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In memoriam

for strings

John Frederick Paul

John F Paul Music

Instruments:
Violin I
Violin II
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Program Notes:
This work was written in remembrance of past innocence and lost dreams, during early 2025 when many I knew were grieving. Embedded within its structure is a familiar tune from my childhood: integral to the unfolding narrative, yet somehow elusive.

Performance Notes:
Staggered bowings on long notes should be encouraged throughout the piece, with each niente (n.) ending at the tip after a down-bow.

Up-bow markings create a subtle metric emphasis of the motive and should be followed. See m. 7 (violin 2), m. 34 (viola), or m. 53 (cello) for examples.

mm. 91-95 Double-bass "bell-tone" harmonics. These four natural harmonics are to be played in a particular way to create a bell-like sound. The finger is placed lightly at the requested node and immediately released when string is firmly plucked. When done correctly, the string should continue to vibrate at the higher pitch. If this technique proves to be too difficult or inconsistent for the players, the ossia notes can be played.

The ending requires the conductor and players to be convincing actors. The conductor should keep beating through m. 120. After the first violins arrive on the final tonic D in m.100, the rest of the strings offer three harmonizations (G sub-dominant, D tonic, and B minor submediant). The orchestra must give the impression that a fourth chord will be given. Ultimately the piece ends "up-in-the-air", no final chord played. The silence should encourage active imagination for each individual: how does the piece end? what is the future?

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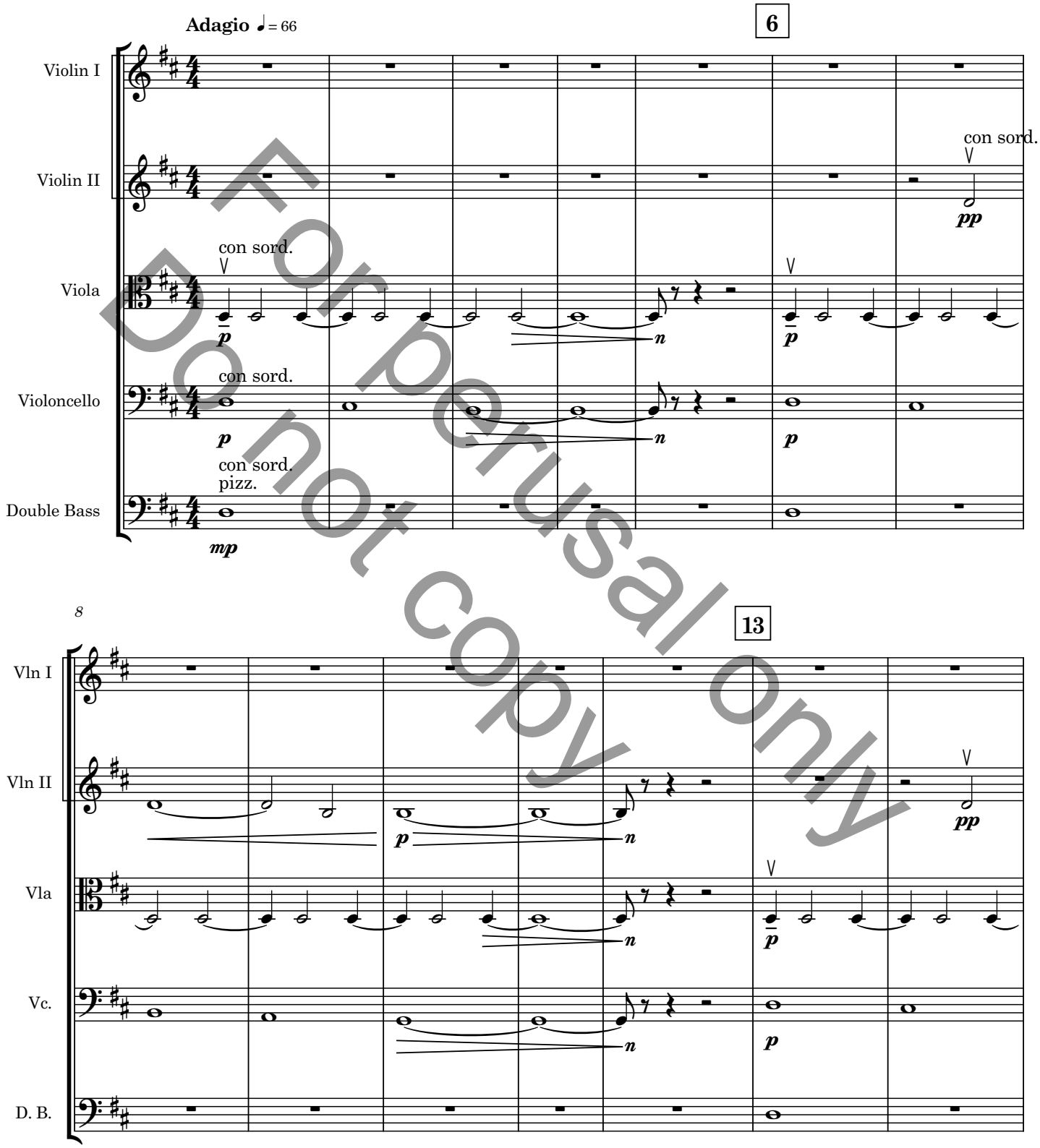

