4 Koans

for violin and viola

Brendan Faegre

2011

Raven Feather Music

commissioned by the Aspen Music Festival

Duration: ca. 6 minutes

Performance Notes:

Harmonics

Hollow diamond noteheads are to be played by lightly touching the string where notated, which produces the sounding harmonic indicated above by a small notehead in parentheses (except for harmonics one octave above the open strings, which sound at the same pitch as lightly touched). In the first movement, the string on which to play a given natural harmonic is indicated by a cue-sized notehead on the same stem. Artificial harmonics are notated with a regular-sized notehead indicating a normally fingered note, and a hollow diamond notehead on the same stem, a P4 above, to be touched lightly on the same string.

Intonation

= quartertone sharp (halfway between natural and sharp)

= quartertone flat (halfway between natural and flat)

Bow Position

bridge = play ON the bridge pont = sul ponticello tasto = sul tasto ord = modo ordinario

Trills

Trills are to be played between the starting note and the note immediately following in parentheses.

Program Note:

4 Koans is an exploration of the Zen Buddhist koan concept in a musical context (perhaps the widest known koan—poorly translated—is "what is the sound of one hand clapping?"). I have always loved these irrational statements, stories, and questions designed to foil the logical mind and allow for an intuitive and spontaneous type of comprehension. I have composed these four short movements with the aim of stimulating similar mental faculties in the performers and listeners.

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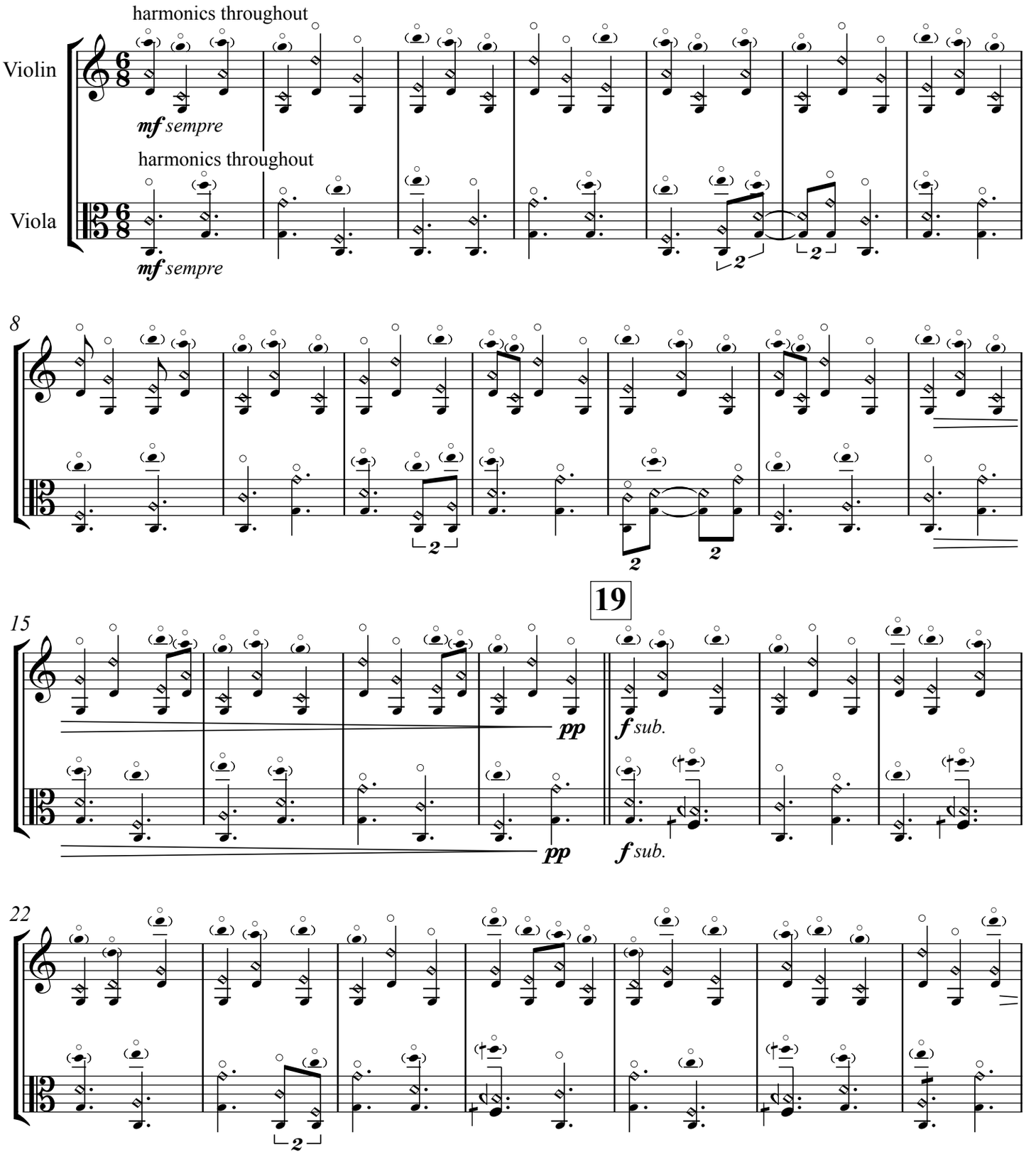
4 Koans

for violin & viola

I. Glass-covered Canyons

Brendan Faegre
(b. 1985)

