Jason Kao Hwang

Symphony of Souls

(2011)

for an Orchestra of String Improvisers

(violin, viola, guitar, cello, string bass and drum set)

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Performance Notes:

Symphony of Souls is created through orchestral improvisation that is conducted by a lexicon of hand gestures (see following page) in dialogue with sixteen written passages. Generally the score progresses left to right, with earlier sections reappearing in variations, often with cued fermatas and transpositions. The conductor can cue the whole orchestra or sections or individuals to perform written passages or improvisations. The conductor indicates passages 1 through 5 with the five digits on one hand. Ear 1 through 5 is indicated by the left hand holding the left ear, and digits 1 through 5 of the right hand. Heart 1 through 5 is indicated by the right hand over the heart, with digits 1 through 5 of the left hand. "Arm Up to the Sky" is cued as described. "Waving 5" (measure 25), is cued by waving five digits of one hand. "Top" is indicated with the hand on top of the head. Cues 2, 3, Ear 1, Ear 2, Ear 3 and Heart 3 can be cued in time or with note-to-note fermatas. They can also be transposed as cued by the conductor. As in the jazz tradition, the drummer has ***s*** the freedom to support and create in dialogue with both the conducter and orchestra.

Symphony of Souls was recorded onApril 24, 2010. A video of the recording session is on youtube:: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iKch6kft2ZY

COMPOSER/ CONDUCTOR/ VIOLIN: Jason Kao Hwang

DRUMS: Andrew Drury
VIOLIN: Trina Basu, Sarah Bernstein, Charles Burnham, Julianne Carney, Mark Chung, Fung Chern Hwei, Rosi Hertlein, Gwen Laster, Marlene Rice, Dave Soldier, Curtis Stewart, Elektra Kurtis, Midori Yamamoto, Helen Yee
VIOLA: Leanne Darling, Nicole Federici, Judith Insell, Eric Salazar, David Wallace
GUITAR: Cristian Amigo, Bradley Farberman, James Keepnews, Dom Minasi, David Ross, Tor Snyder, Hans Tammen
CELLO: Martha Colby, Loren Dempster, Daniel Levin, Tomas Ulrich, Shanda Wooley
BASS: Michael Bisio, Ken Filiano, Francois Grillot, Clifton Jackson, Tom Zlabinger, James Ilgenfritz

Lexicon of Conducted Improvisational Cues

Traditional
- Downbeat (traditional)
- Held note(open palm)
- Cut-off

Pitch
- Sustained'Fermata – note to note
  - assigning leaders to cue sustained notes
- Sustained followed by slides – RH downbeat, LH curve down, RH cut
- High notes – point up
- Low notes – point down
- Drone on D – arc both arms over head

Transposition
- ½ step – from nose up to top of head
- whole step up - chin up to top of head
- whole step - chin up to top of head
- minor third – chin to above head
- fourth - chest to way above head

Dynamics
- pianissimo, forte, - shhh and fist
- Cresc, Decresc - V up and down
- Mute - cover

Texture
- Tremelo – mime bow trememlo
- Bird calls (above finger board*) shake hand above head*
- Pizz – mimed
- Harmonics – hand circle (ok)
- Crunch - mime
- Mime: Gtr tight – squeeze to chest; Strings mime bow crunch
- Colegno – mimed colegno
- Wide vibrato – mimed
- Trill – flat palm rotated rapidly back and forth
- Gliss – follow shape of hand gesture
- Air sounds - shhh (strings blow across f holes)
- Tremelo/ Flutter tonge - bow tremelo
- Pitch bends – gesture down or up
- Wide vibrato
- Drunk improv – rubbery stretches

Drum Set
- arco cymbals or slides on drum

Mutes
- Mute (*cover bridge for strings*)

Double-stops (strings)/ Multiphonics (reeds)
- interlaced fingers

Improvisation

- Solos – point and come hither gesture
- Call & Response – each hand gestures talking
- Short stabs – tiger claw
- Guitars comp – mime strum
- Repeat or Riff - hands bracket
- Improv – solo or sectional - come hither!
- Call and response – talking bird
- Open more space – hands pulled apart
- Develop – hand circles encouragement
- Break up pattern
- Arpeggio - follow shape of hand gesture
- Riffs Cues from Conductor's violin
- Improv runs up or down – use arm, trace finger up or down
- Conducted Rhythms – follow gestured rhythm
- Conduct any written cue as note to note fermatas

Assign Leaders

- Create Riff – point to leader, eye to ear, riff gesture
- Create Sustained, point to leader, eye to ear, sustain

Grooves

- Ostinato 4/4
- Walk 4/4
- shuffle 4/4 (digging triplet gesture)
- 6/8 conducted
- Break Groove and develop
- Guitar comp (mime strum)

Conductor generated

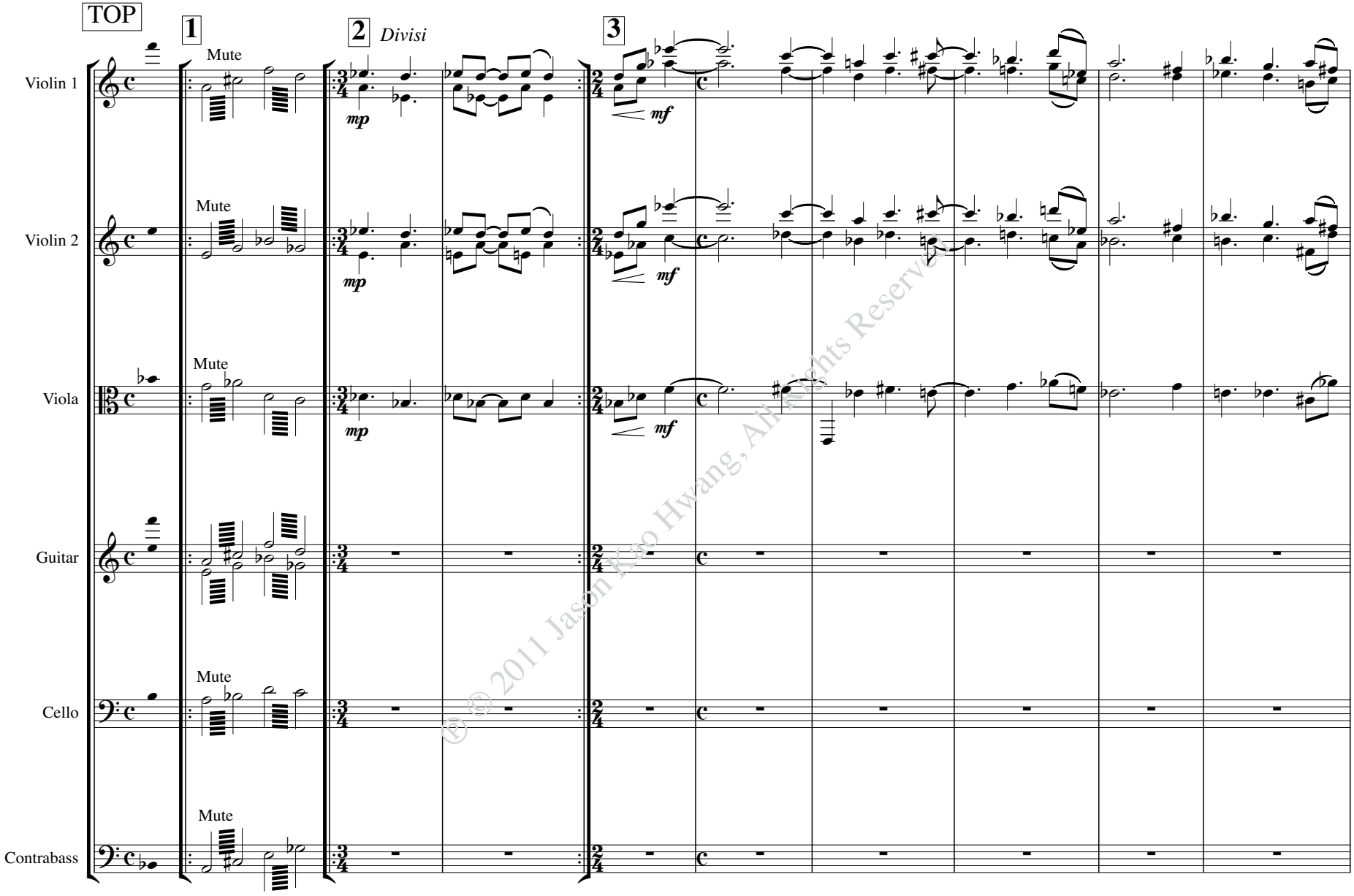
- Cues from my violin
- Conducted Rhythms

