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.

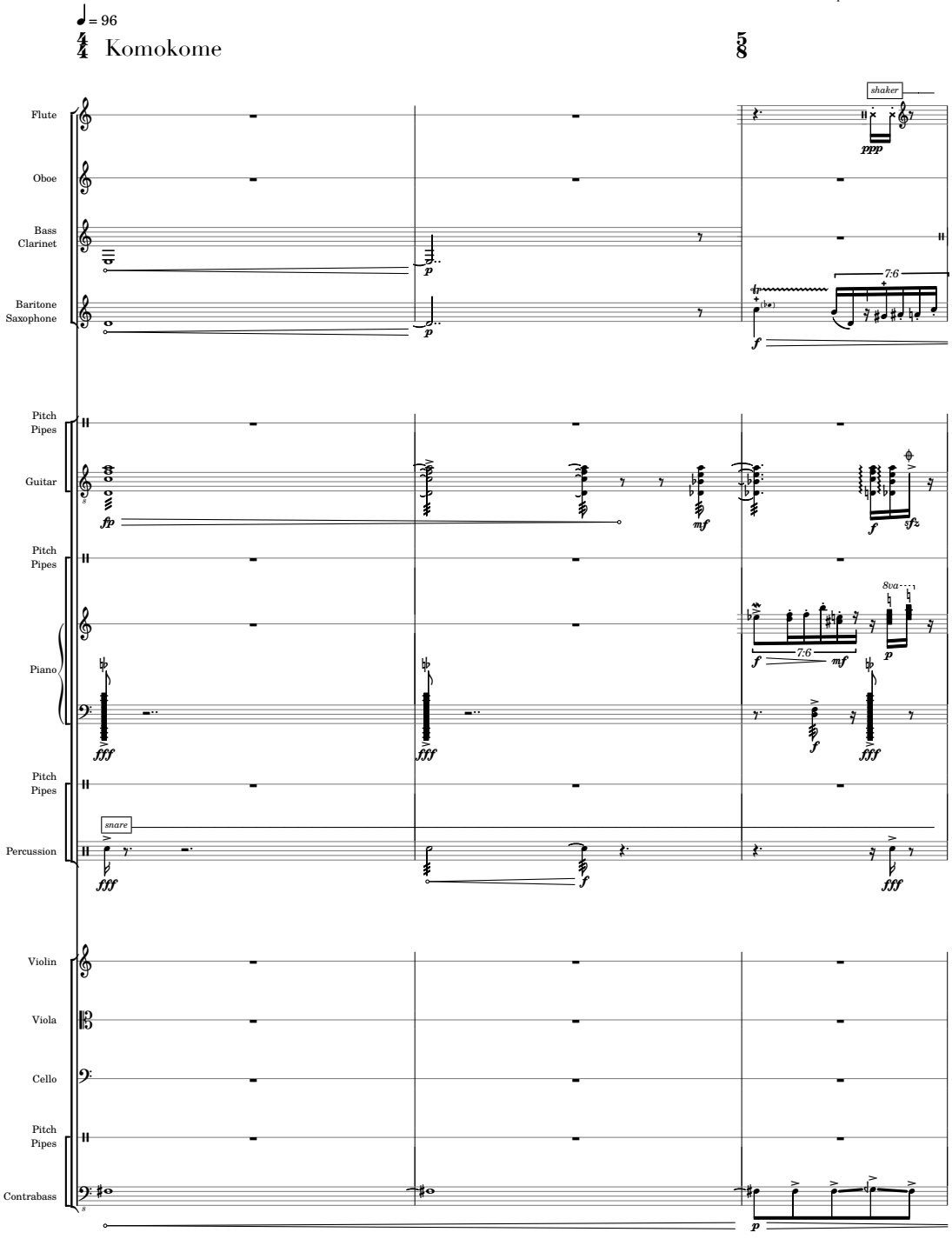
Invisible Cities (iii):

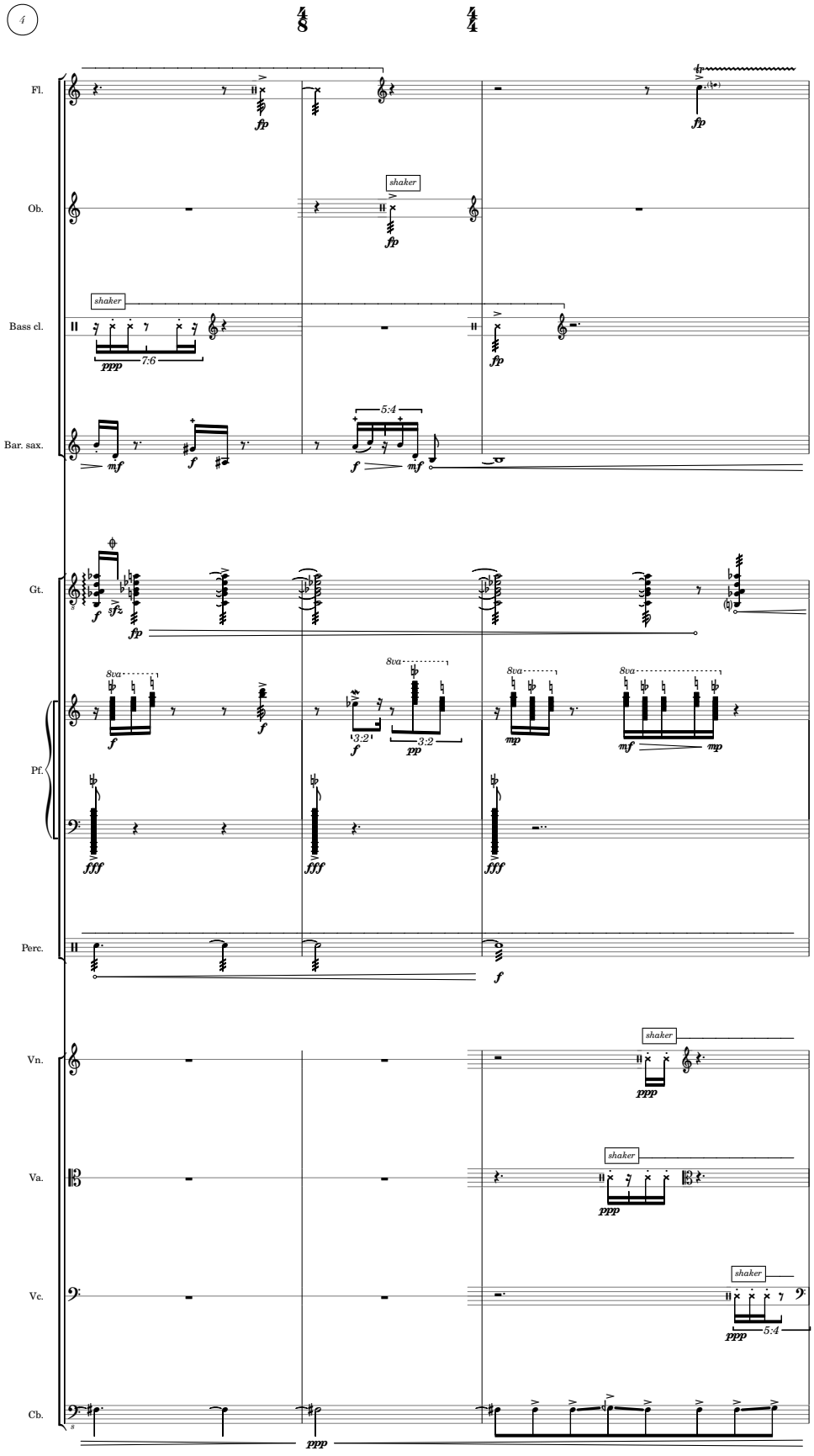
ERSILIA

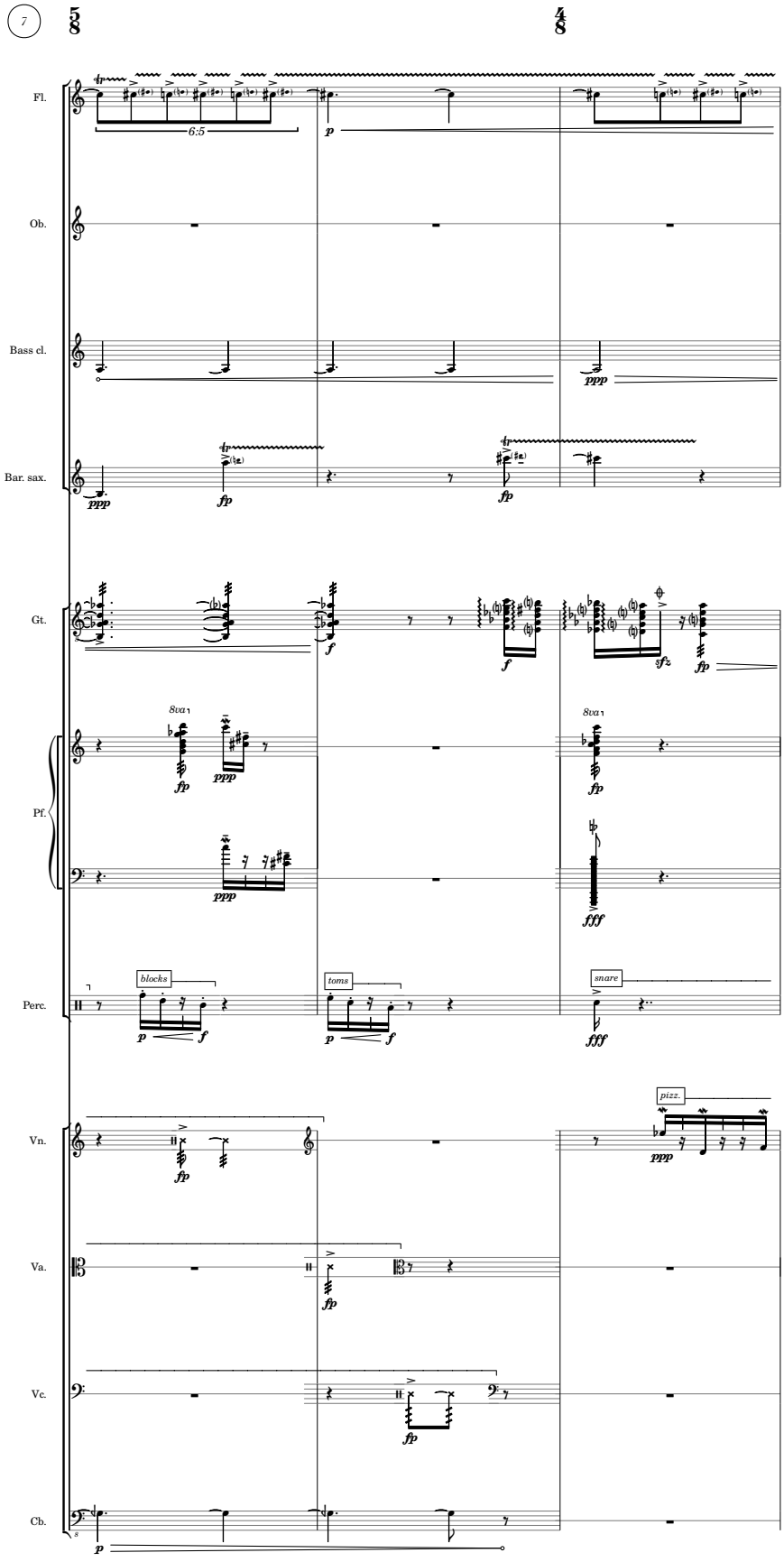
(a botanical survey of the uninhabited northeastern isles)

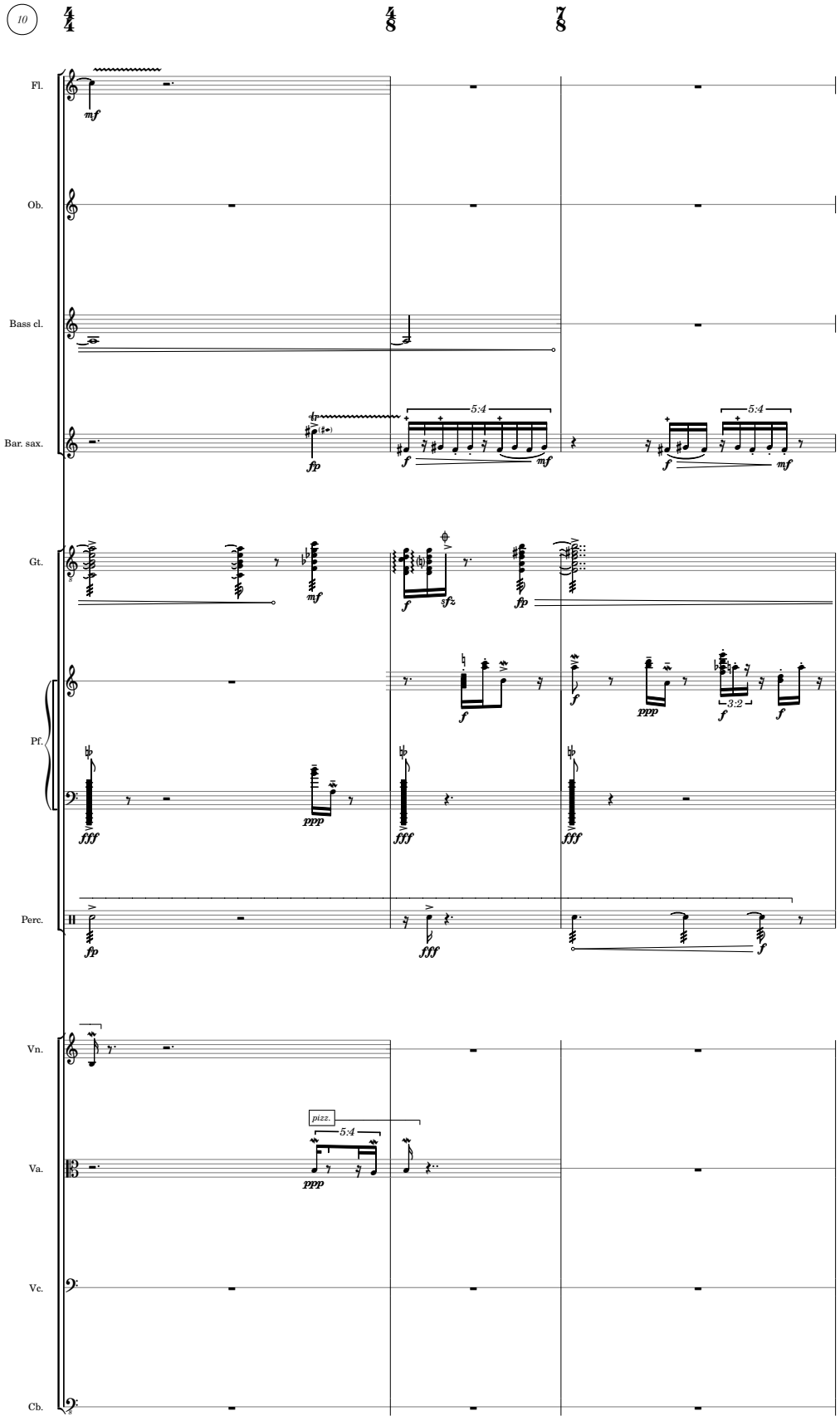
for Ensemble Dal Niente

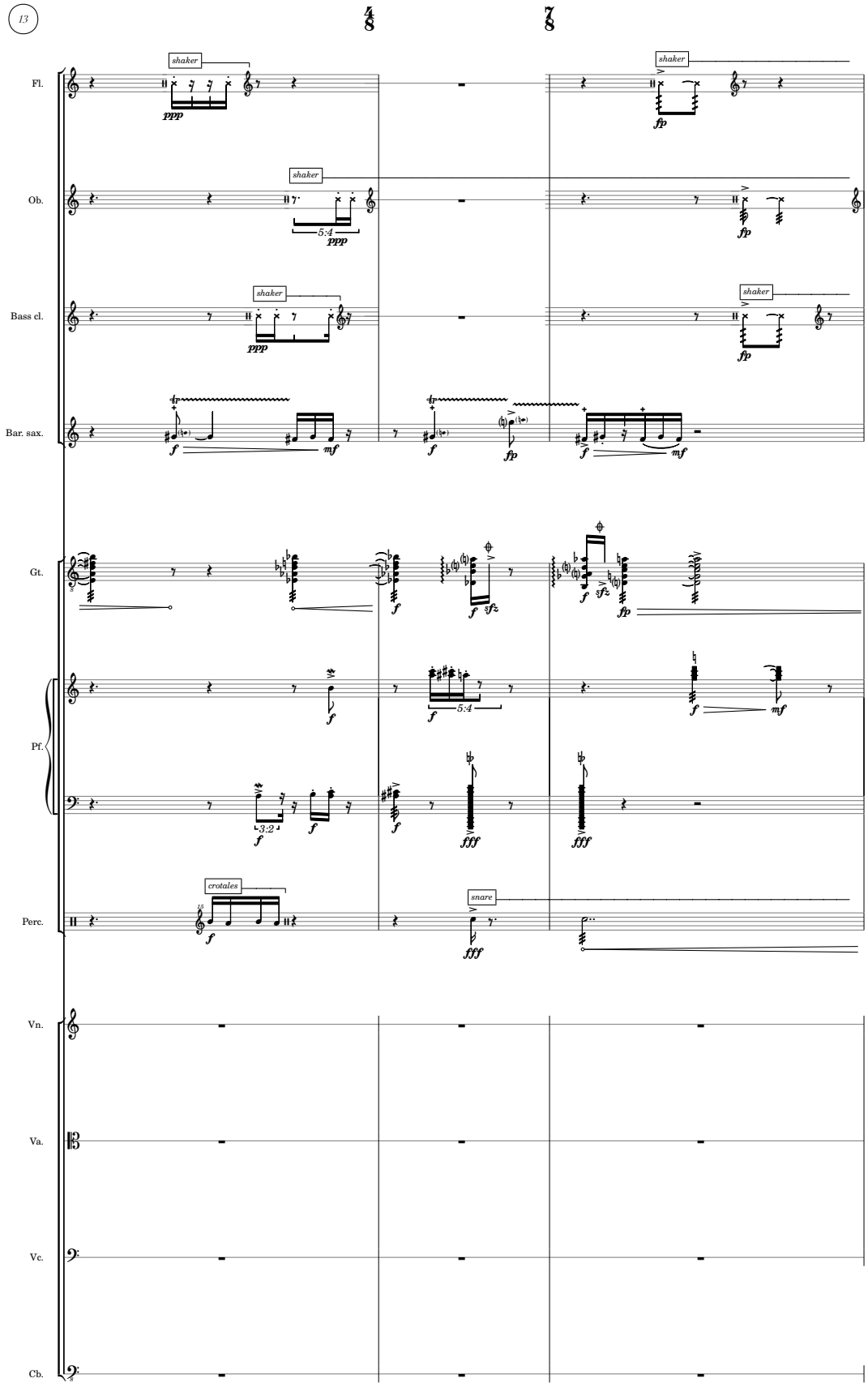
Joséphine Wolf Oberholtzer (1984)

