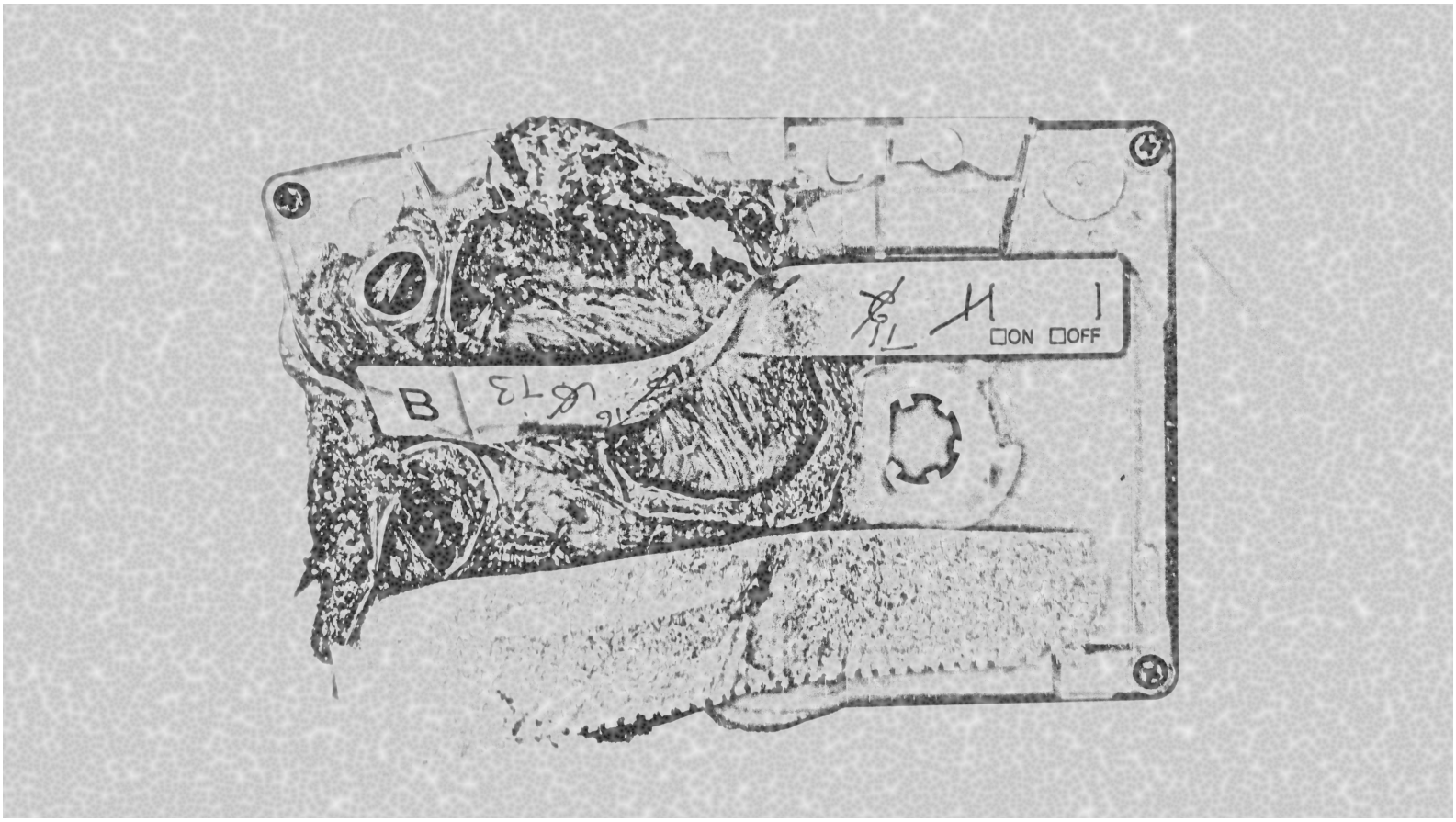
IN THE BACK OF MY MIND

FOR STRING QUARTET AND TAPE

February 2025



Max Boone

Performance Notes

Vibrato:

Each of the numbered sections should be played with varying levels of vibrato, increasing from 1, (no vibrato) to 7, (very wide and slow vibrato, deviating by up to a semitone). This should be worked out by the players, so that a gradual change can be heard from the ensemble across the duration of the piece.

Dynamics:

The players should maintain a regular dynamic level throughout, taking care not to increase in volume as they escalate their level of vibrato used. They should play at a general mezzo level, neither quite nor loud, consistently clear.

Repeats:

The numbers above the end repeat bars of each section of string playing refer to the number of times that section should be played, observing the special ending instructions

Electronics

The performers should all play with in-ear monitors, through which they shall hear the electronics (tape) track combined with a cueing track along with a click. The tape part of this work consists of a soundscape built up from distorted layers of a Beach Boy's style sample song, created by the composer. As indicated in the score, the quartet shall be cued in the track two bars before each entrance. For the last section, the ensemble are cued for every repetion in the same manner.

Live Performance:

Should the piece be performed live, the quartet should be individually mic'd and the whole ensemble amplified. The amount of amplification required will vary depending on the performance space, and must be balanced with the amplification of the tape part, but it should not cover the accoustic sound of the instrument.
The performers must hear the perfomance track, with tape, click and cueing track, while the audience hear the natural and amplified ensemble, and the tape part.

Duration: 13'30"

Copyright © 2025 by Max Boone

Front-matter illustration by Heinrich Vogeler (public domain)

In 2024 I was asked by the Valette Ensemble to write a new work for them to record. I would not know until I began working on it, but the piece had begun its inception many years ago,when I first listened to the music of the Beach Boys. Their early work dating from 1962 to 1966 is undeniably music written by young people, for young people. It really resonated with me at the time I first discovered it. It speaks of summer romances, trips to the beach, lovers' quarrels, surfing and all the other clichés of the 1960s upper-middle class California lifestyle. It is, when at its best, a direct, uncomplicated celebration of life for its main writer, Brian Wilson.

In 1983 Dennis Wilson's body was recovered by divers in a slip in the Marina del Rey. He had drowned whilst diving off a friend's boat, drunkenly searching for items he'd thrown off his own yacht, long ago sold to pay for bills and loans. This brought an end to the bands original incarnation, and to decades of struggle, fraught from the start with narcotics abuse, mental illness, involvement with Charles Manson, and a swift decline in relevance after the 1967 album Smiley Smile, when Brian Wilson was no longer able to usefully contribute to the group, due to his crippling psychological issues which lasted for decades. The band's entire history is marbled through with an undercurrent of tragedy, from the Wilson brothers' continued abuse at the hands of their father (and eventual band manager), to their song rights being sold without their permission, constant in-fighting and legal disputes and deaths of its members.