Smooth (𝅗𝅥. = 50)



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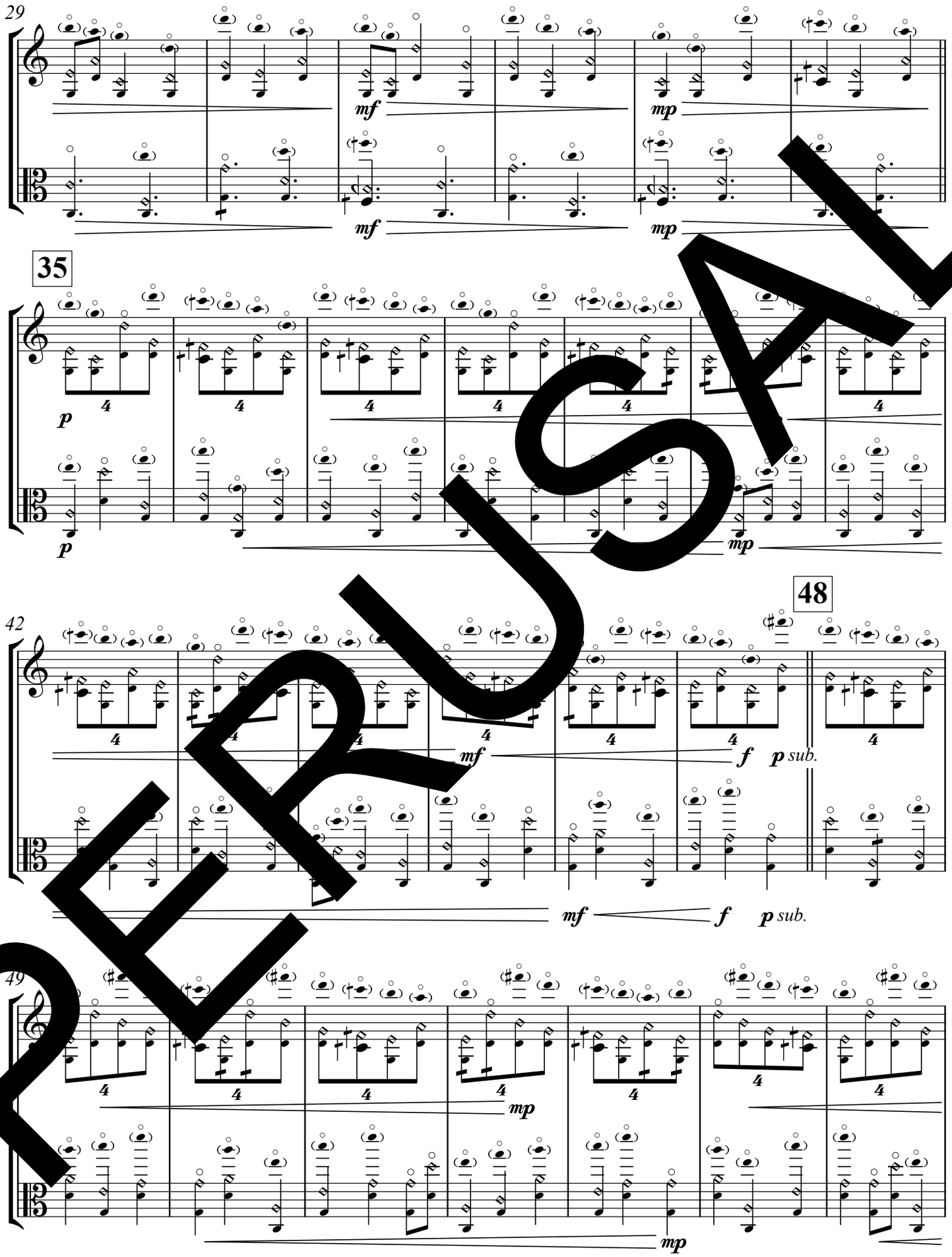
