Grade 3

Music for String Orchestra

The Lamps of Deepavali

Manjula Ramachandran
& Cooper Ford

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INSTRUMENTATION

Violin I 8
Violin II 8
Viola 5
Cello 5
Bass 5
Djembe 1
Tubular Bells 1

CAS168F

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Performance Notes

The Lamps of Deepavali (*deepa* meaning lamp and *oli* meaning glow of light) commemorates one of the most important holidays in South Indian culture. Deepavali celebrates bringing light over darkness, and is also known as its North Indian counterpart, Diwali. This orchestral piece is written in Sindhubhairavi, a raaga common in both the Carnatic and Hindustani (Bhairavi) musical traditions of India. The notes of this raaga are often associated with devotion and positivity.

The piece begins with a traditional musical Bhajan, a type of devotional song. It is sometimes heard in a call by a single leader or small group, followed by a response by all. This is followed by sounds of celebration with fireworks, new dresses, sweets, and the exchange of gifts, portrayed by the faster rhythms, energy, and growing intensity. Finally, we end with a return to the theme of the Bhajan. This music is an exciting and accessible introduction to the sounds of South Indian music, as well as the culture.

In the Bhajan, the call of each phrase can be performed by a soloist or smaller group, as opposed to the entire section. Traditionally, a bell would be used, if one happens to be available. Otherwise, chimes may be used as noted.

In the second section, the *mridangam* is the drum that would traditionally be used. If one is not available, alternatives should approximate the sound to maintain authenticity. A combination of small and large djembe or bongos and congas are possibilities. Written percussion is a suggestion and may be modified through improvisation.

In measures 19 and 21, the violins have snap pizzicato, which is pulling the string to hit the fingerboard and make a snapping sound. This portrays the popping effect of fireworks. Players may come up with other sounds as well, such as quickly rolling fingernails across the wood of the instrument. Finally, just like in a fireworks display, the piece builds to the climax in mm. 50-58. Make sure the momentum keeps building to that point and then let it all out.

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About the Composers

Manjula Ramachandran (Manjula Mani-Dharmarajan) is a South Indian Classical (Carnatic) Vocalist and Saraswathi Veena player from South India. As a vocalist, she is well known for her deep knowledge of handling the Indian Raagas and Taalas (rhythms), composing in rare ragas, improvisational skills, and classicalism in voice. As a veena player, she is well known for her Gayaki (singing) style of playing, fingering techniques, and ability to engage the listener with high tonal string quality. Manjula graduated in Music as a String Major (veena) from Sree Swathi Thirunal Music College. She runs her own Indian music school in New Jersey where she has introduced many young children to the world of Indian Classical Music.

Cooper Ford is a music educator, composer, and conductor. He began learning the violin and trumpet at a young age in the school music program in his hometown of Chatham, New Jersey. During that time, he was encouraged by his teachers to explore his interest in composition, culminating in the performance of one of his string orchestra pieces, "Ballad and Inferno," during his senior year of high school. Since then, he has continued to write for a variety of ensembles, focusing on string and full orchestra. He is a winner of the ASTA/NJ Composer Competition with "Scenes from an Unwritten Tale," which was performed by Sinfonia from The New Jersey Youth Symphony.

Cooper received his Bachelor of Music in Music Education from The College of New Jersey and Master of Music in Music Education from the University of Florida. He is currently the Orchestra Director at North Brunswick Township High School in North Brunswick, New Jersey, where he also teaches classes in Music Production. Previously, he was on the conducting staff of the New Jersey Youth Symphony, working primarily with students in grades 5-7. He is a member of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) and the National Association for Music Education (NAfME).

