PREFACE

1

In Ersilia, to establish the relationships that sustain the city's life, the inhabitants stretch strings from the corners of the houses, white or black or gray or black-and-white according to whether they mark a relationship of blood, of trade, authority, agency. When the strings become so numerous that you can no longer pass among them, the inhabitants leave: the houses are dismantled; only the strings and their supports remain.

From a mountainside, camping with their household goods, Ersilia's refugees look at the labyrinth of taut strings and poles that rise in the plain. That is the city of Ersilia still, and they are nothing.

They rebuild Ersilia elsewhere. They weave a similar pattern of strings which they would like to be more complex and at the same time more regular than the other. Then they abandon it and take themselves and their houses still farther away.

Thus, when traveling in the territory of Ersilia, you come upon the ruins of abandoned cities, without the walls which do not last, without the bones of the dead which the wind rolls away: spiderwebs of intricate relationships seeking a form.

- Italo Calvino, *Invisible Cities*

2

"Are we still in the South Reach?"

"Reach? No. The islands –" The chief moved his slender black hand in an arc, no more than a quarter of the compass, north to east. "The islands are there," he said. "All the islands." Then showing all the evening sea before them, from north through west to south, he said, "The sea."

"What land are you from, lord?"

"No land. We are the Children of the Open Sea."

Arren looked at his keen face. He looked about him at the great raft with its temple and its tall idols, each carved from a single tree, great god-figures mixed of dolphin, fish, man, and seabird; at the people busy at their work, weaving, carving, fishing, cooking on raised platforms, tending babies; at the other rafts, seventy at least, scattered out over the water in a great circle perhaps a mile across. It was a town: smoke rising in thin wisps from distant houses, the voices of children high on the wind. It was a town, and under its floors was the abyss.

- Ursula LeGuin, *The Farthest Shore*

3 Instrumentation

- Flute
- Bass clarinet
- Oboe
- Baritone saxophone
- Acoustic guitar
- Piano
- Percussion
    - bamboo wind chimes
    - four toms
    - five wood blocks
    - snare drum
    - marimba
    - crotales, two octaves
    - tam-tam
    - bass drum
- Violin
- Viola
- Cello
- Contrabass

4 Performance notes

Six players flute, bass clarinet, oboe, violin, viola and cello receive a shaker caxixi, maraca or similar. Four players guitar, piano, percussion and contrabass receive a chromatic pitch pipe a circular harmonic-like instrument generally used for tuning vocal groups.

The shakers should be placed on or suspended from their respective performer's music stands, or wherever convenient.

The pitch-pipes should be played by inhaling or exhaling as indicated through fully half of the circumference of the instrument, creating a rich cluster.

For all winds, a +-symbol indicates slap tonguing.

For guitar, the coda symbol indicates a percussive damping of the strings.

Piano plays with pedal to their discretion throughout the first four sections of the piece. The sound should be generally dry, although some pedal should be used when appropriate for phrasing and blending, especially on tremolo passages. The sustain pedal should remain fully depressed for the entirety of section D. Inside-piano glissandi are notated proportional to the lower interior portion of the instrument from the lowest string up to the first cross-bar and should be played with the fingertip.

Percussion should use hard sticks on toms, woodblocks, snares and crotales, and softer mallets on marimba, bass drum and tam-tam (when ergonomic to do so).

All mordents and trills are a major 2nd, unless otherwise specified. All tremolos are unmeasured and should evoke an even, cloud-like texture.

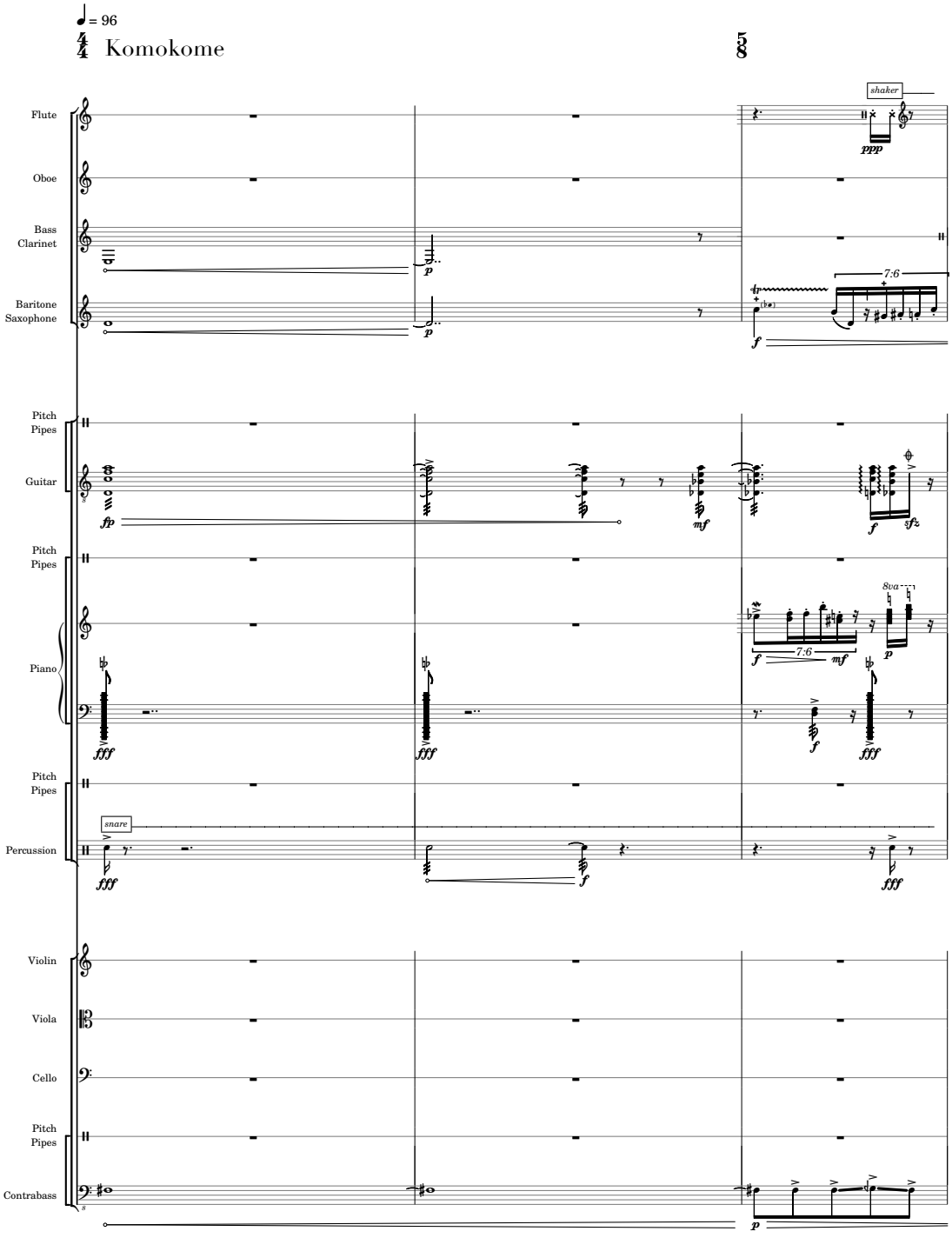
Invisible Cities (iii):

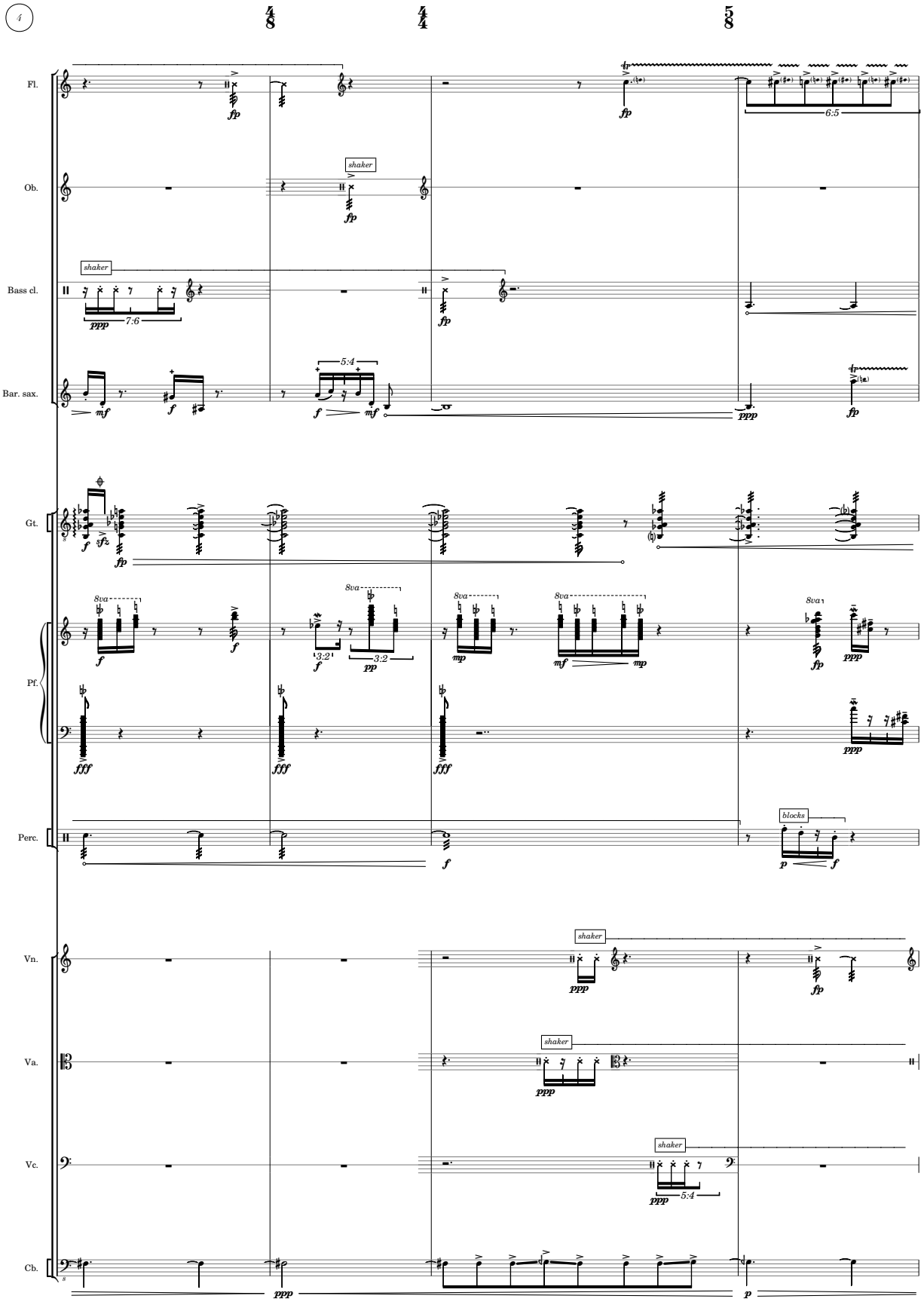
ERSILIA

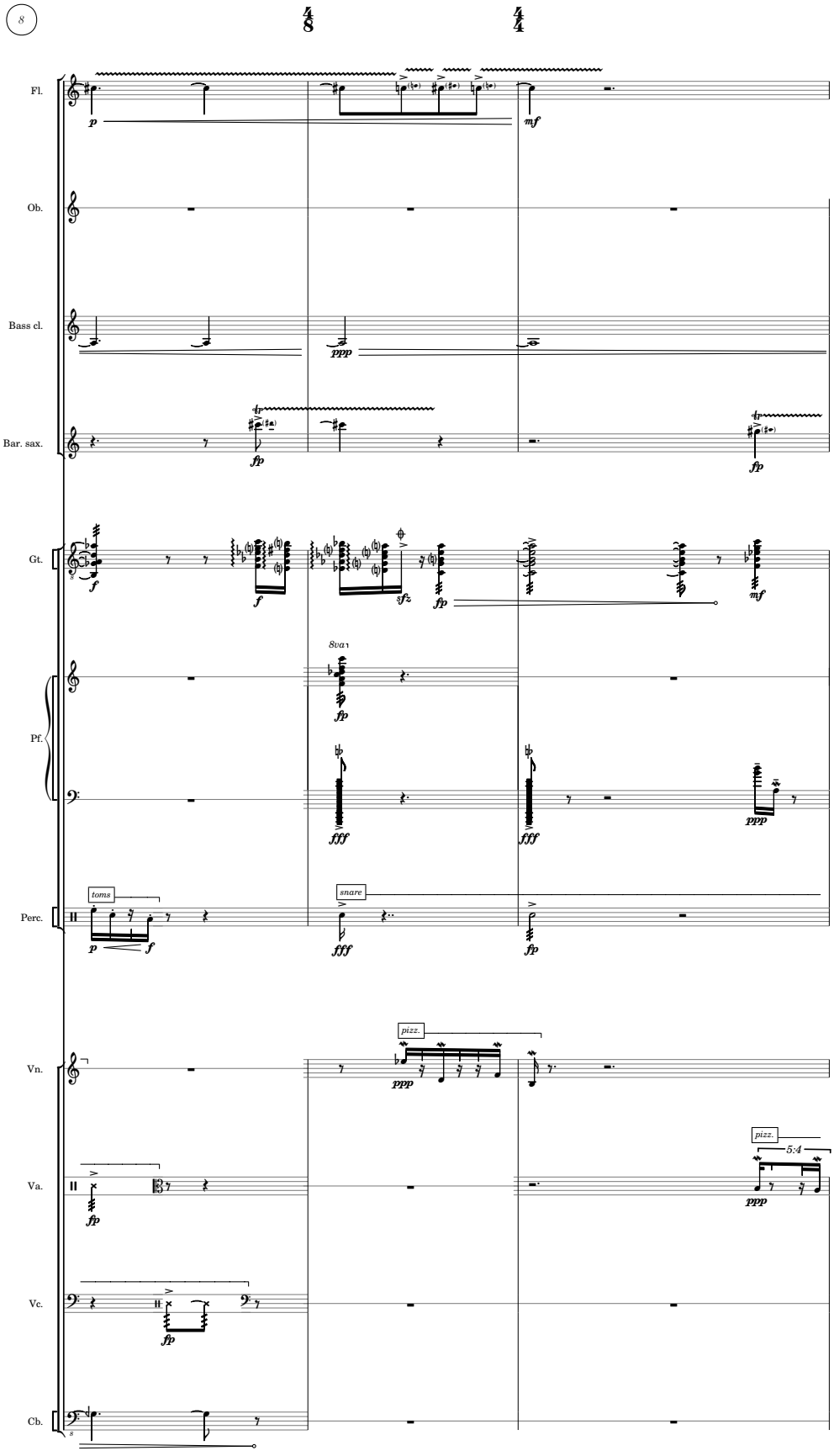
(a botanical survey of the uninhabited northeastern isles)

for Ensemble Dal Niente

Josiah Wolf Oberholtzer (1984)




Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
blocks
6:5
7:6
5:4
3:2
8va


Fl.
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Bar. sax.
Gt.
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Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
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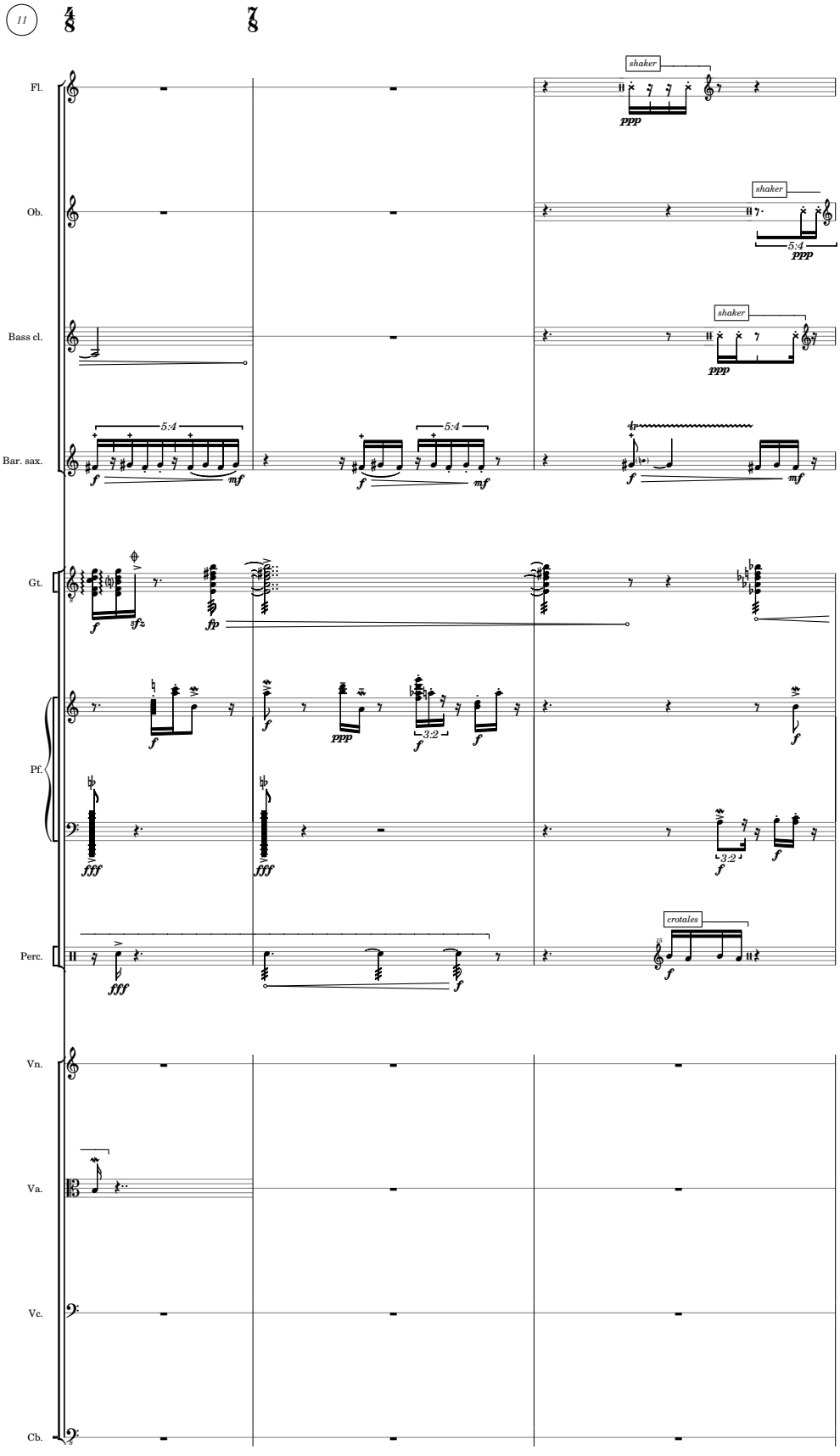
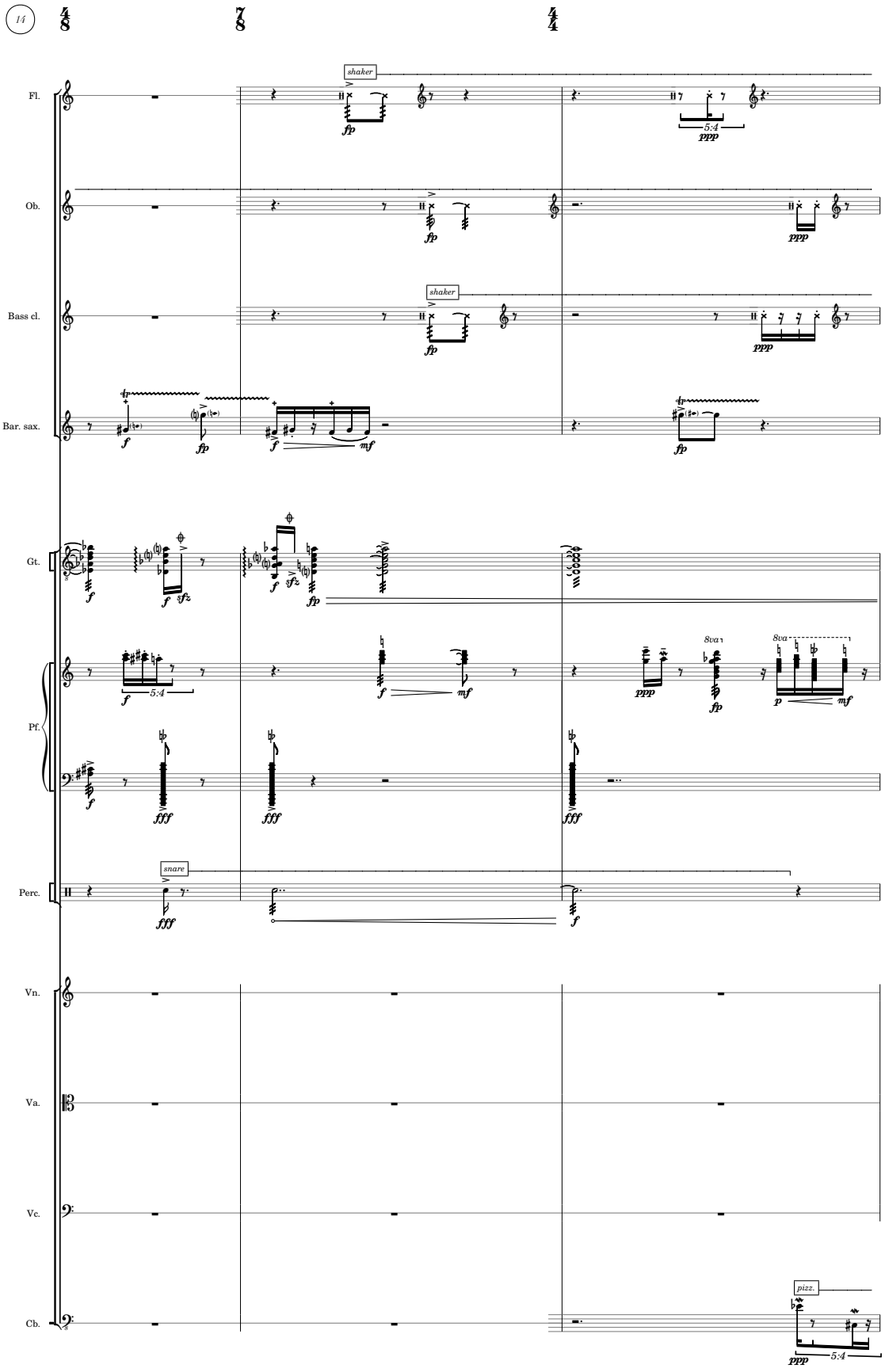
toms
snare
pizz.
pizz.
5:4
8va


