Please note that not all pages are included. This is purposely done in order to protect our property and the work of our esteemed composers.

If you would like to see this work in its entirety, please order online or call us at 800-647-2117.

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**DURATION: 23:00**

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**Elena Ruehr (b. 1963)**

For biographical information visit:
www.elenaruehr.org

**PROGRAM NOTES**

Written for the Cypress String Quartet, partially commissioned by the Fromm Foundation, and dedicated to Todd Donovan.

If there were a nickname for this quartet, it might be the "Romantic Quartet." Although my other quartets could be viewed as romantic, both in character and their narrative form, this particular quartet is tied to a belief in music as an expressive, lyrical, and narrative medium.

Movement I was written for Professor Thomas Kelly's "First Nights" course at Harvard University, and was originally subtitled "the sea." I conceived of it as a jumping off point for a journey. As I worked, the quartet as a whole evolved into a different journey than the one I imagined. On the evening of the premiere of this movement, the Cypress Quartet and I learned that Todd Donovan, executive director of the quartet, was diagnosed with brain cancer. Movement II was written for Todd as a gift while he was undergoing chemotherapy and was premiered at a private concert in Todd's honor. Since Todd was a baritone, I wanted to write a song for him. In this case, the lyrical line that moves from one instrument to another throughout is based on a melody set to a poem by Stephen Tapscott, and it could be sung as a piece for voice and piano.

The third movement is based on an idée fixe: in this case, a nine-note pattern that repeats with variations for the bulk of the movement. To me, a repetitive but changeable idea represents a kind of subliminal, obsessive thought that constantly shifts in meaning depending on the surroundings. Never shaken from its core until the very end, the movement becomes suddenly expressive and romantic.

Although in many ways the most abstract and modern, the fourth movement is based on the most romantic material from the previous movements, representing a shift from human to otherworldly.

—Elena Ruehr

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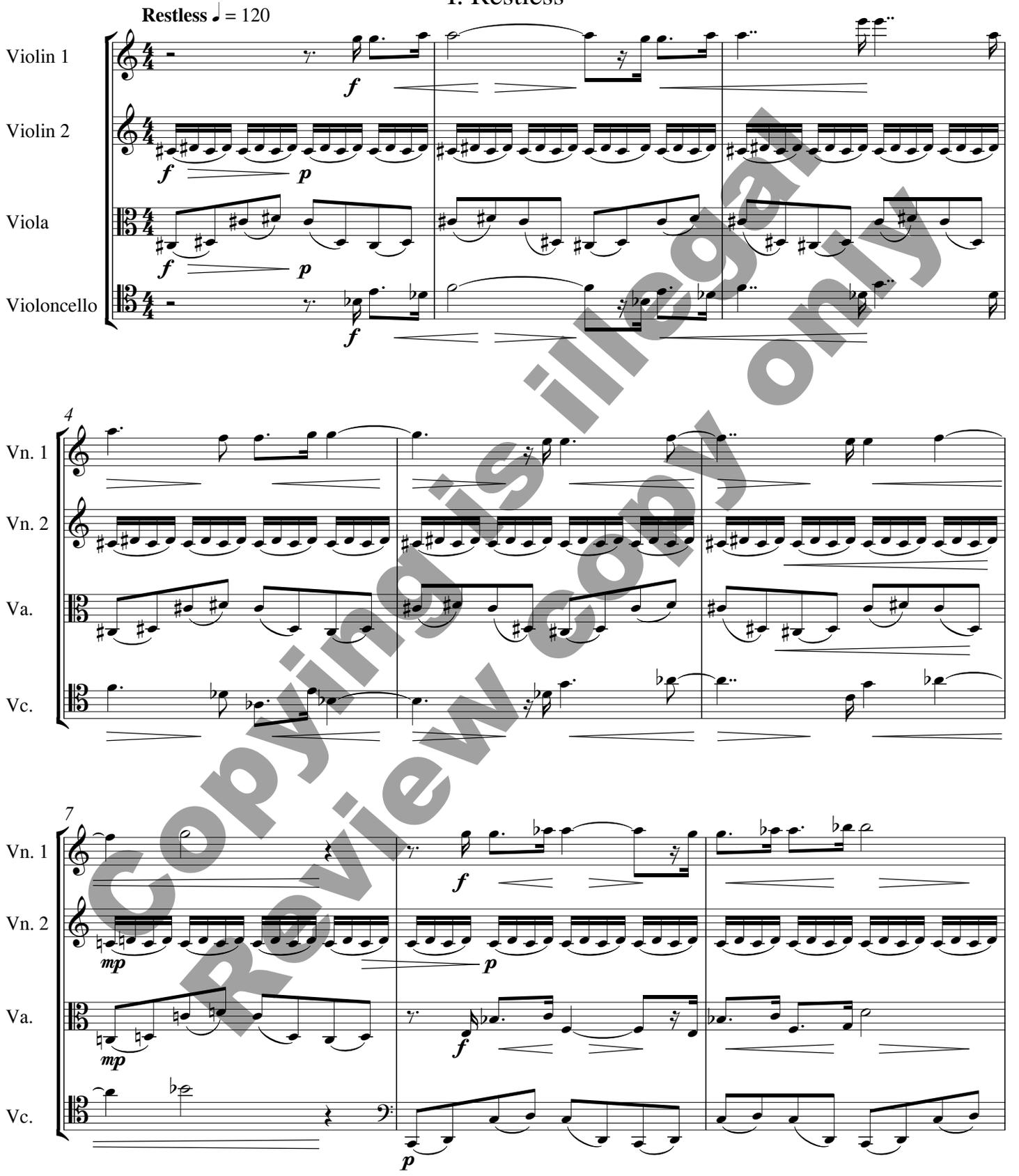
# String Quartet No. 6

