Jeffrey Ryan

Triple Witching

for B♭ clarinet, cello and piano

commissioned by CBC Radio Music

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Performance notes

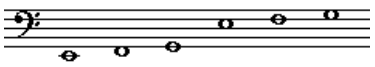
1. Total performance time ca. 10'. In the piano part, the cued clarinet and cello lines are written as *sounding*. (The clarinet *part* is, of course, transposed as usual for B^{b} clarinet.)

2. Specific notations: note ends with a breath accent for clarinet; no bow change for cello

   quarter-tone flat; three-quarter-tone flat

    give note a slight rhythmic and dynamic stress

3. The piano must be prepared by taping down the following keys:

   During the course of the piece, these keys are released at the points indicated in the score, so care should be taken when preparing the piano to ensure that the tape will hold securely but can still be removed easily and silently when required.

   As a result of this preparation, various harmonics will be activated sympathetically and will ring through. This "afterimage" of sound is an integral part of the piece, as are the various levels of accumulated blurred sound. Pedal markings should thus be carefully observed and executed.

4. All glissandi and portamenti should begin immediately after the first pitch is sounded; glissandi of duration greater than a quarter note are notated with an opening eighth note along with the required duration.

5. In the opening section, both the cellist and pianist double their melodic line with singing. Ideally, an easy, unforced, and somewhat ethereal vocal sound is desired. The vocal sound should not predominate, but should mix into the overall colour. The vocal line may be transposed (in its entirety) by an octave as appropriate for the performers.

6. The three main ideas of the piece have distinct characters. The slow unison line is haunting and seductive; the fast theme is extroverted and energetic to the point of being frantic or aggressive; and the clarinet/cello duets are searching and introspective. In the long term of the piece, each of these emotional states develops and evolves, while in the short term, the character of the music often shifts quite suddenly. The performers are encouraged to "go to the edge" of each state, and to maximize these dramatic contrasts, perhaps even giving each state a "physical" character by manner of playing.

Programme note for **Triple Witching**

"Scale of dragon, tooth of wolf …"

The allusion to the three witches in Macbeth aside, the title "triple witching" comes from the world of the stock market. Triple Witching occurs on the four Fridays during the year when stock options, stock index options and stock index futures simultaneously expire. Traditionally, on those days the stock market is especially volatile, with massive trading as the traders try to maximize their profits before the final bell.

Of course, it's all about profit—the more, the better—which led me to consider the role of money in our everyday lives. Money has a tremendous allure—it can indeed be quite bewitching. Most of us spend the larger part of our days in pursuit of its acquisition. Most of us also never seem to have enough of it, and when we get some, suddenly it's gone. And yet so many financial transactions occur without ever handling any actual money: credit cards (loans, really); electronic transfers (no cheques or stamps required either); stock options (buying the possibility of buying)—the list goes on and on. Money has become a virtual construct.

Triple Witching explores the power of money in our culture. It is scored for, appropriately enough, a trio of clarinet, cello and piano. The piece is based on three different musical ideas which are introduced in order: first, the allure of money is suggested by a haunting unison line; second, a flurry of activity expresses our continuous driving need for money, though what money we do acquire may be quick to disappear; and third, more reflective and introspective music laments the struggles that money, or the lack thereof, can bring. Each of these ideas is further developed and commented upon as their reappearances cycle through the course of the piece.

Triple Witching was commissioned for the *Amici Chamber Ensemble* by Neil Crory and CBC Radio Music. It received its première performance on April 30, 1999, at the Glenn Gould Studio in Toronto, Ontario, with Joaquin Valdepeñas, clarinet; David Hetherington, cello; and Patricia Parr, piano.

