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Short Essay

for symphonic wind ensemble

TRAVIS J. CROSS

Commissioned by the St. Ambrose University Symphonic Band, Andrew Mast, conductor

Performance Notes

An essay is generally defined as a short and somewhat informal composition on a single subject. To that end, my "Short Essay" for symphonic wind ensemble lasts only four minutes and concerns the inception and development of one musical theme.

The introduction sets both the tonal vocabulary and primary rhythmic material of the essay. The first four pitches establish a general key area of B flat major, colored by the second and fourth scale degrees to create relatively innocuous harmonic dissonance. In fact, only four pitches are heard for the first 90 seconds! The syncopated eighth-note rhythms and shifting accents that figure prominently throughout the piece are also introduced.

Short statements of the four-pitch set from throughout the ensemble build into a *tutti* arrival point that immediately transforms into an *ostinato,* establishing the second section of the essay. A playful tune fleshes out the tonality by realizing the rest of the major scale, but the harmonic seconds, suspended fourths and syncopated rhythms from the introduction remain as part of the accompaniment.

The tune naturally progresses into a musical bridge, played first in the horns and trombones and then in the entire brass section. An upper woodwind obbligato and more active pecussion writing provide harmonic ornamentation and rhythmic drive.

As the woodwinds continue, an augmented recapitulation of the tune enters in the low brass and leads up through the higher voices of the ensemble. Brilliant chords and an aggressive unison statement of the opening rhythm bring the work to a close much in the same way that a conscientious student restates the thesis sentence at the end of a literary essay.

"Short Essay" was commissioned by the St. Ambrose University Symphonic Band, Andrew Mast, conductor. The title also refers to the initials prominently used in the university web address, *sau.edu.* Trust me — just say the first two letters really fast, and you'll get it. "Short Essay" was premiered at St. Ambrose University in Davenport, Iowa, on 2 May 2003, with the composer conducting.

Travis J. Cross
Edina, Minnesota
April 2003

Commissioned by the St. Ambrose University
Symphonic Band, Andrew Mast, *conductor*

Short Essay

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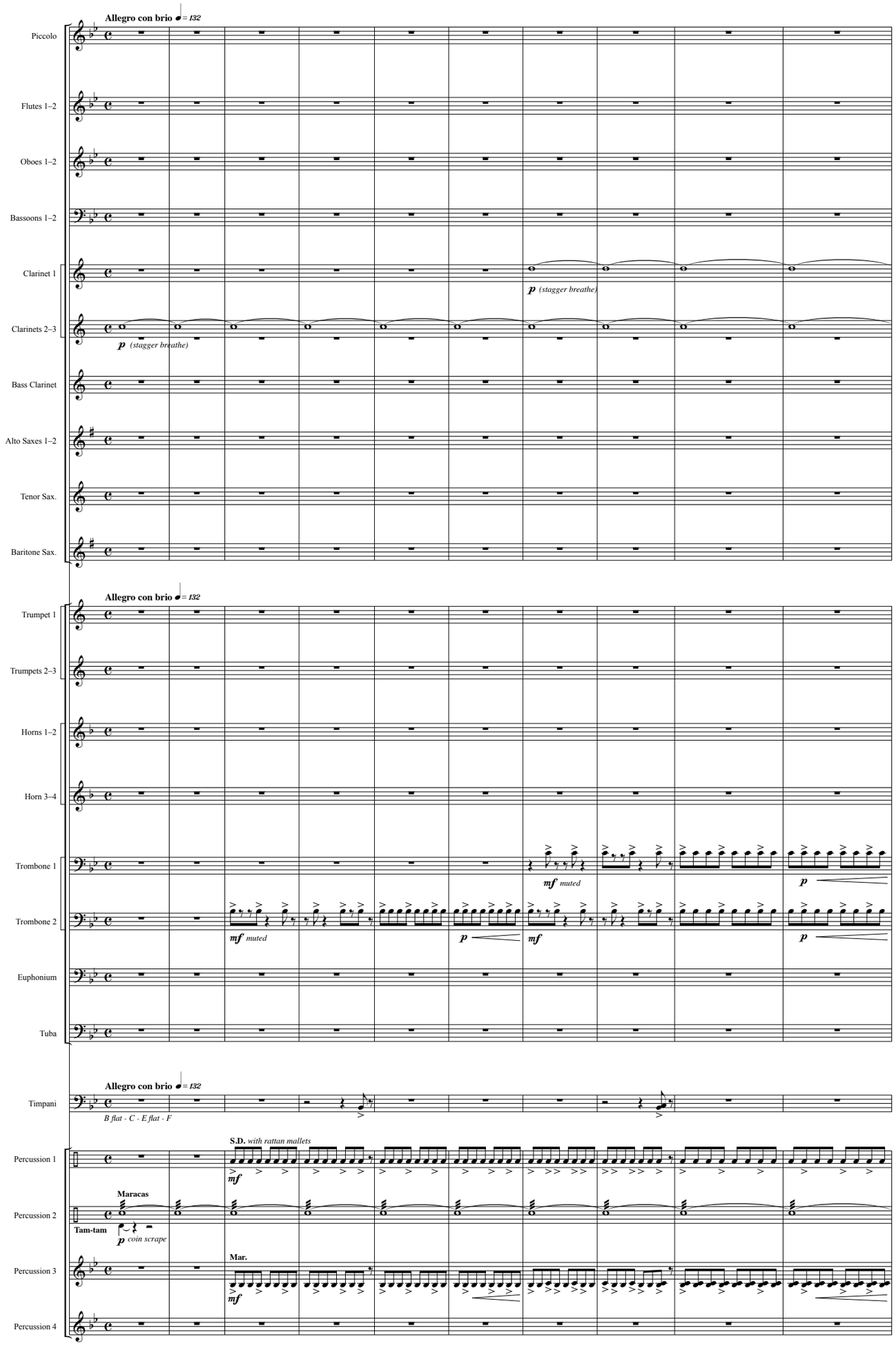
TRAVIS J. CROSS



