Songs my Mother Taught me



Song cycle for alto and baritone voice, violoncello, harp, and marimba.

Finn Endries

Perusal score

Instrumentation

Solo Alto Voice

Solo Baritone Voice

Violoncello

Pedal Harp

Marimba (5 octave)*

** with a sheet of paper, or multiple stuck together, to cover the lowest octave of the white keys.*

Perusal score

Performance Notes

General

Boxes have been placed around segments which require creative input of the performer. These segments are to be played rhythmically free with an emphasis on musicality, and in regard to the prompt. In *The Snow Child*, in bars 22 and 28 for the Harp and 31 for the Marimba, the boxes indicate the performer is to play with great rhythmic freedom (though still in loose regard to the original tempo) with an emphasis on musicality over rhythmic precision. The sections are to span approximately 4 bars and 5 bars for the Harp respectively, and 2 bars for the Marimba. In *Lorelei*, bars 100 - 102 in the Marimba, the performer is to improvise a rapid passage using the given notes, to fluttered, shimmering effect. In bar 102 the Marimba performer is to play a 3 - 5 second **cadenza**; it is to blend with what has been previously improvised, expanding in both harmonic and rhythmic fronts whilst fading in dynamic and floating away. The Marimba performer will then cue the rest of the ensemble in. In bars 162 - 164, the Harp performer is also to improvise a rapid passage using the given notes, to fluttered, shimmering effect. In bars 162 - 165, the Marimba is to repeat the given chords freely and as they see musically fit. The overall texture of the section is to be unstable and quivering.

In bar 142 of Lorelei, the **pause** on the final quaver of the bar is to be the length of a crotchet in the next (after the tempo change). The harp is to lead this tempo change.

From letter S in *Lorelei*, Cello, Harp and Marimba performers are required to speak, while either playing their instrument or **shuffling** their feet (in a that players in an orchestra might applaud their fellow performers). For the final bar, all performers are required to **sing**. Given that vocal range may vary, Cello, Harp and Marimba are given the option to chose any note from a G major chord. The note is to be decided upon in rehearsal. The overall effect of this section is to be dark, enfolding, and muddy.

Glissandos are used throughout the piece, and are indicated with a line between two notes and *gliss.* as text. When the line is between notes, though without the text, then the performer is to play a short portamento slide between the two notes, as they are transitioning from one note to the next. The exception to this is in the Baritone, *The Snow Child*, bar 43, where the slide is to be drawn out.

Grace notes that proceed a note with a tenuto marking are to be played before the beat. Ones that proceed a note without a tenuto marking are to be played on the beat.

Voice

The *tz* sound introduced in *Lorelei's* bars 60 - 62, is to be pronounced [t͡s] (the *ts* in *cats*). The following **sibilance** is the *tz* sound rapidly repeated, though in a relatively sustained fashion with softer attack.

In bars 81 and 169 of *The Snow Child*, **rasp** is written to indicate a have sung, half spoken vocal approach. The desired effect is guttural and despondent, though the performer is encouraged to be subtle in approach.

Pedal Harp

Pedal diagrams have been provided at key points during the piece, and before glissandos.

Glissandos from or into headless notes indicate indistinctness in pitch, though the general range is to be regarded.

Chords are to be played unbroken, unless otherwise specified. The performer is to **mute** however they deem most musical, though in bars 69 and 72 of *Lorelei* they are given specific direction.

Brackets have been placed around **accidentals** that signify the need for a pedal change. However, not all accidentals that indicate a pedal change are marked like this - only ones that are would otherwise not require an accidental i.e. ones that are implied by key signature or lack of one.

In bar 103 of *The Snow Child*, the top stave is to be played **bisbigliando**, and the bottom ordinary. The arpeggio is to flow from the bottom stave, with the bisbigliando sounding as it's eventual decay. This technique continues into the piece.

Pedal buzz indicates the performer is to place the pedal between the indicated notes under the stave to produce a metallic buzzing sounds. The desired sounds is harsh and wiry, though not overbearing.

In bars 104 - 105 of Lorelei, the **low clusters** indicate the strings are to be slapped with an open palm.

Marimba

Prepared on indicates that a sheet of paper, spanning the width of the lowest octave, is to be slipped between the resonator pipes and the bars, covering the lowest octave of the "white" keys. The desired sound when striking a bar is a sustained rattle. **Prepared off** indicates to remove the sheet of paper.

A **cross note head** indicates the player is to strike an exposed resonator pipe with the wood of their mallet. The notated pitch is to be disregarded, the player may strike wherever convenient.

Perusal score

The Snow Child

The linden tree bore leafless
The bird of winter perched
Featherless, my mother, melting
It beneath her barren tongue
And the linden tree bore leaves

Her husband chased the trade winds
While I trickled down her throat
By the time he'd learnt to miss his dearest
I was three feet of her snow

And he comes angry
Oh, he's learnt some things
If you weren't barren before, my dear
You'll be winter again

He sculpted me into a child
Taught me spring, taught me summer
Eleven times I bore their hunger
Day on day on breaking
So she learned the mandolin
Bound her chest and
Tried to teach us both to sing,
So she lent her sisters harp
But thought it looked just artless,
So I made her a guitar,
From my hair was woven
Though it melted in her hands
The chord that sung

It is day now
Night was when you won her from me

Three hundred mark for I sold
Two months on the water
His crew, sheltering their northern breath
Watched his hand steady on the rudder
Oh, he's learnt some things
If there wasn't drumming before
He'll be the flame again.

My dearest, we lost our way
In dawning the horizon
Waves pushed us browbeaten
Kneeling to the southern bliss
She lost drip by drip by drip in shimmer

It should not have surprised me
Since you say she came from snow.

Lyrics

Perusal score

Lorelei

Dancing by the Rhein
Beneath the dawning of the Lorelei
Arched and rippling in the tide
She followed him

He had lain upon the rock
Murmured songs both old and wrong
She was rosemary
By the scraping moon on river sheen
Full and clot and thistled

To speak of music
To hunger to a fault
By dawn a thousand bodies
Waiting on the final note
Not wilding in it's age
Flowing by the Lorelei
The river, silted, honey paced
Pressed against it's country throat

Seven years the river quiet
A year for every child
A year for every child

The first was born a water-horse
The second slipped away as melody
The third and fourth as king and queen
Of hearts within a gamblers purse
The fifth was as an old fig tree
The sixth was born a loving son
Whom within a year
Had grown so tall he'd swam to sea
And lain down as a cliff face
The seventh was born so shy
Until the shortest night,

My mother stirring by the cot
Heard dancing by the Rhein-shore
And for the first time
My voice broke a new chord
And fractured in the valley
In echo every single note was
Rope to hold on to
Rope to hold on to
Rope to hold on to

To speak of music
To hunger to a fault
By dawn a thousand bodies
Waiting on the final note

She had left that night to dance,
Swing and turn, my dress was flying
In her hands around the fire
Every spin a moment higher

He had stepped out of the river,
And he spun them down to earth
You can't shake me from him
I am the flooding hunger
Only half a girl
As she tore me from him
He held my other arm,
He'll pull, I'll tear and fracture
He'll have his missing half
You pull, I'll tear and fracture
You can keep the other part
You can keep the other part

The night furled in on herself
So she let her daughter go
The night furled in on herself
Until she could no longer fold
So she curled onto the fire
By now a bed of coals
And dreamt of dancing
And dreamt of dancing with the lightest feet
To the longest woven song
Of the Lorelei
Of the Lorelei.

To speak of music
to hunger to a fault
by dawn a thousand bodies
Waiting on the final note.

Perusal score

Special thanks to Rae Howell, Shelby Hills, and Adam Marguglio for the support and feedback throughout the project.

Cover image is A Tale from Jølster *by Nikolai Astrup.*

Program Notes

This project is the result of a study in German folklore. It's lyrics are an amalgamation of folk tales that have echoed through the regions collective consciousness for centuries, perhaps millennia, enduring in the weeds of children's stories, folk songs and proverbs.

I wish to give these ideas a new life, with new musical bedding, evoking their spirit without engaging directly in their musical tropes. To create is to contribute to the cultural weave of what has come before, and I hope, however minuscule, that this project engages in the constant (albeit somewhat slowed) forward motion of the folk tradition.

Themes of human nature, violence; of supernatural and the mundane; deep mysticism and christian devotion find themselves side by side in many of the songs and stories I had investigated. With such a broad thematic palate do pull from, I found myself drawn to the stories centred on family, in retrospect maybe a natural choice given my connection to the culture. Often the supernatural is woven into these familial stories to seemingly soften the blow of what can range from tragic circumstance to malevolence. Unfortunately, this is too often at the hand of a masculine figure, be that a brother, father, or supernatural (or natural) suitor, to pass as simple coincidence; many of the striking stories that I wove into my own lyrics were privy to this, and as such have played into my own lyrics. Violence, entrapment, and a despondent resilience feature centre within my lyrics, to be clear - these are not happy songs.

Whether these stories serve as cautionary tales or as whispers of life in early Europe are ultimately beyond the scope of this project; my intention with this project is to rediscover the stories that shaped this culture, and shine my own little light on what catches my eye.

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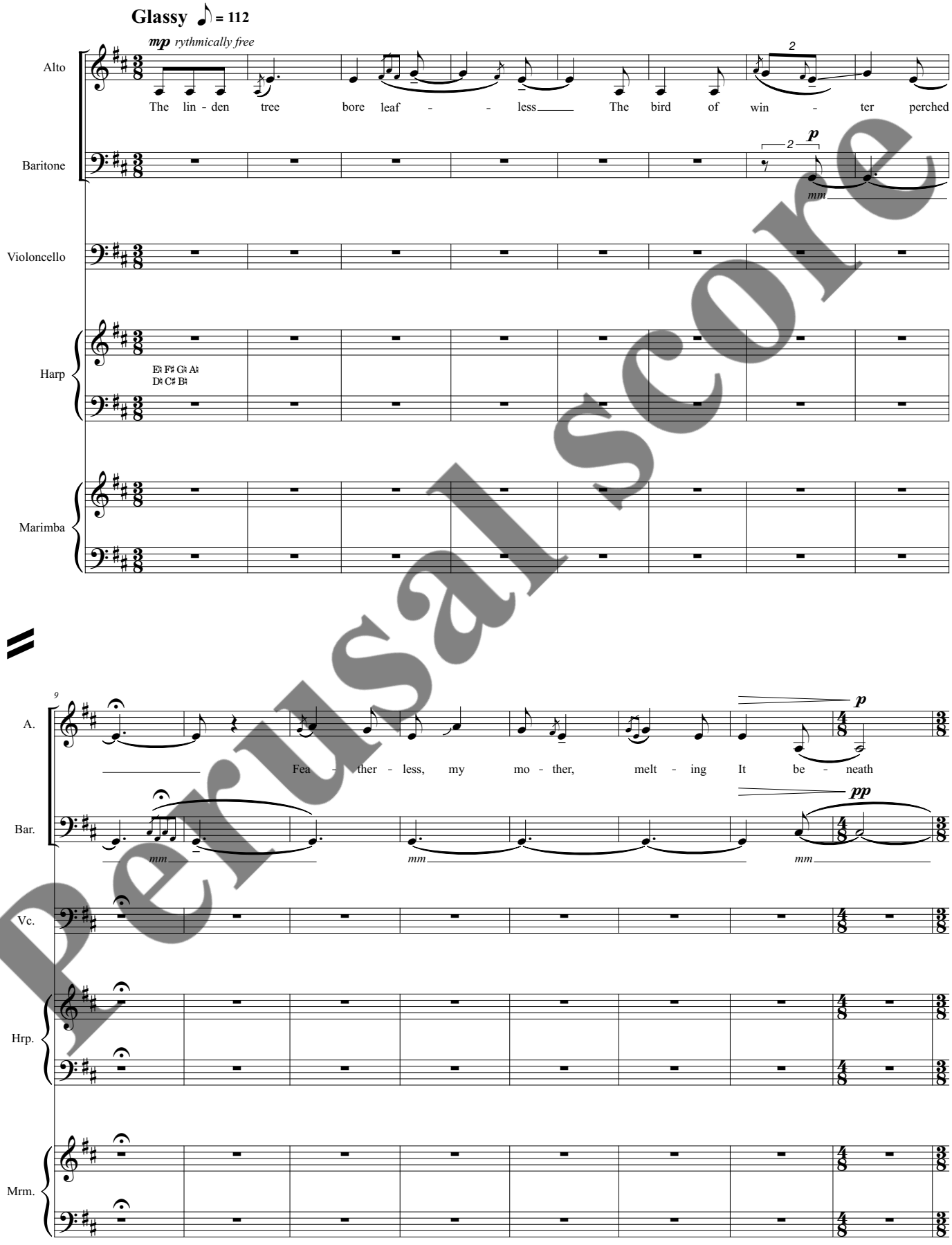
Es kam ein Vogel federlos

Es kam ein Vogel federlos	*There came a bird featherless*
Saß auf dem Baume blattlos	*Sat on the tree leafless*
Da kam die Jungfer mundlos	*There came a maiden mouthless*
Und fraß den Vogel federlos	*And ate the bird featherless*
Von dem Baume blattlos.	*From off the tree leafless.*

Traditional German folk riddle
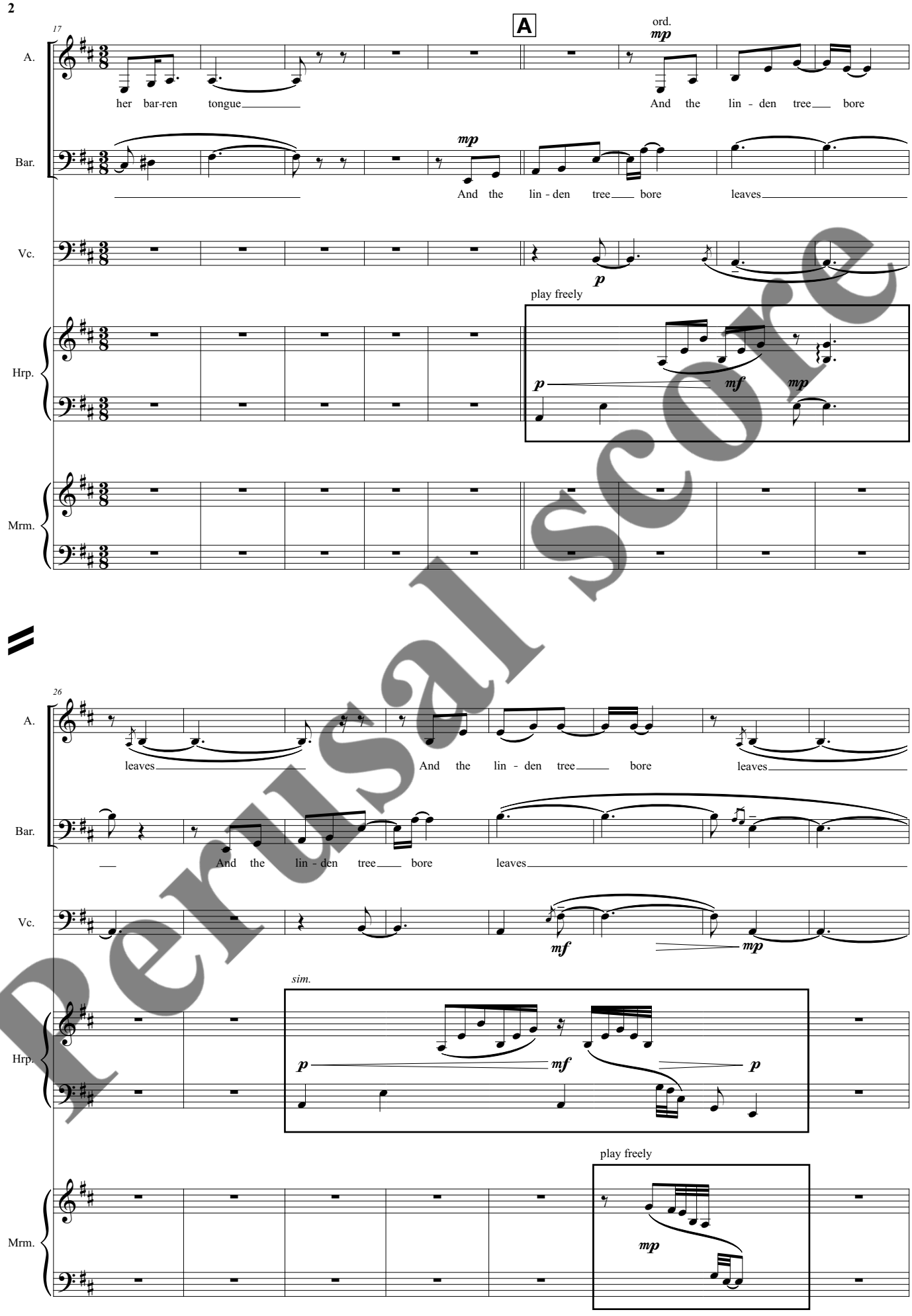
I. The Snow Child