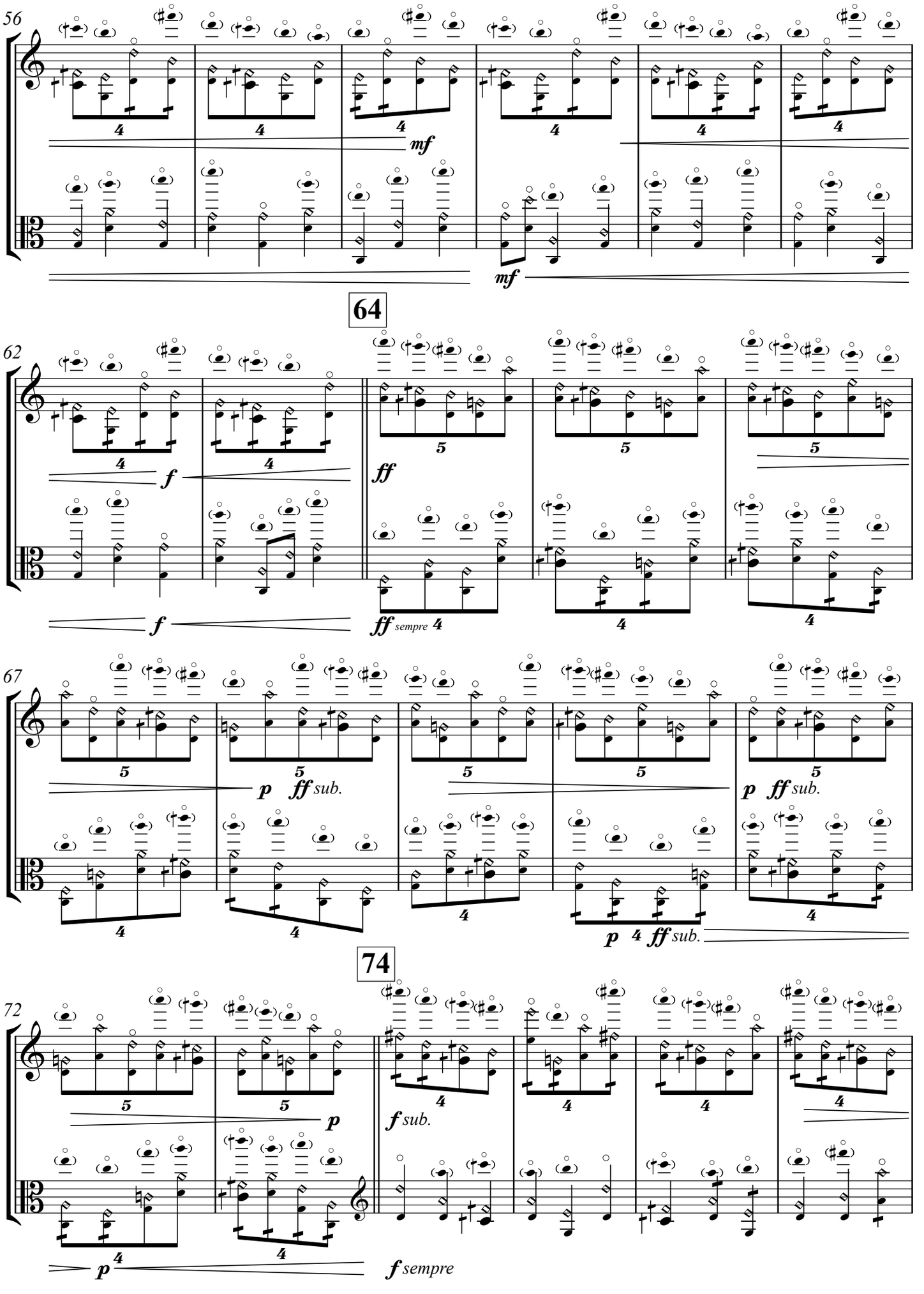
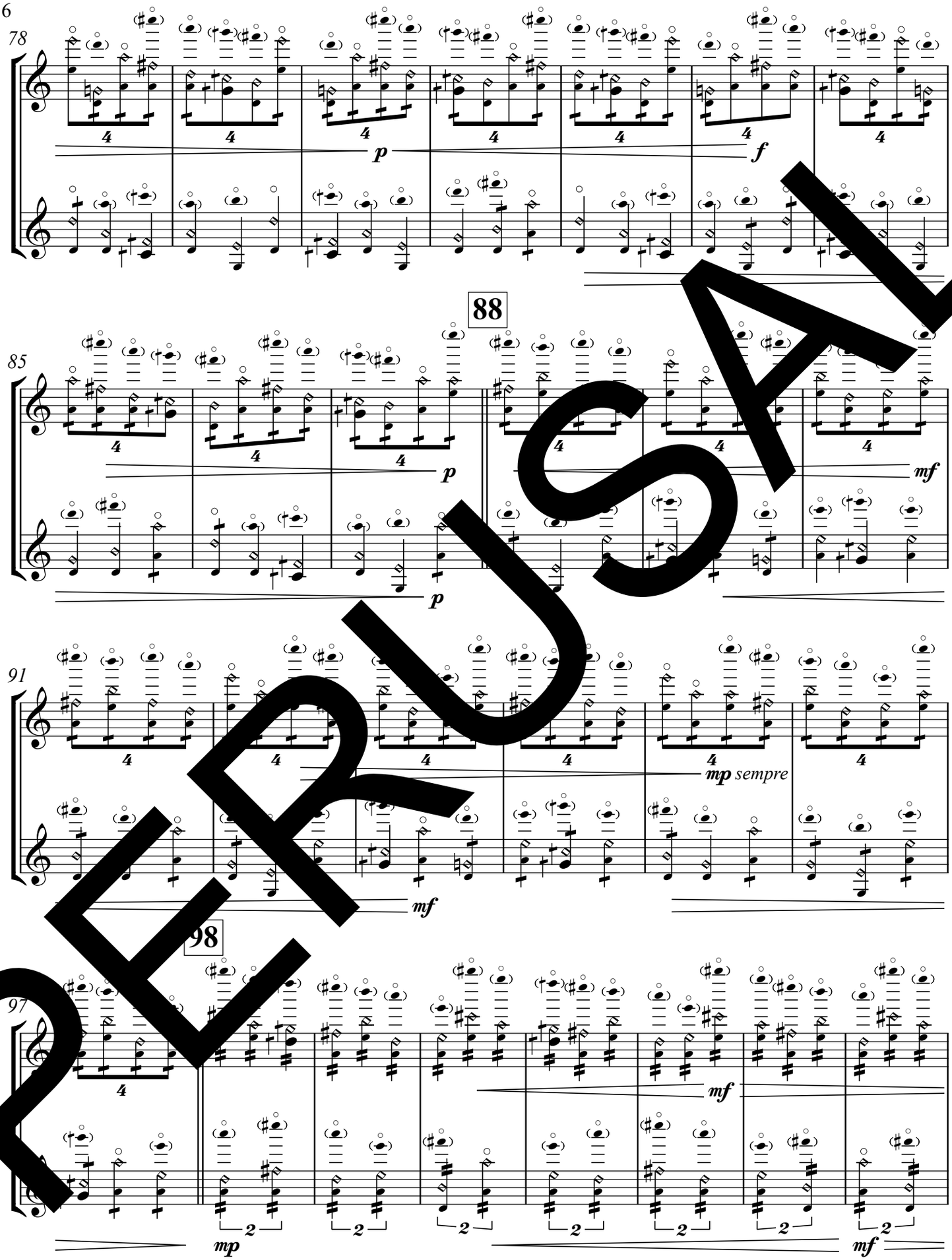


