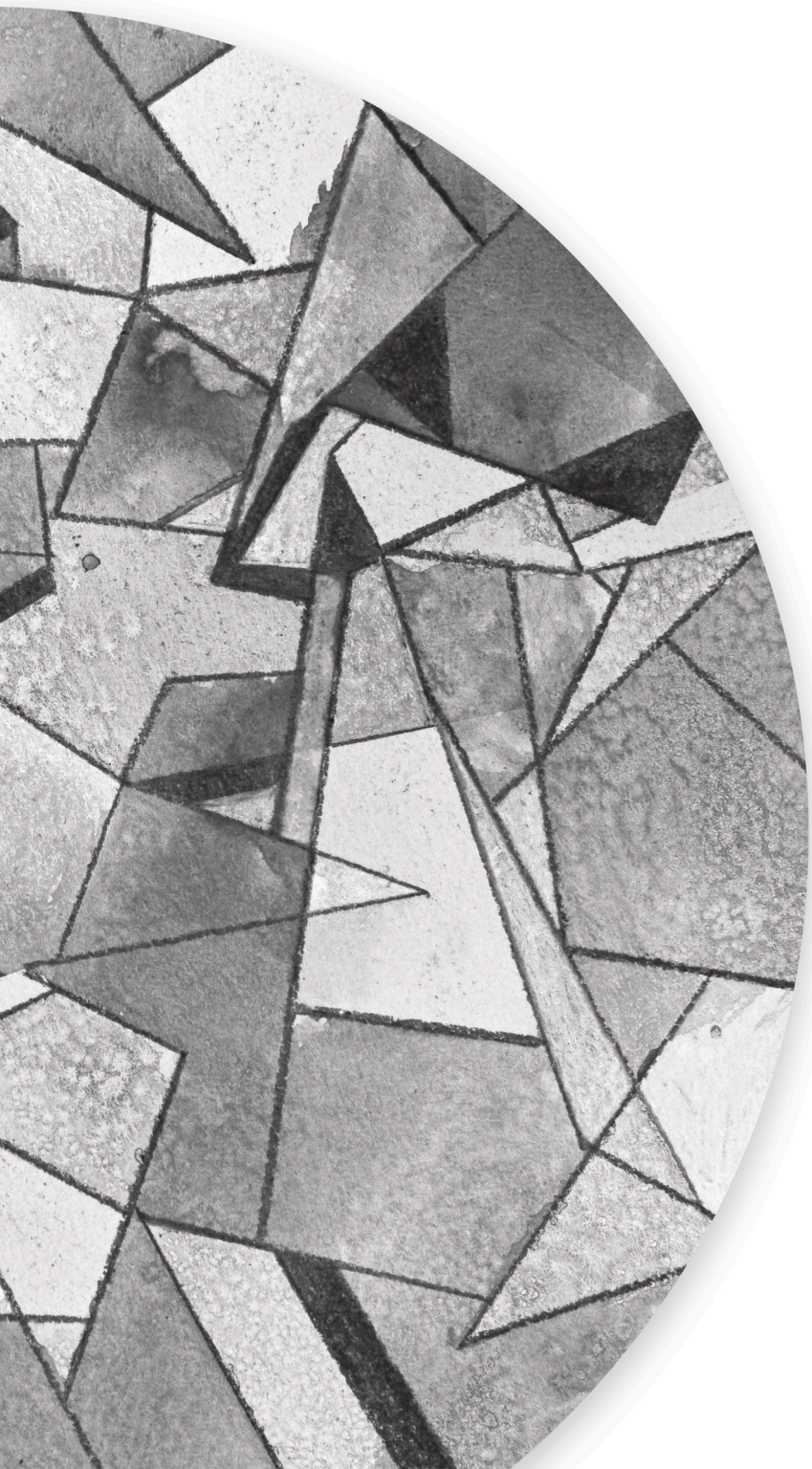

Edges

String Quartet

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

Edges

String Quartet

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

Edges

String Quartet

(2013)

Duration: 7 minutes

Commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival Susan and Ford Schumann Center for Composition

www.lukecarlsonmusic.com

luke@lukecarlsonmusic.com

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Program Notes

The title Edges is meant to be ambiguous. It could refer to the soft- or hard-edged sounds in the piece, or as this image implies, the shapely form of the string instruments themselves.

