Brass Quintet

*For Red Star Brass*

# Gristmill

Katherine Pukinskis

2017

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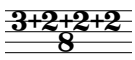
## Performance Notes

- Fermatas should be held between 4"-10", at the discretion of the ensemble.
    - Instances from the opening through m. 43 should feel just slightly longer than natural.
    - From m. 43-end, fermatas can be held still at the discretion of the ensemble, but in a more naturally musical context.
- There should be no audible break between a fermata and the restart of regular time unless indicated with rests in the score. Players holding the fermata should cut off at the precise moment the other instrument(s) come(s) in.
    - A slight decrescendo should be included at the end of a fermata (for artistry/musicianship rather than a car horn sound).
- ♪. = ♪ always.
- Accidentals carry through a measure and are reset at the bar line. Accidentals do not carry across octaves within a measure. Some courtesy accidentals exist in the score and parts in order to confirm a direct clash of the semitone between two instruments.
- Dotted slur markings are phrasing indications; you may breathe under the line if necessary.
- Time signatures are written in macro groupings; if the majority of the bar is a standard meter with well-known groupings, the familiar will be accompanied by the addition:

    ex) m. 2: should be counted 3+3+3+3+3+1

    - If the grouping is non-standard, 2s and 3s will be spelled out in the time signature.

      This will help the ensemble keep a group pulse and use the natural weight of the meter

## Composer's Note

In speaking with Red Star Brass while planning this commission project, we talked about ideas of space and of groove. These elements seem, at the surface, relatively disparate, but the more I thought about it, the more I realized that space or place often invite the natural existence of groove. A past teacher of mine (and of RSB Tuba player, Chris Smith) says that groove is what allows one to embody the future. It helps us understand and anticipate what might be coming next in such a way that our body can go along for the ride of what we hear, see, observe, feel, etc. Musically, we experience groove when we tap our feet, sway, or nod our head.

As a composer, my inspiration often comes from the place I am writing, or the space in which the work will be performed. *Gristmill* was completed while attending a residency at the Hambidge Center in Rabun Gap, GA. In addition to hosting fellows who specialize in a variety of arts (and some sciences) in creative residency, Hambidge runs Barker's Creek Mill, one of the few remaining active gristmills in the nation. A gristmill relies on the muscle of water to turn a wheel to power a mechanism to create enough pressure and force to grind grain. The machine is powered by a combination of momentum and pure grit. It relies on the smooth function of a number of individual pieces in order to work as a unit, any of which can be held up by lack of water, stray objects in the path of flow, rough surfaces, and many other variables small and large, all with the ability to halt the system.

*Gristmill* plays on the relentless work put into achieving a smooth line of production. Listeners can tap their toes on the "big beat" or macro pulse (most often heard in groups of three: think of a wheel turning or a waltz), but the groove/cycle is constantly and inconsistently interrupted by groups of two inserted into the lines. It is a quest for consistency, for toe-tapping regularity, for groove.

Many thanks to the Red Star Brass for their support of new music and crazy ideas, and to the Hambidge Center's Creative Residency Program for providing the time, space, and solitude to compose.

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Duration ca 8 minutes
Completed at the Hambidge Center's Creative Residency Program
Rabun Gap, GA