PERUSAL


56
mf
mf
64
62
f
f
ff
ff sempre
67
p
ff sub.
p
ff sub.
p
ff sub.
74
72
p
p
f sub.
f sempre



PERUSAL

110

105

mp unmeasured tremolo (as fast as possible)

mp unmeasured tremolo (as fast as possible)

113

poco rit. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - **(𝅗𝅥. = 40)**

118

p

pp

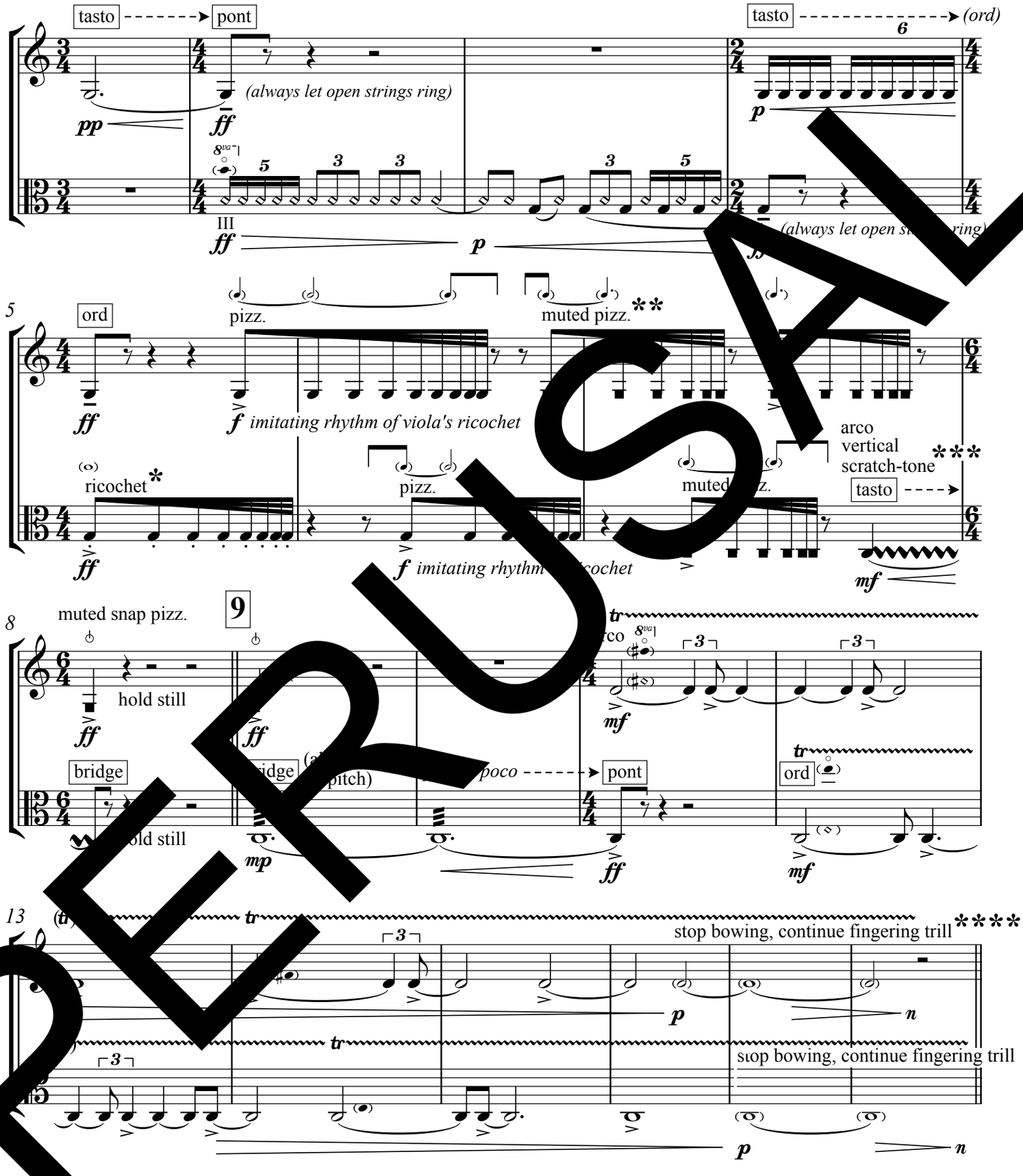
p

pp

[2'30"]

III. Ever-Ascending Spiral

Flowing (♩ = 108)



