THE HIGHLAND/ETLING STRING ORCHESTRA SERIES

BARNYARD VARIATIONS

on Old MacDonald Had a Farm

By Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)

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INSTRUMENTATION

Full Score 1
Violin I. 8
Violin II 8
Viola. 5
Cello. 5
String Bass 5

This piece is a creative set of humorous variants on the familiar "Old MacDonald" folk song. Every orchestra section is featured in a variation, each musically imitating a different barnyard animal. Students explore contemporary techniques with a bluegrass flare. This piece makes an excellent opening or closing piece for concerts.

PROGRAM NOTES

Barnyard Variations is a creative set of humorous variants on the familiar "Old MacDonald" folk song. Set within a bluegrass context, every orchestra section is featured in a variation, each musically imitating a different barnyard animal using special techniques. In the six variations, (1) the first violins imitate birds chirping, (2) the violas play like squeaking mice (listen for the snapping mousetrap!), (3) the cellos create a mule baying, (4) the second violins—with help from the firsts—sound like clucking chickens, (5) the basses "moo" like cows, and finally (6) the whole orchestra wraps it up with a barnyard hoedown!

Note from the Editor

In orchestral music, there are many editorial markings that are open for interpretation. In an effort to maintain consistency and clarity you may find some of these markings in this piece. In general, markings for fingerings, bowing patterns, and other items will only be marked with their initial appearance. For a more detailed explanation of our editorial markings, please download the free PDF at www.alfred.com/stringeditorial.

x	–	’	♭, ♯, ♮	⊓ ⊓ or ∨ ∨
extended position	**shift**	**bow lift/reset**	**high or low fingerings**	**hooked bowings**

I hope you will find these explanations to be helpful. Best wishes with all of your musical endeavors!

Chris M. Bernotas
Director of String Publications

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

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

Originally written as a piece to introduce young children to string instruments, *Barnyard Variations* is a set of variants on the familiar "Old MacDonald" folk song. Every orchestra section imitates a different barnyard animal in a unique variation. Throughout the piece, the director and group should explore the prescribed techniques to best emulate animal sounds. The introduction and statement of the theme (mm. 1–10) are in bluegrass style; notes should not be played staccato, and slides should be emphasized where indicated. Violin double stops are encouraged, though parts may be divided. A marked pause ends this section before the first variation begins (m. 11) at a slower tempo. Here (mm. 11–18), the first violins imitate barnyard birds, with trills and quick grace note chirps. The optional individual or small group solo line, up one octave, will enhance the birdlike effect. Going forth without pause and at the original, faster tempo, the second variation features the violas (mm. 19–26). Mice are imitated with light pizzicato accompaniment, then a squeaking sound as the violas play the given rhythm on the A string between the bridge and tailpiece (mm. 23–24). All strings employ "Bartok pizzicato" on the last note of the variation (m. 26, beat 4) with the string slapping the fingerboard, as the mousetrap snaps! A pause precedes an introduction to the next variation (mm. 27–30), establishing a new key (G major), meter ($\frac{3}{4}$), and tempo. The third variation (mm. 31–55) features the celli as they imitate a mule. Harmonic clashes, grace notes, and sudden accents emulate the "hee-haw" baying of the mule. A fermata and crescendo on the third beat of measure 55 propel the group to the fourth variation. Here the second violins—often doubled by the firsts—imitate chickens. Minor seconds, quick grace notes, and short repeated down-bow strokes create the clucking sound (mm. 56–63). Attention to bowings and divisi marks, dynamics, and accidentals will enhance the effect. Again, a pause ends this variation. A much slower tempo; long, legato bowing; and glissandi characterize the fifth variation (mm. 64–76) in which the basses imitate cows. In measures 69–71, the basses slide their finger to create a distinct "mooing" sound; gliss slides are indicated for other instruments as well. The final variation recreates the initial bluegrass mood (mm. 77–87) with harmonized fiddling throughout. Care should be taken in measures 81–83 to balance voices as the animals are recapped, especially noting a sudden ritard to accommodate the basses' final "moo." The piece ends with a typical two-measure triple-fiddle bluegrass tag (mm. 86–87).

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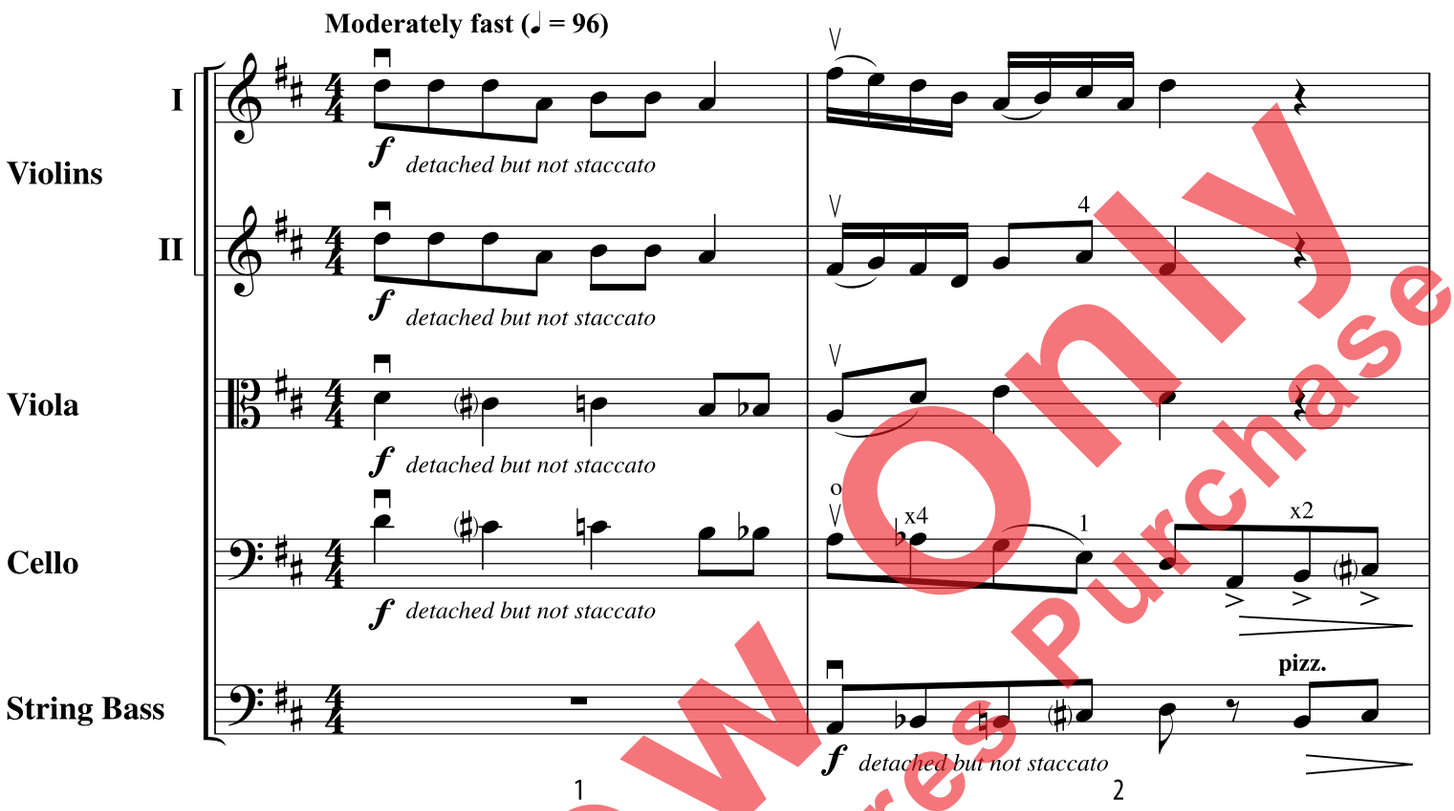
For the Sebago-Long Lake Music Festival, Harrison, Maine

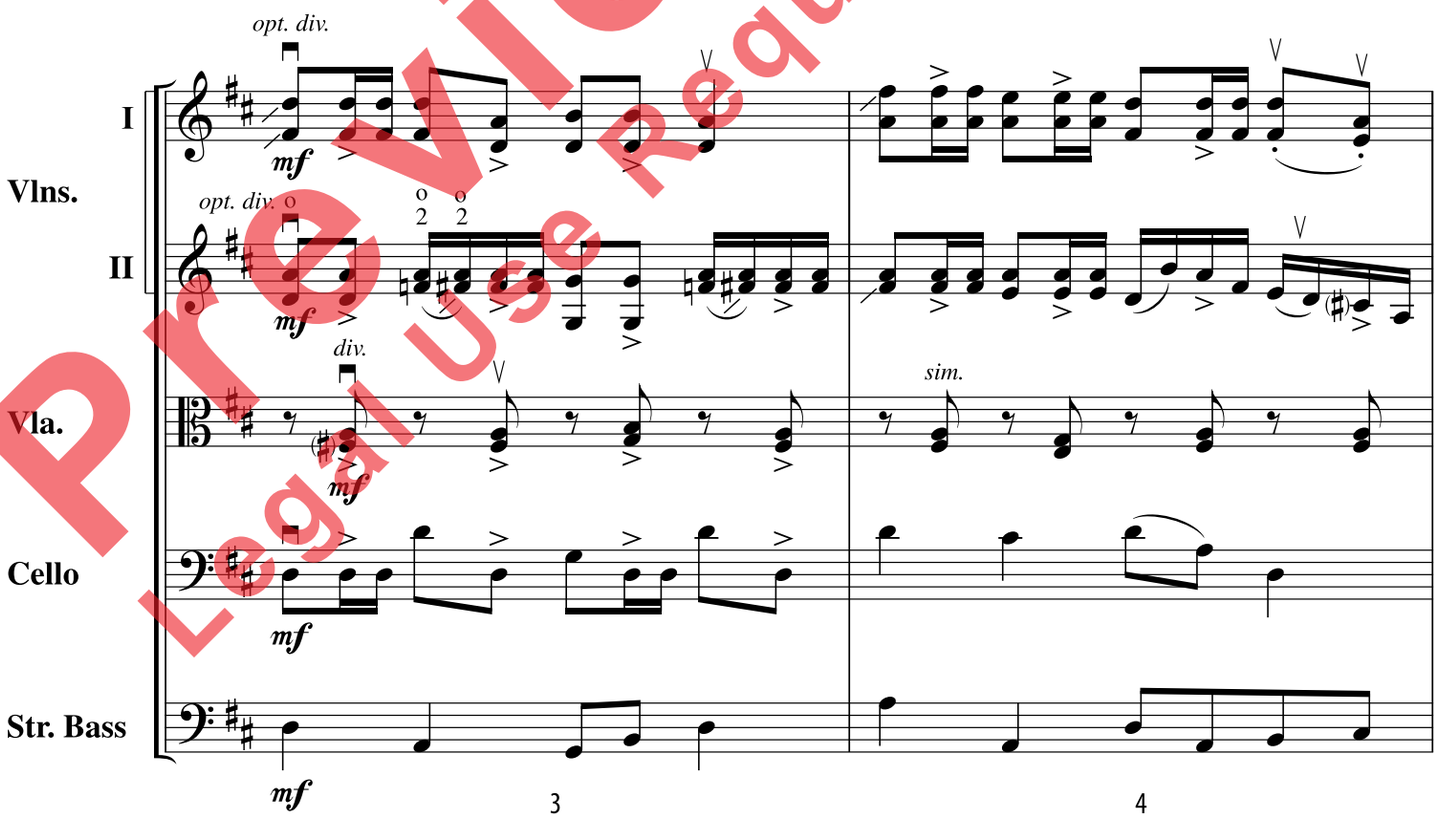
Barnyard Variations

on Old MacDonald Had a Farm

FULL SCORE
Duration - 3:45

By Andrew H. Dabczynski (ASCAP)





