Alex Stephenson

# ADRIFT

(2021)

for bass flute (doubling piccolo),
piano, and electronics

FOR PERUSAL ONLY

Score
2022.10.16.1

Commissioned by and written for Duo Axis

First performed by Duo Axis – Zach Sheets, flutes, and Wei-Han Wu, piano
Tenri Cultural Institute, New York, New York
May 8, 2022

DURATION: 12 minutes

PERFORMANCE NOTES

**Bass Flute/Piccolo**

○ Breathy tone

● Normal tone

The flutist plays from two different positions over the course of the piece: (1) playing into the piano (standing as close to the piano as possible with the flute pointing into the body of the piano), and (2) a standard playing position (in front of the piano and facing the audience). The score specifies when the flutist should move from one position to another, indicating both when the transition may begin and the moment by which the target position should be reached. To enable these transitions, a few small fragments of the flute part may need to be memorized.

**Electronics**

The electronics consist of synthesized audio, which is generated by a Max/MSP patch using oscillator banks and a pitch-glitching algorithm. The patch should be cued (either by the performers or a dedicated sound engineer) at moments indicated in the score so that the timing of the electronics is responsive to the performers' interpretation. Audio from the patch should be diffused through a single (mono) loudspeaker placed under the piano or possibly inside it (for example, a high-quality Bluetooth speaker placed discreetly inside the body of the piano). Microphones/amplification for the instruments should not be necessary.

TO CONTACT THE COMPOSER

alex@alexstephenson.com

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PROGRAM NOTE

*Adrift* stages a dialogue between what I've sometimes called "narrative" and "spatial" music—between music, in other words, that seems outwardly communicative and expressive, and music that seems only to curate an ambiance in which outward expression might (or might not) happen. Over a bed of sonorous piano harmony, the flutist continually negotiates their place in the texture. At times, they present a simple, ambient oscillation of long tones; at others, they behave much more like a "traditional," lyrical soloist. This narrative-space spectrum is traversed not only through the flutist's sonic material but also theatrically, in terms of their position onstage.

The electronics engage in a similar sort of role negotiation. In several passages, they are quite subtle, consisting only of pure tones that resonate the acoustic instruments. In others, they present much more complex textures that assert themselves to the ear as active, independent entities.

Despite the continuous flux underlying the music, much of the piece presents itself as calm, focused, and meditative.

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2022.10.16.1
Transposed Score

*Commissioned by and written for Duo Axis*

# Adrift

Alex Stephenson (2021)

**Slow, spacious, gently drifting (♩=c.32)**

Bass Flute

play into the piano (sempre)
senza vib.

Bass Flute (doubling Piccolo)

*sim.*

*p*

*breath-like*

Piano

*p*

*pp*

*p*

*sonorous, sighing*

match the dynamic of the resonance (sempre)

*sim.*

*bring out the pitches shown in each chord:*

E♭

*(sim.)*

F♯

1

sine tones

½ changes sempre

Electronics

4

(3+2+2 sempre)

Bs. Fl.

Pf.

2

F

Elec.

*sim.*

7

(2+2+3+2 sempre)

Bs. Fl.

Pf.

3

E

Elec.

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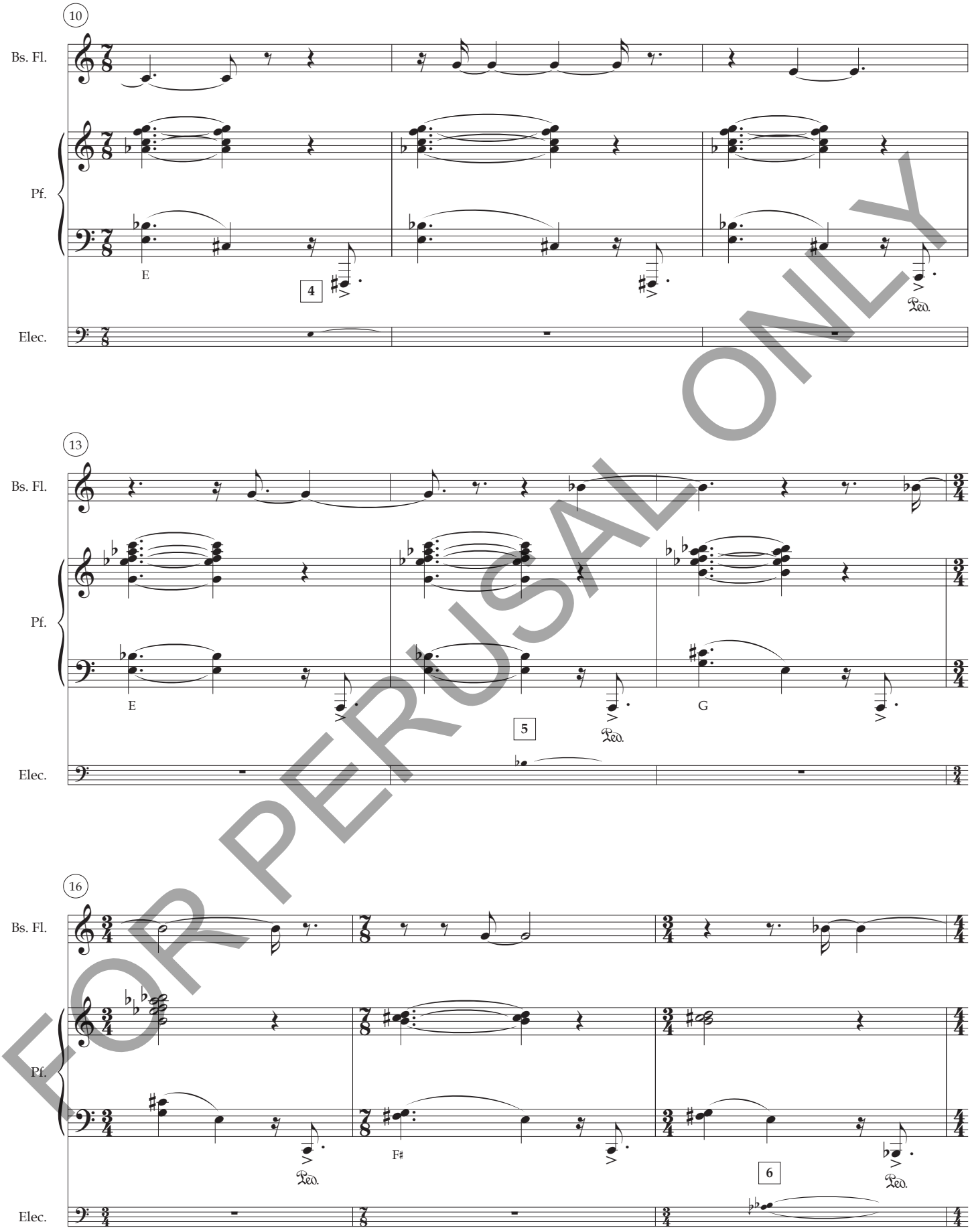


