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The Spirits of Cahuachi

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Antonio Gervasoni

The Spirits of Cahuachi

for 10 musicians

Lima, March 2020

Instrumentation

Flute
Oboe
Horn in F
Trombone
Percussion (1 player)
    Triangle
    Mark Tree
    Suspended Cymbal
    Claves
    Guira
    Whip
    2 Woodblocks
    Snare Drum
    3 Toms (High, Mid and Floor)
    Small Gong
Harp
Violin
Viola
Violoncello
Double Bass

Programme Notes

"The Spirits of Cahuachi" is inspired by the reading of the book "Behind the Silence: Music in the Nasca Culture", by the Polish scientist Anna Gruszczyńska-Ziółkowska, which describes the discovery, in 1994, of several "antaras" (Andean pan flutes) made of clay in a temple in the city of Cahuachi, the political and cultural center of the Nasca culture.

The artifacts have been laboriously studied by Dr. Gruszczyńska-Ziółkowska and the book includes tables with the exact tones that each tube is capable of producing. The Spirits of Cahuachi uses these tones, i.e. their approximate counterpart in our modern tuning system, treating them in different ways, sometimes as chords, sometimes as scales, sometimes as pitch-class sets, fragmenting the sets, and then overlapping the resulting groups, etc.

A common thing throughout the piece is the application of what I call the "delay effect", in other words, writing the music in such a way that it mimics the delay effect found in audio processing software. This idea comes from the theme of the piece itself because we relate the effect of audio reverberation with a large empty space, and there is a kind of emptiness that separates us from the times of the Nasca culture, not the emptiness of time itself, but the one left by all the things we don't know about them, all the things that have been lost, like their music.

Of course, there is no intention to produce something that resembles the music of the ancient Nasca inhabitants. We don't know anything about their music. None of it has survived with the exception of these tones, these "spirits" contained in the pipes of the antaras discovered in Cahuachi.

Notation

This score makes extensive use of very soft dynamics as well as "al/dal niente" hairpins. In all cases, these indications simply instruct the musicians to play as softly as possible considering the given register and the possibilities of their instruments. No superhuman abilities are expected. As long as the players do their best to produce the softest sound possible, everything will be fine.

Duration

c.a. 6 min.