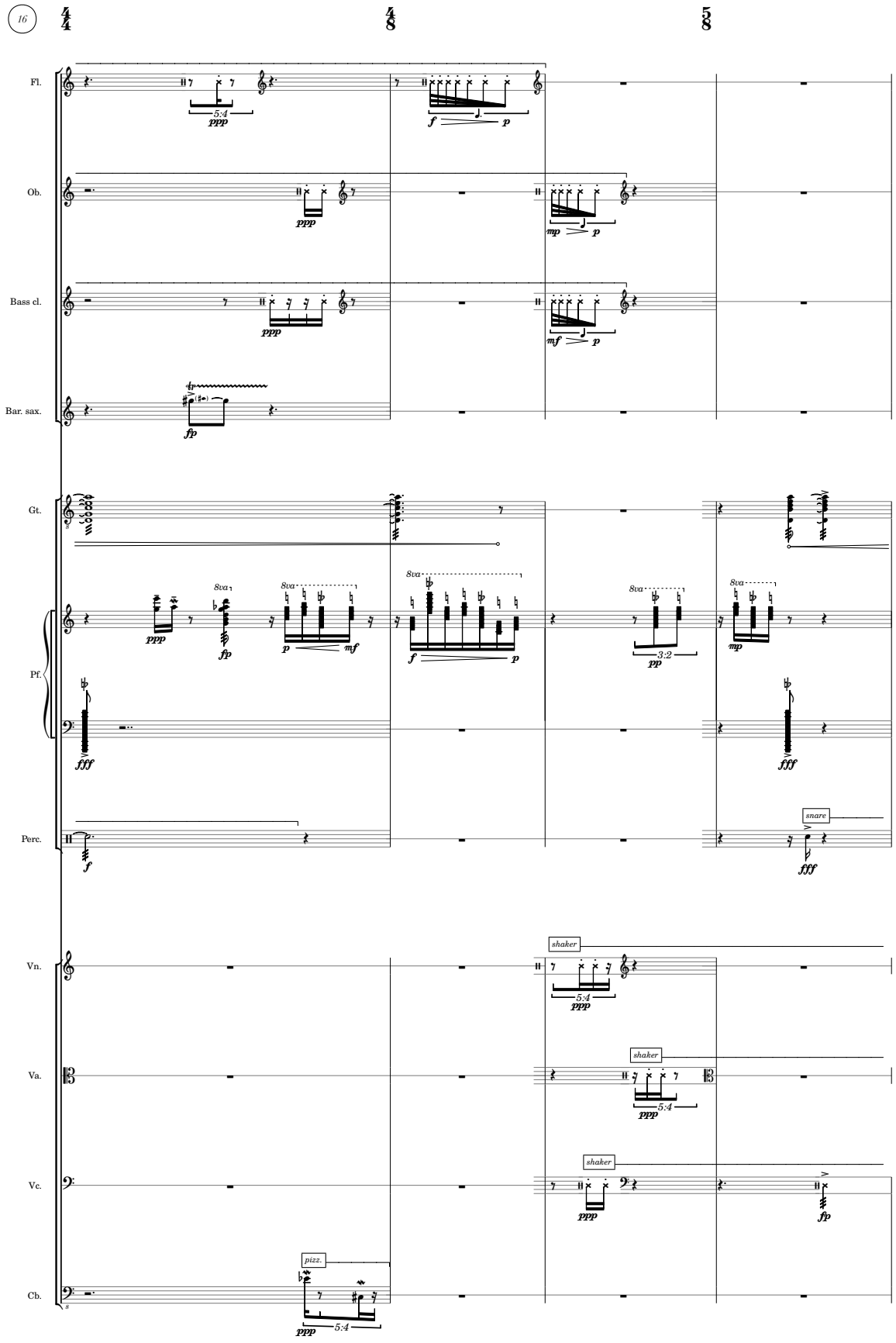



Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
7:6
5:4
3:2
8va


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


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


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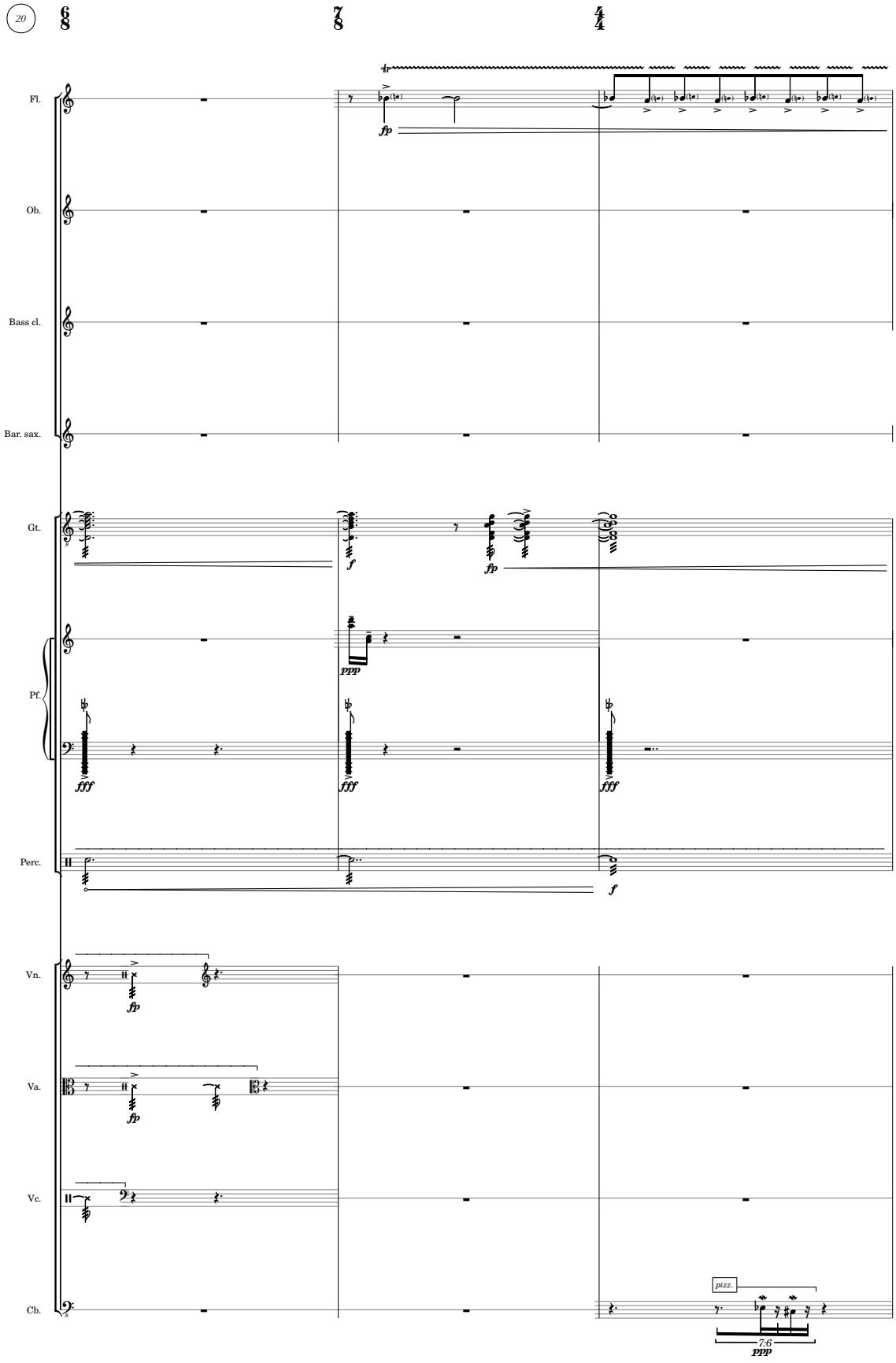
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
5:4
ppp
f
p
mp
mf
fp
8va
3:2
pp
fff
snare
shaker
pizz.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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
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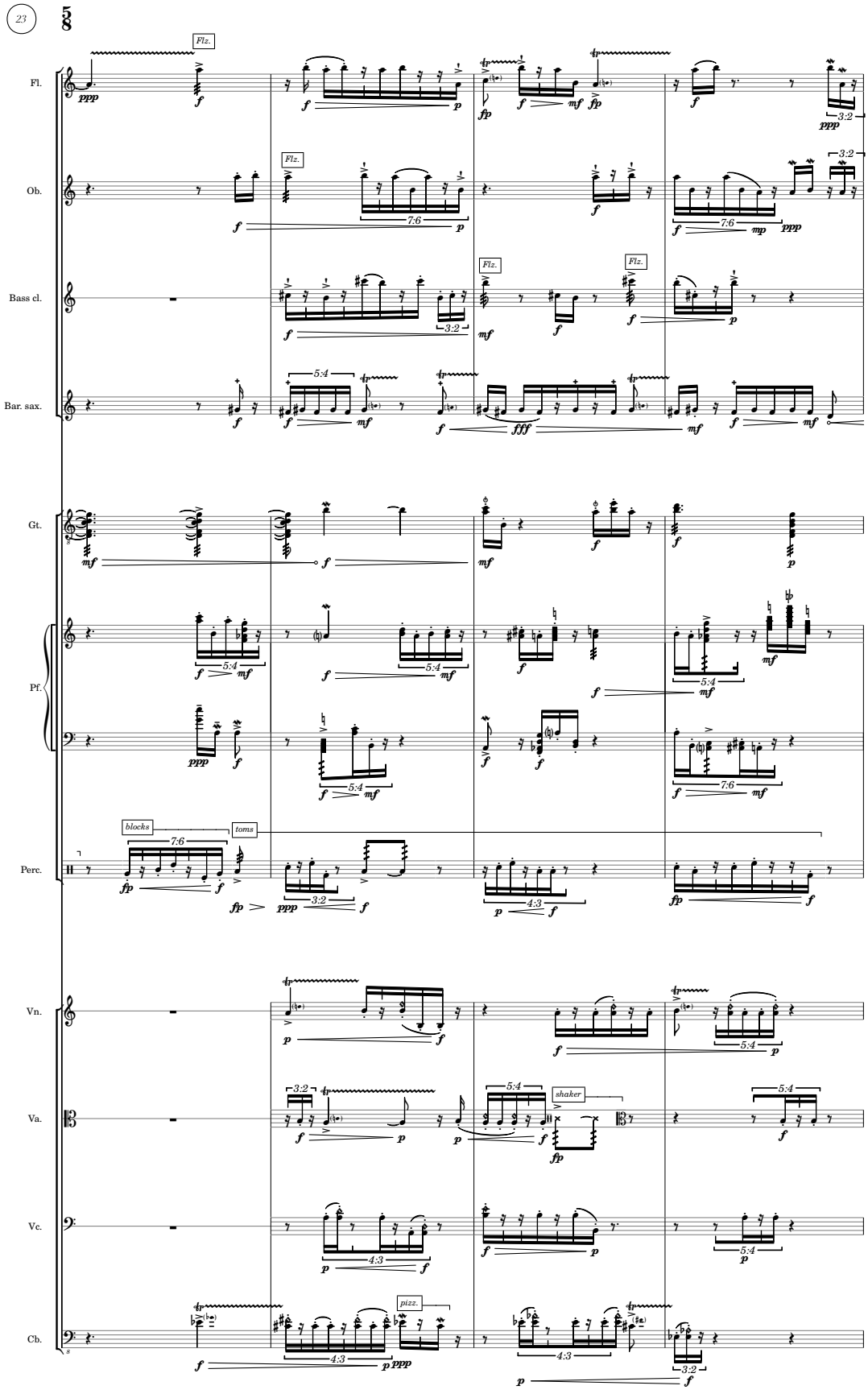
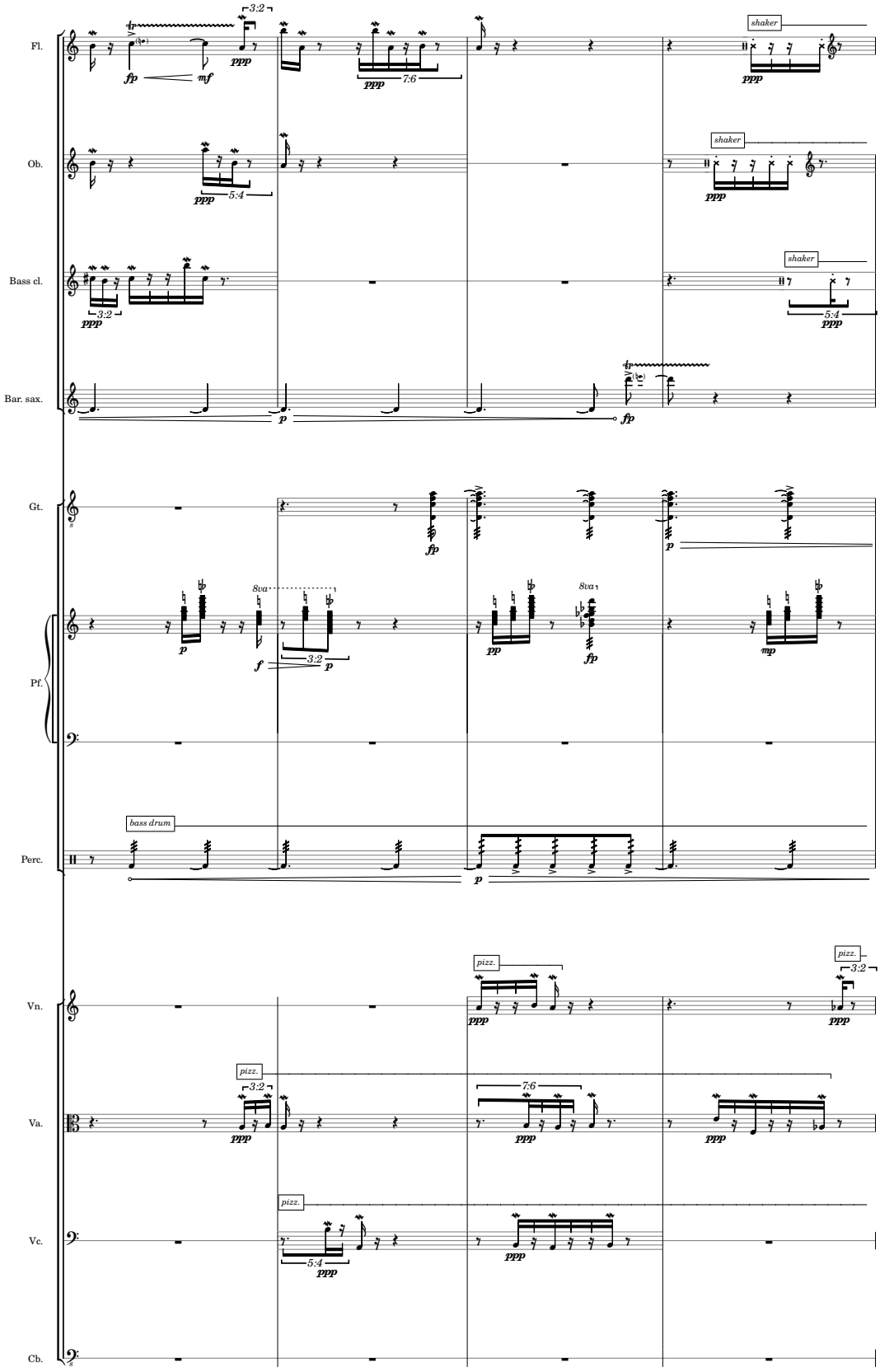
Cb.
fp
f
ppp
fff
pizz.
7:6
ppp


Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
Flz.
blocks
toms
shaker
pizz.


Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
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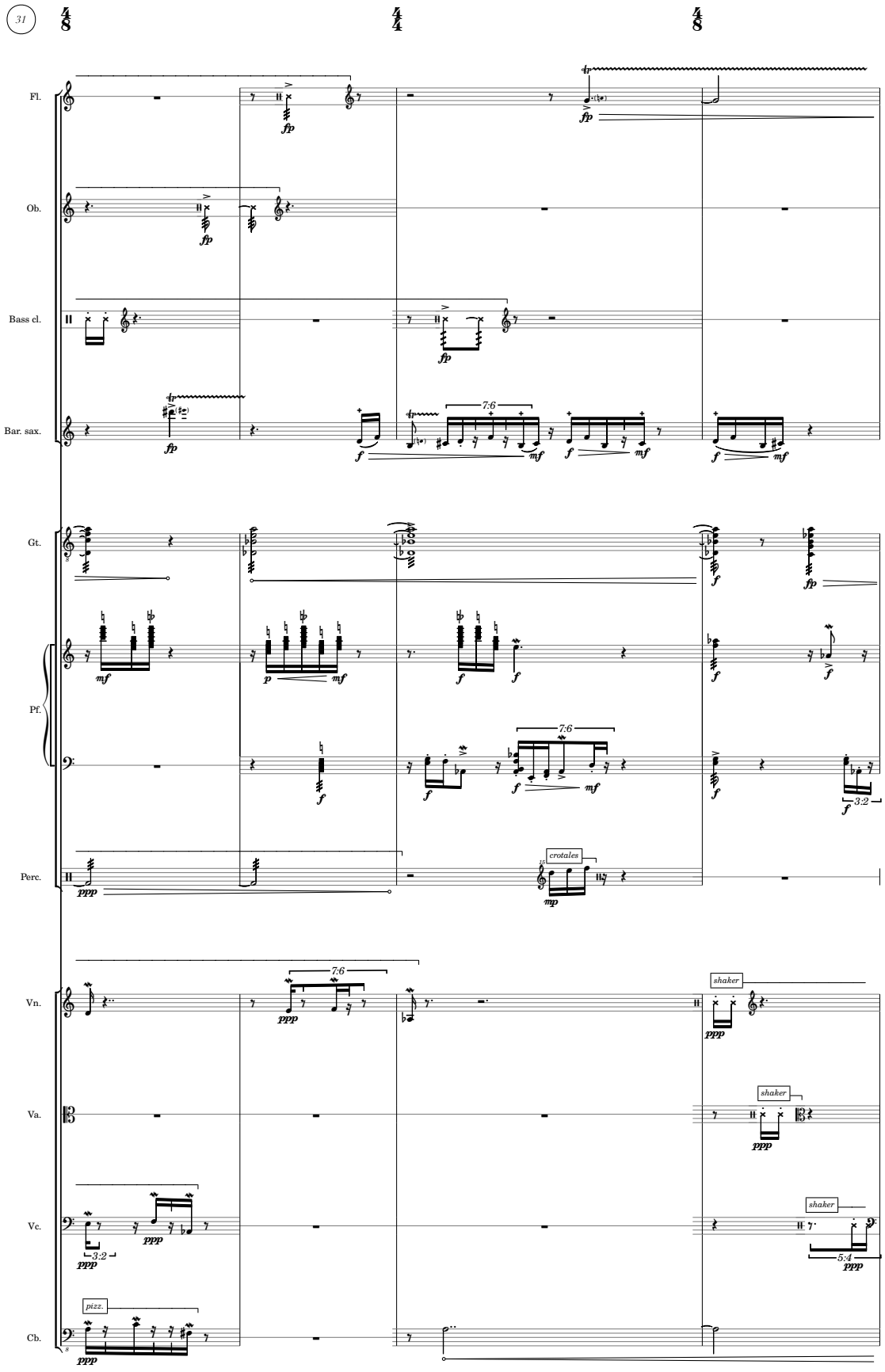
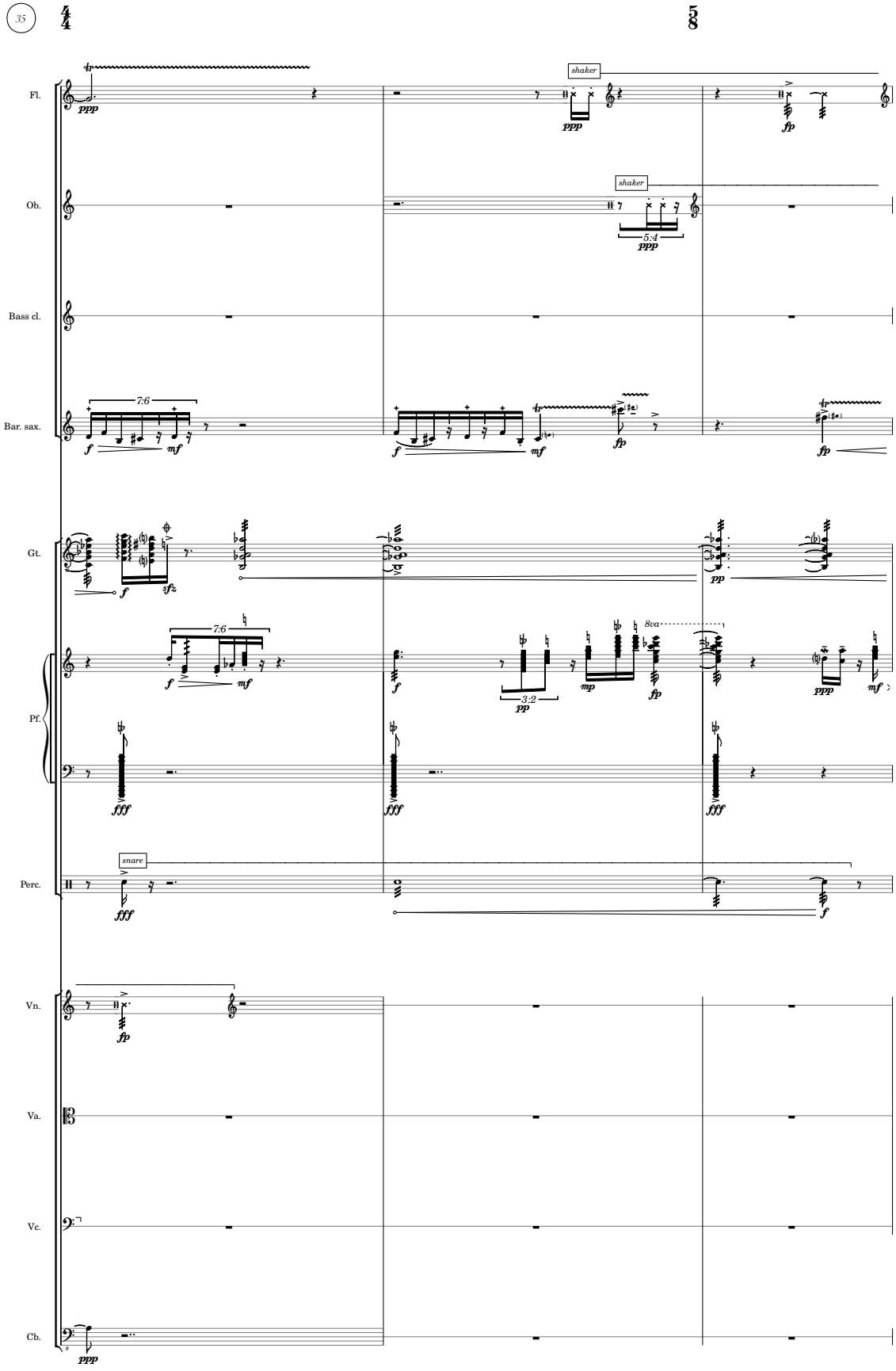
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
bass drum
pizz.
3:2
5:4
7:6
8va


