Aaron Houston

Rude Moods

-- A suite for unaccompanied bassoon --

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Aaron Houston Music, 2020
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Rude Moods

-- A suite for unaccompanied bassoon --

1 – Off with a Bang
2 – Schizenoidle
3 – Drive
4 – Right on Track?
5 – Sounds of Goodbye
6 – Distant Voices
7 – Home
8 – Stories
9 – Motion-less
10 – From the Top
11 – Breathe
12 – Burnin' Down the Barn

Performance time: c. 20 mins (for all movements)

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Program Note

Rude Moods began with an idea to create a "raging hot blues solo" for bassoon with Ryan Reynolds. As the project got delayed and rethought, it got expanded. While the idea simmered in the back of my mind, I could not help think: What would it look like to create a collection of solos that explored a variety of untapped skills for bassoon players? What if this became an opportunity to demonstrate on some scale the multitude of characters, attitudes, and identities that bassoon players can exhibit in their performance?

With the help of Ryan, we came up with the idea for 12 miniatures to be commissioned by 12 different soloists. Each movement of this work was then inspired by the musical interests, abilities, playing, and feedback of a single player. My hope was to give each performer an opportunity to have a say in crafting a short solo for the bassoon they knew and loved so well and, in the proces, create a suite of miniatures solos that can serve as a snapshot for each of their identities, skills, and the breadth of what the instrument is capable of.

There are movements throughout this suite that ask the performer to stretch musical muscles they might never have used before -- playing blues, improvising, being a little childish and comedic. There are also movements that take a step back and just let the beauty of the bassoon speak for itself. The entire suite covers a vast territory of musical styles, ideas, and techniques before closing with the one that started the whole project: a "ragining hot blues solo" titled *Burnin' Down the Barn*.

This suite was commissioned by the following performers (listed in no particular order):

Ryan Reynolds, Marisa Olegario, Chris Gonzalez, Mark Lauer,
Eleni Katz, Carlos Clark, Shawn Karson, Rachel Frederiksen,
Christian Green, Alex Lee, Sabrina Stoval, and Brianna Cantwell

Performance Notes

Accidentals –
All accidentals last for the duration of the measure unless cancelled out by another accidentals. Additionally, accidentals are not treated as transpositional by the octave (meaning an accidental on C4 has no bearing on C5).

Microtones –
All microtone accidentals utilize an arrow to indicate the direction of their adjustment from a "standard" accidental (either up a quarter-tone or down a quarter tone) and also last for the duration of a measure unless cancelled out by another accidental.

Growls –
Growls can be achieved by "garggling" in the back of your throat while playing. Alternatively, you can also use a flutter tongue to achieve a similar sound.

Glisses –
All glisses should be performed as smoothly as possible for the length of the note.

Bends & Falls –
Marked with short, curved lines either leading into or away from a note (a bend can be seen in m. 26 of Schizenoidle while a fall is shown in m. 14 of the same movement) should be performed by either starting the pitch slightly lower and lifting into the note for a bend or relaxing and briefly "falling" out of the end of a note.

You may play as many movements as you like (and in any order) based on the time restraints and needs of your concert. Please list every movement performed within any concert programs created.

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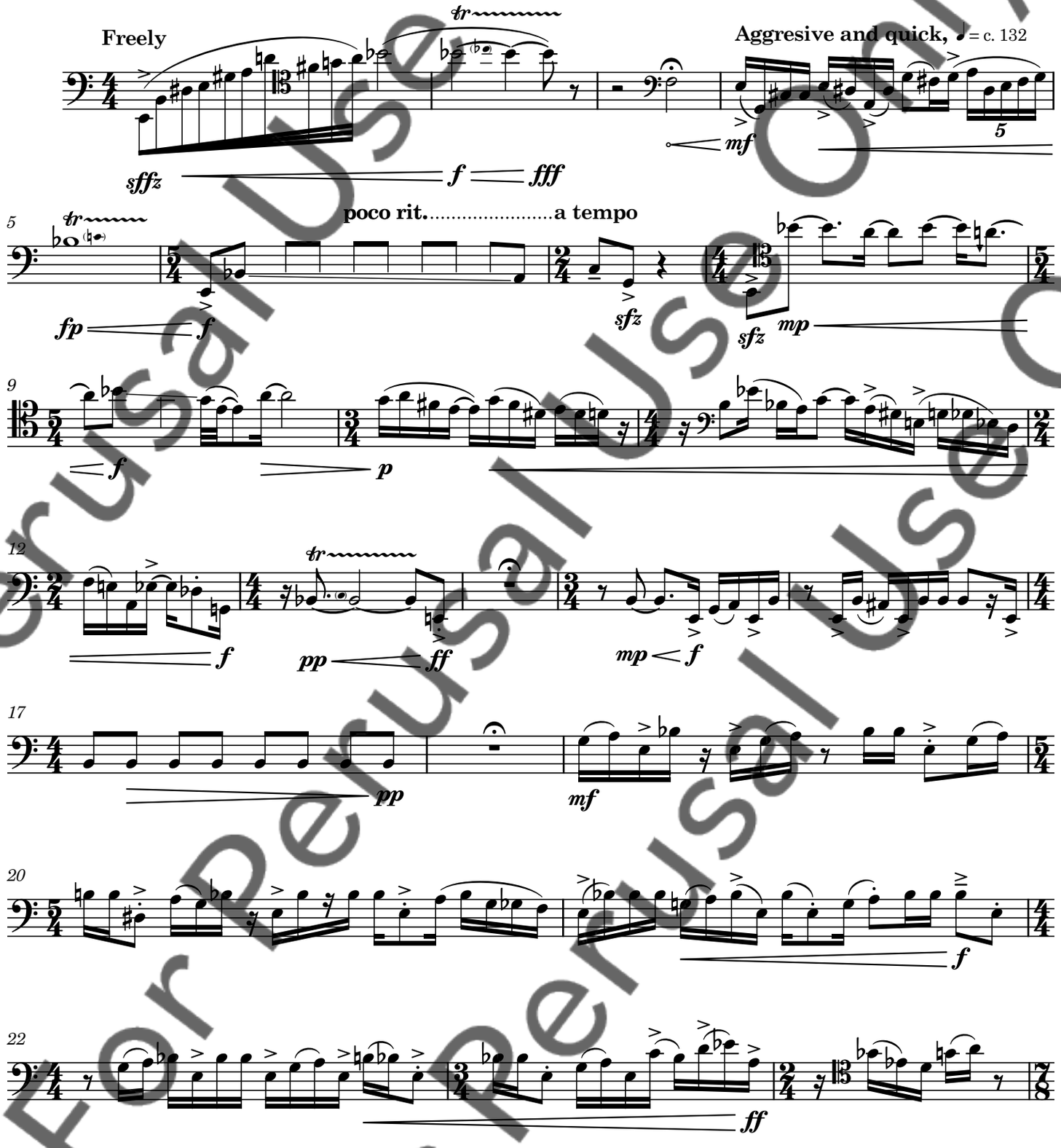
1 – Off with a Bang

Commisisoned by Marissa Olegario

This movement serves as an exciting and aggressive flash of character. It is full of fast-paced decisions and rapidly spinning notes that should move as if they are being carried by a strong wind around every corner. While motifs are presented in short bursts of excitement, each new statement should build toward the declarative ending as if you have finally chosen a path and are determined to take it.



