Ludwig van Beethoven

Pathétique

from *Piano Sonata No. 8 in C minor, Op. 74*

arranged for percussion ensemble
by Alan Miller

Pathétique by Ludwig van Beethoven, arr. Alan Miller
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TSPCE-24

Performance notes

Pathétique may be performed with or without a conductor.

It is recommended that you use 4.5 octave (low F) marimbas for the marimba 2 and 3 parts. However, with a few adjustments the marimba 2 part can be made to fit on a 4.3 octave (low A) marimba. If only one low F instrument is available, use it for marimba 3. Using low A marimbas on both marimba 2 and 3 is not advised.

The opening section should be played with large, heavy mallets. Strive for maximum sound with minimum articulation. Pickup notes in the timpani should be very aggressive. Vibes and timpani should play the note values precisely as written. The ritard and fermata in measure 9 will allow for a quick mallet change to a harder mallet for all keyboard players (and timpani). Vibe 2 should already have hard mallets by the time measure 9 arrives.

As a starting point (certainly not a rigid rule), vibe players should only "feather" quarter notes as they move very fast, but pedal full value any note longer than a quarter note. Any eighth notes should be played dry (no pedal). Adhere to rests precisely. The timpani part in the faster section is very difficult. The pedaling demands are such that attempting to play on timpani that do not have gauges will be extremely challenging. To make the part a little more manageable, the timpanist may omit a lot of the "split octaves" and simply play both eighth notes on the lower pitch.

At letter C, a bass drum with a crash cymbal attachment is called for. If one is not available, omit the bass drum part and play the crash cymbals. Also, a more mellow mallet choice would be in order for marimba 2 and vibe 2 in this section. Players should have a chance to change back to harder mallets during the fermata right before letter D.

At letter E, it is difficult to get the marimba 1 part to speak above the ensemble. The player should be using mallets that are sufficiently articulate, but not abrasive. Other players must be aware of the high-end marimba part and balance down. At measure 109, don't let the eighth notes dominate. The moving line and, later, the whole notes are most important.

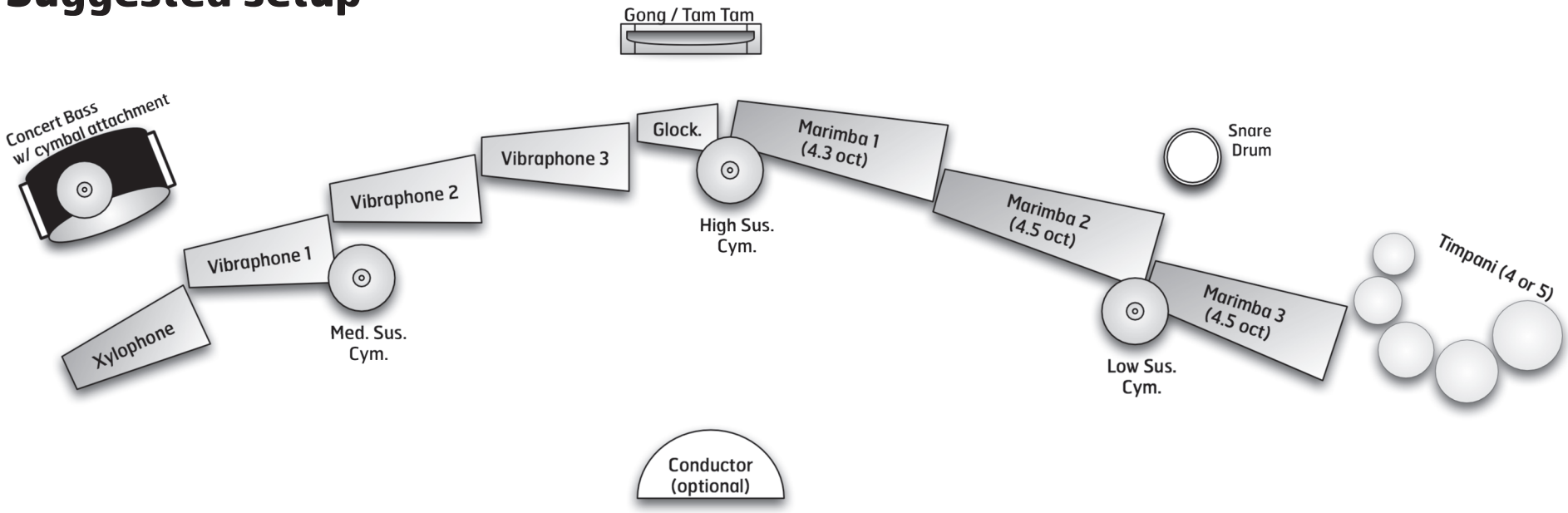
The accelerando at letter J should start very slow, almost rubato at first, then slowly pick up steam until the end is a blur of notes.

Instrument/Parts list

This arrangement calls for eight players.

Four timpani (5 recommended)
Two 4.5 octave marimbas (low F)
One 4.3 octave marimba (low A)
Glockenspiel (w/high D recommended)
Three vibraphones
Xylophone
Concert bass drum with crash cymbal attachment
Concert snare drum
Tam tam
Three suspended cymbals (high, mid, low)

Suggested setup



Level: Med-Advanced
Duration: approx. 3'40"

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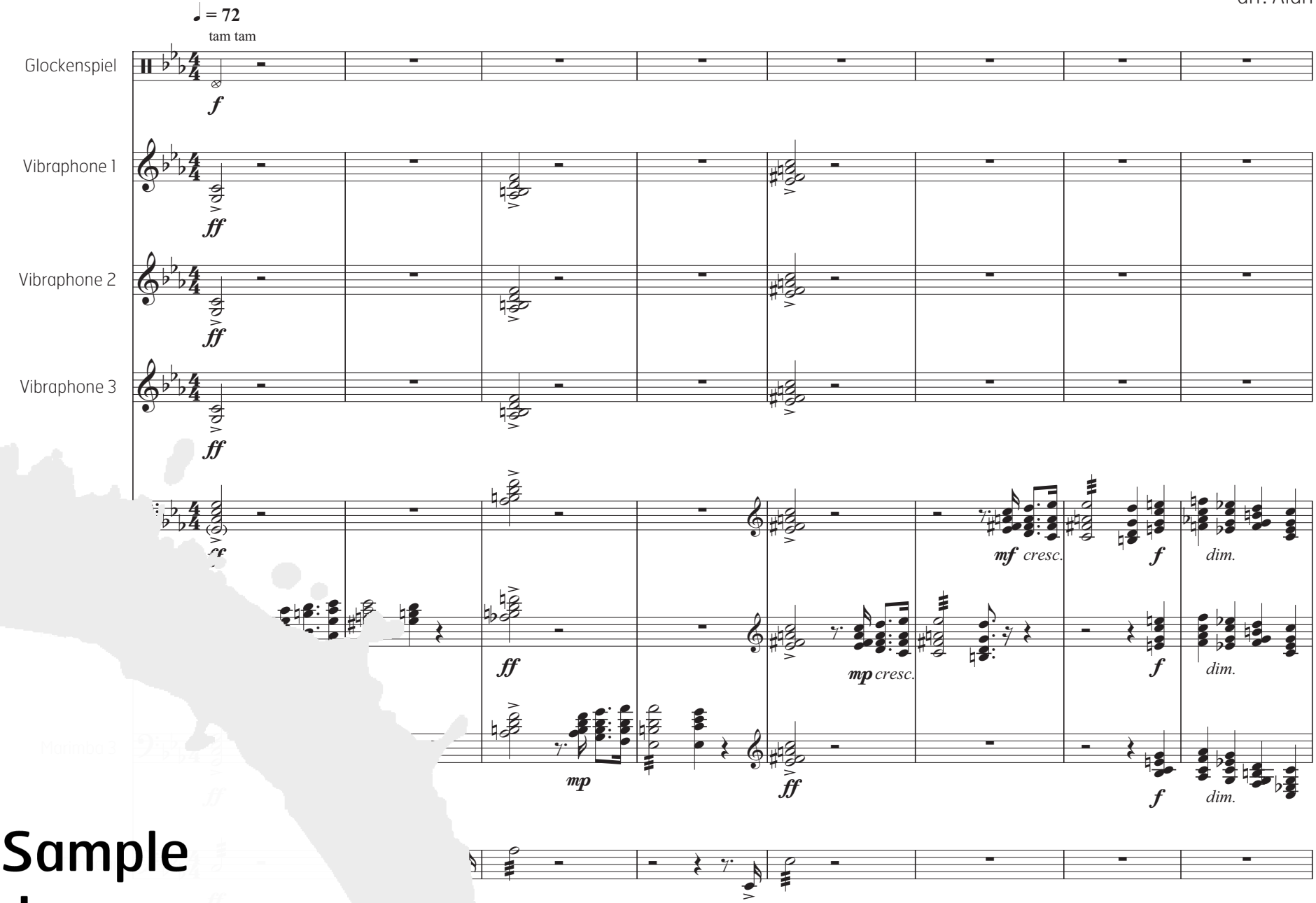

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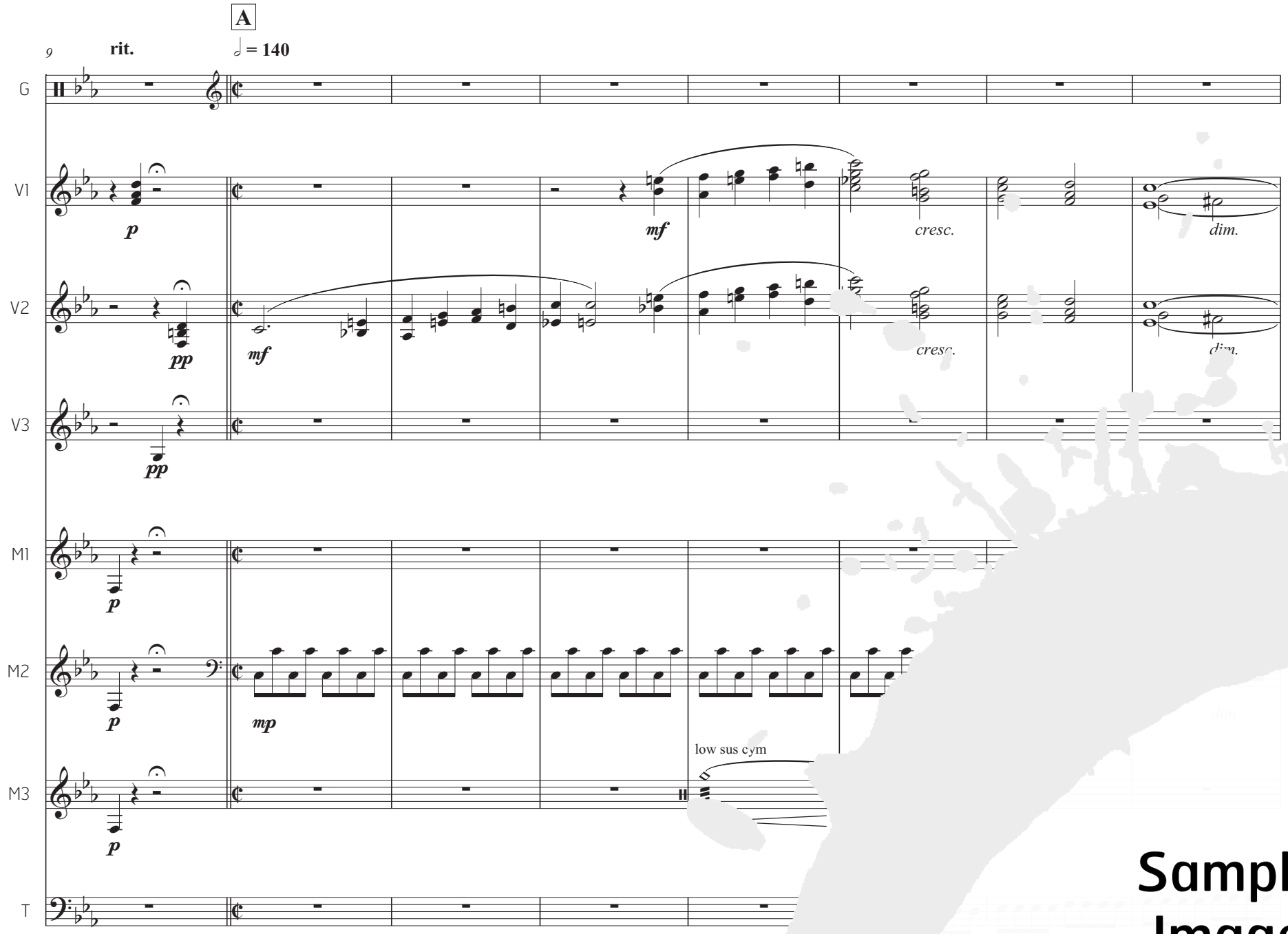

