HALF MY HEART

for piano 4-hands

DWalters Music

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Program Notes:

This brief work was inspired by *He would not stay for me, and who can wonder* by A. E. Housman (1859-1936).

He would not stay for me, and who can wonder?
He would not stay for me to stand and gaze.
I shook his hand, and tore my heart in sunder,
And went with half my life about my ways.

Alfred Edward Housman was born in Worcestershire, England on March 26, 1859 and was the eldest of seven children. In 1877, he attended St. John's College, Oxford. Housman became distracted, however, when he fell in love with his roommate, Moses Jackson. He unexpectedly failed his final exams, but managed to pass the final year and later took a position as clerk in the Patent Office in London for ten years.

During this time, Housman studied Greek and Roman classics intensively, and in 1892, he was appointed professor of Latin at University College, London. In 1911, he became professor of Latin at Trinity College, Cambridge, a post he held until his death.

Housman only published two volumes of poetry during his life: *A Shropshire Lad* (1896) and *Last Poems* (1922). The majority of the poems in *A Shropshire Lad*, his cycle of sixty-three poems, were written after the death of Adalbert Jackson, Housman's friend and companion, in 1892. These poems center around themes of pastoral beauty, unrequited love, fleeting youth, grief, death, and the patriotism of the common soldier.

Housman continued to focus on his teaching, but in the early 1920s, when his old friend Moses Jackson was dying, Housman chose to assemble his best unpublished poems so that Jackson might read them. These later poems, most of them written before 1910, exhibit a range of subject and form much greater than the talents displayed in *A Shropshire Lad*. When *Last Poems* was published in 1922, it was an immediate success. A third volume, *More Poems* was released posthumously in 1936, as was an edition of Housman's *Complete Poems*.

Despite receiving acclaim as a scholar and a poet during his lifetime, Housman lived as a recluse, rejecting honors and avoiding the public eye. He died on April 30, 1936 in Cambridge.

Performance Notes:

Though there is no stated tempo, all the durations remain relative to one another.

The weaving of hands between players is intentional. If more time is required to avoid a collision, take it.

Pianists are encouraged to choreograph all hand and arm movement - graceful and unhurried.

Dashed lines indicate phrases that pass between pianists.

Even when accented, the music remains legato.

Pedal only where indicated.

The final pedal release is after the death of the sound.

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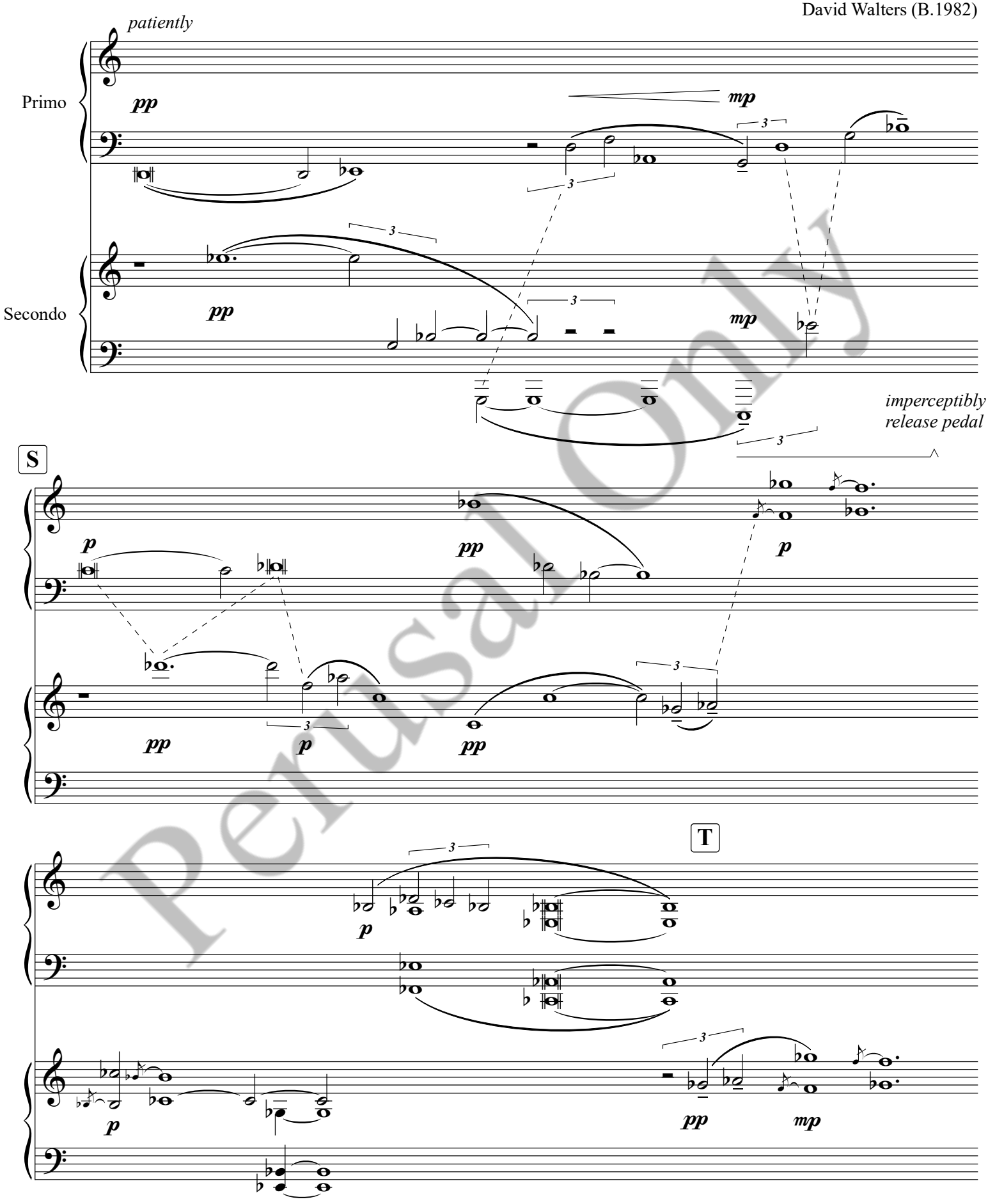
David Walters (B.1982)



