Julian Wagstaff

In Extremis

for string trio

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Score

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In Extremis

for violin, viola and cello

This work was commissioned by Music in KB (the music society at King's Buildings, the science campus of Edinburgh University) in 2011. At the time I was serving as Composer in Residence at King's Buildings. The piece received its first performance at a concert given by members of the Edinburgh Quartet at the e-Science Centre in Edinburgh on 19 April 2011 as part of the Edinburgh International Science Festival. The players were Tristan Gurney (violin), Michael Beeston (viola) and Mark Bailey (cello).

This work is in three movements, as follows:

1. SI-SVI
2. "Attempt No Landings Here"
3. *Explosiv*

Each of the three movements is informed and inspired by the work of a different group of scientists working at the Centre for Science at Extreme Conditions (CSEC) at Edinburgh University. The Centre re-creates the extreme temperatures and pressures found at the centre of the earth and on distant planets, and investigates how substances react under these conditions.

The first movement draws on Dr. Olga Degtyareva's ground-breaking work on the high-pressure solid phases of the element sulphur, with the "SI-SVI" of the title referring to a journey from sulphur phase one through to phase six. In writing this section I wished to emphasise the "movement within stasis" aspect of those crystalline structures. Each phase has its own definite geometry, but that geometry is itself constantly pulsating and vibrating. The term "phase" also put me in mind of the work of minimalist composers such as Steve Reich (for example Piano Phase from 1967).

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The second movement was inspired by Dr. John Loveday's work on methane hydrates on Saturn's largest moon, Titan. (The title of the movement is a reference to Arthur C Clarke's novel 2010, the sequel to 2001-A Space Odyssey, in which life emerges on Jupiter's moon Europa). Titan is of particular interest to researchers due to its relative size (it is larger than the planet Mercury), and because it is the only moon that we know of to have a fully developed atmosphere. On icy Titan, methane plays the role that water does in Earth's weather systems: it can form clouds, and can fall as rain – or even hail or snow. In 2004 the Cassini-Huygens mission discovered liquid hydrocarbon lakes in the satellite's polar regions.

The third and final movement is a musical treatment of the high explosive CL-20, and is indebted to Professor Colin Pulham's work on the high-pressure "zeta" form of the substance. The explosive has the chemical formula C6H6N12O12, and this formula is reflected in the pitch and time signature choices within the movement. The application and nature of the explosive is represented in the musical gestures and articulation that give the movement its character and shape.

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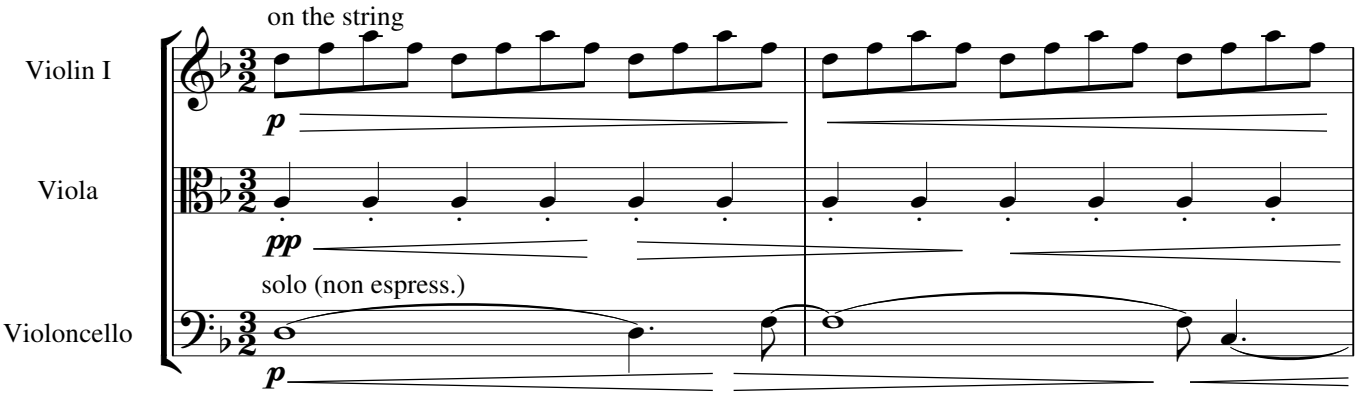
In Extremis

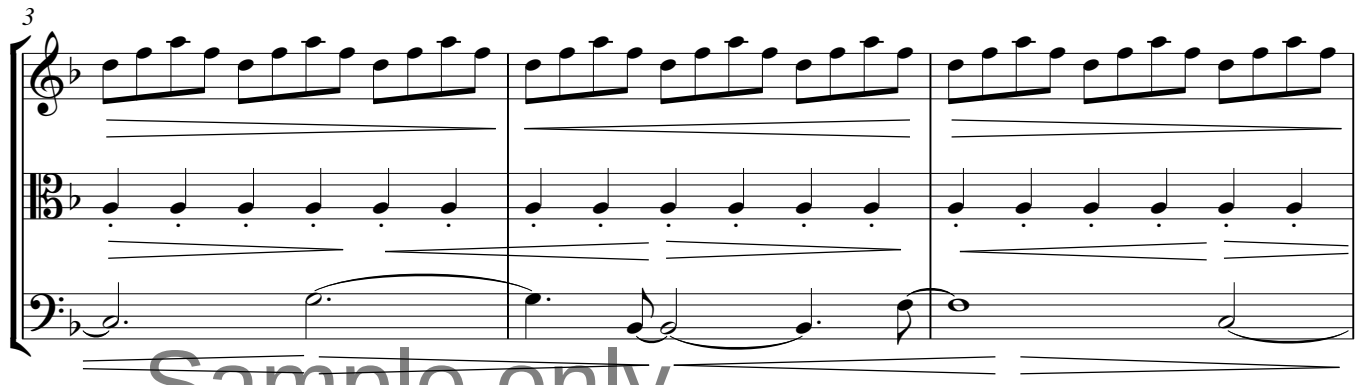
SI-SVI

Julian Wagstaff

"Phase I"

With a very steady pulse (𝅗𝅥=70)





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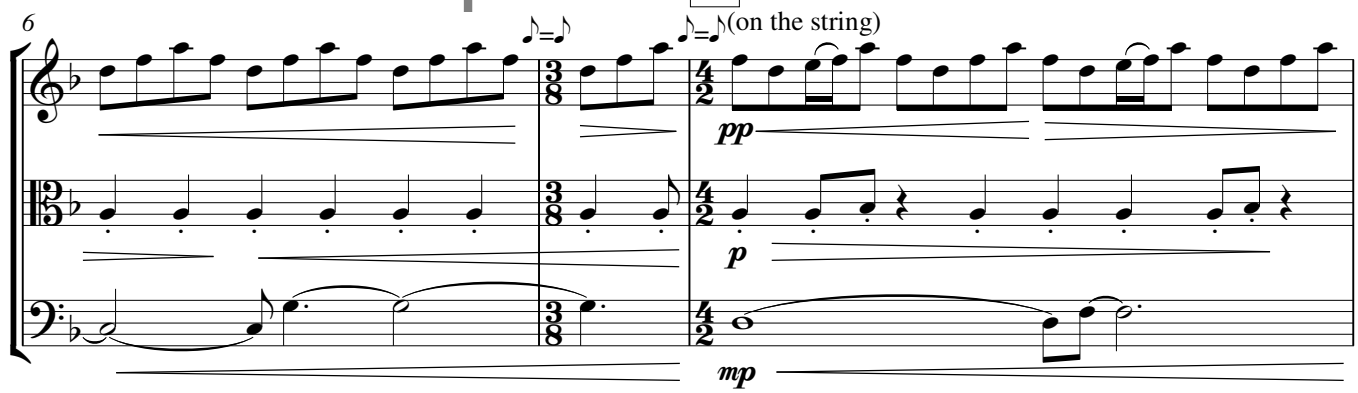
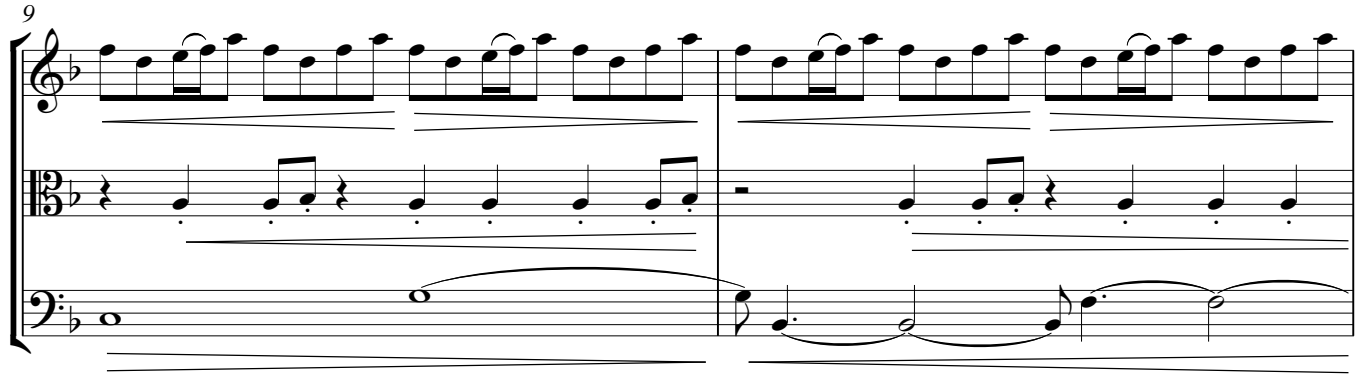
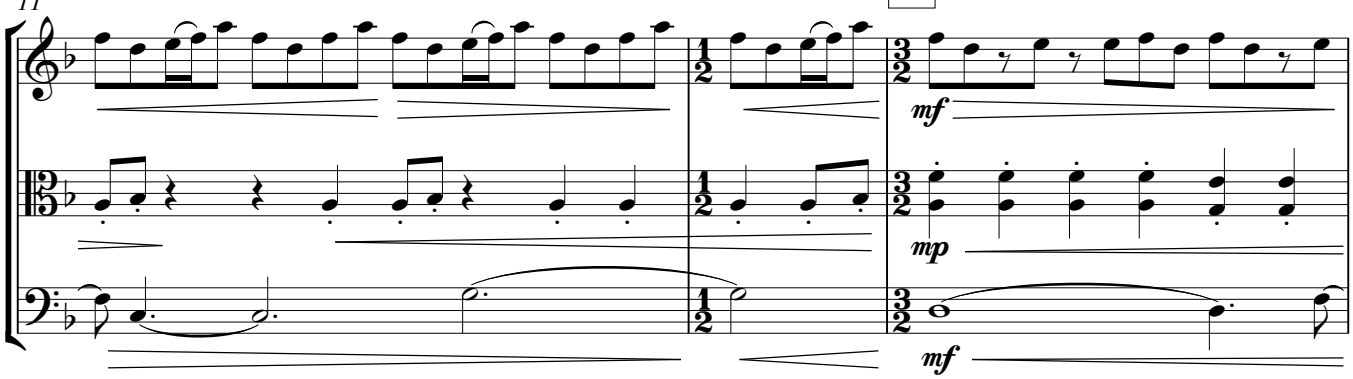