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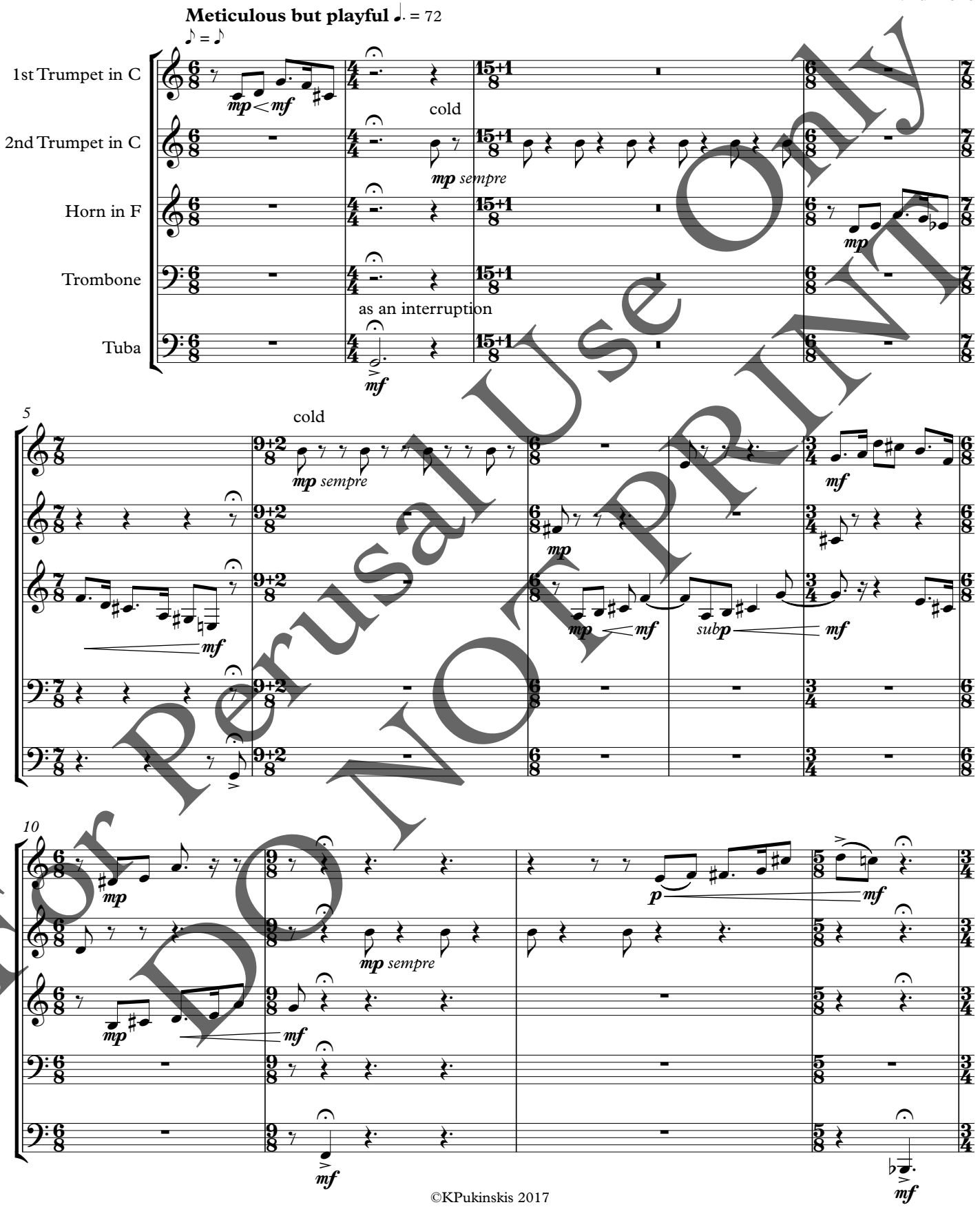
K. Pukinskis

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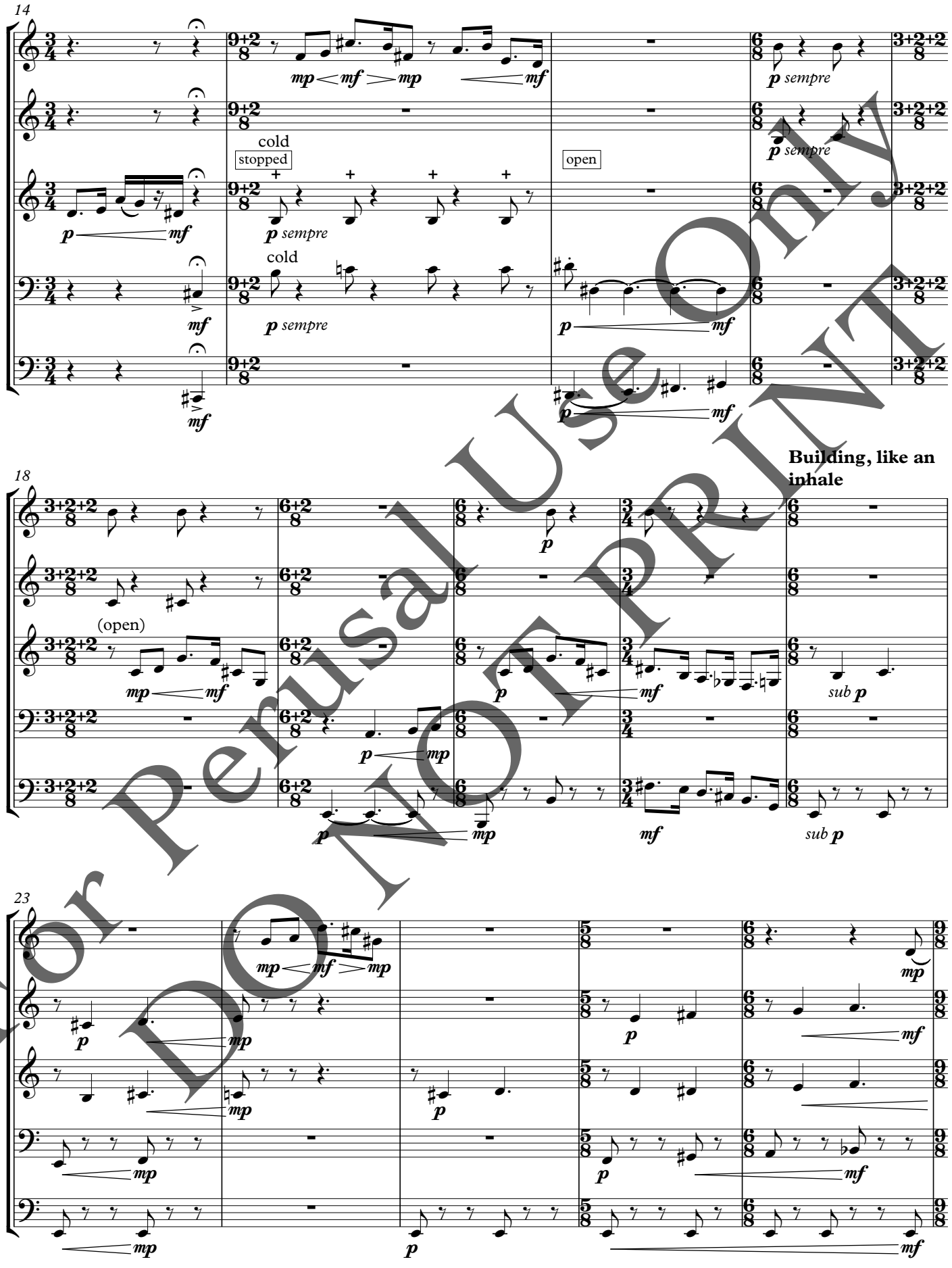