The musical material for Edges finds its origin in a simple, descending three-note motive, C-sharp–A–G. This motive is repeated frequently in the opening section and returns throughout the piece in different transpositions and rhythmic augmentations and diminutions. This motive "hints" at a longer melodic idea which is deliberately withheld until the closing moments of the work, where the first violin is given a long, fully realized melody based on this simple three-note fragment.

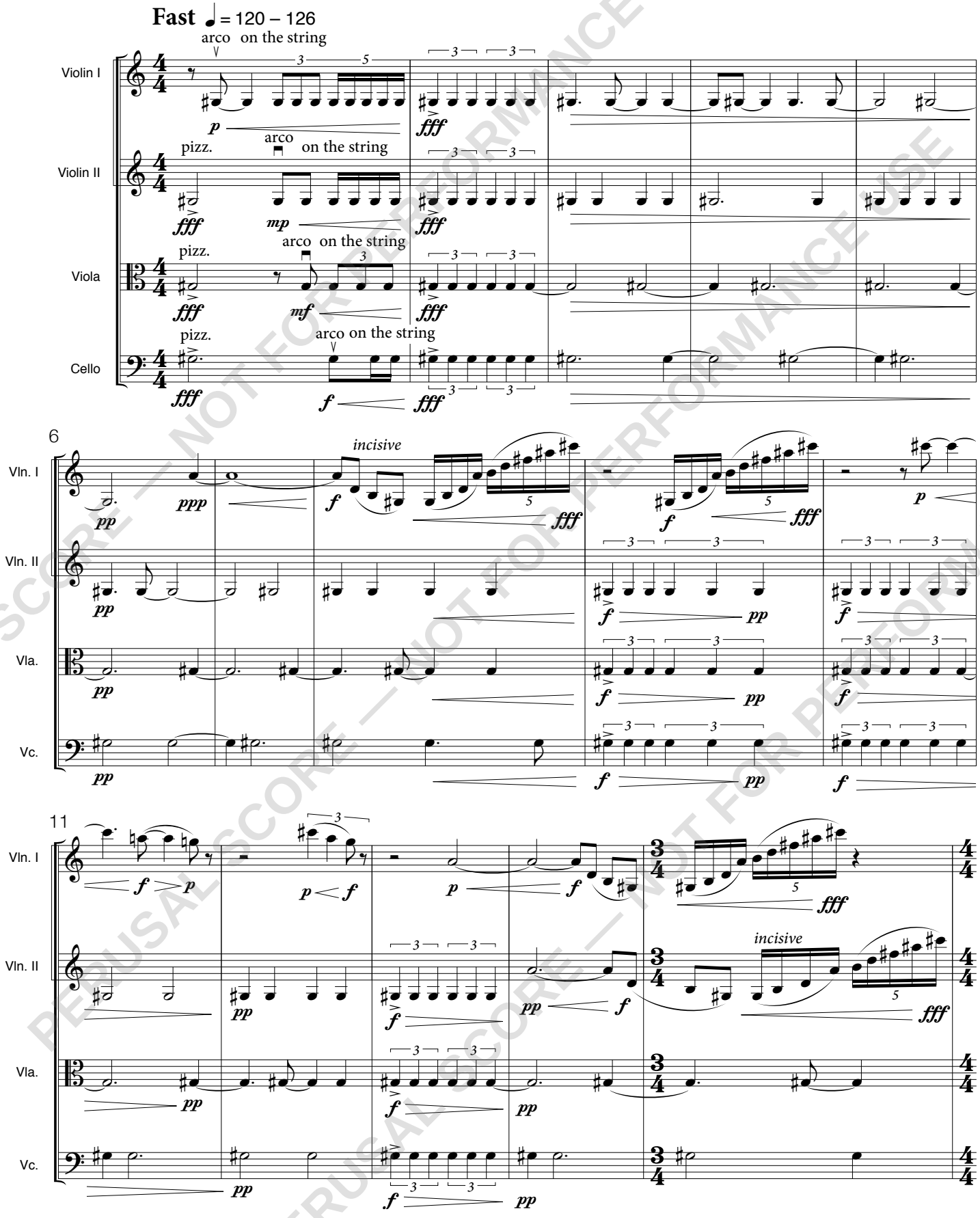
In addition to the melodic considerations, contrast and homogeneity are two main compositional ideas that contribute to the overall identity of the piece. Homogeneity is provided by the homophonic and unison string writing, blending the quartet into a merged, single string sound; contrast is highlighted by the diversity of textures and moods, ranging from contemplative to capricious; frenetic to calming.

