

Alex Stephenson

AN ELEMENTAL MUSIC

(2022)

for orchestra

Commissioned by the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus
First performed by the La Jolla Symphony
Michael Gerdes, conductor
Mandeville Auditorium, La Jolla, California
March 18, 2023

DURATION: 12 minutes

MOVEMENTS

I. Crisp, bright1
II. The Cold Song. Desolate, icy 13
III. Dark, mysterious – As in the first movement – Presto 36

INSTRUMENTATION

Piccolo
2 Flutes
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B-flat
2 Bassoons
Contrabassoon

4 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in C
3 Trombones (TTB)
Tuba

Timpani
Percussion (2 players; see requirements below)

Harp
Piano

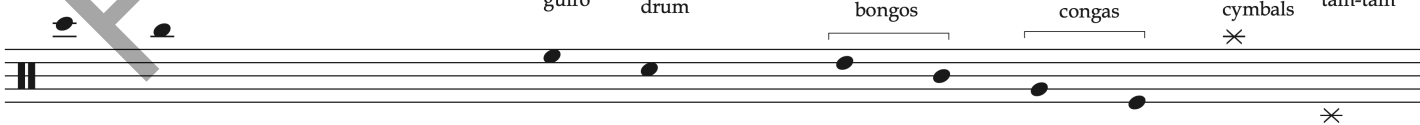
Strings

THE SCORE IS IN C

PERCUSSION REQUIREMENTS

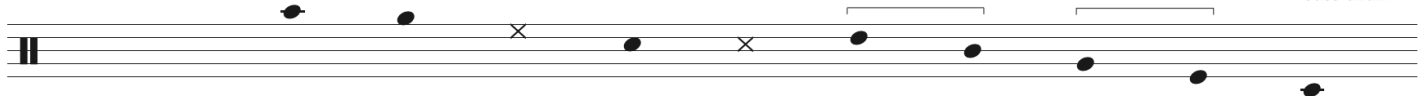
Player 1: Vibraphone, Antique Cymbals  (i.e., two crotales with handles, clashed together, sounding two octaves higher than written), and the following non-pitched instruments:

high wood block med.-high wood block guiro snare drum bongos congas crash cymbals tam-tam



Player 2: Glockenspiel and the following non-pitched instruments:

med.-low wood block low wood block sleigh bells snare drum tambourine bongos congas bass drum



N.B. If possible, Percussion players 1 & 2 should be located antiphonally on stage (far stage left/right). It is especially desirable that passages in which the two players trade off material on bongos and congas be heard antiphonally.

TO CONTACT THE COMPOSER
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PROGRAM NOTE

In the three movements of *An Elemental Music*, I seek to explore basic musical materials—things that are primary, fundamental, or “elemental”—in fresh and unanticipated ways. I wanted to delve into some of the core components of my musical craft, and I hoped to infuse them with a new vitality.

In the first movement, I start from a chord (the dominant seventh) ubiquitous in many musical genres, from nineteenth-century symphonies to the twelve-bar blues. But rather than using the chord as a means to an end, I view it as an object of musical exploration in its own right, treating it like a hub where many different harmonic paths converge. The music explores these paths in turn, winding through the orchestra in lively and colorful fashion.

The second movement is by far the longest of the three, comprising over half the total playing time of the work. The movement is a very free reimagining of the aria “What Power Art Thou” from Henry Purcell’s *King Arthur*, also known as the “Cold Song.” In Purcell’s aria, the spirit of winter (the “Cold Genius”) is summoned to life: here, then, I use the word “elemental” not only as an adjective, but also as a noun, referring to the primal forces of nature that the Cold Genius embodies. In my version, I freely transform the shivering staccato motif and aspects of the harmonic progression from Purcell’s original, gradually building to an intense, chilling depiction of the Cold Genius. Fittingly, I finished this piece on a day of subzero temperatures in central Illinois.

The brief third movement revisits materials from the first, but in a distorted, out-of-order fashion—perhaps as if being recalled from a distant memory. The music eventually transforms itself into a jig that gives way to a grotesque, march-like climax.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

2023.01.09.3C
Score in C

Commissioned by the La Jolla Symphony & Chorus

An Elemental Music

I.

