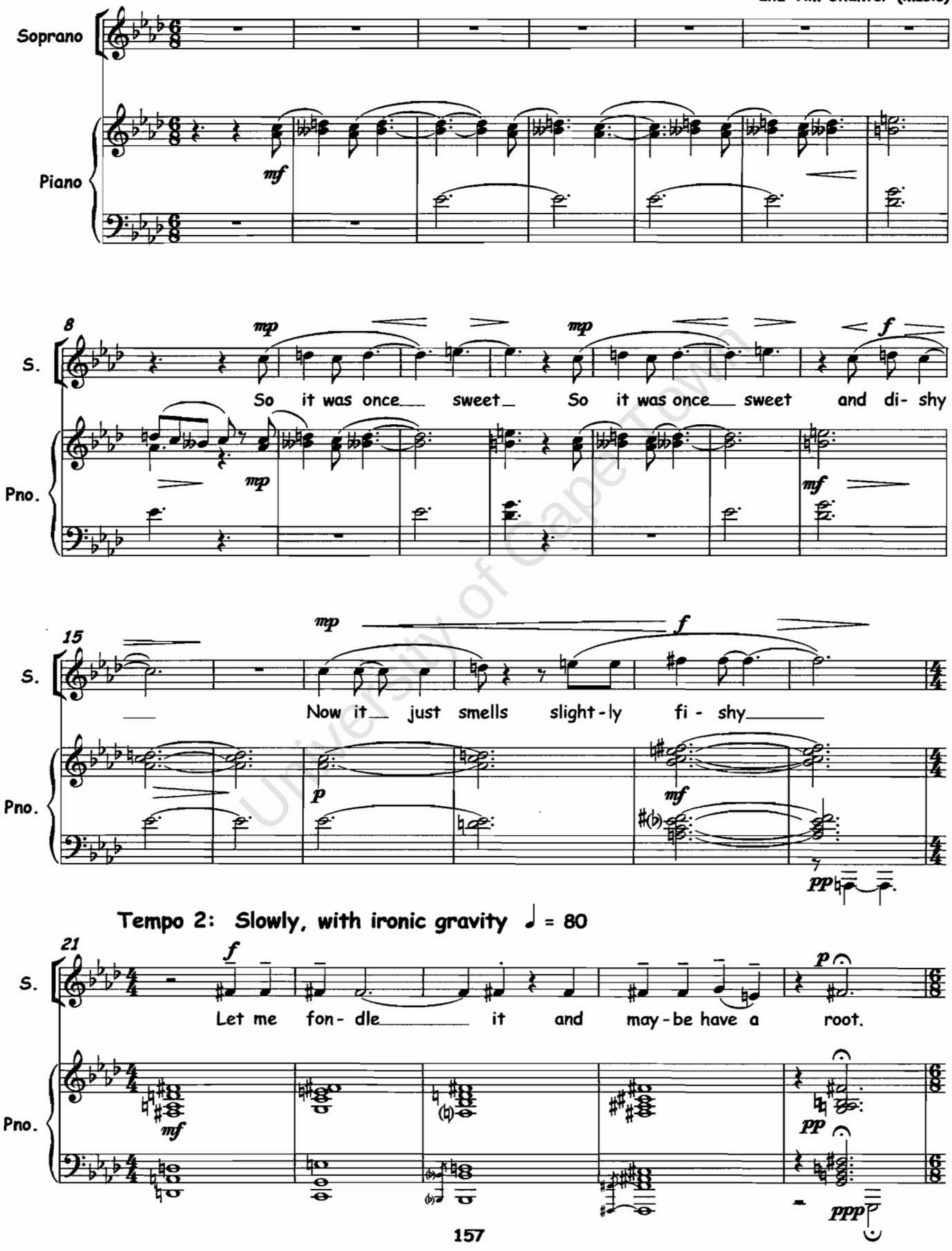
The piece should be sung with an air of mock gravity, as if the subject matter was extremely serious.

The vocal range is from middle *C* to top *C*, unless the lower range ossias at bars 31-35 and 83-84 are chosen in which case the highest note is lowered by a minor third to the *A* natural.

Tight as an owl

Tempo 1: Slowish, and with rubato ♩. = 80

by Jon Chanter (lyrics)
and Tim Chanter (music)



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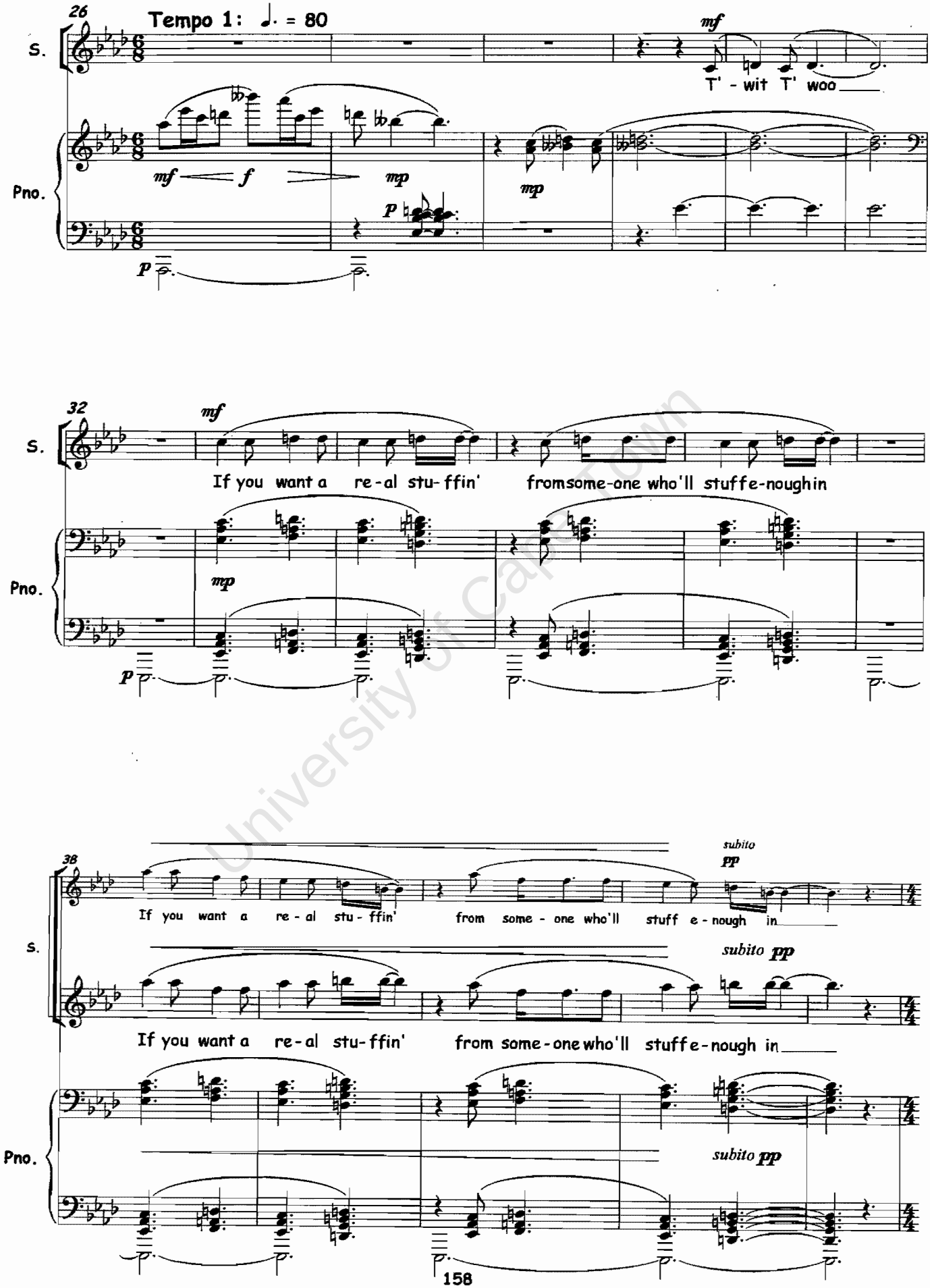

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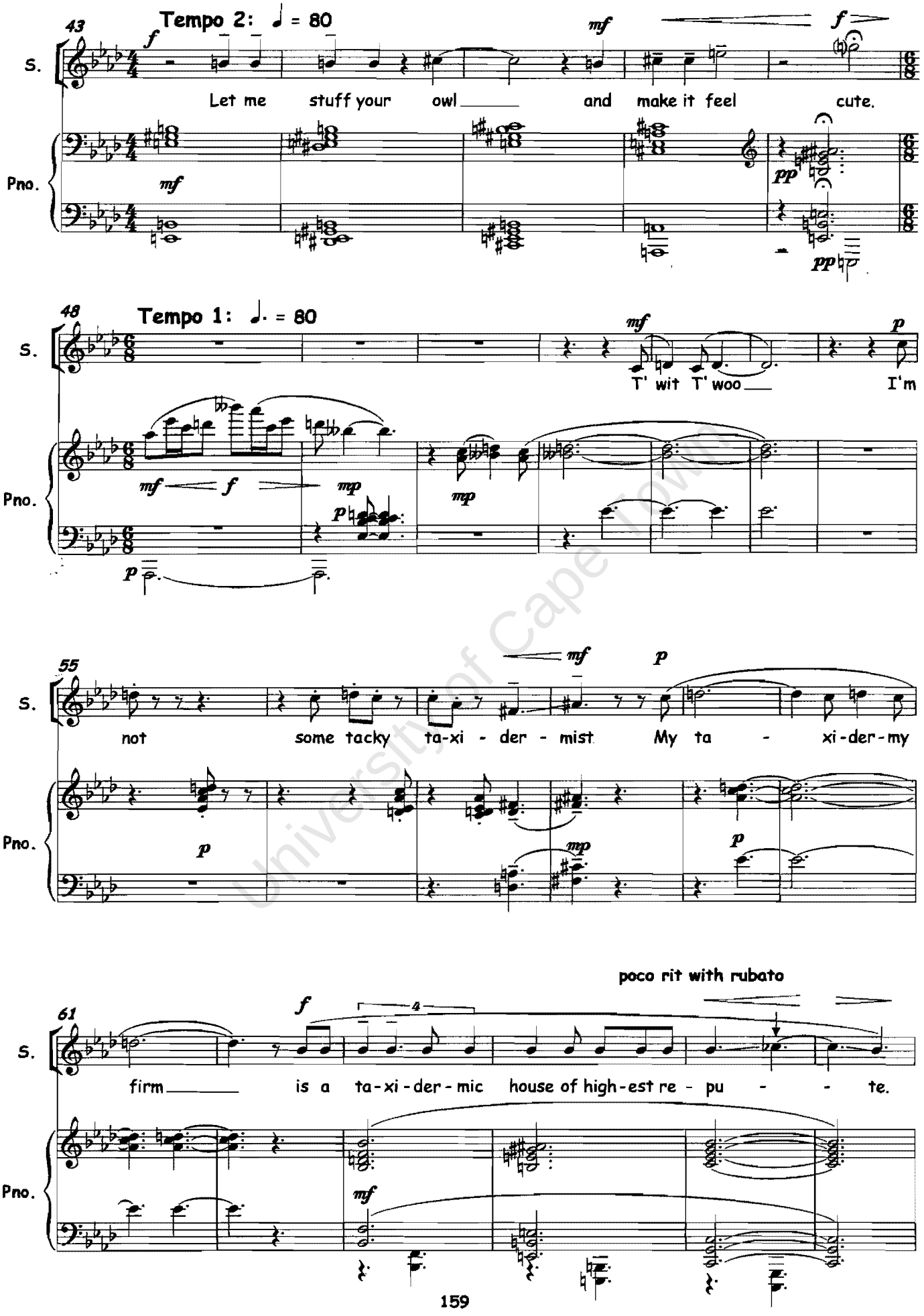

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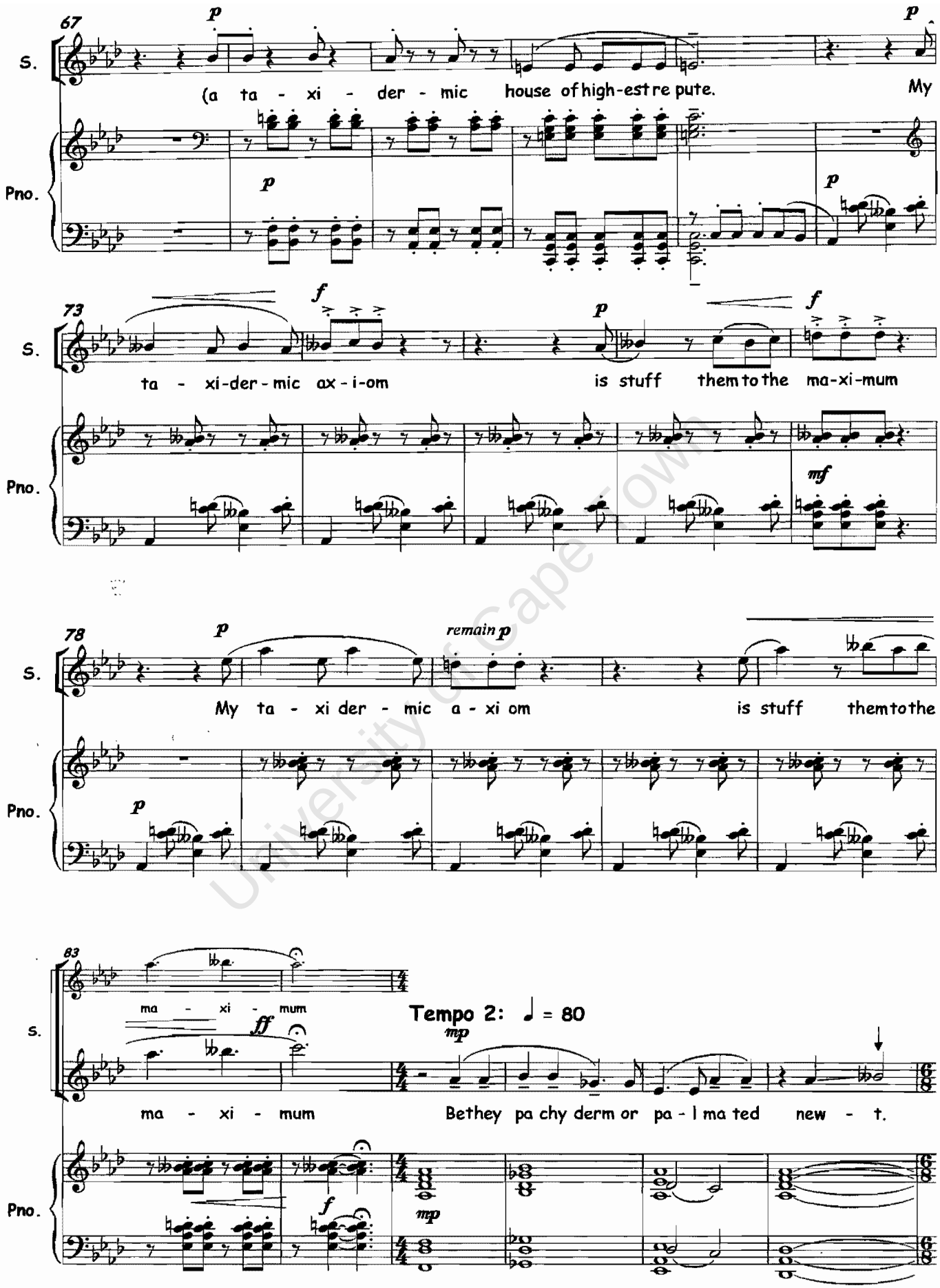

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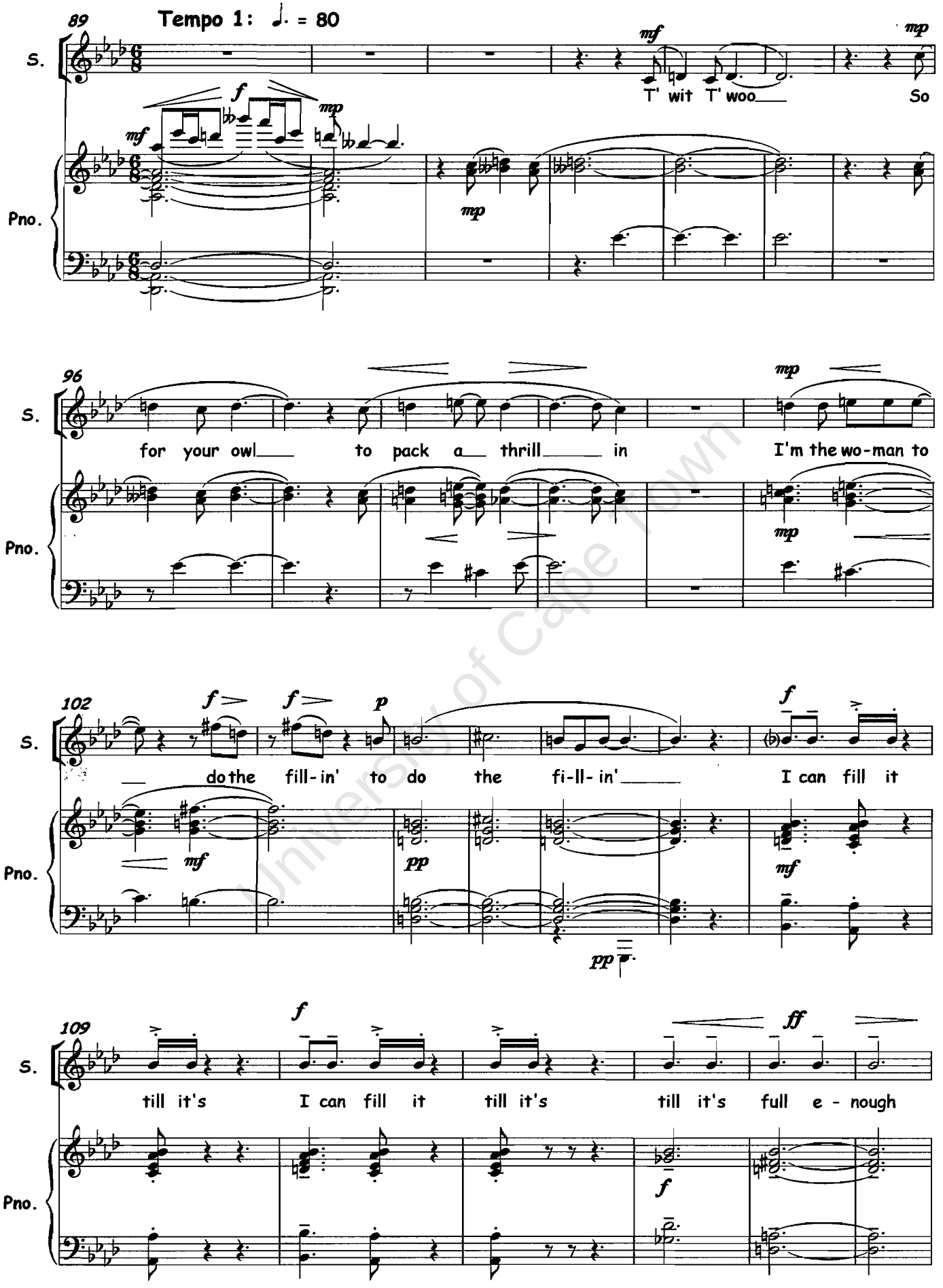

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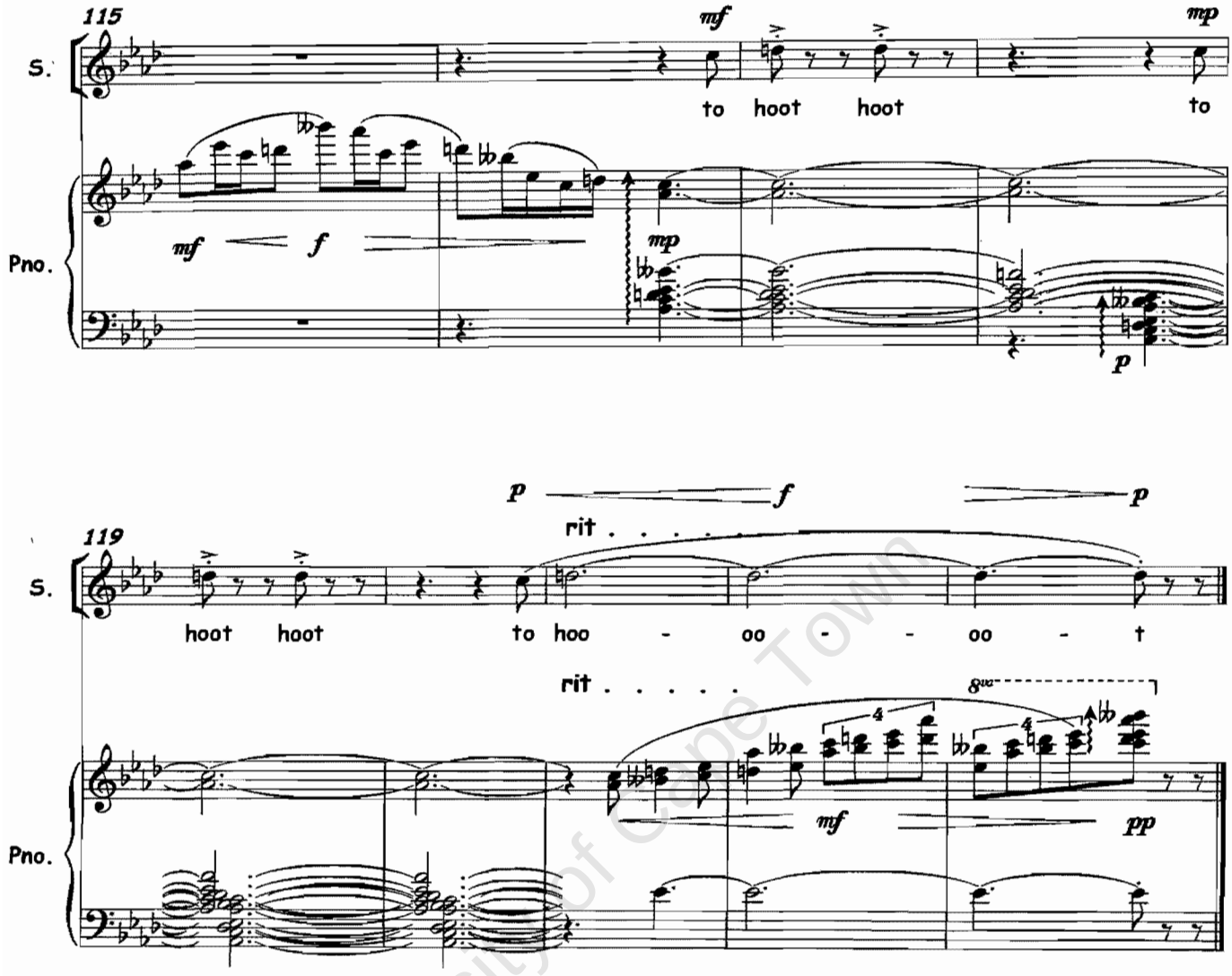

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A Short Excursion around Middle D

for Horn and Piano

by Tim Chanter

University of Cape Town

Duration: 5 minutes

Performance Notes:

Hornist

The horn part is predominantly one of long melodic lines: play with natural dynamic swells (particularly the long sustained notes), but do not in general use any rubato (the piano accompaniment is intended to keep a very regular pulse)

Play with pinpoint rhythmic accuracy: the attacks, which are mainly off the strong beat, must sound as clear syncopations.

Use a wide dynamic range, as marked, but always ensure the melodic line is clear above the piano

Pianist

Maintain a light metronomic pulse in the RH octave figuration – *slightly* swelling at the points of high register

Subtly accent the LH syncopations

Dynamics are marked separately in the octave figuration passages (such as bars 1-31), but together in the homophonic chordal passages (such as bars 32-45).

Ensure the piano dynamic is sufficiently quiet that the horn part takes prominence throughout.

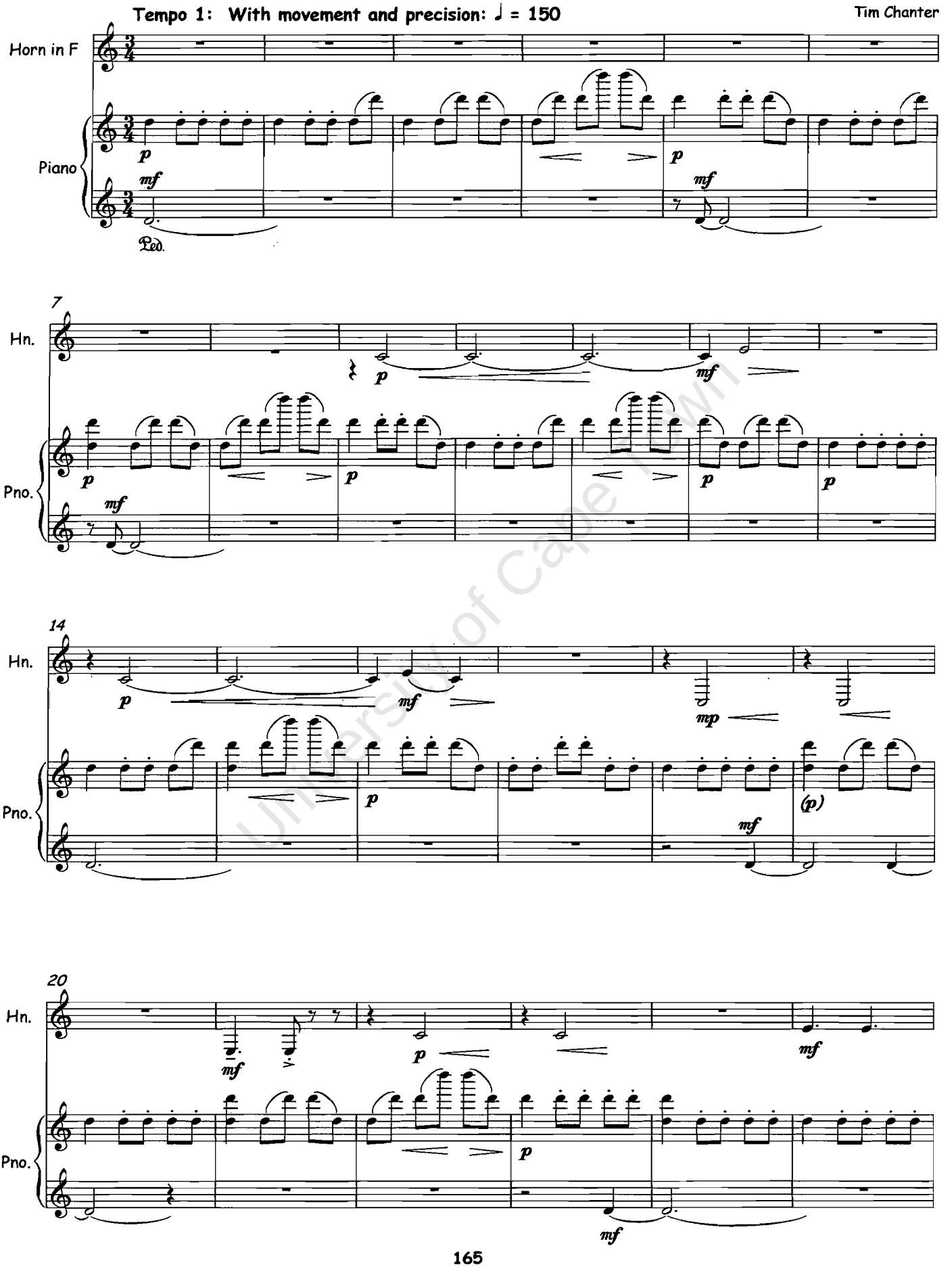
As marked, the pedal should be extensively – sometimes for very extended passages to capture a background harmonic wash. If the dynamic becomes to loud, then dampen and re-pedal.

University of Cape Town

A Short Excursion Around Middle D

Tempo 1: With movement and precision: ♩ = 150

Tim Chanter



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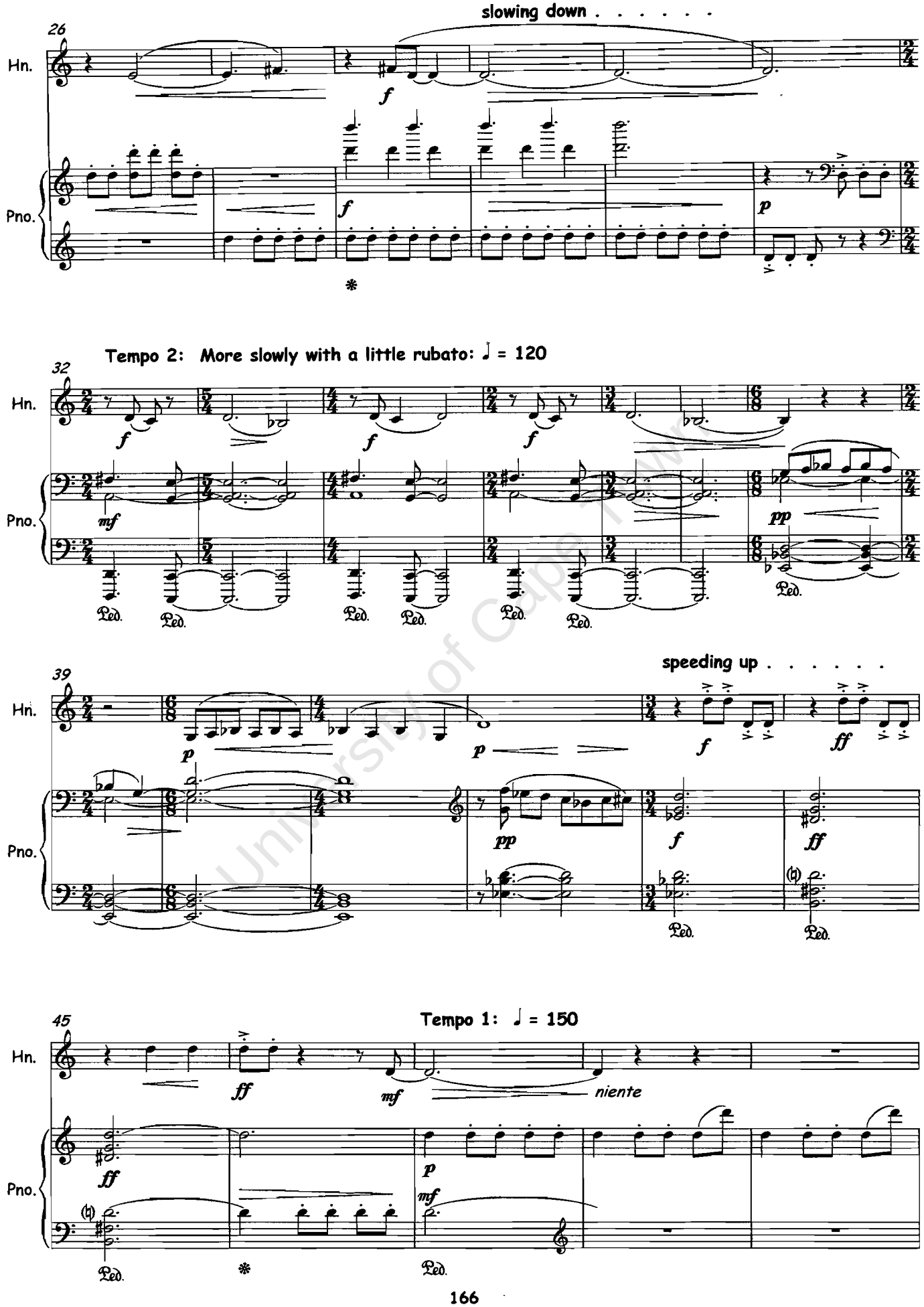

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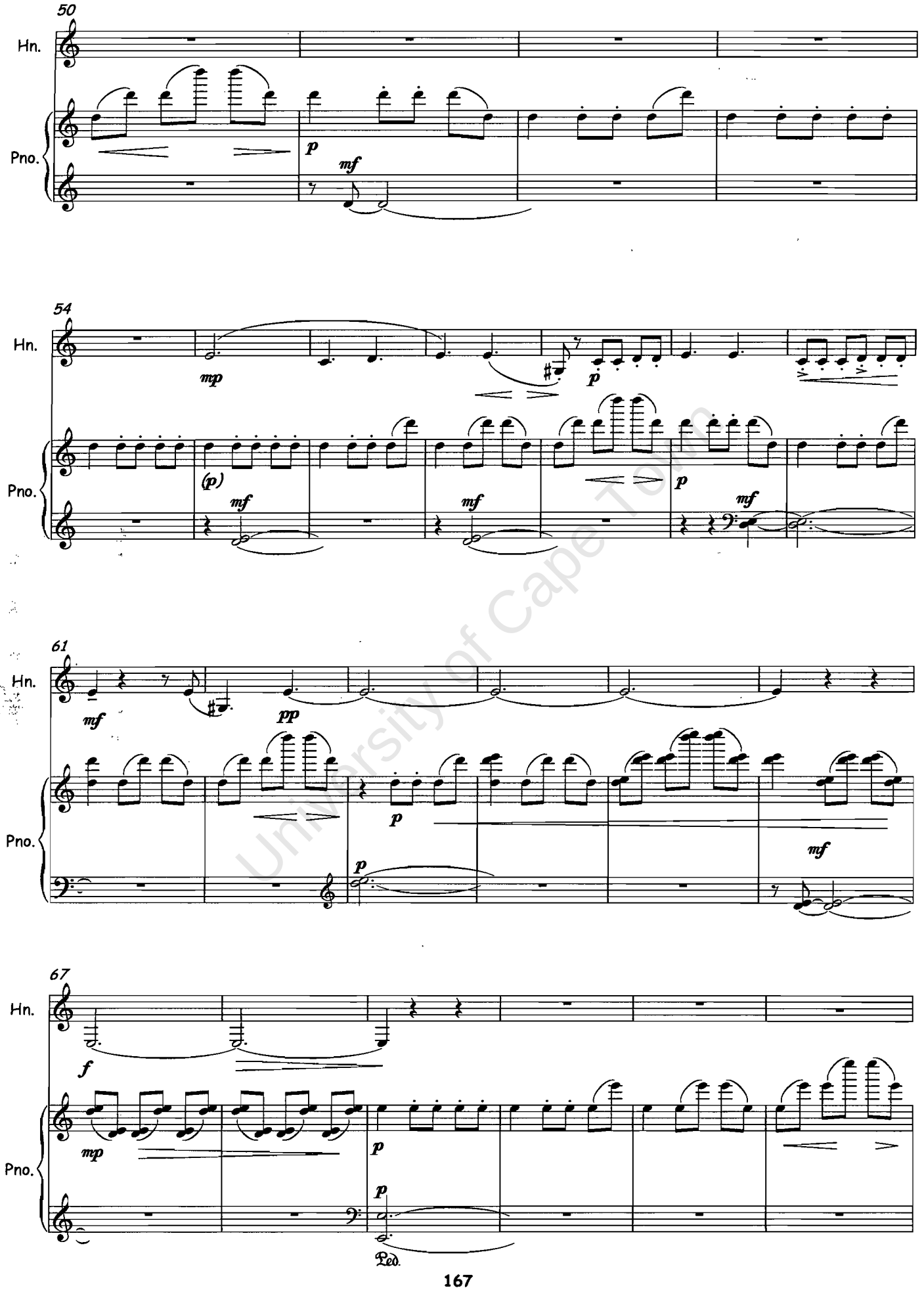

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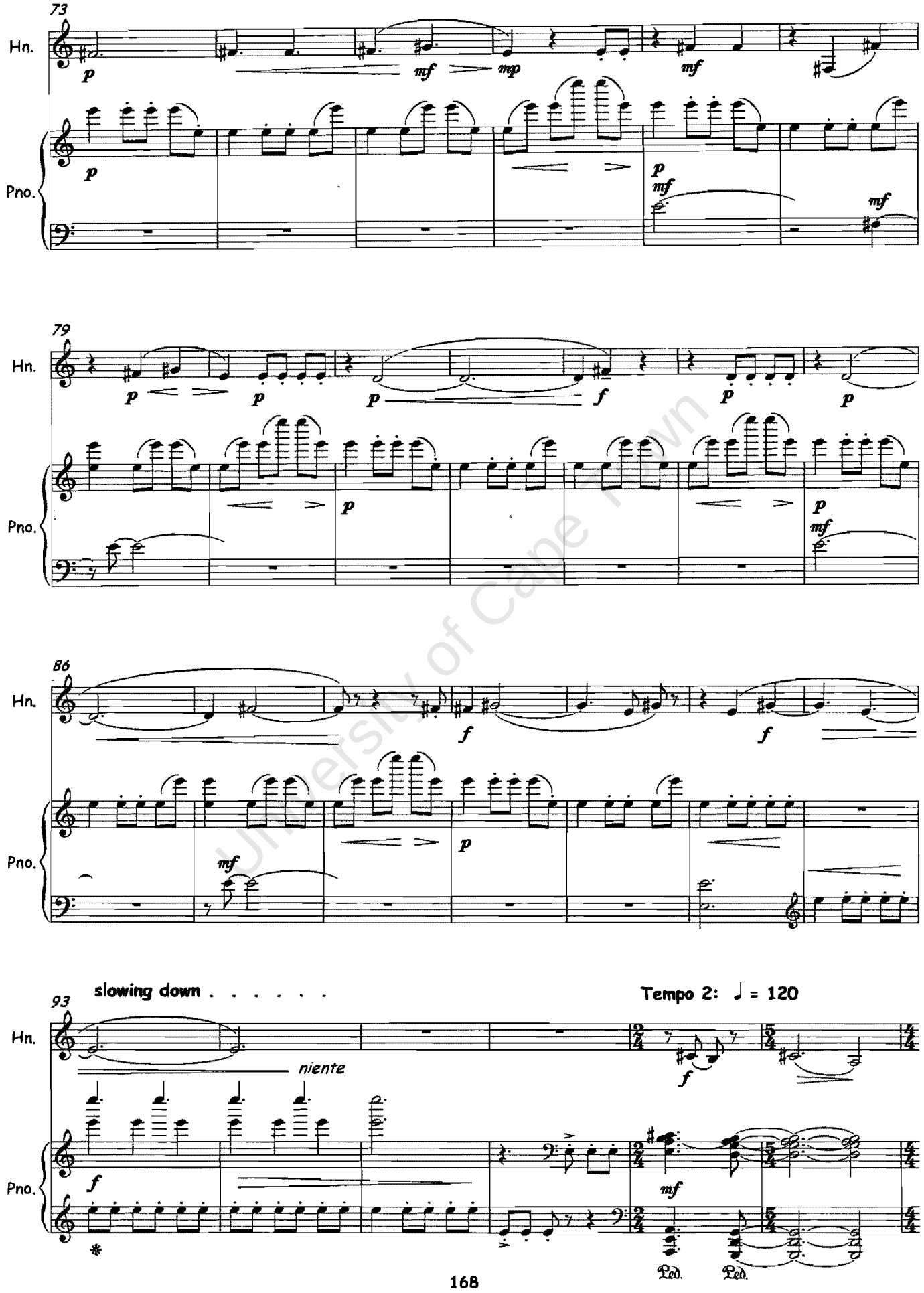

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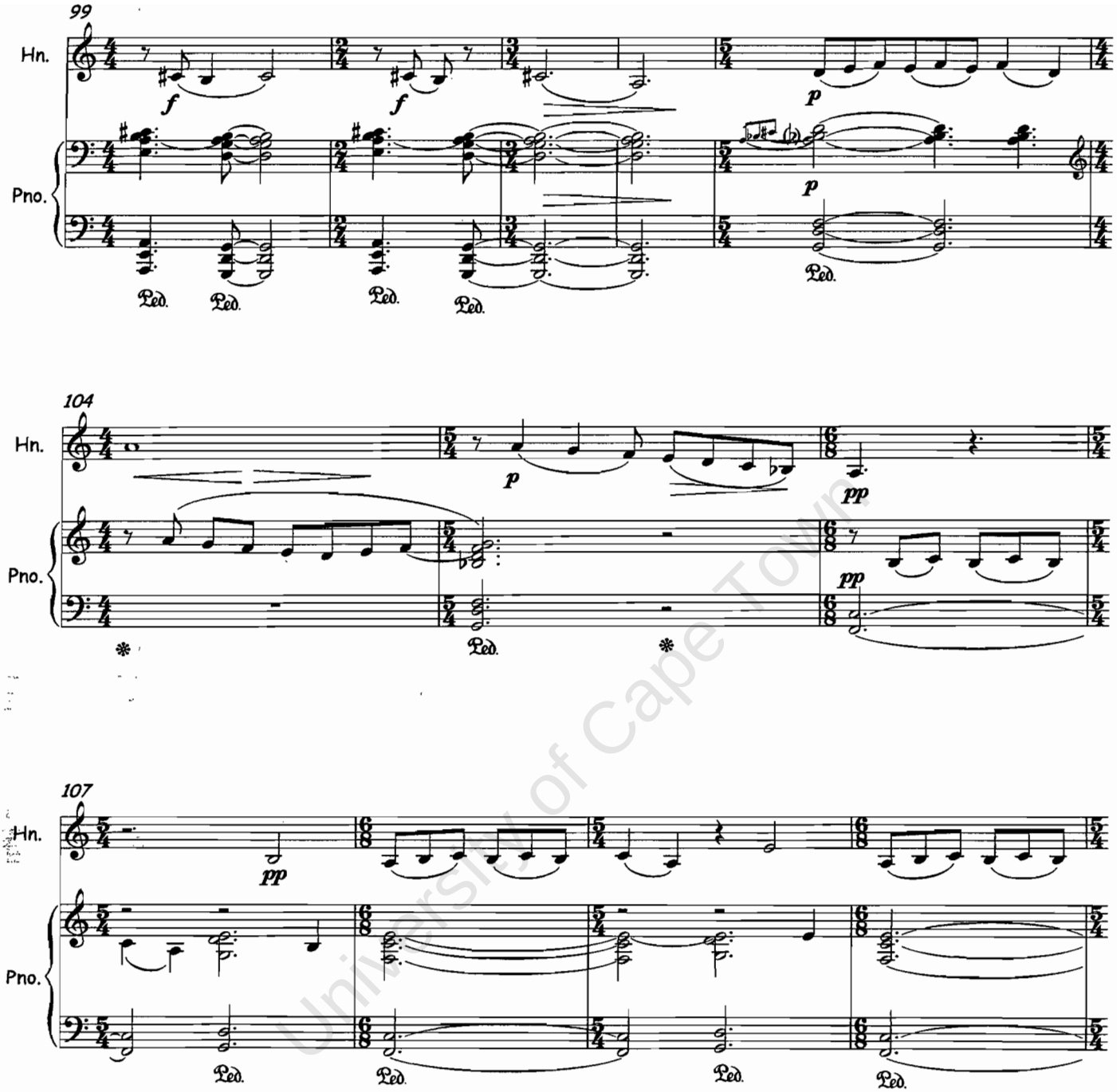

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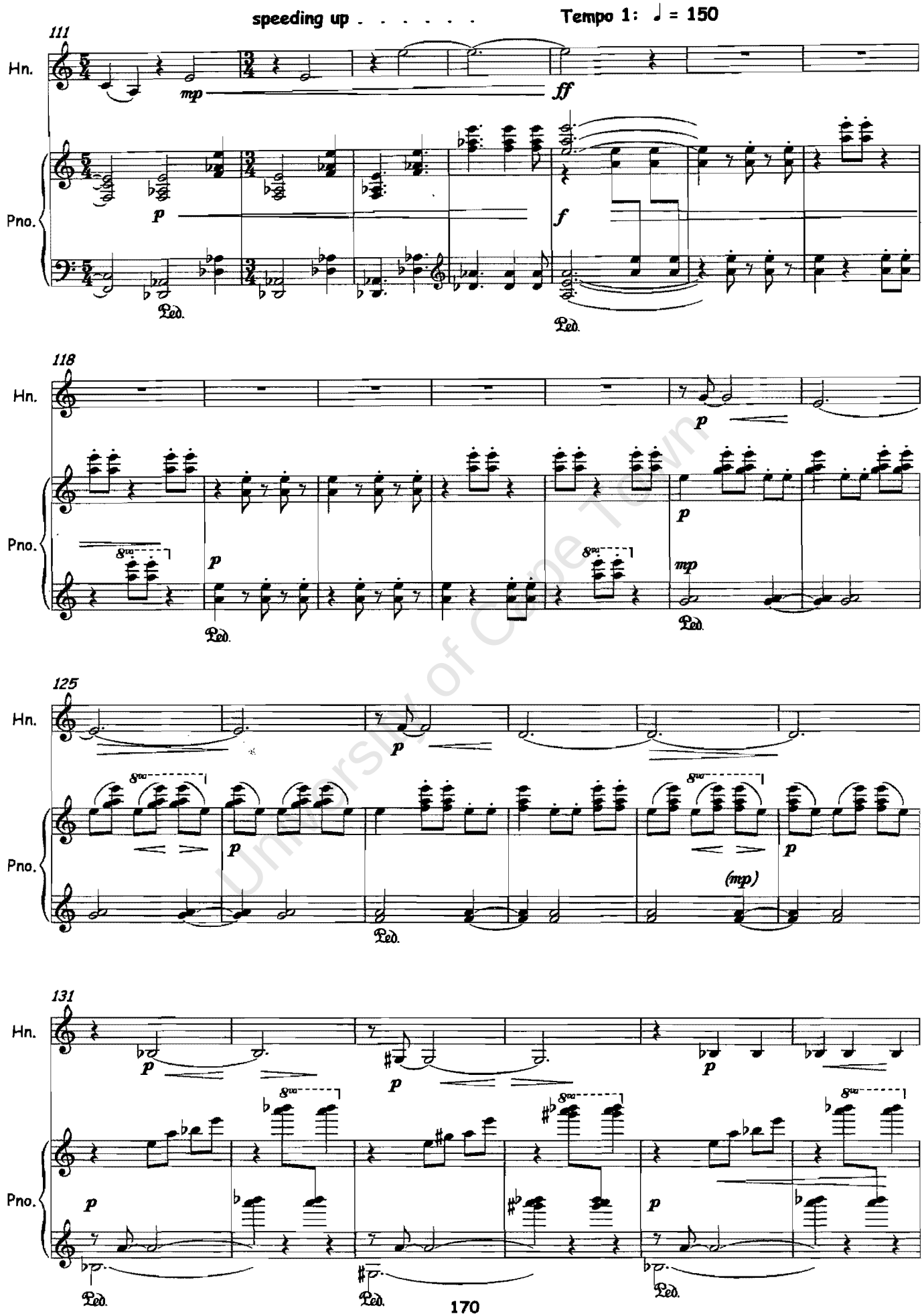