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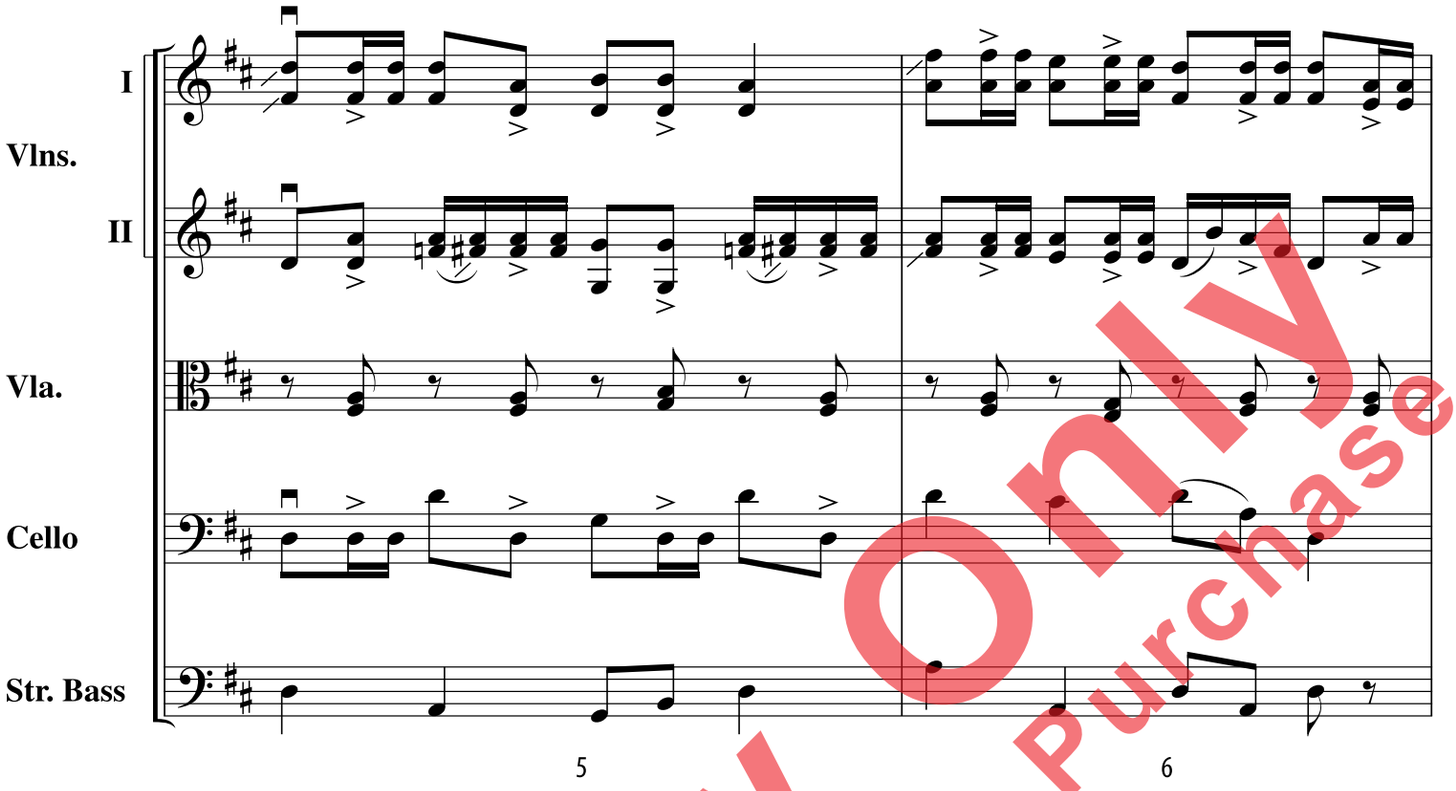