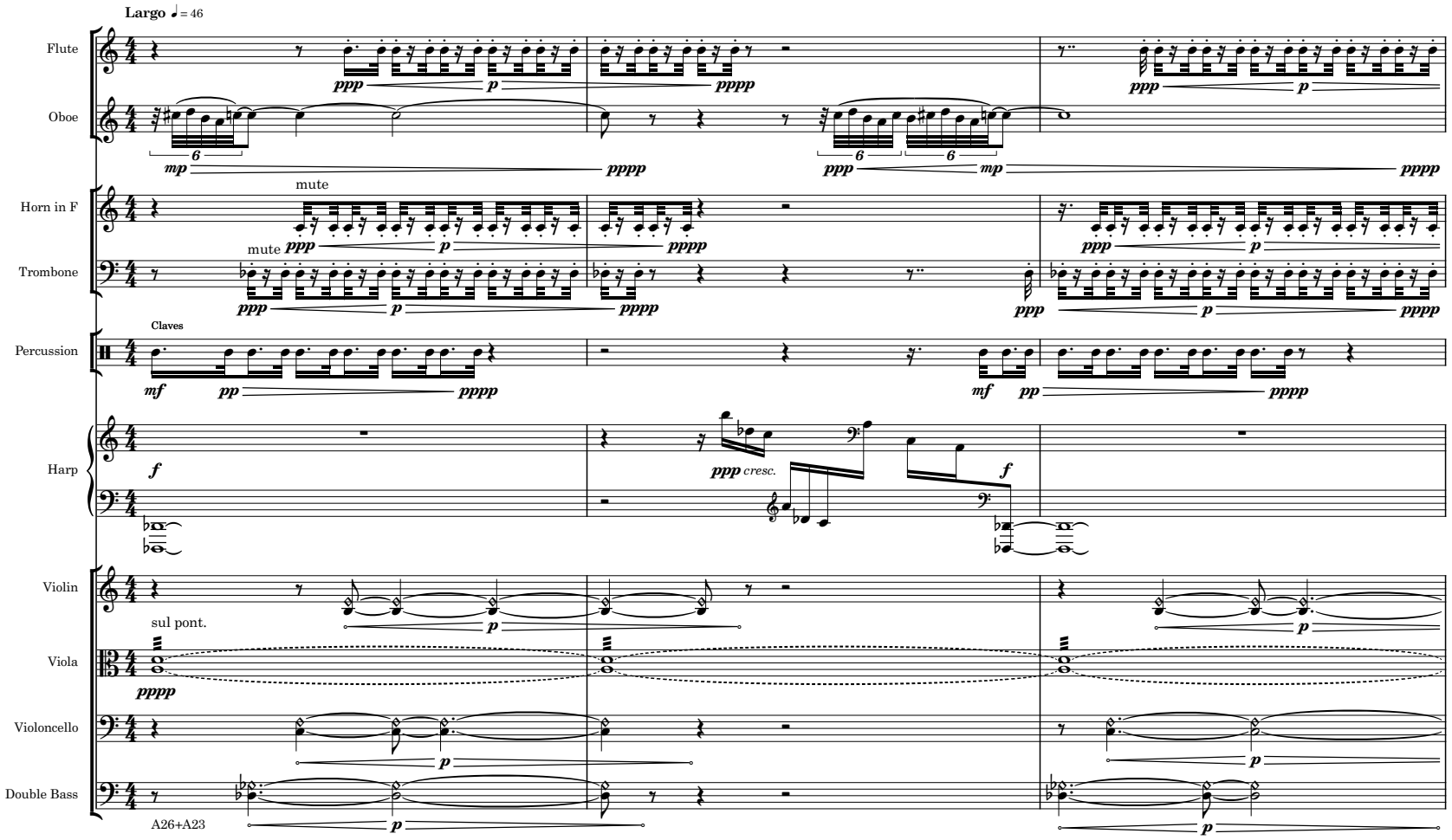
Printing Instructions

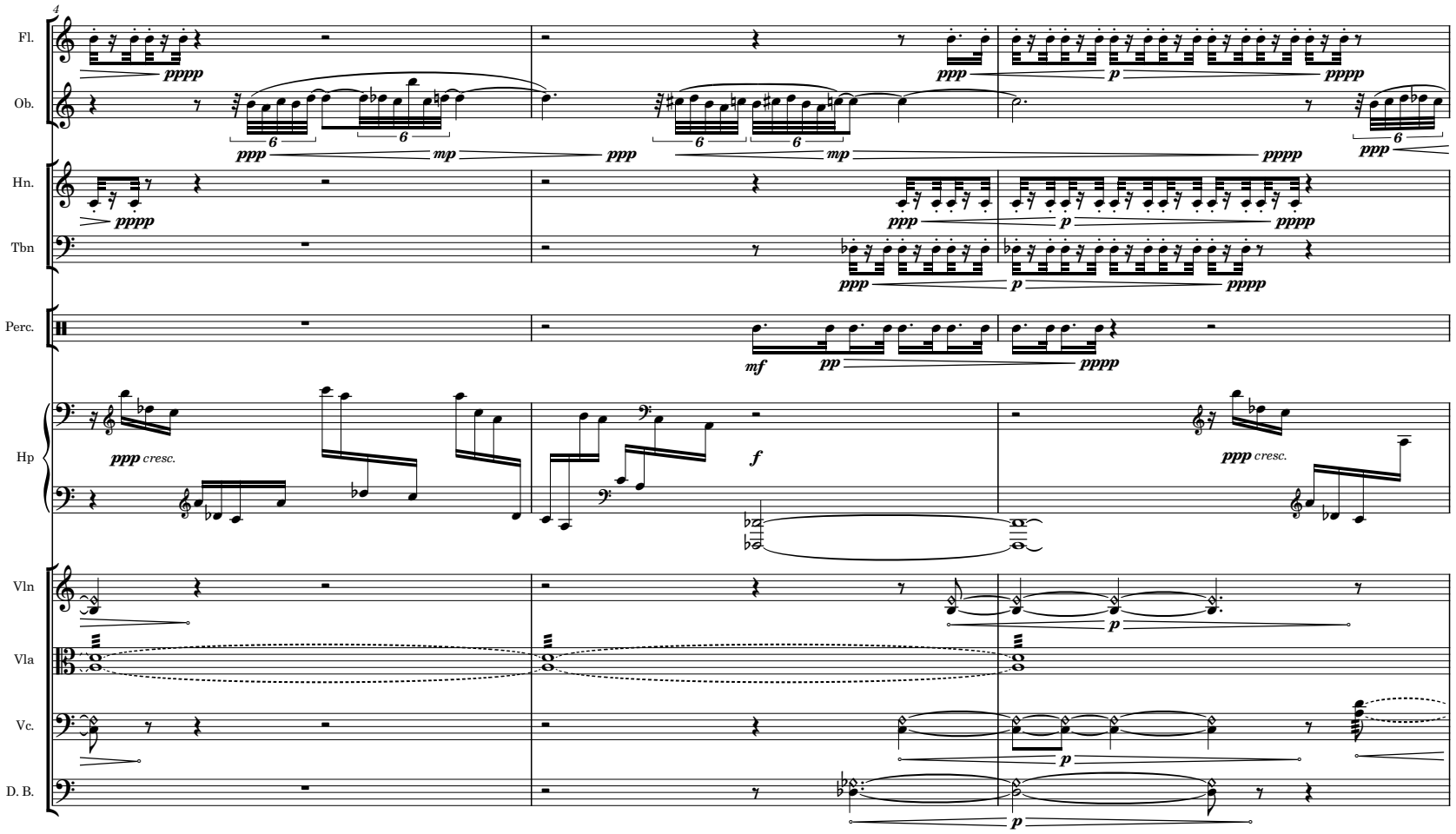
The correct paper size for this score is B4. Do not print on paper smaller than B4 or the music will probably be unreadable.

