STRING ALTERNATIVES SERIES

Dixie Highway

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

A hint of New Age, a bit of traditional Irish fiddling, and some intense Bluegrass—those are the sounds of this creative work which musically depicts the history of the famous auto road that was built to connect Midwest America with the Deep South. Based on Chippewa, Irish, and Old-Time melodies, this exceptional composition contains individual and section solos, opportunities for improvisation, suggestions for traditional folk ornamentation, and "hip" bass lines. With its variety of musical moods, *Dixie Highway* offers a dynamic and motivating change of pace to any orchestra program, one that promises to shift both the audience and orchestra to overdrive!

HIGHLAND/ETLING
A DIVISION OF Alfred

Please note: Our band and orchestra music is now being collated by an automatic high-speed system. The enclosed parts are now sorted by page count, rather than score order.

Program Notes

Written for and premiered by the Kettering High School Orchestra in Waterford, Michigan (Merlyn Beard, Director), *Dixie Highway* musically depicts the historic development of the American auto road of the same name. The famous roadway passes through Waterford, and long has been central to its history—as well as to the history of many other towns in the Midwest. Based on its predecessor, the east-west "Lincoln Highway" that traverses the United States, the Dixie Highway was first conceived in the early years of the 20th century to be a network of interconnected paved roads, making possible continuous auto travel from the Deep South all the way into the Midwest, the heartland of the auto industry. The piece is in three sections: "The Saginaw Trail," "The Immigration Road," and "Cruisin' the Dixie Highway." In southeast Michigan, the Dixie Highway follows the ancient route of the Indian Saginaw Trail. To bring this important Native American trail to mind, a Chippewa melody ("Farewell to the Warriors") opens the piece, heard first as a cello solo and then in a series of "New Age" style variations. The melody fades away with repeated "drumbeats" played by the basses, yielding to a solo violin setting of an Irish slip jig (a dance in 9/8 time) called "Biddy from Limerick." This tune suggests the arrival and settlement of Europeans and the development of the trail into an immigrant road. A faint hint of the drumbeats returns momentarily, but quickly transforms into a driving bass line, indicating the progression of the old road into the modern, high-speed Dixie Highway. Appropriately, the melody heard at this point is the energetic Old-Time fiddle favorite, "Paddy on the Turnpike." The piece concludes with a hard-driving bluegrass version of the tune, reminding us that the Dixie Highway continues to serve as a modern avenue of music and culture between the Southern and Midwestern states, as well as a means to share its cars, trucks, and travelers.

Notes to the Conductor

Dixie Highway musically depicts the historic development of the American auto road of the same name. The composition is in three sections: "The Saginaw Trail," "The Immigration Road," and "Cruisin' the Dixie Highway." The first is a setting of a Chippewa Indian melody, heard first by solo cello (mm. 2–11), followed by a series of free variations (mm. 11–19, 20–31, and 32–44), all with a distinctive "New Age" flavor. Care should be taken in this section to observe the subtle dynamic differences as marked, and to bring out the continuity of the interlocking musical lines (i.e., mm. 32–33: between 1st and 2nd violins; mm. 32–42: among viola, cello, and bass). The repeated Ds—representing the distant Chippewa drums—in the cello/bass (mm. 44–47) should remain steady and at a consistent tempo. The second section (mm. 47– 81) is a setting of an Irish slip jig, "Biddy from Limerick," heard first as a violin solo (mm. 47–50), and then as a section solo. Traditional Irish fiddling ornaments are suggested; players—especially the soloist—should be encouraged to use these as a departure point for their own tasteful ornamentation. The lilting melody is then heard in the cellos (mm. 59–74; note occasional optional divisi), with secondary countermelodies in the other voices. A suggestion of the Chippewa drum beat returns in the bass (mm. 82–91) and then merges with a syncopated cello line and off-beat accompaniment. The accompaniment should be played off the string. The third and final section is an energetic setting of the Scottish-based Old-Time American fiddle tune, "Paddy on the Turnpike." The basic melody is presented initially in the first violins (mm. 96–116) and then in a series of increasingly complicated variations. Care should be taken to emphasize syncopated accompaniment lines (i.e., m. 116), as well as to observe all accent and staccato markings. The cellos take over the melody, suddenly and quietly, over a steady and continuously driving bass line and drones (mm. 125–134). The melody takes a decided turn toward a bluegrass feel with its statement in "triple-fiddling" harmony (mm. 135–144). A change of key (m. 145) follows, with a statement of the tune by second violins/violas with an off-the-string, "chugging" accompaniment (mm. 145–153). The final statement of "Paddy on the Turnpike" is a repeated 1st violin setting in a typical bluegrass solo-fiddle style (mm. 154–163). Care should be taken so that this melody soars above the rest of the group. A syncopated bluegrass figure closes the piece in an energetic coda (mm. 164–167), fortissimo in all parts. The final accented note is held; players should be encouraged to use many extra bows, with a "ripped" release.

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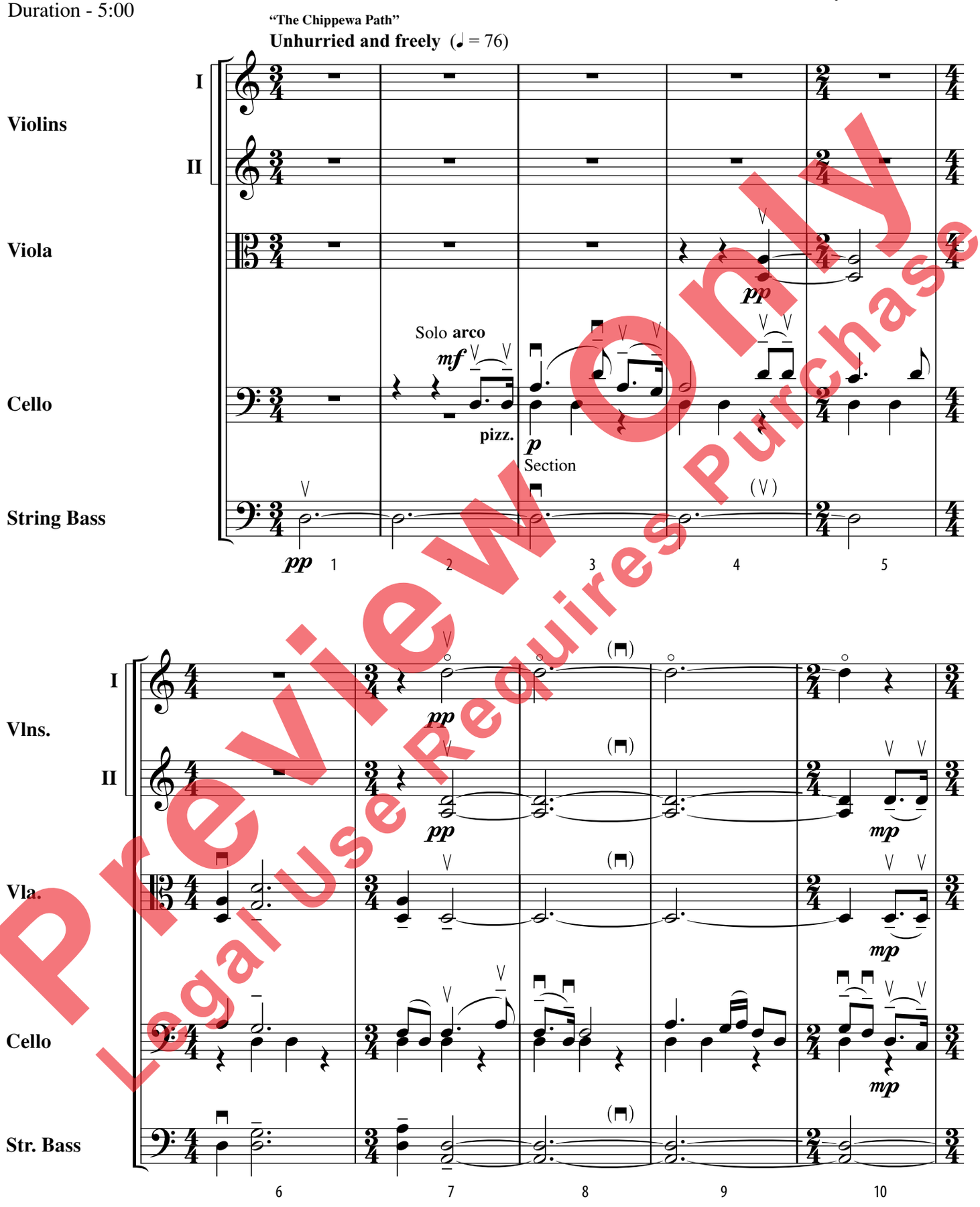
Dixie Highway

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 5:00

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)



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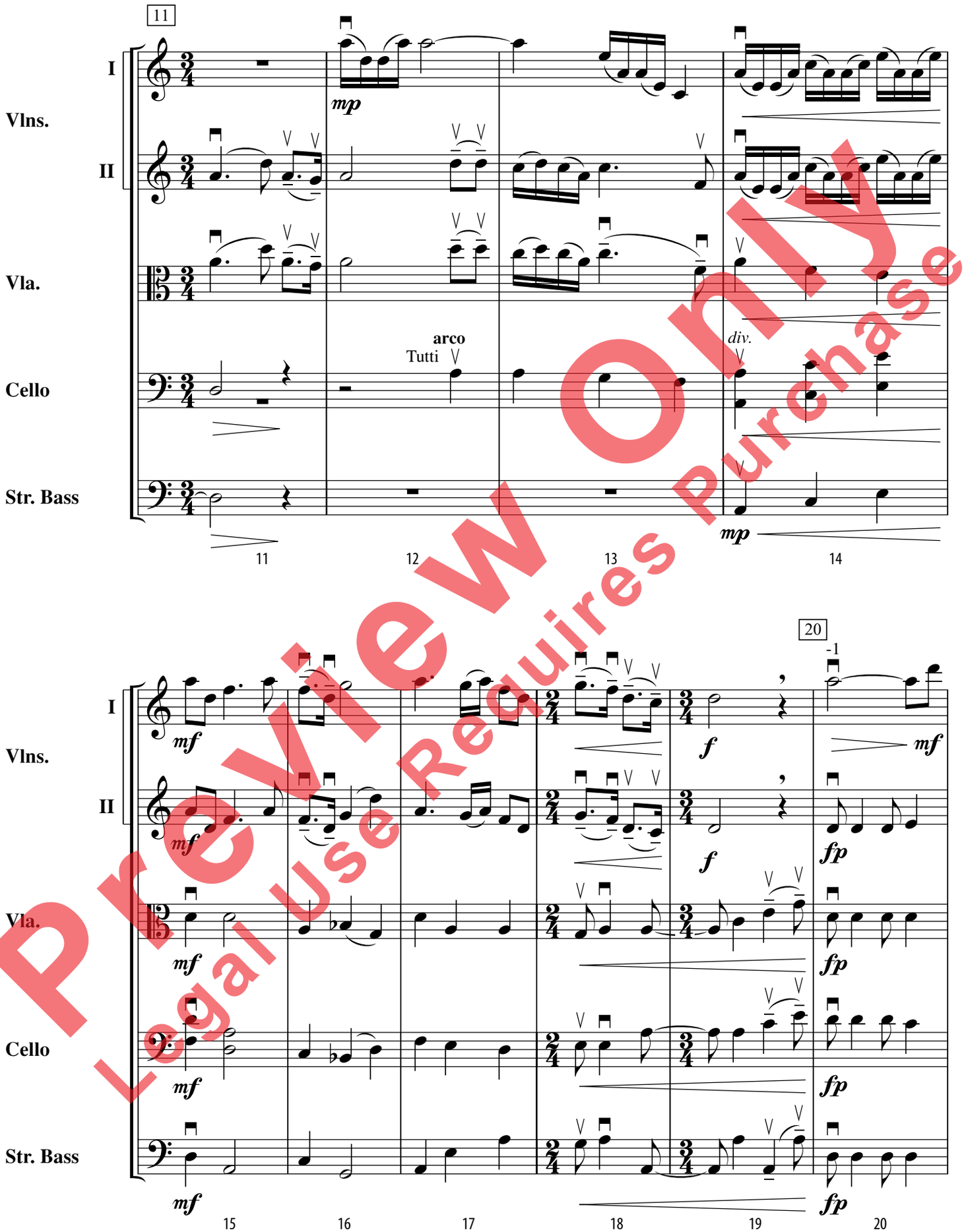

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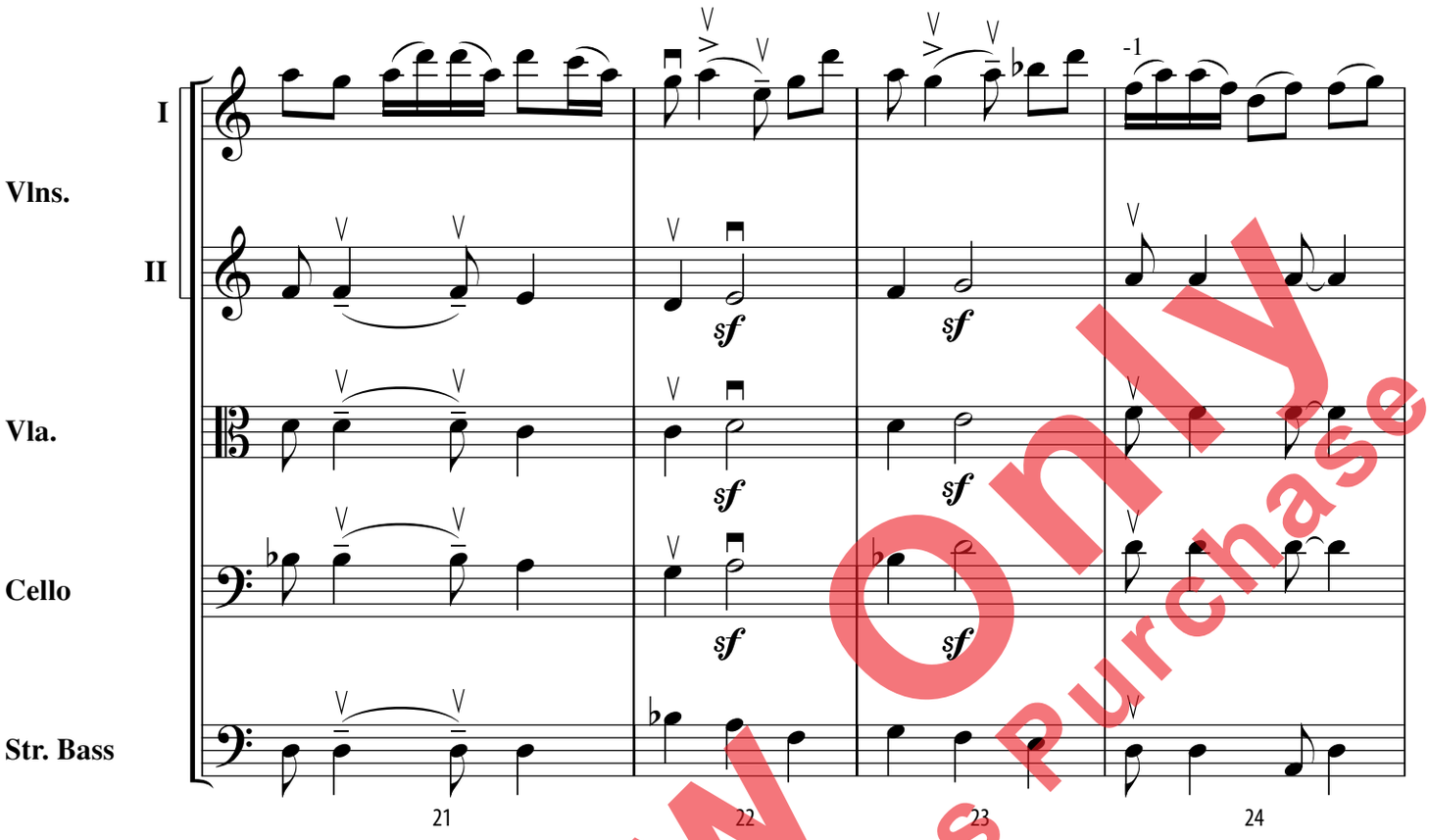

