Grade Level: 3

STRING ALTERNATIVES SERIES

1812 – A Fiddler's Overture

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

The War of 1812 in America gave birth to some of the country's most beloved folk melodies and fiddle tunes. Here's an original overture where all the sections get a chance to explore those tunes, cleverly combined with famous melodic quotes, in both traditional and contemporary settings. "The 8th of January," "The Constitution Hornpipe," and "The Constitution and Guerriere" appear with distinctive old-time, bluegrass, country, and even Latin flavors. Optional opportunities for solo improvisation are also included.

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

The importance of the War of 1812 in America—sometimes called the "Second War of Independence"—cannot be understated as it secured the place of the United States on the world scene. Many folk songs and fiddle tunes were inspired by events related to the conflict (the fiddle being the predominant folk instrument of the day), and provide the melodies for *1812 – A Fiddler's Overture*. And while the piece begins with a nod to the "other" *1812 Overture* by Tchaikovsky, here it merely provides a fiddler with a chance to improvise. After a driving introduction with a contemporary sound, the folk song "The Constitution and Guerriere" is heard, depicting the story of the critical naval battle between those two great warships. In counterpoint to this ballad, the most famous melody from the War of 1812 is heard—"To Anacreon in Heaven," the popular drinking song that, with new words by Frances Scott Key, would become the national anthem. "The Constitution Hornpipe" is then played, a fiddle tune that has been popular at New England dances since around the time that ship was launched in 1797. The final tune in the overture is "The Eighth of January" (also known as "The Battle of New Orleans"). This standard of the fiddle repertoire commemorated the improbable victory of an American army under General Andrew Jackson over the British on January 8, 1815. This triumph secured the Mississippi corridor for the United States, made Jackson a national hero, and was celebrated for years afterward throughout the young country. The long-lasting impact of this victory—and the tune—is suggested in the overture by its presentation with typical old-time, bluegrass, contemporary, and even Latin musical features.

Notes to the Conductor

1812 – A Fiddler's Overture presents some of the most famous fiddle and folk melodies, in both traditional and contemporary settings, to come out of the American War of 1812. The piece begins with a familiar quote from the "other" *1812 Overture*, which humorously morphs into a bluesy violin solo, and then into a driving introduction to "The Constitution and the Guerriere" (m. 18). Care should be taken that the traditional first violin shuffle accompaniment in this tune does not over-balance the main melody played by second violins, violas, and celli. A famous musical quote, "To Anacreon in Heaven" (the drinking song that would become the national anthem), becomes a countermelody in the first violins (m. 34). A change of key marks "The Constitution Hornpipe" (m. 42), in a typical old-time setting, with off-beats in the first violins giving way to this tune's signature arpeggiated "B" section (m. 50). A return to the driving, modal introductory material (m. 66) yields to a ritard and a new, more relaxed tempo for "The Eighth of January" (m. 73) in a traditional, old-time setting. The introductory theme sets up a new presentation of the tune (m. 97) with lots of typical bluegrass-style syncopations and accompanying accents. This is followed by an optional modal ostinato section (mm. 113–120) which can be played as written, repeated ad lib to accompany improvised solos (Dmi7), or cut entirely. The following ritard (mm. 121–122) sets up a slightly slower, more deliberate final setting of "The Eighth of January" (m. 123), now with a more contemporary, Latin feel. Care should be taken here to play correct syncopations and accents in all voices. The piece closes with a return to the introductory material (m. 139), driving with an accelerando to the end of the piece.

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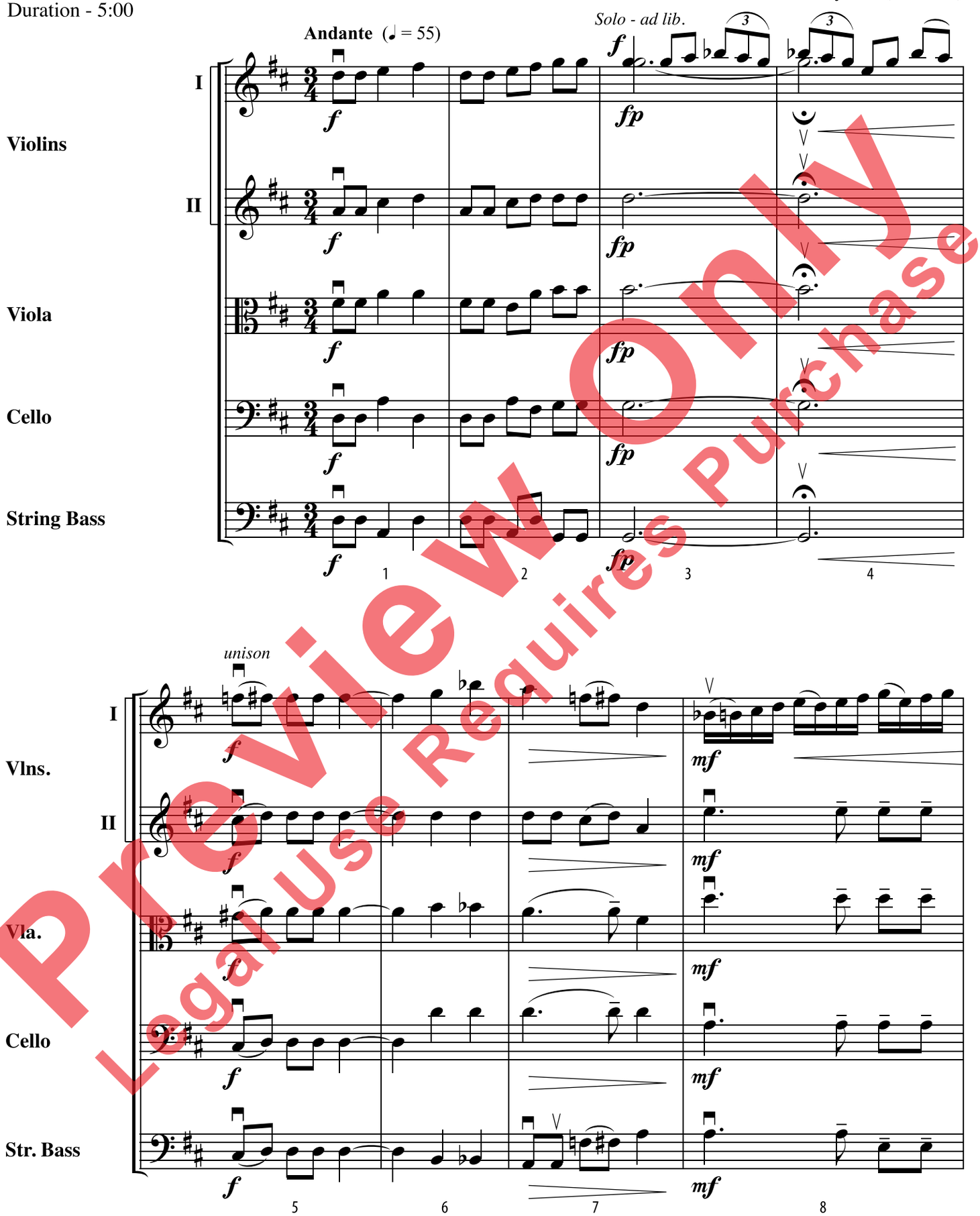
1812 - A Fiddler's Overture

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 5:00

Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)



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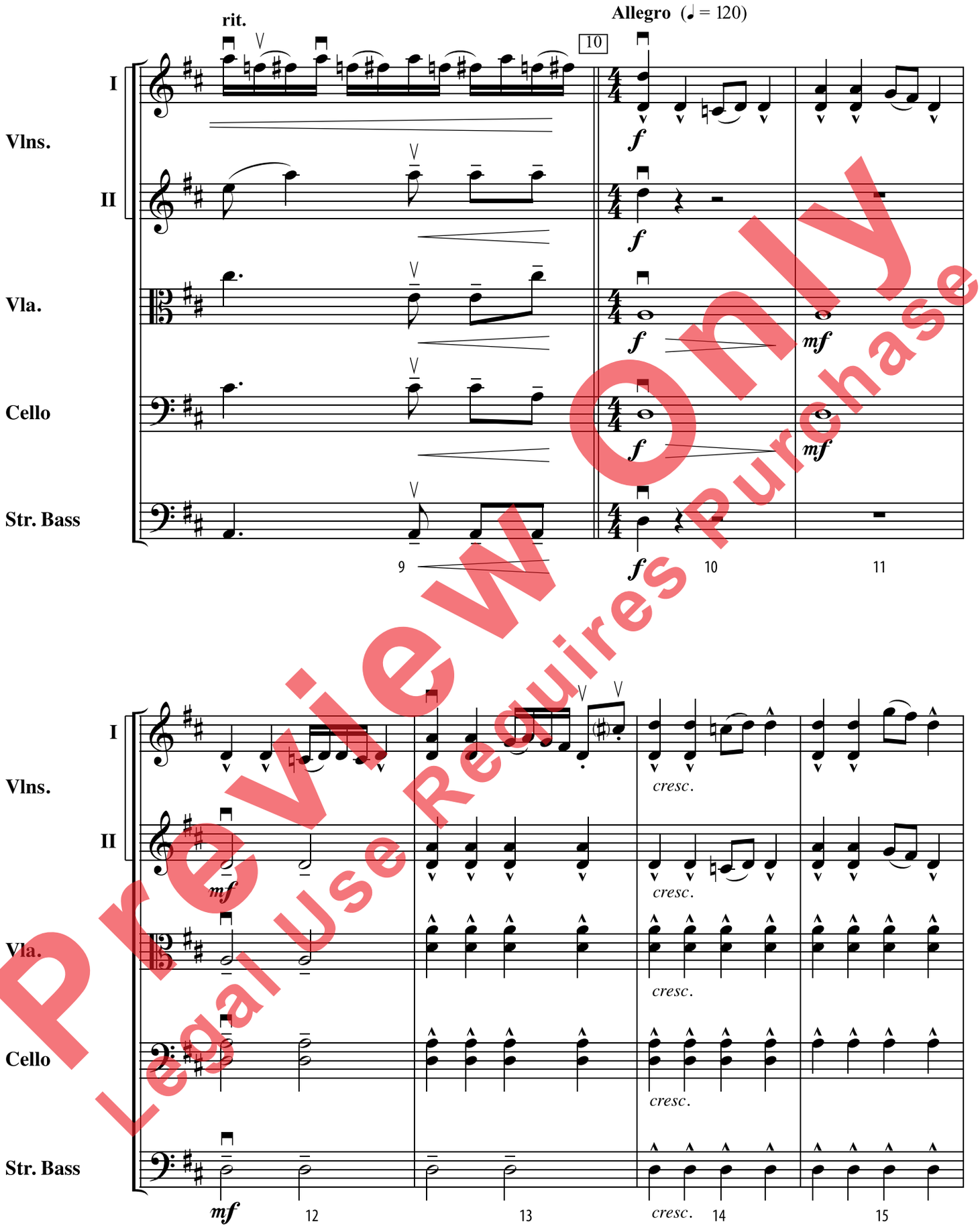

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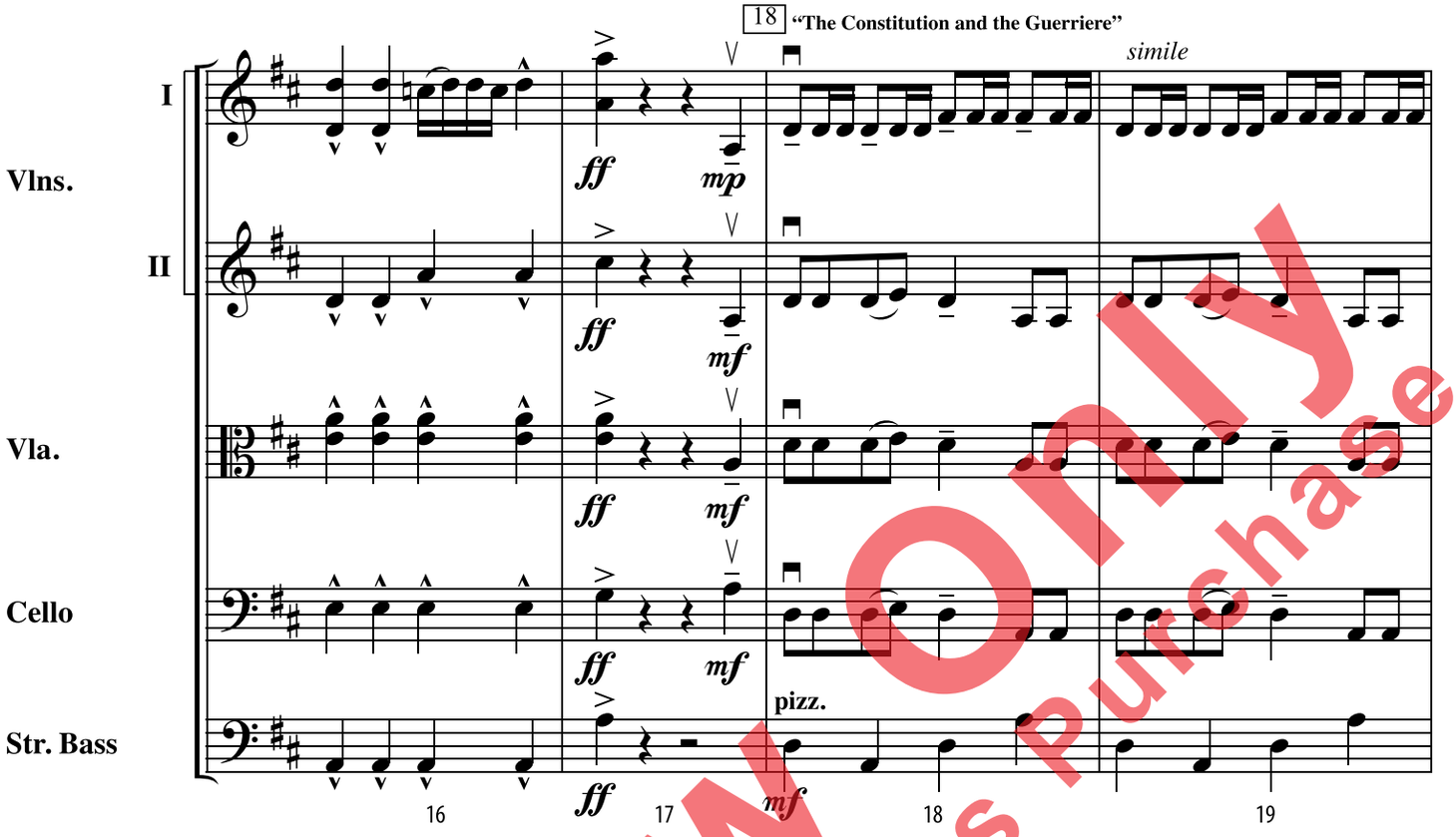