Score in C

The Spirits of Cahuachi

Antonio Gervasoni





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1

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

ppp
f
open
mf
Snare Drum
Toms
ff
ord.
cuasi trillo

2

Wood Block 1
Mark Tree
pp
p

11

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

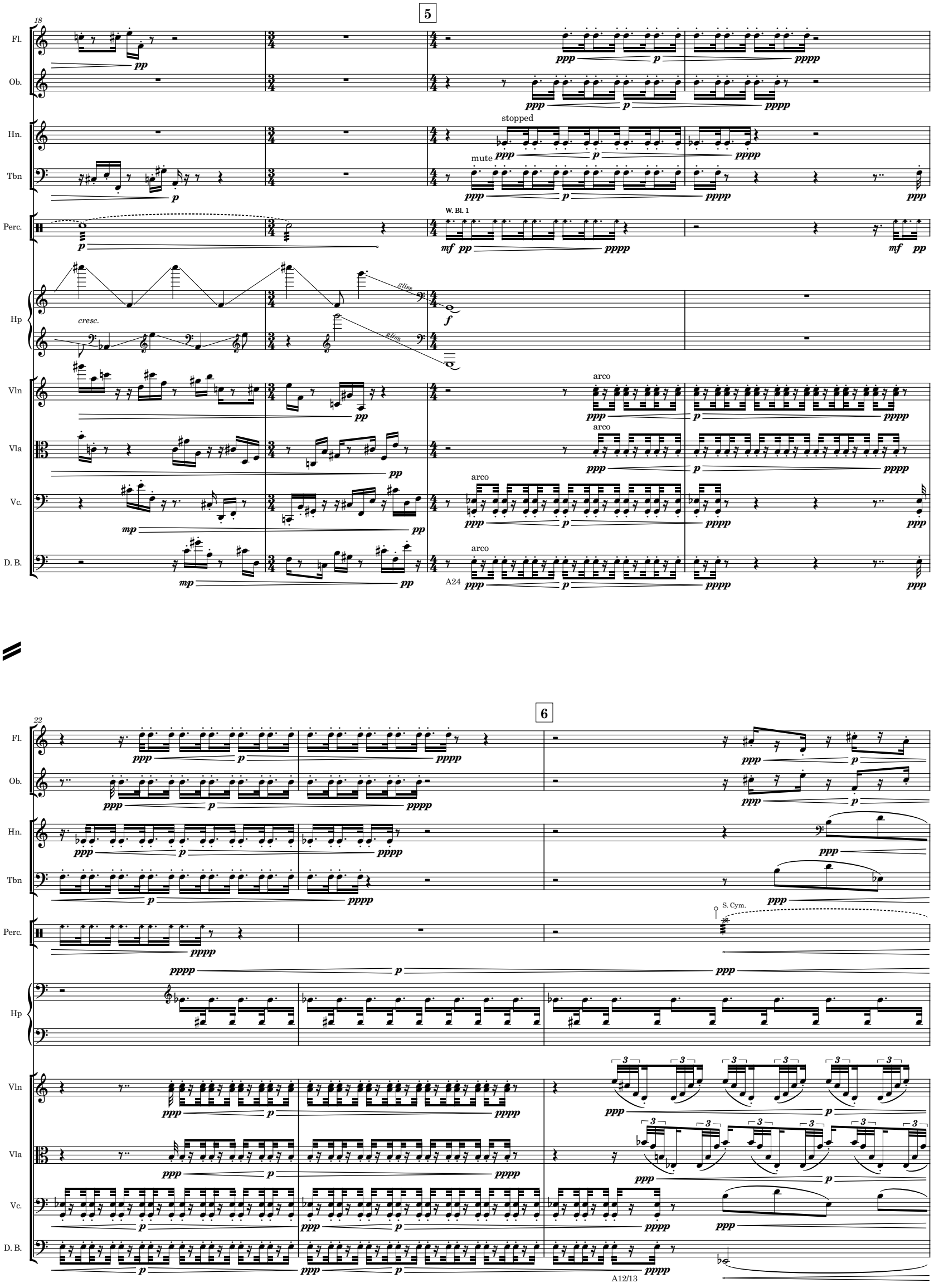
snares off
Wood Block 2
Suspended Cymbal

14

3
4

open
mute
snares on
gliss.
D C♯ B | E F G A♭
pizz.