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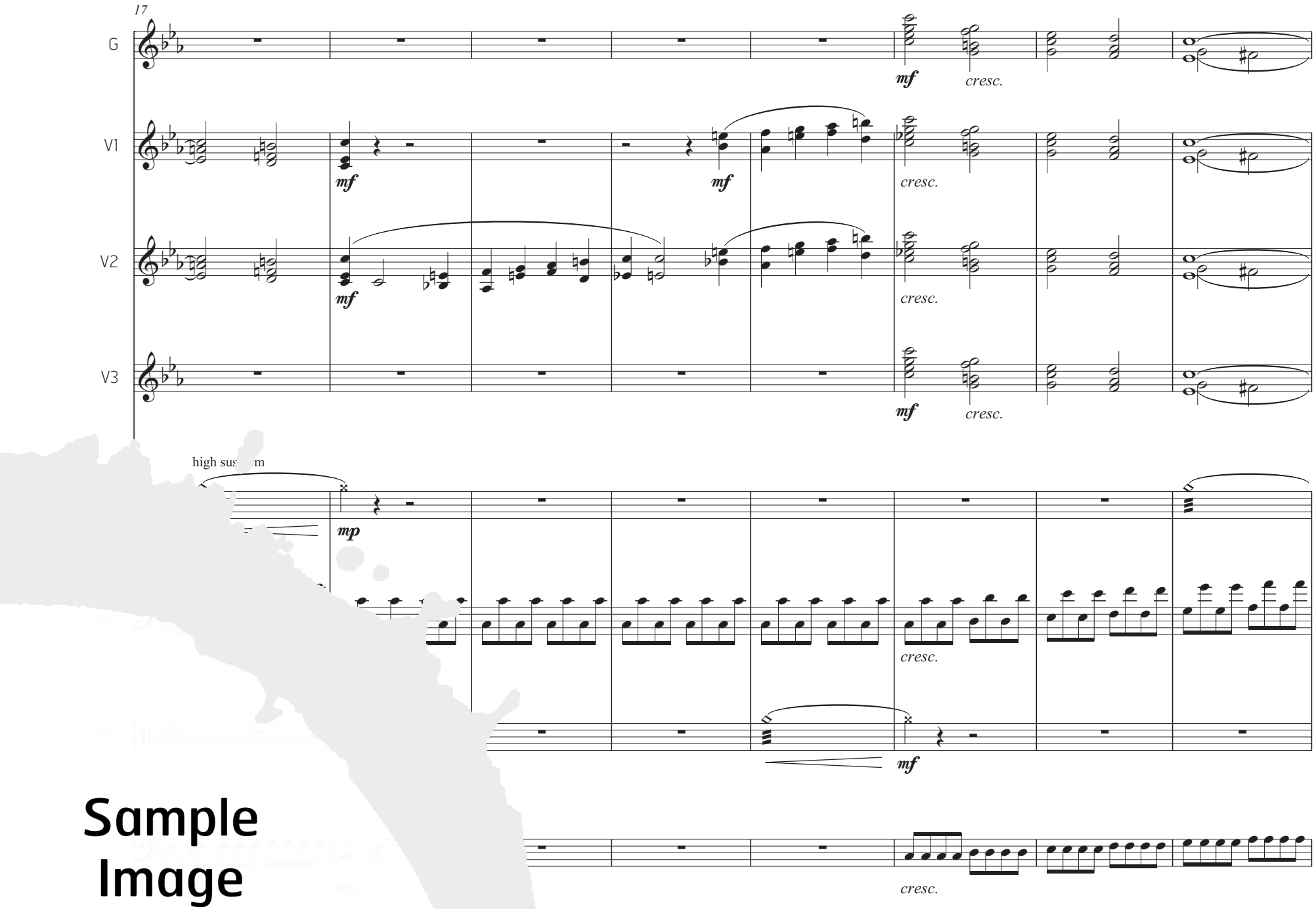

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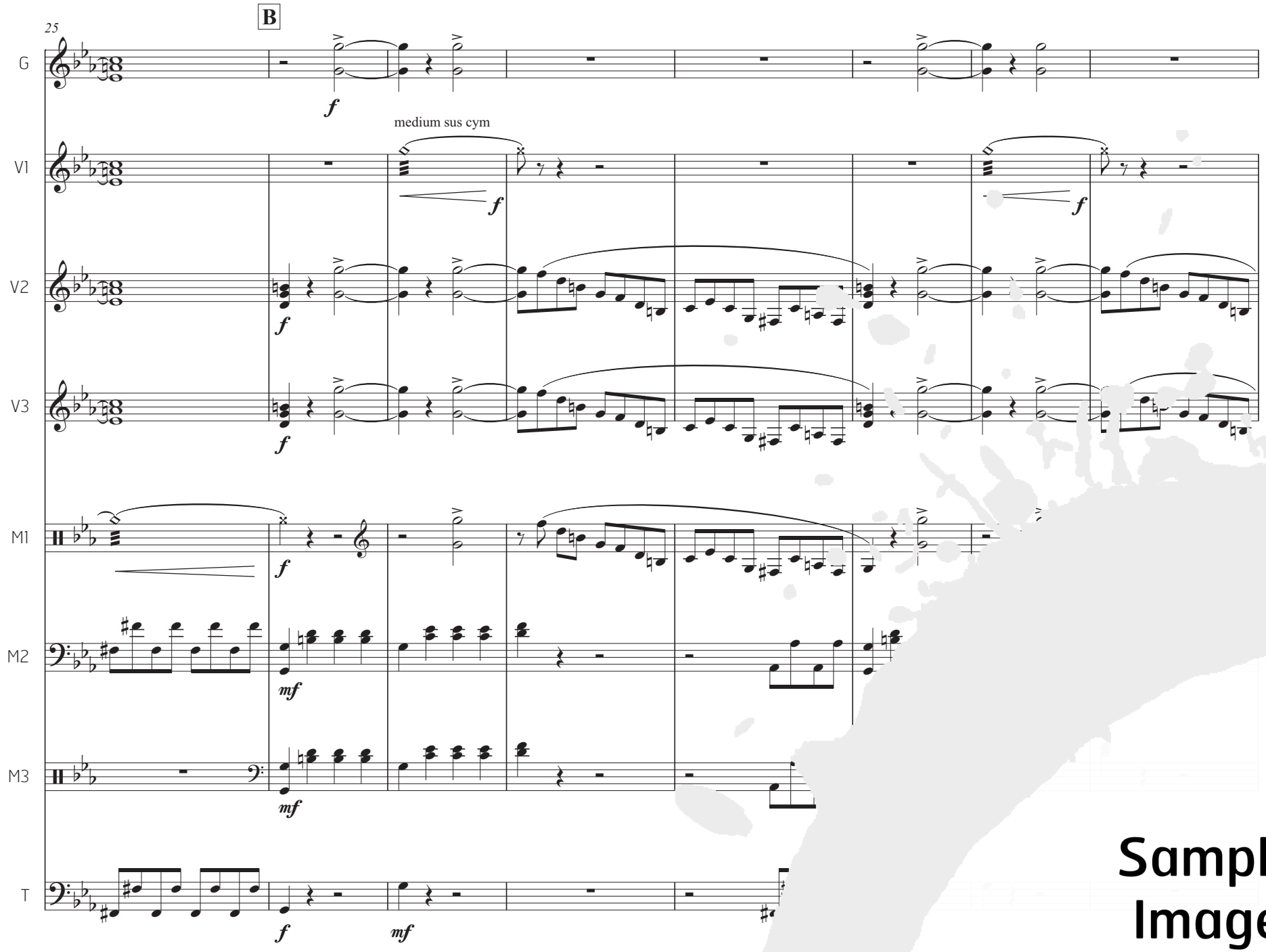

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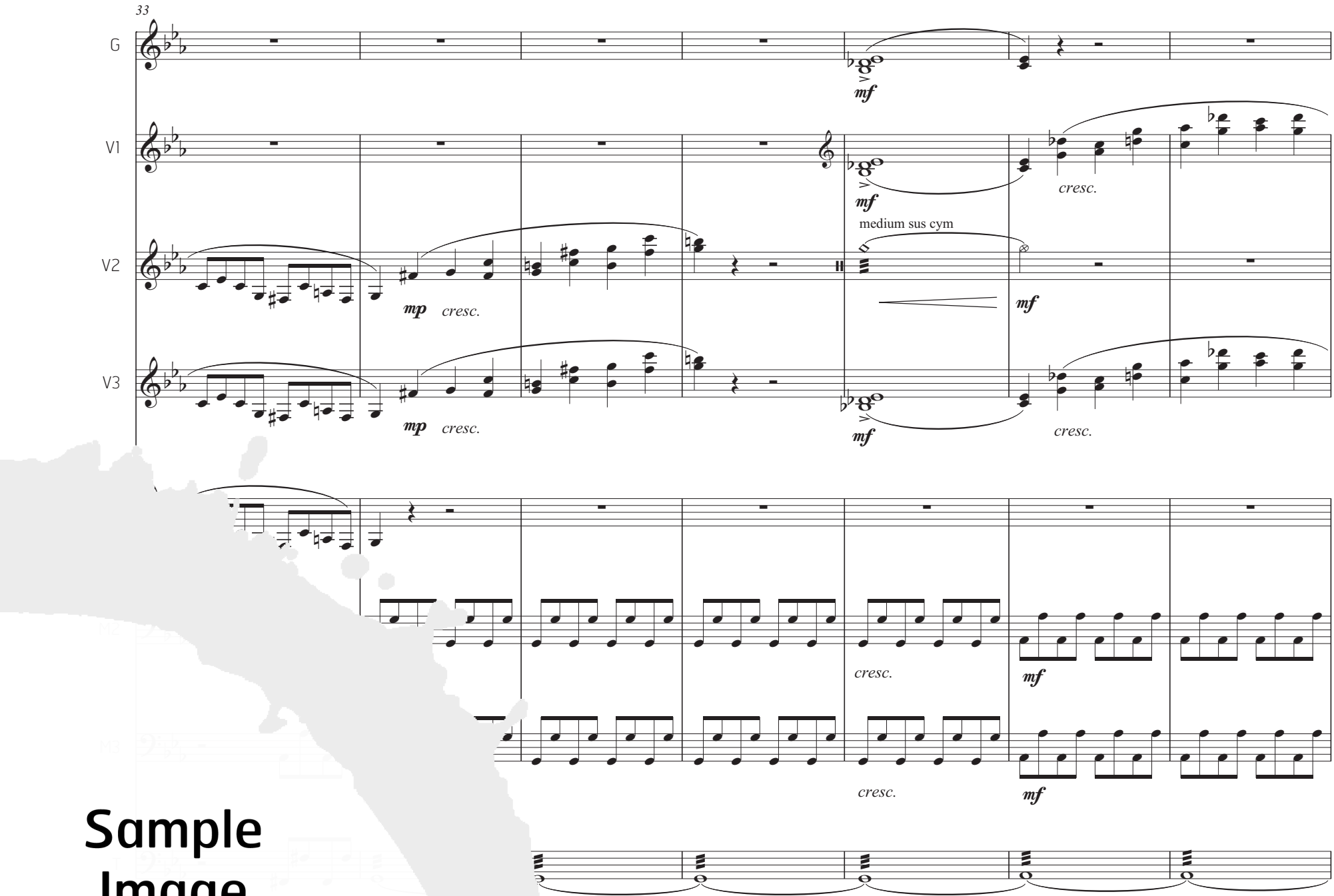