B **More of a groove! (𝅗𝅥=72)**

11



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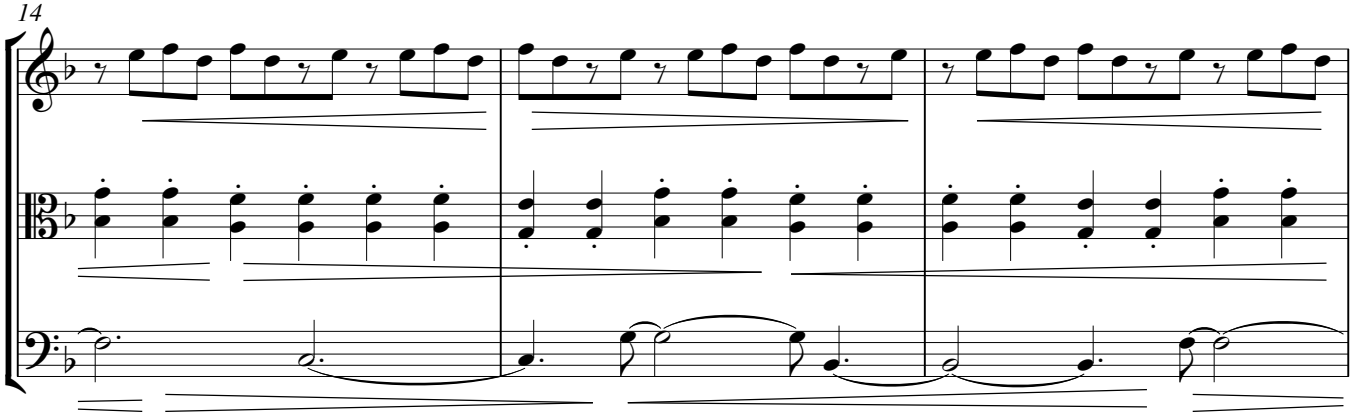

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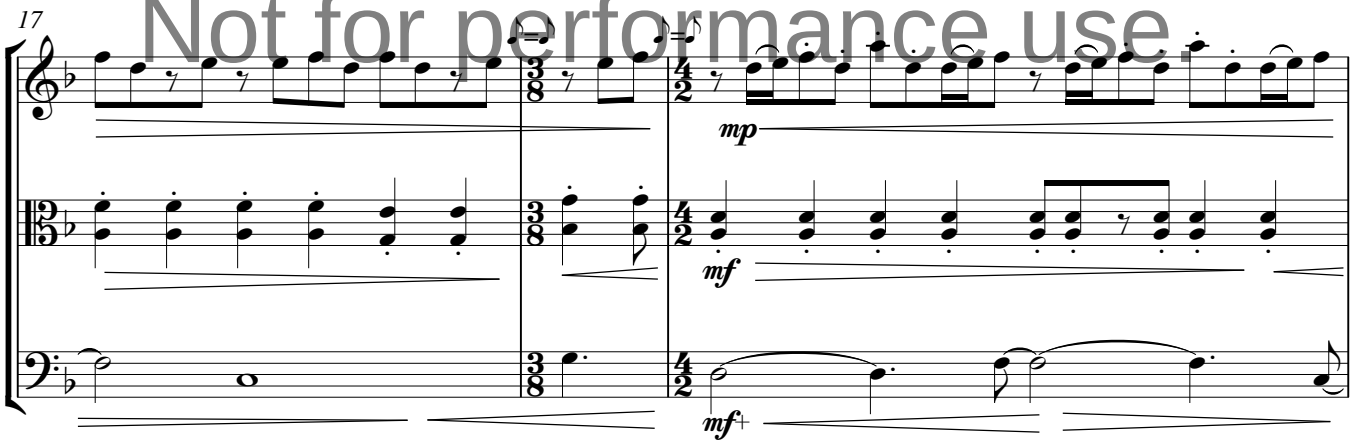
C **L'istesso tempo (𝅗𝅥=72)**

17



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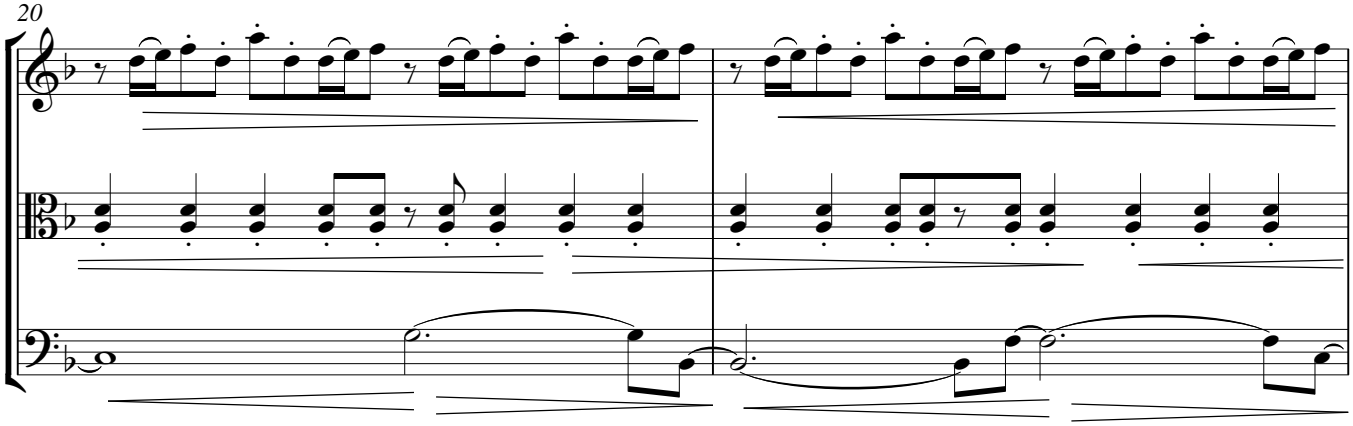

D **"Phase II"**
L'istesso tempo (𝅗𝅥=72)

22

poco espr.

