Jason Freeman

Prior Art

for chamber ensemble

C Score

Instrumentation:

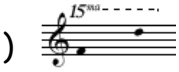
Flute

Oboe (doubles on Metal Wind Chimes ( ))

Bass Clarinet

Horn (doubles on Suspended Cymbal ())

Percussion [1 player]:

- Vibraphone ( )
- Crotales ()
- Snare Drum ( )
- Tam-Tam ( )

Piano

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

Program Note:

Just a few feet away from my studio, several hundred sheep are making their way through the field, led by a shepherd wearing a black cape and driving a pickup truck. Is someone filming an epic biblical movie? No, I am assured, these sheep are real. The shepherd passes through here every year. The cook always takes him a beer.

Eventually, the flock goes on its way, but five lambs are accidentally left behind. Someone calls the police, and two officers come, and they try to contact the shepherd. No one knows what to do in the meantime, but the lambs are cute, so everyone (including the policemen) starts taking photos. Finally, the shepherd drives up in the pickup truck to retrieve his lambs. But the lambs don't want to be retrieved; they are happy here with lots of grass, lots of attention, and no roaming. The shepherd and policemen have trouble catching the lambs, but after an hour they do finally get them all into the truck, and the shepherd drives away.

These sheep *can't* have anything to do with this piece, which was nearly finished by the time they visited. But I nevertheless feel some strange connection. Maybe the sheep simply make a good illustration of my surroundings, which in turn influence

the music I write. Maybe there are visual similarities, however coincidental, between the layout of the score and the arrangement of the lambs. Or maybe they offer some impossibly corny metaphor about my compositional process: maybe the lambs are some abstract musical ideas from my past works which I revisit in this piece. So then am I the shepherd who comes back to get them, only to find them unwilling to come? Or am I one of the policemen who just takes pictures of them because he doesn't know what else to do? And how exactly does one take a picture of an abstract musical idea?

This logic is clearly going nowhere. I am just myself, writing this piece, contemplating its various connections to my prior art while I look out the window at sheep.

Prior Art was written for Speculum Musicae while in residence at Akademie Schloss Solitude in Stuttgart, Germany.

Duration: approximately 14 minutes

Performance Notes:

On paper, this music may look easy. Do not be fooled! While the individual parts are not very technically challenging, issues of tuning, balance, timing, and timbre require ample ensemble rehearsal time to address. To assist the performers, please distribute a copy of the score to each member of the ensemble along with his or her part.

Notes for Specific Instruments:

Oboe:

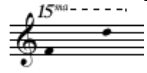
- **Metal Wind Chimes** ( ): Use the largest set available, which covers the widest possible range. Play with two metal beaters (one in each hand). Begin with both beaters in the center and quickly sweep out to the two opposite ends of the instrument.

Horn:

- **Suspended Cymbal** ( ): Use the largest, most resonant cymbal available. Play with two wire brushes (one in each hand). Begin with

both brushes in the center and quickly sweep them out to opposite rims of the instrument.

Percussion [1 player]:

- **Vibraphone** ( ): Motor should remain off throughout. Use pedal as indicated. Play with bow ( ) or mallets (***ord.***) as indicated.
- **Crotales** ()  : Suspend the two crotales (do not mount on a stand) so that they resonate as freely as possible. Play with brass beaters. Crotales sound two octaves higher than written.
- Choice of specific mallets, beater, and sticks for vibraphone, tam-tam, and snare drum (respectively) is left to the discretion of the percussionist.

Piano:

- **Inside piano sweeps:** Place the tips of your two index fingers approximately on the strings indicated and quickly sweep them in opposite directions, as far as possible until the soundboard blocks further motion. Play on the portion of the strings which lies between the keyboard and the hammers. Keep the sustain pedal down.

Strings:

- **Harmonics:** All harmonics are natural harmonics and are notated as sounding pitches.

Double Bass:

- Double Bass sounds one octave lower than written.

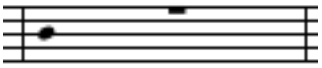
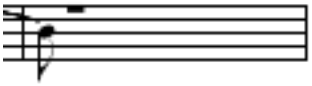
About Time:

There are three approaches to time used in the piece:

- **Regular Meter:** These sections are indicated by a specific time signature and metronome marking, regular noteheads, and the indication *regular meter*. The conductor should beat regular time as indicated.

- **Indeterminate Measure Lengths:** These sections are indicated by solid, stemless noteheads and the indication *each measure x-y"*. The conductor should give only the downbeat of each measure, and he or she should vary the length of each measure as indicated (usually between two and five seconds). Avoid any sense of a regular pulse.

  In these sections, rests are used as follows:

  -  = player may begin the rest at any point within the measure (of his or her choosing)
  - = player may end the rest at any point within the measure (of his or her choosing)
  -  = player should end the note just after the downbeat of the measure
- **Independent Time:** In this section, individual players and groups of players maintain time independently from the rest of the ensemble. It is indicated by the use of diamond-enclosed, numbered rehearsal markings (instead of the circle-enclosed letter rehearsal markings used in the rest of the piece) and by the indications *conductor gives only cues* and *repeat independently*.

  The conductor should give each numbered cue, but should not otherwise beat time or give measures until rehearsal number six, where he or she should beat regular meter for the strings (while other players continue independently of the conductor). For cues one through five, the amount of time between cues is not indicated; it is completely at the discretion of the conductor.

  Players should follow the indications about how to repeat their gestures. Note that the bass clarinet and flute must coordinate with each other so that they play together while still maintaining independence from the rest of the ensemble.

  At rehearsal number seven, the conductor must wait for the bass clarinet and flute to finish the last repetition of their gesture, at

which point he or she should continue to rehearsal letter V without pause (and at which point the ensemble comes back together).

Other Notational Conventions:

n. = niente

= midpoint dynamic

(dynamic in parentheses represents a specific midpoint within the *crescendo*)

l.v. = let vibrate

, = breath mark

(For non-wind instruments, insert a small gap of silence as if you were taking a breath.)

Match each attack to previous note's decay = This notation, attached to a *decrescendo*, accompanies a series of repeated notes played on piano or crotales. Simply match the dynamic of each new attack to the dynamic to which your previous note has naturally decayed.

Additional Notes:

- Unless otherwise indicated, half note remains constant through all meter changes.
- All accidentals hold for the duration of the measure, but only in the staff and octave in which they first appear.
- During the independent time section (mm. 141-162), not all instrumental parts have the same number of measures as each other. Nevertheless, measure numbering in each part is kept consistent with the score so that measure numbers will remain synchronized through the entire piece. Within this section, do not attempt to count measures, but instead rely on the numbered cues.
- Have fun!

The cover photo, documenting the lost lambs of Schloss Solitude in all of their glory, was taken by my colleague Hoi Wood Chang and is used with his permission.

C Score

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Delicate (each measure 2-5") **(G. P.)**

Flute *no vibrato throughout*

Oboe *no vibrato throughout*

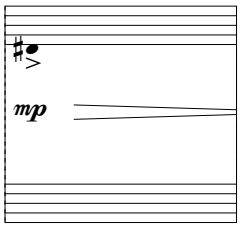
Bass Clarinet *no vibrato until m. 55*

Horn *no vibrato until m. 61*

Percussion *Vib* motor always off

Delicate (each measure 2-5") **(G. P.)**

Piano *f*



una corda and no sustain pedal until m. 61

Delicate (each measure 2-5") **(G. P.)**

Violin *con sordino until m. 51*
no vibrato until m. 92

Viola *con sordino until m. 48*
no vibrato until m. 92

Cello *con sordino until m. 51*
no vibrato until m. 61

Bass *with vibrato throughout*

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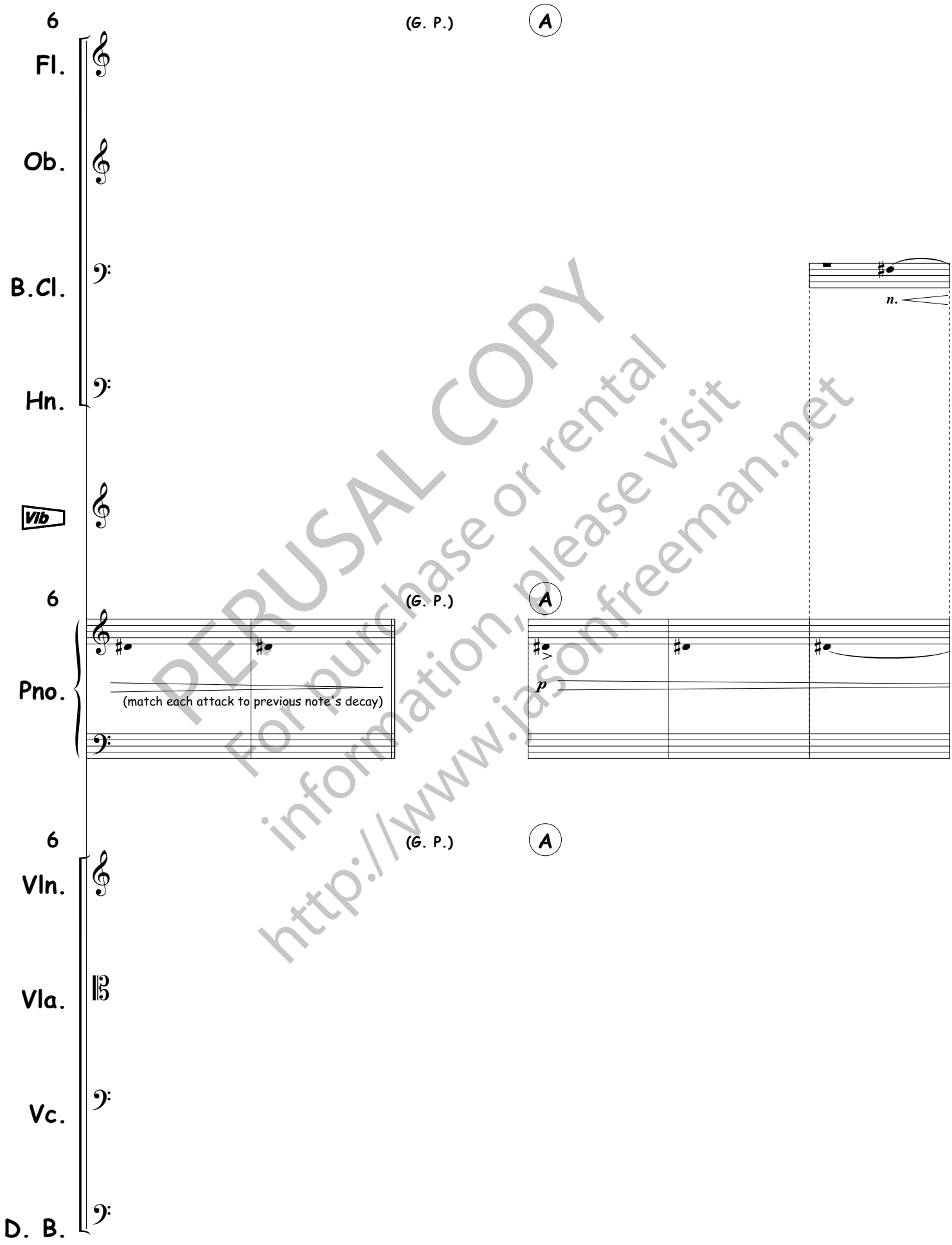

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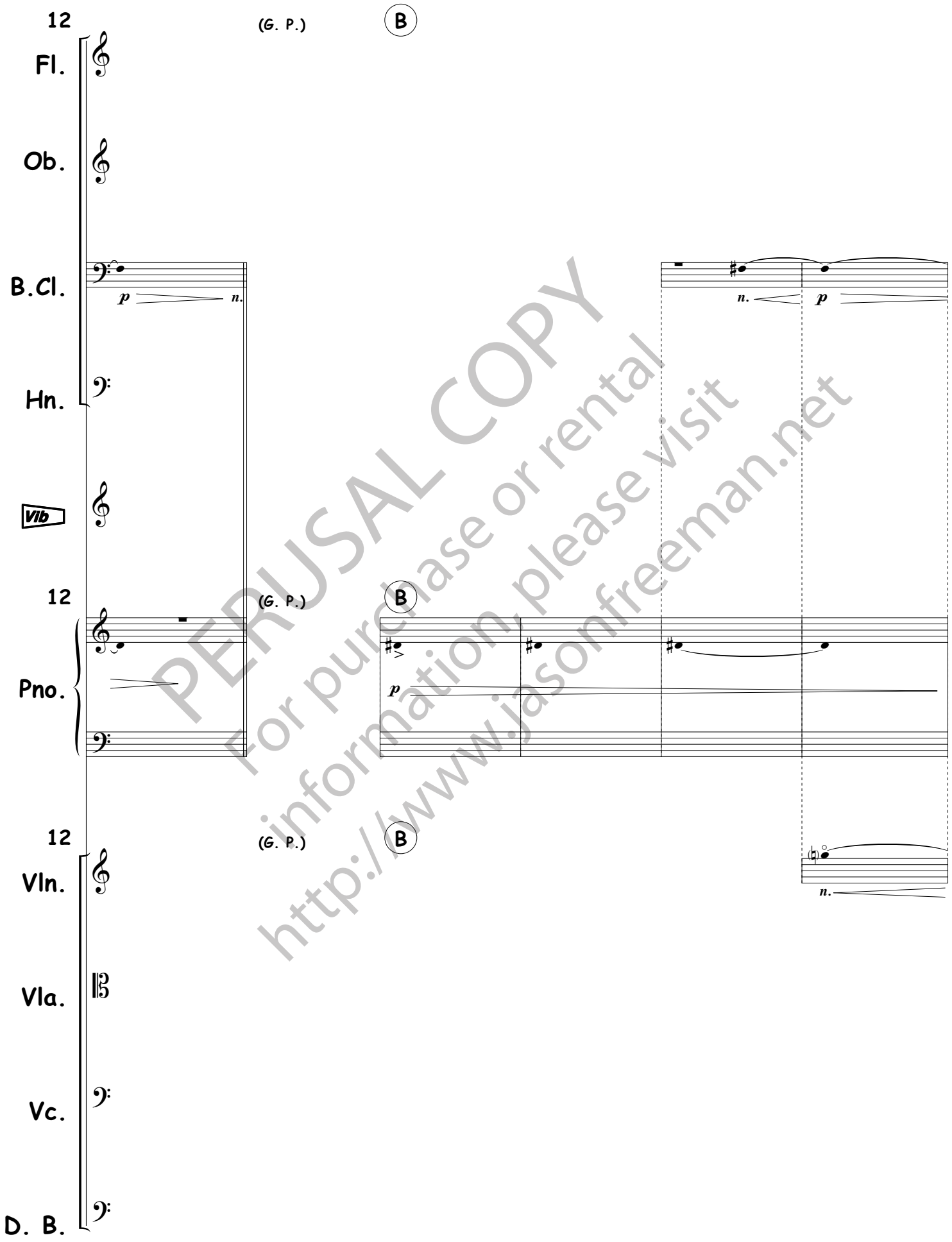

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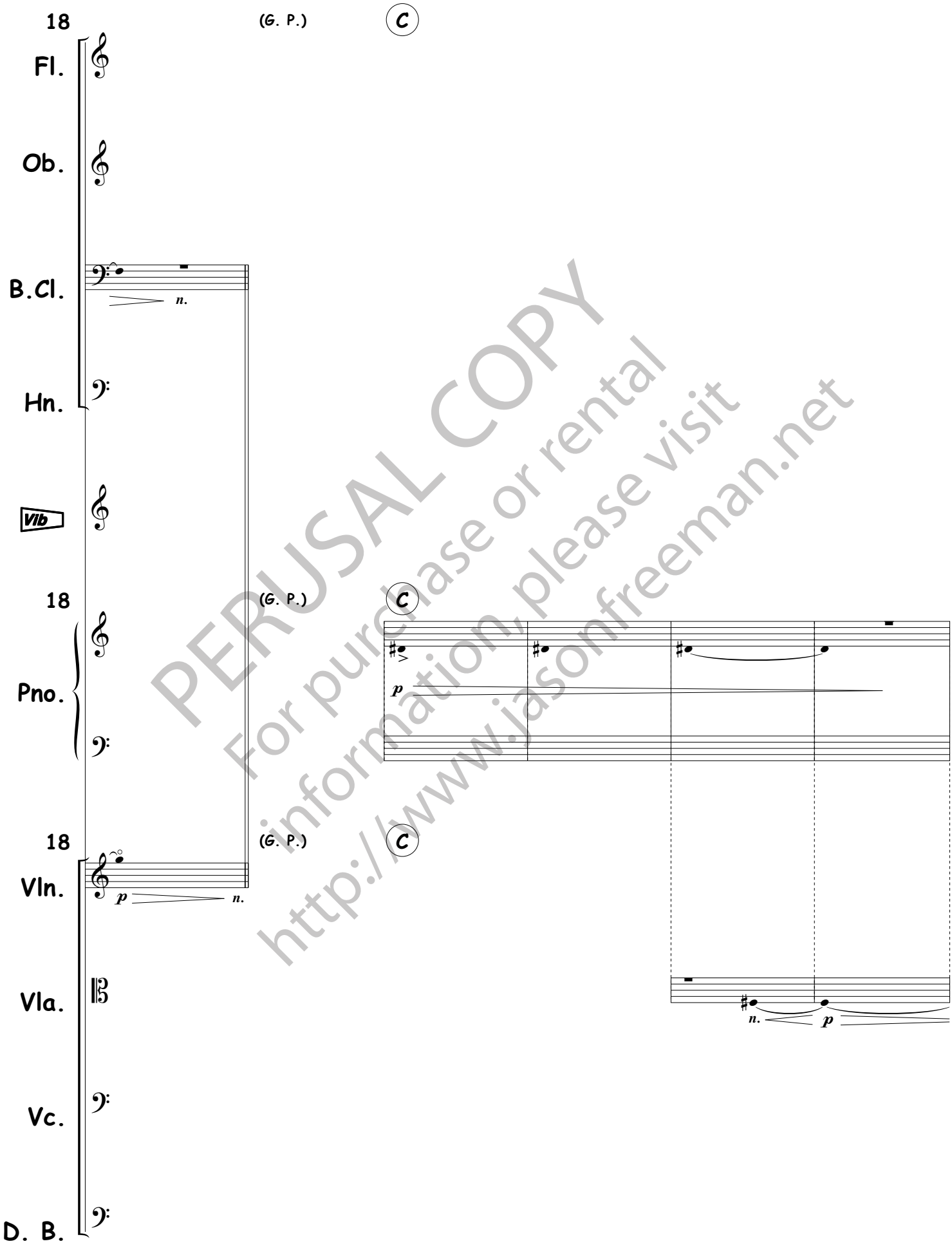

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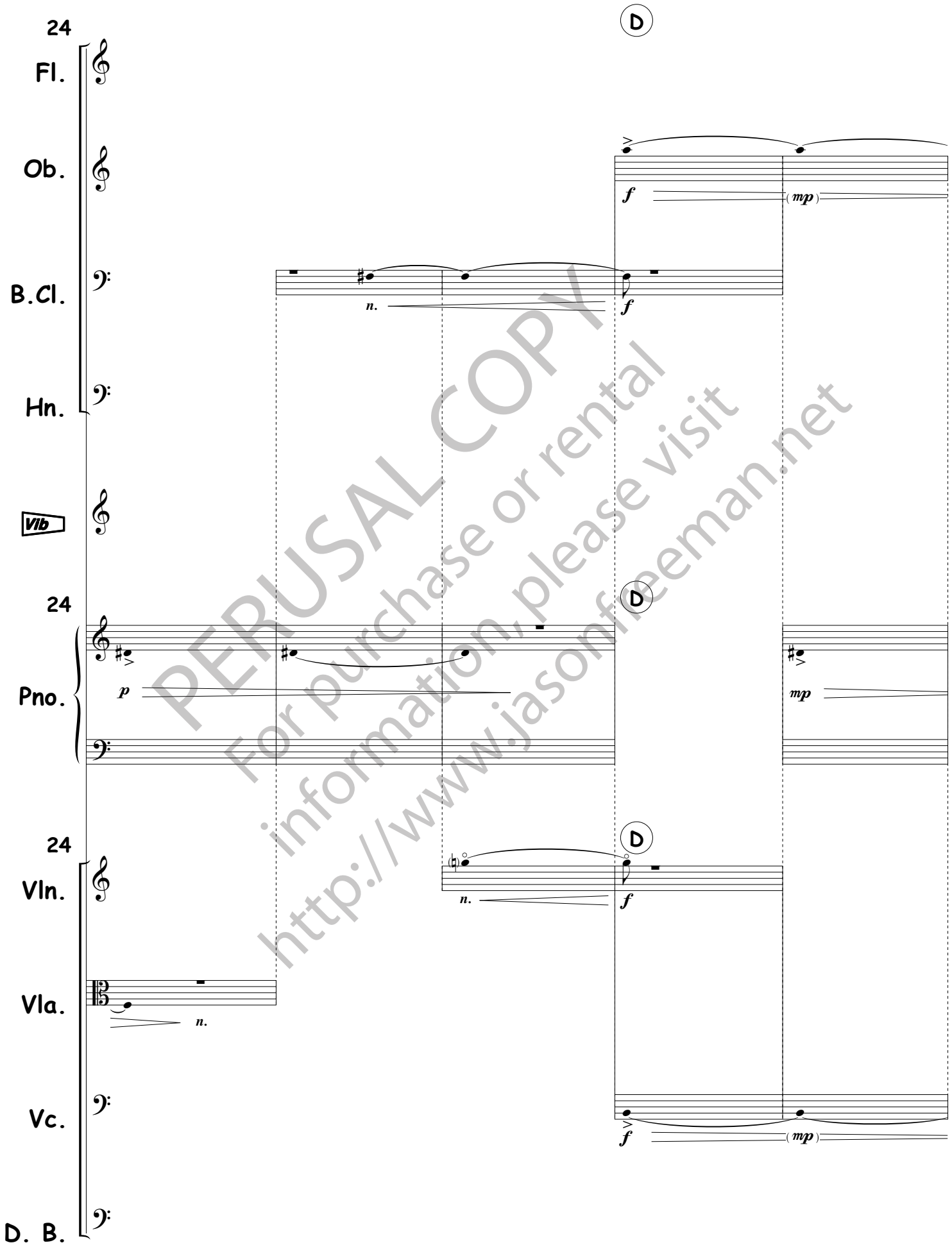

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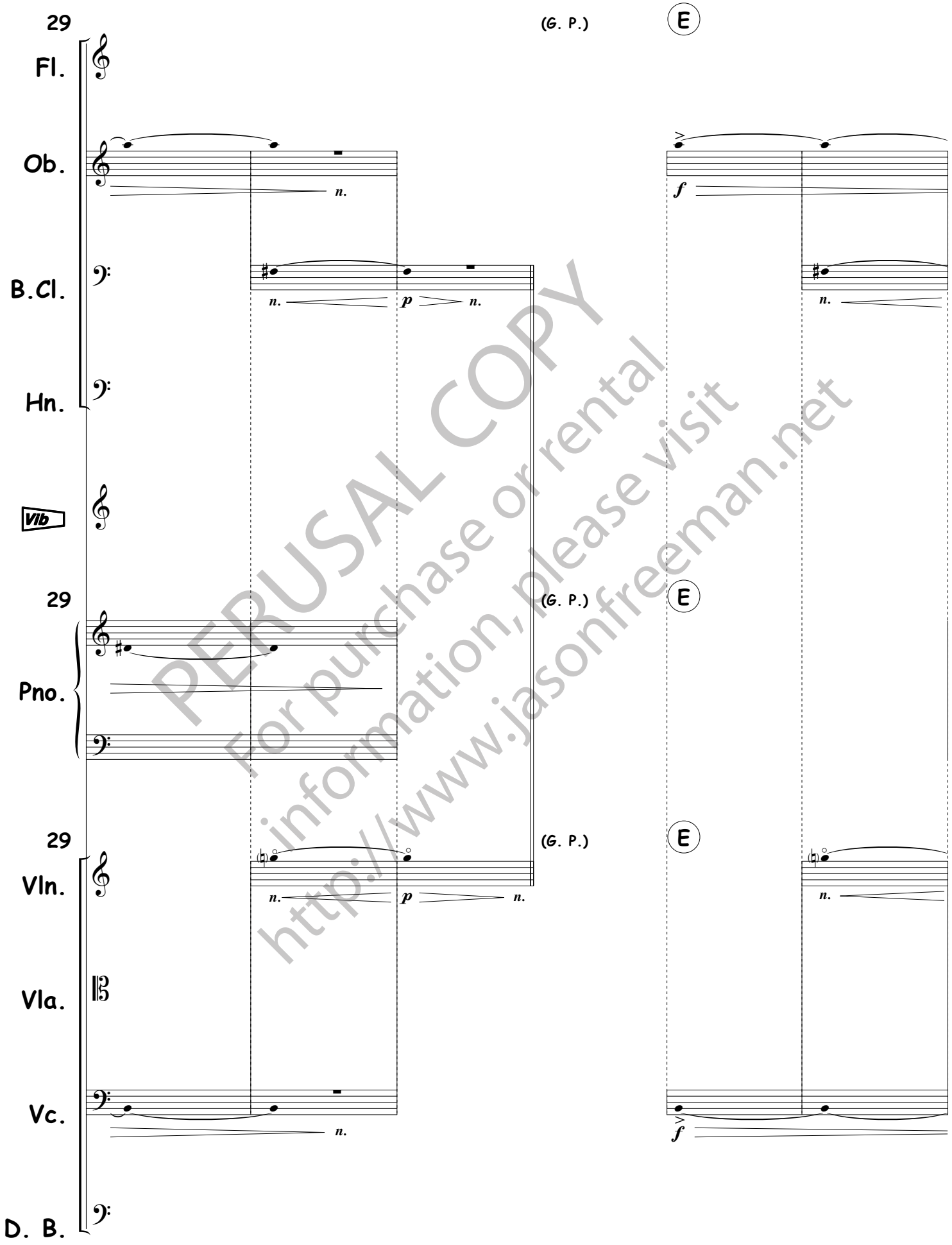