11
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
5:4
3:2
crotales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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
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Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
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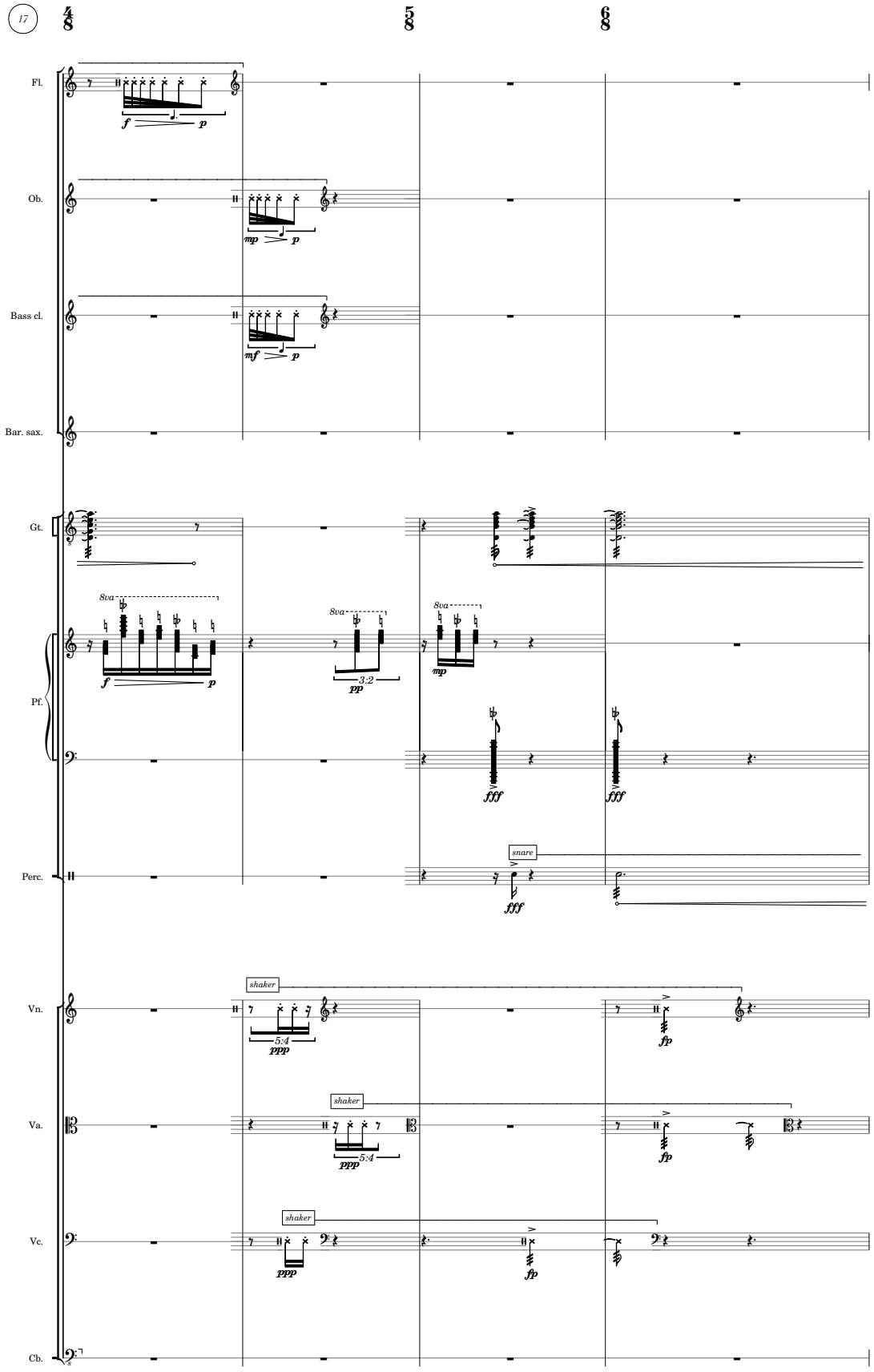
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
snare
pizz.
5:4
8va
fp
ppp
mf
fff
sfz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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
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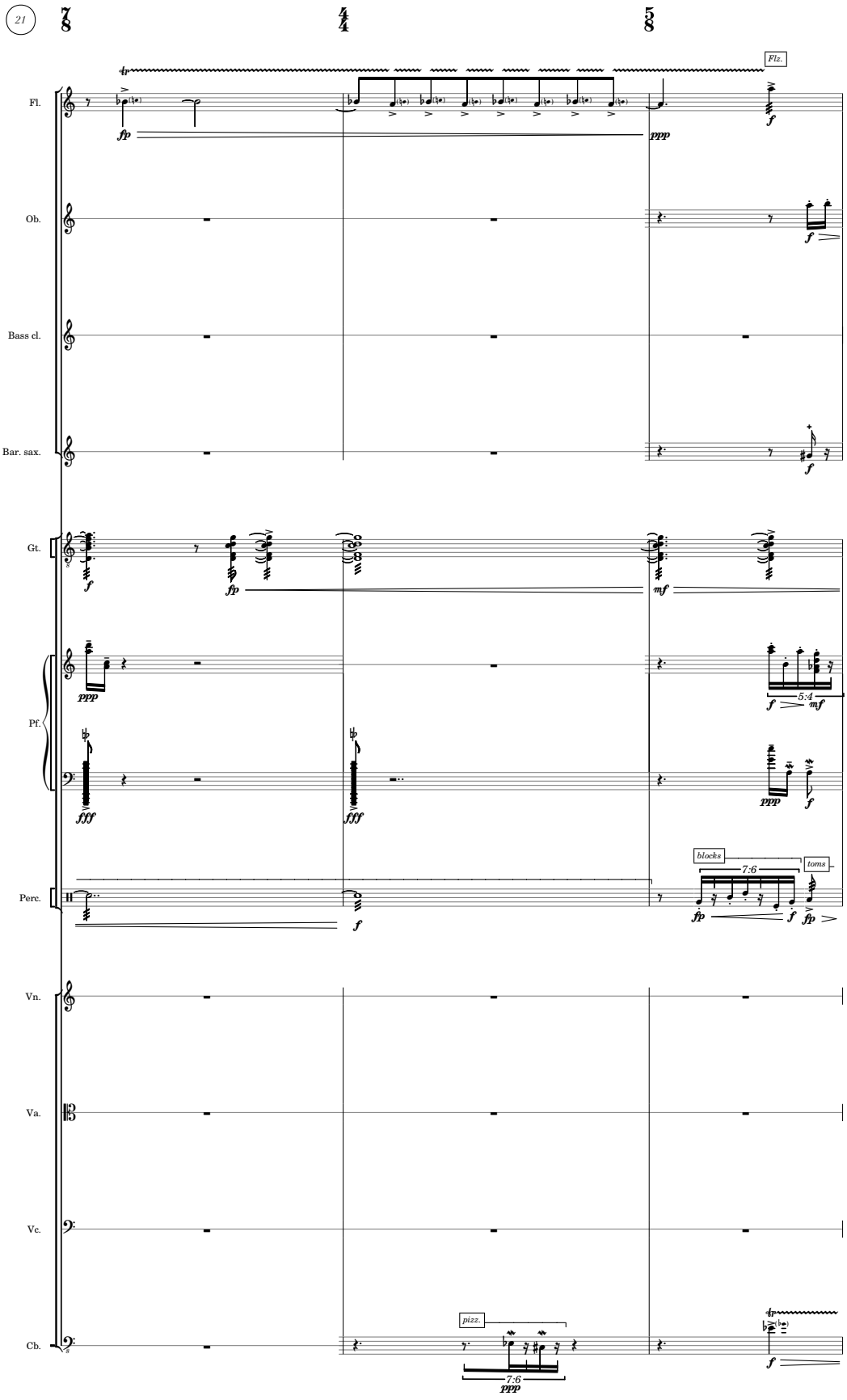
Cb.
8va
snare
shaker
3:2
5:4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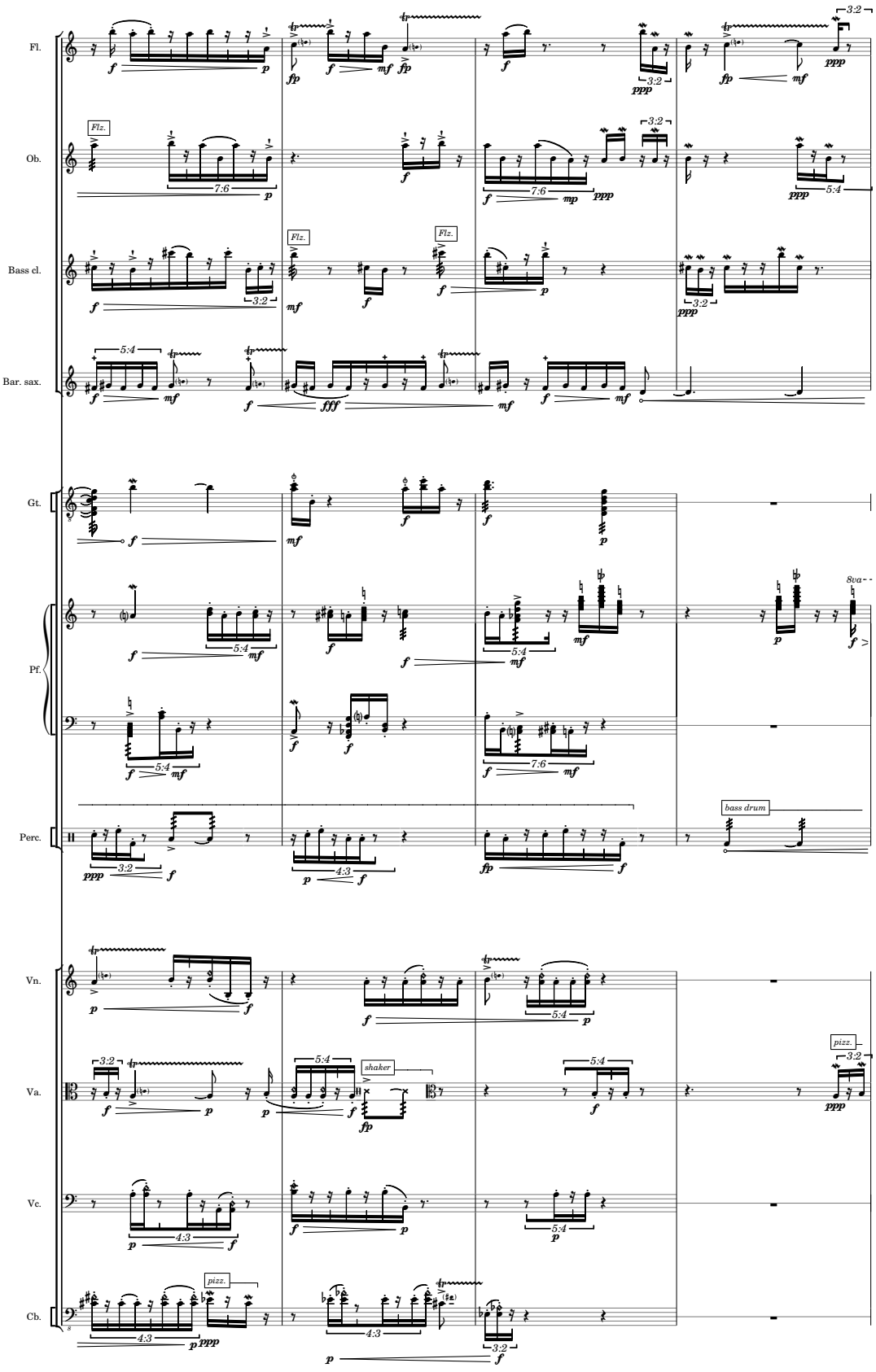
Flz.
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
blocks
toms
pizz.
5:4
7:6
7:6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Ob.
Bass cl.
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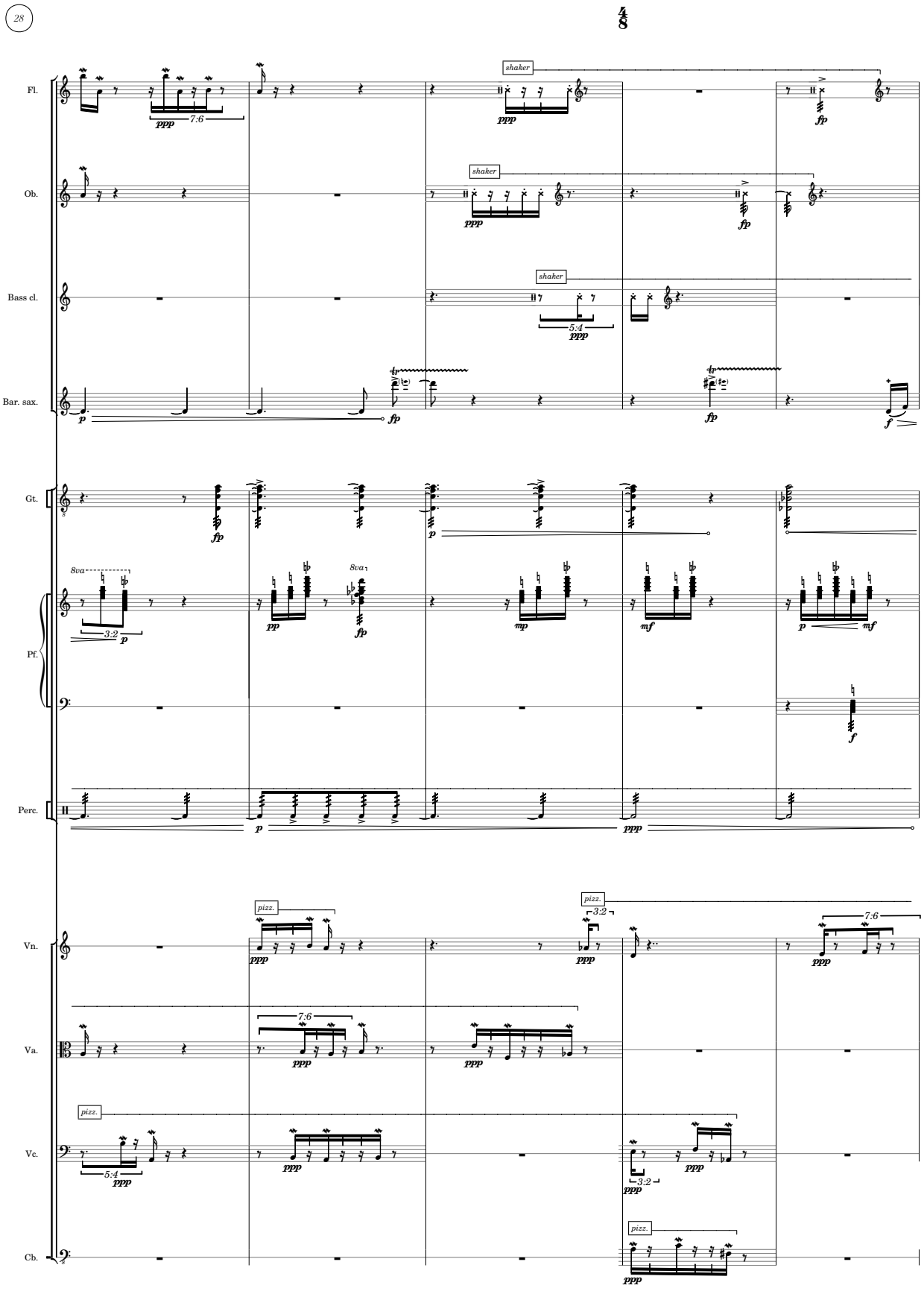
Vc.
Cb.
Flz.
bass drum
shaker
pizz.
8va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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
