(Correlates with *String Explorer*, Book 1, Unit 14) Grade Level: 1½

STRING EXPLORER SERIES

C-Serpents

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Violin III (Viola 𝄞)	3
Cello	5
String Bass	5
Piano Accompaniment	1

PROGRAM NOTES

C-Serpents is an original work for string orchestra that features the viola and cello sections playing on their low C-strings. In fact, all the players perform primarily on their lowest strings (the violins never playing higher than their open E-string). The piece is in Dorian mode, an ancient Greek scale that has a distinctly dark and melancholy sound. The repeated, wavy musical figures are combined with dissonant harmonies and steady rhythms to produce the mysterious, sinister, foreboding mood associated with mythical sea serpents. The piece has three main themes. It begins slowly, accelerates, and then returns to the introductory material. Just as the listener thinks the "C-Serpents" are fading away, and all is quiet, the piece ends with a sudden, explosive bite from the deep!

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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.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Here's the perfect piece for your "C-farers!" Written especially for young violists, cellists, and bassists, *C-Serpents* explores the depths of the lower strings. Simple modes are creatively mixed with contemporary-sounding rhythms and harmonies for a work that's perfect for students within their first two years of string study. This piece uses relatively simple fingerings, bowings, and rhythms to focus on tone production on the lower strings. While the pun in the title is obvious, the piece should maintain a rhythmic, sinister, and haunting "sub-mariner" character. Emphasis is on the violas, celli, and basses throughout. Primarily in D-Dorian mode, the piece begins slowly and steadily with a repeated C-string figure (violas/celli) and sudden accented and dissonant outbursts by the basses and violins (mm. 1–8). The repeated figure accelerates and is expanded (mm. 8–12) until the main theme is reached at m. 13 in a comfortable Allegro tempo. The accompaniment in the violins should not over-balance the viola/cello melody. Roles are reversed at m. 20 when the 1st violins take over the melody. A second theme begins at m. 27 (violas, celli, basses), an augmentation of the opening measures. A steady, almost "rock-beat" feel should be maintained when the violins join with their rhythmic accompaniment (m. 34). The violins come to the fore with a new melody in m. 45, but the accompaniment in the lower strings is of almost equal importance and should always be steady and insistently rhythmic. Following the second ending (m. 53), the piece suddenly ritards, comes to a cadence and pause (m. 58), and with a da capo, returns to the opening. A coda is taken (after m. 28), and with a return to the introductory material, the piece ritards and fades to a virtually silent halt. Following a long, tension-filled grand pause, the piece concludes with a startling, loud plucked note in all instruments, with the strings slapping the fingerboard (Bartok pizz)—a final bite from the deep.