The Lamps of Deepavali

MANJULA RAMACHANDRAN
and COOPER FORD
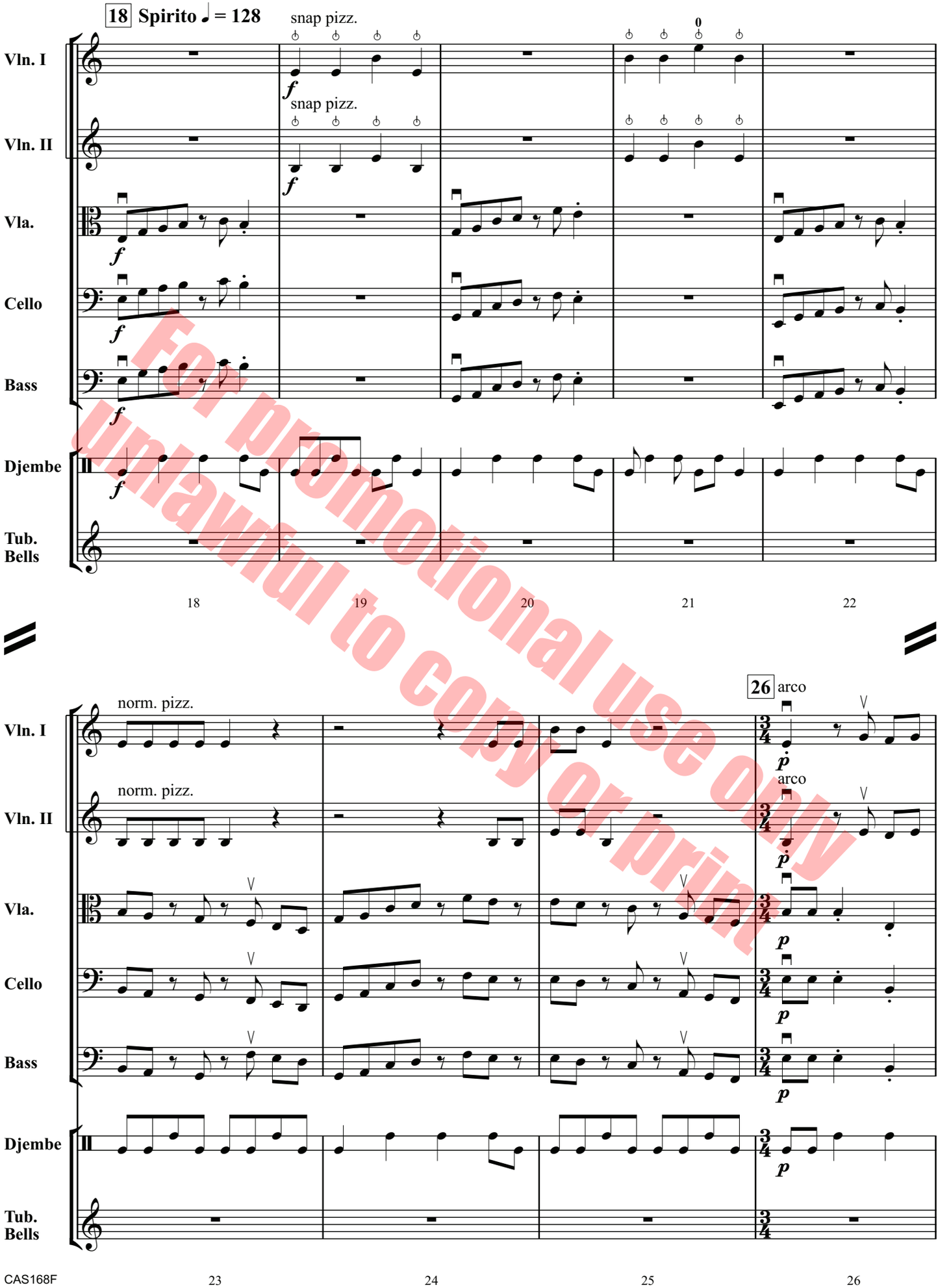