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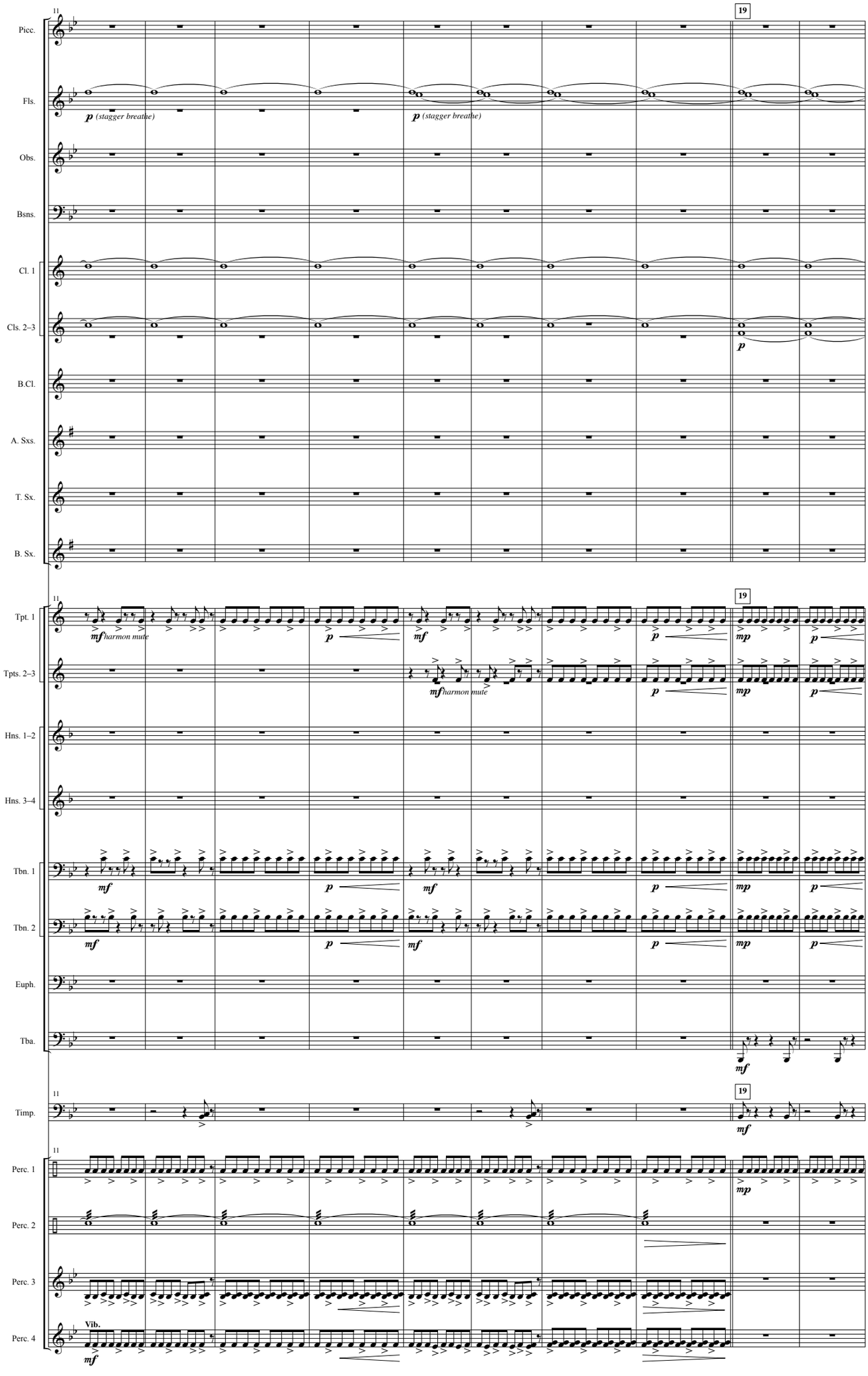
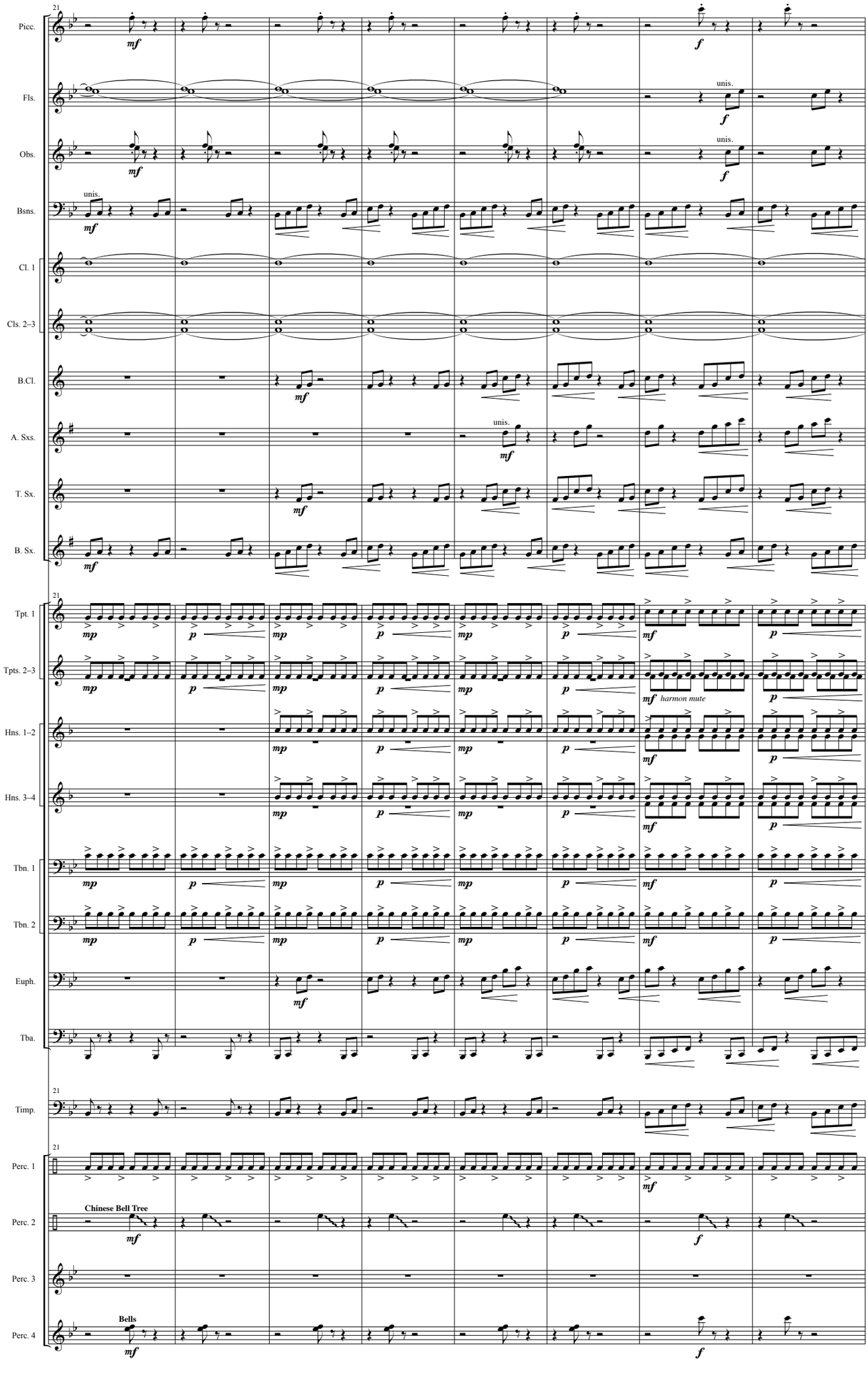