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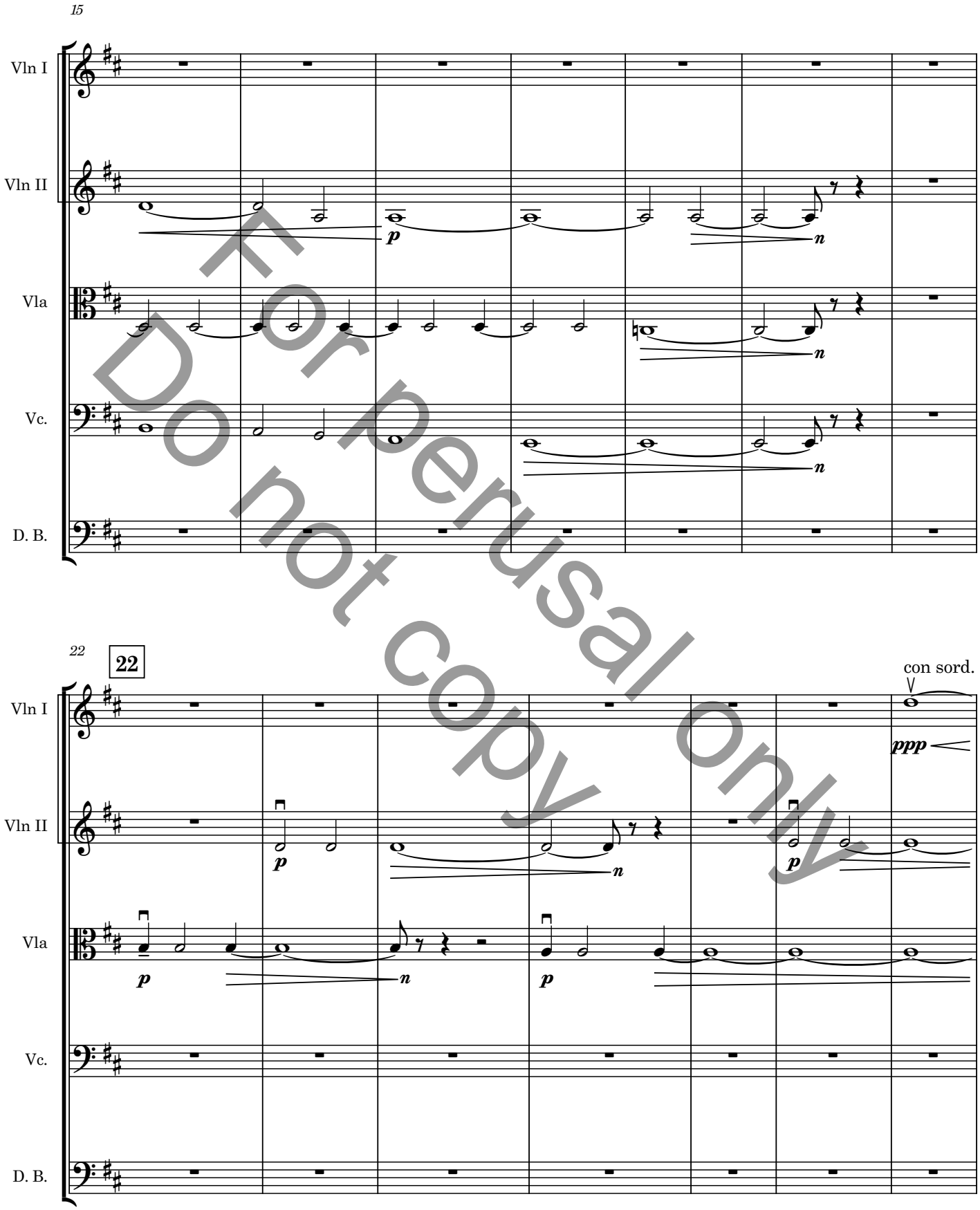