Today, Brian Wilson is the only one of his brothers remaining. Mike Love, founding member and cousin to the Wilsons tours separately as The Beach Boys, and sued Brian over songwriting credits in the 90s. In 2023 Brian's wife of over 30 years died, and hehas since been entered into another conservatorship. I often wonder how he feels now about songs like *Kiss Me Baby*, from the 1965 album *The Beach Boys Today!* Do these feel like distant memories of another life, as they feel to me?

to the Valette Ensemble

recorded at the RNCM on the 12th of March 2025

In The Back of My Mind

Max Boone

15"

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Violoncello

♩. = 35

Cue

Tape

♩. = 35

tutti sempre con sord.

1

play 4 times

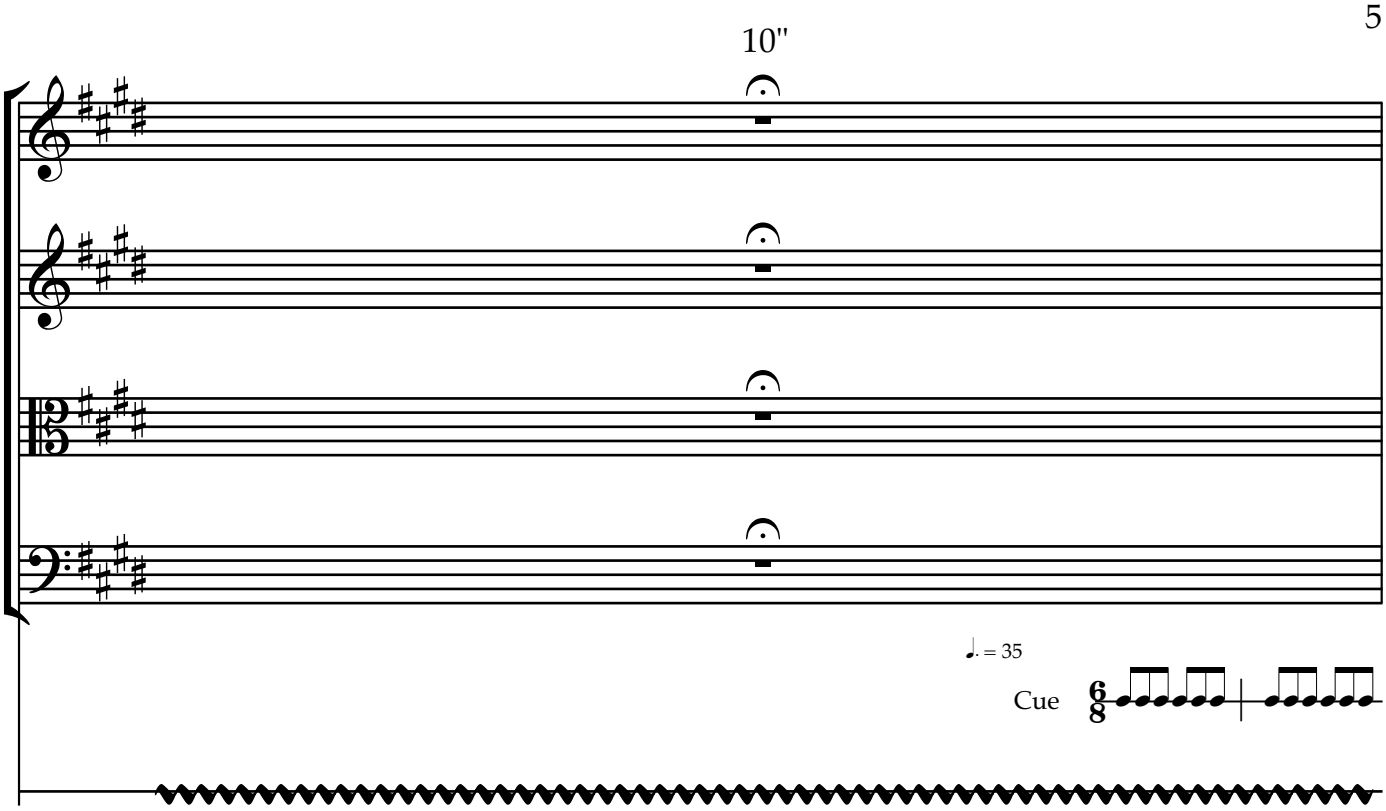
1. 2. 3. only

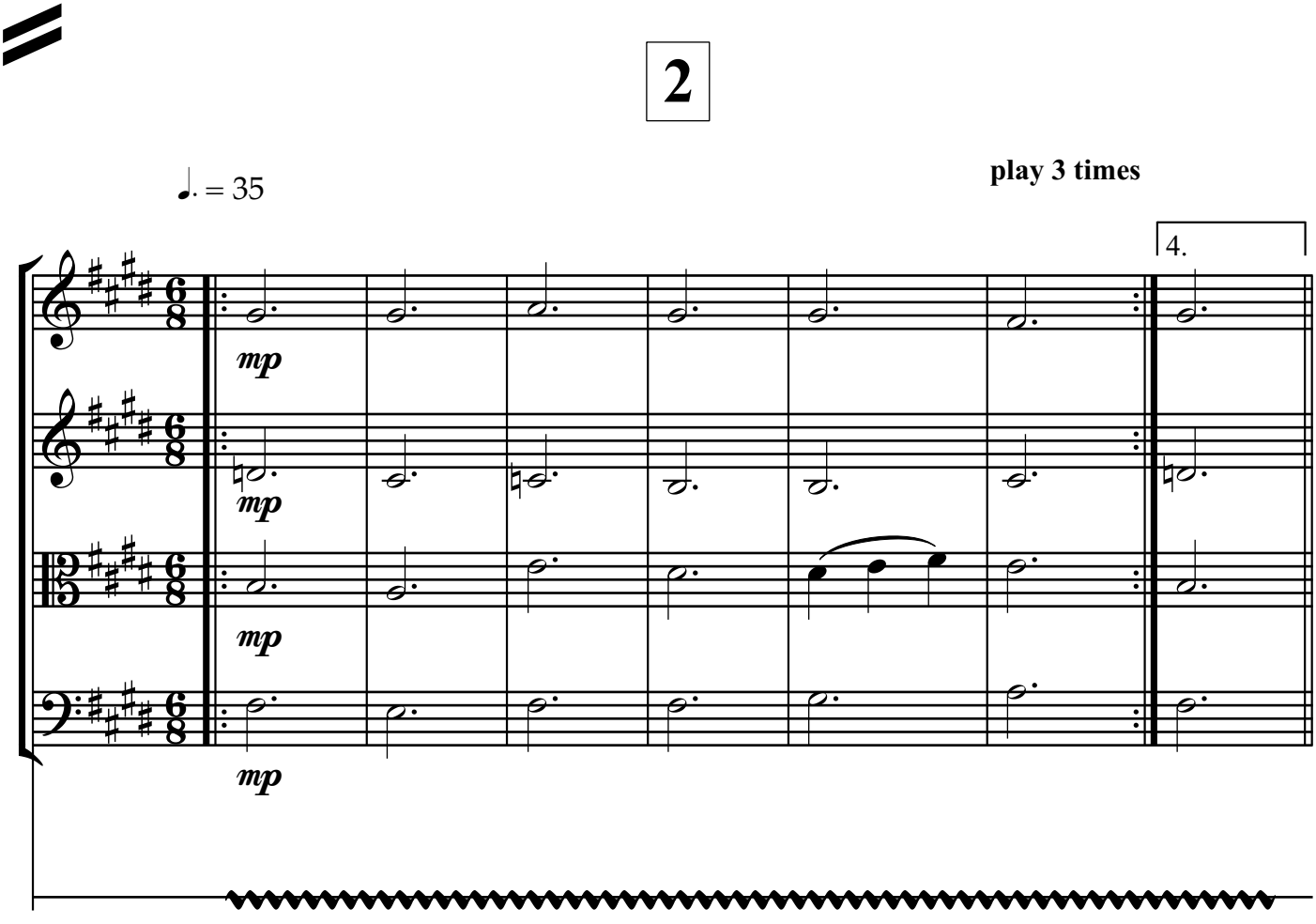
mp

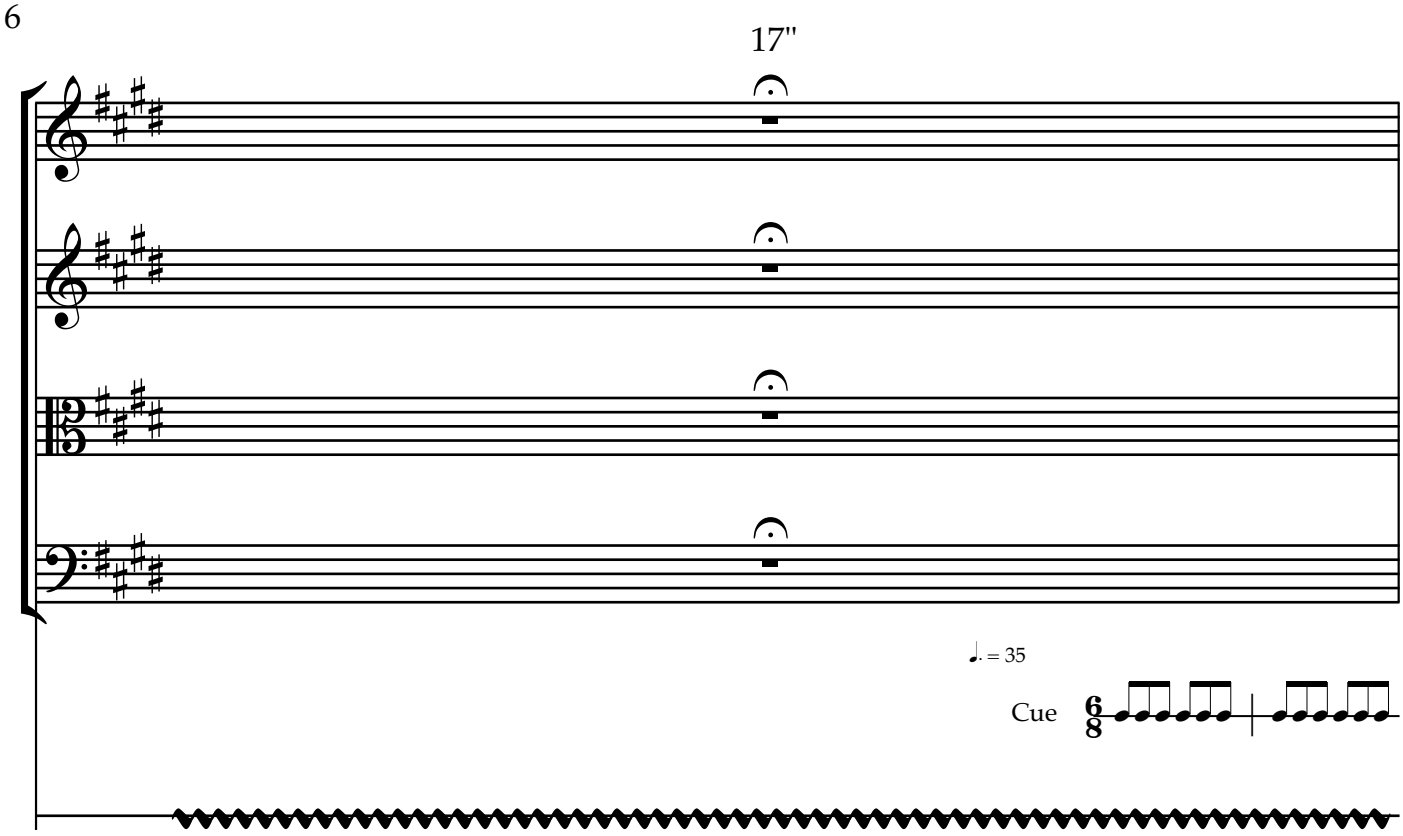
mp