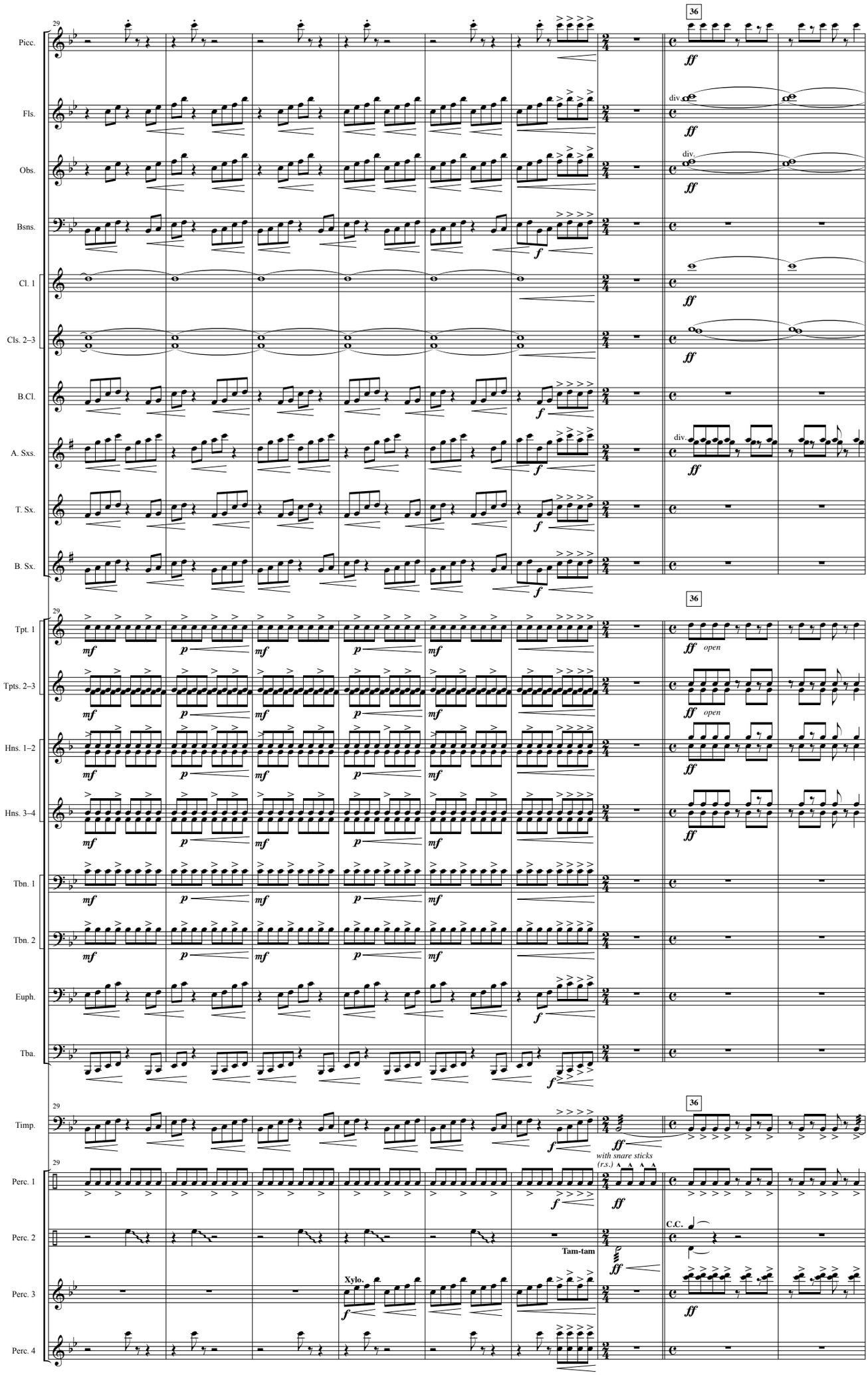
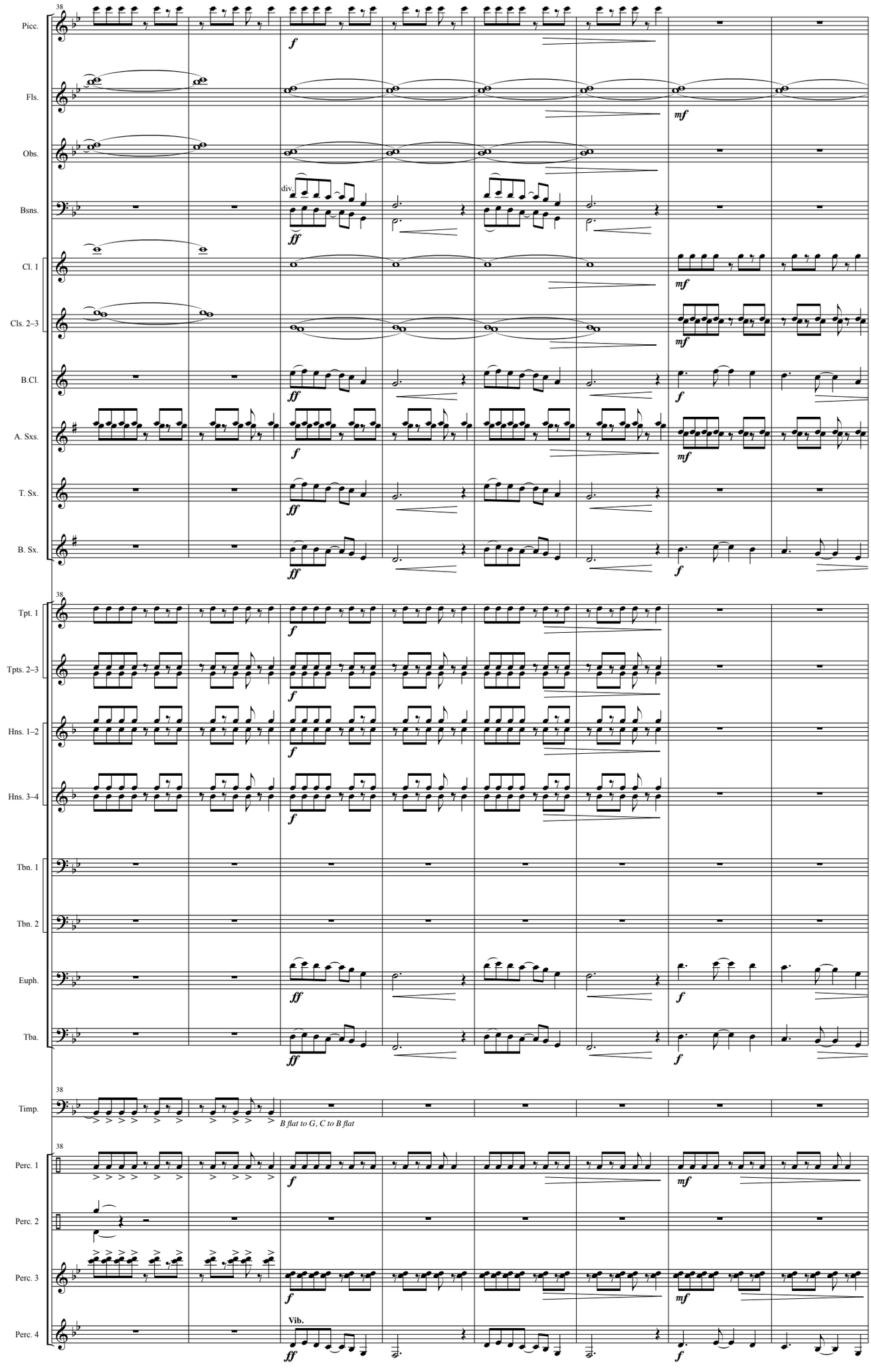
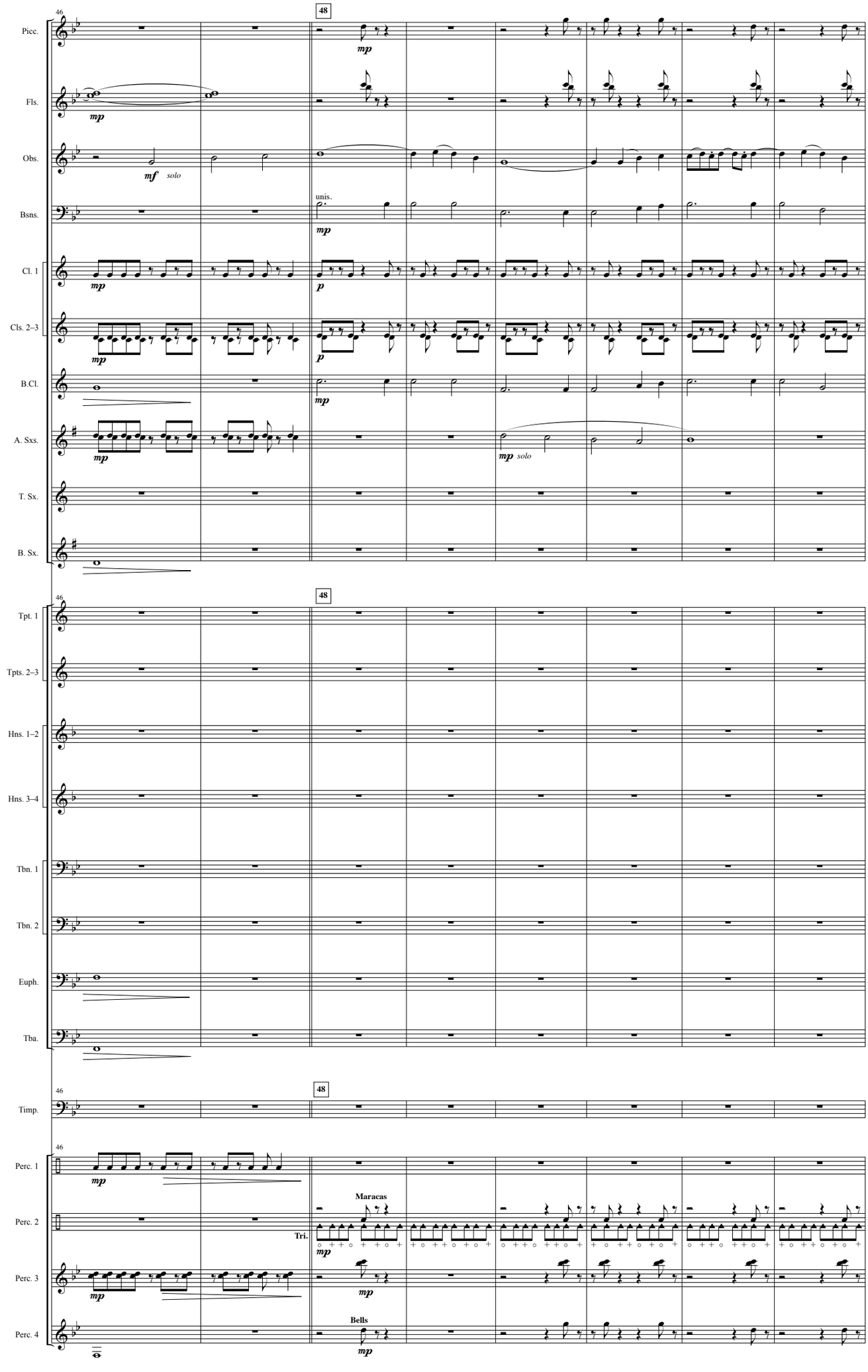
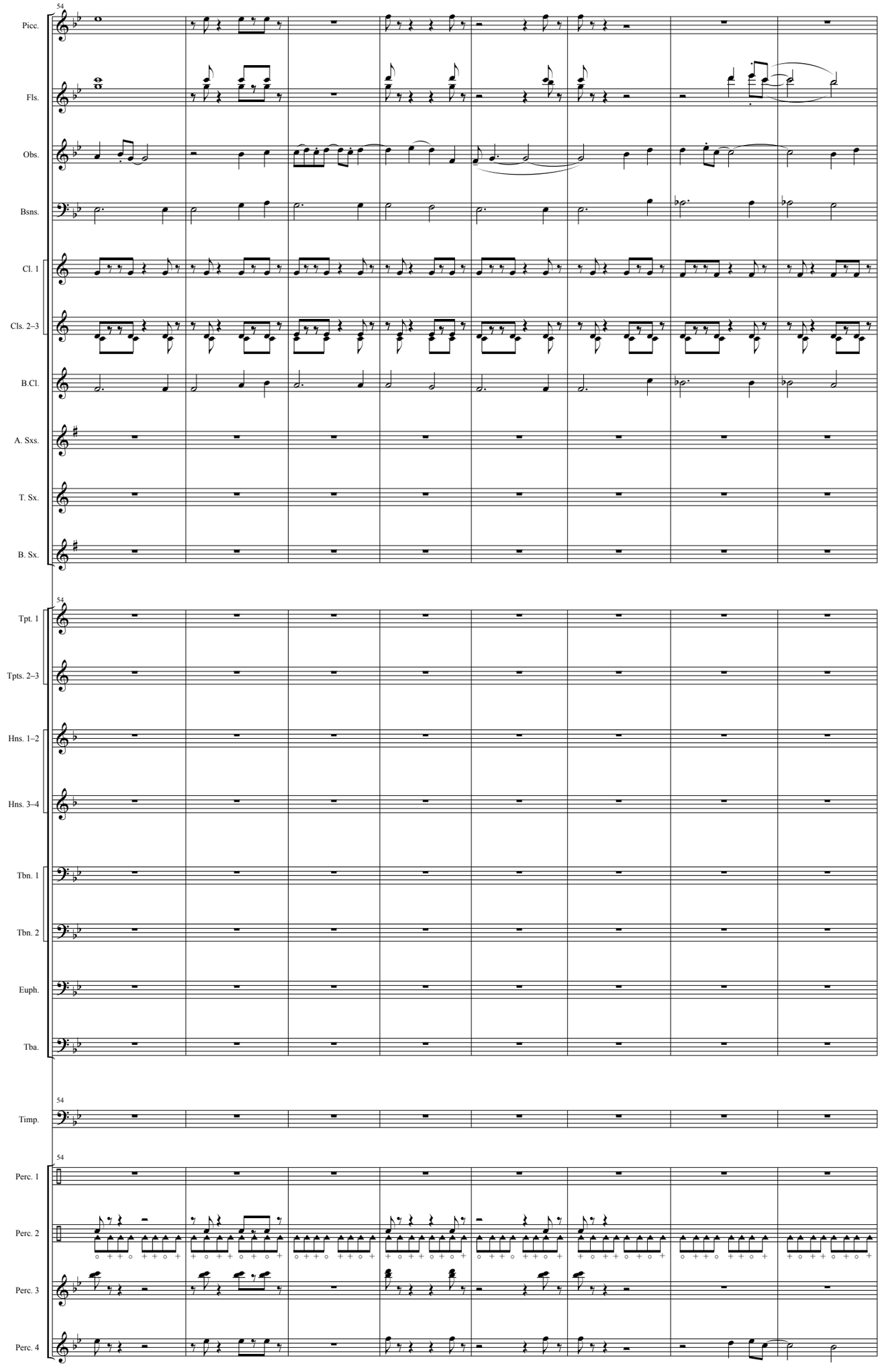