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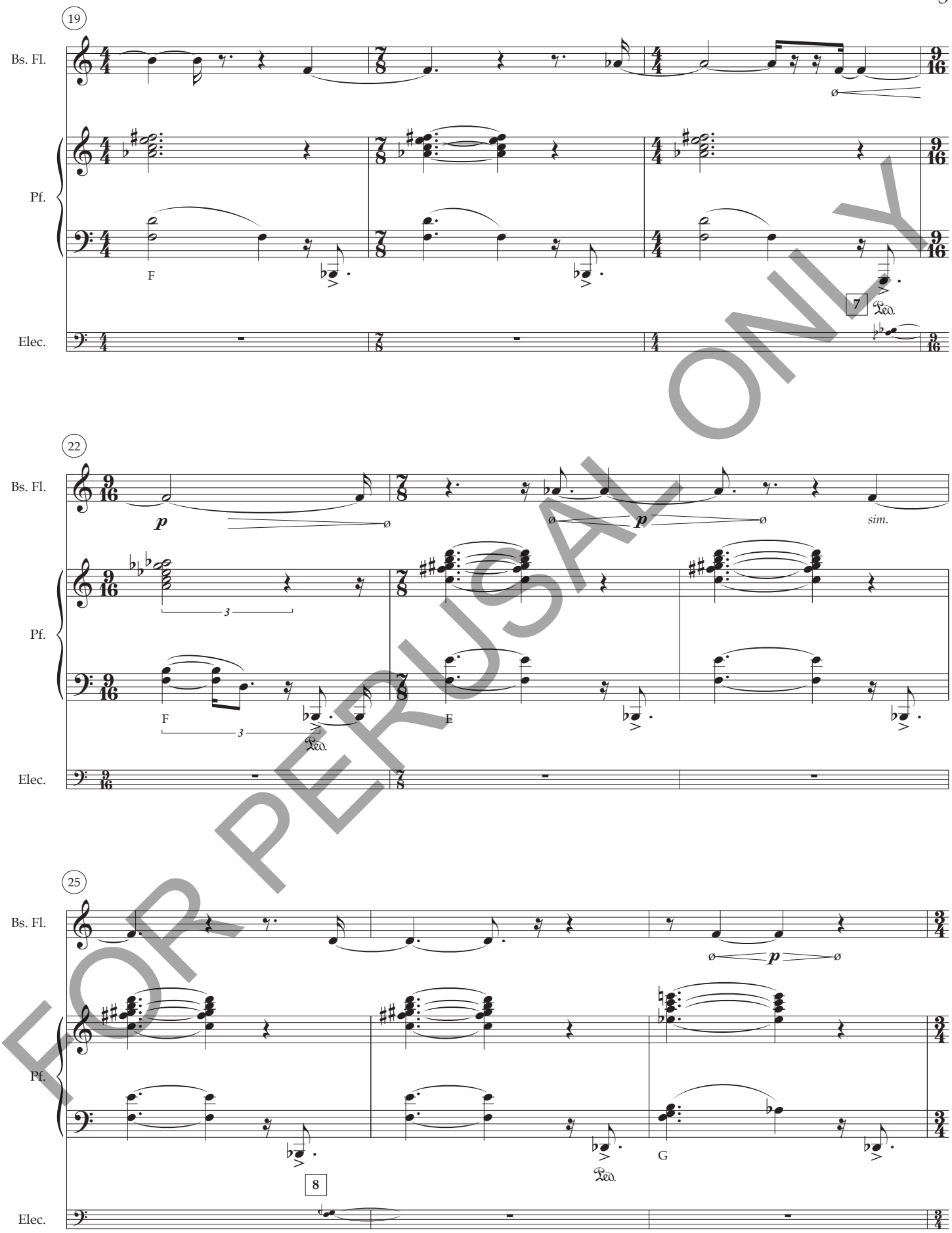


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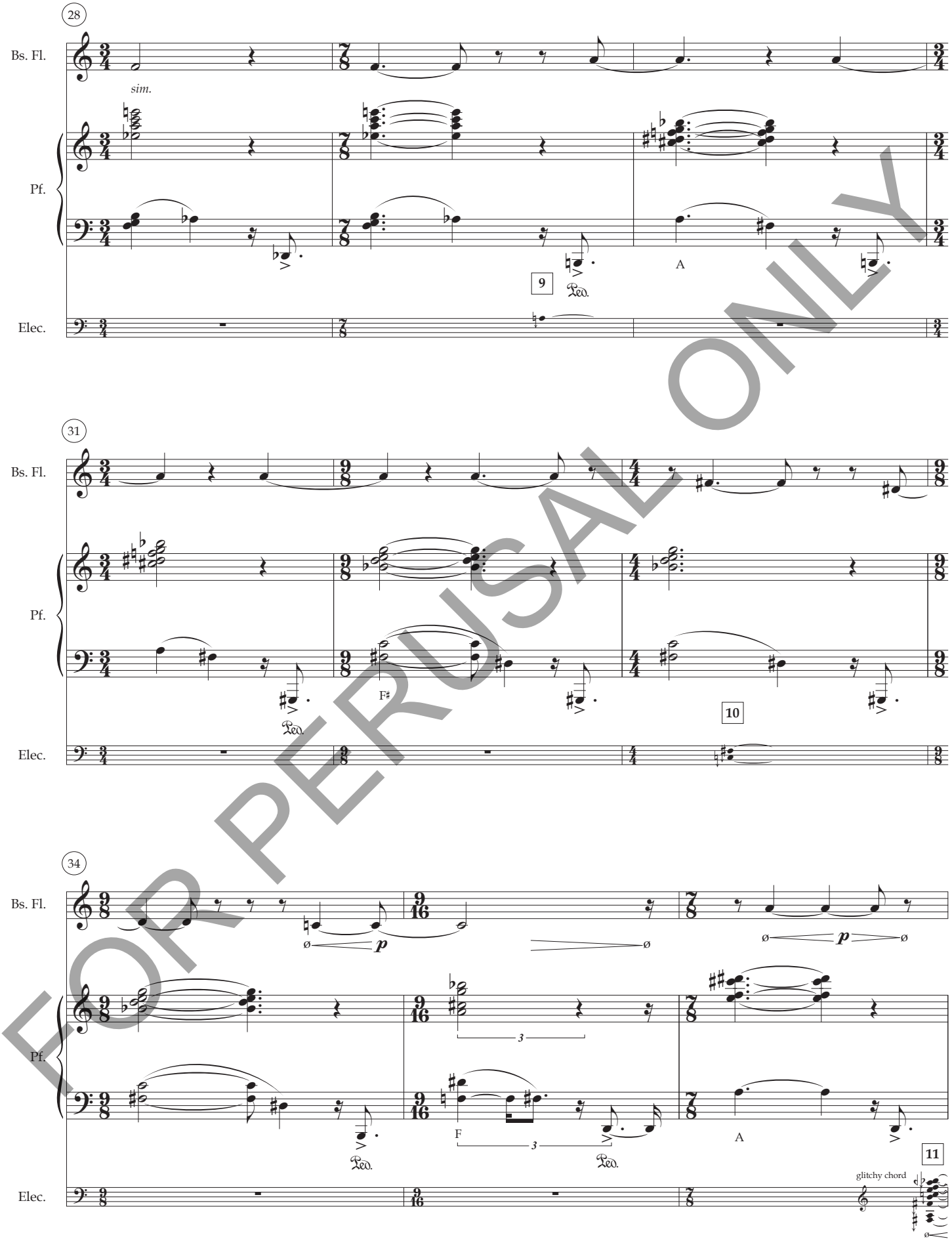