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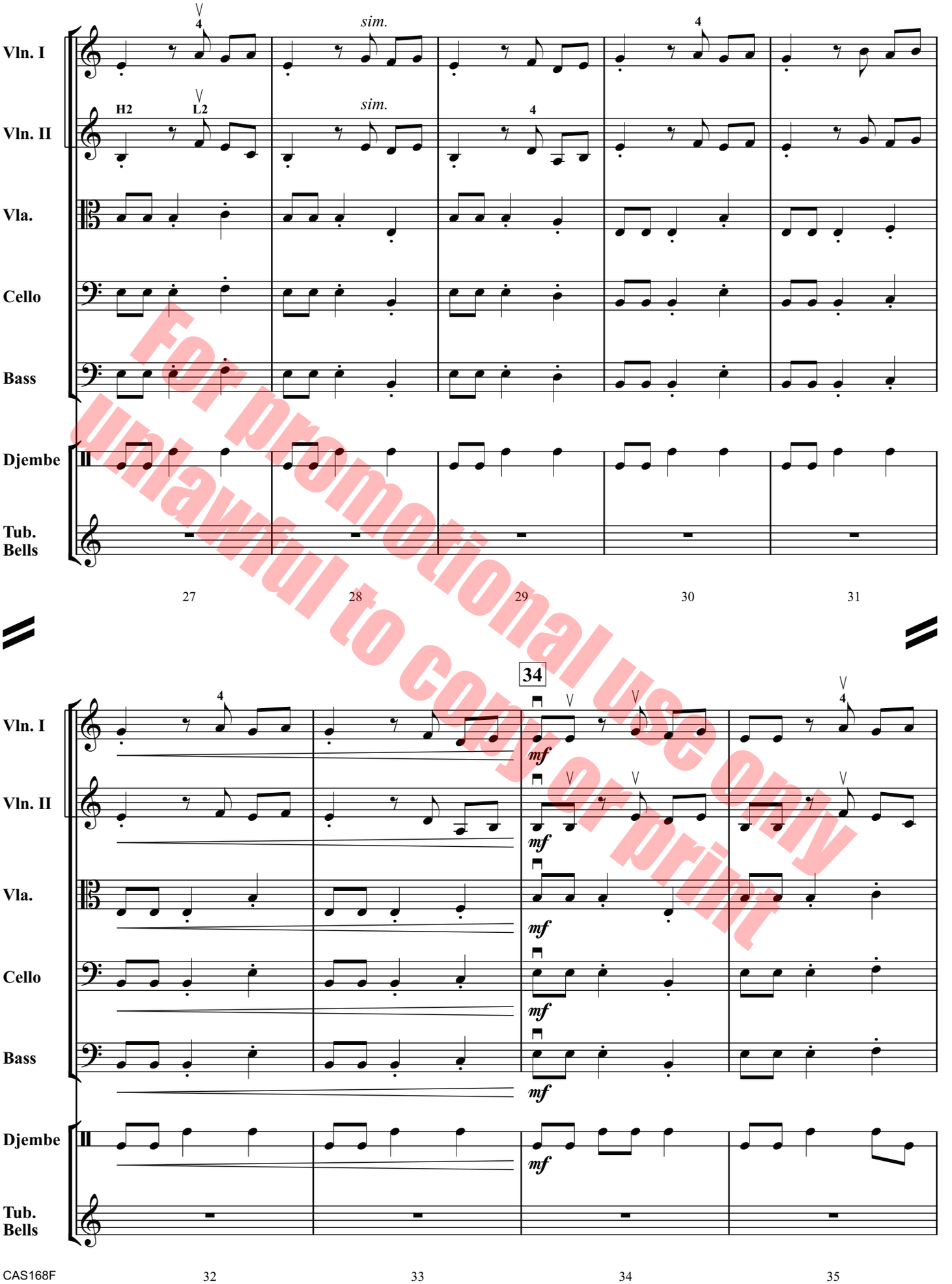