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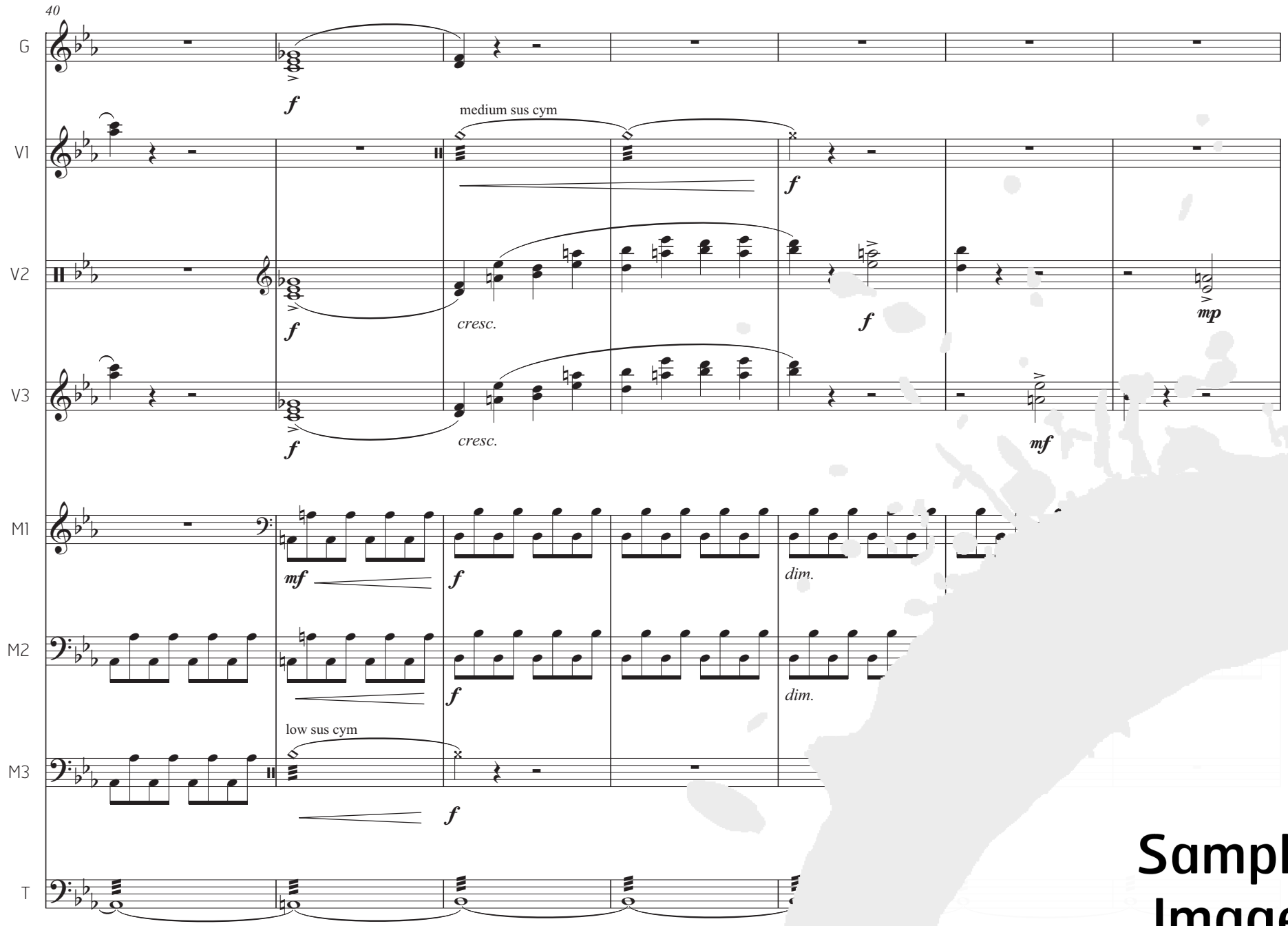

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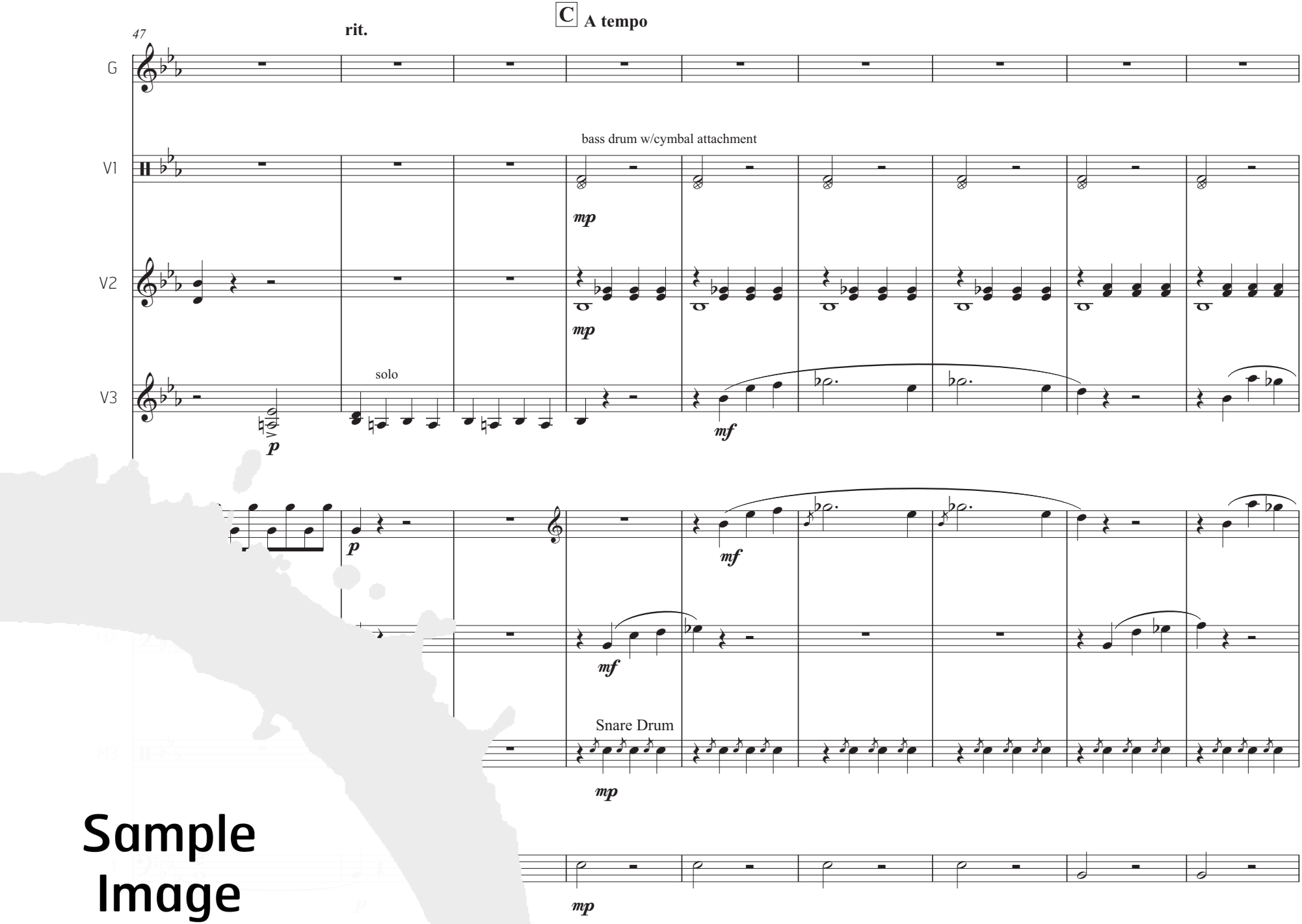

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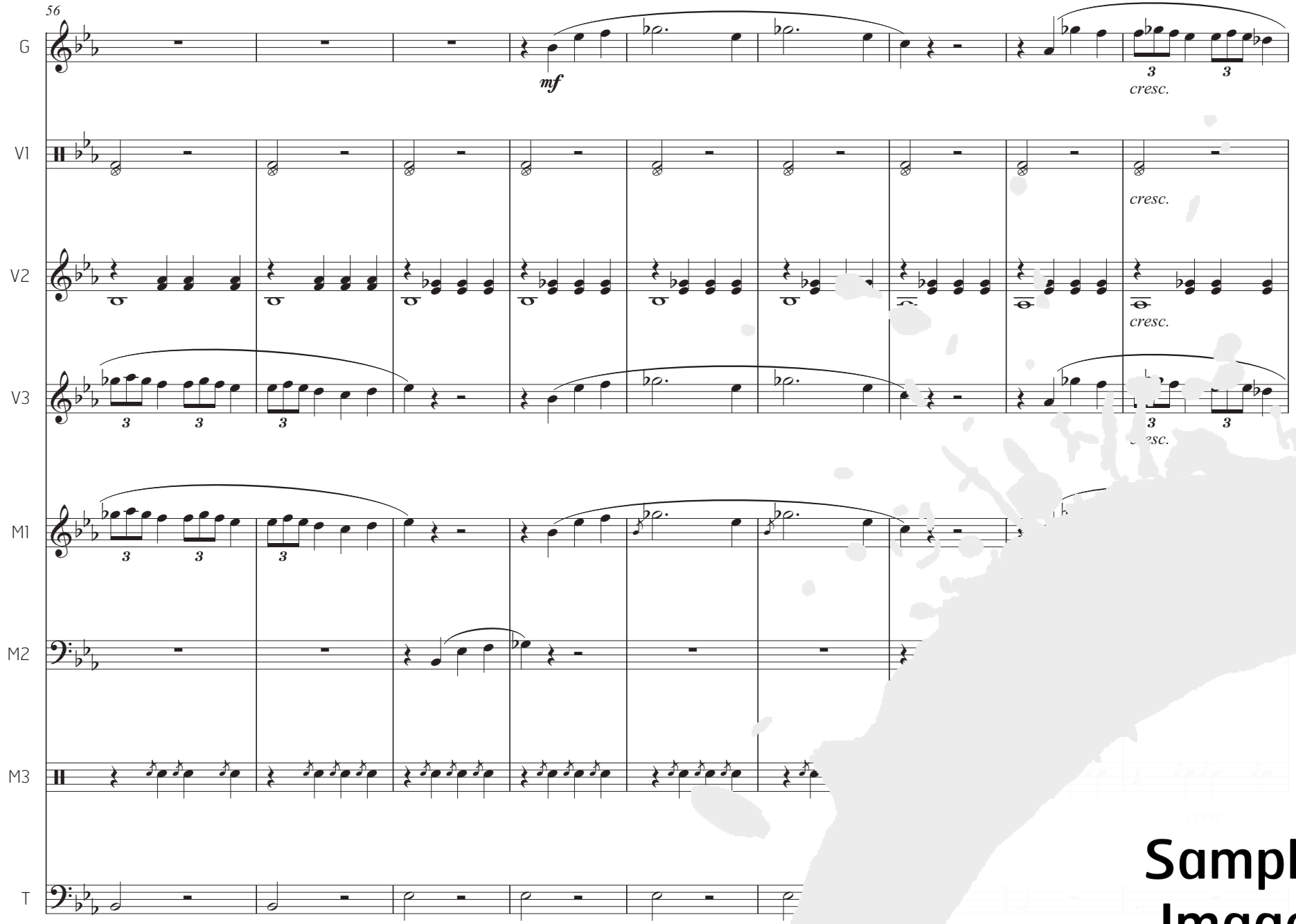