f

mf

mf

24

26

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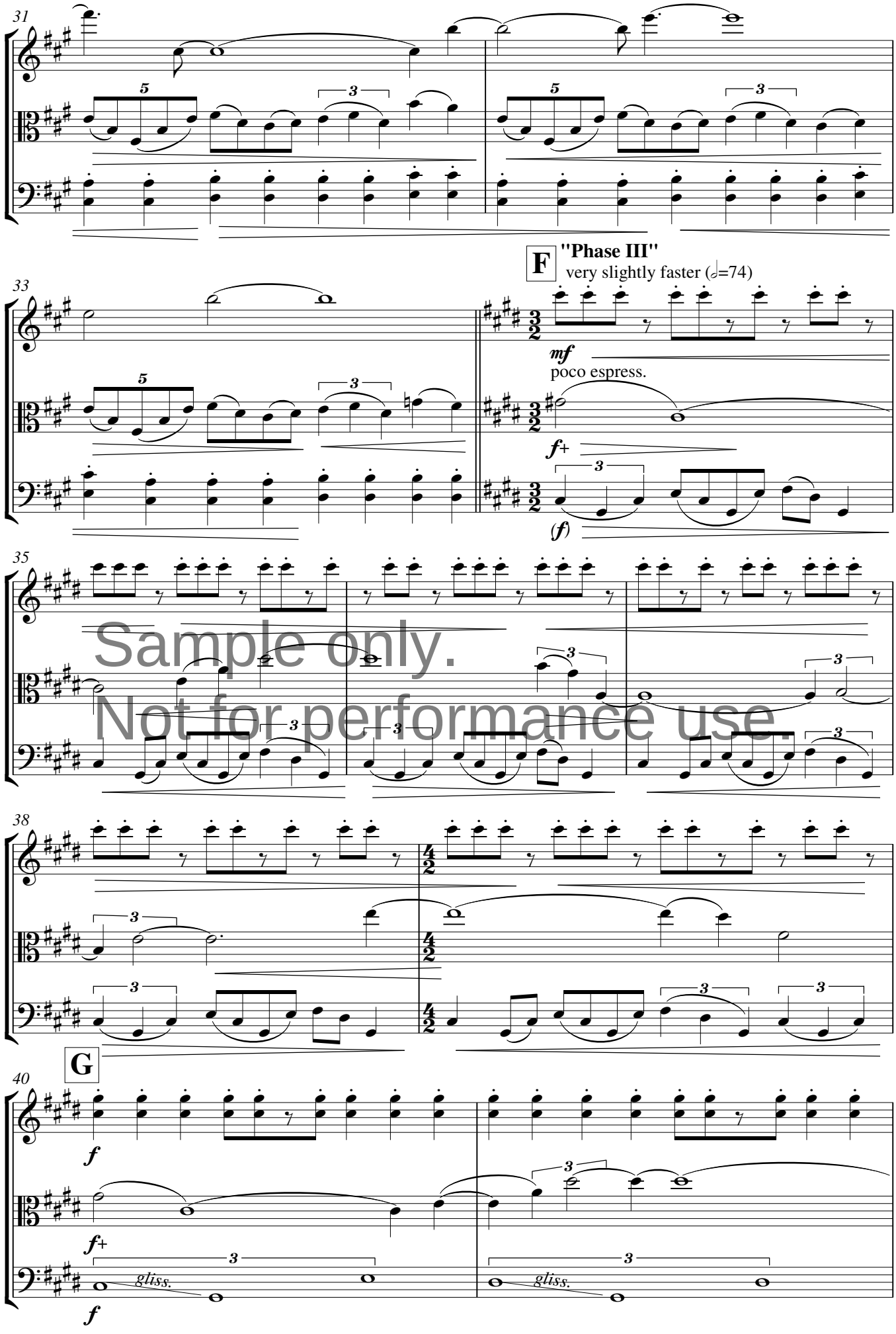
E

29

f+

f

f



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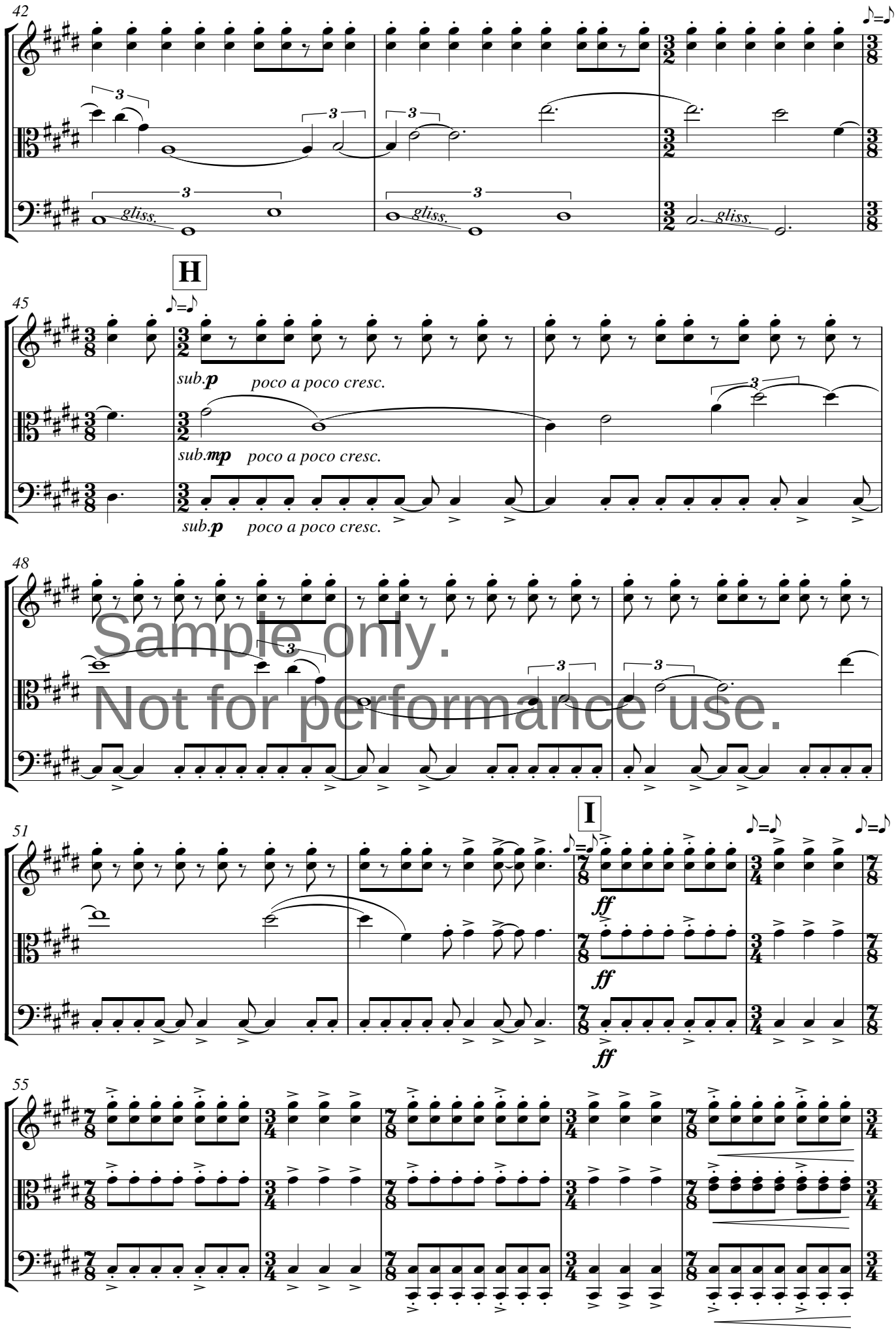

Sample only.
Not for performance use.

"Phase IV' "

J **A little more languid (♩=126)**

(like bells chiming)

60

ten.

fff

mf

mp

(like bells chiming)

