Aaron Houston

Jam and Toast

For Solo Horn in F

Aaron Houston Music, 2019
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Program Notes

When I was asked to compose a work for unaccompanied French Horn based on funk music, I was extremely excited. To my knowledge, nobody had really combined those two elements and I was immediately interested in how the sounds of the horn would combine with the riffs and grooves of funk music. A couple days later I thought, "How in the world am I going to make these totally different ideas work?"

Initially, I tried to make the composition feel like listening to the radio on a morning drive. I wanted to mimic the sounds of flipping through radio stations with funk and soul tunes interrupting each other as you go along...and this was a disaster. After attempting several different ways to force this piece together, I decided to scrap the whole thing and start afresh with a new idea. I sat down with a guitar, turned on an Earth, Wind, and Fire playlist, and just started to jam with the music.

Jam and Toast is the result of this jam session between myself and some imaginary funk band I played with that day. It is a single performer having fun playing off his or her own ideas – first providing a gentle bass groove, slowly filling in the gaps with some melodic ideas, and finally launching into screaming solo lines in the upper register. *Jam and Toast* asks the performer to be a one-man band, be a little funky, and put on a show...even if he or she is just having a solo jam session with no one watching.

Performance Notes

This composition is based on idioms from funk music. It should be played with a lot of character, attitude, and excitement. There are many sections which might feel like a riff from a funk bass line or reference a "slap bass" technique sometimes used for an electric bass. I encourage you to lean into those feelings and let the music be fun and have a really strong groove to it.

Technique indications:

"x" indicate a "ghost note" that doesn't fully speak.

Accidentals:

= a quarter tone sharp

\# = a standard half-step sharp

= a quarter tone flat

♭ = a standard half-step flat

When these quarter-tone accidentals are used in measure 75, the overall effect should be as if you are slowly bending the note up through the quarter tones – like a long bend on a guitar string

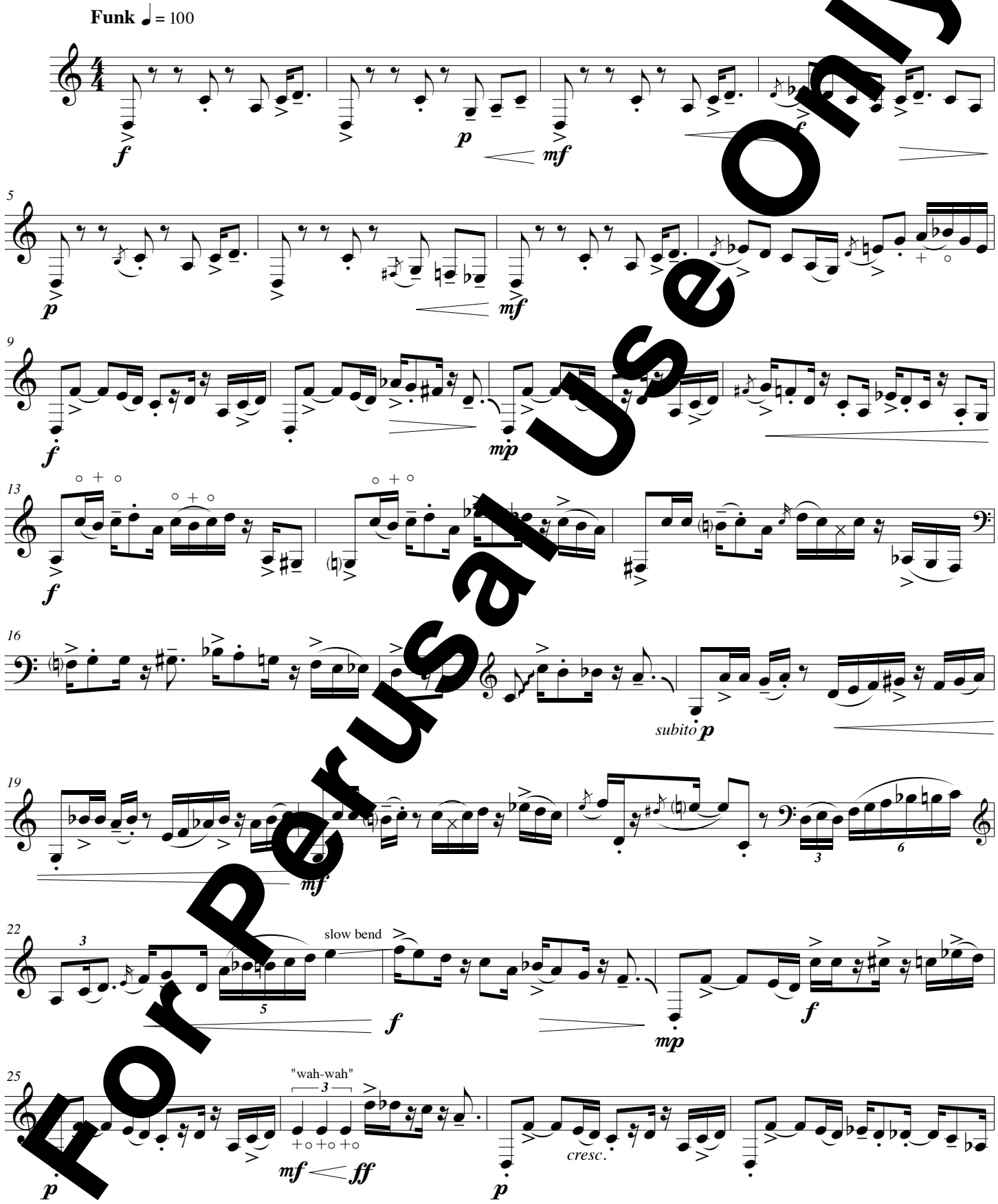
For reference on quarter-tone fingerings, please consult *Extended Techniques for the Horn* by Douglas Hill.