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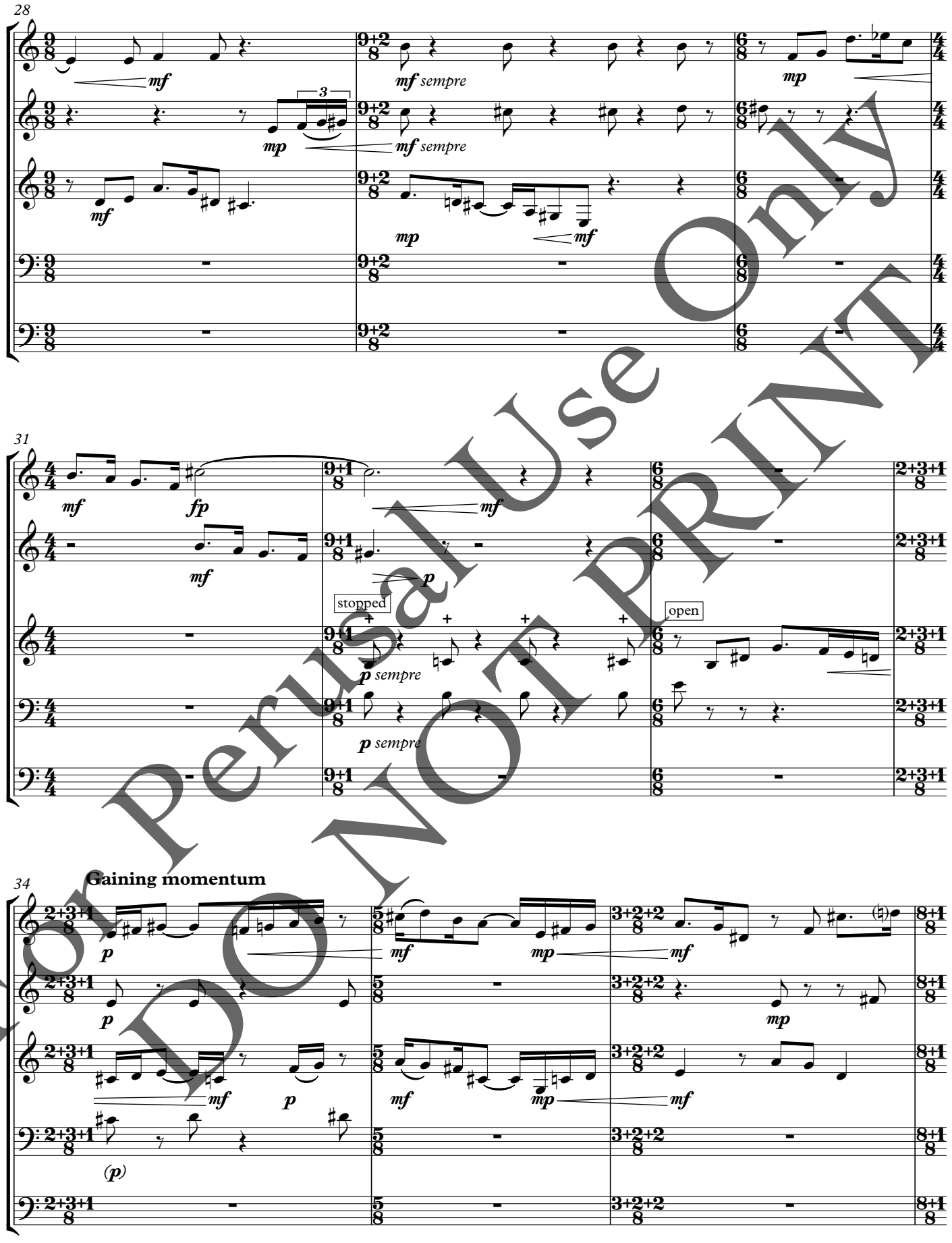