A14/15
A16/17


5
18
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
pp
ppp
p
pppp
stopped
mute
W. Bl. 1
mf
cresc.
gliss.
f
arco
mp
A24
6
22
S. Cym.
pppp
3
A12/13

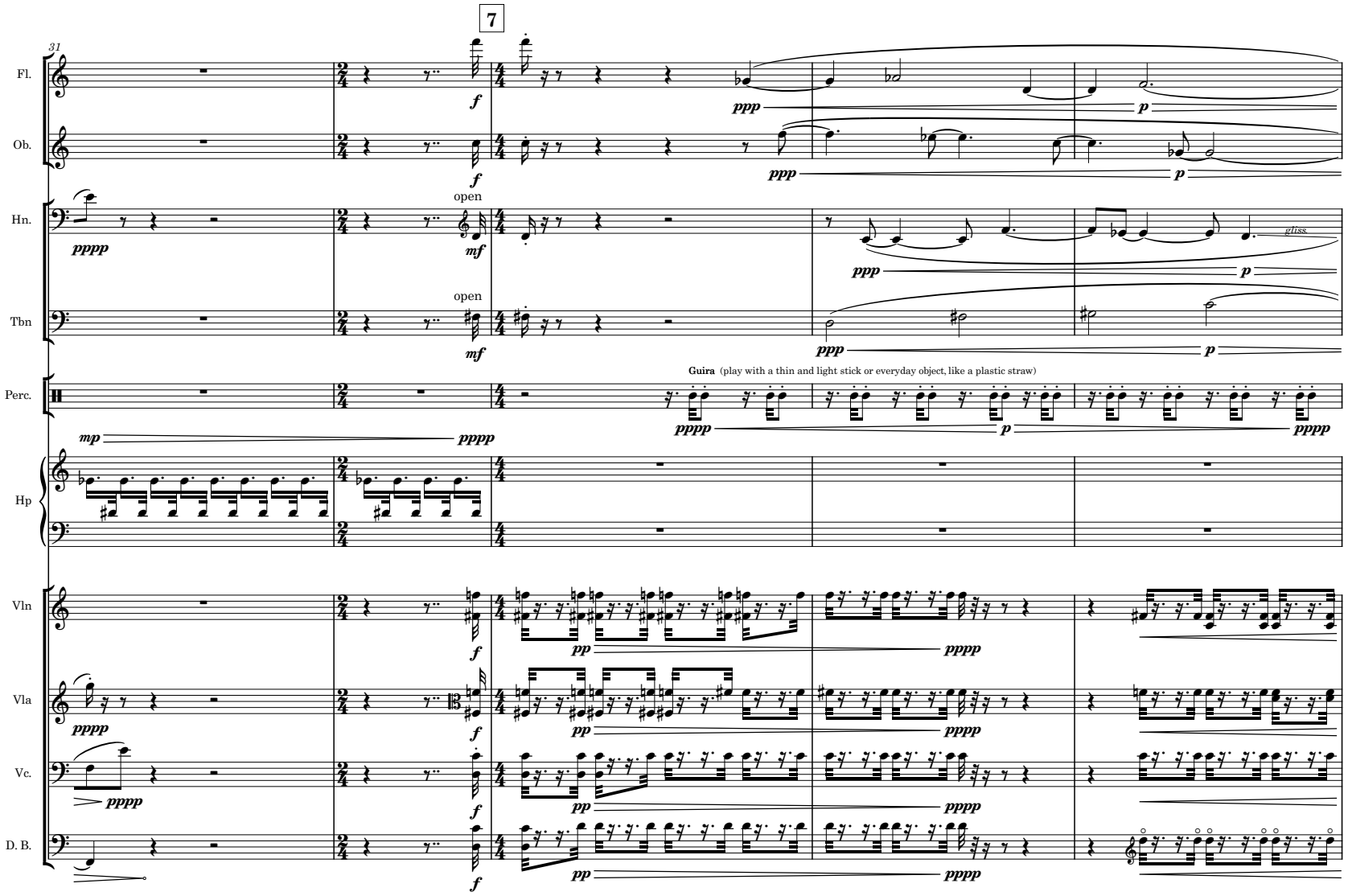
25

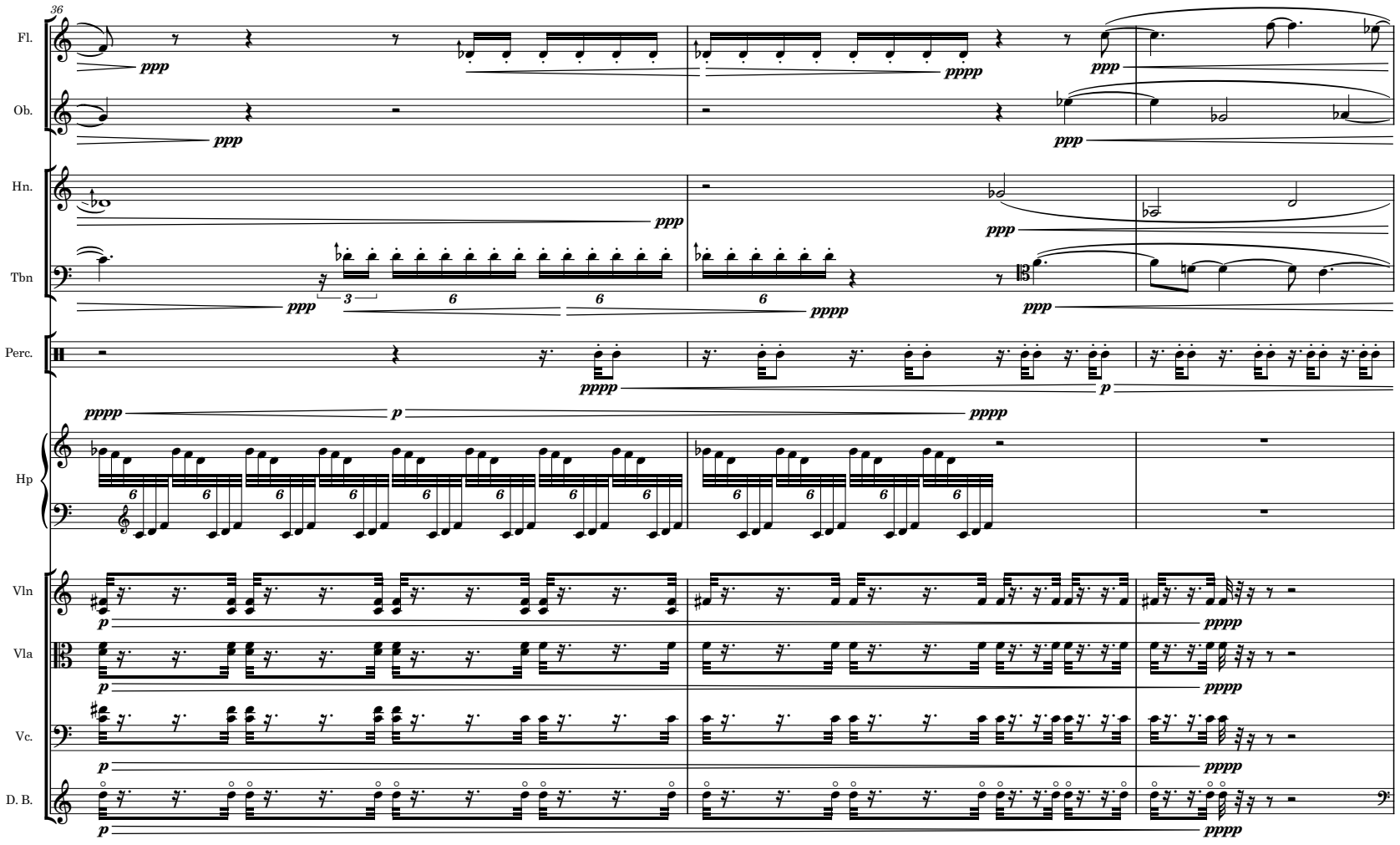
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

Sn. Dr.

28

Small Gong


7
31
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
open
open
gliss.
Guira (play with a thin and light stick or everyday object, like a plastic straw)
A22


