Western edge,

desert surface,

euphrates,

eastern edge

piccolo, oboe / guitar, percussion, 2 pianos / violin, viola, cello, double bass

Charlie Usher

Performance notes :
The ensemble is split into four sub-ensembles, each more distant than the other.
In order of ‘presence’, these are :

piccolo, oboe and guitar
pianos 1 and 2
double bass and percussion
violin, viola and cello

The seating is not necessarily to reflect this.

General notes:
All grace notes are written to sound like small breaths rather than exclamations,
and should stand in slight relief to surrounding tones.
All attacks should be soft - tone should glow from background rather standing in relief from it.

Piccolo, oboe and guitar (acoustic)
General dynamic PPP - all resultant imperfections and discolourings of tone are fine.

Pianos 1 and 2
One part played in unison.
General dynamic PPP - just brushing the keys.
Independent light rubato for each player.
L.V. marks imply finger-sustain as opposed to pedal-sustain.

Double bass and percussion
Percussion part is for 4 ‘grainy’ shaken instruments of staggered size/presence.
Both parts are very quiet, barely louder than the general ambient dynamic of the performance space.
The two players should work to create one unified timbre, each enriching the other.

Violin, viola and cello
As with the double bass, all parts are very quiet,
barely louder than the general ambient dynamic of the performance space.
All resultant imperfections in tone are fine.
The effect of the part is of an imperceptibly rising glissando.
Players have a certain amount of rhythmic freedom - new pitches should be arrived at within 3 or 4 beats of the notated point.

When writing this piece
I was thinking about types of presence:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| strong presence through offering lots of information | - | less presence through offering lots of information |
| strong presence through offering less information | - | less presence through offering less information |

quietness being more present than loudness

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| loudness offering no information | - | quietness offering a lot of information |
| massiveness offering a lot of information | - | massiveness offering no information |
| massiveness smothering information | - | intimacy offering a lot of information |

I'm still not convinced that any of this is quantifiable, but the ephemerality of this is something to work within.

The idea is that we stop hearing the long chord in the strings and that it becomes part of the flora and fauna of the room

and it's only when the 2 pianos* come back after 3** minutes (and that the pianos are now out of tune) do we realise the chord has been sliding upwards all this time

and that this room has changed.

In Michael Snow's 'Wavelength' the zoom fits the story like a glove in that what happens in the story fits uncannily into the limits of the narrowing shot.
The story gets less and less present - or rather offers less and less information.

Our view of the room changes and we are left with a photo of the sea
- outdoors - unconfined by horizon - infinity -

so a sort of nudge to look past the immediate
- the medium - the information - the story -

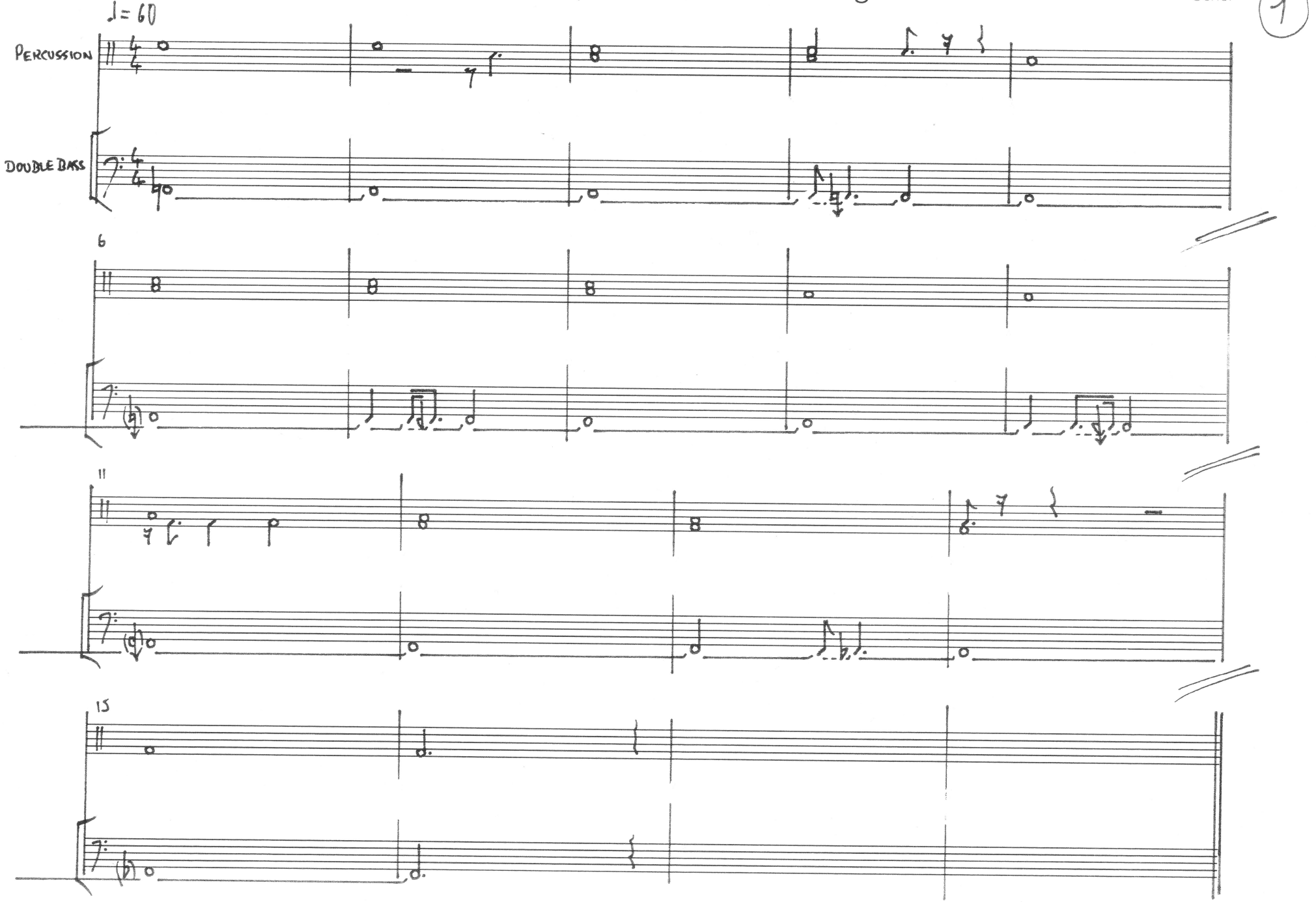
and further afield to reflection on other things.

