

Spectra

Clarinet, Horn, Viola, & Piano

LUKE CARLSON MUSIC

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(2013)

Duration: 12 minutes

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Program Notes

The three movements of Spectra are inspired by colors, or more specifically, particular shades of colors and their unique names: Viridian (bluish-green), Zaffre (deep blue), and Carmine (dark red).

Viridian is a relatively dark shade of spring green, and takes its name from the Latin, viridis, meaning “green.” The music is intended to have an organic and free-form feel both in terms of how the material is originally exposed and then developed, as well as the fluctuation between slow and fast tempi. The beginning and ending of this movement foreshadows the music that follows in the second and third movements, tying together the piece as a whole and planting seeds that are later fully developed.

The second movement, Zaffre, explores distant, expansive sounds that eventually develop into declamatory and jagged outbursts both at the beginning and ending of the movement. This is contrasted by the middle section which subtly imitates a Baroque aesthetic, light and detached playing from the piano under longer, quasi-tonal melodic fragments and suspension figures in the other instruments. Zaffre is a deep blue pigment obtained by roasting cobalt ore and was used in the staining of glass.

The English word Carmine is derived through French and Medieval Latin from the Arabic qirmiz “crimson,” and the Sanskrit word krimiga, meaning “worm, insect.” The pigment is produced by boiling dried insects in water to extract the carminic acid, a clear solution which is then treated with alum to produce a dark-red color. The music is in no a way trying to reference insects—alive, dead, boiled or otherwise—but rather the intense and bold nature of the color itself. The music is made up of relentless figurations in the clarinet, horn and viola, with dramatic punctuation provided by the piano. The form is a sort of rondo, where the main thematic material returns periodically, contrasted by sections of varied texture and mood but all of a fast and energetic nature.