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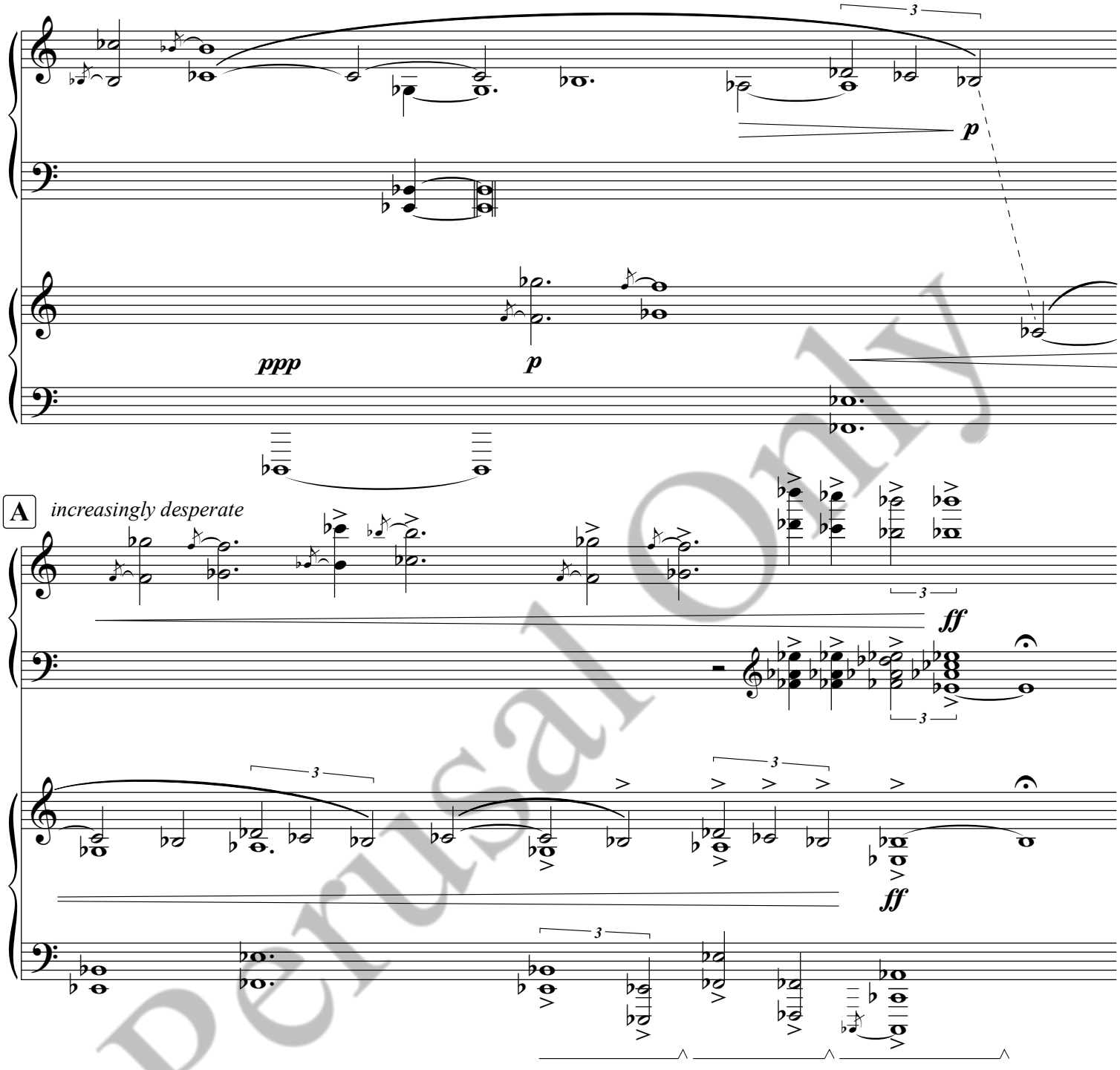