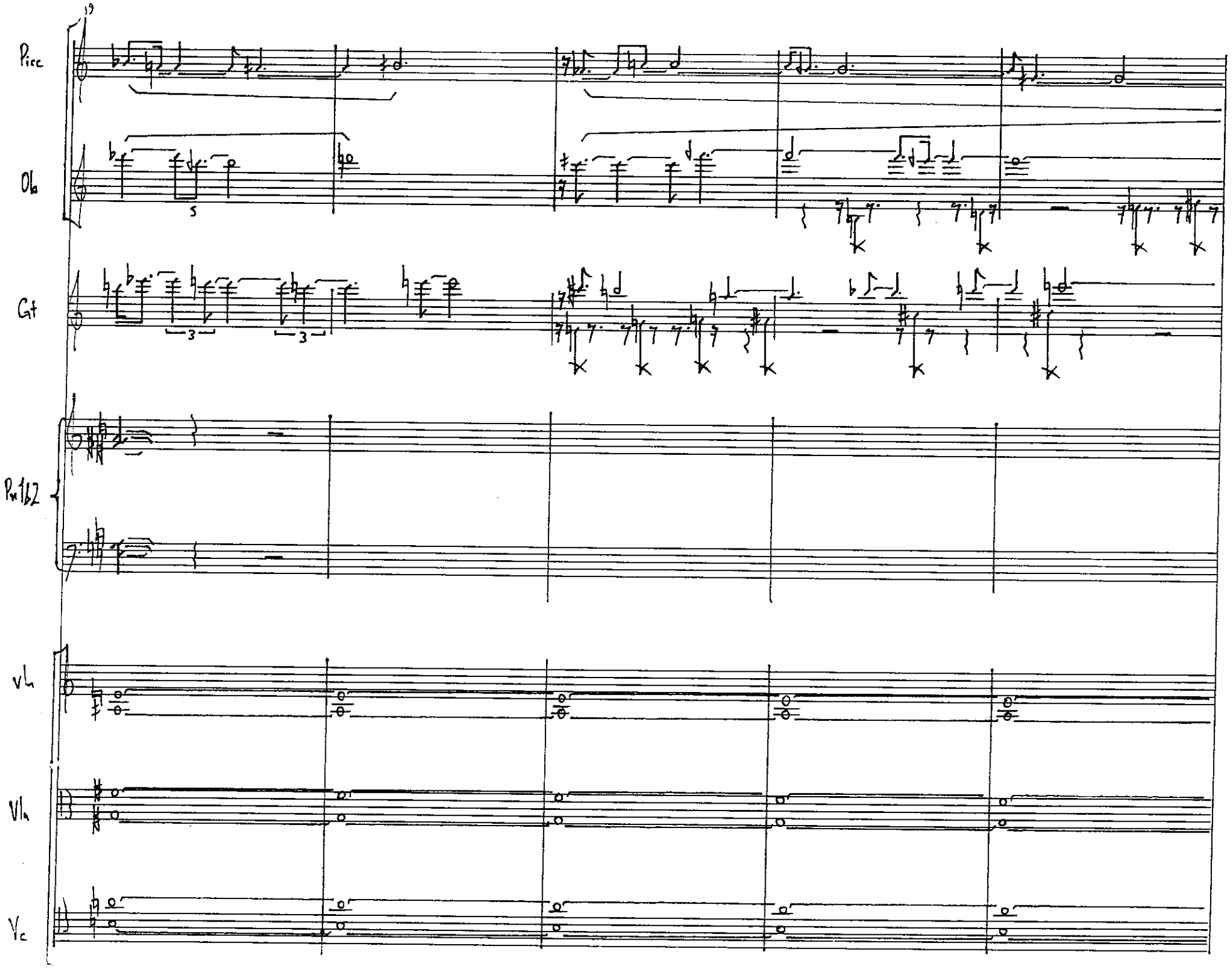
* for me the constant unison creates extreme mass
and the impression of infinitely numerous pianos!
** 2 medium and 1 very long