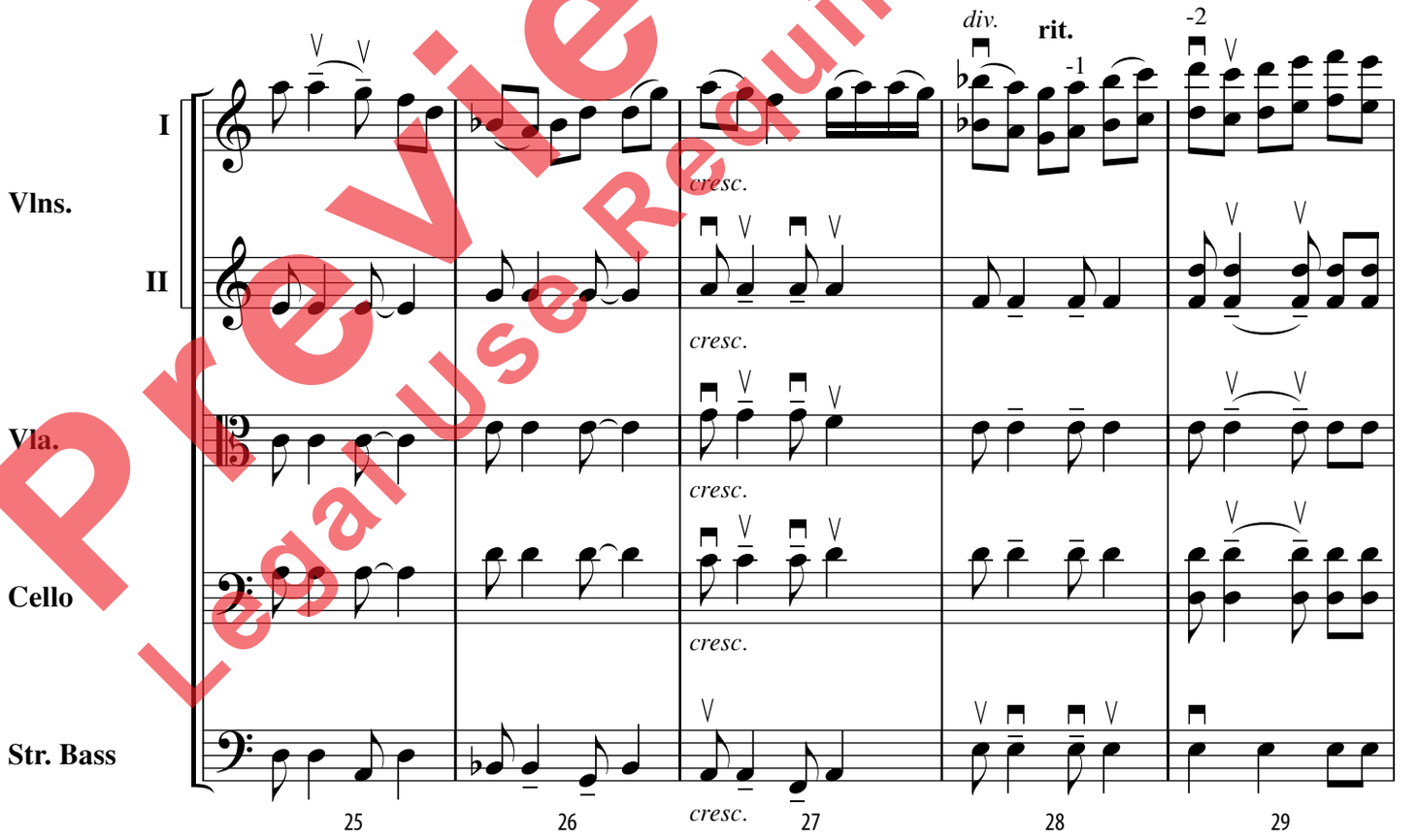

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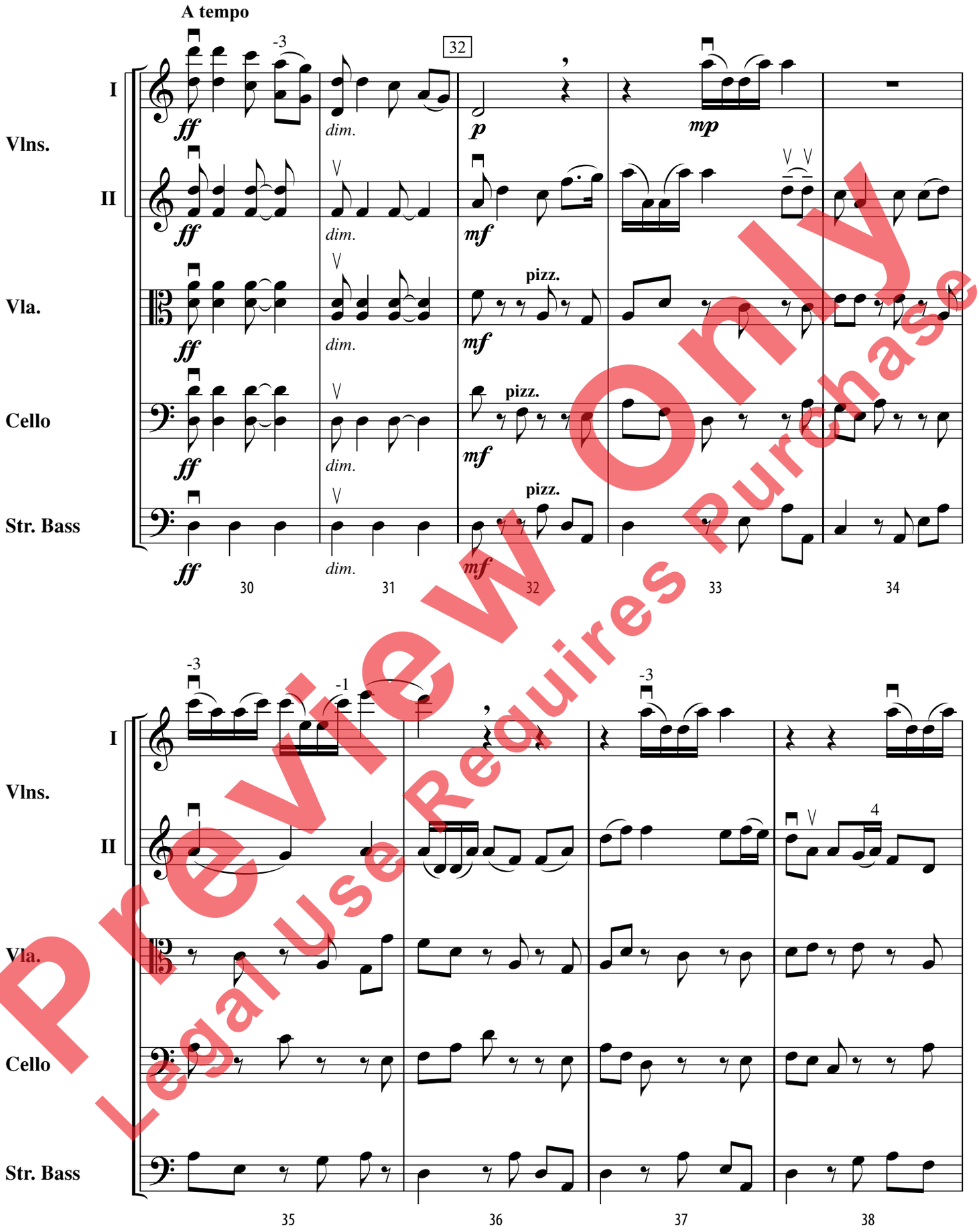

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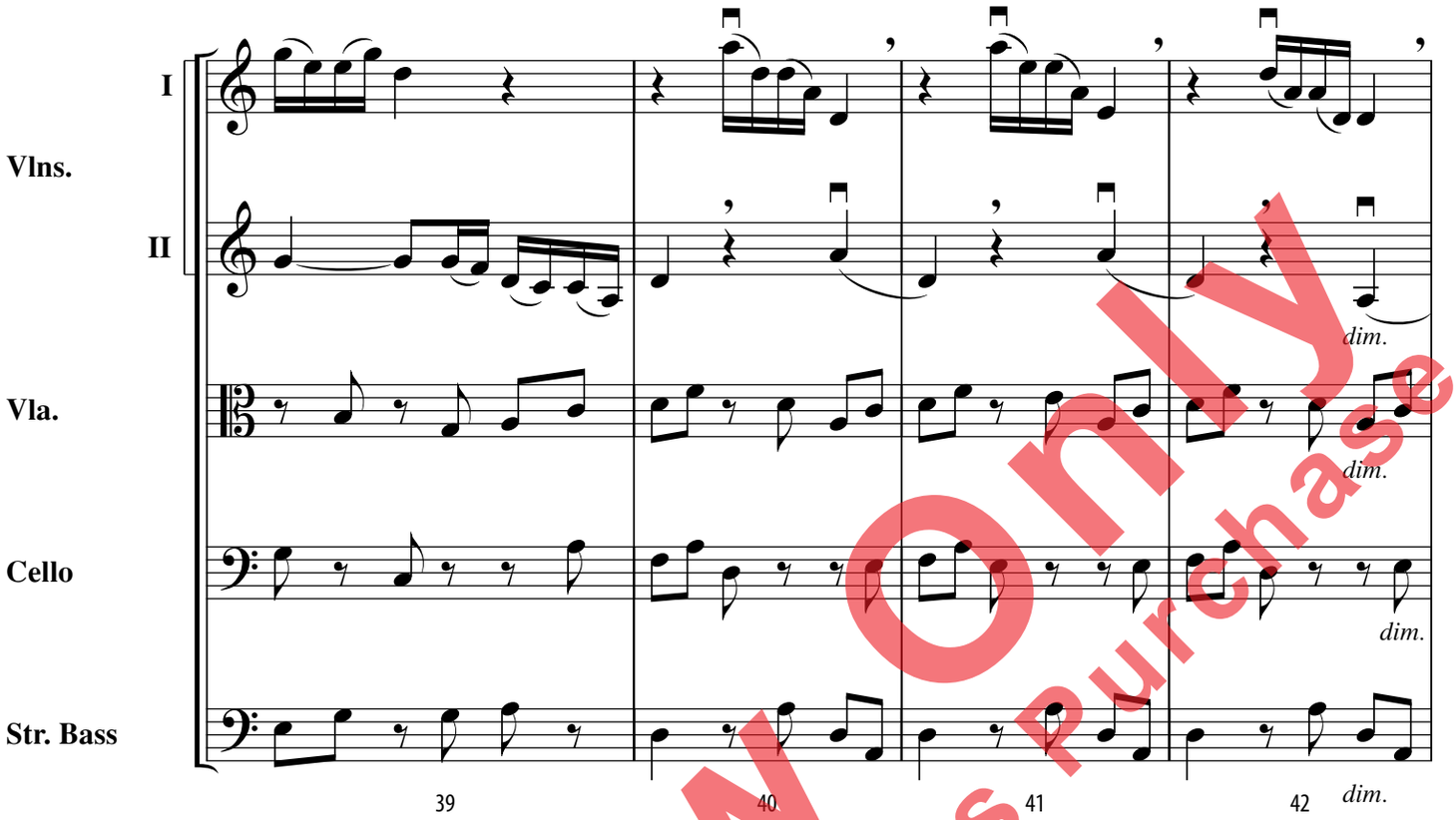

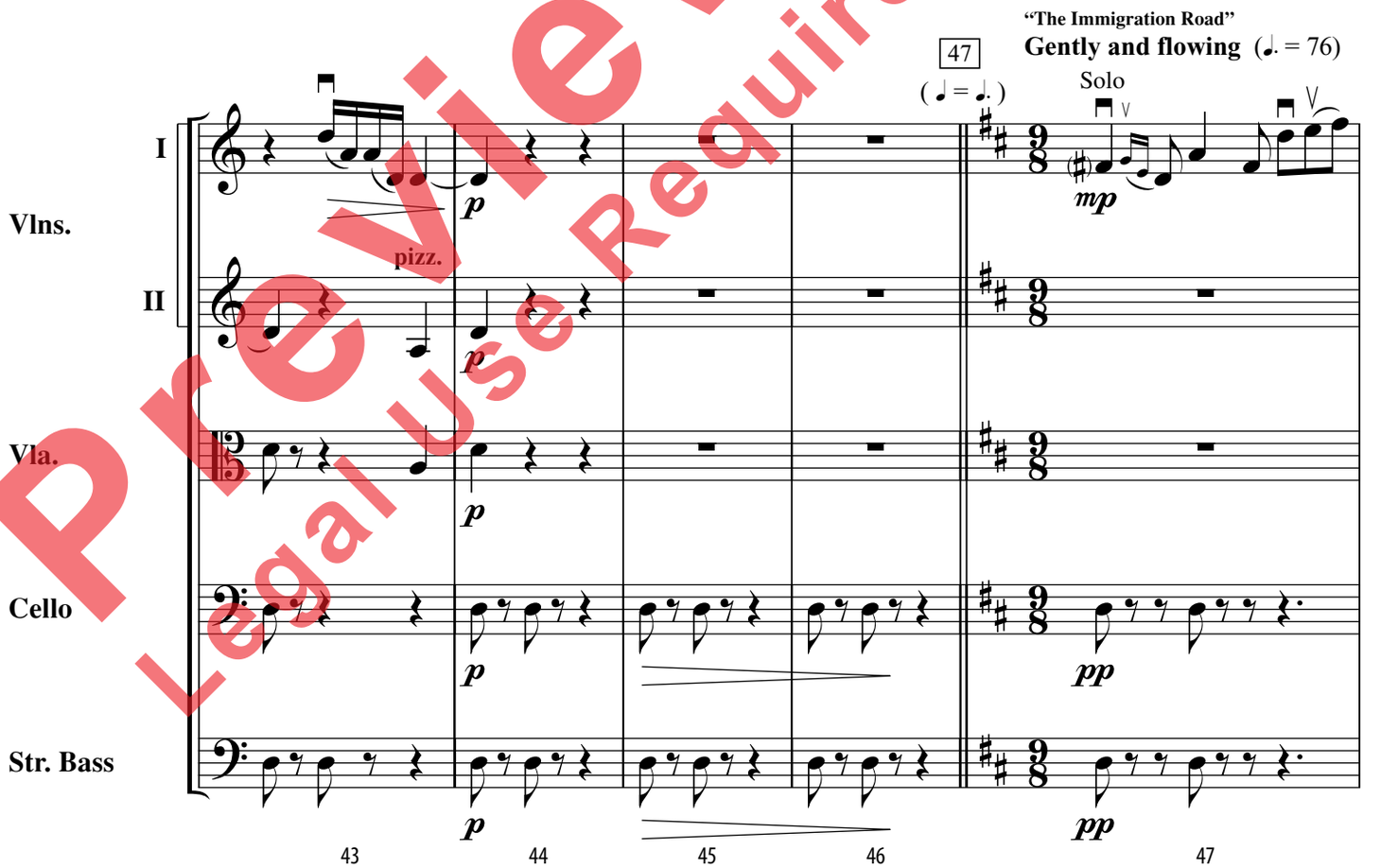

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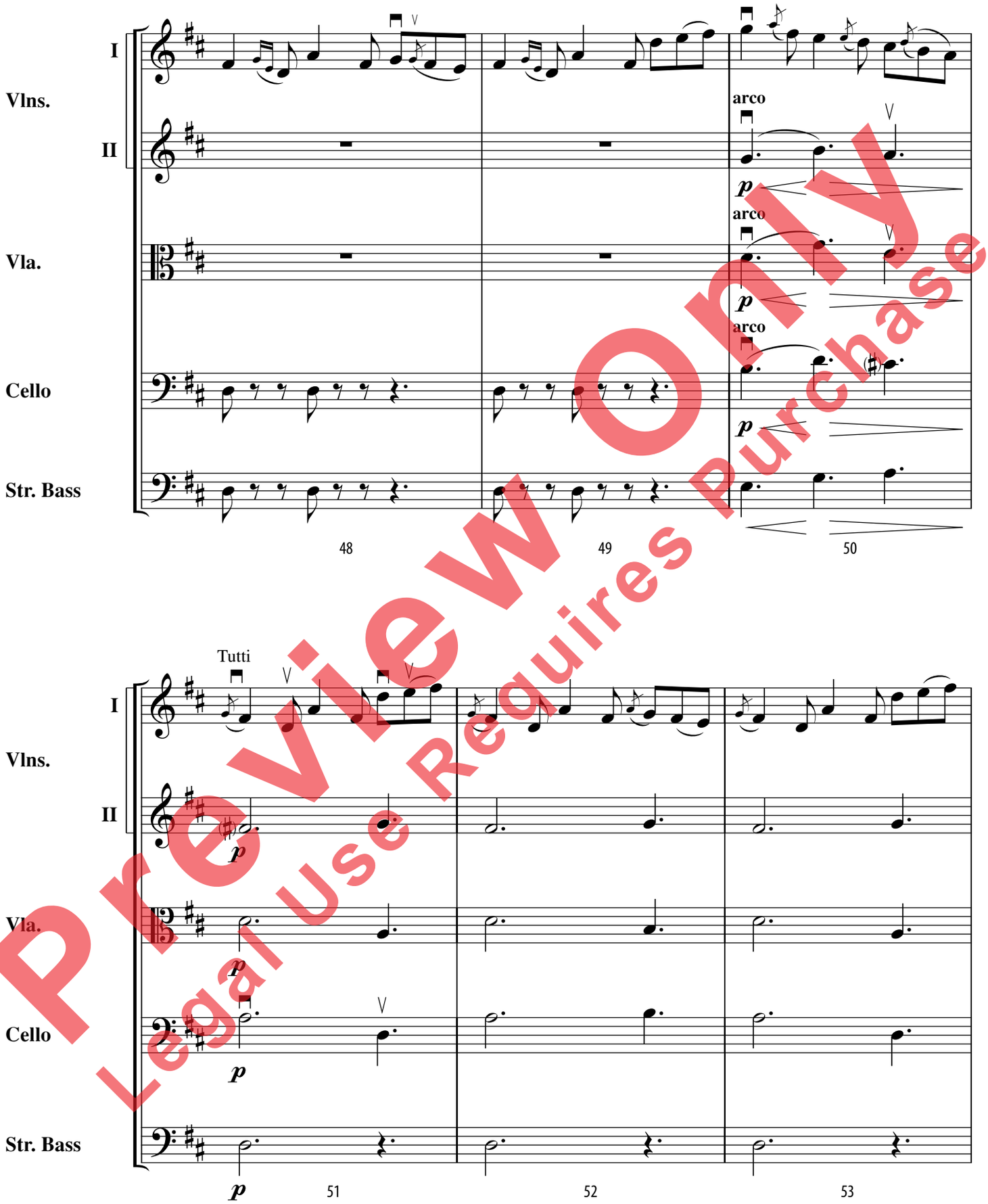

