Invisible Cities (iii):
ERSILIA

for
Chamber Orchestra

Composed by
JOSIAH WOLF OBERHOLTZER

2015

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

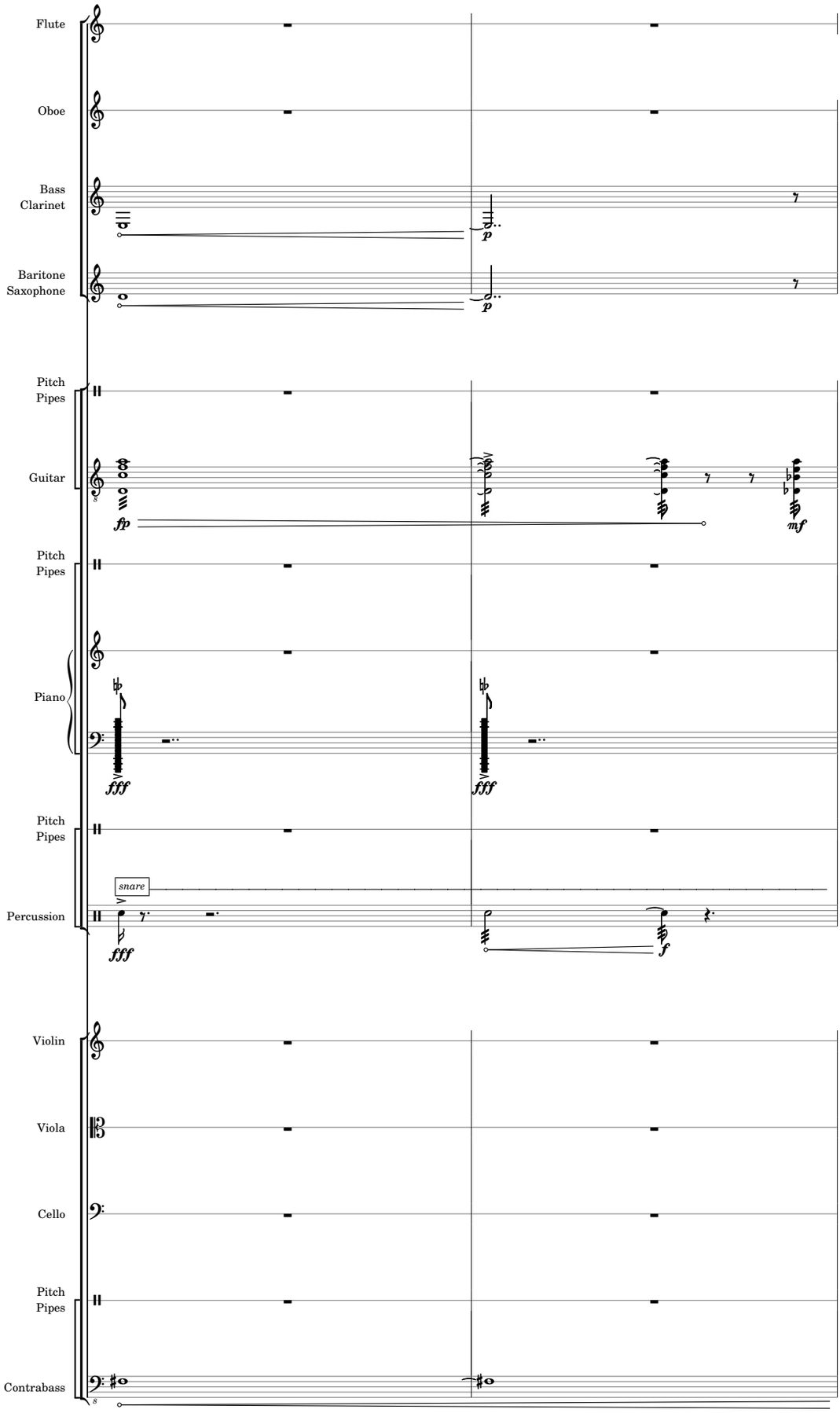
(a botanical survey of the uninhabited northeastern isles)

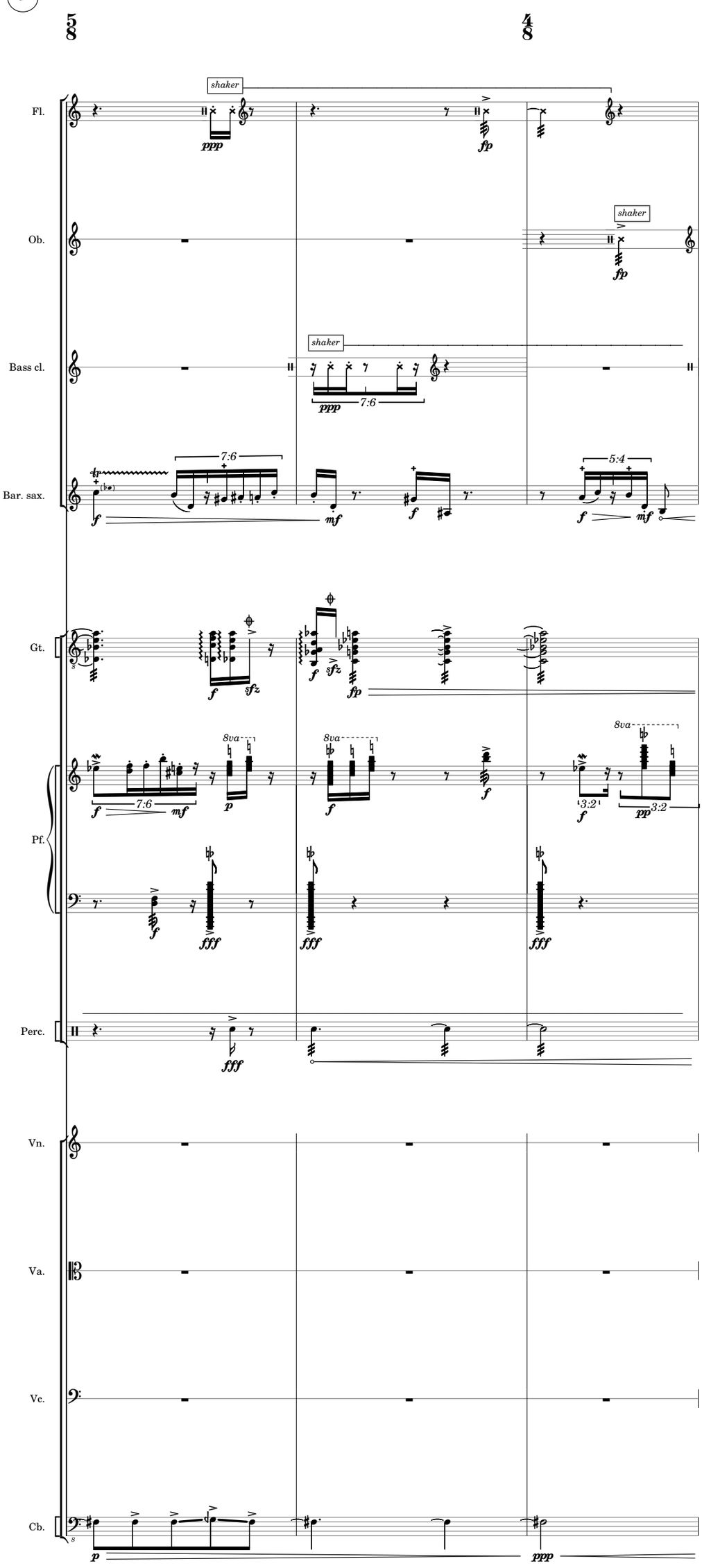
for Ensemble Dal Niente

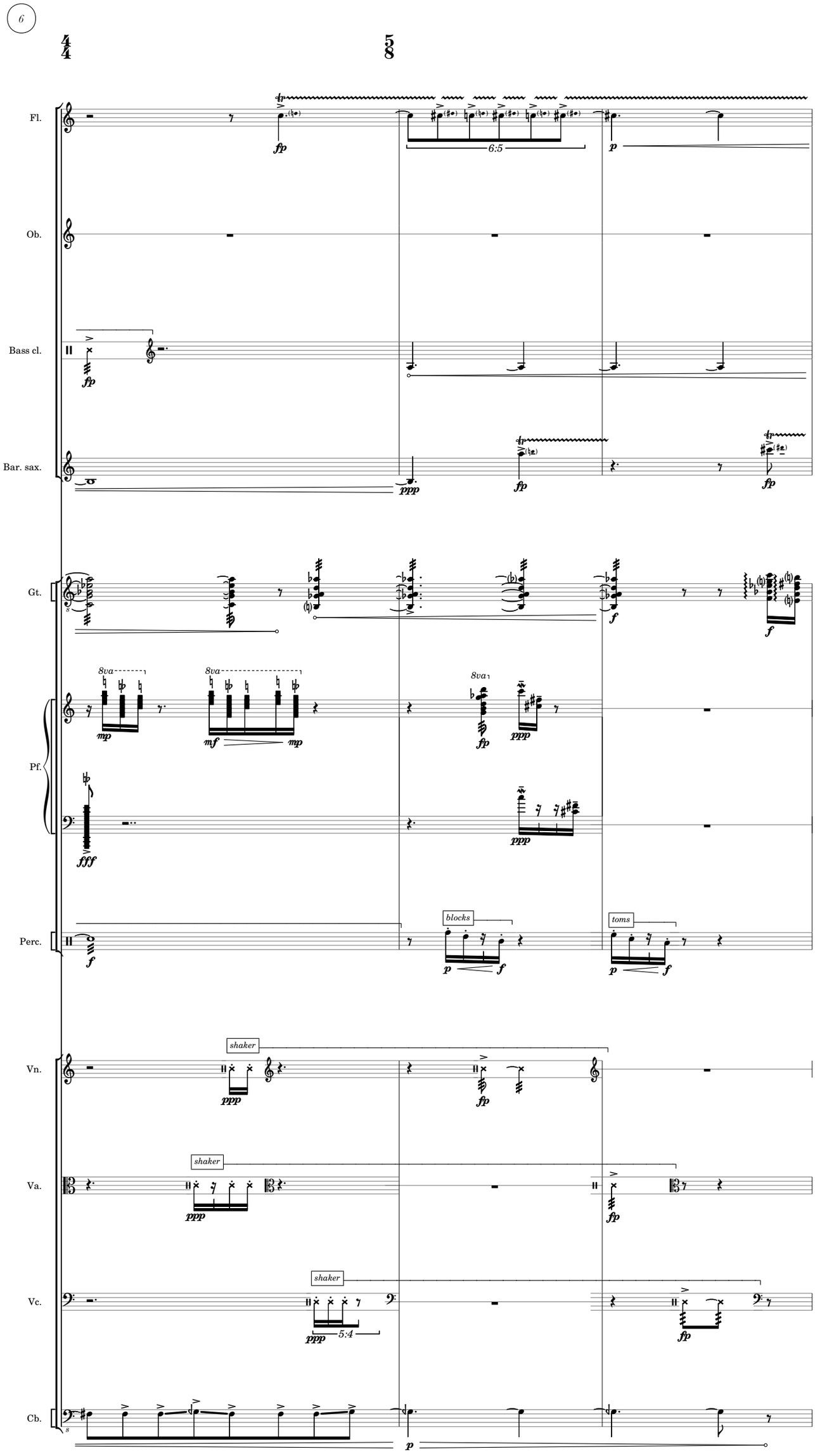
Josiah Wolf Oberholtzer (1984)

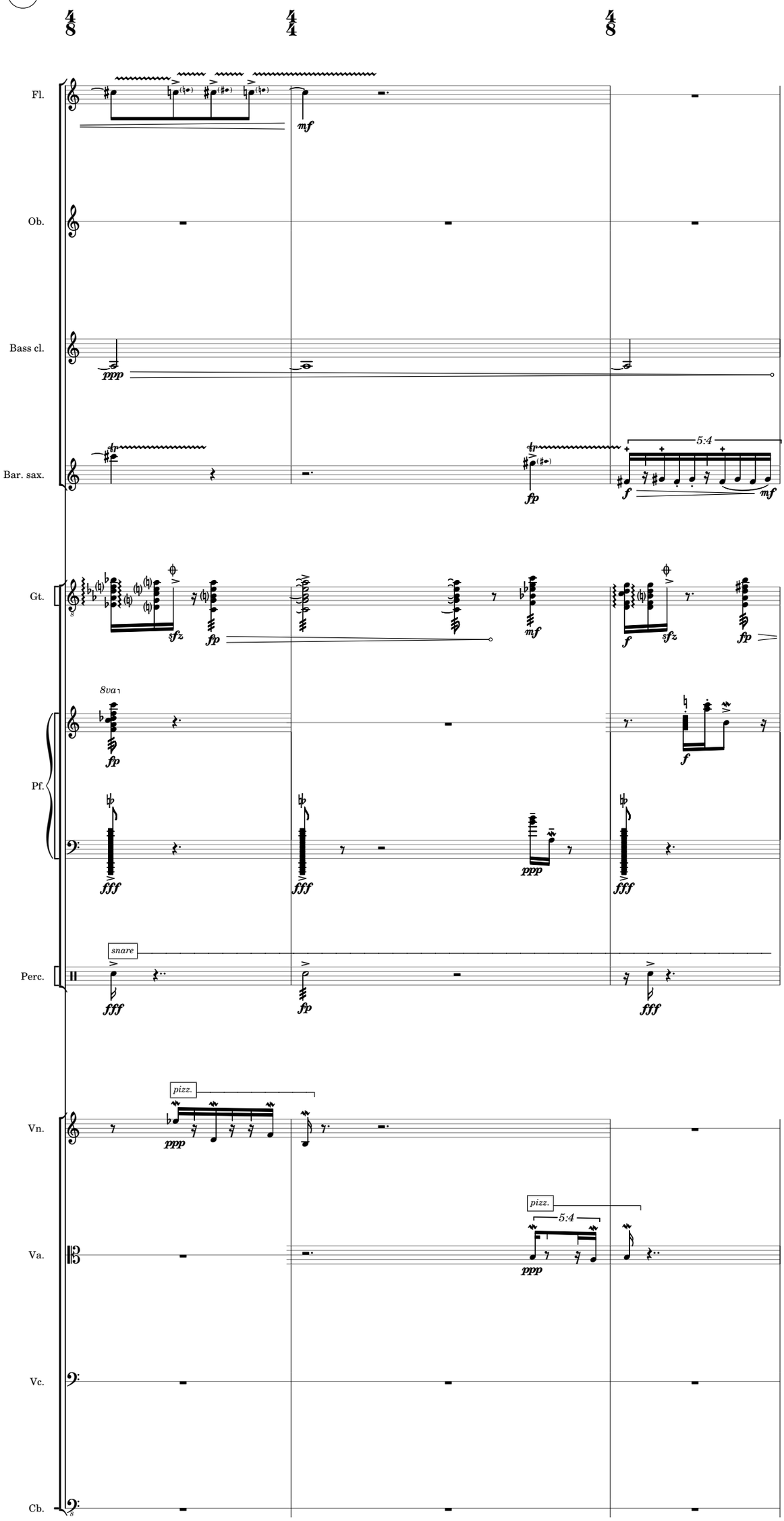
♩ = 96

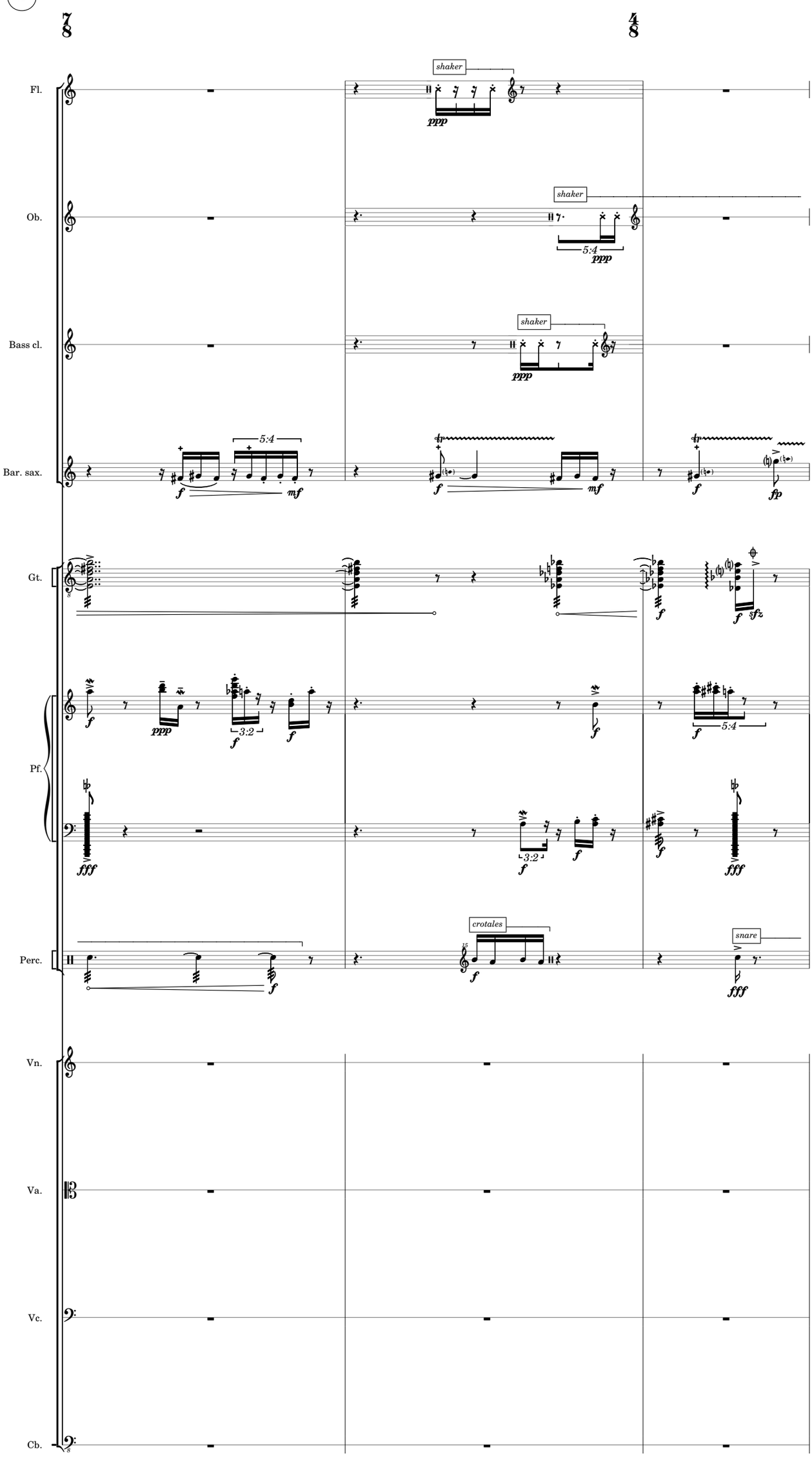
Komokome

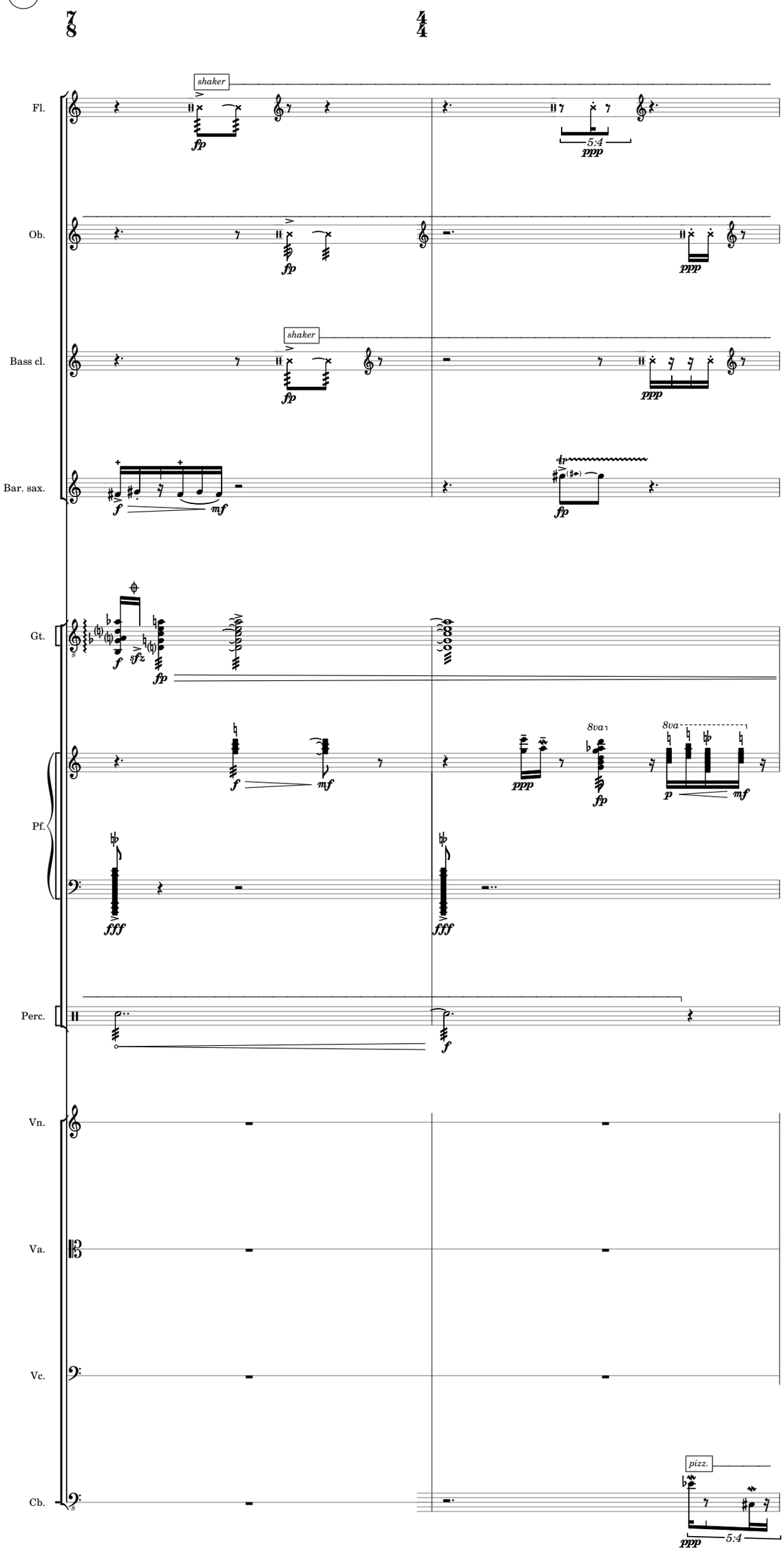


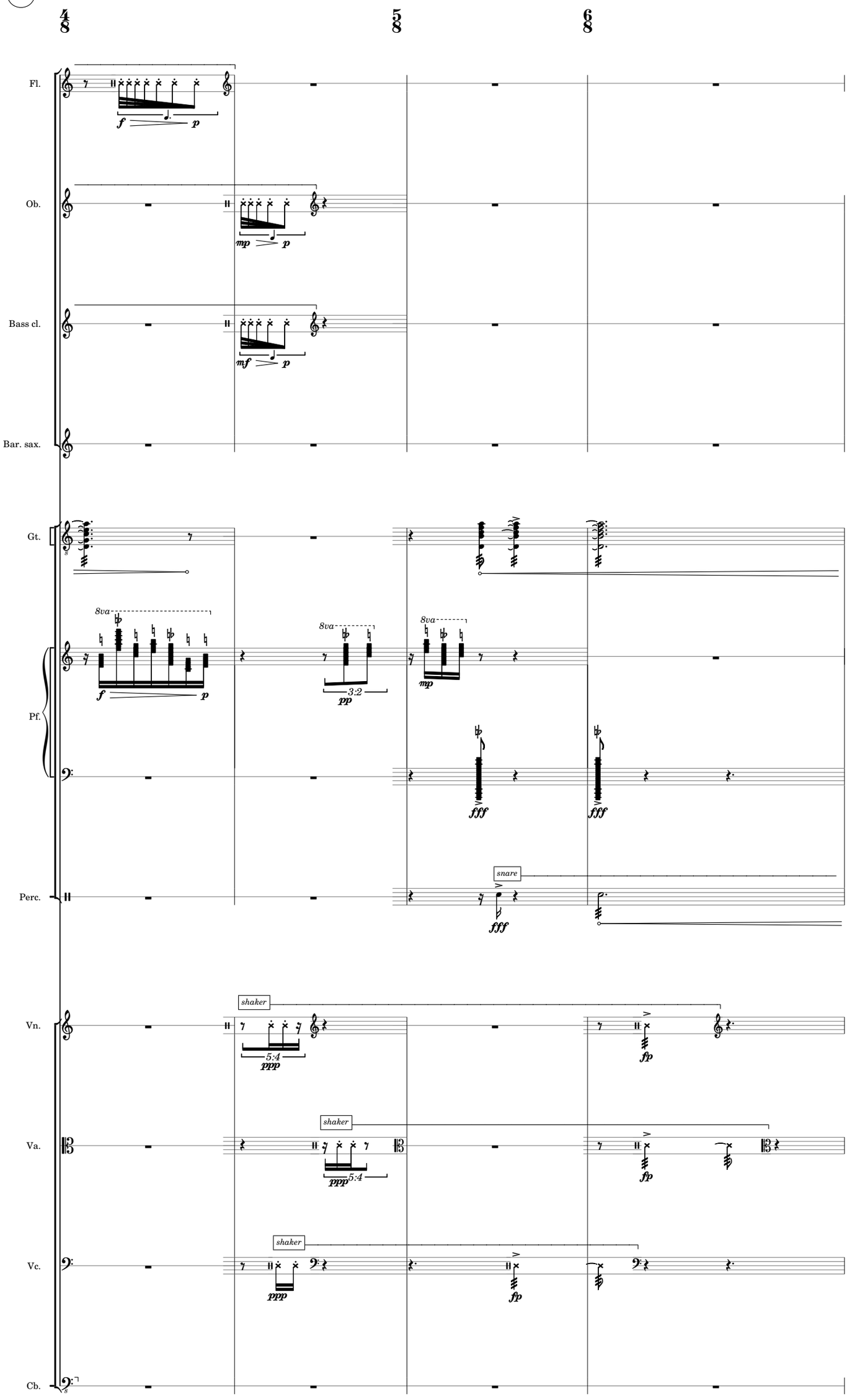

5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
ppp
fp
7:6
5:4
3:2
8va
f
mf
sfz
fff
pp
p


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


Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
snare
pizz.
5:4
8va


Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
shaker
shaker
5:4
5:4
3:2
5:4
3:2
crotales
snare