Combination Example:

- Forte piano (fist + shh)
- Accent/ trill/ gliss (fist – hand flutter – slide)

SYMPHONY OF SOULS

Music by Jason Kao Hwang



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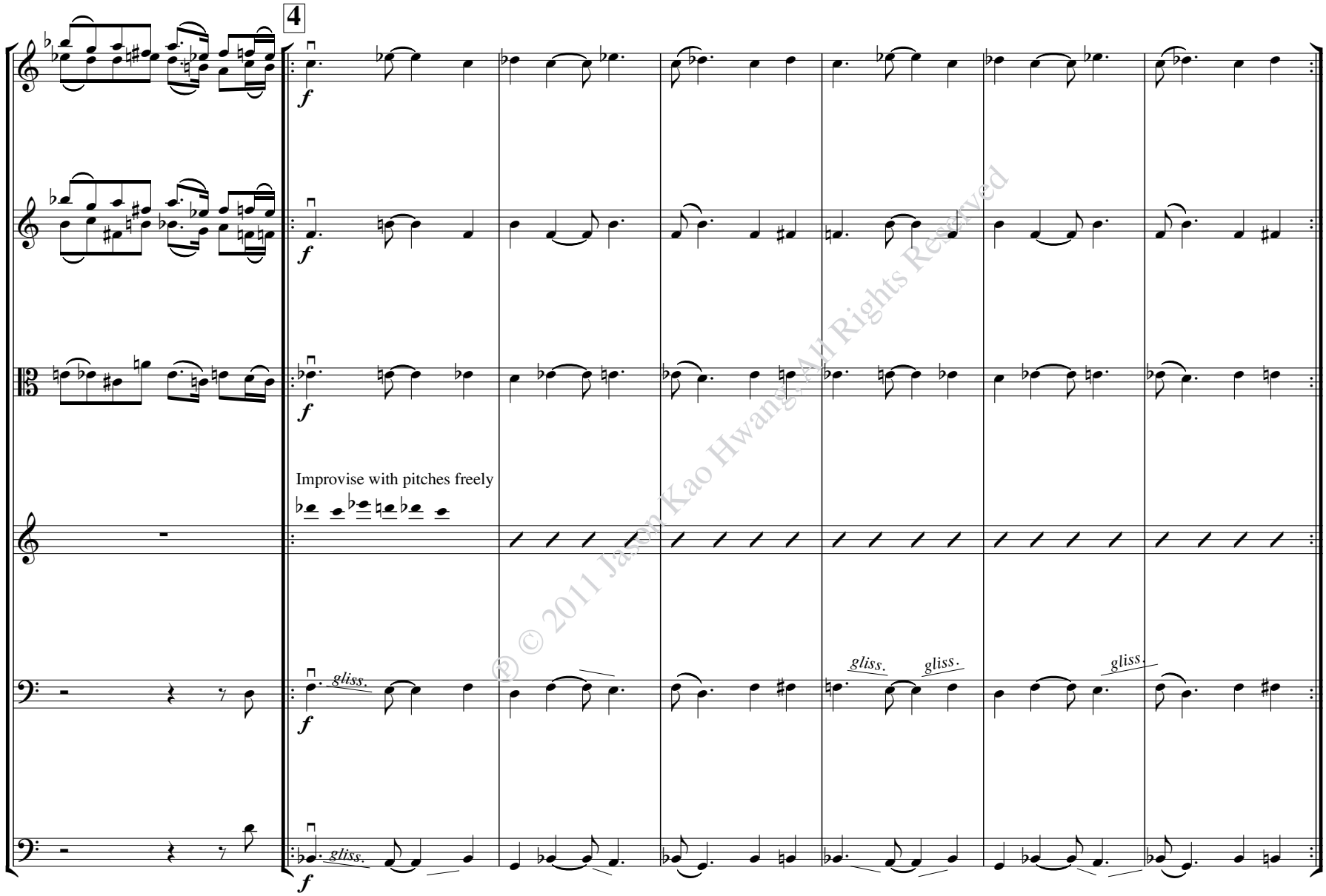

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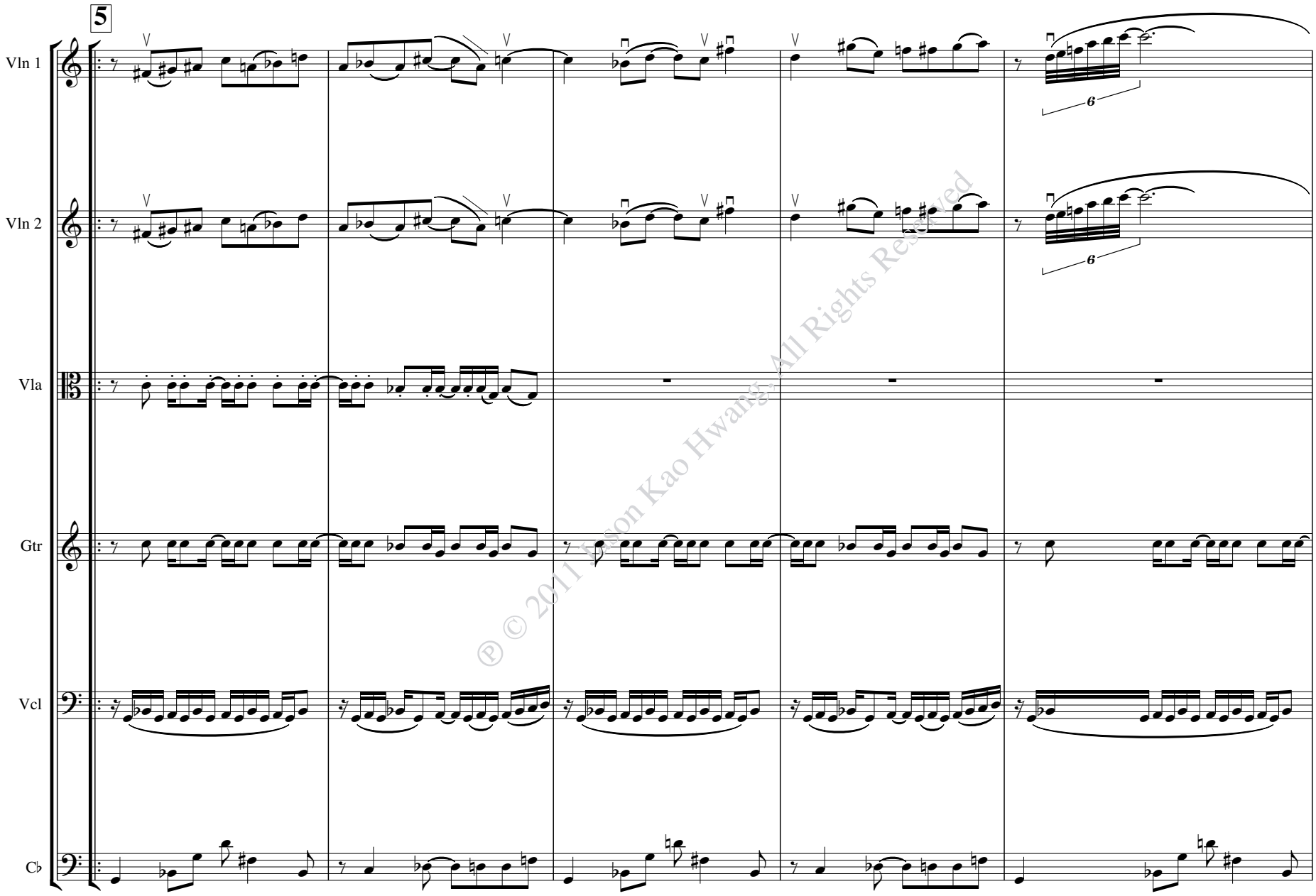

