Béla Bartók

Hungarian composer **Béla Bartók** (1881-1945) combined 20th century compositional techniques with folk traditions of his native country to create unique styles of 20th century nationalistic music. Born in what was the country of Hungary at that time, he is known for being one of the greatest Hungarian composers.

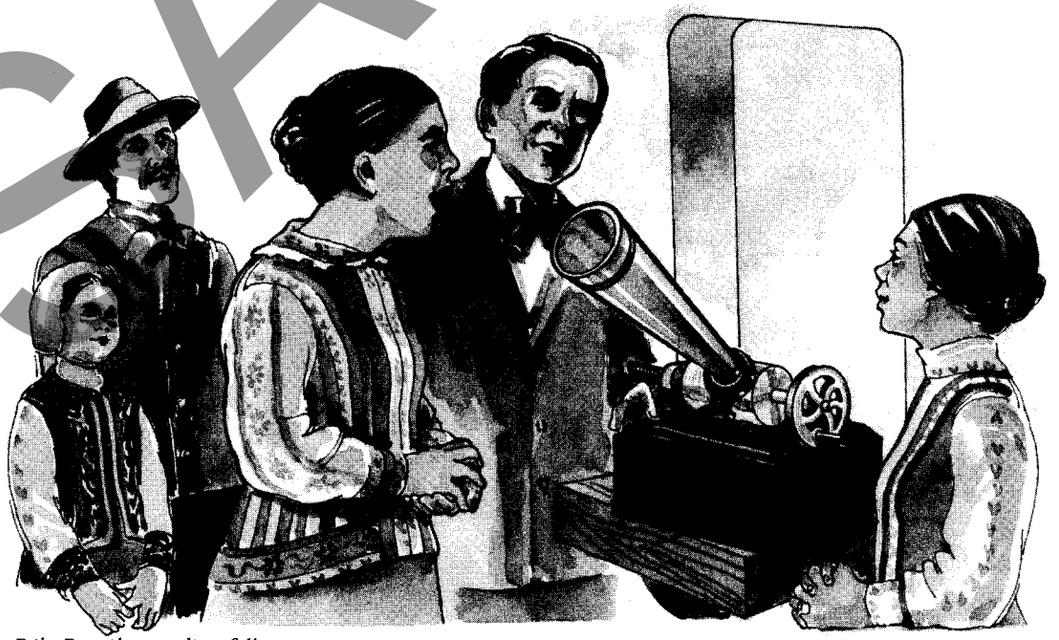
Young Bartók started his music studies at the age of five. Because his parents were musicians, they were quick to recognize his musical talents. His mother started him out with piano lessons and by age nine, he started composing. Upon giving his first piano recital at the age of 10, it was decided that he embark on more intensive piano study. At age 18 he entered the Budapest Academy of Music to study piano and composition.

As a twenty year old, Bartók knew well the styles of German Romantic music as well as other music from other musical periods, though, he did not feel much creative stimulation. In 1902, however, he heard music by Richard Strauss for the first time. This marked a significant change in his career as a composer. From there it wasn't much longer until he began a lifelong friendship and association with Zoltán Kodály. Together, they discovered endless resources of Hungarian folk music. Armed with an Edison cylinder recorder, Bartók traveled around the countryside conducting fieldwork and recording villagers singing folk songs. He, along with Kodály, compiled several thousand folk melodies which, until then, were totally unknown to the rest of the world. Bartók also extended his research to include Slovak and Romanian folk music. Throughout his research, he constantly desired to seek the roots of rhythms, meters, and the use of melodic and harmonic foundations in the songs and dances of his people.

Since Bartók was an accomplished pianist, he enjoyed composing for the piano, but he also composed for orchestra, chamber groups, and voice. Bartók's **Romanian Folk Dances** was originally composed for solo piano. His compositional output was significant, but he also concertized on piano throughout most of his life in order to maintain an income.

He often performed his own works, as he did during a 1927 visit to the United States. Bartók came to America again in 1940, this time to escape the rule of the Nazi regime. He brought his wife with him and together, they earned a meager living by giving frequent two-piano recitals. While living in New York City, he maintained his folk song research. He missed his homeland and always held hope of returning. The research he conducted at Columbia University was the closest he would ever get to his beloved home of Hungary. Bartók's years in America were unhappy ones despite the overwhelming number of commissions he received from top musicians of the day. He was homesick, distraught over the war, and saddened over the loss of his mother. Illness plagued him frequently throughout his final years. Despite his condition, he completed several large-scale works including **Concerto for Orchestra**.

Béla Bartók's surveying, collating, and editing of folk music was done with an exceptional degree of meticulousness. His work is considered an important contribution to ethnomusicology. His compositional output did not receive high accolades until the end of his life and after.