11
19
Picc.
Fls.
p (stagger breathe)
p (stagger breathe)
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
p
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
11
19
Tpt. 1
mf harmon mute
p
mf
p
mp
p
Tpts. 2–3
mf harmon mute
p
mp
p
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
mf
p
mf
p
mp
p
Tbn. 2
mf
p
mf
p
mp
p
Euph.
Tba.
mf
11
19
Timp.
mf
11
Perc. 1
mp
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
Vib.
mf

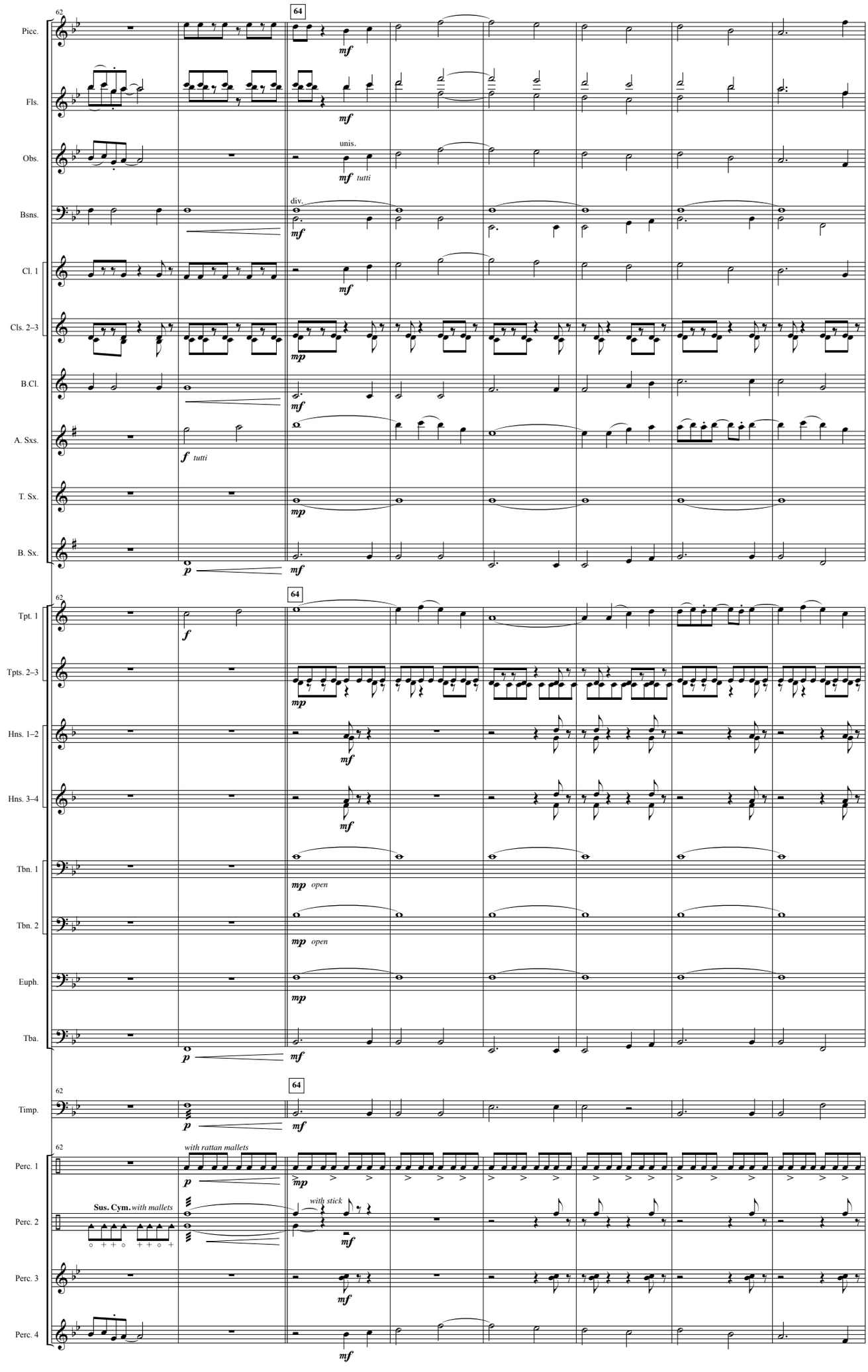

21
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
unis.
harmon mute
Chinese Bell Tree
Bells
mf
f
mp
p