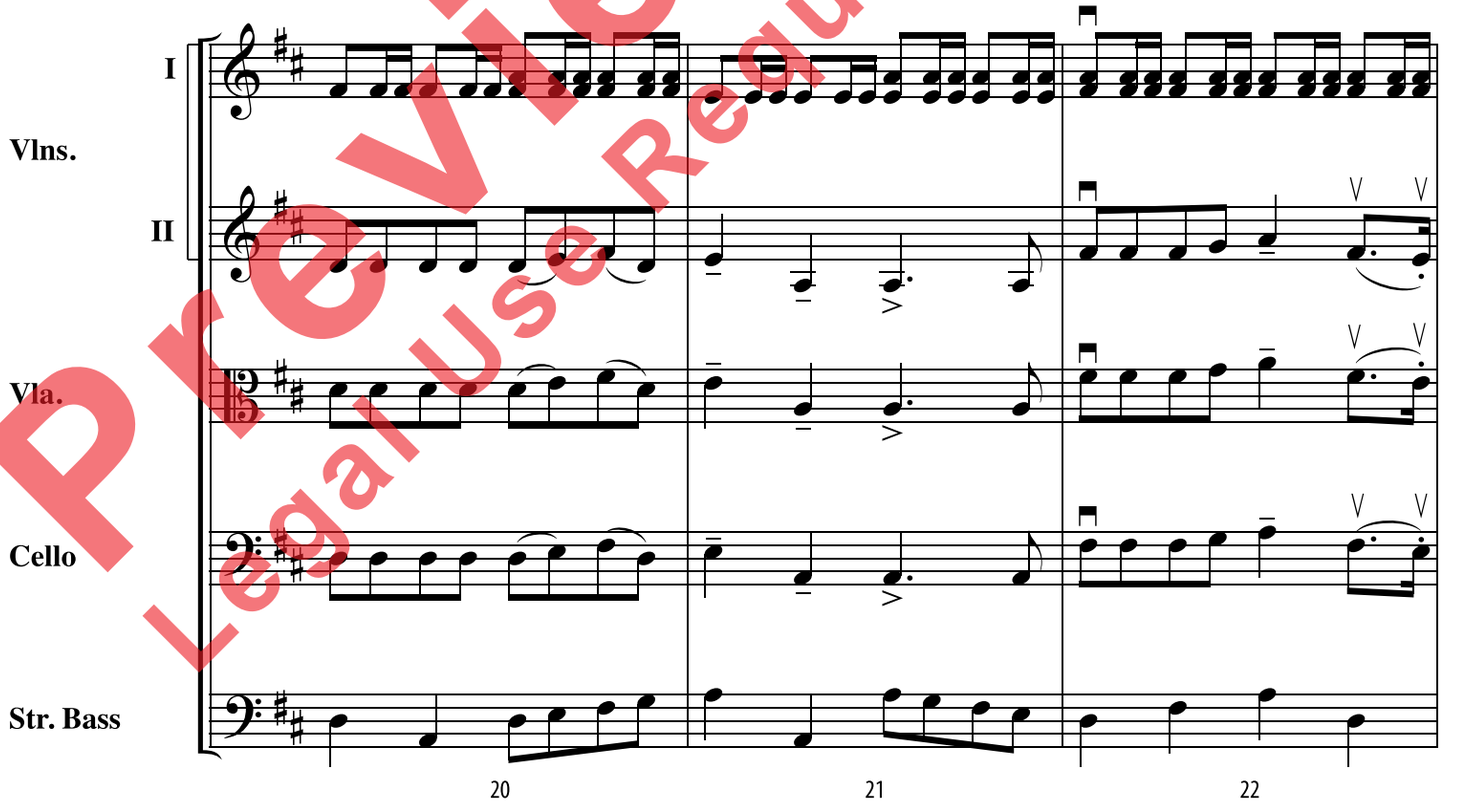

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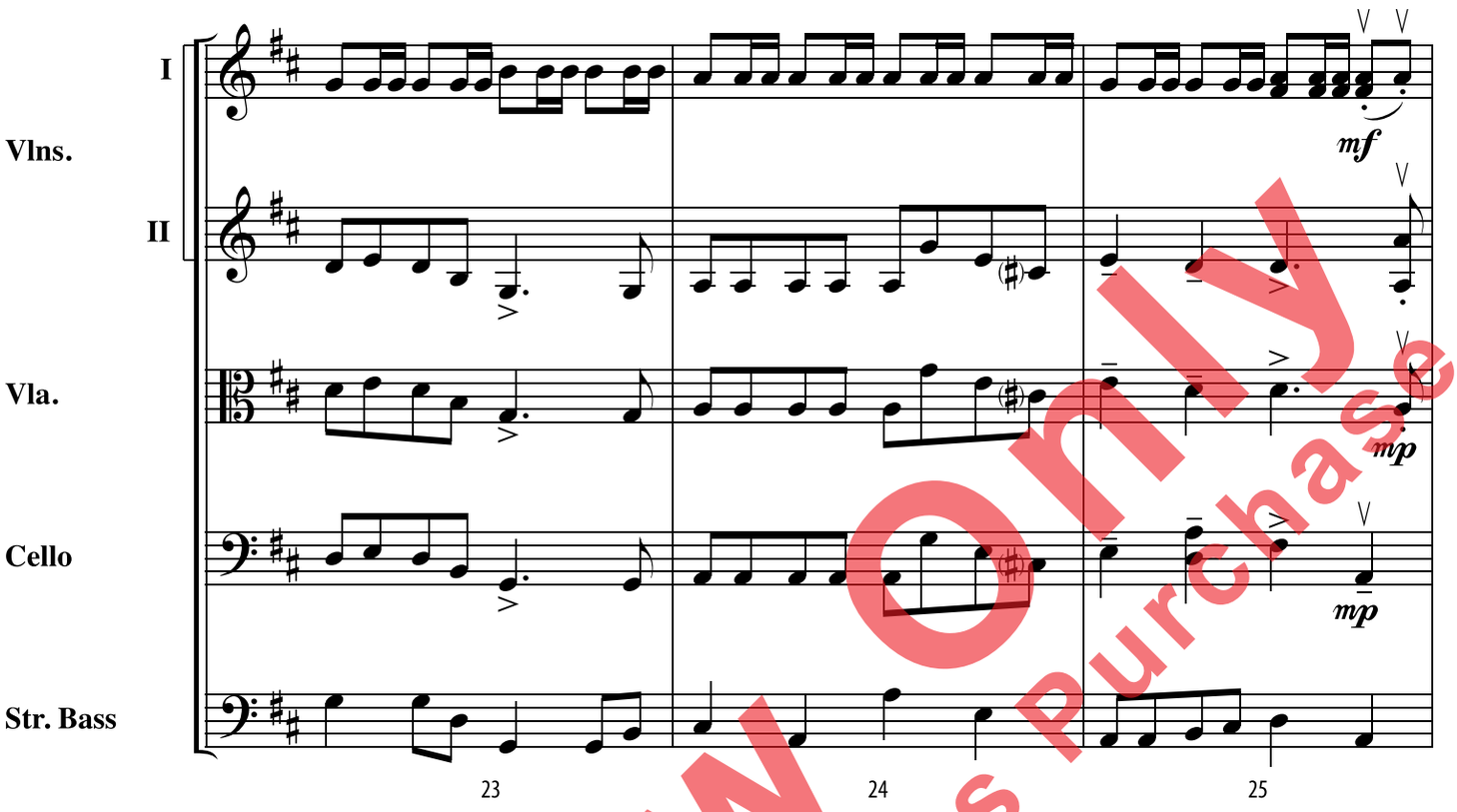

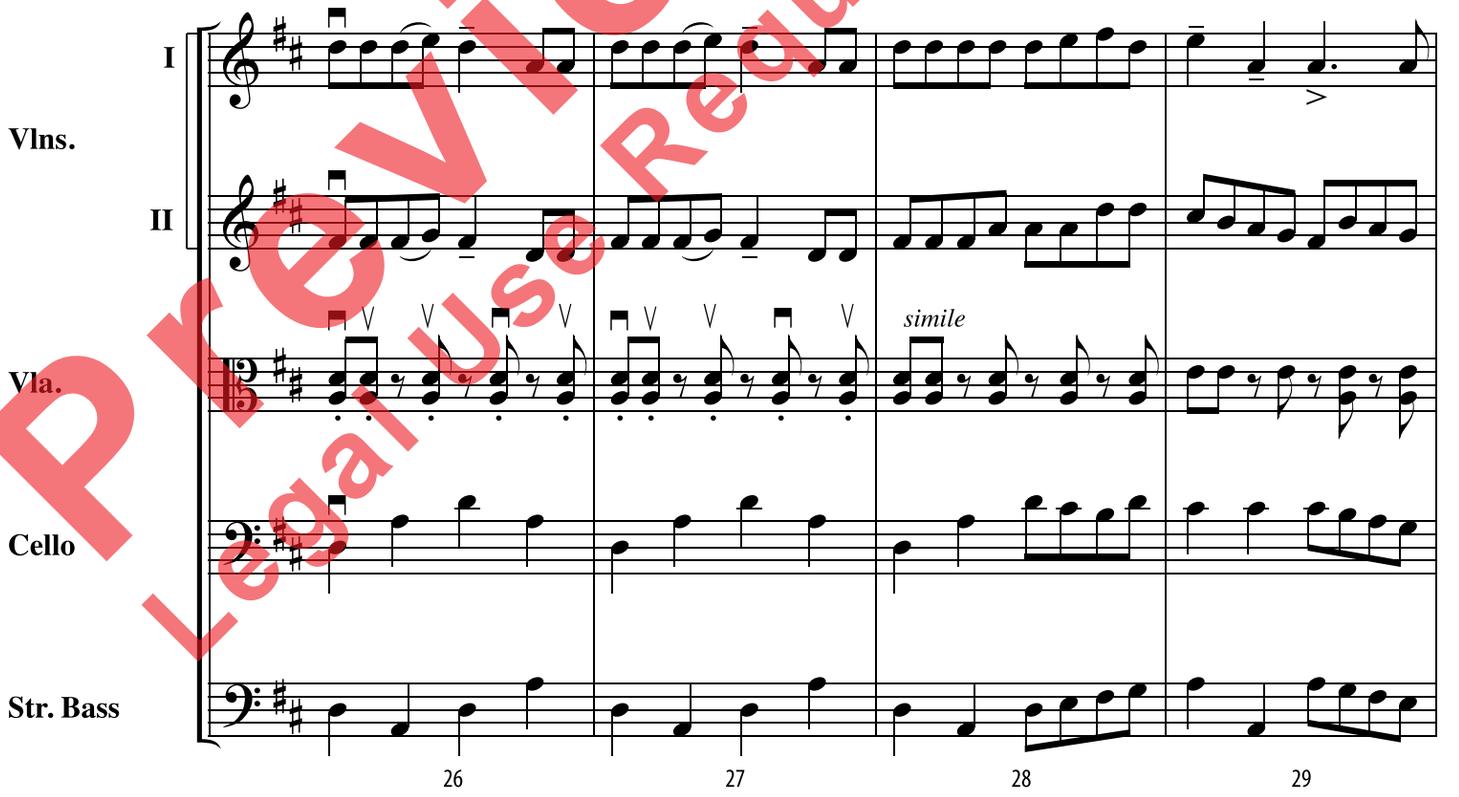

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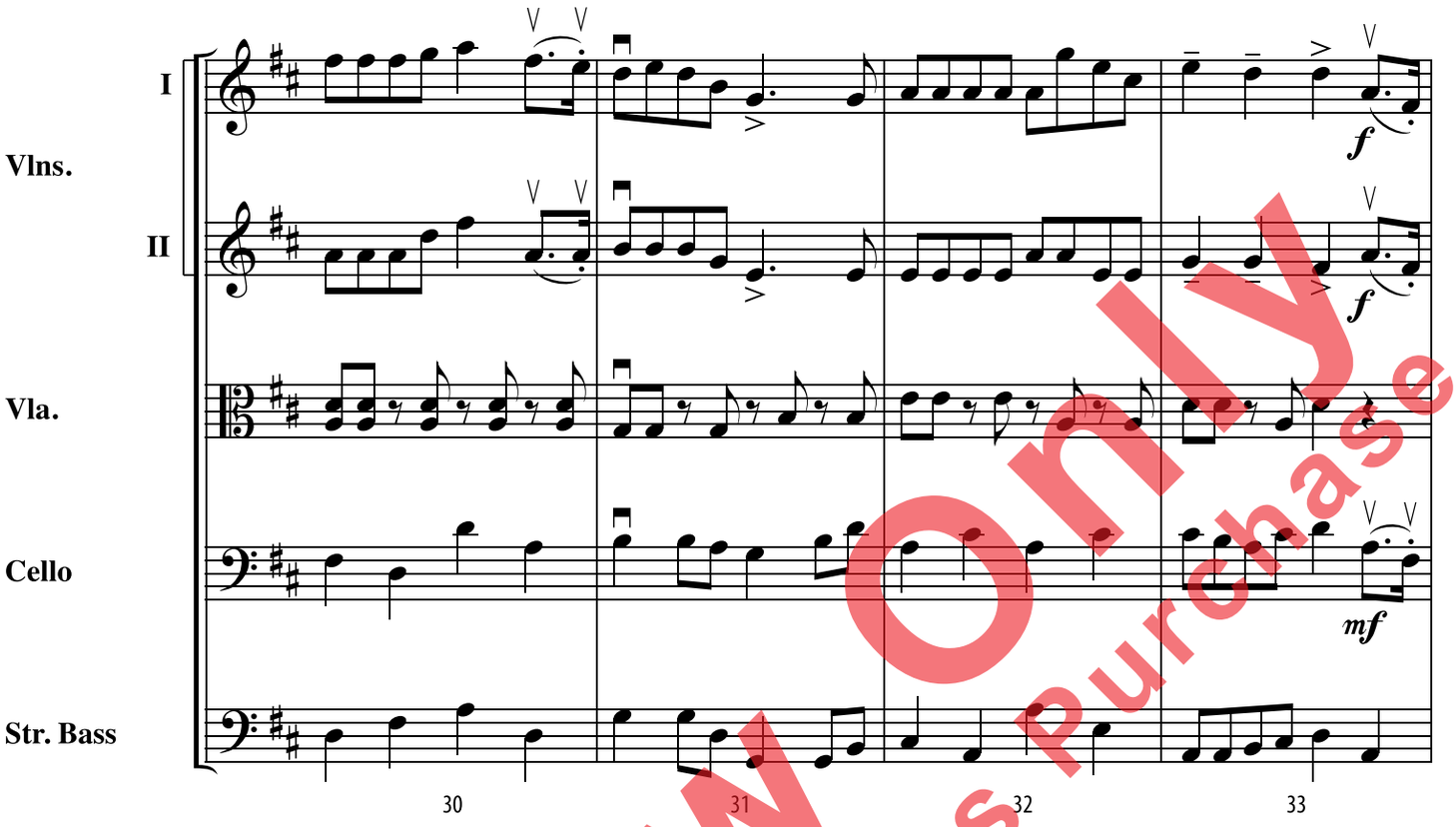