# Western edge, desert surface, euphrates, eastern edge

Charlie
Usher



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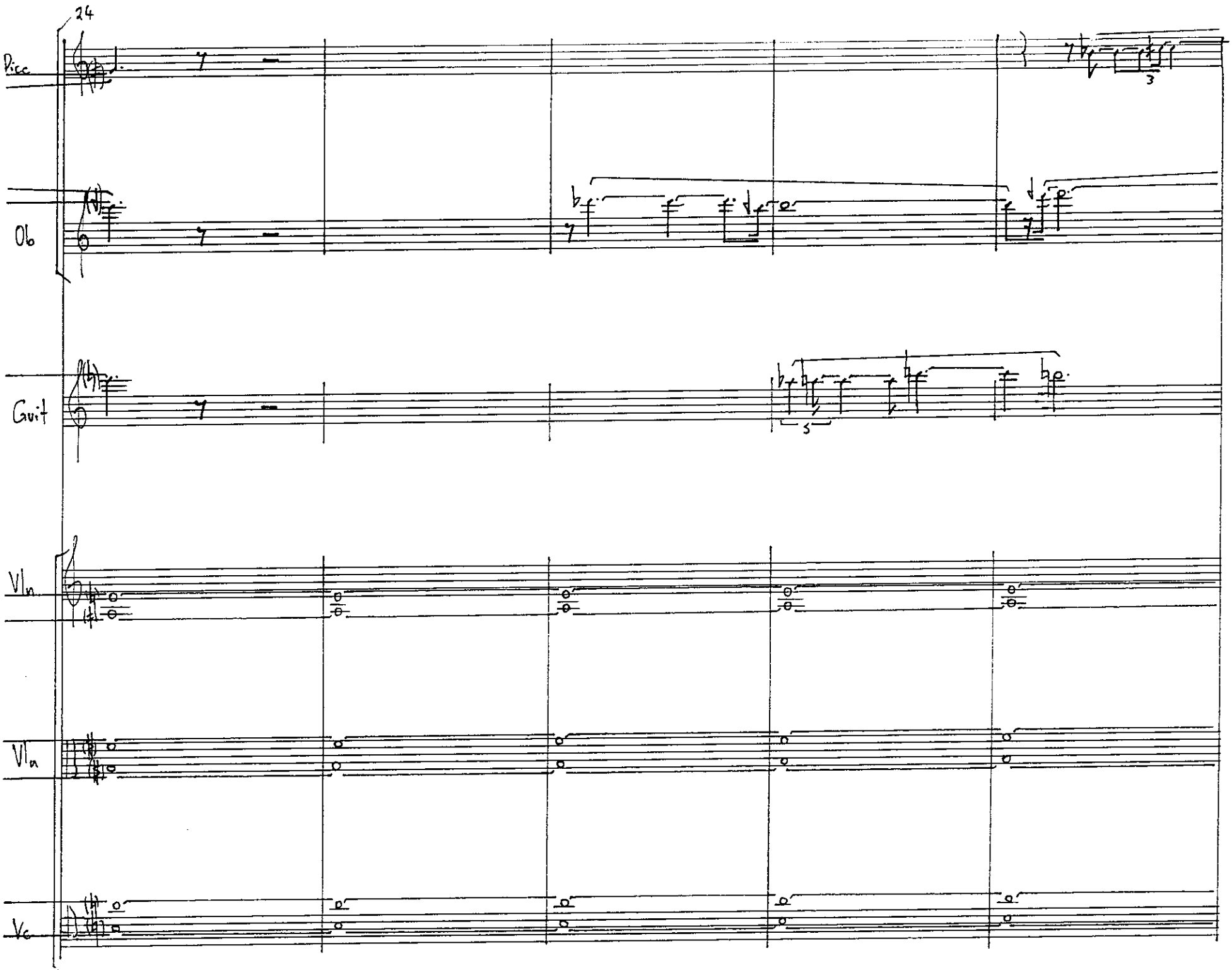
Picc
Ob
Gt
Pno/Cel
Vln
Vla
Vc
5
3