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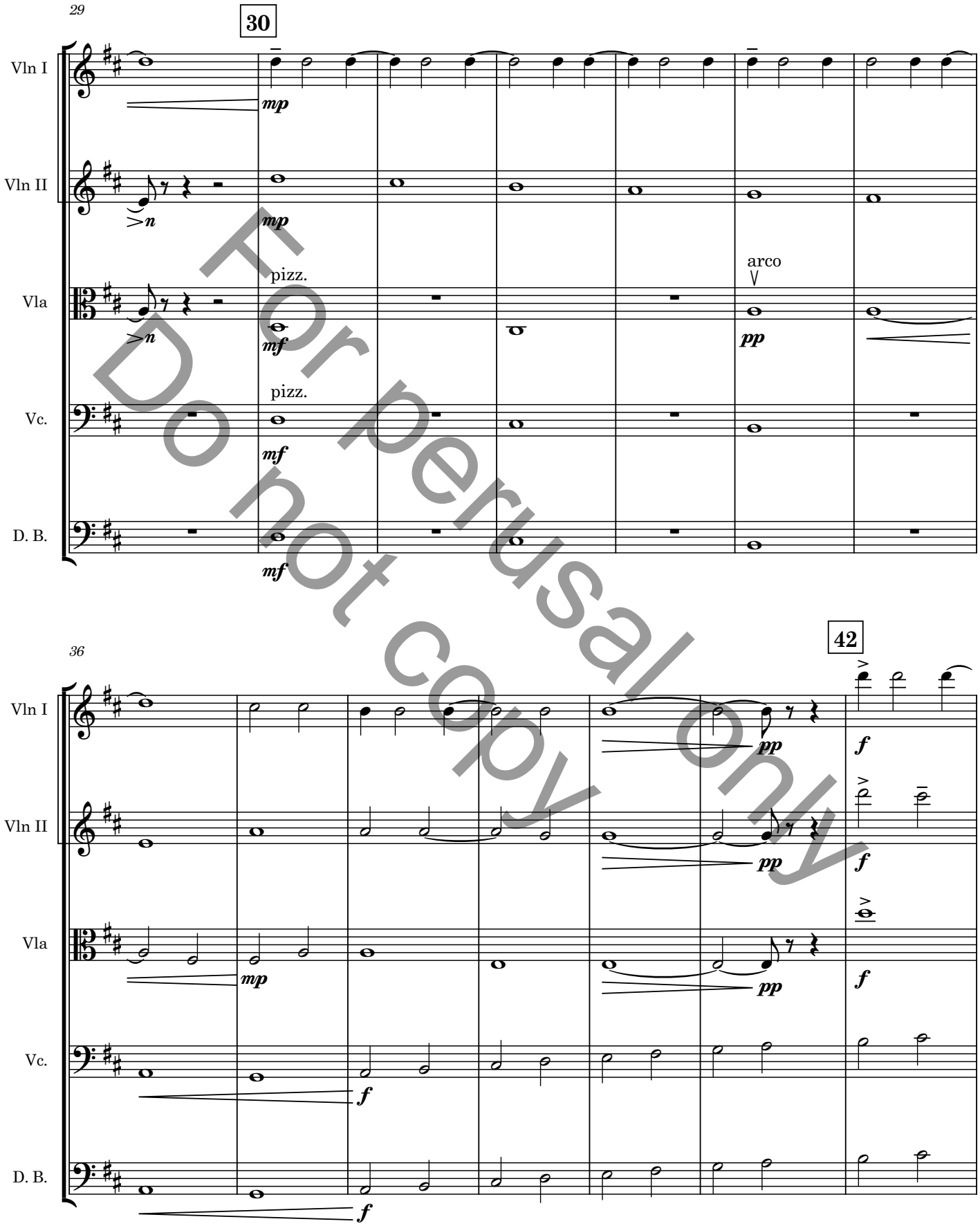

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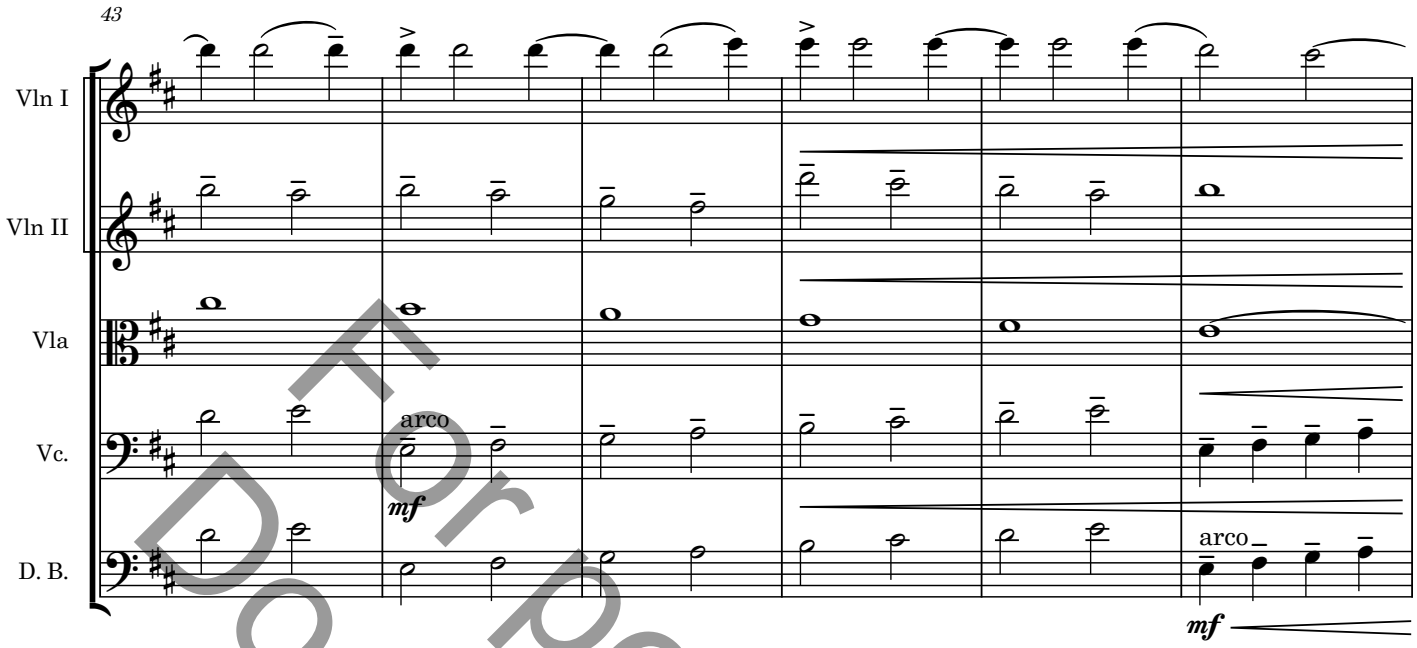

