Por Una Cabeza

by

Alfredo Le Pera / Carlos Gardel

arranged by

David Scott

Complete String Orchestra Instrumentation

1 - Full Score
1 - Violin Solo & Violin I
1 - Violin Solo
10 -Violin I
10 -Violin II
1 - Viola Solo & Viola
1 - Viola Solo
8 - Viola
8 - Cello
6 - Contrabass

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ABOUT THE MUSIC:

For most listeners, Por Una Cabeza is THE iconic tango. It has been used in at least eight movies, including *Scent of a Woman*, *Schindler's List*, and *Titanic*. It was written in 1935 by Carlos Gardel and Alfredo Le Pera, both of whom died tragically in a plane crash later that same year. The song is the lament of a man who lost all his money betting on a horse race (*por una cabeza* means "by a head," the amount his horse lost by), and also lost the woman he loves.

PERFORMANCE NOTES:

This tango gets its power from the almost schizophrenic contrast between the sweetness of the major section and the fiery passion of the minor. Emphasize this difference as much as possible by changing the vibrato, bow contact point, and bow pressure to create different tone colors.

Let the pizzicatos in the lower strings ring, like a harp or chorus of guitars.

Don't be afraid to slide between notes in the melody when it seems appropriate. For example, a juicy slide between the B flat and the D in measure 13 would be very tasty. The conductor or concertmaster should choose where the slides should be, so that there is some uniformity throughout the violins – the music should sound free and effortless, but it takes tight ensemble to make that happen.

The violin solo (m. 32) should sound free and improvisatory. Use lots of rubato, a give-and-take feeling in the rhythm.

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ABOUT THE COMPOSER:

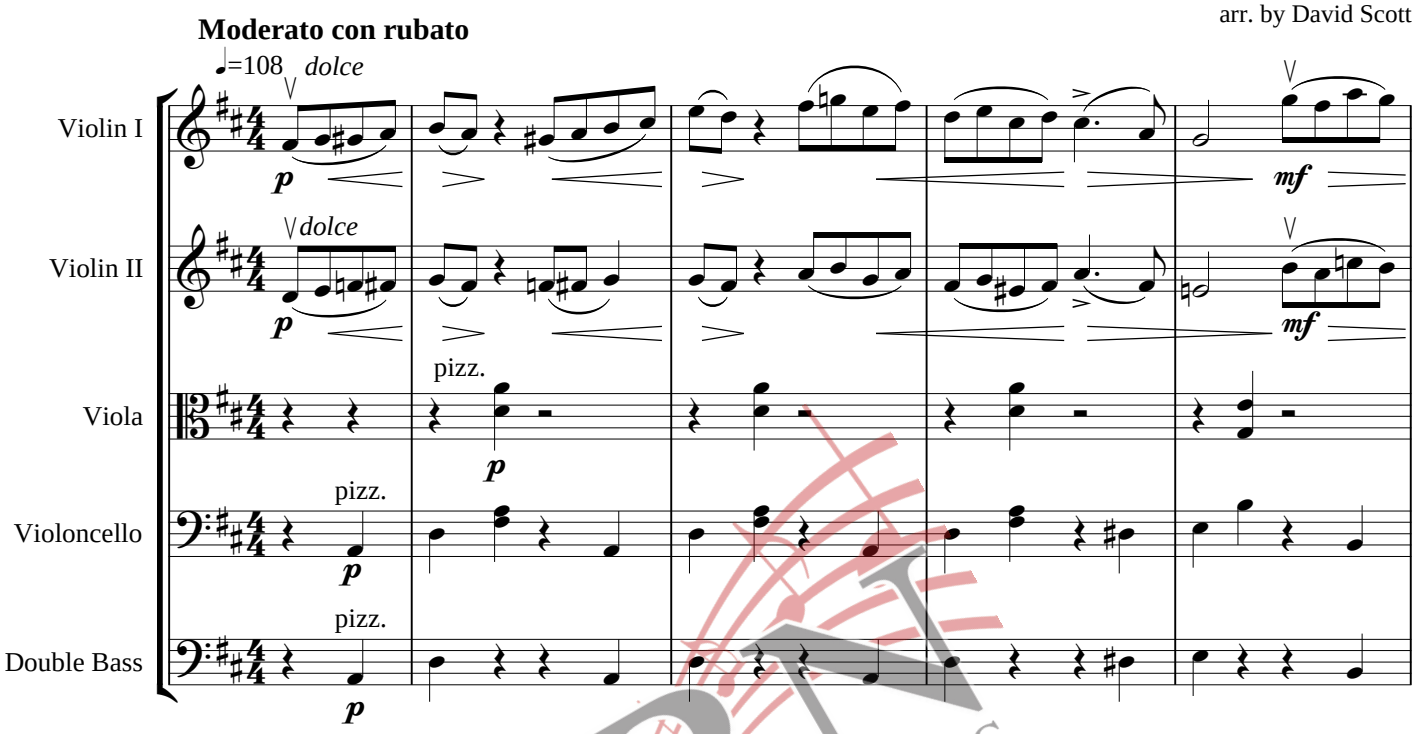
David Scott has been composing and playing the violin since before he can remember. As a four-year-old he began violin studies in the Suzuki method, a tradition which his own children have continued. He attended Indiana University and Northwestern University, where in addition to his studies on violin, he composed "classical" music, a musical, and countless pop songs with his friends. Now a professional violinist in the Denver area, his compositions have been played by the Colorado Symphony, the Colorado Chamber Players, and in nearly one hundred schools around the area by the Up Close and Musical ensemble.

