PRESSER PREMIERE SERIES

Robert Martin

Enigma

for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano

sample

THEODORE PRESSER COMPANY

NIGHTTIME, ENIGMA, AND NOSTALGIA: a visionary triptych in music. These are three single-movement pieces for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. They are conceived and designed to stand as solitary expressions, each less than ten minutes; however, on special occasions they can be performed together. All three pieces were composed in 1979 in Manhattan, New York. In 2015, they were premiered and recorded by the The North/South Consonance Chamber Orchestra conducted by Max Lifchitz. The scores are in c.

In music, composer Robert Martin brings together the horrific historical reality of the Armenian holocaust with the unspeakable beauty of paintings by Arshile Gorky. It is his life-long fascination of how Gorky, an abstract painter, creates images that are solid and resolved. For Martin, Gorky's paintings present a wonderful paradox, a feeling of playful spontaneity contrasted against a sense of organized inevitability. Gorky's works are abstract; yet they are steeped in various western painting traditions. Similarly, Martin's music is "atonal," but is built from contours and constructs that grow out of western musical traditions.

By the mid-seventies, Martin asked, "If I were an historical painter, who would I be? Or at least, who is my esthetic guide?" The answer was Gorky. In order to find and define his music, Martin jumped far afield to Gorky's abstract images. His creativity is fueled through metaphor and poetic imagery. In the mid-nineties, Paul Griffiths, music critic of the New York Times, wrote "Robert Martin's interest was apparently not so much in the subject matter of one particular [Gorky] picture as in the general notion of what gives an abstract image wholeness and presence."

NIGHTTIME (1979) is a single-movement piece for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. One role of music is to evoke. Therefore, Nighttime is a nocturne, a night piece suggestive of flickering shadows, perhaps created by firelight. It is a recurrent setting in human existence. The music opens with the scene of twilight calm, gently disturbed with the slight uncertainty about what is around us, what we cannot see. Later, the clarinet takes on a solo role, and the notes bleed like careless paint into the other instruments that quietly sustain them. Next, the flute takes over the role of solo. The piece ends with a repeated cadence of morning light.

ENIGMA (1979) is a single-movement piece for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. As the title suggests, the music is in a state of perpetual questioning using a variety of approaches. For example, Enigma opens using ostinati (plural of ostinato) that do not match in length, like a staircase with each step a different height. Additionally, the music has sudden starts and stops, again unexplained. There are dramatic and powerful explosive passages that are interrupted. The technique, used to create this feeling of a perplexed music world where things seem often not to make sense and to be left unresolved, is called in poetry and literature, anticlimax. In Enigma, the music suggests one direction; then refuses to continue, striking out in another direction. Artists use approaches such as this to force themselves into creative circumstances that they otherwise might not have discovered.

NOSTALGIA (1979) is a single-movement piece for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano. There are passages in Nostalgia that build using two layers, a louder foreground and a quieter background. Both of these layers are independent of specific instruments, in other words, the various instruments jump in to play a role in either layer, then jump to the other layer. It is as if the ensemble has doubled. The technical musical term for multiple instruments interweaving to produce a single thread or idea is called Klangfarbenmelodie (tone-color-melody). Because there are two layers (louder and softer), both using this technique, Nostalgia is a unique example of "double Klangfarbenmelodie." The piece ends with a series of intense rhythmic pulsations and several apocalyptic fanfares.

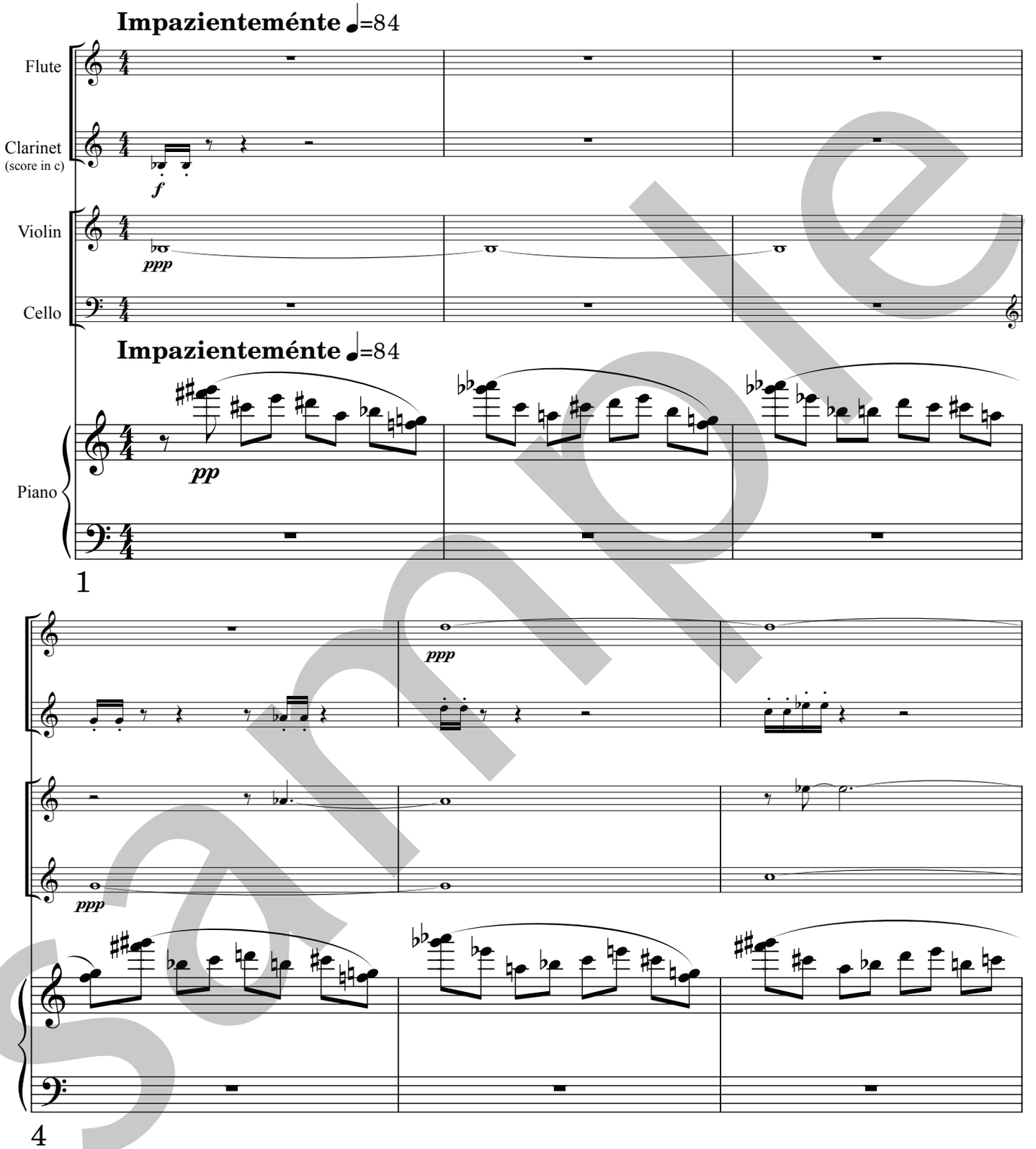
sample

Duration: c. 11'