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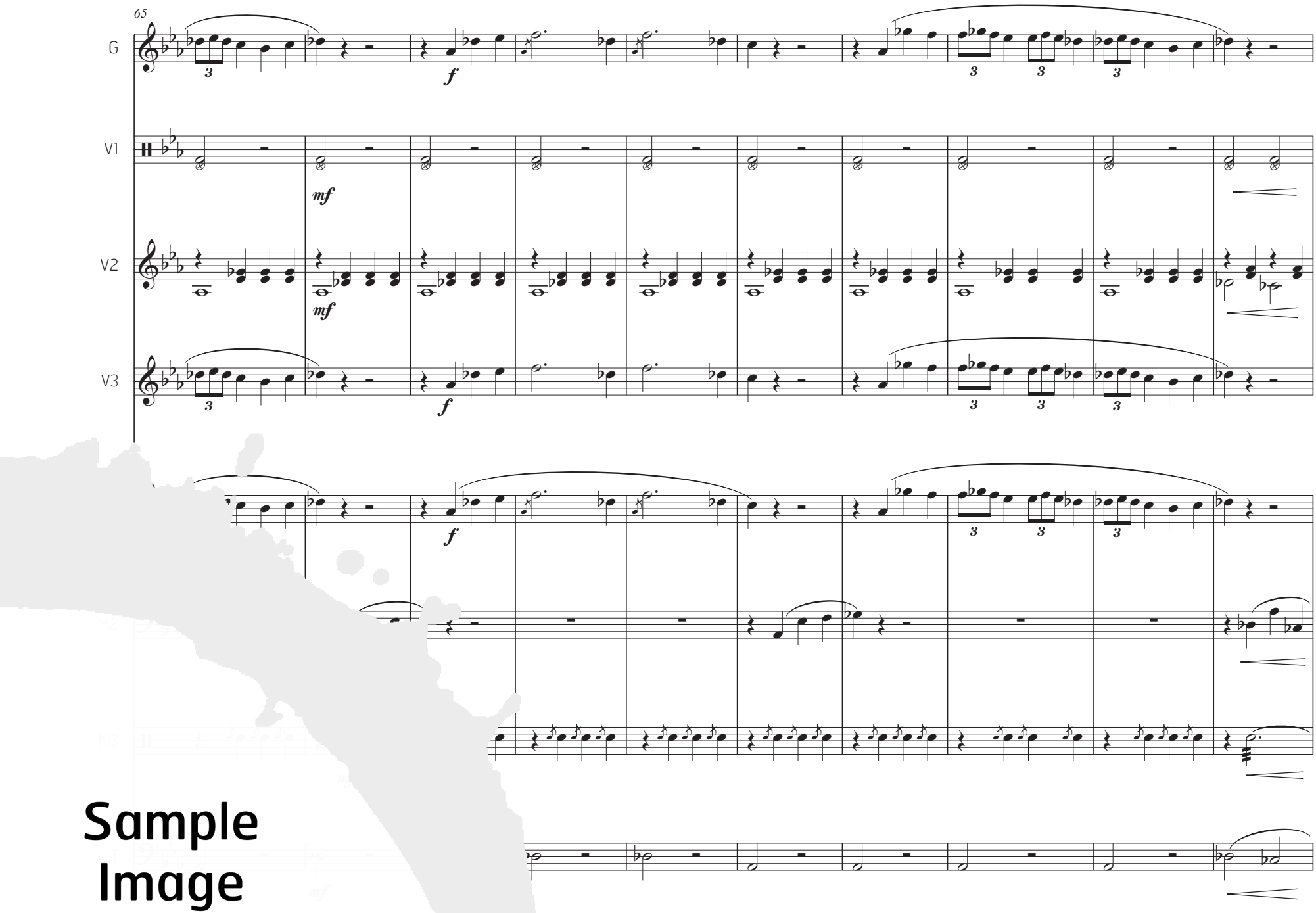

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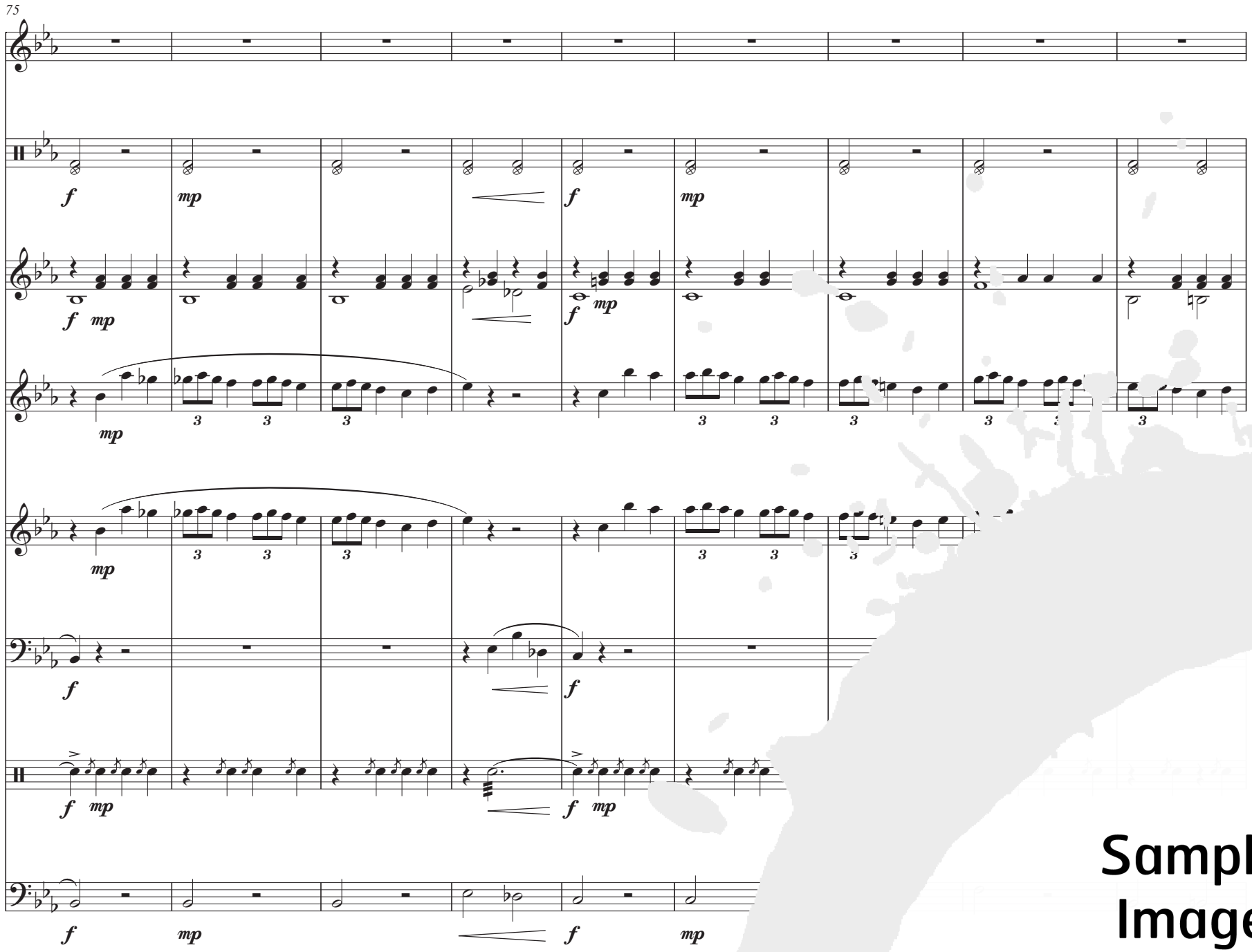

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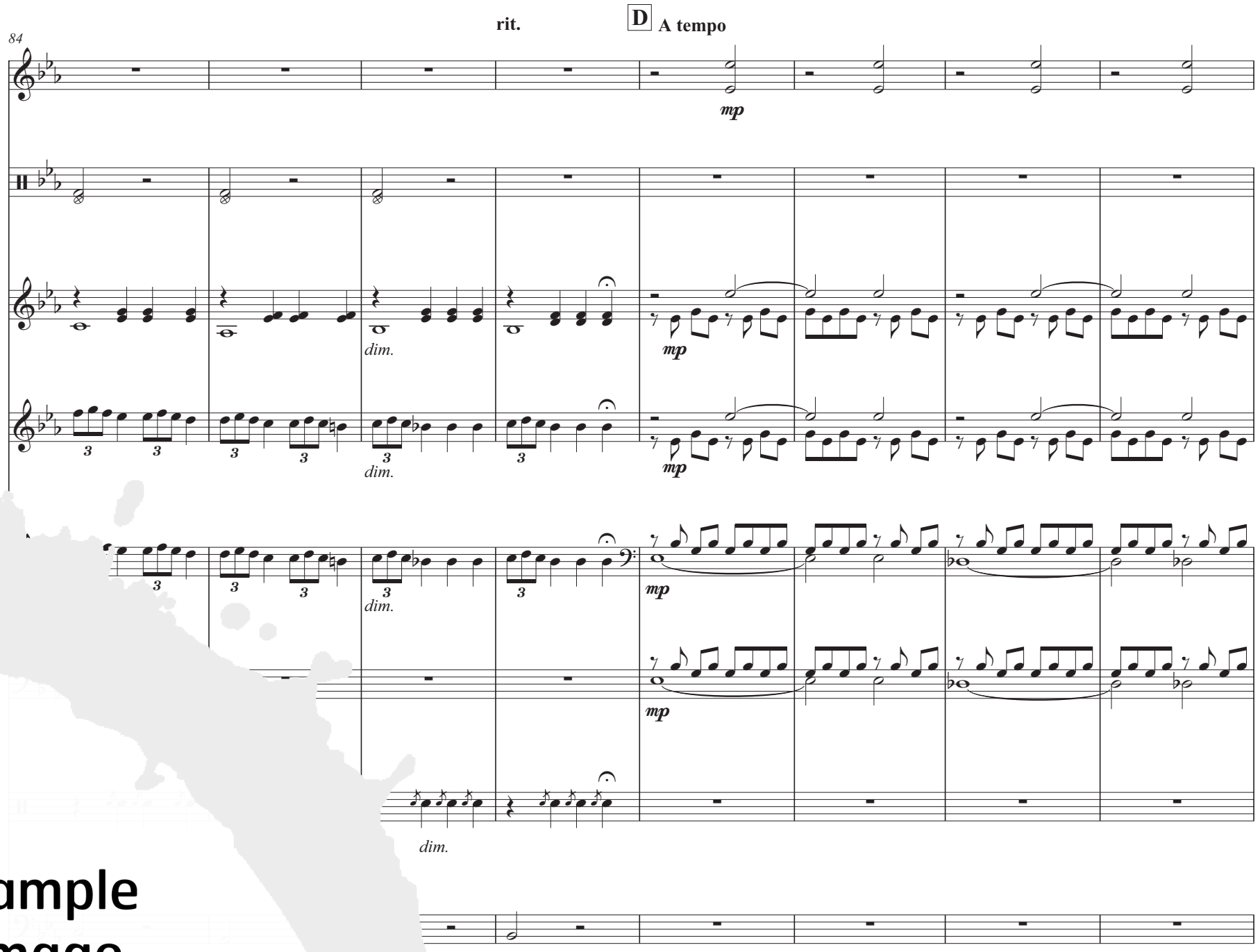

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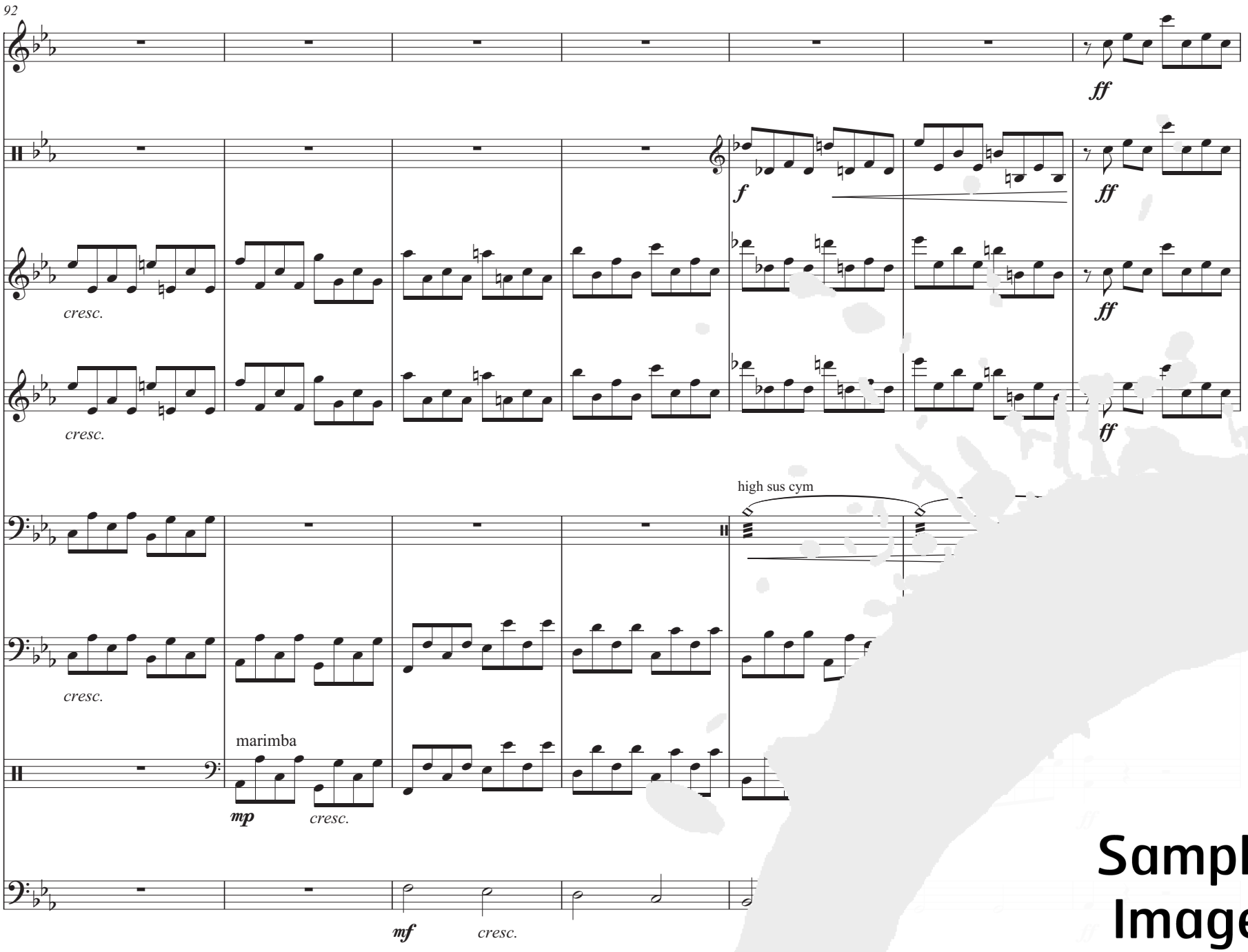