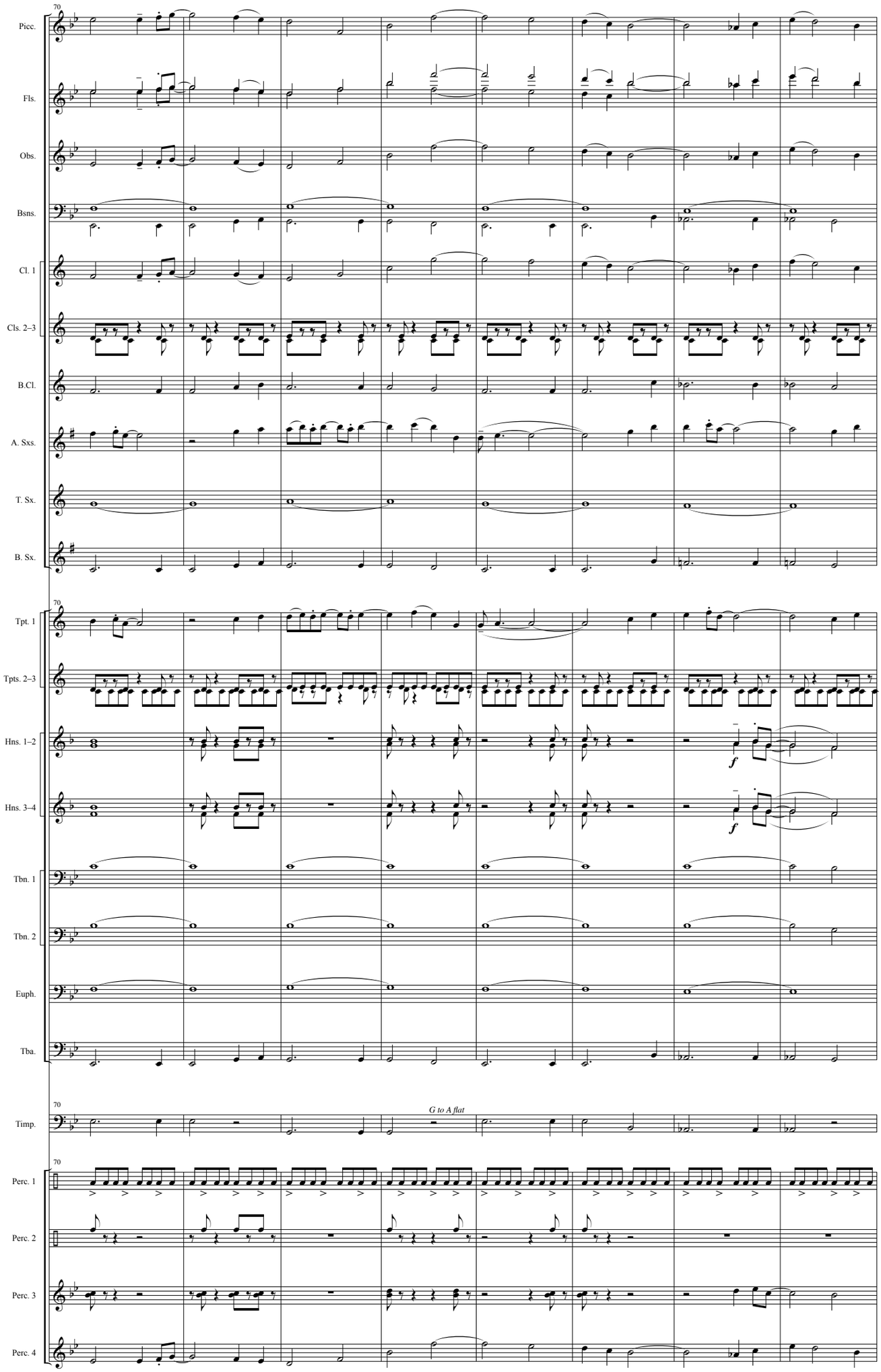

29
36
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
div.
open
with snare sticks
(r.s.)
C.C.
Tam-tam
Xylo.

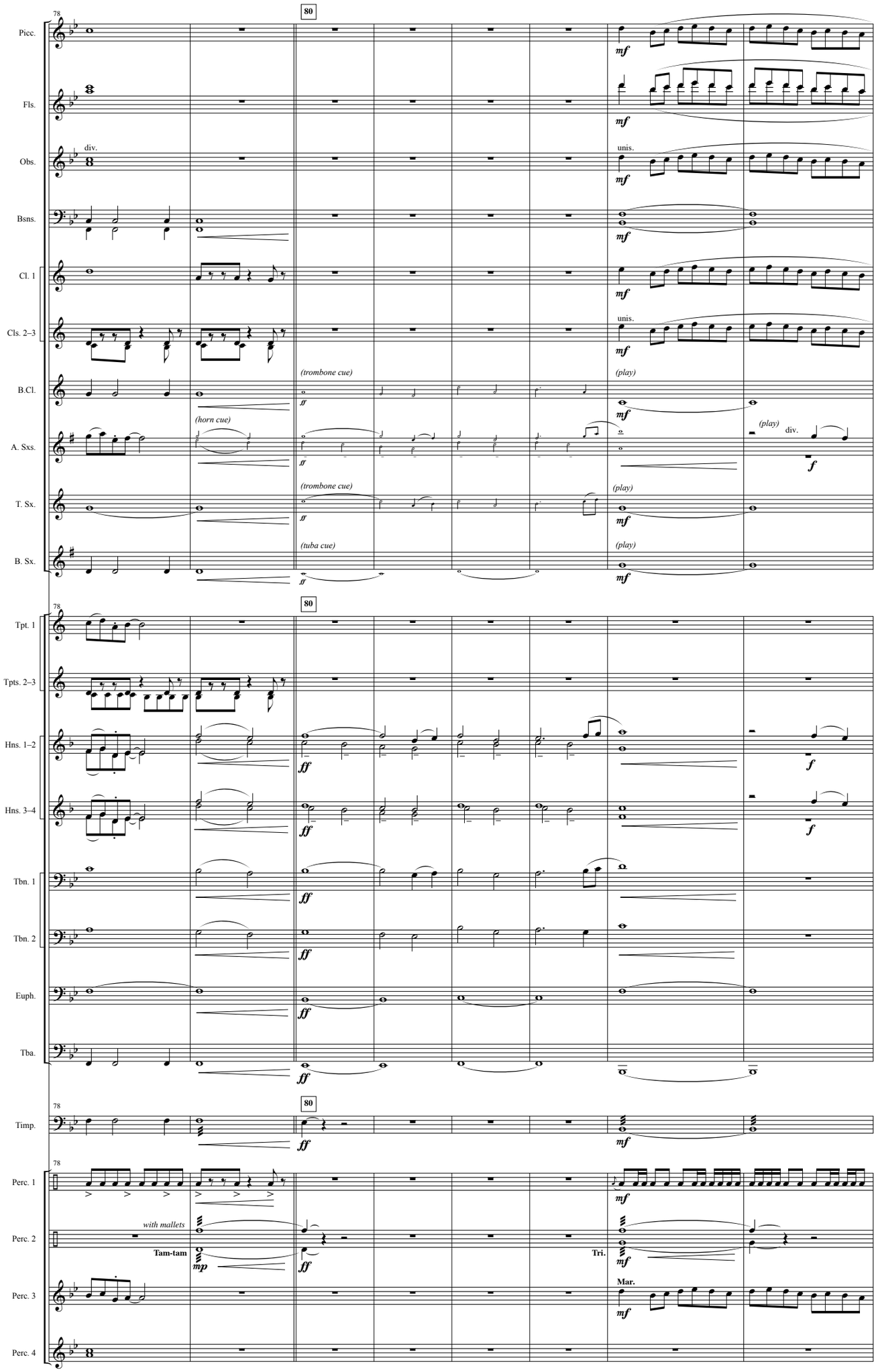

38
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
div.
Vib.
B flat to G, C to B flat