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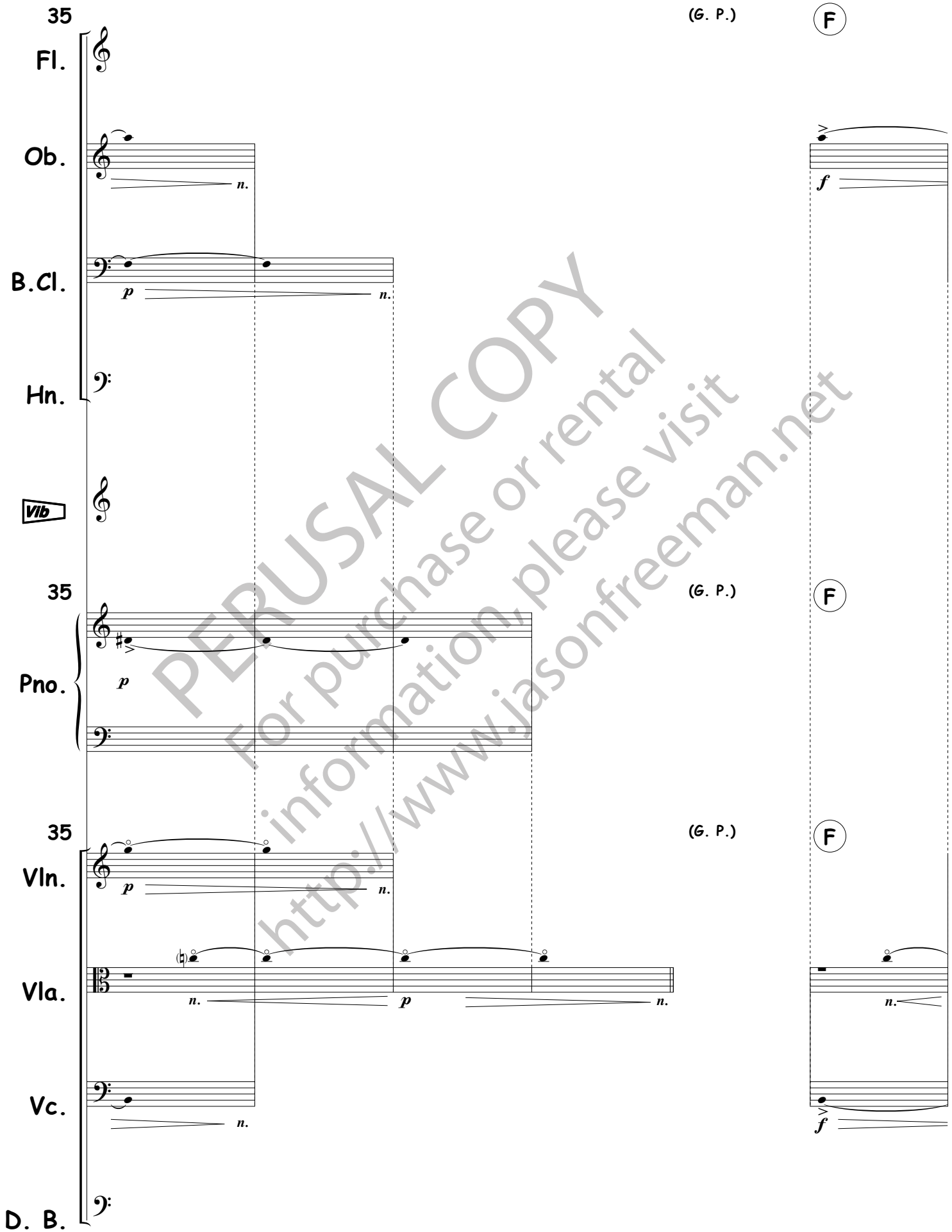

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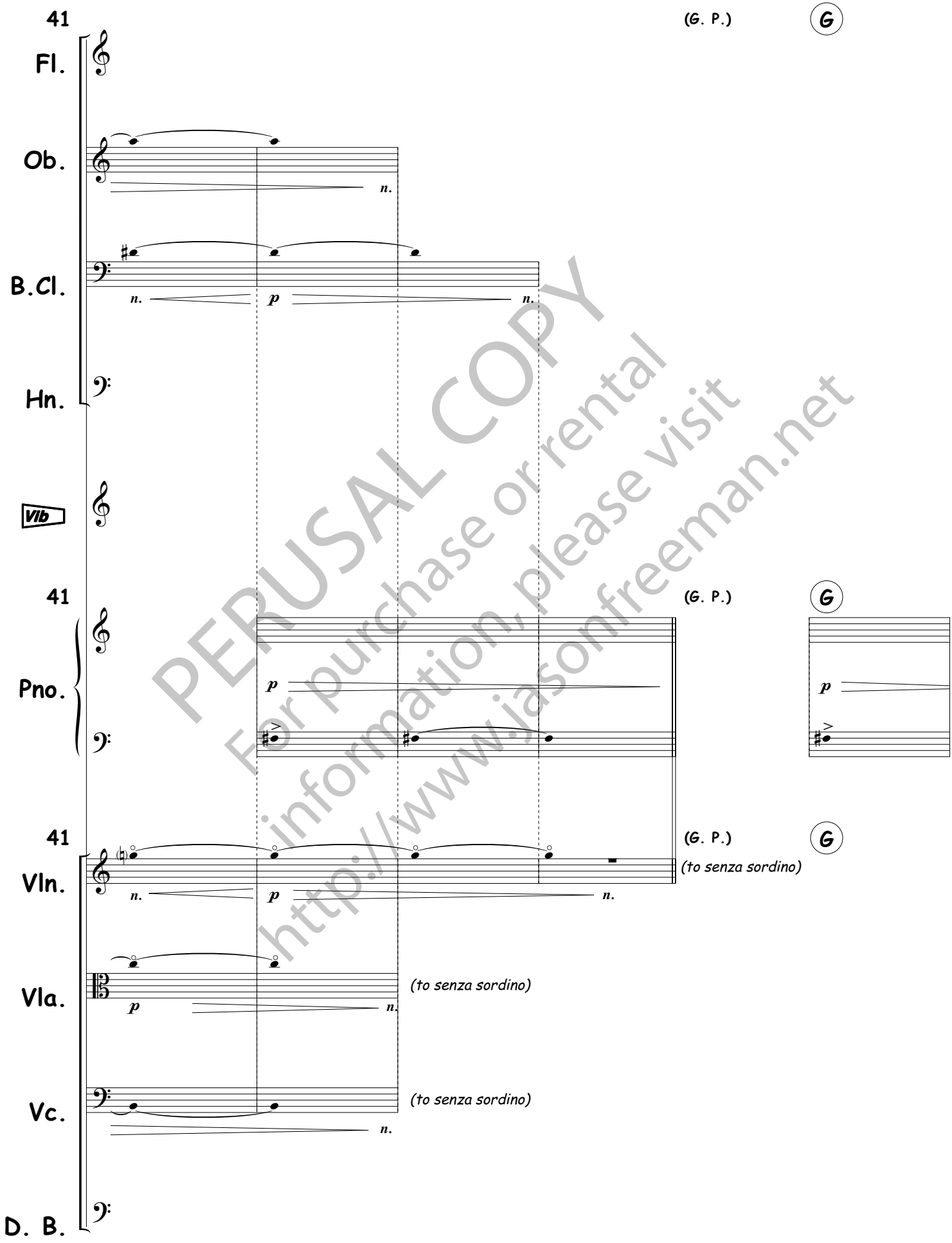

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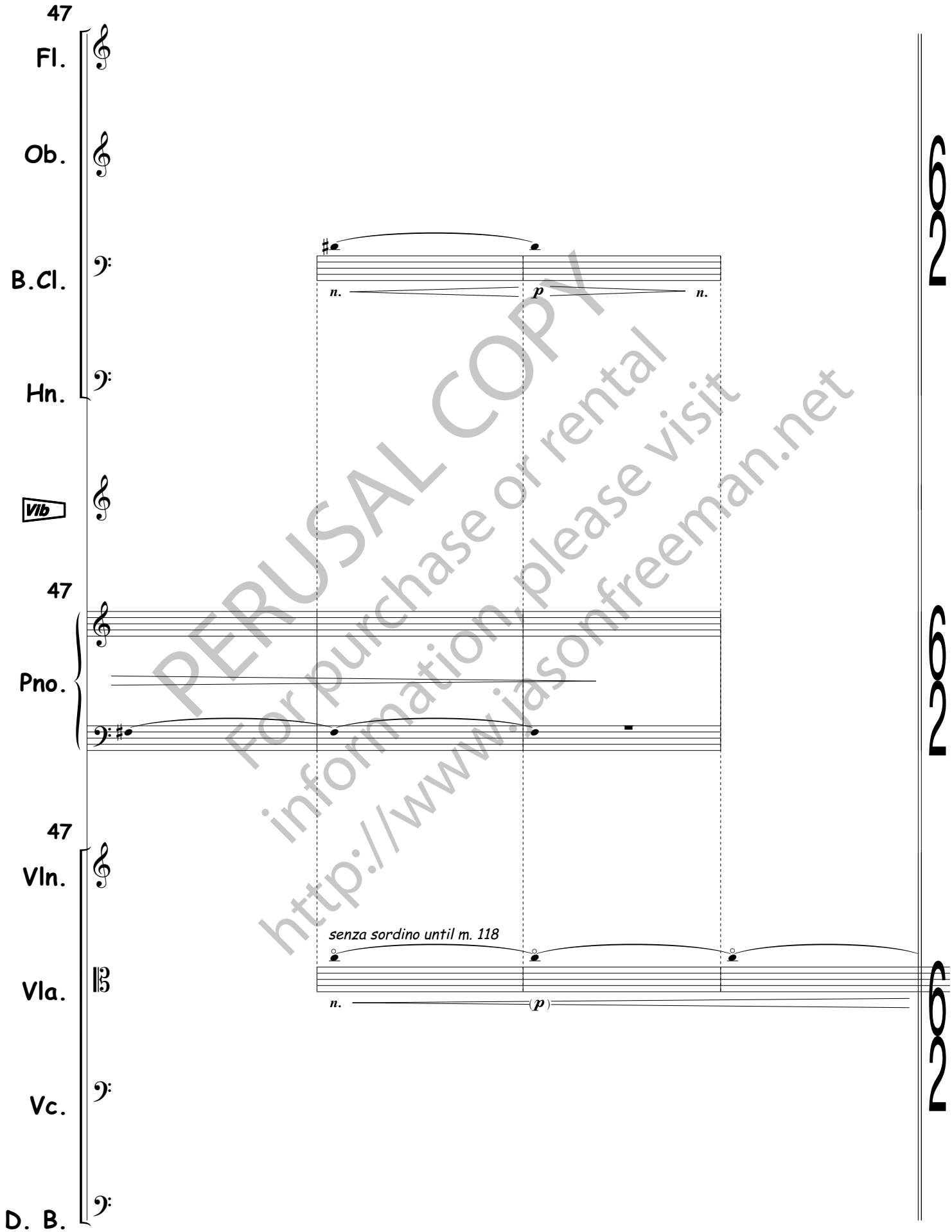

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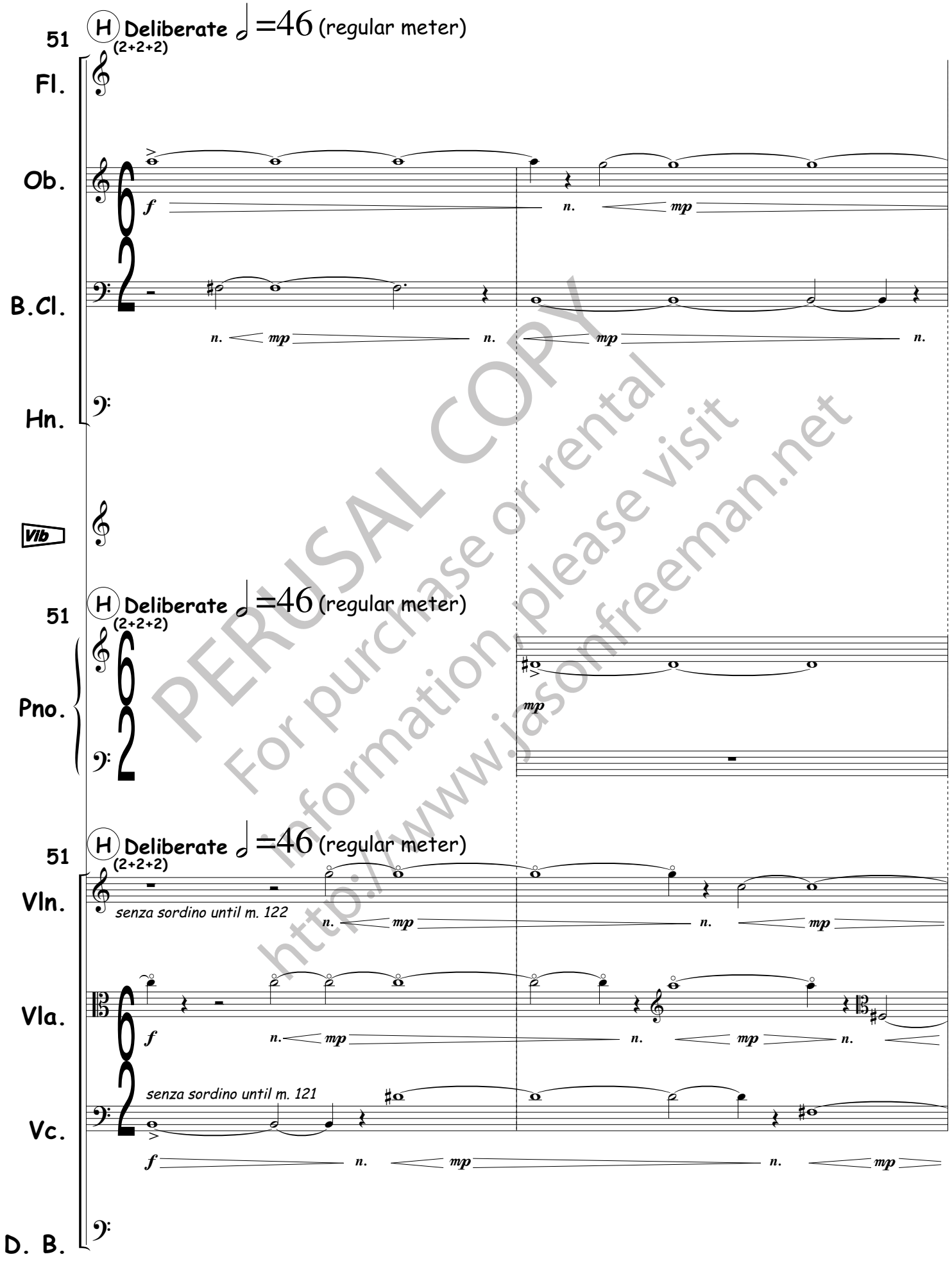

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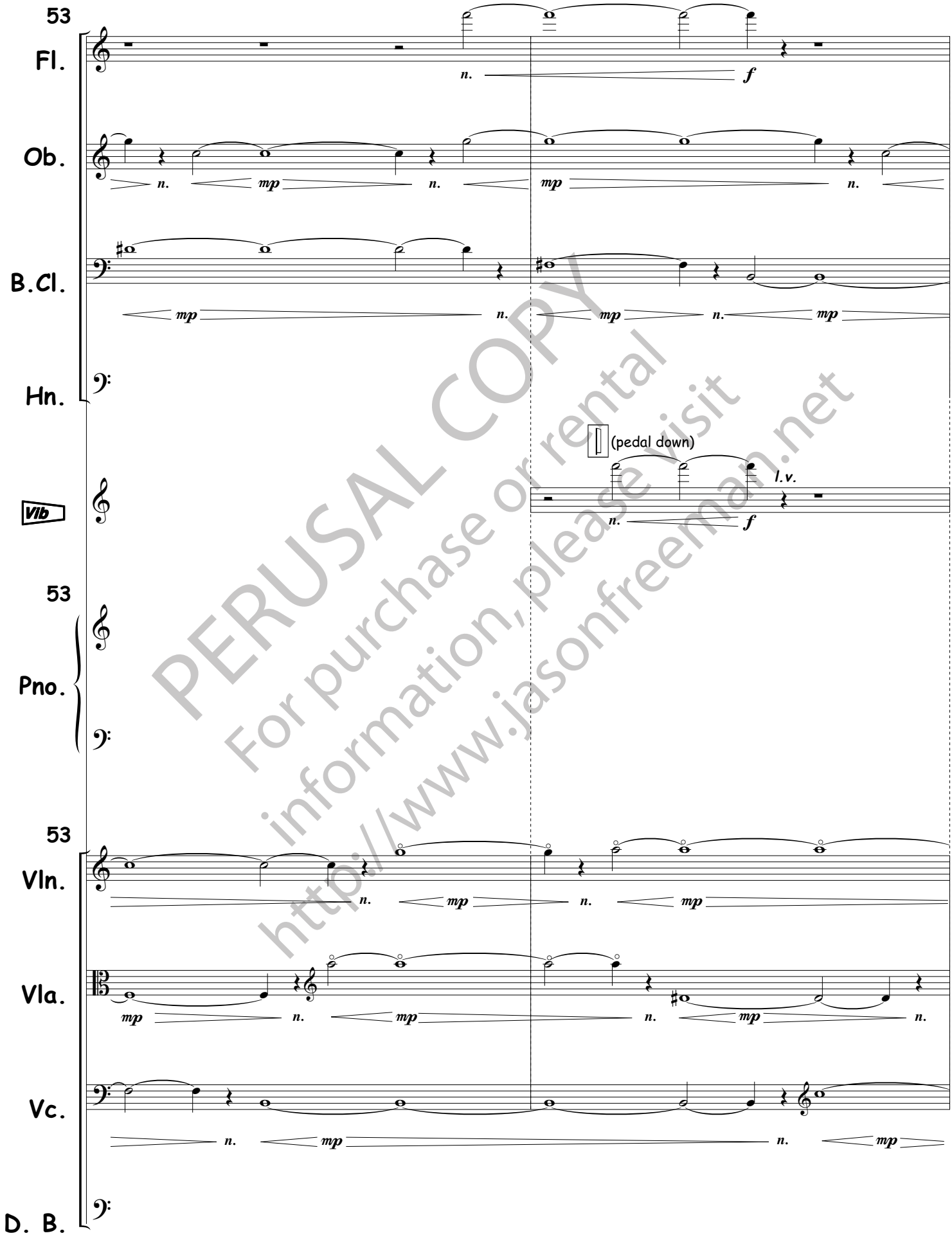

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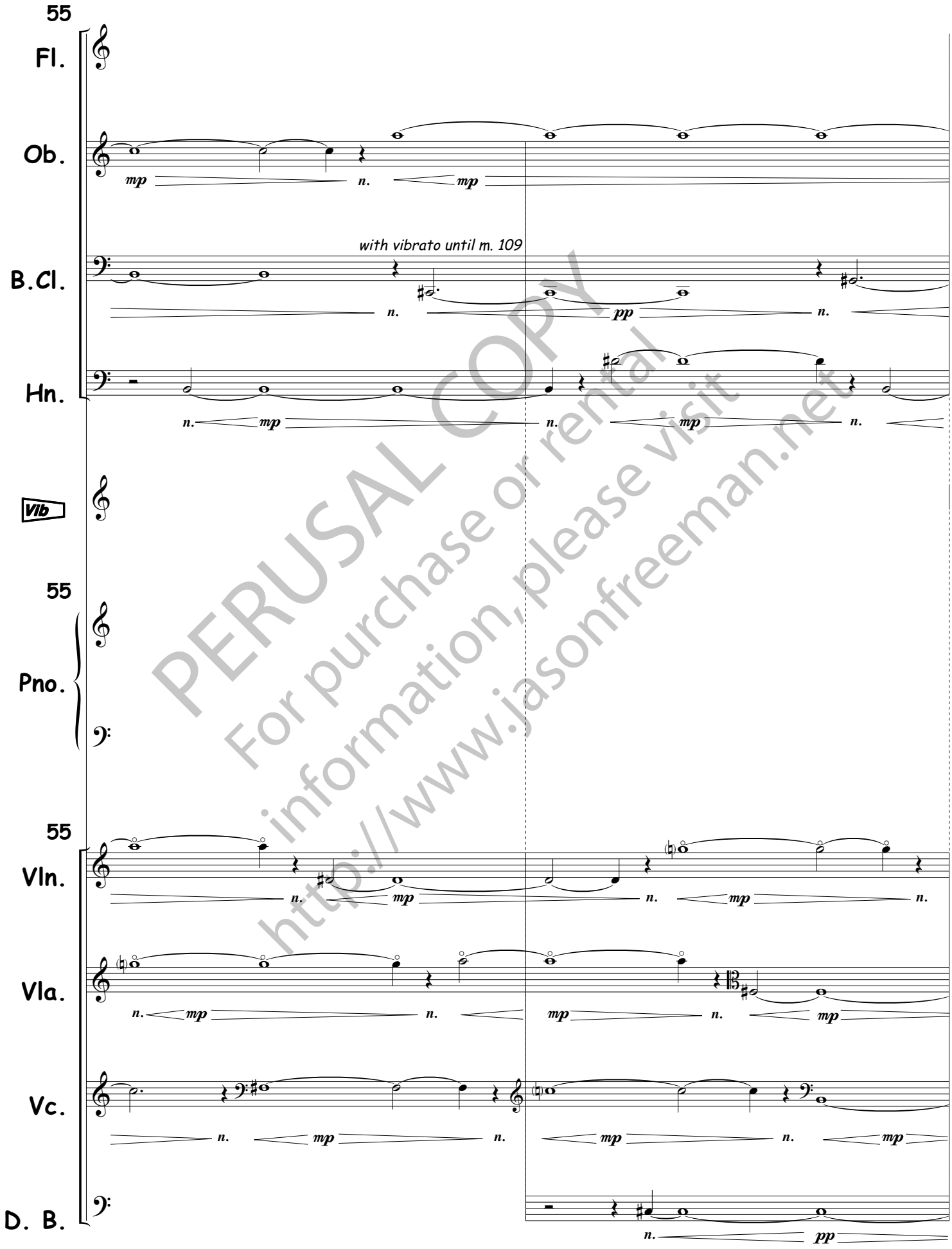

