ELLIOT ROMAN

SDSSJ0826+5630

for trombone and string quartet

SCORE

PERUSAL USE ONLY

Program note:

In January 2023, a radio signal from the most distant galaxy studied to date was picked up by the Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope in India, giving researchers an approximately 9-billion-year lookback into the universe's past. This galaxy, commonly known as SDSSJ0826+5630, emitted the signal when the universe was approximately 4.9 billion years old. The telescope was able to pick up the signal due to a naturally occurring astrophysical phenomenon called gravitational lensing, in which a large gravitational field in between a light or radio source and an observer will bend the source's signal around the gravitational field, putting it into focus for the observer (under the right conditions). This concept was predicted by Albert Einstein in his general theory of relativity.

This piece is my reflection on the concepts of space, time, spacetime, and distance, all through various musical parameters: pitch, register, timbre, and instrumentation to name a few. The unique identities of the instruments – that of the string quartet, of the individual instruments within the string quartet, and especially of the trombone – are challenged throughout the work. Long, timeless phrases are defined via a constant shifting and recrystallization of prismatic textures. This work is dedicated to Spencer Schaffer, for whom I composed the piece.

Approximate duration: 8 minutes

Performance notes:

1. Triangle noteheads = play highest possible note on given string (unless directed otherwise)
2. Square noteheads = air sound
   Trombone: whisper given consonant into instrument. White and black holes above the part indicate air sound and default sound, respectively.
   Strings: white noise, usually works best on II string, flautando, little bow hair, half stop the string, very fast bow, sul pont.
3. The effect indicated by the sawtooth line above trombone in mm. 74 should yield various overtones ad libitum above the given pitch.
4. Mute changes in all parts should be done as calmly as possible.
5. Abbreviations:
   m.v. – molto vibrato
   s.v. – senza vibrato
   s.t. – sul tasto
   m.s.t – molto sul tasto
   s.p. – sul ponticello

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Premiered April 14, 2023, by trombonist Spencer Schaffer and Quartet Integra at The Colburn School, Los Angeles, CA.

Score

written for Spencer Schaffer

SDSSJ0826+5630

Elliot Roman
(2023)

Suspended, almost timeless, ♩ **= 52**
practice mute
air sound (white noise)

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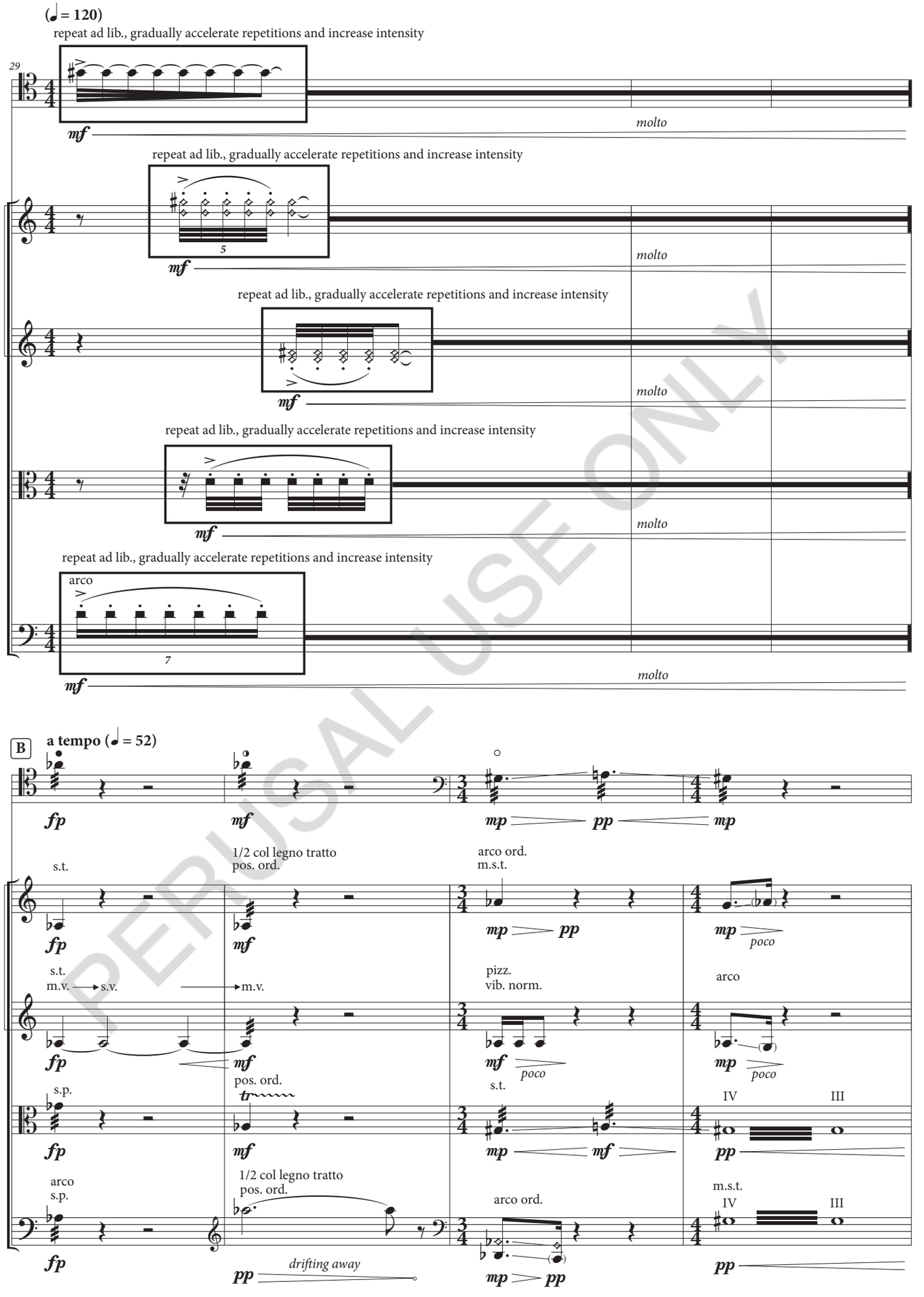