Horn in F

Jam and Toast

Commissioned and premiered by Parker Nelson

Aaron Houston



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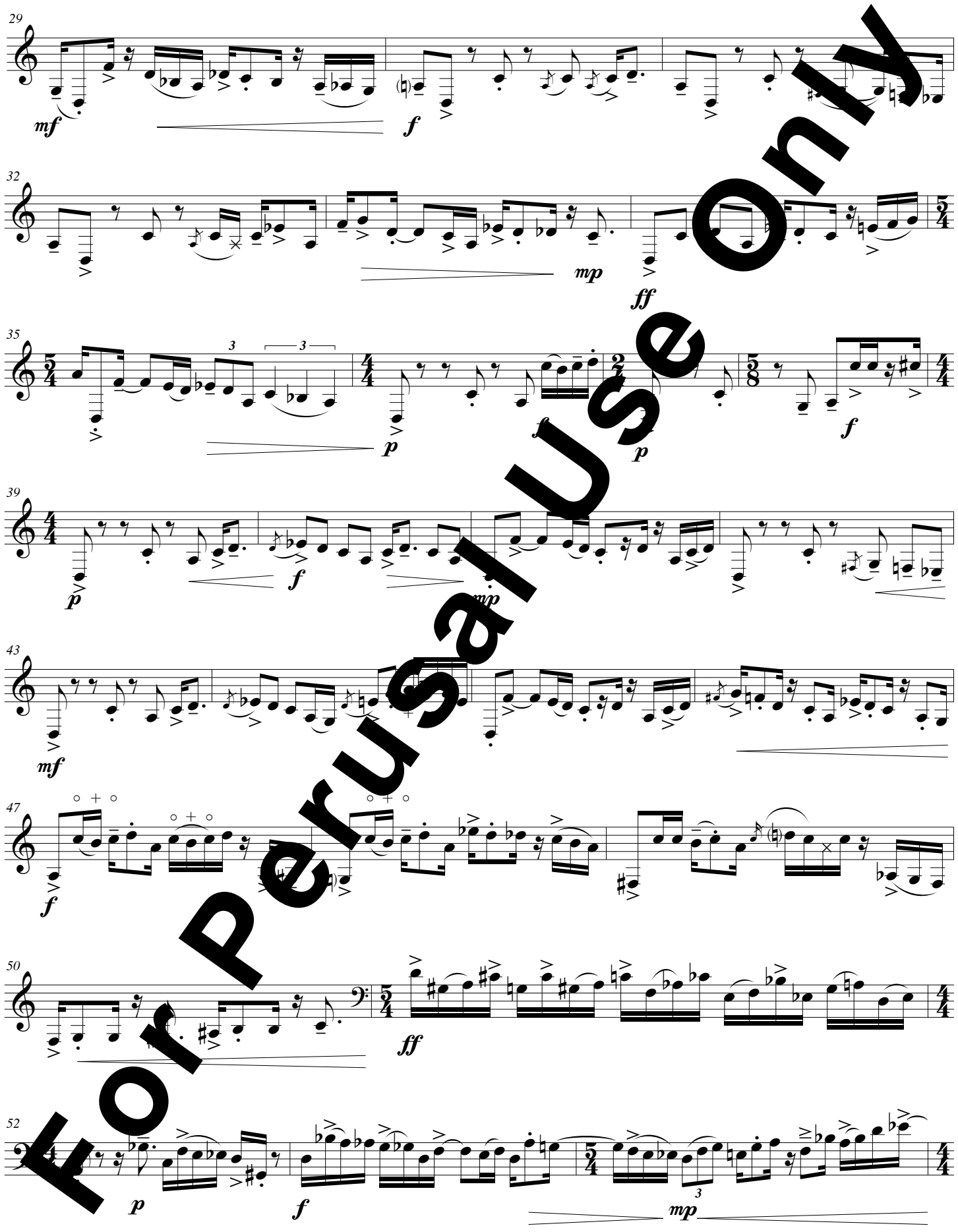