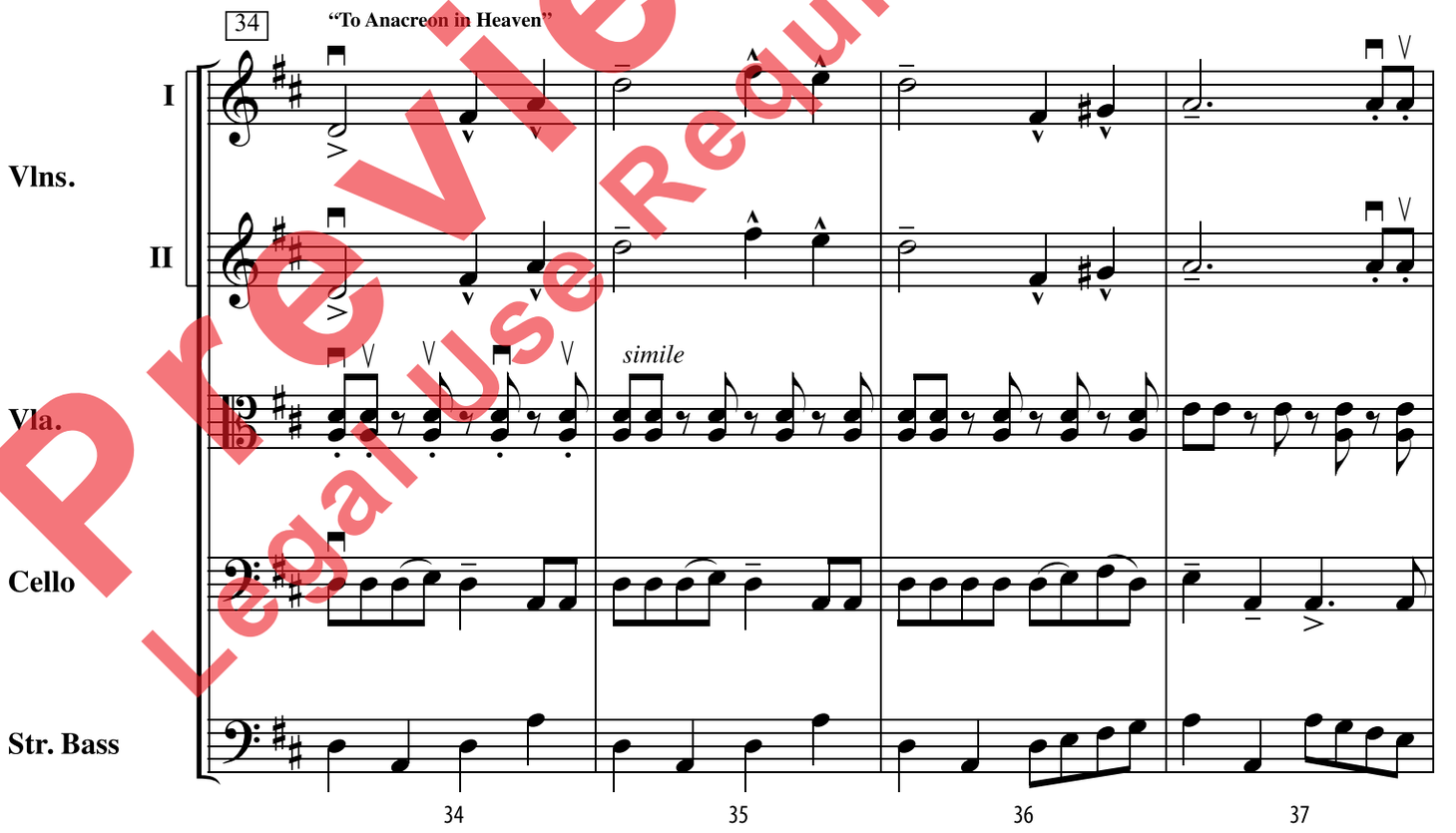

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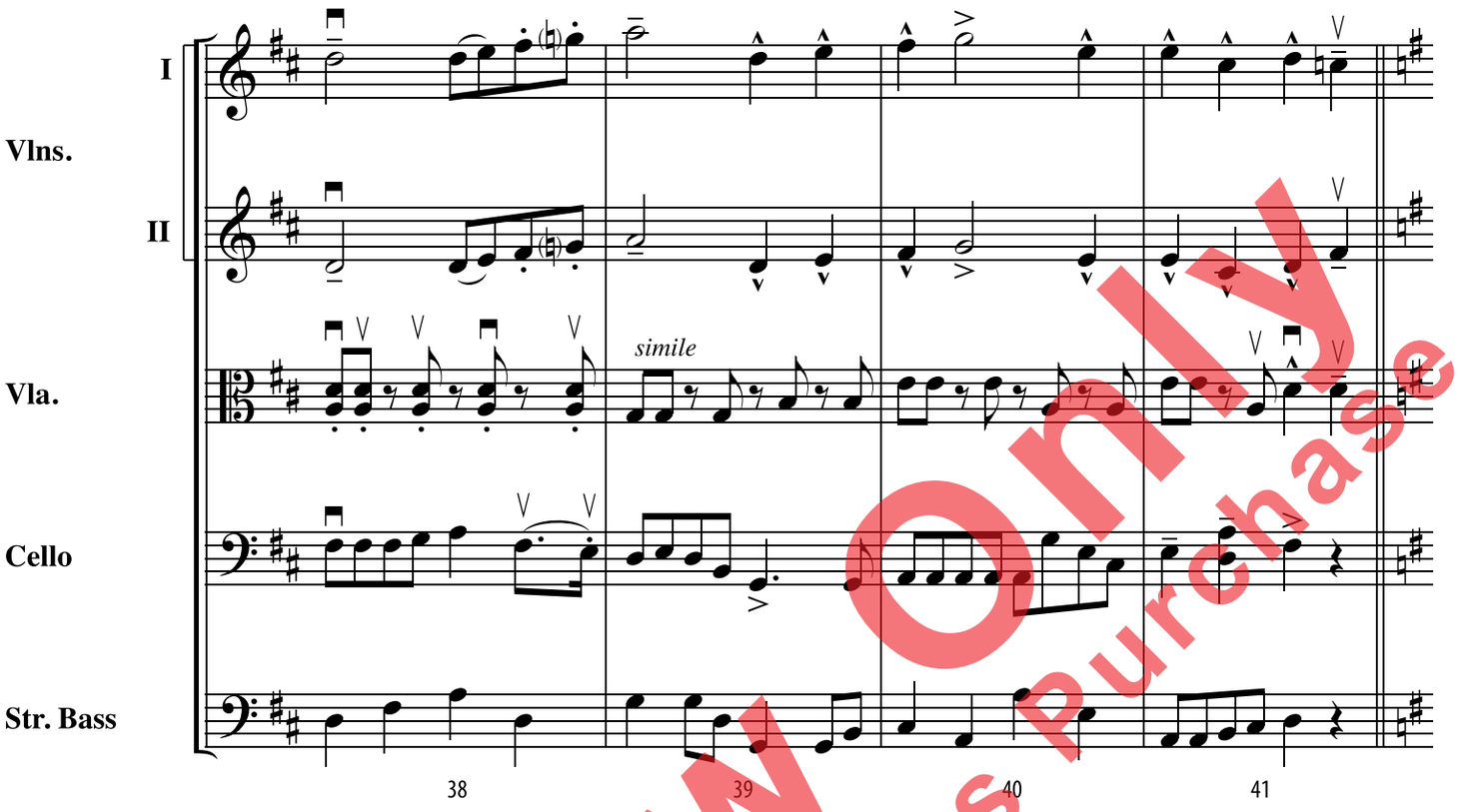

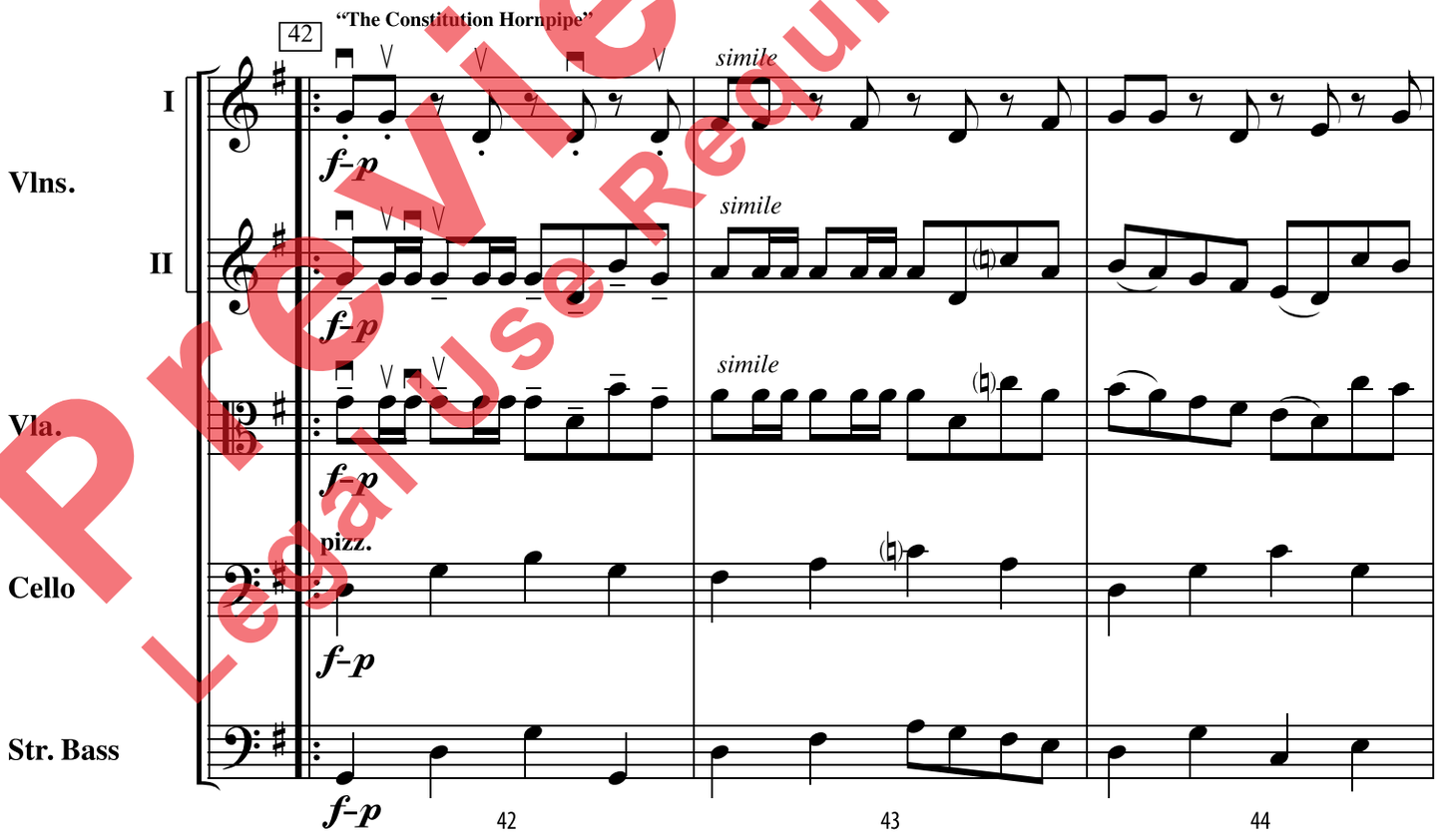

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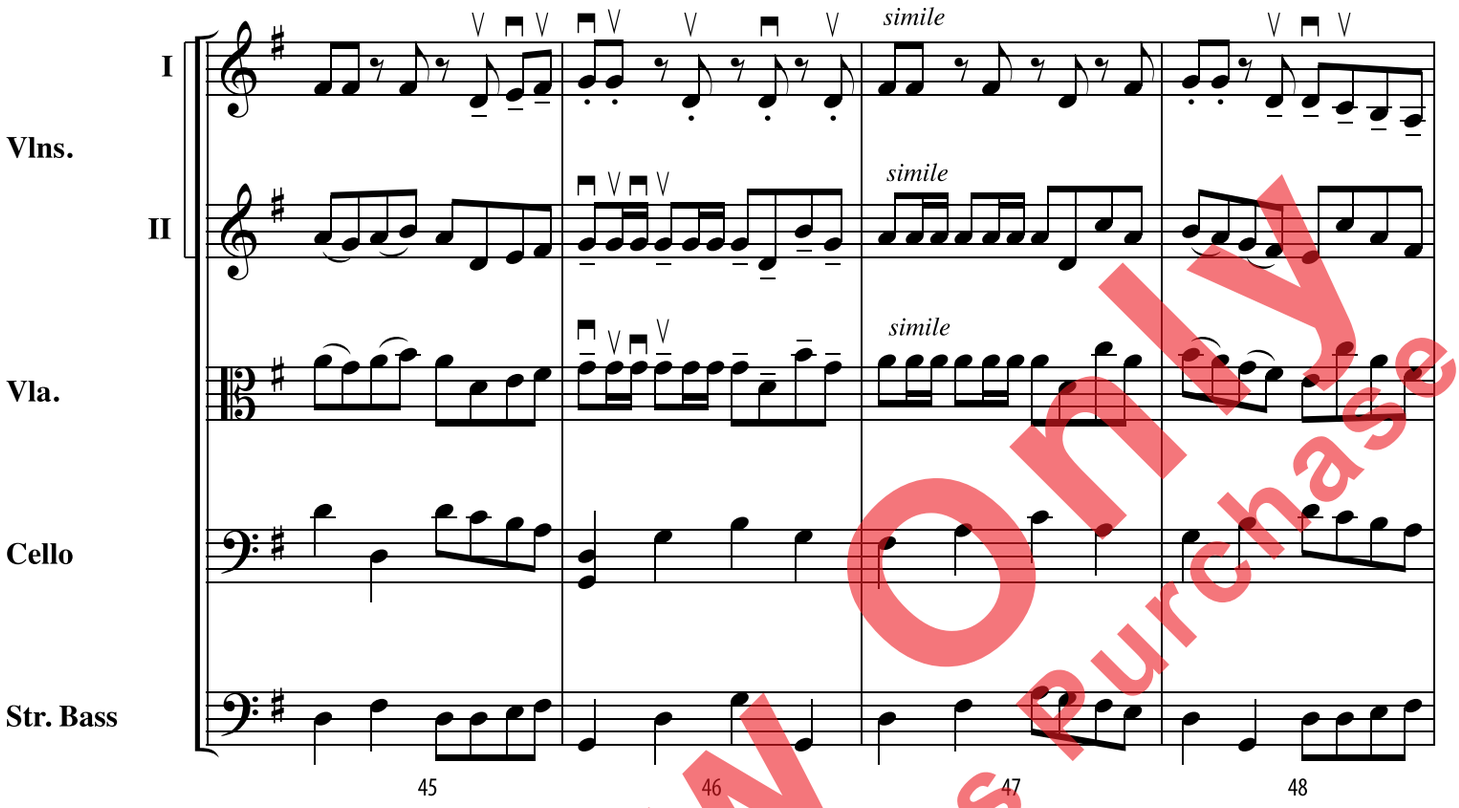