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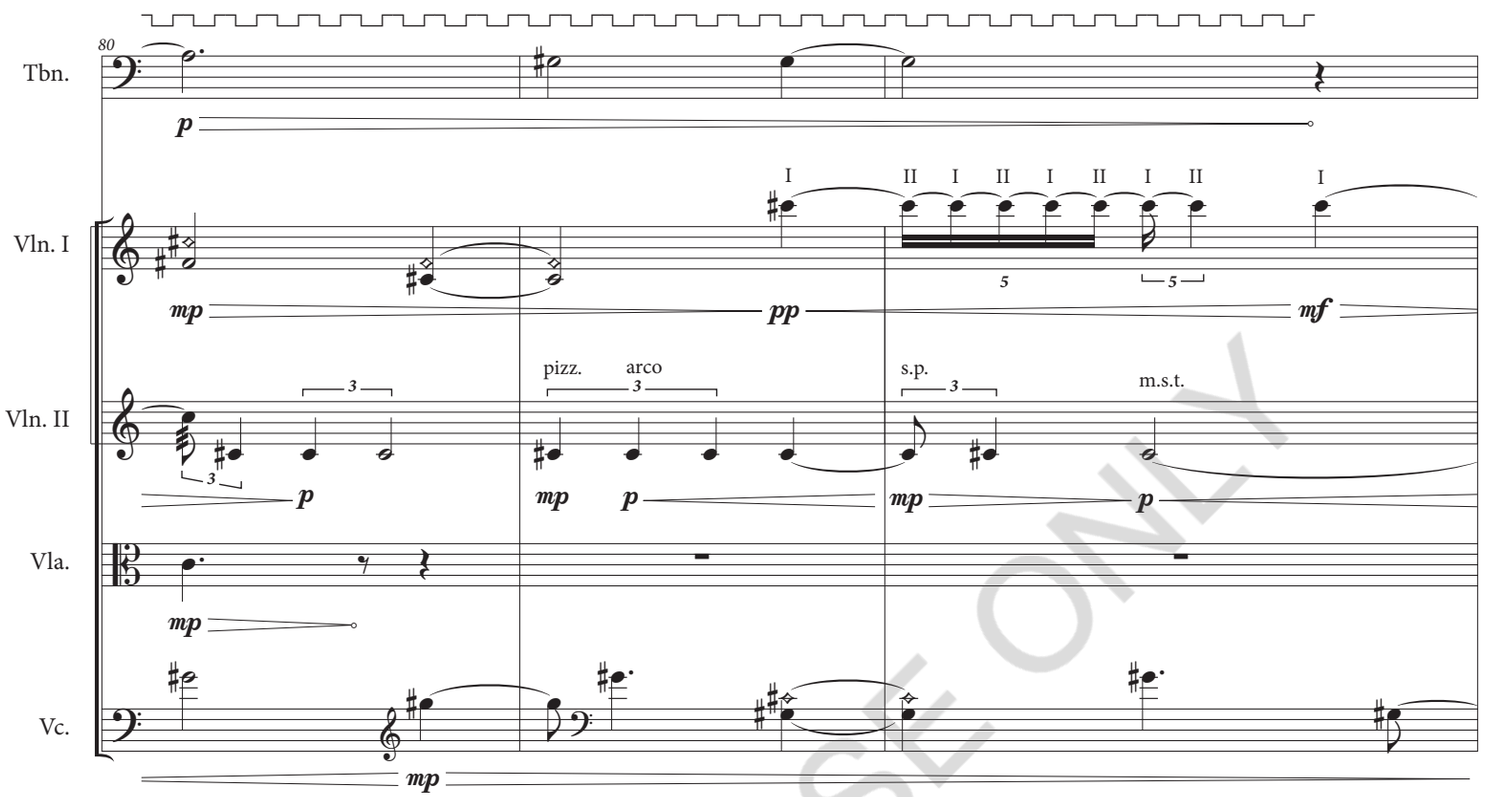