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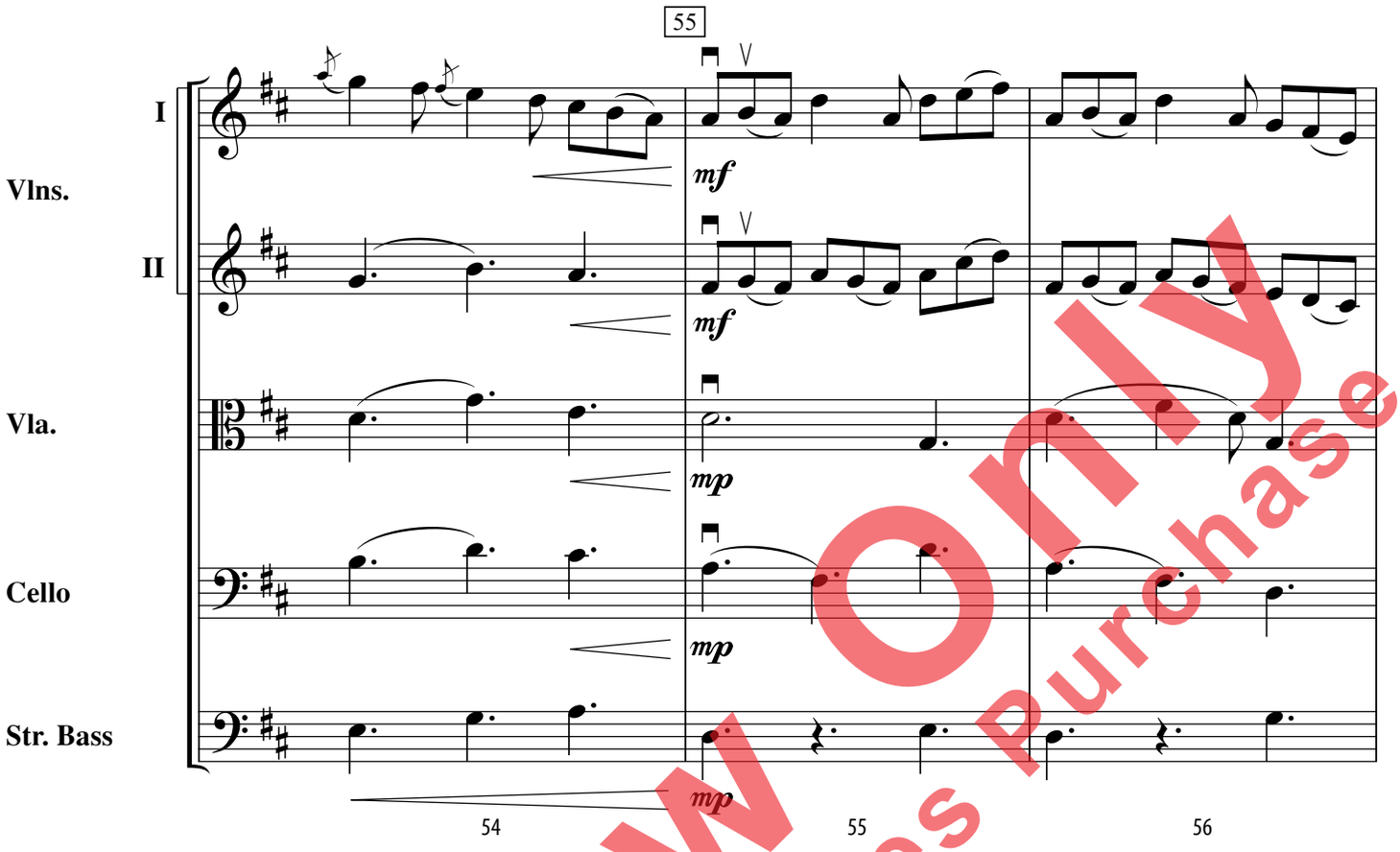

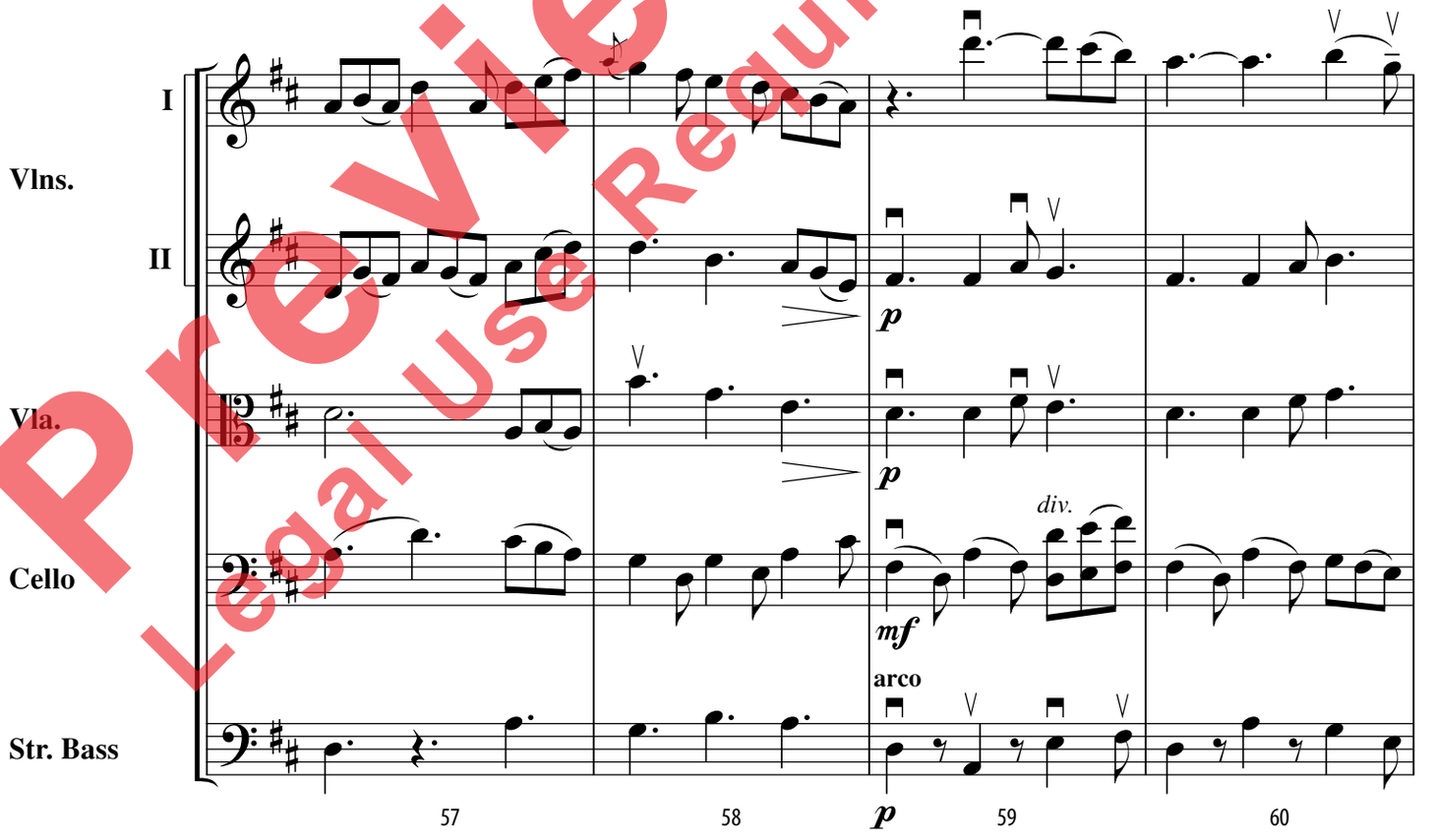

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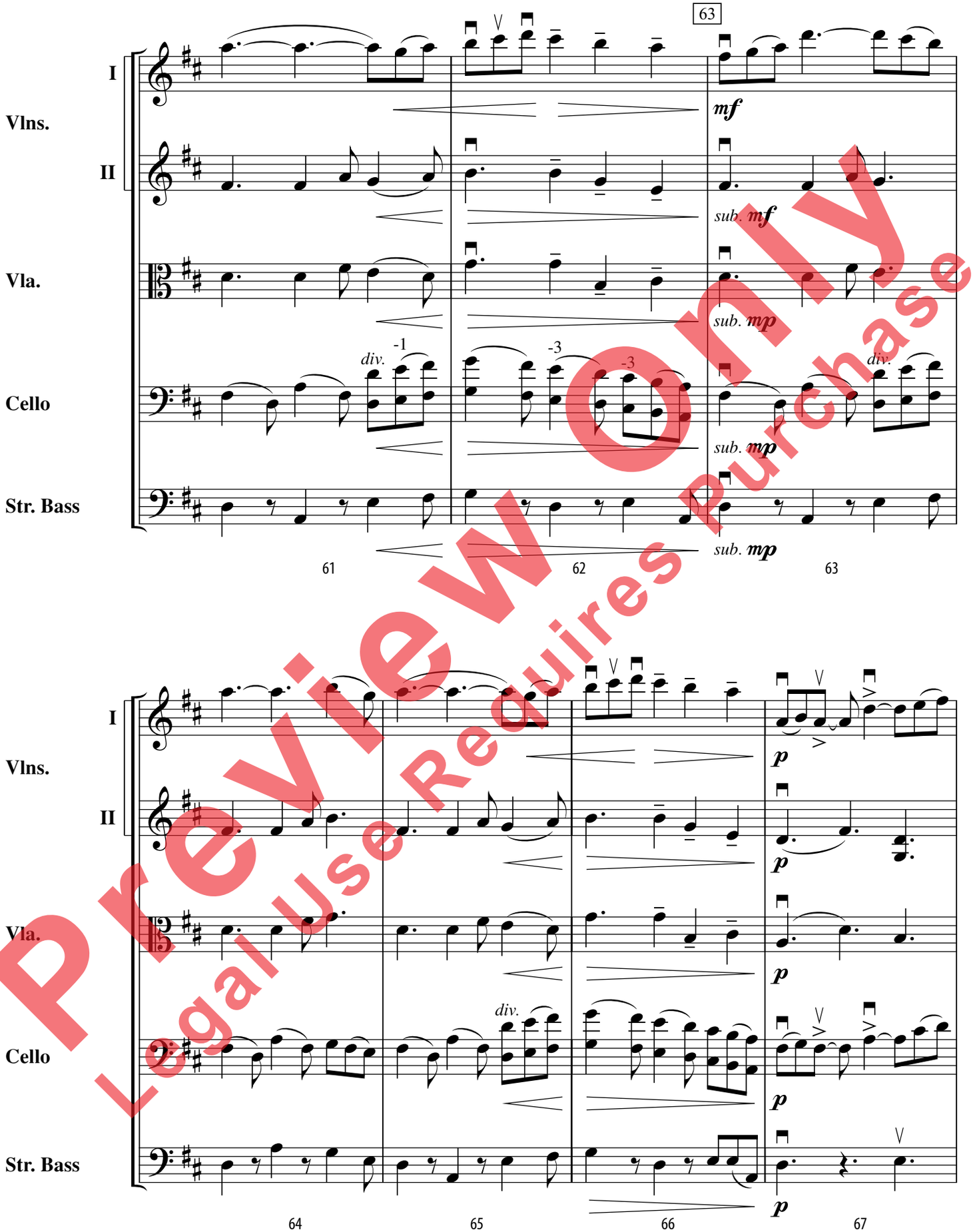

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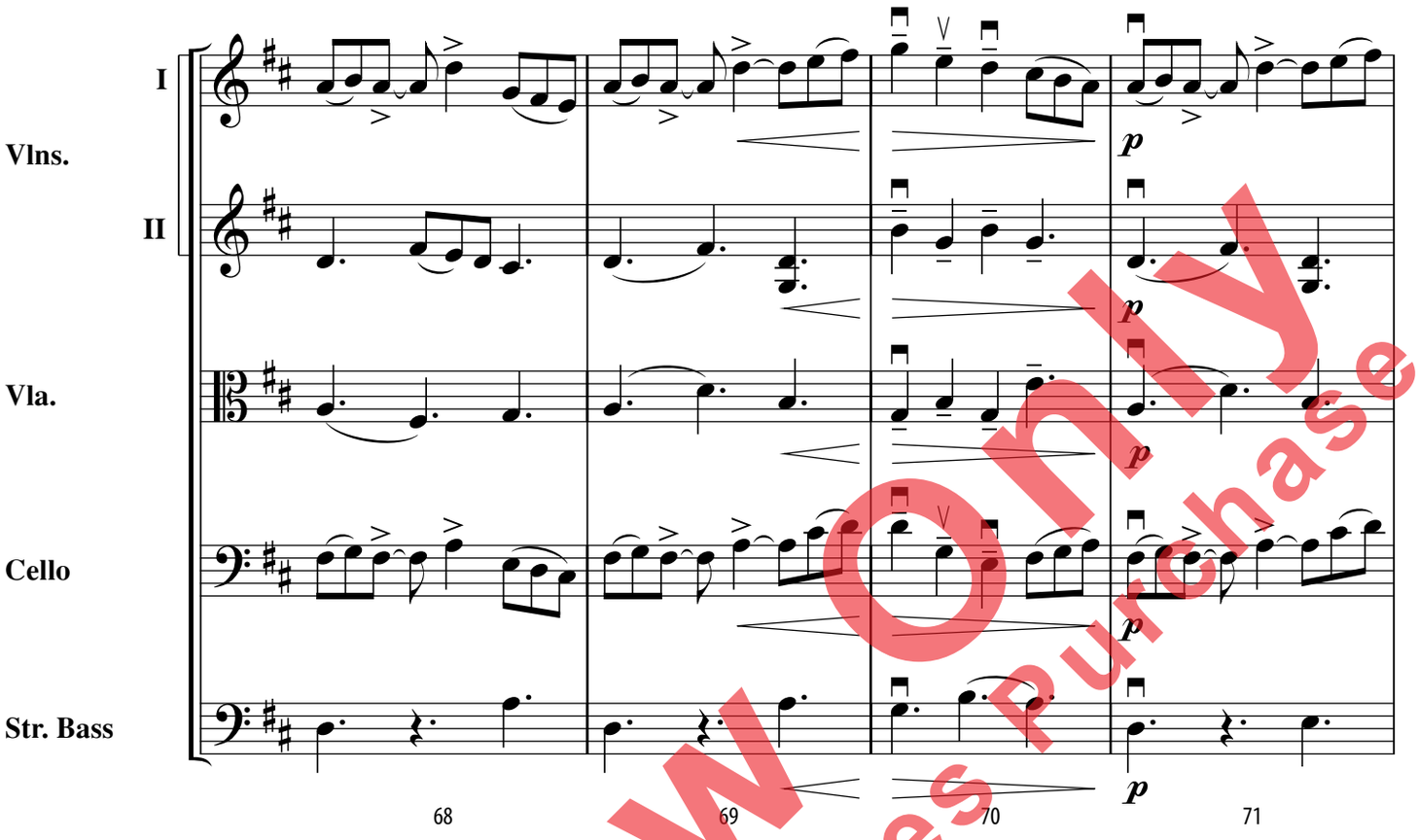

