Wynton Marsalis, Managing and Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

Brasilliance (from *Latin American Suite*)

By Duke Ellington

As performed by the Duke Ellington Orchestra
Transcribed by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center
Edited by Christopher Crenshaw for Jazz at Lincoln Center

Full Score

This transcription was made especially for Jazz at Lincoln Center's 2014–15
Twentieth Annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program.

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essentially ELLINGTON

jazz

NOTES ON PLAYING ELLINGTON

At least 95% of modern-day large ensemble jazz playing comes out of three traditions: Count Basie's band, Duke Ellington's band, and the orchestrations of small groups. Those young players interested in jazz will be drawn to small groups for the opportunity to improvise and for practical reasons (it is much easier to organize 4 or 5 people than it is 15). Schools have taken over the task (formerly performed by dance bands) of training musicians to be ensemble players. Due to the Basie Band's popularity and its simplicity of style and emphasis on blues and swing, the better educators have almost exclusively adopted this tradition for teaching jazz ensemble playing. As wonderful as Count Basie's style is, it doesn't address many of the important styles developed under the great musical umbrella we call jazz. Duke Ellington's comprehensive and eclectic approach to music offers an alternative.

The stylistic richness of Ellington's music presents a great challenge to educators and performers alike. In Basie's music, the conventions are very nearly consistent. In Ellington's music there are many more exceptions to the rules. This calls for greater knowledge of the language of jazz. Clark Terry, who left Count Basie's band to join Duke Ellington, said, 'Count Basie was college, but Duke Ellington was graduate school.' Knowledge of Ellington's music prepares you to play any big band music.

The following is a list of performance conventions for the great majority of Ellington's music. Any deviations or additions will be spelled out in the individual performance notes which follow.

1. Listen carefully many times to the Ellington recording of these pieces. There are many subtleties that will elude even the most sophisticated listener at first. Although it was never Ellington's wish to have his recordings imitated, knowledge of these definitive versions will lead musicians to make more educated choices when creating new performances. Ellington's music, though written for specific individuals, is designed to inspire all musicians to express themselves. In addition, you will hear slight note differences in the recording and the transcriptions. This is intentional, as there are mistakes and alterations from the original intent of the music in the recording. You should have your players play what's in the score.

2. General use of swing phrasing. The triplet feel prevails except for ballads or where notations such as even eighths or Latin appear. In these cases, eighth notes are given equal value.

3. There is a chain of command in ensemble playing. The lead players in each section determine the phrasing and volume for their own section, and their section-mates must conform to the lead. When the saxes and / or trombones play with the trumpets, the lead trumpet is the boss. The lead alto and trombone must listen to the first trumpet and follow him. In turn, the other saxes and trombones must follow their lead players. When the clarinet leads the brass section, the brass should not overblow him. That means that the first trumpet is actually playing 'second.' If this is done effectively, there will be very little balancing work left for the conductor.

4. In Ellington's music, each player should express the individuality of his own line. He must find a musical balance of supporting and following the section leader and bringing out the character of the underpart. Each player should be encouraged to express his or her personality through the music. In this music, the underparts are played at the same volume and with the same conviction as the lead.

5. Blues inflection should permeate all parts at all times, not just when these opportunities occur in the lead.

6. Vibrato is used quite a bit to warm up the sound. Saxes (who most frequently represent the sensual side of things) usually employ vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. The vibrato can be either heavy or light depending on the context. Occasionally saxes use a light vibrato on unisons. Trumpets (who very often are used for heat and power) use a little vibrato on harmonized passages and no vibrato on unisons. Trombones (who are usually noble) do not use slide vibrato. A little lip vibrato is good on harmonized passages at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. In general unisons are played with no vibrato.

7. Crescendo as you ascend and diminuendo as you descend. The upper notes of phrases receive a natural accent and the lower notes are ghosted. Alto and tenor saxophones need to use sub-tone in the lower part of their range in order to blend properly with the rest of the section. This music was originally written with no dynamics. It pretty much follows the natural tendencies of the instruments; play loud in the loud part of the instrument and soft in the soft part of the instrument. For instance, a high C for a trumpet will be loud and a low C will be soft.

8. Quarter notes are generally played short unless otherwise notated. Long marks above or below a pitch indicate full value: not just long, but full value. Eighth notes are played full value except when followed by a rest or otherwise notated. All notes longer than a quarter note are played full value, which means if it is followed by a rest, release the note where the rest appears. For example, a half note occurring on beat one of a measure would be released on beat three.

9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat fp (forte-piano); accent then diminish the volume. This is important so that the moving parts can be heard over the sustained notes. Don't just hold out the long notes, but give them life and personality: that is, vibrato, inflection, crescendo, or diminuendo. There is a great deal of inflection in this music, and much of this is highly interpretive. Straight or curved lines imply non-pitched glisses, and wavy lines mean scalar (chromatic or diatonic) glisses. In general, all rhythmic figures need to be accented. Accents give the music life and swing. This is very important.

10. Ellington's music is about individuality: one person per part—do not double up because you have extra players or need more strength. More than one on a part makes it sound more like a concert band and less like a jazz band.

11. This is acoustic music. Keep amplification to an absolute minimum; in the best halls, almost no amplification should be necessary. Everyone needs to develop a big sound. It is the conductor's job to balance the band. When a guitar is used, it should be a hollow-body, unamplified rhythm guitar. Simple three-note voicings should be used throughout. An acoustic string bass is a must. In mediocre or poorly designed halls, the bass and piano may need a bit of a boost. I recommend miking them and putting them through the house sound system. This should provide a much better tone than an amplifier. Keep in mind that the rhythm section's primary function is to accompany. The bass should not be as loud as a trumpet. That is unnatural and leads to over-amplification, bad tone, and limited dynamics. Stay away from monitors. They provide a false sense of balance.

12. Solos and rhythm section parts without chord changes should be played as is or with a little embellishment. Solos and rhythm section parts with chord changes should be improvised. However, written passages should be learned because they are an important port of our jazz heritage and help the player understand the function of his particular solo or accompaniment. Soloists should learn the chord changes. Solos should not be approached as opportunities to show off technique, range, or volume, but should be looked at as a great opportunity to further develop the interesting thematic material that Ellington has provided.

13. The notation of plungers for the brass means a rubber toilet plunger bought in a hardware store. Kirkhill is a very good brand (especially if you can find one of their old hard rubber ones, like the one I loaned Wynton and he lost). Trumpets use 5' diameter and trombones use 6' diameter. Where Plunger/Mute is notated, insert a pixie mute in the bell and use the plunger over the mute. Pixies are available from Humes & Berg in Chicago. Tricky Sam Nanton and his successors in the Ellington plunger trombone chair did not use pixies. Rather, each of them employed a Nonpareil (that's the brand name) trumpet straight mute. Nonpareil has gone out of business, but the Tom Crown Nonpareil trumpet straight mute is very close to the same thing. These mute/plunger combinations create a wonderful sound (very close to the human voice), but they also can create some intonation problems which must be corrected by the lip or by using alternate slide positions. It would be easier to move the tuning slide, but part of the sound is in the struggle to correct the pitch. If this proves too much, stick with the pixie—it's pretty close.

14. The drummer is the de facto leader of the band. He establishes the beat and controls the volume of the ensemble. For big band playing, the drummer needs to use a larger bass drum than he would for small group drumming. A 22' or 24' is preferred. The bass drum is played softly (nearly inaudible) on each beat. This is called feathering the bass drum. It provides a very important bottom to the band. The bass drum sound is not a boom and not a thud—it's in between. The larger size drum is necessary for the kicks; a smaller drum just won't be heard. The key to this style is to just keep time. A rim knock on two and four (chopping wood) is used to lock in the swing. When it comes to playing fills, the fewer, the better.

15. The horn players should stand for their solos and solis. Brass players should come down front for moderate to long solos, surrounding rests permitting. The same applies to the pep section (two trumpets and one trombone in plunger/mutes).

16. Horns should pay close attention to attacks and releases. Everyone should hit together and release together.

17. Above all, everyone's focus should remain at all times on the swing. As the great bassist Chuck Israels says, 'The three most important things in jazz are rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm, in that order.' Or as Bubber Miley

(Ellington's first star trumpeter) said, 'It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing.'