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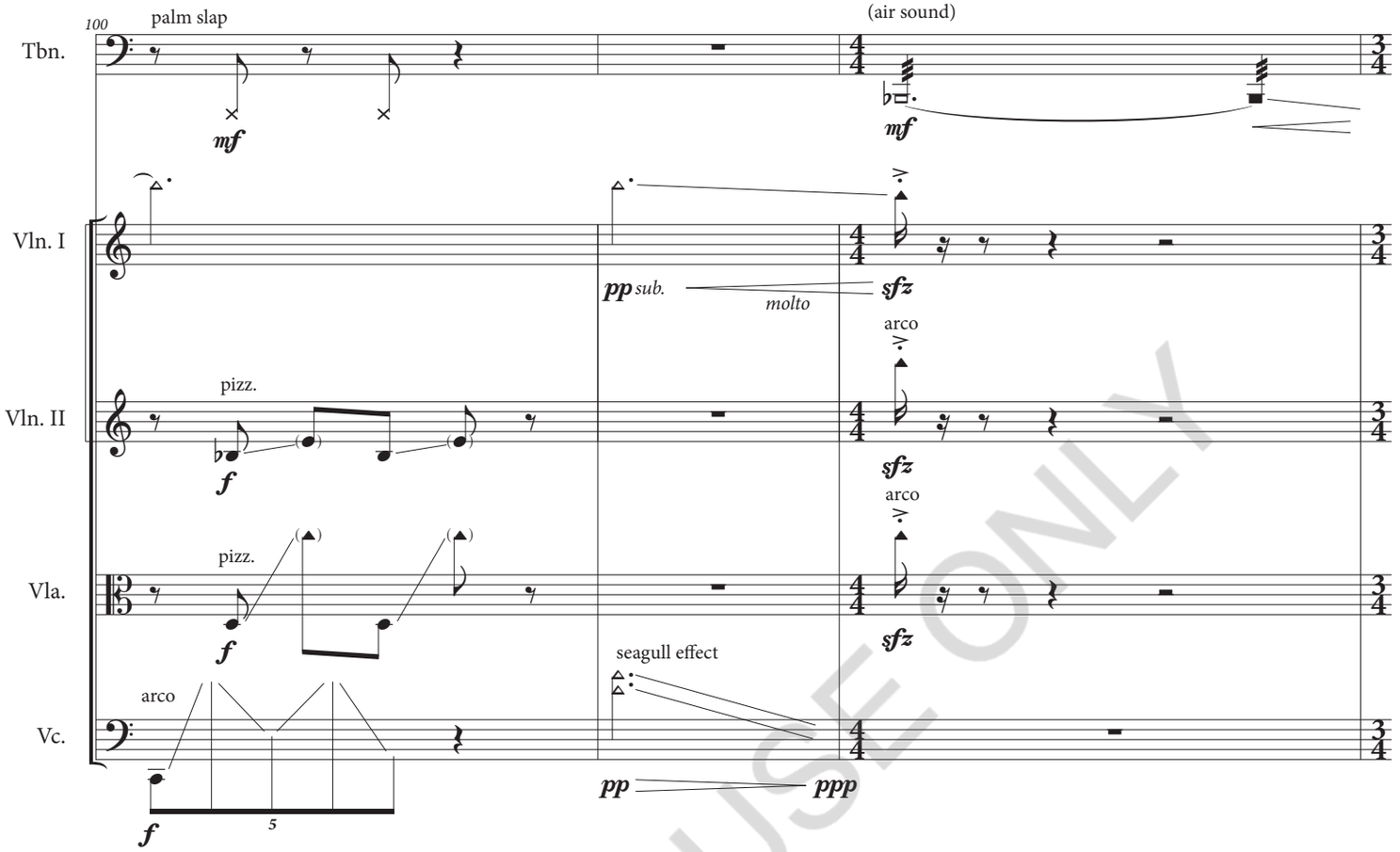