Por Una Cabeza

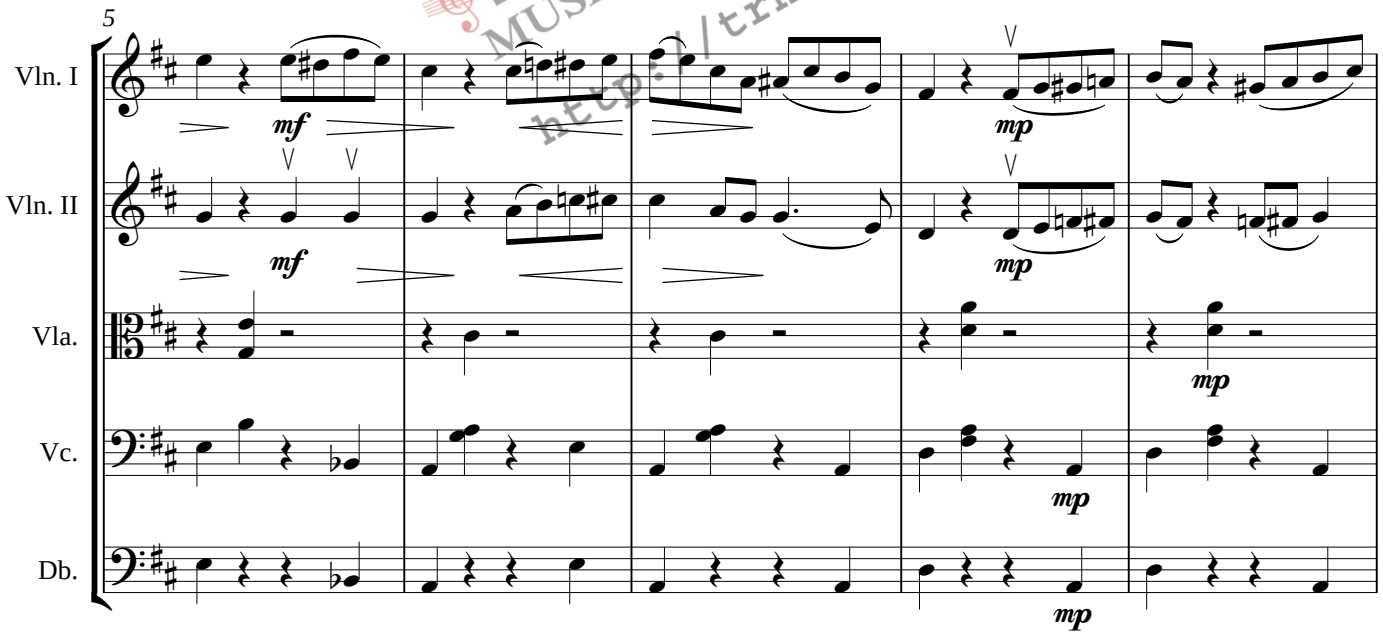
for String Orchestra

Full Score

Alfredo Le Pera
Carlos Gardel
arr. by David Scott



This is a song about a man who has lost everything at the horse track ("by a head", or "por una cabeza") and also lost the woman he loves. It should have an almost schizophrenic contrast between the sweetness of the major section and the fire of the minor.



