JAZZ BAND SERIES

Belwin JAZZ
a division of Alfred

Gentle Rain

By LUIZ BONFA and MATT DUBEY
Arranged by LISA DeSPAIN

INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor
1st E♭ Alto Saxophone
2nd E♭ Alto Saxophone
1st B♭ Tenor Saxophone
2nd B♭ Tenor Saxophone
E♭ Baritone Saxophone
1st B♭ Trumpet
2nd B♭ Trumpet
3rd B♭ Trumpet
4th B♭ Trumpet (Flugelhorn)

1st Trombone
2nd Trombone
3rd Trombone
4th Trombone
Guitar Chords
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drums

Optional Alternate Parts

C Flute
Tuba
Horn in F (Doubles 1st Trombone)
1st Baritone T.C. (Doubles 1st Trombone)
2nd Baritone T.C. (Doubles 2nd Trombone)
3rd Baritone T.C. (Doubles 3rd Trombone)

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NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

In arranging "Gentle Rain," I utilized rhythmic figures and melodic and harmonic vocabulary authentic to the bossa nova style. This arrangement can be a terrific tool in schooling young bands on the correct elements of playing bossa nova. The two key words throughout would be simplicity and accuracy. Please note that many swing charts allow for flexibility in improvisation in the rhythm section. Not so with this arrangement. Attention was paid to notating correct bossa nova figures throughout and should be played exactly as written. Accuracy and precision is key and improvisation will interfere with the elegance of the melody and the delicate rhythmic bed.

One of the crucial rhythmic foundations of the bossa nova is the emphasis on the backbeat. (Bossa nova is always felt in cut time not 4/4.) This accented groove comes from the surdo, the bass marching drum used in Brazil at Carnival and festivals. It always plays a heavy stroke on the backbeat. Looking at the bass and drum part (example: measure 5) you will always see the accent mark on beat 2. This should be felt throughout the entire piece. Practice with only the bass and drum as a unit until they are locked together with this feel. Once the backbeat is firmly established, move on to the accompaniment figures in the guitar and piano. These should fit into the bass/drum foundation like precise puzzle pieces. Take care that these figures are neither rushed nor laid back. Play close attention to the syncopated chord after the backbeat. It should bounce off the heavy backbeat to create elegant buoyancy, a floating rhythmic bed in the music. This rhythmic figure is the primary comping figure in bossa nova.

The other prominent accompaniment rhythm figure is utilized in measure 49 by the guitar during the piano solo. Again, it must be played accurately without rushing. It should sound relaxed and again, lightly bouncing off the bass/drum rhythmic pattern. Work the rhythm section alone (sans piano solo) until all these rhythmic pieces fit together cleanly. The sound of the guitar should also be as clean as possible. Use a natural sound without excess pedals, effects, and no distortion. Try to achieve a clean, warm, acoustic sound.

Although bossa nova is often thought of as a rhythmic style, it was first and foremost a song style. As such, attention to the melody is crucial and cannot be overlooked. Listen to the masterpiece recording Elis & Tom featuring Antonio Carlos Jobim and Elis Regina to hear this vocal style. (Great source for the rhythm section too!)

The melody constantly shifts colors as new instruments are added, subtracted or new sections take over. This exchange must always feel organic, never jarring. For example, in the measures 19–21 the melody changes hands from an intimate ensemble (tenor, flute, flugelhorn), to a full ensemble in measure 21. In creating a smooth transition between these two forces, utilize the crescendo in the background trombone ensemble to build volume and momentum. Then this task is handed off to the rhythmic figure in measure 20 (bass, piano, guitar), to continue the momentum. The final push is in the 16th note run of the saxes leading into the downbeat of measure 21. If this crescendo is smooth through the interplay of sections, then when the melody arrives on the downbeat, it will feel like a continuation from where the small ensemble left off with no bumps in the road.

There are many independent parts in the arrangement. The trumpet, trombone, and saxophone sections at some point during the piece will play a melodic figure, a counterpoint figure, or a background figure. These figures are often voiced across the section; e.g. low saxophones with trombones while higher saxophones play with the trumpets. Challenge the students to think outside the box of their particular section and listen to what their role is in the larger picture. It might be worthwhile have the students mark their music with a breakdown as to what their role is at any given time; melody, counterpoint, background.

During rehearsal, work on a 4–8 bar segment, focusing on balance and awareness as to who has the primary role or who is secondary. For example, in one of the more complex sections, measures 37–40, whenever the melody has a sustained note, there is movement in the counterpoint that should be brought out but then immediately it must subside when the melodic material moves. Especially pay close attention to any unison lines for rhythmic accuracy. Consider the flute a primary instrument instead of an optional if you have the resources. If harmon mutes are unavailable, try cup or straight mute. If you are without bucket mutes, play into the stand.

If possible, put your featured soloist on 4th trumpet. The 4th trumpet carries the most important melodic weight throughout the chart and doubles on flugelhorn. If no flugelhorn is available, a bucket mute or open trumpet will suffice. Beginning in measure 53, the piano solo should be played as written, no improvisation. As the solo continues, it mutates into a soli. Measures 53-59 set up the melodic ideas that are expanded in the soli, measures 69-75.

For further listening check out Luiz Bonfa's performance of "Gentle Rain" on the recording Non-Stop Brazil, an excellent lesson in the simplicity and beauty of bossa nova.

Please enjoy.

—Lisa DeSpain

Lisa DeSpain

Lisa DeSpain is the recipient of numerous composition awards, including an Aaron Copland Fellowship and the ASCAP/IAJE Commission Honoring Duke Ellington. She studied jazz piano under Elaine Elias and Ellis Marsalis and jazz composition with Manny Album. Ms. DeSpain's music has been heralded by the New York Times as "intoxicating" and "intelligent and witty."