64

69

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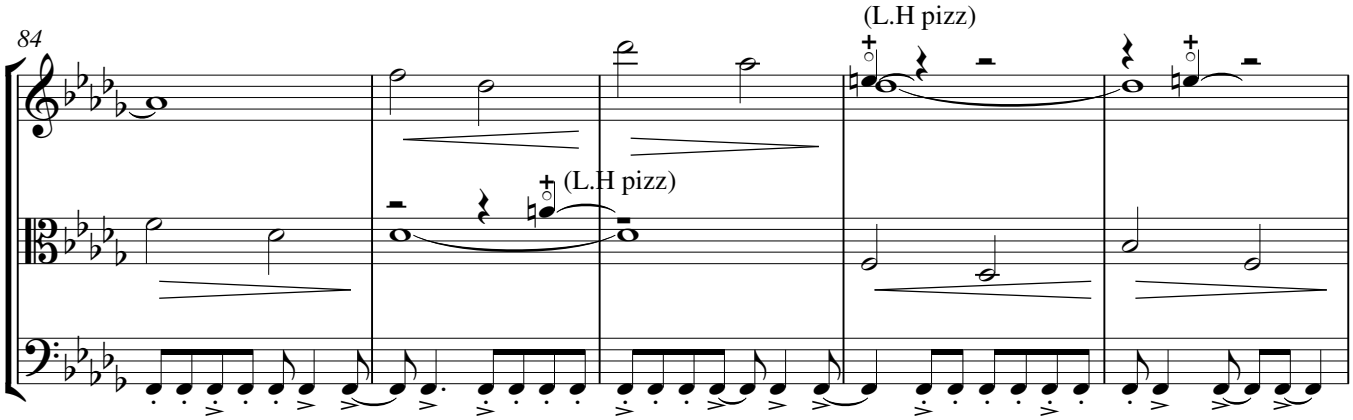
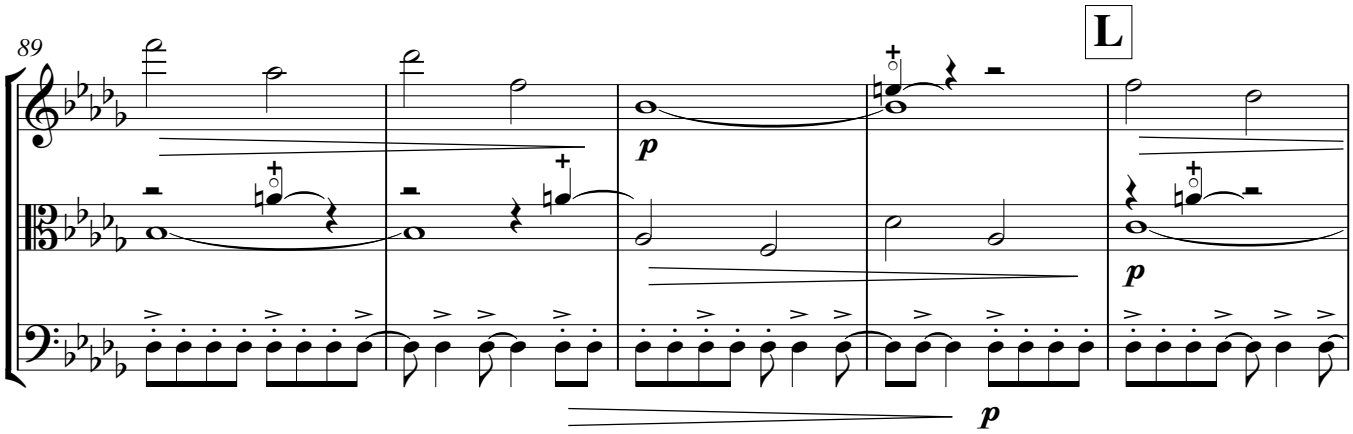
K

74

79

3





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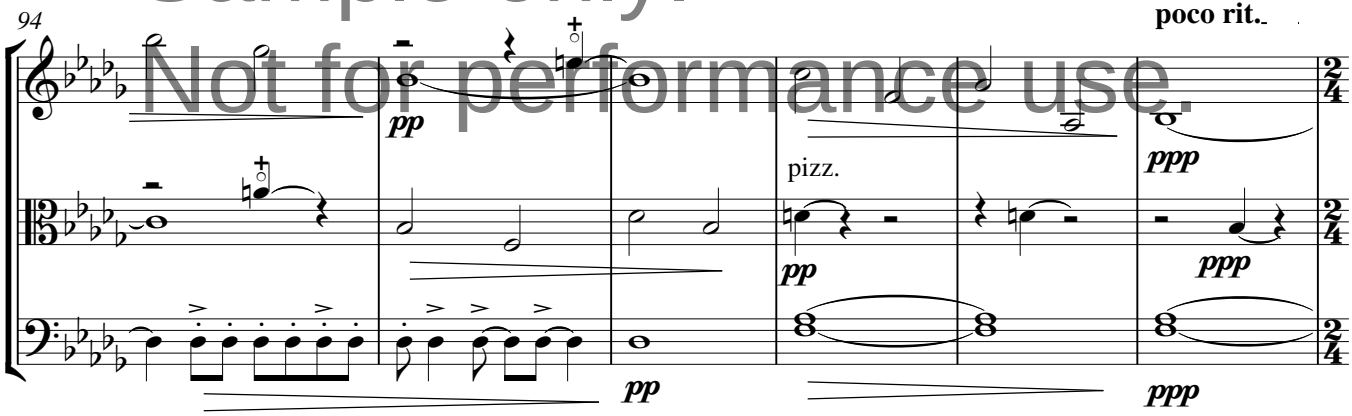

