ED HUGHES

# T h e  W o o d s  S o  W i l d

2021

for piano quartet
piano
violin
viola
cello

duration 14'

Perusal score

**The Woods So Wild (2021)**

***The Woods So Wild*** (2020-21) for piano quartet (piano, violin, viola and cello) was written for and dedicated to the Primrose Piano Quartet. I began writing this piece in 2020 during lockdown, and completed it in August 2021. 'Will Yow Walke the Woods soe Wylde' was a song in the Tudor era, possibly sung by Henry VIII and his courtier Sir Peter Carew (c.1514-1575). The fragment of melody that survives uses its scale's raised fourth expressively, creating a haunting, searching and restless quality. The song's qualities were not lost on Elizabethan composers William Byrd (1543-1623) and Orlando Gibbons (1583-1625) who created brilliant keyboard variations. John Dowland (1563-1626) wrote a song entitled 'Can She Excuse My Wrongs' which quotes the tune. It is thought this expressed in musical code his feelings of isolation on being excluded from the Elizabethan court.

My own work explores the consolations of landscape and 'the woods so wild'. The first movement is in a steady three time. The song's melody begins in the cello and drifts over the barlines, so that its modal sound is slightly distanced from the prevailing harmony. Extra melodies are interwoven, using all the notes of the chromatic scale, to create harmonic colour. The main tonal centres of the movement are F and G, echoing the original, and Byrd and Gibbons's own elaborations on the song (contained in the Fitzwilliam Virginal Book, a manuscript of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English music).

The second movement is in a slow to moderate 12/8 – a balance between four and three time. The music moves between D and E, again reflecting the stepwise harmonies of the original pre-classical song form. Towards the end of the second movement the Woods So Wild melody appears again in various forms and transpositions. The music accelerates and moves straight into the fast final movement without a break. The tune sings through the final movement too, which has cross-rhythms and weaving polyphony, like the intertwining roots, branches, moss and leaves of a sunlit wood.

*The Woods So Wild* was first performed by the Primrose Piano Quartet, Susanne Stanzeleit, Dorothea Vogel, Andrew Fuller and John Thwaites, and recorded by them and released in 2022 on Metier MSV 28623.

Ed Hughes. March 2022.

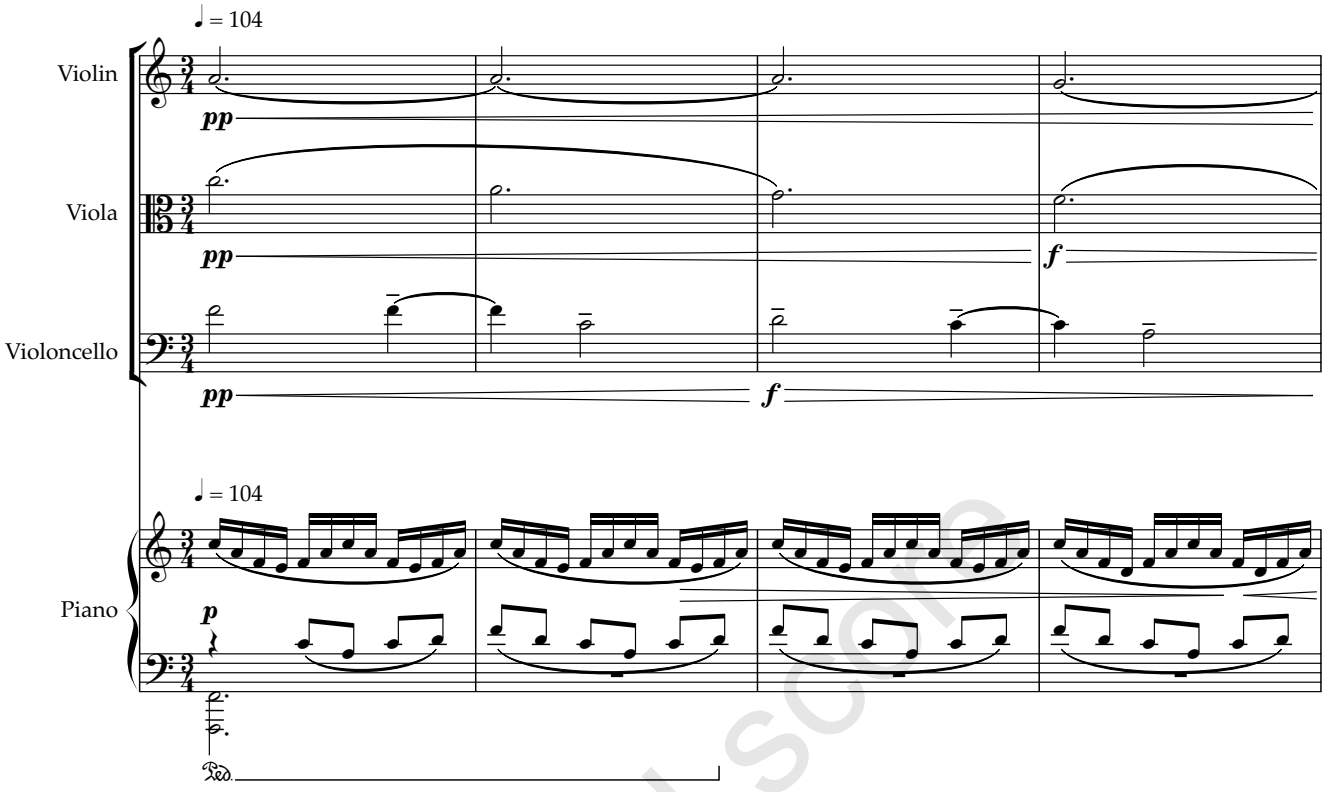
Perusal Score

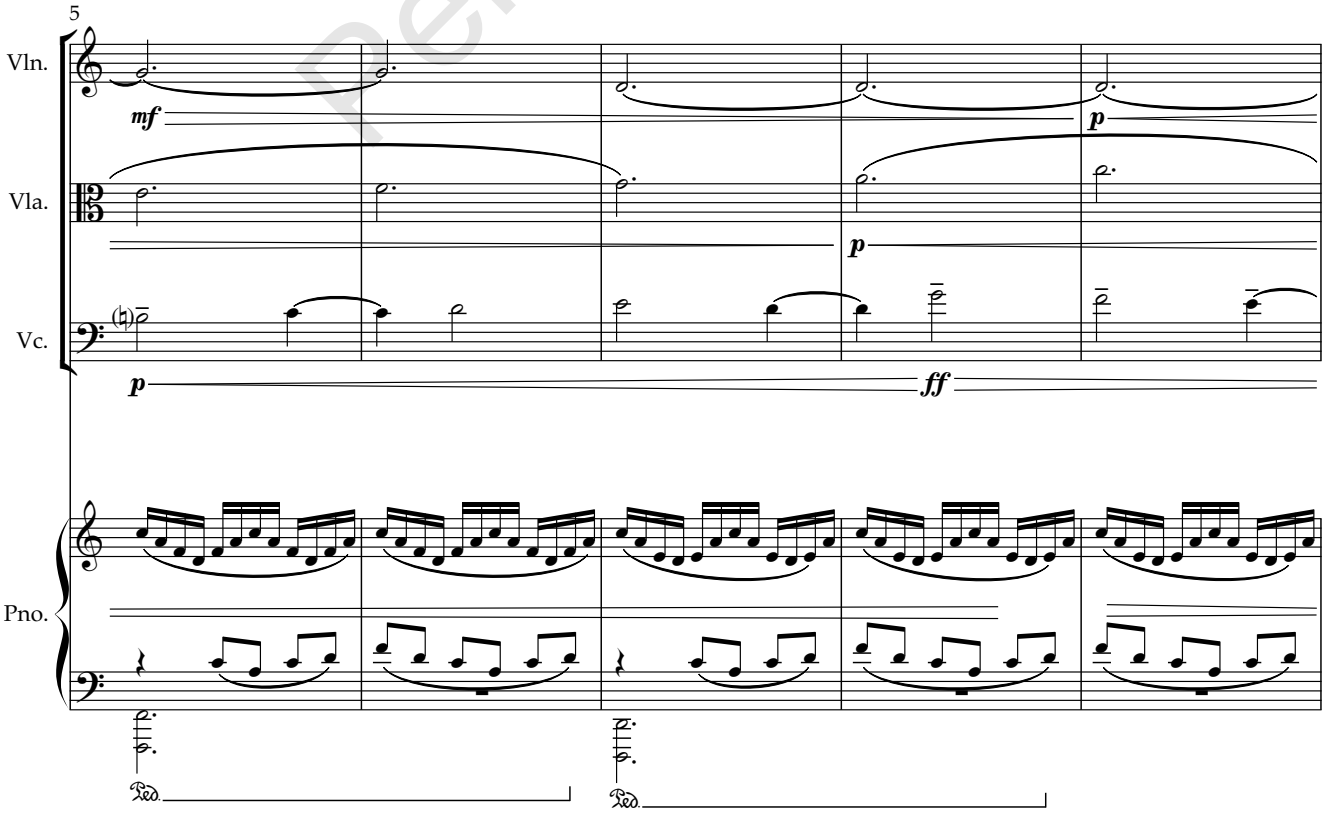
To The Primrose Piano Quartet

# The Woods So Wild

I.

ED HUGHES




Perusal score

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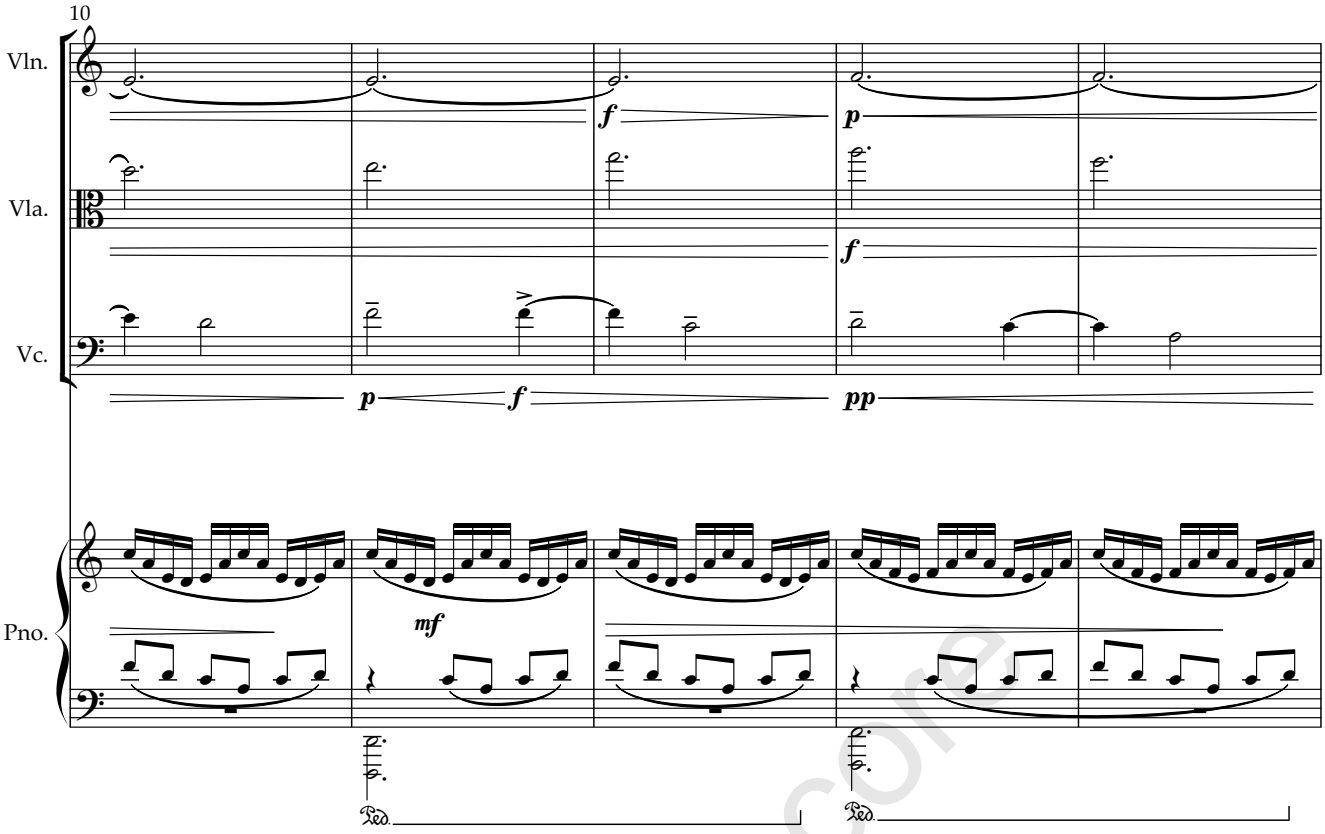


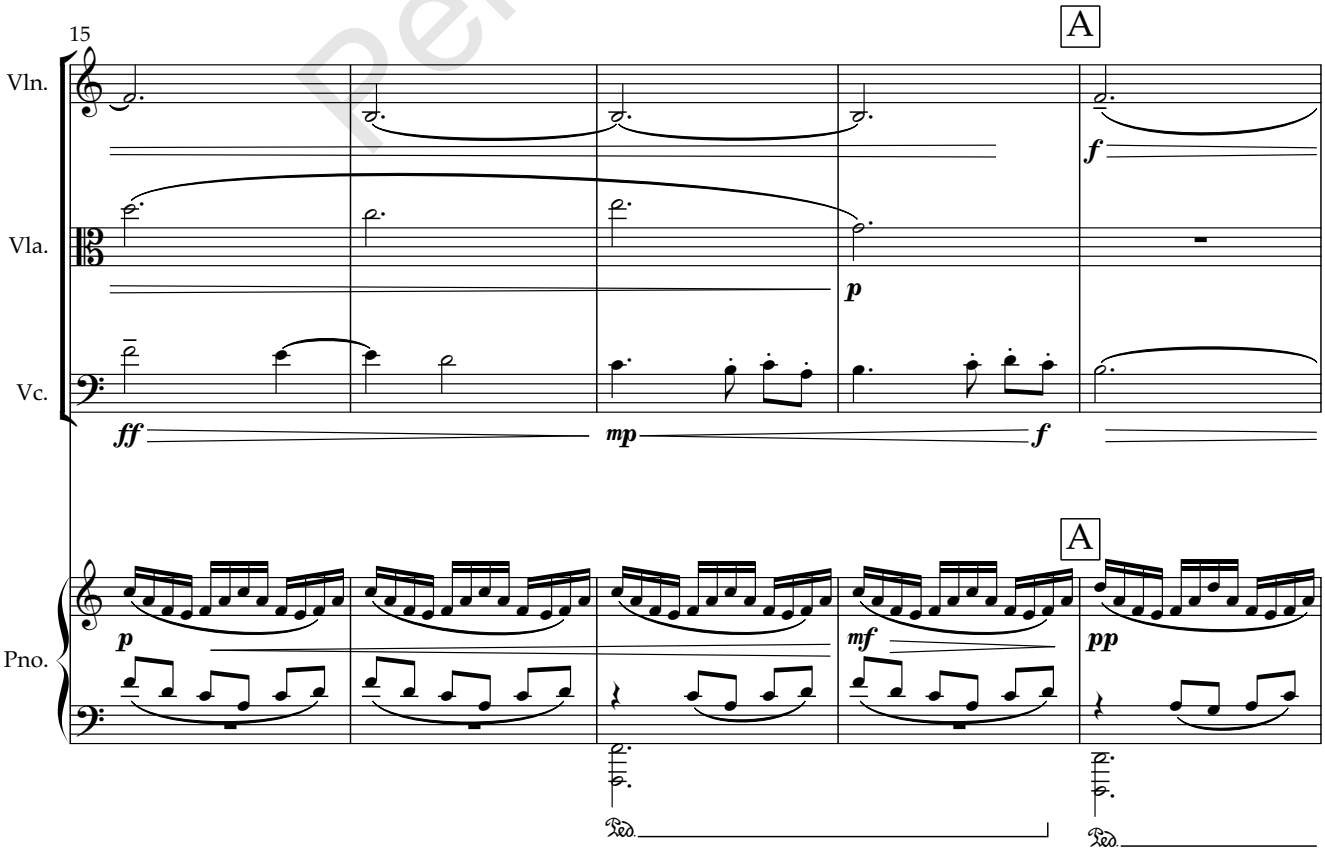


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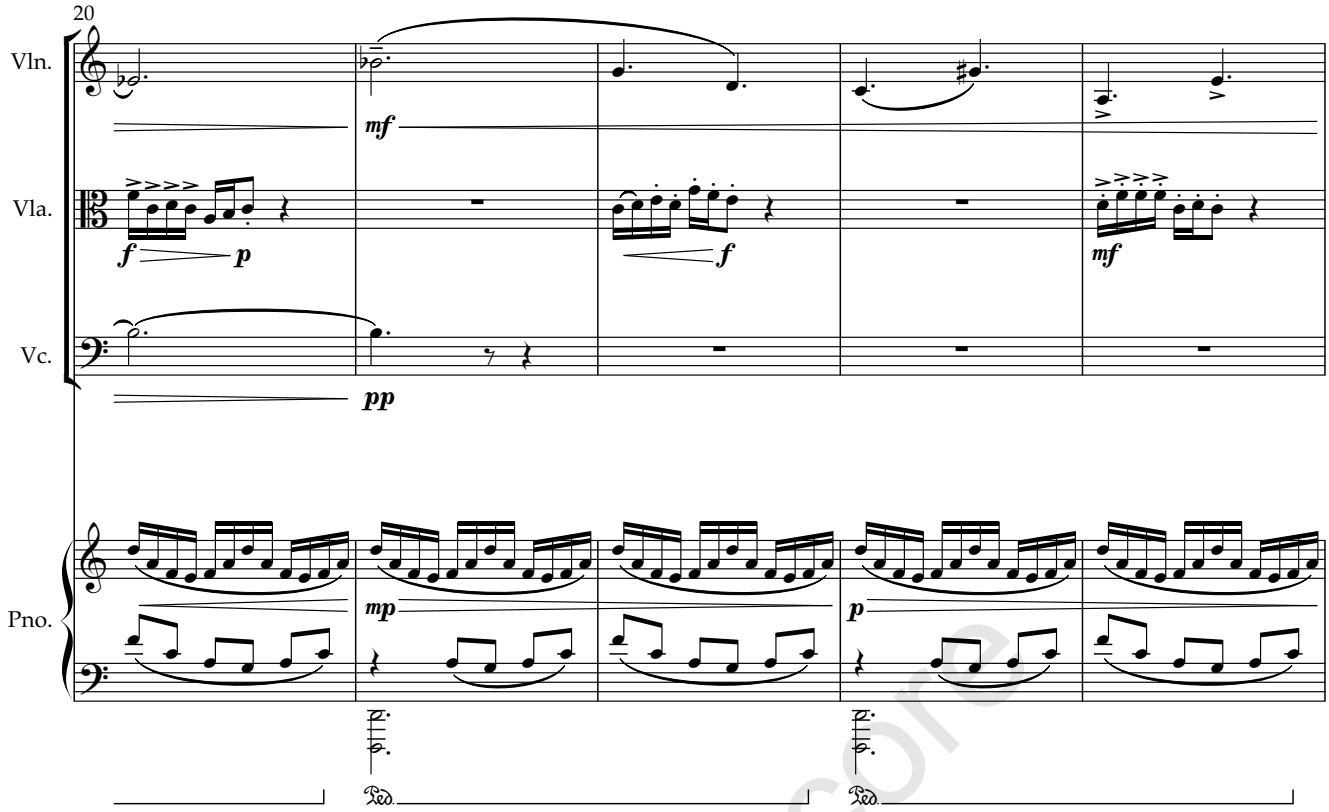


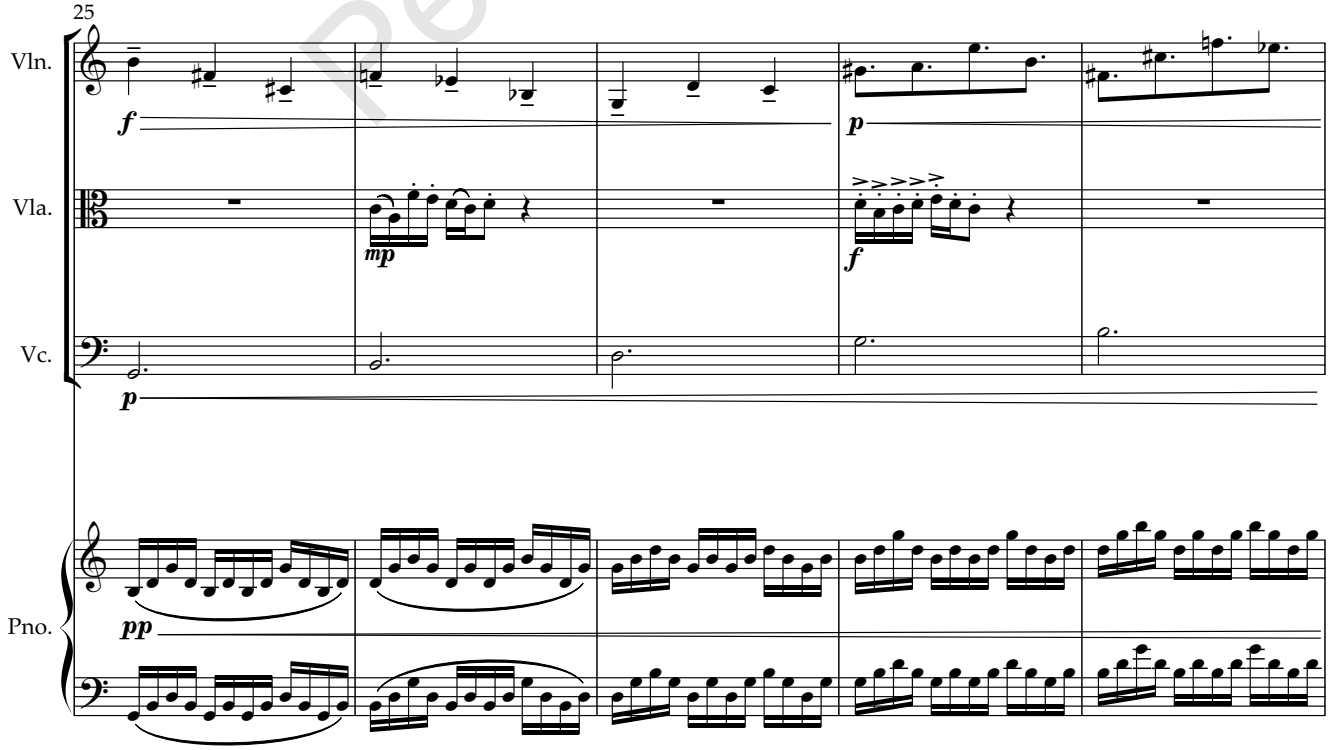


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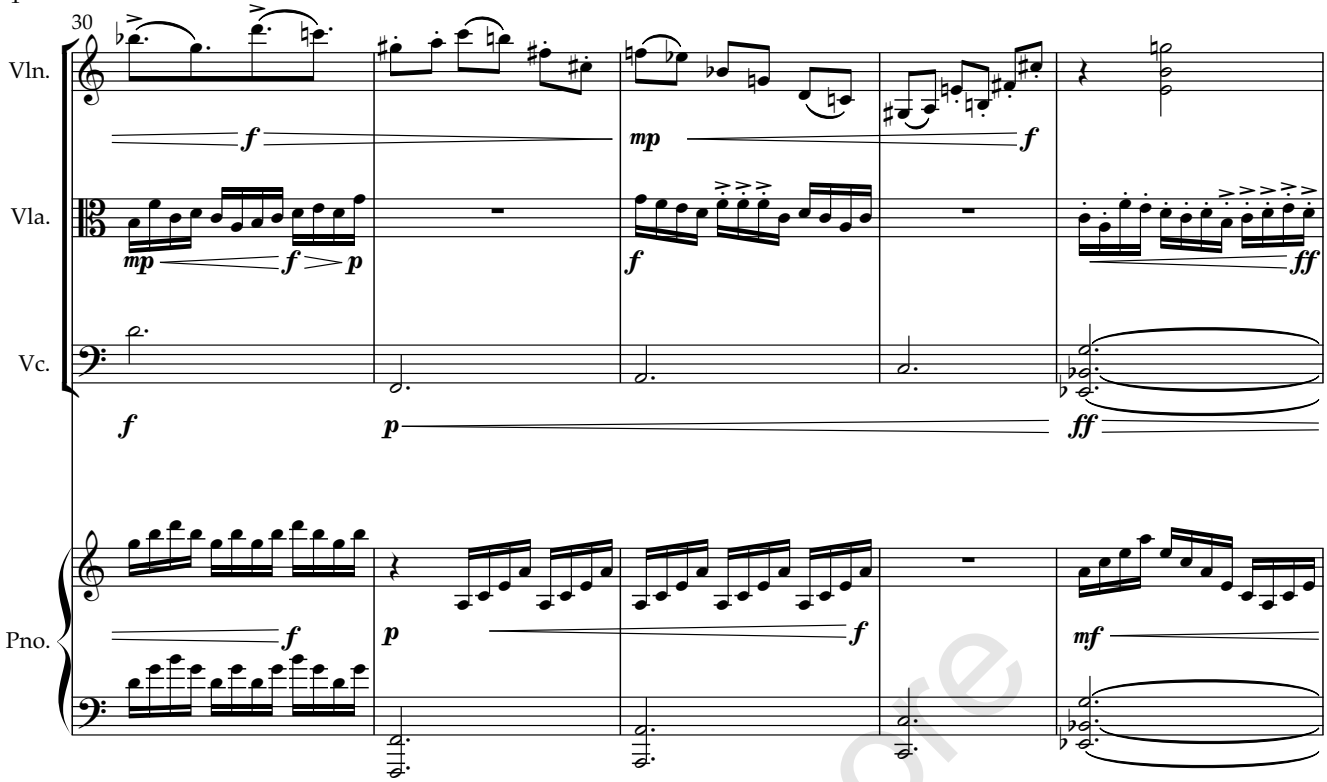


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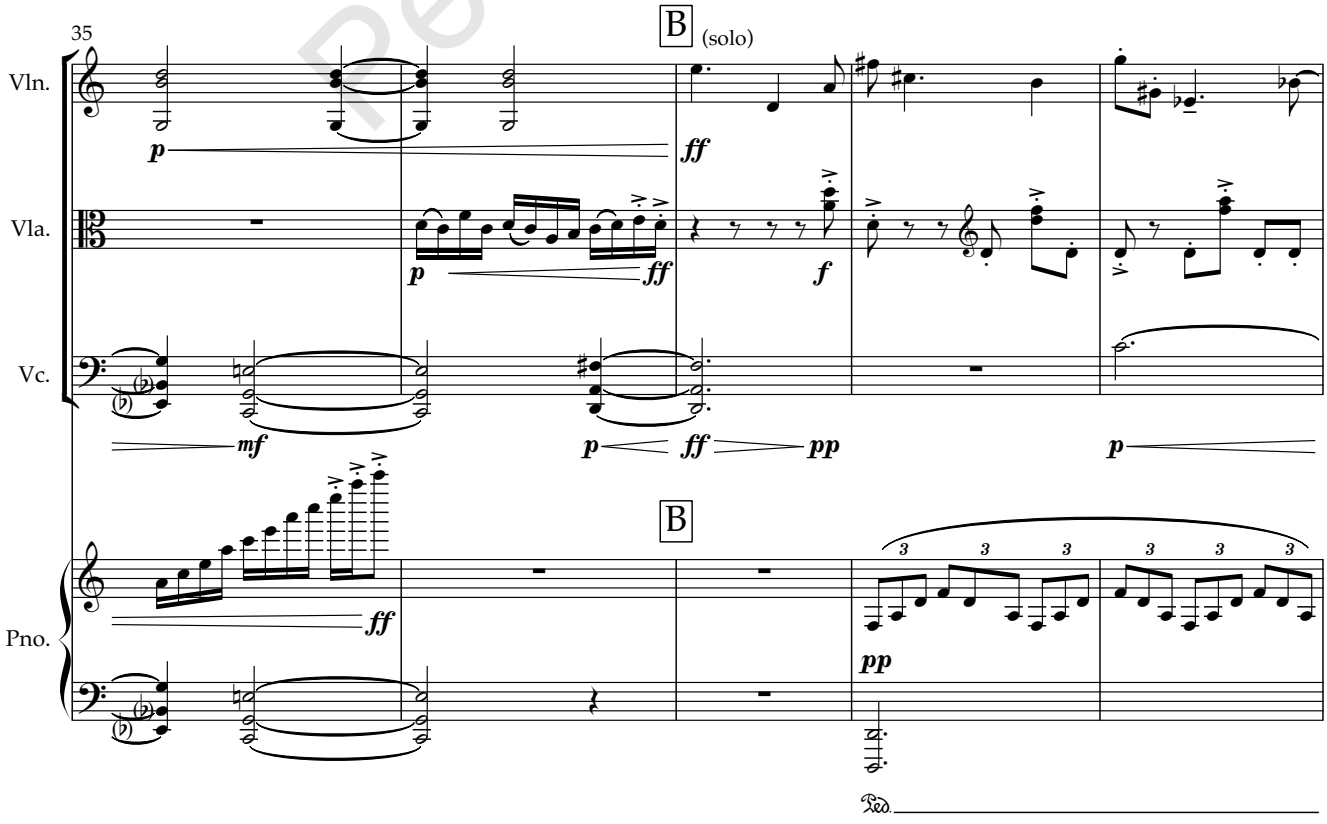

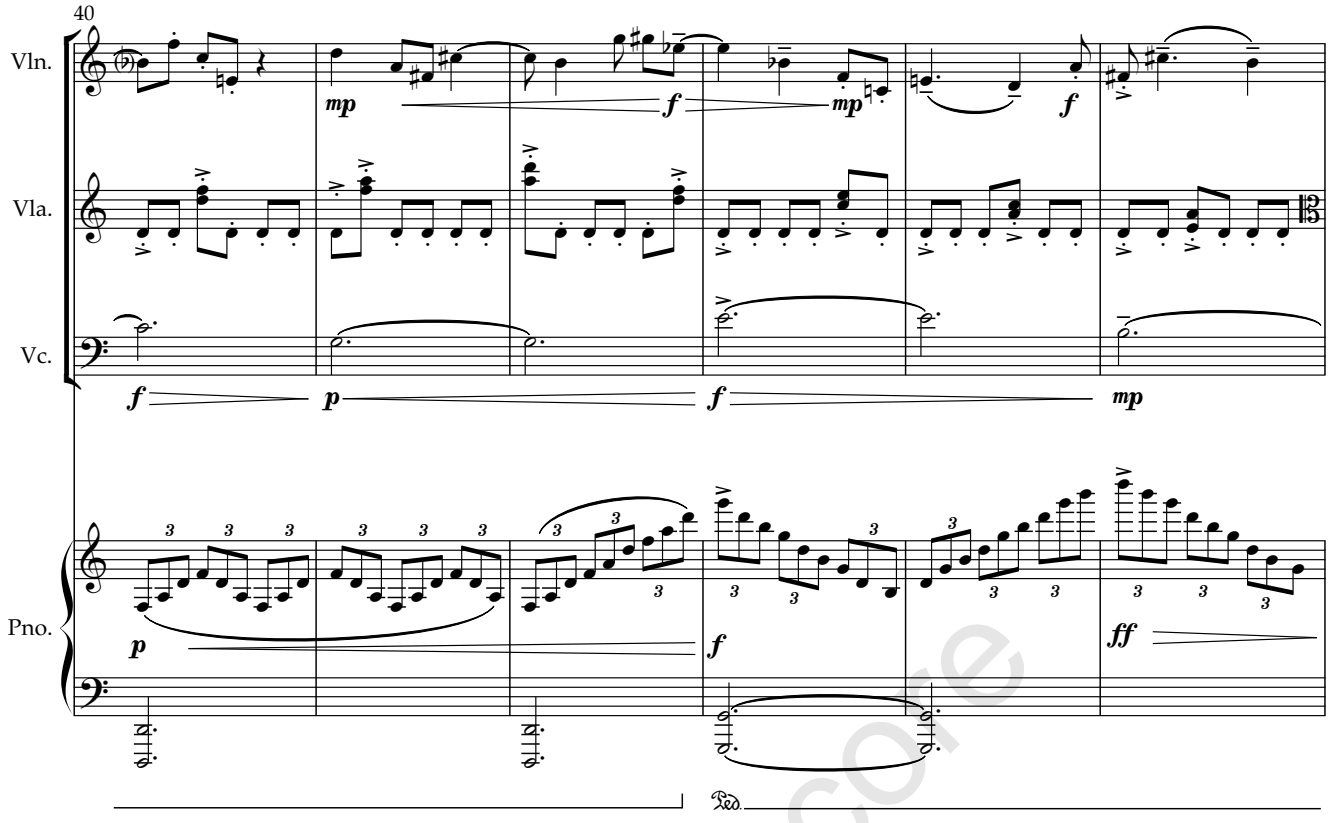


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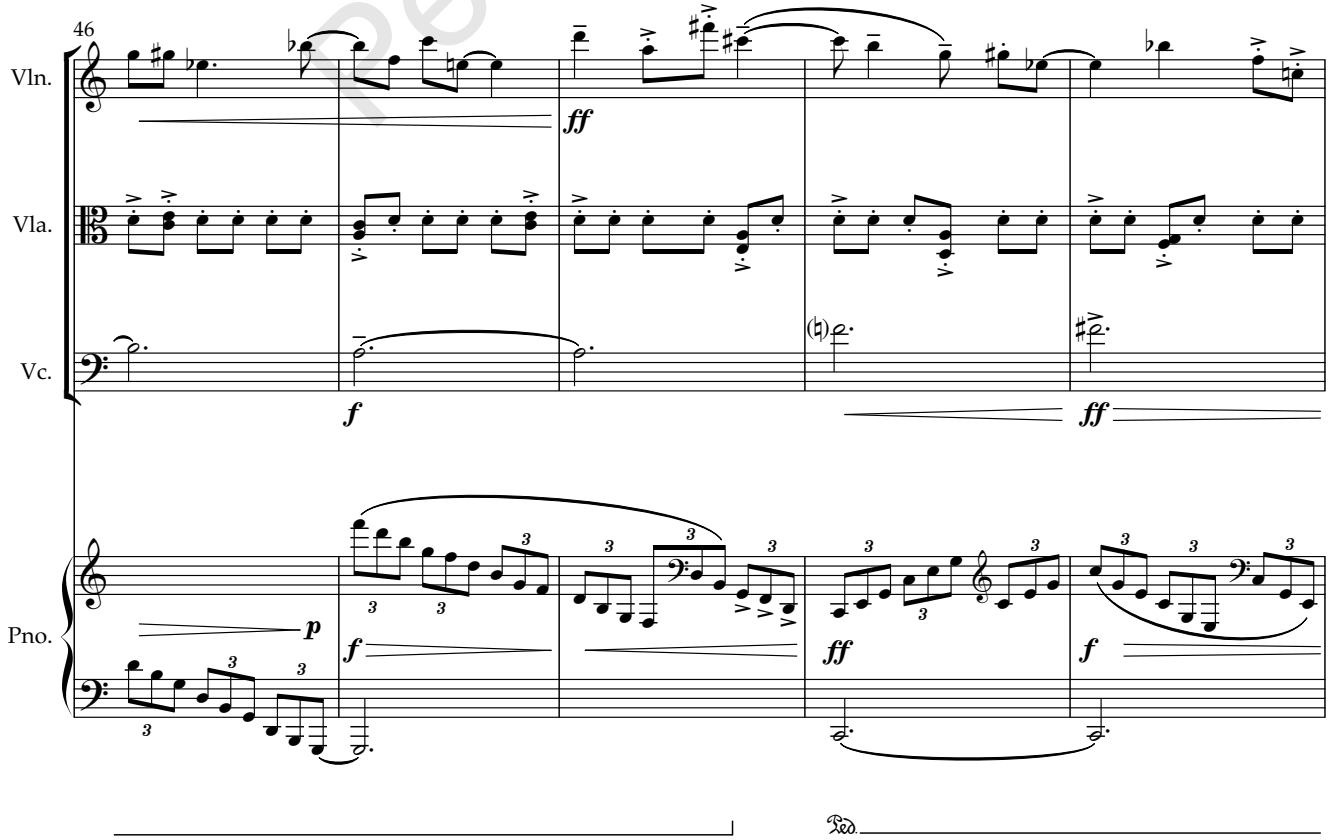