pizz.
8va
7:6
5:4
3:2
ppp
pp
p
mp
mf
f
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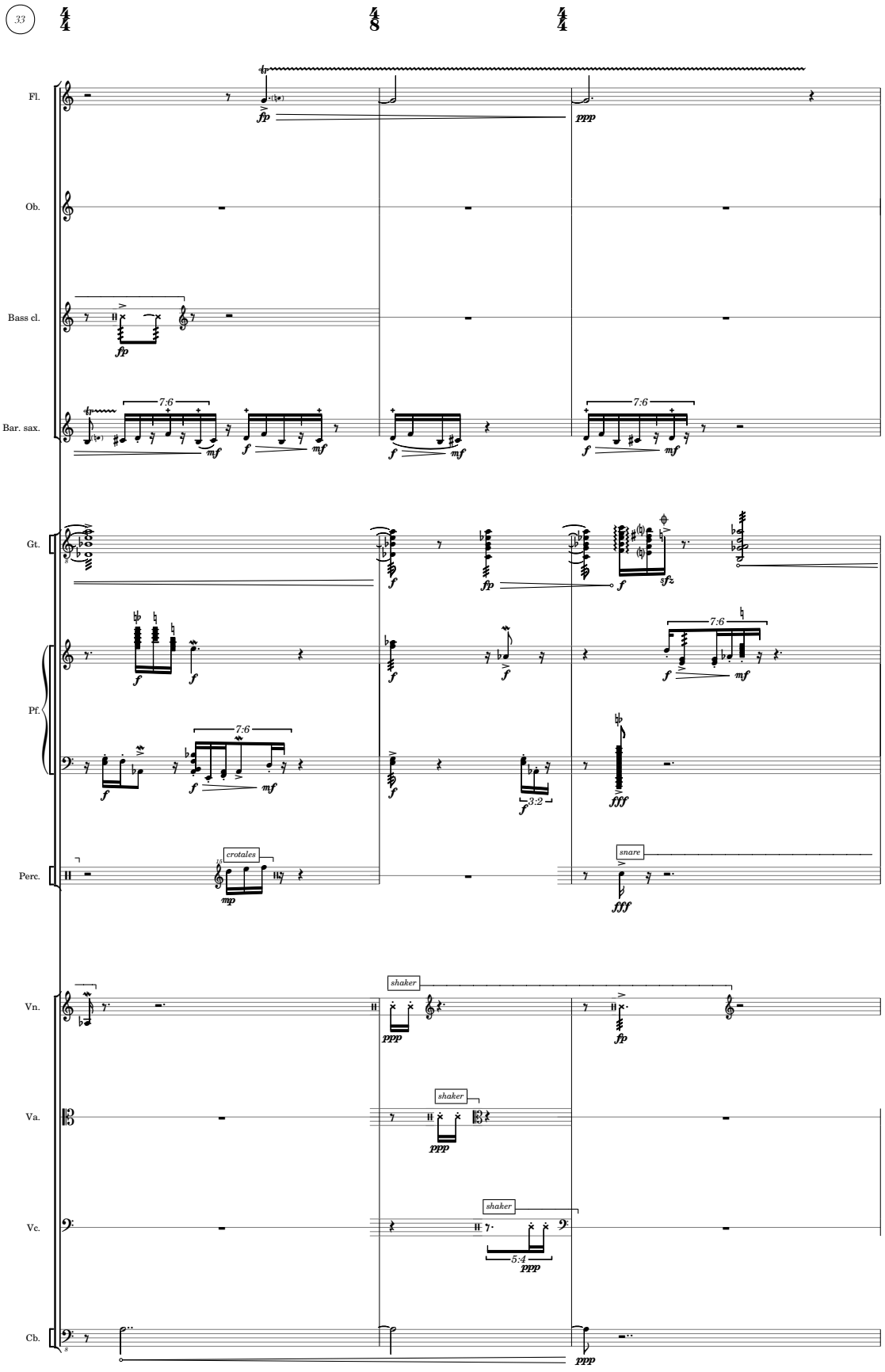
sfp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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
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Perc.
Vn.
Va.
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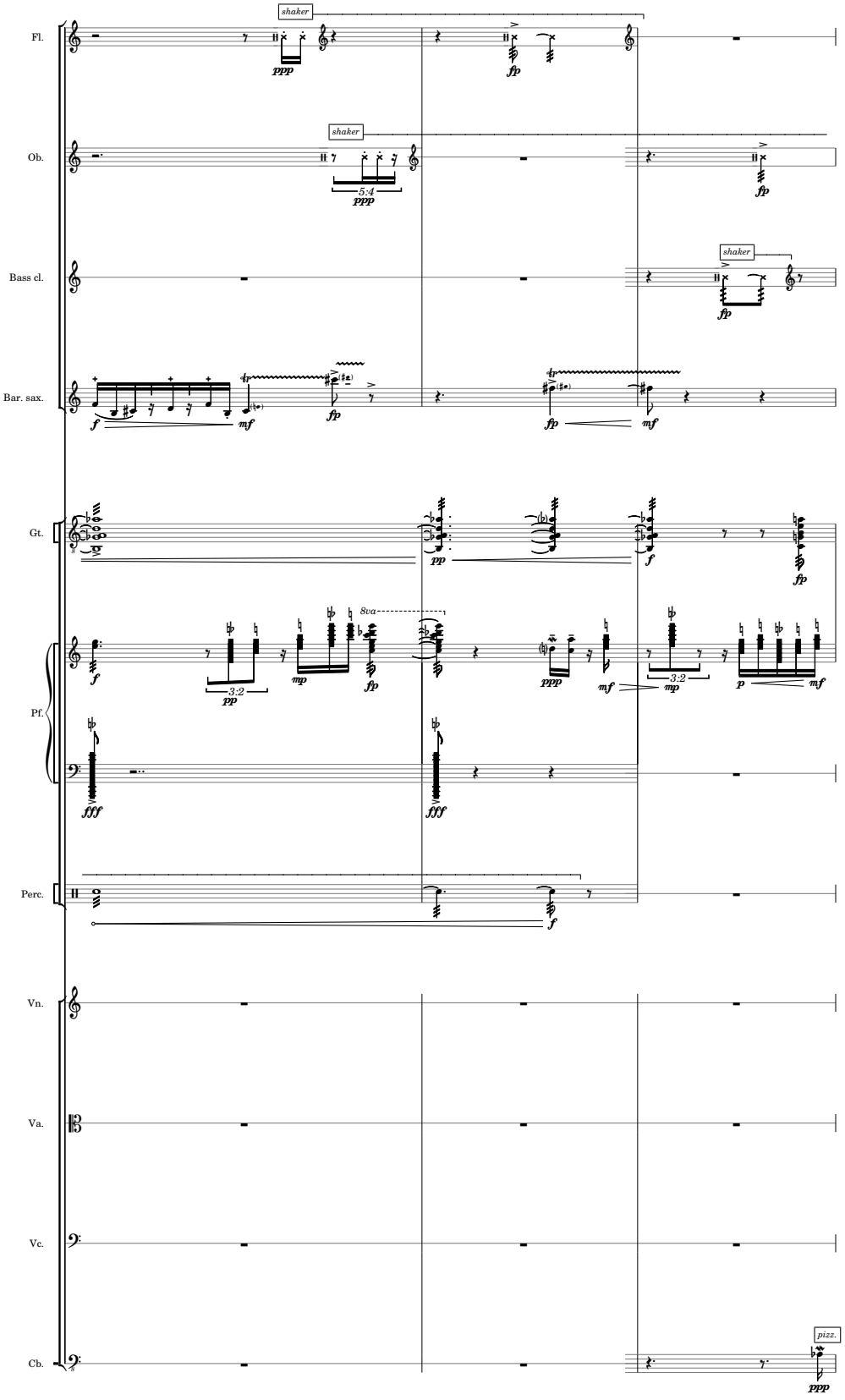
crotales
snare
shaker
shaker
shaker
shaker
7:6
3:2
5:4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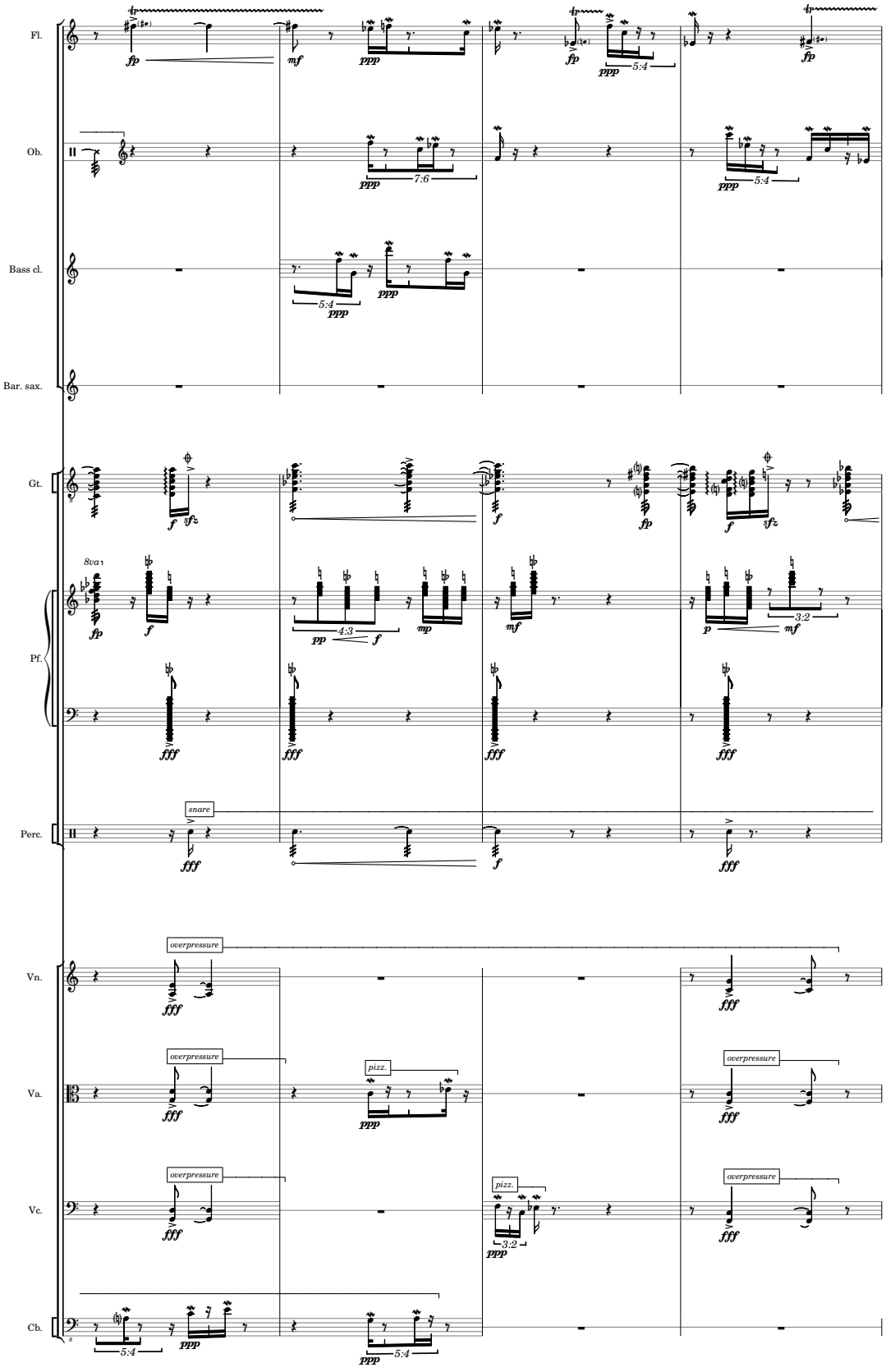
5:4
8va
3:2
pizz.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Bar. sax.
Gt.
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Vc.
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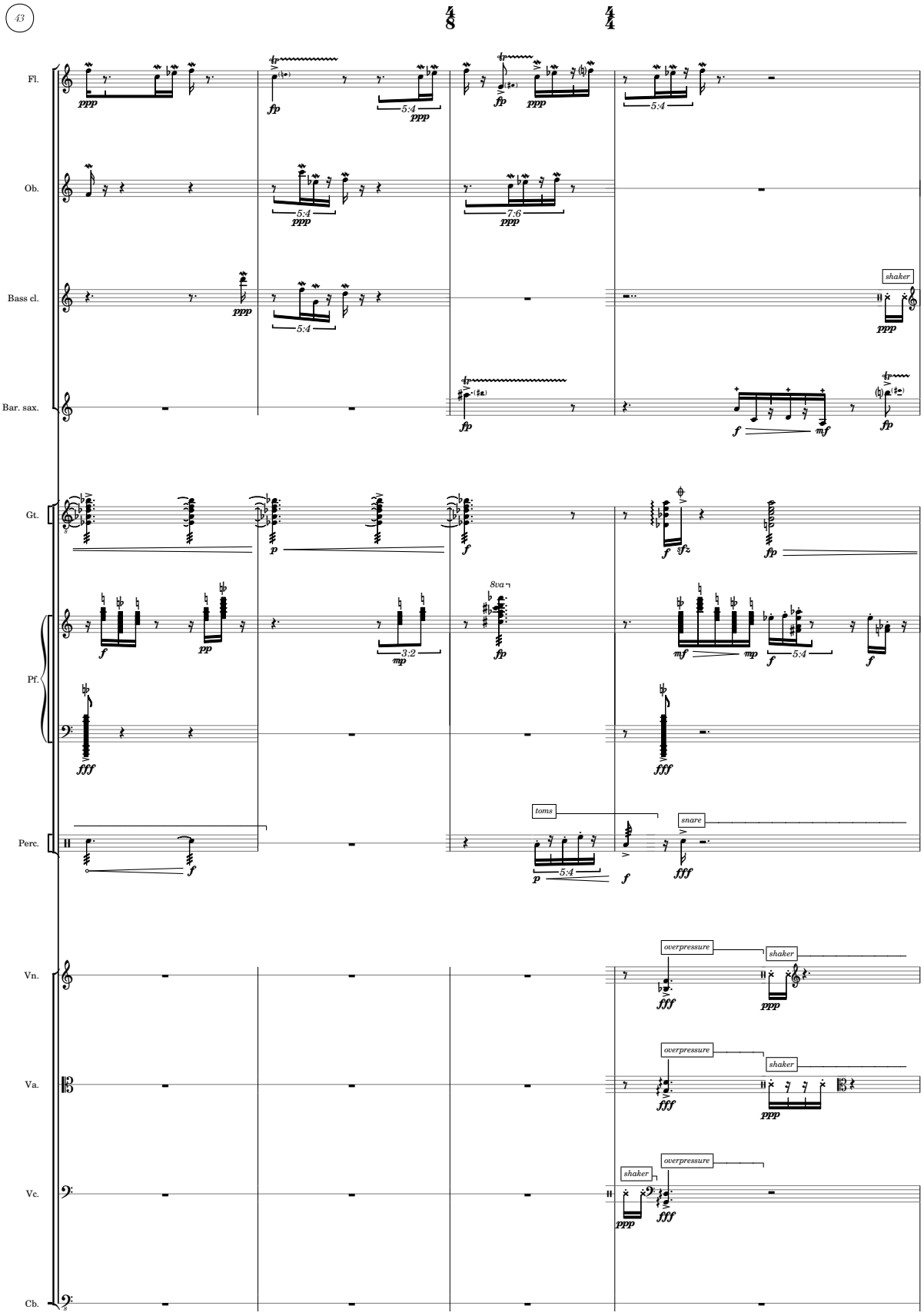
snare
overpressure
pizz.
8va
5:4
7:6
4:3
3:2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overpressure
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5:4
7:6
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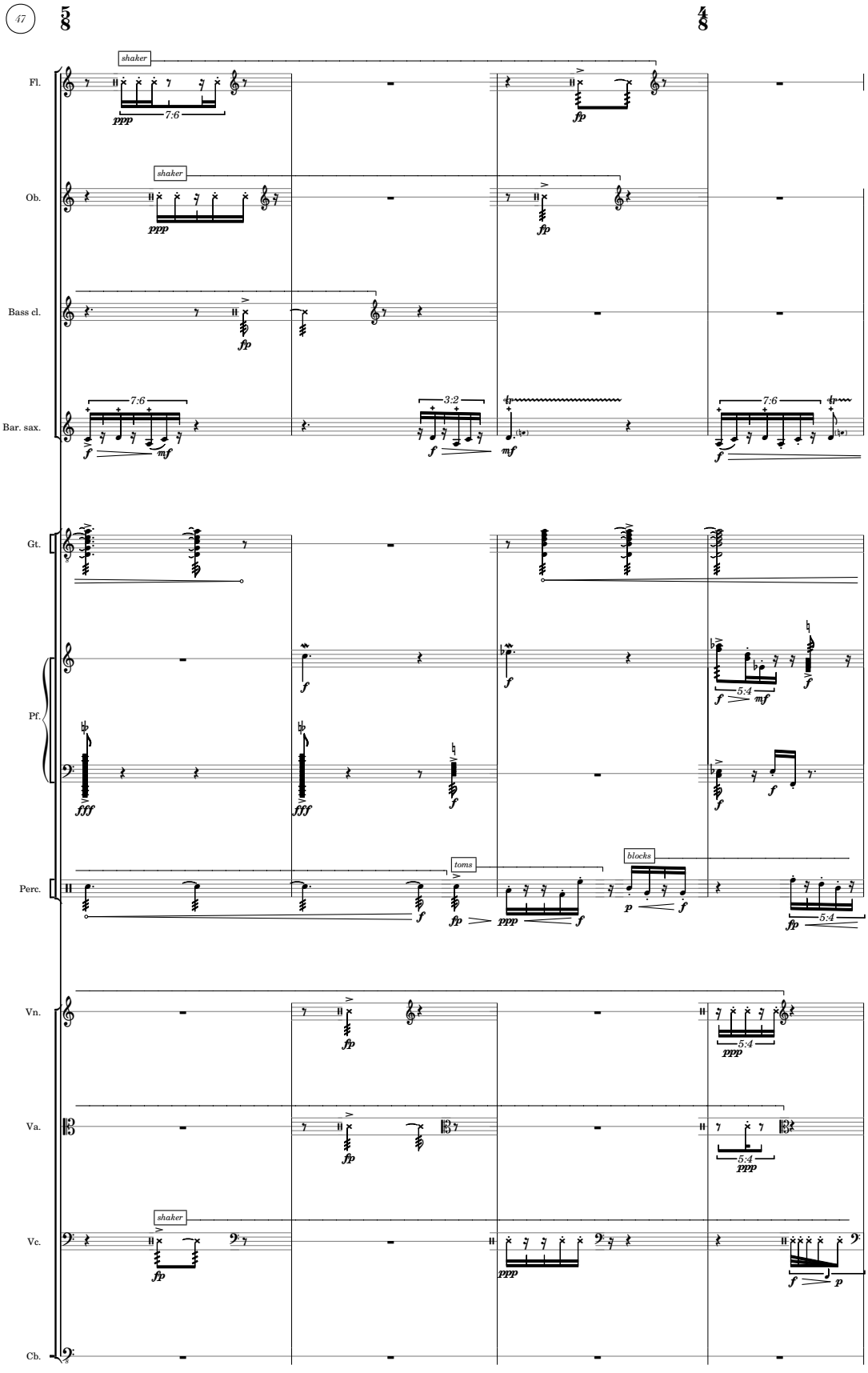