Edges is loosely based on a five-section arch form. Swirling arpeggios open and close the piece, contrapuntal interjections comprise the second and fourth sections, and the middle of the quartet is a slower, more introspective period of tranquillity.

Edges

for string quartet

Luke Carlson



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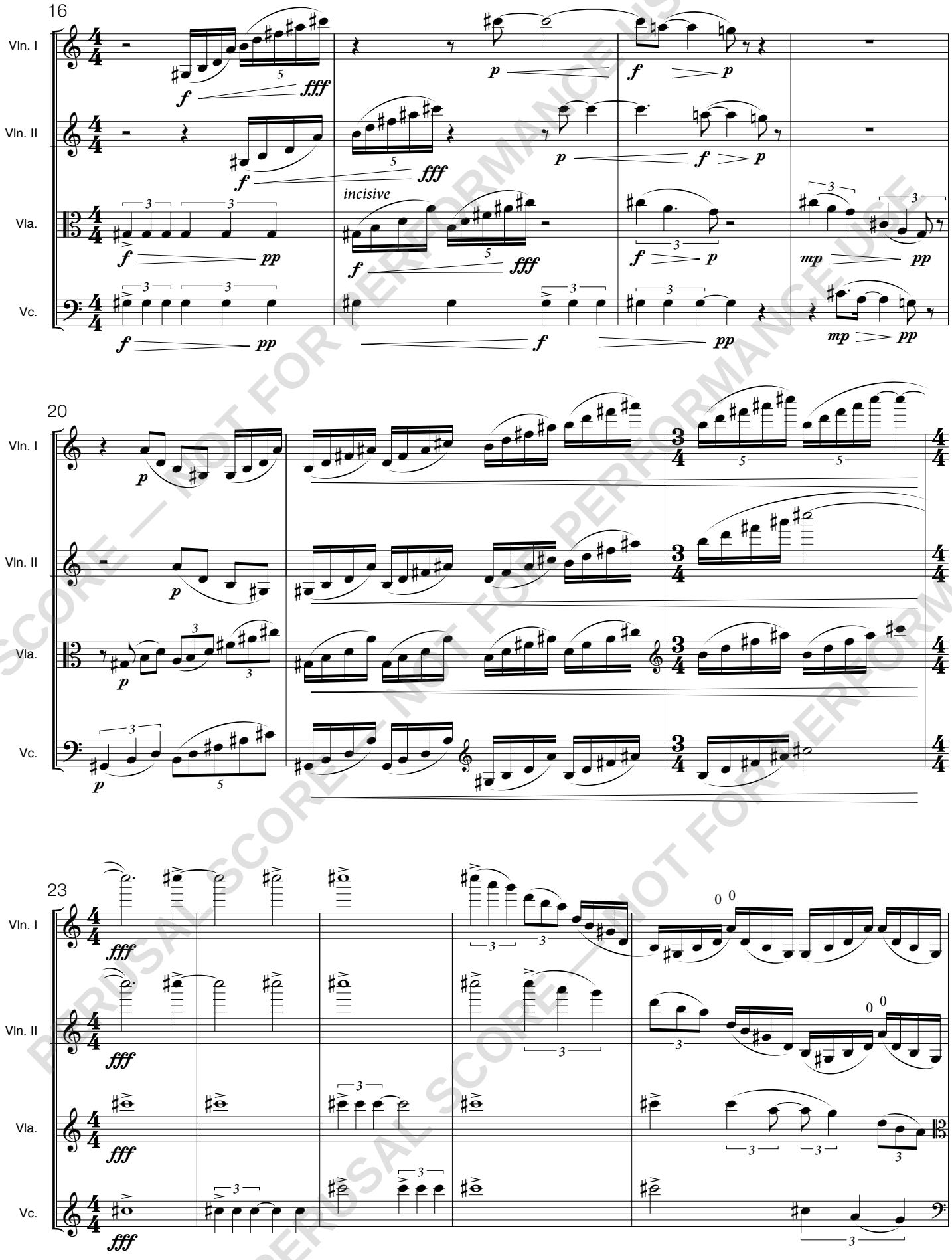