7/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
shaker
pizz.
5:4
5:4
8va
8va
fp
ppp
f
mf
sfz
fff
p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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
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Perc.
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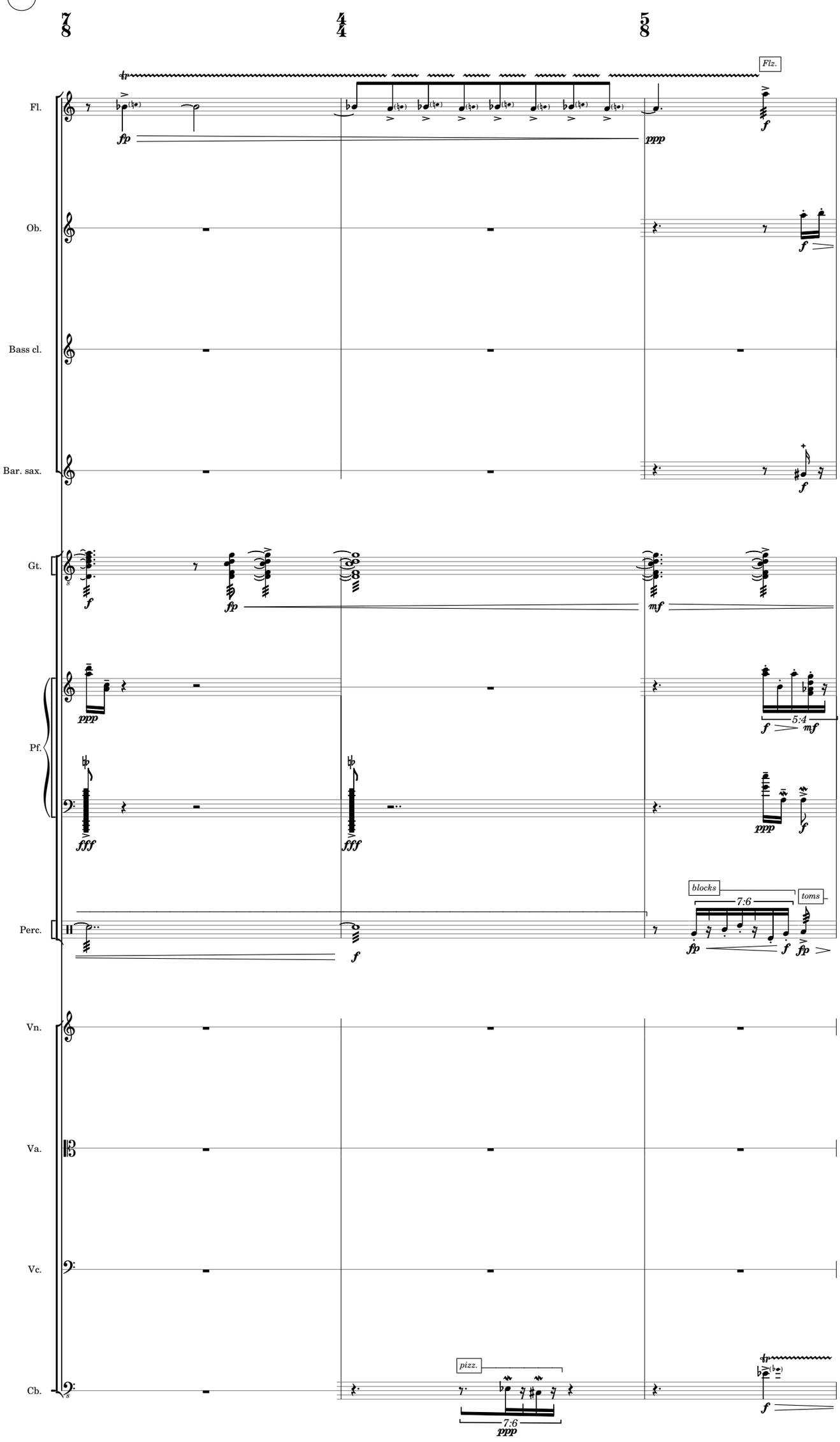
Vc.
Cb.
8va
3:2
5:4
shaker
snare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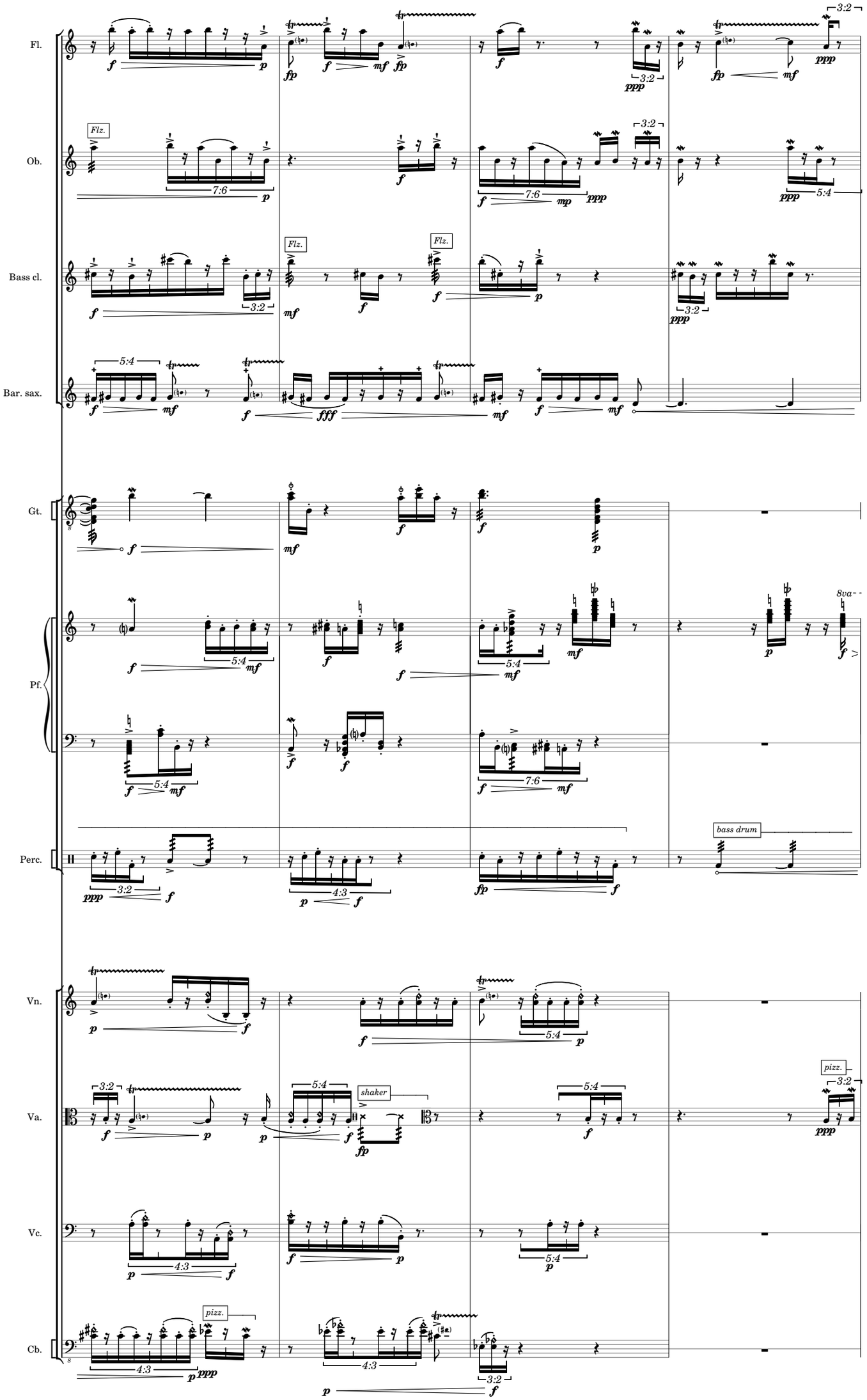
4/4
5/8
Flz.
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
blocks
toms
7:6
5:4
pizz.
7:6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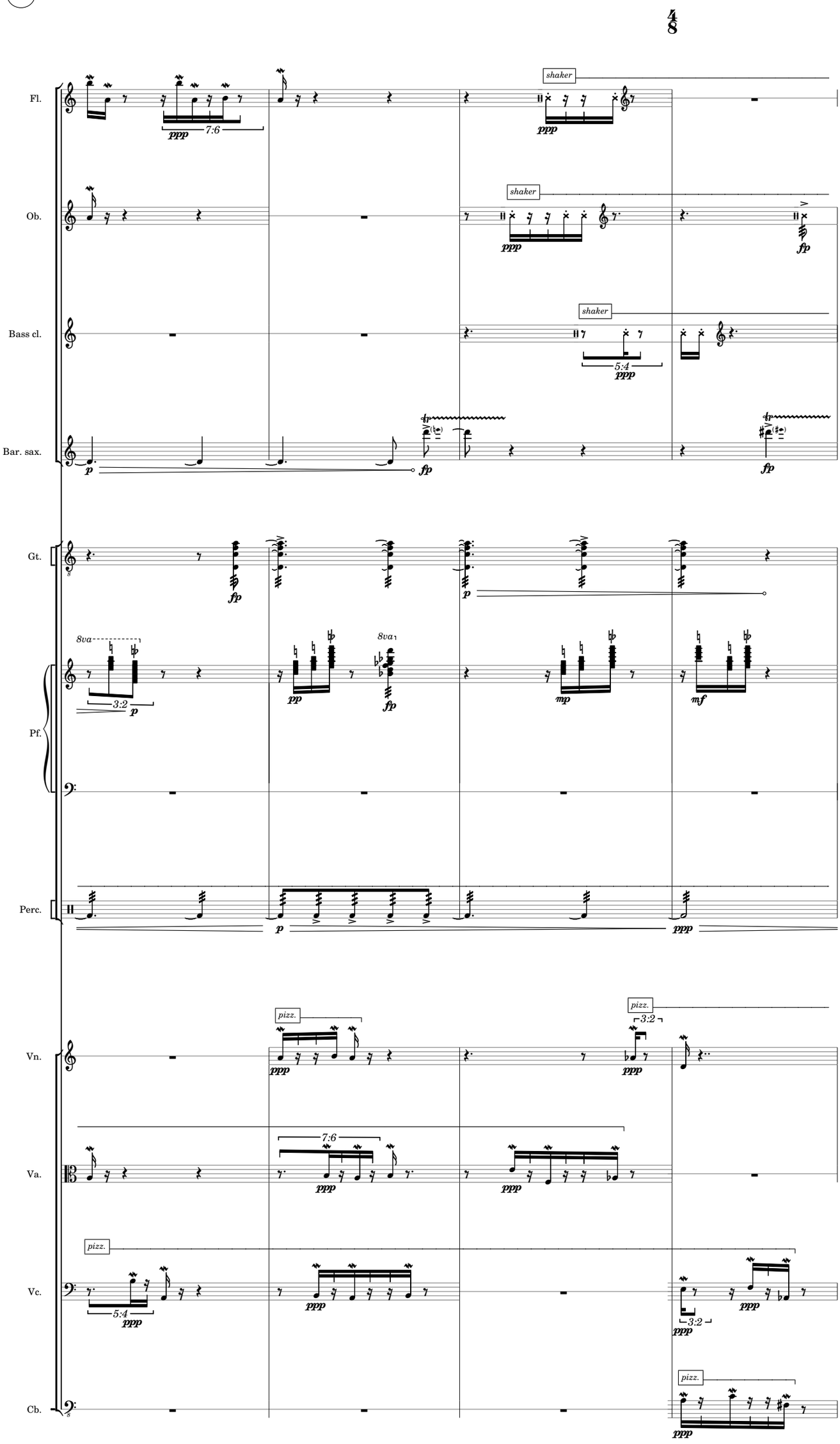
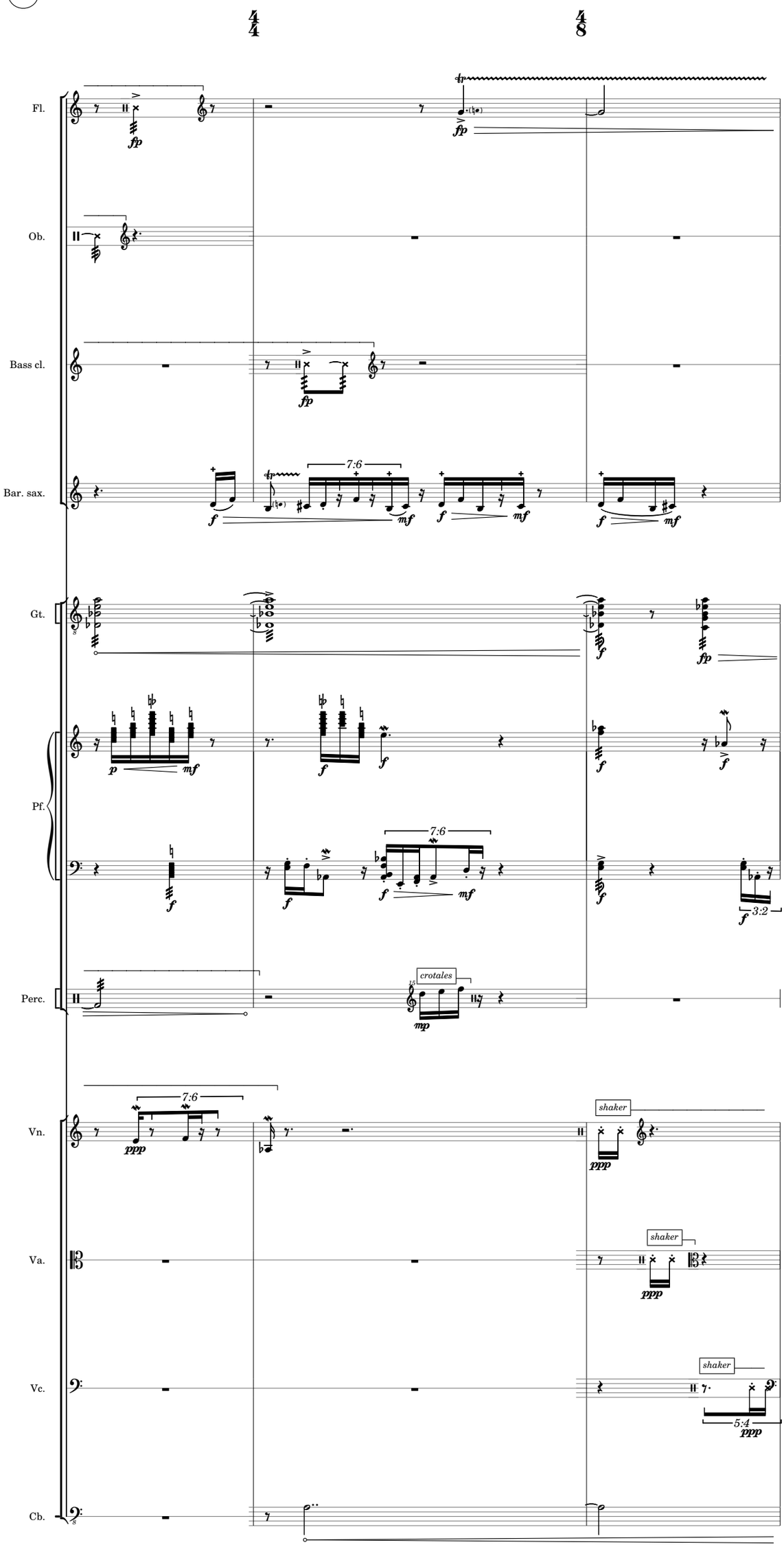
Ob.
Flz.
Bass cl.
Flz.
Flz.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
8va
Perc.
bass drum
Vn.
Va.
shaker
pizz.
Vc.
Cb.
pizz.


4/8
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
fp
fp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Ob.
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Gt.
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Perc.
Vn.
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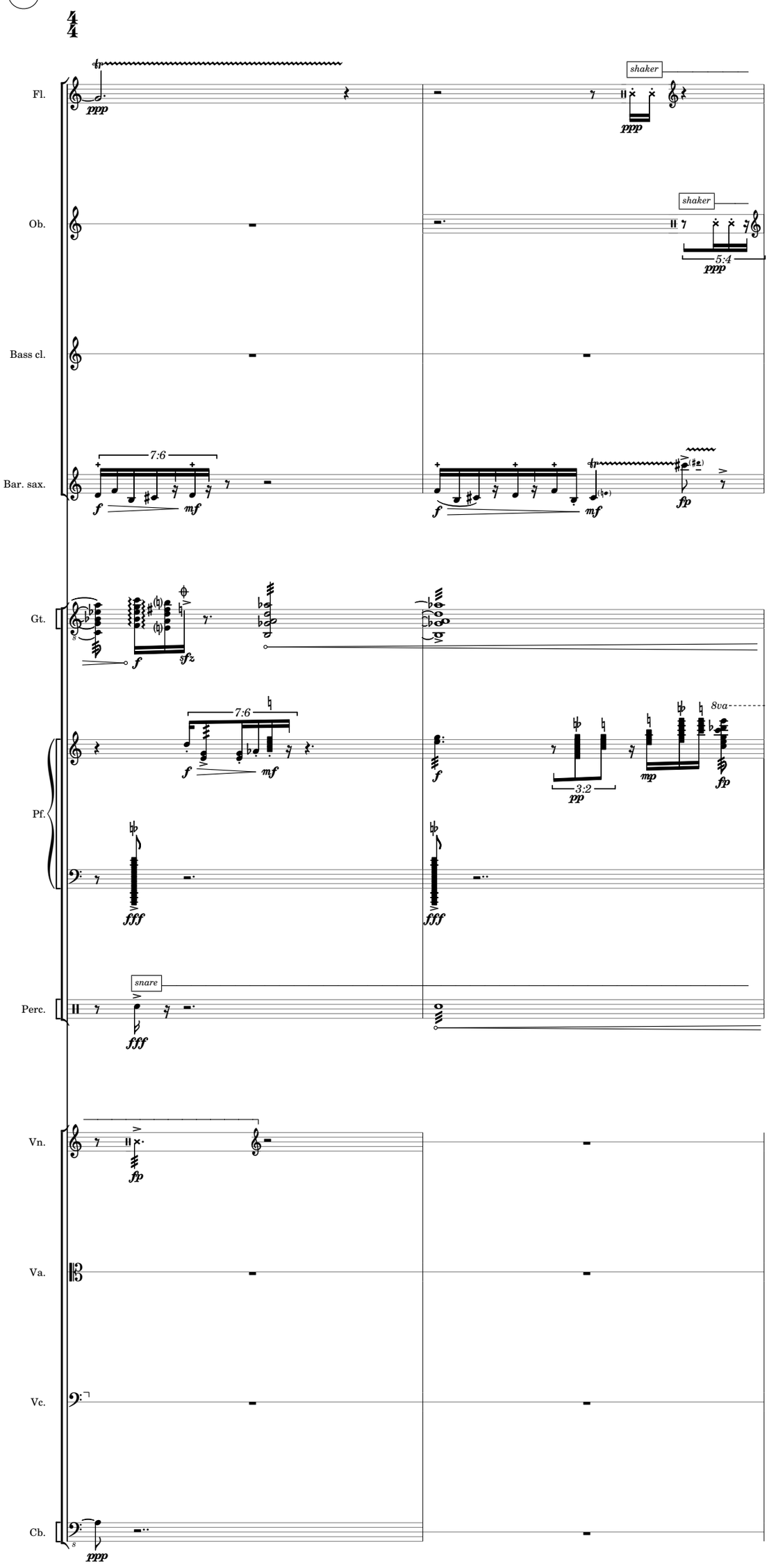
7:6
crotales
shaker
3:2
5:4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Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
shaker
snare
5:4
7:6
7:6
3:2
8va
ppp
ppp
ppp
f
mf
f
mf
fp
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sfz
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mp
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pp
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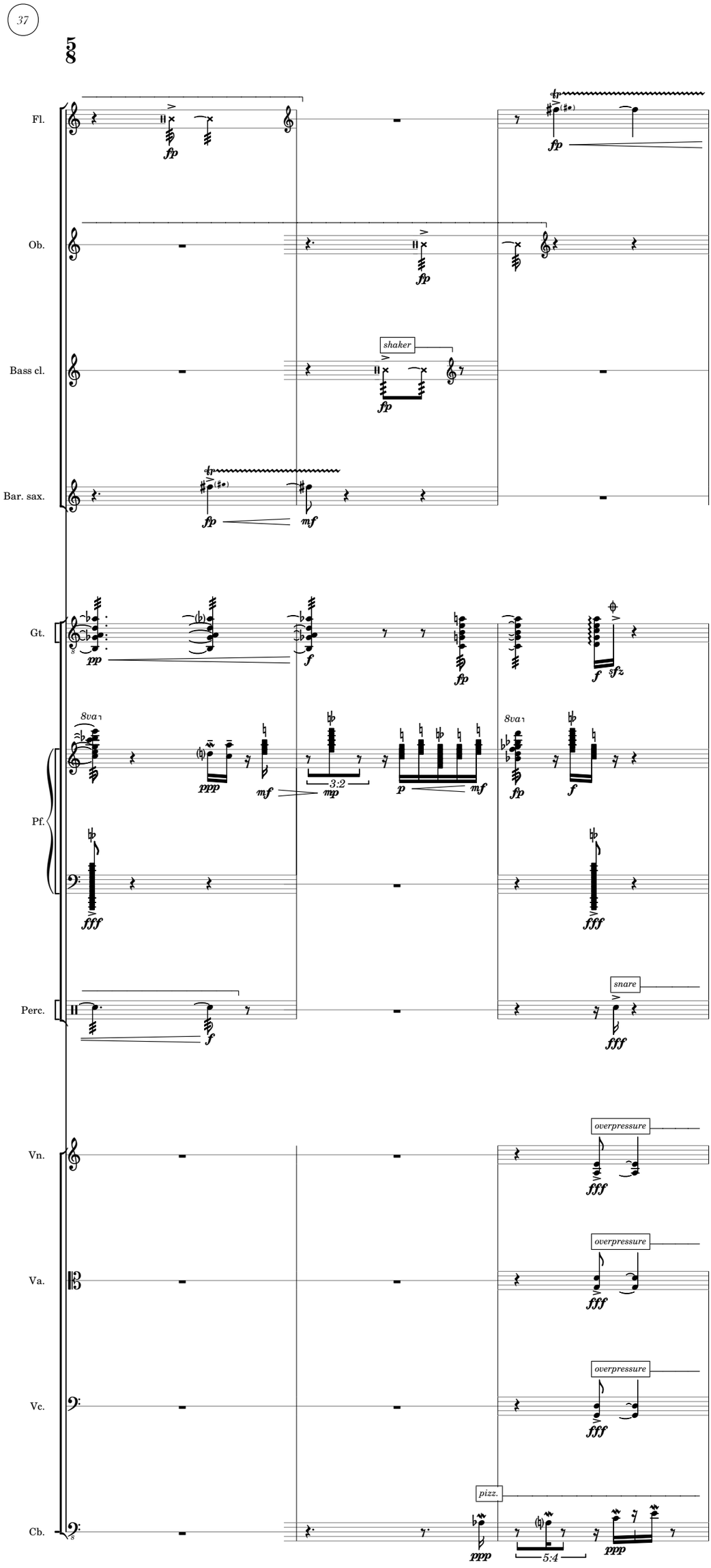
fff
fp
ppp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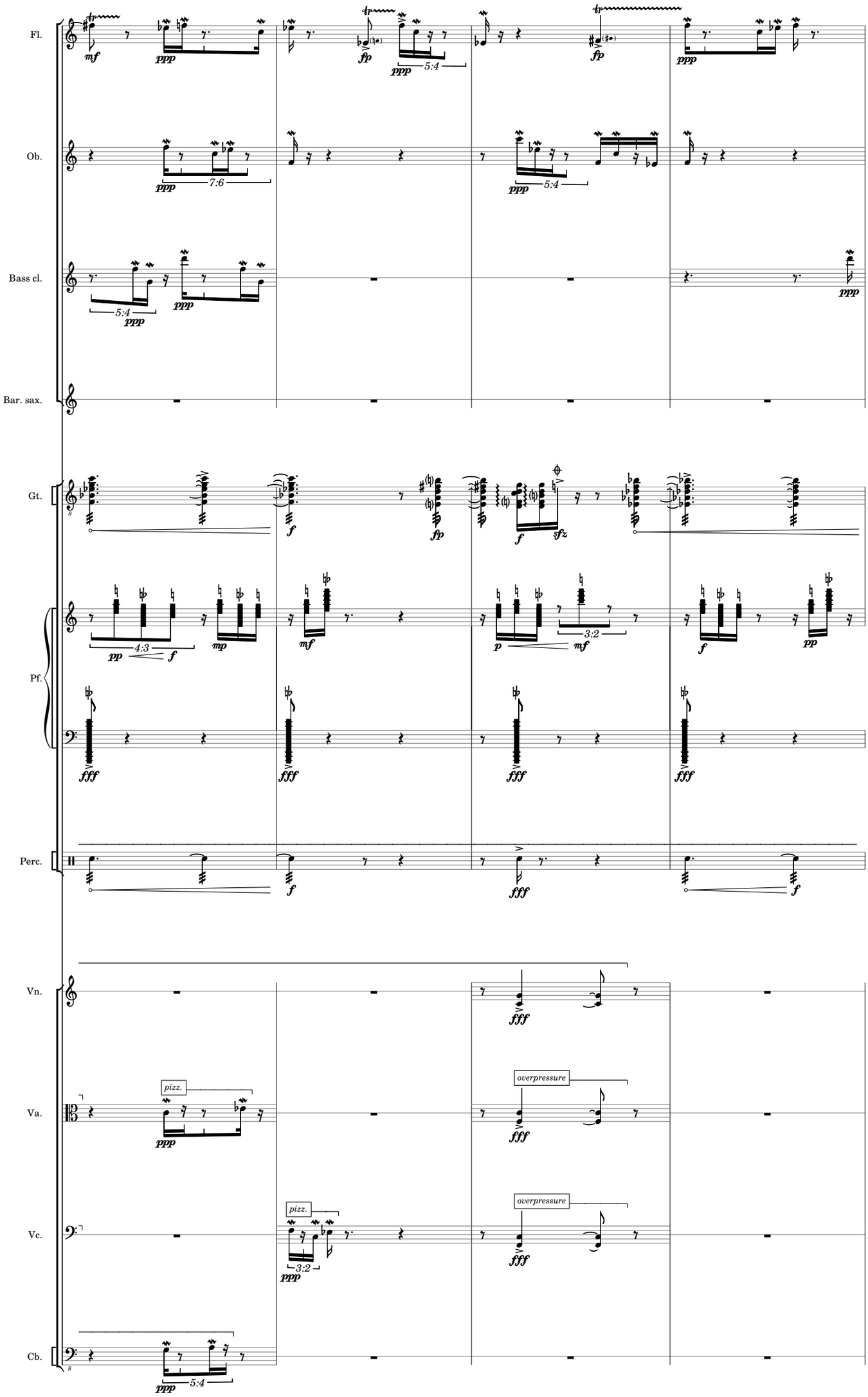
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
shaker
Bar. sax.
Gt.
8va
Pf.
Perc.
snare
Vn.
overpressure
Va.
overpressure
Vc.
overpressure
Cb.
pizz.
3:2
5:4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Vc.
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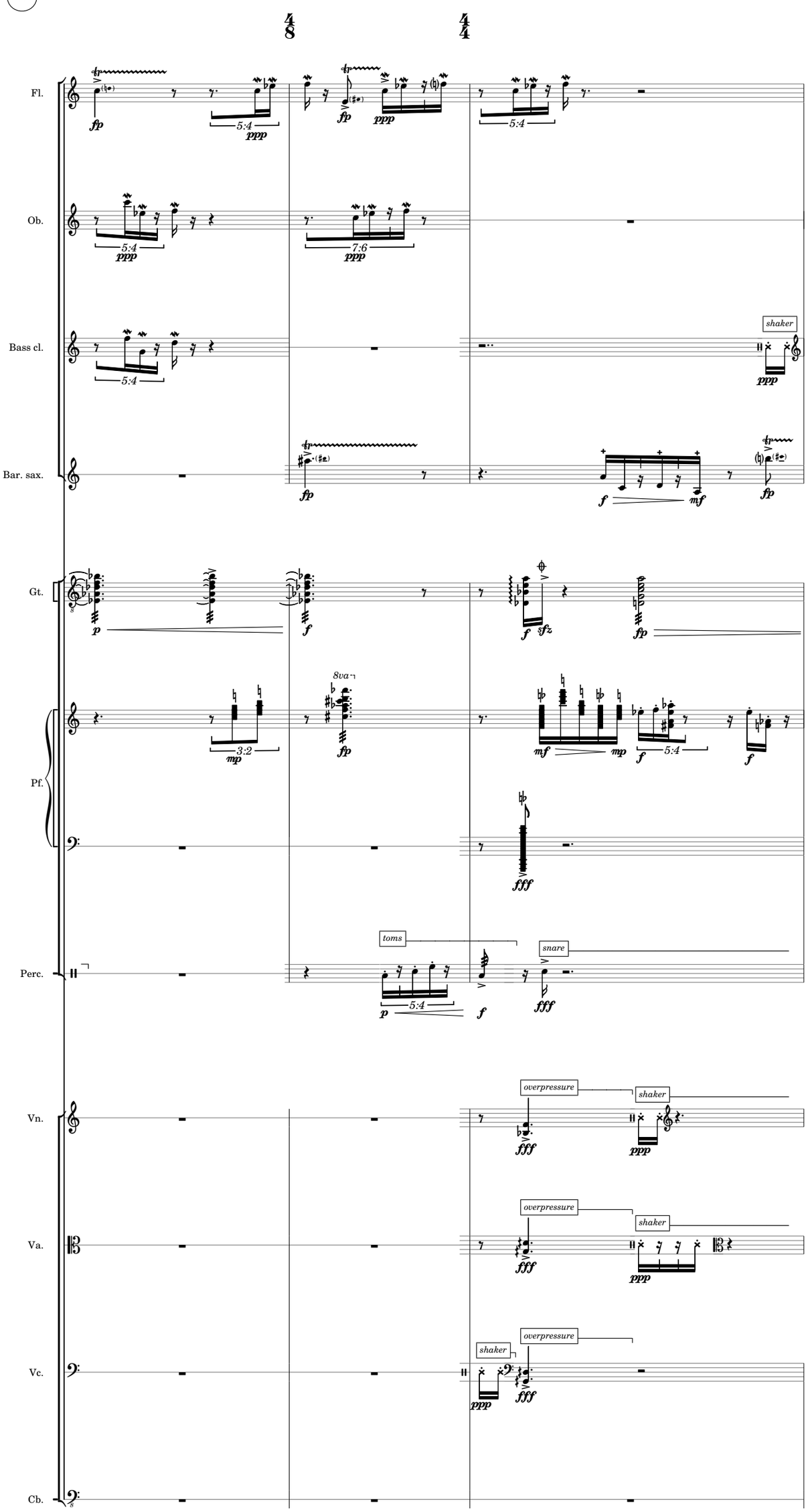
pizz.
overpressure
pizz.
overpressure