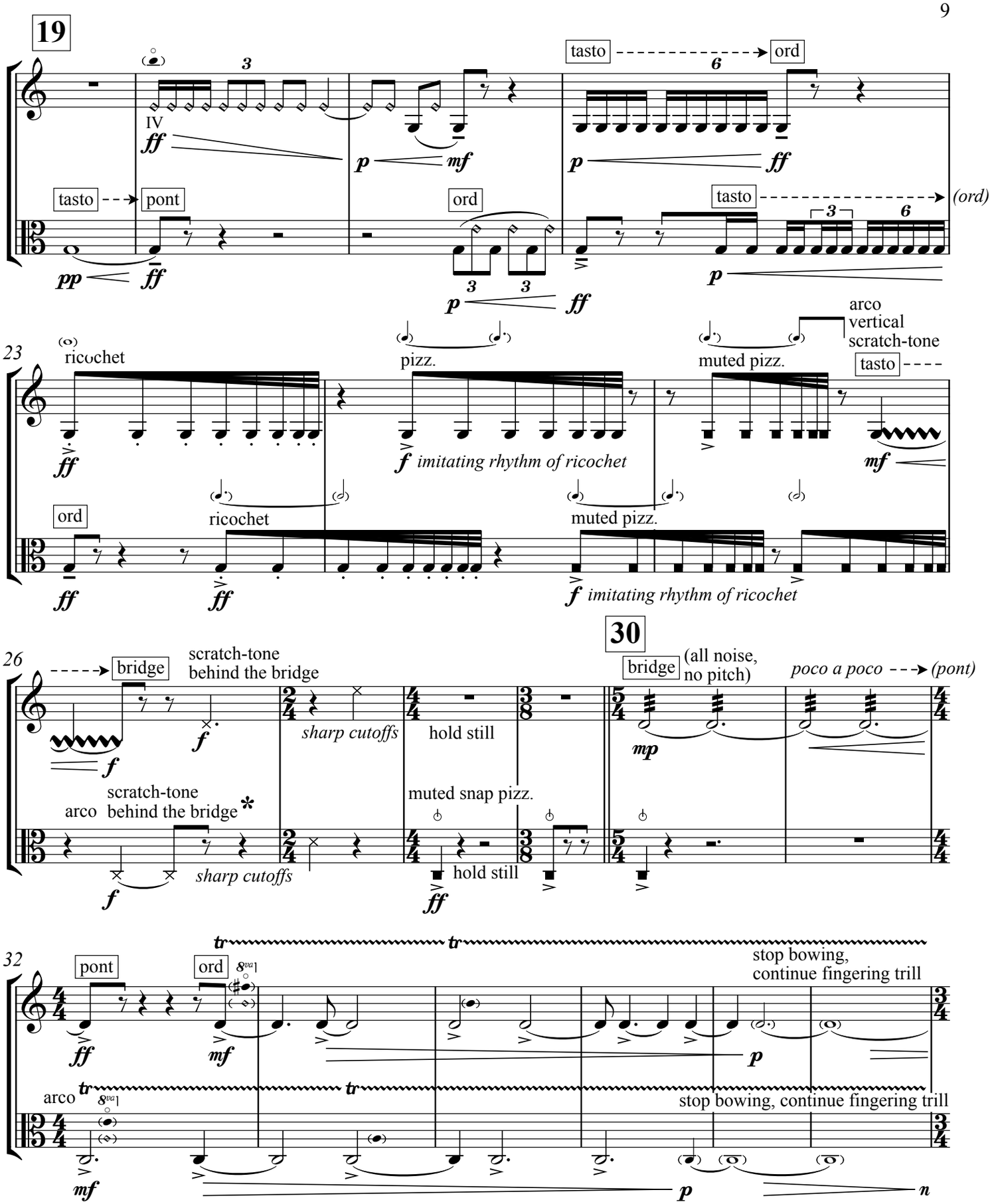
PERUSAL

* *throw the bow onto the string, producing naturally accellerating rebounds for the duration indicated in parentheses above.*