Elena Ruehr

## I. Restless

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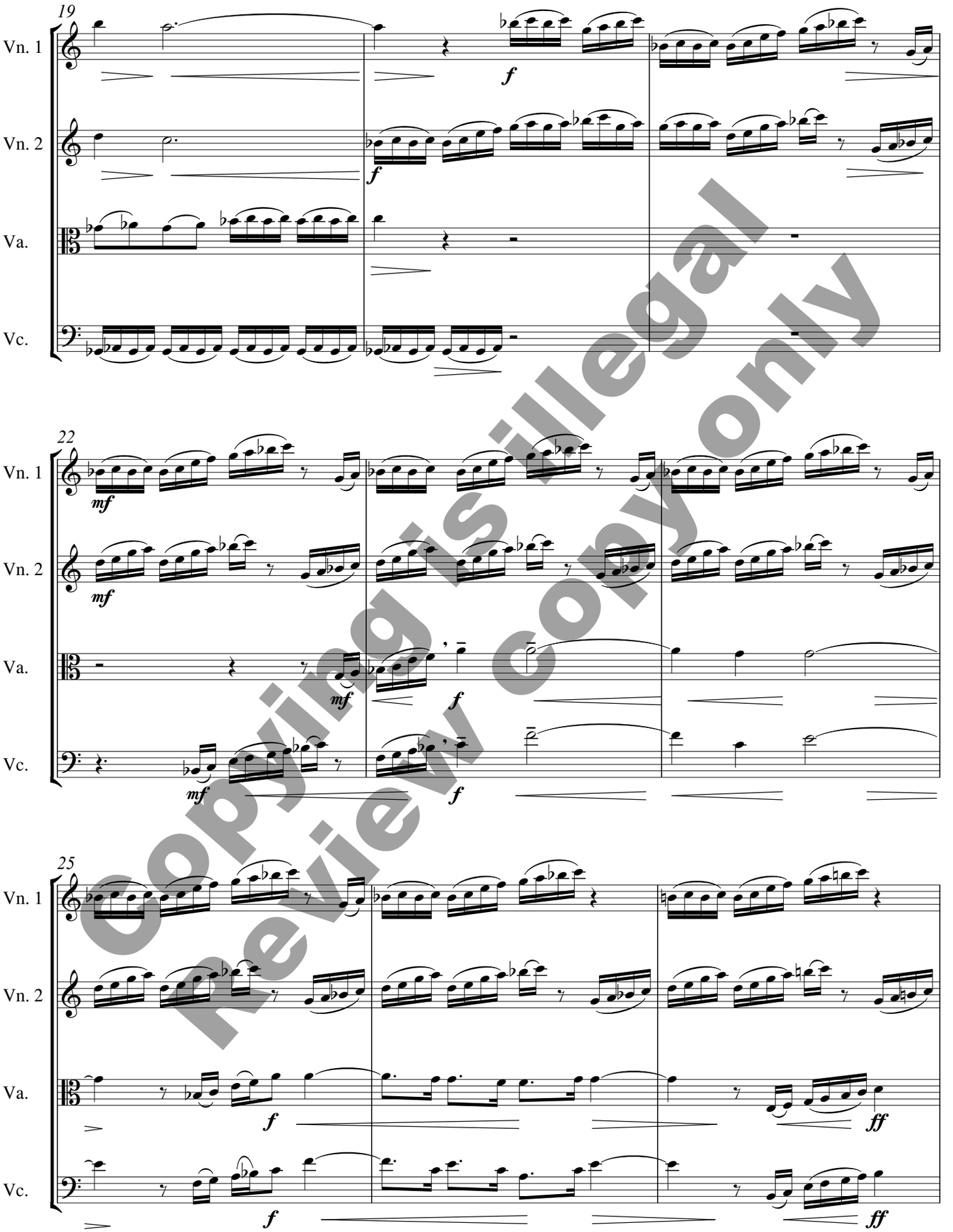


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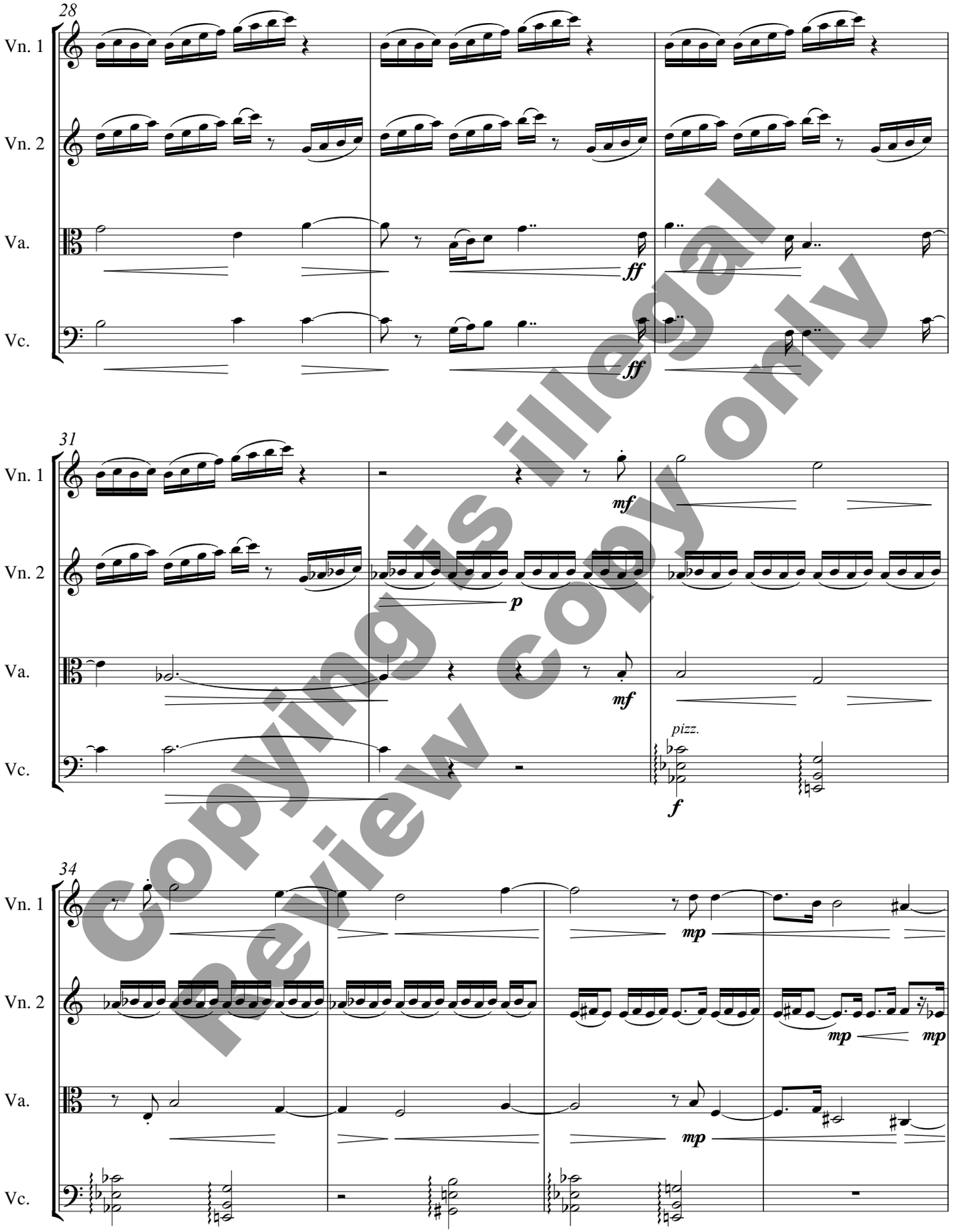