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Triple Witching

for Bb clarinet, cello and piano

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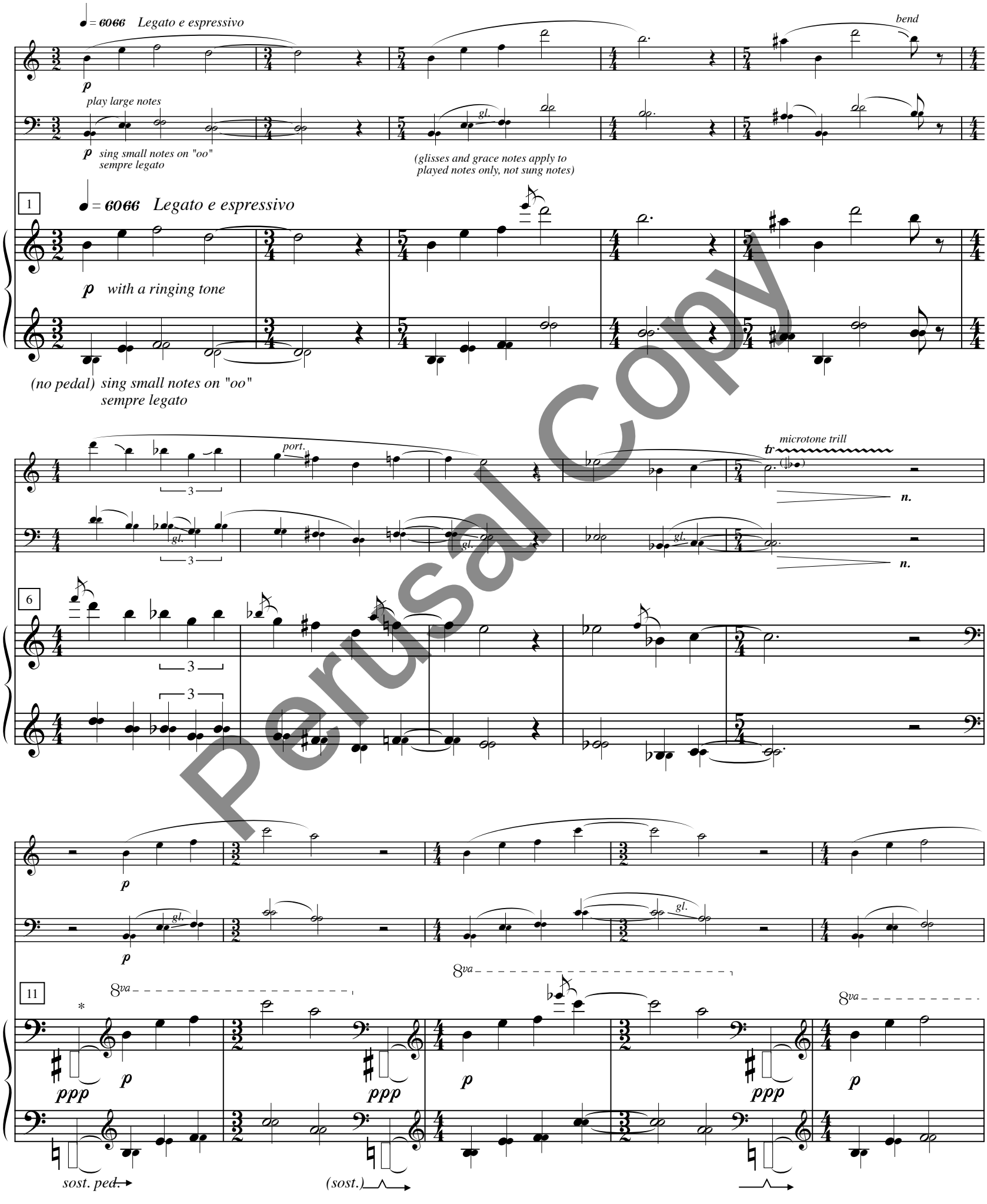

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*play with palms at extreme lower end of keyboard, fingers of both hands pointing left; right hand on black keys, left hand on white; start with hands on keys, then press keys down to sound. Effect is similar to a large tamtam.

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(alternate fingerings)

tr

A ♩ = 138 A burst of activity

port.

n.

ff

gl.

(gliss in voice)

voice senza decresc.

16

(8va)

voice senza decresc.

(sost. off)

allow harmonics to ring

mf

p

(II) (I) sim.

23

rit. to ♩ = 116 poco meno mosso

rit. to ♩ = 84

(I)

(II)

unis.

(each subsequent gliss up is slightly closer to the A)

becomes fast vib. non vib.