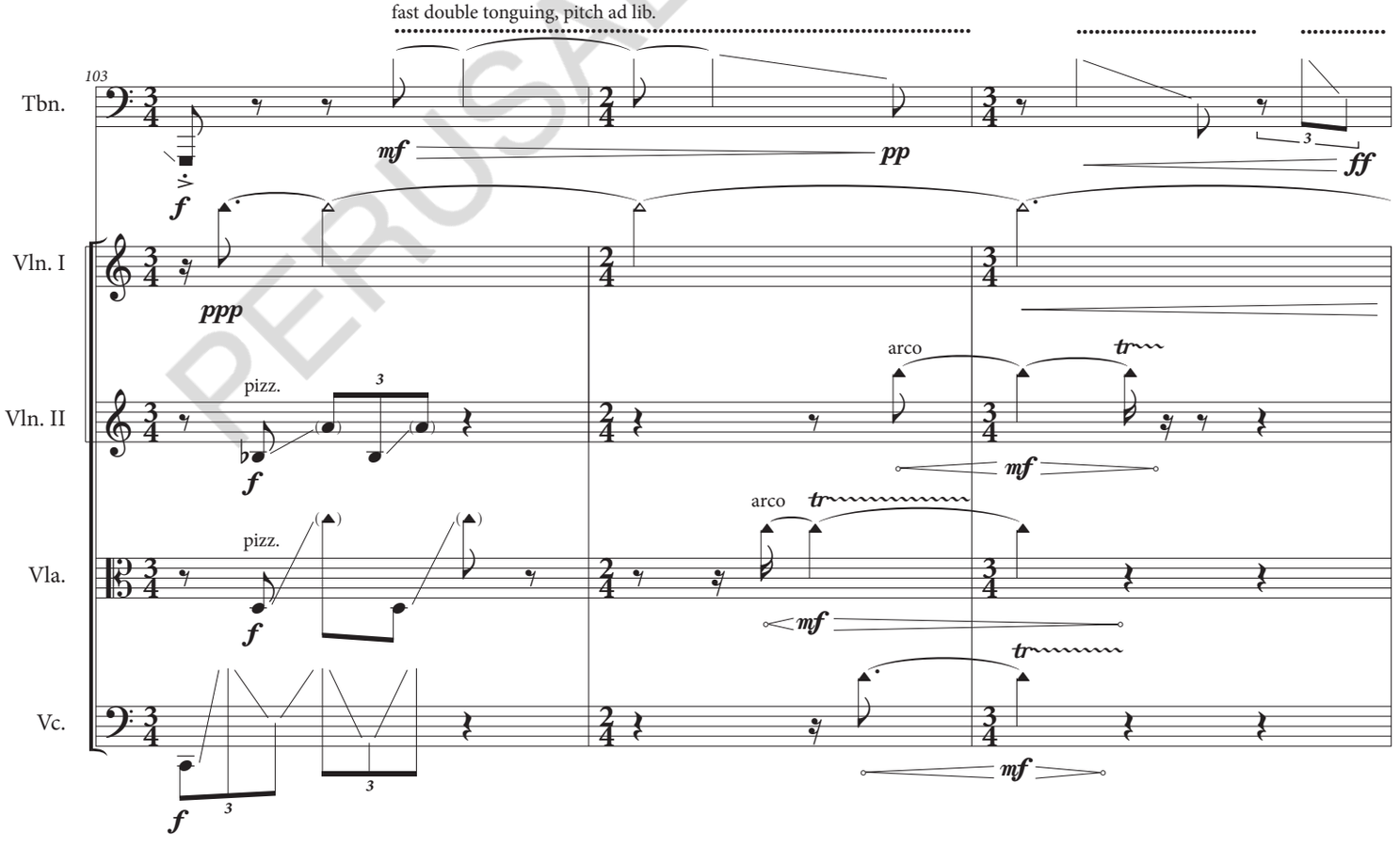

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