GLOSSARY

The following are terms which describe conventions of jazz performance, from traditional New Orleans to the present avant garde.

Break • within the context of an ongoing time feel, the rhythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a soloist will improvise during a break.

Call and response • repetitive pattern of contrasting exchanges (derived from the church procedure of the minister making a statement and the congregation answering with 'amen'). Call-and-response patterns usually pit one group of instruments against another. Sometimes we call this 'trading fours,' 'trading twos,' etc., especially when it involves improvisation. The numbers denote the amount of measures each soloist or group plays. Another term frequently used is 'swapping fours.'

Coda • also known as the 'outro.' 'Tags' or 'tag endings' are outgrowths of vaudeville bows that are frequently used as codas. They most often use deceptive cadences that finally resolve to the tonic or they go from the subdominant and cycle back to the tonic.

Comp • improvise accompaniment (for piano or guitar).

Groove • the composite rhythm. This generally refers to the combined repetitive rhythmic patterns of the drums, bass, piano, and guitar, but may also include repetitive patterns in the horns. Some grooves are standard (i.e., swing, bossa nova, samba), while others are manufactured (original combinations of rhythms).

Head • melody chorus.

Interlude • a different form (of relatively short length) sandwiched between two chorus forms. Interludes that set up a key change are simply called modulations.

Intro • short for introduction.

Ride pattern • the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.

Riff • a repeated melodic figure. Very often, riffs repeat verbatim or with slight alterations while the harmonies change underneath them.

Shout chorus • also known as the 'out chorus,' the 'sock chorus,' or sometimes shortened to just 'the shout.' It is the final ensemble passage of most big band charts and where the climax most often happens.

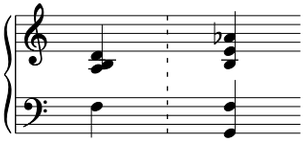
Soli • a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets an trombone in plungers/mutes in triadic harmony. This is called the 'pep section.'

Stop time • a regular pattern of short breaks (usually filled in by a soloist).

Swing • the perfect confluence of rhythmic tension and relaxation in music creating a feeling euphoria and characterized by accented weak beats (a democratization of the beat) and eighth notes that are played as the first and third eighth notes of an eighth-note triplet. Duke Ellington's definition of swing: when the music feels like it is getting faster, but it isn't.

Vamp • a repeated two- or four-bar chord progression. Very often, there may be a riff or riffs played on the vamp.

Voicing • the specific spacing, inversion, and choice of notes that make up a chord. For instance, two voicings for G7 could be:



Note that the first voicing includes a 9th and the second voicing includes a 9th and a 13th. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The following are placed in their order of importance in jazz. We should never lose perspective on this order of priority.

Rhythm • meter, tempo, groove, and form, including both melodic rhythm and harmonic rhythm (the speed and regularity of the chord changes).

Melody • a tune or series of pitches.

Harmony • chords and voicings.

Orchestration • instrumentation and tone colors.

– David Berger

BRASILLIANCE • INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 • Alto Sax
Reed 2 • Clarinet
Reed 3 • Tenor Sax
Reed 4 • Tenor Sax
Reed 5 • Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Trumpet 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Bass Trombone
Piano
Bass
Drums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer • Duke Ellington
Arranger • Duke Ellington
Recorded • November 5, 1968 in New York City
Original issue • Fantasy F8419 (*Latin American Suite*)[LP]

Currently available on CD • OJC 469 (Duke Ellington, *Latin American Suite*)
Currently available as digital download • Amazon, iTunes (Duke Ellington, *Latin American Suite*)

Personnel • Duke Ellington (leader, piano); Cat Anderson, Cootie Williams, Willie Cook, Mercer Ellington (trumpet); Lawrence Brown, Buster Cooper, Chuck Connors (trombone); Russell Procope, Johnny Hodges (alto sax); Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby (tenor sax); Harry Carney (baritone sax); Jeff Castleman (bass); Rufus Jones (drums)

Soloists • Paul Gonsalves (tenor sax); Duke Ellington (piano)

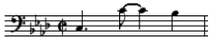
REHEARSAL NOTES

• **Brasilliance** from *Latin American Suite* came out of a tour of Latin America that the Ellington band took in 1968. Wherever Ellington went in the world, he would encounter new cultures and music and filter them though his lens, relating them to his style of music. **Brasilliance** is no exception.

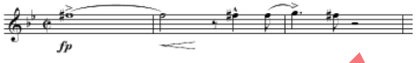
• The central idea in **Brasilliance** is the Band Call lick, which is heard in **C5-8** and again 8 bars later. The maestro would play this lick on the piano when he wanted the band back on the stand. He first arranged and recorded it as a swing chart in 1954. **Brasilliance** sets this lick to a Latin beat and an insistent C7-9 vamp not unlike *Caravan*, except that this vamp never resolves and has no bridge. It is just one chord, which by 1968 was not at all unusual in jazz or pop music.

• The overall form of this piece is ABAB. A contains all the written material for the horns. B is the tenor sax solo over the vamp. The 2nd A is the da capo al coda with the piano vamp ending on the 2nd B. The A sections break down into aa (4-bar brass figure), b (4 bars rhythm section), c (4 bars of reed ascending chromatic scale), d (4-bar Band Call), b, d (with different voicings), e (long unison development of Band Call). Since Band Call consists of 4 notes chromatically ascending, repeating the top note 4 times and then descending a minor 3rd. The entire Band Call is voiced in parallel diminished seventh chords.

• The most essential element in performing this piece is the groove set up in the bass and drums. It is only one measure that is repeated verbatim. It must immediately feel so infectious that you want to dance. If the written bass figure proves too difficult for your bassist, it could be simplified to:



• Although the groove of this piece is Latin, the syncopated figures that involve 8th notes are swung and use the usual swing phrasing (shorts and longs, etc.). It is also exciting to add subtle inner dynamics to the lines, i.e. **A1-3** in the trumpets could be played thusly:



• In addition to the crescendo in **A2**, it adds excitement to add vibrato for those last 2 beats. This gives the figure a shimmer. The great lead trumpet player Snooky Young was known for personalizing his parts little flourishes like these. The same fp, crescendo, terminal vibrato also works great in the trumpets at **B**. Conversely at **C8** and **D8** the whole note in the trumpets and reeds is slurred down to, which means that it should be played mf with no crescendo or vibrato.

• Trombones 1 and 2 at letter **A** are in unison, so no vibrato. Their second note isn't long enough to crescendo, and besides, their part is to be played straight—no personality as a foil to the trumpets. The bass trombone needs to put a strong head on his low C's so that we understand his rhythm and that he doesn't get lost in all the wildness going on in the trumpets and tenor trombones.

• Please note that carat accents are short while wedge accents are full value. If an accent falls under a slur, it is a breath accent as opposed to accents not slurred, which are tongued.

• The key to playing the band unison that starts at **E** is keeping the dynamic at a comfortable mf. This assures a pleasing ensemble blend. The excitement comes from the intensity, which is achieved through accents and very slight cresendi through the phrases. My trumpet teacher, Jimmy Maxwell, taught me that as we expend air, we naturally get softer. To keep the intensity of a phrase, we need to expend slightly more air as we go along. In addition we crescendo slightly as we ascend and diminuendo as we descend.

• You will note that although Paul Gonsalves starts his solo prior to letter **L** on the Ellington recording, the original parts indicate the solo to start after the ensemble. This makes more sense to me. Plus a clearer form is a bit easier for the audience to understand. Very often Ellington would choose a flawed take over a 'perfect' one if the flawed take had a better feel. This may be the case here; I can't say. In any event, it's just a C7-9, wherever the tenor begins his solo, it is all on the same chord.

• The vamp at letter **L** is repeated until a cue is given to DC. The bass and drums continue their patterns without variation while the piano comps for the tenor solo. This is a nice spot for the piano to interact with the tenor rather than play an ostinato figure. The vamp at **M** can be more of a piano ostinato, or it could start out as more of a solo and then set up a repetitive figure in order to come to a logical sounding ending.