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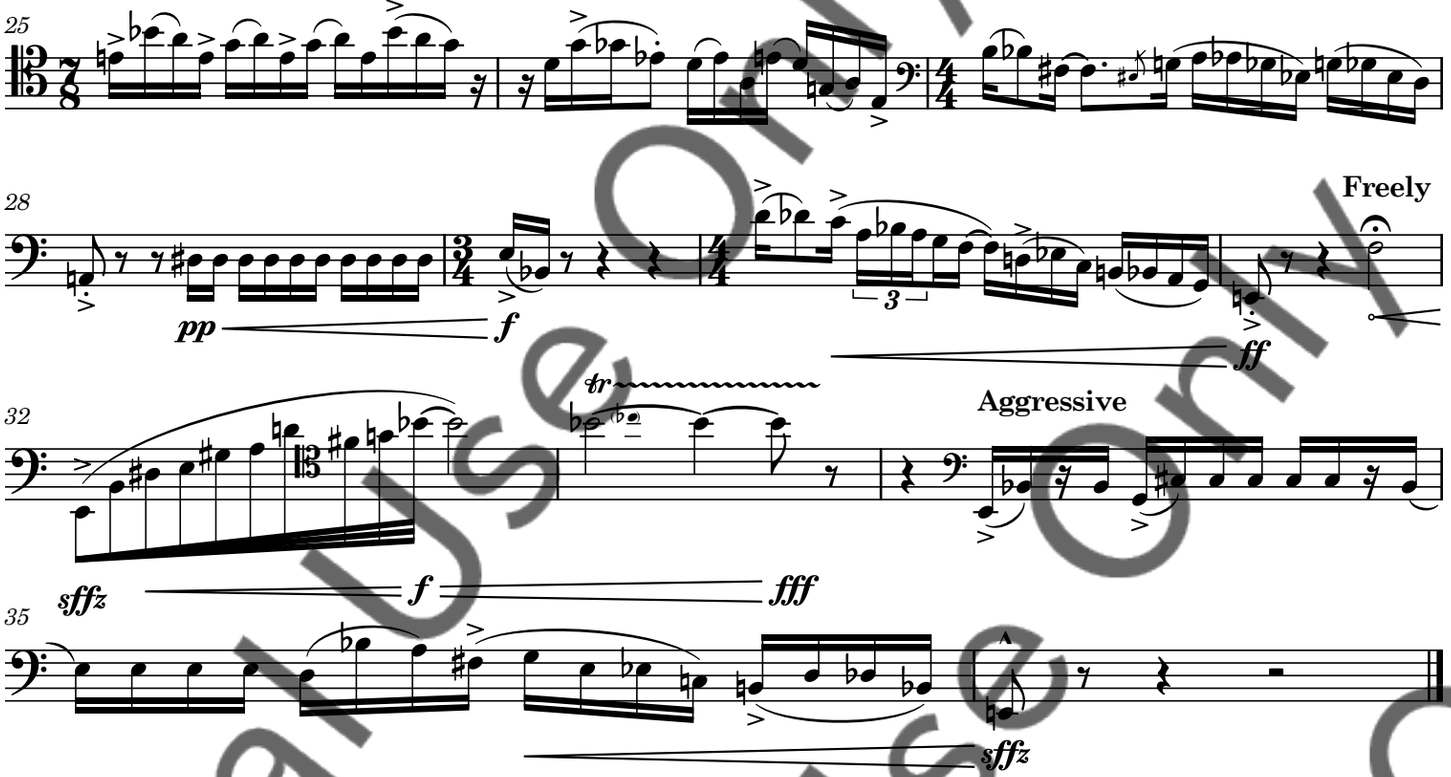

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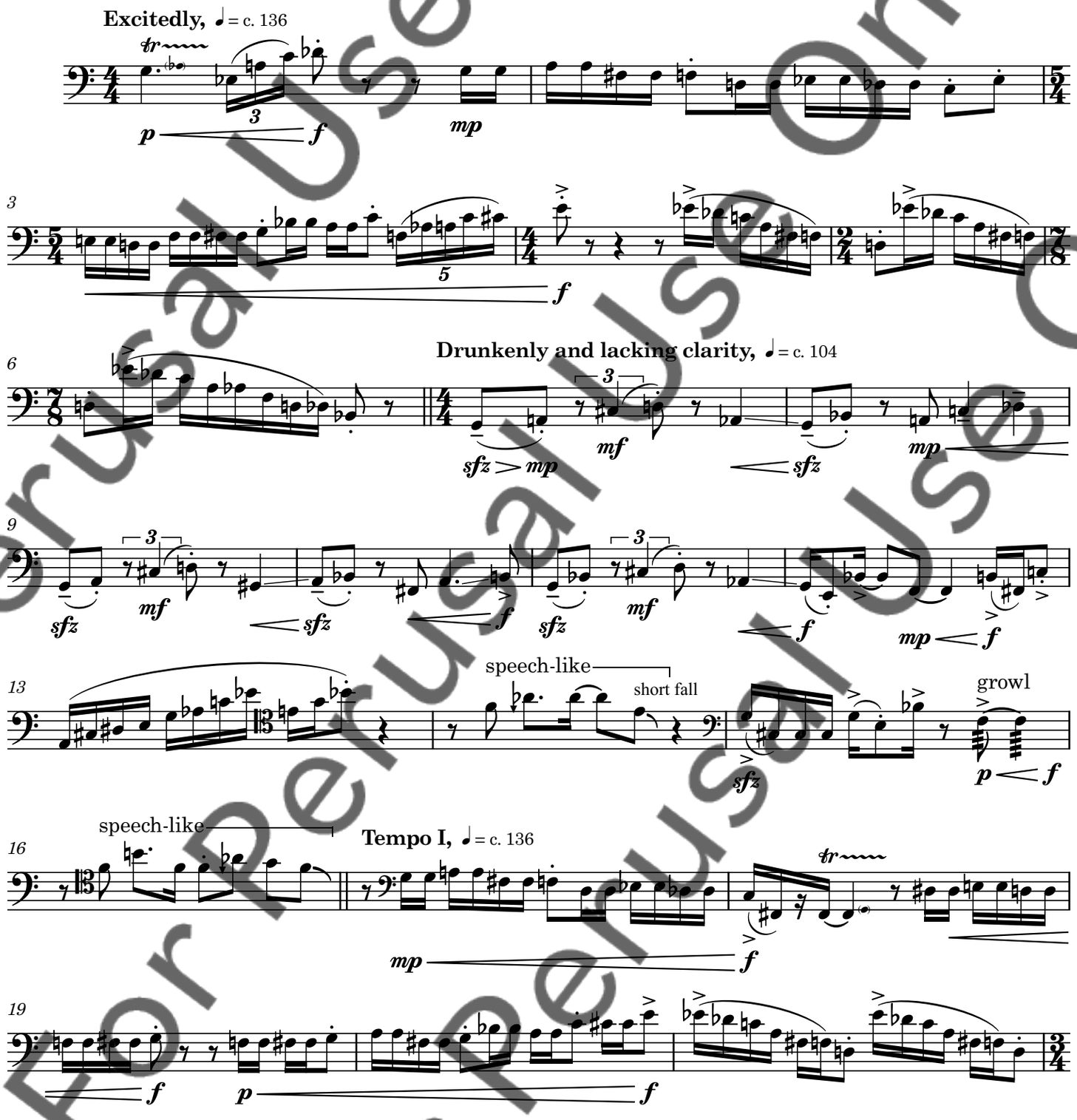
2 – Schizenoidle