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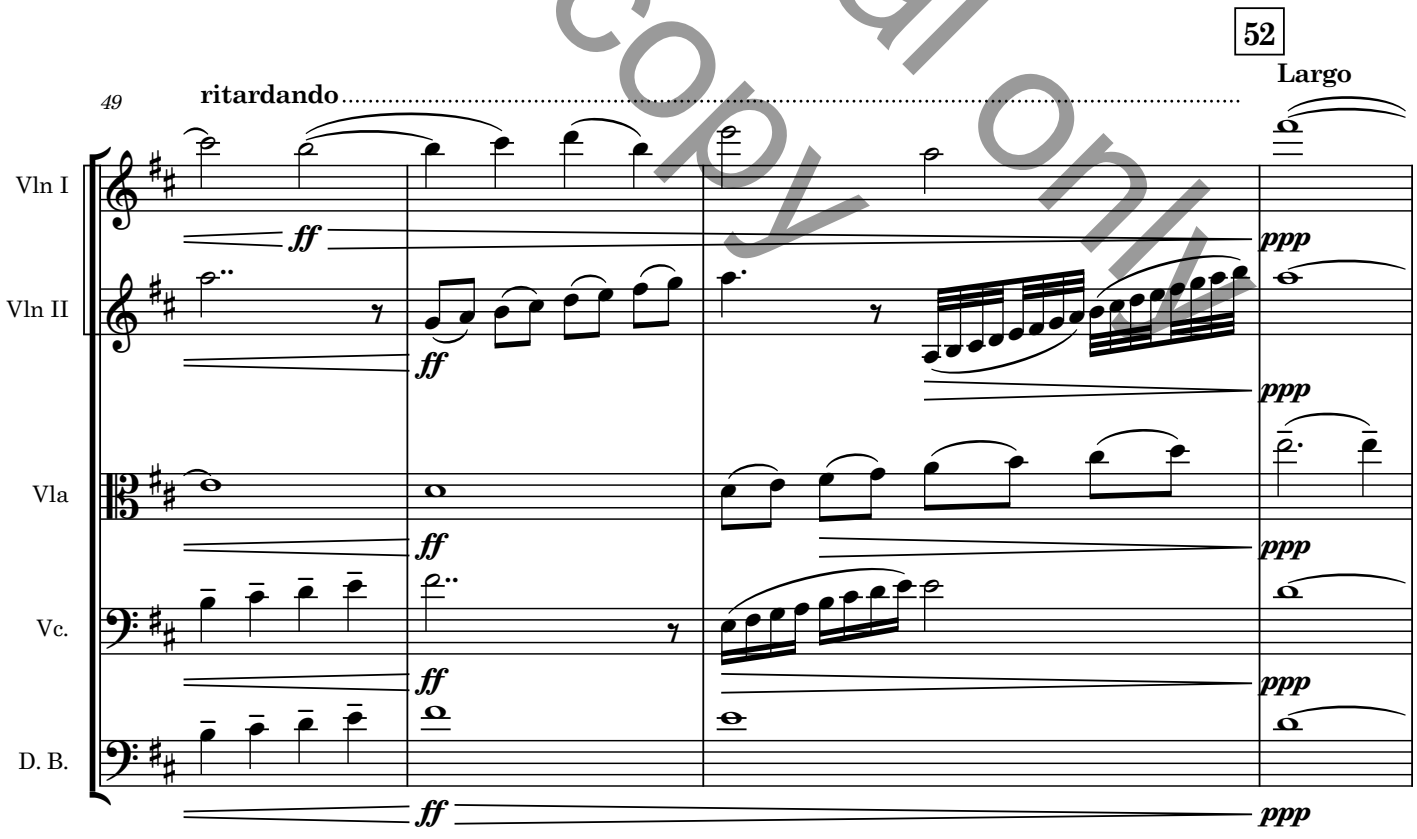

