COMMEMORATIVE FACSIMILE EDITION

Manuscript Full Score

George Gershwin®

RHAPSODY IN BLUE™

GERSHWIN® 50TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

INCLUDES HISTORICAL INFORMATION AND ANNOTATION

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GEORGE GERSHWIN BIOGRAPHY

George Gershwin was born in Brooklyn, New York on September 26, 1898. He was the second of four children born to Morris and Rose Gershwin, who came to the United States from Russia. The oldest, Ira, became Gershwin's lyricist and also worked with Kurt Weill, Jerome Kern and Vernon Duke. Another brother, Arthur, also became a songwriter, and Frances, the youngest, often performed Gershwin's songs in night clubs and cabarets in Europe.

George Gershwin grew up on New York's lower East Side. His music study began when his parents bought a piano so that Ira could take lessons. It was George who monopolized the instrument. In 1912, he began studying with Charles Hambitzer, noted pianist and composer. It was Hambitzer who introduced him to the classic piano literature and exposed him to the modern concert music of the time. Gershwin later said that Hambitzer made him "harmony conscious."

In May 1916, Gershwin quit school to become a song demonstrator (or "plugger") for the Remick Music Publishing Company. He soon established himself as one of the best pianists in the song publishing business and began making piano rolls.

In 1917, he joined the Harms Publishing Company as a staff composer. Max Dreyfus, who ran the company, was immediately impressed by Gershwin's talent. (He later encouraged and gave similar contracts to Rodgers and Hart, Cole Porter, and Vincent Youmans.) Gershwin's fame and confidence grew with his first hit, "SWANEE," and his first full Broadway score "LA, LA, LUCILLE," both written in 1919.

Through the years, Gershwin continued to study harmony, counterpoint and orchestration with Edward Kilenyi, Henry Cowell and Wallingford Riegger. He wrote his first concert piece in 1919-"LULLABY" for String Quartet.

During the 20's, Gershwin wrote songs for shows and revues, and in 1922, wrote his second concert work, a 20 minute opera, "BLUE MONDAY," for the "GEORGE WHITE'S SCANDALS OF 1922." Unfortunately, it was removed from the show after opening night. However, Gershwin and Paul Whiteman, the Scandals' conductor, struck up a friendship. Whiteman promised to commission a work from Gershwin for a jazz concert that he would one day give. That day came on February 12, 1924, when "A RHAPSODY IN BLUE" created a sensation at Aeolian Hall in Paul Whiteman's first "EXPERIMENT IN MODERN MUSIC." The "RHAPSODY" has since become the most frequently performed concert composition by an American composer, and Gershwin's most popular piece.

Many of Gershwin's greatest songs date from the late 1920's, among them "THE MAN I LOVE", "SOMEONE TO WATCH OVER ME", "'S WONDERFUL" and "HE LOVES AND SHE LOVES." On December 3, 1925, Gershwin was the soloist in his own piano concerto, "CONCERTO IN F" commissioned by the New York Symphony. He premiered his "THREE PRELUDES" for piano on December 4, 1926, and his tone-poem "AN AMERICAN IN PARIS " was first played by Walter Damrosch and The New York Philharmonic on December 13, 1928. All of these works have become staples in the concert literature and continue to grow in popularity around the world.

The '30s brought Gershwin more acclaim in the theatre ("STRIKE UP THE BAND," "GIRL CRAZY," "OF THEE I SING") and in the concert hall. His "SECOND RHAPSODY" was indifferently received at first, but is finally coming into its own in the 1980's. "CUBAN OVERTURE" (1932) and "I GOT RHYTHM VARIATIONS" (1934) gave evidence to Gershwin's growing mastery of counterpoint and orchestration, which culminated in the opera "PORGY AND BESS." Many historians believe "PORGY AND BESS" not only to be Gershwin's masterpiece, but the best opera composed by an American; indeed, one of the finest written in the 20th Century. The work was a failure when introduced in 1935, but revivals in the 40's and 50's brought the work (albeit cut and altered) before millions of music lovers, and earned the work much respect. It wasn't until 1976, however, that the opera was performed as Gershwin originally intended. The acclaimed Houston Grand Opera production toured extensively throughout the United States and Europe (and had a significant run on Broadway). A recording of this production is available on RCA Records.

The Gershwins moved to Hollywood in 1936 and the songs "THEY CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME," "A FOGGY DAY," "LET'S CALL THE WHOLE THING OFF,"and "THEY ALL LAUGHED" date from that period. Gershwin suddenly became ill in July 1937. A brain tumor was diagnosed and surgery was performed on July 11. Portions were removed, but the composer never regained consciousness. He died that same day.

In recent years, the Gershwin legend has grown considerably, resulting in historical articles, musical analyses, books, and festivals of his music. Recordings of his works increase in number each year as a result of this continuing interest. Warner Brothers Publications is proud to honor his memory by issuing these facsimile editions of 4 of his major works for the year 1987.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project of this magnitude involves many people. In the case of the GERSHWIN FACSIMILE EDITION, it is made up of people who supported it from the start, who gave generously of their expertise, and who could not do enough to bring the project to fruition.

The man most responsible for these volumes reaching the public is Anthony Esposito, Editorial Director of Warner Brothers Music Publications and an ardent Gershwinophile. He initiated the project and watched its progress at every step, contributing many ideas along the way. Musicians and historians are in his debt for his belief that George Gershwin's music deserves to be made available in the composer's own hand. In addition, I am very proud he selected me to write about these scores. This project culminates about 10 years of my own research into Gershwin's concert music.

Sy Feldman, Vice President of Warner Brothers Music Publications, secured the necessary permissions. Ron Blanc, legal representative tor the Gershwin family, immediately gave his permission to go ahead with the edition. Ferde Grofé Jr. graciously allowed us to reproduce his father's manuscript of "RHAPSODY IN BLUE."

The Library of Congress could not have been more helpful in their desire to make copies of the manuscripts available, and in their concern to provide the best copies possible. In the photo-duplication department, I would like to thank Norman Shaffer (head), Evelyn Nave, and particularly Marita V. Stamey. The photographers of the manuscripts themselves were James Higgins and Reid Baker.

For the "RHAPSODY IN BLUE," the conservation department oversaw the reproduction of this priceless score, which is currently under restoration against further deterioration. Barbara Gould deserves every musician's thanks for her wonderful work.

Musicologists Wayne D. Shirley (of the Library of Congress) and Robert Kimball read the historical information and annotation and made valuable suggestions and comments. Wayne Shirley, in particular, was extraordinarily helpful. Not only did he make available his very important articles on the "CONCERTO IN F" (two of the finest musicological studies on Gershwin yet published), he was tireless in his efforts to supply information and miscellaneous musical documents (i.e. the trial orchestration of the "CONCERTO IN F"). His love and understanding of American music (and of George Gershwin in particular) is matched by few. Special thanks also to Jon Newsom, head of the music division of the Library of Congress.

Carl Johnson, Curator of the Paul Whiteman collection at Williams College in Massachusetts, filled in important details on Paul Whiteman, and on the "RHAPSODY IN BLUE." He also supplied a copy of the program from the original concert (including the personnel of the Whiteman orchestra).

At Warner Brothers Music Publications, I am lucky to be working with people who have helped me considerably in making these scores a reality. Beside Mr. Esposito, my sincere thanks to David C. Jessie, managing editor, and our editorial assistants—Robin Bottino and Ellen McGraw. In particular, I would like to express my great appreciation to Ethan Neuburg, rental manager. Ethan's help in coordinating this project was invaluable.

As it has helped many others, so the Rodgers and Hammerstein memorial archive at Lincoln Center has helped me in tracking down the many historic recordings of the concert Gershwin and the Broadway and Hollywood Gershwin. I would like to thank David Hall, former director of the archive, for his many kindnesses over the years.

I would also like to express appreciation and thanks to the following for their encouragement and valued advice: Elliot Finkel, Ellen Gould, Jerome Graff, Lothar Perl, Alfred Simon, and Artis Wodehouse.

George Gershwin wondered whether his music would be played after his death. It is now obvious that George Gershwin is greater known and performed than in his lifetime. His music touches people of all walks of life, of all strata of society. It is universal and yet very much a part of American life. With the issuance of these scores, we have taken a giant step toward an even greater understanding of this unique, brilliant composer. I am very proud that, not only is it being done in my lifetime, but that I (and all of those mentioned) could be a part of it.

Jeff Sultanof

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Rhapsody In Blue Background

On January 4, 1924, George Gershwin was completing his score for the musical "SWEET LITTLE DEVIL." His brother, Ira, casually showed him an item in the New York Tribune about an upcoming Paul Whiteman jazz concert. According to the article, "George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto . . ."

That was news to Gershwin! When he called Whiteman, the bandleader explained that Vincent Lopez had just announced that his band would give such a concert. Whiteman had discussed giving a formal jazz concert years before, and he was not about to be second-bested by a rival.[1] Gershwin was reminded of his promise to write a piece for the concert—a work for piano and jazz band, with Gershwin himself as the soloist. When Whiteman told him that he needed the piece as soon as possible (the concert was to be given on Lincoln's birthday), Gershwin wondered how he was to accomplish such a task. Whiteman immediately offered the services of his chief arranger, Ferde Grofé, to orchestrate the piece. By the end of that historic phone call, Gershwin was sufficiently challenged to finish the work in time for the concert.

He began sketching it on the train to Boston for the out-of-town tryouts for "SWEET LITTLE DEVIL." He began writing out the two-piano sketch on January 7 (the manuscript is so marked), completing it on approximately January 25. Grofé began the orchestration almost as soon as Gershwin began composing. The two men became quite friendly at this time, and Gershwin respected Grofé's ability to score for such an unusual ensemble with such ease.[2] Although Gershwin had already had a smattering of orchestrational study and advice from Edward Kilenyi, Robert Russell Bennett and Will Vodery, he did not have sufficient experience to handle the task of orchestrating the piece himself, even if he had had the time to do so.[3]

Be that as it may, "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" had its world premiere before a star-studded audience[4] at Aeolian Hall on February 12, 1924. The work proved to be the hit of the concert (which was otherwise rather dull, according to reviews of the time). The audience responded to it with sustained applause and wild cheering. Most of the critics generally agreed that Gershwin's work heralded the arrival of a major talent. Deems Taylor summed up the feeling of many in the audience that day. The Rhapsody "hinted at something new, something that had not hitherto been said in music . . . (Gershwin) may yet bring jazz out of the kitchen".

The concert was repeated at Aeolian Hall on March 7, and again on April 21 at Carnegie Hall. Gershwin and Whiteman recorded the "RHAPSODY" on June 10, 1924 and 3 years later on April 21, 1927, both times for Victor Records.

Max Dreyfus wanted to publish the work immediately after its premiere, making this the first piece of concert music published by Harms. The two-piano version (the second piano being the orchestral reduction) was released in 1924 and sales were incredible from the start. Gershwin's performance fee arrangement was unique for a concert work—he received 80% of the collected fee for usage. Thus, in a memo from Max Dreyfus dated February 17, 1930, the use of "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" for a ballet sequence in the motion picture "KING OF JAZZ" cost Universal Pictures $50,000. Gershwin's personal share was $40,000![5]

It did not take long for the "RHAPSODY" to create a sensation in Europe as well, and such pianists as Weiner and Doucet in France, and Lothar Perl in Germany brought the work to many more millions all over the world. Soon, such respected European musical figures such as Ravel, Bartok and Vaughan Williams counted themselves as Gershwin admirers, calling him an important musical talent.

"RHAPSODY IN BLUE" remains Gershwin's most popular and profitable composition, instantly recognizable within seconds. It has also attained the distinction of being the most popular piece of concert music by an American composer throughout the world. For George Gershwin, it was a major breakthrough—for jazz, and for his ever-growing career. It gave him the confidence to further expand his compositional horizons, and, as a result of the "RHAPSODY", he received the commission that fully established him as an important American musical voice—the "CONCERTO IN F."

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Sources And Publications History

After the premiere, a two-piano edition was immediately prepared for publication. That edition had a number of musical errors and omissions which were corrected on the first reprint. A copy of this edition with corrections marked in pencil is in the Warner Brothers Music archive in Secaucus, New Jersey[6]. A piano solo edition was issued in 1927, no doubt as a result of the unprecedented demand for as many accessible versions of the work as possible. It is this version, combining both the solo and the orchestral background, that Gershwin recorded as a piano roll in the same year. A one piano-four hands version and a "modified" solo version were eventually issued.

Also in the Warner Bros. Music archive are two separately copied, incomplete piano manuscript books; one is a solo piano arrangement, the other is an orchestral reduction. There are major differences in both books versus their published counterparts, especially with regard to chordal spelling (See plate 1). Additionally, the composer's name is spelled "Gerschwin".[7]

These two books are in the hand of the editor, Vladimir Dukelsky (spelled 'Dukelski' on the manuscripts). Dukelsky is better known as Vernon Duke, the name under which he wrote his popular songs (including "APRIL IN PARIS," "AUTUMN IN NEW YORK," and "I CAN'T GET STARTED"—the last-named with lyrics by Ira Gershwin). Duke and Gershwin had been friends since 1922 (Gershwin made up the name "Vernon Duke" for Dukelsky), and Duke wrote in 1955[8] that he was paid $100.00 to prepare a solo version of "RHAPSODY." It is probable that Duke's solo version was not used, and was either scrapped, or edited and completed by Gershwin himself. Duke does not mention the reduction book. Why was a separate orchestral reduction part being made, and why are both the reduction and the Dukelsky solo version unfinished? These two books remain a curious footnote in the history of "RHAPSODY IN BLUE".

Prior to publication, cuts were made 1) in the work's orchestral background: 3-6 bars after 4, and 2) in the piano solo a) 10 bars inbetween the 8th and 9th bar of 21, b) 26 bars in various places inbetween 32 and 33, and c) 8 bars inbetween 10 and 11 bars before 34.

The orchestration of "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" presents another interesting story. After the work's initial publication, the editors at Harms realized that a more suitable orchestration was needed for further concert, theater, and radio performances. Ferde Grofé was asked to expand his original orchestration for this purpose, to be rented out per performance. His manuscript of the new version was completed on February 23, 1926 at his home in Leonia, New Jersey. The scoring is that of the standard stock orchestration of the time:

Flute, Oboe, 2 Clarinets, Bassoon, 1st Alto Saxophone, 2nd Tenor Saxophone, 3rd Alto Saxophone, 2 Horns in F, 2 Trumpets, Trombone,

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Drums (Percussion), Piano—Conductor, 1st and 2nd Violins, Violas, Cellos, Bass and Banjo.

The orchestration follows the guidelines of the overtures and concert selections of Broadway shows published for sale with regard to extensive instrumental cuing[9] and a very detailed Piano—Conductor part. Grofé left off the piano solo on this score, but marked the amount of bars rest and piano solo cues in instrumental parts where necessary. Because of this, it is highly doubtful that this full score was made available with the parts when the set was rented out. (Availability of a full score for such orchestrations was not common practice anyway.)

Clearly, this orchestration was not done for the Whiteman organization, as has been stated in a few sources.[10]

This version of the work served well for a number of years, until a decision was made to prepare a version for piano and full symphony orchestra. By this time, Frank Campbell-Watson was chief editor of educational music of Music Publishers' Holding Corporation, an umbrella company that oversaw all of the music publishing companies that Warner Brothers Pictures owned.[11] He was now supervising publication of all of Gershwin's concert music, and he'd had extensive discussions with Gershwin about revisions of his orchestral works in order to make them available for sale. Instead of recasting the score yet again, Grofé merely touched up the 1926 orchestration.[12] Hence, no manuscript exists for the symphony orchestra version. This edition was released in 1942 and accomplishes what Gershwin and Campbell-Watson sought to achieve—a "jazz band" sound for symphony orchestra.[13]

The manuscript of the 1926 expansion score was given to Ira Gershwin by Grofé. Ira Gershwin donated it to the Library of Congress in 1953.

Grofé also prepared a concert band version of the "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" for sale. This was published in 1938, and is still available today. A particularly interesting sidelight with regard to this version is that Grofé orchestrated the solo piano part in addition to the ensemble accompaniment.

Within recent years, requests for performance material of the original 1924 version have risen dramatically. "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" has come full circle!

The Manuscript

Grofé donated the original manuscript of "RHAPSODY IN BLUE" to the Library of Congress in 1947. While it had been cared for under strict conditions, certain pages were in better condition than others at the time of reproduction for this edition. This score is under restoration at this writing.