Commissioned by Mark Lauer

Schizenoidle is an adventure in the multiple personalities of the bassoon (yes, even within a suite of works exploring different identities of the instrument). It exhibits not only the technical precision and clarity of the instrument, but also the ability of the instrument to be the "clown" of the ensemble, to be both a "serious" musician and also the "court jester", so to speak. With each varying motif within this movement, the performer should attempt to wear a new hat and express that personality to its fullest -- whether it is the precise, fast-moving performer or the lumbering ofe at the back. Above all, have *fun* with it.



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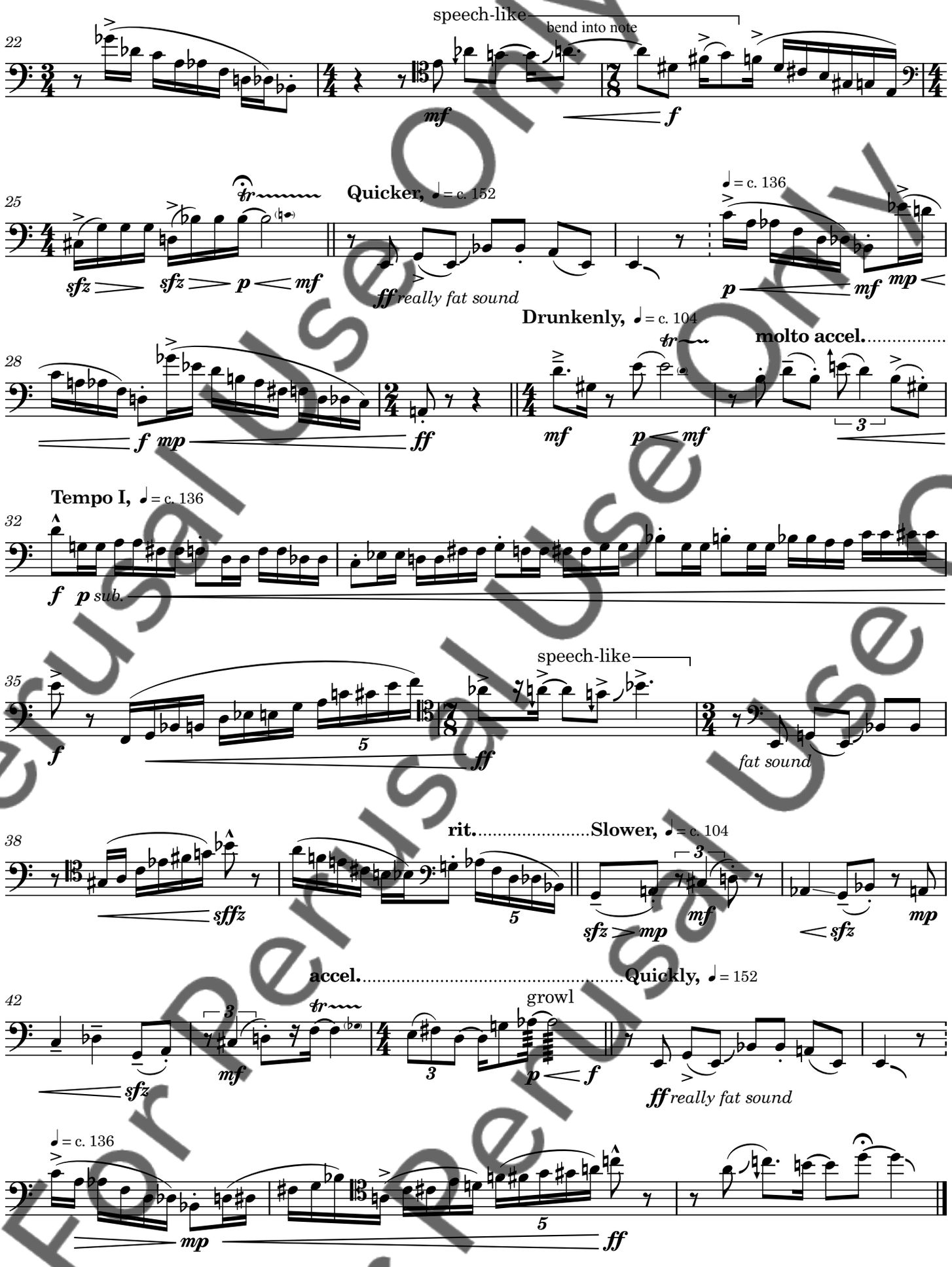