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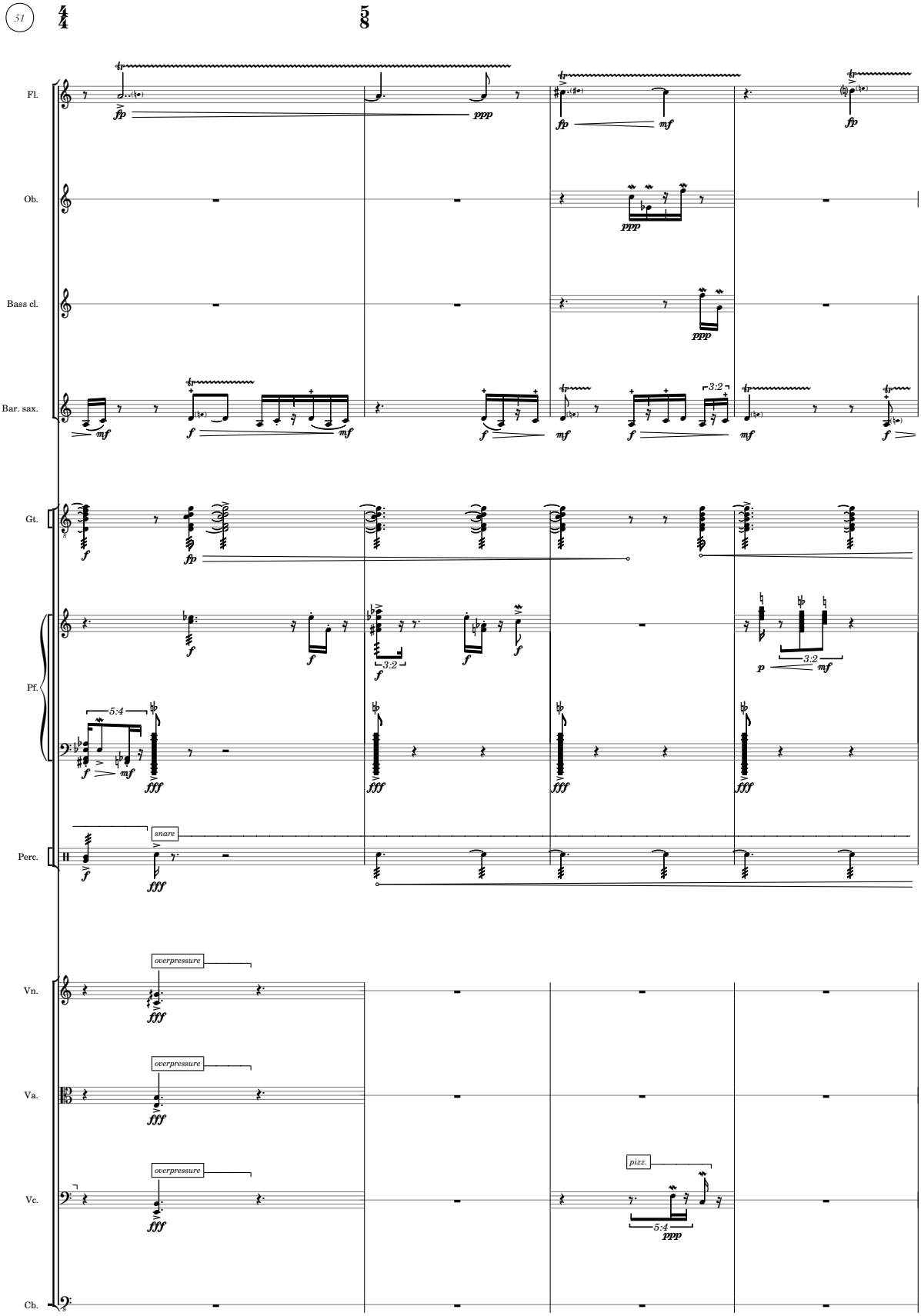
shaker
toms
blocks
7:6
3:2
5:4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Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
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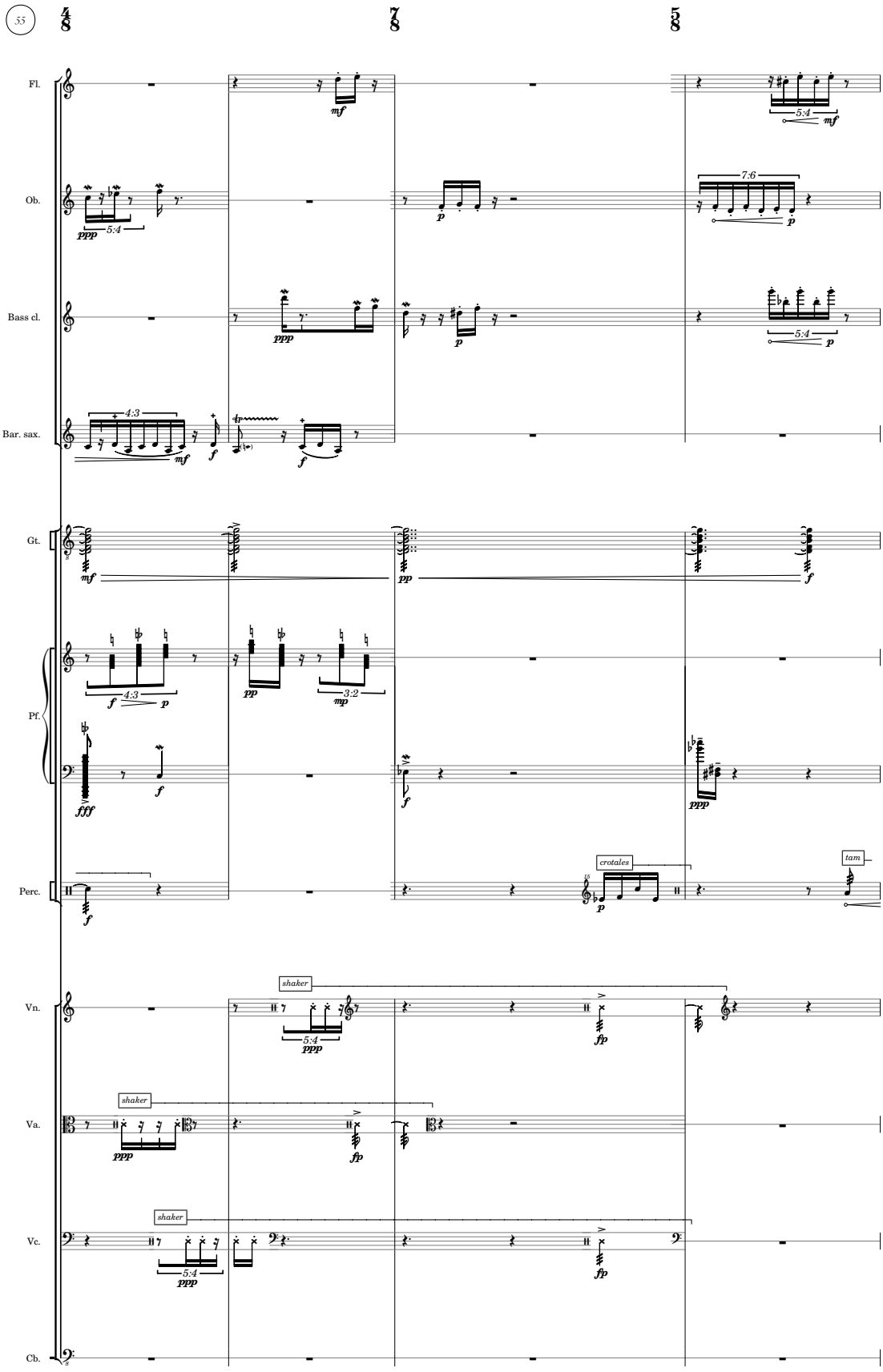
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure
pizz.
5:4
3:2
3:2
3:2
5:4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Fl.
Ob.
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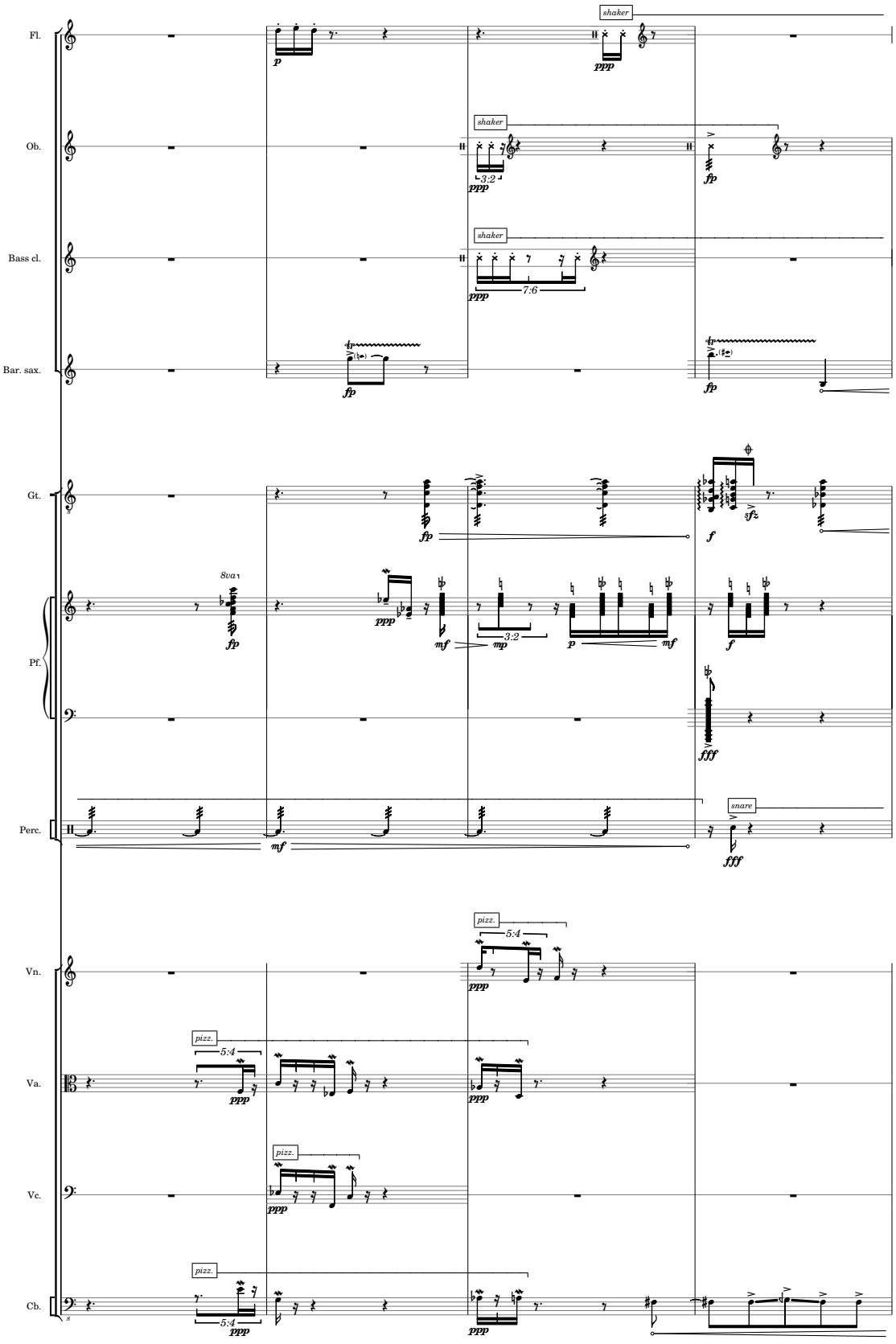
crotales
tam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3:2
7:6
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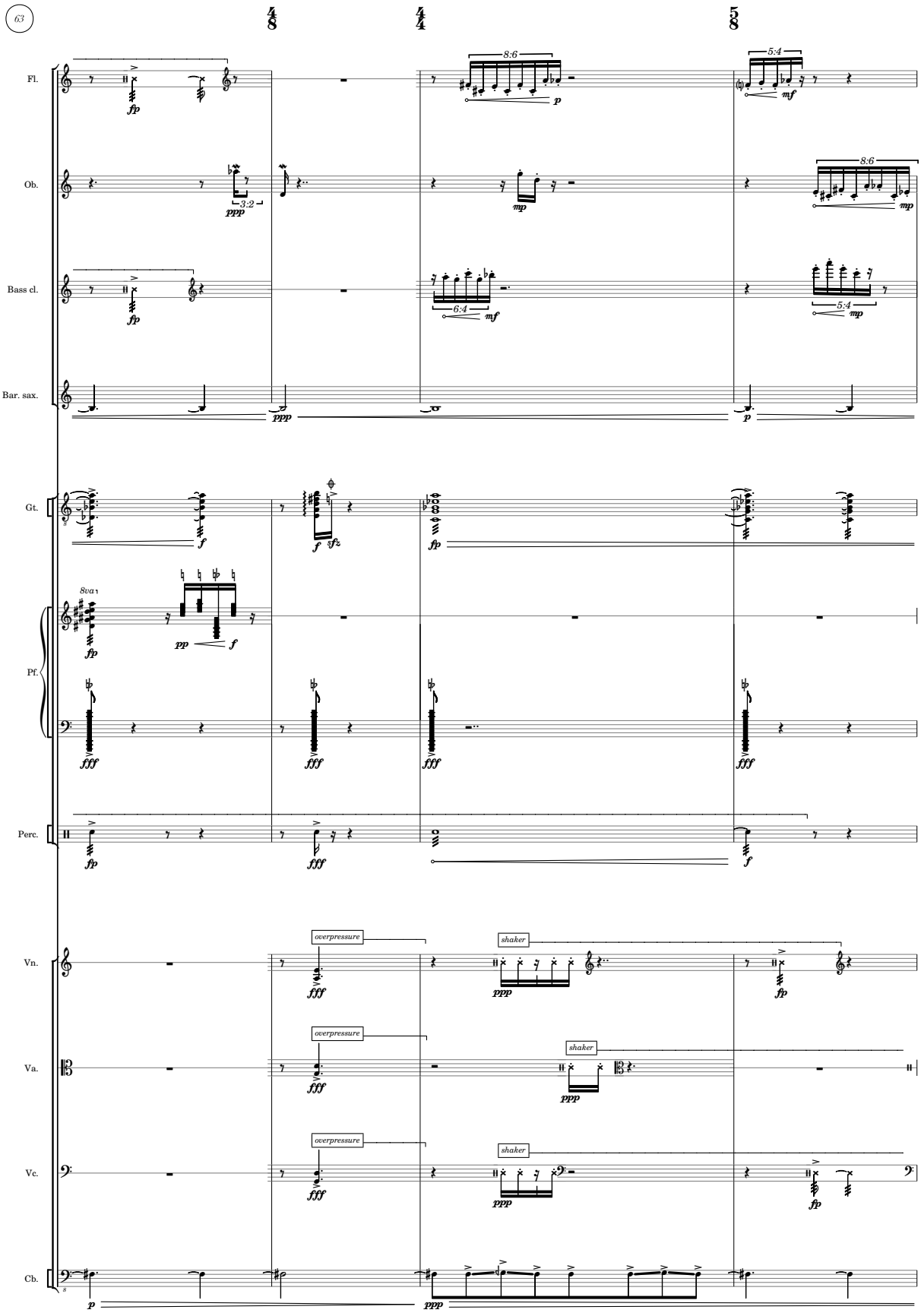
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Bar. sax.
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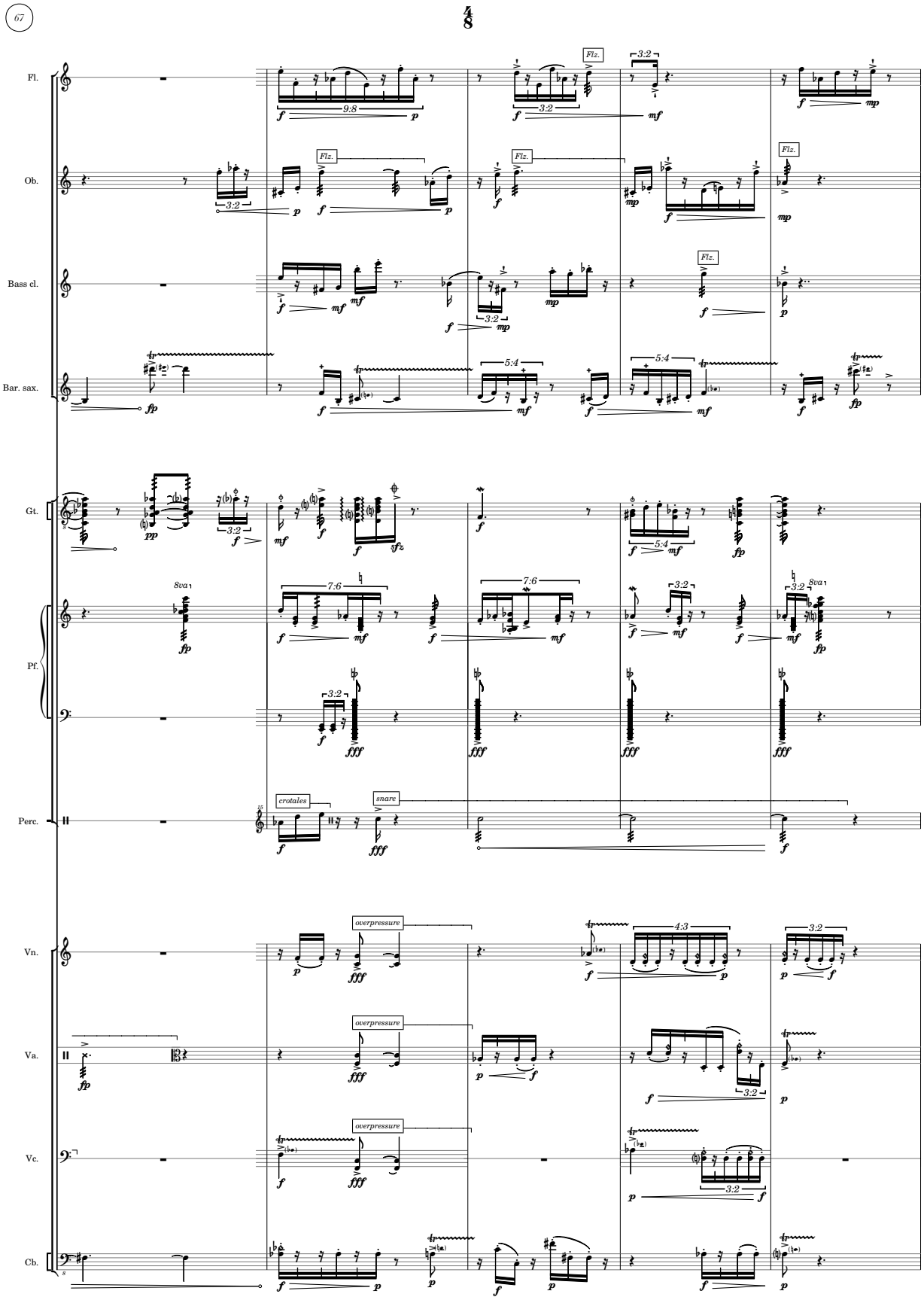
8:6
5:4
3:2
6:4
overpressure
shaker
8va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crotales
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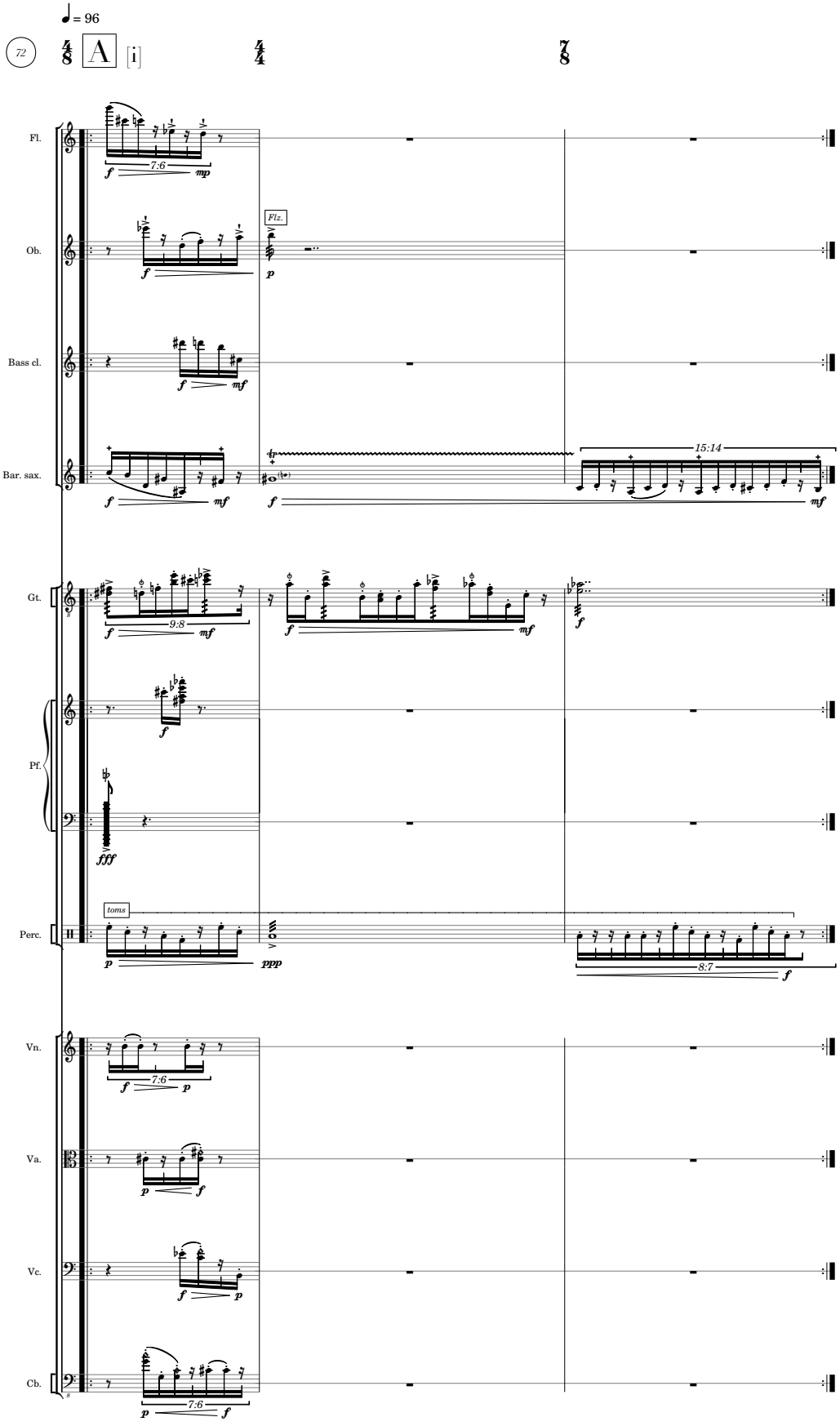
72
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A
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Fl.