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37

Bs. Fl.

c. 5"

p

Pf.

c. 5"

12

(+ harmonics)

Elec.

**More expressive (poco più mosso: ♩=c.38)**

transition to standard playing position (facing audience)

in standard playing position by here

41

Bs. Fl.

c. 8"

con vib.

smorz.

p mf p mf p mf

espr., soloistic, flexible

Pf.

p pp p

sim.

13 fade out glitchy chords

14

sine tones

15

Elec.

sim.

45

Bs. Fl.

f p f p f p f sub.

Pf.

Elec.

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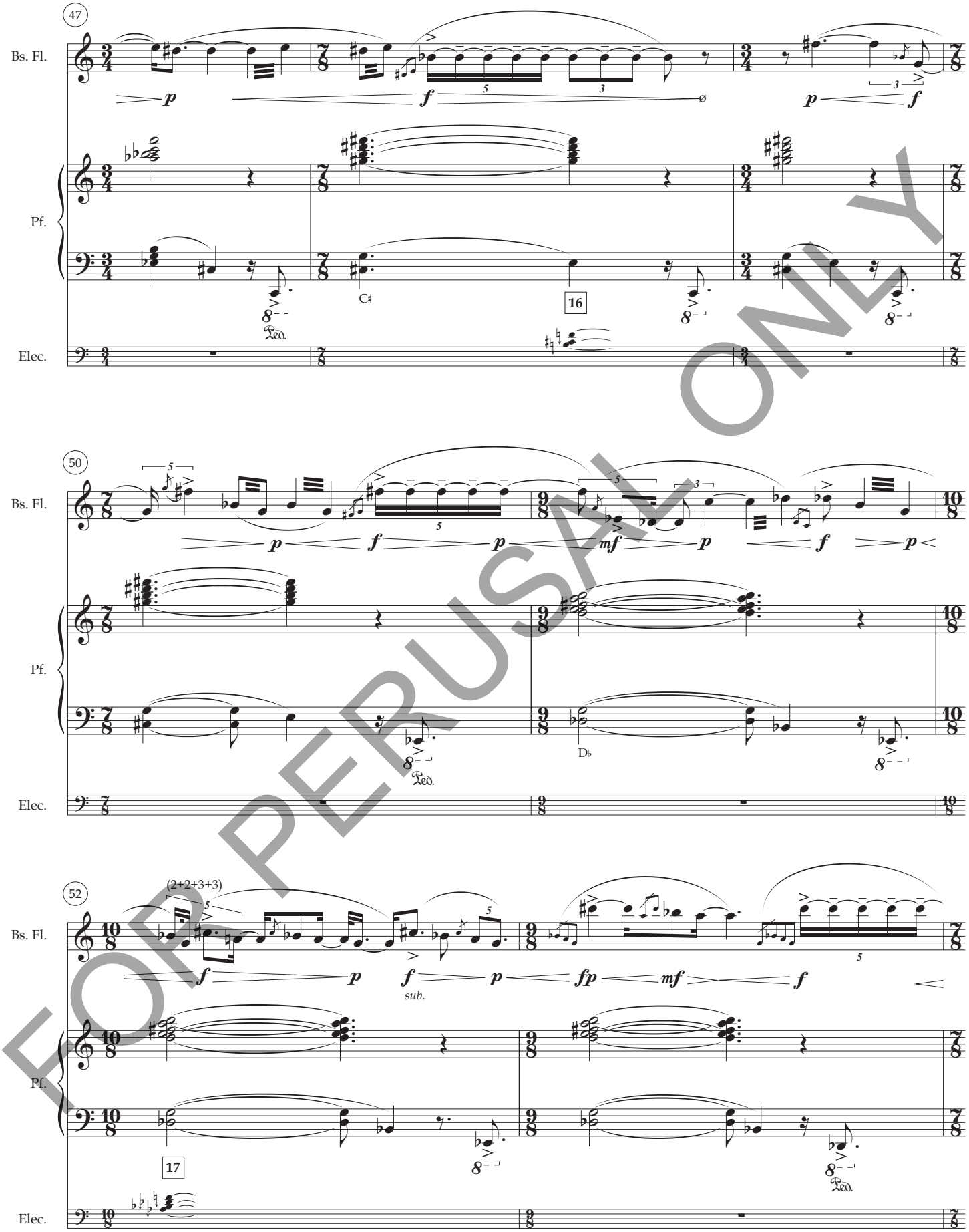


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54

Bs. Fl.

Pf.

Elec.

E

18

57

Bs. Fl.

sub.

Pf.

A♭

19

glitchy chord

Elec.

60

transition to playing-into-piano position

in playing-into-piano position by here

Bs. Fl.

c. 8"

Pf.