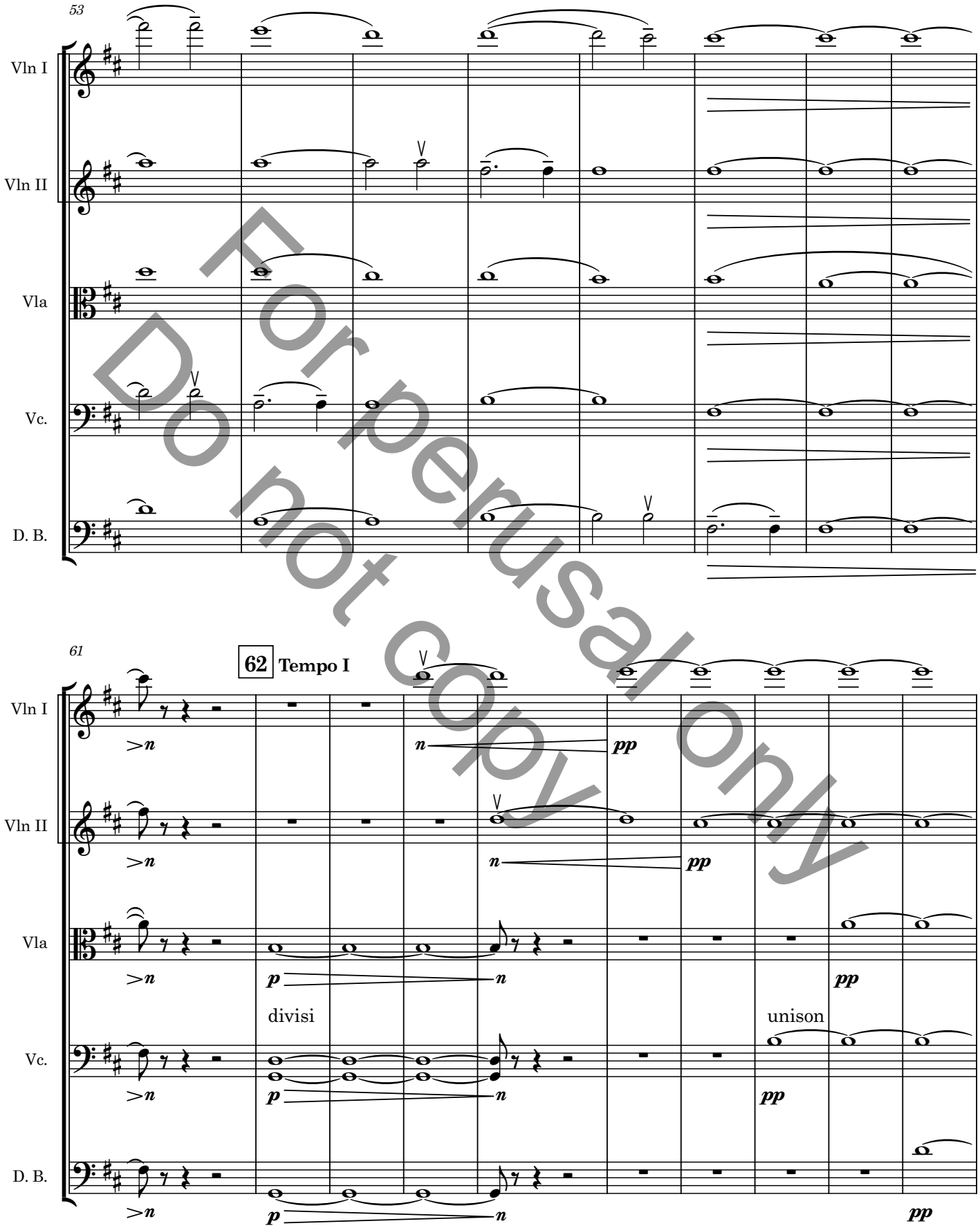

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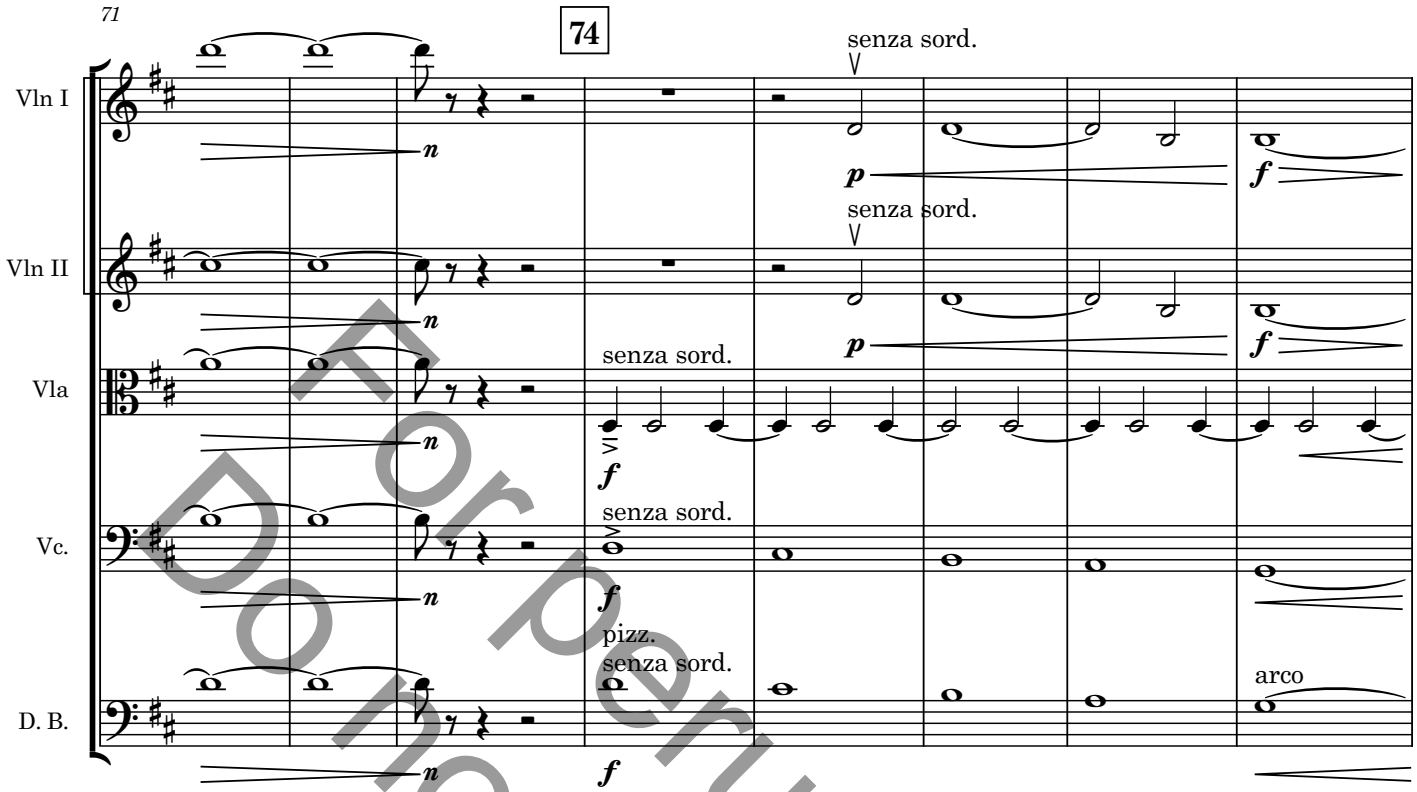

