David Dzubay

St. Vitus' Dance

(2003)

Brass Quintet

Pro Nova Music

Commissioned by the Manhattan Brass Quintet
This piece was made possible by a grant from the Meet the Composer

St. Vitus' Dance

(2003)

I. Tarantella in the churchyard of St. Magnus [4:00]
II. Lamentation of the Afflicted [5:40]
III. Kindling of the Nodfyr [2:30]
IV. Festival of St. John's Day [4:00]

Duration: 17 minutes

Instrumentation: Brass Quintet [2 Trumpets in C, Horn in F, Trombone, Tuba]

Program note:

"Young people of Saxony were dancing in the churchyard of St. Magnus. There were fifteen youths and four maidens and they danced so much and sang so loudly that they disturbed the priest, who was saying mass. He left the chapel and came out to them, asking them to desist; but, heedless of his injunction, they continued their sport. The priest then prayed to God and to St. Magnus to make them dance for a whole year as a punishment." (Nuremburg Chronicles, 1493)

Setting out to compose a group of dances for the Manhattan Brass Quintet, I became intrigued with the idea of exploring the history of the medieval dancing manias that raged in Europe between the eleventh and seventeenth centuries. In 1278 a crowd of people danced so raucously on a bridge above the Maas River in Germany that it collapsed, killing many participants. Survivors were apparently restored to full health in a nearby chapel dedicated to St. Vitus. Thus referred to as St. Vitus' Dance, these dance manias were sometimes ascribed to chorea, a central nervous system disorder characterized by brief irregular jerking movements resembling dancing. This is reflected in the twitchy, heavily syncopated main theme of this quintet.

An Italian variation of the dancing mania, known as tarantism, was supposedly caused by the bite of a tarantula spider. The only cure was thought to be frenetic dancing of a tarantella, causing the "poison" to dissipate from the victim's blood. Recreating the scene in the churchyard of St. Magnus, the first movement of the quintet transports the Italian tarantella, complete with the opening spider "bites," to Saxony, with the disturbed priest represented by interruptions of increasingly insistent, sonorous, repeated chords.

The second movement transforms the syncopated theme into a chant-like melody presented in rather free canon in this slow, expressive lament. The twitchy dancing continues, however, in the quick ornamentation of some of the counterpoint. After an anguished, faster middle section, the movement reaches a state of calm leading back to a chant reprise.

The third movement presents propulsive yet light bouncy music that rarely seems to touch ground. This is meant to evoke the "Kindling of the Nodfyr," a ritual associated with the dancing manias, involving participants leaping through smoke or flames with the belief this would protect them from disease over the coming year.

The "Nodfyr" ritual, performed at the summer solstice, was incorporated into the festival of St. John's Day as early as the fourth century, resulting in a half-heathen, half-Christian festival. The last movement includes variations of the priest's music, a short pious chant and some music reminiscent of the famous 12th century Notre Dame choirmaster, Perotin. These sacred elements are contrasted with a profane, raucous dance. A central feature of the medieval dance frenzy was participants leaping or jumping continuously for up to several hours through what they claimed were invisible fires, until collapsing in exhaustion, as do the players in the brass quintet at the end of this work, following five last spider bites!

St. Vitus' Dance is dedicated to the members of the Manhattan Brass Quintet, who commissioned the work, and who have performed my other music for brass quintet so well and so frequently over the years.

- David Dzubay

David Dzubay is Professor of Music, Chair of the Composition Department, and Director and Conductor of the New Music Ensemble at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music in Bloomington, Indiana.

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Coverart: Religious fanatics dancing amid graves in a churchyard. From a German engraving, about 1600.

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St. Vitus' Dance

(2003)

David Dzubay
(b. 1964)

I. *Tarantella in the churchyard of St. Magnus*

[:10]

Trumpet 1 in C
Trumpet 2 in C
Horn in F [transposed]
Tenor Trombone
Tuba

p *sffz* *p* *niente* *mp* *sffz* *niente*
p *sffz pp* *niente* *mp* *sffz pp*
sffz *p* *niente*
gliss. (slow)
pppp *sffz p* *pp* *ff* *pp*
sffz mp

quicken swells

[:20]

5 10

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

p *sffz pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *niente*
niente *mp* *sffz pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *niente*
sffz pp *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *niente*
mf *gliss.*
niente *mf* *sffz pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *niente*
niente *mf* *f* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *pp* *ff* *niente*

(Trb.) (Hn.)