Ob.
Fls.
Bass cl.
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15:14
Gt.
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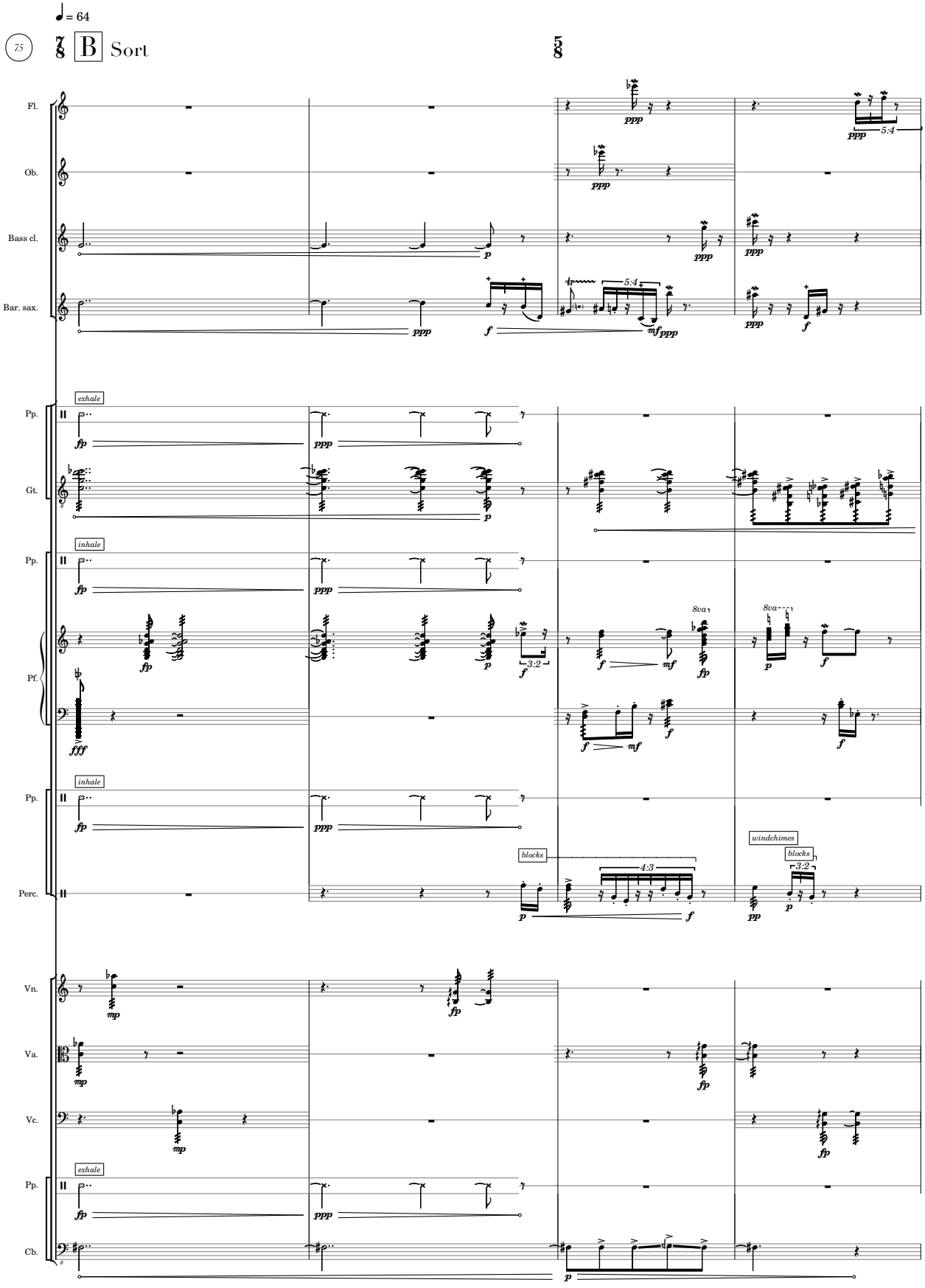
Pf.
toms
8:7
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
7:6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Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
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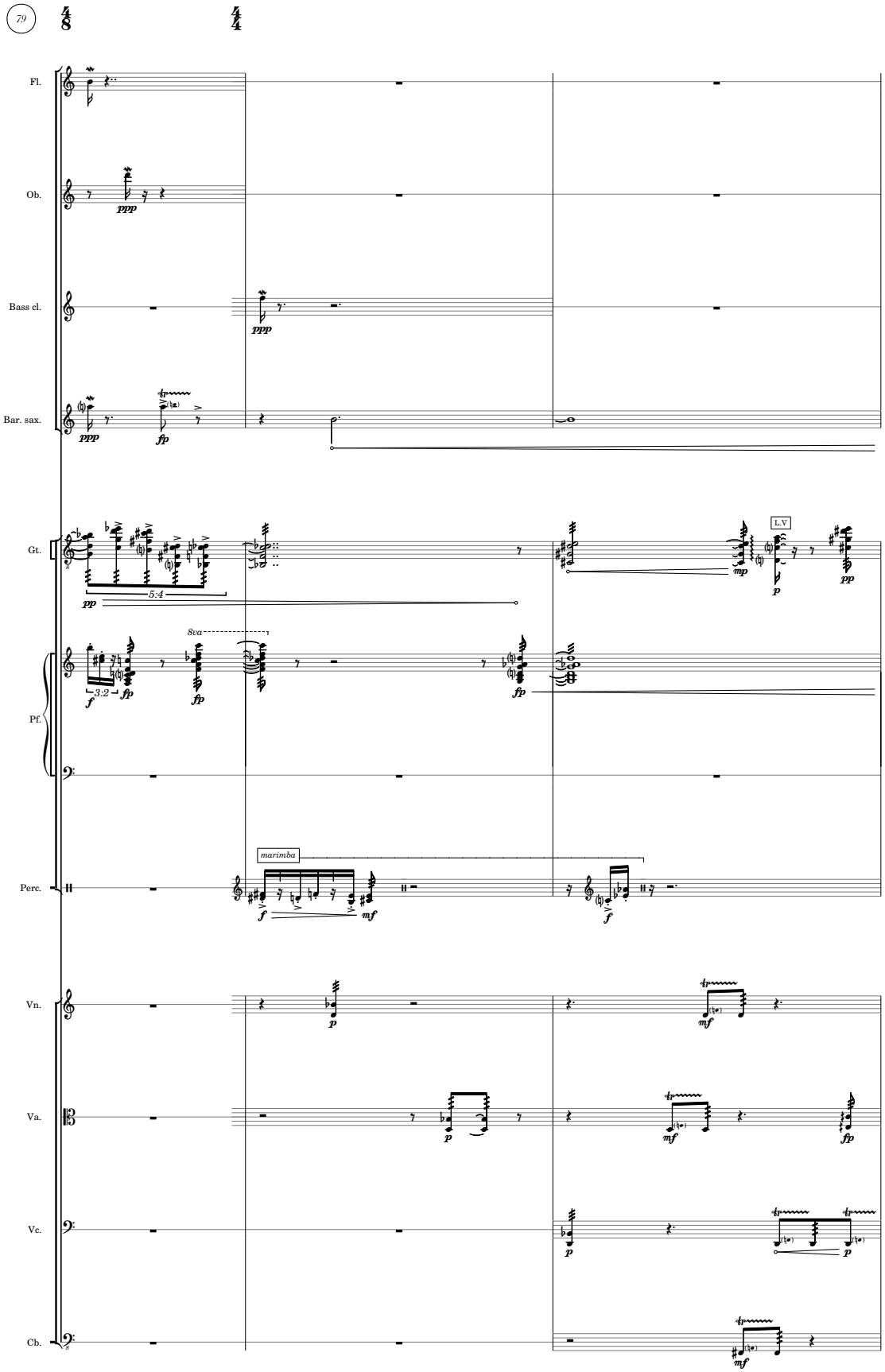
Cb.
exhale
inhale
blocks
windchimes
5:4
3:2
4:3
8va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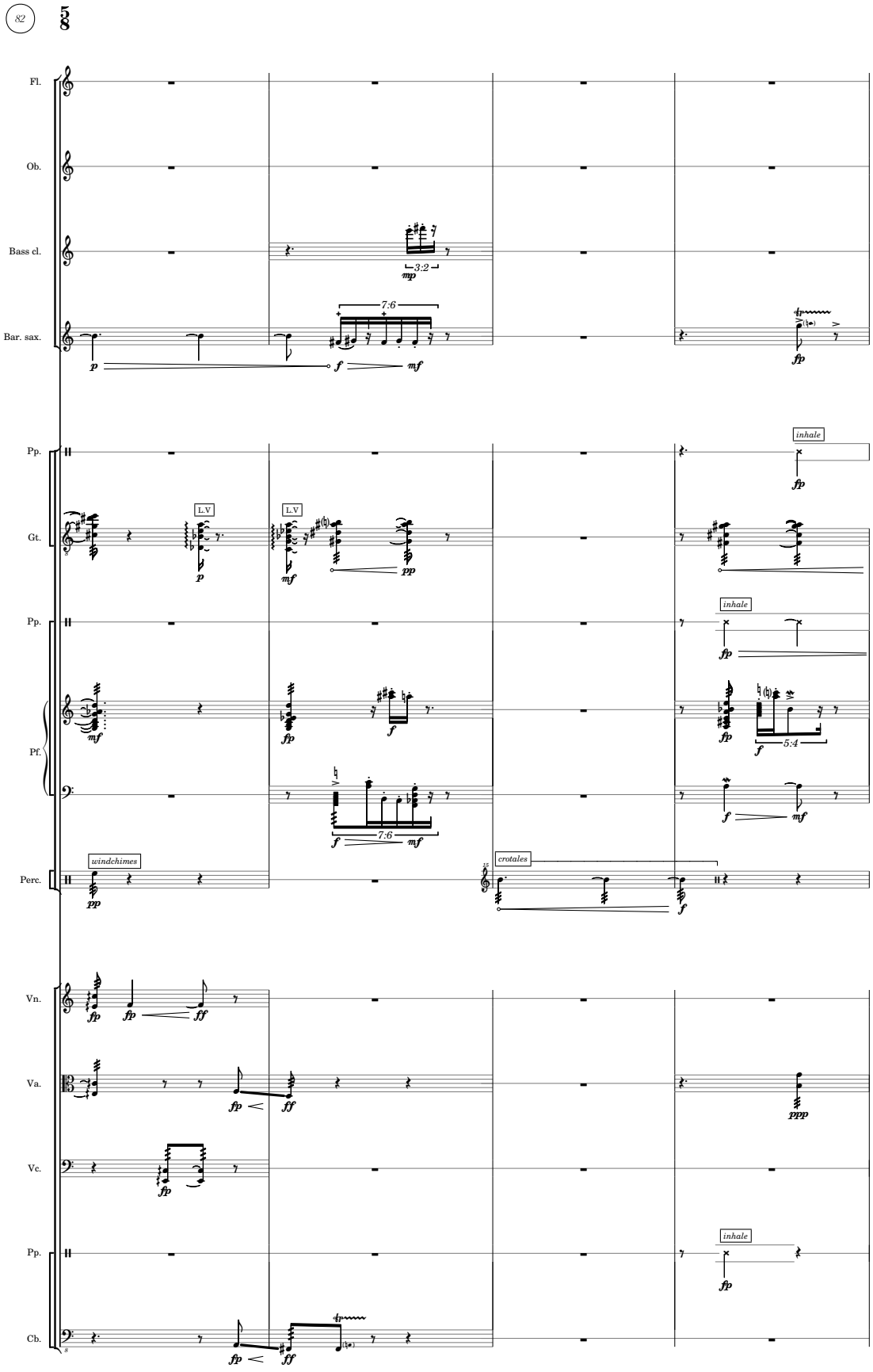
5:4
3:2
L.V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Pp.
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inhale
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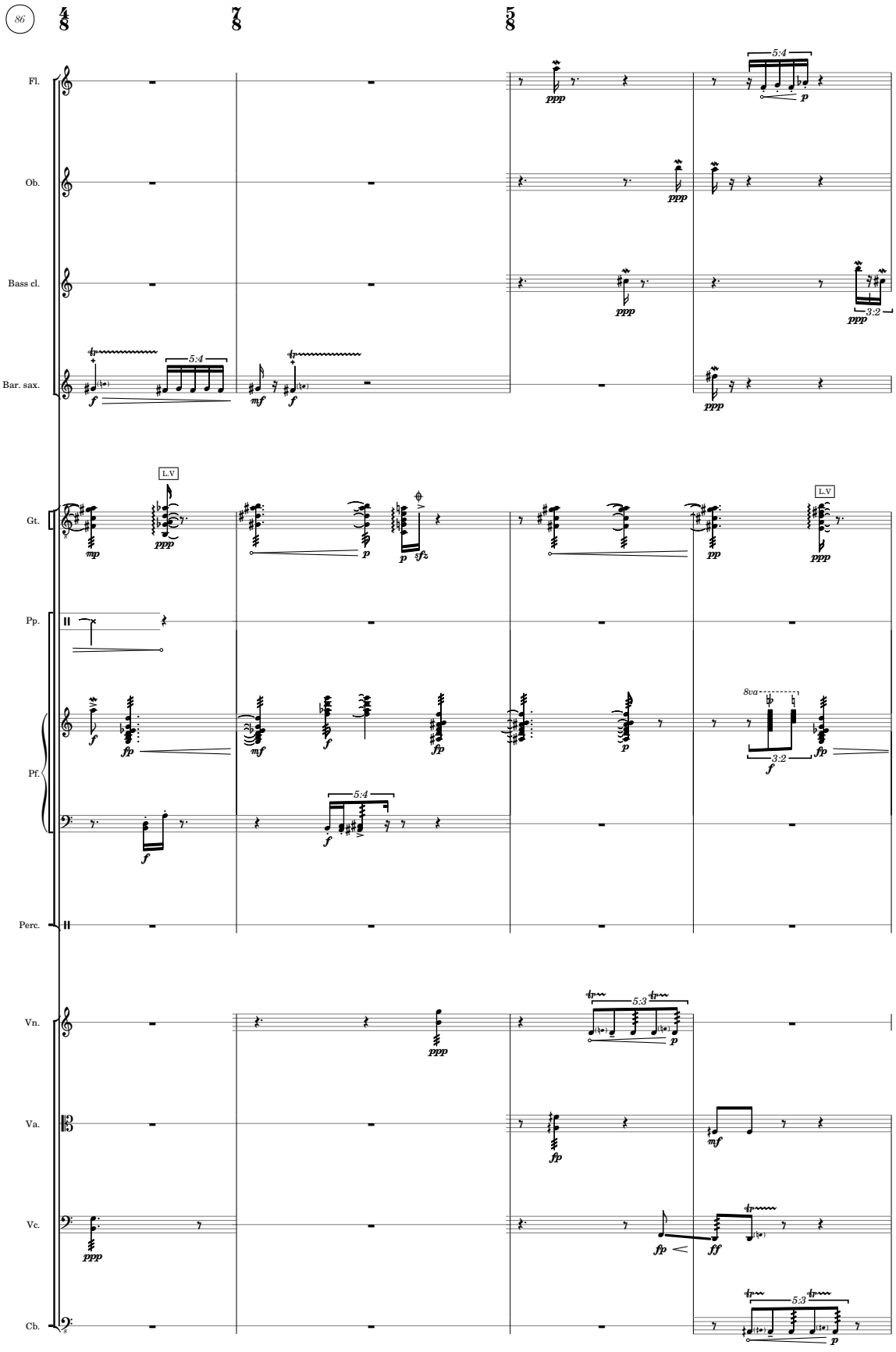
5:4
7:6
windchimes
crotales
15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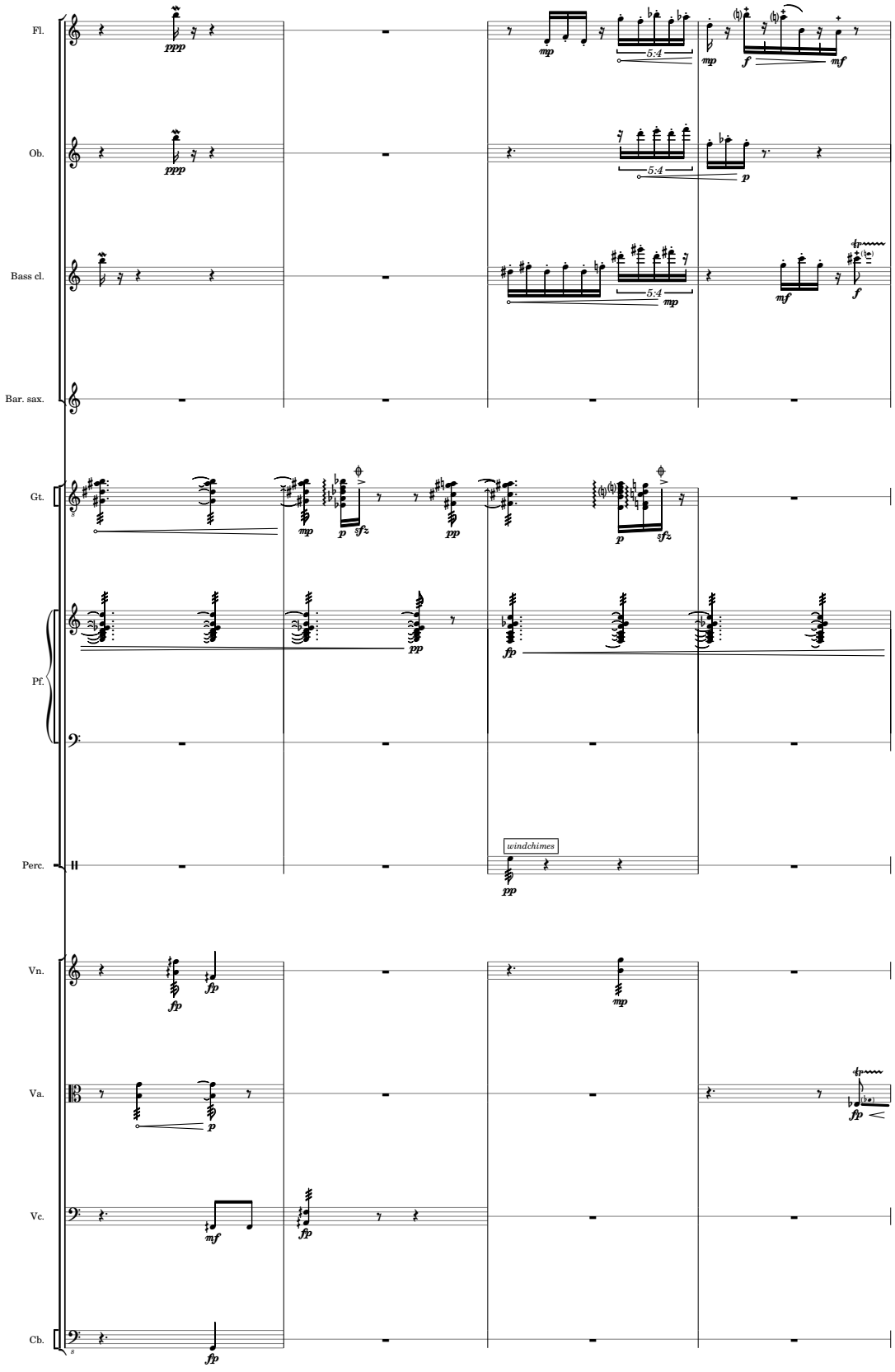
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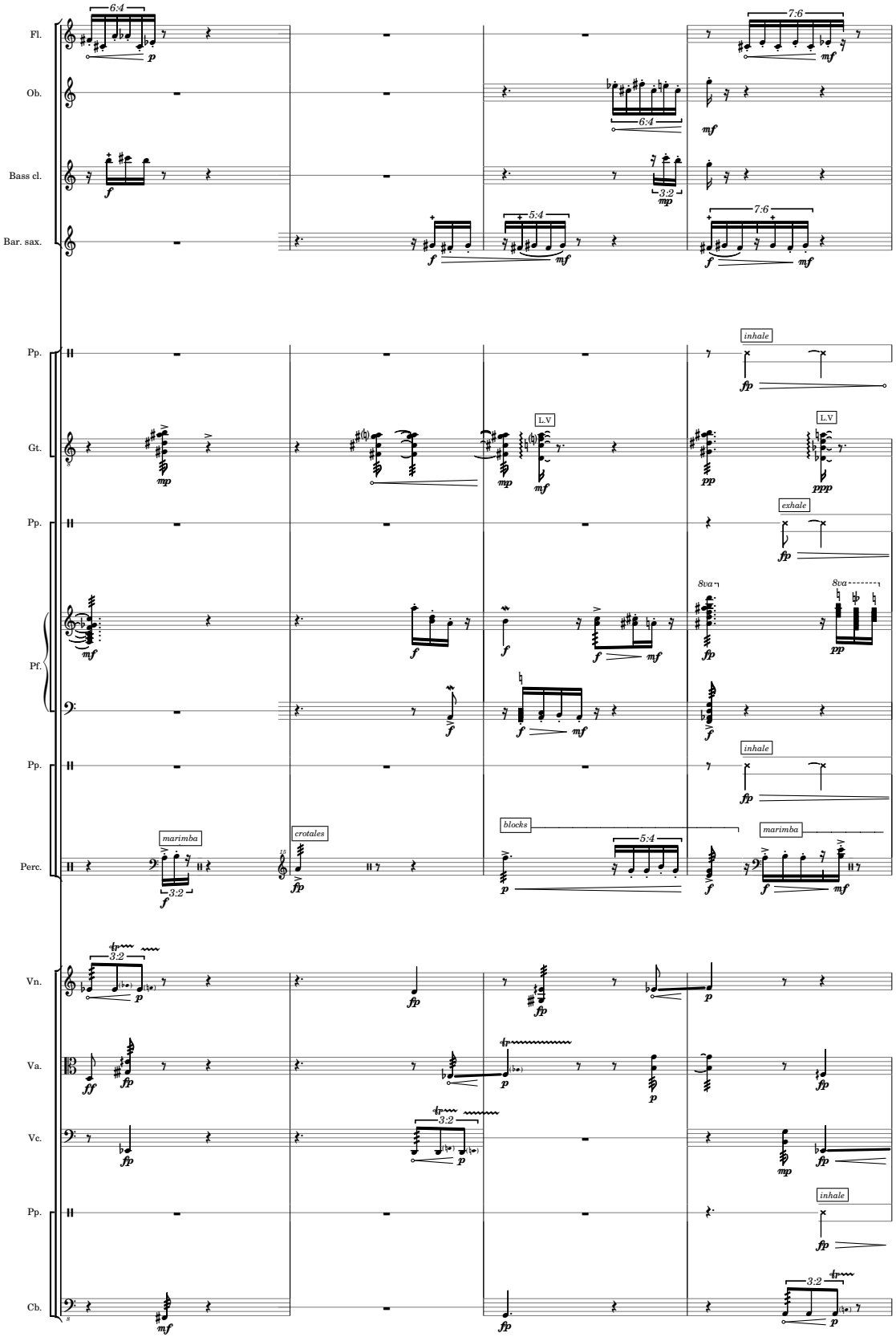
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6:4
7:6