Paul Whiteman—Personnel

Reeds

Ross Gorman —Eb & Bb Soprano Saxophones, Alto Saxophone, Oboe, Heckelphone, Eb Soprano Clarinet, Bb Clarinet, Alto & Bass Clarinets, Octavion

Hale Byers —Bb Soprano Saxophone, Tenor Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone, Flute

Donald Clark —Bb Soprano Saxophone, Alto Saxophone, Baritone Saxophone

Trumpets & Flugelhorns:
Henry Busse, Frank Siegrist

French Horns:
A. Cerino, A. Corrado

Banjo:
Michael Pingatore

Drums, Timpani and Traps:
George Marsh

Trombones:
Roy Maxon (& Euphonium)
James Casseday (& Bass Trombone)

Tuba and String Bass:
Gus Helleberg, Albert Armer

Piano:
Ferde Grofé, Henry Lange (& Celeste)

Violins:
Alex Drasein (Concert Master), George Torde, Robert Berchad, Kurt Dieterle, Joseph Streisof, Jack Eaton, Bert Hirsh, Mario Perry (& Accordian)

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RHAPSODY IN BLUE

Footnotes

1. Jazz concerts were all but unheard of in 1924. Except for a pioneering concert by the Clef Club at Carnegie Hall in 1912, there were few other public concerts of ragtime and jazz music. Jazz was still considered music for dancing; music composed especially for a jazz orchestra in a concert setting was quite a novelty. Hence, Whiteman was determined that his would be the first "modern" dance orchestra to give a formal concert.

2. It was known that Grofé could play every instrument in Whiteman's ensemble with some skill. Grofé later taught arranging and orchestration at the Julliard School from 1939-1942.

3. Grofé later stated that in his discussions with Gershwin, it was clear that Gershwin could not orchestrate.

4. Such musical luminaries as Fritz Kreisler, Leopold Stokowski, Sergei Rachmaninoff, Jascha Heifetz, Walter Damrosch, and John Phillip Sousa attended the concert.

5. Fees for other Gershwin concert works were split 60% Gershwin/40% Harms (and later, New World).

6. The name, Clive Hanley, appears on the cover of this copy and the pencil corrections are clearly in his handwriting.

7. The solo book stops 6 bars after 9, the orchestral reduction book stops at 30.

8. PASSPORT TO PARIS (Boston; Little, Brown & Co. - 1955; pages 103-4)

9. The 1st violin part (called 1st Violin - Conductor) and the 1st Alto Saxophone have the opening clarinet glissando cued in, the trombone has a cue for the Bassoon part, etc.

10. Carl Johnson, curator of the Whiteman collection at Williams College, confirms that no score or set of parts of this version is in the collection. When Whiteman enlarged his orchestra in later years, he kept adding instrumental parts to his original 1924 version as the instrumentation of his orchestra changed. He even expanded the orchestra part at bars 3 - 6 of 4, which were cut in the 2-piano score. (See 1927 Whiteman recording.) Overall, over 90 parts exist for the various instrumental combinations Whiteman had at any given time.

11. Harms, Remick, M. Witmark, Advanced, and George Gershwin's company, New World Music.

12. On the manuscript of the 1926 version, notes in a hand other than Grofé's (Campbell-Watson's?) indicate instruments to add (i.e. at bar 2, "Add 3rd horn") and indications to revoice chords for the added instruments.

13. As an example, even though there are now two flute and two oboe parts, the instrumental lines remain unchanged from the 1926 version. There are merely indications for soli flute (or oboe) or a2.

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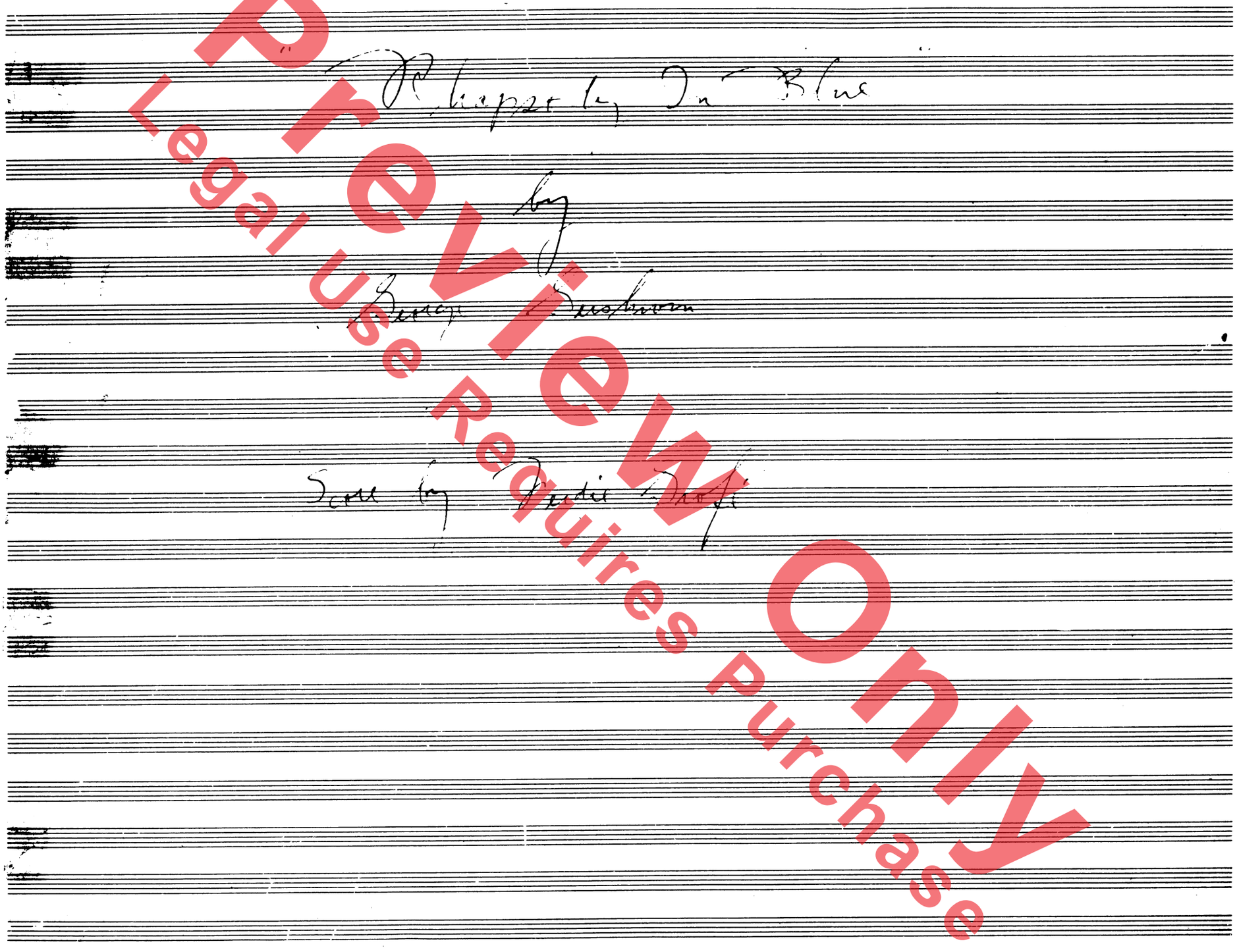

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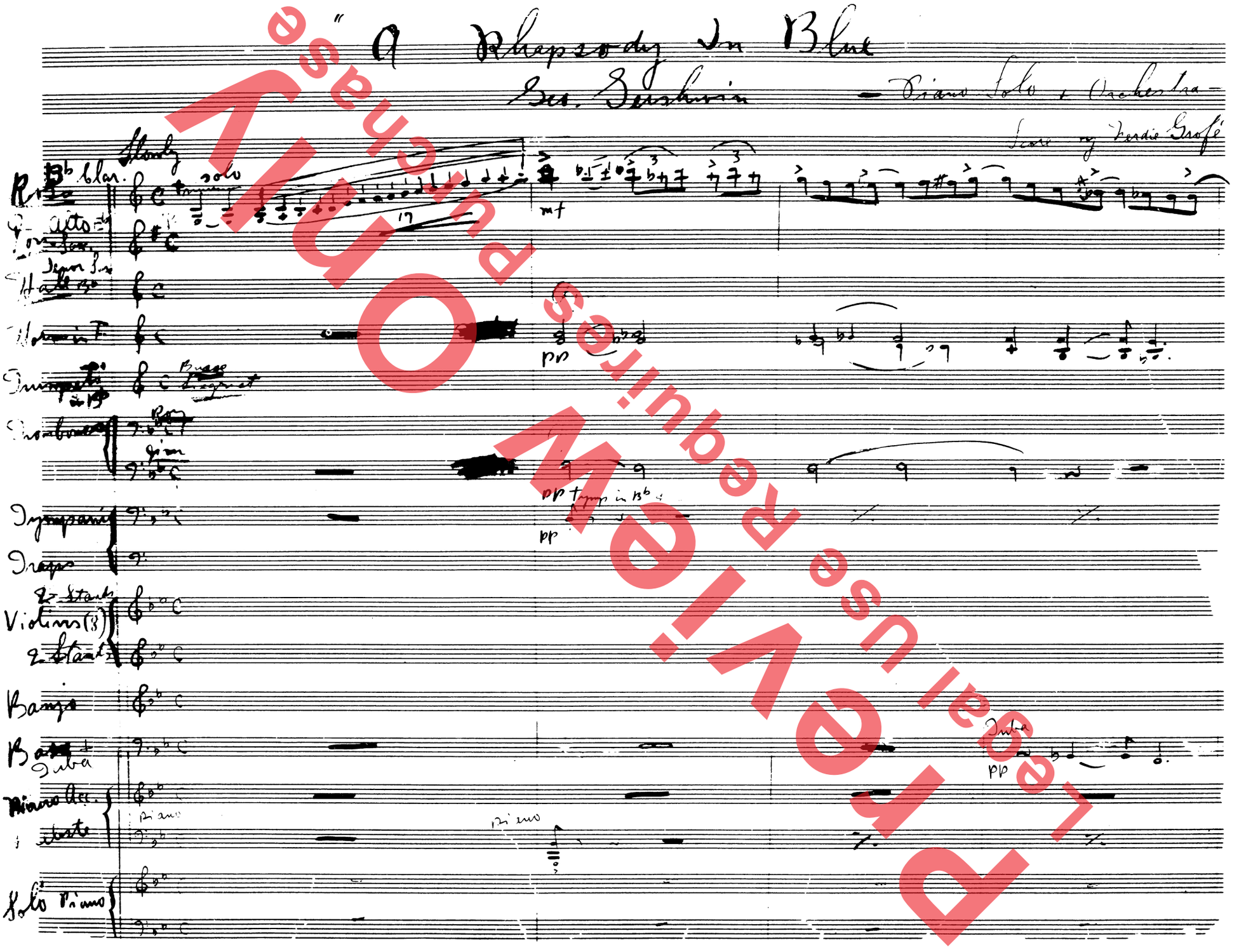

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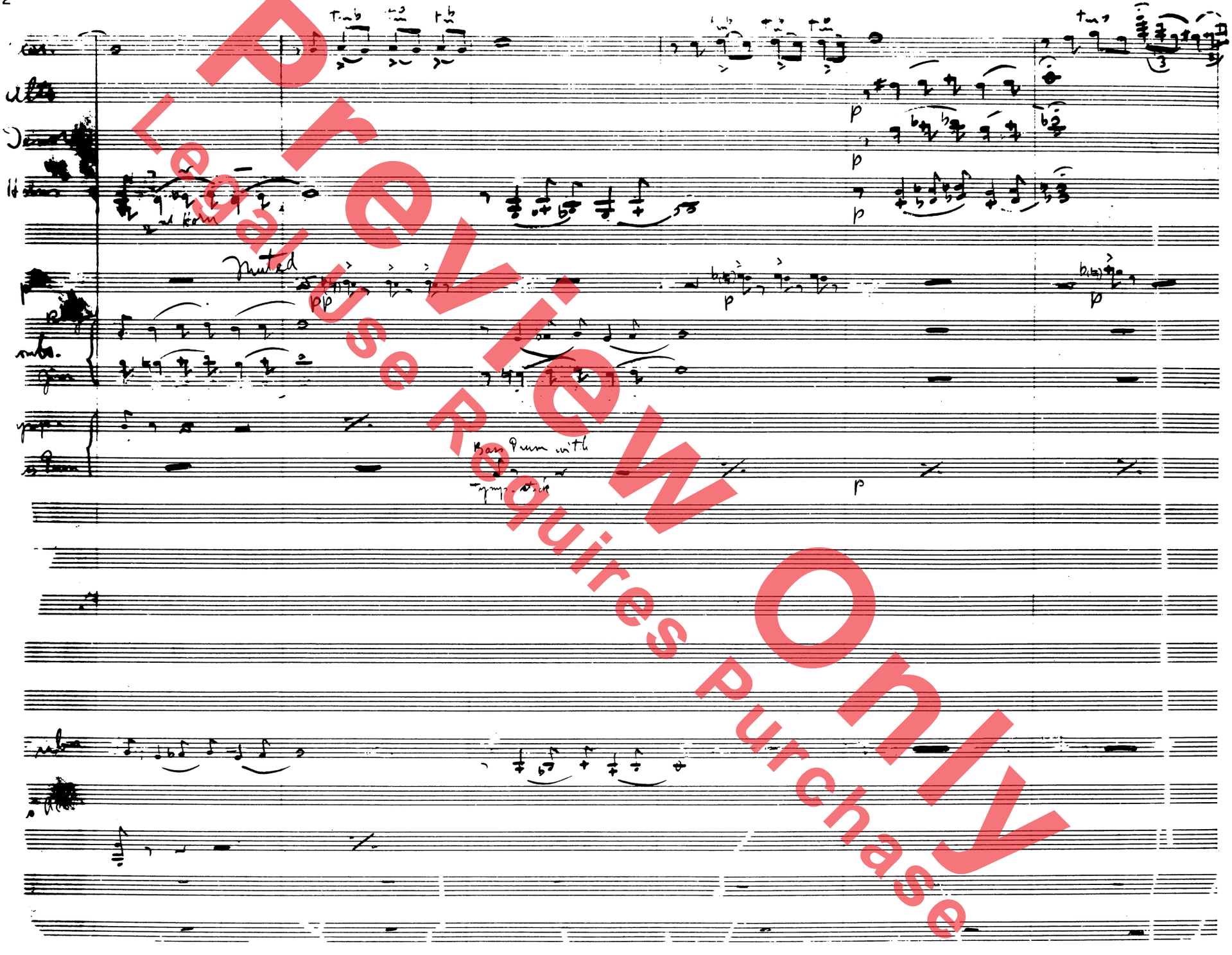

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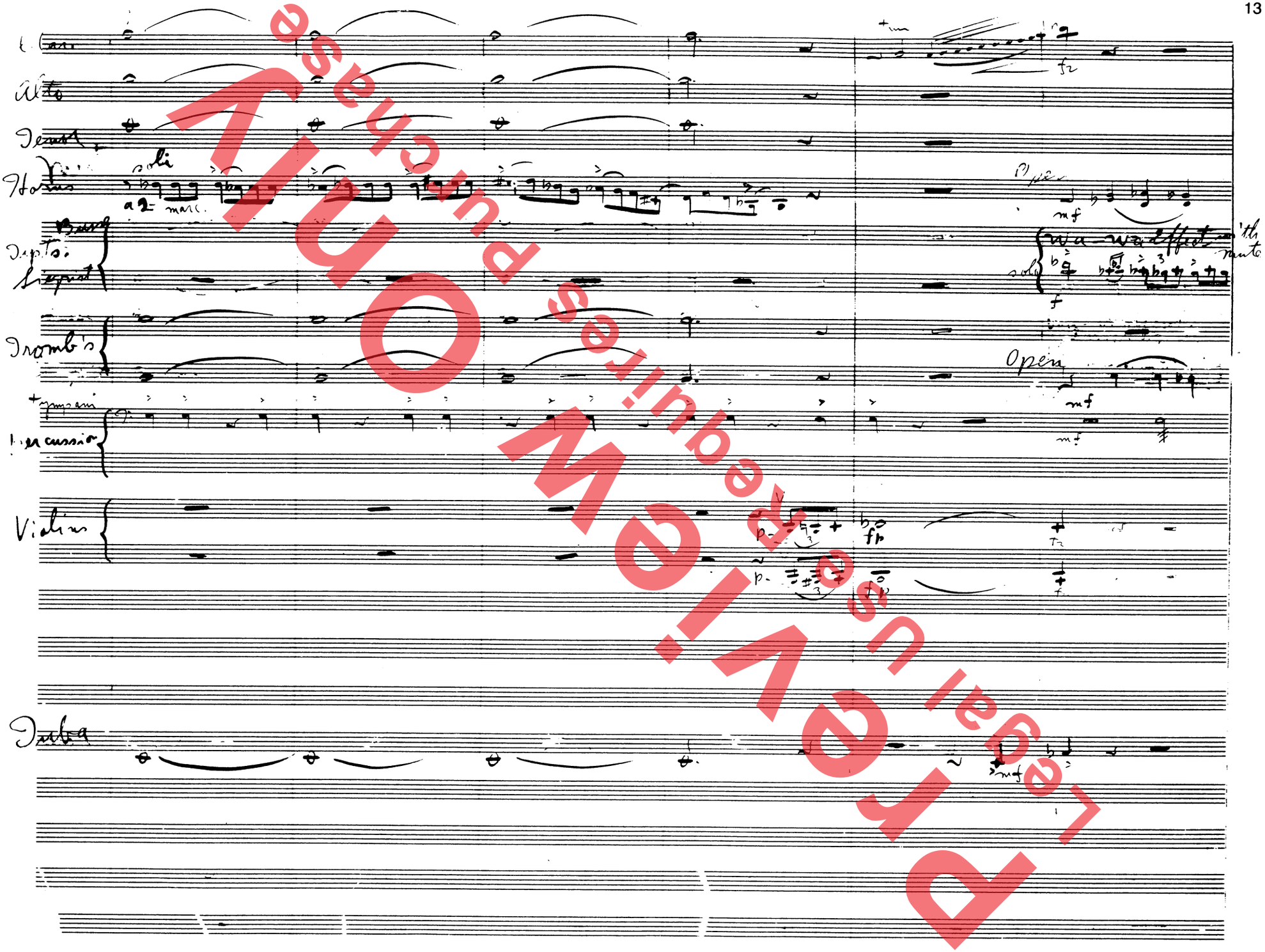