Fl.
Ob.
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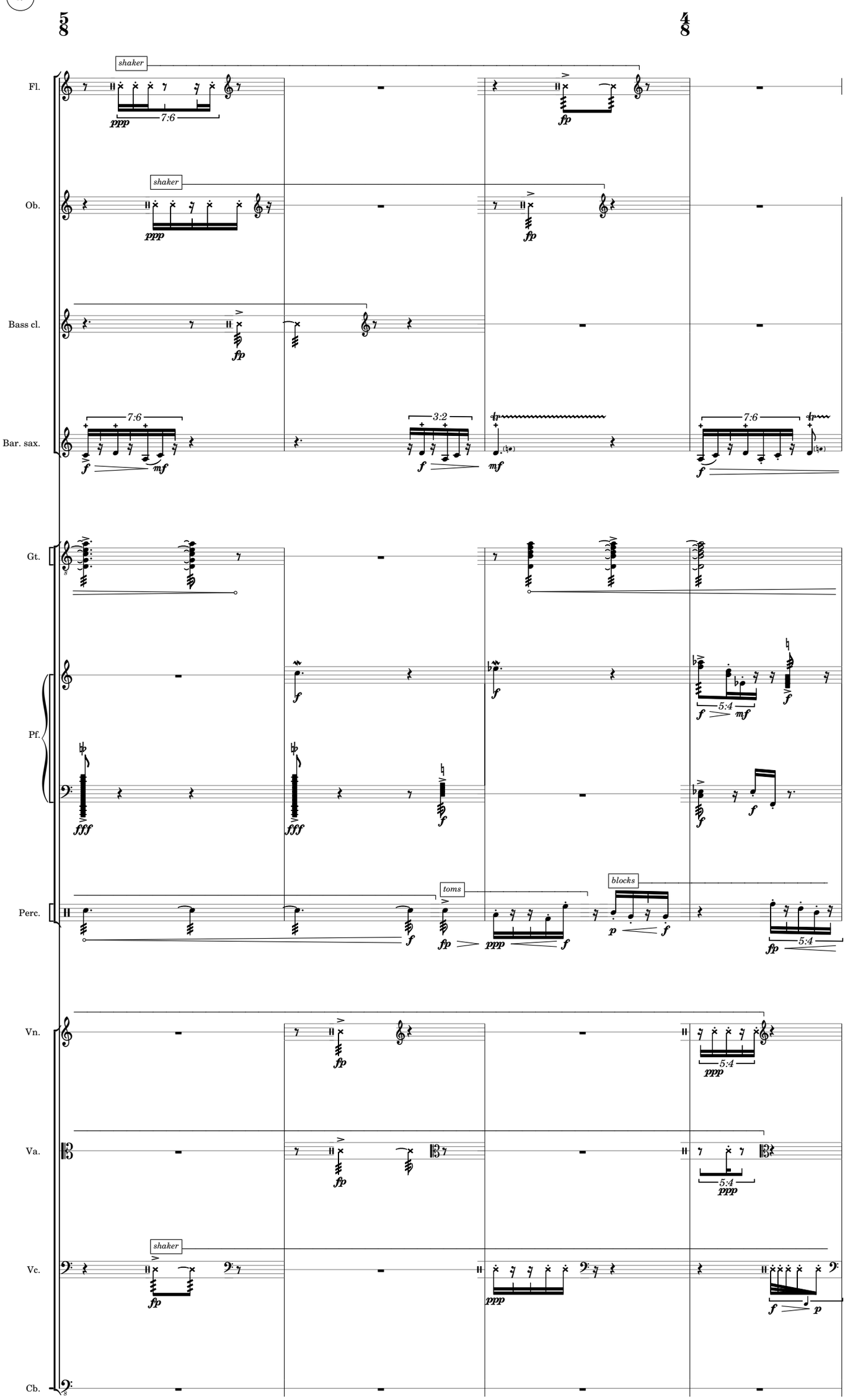
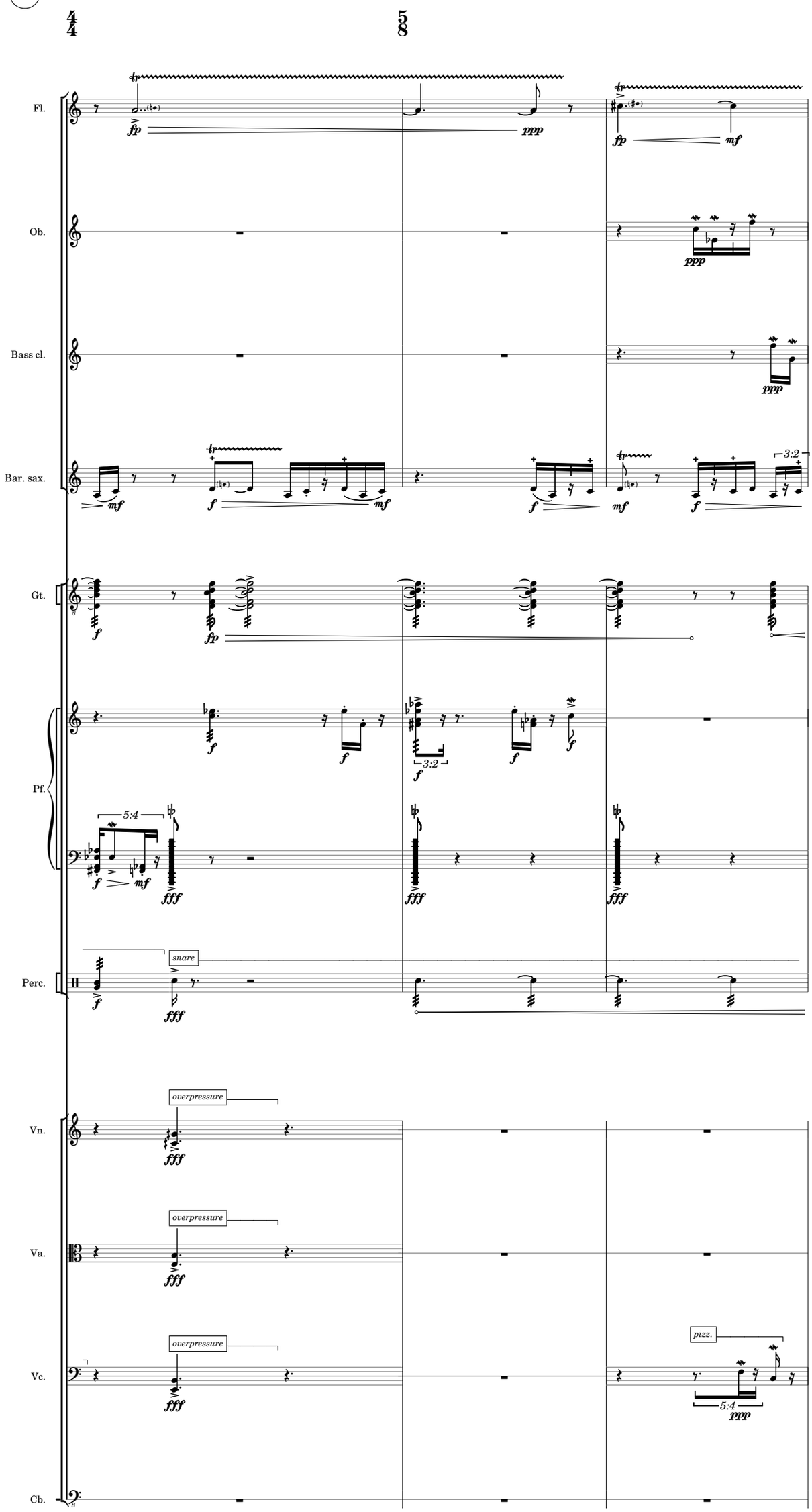
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
toms
snare
overpressure
8va


5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
toms
blocks
7:6
3:2
5:4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Fl.
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Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
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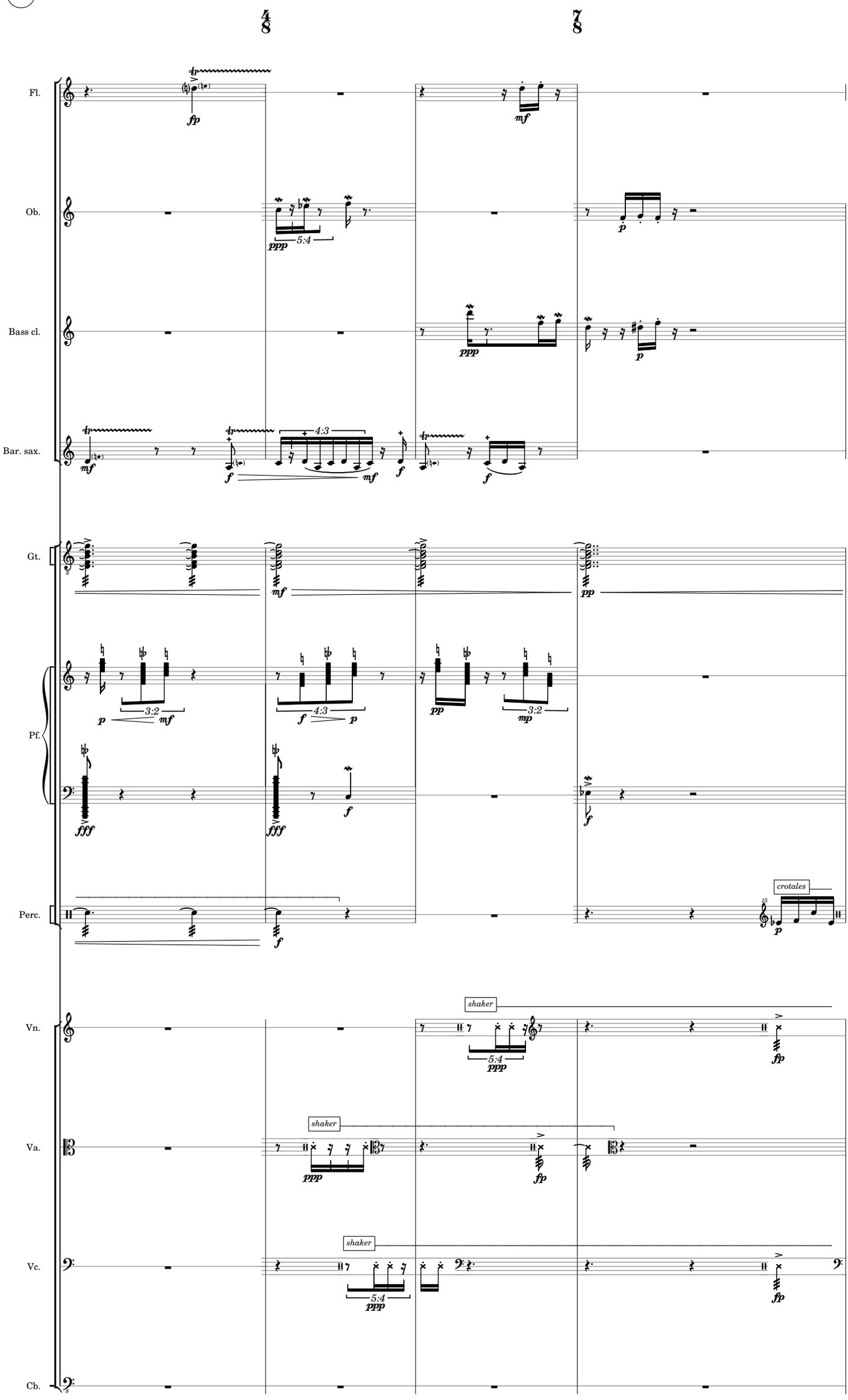
Cb.
snare
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure
pizz.
5:4
3:2
3:2
5:4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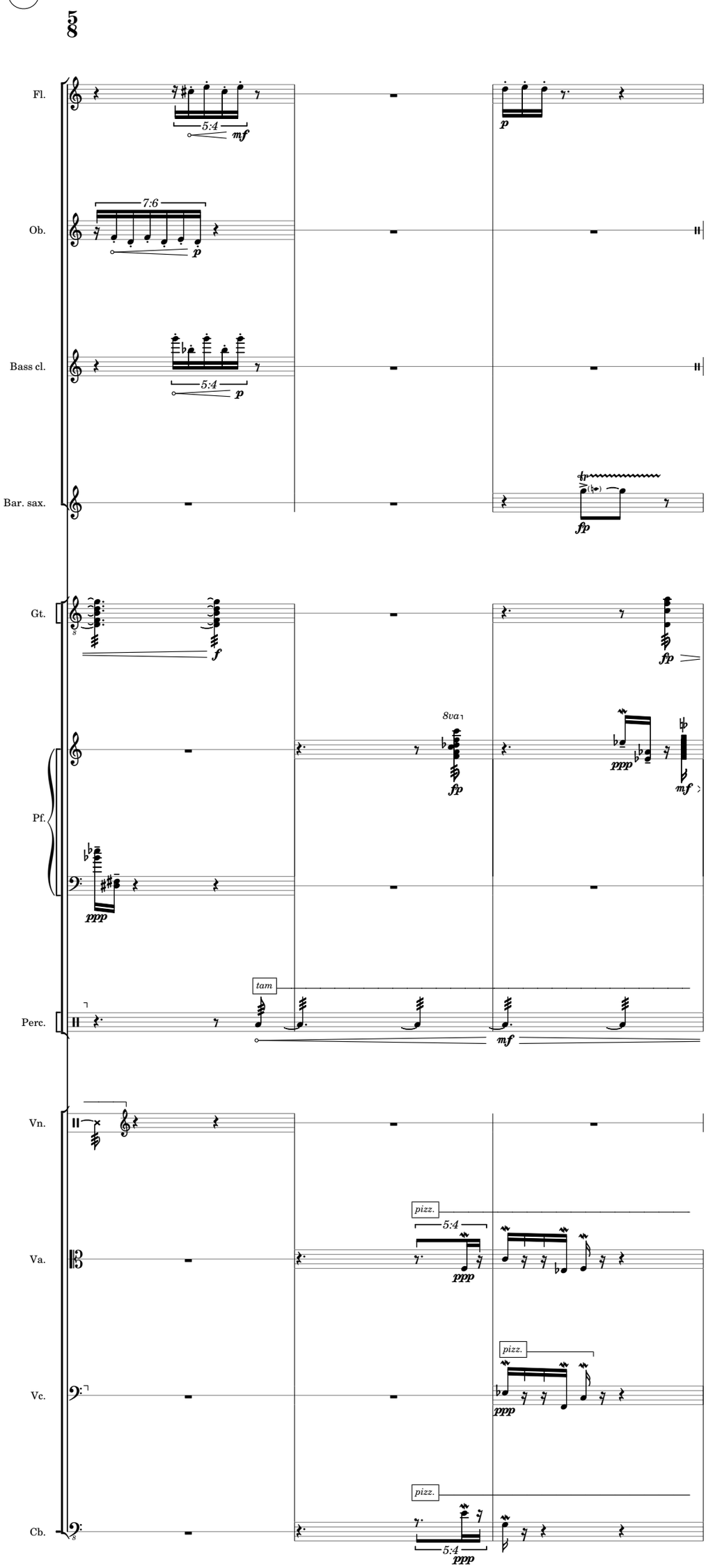
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
fp
mf
ppp
5:4
p
4:3
f
pp
3:2
mp
fff
crotales
shaker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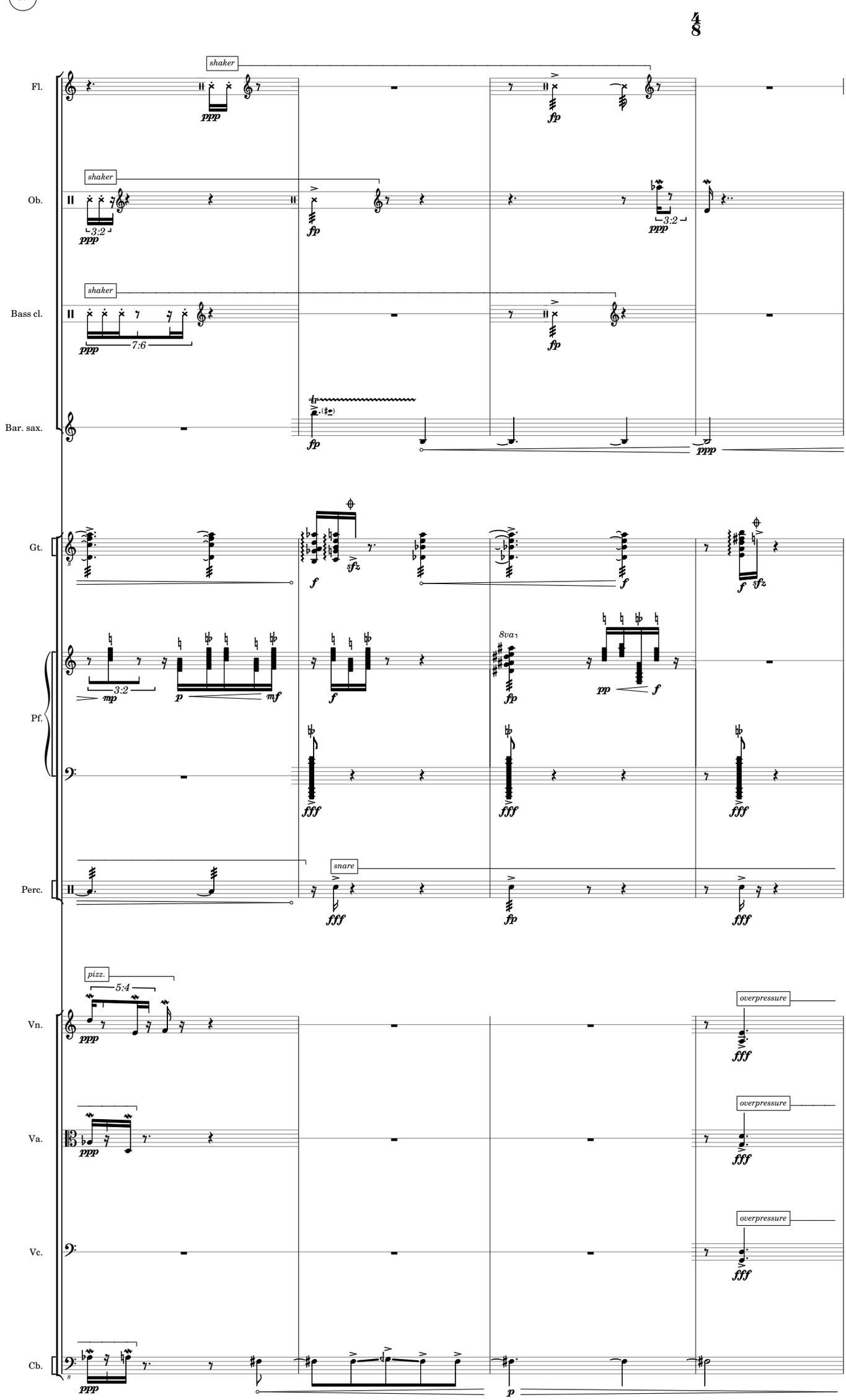
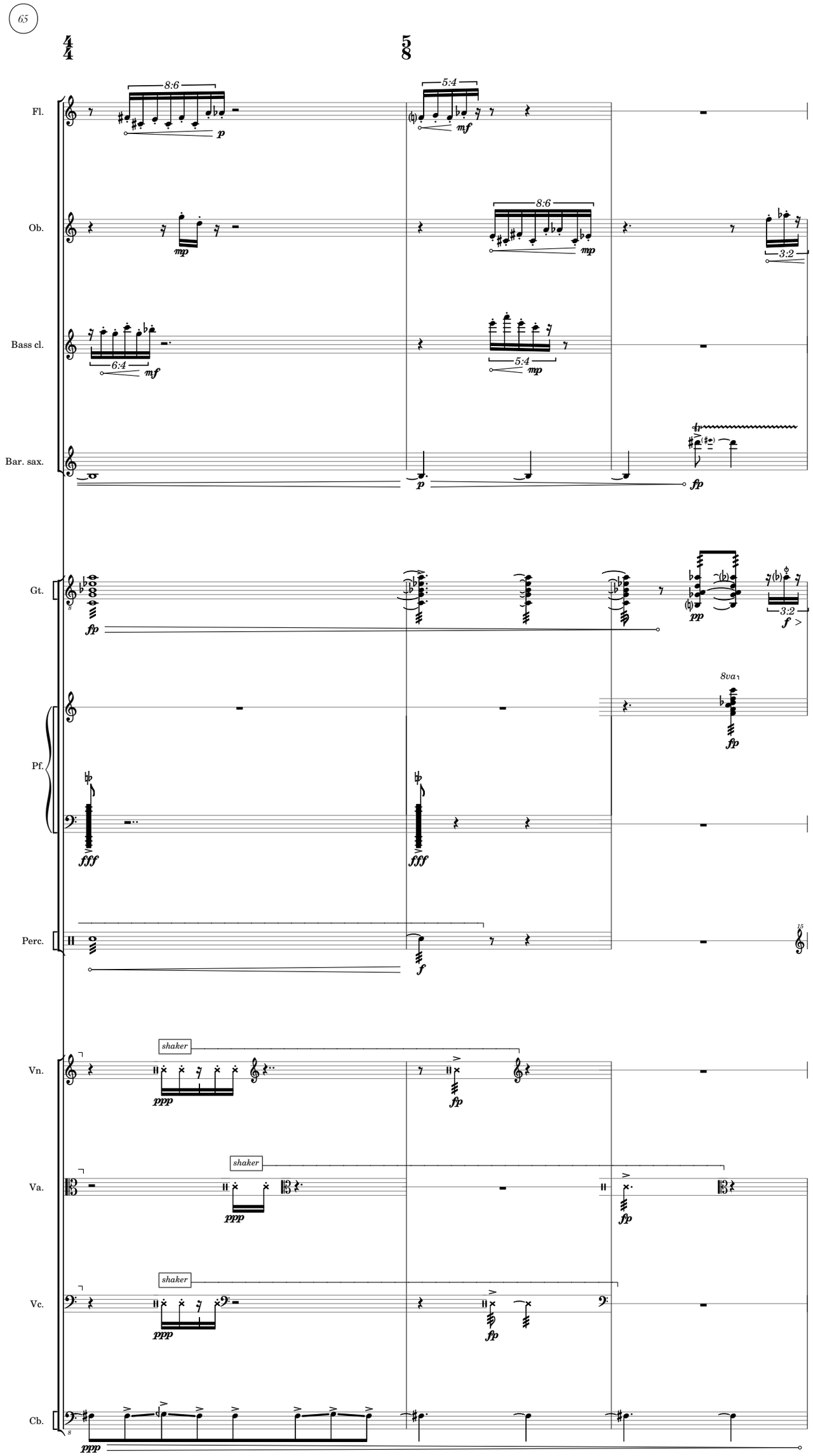
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
5:4
7:6
tam
pizz.
8va