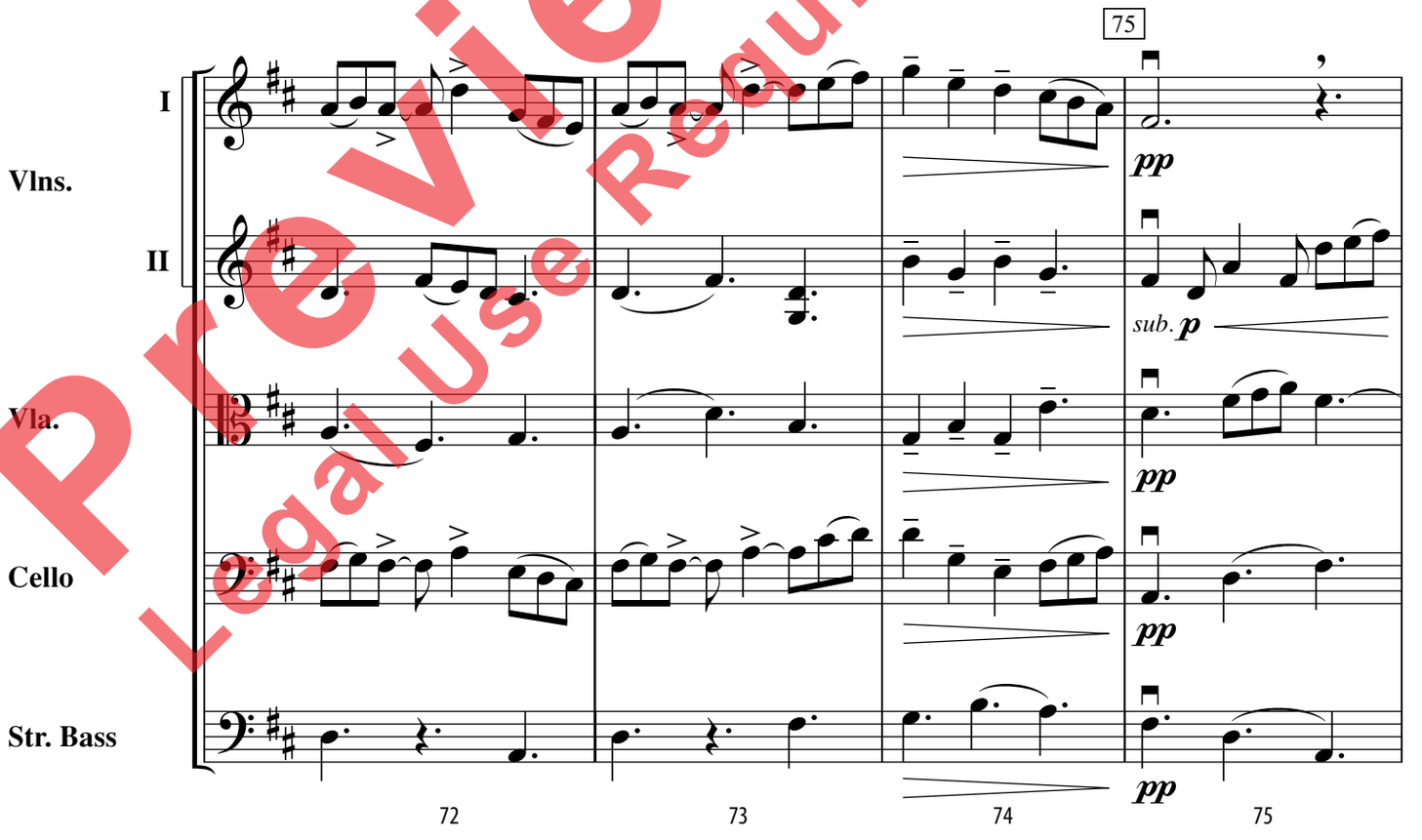

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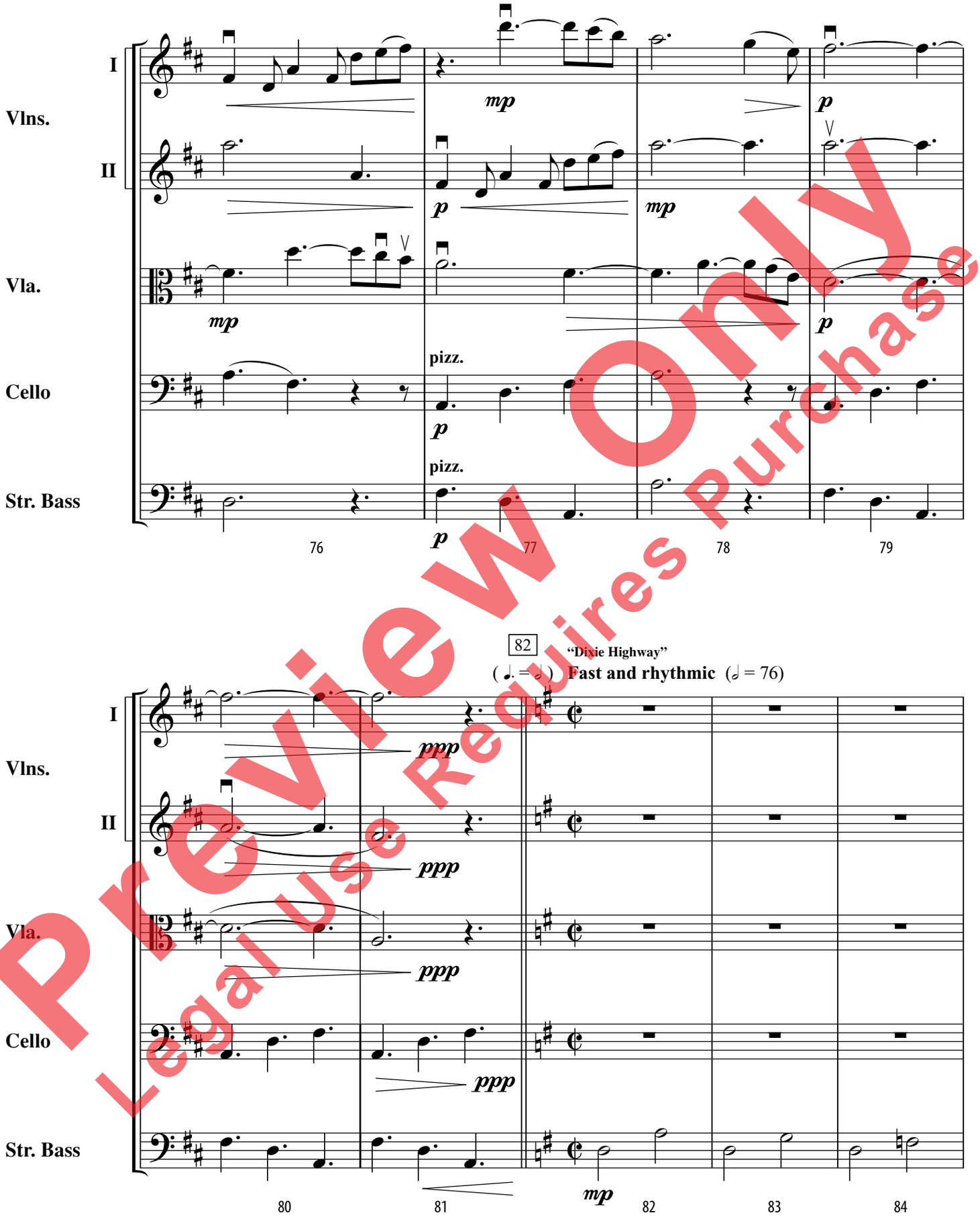

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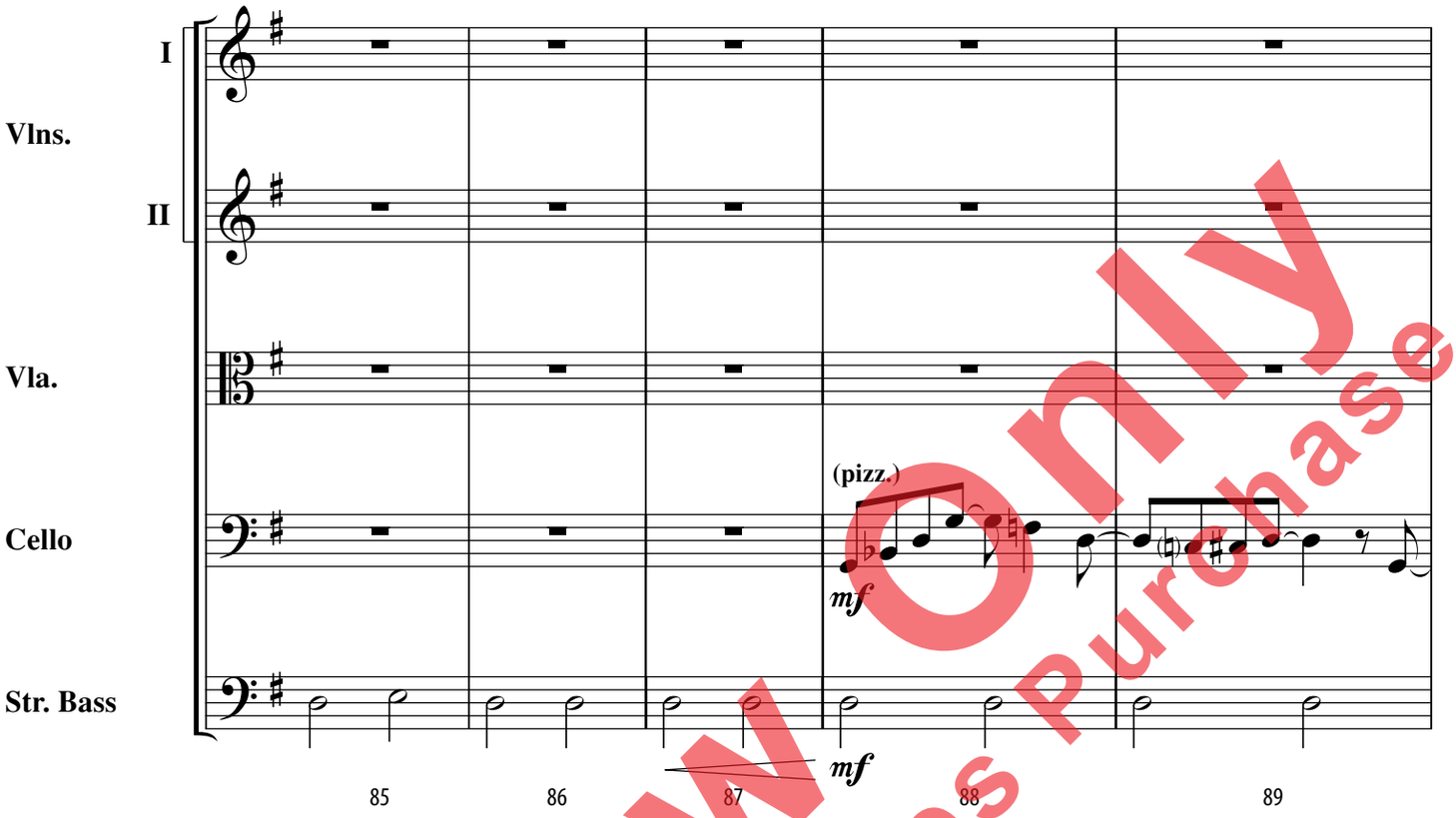

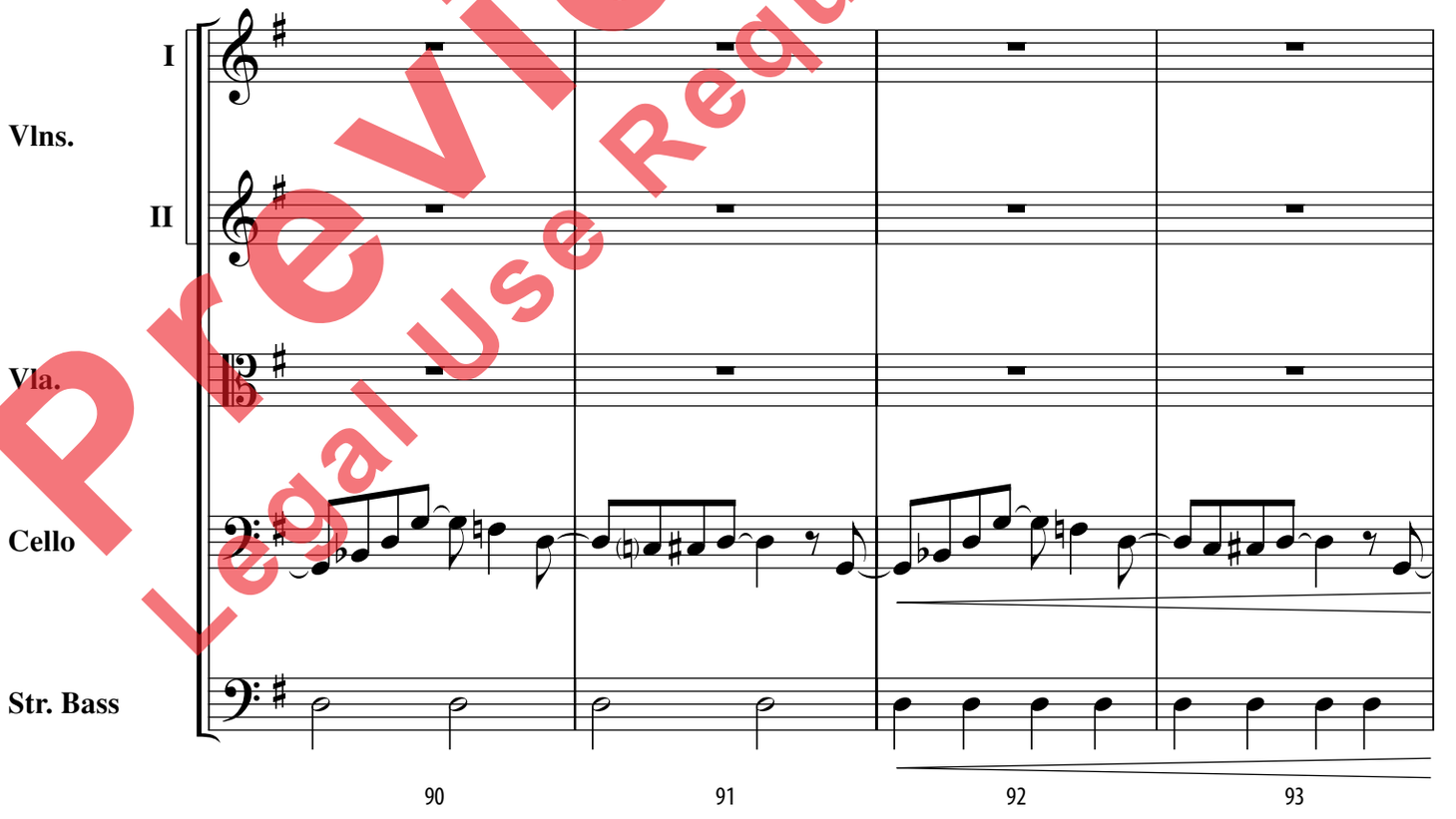

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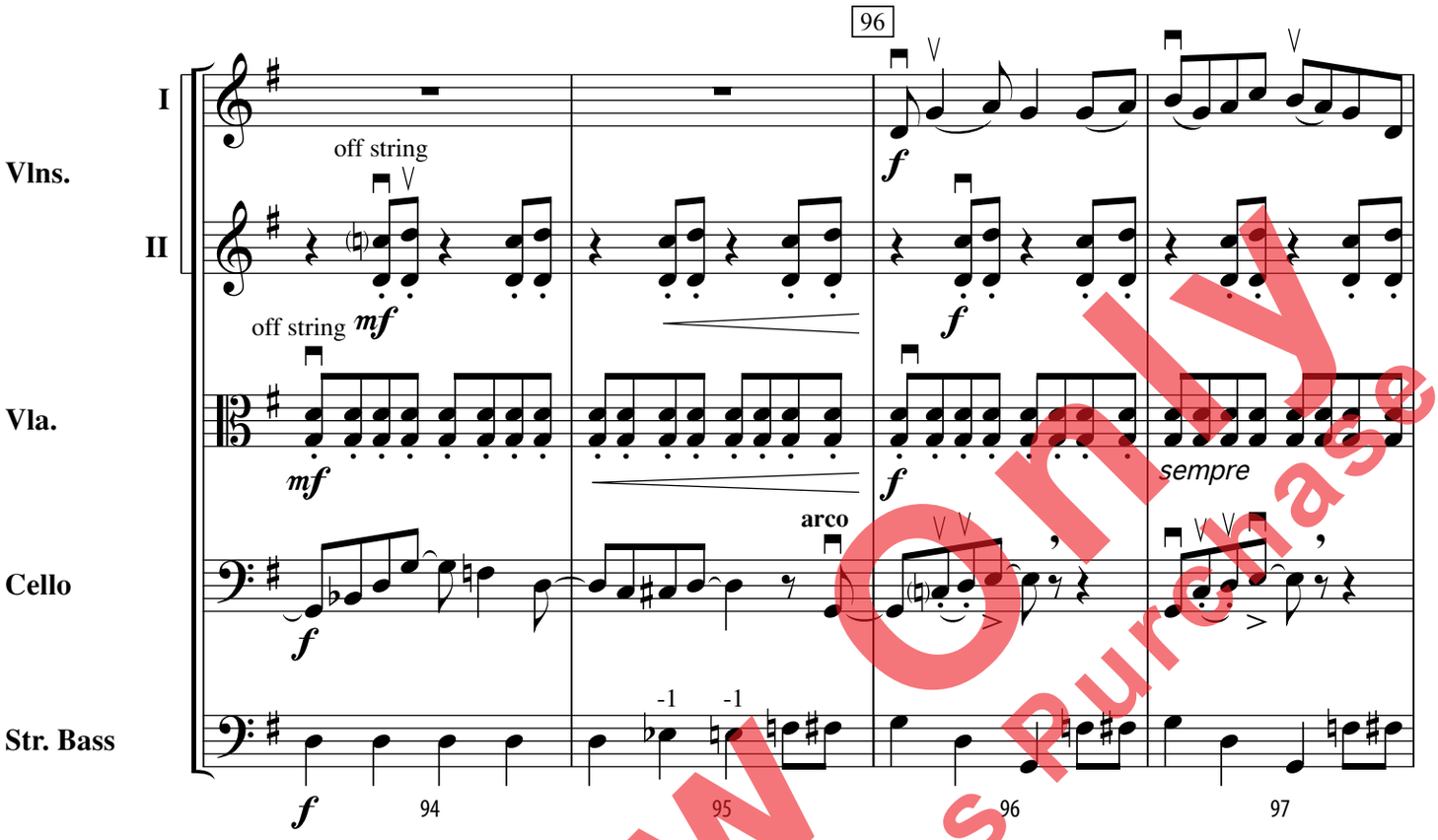