Alex Stephenson (2022)

Crisp, bright (♩=138)

Piccolo

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

B♭ Clarinet 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Contrabassoon

F Horn 1, 3

F Horn 2, 4

Trumpet 1, 2

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Piano

Harp

Crisp, bright (♩=138)

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

[illegible]

B

(Bongos/Congas)

Bongos/Congas

f sempre

omit B if necess.

B

cc

div. $\geq$

unis.

div. $\geq$

sempre

27

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

Bs. Cl. 1

Bs. Cl. 2

Bsn. 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1

Hn. 3

Hn. 2

Hn. 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

1. SOLO (open)

1. (straight mute)

(straight mutes)

(straight mute)

(senza sord.)

SOLO mallets

mallets

C

C

[illegible]

8

F

64

FL. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hr. 1, 3

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Vln. I
div. a 2

Vln. II
div. a 2

Vla.
div. a 2

Vc.

Db.

G

H

[illegible]

2023.01.09.3C

II. The Cold Song

Desolate, icy (♩=52)

Piccolo

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

B♭ Clarinet 1

B♭ Clarinet 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Contrabassoon

F Horn 1, 3

F Horn 2, 4

Trumpet 1, 2

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Piano

Harp

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

SOLO
senza vib.
mf

(pass line
to Cl. 2)

(take line
from Cl. 2)

(sim.)

(take line
from Cl. 1)

SOLO
senza vib.
mf

(pass line
to Cl. 1)

(sim.)
mf

Vibraphone motor off always
p
con  (change on each note)

Desolate, icy (♩=52)
unis. (off the string)
p sempre
sempre sim.

A

11

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

B $\flat$ Cl. 1

B $\flat$ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Perc. 1 (Vibes)

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

senza vib.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

senza vib.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

mf

mf

mf

Glockenspiel l.v.

damp G l.v.

damp F l.v.

sempre sim.

mf

con X (change on each note)

unis.

p sempre

unis.

p sempre

19

B

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

pp

senza vib.
mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp*

1. senza vib.
p *con vib.*
espr. *f*

(X₀₀)

(l.v.)
Sleigh Bells
p short and articulate

p

(X₀₀)
con *X₀₀* (change on each note)

div. a 3
(con vib.)
mf *espr.*
(con vib.)
p

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

mf

p
con XXX (sim.)

Glockenspiel
l.v.

mf

8

mf

(XX)

p

C
as before

p

37

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

Bs. Cl. 1

Bs. Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

D

44

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. div. a 3

Db.

mf *pp*

f

p

p

mf *espr.* *pp*

mf *espr.* *pp*

mf *espr.* *pp*

p *pp*

(Vibes)

(Glock.) (l.v.)

Sleigh Bells

change ♯ on each note (as before)

change ♯ on each note (as before)

E
F

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1
mf

B♭ Cl. 2
mf

Bsn. 1, 2

Tpt. 1
mf (match clarinets)

Tpt. 2

Perc. 1
p
 con Xca (sim.)

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.
p

E
F

Vln. I
p

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

(pass line to Tpt. 2)
 (take line from Tpt. 1)
 SOLO straight mute senza vib.
mf (match clarinets)
 (take line from Tpt. 2)
mf
 (pass line to Tpt. 1)
 (sim.)
 (sim.)
mf
 Glockenspiel L.v.
mf
 (l.v./damping as before)
mf
 con fz (change on each note)

71

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1

Ob. 2

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

← ♩. = ♩ →
G ♩=138

con vib.
p *espr.* *f* *pp*

senza vib. *p* con vib. *f* *espr.*

(Xeo) (l.v.) Tambourine *p* *f*

mp *f*

(Xeo) l.v. *f*

(stop bow on string) *f*

(stop bow on string) *f*

(stop bow on string) *f*

pizz. div. *f*

pizz. div. *f*

pizz. div. *f*

pizz. div. a 2 *f*

2023.01.09.3C

H

Picc.

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hrn. 1, 3

Hrn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1 (Guero)

Perc. 2 (Tamb.)

Pno.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. div. a 2

Db.

p

f

fp

a2

HARP: harmonics sound one octave higher than written always

♩=104 (♩=52)

Picc.