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C-Serpents

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 3:40

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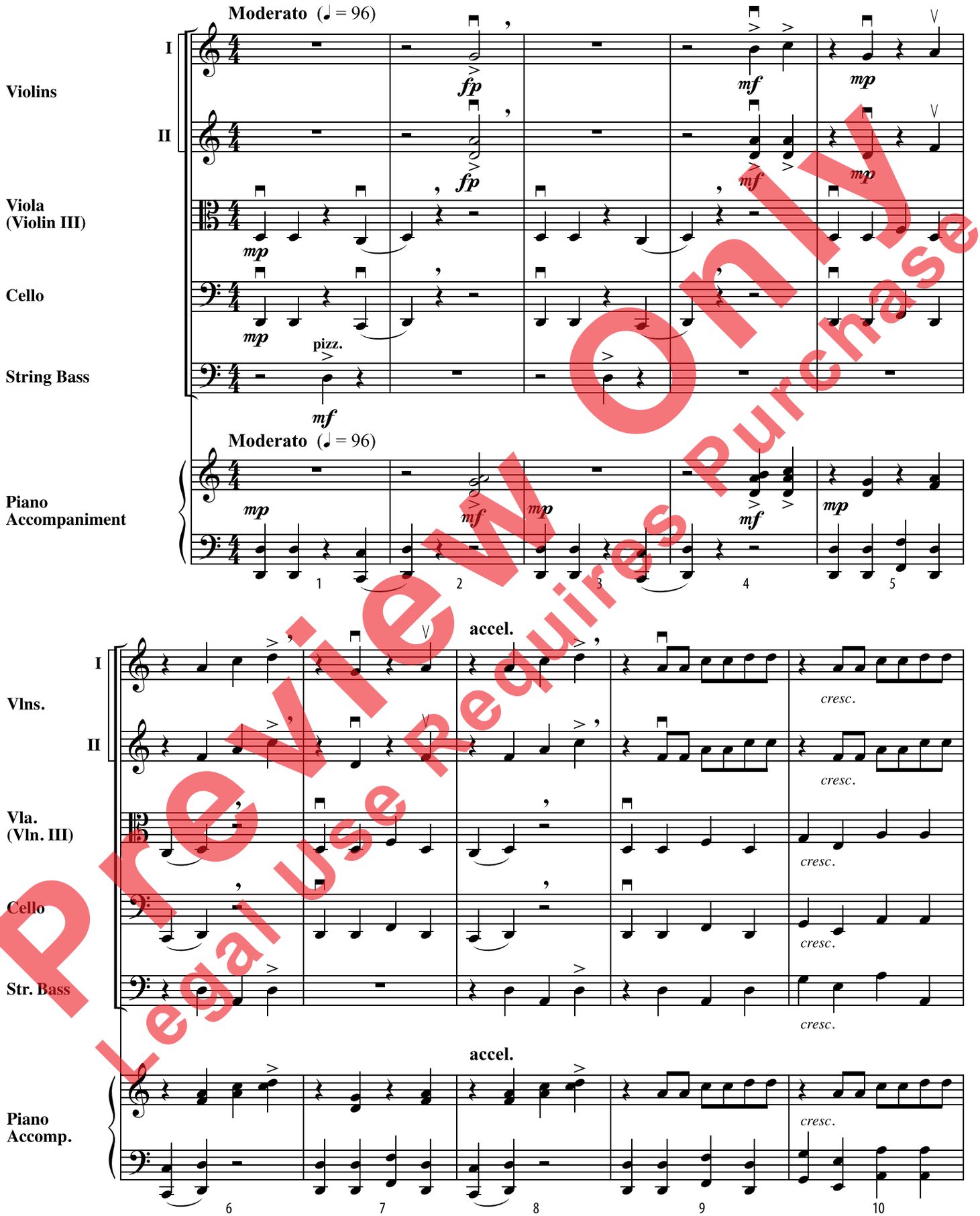

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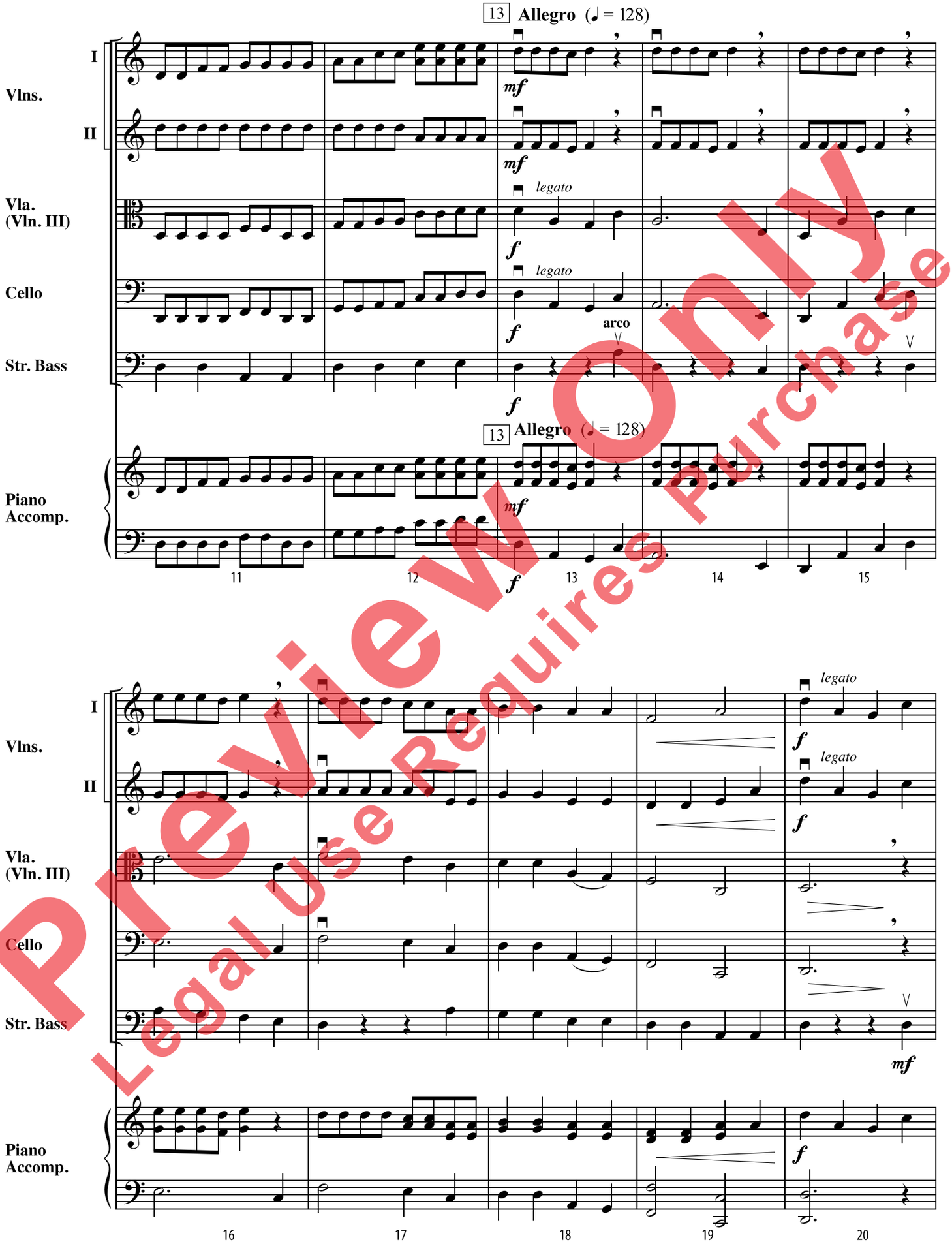