11 12 13 14

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

pp *sffz* *dim...*
pp *sffz* *dim...* *niente*
(w/Tuba) *pp* *sffz* *dim...* *niente* ♩.=160 +/- w/ erratic variation in tempo...possessed! *p* *f*
V *gliss.* *pp* *sffz* *niente* ♩=120 +/- w/ erratic variation in tempo...possessed! *p* *f* 5:4 *p* *mp*
(w/Horn) *pp* *sffz* *dim...* *niente*

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(Tp.2)
15

(Tuba)
16

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

niente

♩.=160 +/- w/ erratic variation in tempo...possessed!

3x 2x 2x 3x

p *mf* *p* *f*

repeat as needed...

sfffz

gliss.

repeat as needed...

𝅗𝅥=120 +/- w/ erratic variation in tempo...possessed!

21

𝅗𝅥=120 +/- w/ erratic variation in tempo...possessed!

somewhat 'with' Tuba, but not strictly so...

somewhat 'with' Tpt.1, but not strictly so...

♩.=160

Tp.1 cue:

28

31

repeat as needed...

mp *f* *ff*

PERUSAL

35

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

39

41

44

gliss.

PERUSAL

51

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

ff

59

f

63

mf

p

PERUSAL

67

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

f

sfz

dim...

73

pp

p

ppp

80

PERUSAL

85

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

90

light

97

PERUSAL

102

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

107

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

111

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

PERUSAL

116

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

122

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

130

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

PERUSAL

135

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

139

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

145

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

PERUSAL

ritardando poco a poco...

152

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

ff

sfz

simile

dim...

gliss.

159

♩=92

p

mp

simile

[4:00]

PERUSAL

II. *Lamentation of the Afflicted*

♩=60-72 molto rubato, independently (except where indicated)

2

3

always very fast grace notes...(sort of "twitchy")

harmon mute (stem in)

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

pp *chant-like, expressive*

p *chant-like, expressive*

accel. rit.

4

5

♩=40-60 molto rubato (keep order of events relatively in tact)