31
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
crotales
shaker
shaker
shaker
pizz.
7:6
7:6
7:6
3:2
3:2
5:4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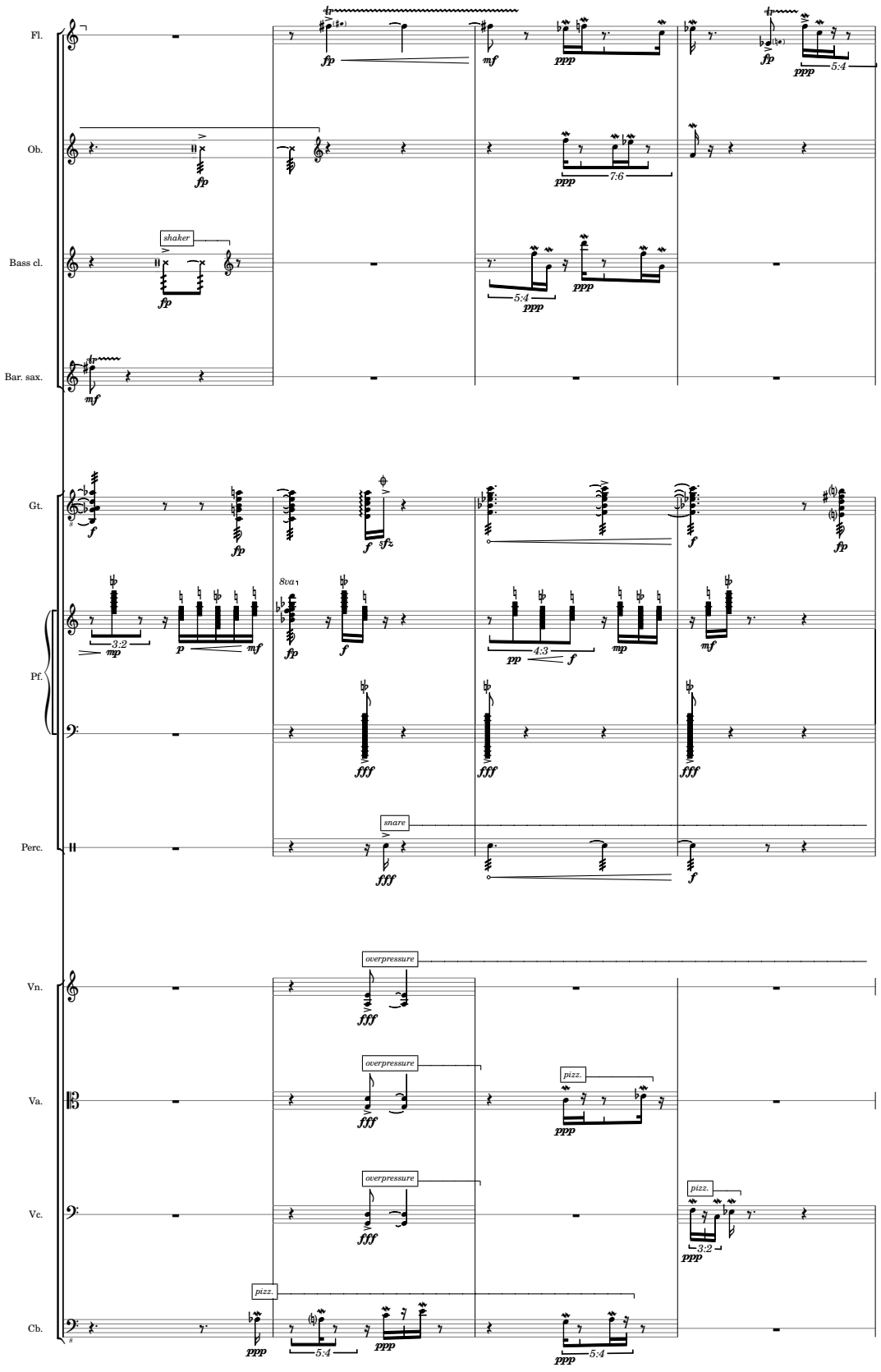
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
shaker
snare
7:6
5:4
7:6
3:2
8va
ppp
fp
f
mf
fff
pp
mp
sfz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Perc.
Vn.
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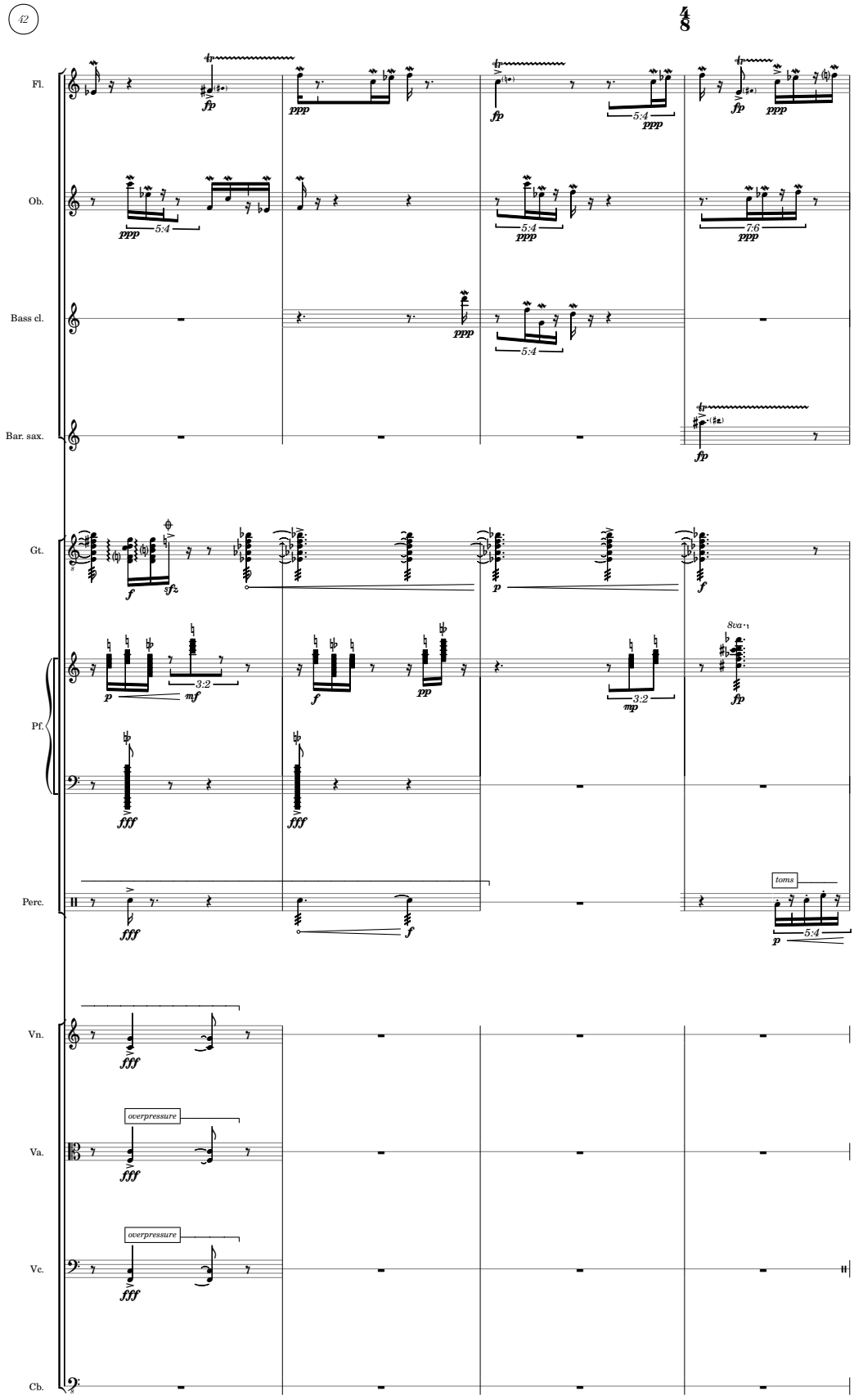
snare
overpressure
pizz.
8va
7:6
5:4
4:3
3:2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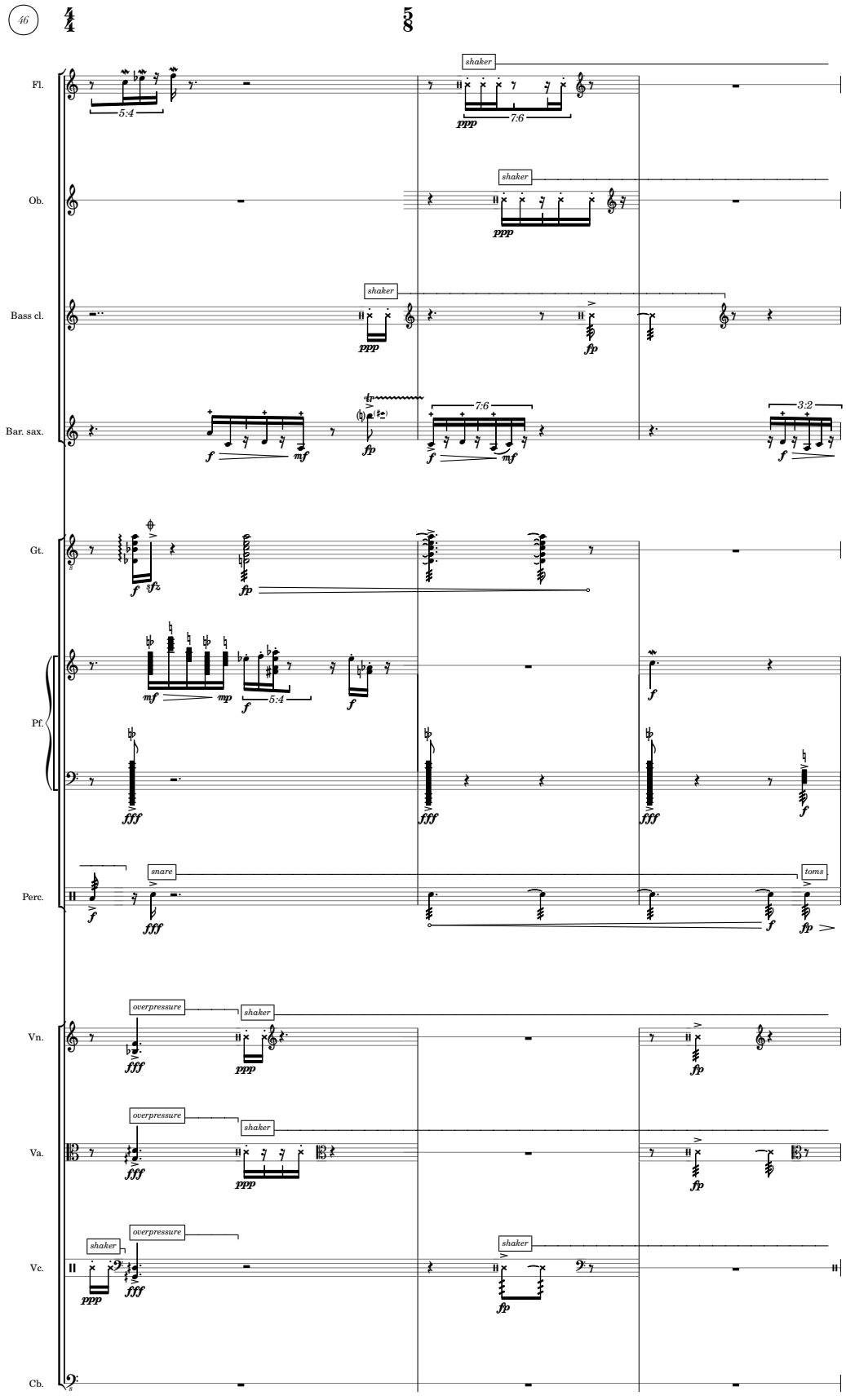
toms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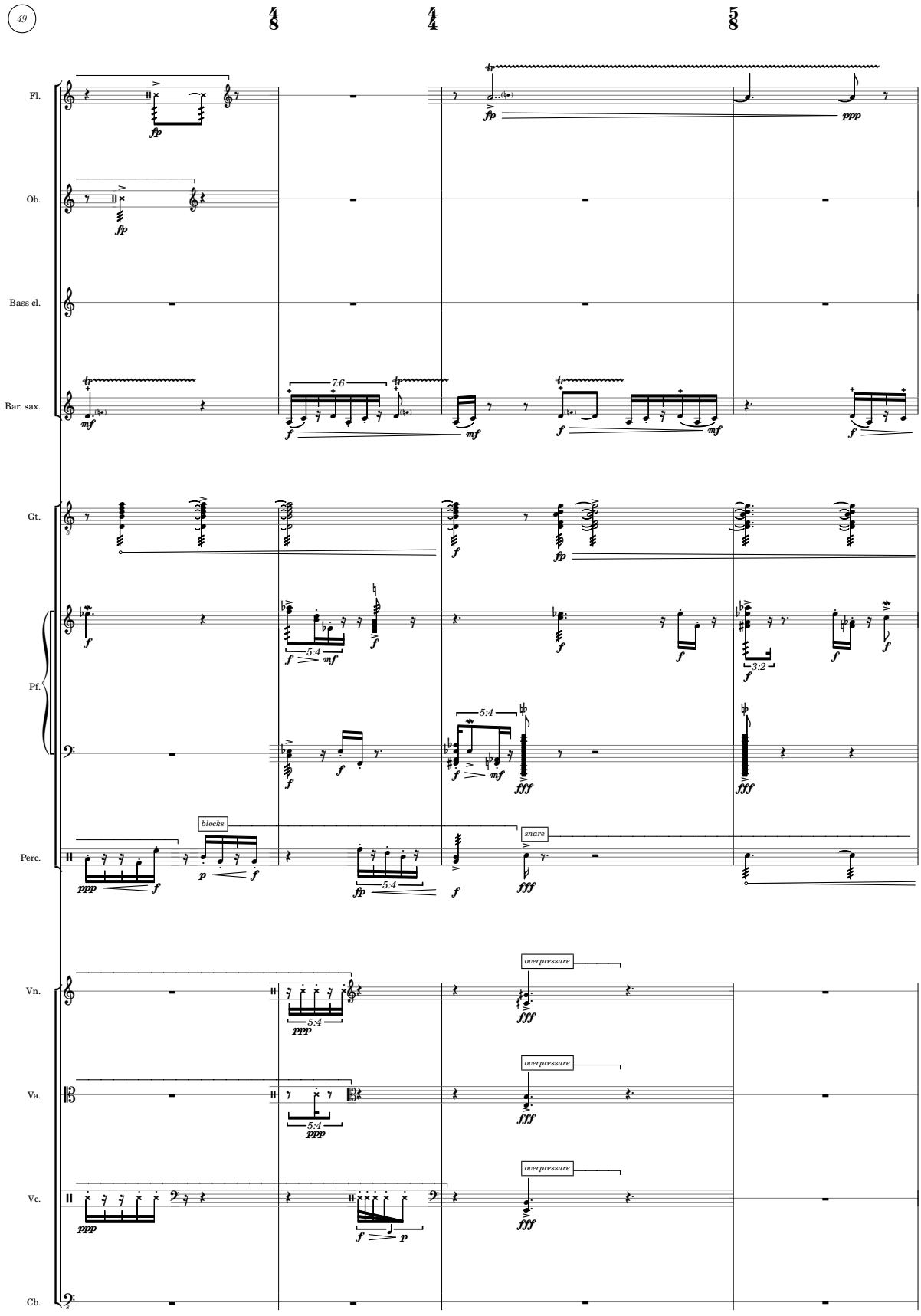
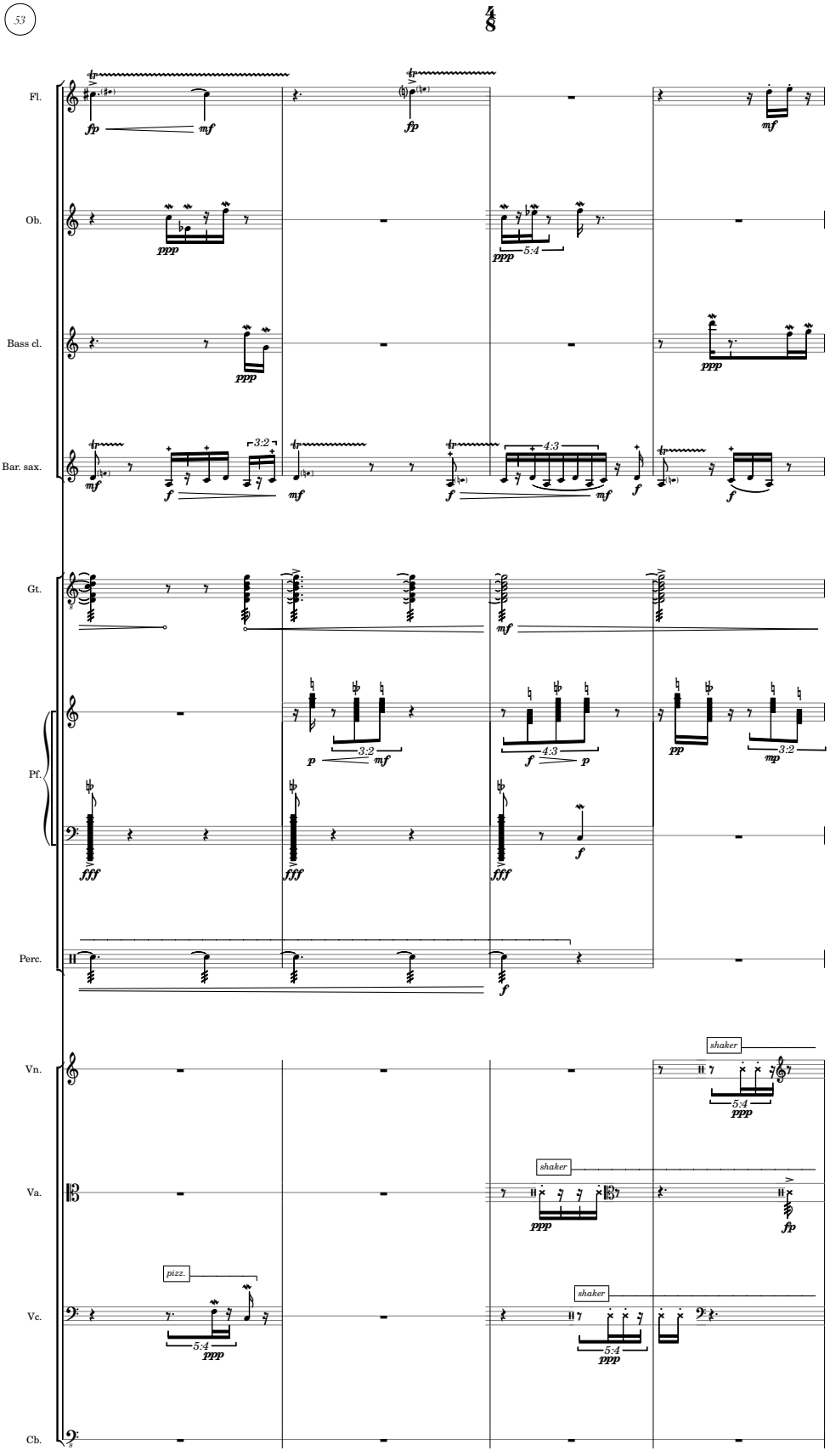
4/4
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
overpressure
snare
toms
5:4
7:6
3:2


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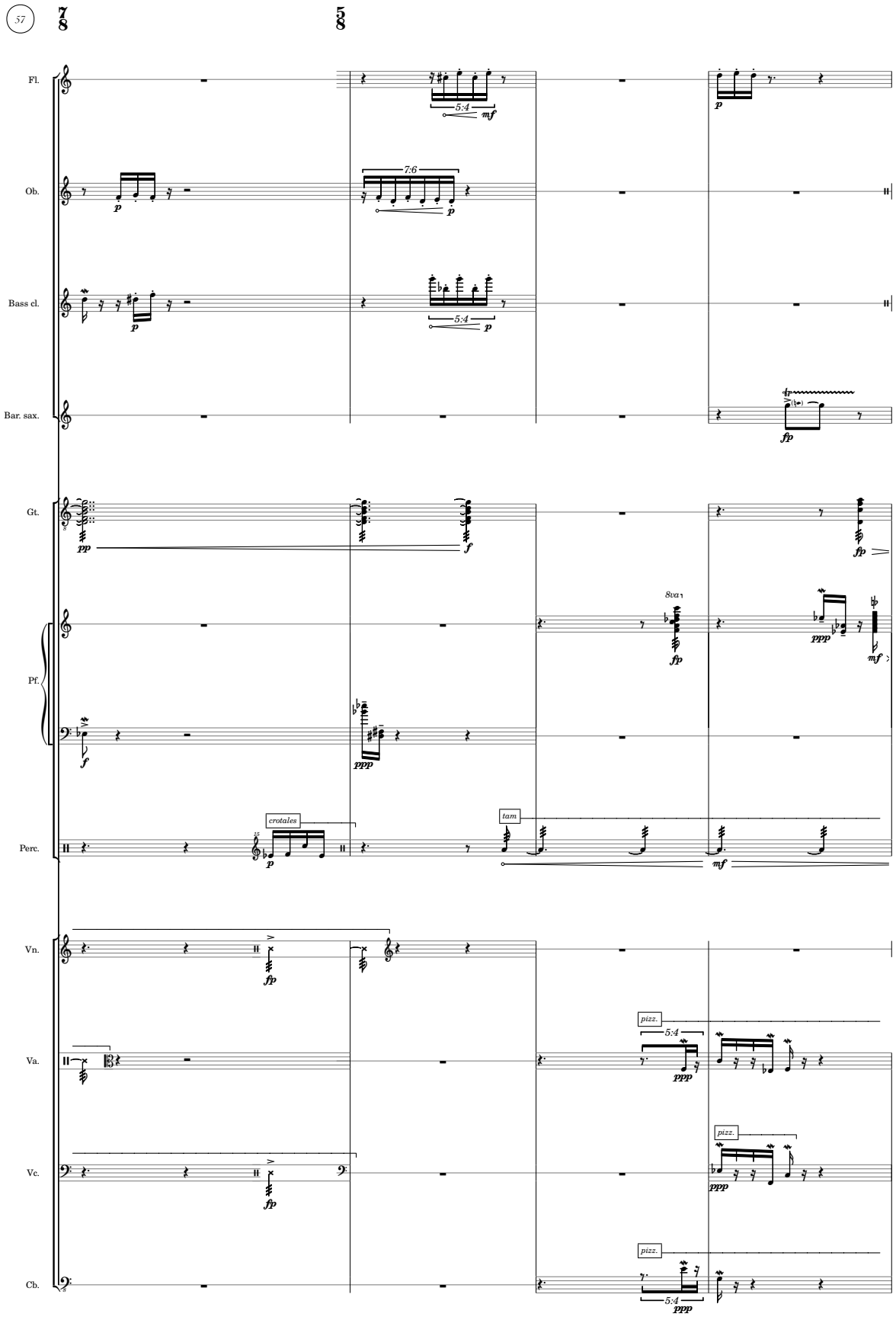
7/8
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Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
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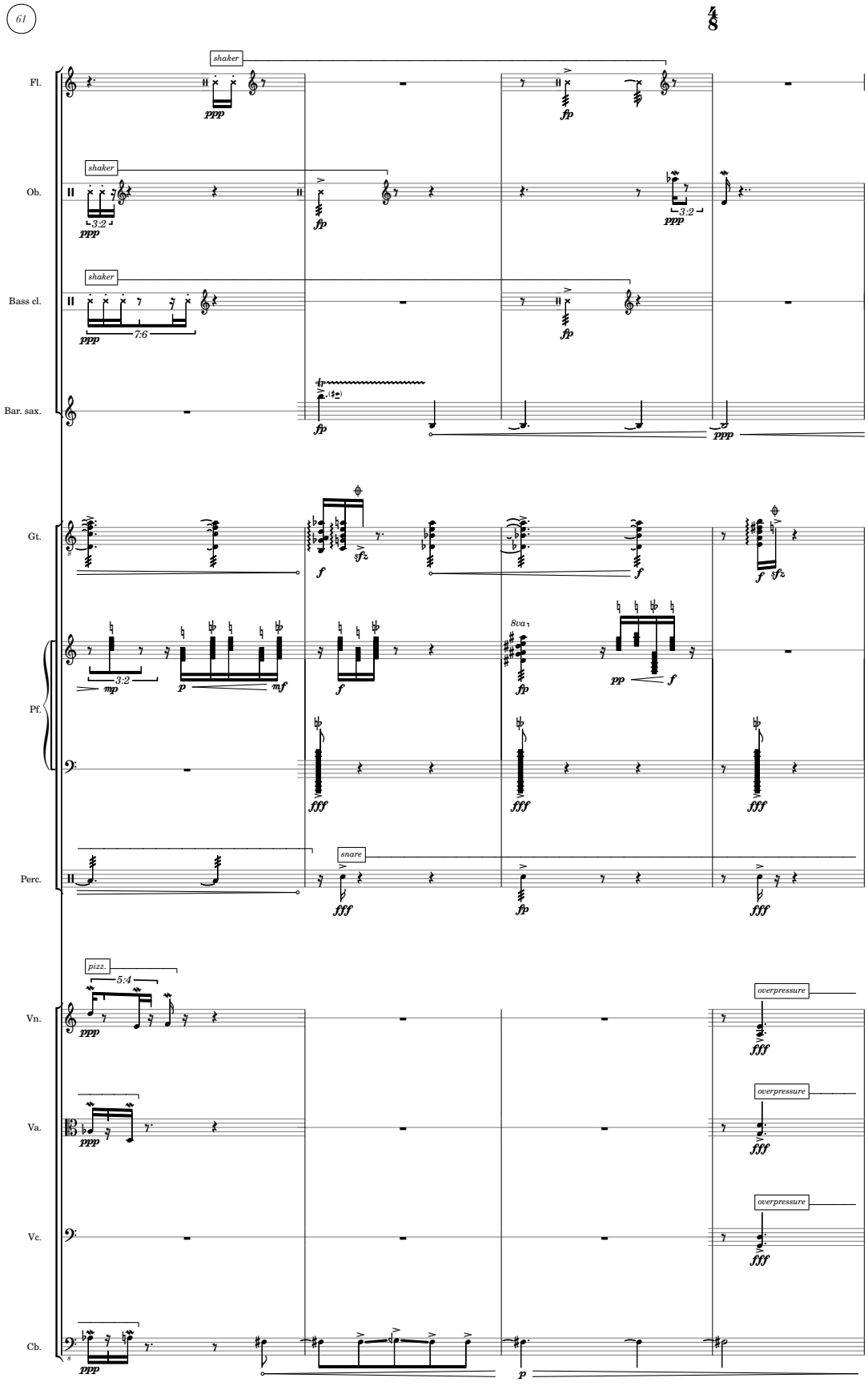
Cb.
5:4
7:6
mf
p
pp
f
fp
ppp
8va
crotales
tam
pizz.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Ob.
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Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
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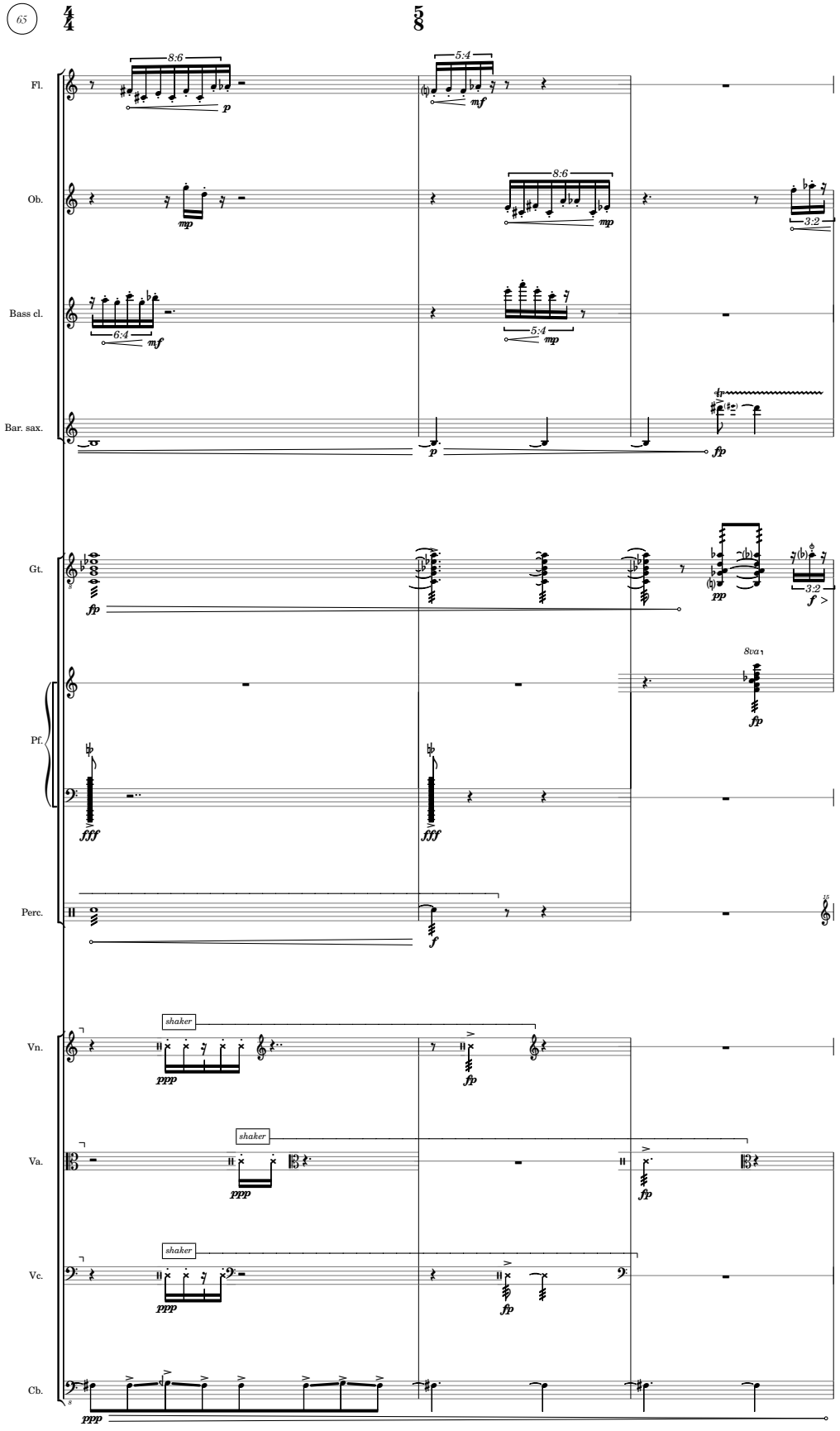
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
snare
pizz.
overpressure
8va
3:2
7:6
5:4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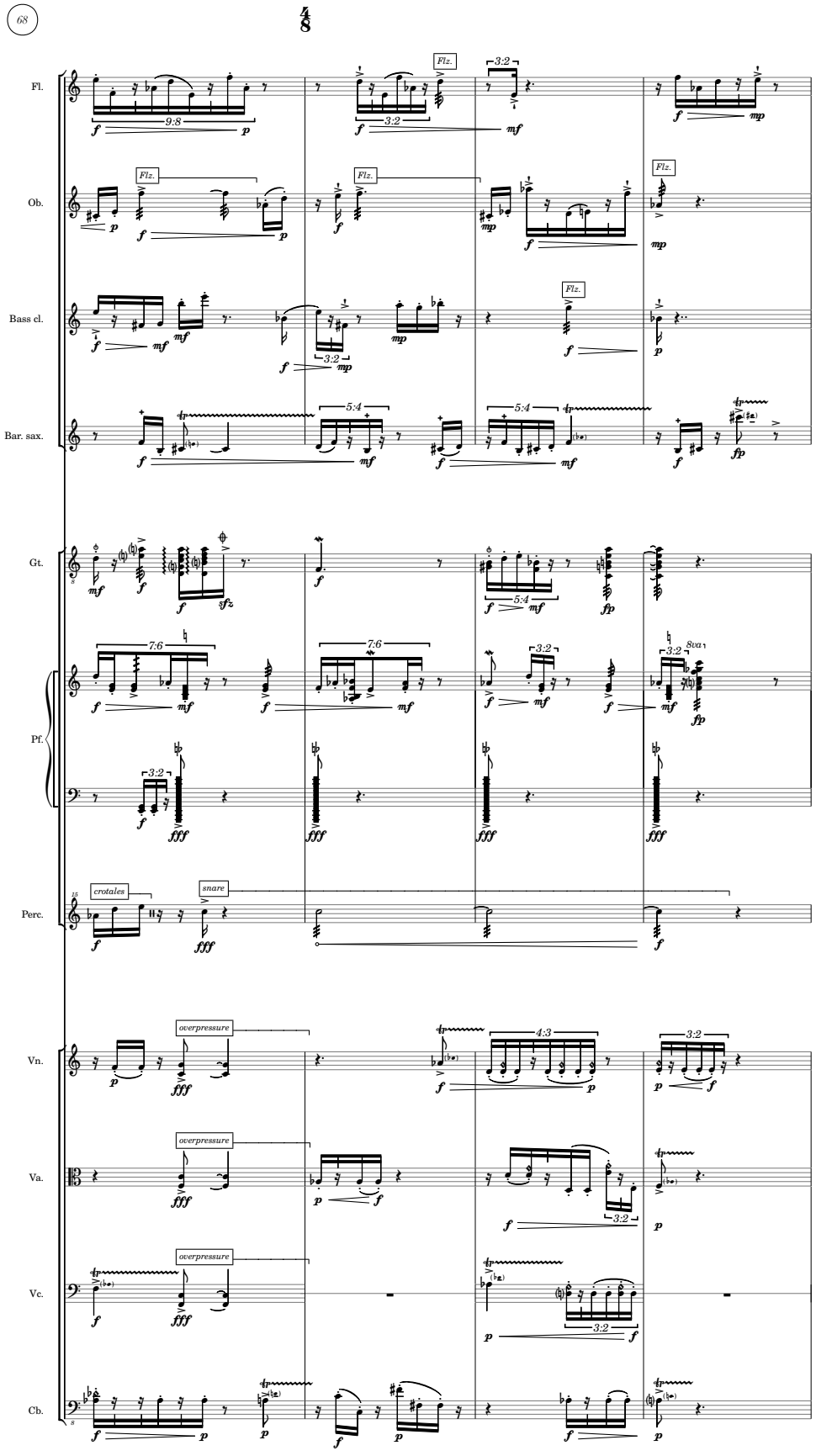
Cb.
shaker
8va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Cb.
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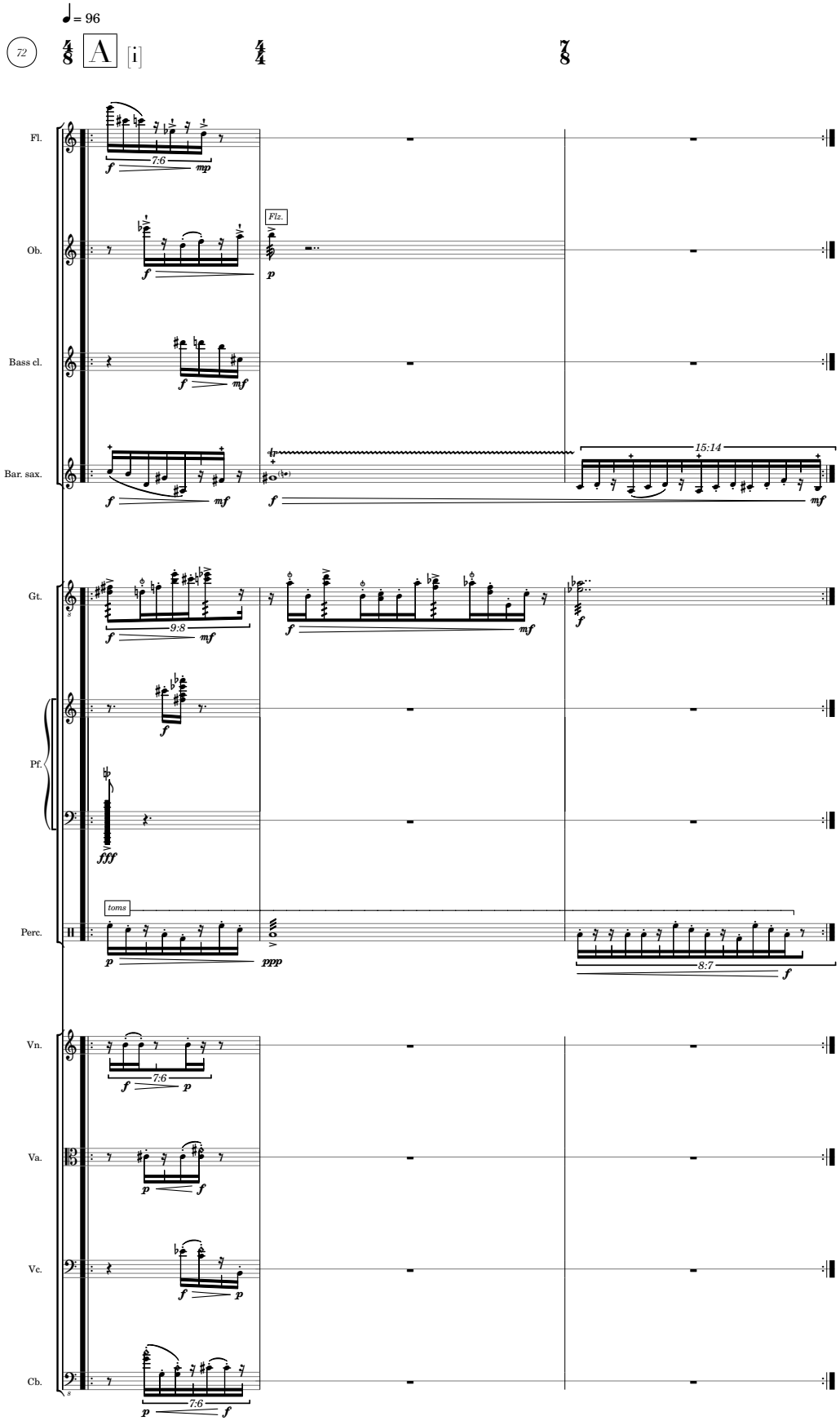
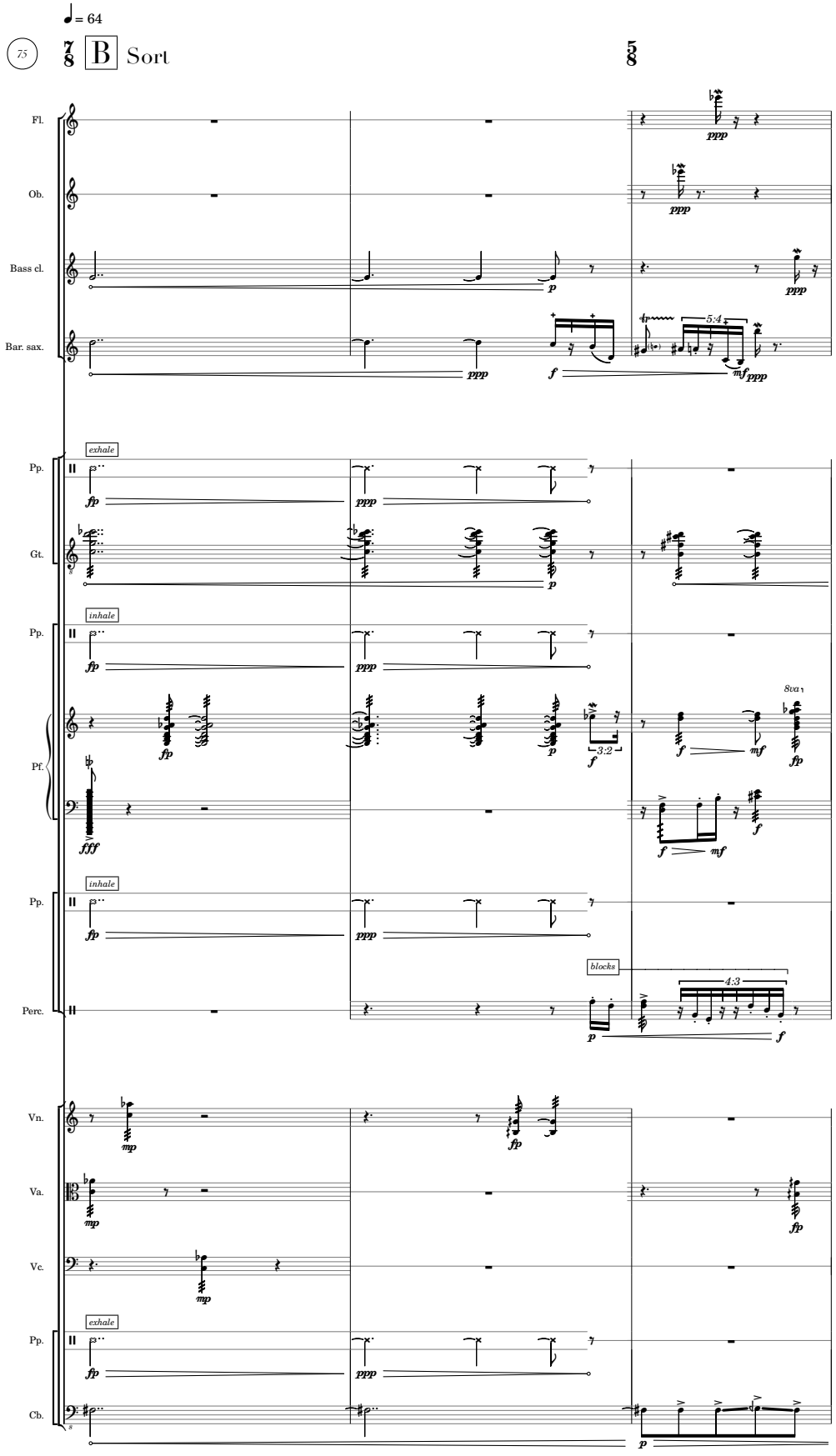
crotales
snare
overpressure
8va