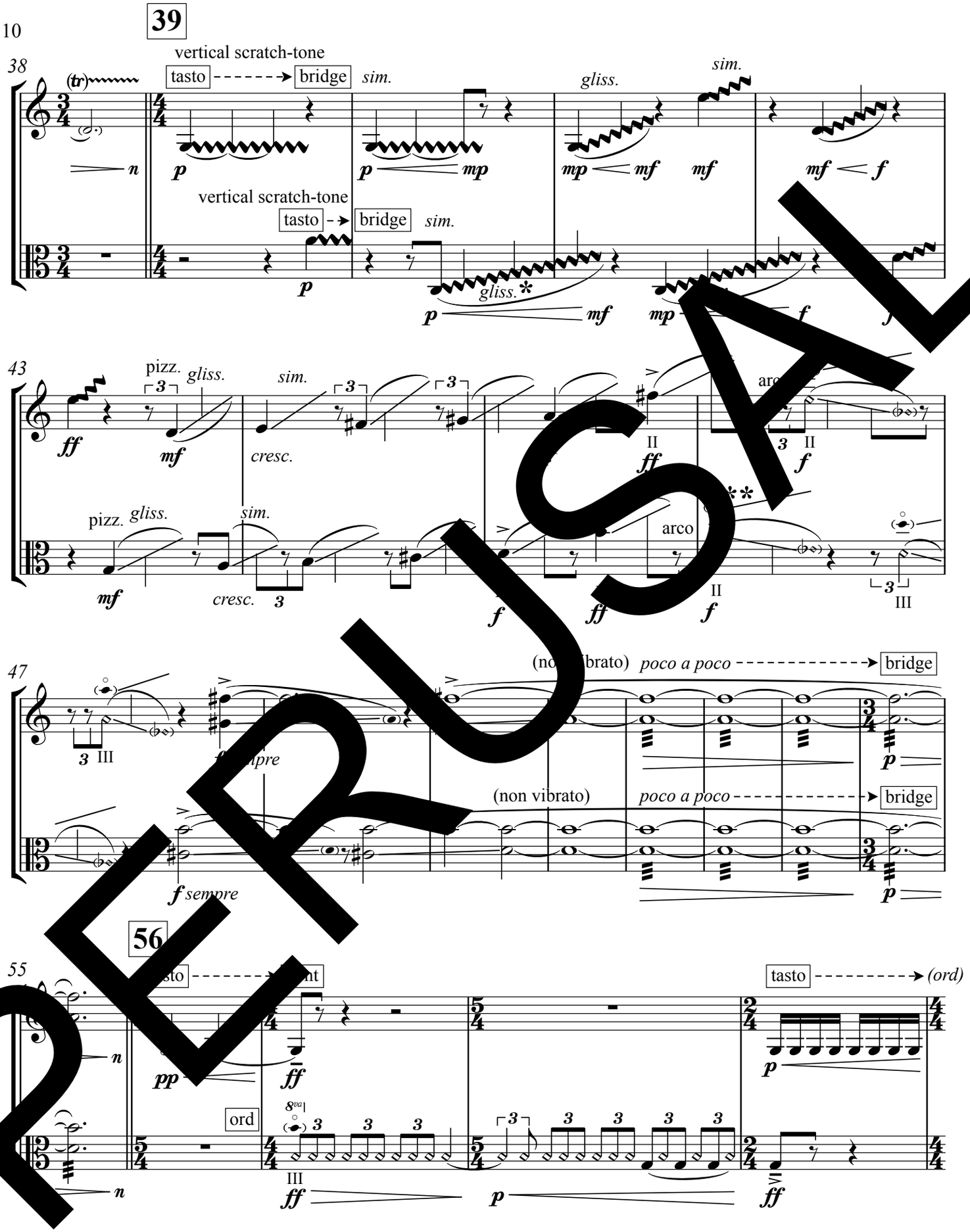
** *wedge a finger between III & IV at about 3rd position, press into the fingerboard and lightly towards IV, and pizz. This should produce a resonant, unpitched "thud".*