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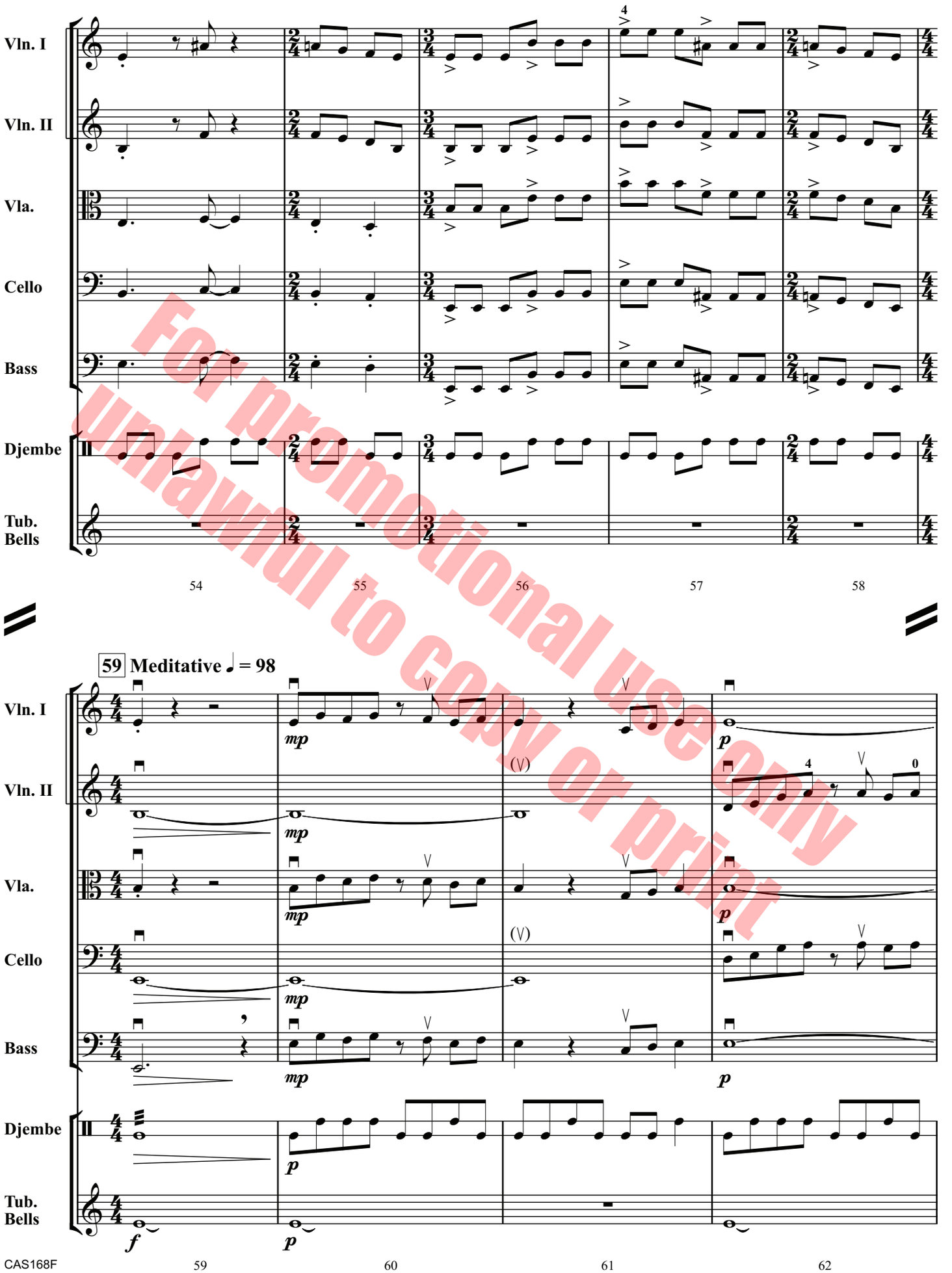