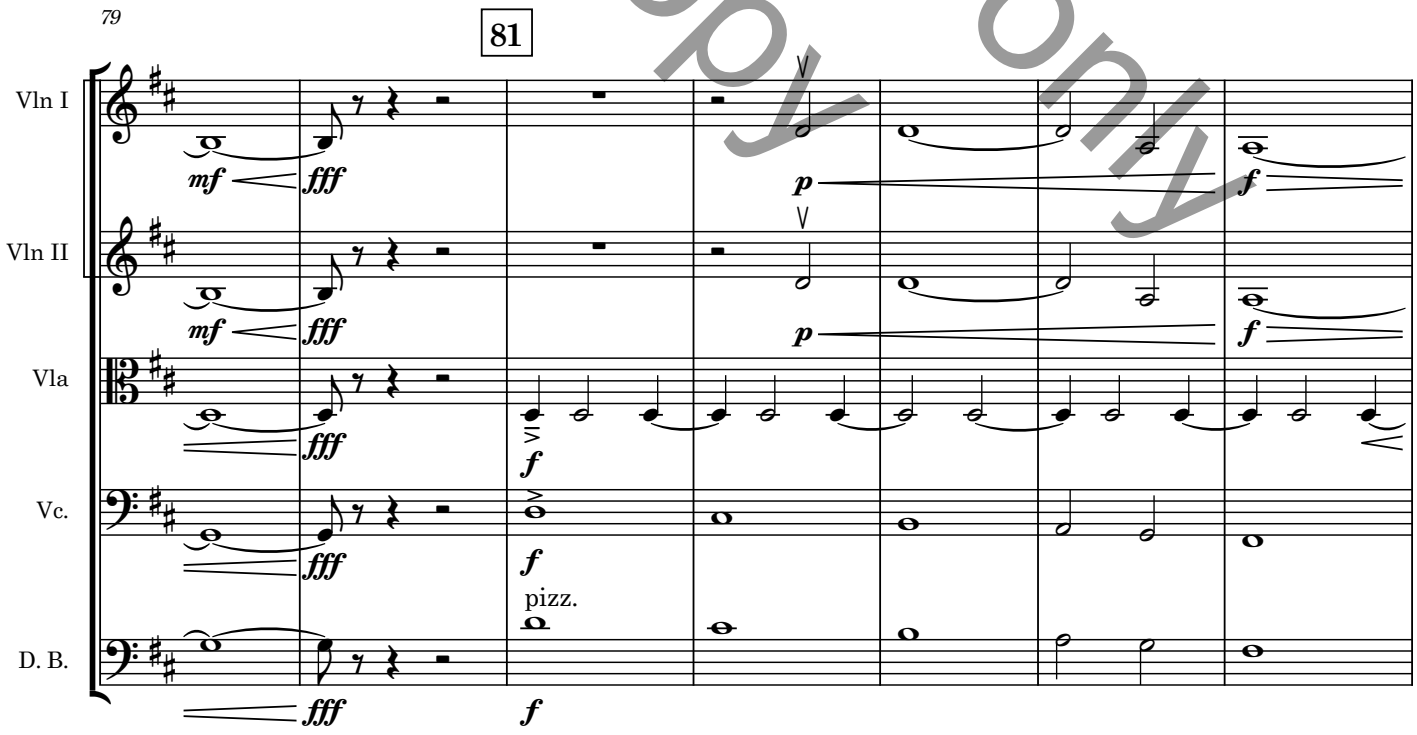

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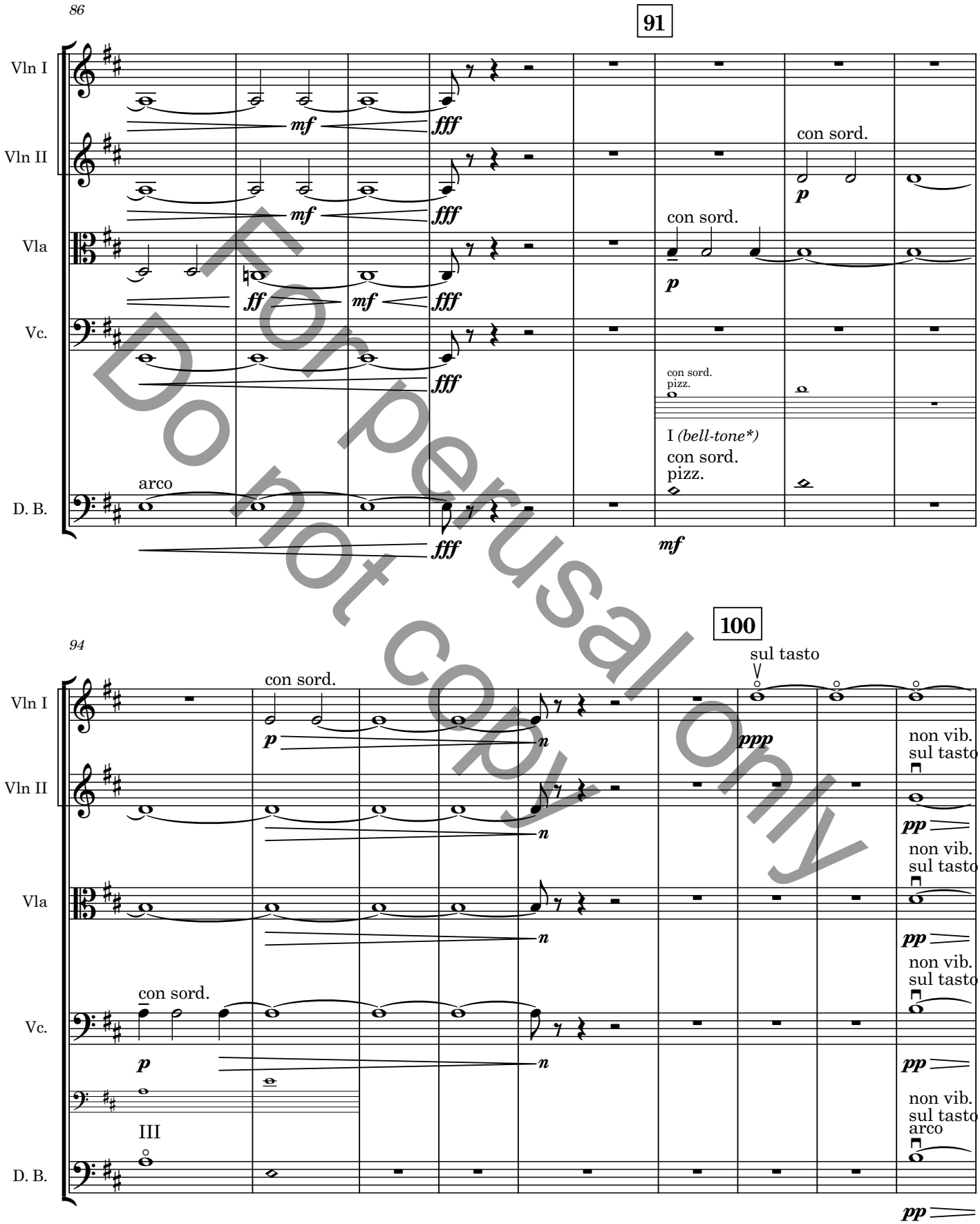