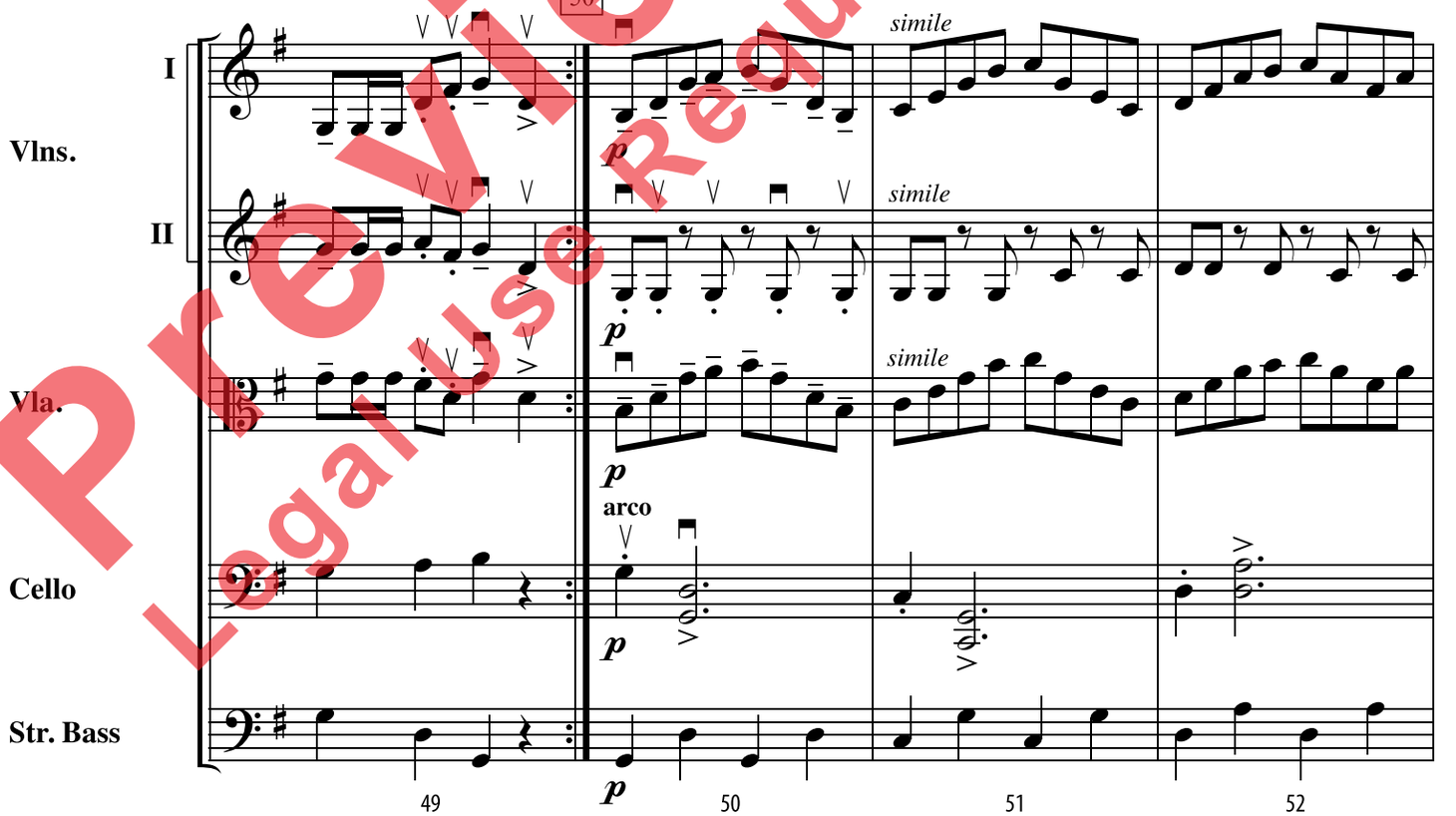

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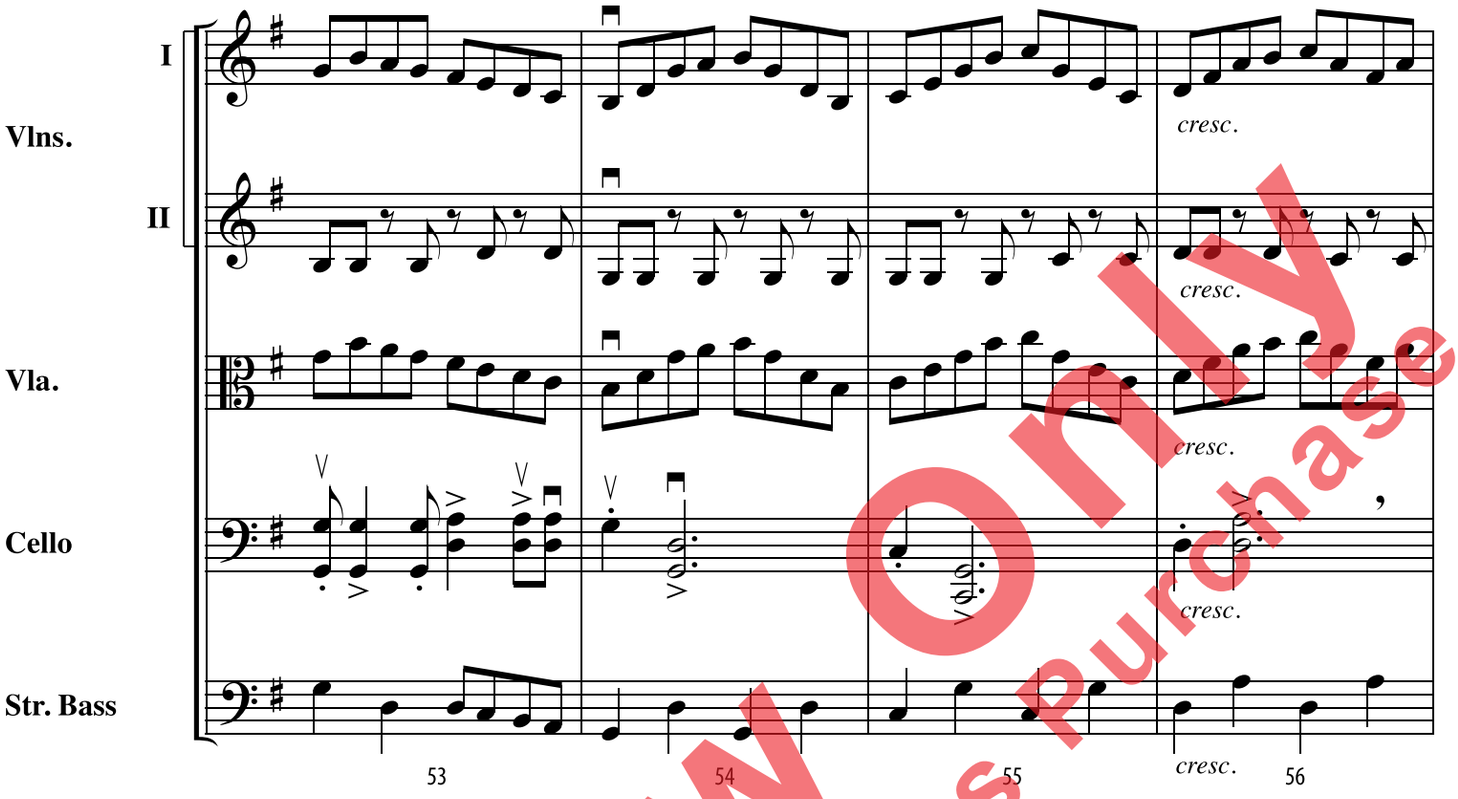

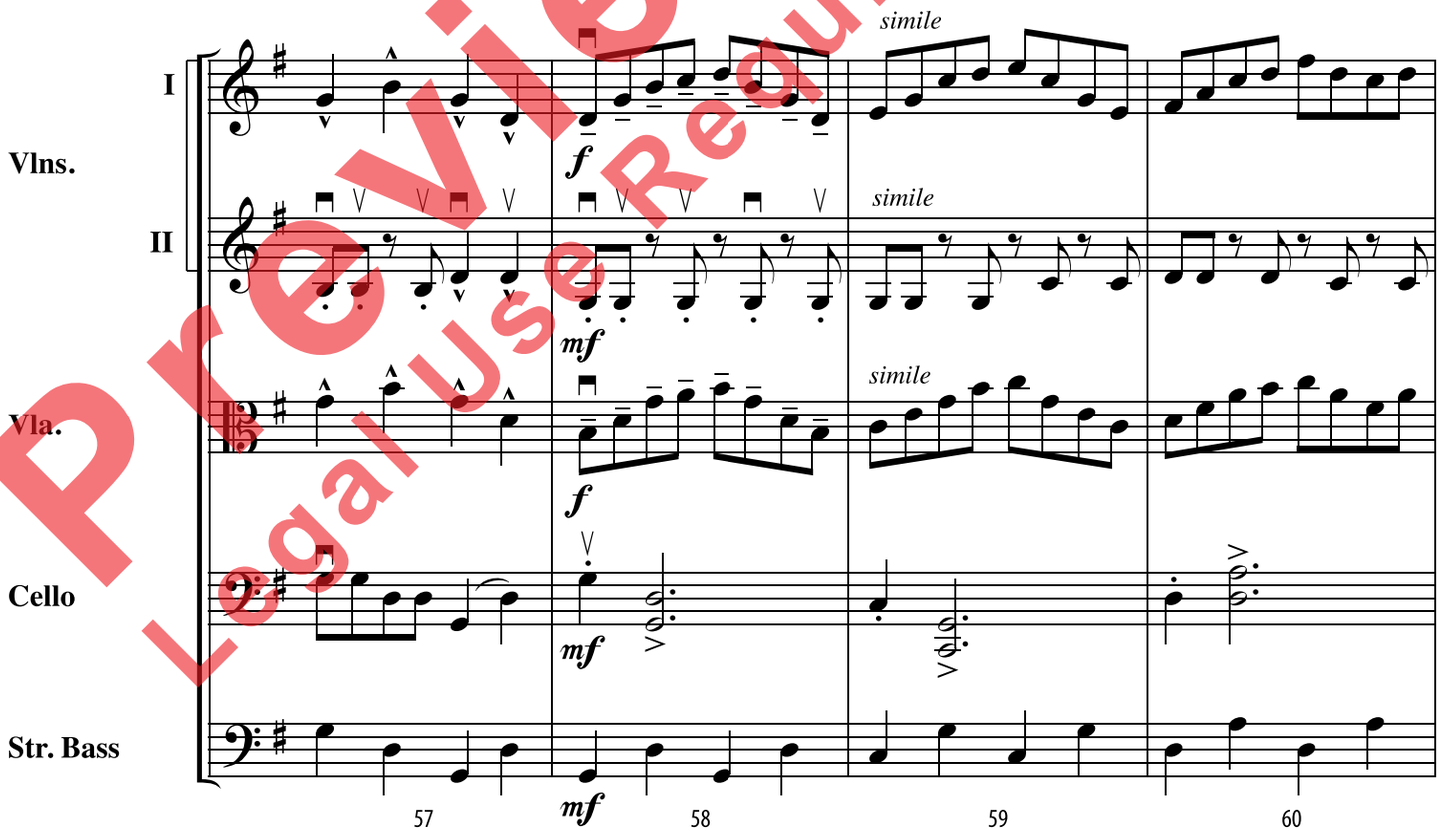

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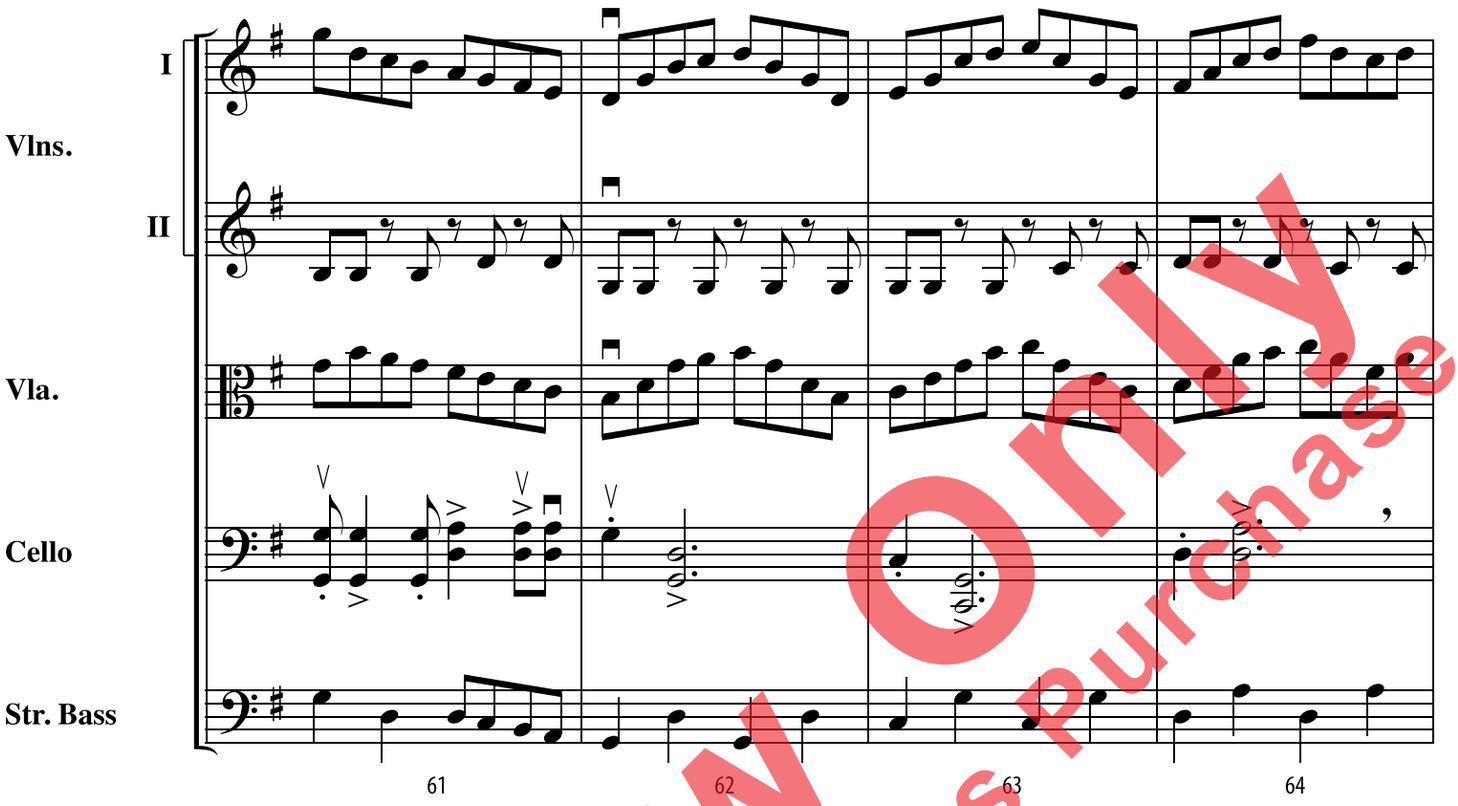