mp *niente*

♩=69 non rubato, independent

♩=48-54 molto rubato, independent

mf *niente*

6

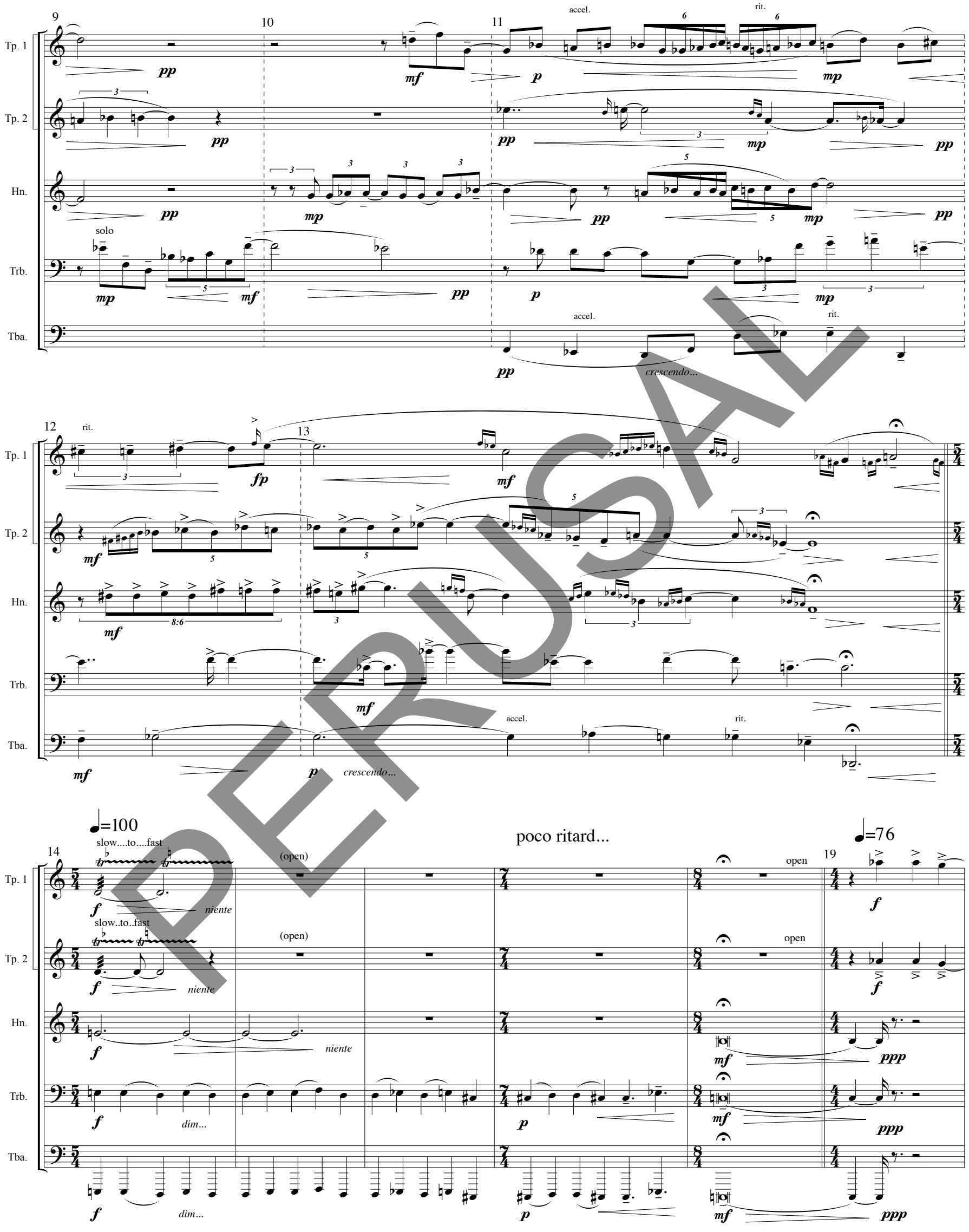
7

8

♩=54-66 rubato

dim...

PERUSAL


9
10
11
accel.
rit.
Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.
solo
crescendo...
12
13
rit.
accel.
rit.
crescendo...
♩=100
slow....to....fast
slow..to..fast
(open)
poco ritard...
open
♩=76
14
19
niente
dim...

PERUSAL

accel. rit. accel.

♩=84

20 23

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

f

♩=76

25

fp *f*

♩=84

29

mf *f* *mp*

PERUSAL

33

rubato

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

mf f p mp f pp p p (f sempre)

37

crescendo poco a poco...

mf f

accelerando...

42

ff fff

PERUSAL

♩=54 *calm, reflective, with twinges of anguish*

47 49

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

accel. ♩=66 ♩=54 accel. ♩=66

55 58

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

niente

ritard... ♩=54 ♩=66

61

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

PERUSAL

67

4"

♩=50=66 molto rubato, independently

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

6"

accel. rit. accel. rit. accel. rit.

pp

accel. rit. accel. rit. accel.

pp

accel. rit. accel. rit.

mf p niente pp

accel. rit. accel. rit.

mf p niente pp

mf p niente

68

♩=88 ritard...

sighing accel. rit.

f niente

rit. sighing

mf niente

♩=66 accel. rit.

pp p sffz niente

accel. rit. gliss.

mp niente

5

mp p

70

♩=66

ad libitum..

rit....

p dolce

p

[5:40]

PERUSAL

III. *Kindling of the Nodfyr*

♩=108 *(slightly swing eighths)*

Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.

mp

10 15

p *mf* *p*

18

mf *p* *mp* *mf* *mp* *p* *pp*

PERUSAL

26

31

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

mp

mf

33

41

44

f

pp

PERUSAL

49

54

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

f

56

60

ff

f

3

63

67

p

pp

mf

(quasi ritard)

PERUSAL

70

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

79

83

86

88

PERUSAL

93

97

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

ff

99

f

104

106

mf

mp

p

PERUSAL

110 112 118

Tp. 1 Tp. 2 Hn. Trb. Tba.

f *f* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mp* *mp* *mp*

119 125

Tp. 1 Tp. 2 Hn. Trb. Tba.