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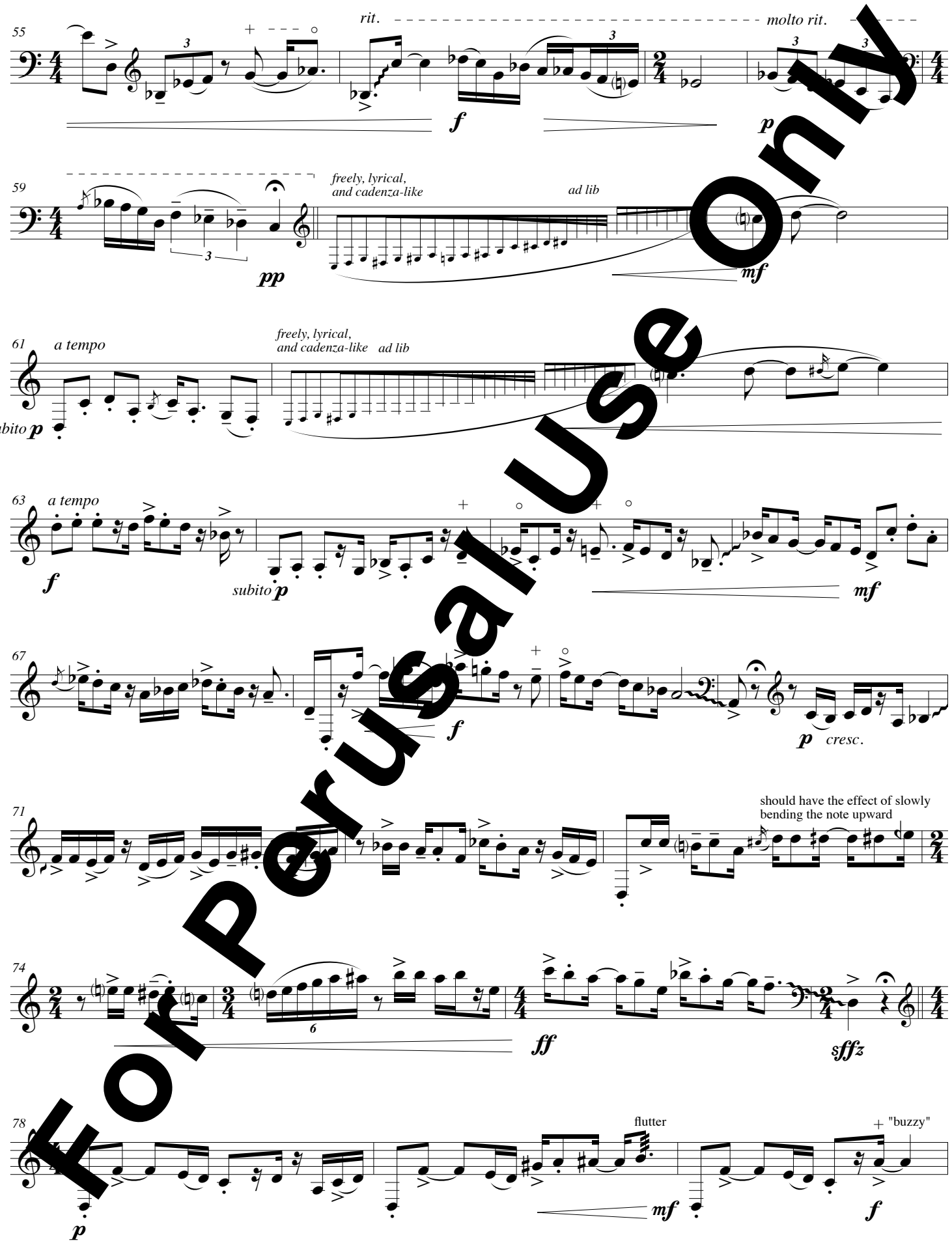