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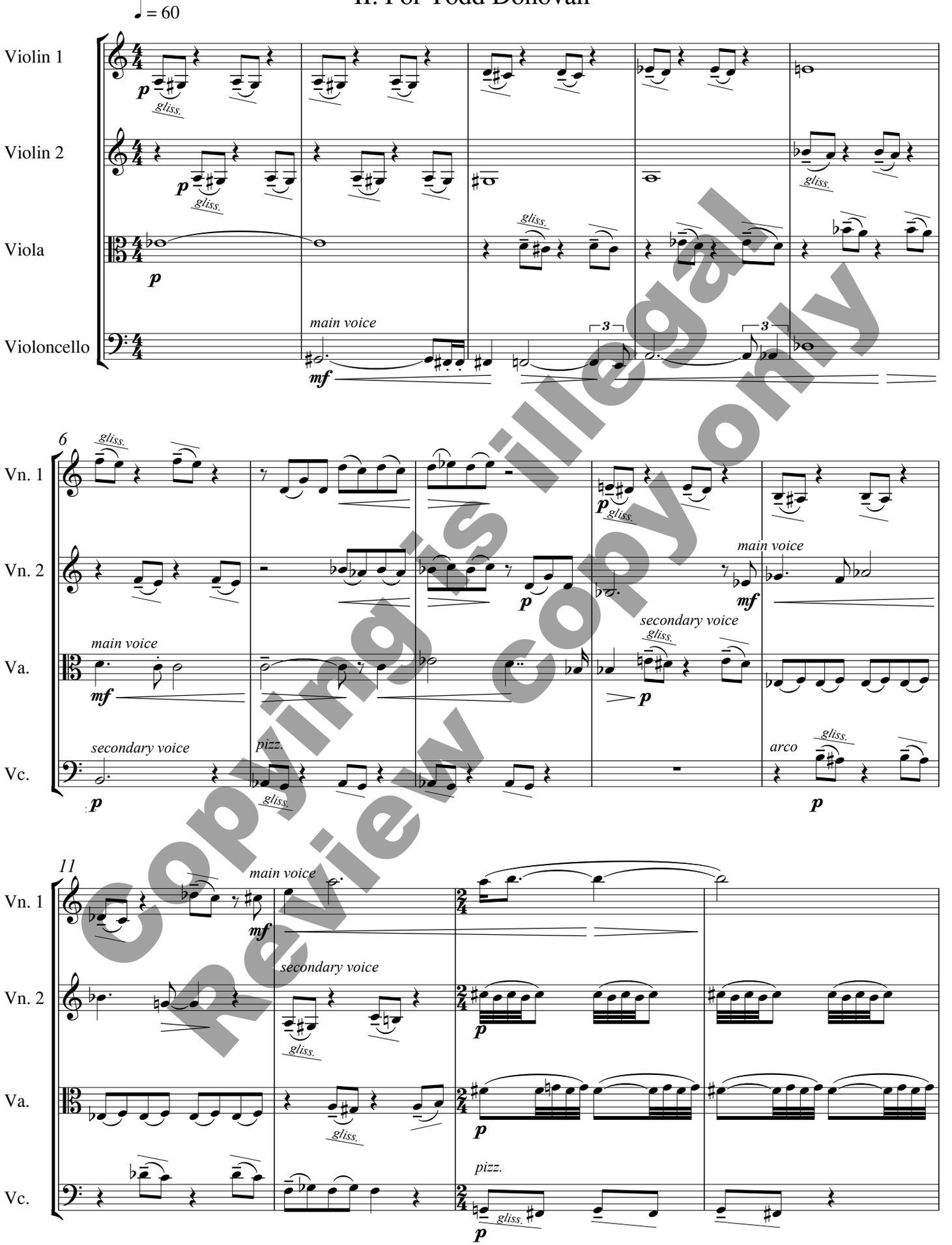
# II. For Todd Donovan

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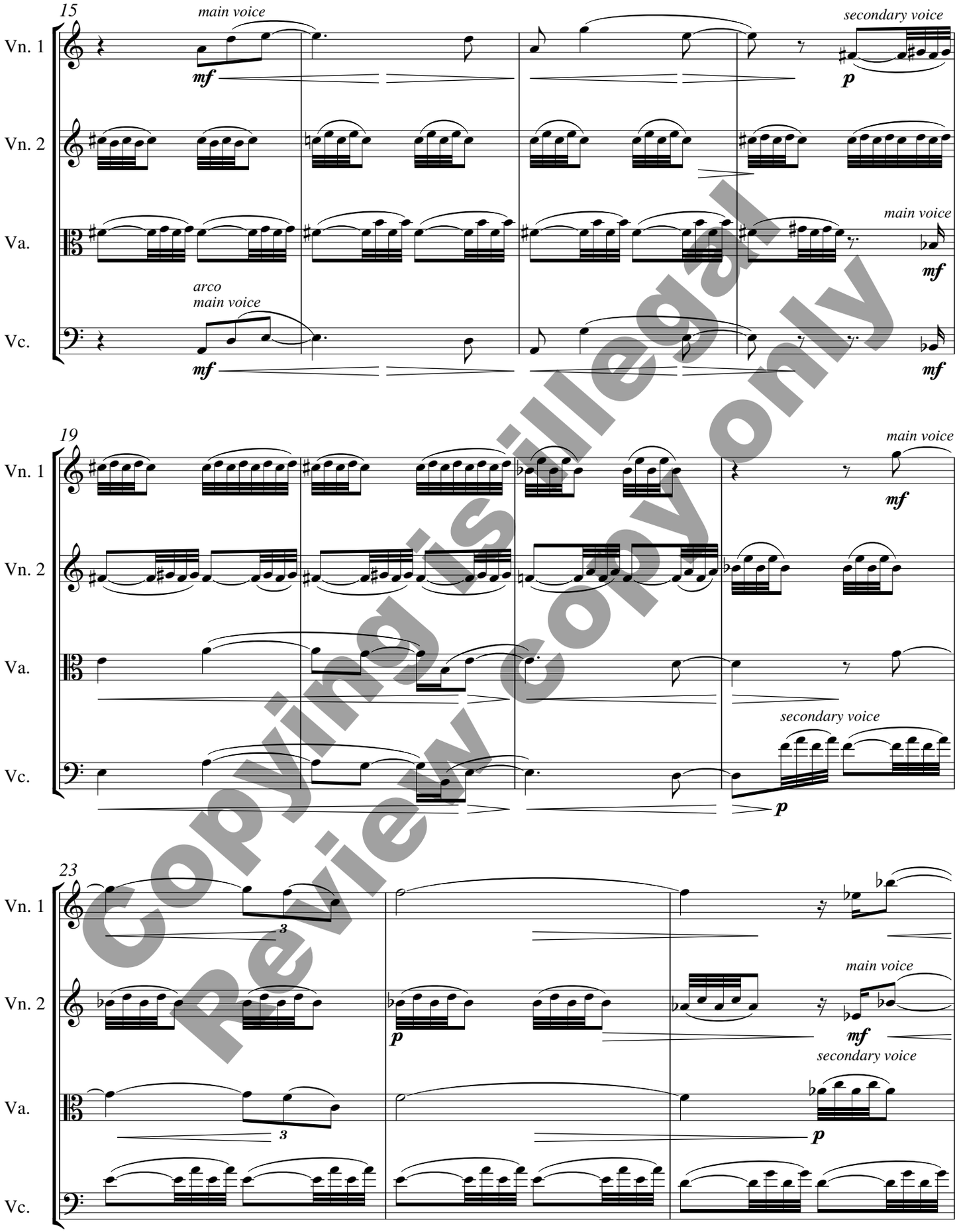