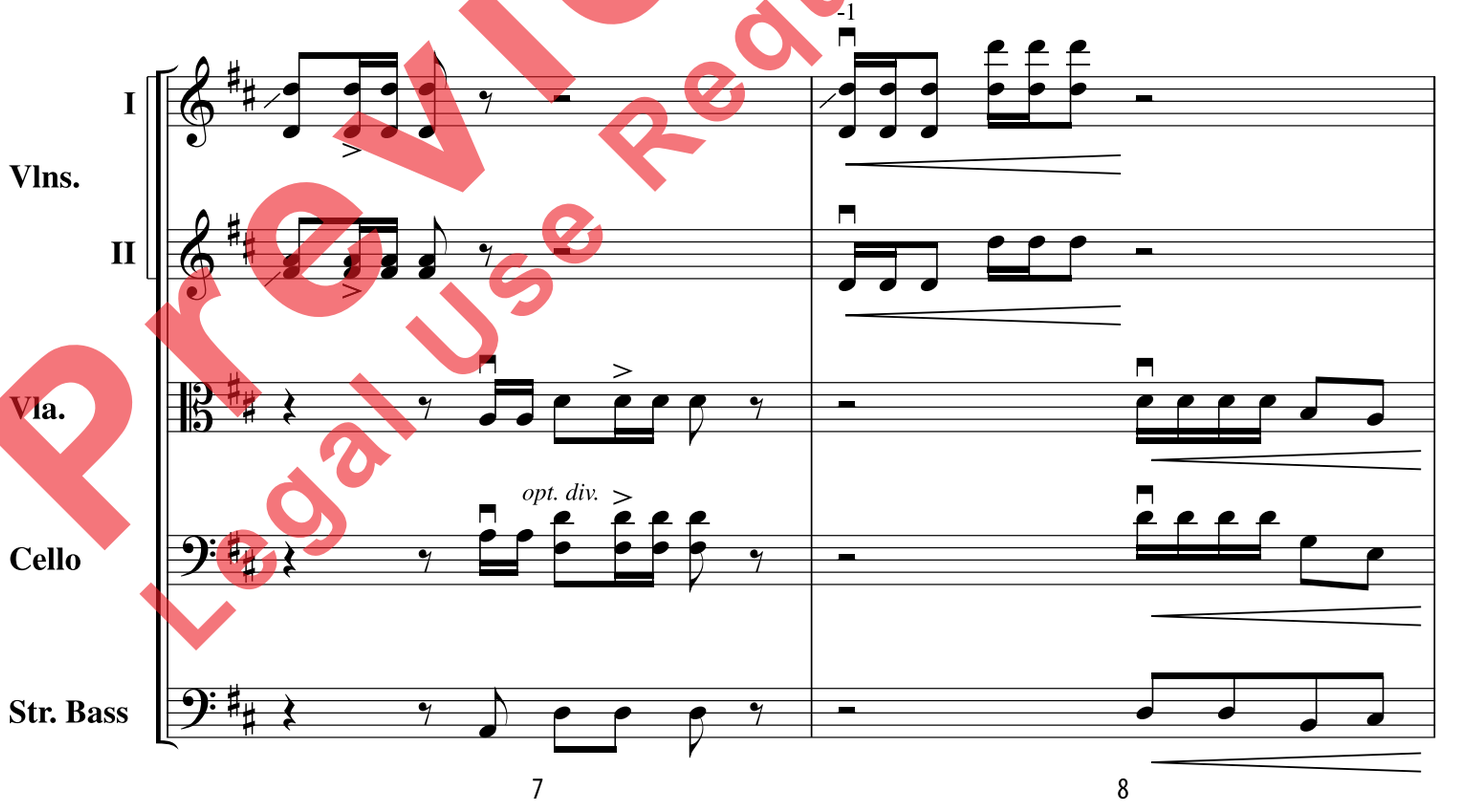

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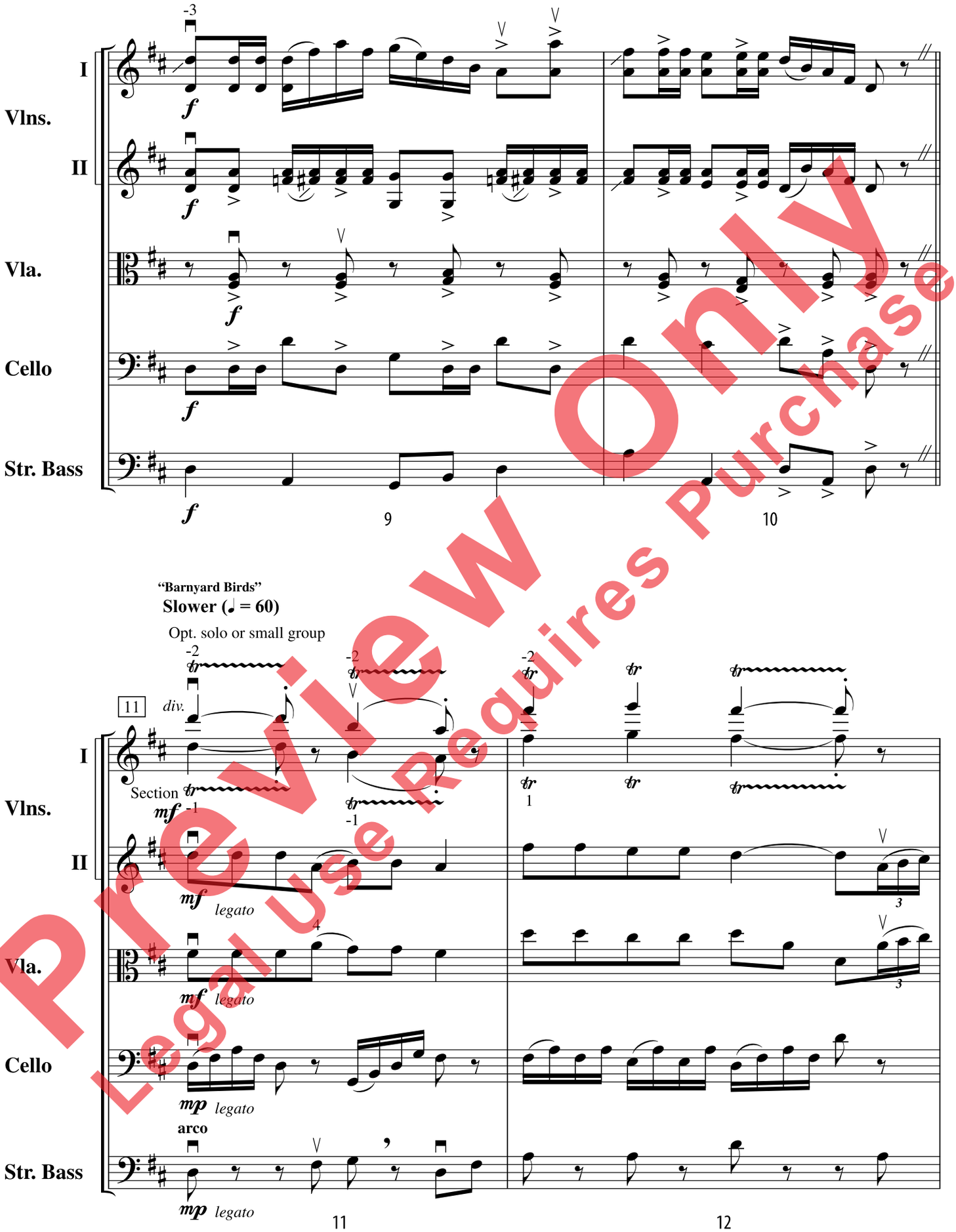

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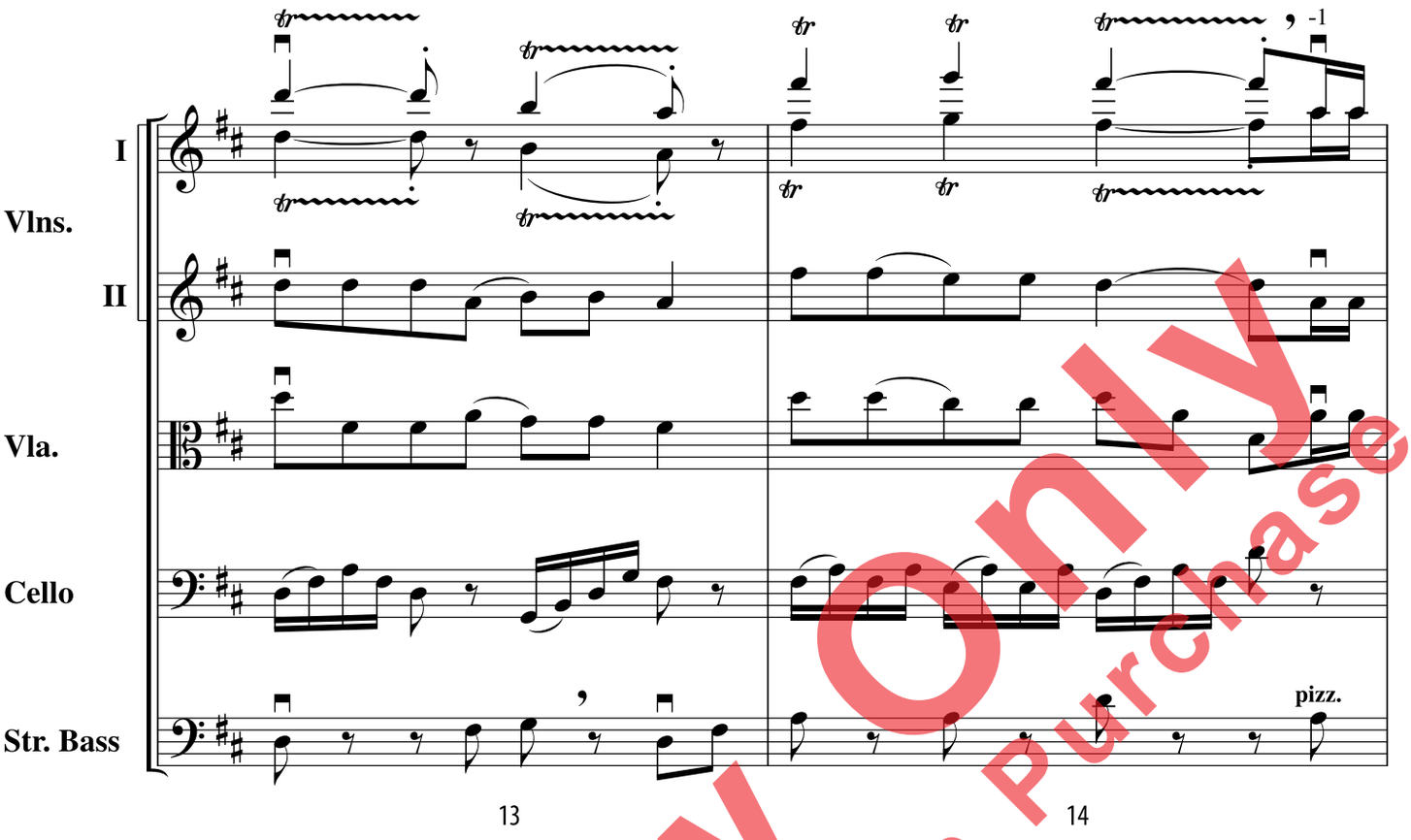

