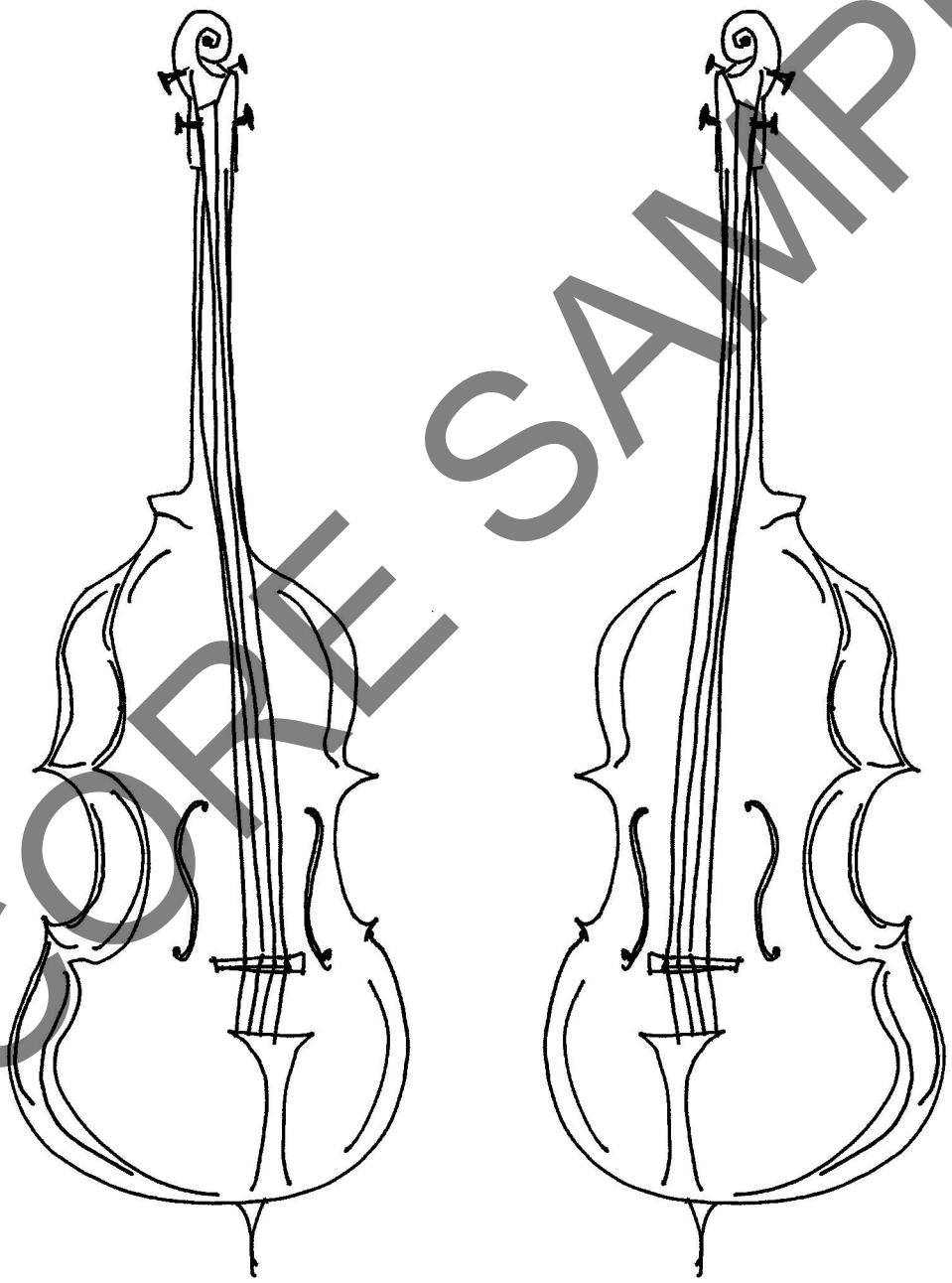
The Argument

Duet for Double Basses



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Duet for Double Basses

The Argument was composed by Zoe Gougousidis in 2022. It was premiered by Michael McNamara and Sam Malone on the 31st of May 2022, in the Music Workshop Concert Hall at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. It was premiered as a part of a showcase of works by senior Composition students.

Duration: c. 5 minutes 20 seconds.

Programme and Performance Notes:

The Argument tells the story of two double bassists who perform a duet together, but cannot agree on how to end phrases in the music. This causes arguments between the two performers.