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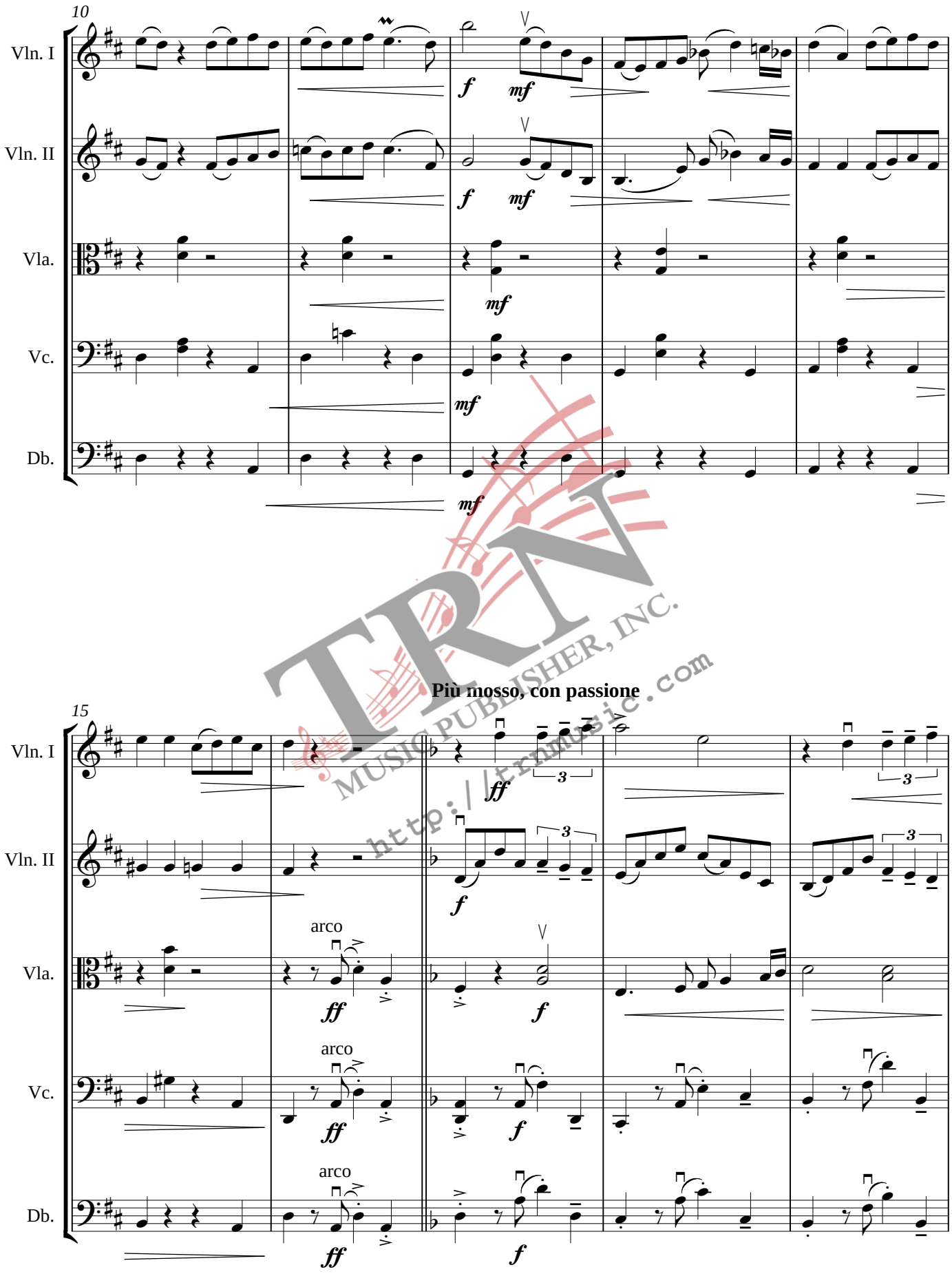

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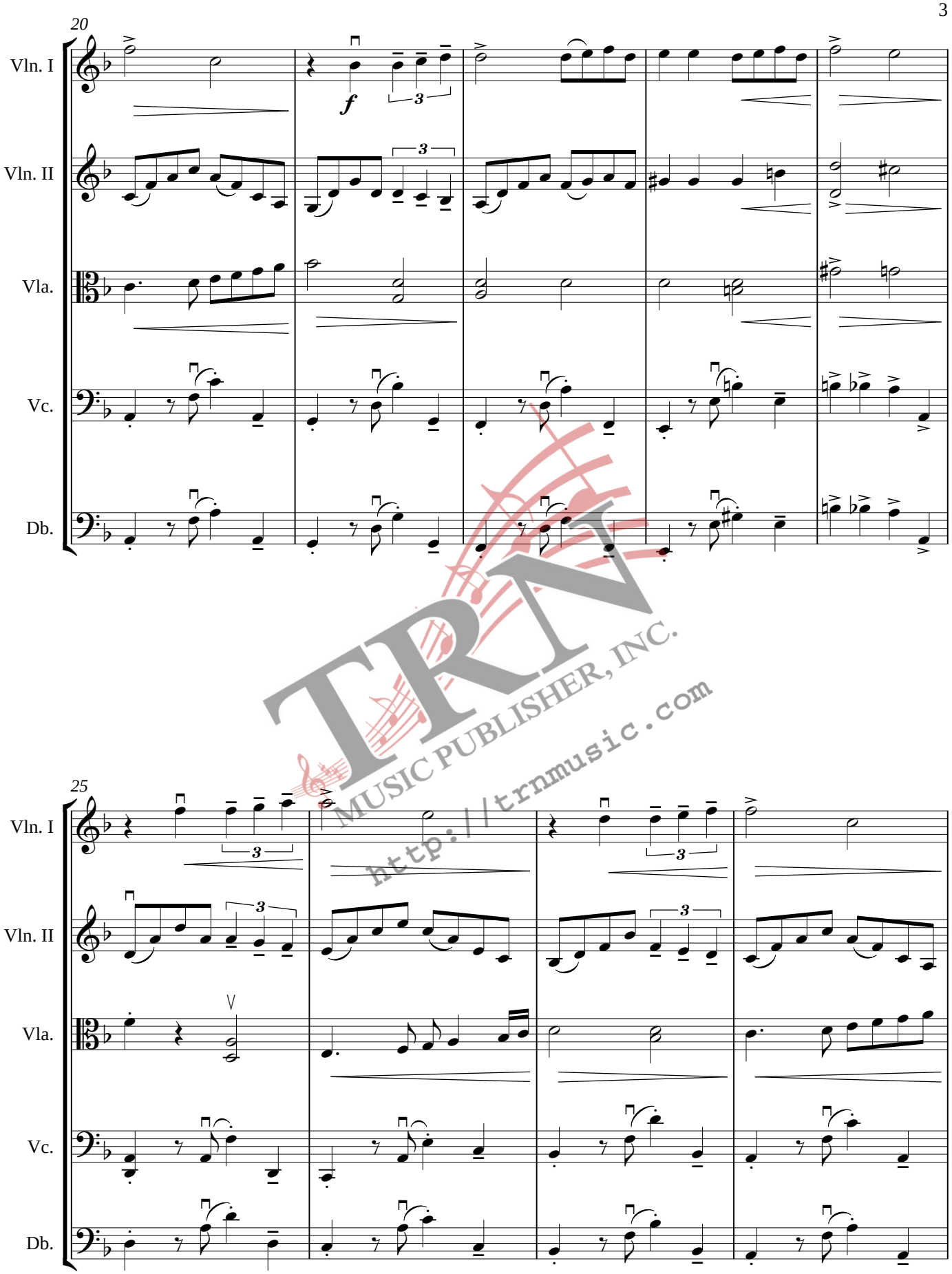