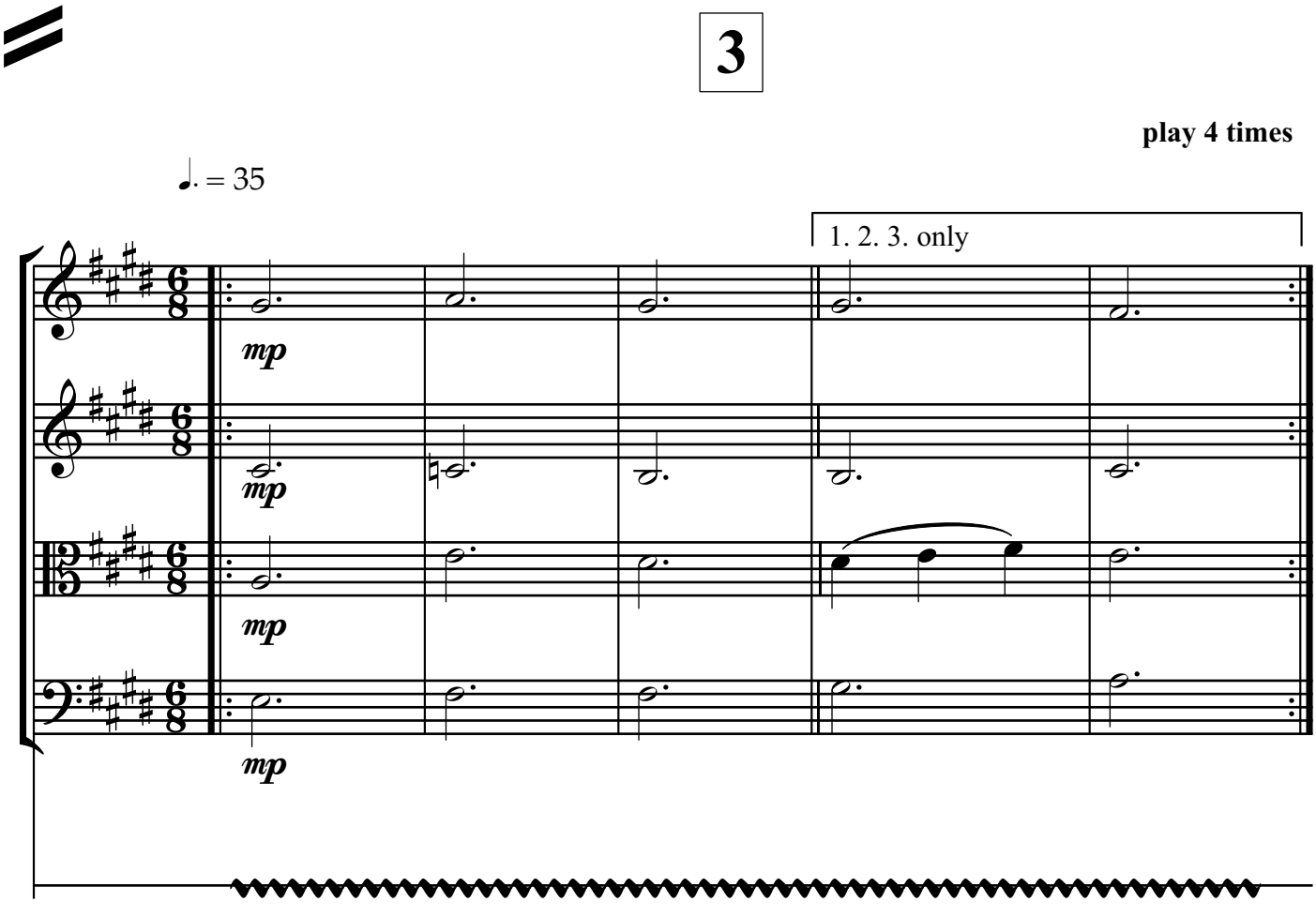
mp

mp

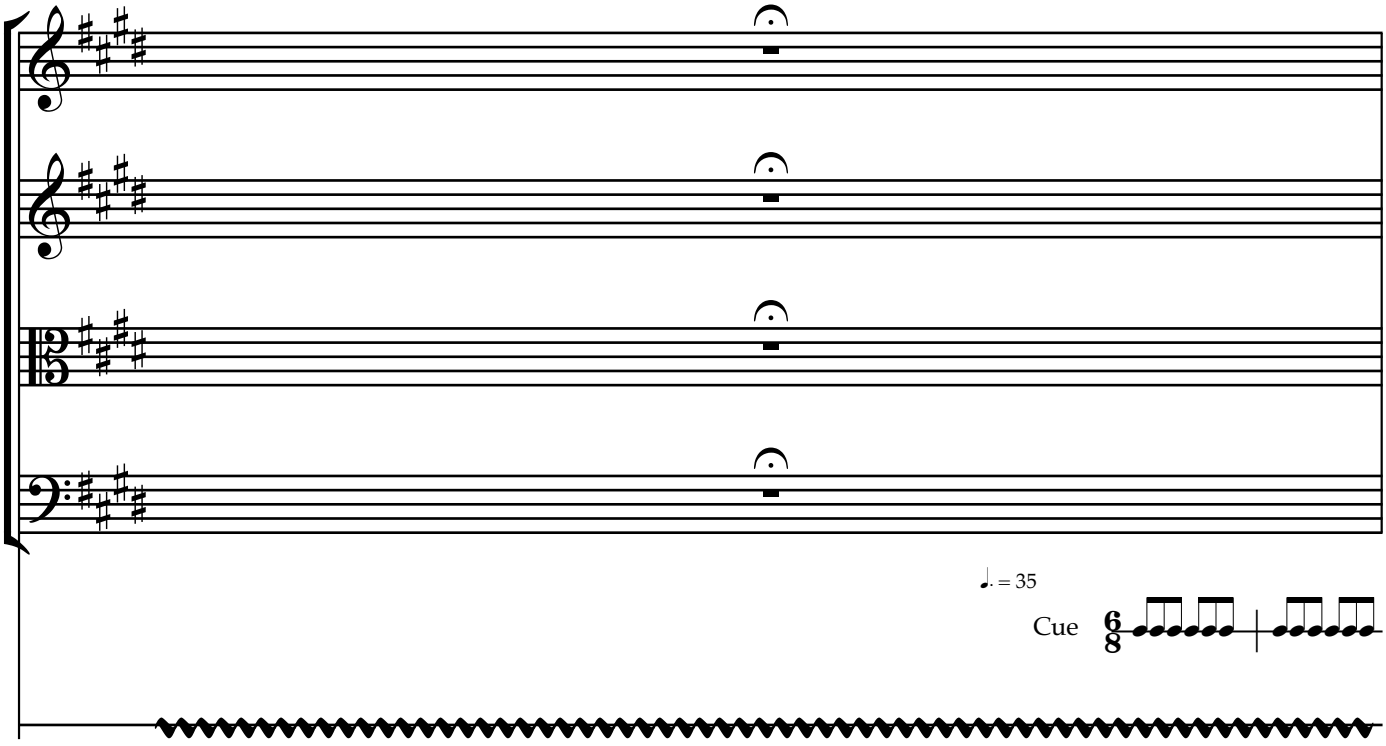

10"
♩. = 35
Cue


2
play 3 times
♩. = 35
4.
mp
mp
mp
mp


17"
♩. = 35
Cue

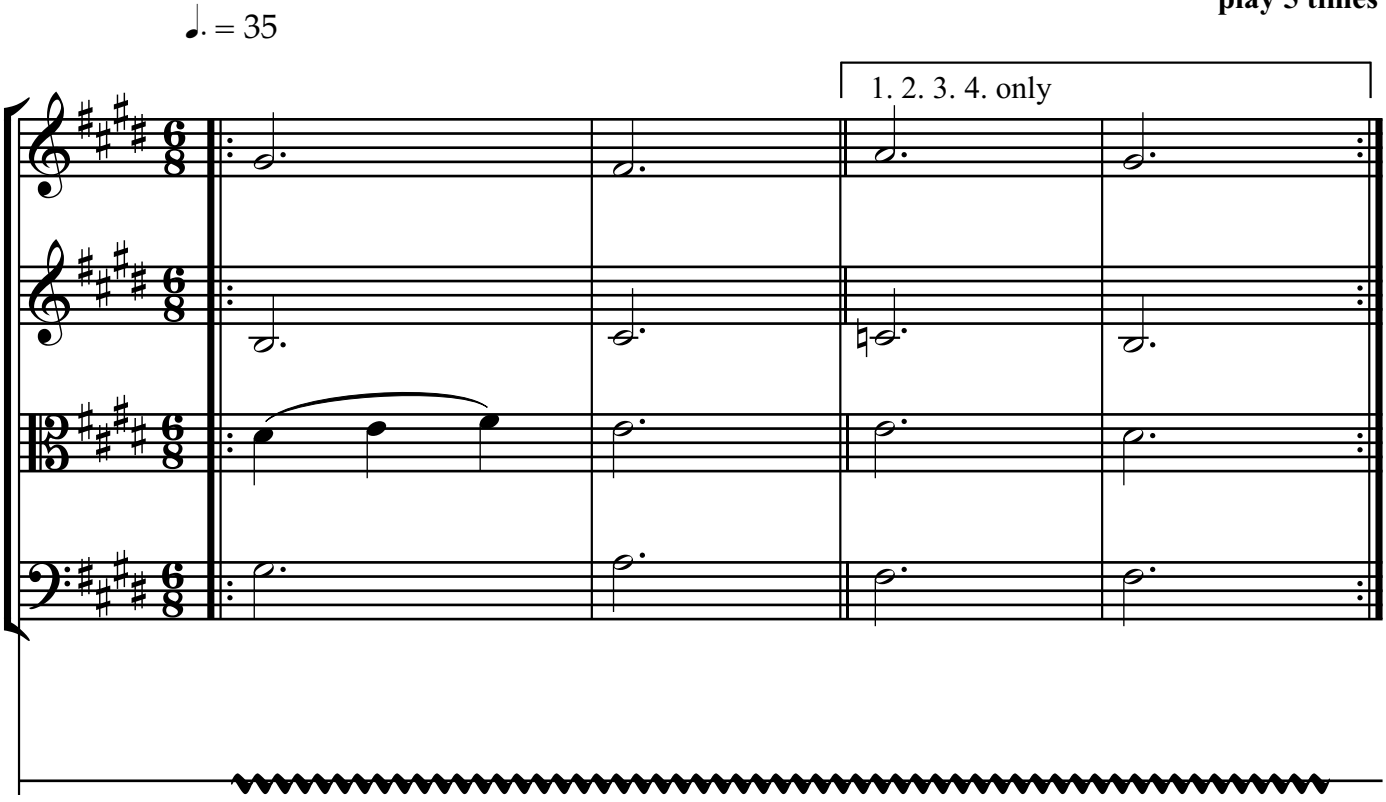

3
play 4 times
♩. = 35
1. 2. 3. only
mp
mp
mp
mp

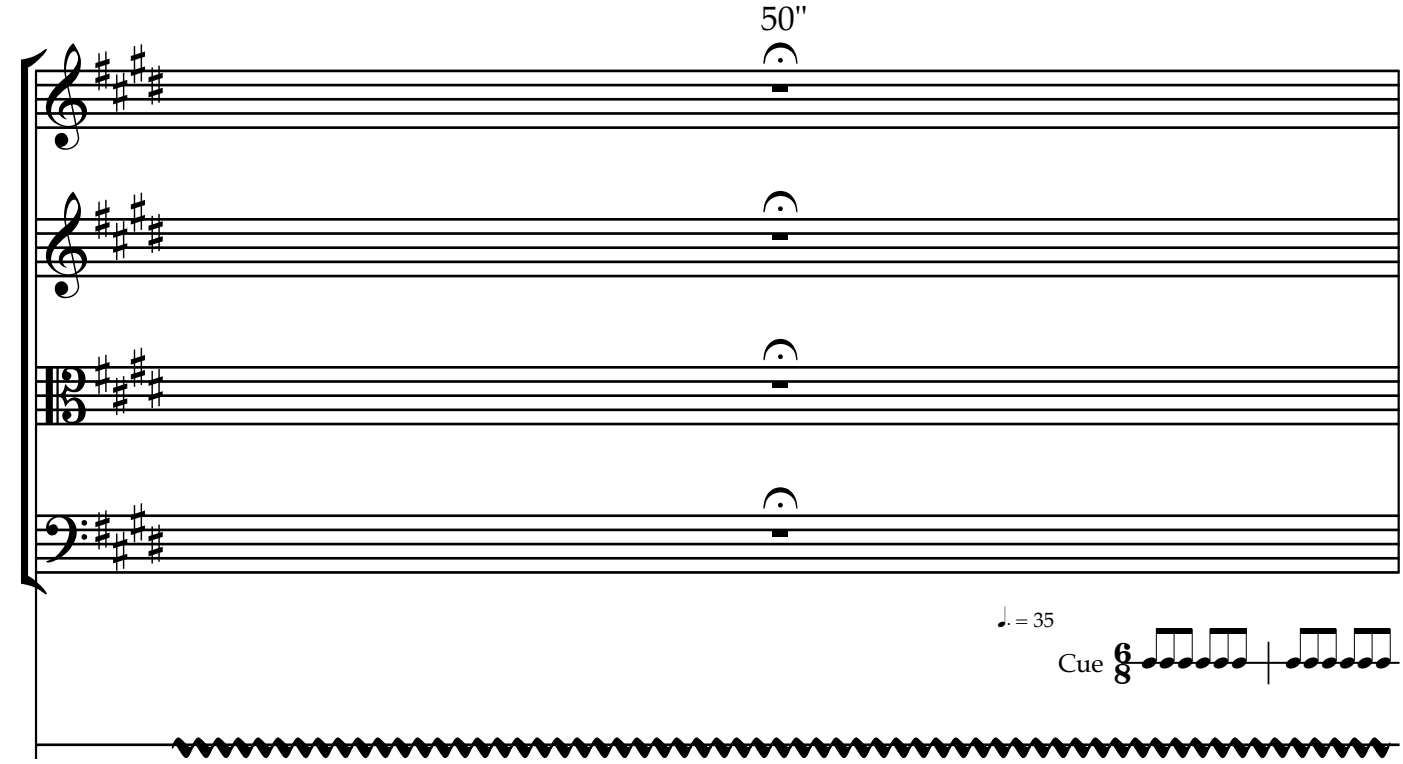
25"