36
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

39

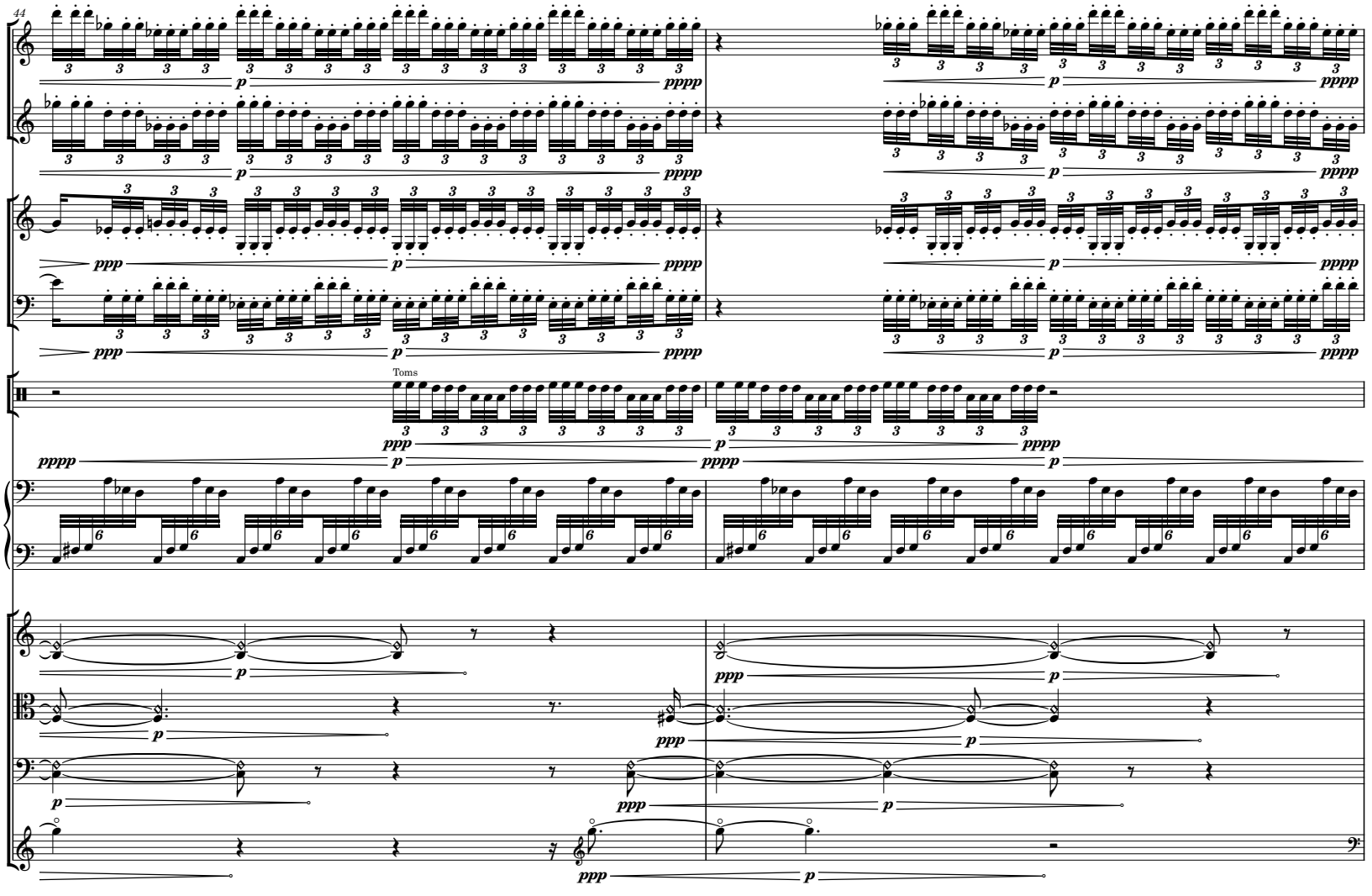
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

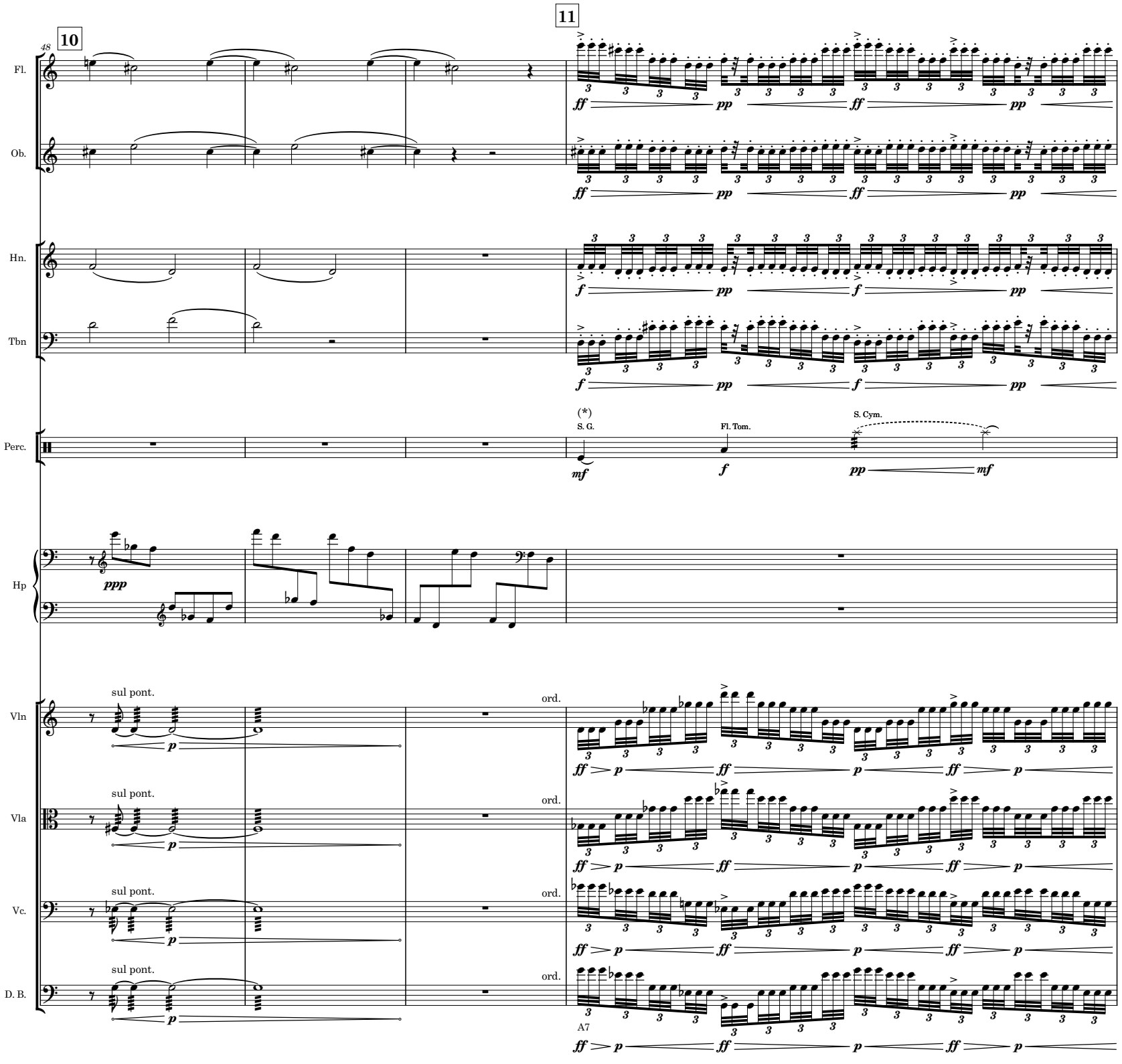
gliss.
gliss.
Sn. Dr.