4/8
Fl.
shaker
ppp
fp
Ob.
shaker
3:2
ppp
fp
3:2
ppp
Bass cl.
shaker
ppp
7:6
fp
Bar. sax.
fp
ppp
Gt.
f
sfz
f
f
sfz
Pf.
3:2
mp
p
mf
f
8va
fp
pp
f
fff
fff
fff
Perc.
snare
fff
fp
fff
Vn.
pizz.
5:4
ppp
overpressure
fff
Va.
ppp
overpressure
fff
Vc.
overpressure
fff
Cb.
ppp
p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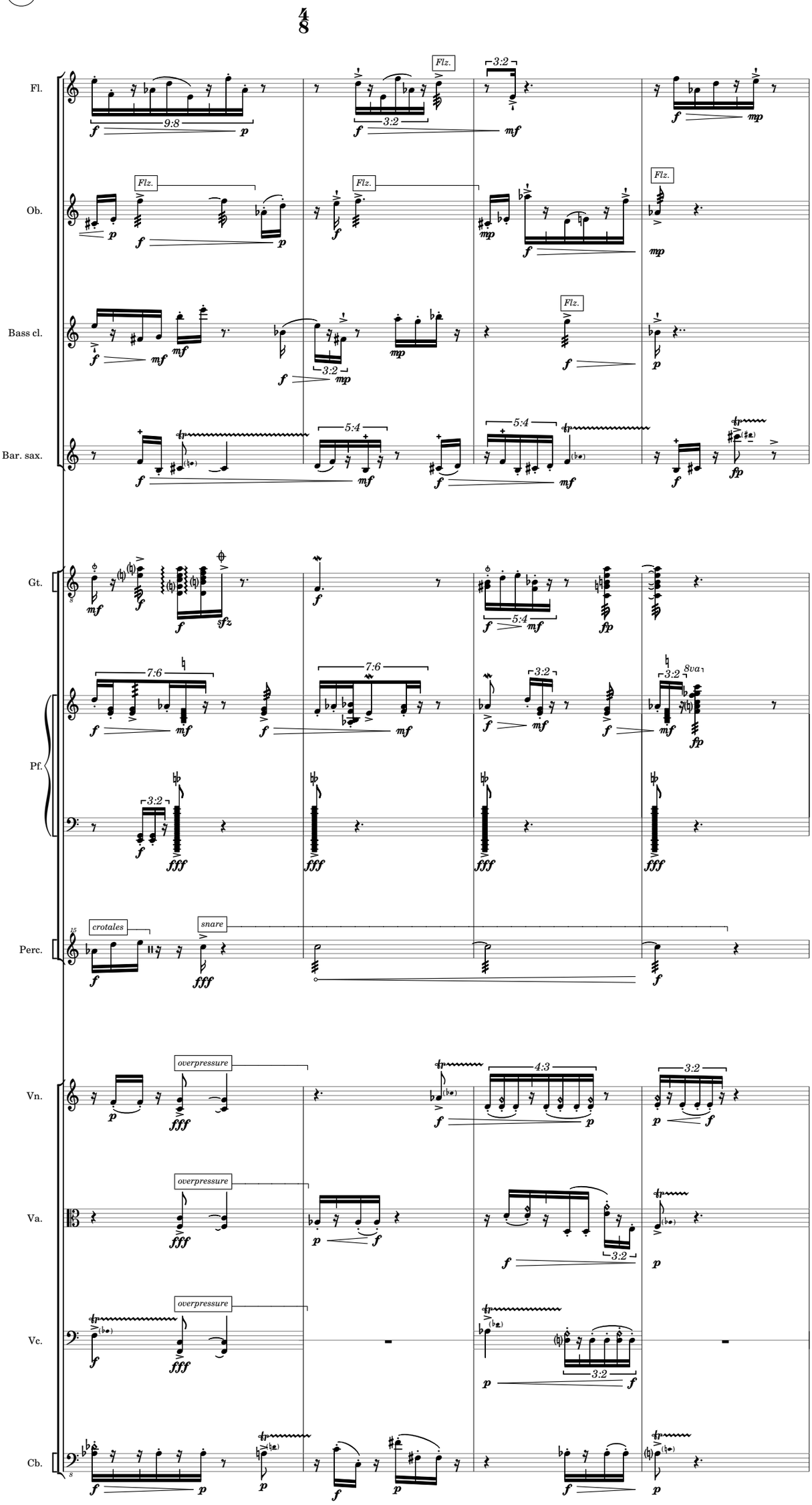
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
8:6
5:4
6:4
3:2
shaker
8va
p
mf
mp
fp
fff
ppp
pp
f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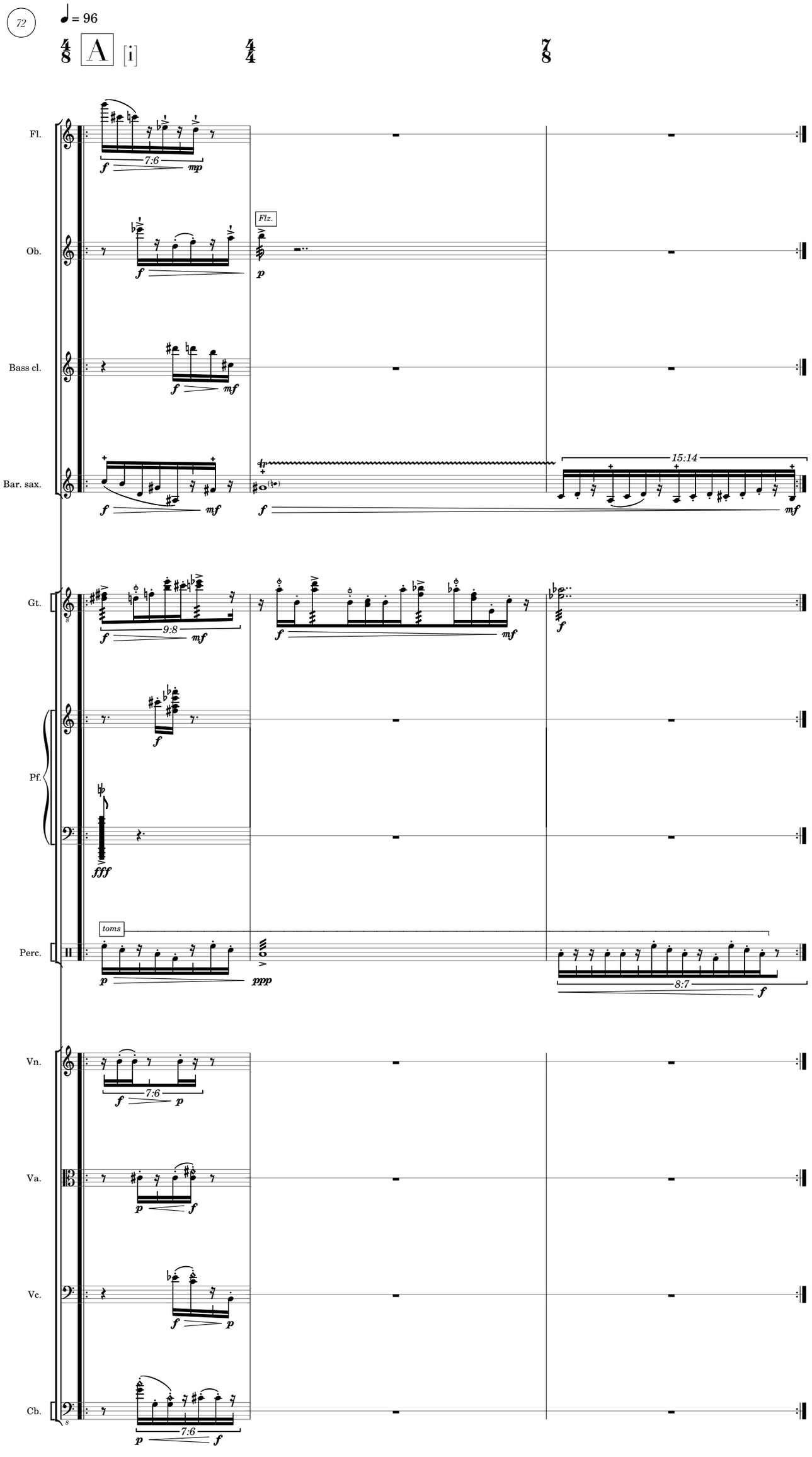
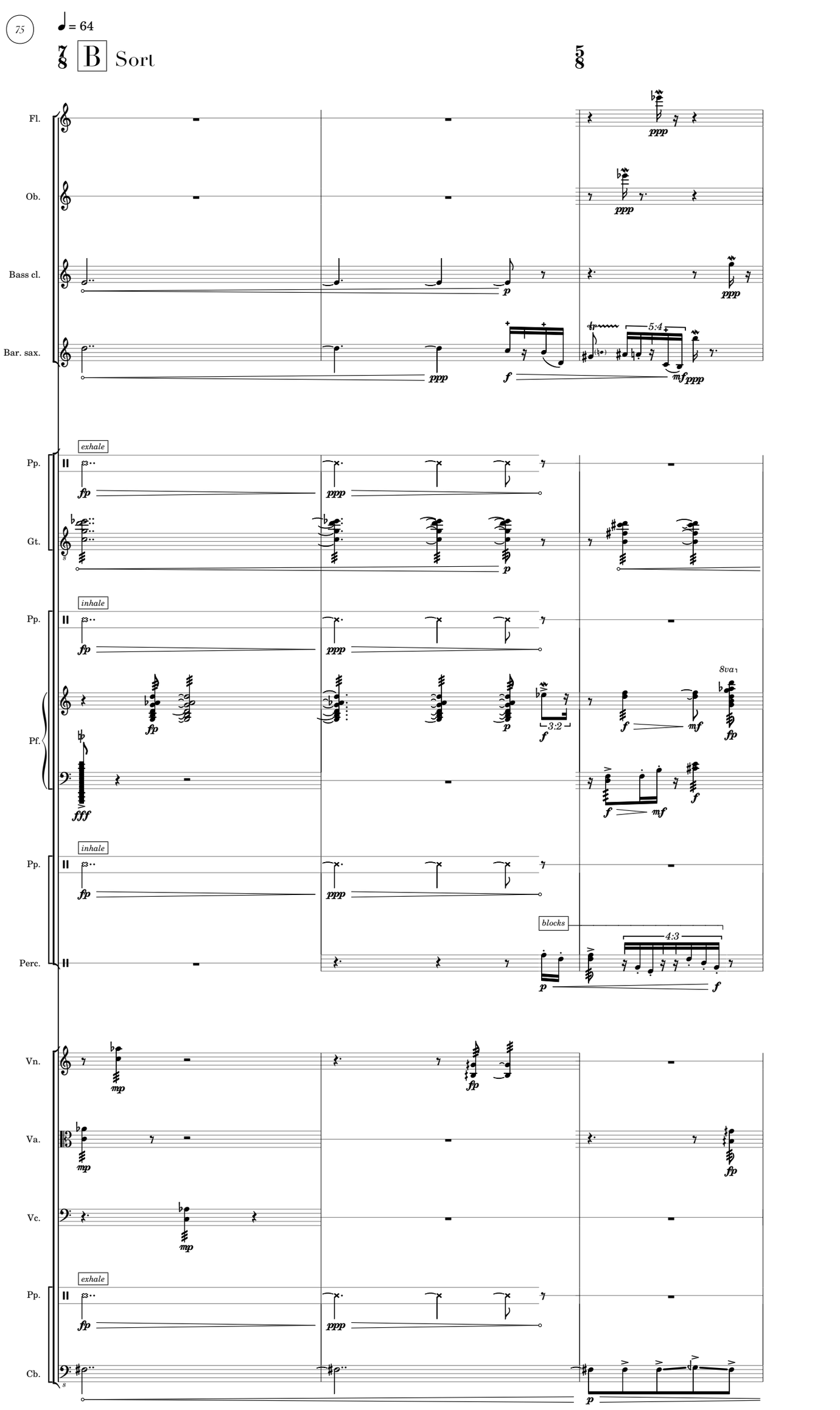
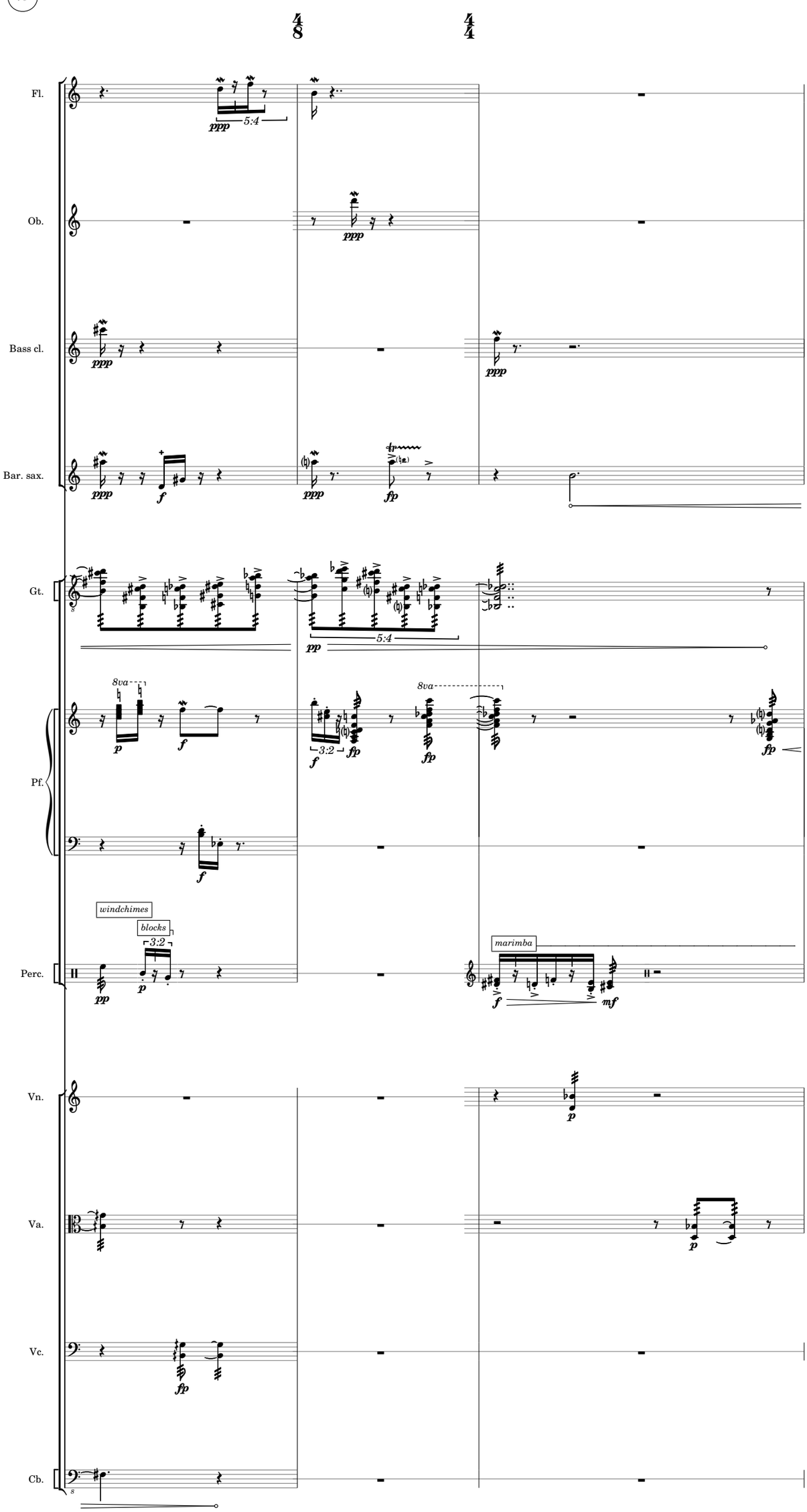
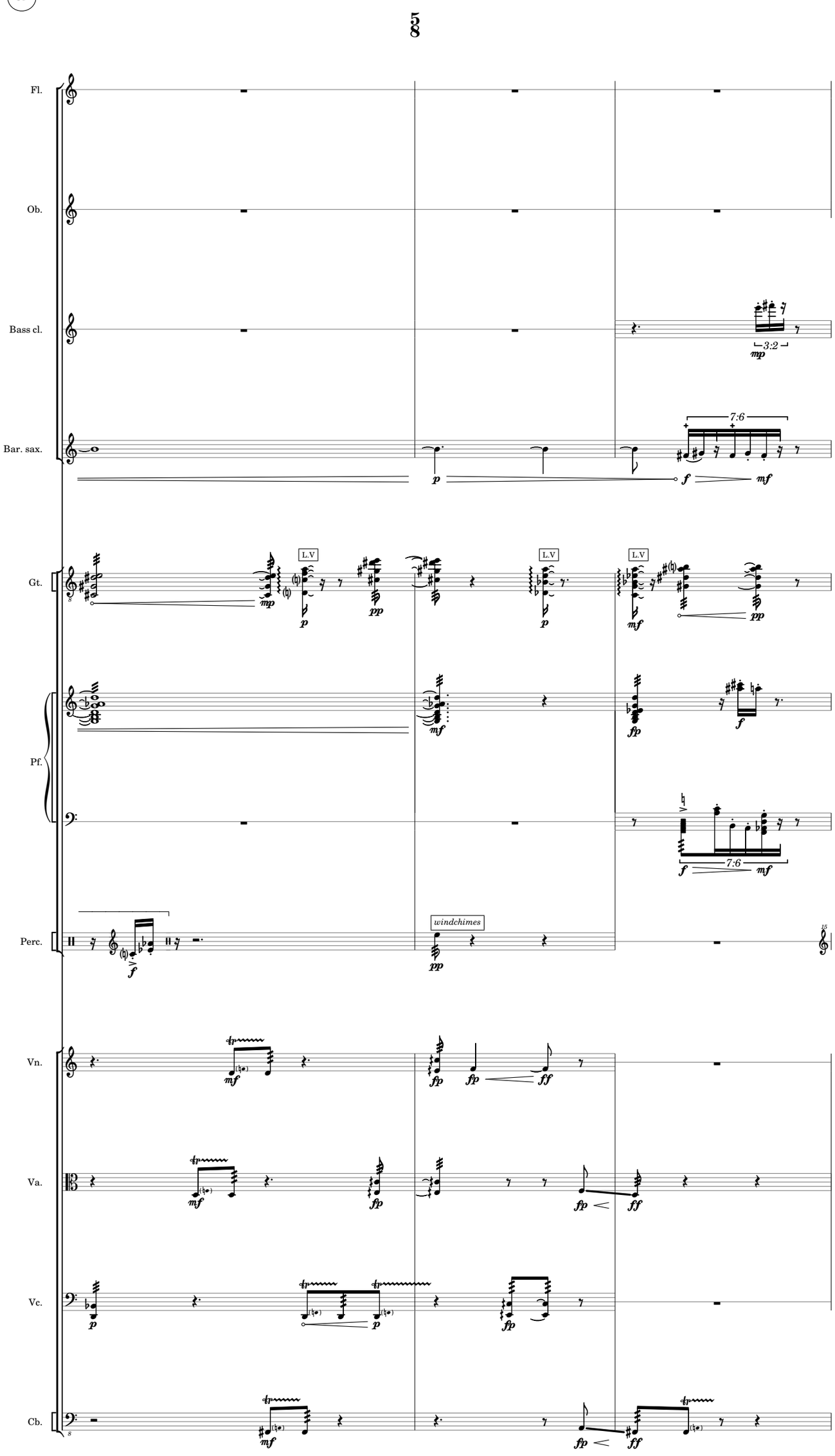
snare
overpressure
8va


♩= 96
A
[i]
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
Flz.
toms
7:6
9:8
15:14
8:7


75
♩ = 64
7/8
B
Sort
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
exhale
Gt.
inhale
Pf.
8va
Perc.
blocks
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
5:4
3:2
4:3


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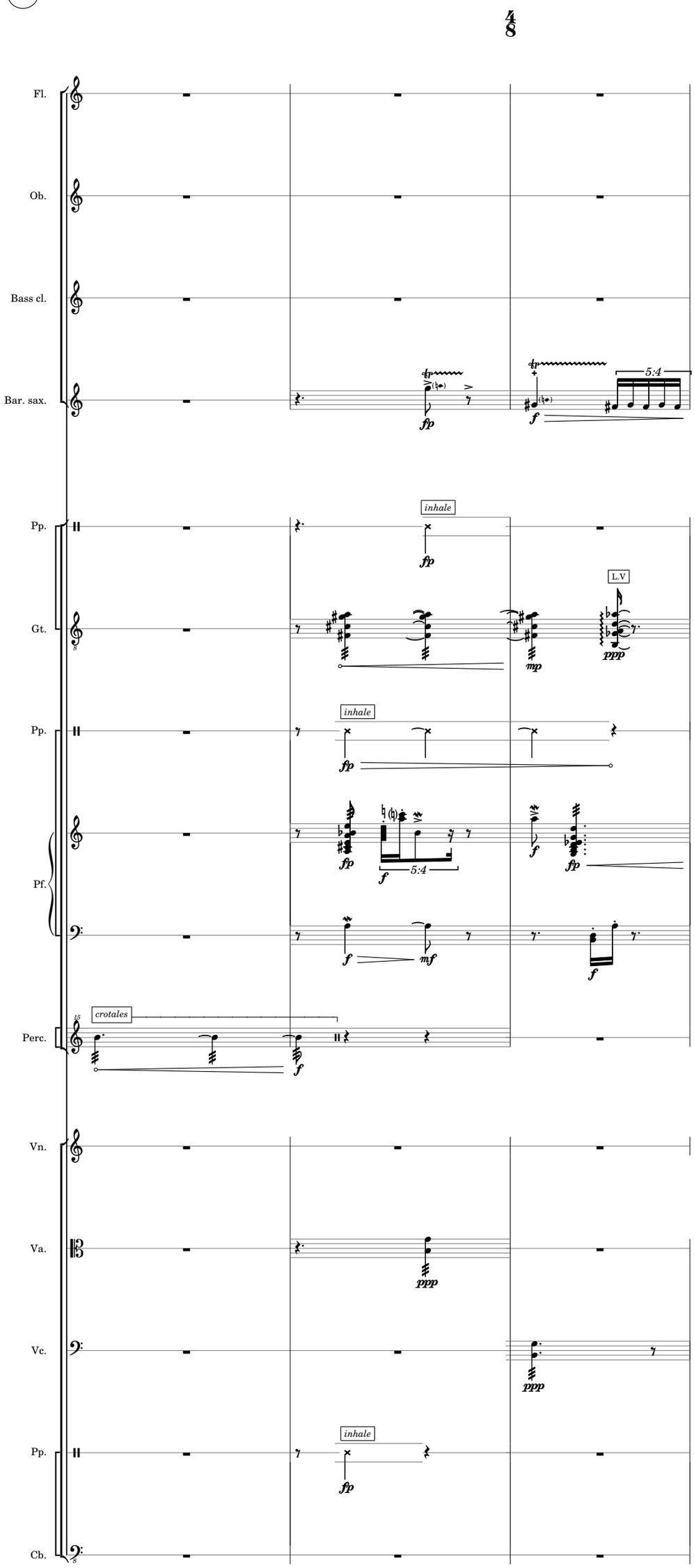
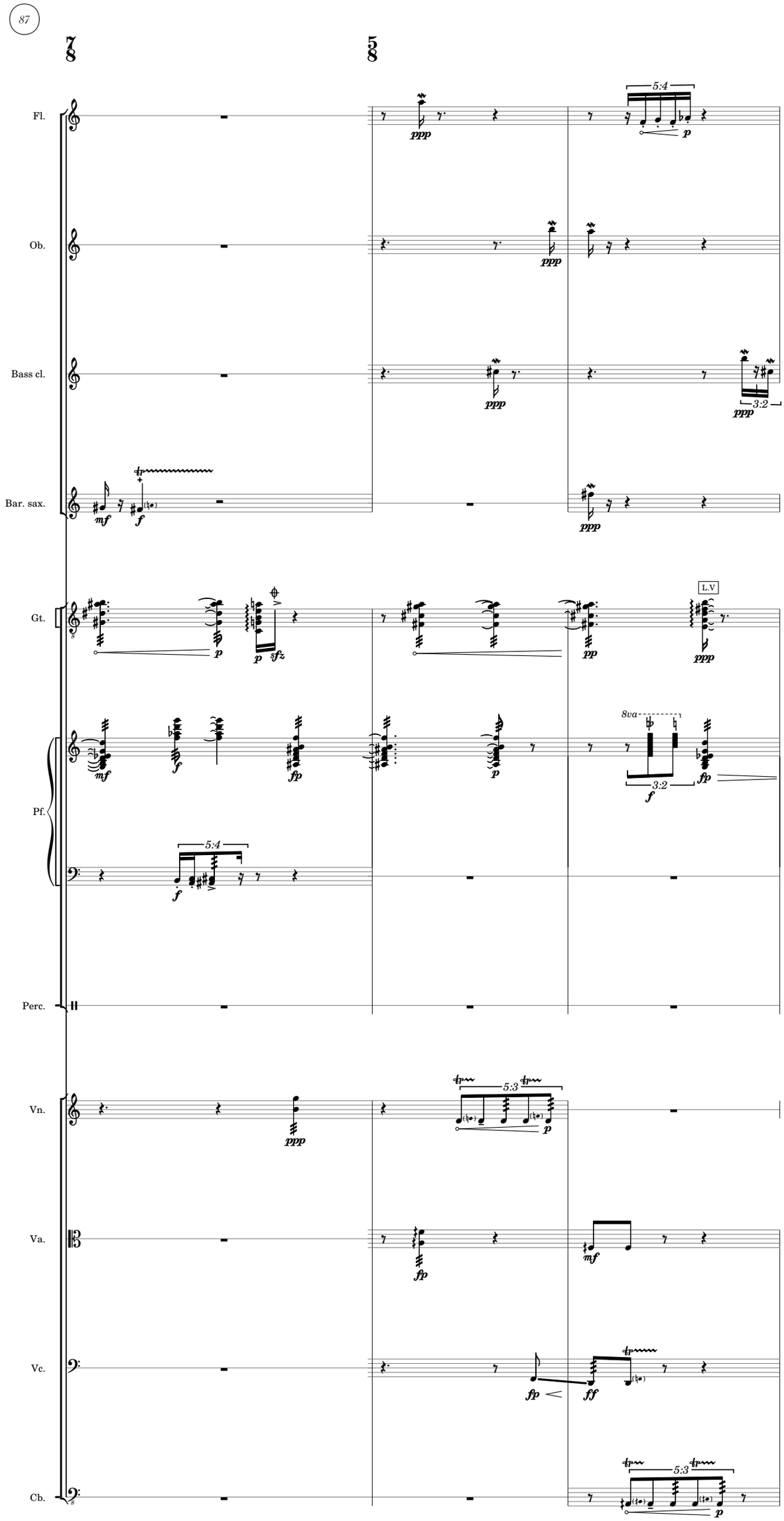
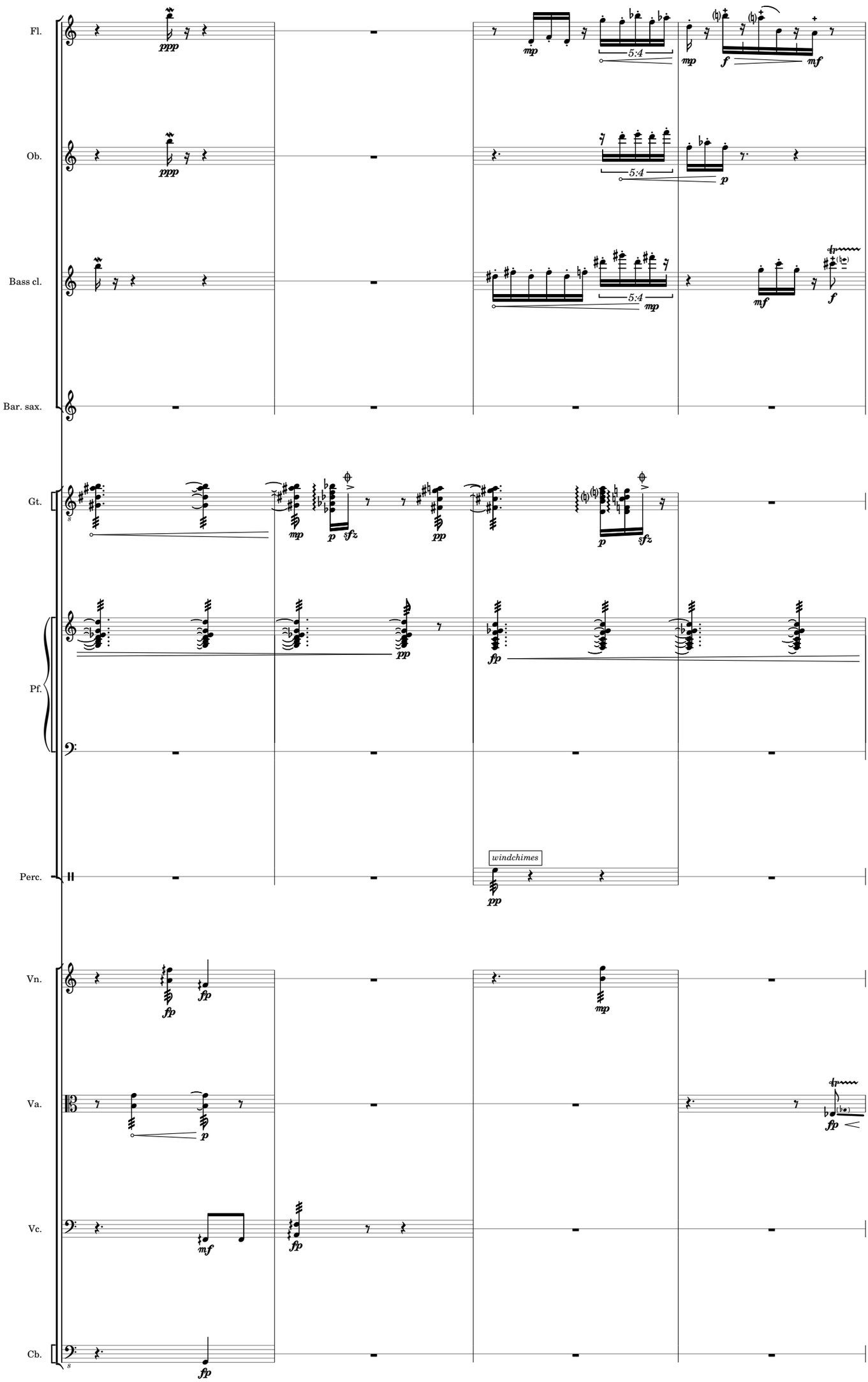
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
windchimes
3:2
7:6