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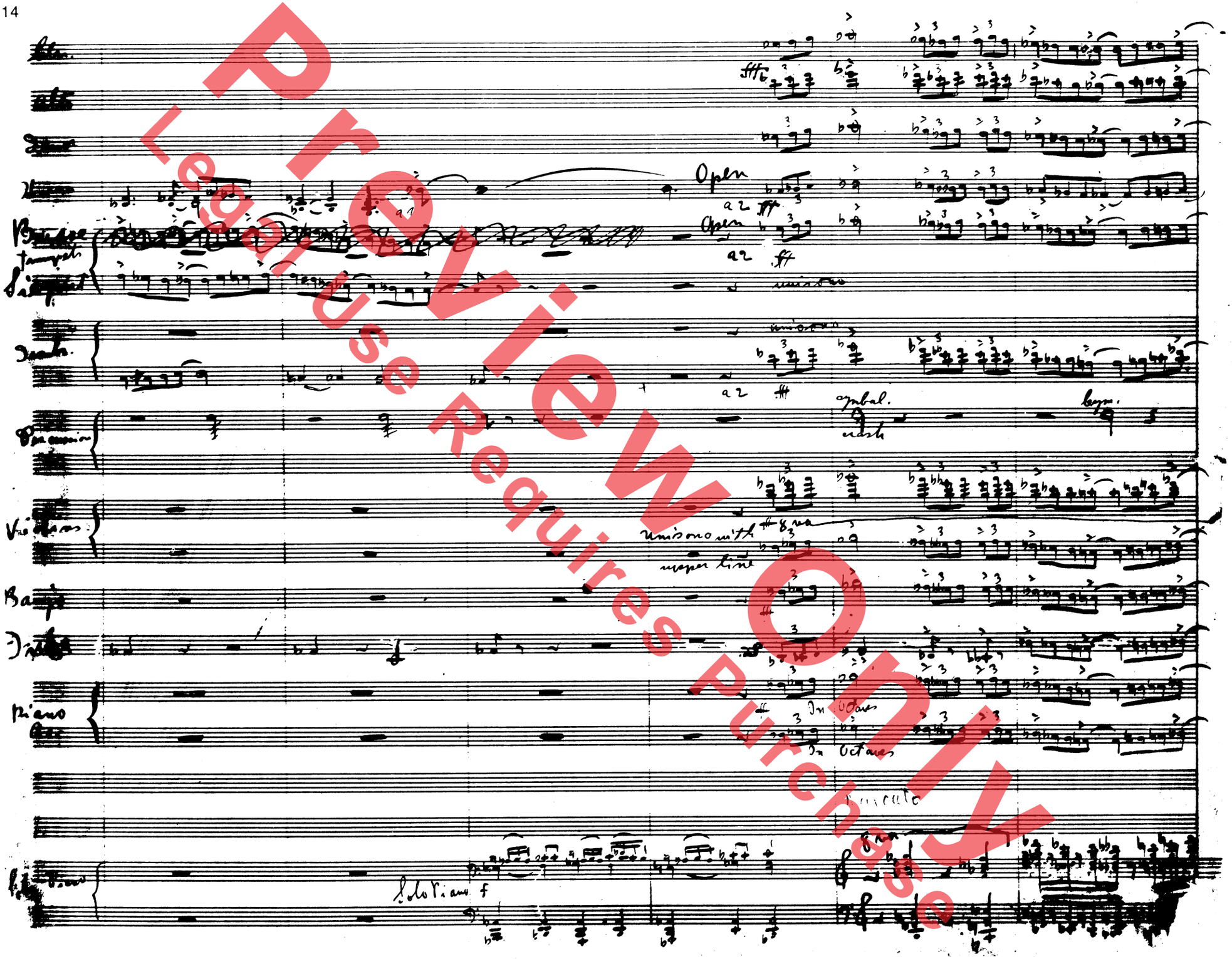

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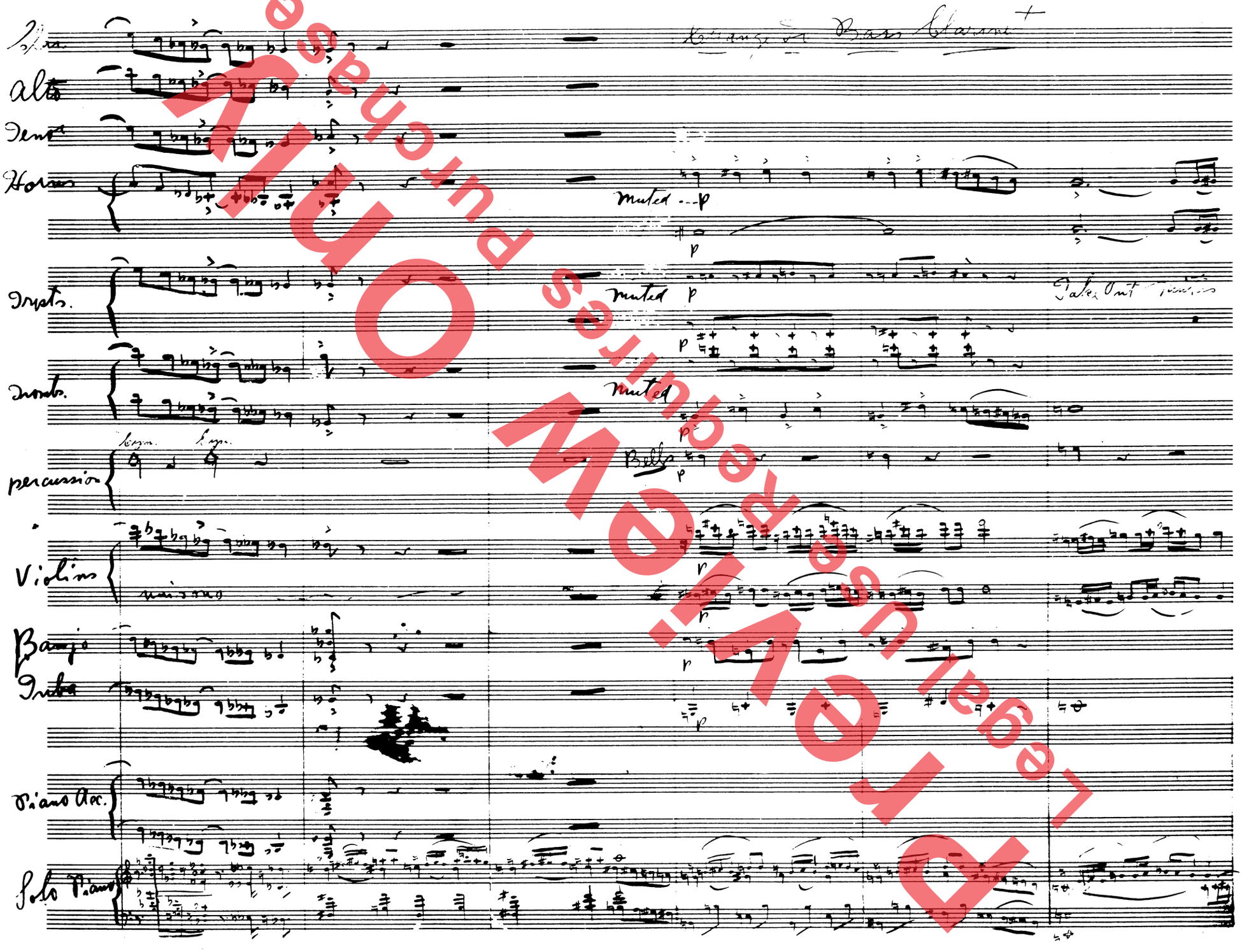

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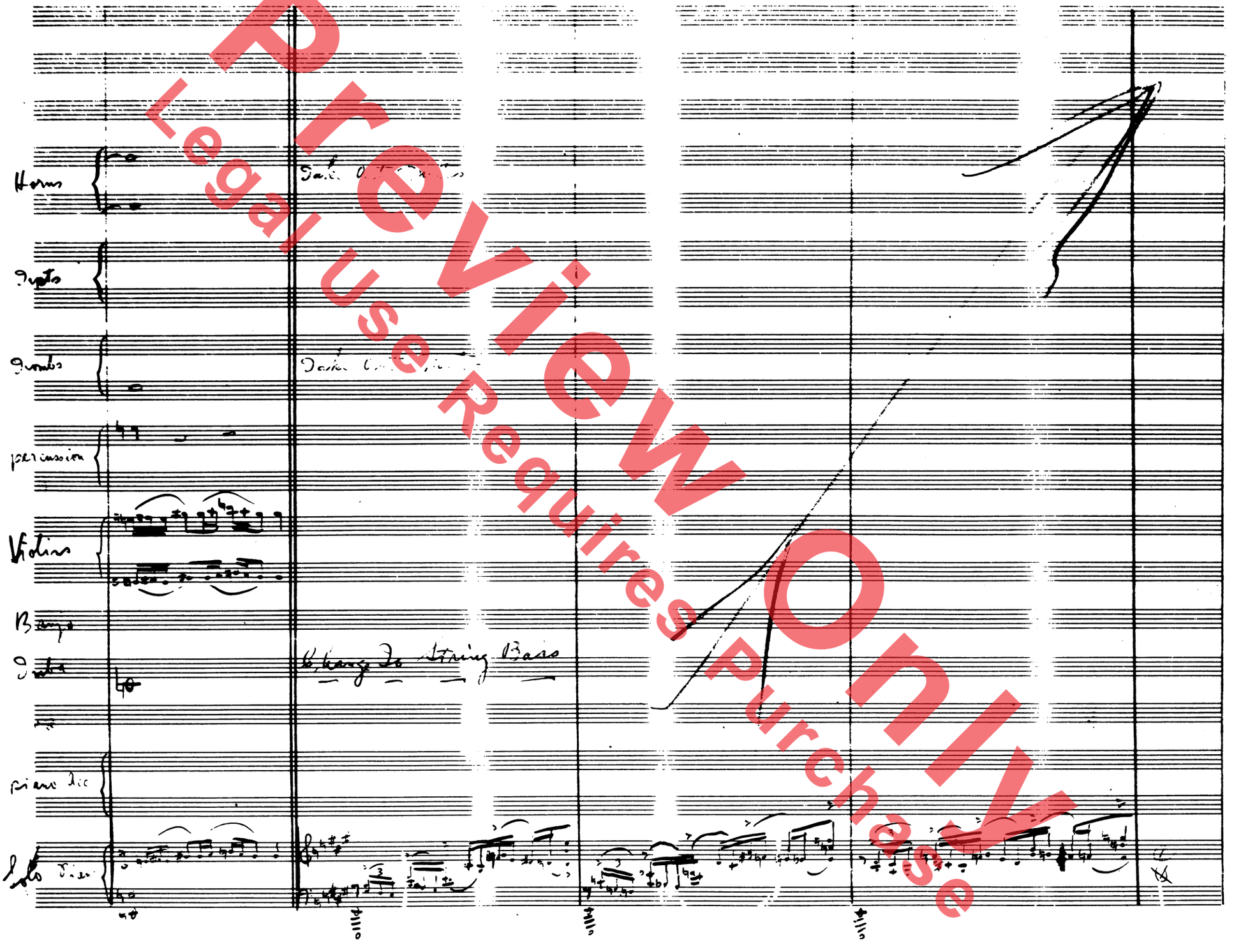

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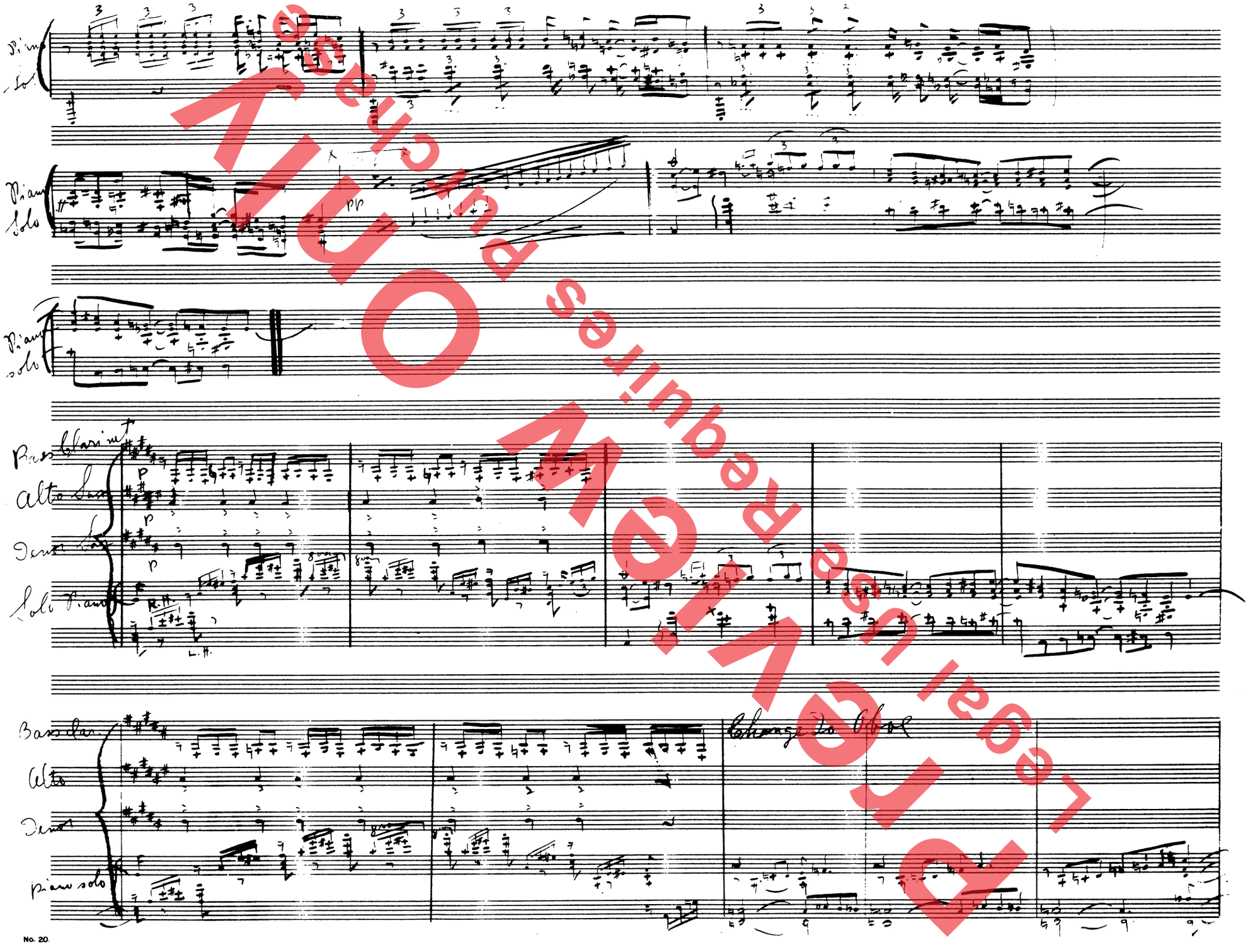