The lyrical passages represent the duet that is being played by the performers, aiming for a resonant and achingly beautiful sound. It utilises a wide range of tone colours, from the brittle high register to the deep and powerful low register, aiming for lyricism across the whole range. At the end of each lyrical passage, one of the bassists ends the phrase, before being interrupted by the other player as they disagree on how the first ended it.

The tense sections, in contrast, represent the players arguing with each other. One player's part is based on the phrase that ended the lyrical section, and the other's part is based around an alternate ending to the phrase. These two endings being used simultaneously represent the two players arguing for what they think is a superior way to end the phrase. This causes tension, dissonance and momentum.

Double Bass 1 prefers tonal phrase endings, using a leading tone and resolution in the first tense section, and an arpeggio in the second tense section, whereas Double Bass 2 uses more non traditional phrase endings.

The final section of the piece represents the argument between the two players getting more heated, as they get angrier. Using dissonance, more complex rhythms and an extreme dynamic range to create tension and exacerbate the sense of anger.

The piece ends with the argument unresolved, the players agreeing to disagree.

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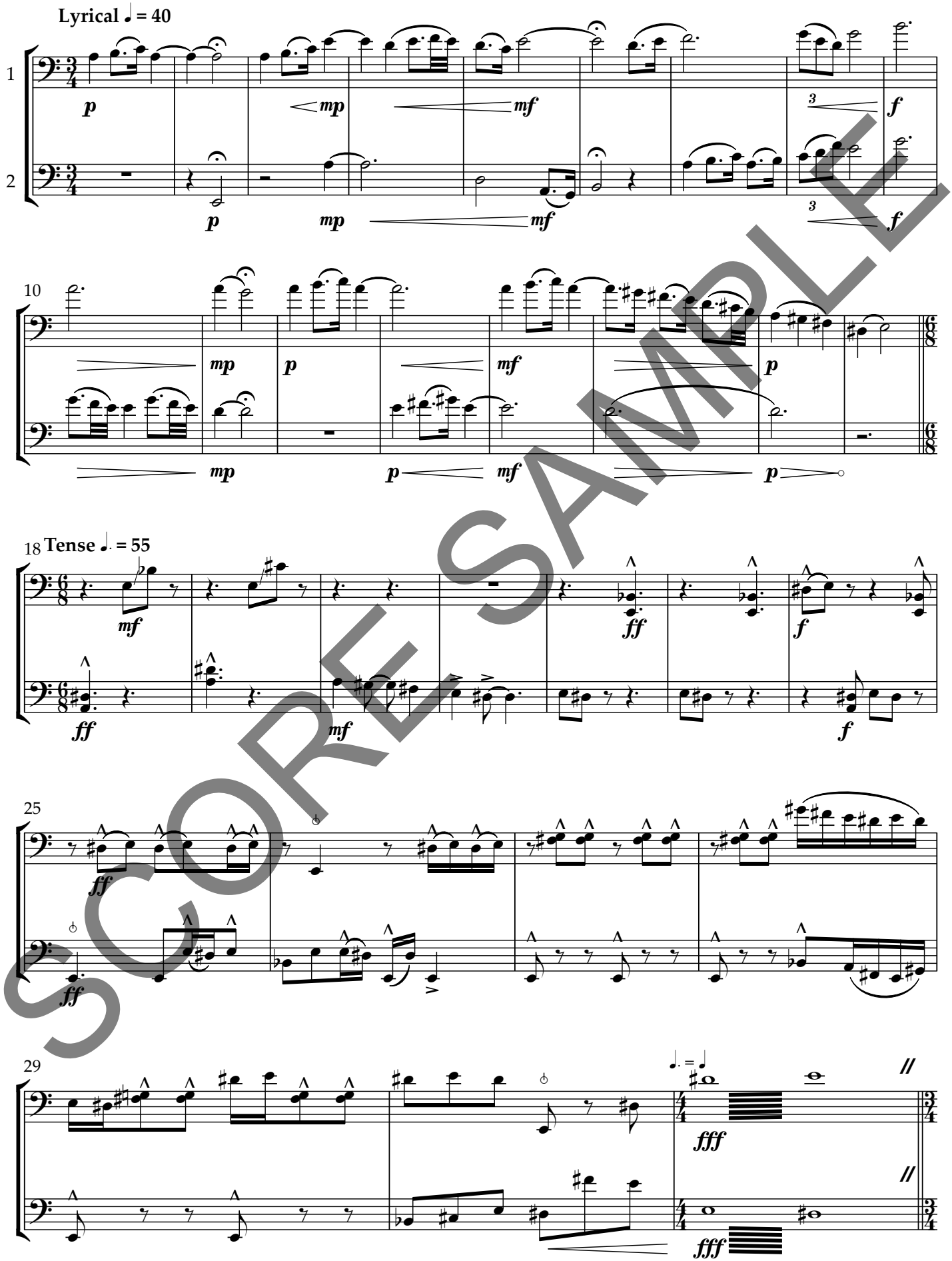