20

(+ harmonics)

Elec.

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**Calm, almost withdrawn (tempo primo: ♩=c.32)**

64

Bs. Fl.

c. 8"

(playing into the piano)
senza vib.

*p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Pf.

c. 8"

*p* *pp* *p*

*sim.*

*loco*

Ped.

G

21 fade out glitchy chords

22

Elec.

sine tones + glitchy chord

68

Bs. Fl.

*p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Pf.

23

B♭

*loco*

Ped.

Elec.

sine tones + glitchy chord

*sim.*

71

Bs. Fl.

*p* *mp* *p* *mp*

Pf.

C

24

25

Ped.

Elec.

glitchy chord

sine tones

glitchy chord

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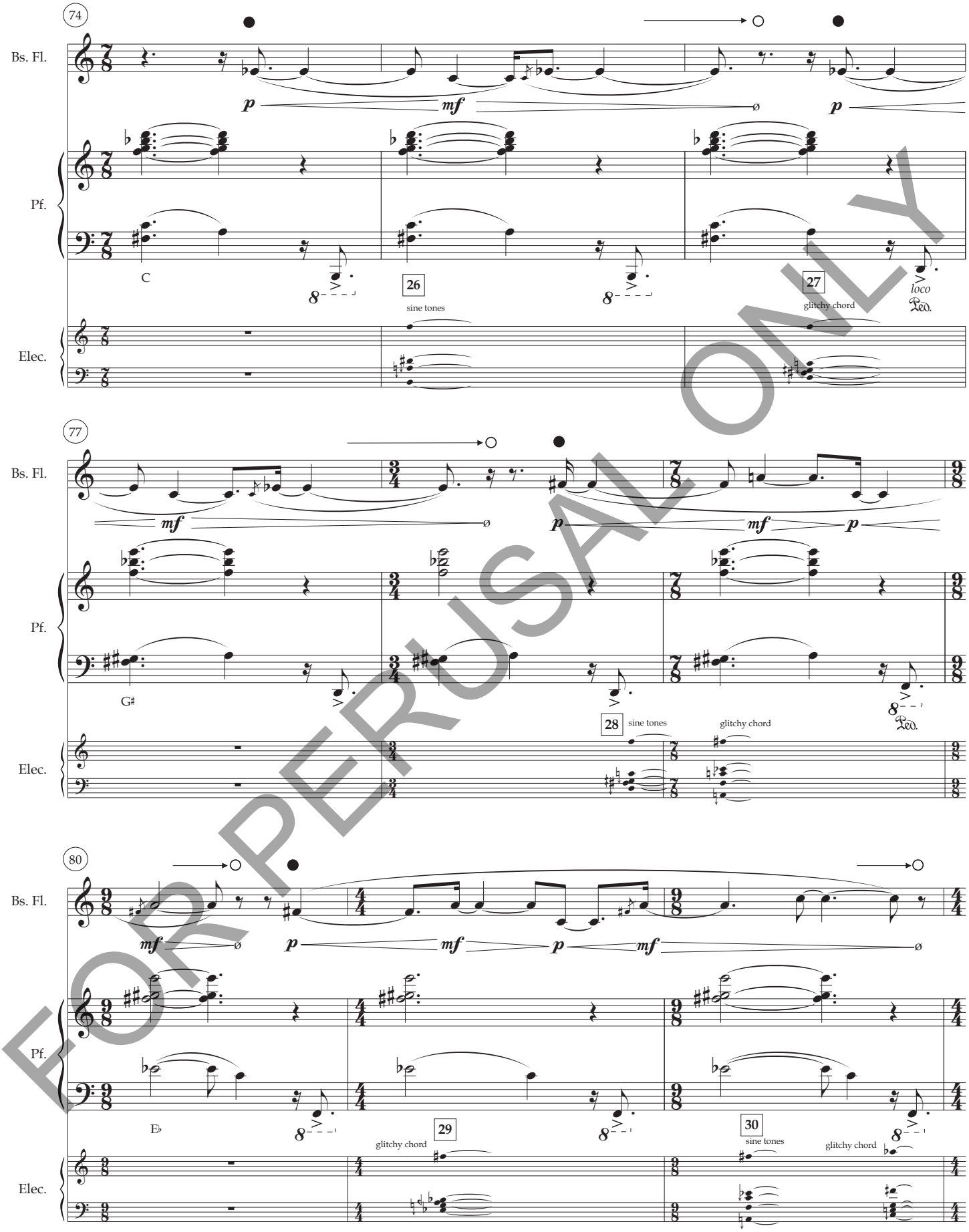


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**Still rather calm (despite intensifying electronics)**

83

con vib.

Bs. Fl.

*p* *f*

Pf.

*cresc. poco a poco, gently, almost imperceptibly, remaining just audible in the texture*

A

31

32

Elec.

(increasingly bright harmonics added →)

glitchy chord

sine tones

86

Bs. Fl.

*p* *f* *p*

Pf.

F♯

33

*loco*

34

Elec.

glitchy chord

89

Bs. Fl.

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Pf.

35

36

Elec.