Finn Endries
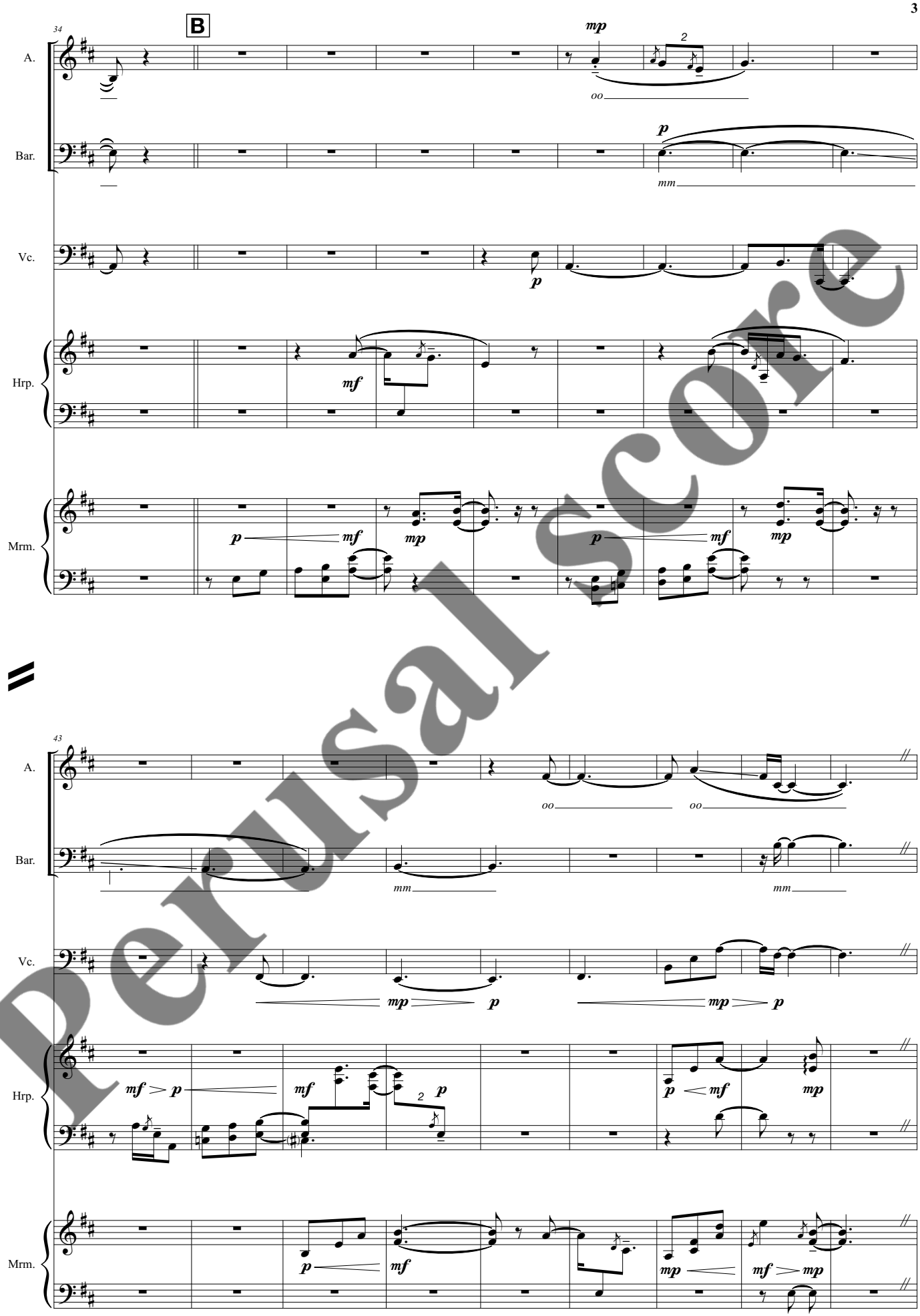


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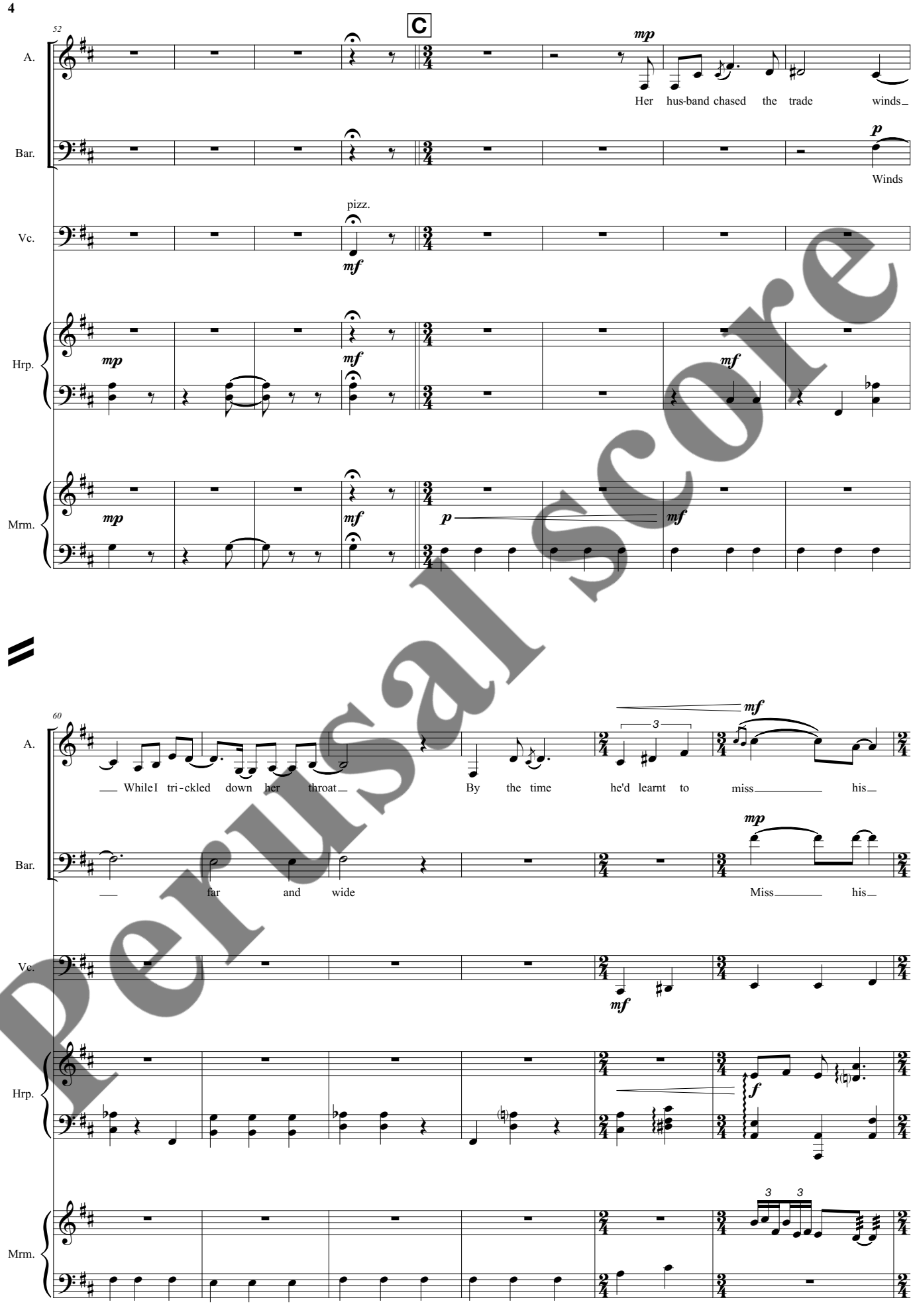


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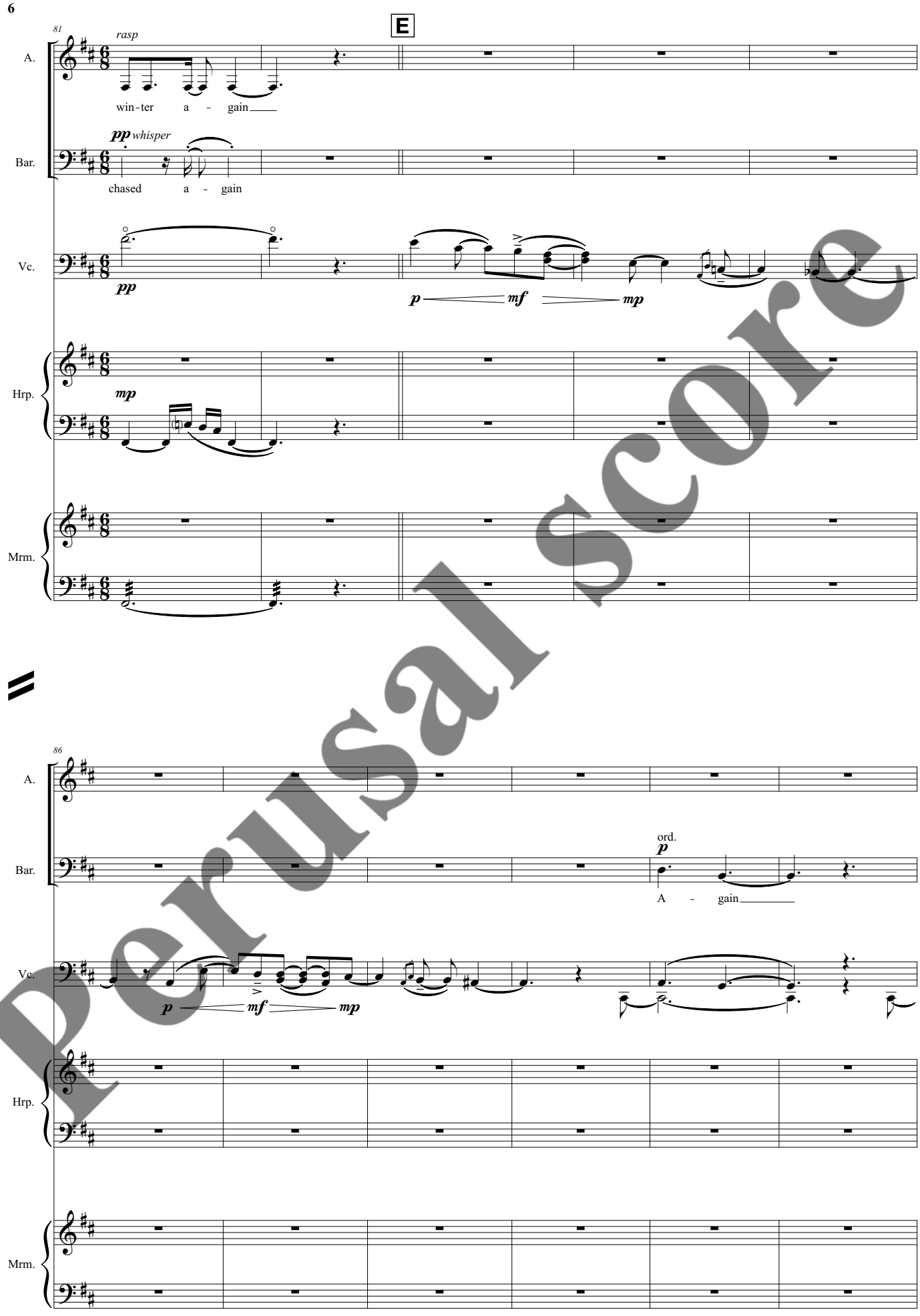


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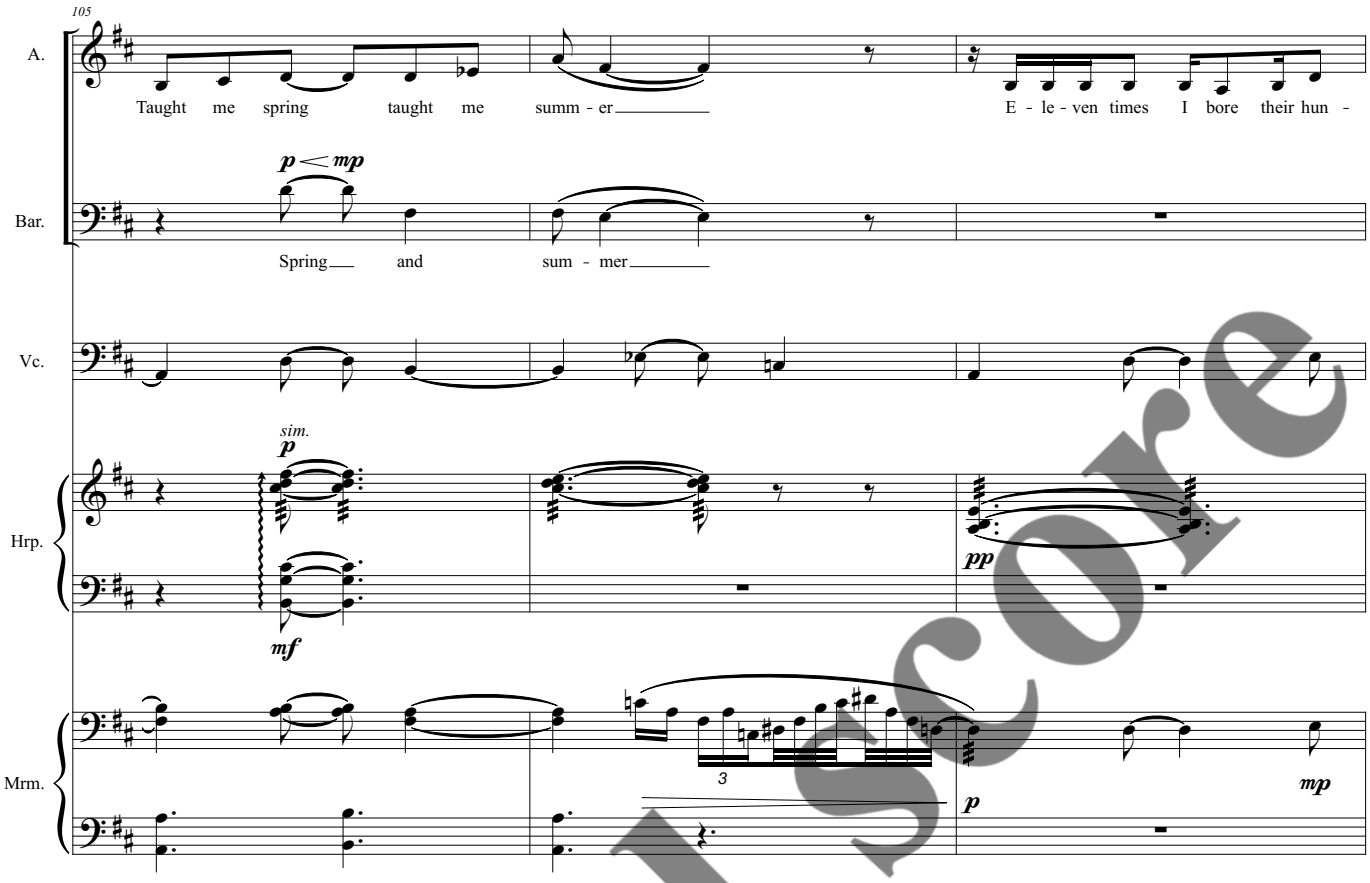


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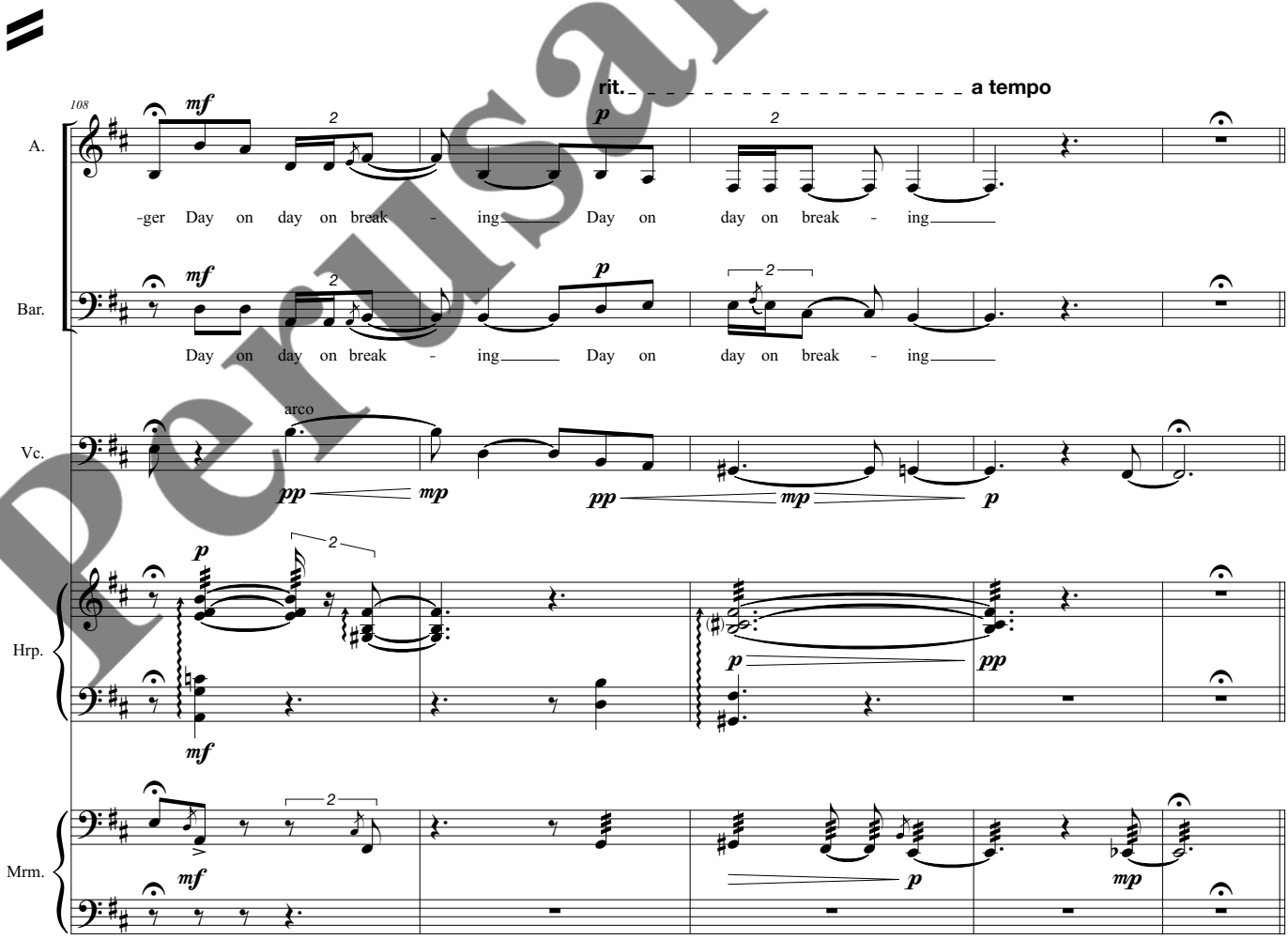
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G

Pastural

113

A. *mf* 2

So she learnt the man - do - lin Bound her chest and

Bar. *p*

Man - do - lin

Vc.

Hrp. *p* *expressively* *mf* *mf* *f*

Mrm.

118

A.

Tried to teach us both to sing So she

Bar.

Teach us both to sing
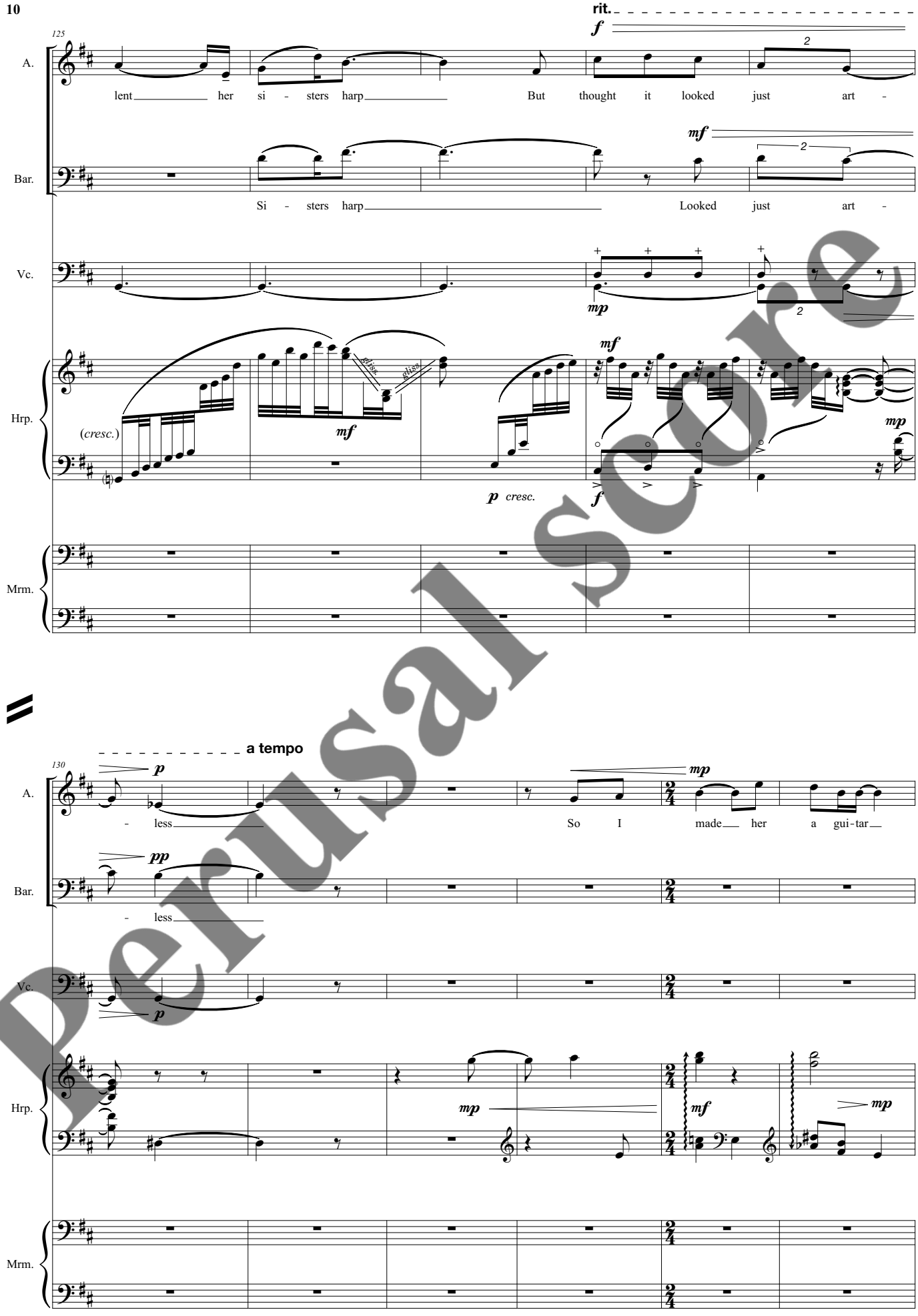
Vc. *p*

Hrp. *mp* *p cresc.*

Mrm.