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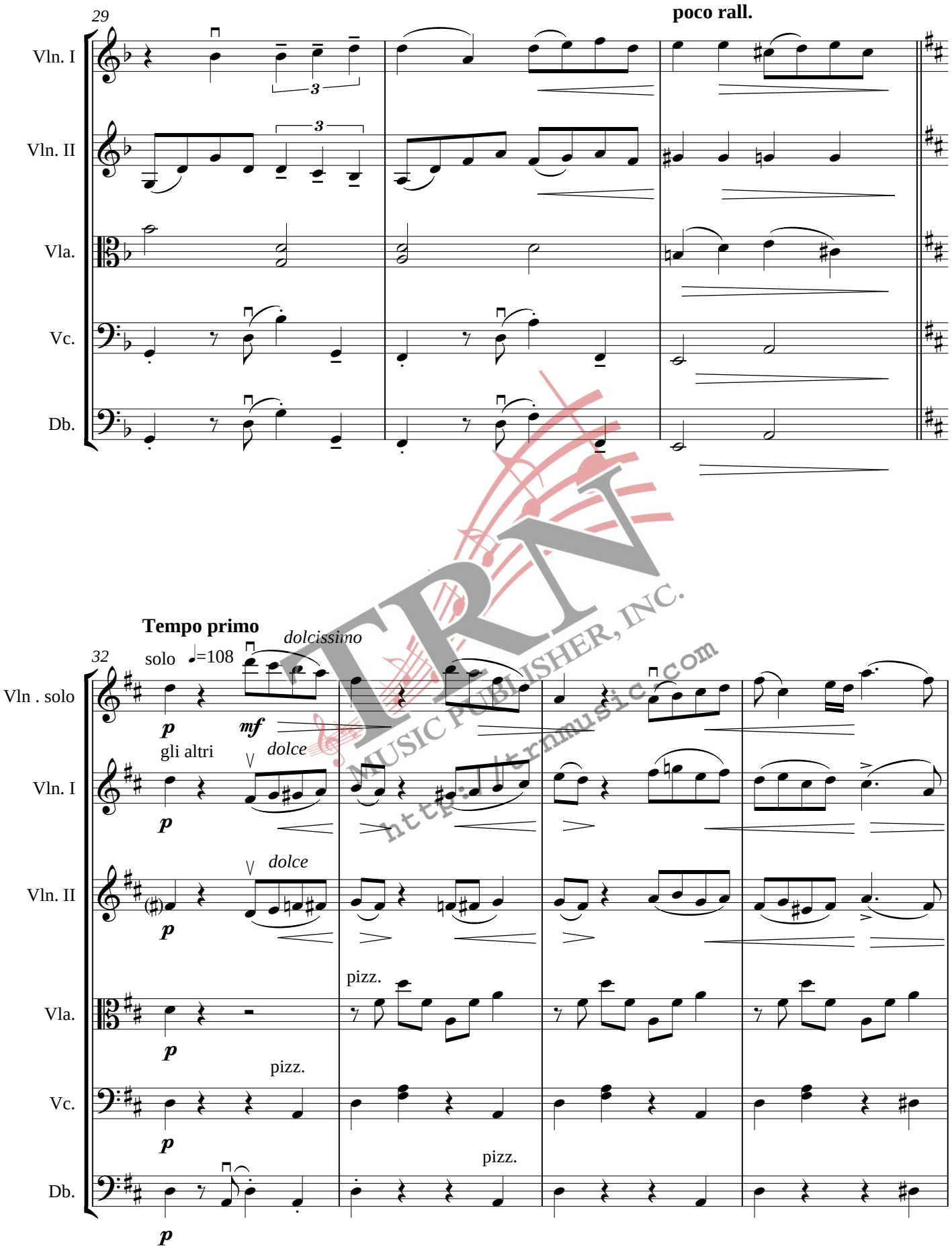