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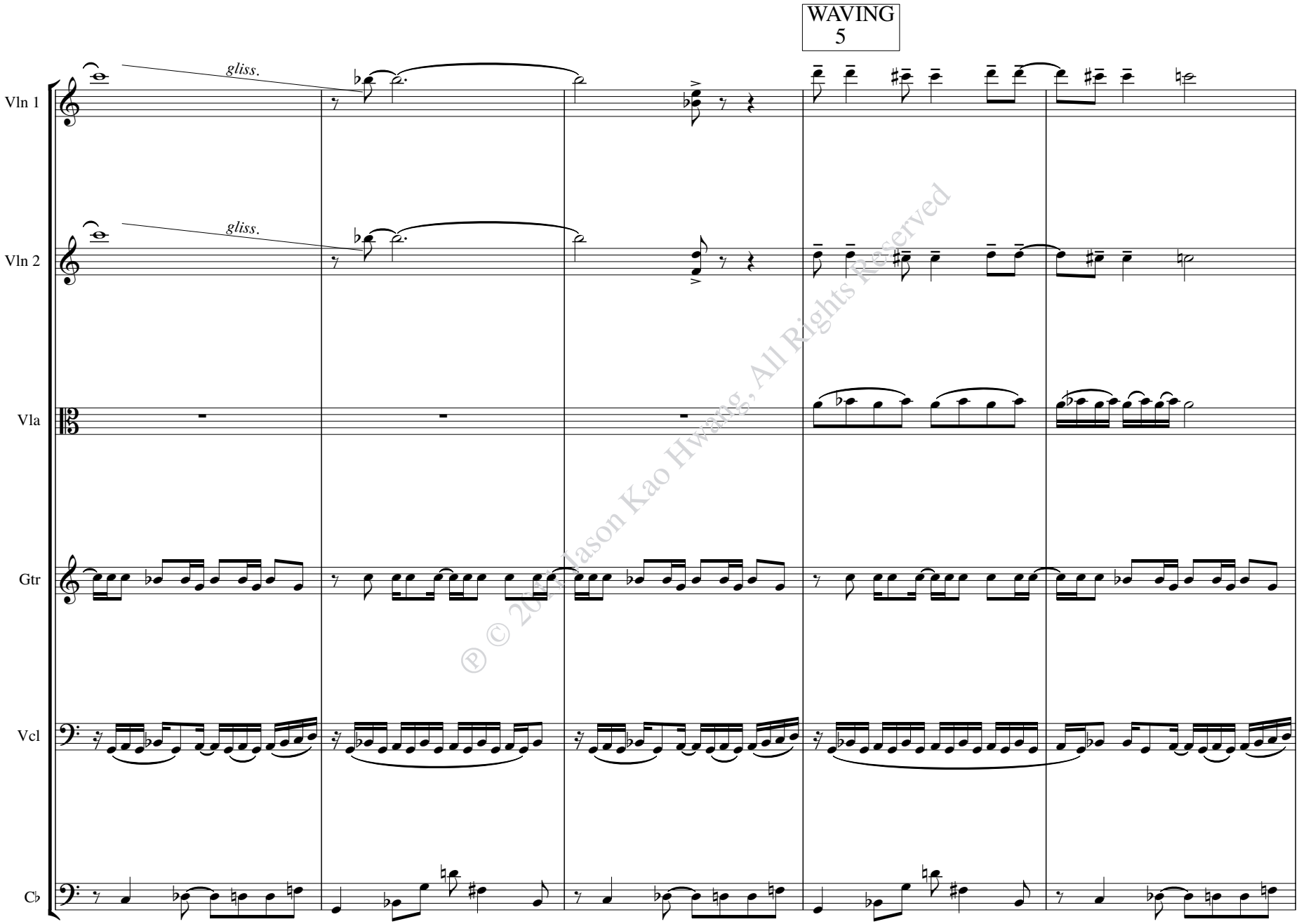