pp *pp* *p* *p* *mp* *mp*

126

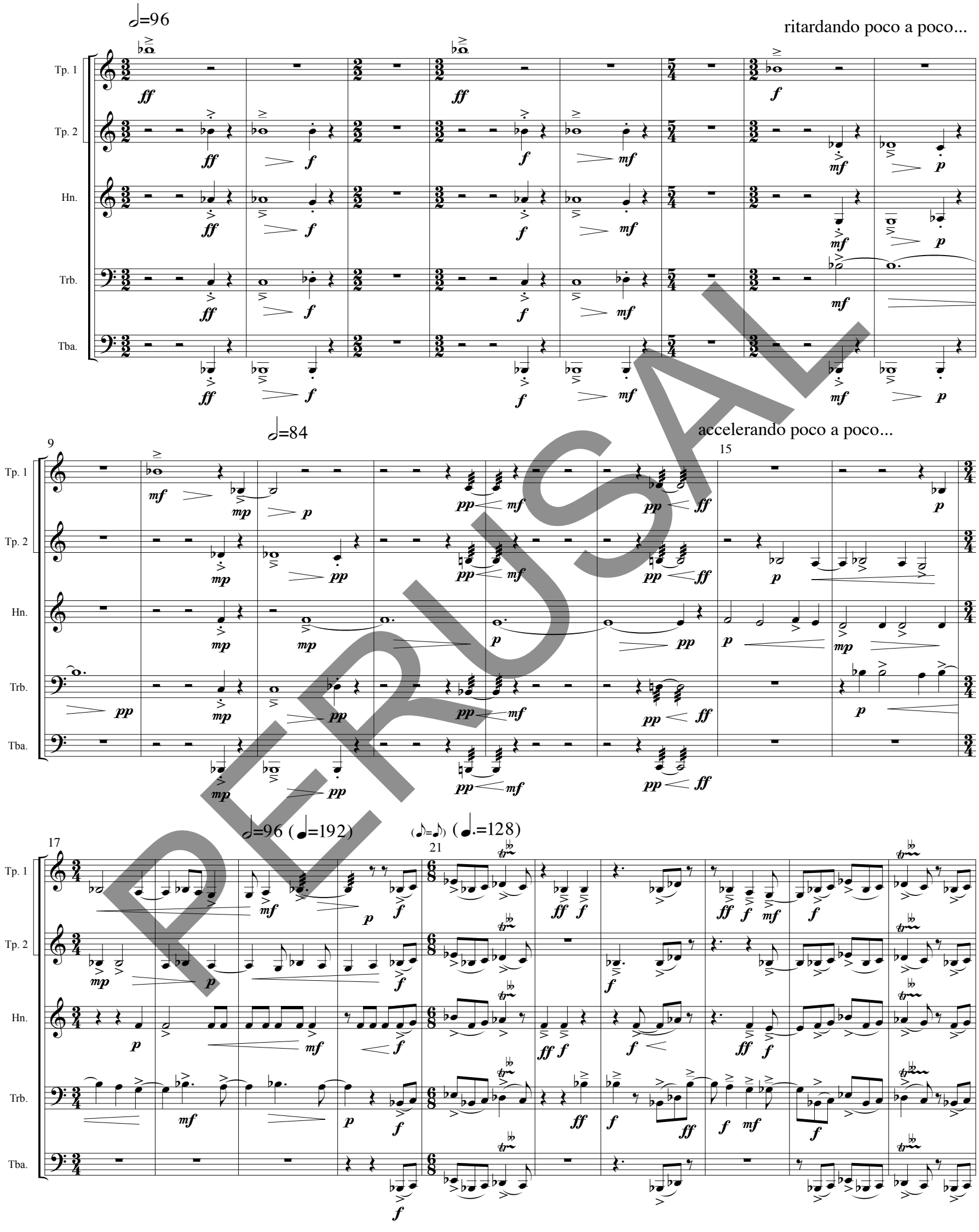
Tp. 1 Tp. 2 Hn. Trb. Tba.

p *p* *pp* *p* *p* *pp* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *p* *mp* *p* *p* *pp* *mf* *pp* *mf* *pp*