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H

136

A. from my hair was wo - ven Though it melt - ed in her hands the

Bar. Oh the hands the

Vc.

Hrp.

Mrm.

rit. a tempo

141

A. chord that sung It is day now night was when you won her from

Bar. chord the hands they tore her from
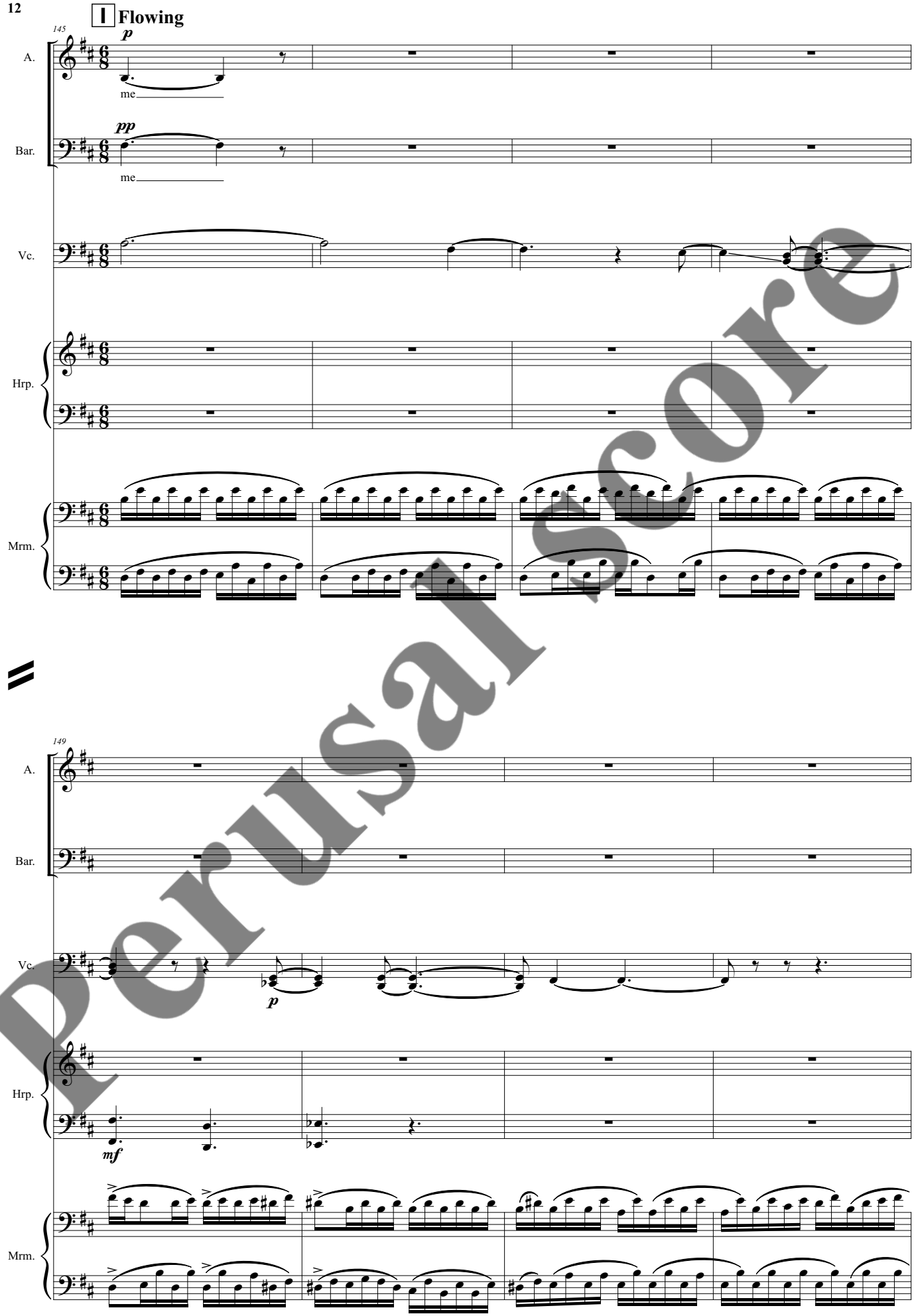
Vc.

Hrp. E♮ F♮ G♮ A♮ D♮ C♯ B♮

Mrm.
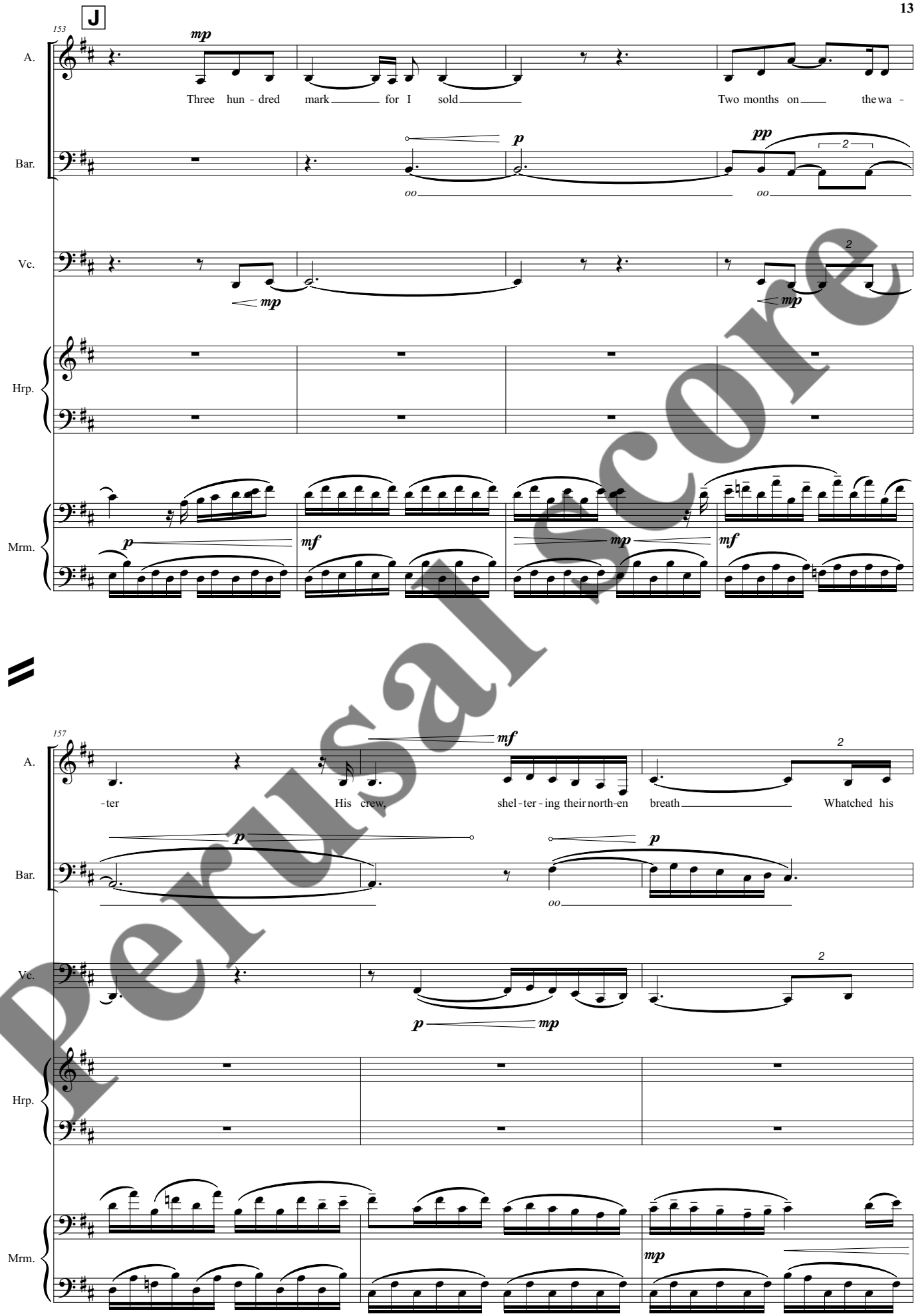
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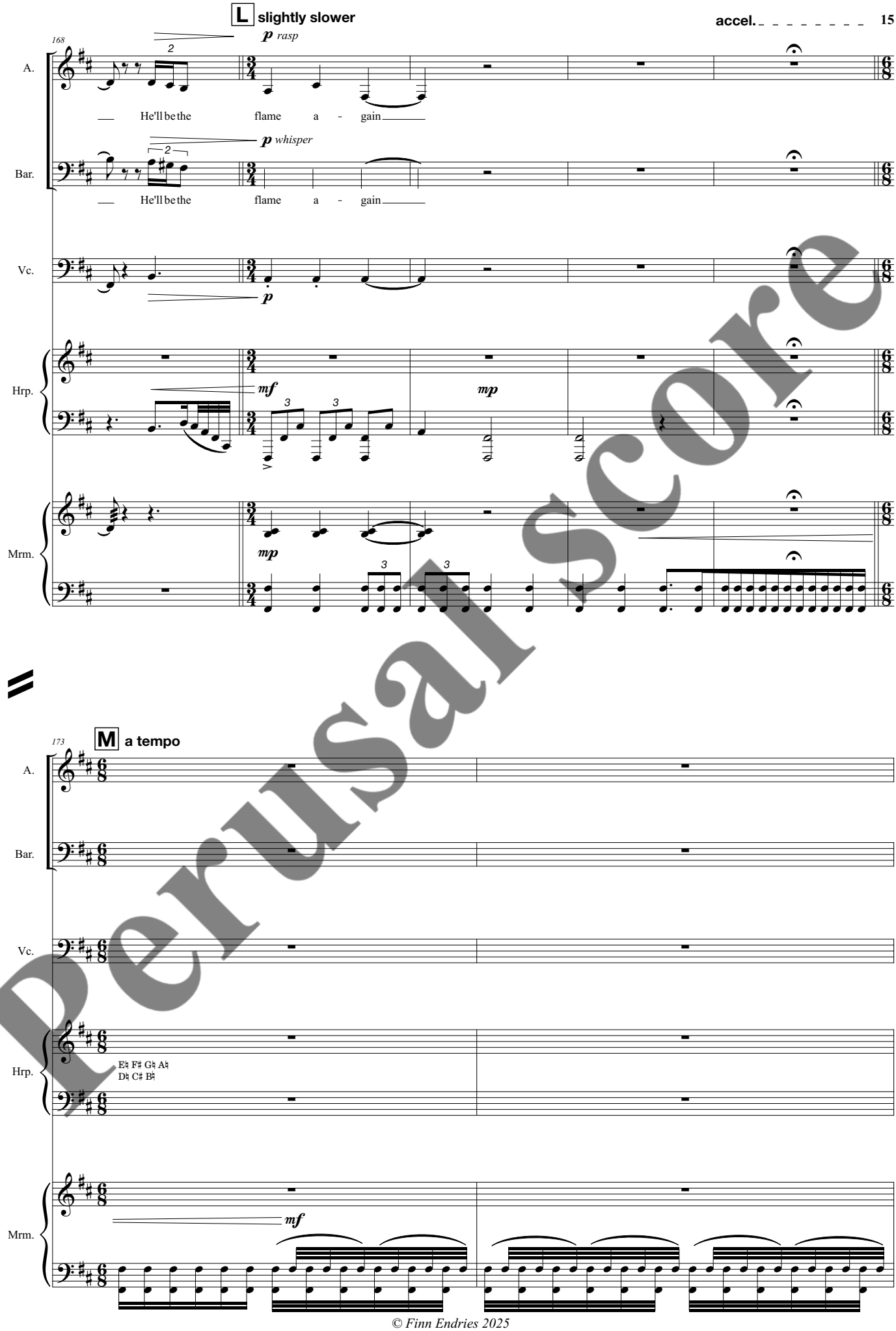


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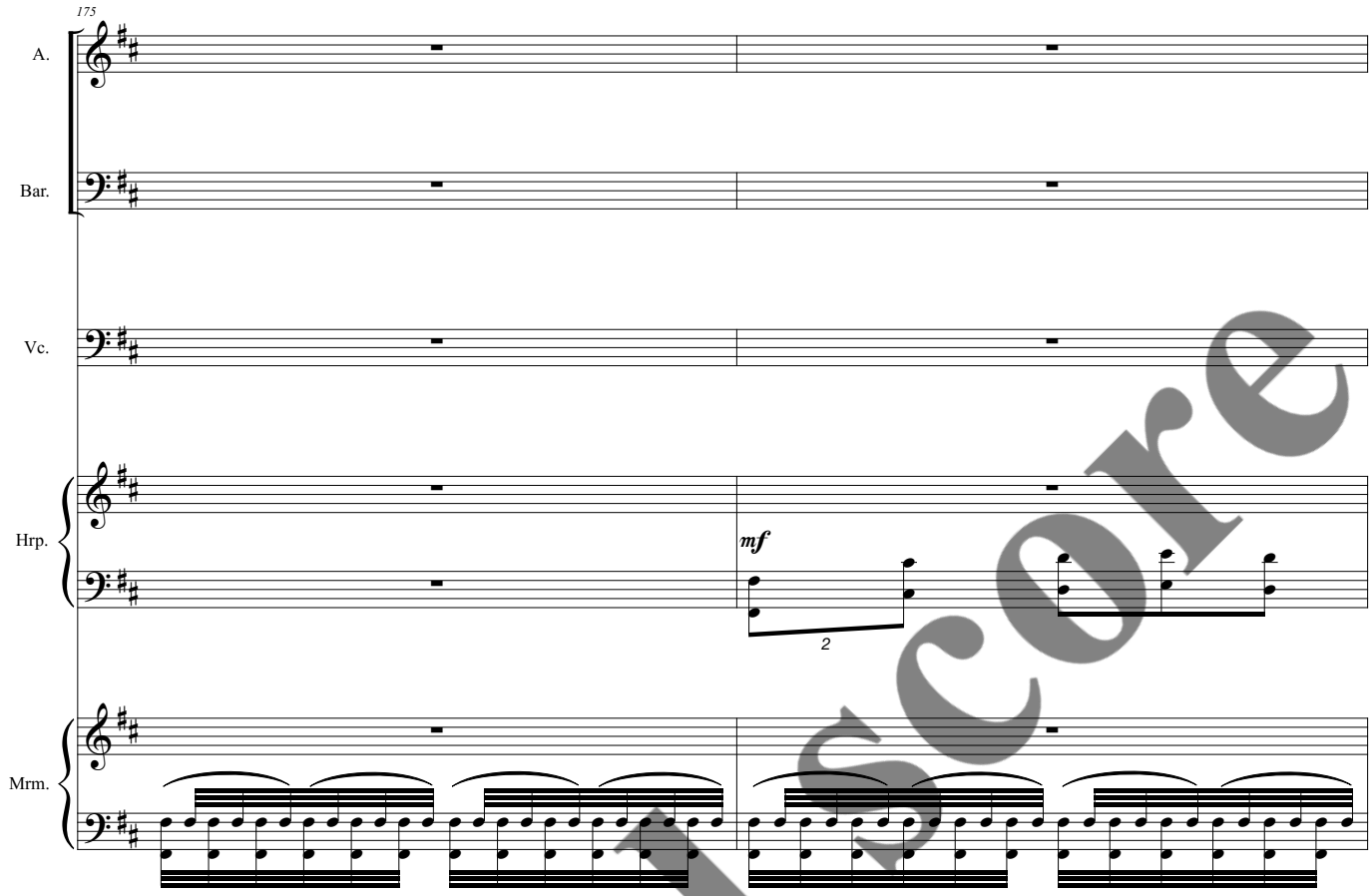