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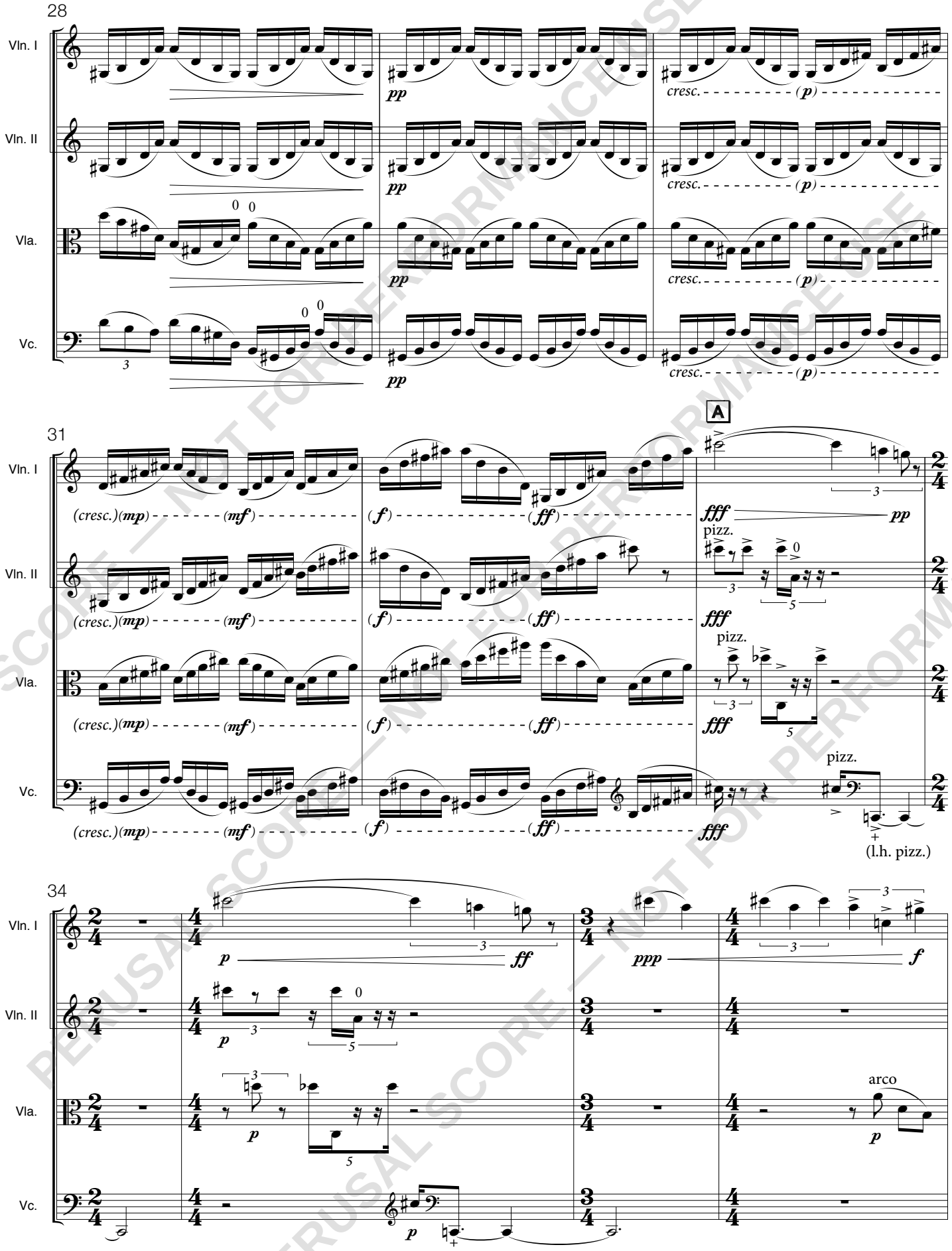