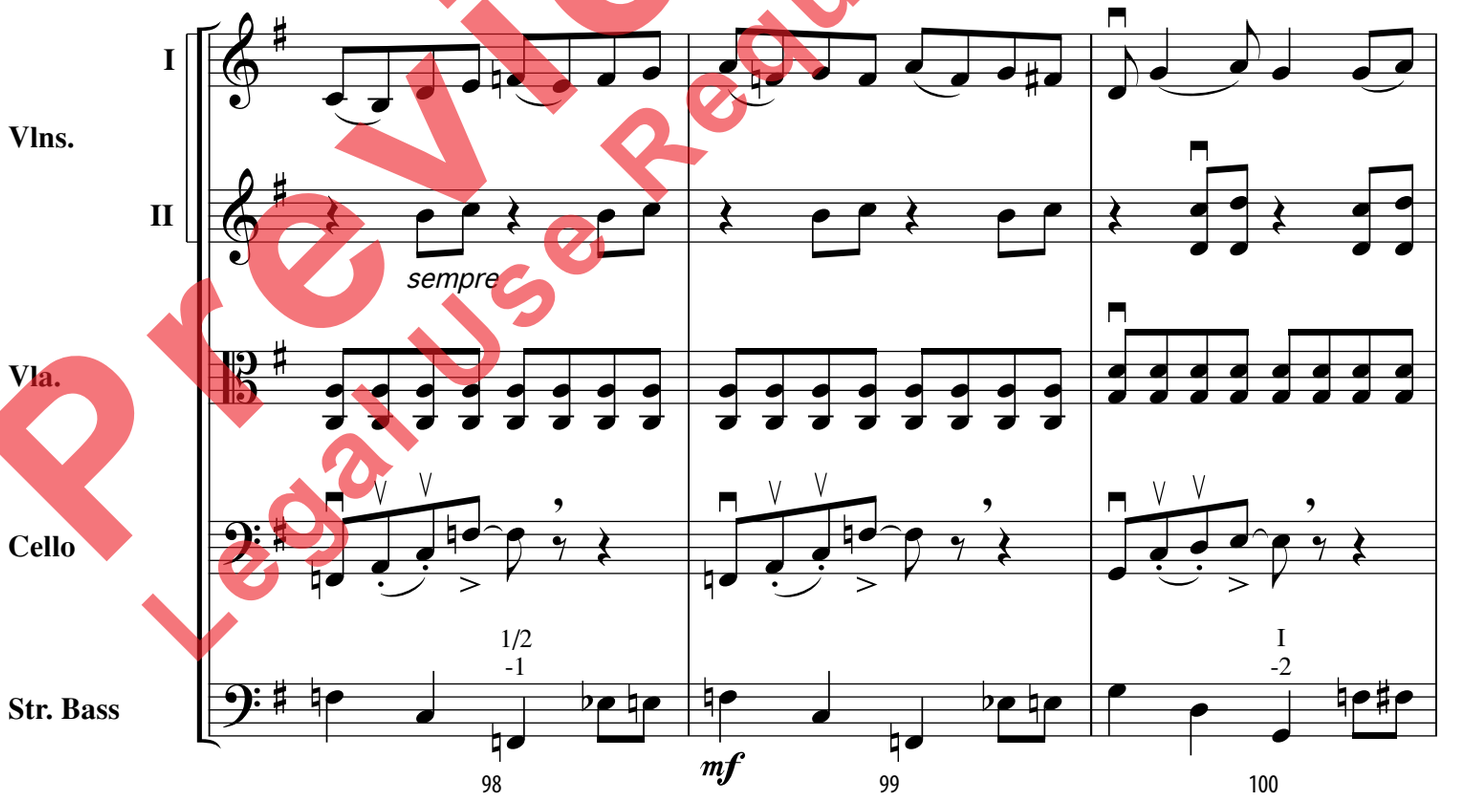

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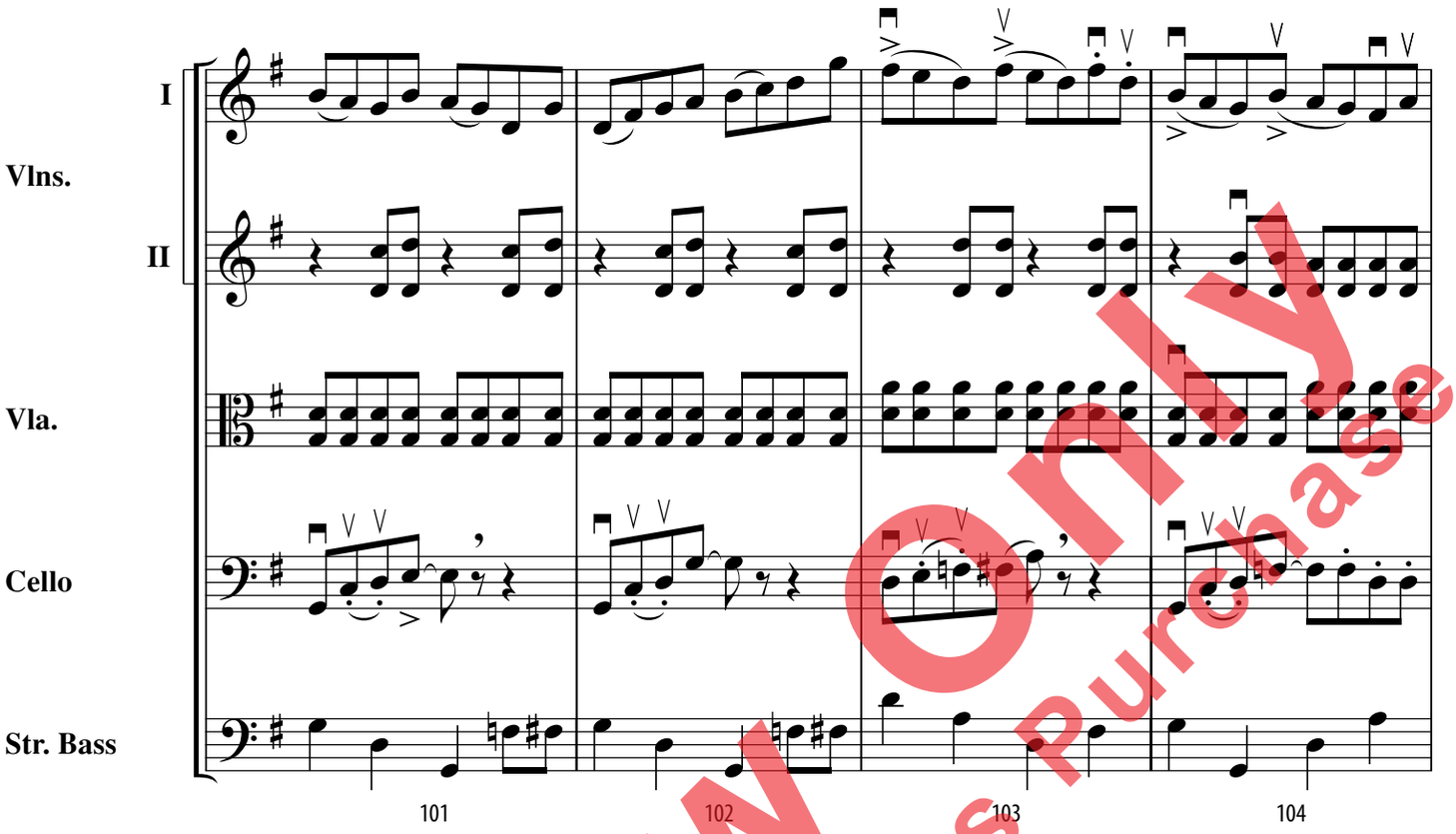

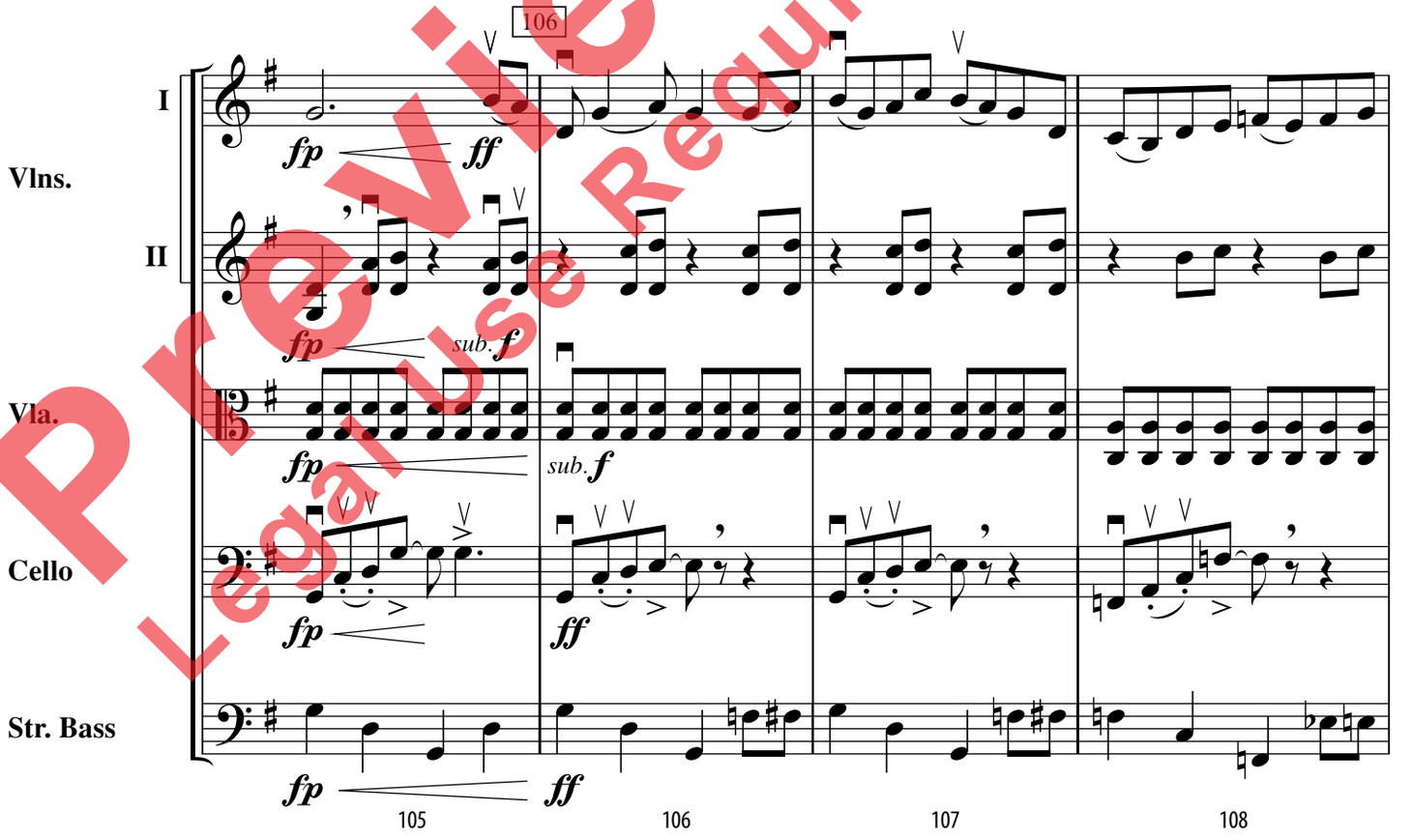

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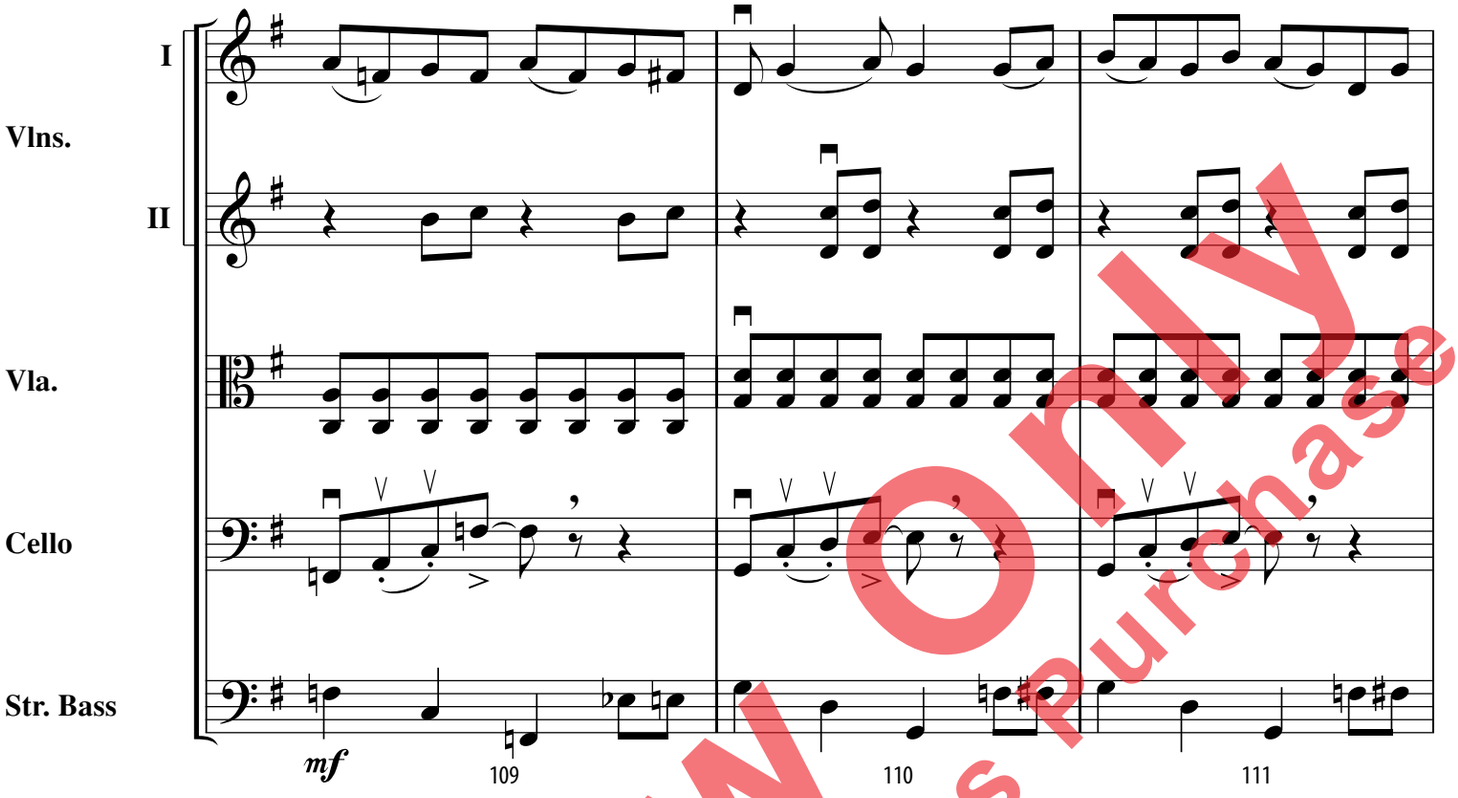