*** *with extreme bow-pressure and slow speed, bow vertically (as opposed to the normal horizontal bowing motion) moving from over the fingerboard to the bridge, playing about 1 in. away from the frog the whole time.*

**** *finger trilled note as hard as possible, so as to produce an audible pitch (like a guitar "hammer-on").*



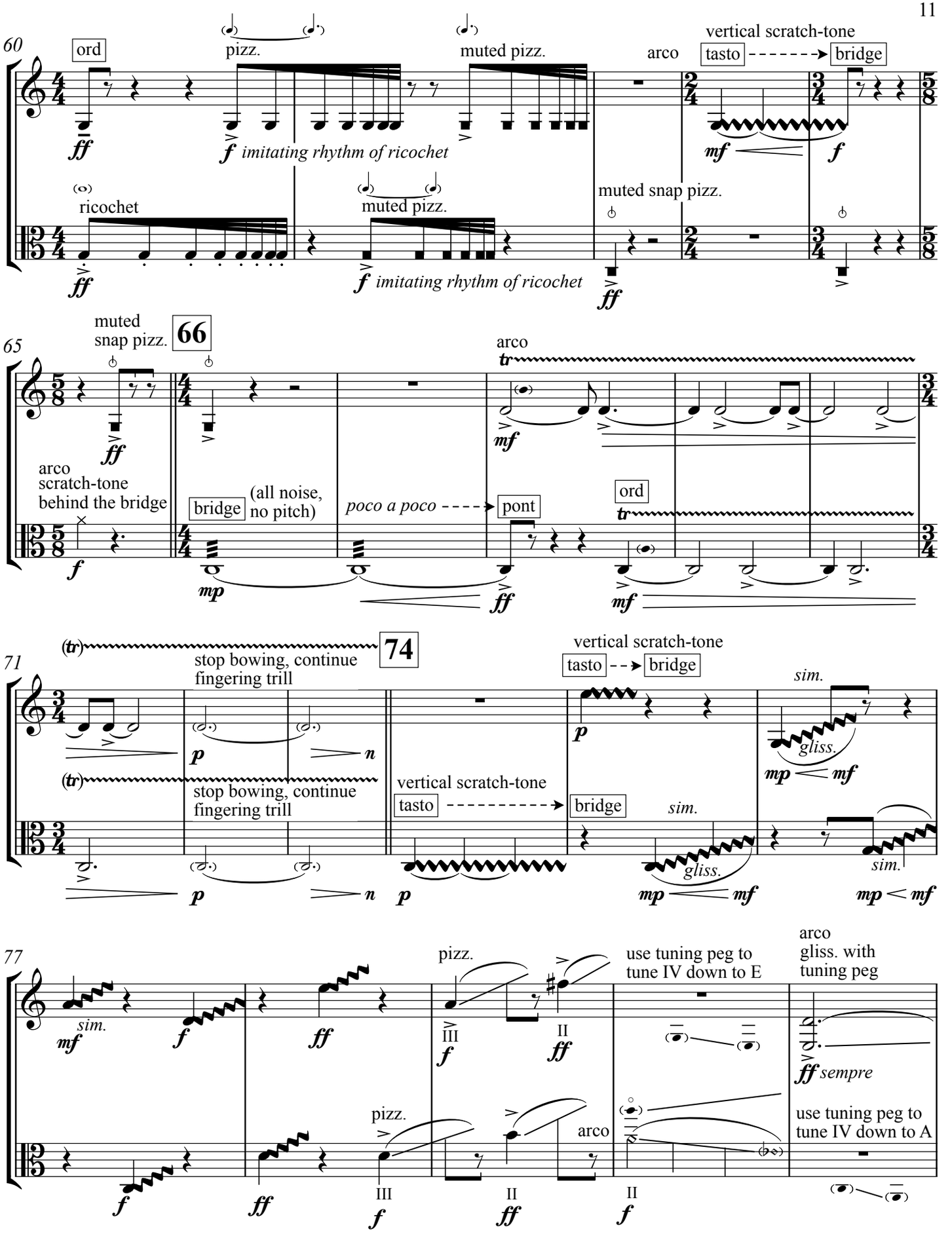
* *play behind the bridge on the string indicated by the "x" notehead, bowing on the string wrapping with extreme bow-pressure and slow speed.*