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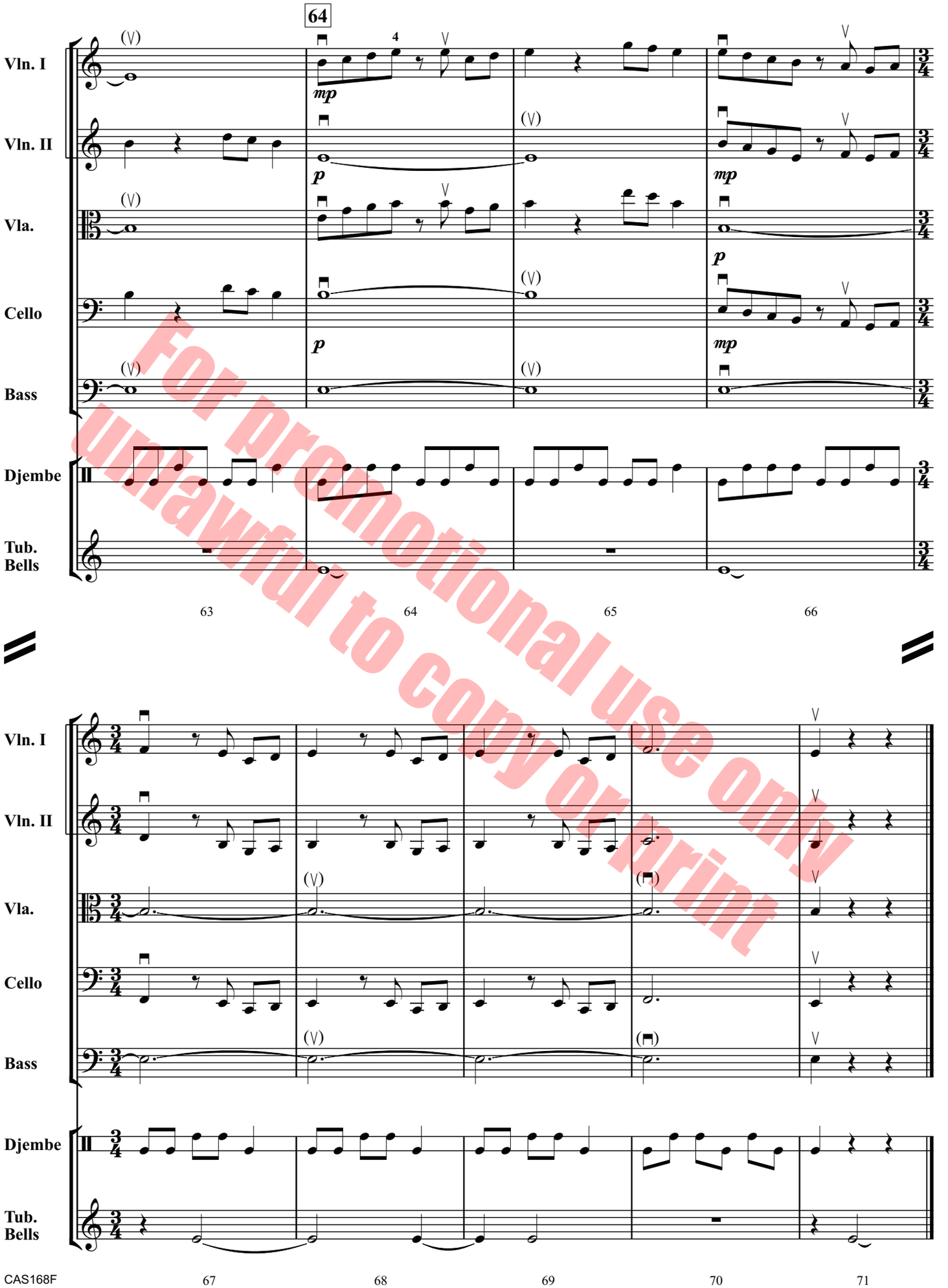