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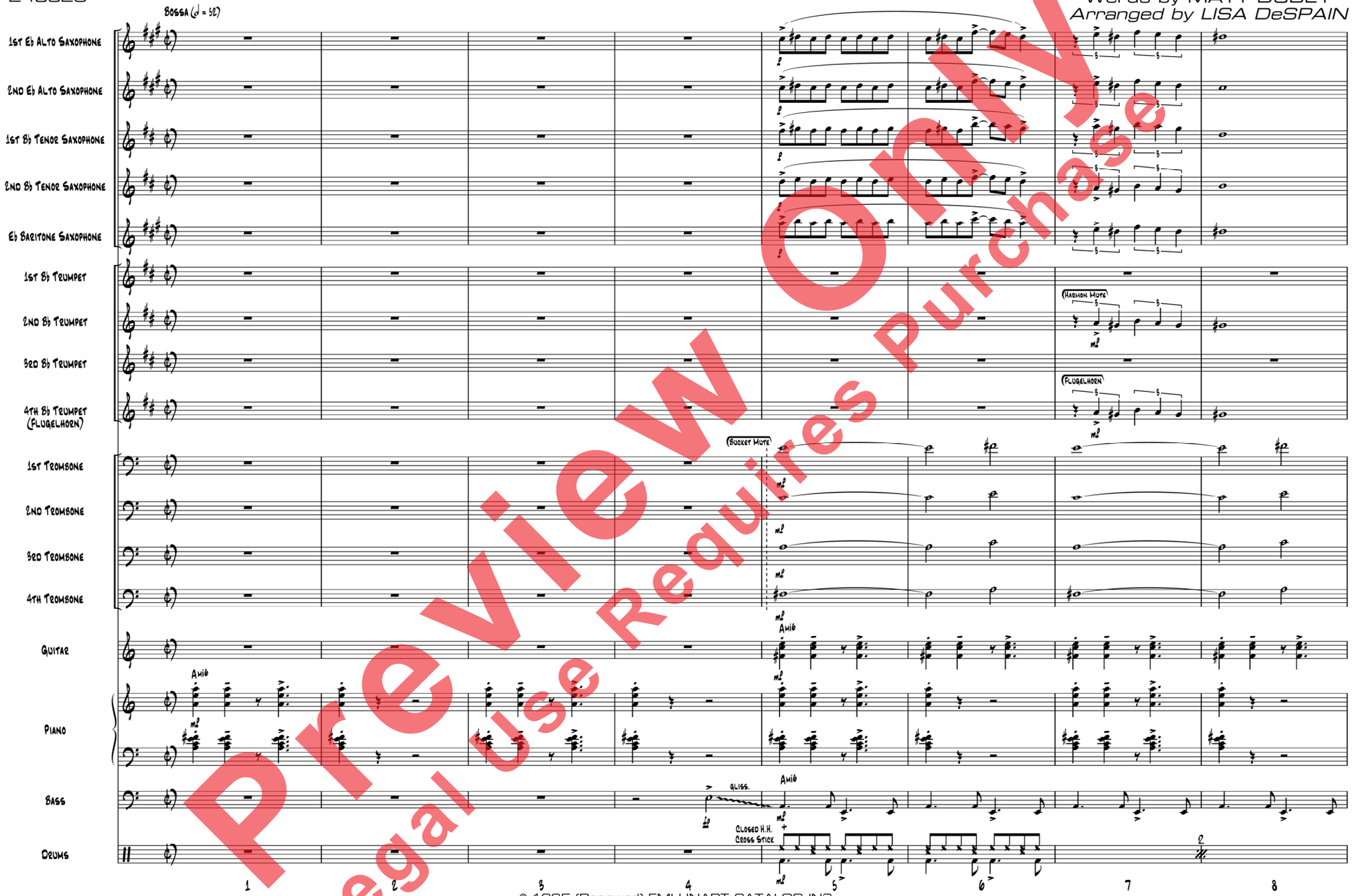
GENTLE RAIN

Music by LUIZ BONFA
Words by MATT DUBEY
Arranged by LISA DeSPAIN



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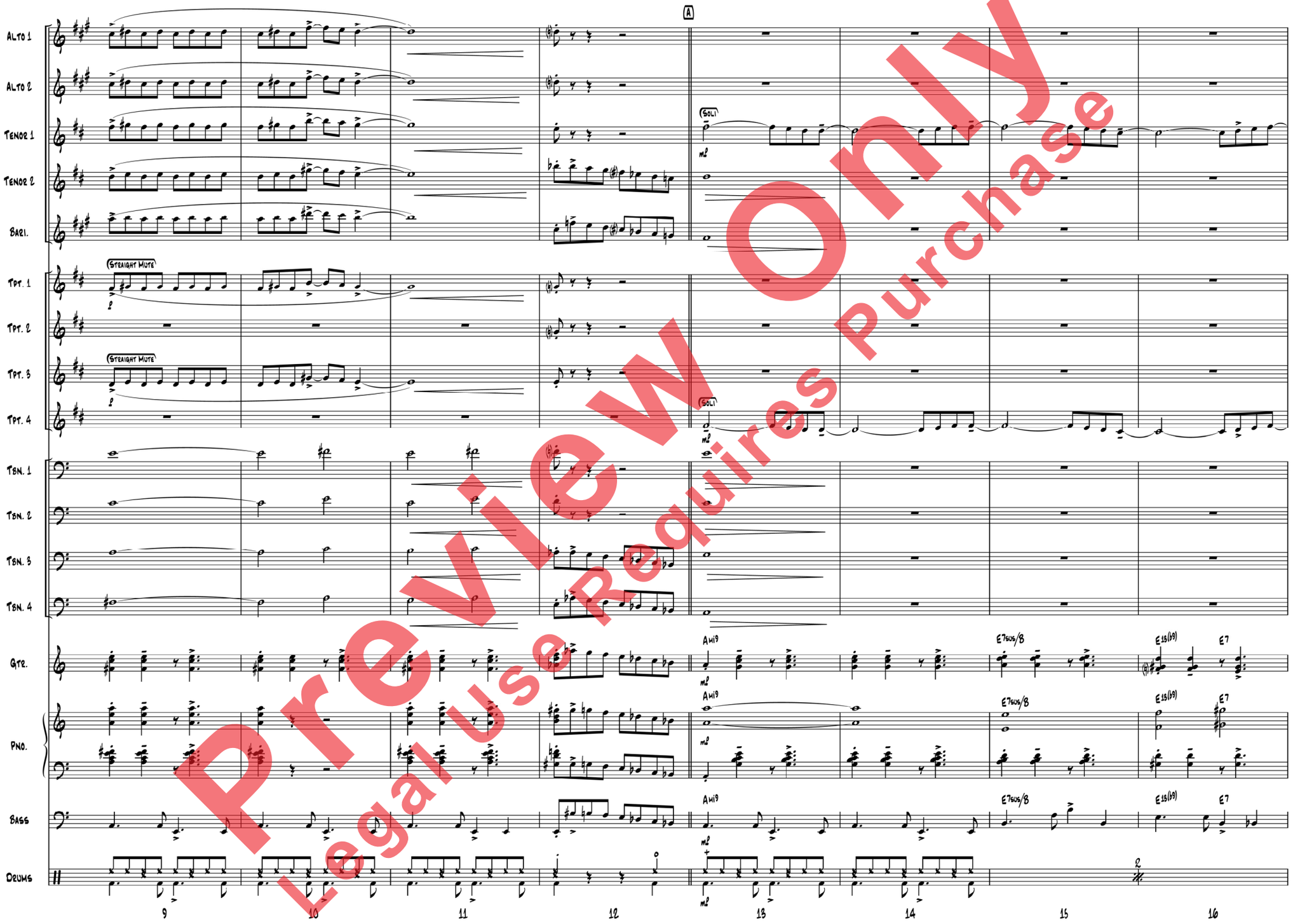