29

espr.

f > mf

Ped.

grad. release pedal

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molto rit.

(♩ = 56)

♩ = 138 sub.

port.

ff

(II)

gl.

p

ff

gl.

gl.

34

molto rit.

(♩ = 56)

♩ = 138 sub.

f sonore

f

ff

port.

ff

gl.

gl.

ff

39

ff sempre

Ped.

Ped.

rit. to - - - - -

B

♩ = 72

espressivo e con rubato

tr

non-tr.

p

3

3

6

p

n.

gl.

gl. (𝅗𝅥.)

(highest possible note)

p

n.

sul pont.

repeat pattern

(highest possible note on each string)

pp

n.

43

rit. to - - -

B

♩ = 72

8vb

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gently
gl.
poco rit.
A tempo
(alt.)
tr
non-tr.
mf
p
p seductively
ord.
pp
n.
8va
loco
p seductively

49
pluck string with nail
let each note ring
poco rit.
A tempo
pp
Ped.

tauntingly
gl.
p < mf sfp
3
mf > p
mf > p mf >

54
silently release
these three notes:
grad. release pedal

poco più mosso
rit.
(♩ = 72)
C
♩ = 138 sub.
tr
pp
pizz. leggiero
pizz.
p
(dampen on rest)

59
poco più mosso
rit.
(♩ = 72)
C
♩ = 138 sub.
giocoso
p
mf sub.
8vb
loco
Ped.

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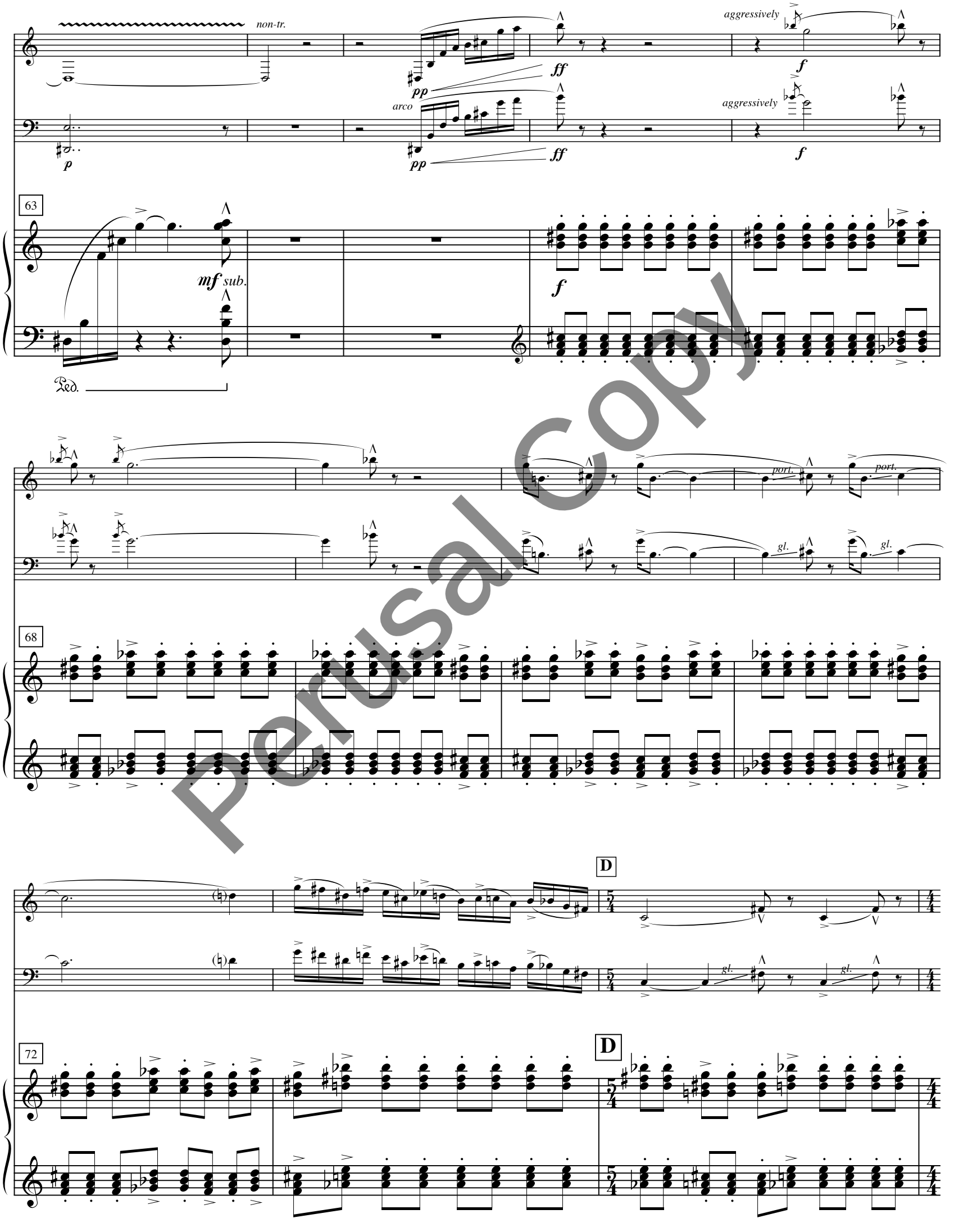