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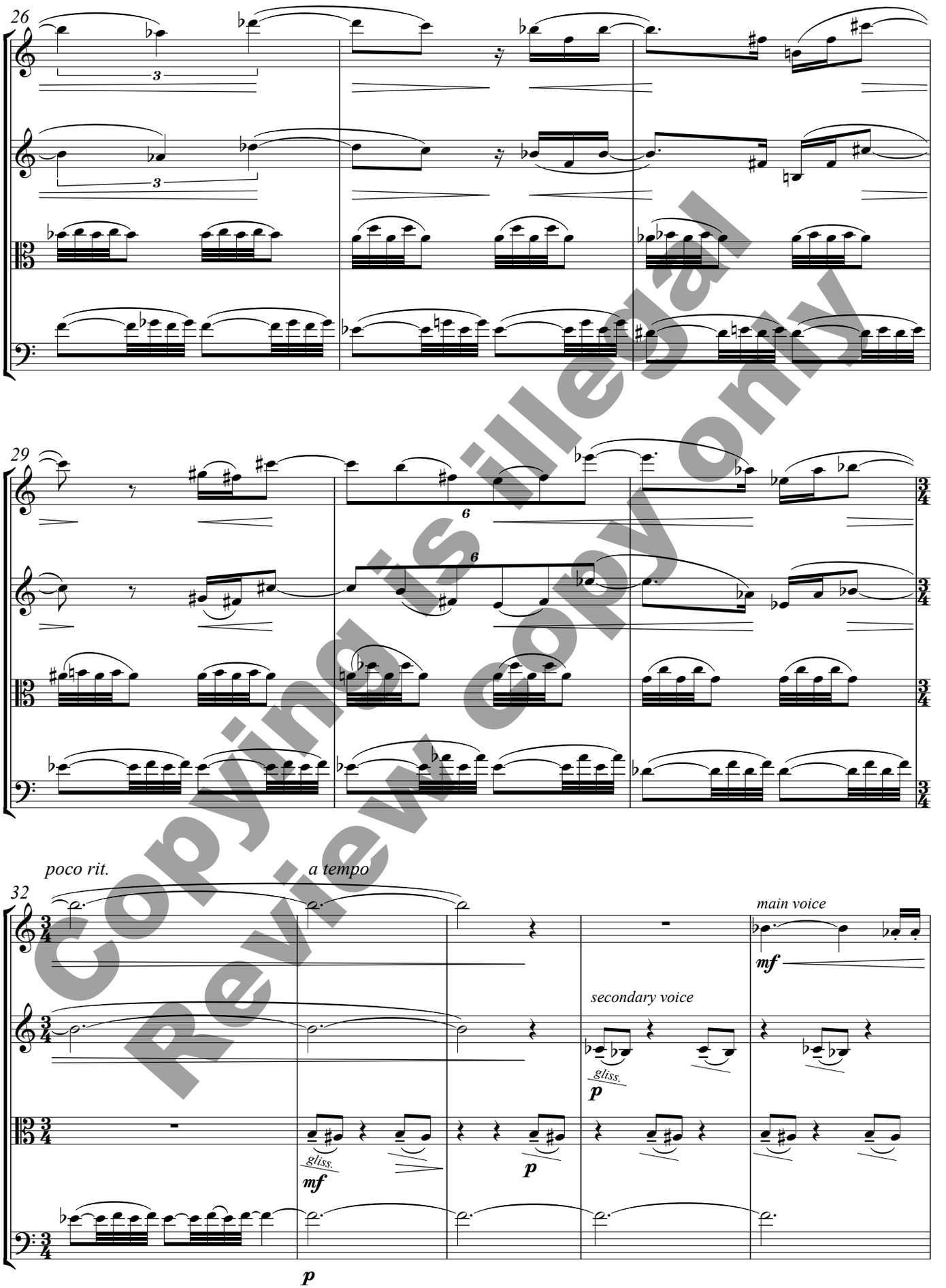