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

(as SOLO before) senza vib.

mf (as before)

mf

mf

con vib. *mf*

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

(Vibes)

Perc. 2

(Tamb.)

Pno.

Hp.

damp B♭

l.v.

damp A

sempre sim.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

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M

(♩=138 sempre)

Henry Purcell, "What power art thou" from King Arthur

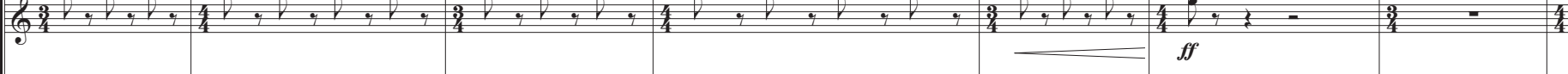
Picc.



Fl. 1, 2



Ob. 1, 2



B♭ Cl. 1, 2



Bsn. 1, 2



Cbsn.



Hn. 1, 3



Hn. 2, 4



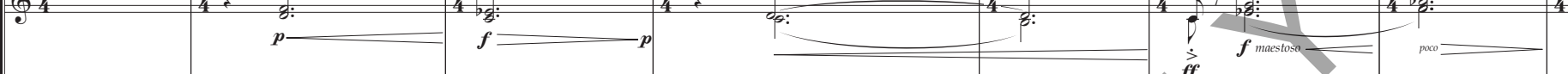
Tpt. 1, 2



Tbn. 1, 2



Tbn. 3



Tuba



Timp.



Perc. 1



Perc. 2



Pno.



Vln. I



Vln. II



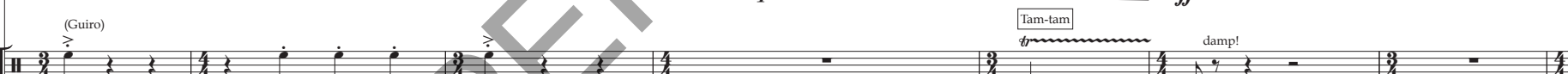
Vla.



Vc. div. a 2



Db.



[illegible]

Ob. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

N

N

8'---

8'---

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

165

rit.

O

♩=104 (♩=52)

The image shows a page of a musical score, likely for a symphony, featuring various instruments and their parts. The score is written in 4/4 time and includes dynamic markings such as *ff*, *mf*, *p*, and *ppp*. The instruments listed include Picc., Fl. 1, 2, Ob. 1, 2, B♭ Cl. 1, B♭ Cl. 2, Bsn. 1, 2, Cbsn., Hrn. 1, 3, Tbn. 1, 2, Tbn. 3, Tuba, Timp., Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Pno., Hp., Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Db. The score is marked with a large "FOR PERSUAL ONLY" watermark.

The score is divided into two systems. The first system includes Picc., Fl. 1, 2, Ob. 1, 2, B♭ Cl. 1, B♭ Cl. 2, Bsn. 1, 2, Cbsn., Hrn. 1, 3, Tbn. 1, 2, Tbn. 3, Tuba, Timp., Perc. 1, Perc. 2, Pno., and Hp. The second system includes Vln. I, Vln. II, Vla., Vc., and Db. The score includes various musical notations, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The tempo is marked as *rit.* and the time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with a large "FOR PERSUAL ONLY" watermark.

174

P

Picc.

Fl. 1

Fl. 2

Ob. 1, 2

B $\flat$ Cl. 1

B $\flat$ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc. div. a 3

Db.

senza vib.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf*

senza vib.

mf *pp* *mf* *pp*

SOLO straight mute senza vib.

mf (match clarinets)

(as before)

SOLO straight mute senza vib.

(as before)

mf (match clarinets)

Glockenspiel l.v.

(l.v./ damping as before)

mf

p

mf

p

mf

pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

pp *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

pp *p* *pp* *p* *pp*

This image shows a page from a musical score for the song "The Rose Tree". The score is written for voice and piano. The vocal parts are in the upper staves, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staves. The music is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings like *mf* (mezzo-forte) and *p* (piano). A large, diagonal watermark reading "FOR PERSAL ONLY" is overlaid across the entire page.

[illegible]

III.