72
A
[i]
♩= 96
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
Fl.
toms
7:6
9:8
15:14
8:7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75
7/8
B
Sort
5/8
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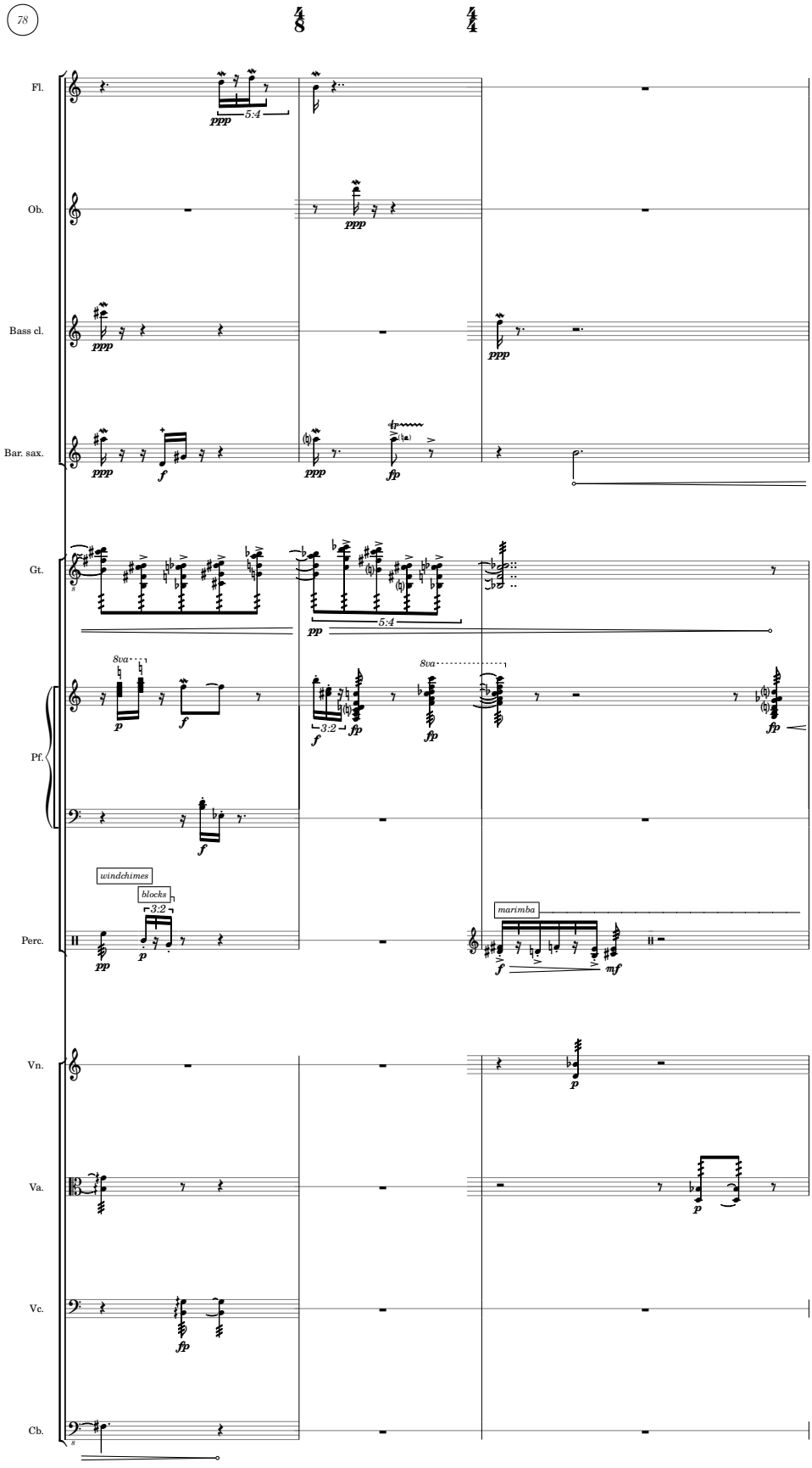
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
exhale
inhale
blocks
5:4
3:2
4:3
8va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Gt.
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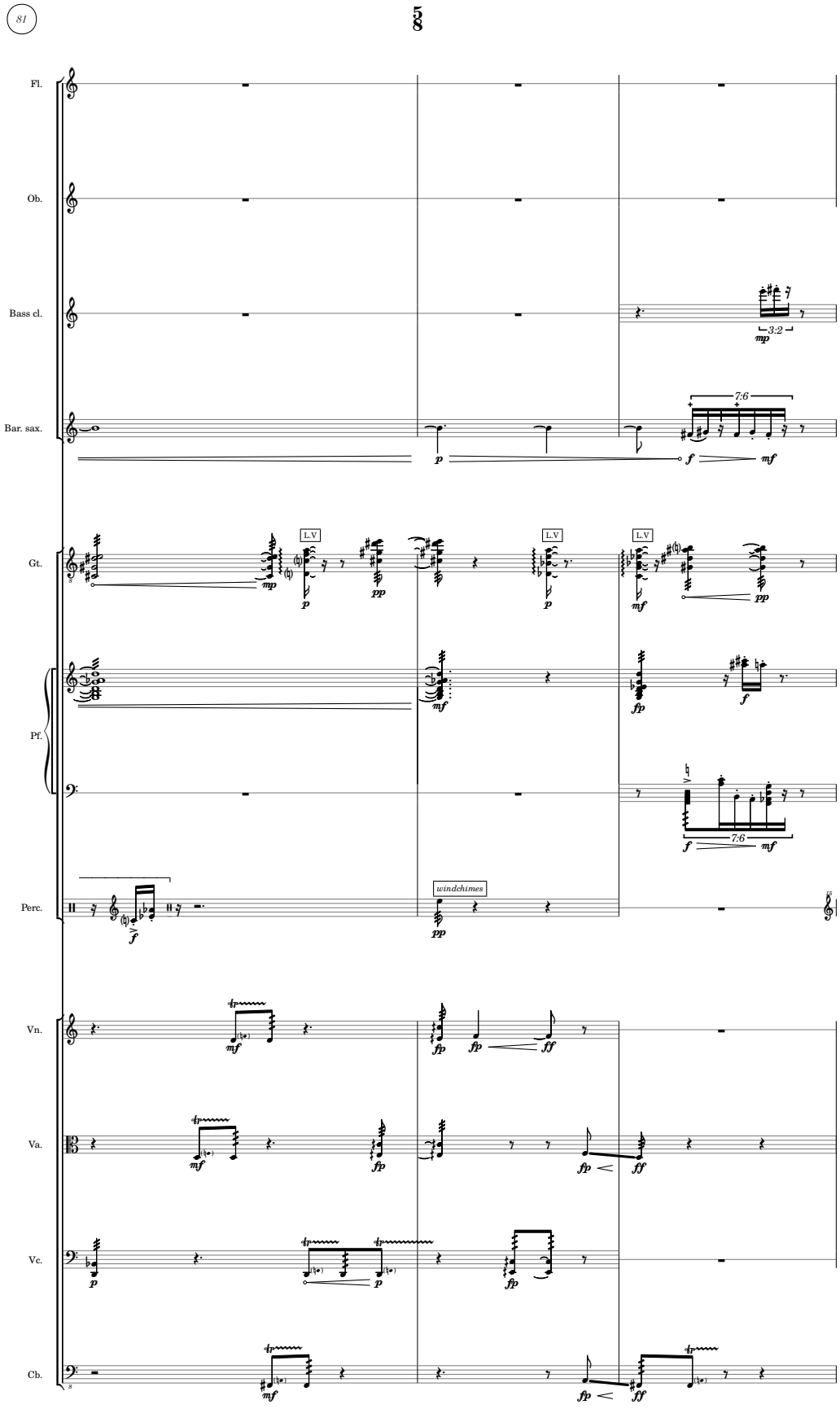
windchimes
blocks
marimba
8va
5:4
3:2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Vc.
Cb.
L.V
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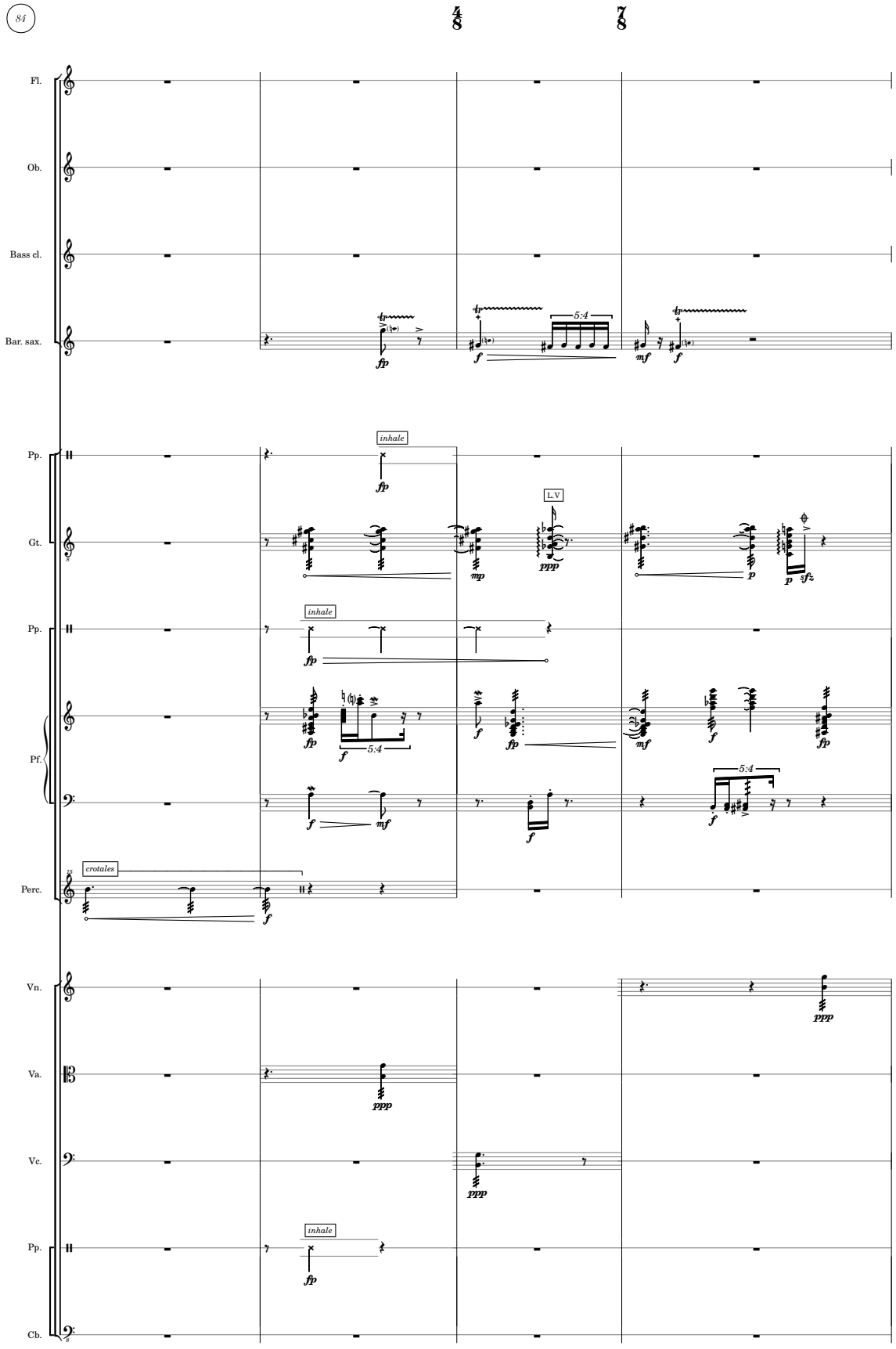
3:2
7:6