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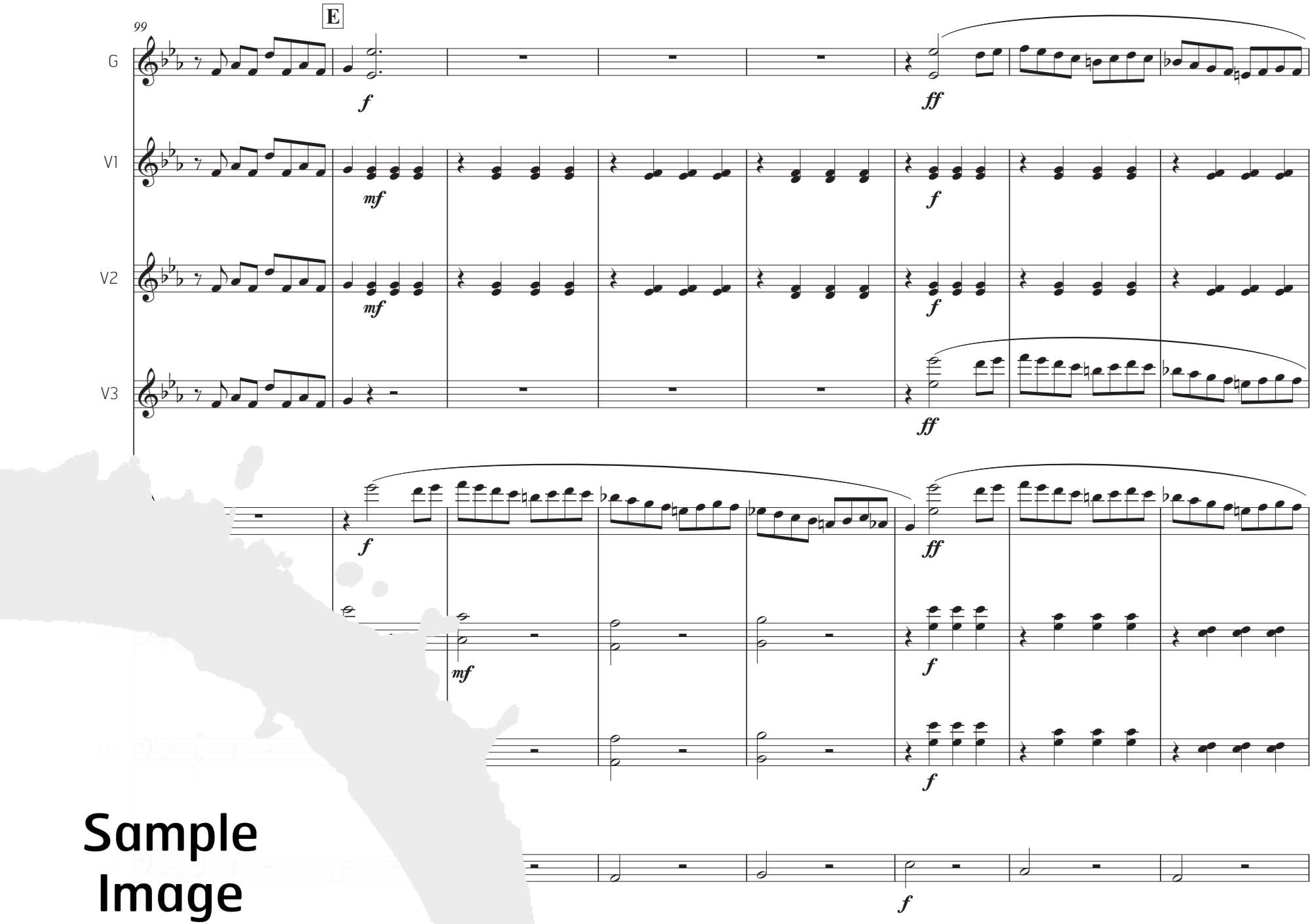

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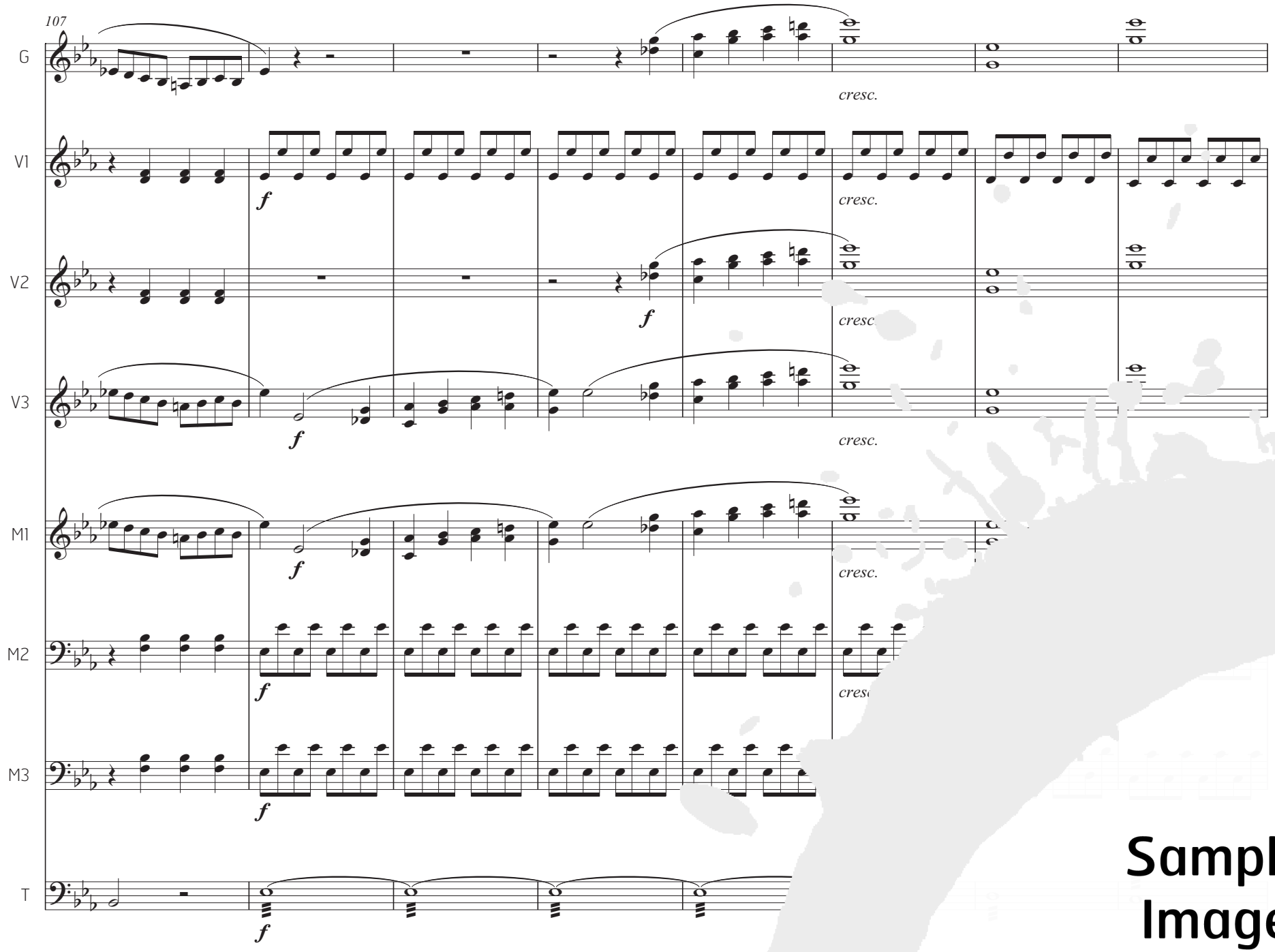

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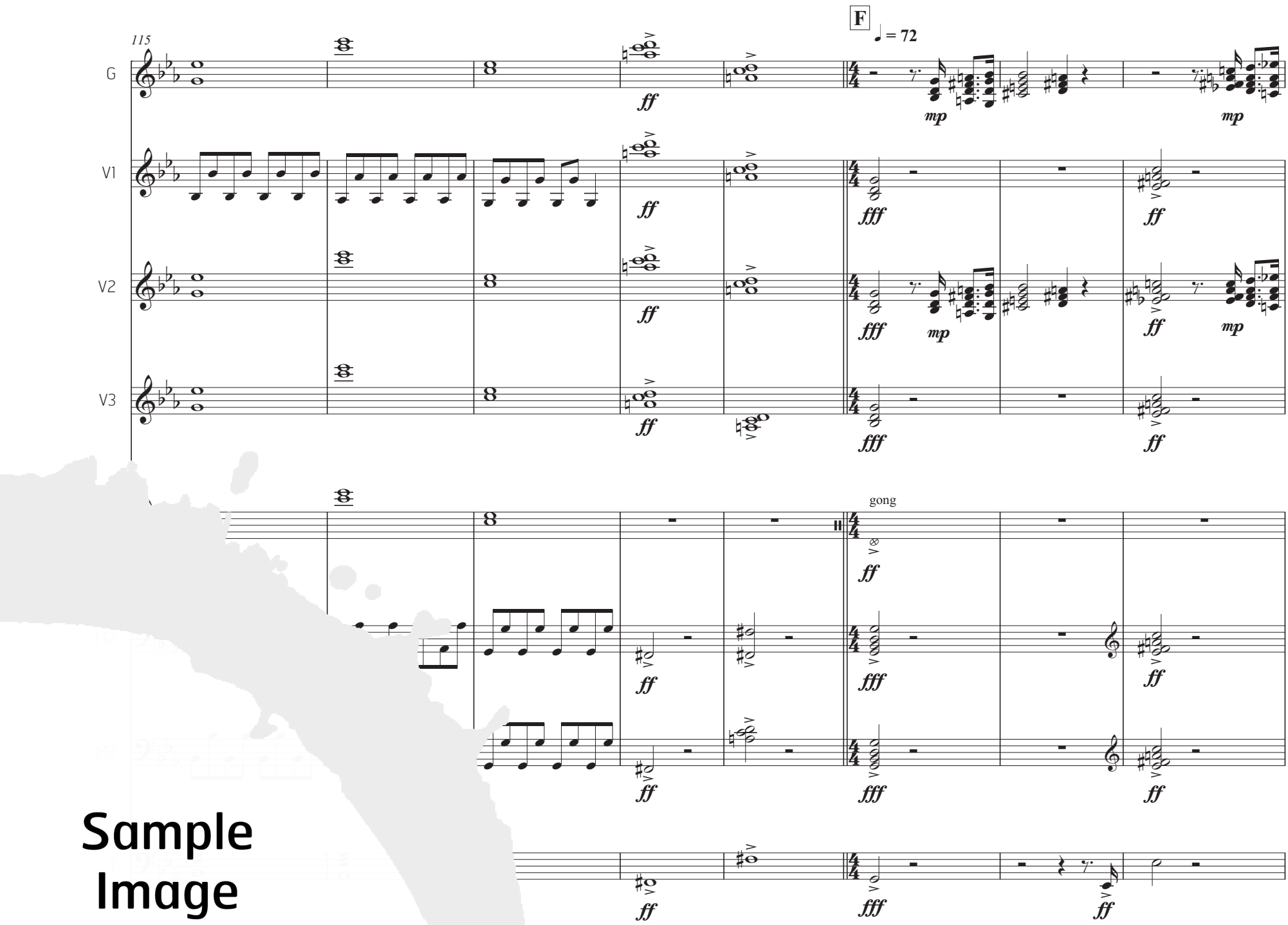