3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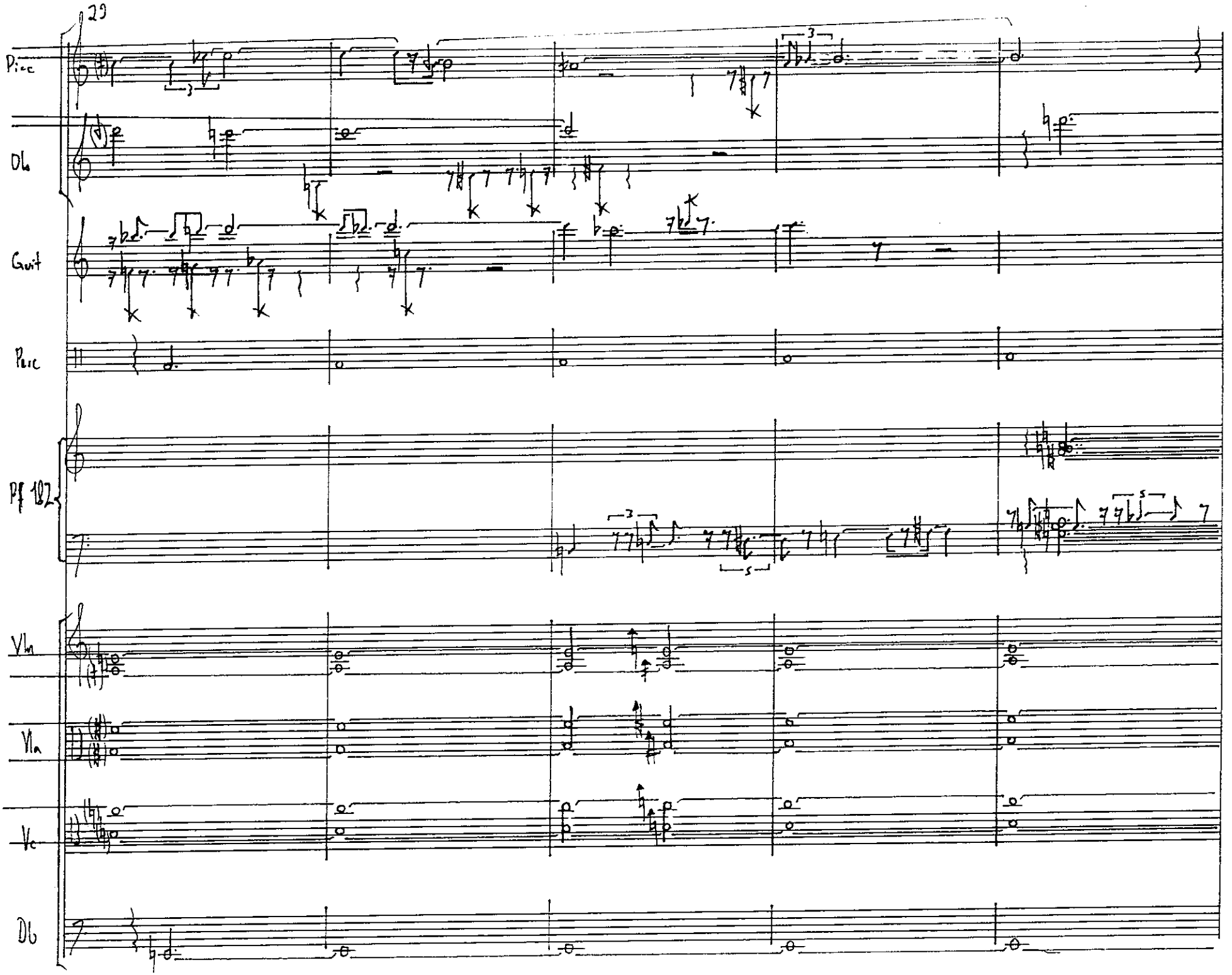
Picc
Ob
Guit
Vln
Vln
Vc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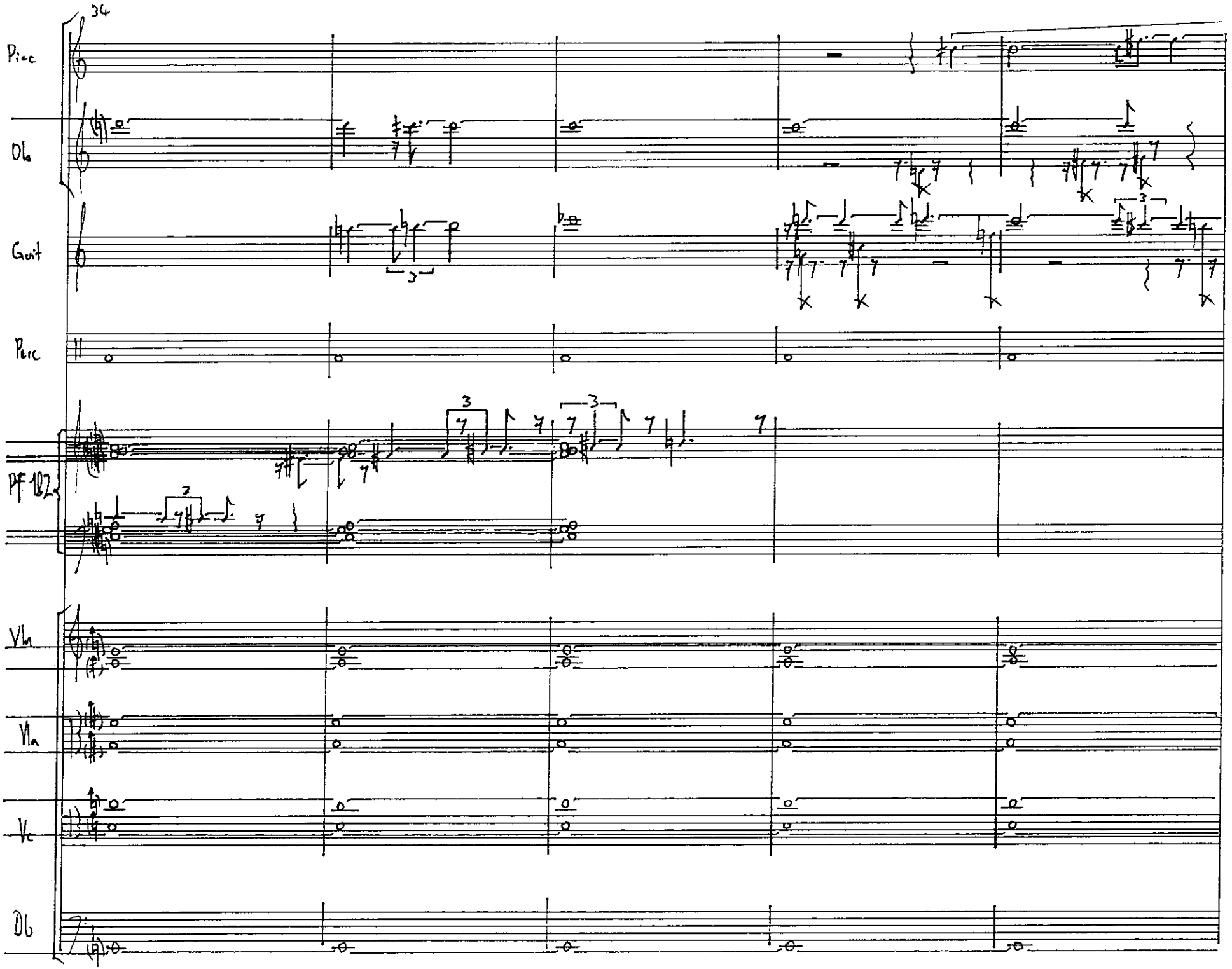