4/8
7/8
Fl.
Ob.
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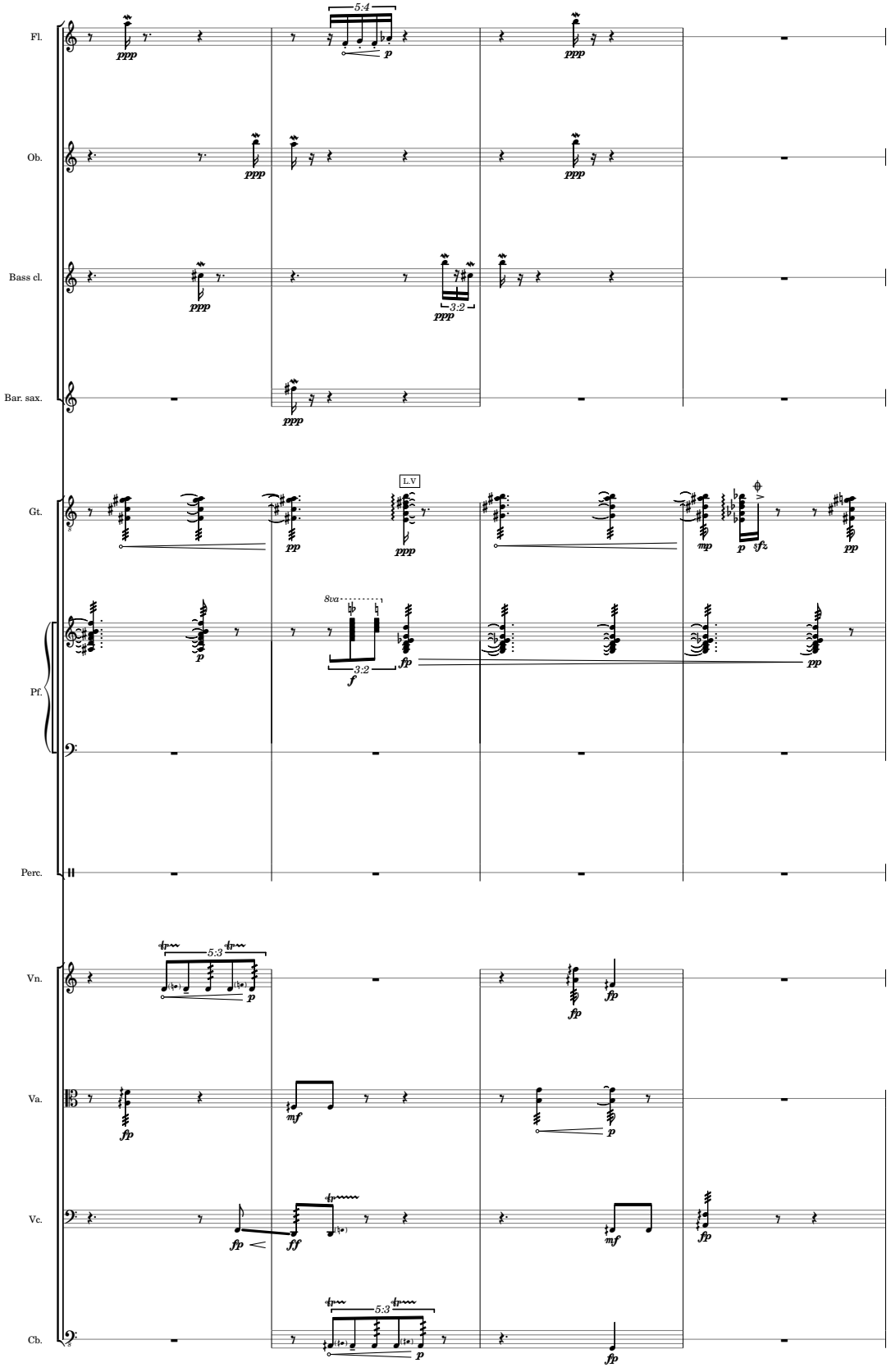
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
L.V
crotales
5:4
fp
f
mf
mp
p
ppp
sfz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Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
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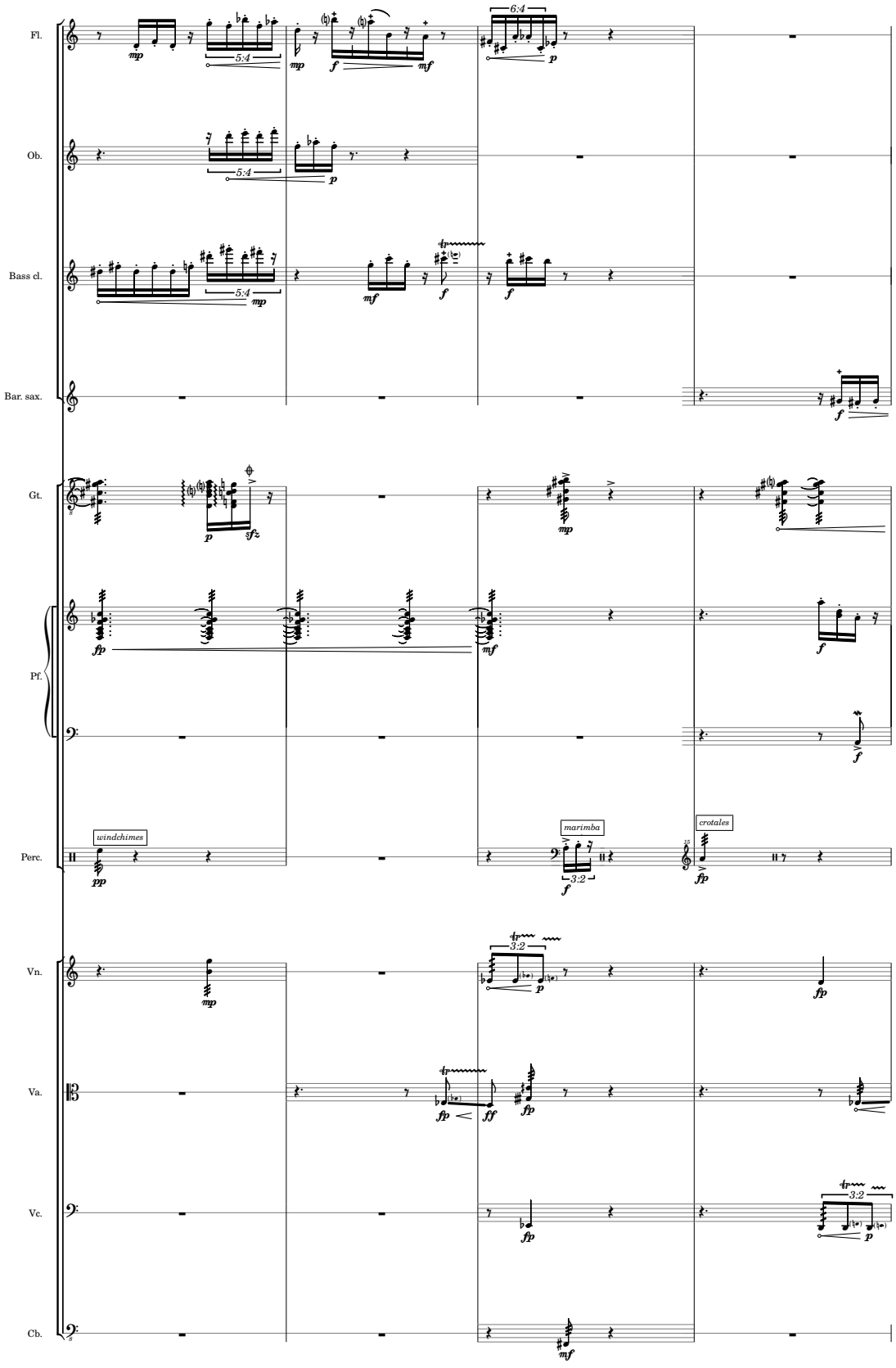
L.V
8va
5:3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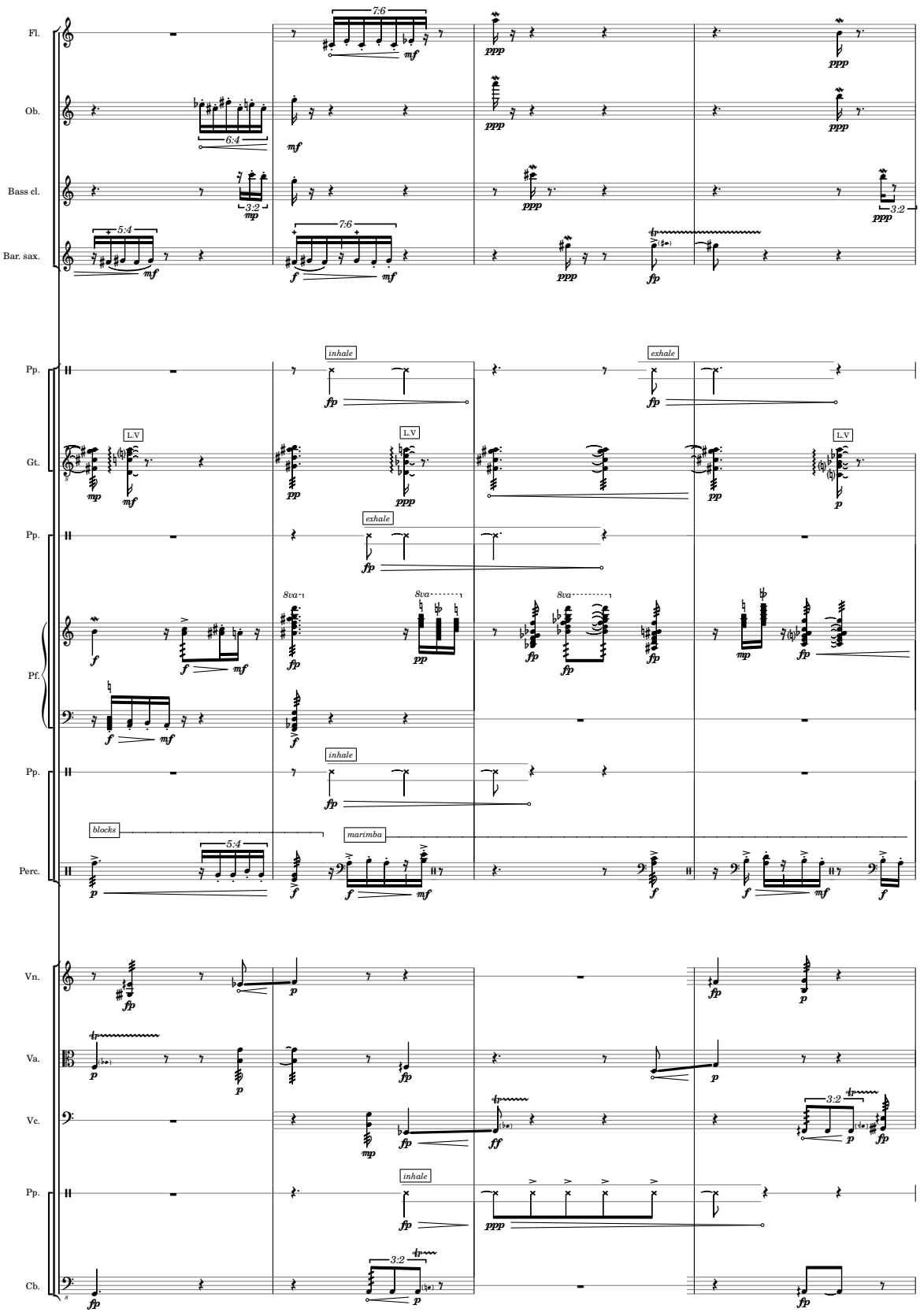
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
windchimes
marimba
crotales
6:4
5:4
3:2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Ob.
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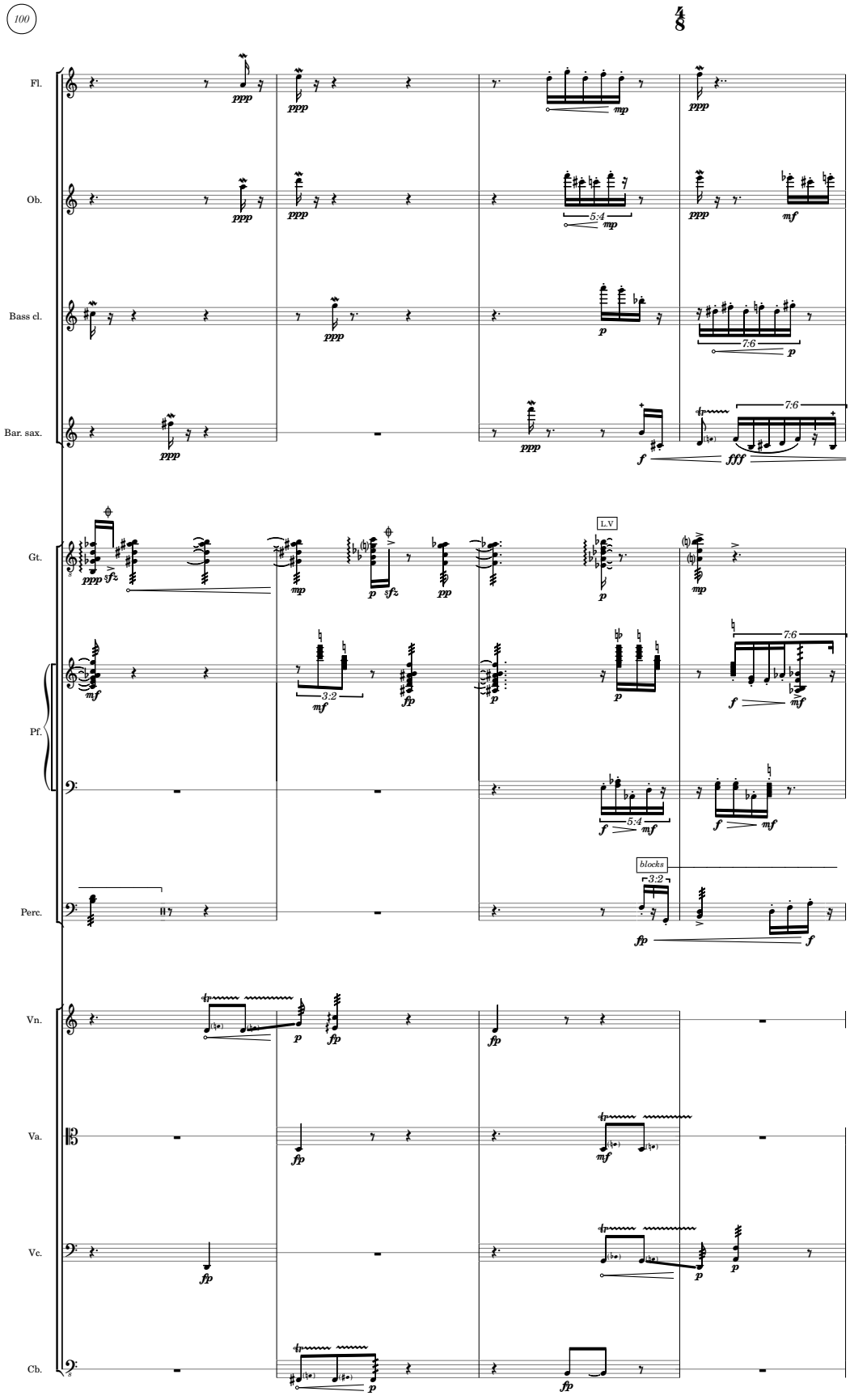
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
7:6
6:4
3:2
5:4
7:6
3:2
inhale
exhale
L.V
exhale
8va
inhale
blocks
marimba
3:2
inhale
3:2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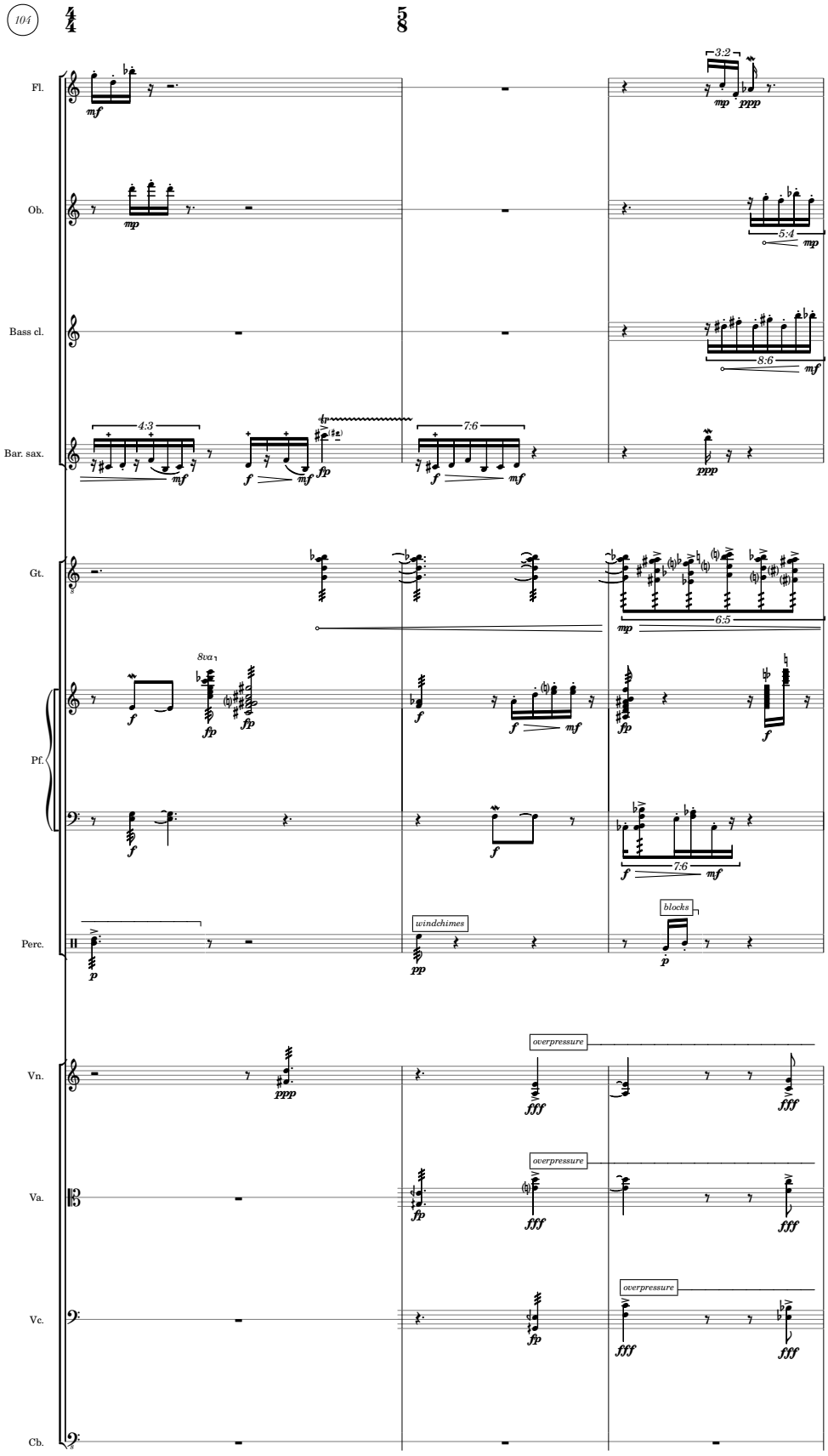
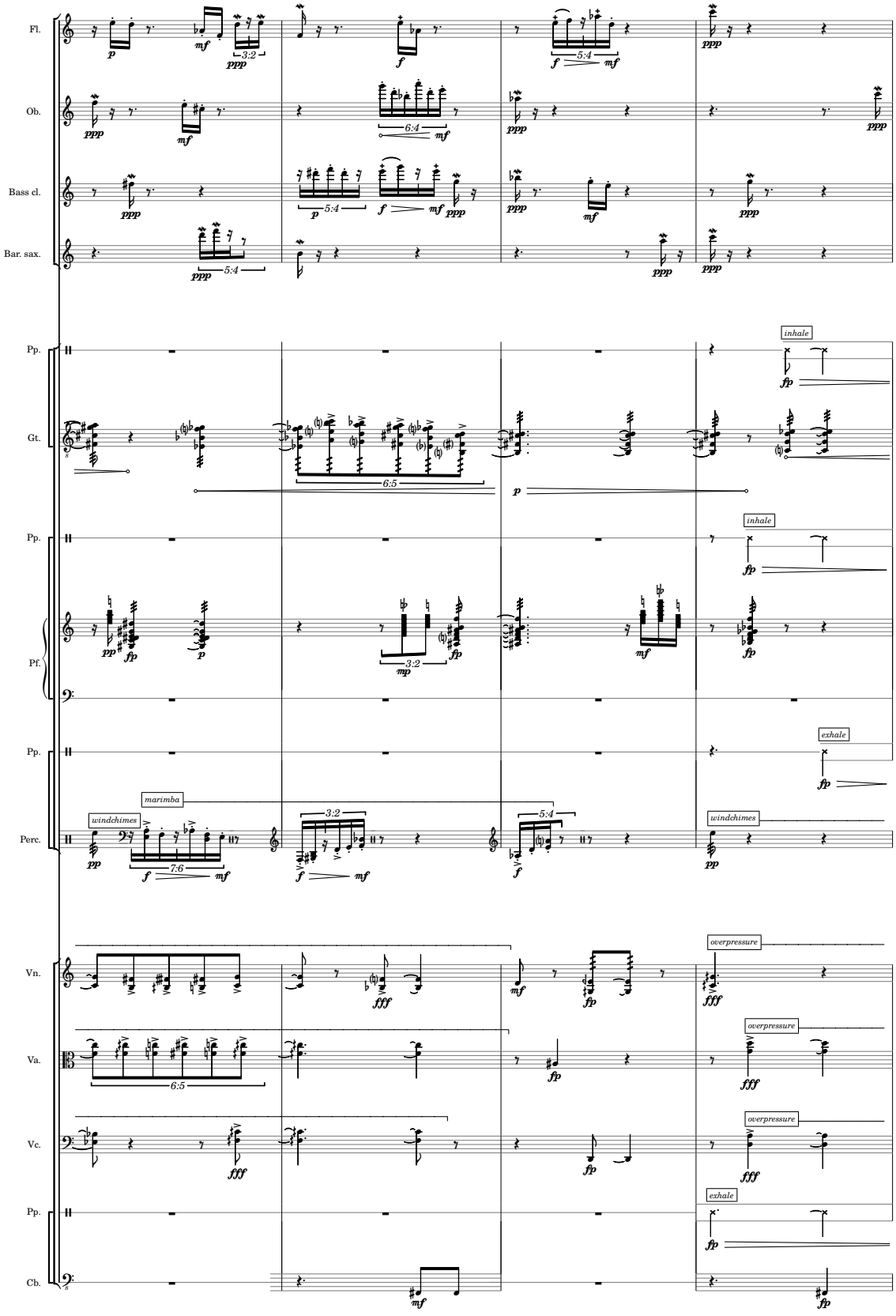
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
blocks


104
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
windchimes
blocks
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure