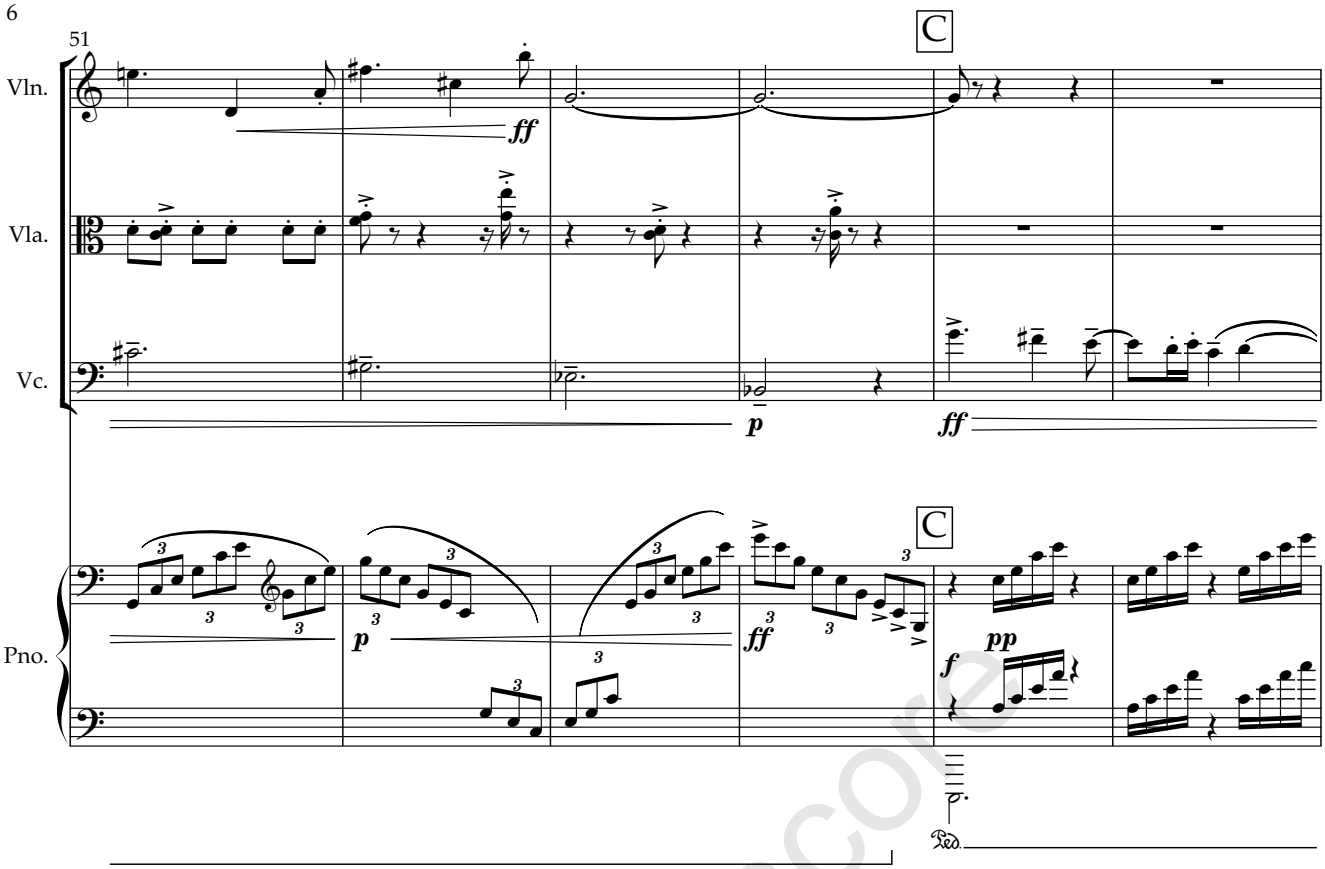


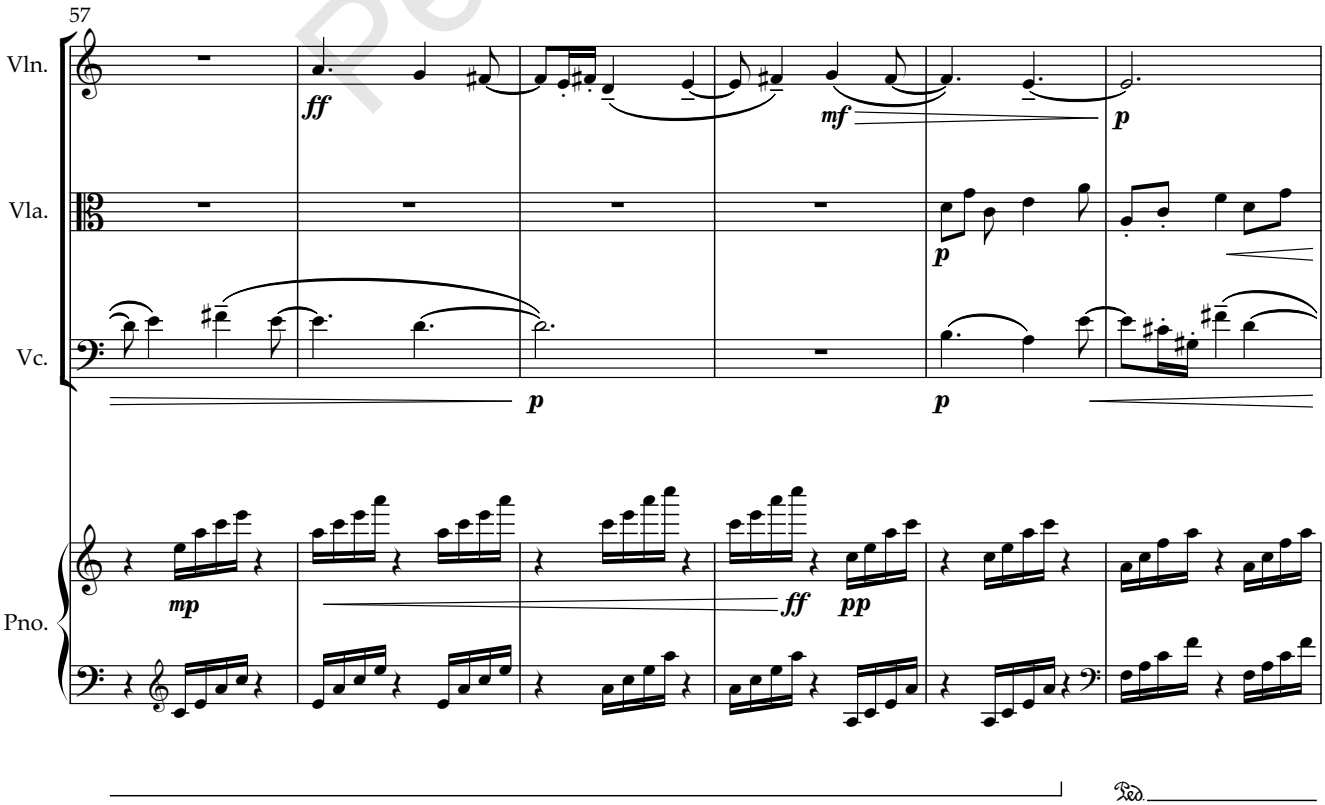


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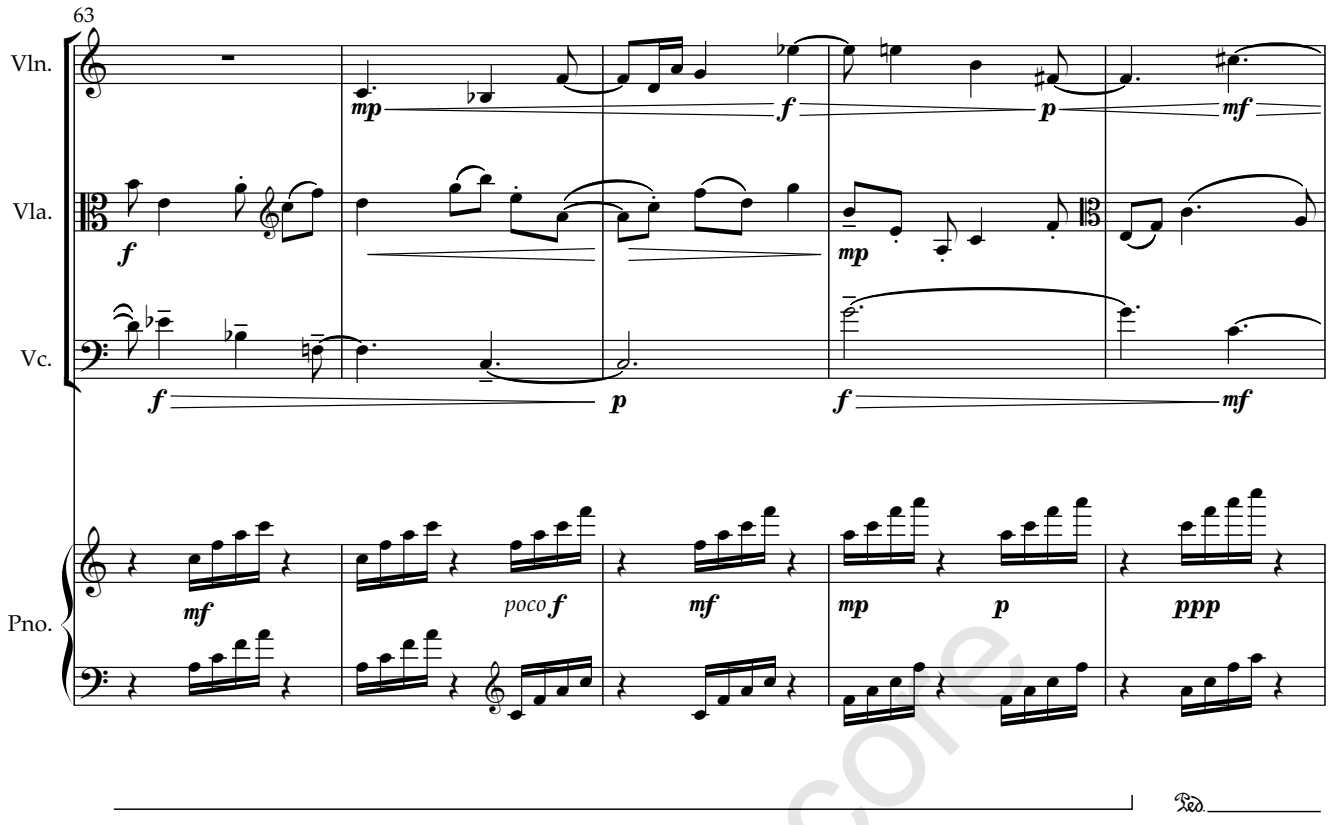


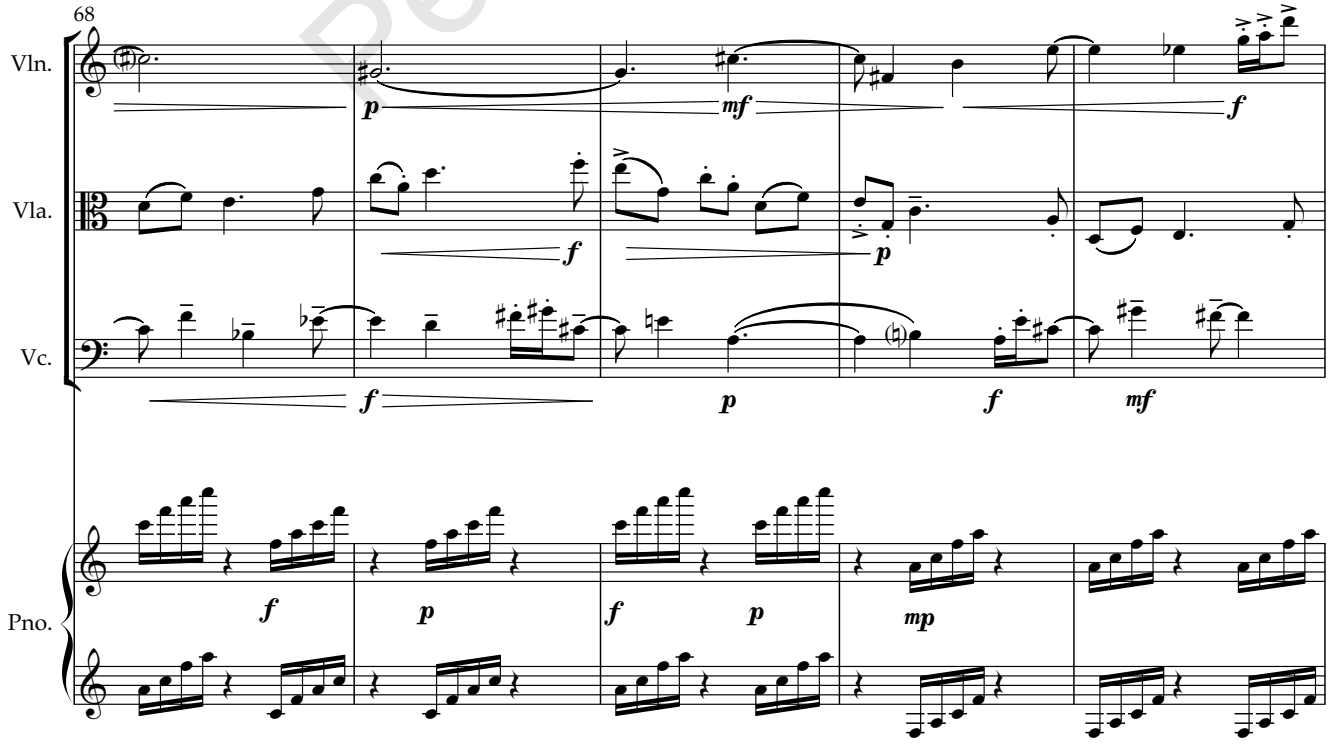


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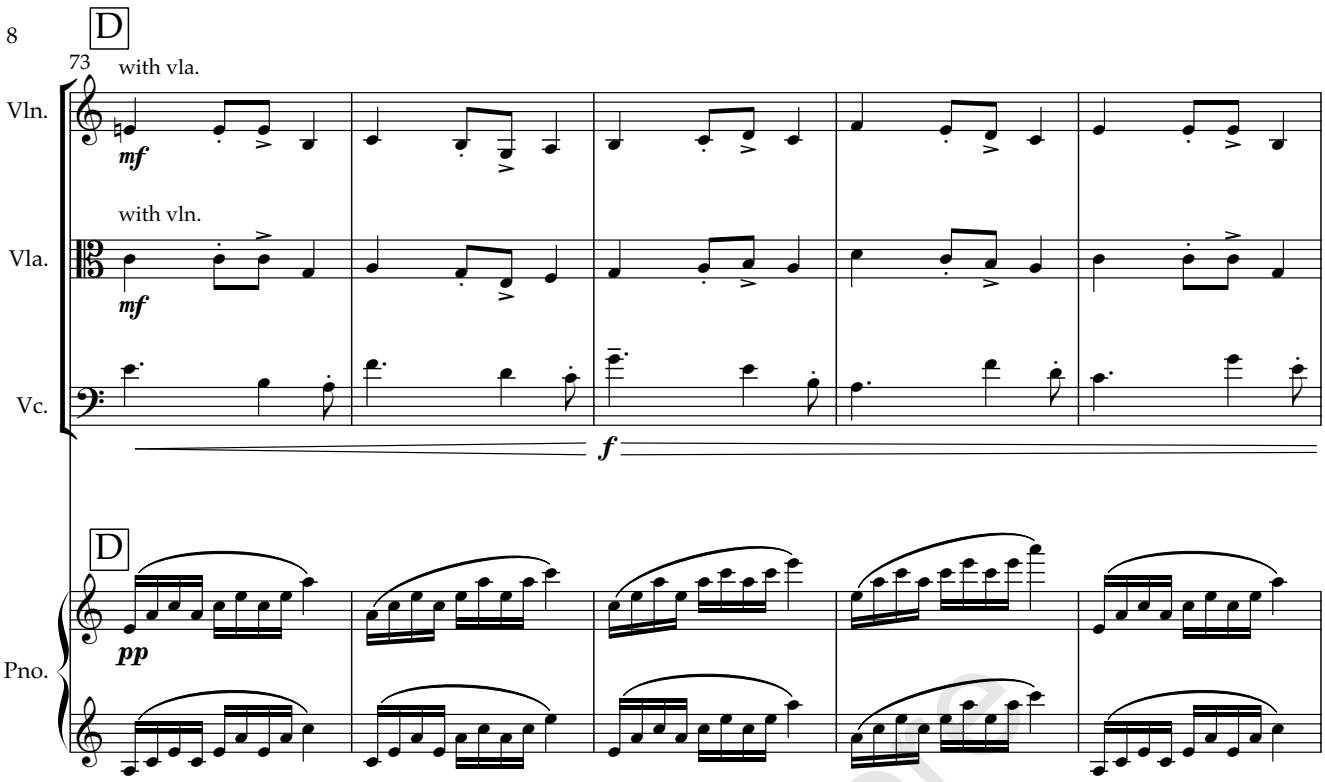


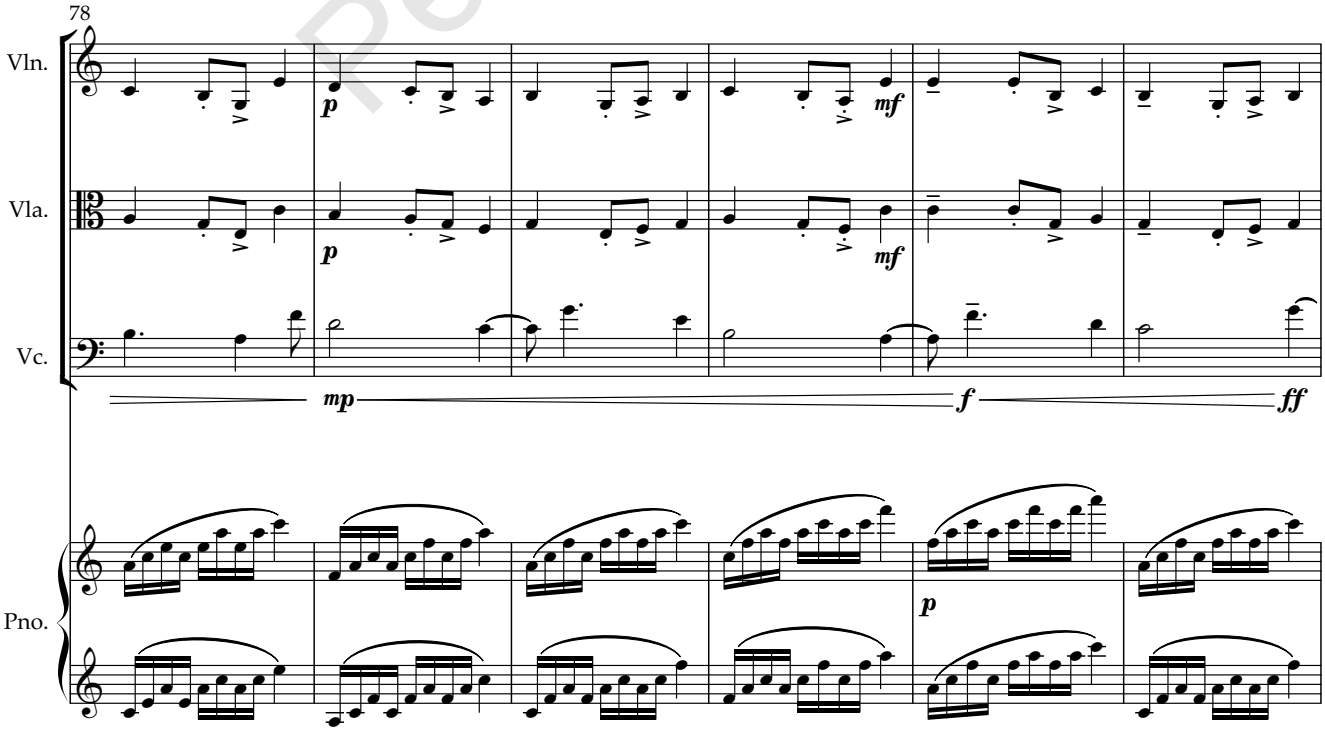


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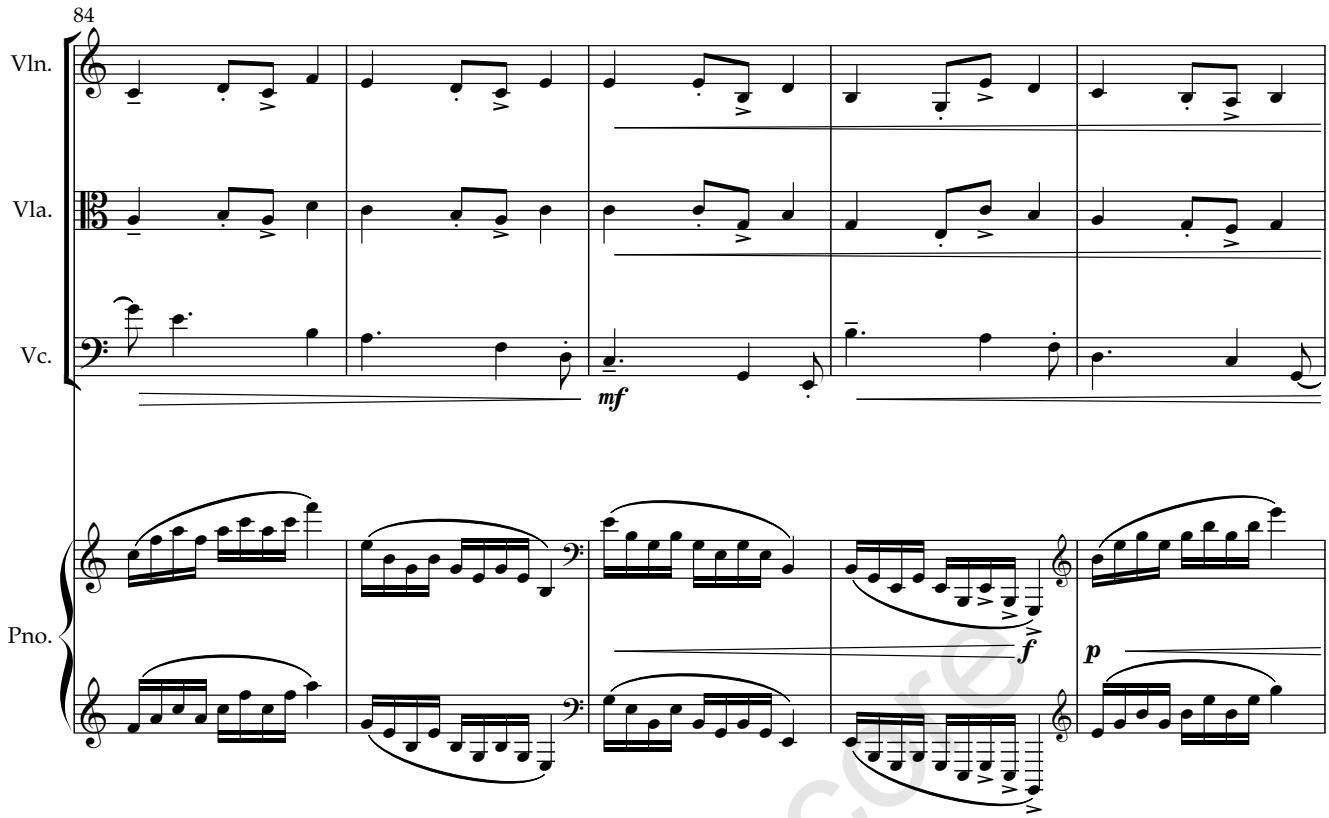


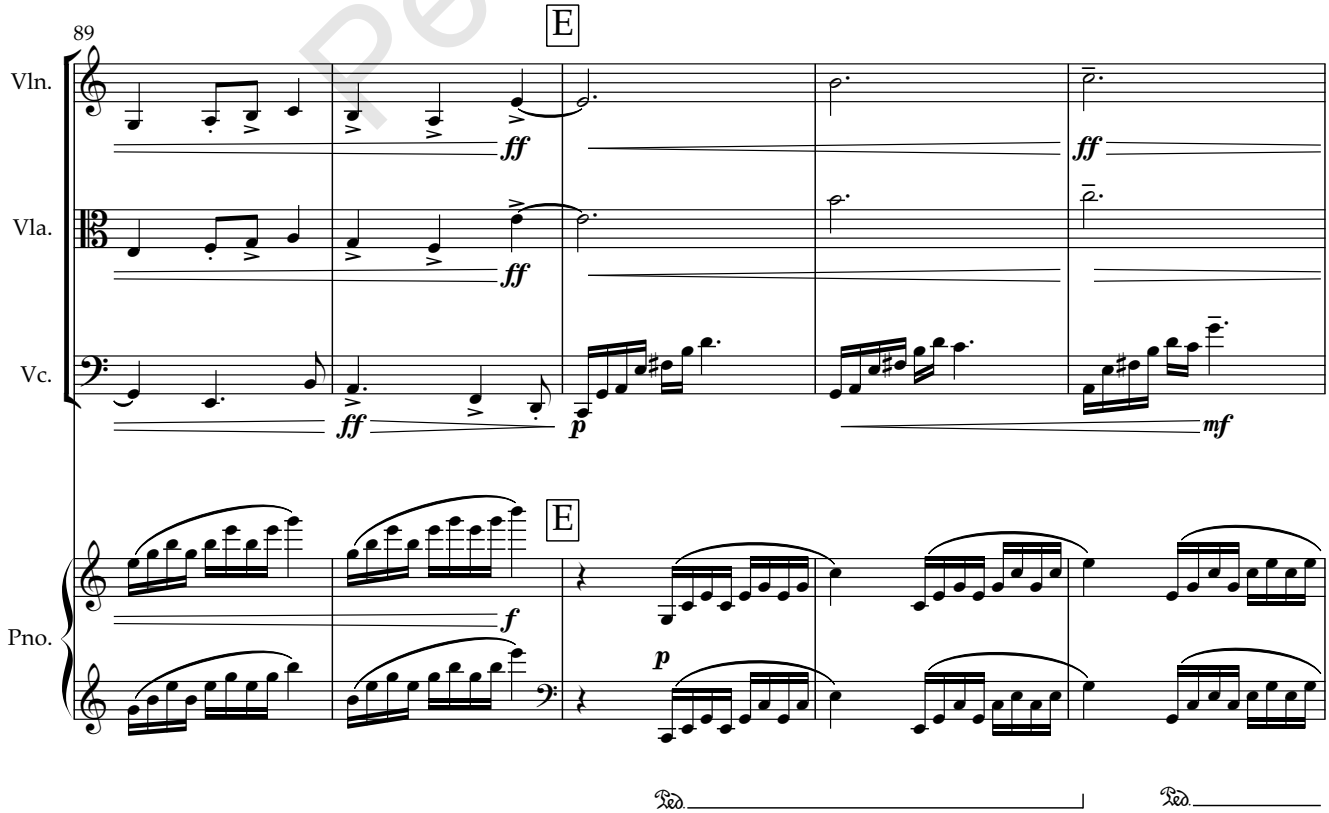


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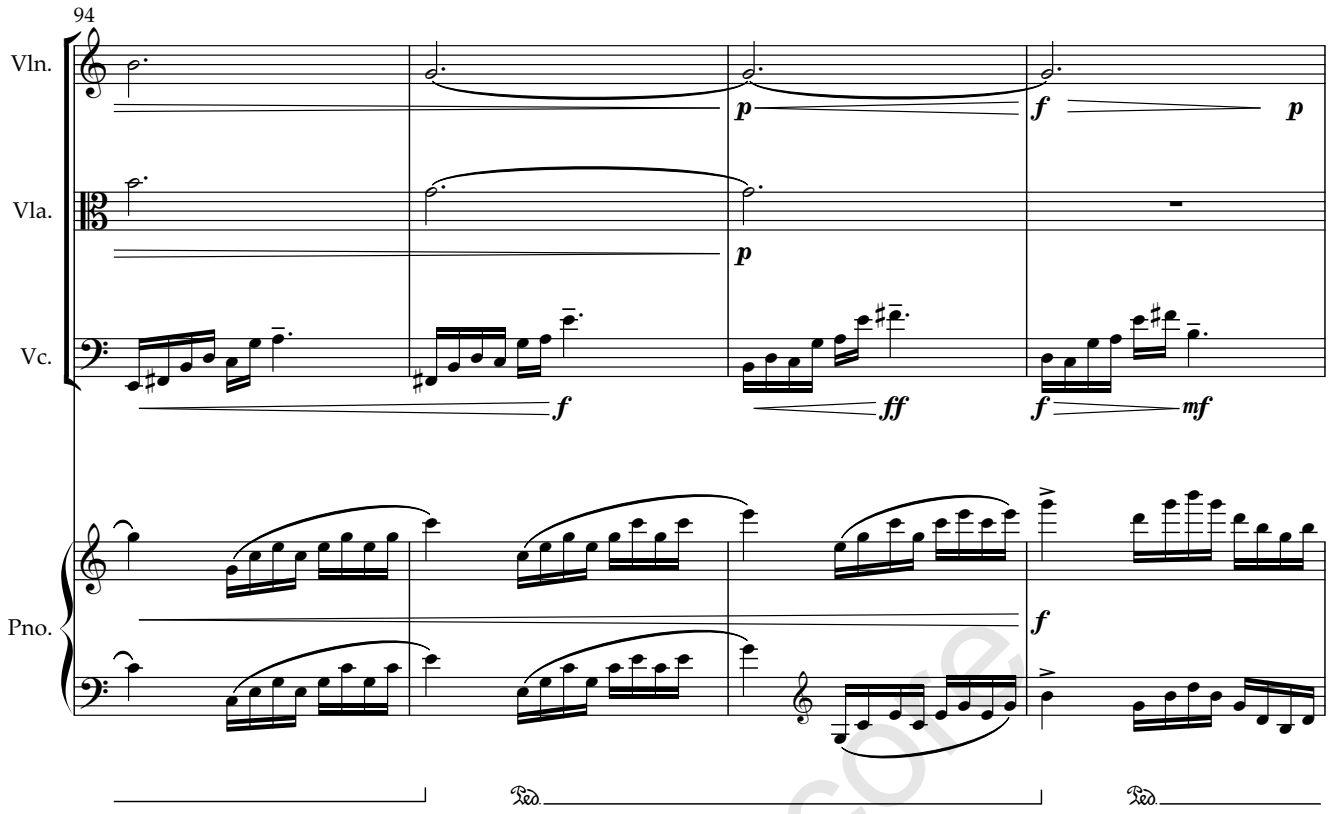


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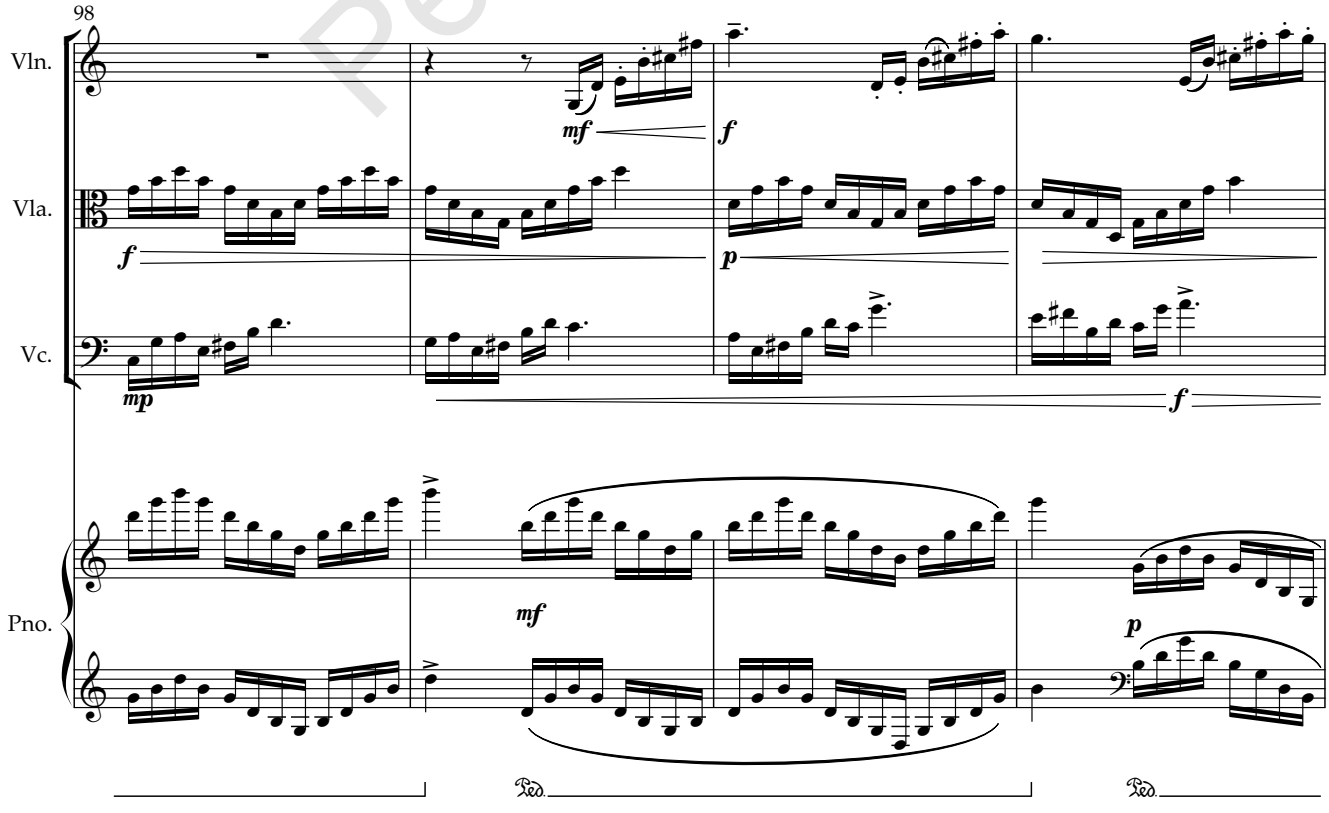

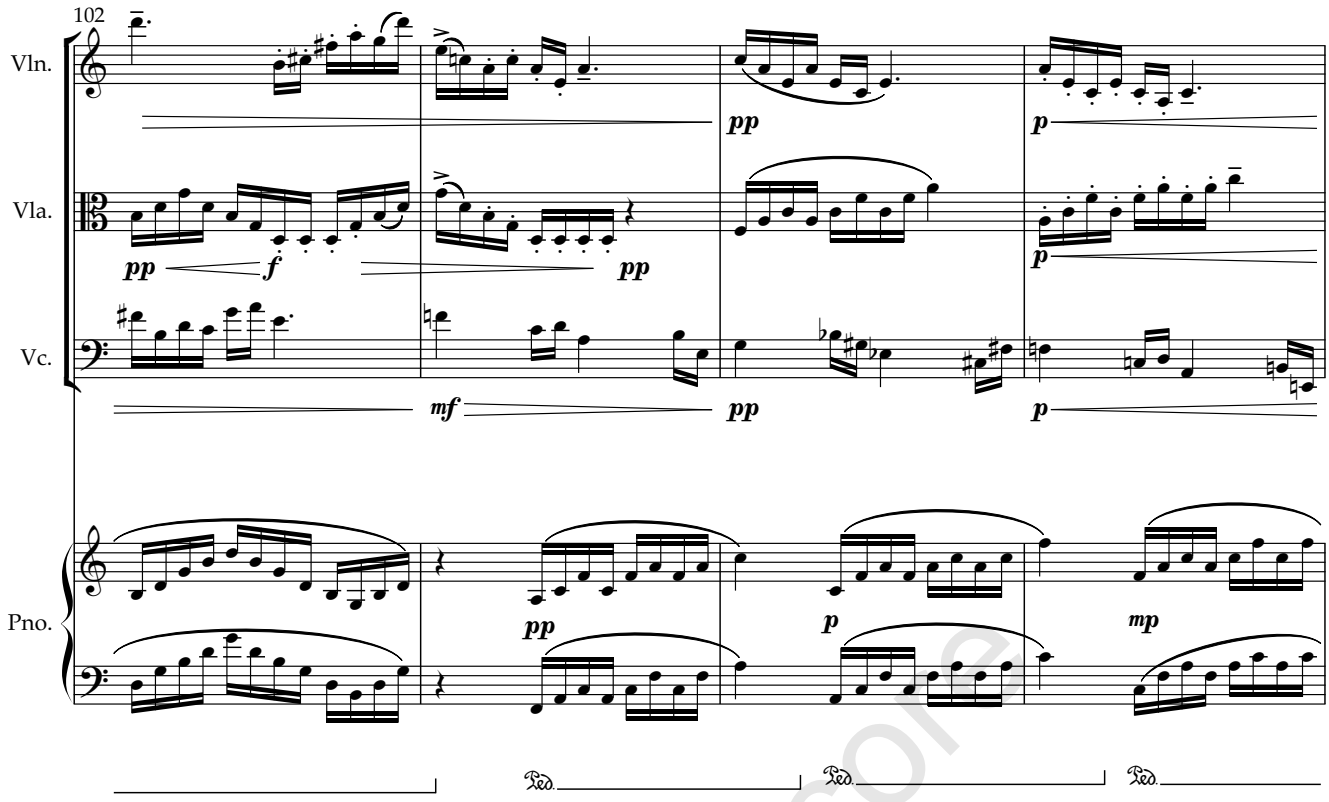


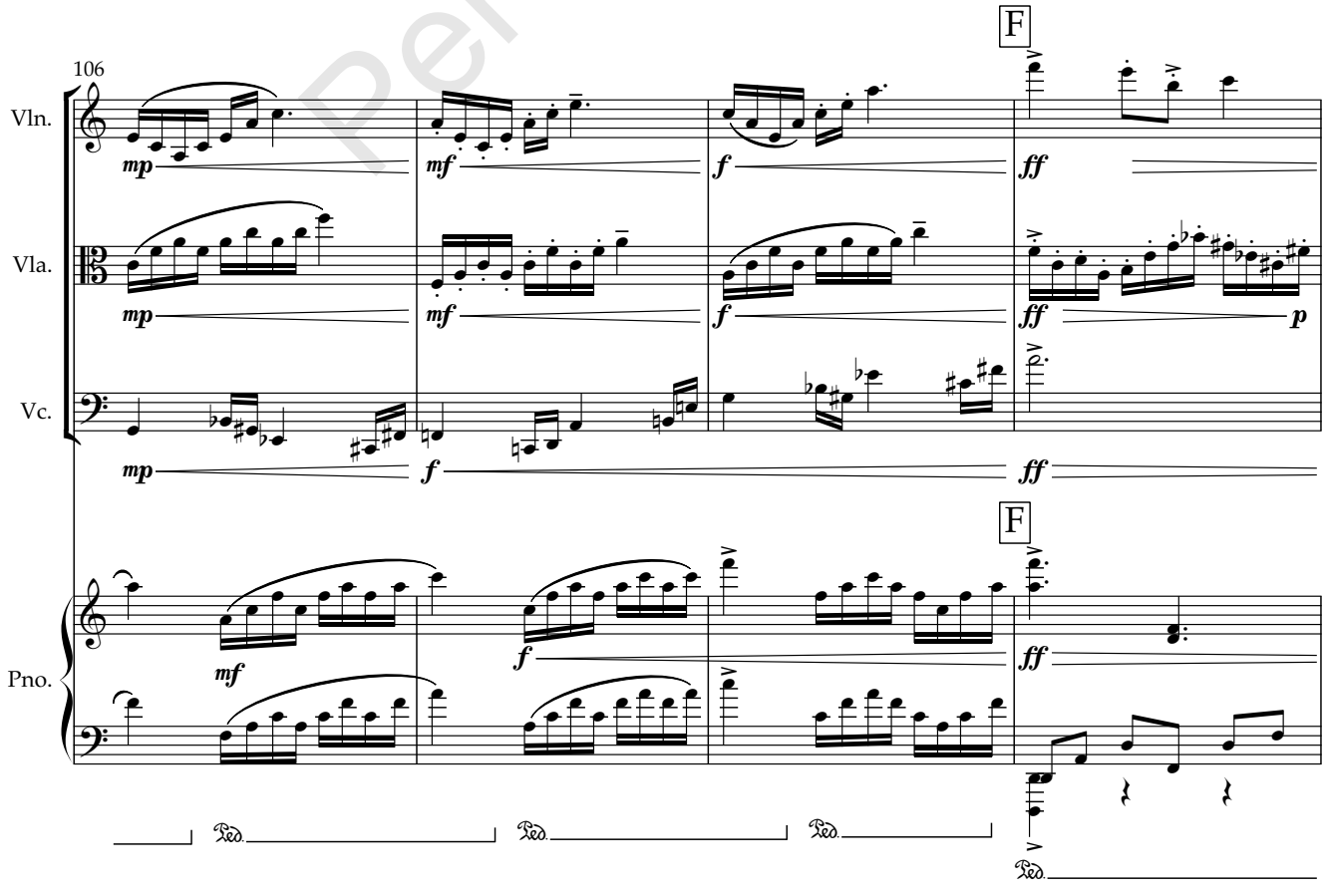


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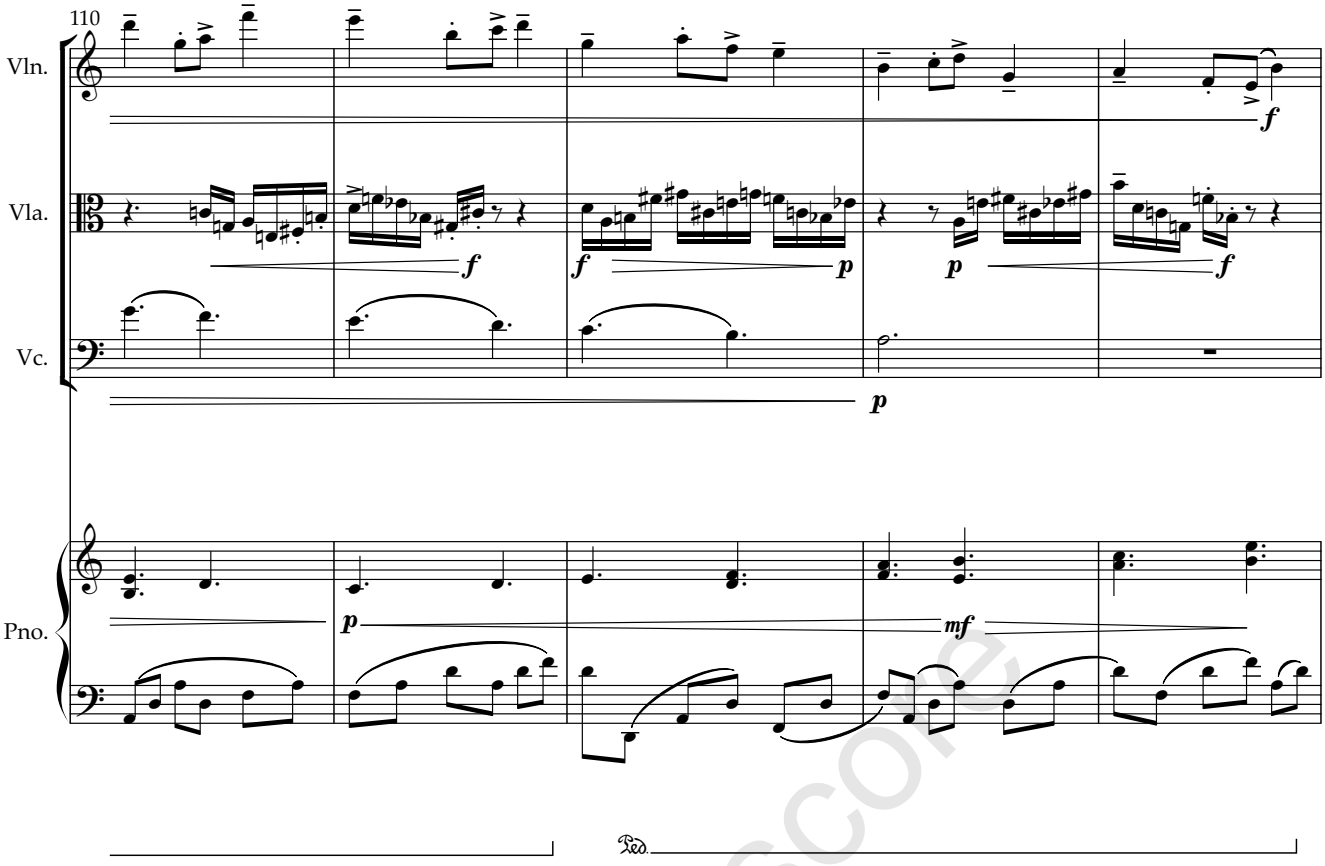