Béla Bartók recording folk songs

SAMPLE

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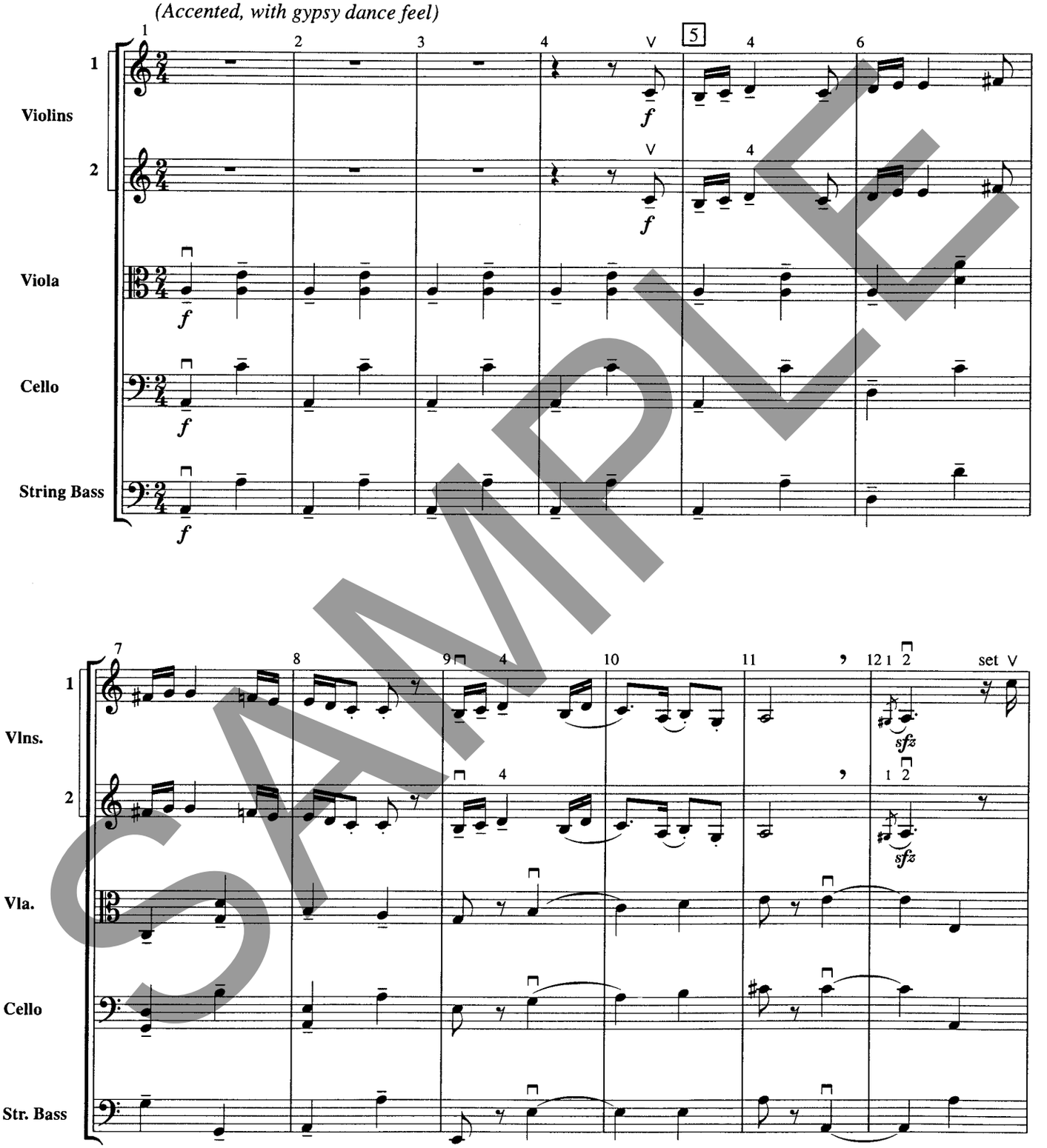
Romanian Folk Dances

1. Joc Cu Bâta

Full Conductor Score
Approx. time – 4:50

Béla Bartók
Arranged by Deborah Baker Monday

Allegro moderato (♩ = 76)
(Accented, with gypsy dance feel)



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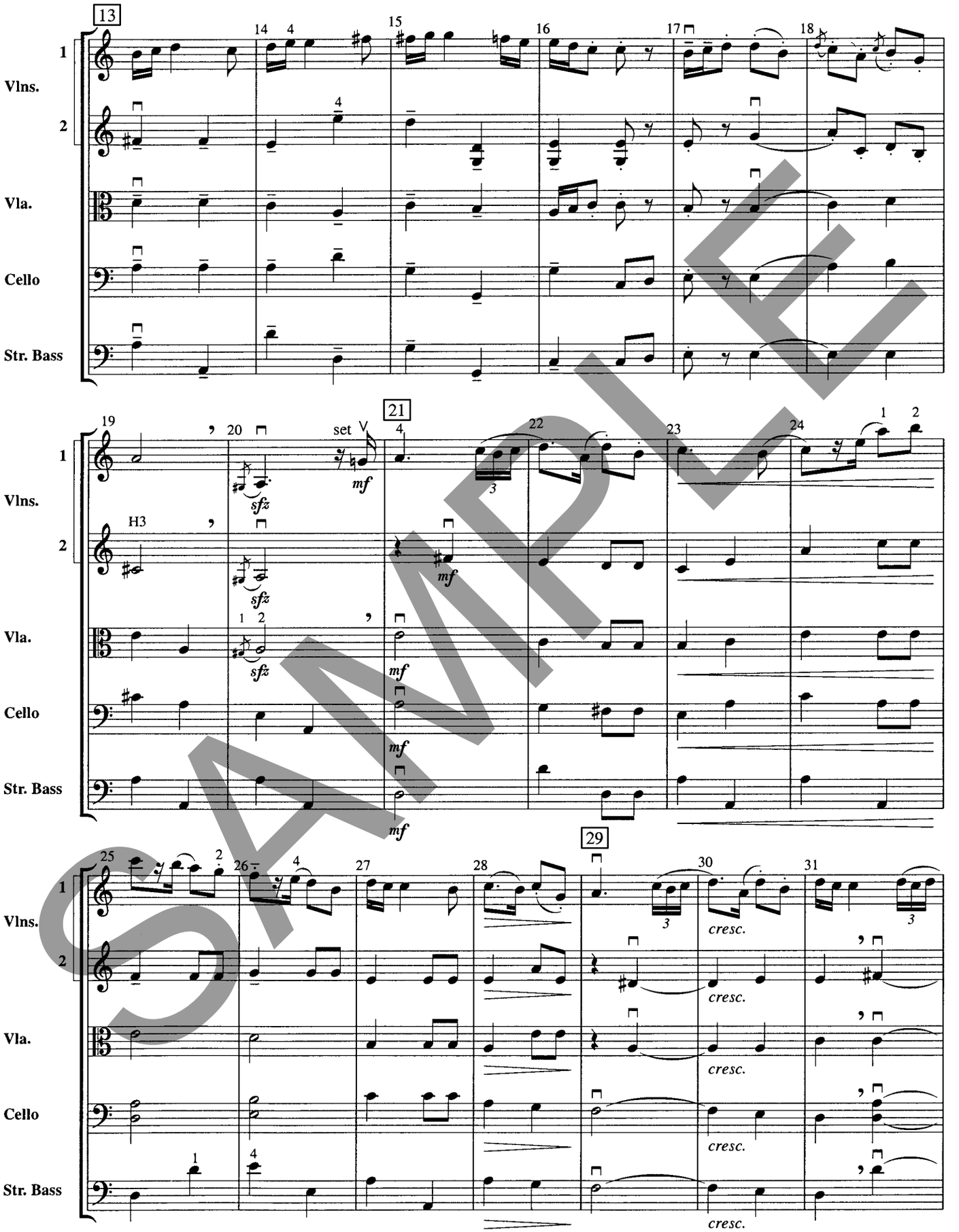
13
14
15
16
17
18
Vlns.
1
2
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
19
20
set V
21
22
23
24
H3
sfz
mf
cresc.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