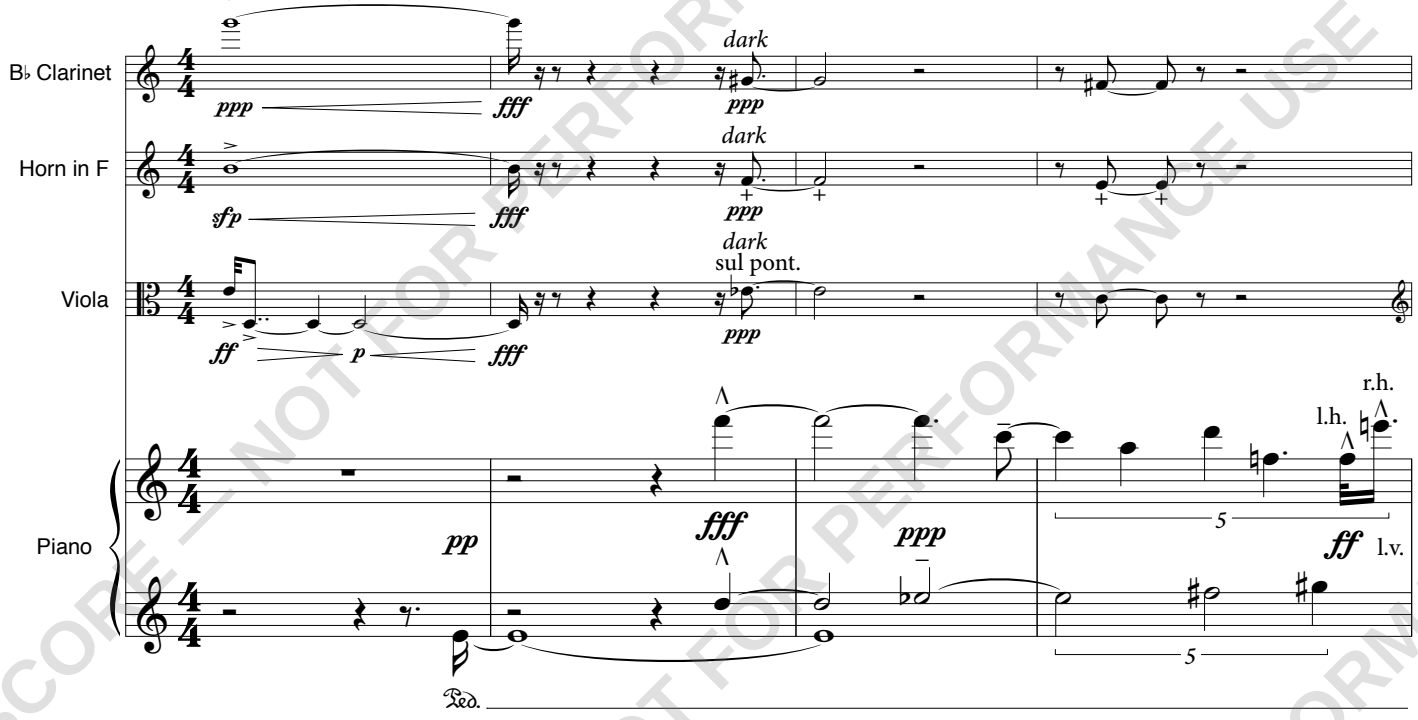
Spectra

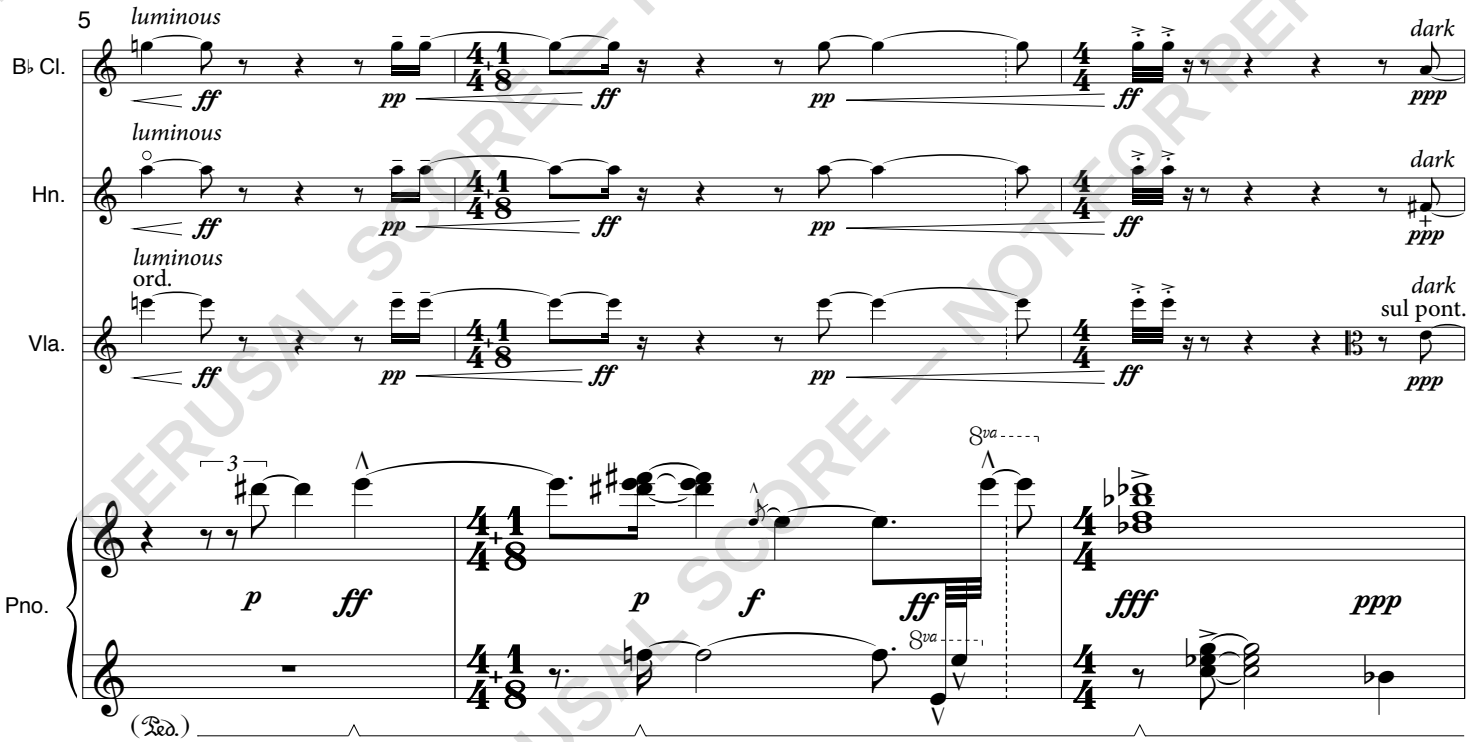
for clarinet, horn, viola and piano

Luke Carlson
(b. 1983)