• When I listen to or perform this piece, it connotes excitement, but slightly ominous. There is something a little dangerous. Danger can be exciting. Like rollercoaster rides or sky diving. This piece is more like the suspense in a movie thriller. Perhaps like if a safecracker is plying his trade and then must get out of the bank vault before he is detected. I am not about to rob any banks, but I do get caught up in the tension while watching those kinds of movies. The pervasive C7-9 vamp sets up that sort of suspense. Enjoy the ride.

– *David Berger*

To view interactive videos of Wynton Marsalis leading the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in rehearsals of the *Essentially Ellington* 2014-15 repertoire please visit *jazz.org/EssentiallyEllington*.

CONDUCTOR

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BRASILLIANCE

(from Latin American Suite)

Duke Ellington
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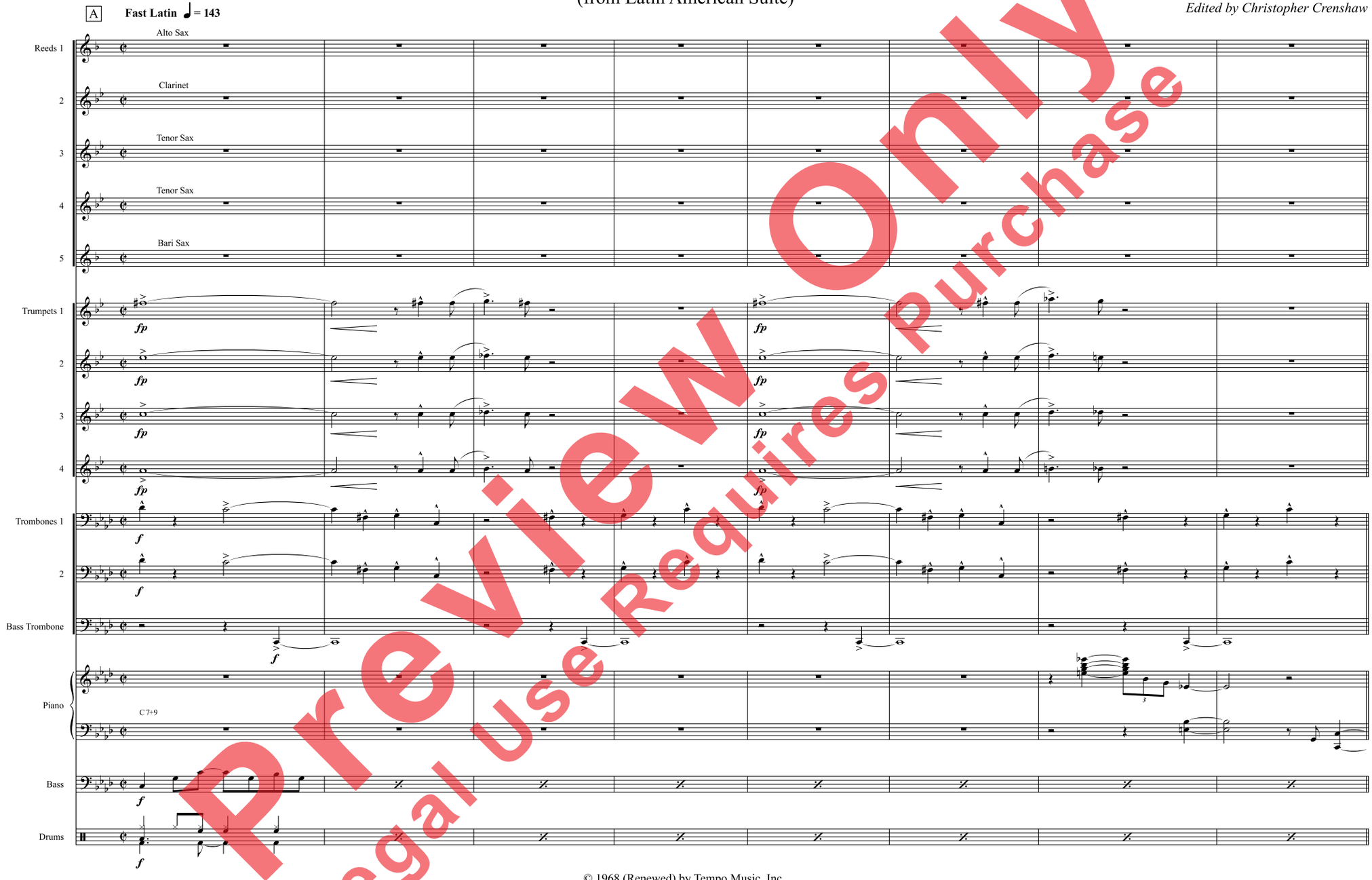