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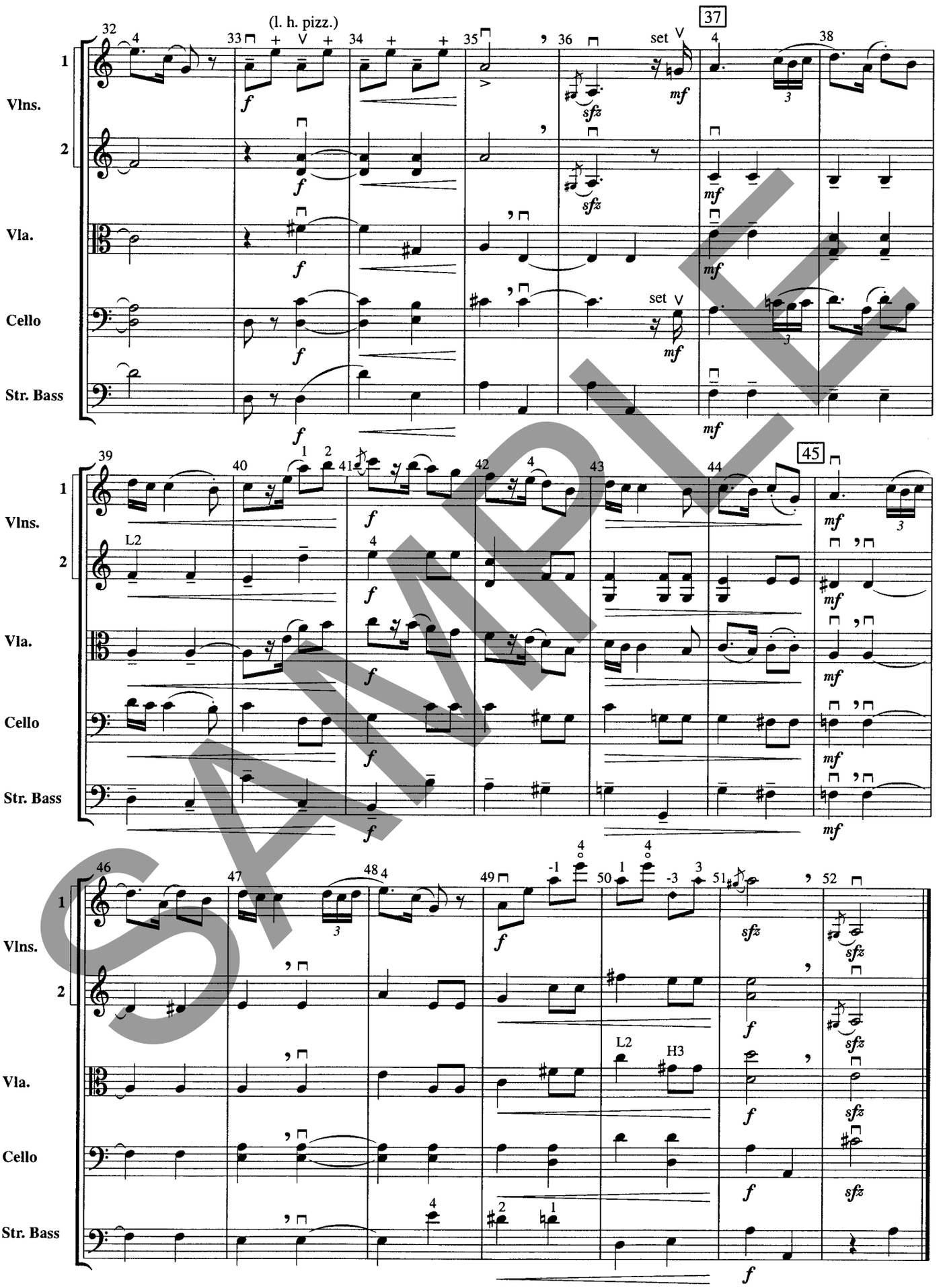