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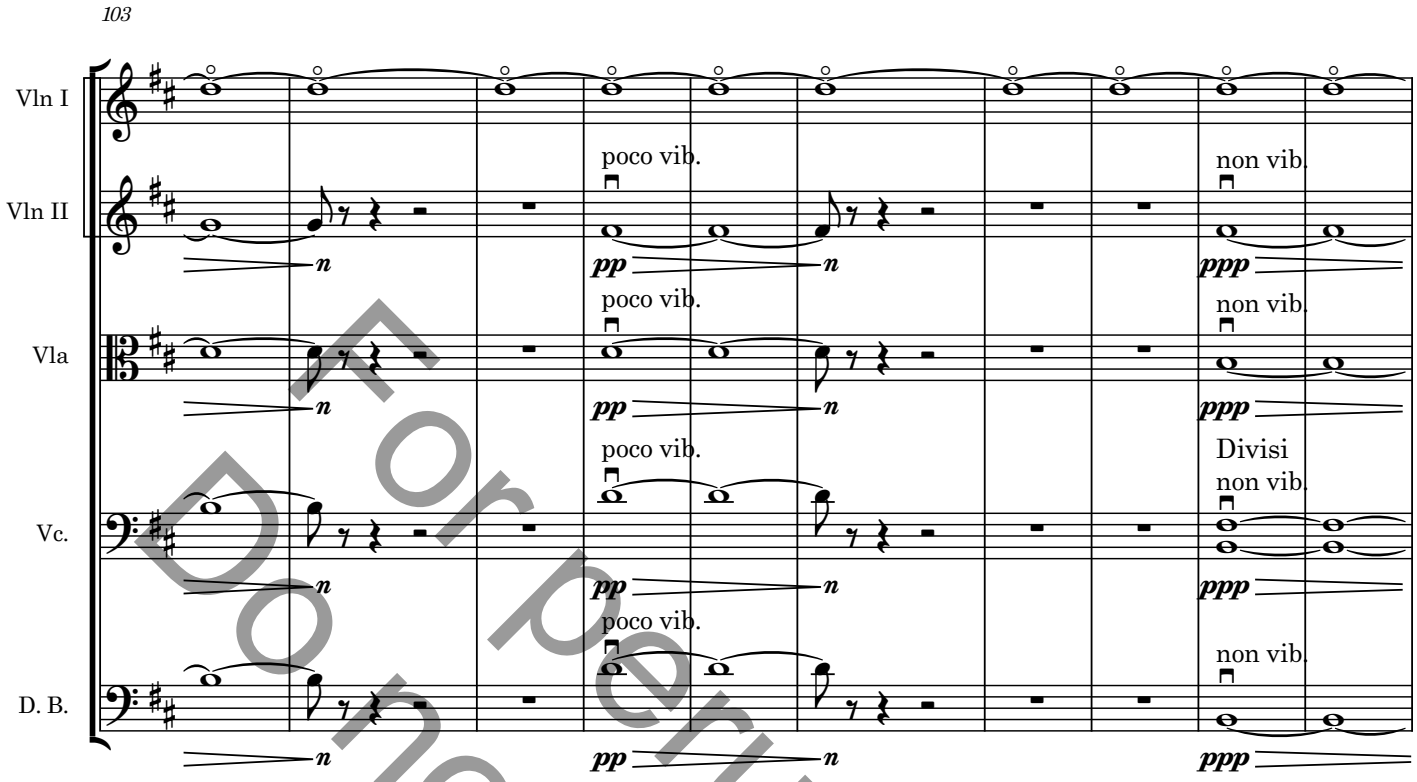