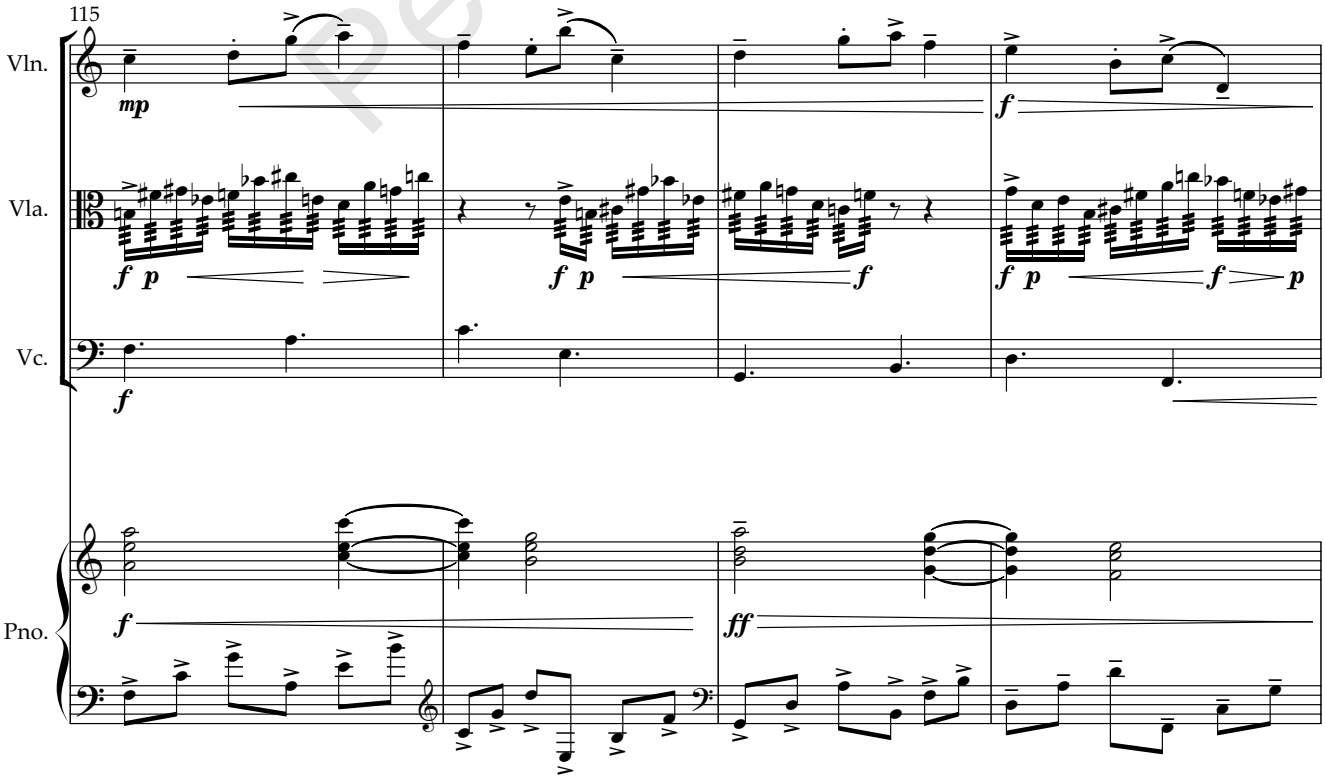


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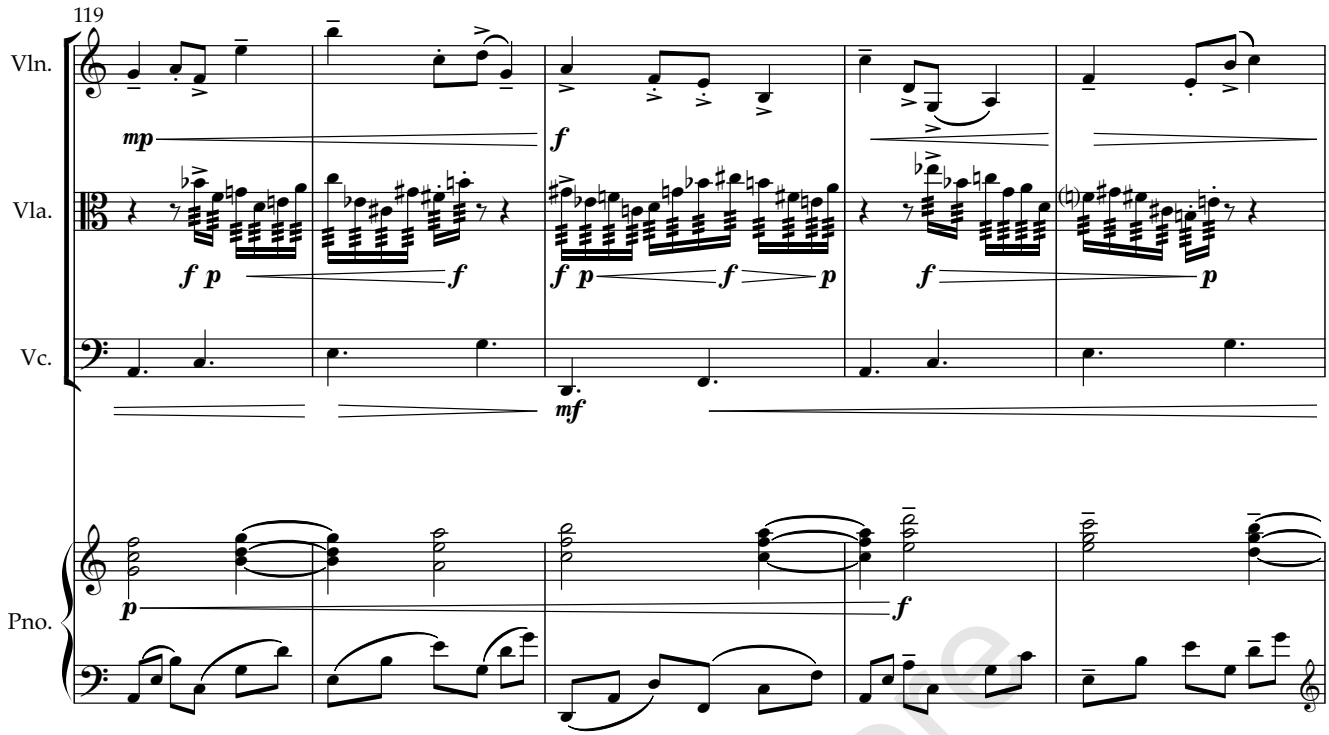


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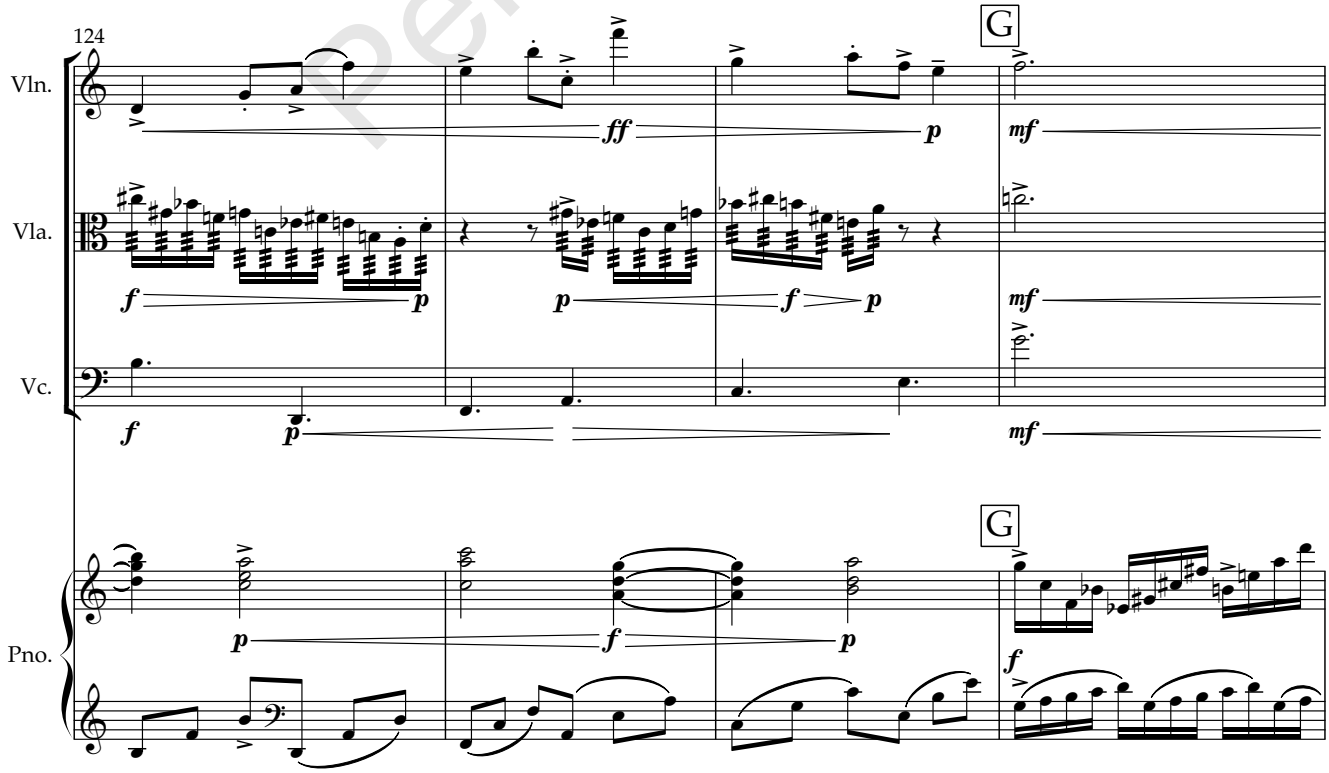

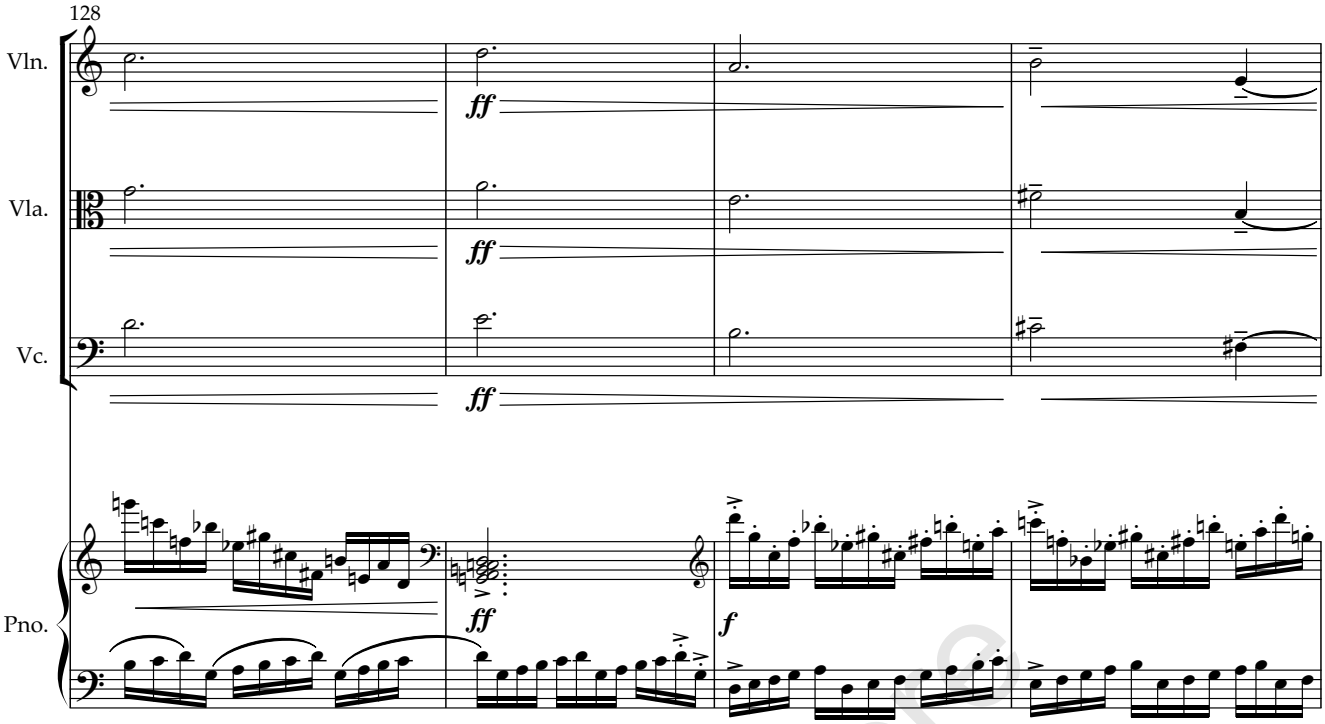


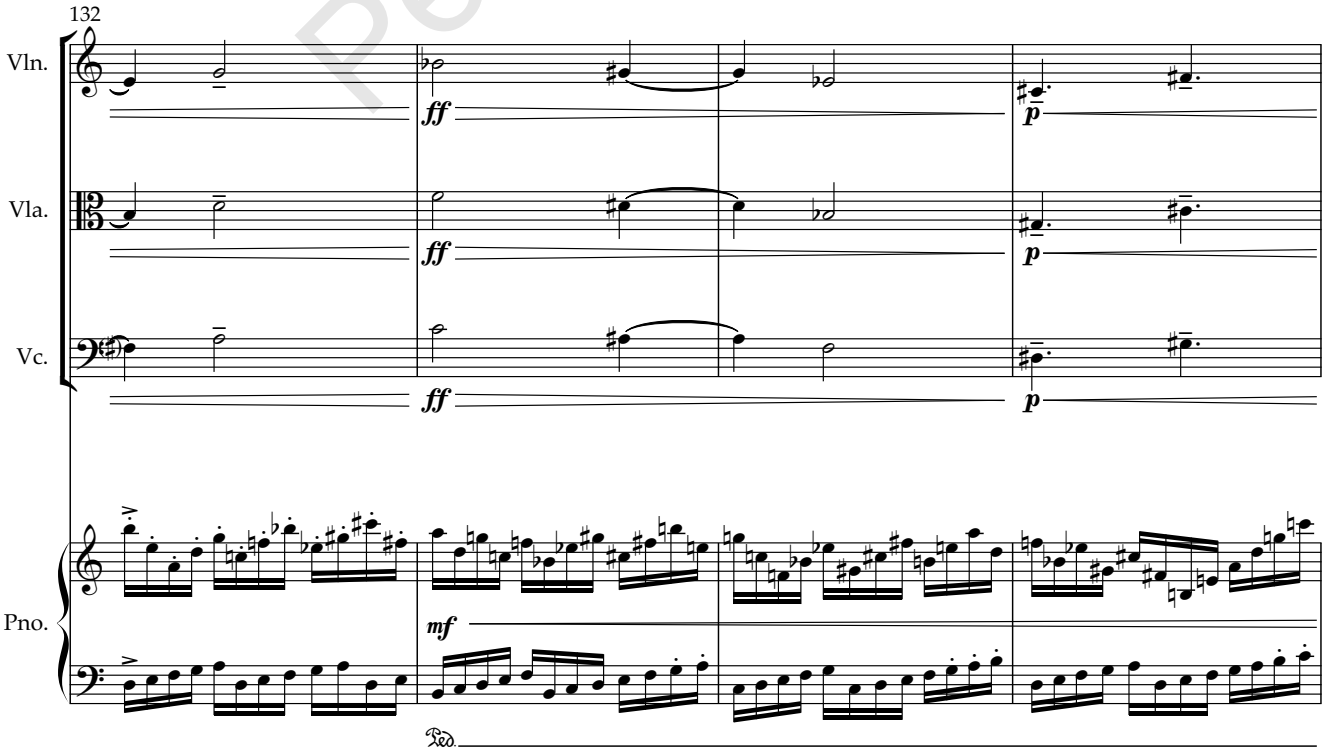


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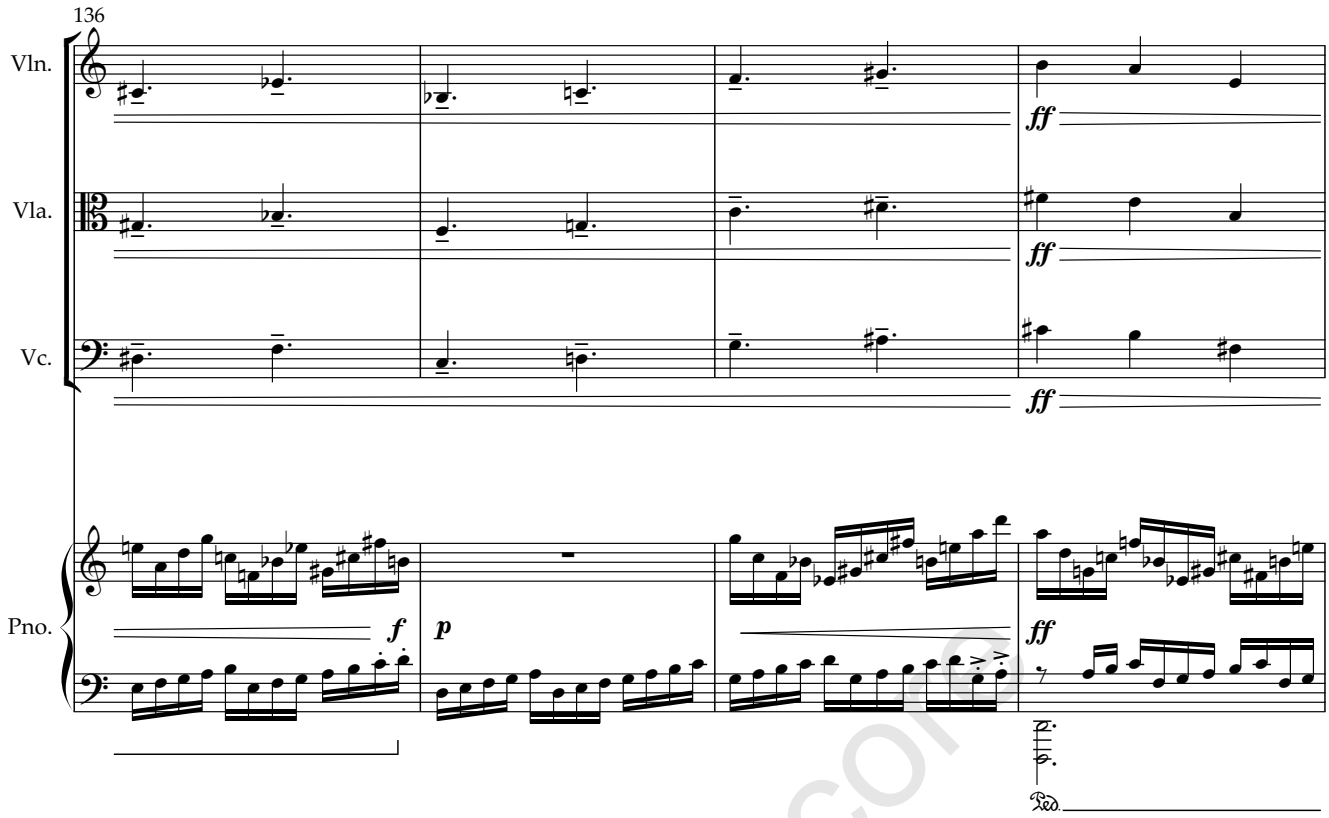


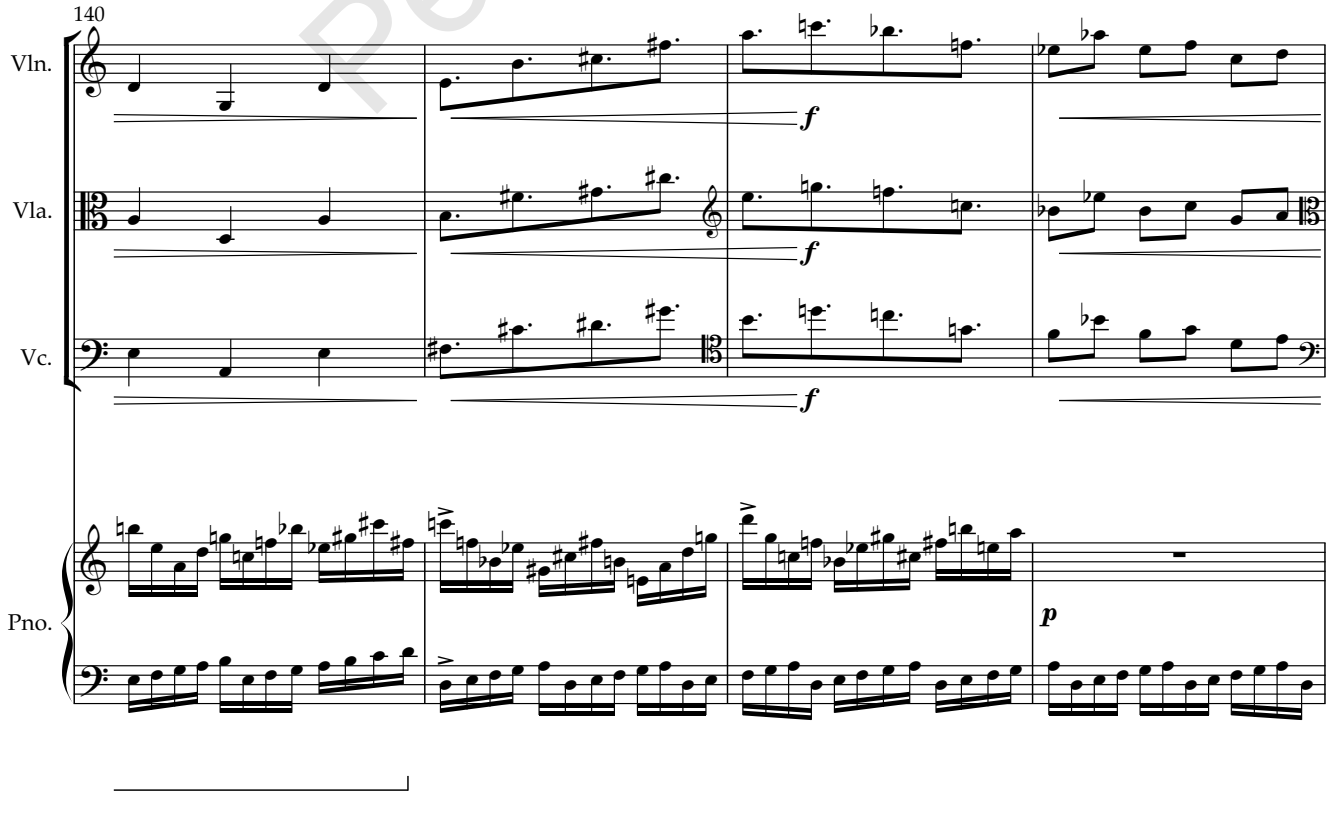


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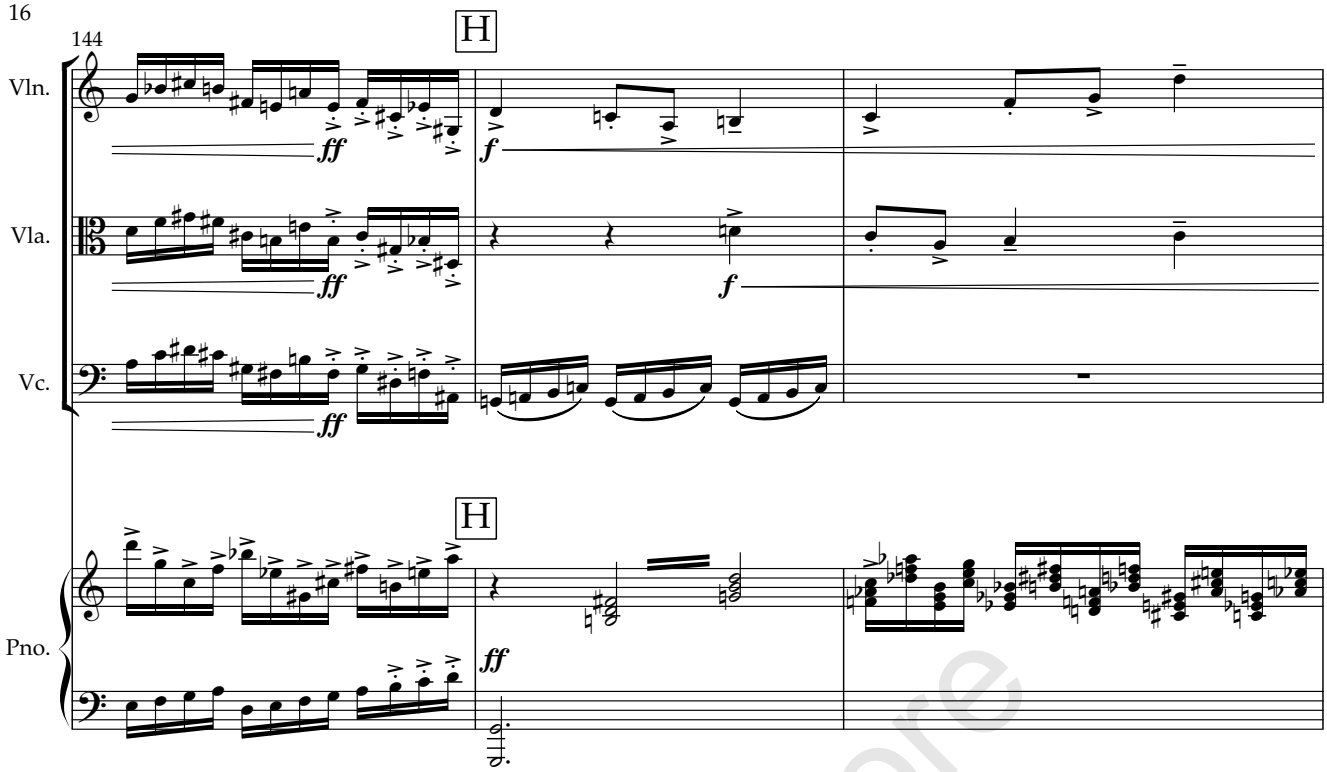


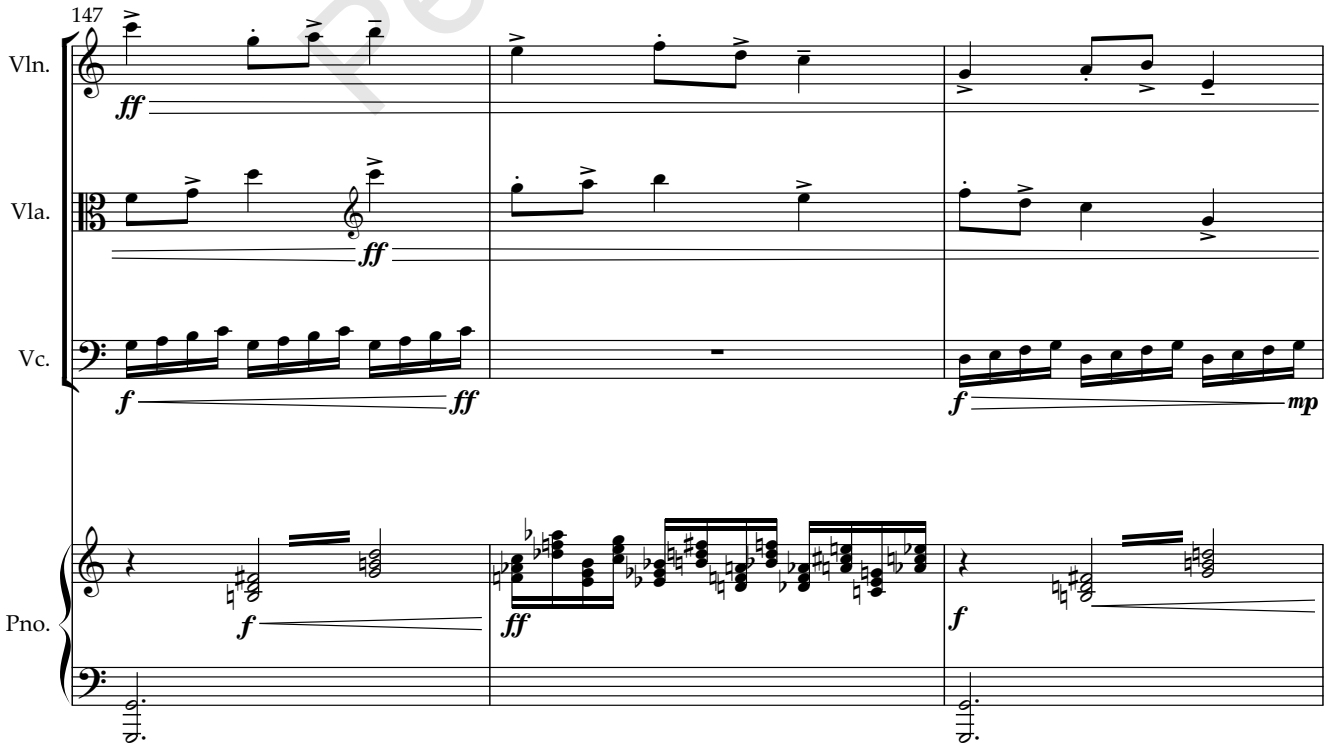


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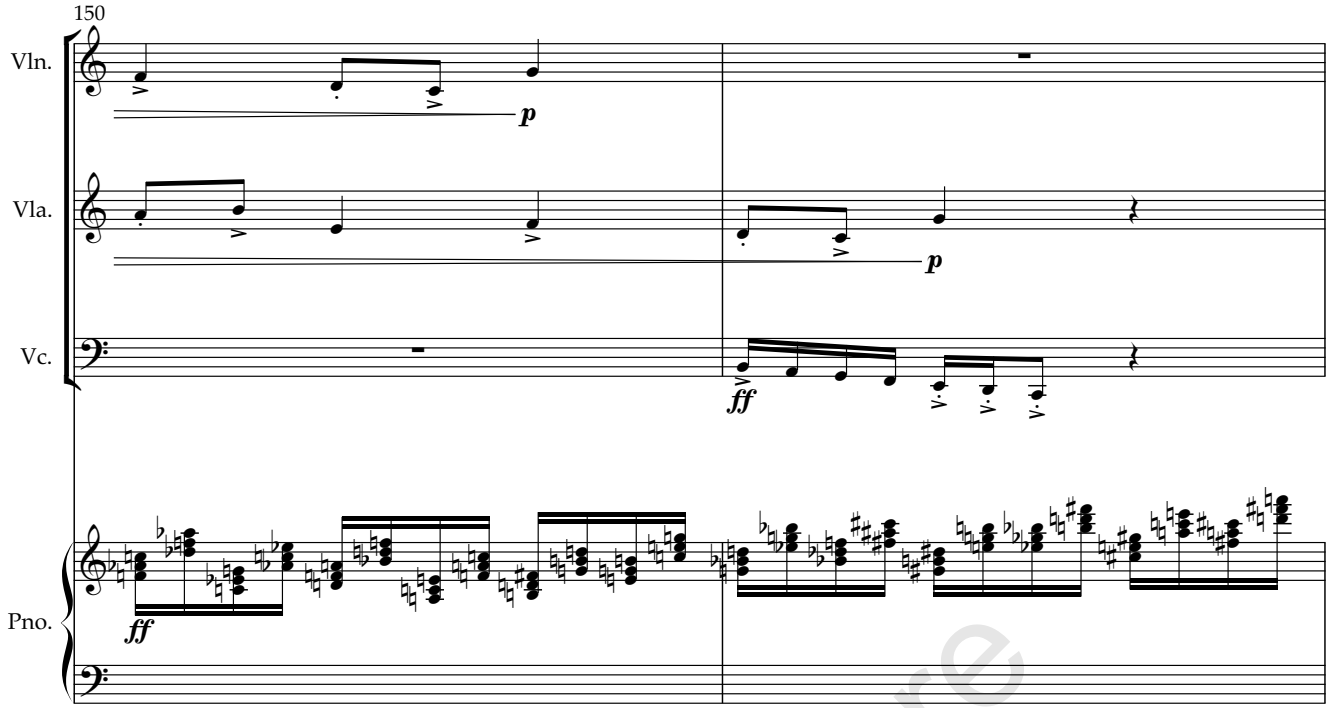


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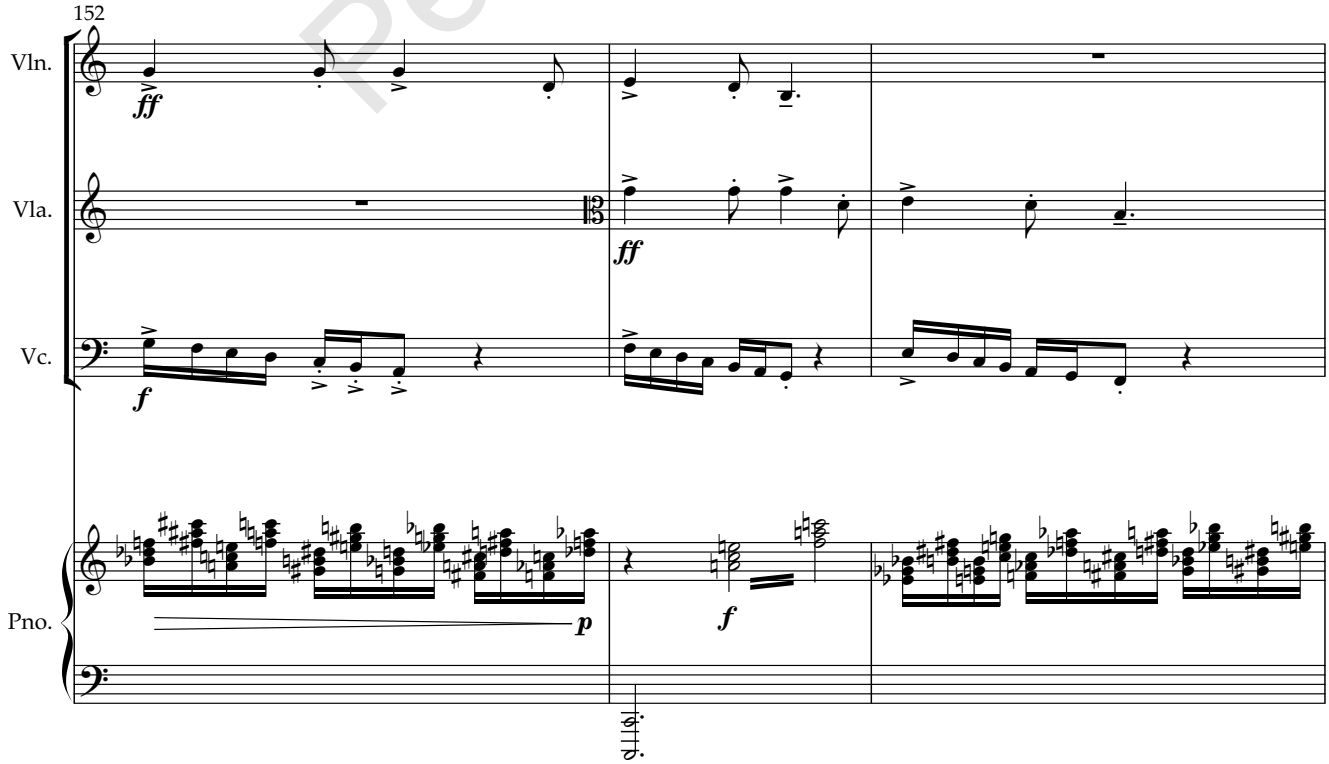

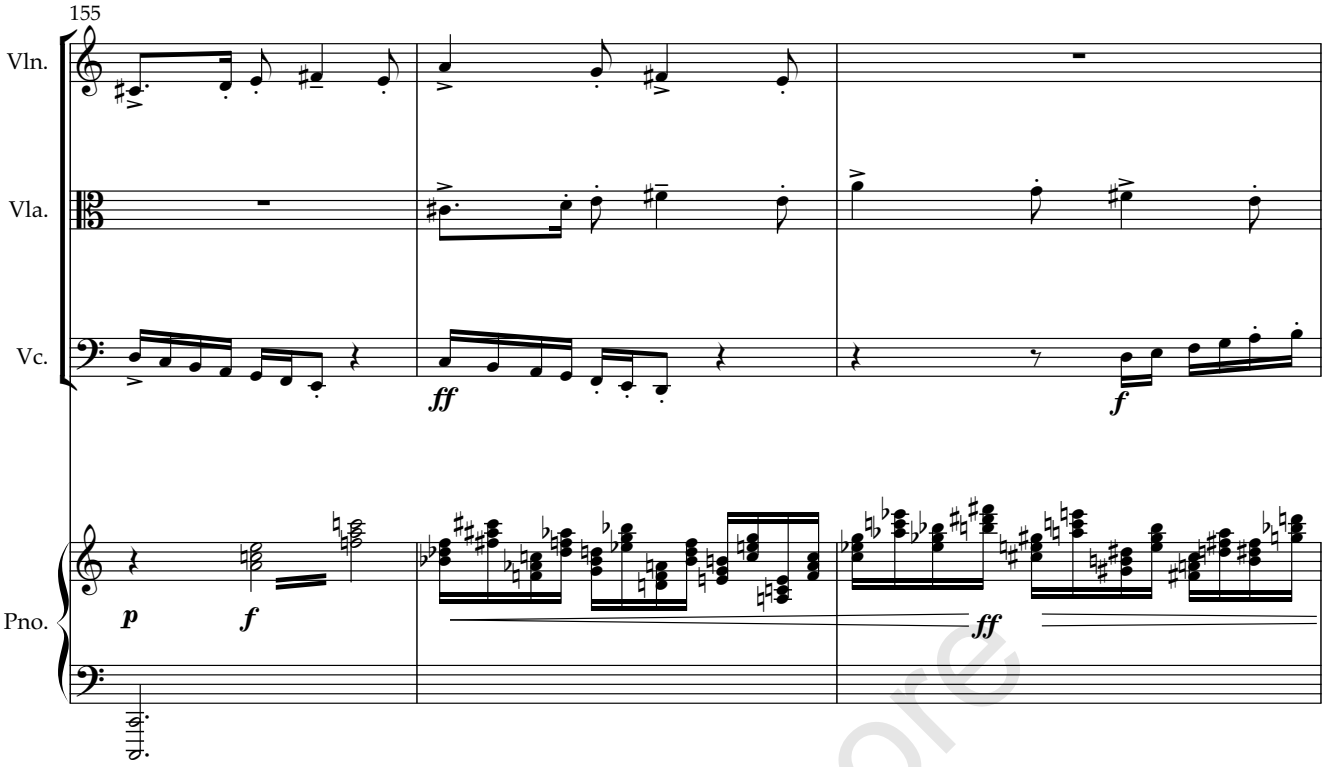


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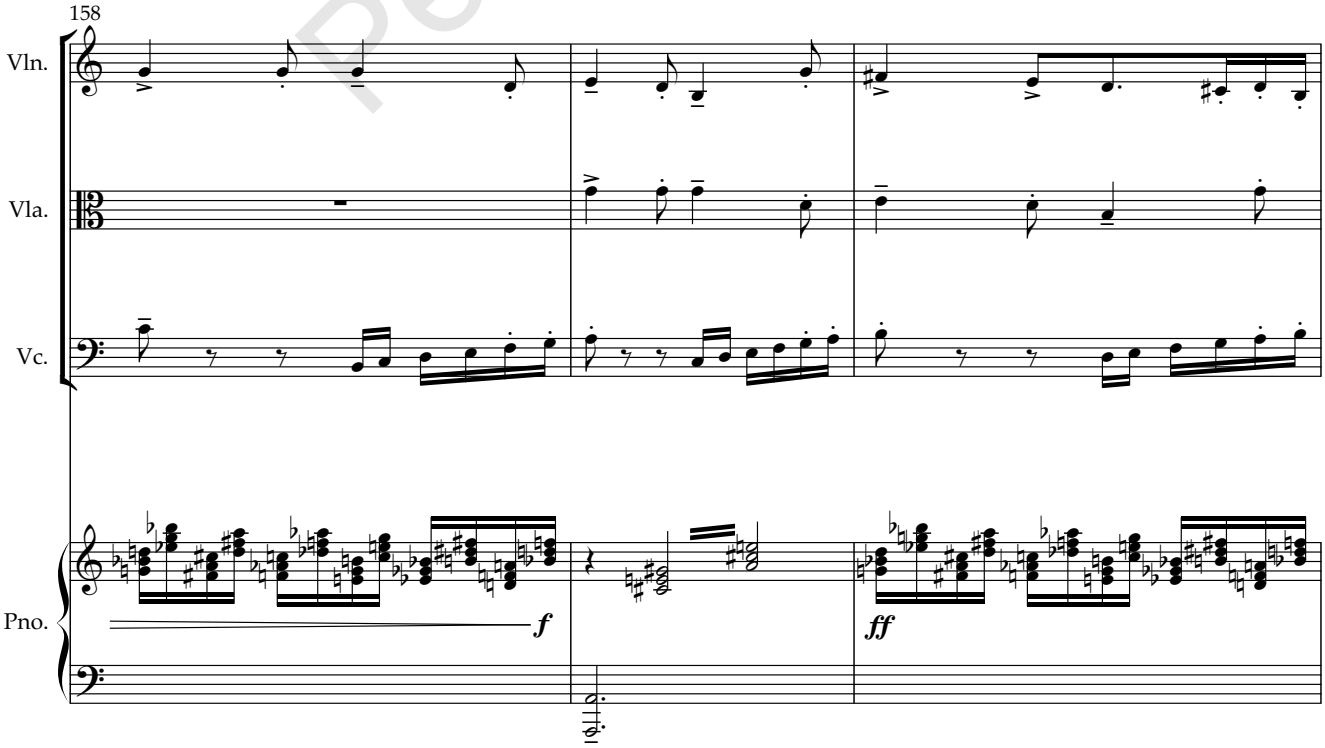