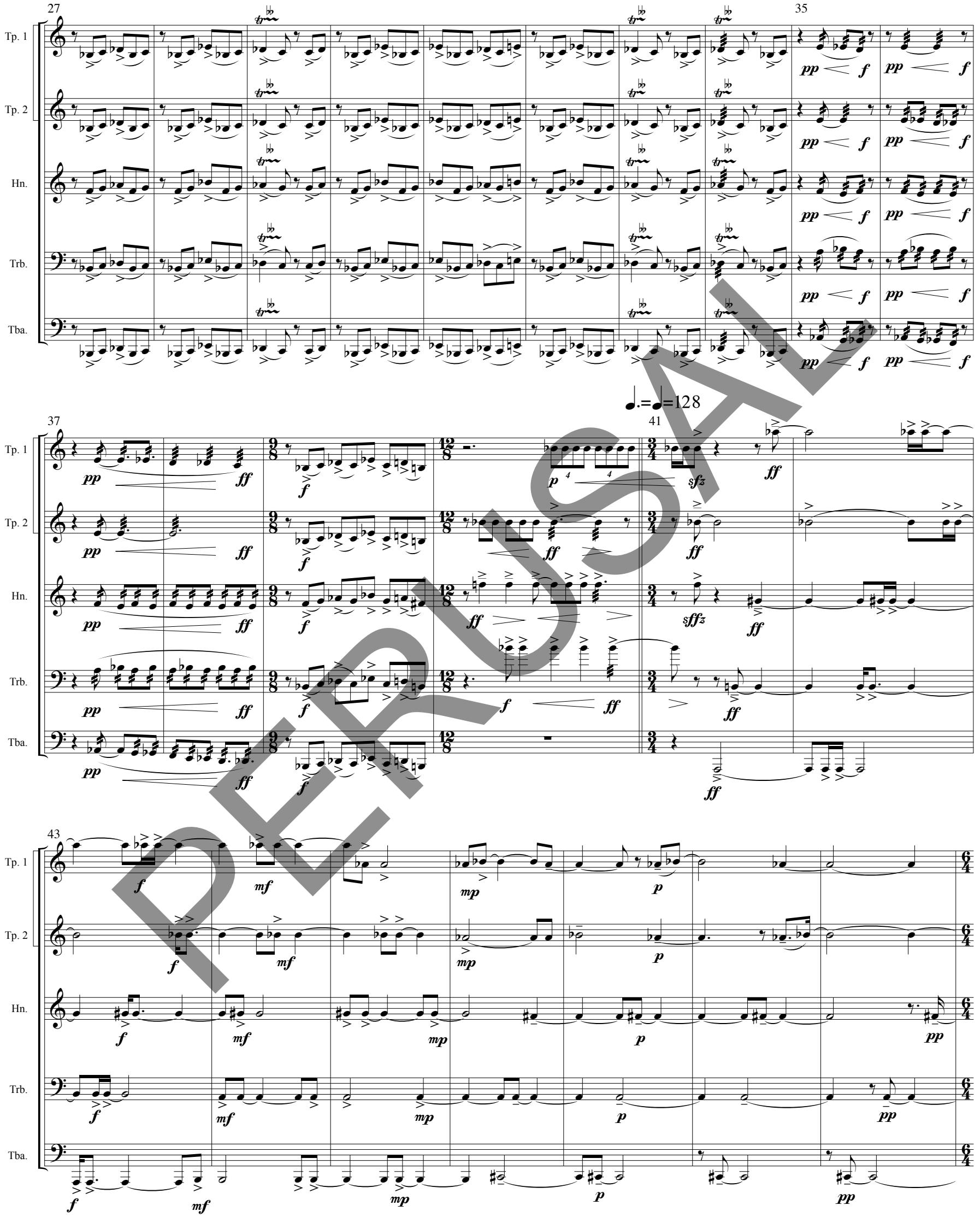
PERUSAL

[2:30]