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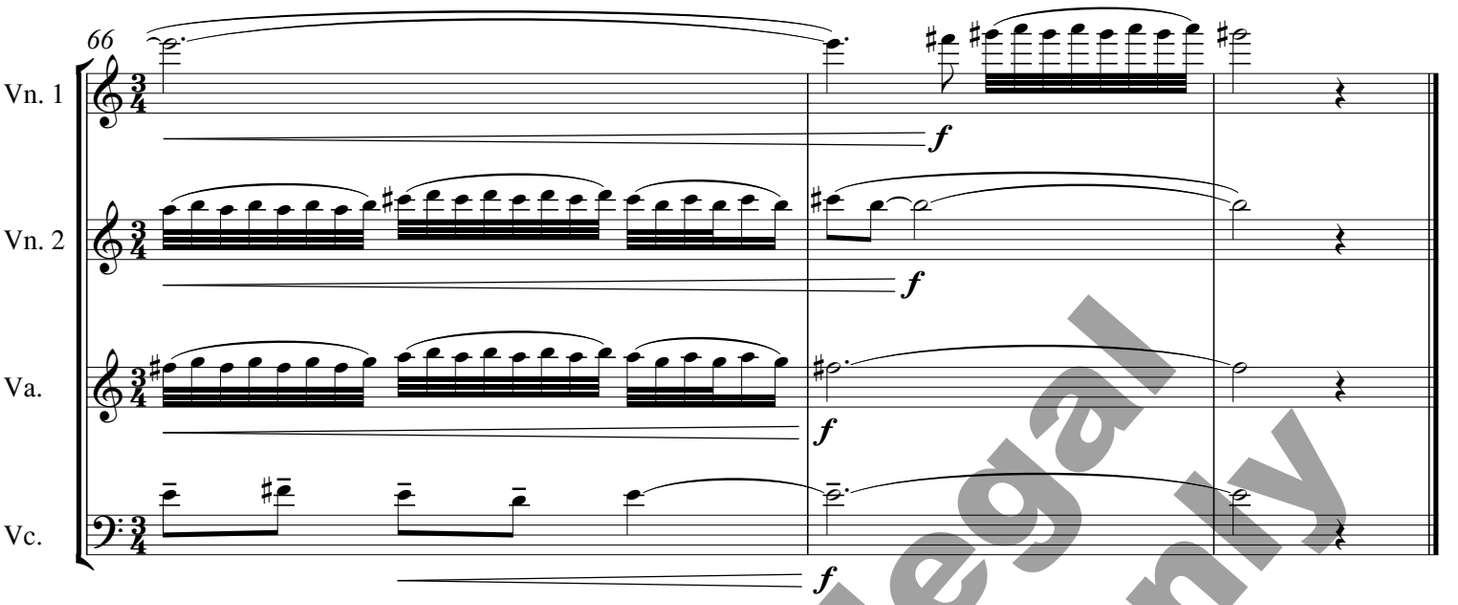
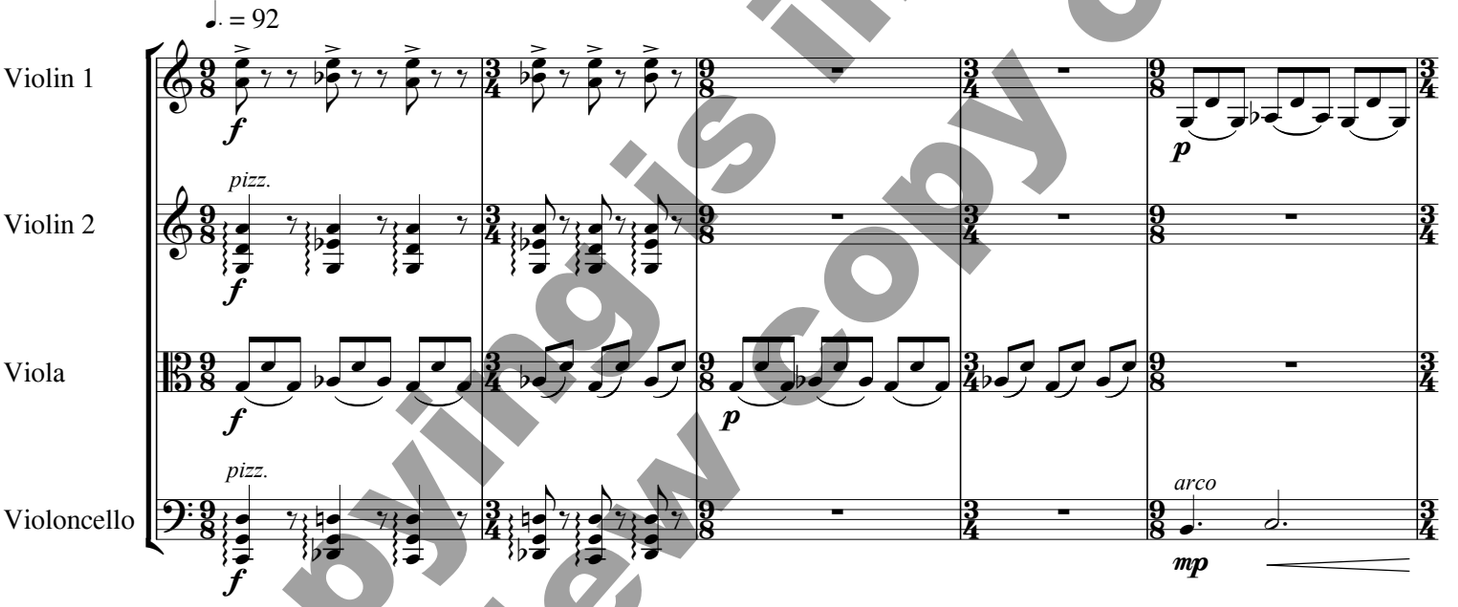
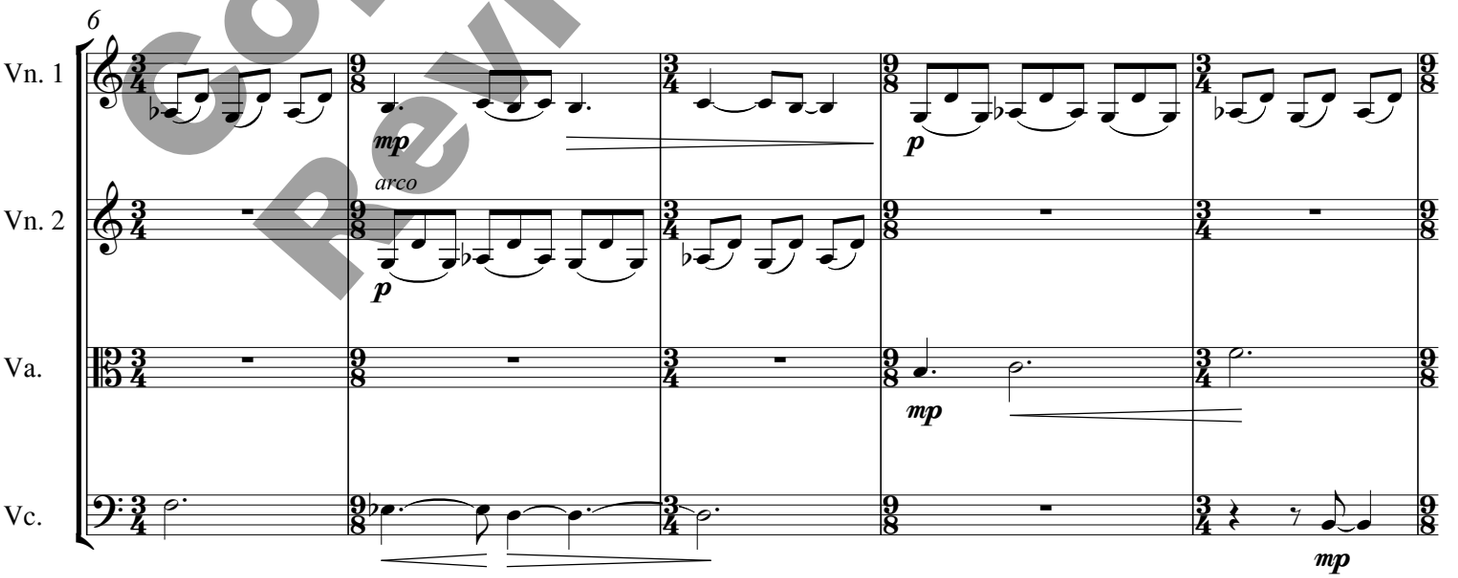