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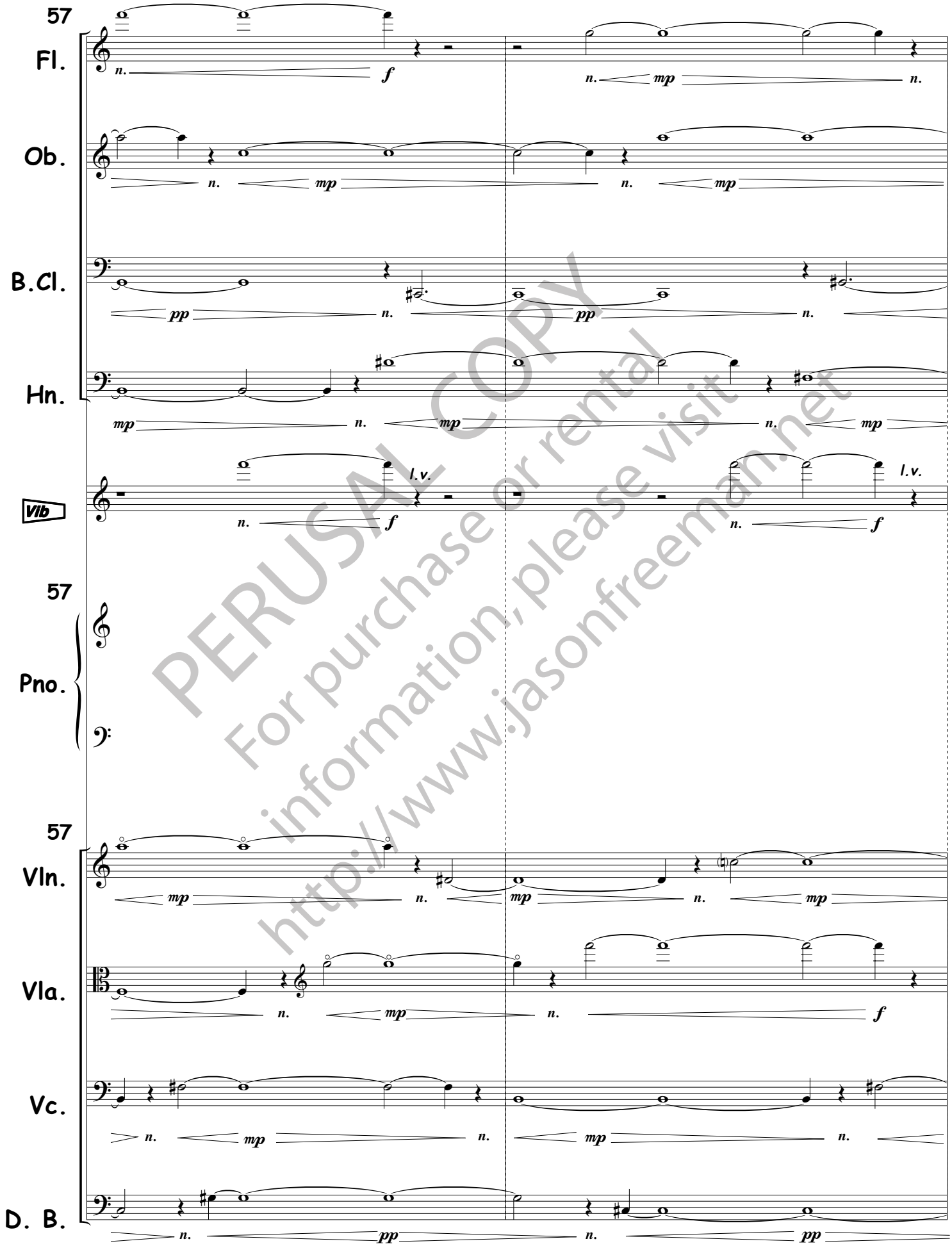

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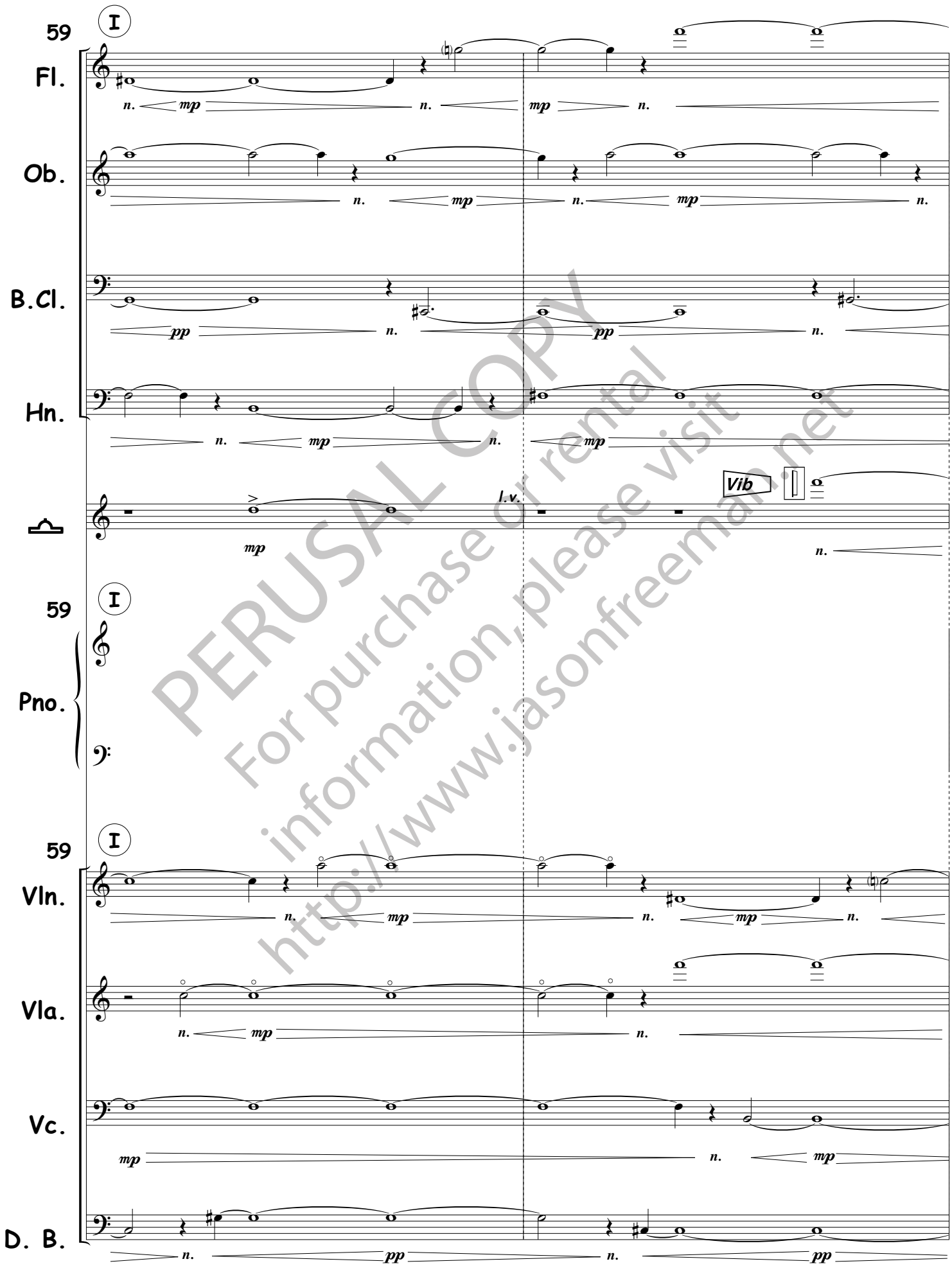

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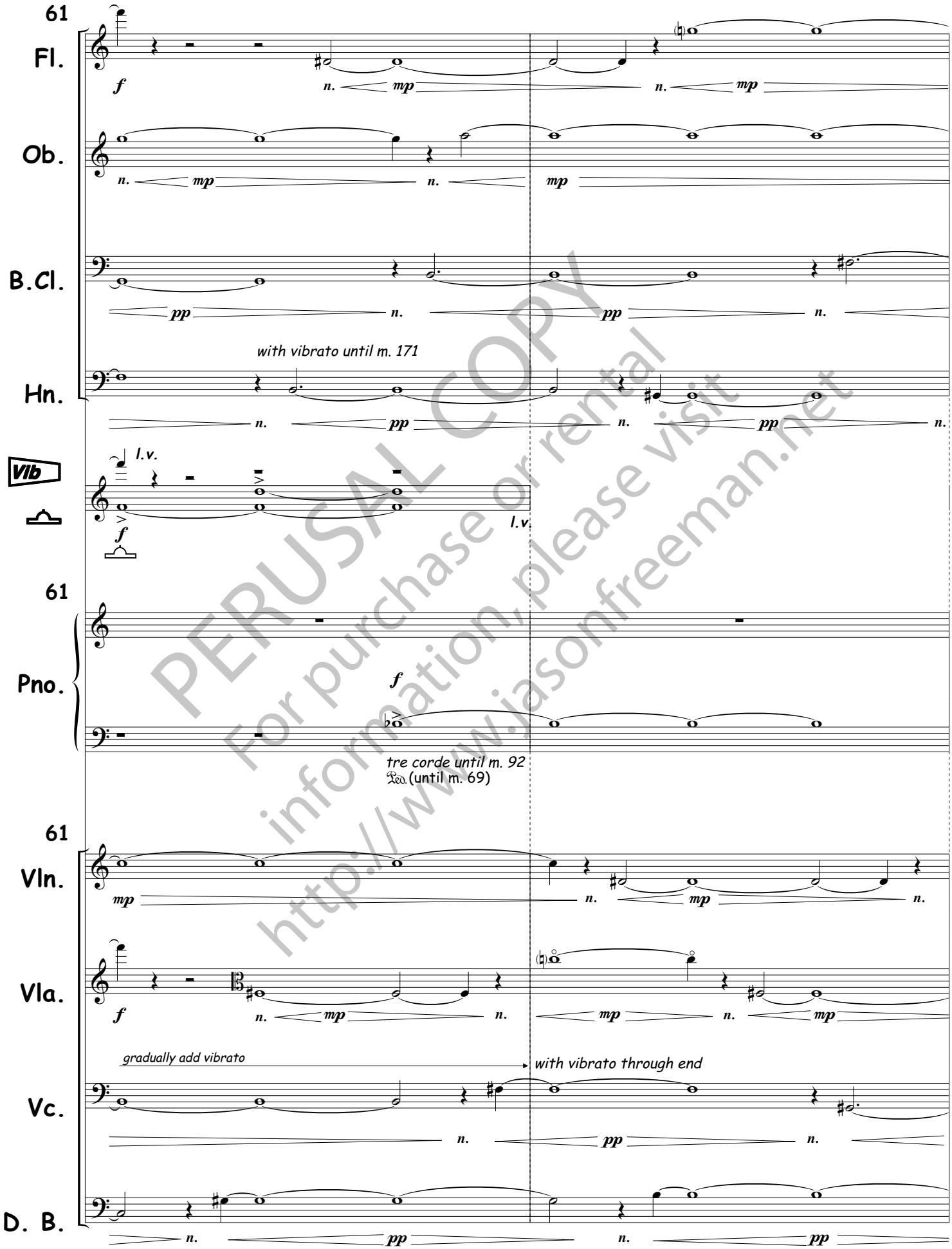

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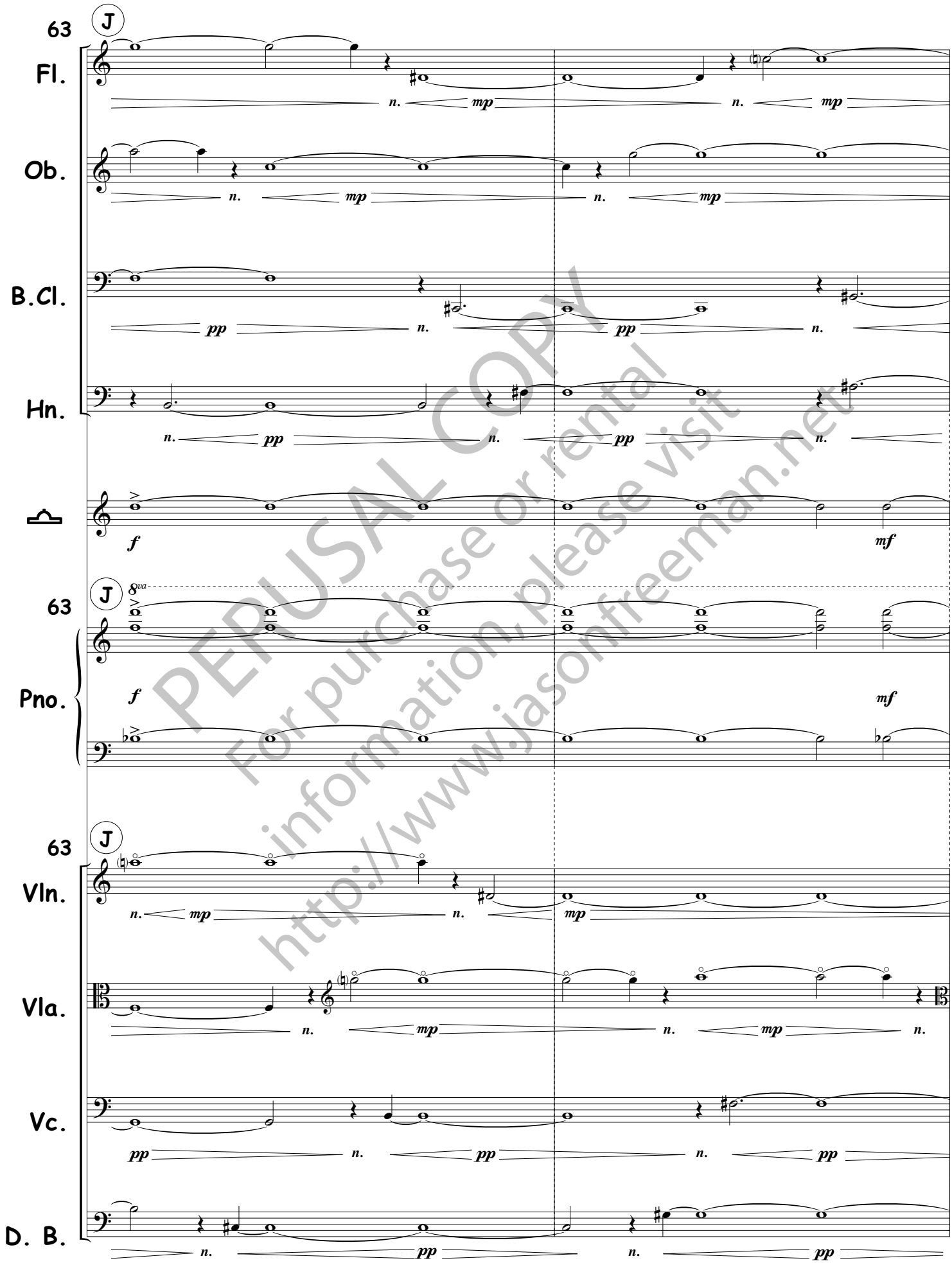

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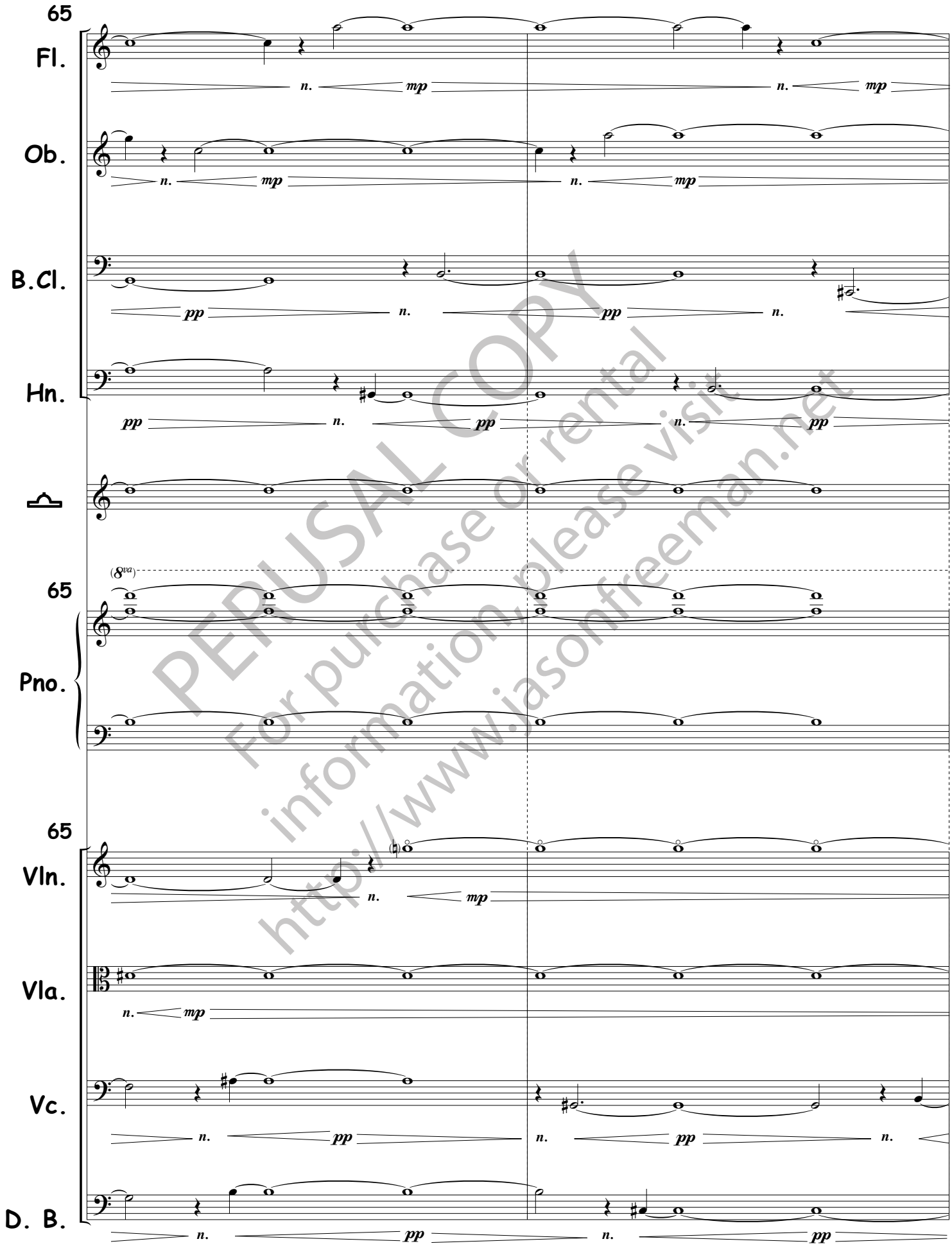

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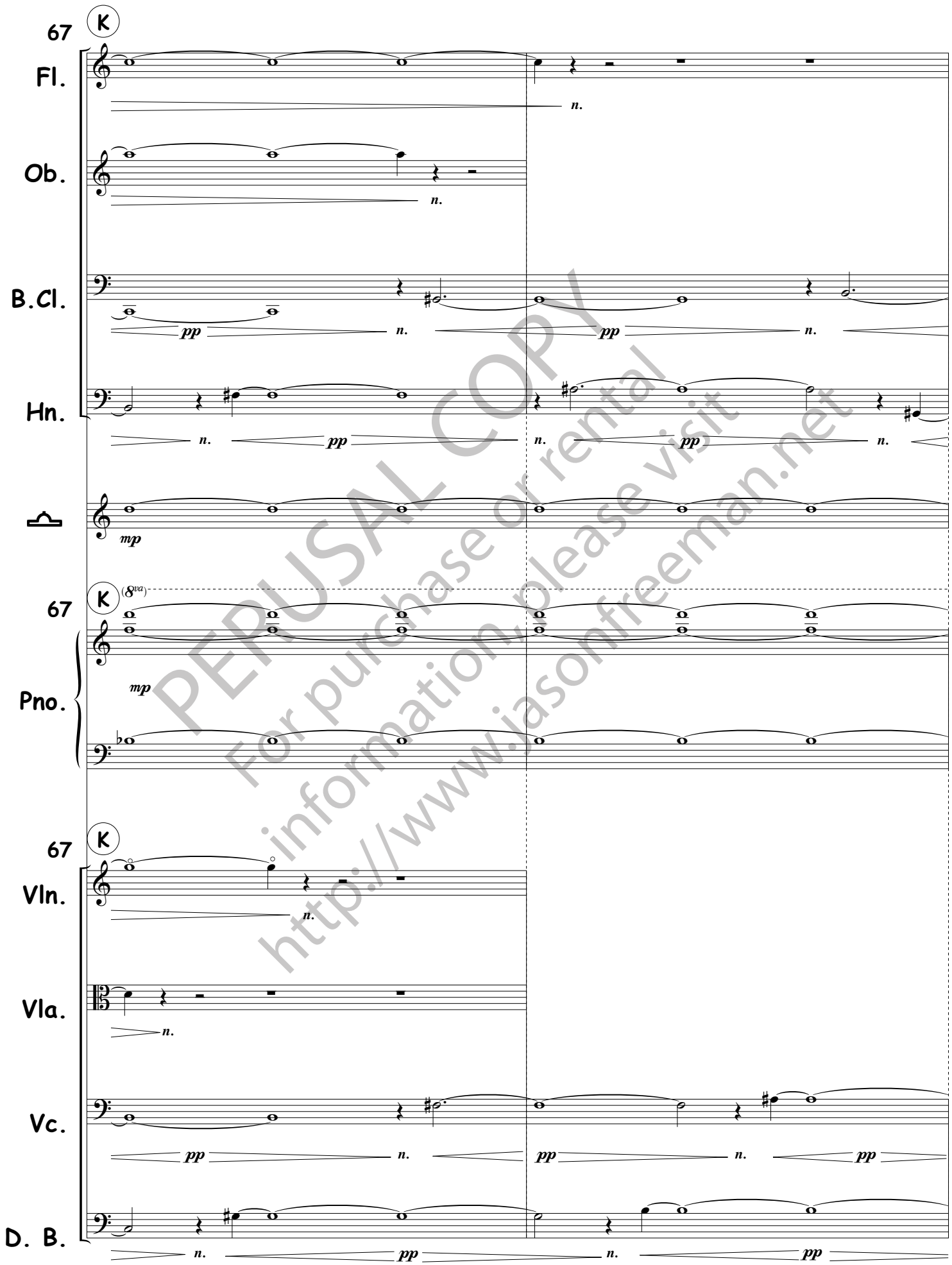

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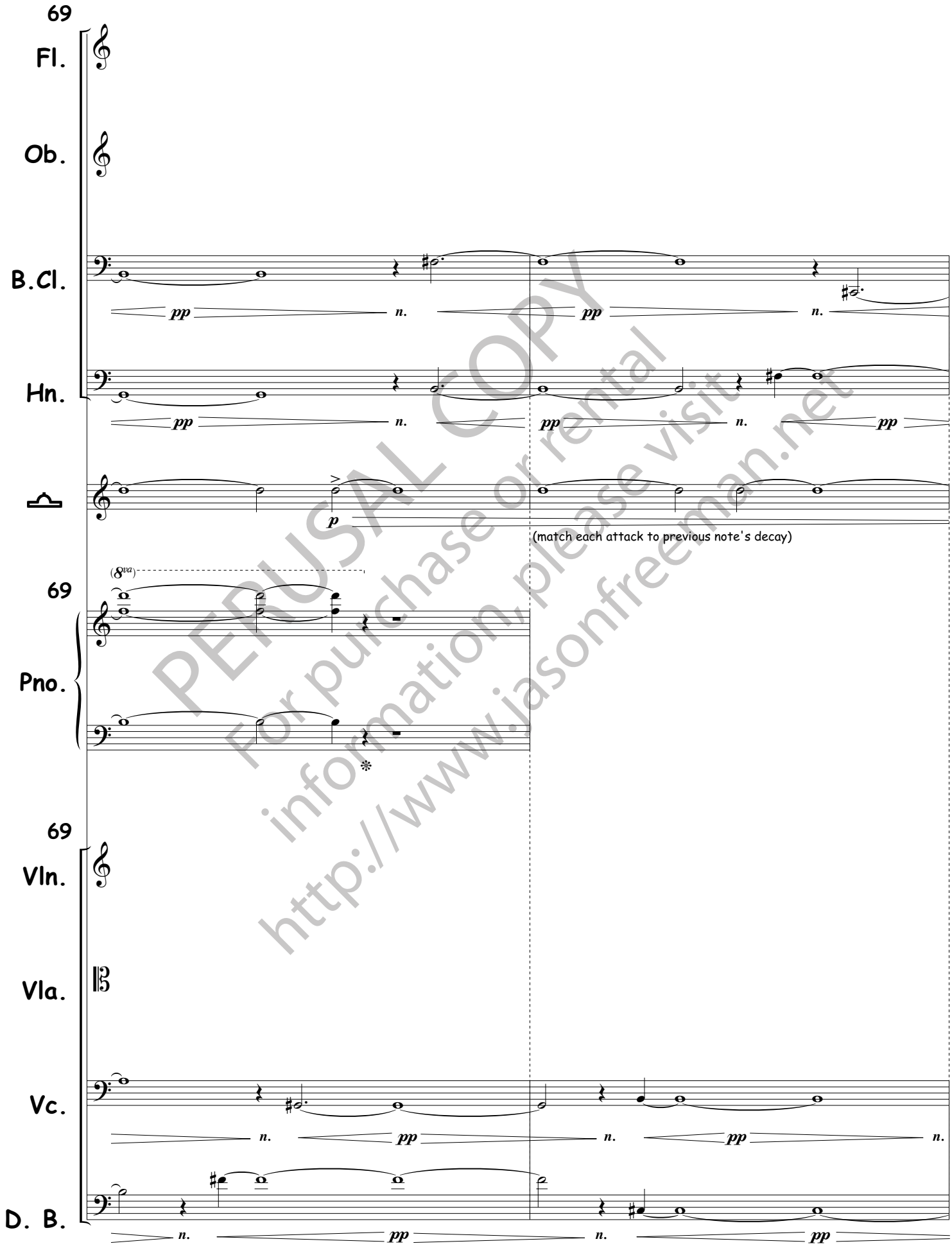