Fl.
Ob.
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Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
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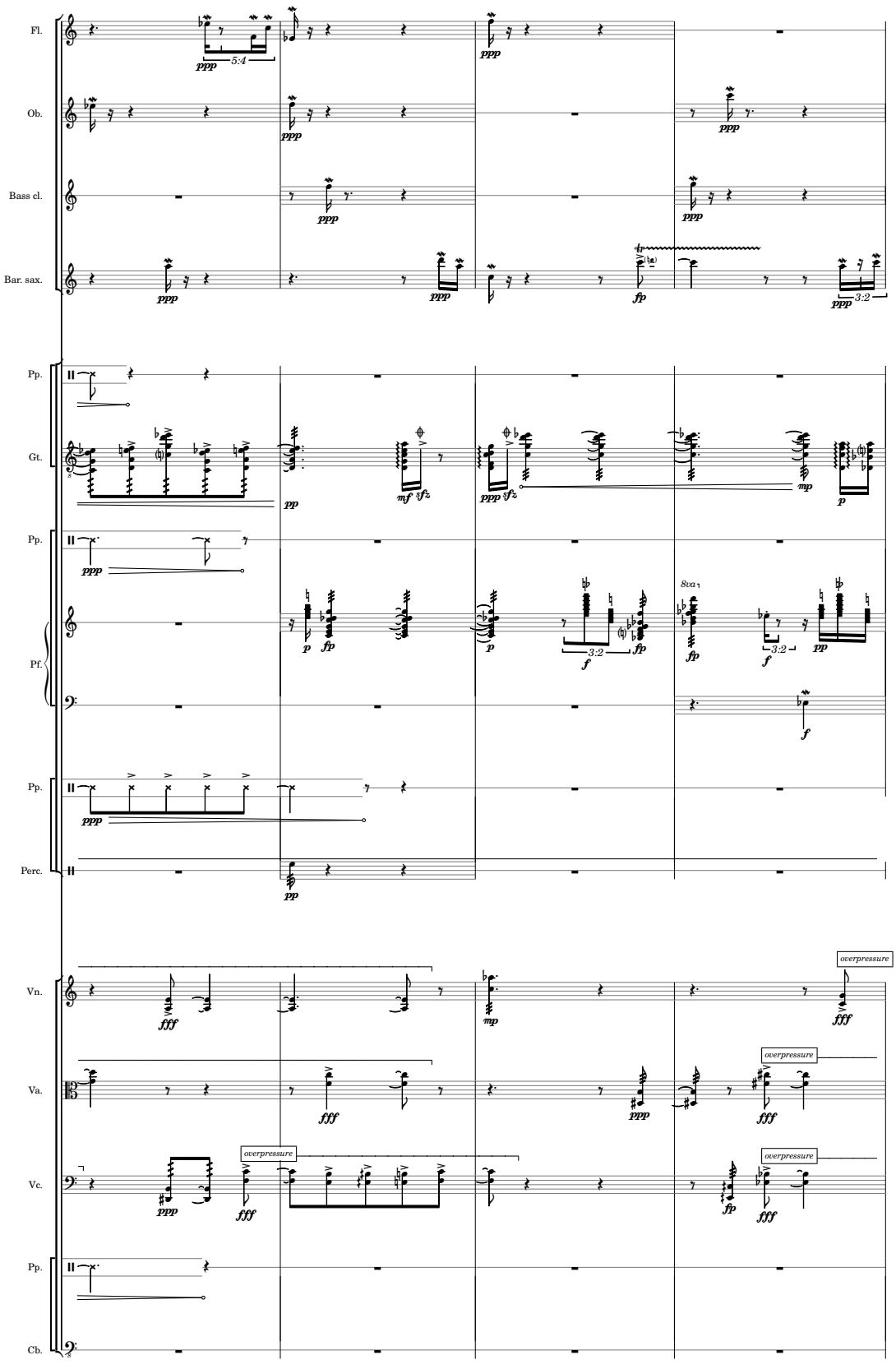
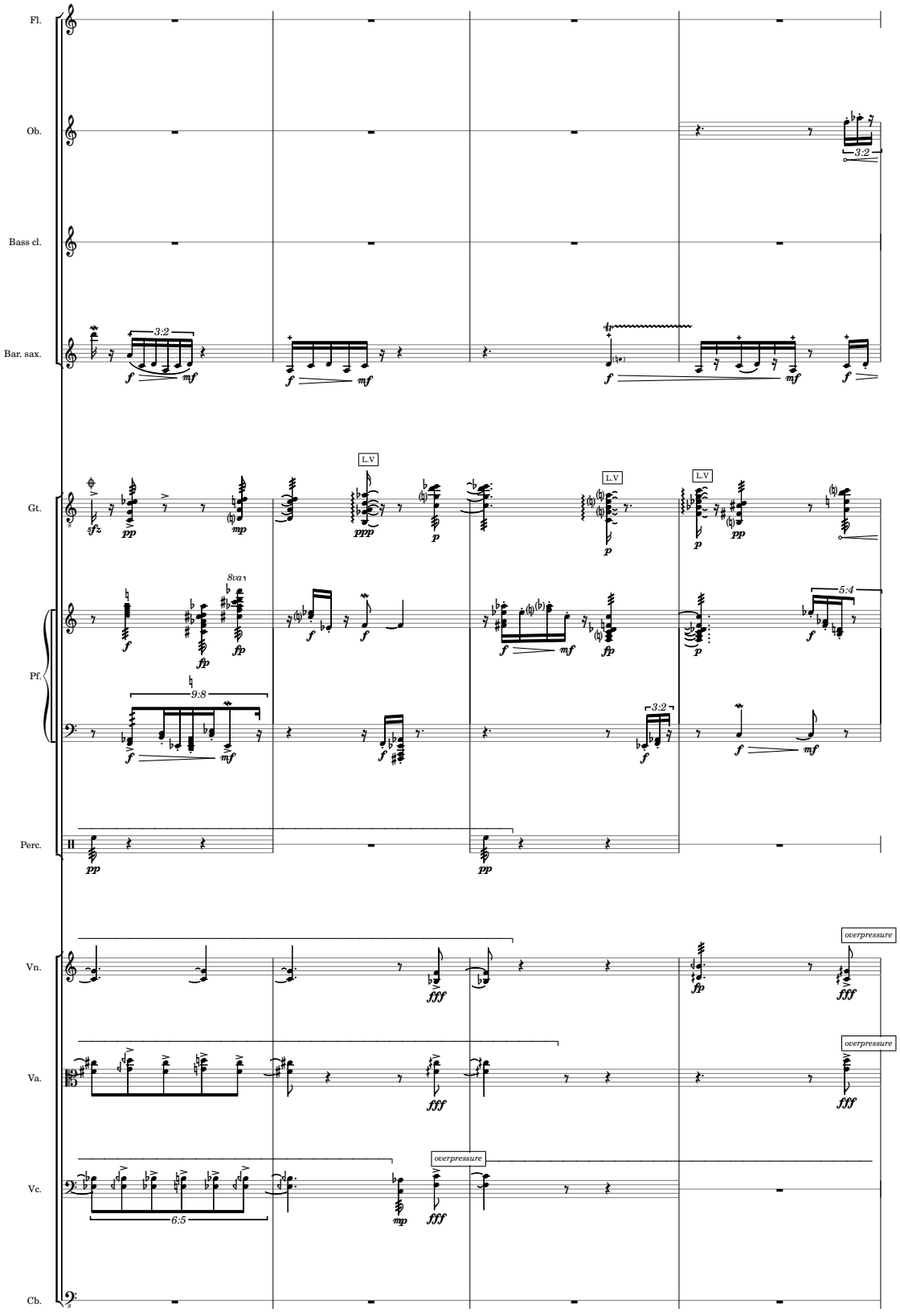
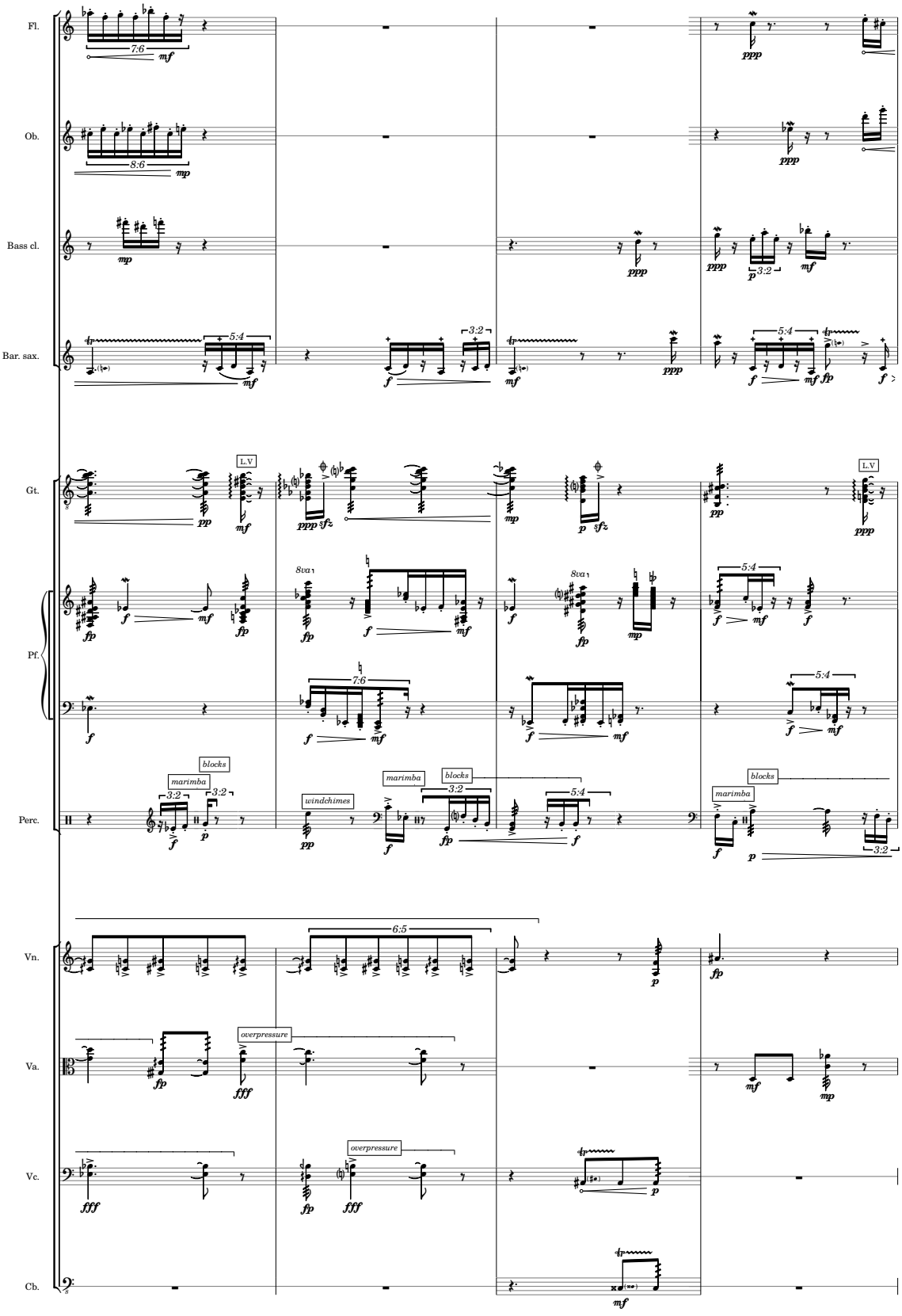
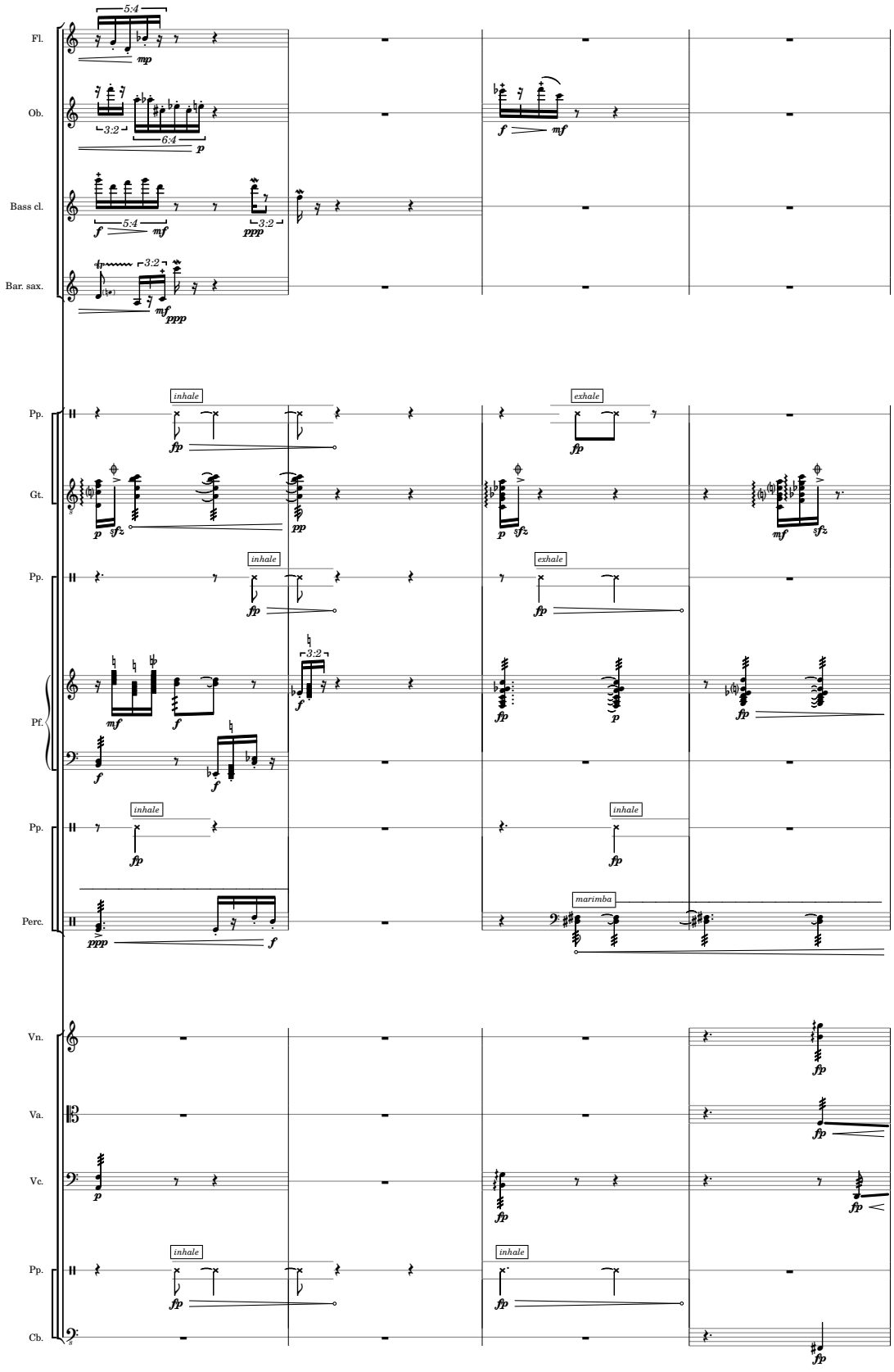
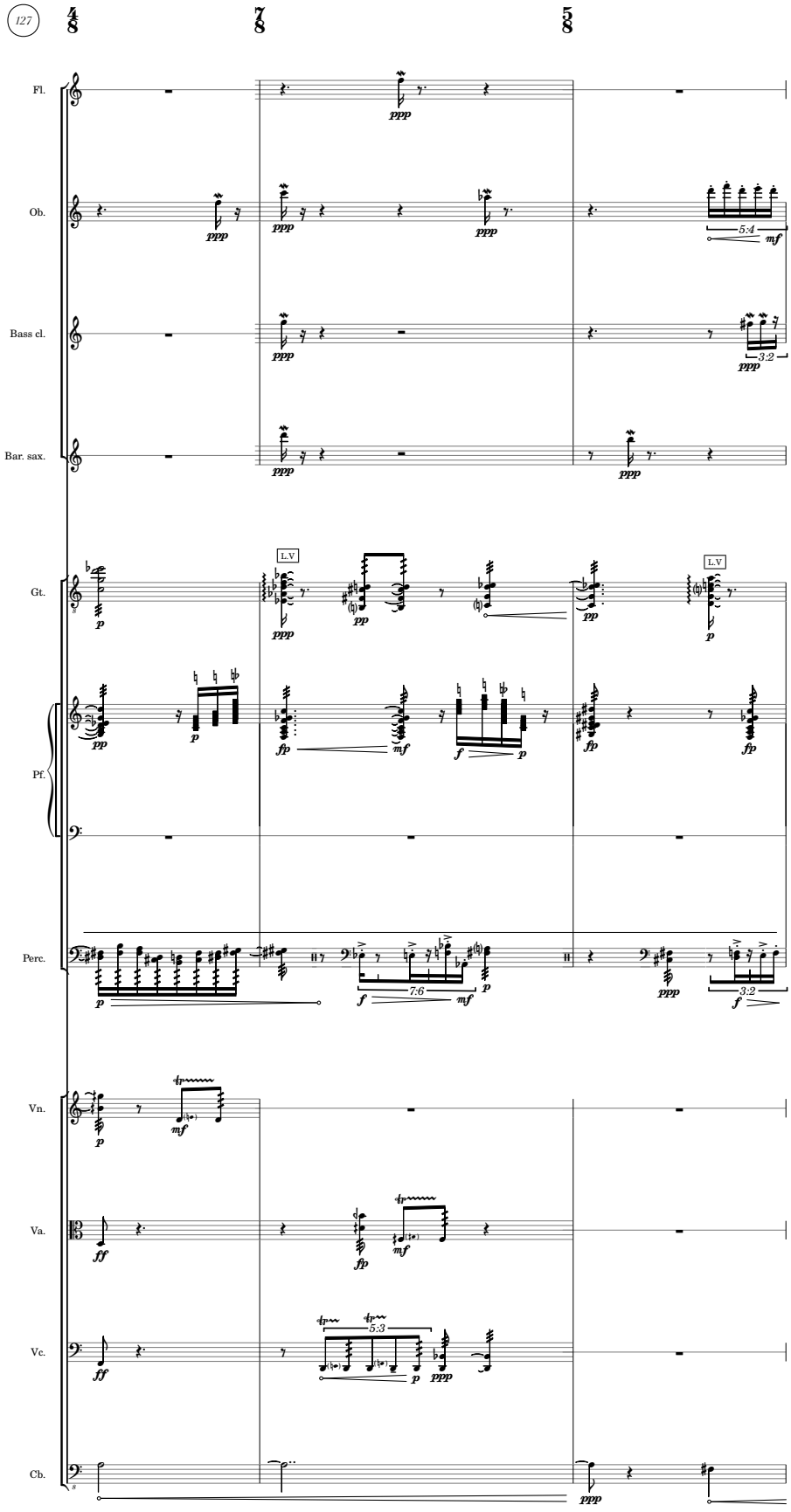
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
windchimes
marimba
overpressure

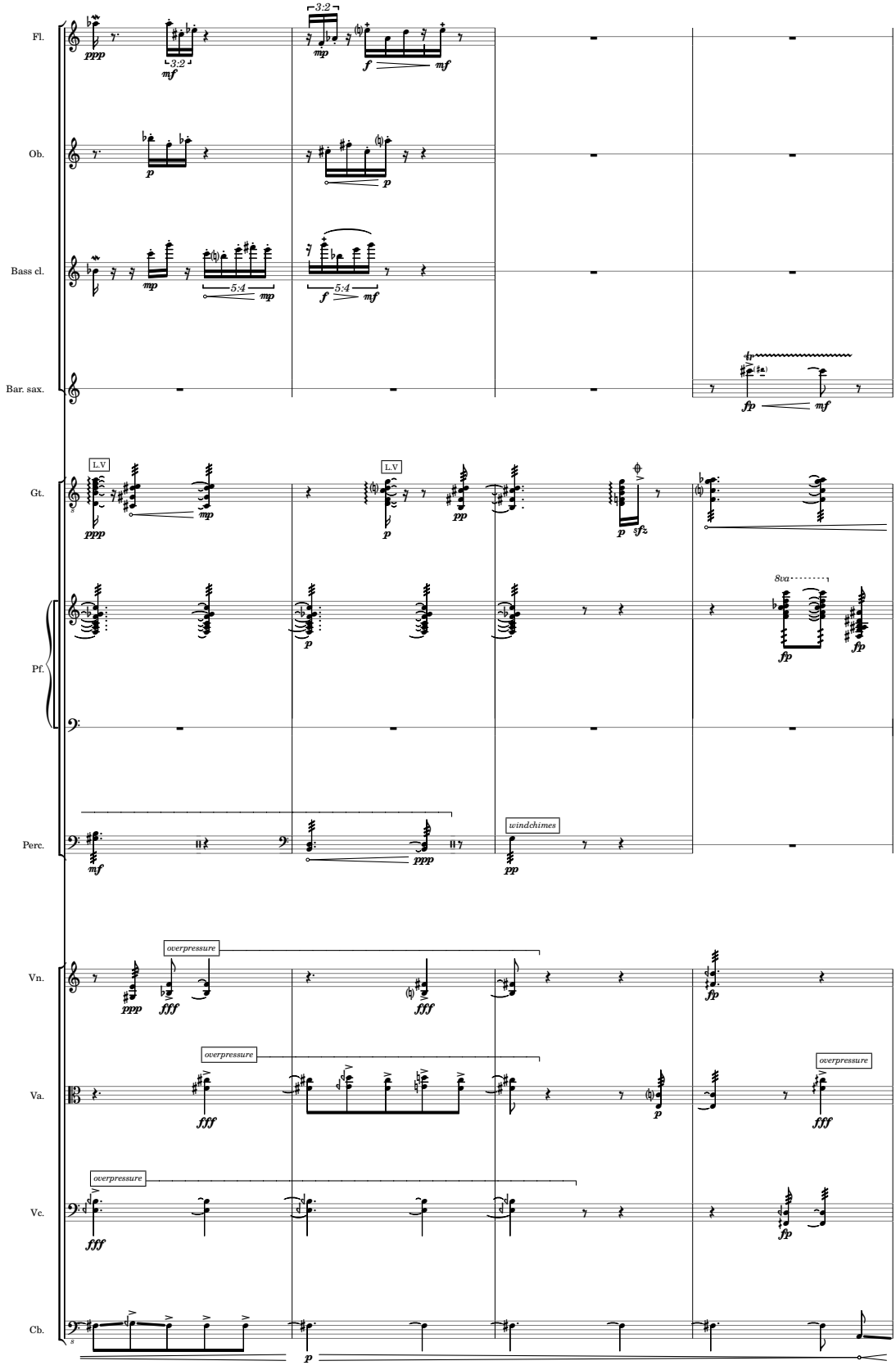

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure
overpressure

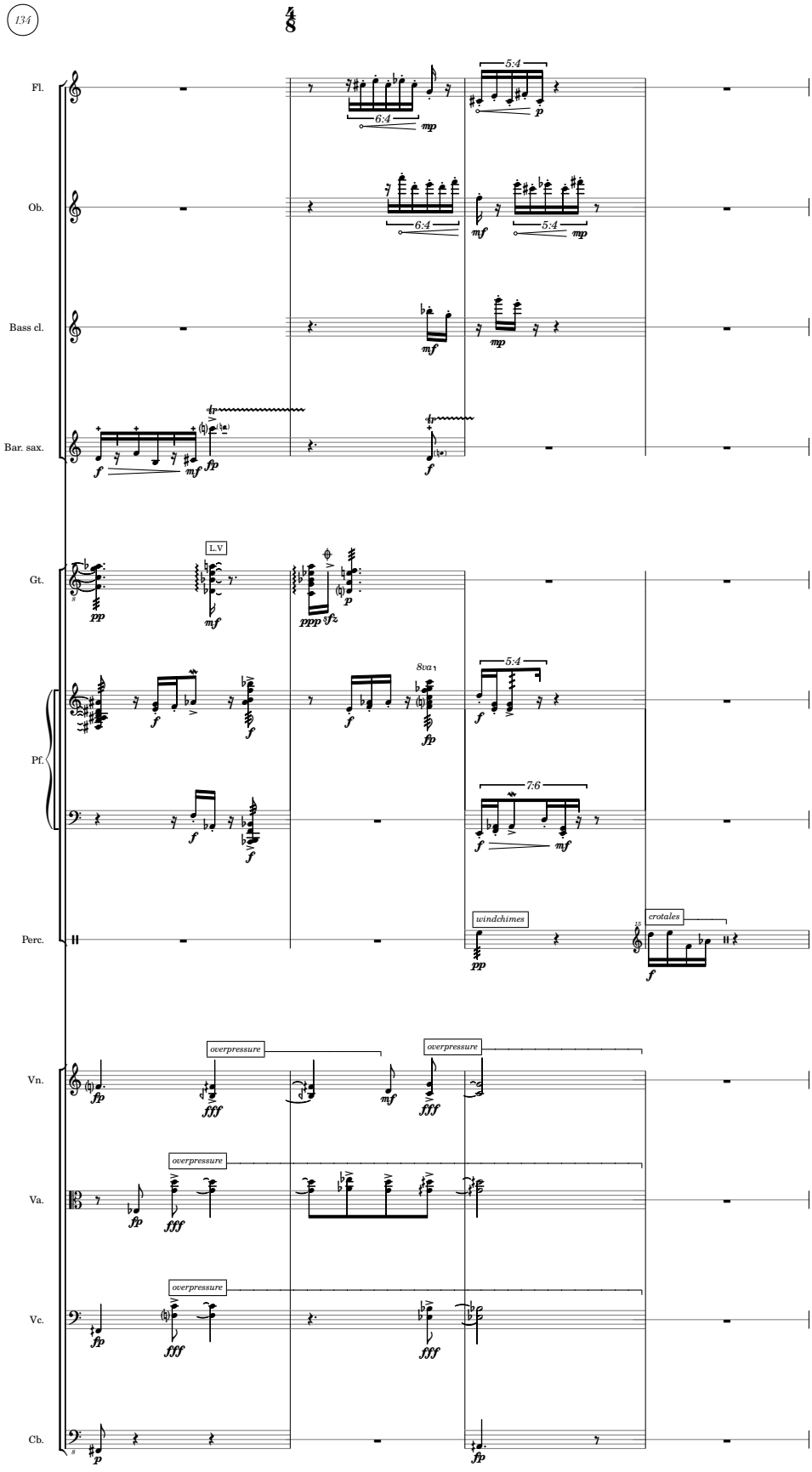

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
overpressure
8va
3:2
9:8
5:4
6:5