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


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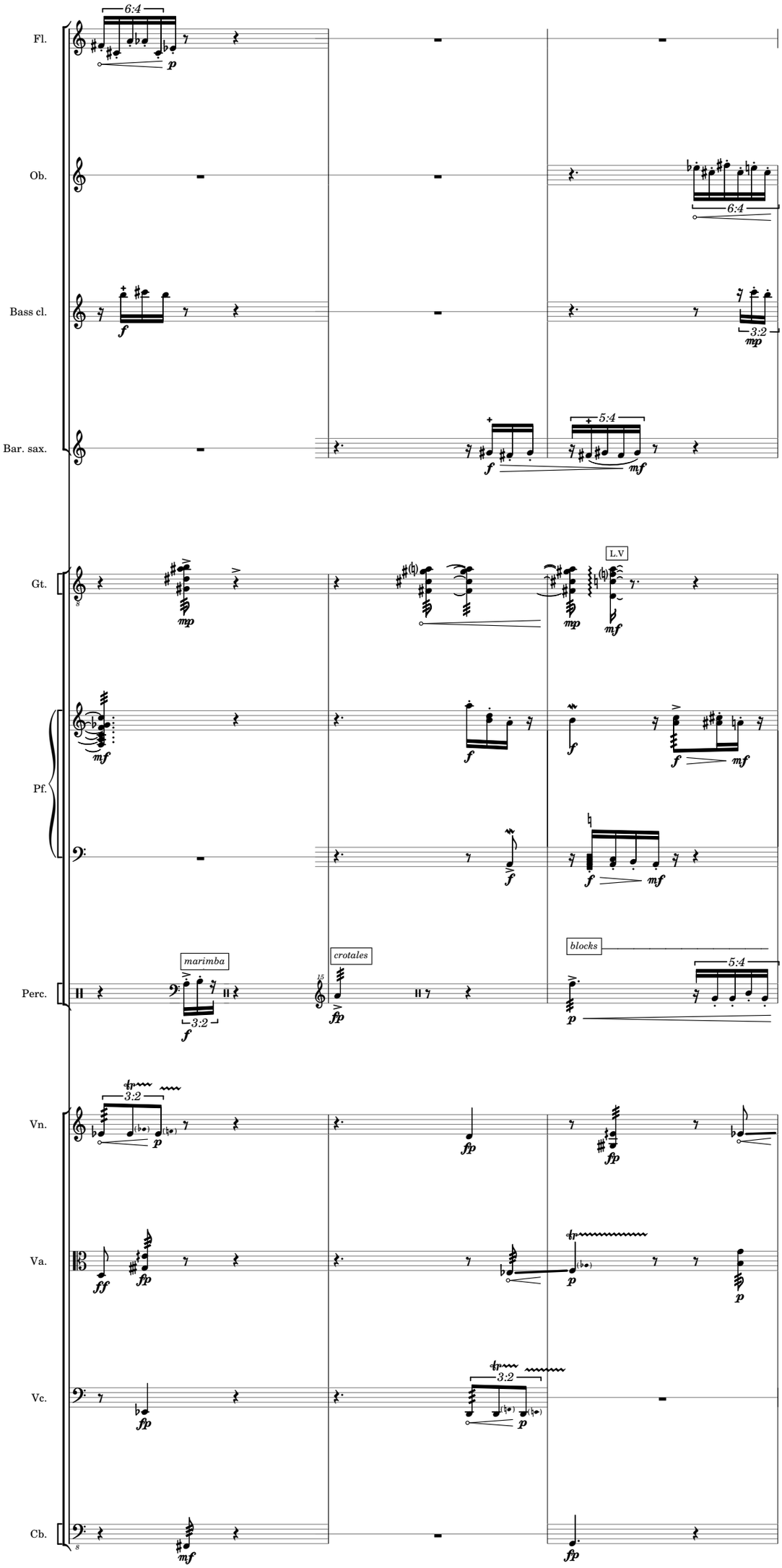
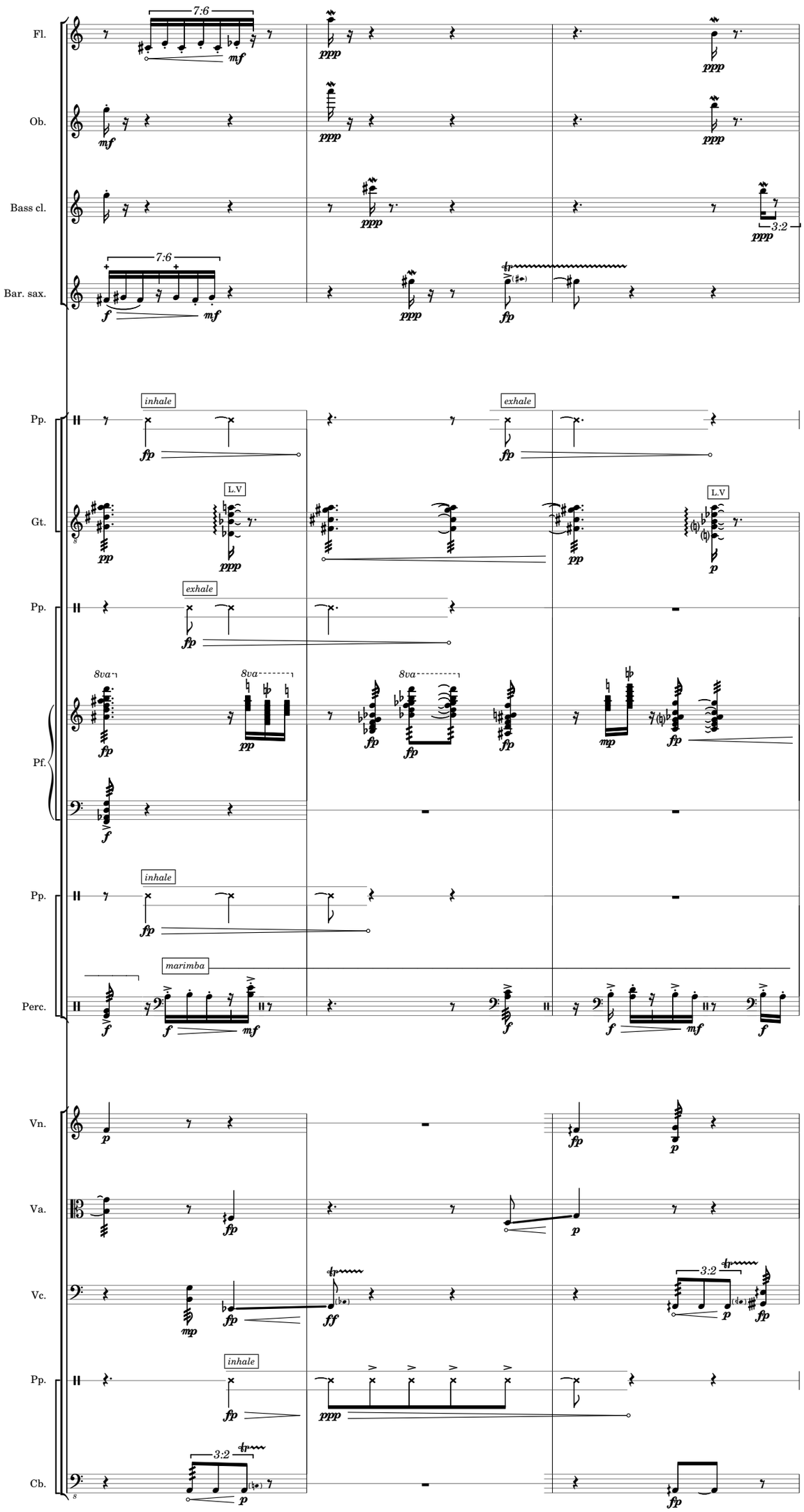
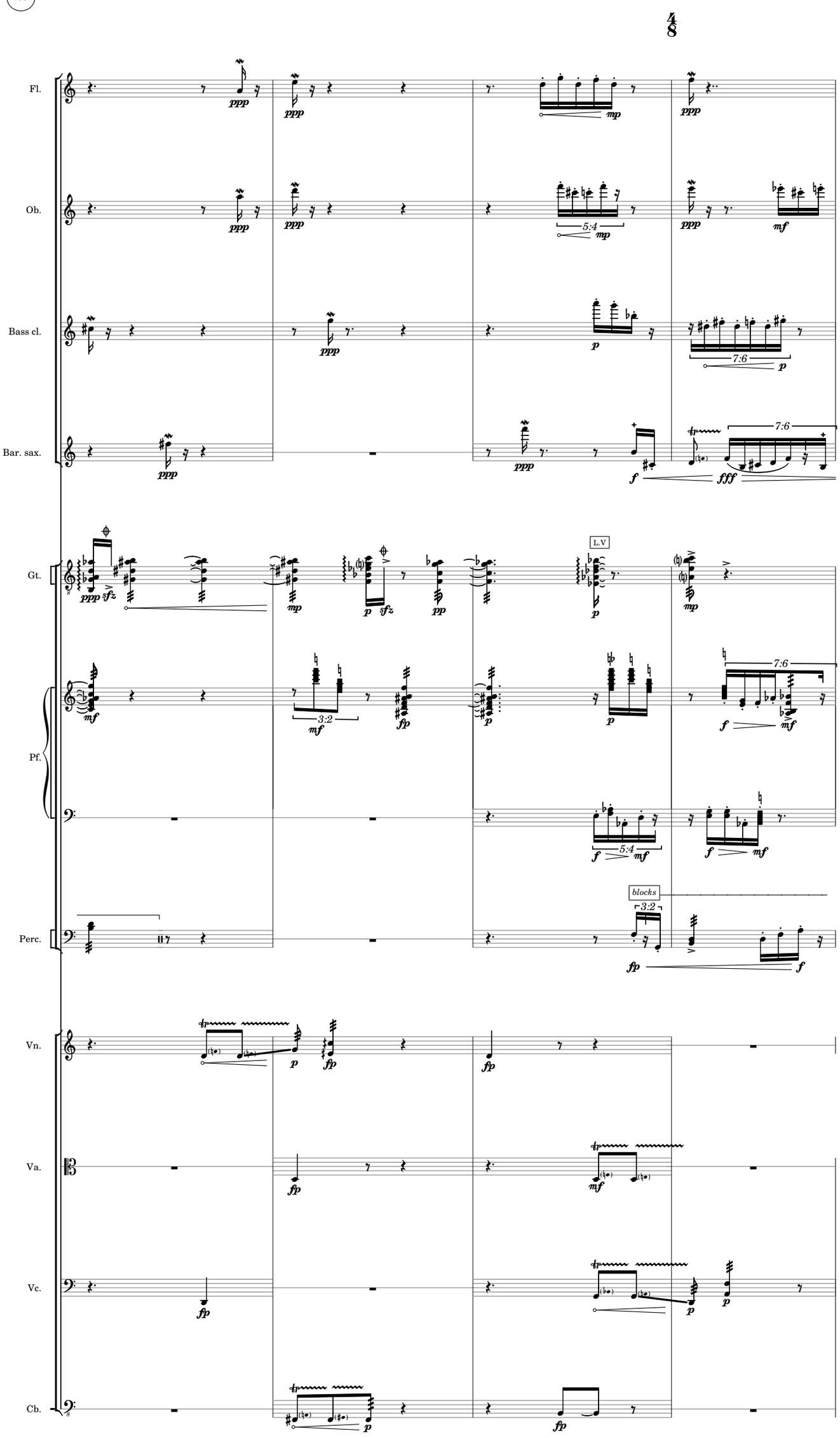
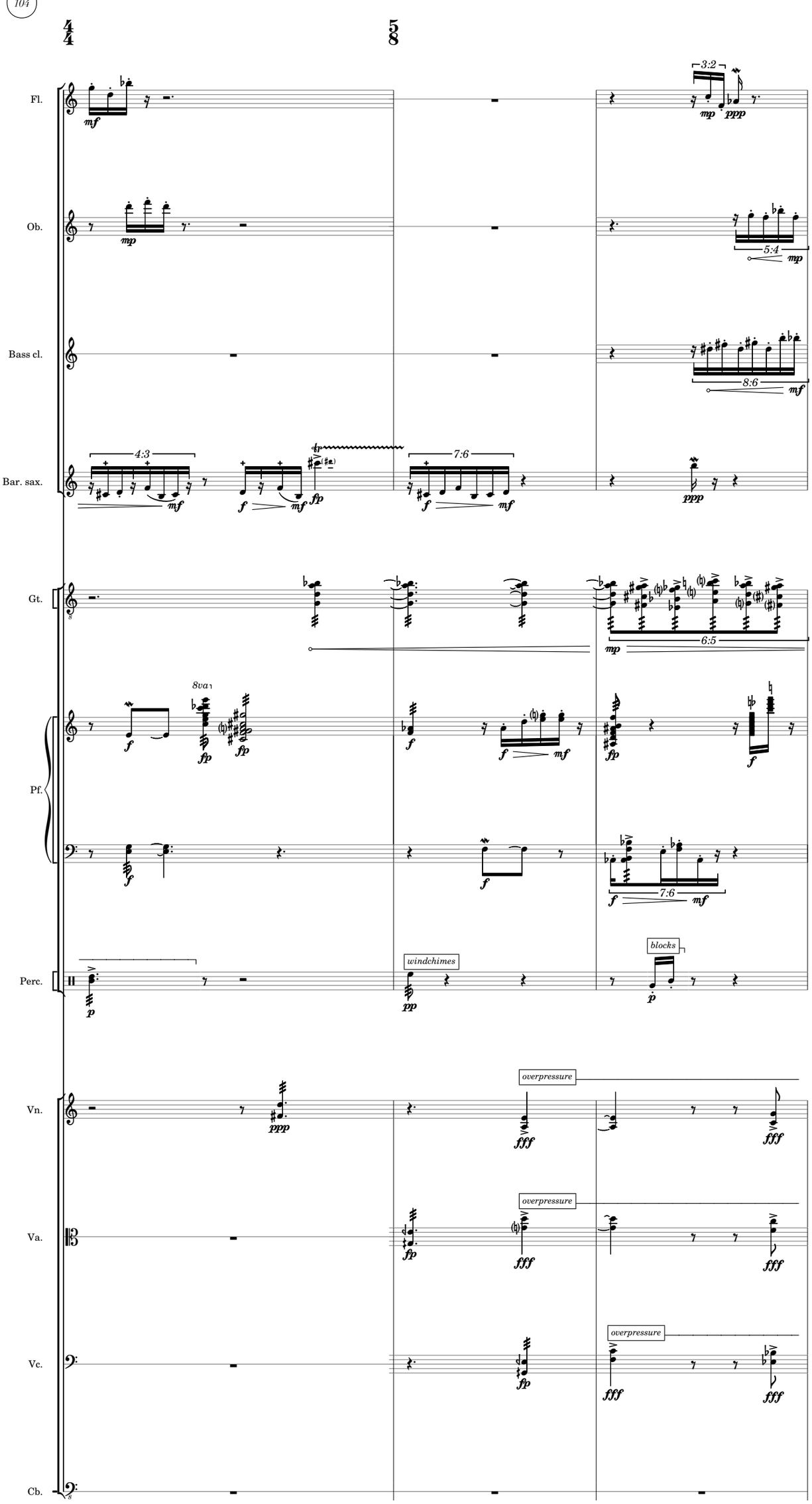
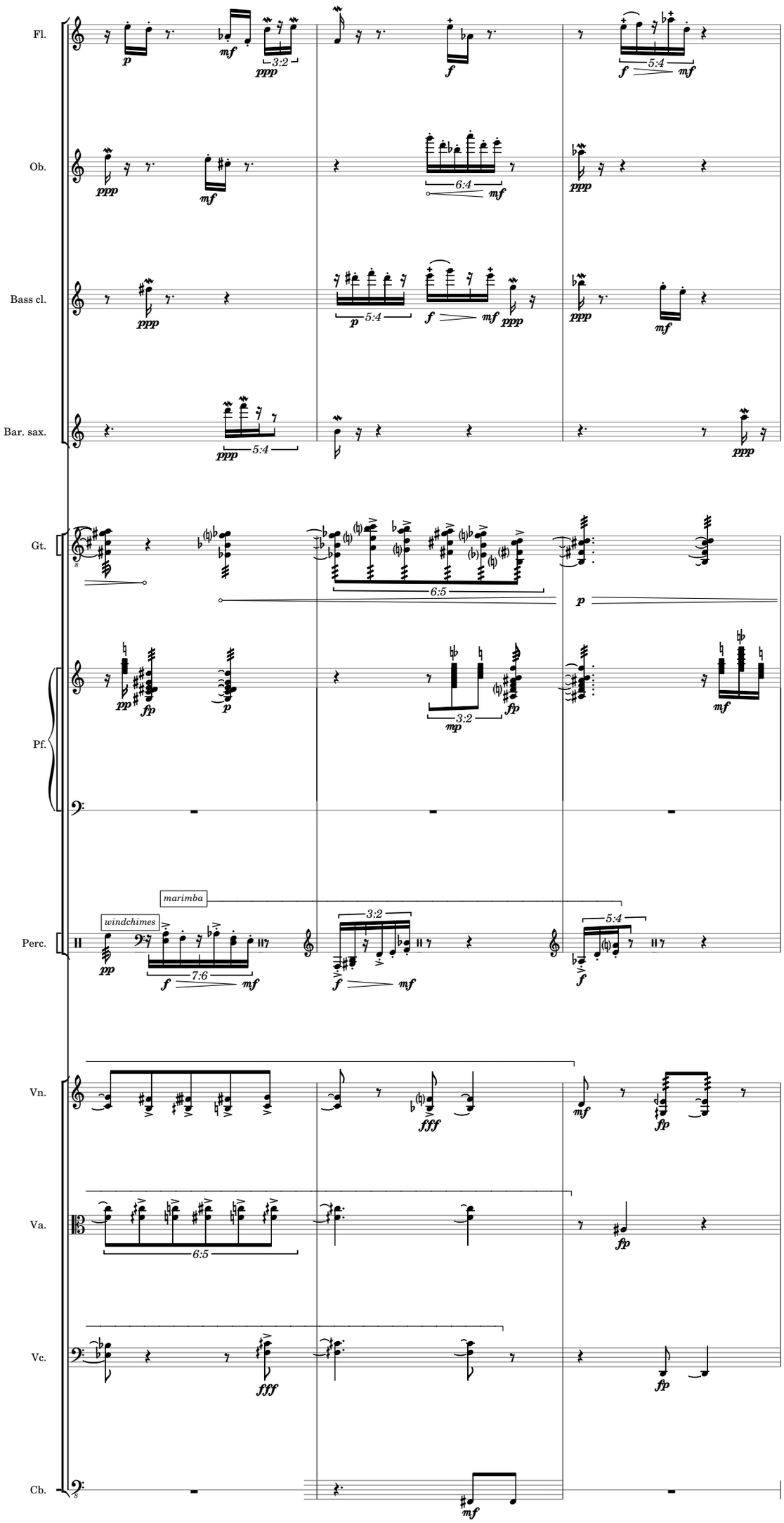
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
windchimes
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.

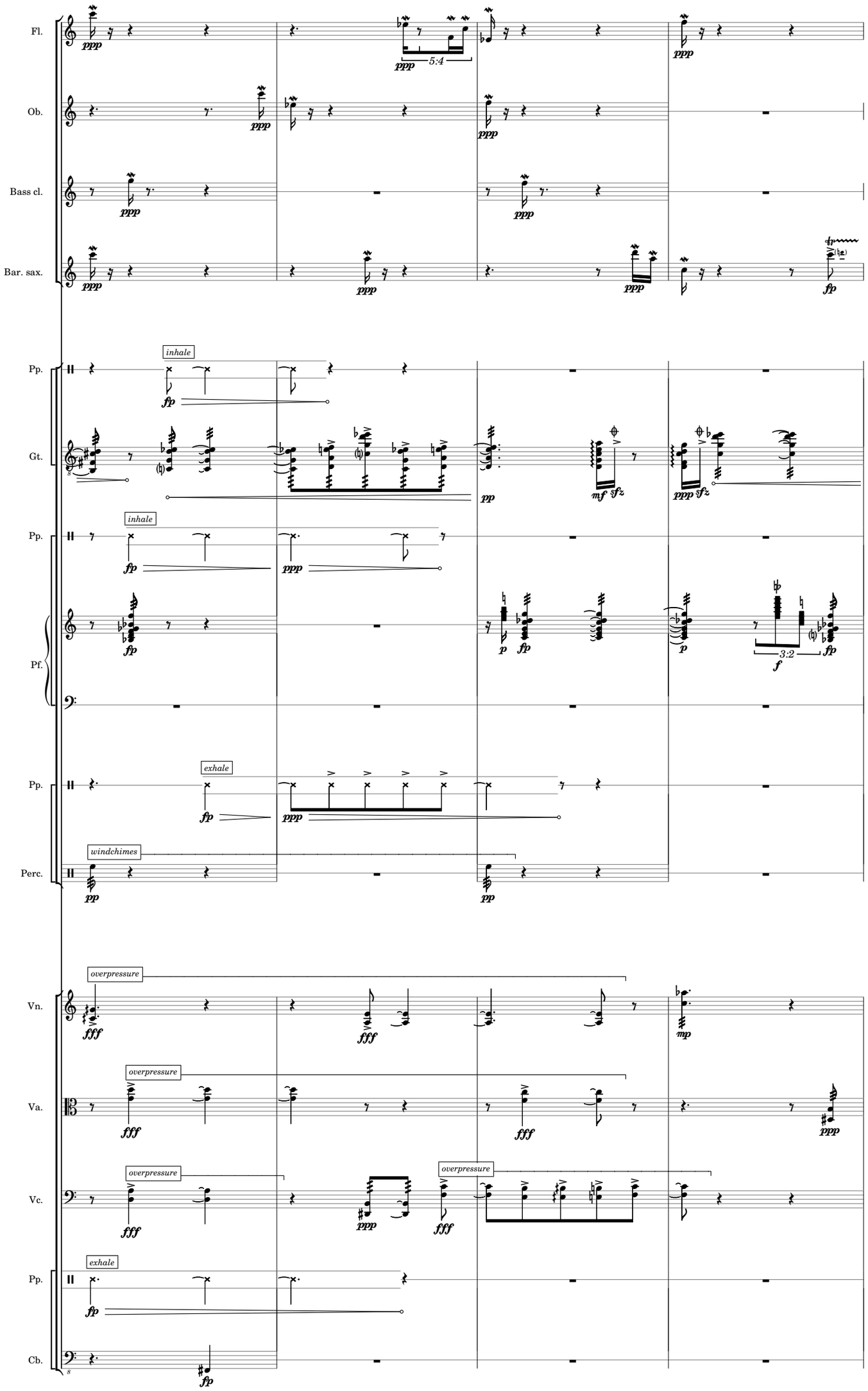

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
6:4
3:2
5:4
L.V
marimba
crotales
blocks

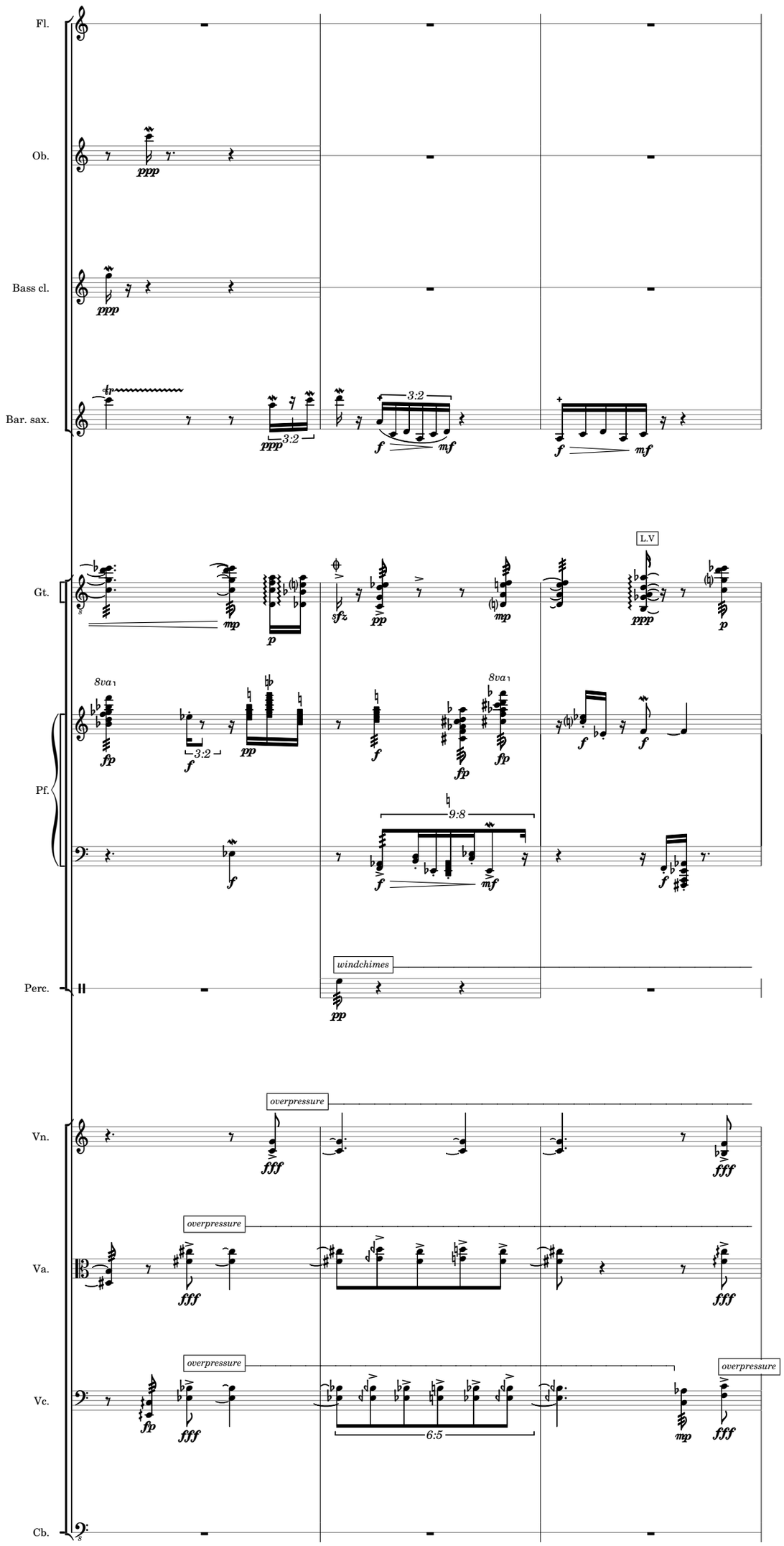

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
7:6
3:2
inhale
exhale
L.V
8va
marimba