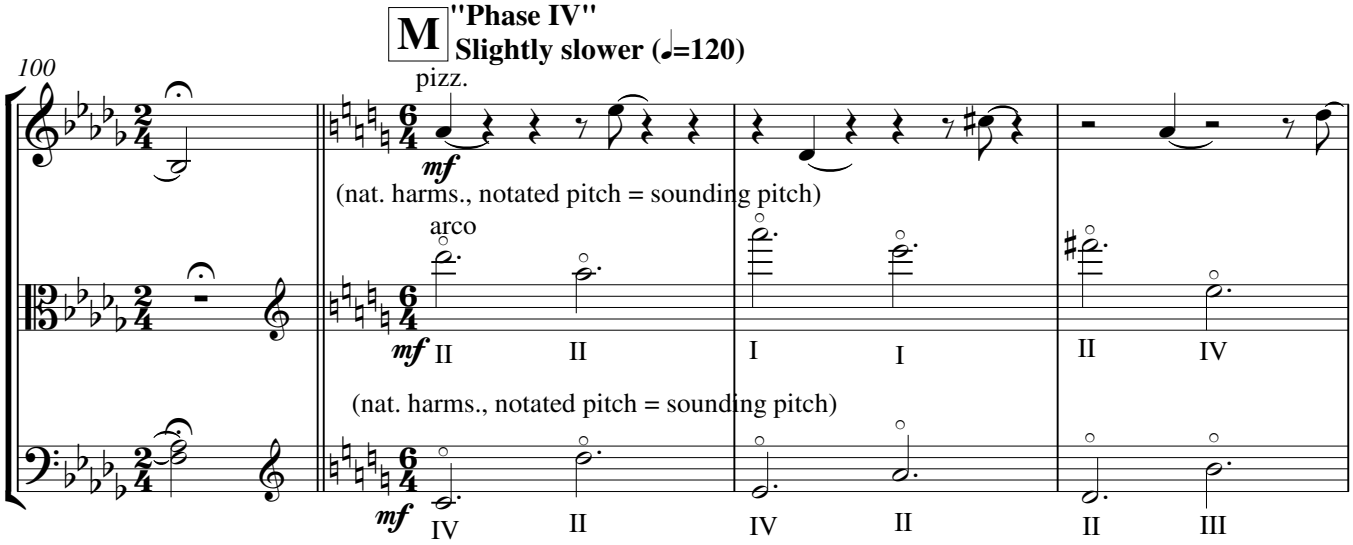

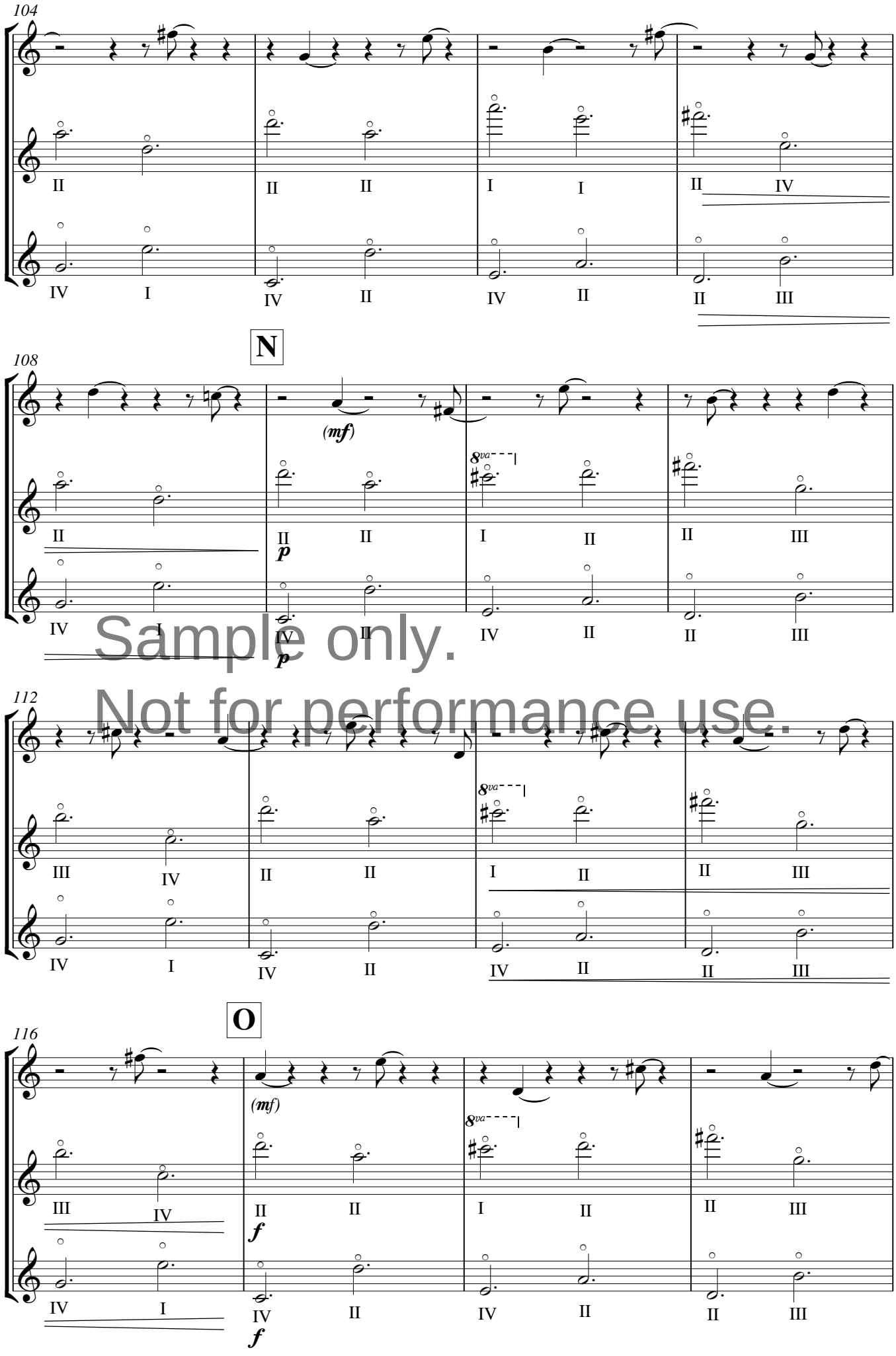

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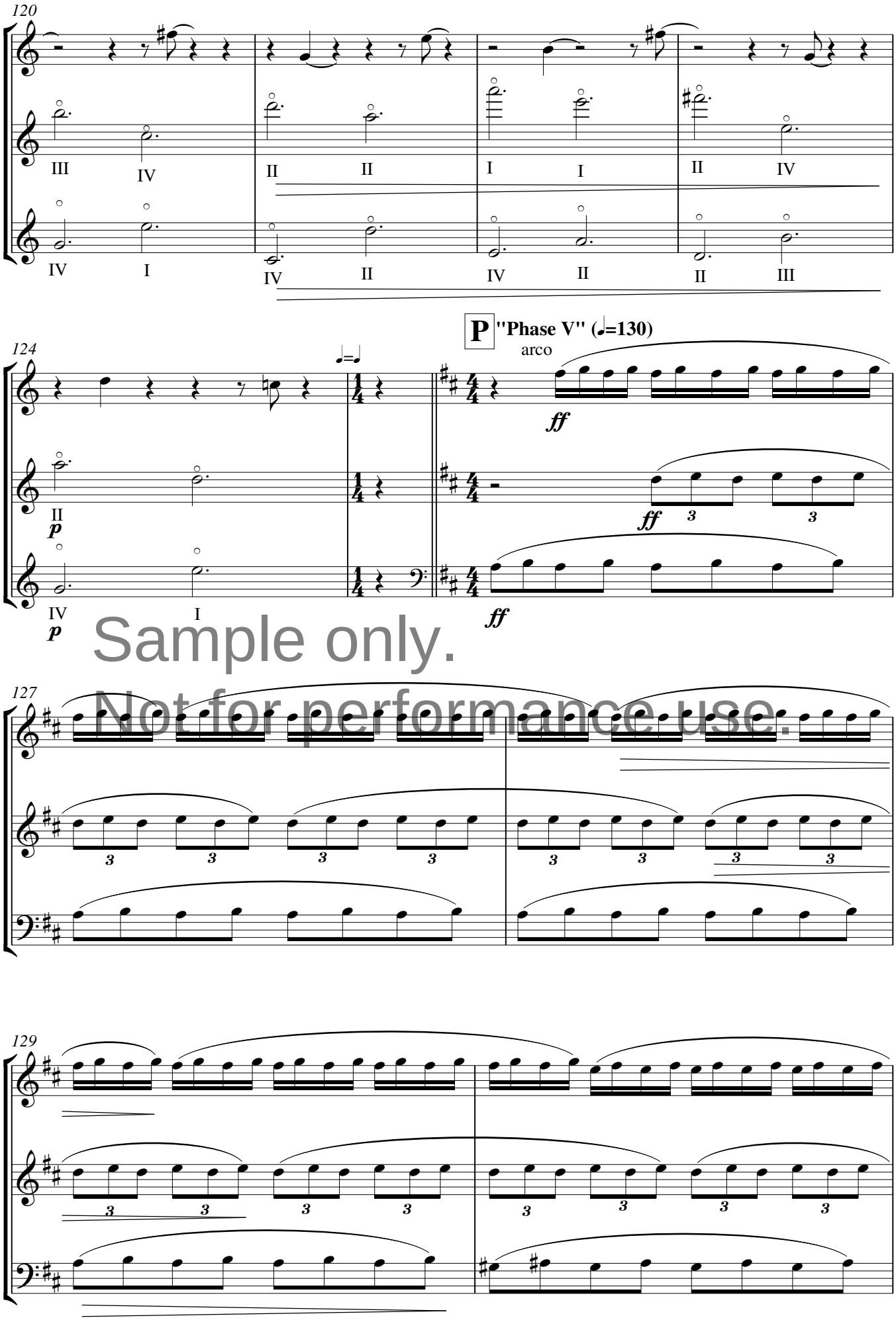

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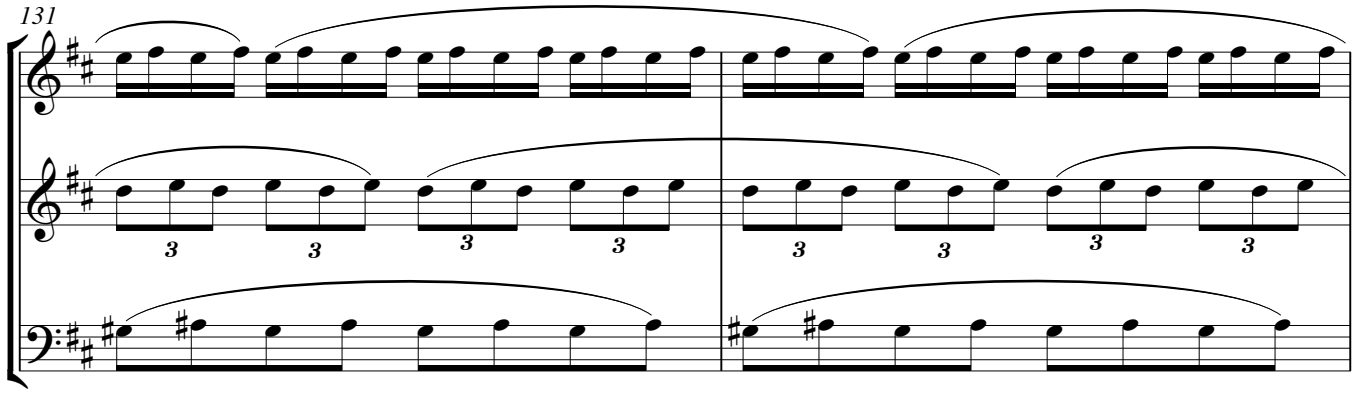