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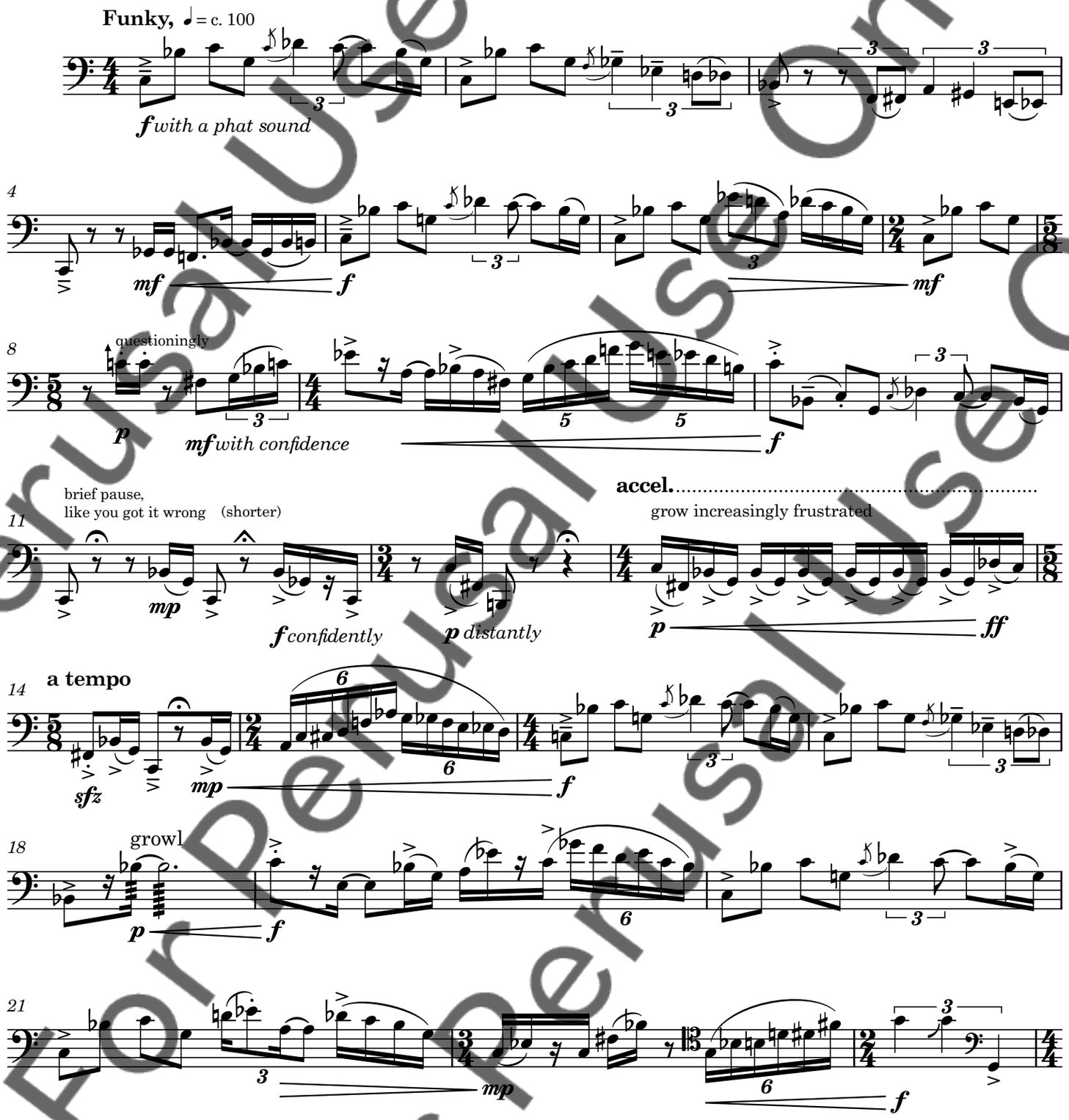
4 – Right on Track?

Commissioned by Shawn Karson

Serving as a whacky take on the development of a performer, *Right on Track?* is a light-hearted movement based on the process of learning to play music of various styles. Inspired by the sounds and idioms of funk music, this movement is intended to expose a performer to a certain style of playing they may not have encountered before...and plays with the frustration of being an accomplished musician struggling to "learn new tricks". It is meant to be both a little funky, a little comical, and provide a lot of opportunity for self-expression.



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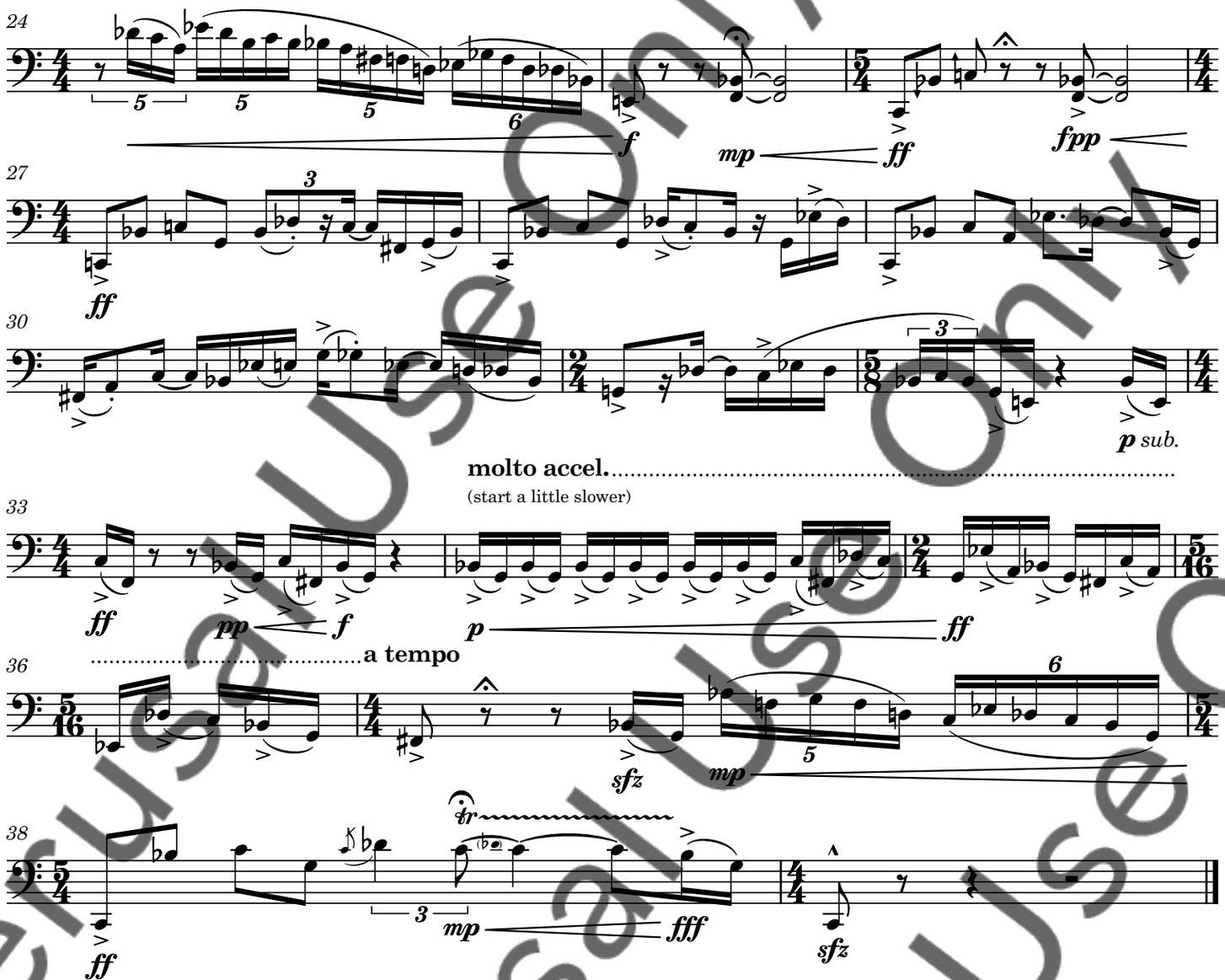