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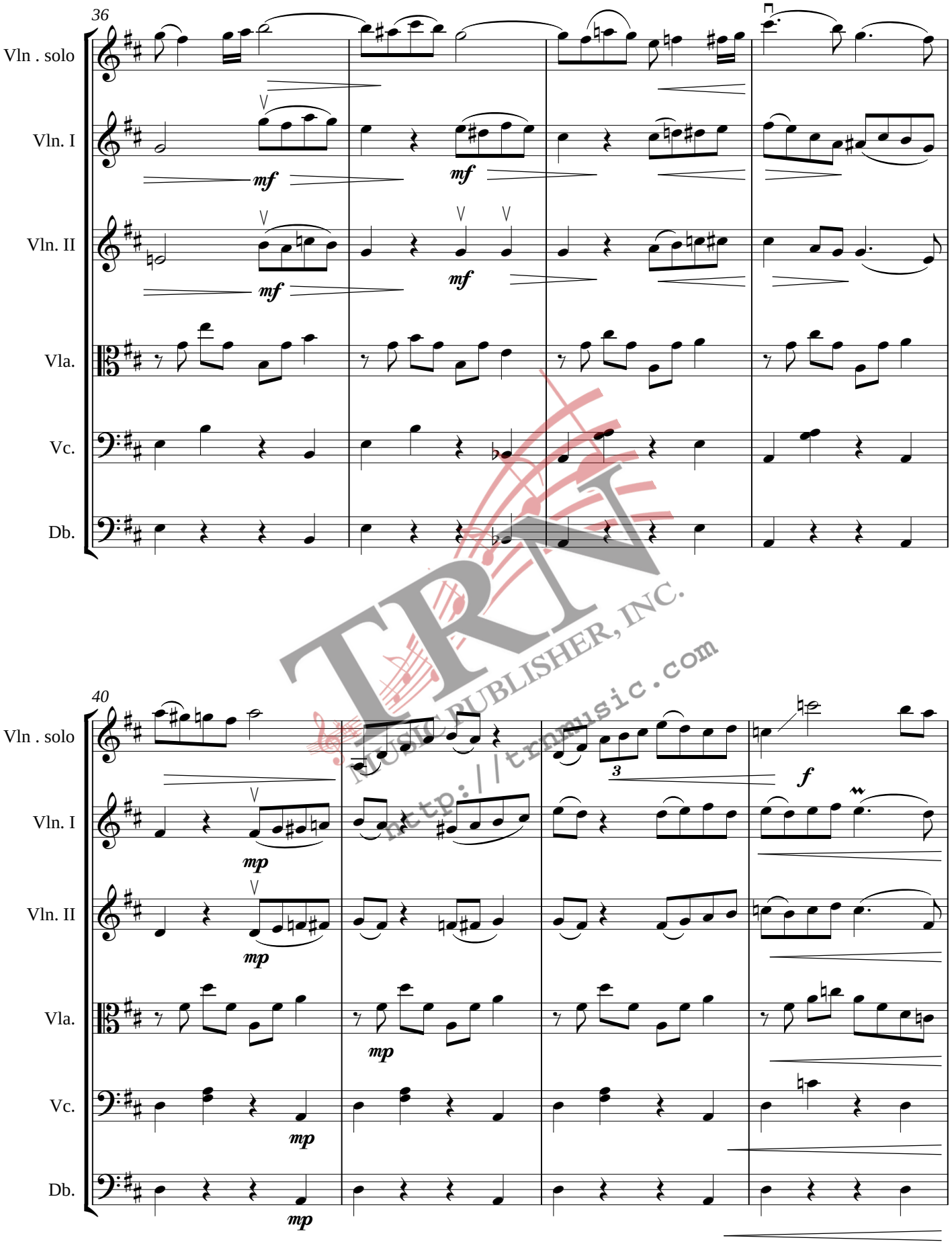