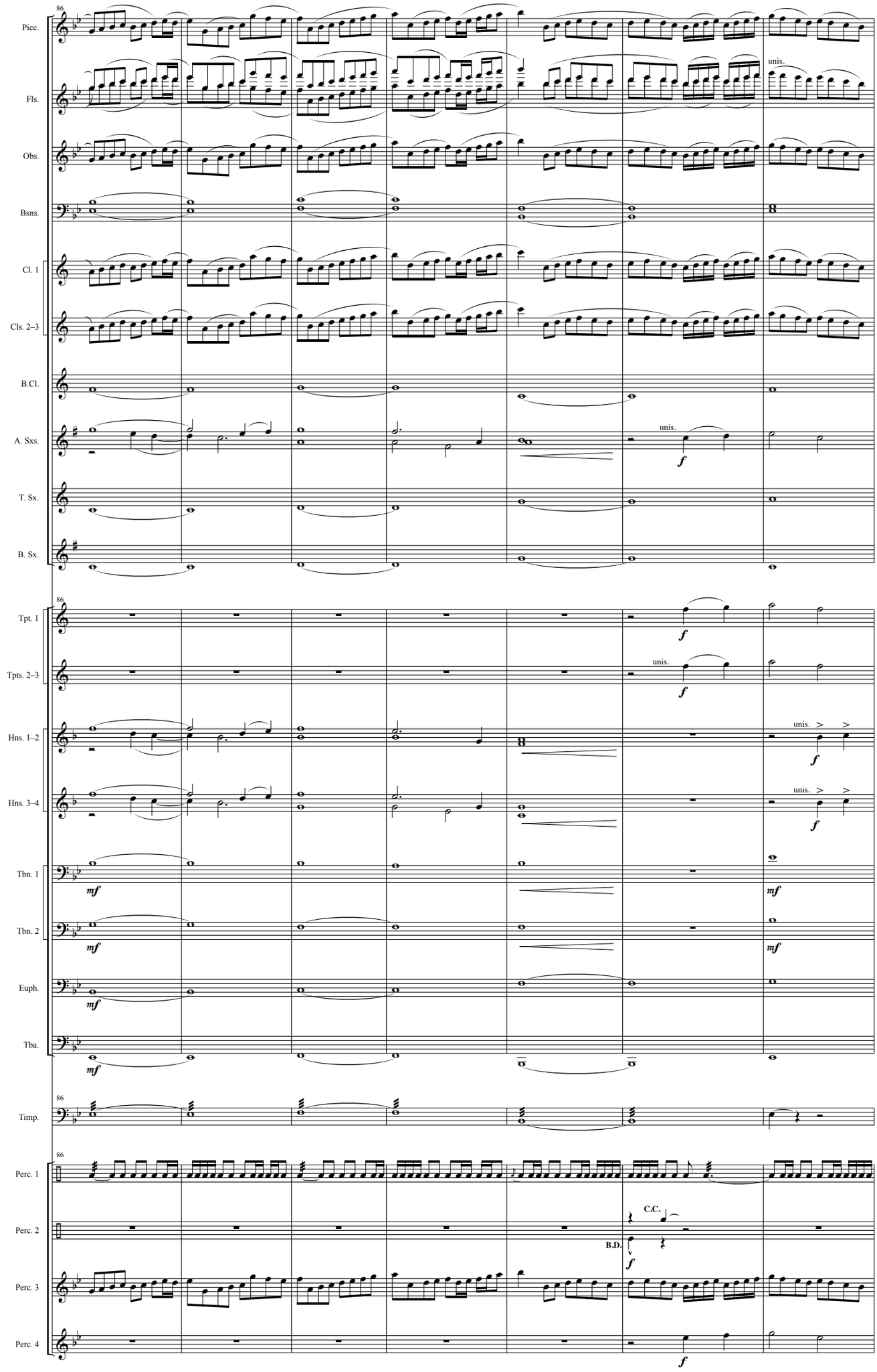

46
48
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
mp
mf
solo
unis.
p
Maracas
Tri.
Bells

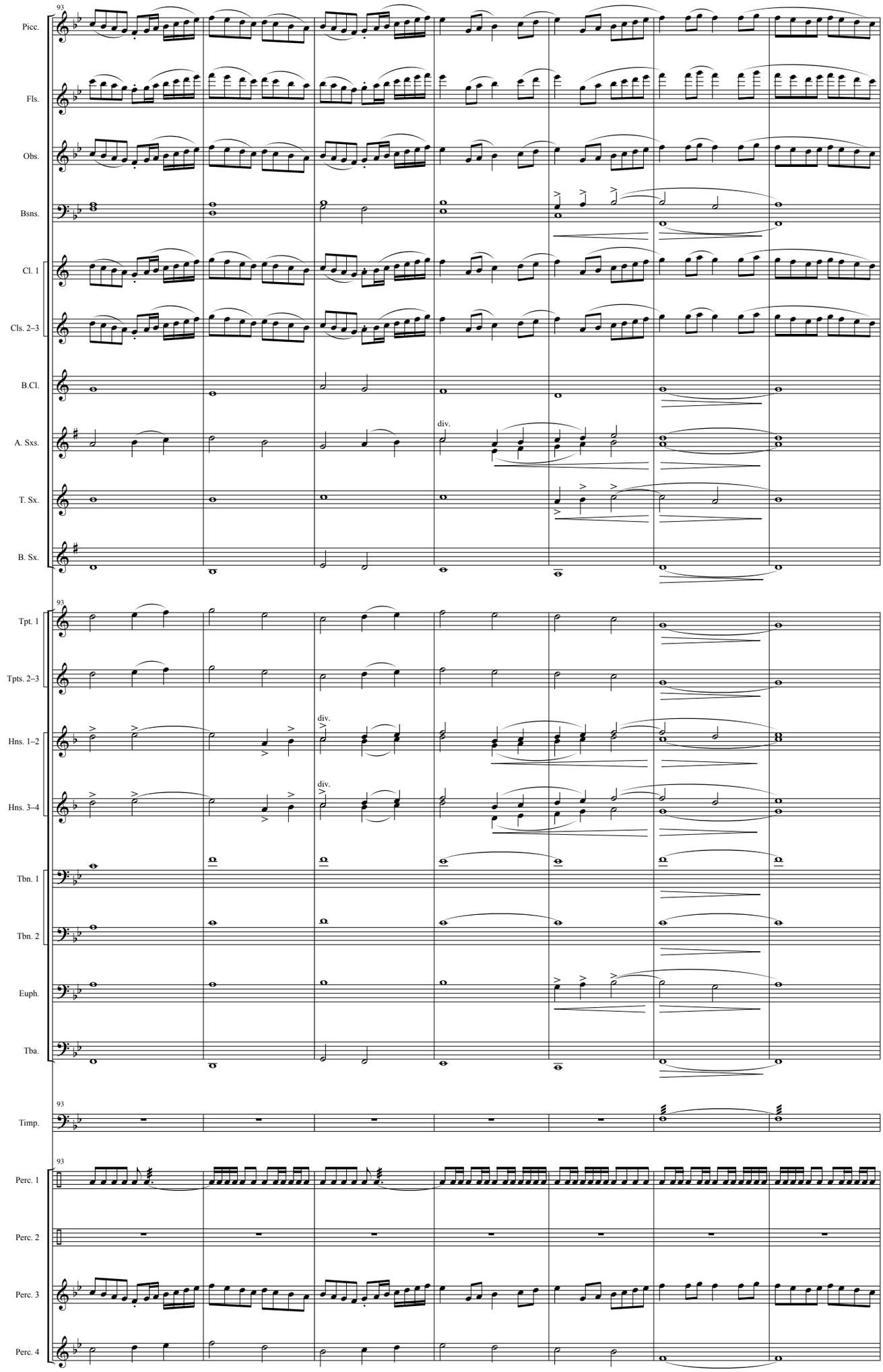

54
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
54
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
54
Timp.
54
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