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Alto 1
Alto 2
Tenor 1
Tenor 2
Bari.
Tpt. 1
Tpt. 2
Tpt. 3
Tpt. 4
Tbn. 1
Tbn. 2
Tbn. 3
Tbn. 4
Gtr.
Pno.
Bass
Drums

Ami9 D9 Gmi9 C9 Fmaj13 F♯mi7(b5) B7(b9) Fmi11 Emi9 A7(b9)

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24

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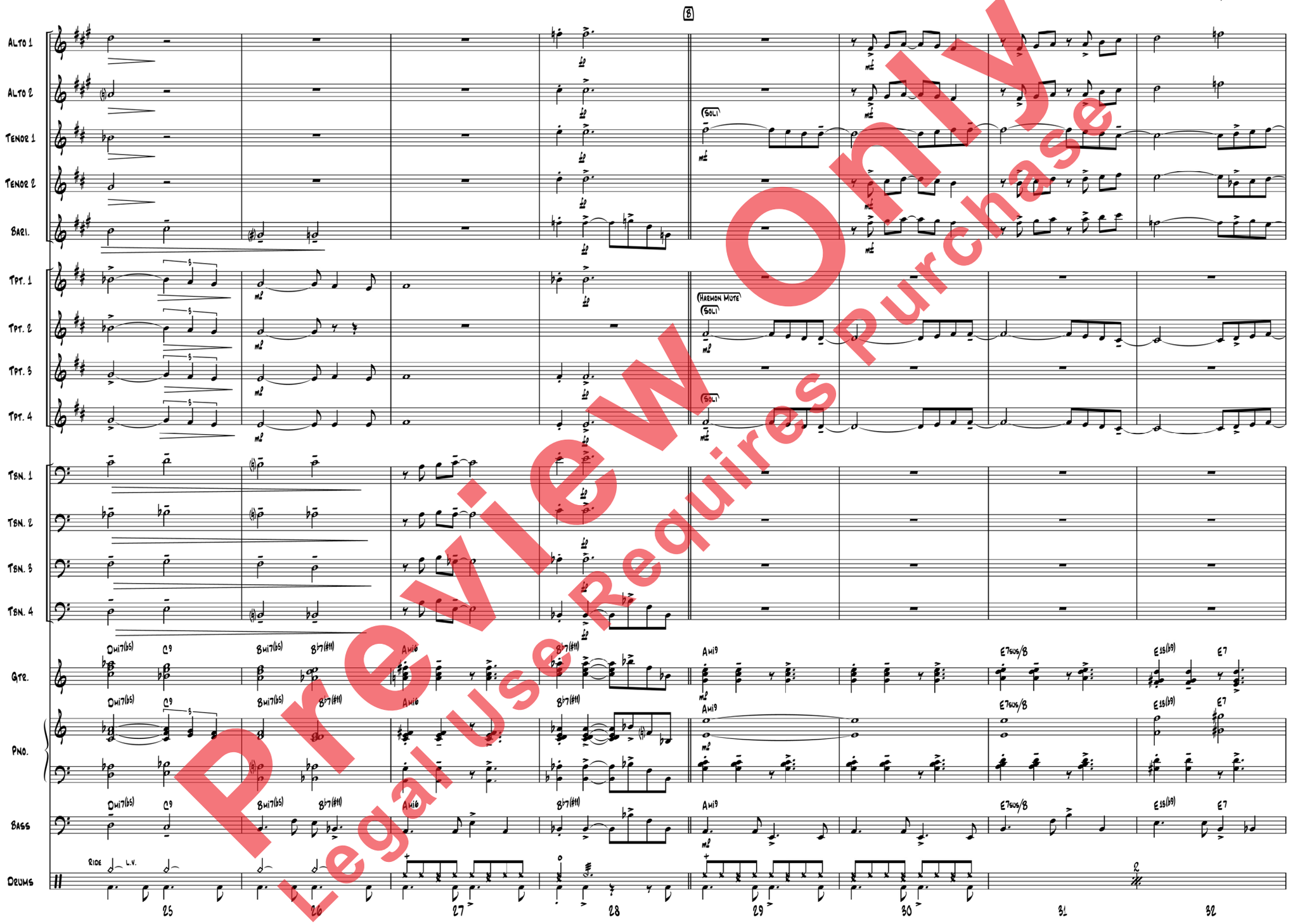

