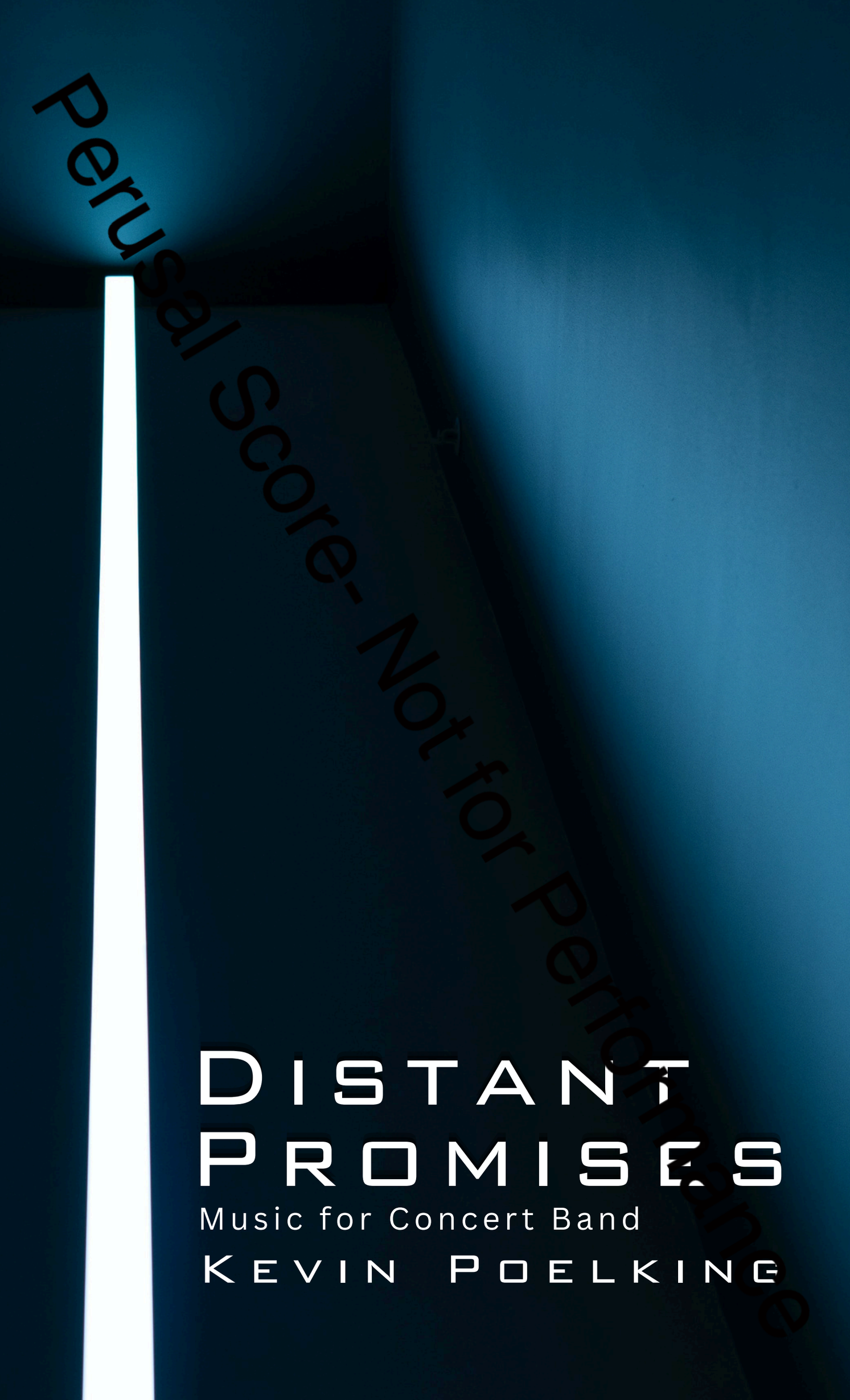

Distant Promises

Music for Concert Band

Kevin Poelking

A MESSAGE FROM THE COMPOSER

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KP music

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Enjoy the music, thank you for your support, and please stay in touch!

Kevin Poelking
contact@kevinpoelking.com
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Distant Promises

FOR CONCERT BAND

(2026)

Instrumentation

Flute 1-2
Oboe 1-2
Clarinets in Bb 1-2-3
Bass Clarinet
Contrabass Clarinet *(opt.)*
Bassoon 1-2
Contrabassoon *(opt.)*

Trumpet in Bb 1-2-3
Horn in F 1-2-3-4
Trombone 1-2-3 *(2 tenors + 1 bass)*
Euphonium 1-2
Tuba

Timpani *(1 player)*
Vibraphone + Chimes *(1 player)*
Marimba *(2 players)*
Percussion *(1+ player)*
(Bass drum, Tam-tam, Suspended cymbals)

Duration: ca. 5 min

Program Notes

Distant Promises takes its inspiration from the experience of traveling west from Denver along Interstate 70, as the distant mountains gradually begin to close in. What first appears as a far-off outline slowly becomes an overwhelming presence, until the road is surrounded and the view ahead narrows.

At the Eisenhower Tunnel, the landscape suddenly gives way to artificial light, concrete, and enclosure. Yet even there, the distant glow at the end of the tunnel suggests what is waiting beyond. When the road finally emerges back into daylight, the view opens all at once to a vast sky, massive mountains, and a sudden flood of color and open space.

The music reflects this sense of anticipation and arrival. Throughout the piece, brief moments of beauty appear and fade, each one seeming to point toward something greater just out of reach. That promise is finally fulfilled in the expansive Maestoso near the end of the work, where the music opens into its fullest and most luminous statement.

KPmusic

KevinPoelking.com
@kevinpoelking

Original Cover Photo by
Lasse Møller

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Performance Notes

To the Conductor

While specific meters, tempo indications, and expressive markings have been included where the composer feels they are essential, the interpretation of this work should remain flexible and deeply musical. Many passages invite subtle moments of breath, space, and forward motion that may vary depending on the ensemble, hall, and pacing of the performance.

These markings are not meant to restrict the conductor's musical judgment, but to clarify the moments where the composer feels a particular sense of motion or suspension is especially important. In all other places, conductors are encouraged to shape the music freely and allow it to breathe.