## III. Idée fixe

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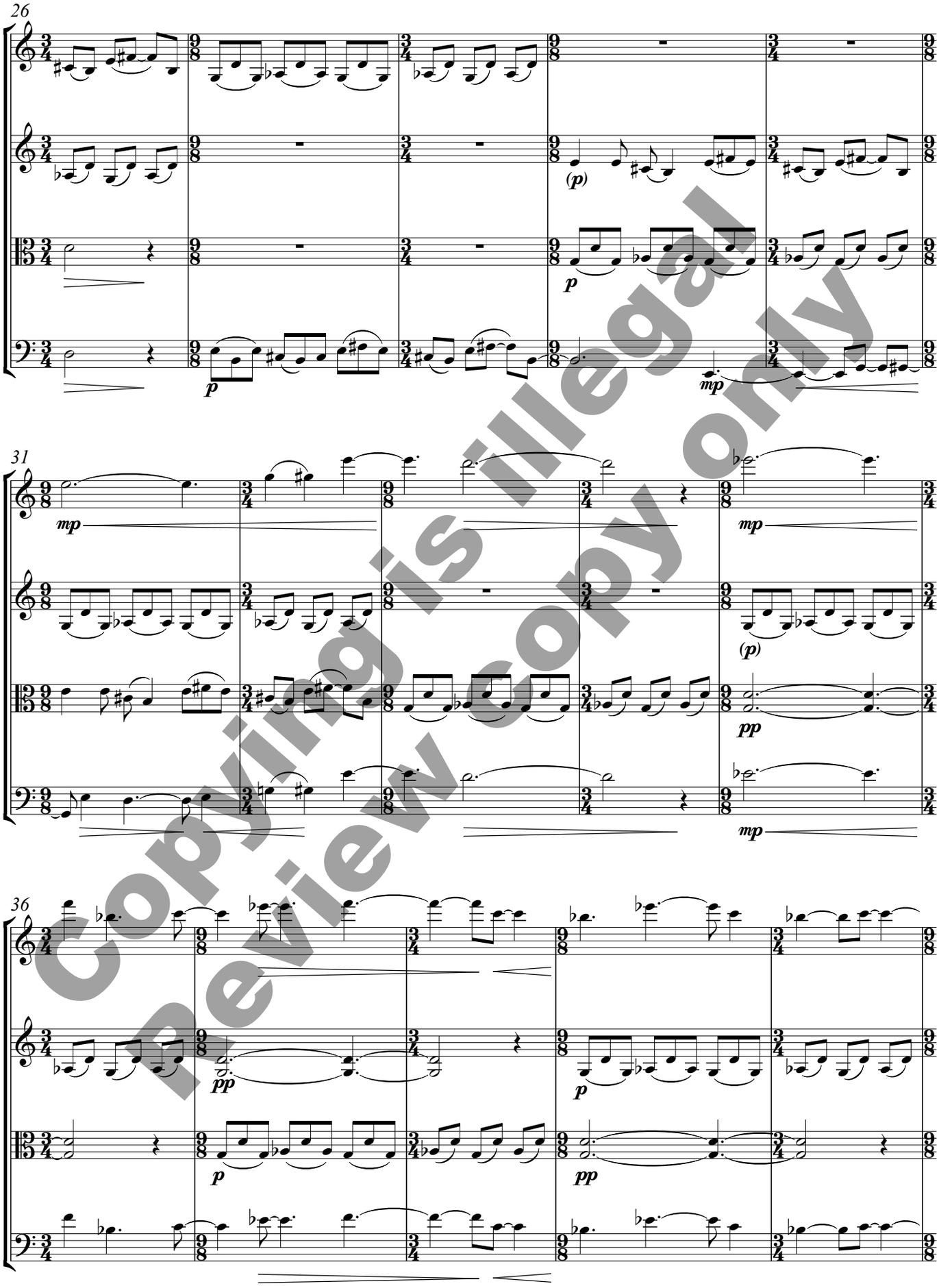