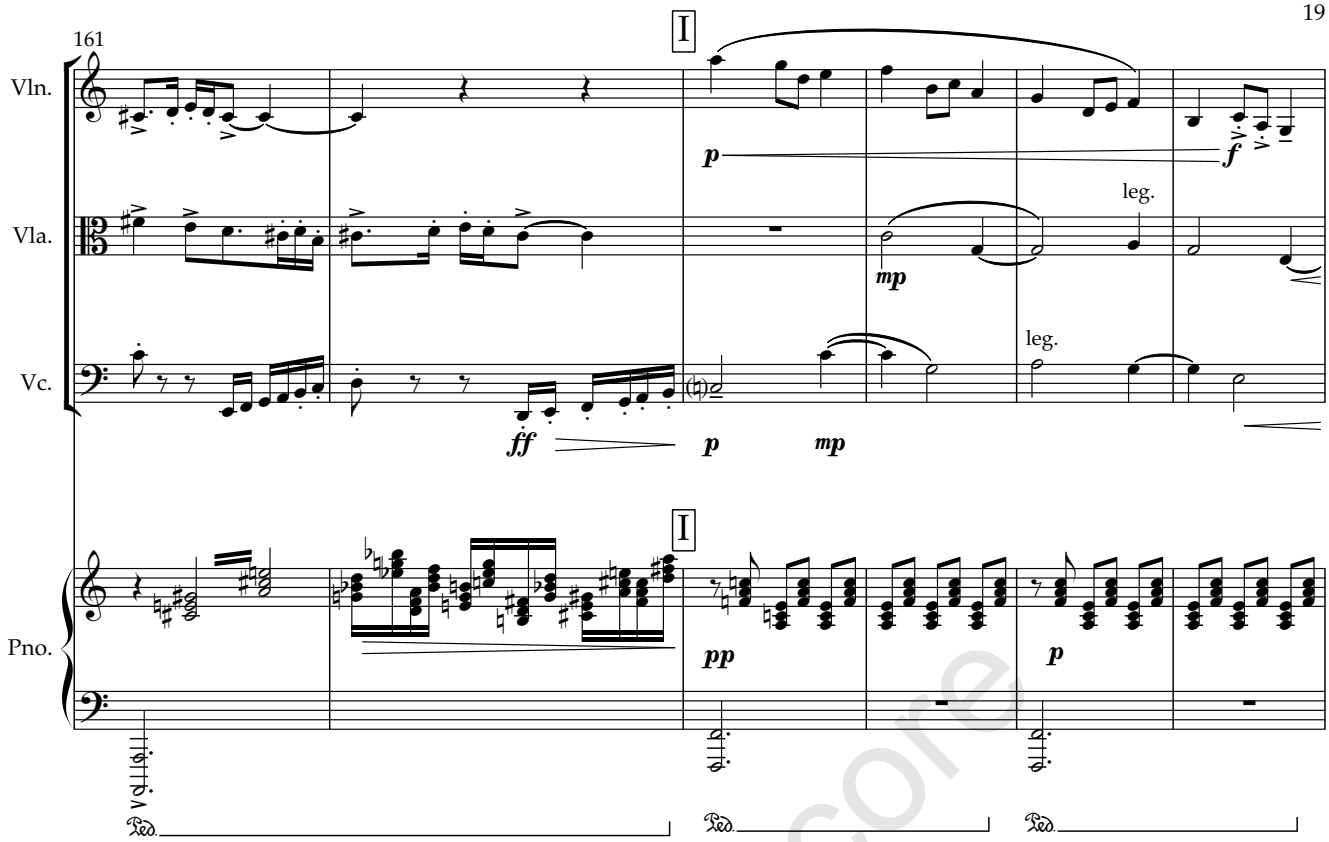


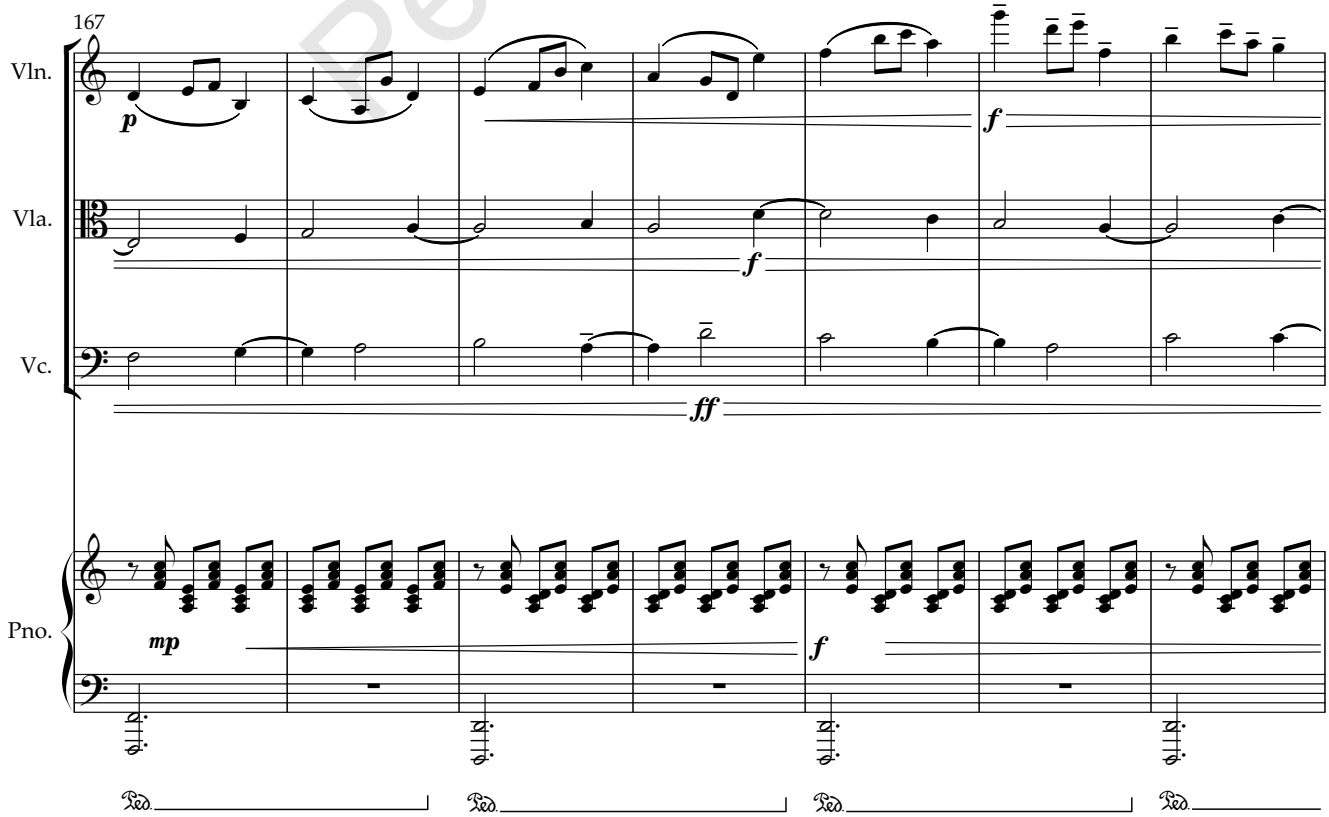


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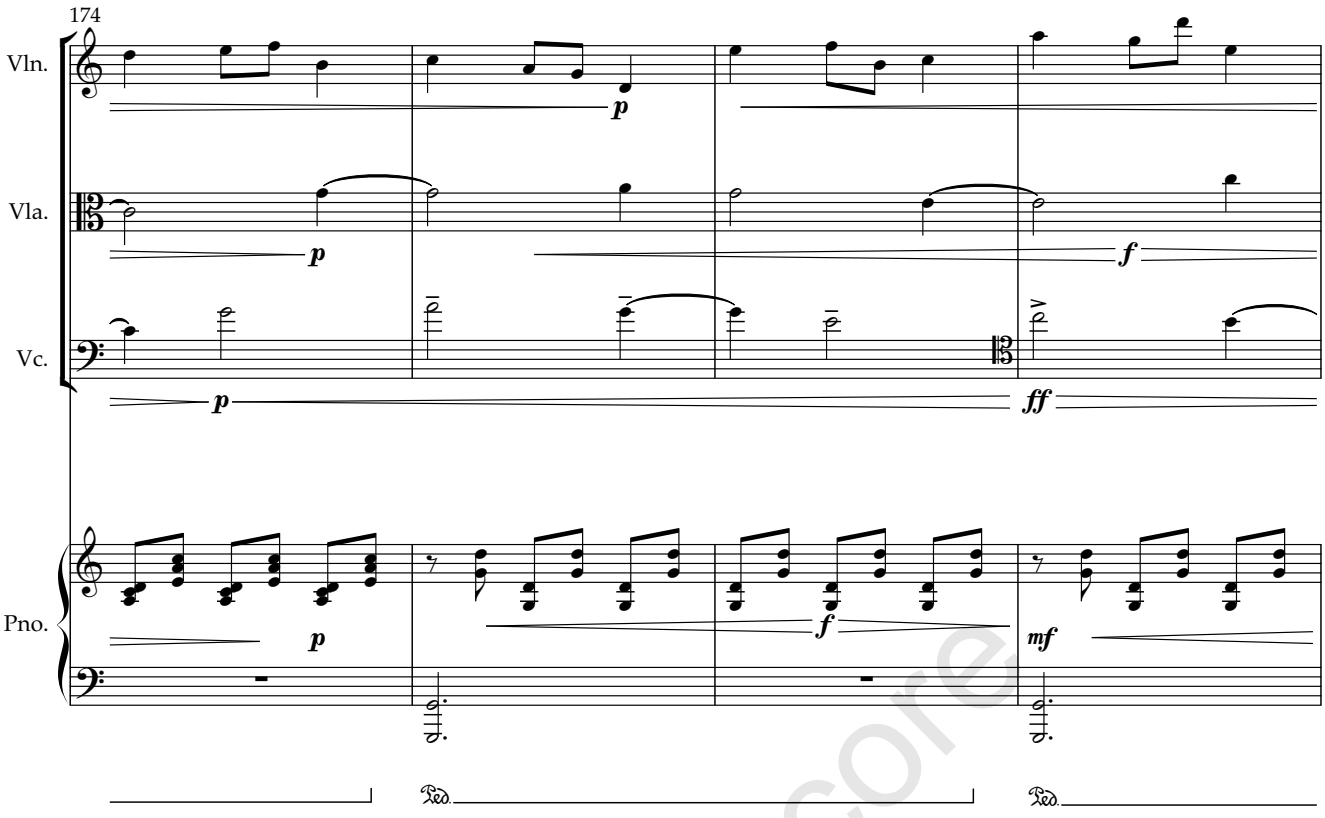


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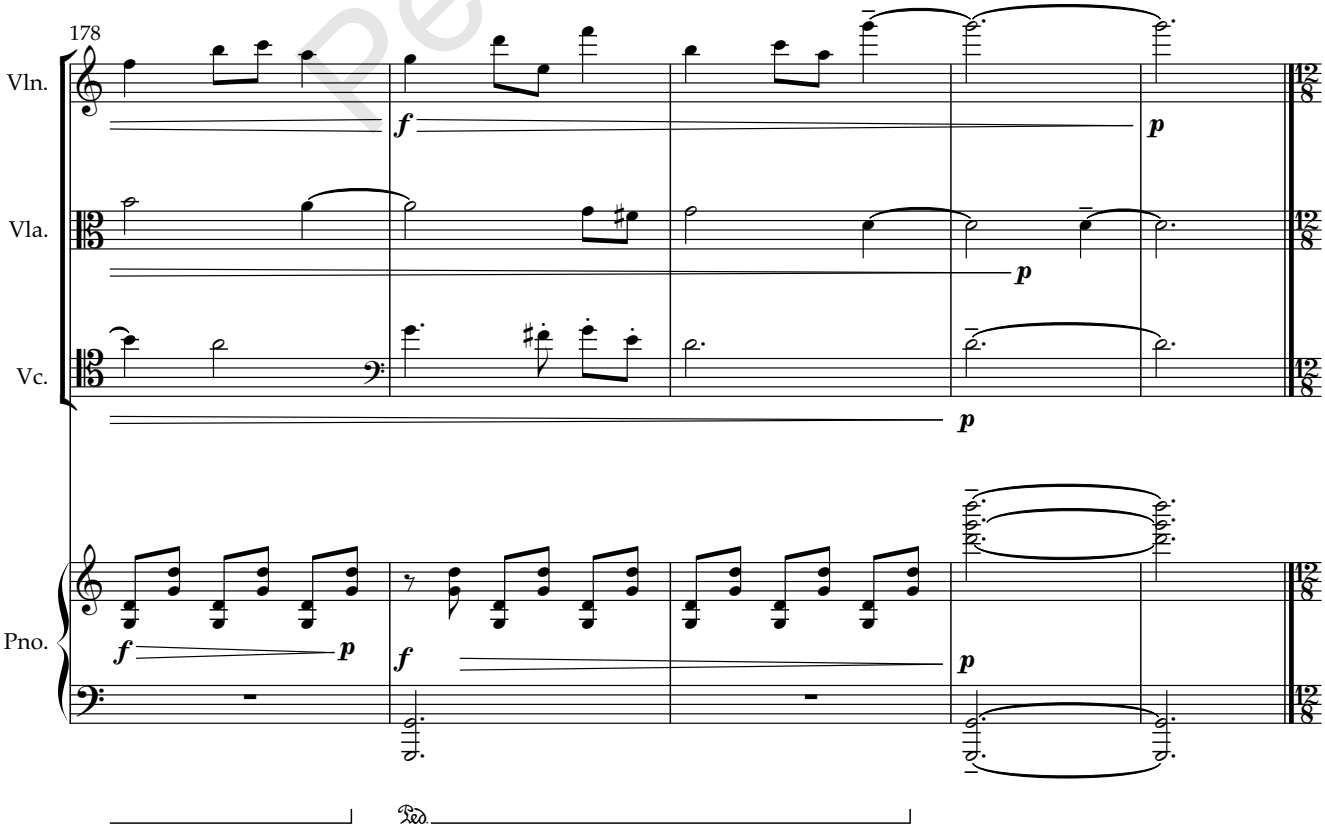
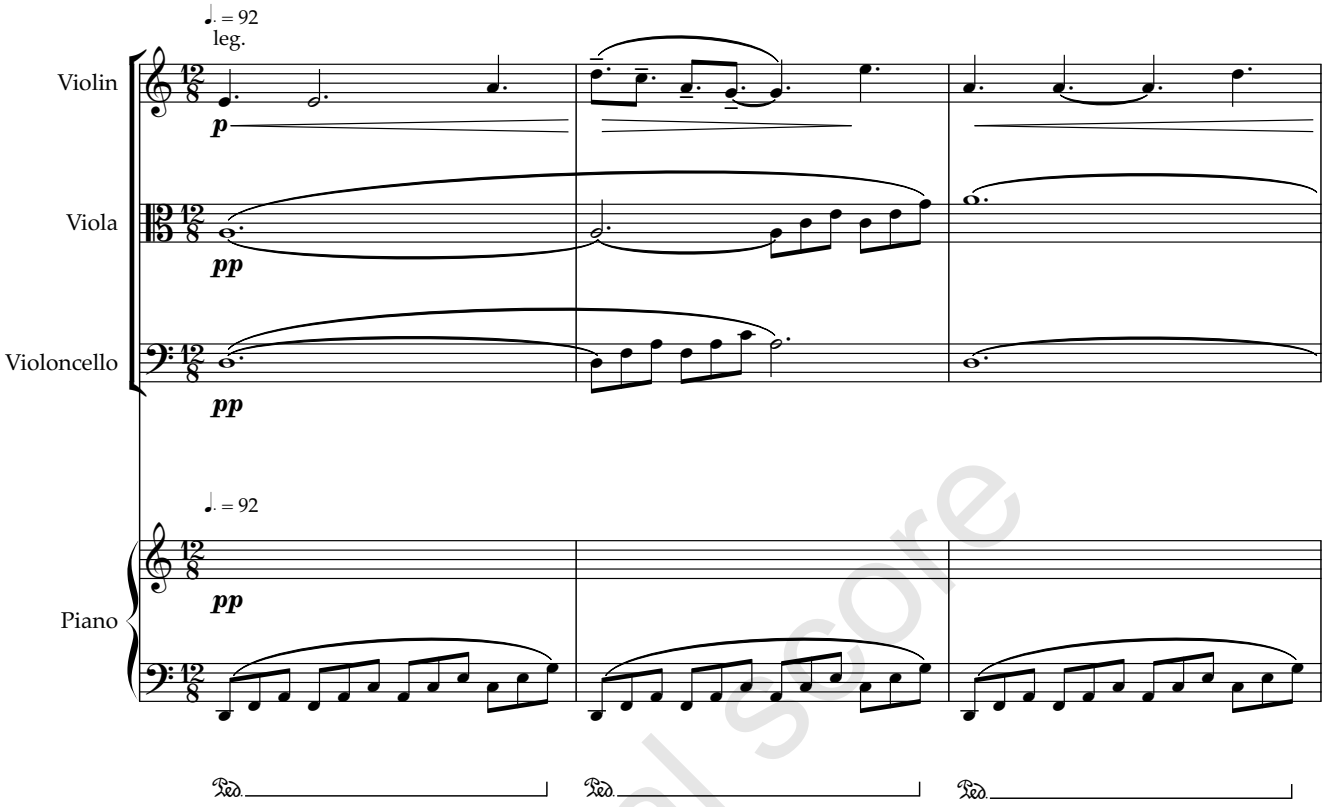


# The Woods So Wild

II

Ed Hughes

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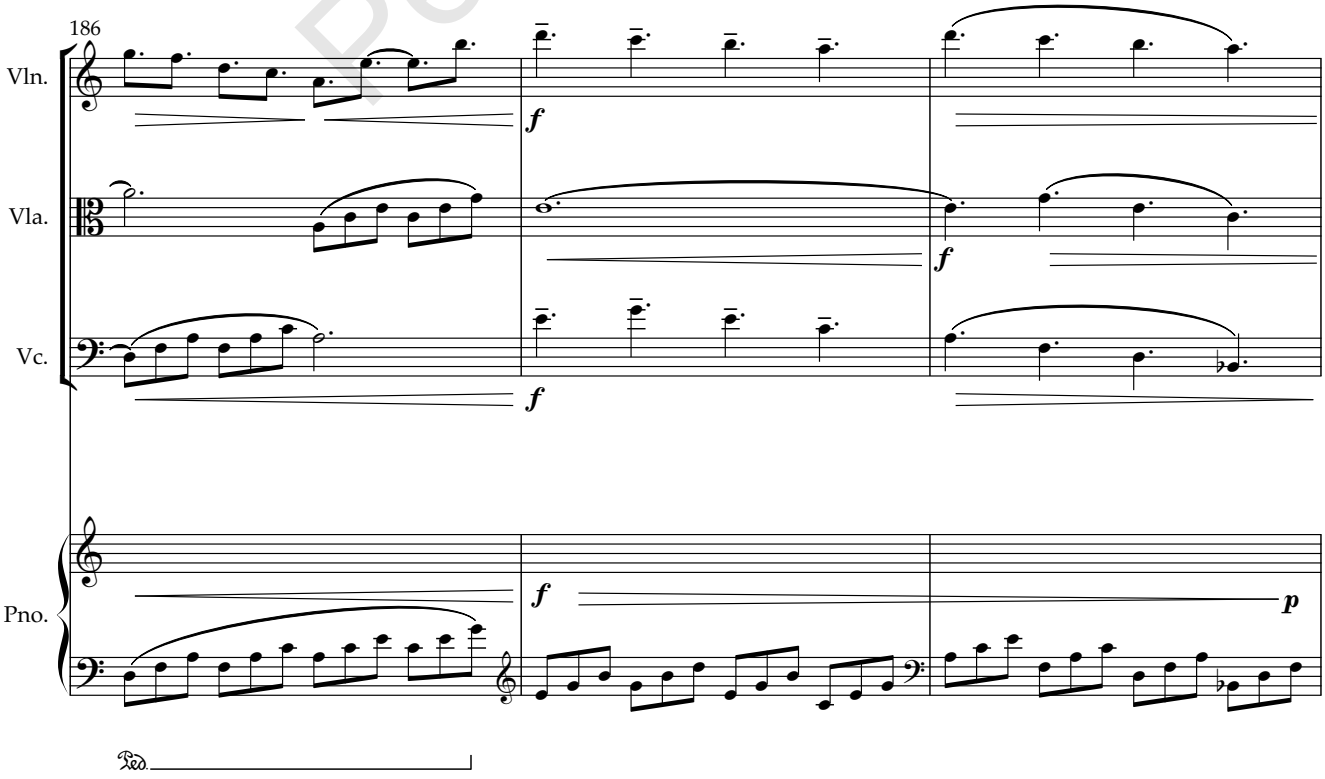

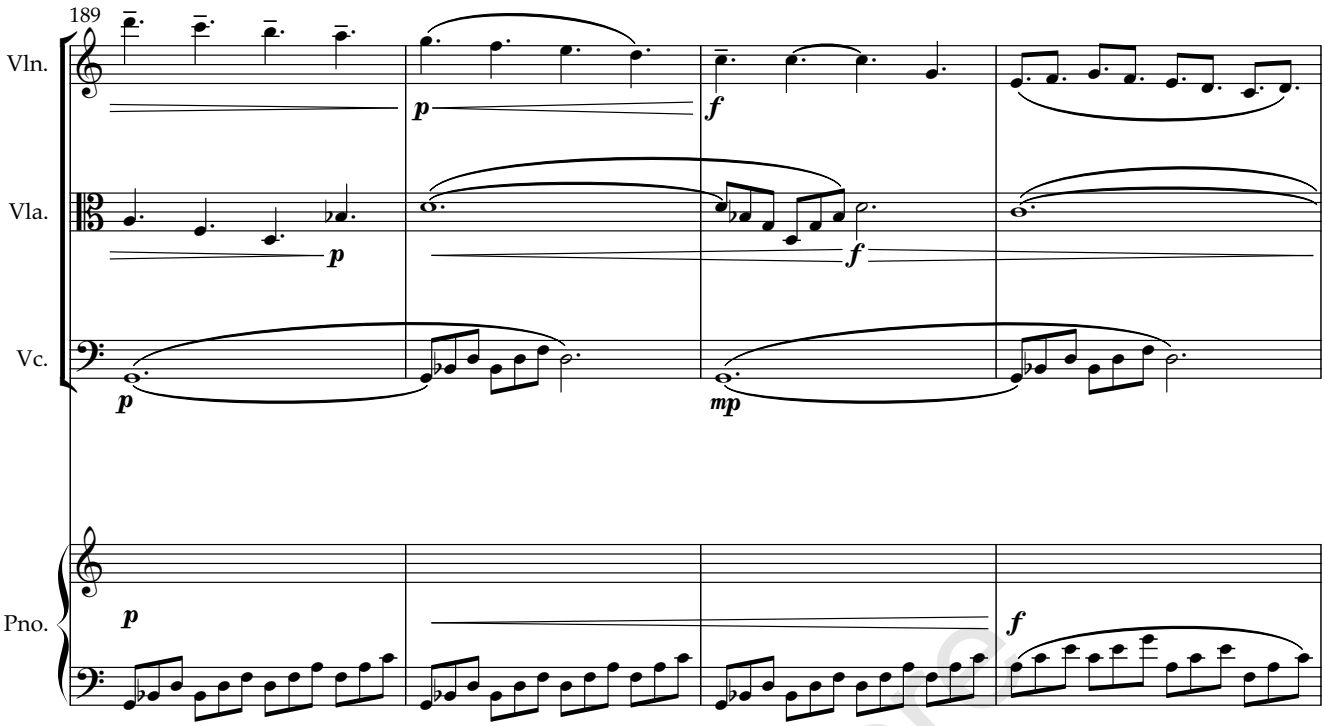


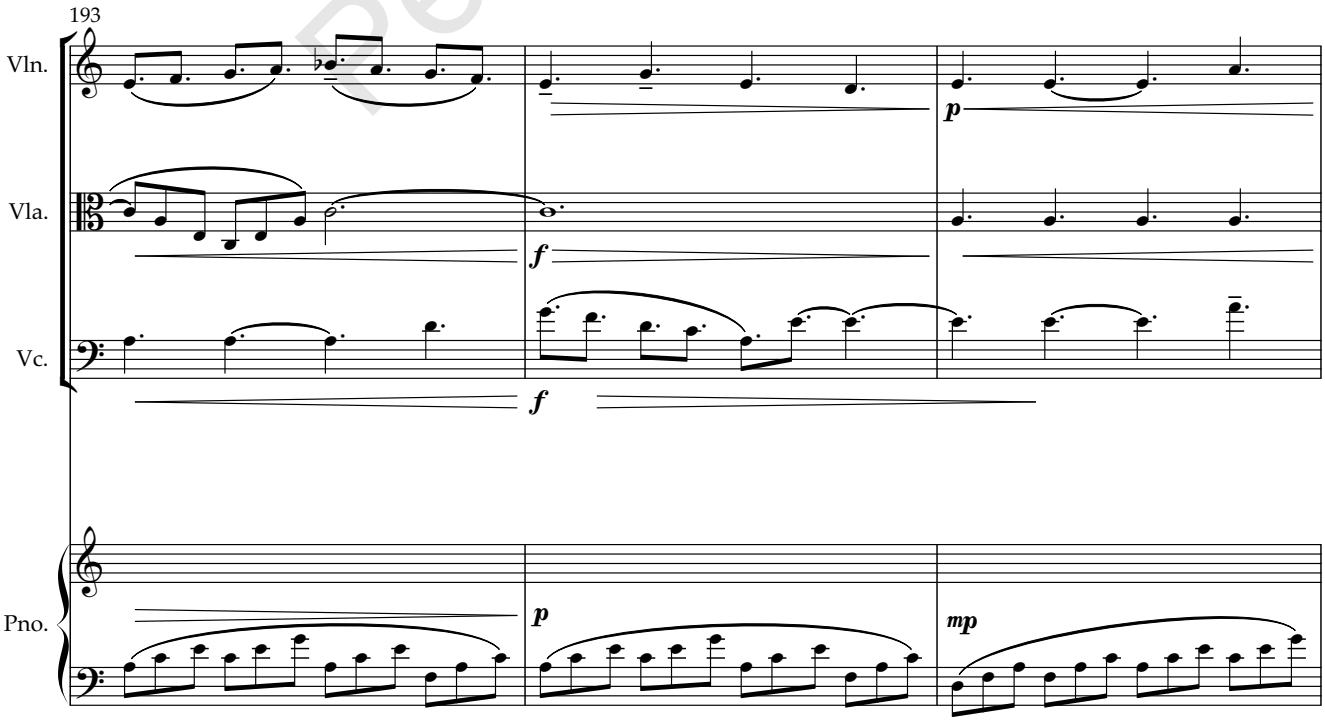


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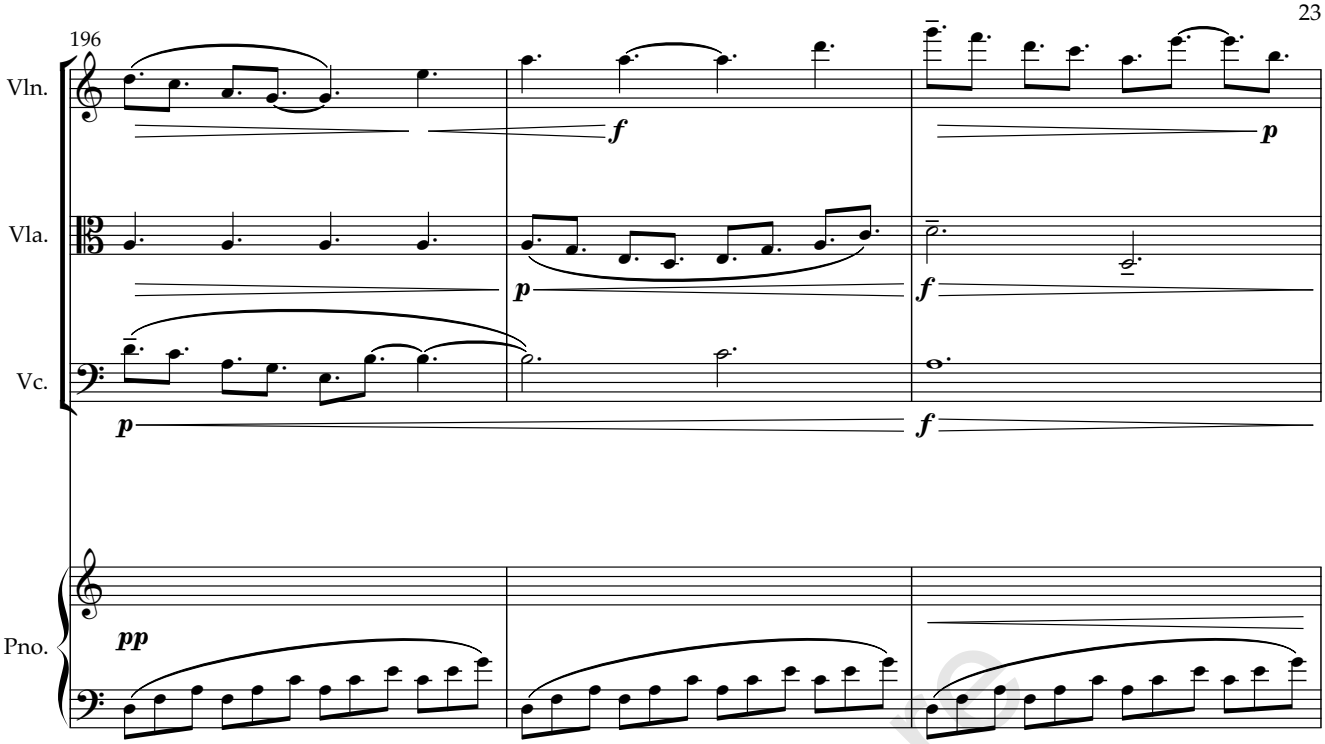


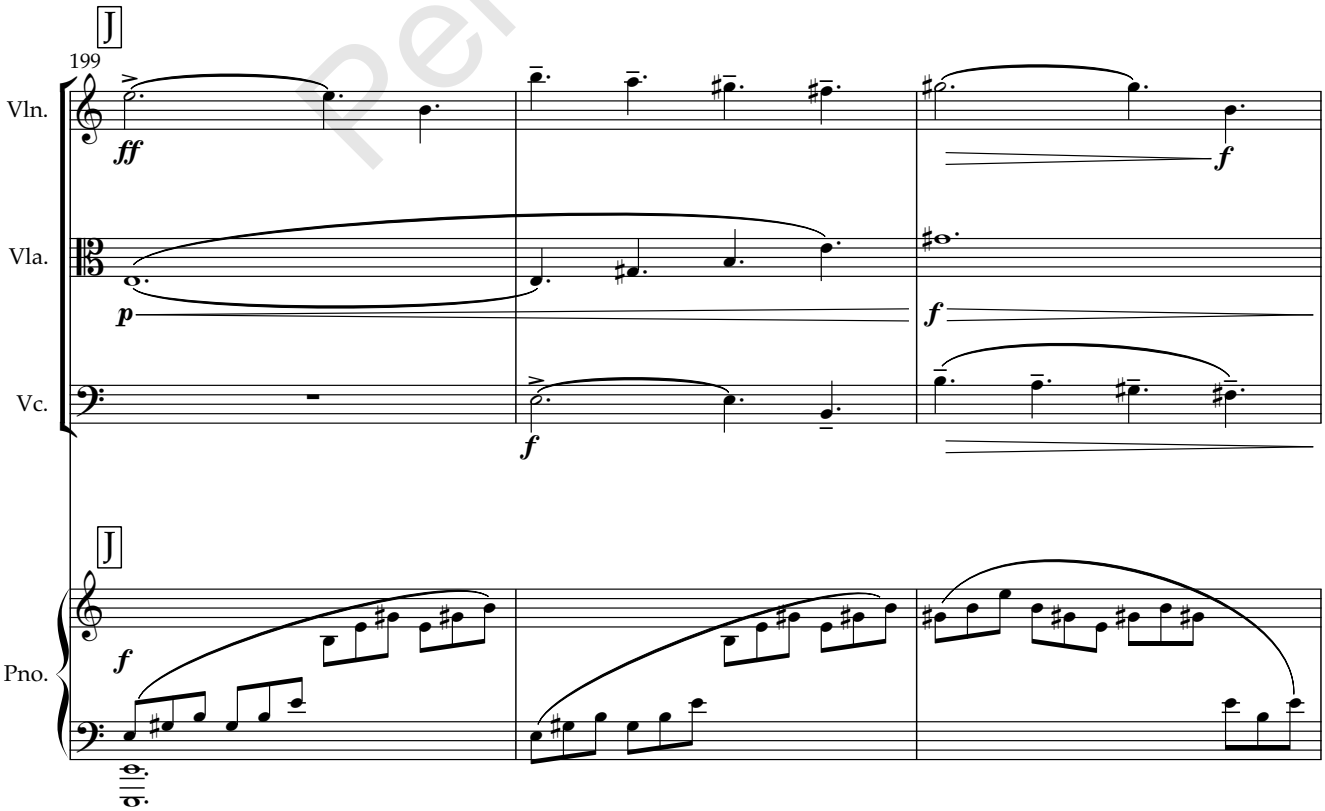


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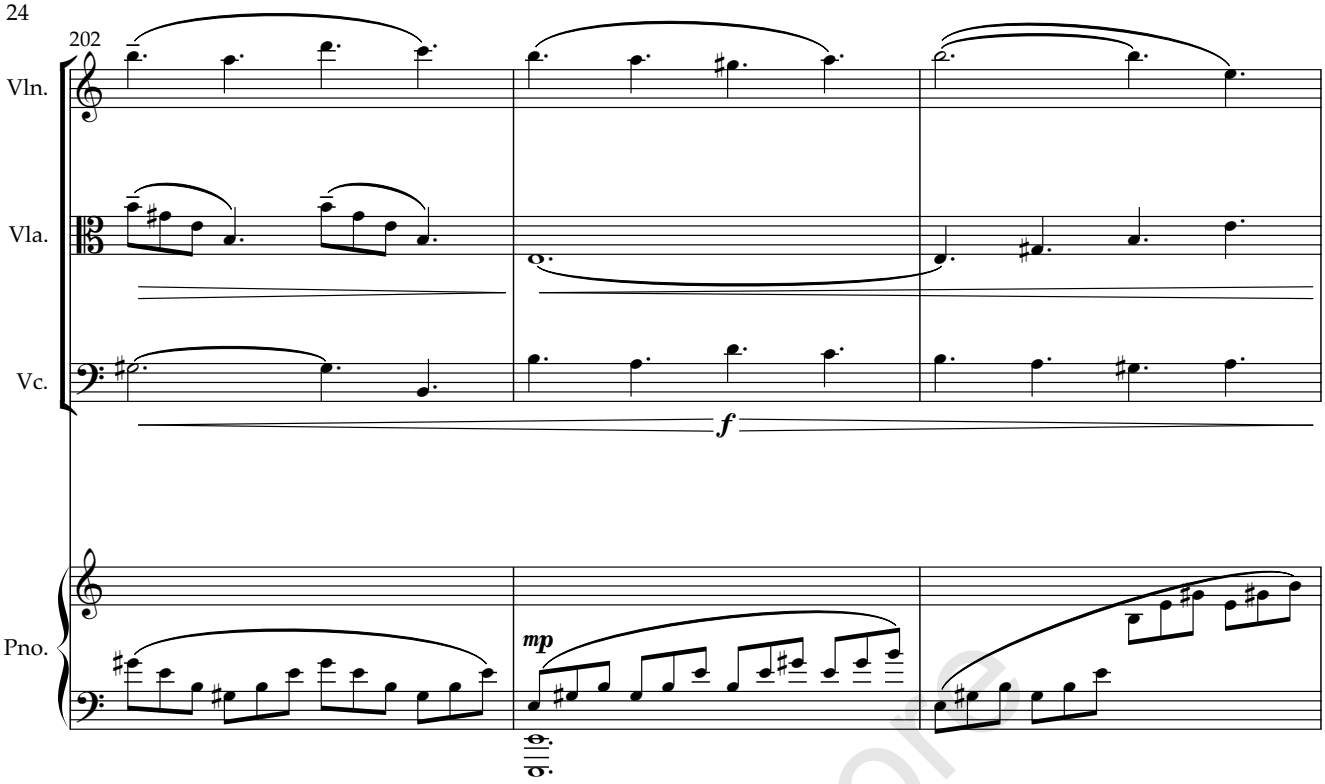


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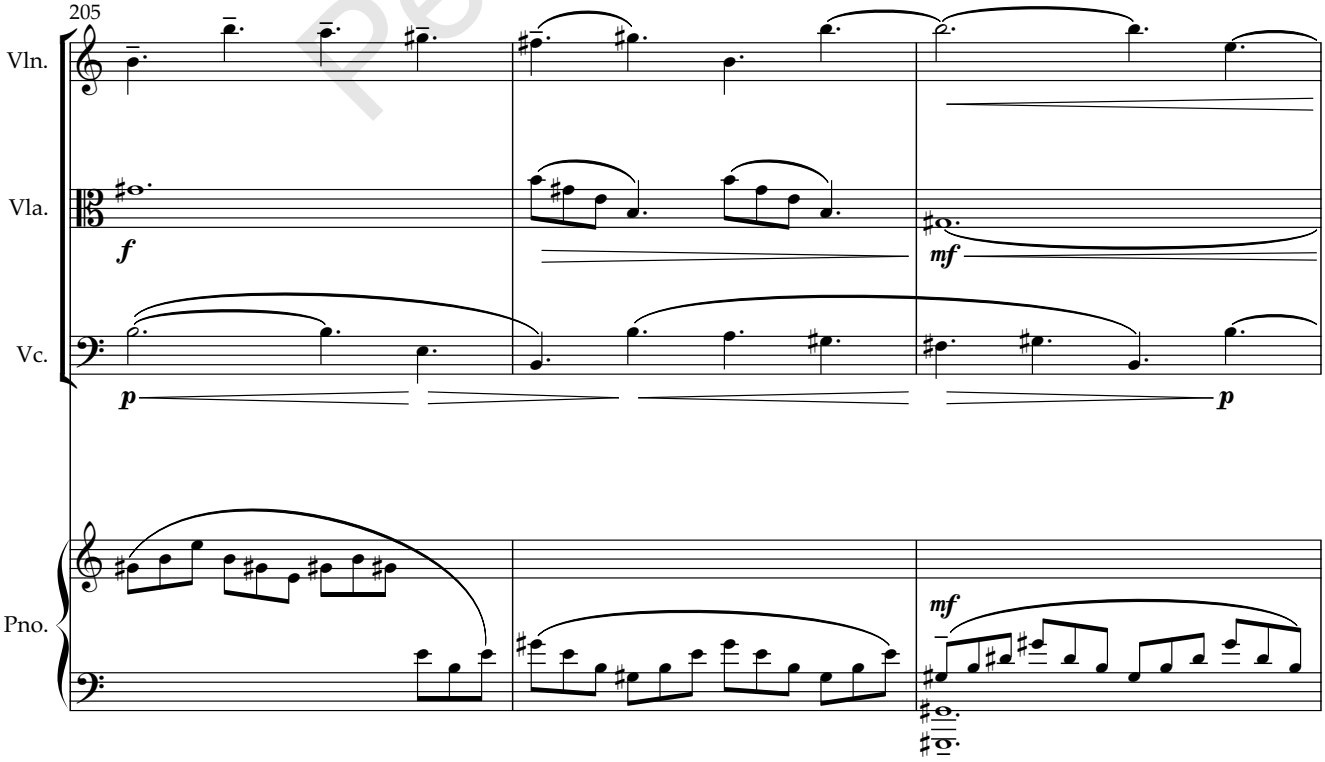