Audience-Integrated Percussion (optional)

At least two percussionists should be placed in the audience with the lowest-pitched suspended cymbals available. Tam-tams may also be appropriate, depending on the hall and desired color. The goal is not to overwhelm the audience, but to create the physical sensation of being gently surrounded by sound.

This effect is intended to give the audience a brief glimpse of the immersive feeling performers often experience when sound surrounds them from within the ensemble. The primary musical material on stage should always remain clear and dominant. The audience-integrated percussion should be balanced carefully so that it enhances the atmosphere without distracting from the ensemble.

Placement, instrument choice, and balance should be determined by the conductor and percussionists based on the performance space. It is perfectly acceptable if only part of the audience experiences the full spatial effect. In many cases, that may be preferable to over-projecting the sound throughout the entire hall. The effect should feel distant, resonant, and enveloping, never harsh or startling.

If the hall, ensemble logistics, or available personnel make audience placement impractical, all percussion may be performed from the stage.

In the final measure, the audience-integrated percussion entrance should be almost imperceptible to much of the audience. It is meant simply to extend the resonance of the stage sound, as though the final sonority continues to shimmer in the hall after the ensemble has released.

Measure 57

At the Maestoso, the indicated spatial gesture from low to high instruments should be shaped according to the ensemble's setup. Because wind ensemble seating arrangements vary widely, a perfect physical sweep from the lowest instruments to the highest may not be possible. In general, the gesture should move from the area of the ensemble where the lowest voices are seated toward the area where the highest voices are seated.

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Distant Promises

FOR CONCERT BAND

Kevin Poelking

(♩ = c. 52) **Largo e espressivo**

6

Flute 1 2

Oboe 1

Bassoon 1

Contrabassoon

Clarinet in B♭ 1

Clarinet in B♭ 2

Clarinet in B♭ 3

Bass Clarinet

Contrabass Clarinet

Alto Saxophone 1 2

Tenor Saxophone

Baritone Saxophone

Trumpet in B♭ 1

Trumpet in B♭ 2 3

Horn in F 1 2

Horn in F 3 4

Trombone 1

Trombone 2

Bass Trombone

Euphonium 1 2

Tuba

Timpani

Vibraphone & Chimes

Coins attached to Ab3 and Db4 on Vib.

Marimba (1 player each staff)

Player 1

no distinct strokes, very soft mallets

Player 2 Do not transpose 8va. Simply eliminate any notes out of range if nec.

no distinct strokes, very soft mallets

Percussion

Sus. Cym.(on|offstage)

Bass Drum

Tam-tam

2 3 4 5

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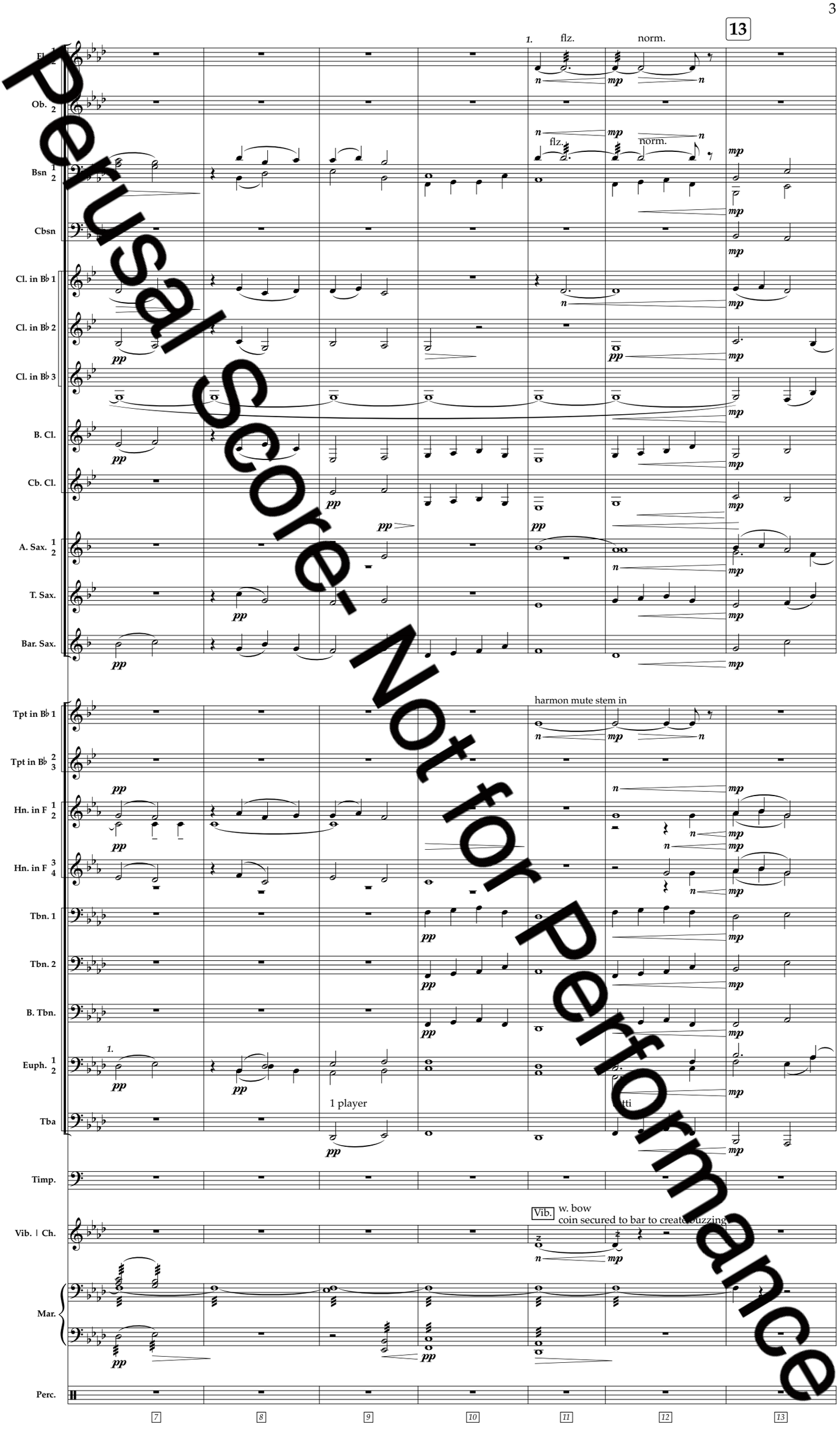