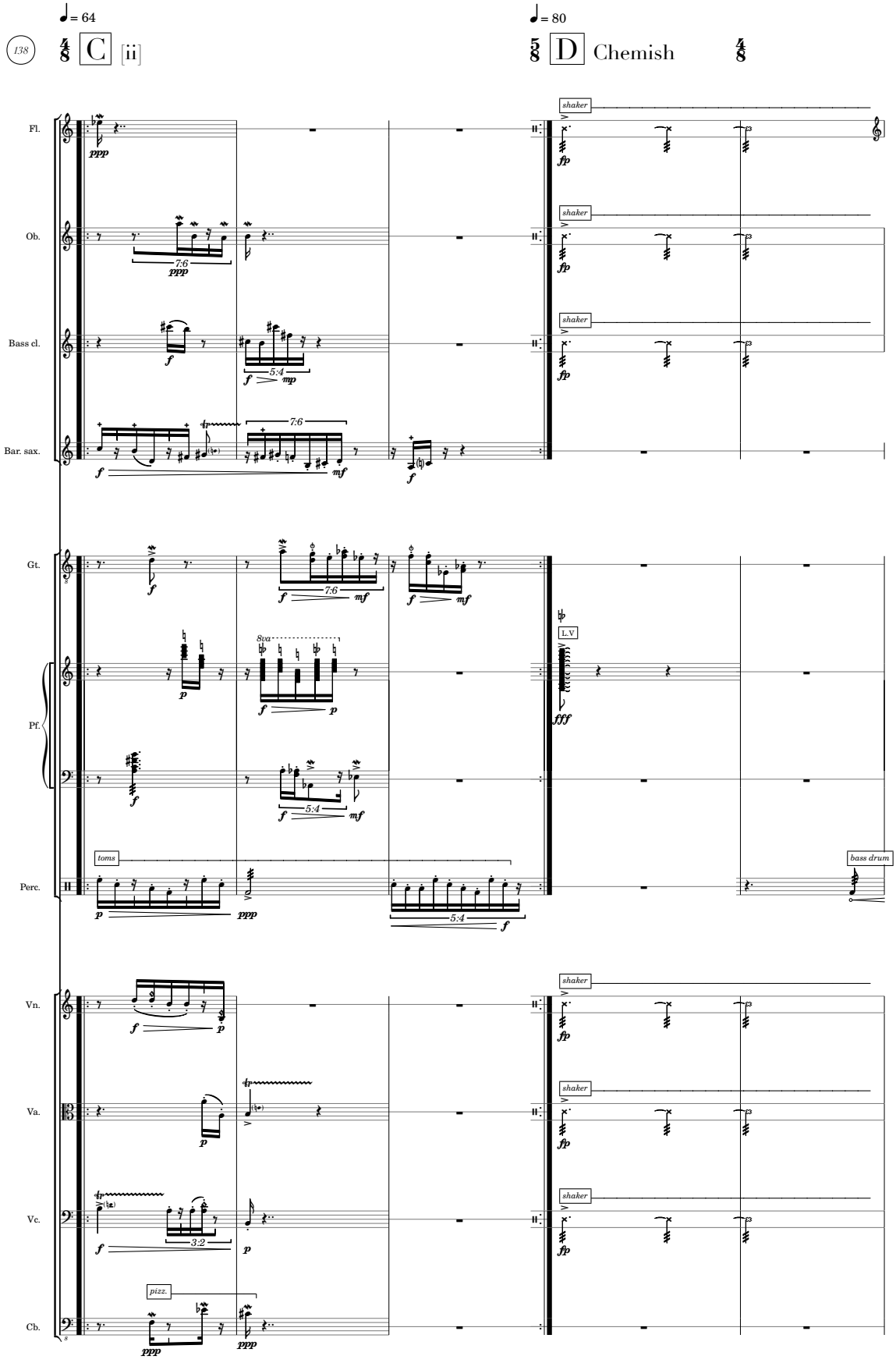

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
marimba
blocks
windchimes
overpressure

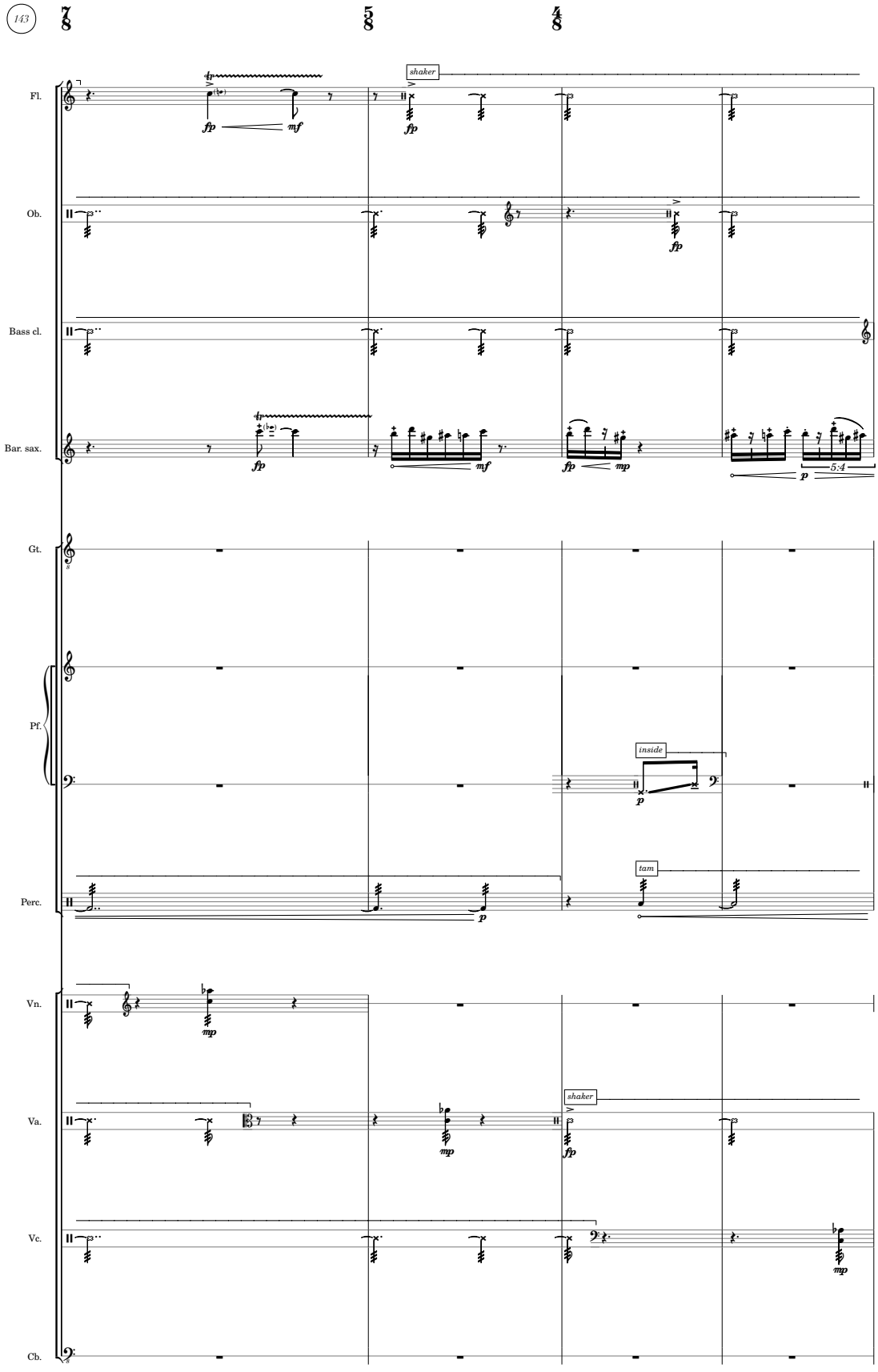

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
marimba
5:4
3:2
6:4

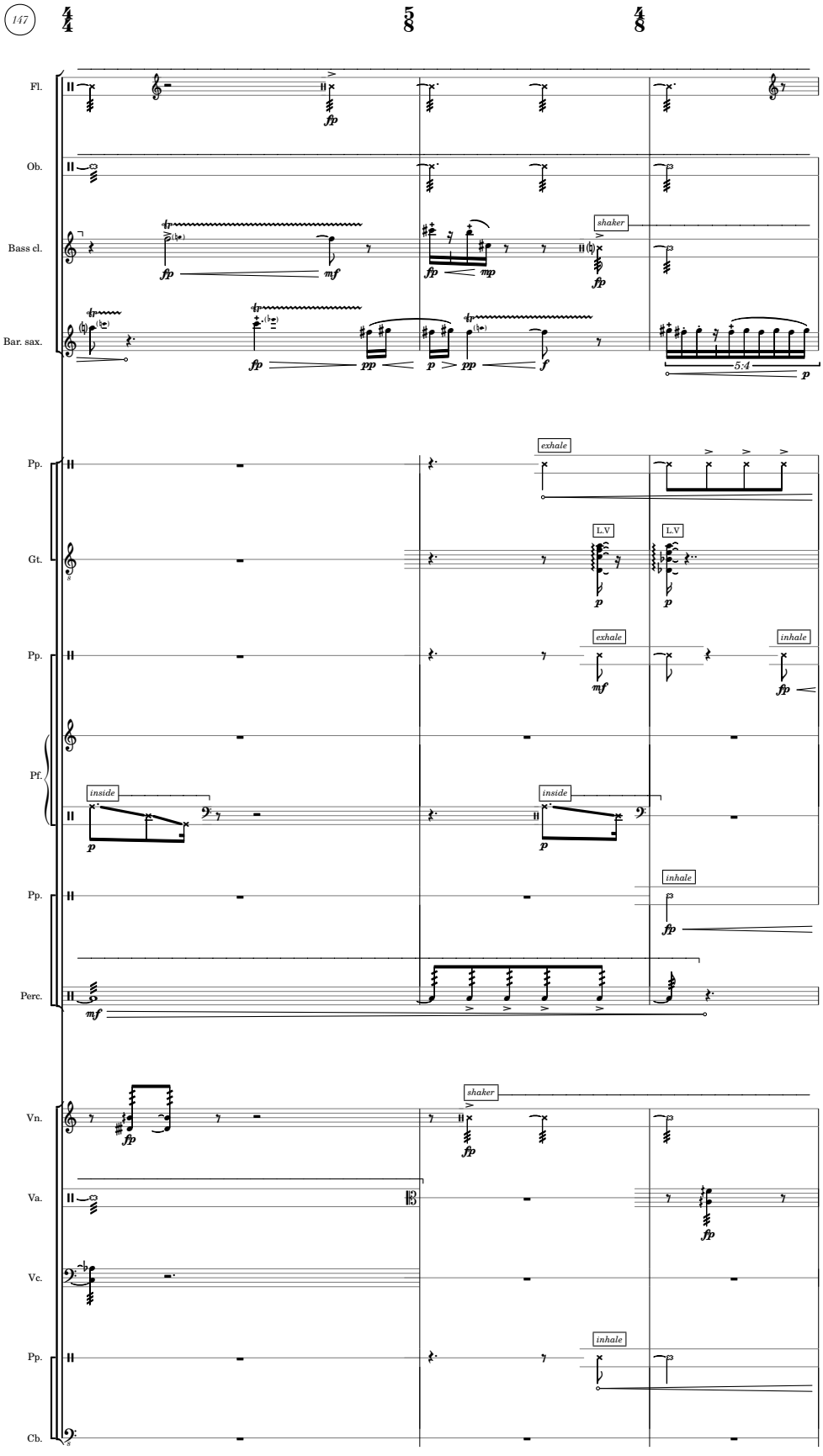

4/8
7/8
5/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
5:4
3:2
7:6
5:3

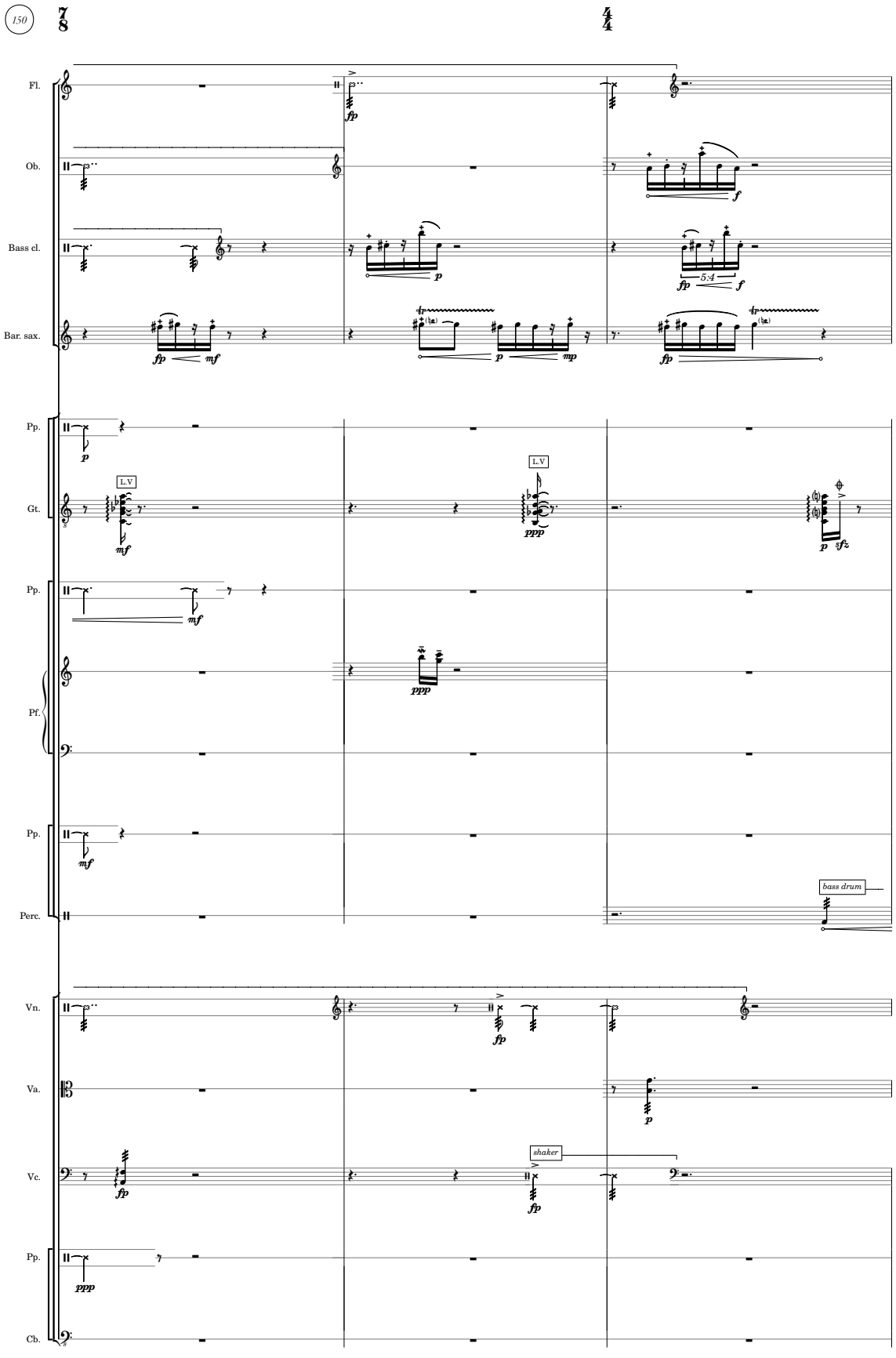

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
3:2
5:4
L.V
8va
windchimes
overpressure

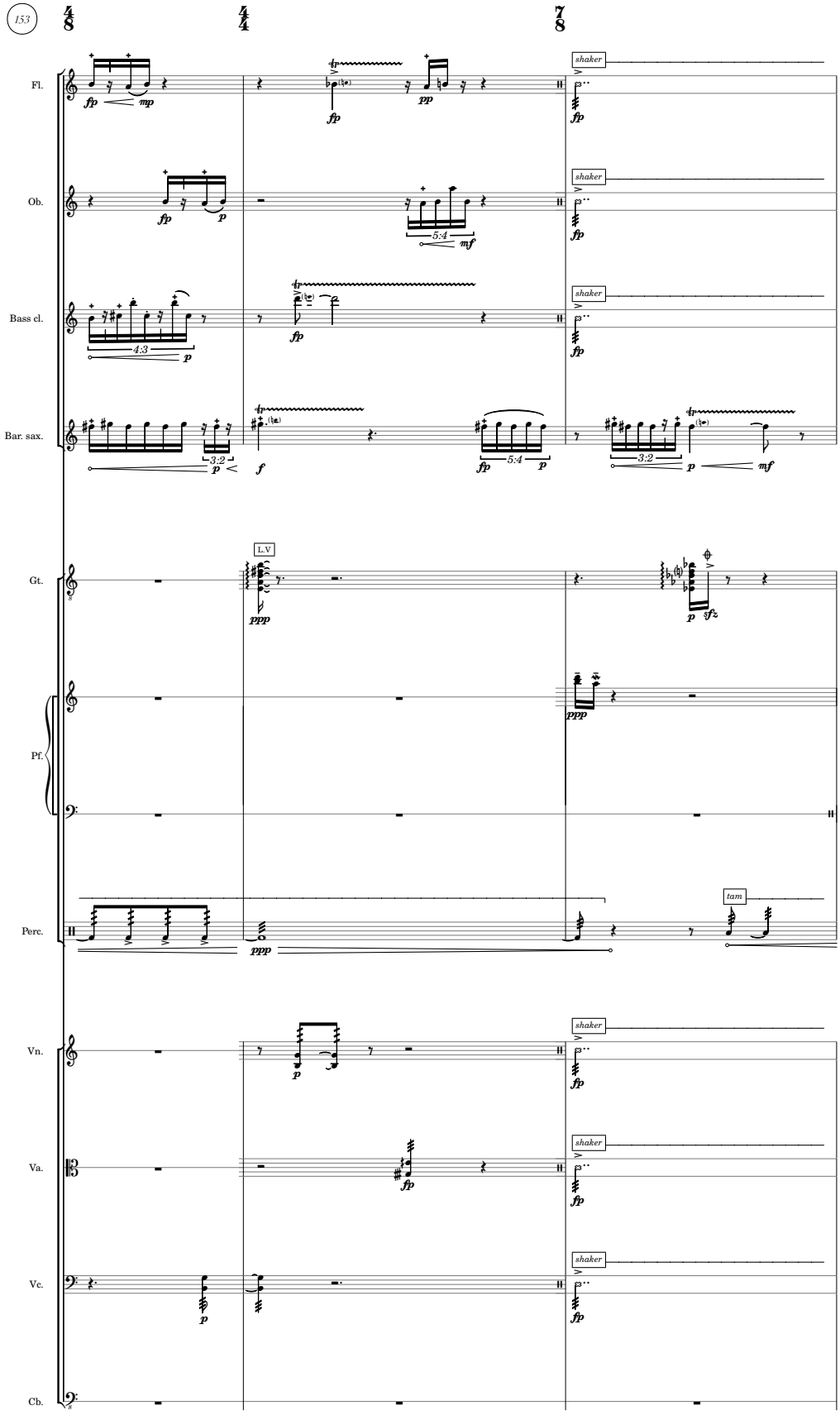

4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
L.V
8va
5:4
6:4
7:6
windchimes
crotales
overpressure

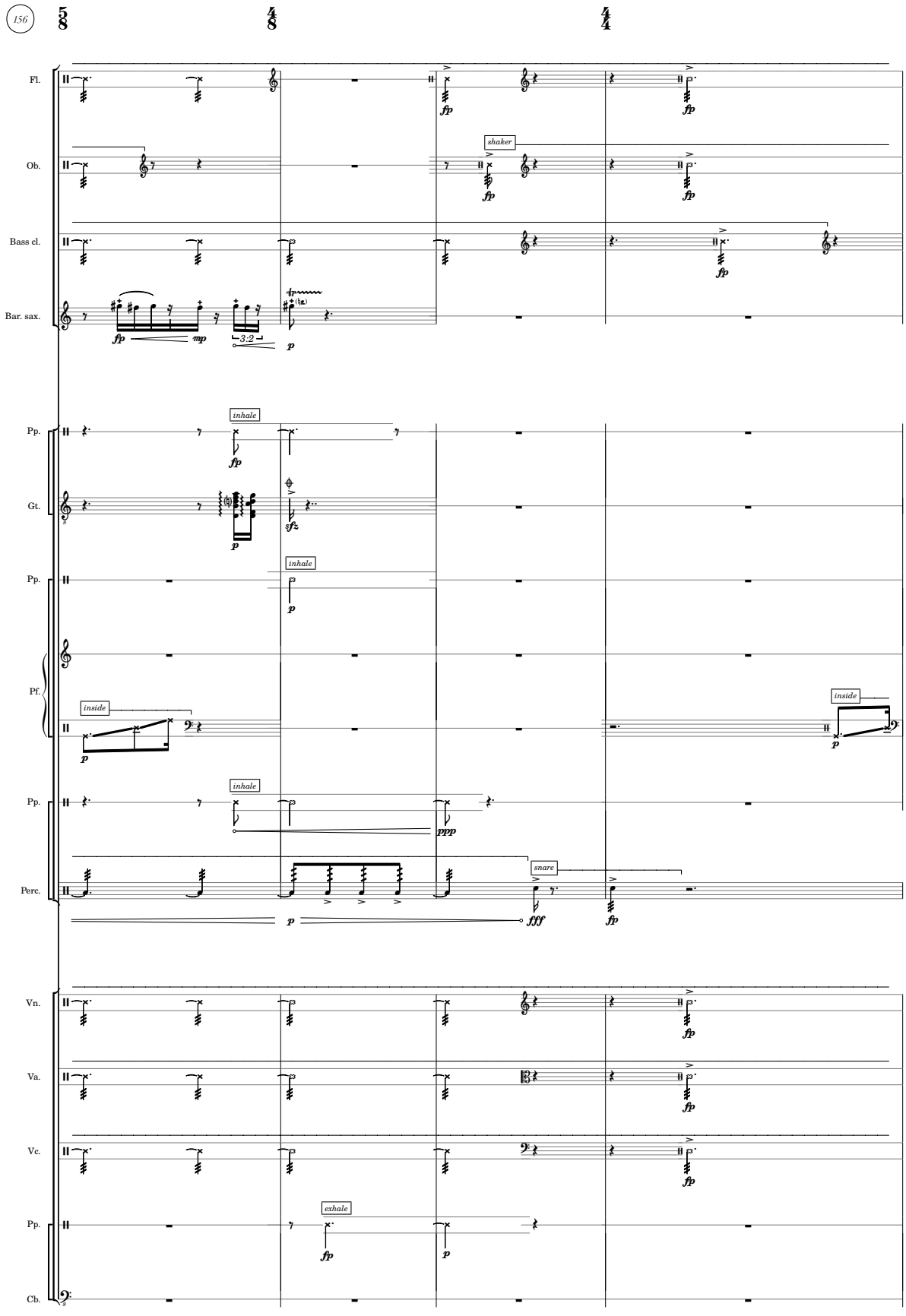

♩= 64
138
C [ii]
♩= 80
D Chemish
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
toms
bass drum
pizz.
L.V
7:6
5:4
3:2
8va