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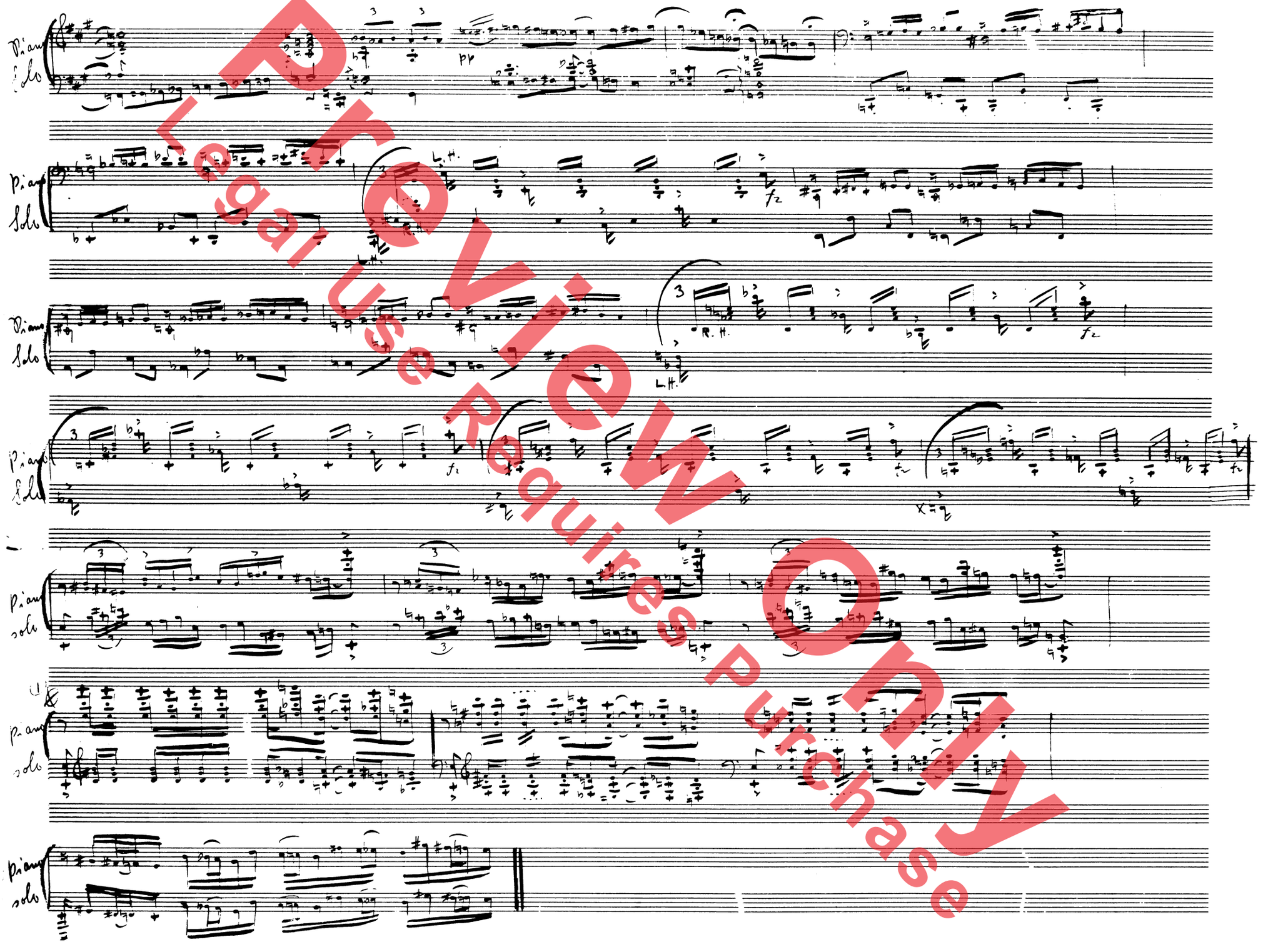

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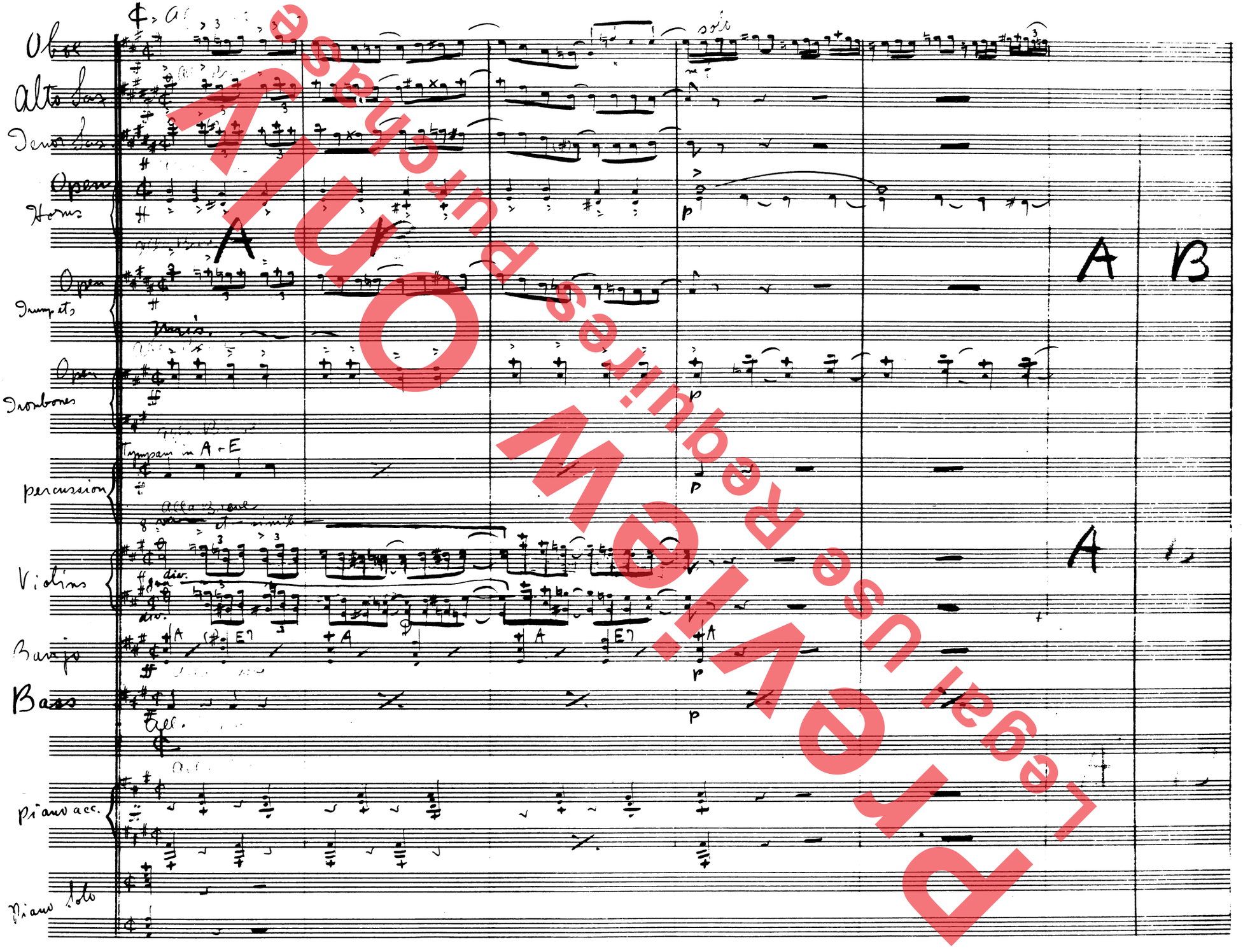

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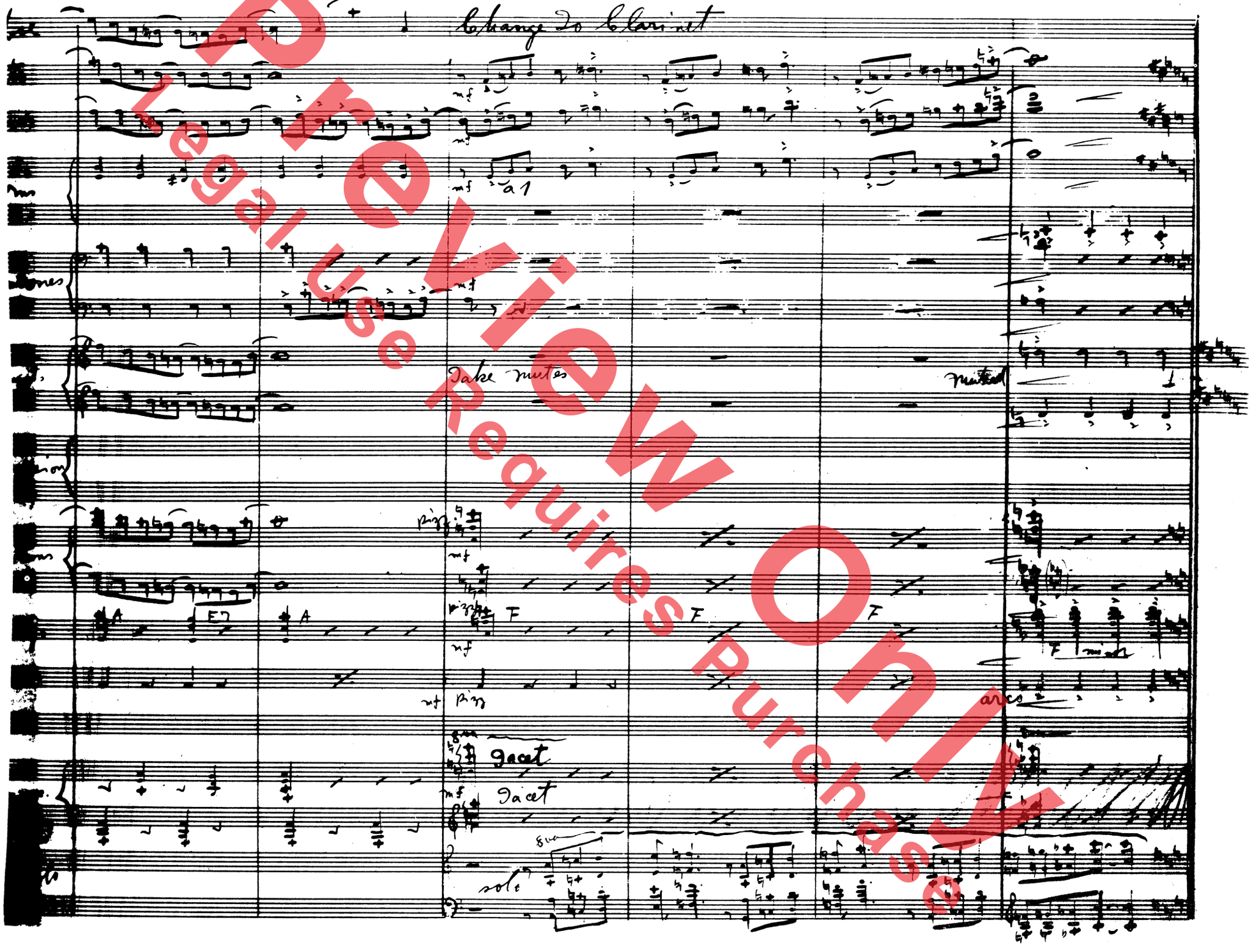

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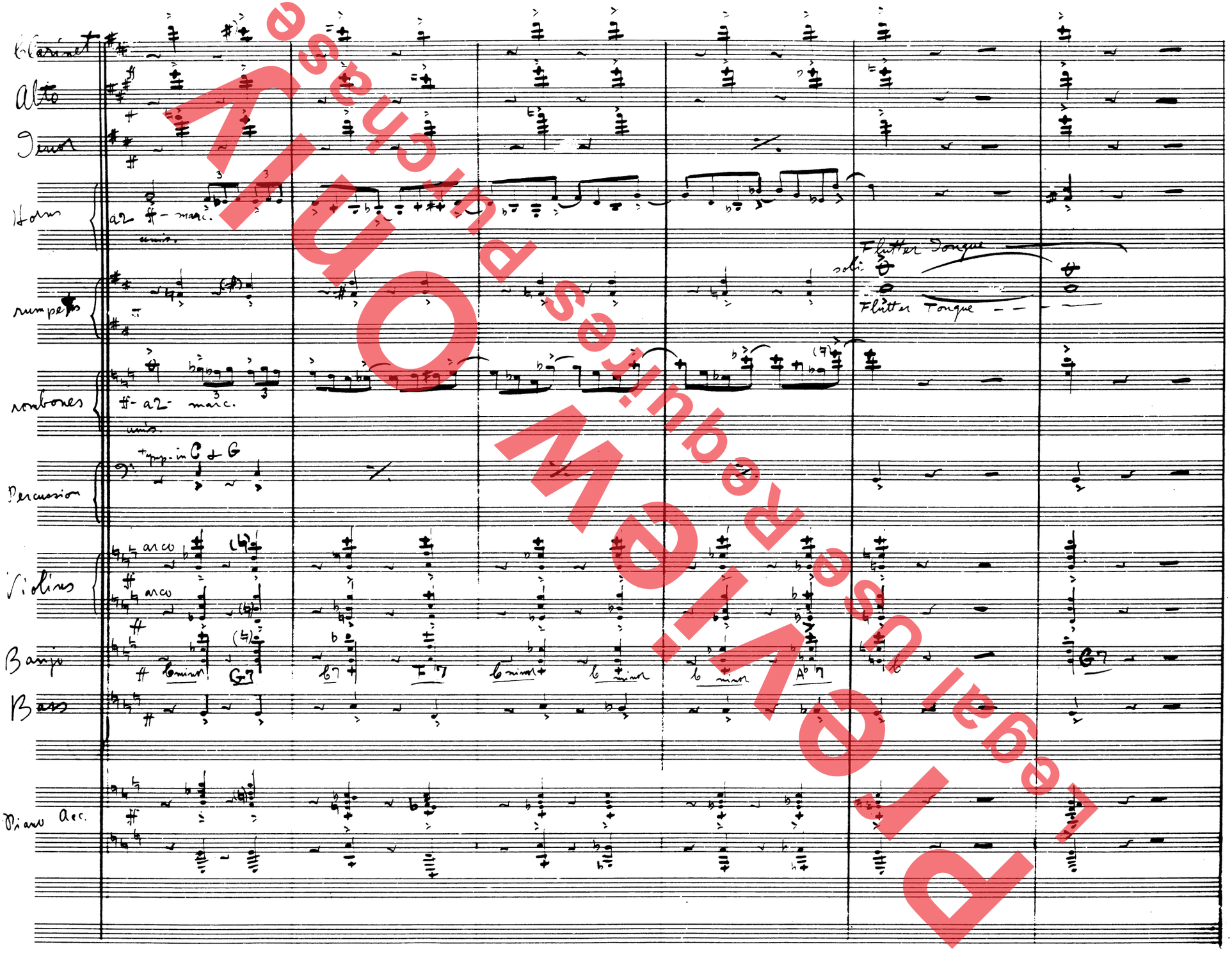

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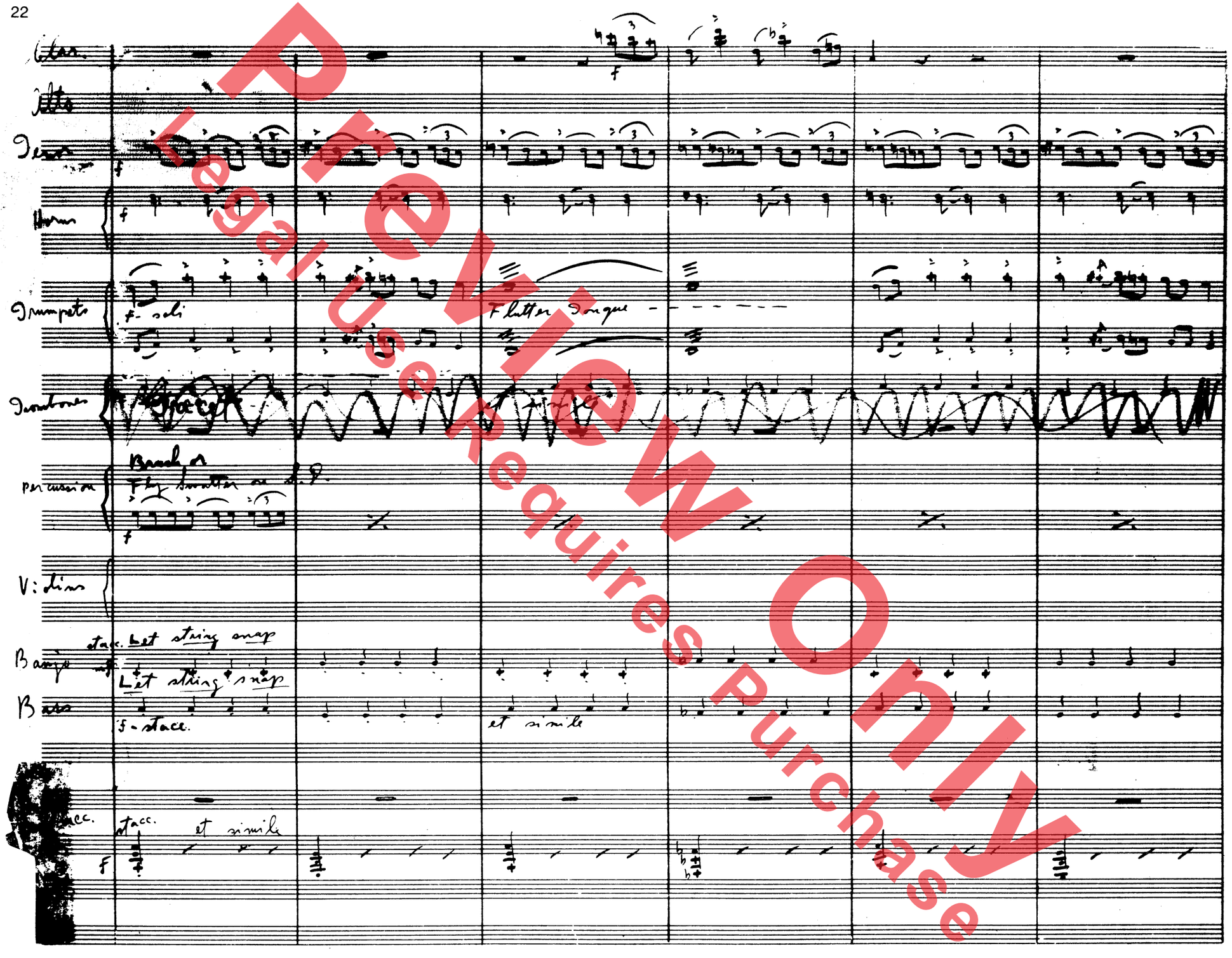