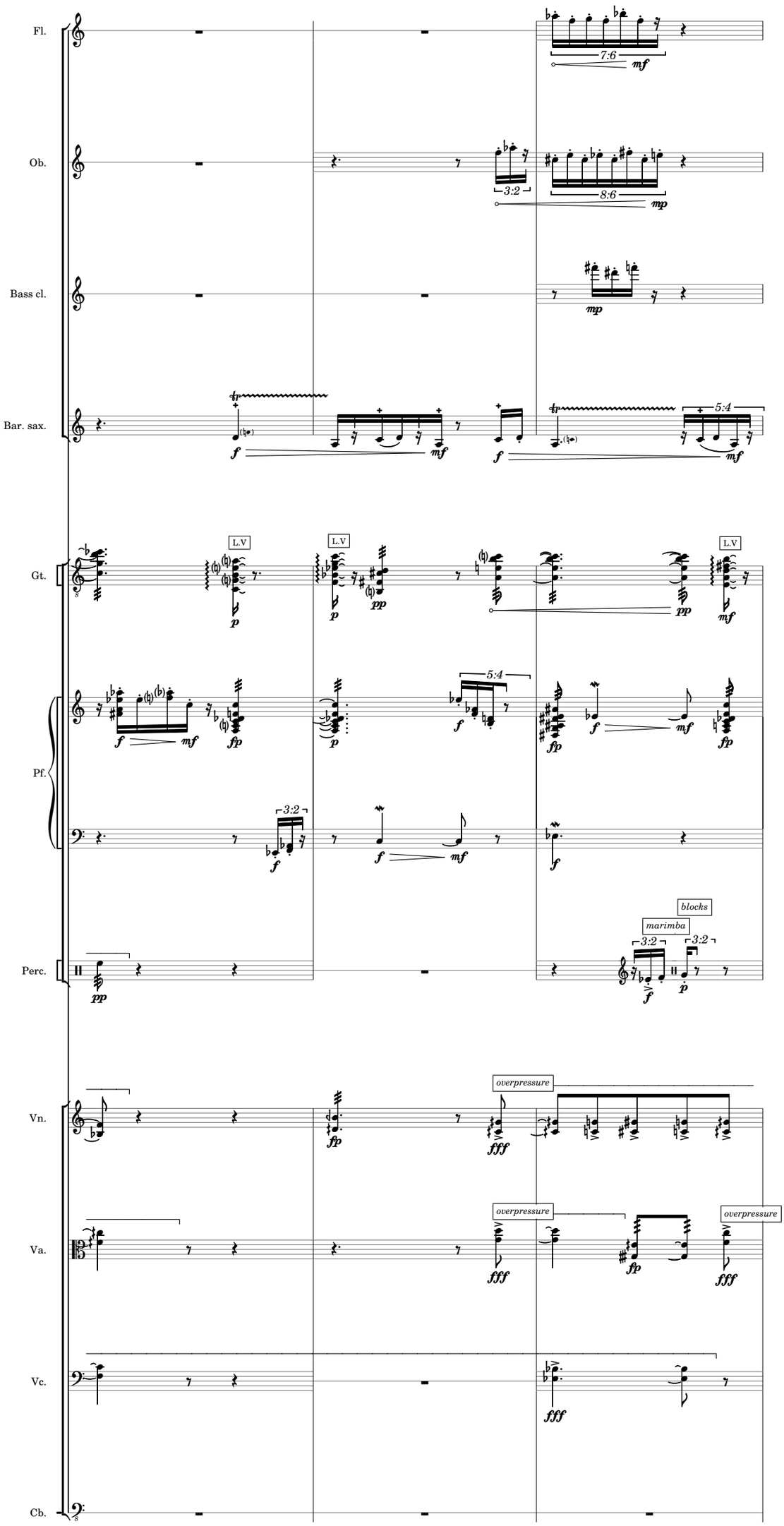

4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
LV
blocks
5:4
7:6
3:2

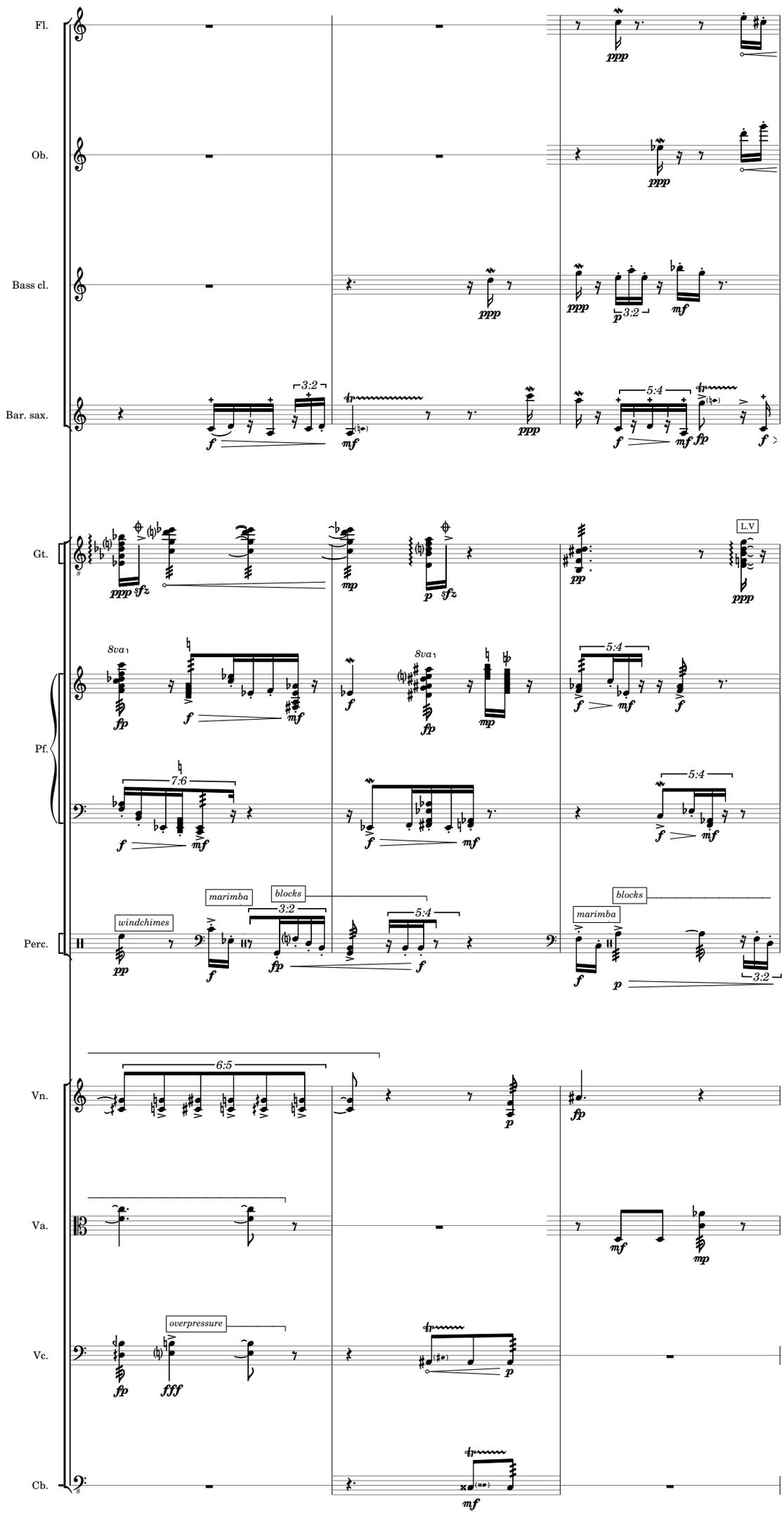

4/4
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
3:2
5:4
8:6
4:3
7:6
6:5
8va
windchimes
blocks
overpressure

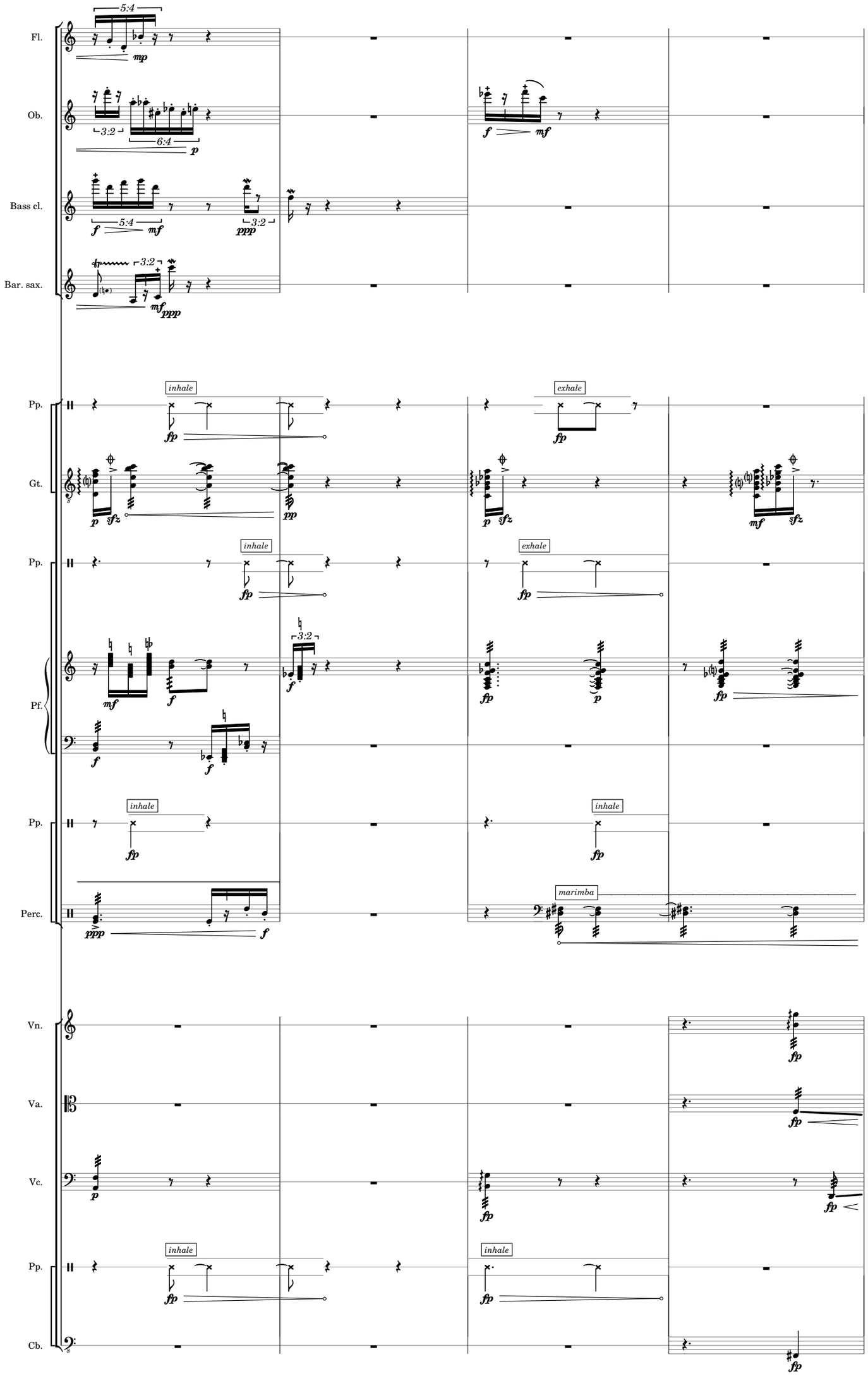

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
marimba
windchimes

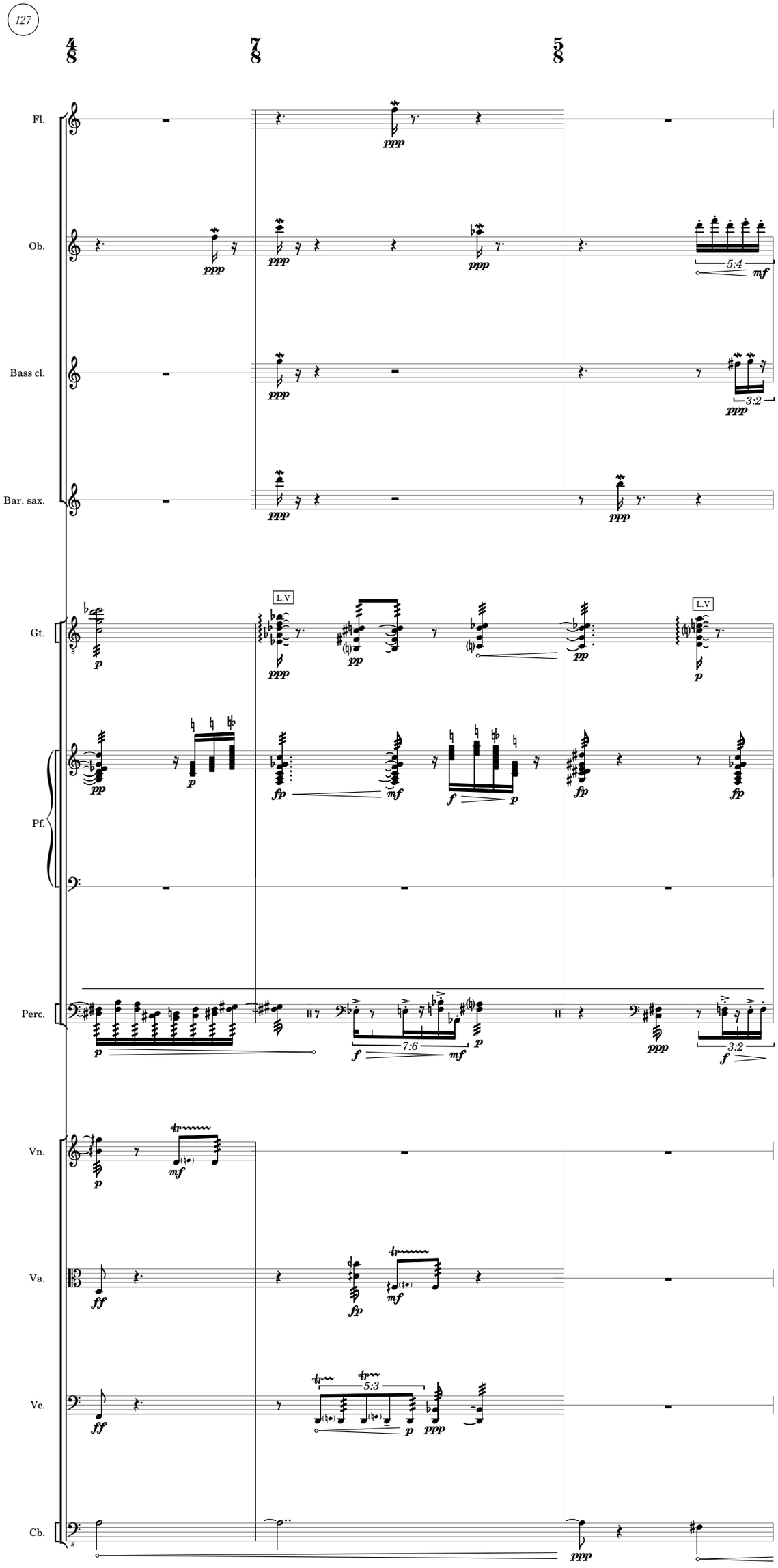

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
windchimes
overpressure
5:4
3:2

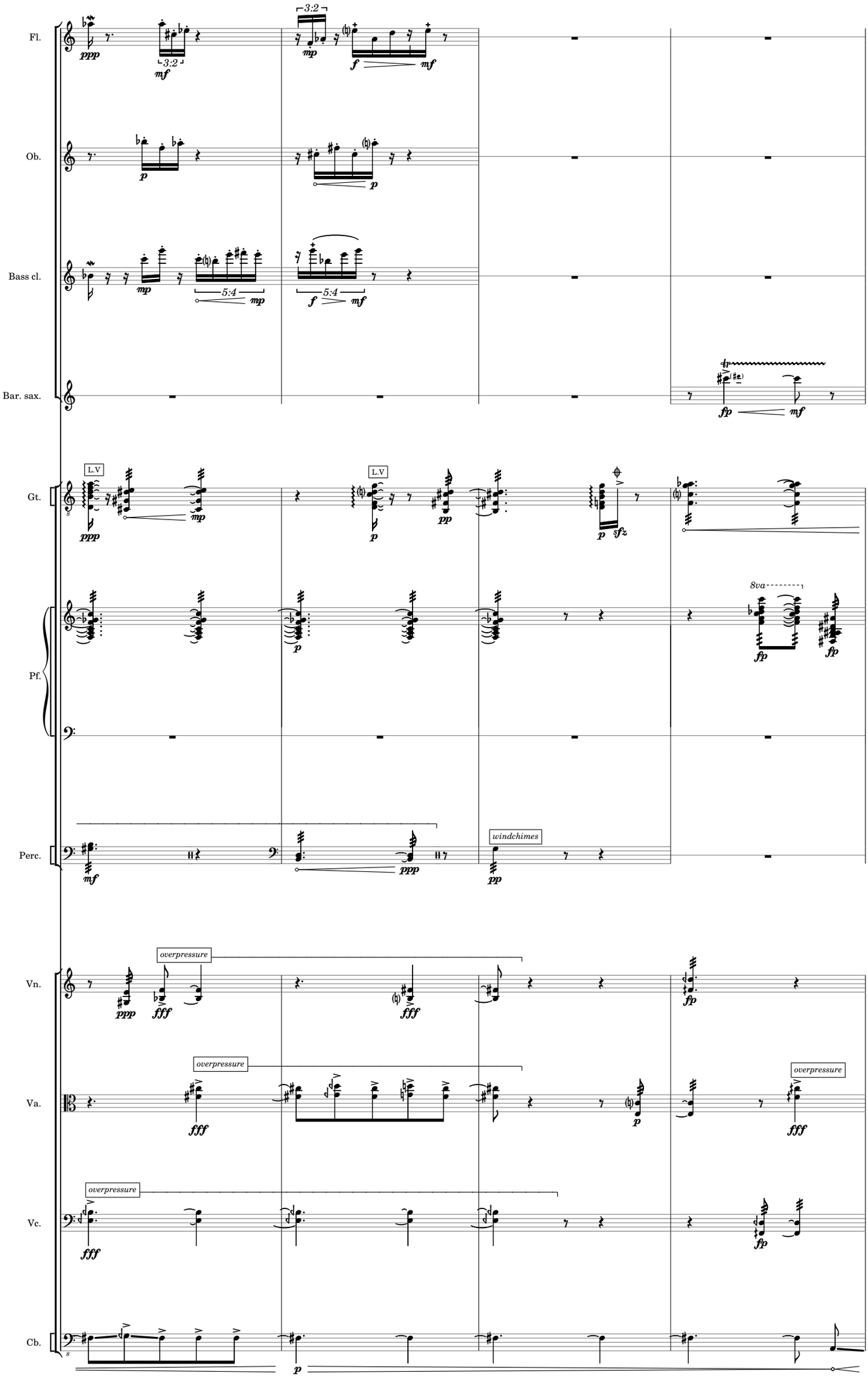

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
ppp
3:2
f
mf
mp
p
sfz
pp
L.V
ppp
8va
fp
9:8
windchimes
overpressure
fff
6:5

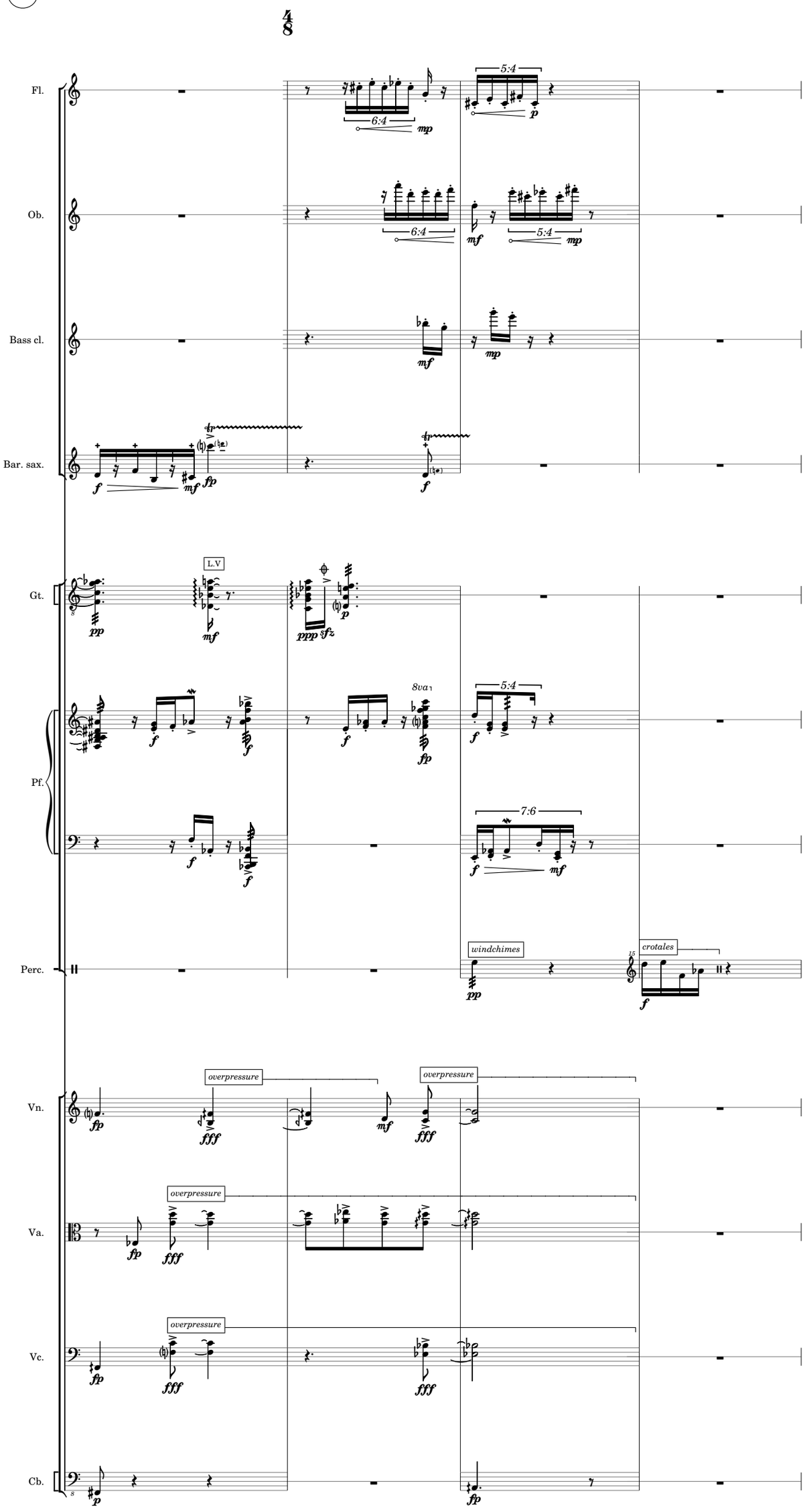

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
7:6
3:2
8:6
5:4
blocks
marimba
overpressure


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


Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
marimba
5:4
3:2
6:4


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.
L.V
L.V
8va
windchimes
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure

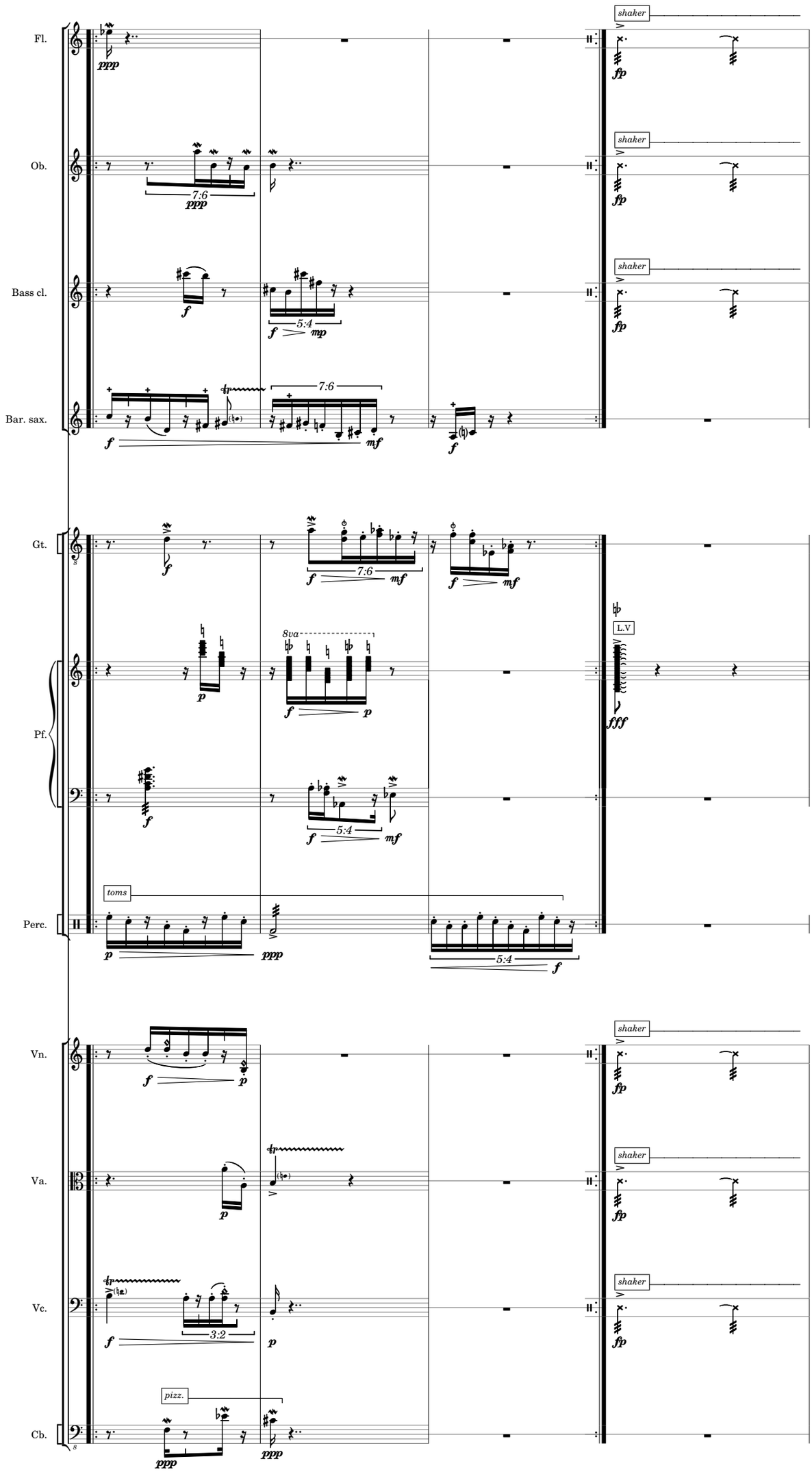

4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
8va
5:4
6:4
7:6
windchimes
crotales
overpressure