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75

78

81

Feroce

ff

ff

(senza decresc.)

Feroce

ff

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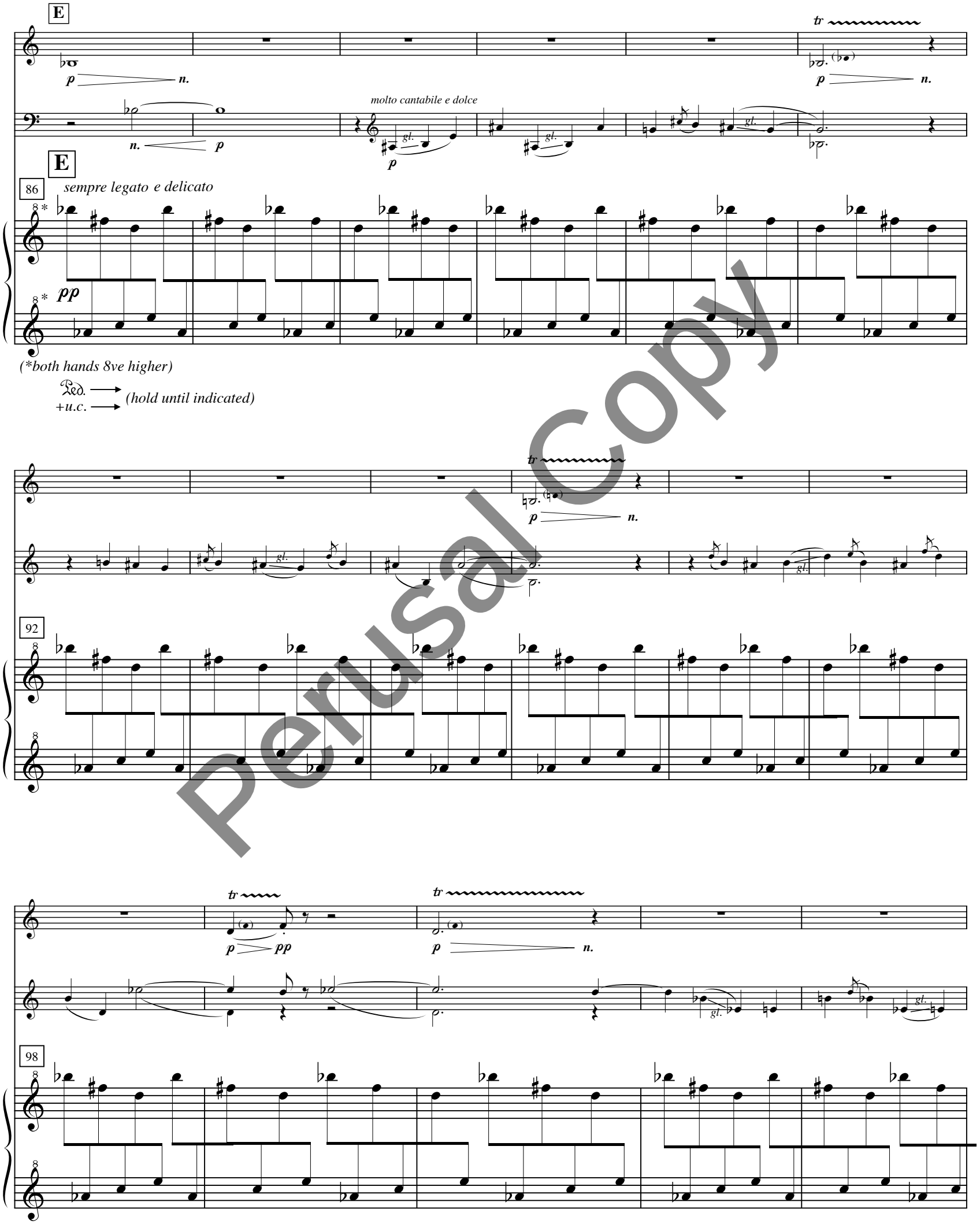