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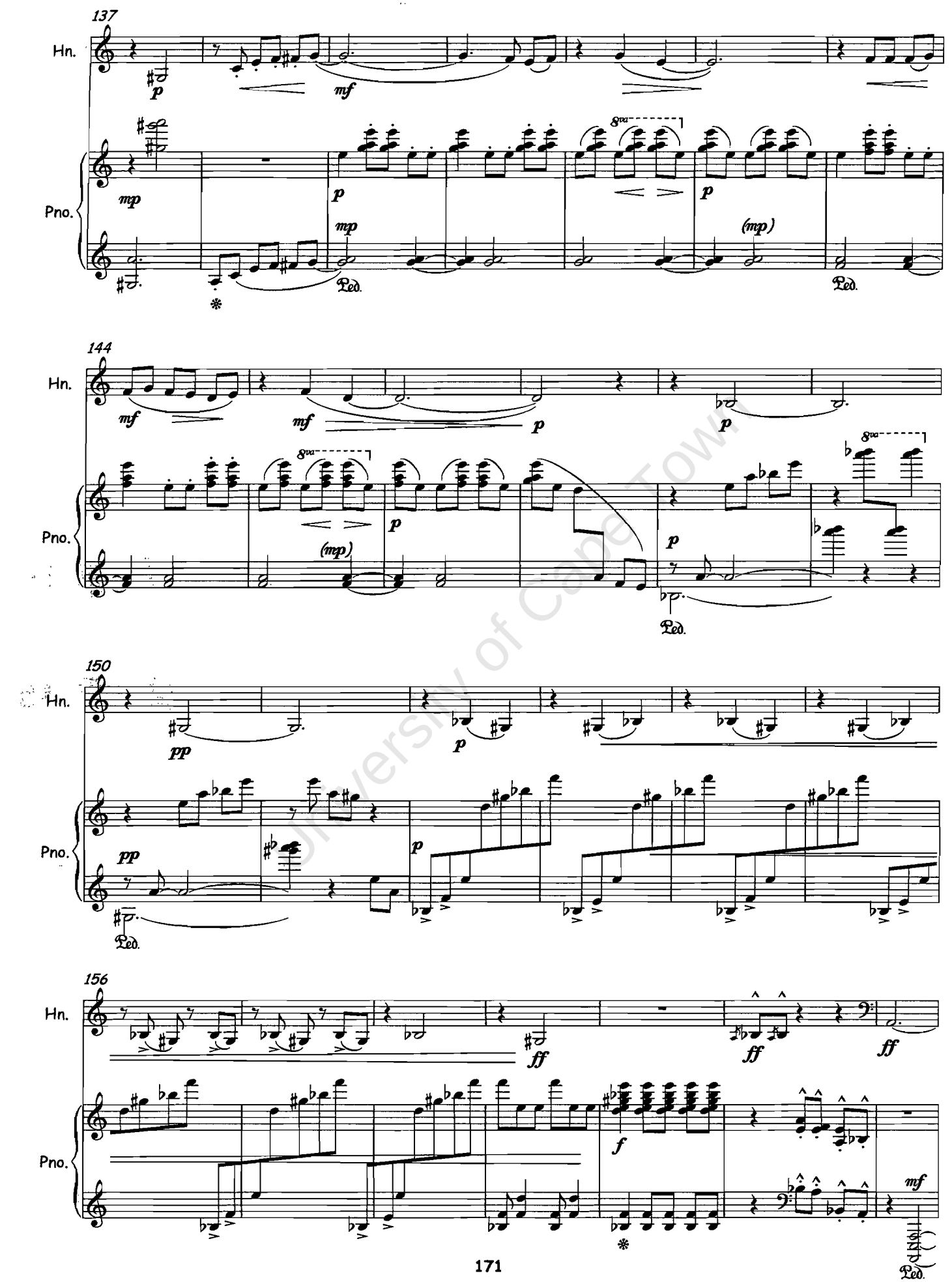

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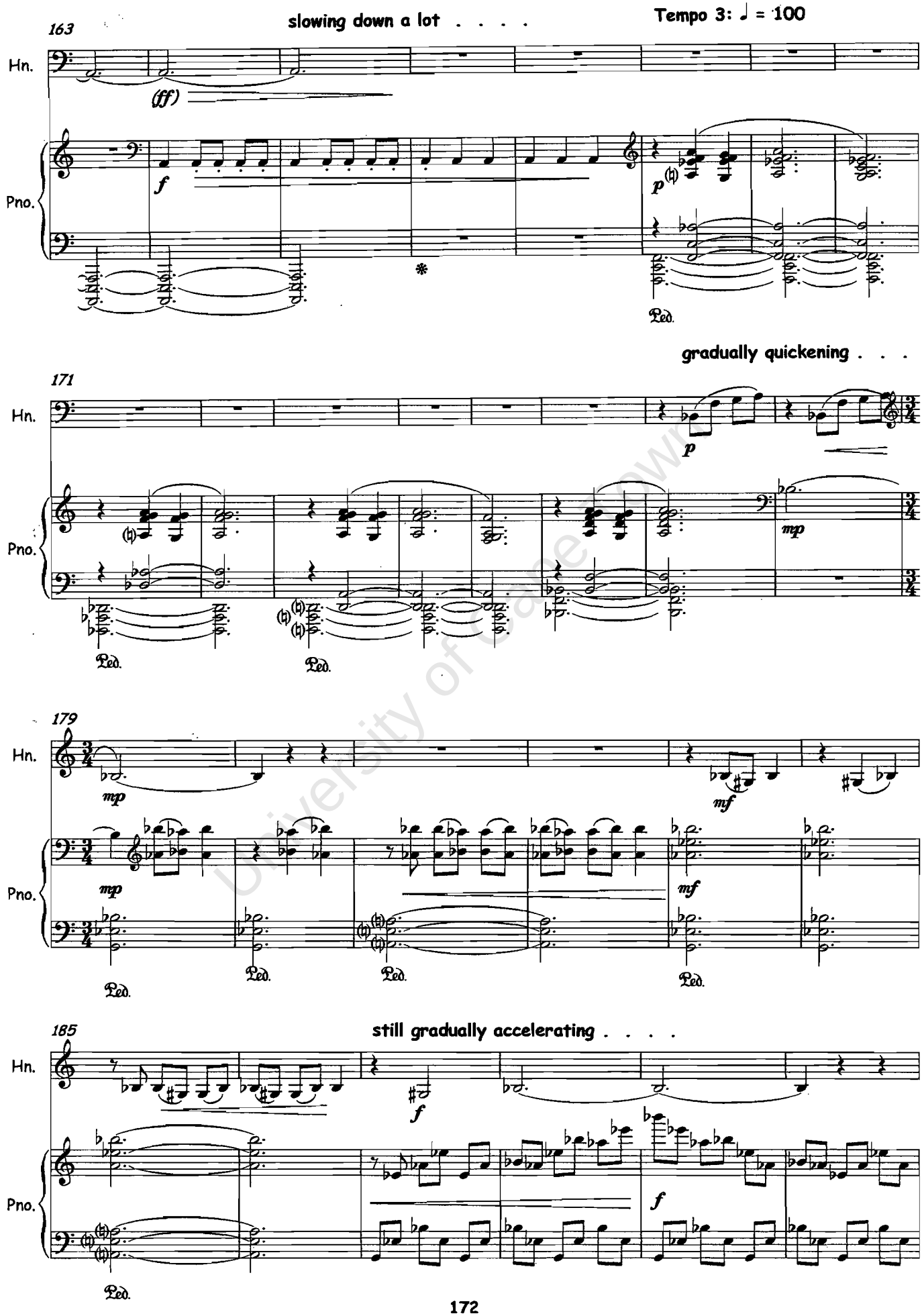

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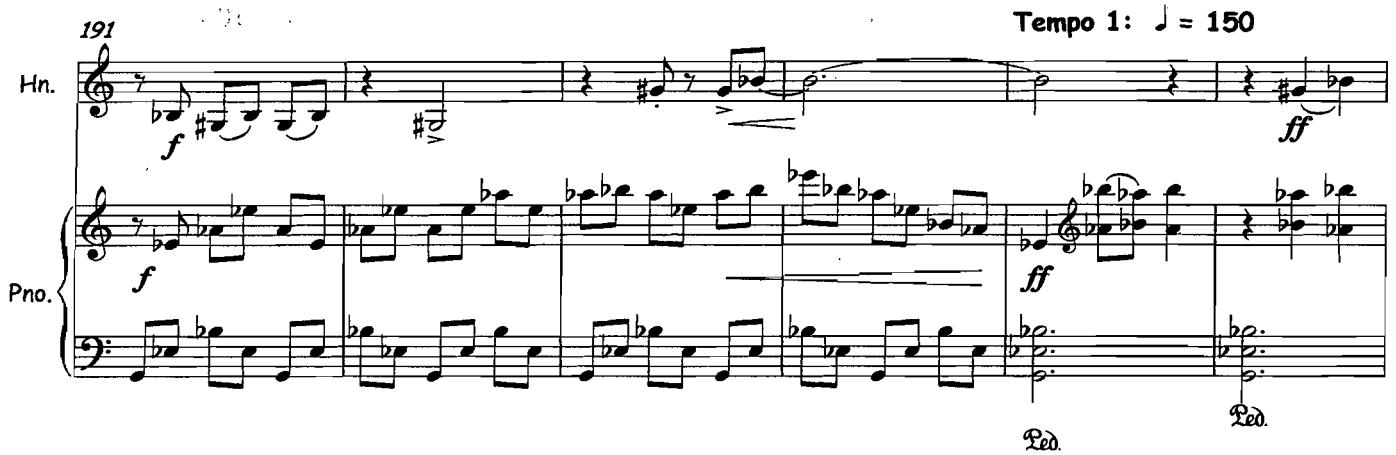

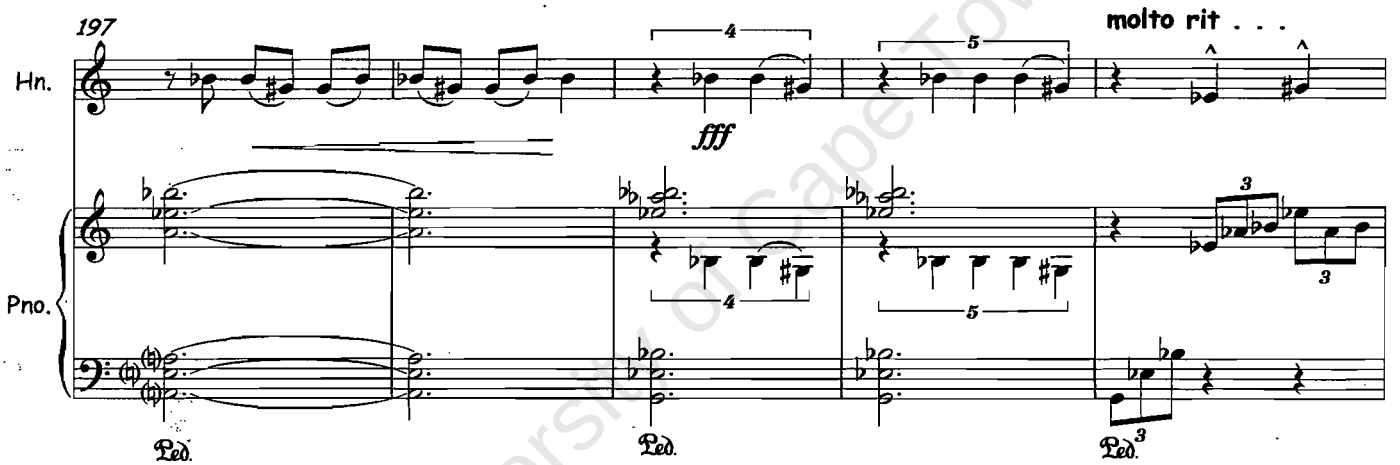

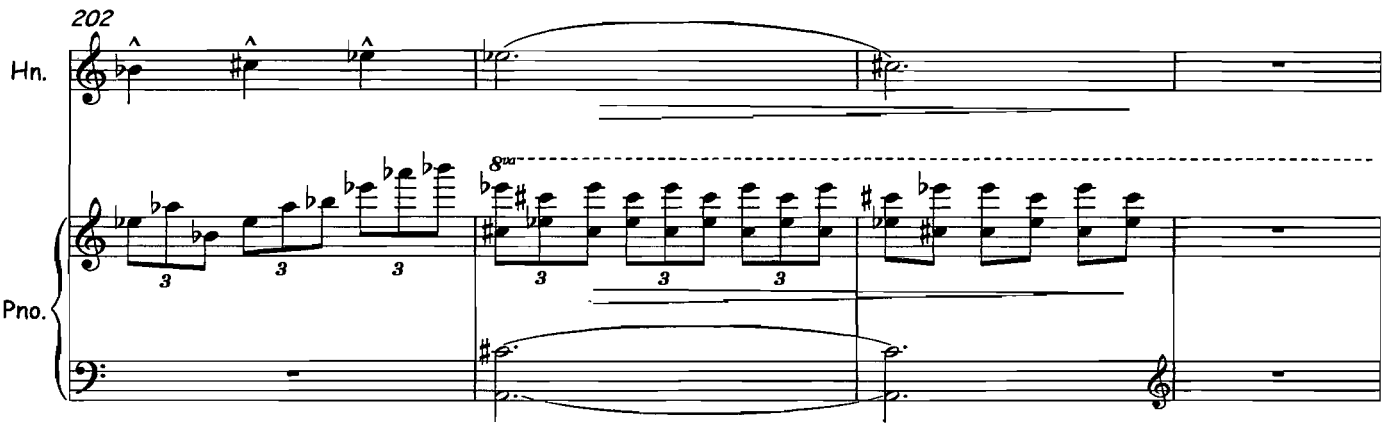

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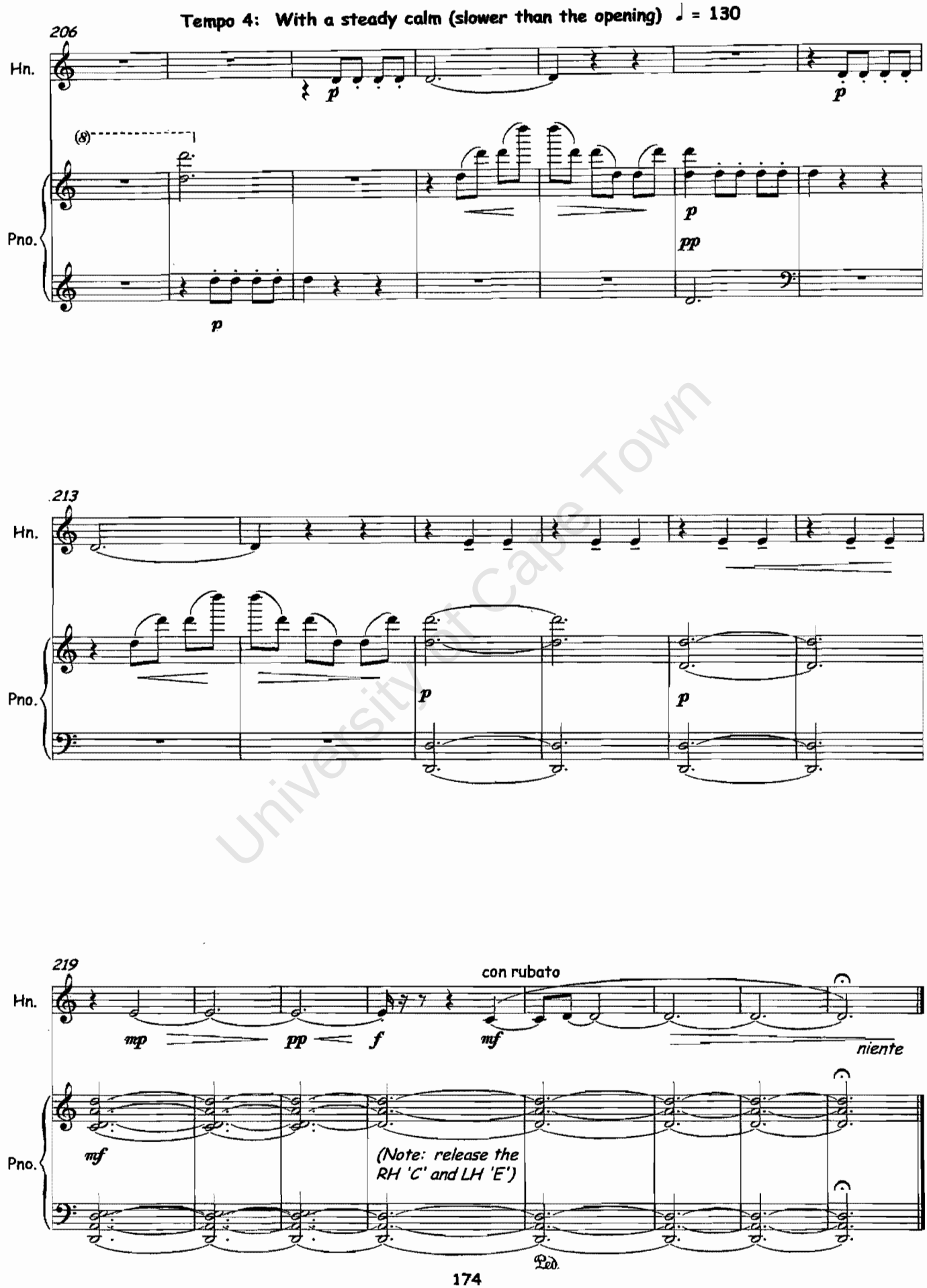


University of Cape Town

Unmanned Orbit

for Orchestra

by Tim Chanter

University of Cape Town

Duration: 12 minutes

Instrumentation

2 Flutes (2nd flute doubling Piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B flat
2 Bassoons (2nd Bassoon doubling Contrabassoon)

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B flat
2 Trombones (1st player: Tenor; 2nd player: Bass)

Non-Pitched Percussion (1 player) – see below
Pitched Percussion (1 player) – see below

Strings

University of Cape Town

Non-Pitched Percussion

- Instrumentation: High and Low Wood Blocks (highest and lowest available), Snare Drum (snares on throughout), Bass Drum, Suspended Cymbal, Cowbell (lowest available), Triangle (highest available), Tom-toms (set of 4), Guiro
- It is assumed that the Snare Drum, Suspended Cymbal and Bass Drum (with foot pedal) are part of a standard drum kit and can therefore be played simultaneously; or if not that they can be arranged to be close enough to do so.
- The High and Low Wood Blocks (choose the highest and lowest available) also need to be played together, and must therefore be mounted rather than hand-held.
- I have used the following beater symbols:
  - ↑↑ - standard hard snare drum sticks
  - ↟ - rubber mallets (for the woodblocks)
  - ↾ - wire brushes (for the suspended cymbals)

Pitched Percussion

- Instrumentation: Vibraphone (standard 3-octave F-to-F range), and Xylophone (standard 3-octave C-to-C range)
- The Vibraphone motor should be on throughout the piece. As marked, the pedal should be used extensively and naturally (i.e. pedal with harmonic changes).
- I have only specified whether the mallets for a specific passage should be
  - ↑↑ - hard (plastic or hard rubber) or
  - ↟↟ - soft (yarn or similar):
  - Exact choice of mallets is at the player's discretion.

Transpositions

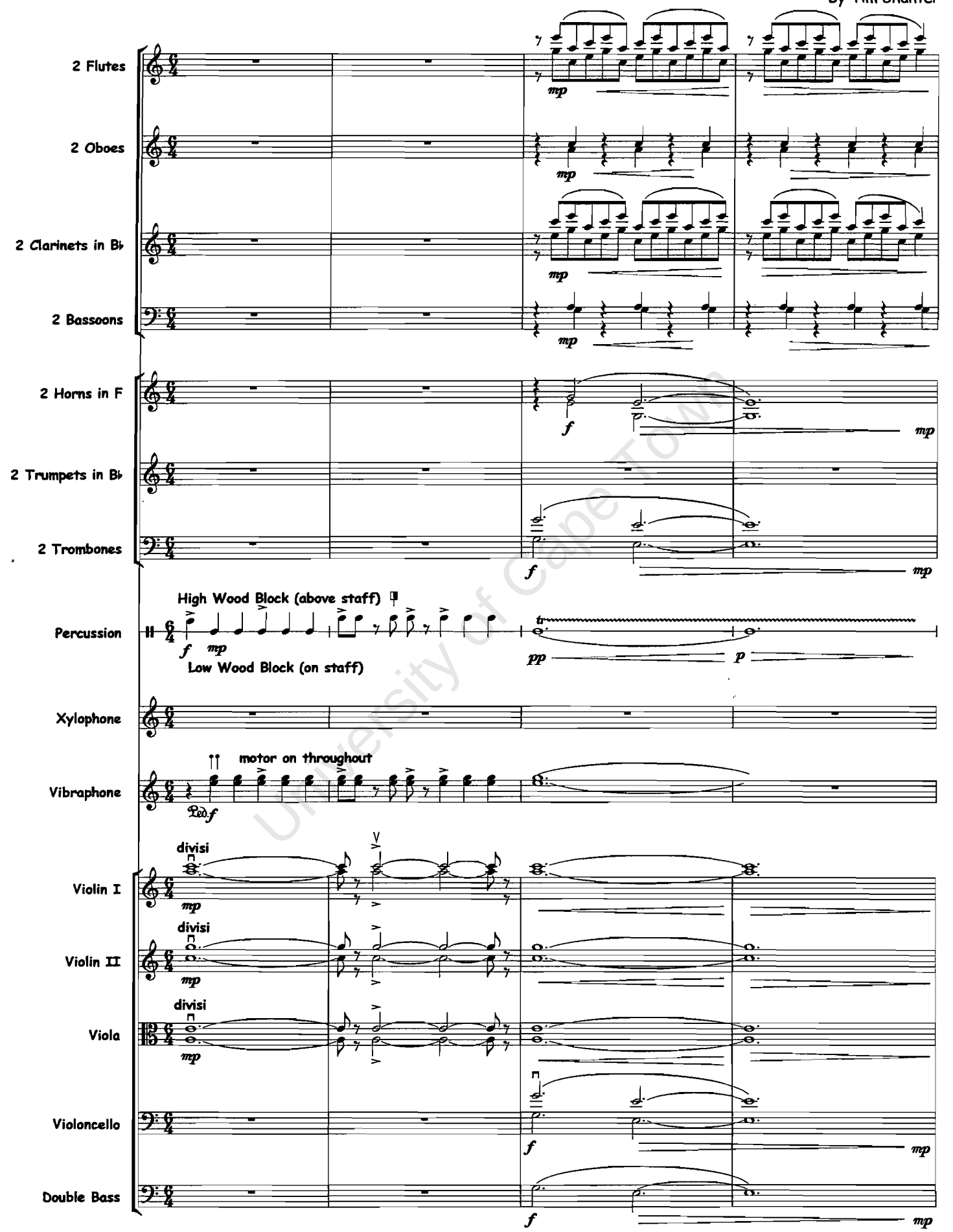
- The full score is in C
- Normal octave transpositions have been used for the Piccolo, Contrabassoon, Xylophone and Double Bass

Unmanned Orbit

Full Score (in C)

Fairly fast, with a strong sense of forward momentum ♩. = 60

by Tim Chanter



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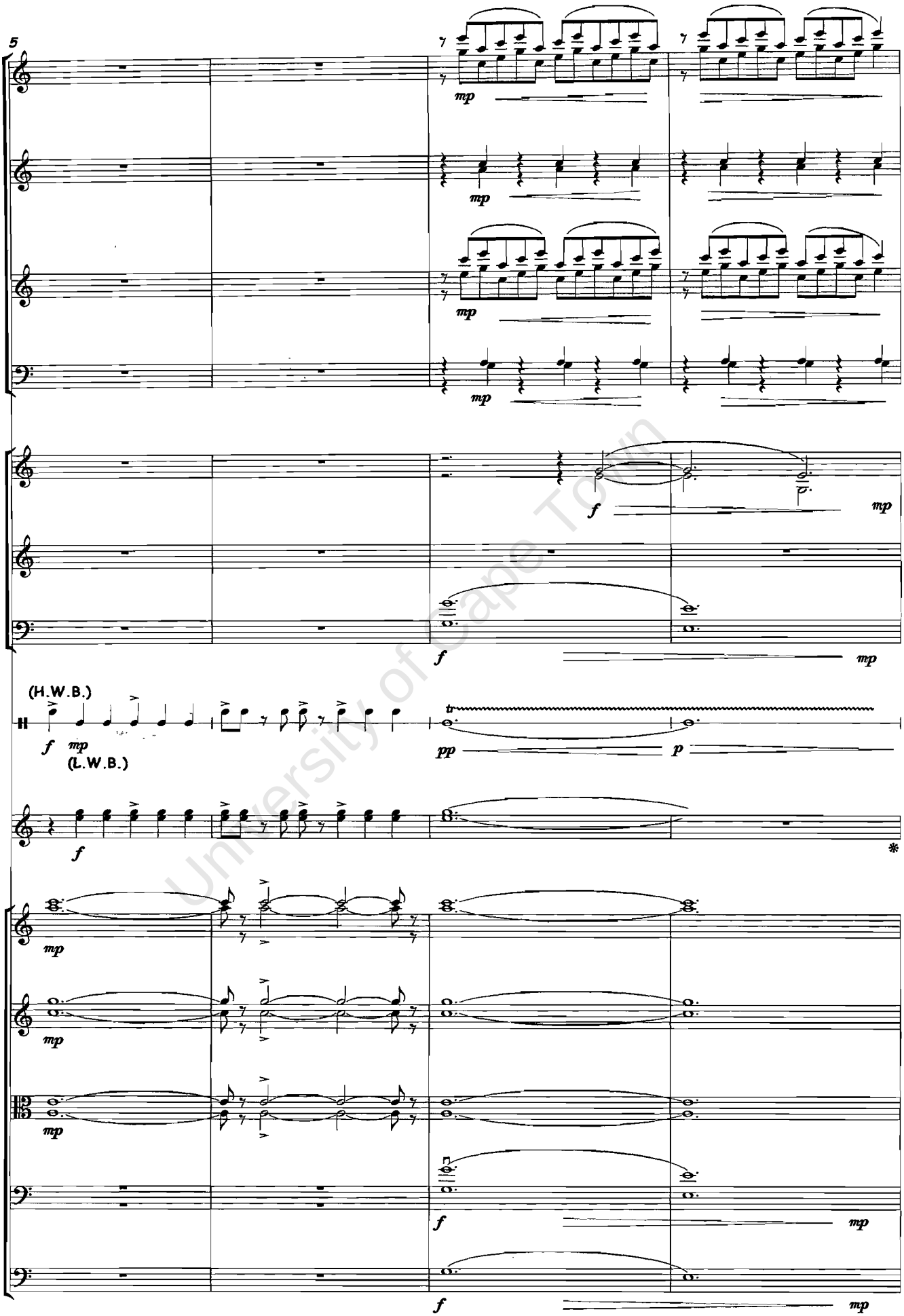

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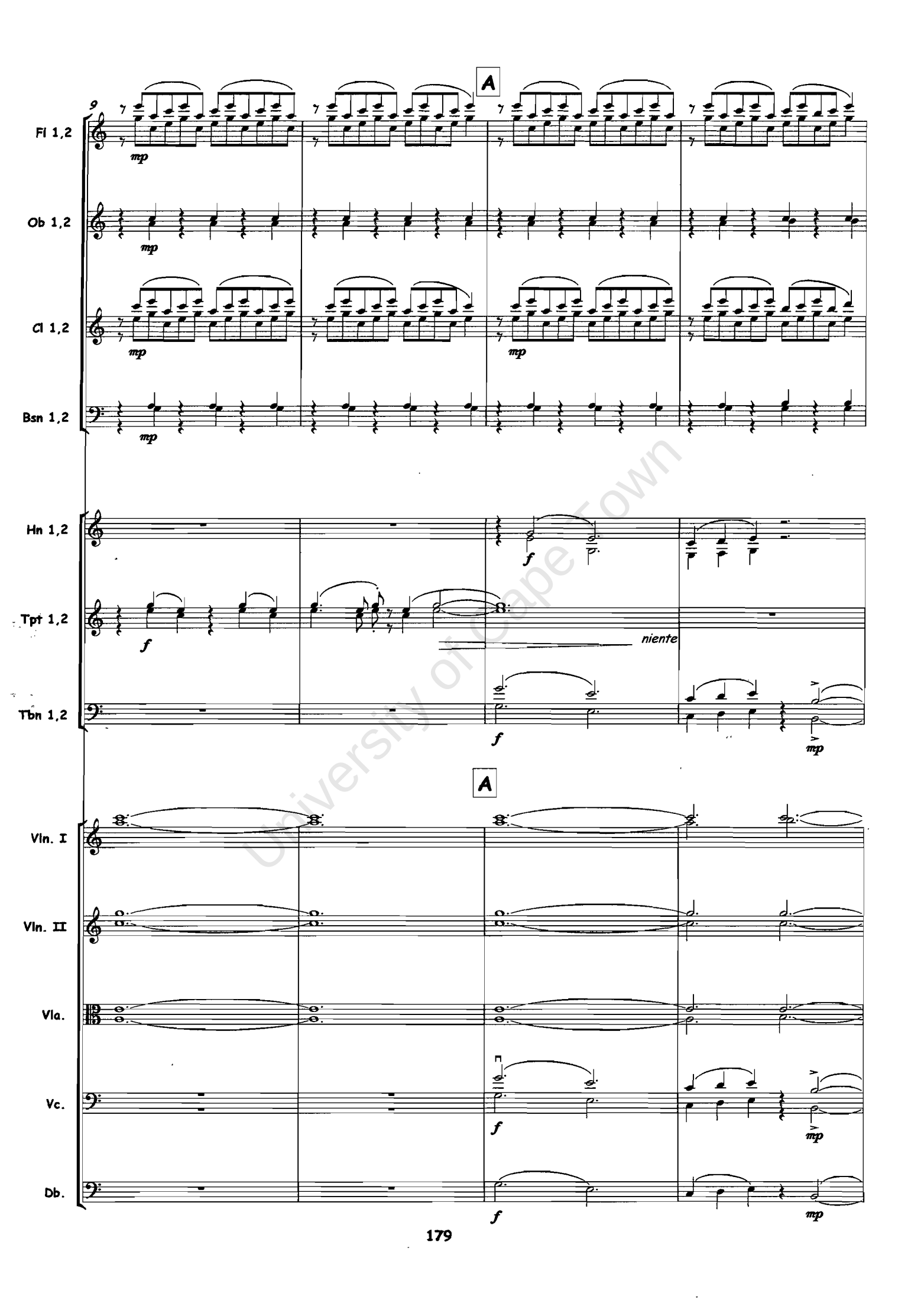

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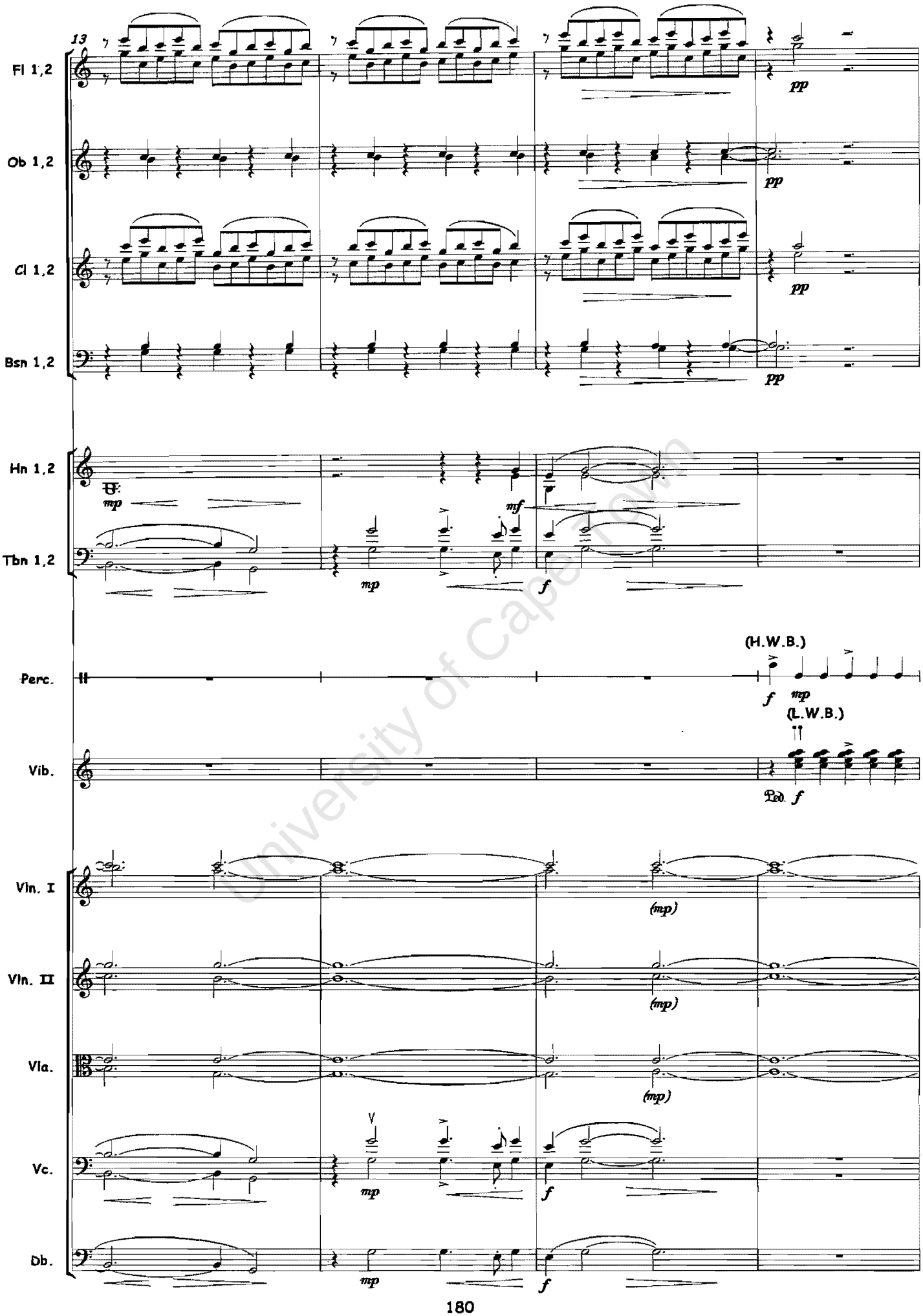

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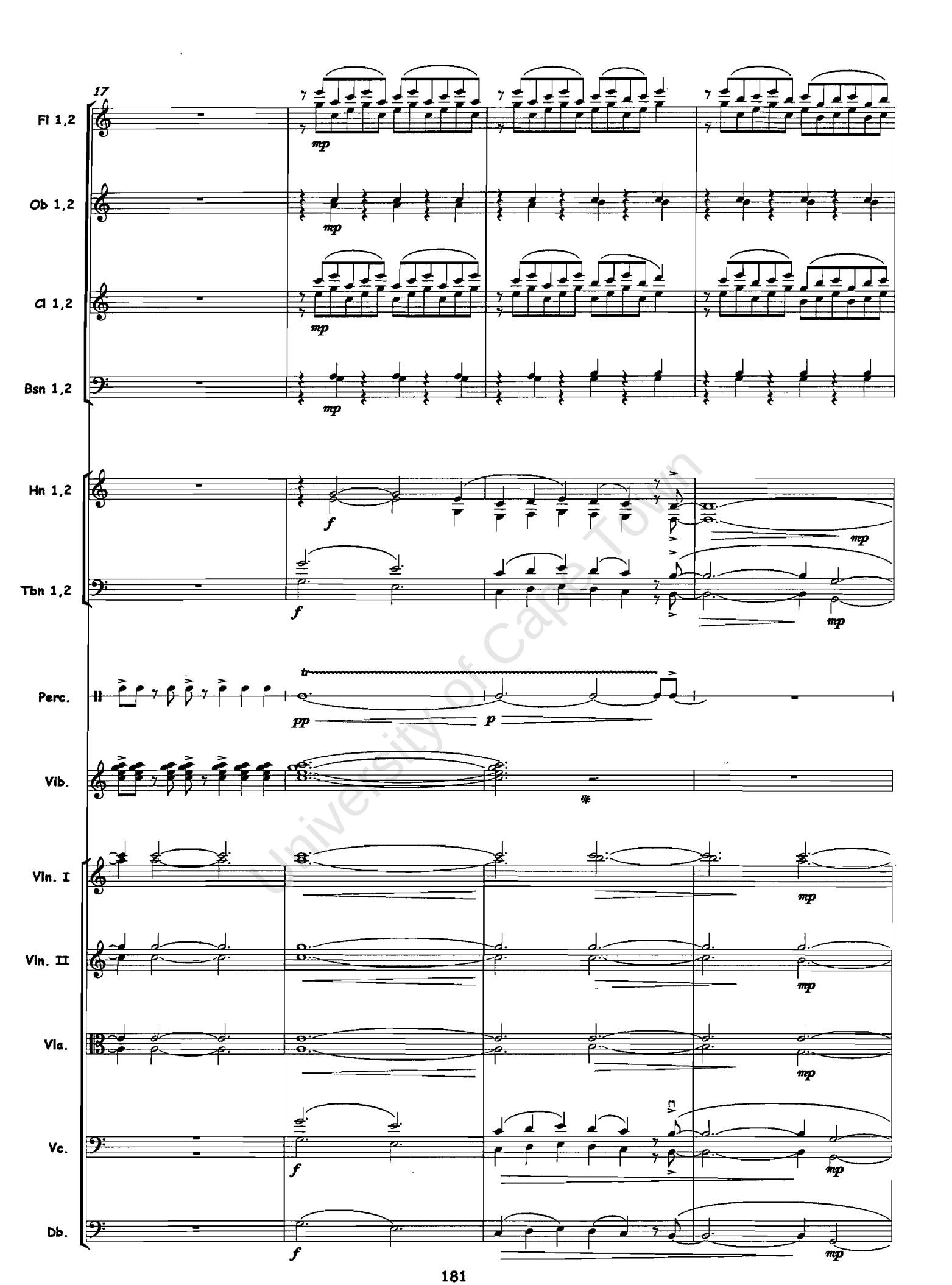

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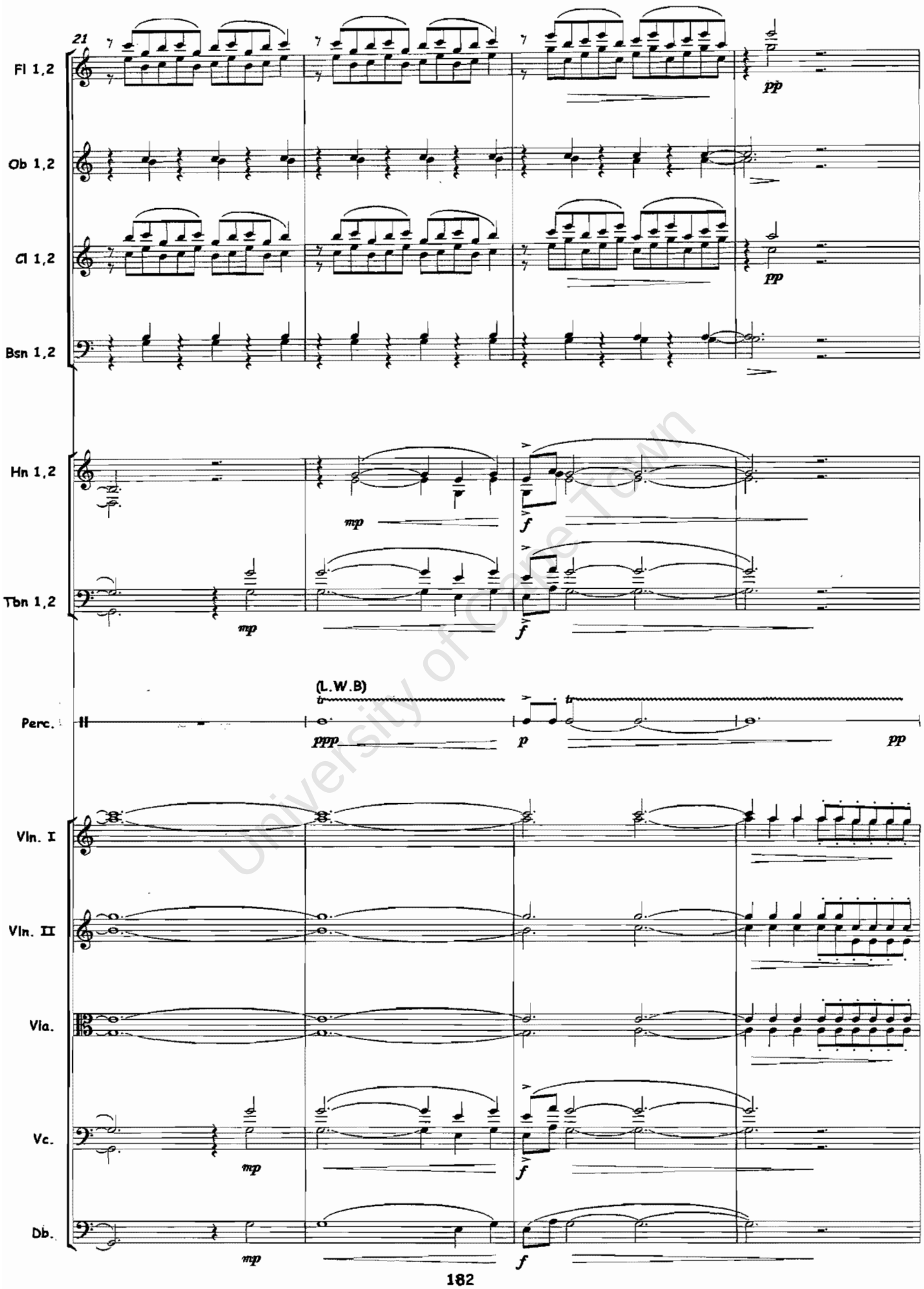

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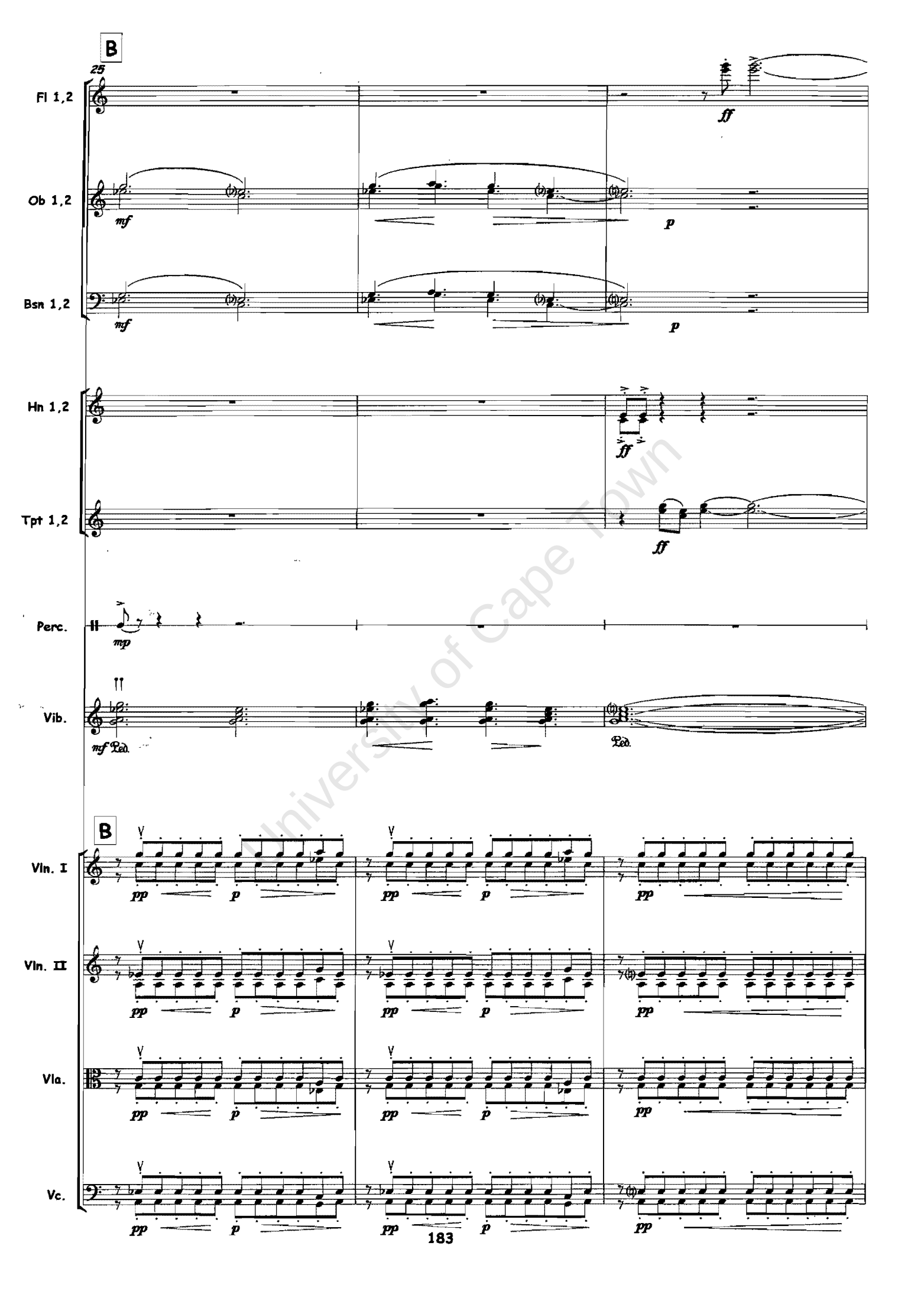