ENIGMA

for Flute, Clarinet, Violin, Cello, and Piano

ROBERT MARTIN



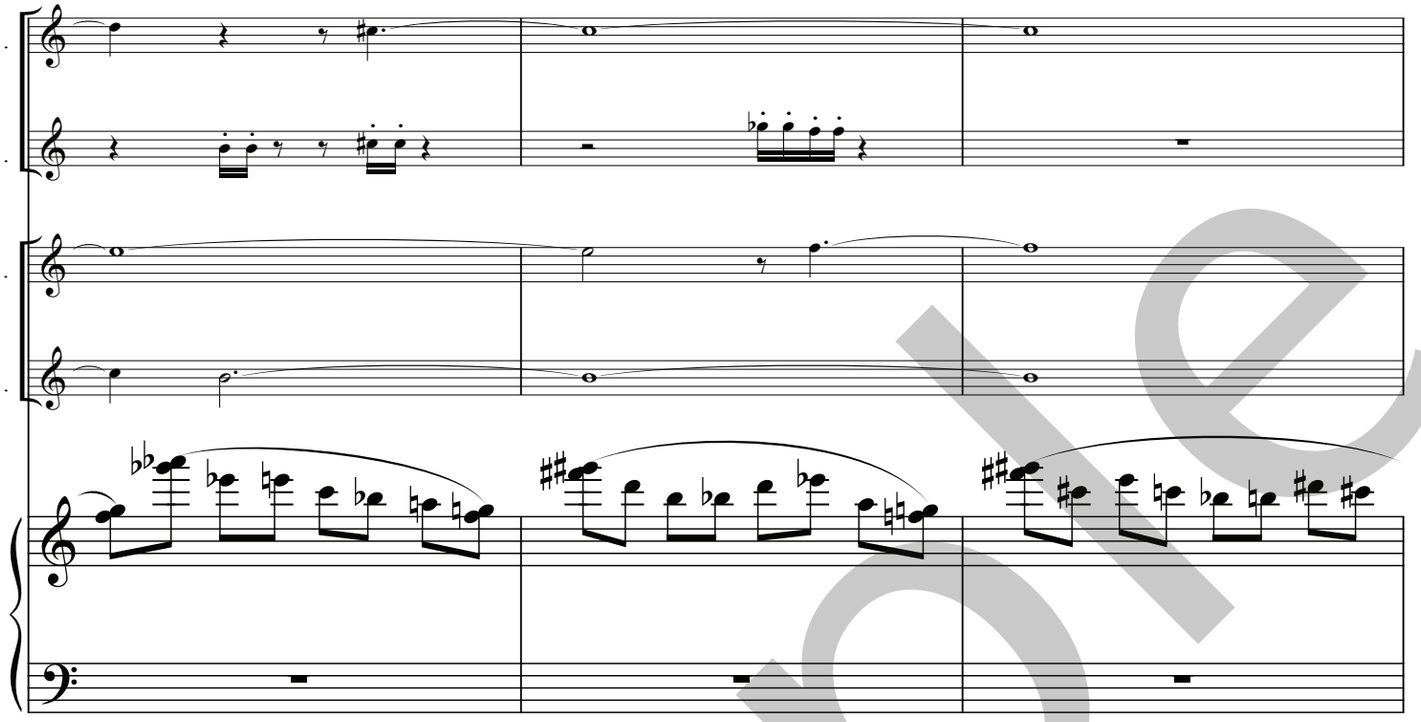
sample

© 2017 by Merion Music, Inc.
144-40516

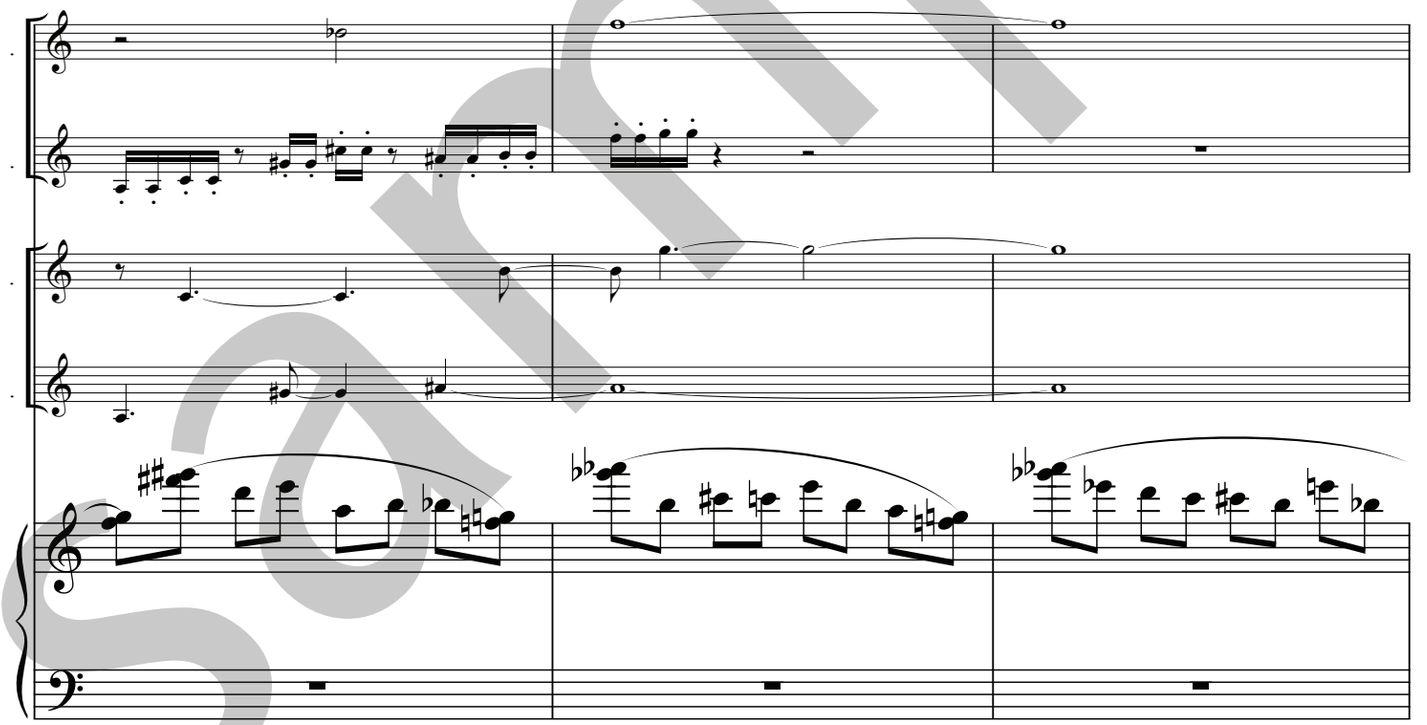
All Rights Reserved
Printed in U.S.A.

International Copyright Secured

Unauthorized copying, arranging, adapting, recording, or digital storage or transmission is an infringement of copyright. Infringers are liable under the law.