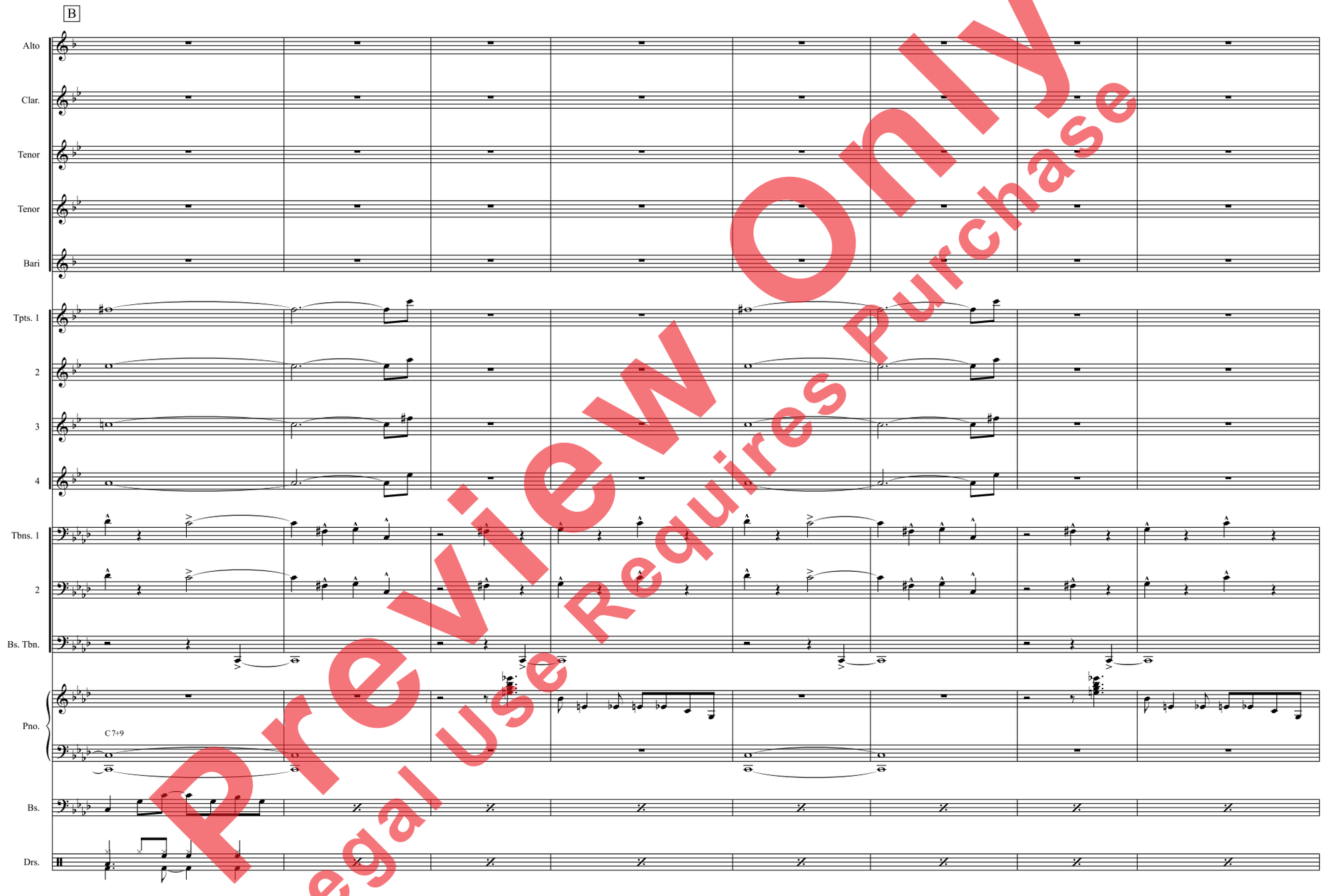

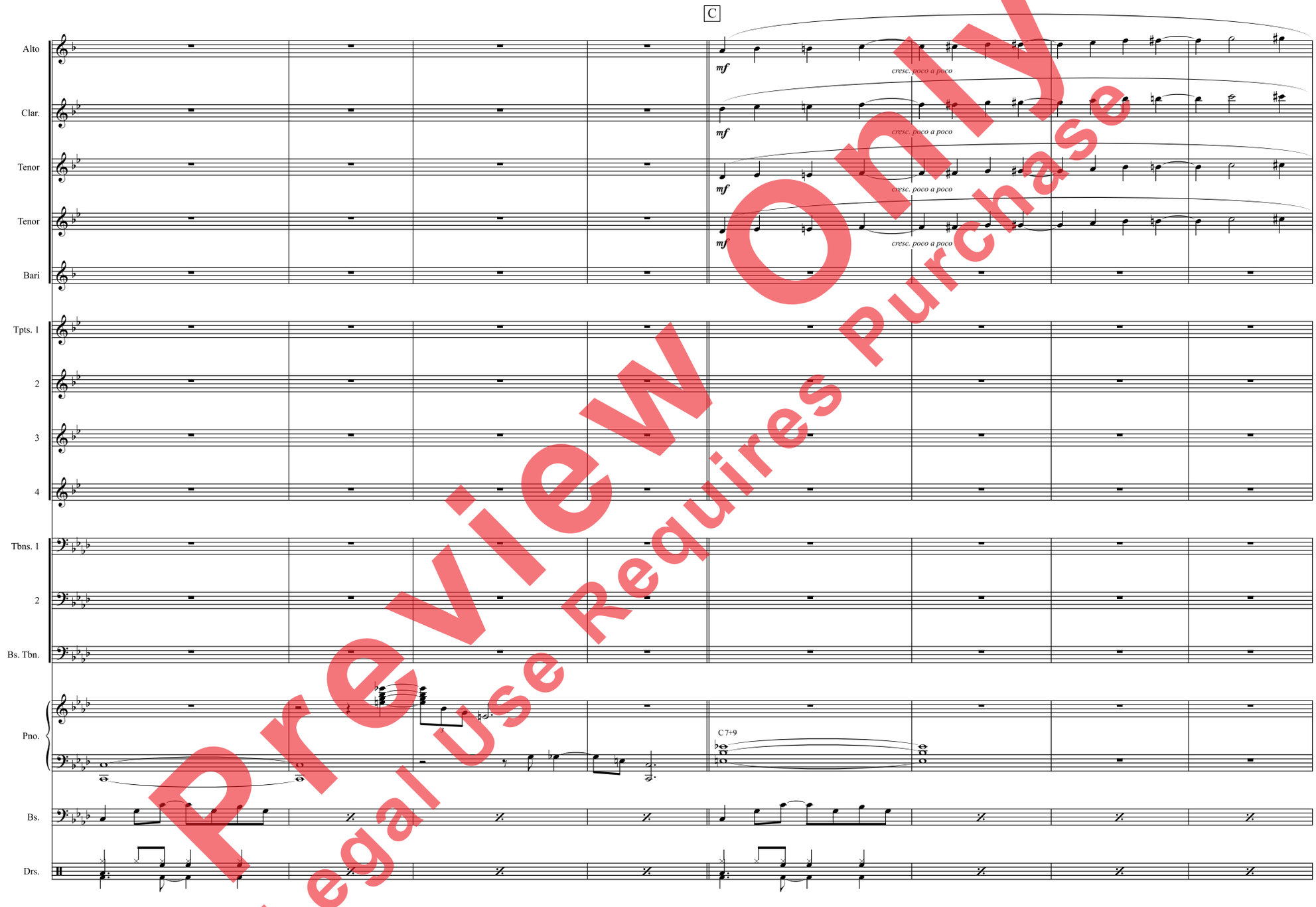

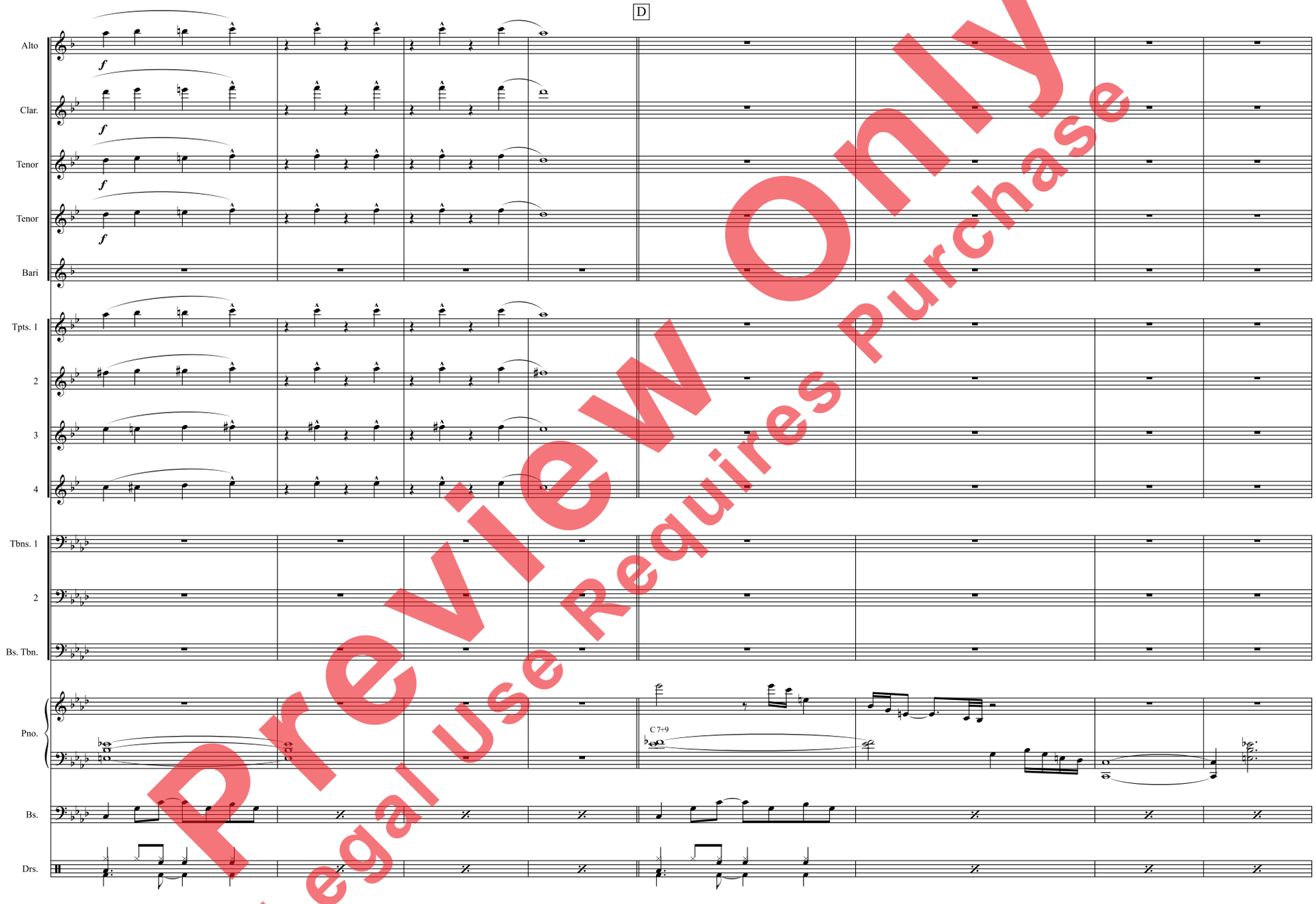

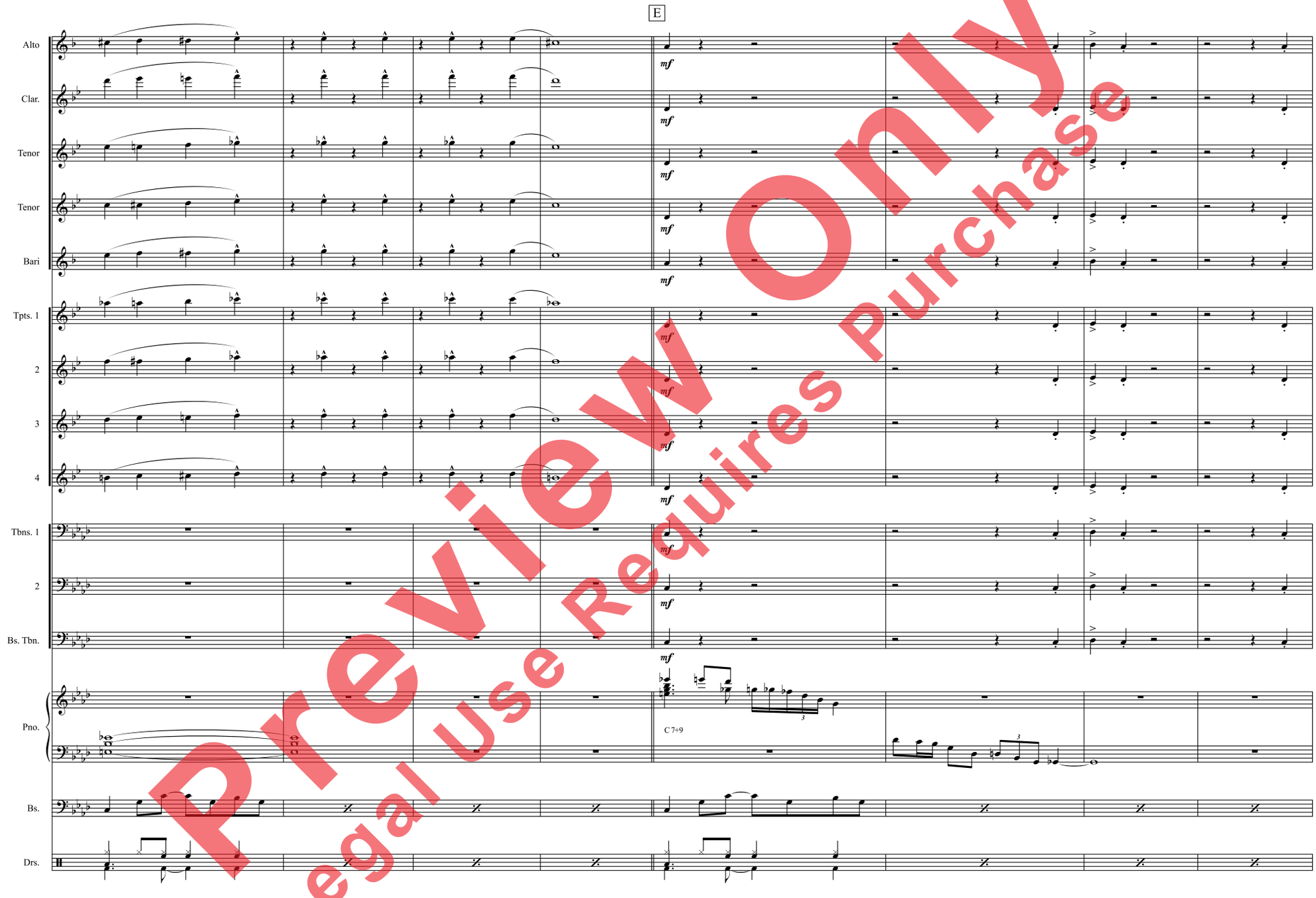

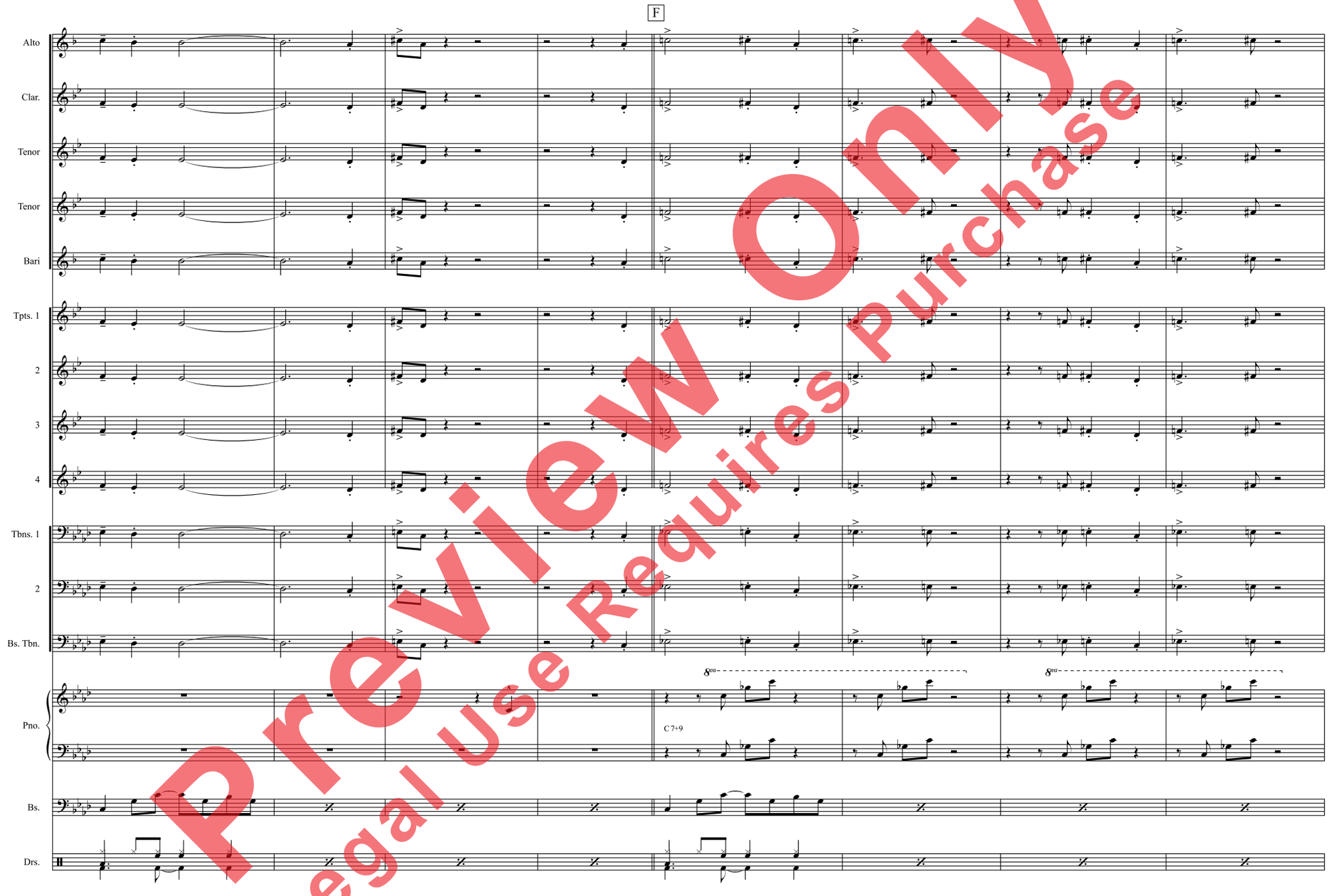

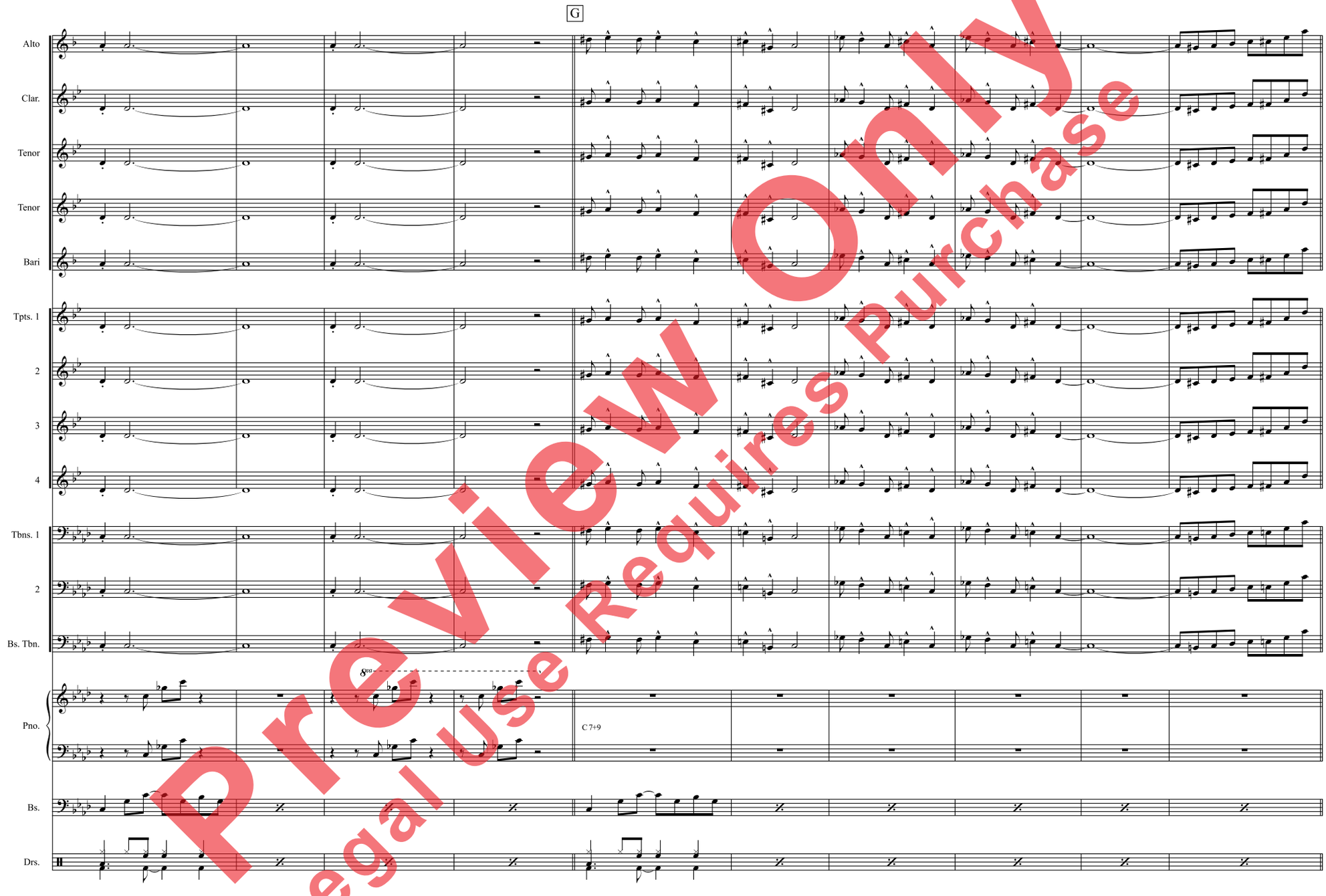

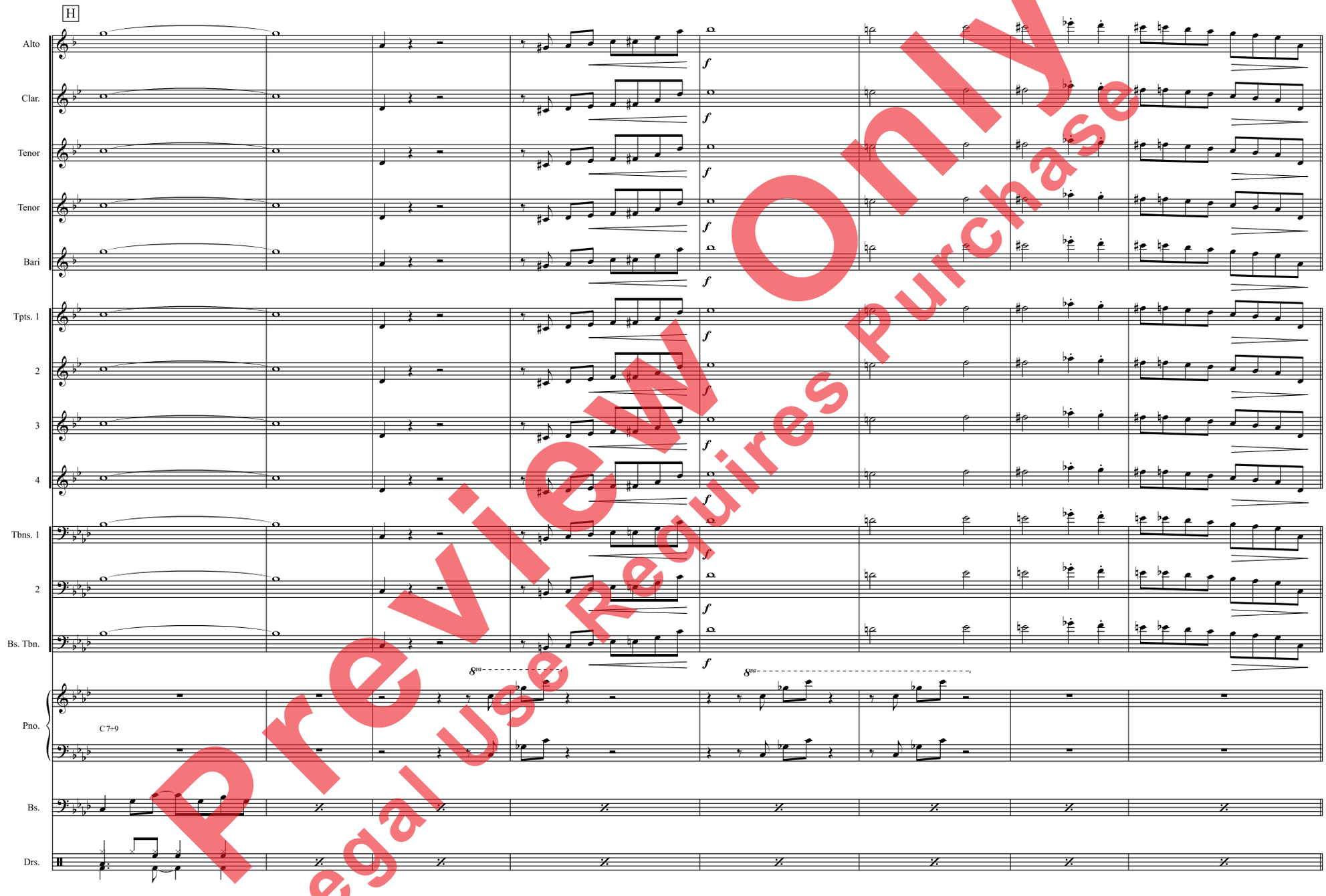

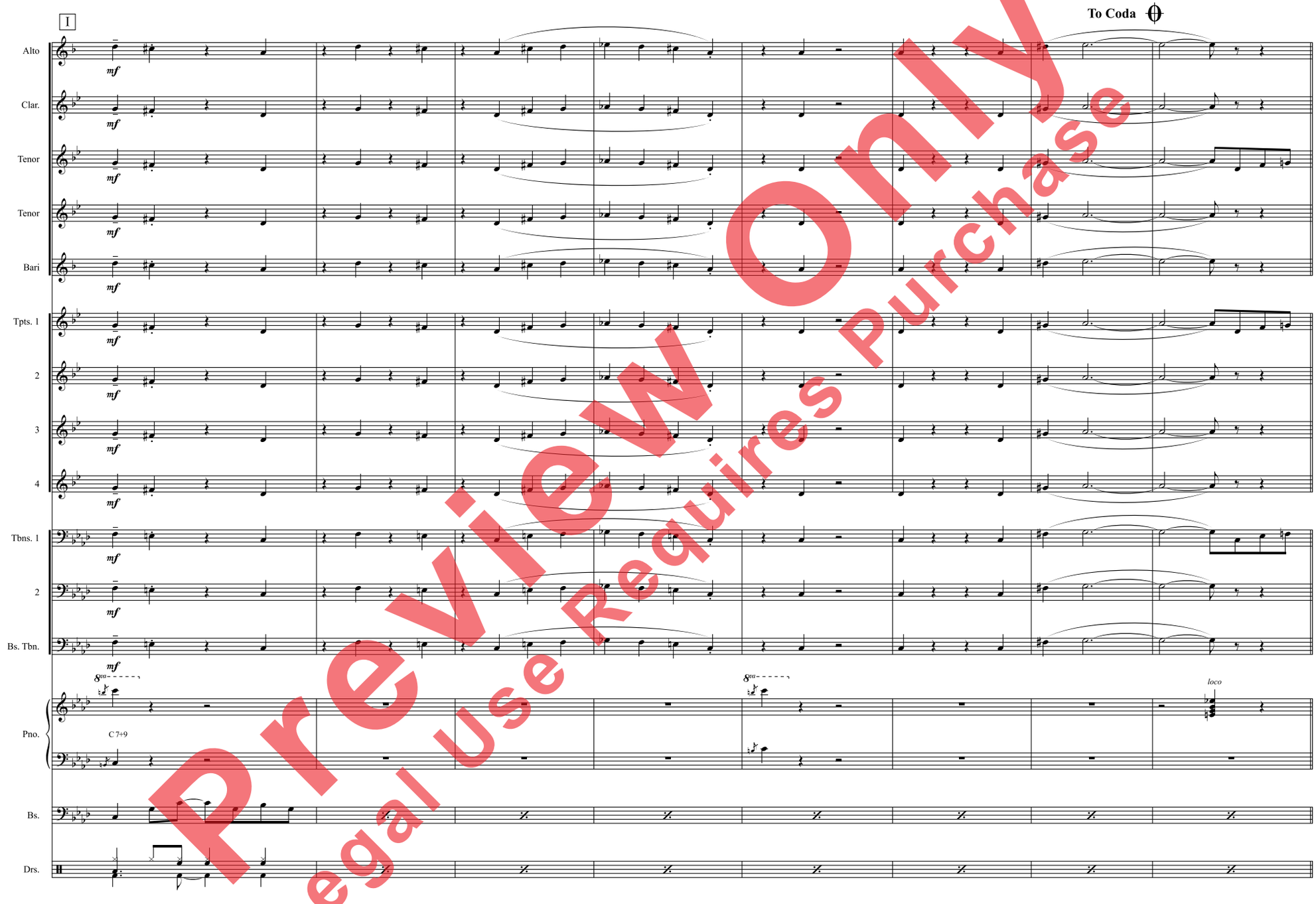

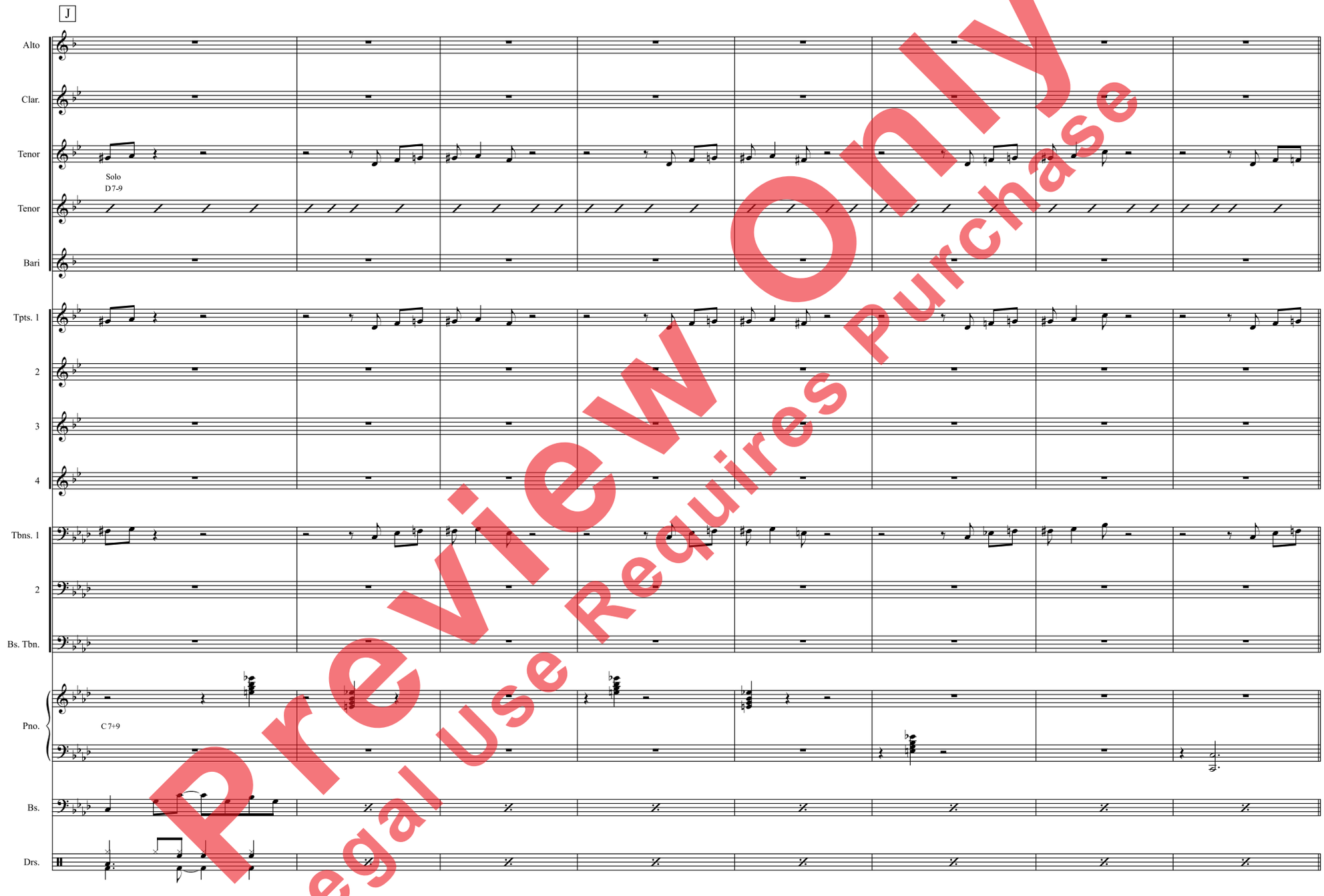

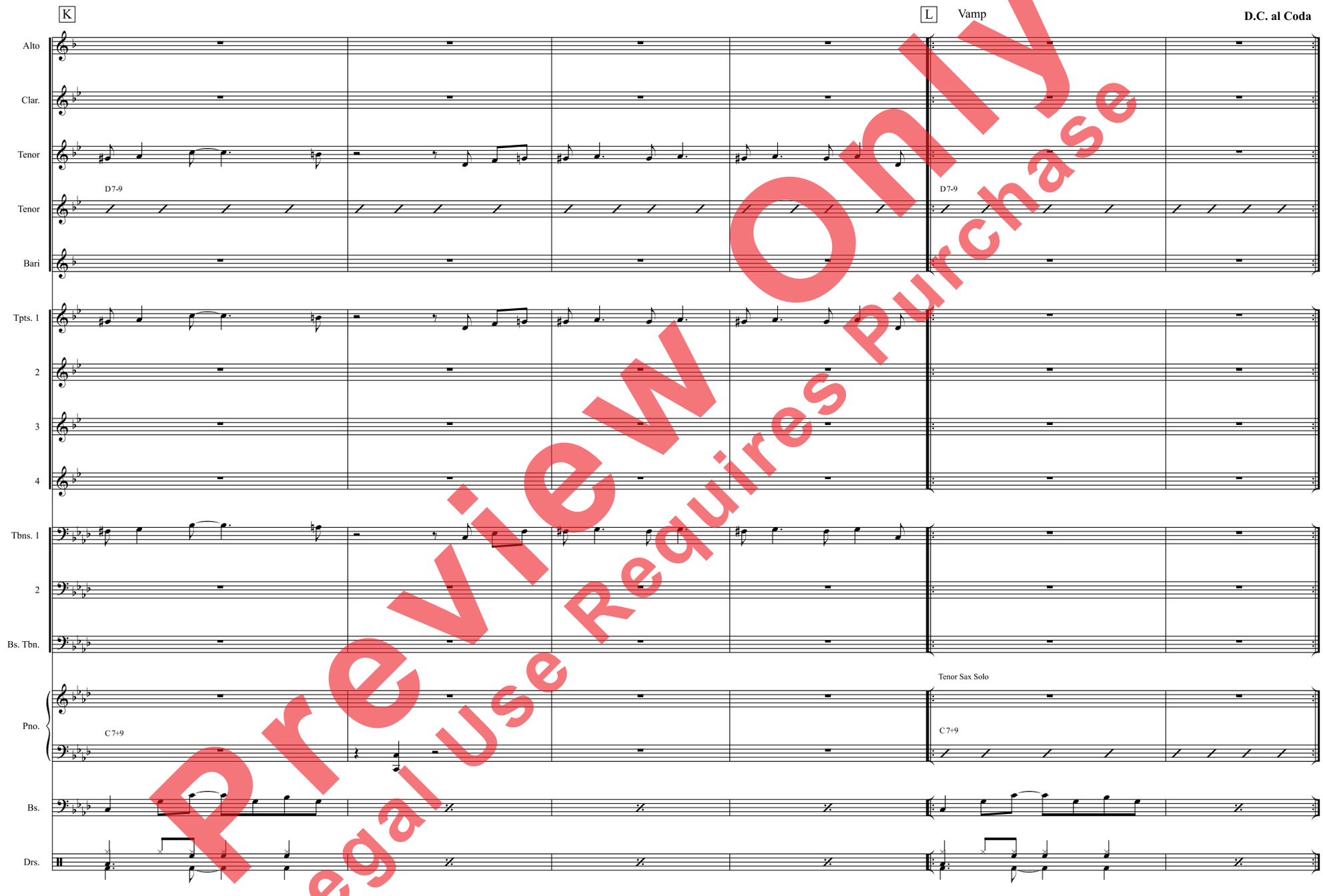

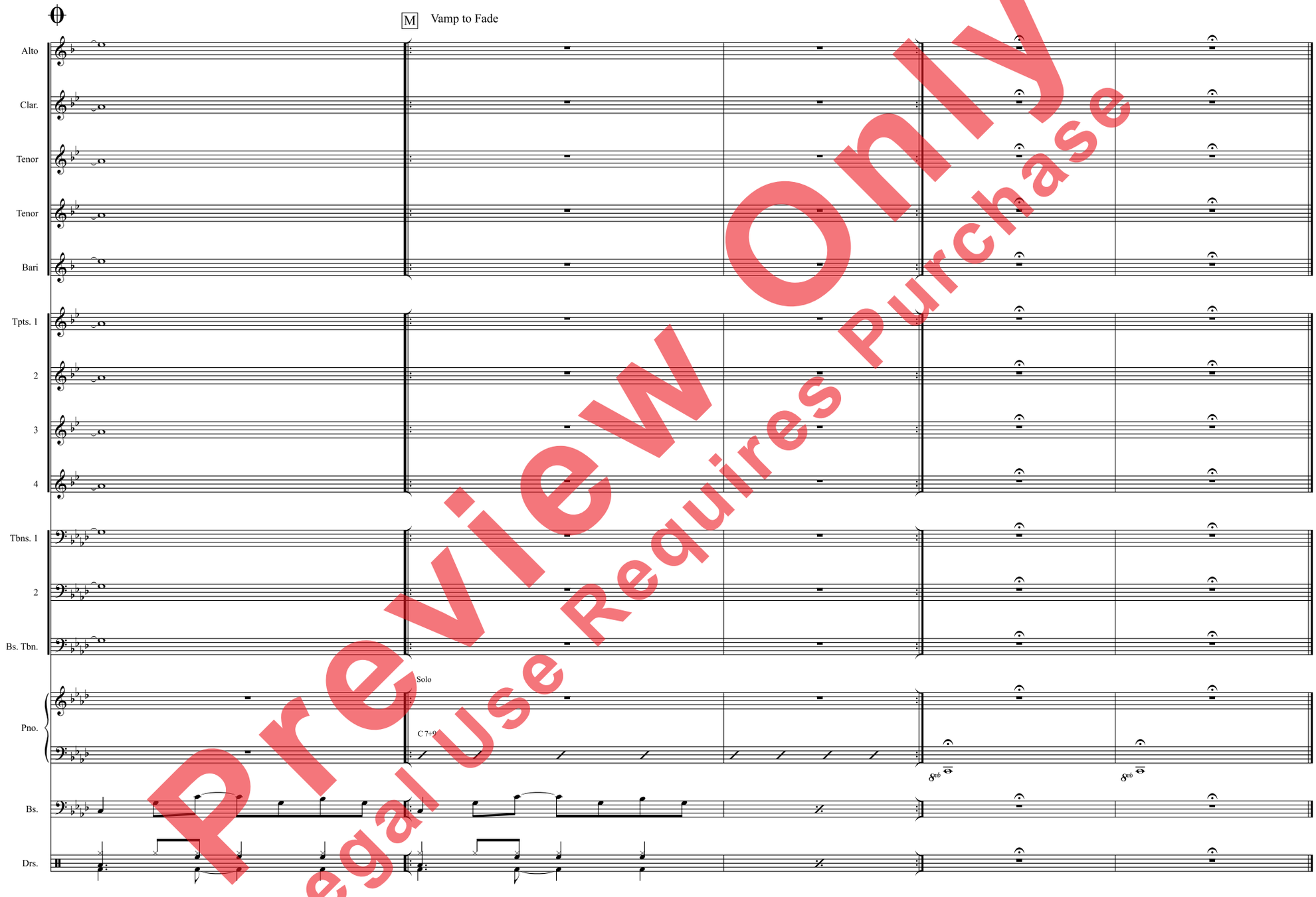

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The *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program (*EE*) is one of the most unique curriculum resources for high school jazz bands in the United States, Canada, and American schools abroad. *EE* extends the legacy of Duke Ellington