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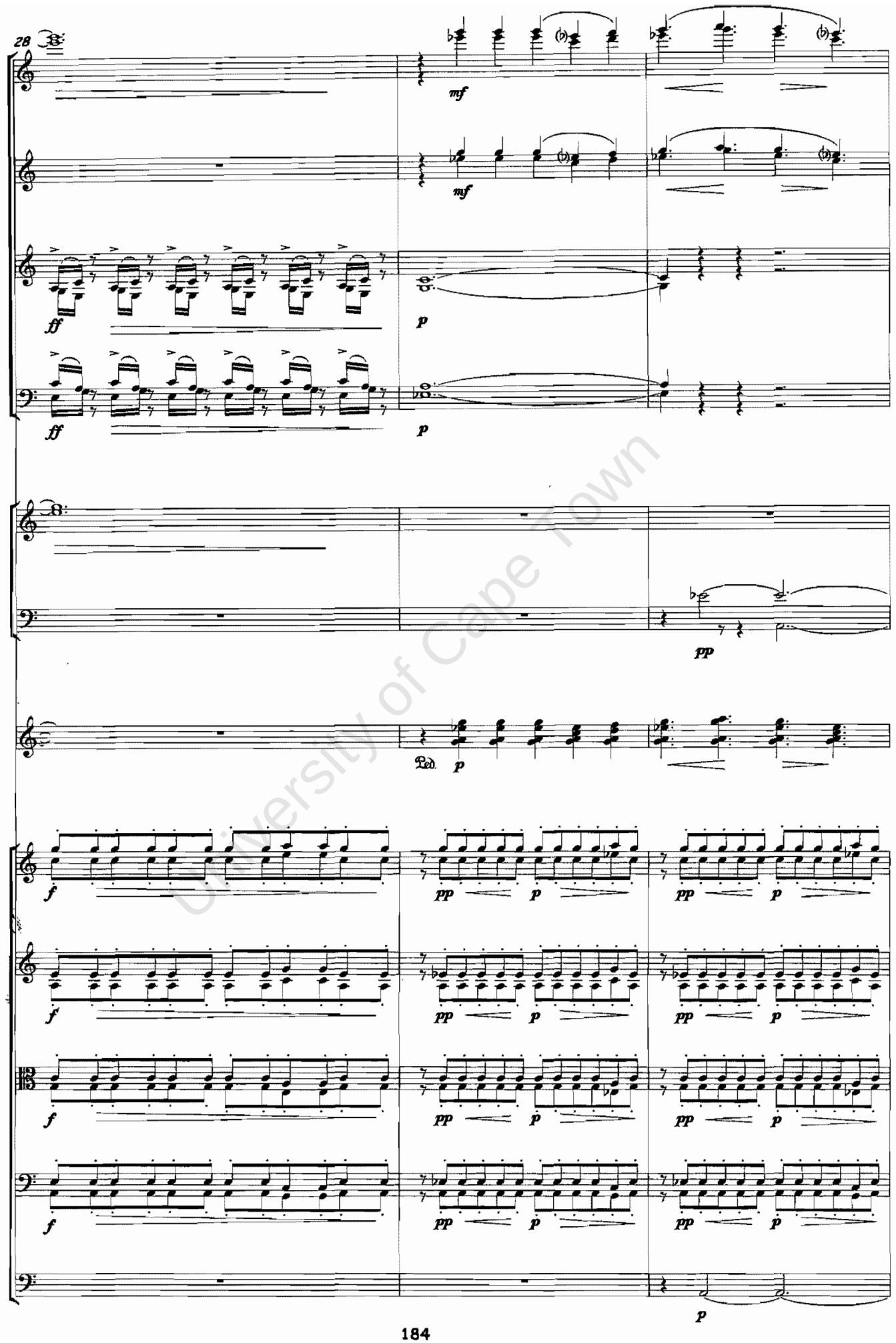

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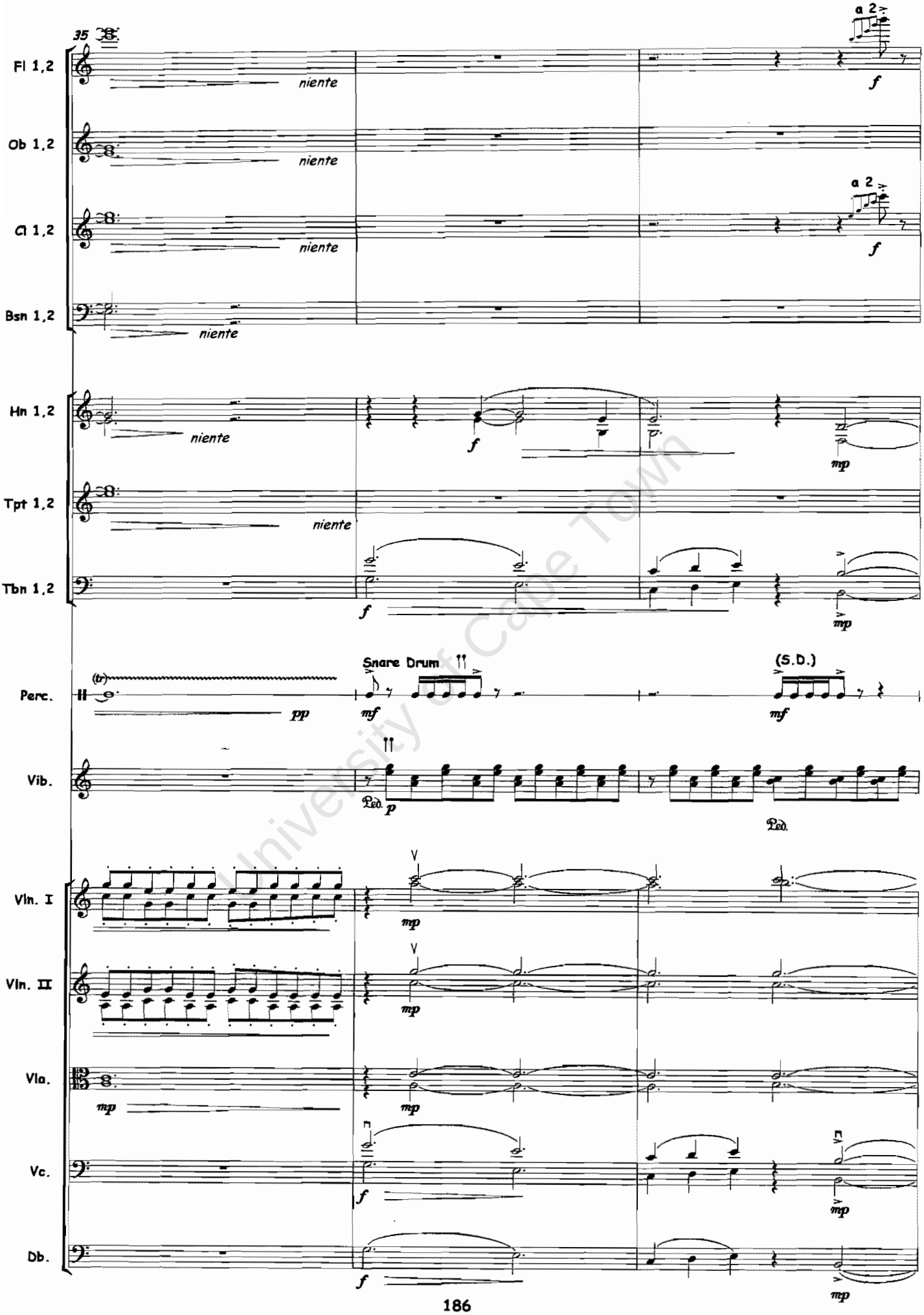

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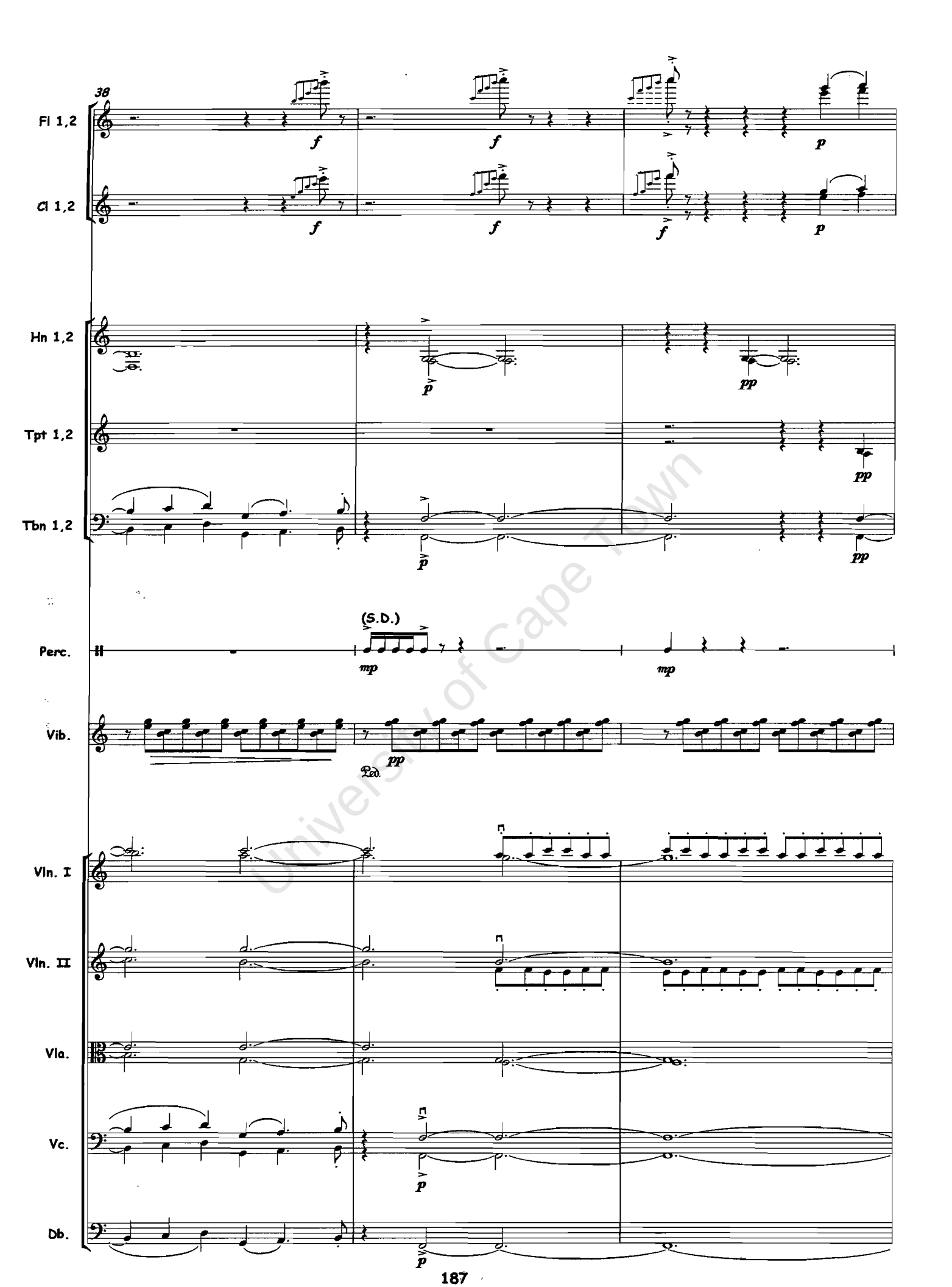

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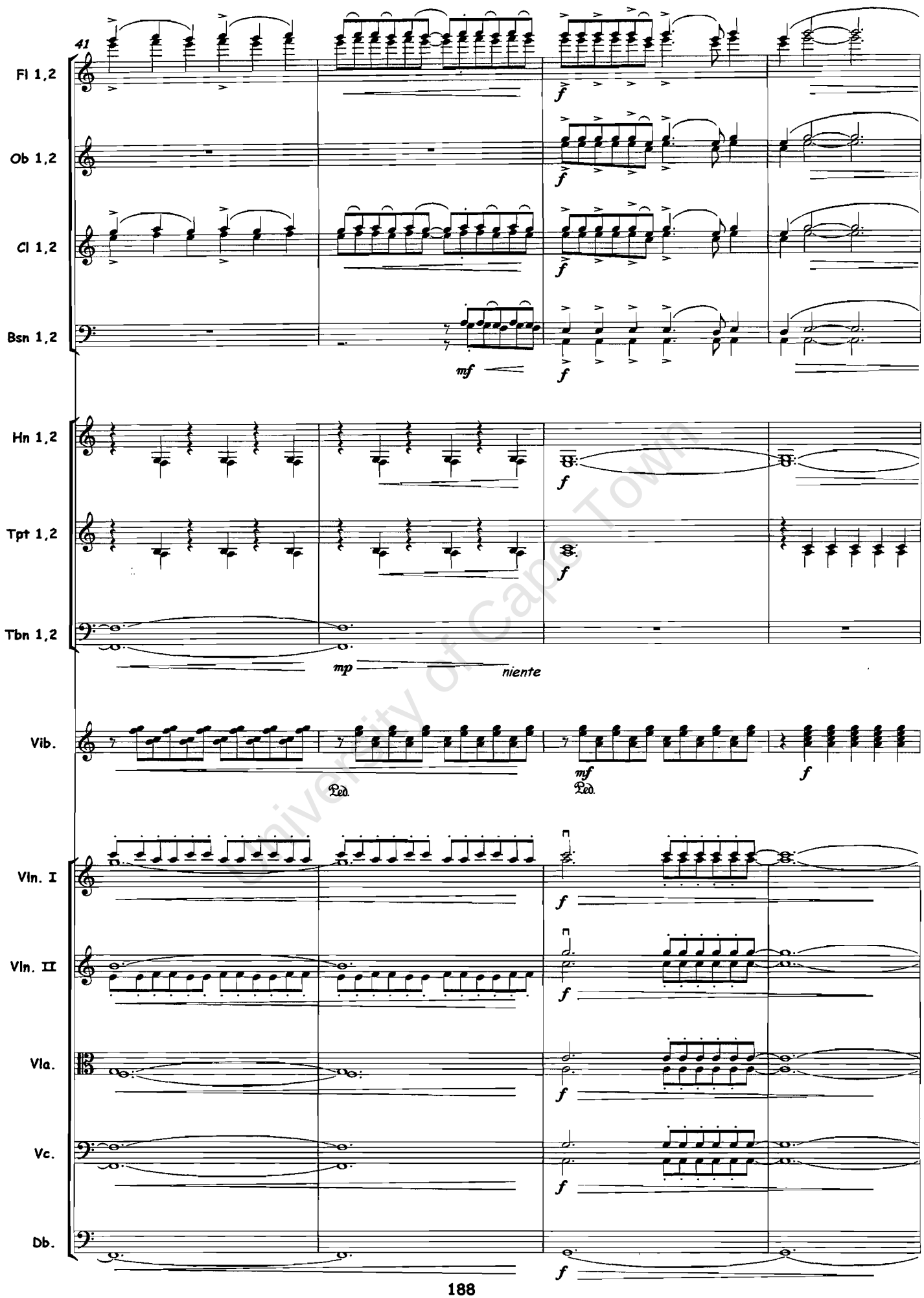

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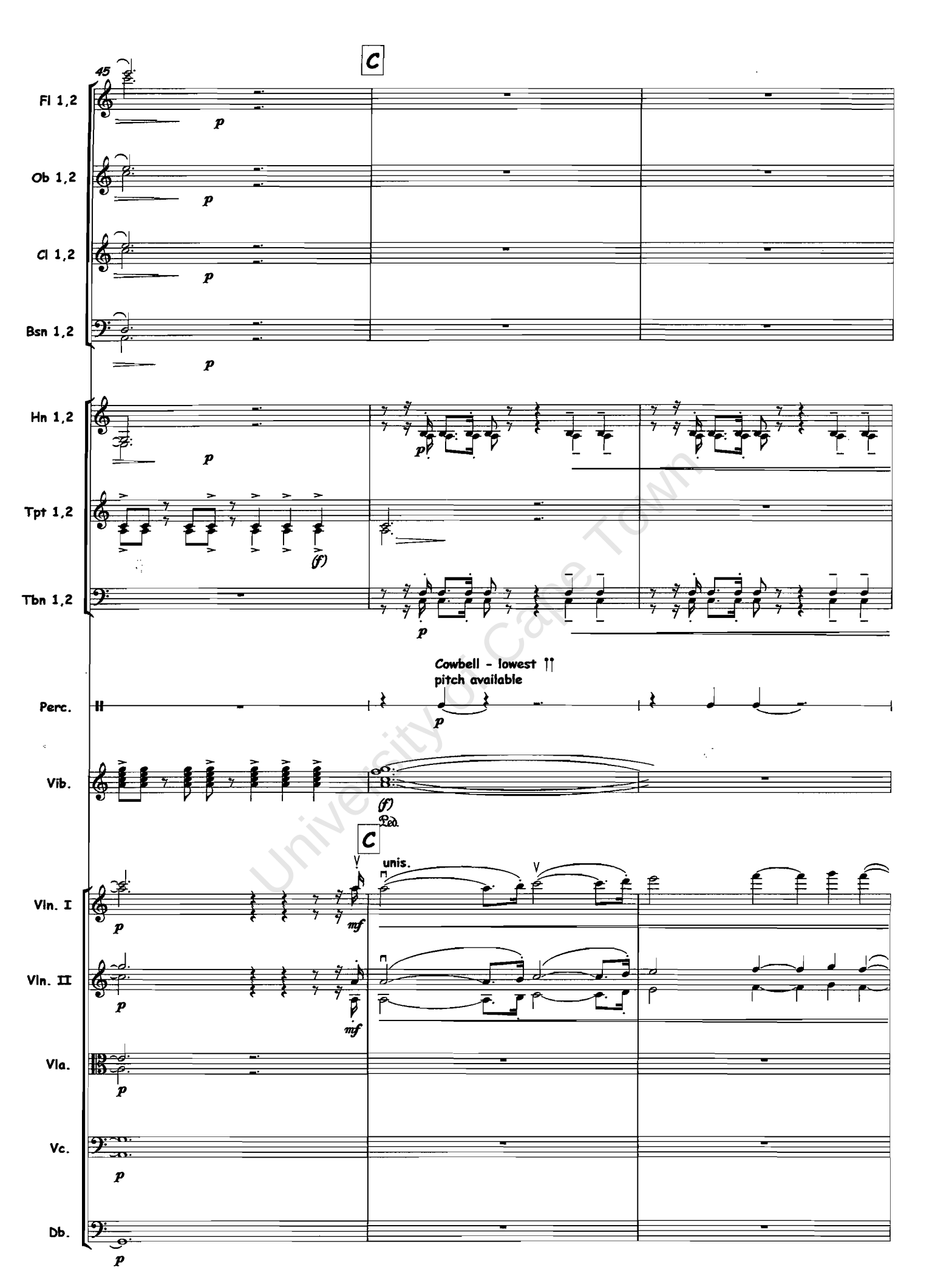

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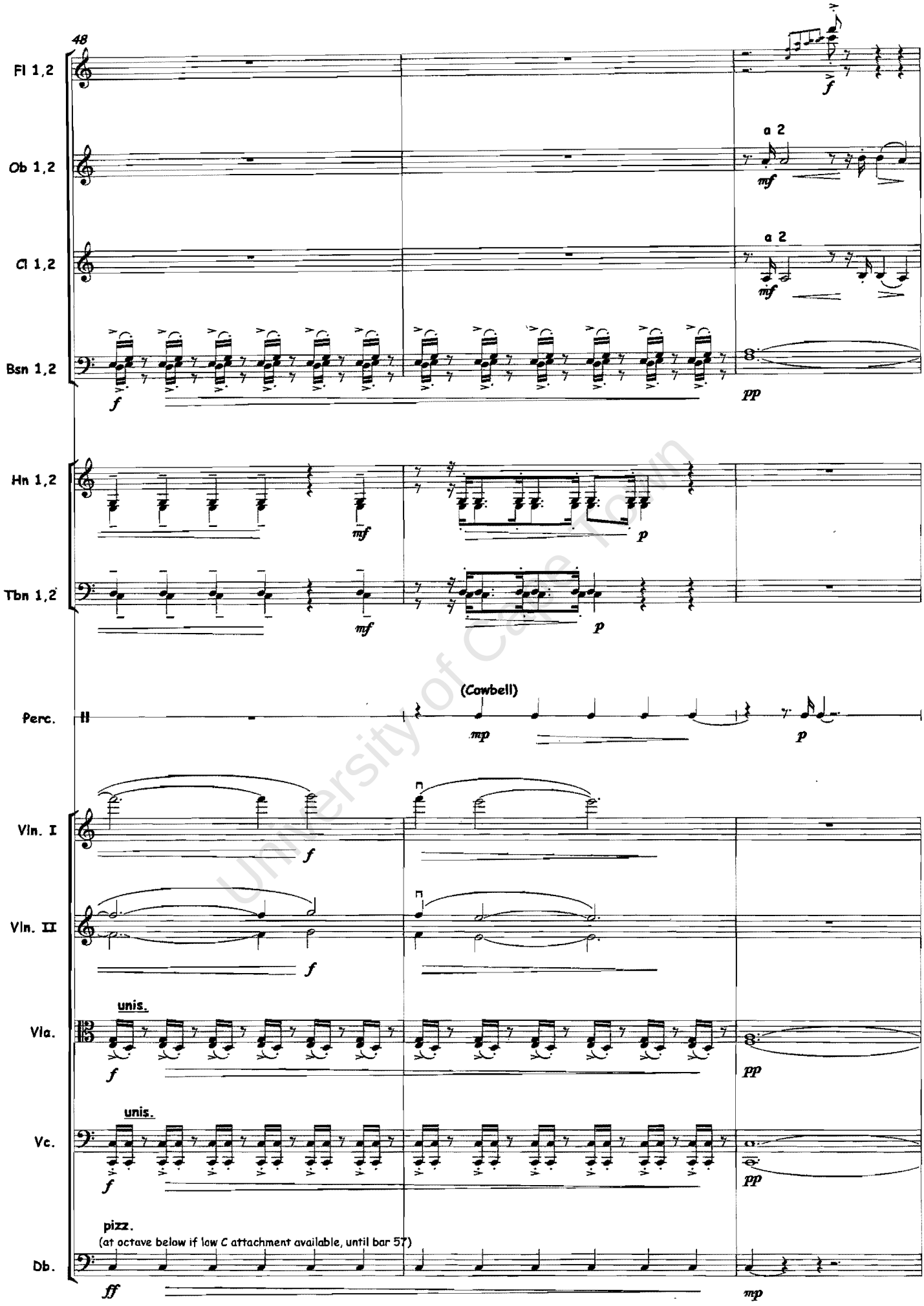

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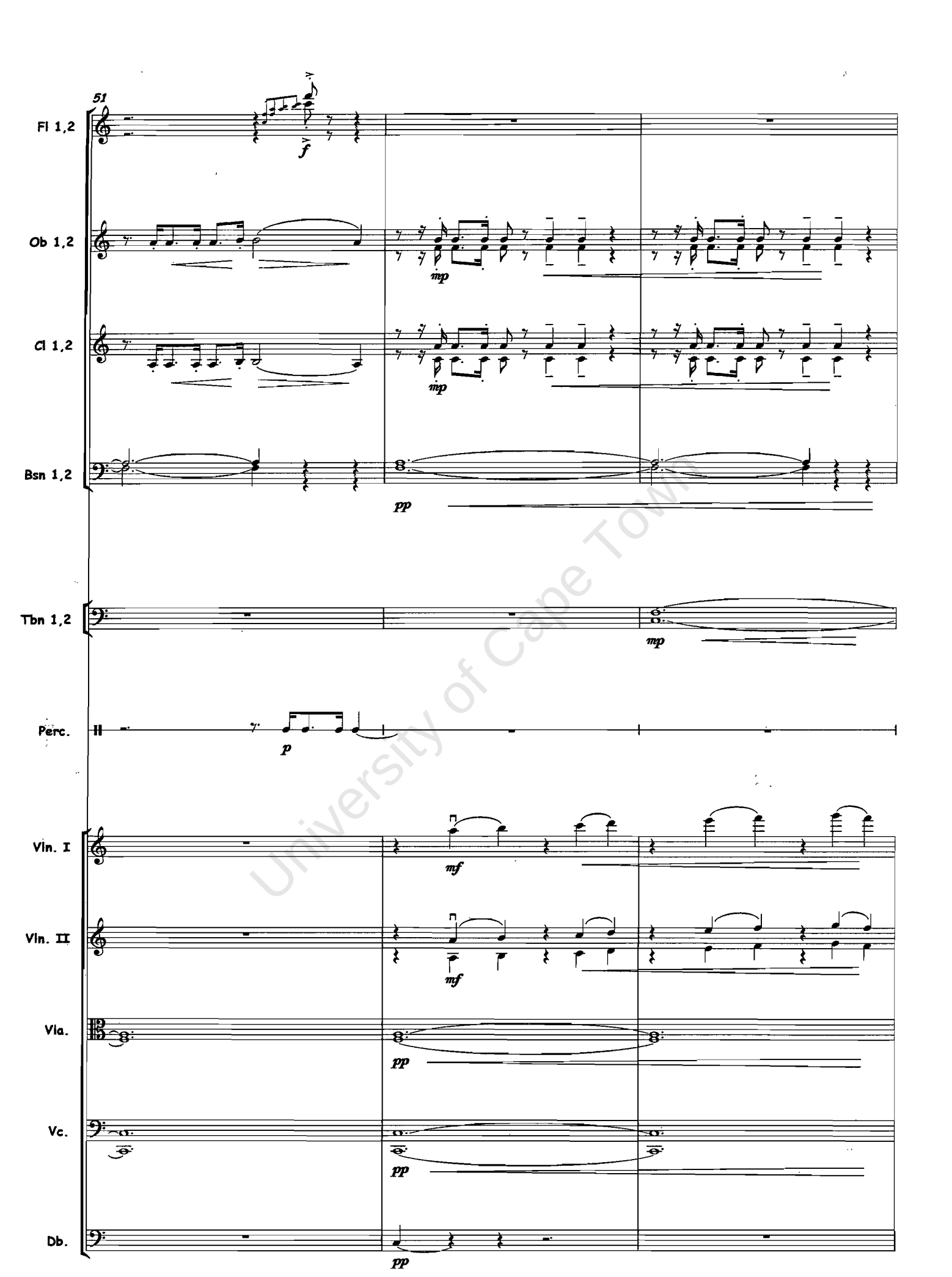

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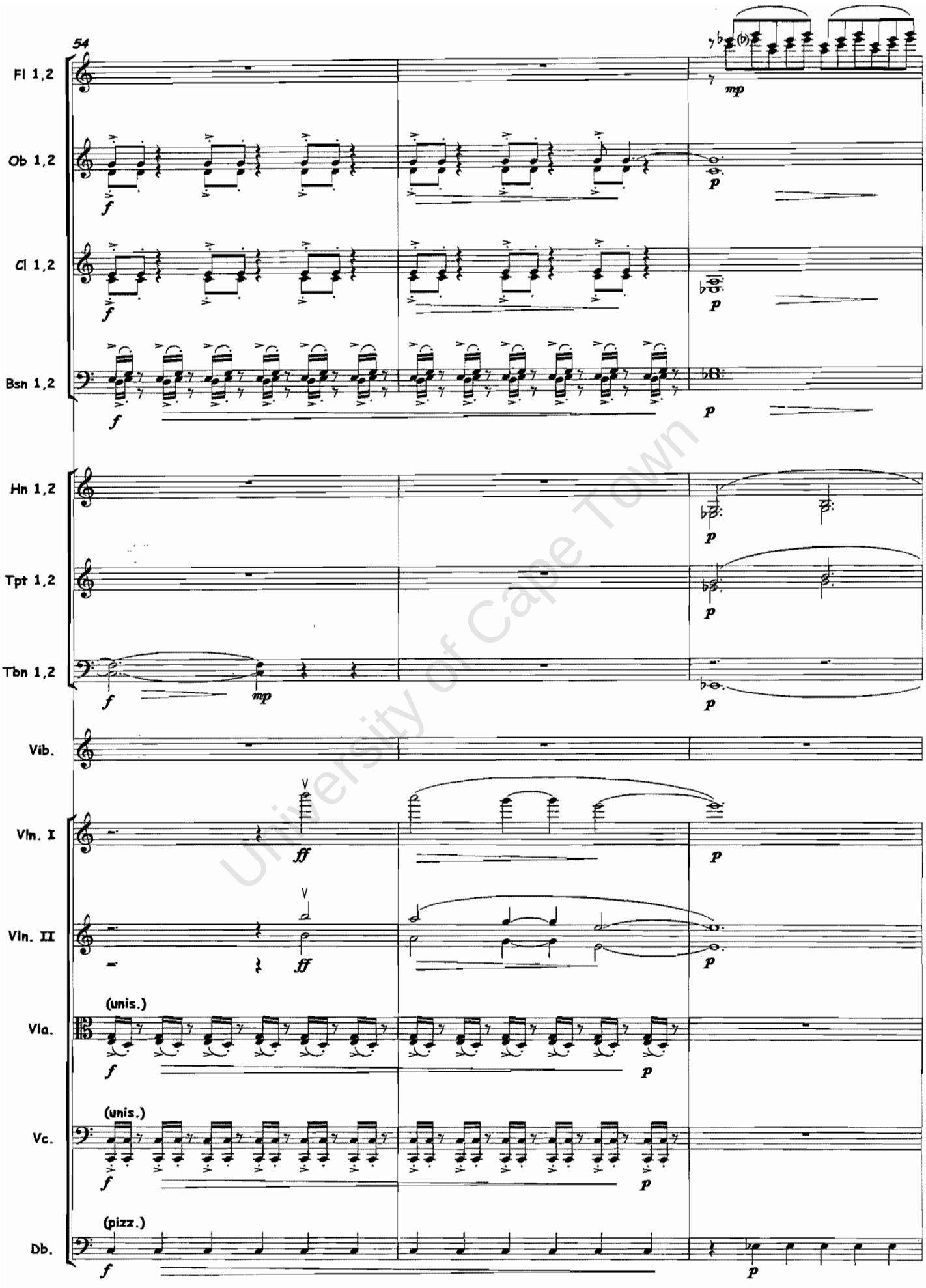

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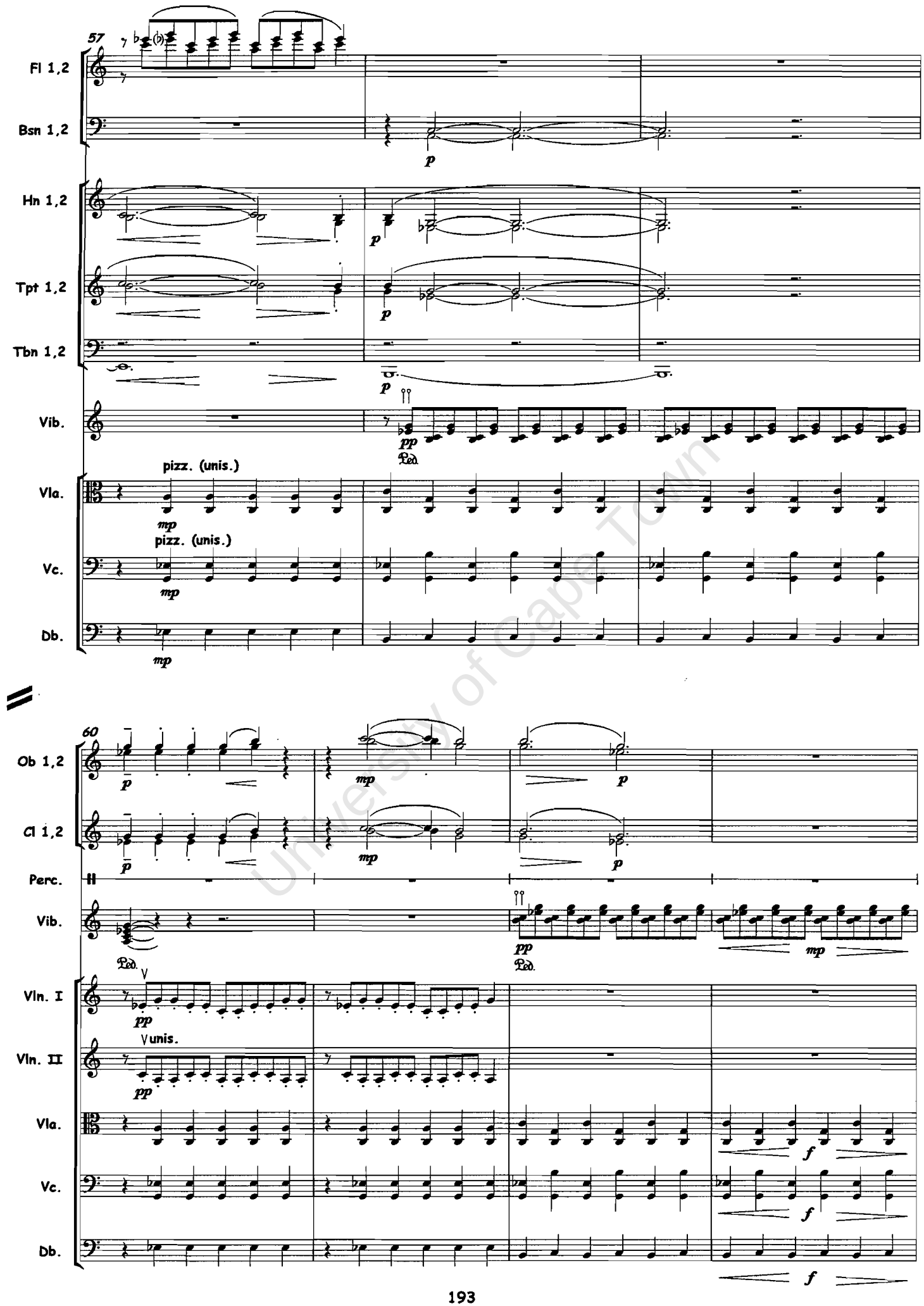

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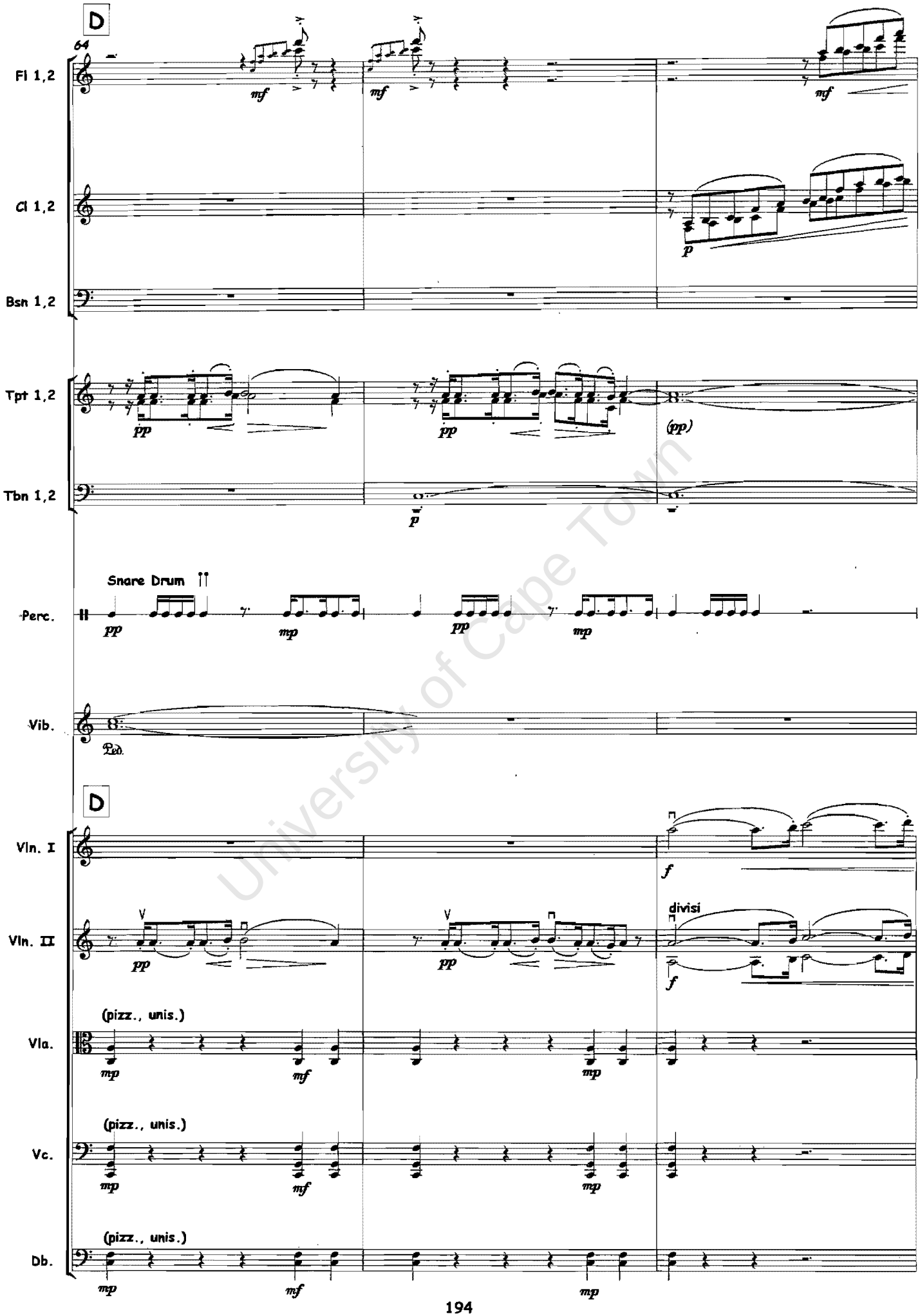

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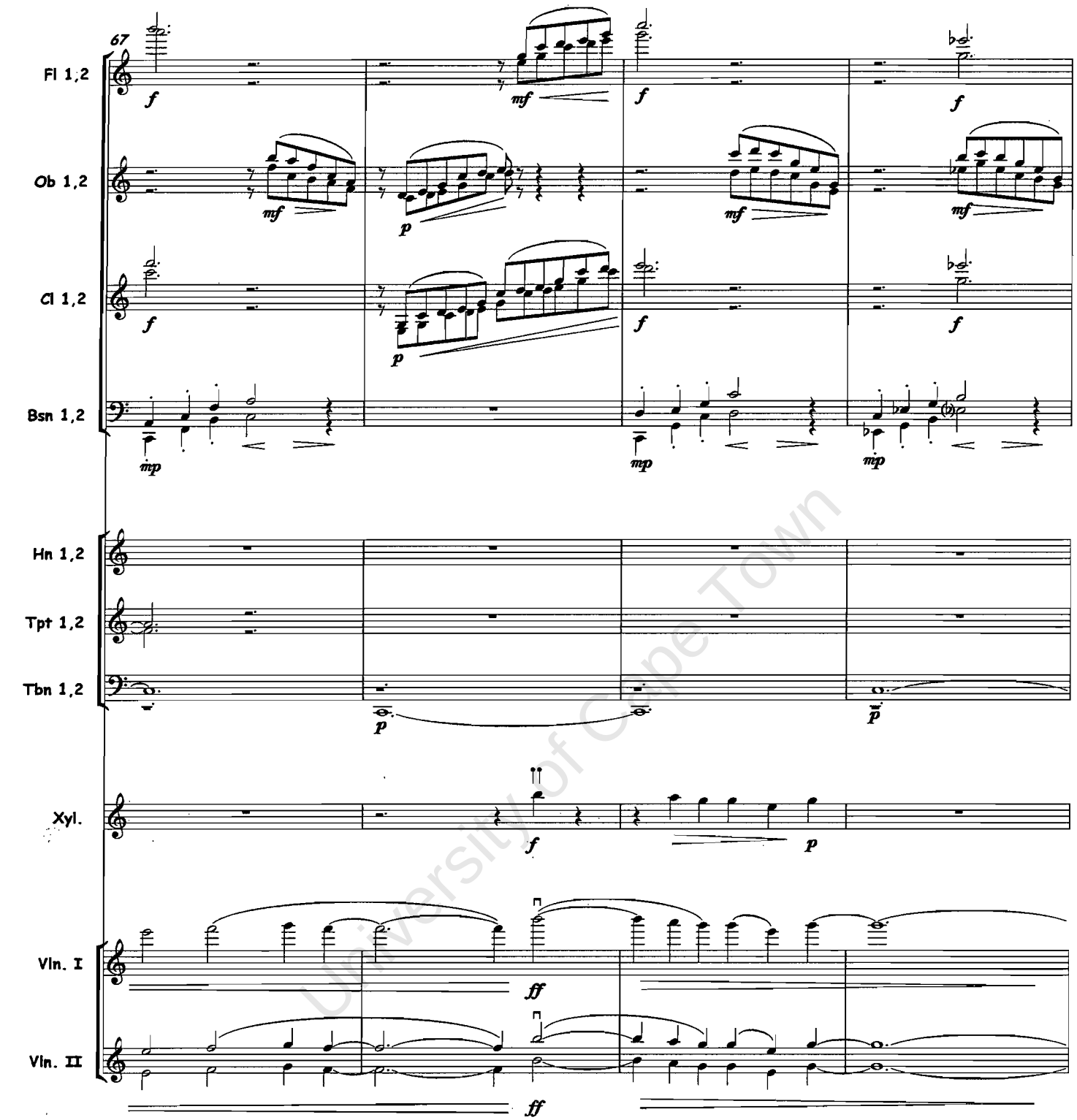

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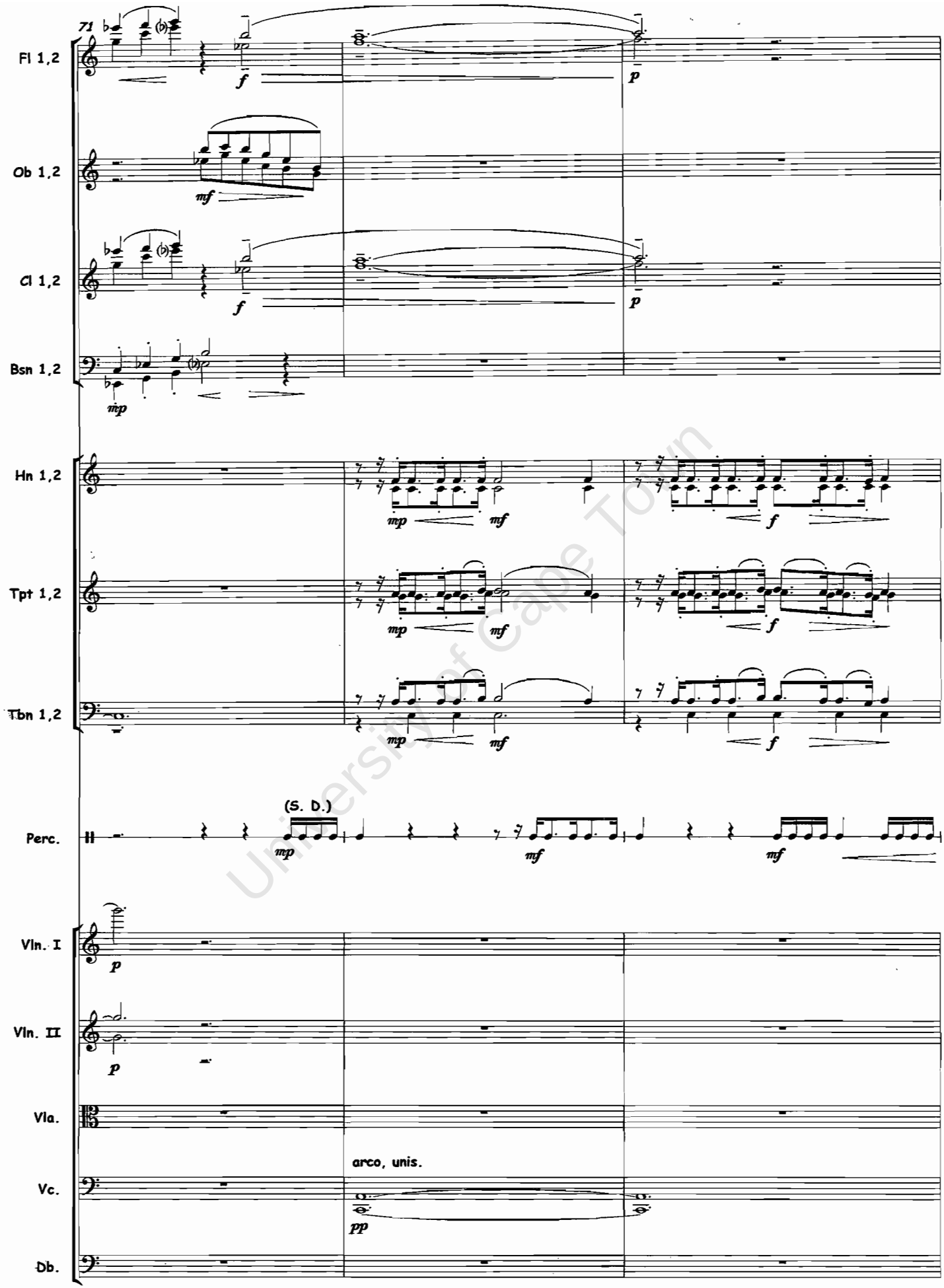