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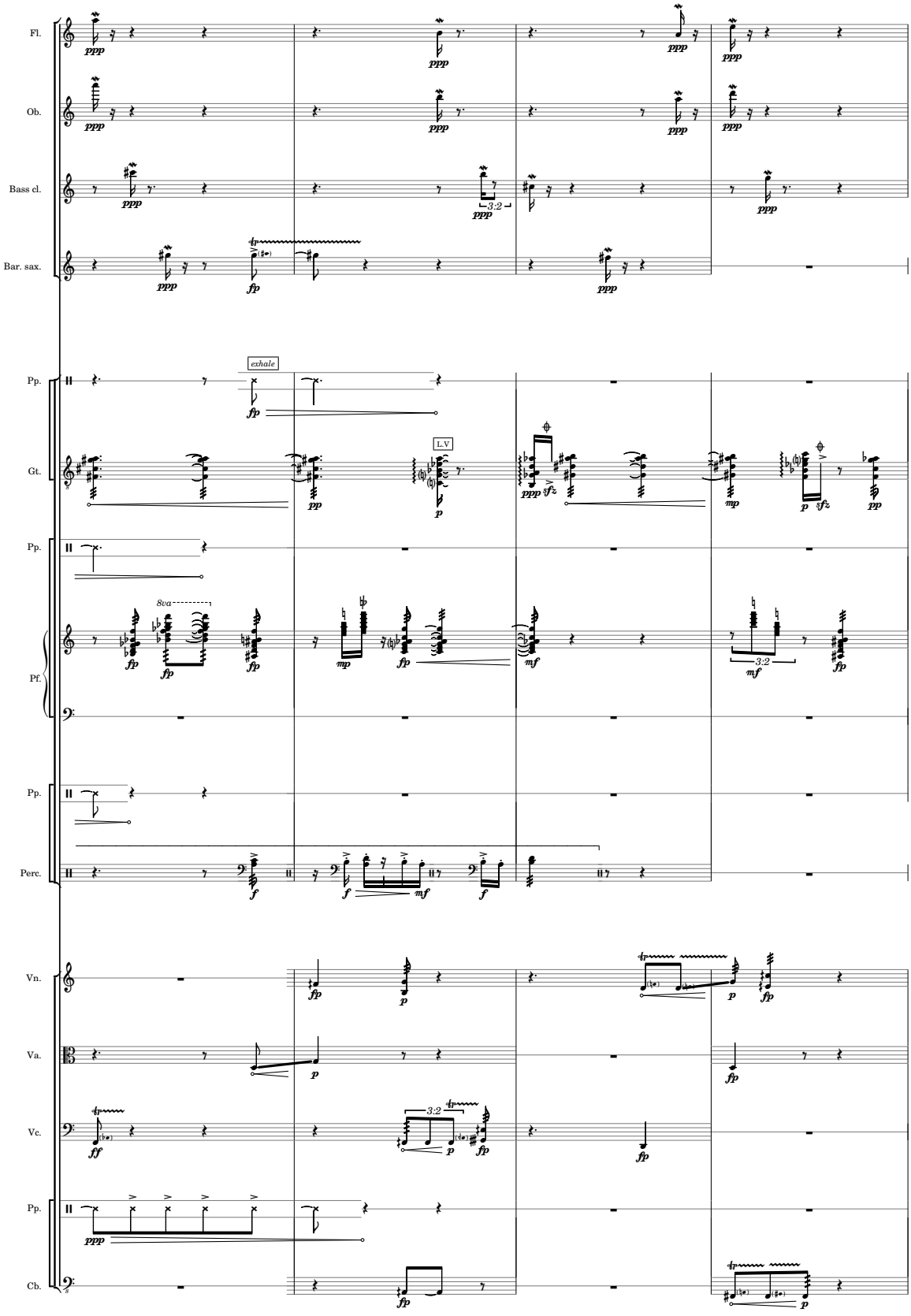
3:2
inhale
exhale
L.V
8va
marimba
crotales
blocks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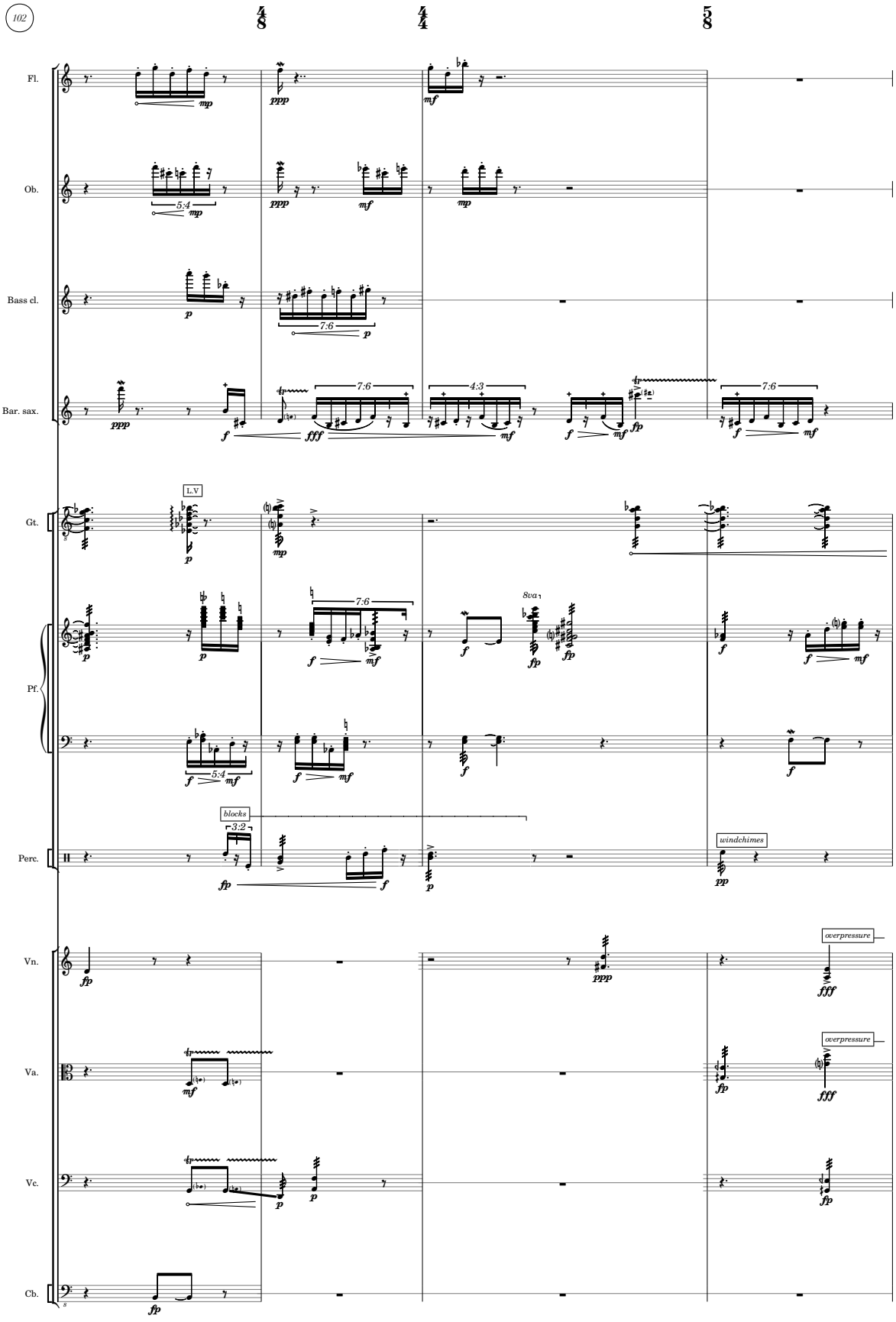
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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
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Vn.
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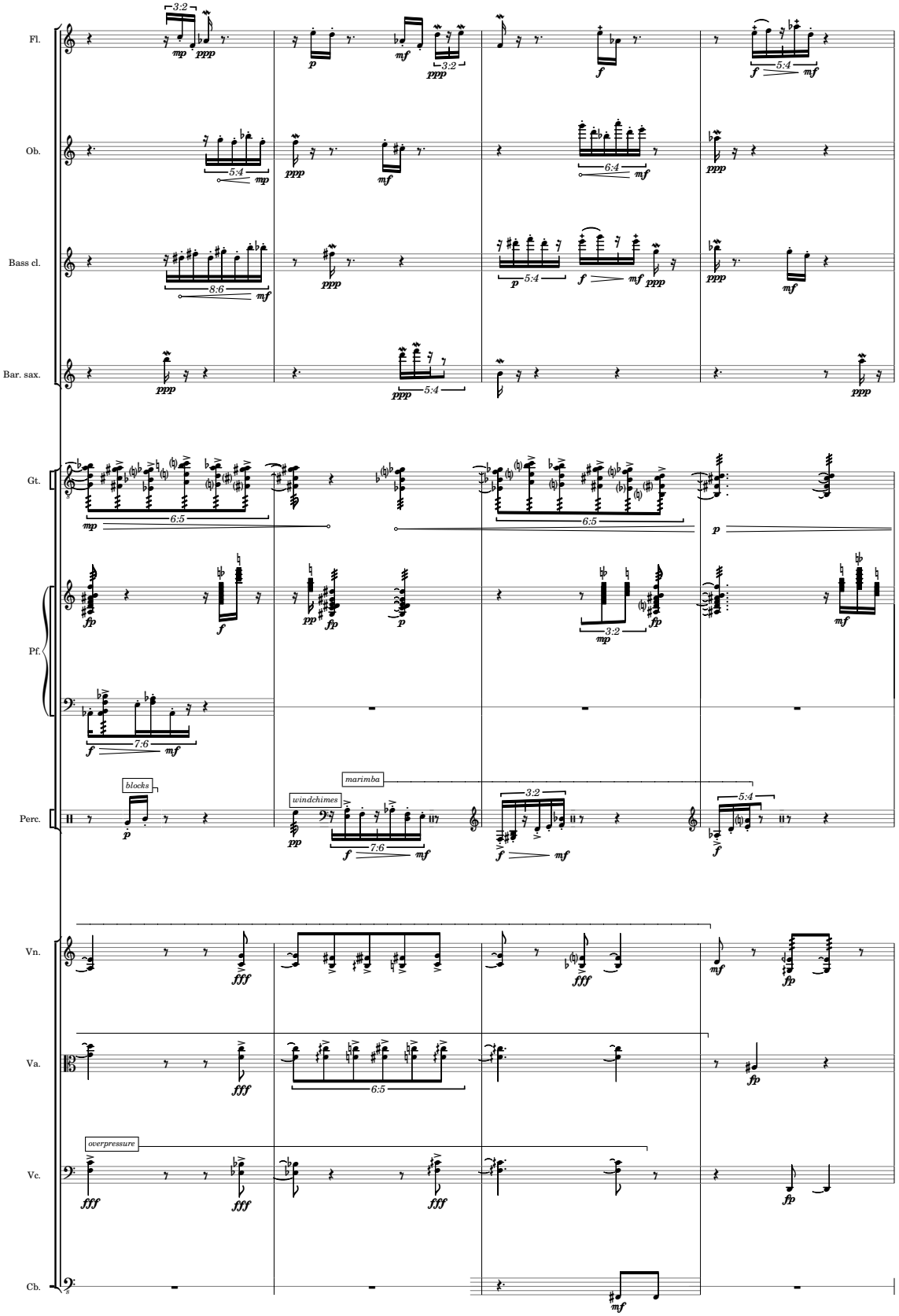
Cb.
L.V
blocks
windchimes
overpressure
overpressure
8va
5:4
7:6
4:3
3:2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blocks
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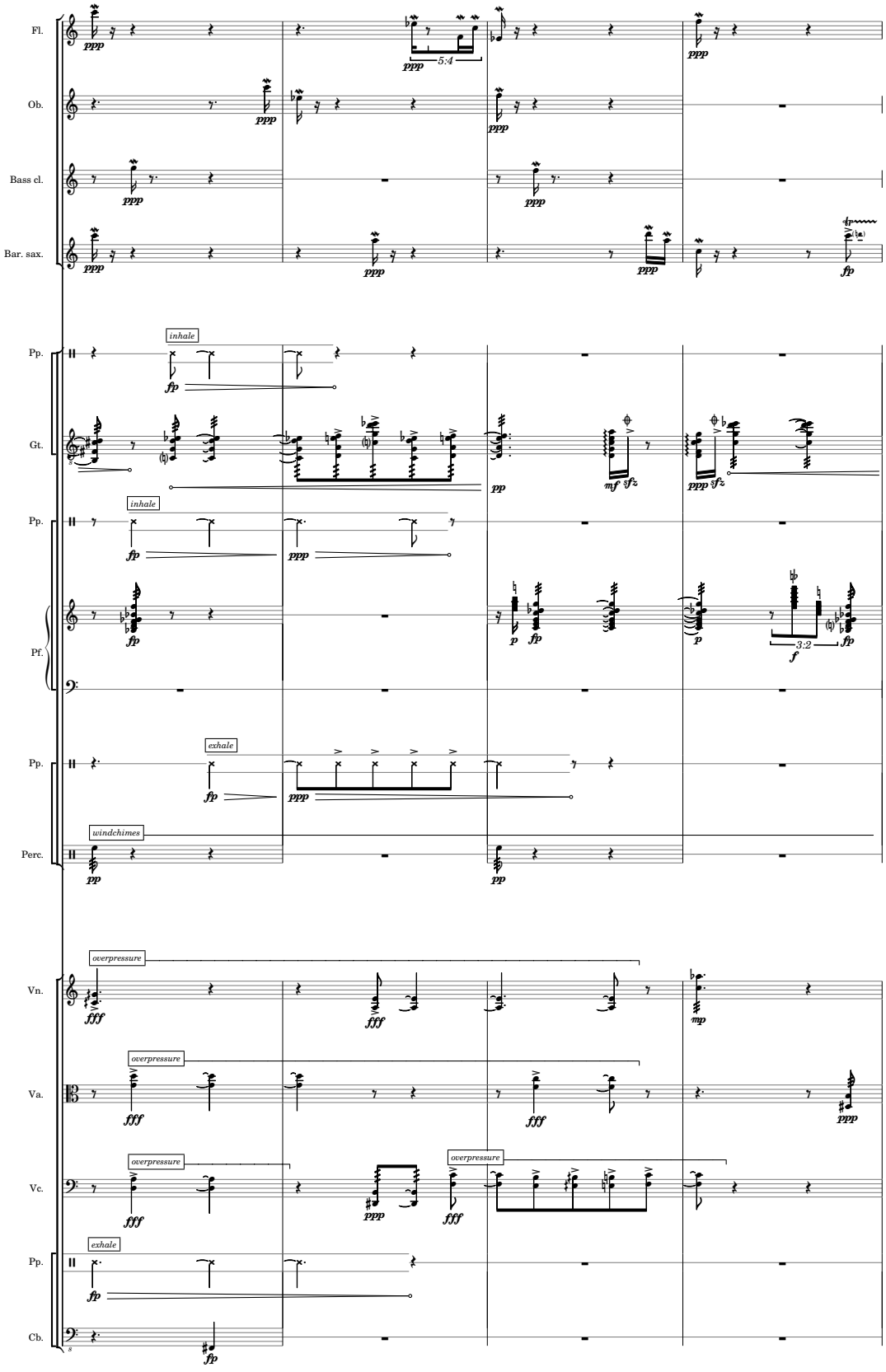
marimba
overpressure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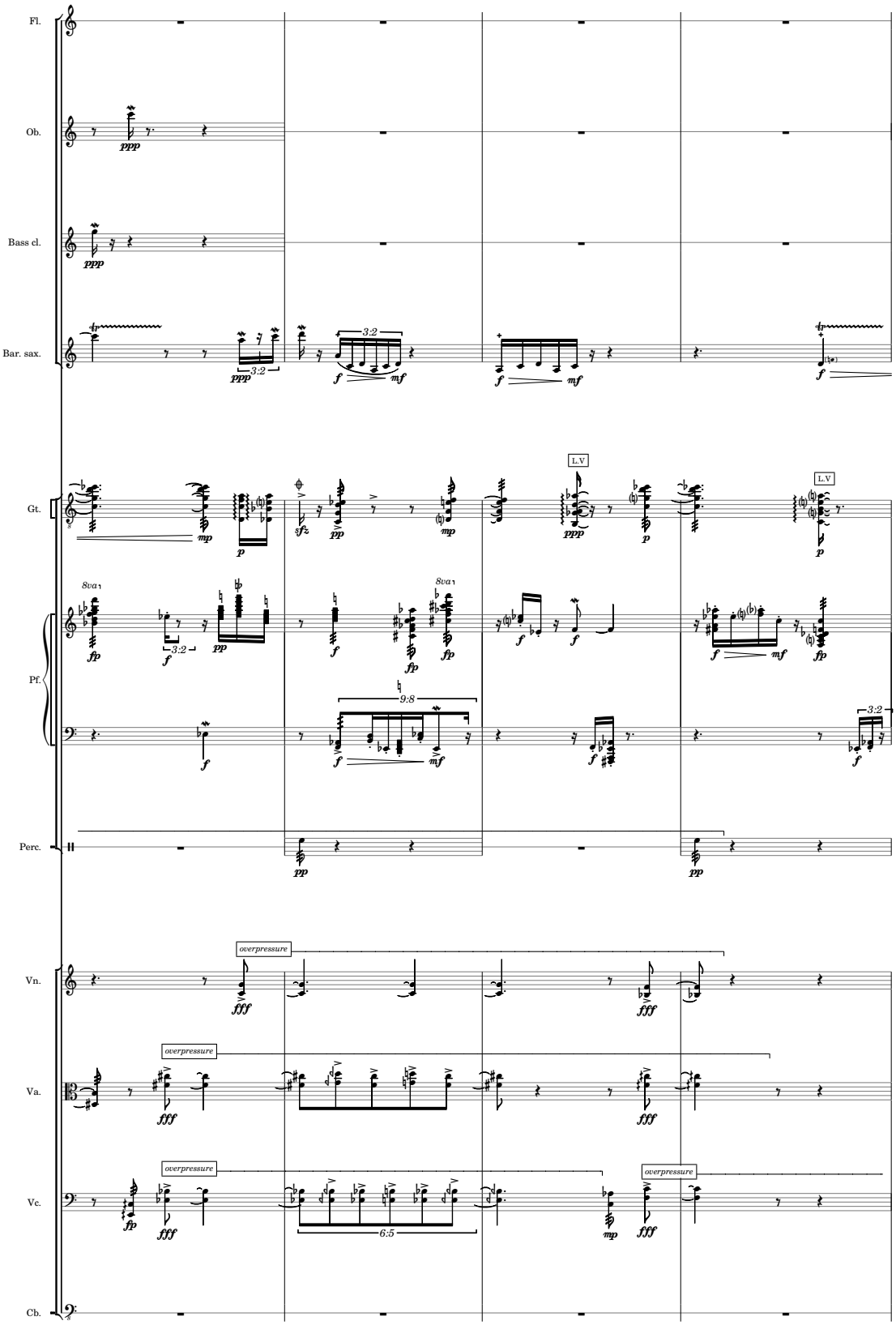
inhale
exhale
windchimes
overpressure
5:4
3:2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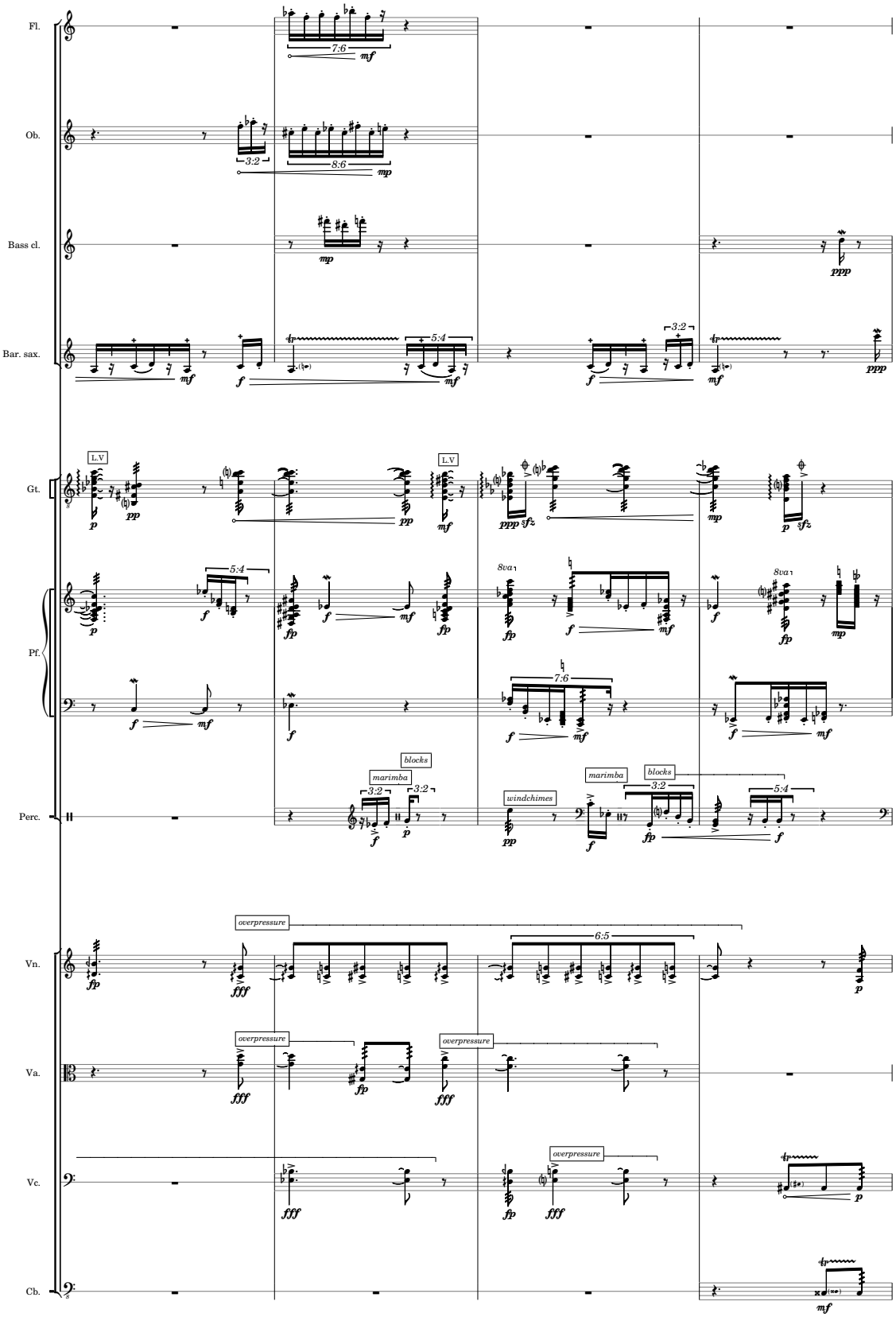
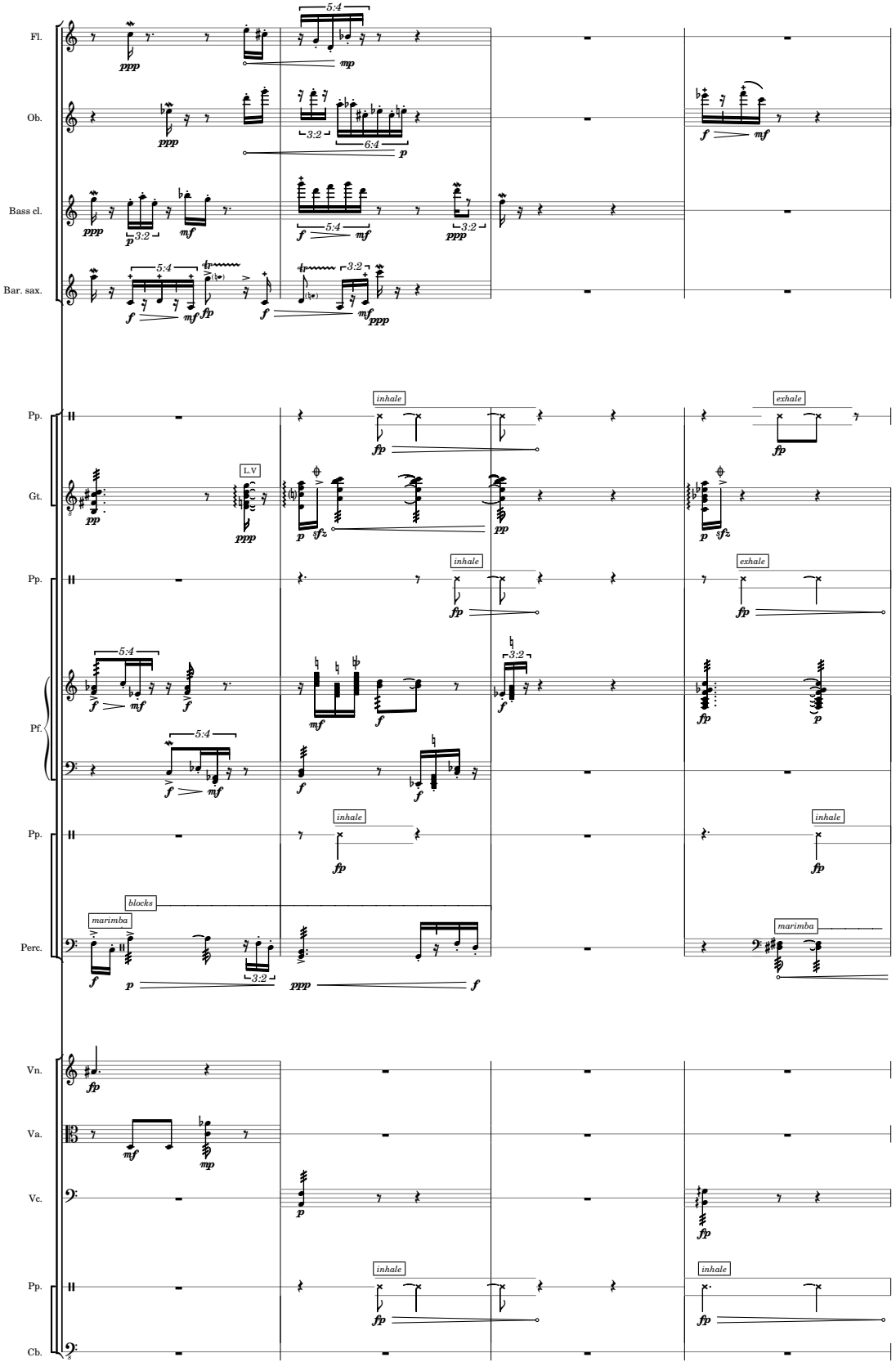
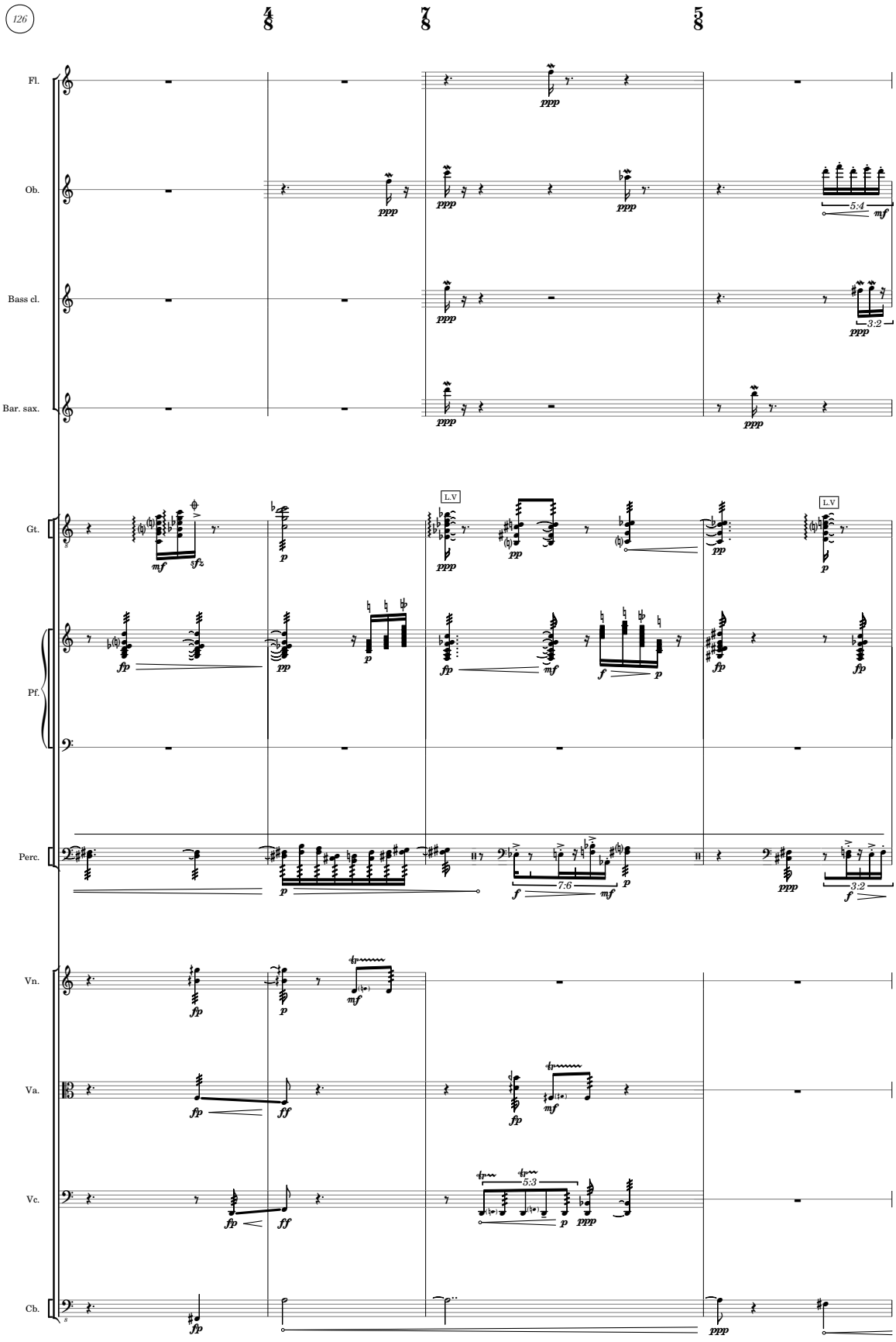
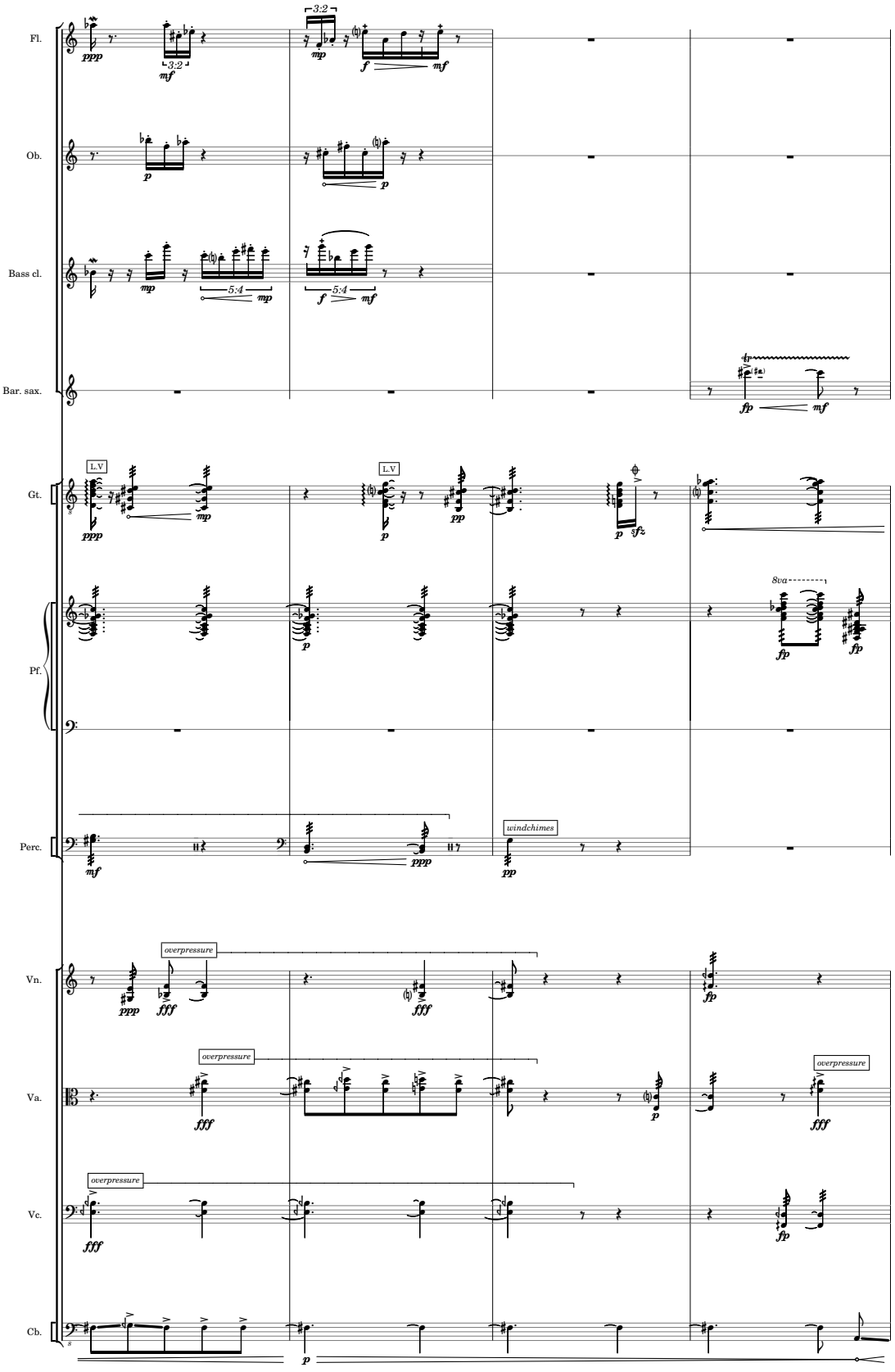
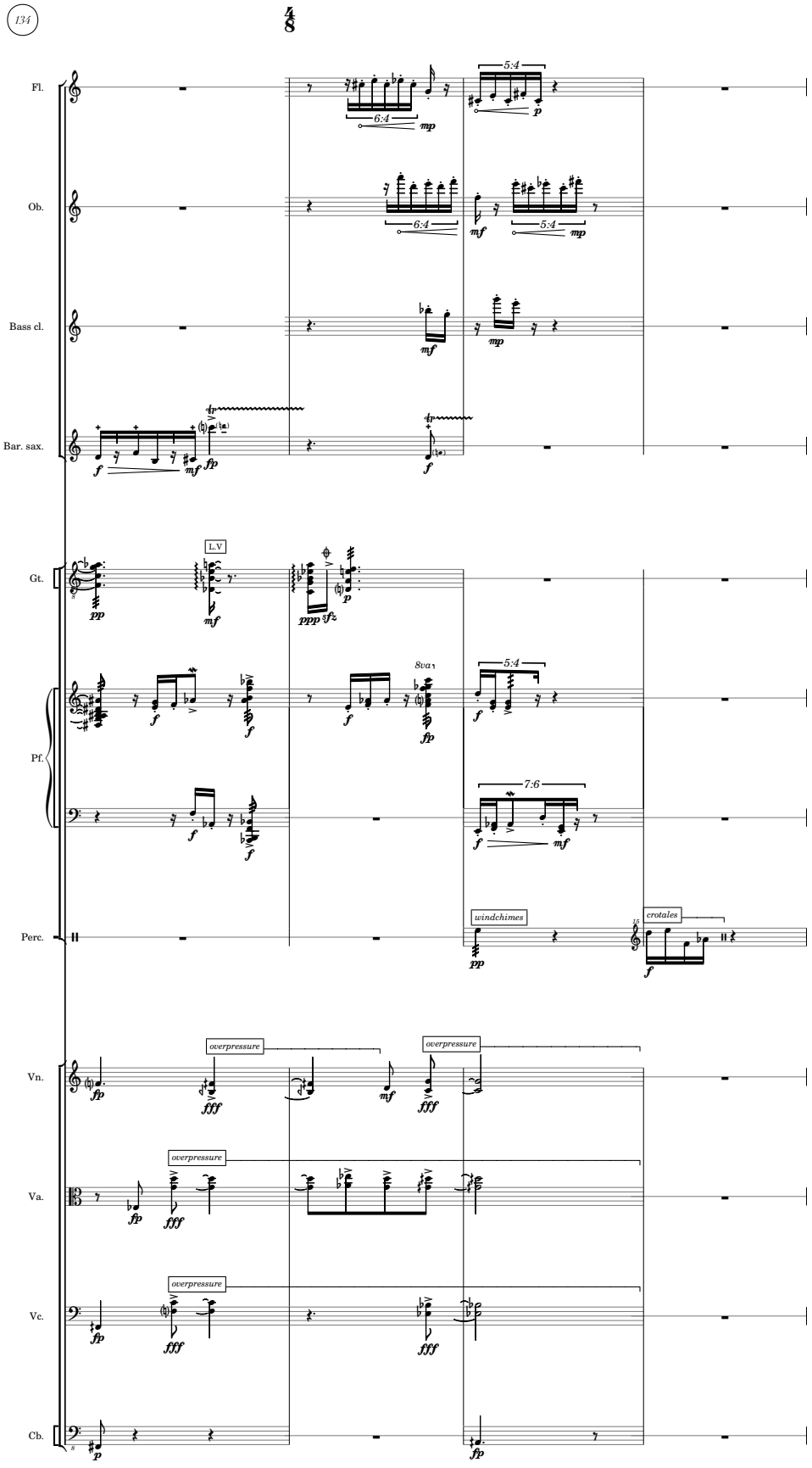
overpressure
8va
3:2
9:8
6:5