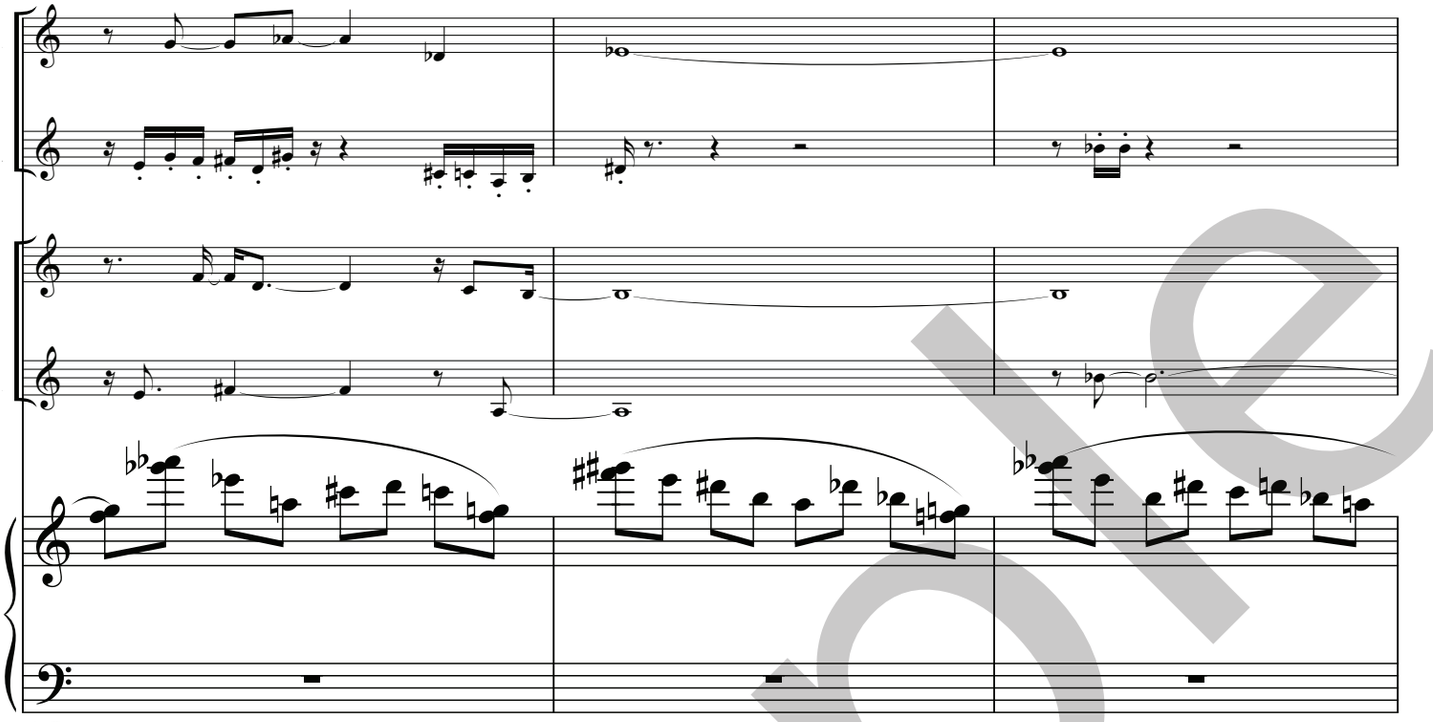


7

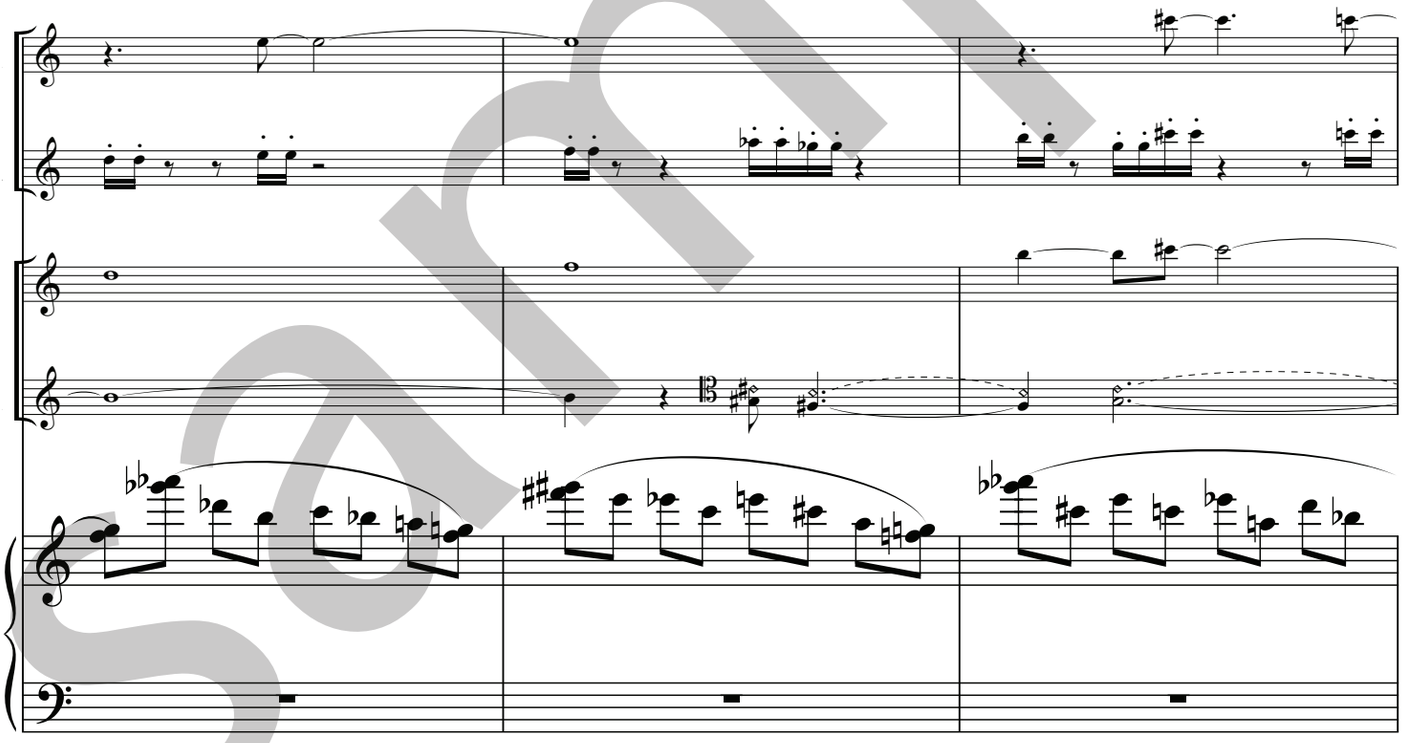


10

sample