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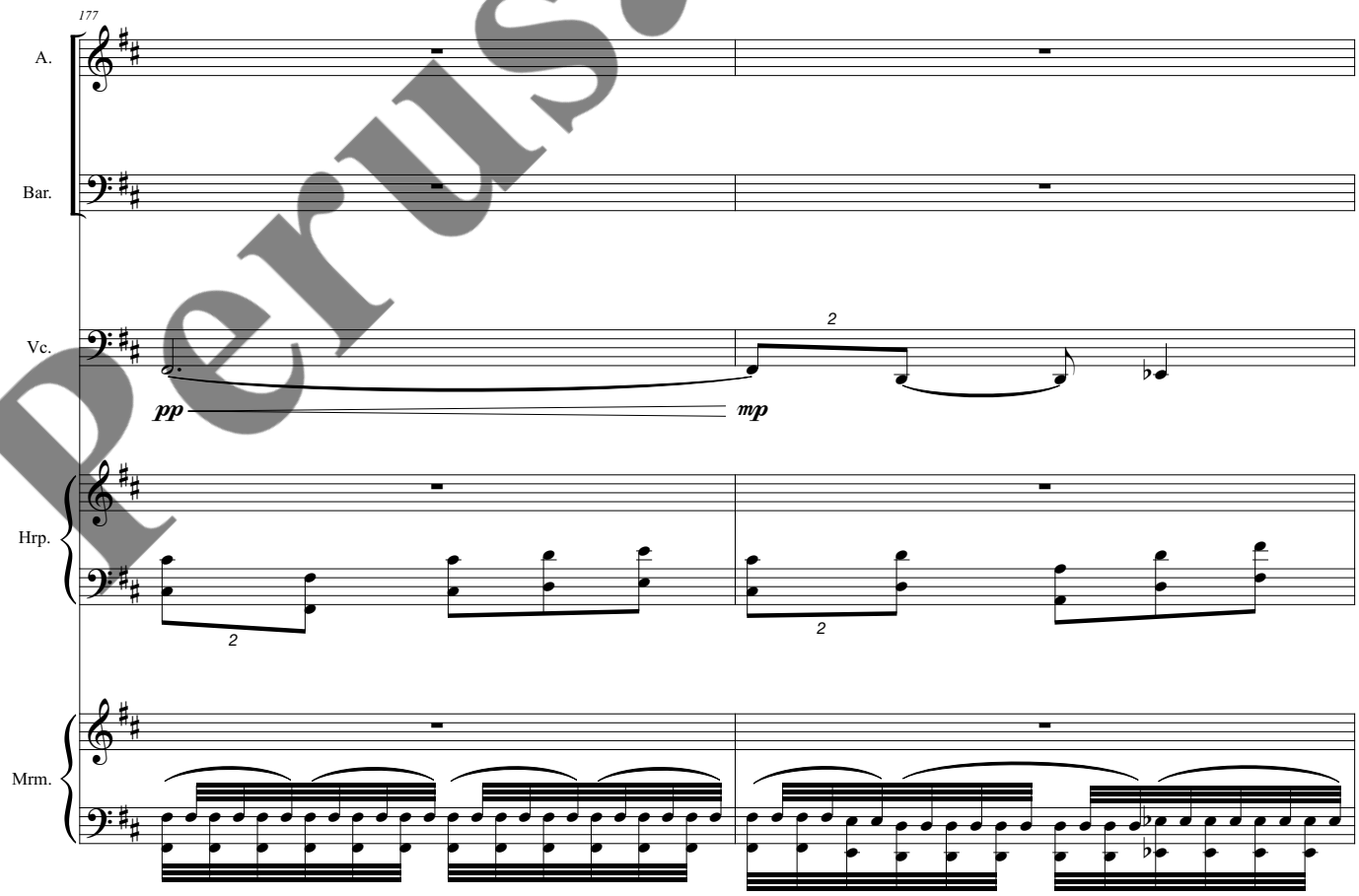
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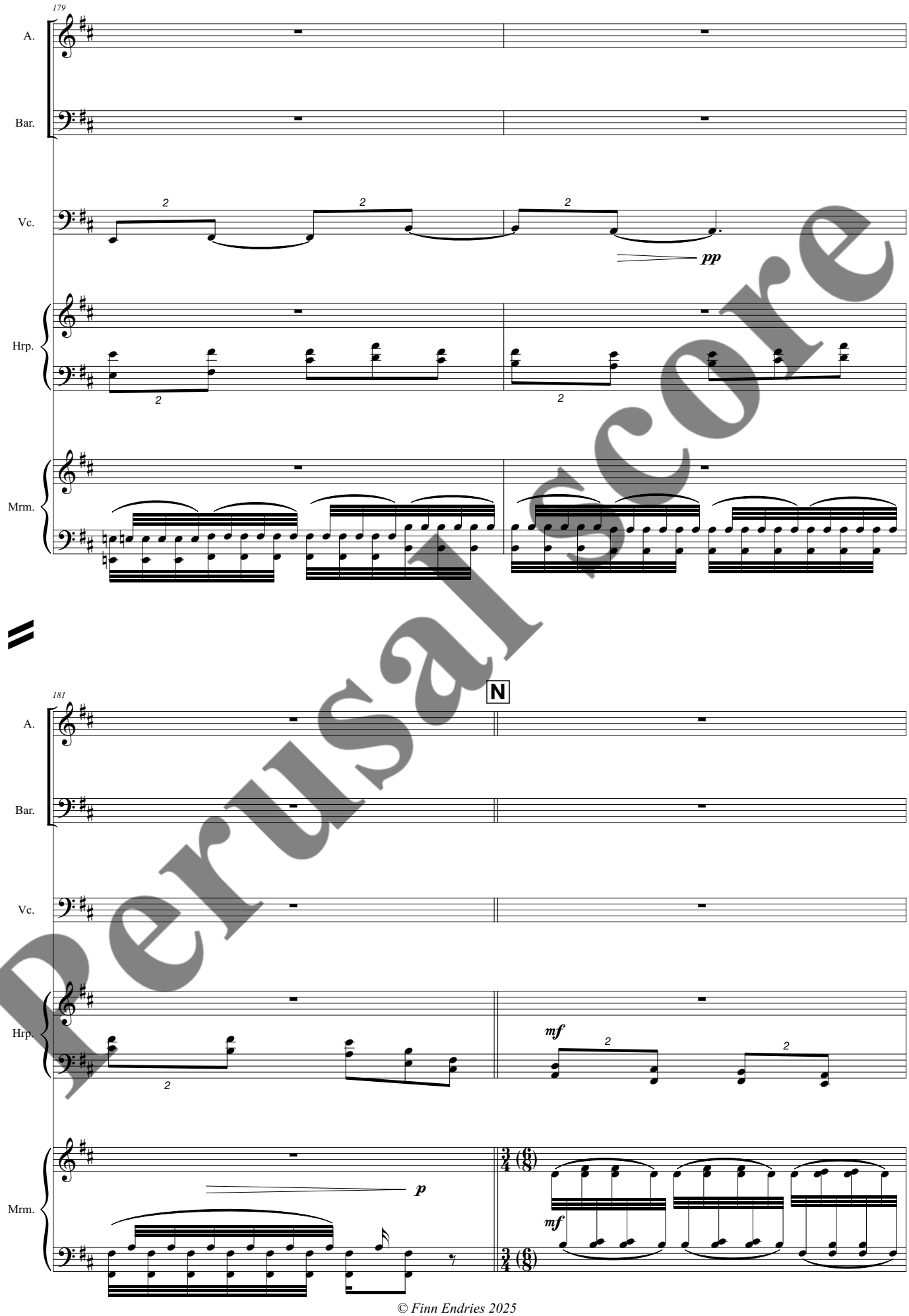
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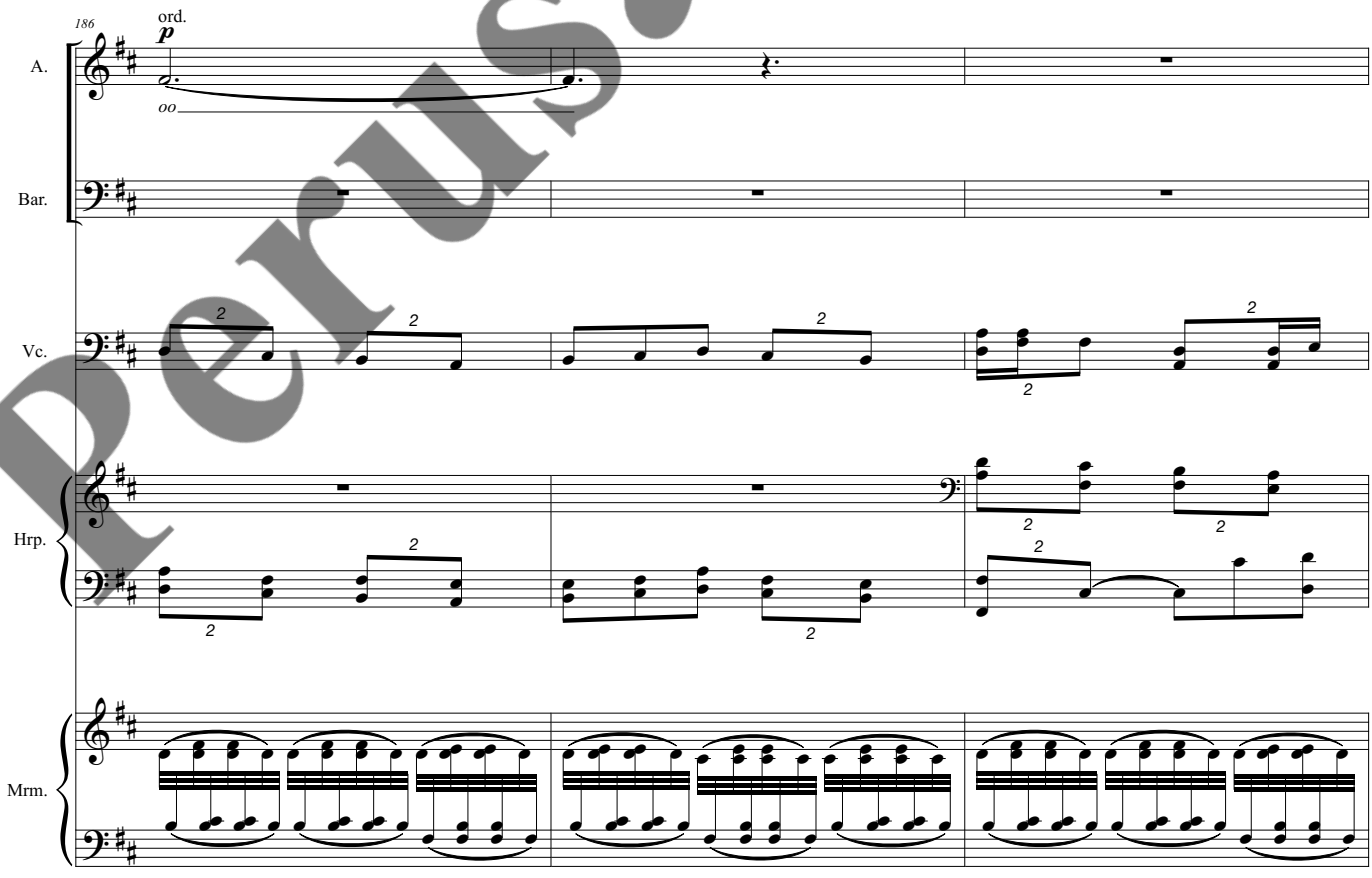
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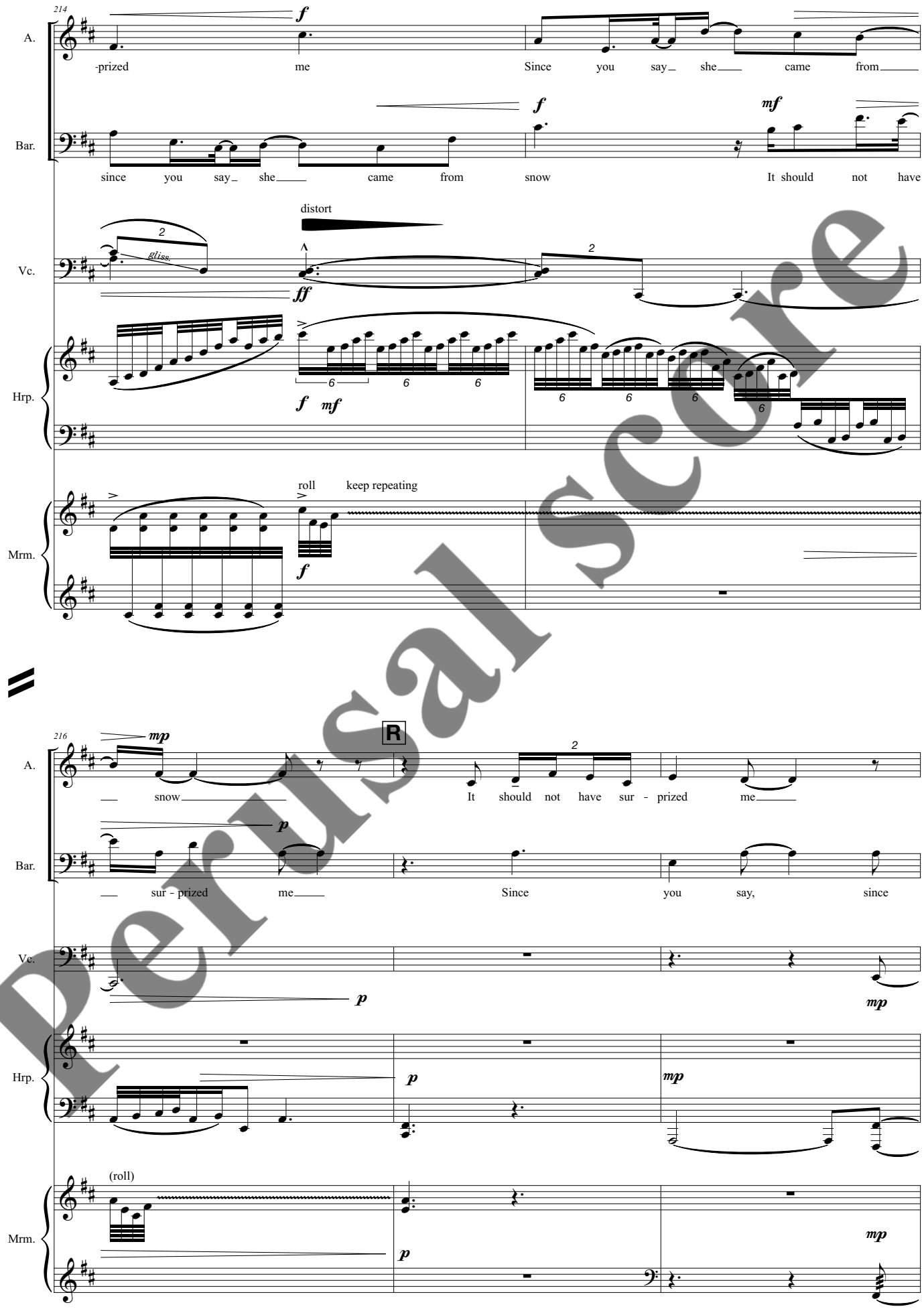


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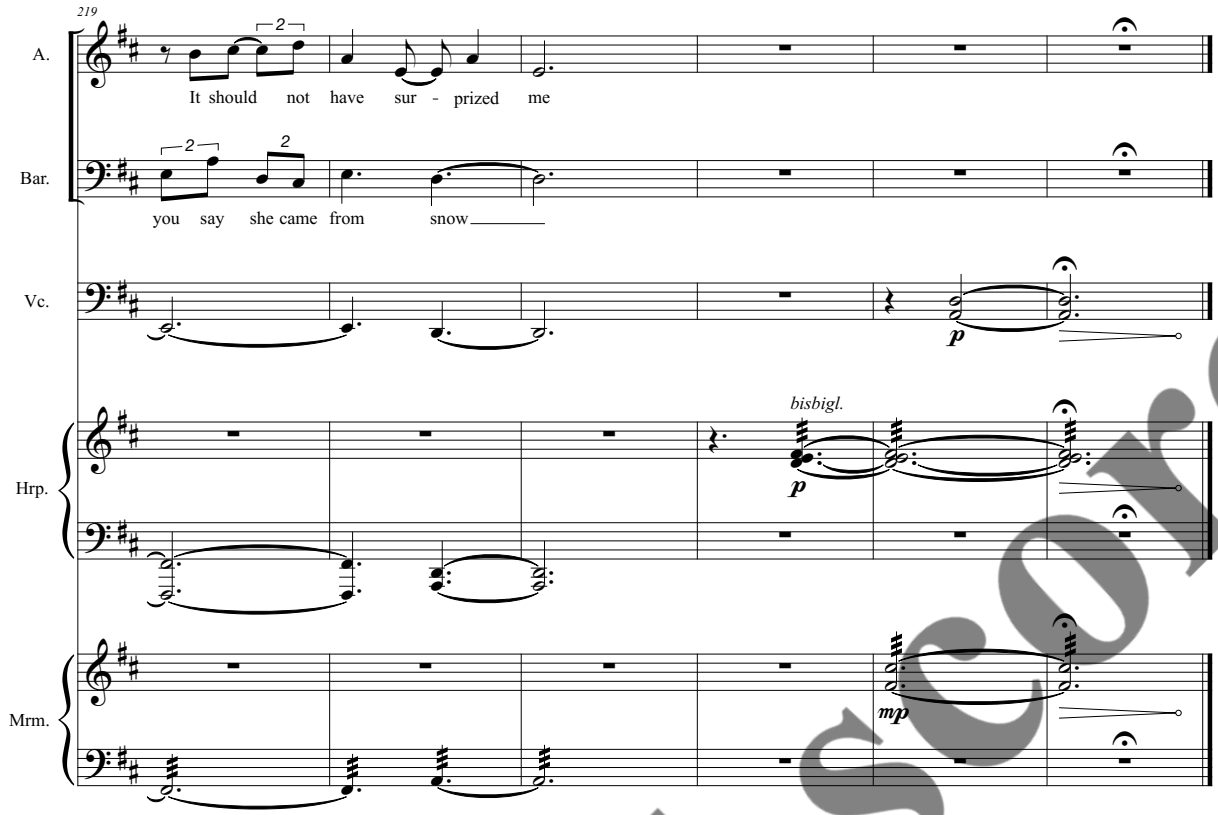


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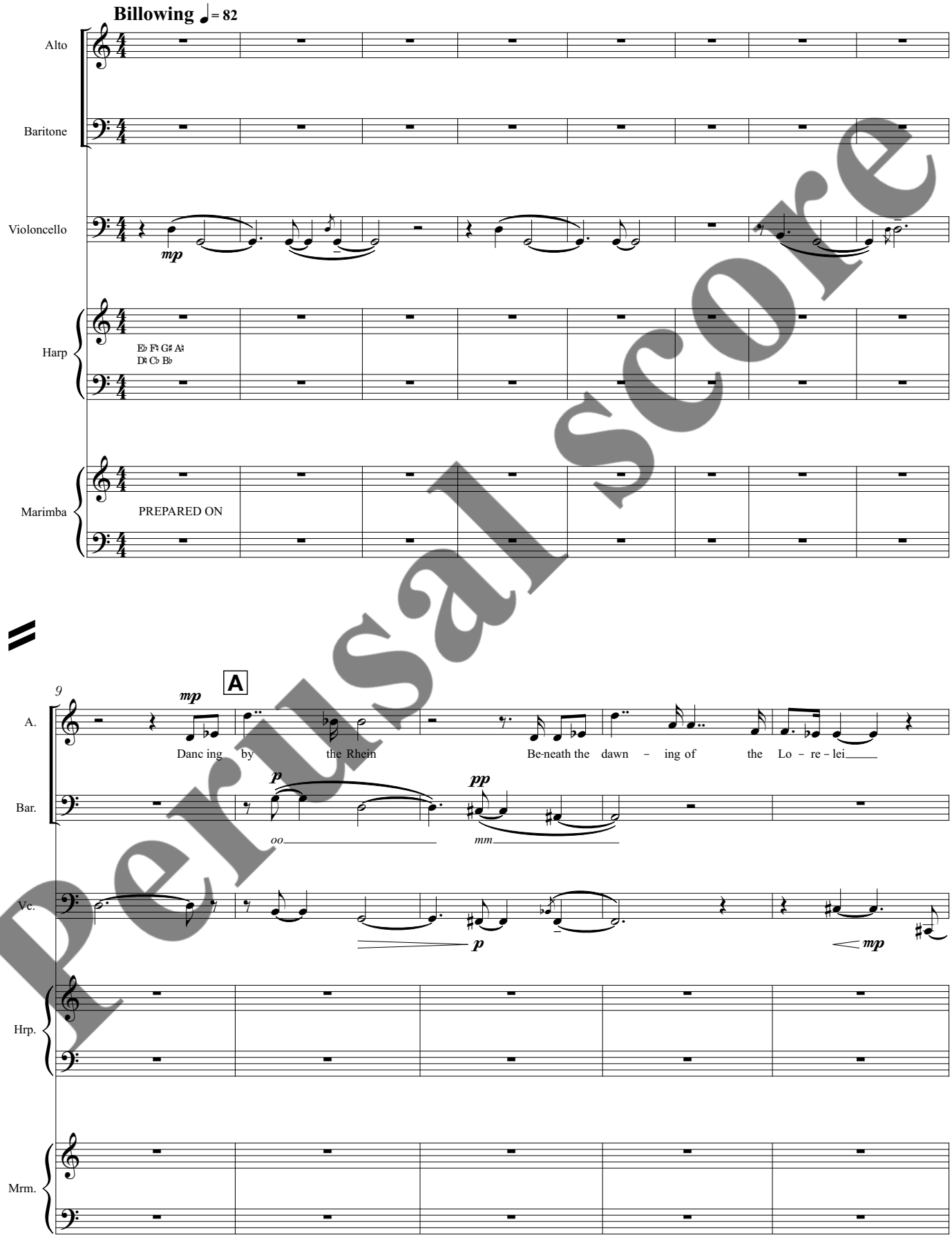