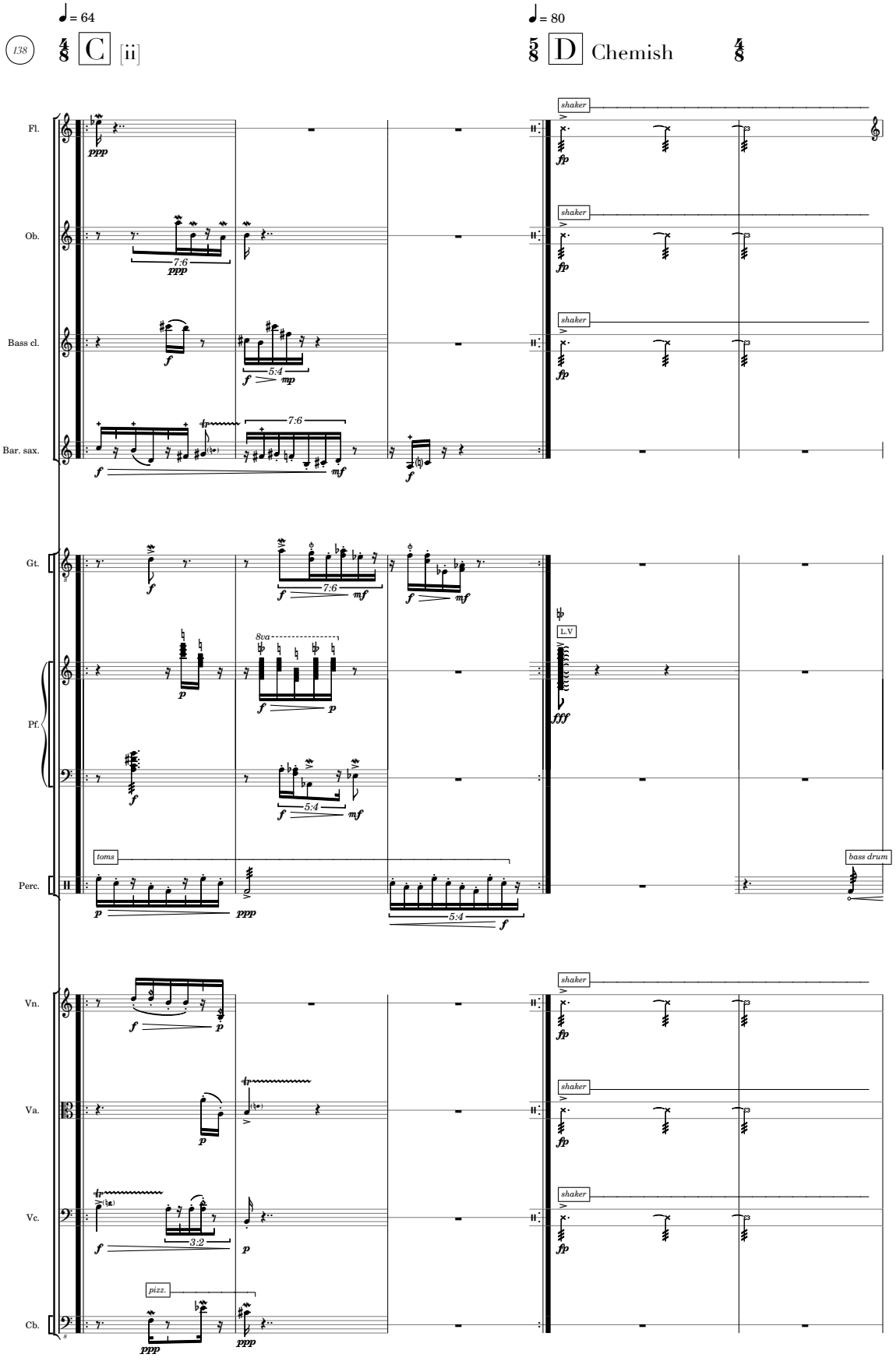

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
LV
overpressure
marimba
blocks
windchimes
8va
7:6
8:6
5:4
3:2
6:5

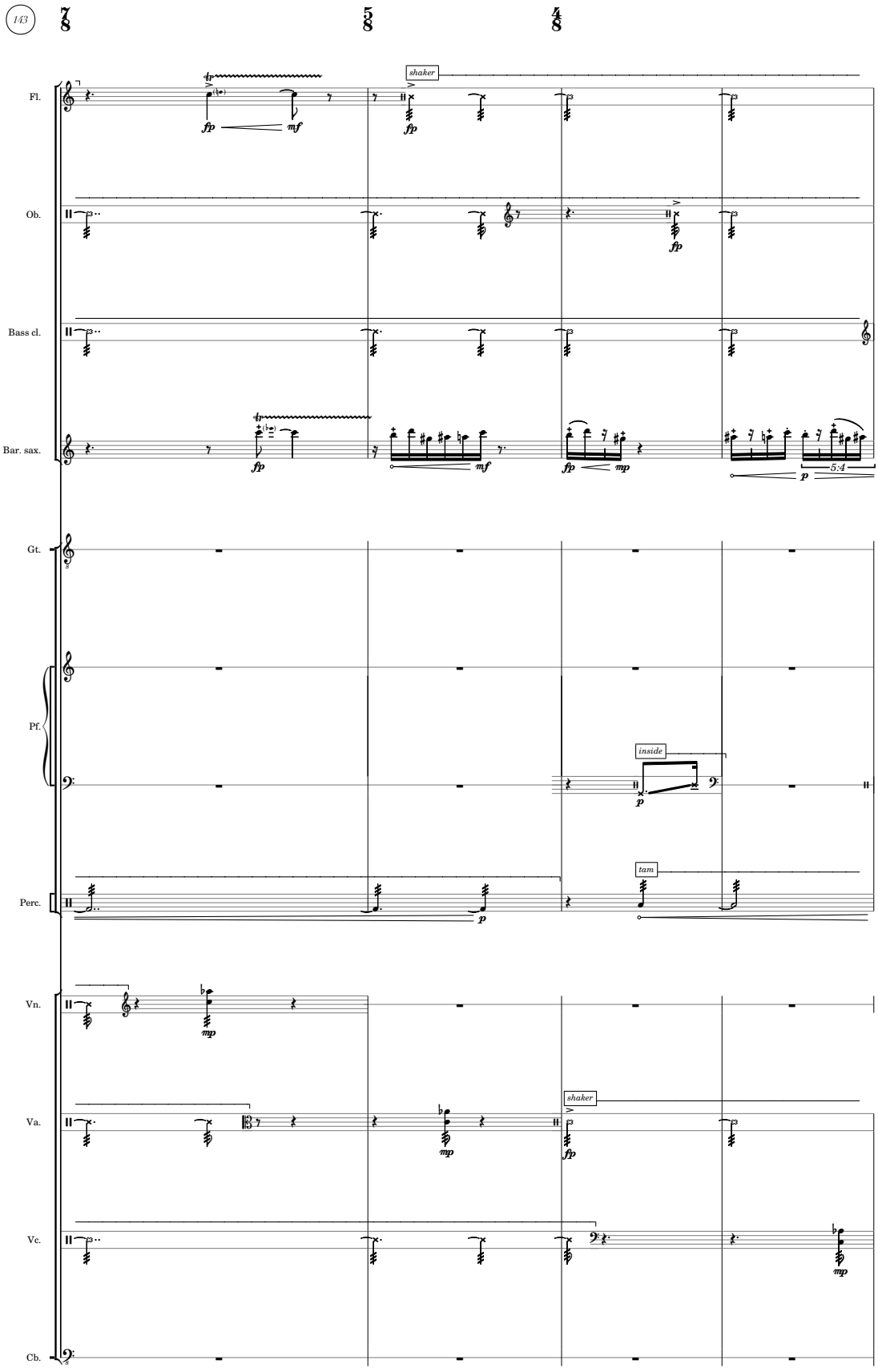

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
L.V
blocks
marimba

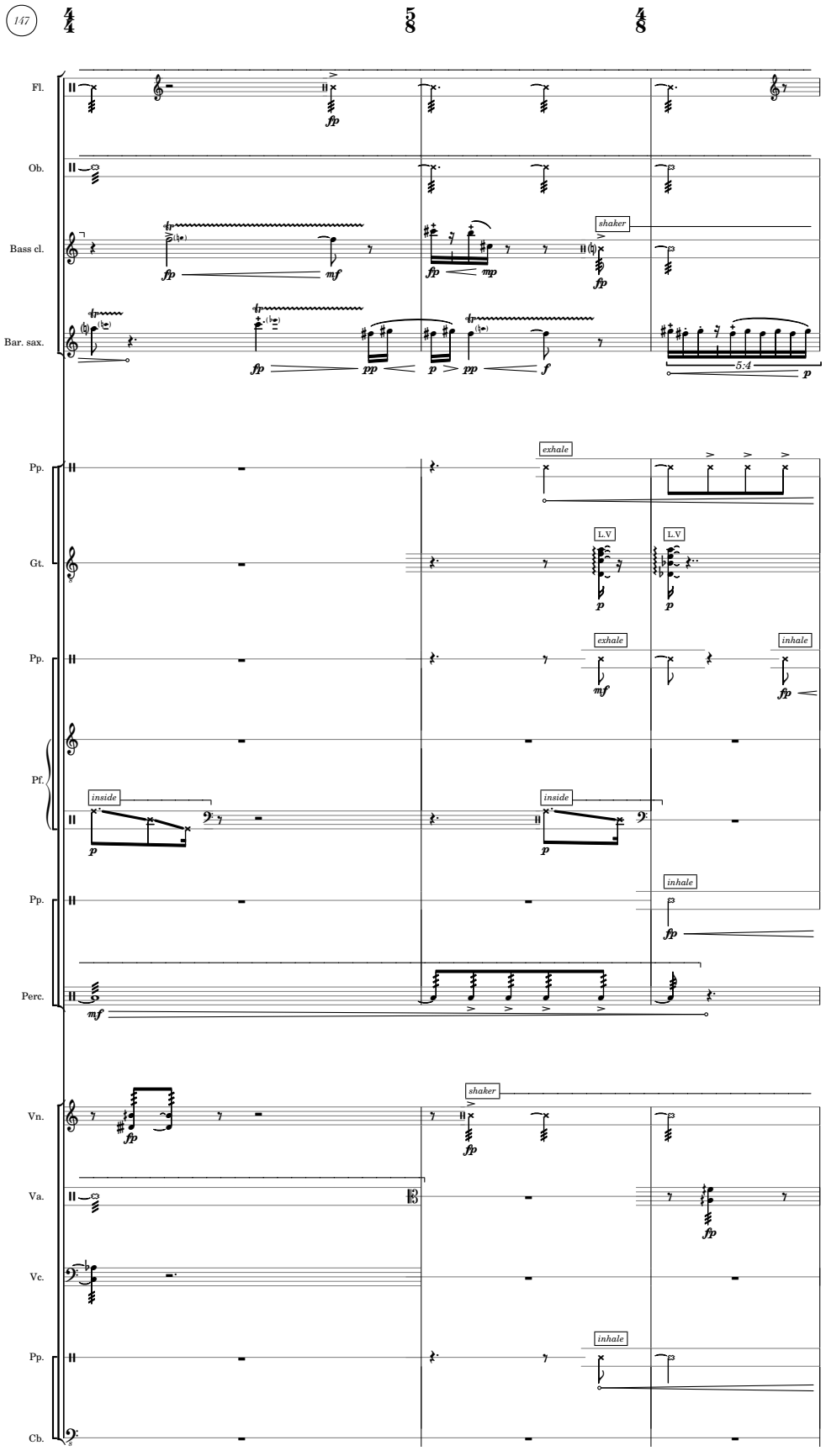

4/8
7/8
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
5:4
3:2
7:6
5:3

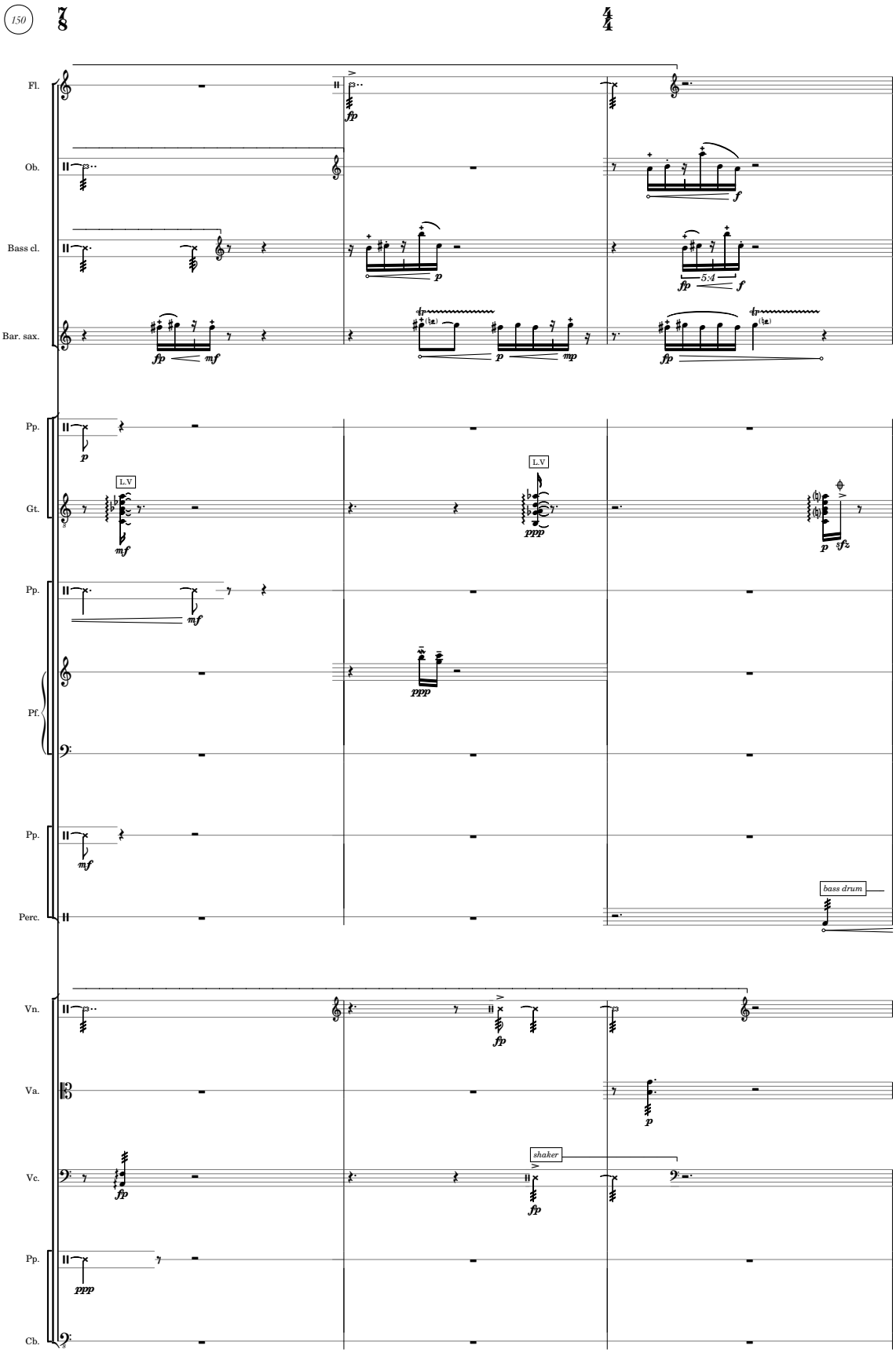

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
3:2
5:4
L.V
8va
windchimes
overpressure

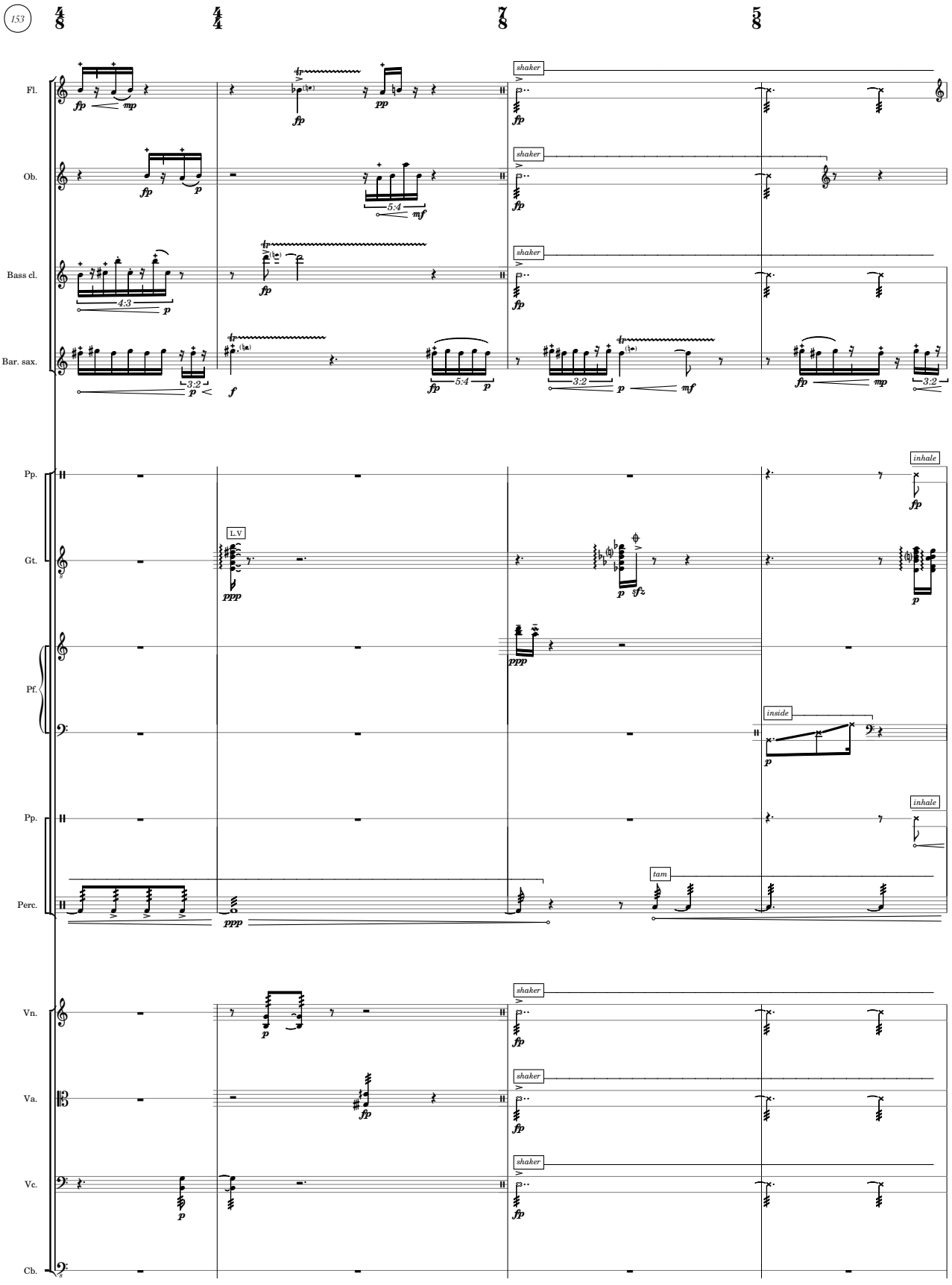

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
8va
5:4
6:4
7:6
windchimes
crotales
overpressure

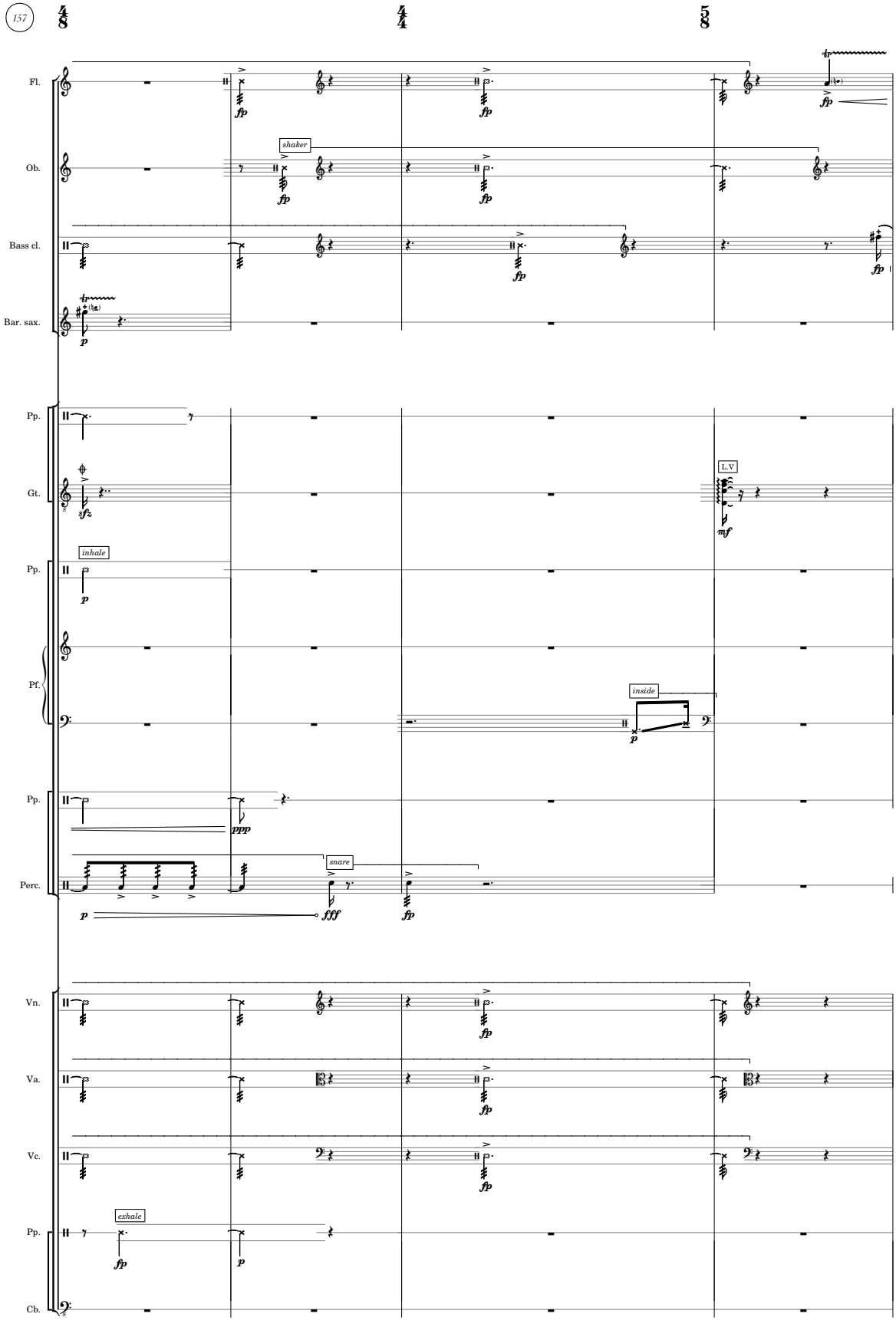

138
♩= 64
4/8 C [ii]
♩= 80
5/8 D Chemish
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
L.V
toms
bass drum
pizz.
7:6
5:4
3:2
8va