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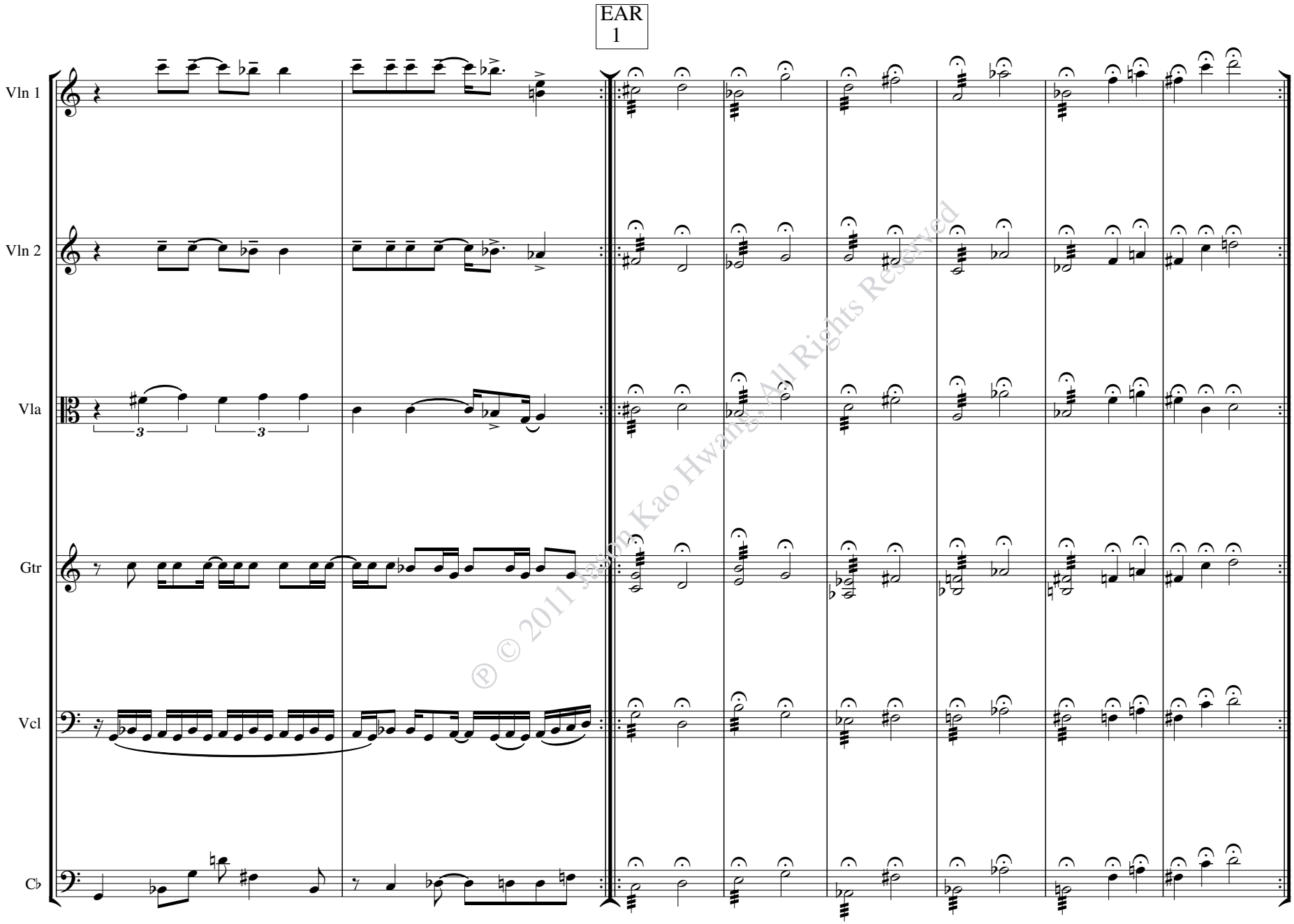

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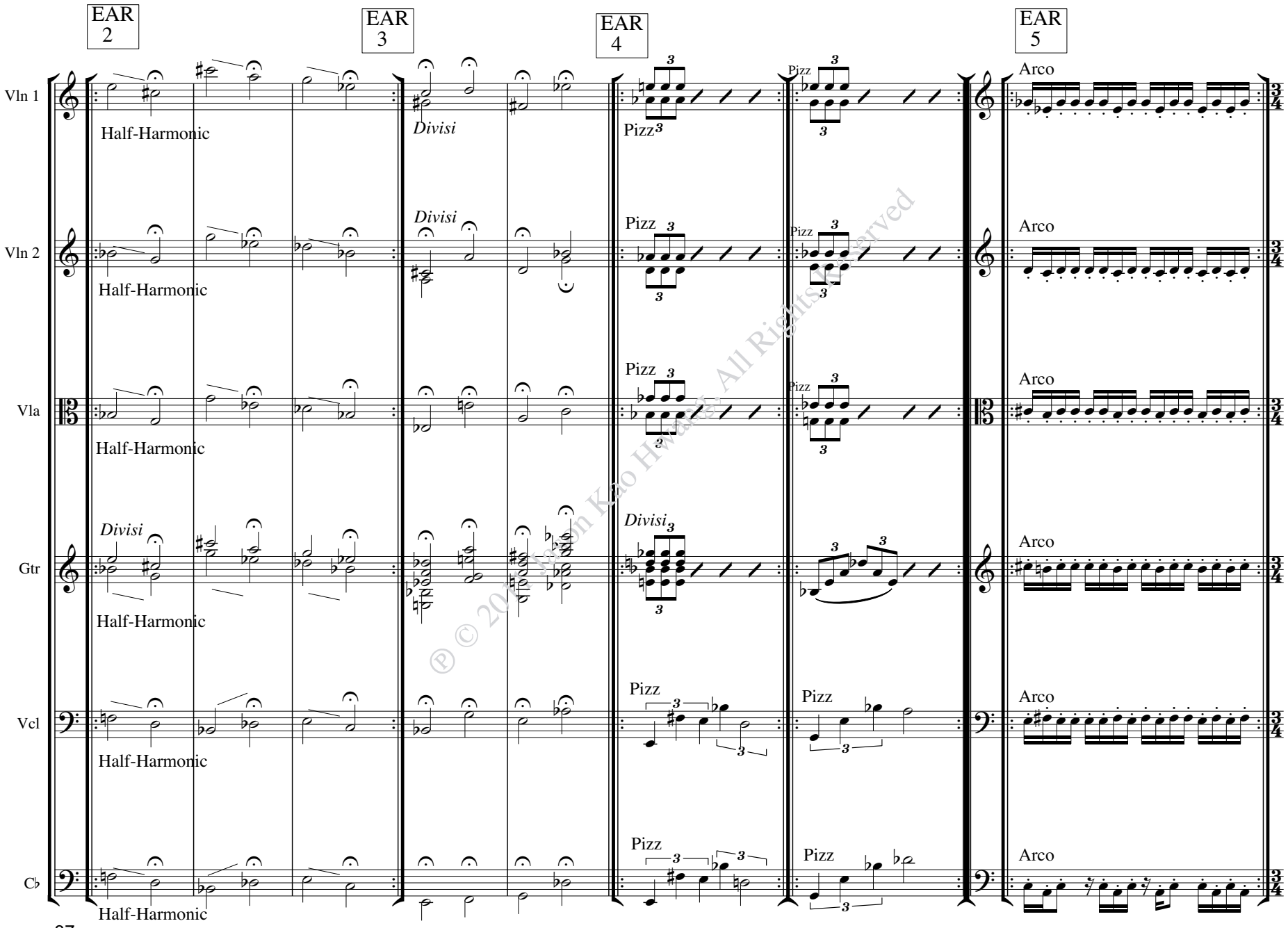