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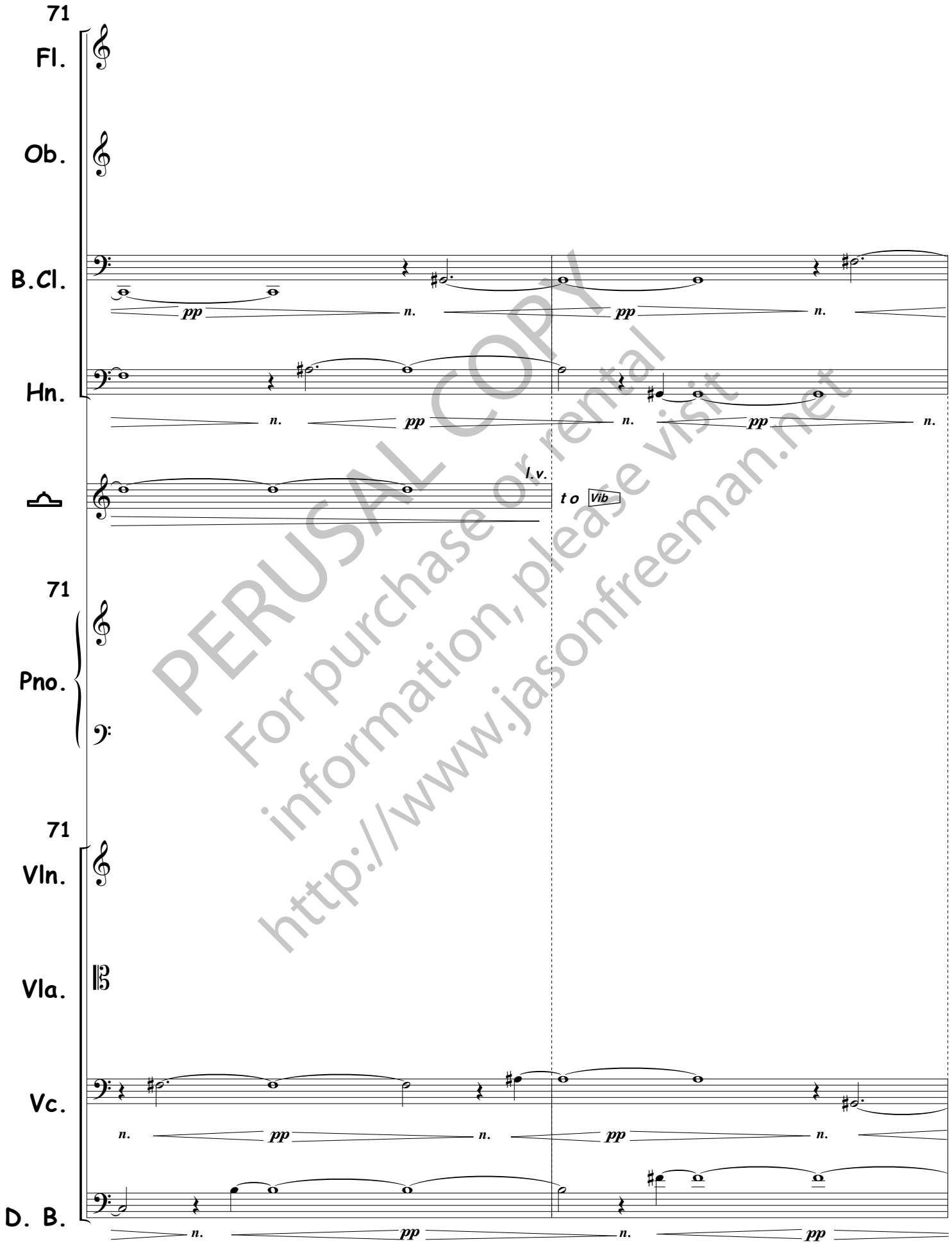

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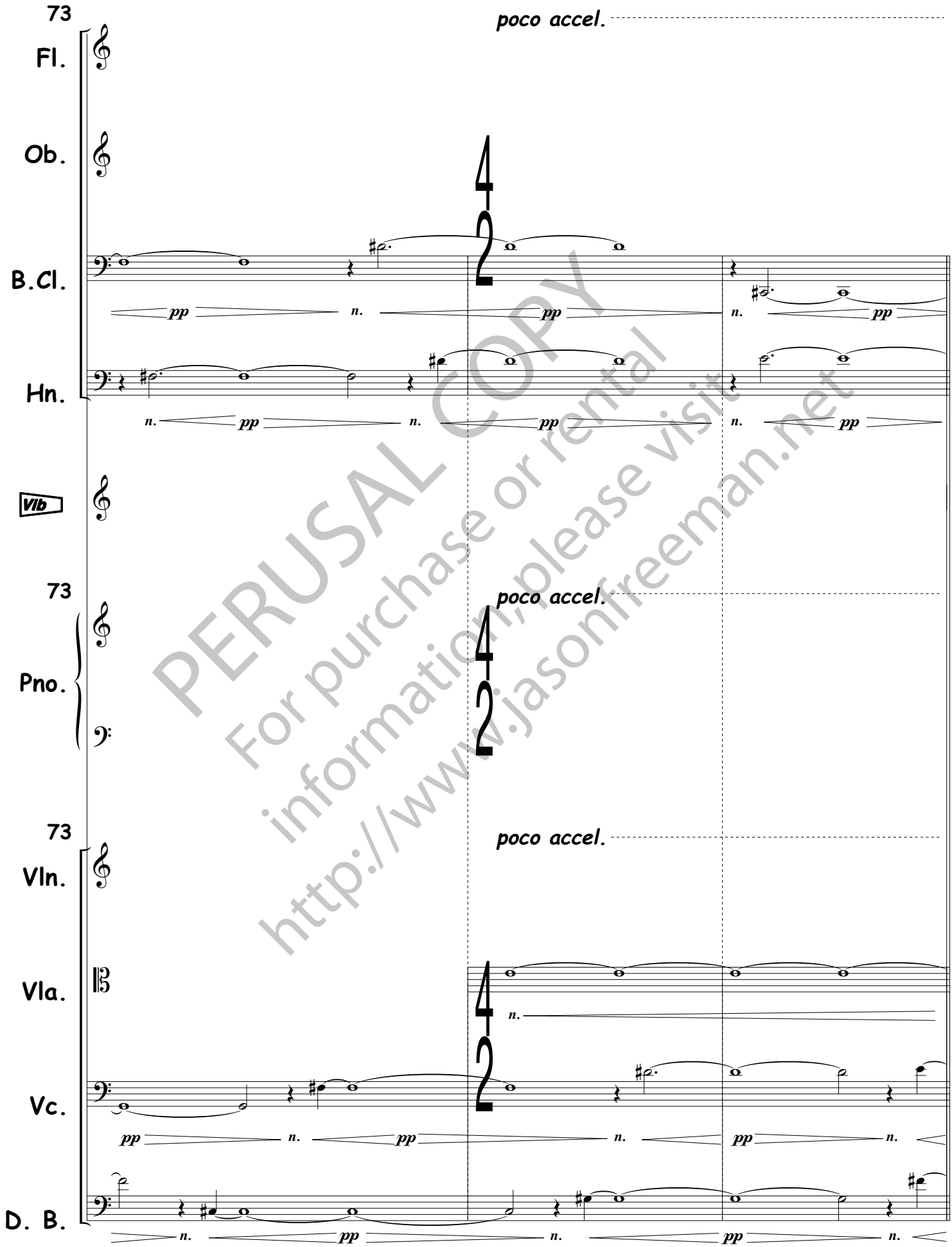

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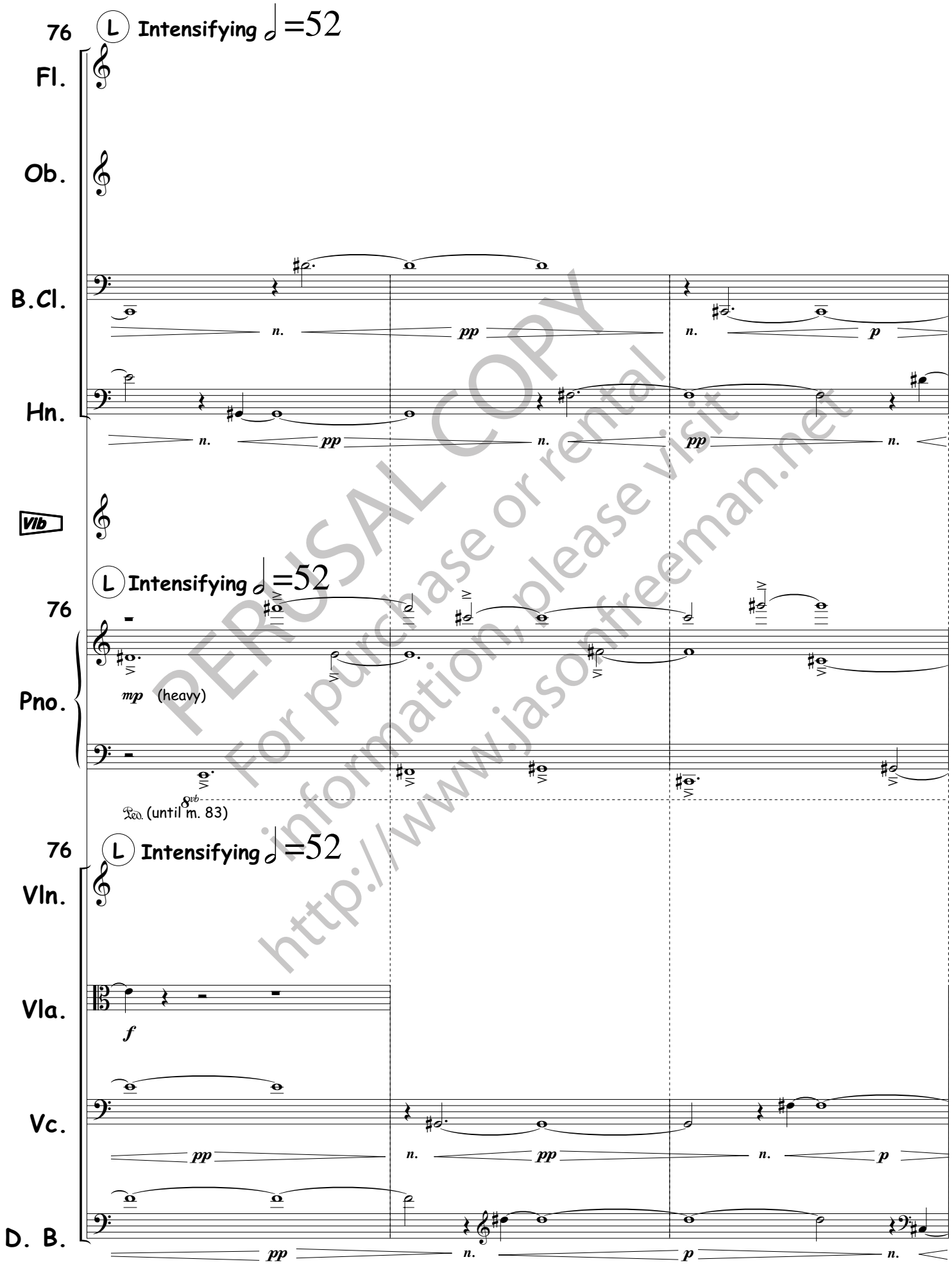

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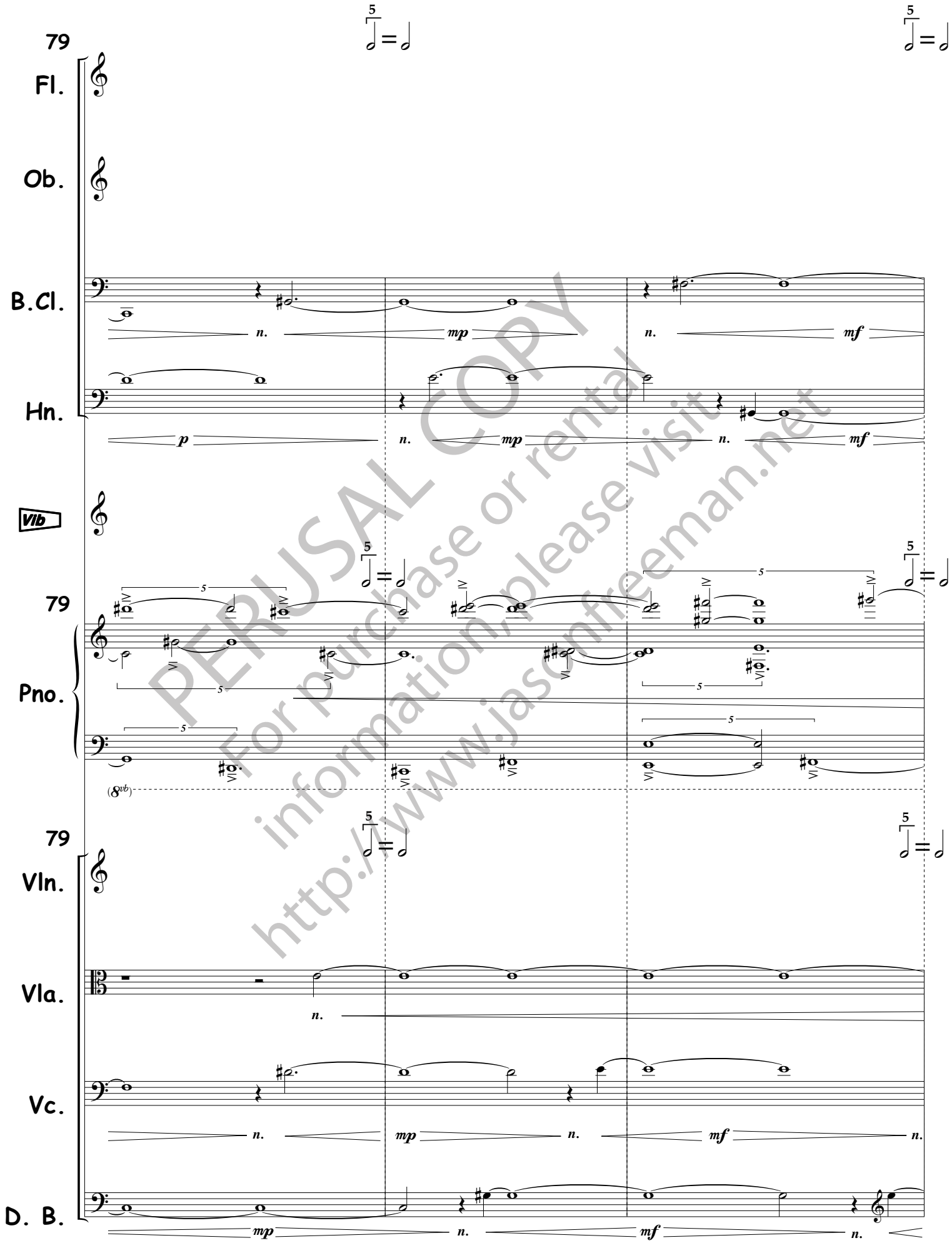

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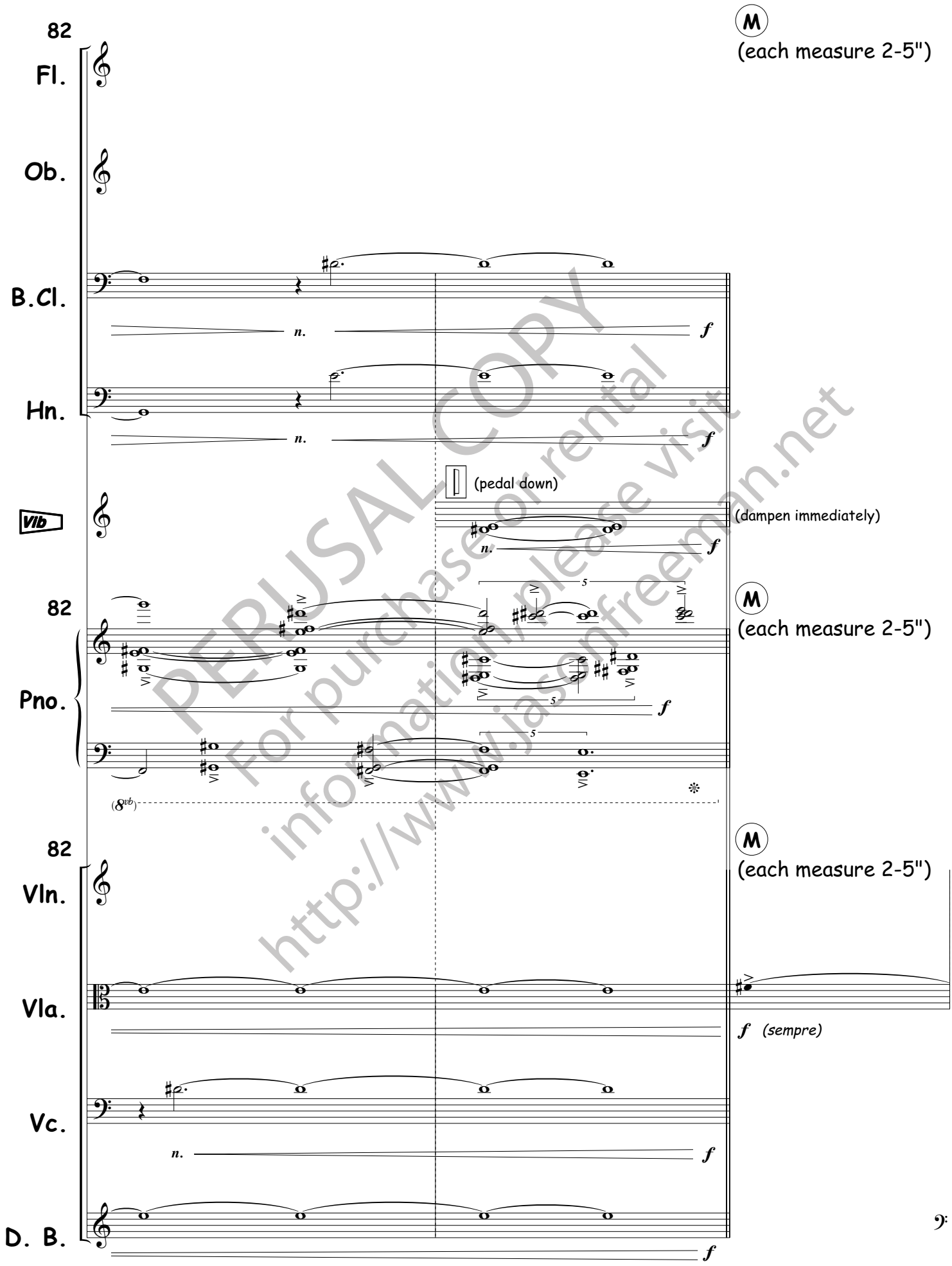

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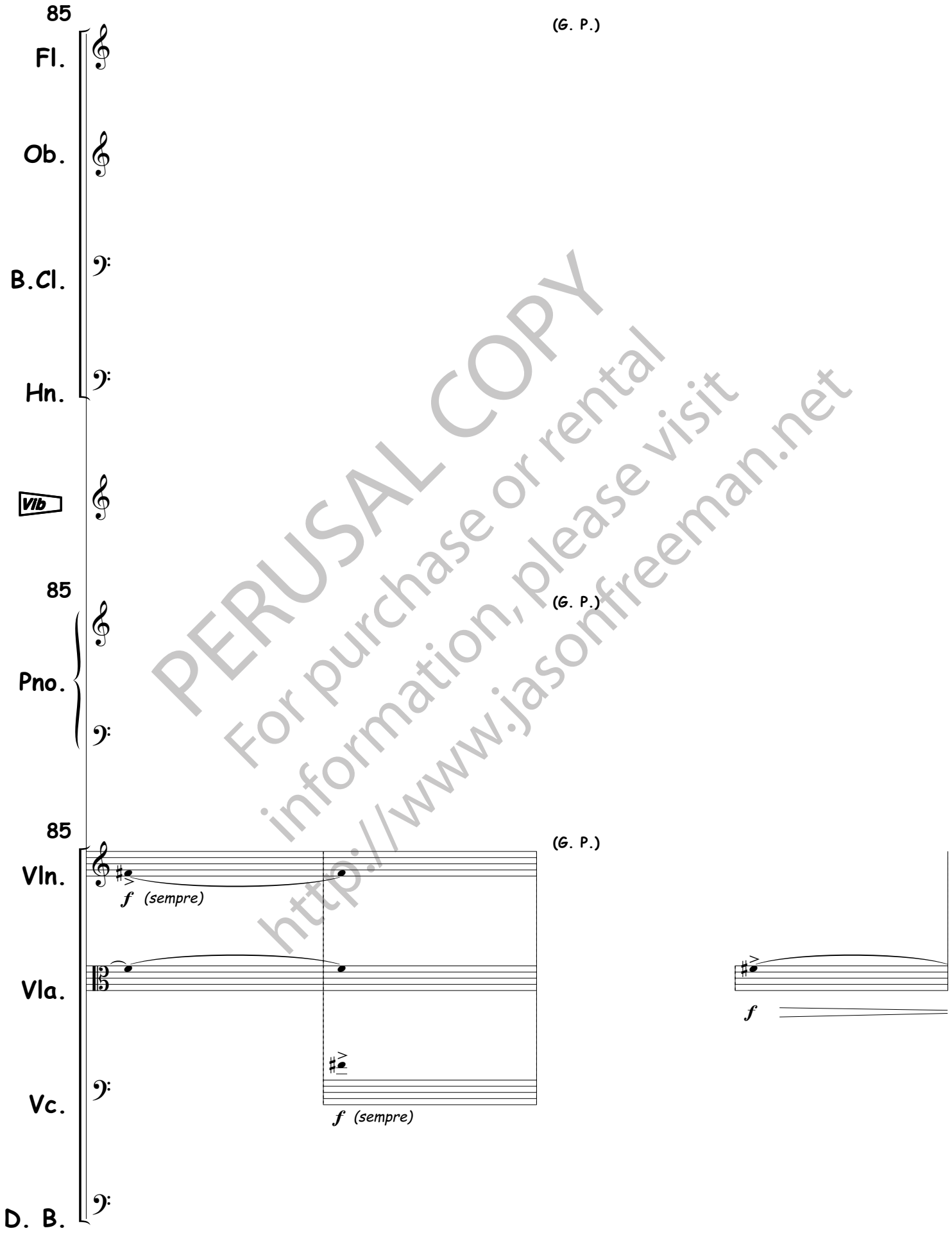

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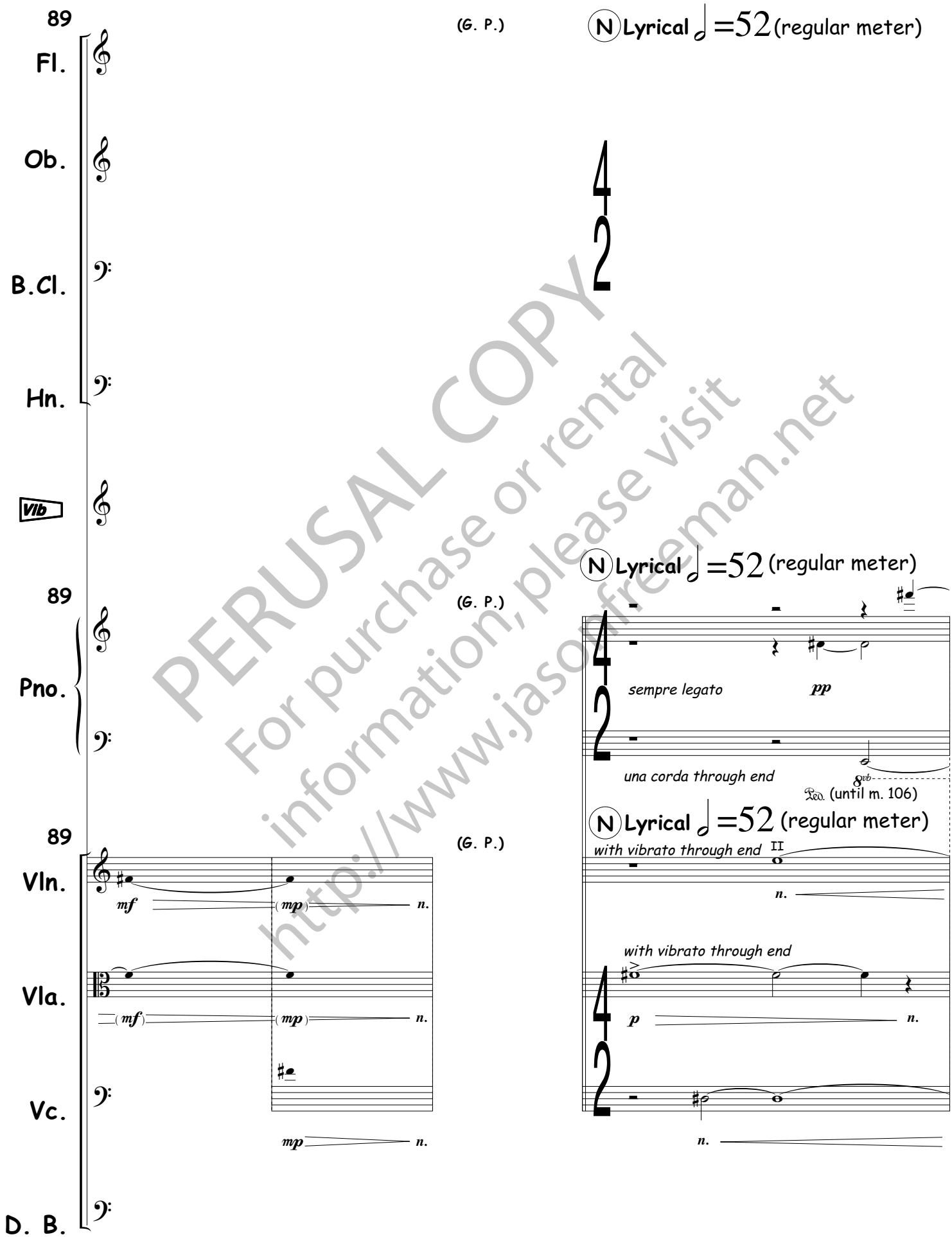