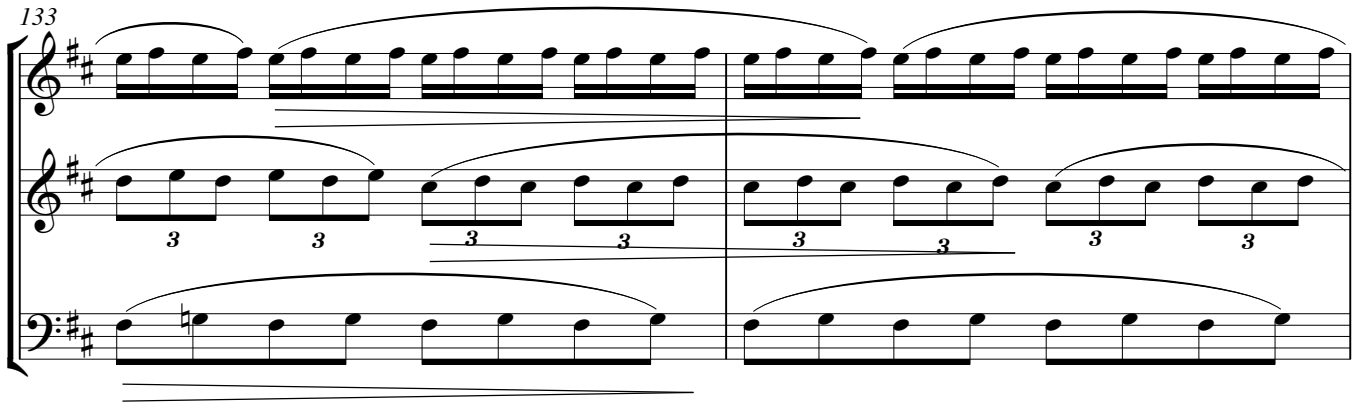

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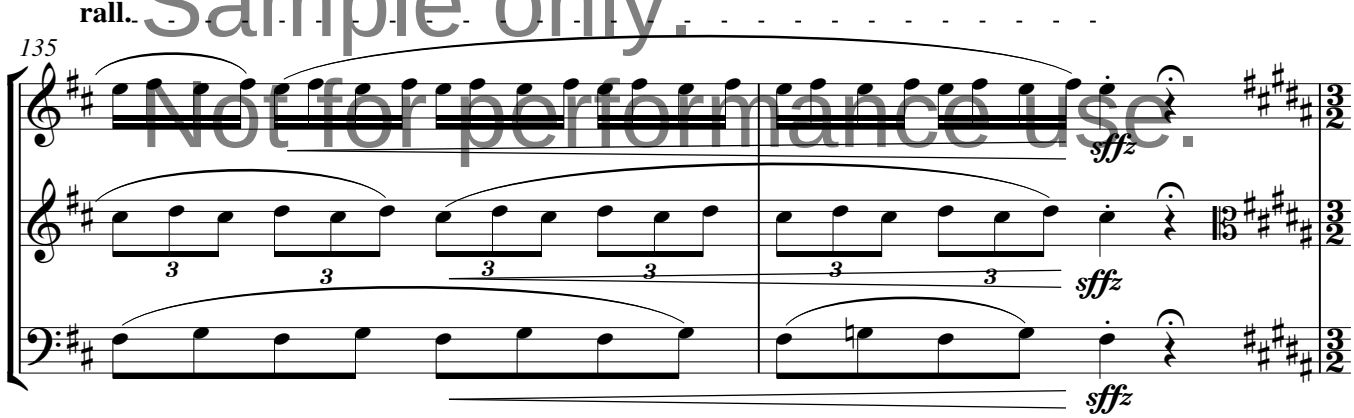

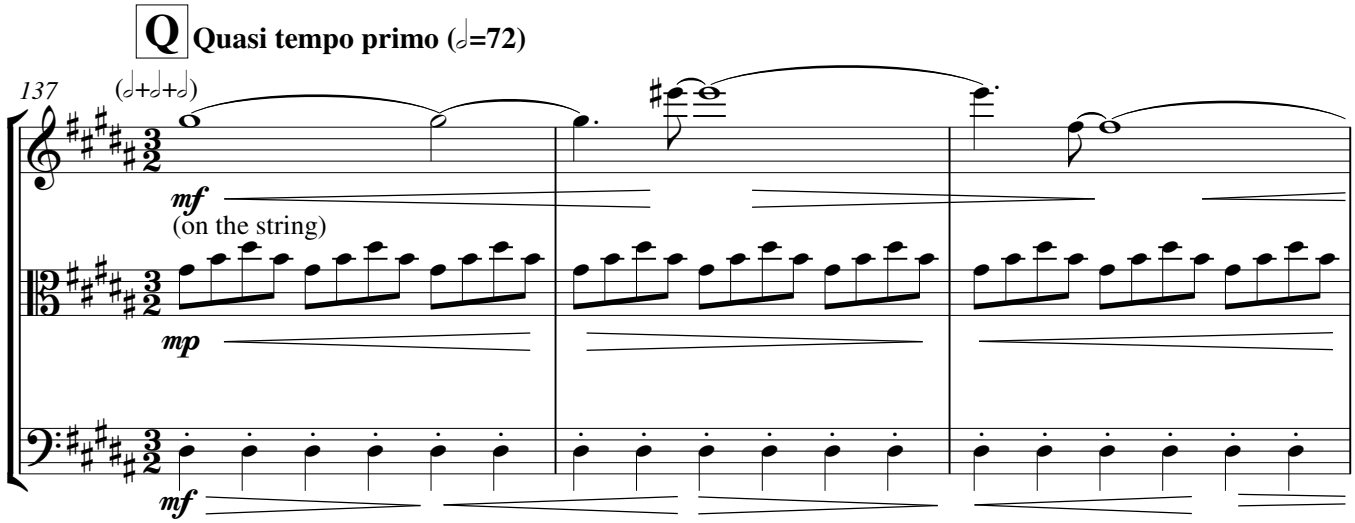

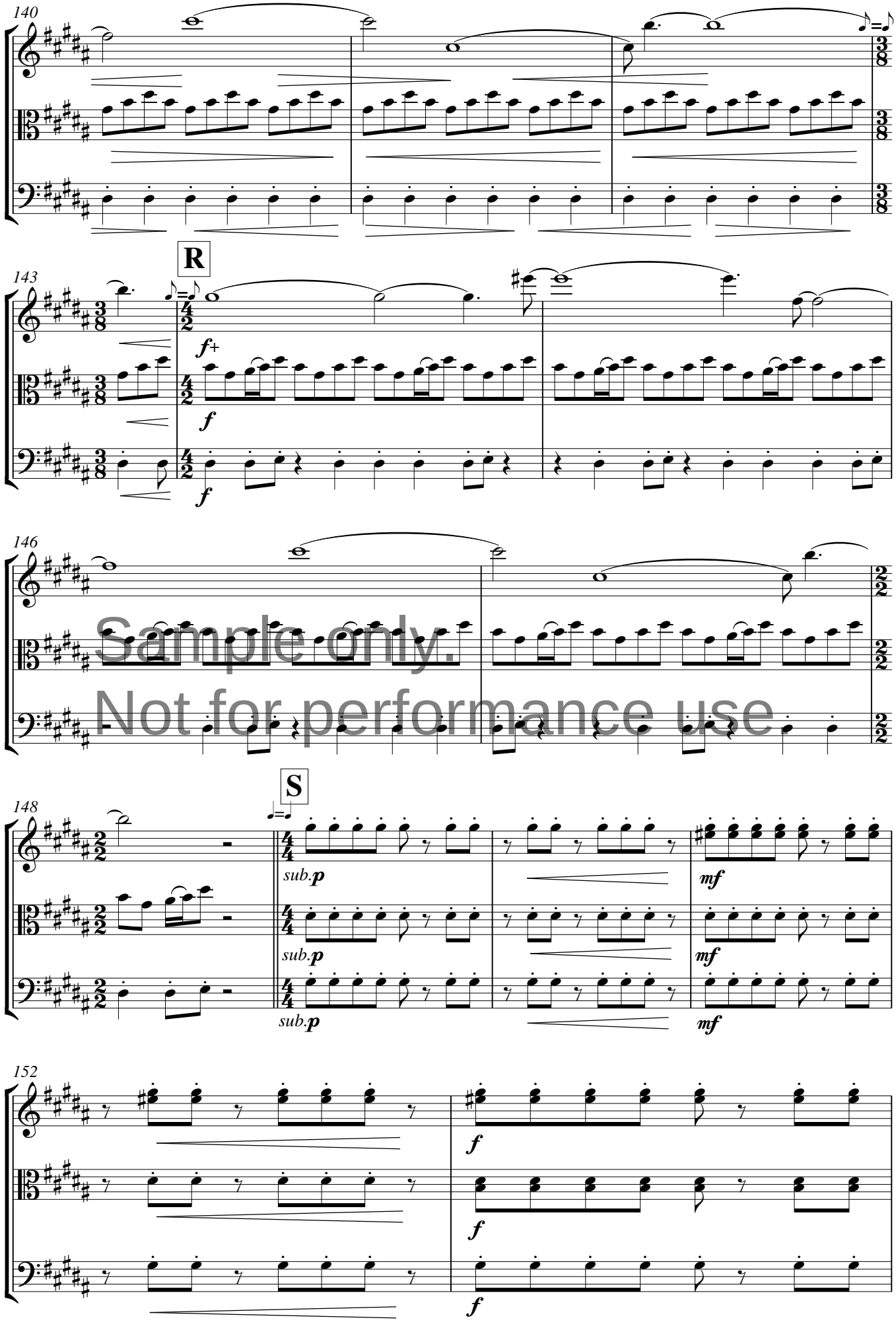

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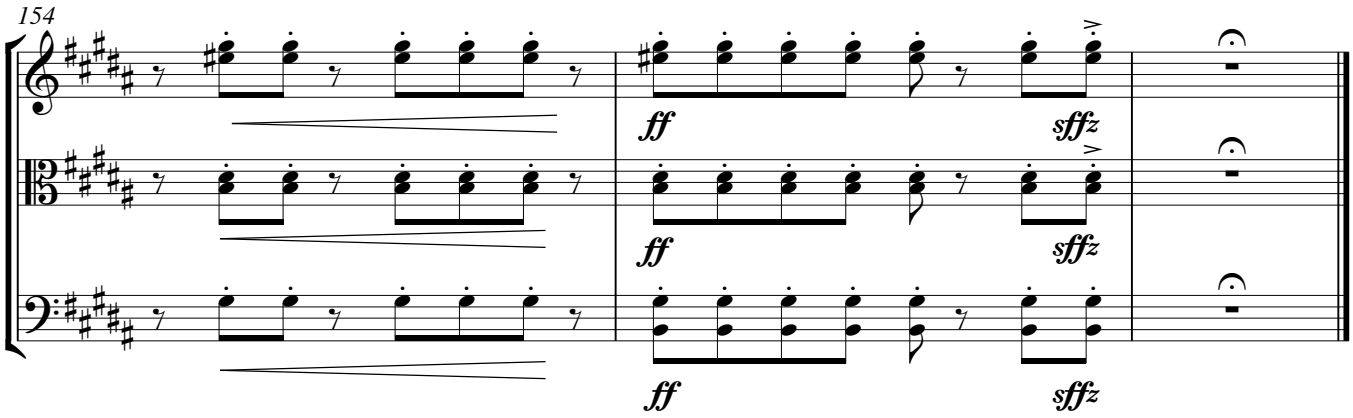