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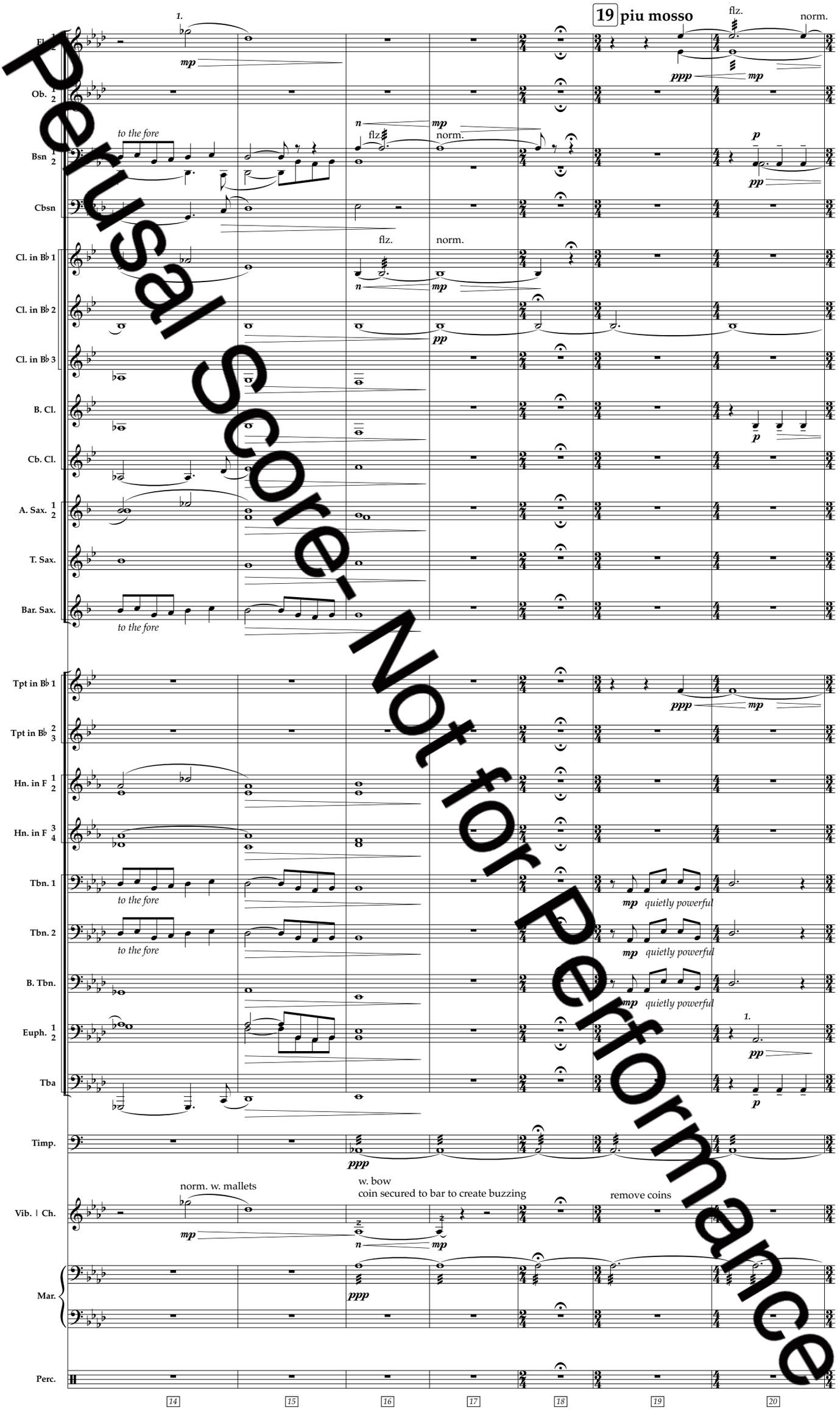

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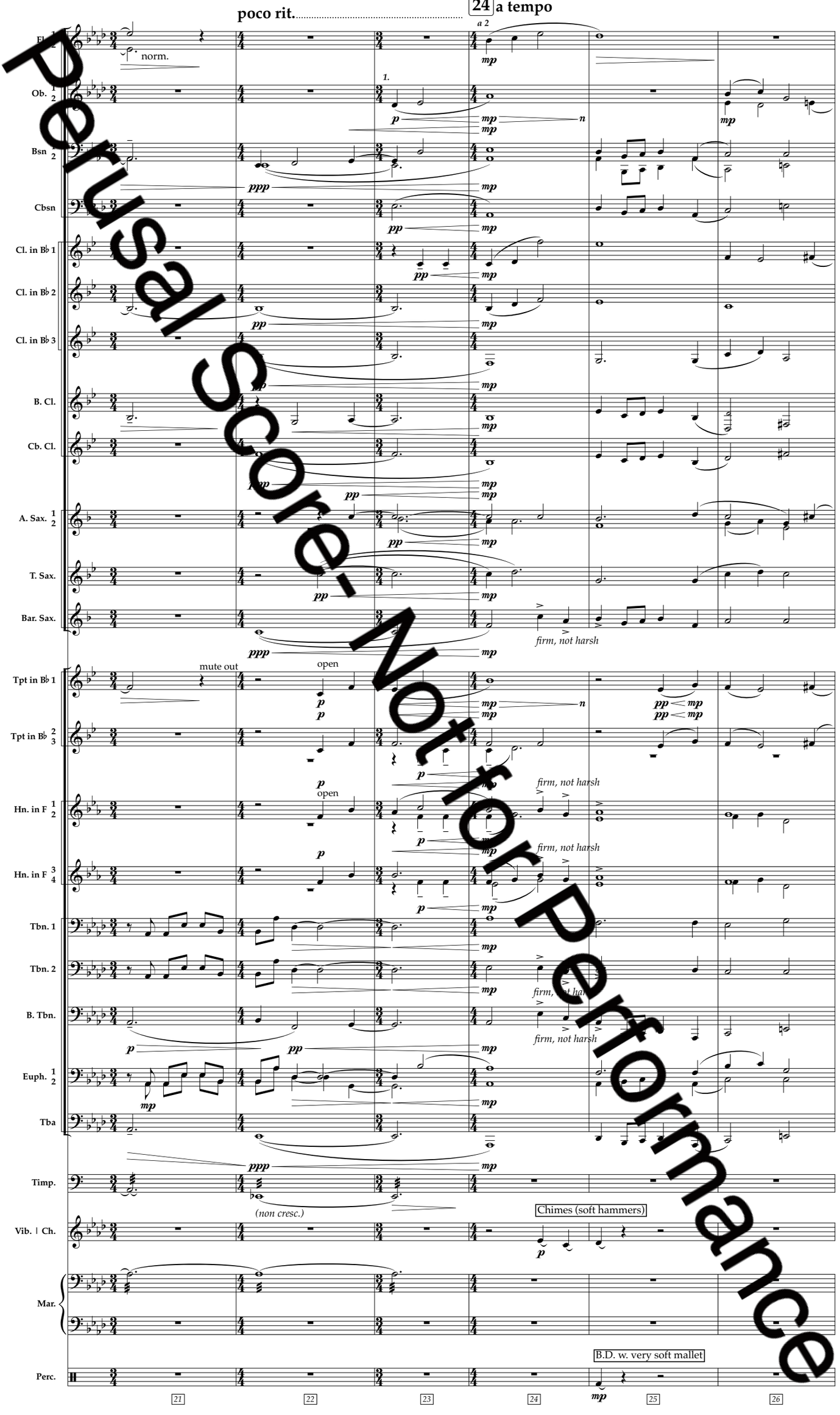