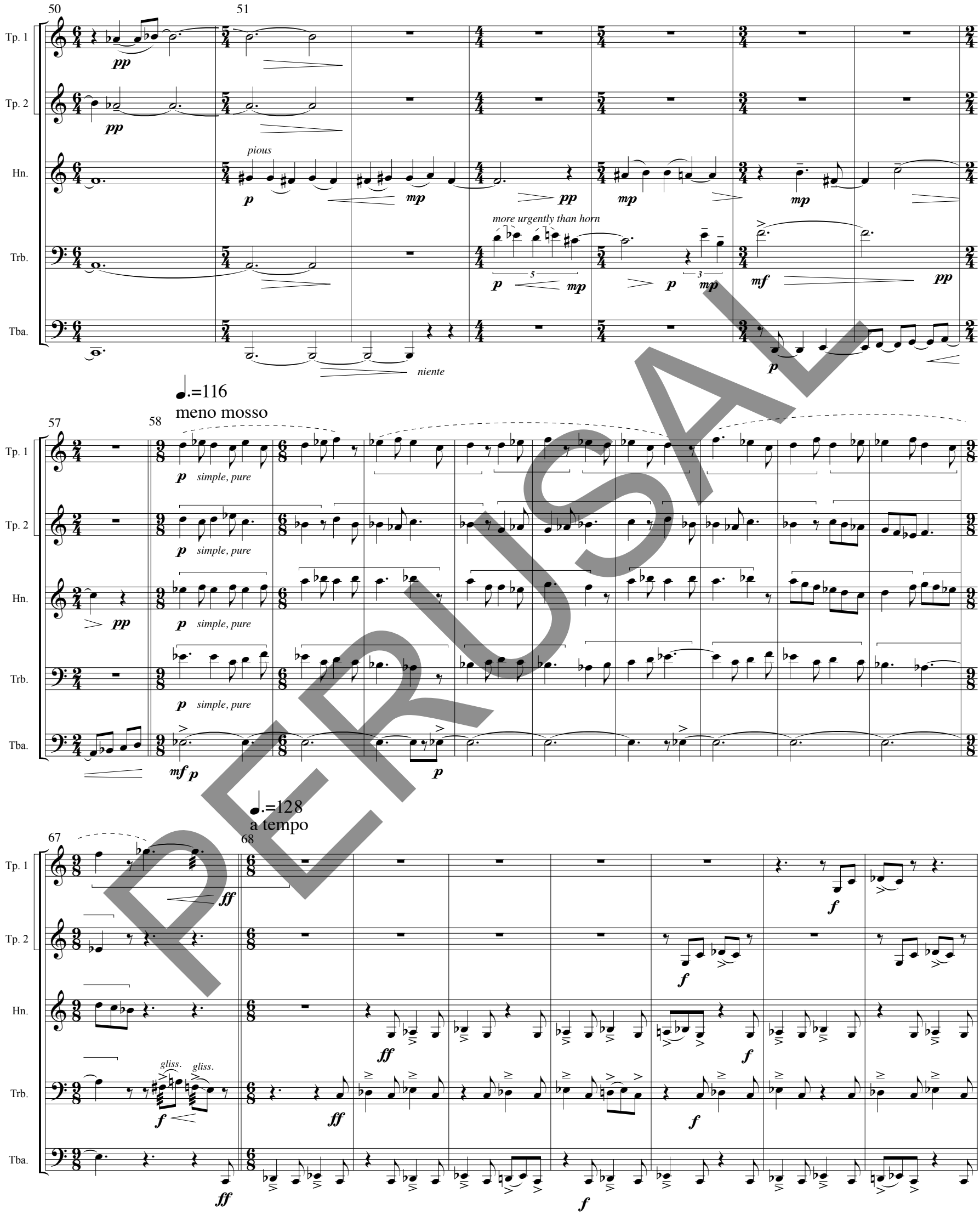
IV. *Festival of St. John's Day*



PERUSAL



PERUSAL


50
51
Tp. 1
Tp. 2
Hn.
Trb.
Tba.
pp
pp
pious
p
mp
pp
mp
mp
more urgently than horn
p
mp
p
mp
mf
pp
niente
p
♩.=116
meno mosso
57
58
p simple, pure
p simple, pure
pp
p simple, pure
p simple, pure
mf p
p
♩.=128
a tempo
67
68
ff
f
f
ff
f
gliss.
gliss.
f
ff
f
ff
f

PERUSAL

75

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

83

85

♩.=116
meno mosso

mf *mp*

mf

mf

mf

mf

p *simple, pure*

p *simple, pure*

p *simple, pure*

p *simple, pure*

p

f

♩.=128
a tempo

91

f

f

f

f

PERUSAL

99

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

108

112

(♪=♪) (♩=96)

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

115

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

PERUSAL

121

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

126

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

♩.=𝅗𝅥=128

131

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

PERUSAL

136 138

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

gliss.

143 148

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

gliss.

150 152

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

gliss.

crescendo...

PERUSAL

156

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

ff

161

(♪=♪) (♩.=170)

165

p

f

168

ff

PERUSAL

177

3"

accelerando...

Tp. 1

Tp. 2

Hn.

Trb.

Tba.

fingered glissandi

gliss.

(1/2 step)

ff > *p* < *ff* > *p* < *ff* > *p* < *fff* > *p* < *ffff*

8"

4"

183

air only

ritard and then....stop trill

p *dim...* *ppp* *p* *niente*

[4:00]

PERUSAL

PERUSAL