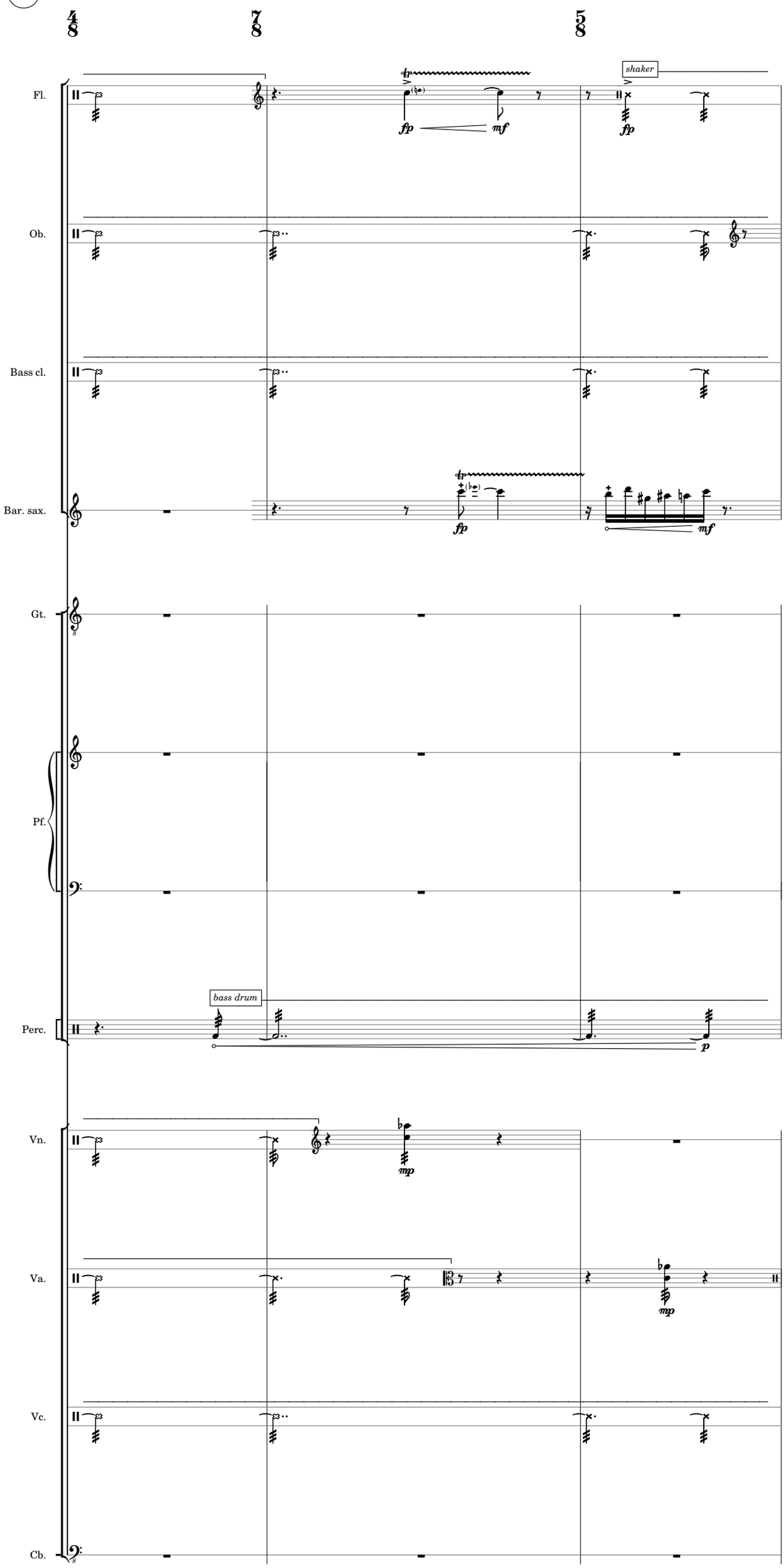
♩ = 64

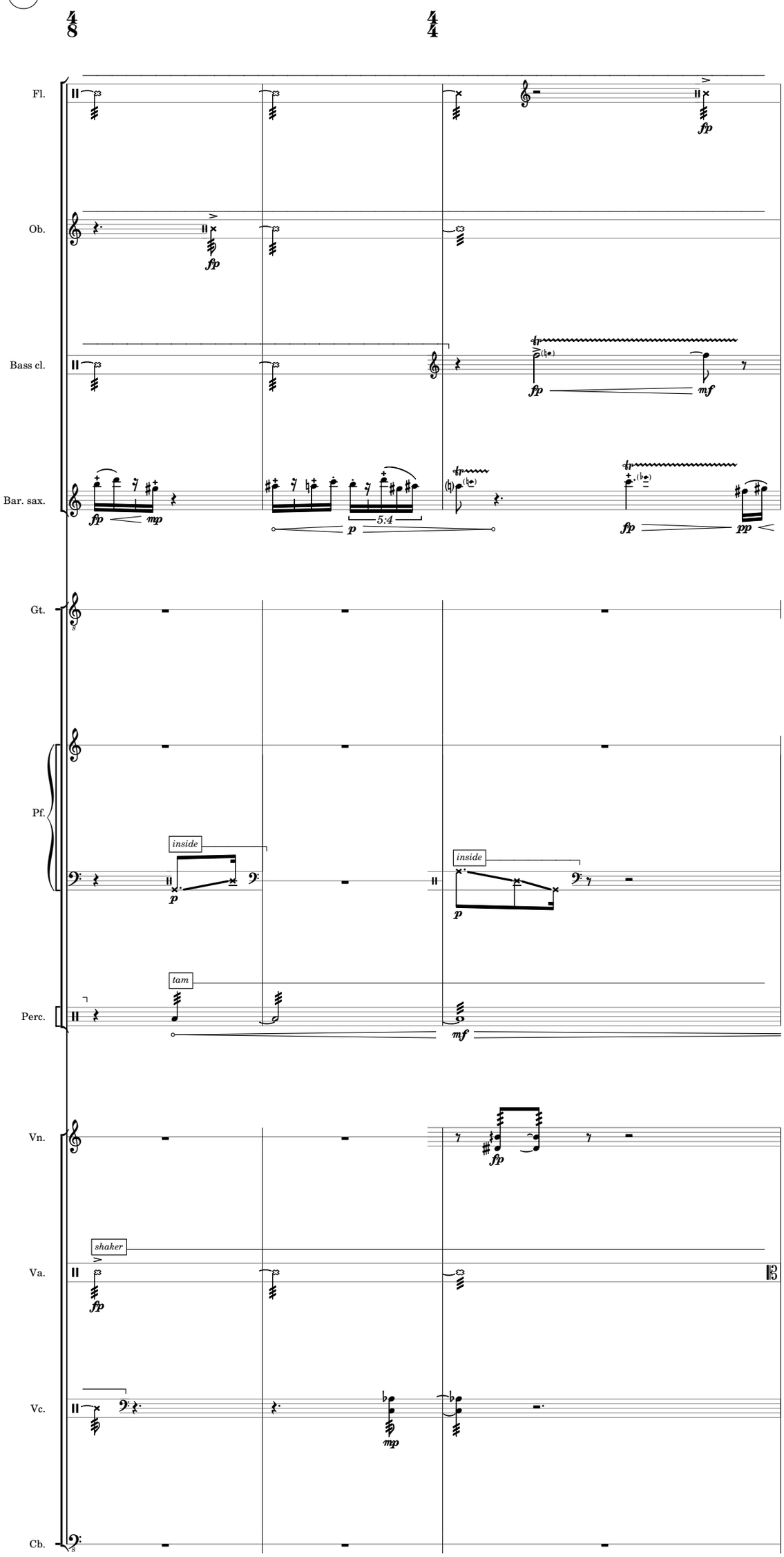
4/8 C [ii]

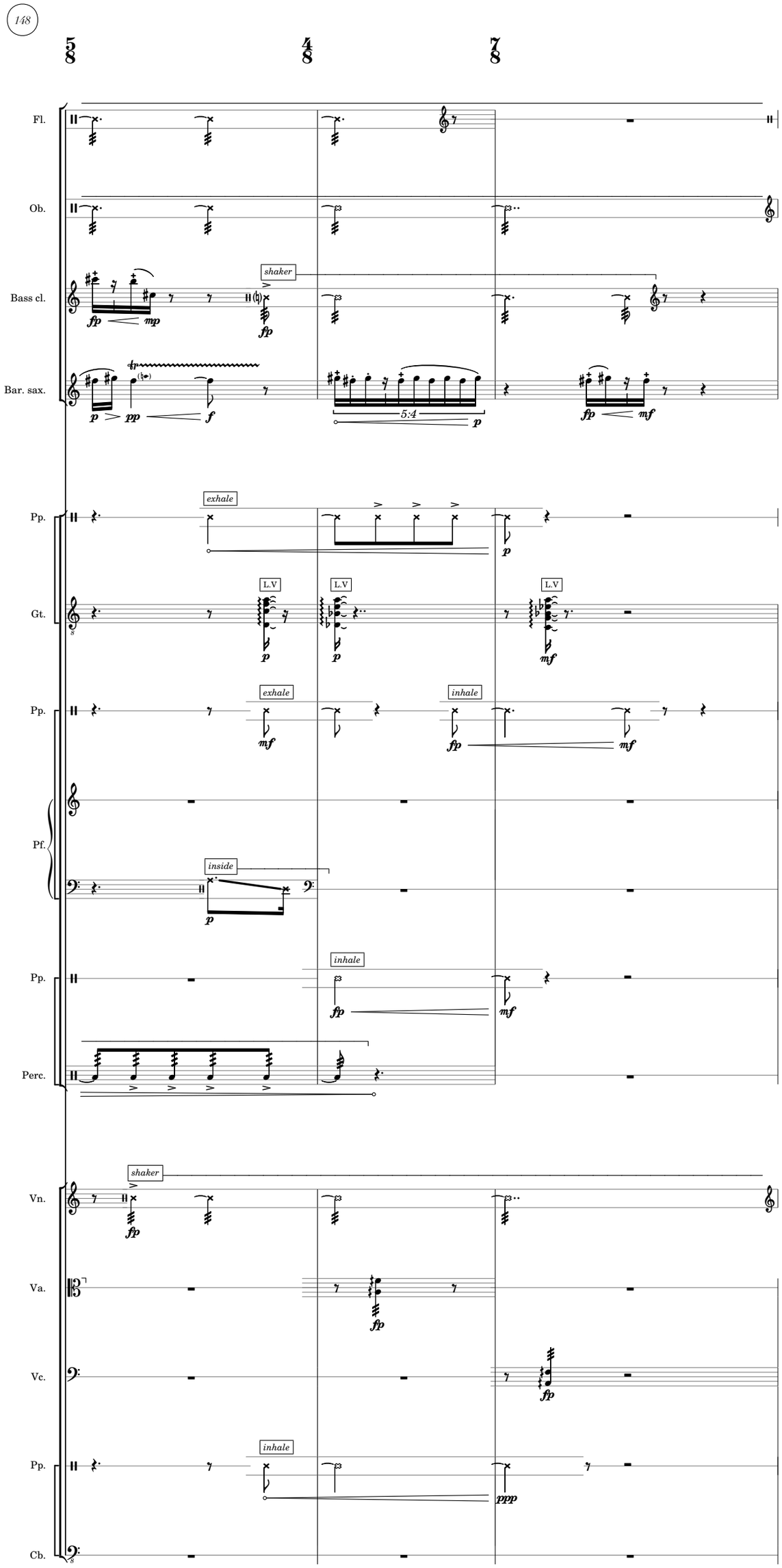
♩ = 80

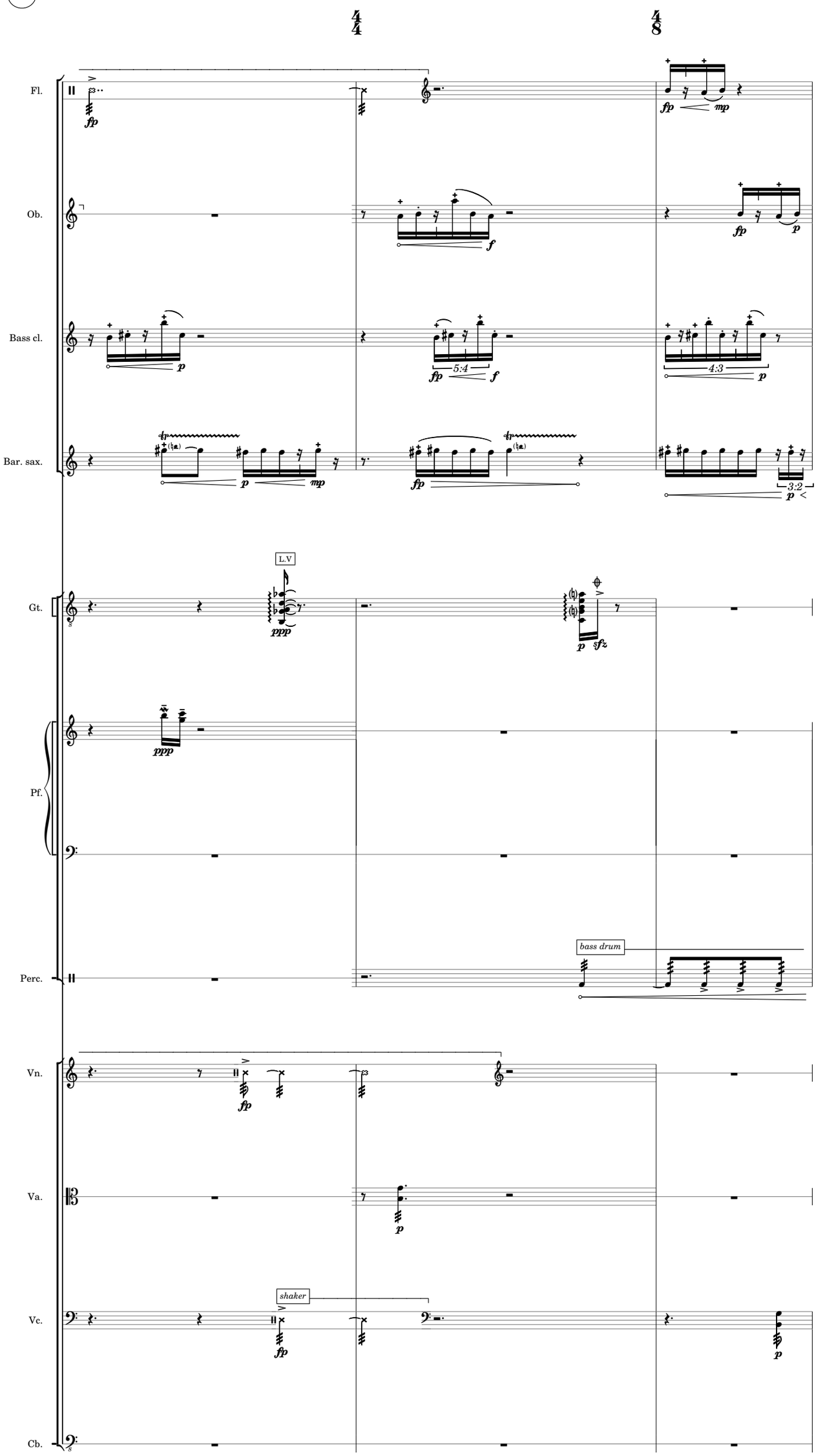
5/8 D Chemish

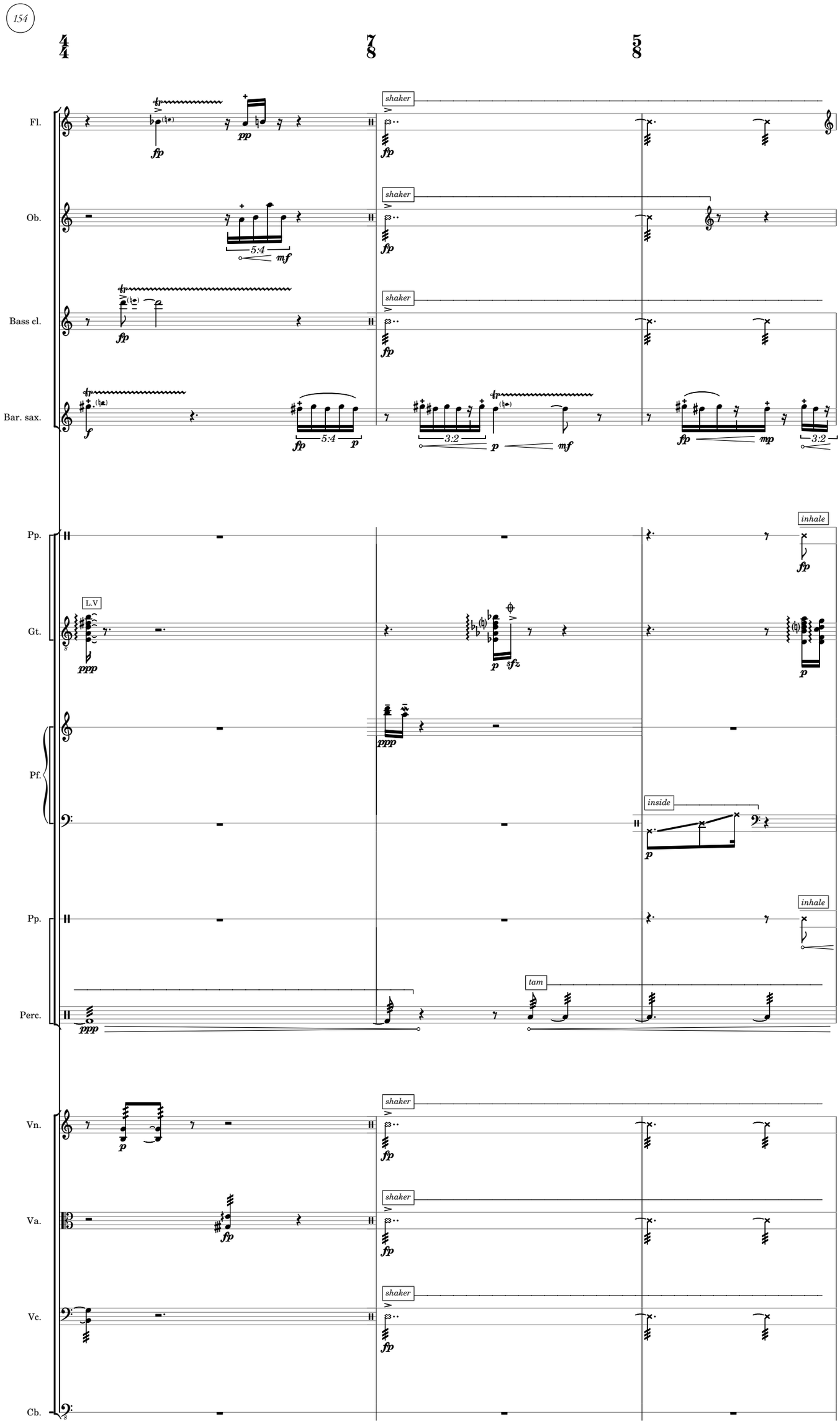


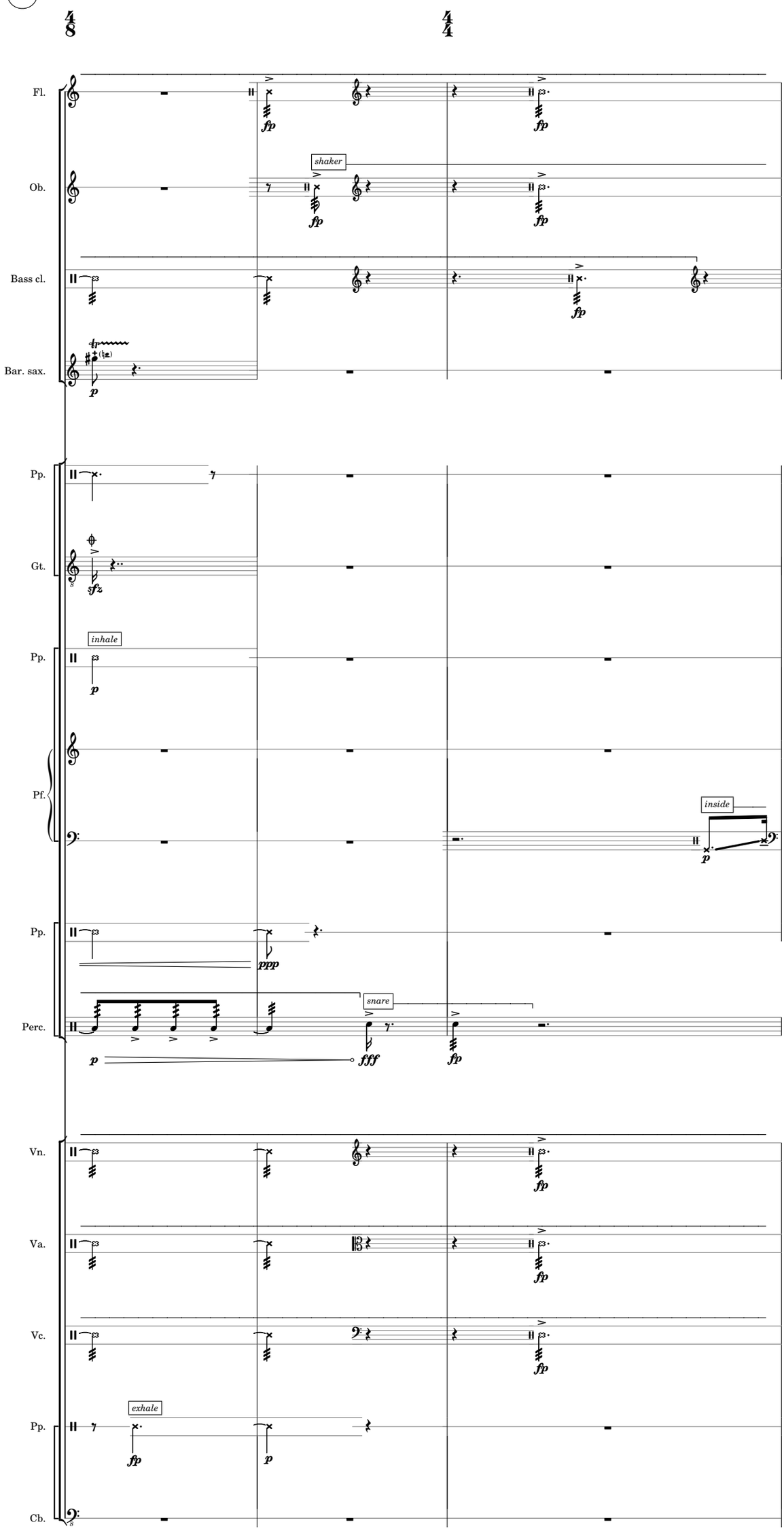

4/8
7/8
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
bass drum
fp
mf
mp
p

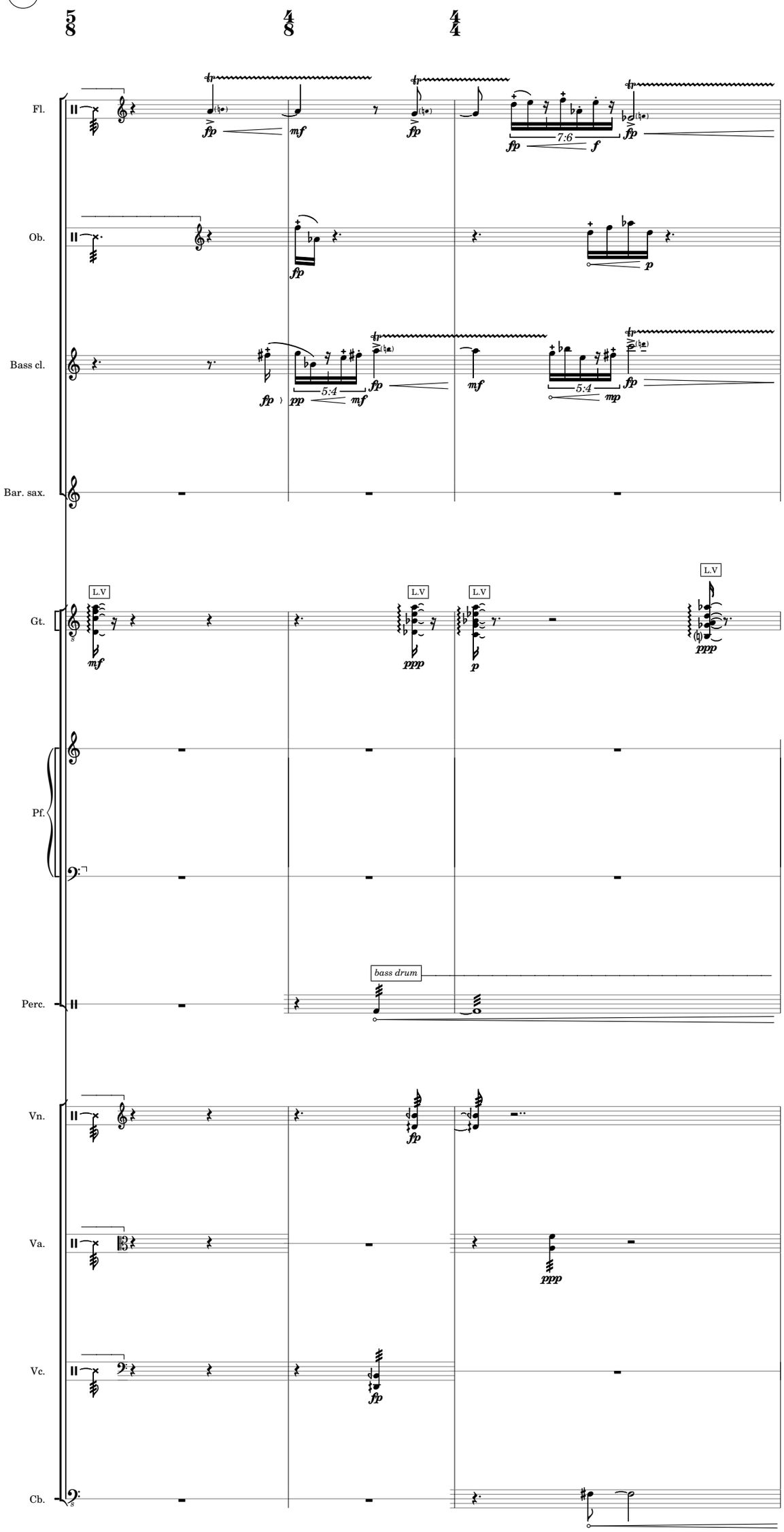

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
inside
inside
tam
shaker
5:4