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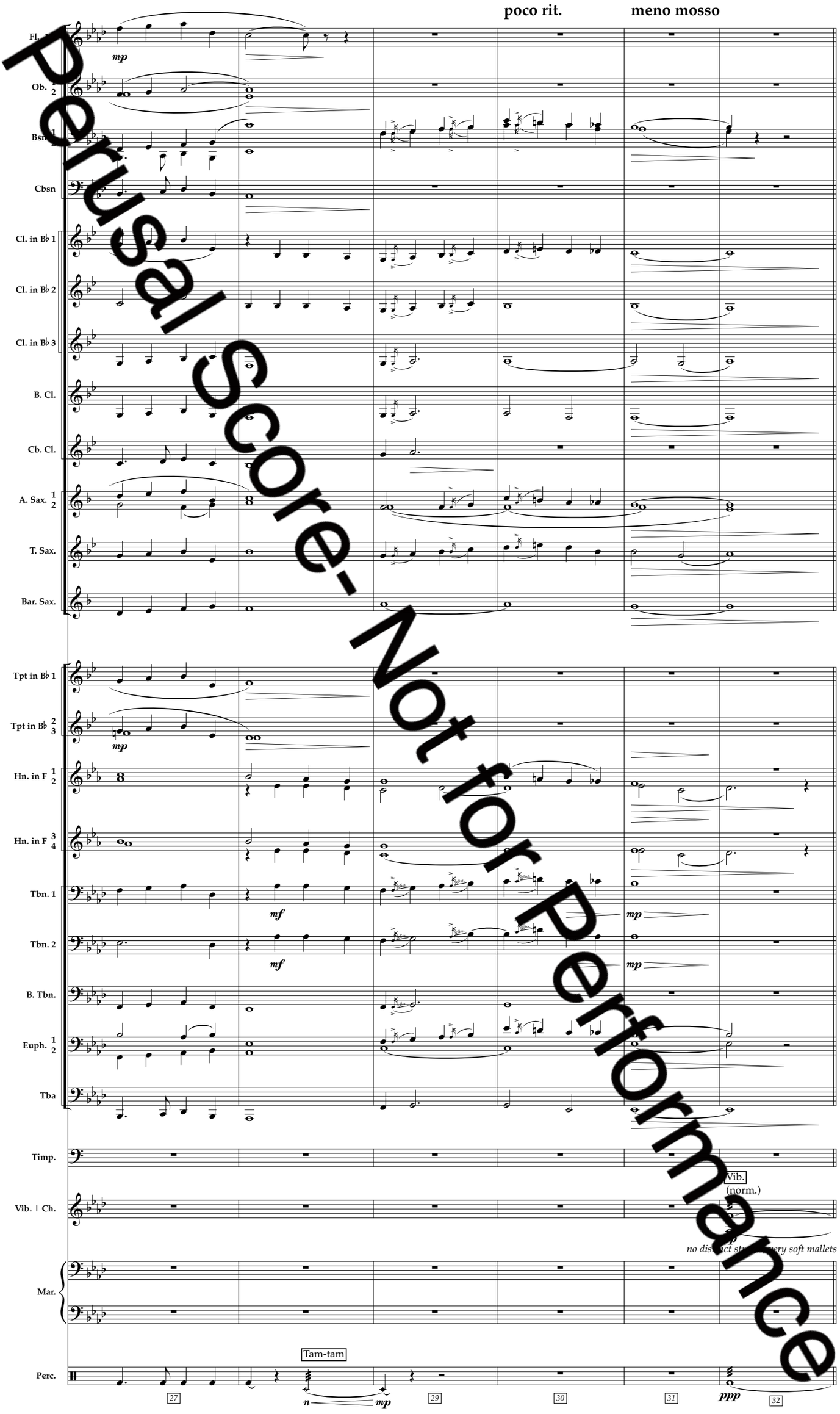