2-3 second silence,
then segue directly into
II. Lorelei

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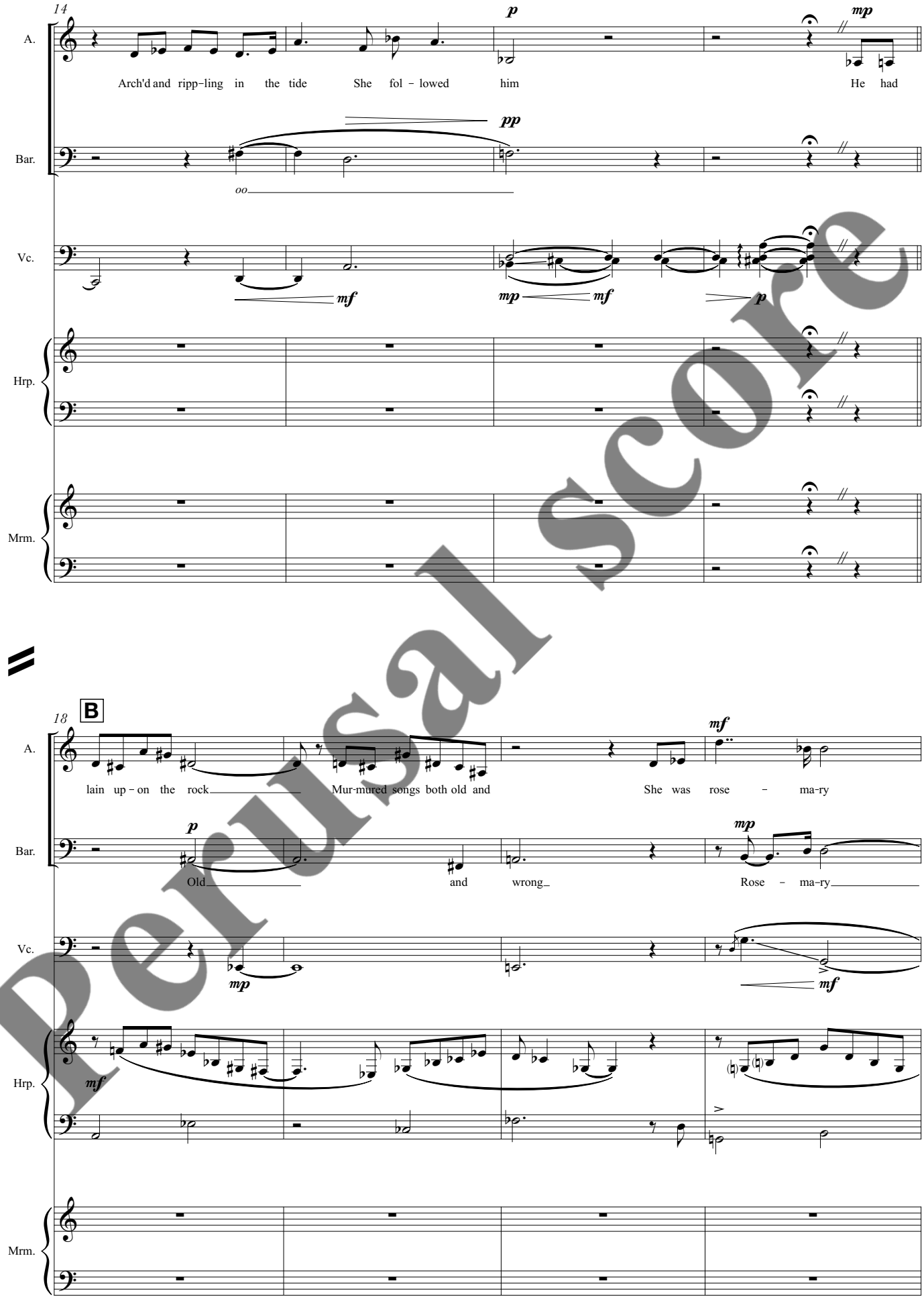
II. Lorelei

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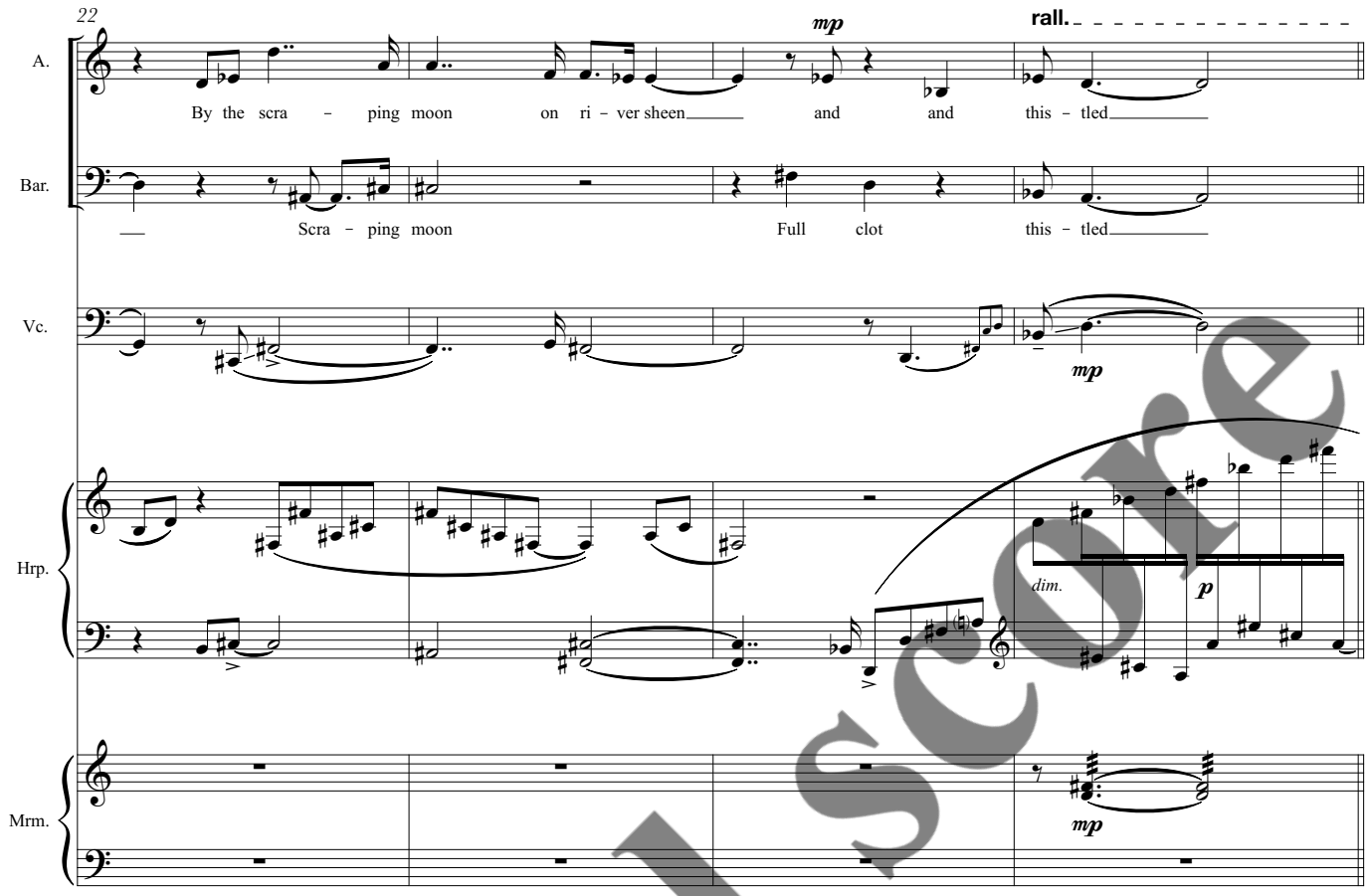


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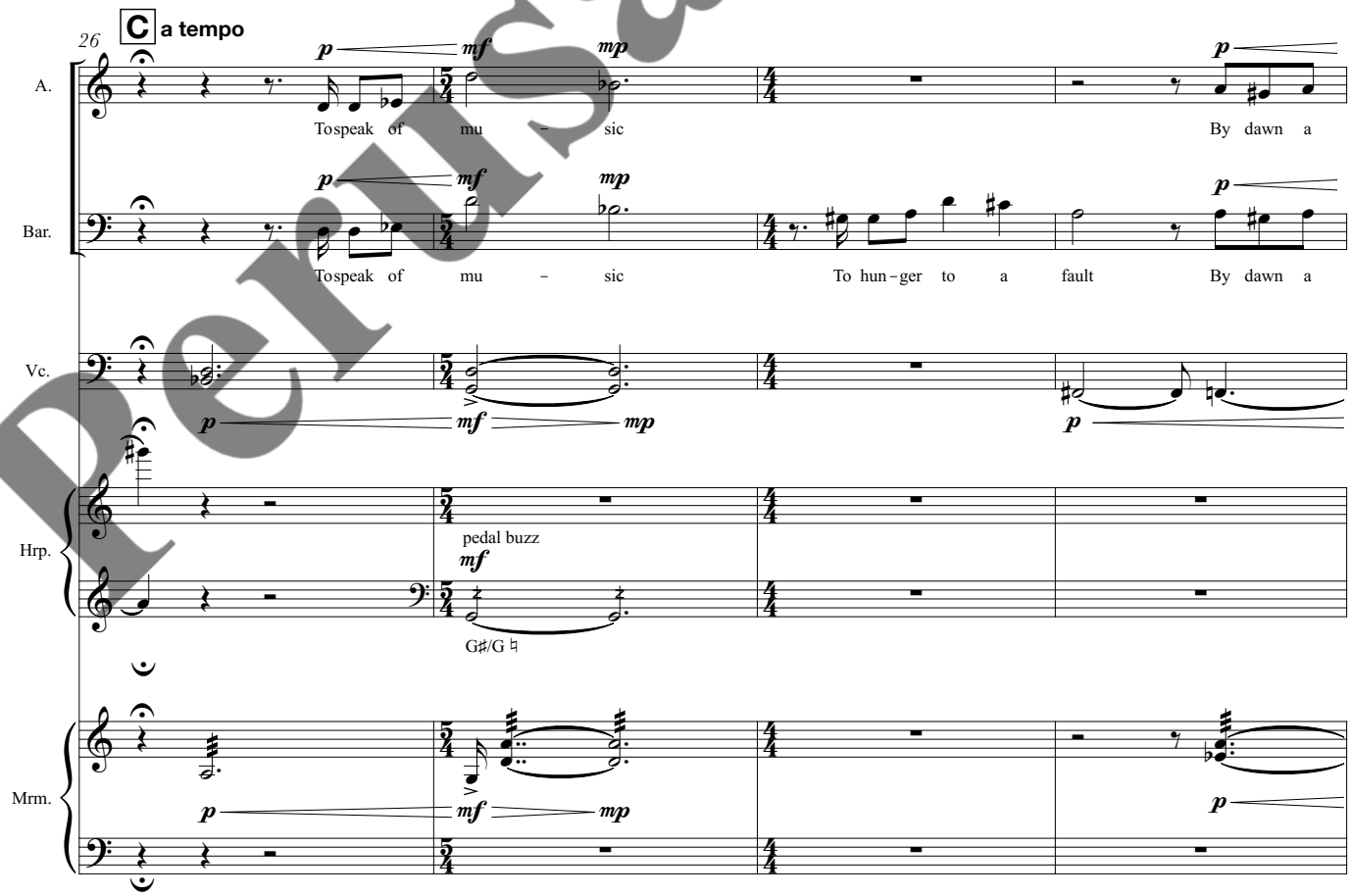
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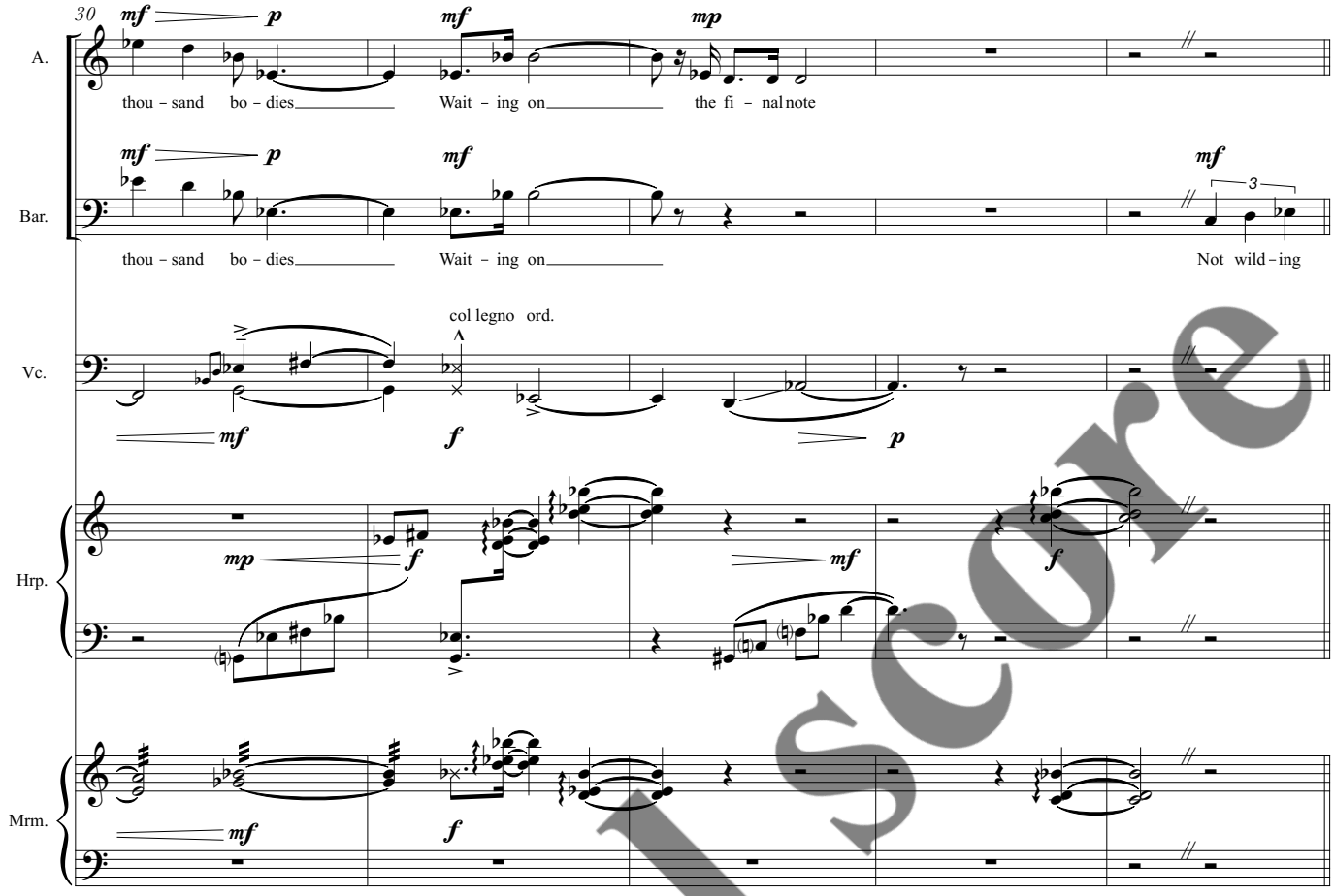
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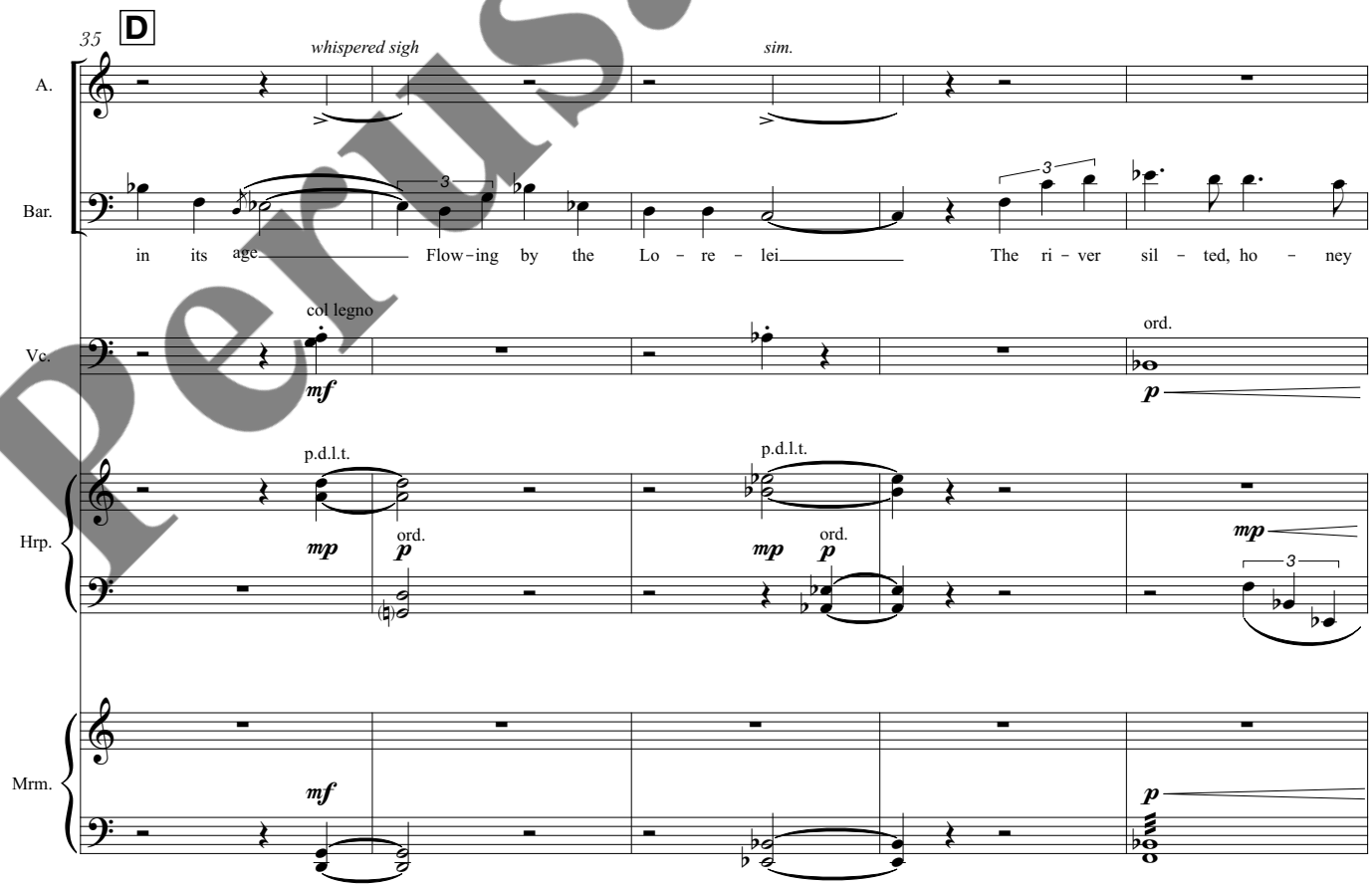