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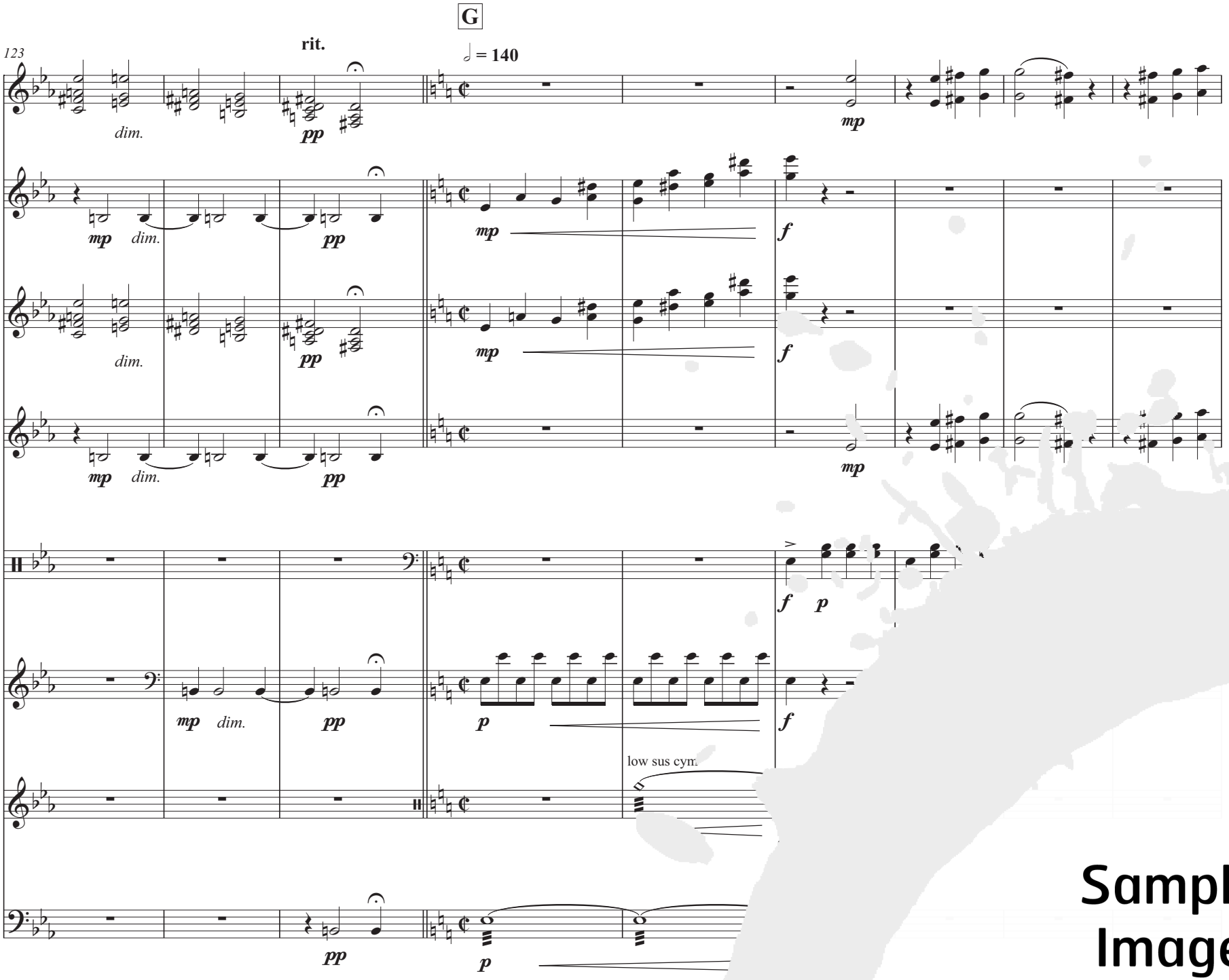

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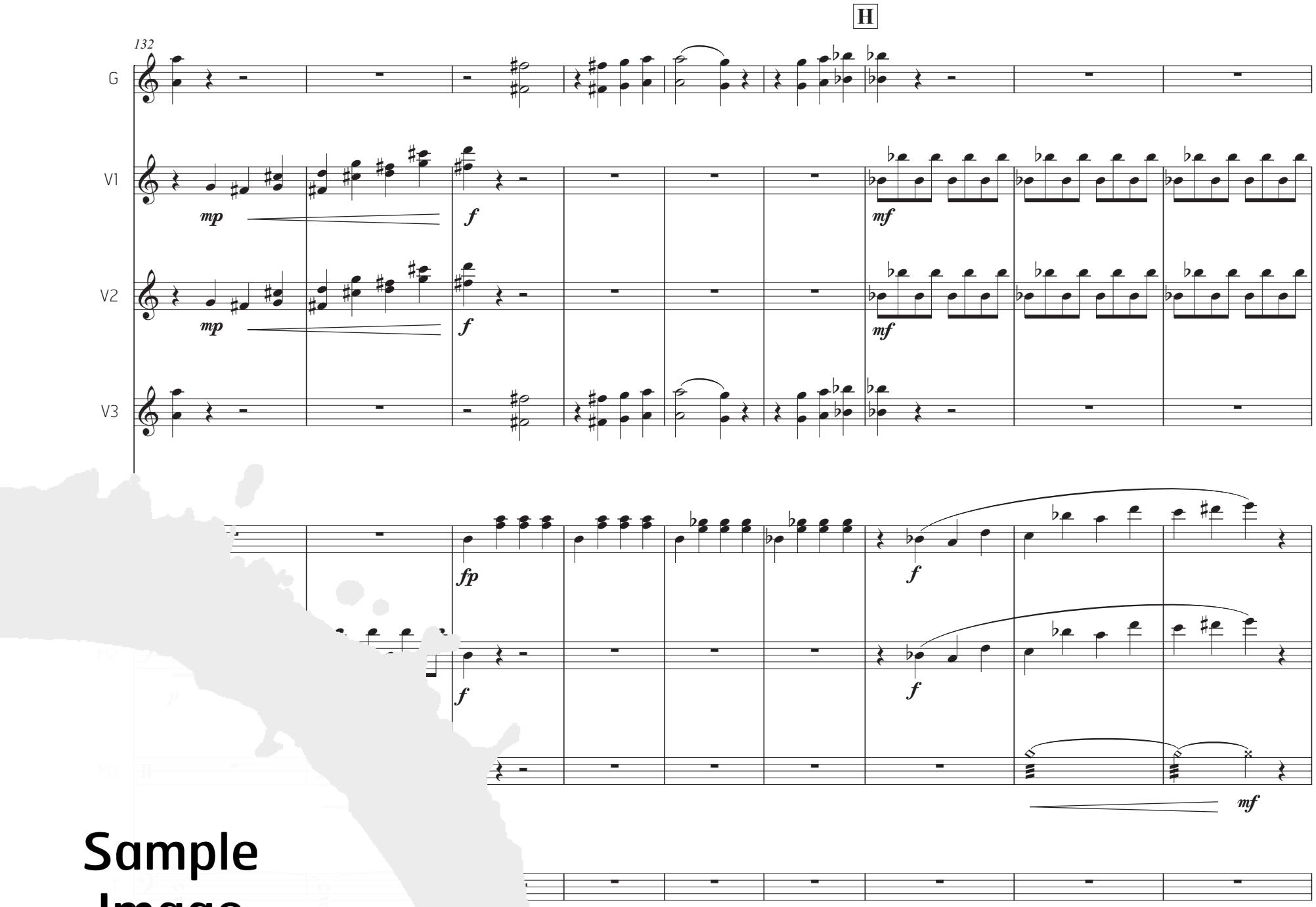

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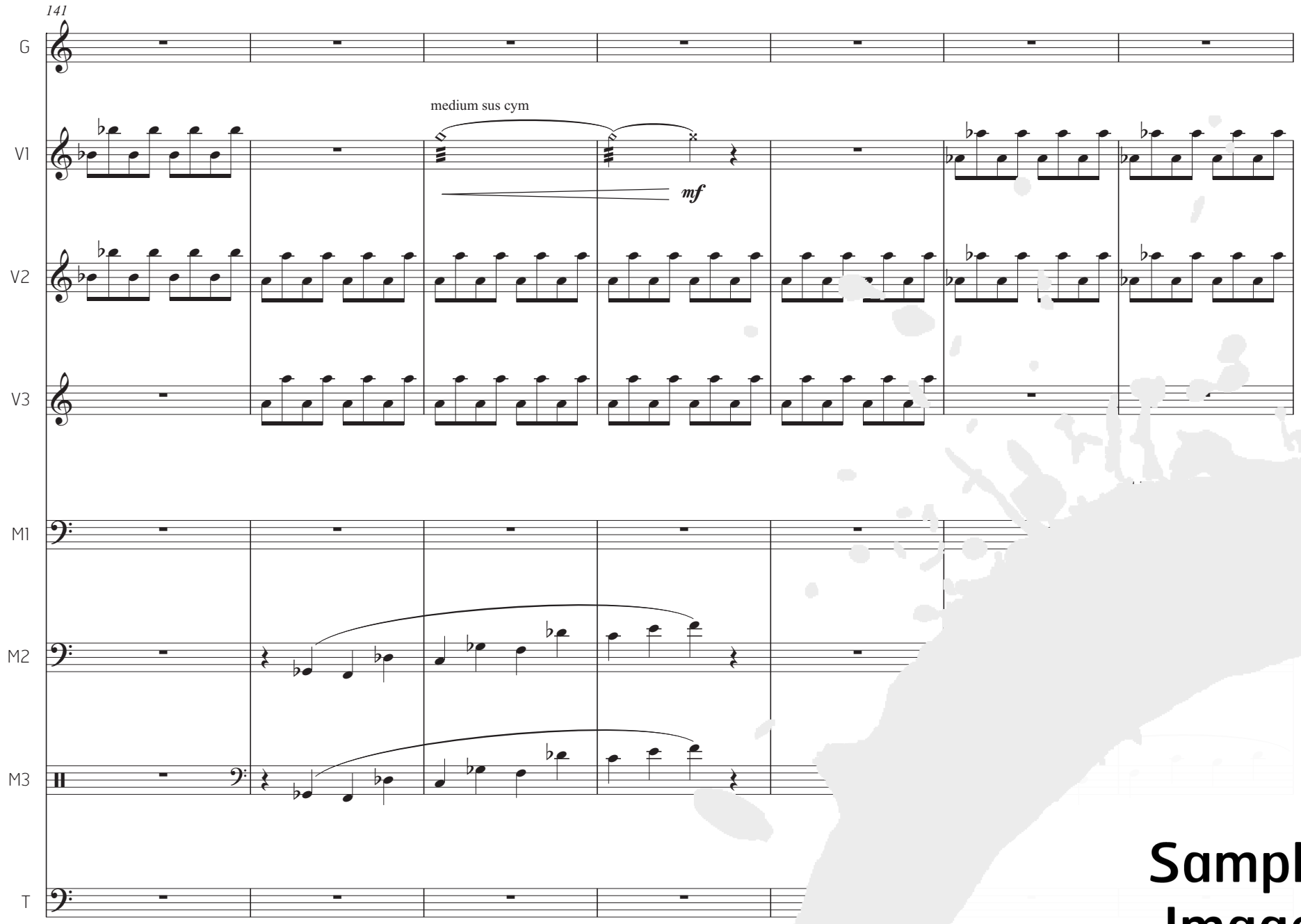