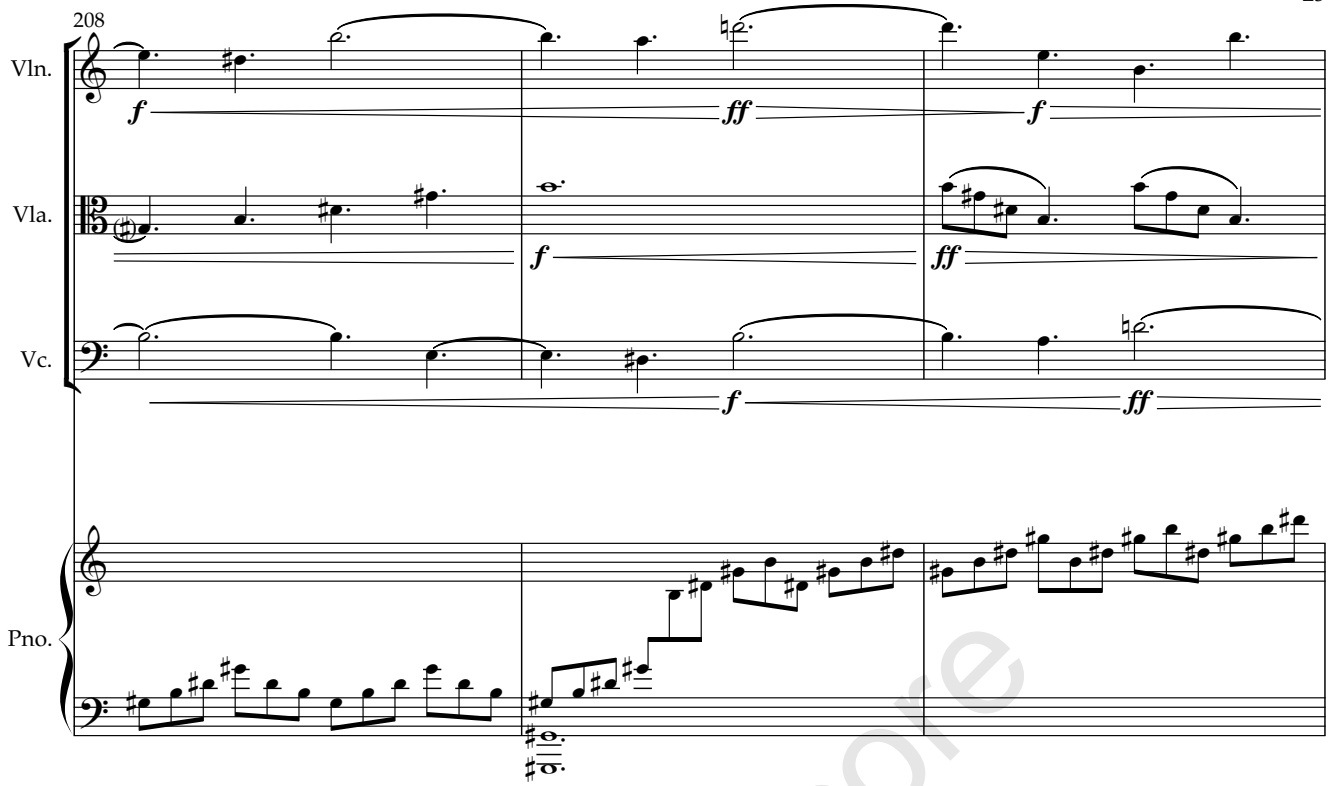


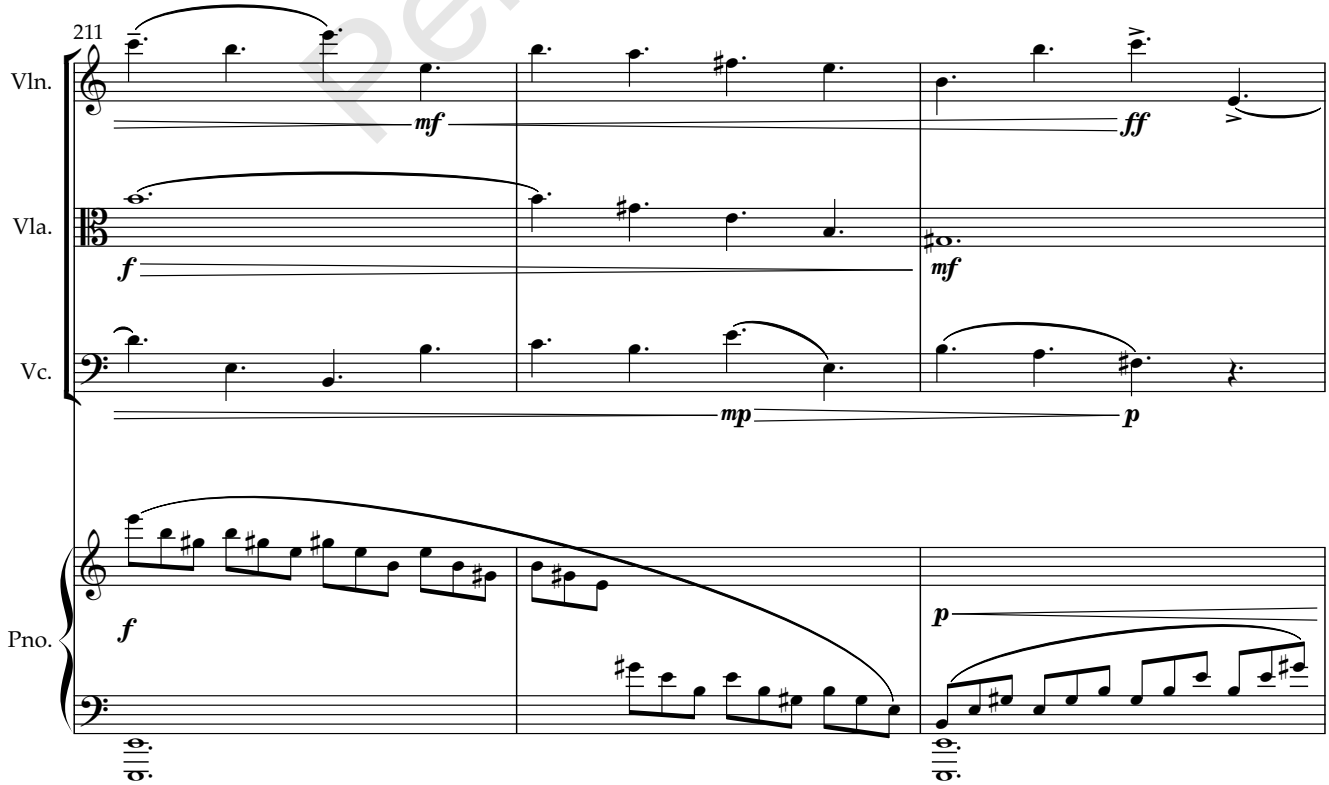


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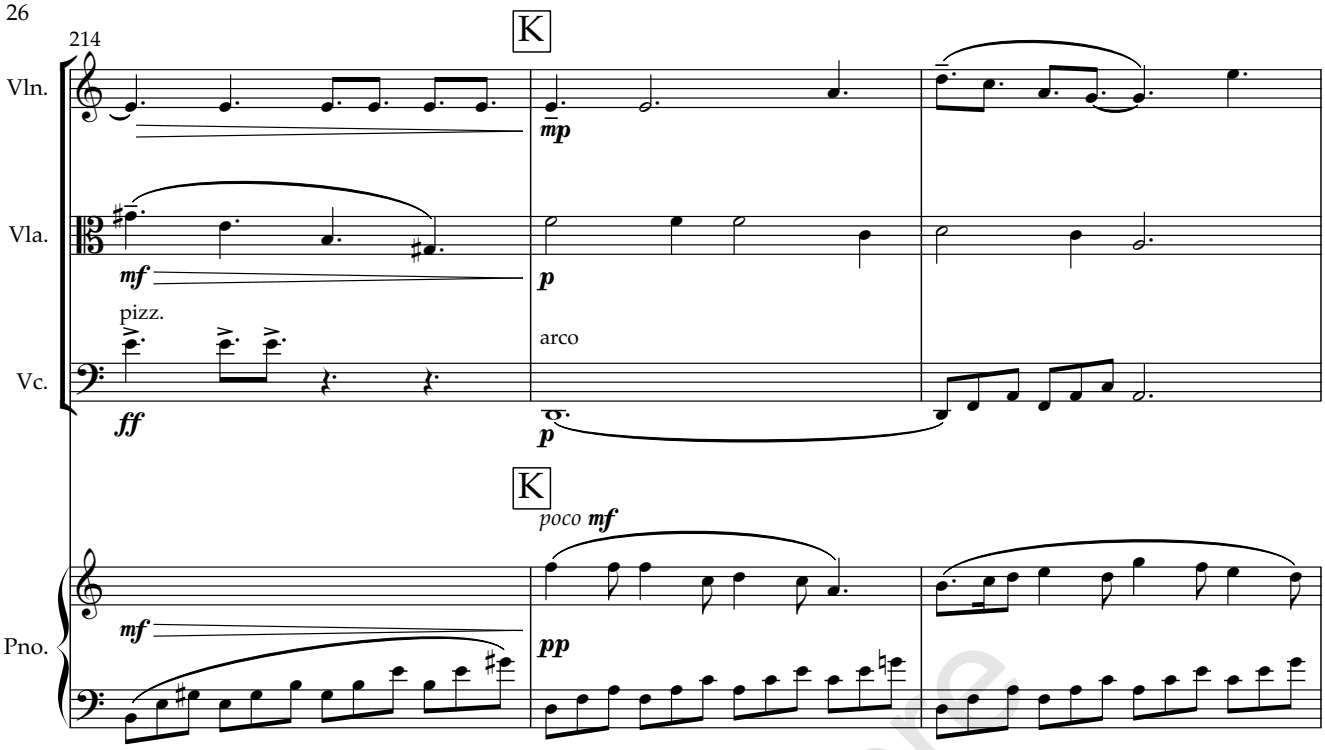


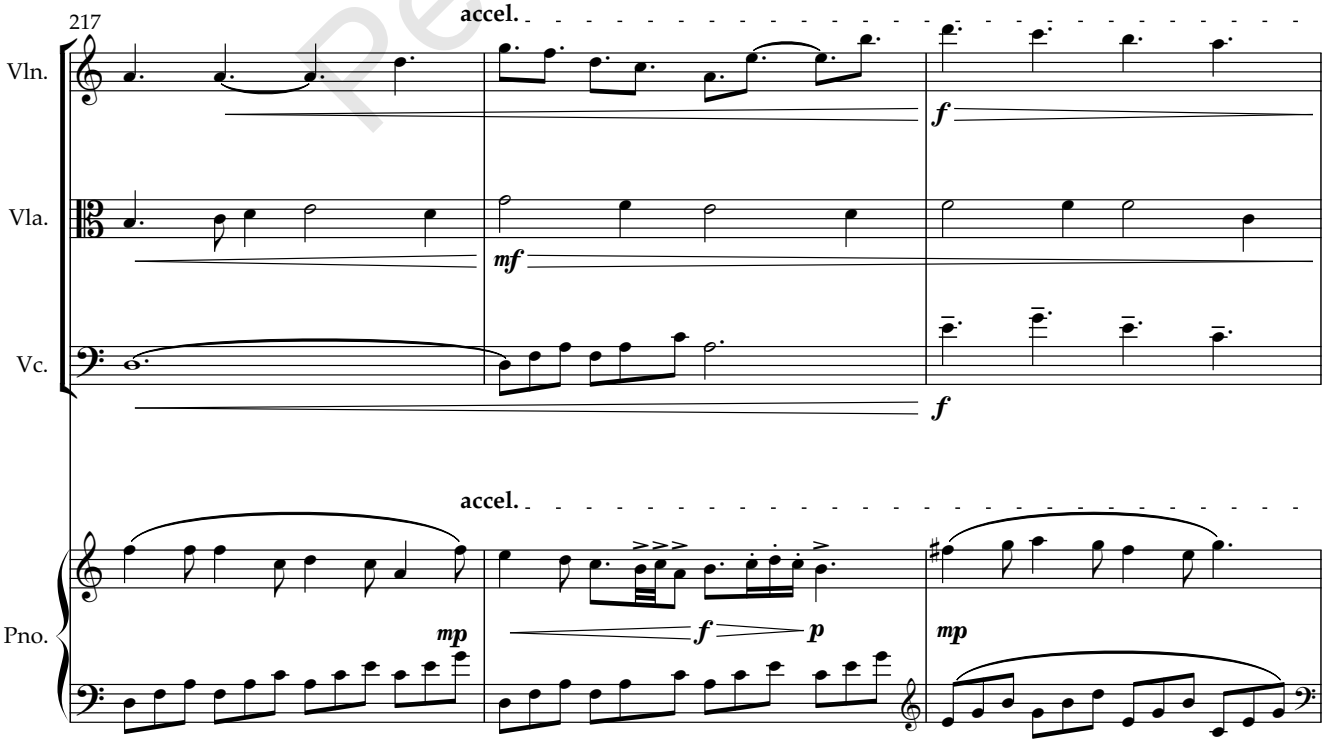


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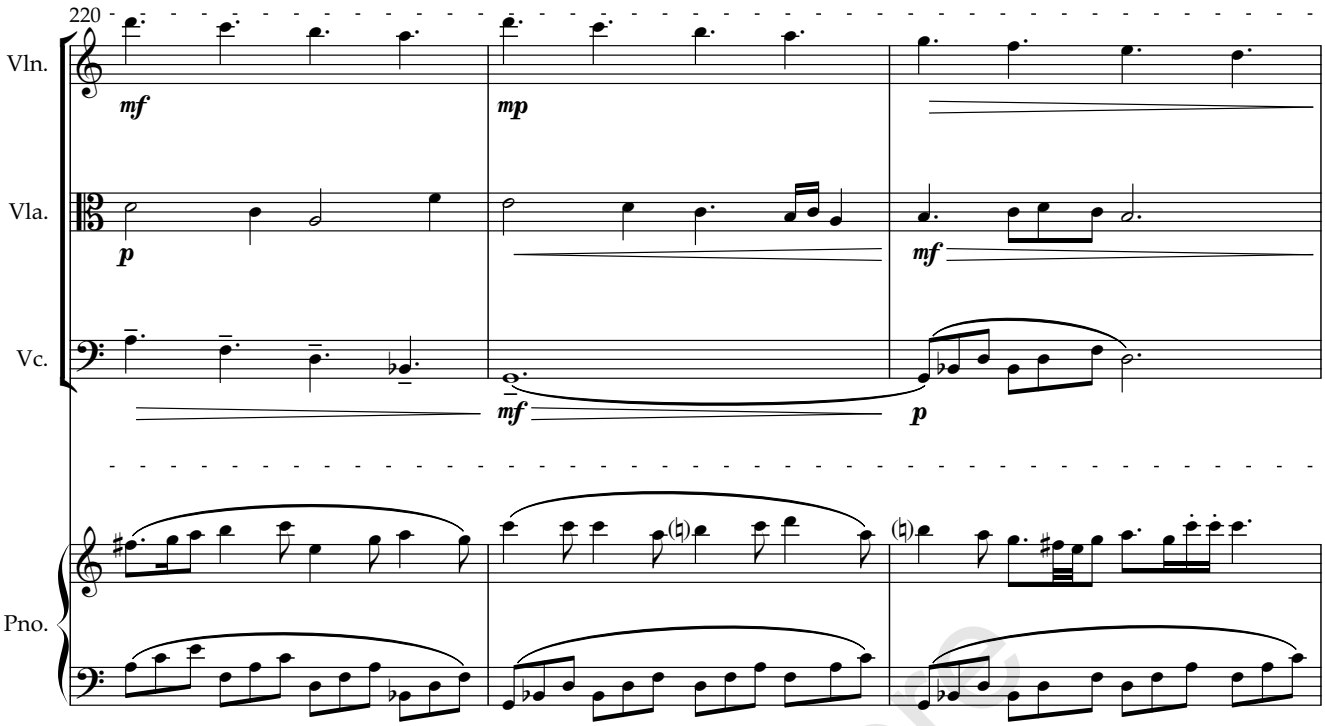


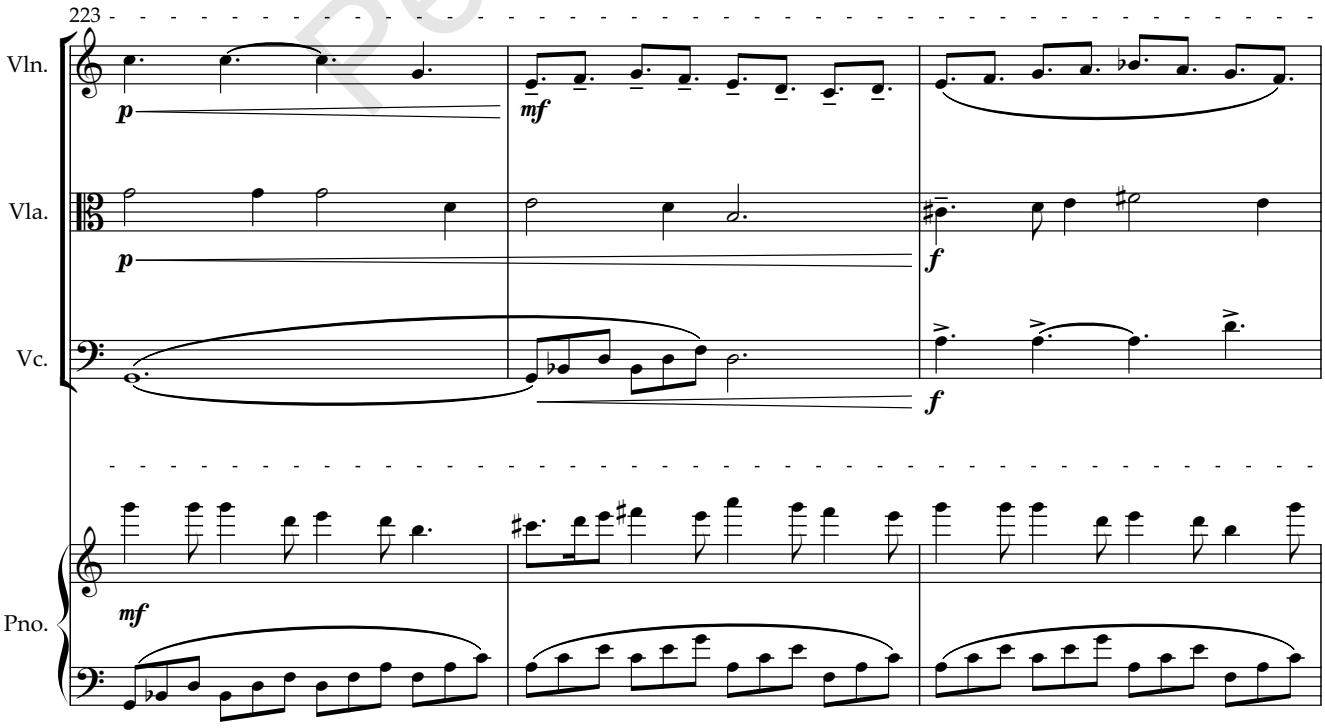


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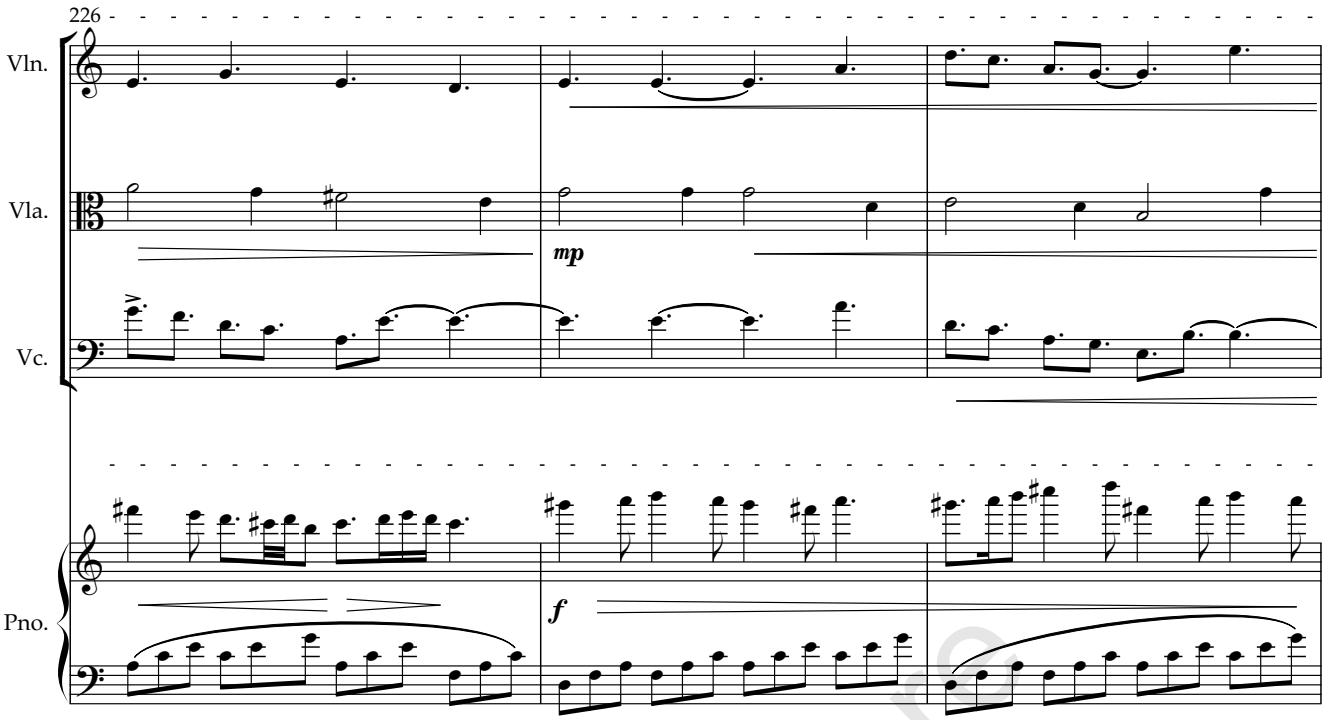
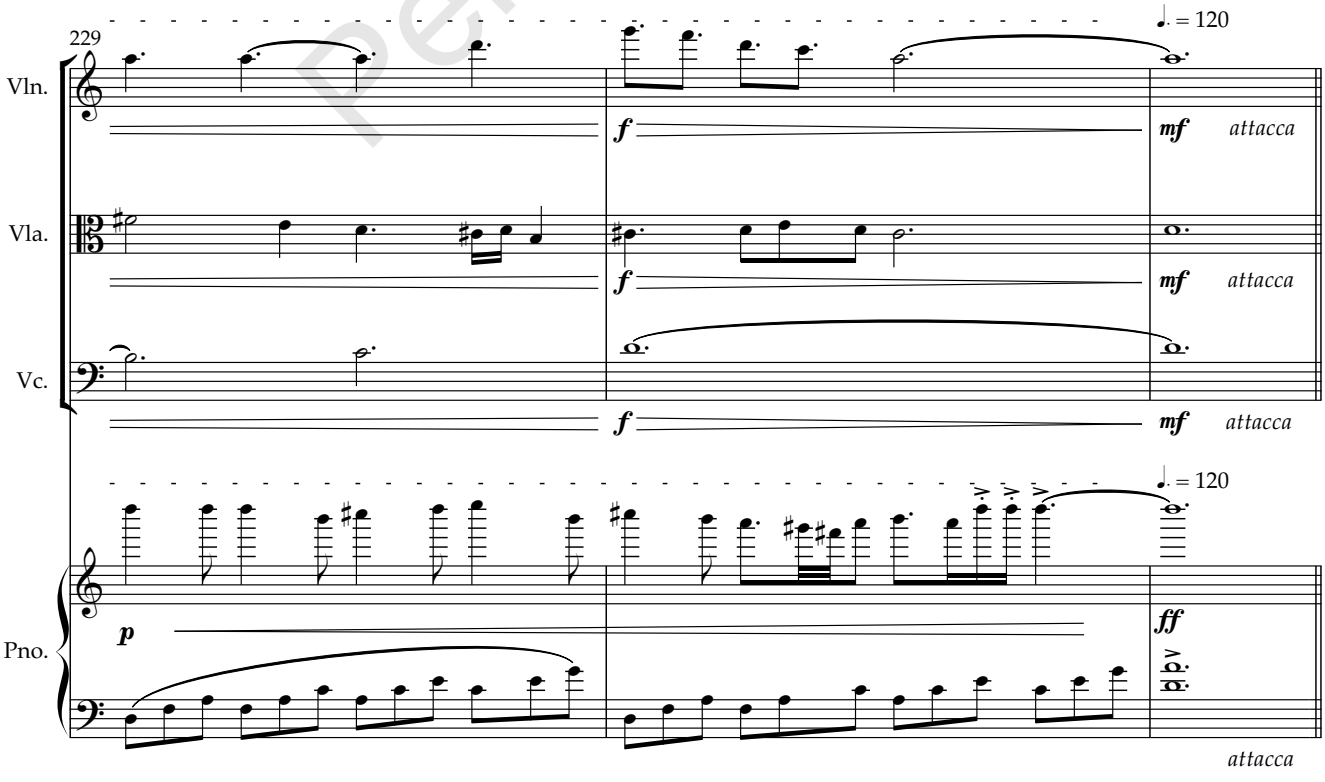
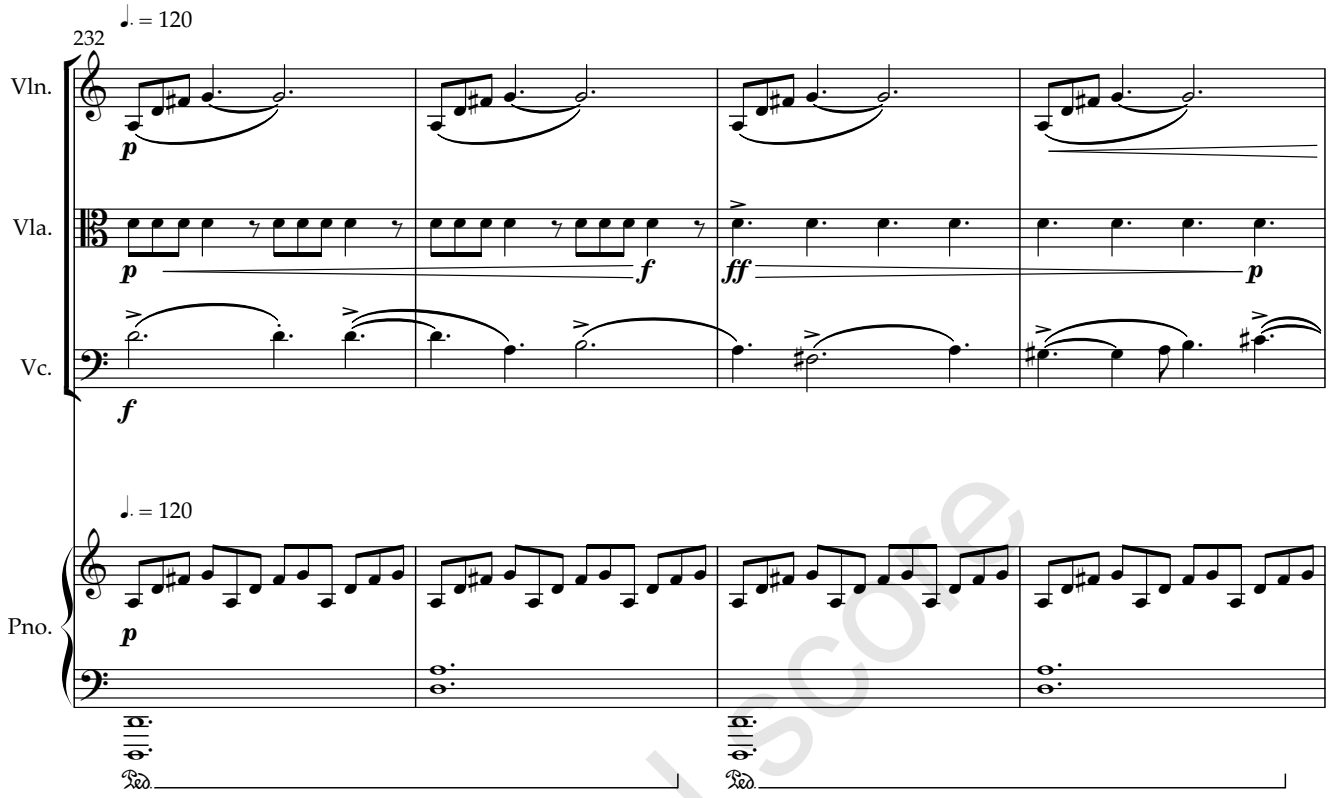



perusal score

# The Woods So Wild

III

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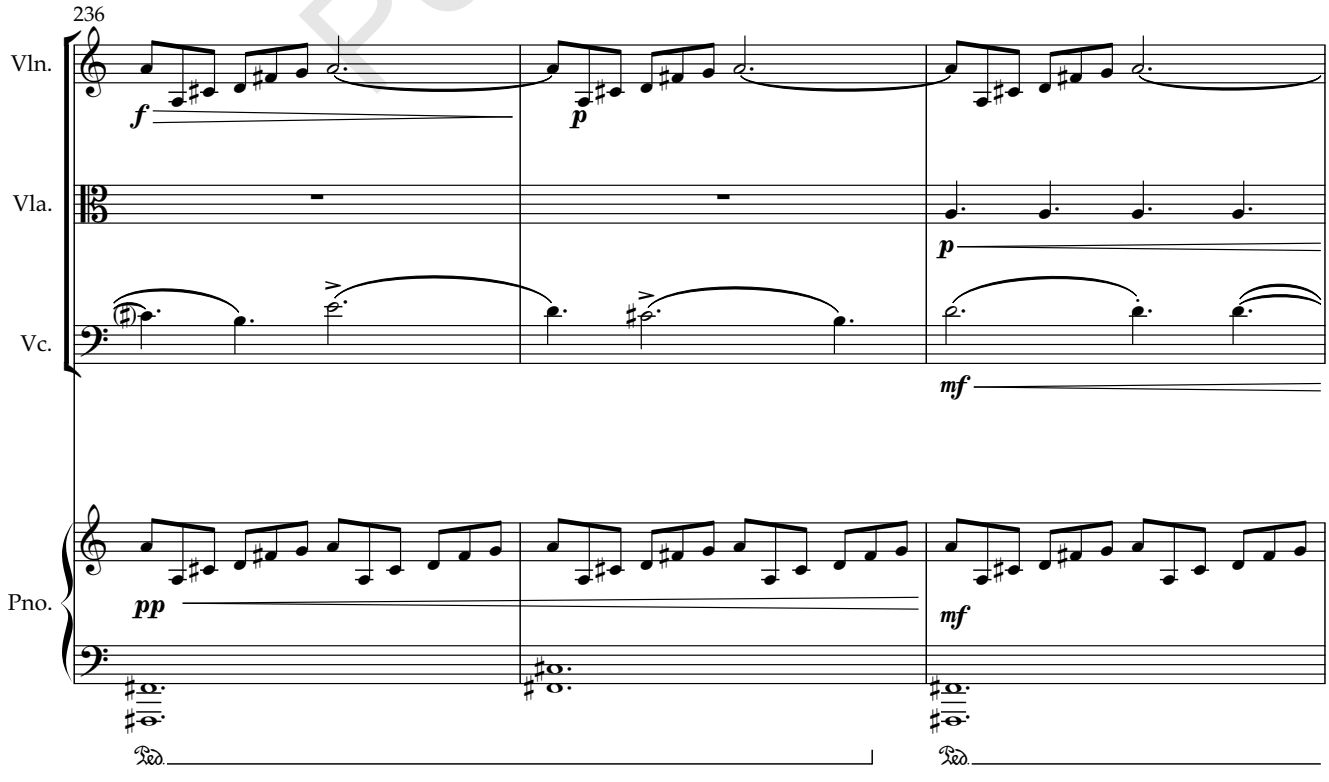

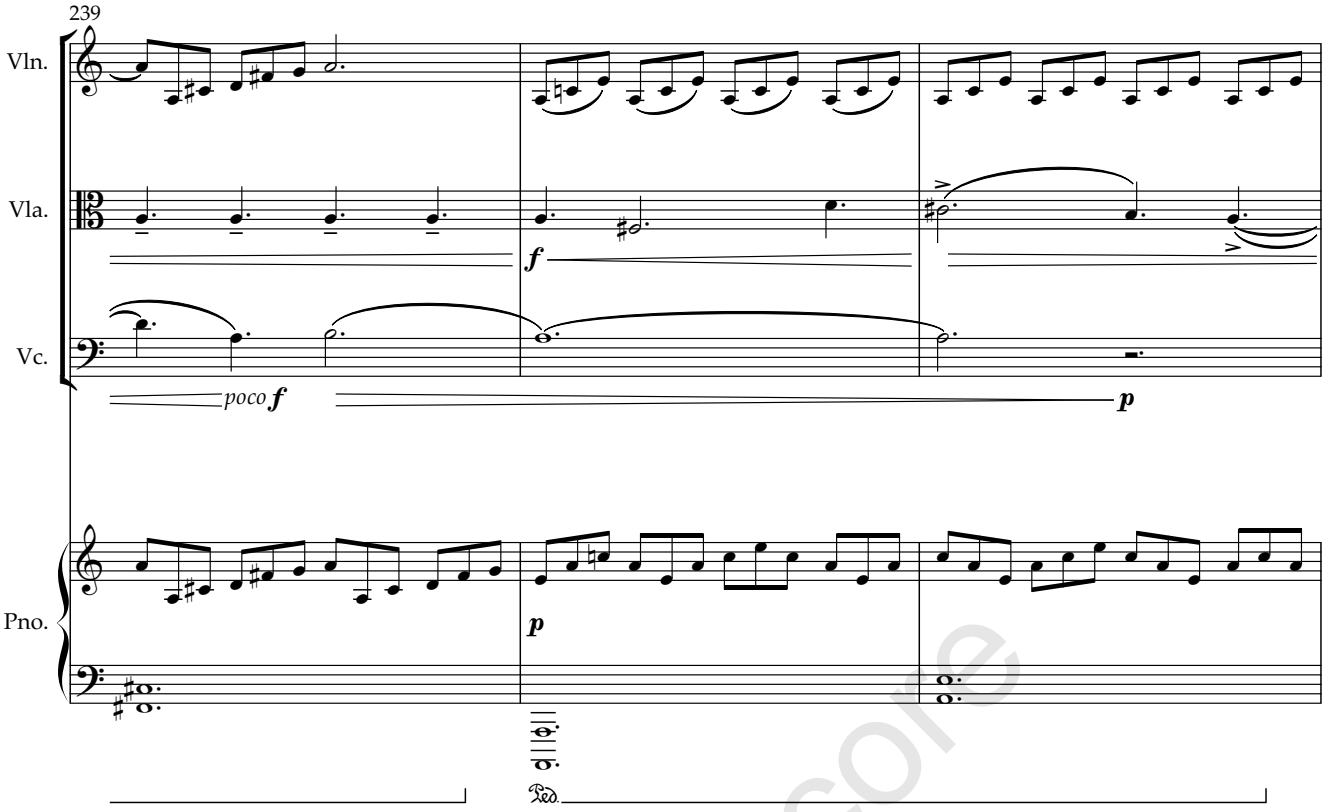


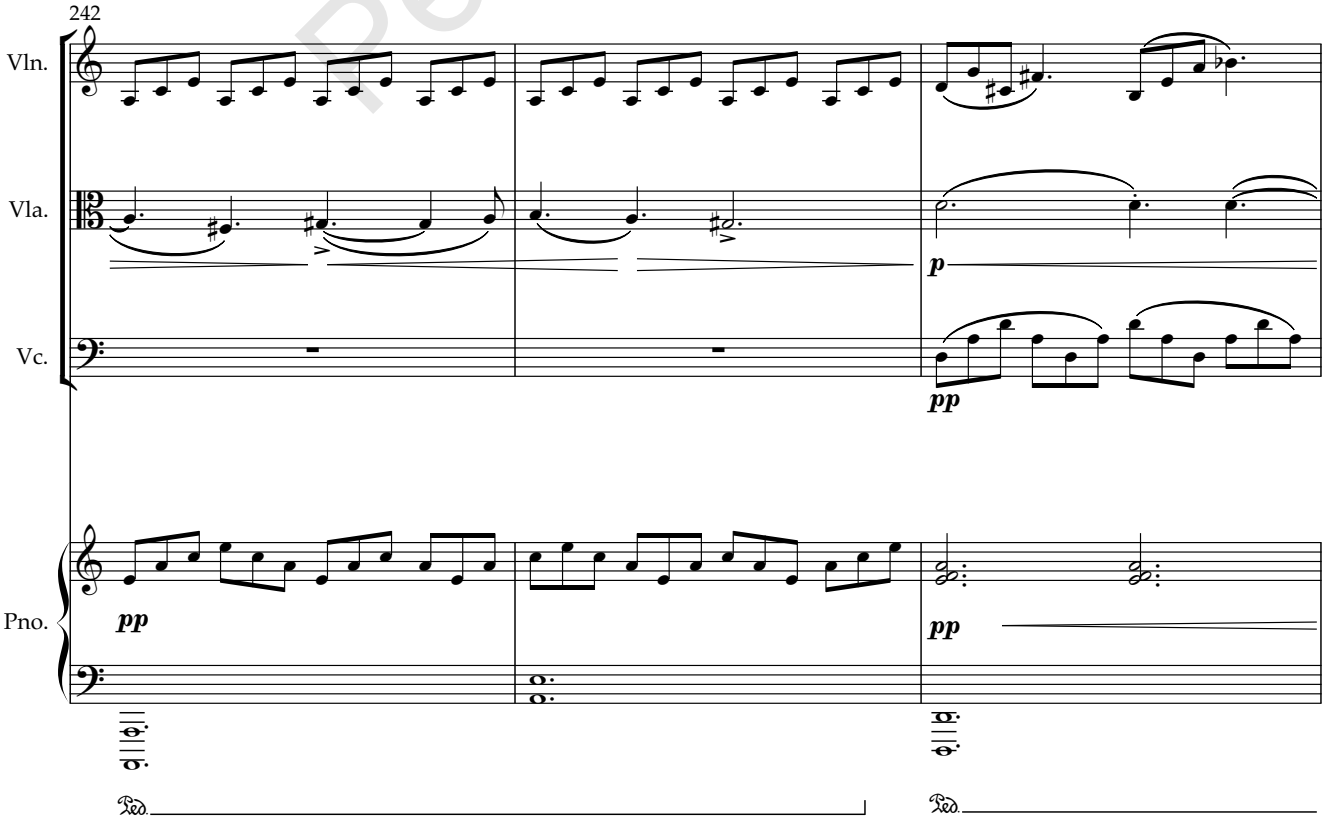


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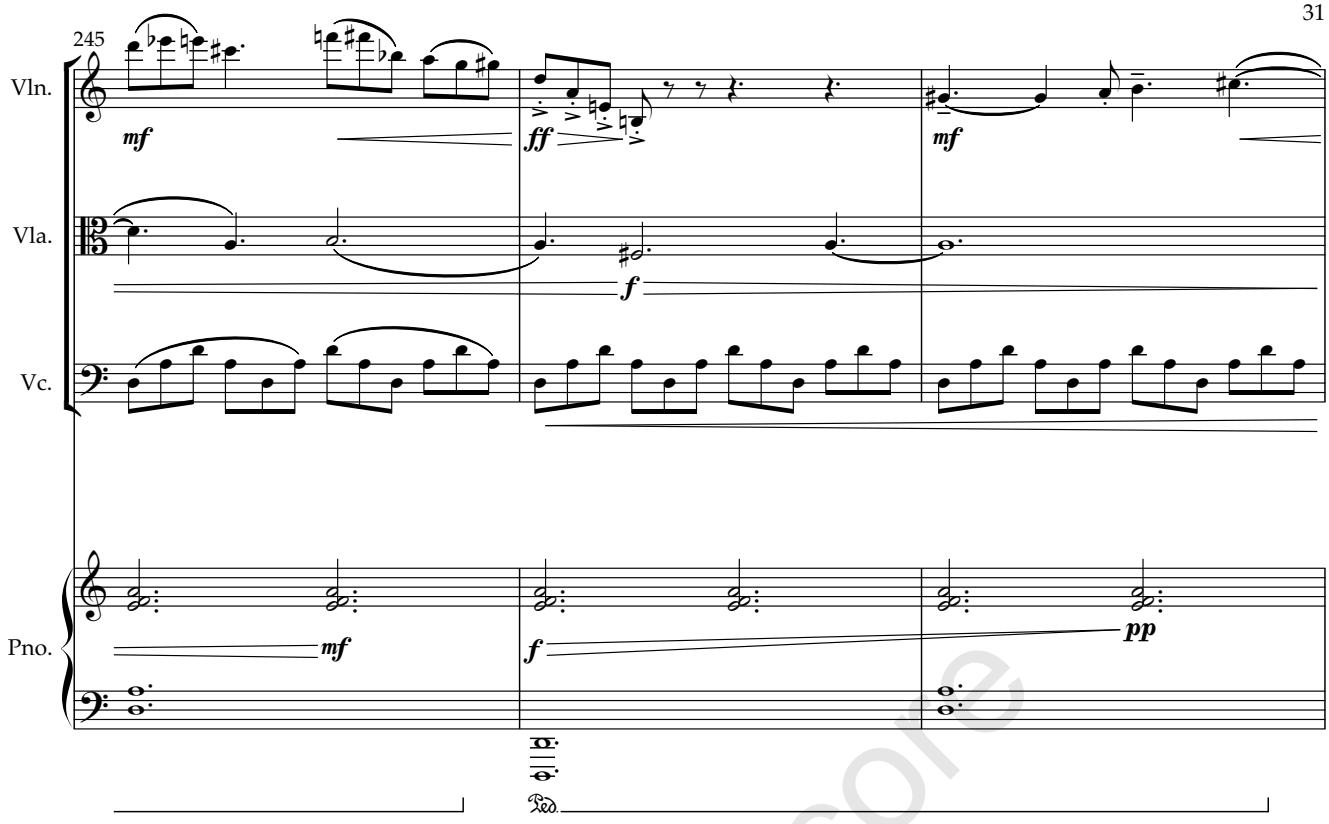