I. Viridian *bluish-green*

Organically ♩ = 60





PERUSAL SCORE — NOT FOR PERFORMANCE USE

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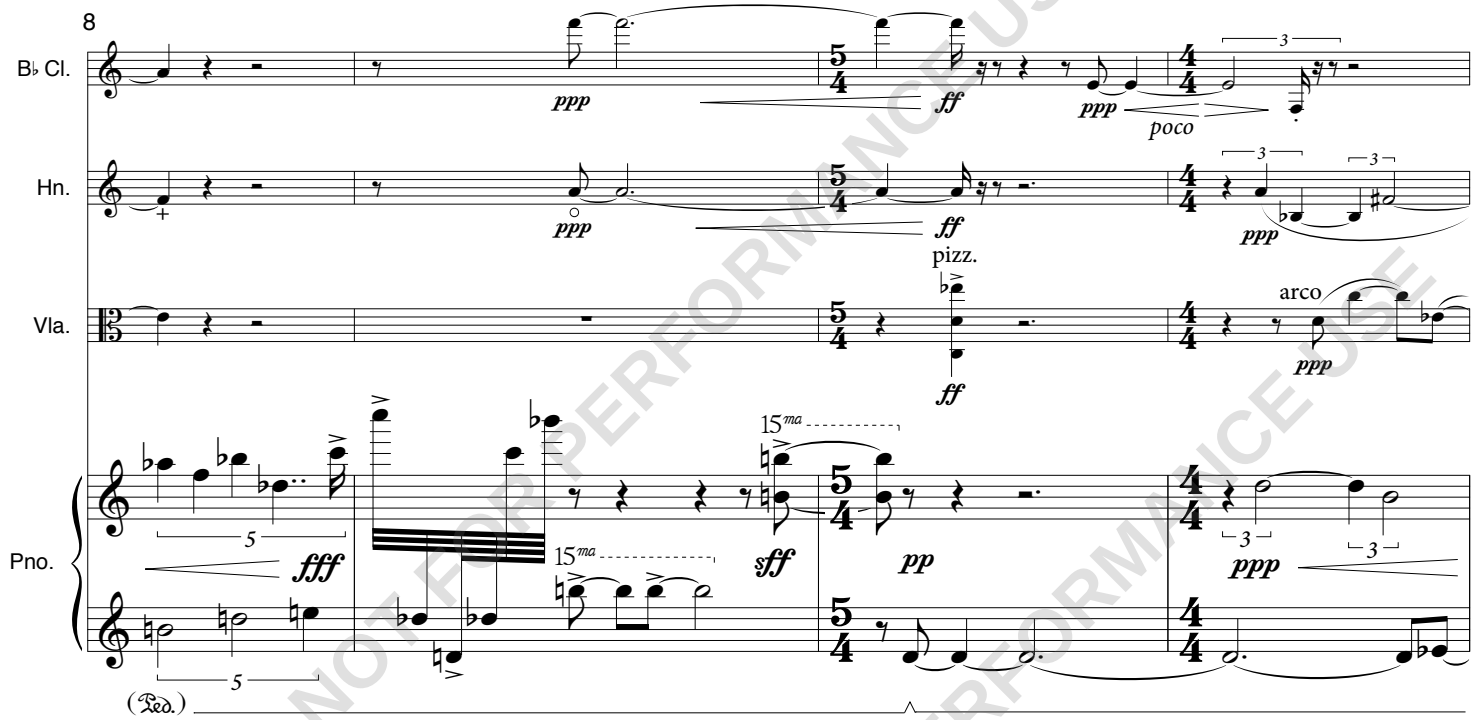