Picc
Ob
Guit
Perc
Pf 182
Vln
Vla
Vc
Db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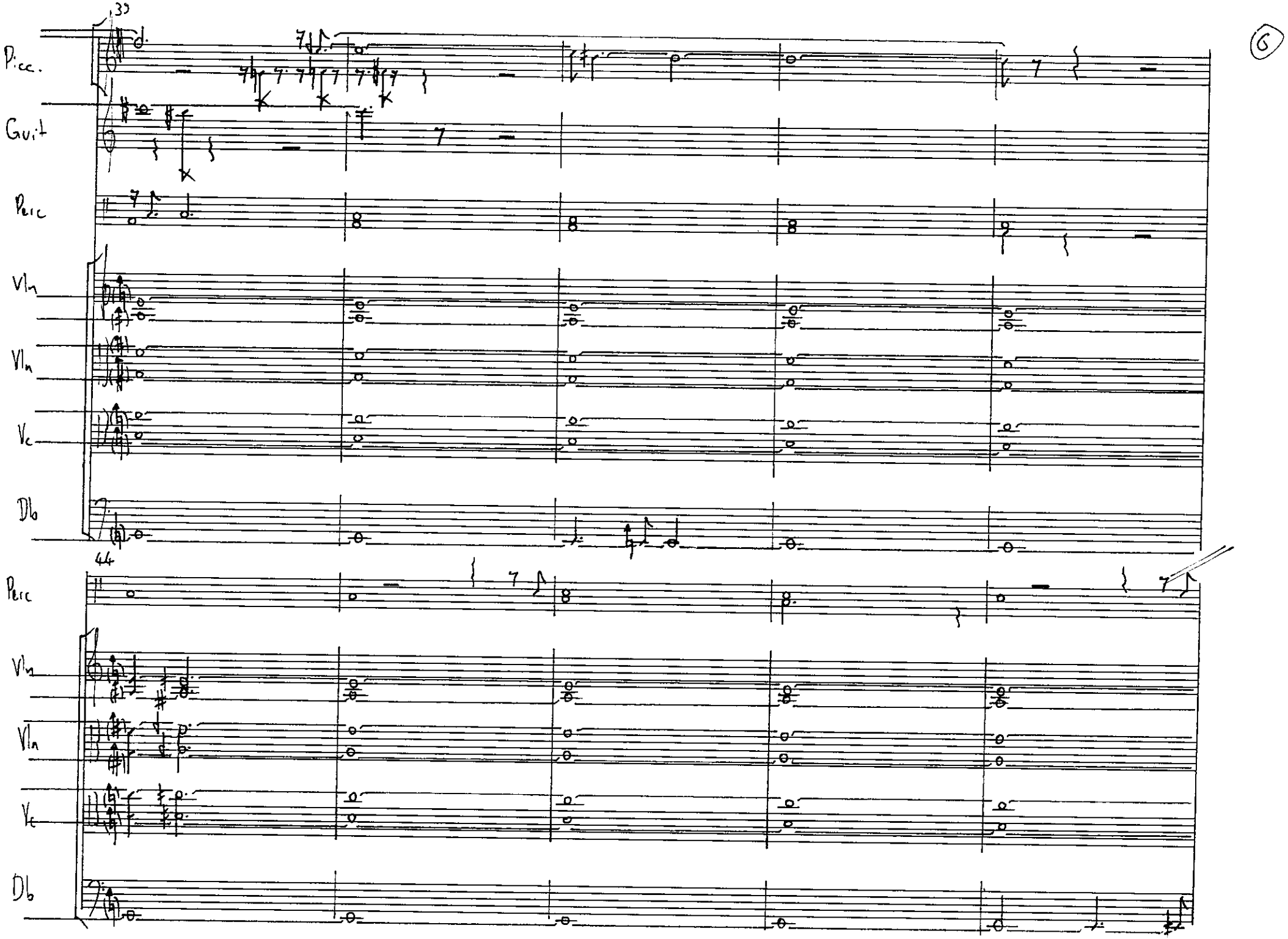
Guit
Perc
PF
Vln
Vln
Vc
Db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Guit