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"Attempt No Landings Here"

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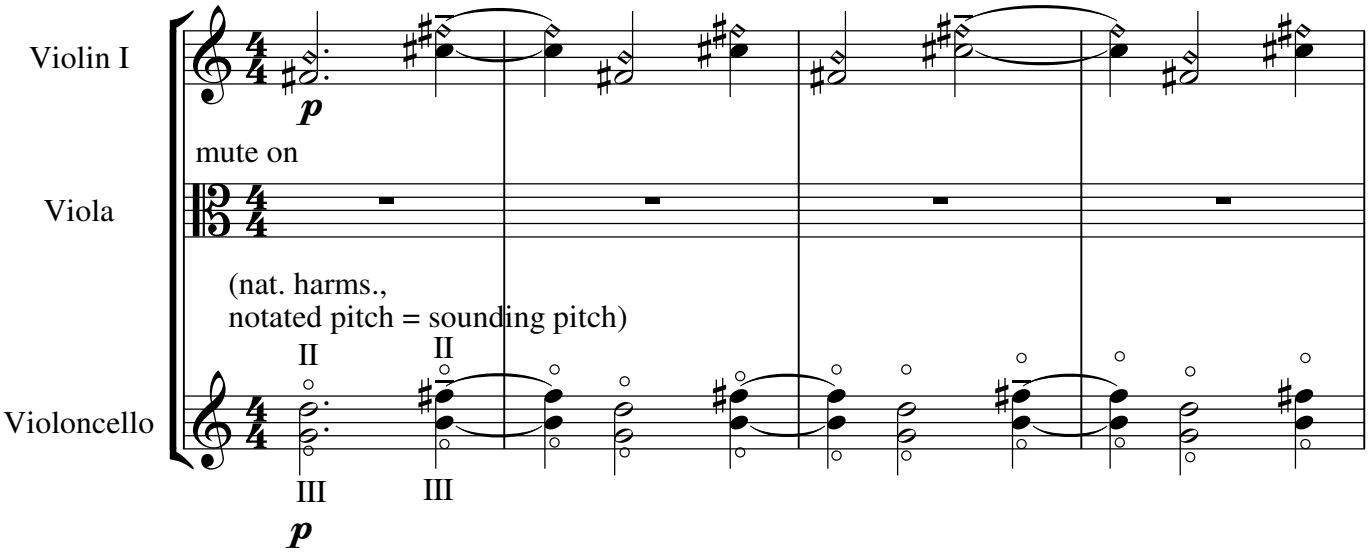
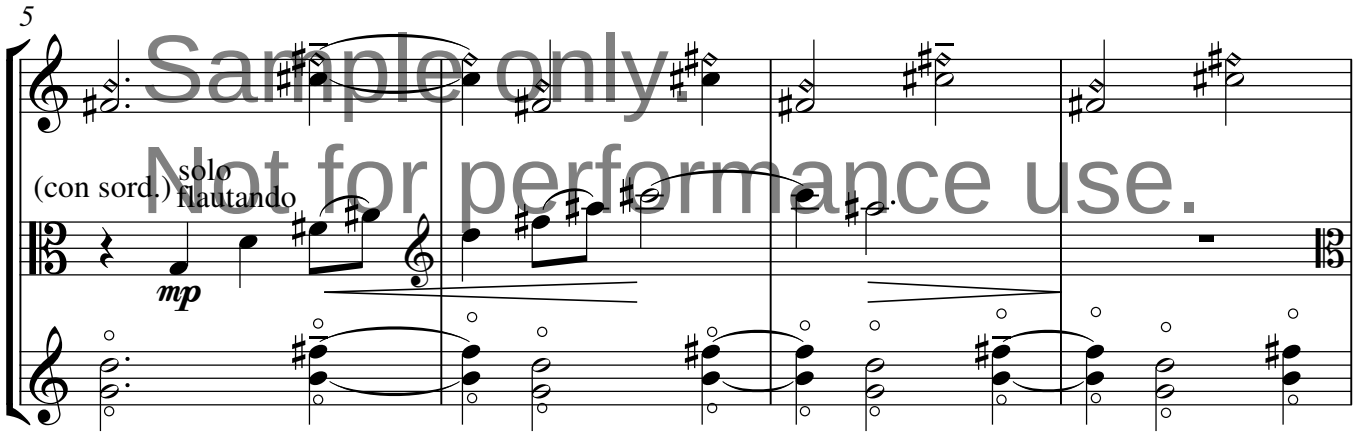
Boundless (♩=60)

(Harms. N.B if impractical, play non-harmonics up two octaves, sul tasto





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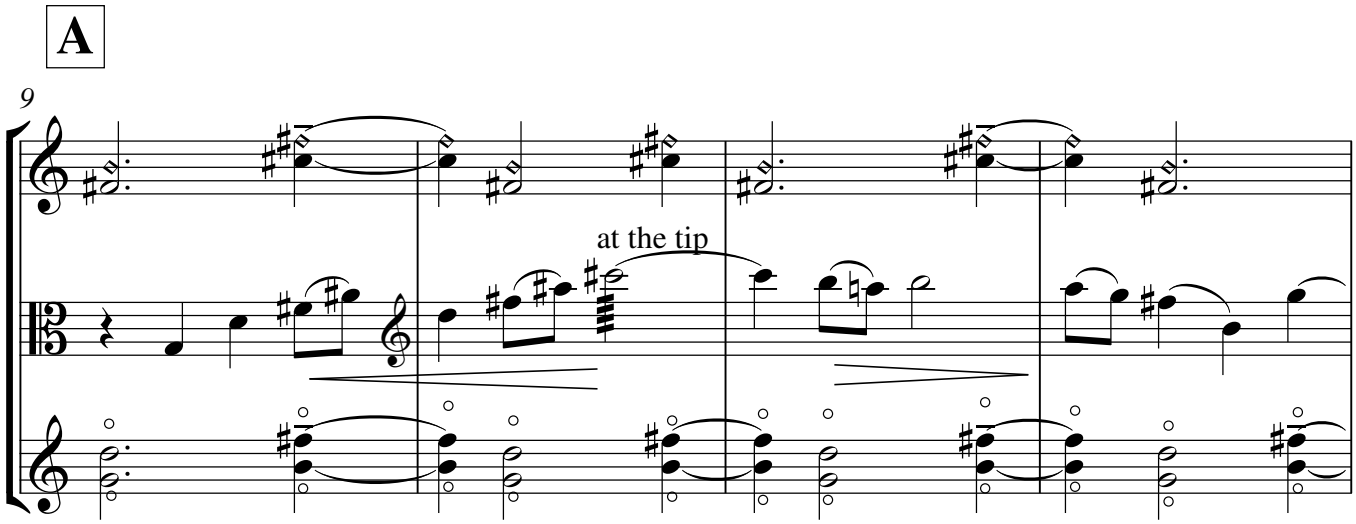
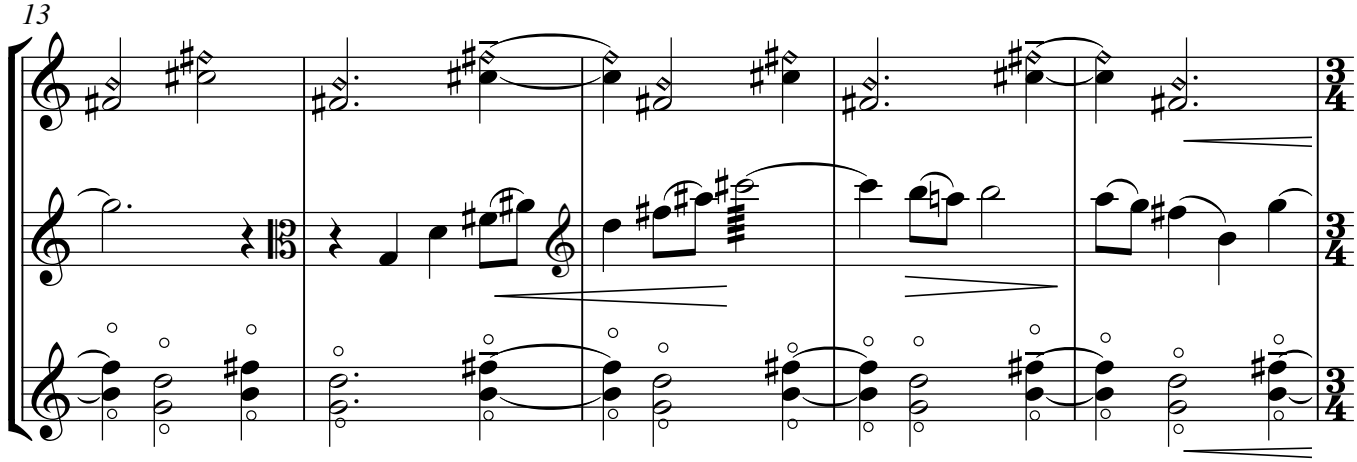