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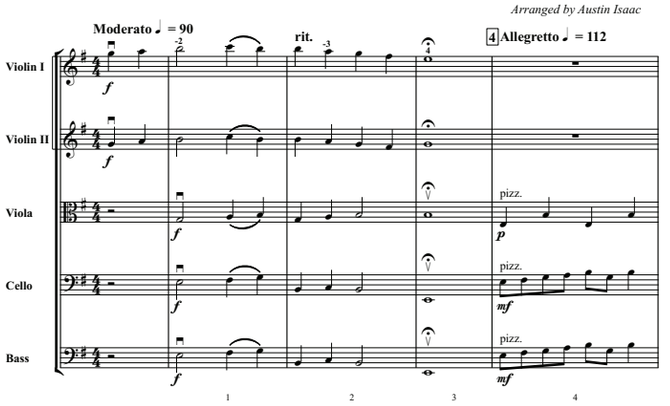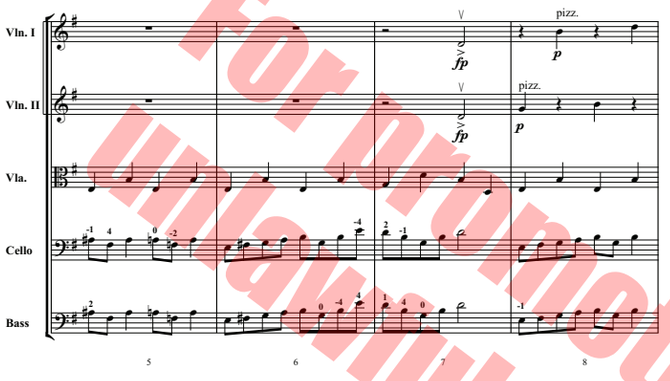