Perc
Vln
Vln
Vc
Db
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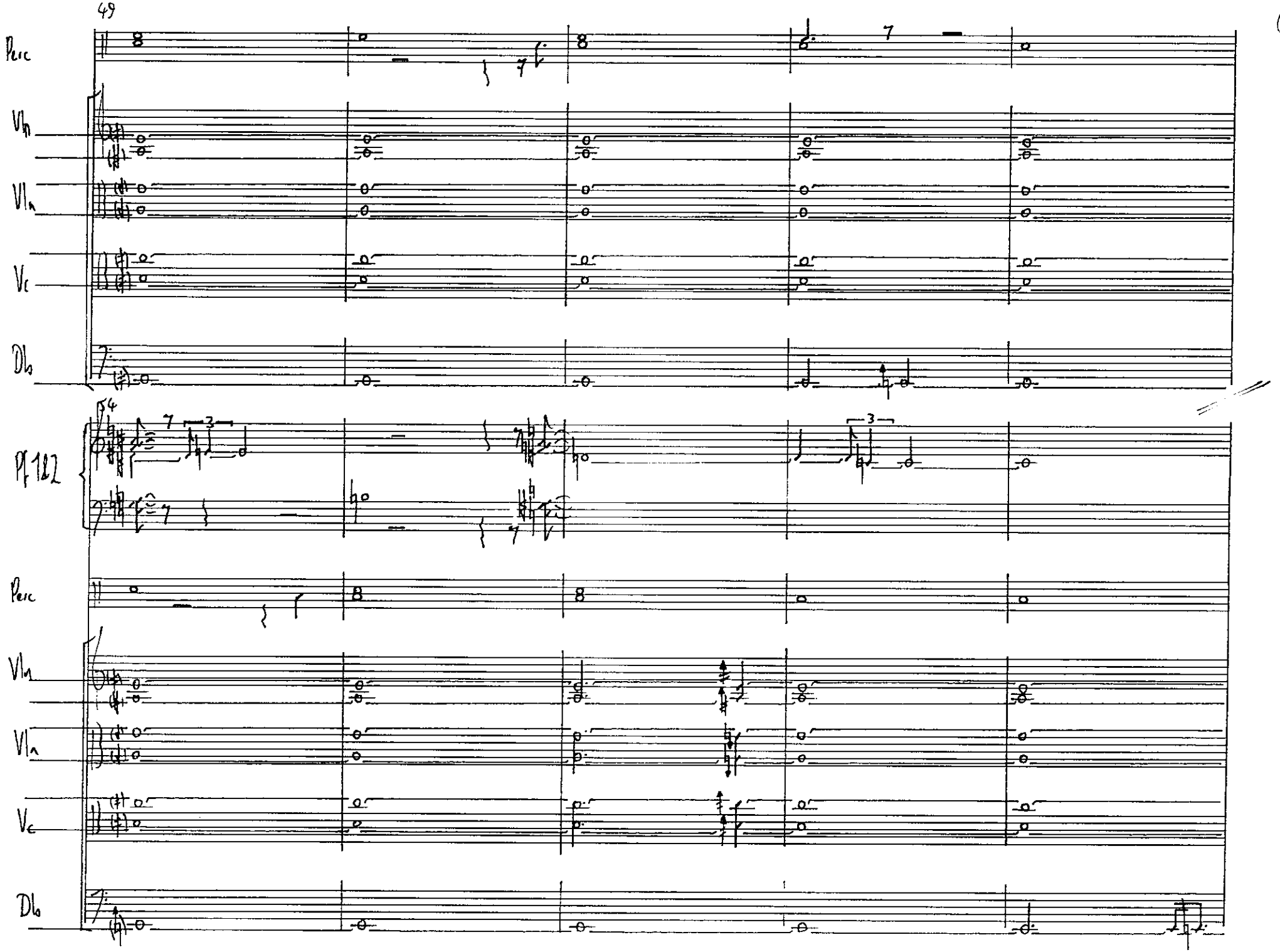
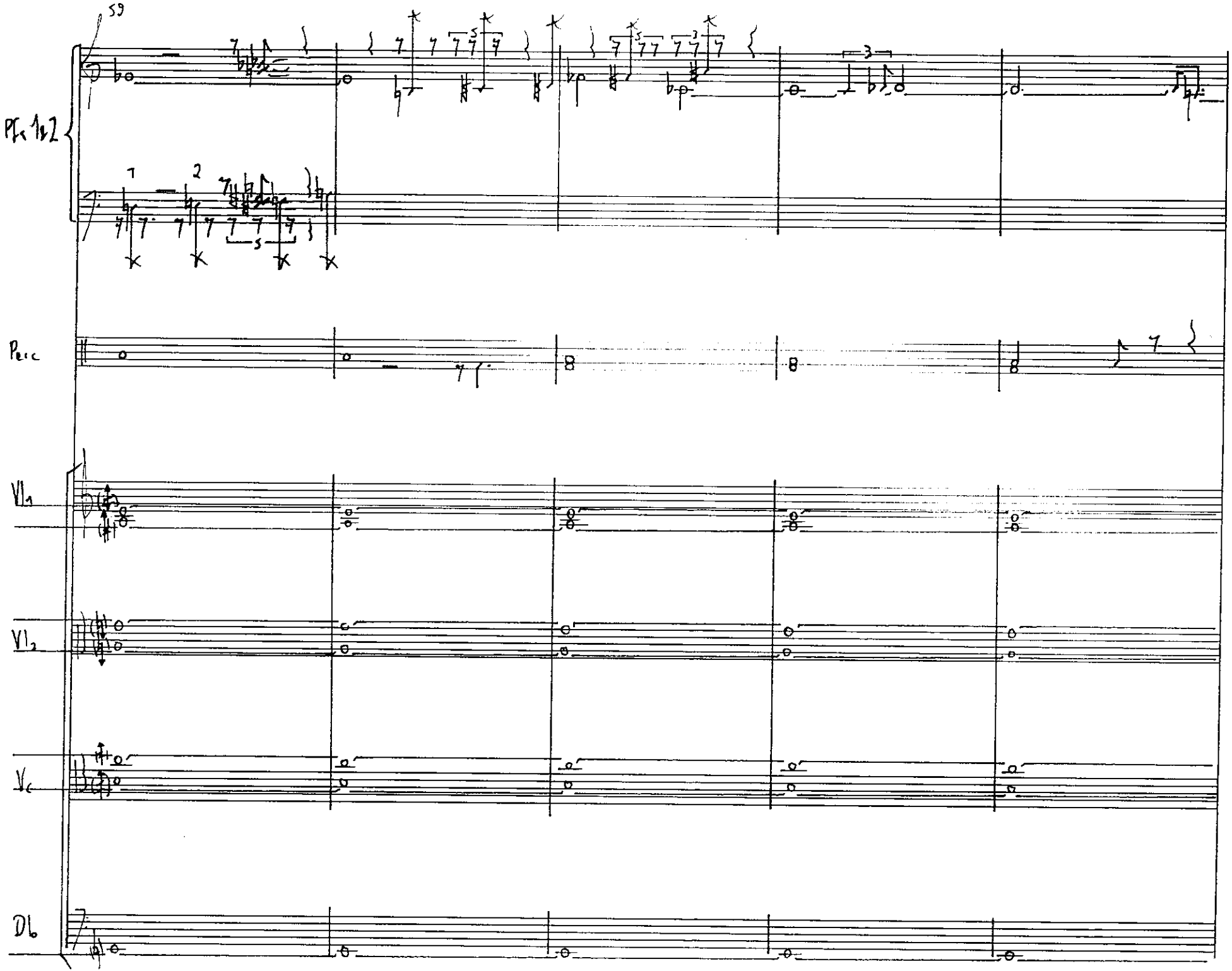
Perc
Vln
Vln
Vc
Db