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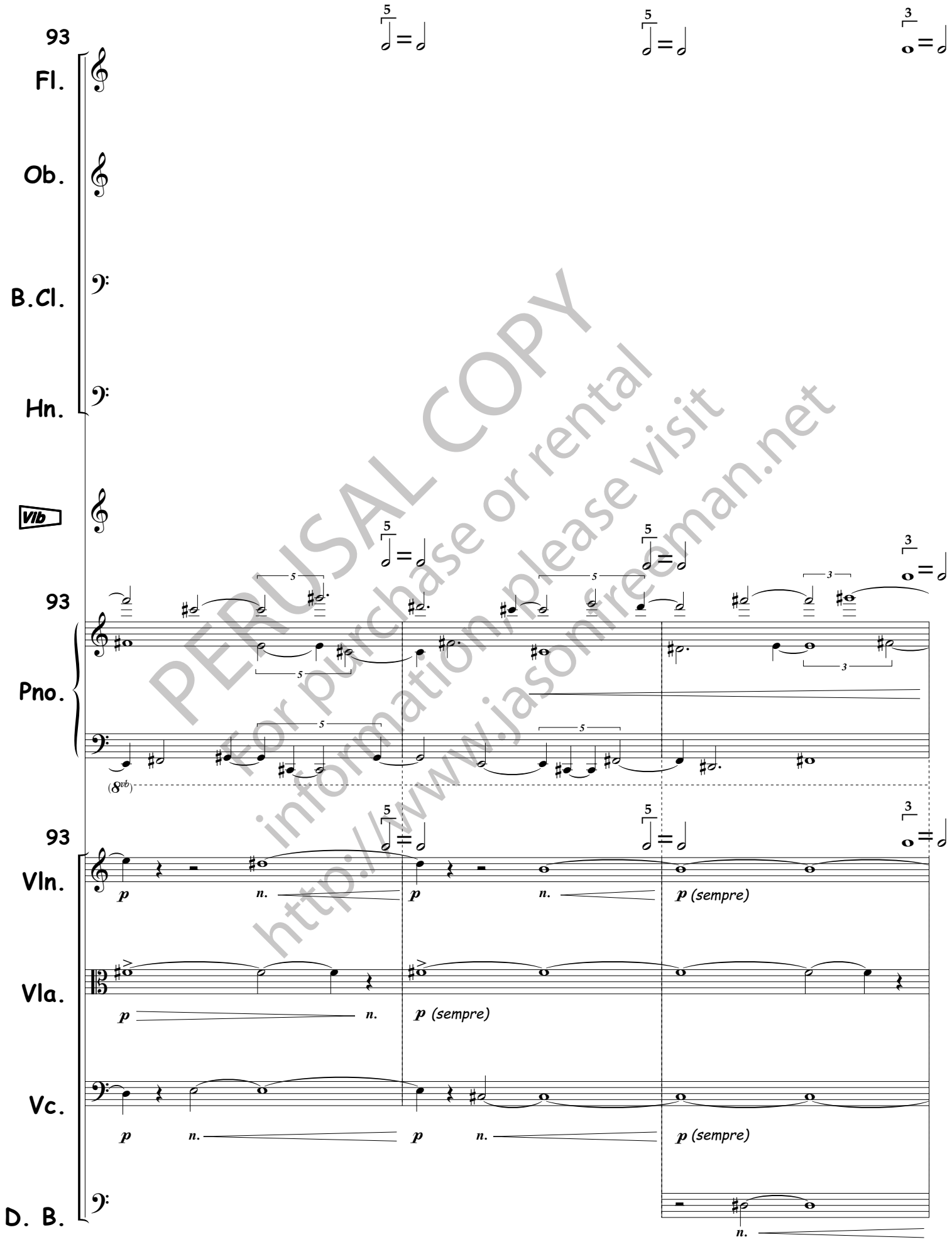

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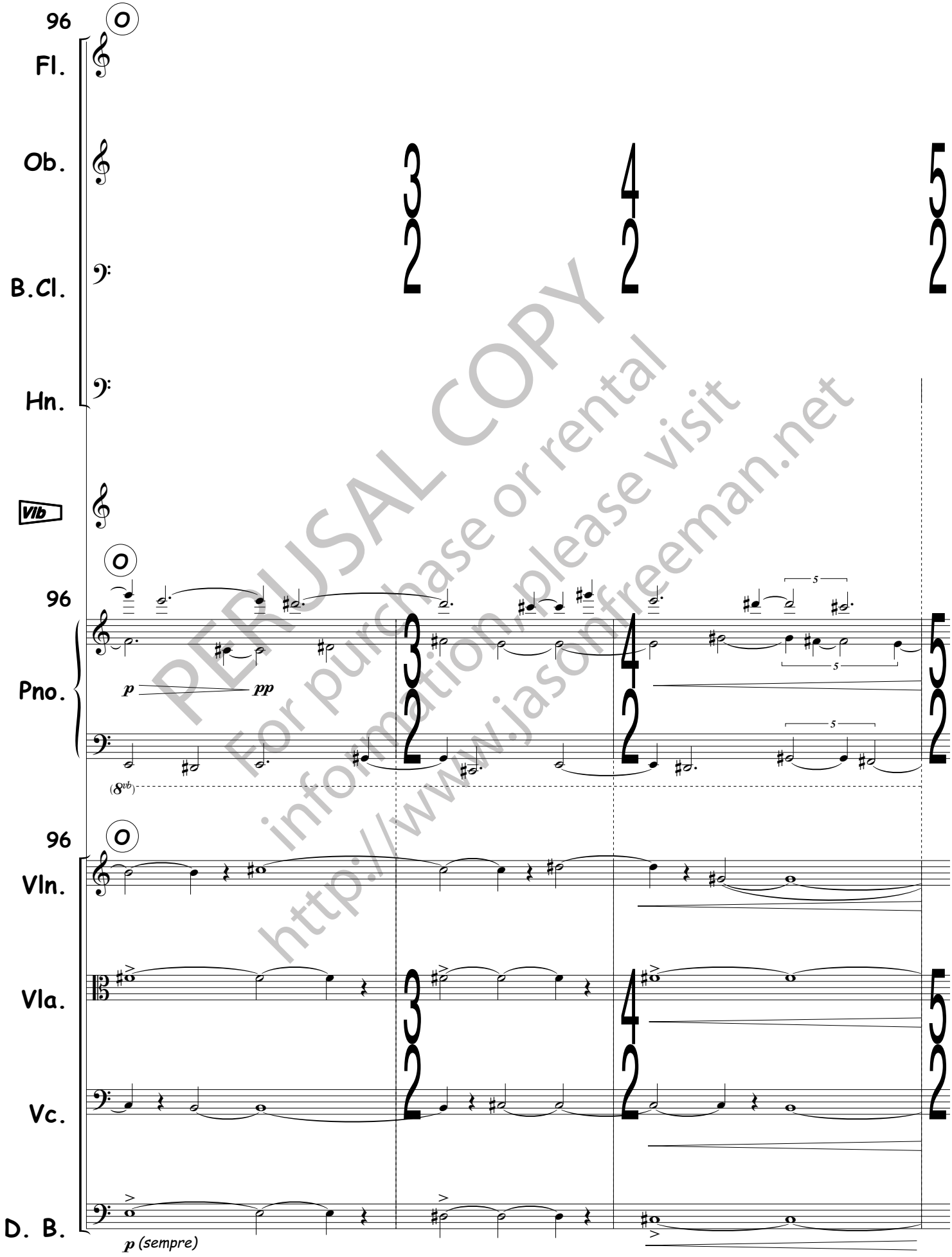

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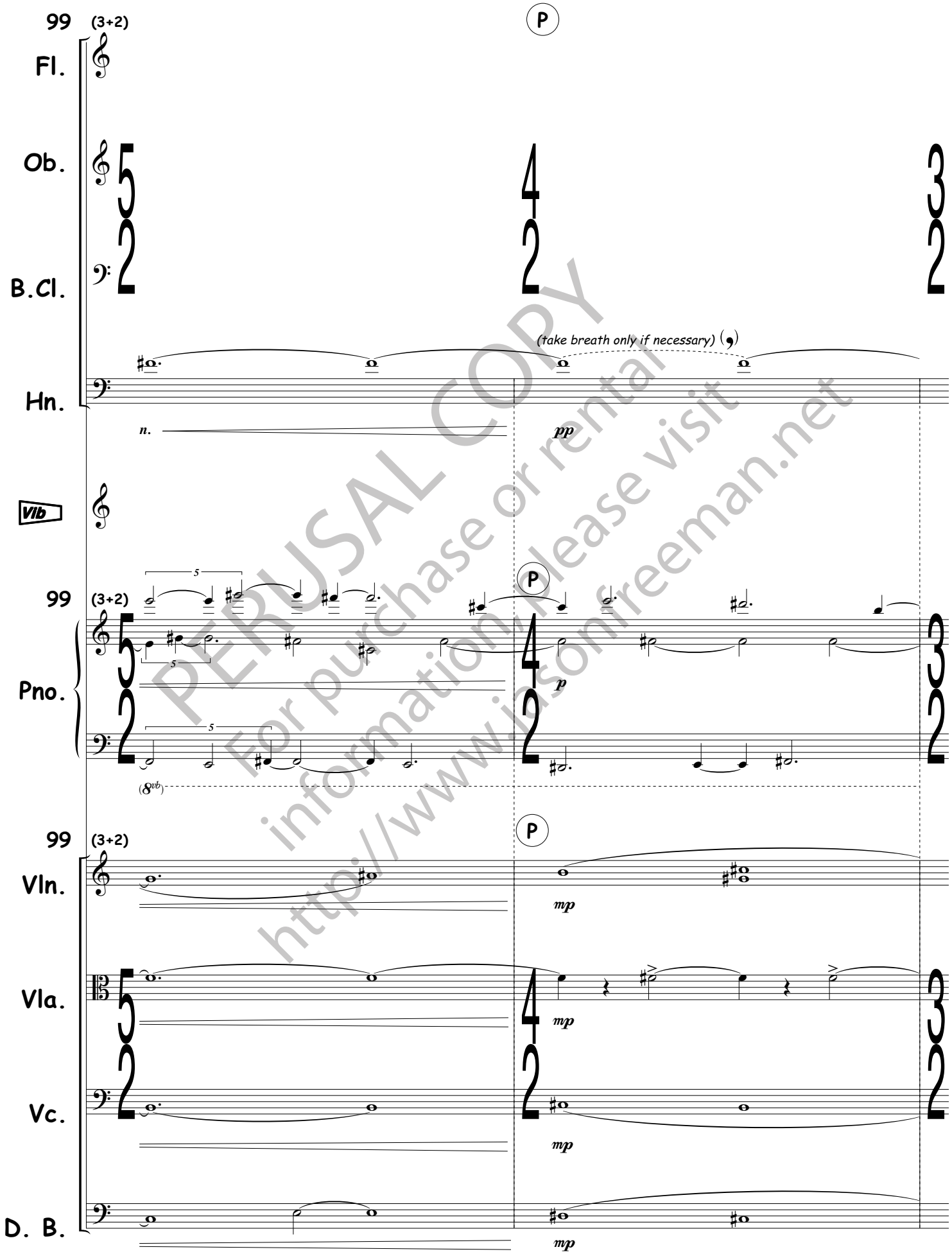

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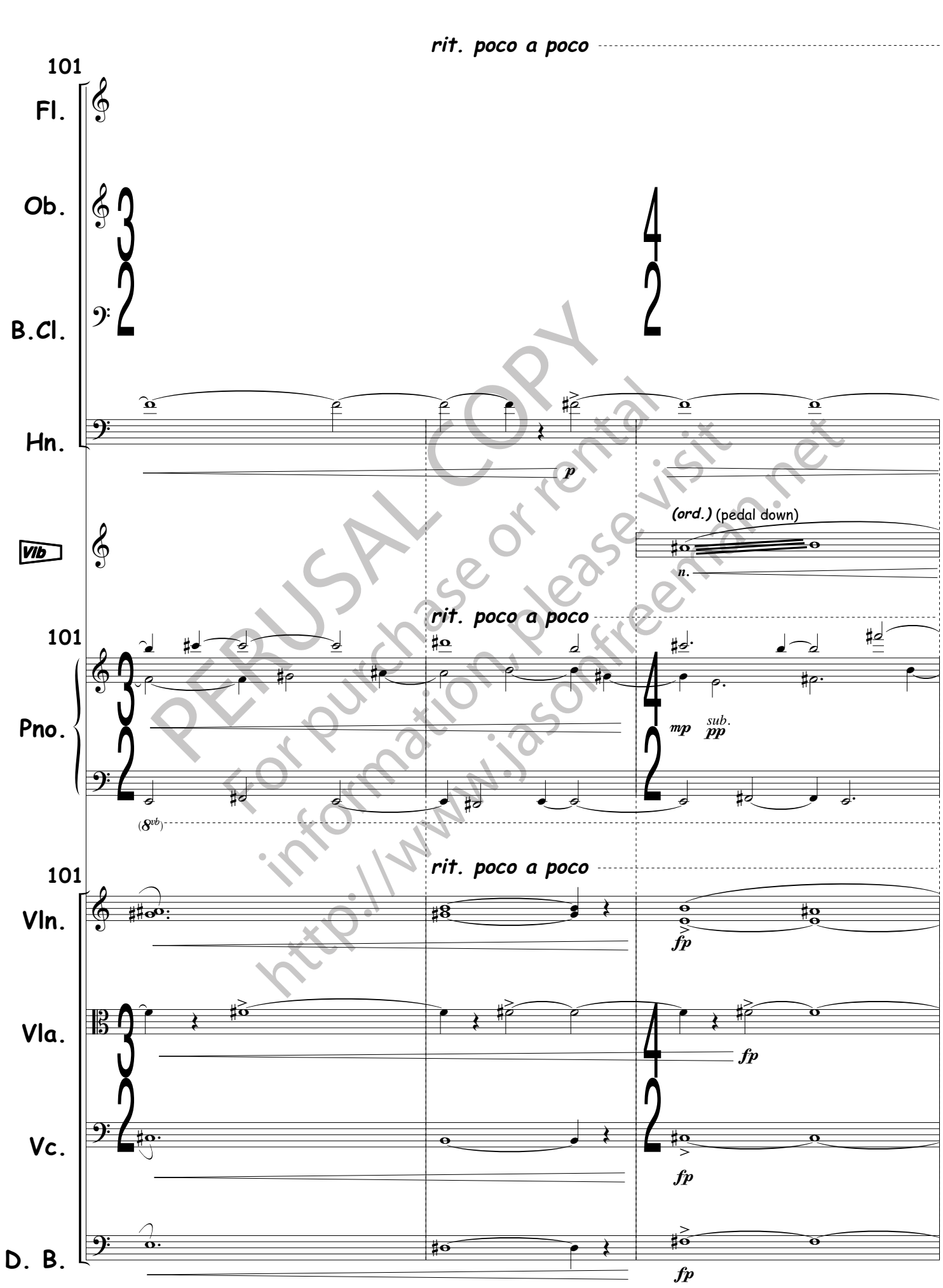

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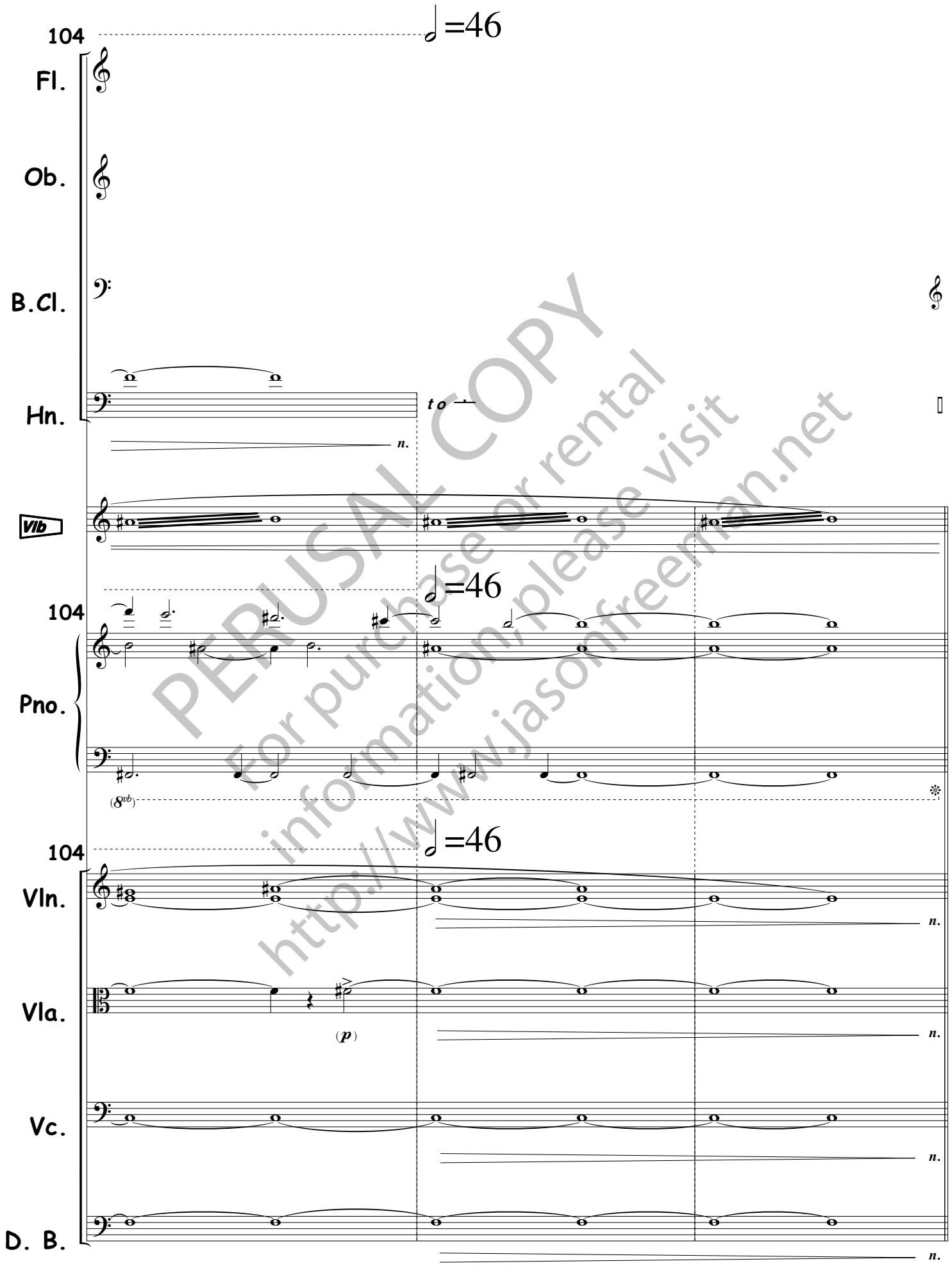

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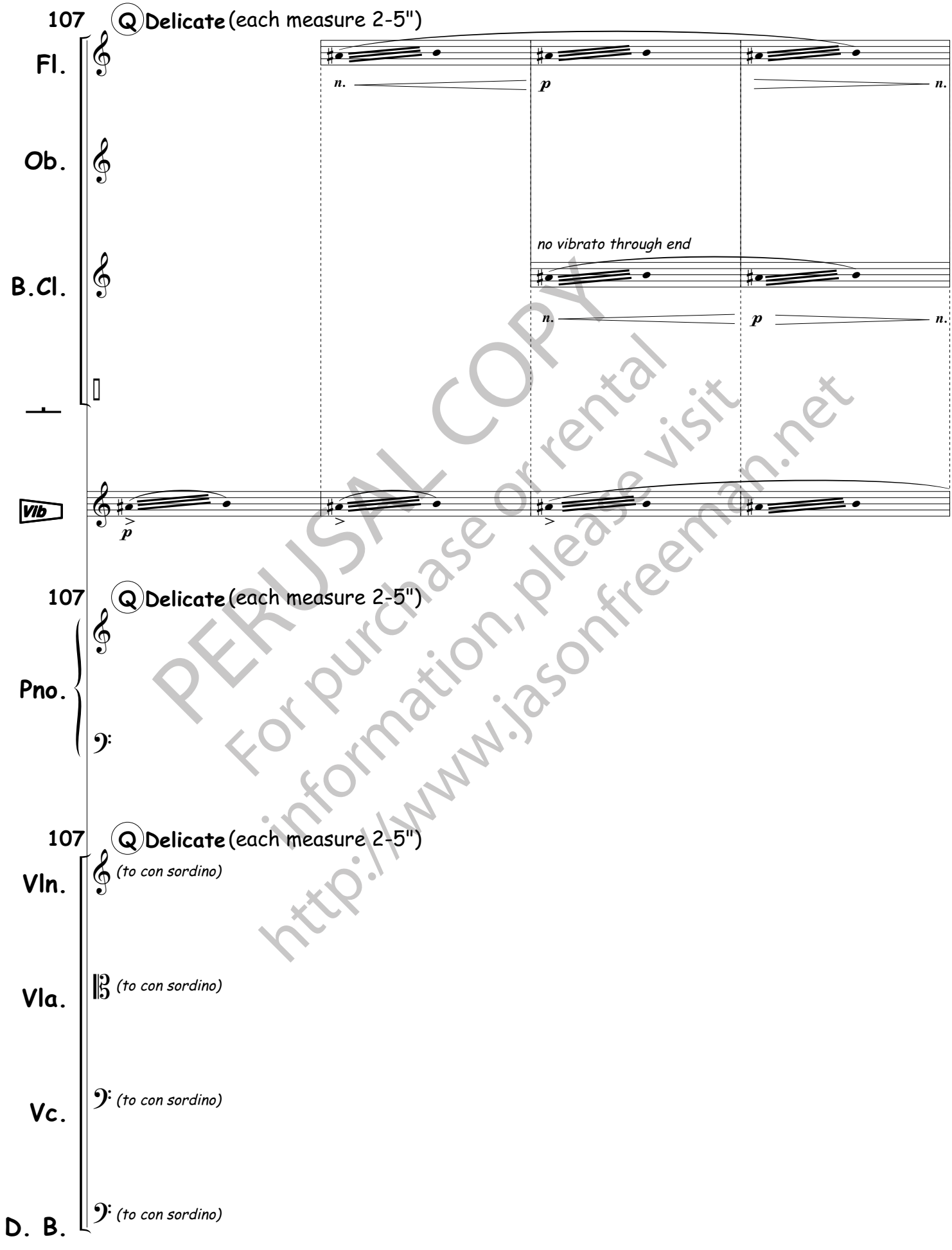