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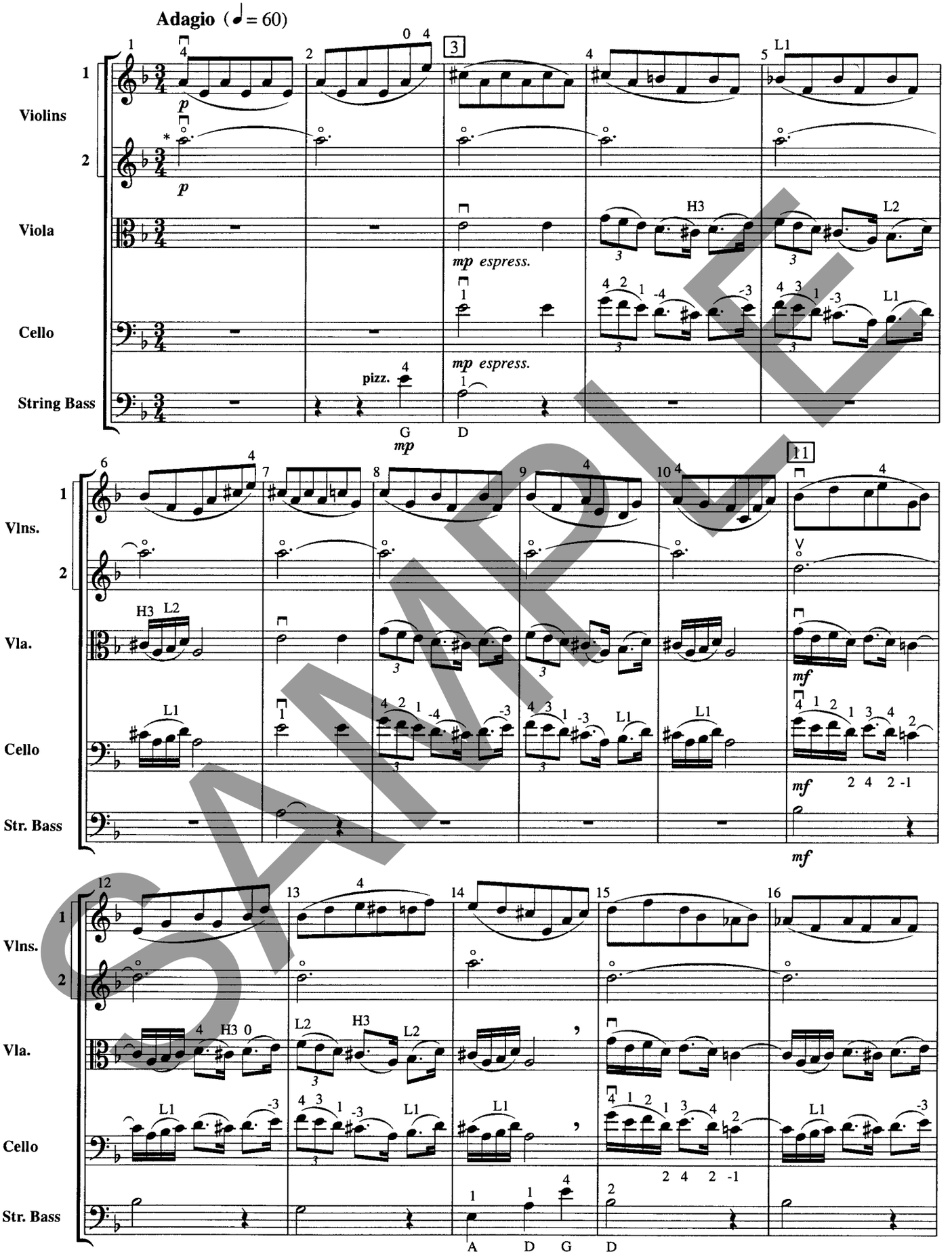
2. Buciumeana



* Harmonic: touch lightly with 4th finger halfway between bridge and nut.