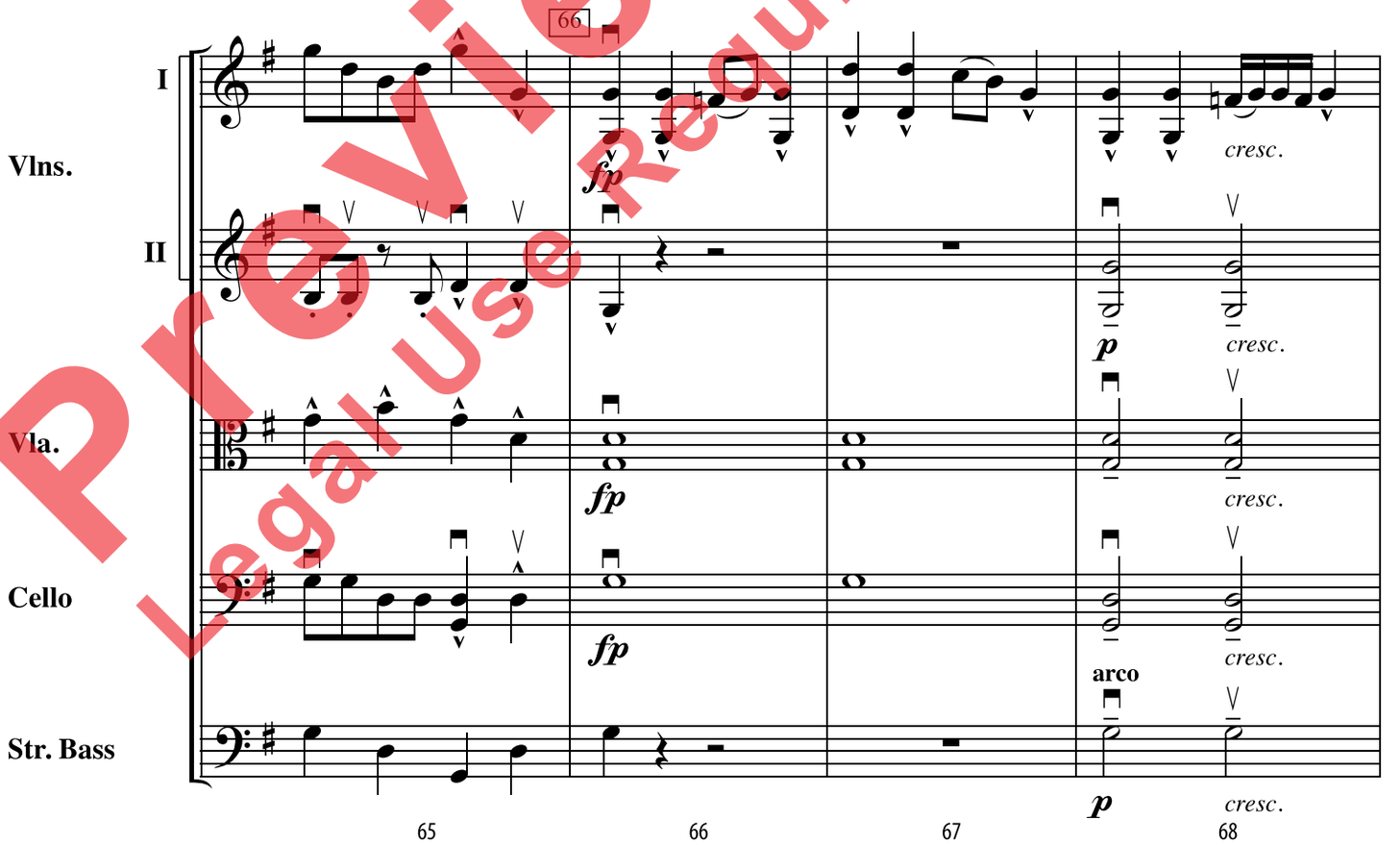

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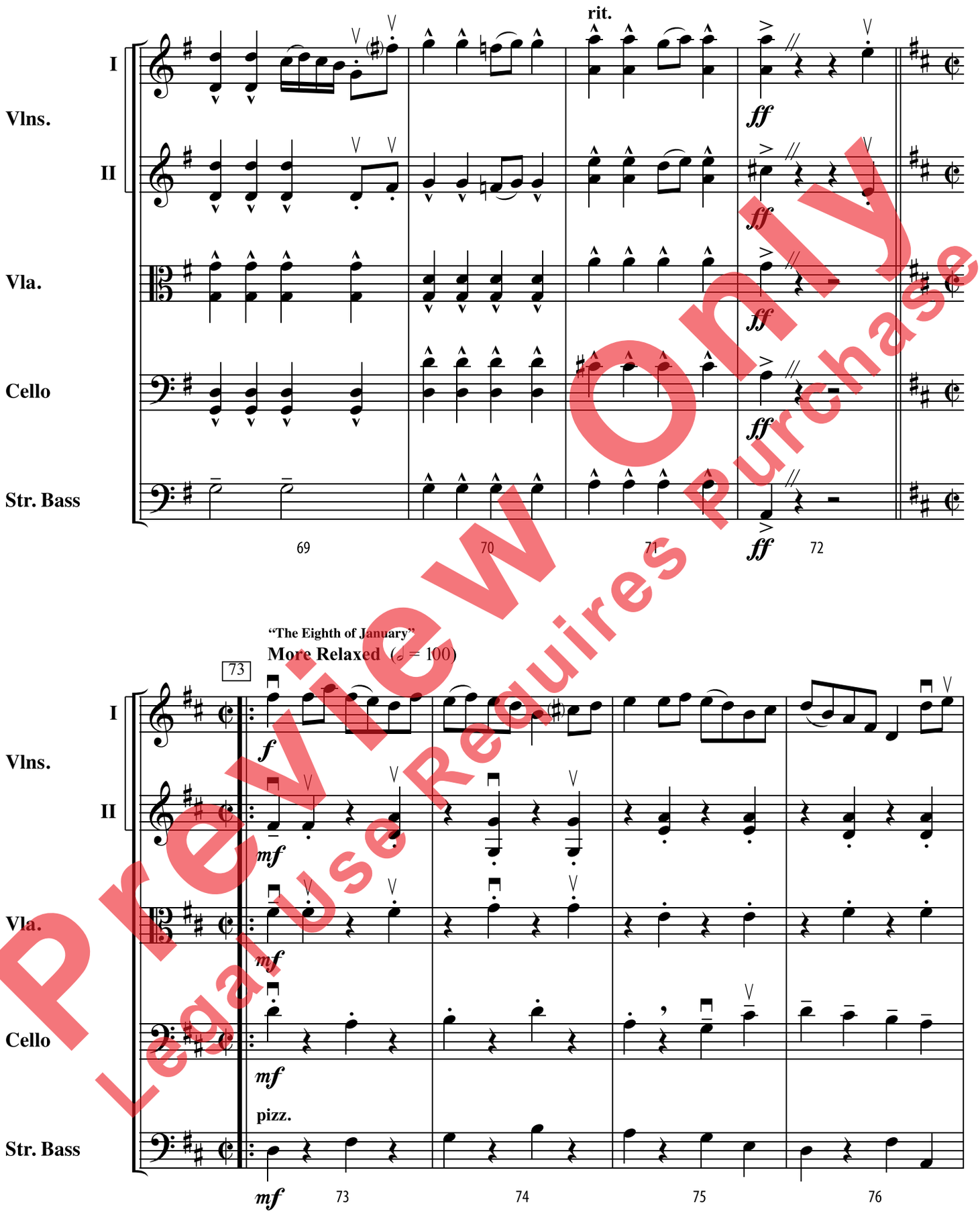

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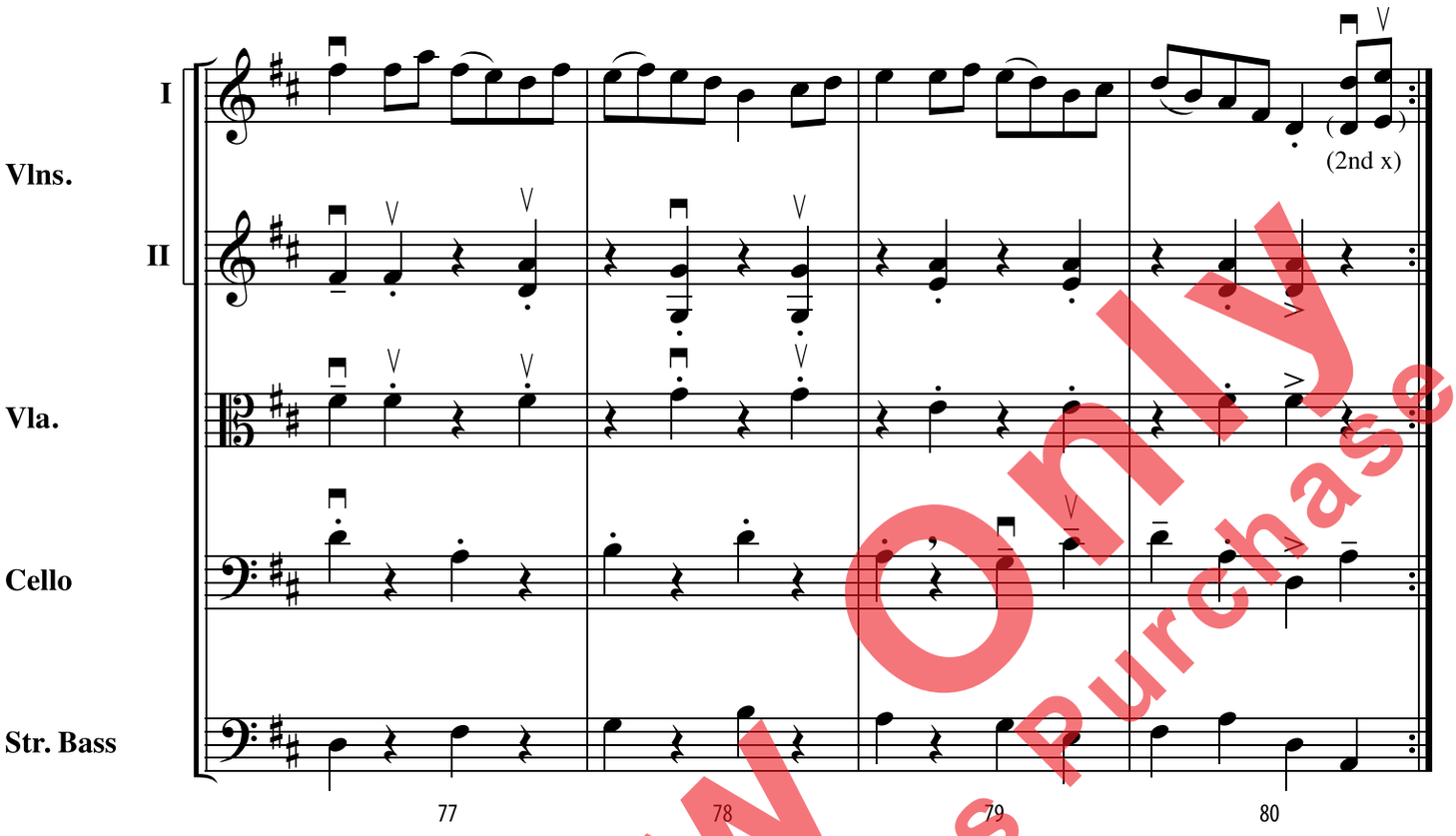