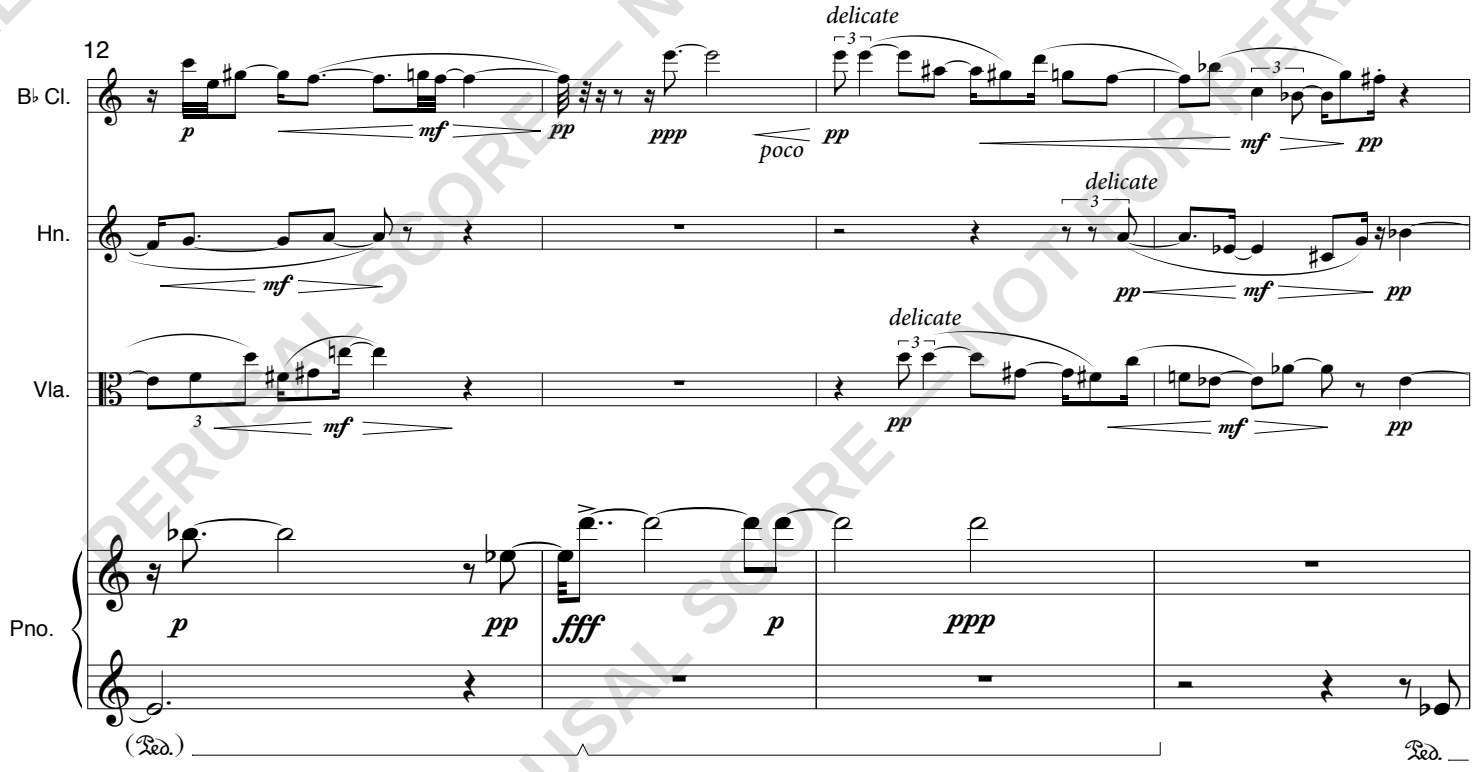

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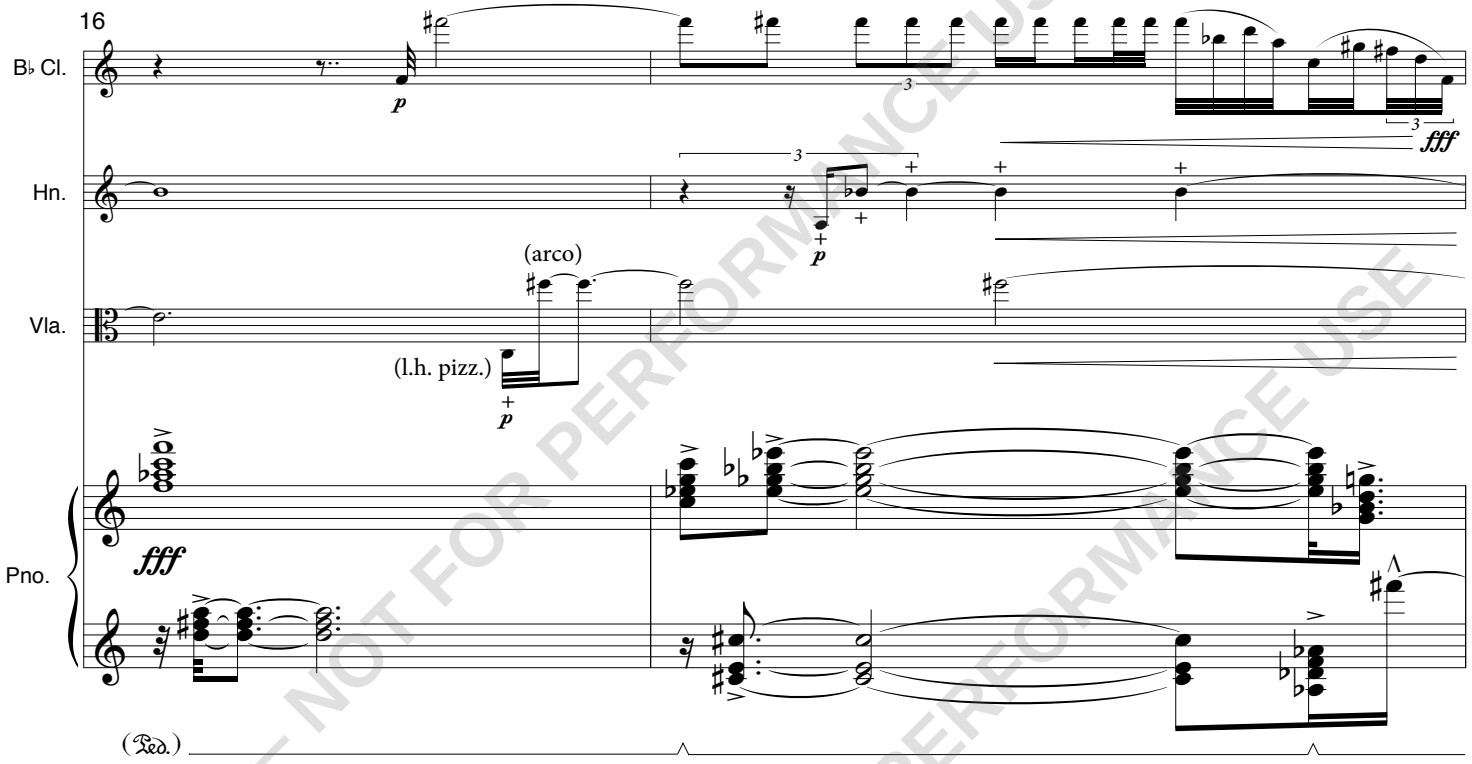