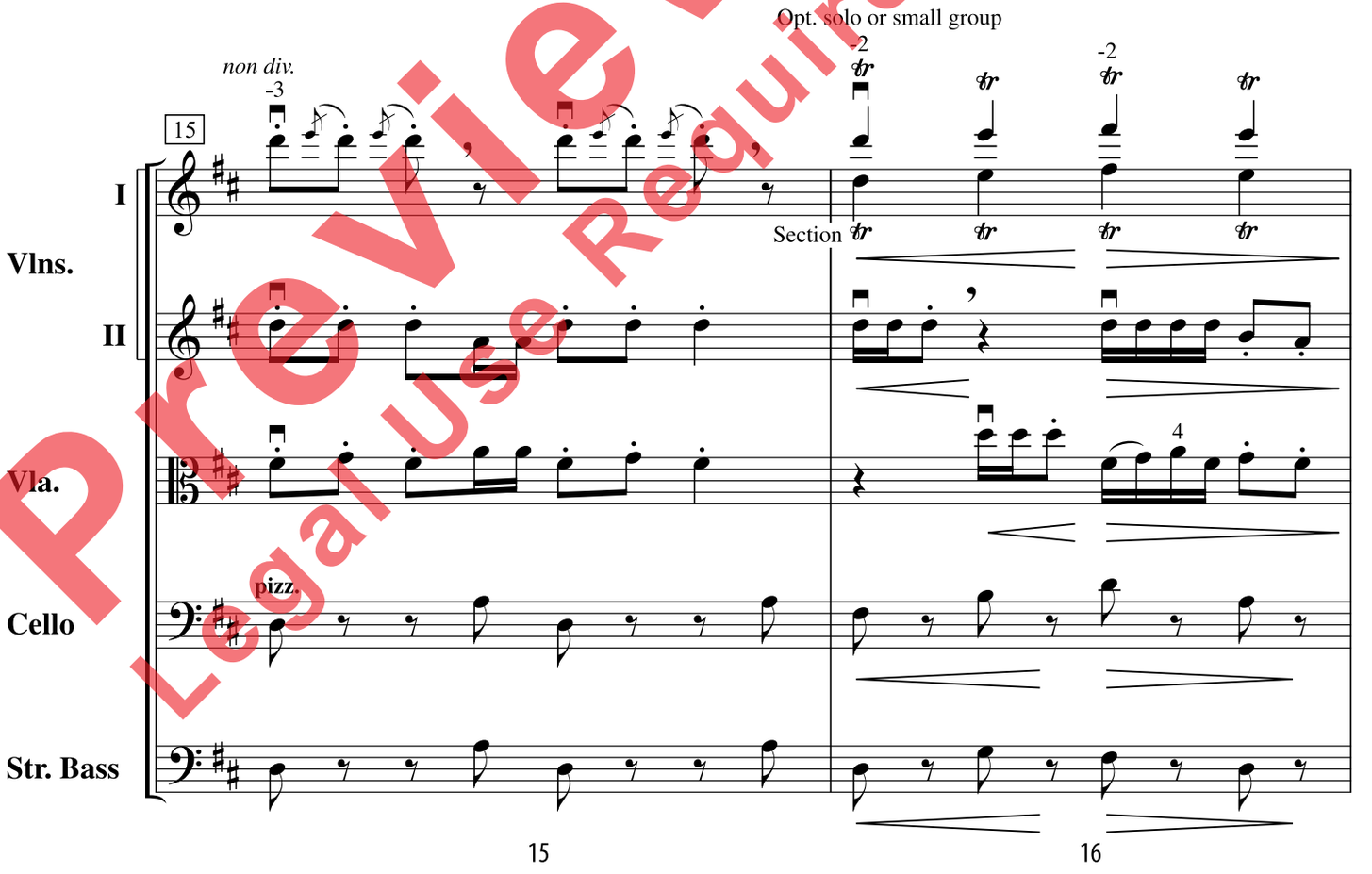

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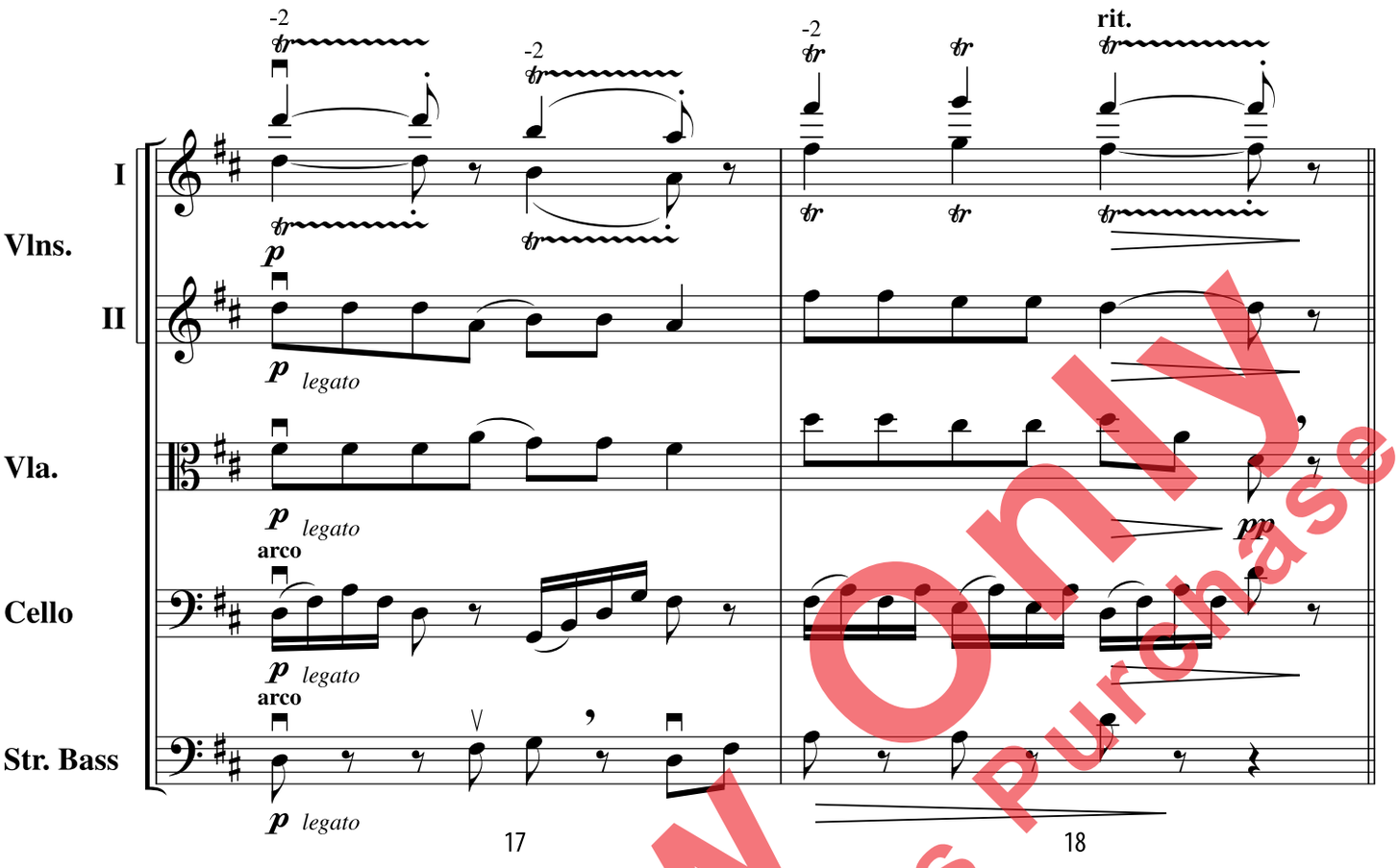

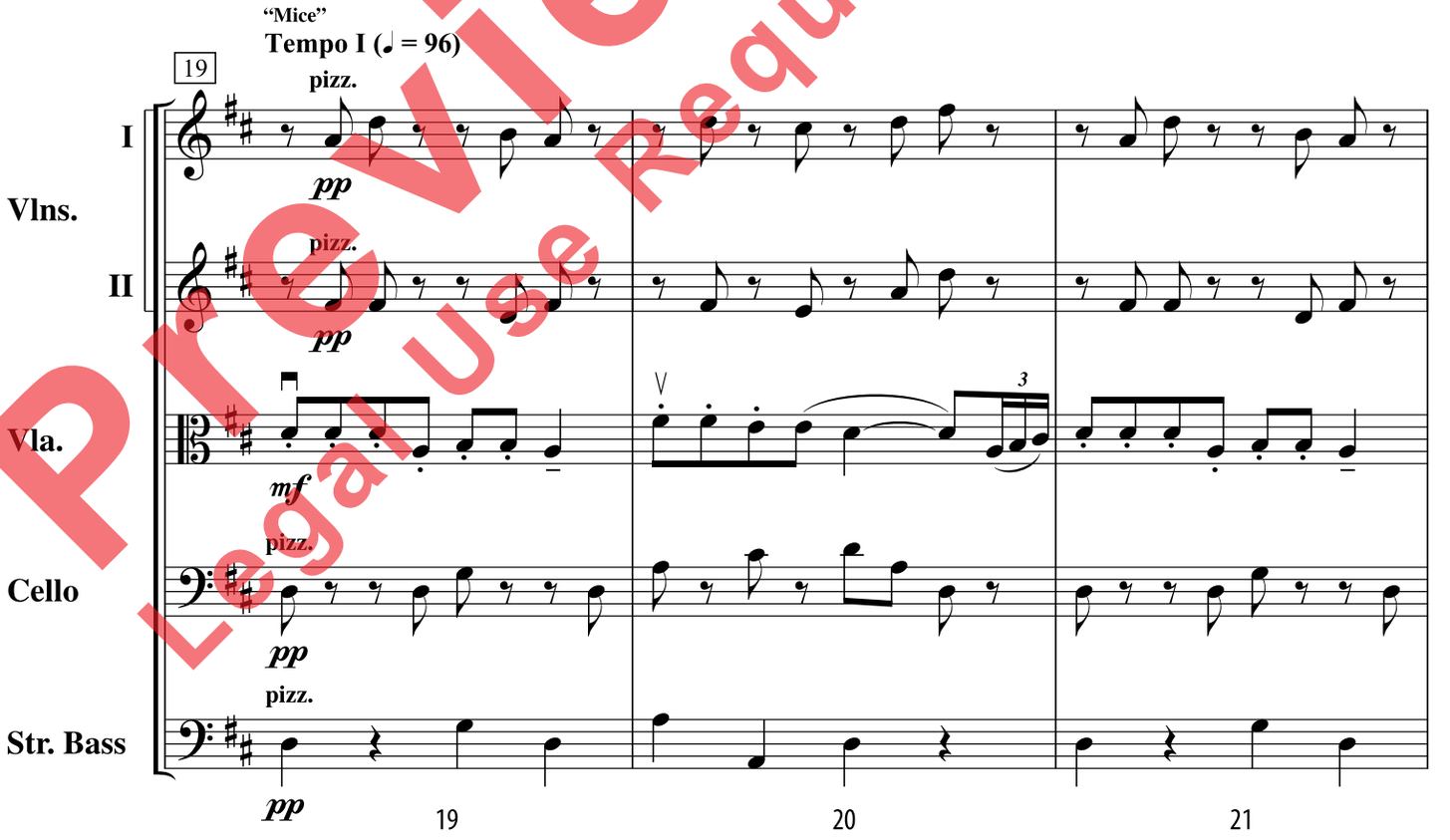

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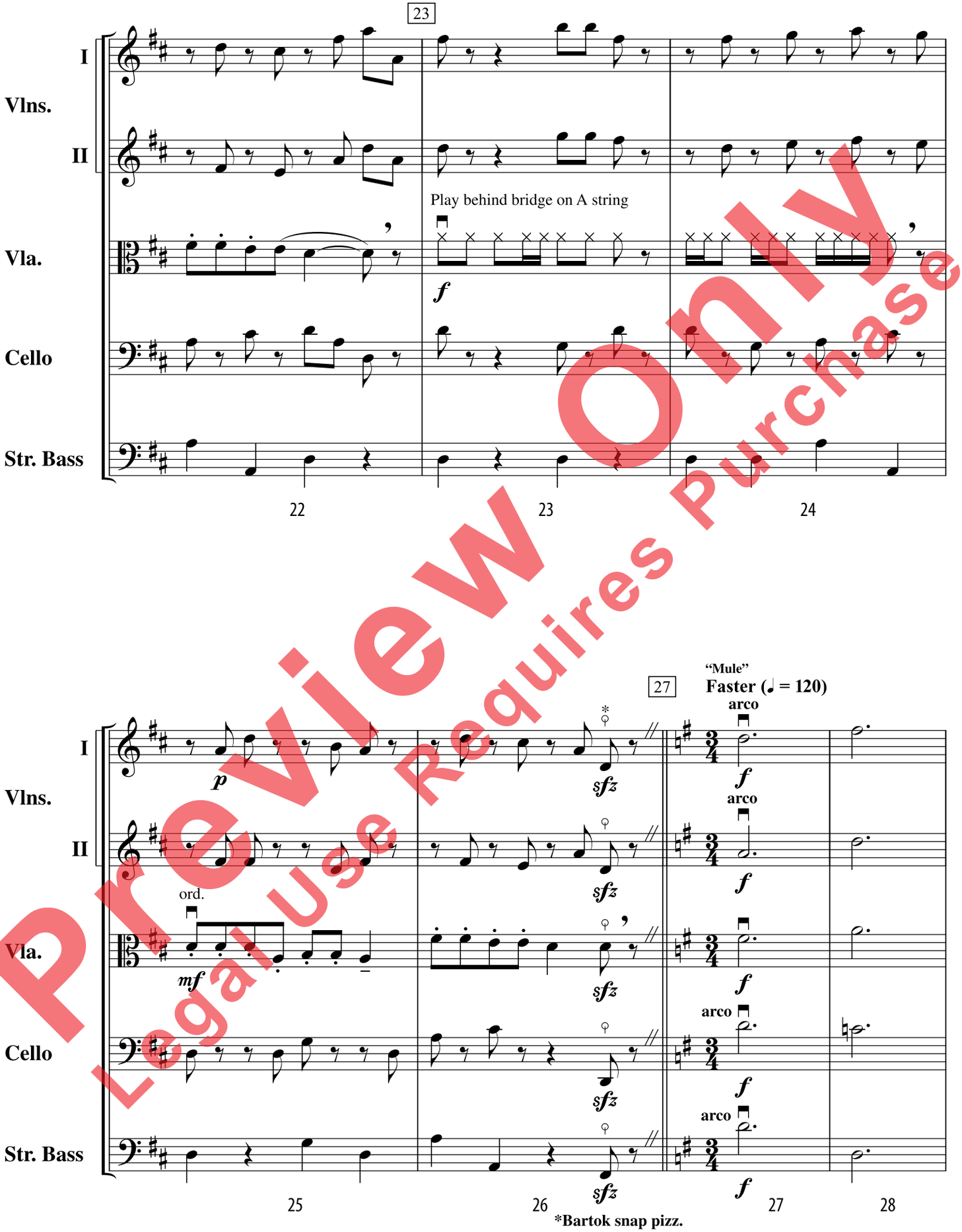