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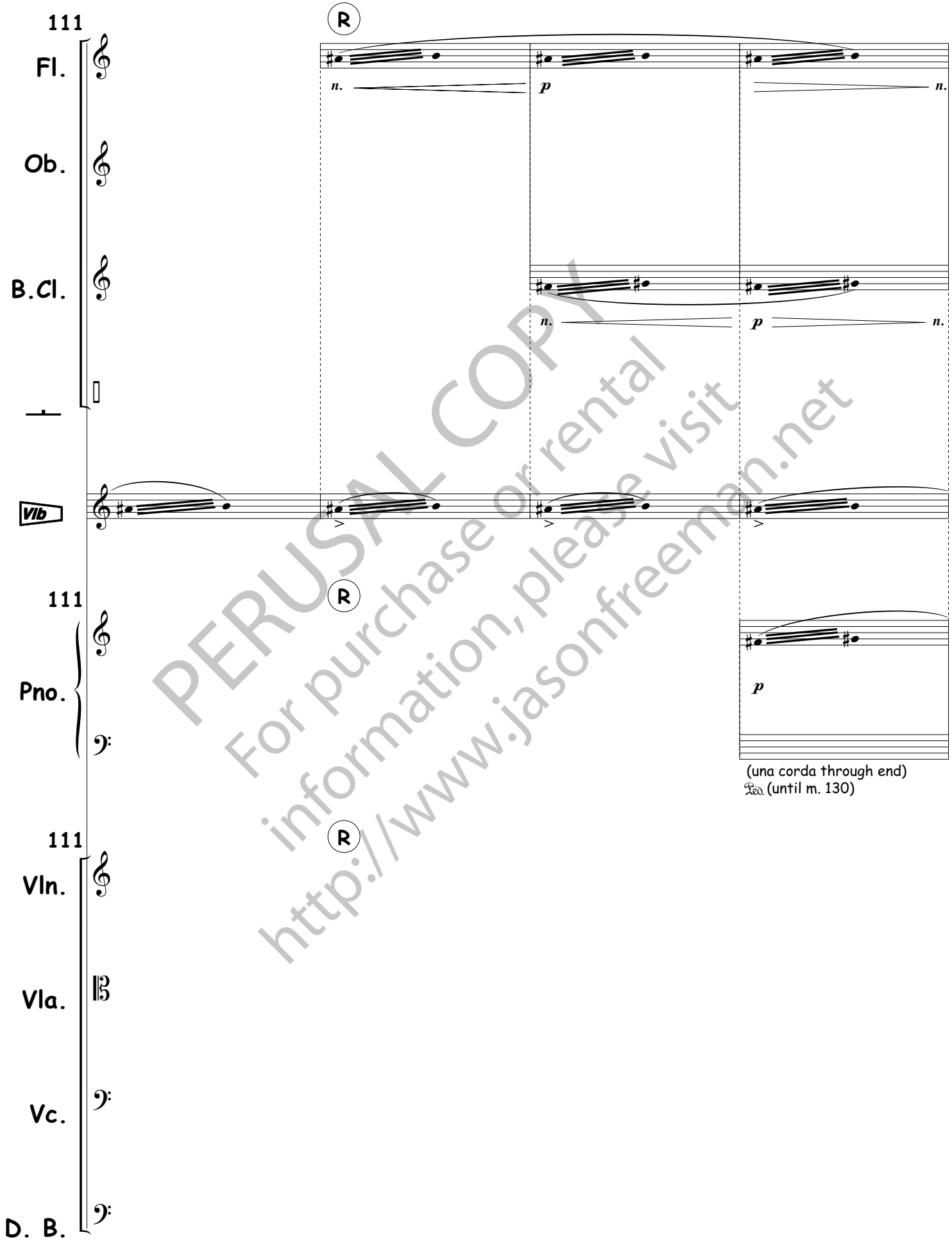

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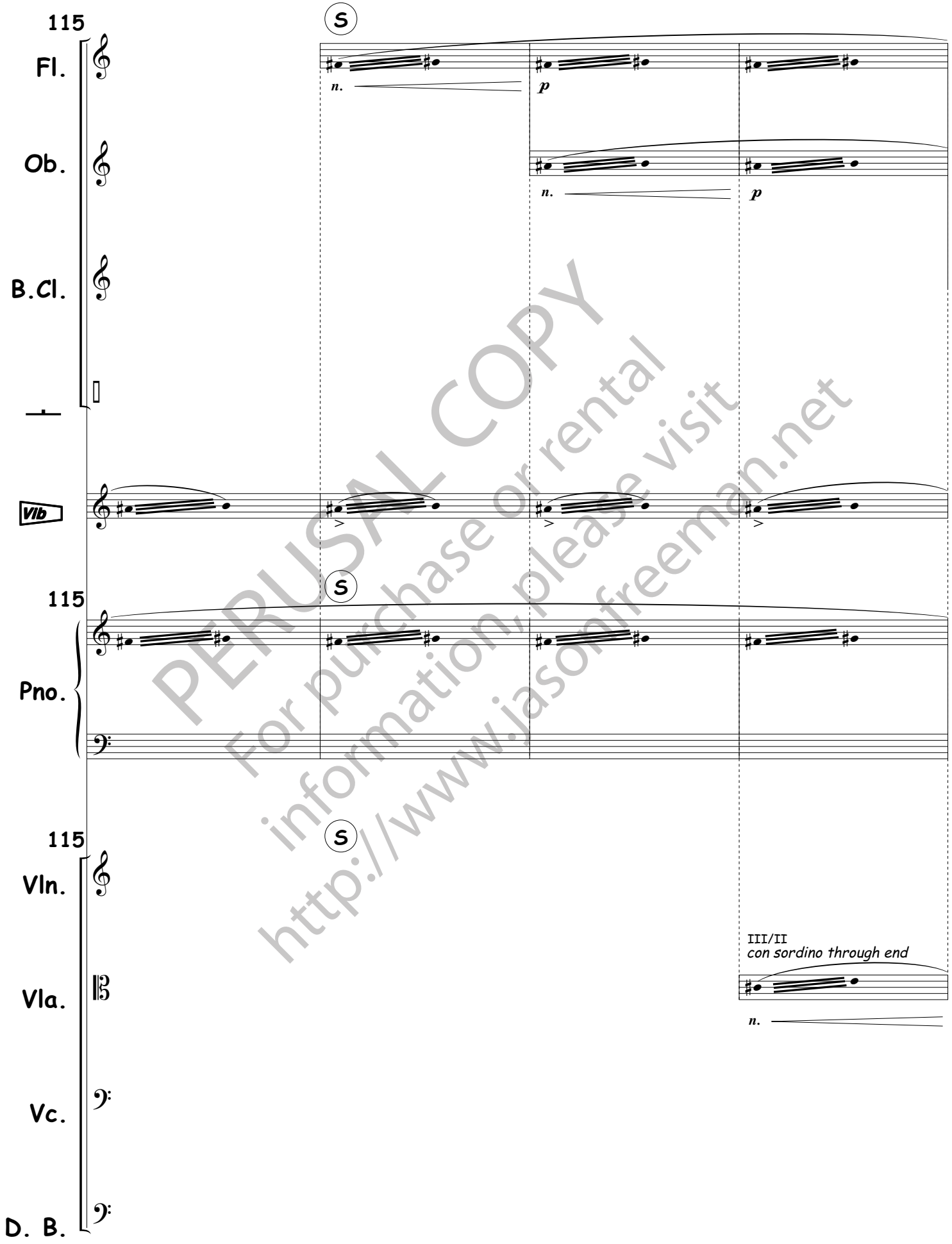

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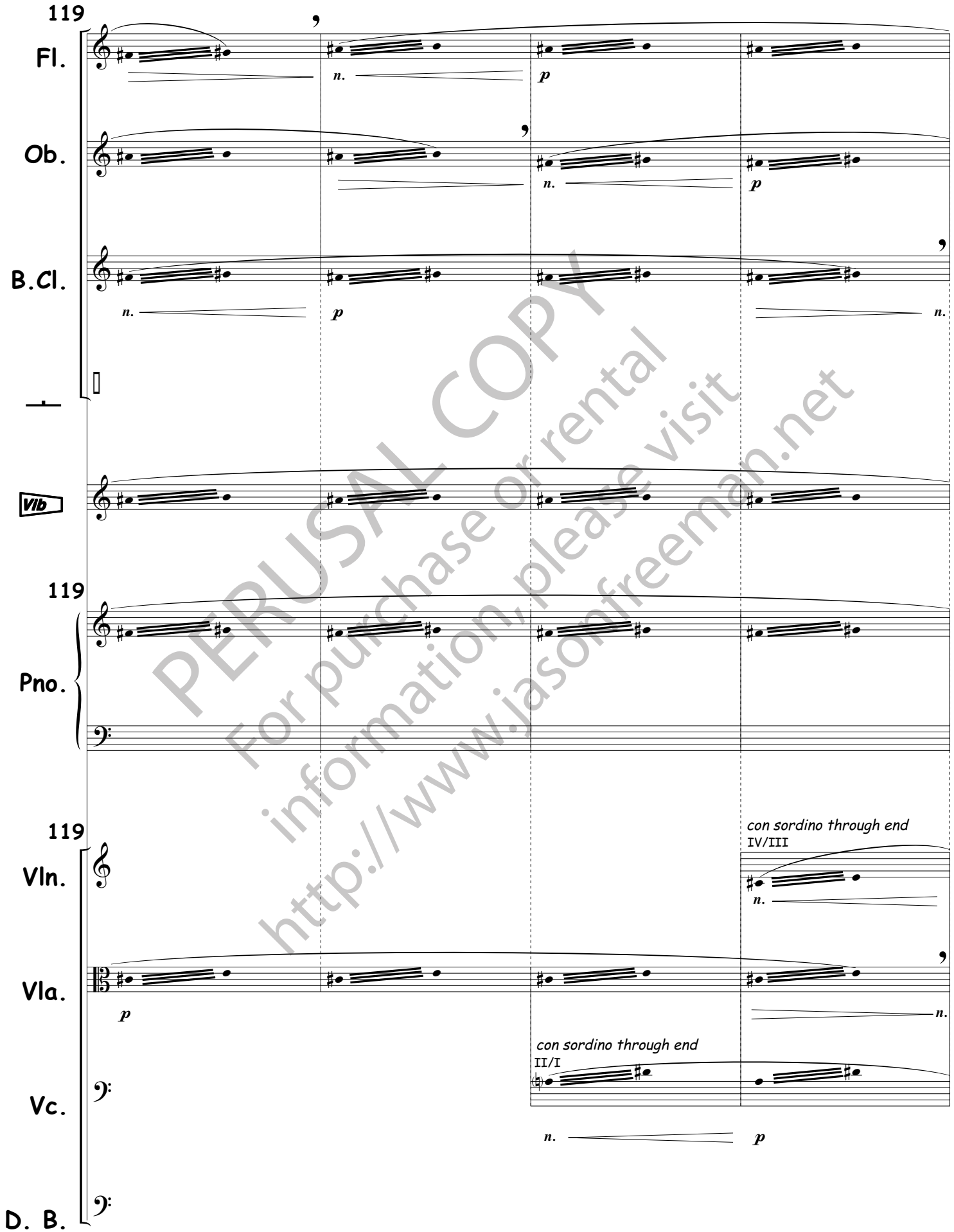

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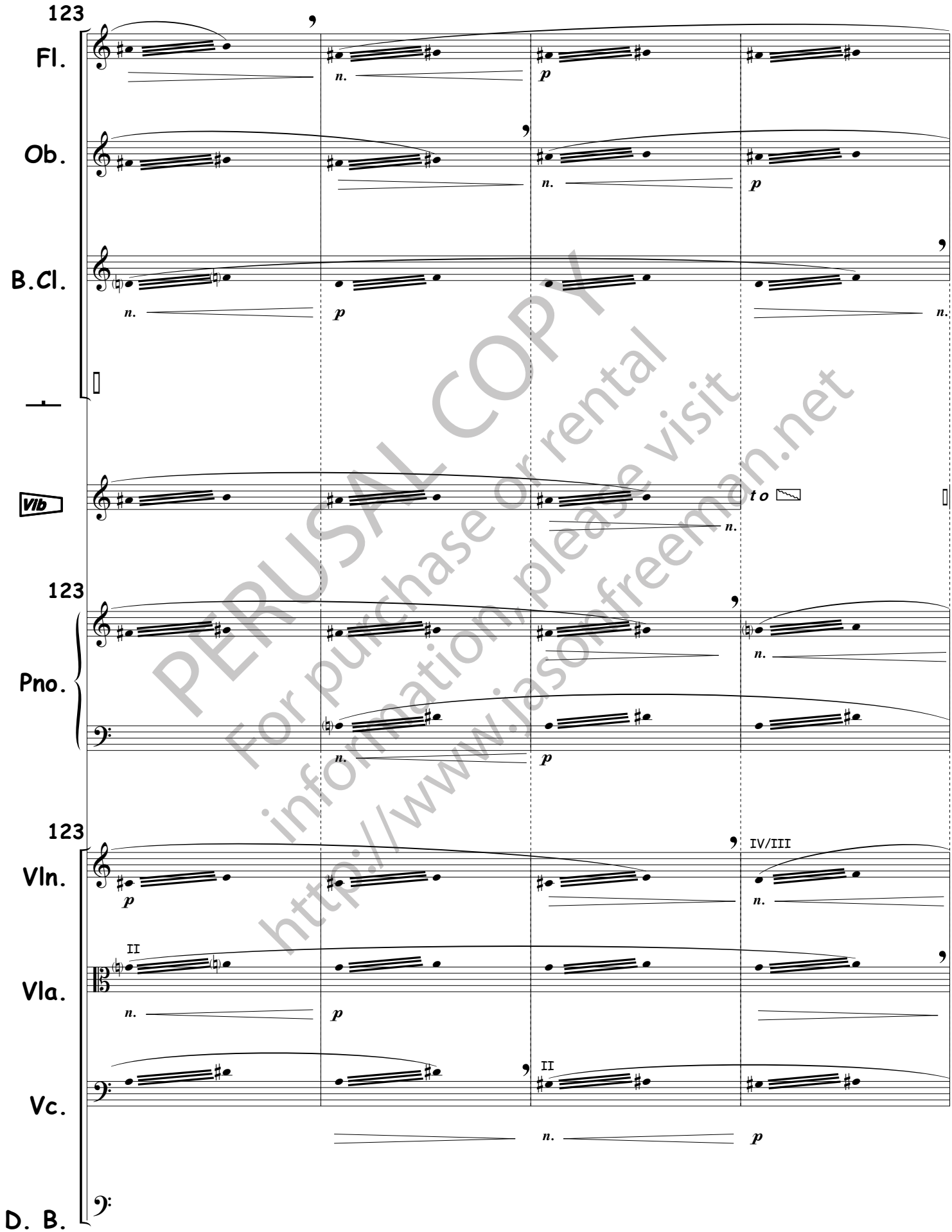

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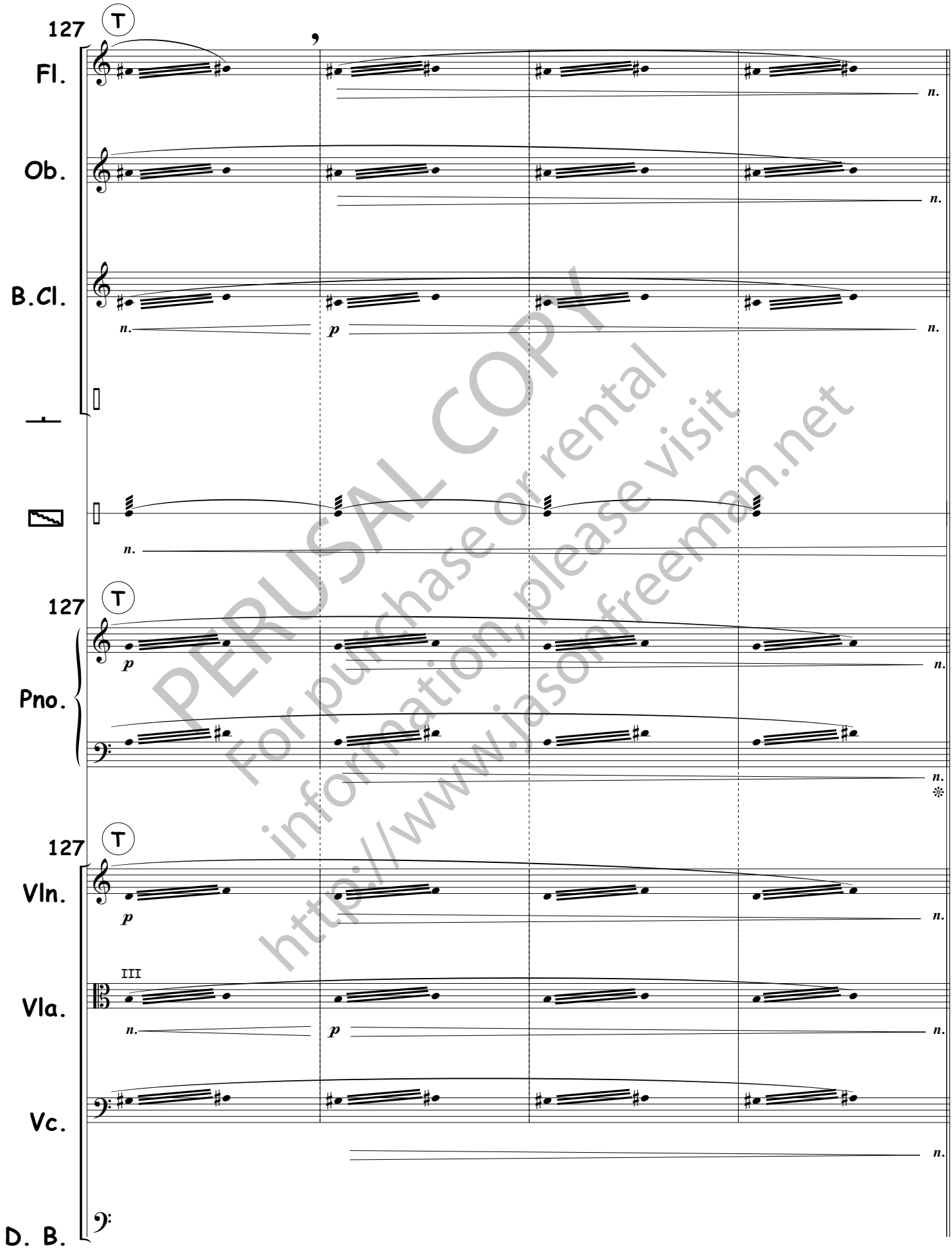

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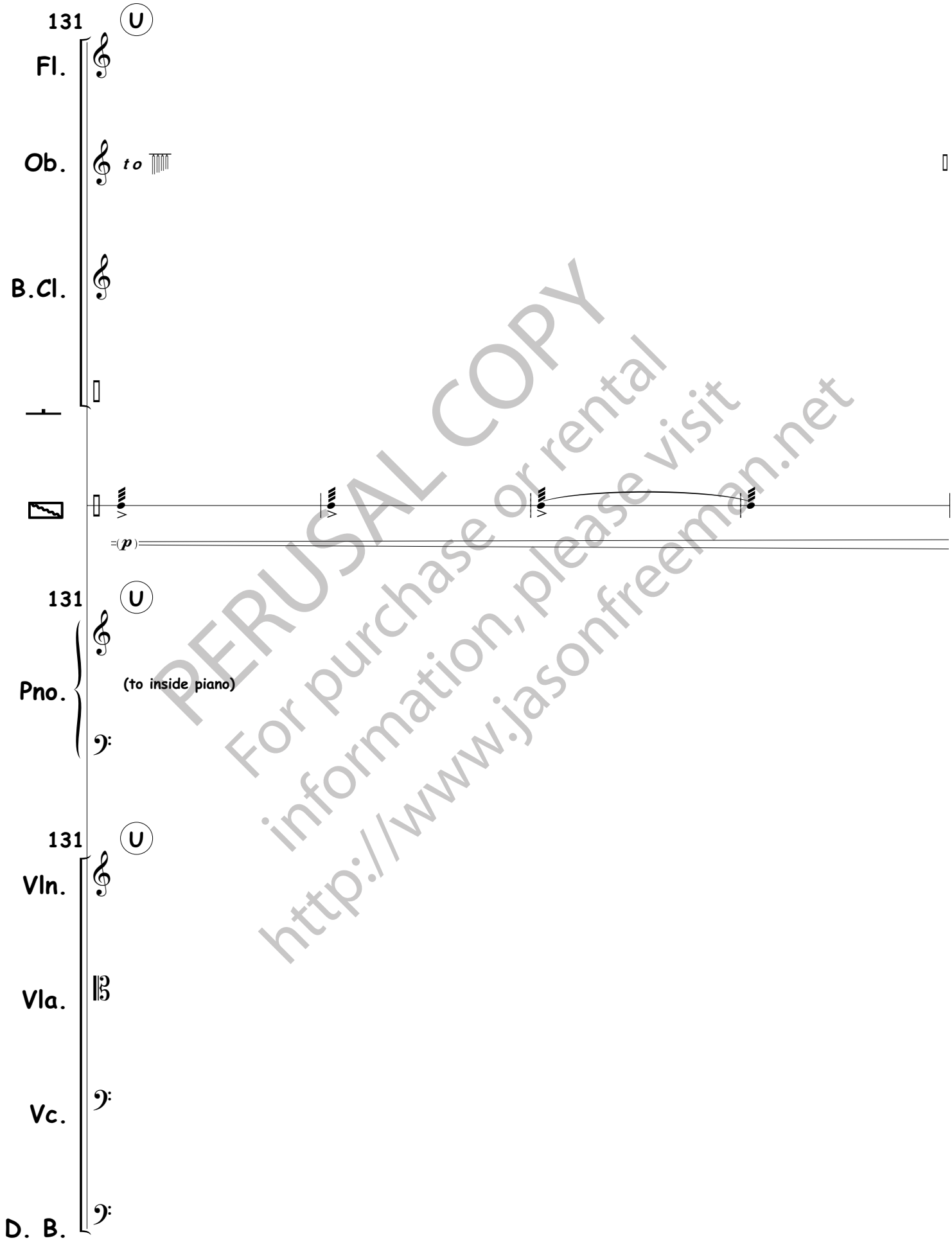

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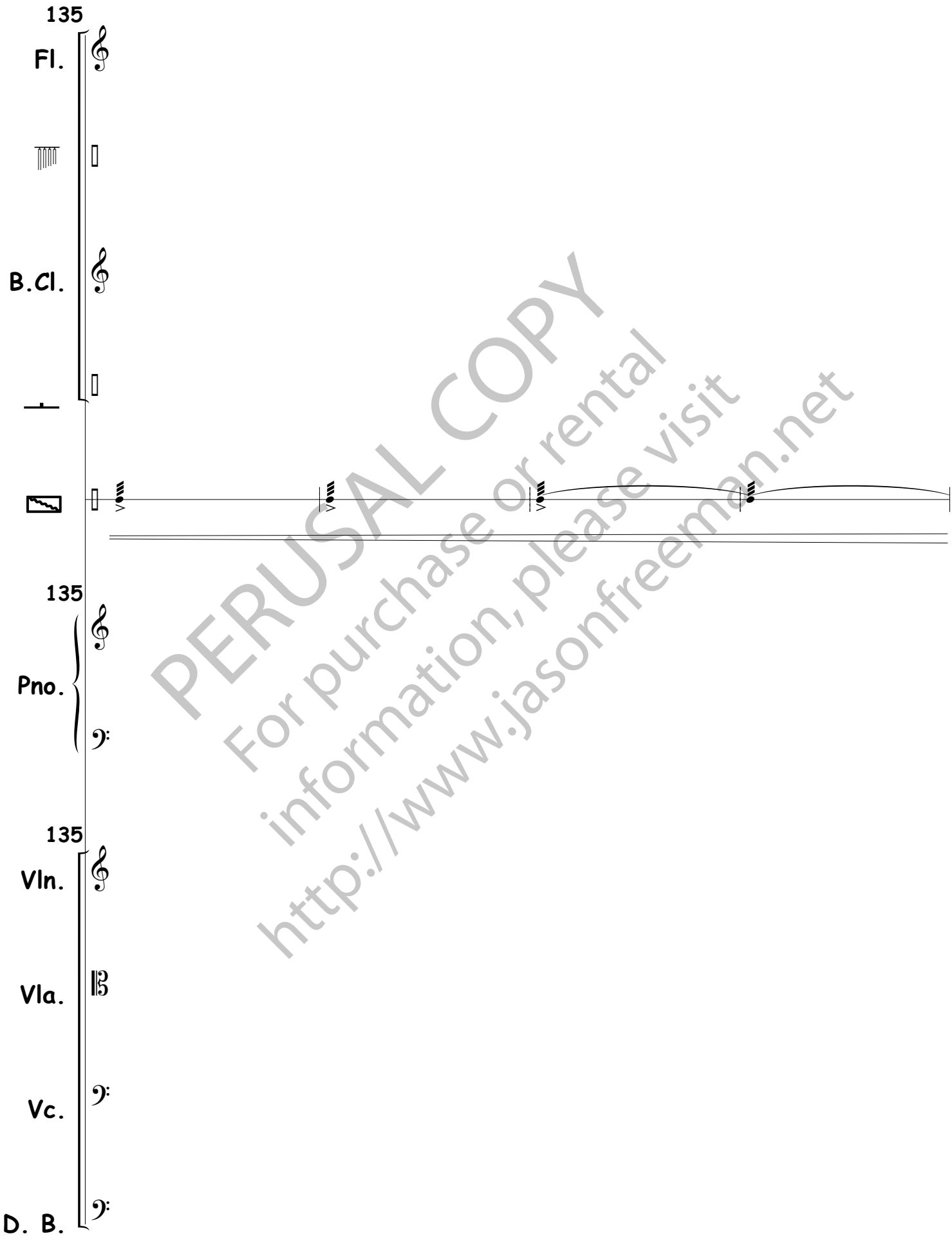