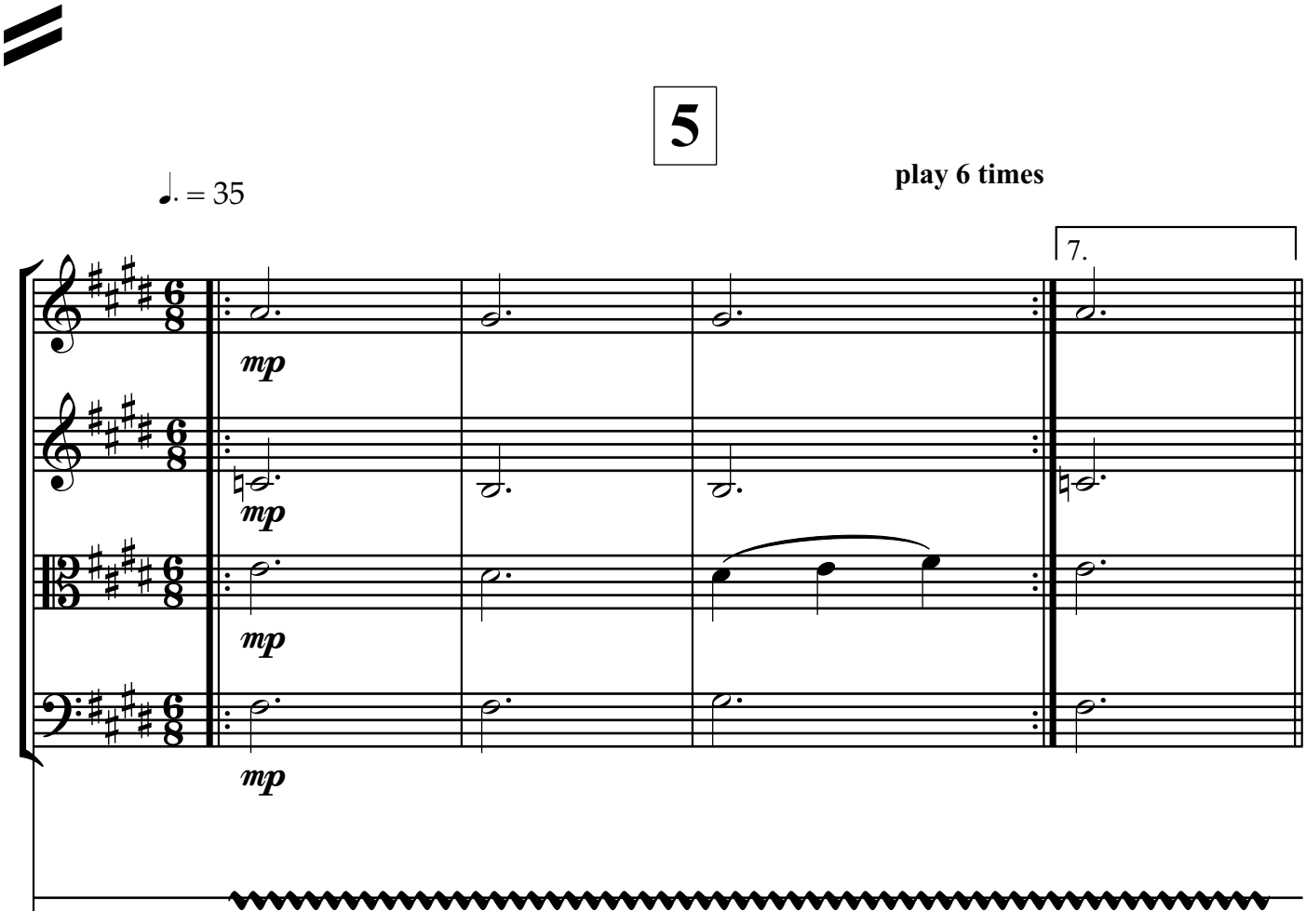


4

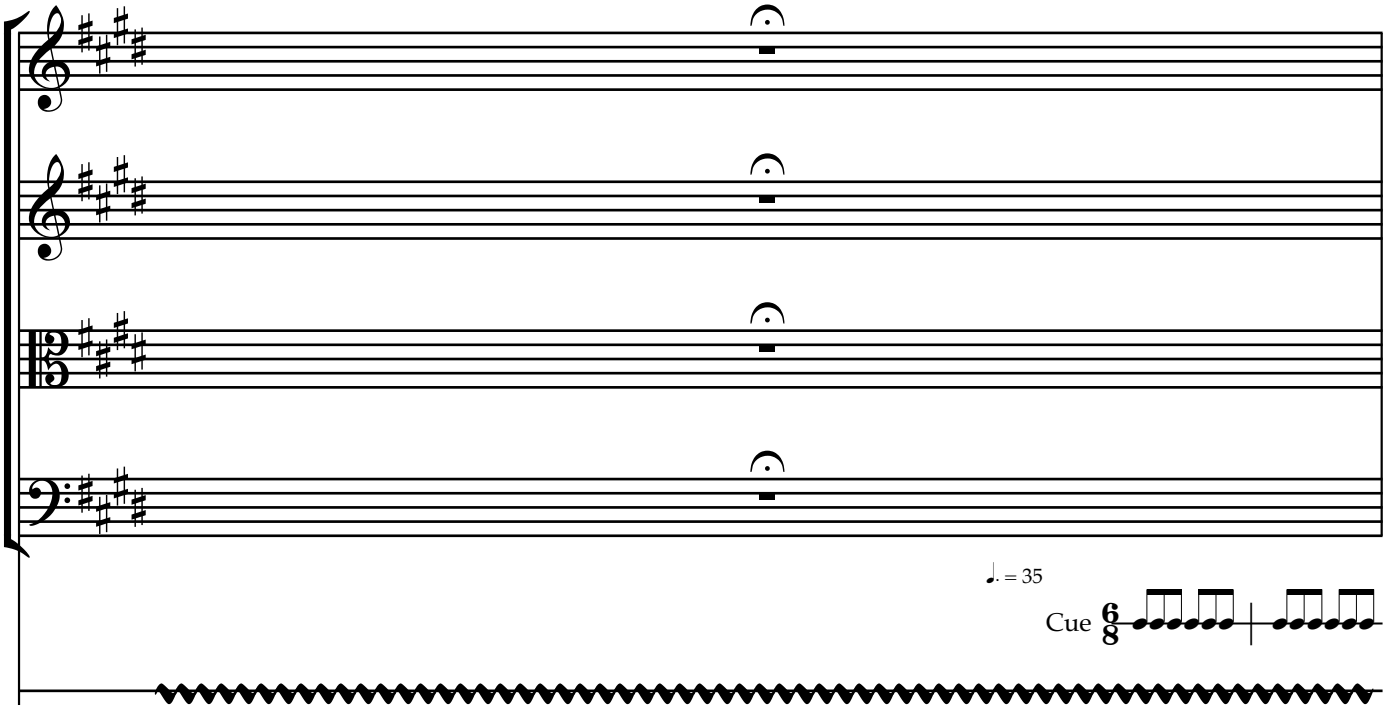
play 5 times




50"
♩. = 35
Cue


5
play 6 times
♩. = 35
7.
mp
mp
mp
mp

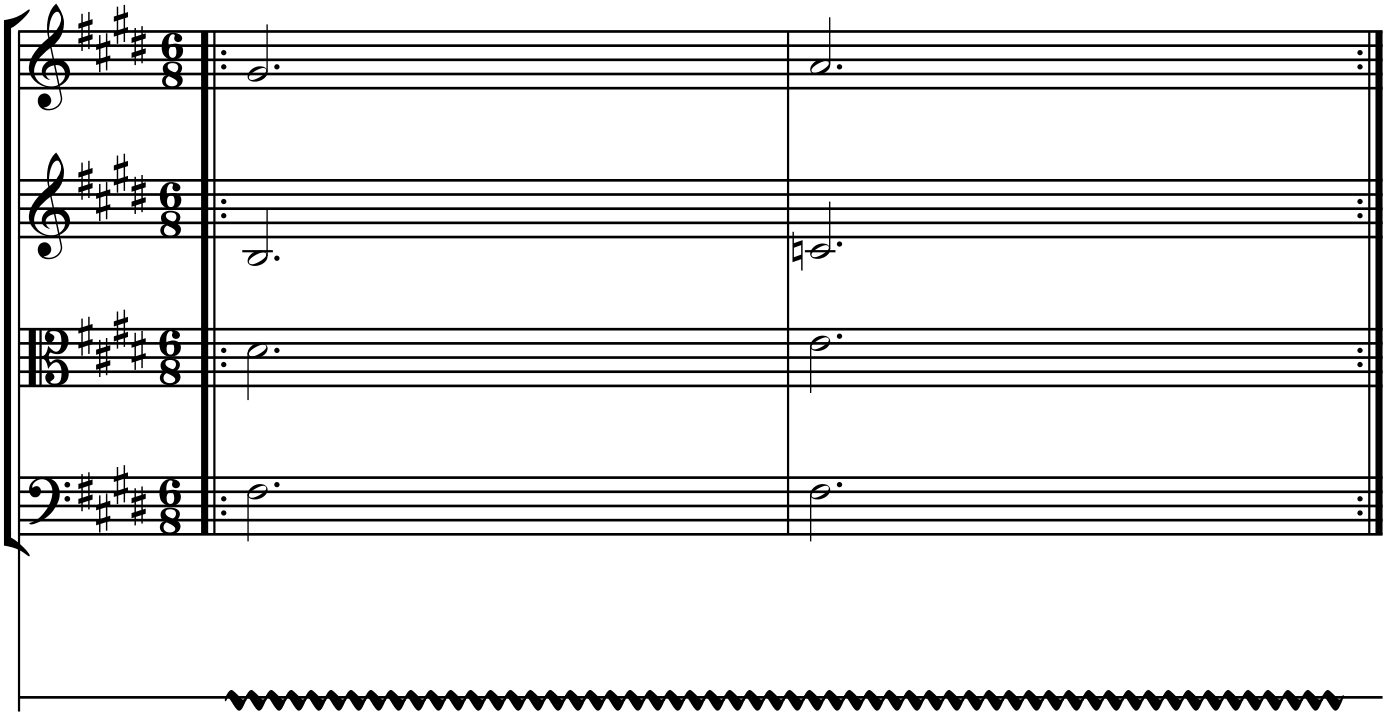
57"