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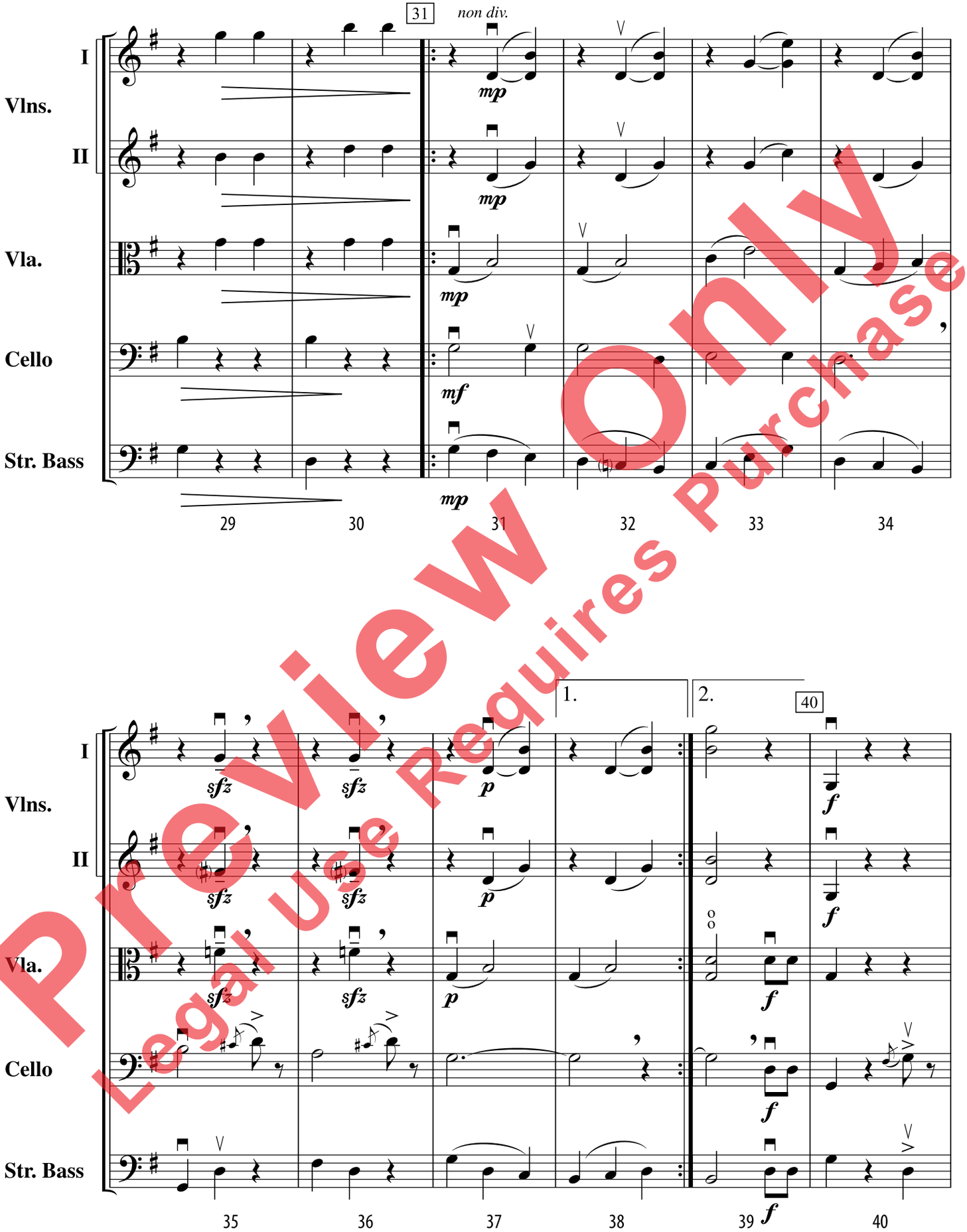

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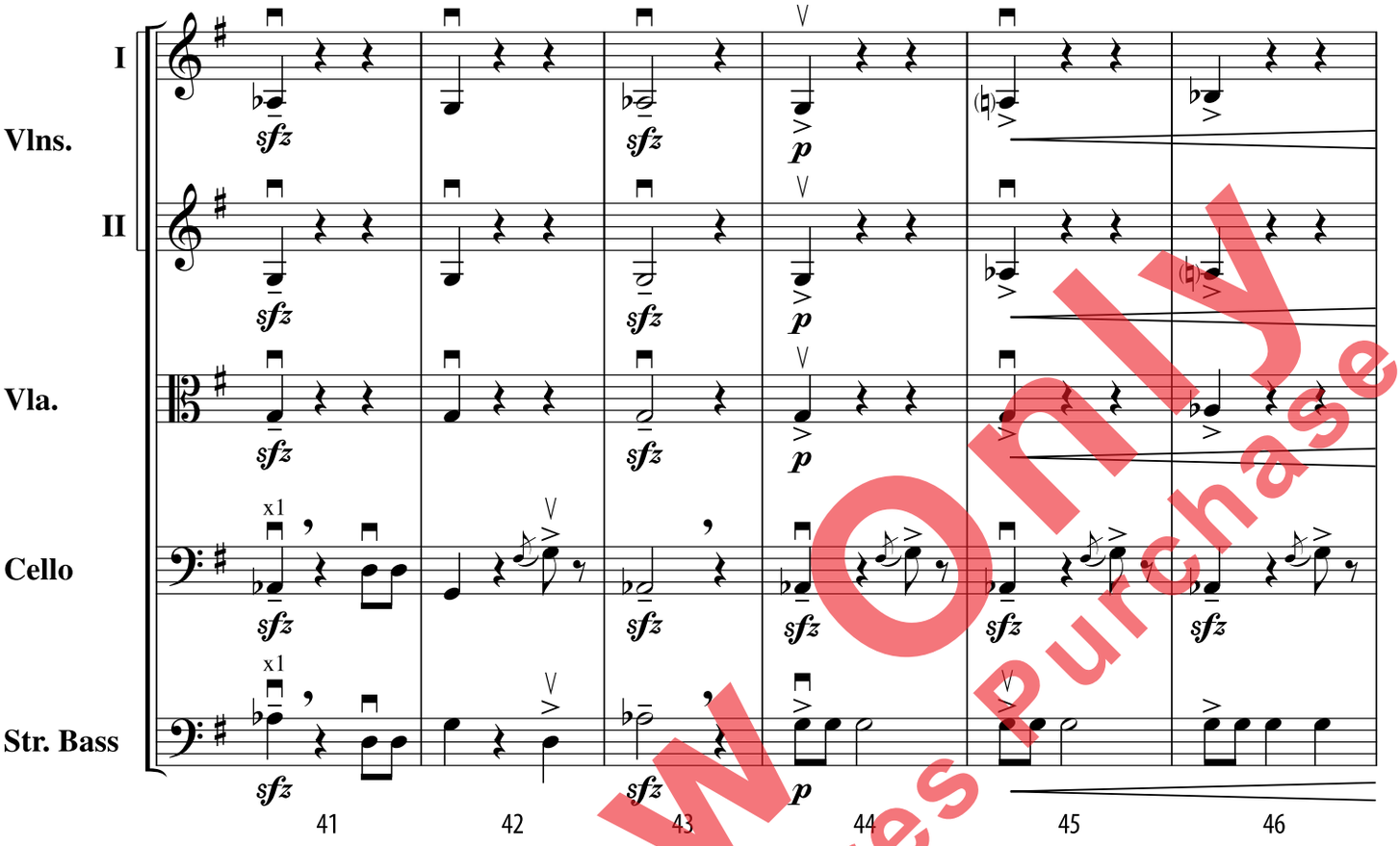