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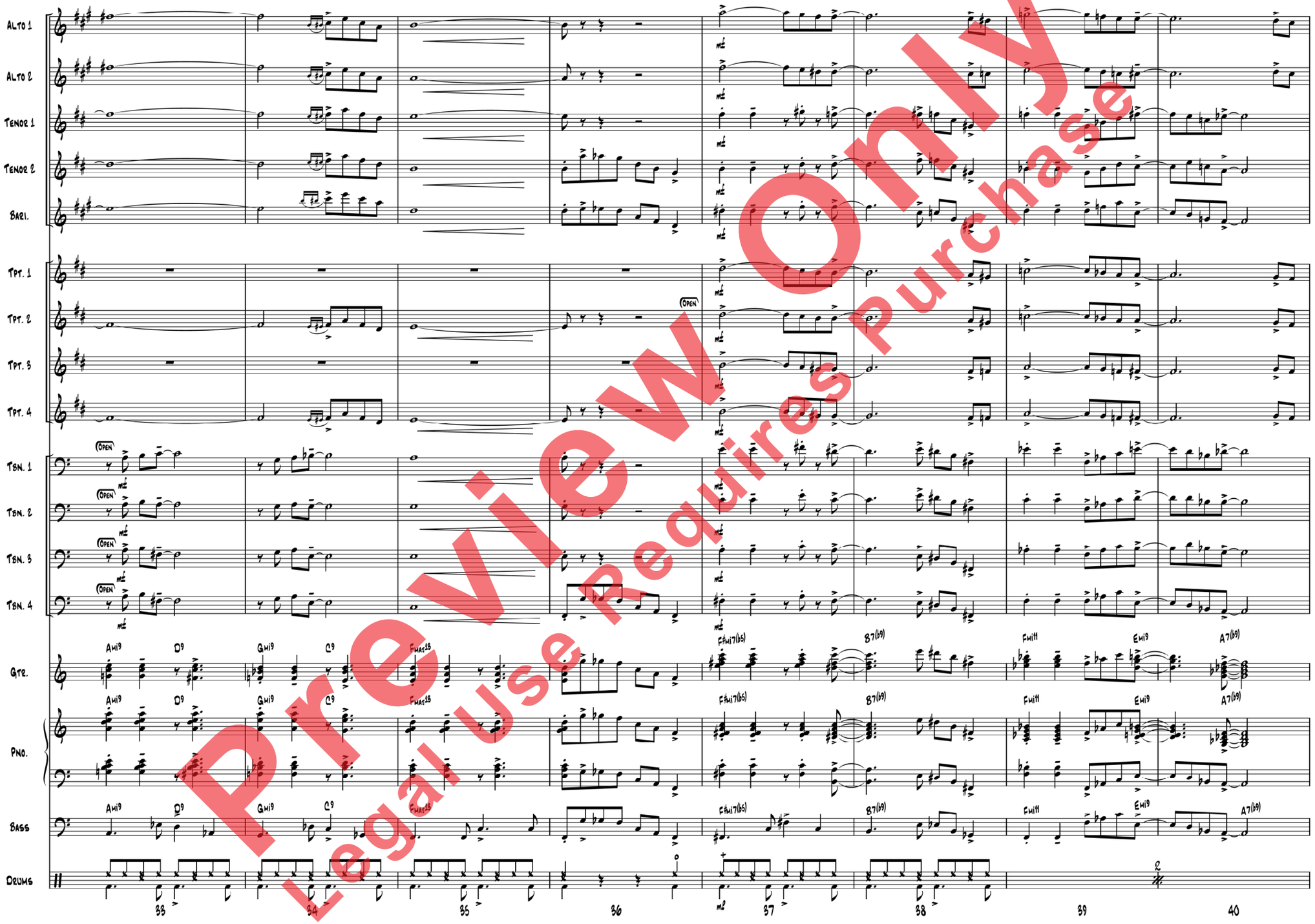

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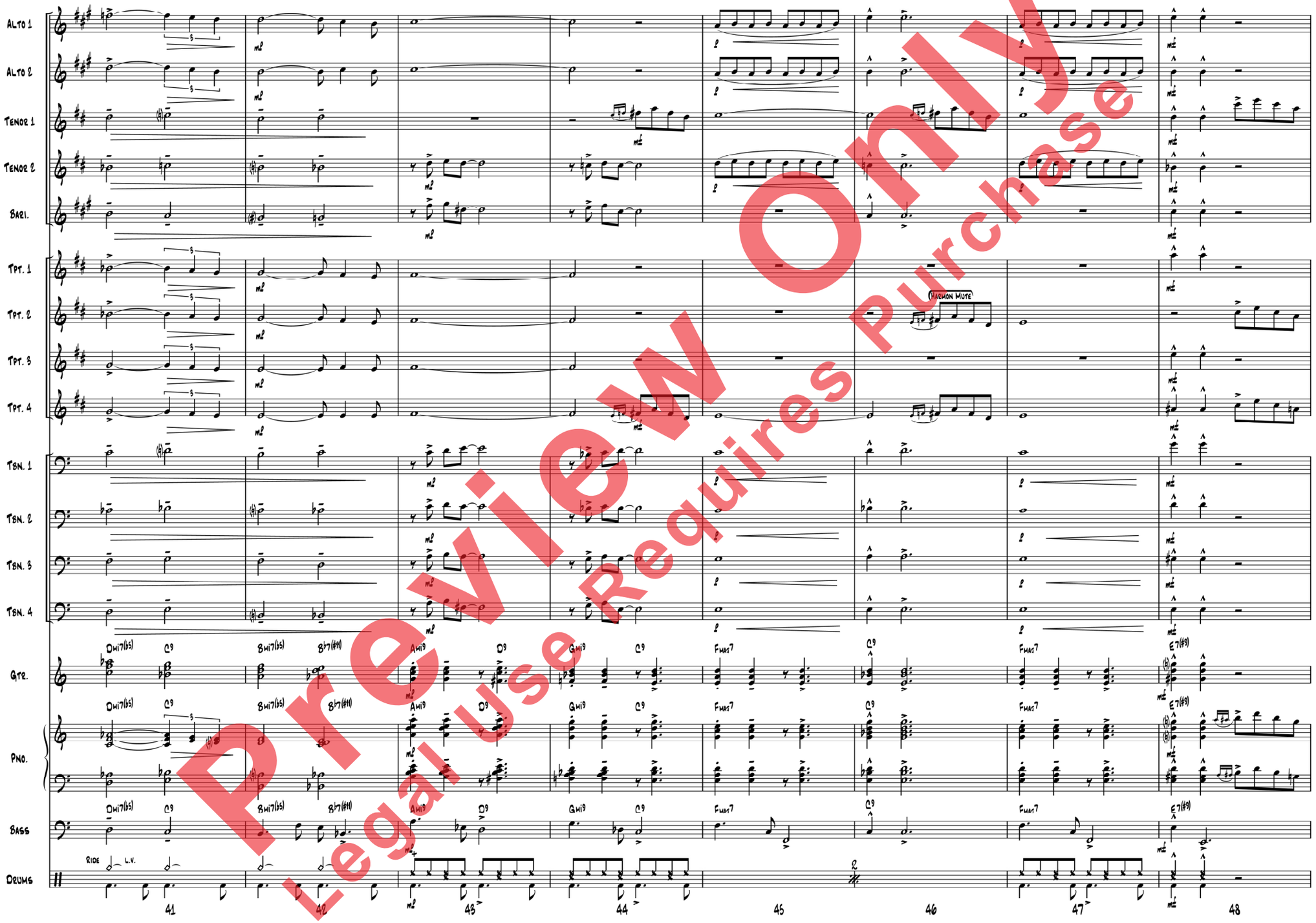