Perc
Vn
Vla
Vc
Db
Pf 1&2
Perc
Vn
Vla
Vc
Db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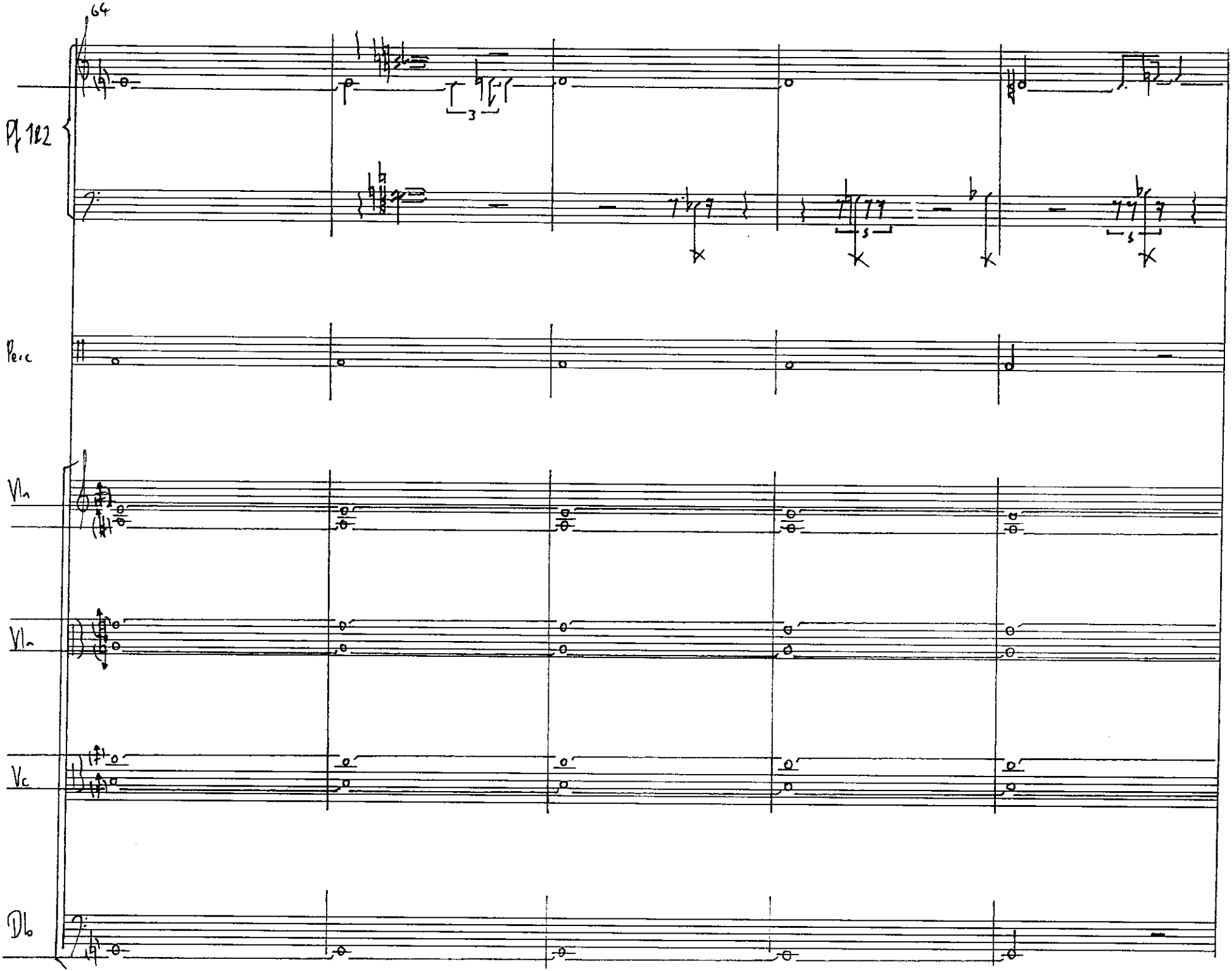
Pf. 1&2
Perc
Vl.1
Vl.2
Vc.
Db.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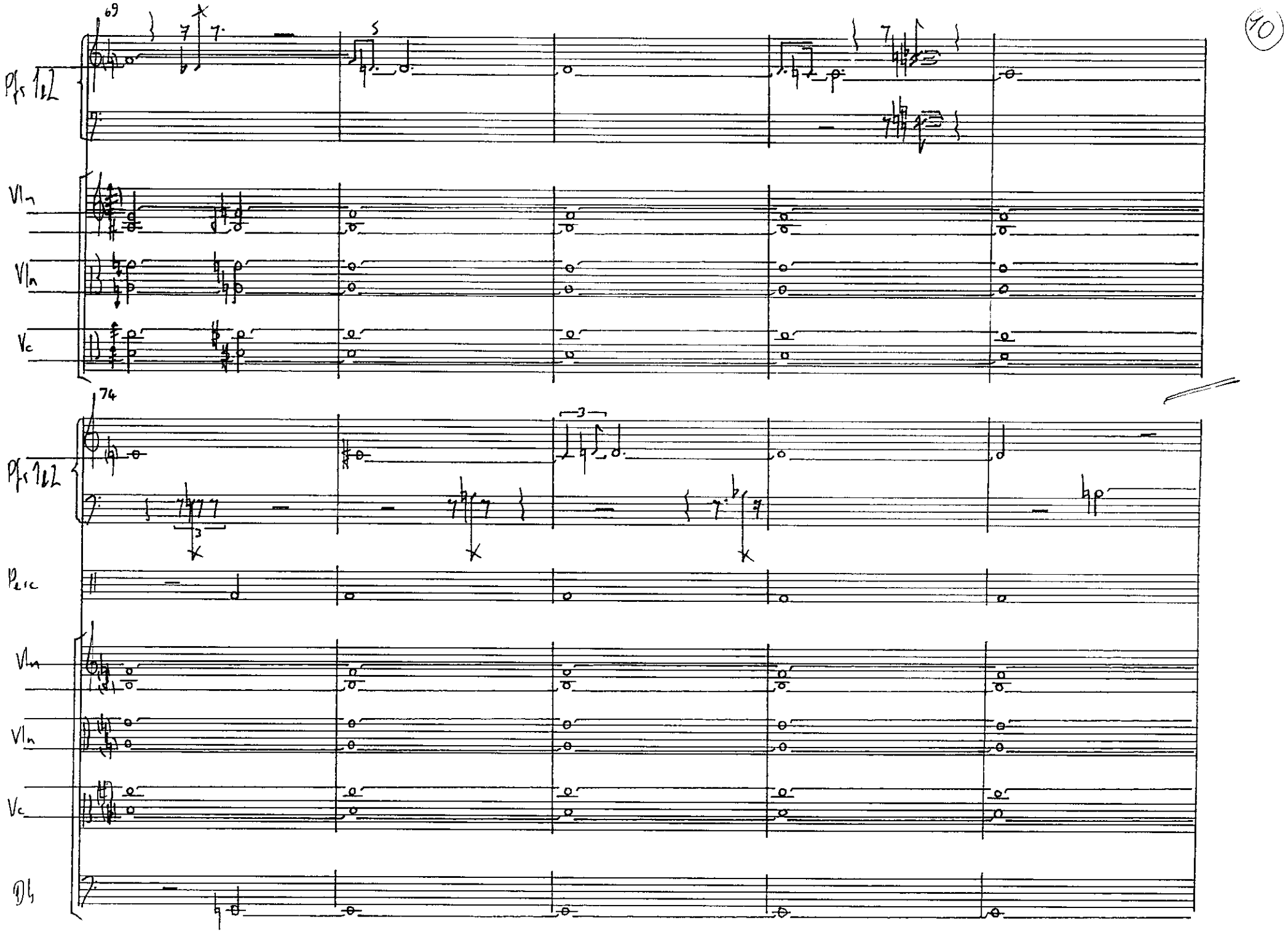
Pf 1&2
Perc
Vln
Vla
Vc
Db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Vln
Vc