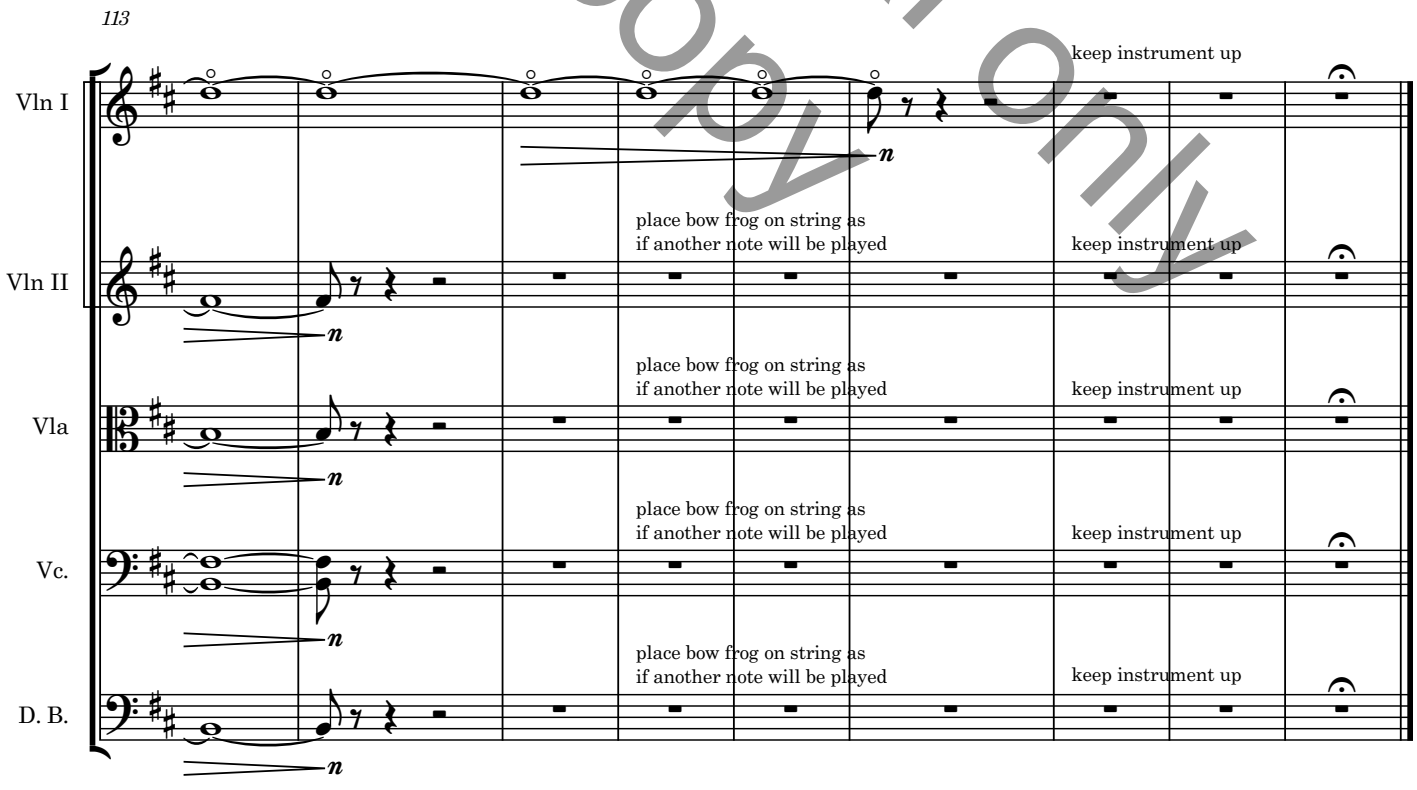

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