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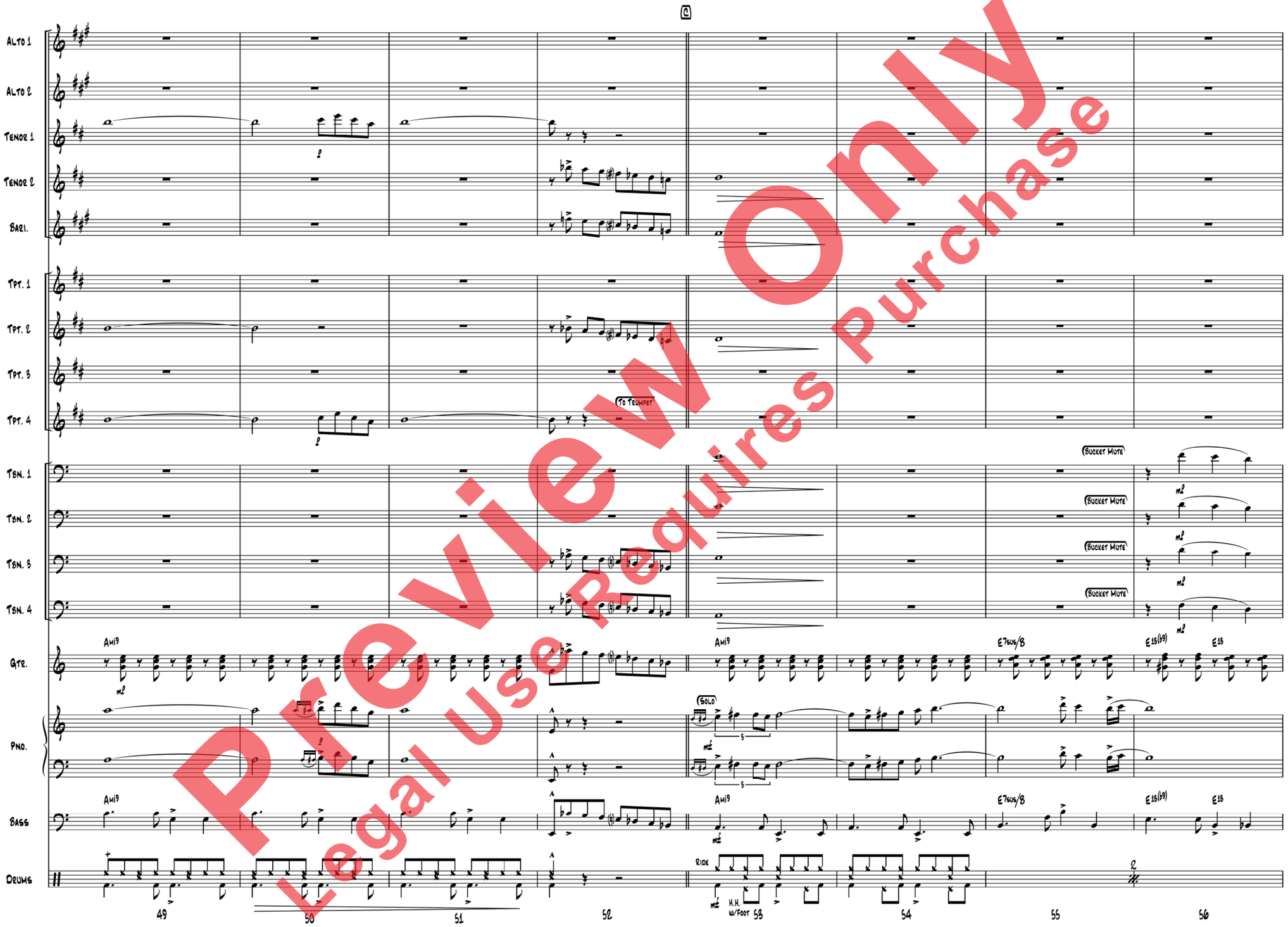