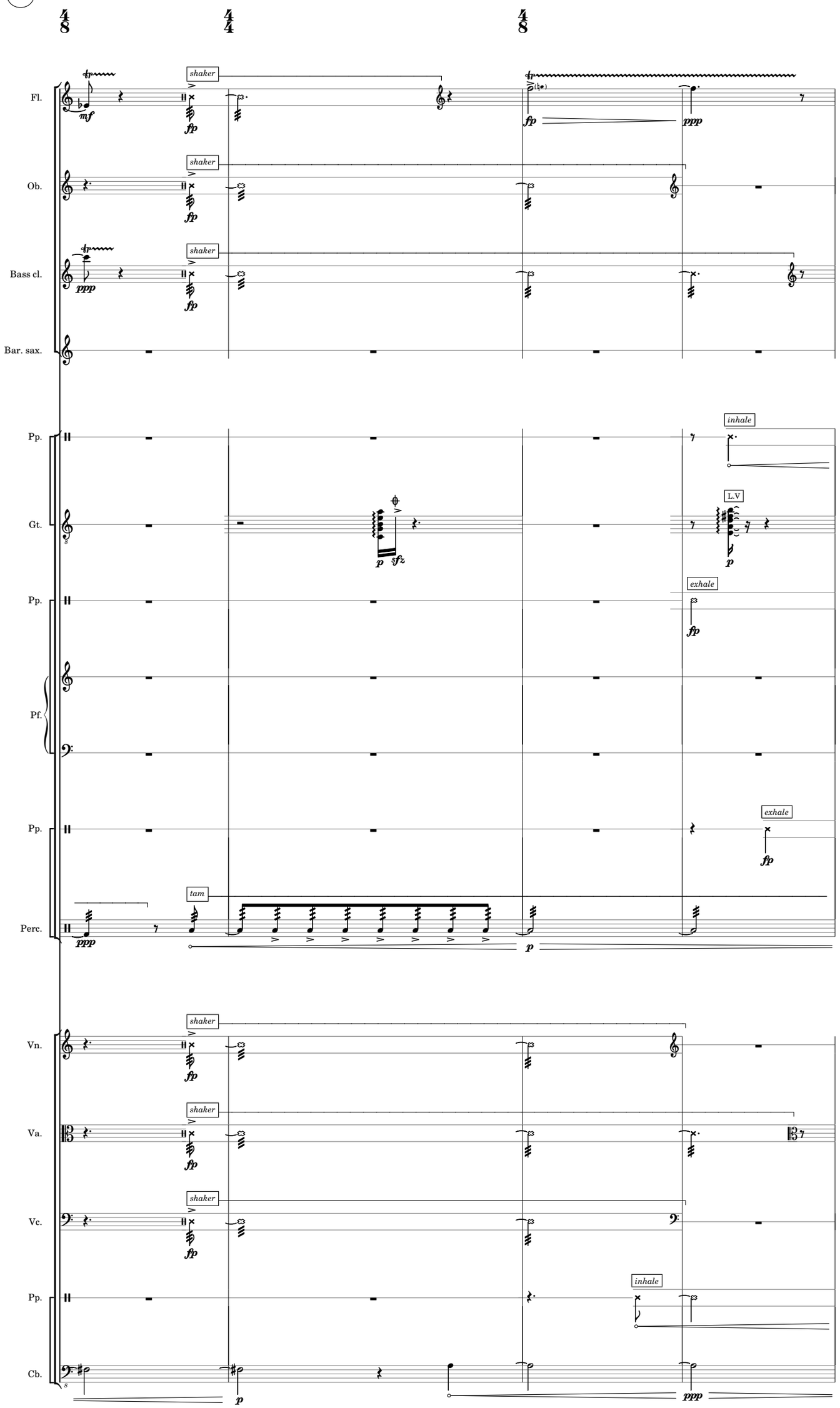

5/8
4/8
7/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
shaker
fp
mp
fp
Bar. sax.
tr
p
pp
f
5:4
p
fp
mf
Pp.
exhale
p
Gt.
L.V
p
p
mf
Pp.
exhale
mf
inhale
fp
mf
Pf.
inside
p
Pp.
inhale
fp
mf
Perc.
Vn.
shaker
fp
Va.
fp
Vc.
fp
Pp.
inhale
ppp
Cb.

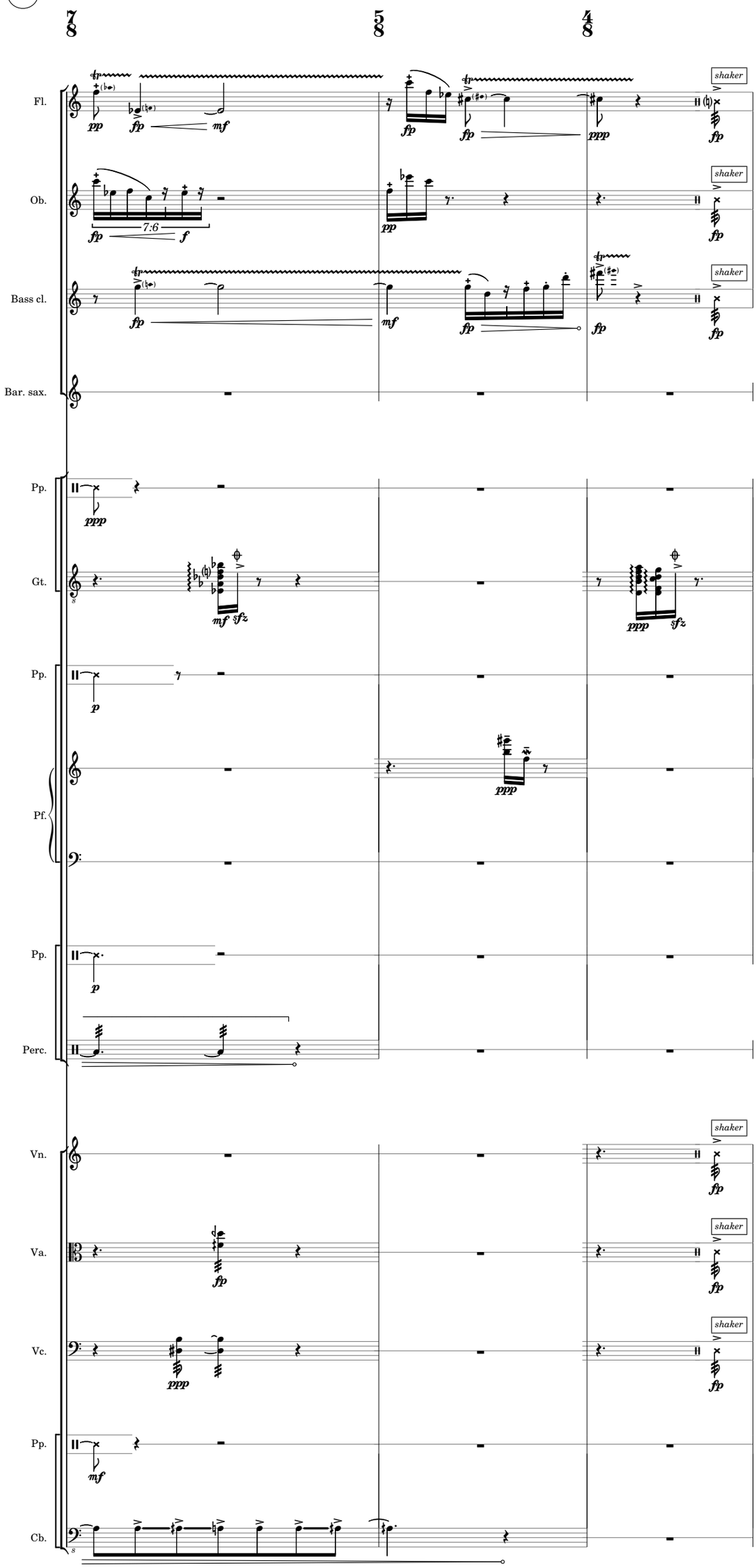

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
bass drum
shaker
5:4
4:3
3:2

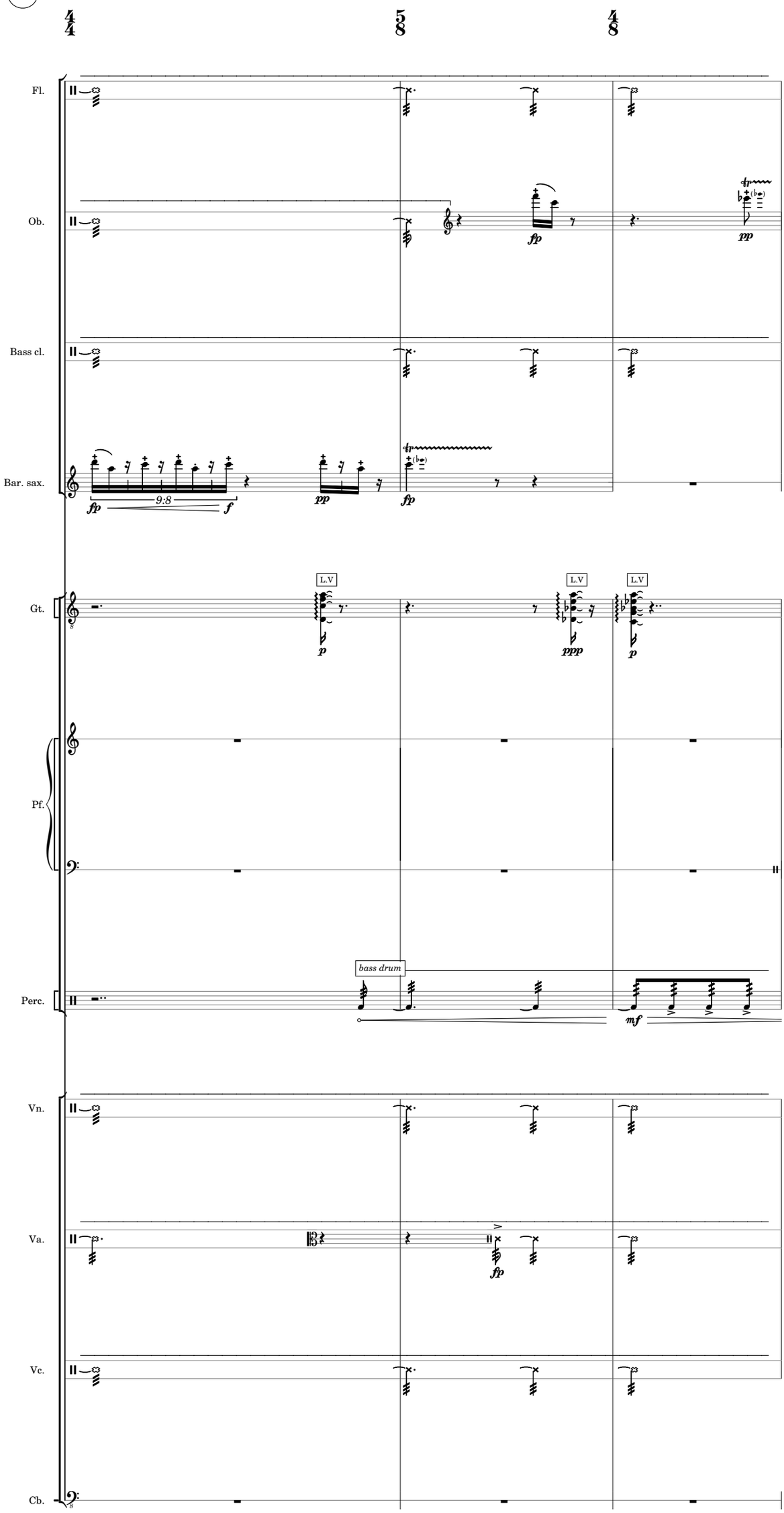

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
L.V
inside
tam
5:4
3:2

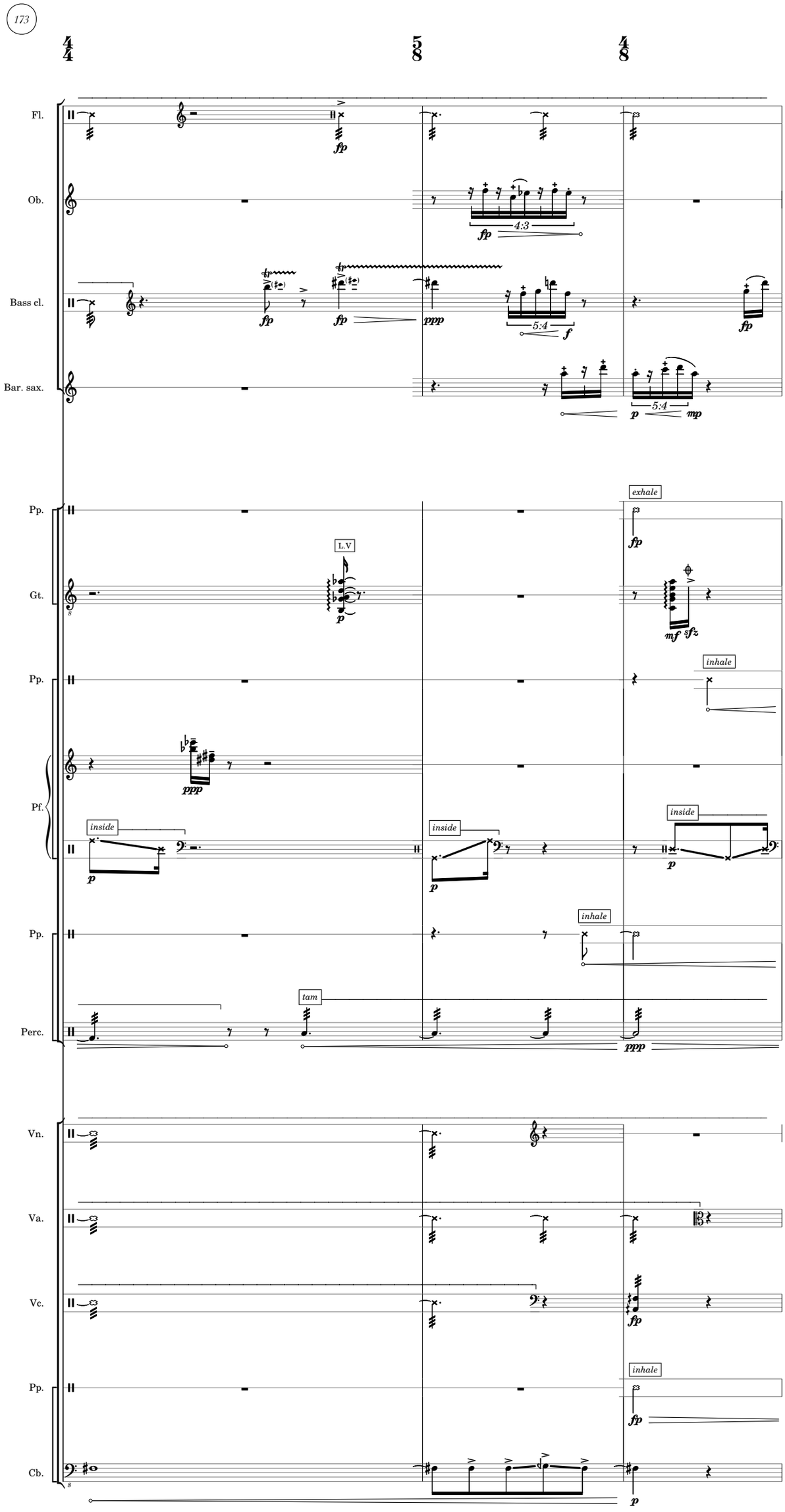

Fl.
Ob.
shaker
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
inhale
Pf.
inside
Pp.
Perc.
snare
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
exhale
Cb.

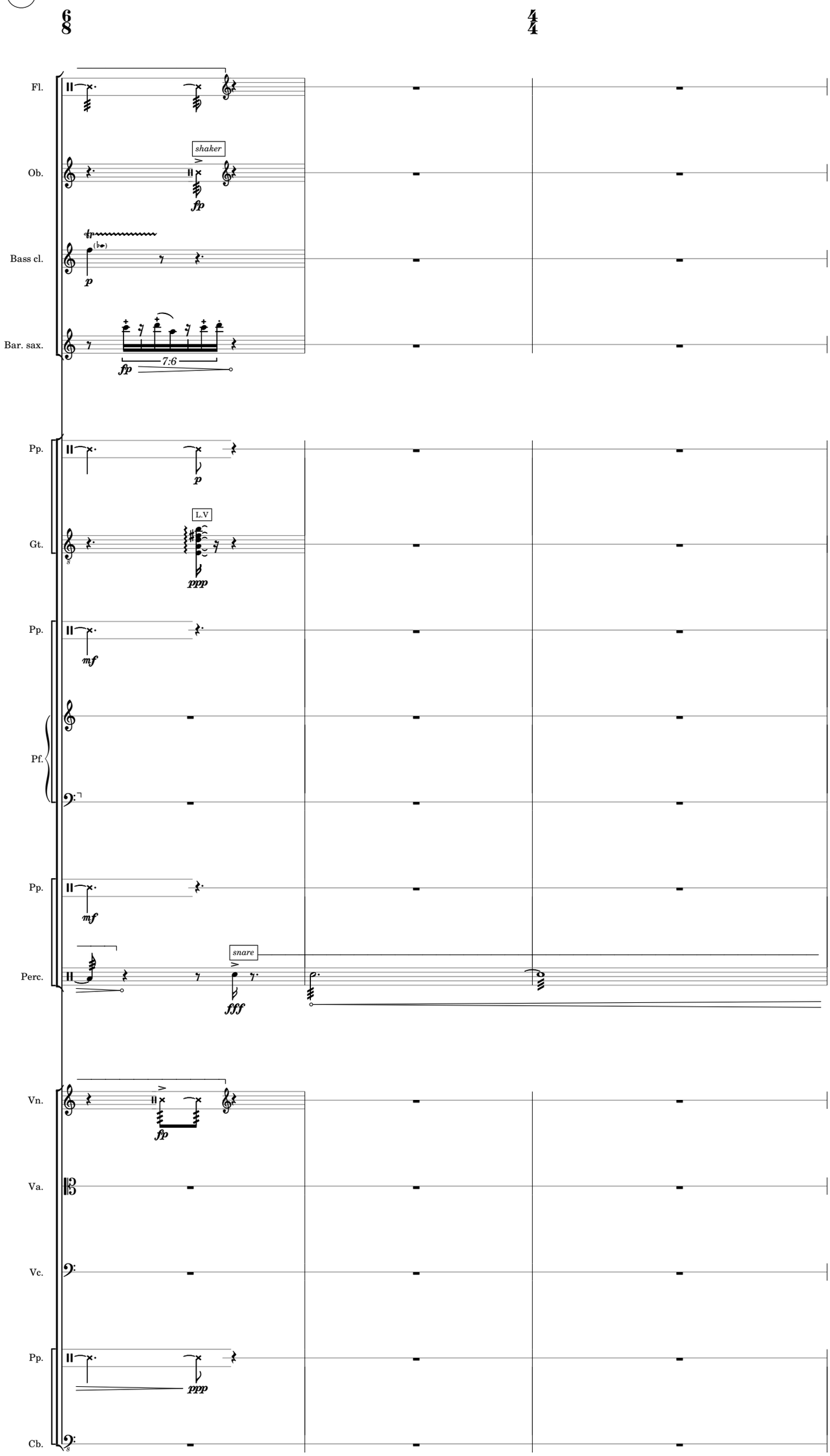

5/8
4/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
bass drum
7:6
5:4
5:4

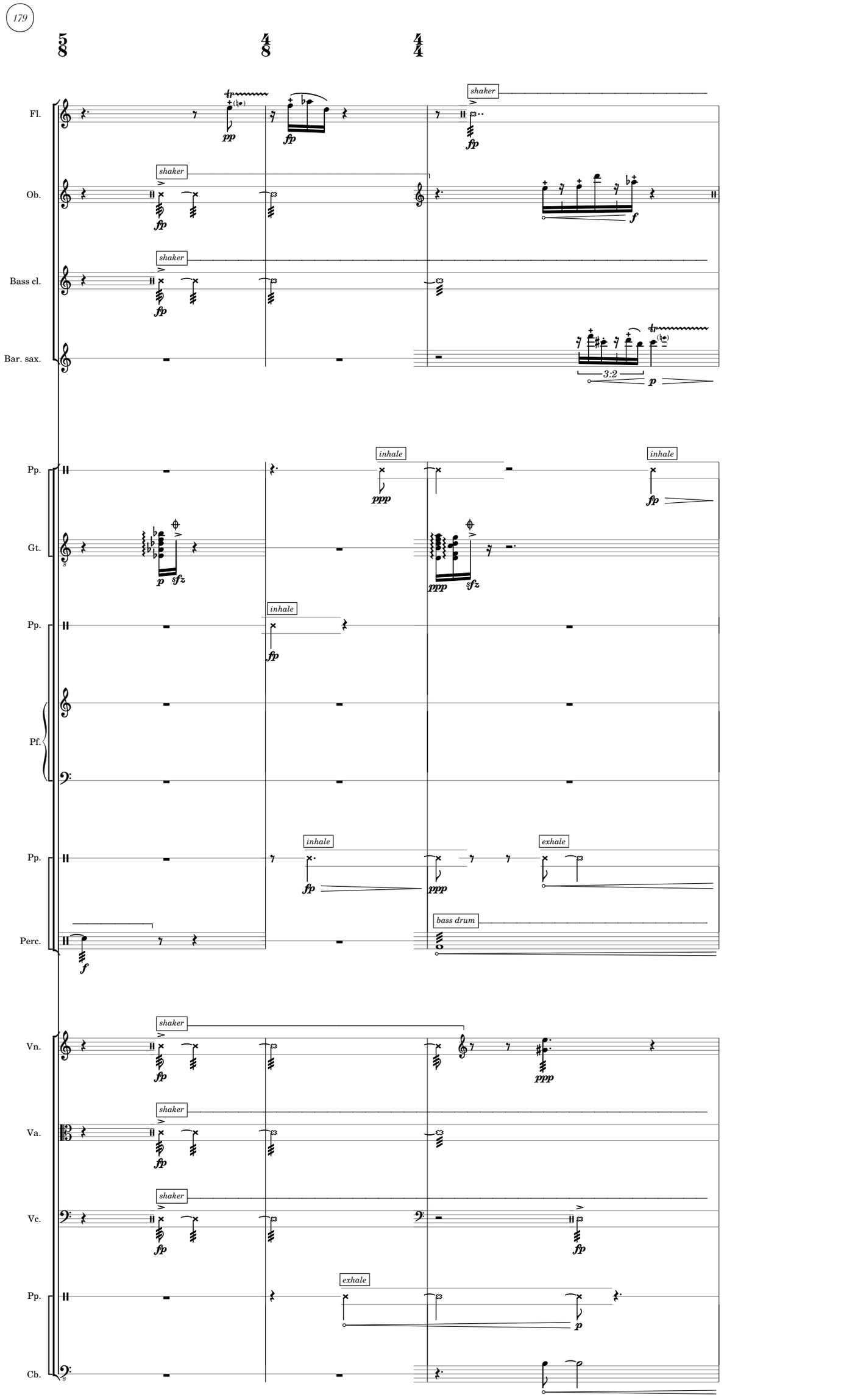

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
exhale
L.V
tam

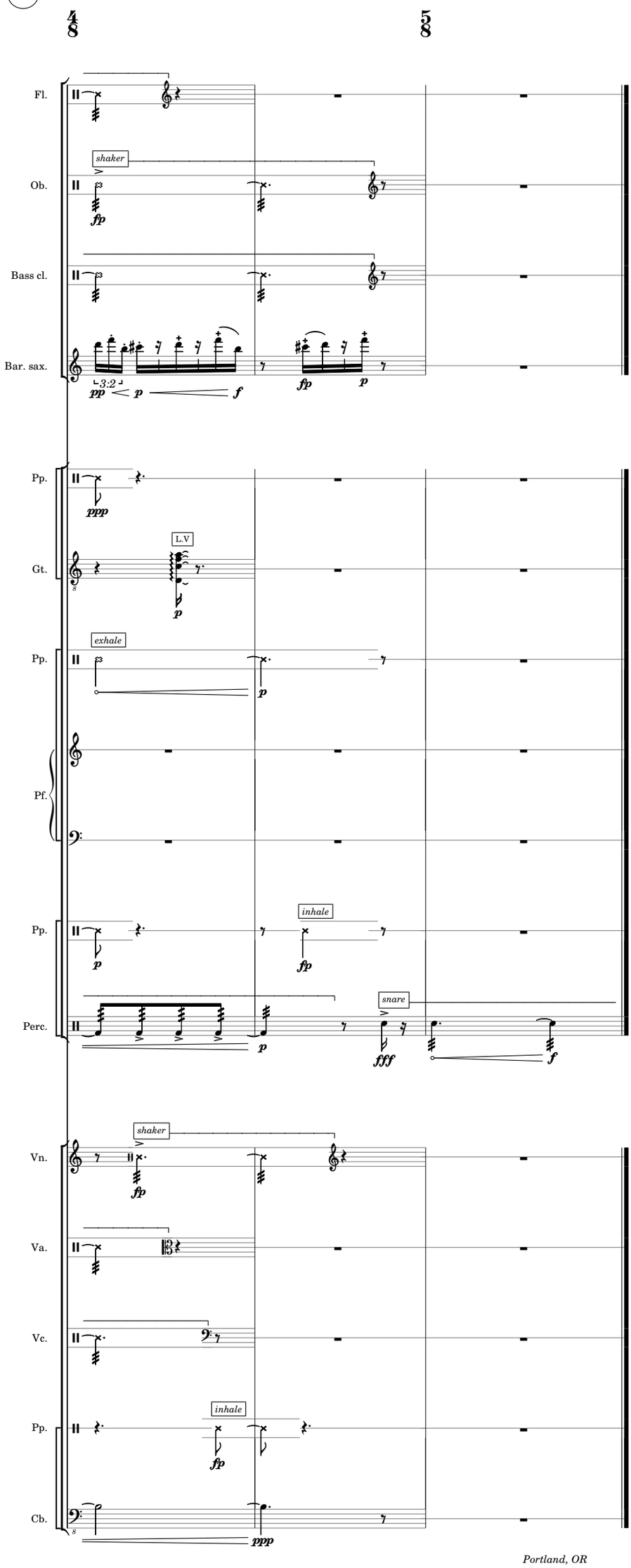

7/8
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
shaker
7:6


4/4
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
fp
pp
9:8
f
L.V
p
ppp
bass drum
mf


4/4
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
fp
4:3
ppp
5:4
f
p
mp
L.V
mf
sfz
exhale
inhale
inside
tam


6/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
shaker
fp
Bass cl.
lip
(b♭)
p
Bar. sax.
fp
7:6
Pp.
p
Gt.
L.V
ppp
Pp.
mf
Pf.
Pp.
mf
Perc.
snare
fff
Vn.
fp
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
ppp
Cb.


5/8
4/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
exhale
bass drum
3:2



Portland, OR
January 2015 - April 2015

2014-05-15

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