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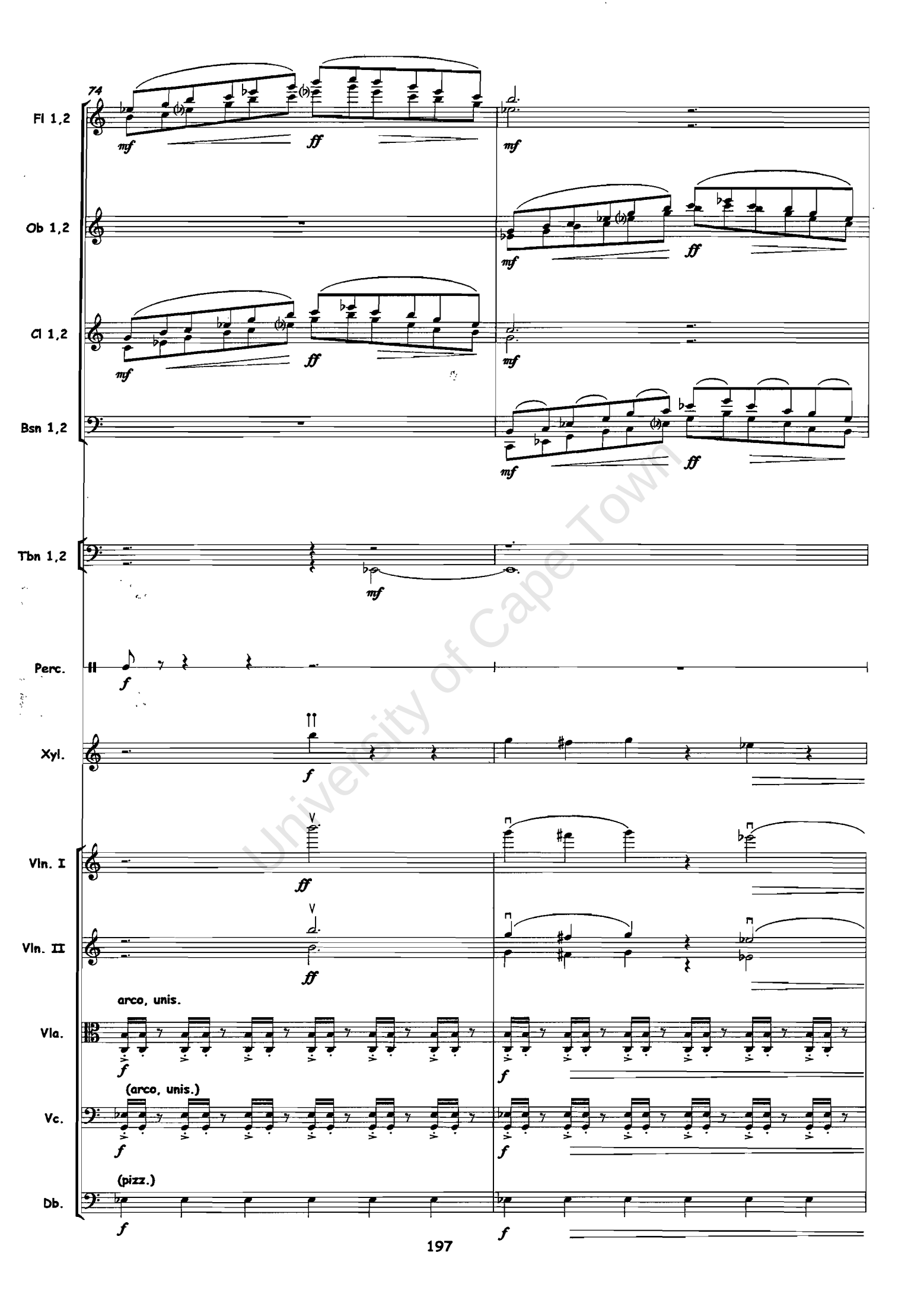

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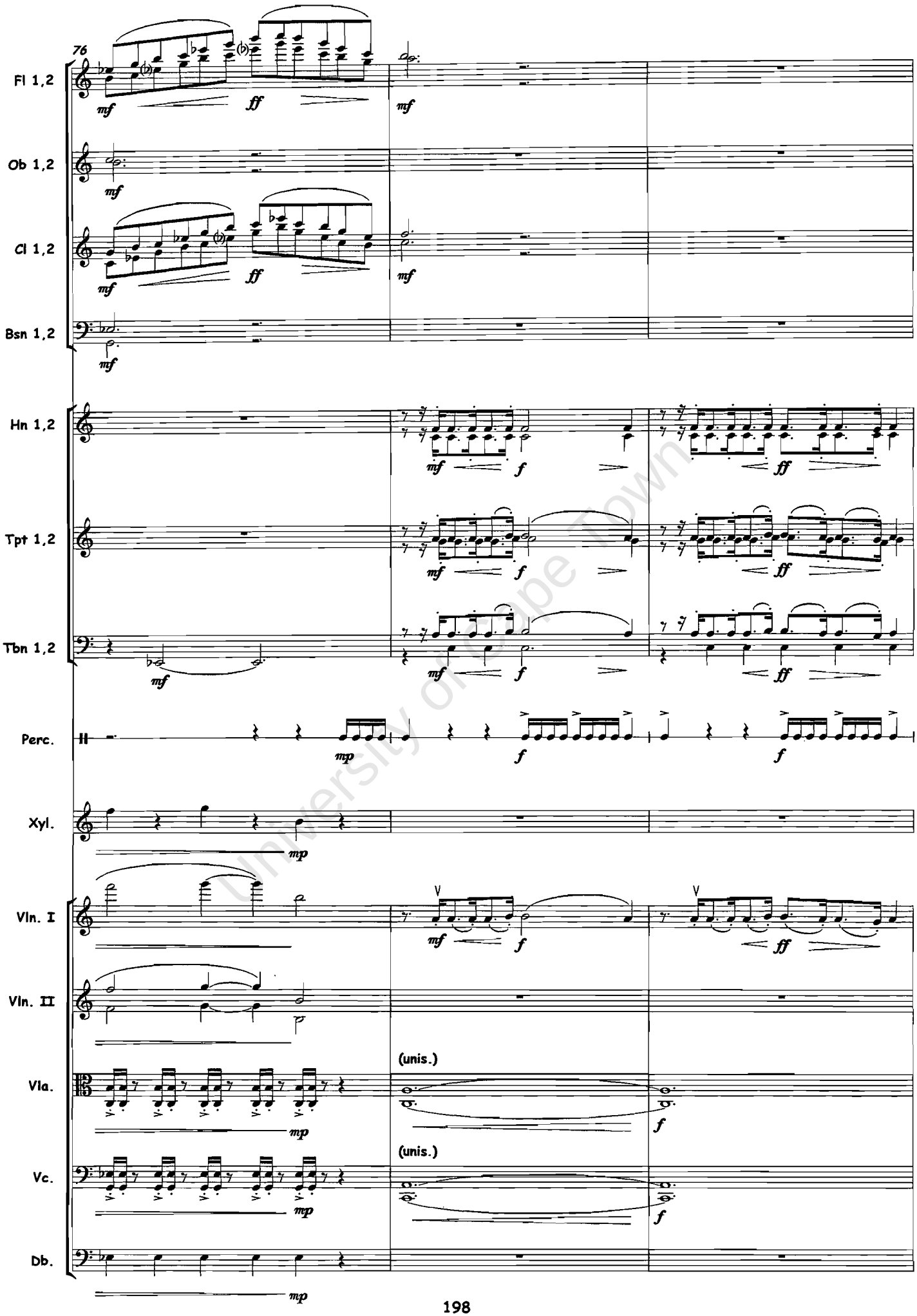

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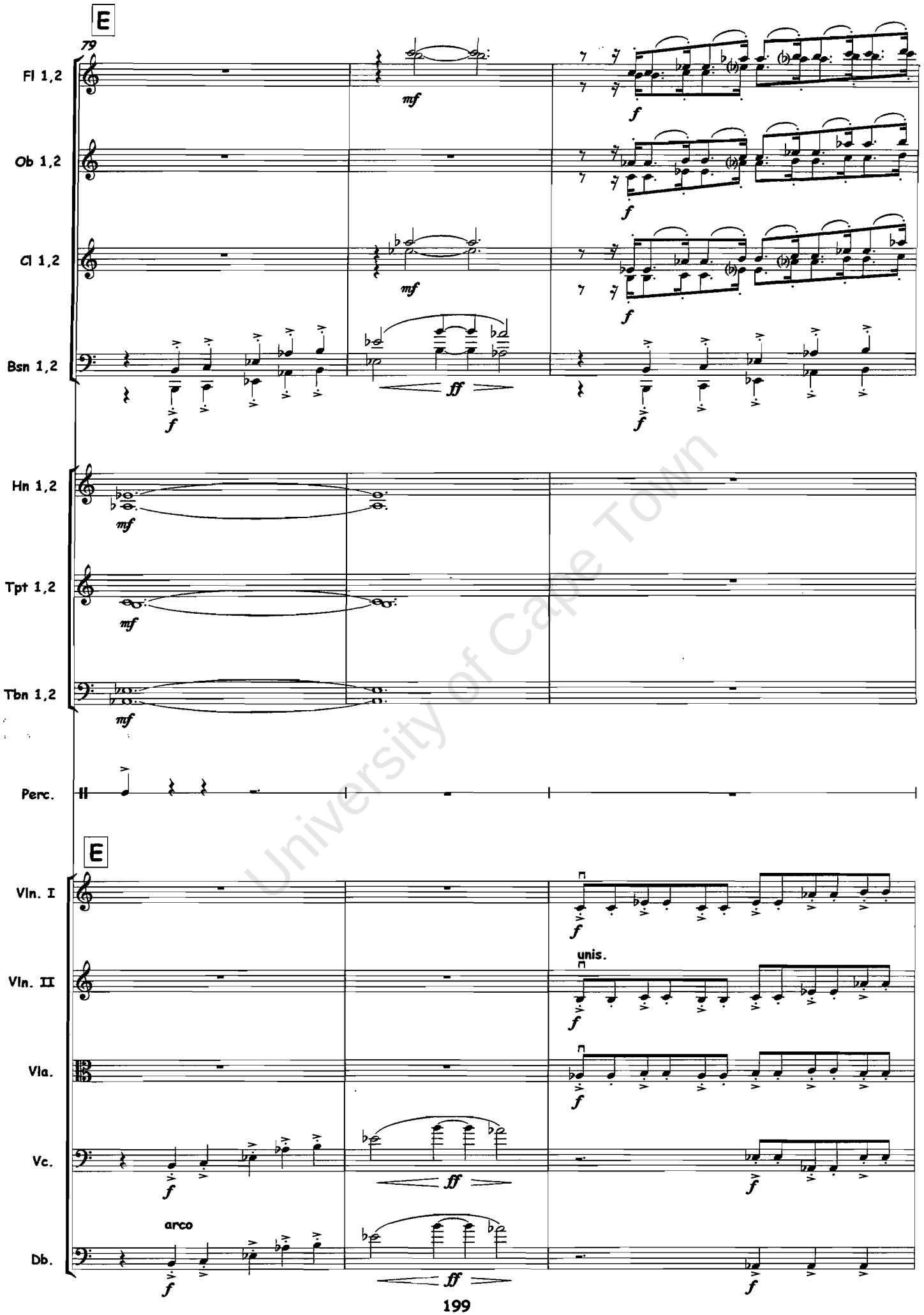

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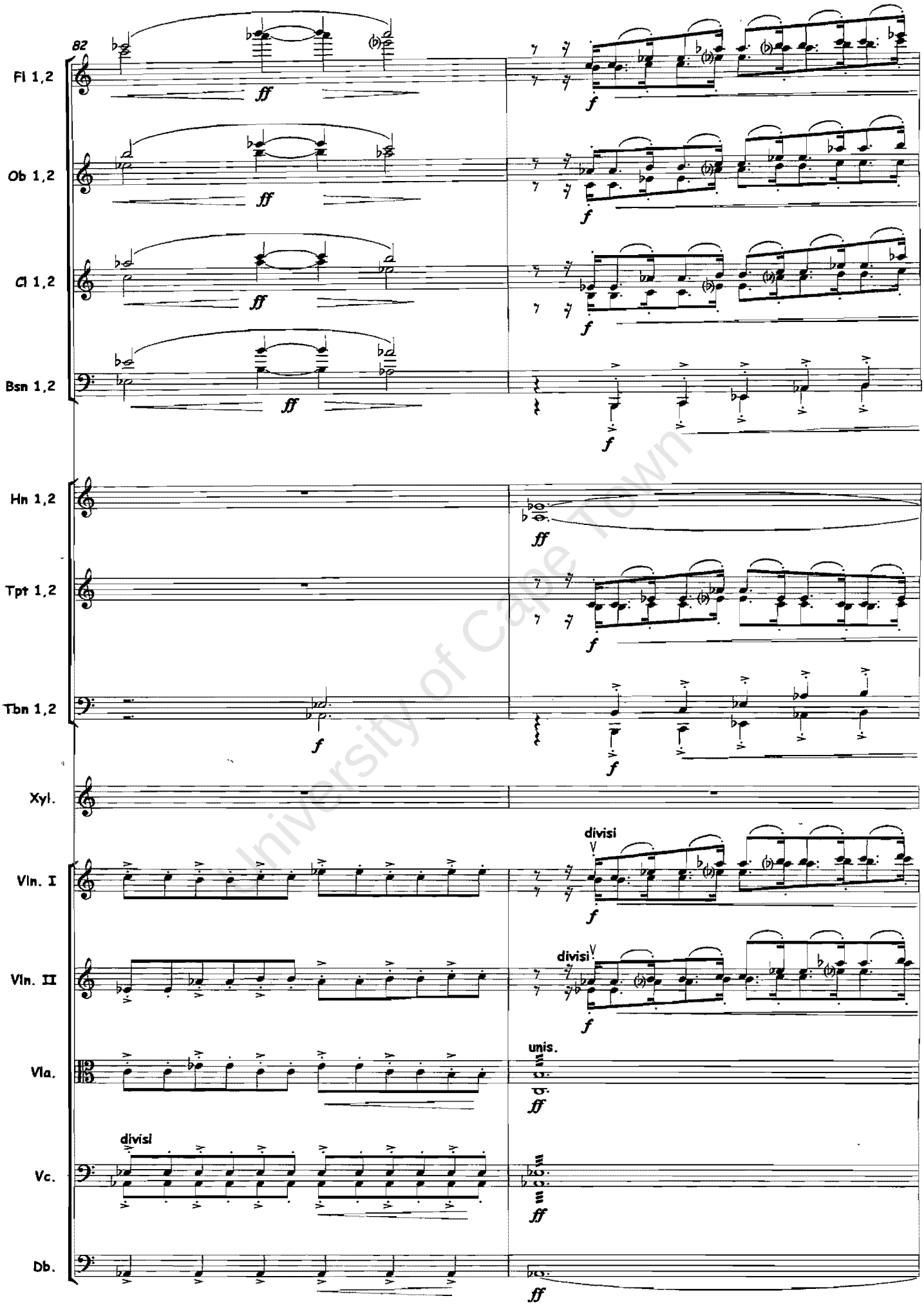

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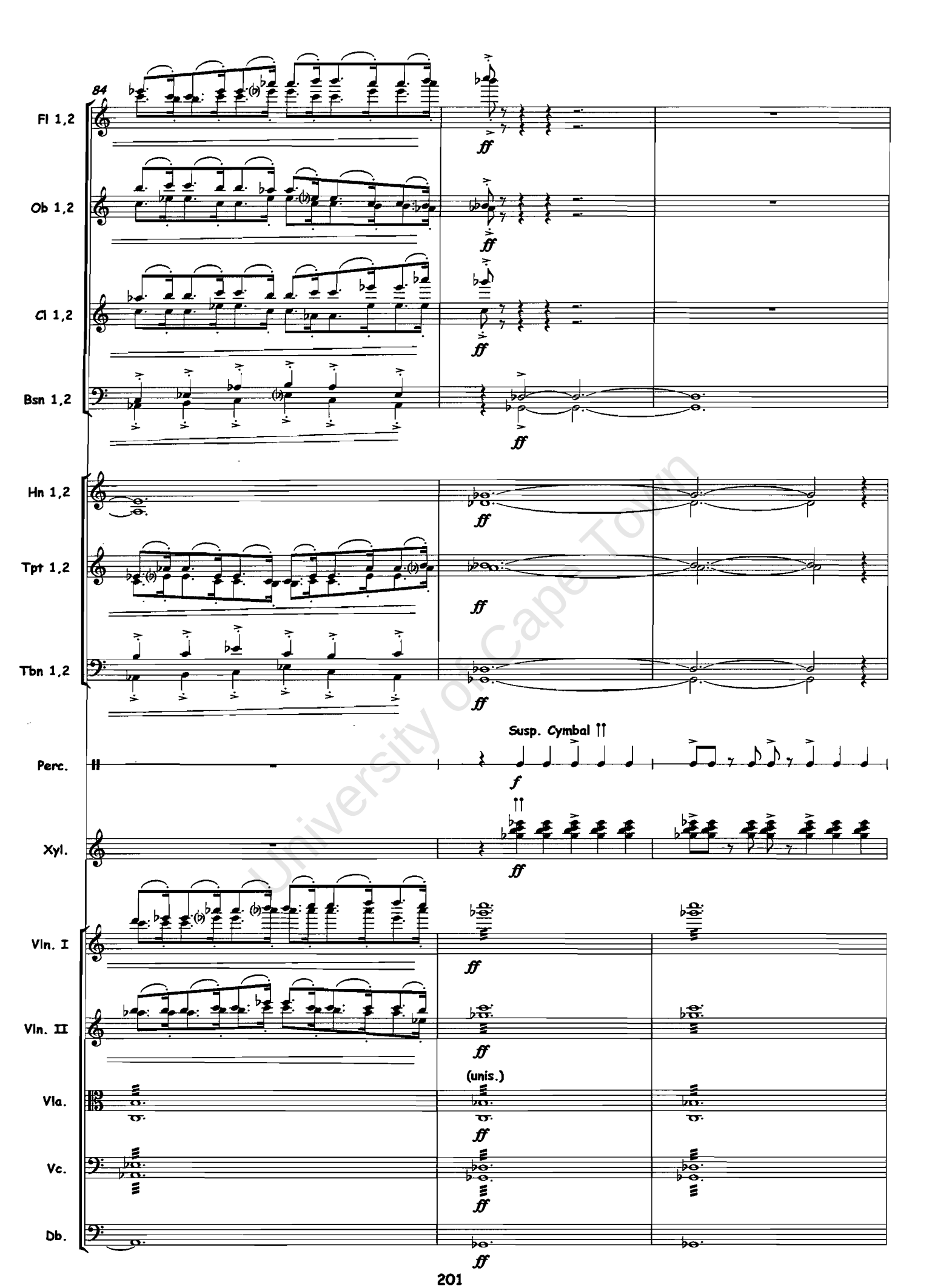

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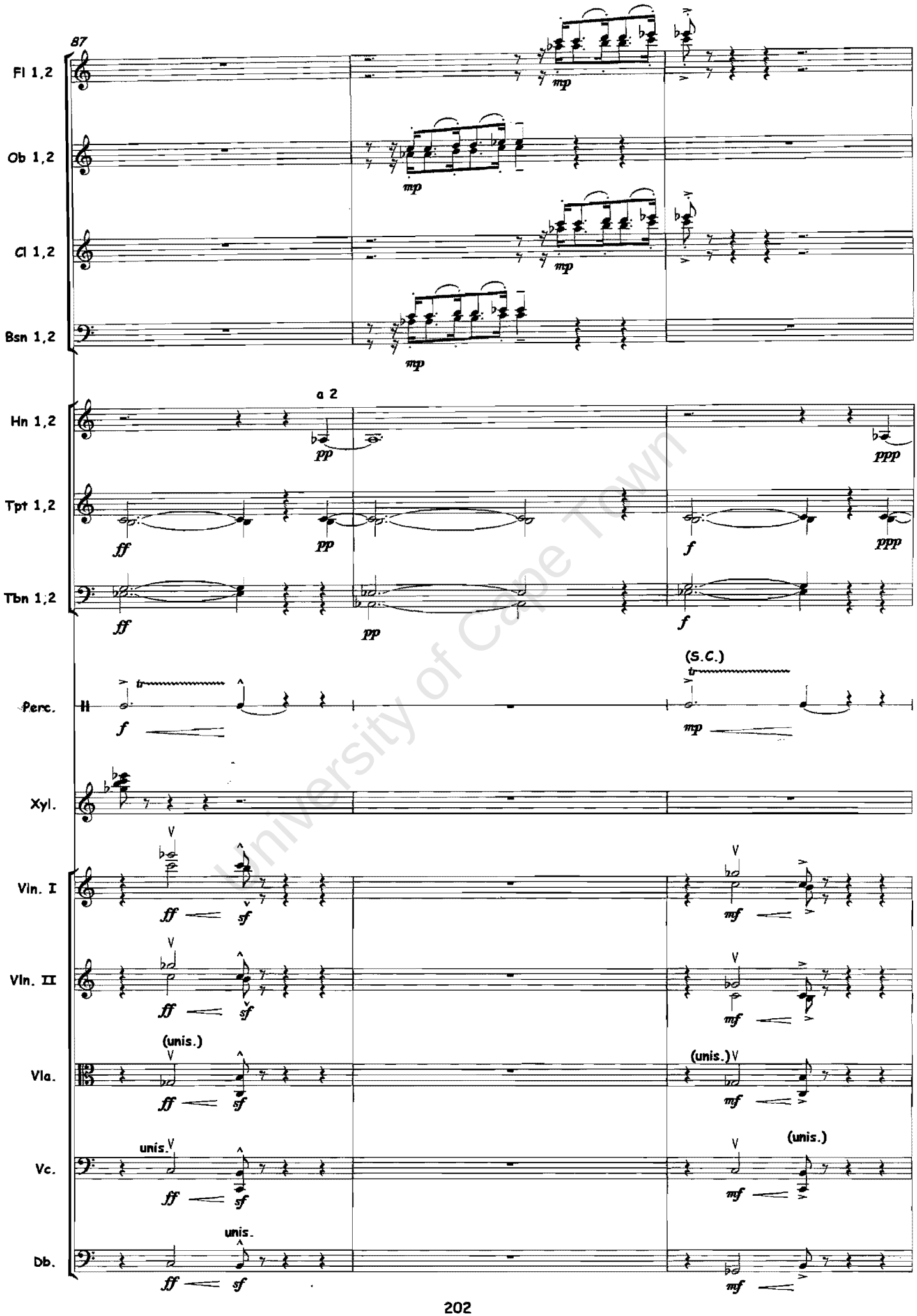

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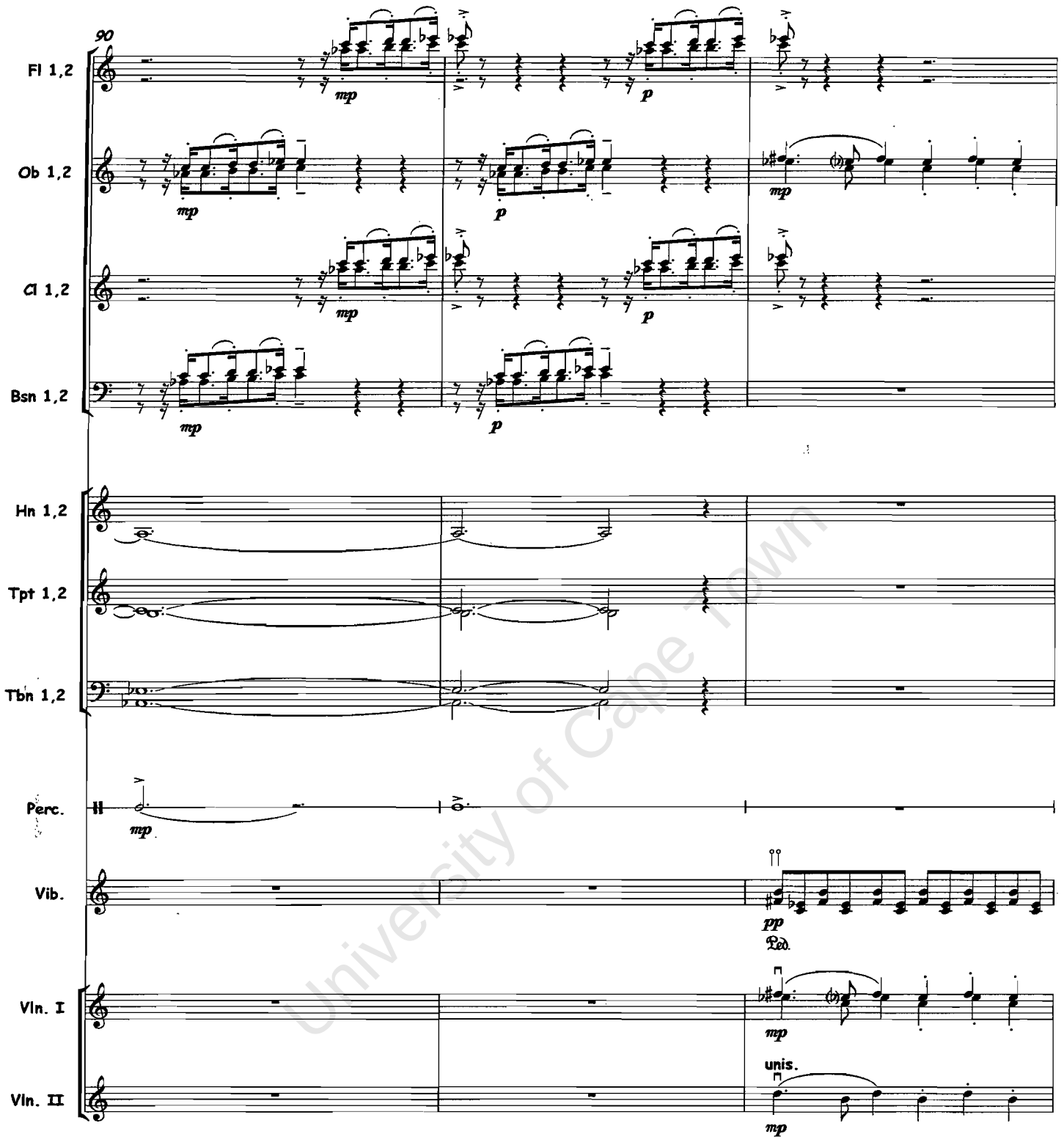

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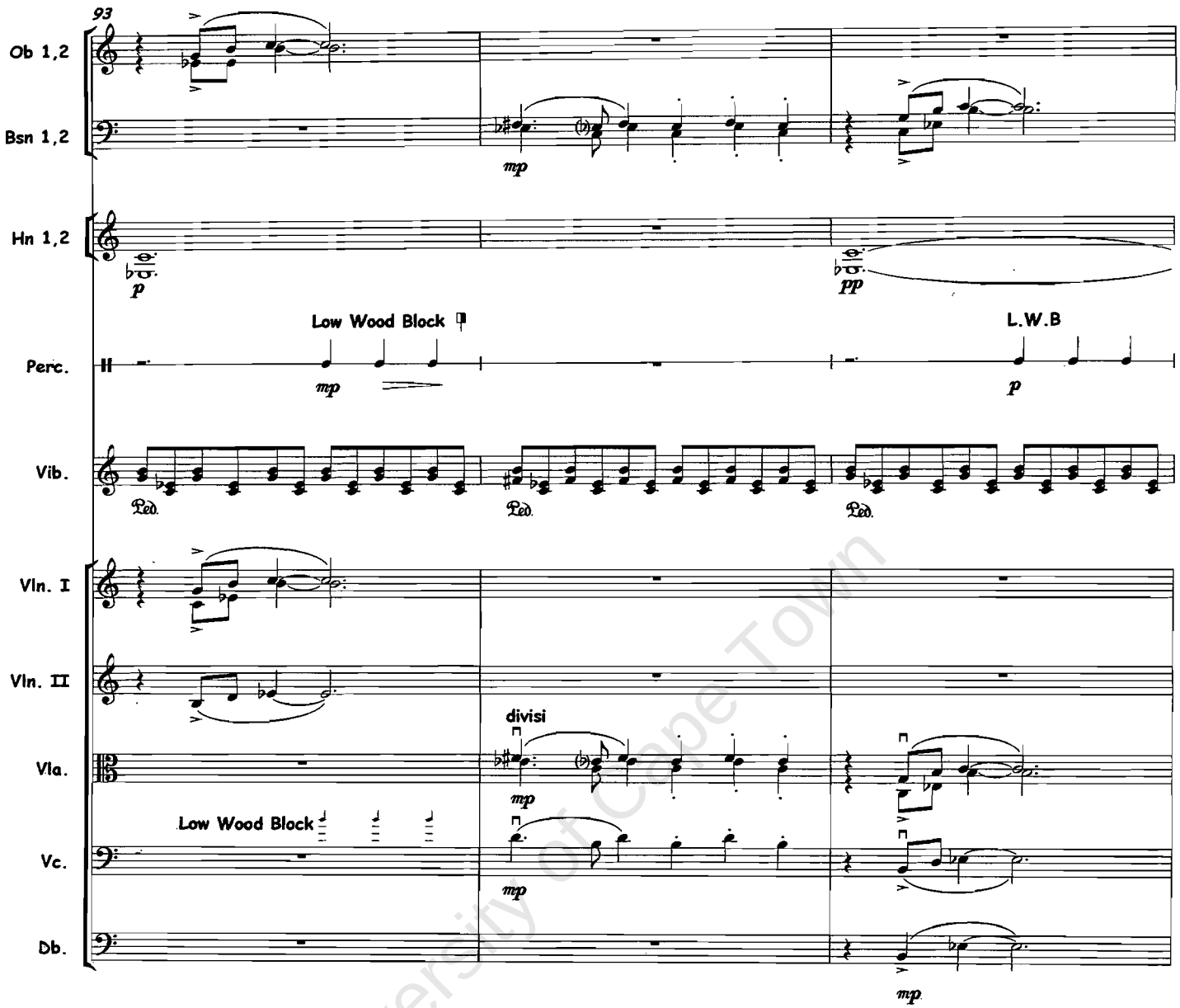

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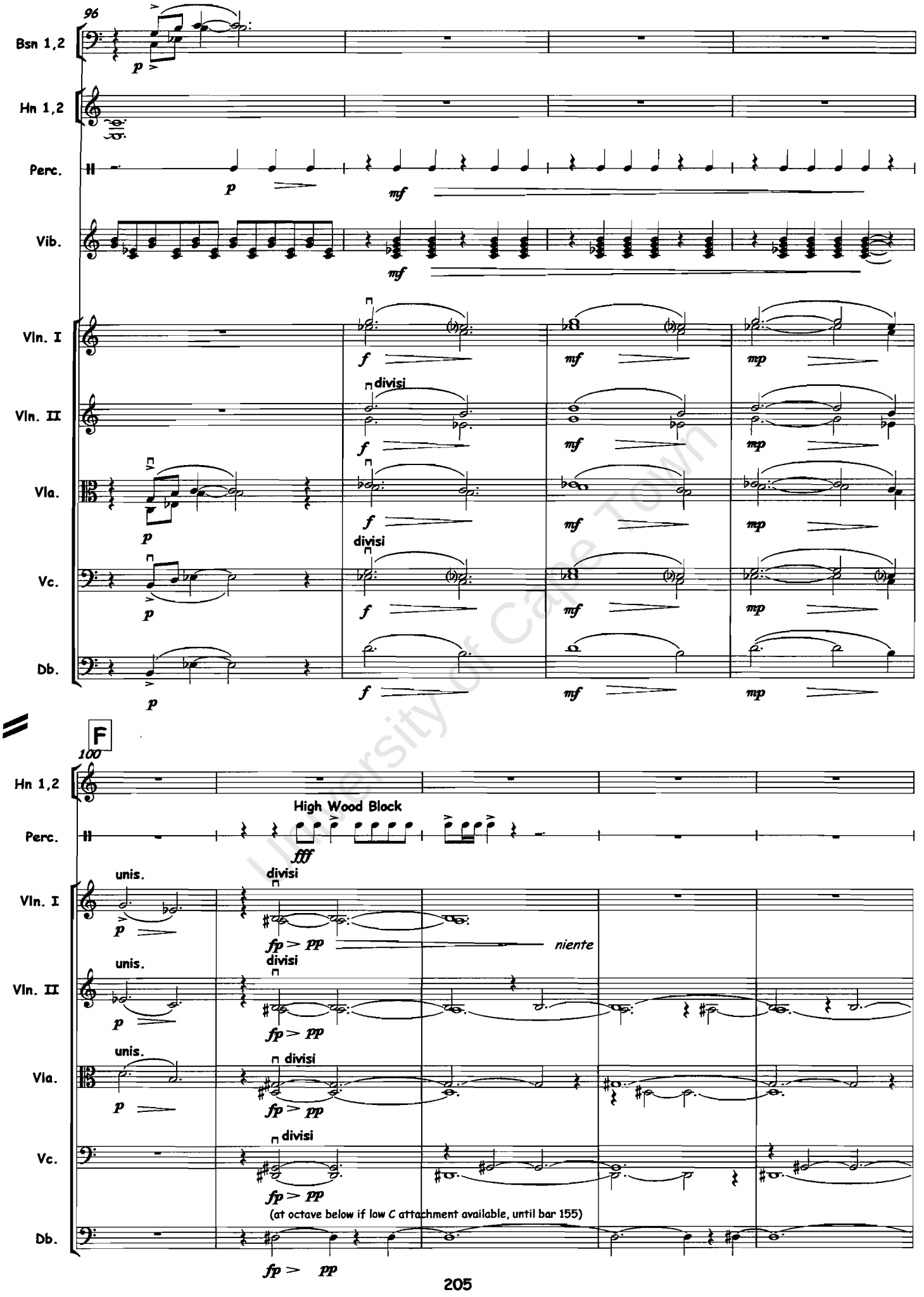

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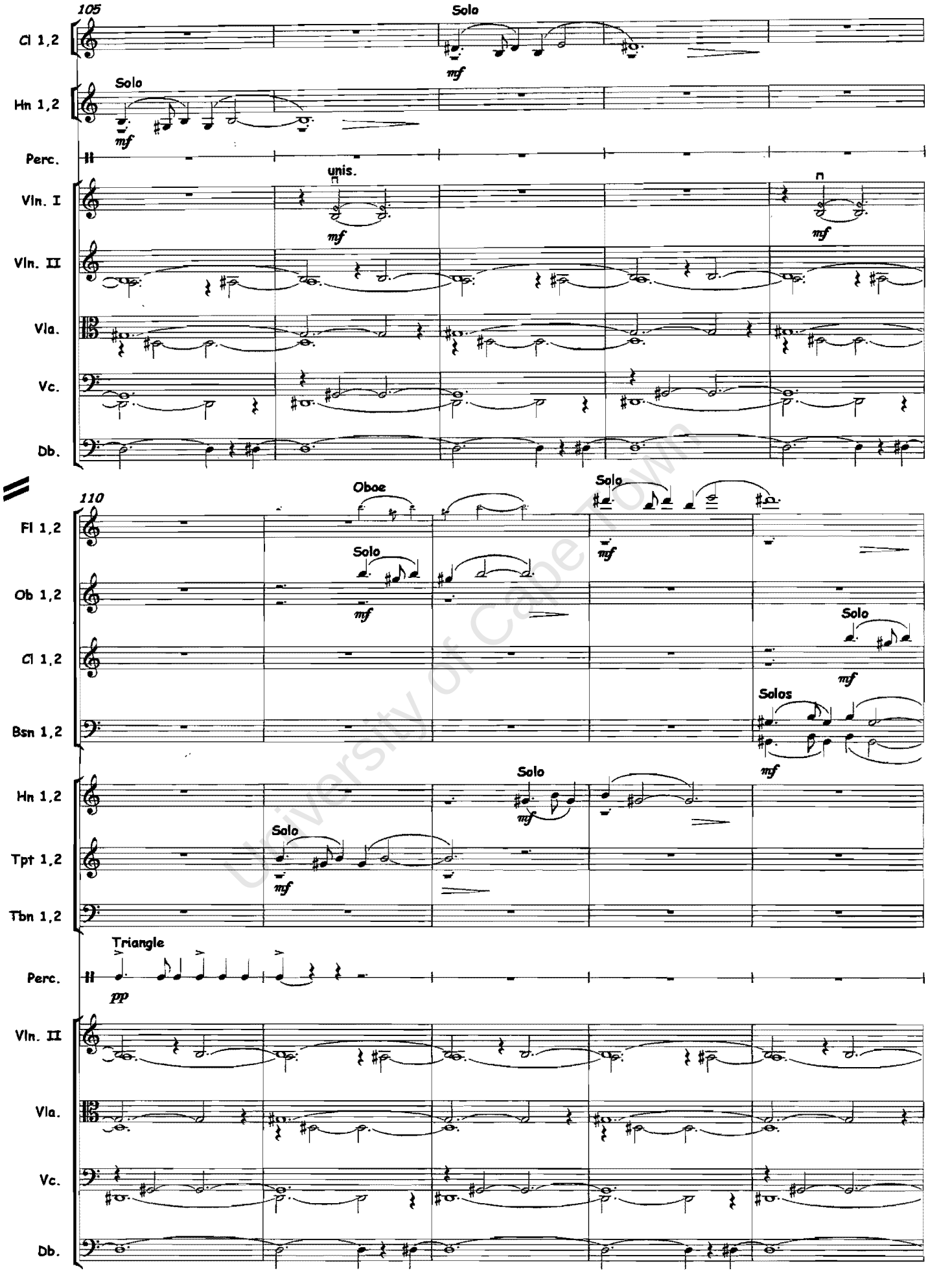

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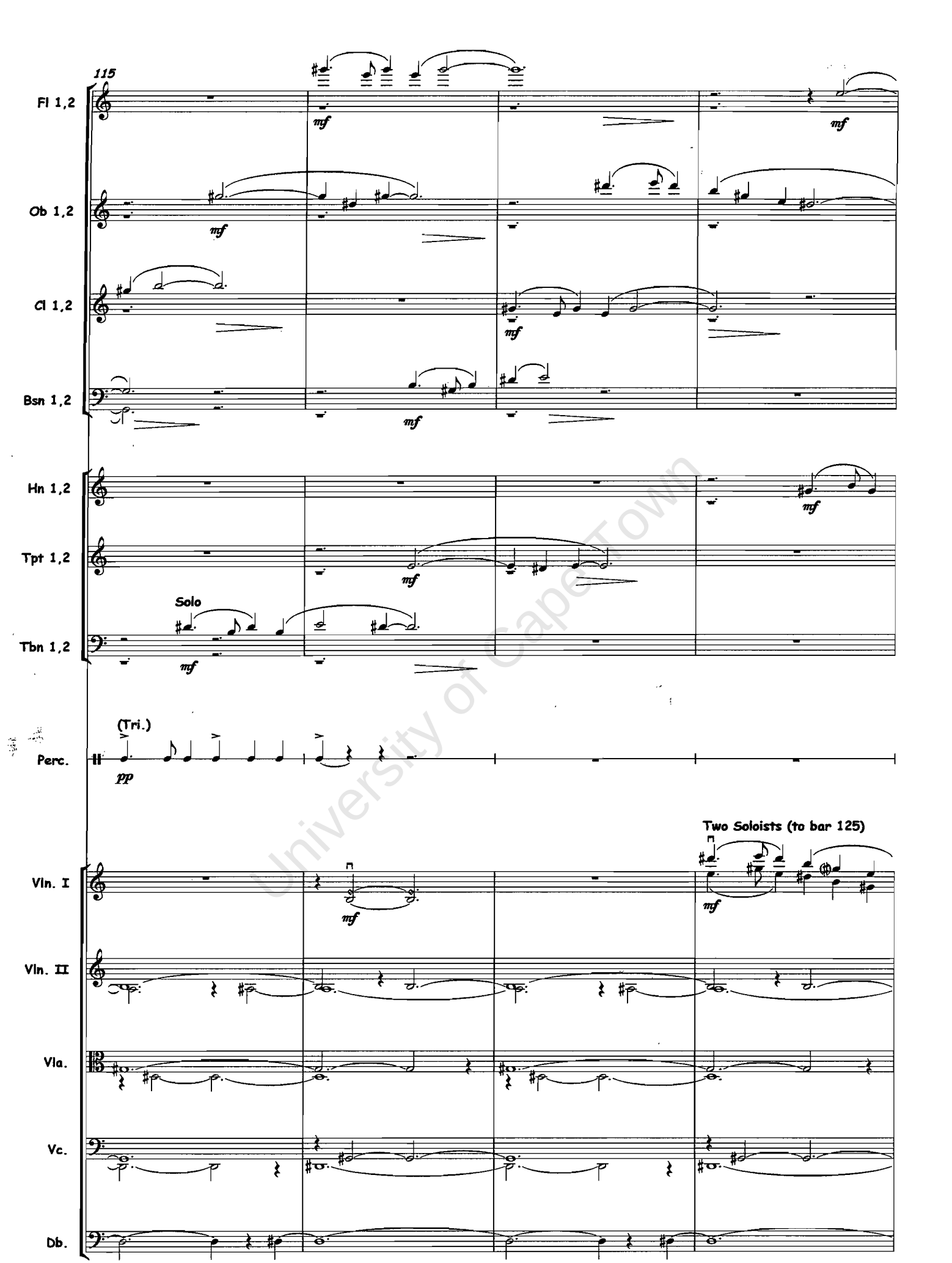

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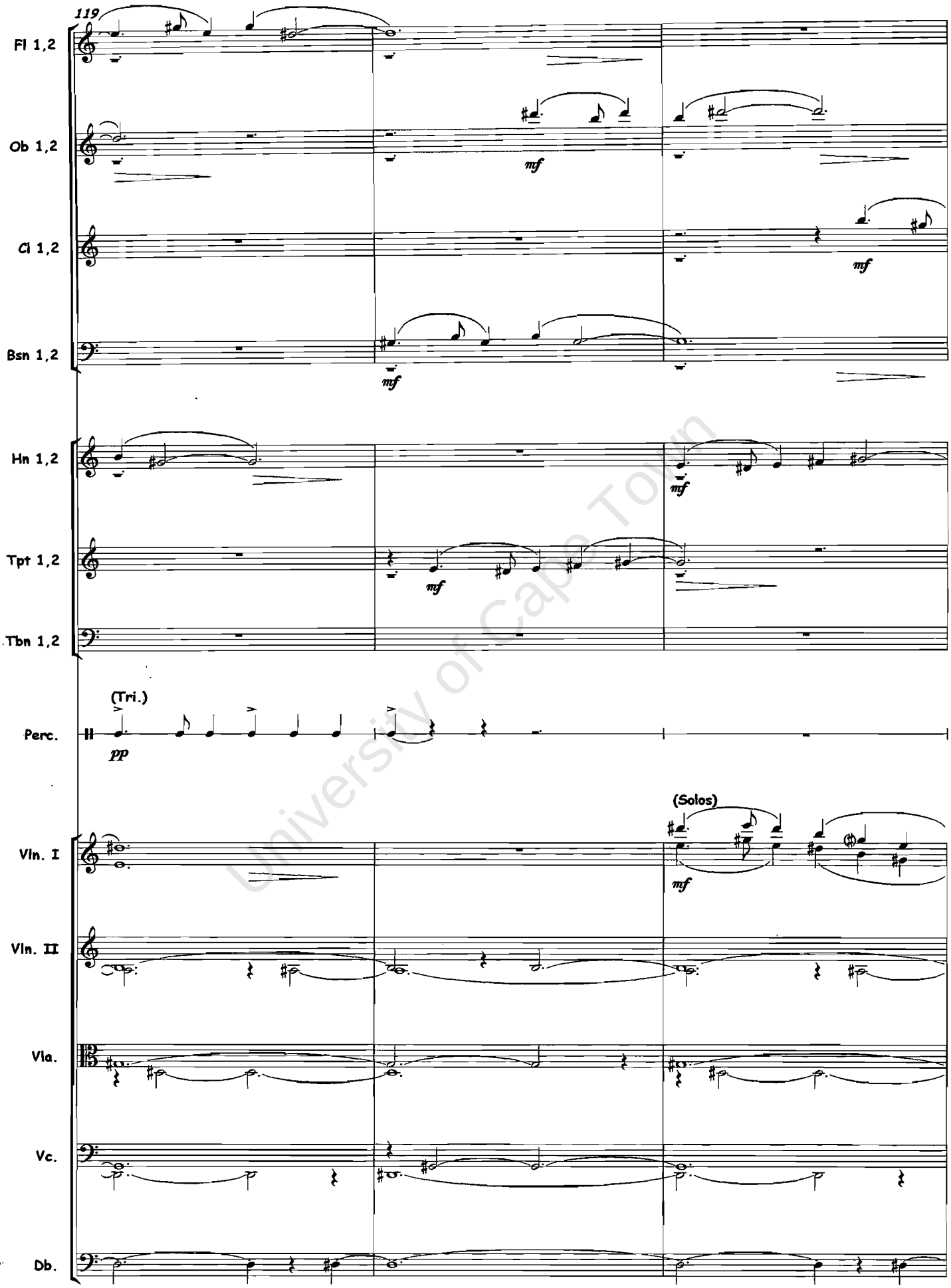

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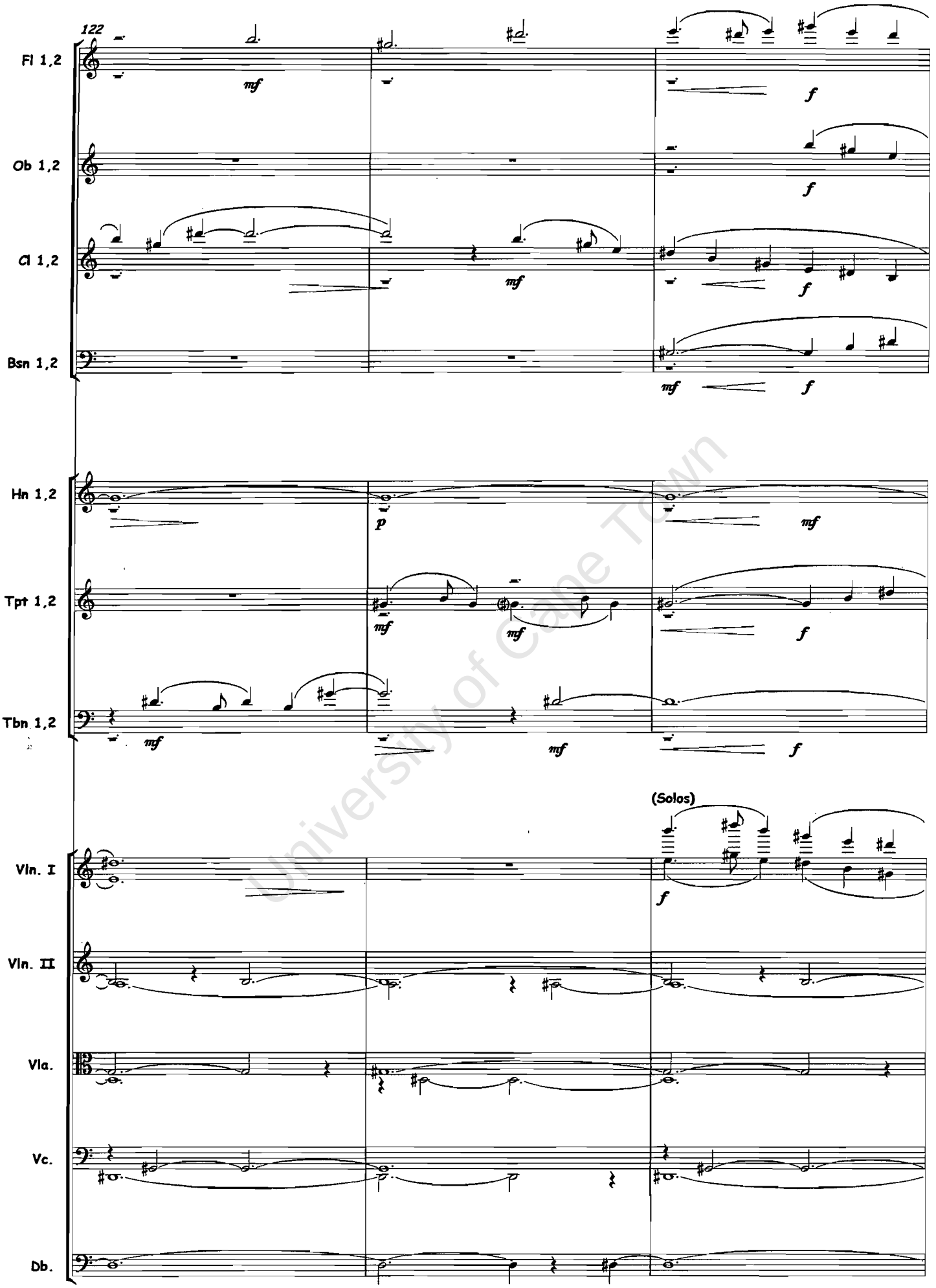