8

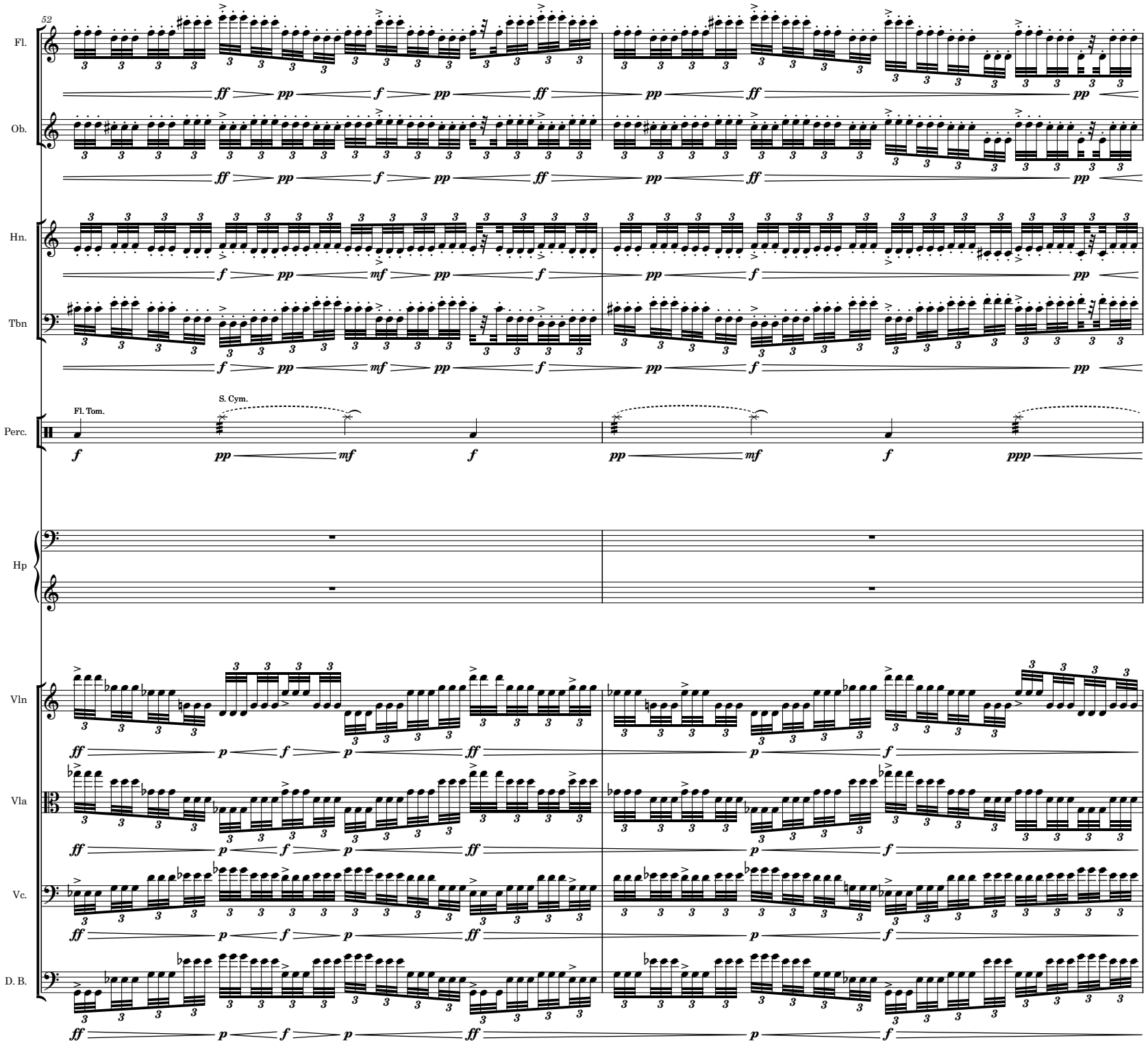
42

A1


44
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Toms
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
9
46
M. T.
W. Bl. 1
A6



(*) All instruments will have to be played with the same beaters. The best option is probably Timpani beaters.


