

Circuits

Classical Guitar

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

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(2013)

Duration: 5 minutes

Commissioned by Gideon Whitehead

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Program Notes

Composing for a solo instrument always presents unique challenges: sustaining rhythmic momentum, balancing melody, harmony and counterpoint, providing textural variety, etc. These challenges are compounded in this case by the technical complexity of the guitar, which for me, is an instrument I was completely unfamiliar with, apart from learning to strum a few chords when I was a child.

To confront some of the difficulties of solo writing, (and to write a piece for guitar that was actually playable) I challenged myself to study and draw upon some of the unique aspects of guitar technique. I started with the opening motive, a quick, syncopated figure with a repeating melodic contour. This idea became the basis for most of the piece; repeating perpetual motion highlighted by syncopated interjections. To provide contrast, the central section features the guitar's ability to accompany a melody in the upper register with chords and running figures in the lower register. To transition back to the recapitulation, another ostinato is used, this time in the lowest register of the instrument and with the melody underneath the flowing accompaniment.

The title Circuits refers to the repeating material's "circular" nature and more broadly, to the overall rounded form of the piece.

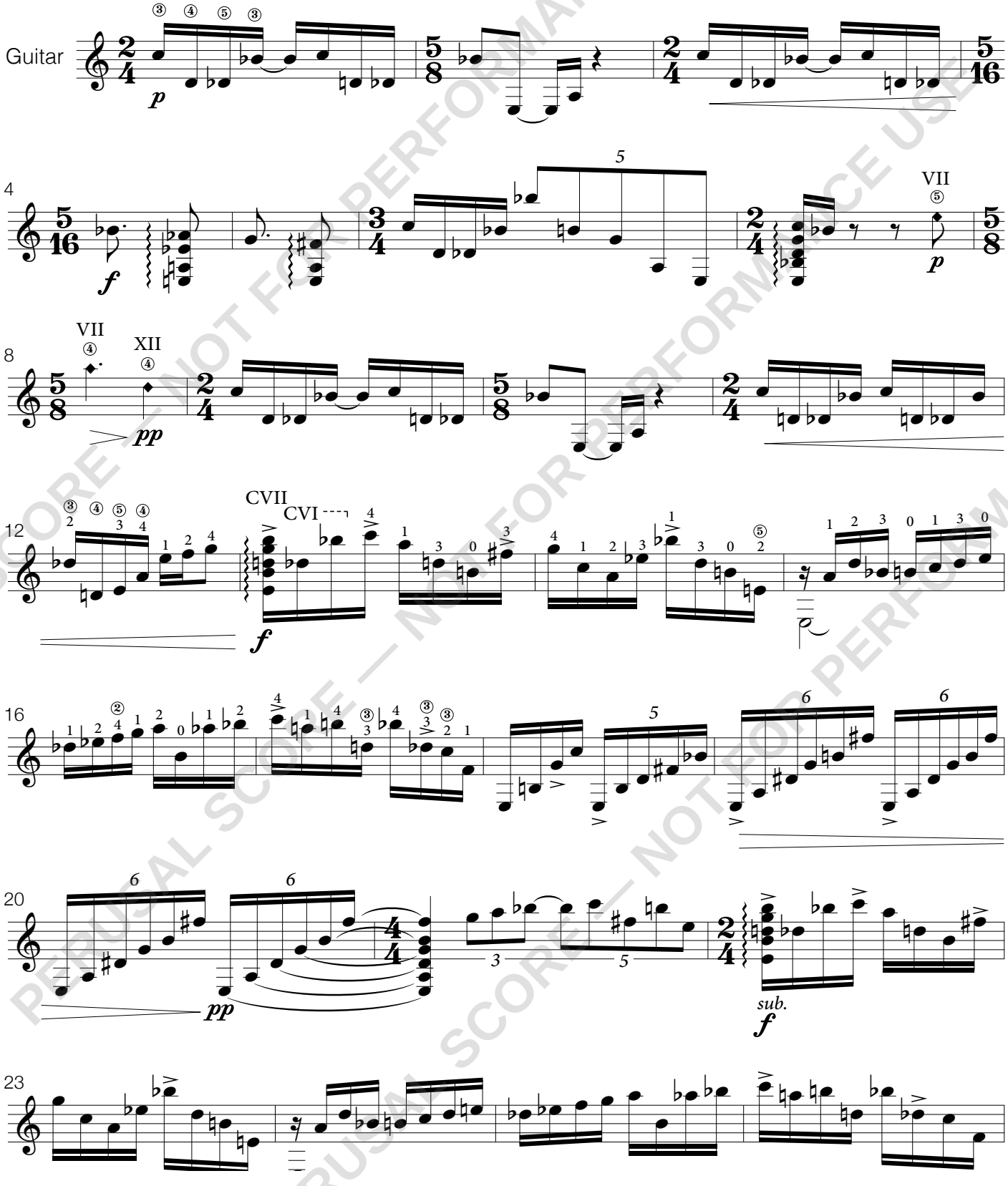
to Gideon Whitehead

Circuits

for classical guitar

Luke Carlson

Energetic ♩ = 100 – 108



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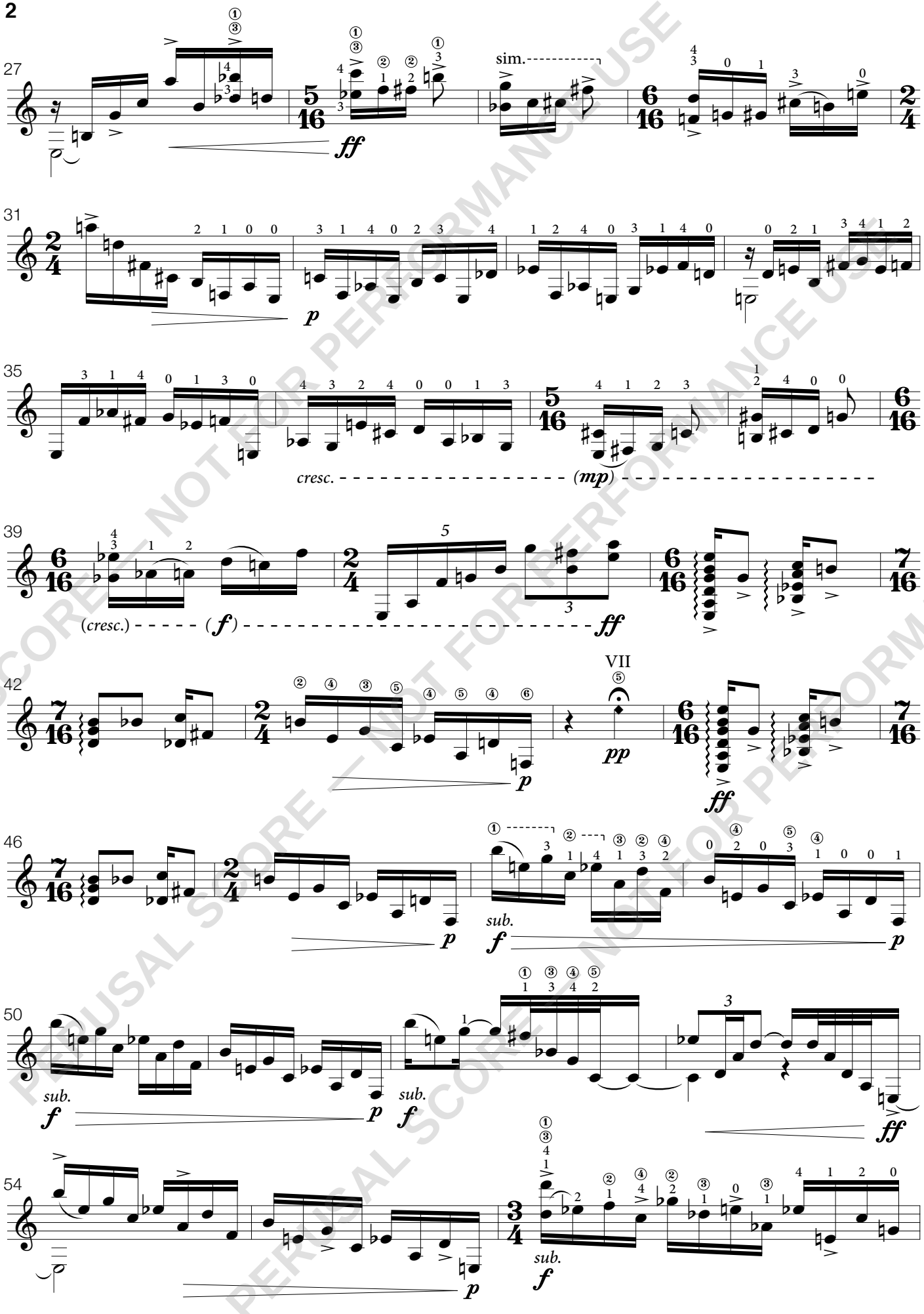