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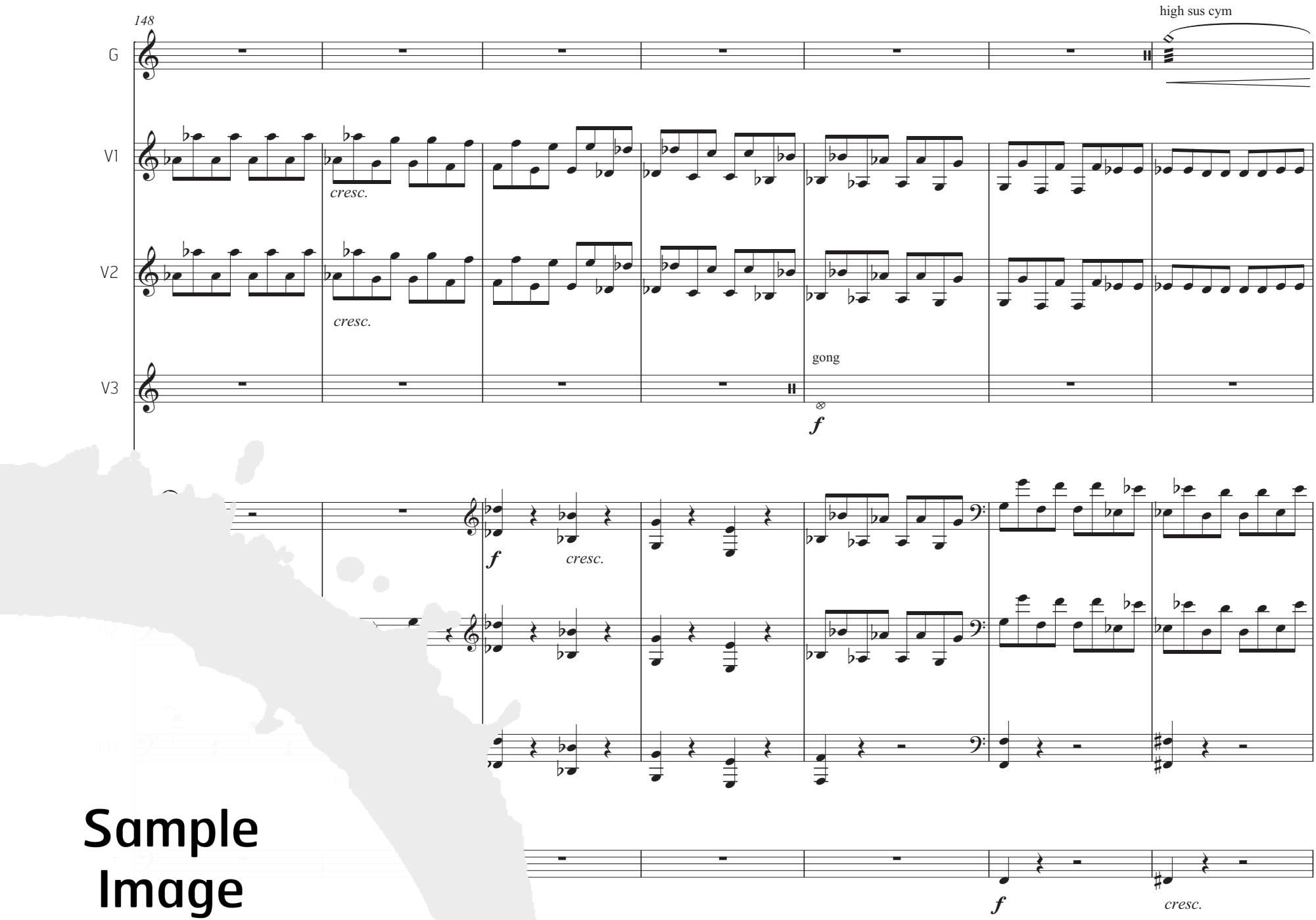

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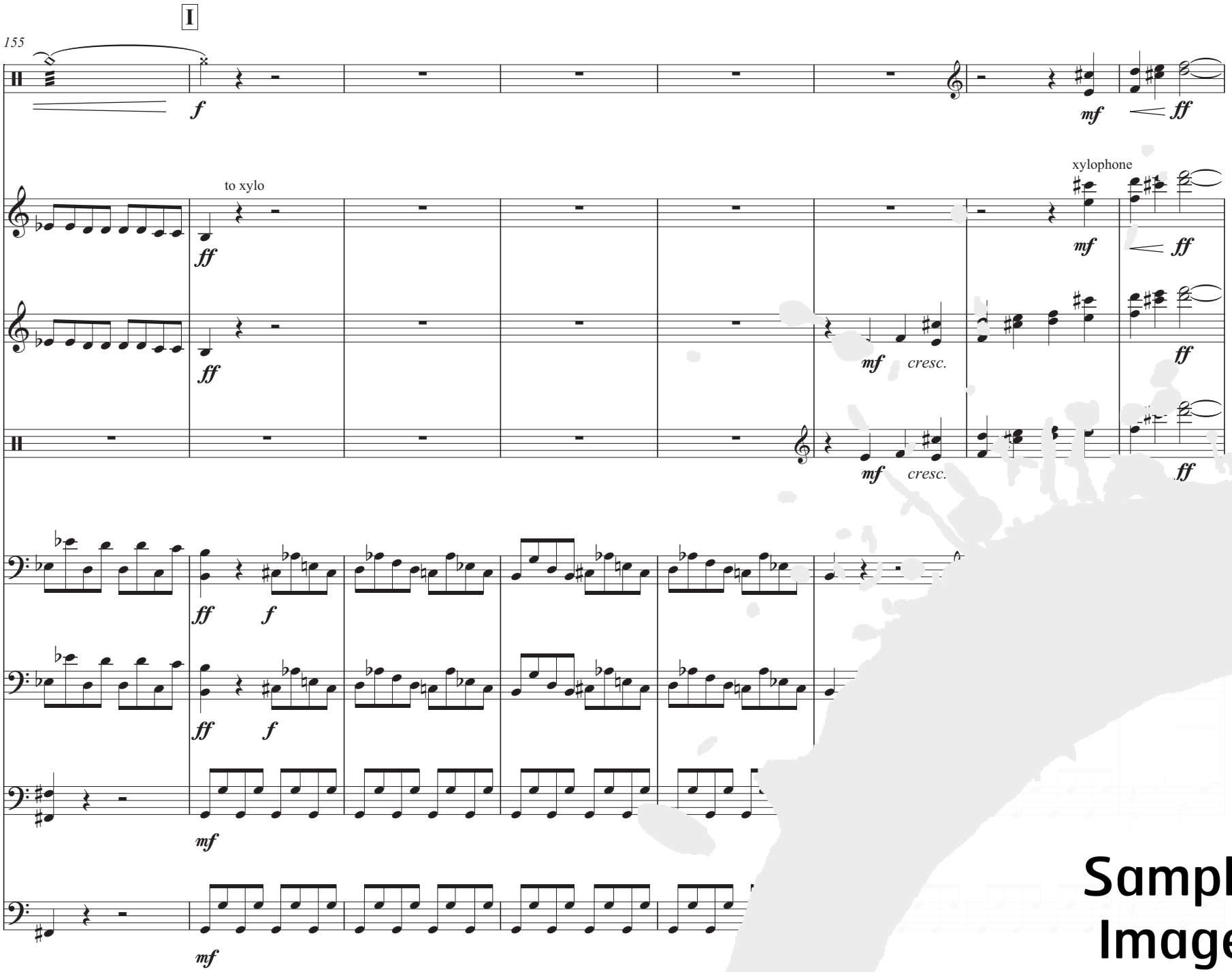

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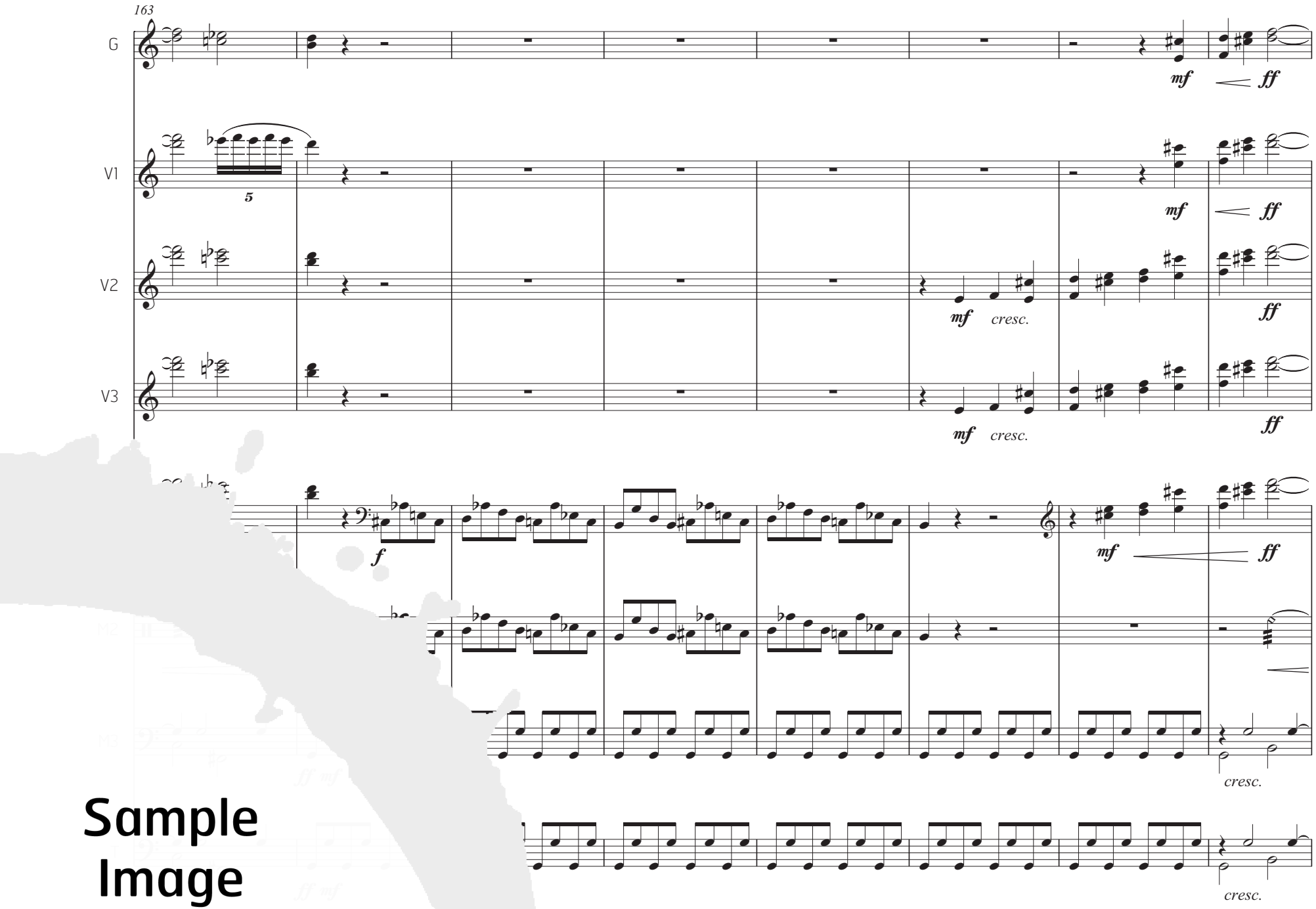

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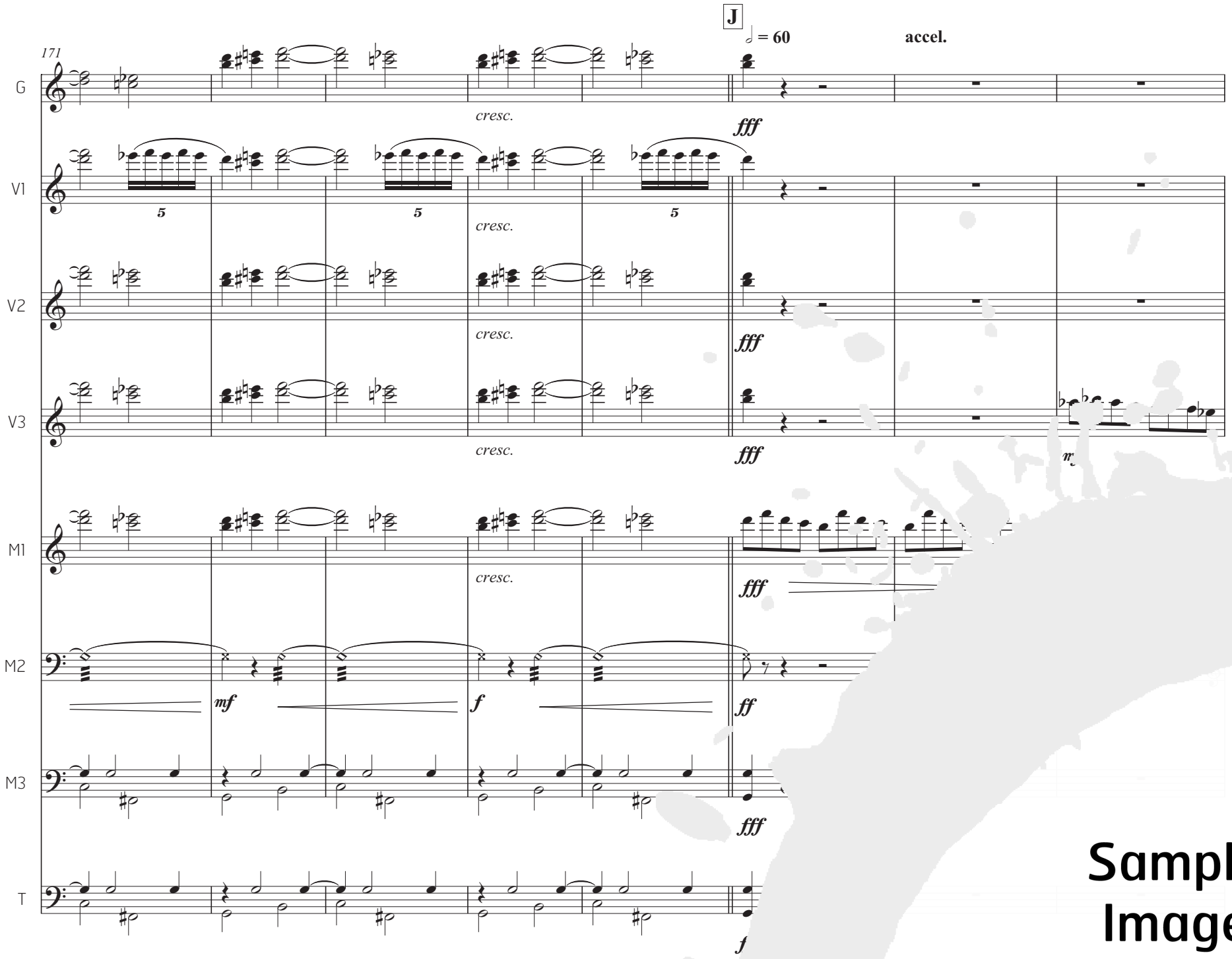