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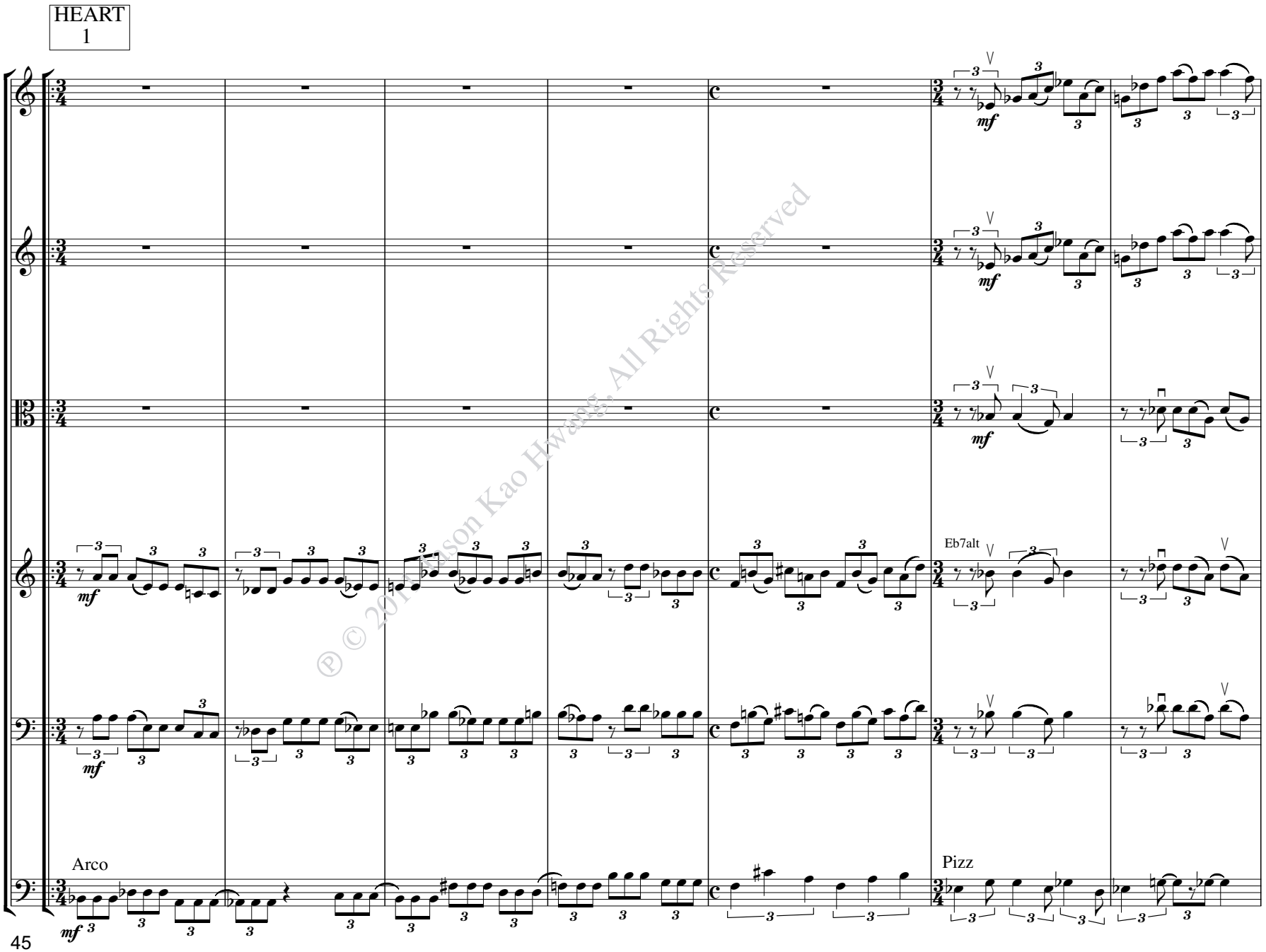

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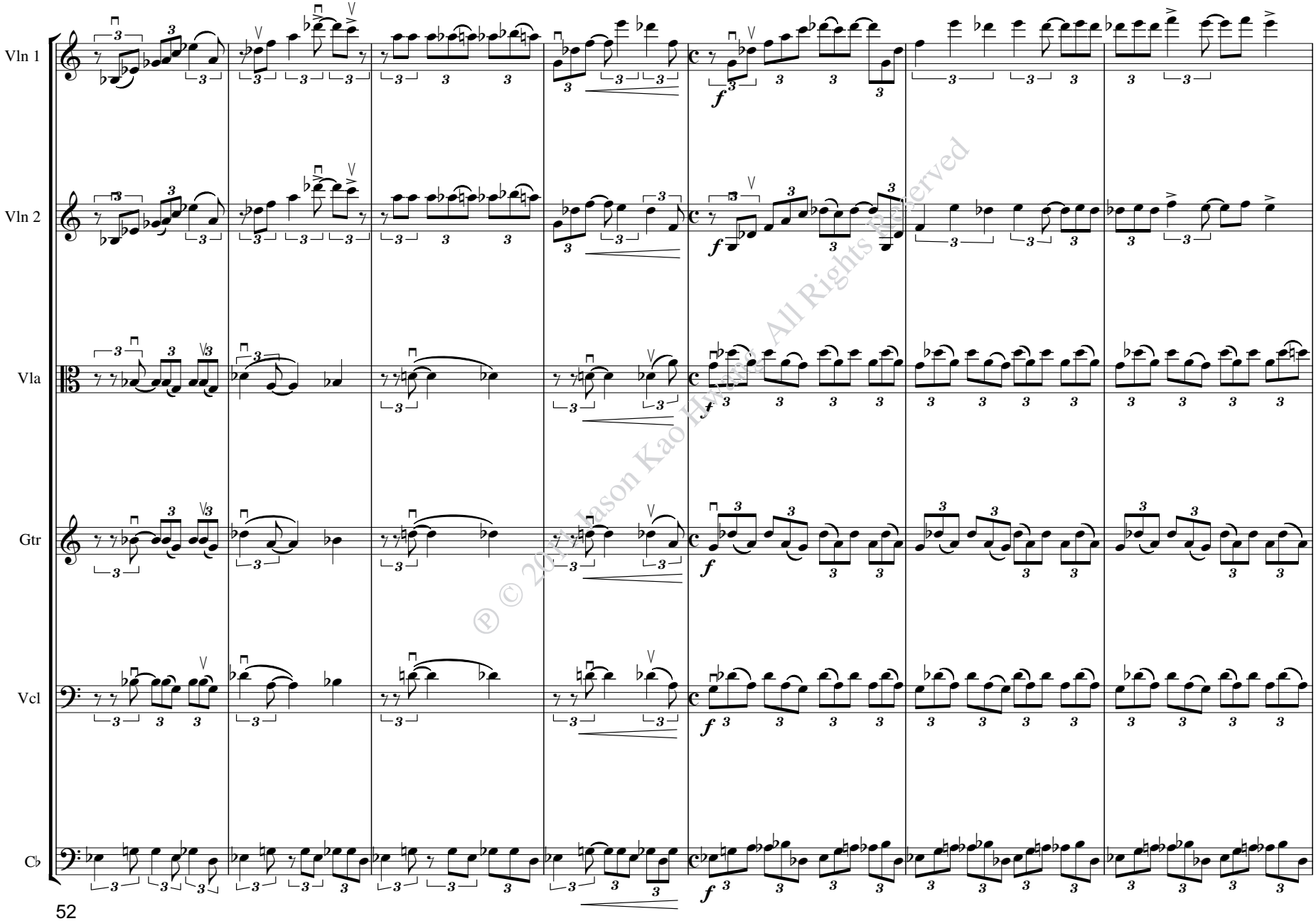