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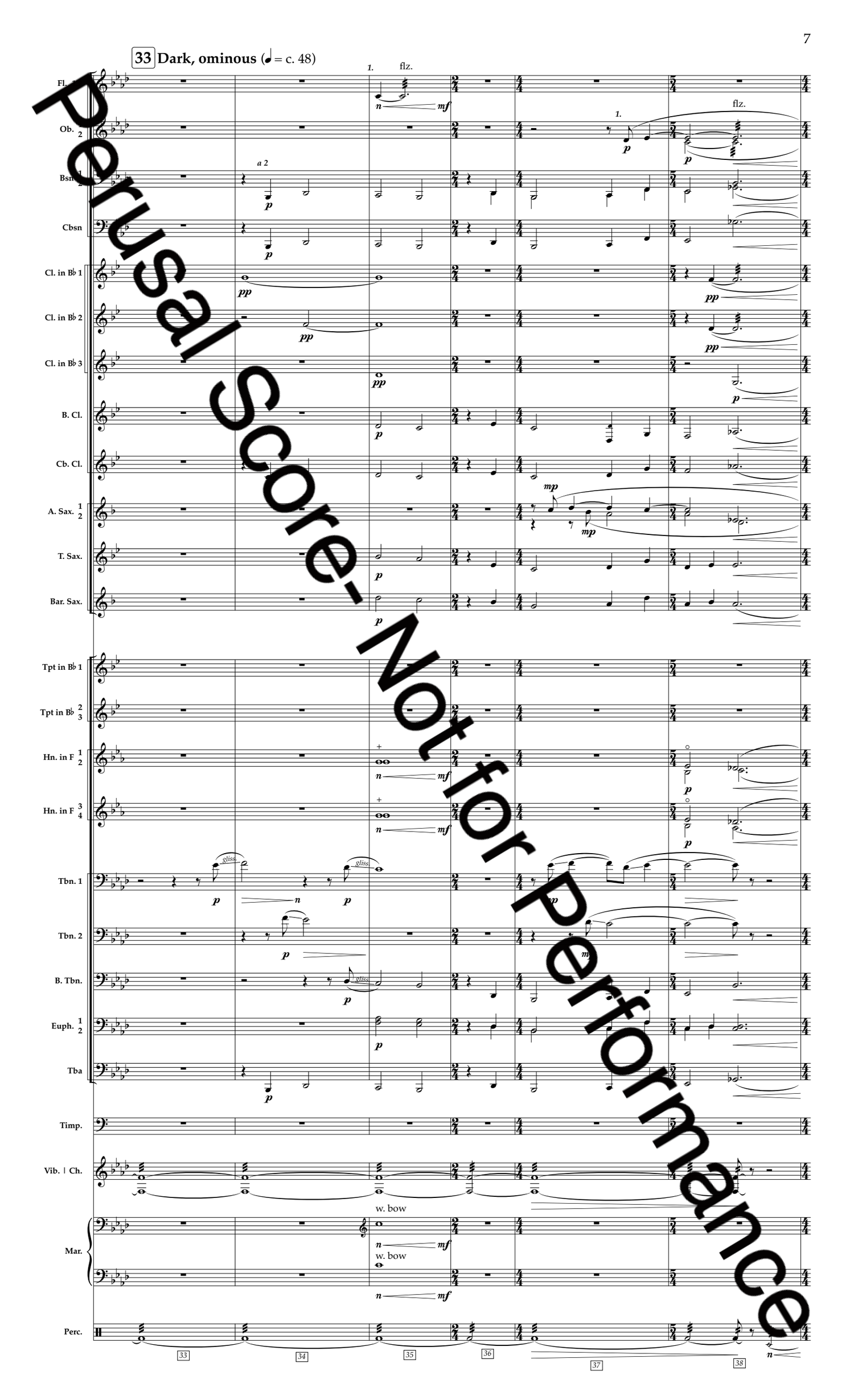

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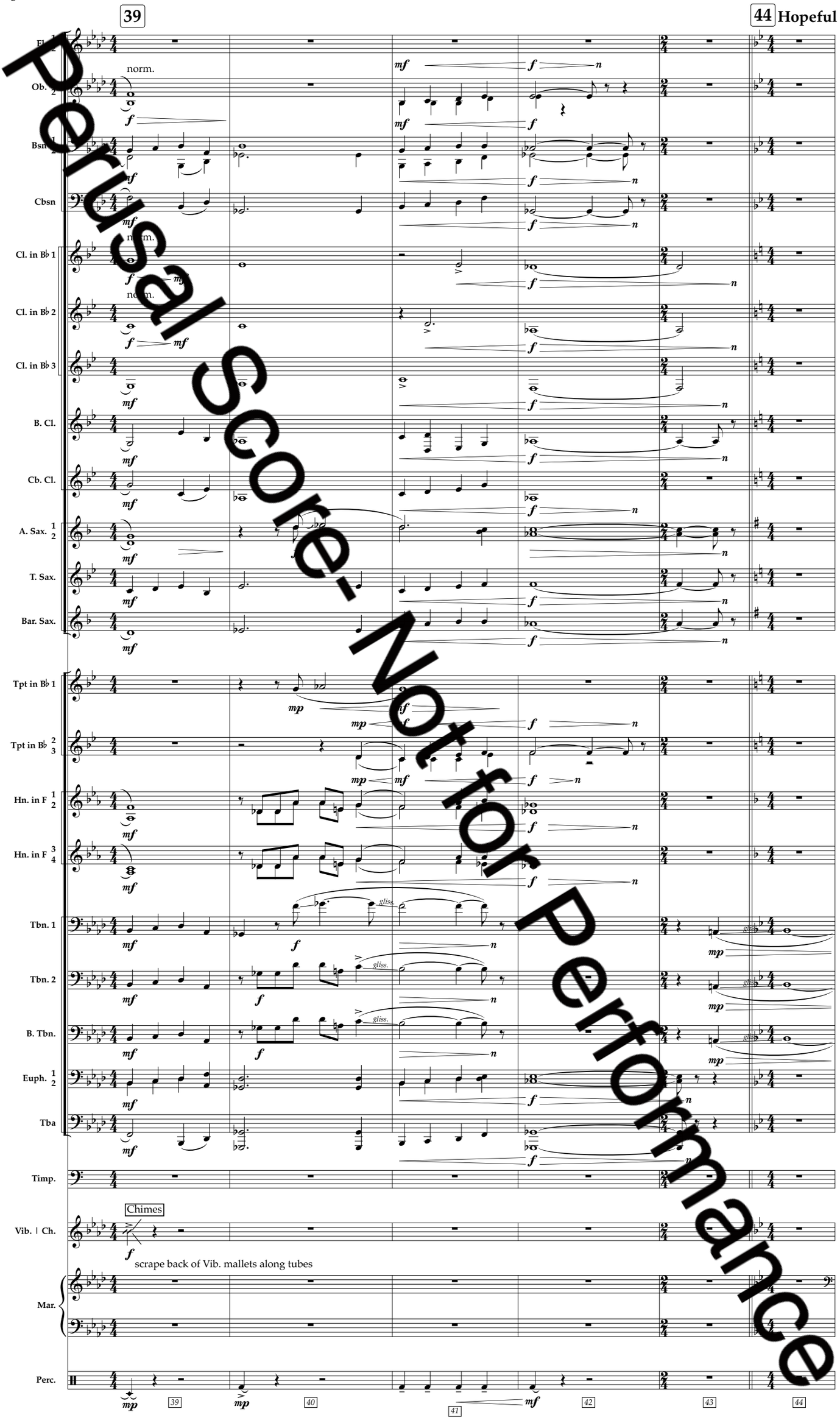