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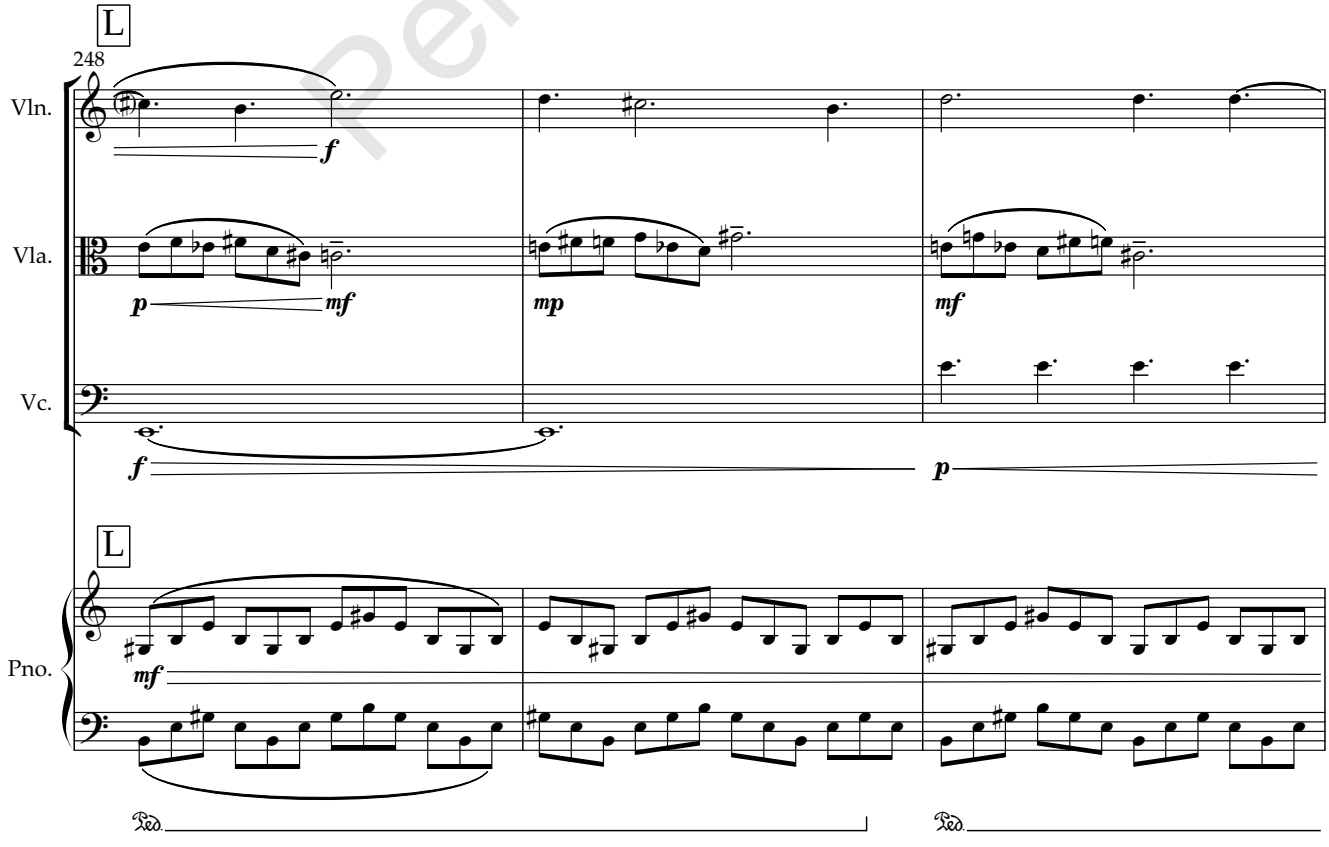

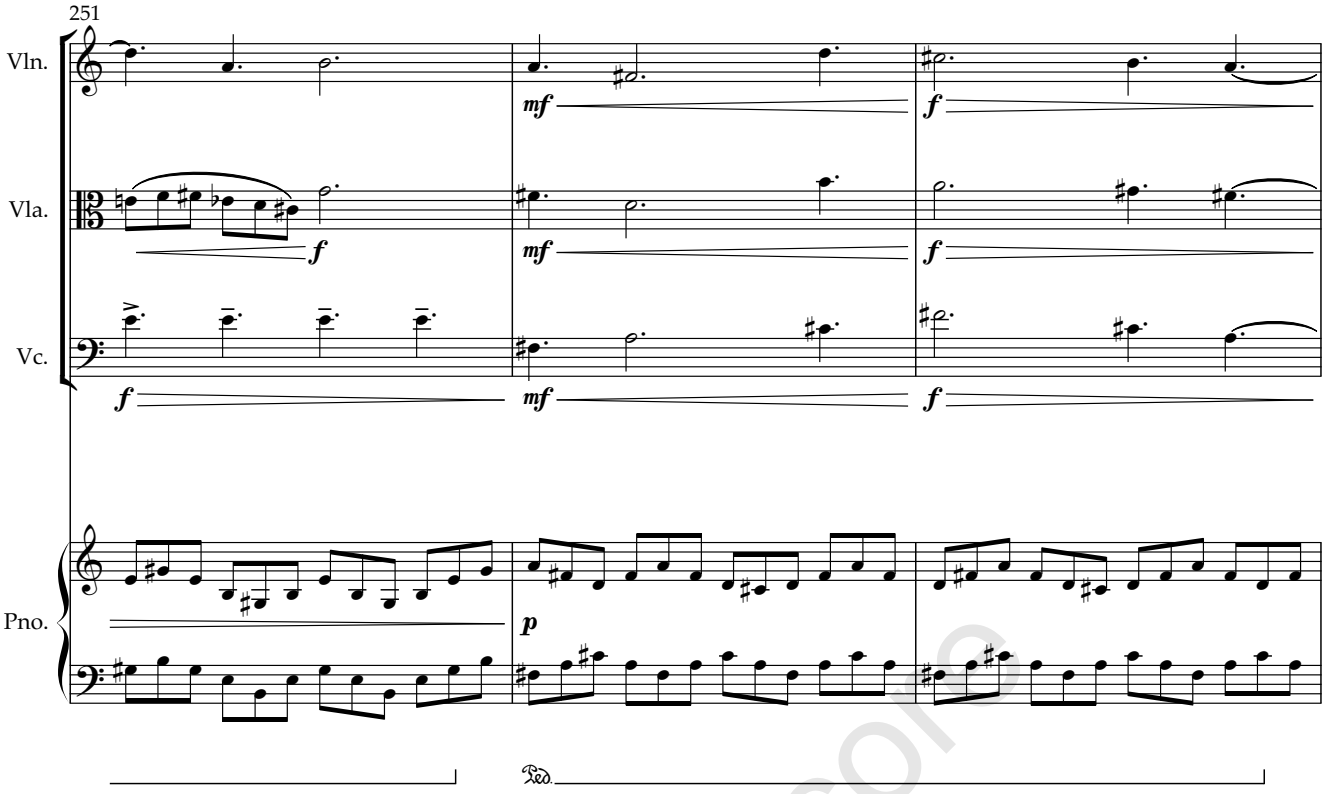


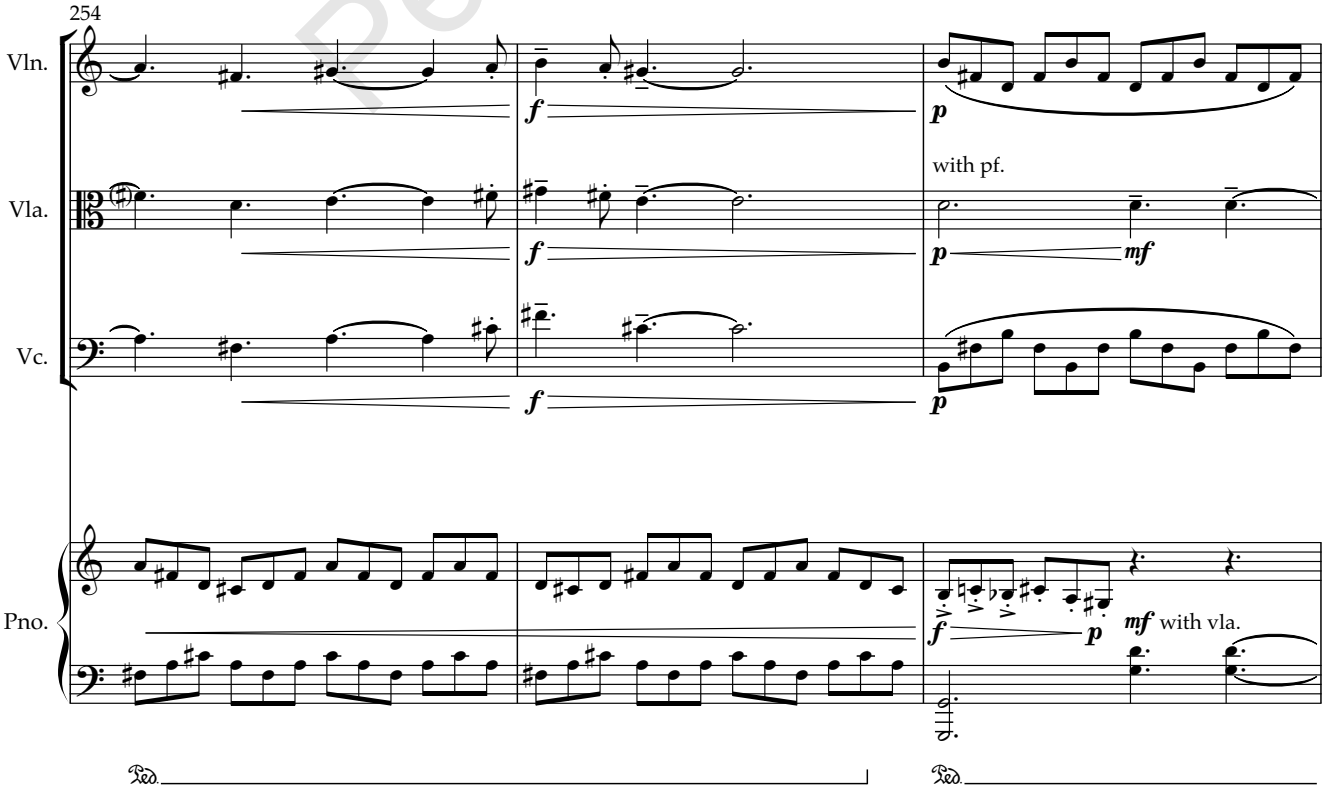


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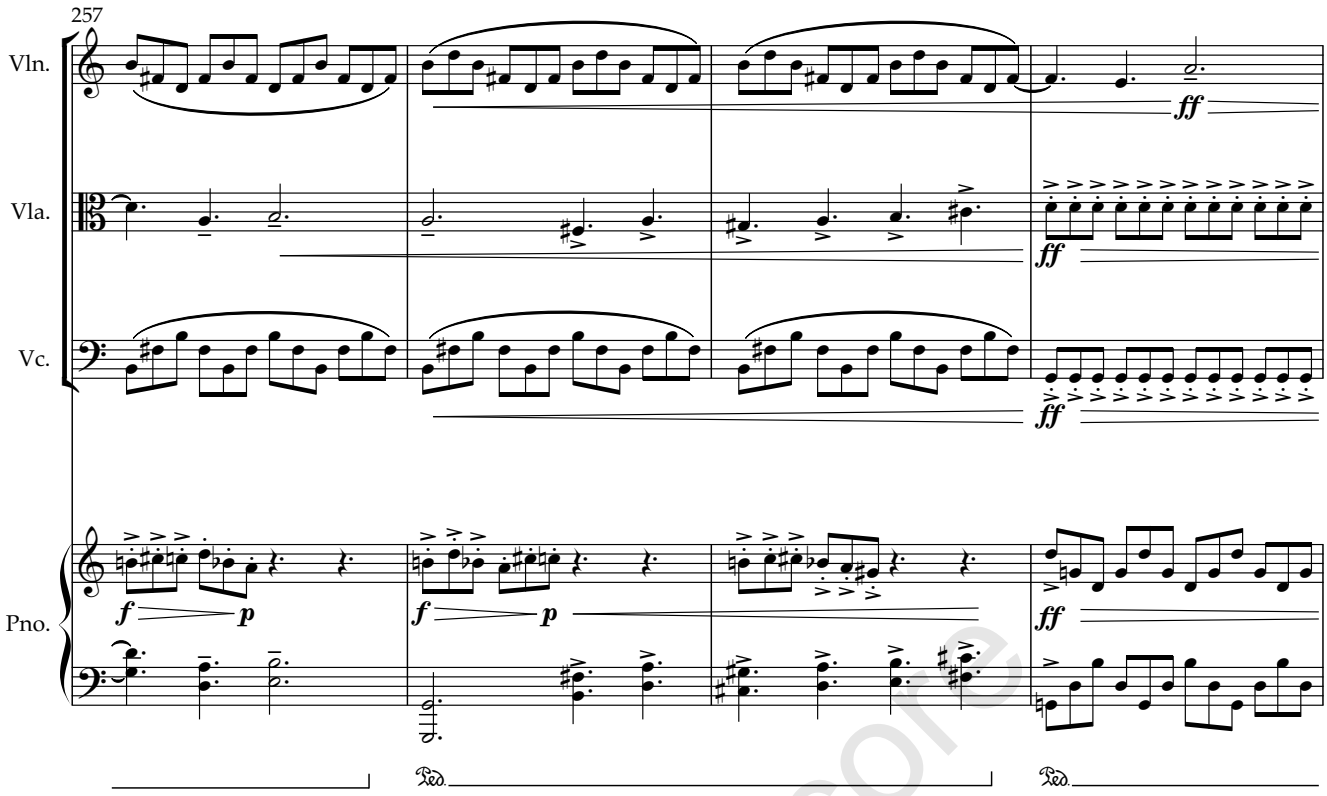


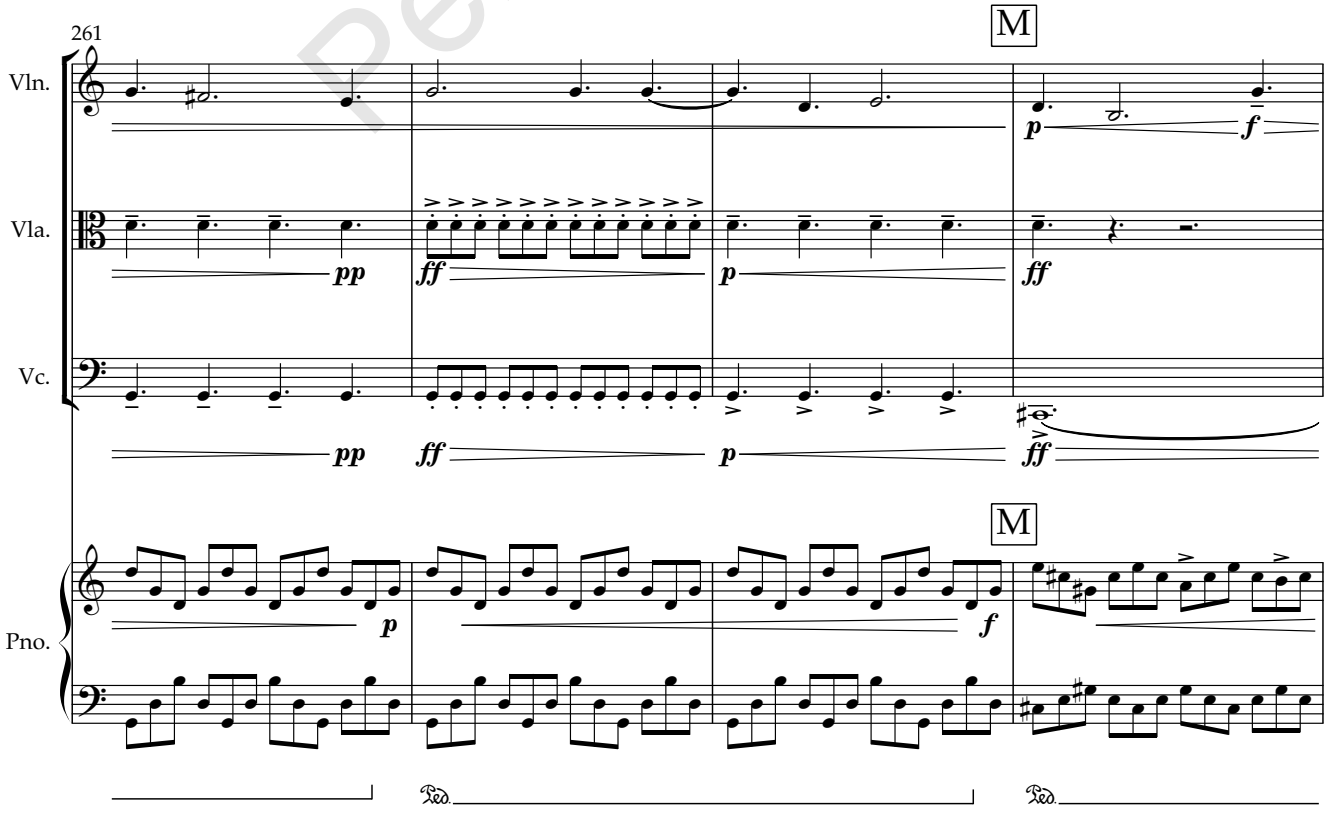


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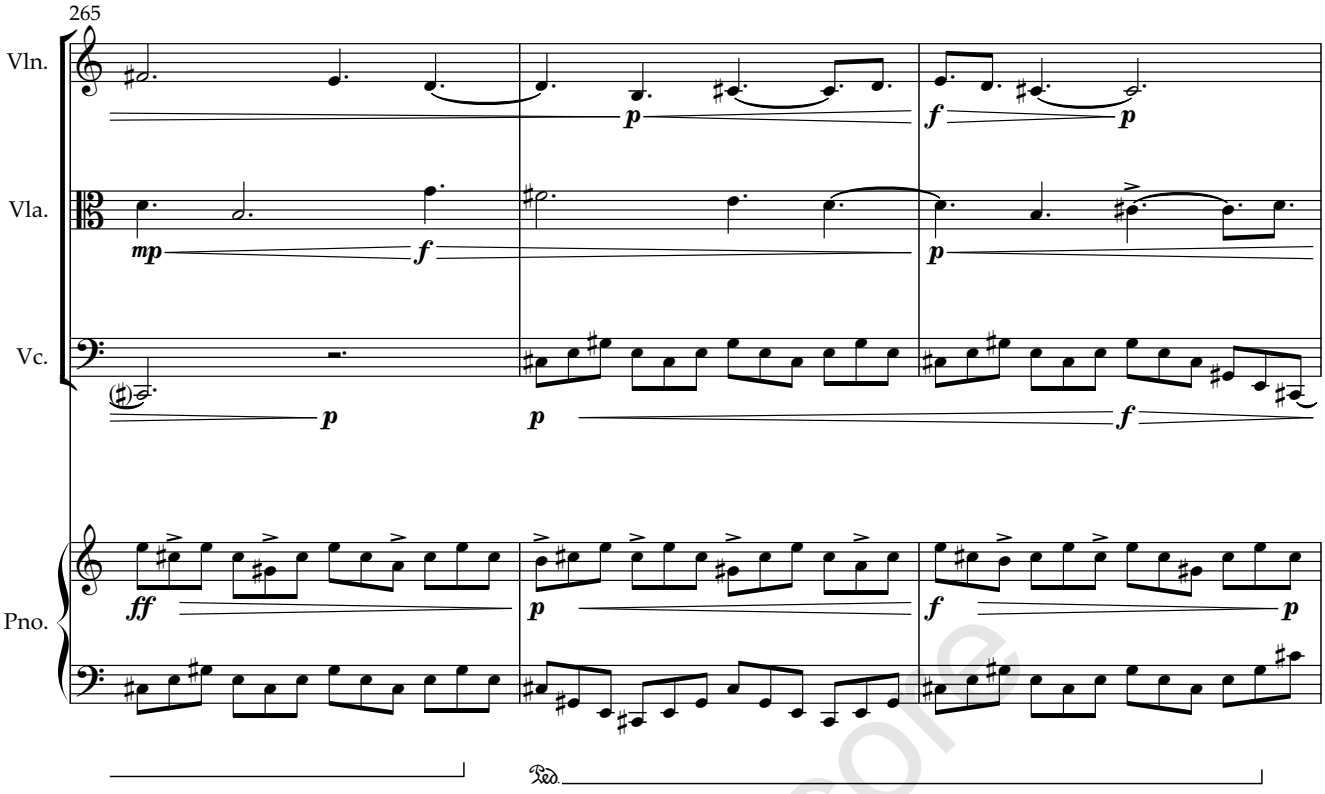


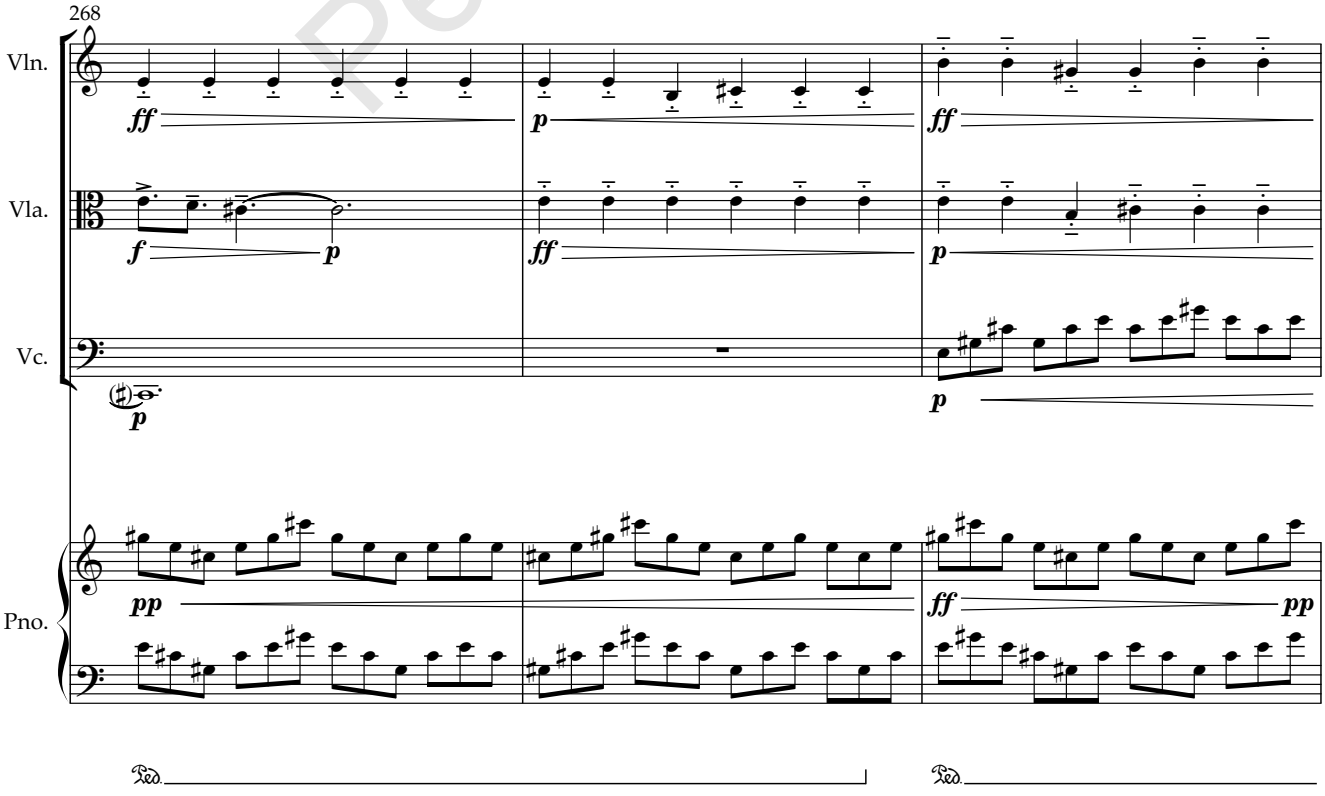


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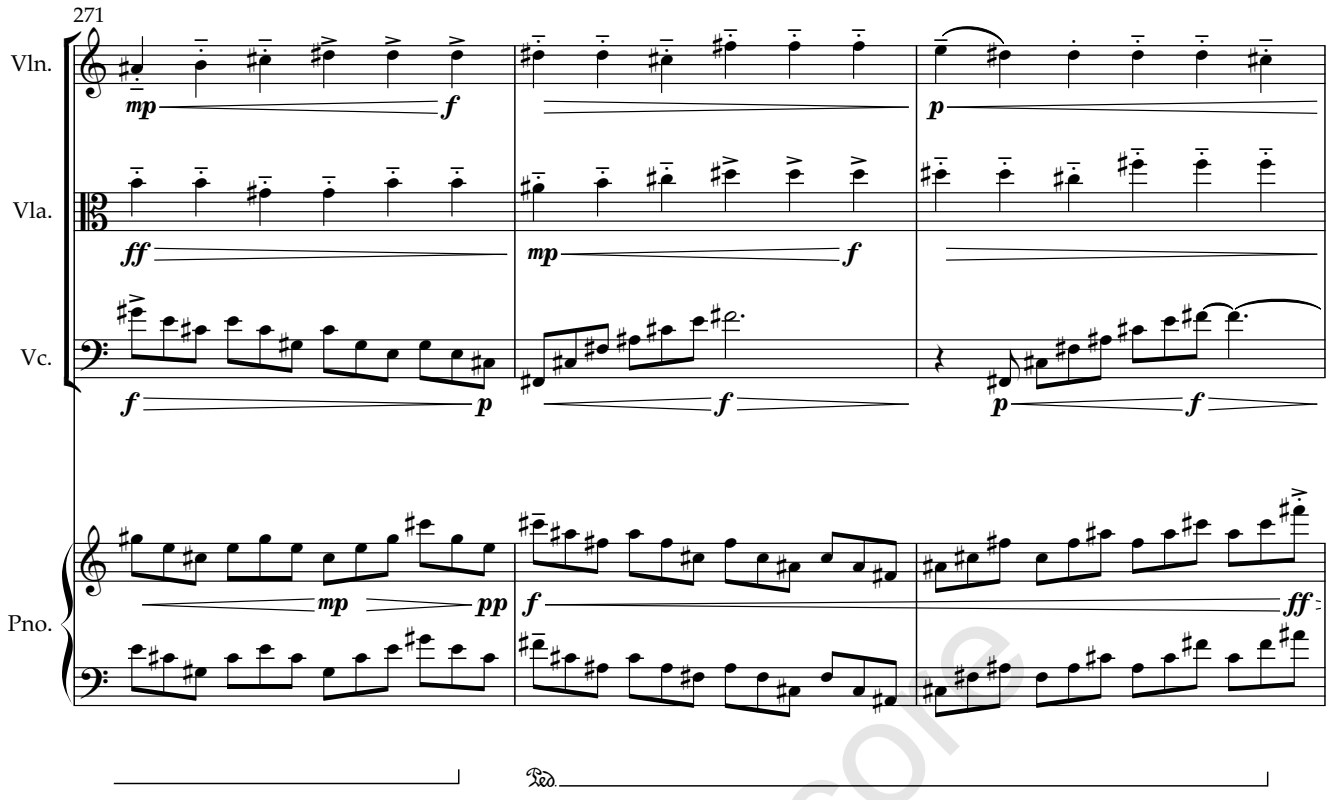


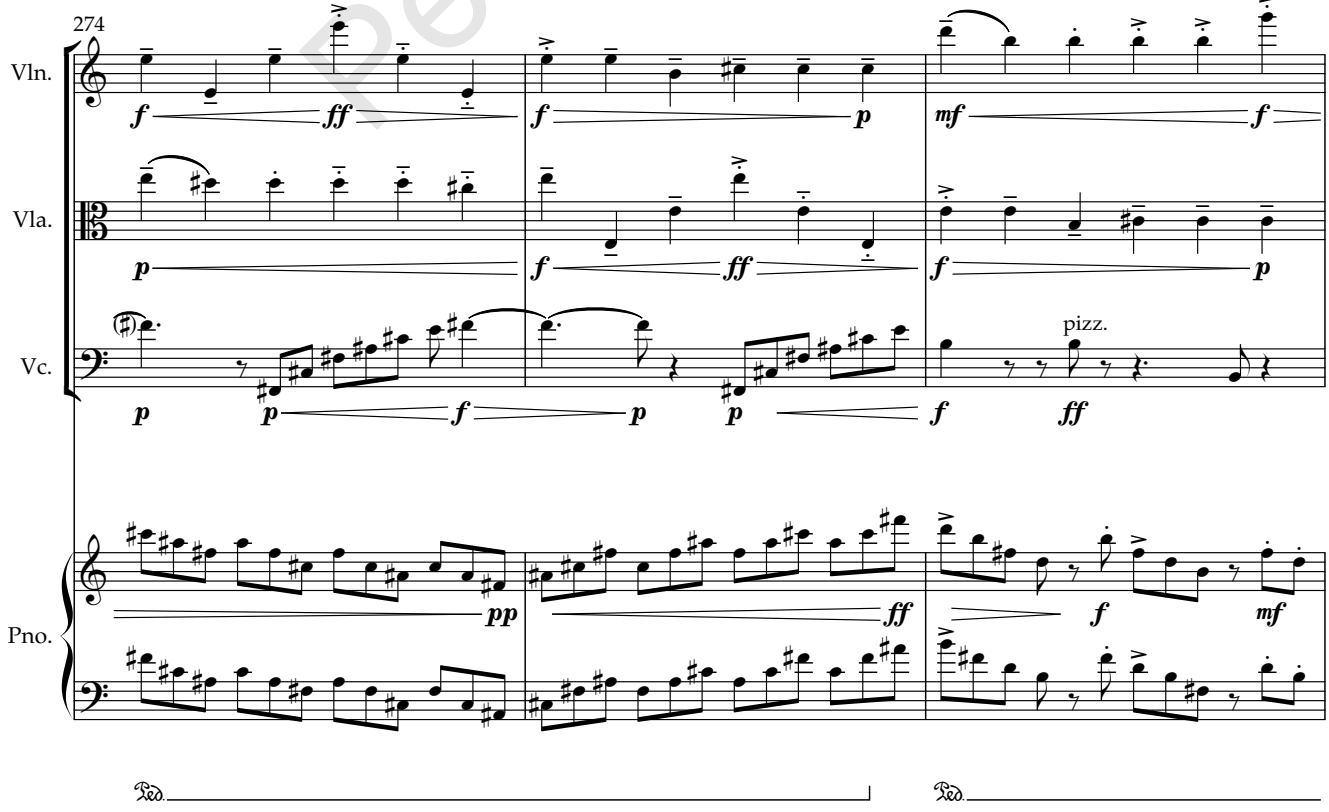


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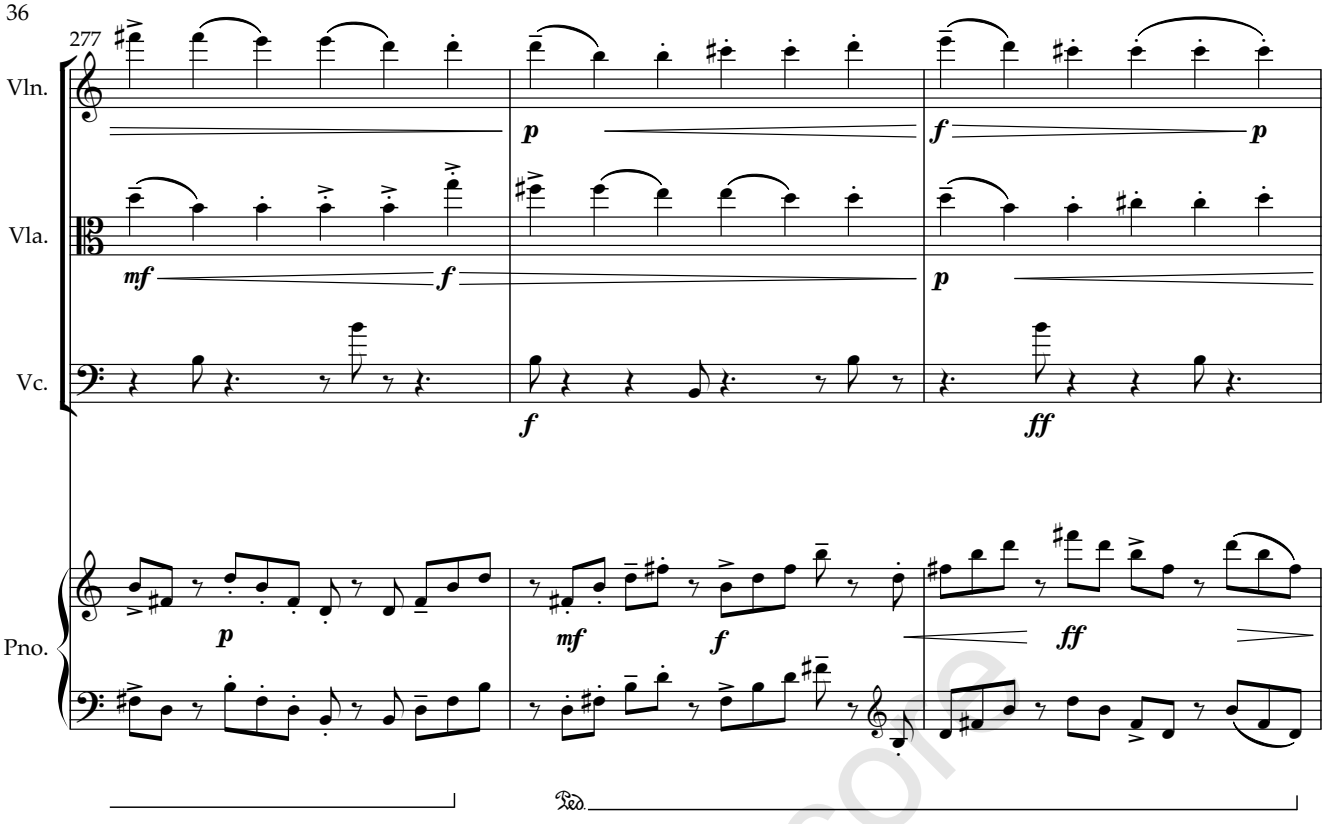


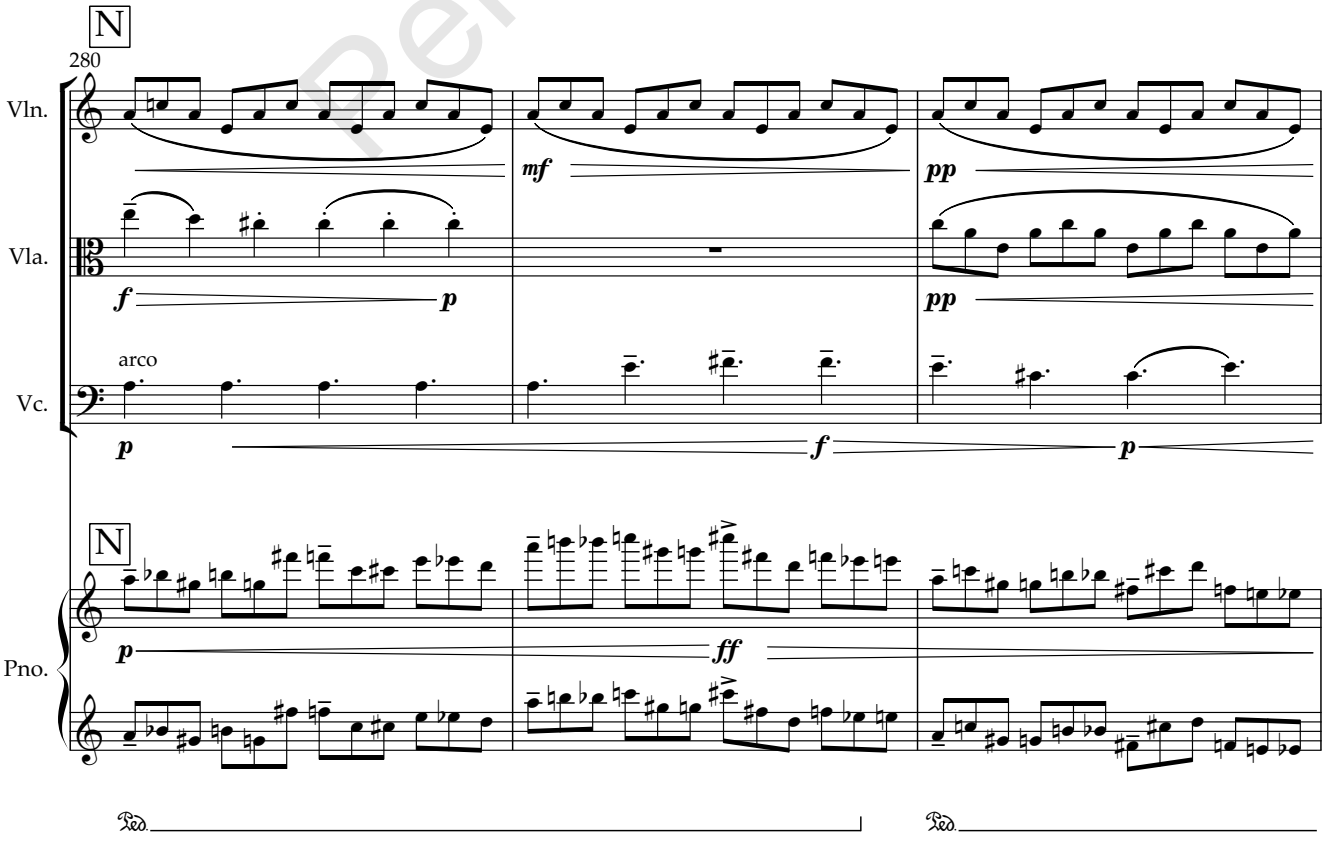


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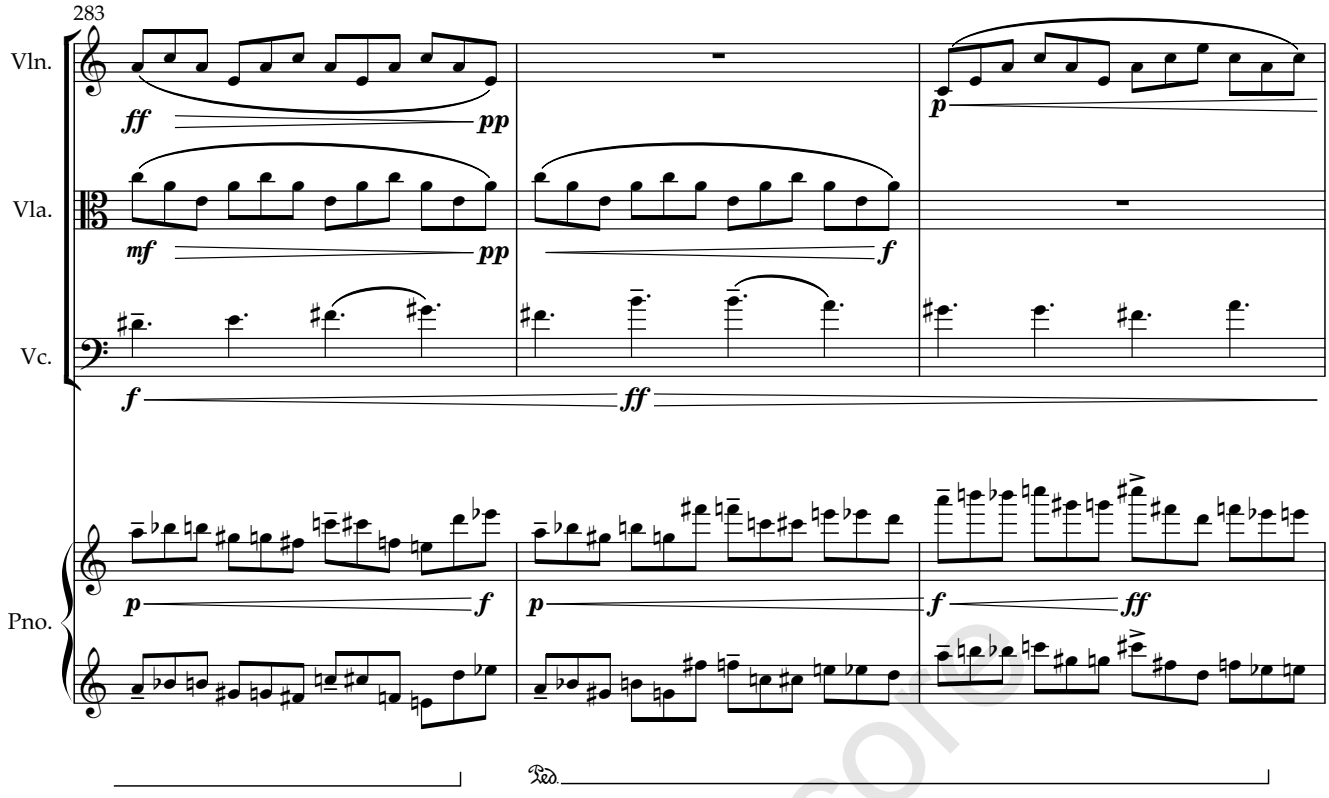