A

Dark, mysterious (♩=138)

Piccolo

Flute 1, 2

Oboe 1, 2

B♭ Clarinet 1, 2

Bassoon 1, 2

Contrabassoon

F Horn 1, 3

F Horn 2, 4

Trumpet 1, 2

Trombone 1, 2

Trombone 3

Tuba

Timpani

Percussion 1

Percussion 2

Piano

Harp

SOLI, a2

ff *grottesco*

mf

ff

f

straight mute

p

ff

p

f

Tam-tam

L.v.

mp

Bass Drum

pp

mf

pp *sempre*

f

L.v.

f

f p.d.l.t.

Dark, mysterious (♩=138)

A

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

div. a 6

p

ff

p *sempre*

11

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B $\flat$ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1

Bsn. 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

B

25

C

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hrn. 1, 3

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I
div. a 2

Vln. II
div. a 2

Vla.
div. a 2

Vc.

Db.

senza sord.

Bongos/Congas hands

D: C: B: E: F: G: A:

p

f

mf

ff

fff

arco

pizz.

FOR PUPUSAL ONLY

2023.01.09.3C

Picc.

Fl. 1

Ob. 1

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1

B♭ Cl. 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hr. 1, 3

Hr. 2, 4

Tpt. 1

Tpt. 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

(W.BL.)

Perc. 1

Wood Blocks

Perc. 2

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

2023.01.09.3C

51

Picc.



Fl. 1



Ob. 1



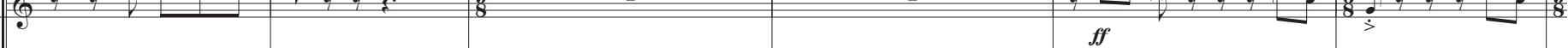
Ob. 2



B♭ Cl. 1



B♭ Cl. 2



Bsn. 1, 2



Cbsn.



Hrn. 1, 3



Hrn. 2, 4



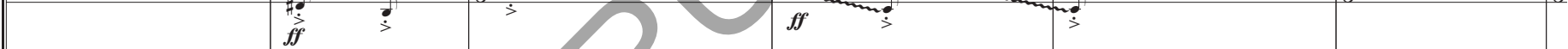
Tpt. 1



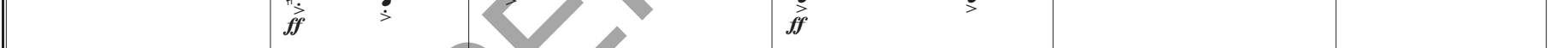
Tpt. 2



Tbn. 1, 2



Tbn. 3



Tuba



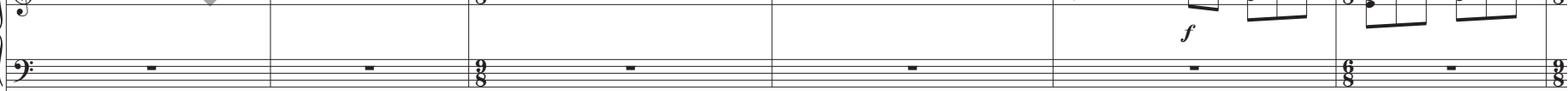
Perc. 1



Perc. 2



Pno.



Crash Cymbals



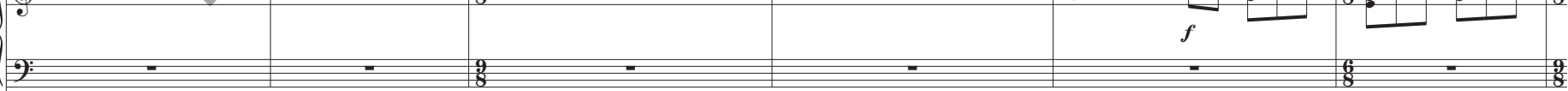
Snare Drum



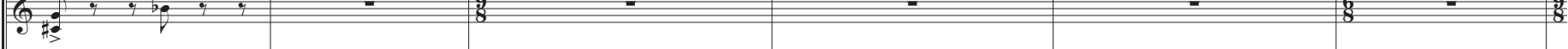
Lv.