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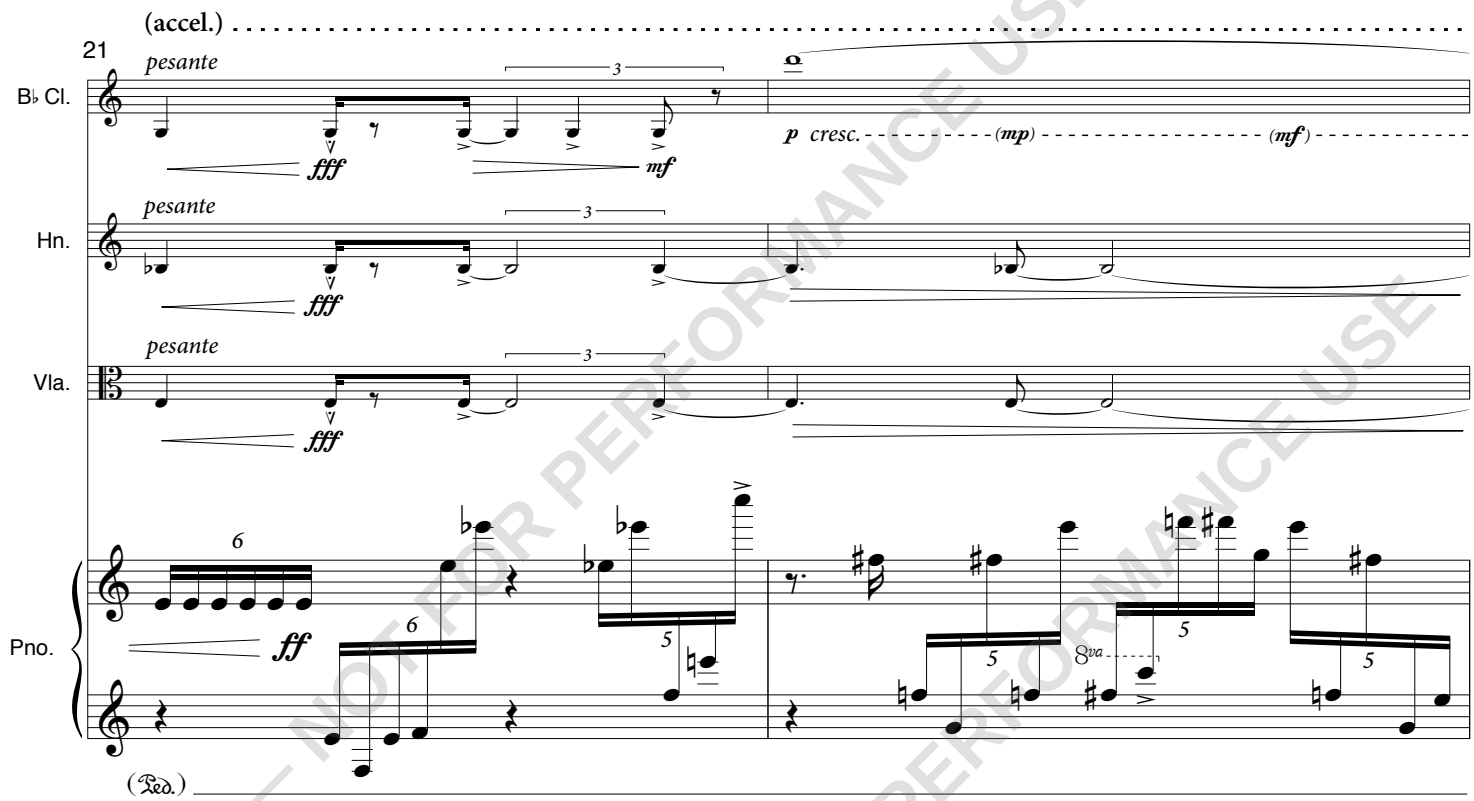