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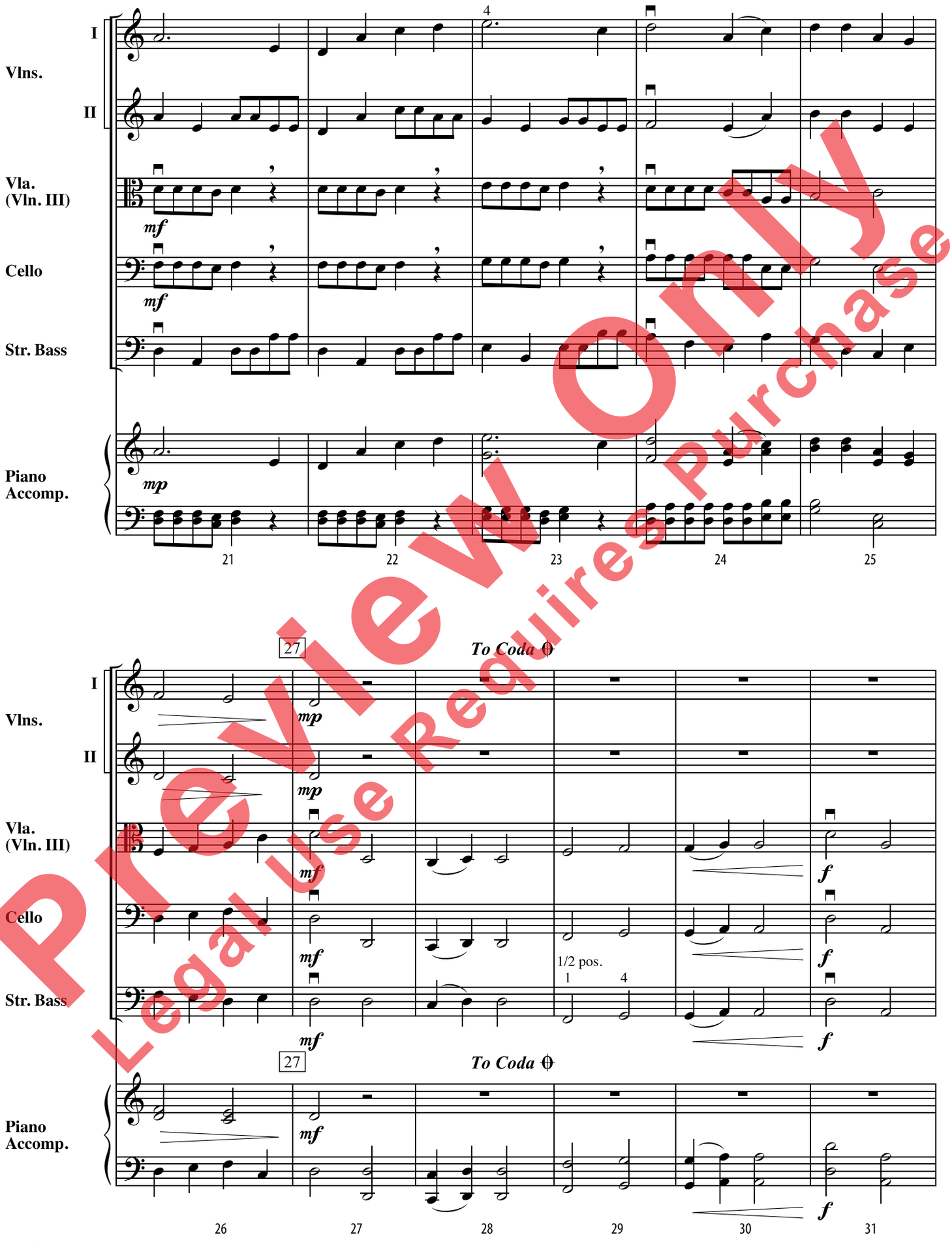