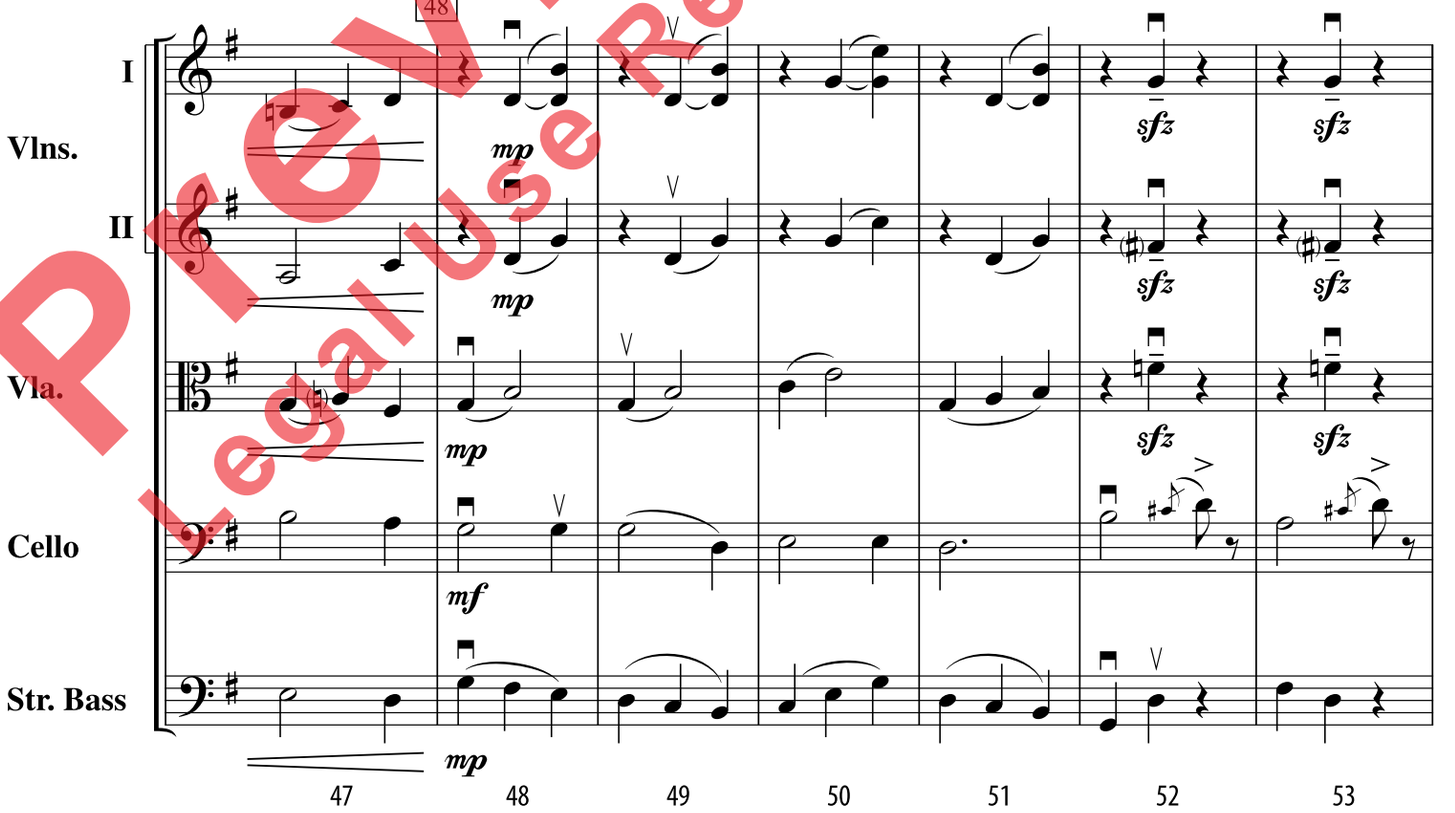

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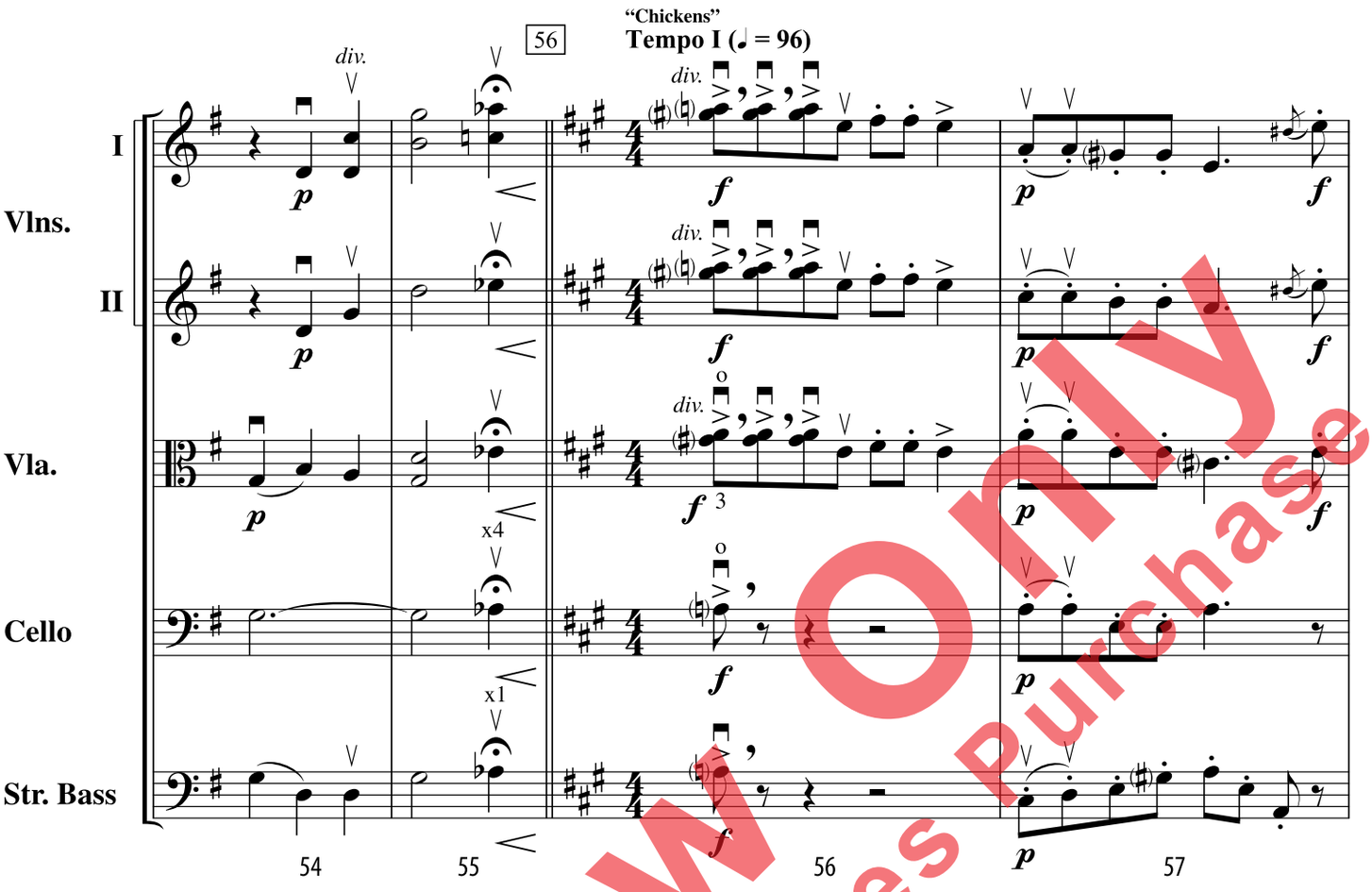