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colourless

n. pp

norm.

pp f

sfp ff

103

(loco)

—u.c.

rit. to gl/port.* (o)

f poss.

gl. (o) **

F

109

= 72

solo (cl/vc tacet)

rit. to

ff p

4 3

* combination port/gliss rising as high as possible; like a wail

** gliss double stop up full length of fingerboard

115

3 5

(pedal up)

pp

fff

sempre

118

very steady and even, almost mechanical

f

with some hesitation …

ppp

(release pedal with last note of pattern)

123

= 60 poco meno mosso

poco rit.

pp

(2) (3) (4)

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A tempo

(♩. = 60) more firmly and resolutely

131

p mp

accel. poco a poco

♩. = 96

accel. e cresc. poco a poco

increasingly angry and intense …

PLAY 8X

PLAY 5X

mf

f

Ped.

(hold pedal down)

♩ = 72 sub.

149

♩. = 144 (or faster - wild!)

ff

fff

G Introspectively

(♩ = 72)

pp

non vib.

sul D

pp sempre

154 unwinding...

G Introspectively

(♩ = 72)

ppp

pp

hold pedal, let fade

+u.c.

repeat pattern

mf

pp

p

tr

gl.

(alternate between fundamental and artificial harmonic)

163

p

–u.c.

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ad lib.

p mf pp

gl. (art. harm. gliss.) gl.

mf mf > pp pp l.v.

168

pp

growing agitated . . . . accel. to

tr mf

171

growing agitated . . . . accel. to

(sim. semitone trills)

p mf ff

Ped.

H = 138 Forcefully

ff

H = 138 Forcefully

175

ff

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mf

arco

mf

180

ff

ff

185

fff

mp

fff

mp

189

J Mechanically, like an automaton

fff

mf sub.

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194

Sinister
fl.
pp *ff*
Mechanically, as before
mp
K *Leggiero*
poco sul pont.
pp *ff*
ord.
mp
p

199 *Sinister*
Mechanically, as before
K *Leggiero*
mf

legato e espressivo
pp

204
pp

Ped. →
+u.c. → *(hold until indicated)*

Perusal Copy

(alt.)

p

p

n.

210

gl.

(alt.)

gl.

(alt.)

gl.

215

p

f

L

220

L

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accel. poco a poco to

(alt.)

tr

pp

f

225

accel. poco a poco to

cresc. poco a poco

(accumulated piano sound will build to a roar)

(♩ = 208)

M ♩ = 104 Driving

mf

mf

f

f

f

230

(♩ = 208)

M ♩ = 104 Driving

ff

f

—u.c.