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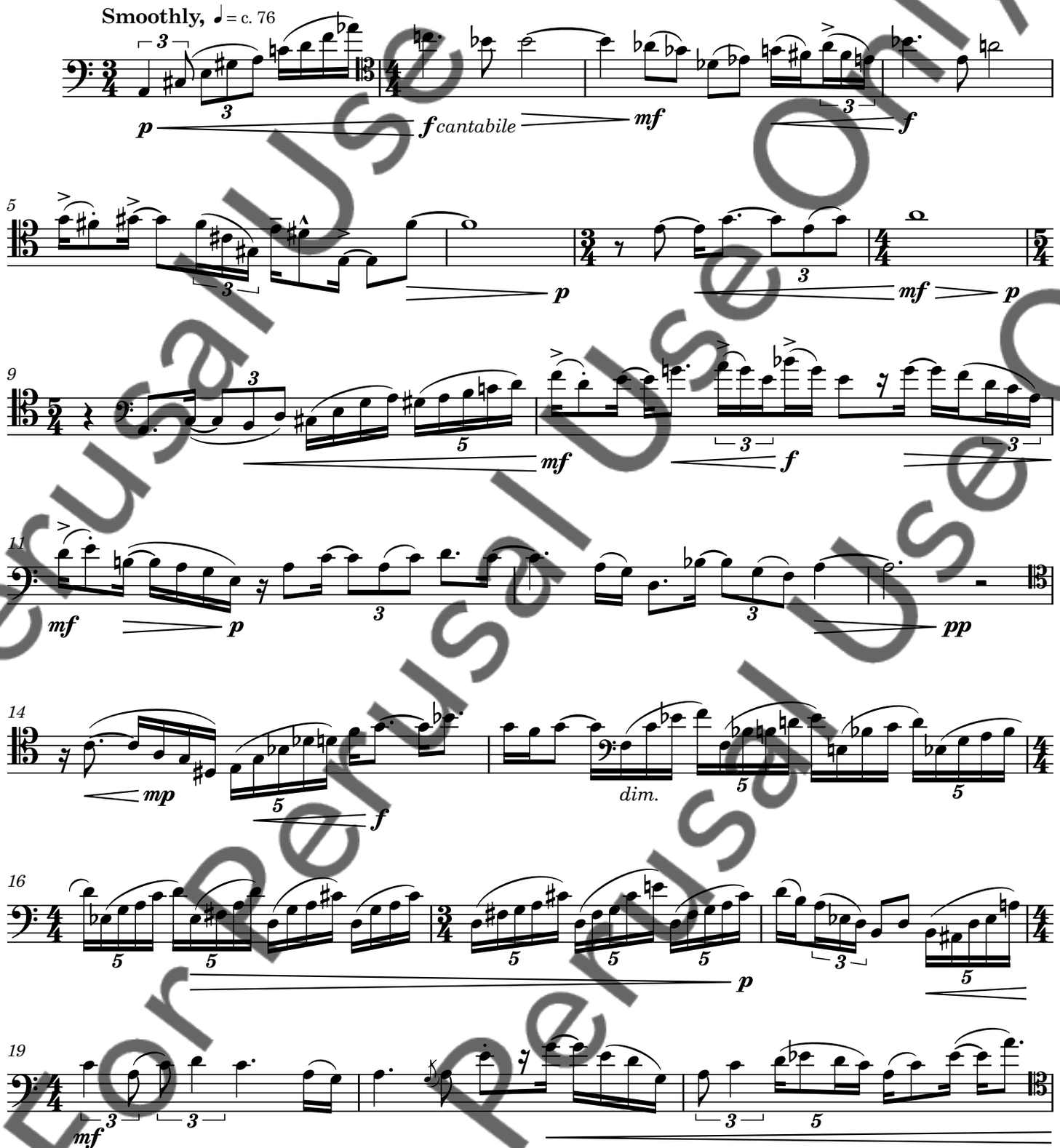
5 – The Sounds of Goodbye

Commissioned by Carlos Clark

This movement should be played witha relaxed mindset while exhibiting the flexibility and expression of the pitch range the bassoon is capable of. Full of jazz-inspired and blues-like motifs, *The Sounds of Goodbye* gives the performer the space to really sing in the tenor register of the instrument while flowing through colorful harmonic changes.



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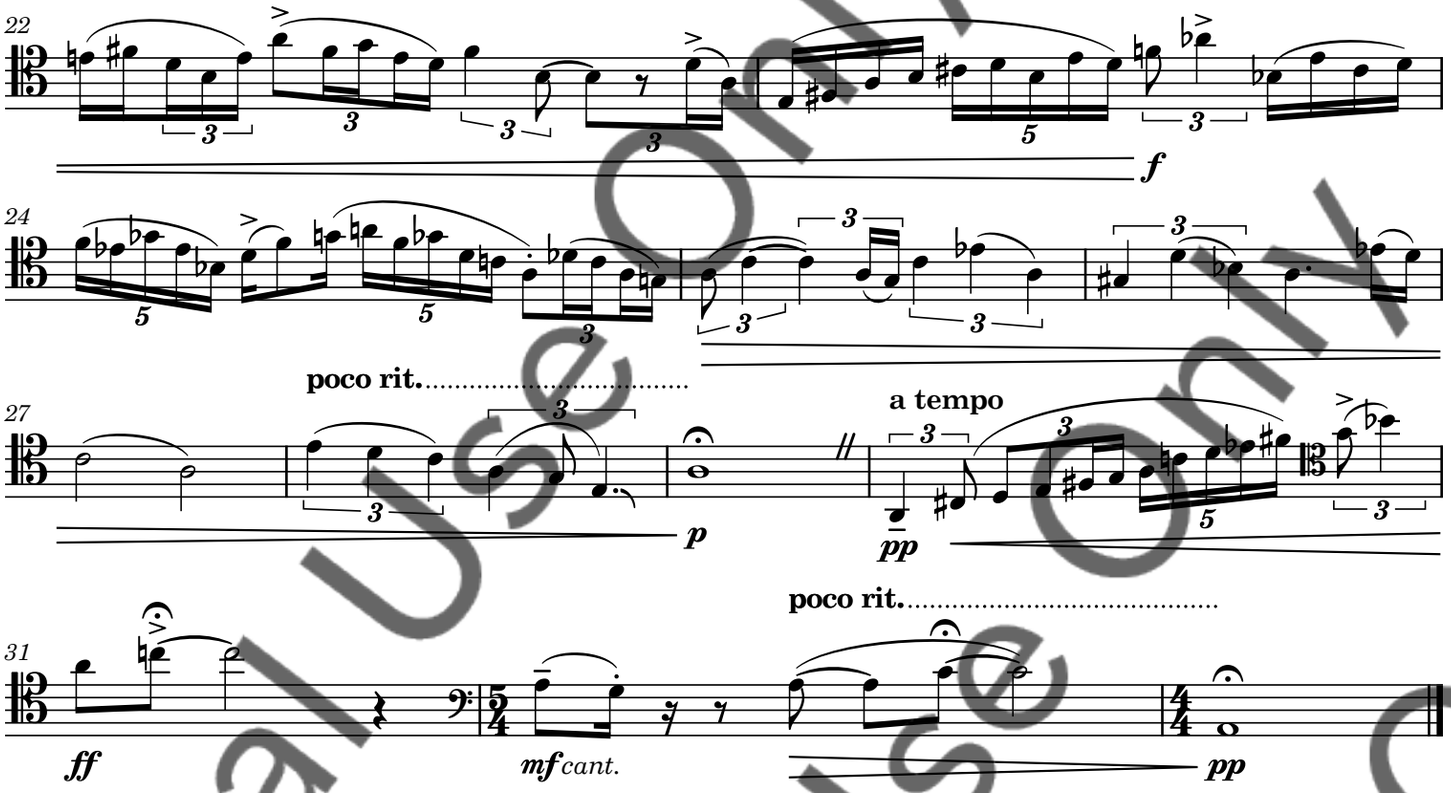