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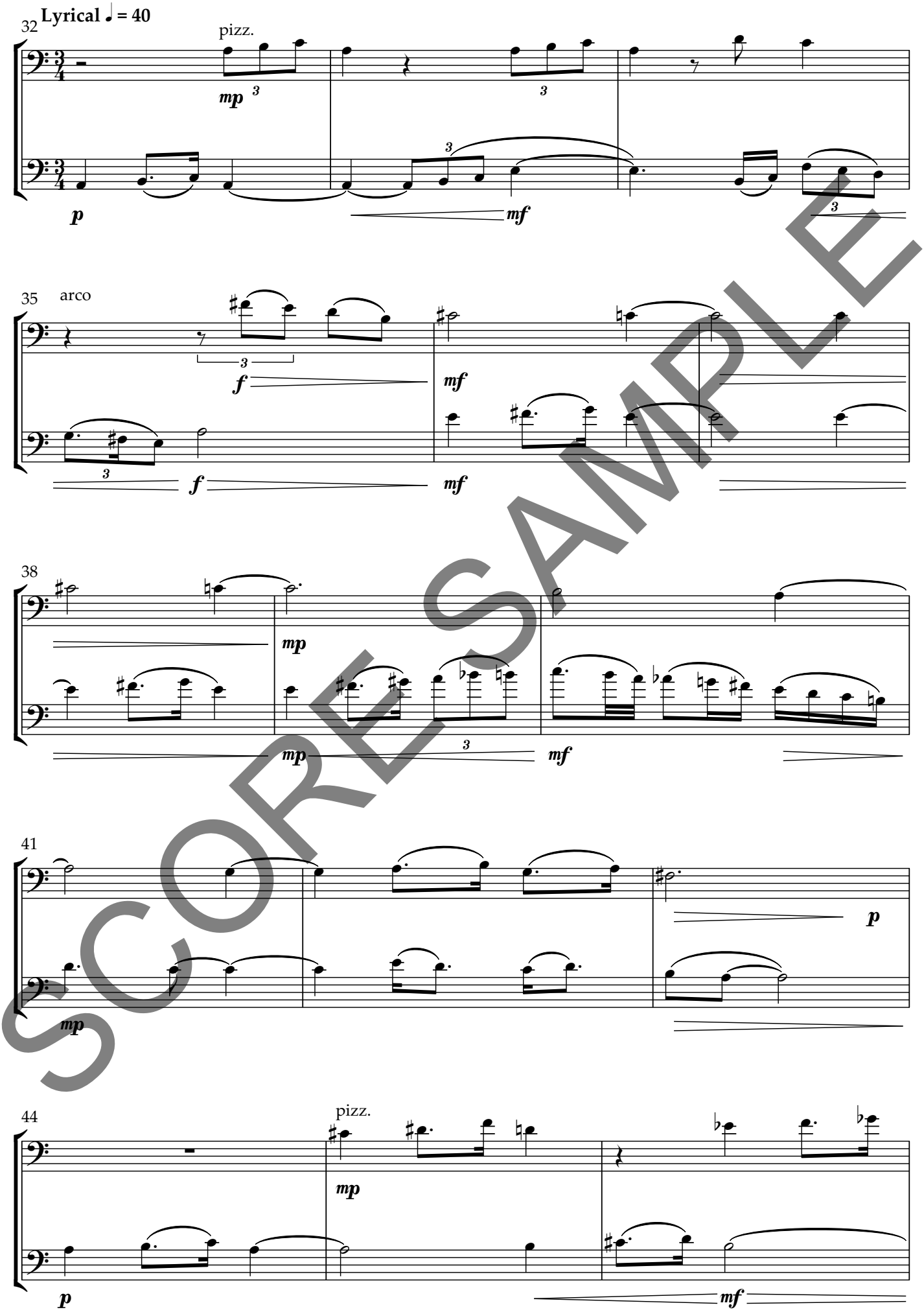

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