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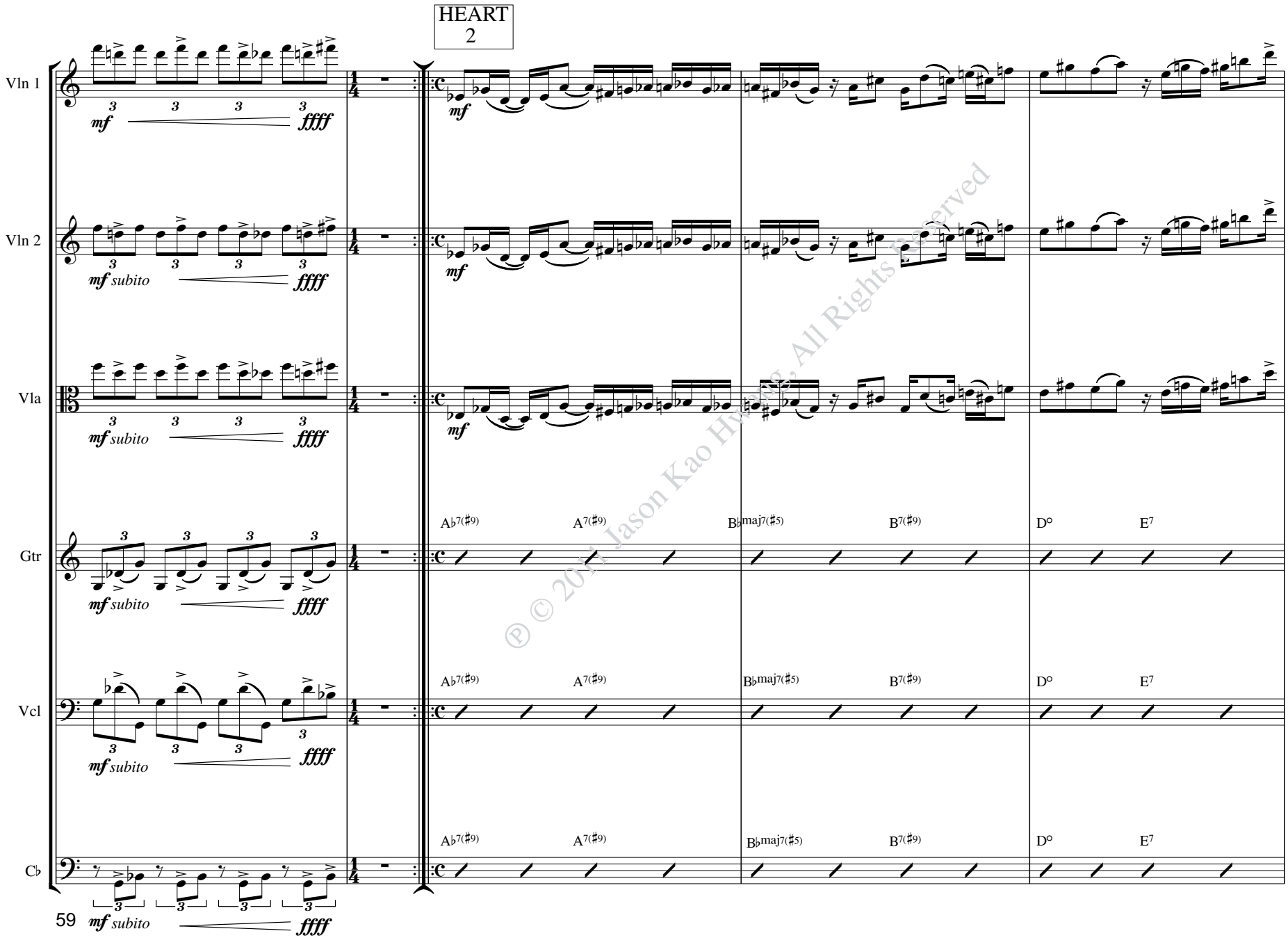

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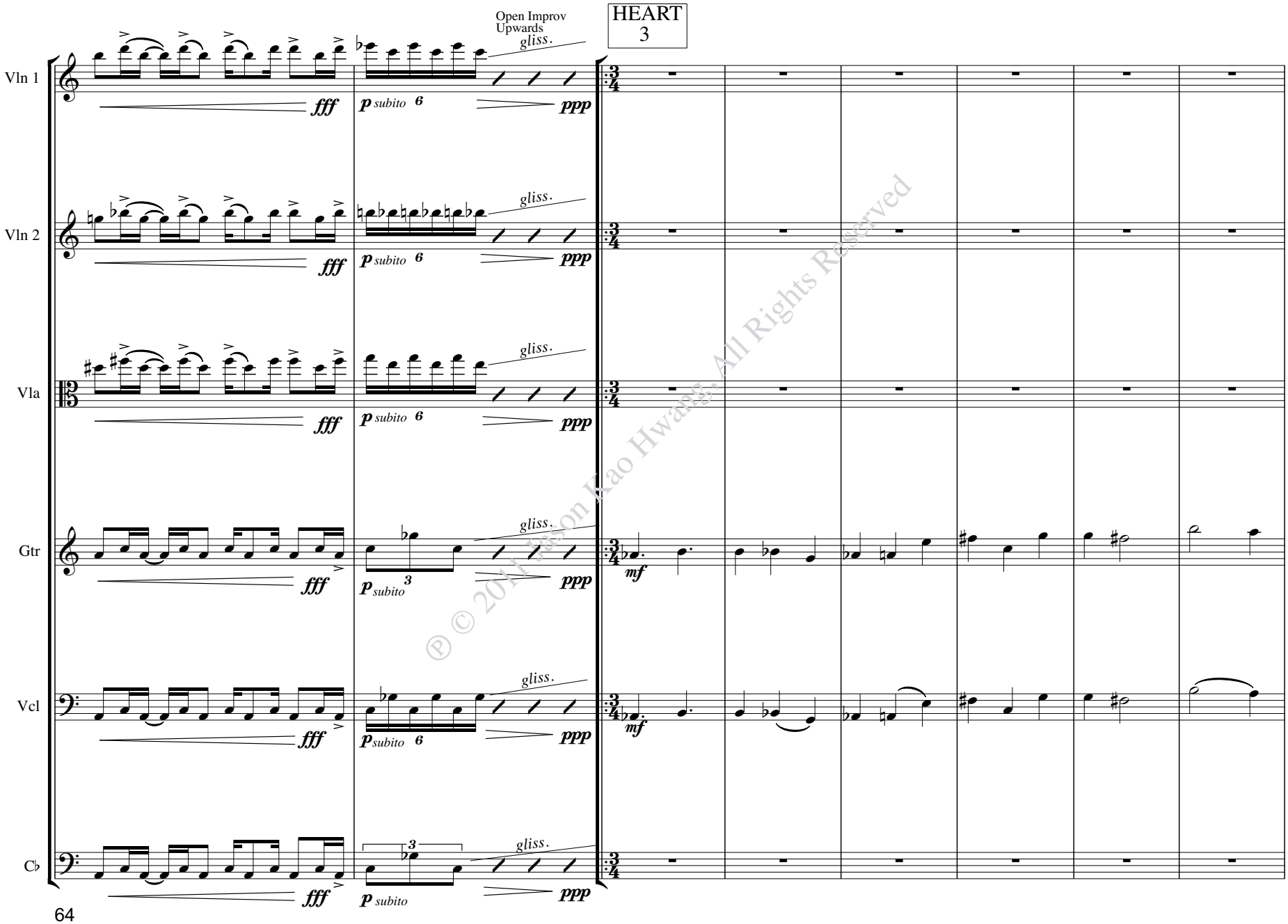