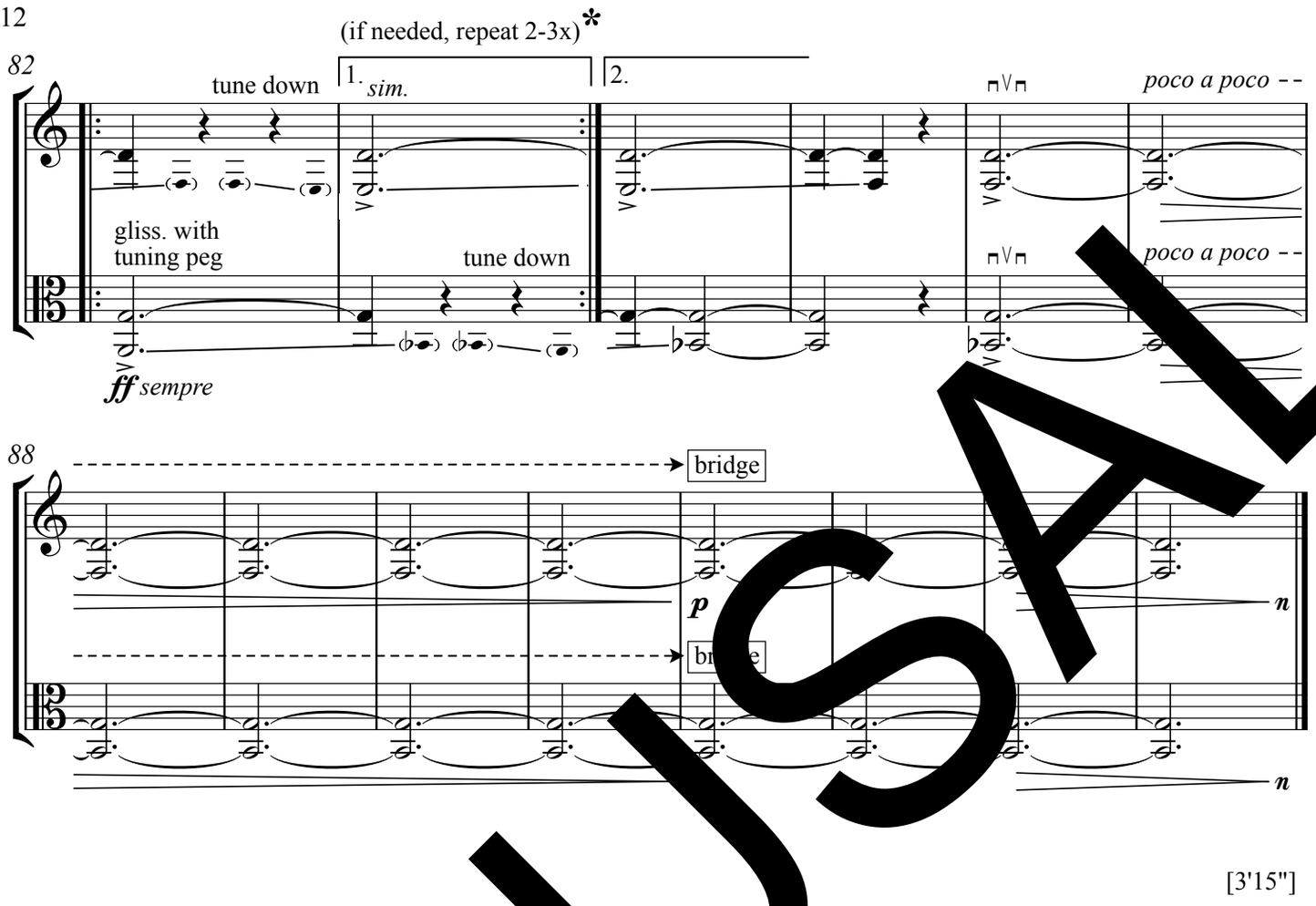


PERUSAL

* *with the right hand use the "vertical scratch-tone" technique described earlier, and simultaneously do a steady glissando with the left hand.*

** *touch lightly and do a steady and slow glissando down the string, allowing ascending harmonics to surface naturally.*


60
ord
pizz.
muted pizz.
arco
vertical scratch-tone
tasto
bridge
imitating rhythm of ricochet
ricochet
muted pizz.
muted snap pizz.
imitating rhythm of ricochet
65
muted
snap pizz.
66
arco
arco
scratch-tone
behind the bridge
bridge
(all noise,
no pitch)
poco a poco
pont
ord
71
stop bowing, continue
fingering trill
74
vertical scratch-tone
tasto
bridge
sim.
gliss.
stop bowing, continue
fingering trill
vertical scratch-tone
tasto
bridge
sim.
gliss.
sim.
77
sim.
pizz.
use tuning peg to
tune IV down to E
arco
gliss. with
tuning peg
sempre
pizz.
arco
use tuning peg to
tune IV down to A



[3'15"]

PERUSAL

* *in order to end the movement with violin and viola IV-strings perfectly in tune, take the first ending 2-3 times if necessary. Please do not retune between movements III and IV.*