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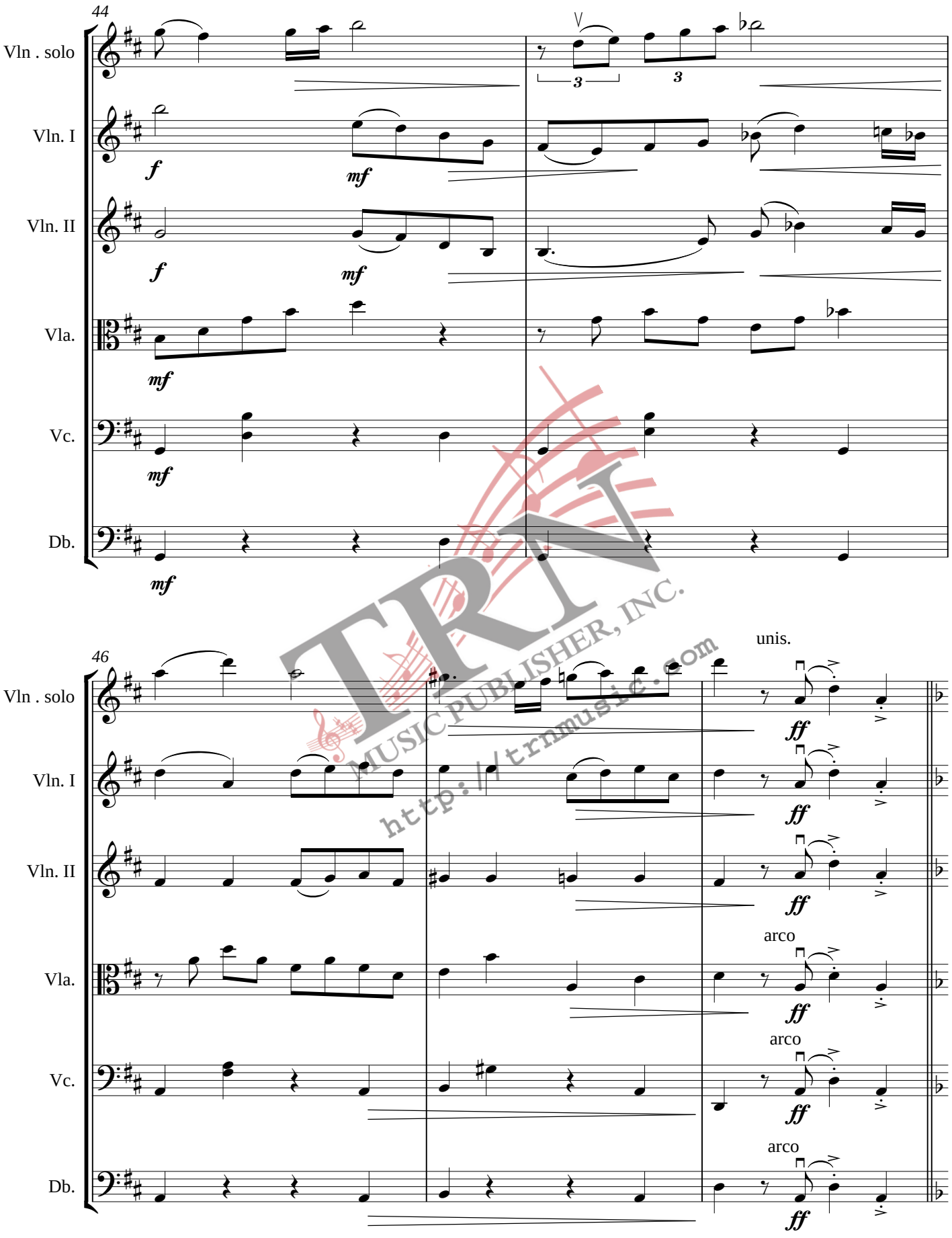