sine tones

glitchy chord

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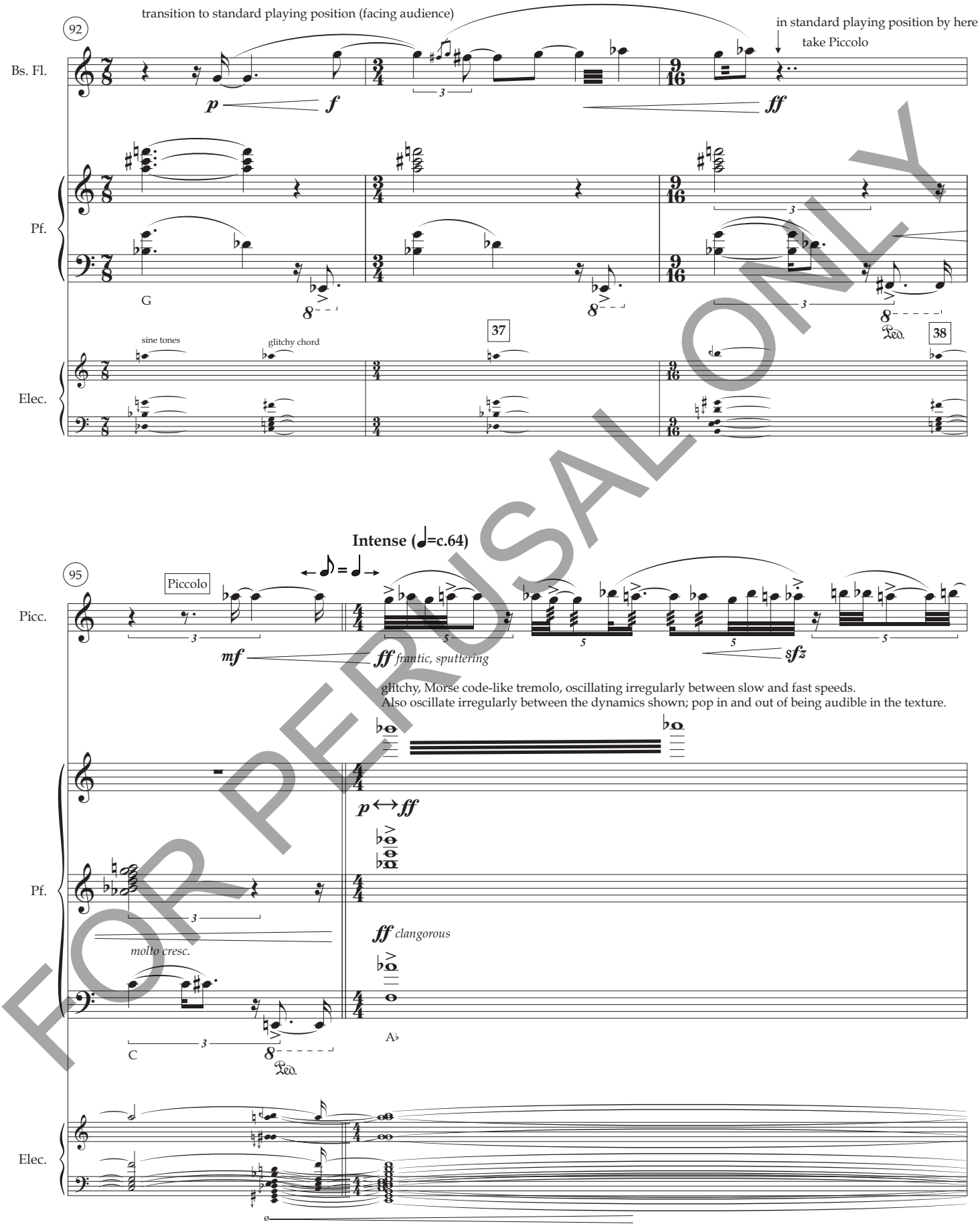


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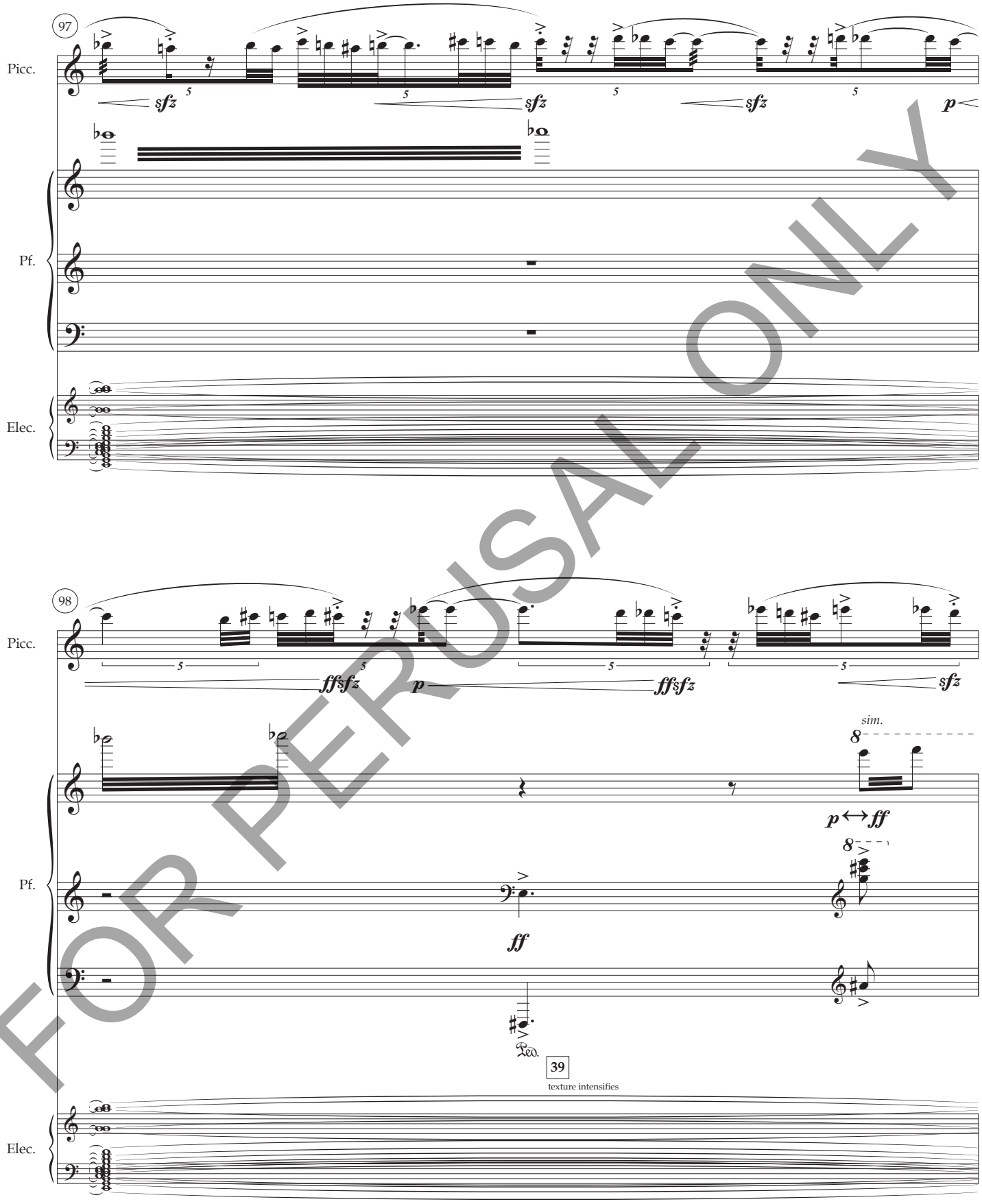