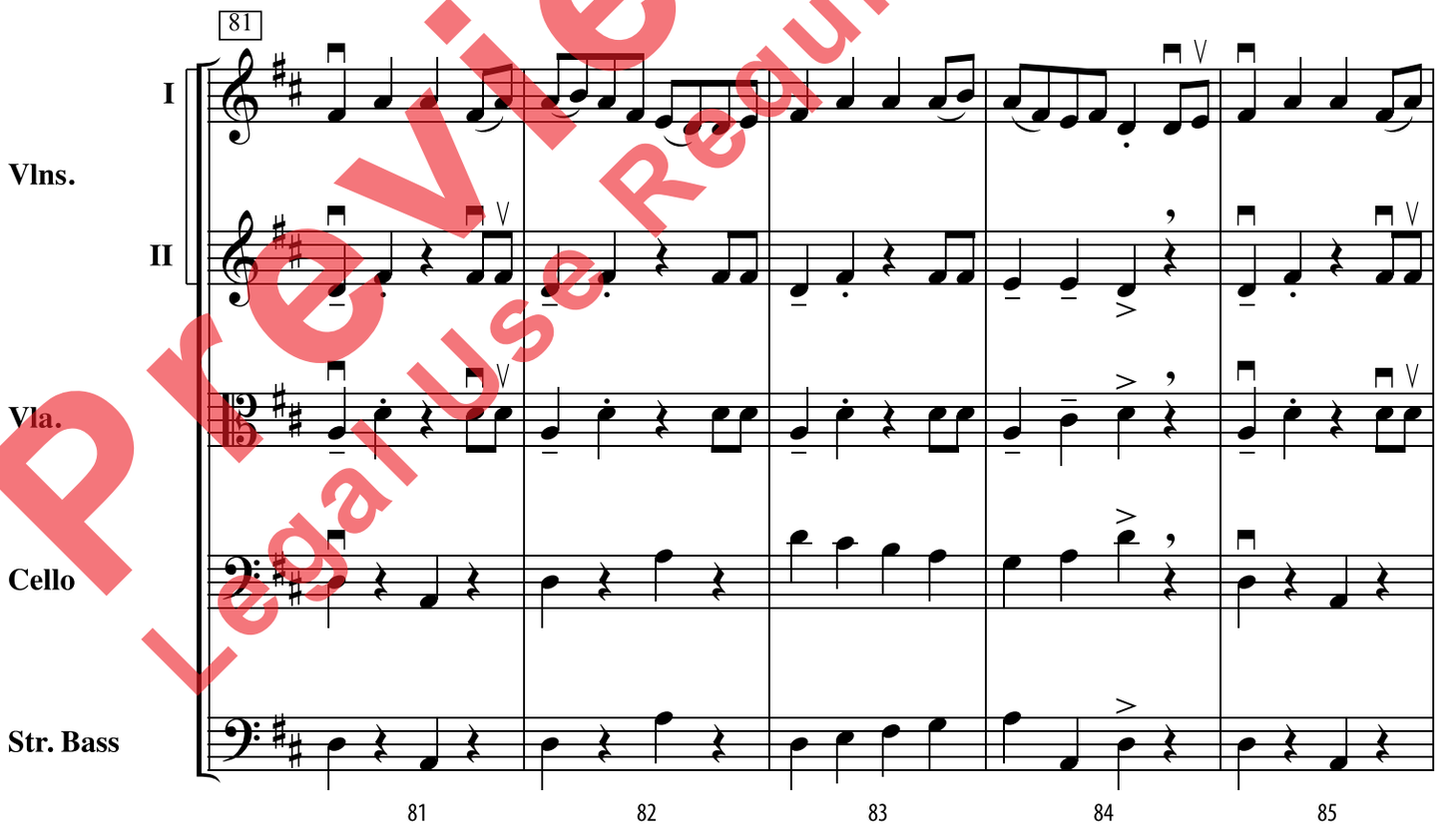

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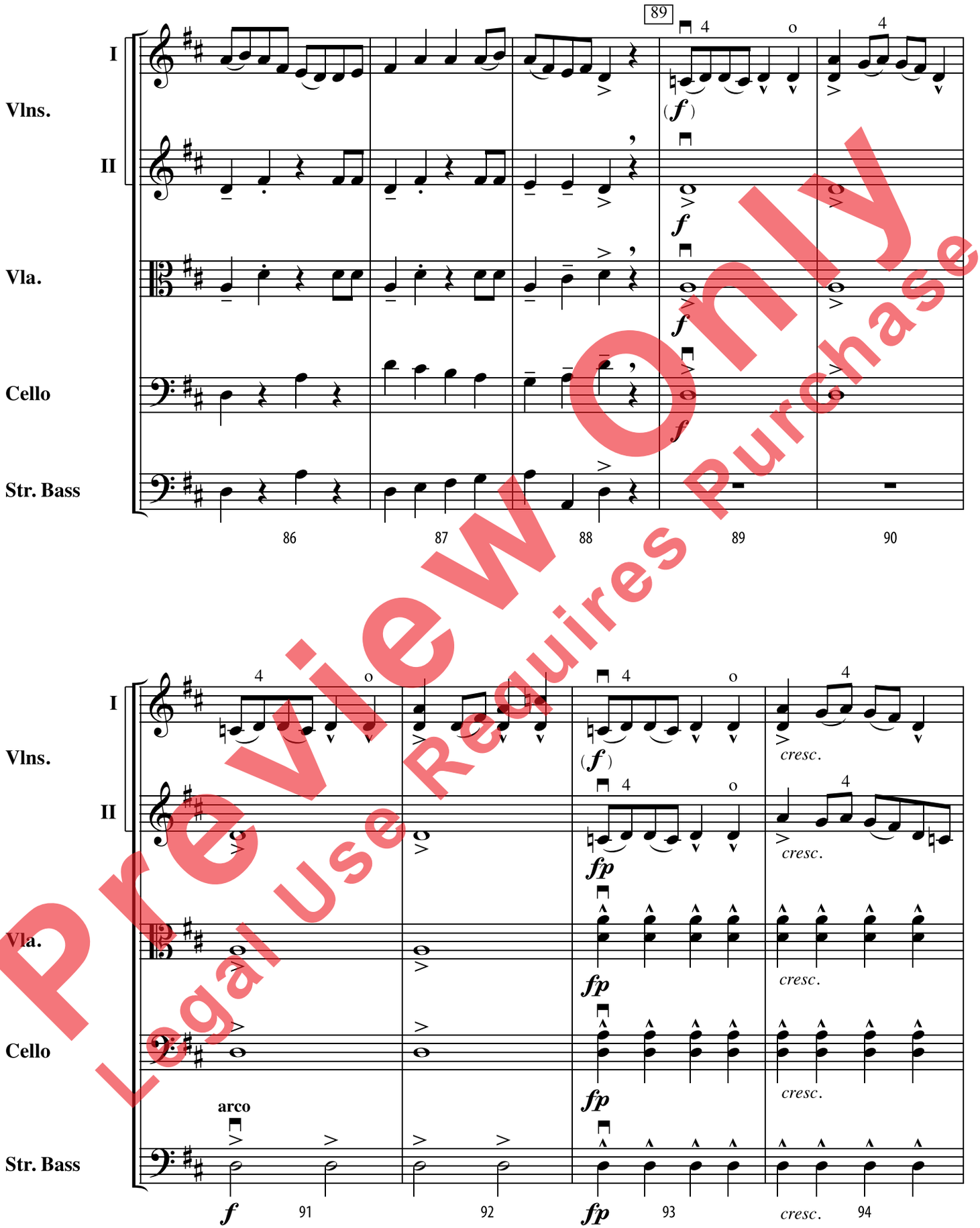

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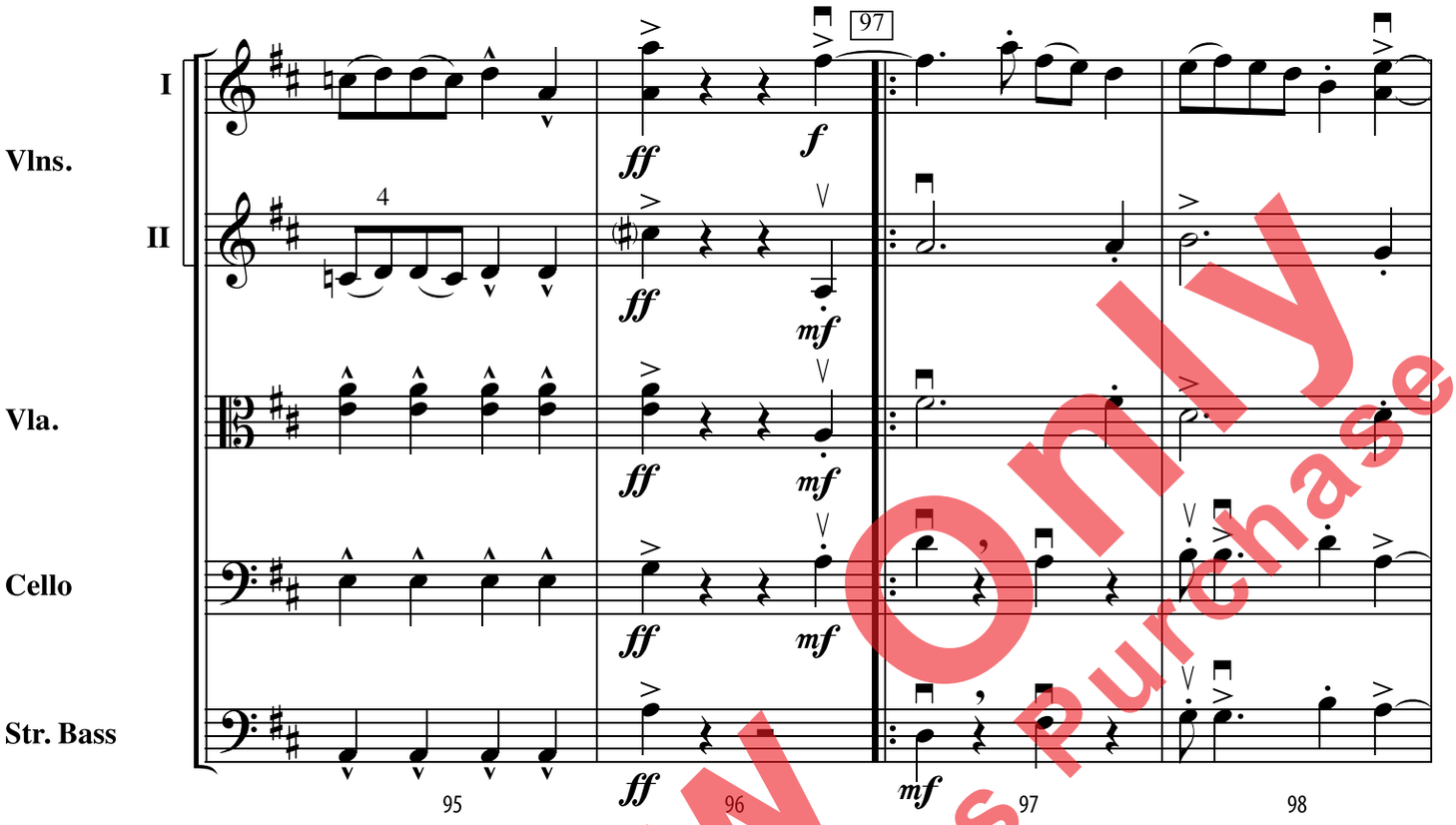