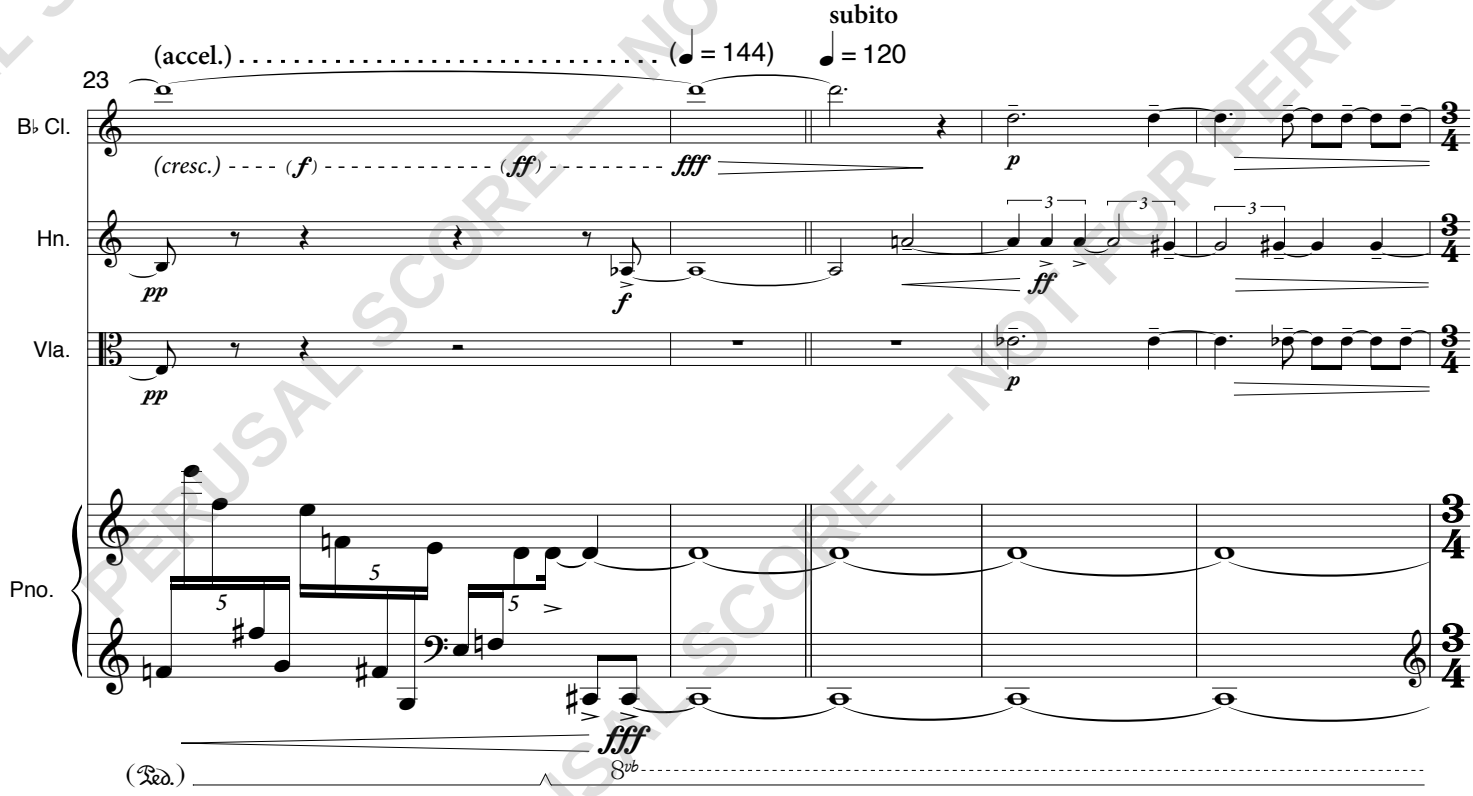

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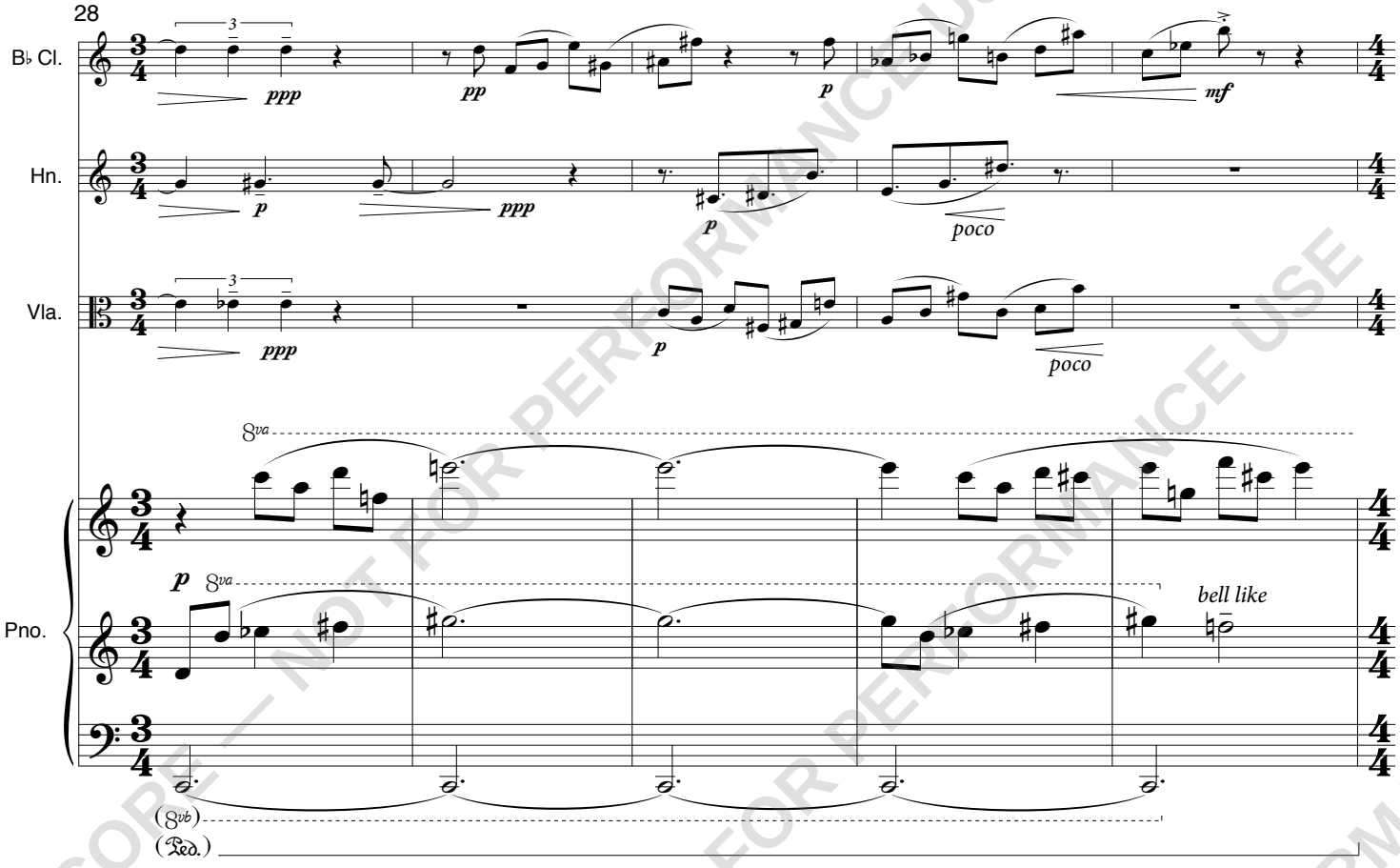