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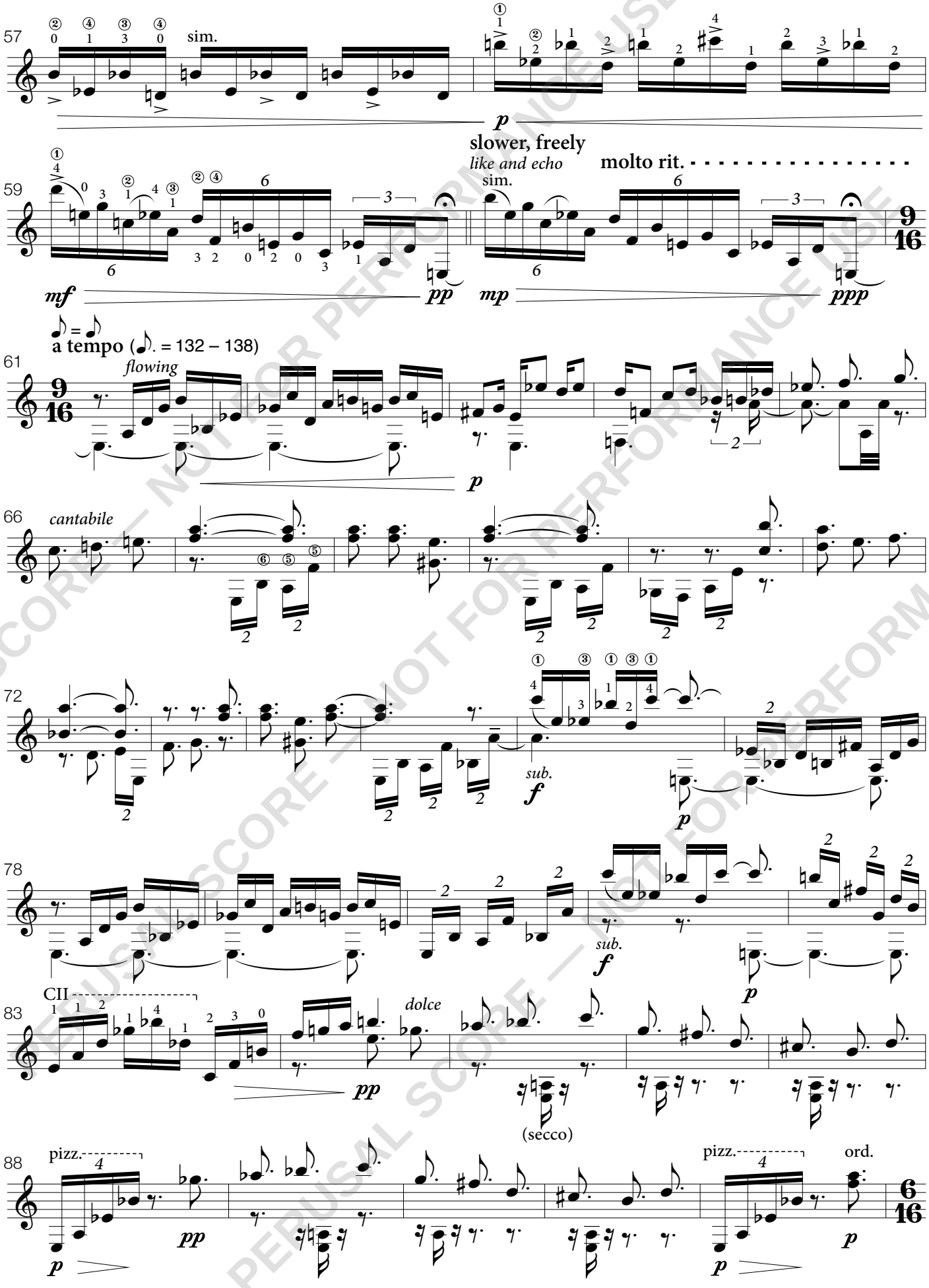

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