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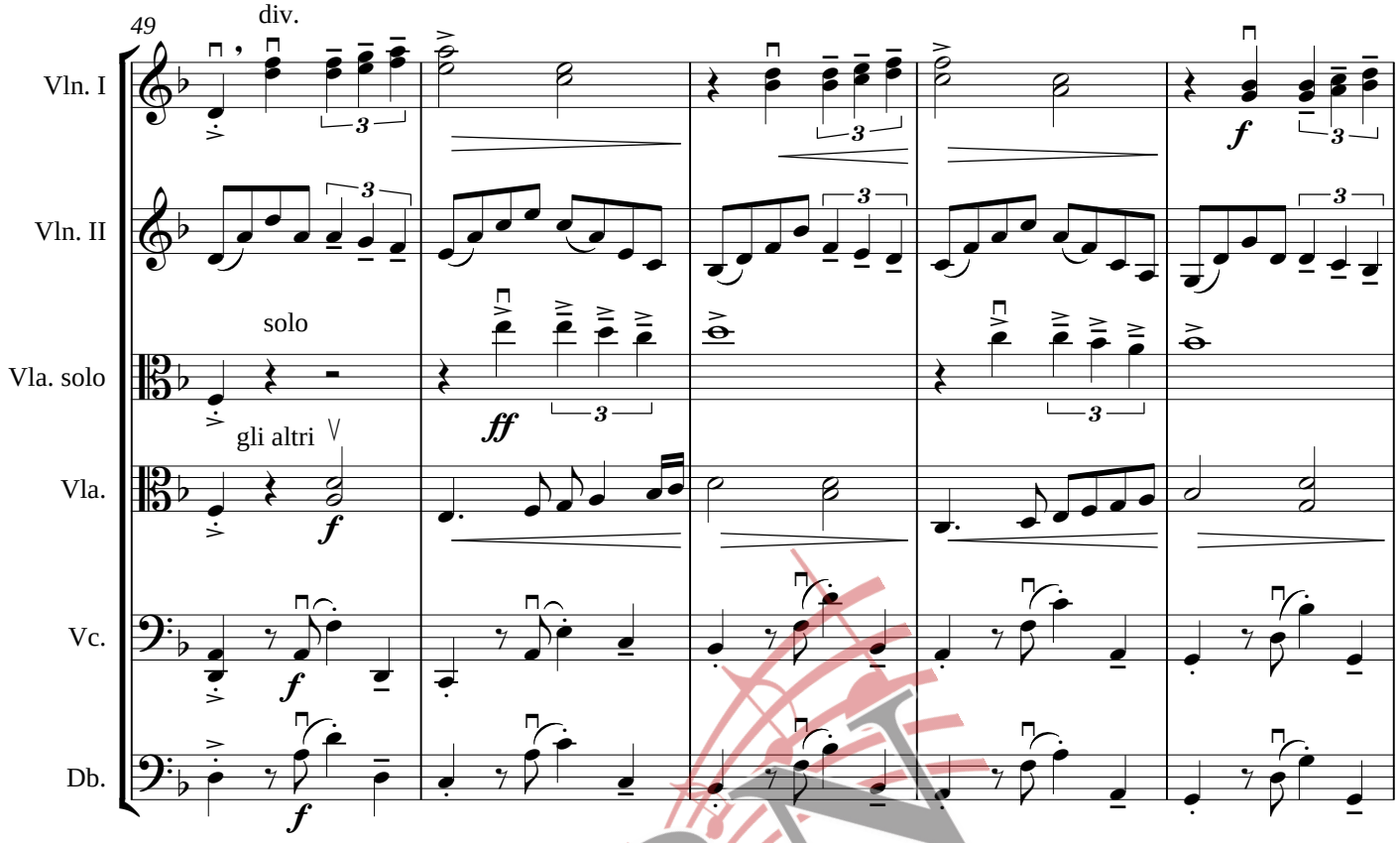