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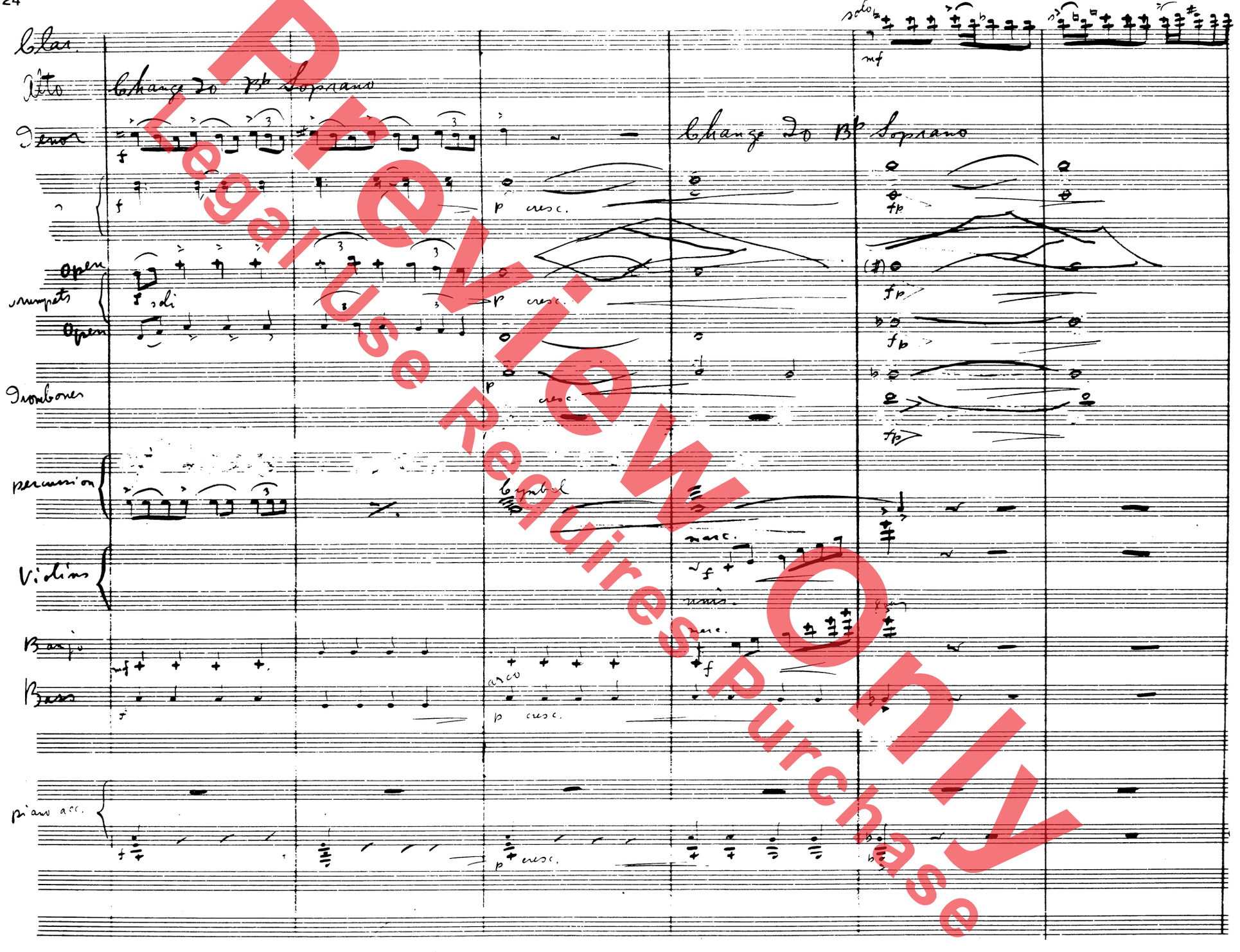

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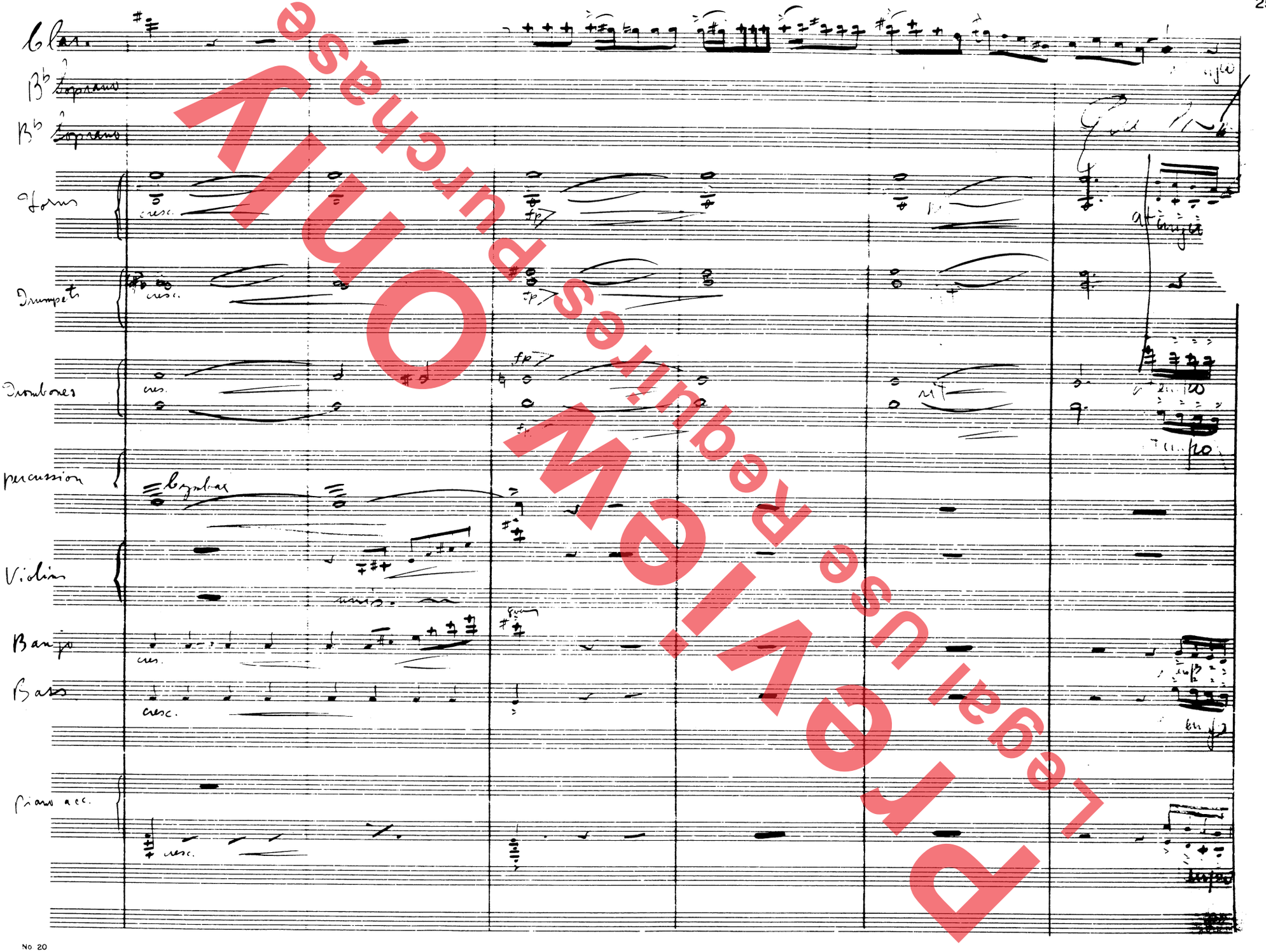

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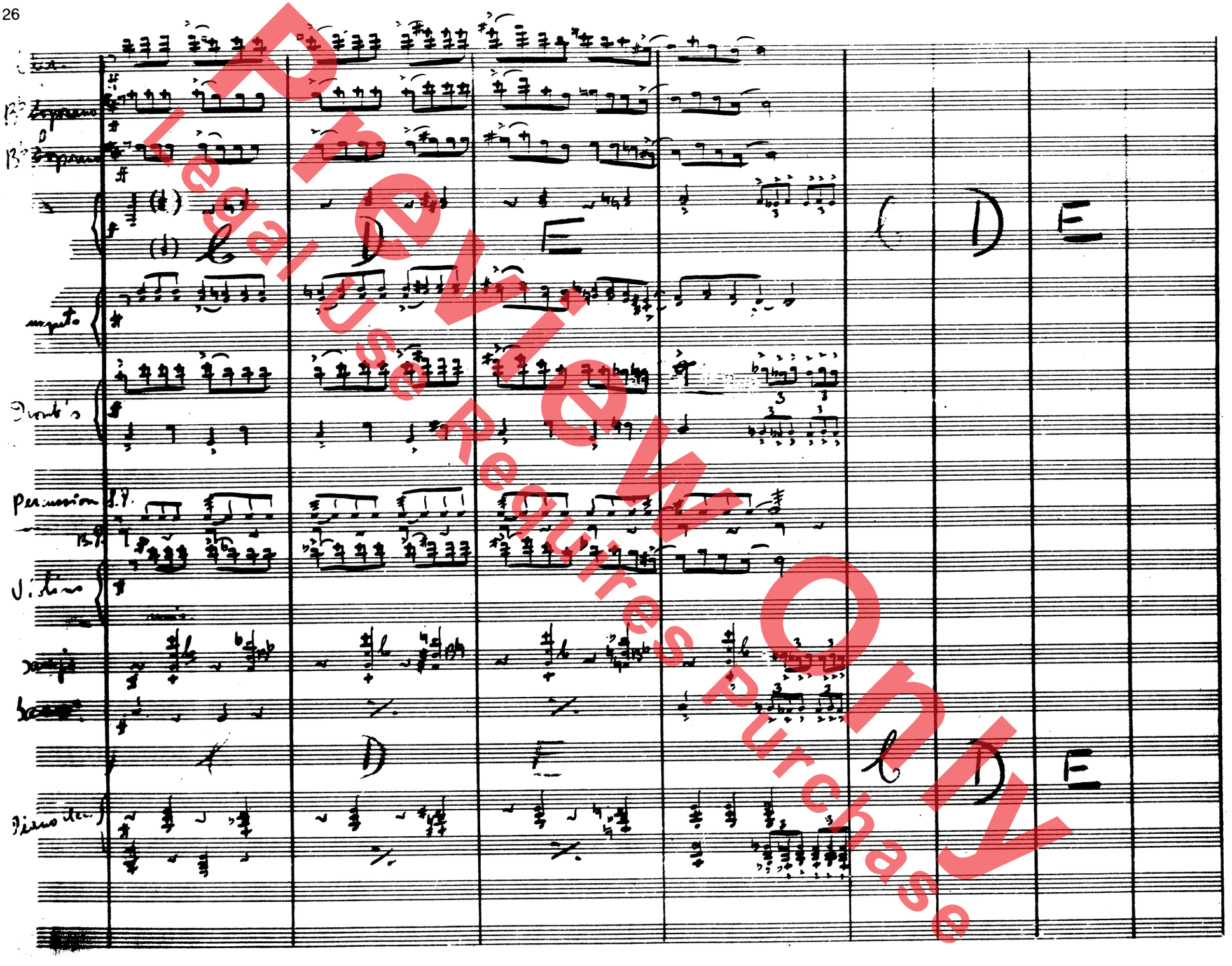

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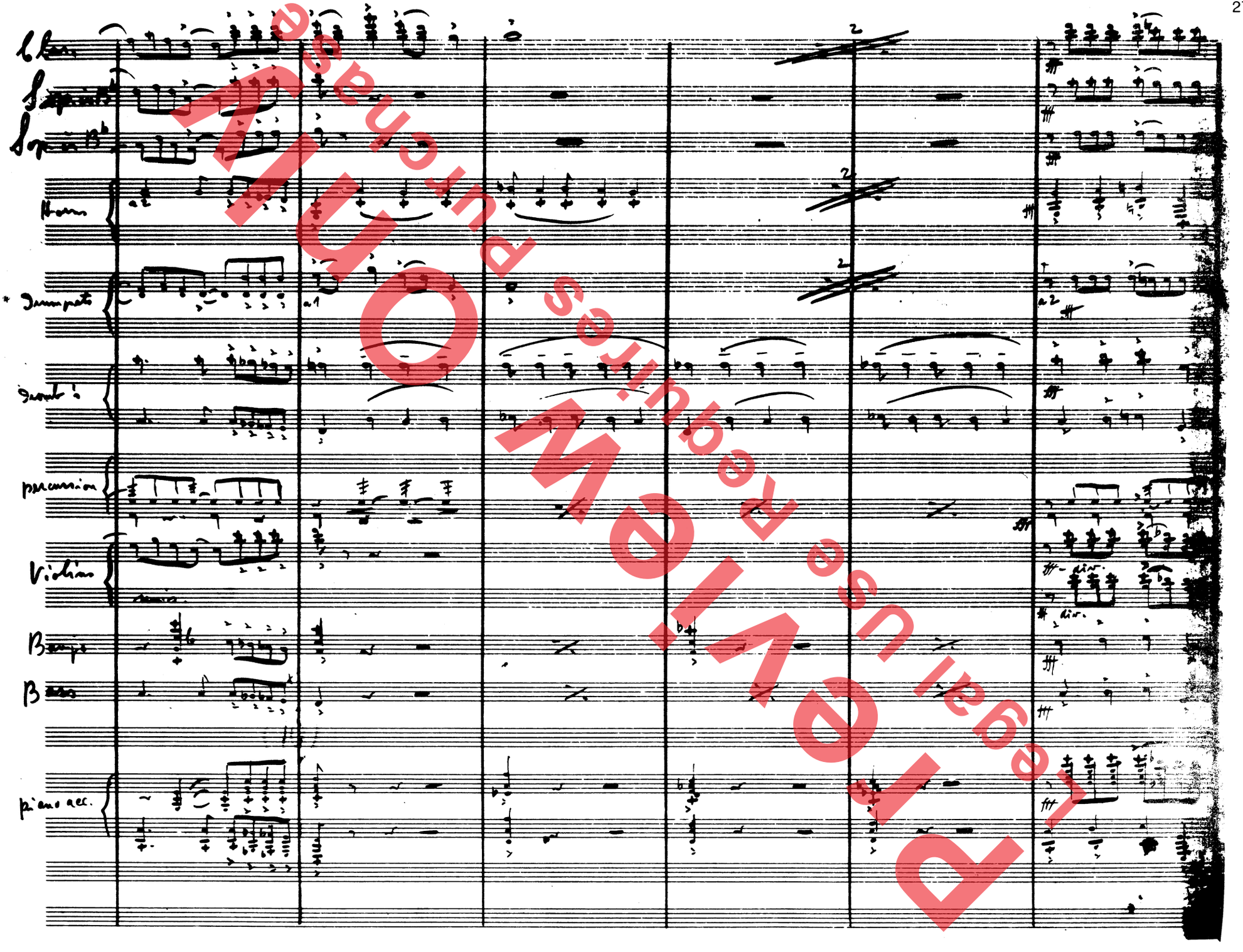