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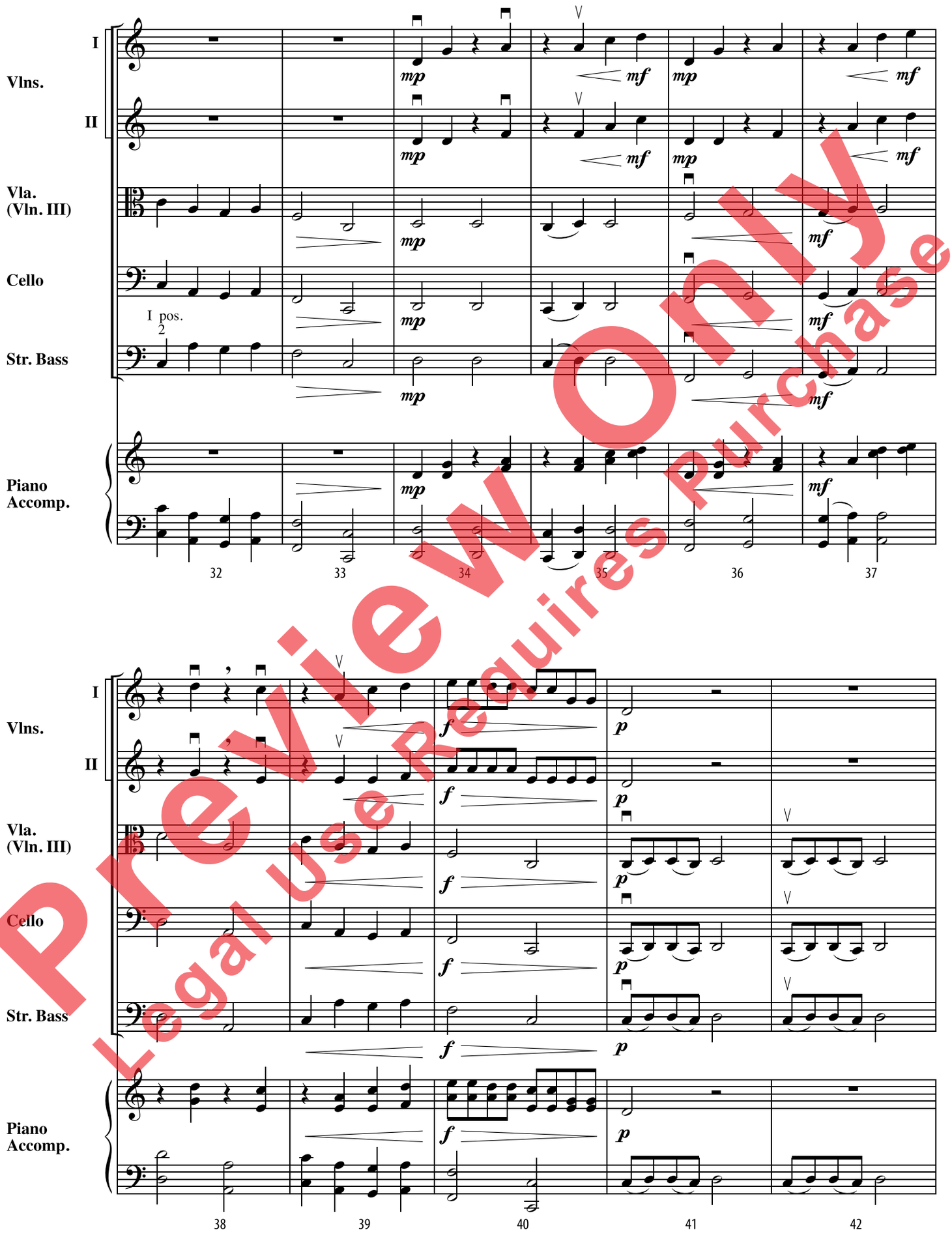