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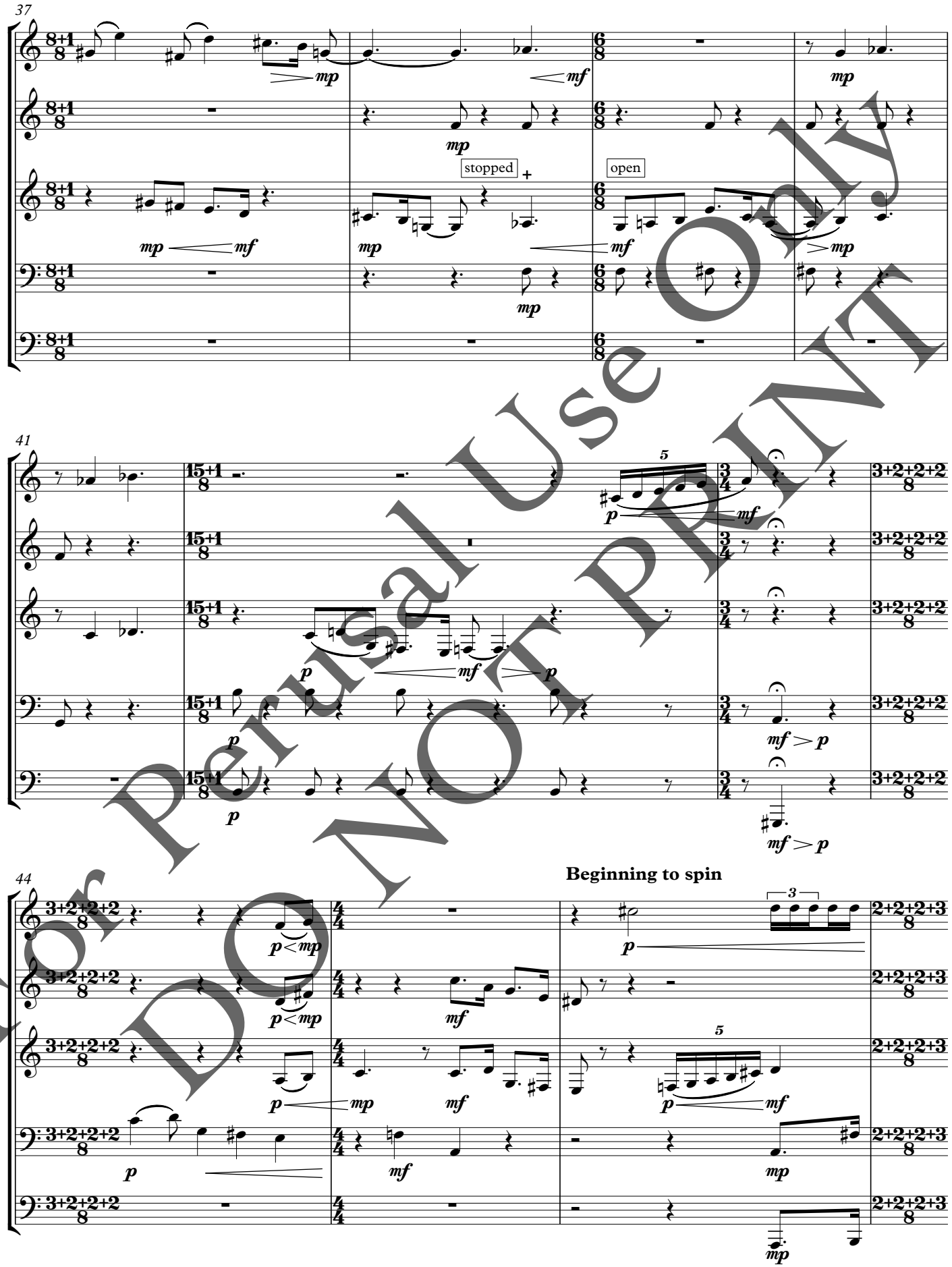