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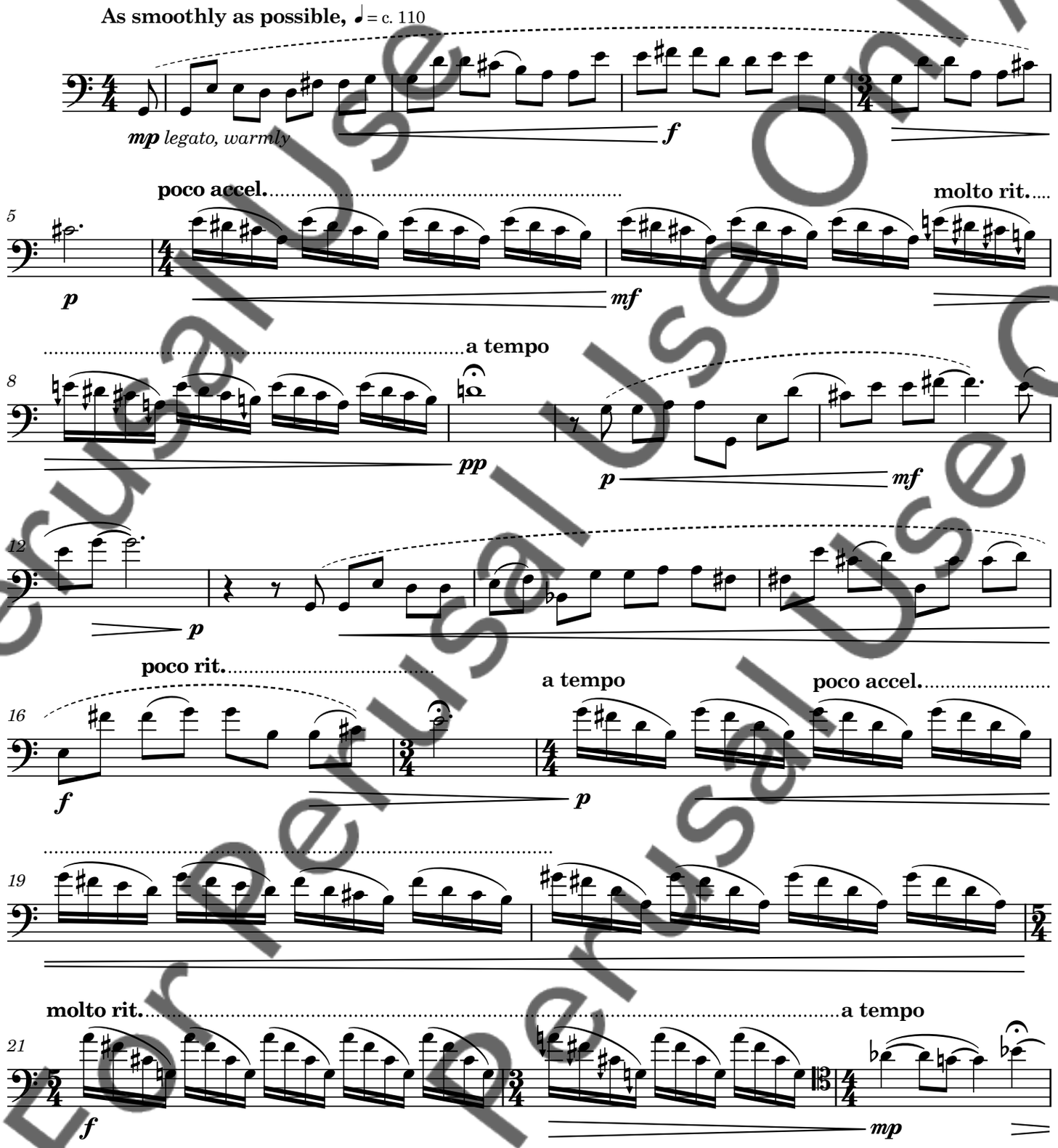
6 – Distant Voices

Commissioned by Eleni Katz

Distant Voices is a vocalise for bassoon. The idea of this movement is allow the warmth of the entire bassoon range to be displayed. The elongated melodies should sound like they are *singing* through the instrument as if they are spinning through the wind. Be as expressive and lyrical with the phrases (marked with dashed slurs) as possible without ever losing forward momentum.