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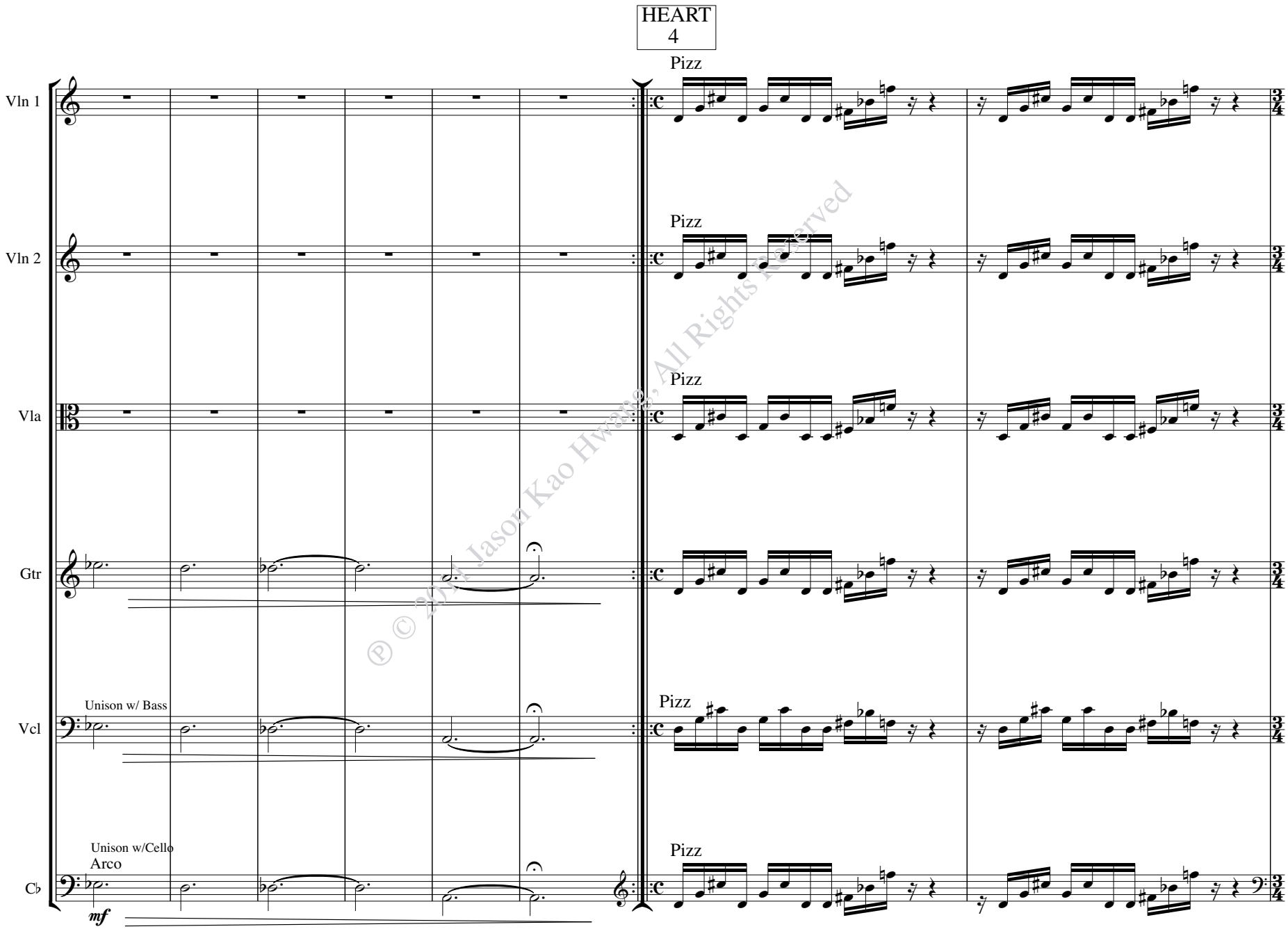

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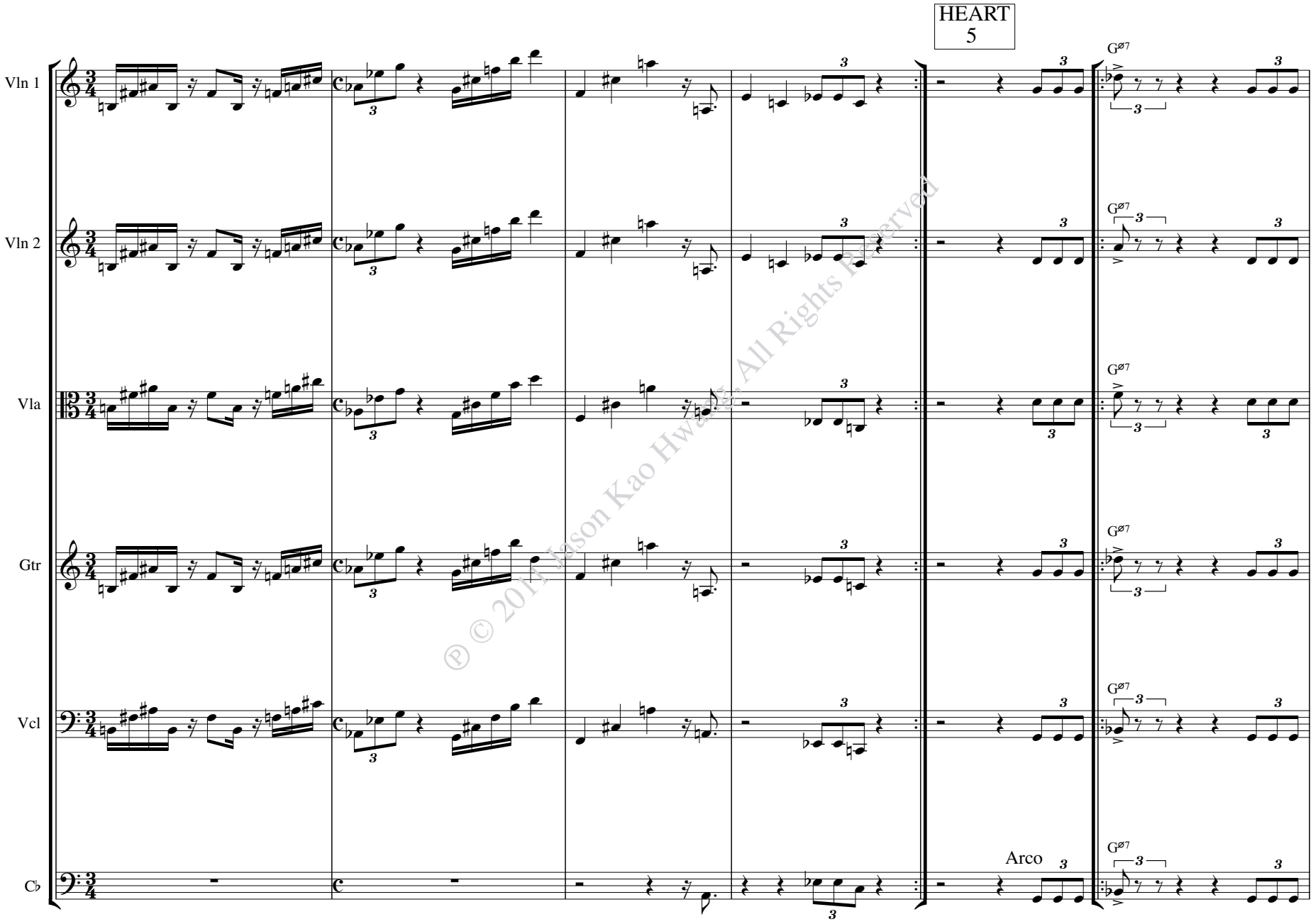