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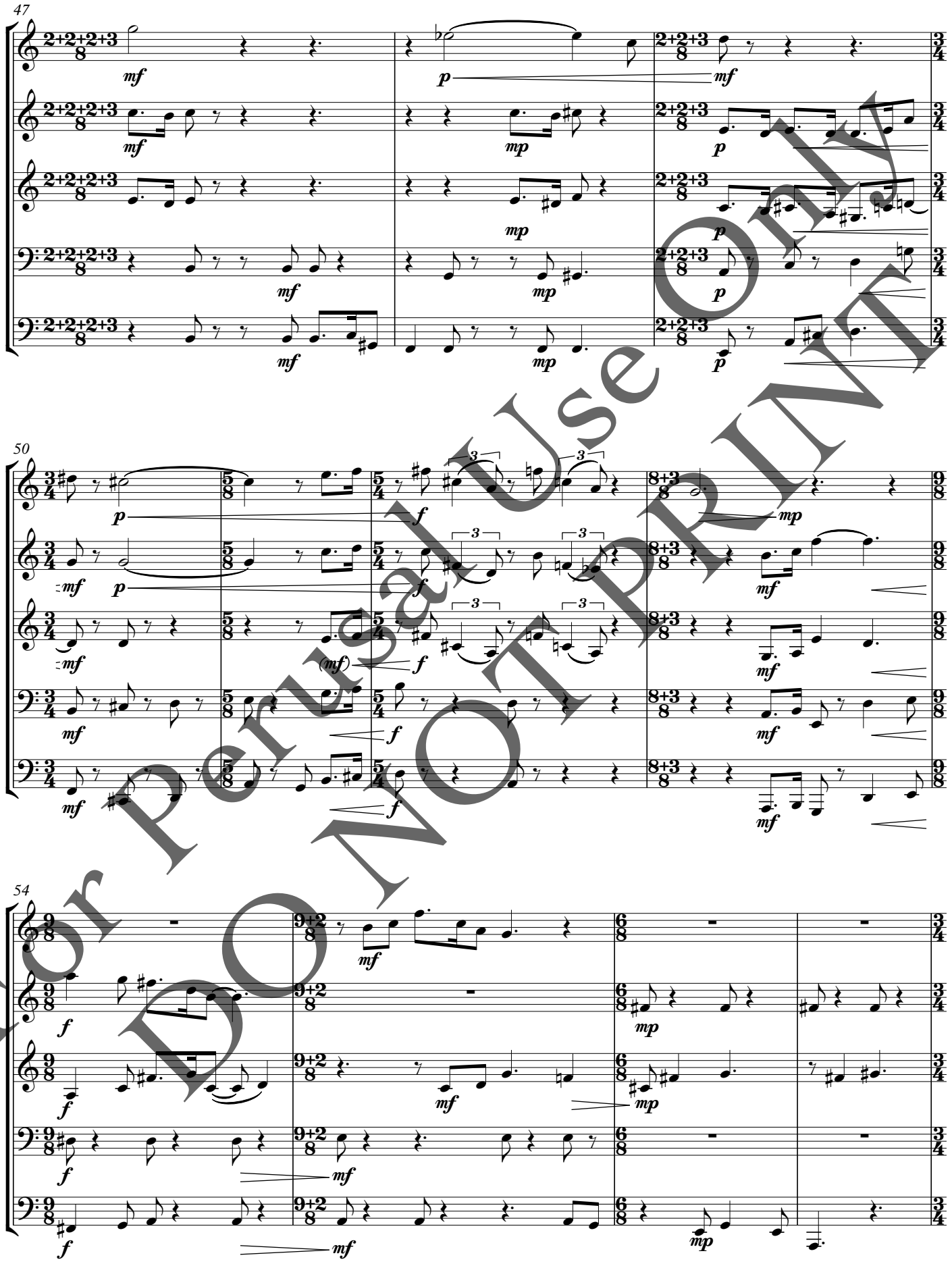