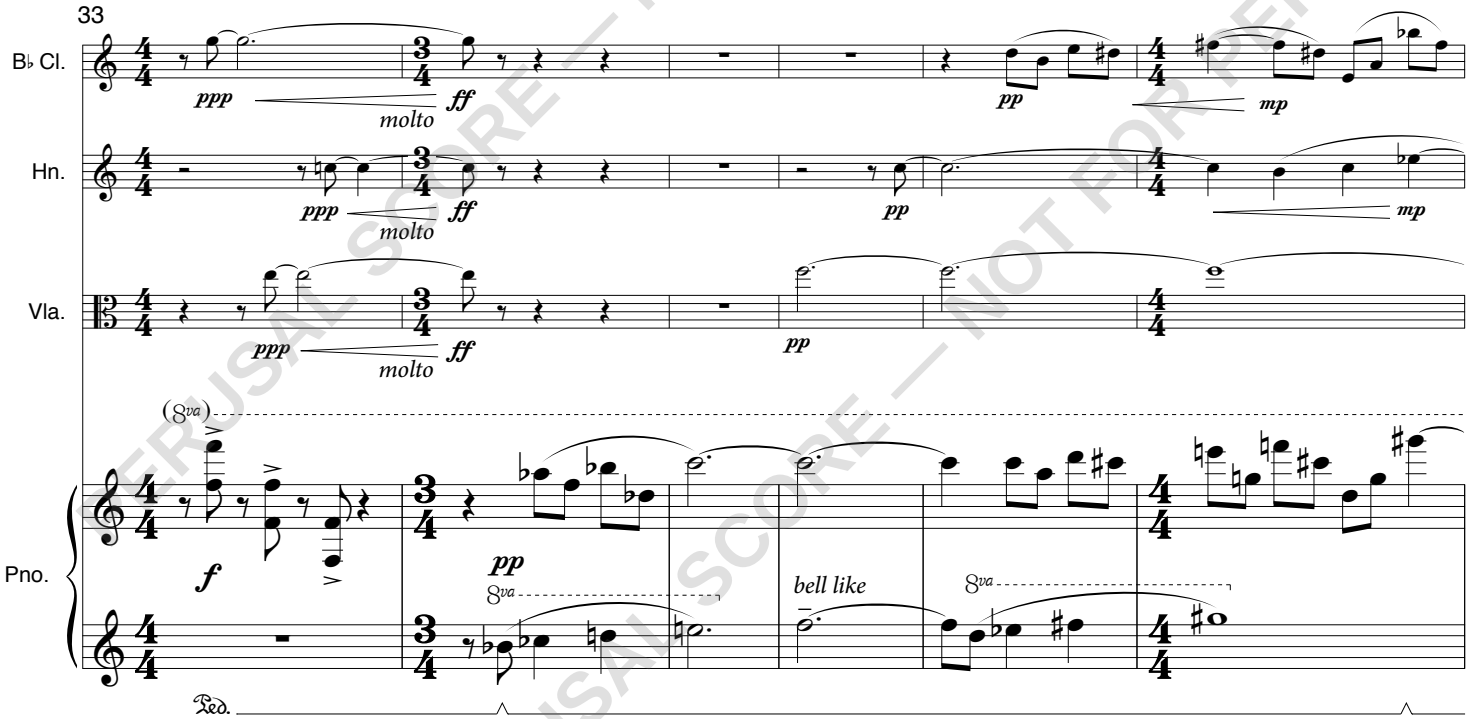

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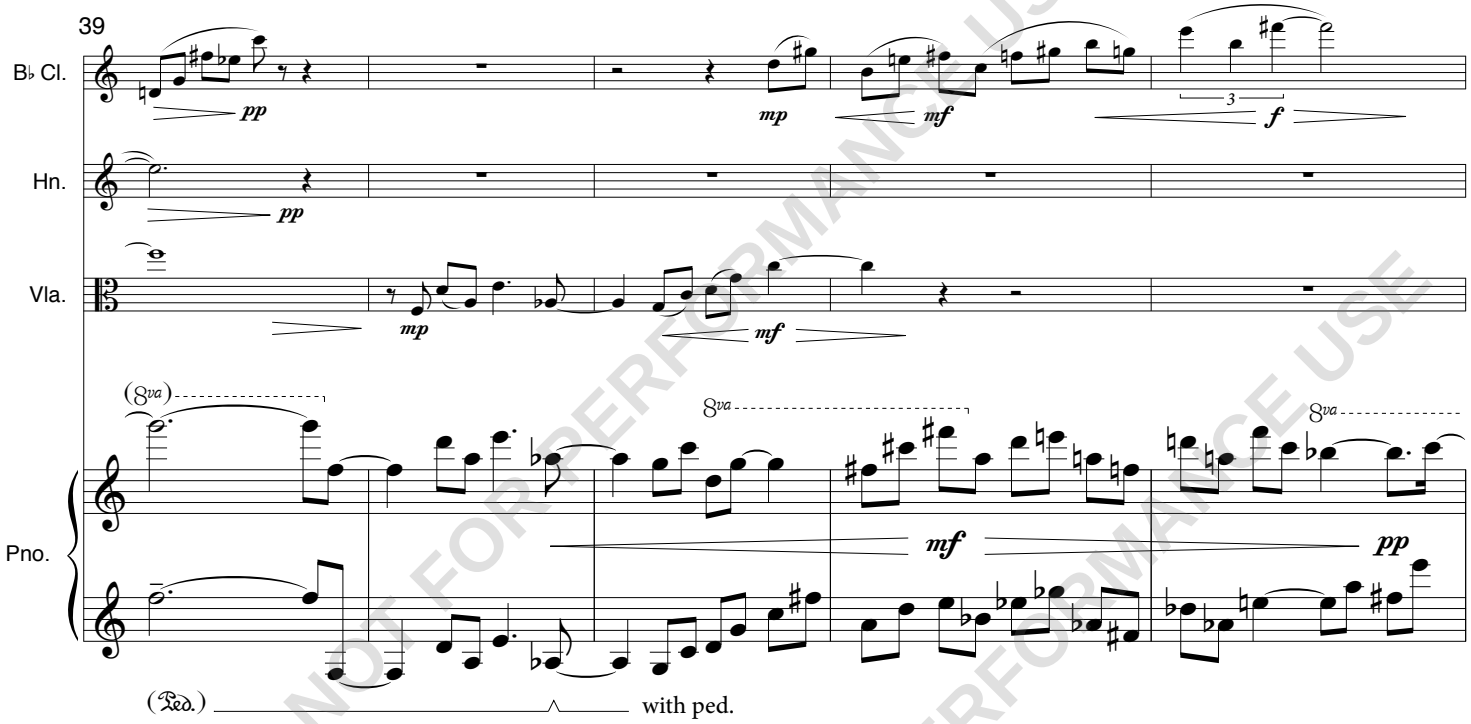