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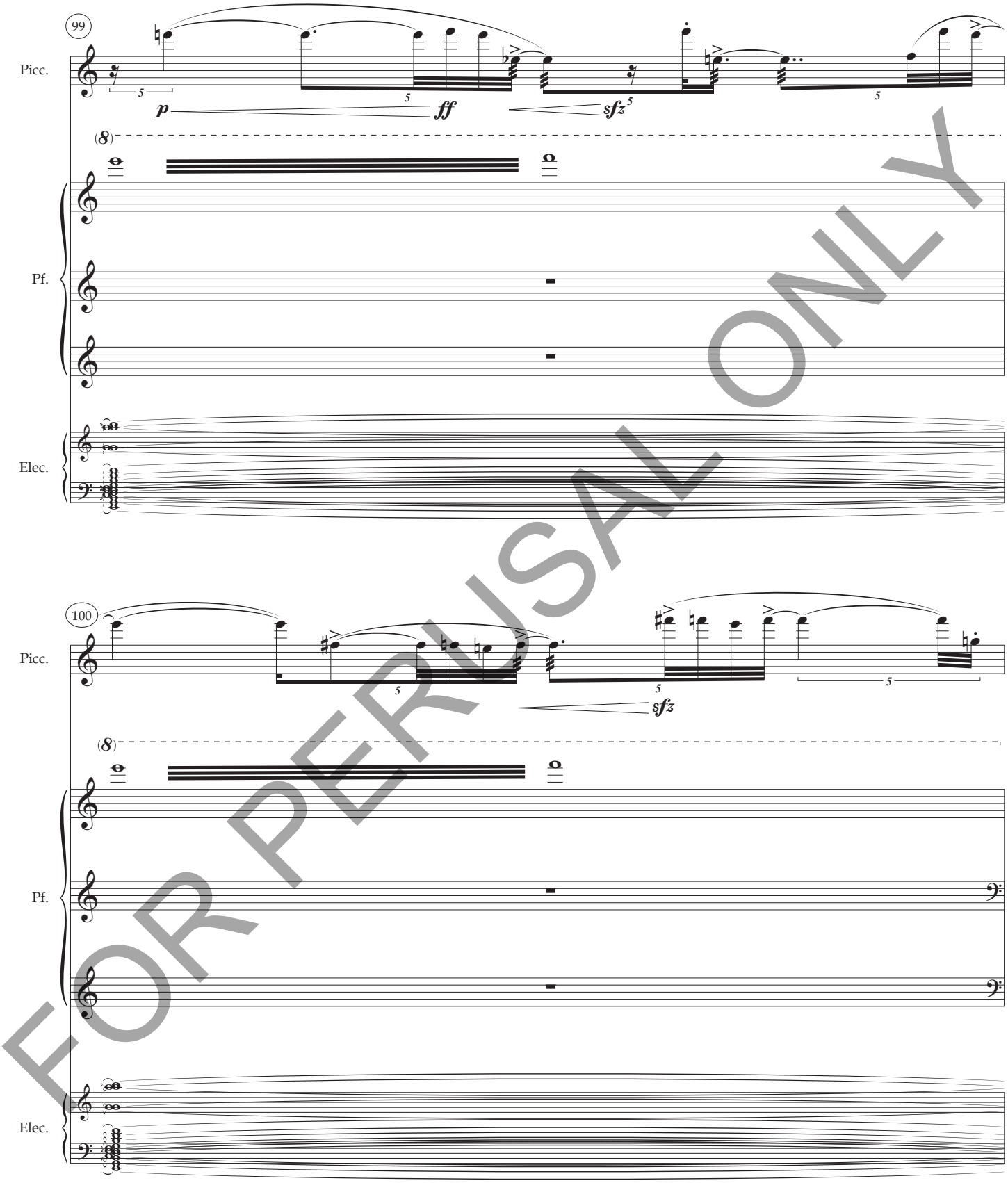


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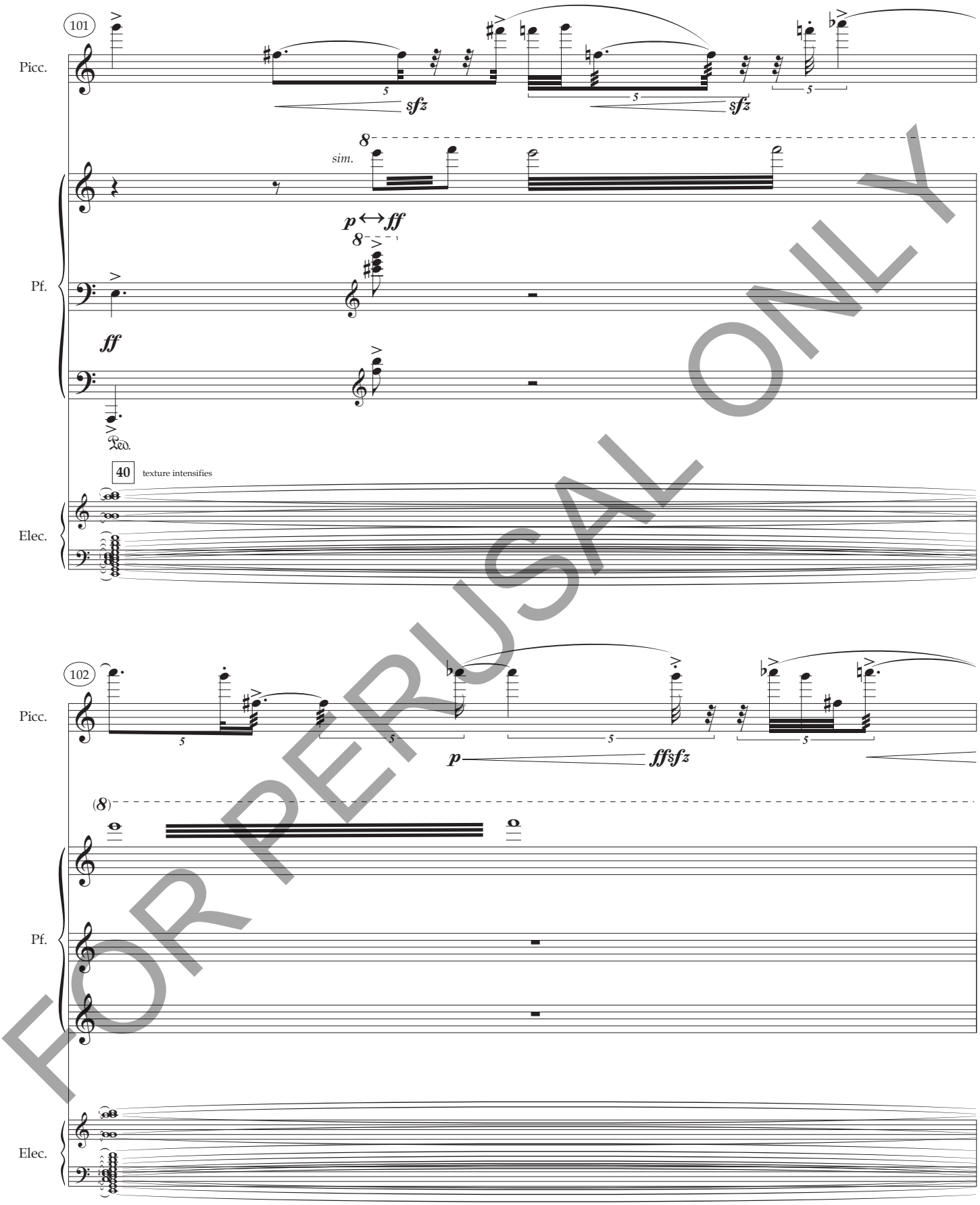