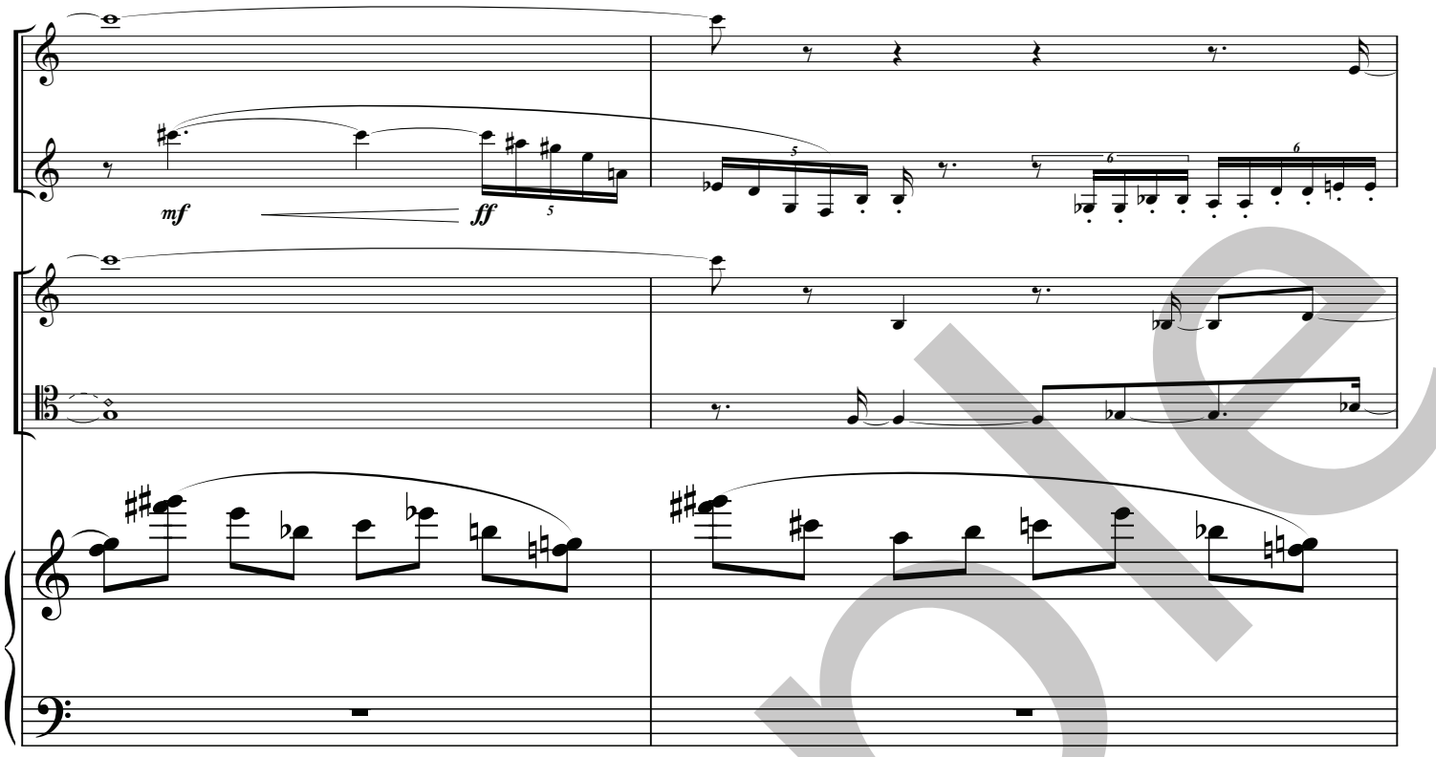


13

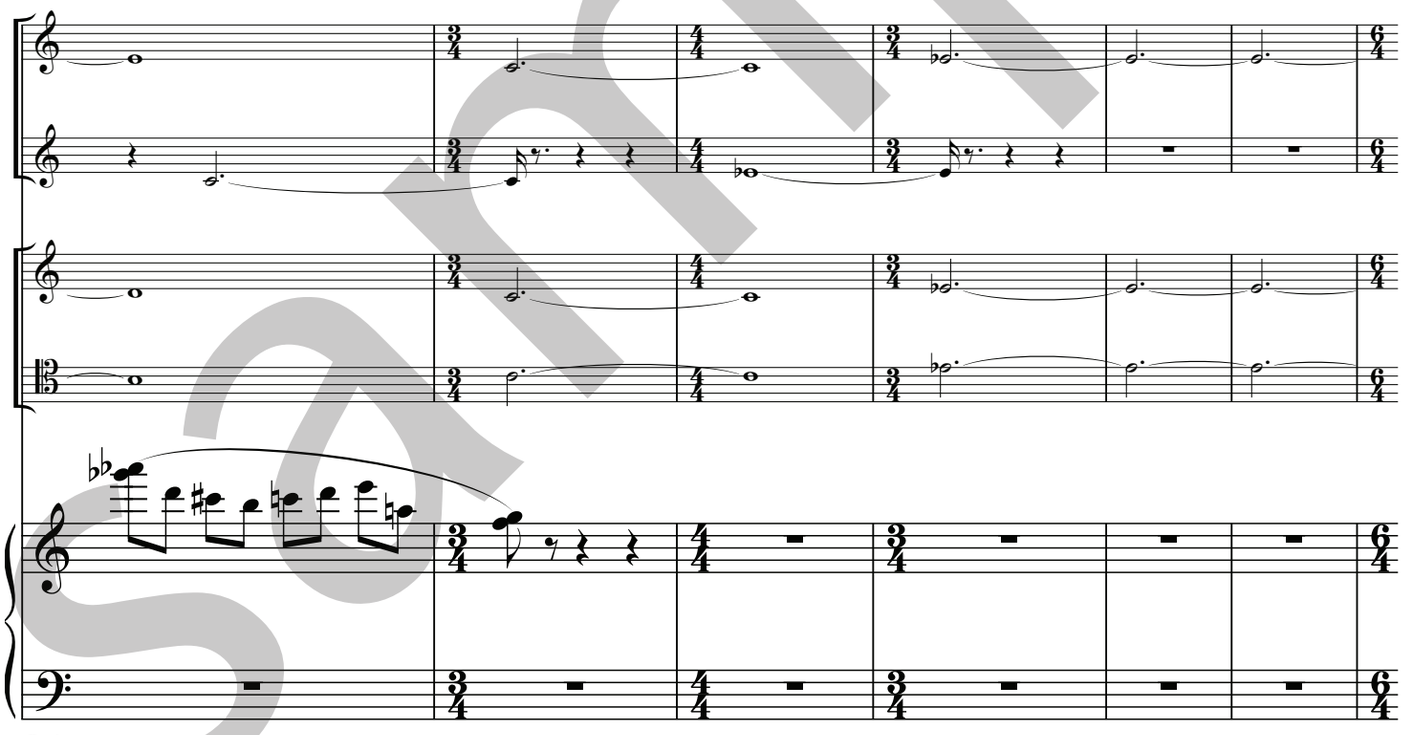


16

sample