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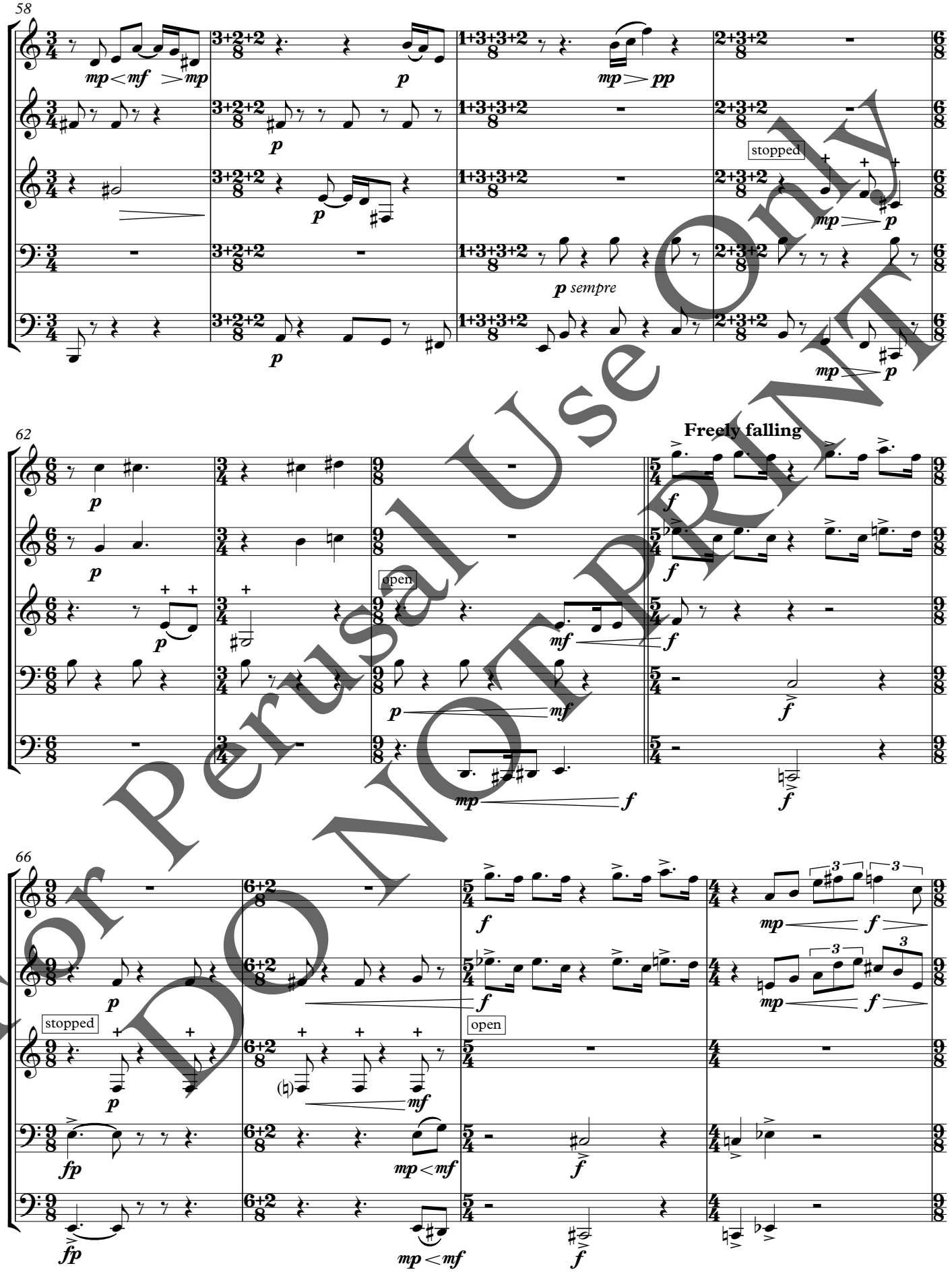


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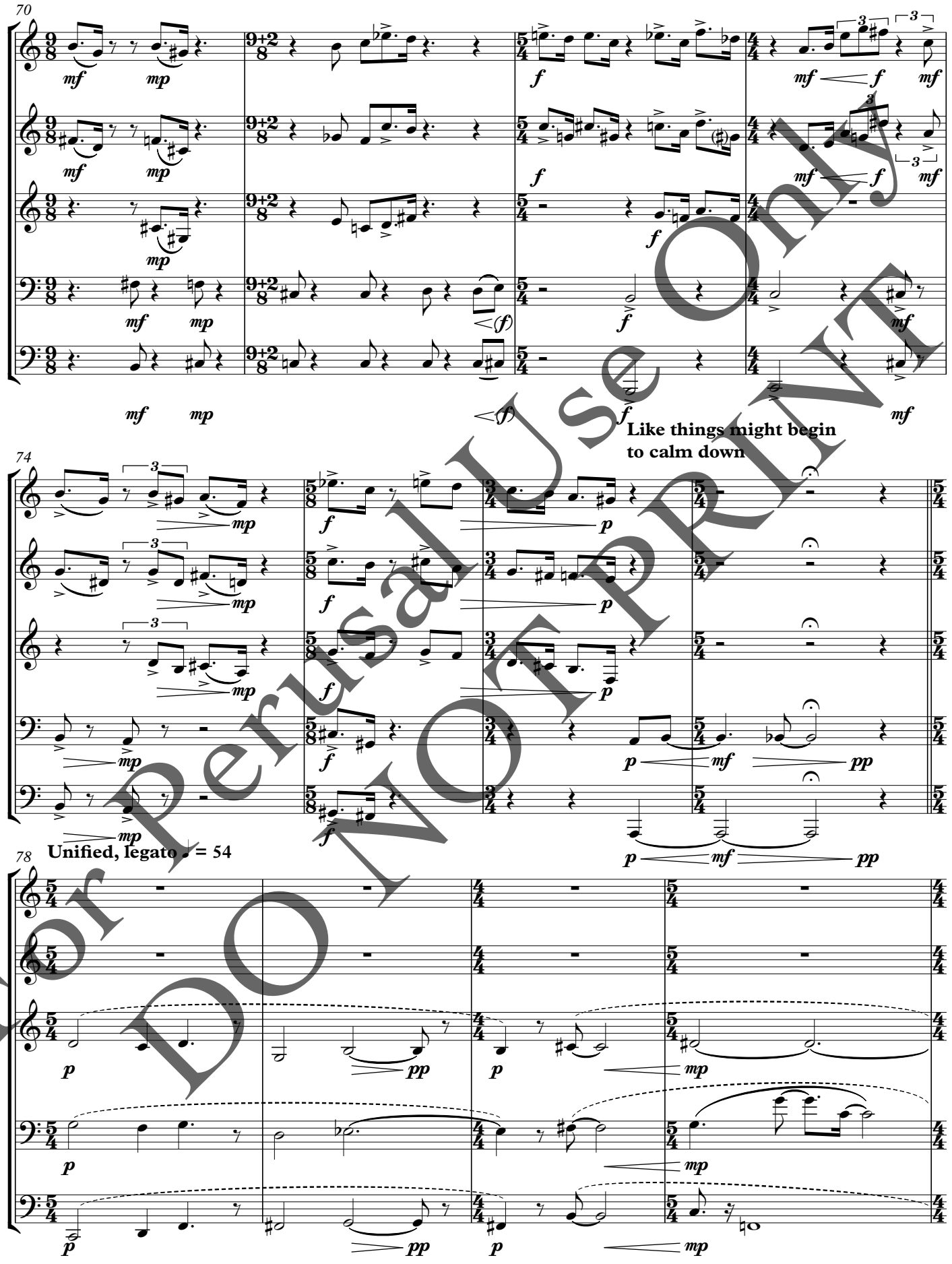