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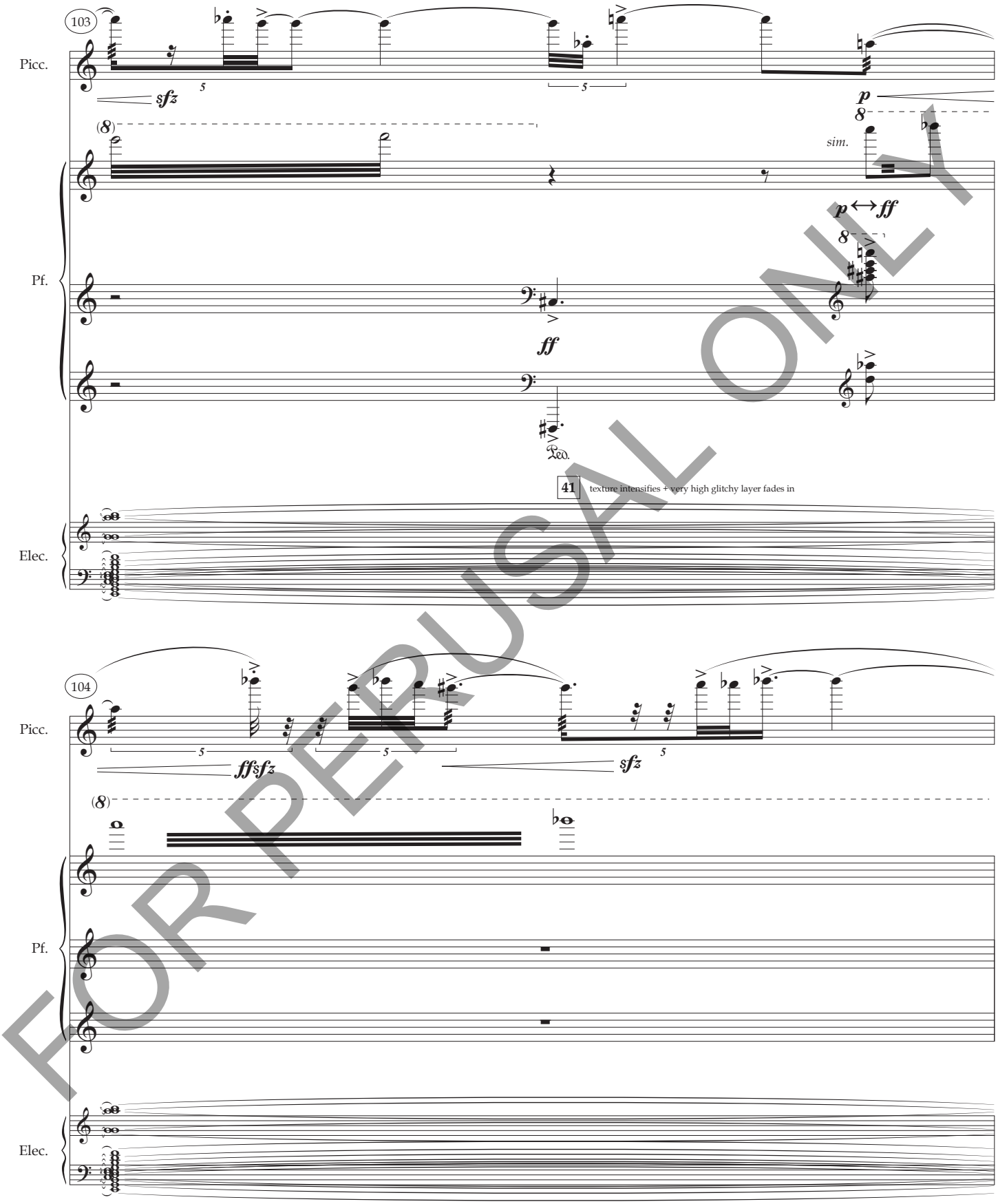