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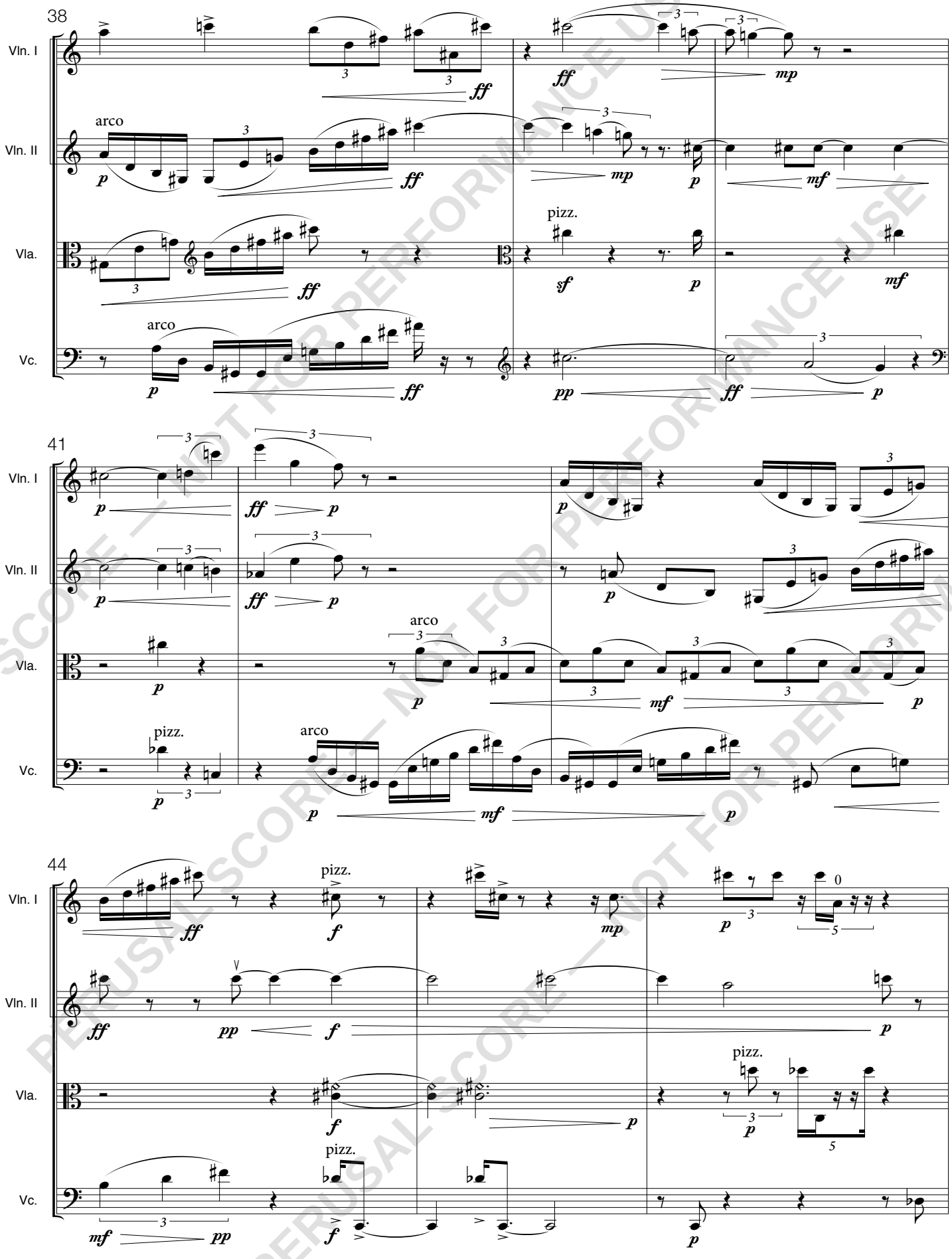

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