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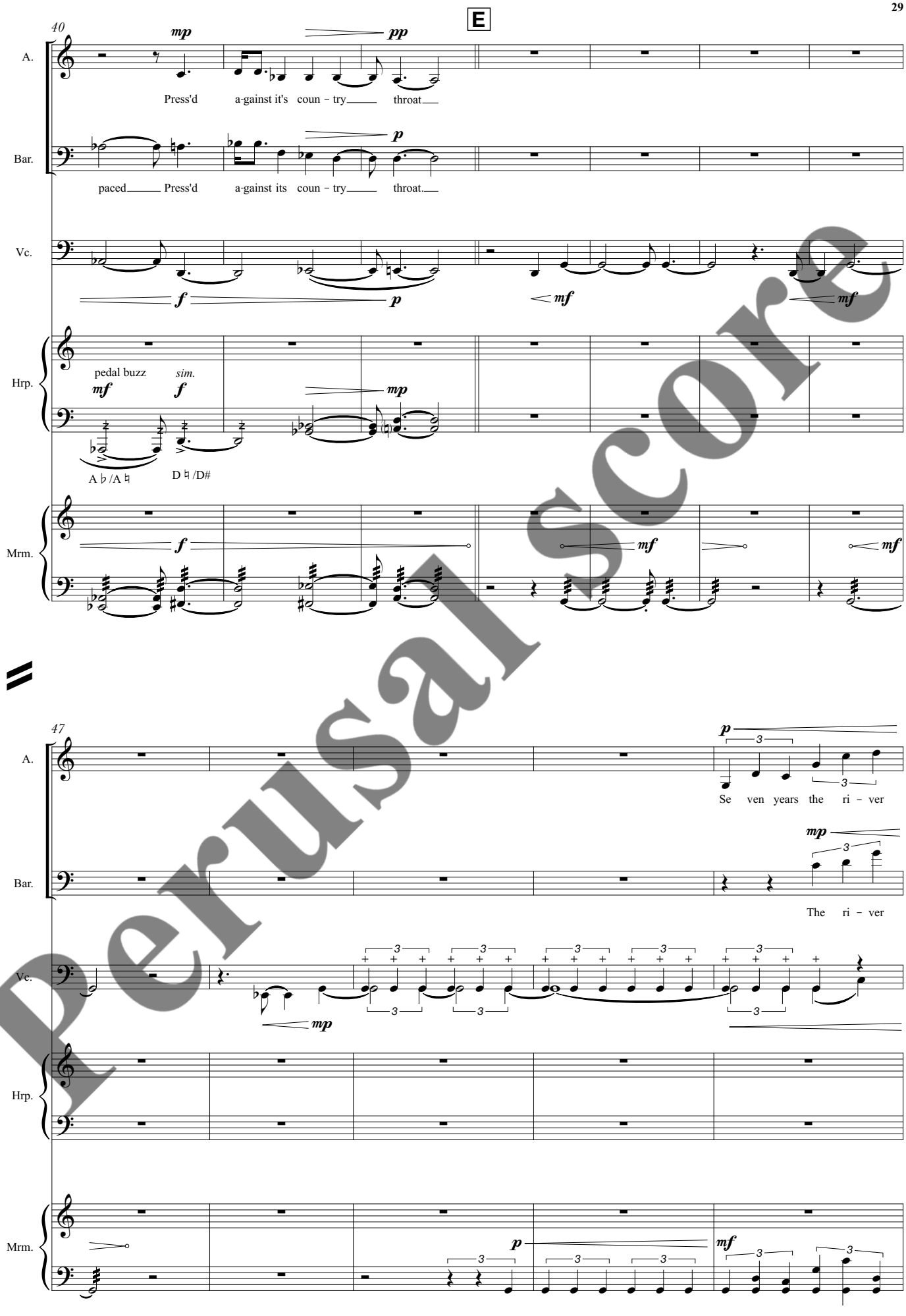
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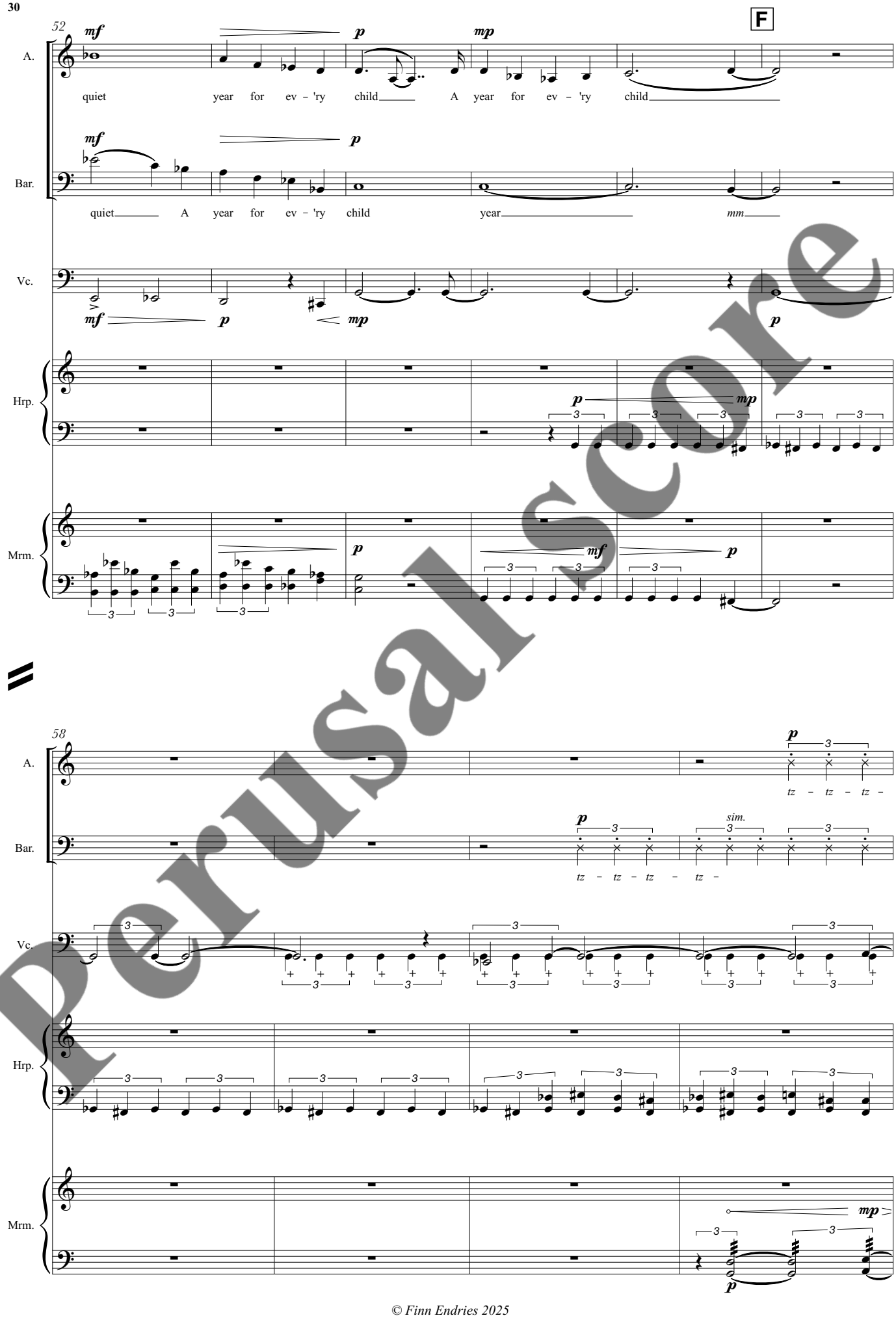




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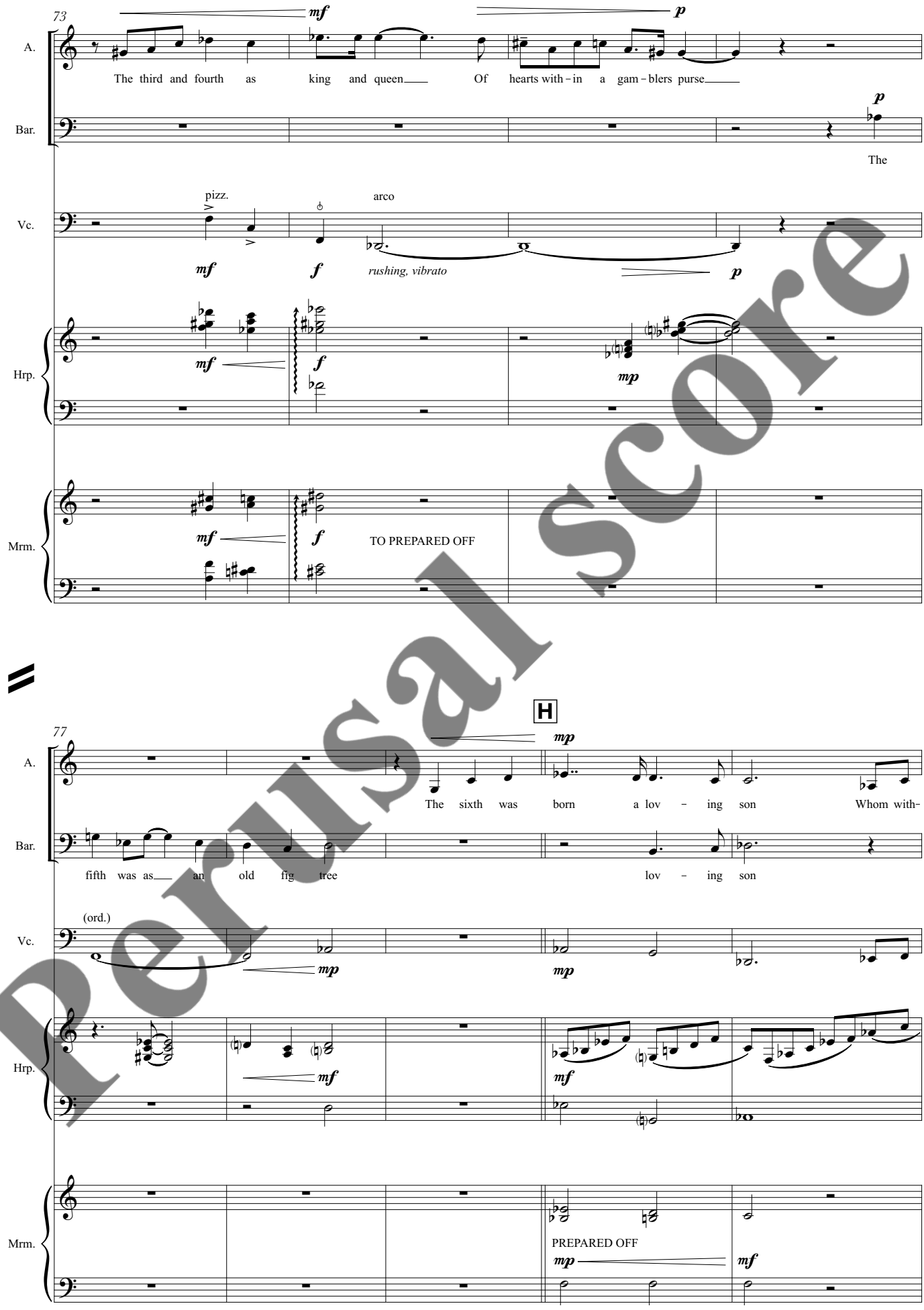


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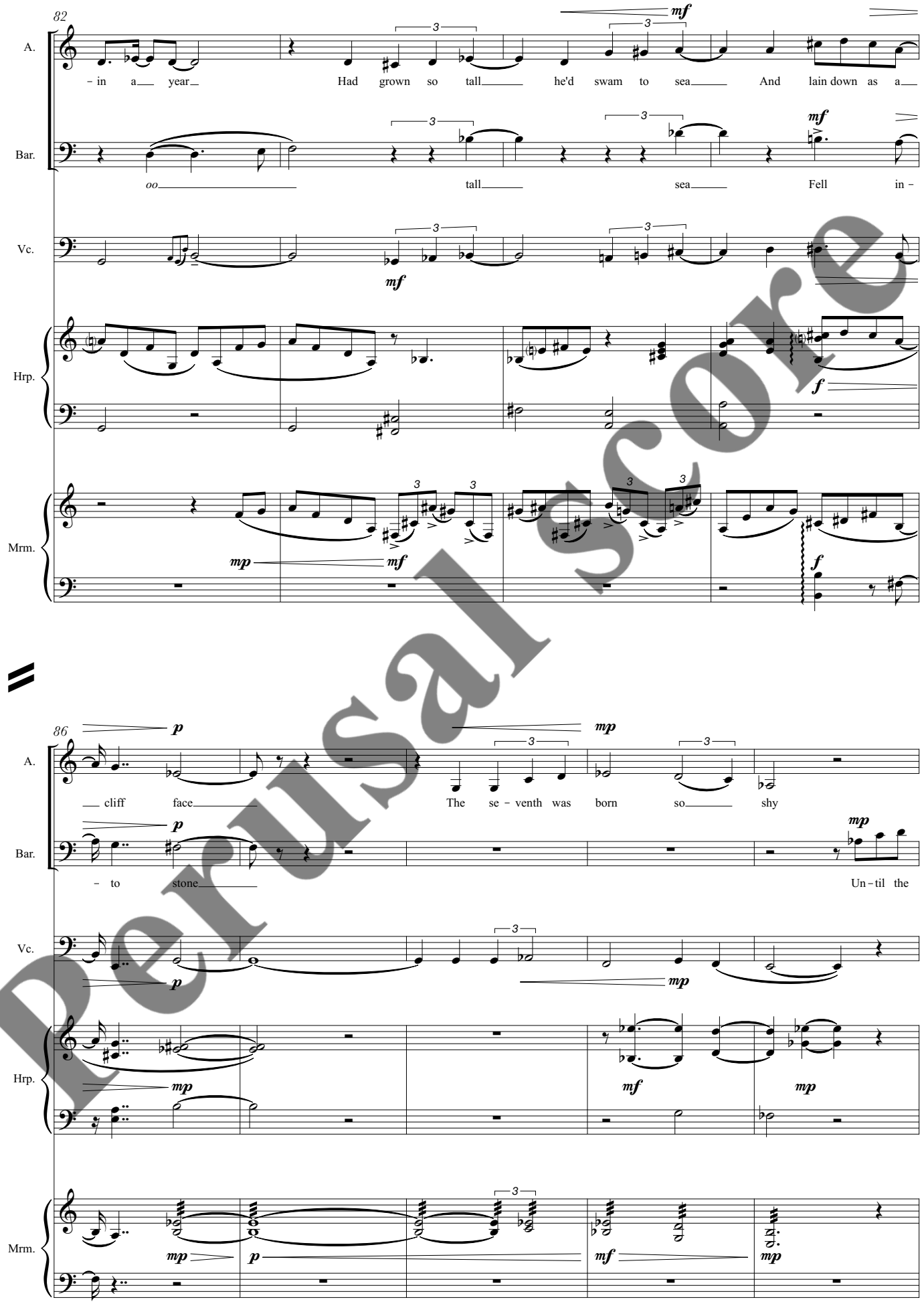


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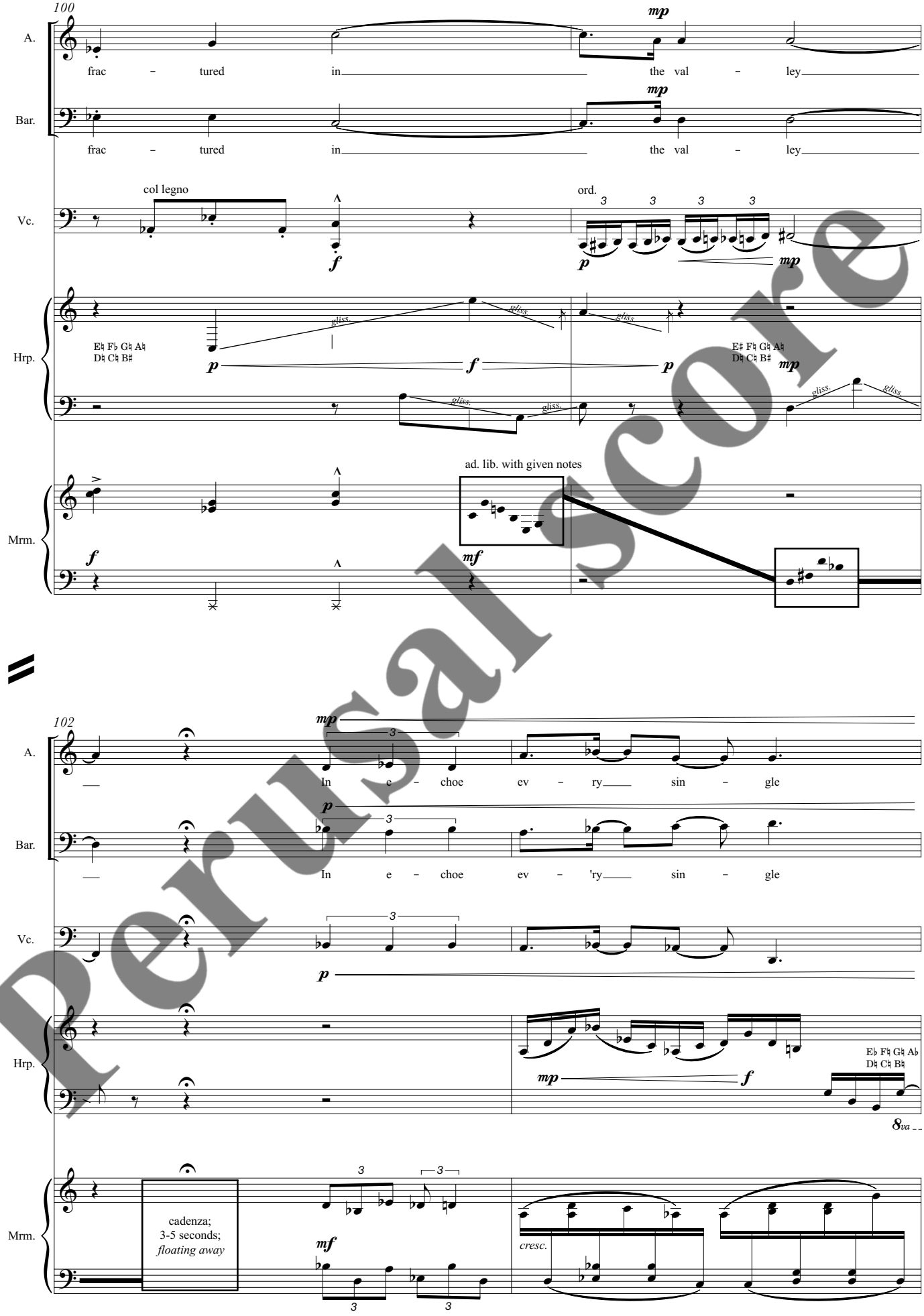