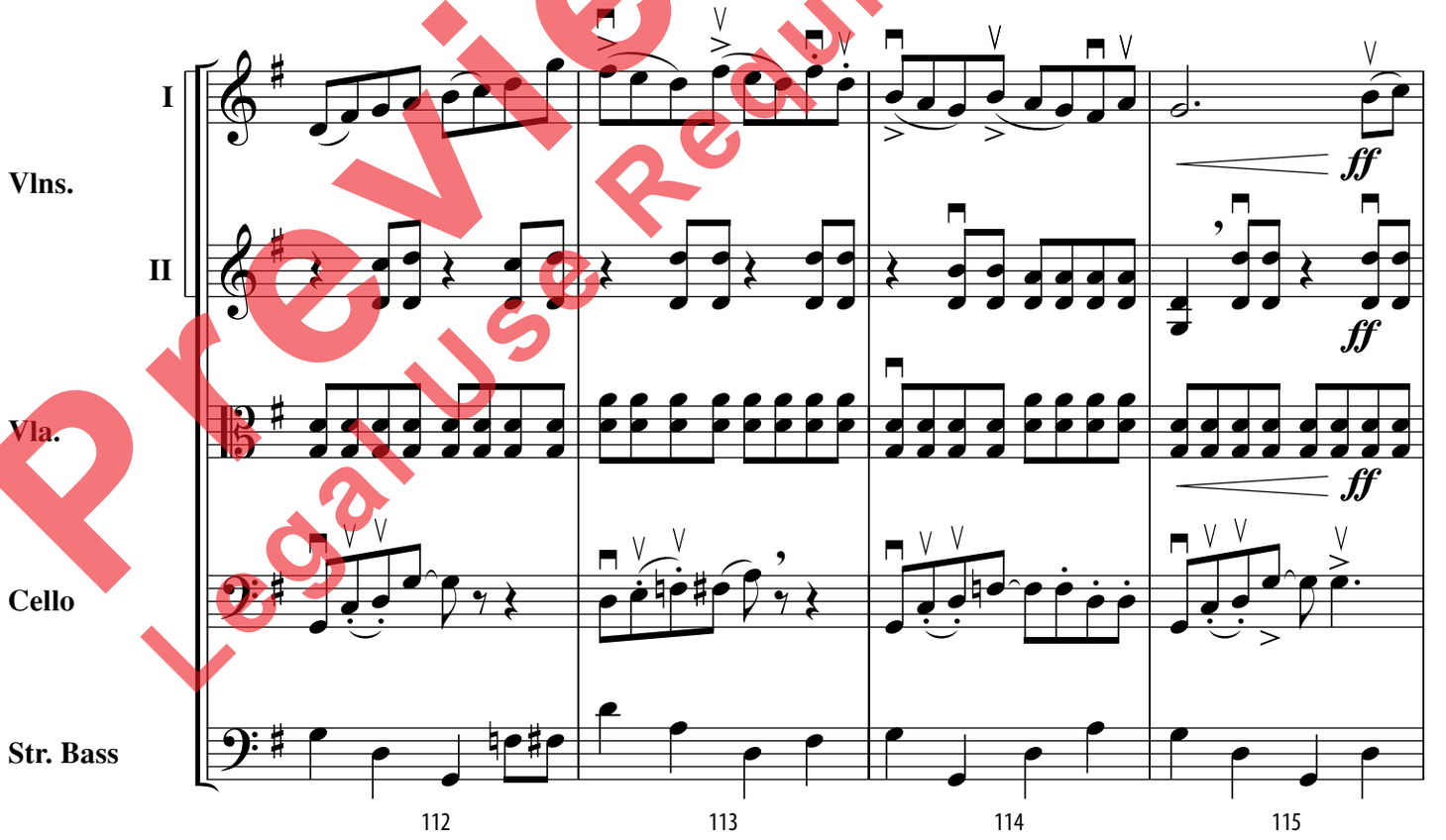

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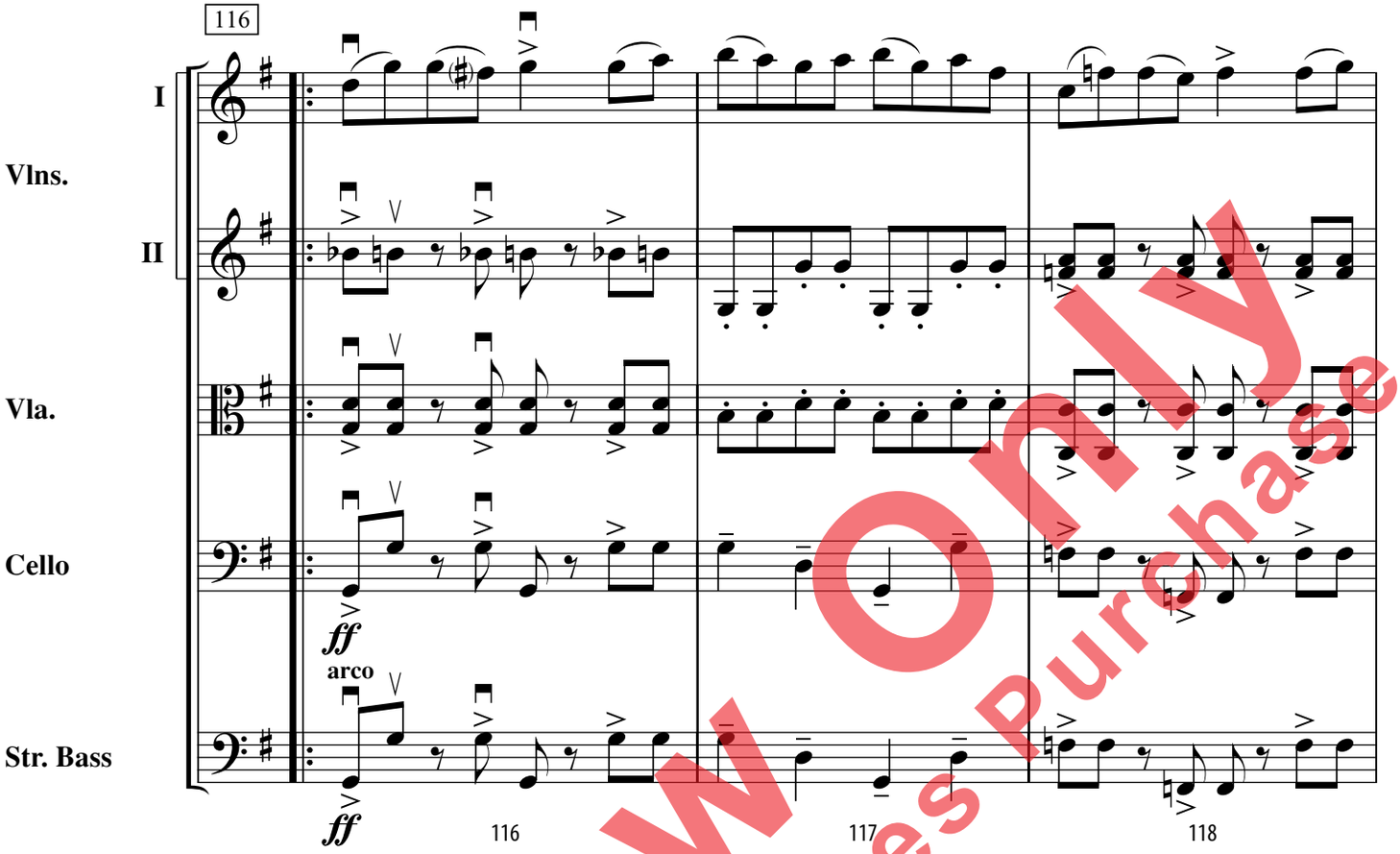

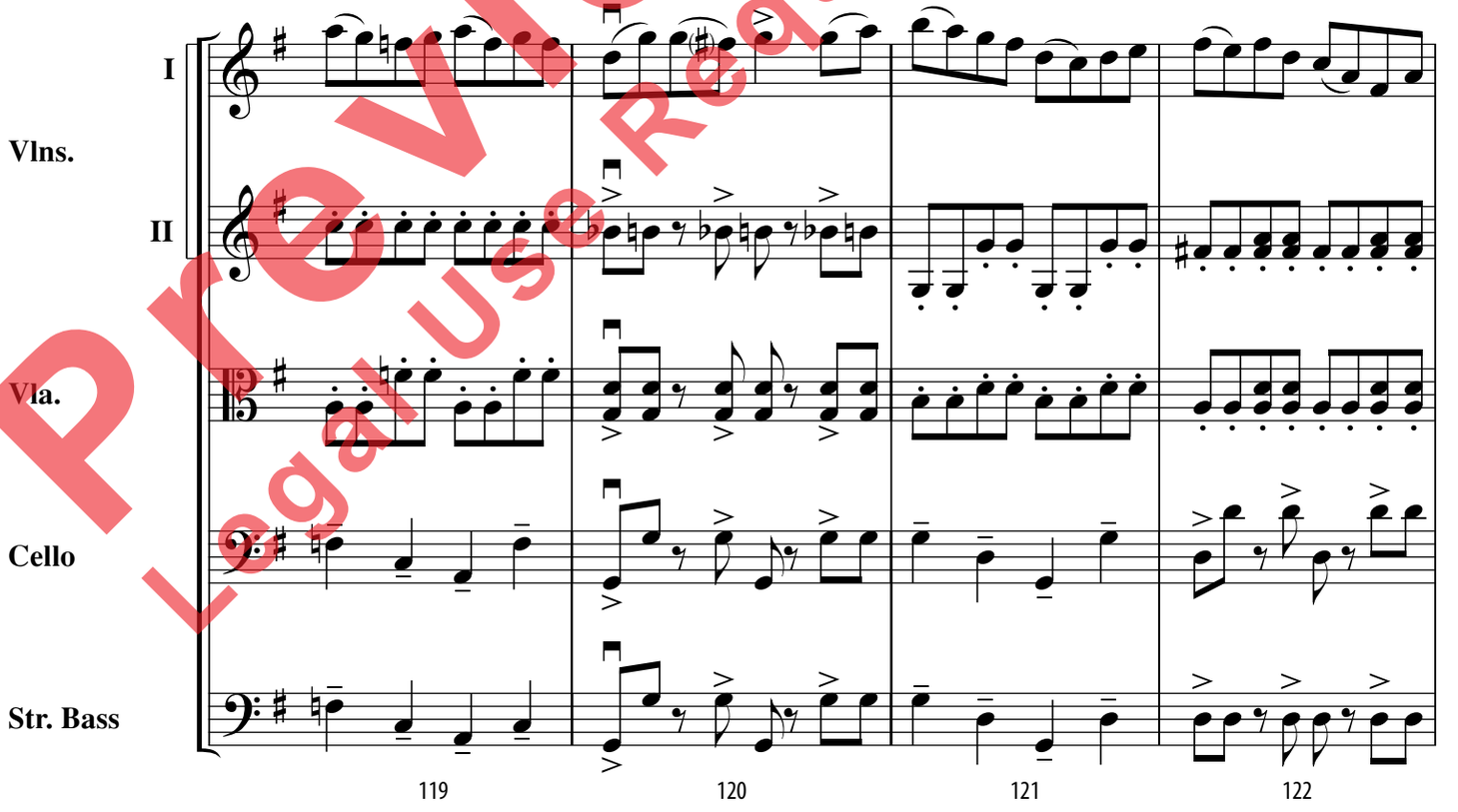

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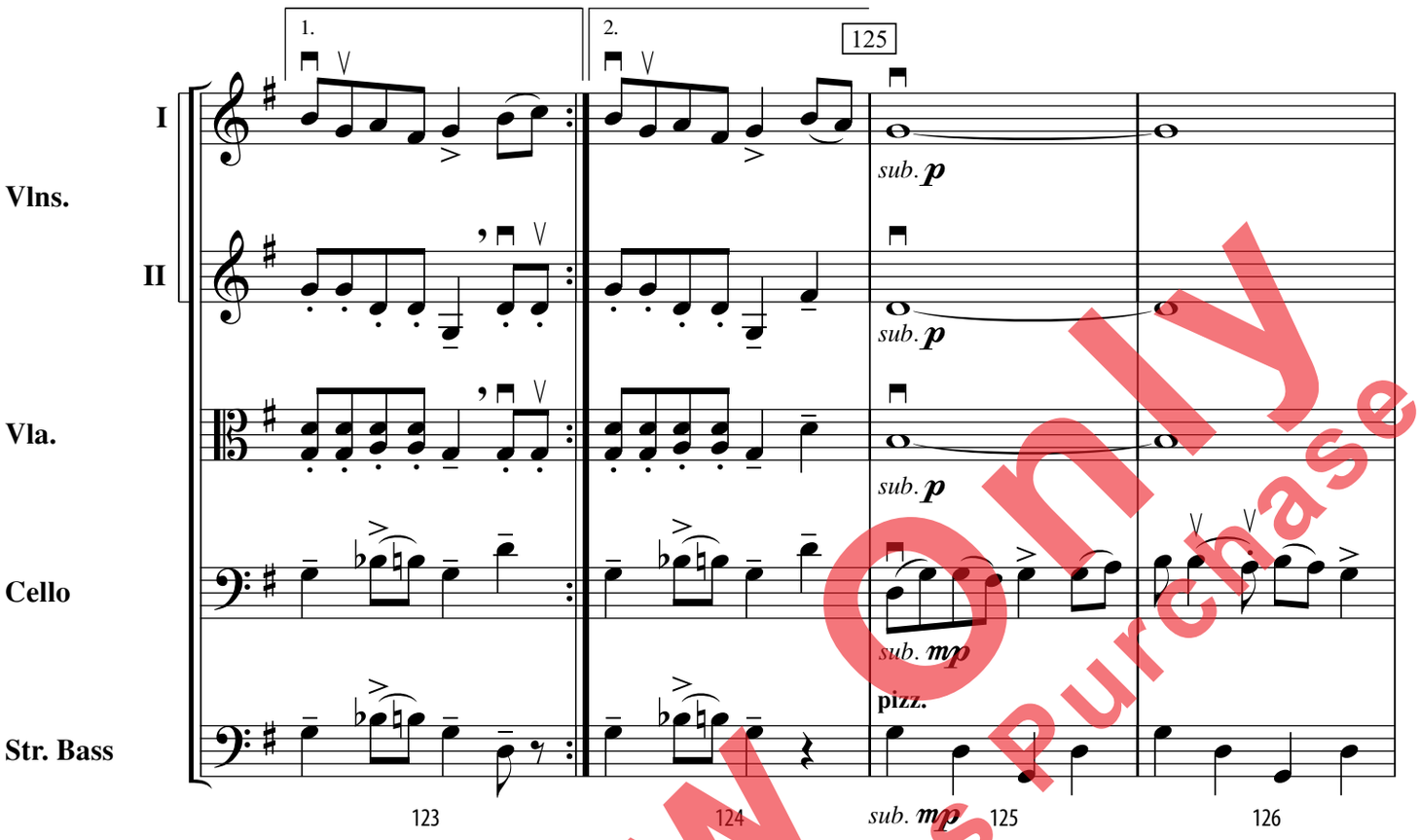