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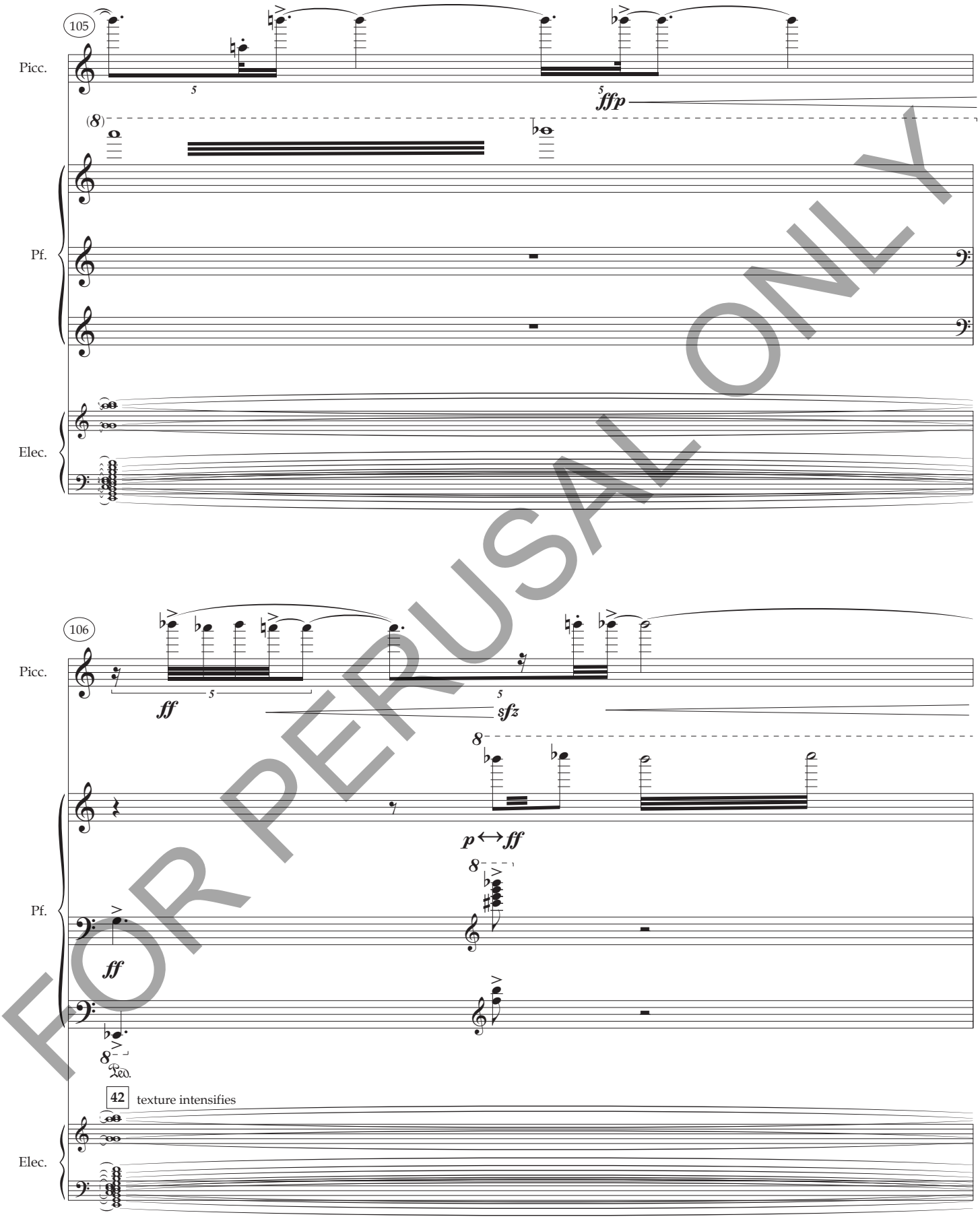


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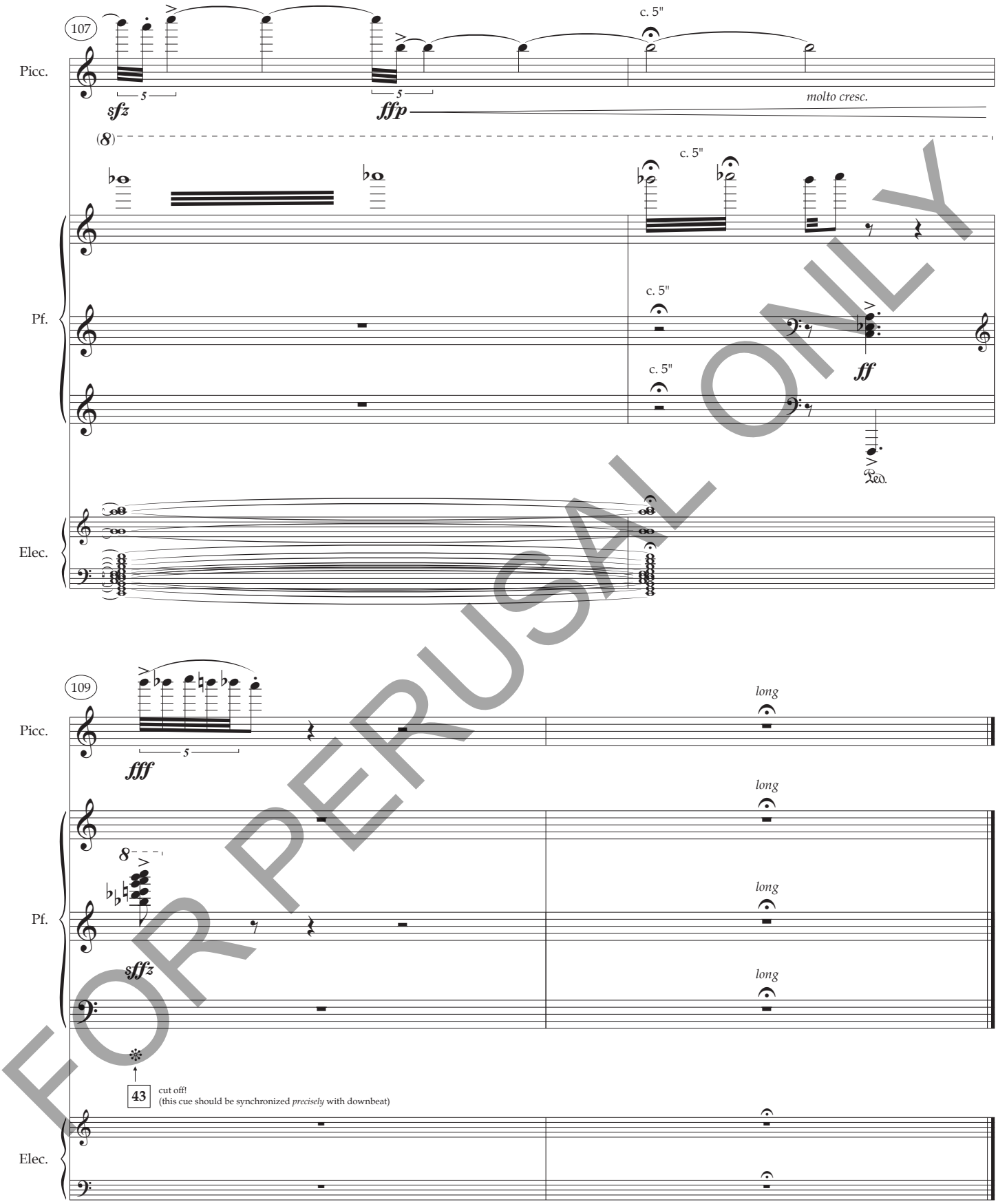


December 29, 2021
San Diego, California

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