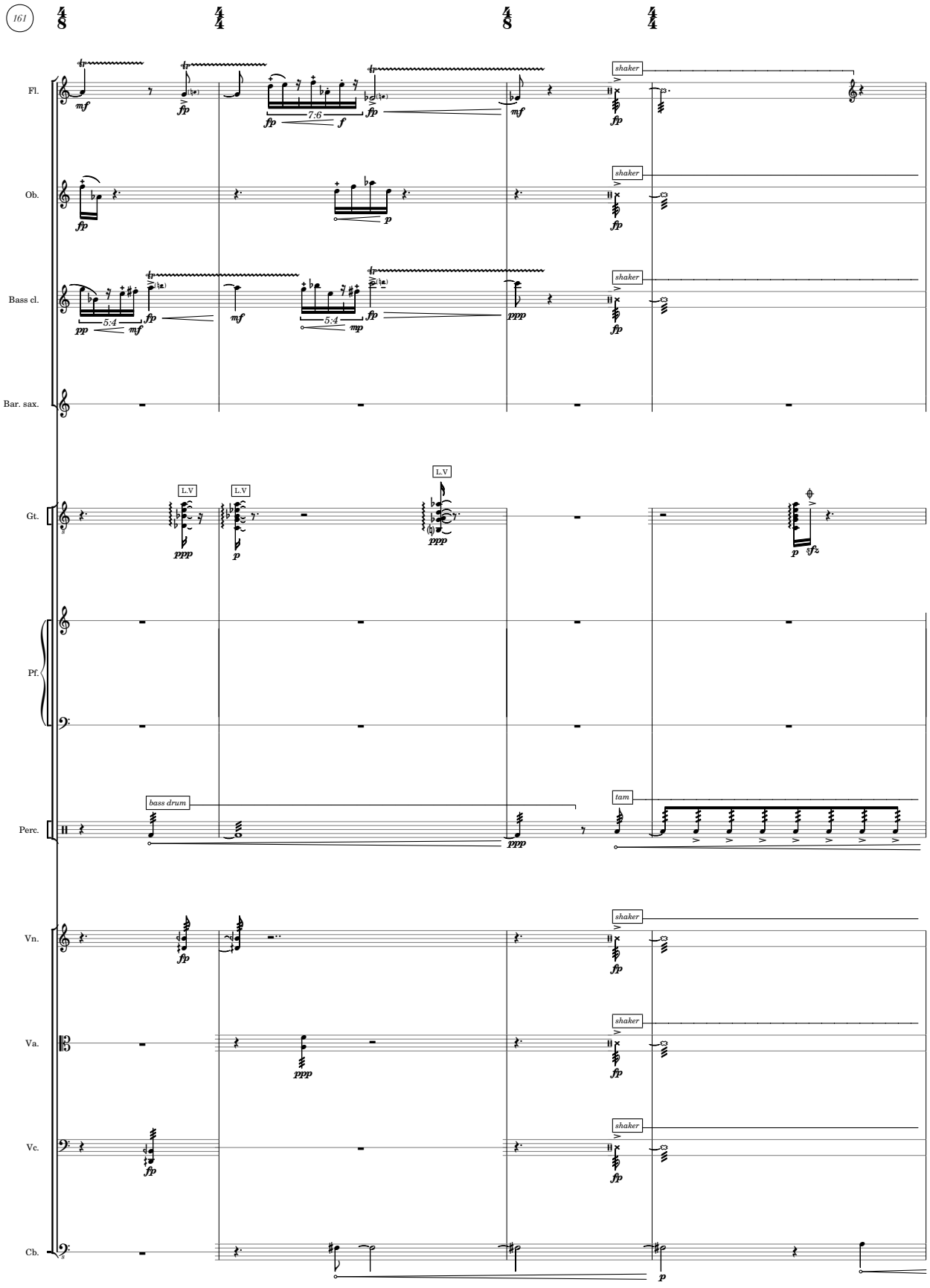

7/8
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
inside
tam
5:4

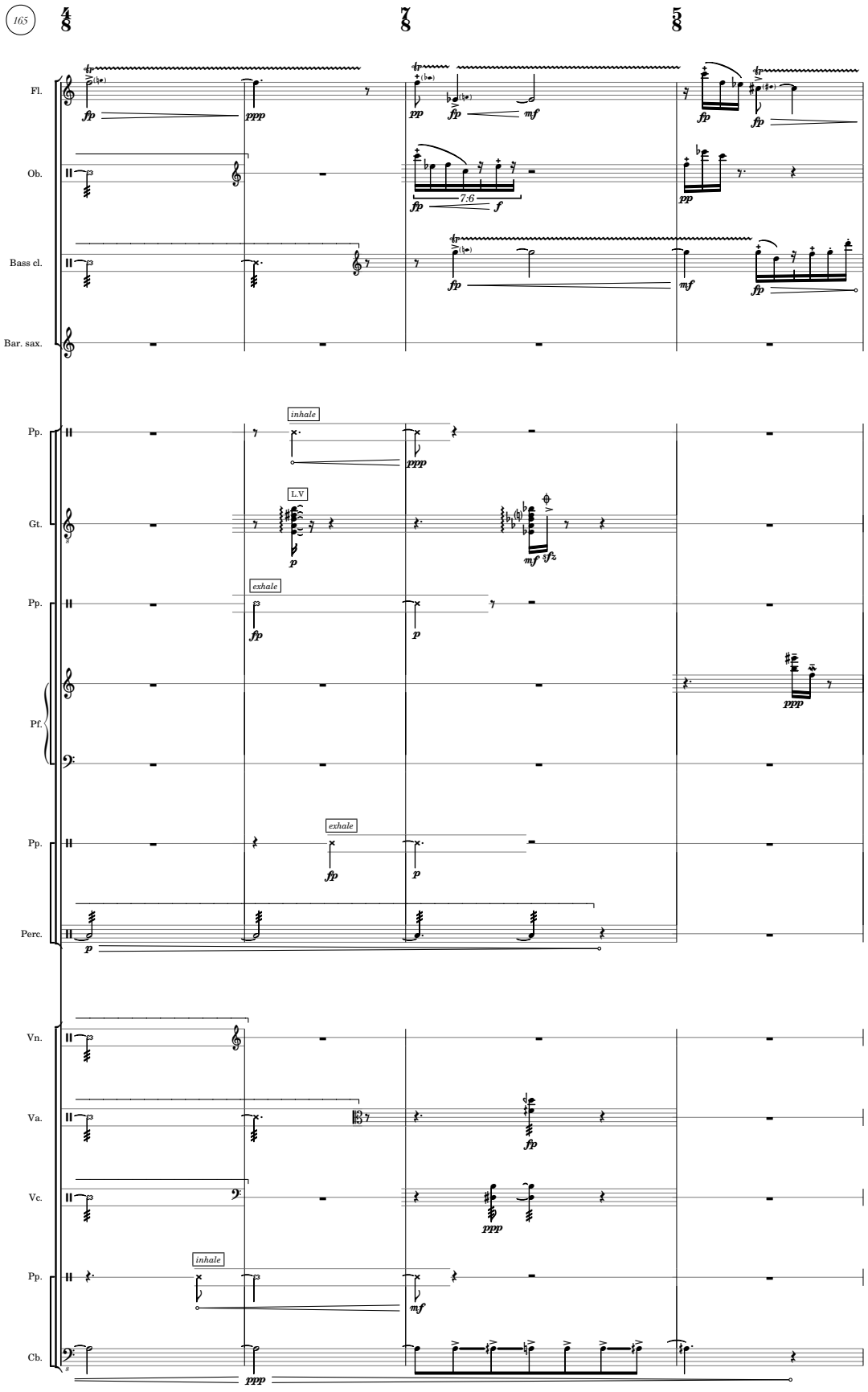

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
shaker
Bar. sax.
5:4
Pp.
exhale
Gt.
L.V
Pp.
exhale
inhale
Pf.
inside
inside
Pp.
inhale
Perc.
Vn.
shaker
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
inhale
Cb.

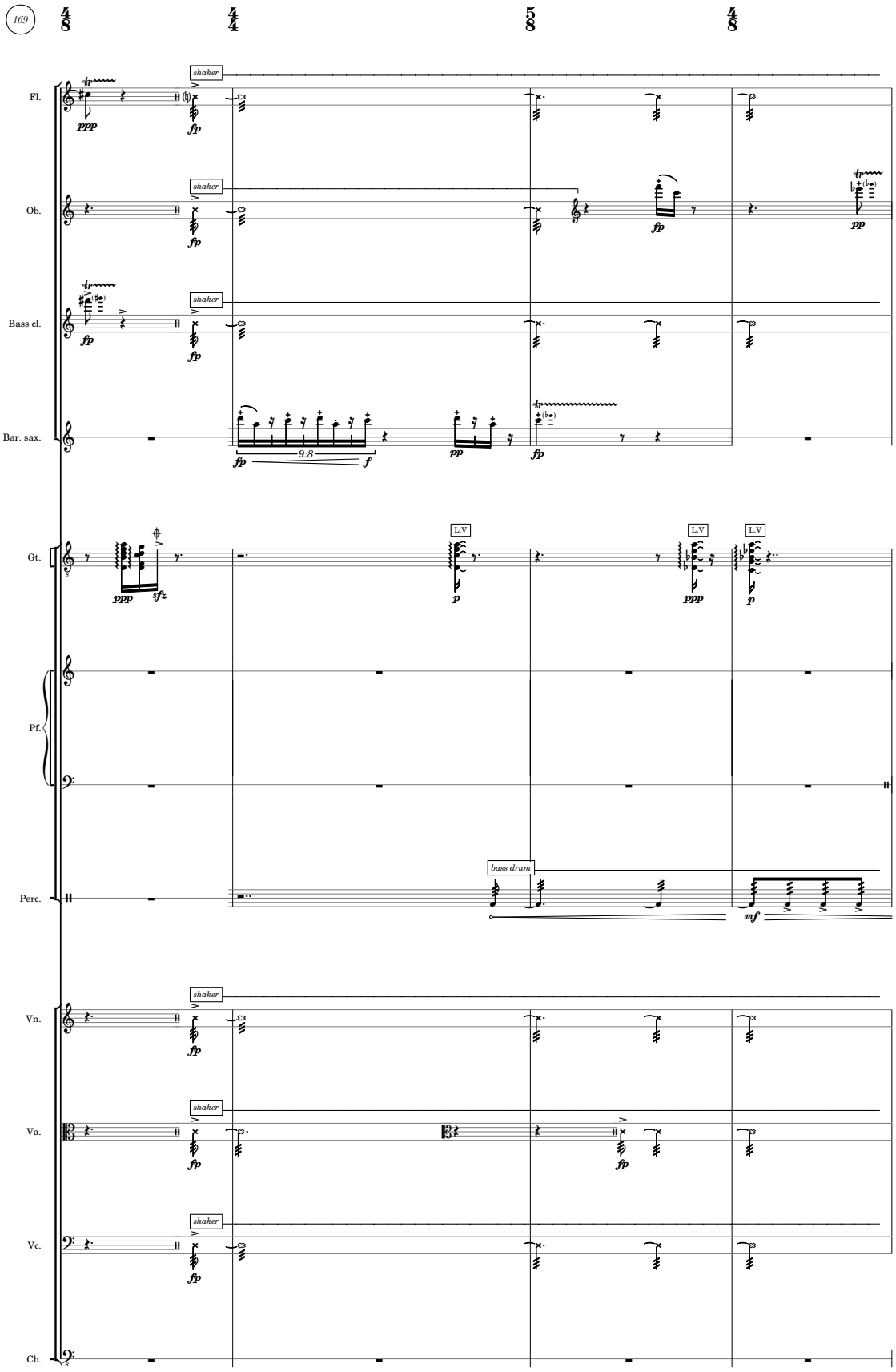

7/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
L.V
L.V
bass drum
shaker
5:4

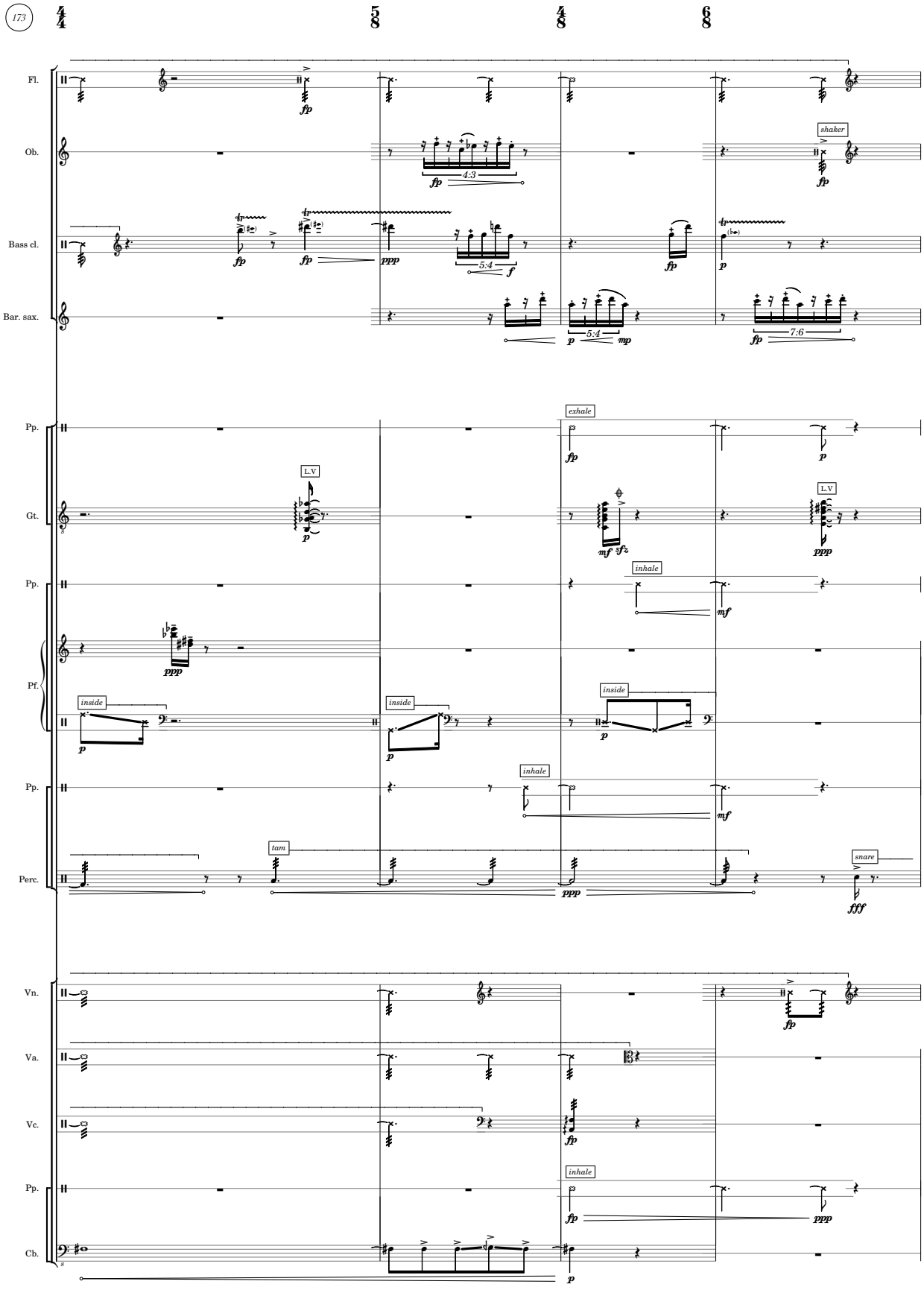

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
LV
inside
tam
4:3
5:4
3:2

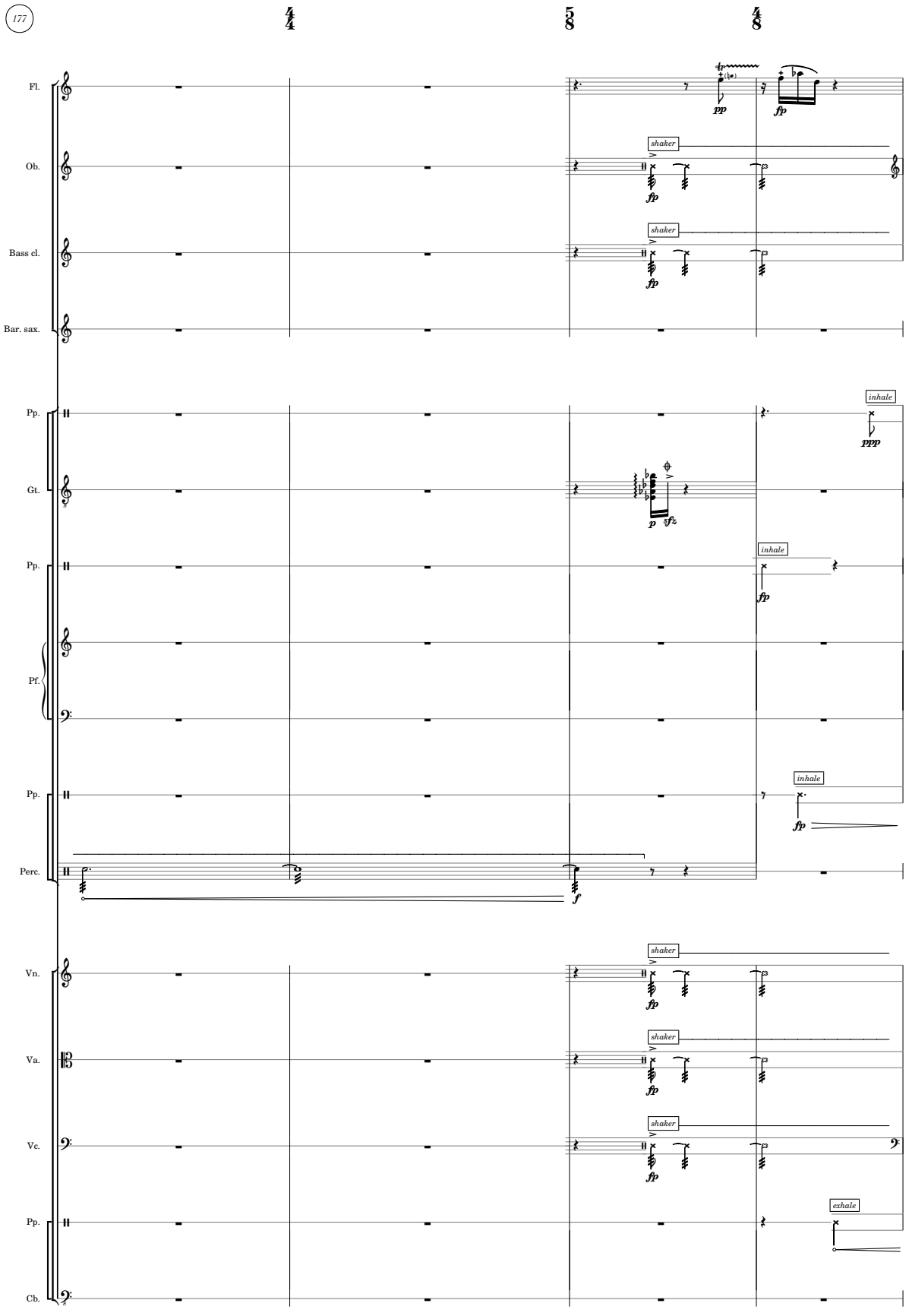

157
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
L.V
inside
snare
exhale

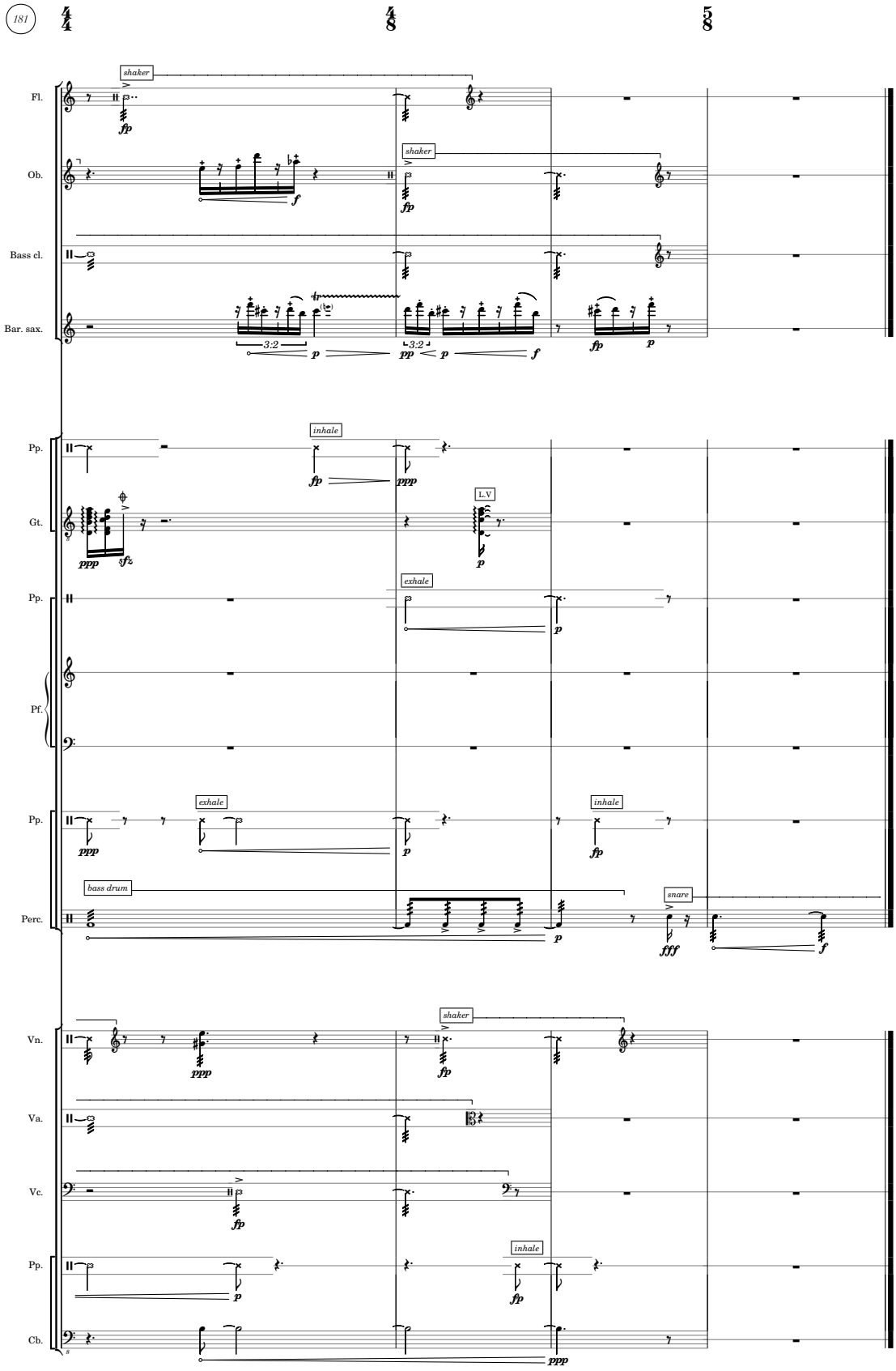

161
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
bass drum
tam
L.V
7:6
5:4


165
4/8
7/8
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
LV
exhale
exhale
inhale
7:6


169
4/8
4/4
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
bass drum
L.V
9:8


4/4
5/8
4/8
6/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
exhale
inhale
inside
tam
snare
L.V
4:3
5:4
7:6


4/4
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
exhale
pp
fp
ppp
p
sfz
f



Portland, OR
January 2015 - April 2015