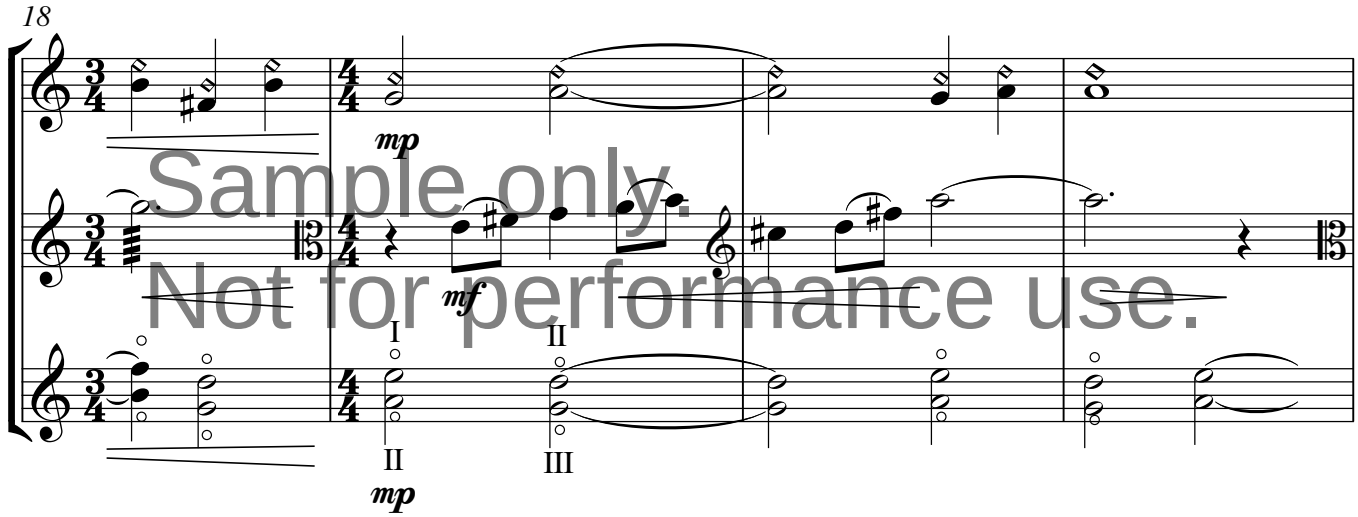
B

13



C

18



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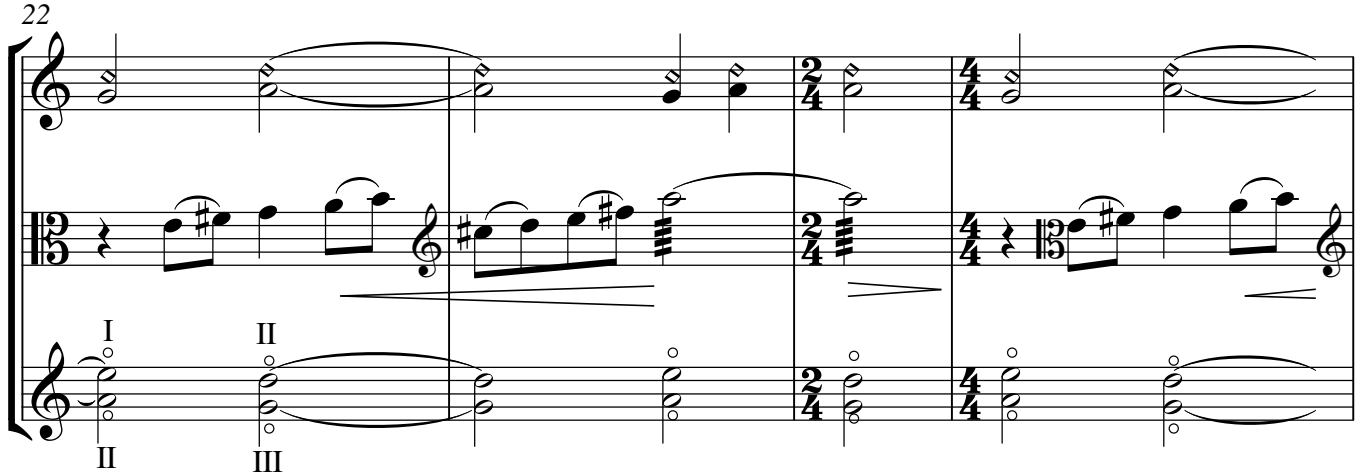
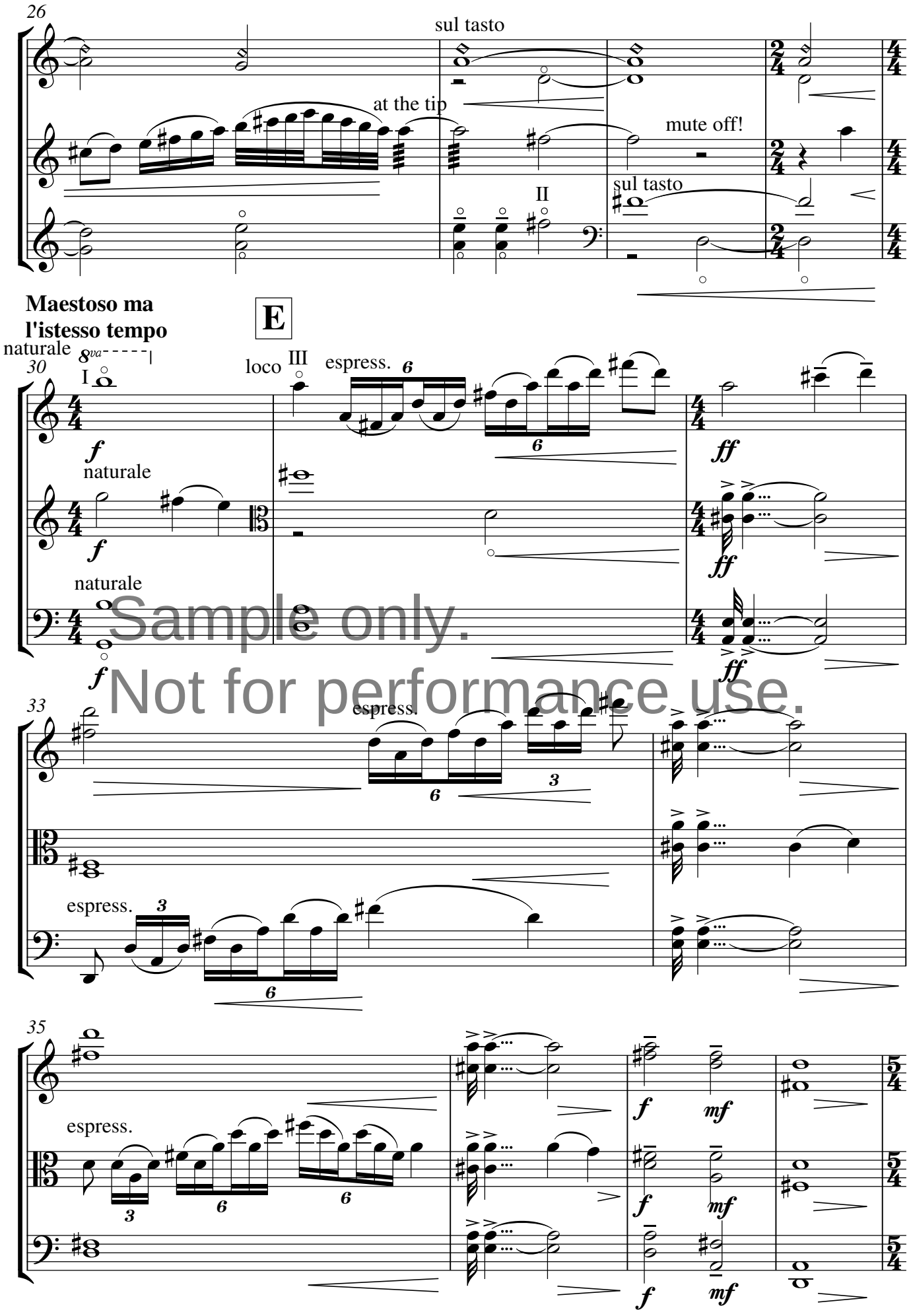
D

22





Sample only.
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F **More definite (♩=75)**

39

(𝅗𝅥.+𝅗𝅥)

poco sul pont.

poco sul pont.

41

poco sul pont.

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43

G

naturale

45