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Full Score
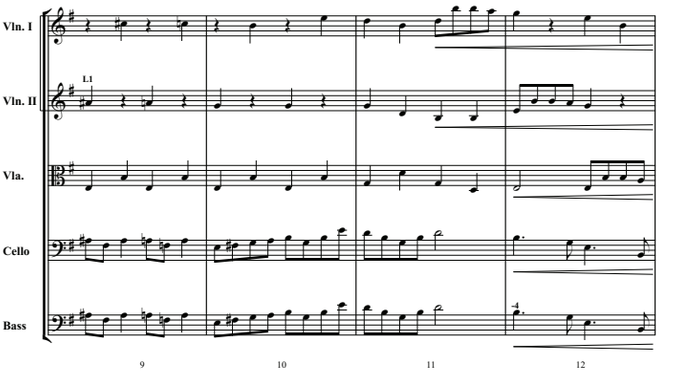
Rest Ye, Mountain King
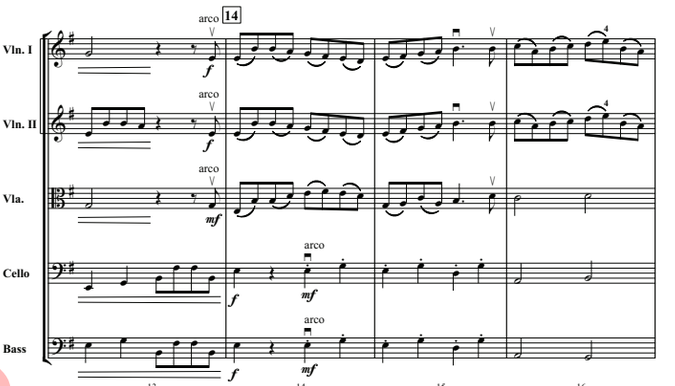
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Arranged by Austin Isaac
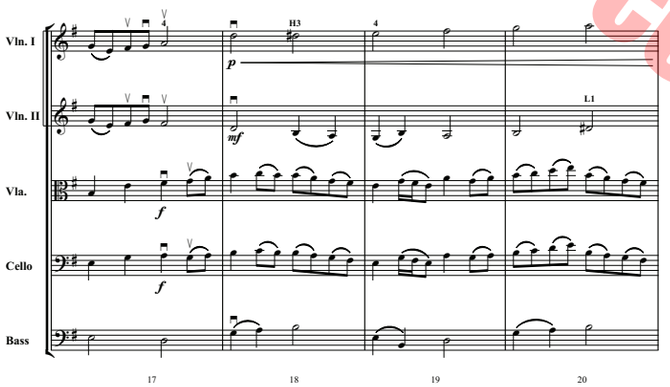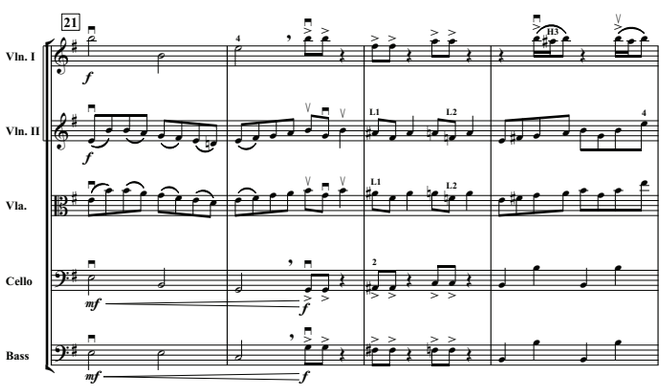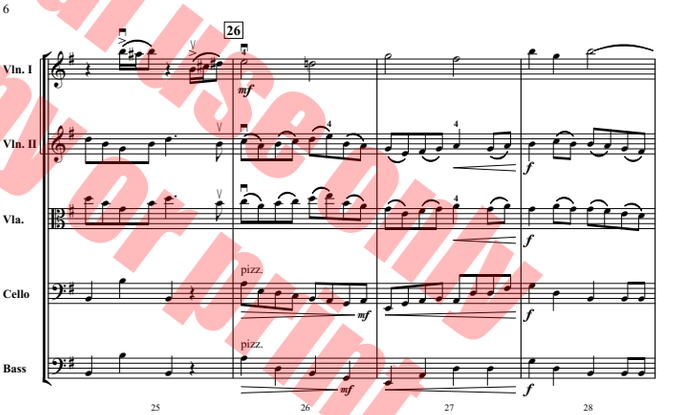