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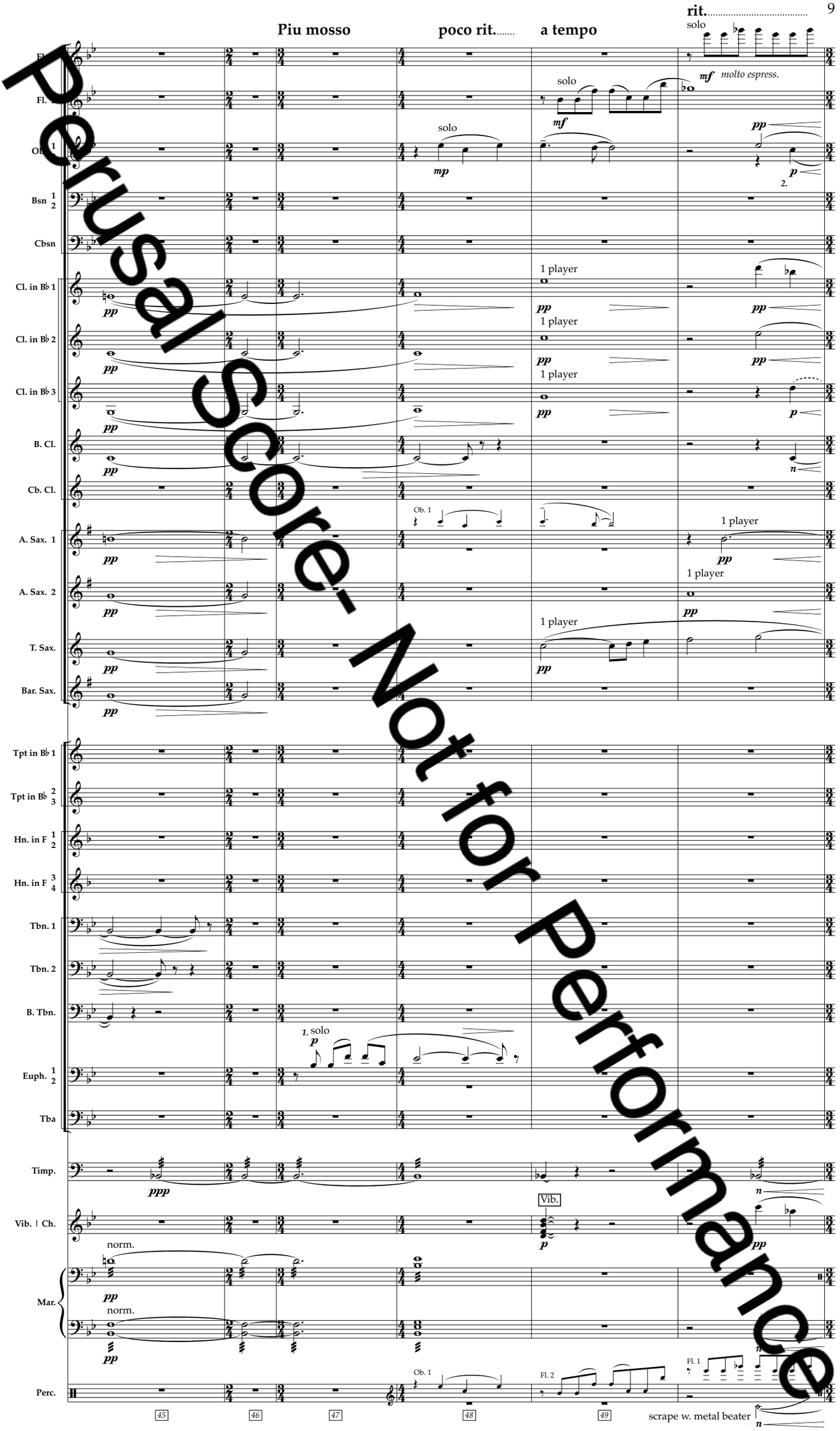