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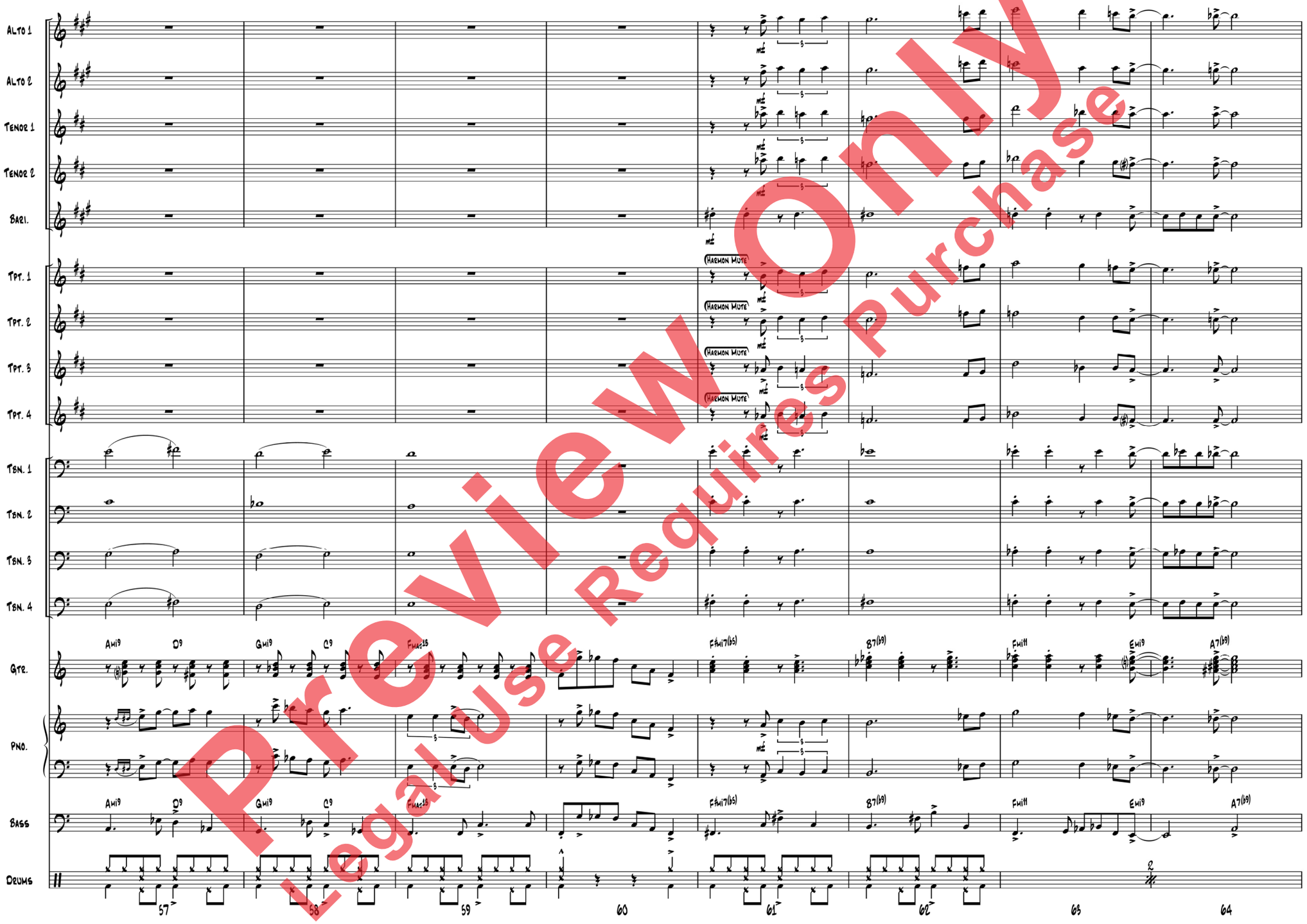

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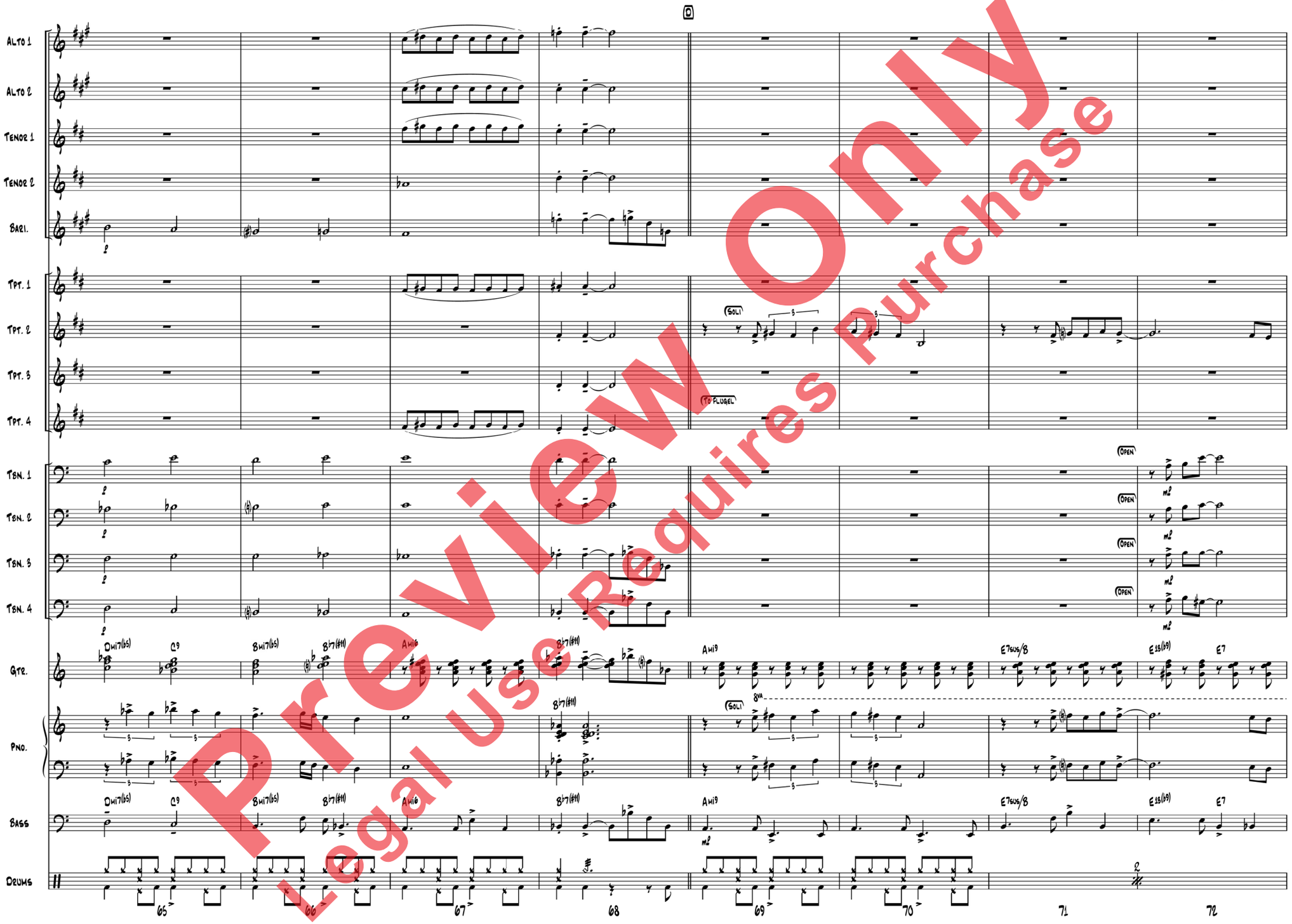