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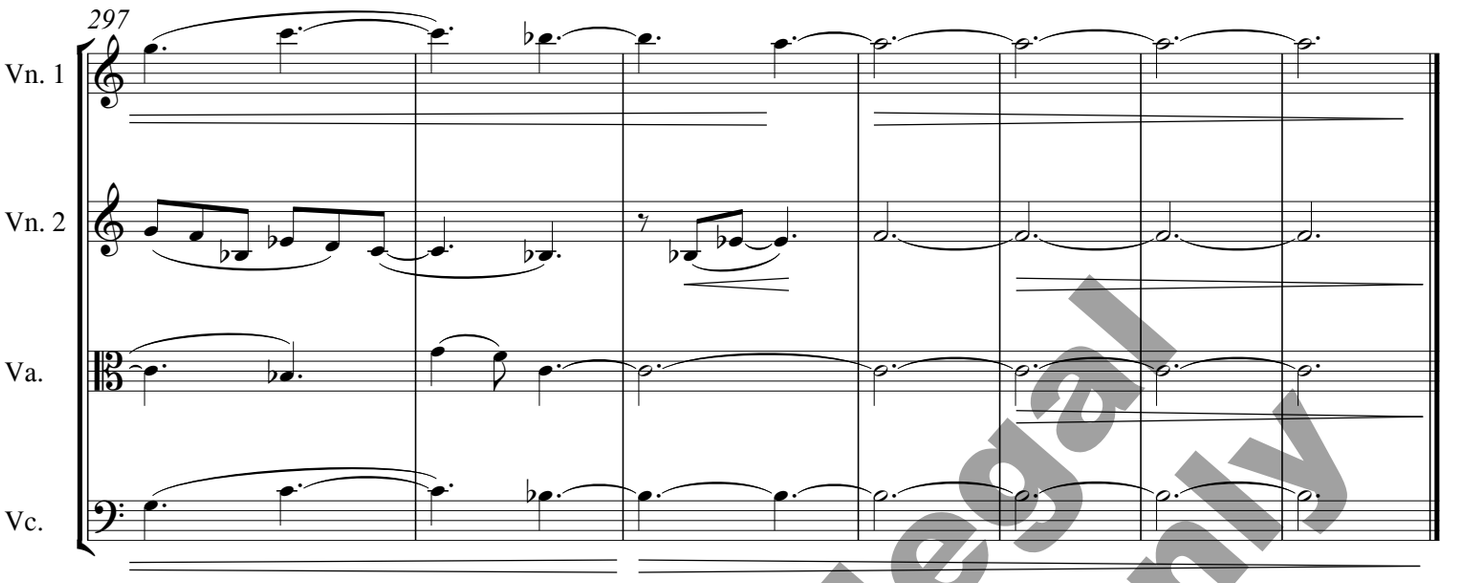
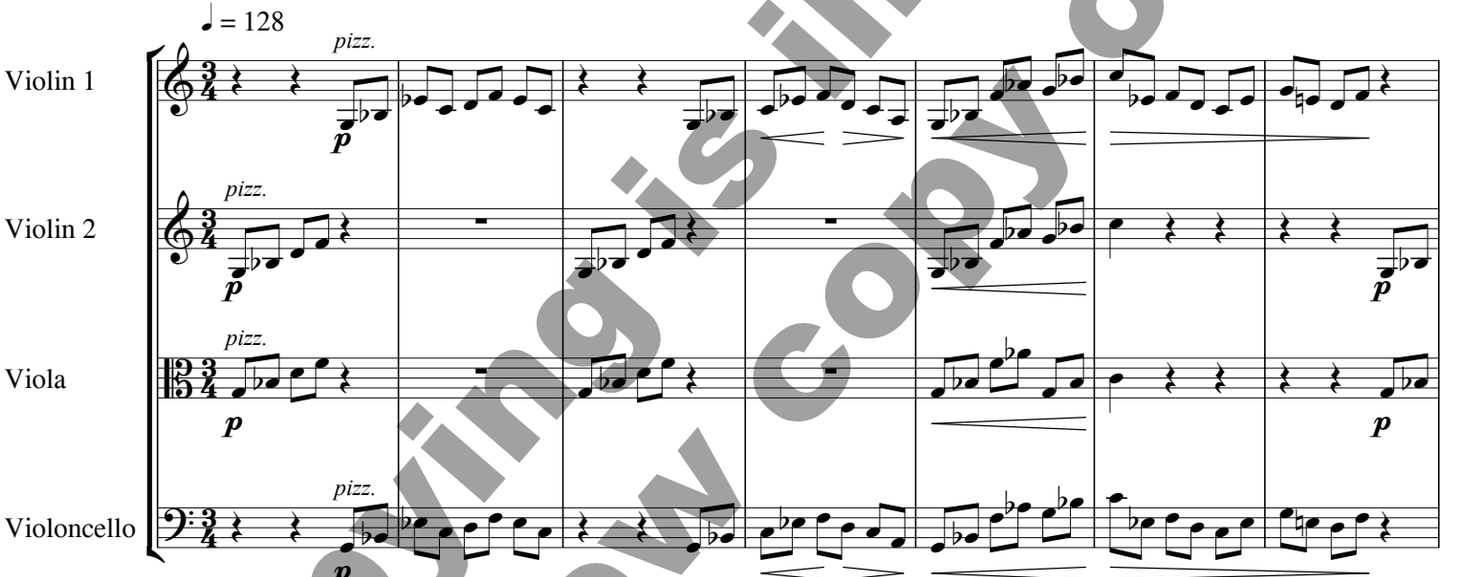
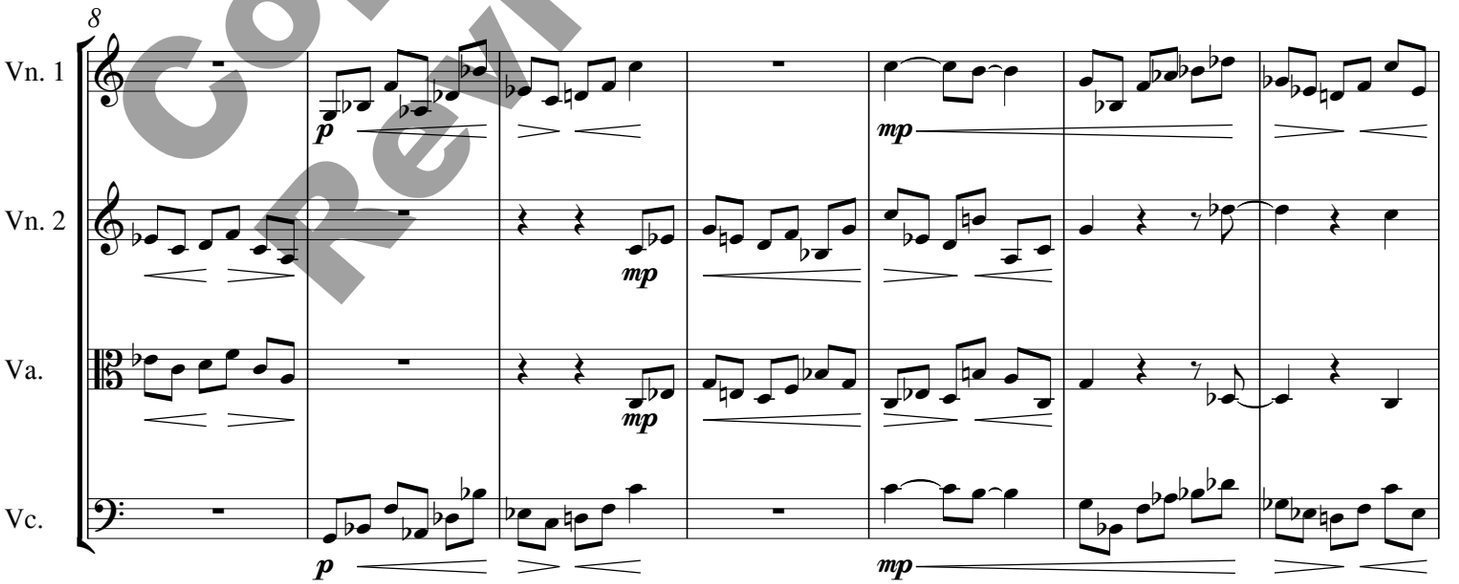