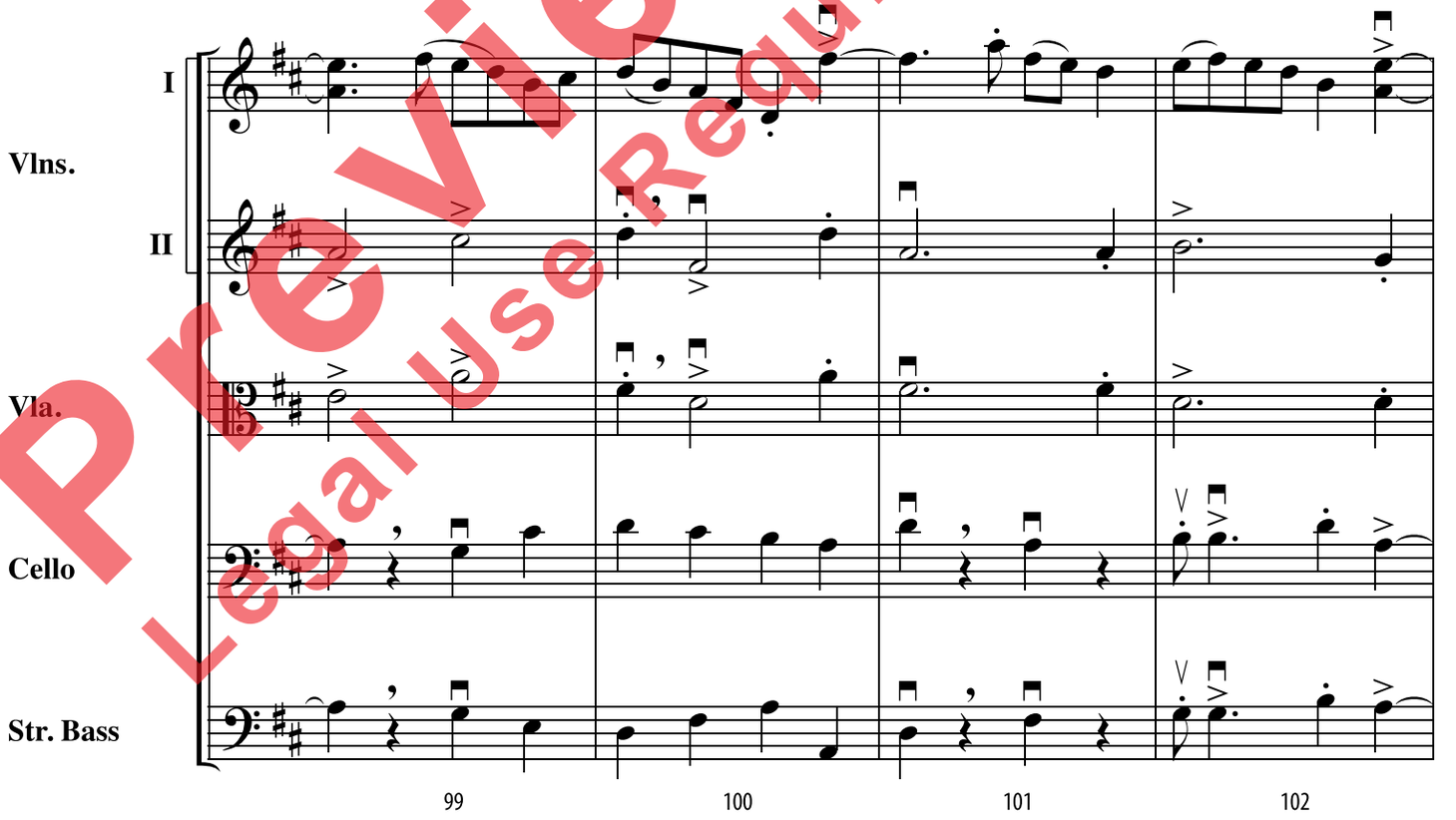

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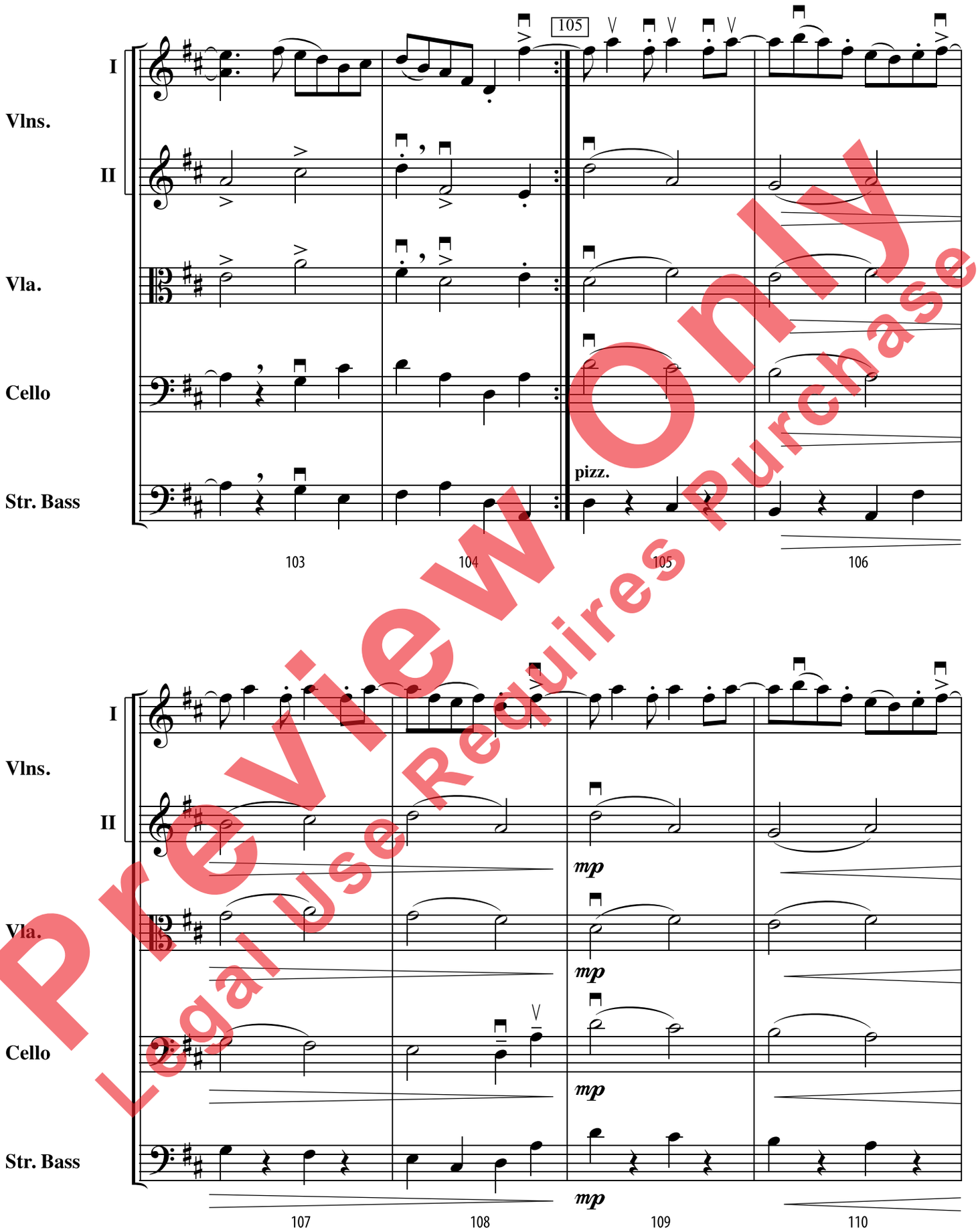

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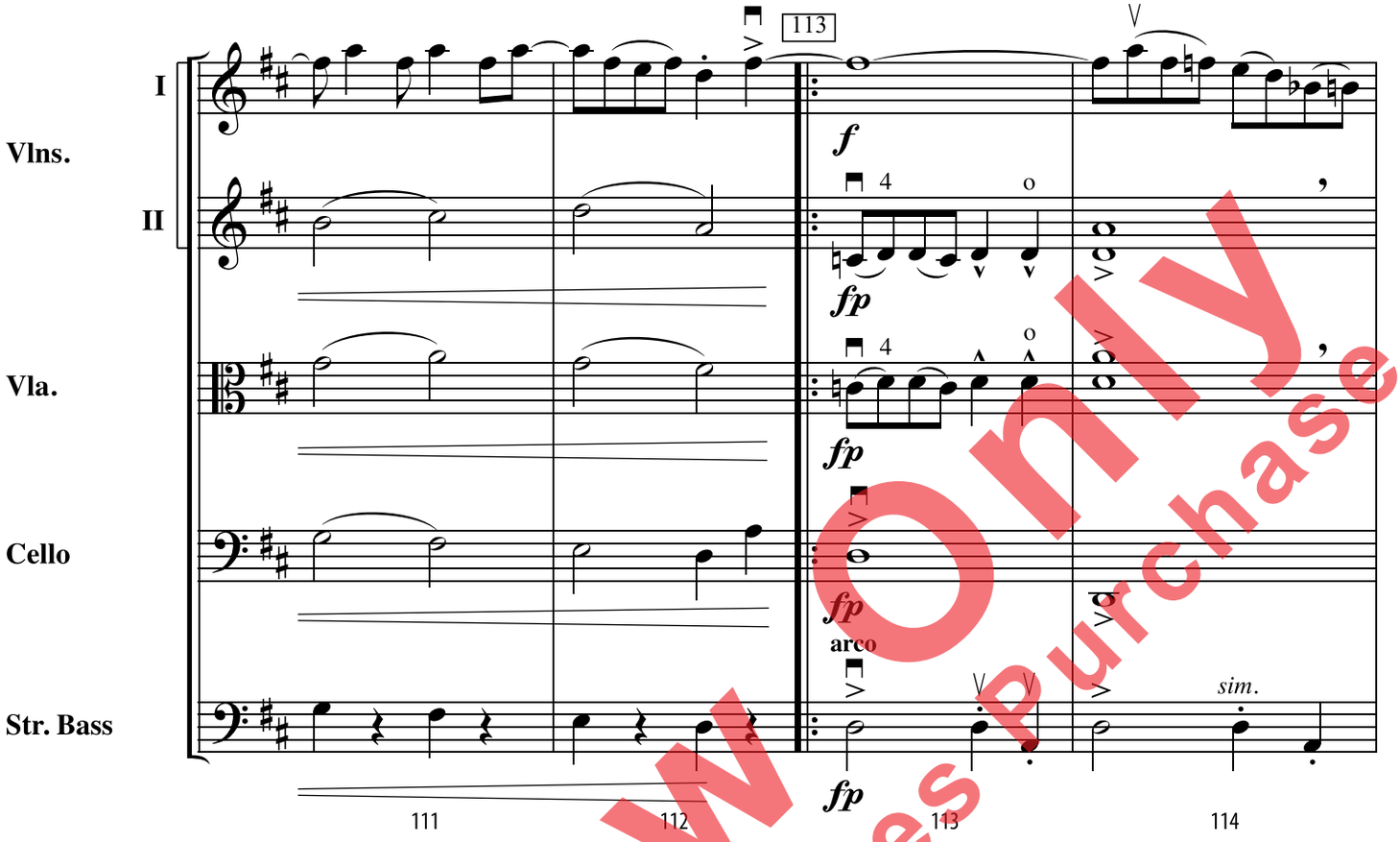
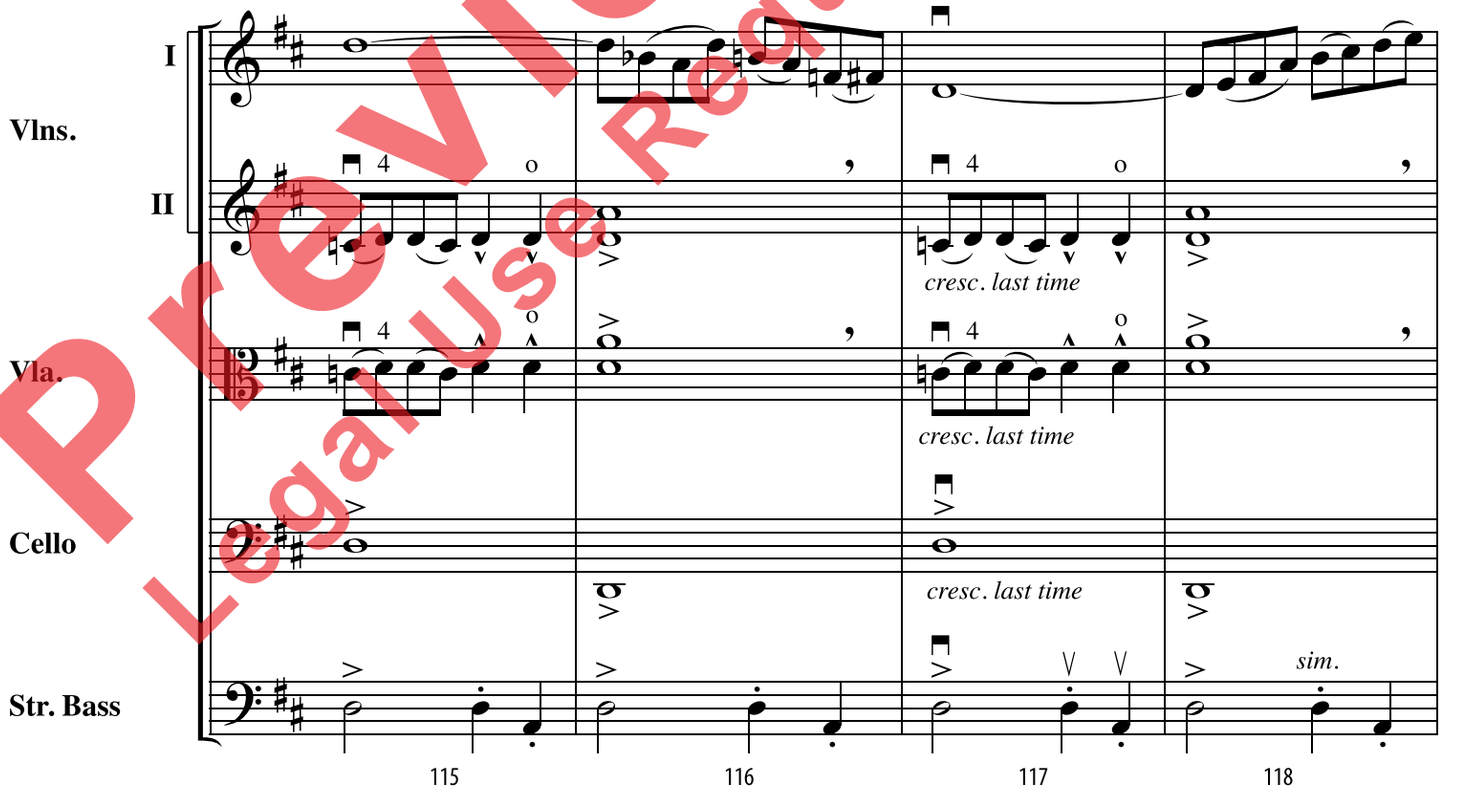
Repeat as many times as neccessary

Section or solo improvisation on Dm7





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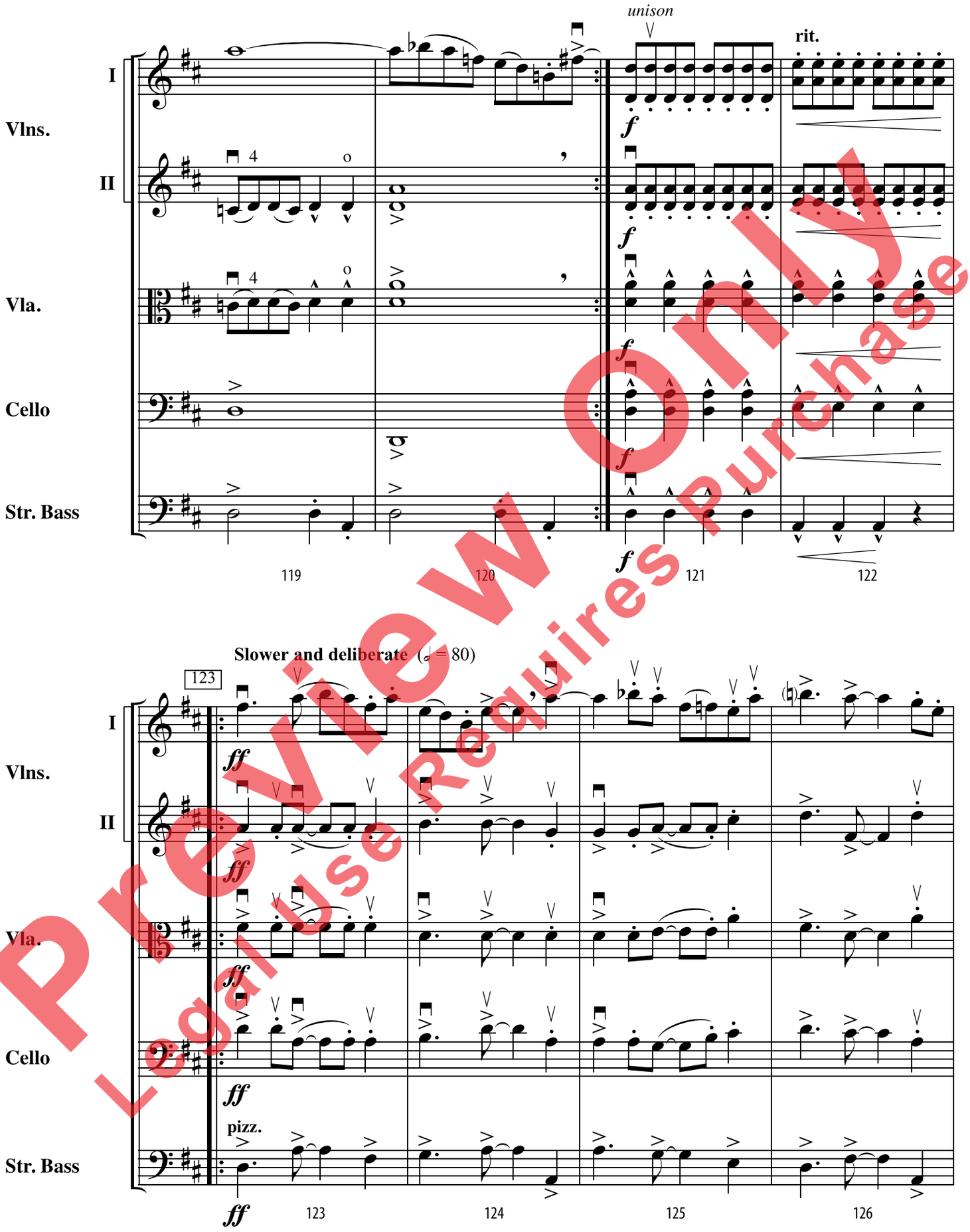