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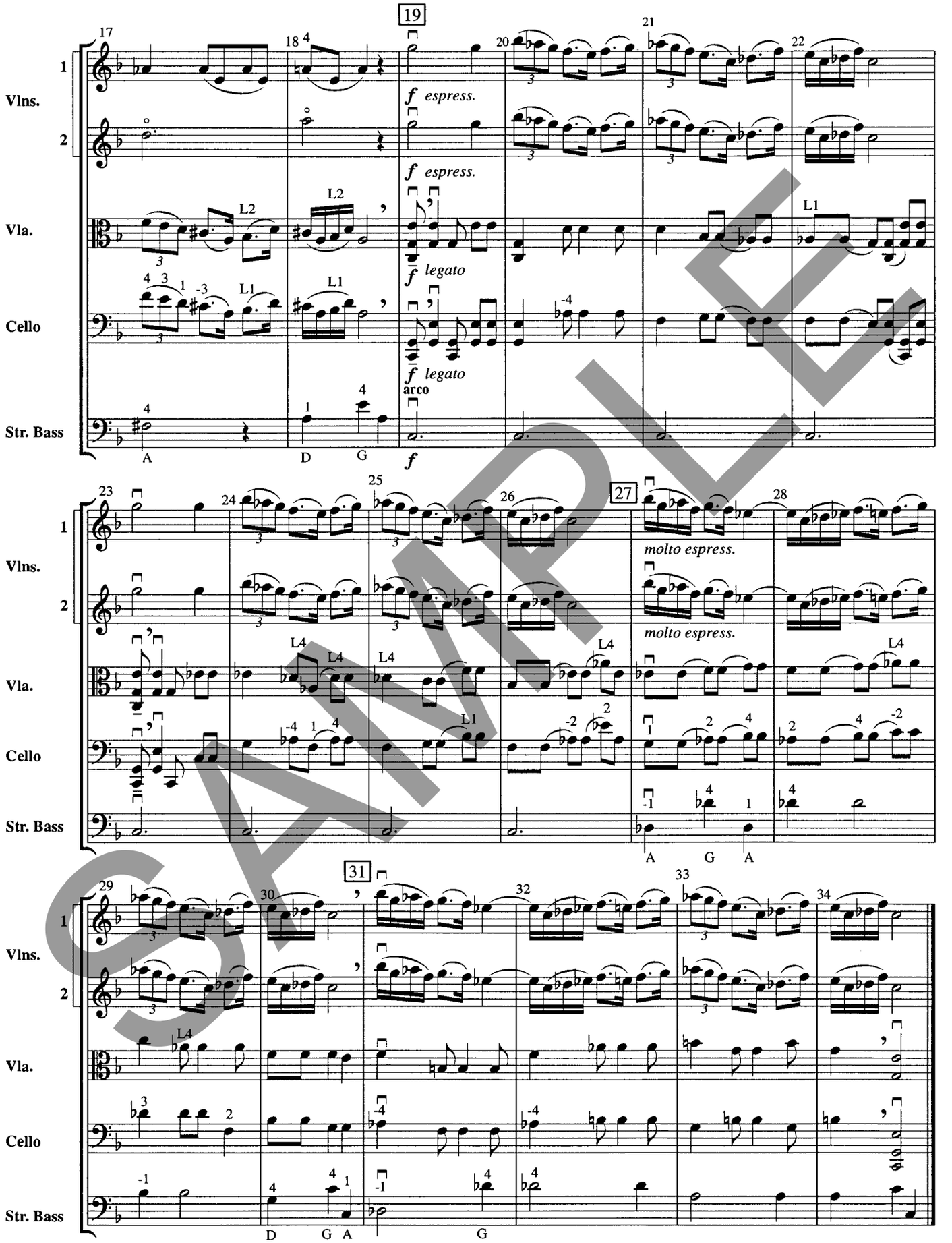
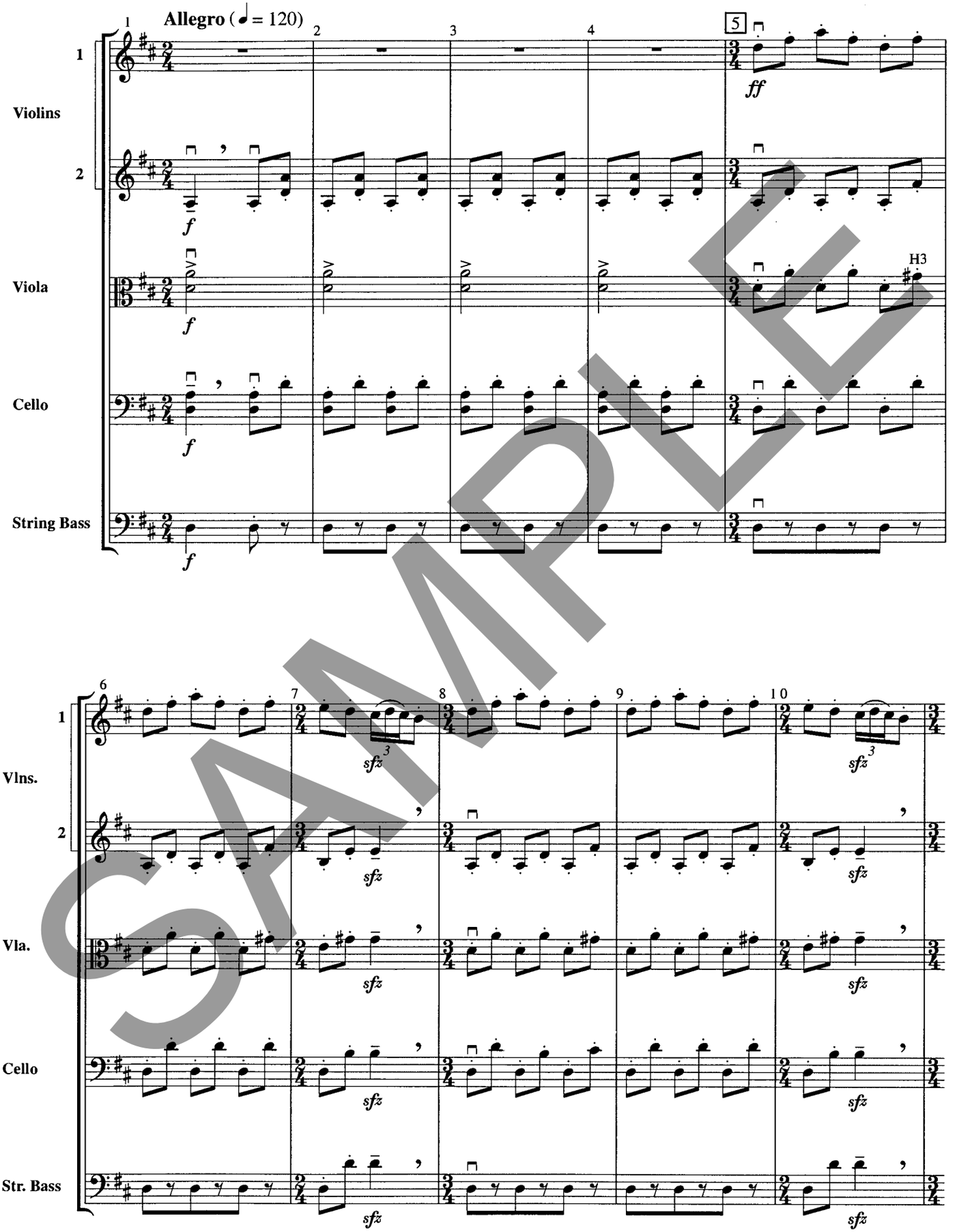