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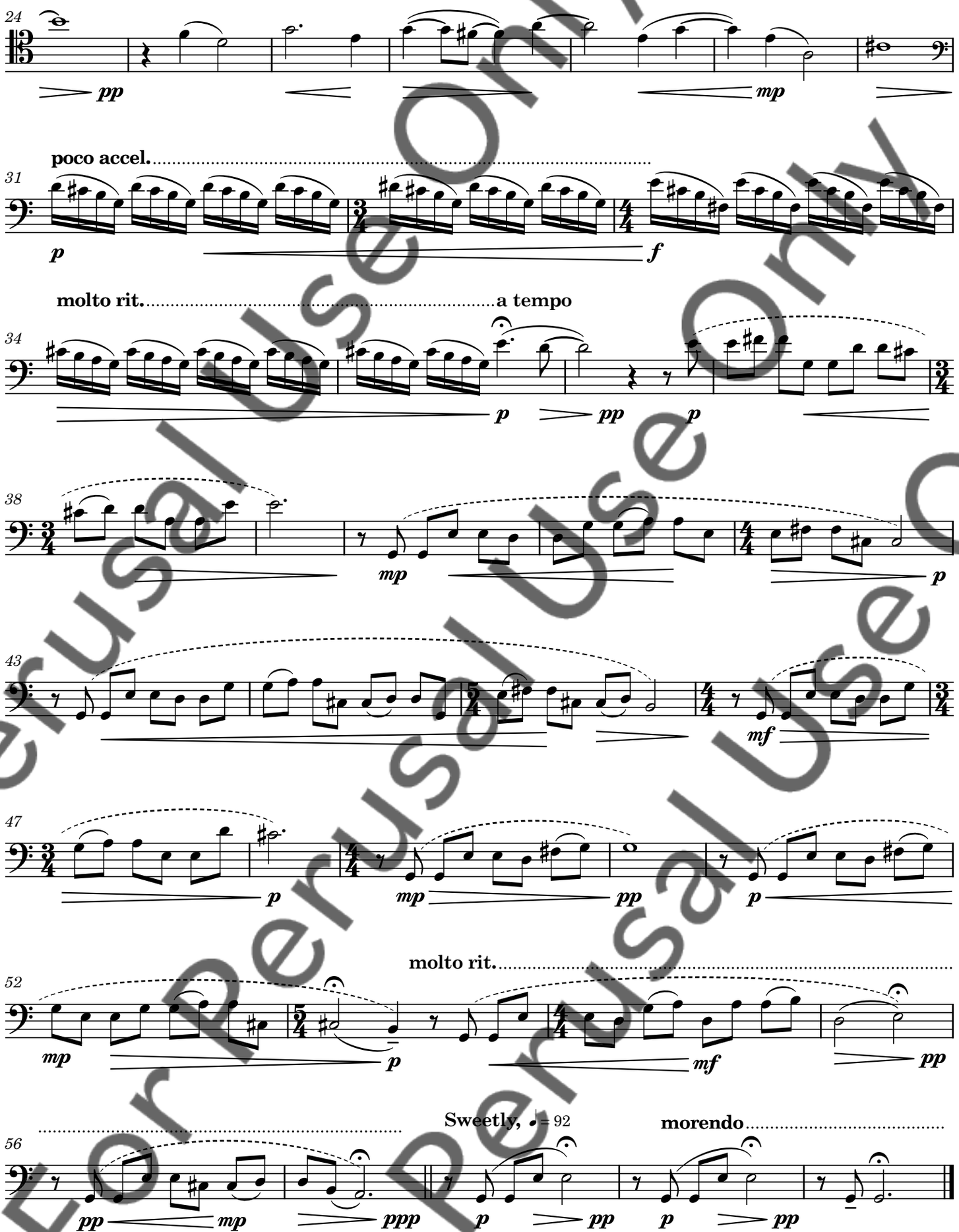

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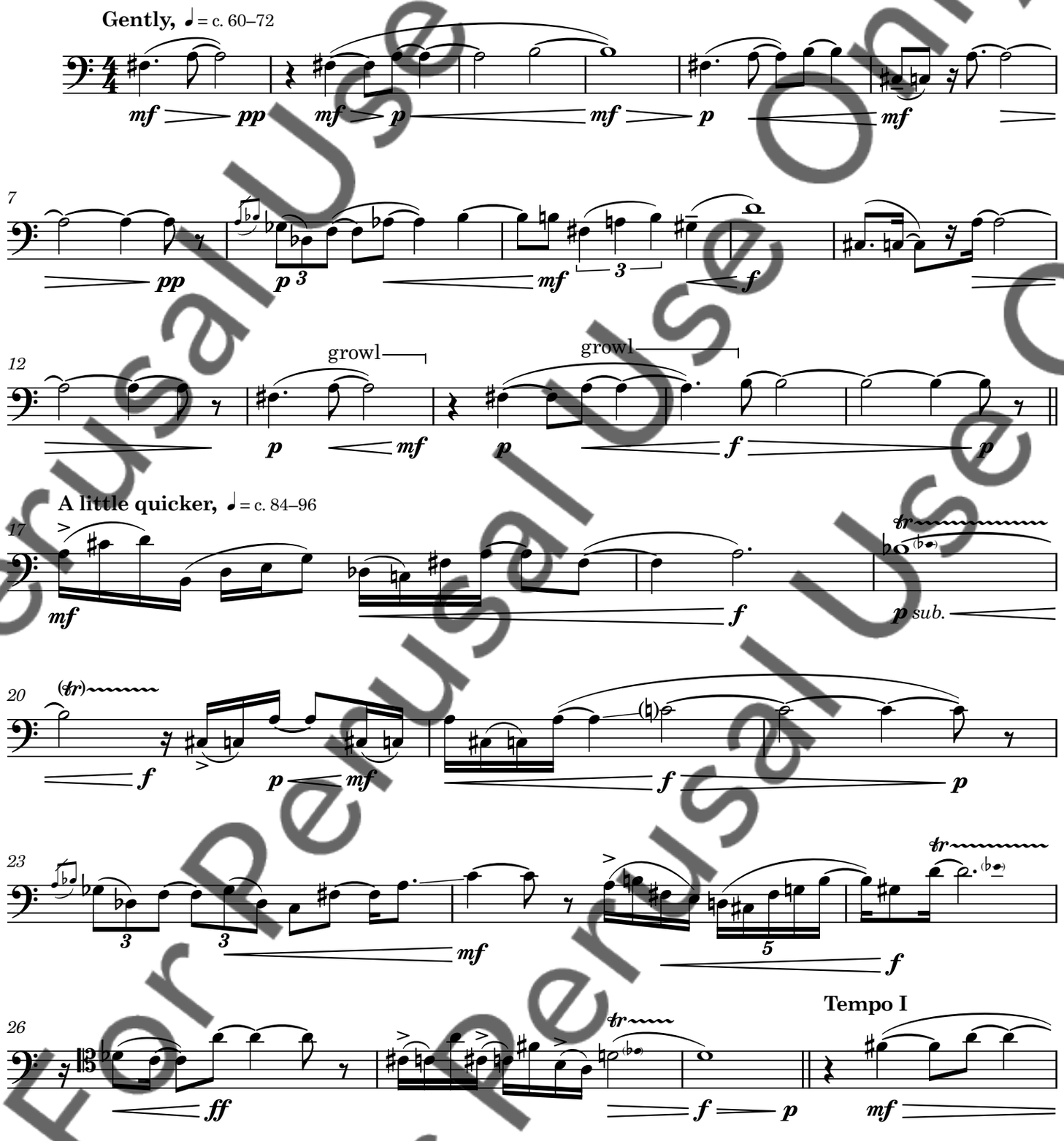
7 – Home

Commissioned by Rachel Frederiksen

This movement is inspired by the idea of remembering a place that feels like home. No matter how distantly removed, I can hear the sounds of the home I grew up in, feel the comfort of my mother's couch, and know joy of her dogs running around causing chaos. *Home* should have that feeling of comfort mixed with the playfulness of a child and their sweet puppy playing in the yard.