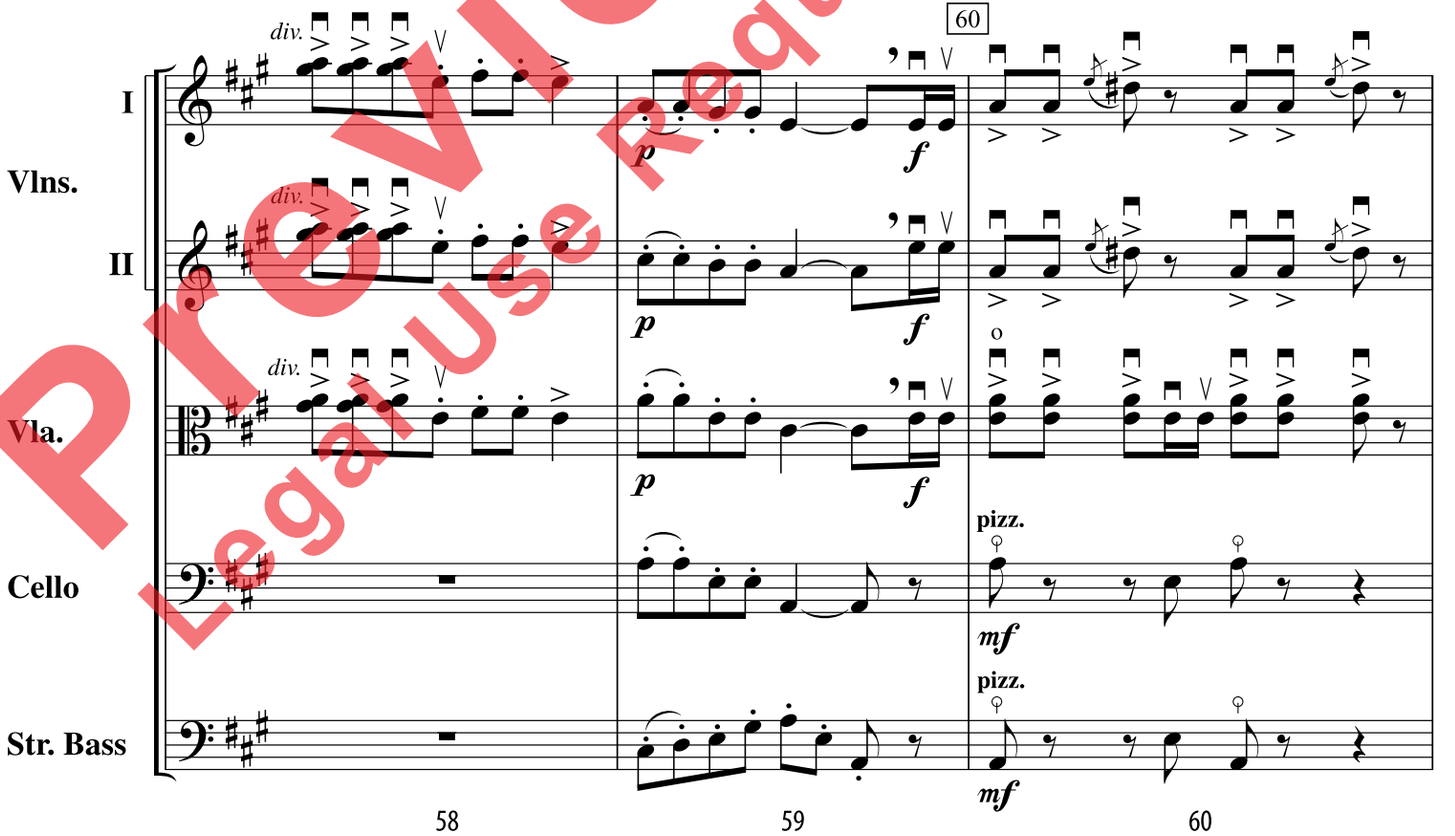

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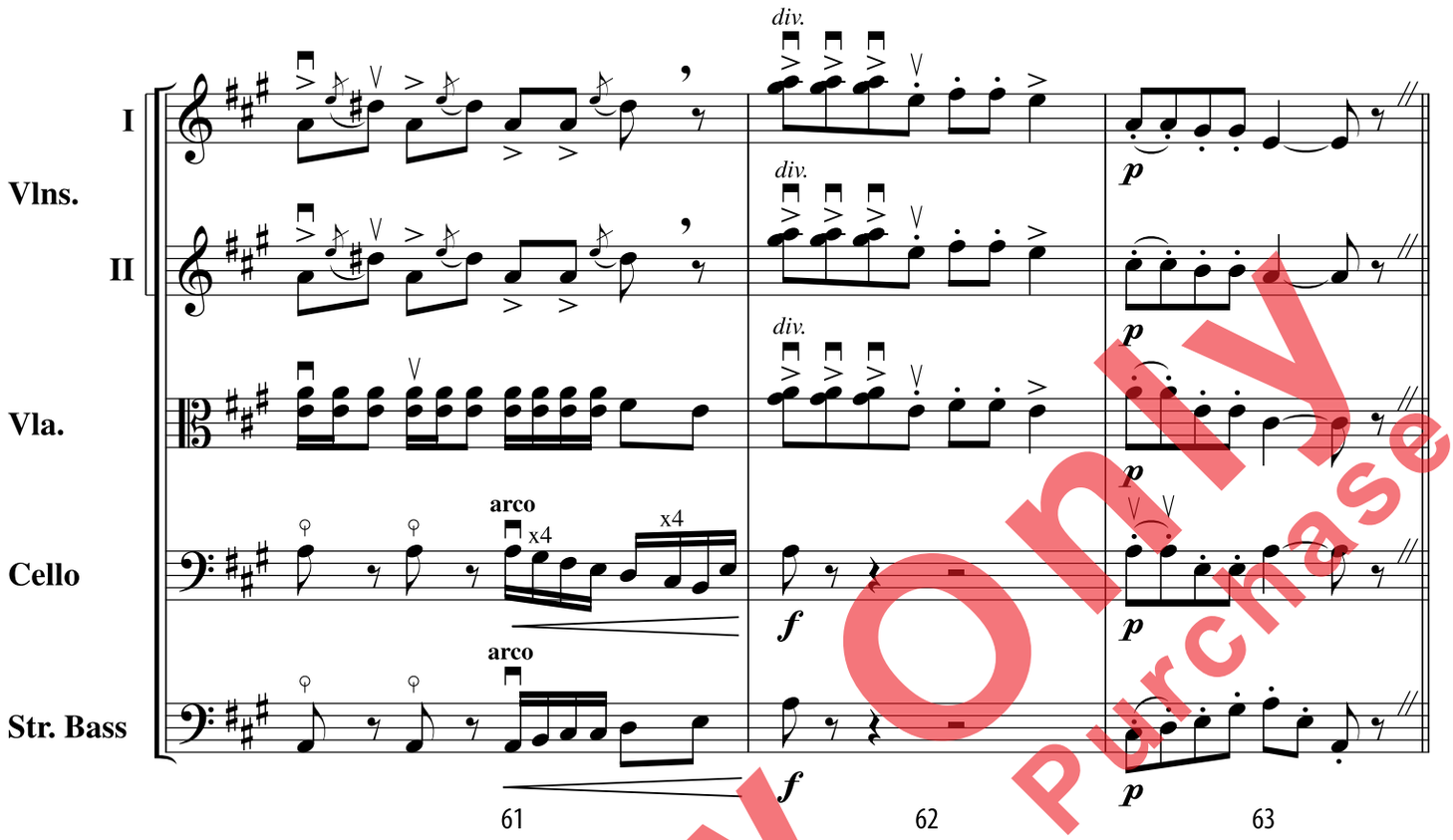

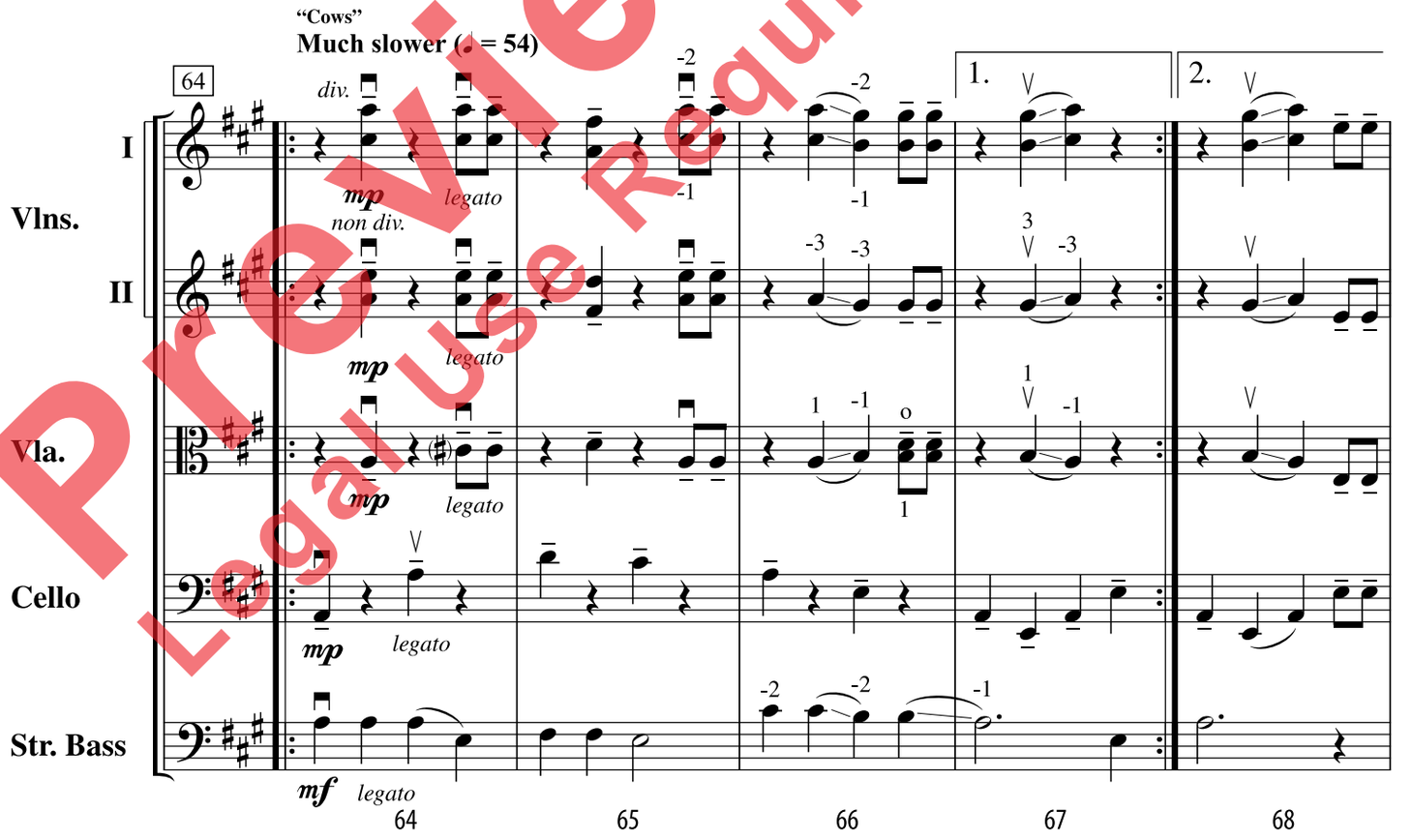

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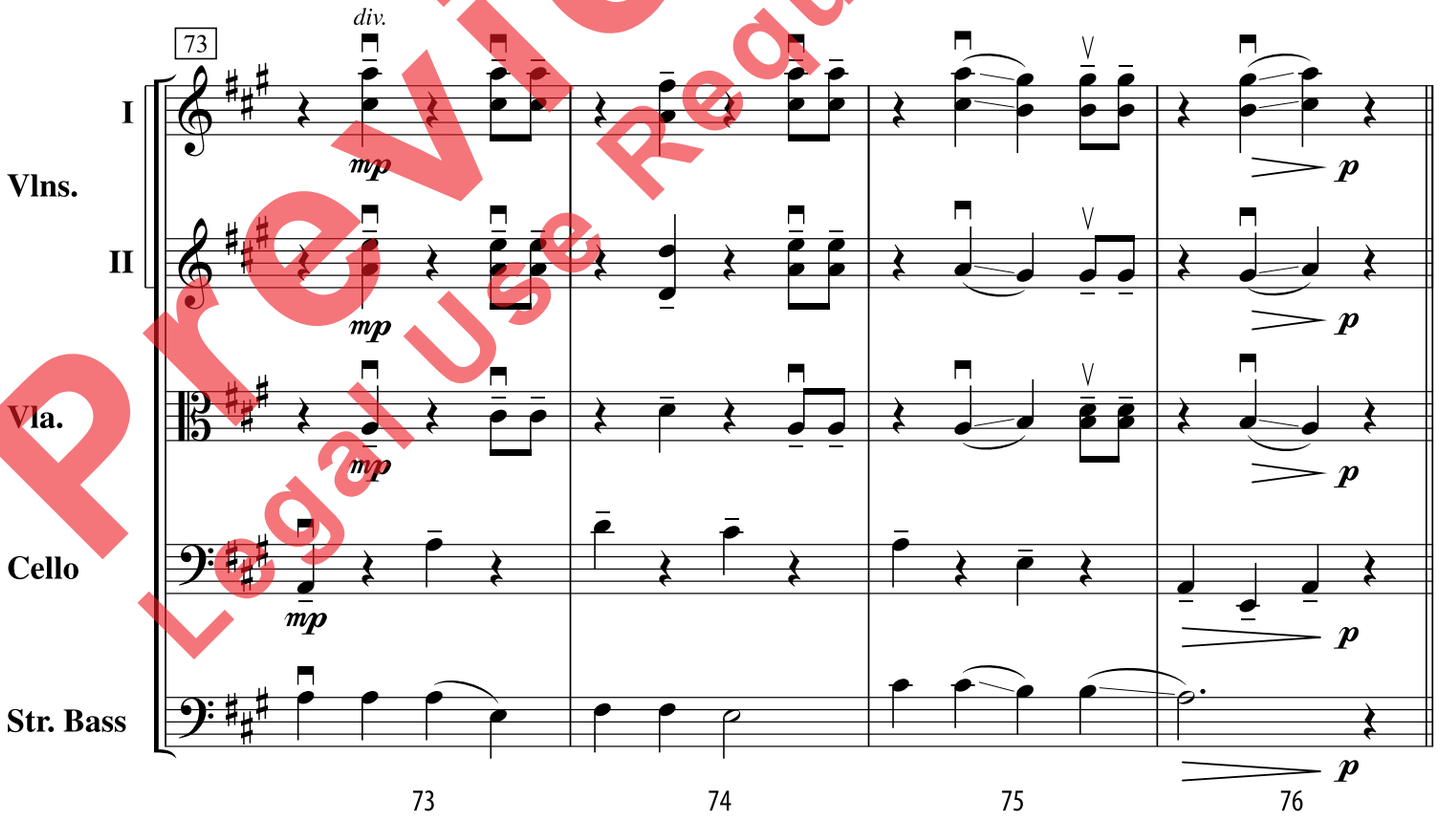