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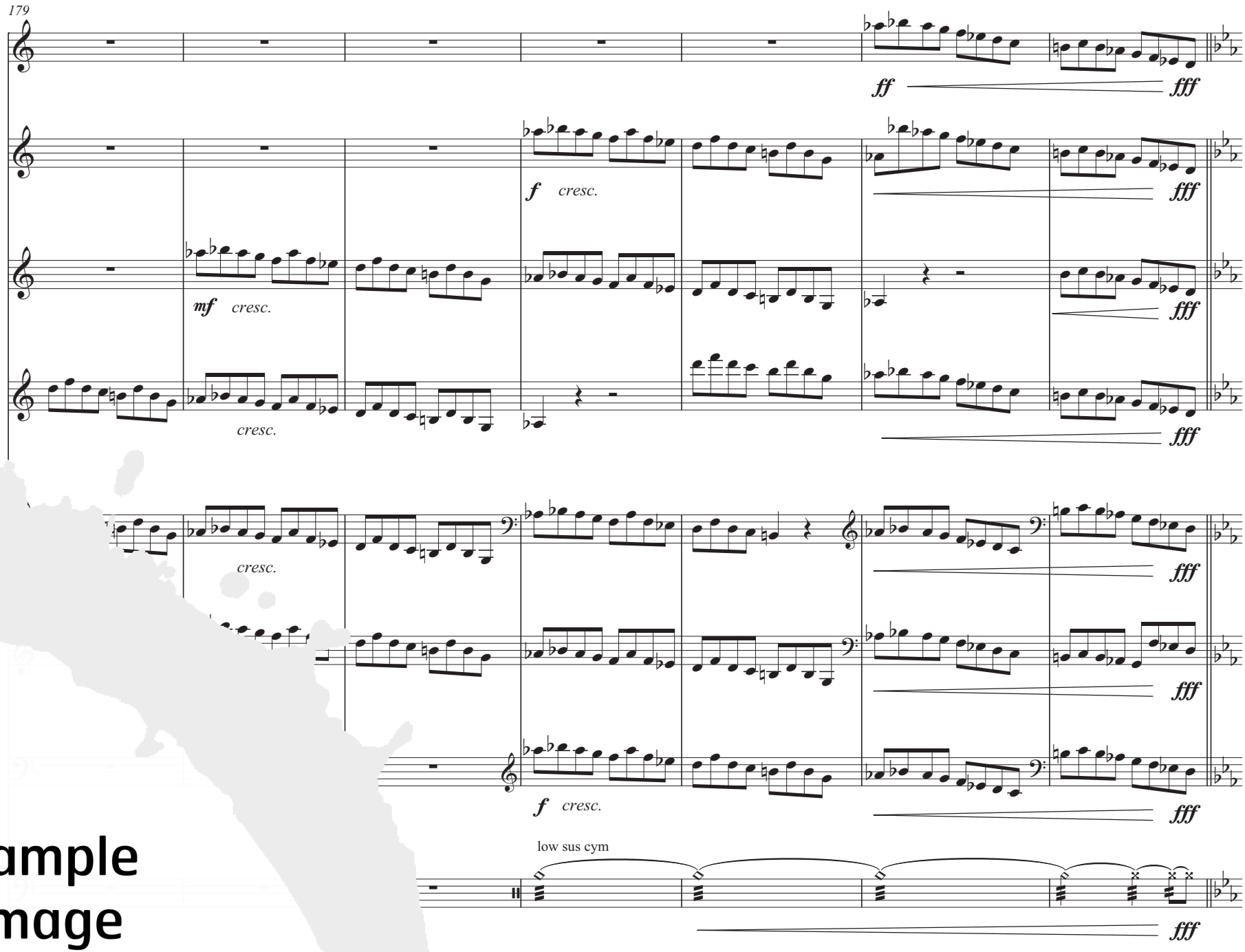

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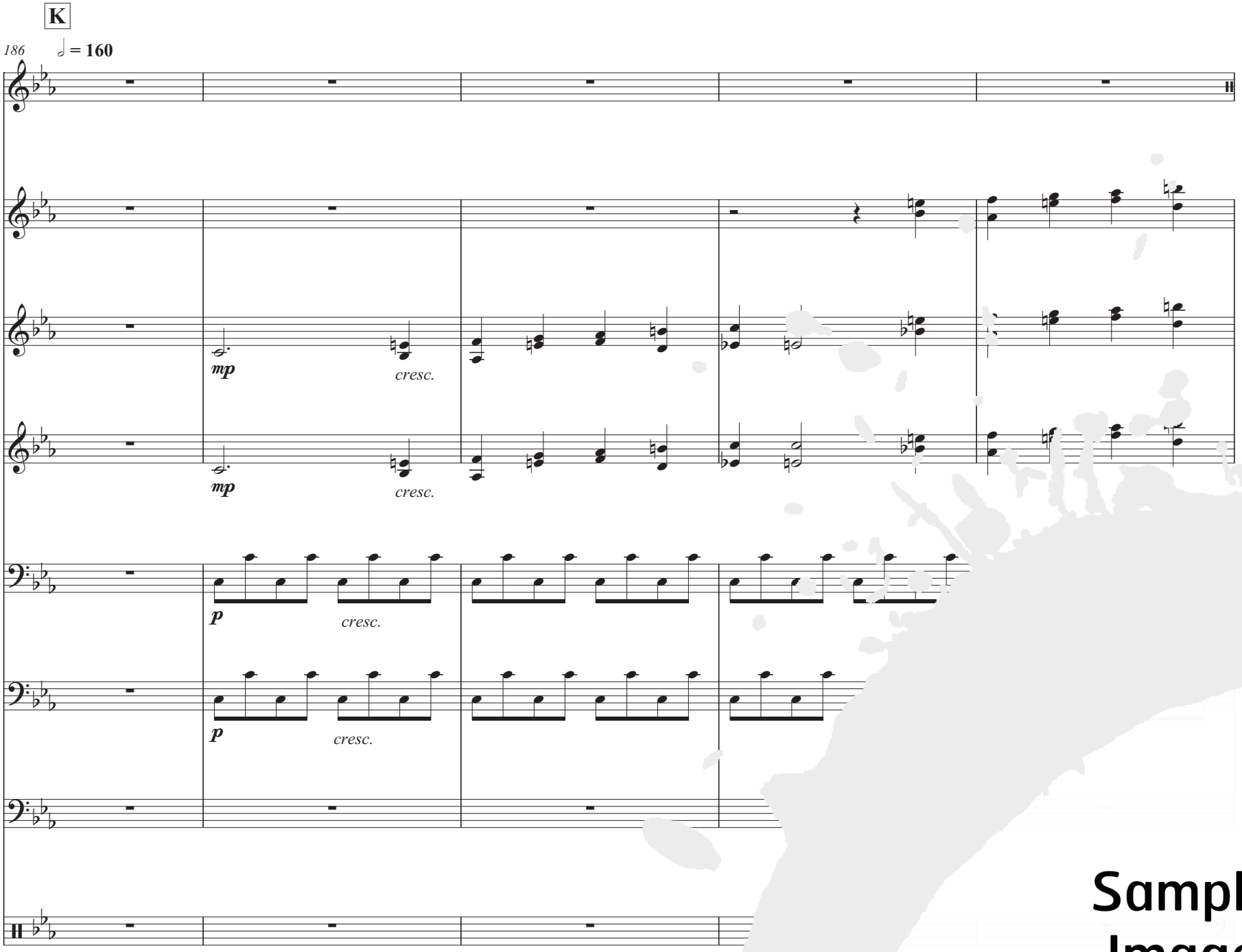

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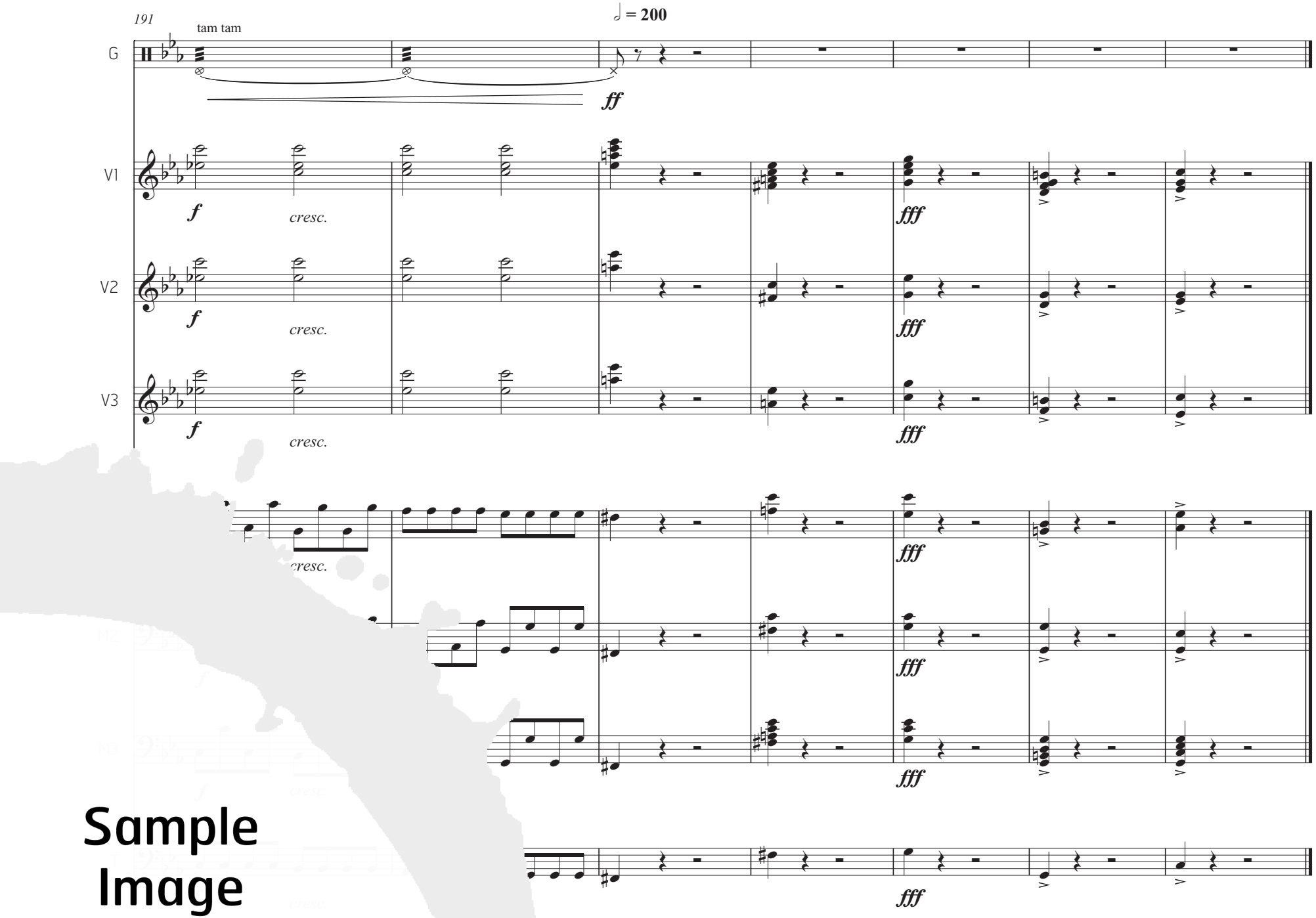

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