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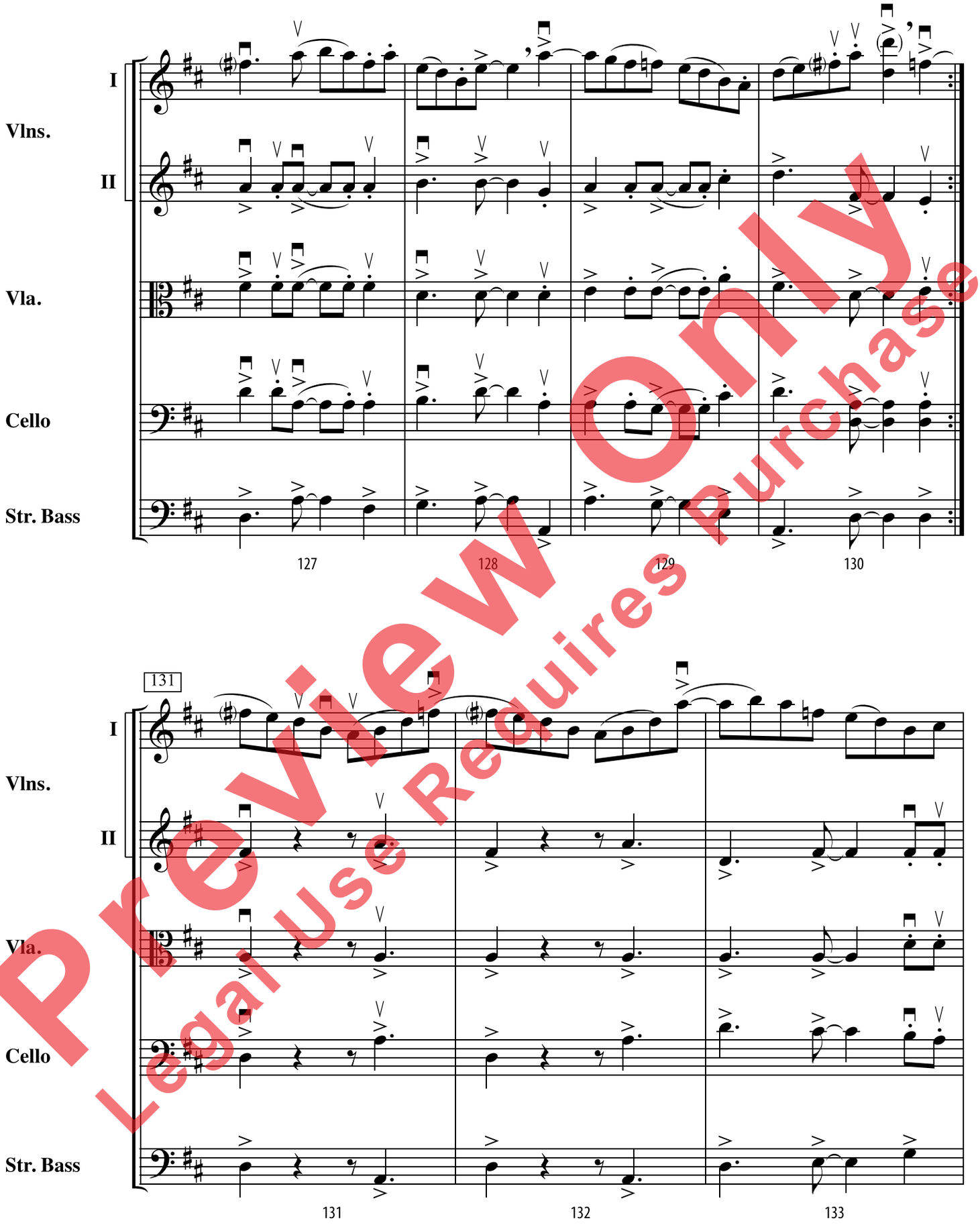

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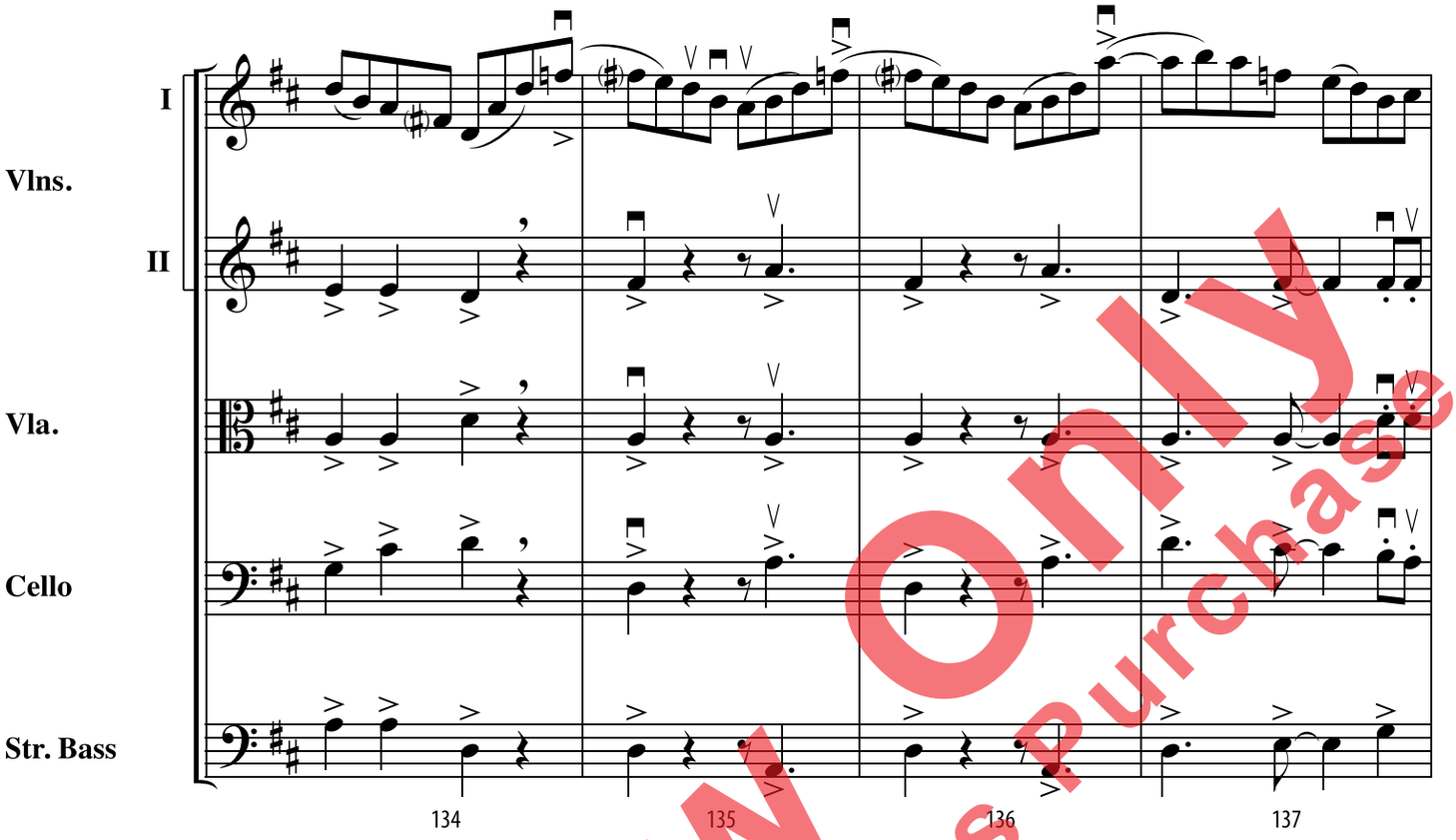

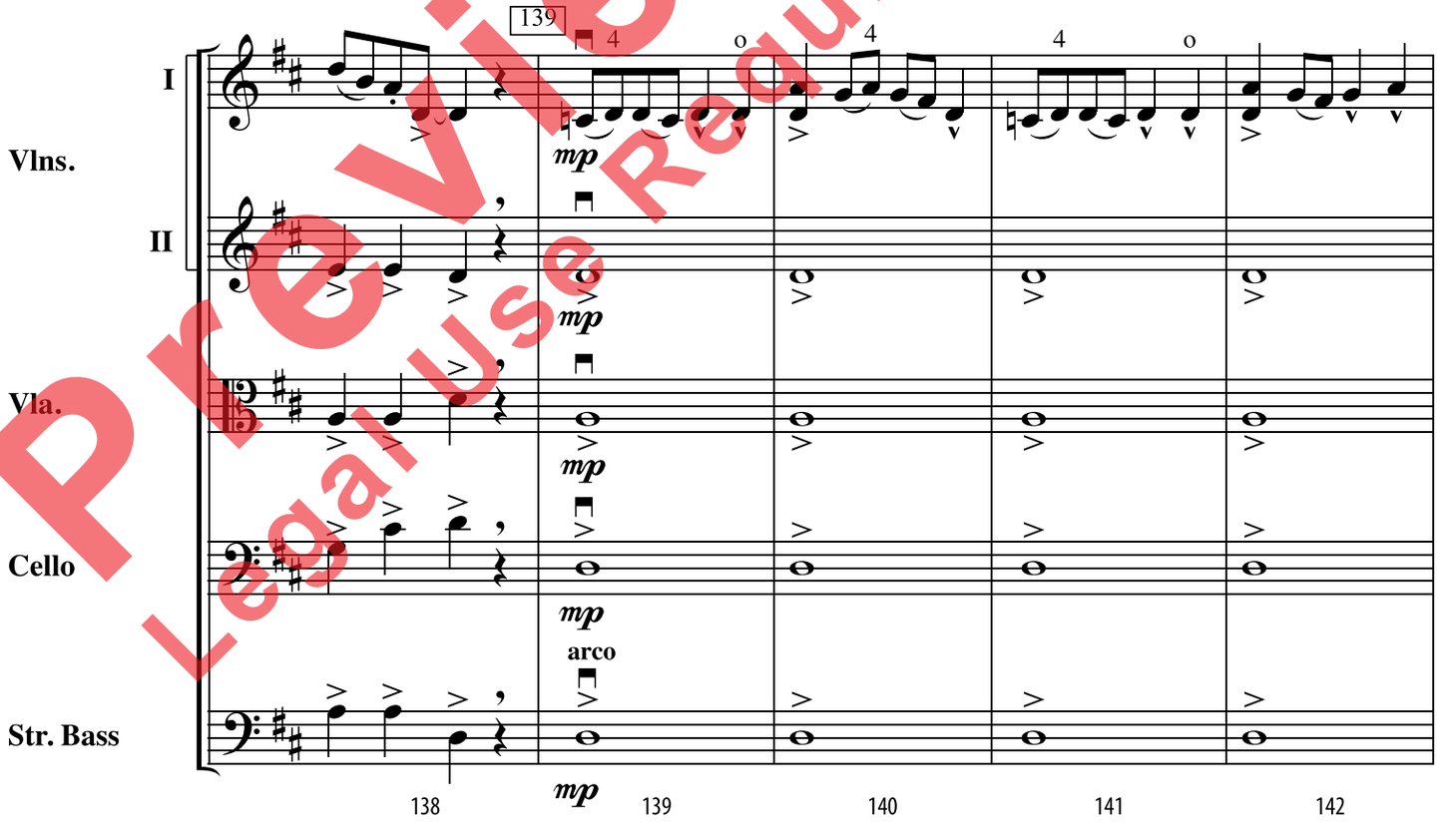

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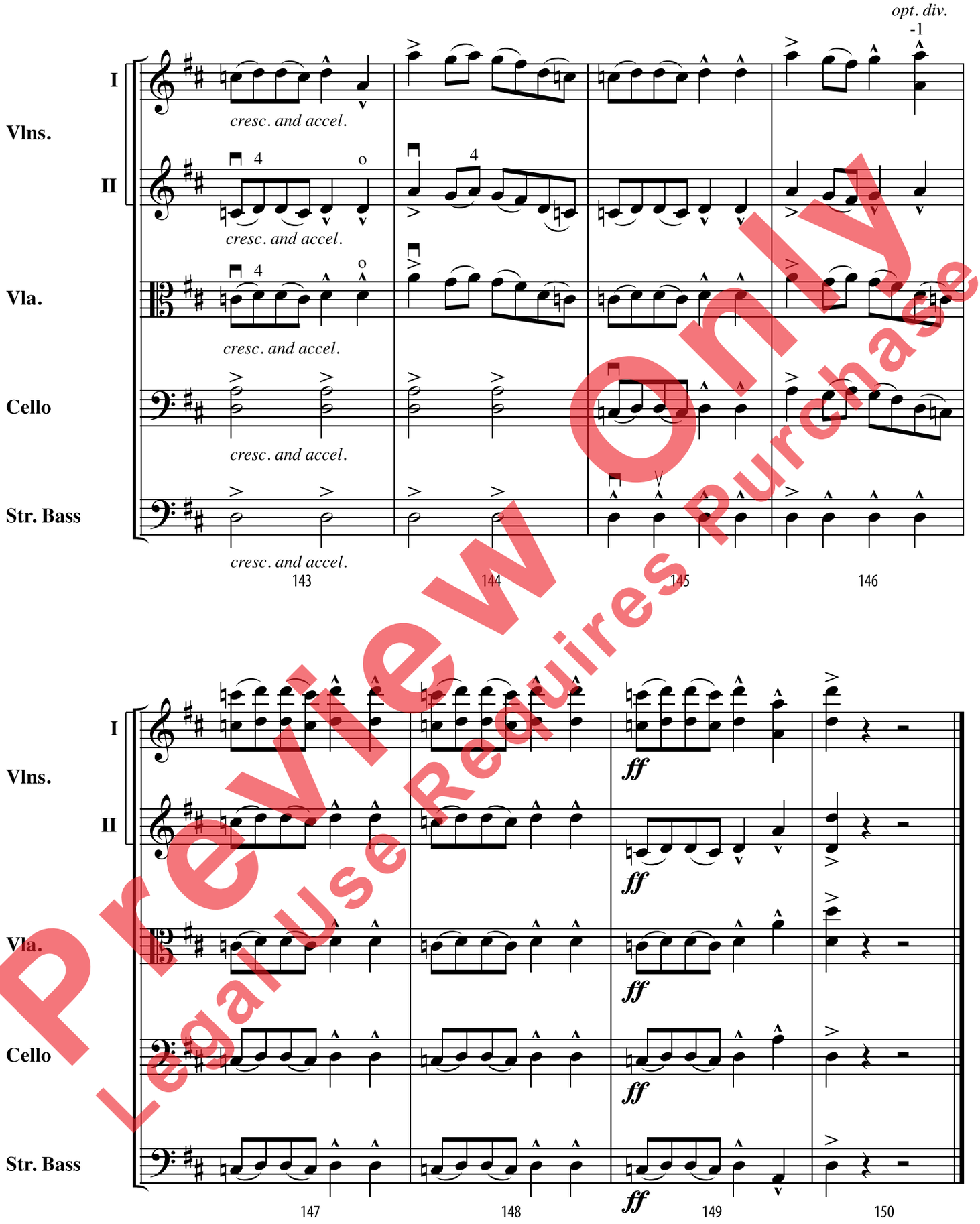

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