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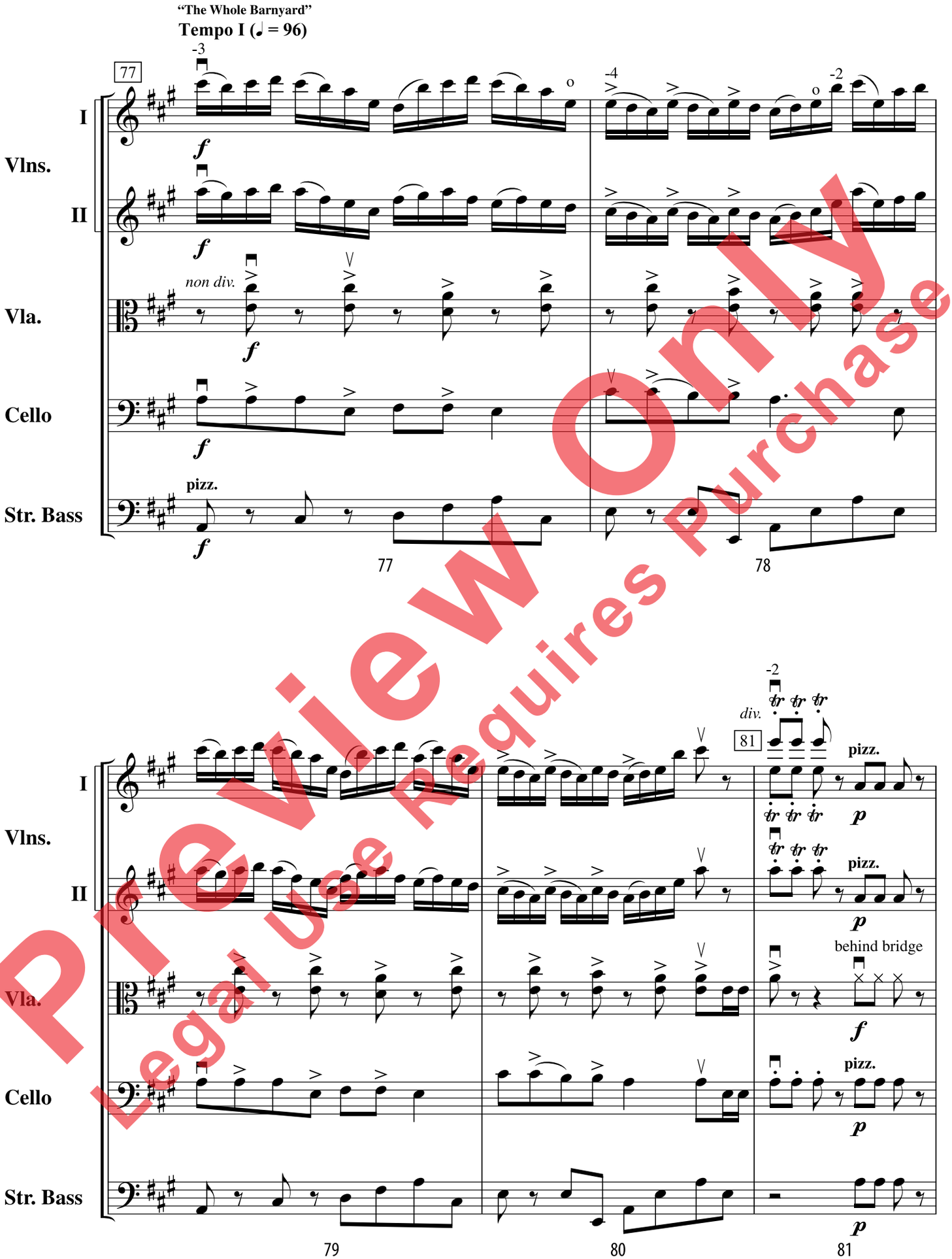

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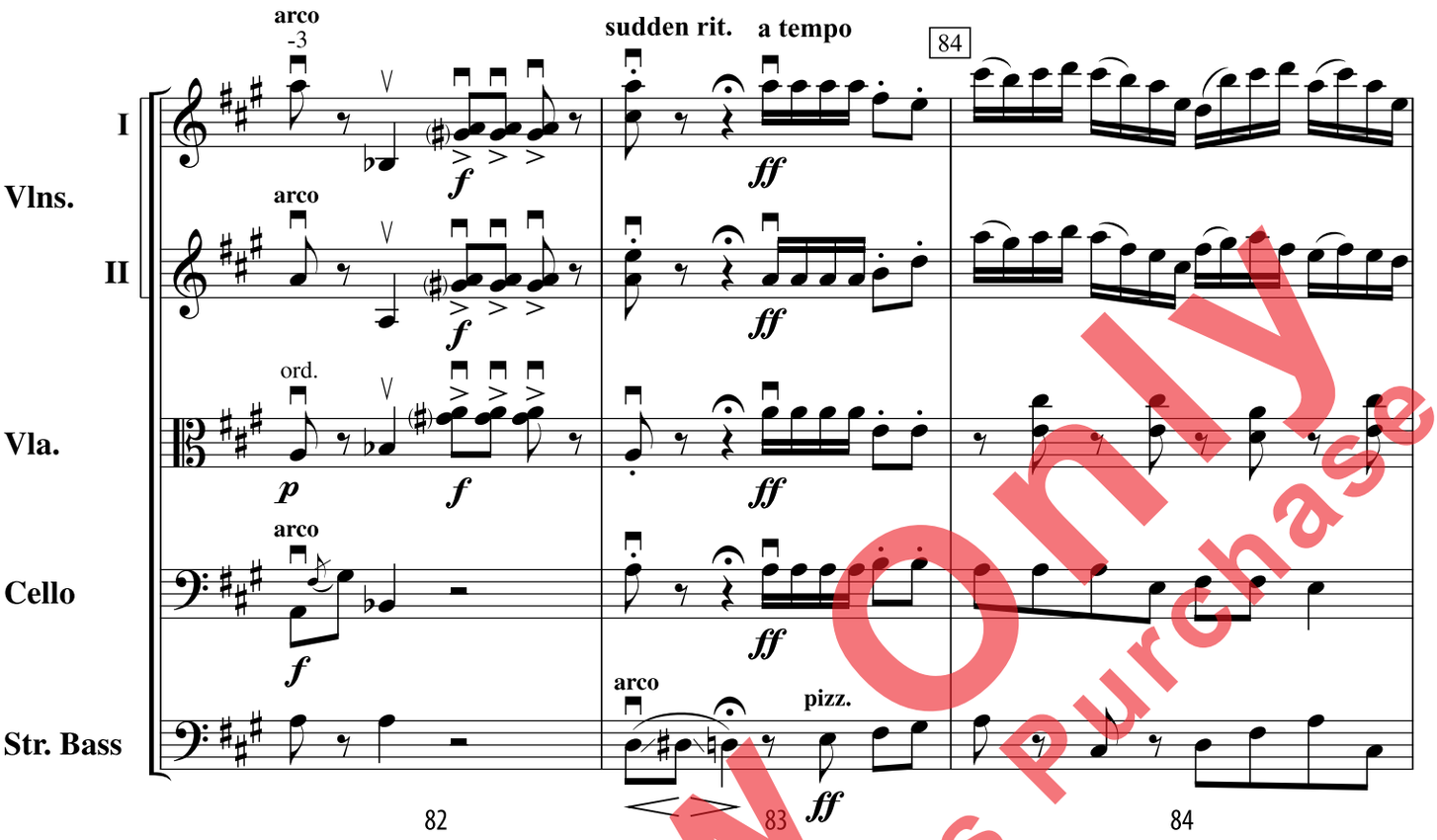

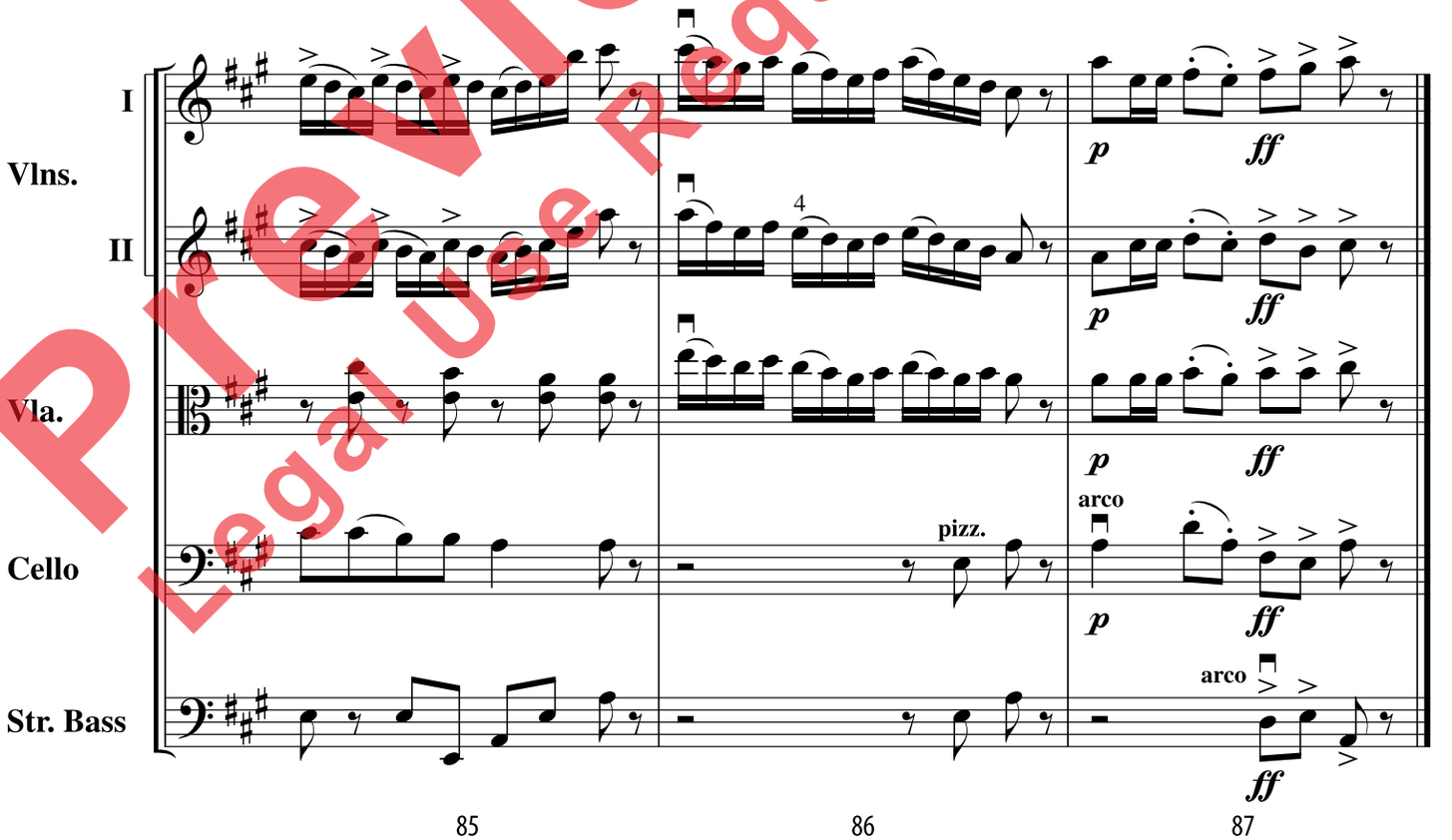

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