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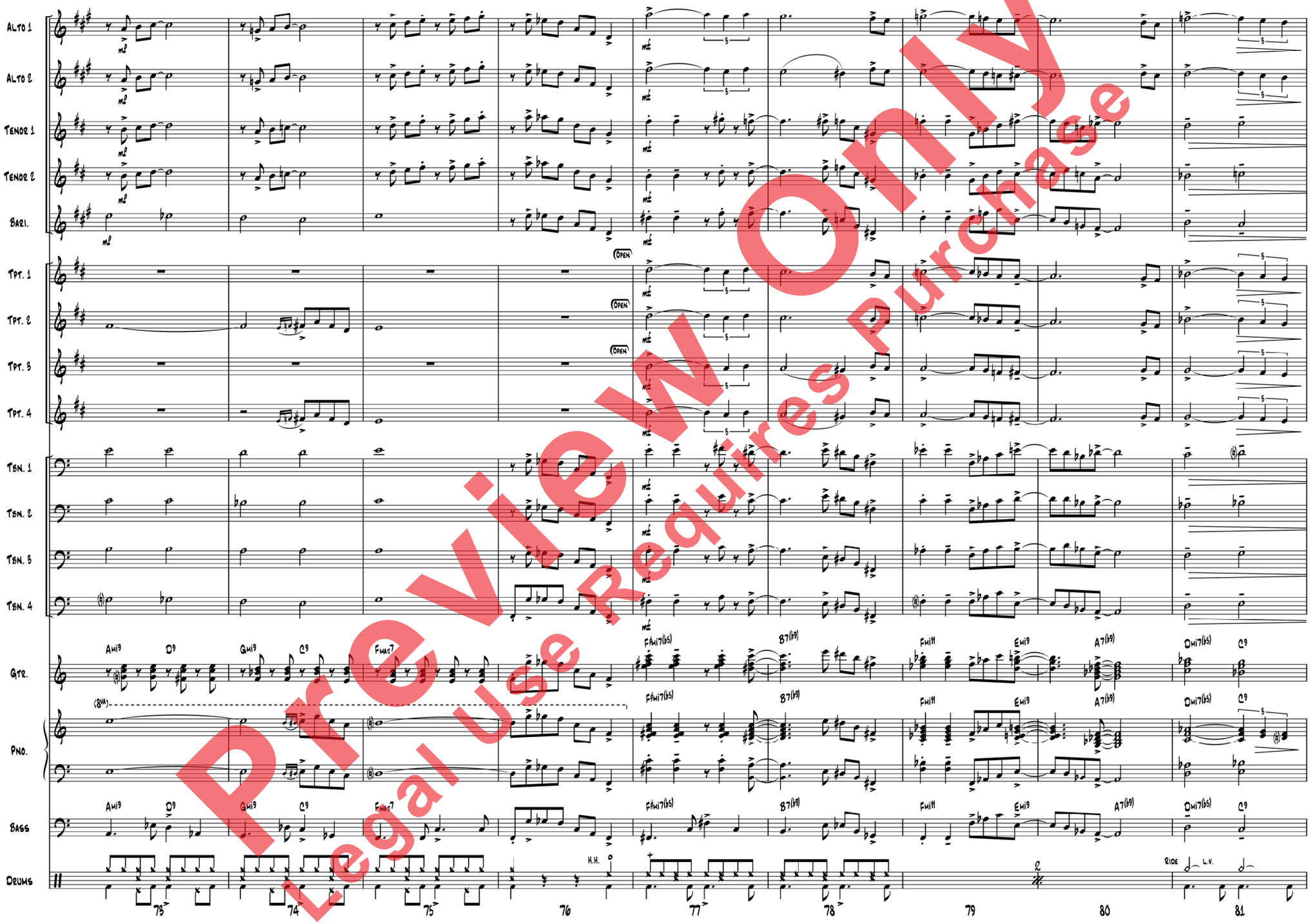