19
Vlns.
1
2
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
f espress.
f legato
arco
molto espress.
27
31

SAMPLE

3. Poarga Românească



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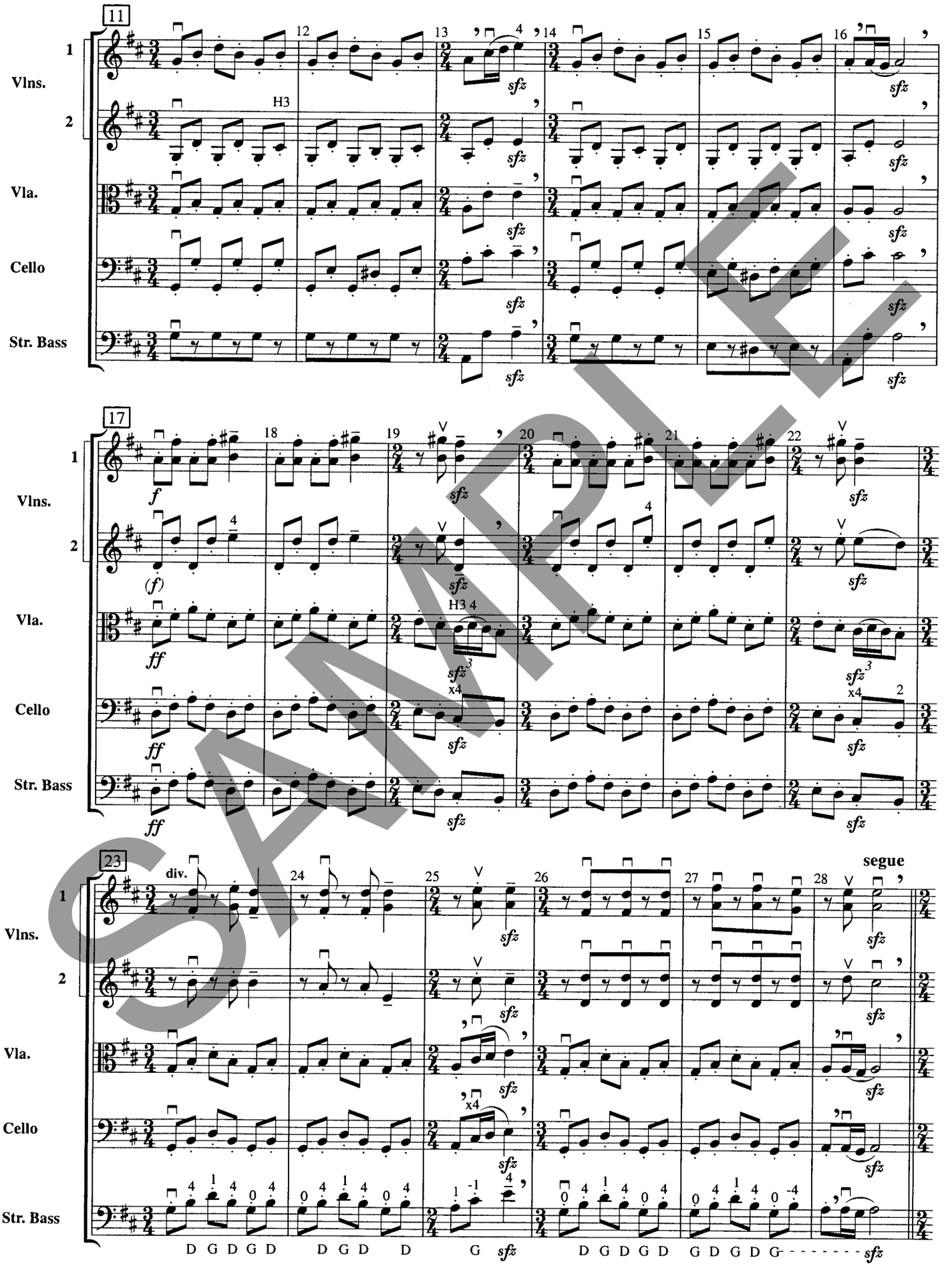
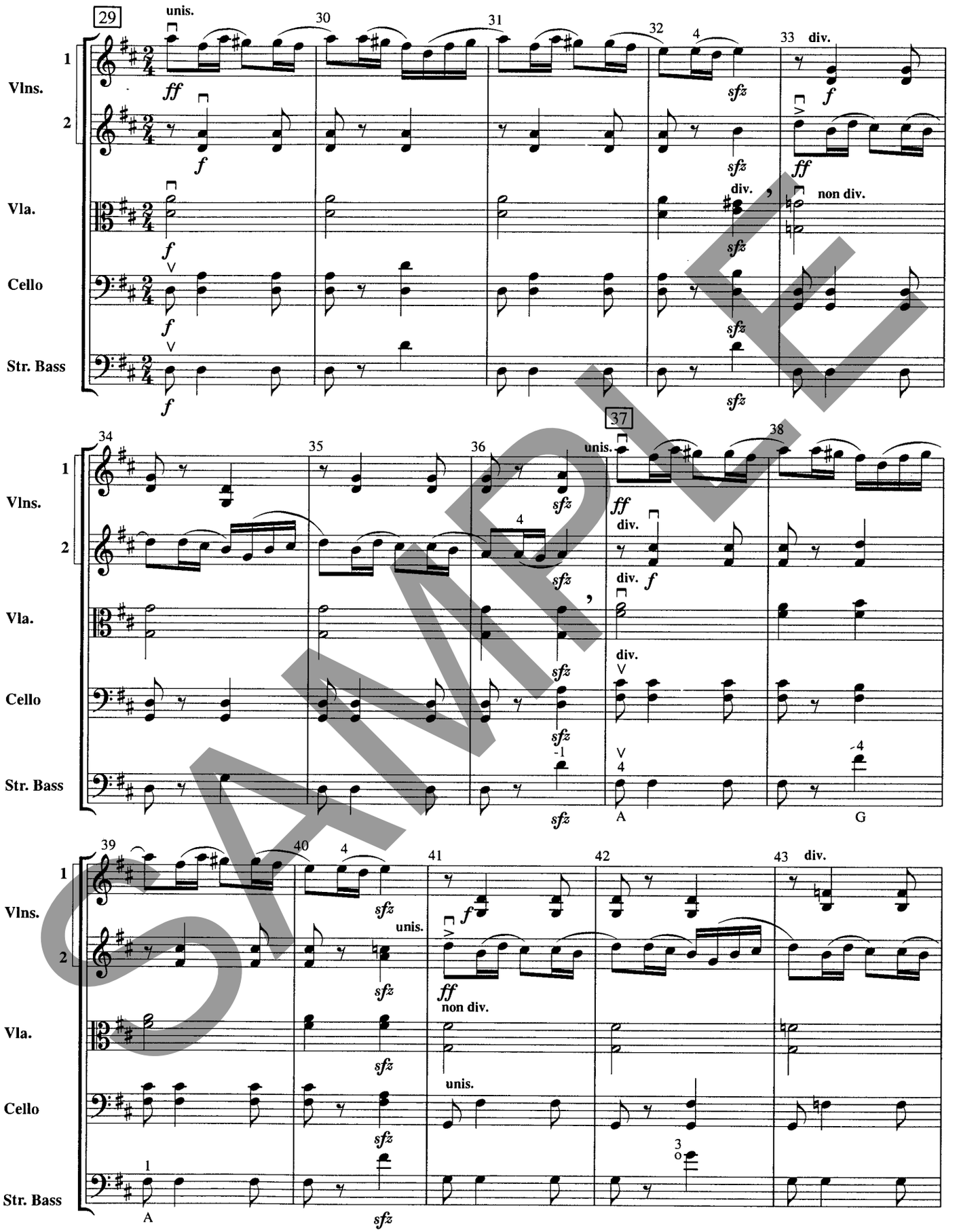

11
12
13
14
15
16
1
Vlns.
2
H3
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
sfz
17
18
19
20
21
22
f
(f)
ff
H3 4
x4
23
div.
24
25
26
27
28
segue
D G D G D
D G D D
G
D G D G D
G D G D G
sfz