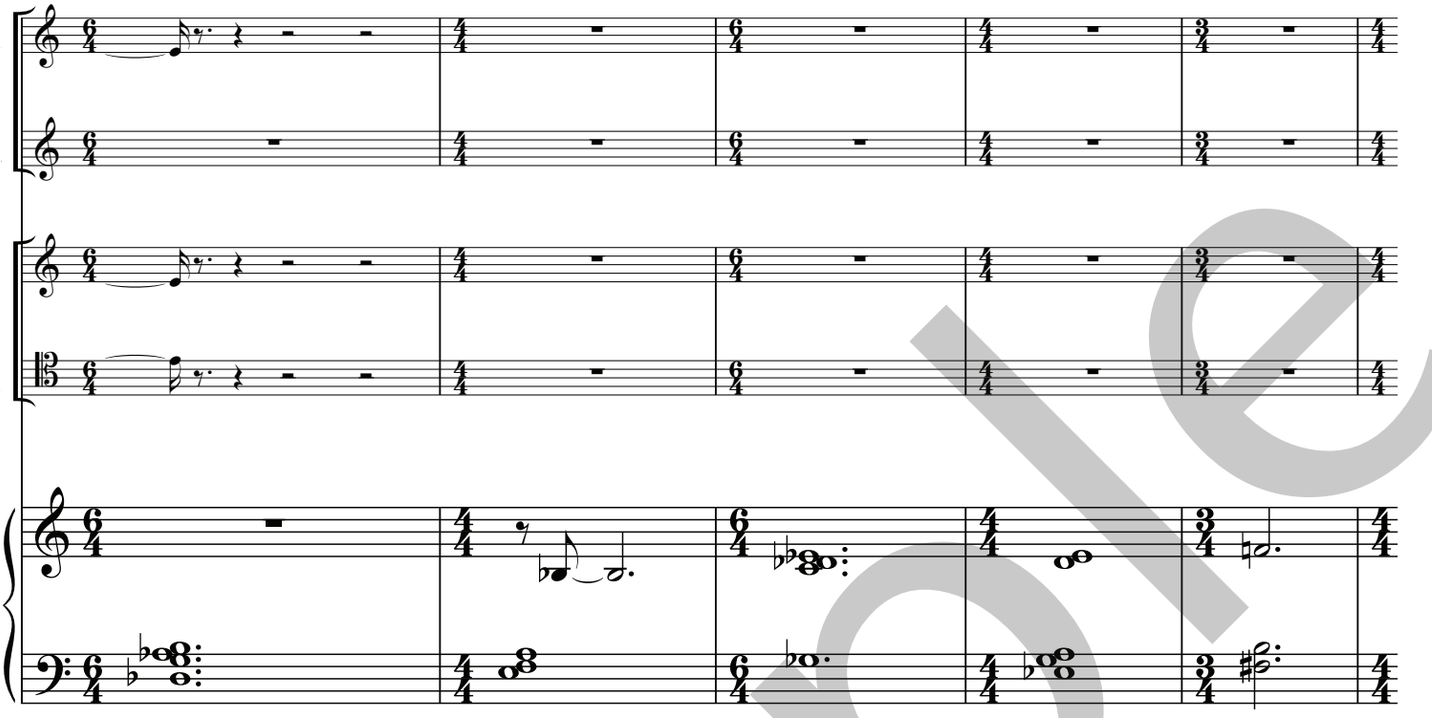


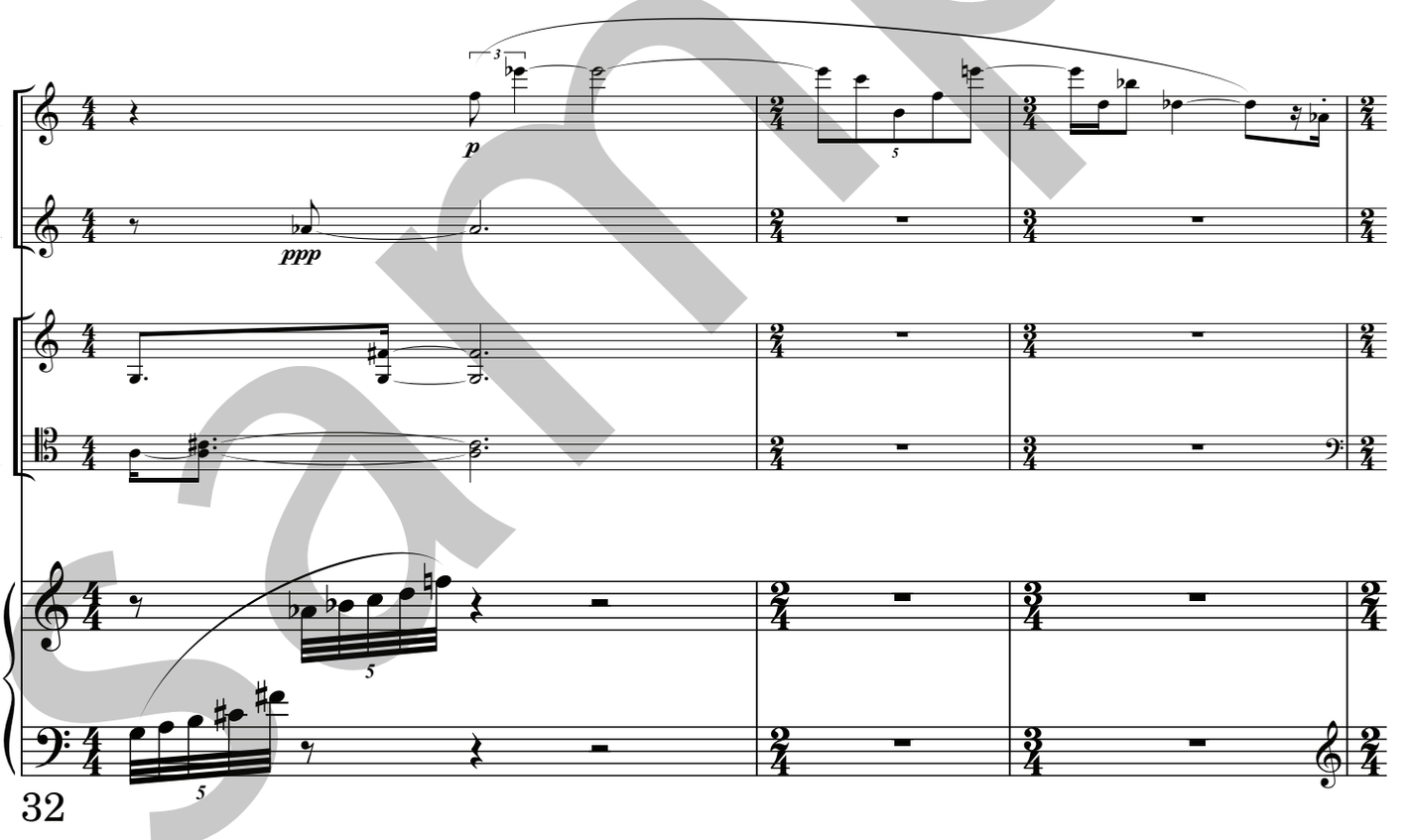
19