IV. Finale

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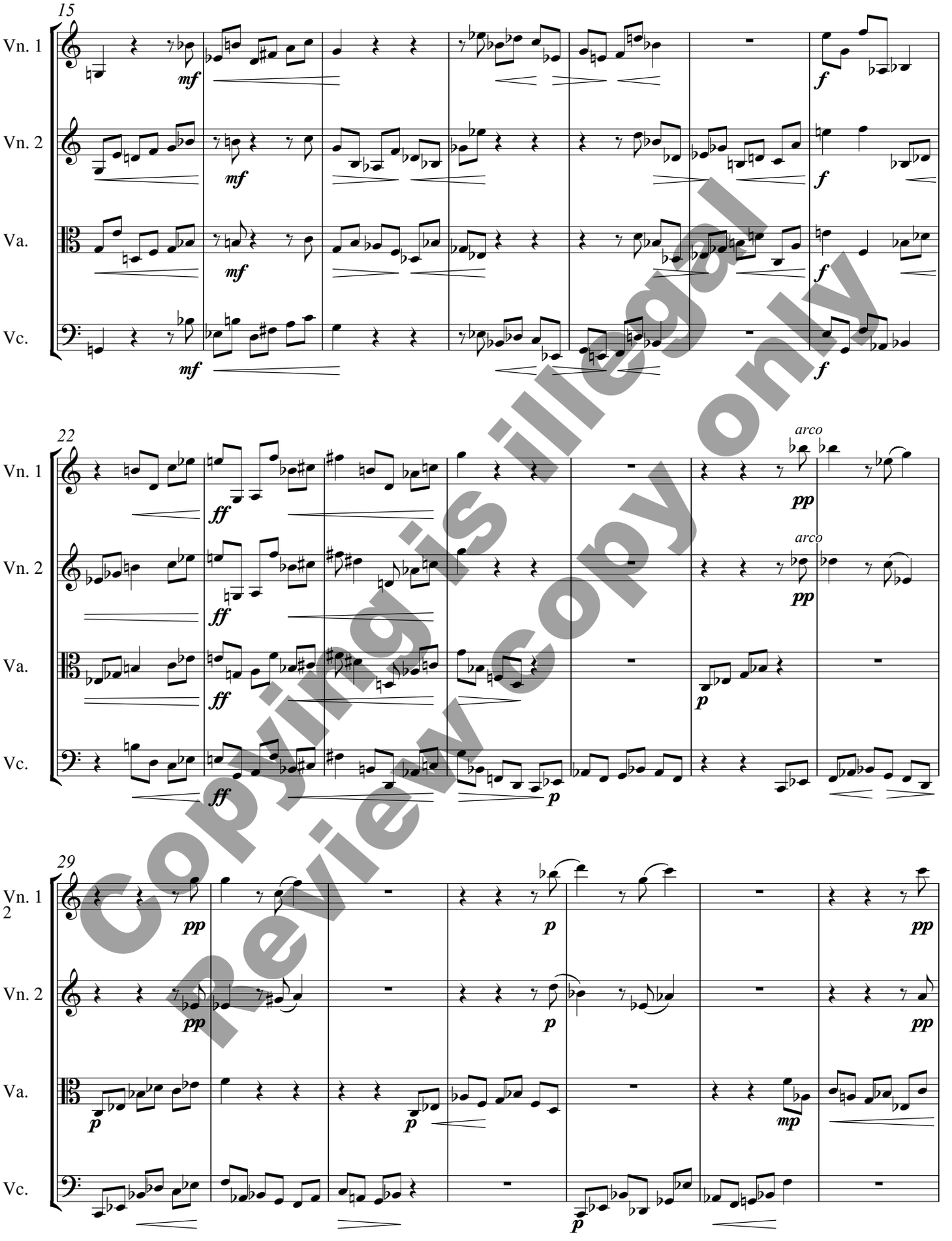


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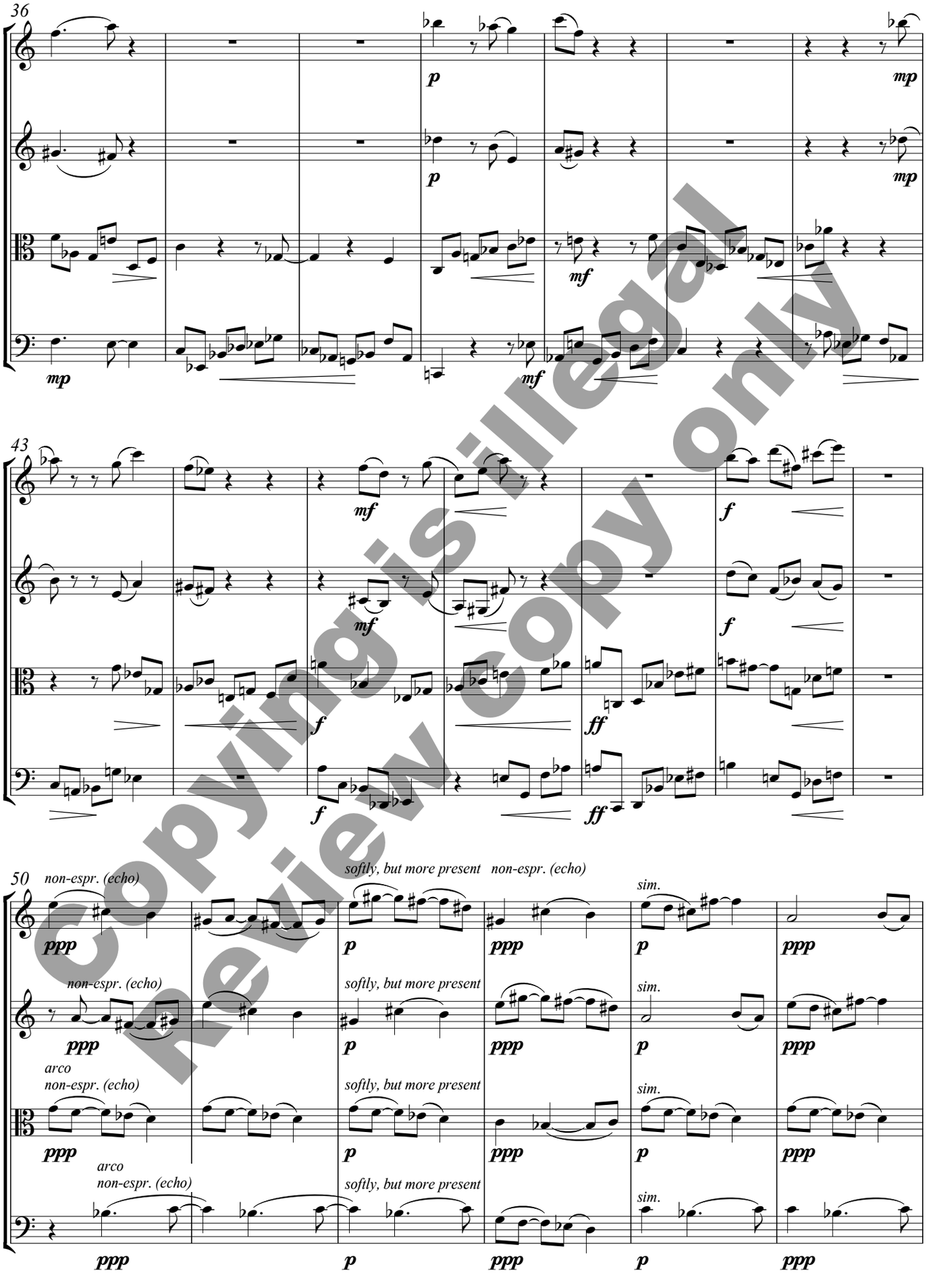


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