SAMPLE

4. Maruntel



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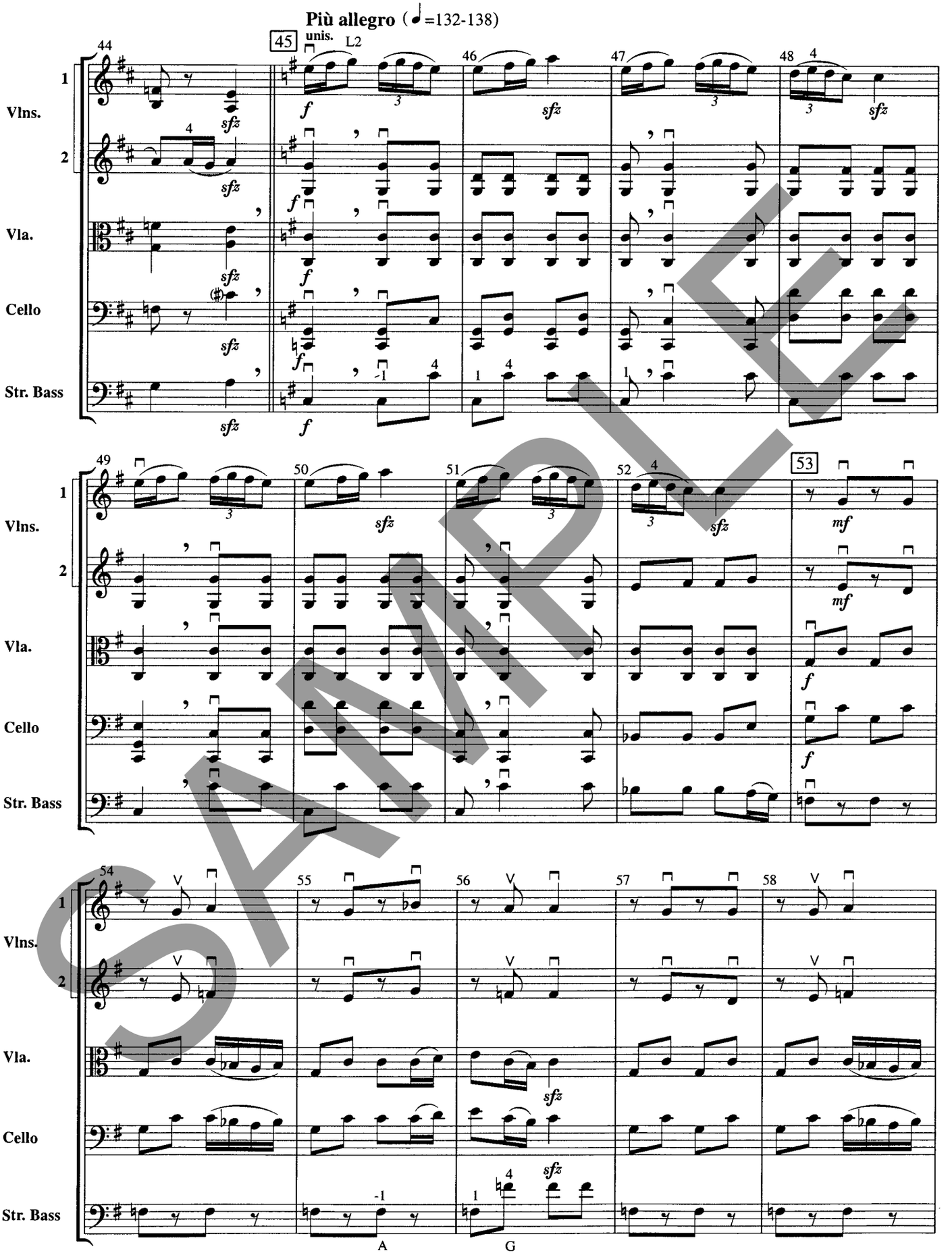