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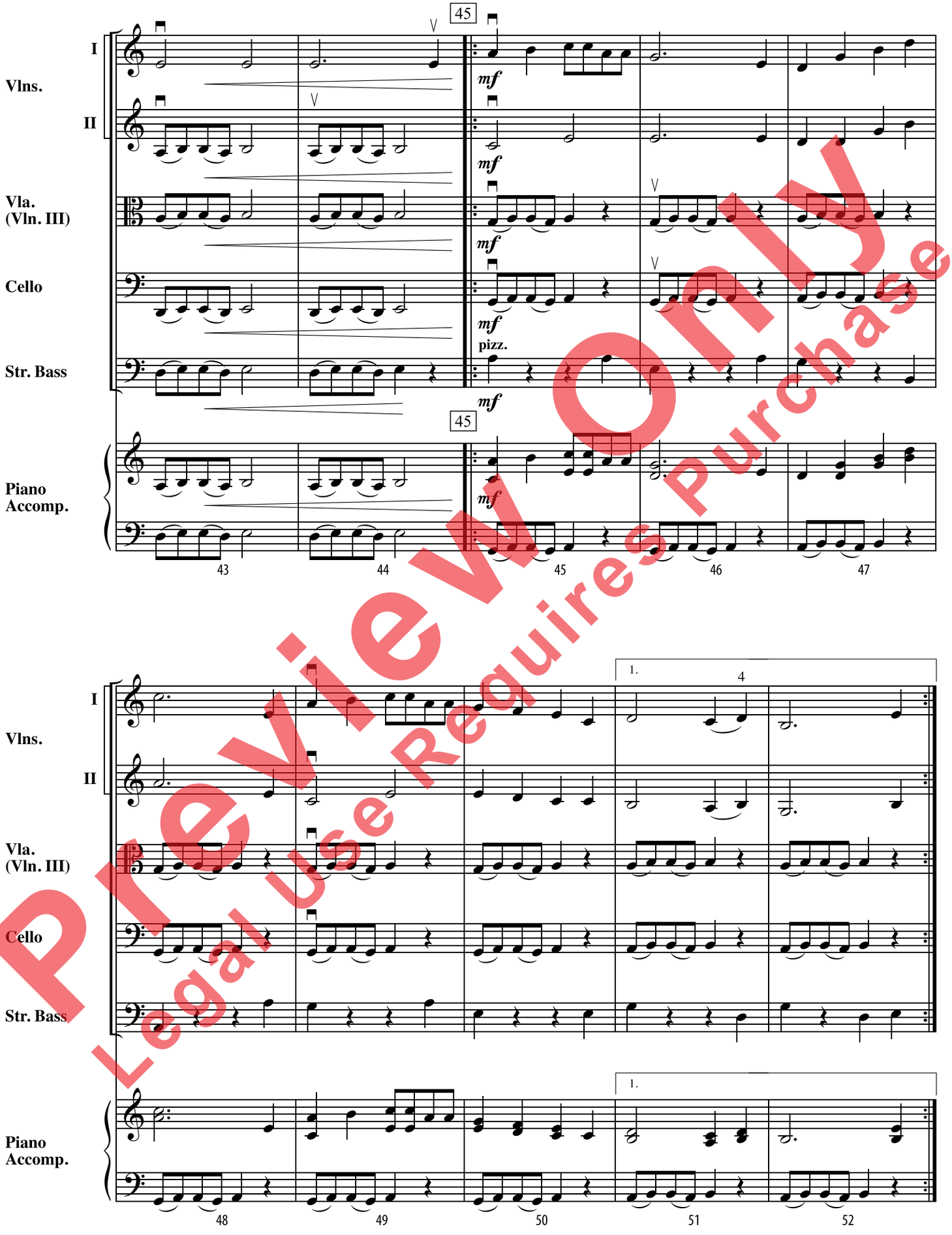