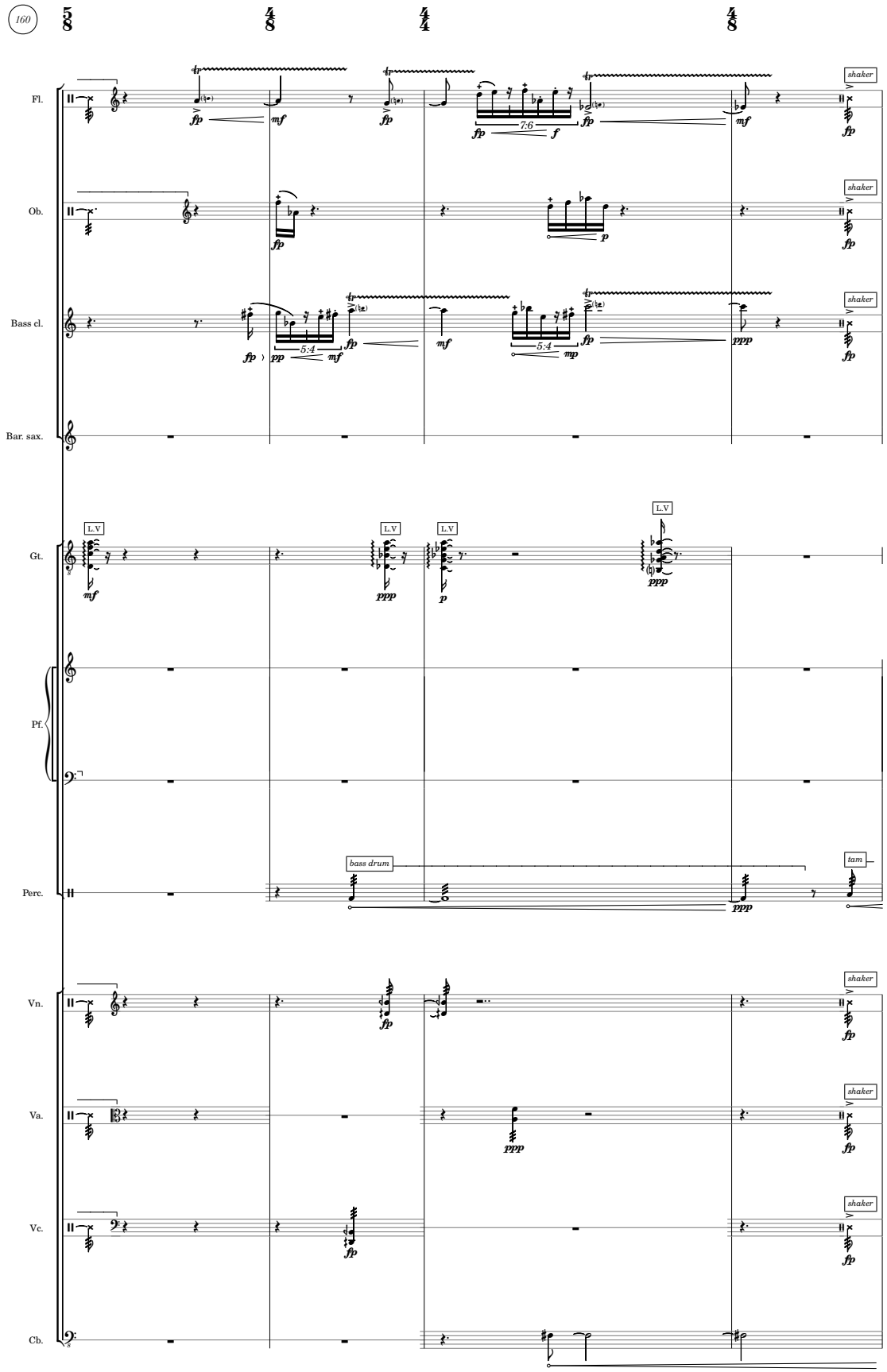

7/8
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
inside
tam
fp
mf
mp
p
5:4

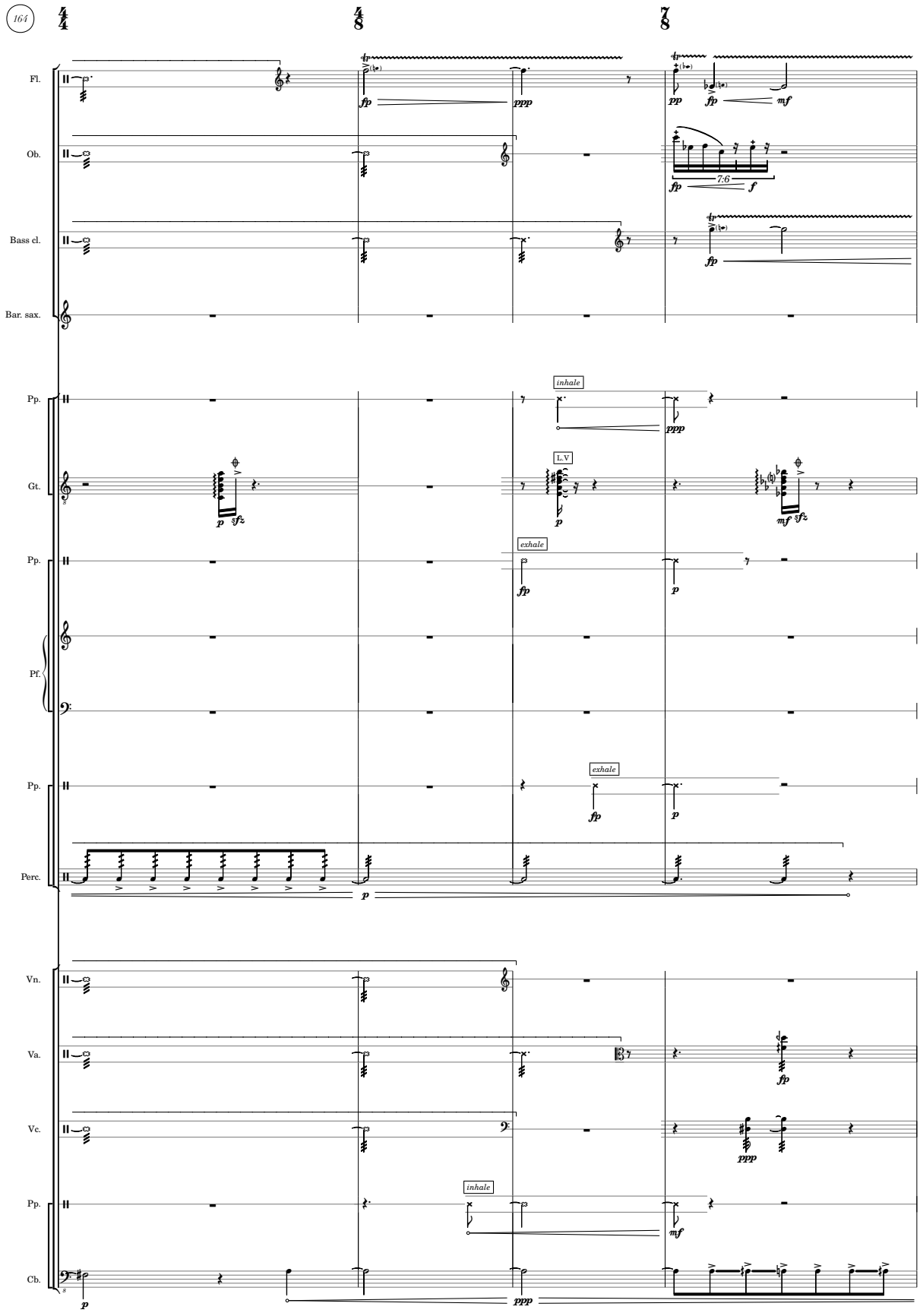

4/4
5/8
4/8
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
shaker
5:4
Pp.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
exhale
inhale
L.V
inside
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.

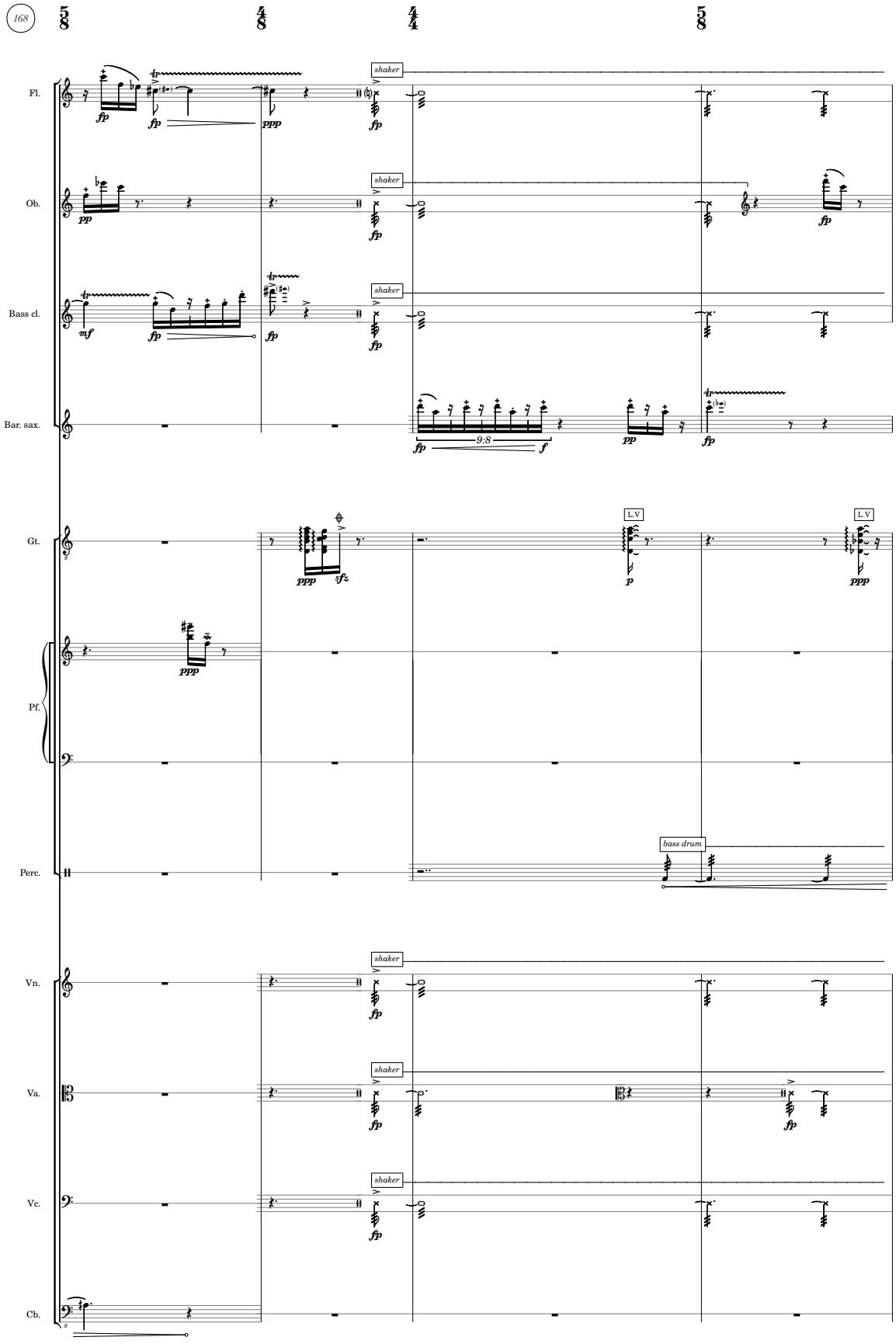

7/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
L.V
L.V
5:4
bass drum
shaker

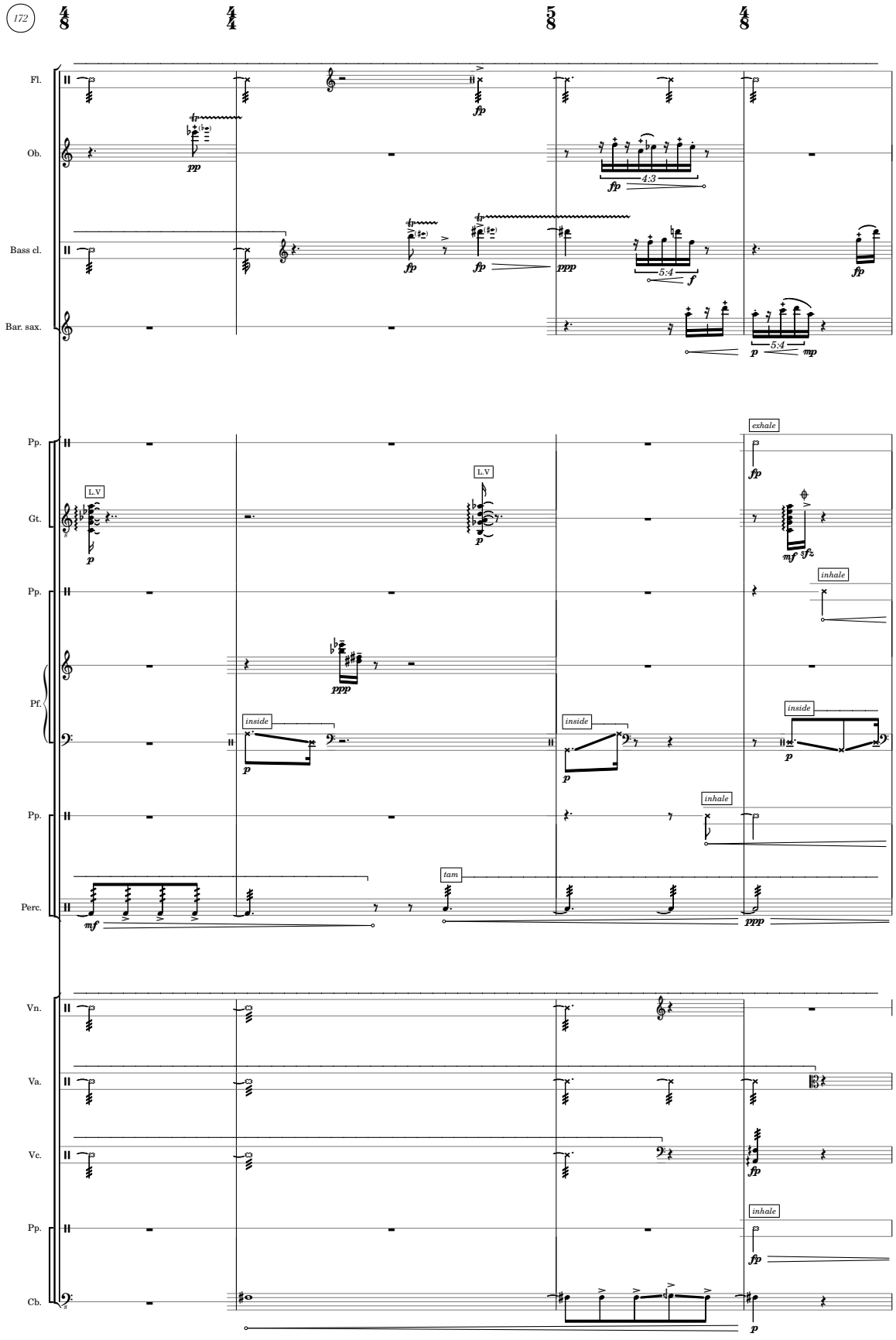

153
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
L.V
tam

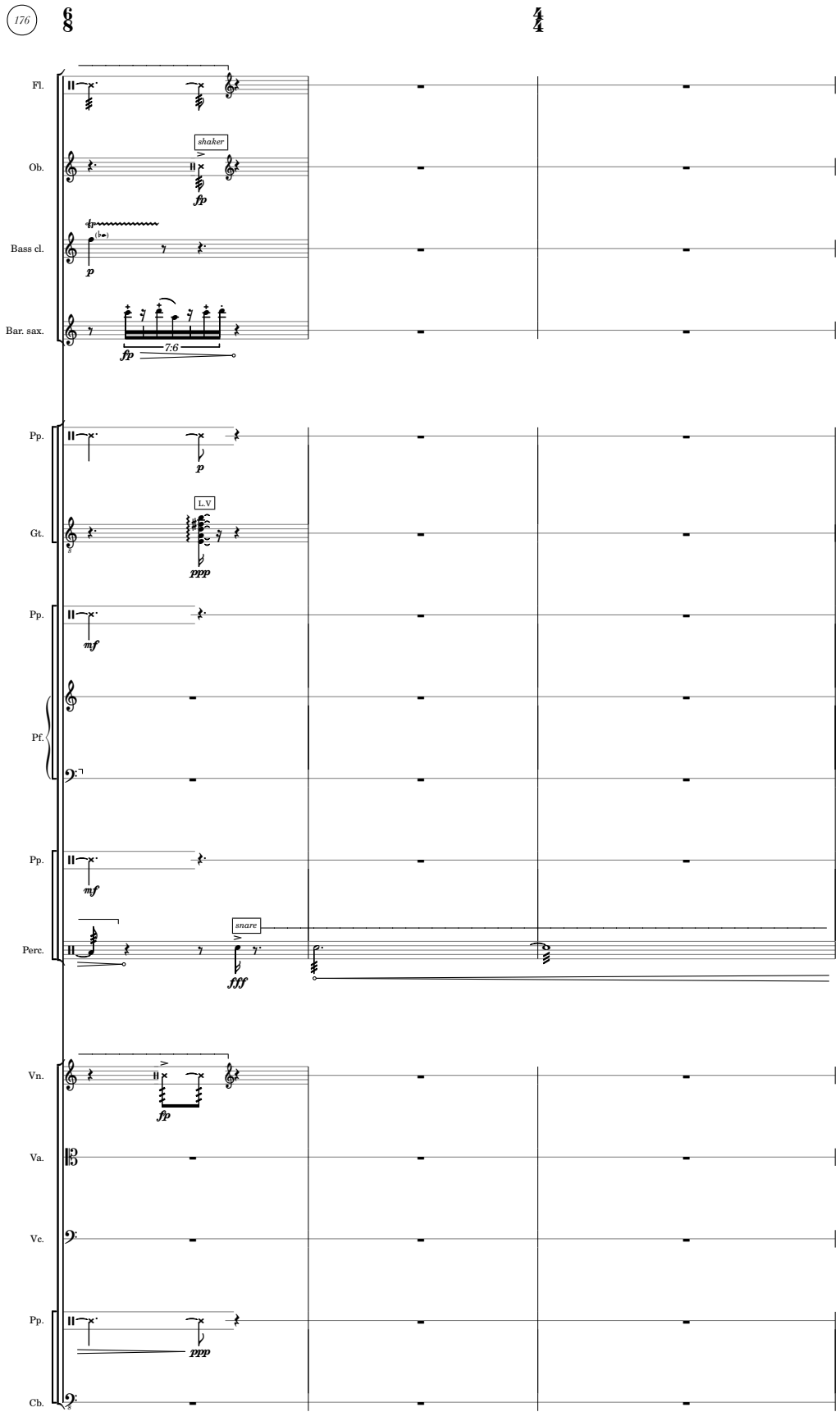

5/8
4/8
4/4
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
shaker
inhale
inside
snare
exhale
fp
mp
p
sfz
ppp
fff
3:2

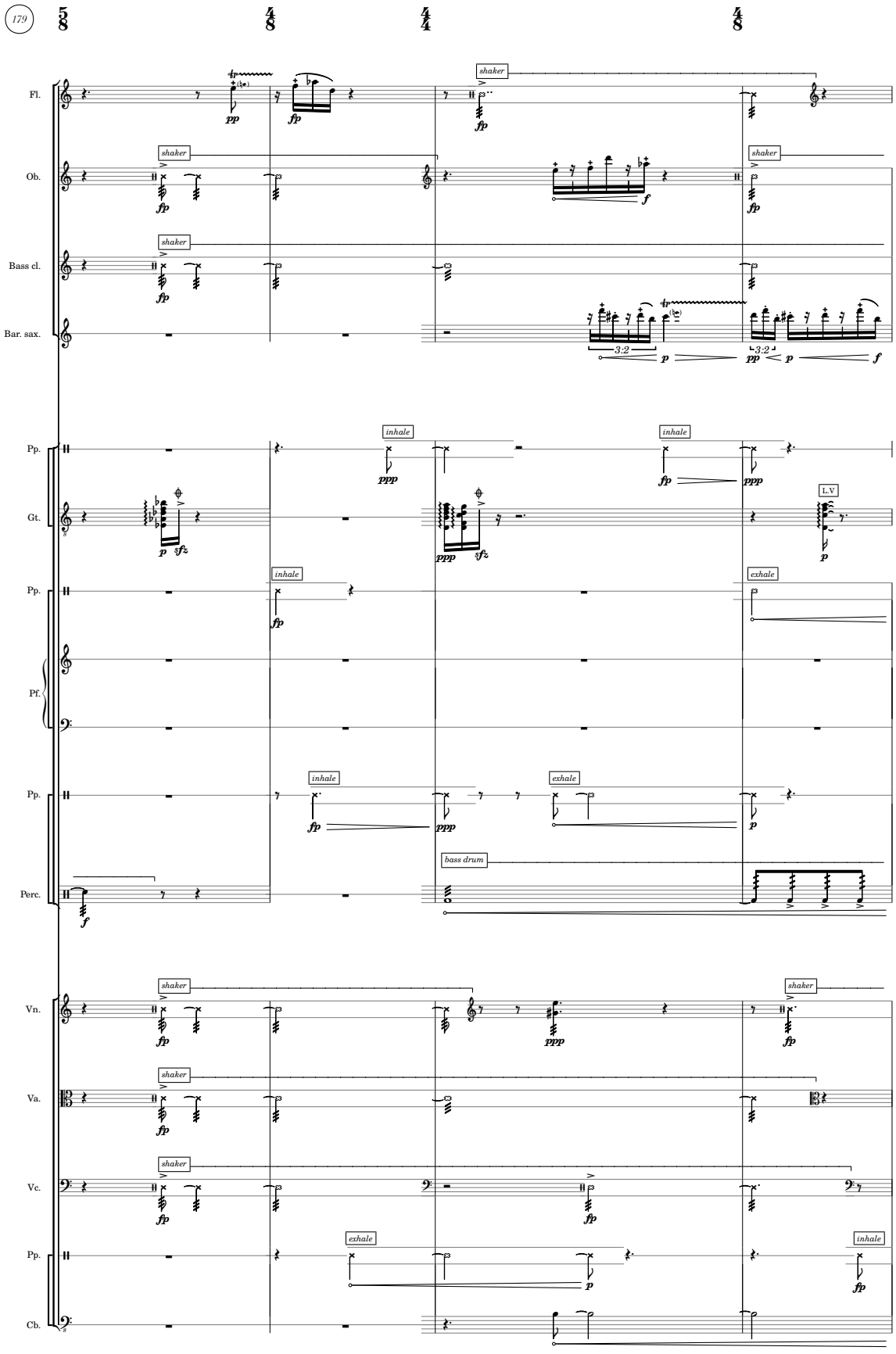

160
Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Gt.
Pf.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Cb.
shaker
L.V
bass drum
tam
7:6
5:4

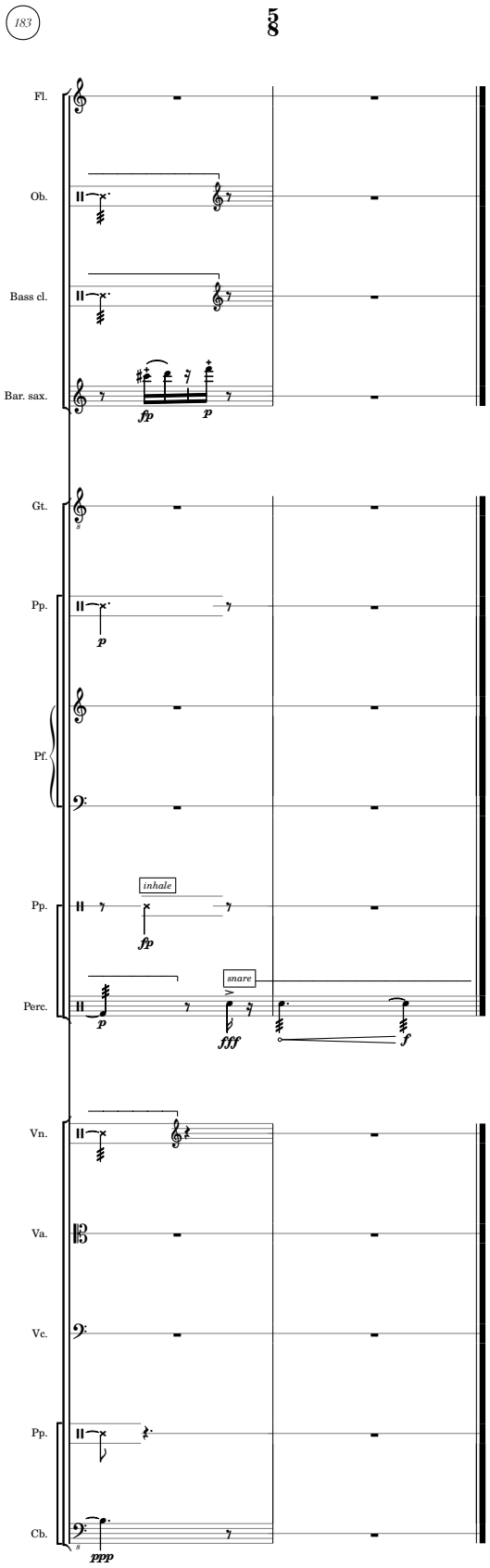

Fl.
Ob.
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
Pp.
Gt.
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.
inhale
exhale
L.V
7:6


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


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


176
Fl.
Ob.
shaker
Bass cl.
Bar. sax.
7:6
Pp.
Gt.
L.V
Pp.
Pf.
Pp.
Perc.
snare
Vn.
Va.
Vc.
Pp.
Cb.


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



Portland, OR
January 2015 - April 2015