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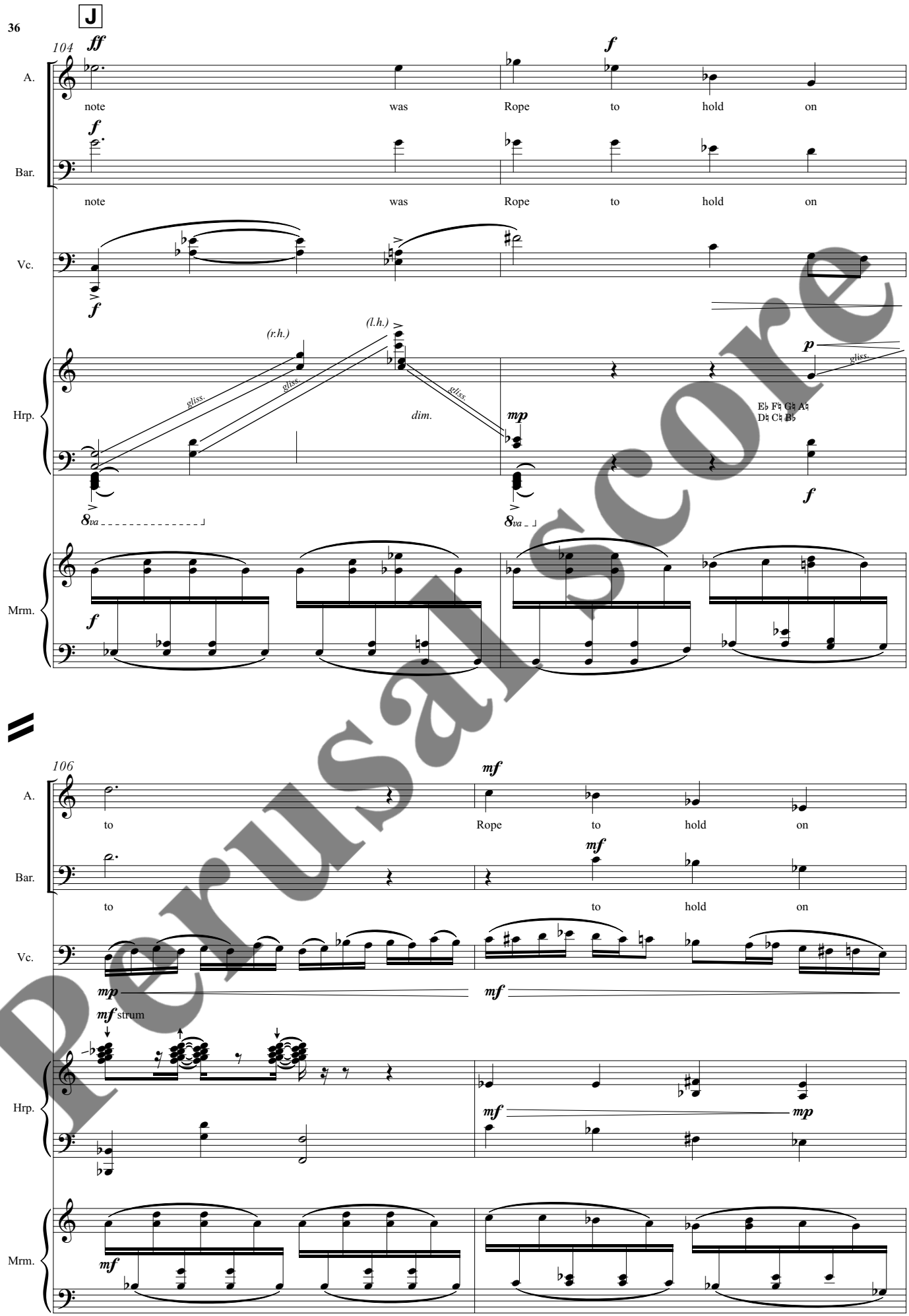


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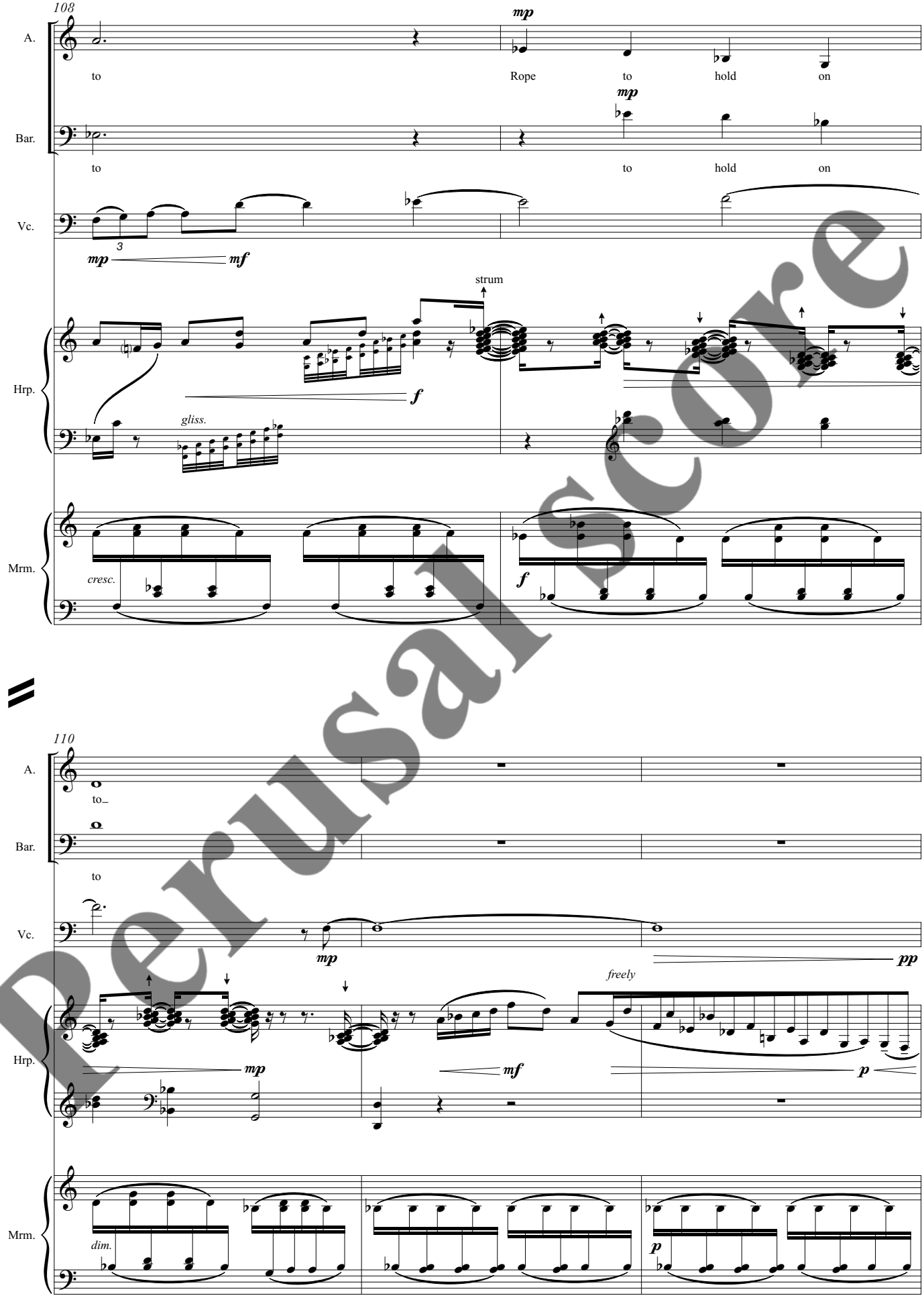


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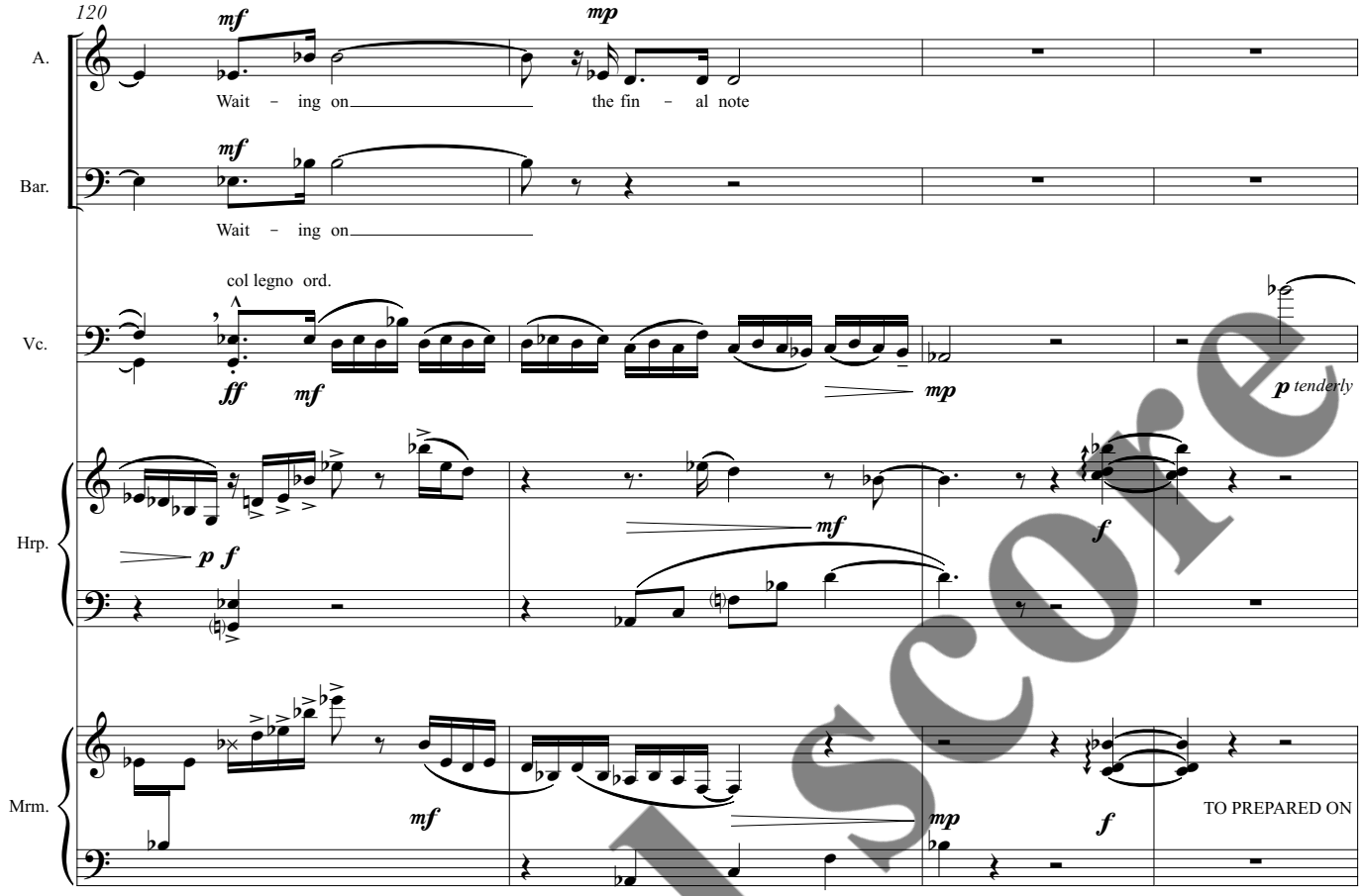


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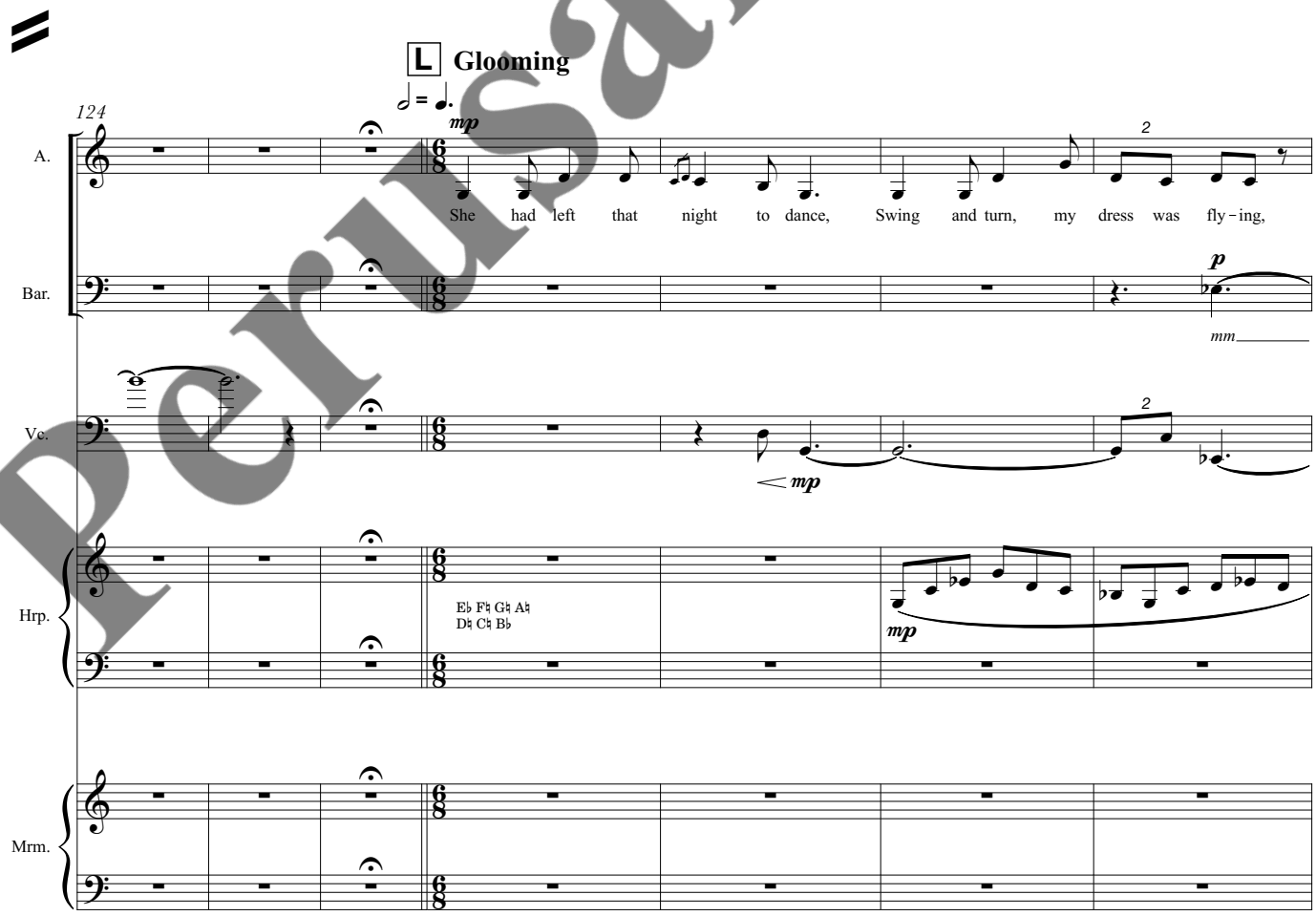
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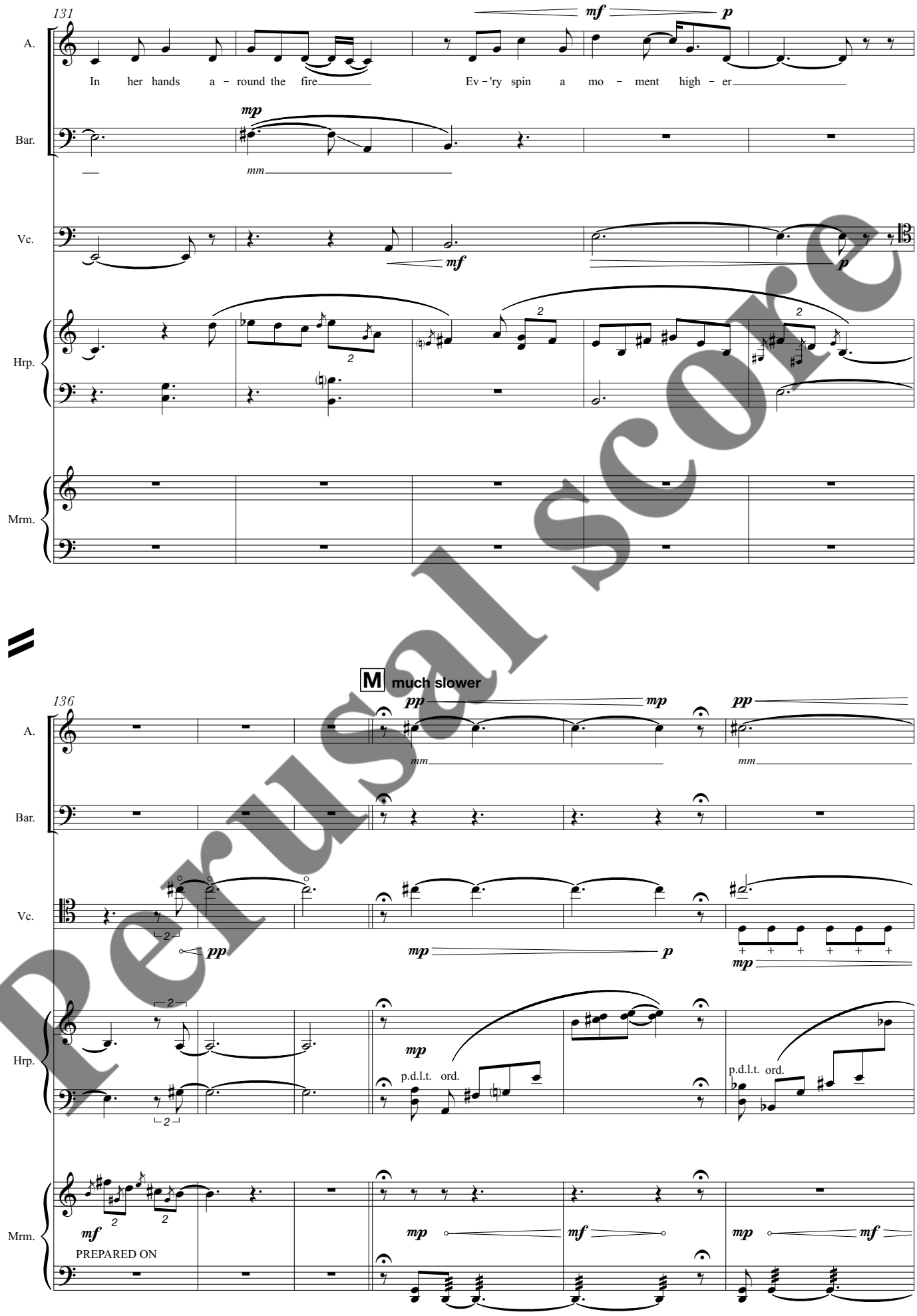
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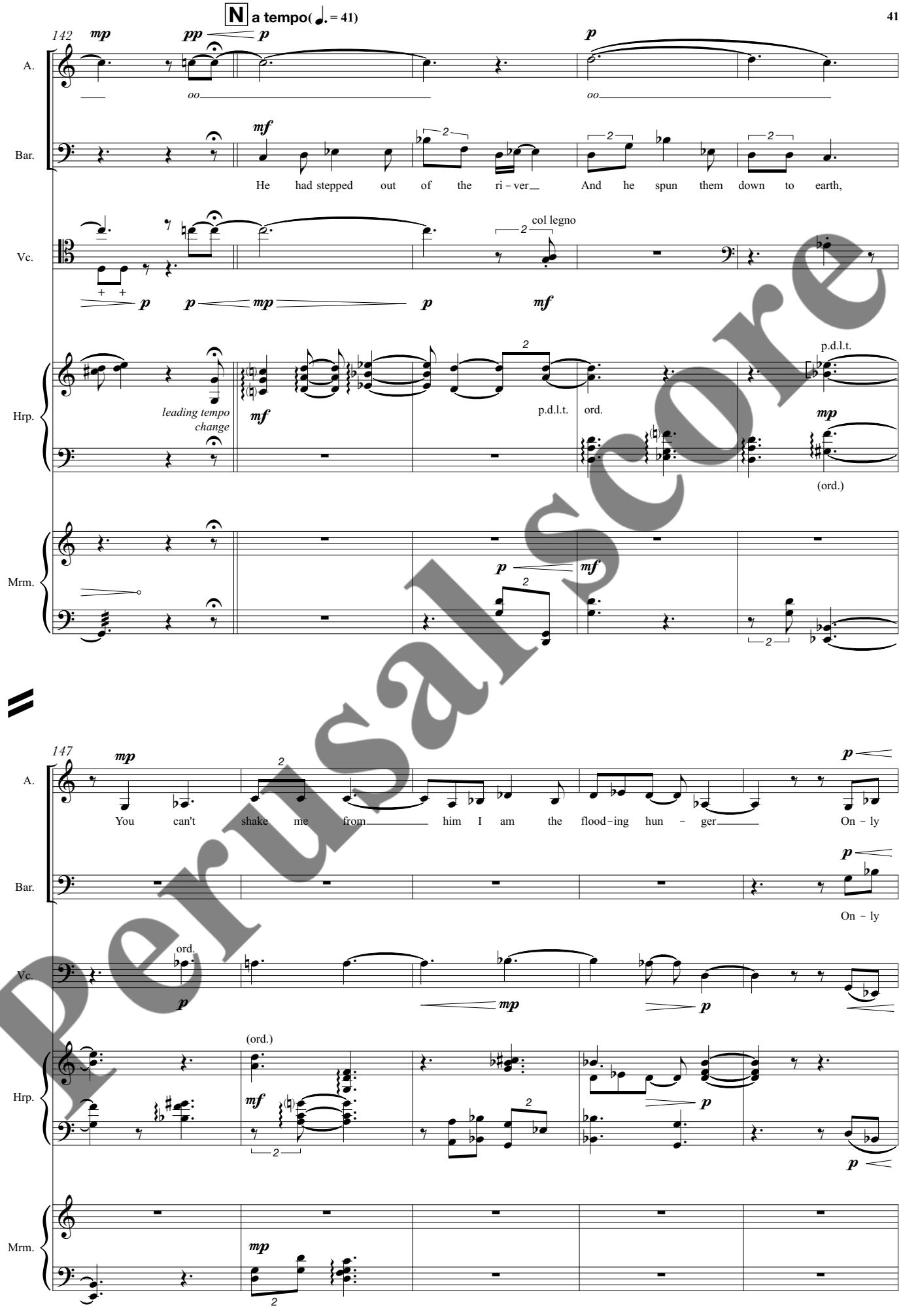