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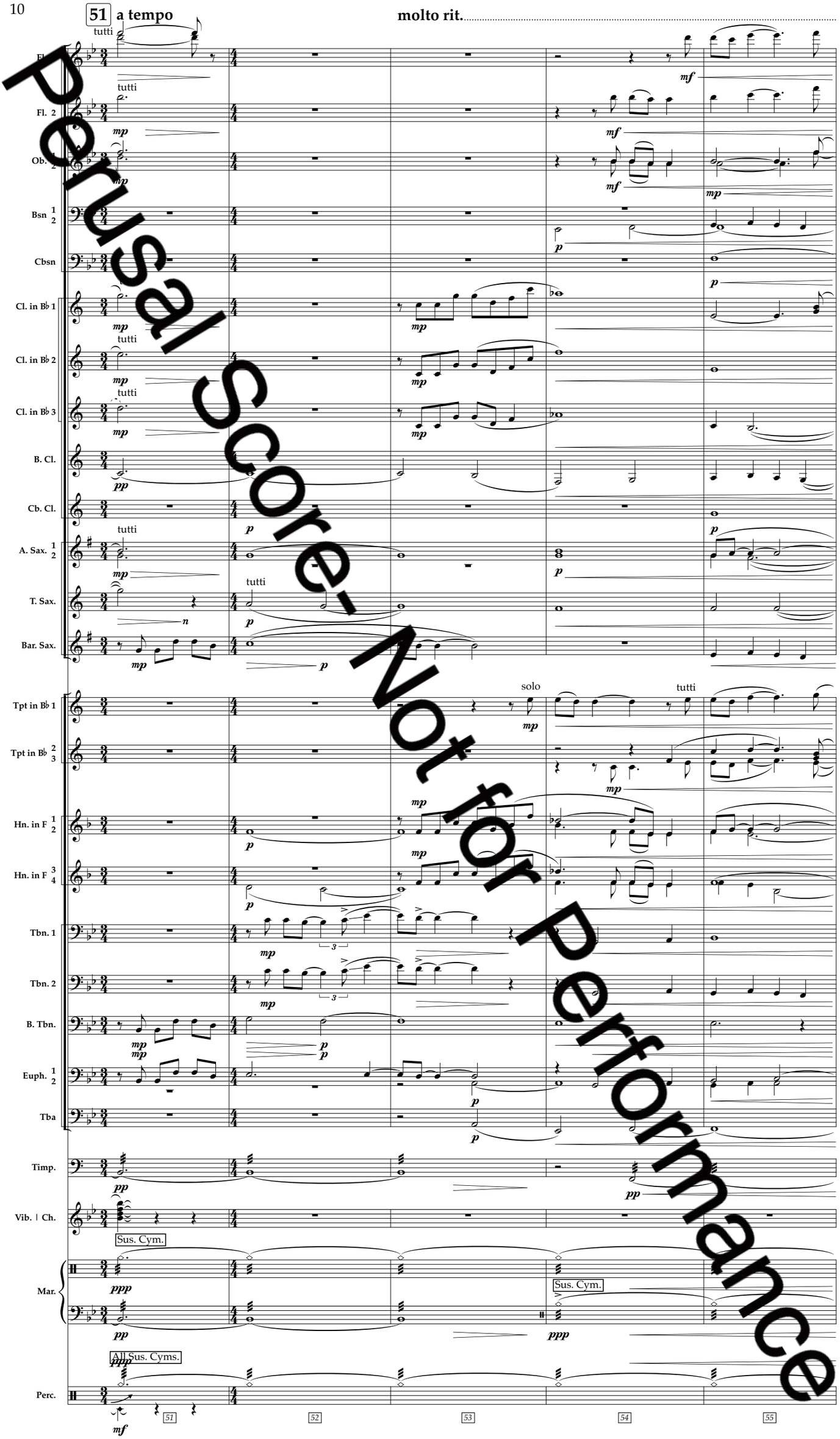

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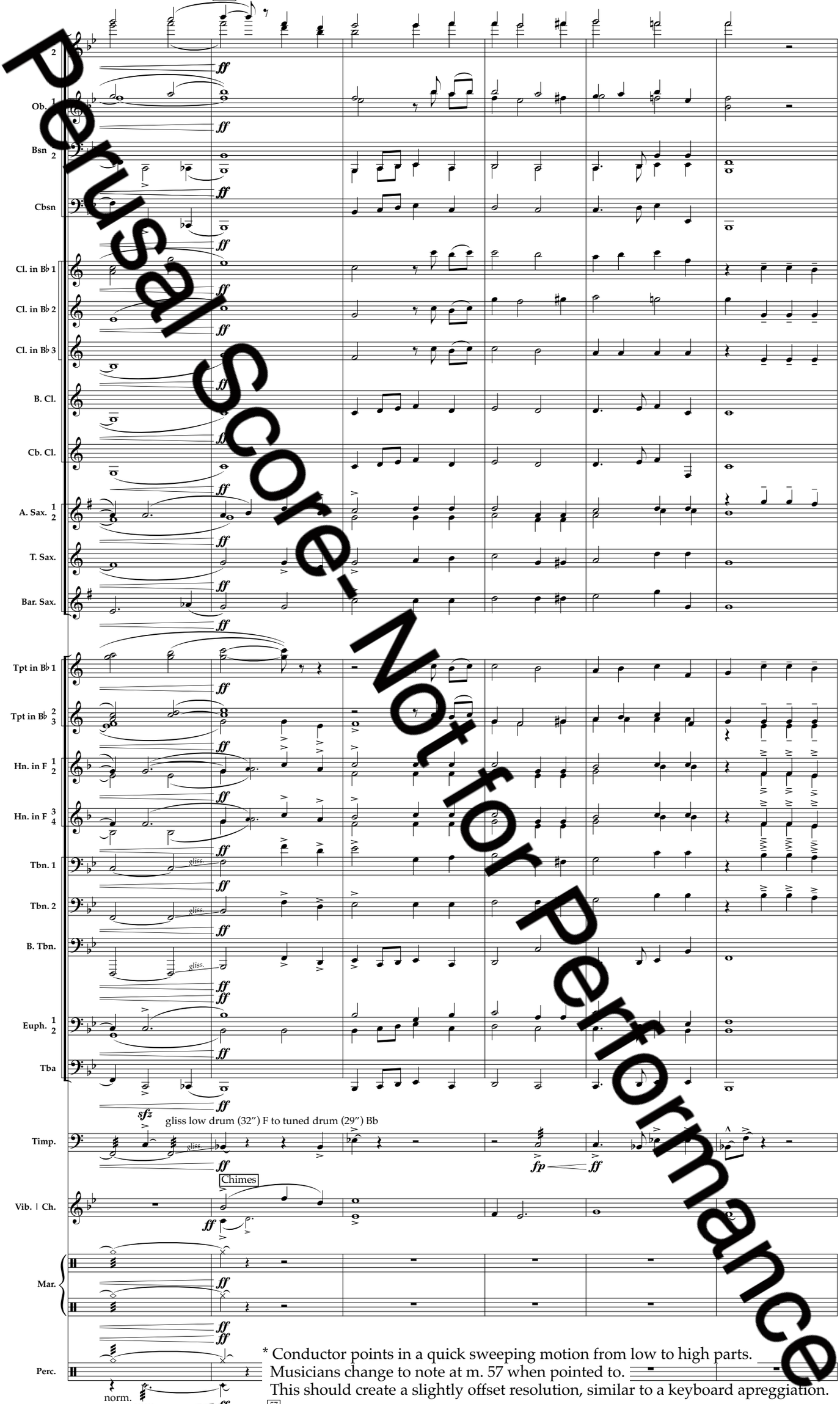
57 **Maestoso***



* Conductor points in a quick sweeping motion from low to high parts. Musicians change to note at m. 57 when pointed to. This should create a slightly offset resolution, similar to a keyboard apreggiation.