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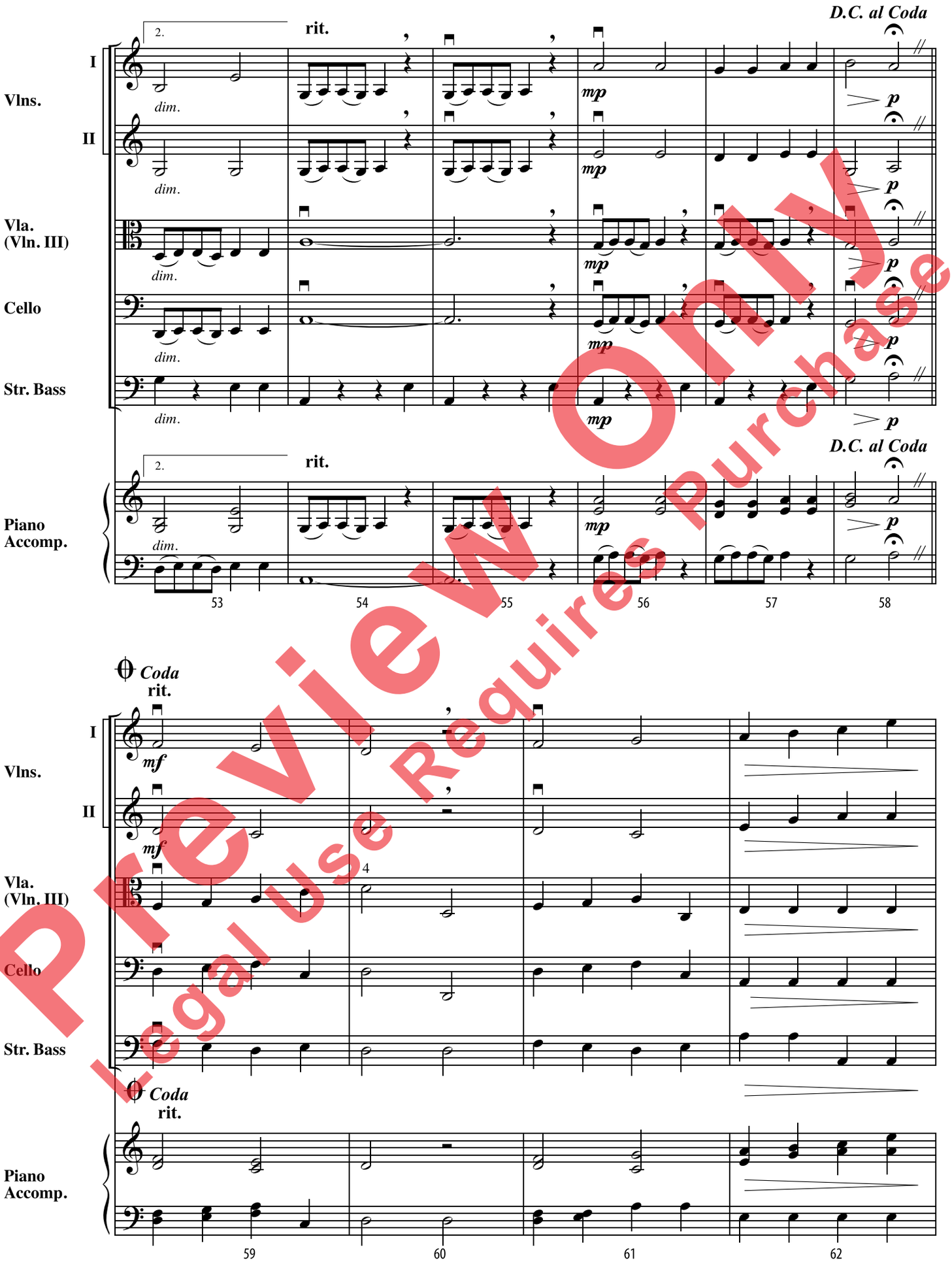