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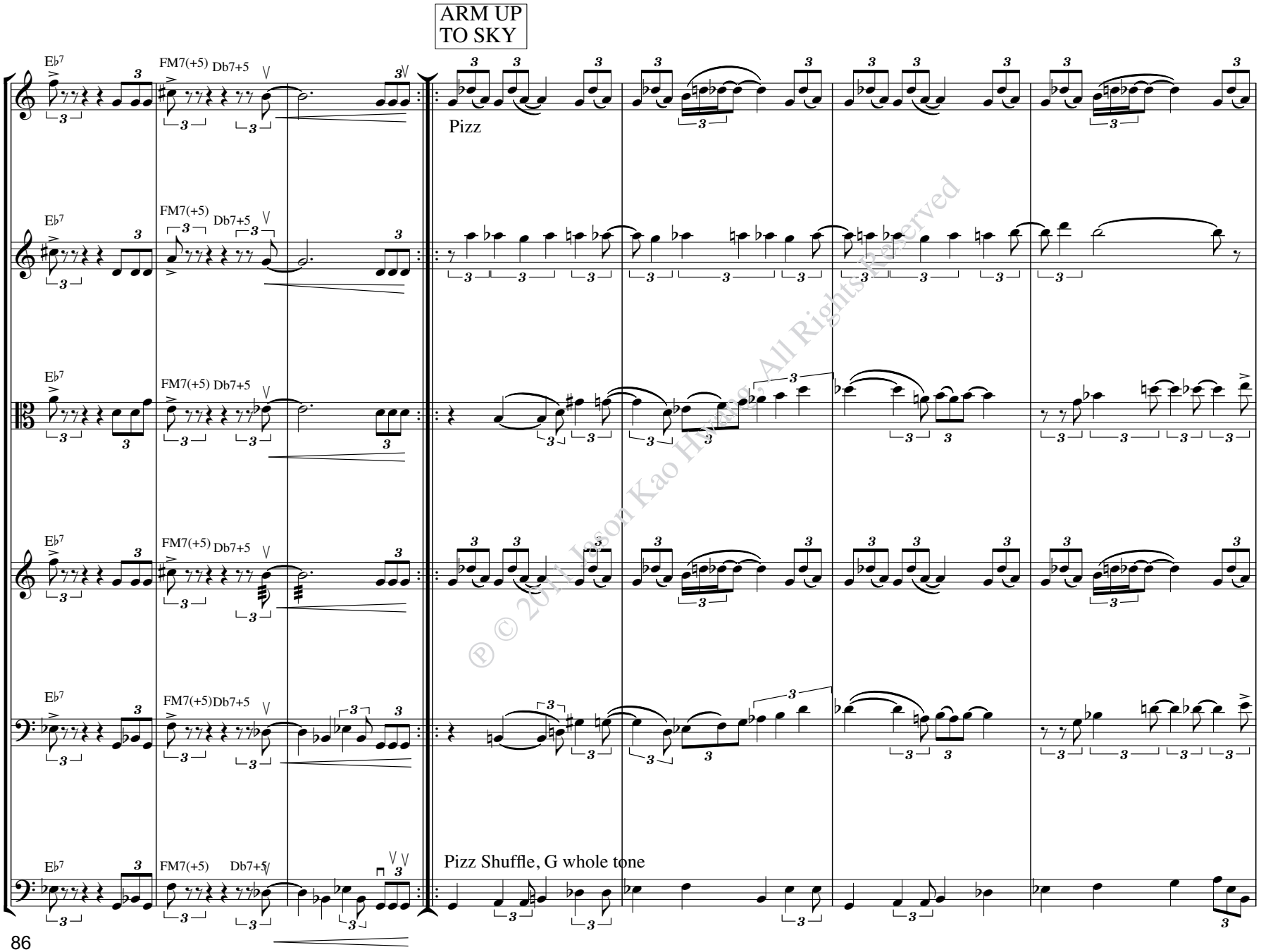

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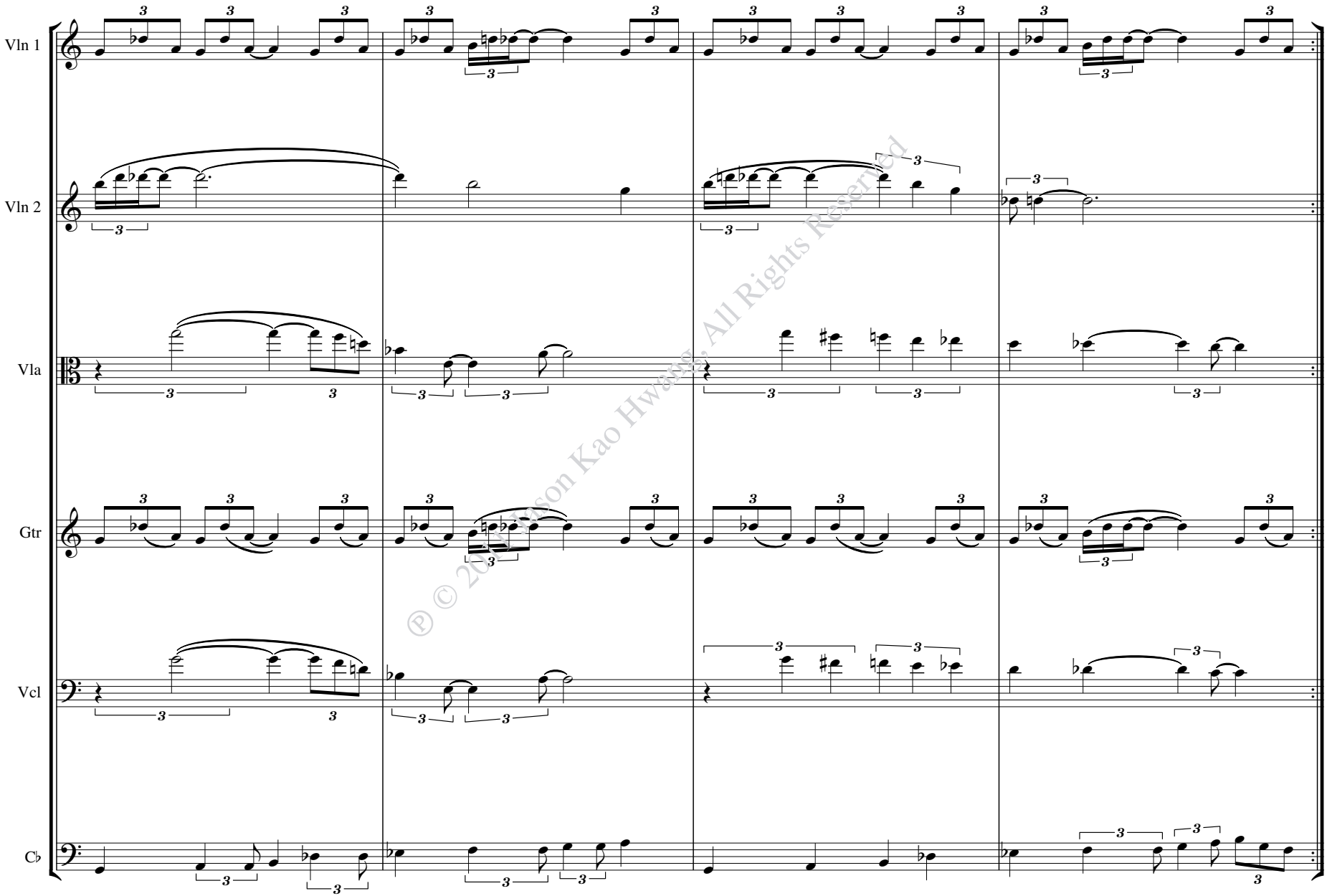

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