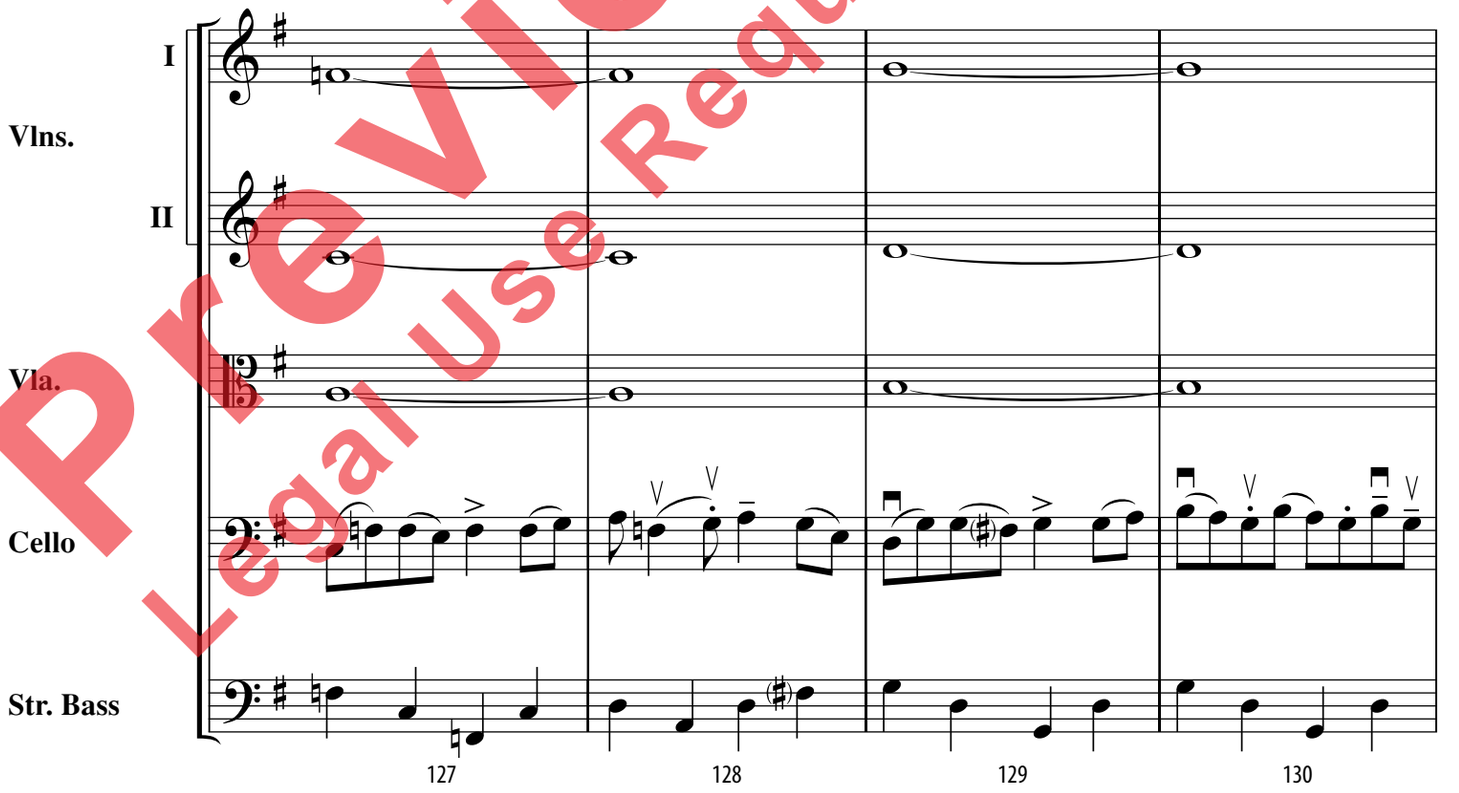

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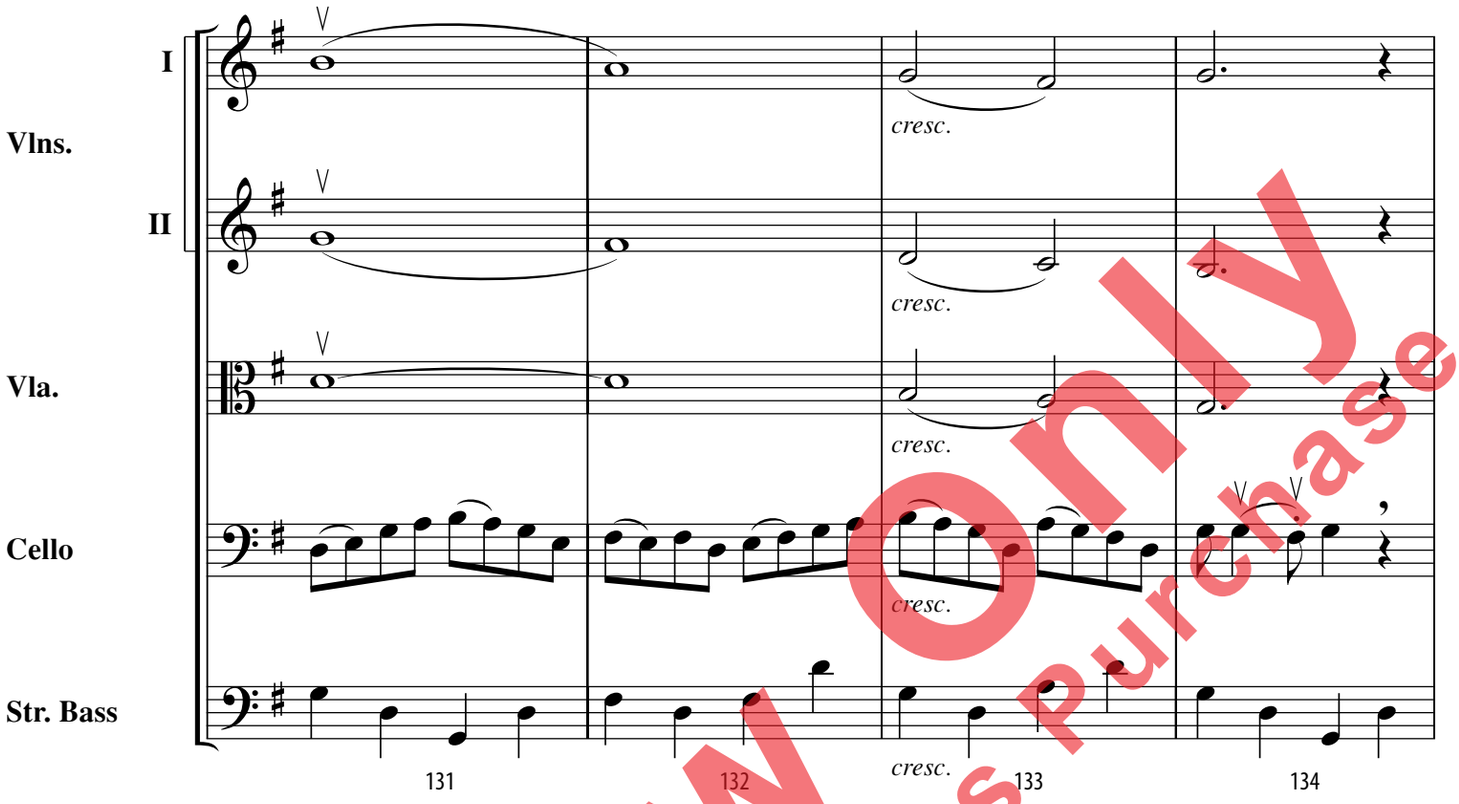

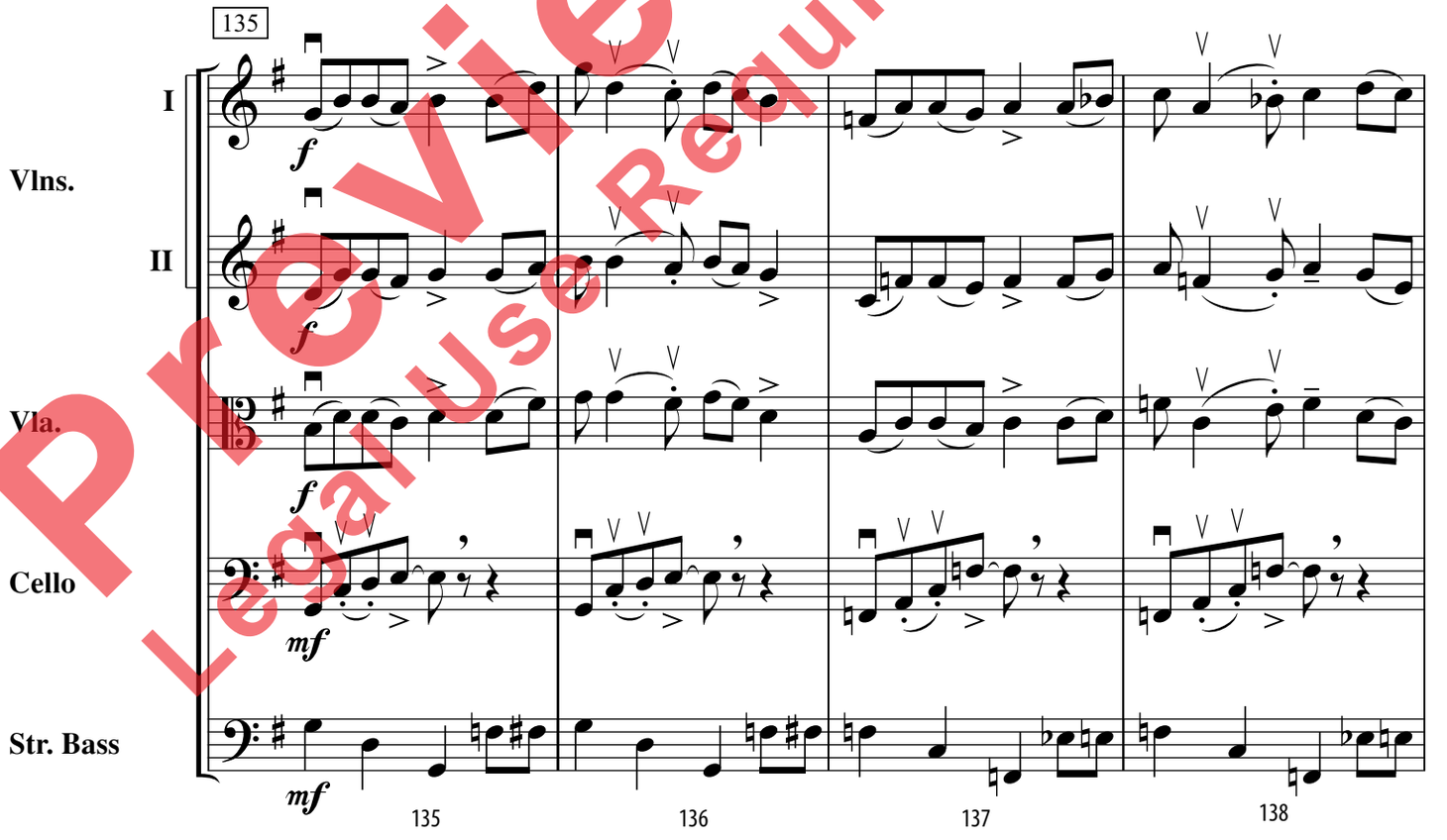

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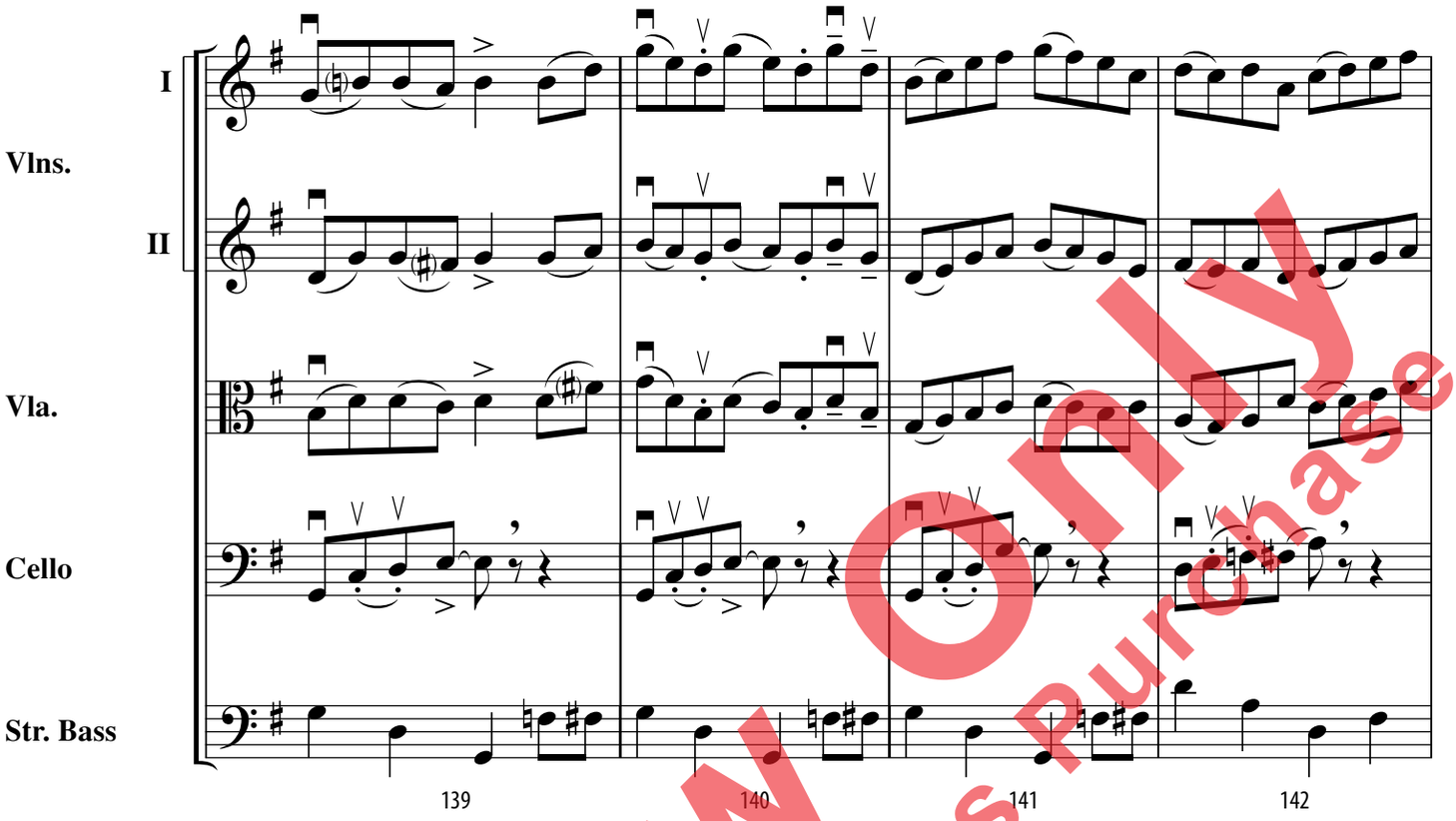

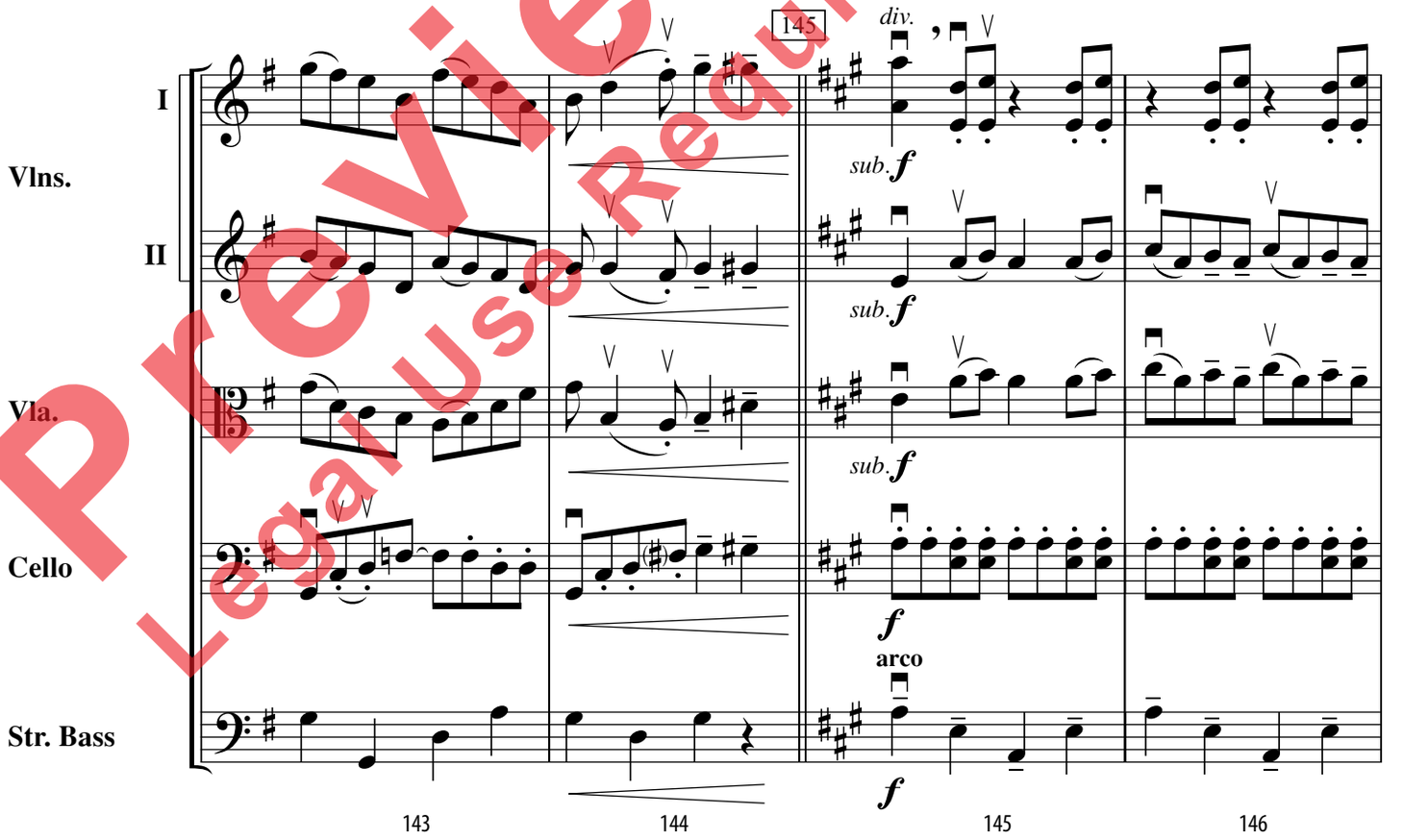

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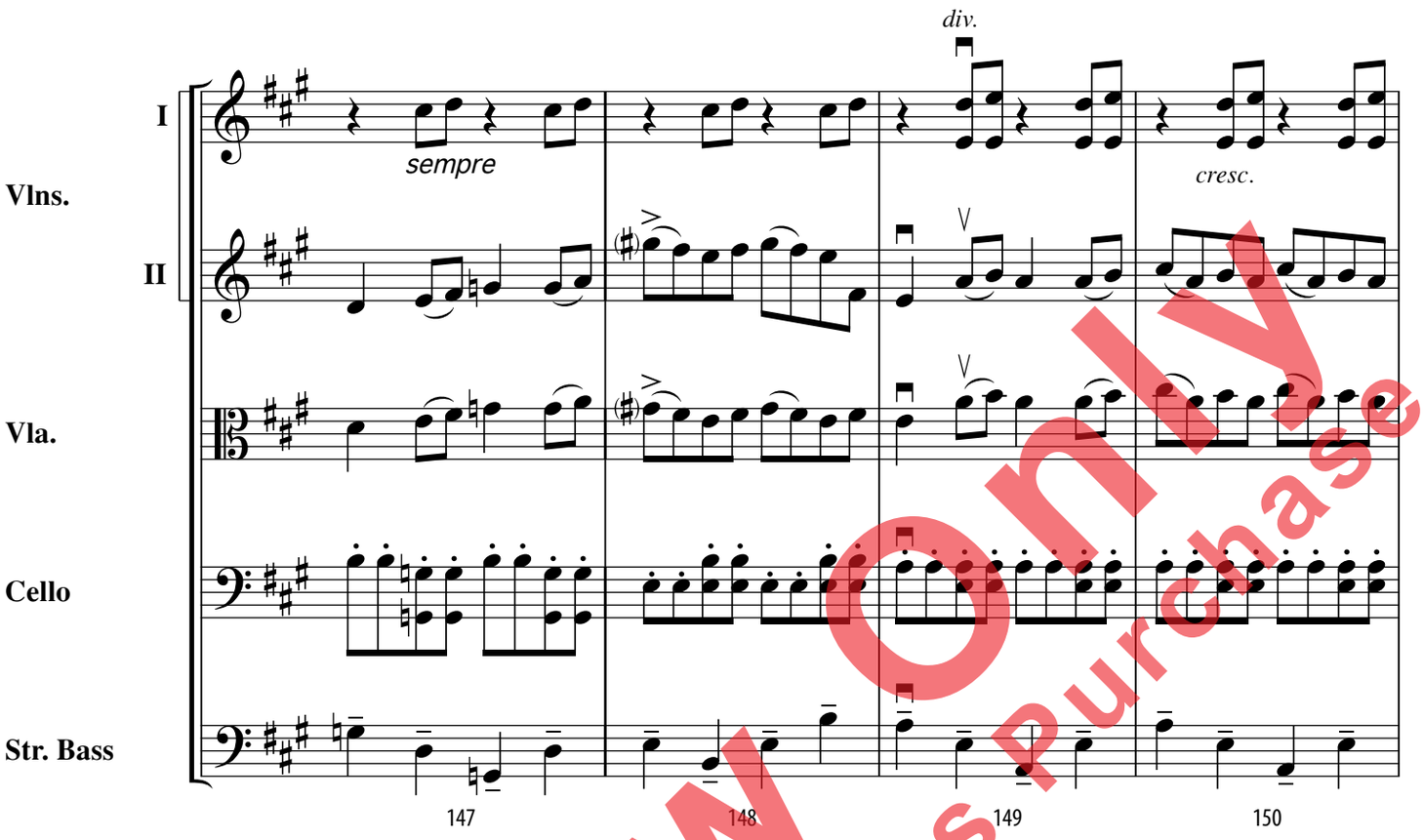