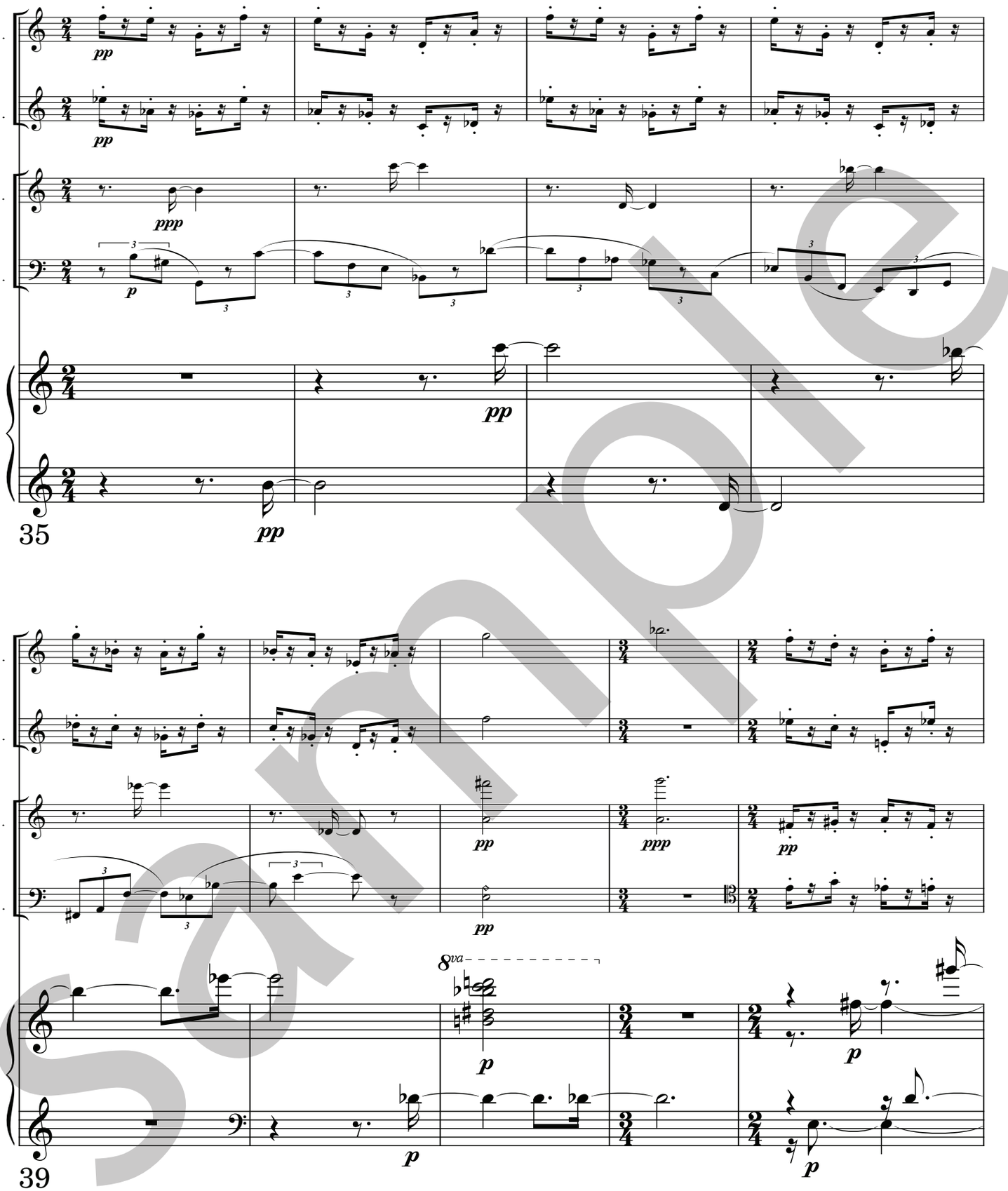
21

sample

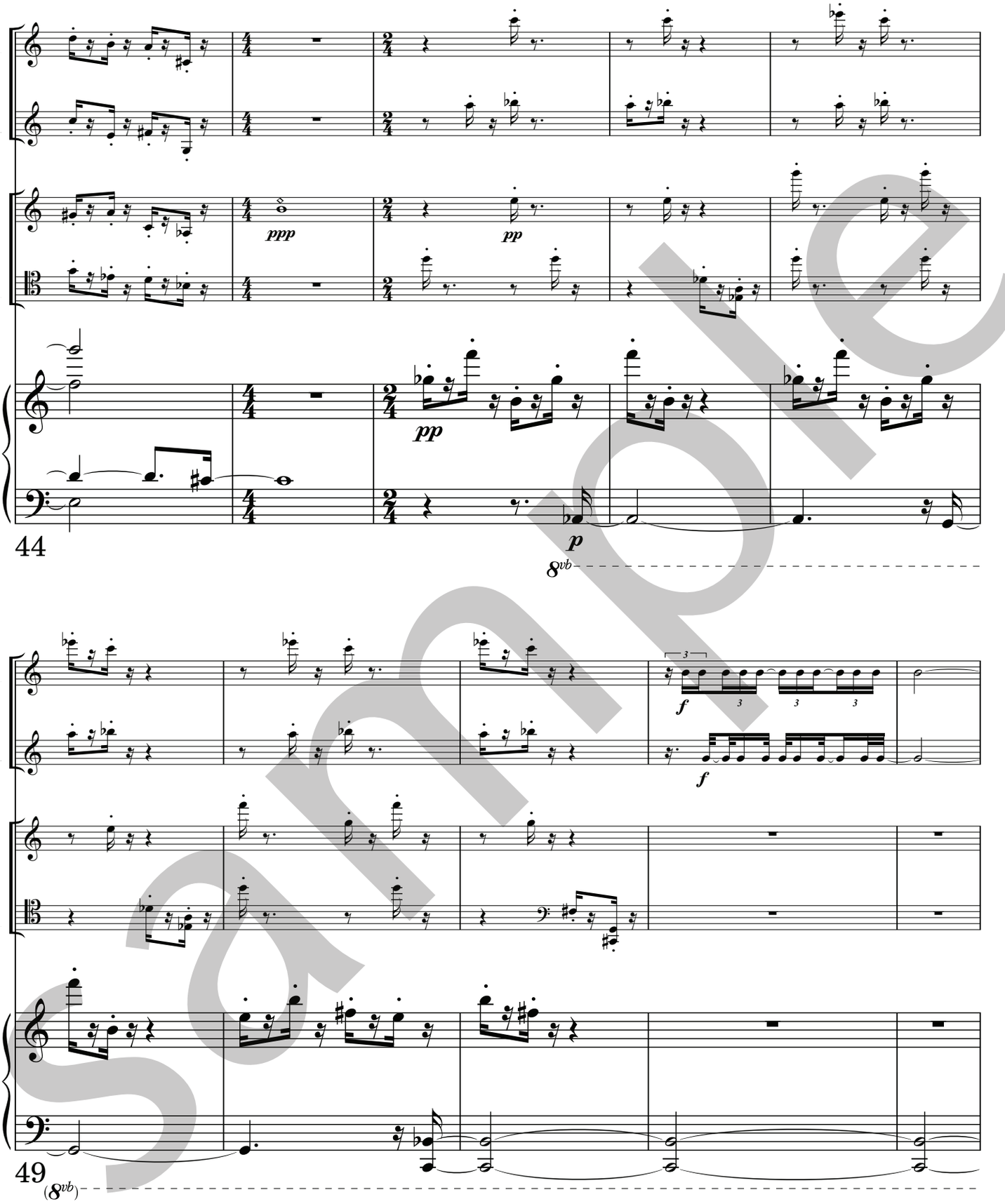