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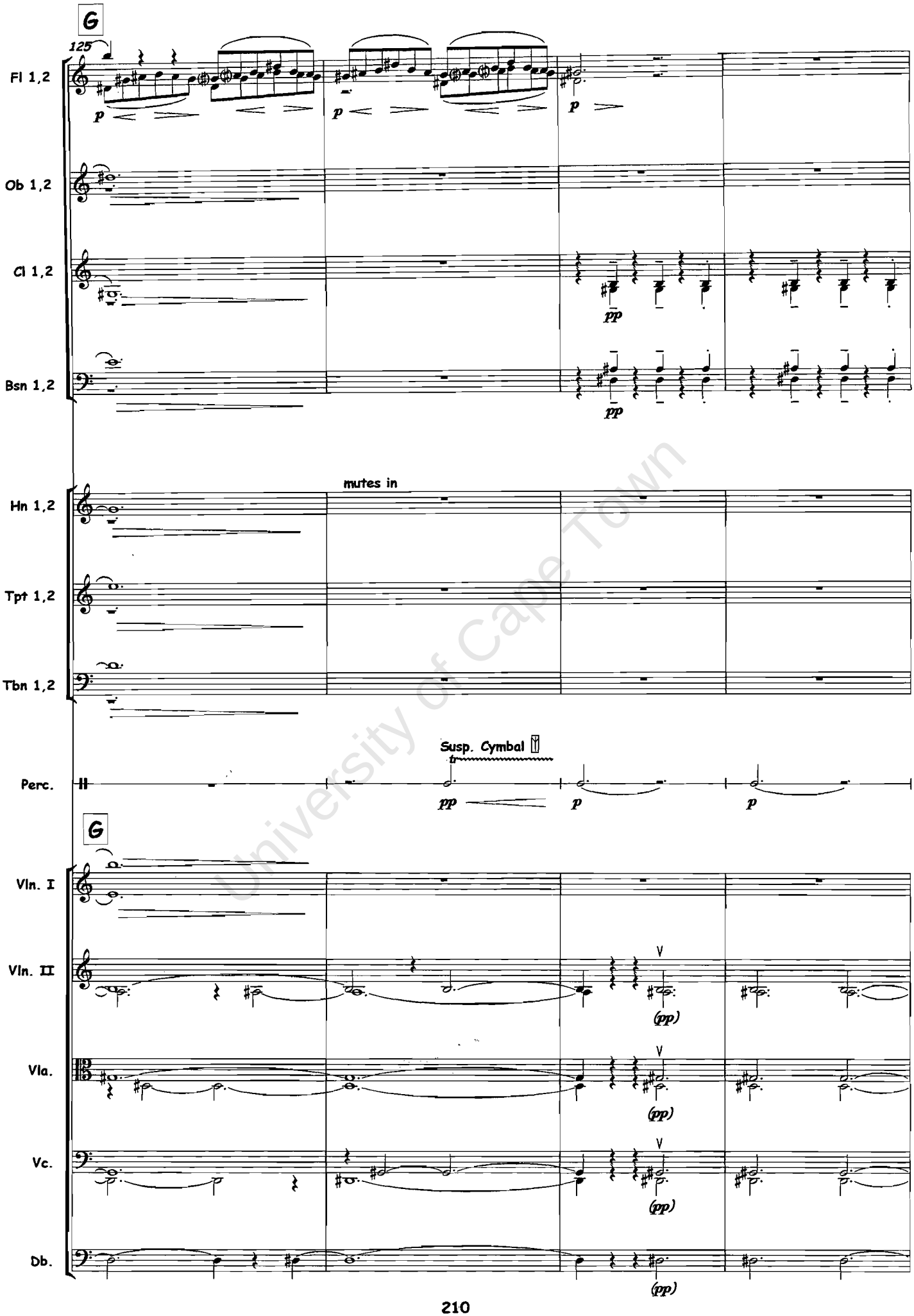

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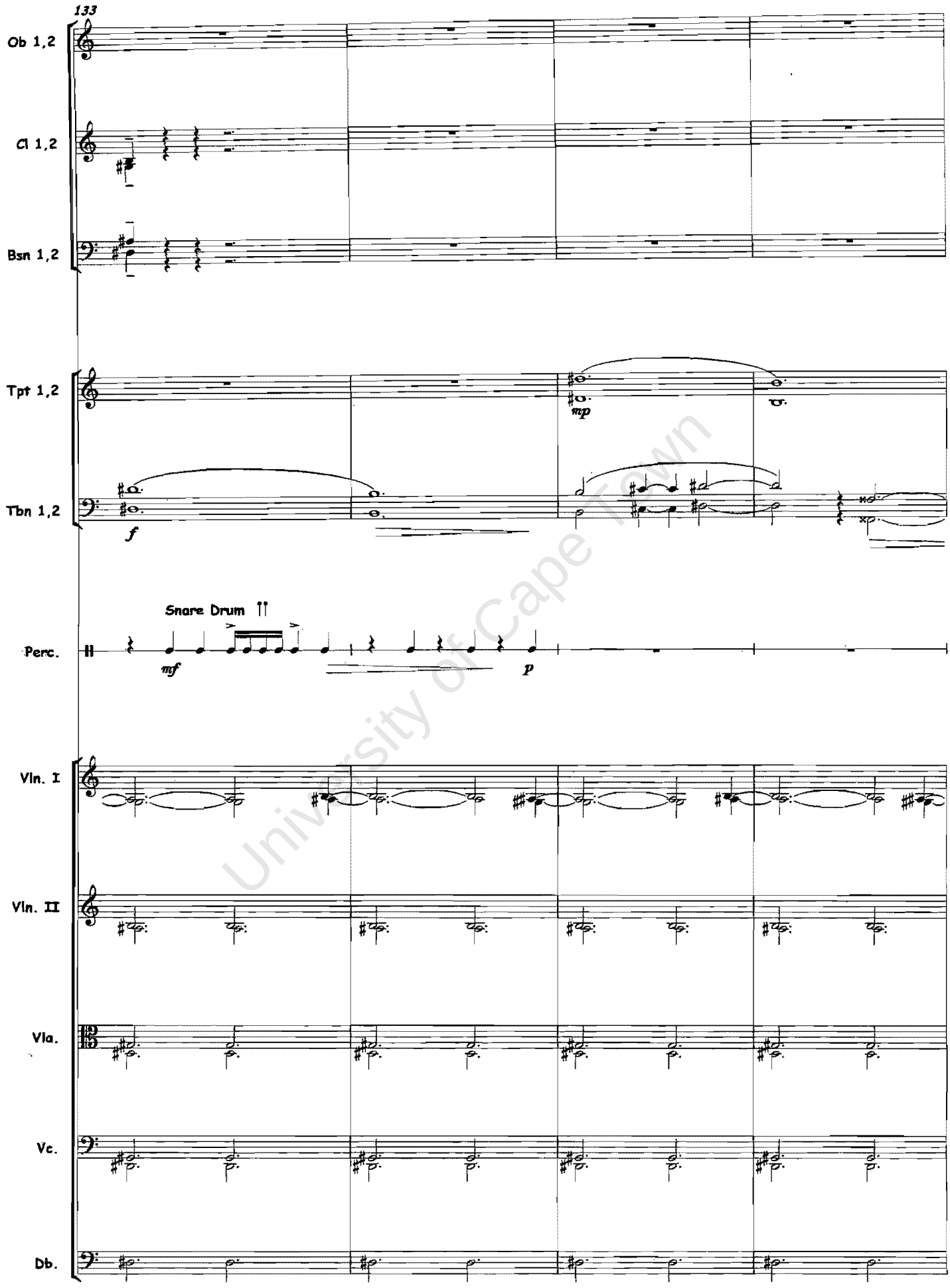

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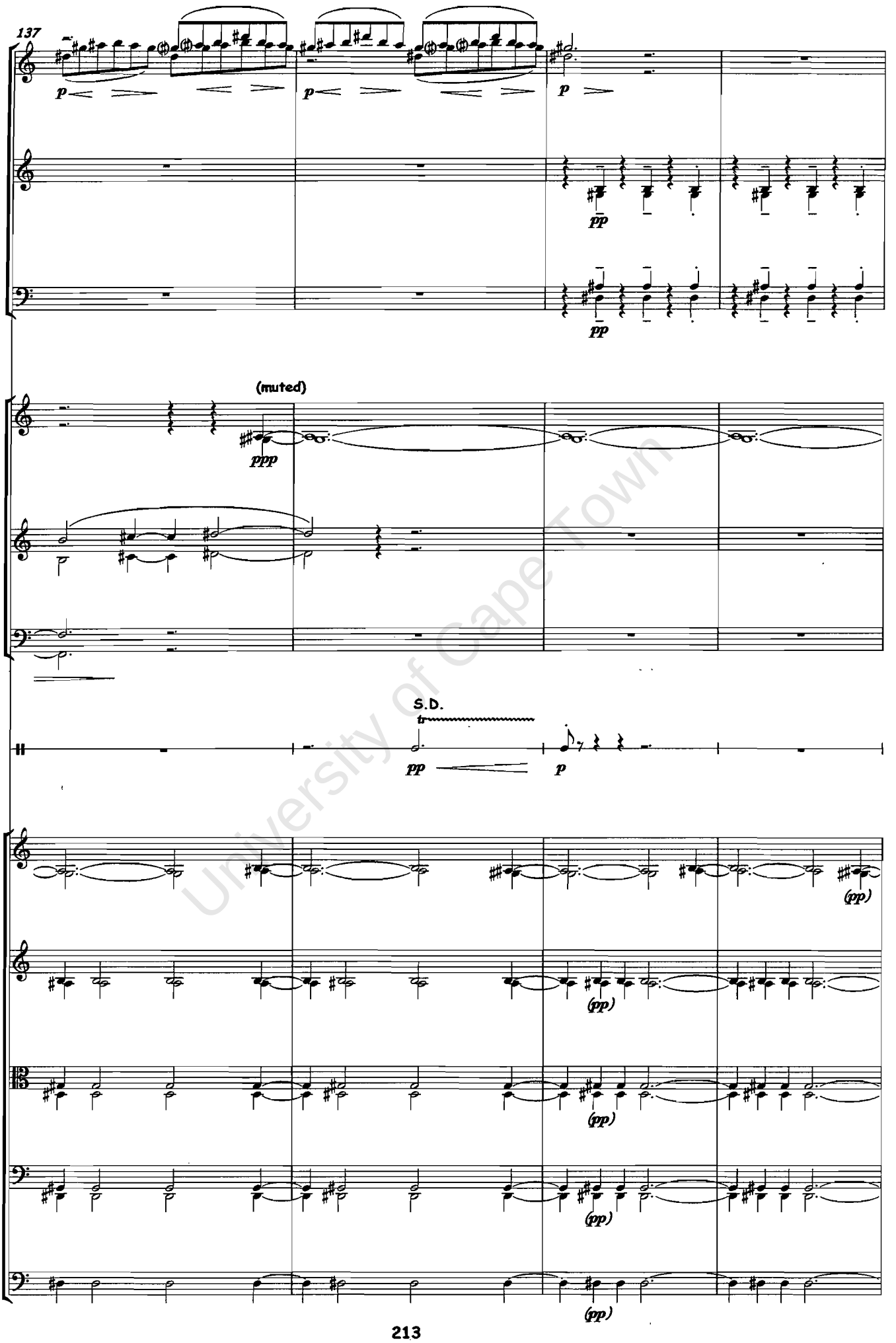

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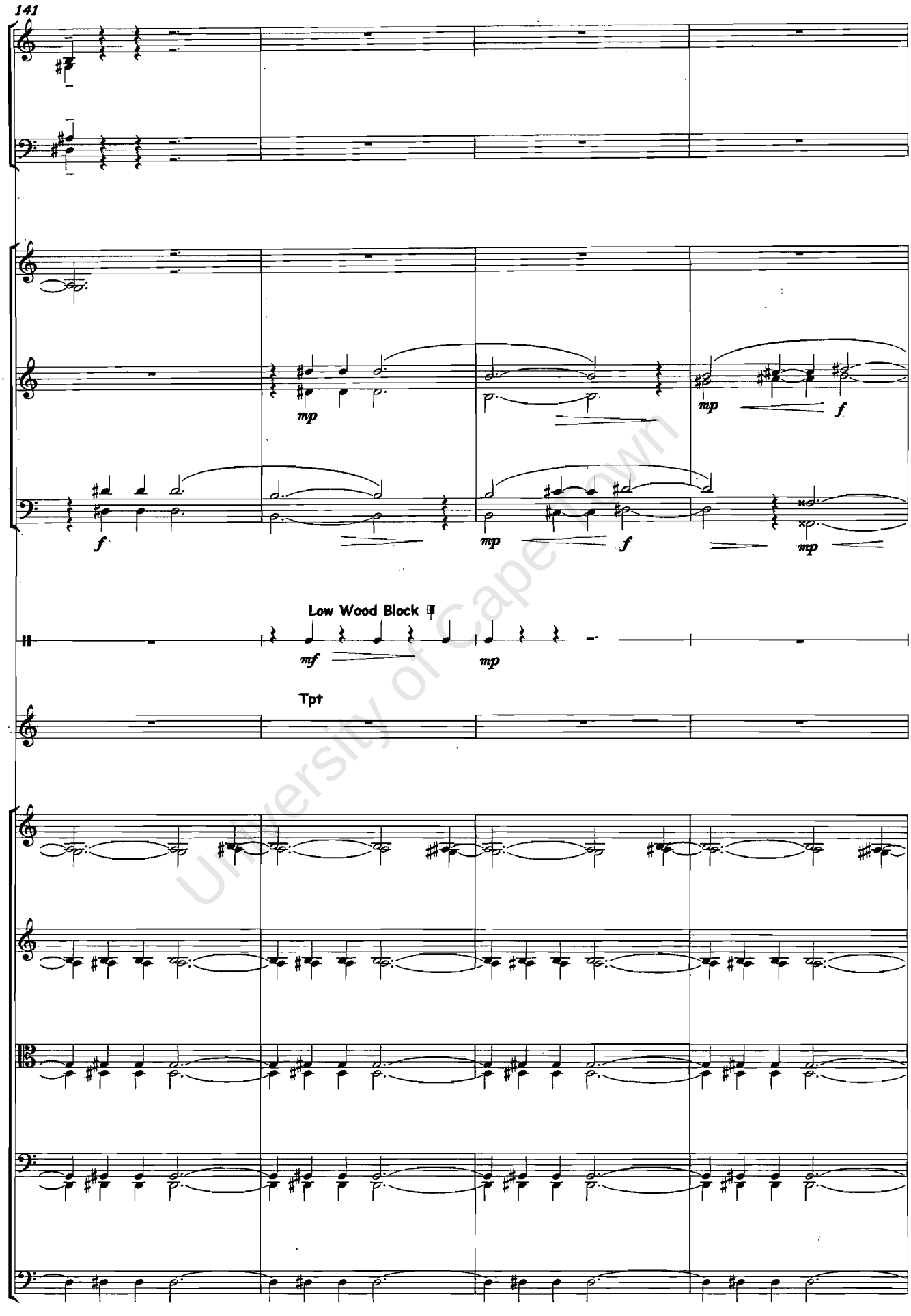

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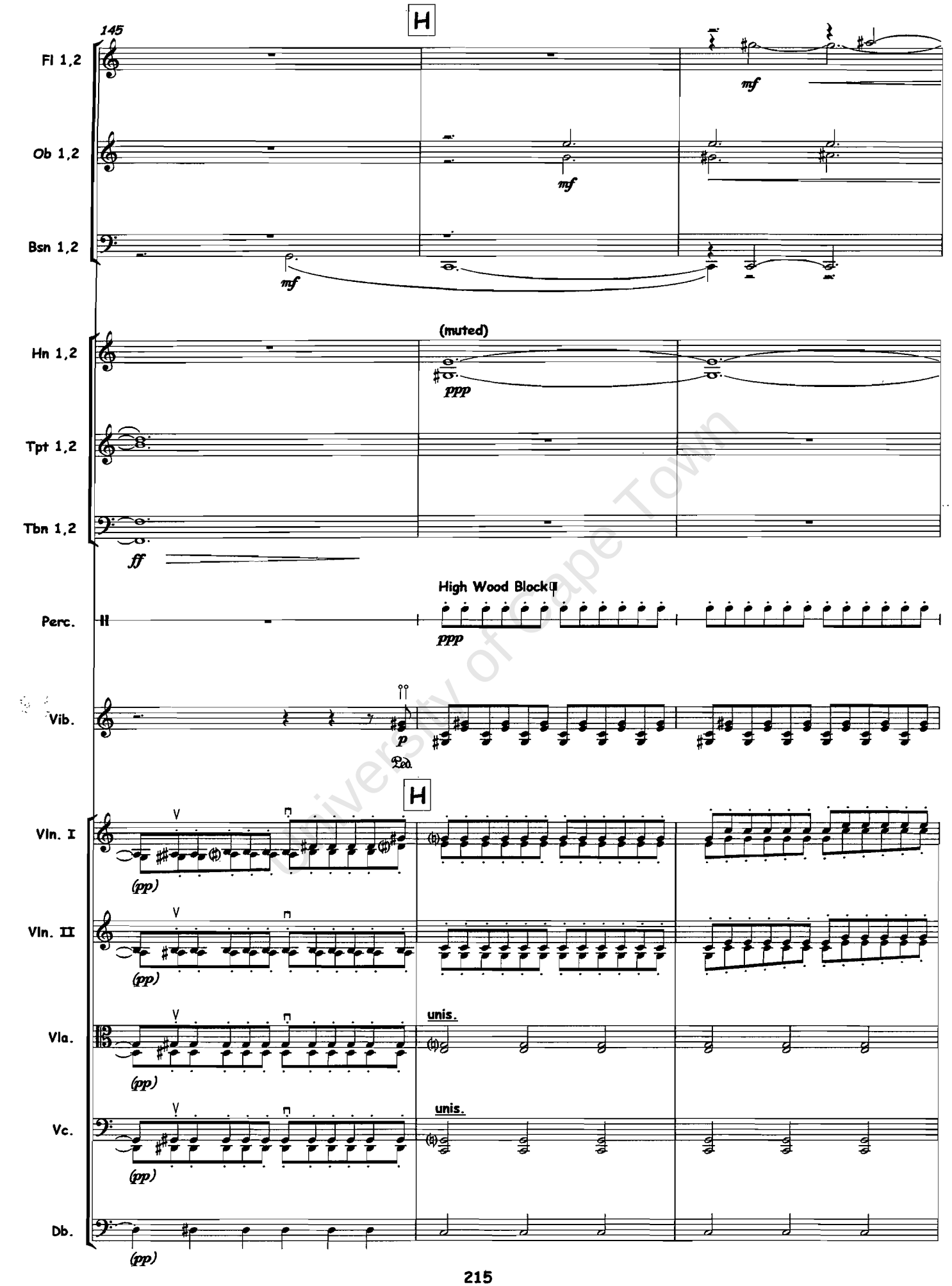

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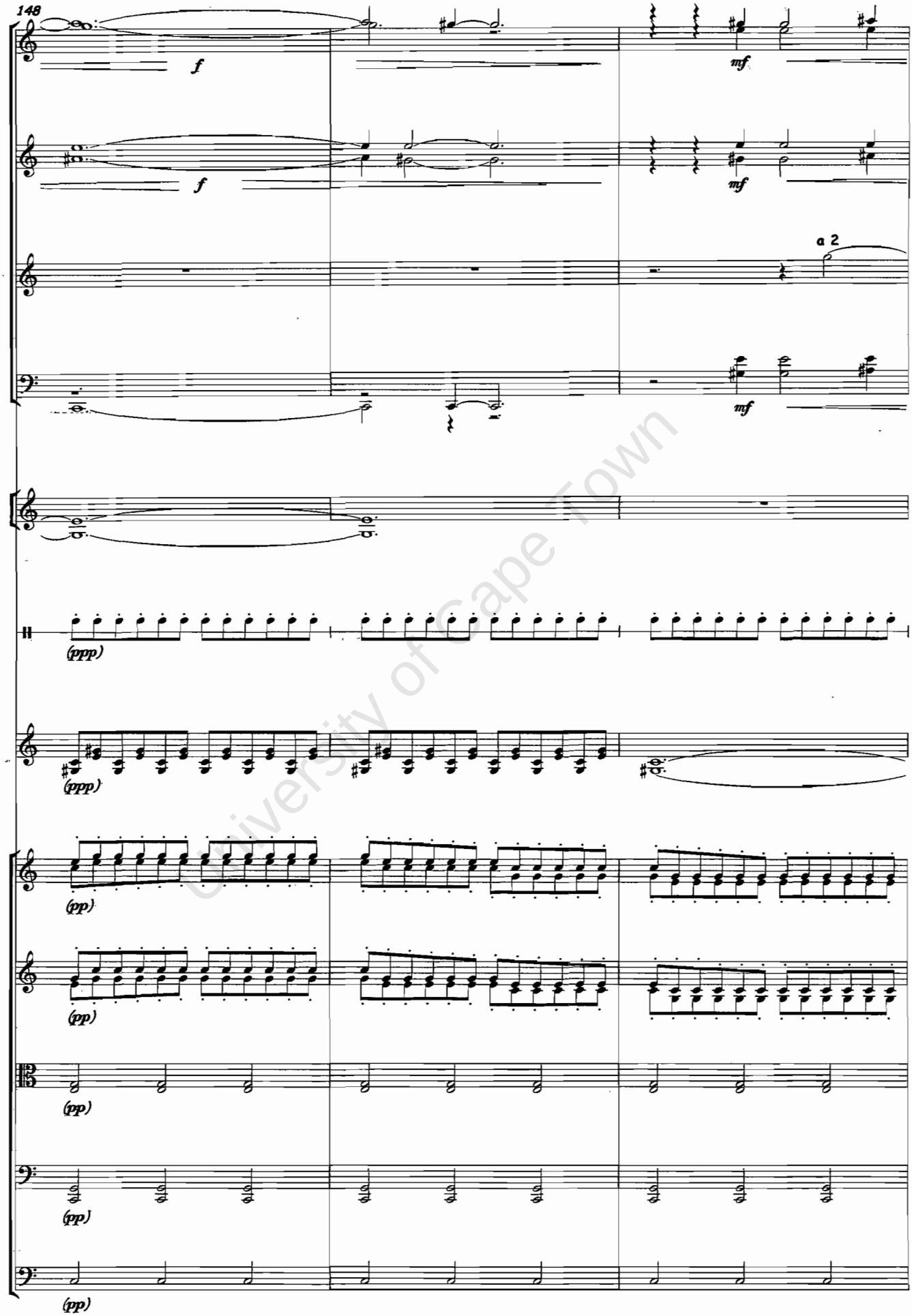

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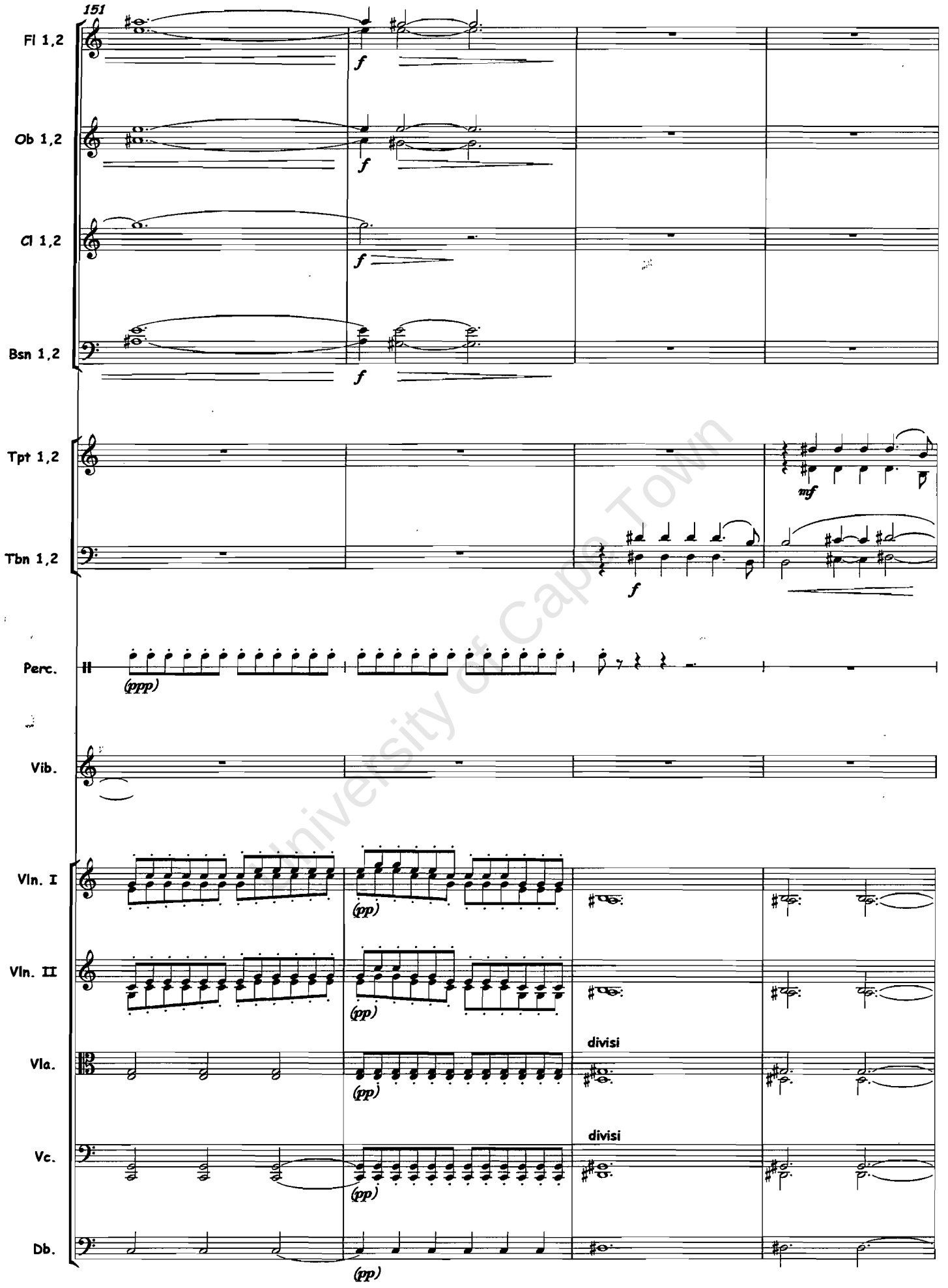

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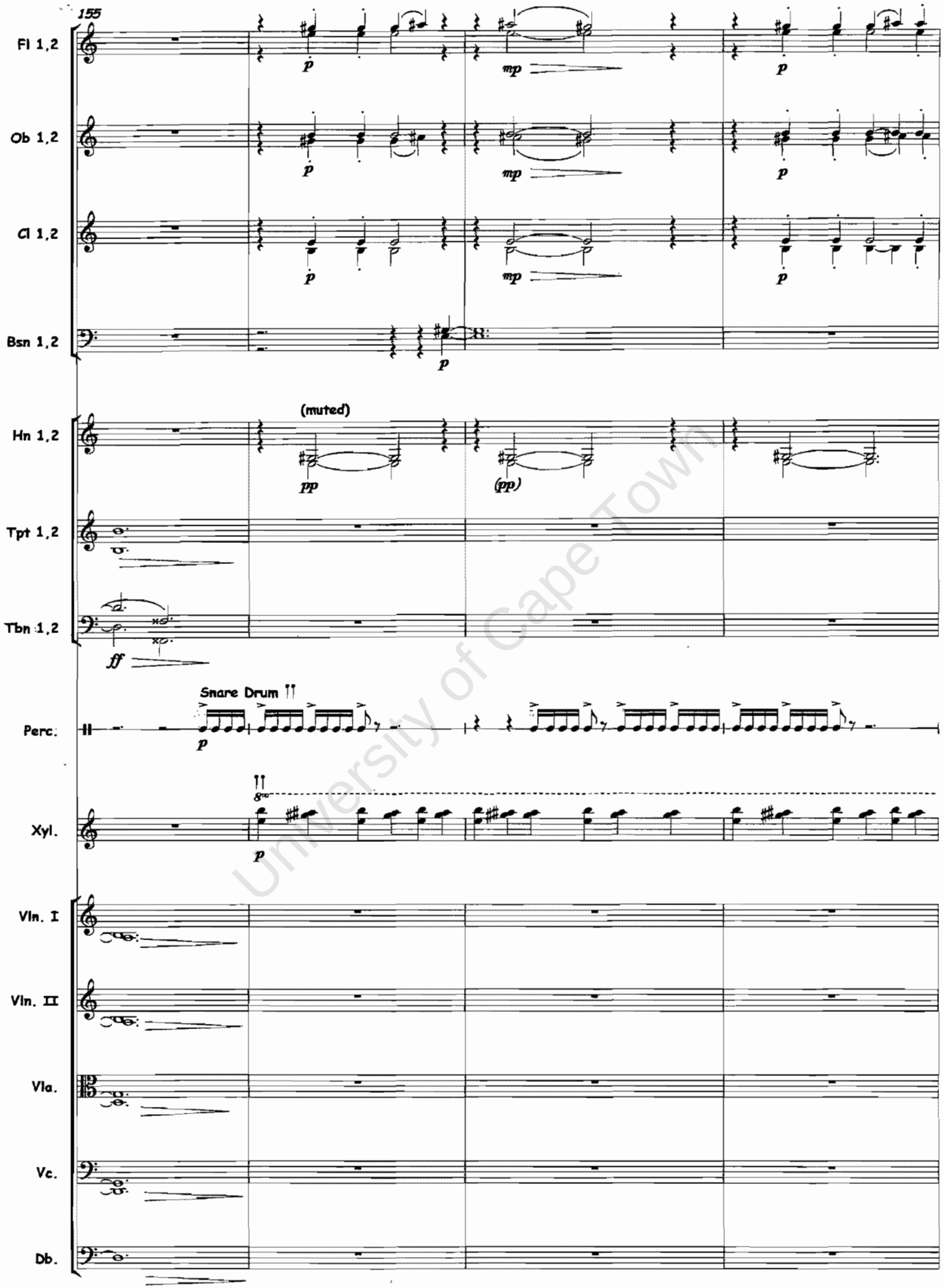

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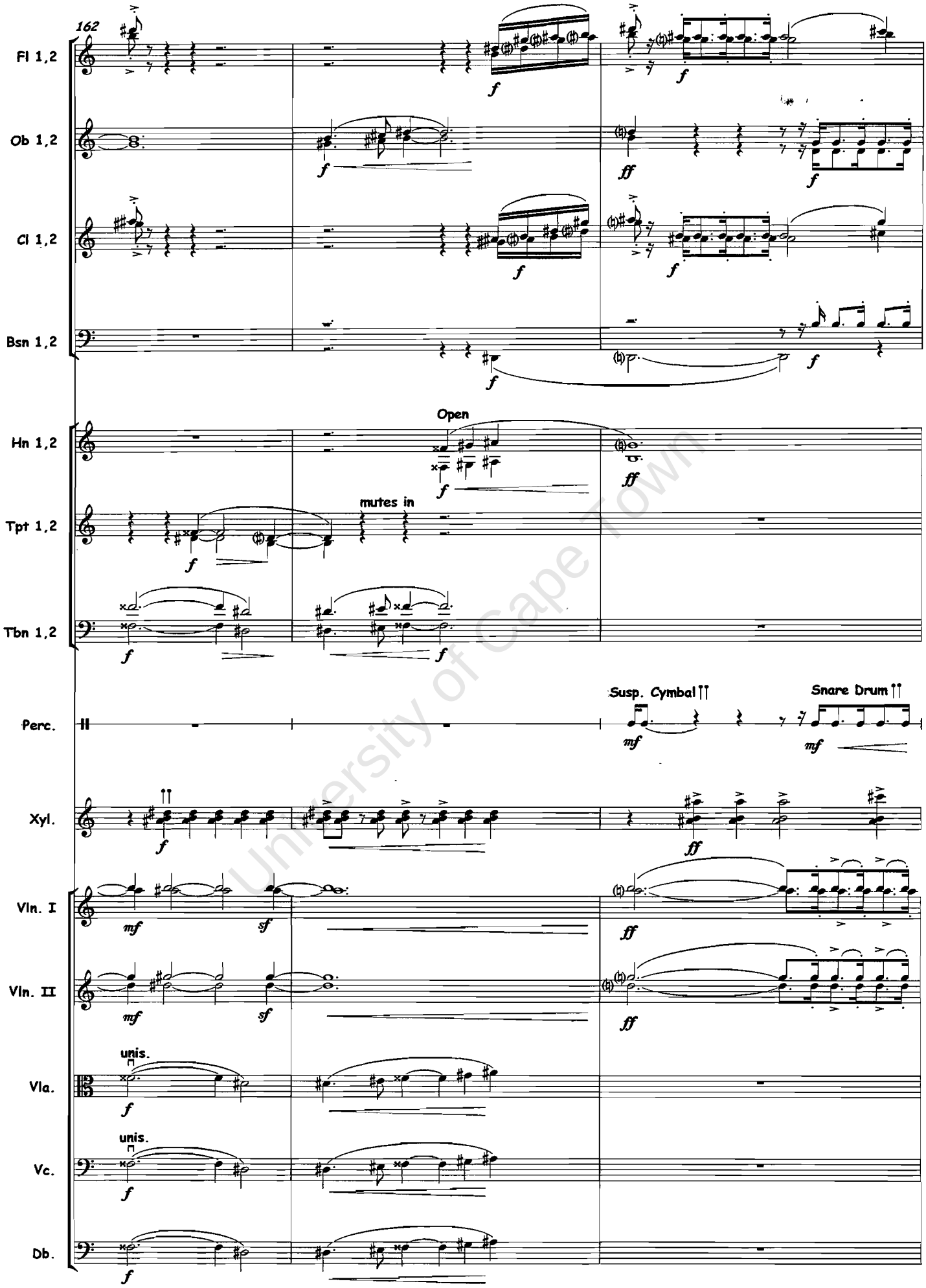

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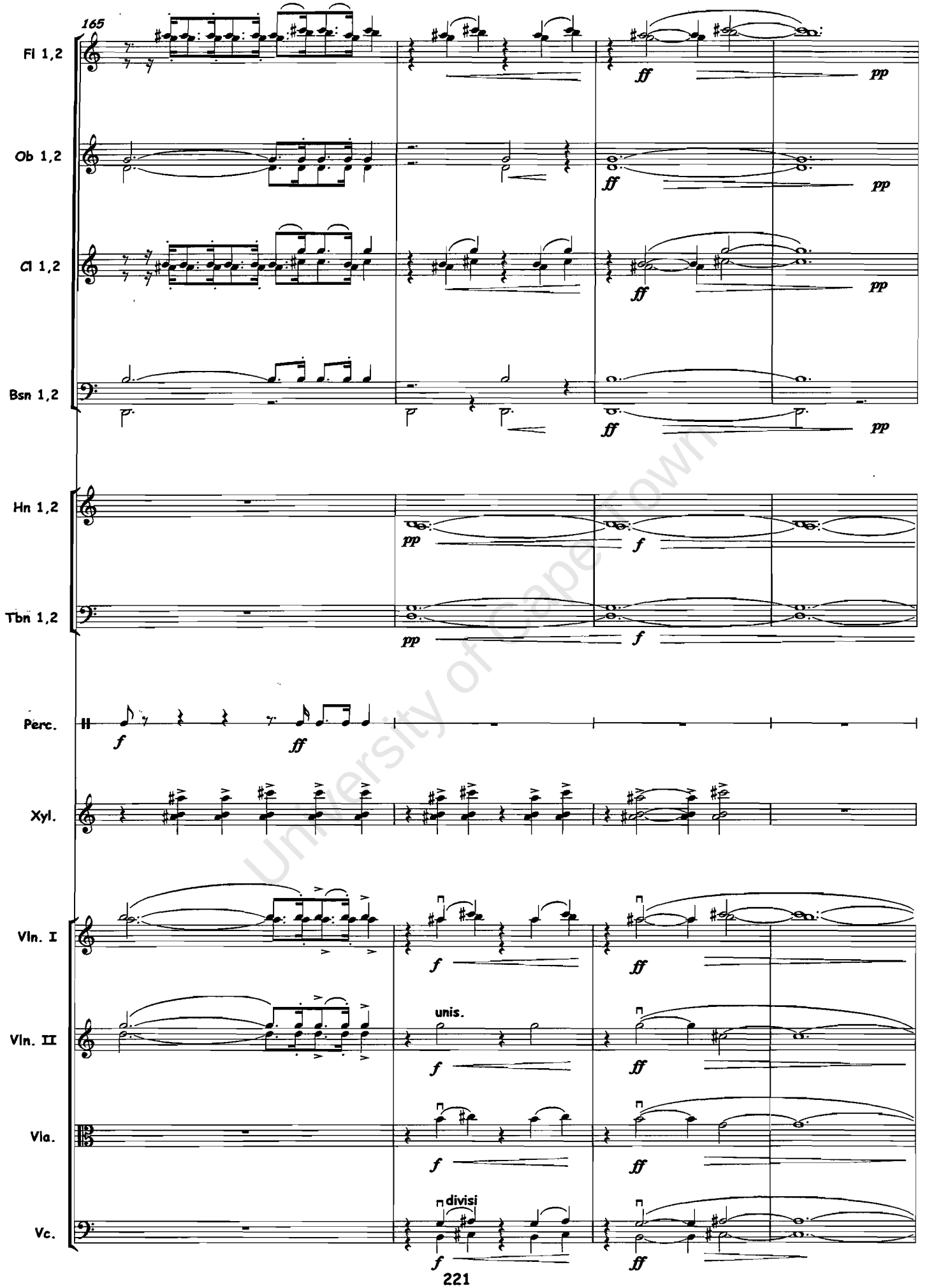

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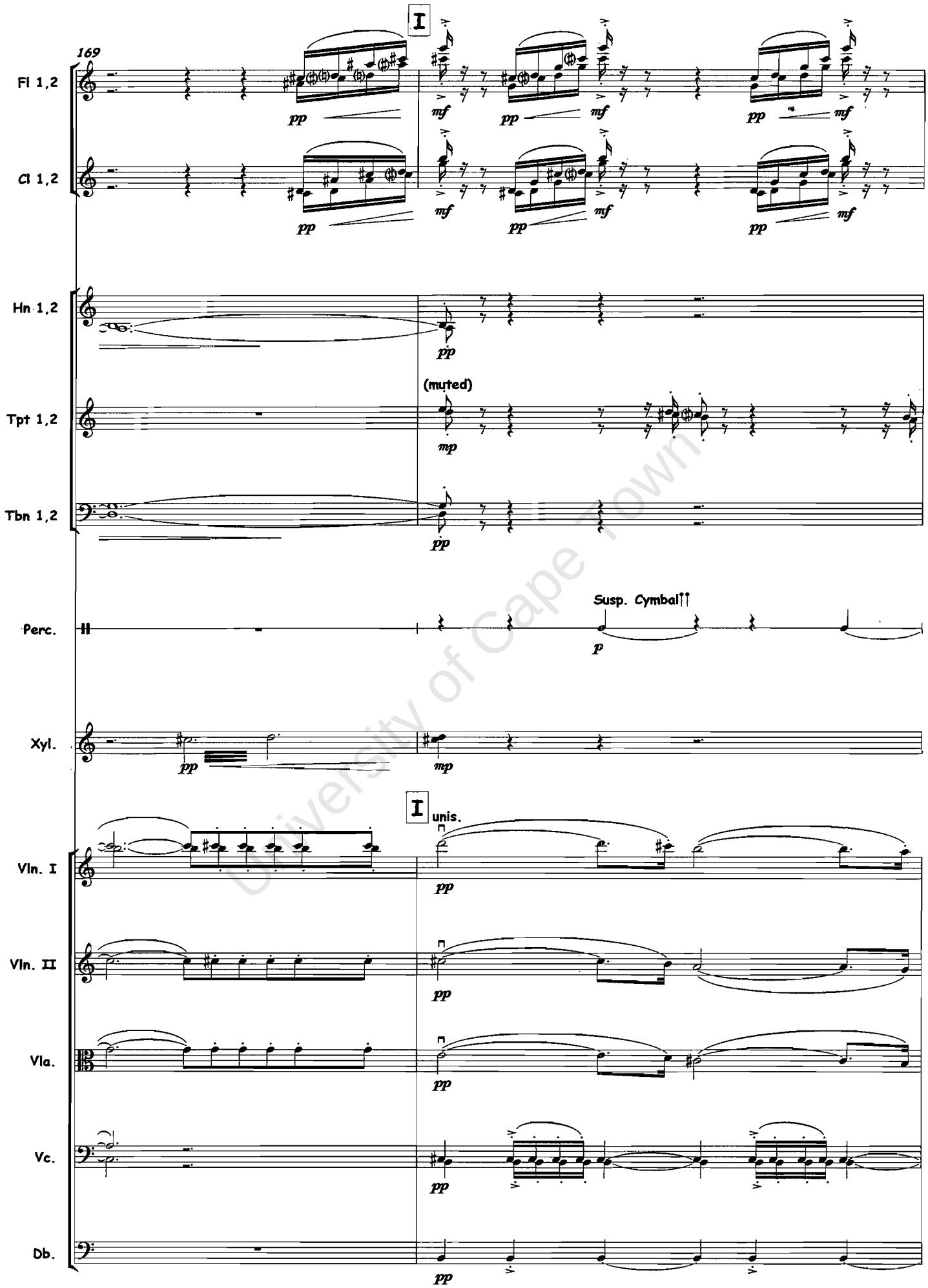

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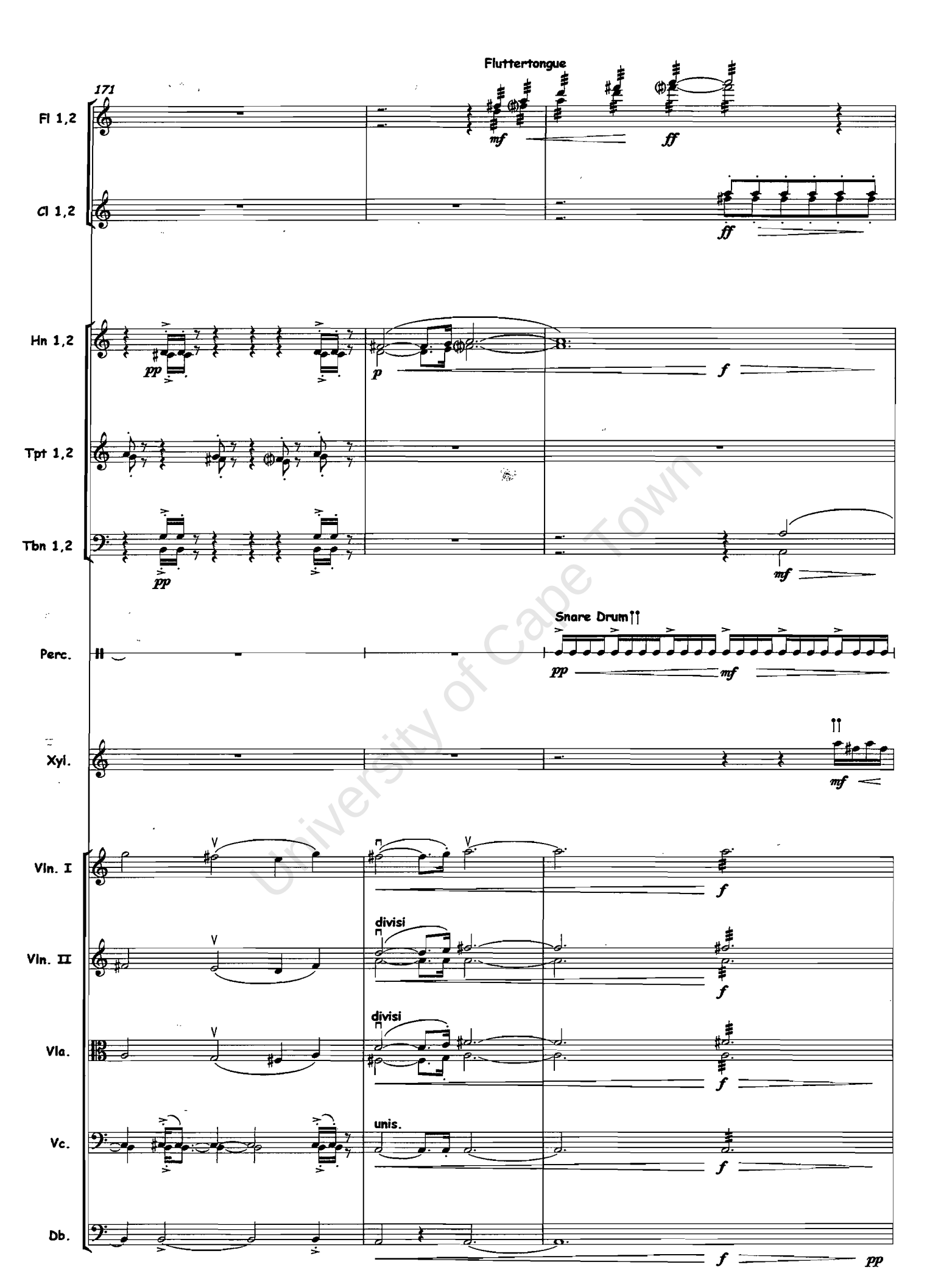