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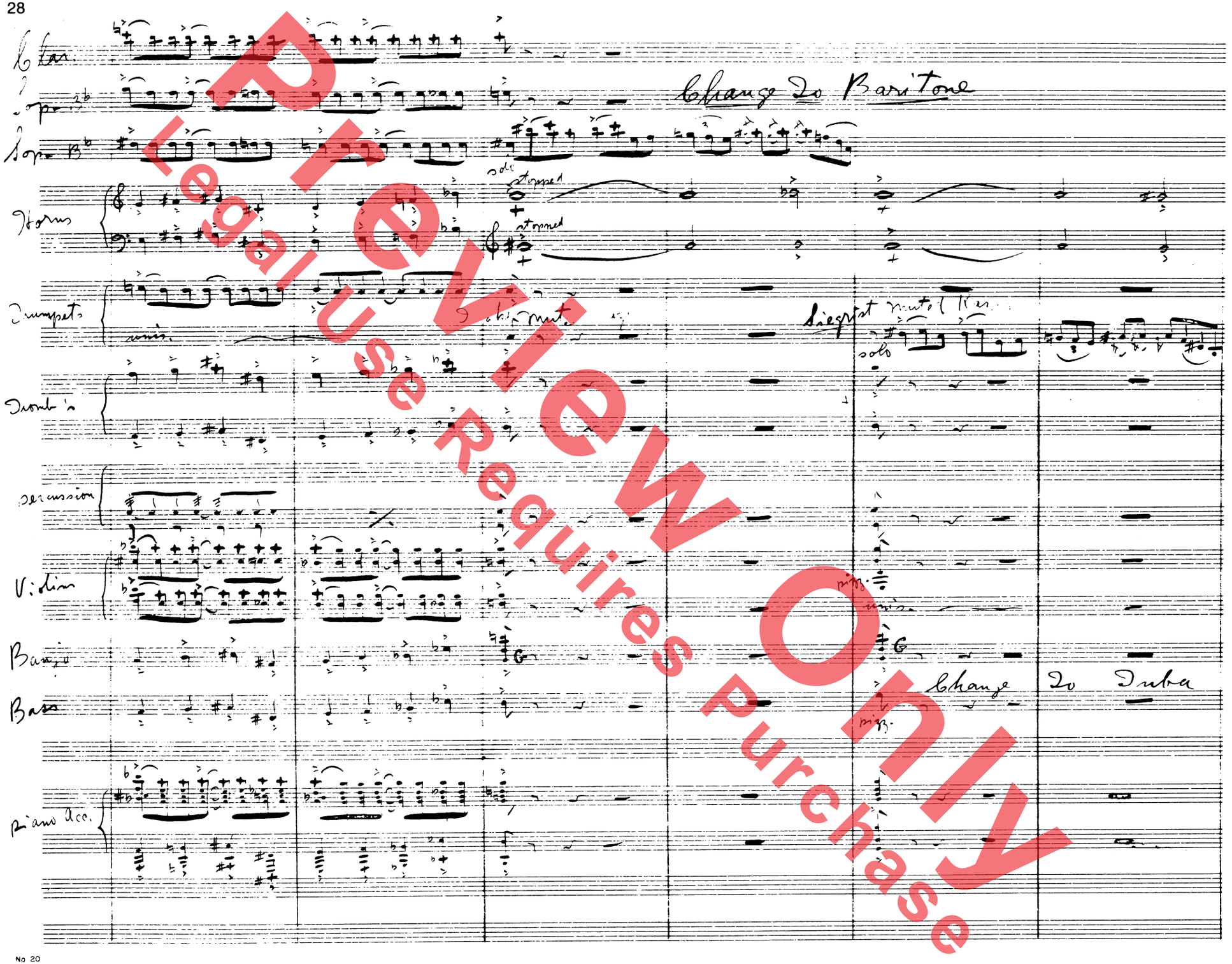

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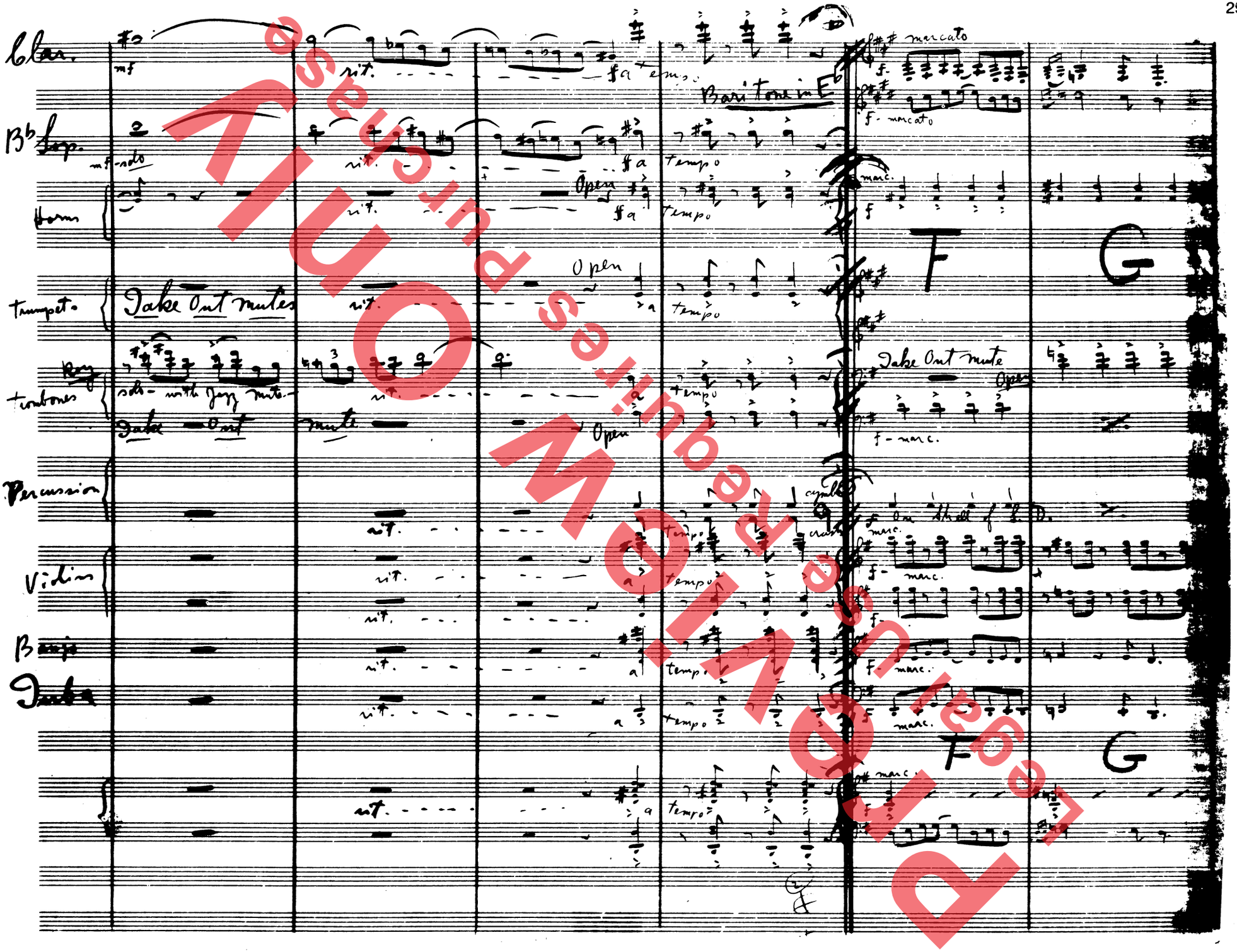

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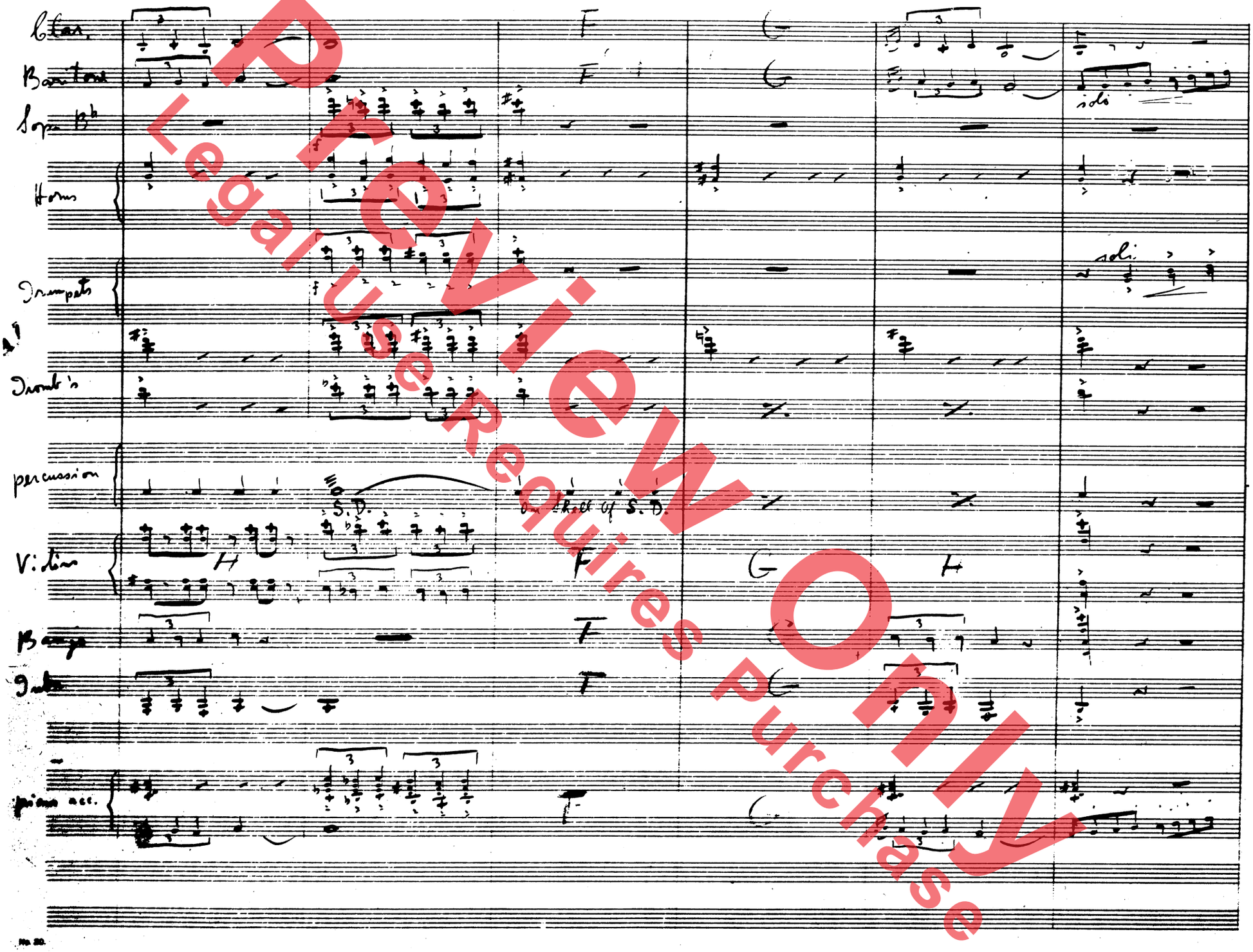

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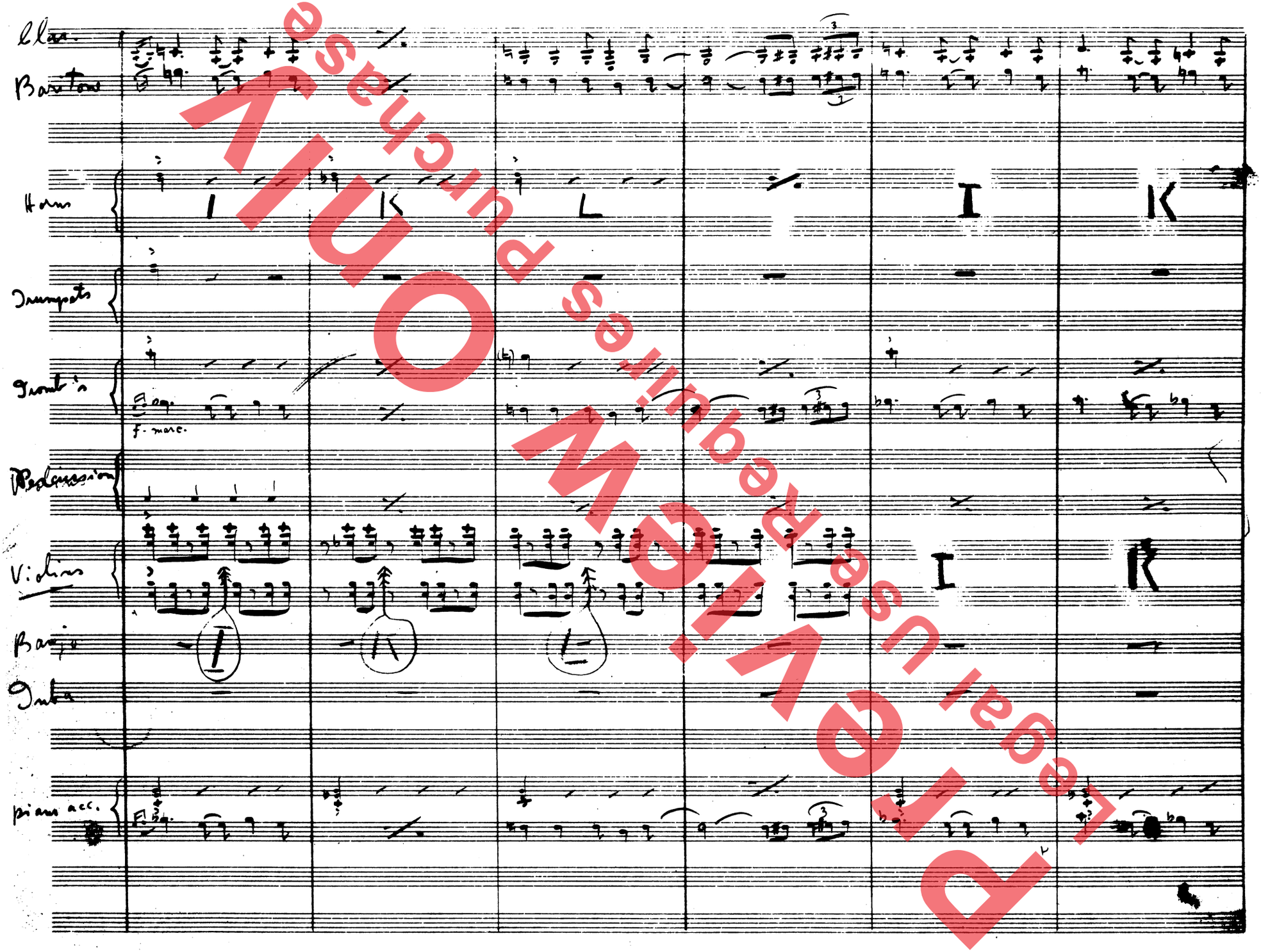

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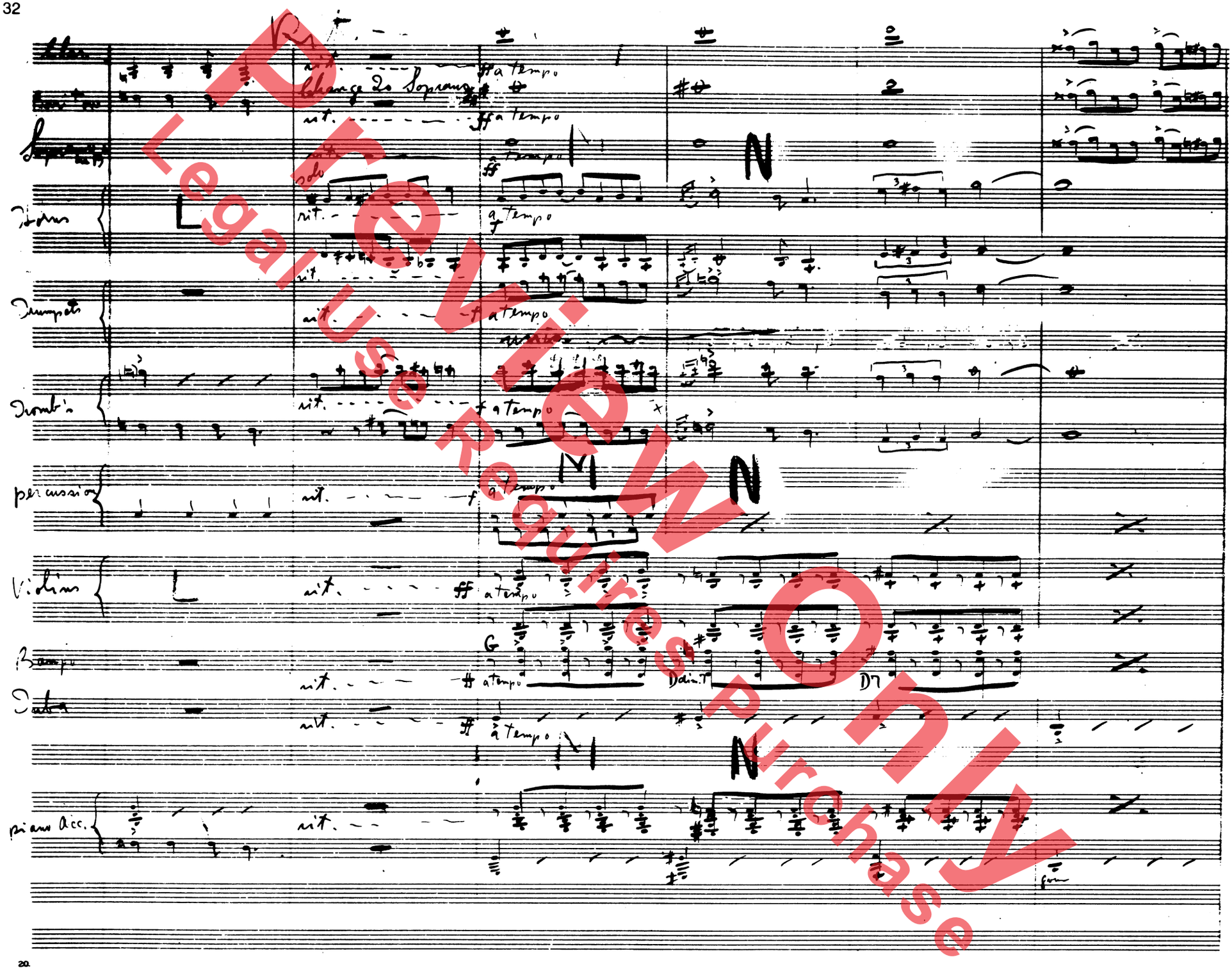