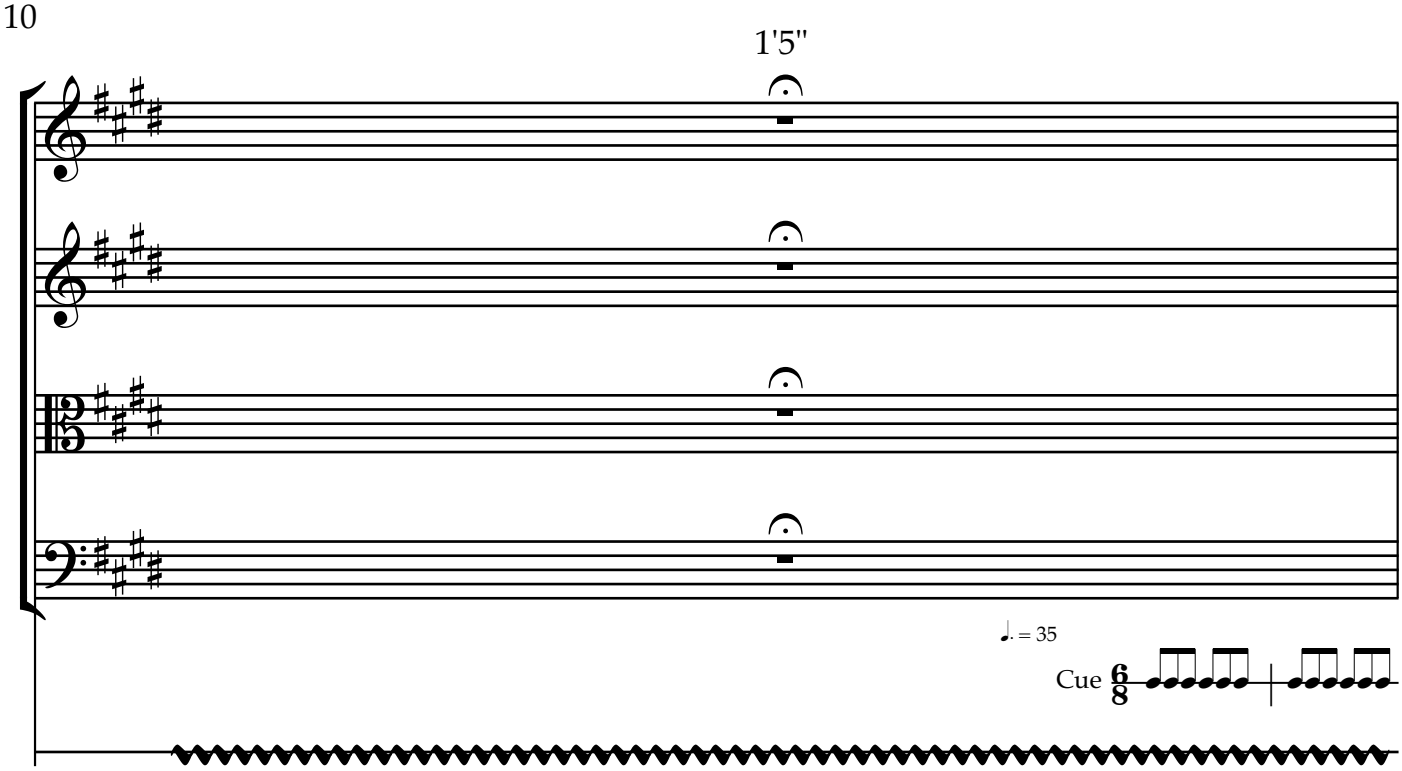


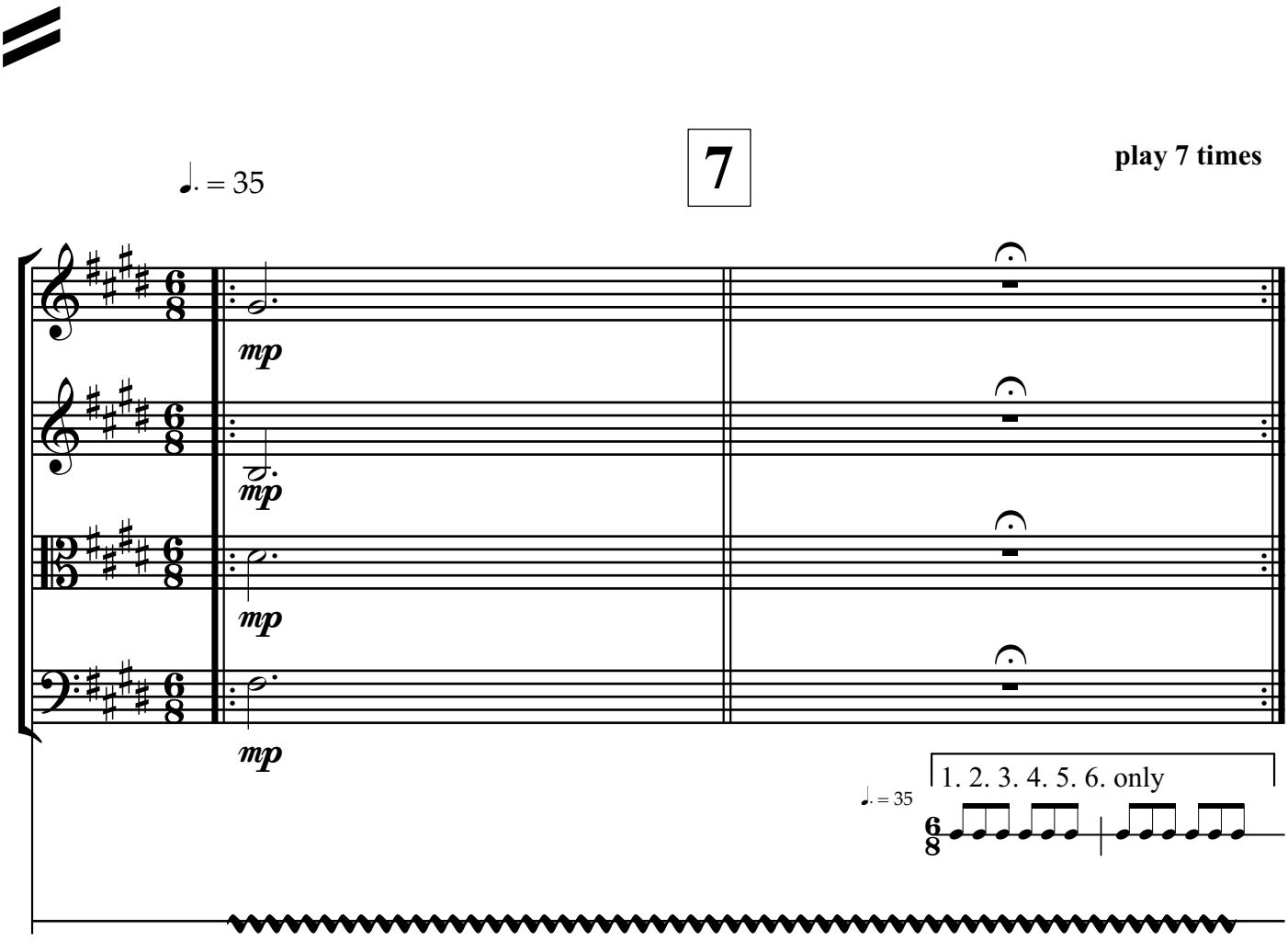
6

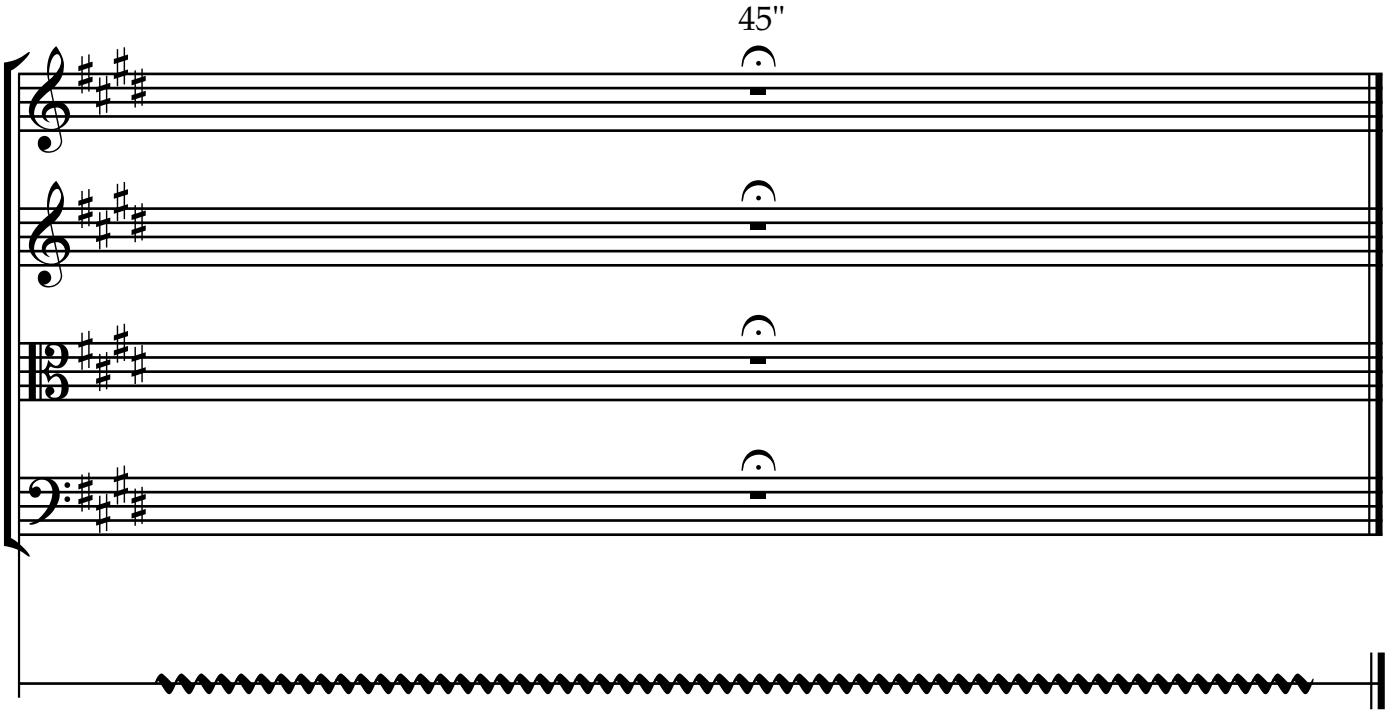
♩. = 35

play 10 times




1'5"
♩. = 35
Cue


7
play 7 times
♩. = 35
mp
mp
mp
mp
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. only
♩. = 35


45"