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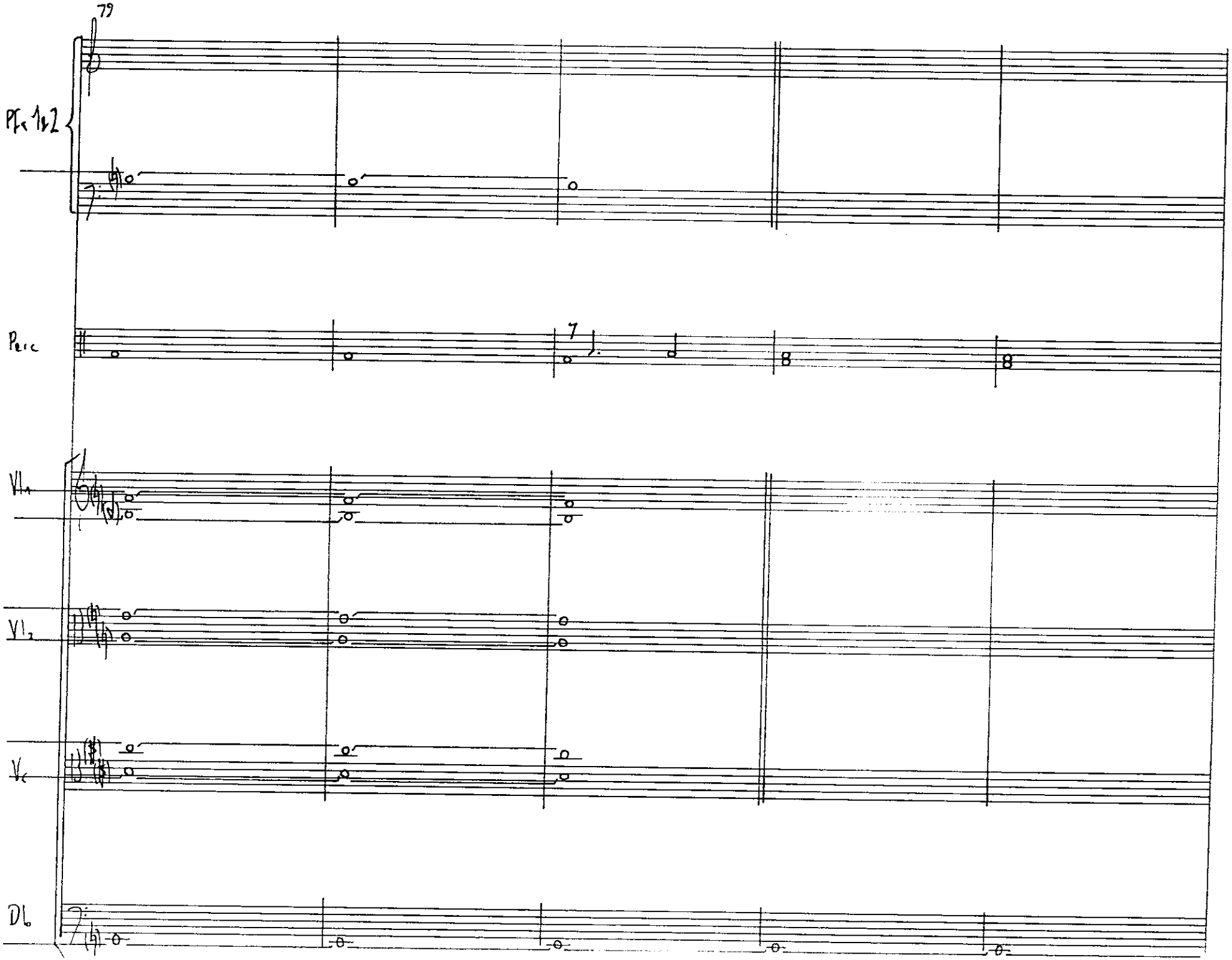
Pfs 1&2
Perc
Vln
Vln
Vc
Db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8
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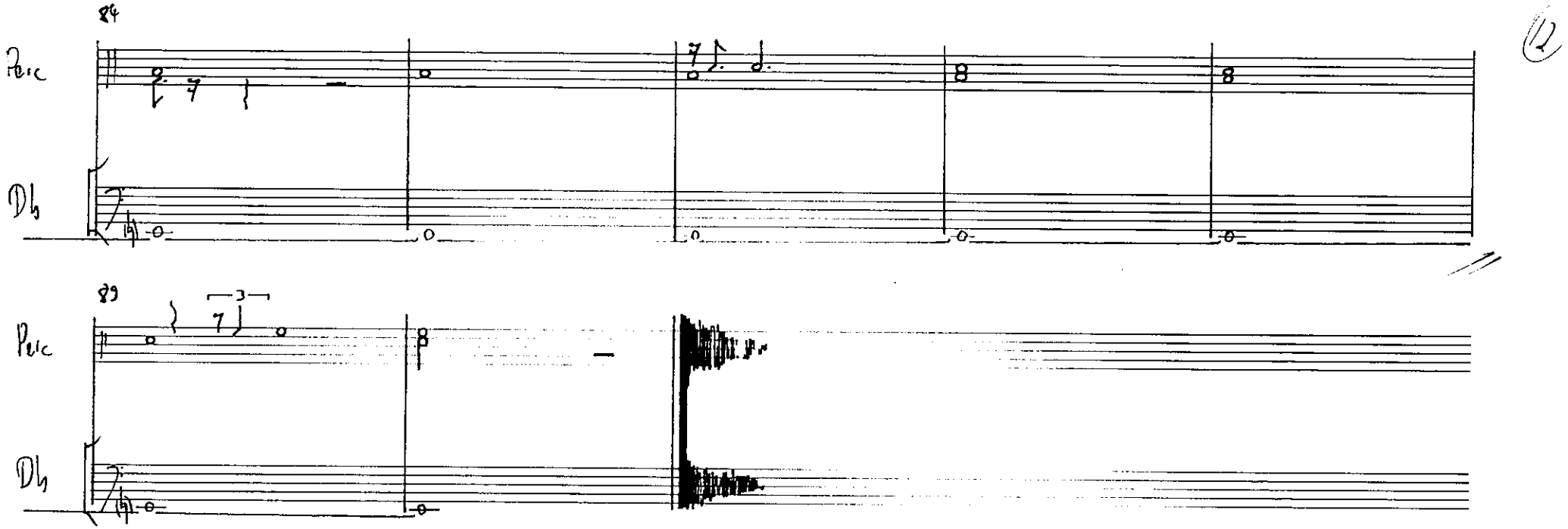
Vl.2
Vc.
Db.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Perc
Db
89
Perc
Db