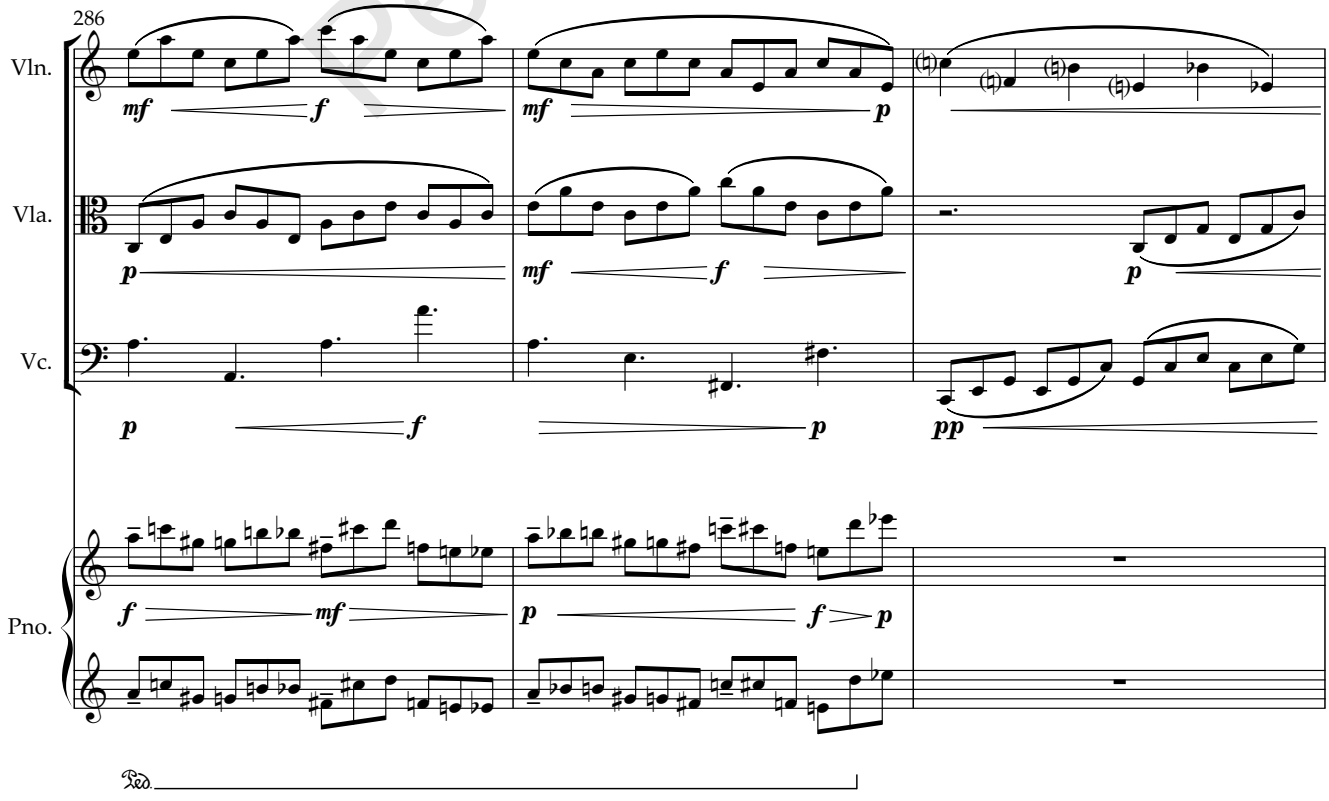


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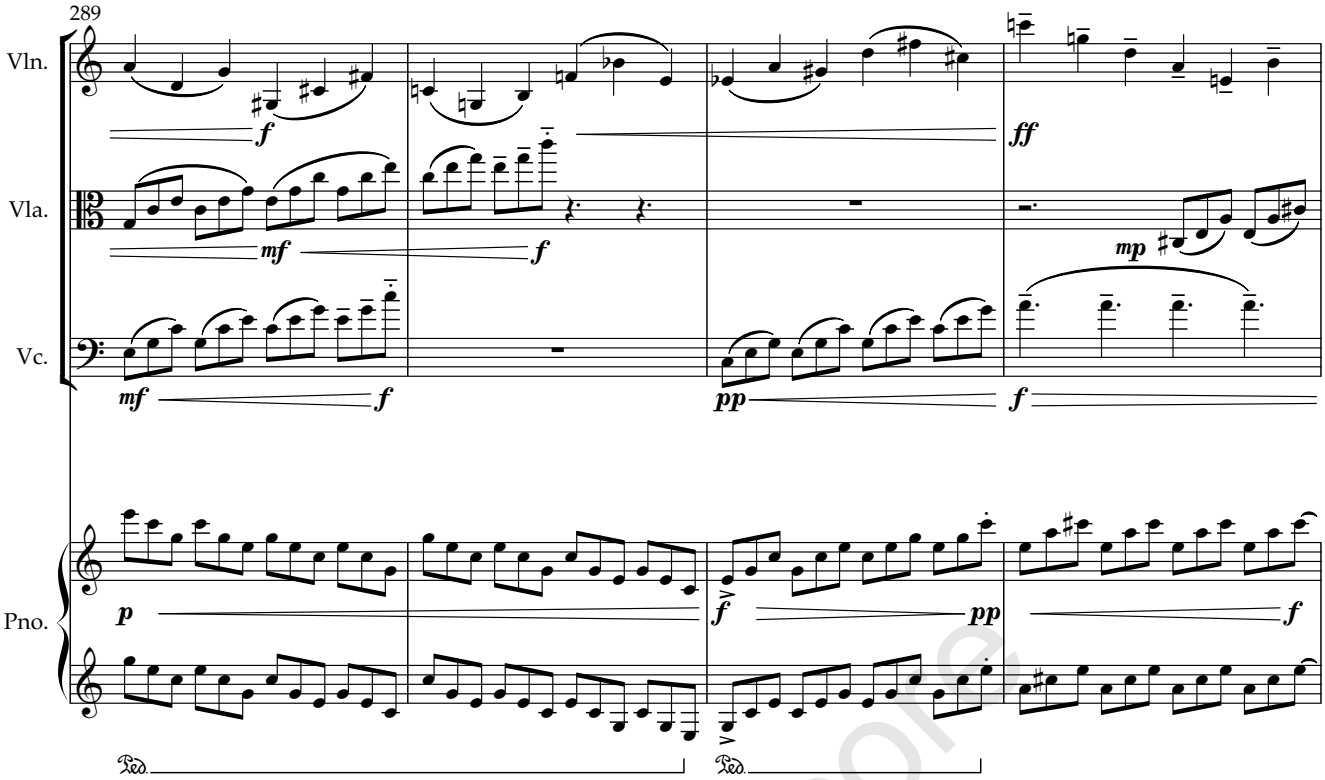


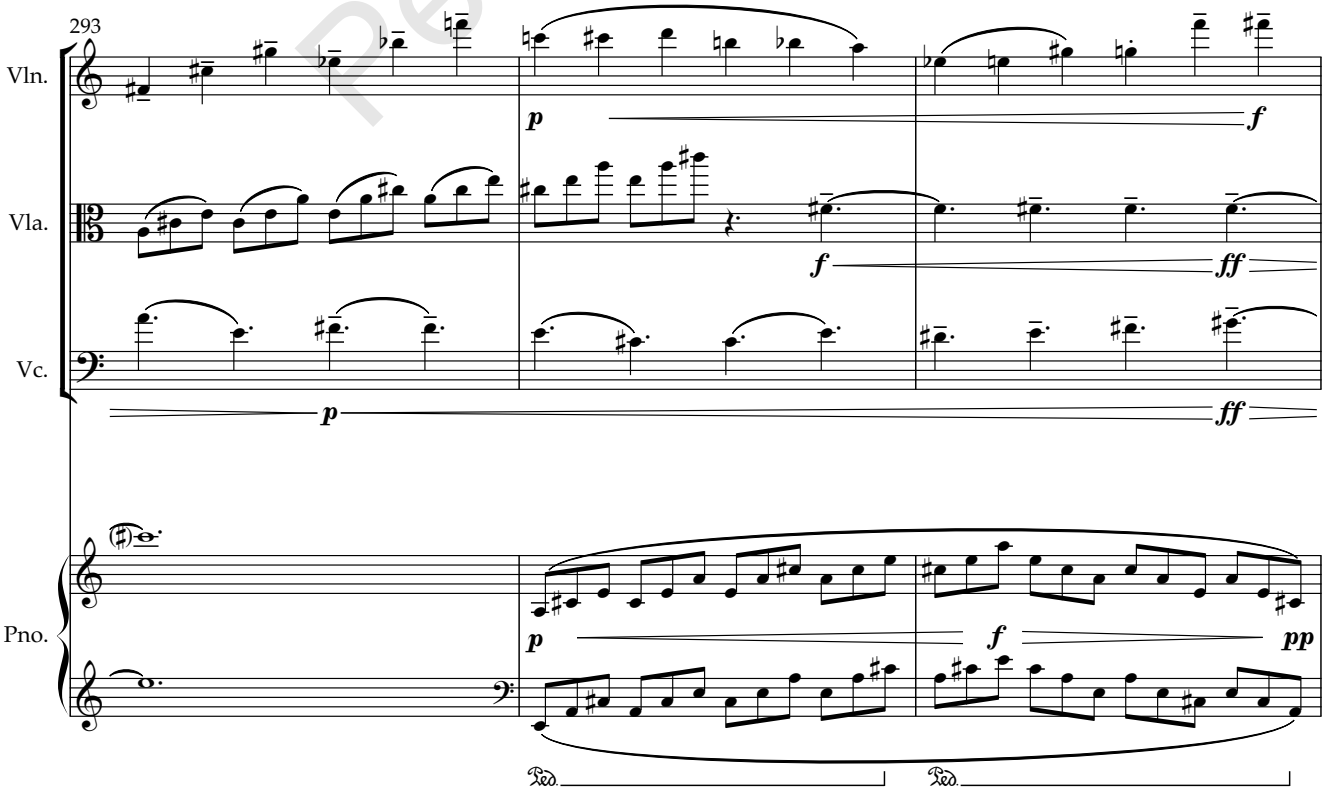


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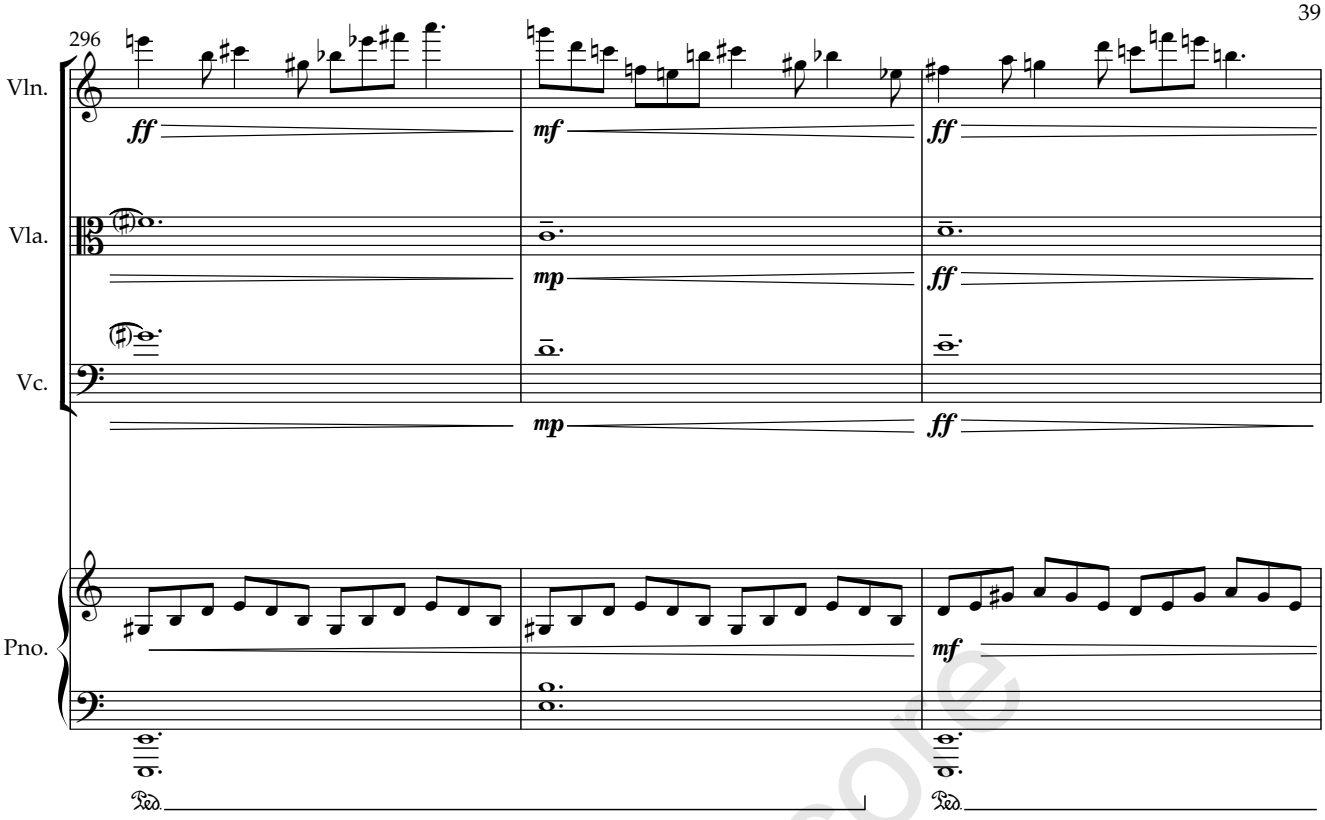


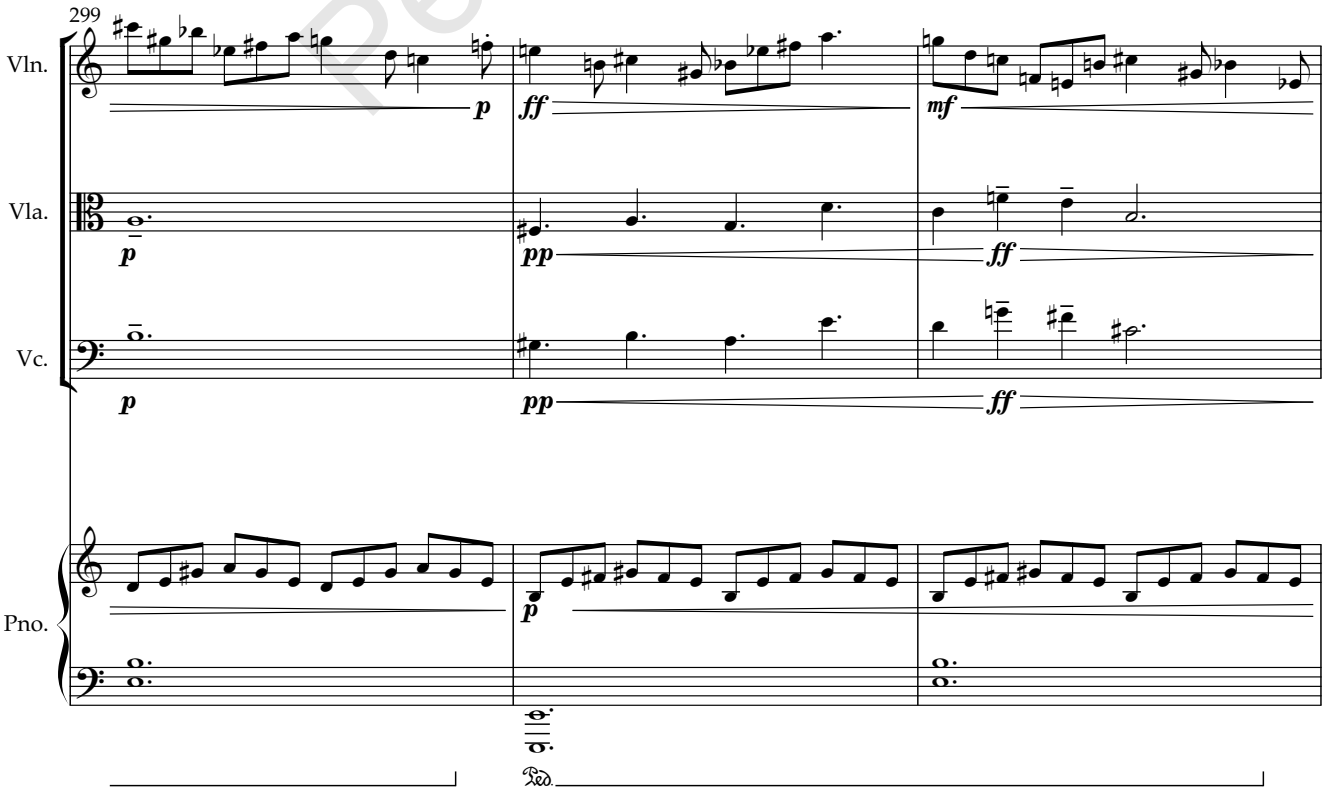


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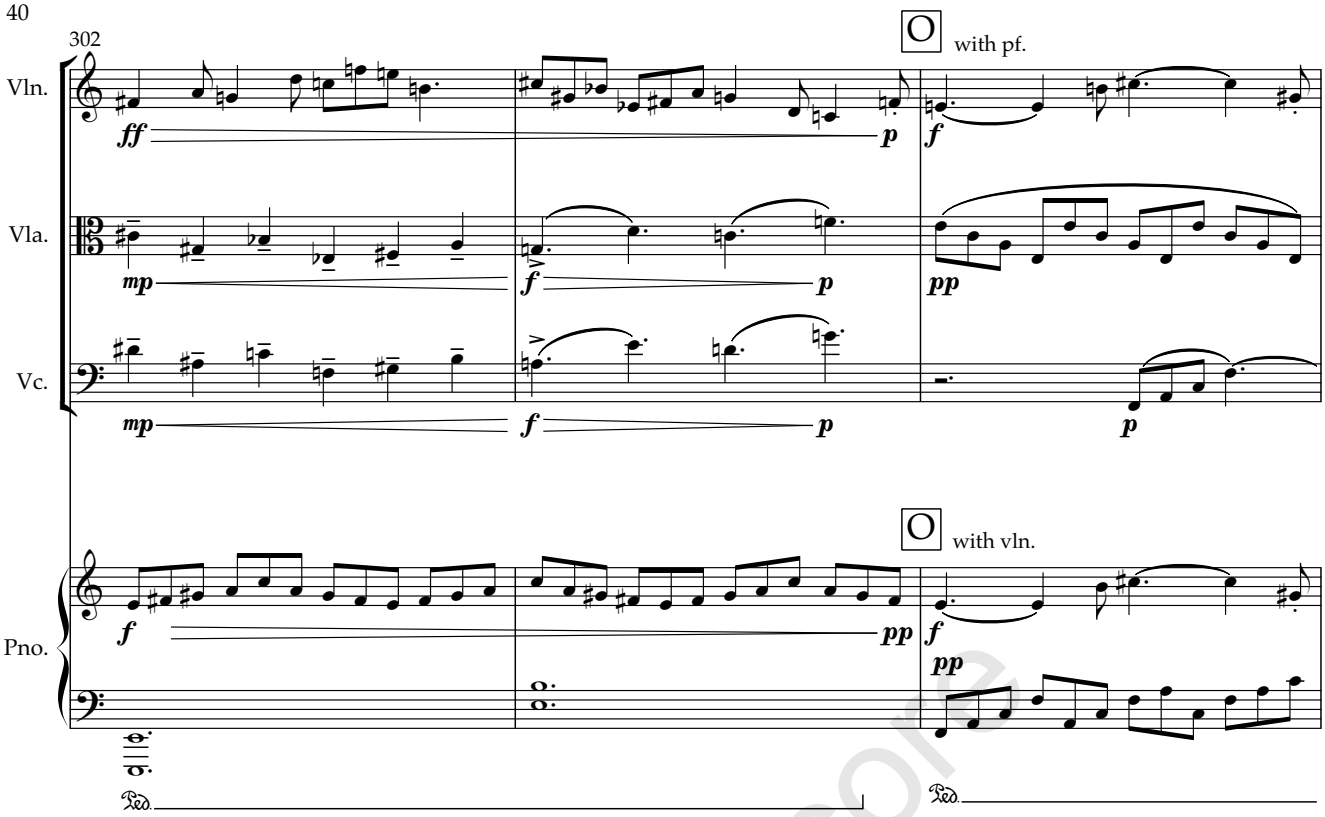


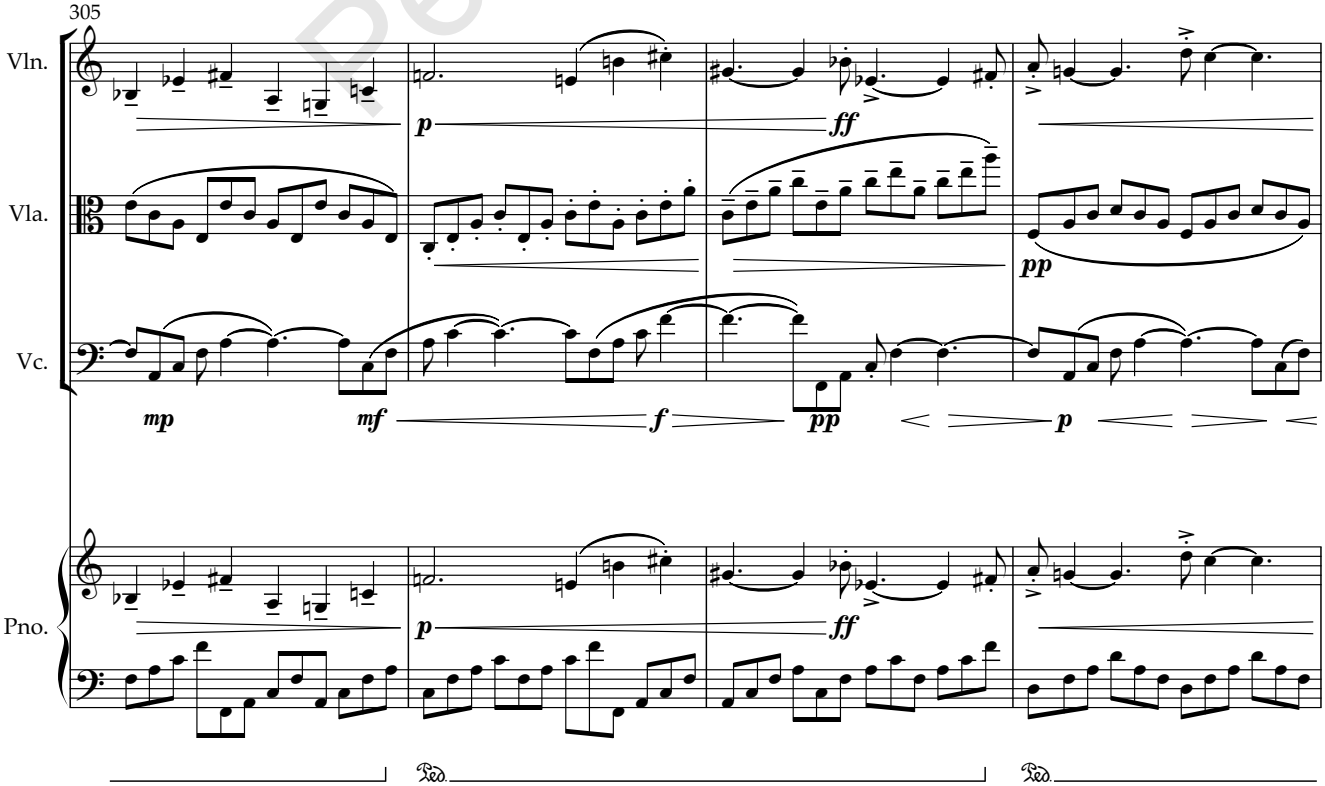


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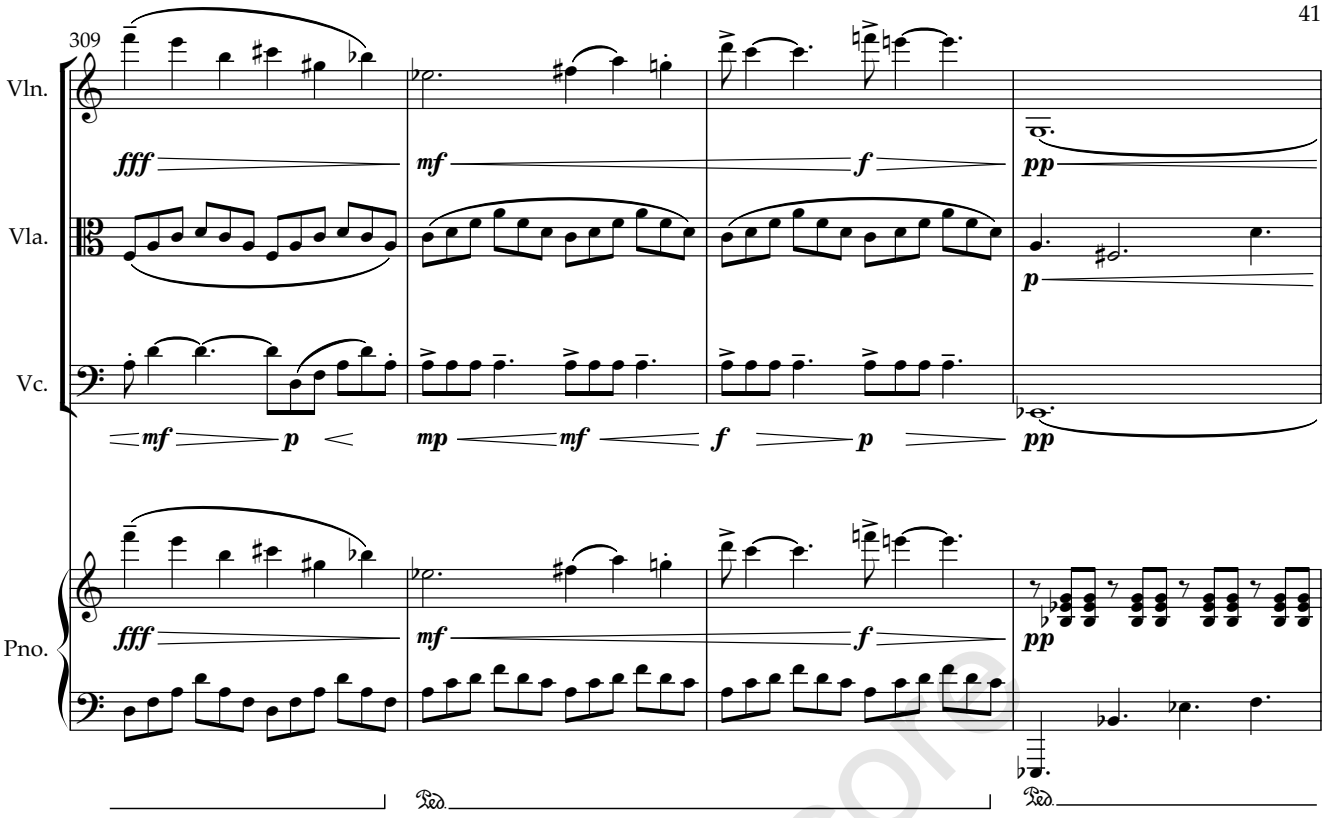


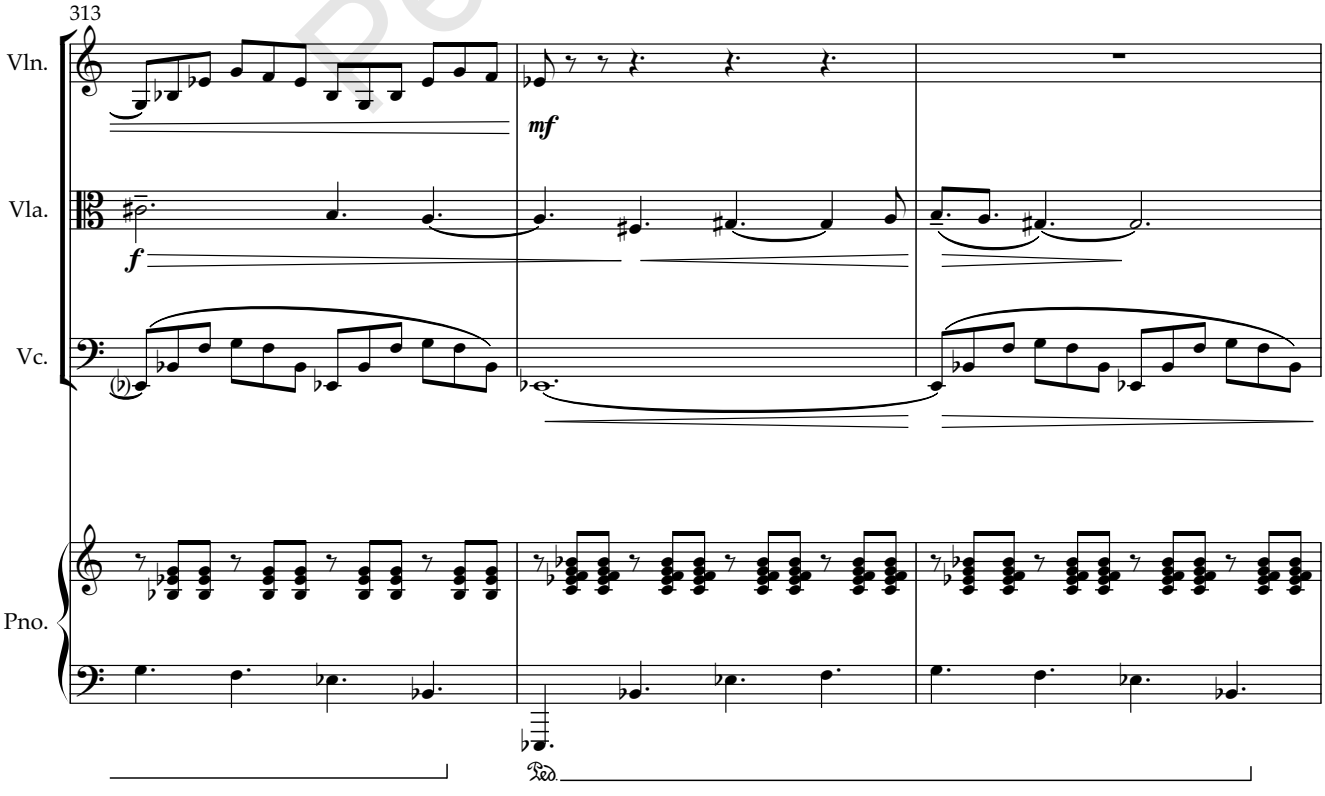


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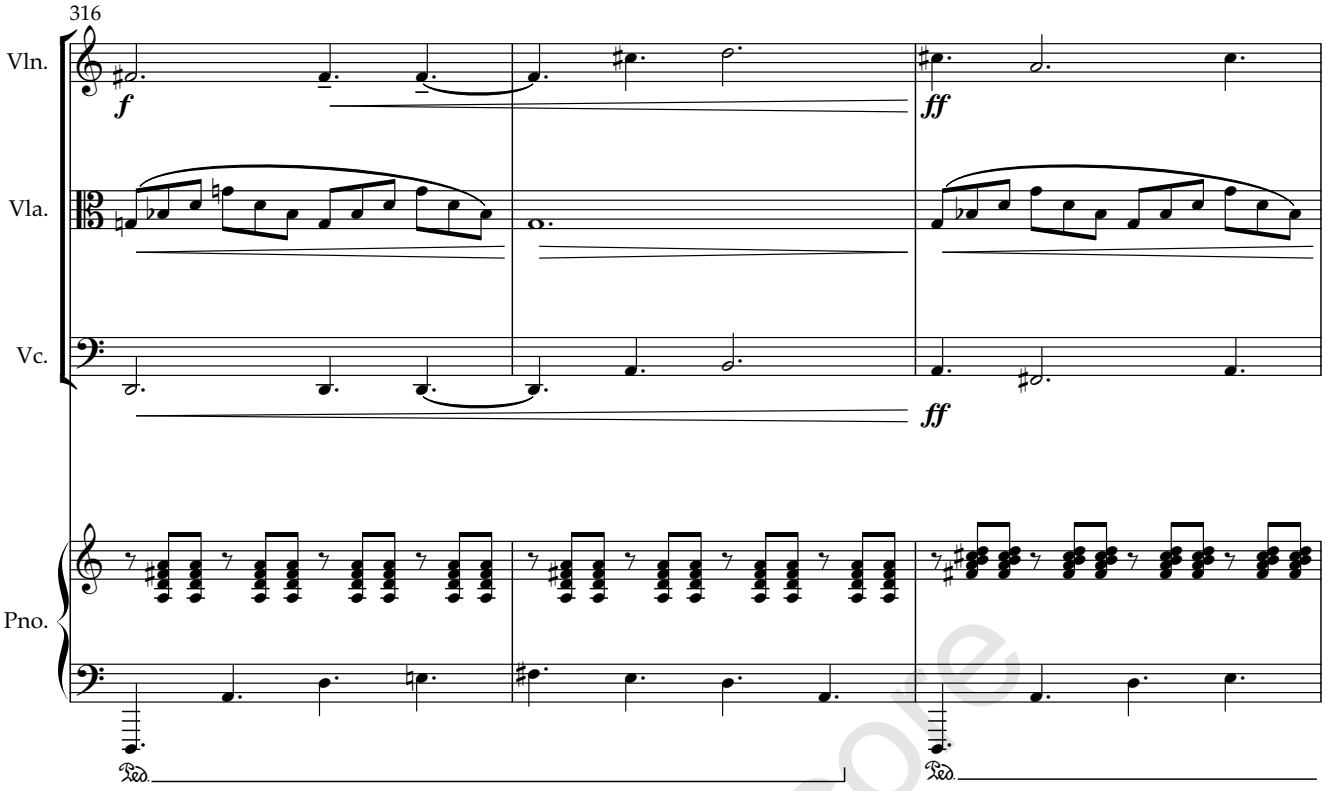


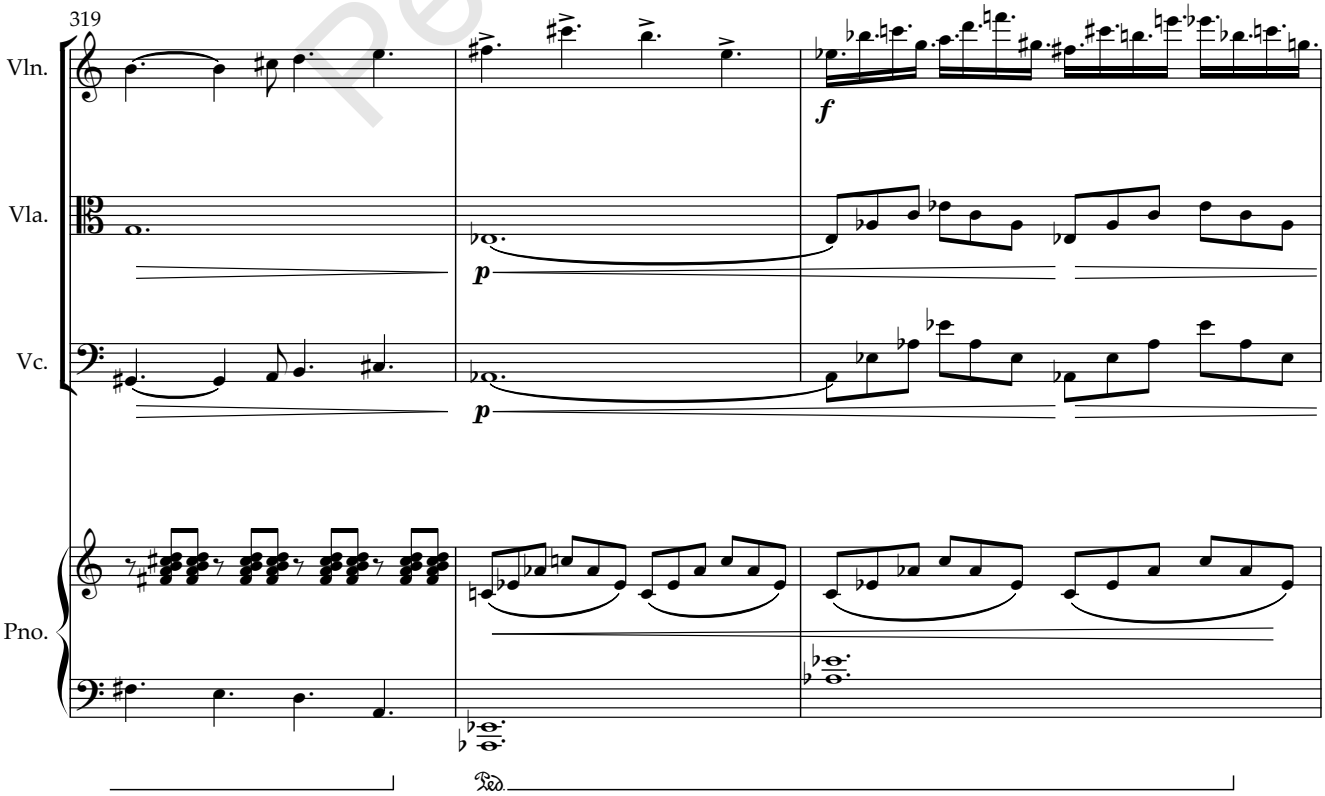


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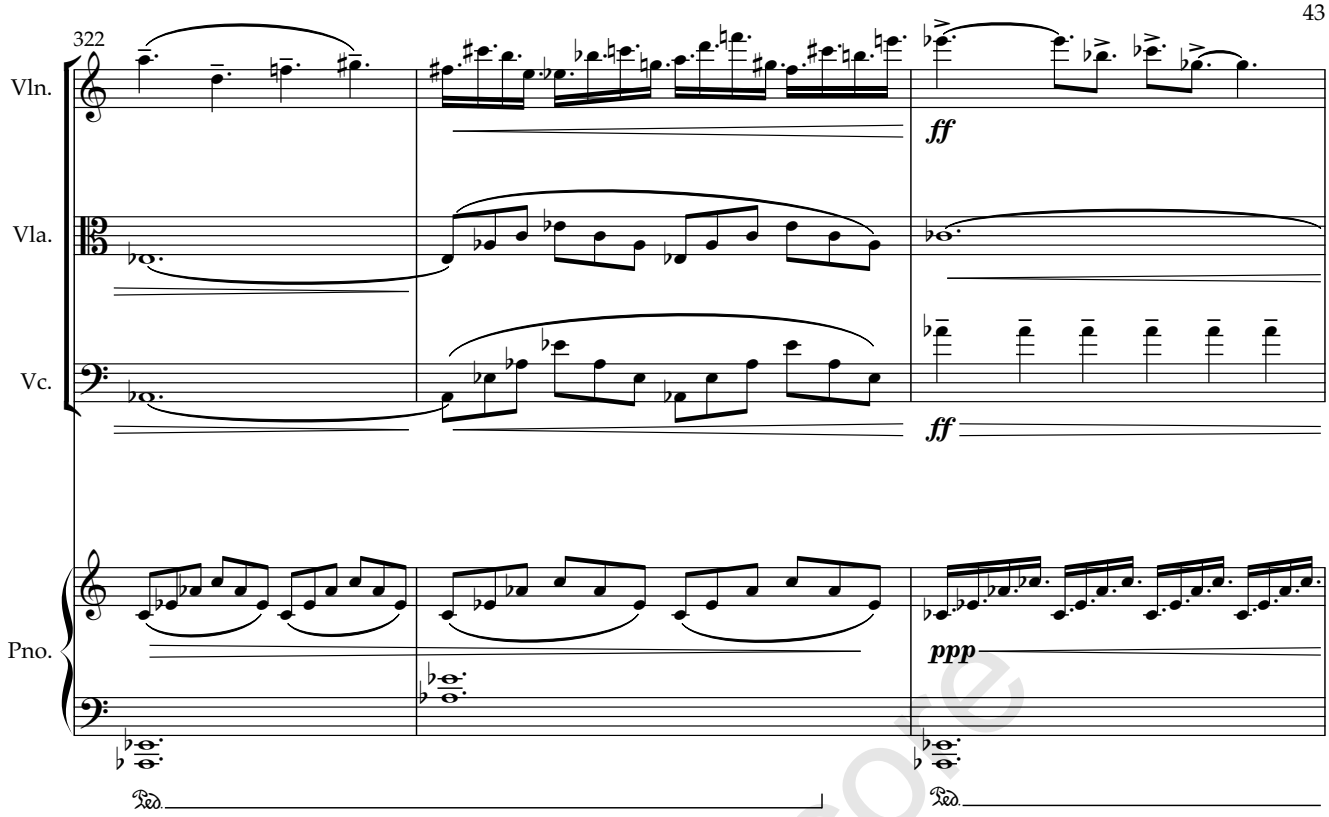