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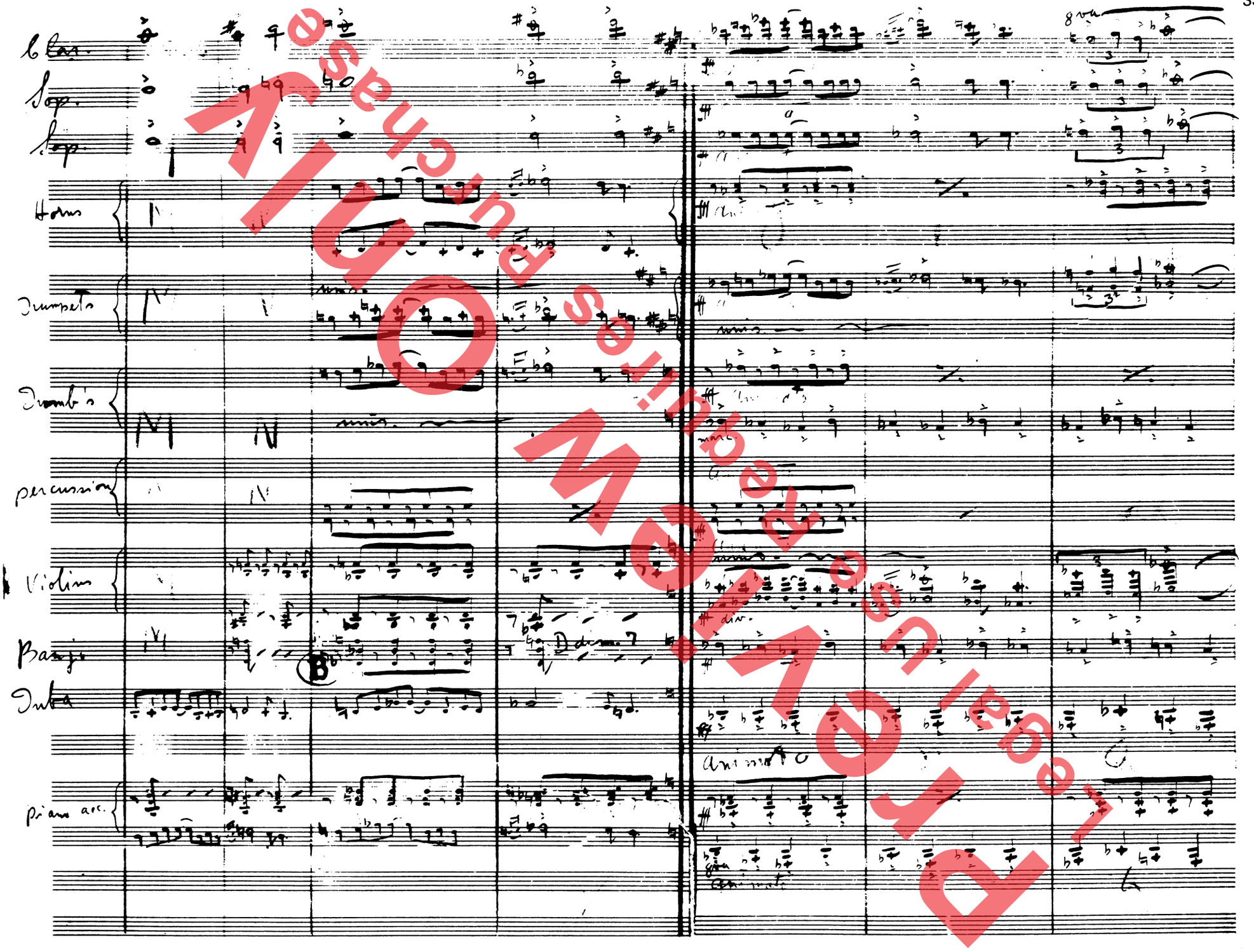

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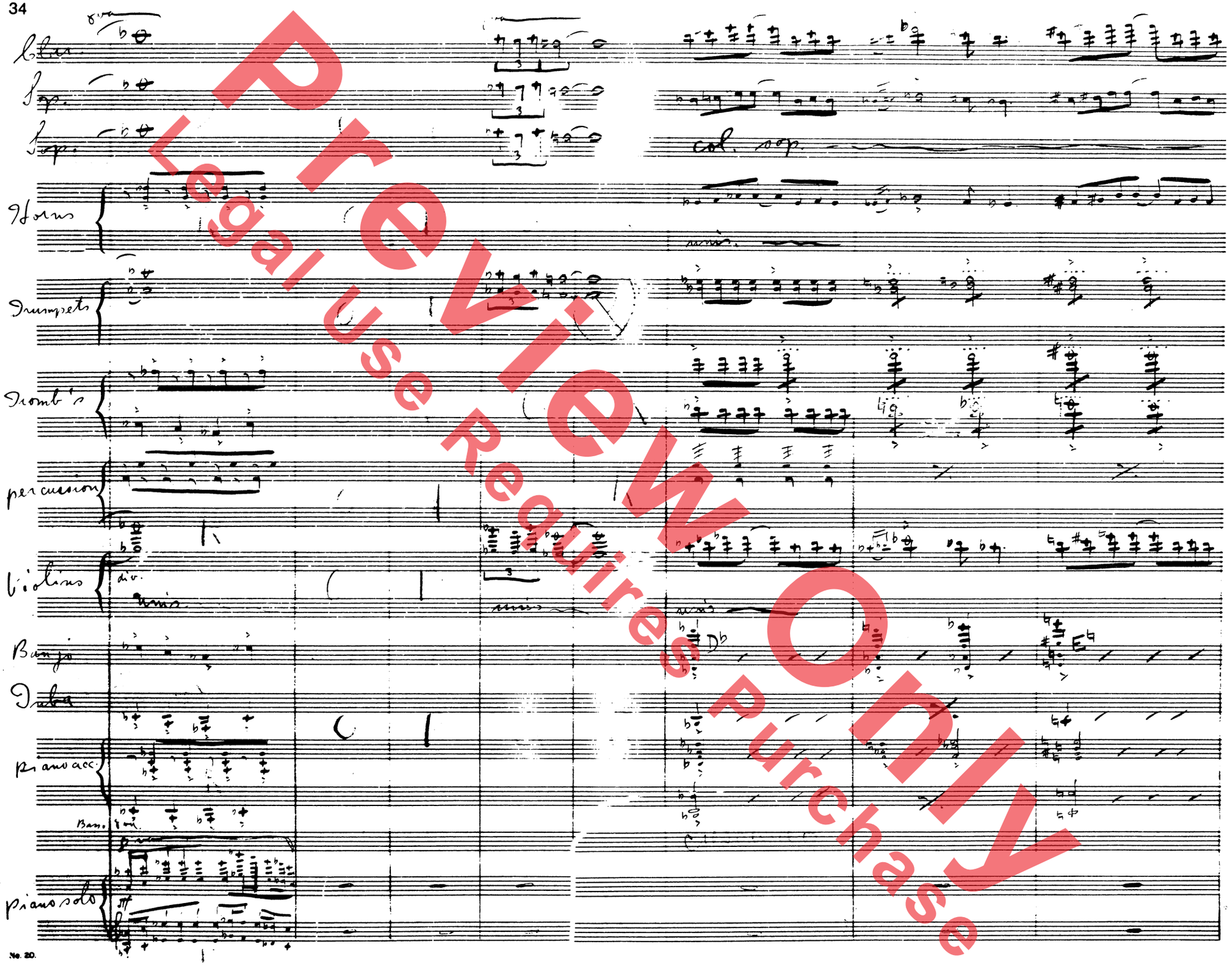

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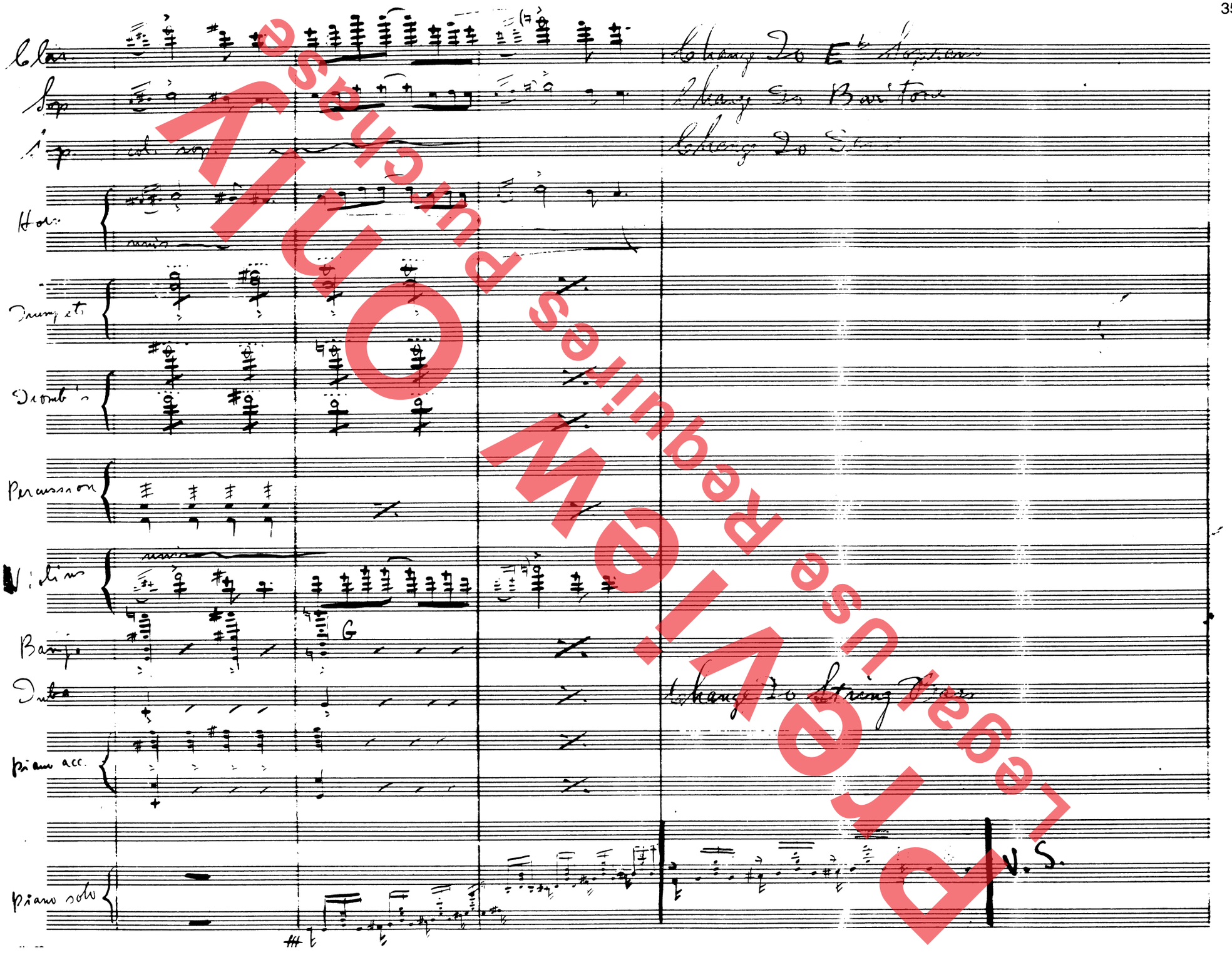

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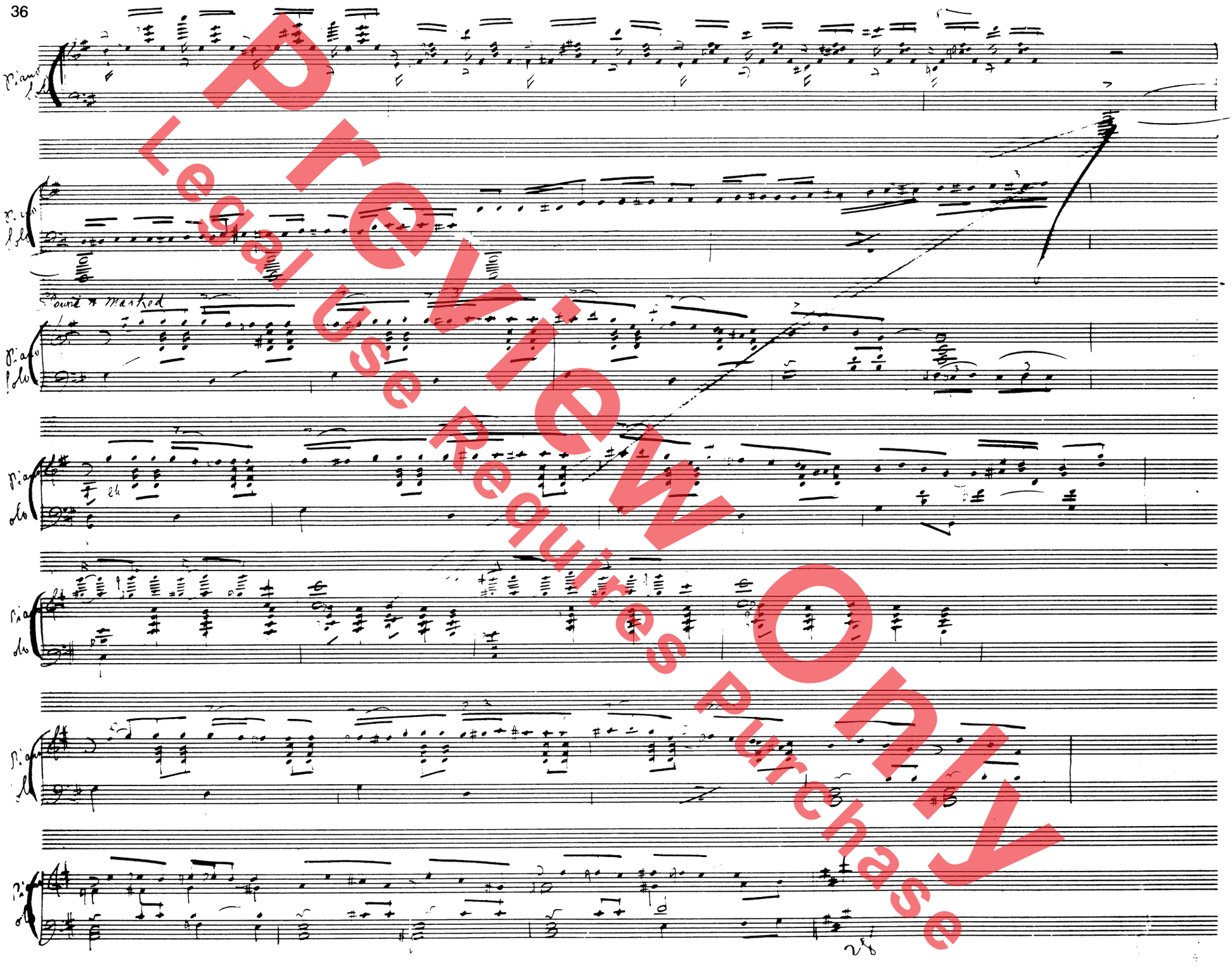