and other seminal big band composers and arrangers by widely disseminating music, in its original arrangements, to high school musicians for study and performance. Utilizing this music challenges students to increase their musical proficiency and knowledge of the jazz language. *EE* consists of the following initiatives and services:

Supplying the Music • Each year Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) transcribes, publishes, and distributes original transcriptions and arrangements, along with additional educational materials including recordings and teaching guides, to high school bands in the U.S., Canada, and American schools abroad.

Talking about the Music • Throughout the school year, band directors and students correspond with professional clinicians who answer questions regarding the *EE* music. *EE* strives to foster mentoring relationships through email correspondence, various conference presentations, and the festival weekend.

Professional Feedback • Bands are invited to submit a recording of their performance of the charts either for entry in the competition or for comments only. Every submission receives a thorough assessment. Bands are also invited to attend *EE* Regional Festivals for an opportunity to perform and receive a workshop.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Band Director Academy • Fifteen bands are selected from competition entries to attend the annual Competition & Festival in New York City. To prepare, each finalist band receives an in-school workshop led by a professional musician. Local *EE* members are also invited to attend these workshops.

Competition & Festival • The *EE* year culminates in a three-day festival at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Frederick P. Rose Hall. Students, teachers, and musicians participate in workshops, rehearsals, and performances. The festival concludes with an evening concert that features the three top-placing bands, joining the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis in concert previewing next year's *EE* repertoire.

Jazz at Lincoln Center Band Director Academy • This professional development session for band directors is designed to enhance their ability to teach and conduct the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers. Led by prominent jazz educators each summer, this companion program to *EE* integrates performance, history, pedagogy, and discussion into an intensive educational experience for band directors at all levels.

As of May 2014, *EE* has distributed scores to more than 4,200 schools in all 50 states, Canadian provinces, and American schools abroad.

Since 1995, over 504,000 students have been exposed to Duke Ellington's music through *Essentially Ellington*.

Alfred

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Jazz at Lincoln Center Education
3 Columbus Circle, 12th Floor, New York, NY 10019

Phone • 212-258-9810
Fax • 212-258-9900
E-mail • ee@jalc.org

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