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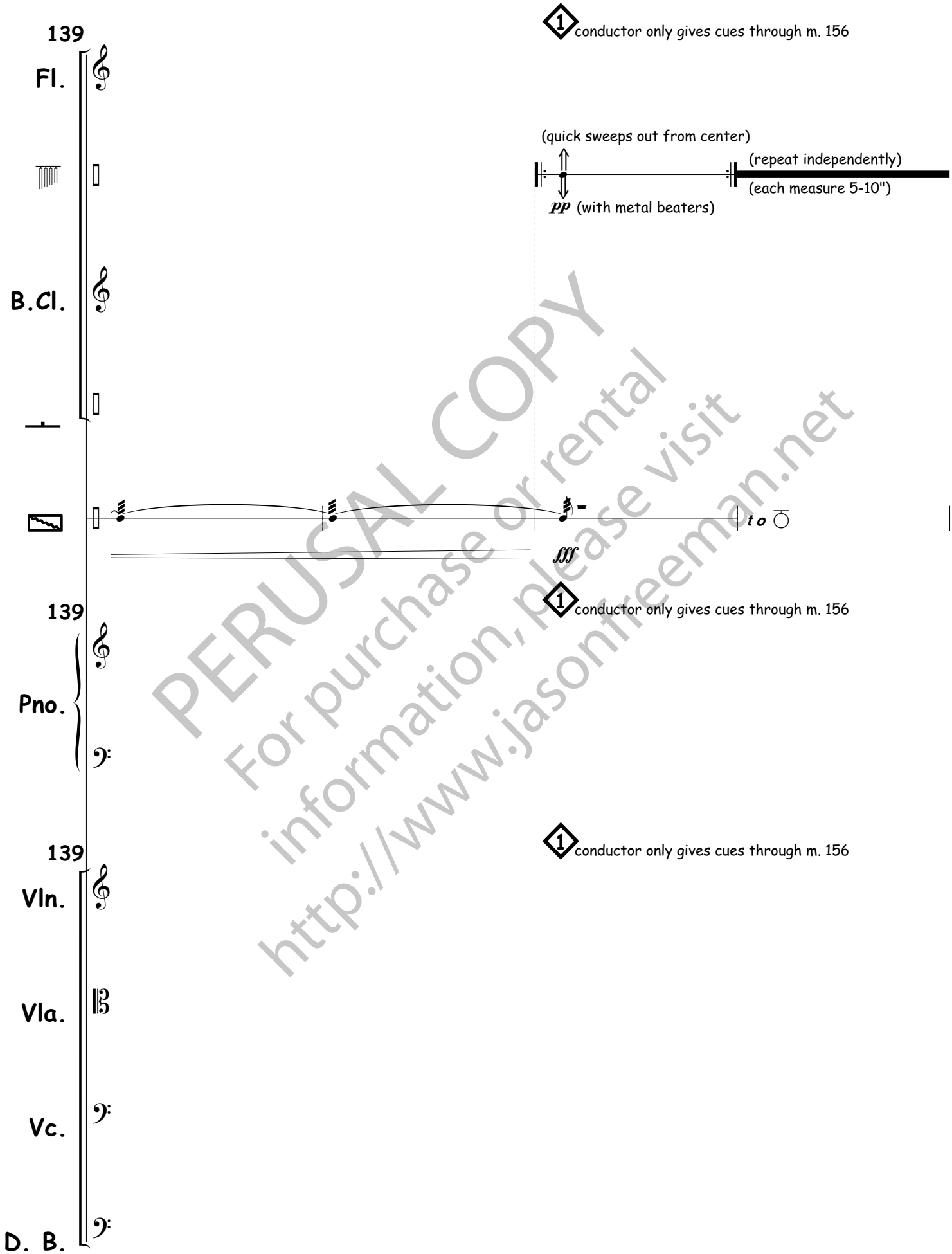

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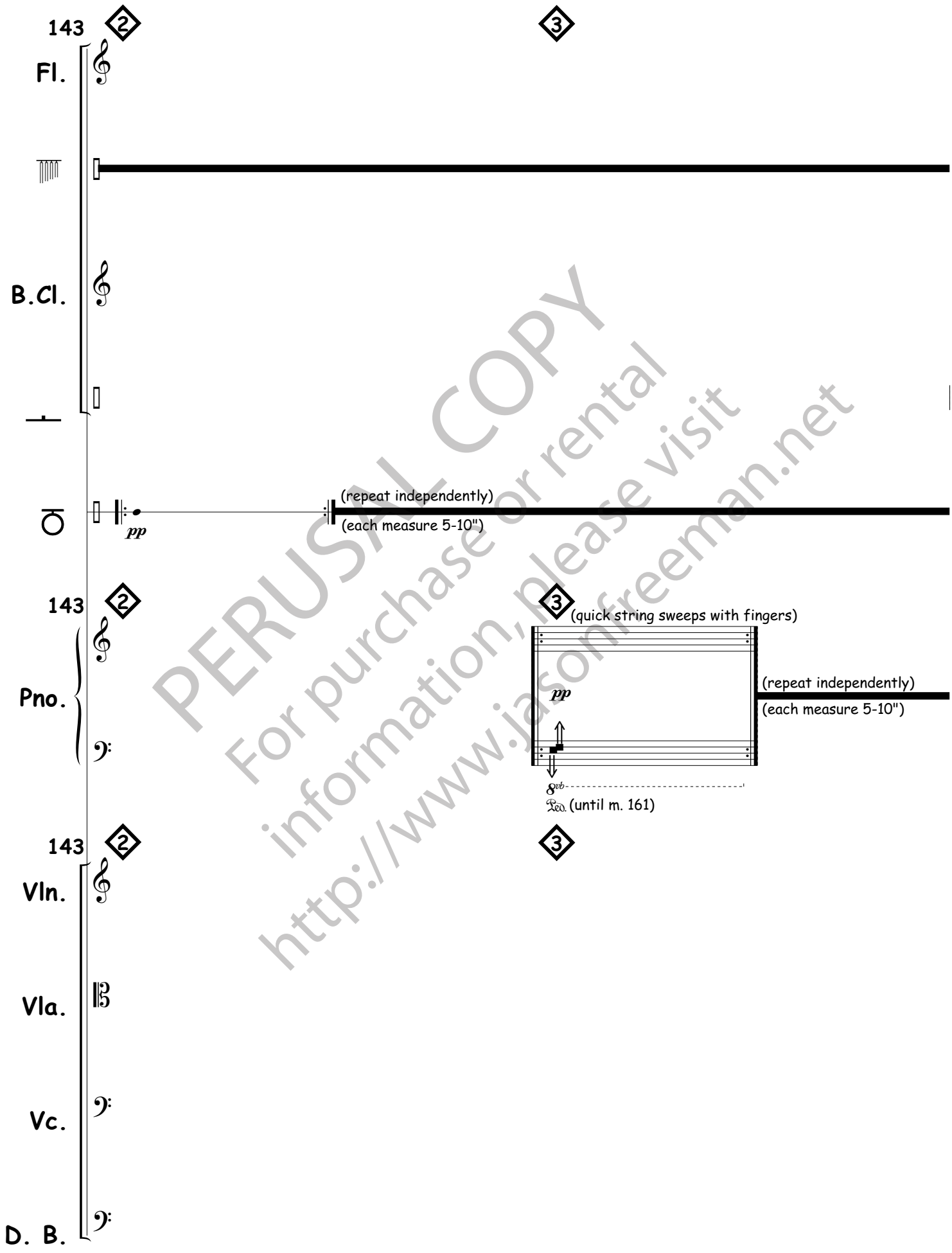

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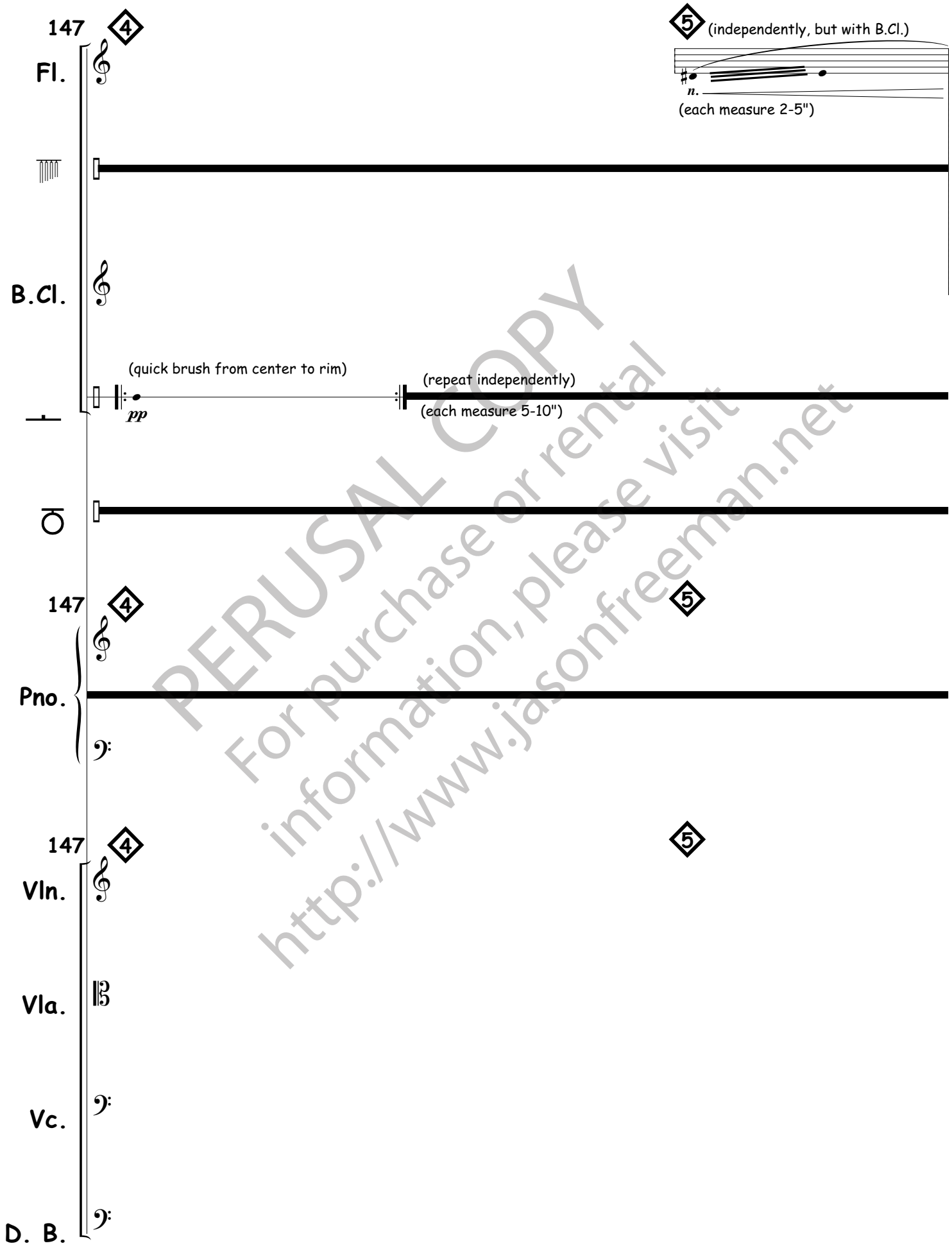

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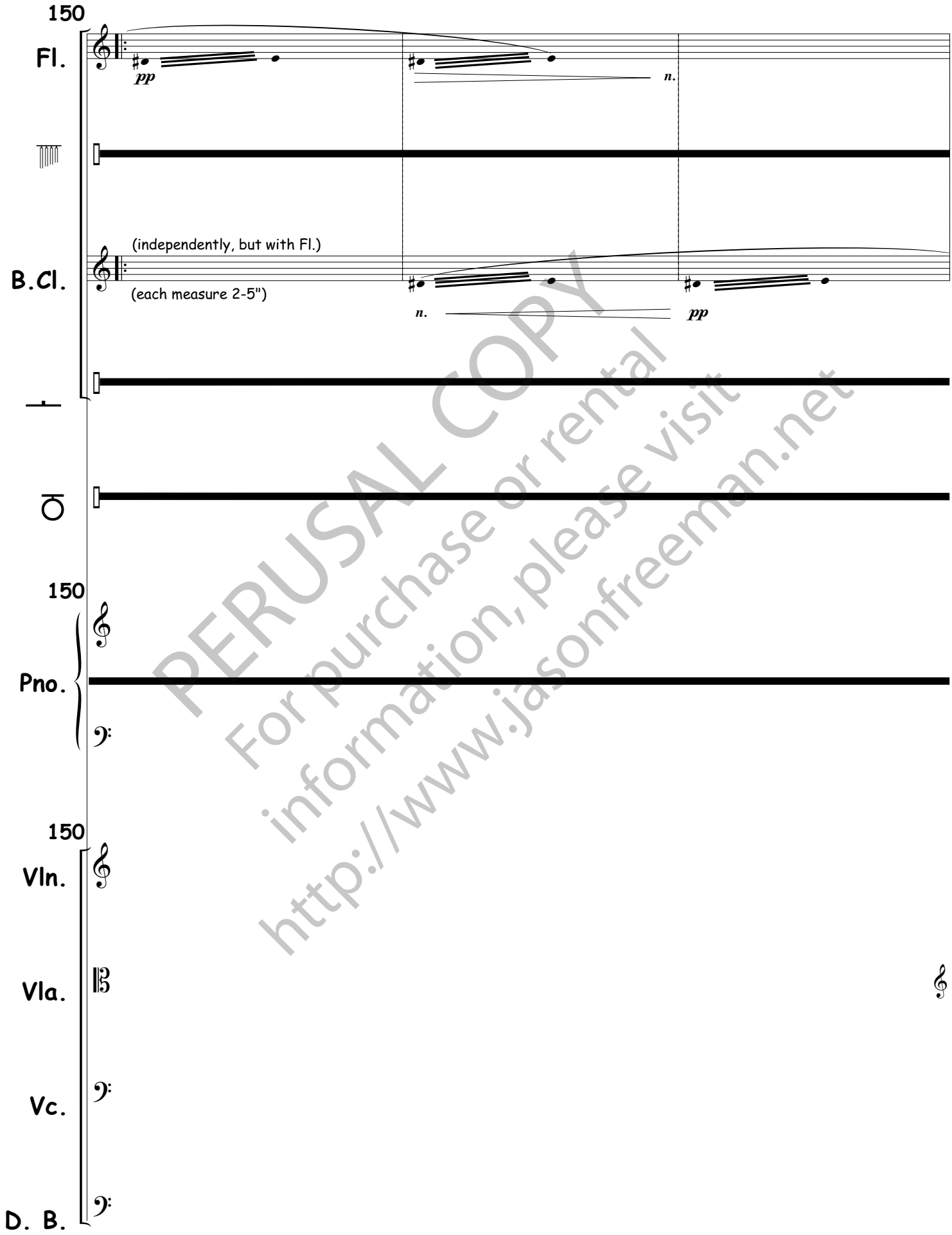

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153

Fl.

(repeat independently, but with B.Cl.)

(regular meter for strings)

(dynamics indicate changes to high points of crescendos)

p

B.Cl.

(repeat independently, but with Fl.)

(dynamics indicate changes to high points of crescendos)

p

153

Pno.

(regular meter for strings)

153

Vln.

Vla.

Vc.

D. B.

(regular meter for strings)

Lyrical ♩=52

8va

p (con sordino through end)
(follow conductor)

p (con sordino through end)
(follow conductor)

p (con sordino through end)
(follow conductor)

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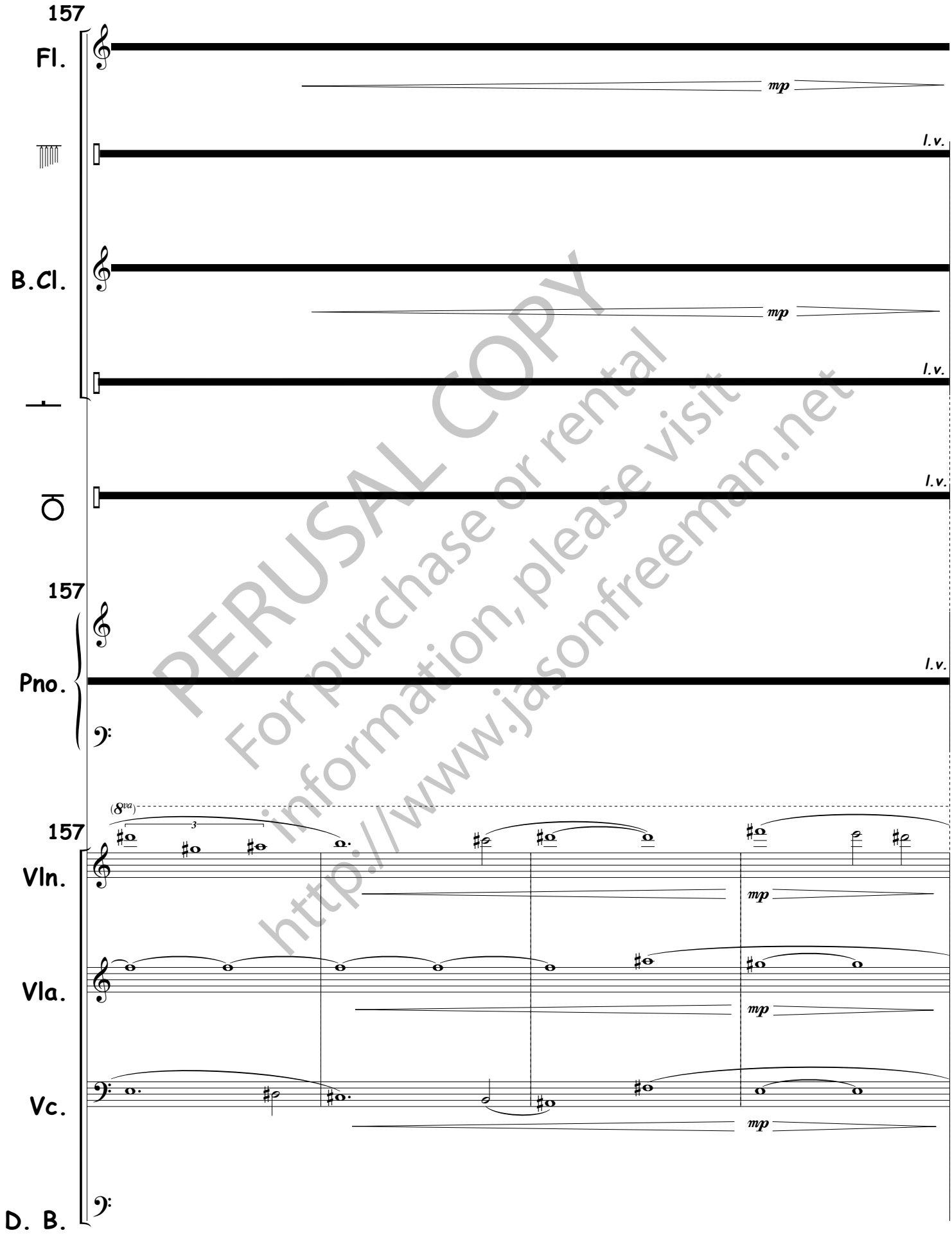

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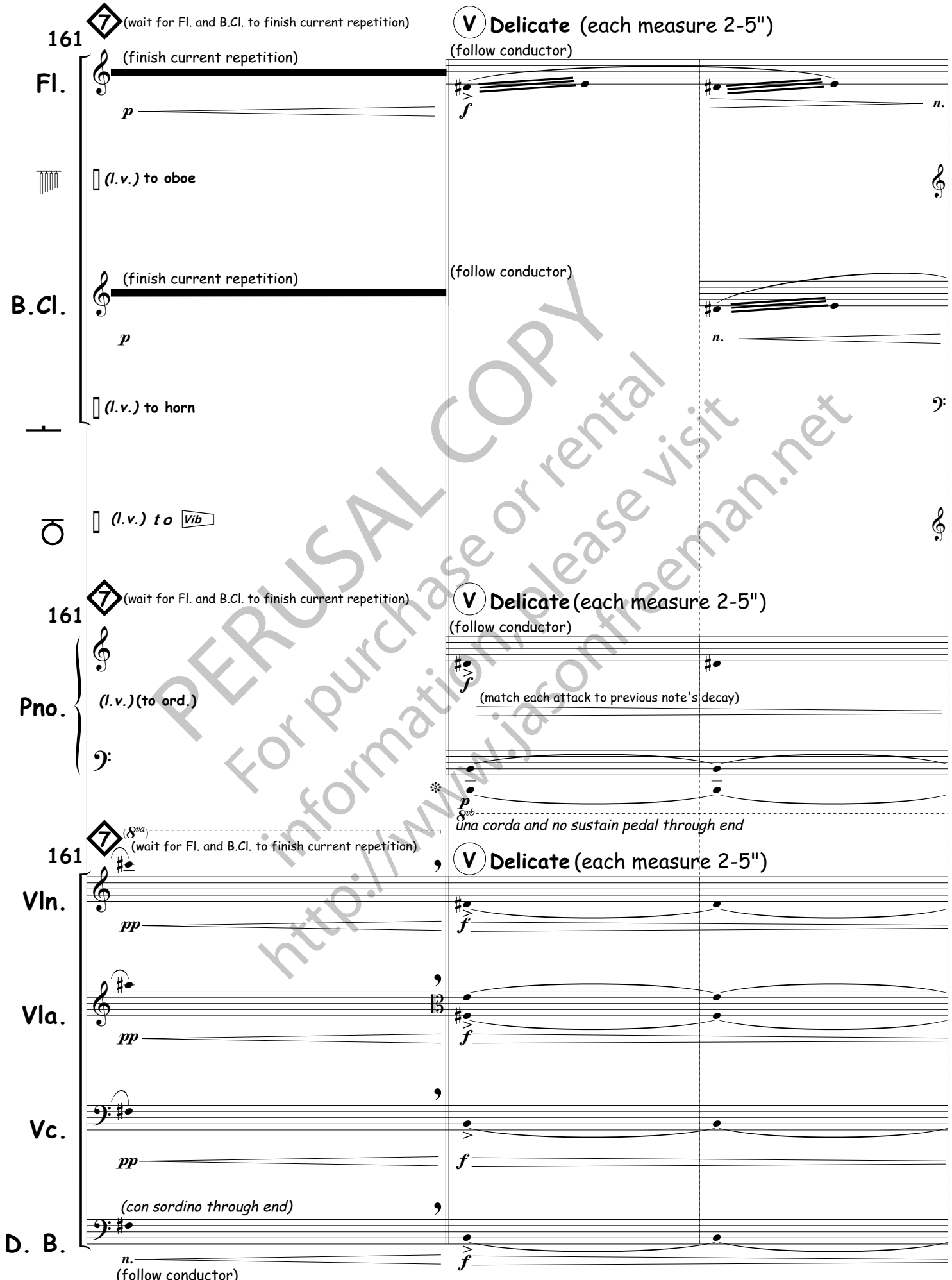