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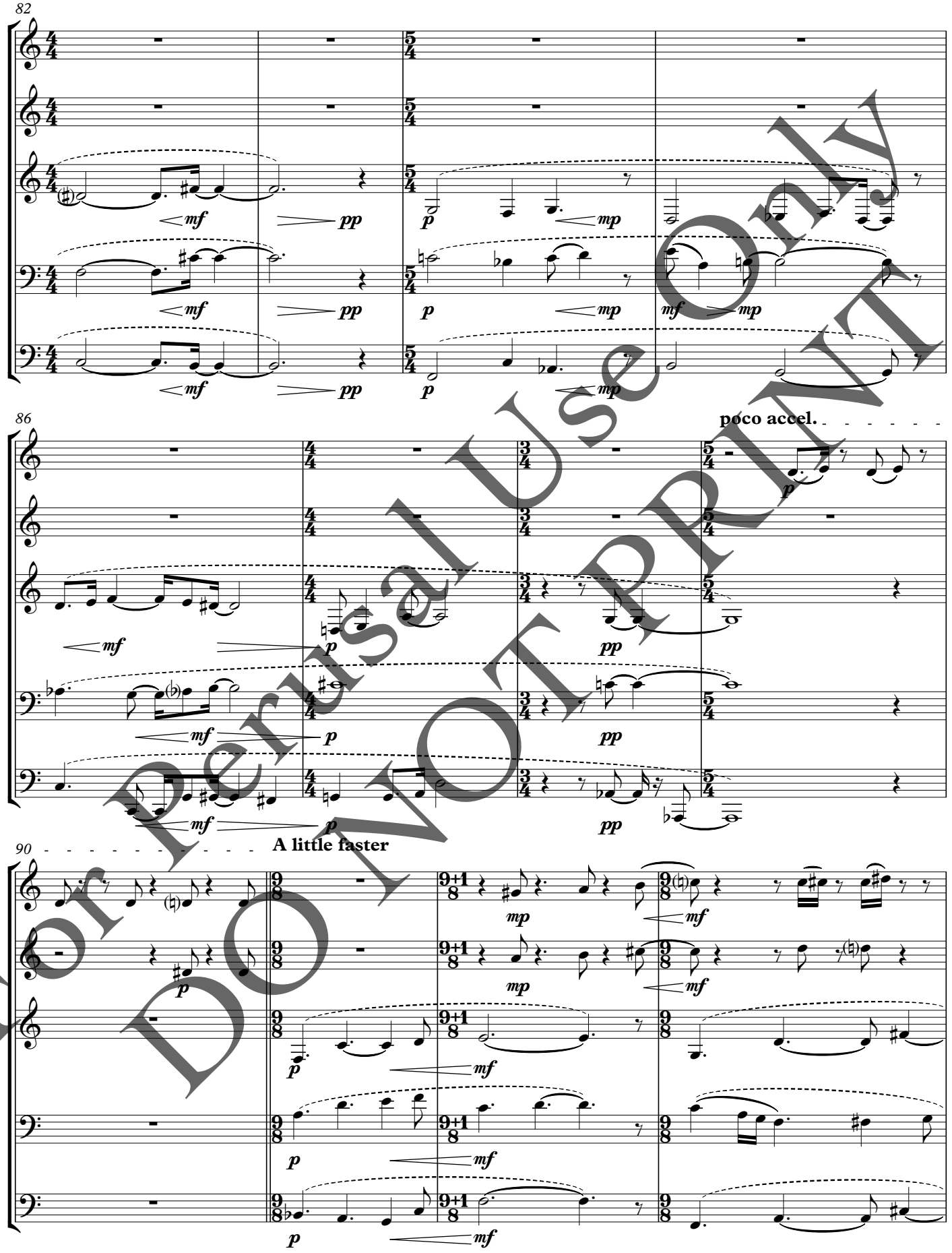