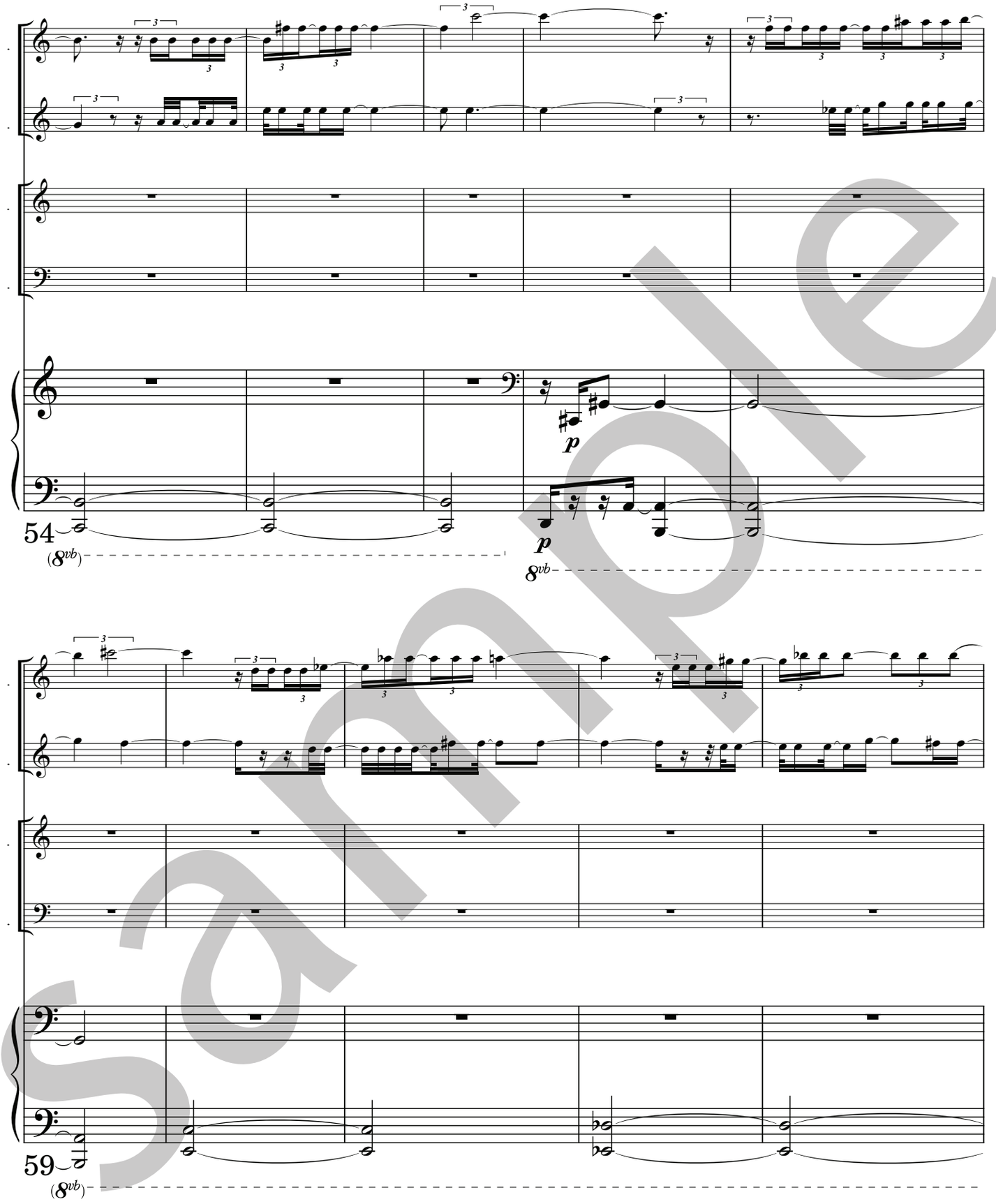
sample



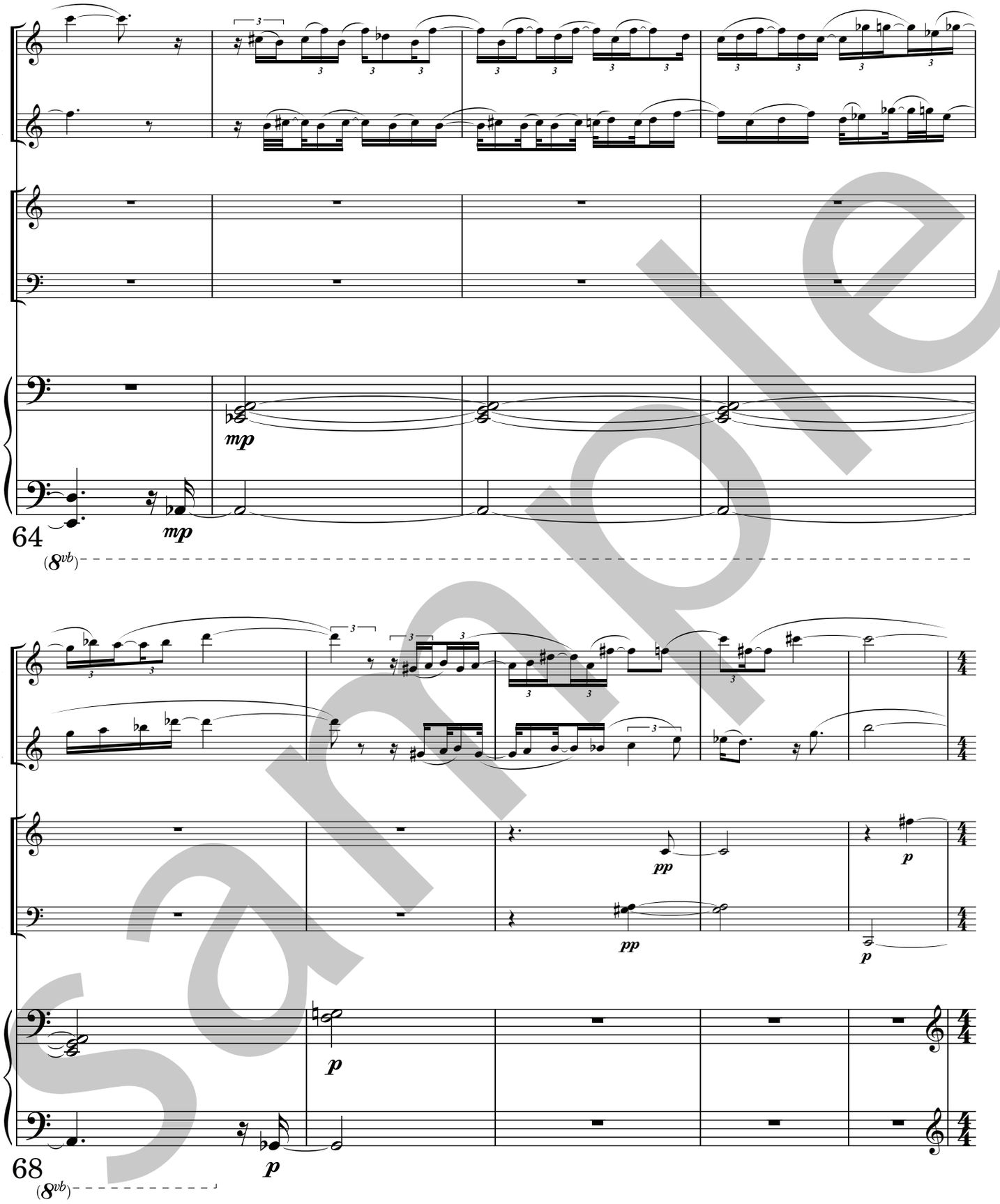
sample