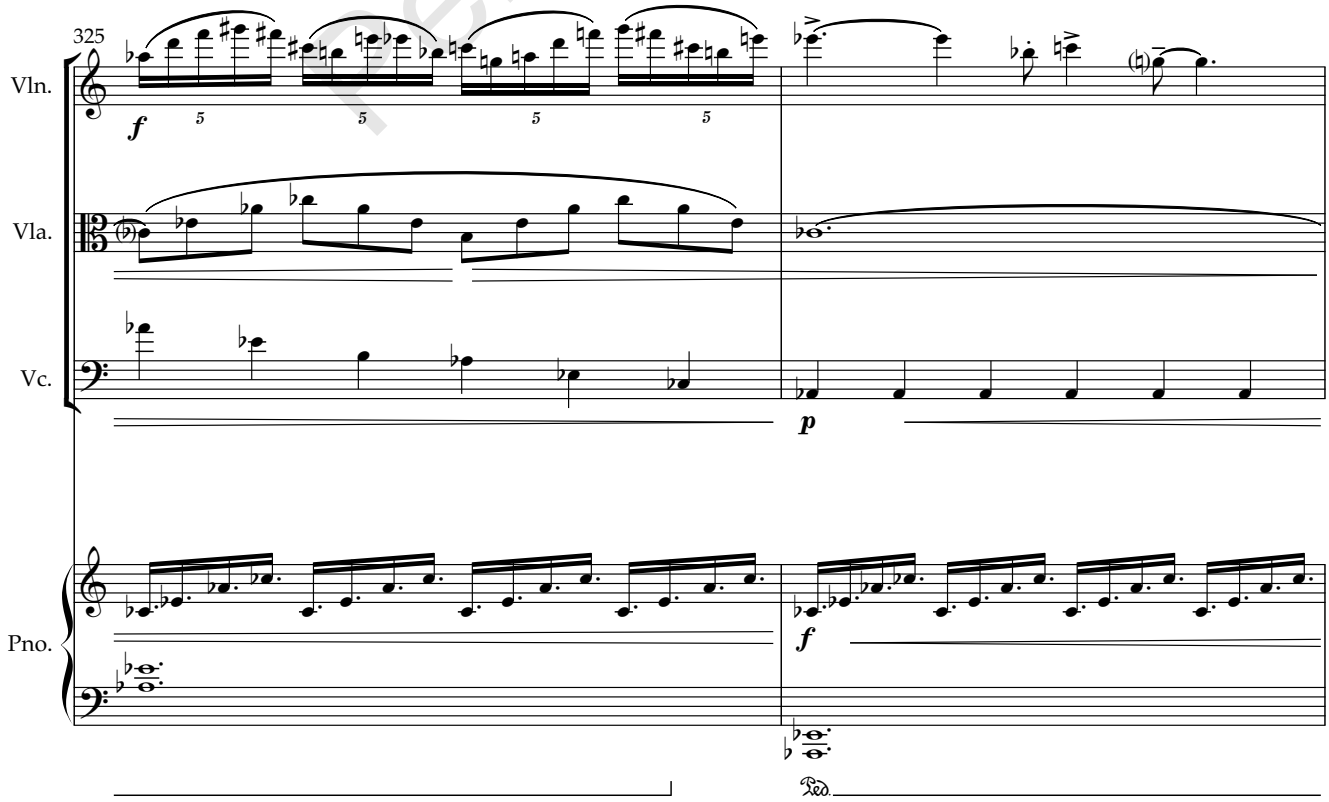


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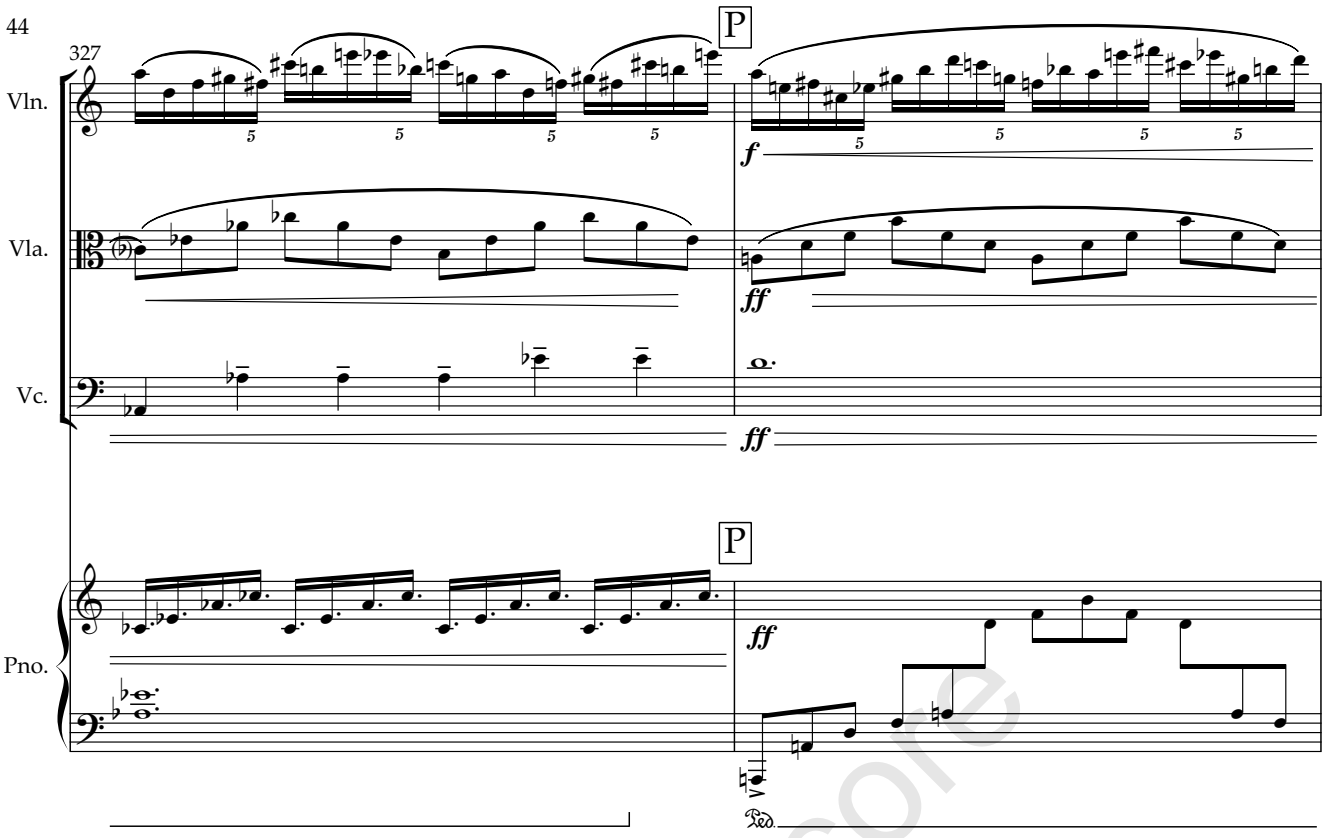


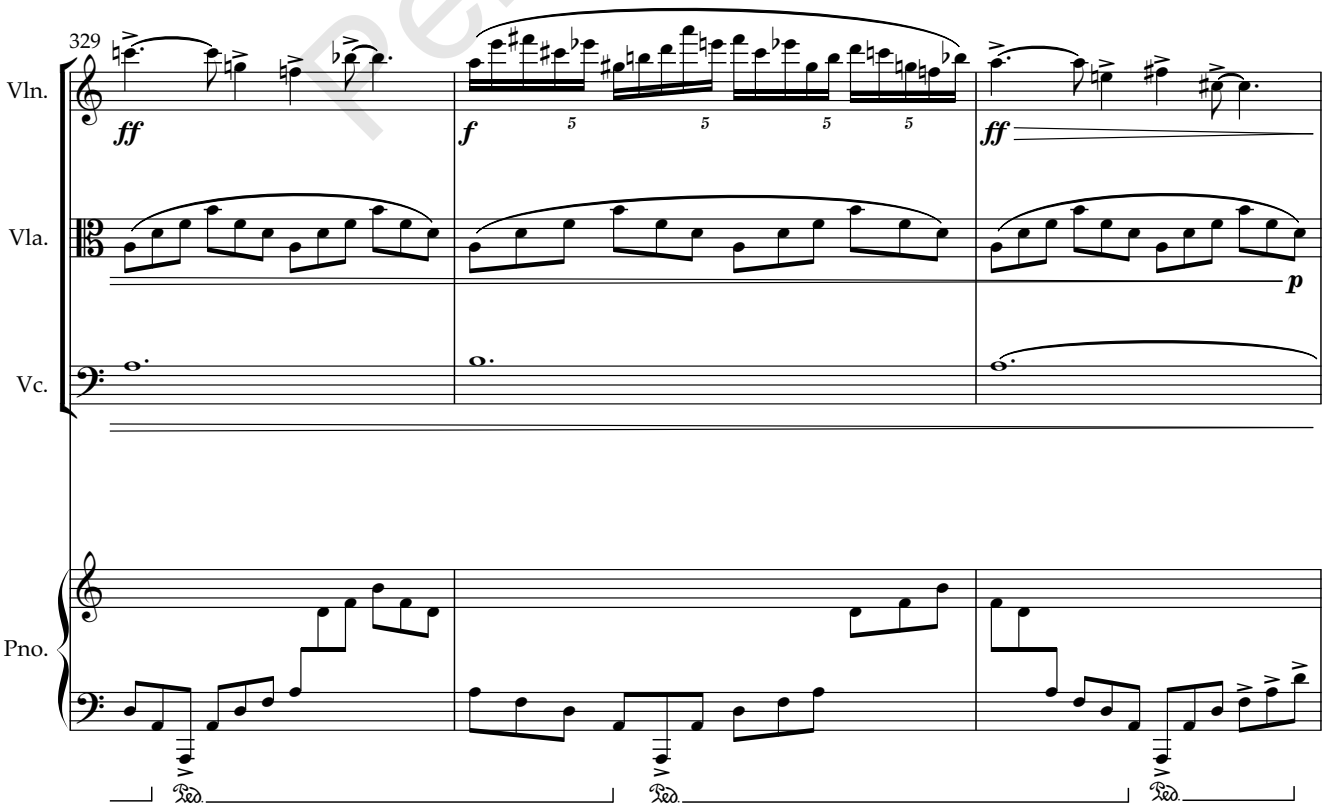


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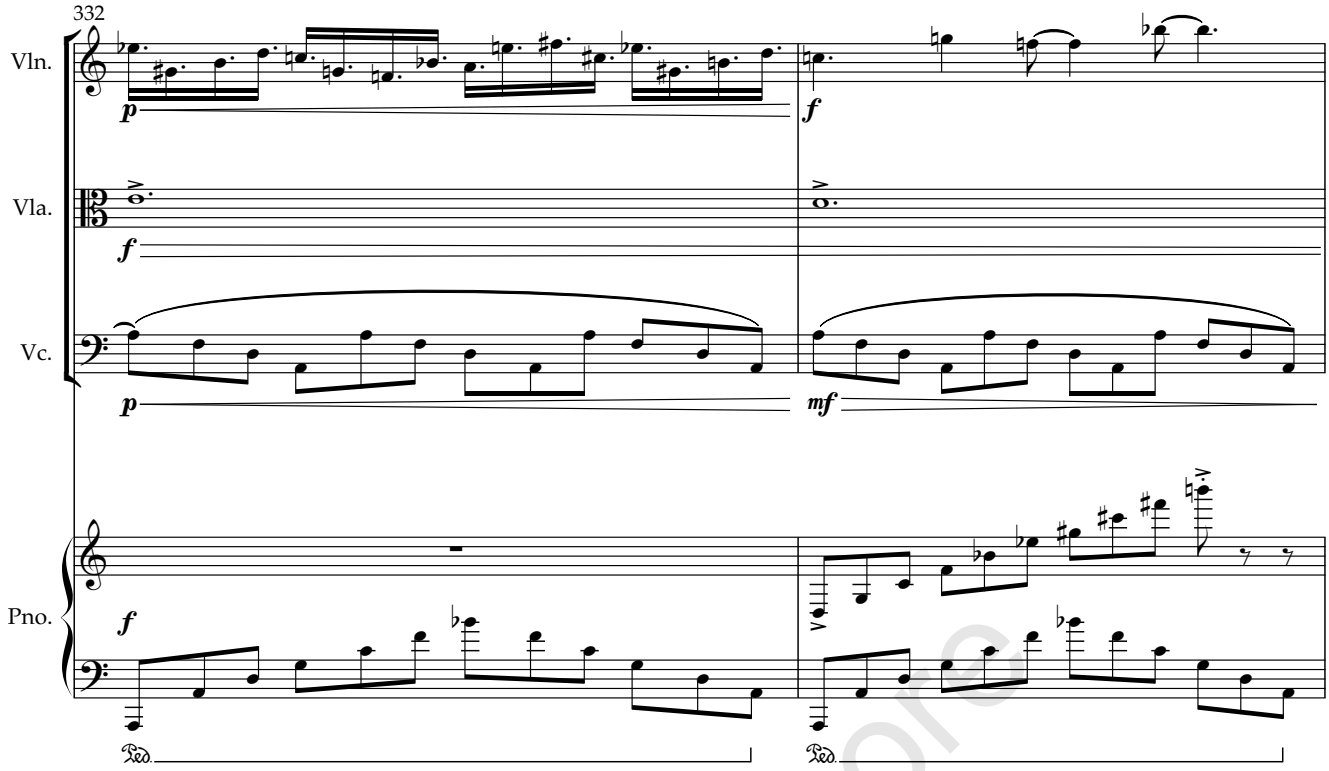


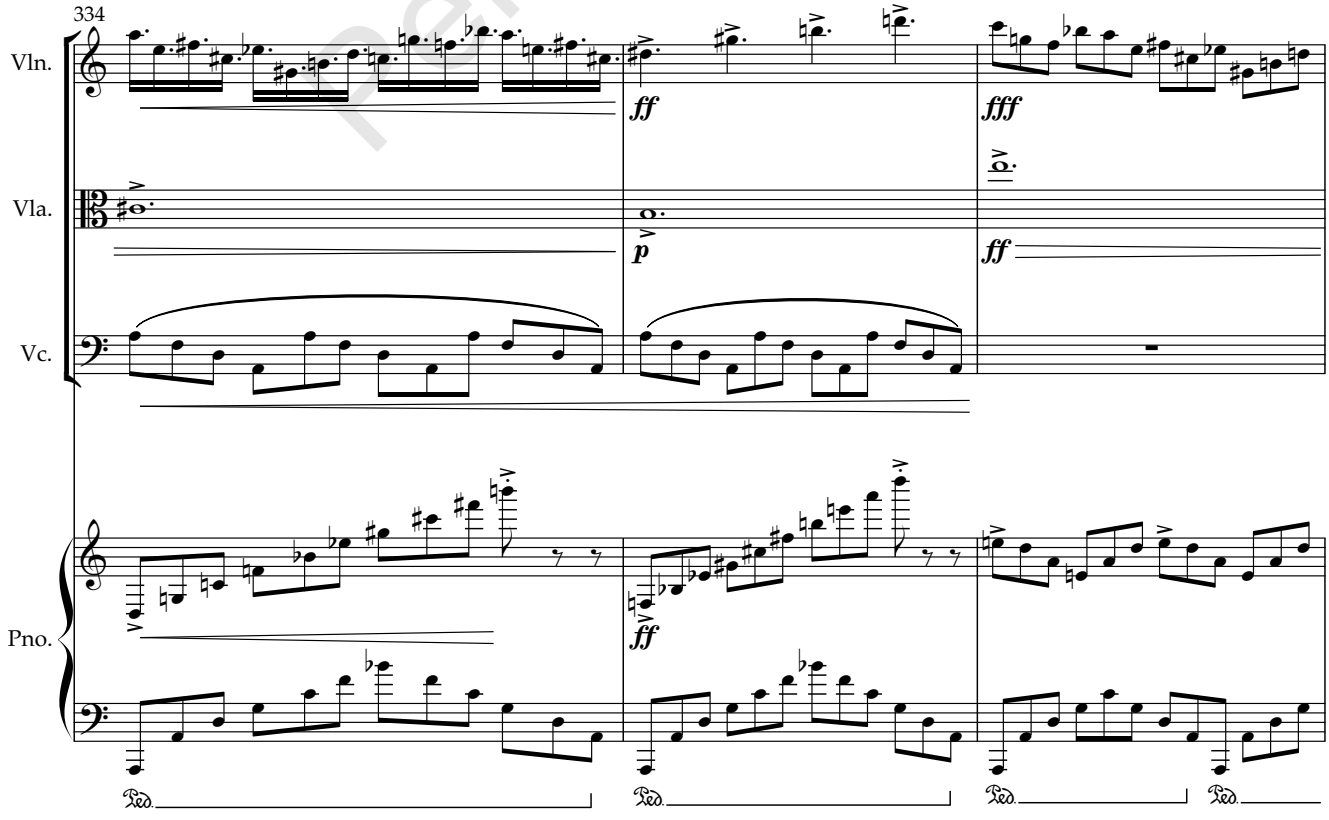


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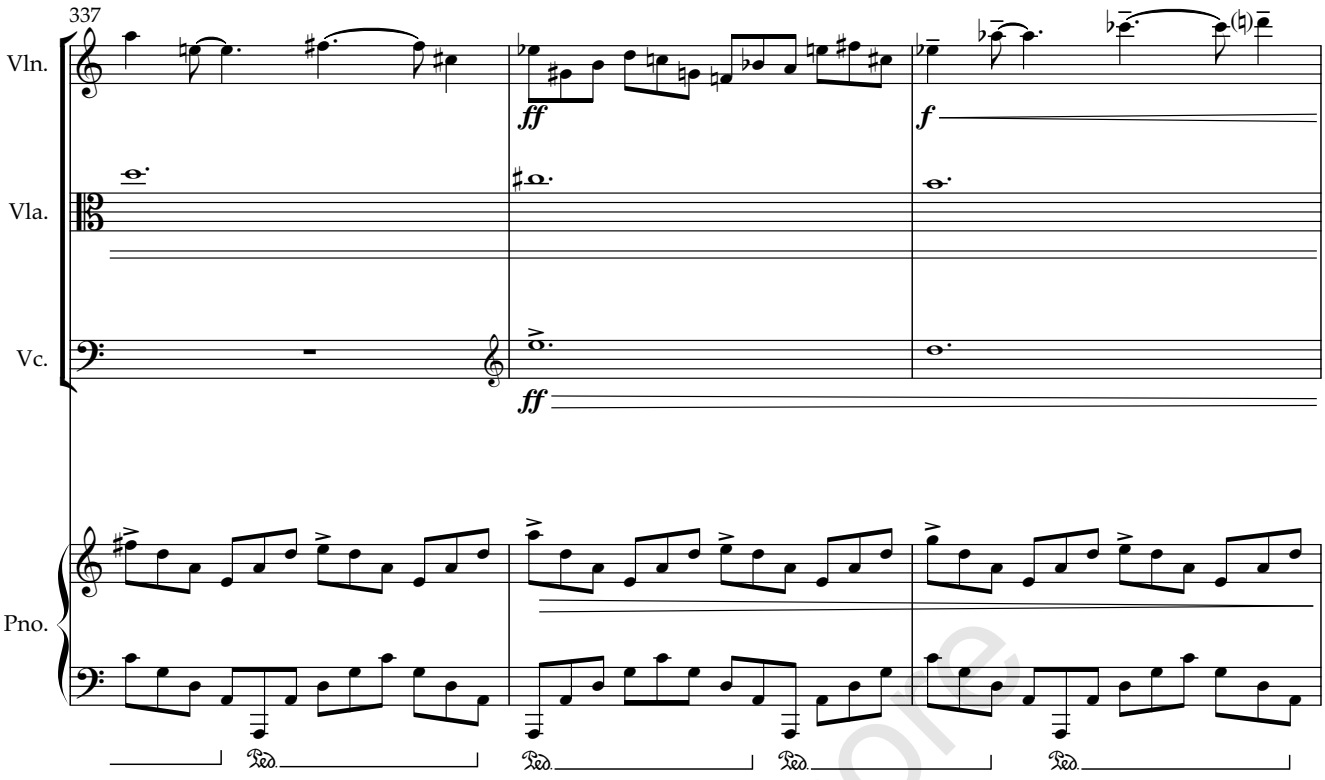


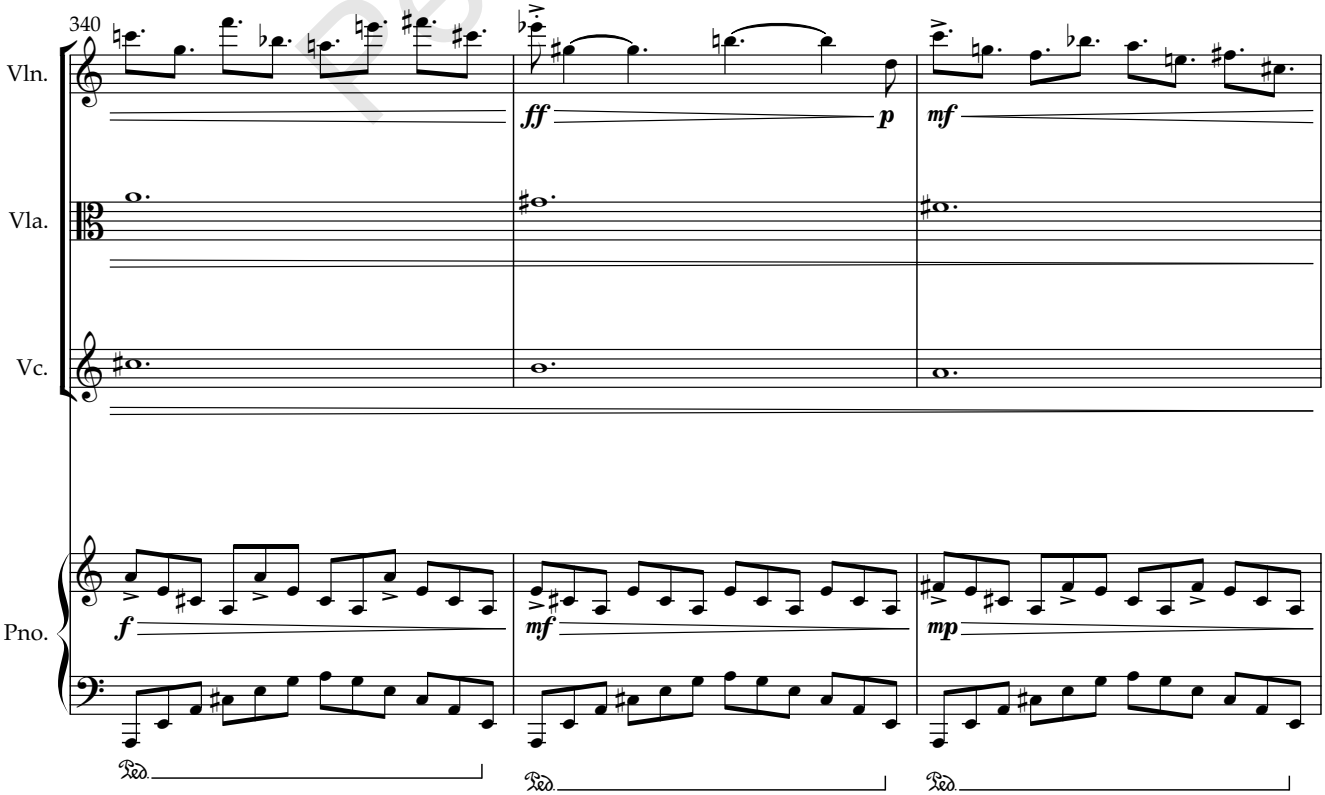


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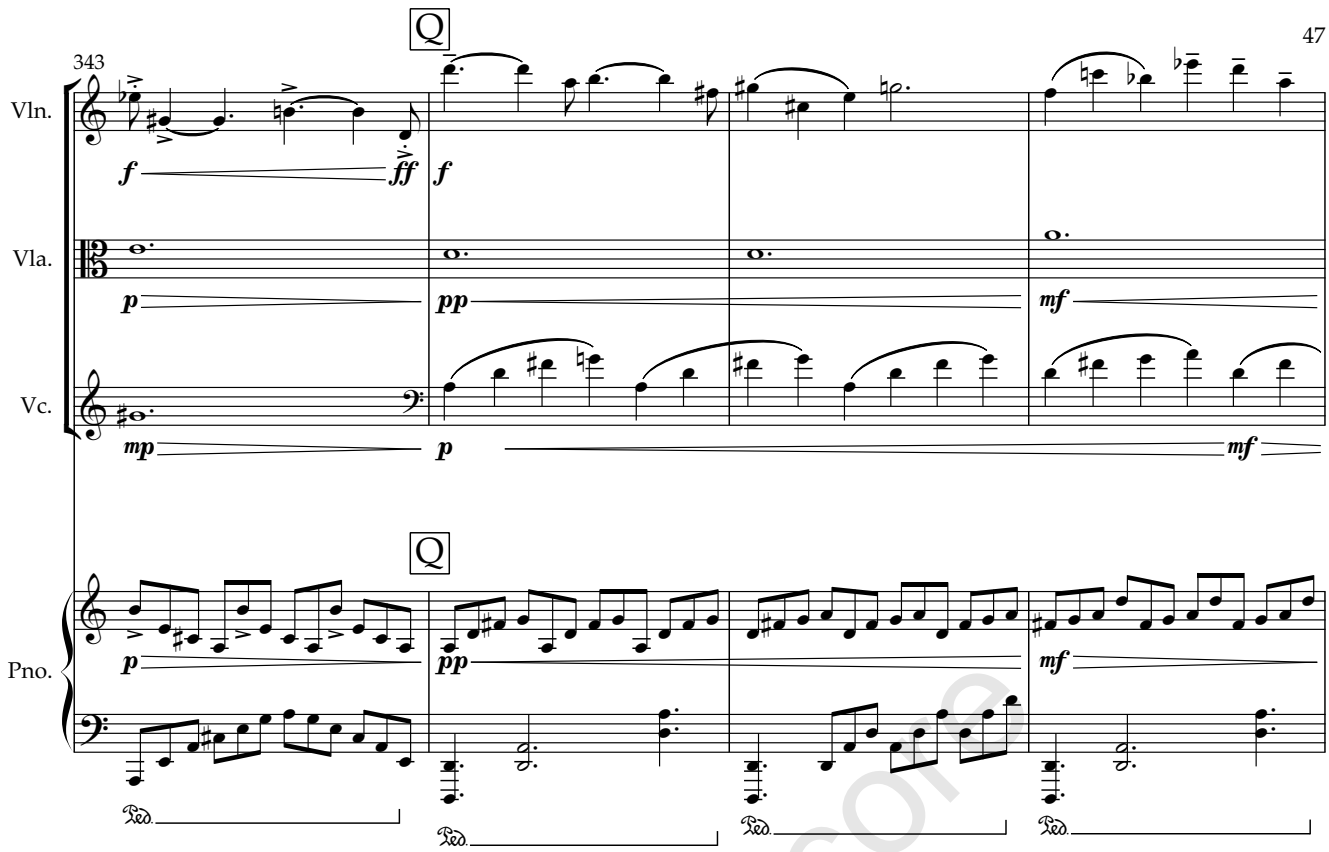


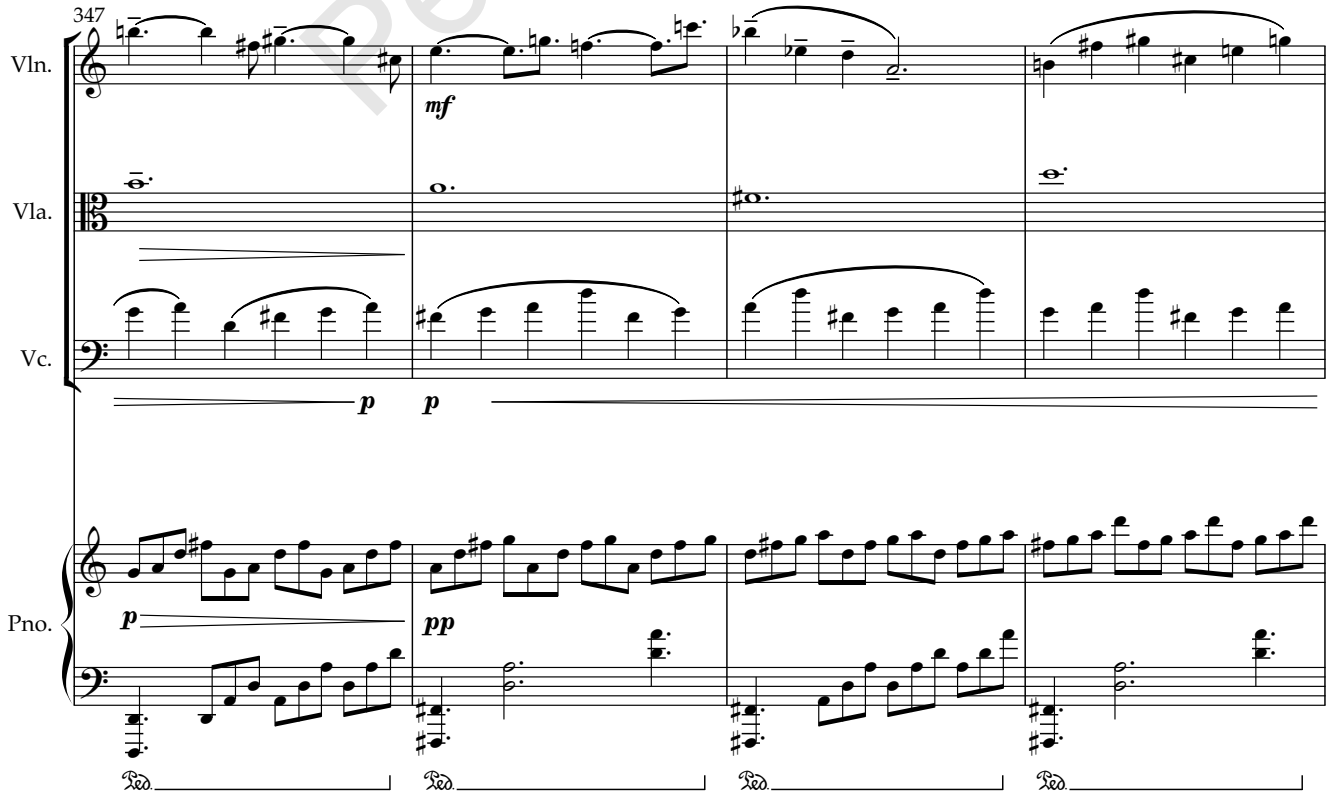


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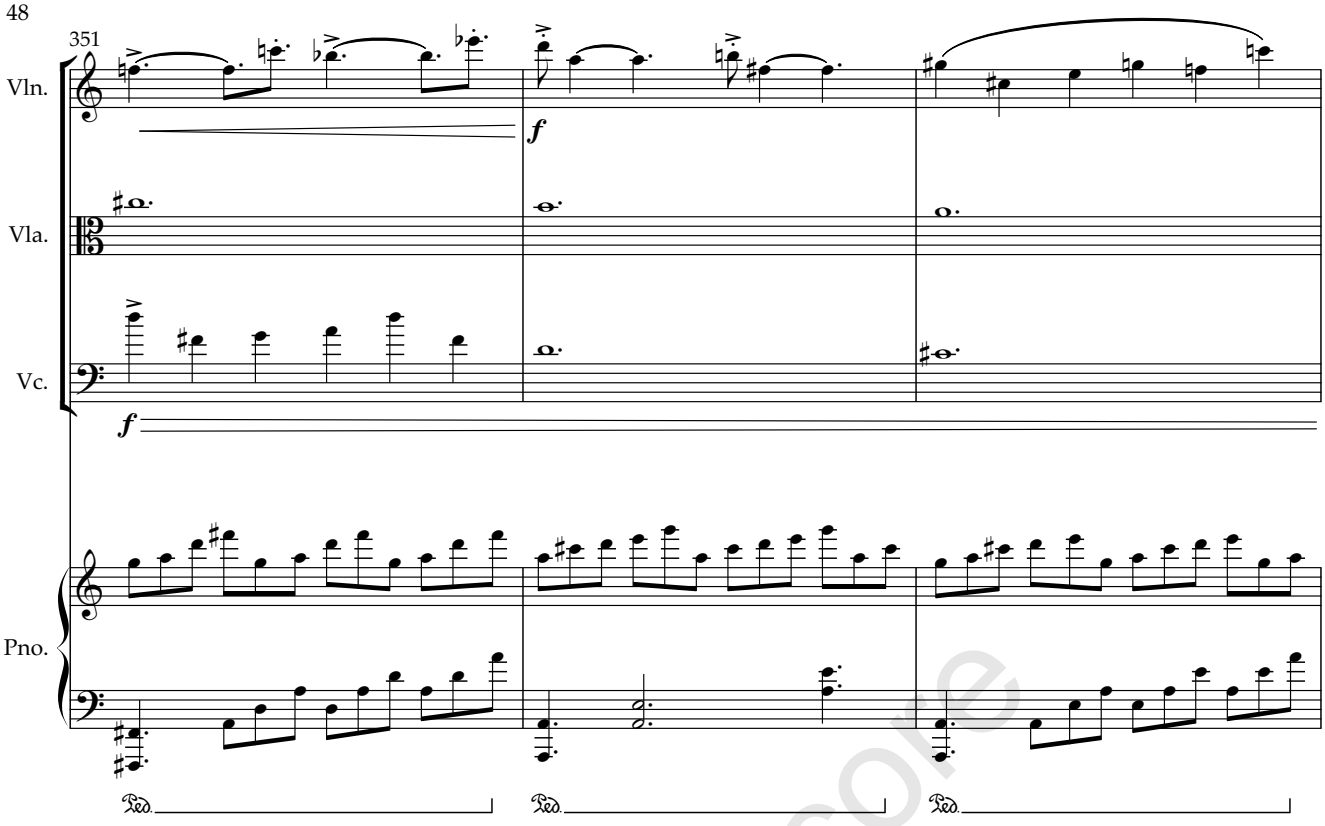


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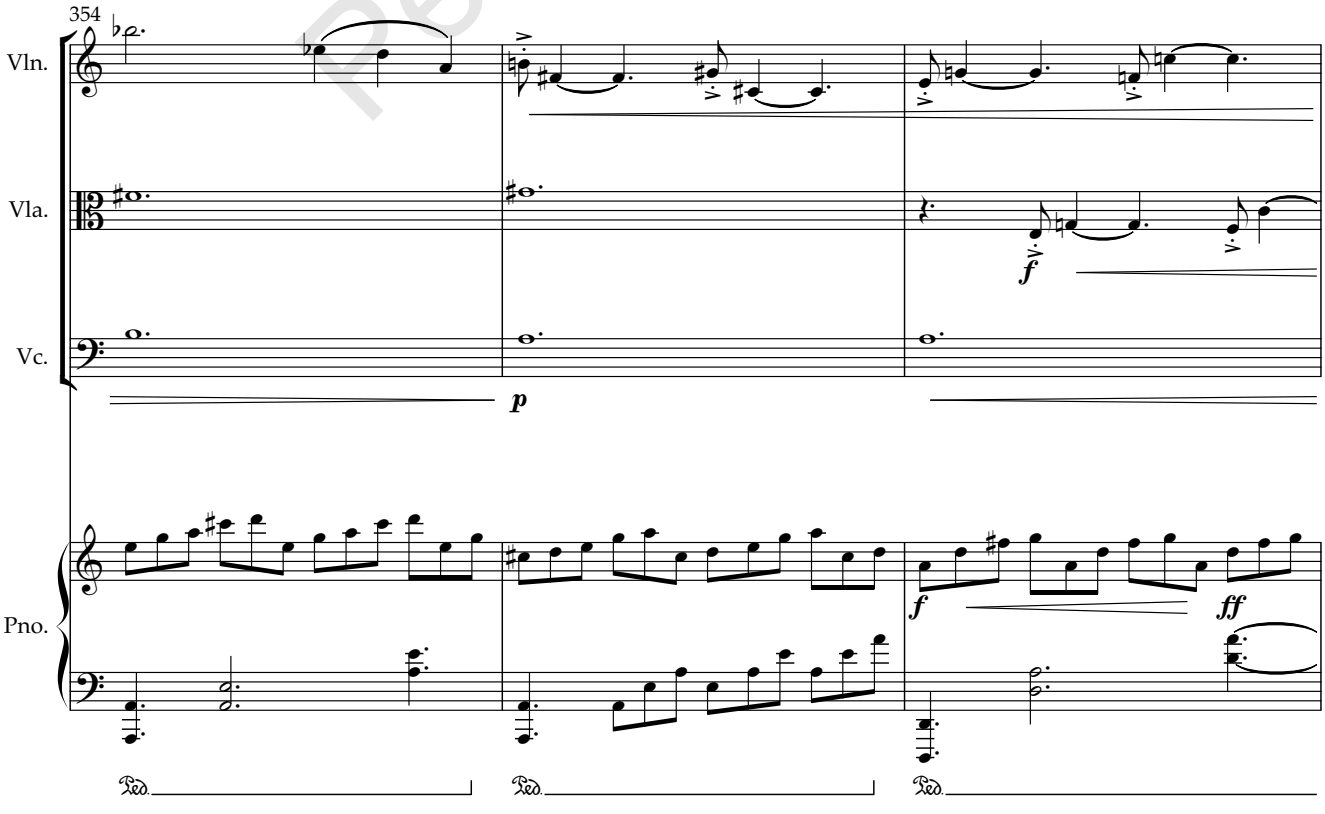

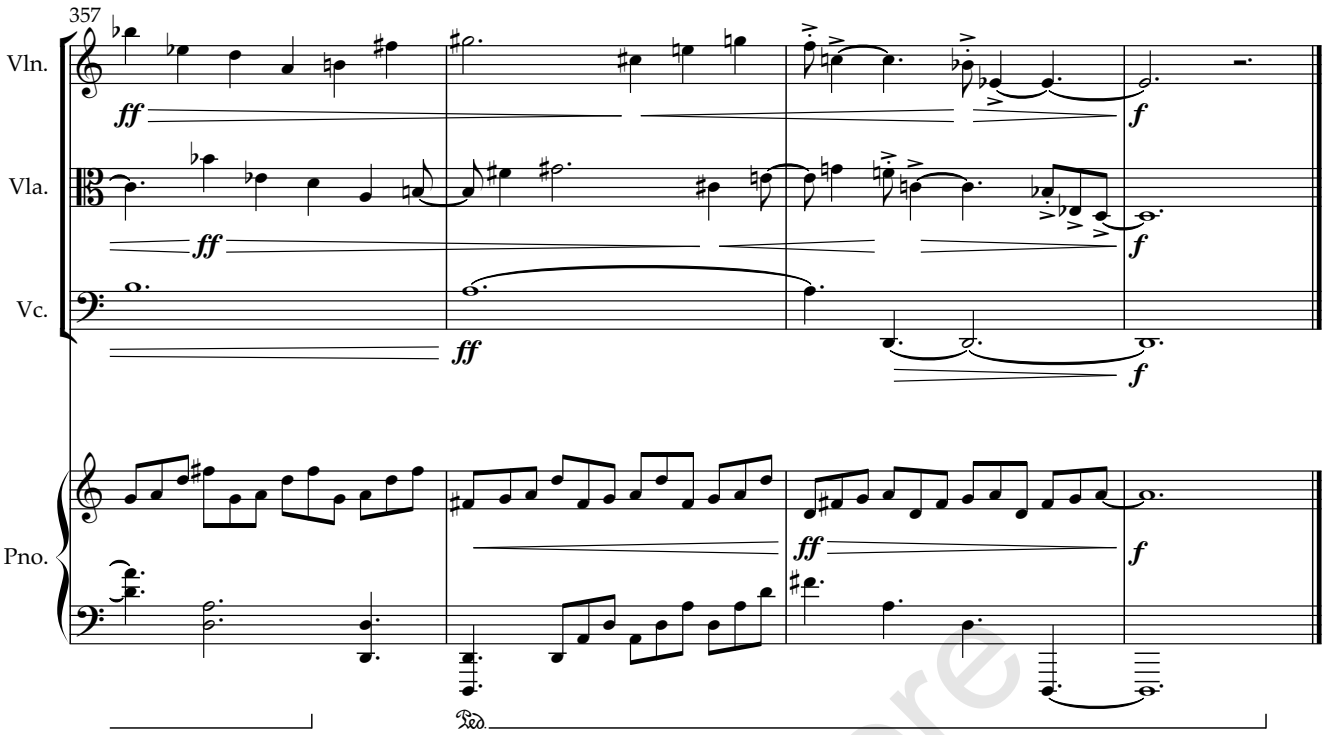


Lewes | 6.8.2021

Perusal score