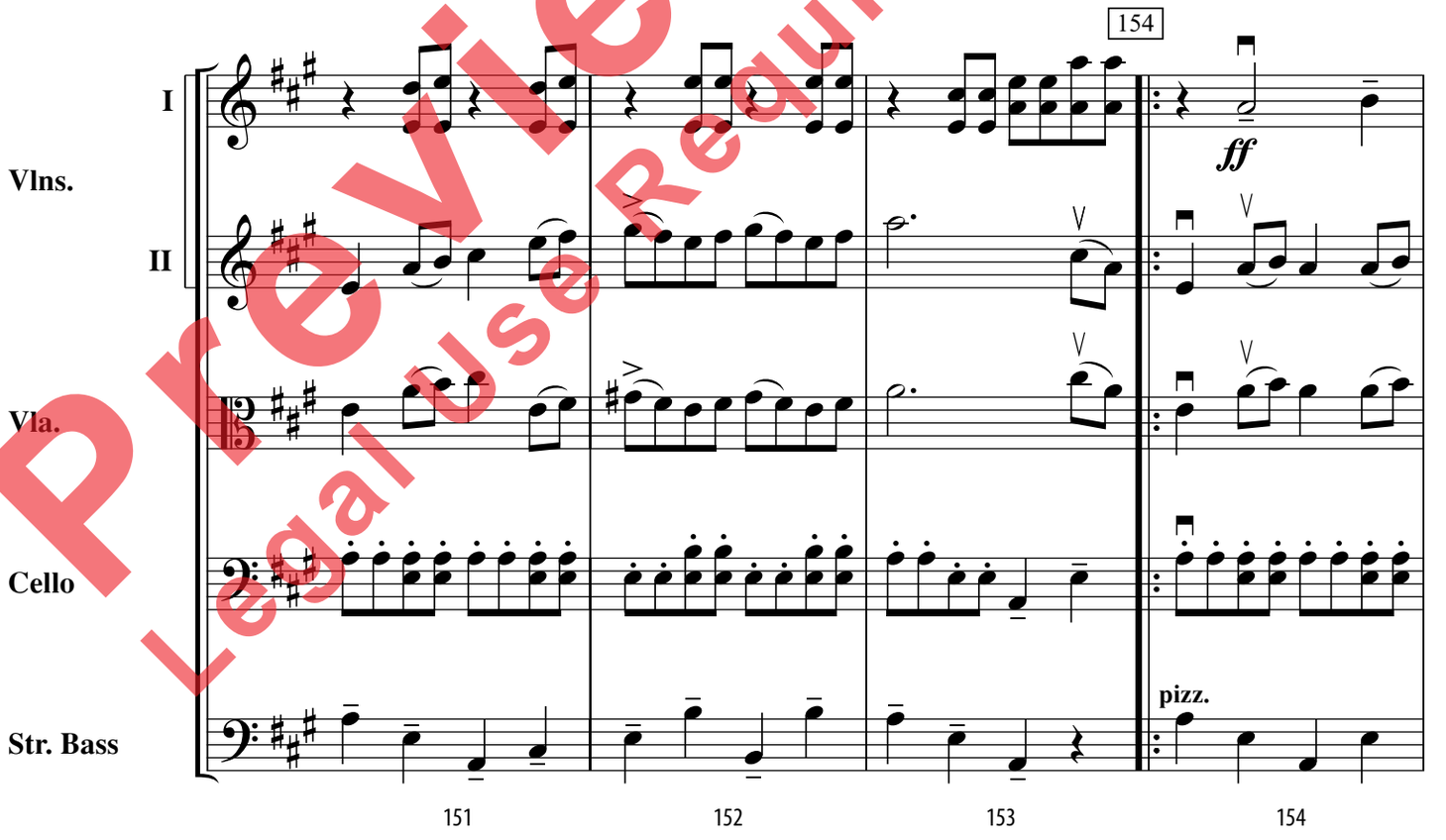

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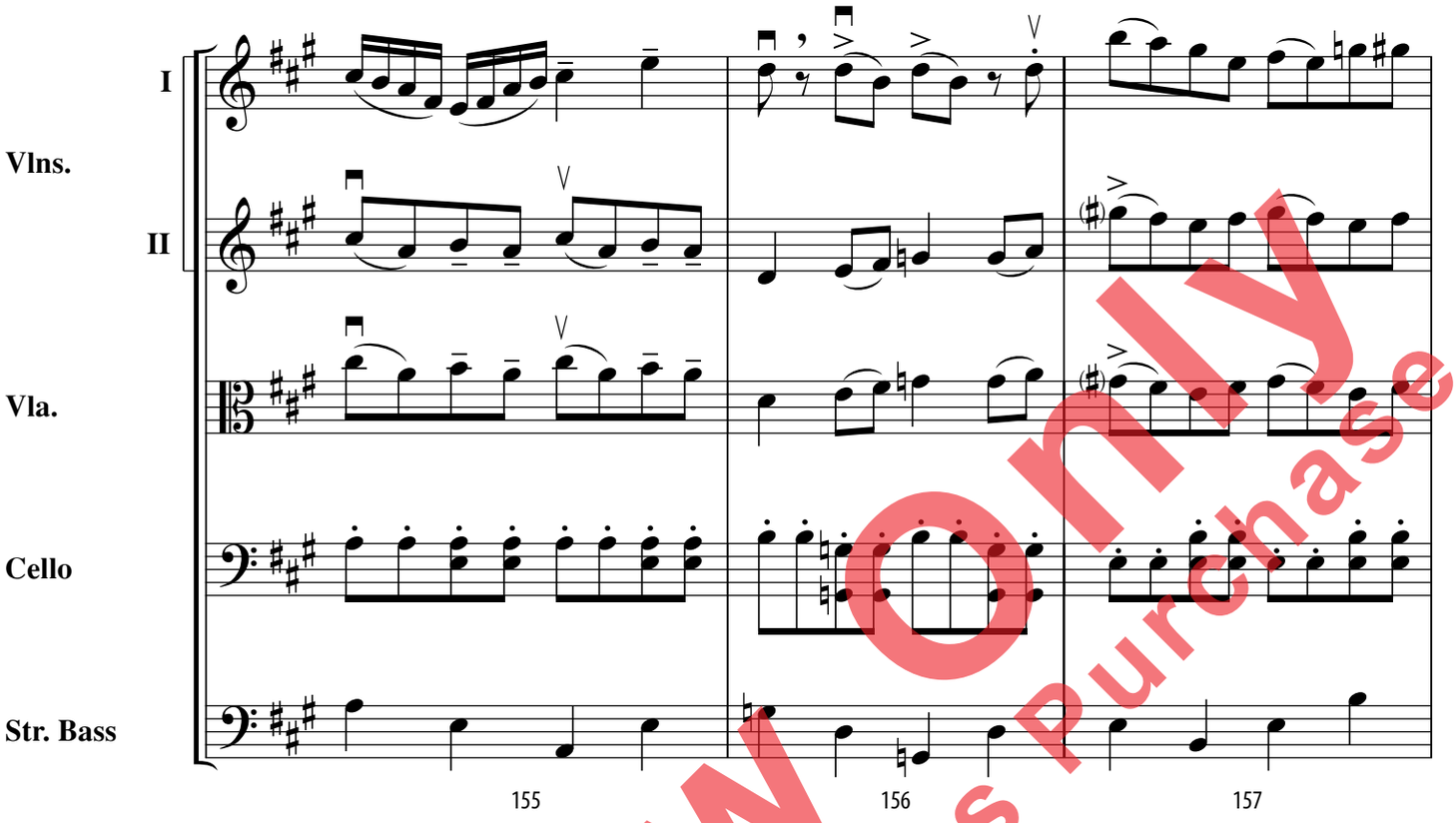

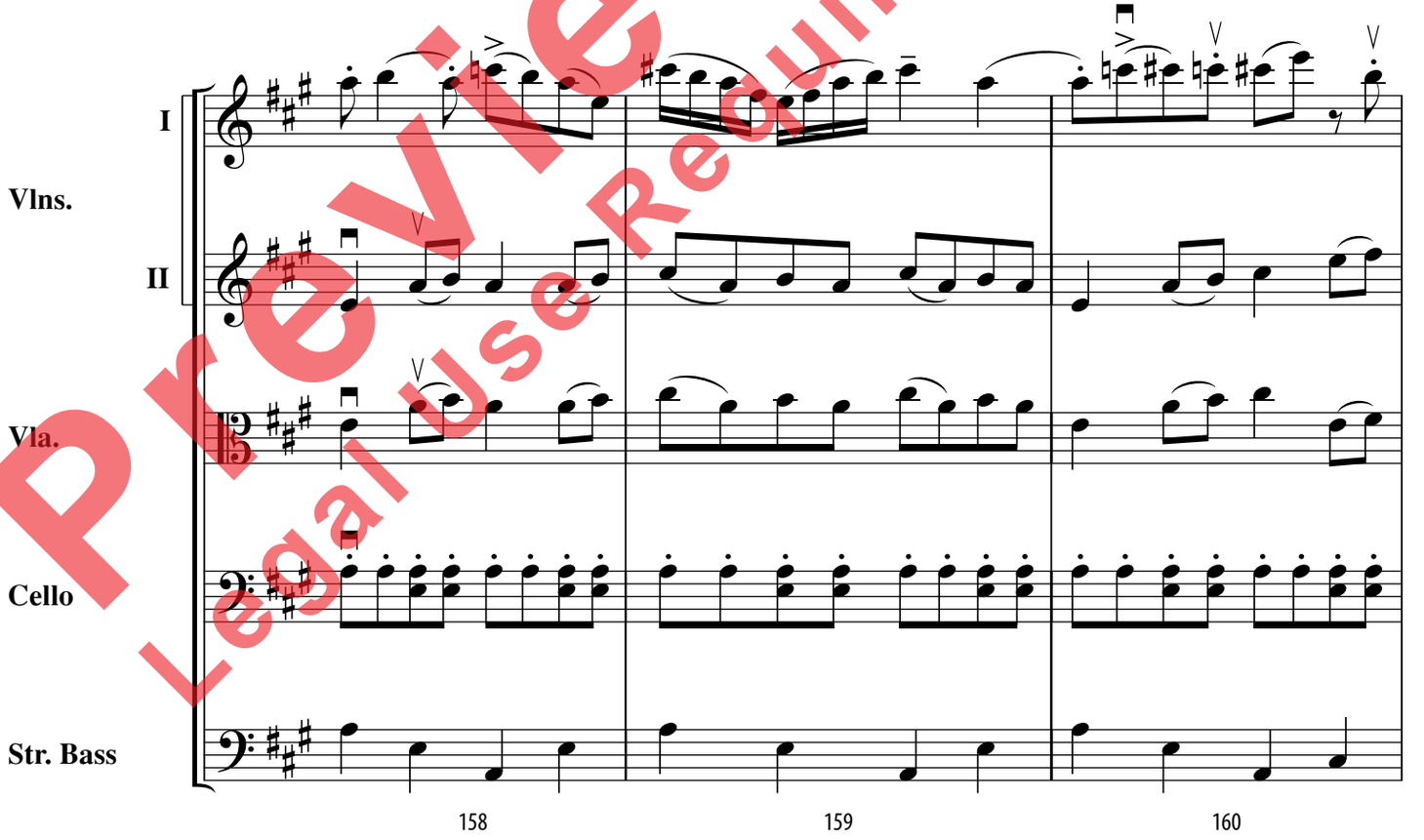

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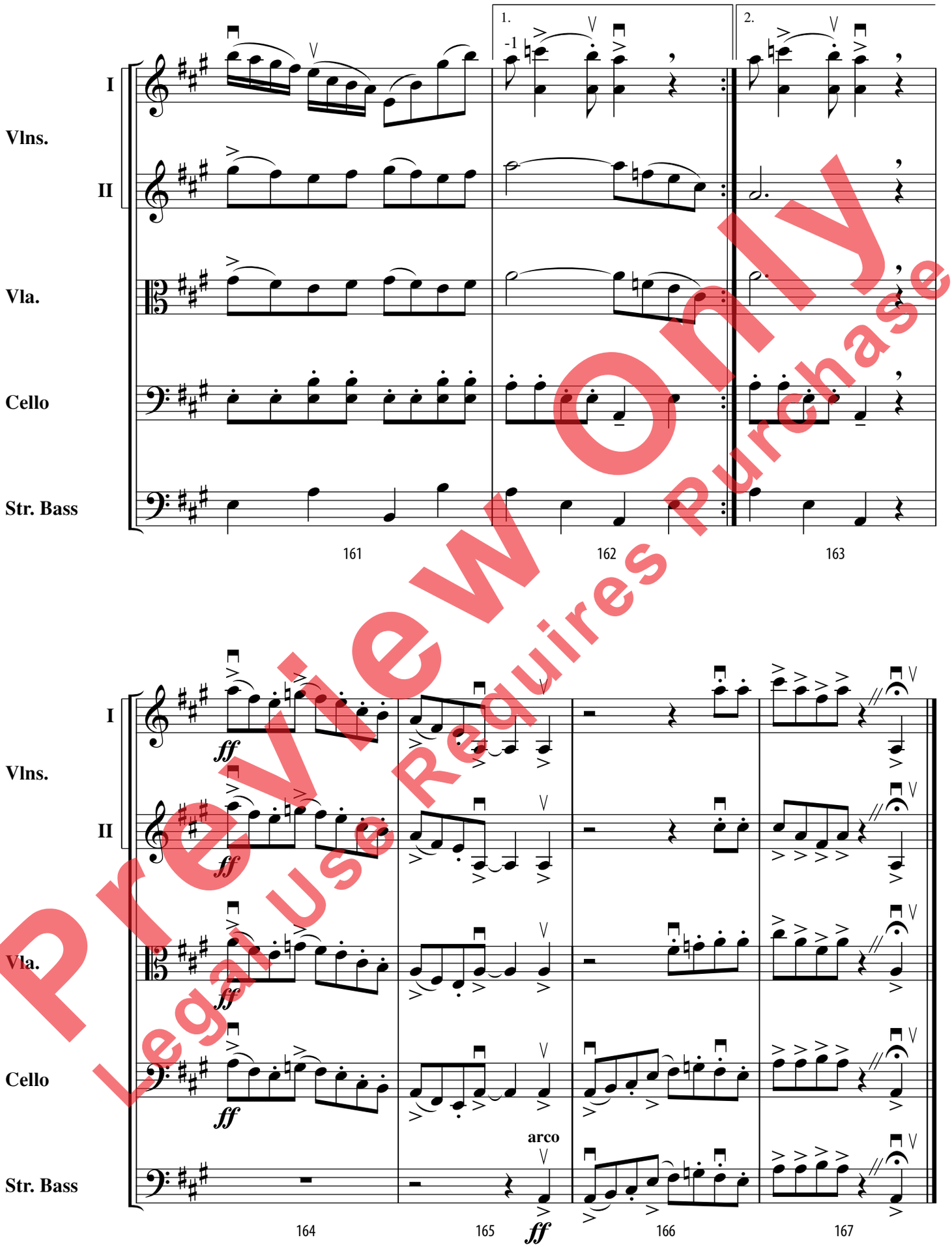

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