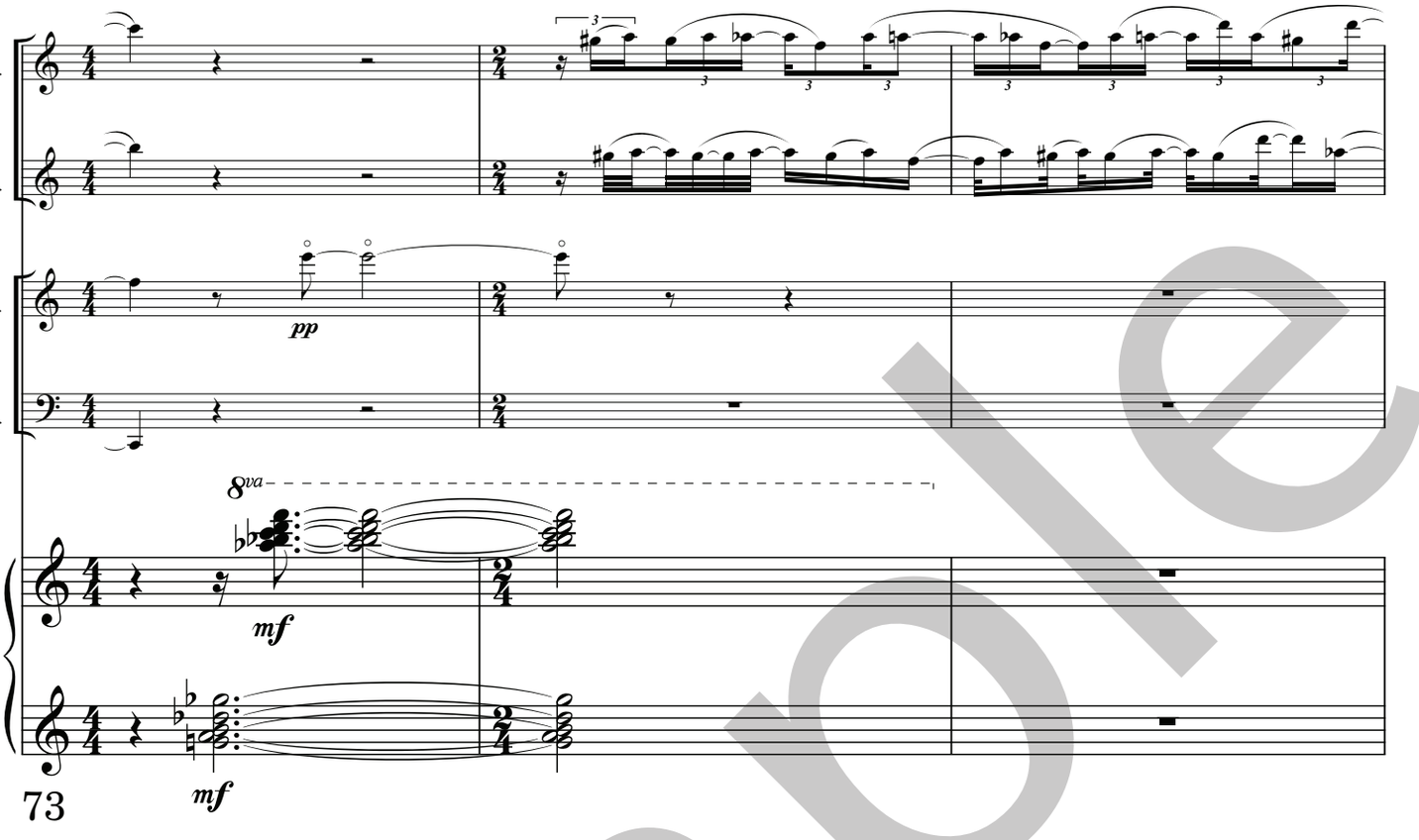
sample

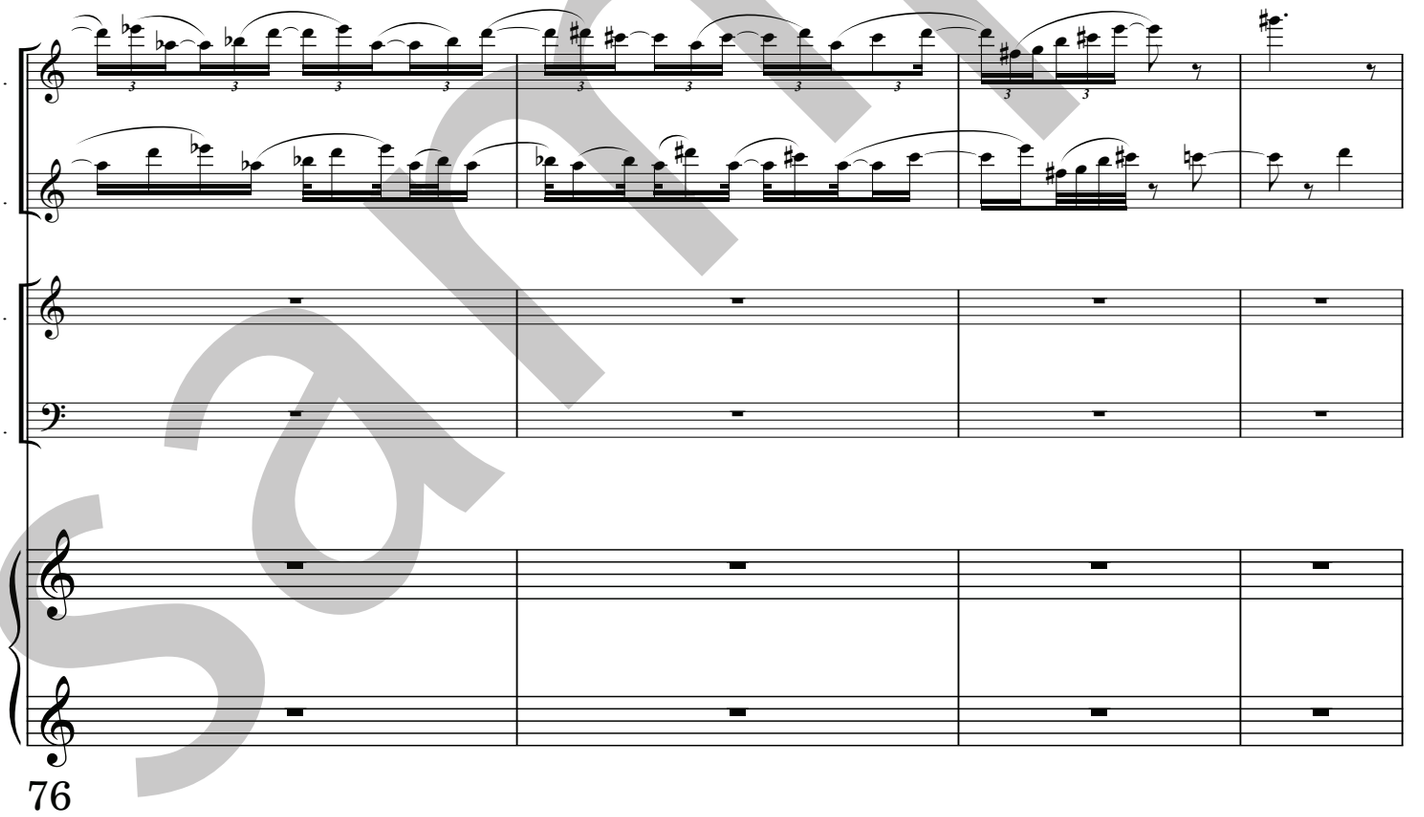


sample



sample





sample