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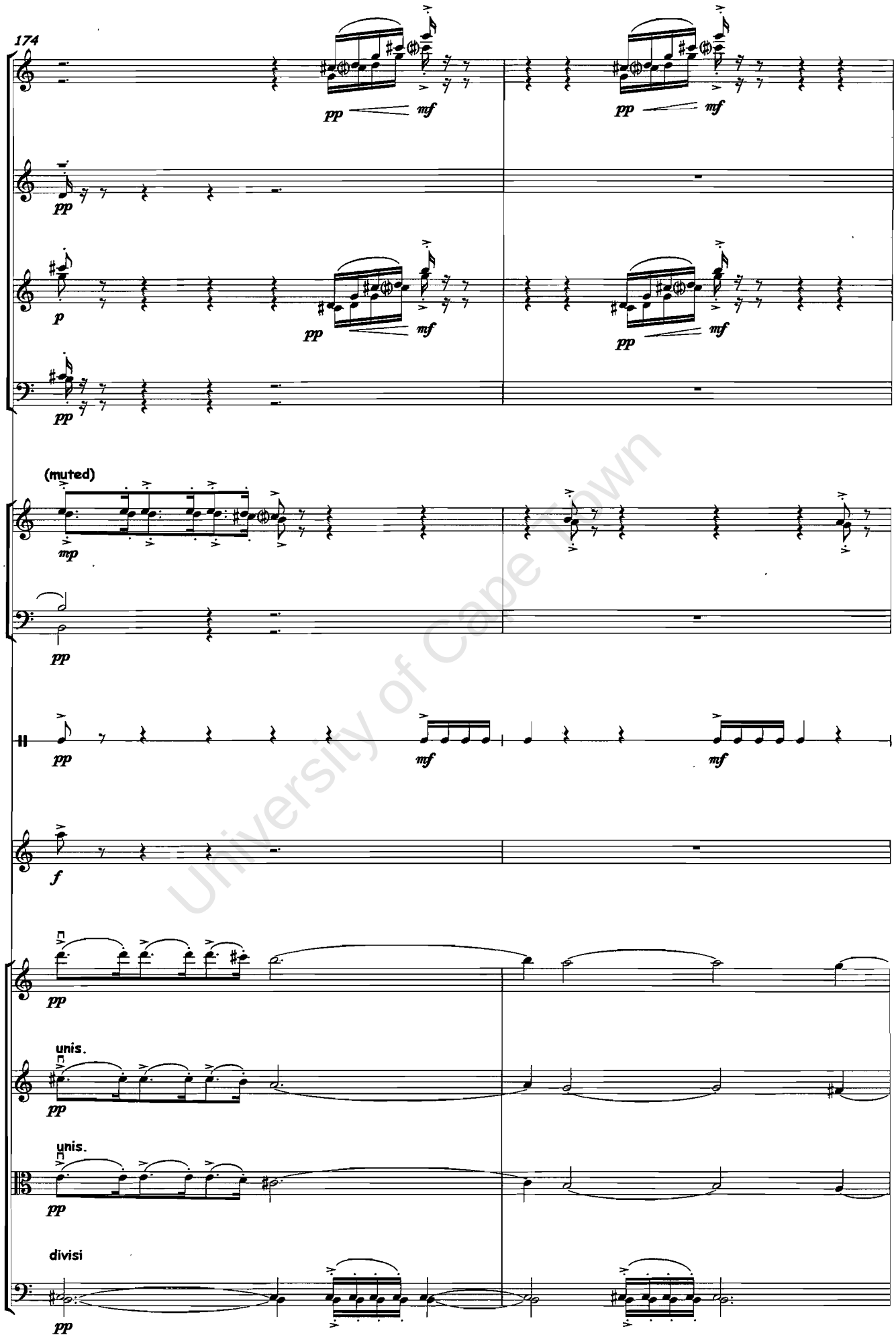

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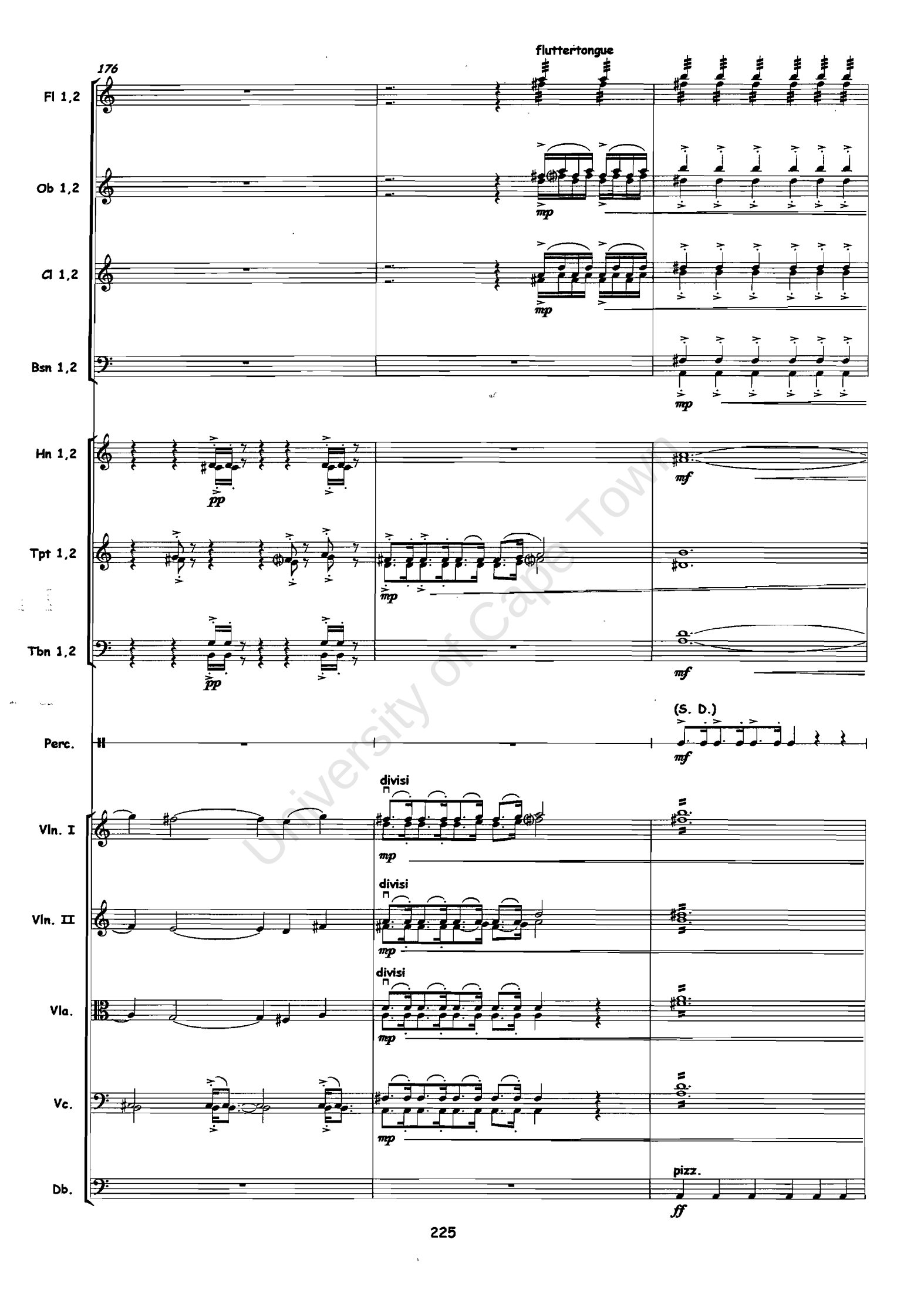

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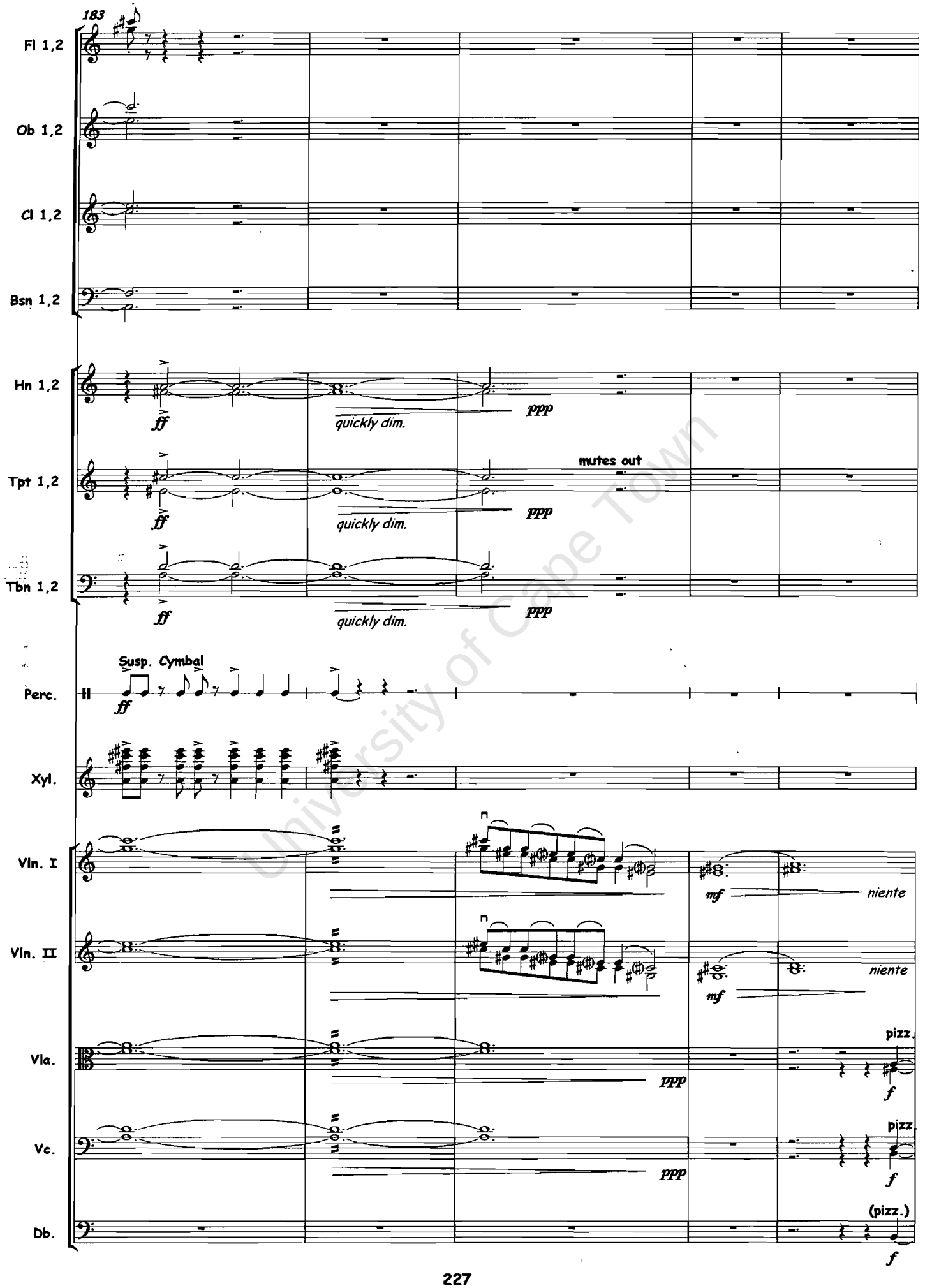

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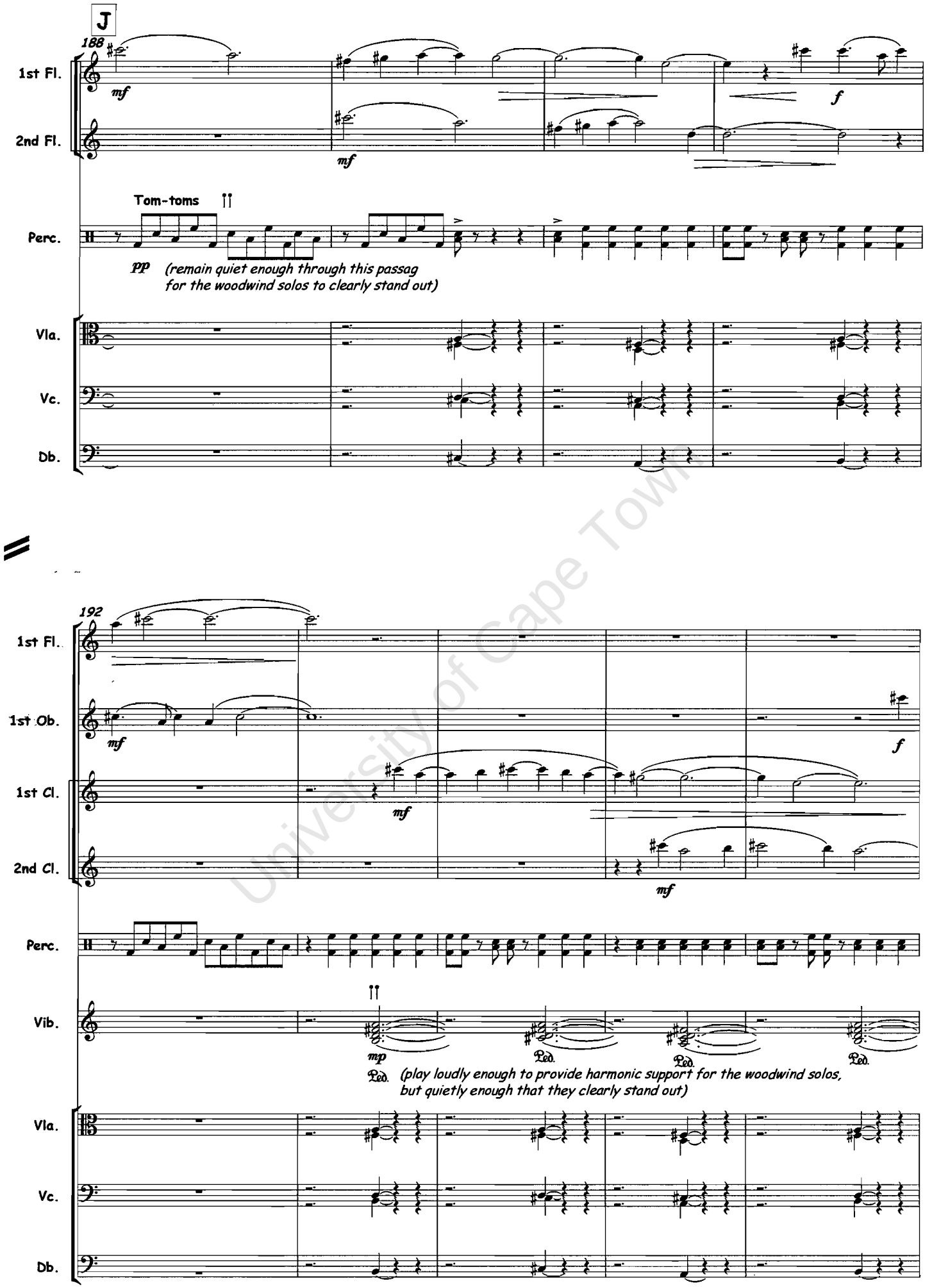

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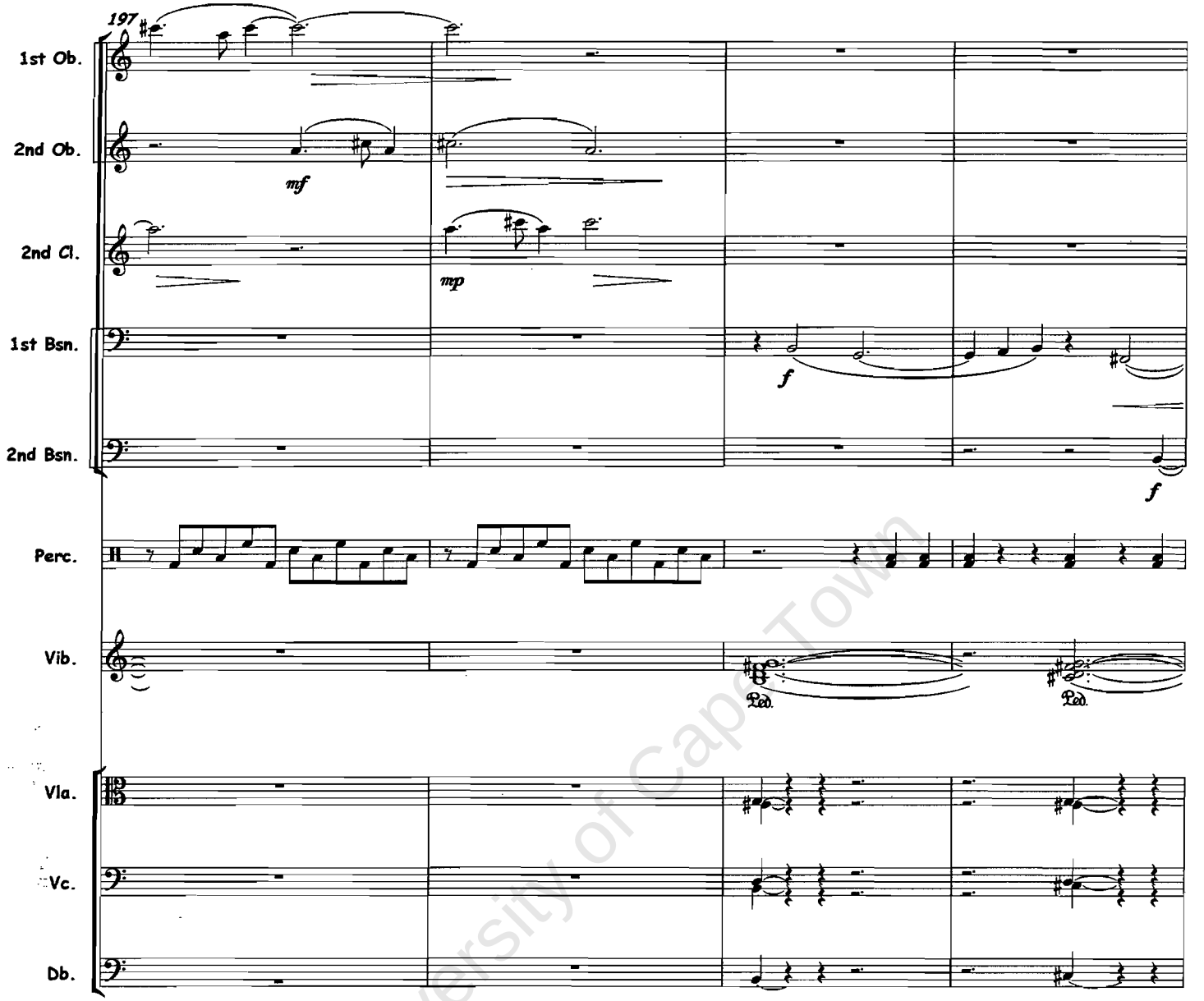

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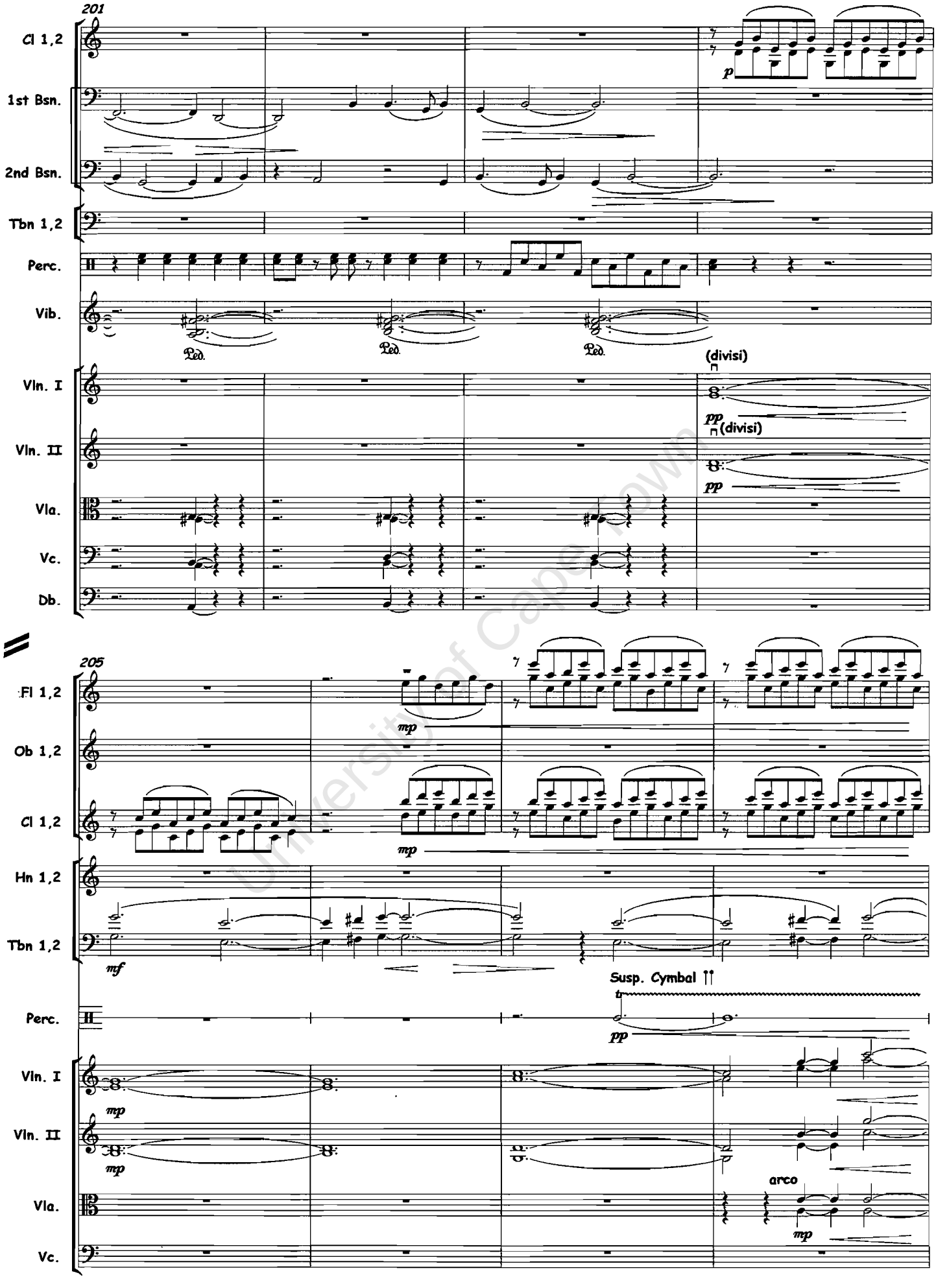

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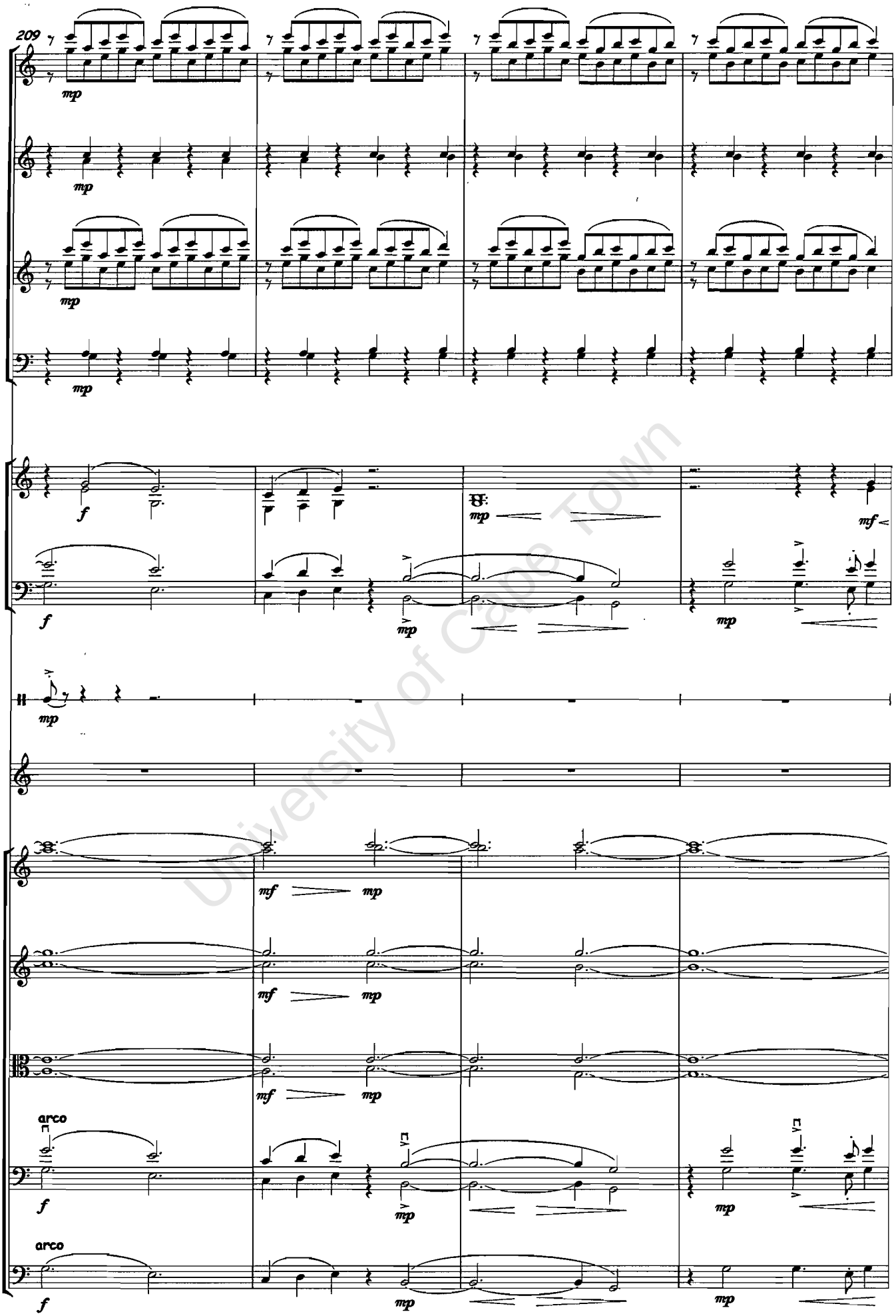

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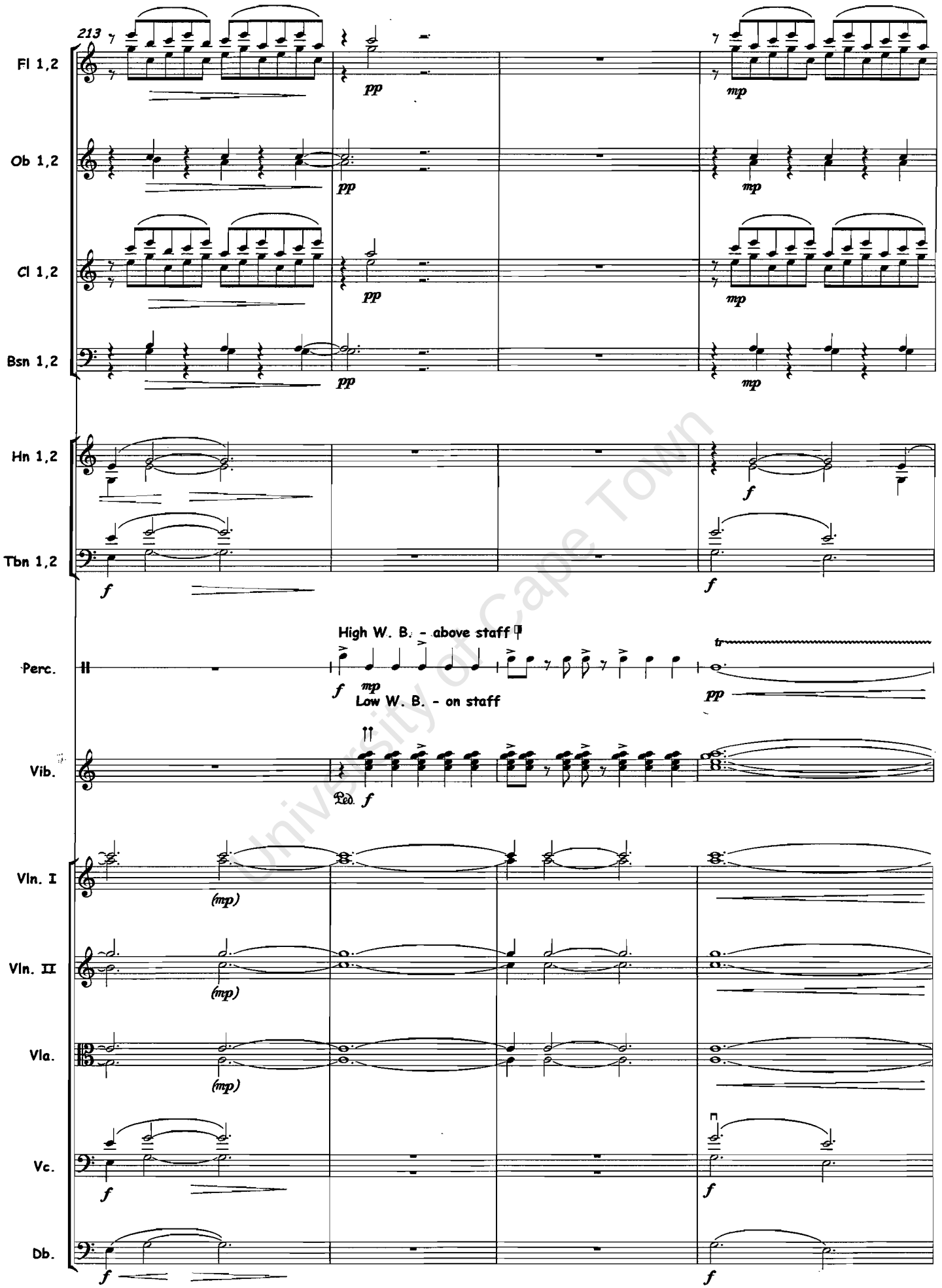

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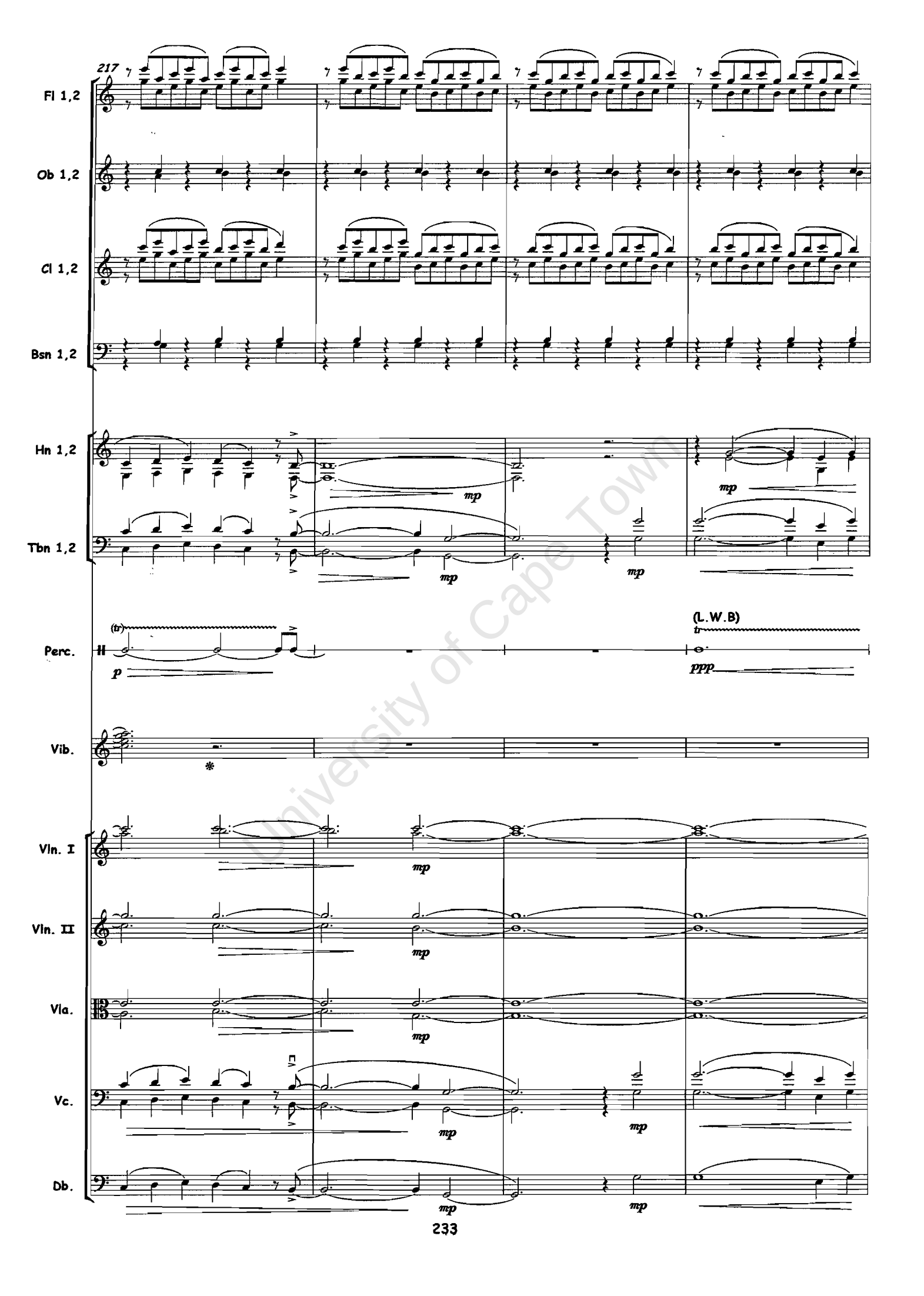

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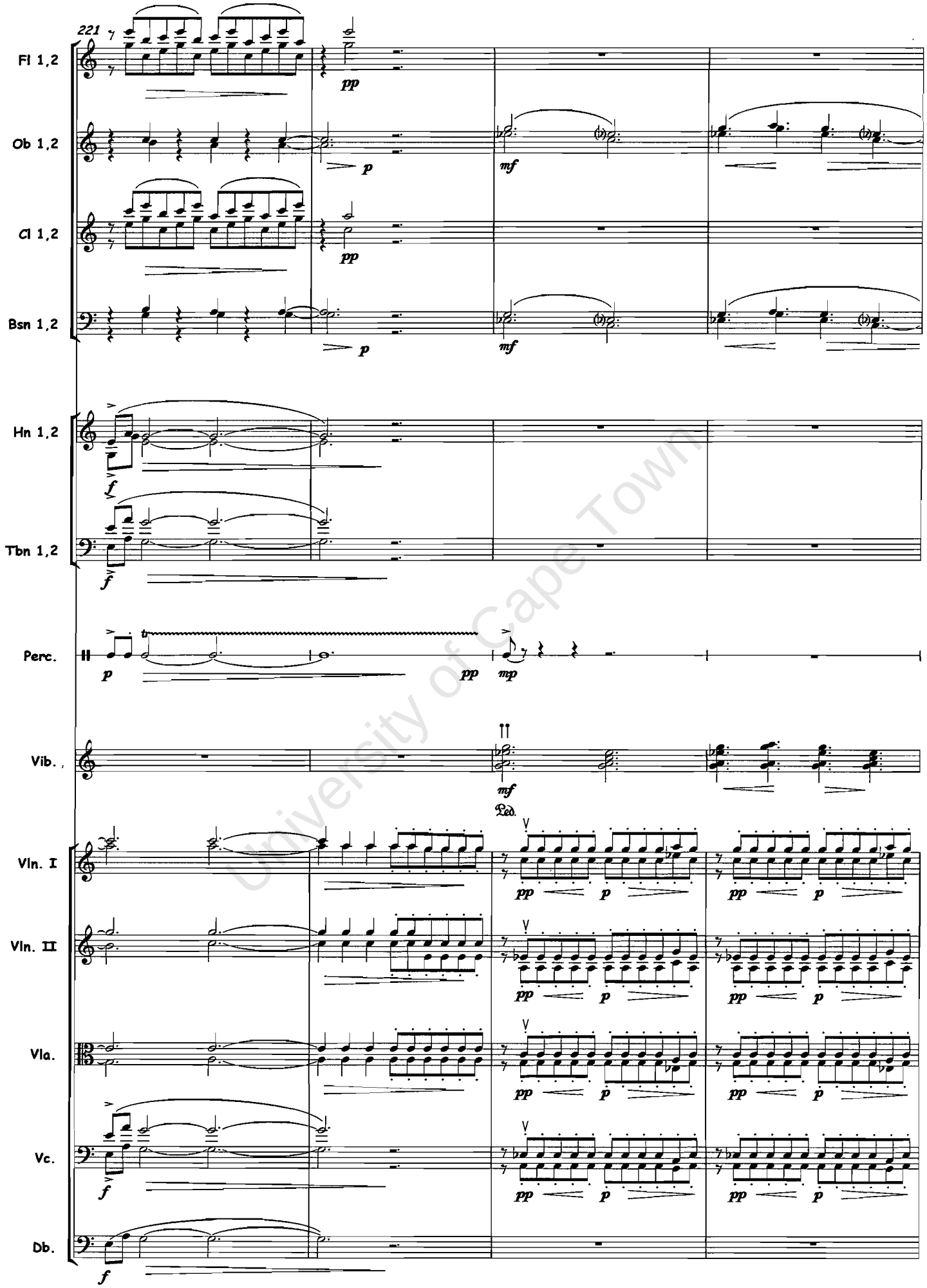

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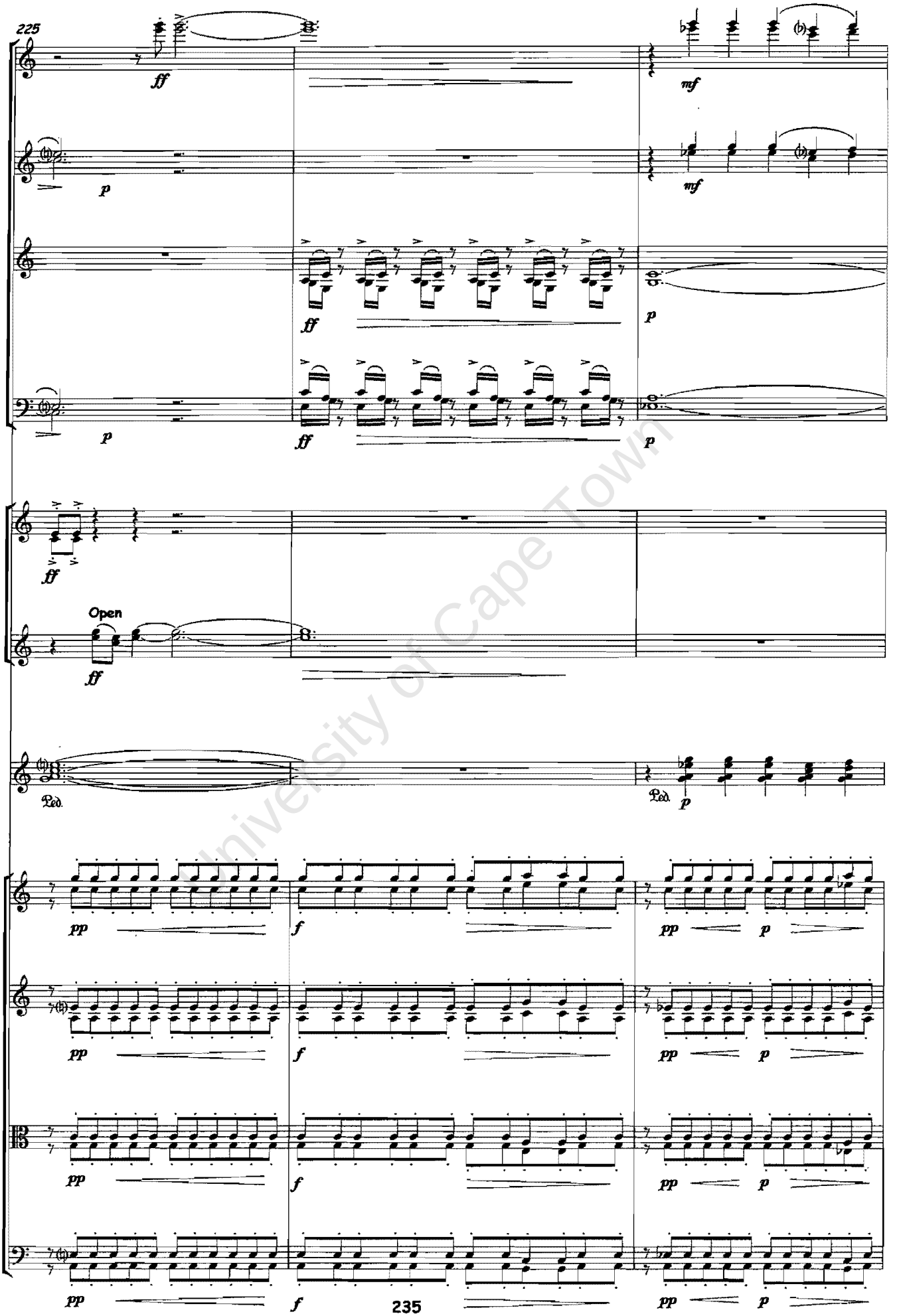

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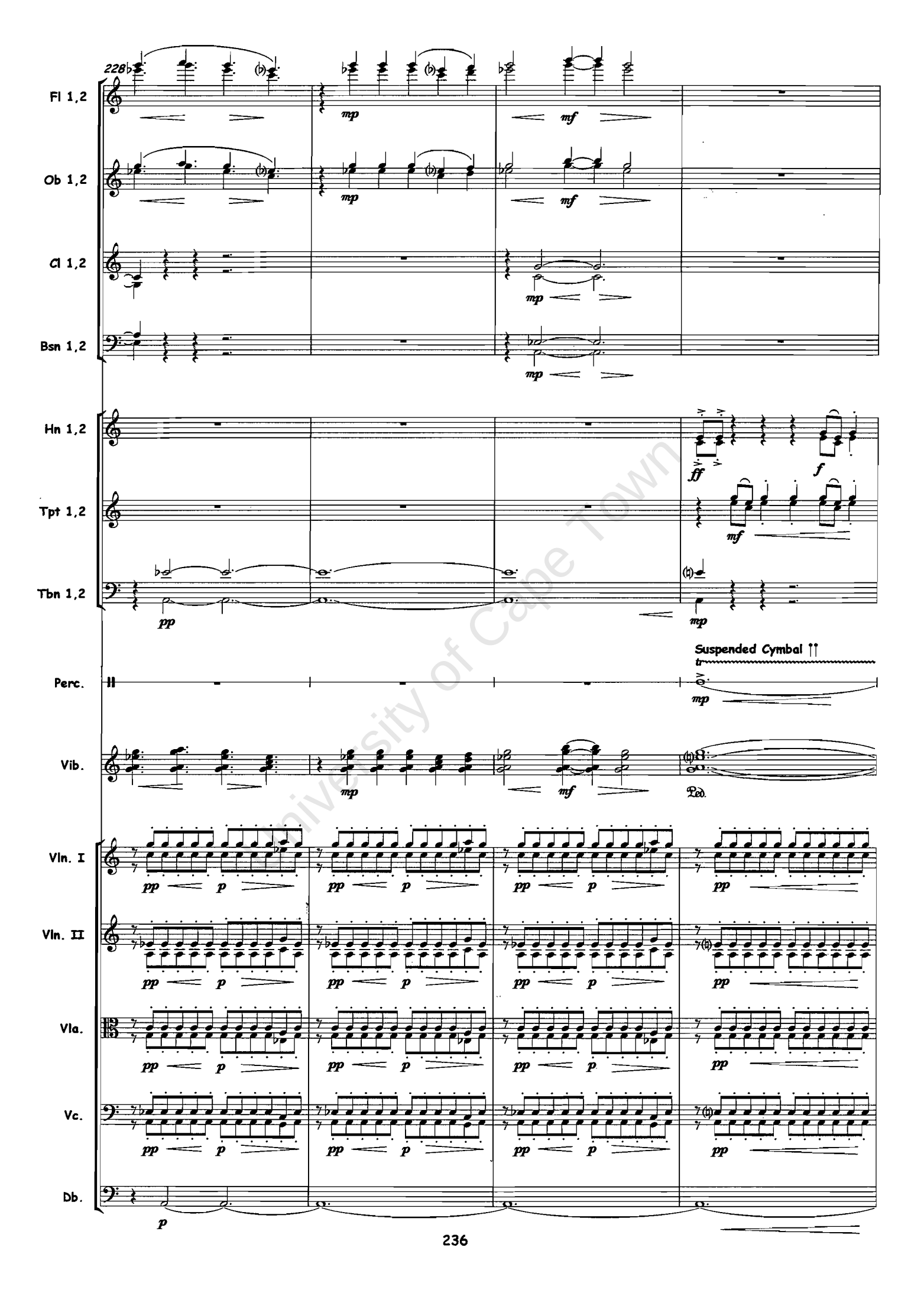