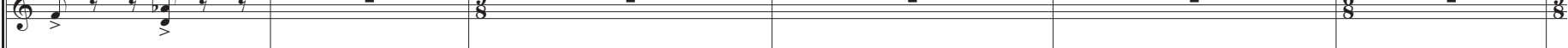
f



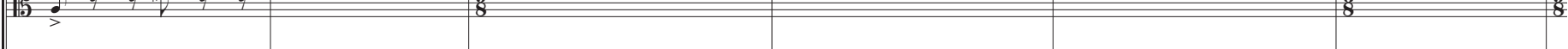
Vln. I



Vln. II



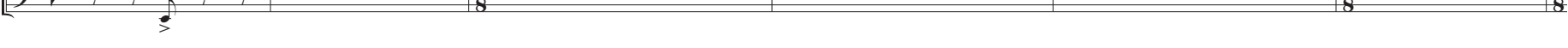
Vla.



Vc.



Db.



(unis.)



57

Picc. *ff*

Fl. 1 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2

B $\flat$ Cl. 1 *ff*

B $\flat$ Cl. 2 *ff*

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hn. 1, 3

Hn. 2, 4

Tpt. 1 *ff*

Tpt. 2 *ff*

Tbn. 1, 2 *ff* a2

Tbn. 3 *ff*

Tuba

Perc. 1 *mf* (Cr. Cym.)

Perc. 2 *f* (S.D.) *p* *f* *mf*

Pno. *f*

Vln. I div. a 2 *f* rough pizz.

Vln. II div. a 2 *f* rough

Vla. *f* (pizz.)

Vc. *ff*

Db. *ff*

This image shows a page of musical notation, likely a piano score, featuring multiple staves with various musical symbols, dynamics (ff, p, f), and a large diagonal watermark reading "FOR PUPILS ONLY". The notation includes notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo) and *p* (piano). The watermark is a large, light gray, diagonal text that spans across the page, partially obscuring the musical notation. The page is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the notation is written on five-line staves. The overall layout is typical of a musical score for a piano, with multiple staves for different parts of the music. The watermark is a prominent feature, indicating that the score is intended for use by pupils. The musical notation includes various symbols, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings, which are used to convey the musical information to the performer. The page is a single page of a larger score, as indicated by the "Page 1" label in the top right corner. The watermark is a large, light gray, diagonal text that spans across the page, partially obscuring the musical notation. The page is divided into measures by vertical bar lines, and the notation is written on five-line staves. The overall layout is typical of a musical score for a piano, with multiple staves for different parts of the music. The watermark is a prominent feature, indicating that the score is intended for use by pupils. The musical notation includes various symbols, including notes, rests, and dynamic markings, which are used to convey the musical information to the performer. The page is a single page of a larger score, as indicated by the "Page 1" label in the top right corner.

H

Irit.....47

Picc.

Fl. 1, 2

Ob. 1, 2

B♭ Cl. 1, 2

Bsn. 1, 2

Cbsn.

Hr. 1, 3

Hr. 2, 4

Tpt. 1, 2

Tbn. 1, 2

Tbn. 3

Tuba

Timp.

Perc. 1

Perc. 2

Pno.

Hp.

Vln. I

Vln. II

Vla.

Vc.

Db.

85

Picc. *p* *ff* *ff*

Fl. 1 *p* *ff*

Fl. 2 *ff*

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff*

B♭ Cl. 1 *p* *ff*

B♭ Cl. 2 *ff*

Bsn. 1, 2 *a2*

Cbsn. *mf* *ff*

Hn. 1, 3 *mf* *a2* *ff*

Hn. 2, 4 *mf* *a2* *ff*

Tpt. 1, 2 *senza sord.* *ff* *a2*

Tbn. 1, 2 *mf* *ff*

Tbn. 3 *mf* *ff*

Tuba *mf* *ff*

Timp. *mf* *ff*

Perc. 1 (Vibes) *ff* *Snare Drum* *p* *f*

Perc. 2 (B.D.) *ff*

Pno. *ff* *ff*

Hp. *f* *ff* ⊕

Vln. I *unis.* *p* *ff* *ff*

Vln. II *unis.* *p* *ff* *ff*

Vla. *mf* *ff*

Vc. *mf* *ff*

Db. *mf* *ff*