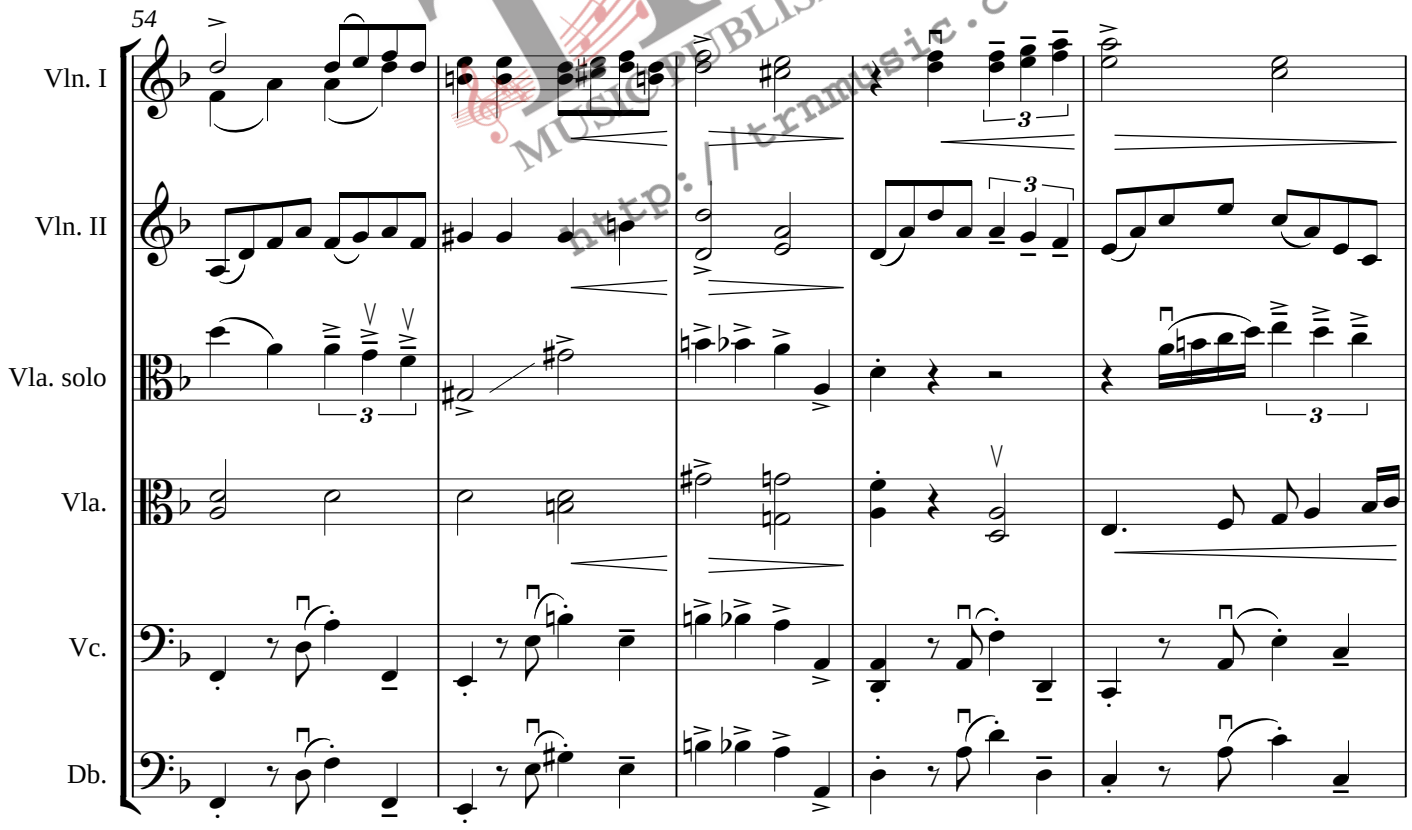

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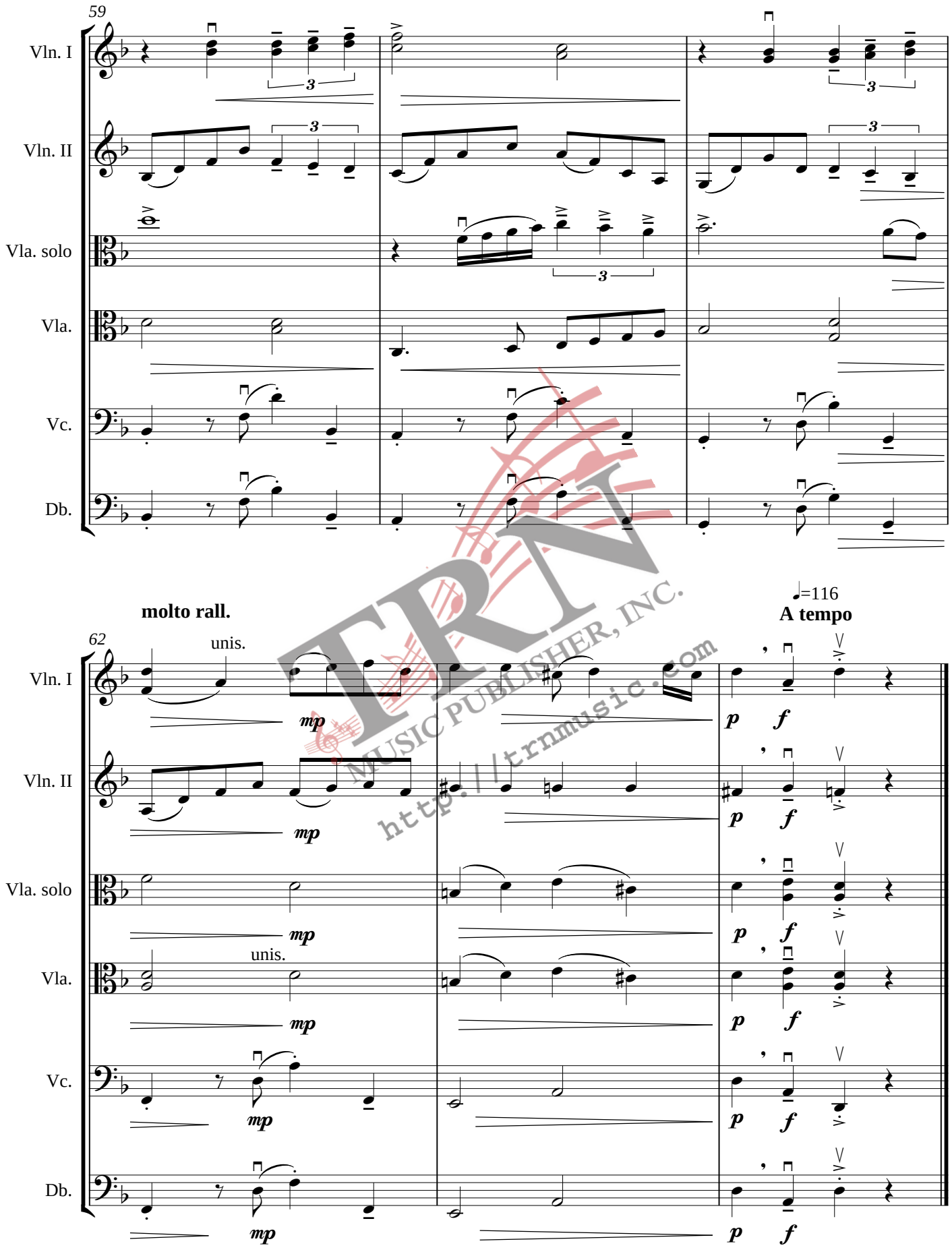

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