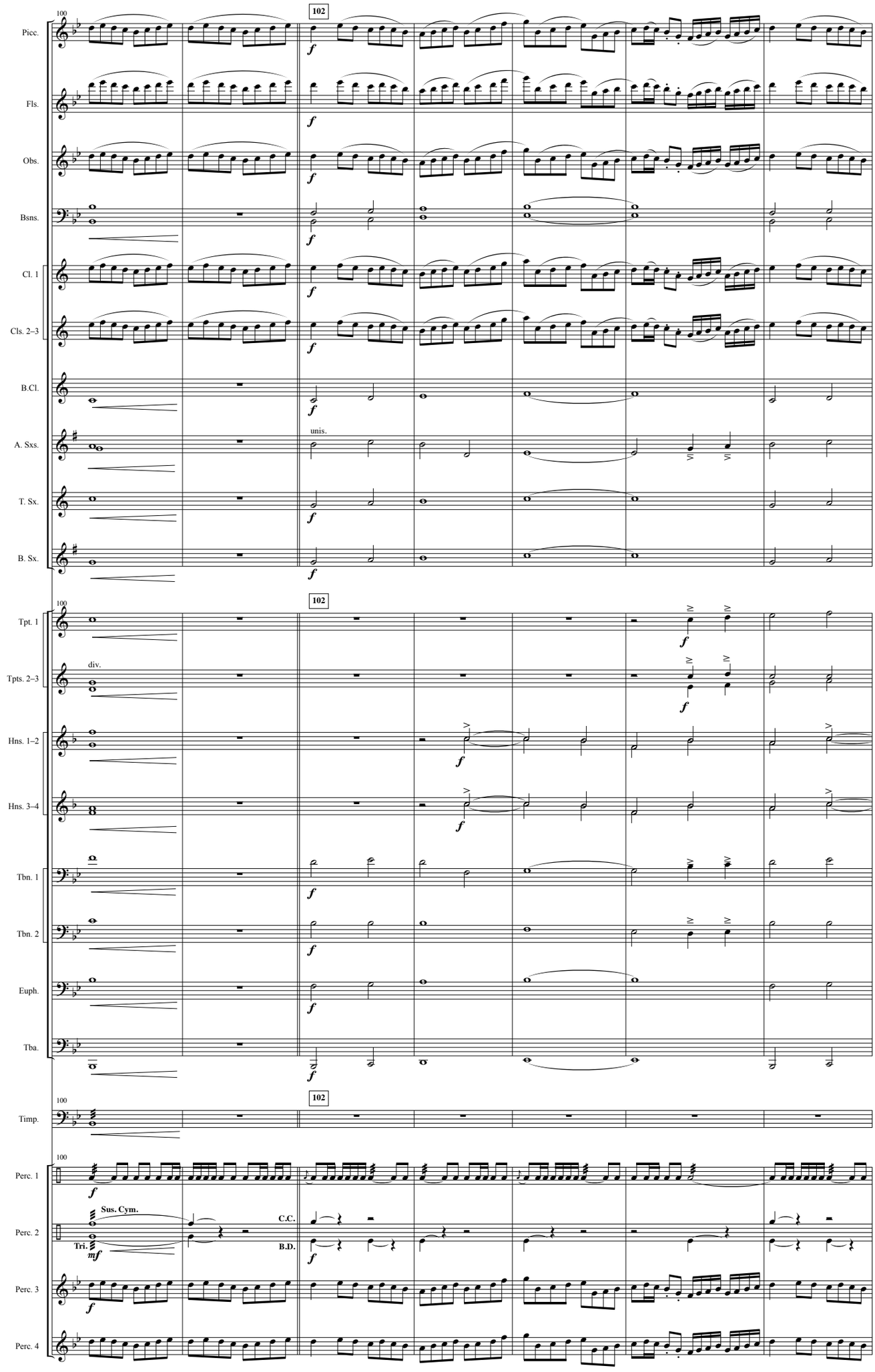

62
64
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
unis.
tutti
Bsns.
div.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
tutti
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
open
Tbn. 2
open
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
with rattan mallets
Perc. 2
Sus. Cym. with mallets
with stick
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

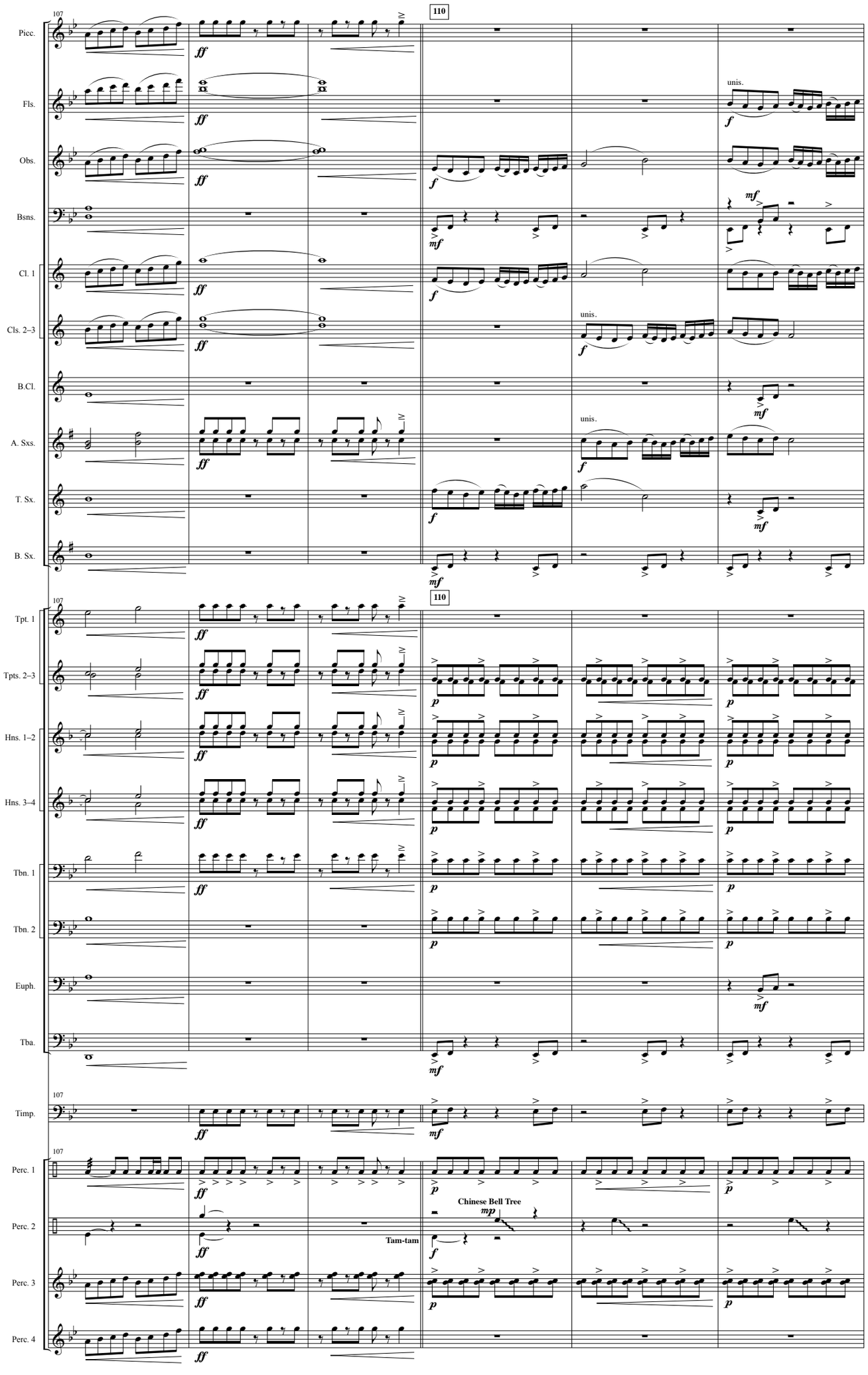

70
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
70
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
70
G to A flat
Timp.
70
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4