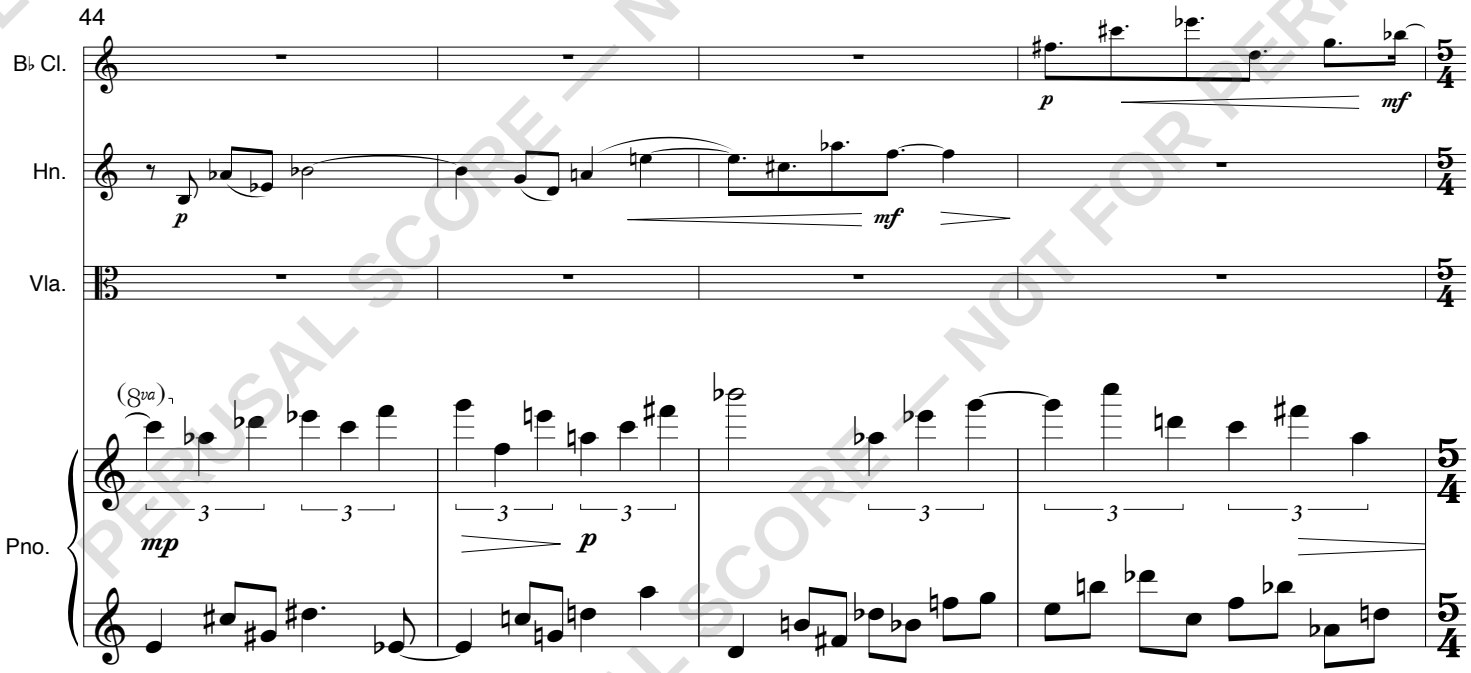

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