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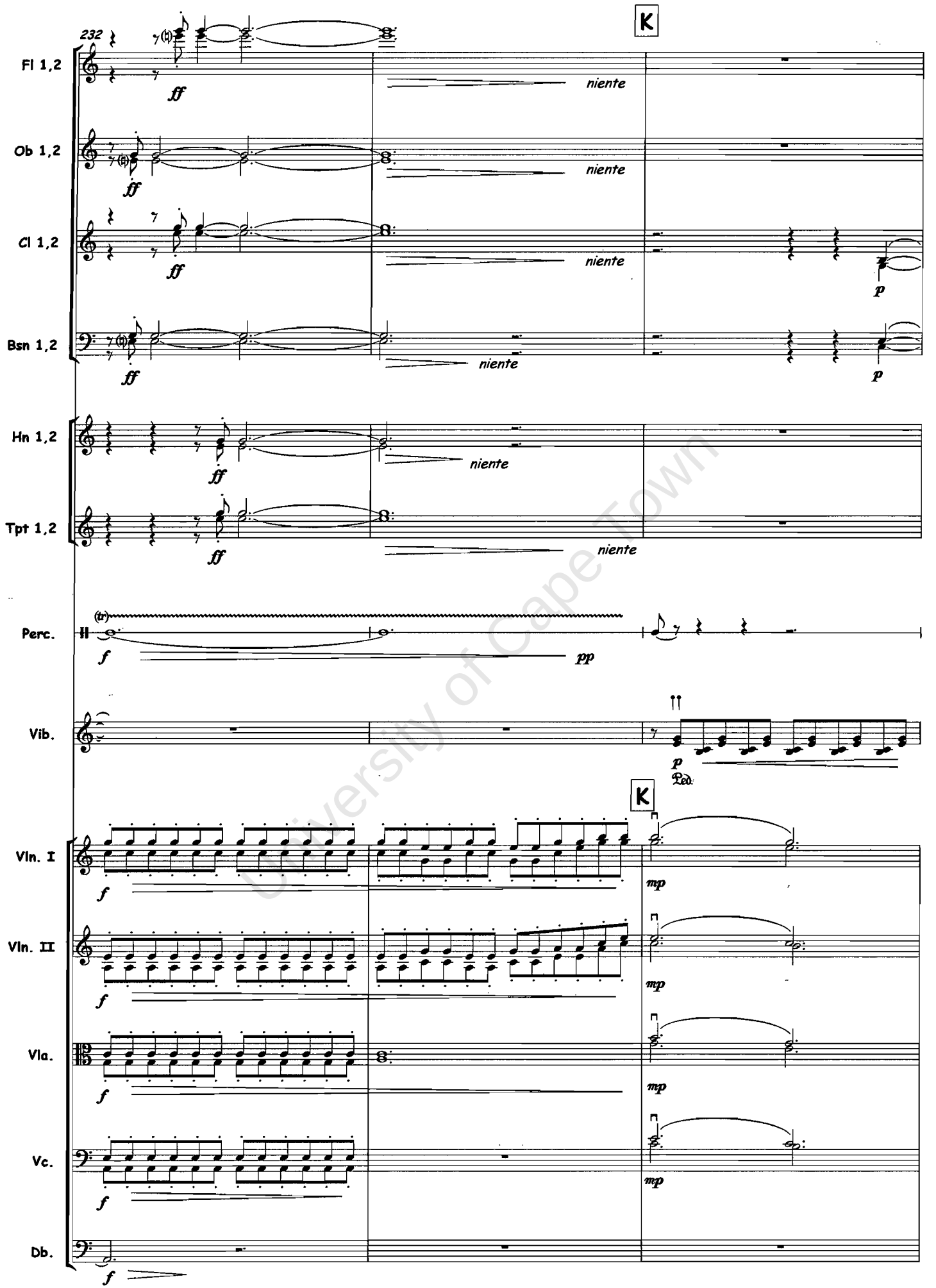

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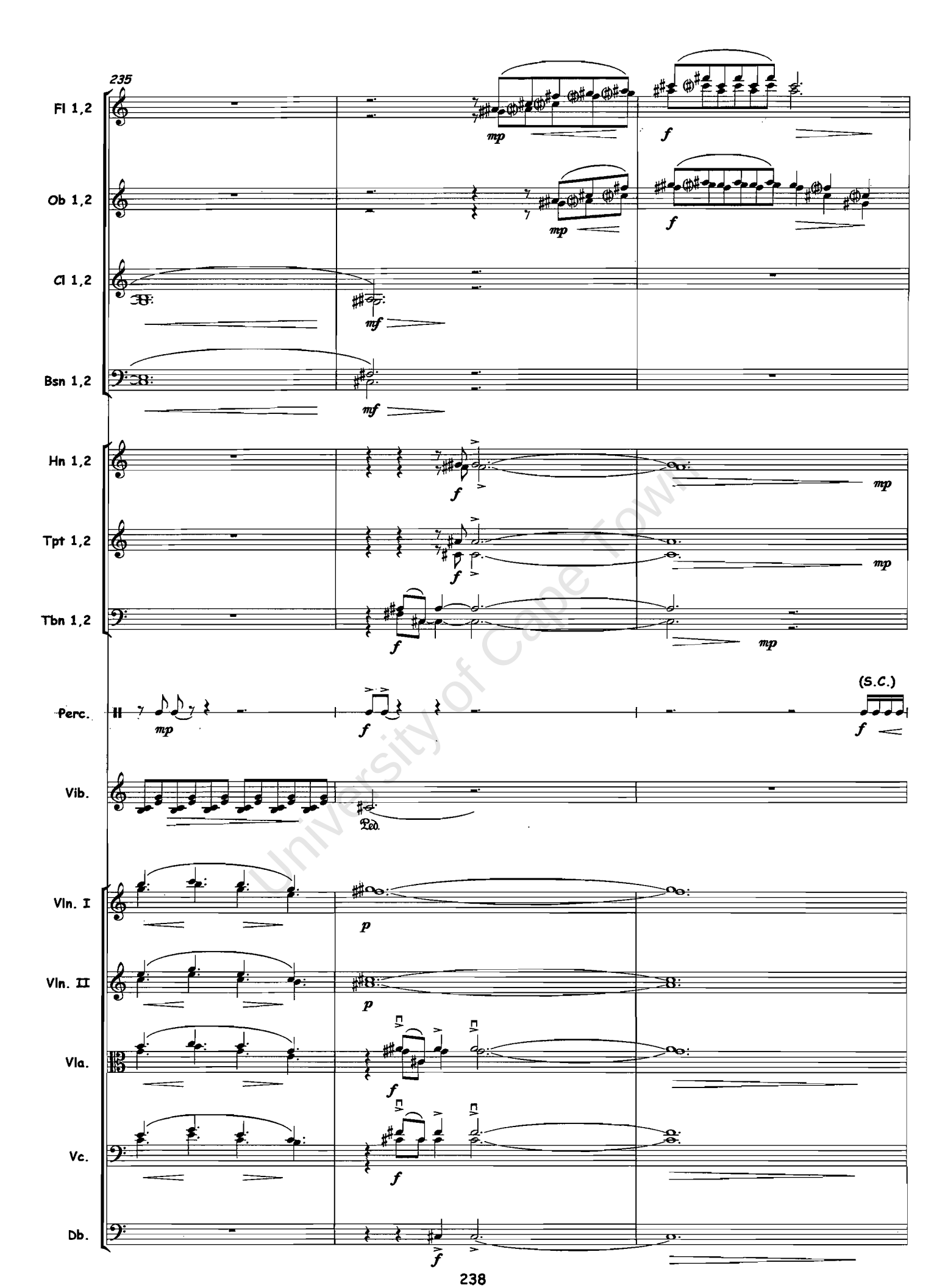

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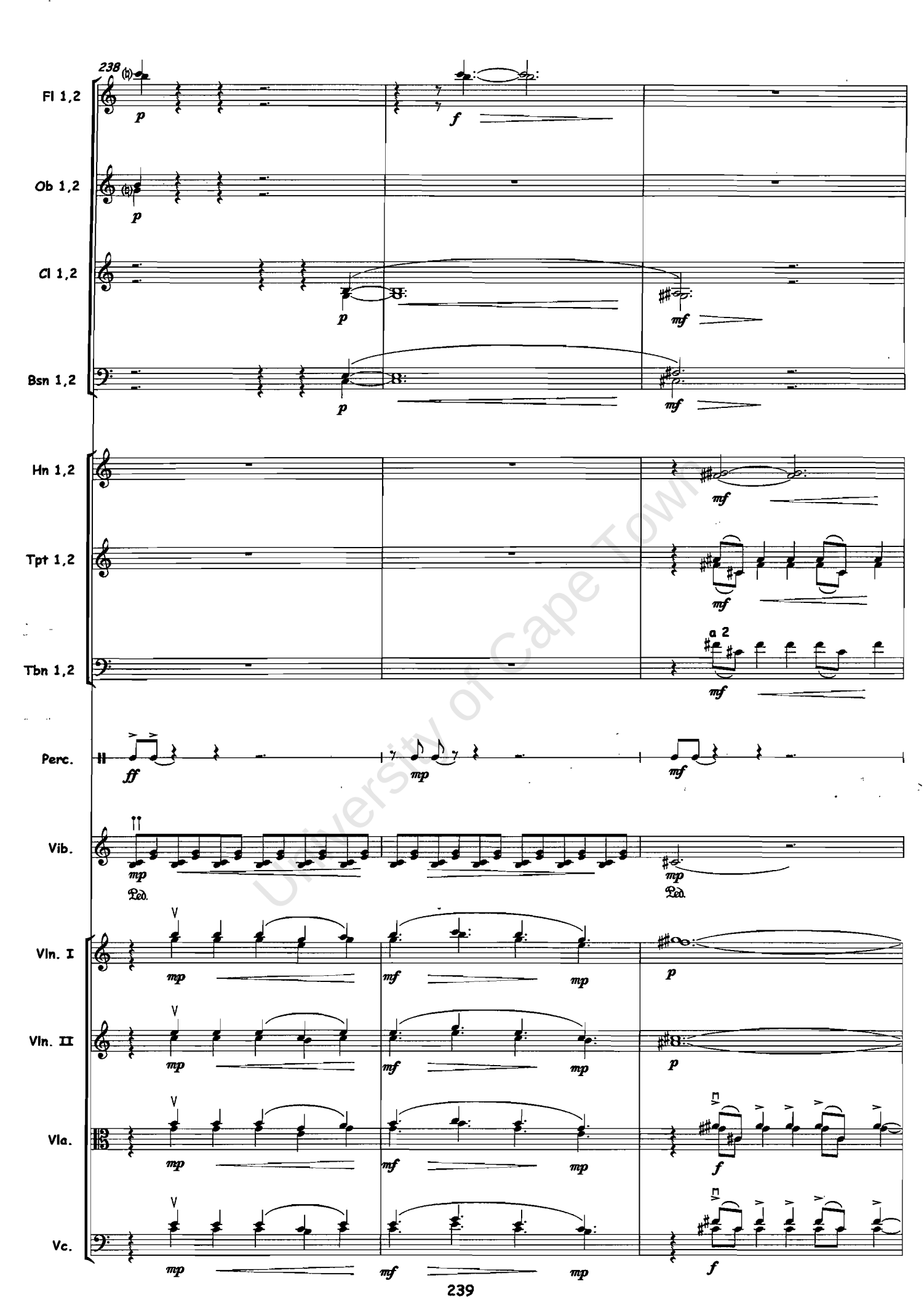

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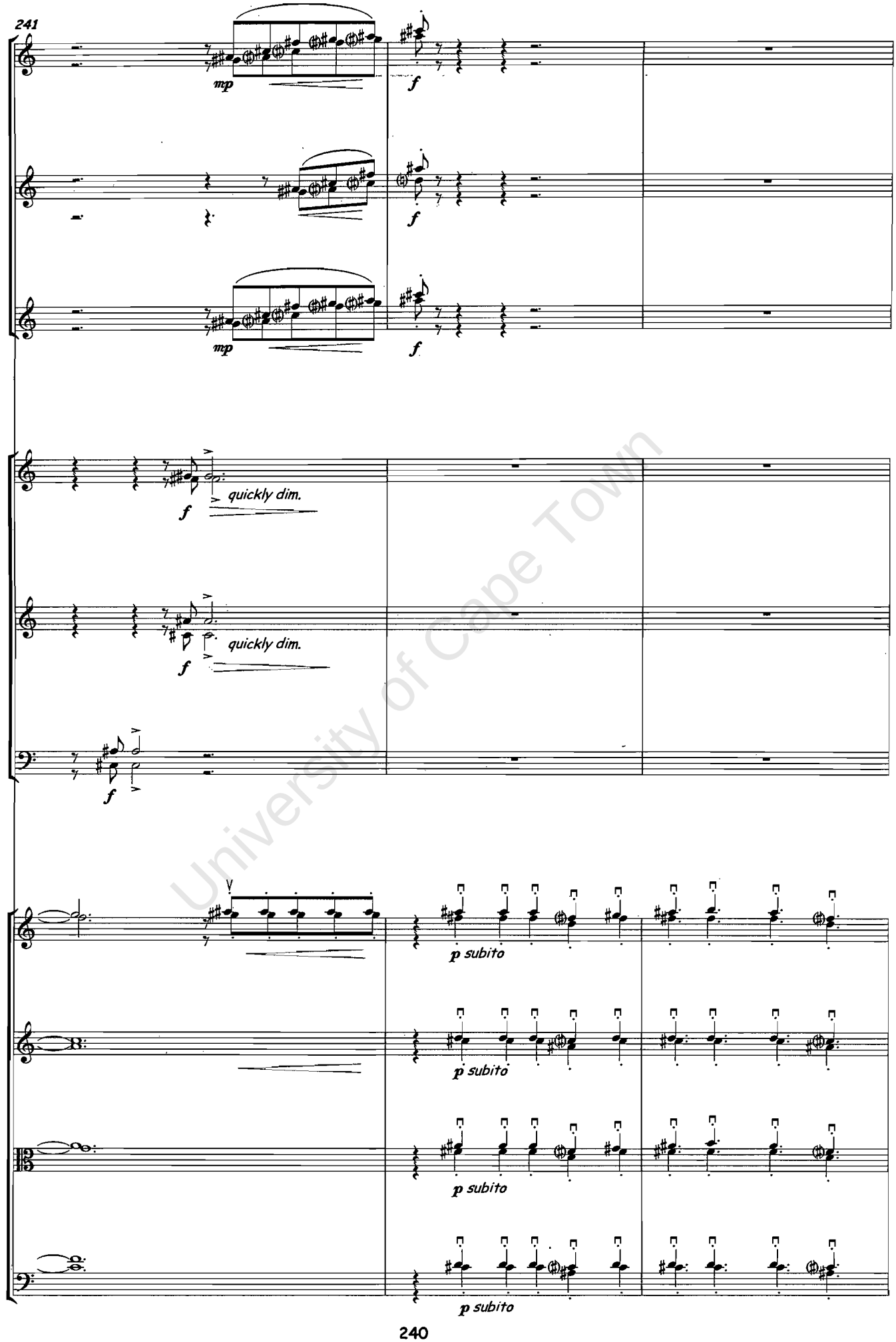

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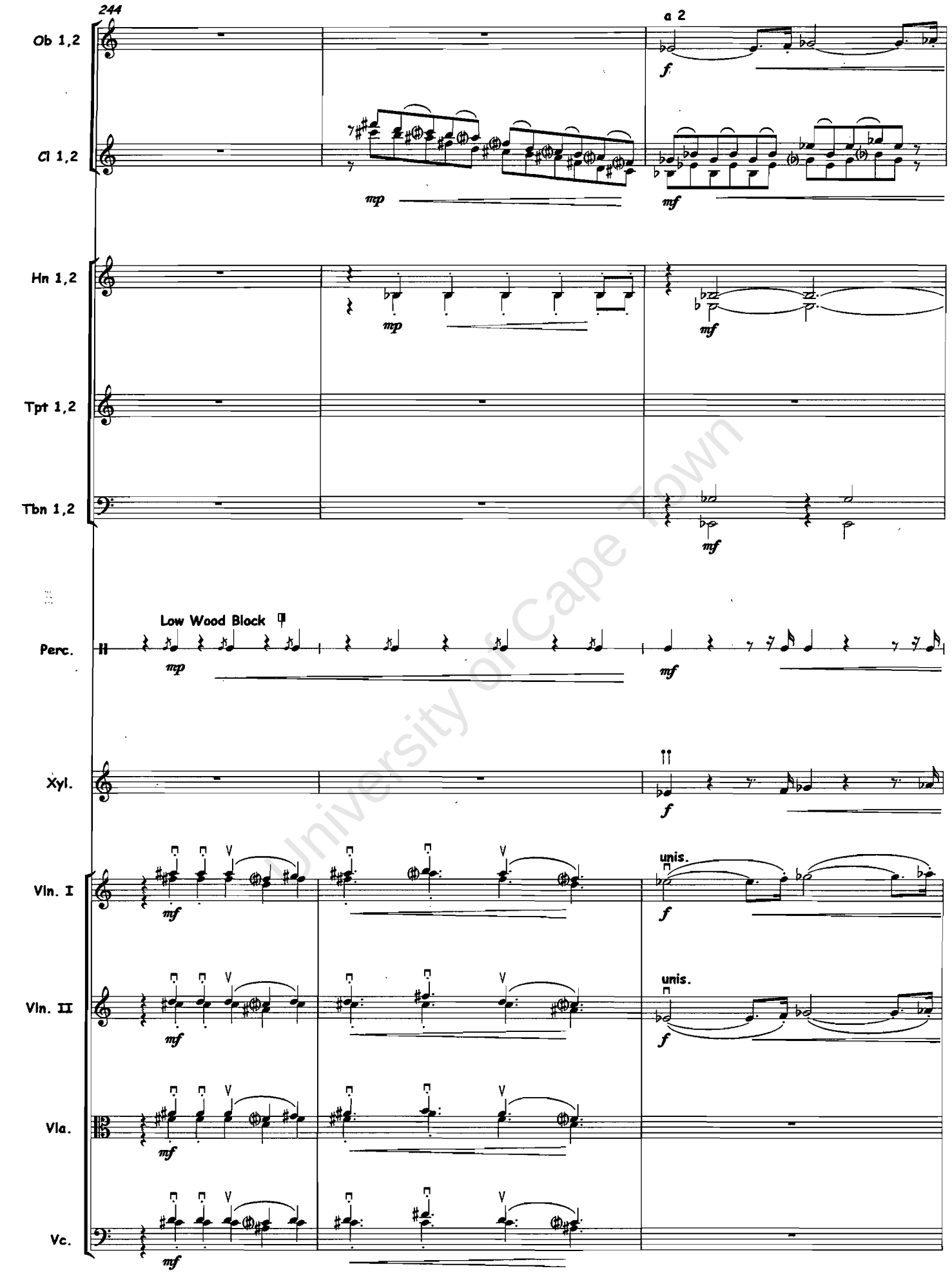

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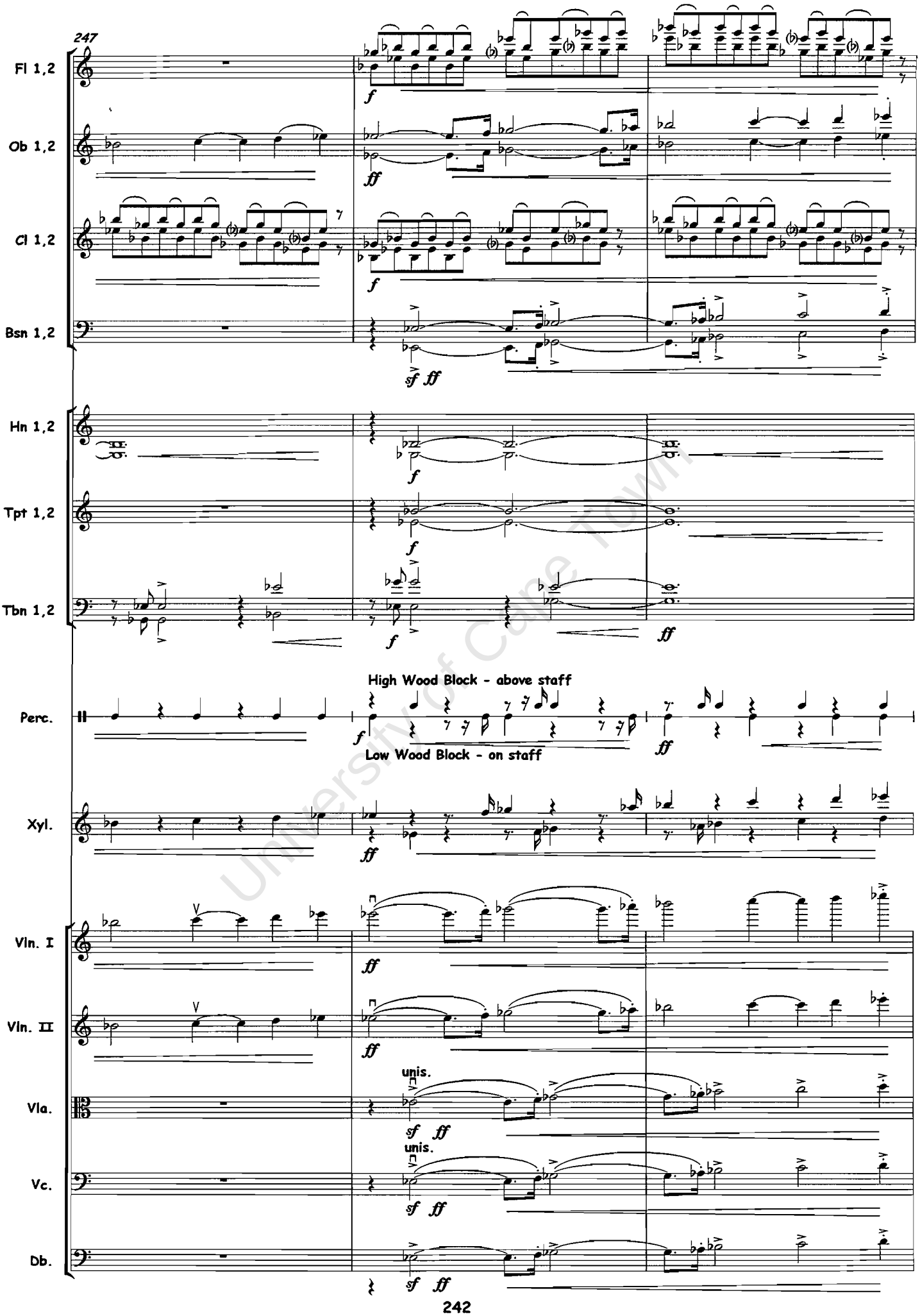

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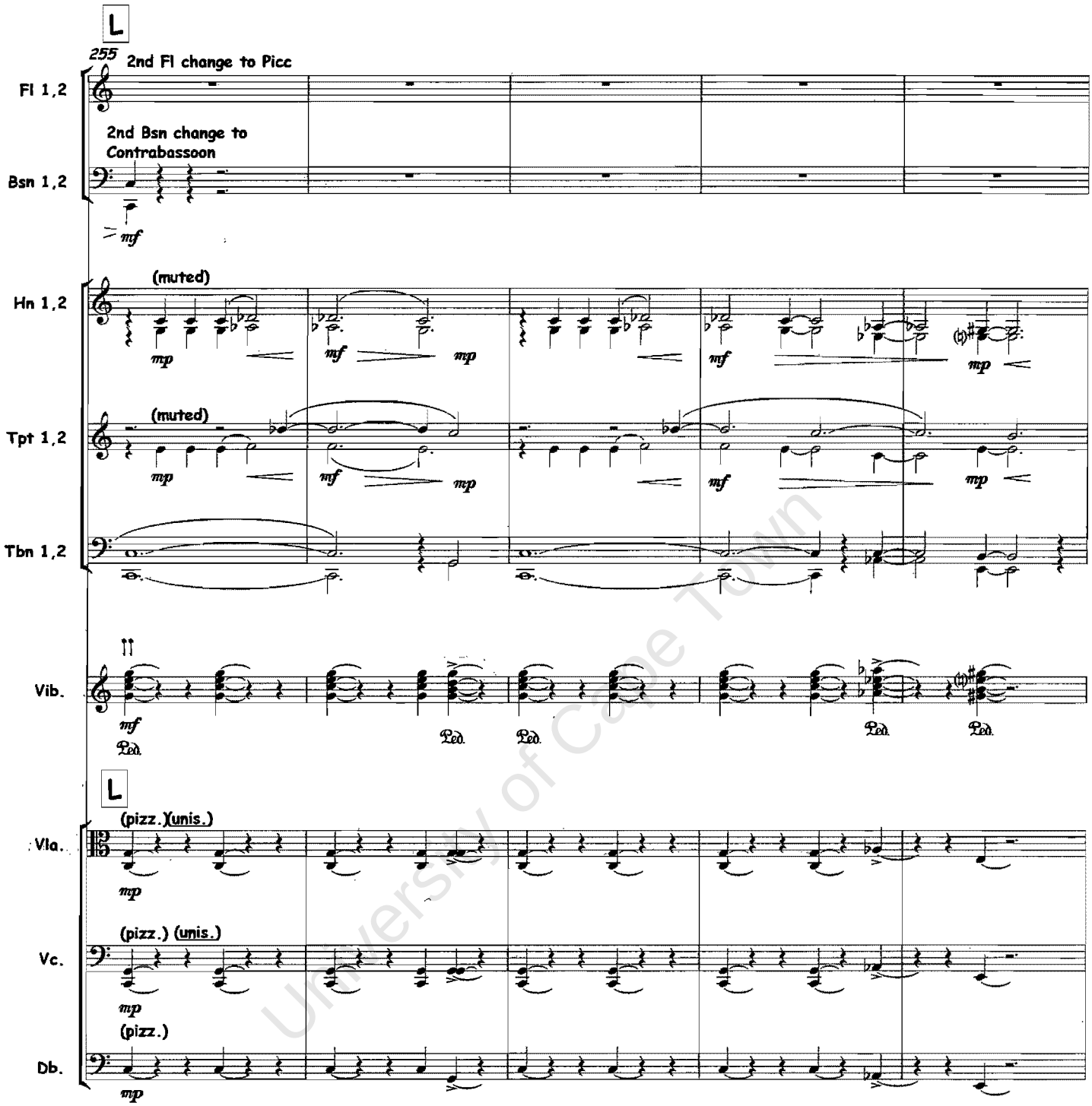

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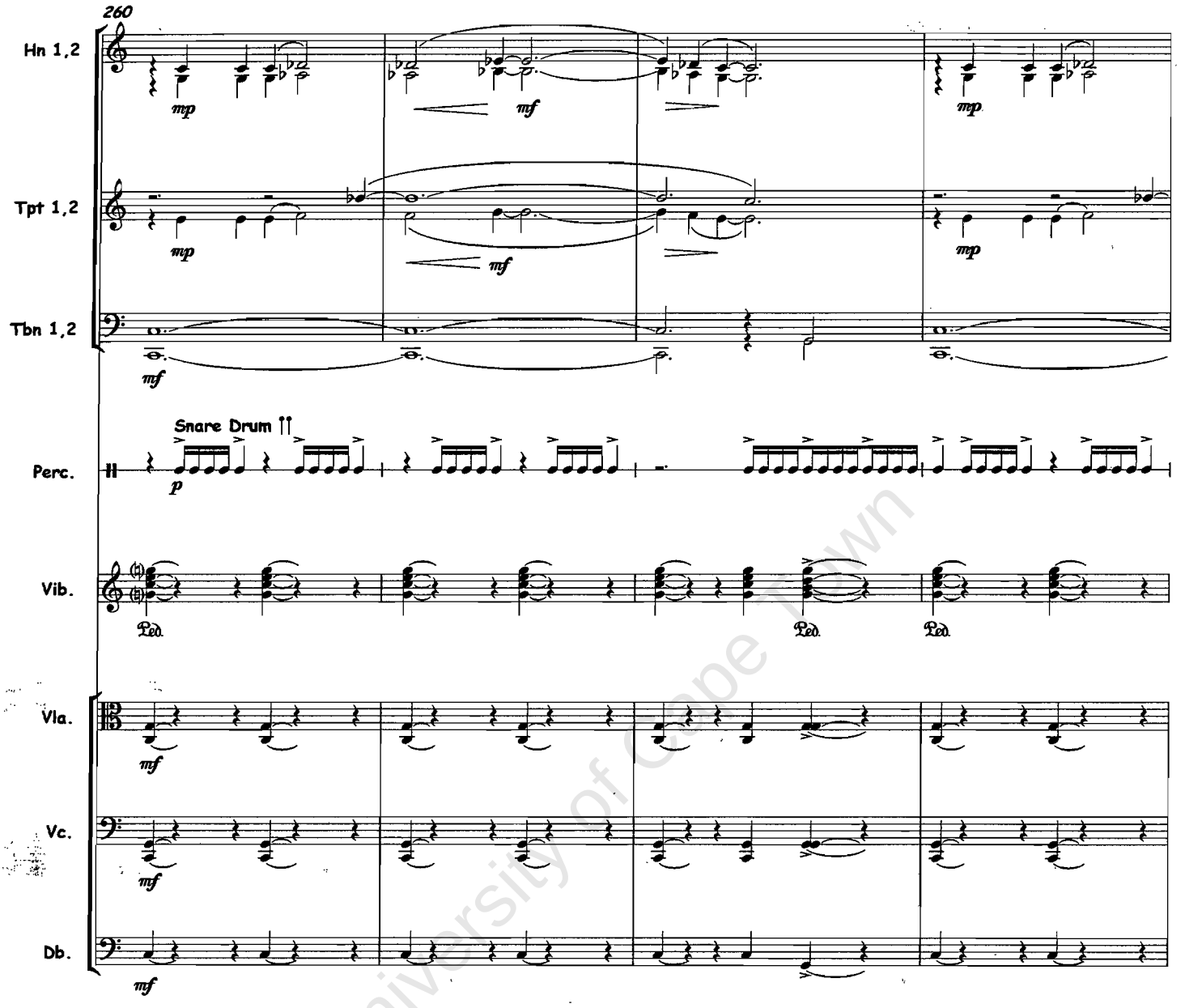

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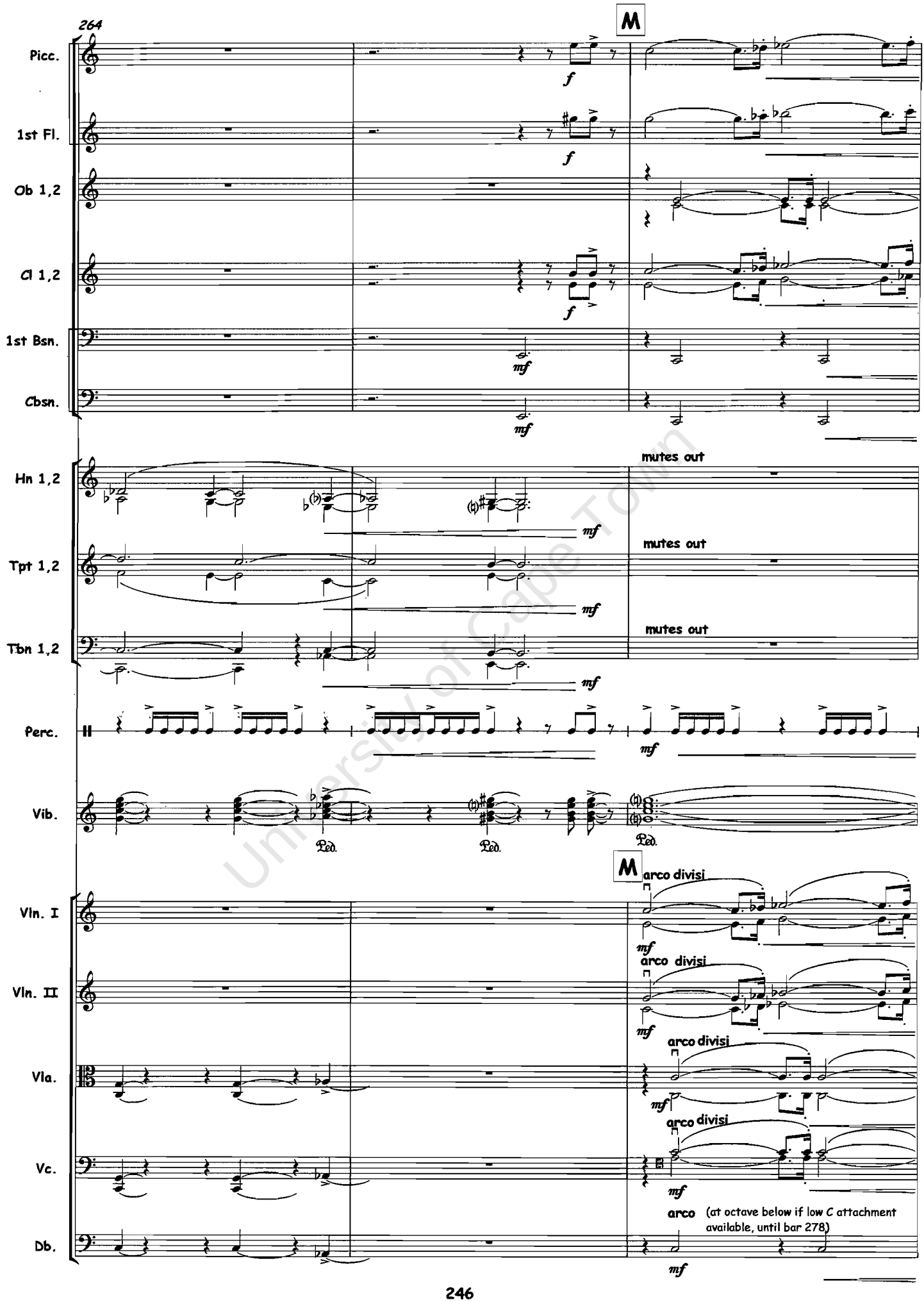

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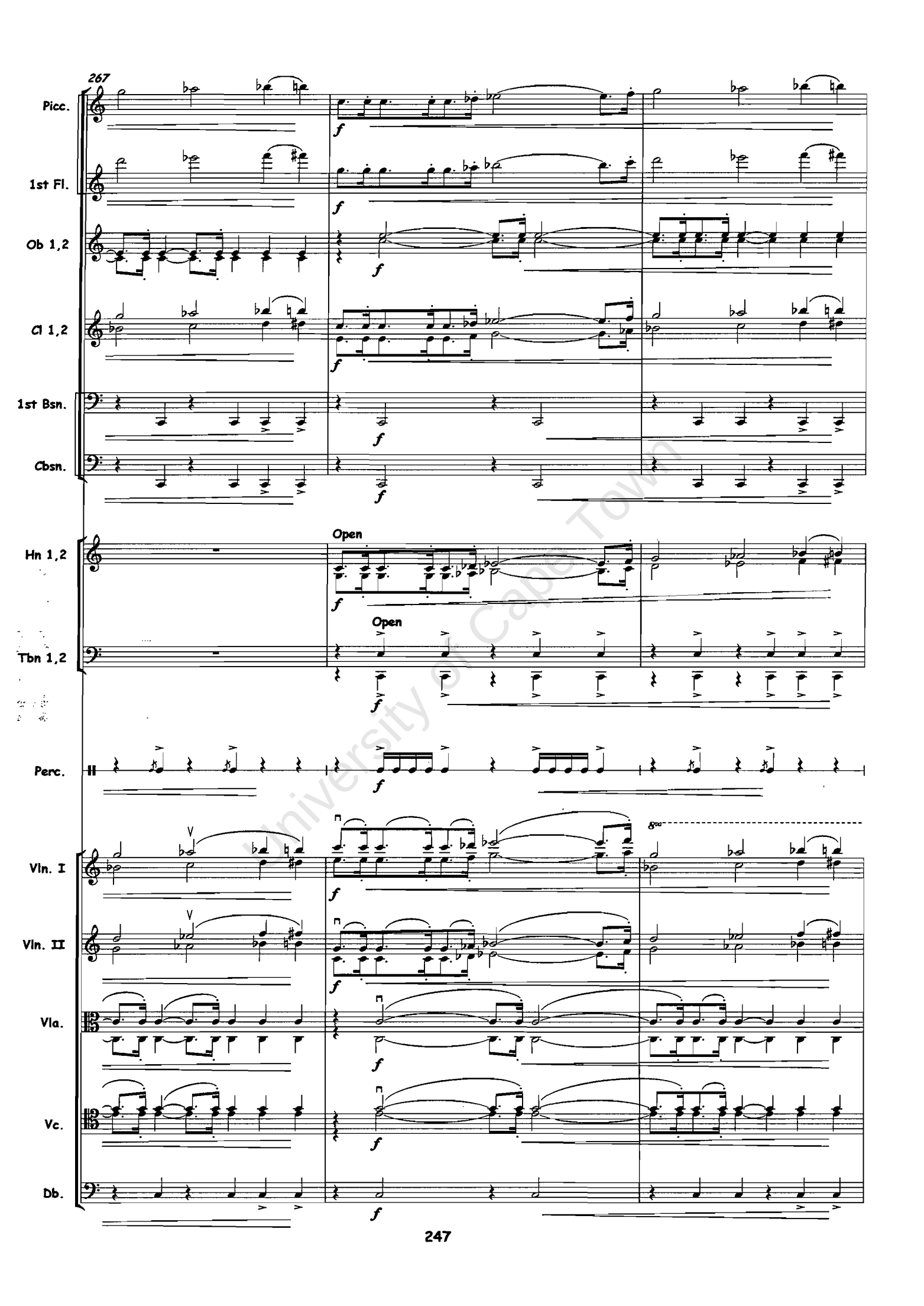

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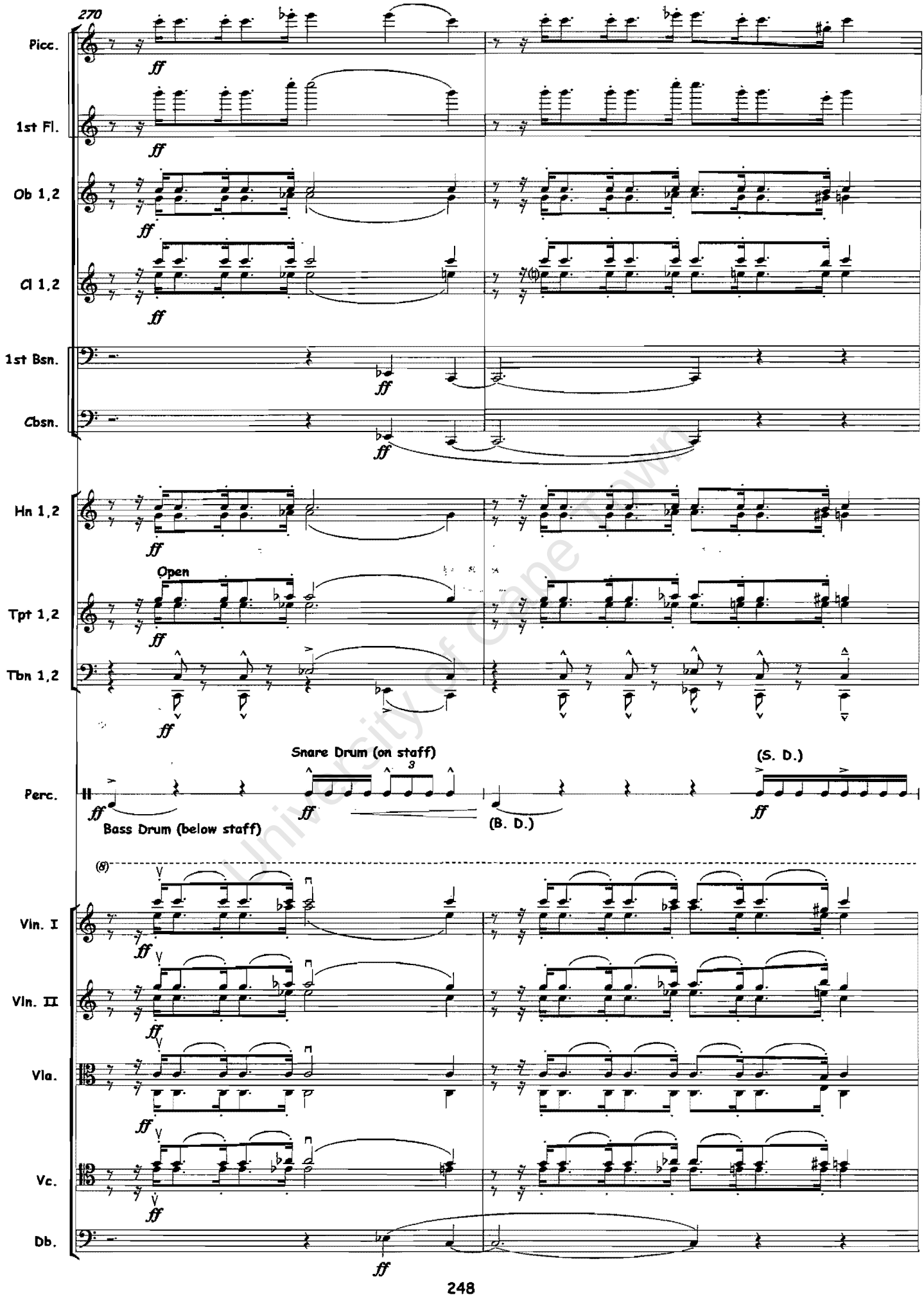

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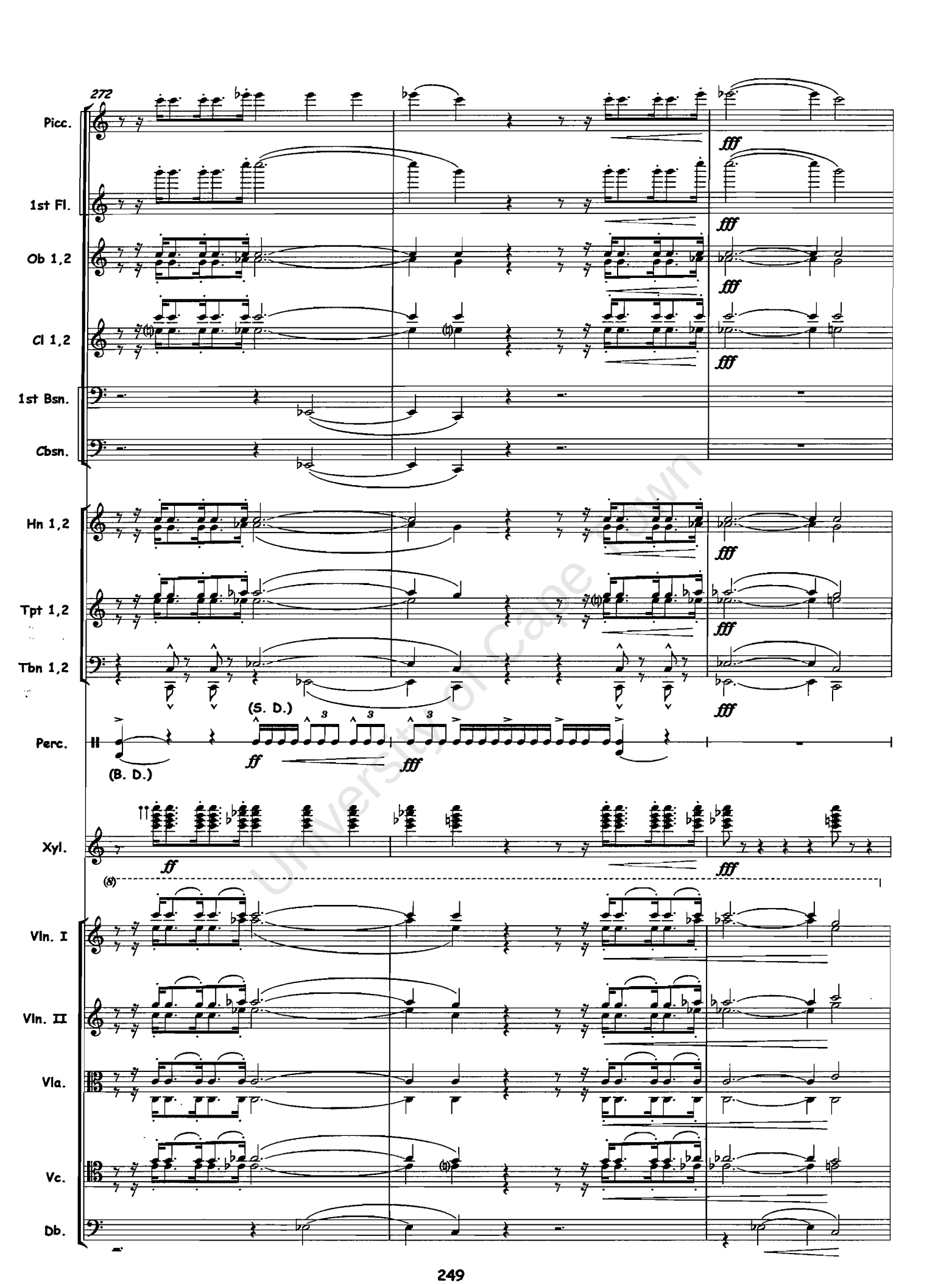

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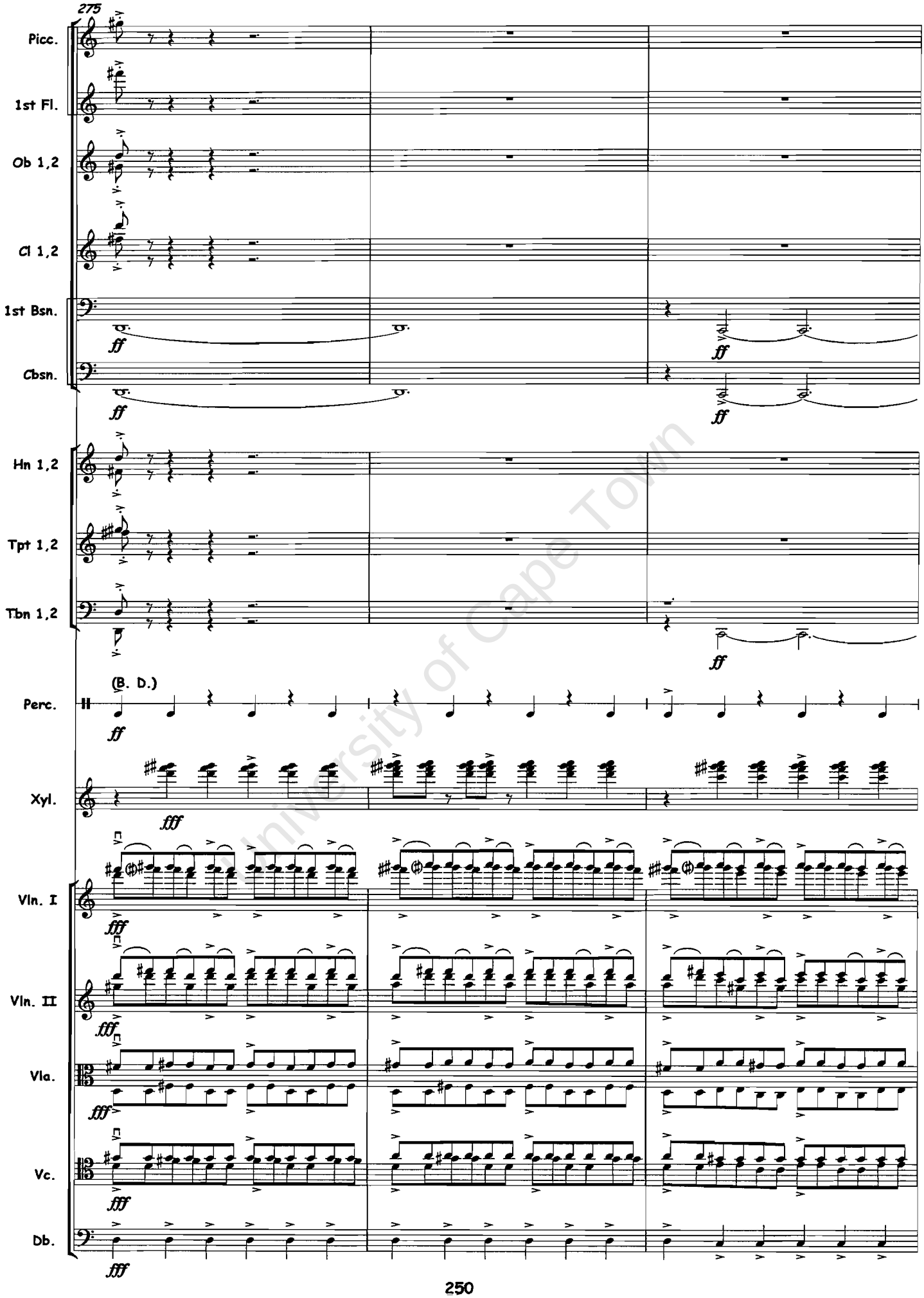