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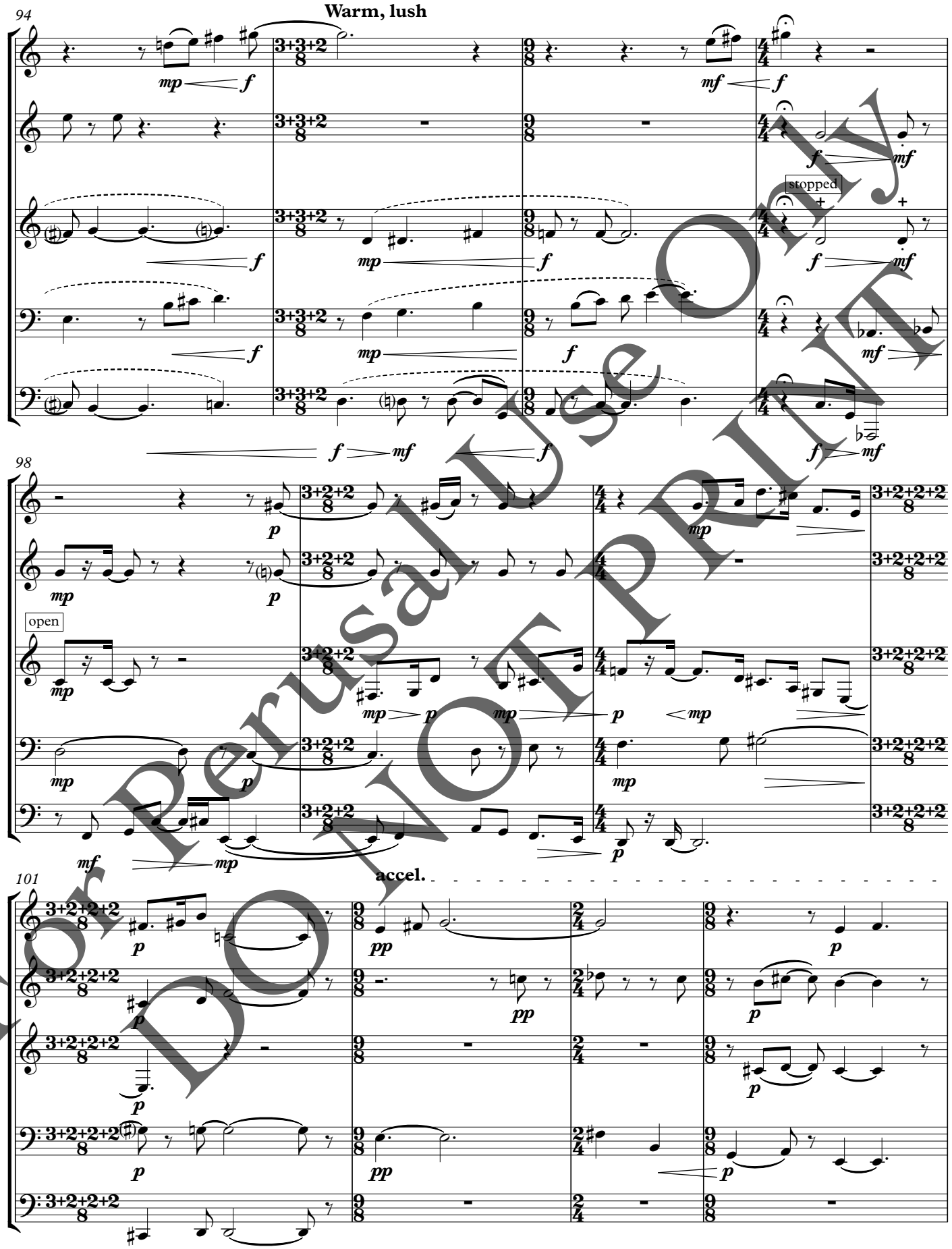


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