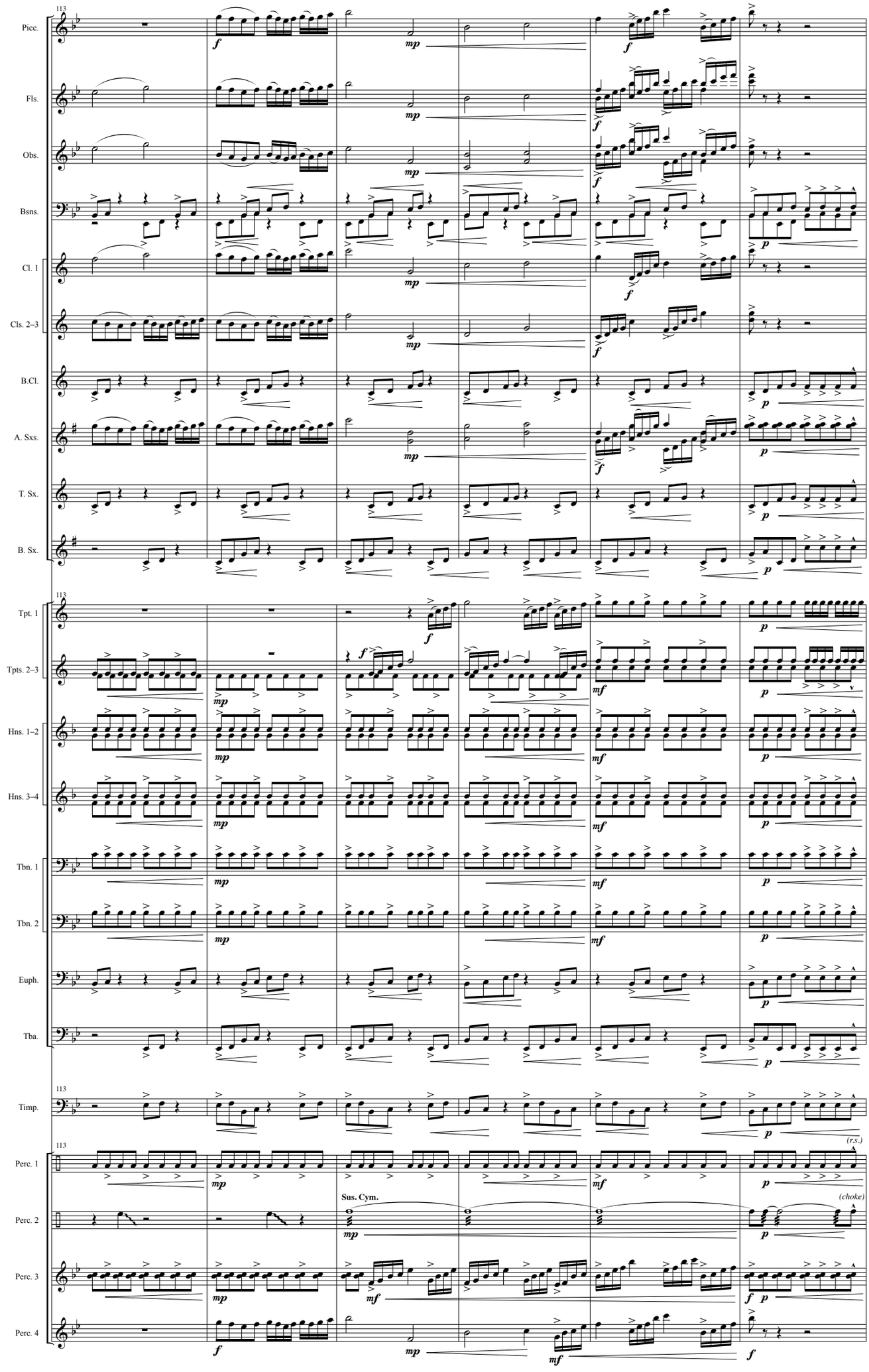

78
80
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
div.
unis.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
unis.
B.Cl.
(trombone cue)
(play)
(horn cue)
A. Sxs.
(play)
div.
T. Sxs.
(trombone cue)
(play)
B. Sx.
(tuba cue)
(play)
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
with mallets
Tam-tam
Tri.
Perc. 3
Mar.
Perc. 4

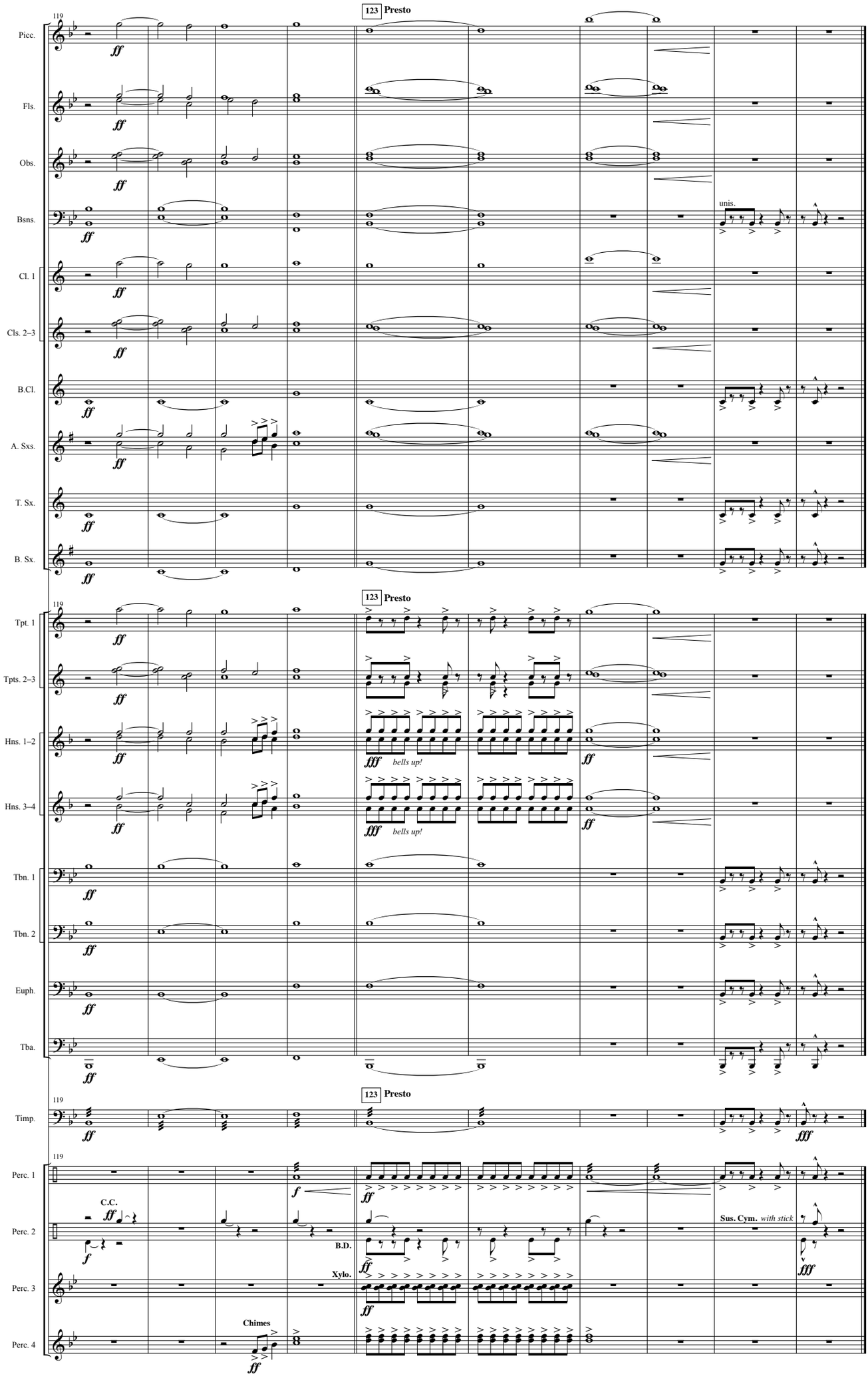

86
Picc.
Fls.
unis.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
unis.
f
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
86
Tpt. 1
f
Tpts. 2–3
unis.
f
Hns. 1–2
unis. > >
f
Hns. 3–4
unis. > >
f
Tbn. 1
mf
mf
Tbn. 2
mf
mf
Euph.
mf
Tba.
mf
86
Timp.
86
Perc. 1
C.C.
Perc. 2
B.D.
f
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
f


93
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
div.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
93
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
div.
Hns. 3–4
div.
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
93
Timp.
93
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4


100
102
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
unis.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
div.
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
Sus. Cym.
Tri.
C.C.
B.D.
f
mf


107
110
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
unis.
Chinese Bell Tree
Tam-tam
ff
f
mf
mp
p


113
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
Perc. 2
Perc. 3
Perc. 4
Sus. Cym.
(r.s.)
(choke)


119
123 Presto
Picc.
Fls.
Obs.
Bsns.
unis.
Cl. 1
Cls. 2–3
B.Cl.
A. Sxs.
T. Sx.
B. Sx.
Tpt. 1
Tpts. 2–3
Hns. 1–2
Hns. 3–4
bells up!
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Euph.
Tba.
Timp.
Perc. 1
C.C.
Perc. 2
B.D.
Xylo.
Sus. Cym. with stick
Perc. 3
Chimes
Perc. 4