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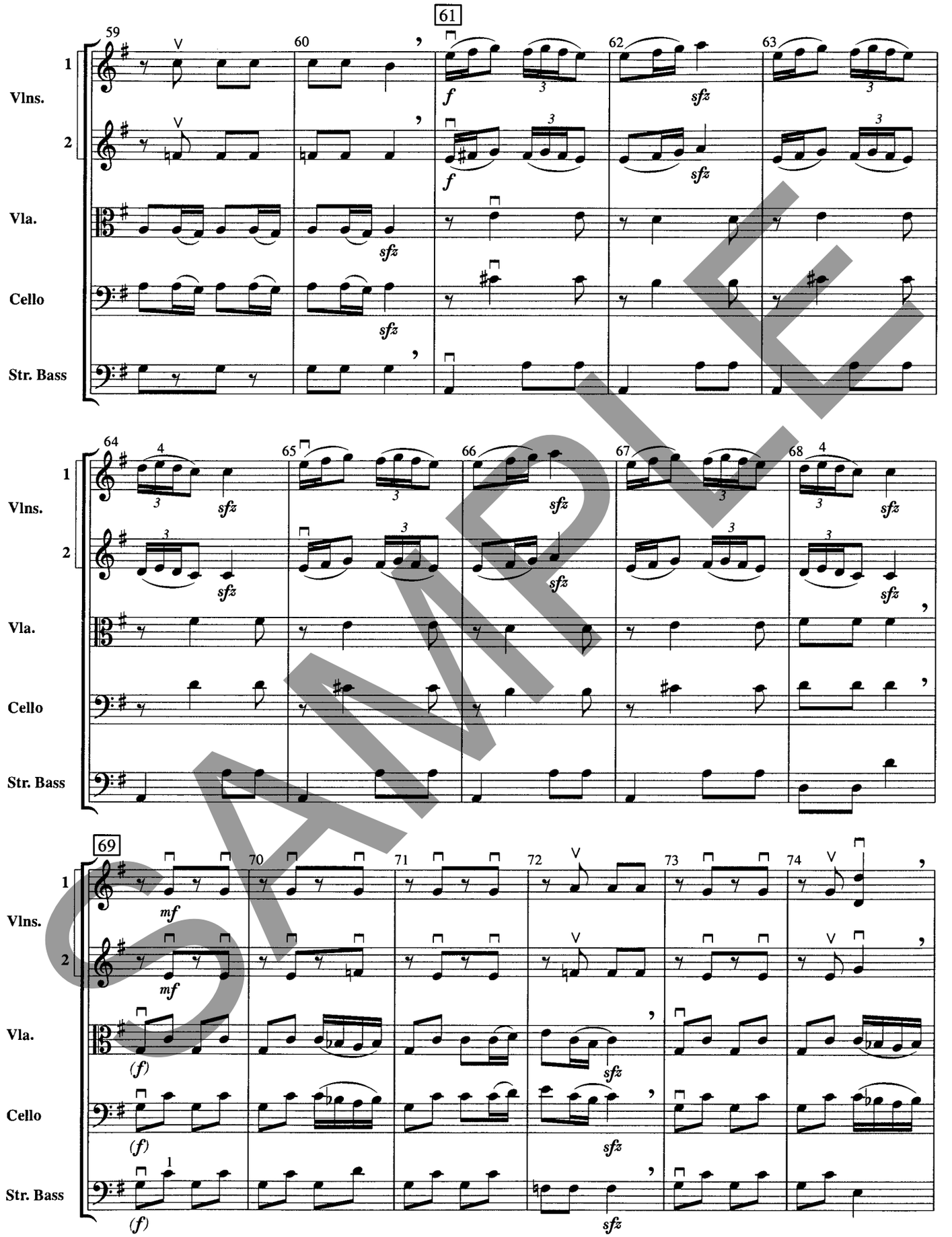
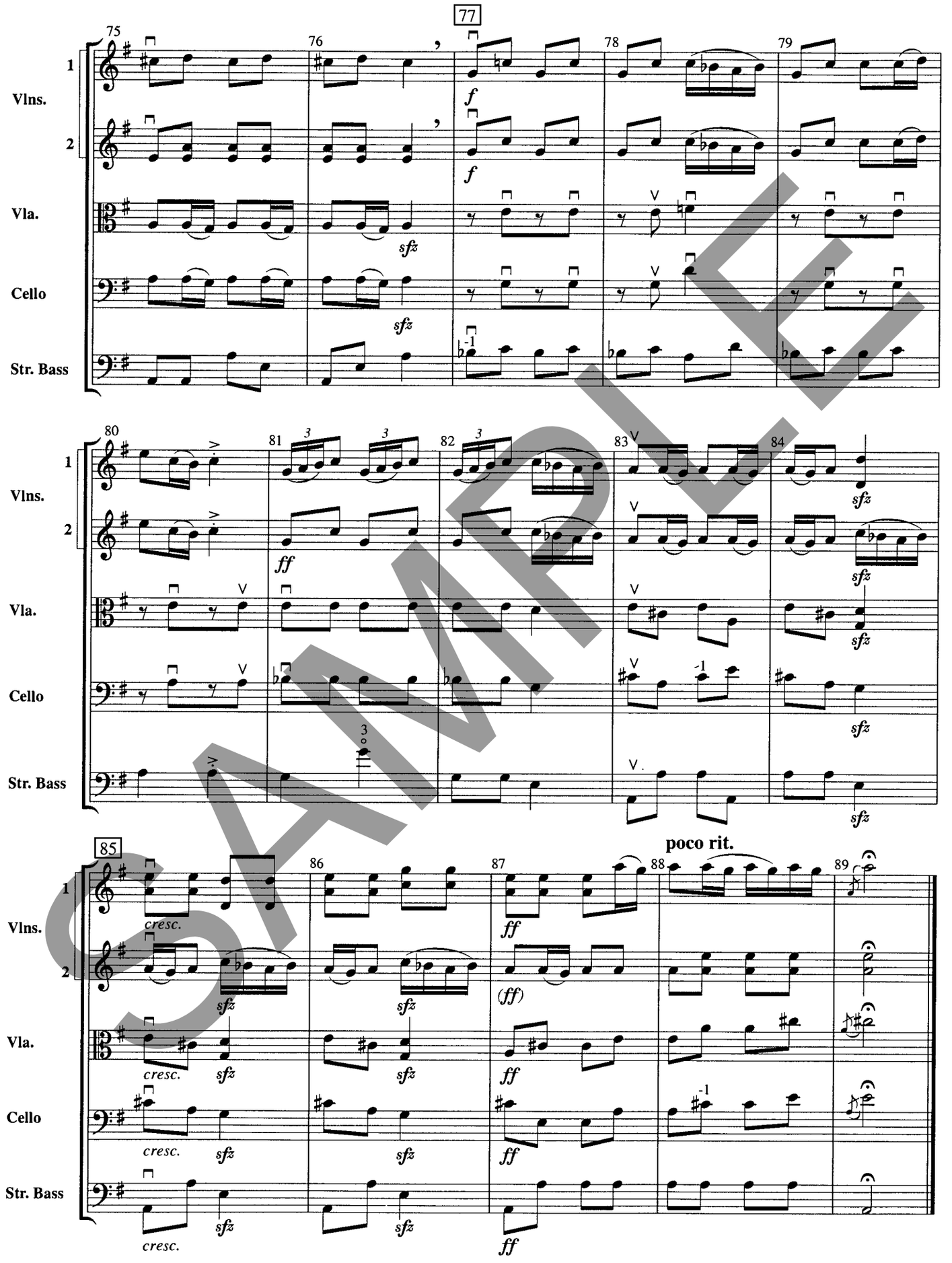
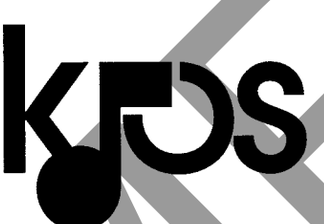

59
60
61
62
63
Vlns.
1
2
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
f
sfz
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
mf
(f)

SAMPLE


75
76
77
78
79
Vlns.
1
2
Vla.
Cello
Str. Bass
f
sfz
80
81
82
83
84
ff
85
86
87
88
89
cresc.
(ff)
poco rit.

SAMPLE

SAMPLE



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