f

sfp

f

f

5

5

sfp

f

sfp

f

5

sfp

f

234

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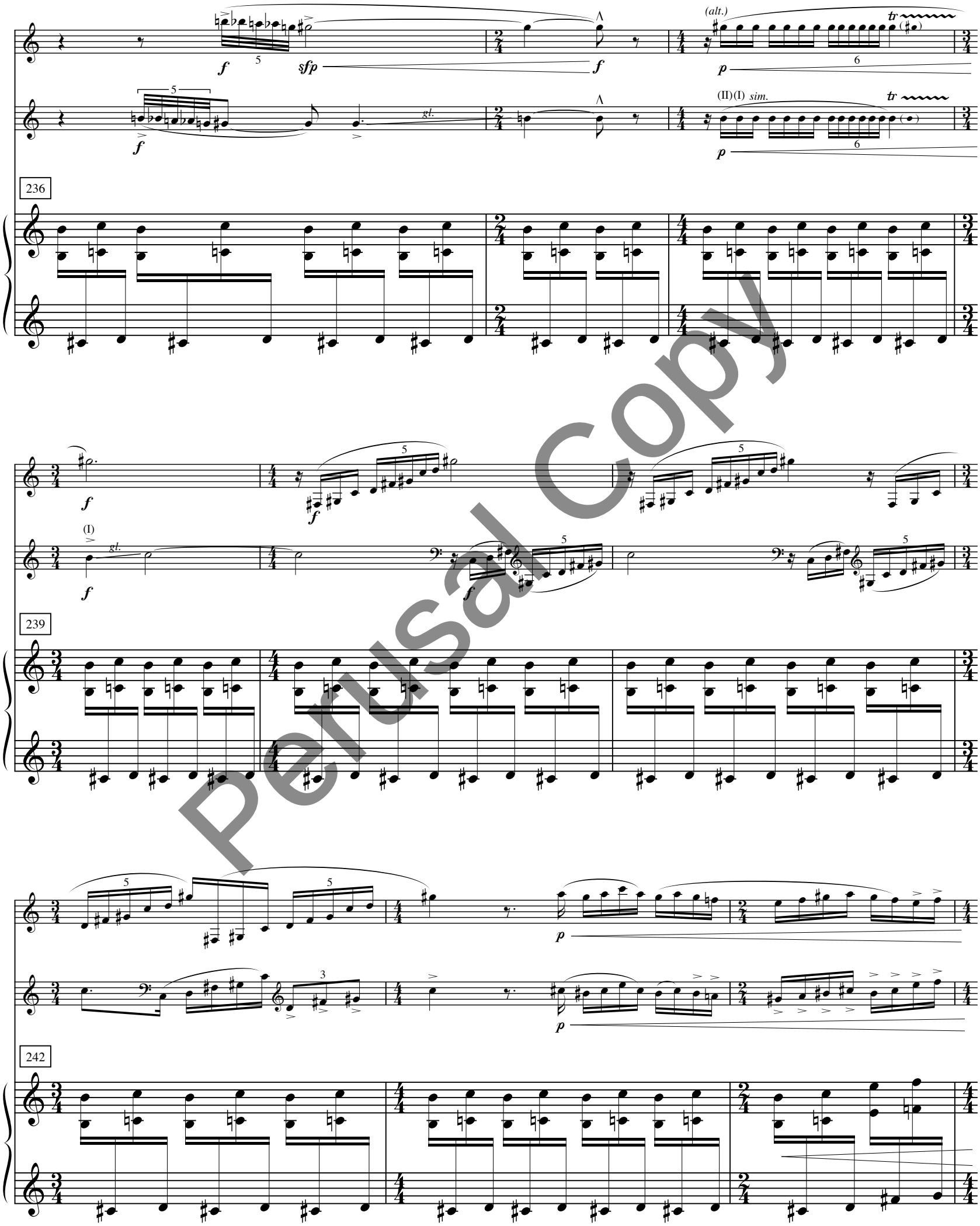

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wailing and anguished

wailing and anguished

N = 156 Explosive

245

N = 156 Explosive

250

O = 72 espressivo e con rubato

solo

257

O = 72 espressivo e con rubato

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♩ = 60 *poco meno mosso*

gl. gl.

263

♩ = 60 *poco meno mosso*

after harmonics fade,
release remaining three keys:

P

accel.to ♩ = 72

n.

a piacere

gl.

pp **f**

decresc. poco a poco

269

P

accel. to ♩ = 72

♩ = 168 *(or fast as possible)*
Explosive again

tr non-tr. gl.

pp

fff

(do not let ring)

275

♩ = 168 *(or fast as possible)*
Explosive again

fff

8vb

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