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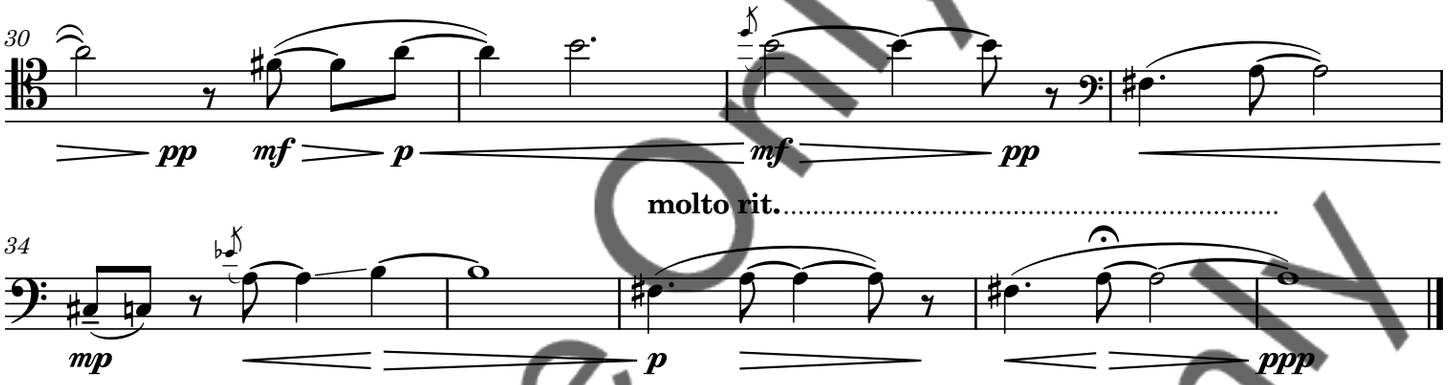

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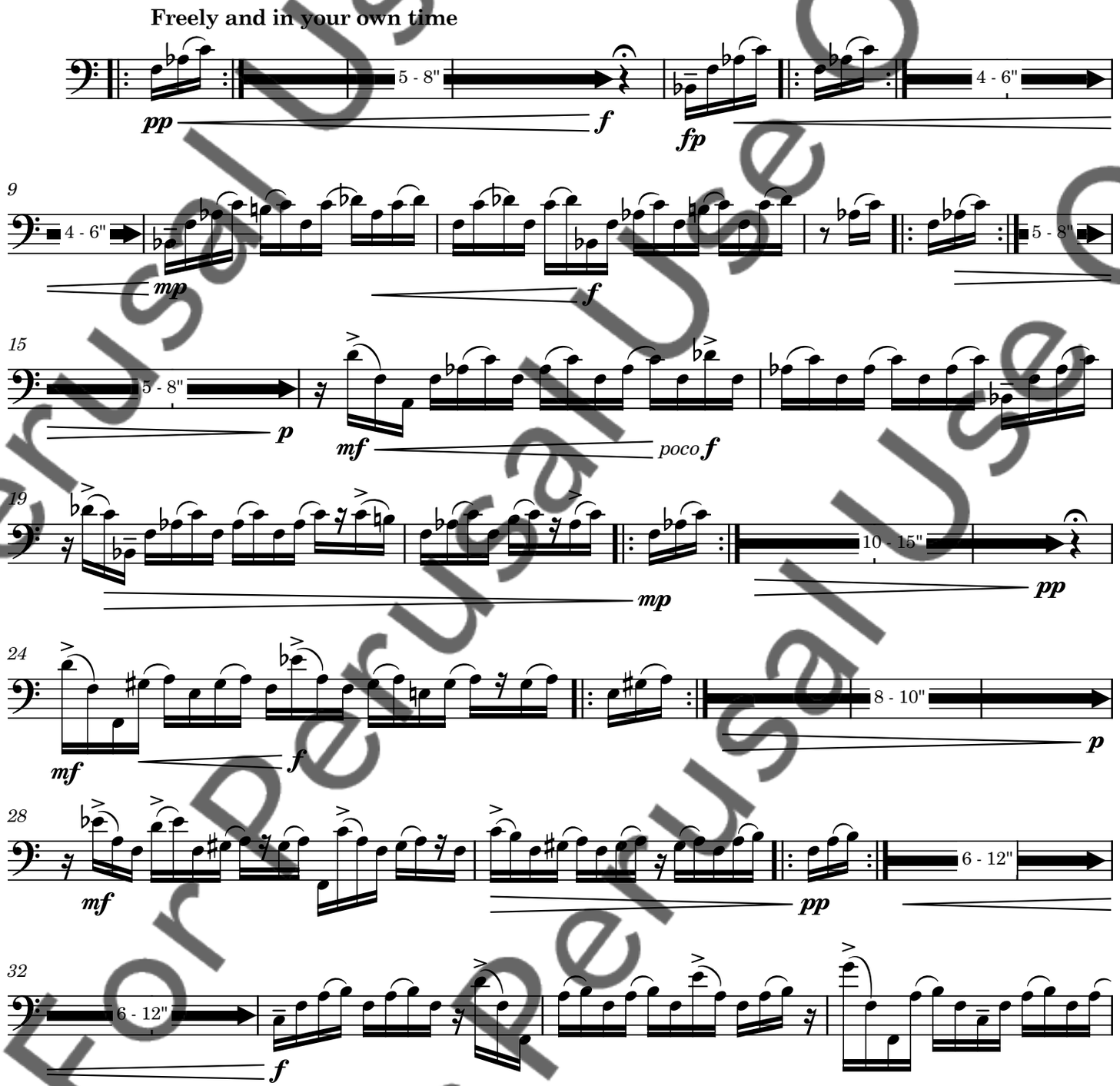
9 – Motion-less

Commissioned by Christian Green

Inspired by the music of Arvo Pärt, *Motion-less* is an exploration of the idea of learning to love and live in a single moment. There is no set tempo for this movement, nor is there a designated length for many of the aleatoric portions of the movement. Rather, there is space for the performer to explore a particular sound or arpeggio while working to find the tone, color, or subtle melodies they can love about each section. Each of the arrows included suggested times for how long to play the previous combination of notes (marked by repeat signs); however, every performer should view these as starting points, or guides, and feel free to adjust them to suit their own individual performance. Additionally, the fermatas should be observed for the amount of time the performer feels is appropriate to the music and the space they are creating. Tenutos should be played as *slight* lengthenings of the note -- similar to the an organist might slightly lengthen a note to create an emphasis.



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