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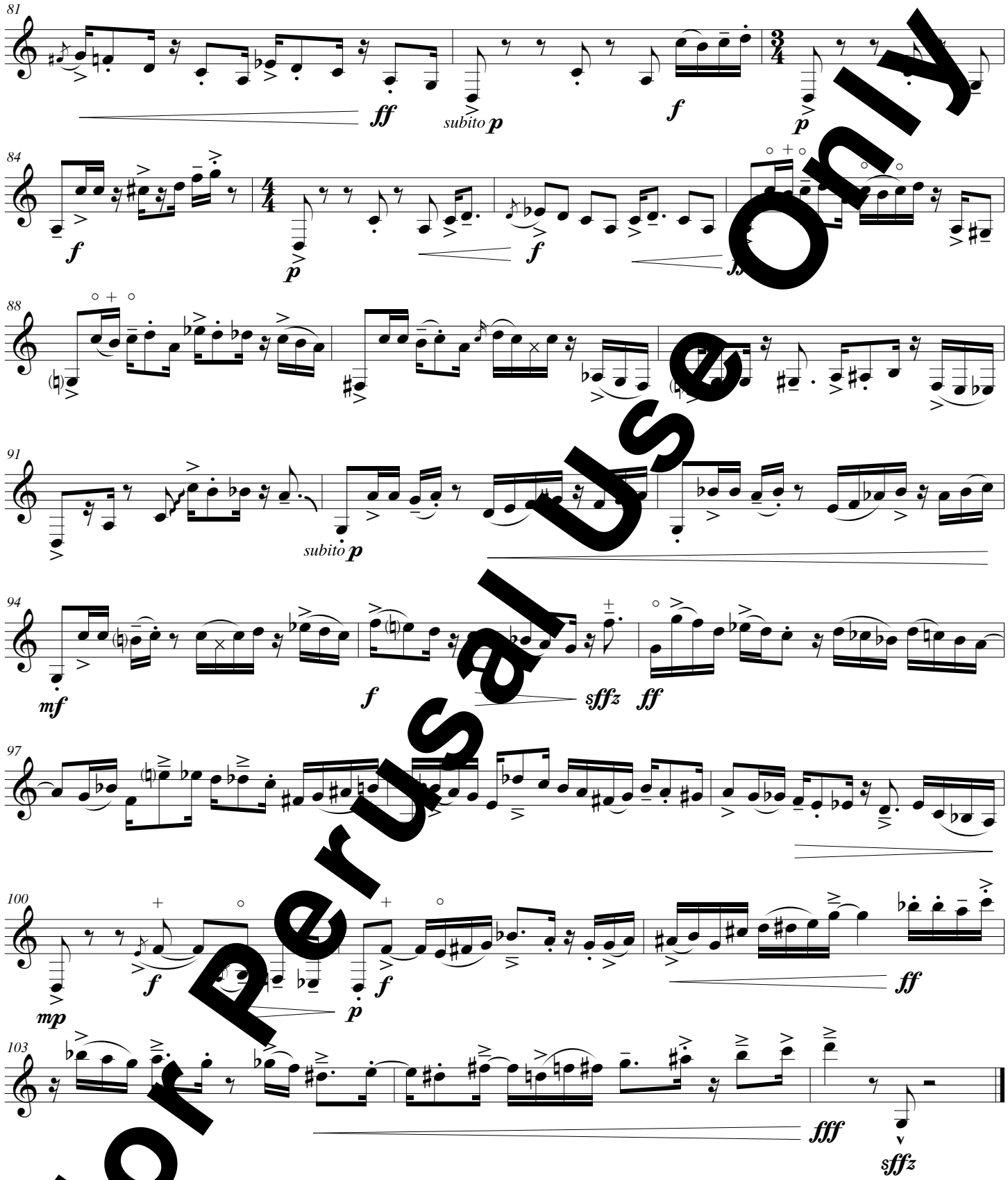

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