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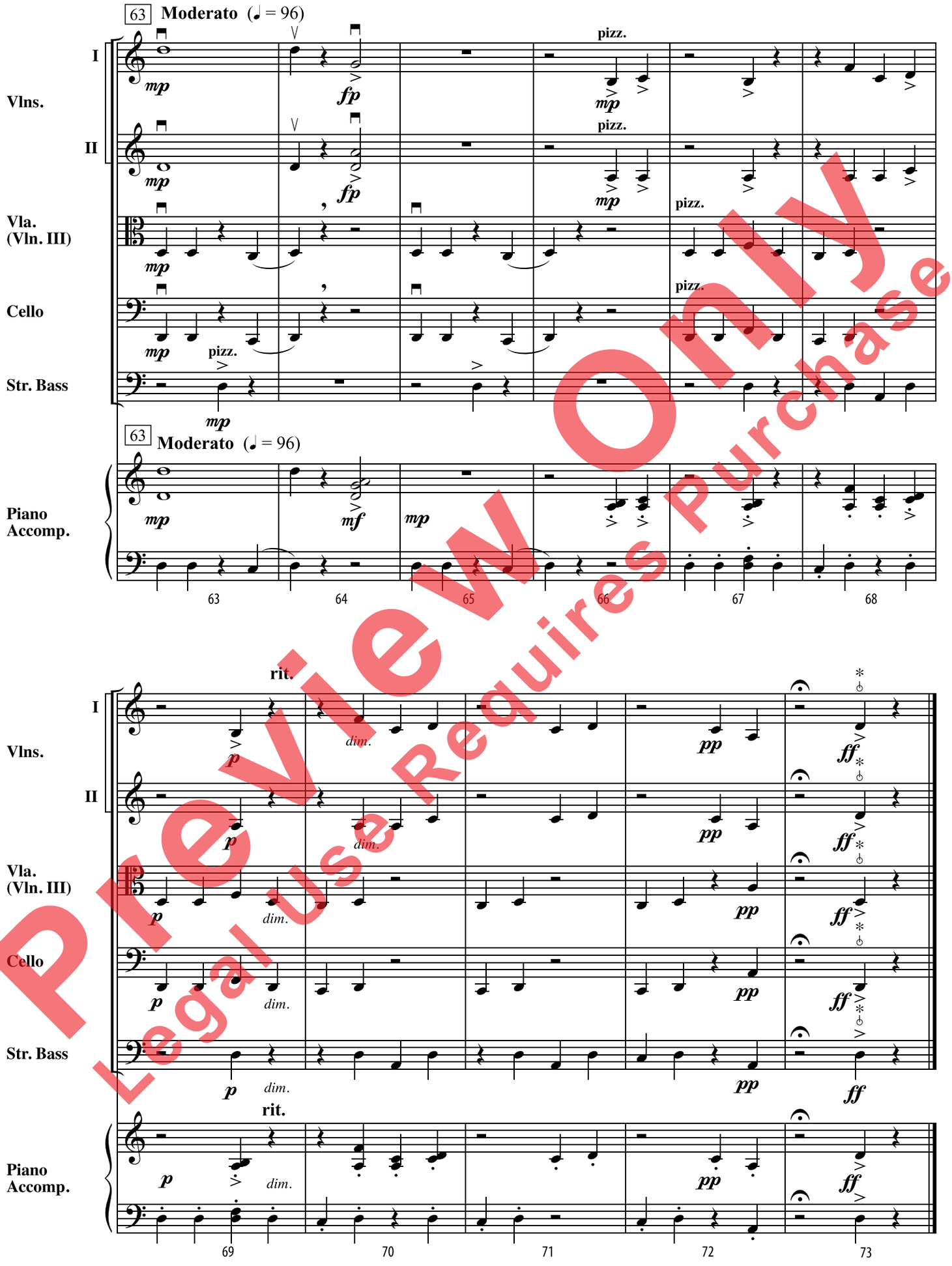

*Bartok pizz. - Pluck so string slaps fingerboard

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