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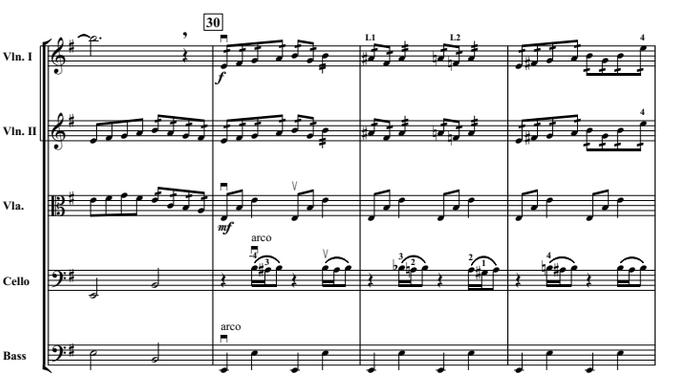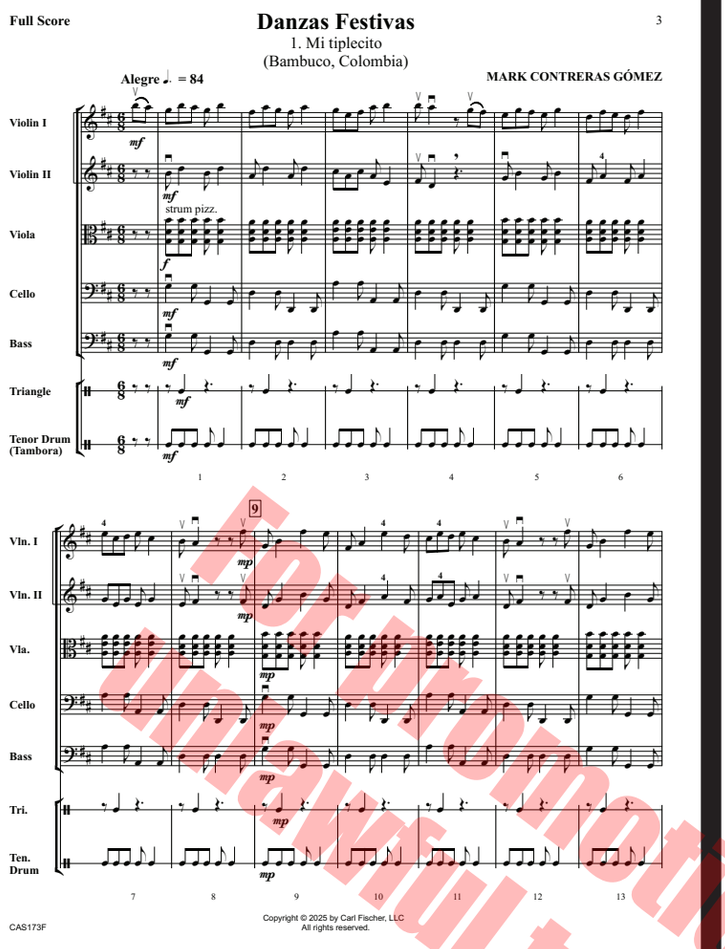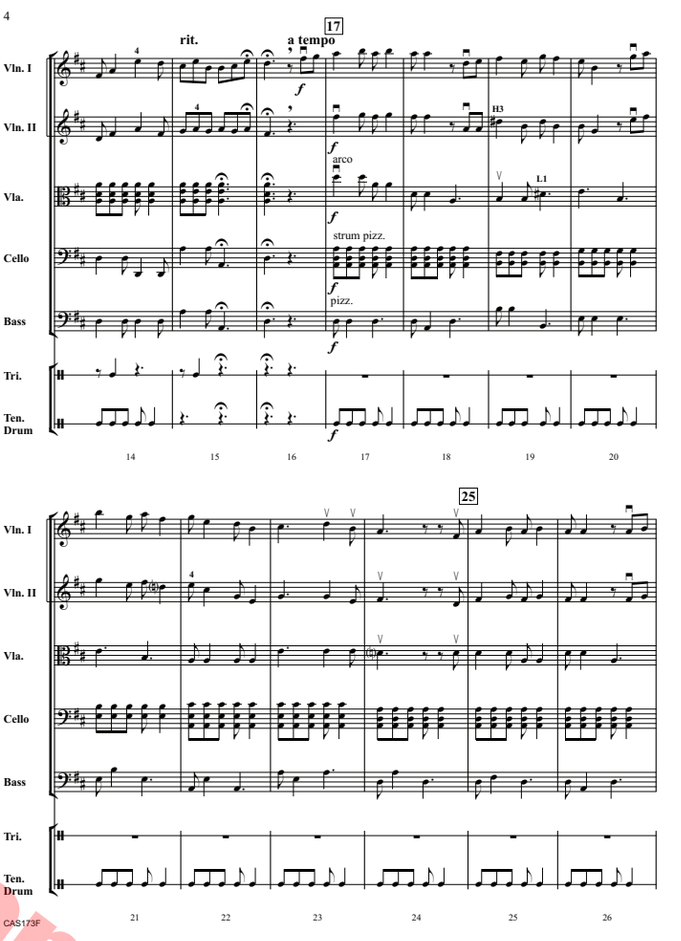












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