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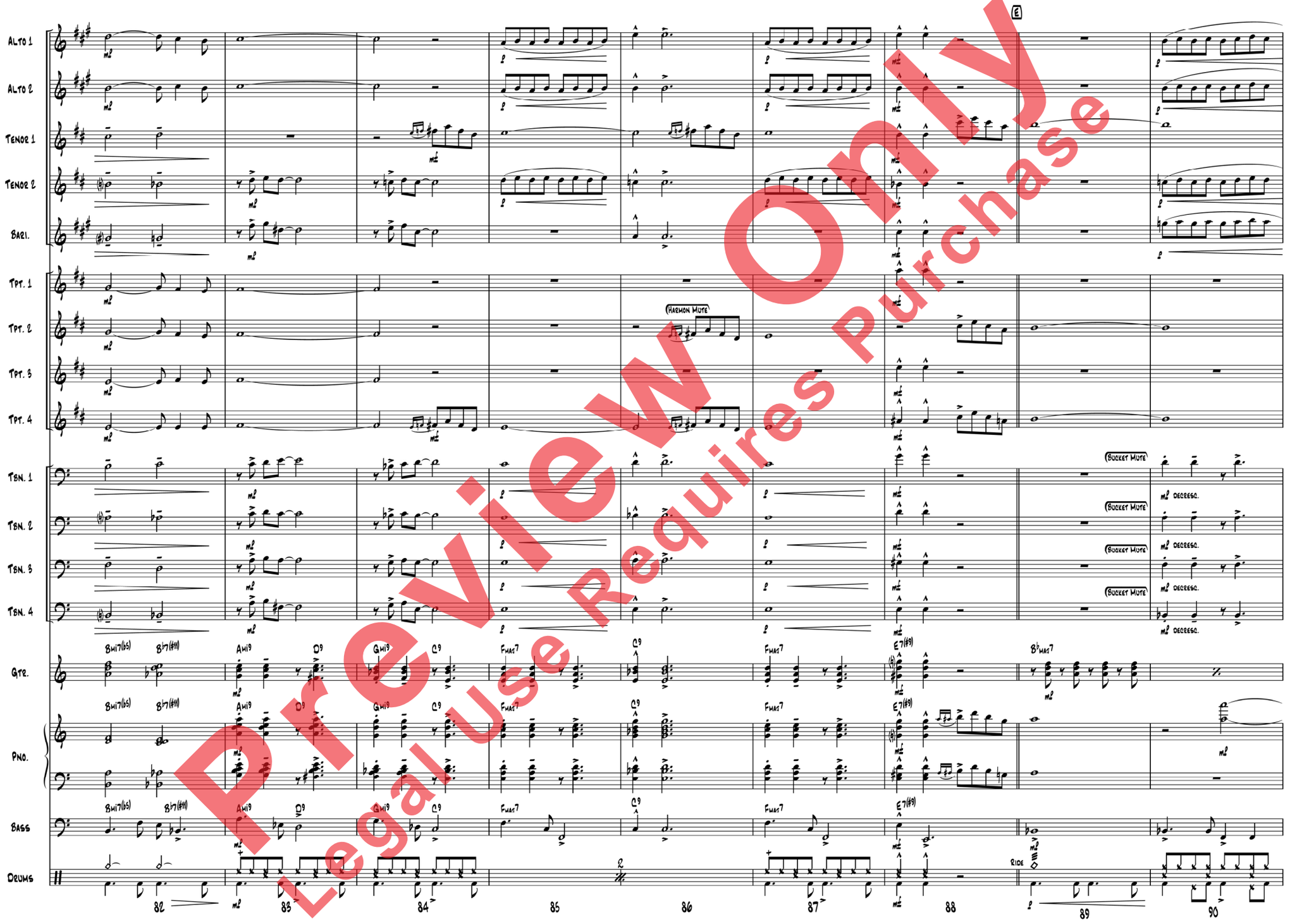

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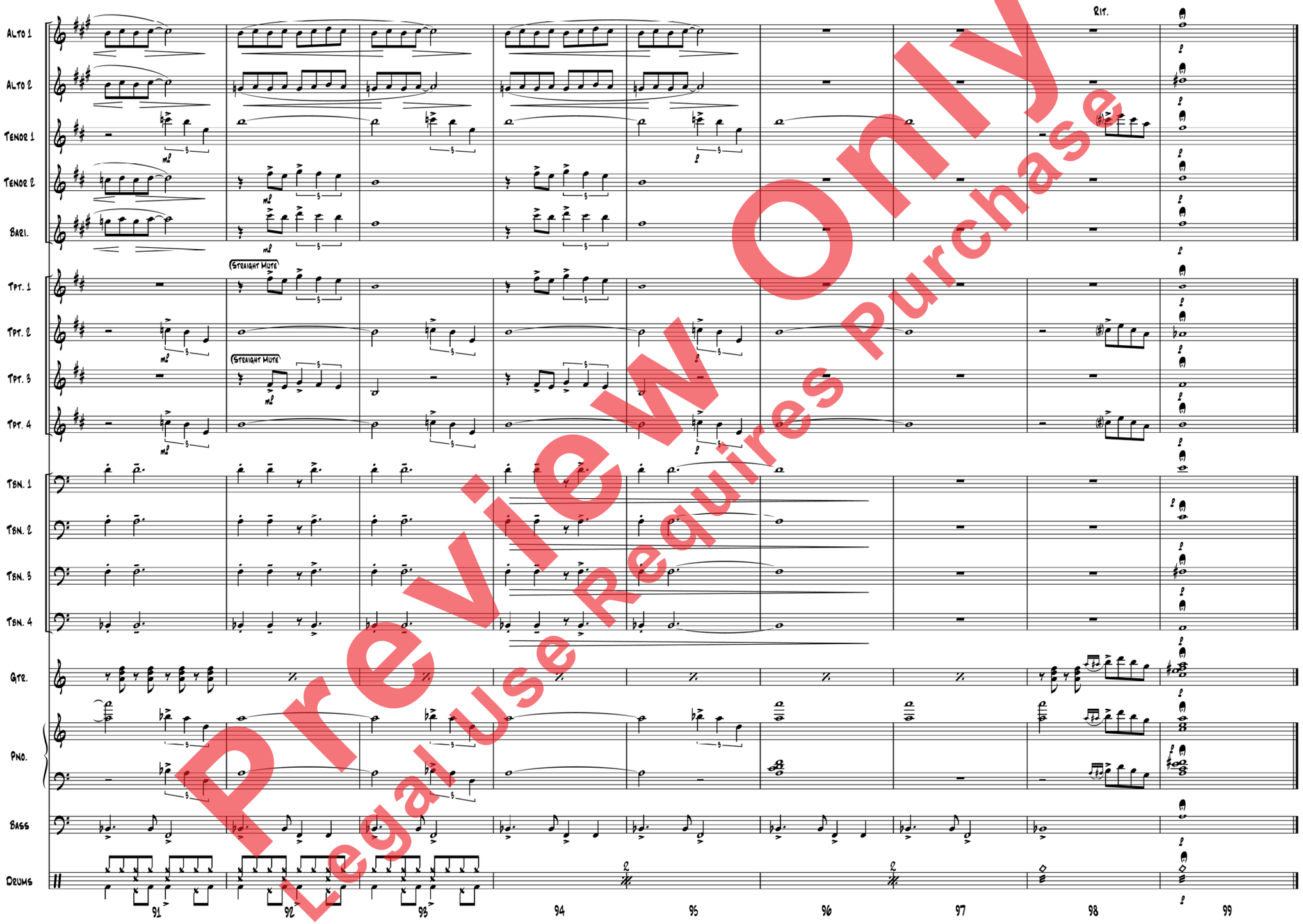

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