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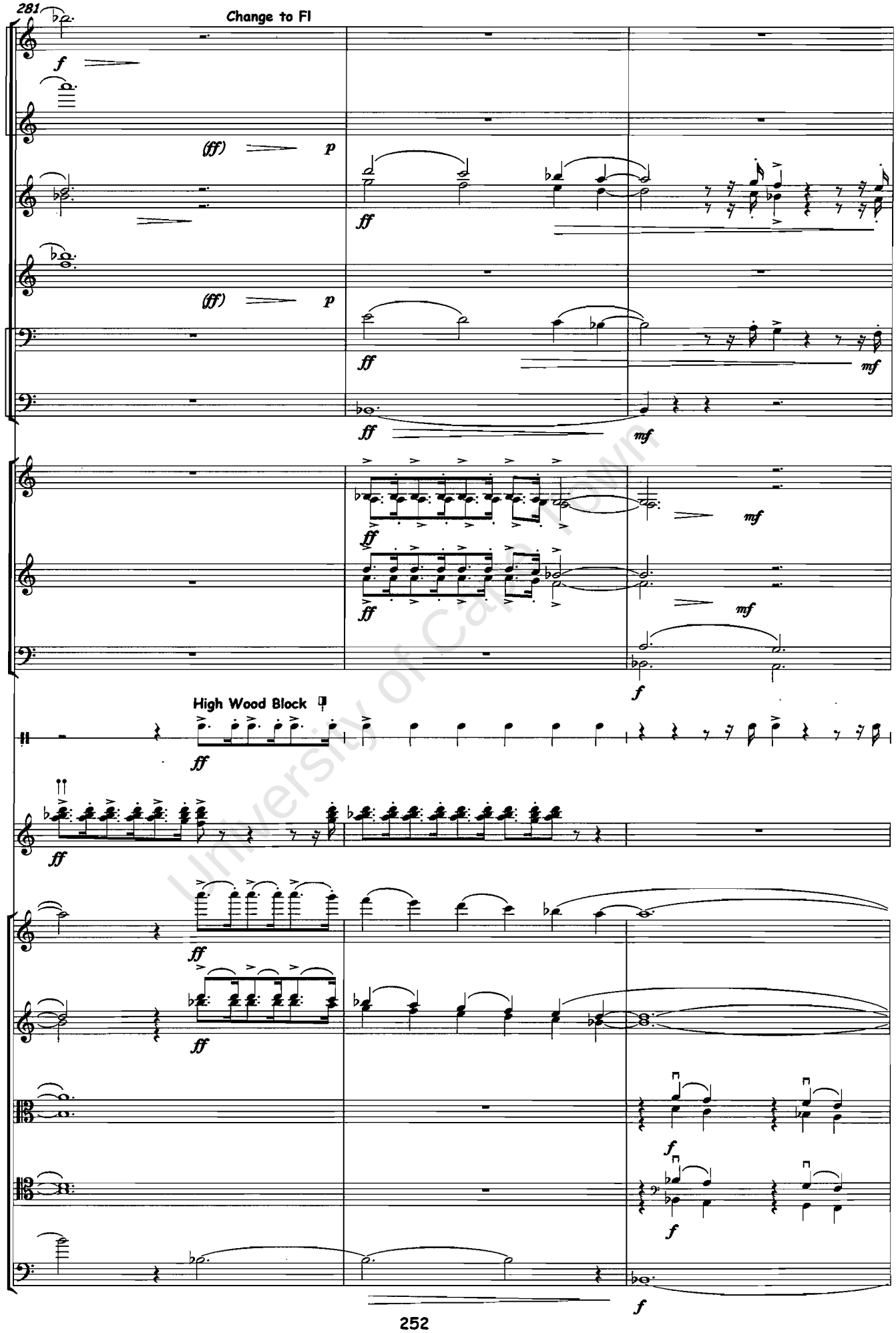

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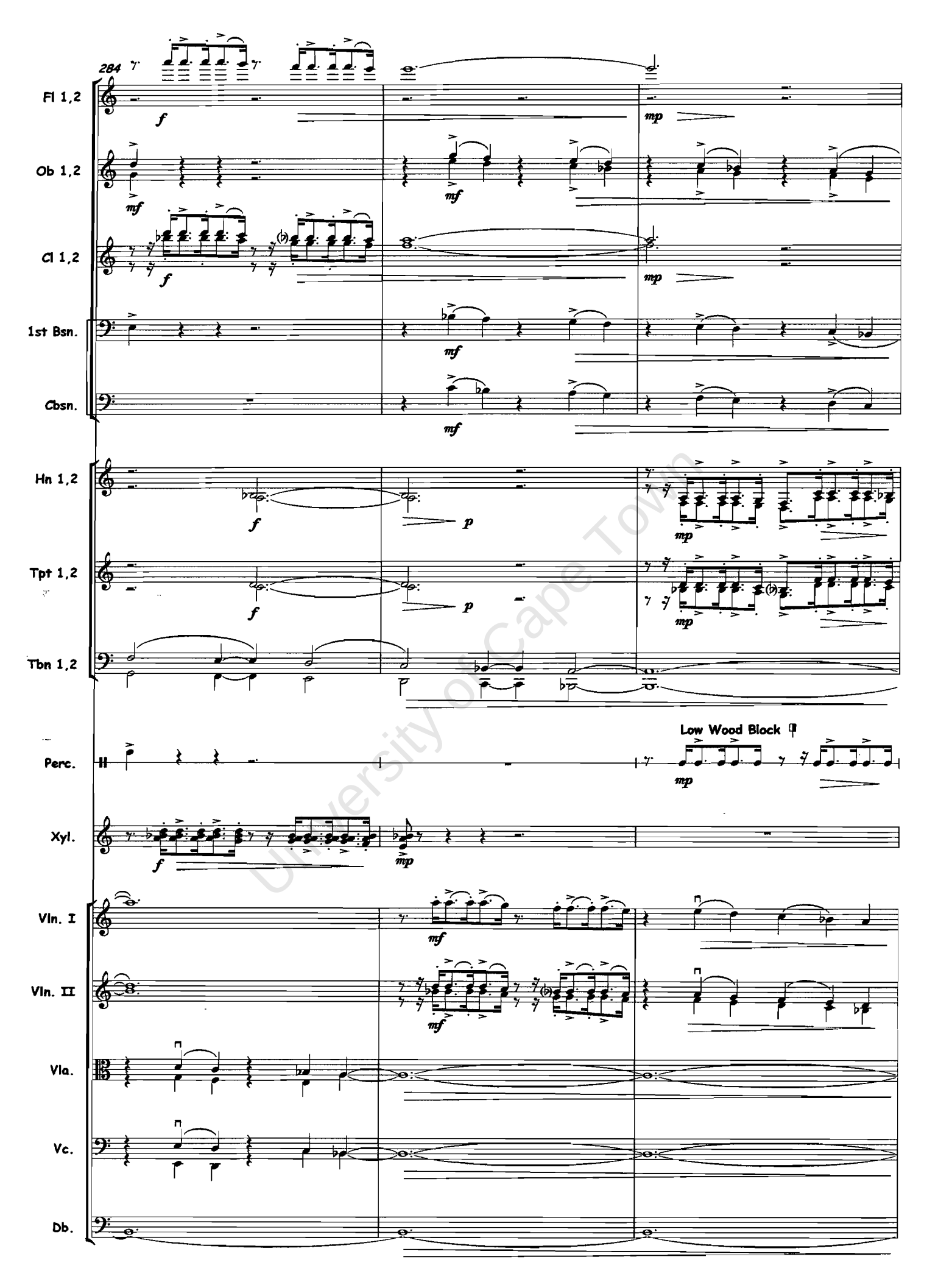

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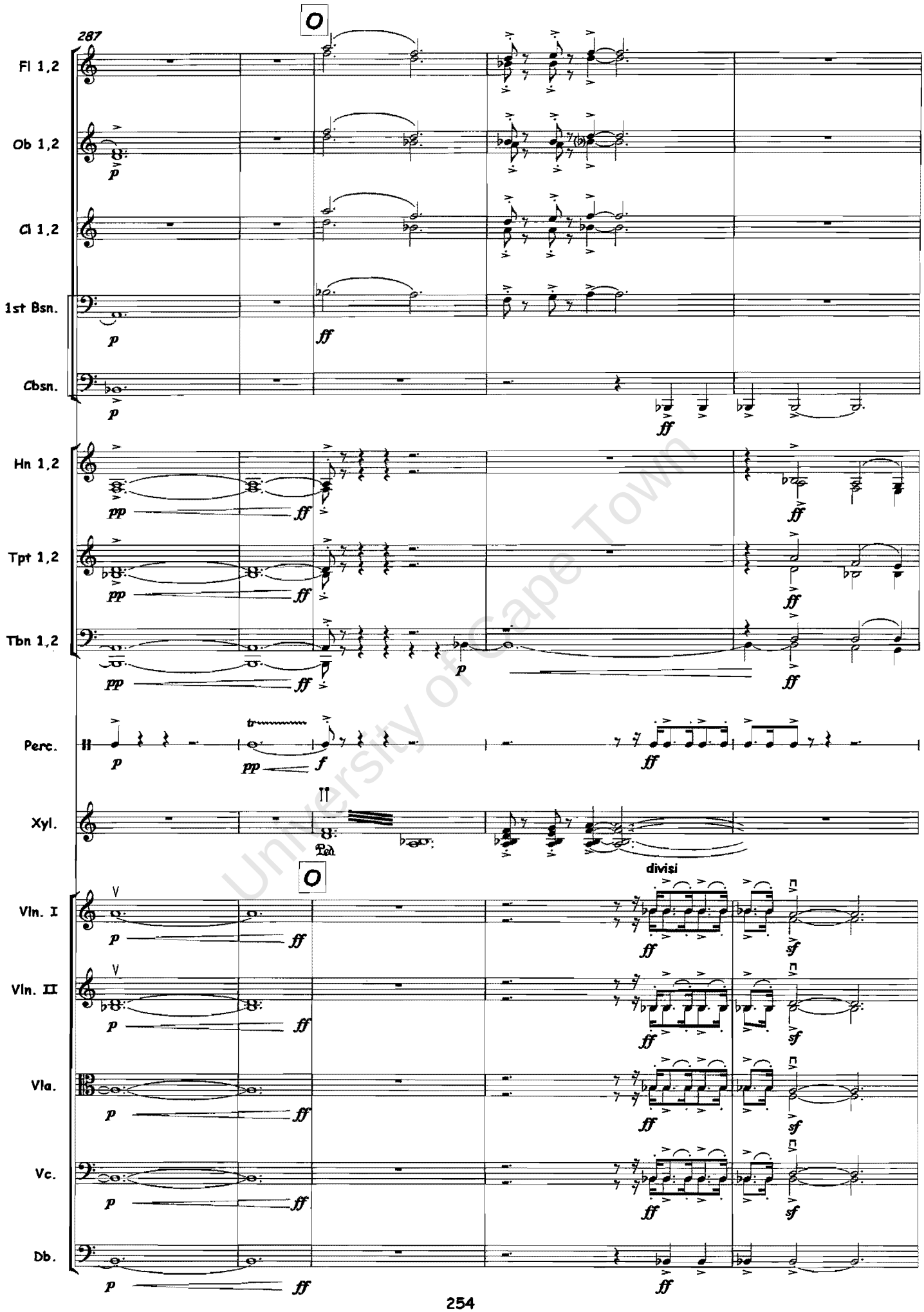

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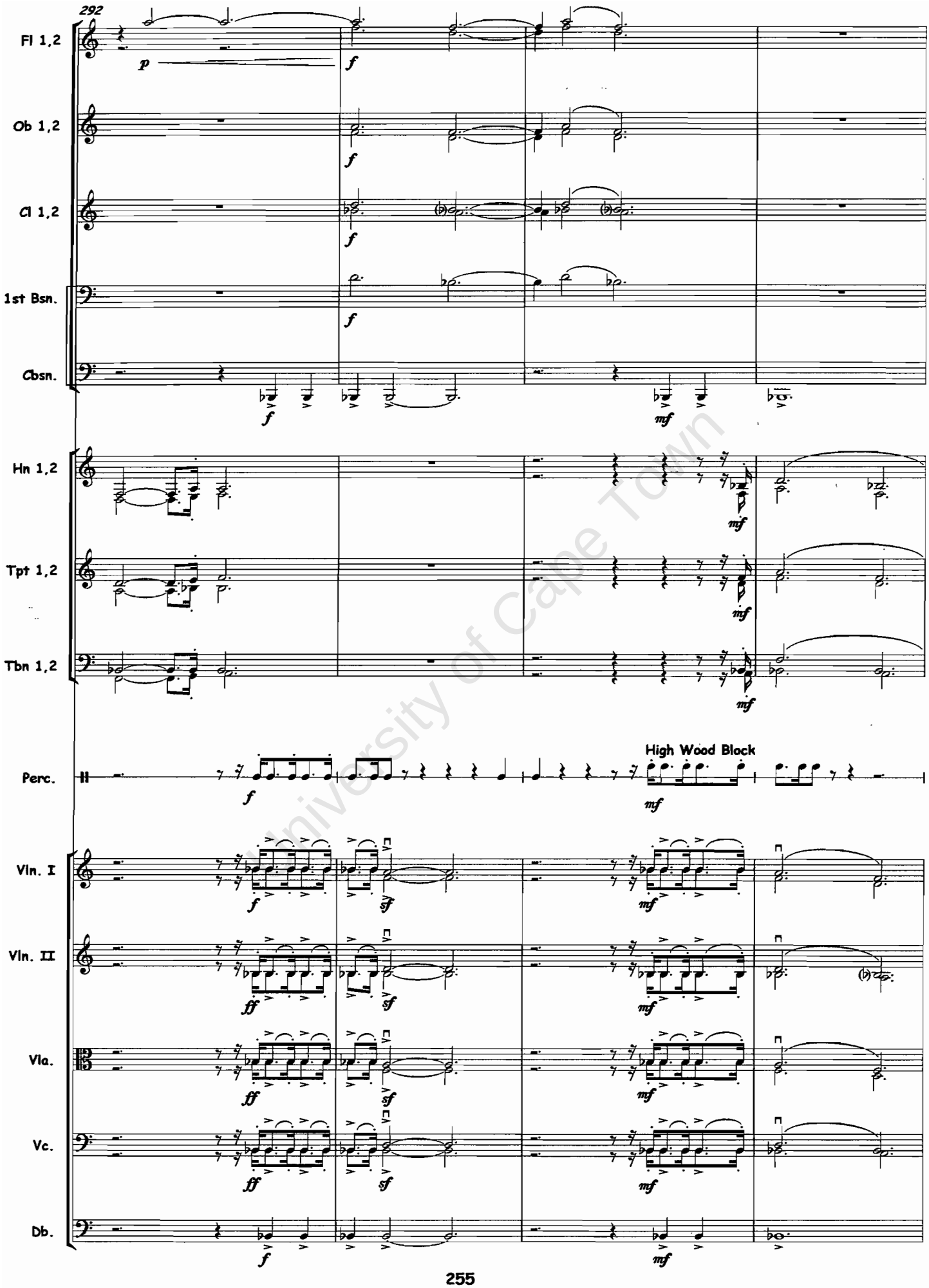

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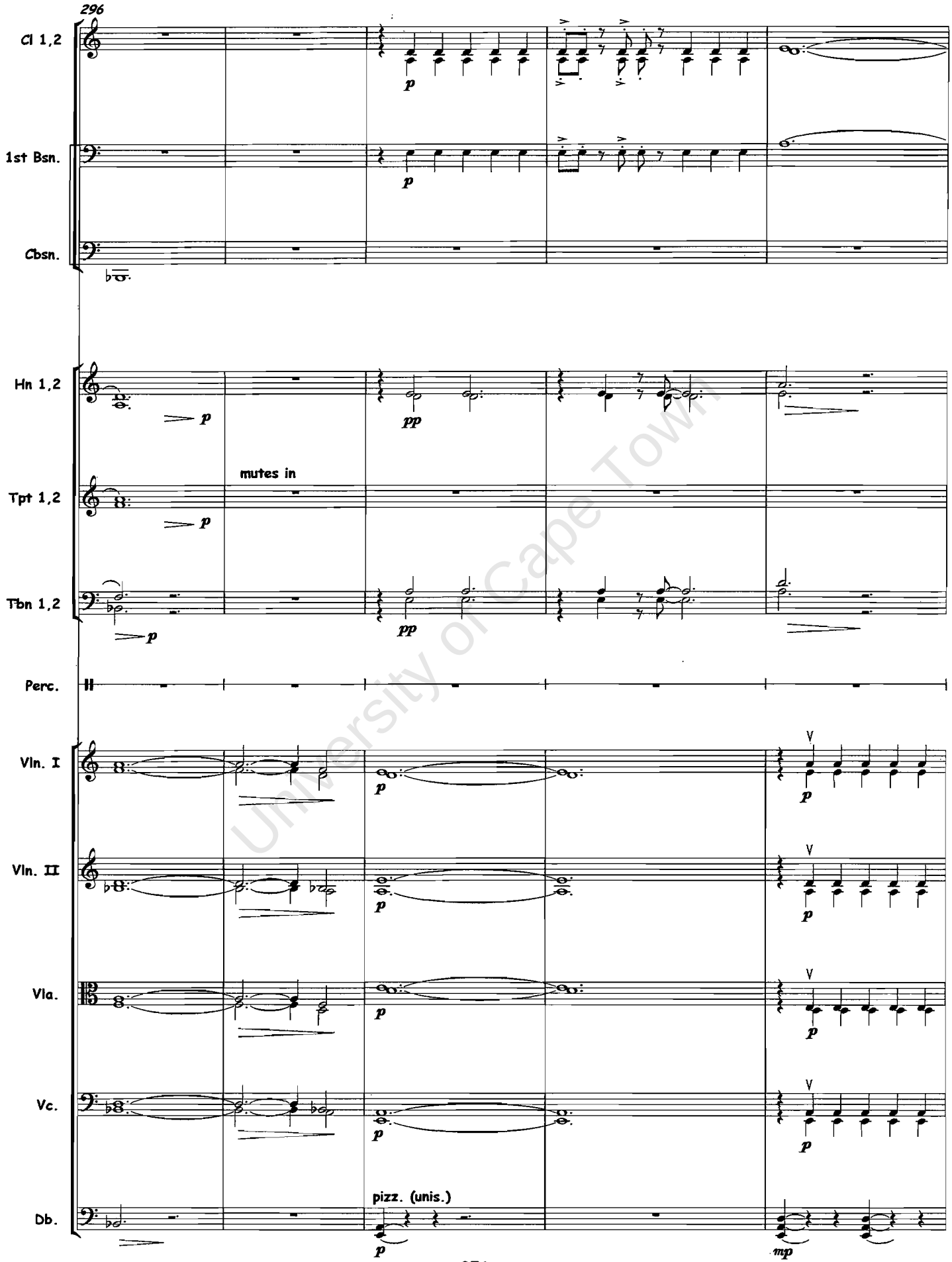

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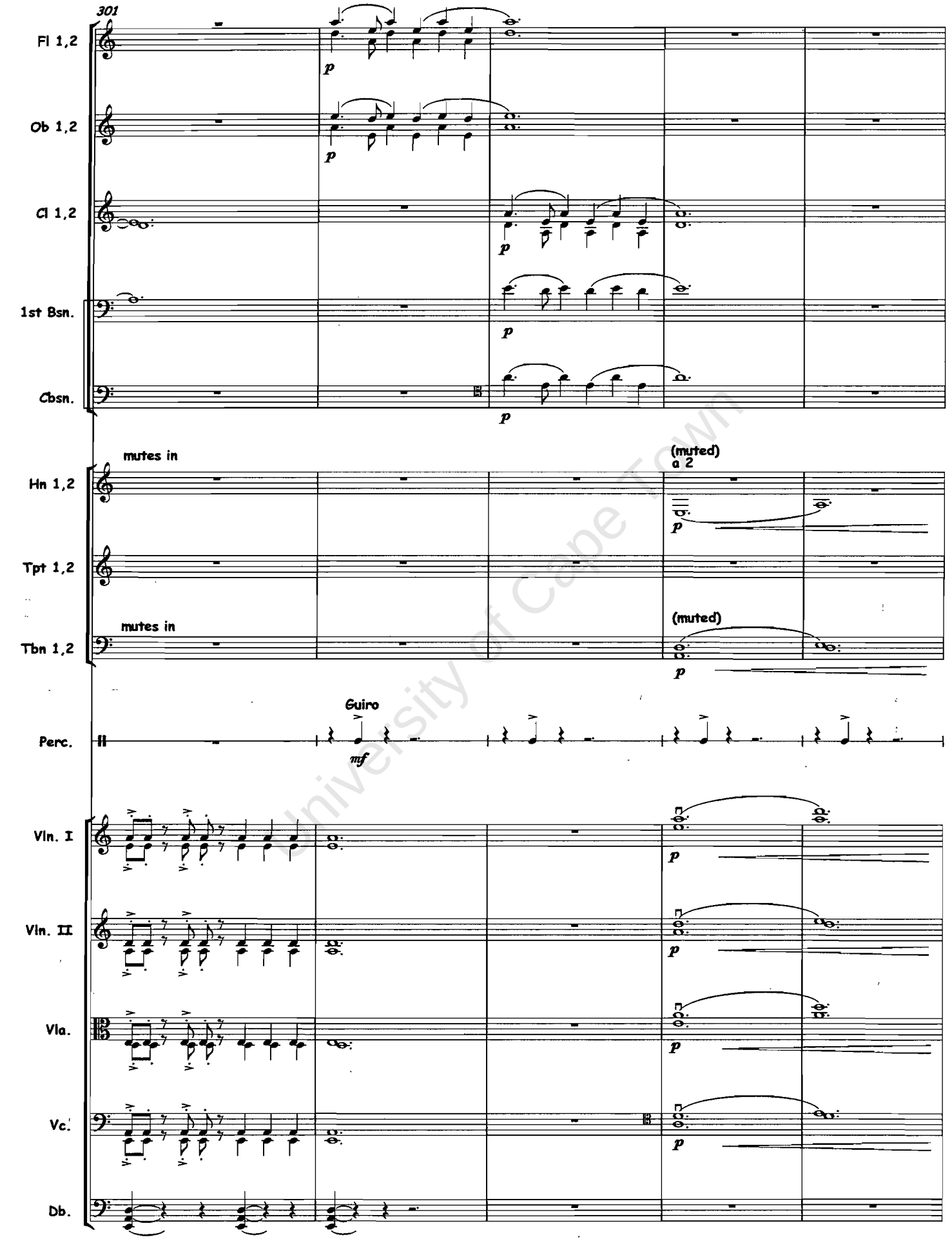

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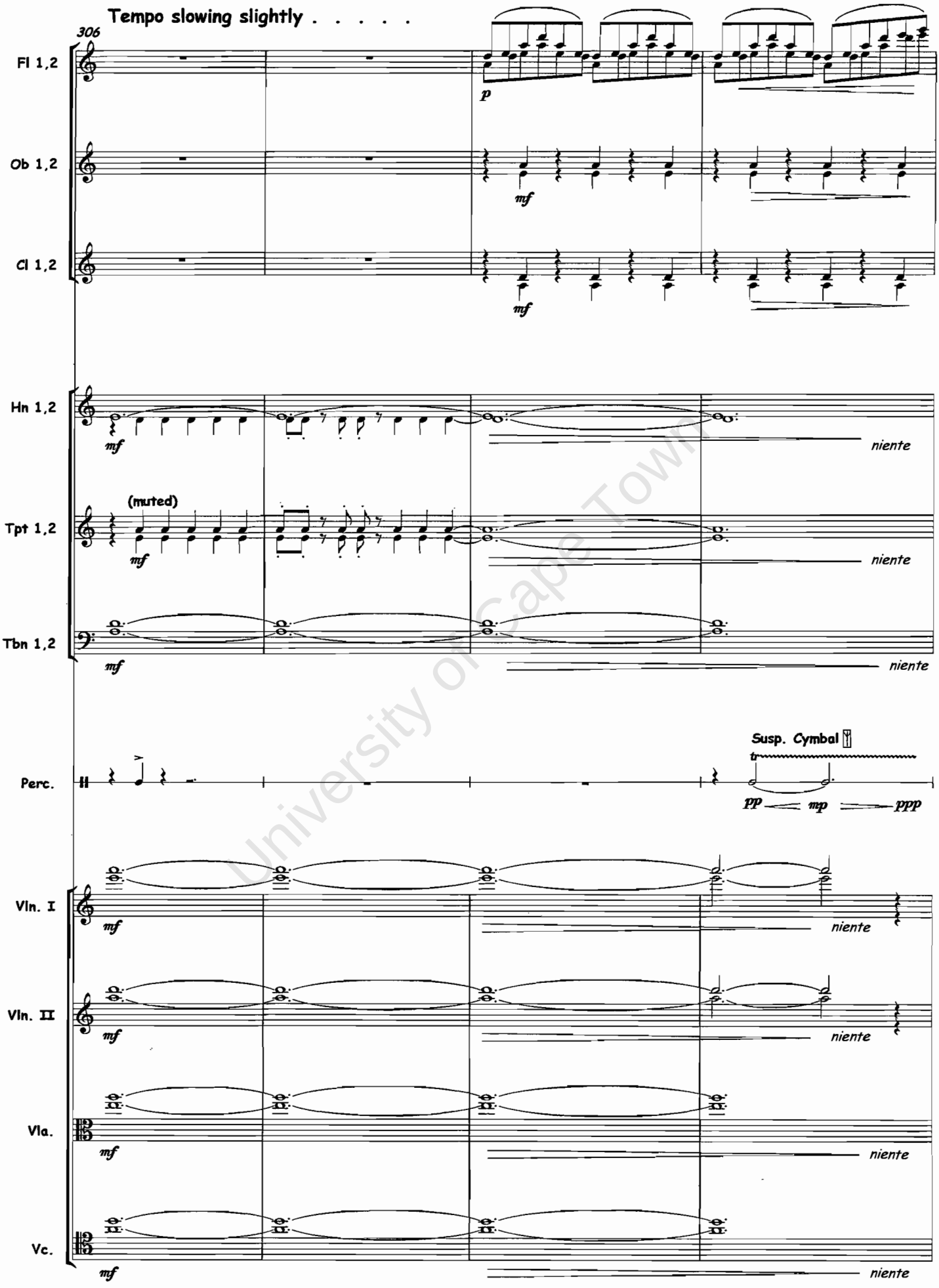

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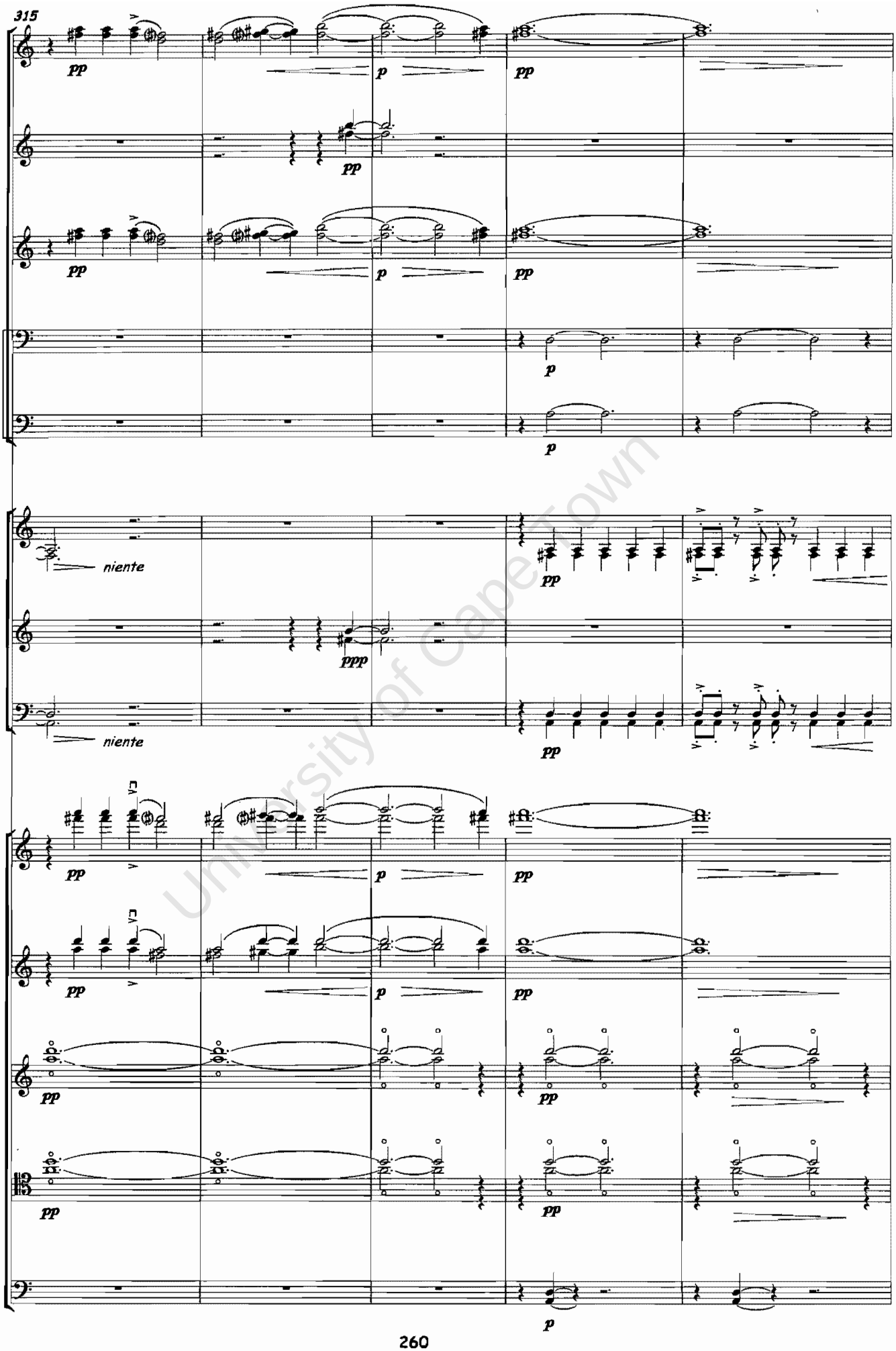

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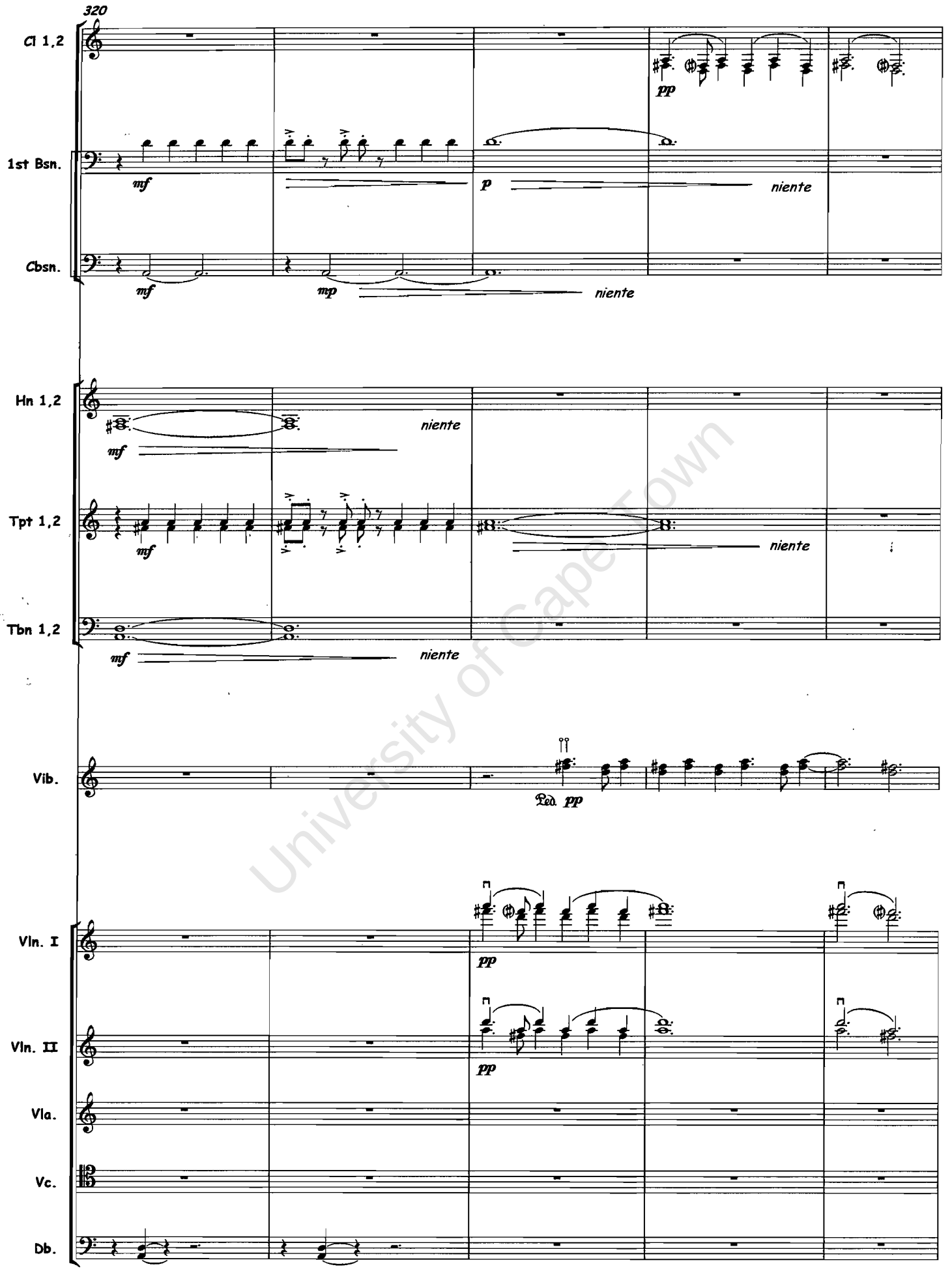

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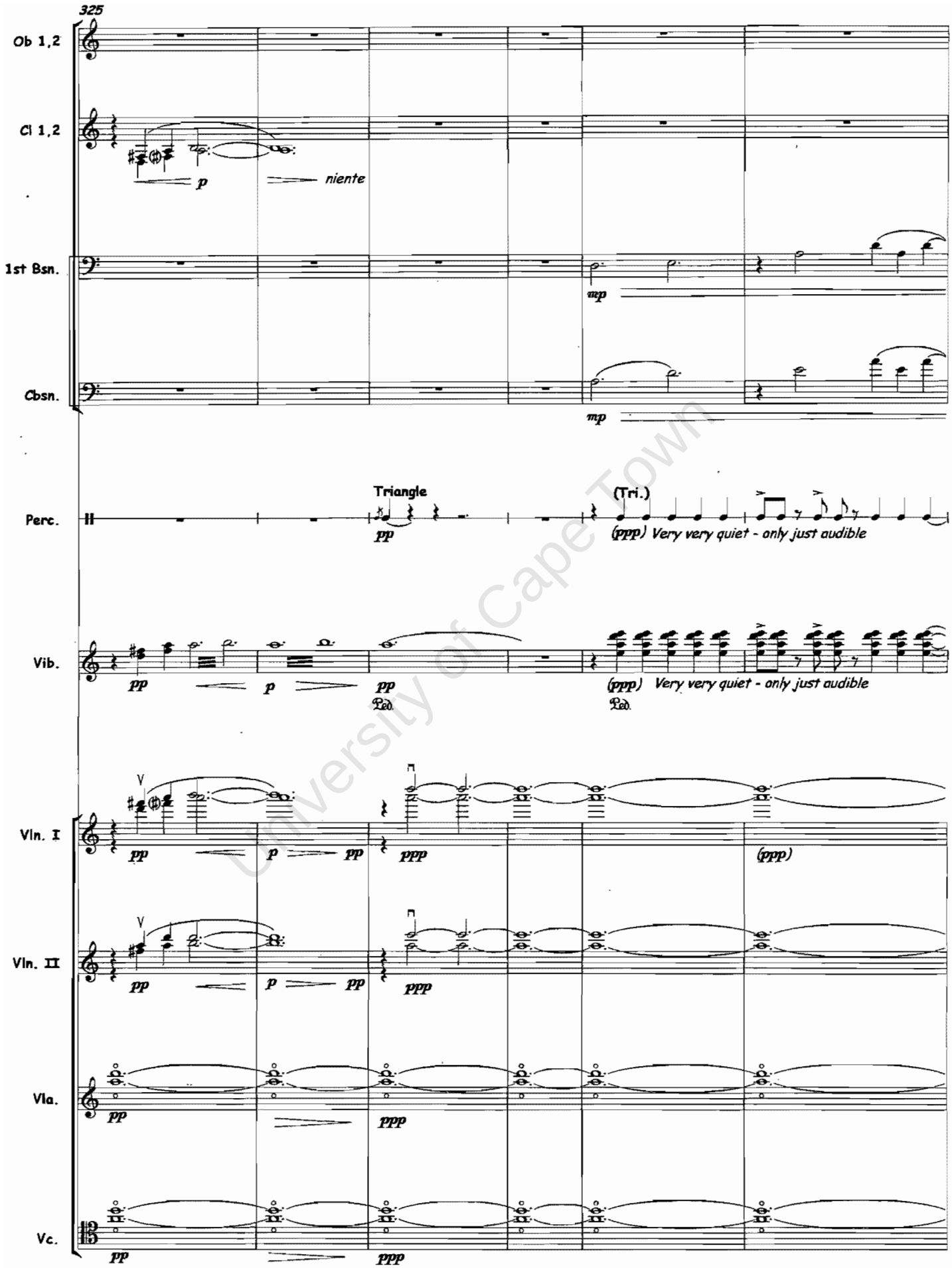

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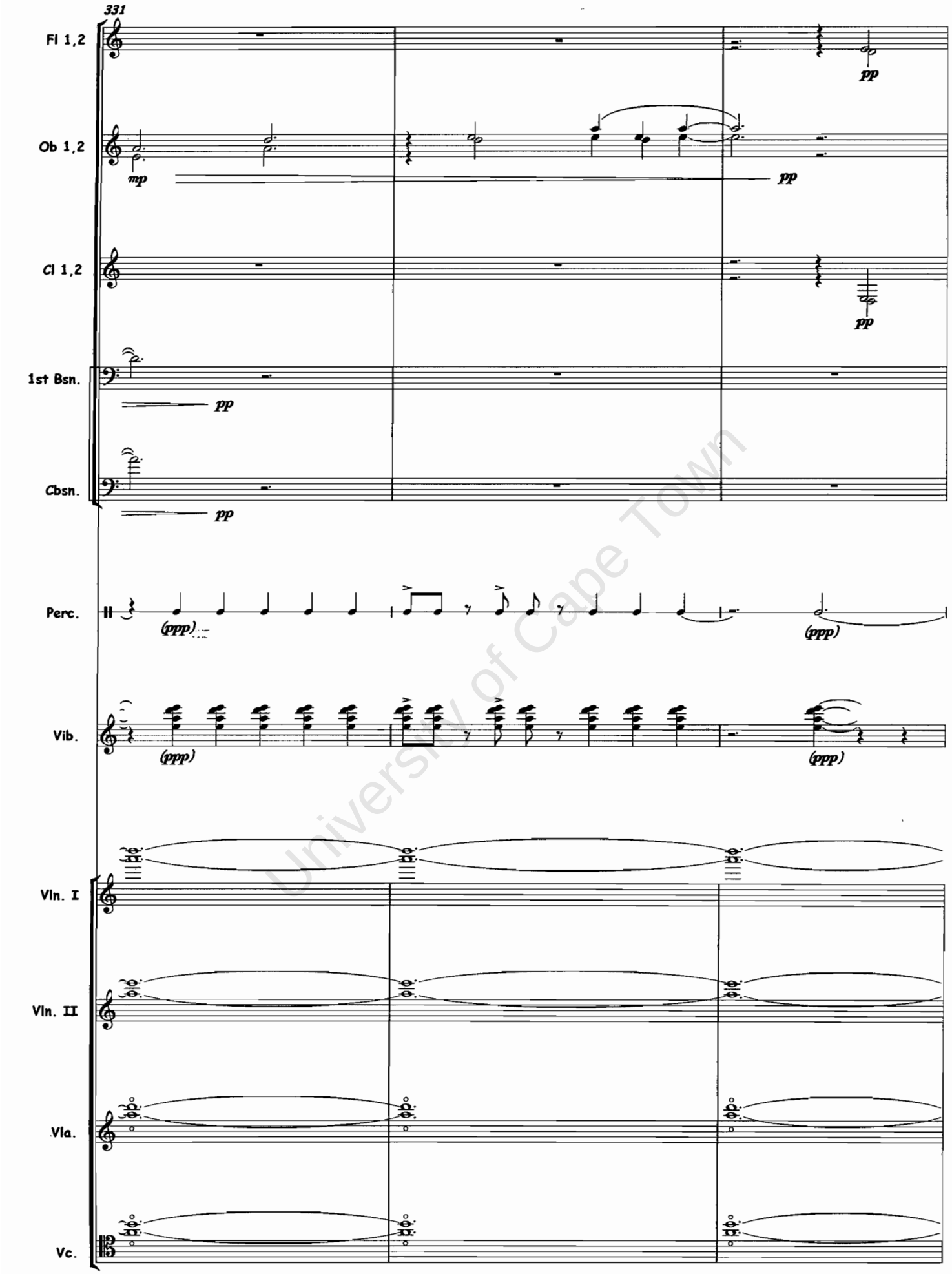

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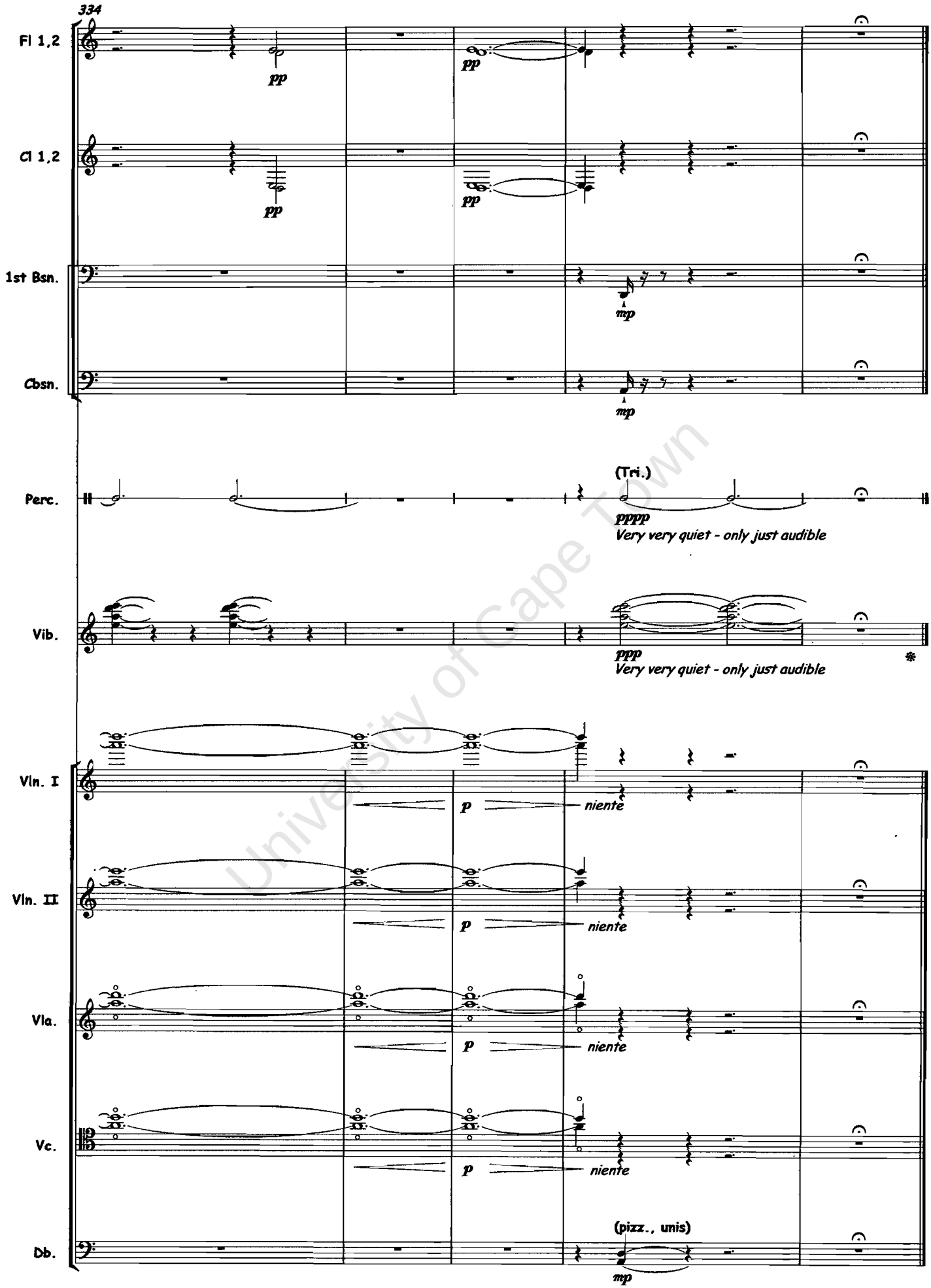

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