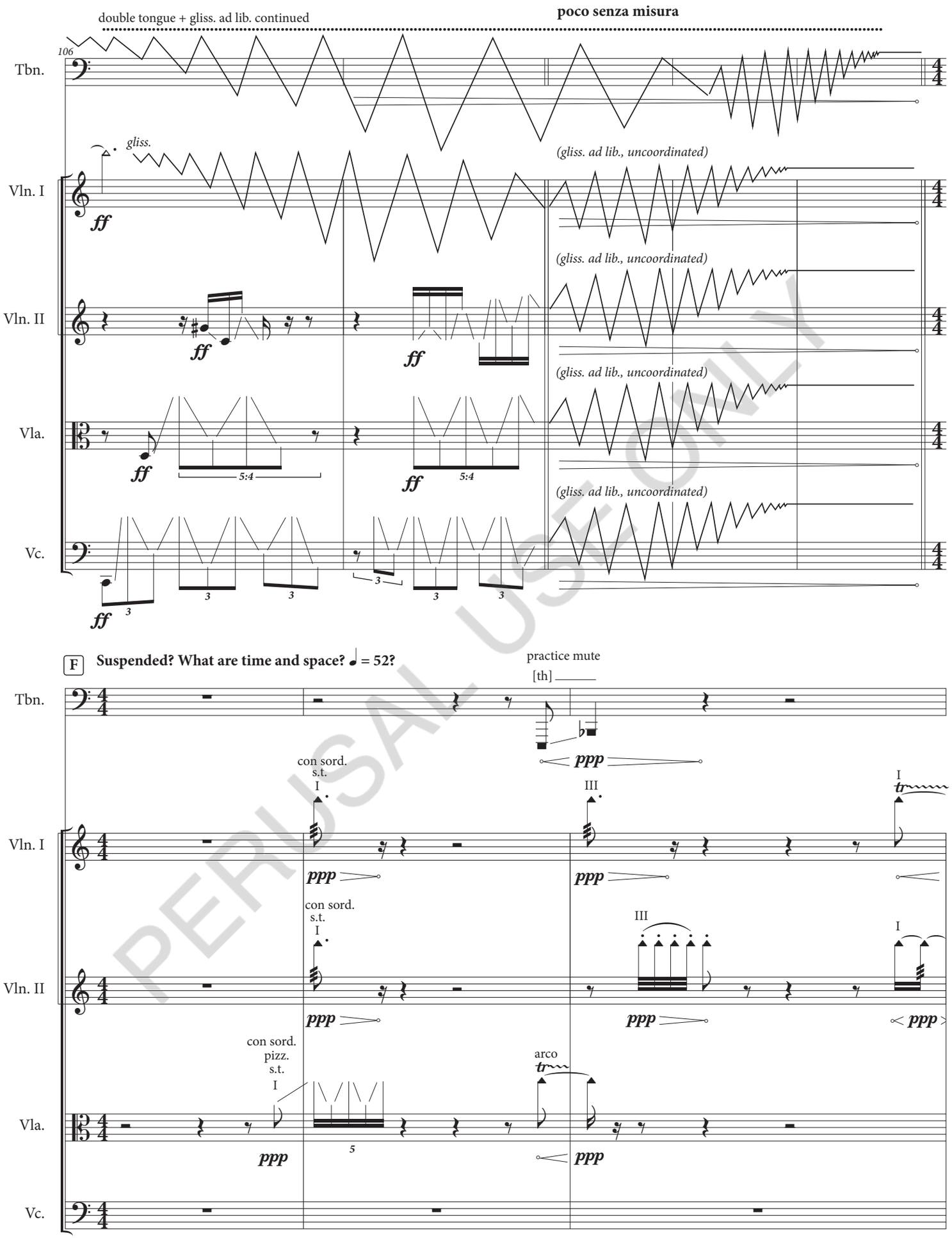

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