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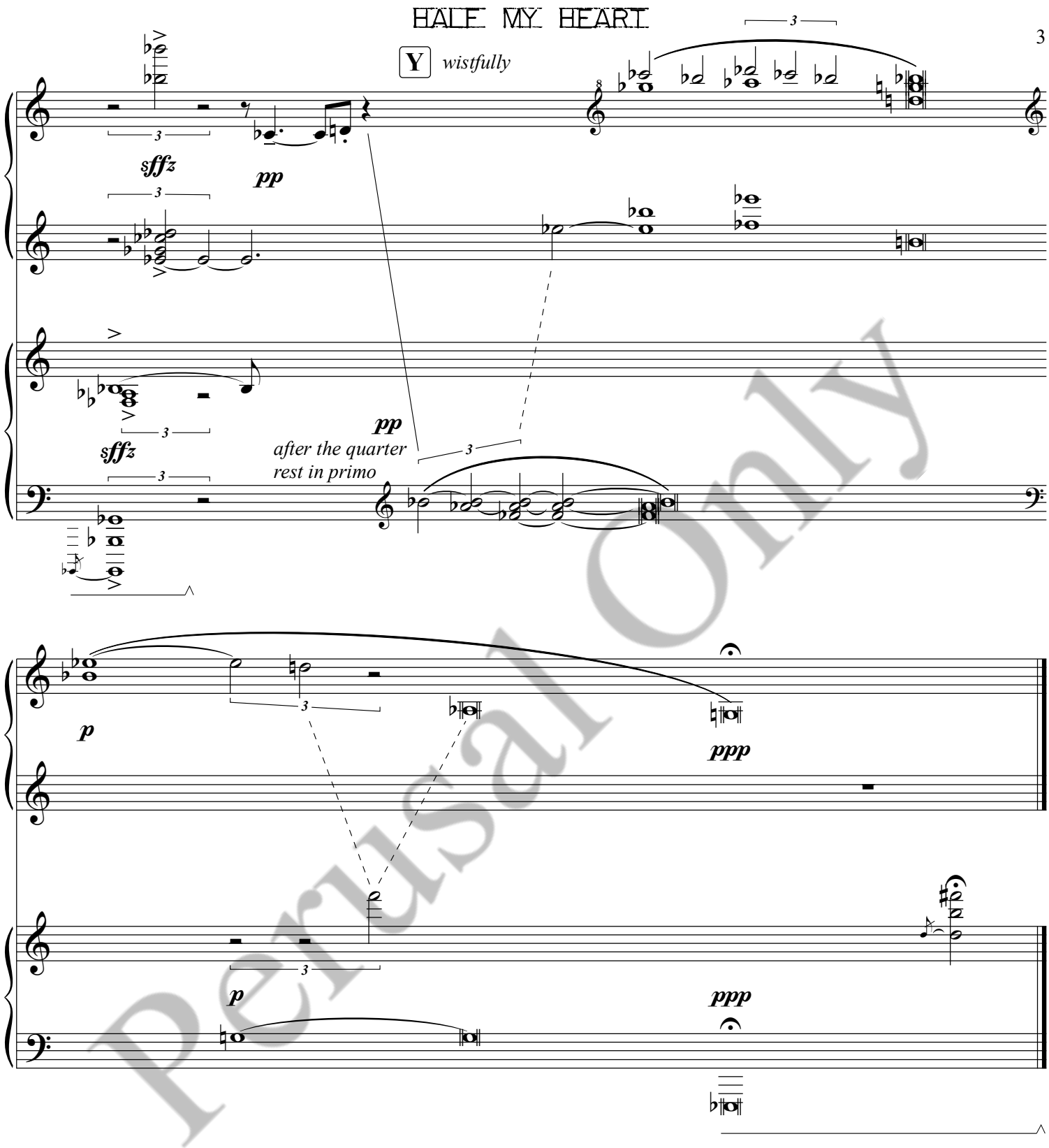

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