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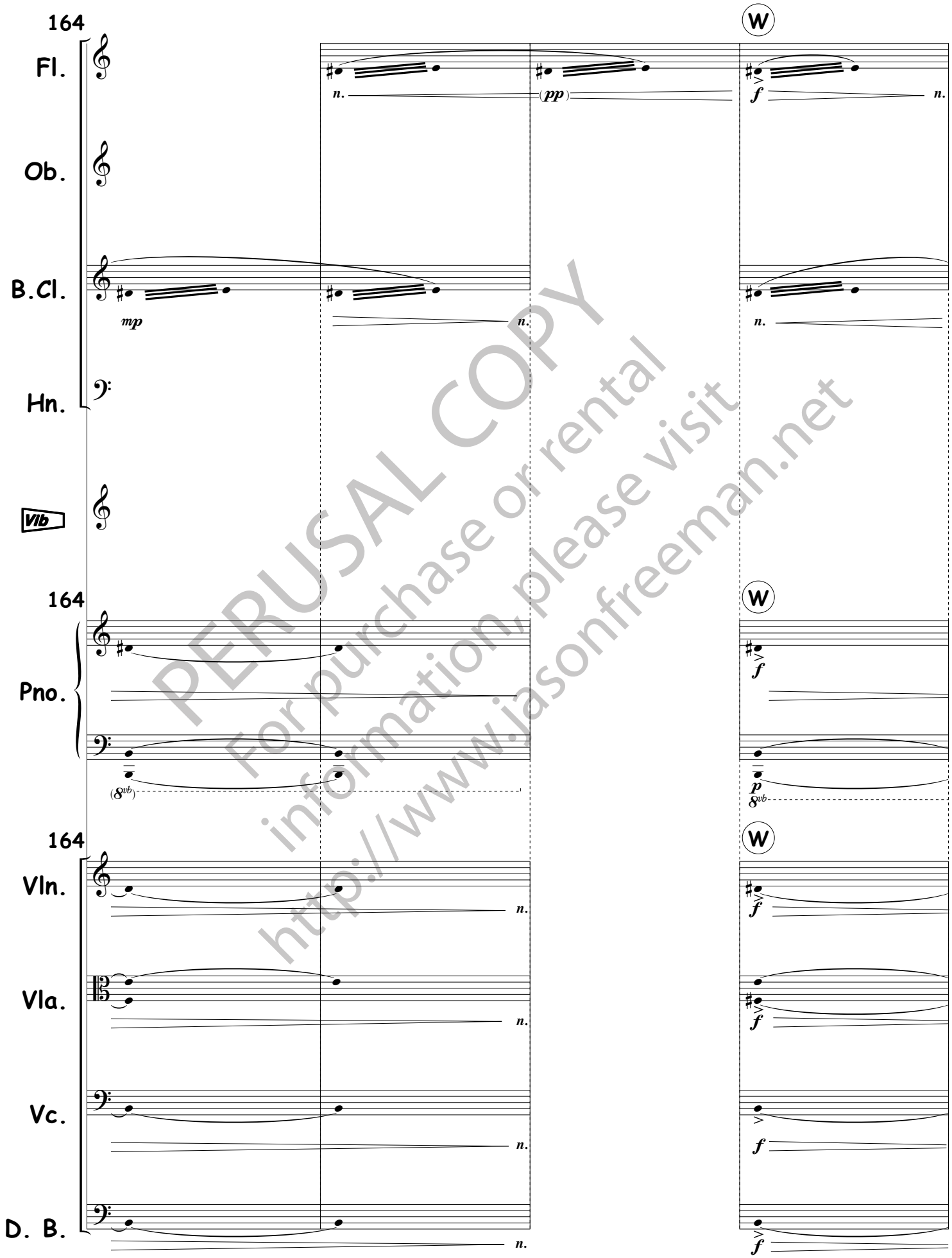

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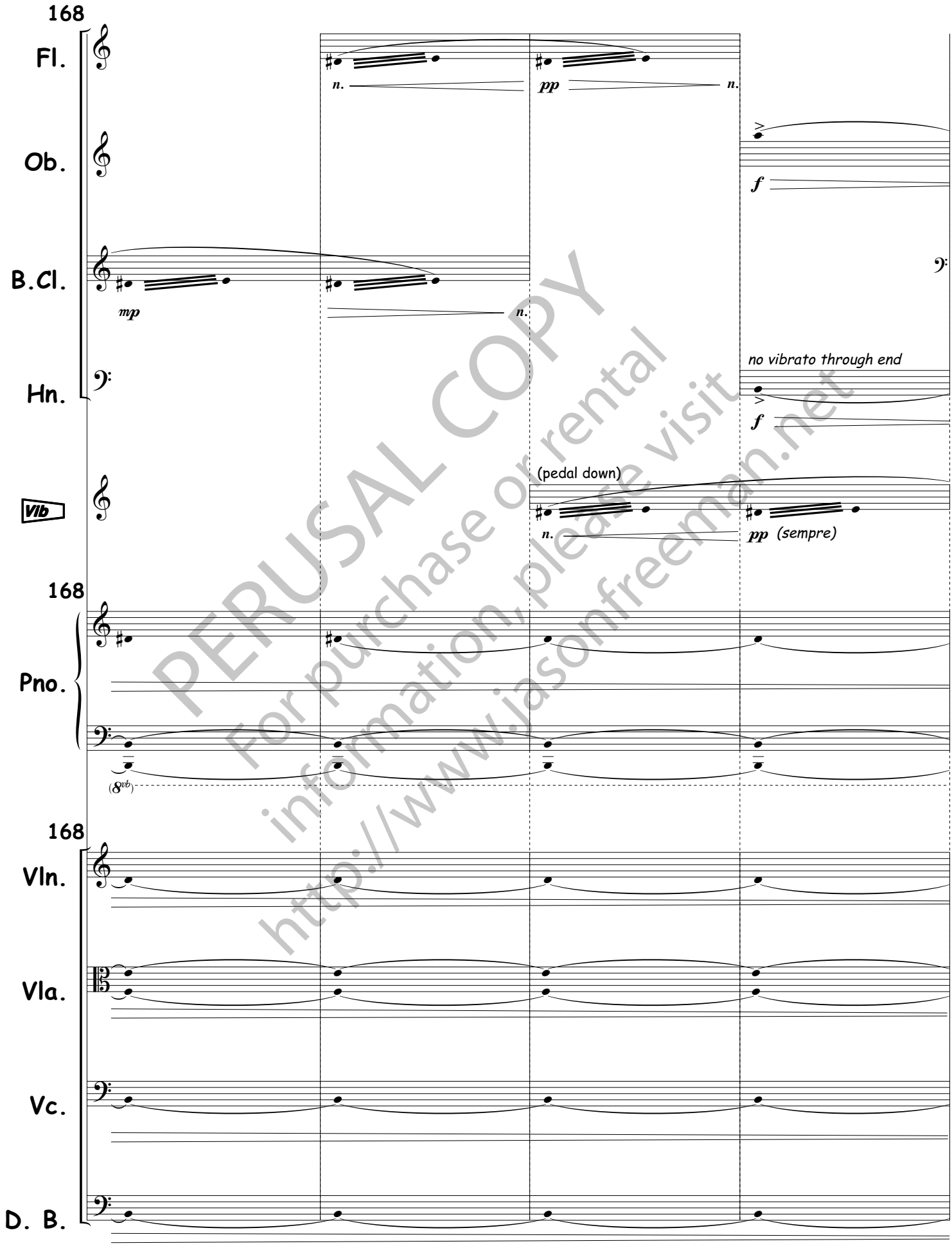

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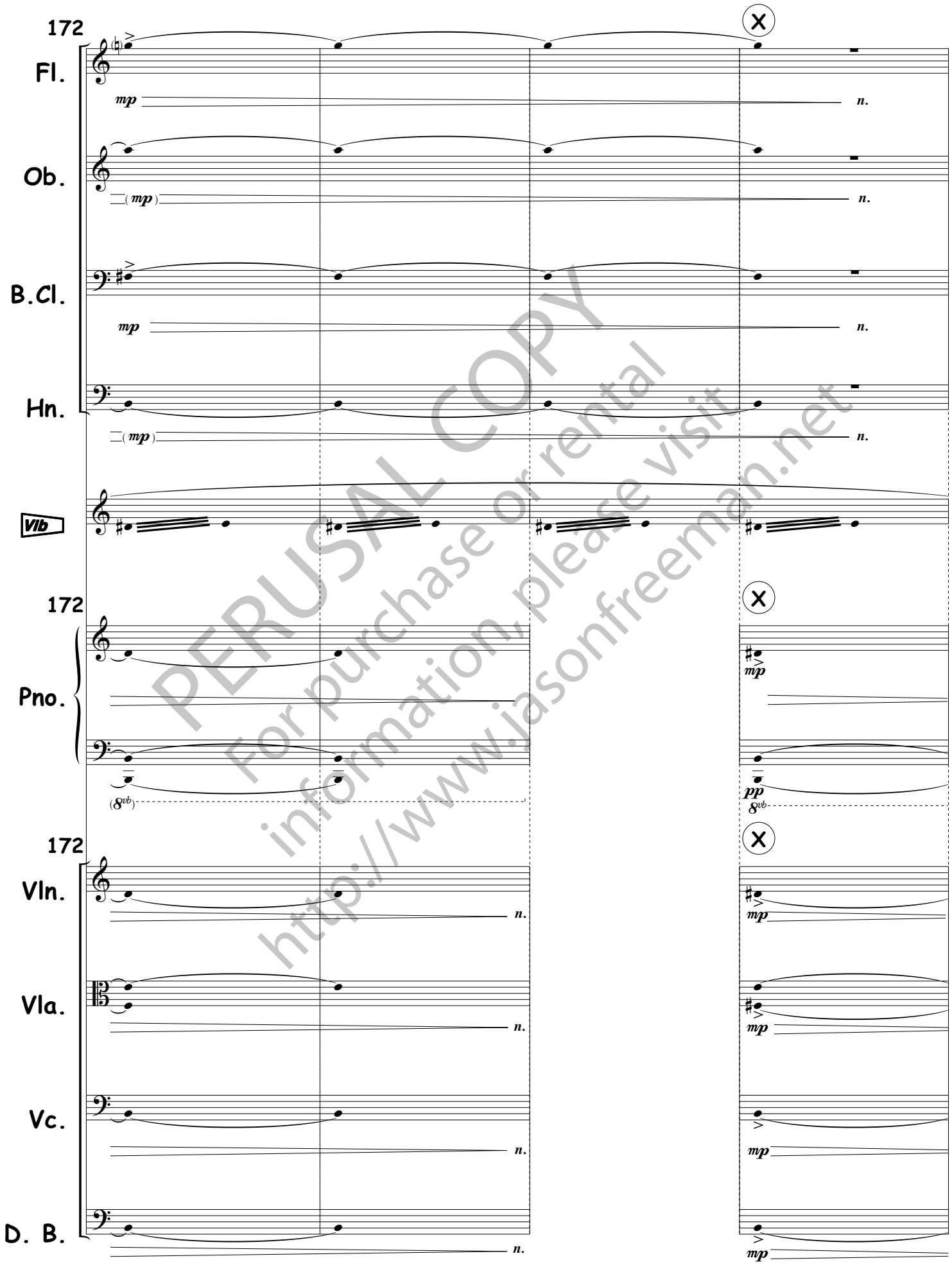

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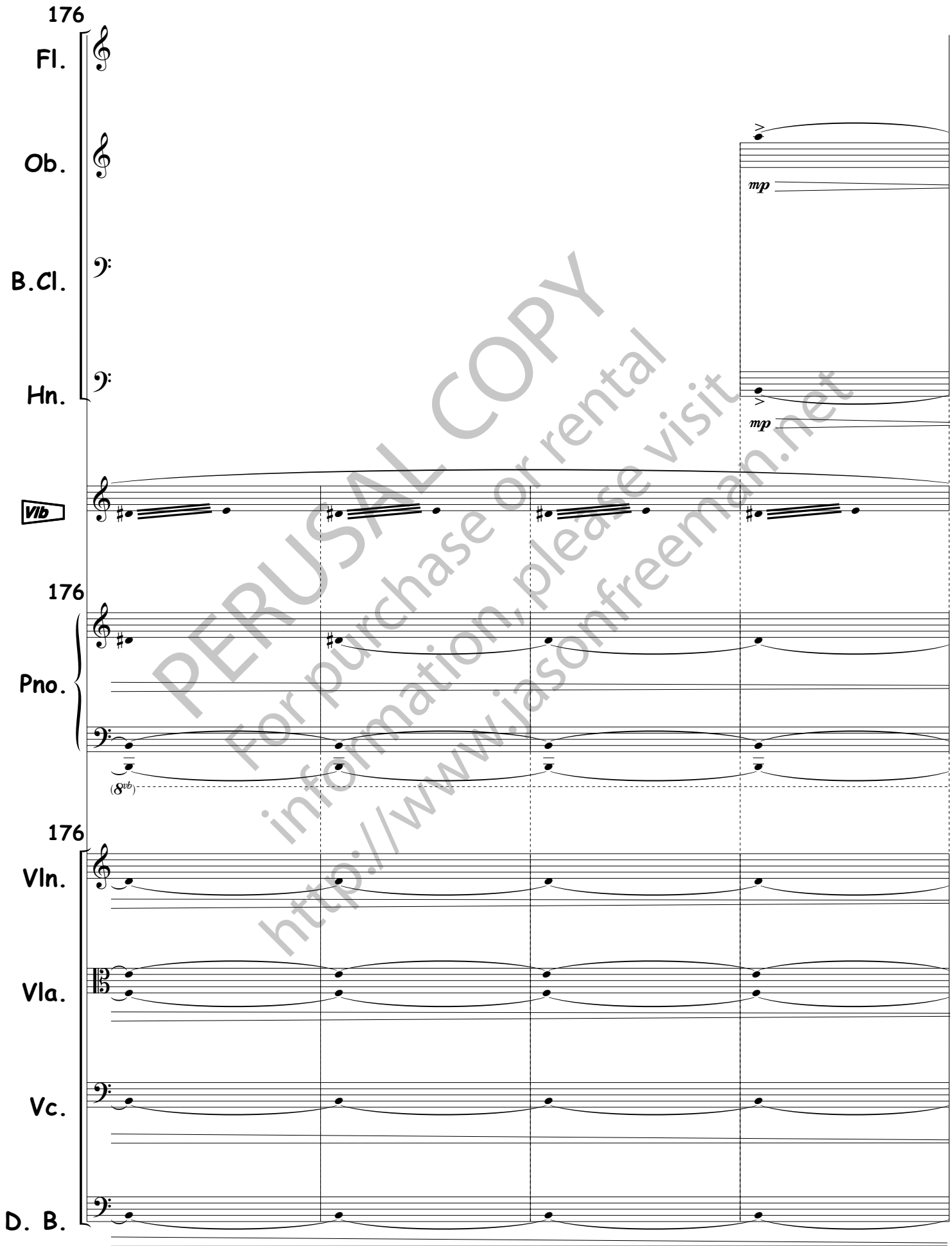

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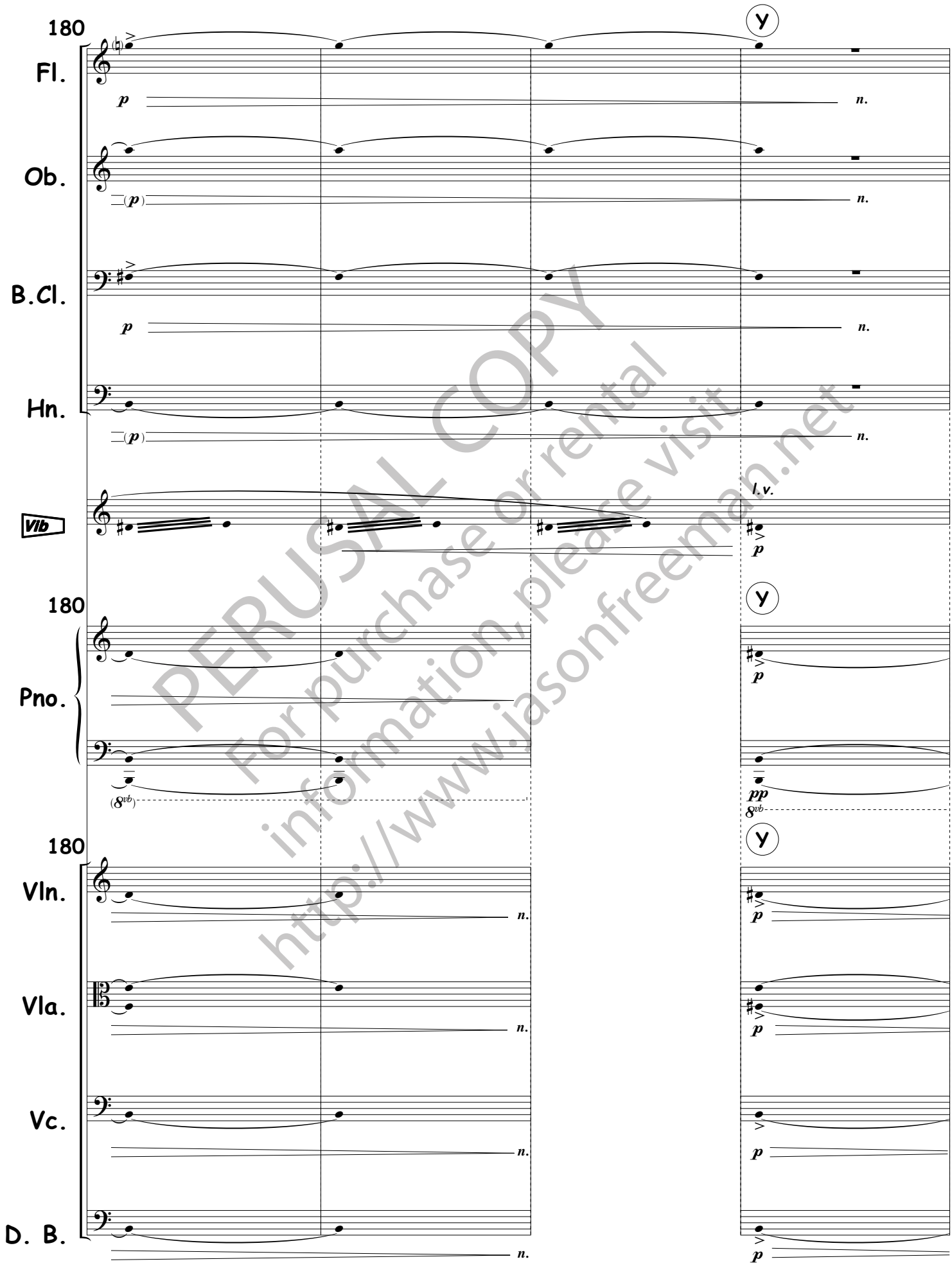

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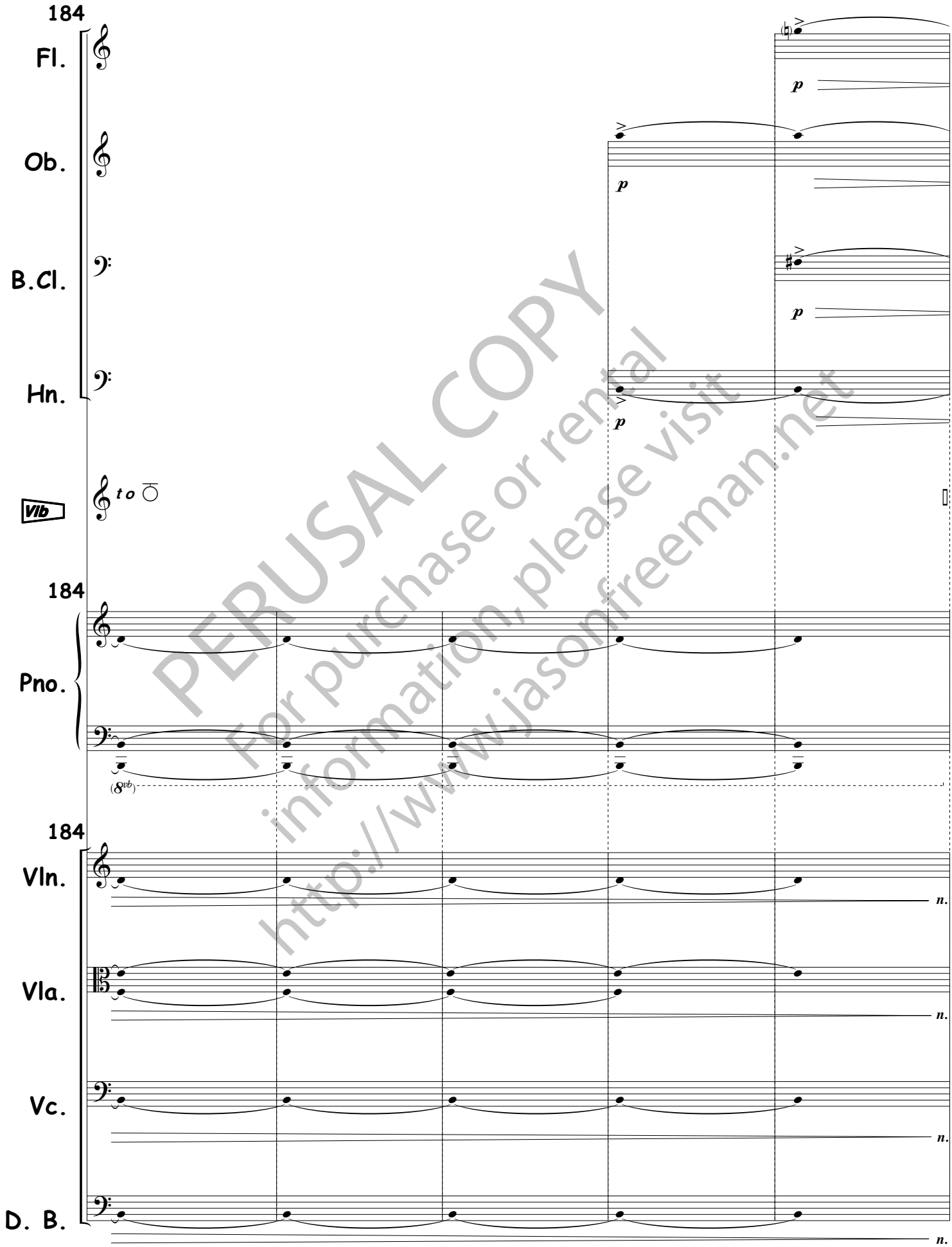

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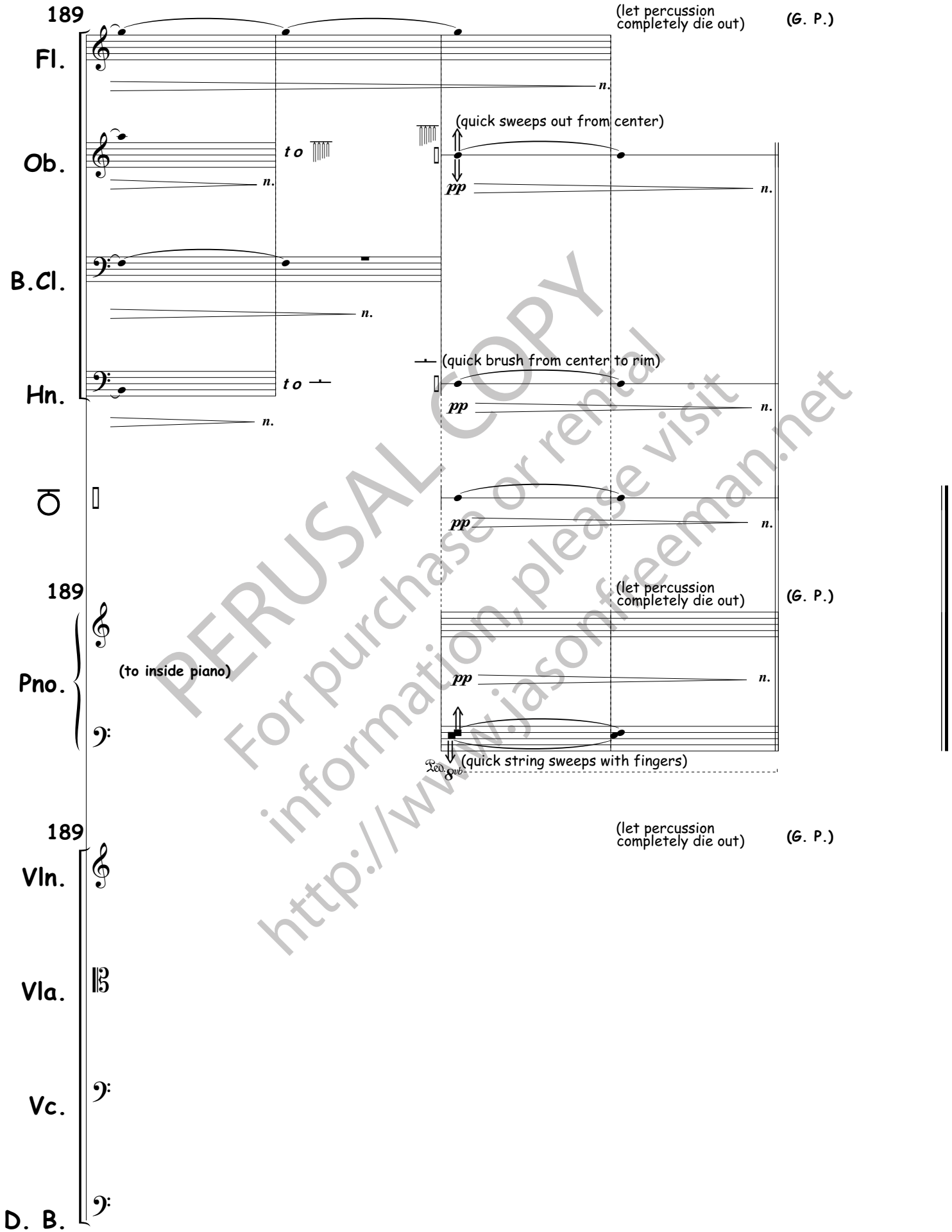

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