52
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Fl. Tom.
S. Cym.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

54

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

56

12

13

stopped

mute

Whip

Sn. Dr.
snares off

S. Cym.

A3/4

A3/4

A25

59

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

S. Cym.
Sn. Dr.
W. Bl. 1

14

62

cresc. poco a poco

A8/9
+ A27

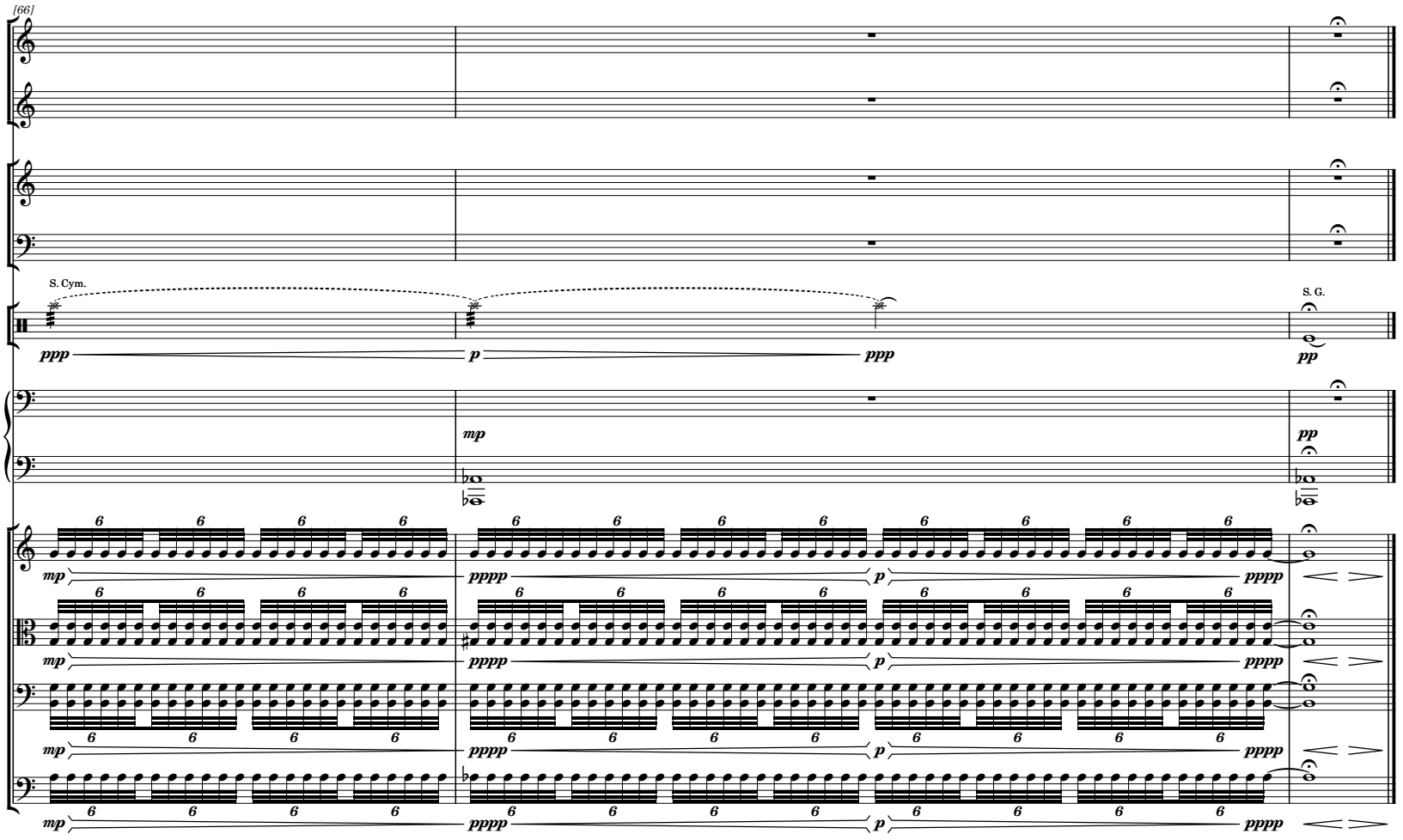
[63]

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.

W. Bl. 2

65

Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
Perc.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.


[66]
Fl.
Ob.
Hn.
Tbn
S. Cym.
Perc.
S. G.
Hp
Vln
Vla
Vc.
D. B.
ppp
p
ppp
pp
mp
pp
pppp