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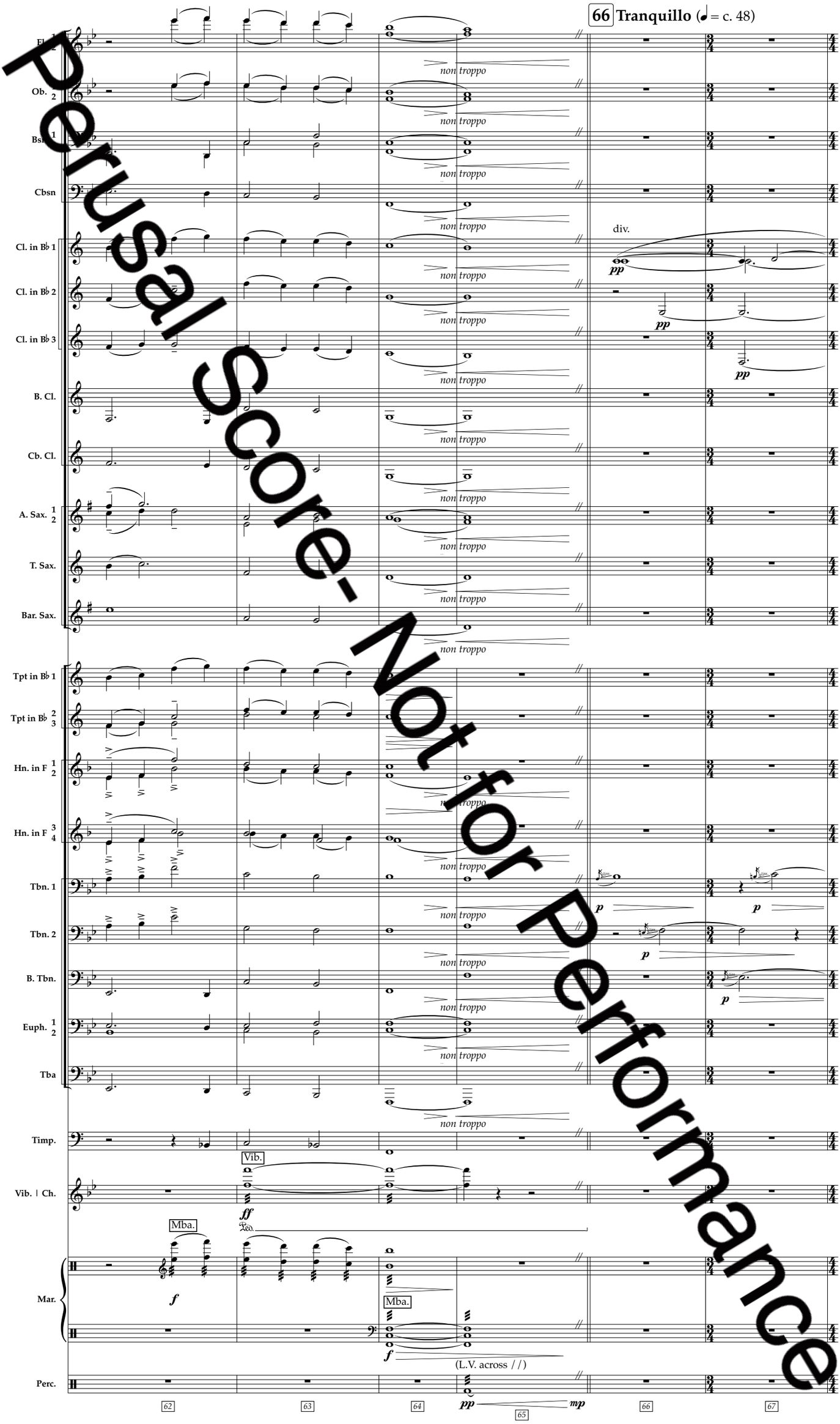

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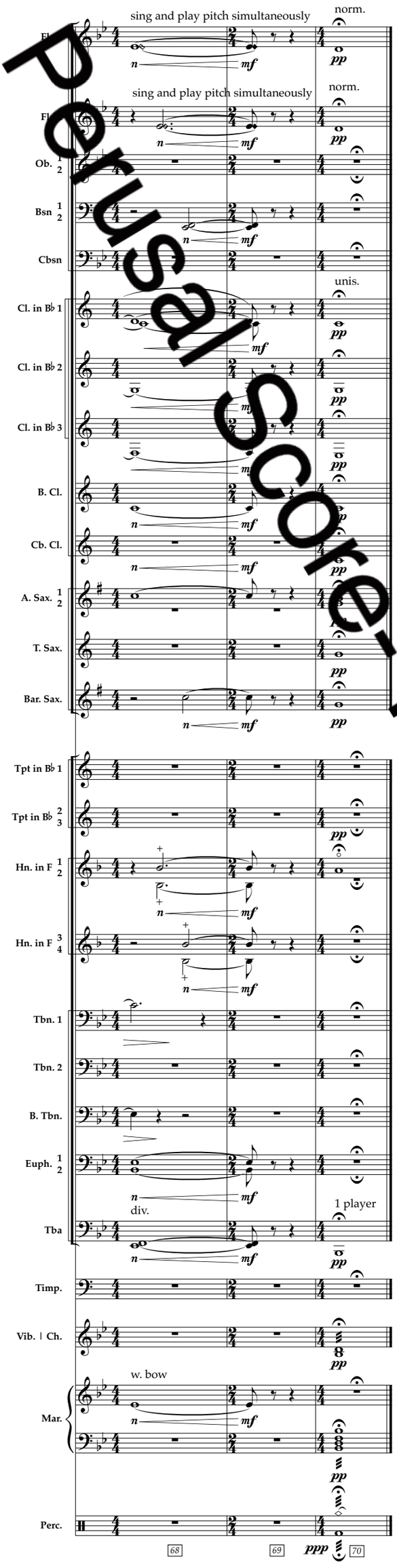

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