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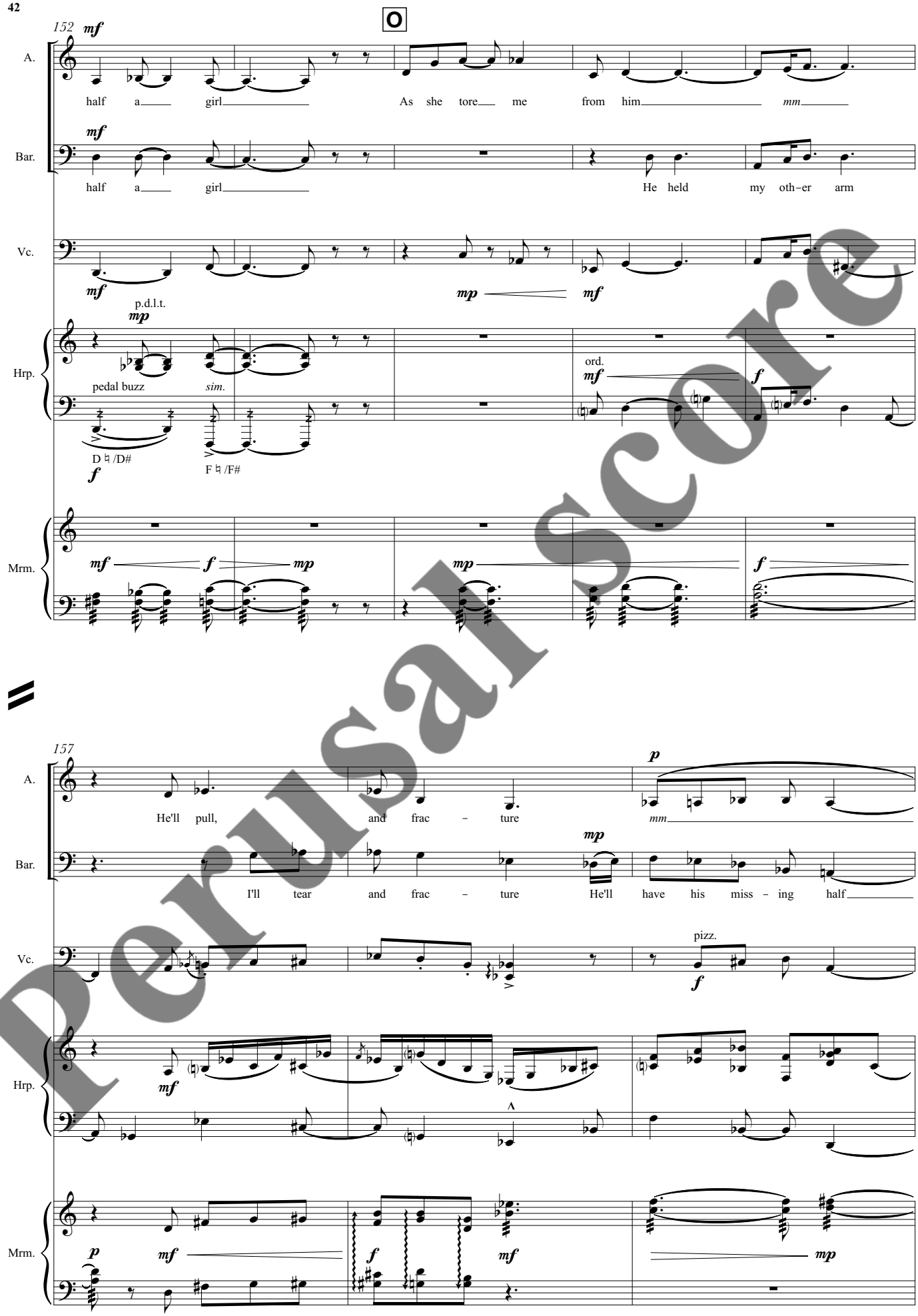


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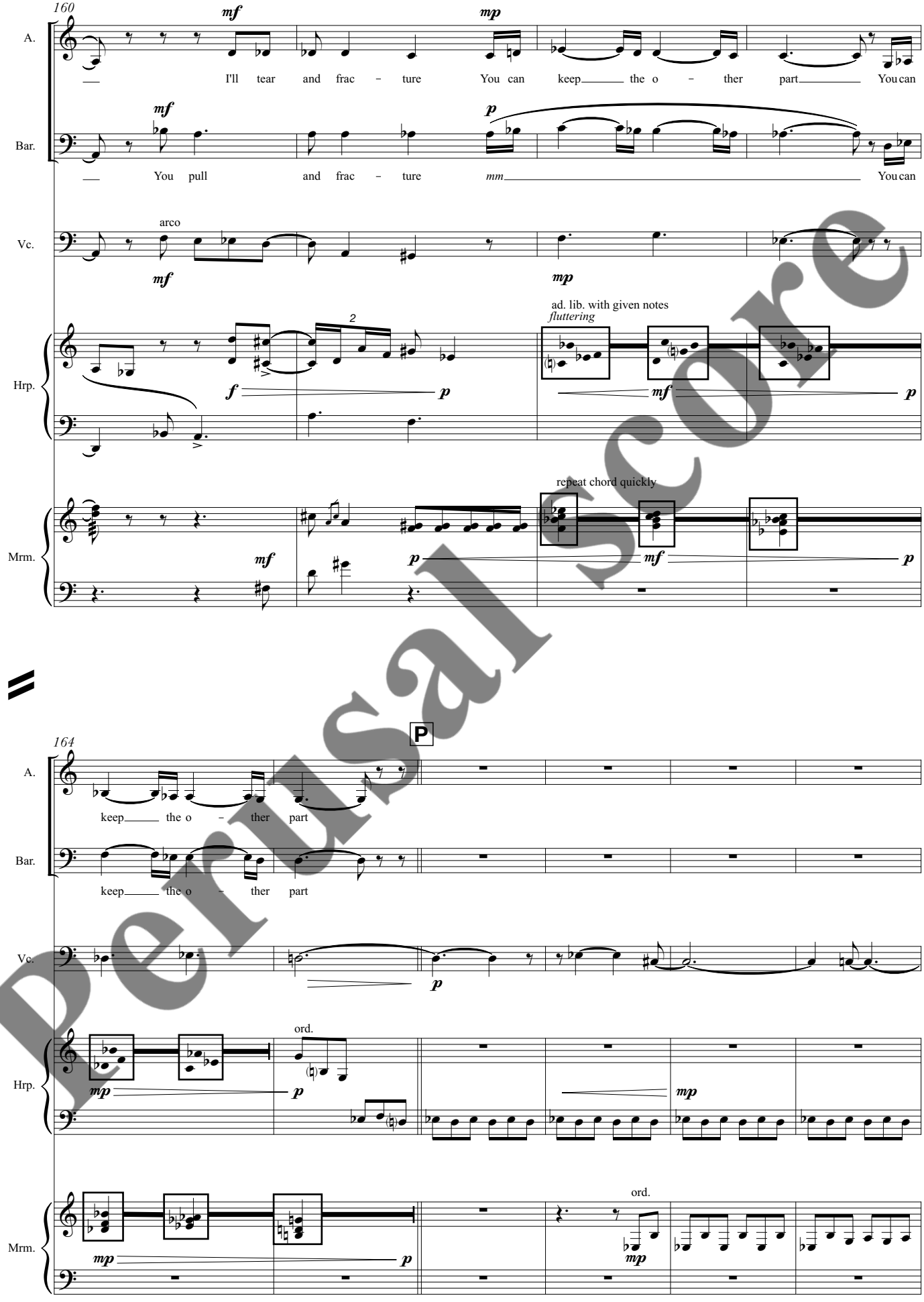


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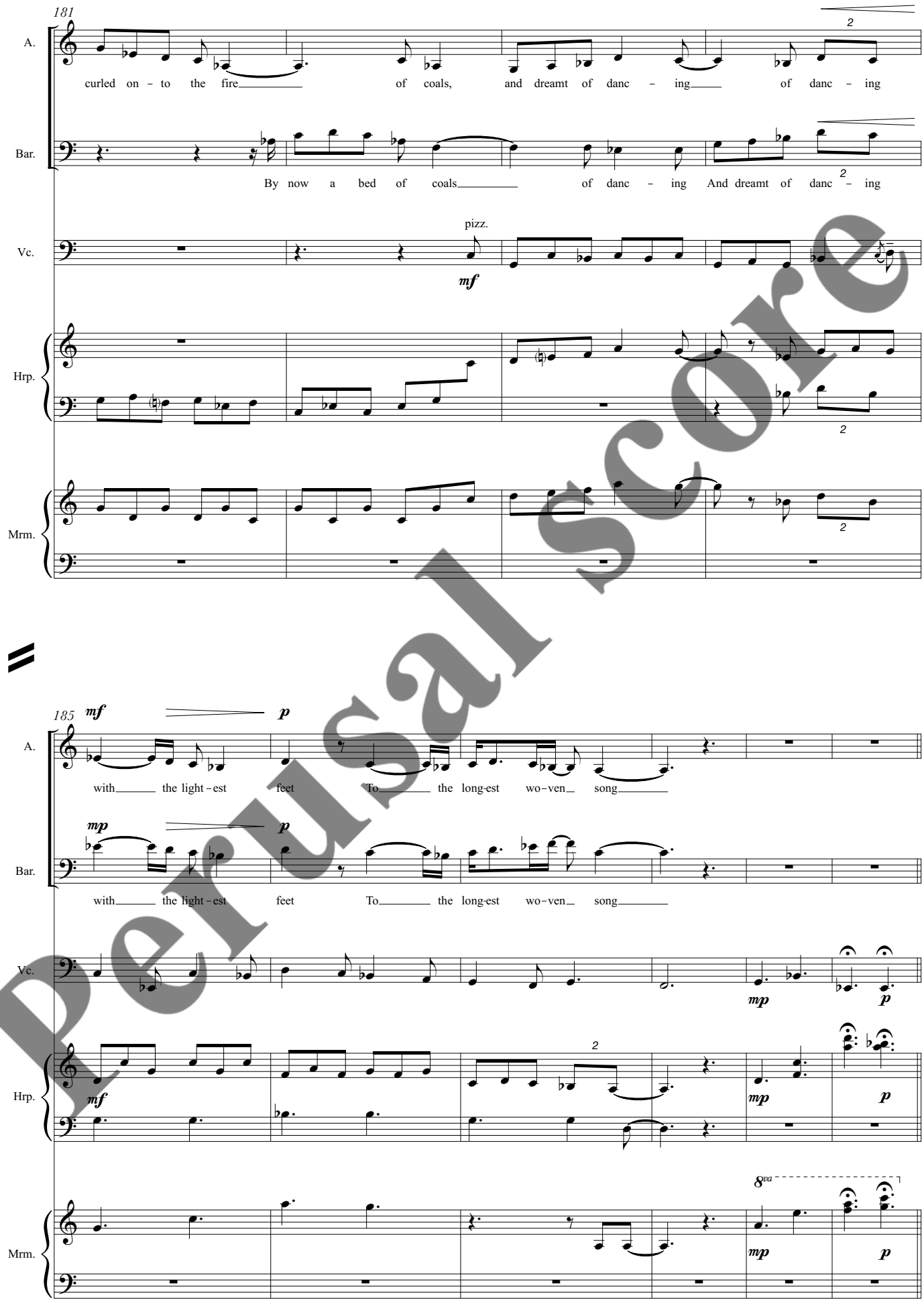


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R

191

raptured

accel. **a tempo**

A. *mf* *p*

Of the lo – re – lei *mm*

Bar. *mp* *p*

Lo – – re – – lei

Vc. SHUFFLE FEET

Hrp. SHUFFLE FEET

Mrm.

S **Enveloping**

198

A. *mf* *mp*

To speak of mu – sic To hung – er to a fault By dawn a

Bar. *p*

ahh *oo* *ahh* *ahh*

SPEAK

Vc. *p*

To speak of music To hunger to a fault By dawn a

mp

SPEAK

Hrp. *p*

To speak of music To hunger to a fault By dawn

mp

SPEAK
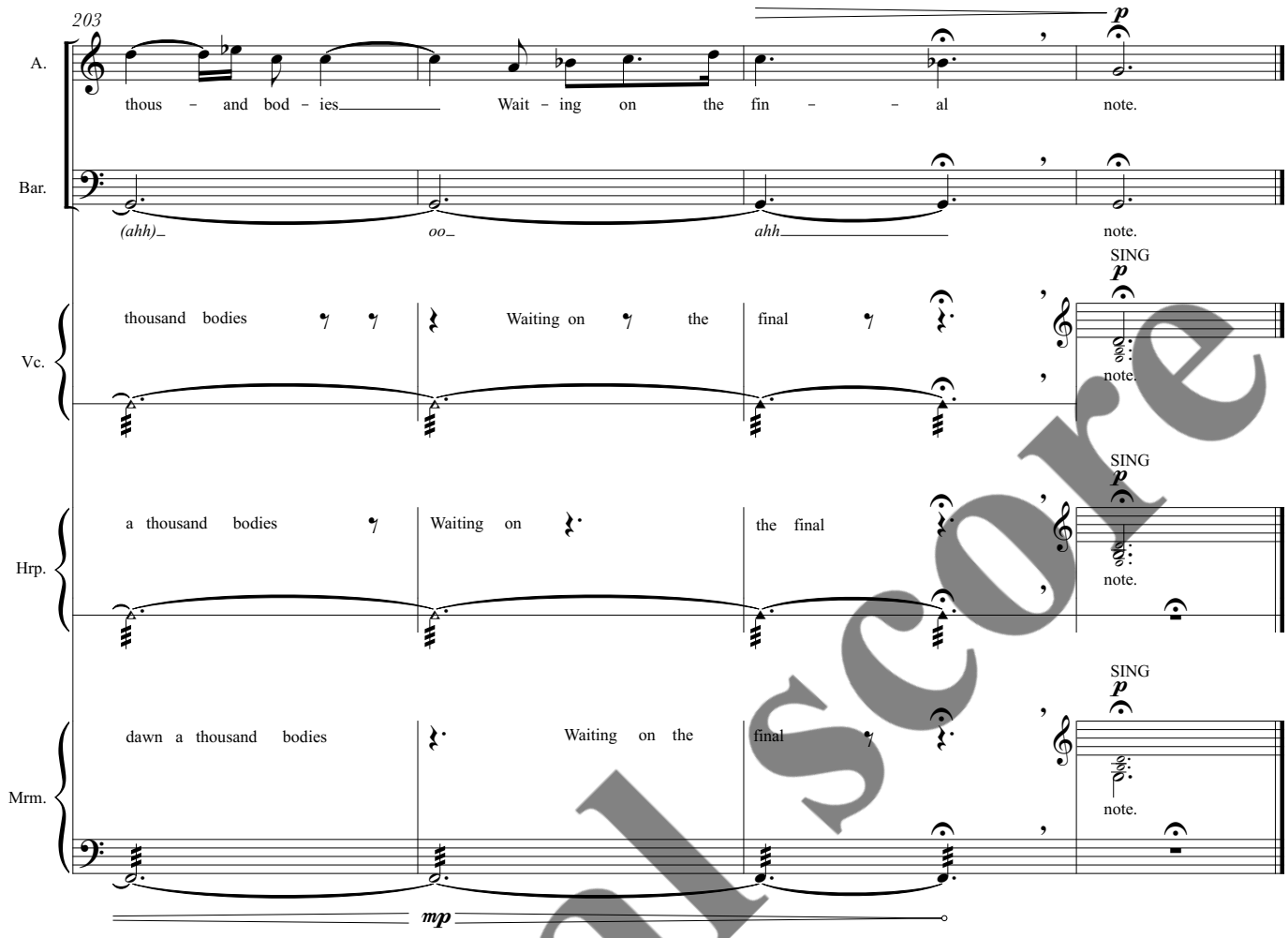
Mrm. *p*

To speak of mu sic To hunger to a fault By

mp

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