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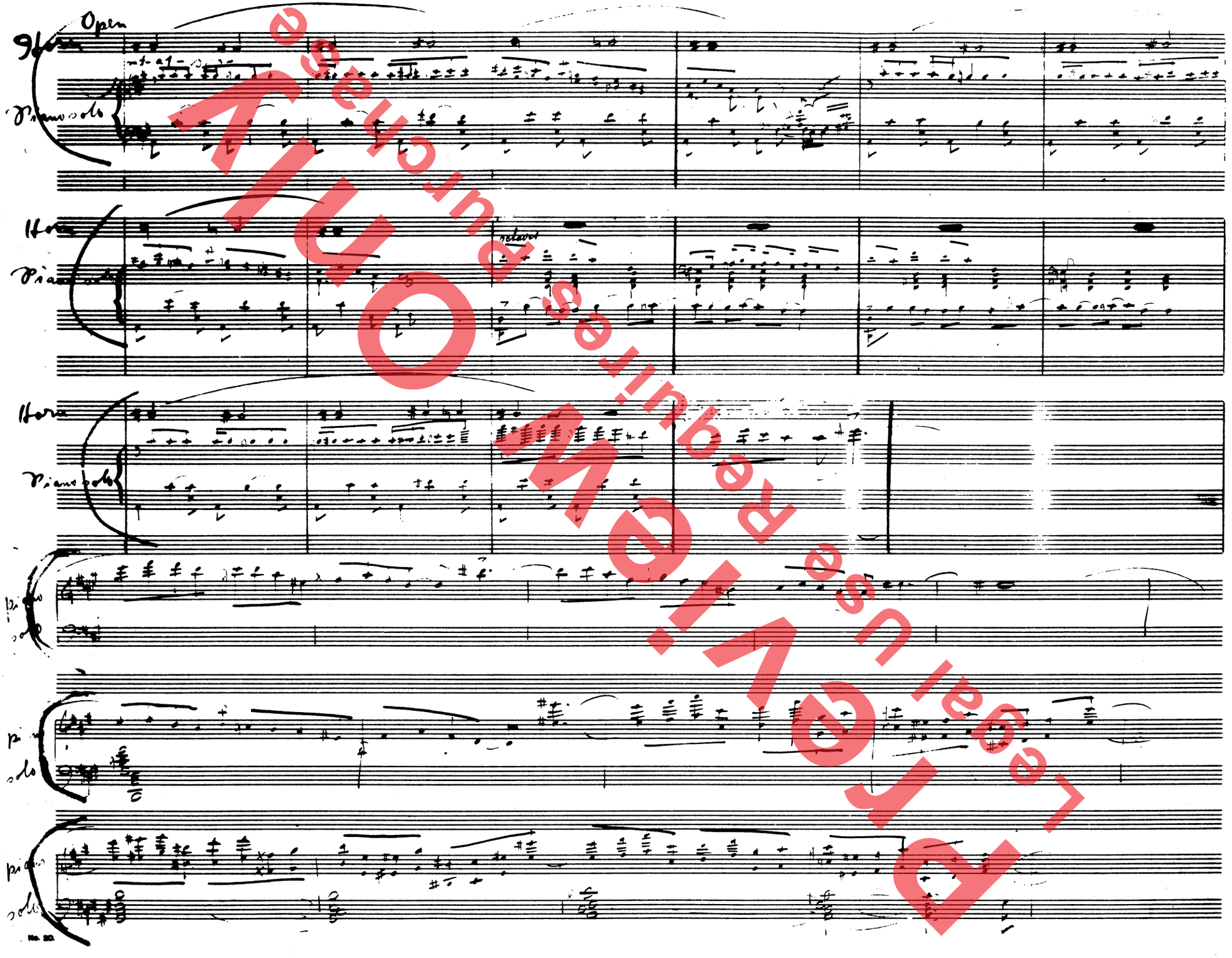

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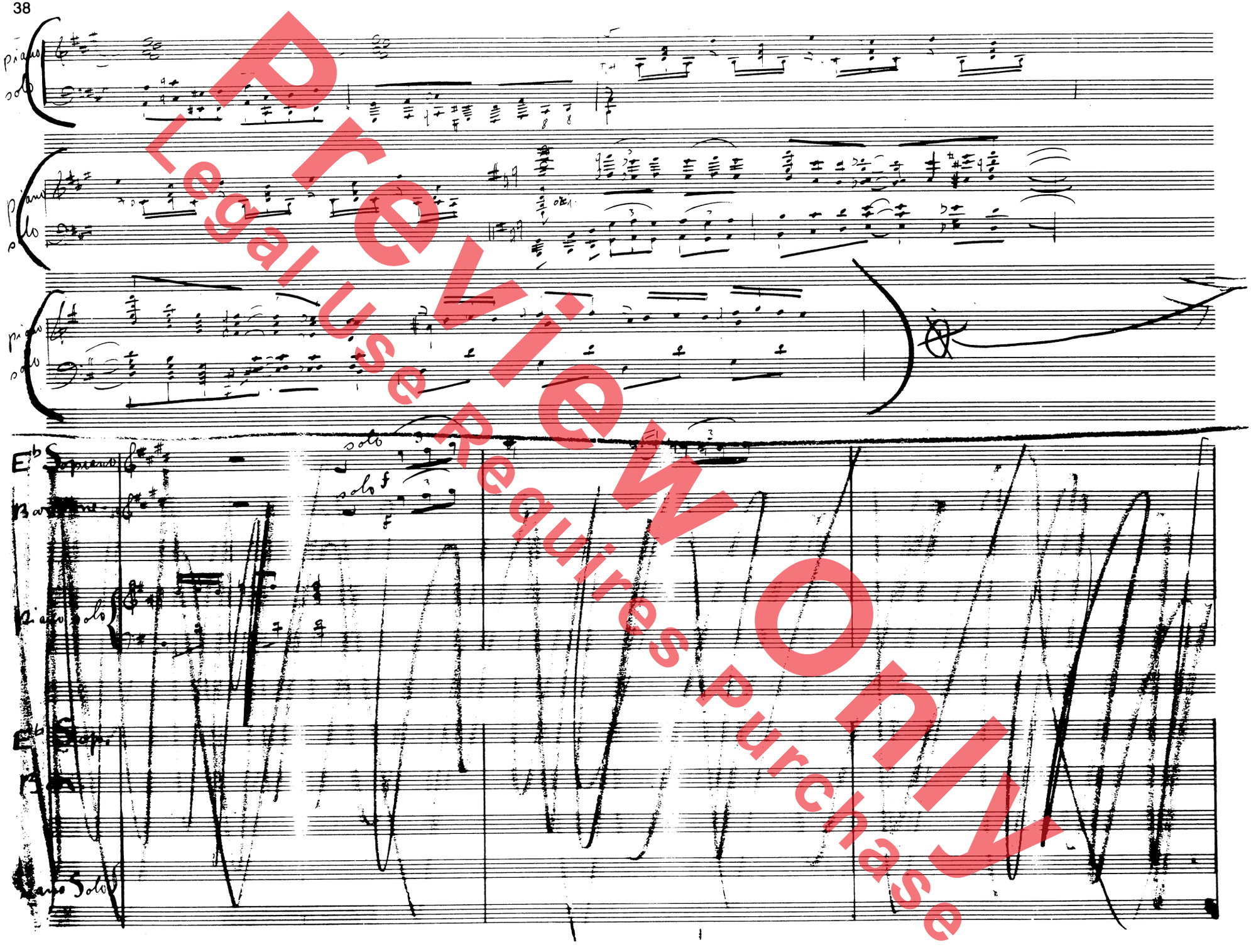

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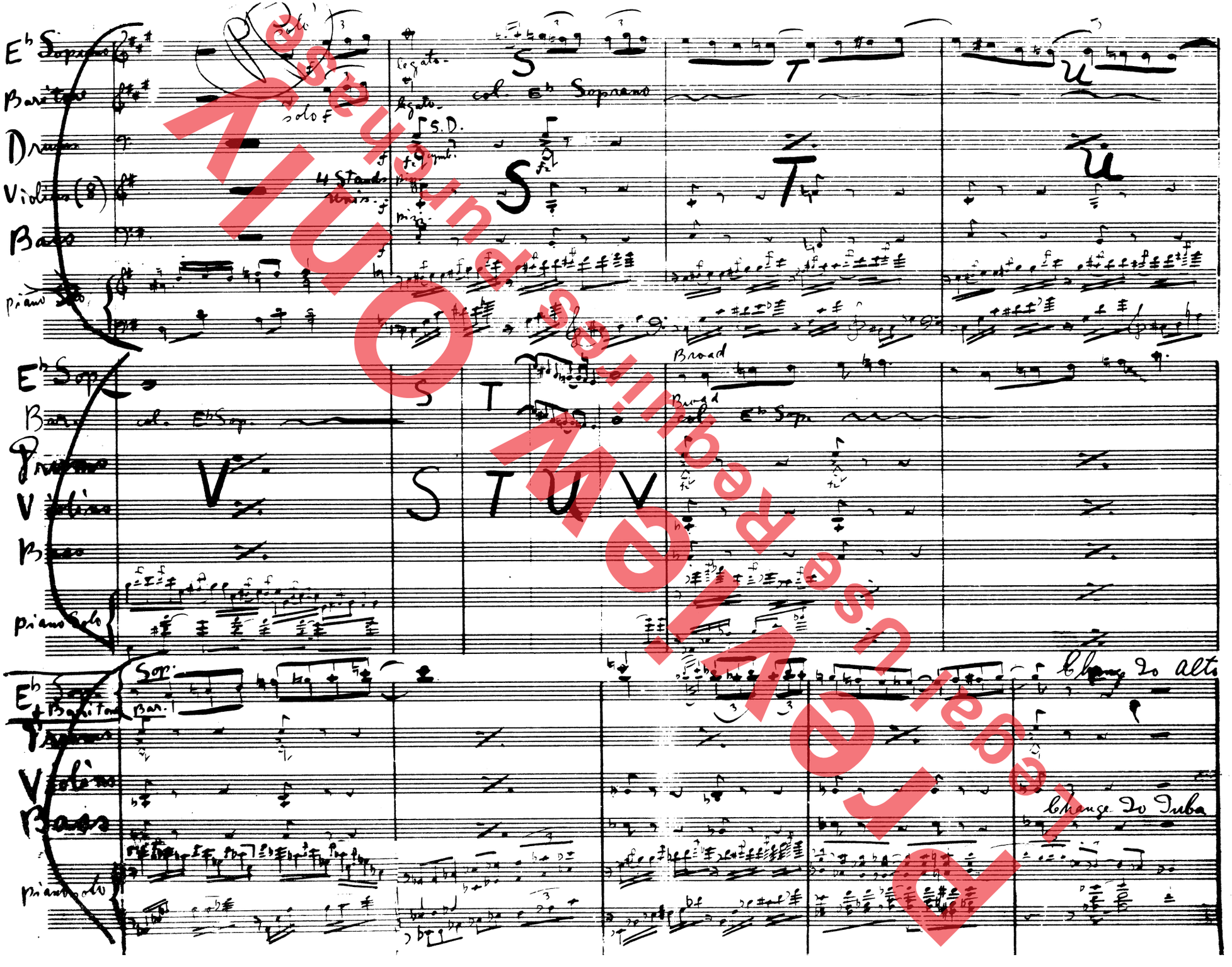

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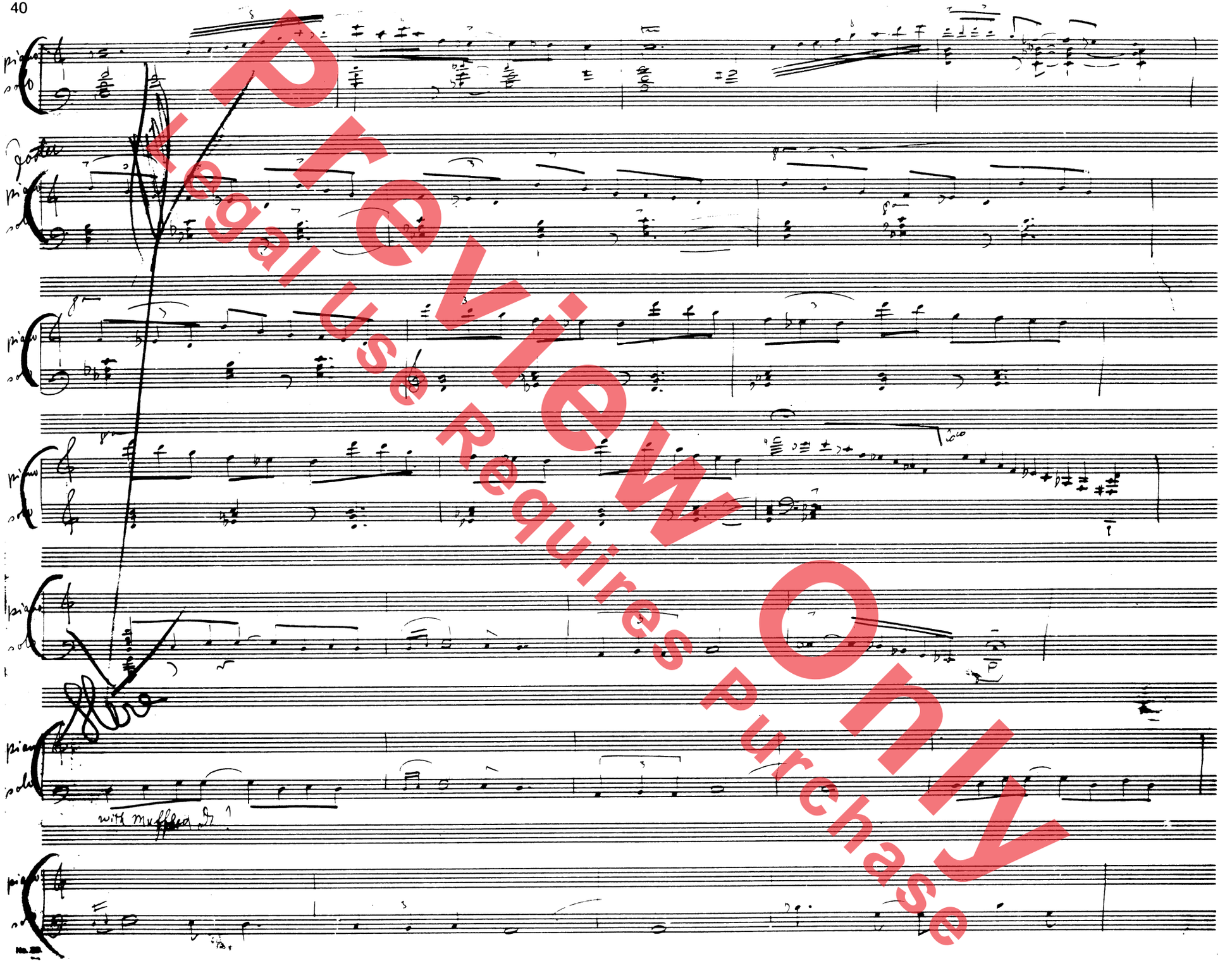

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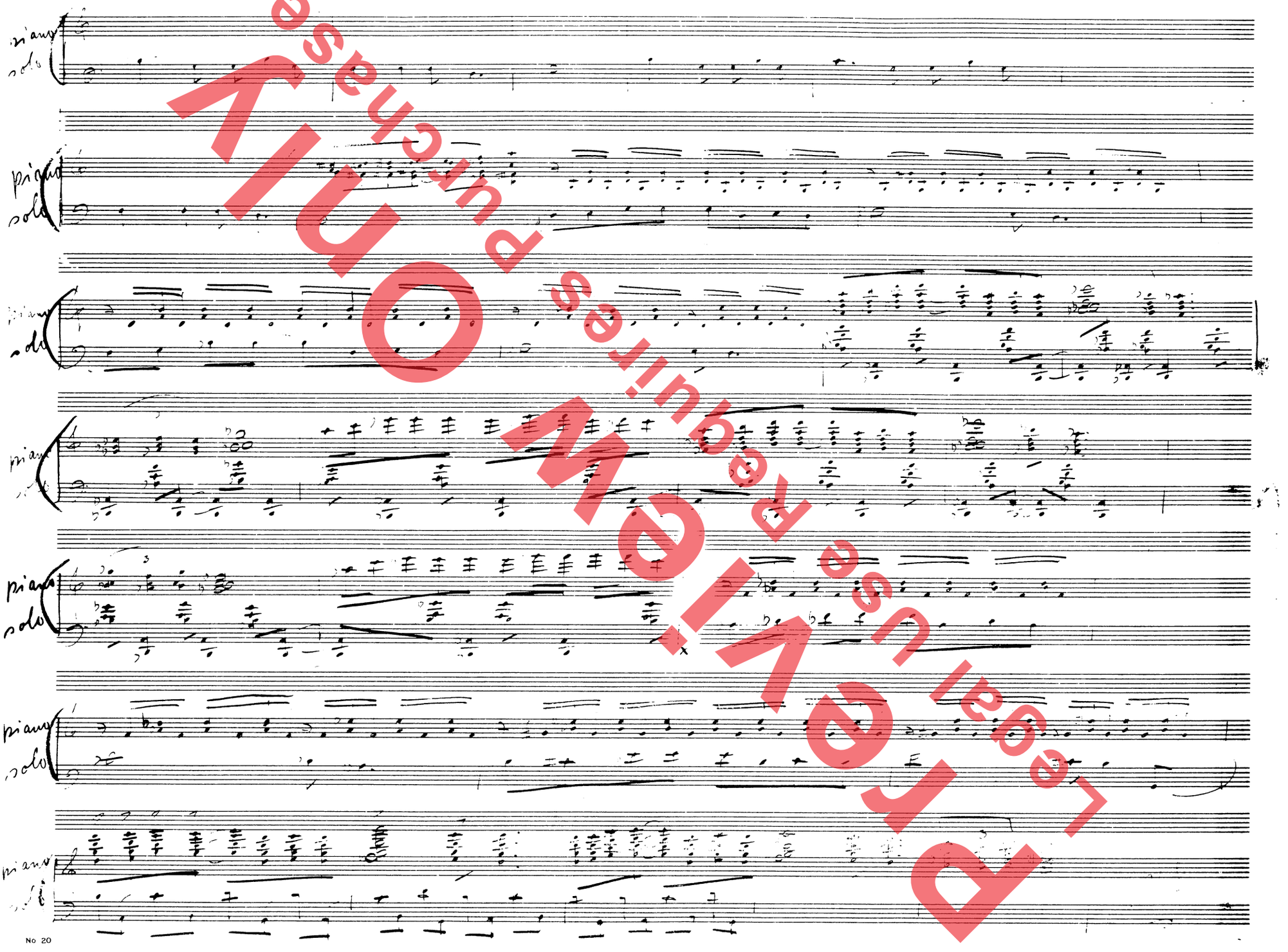

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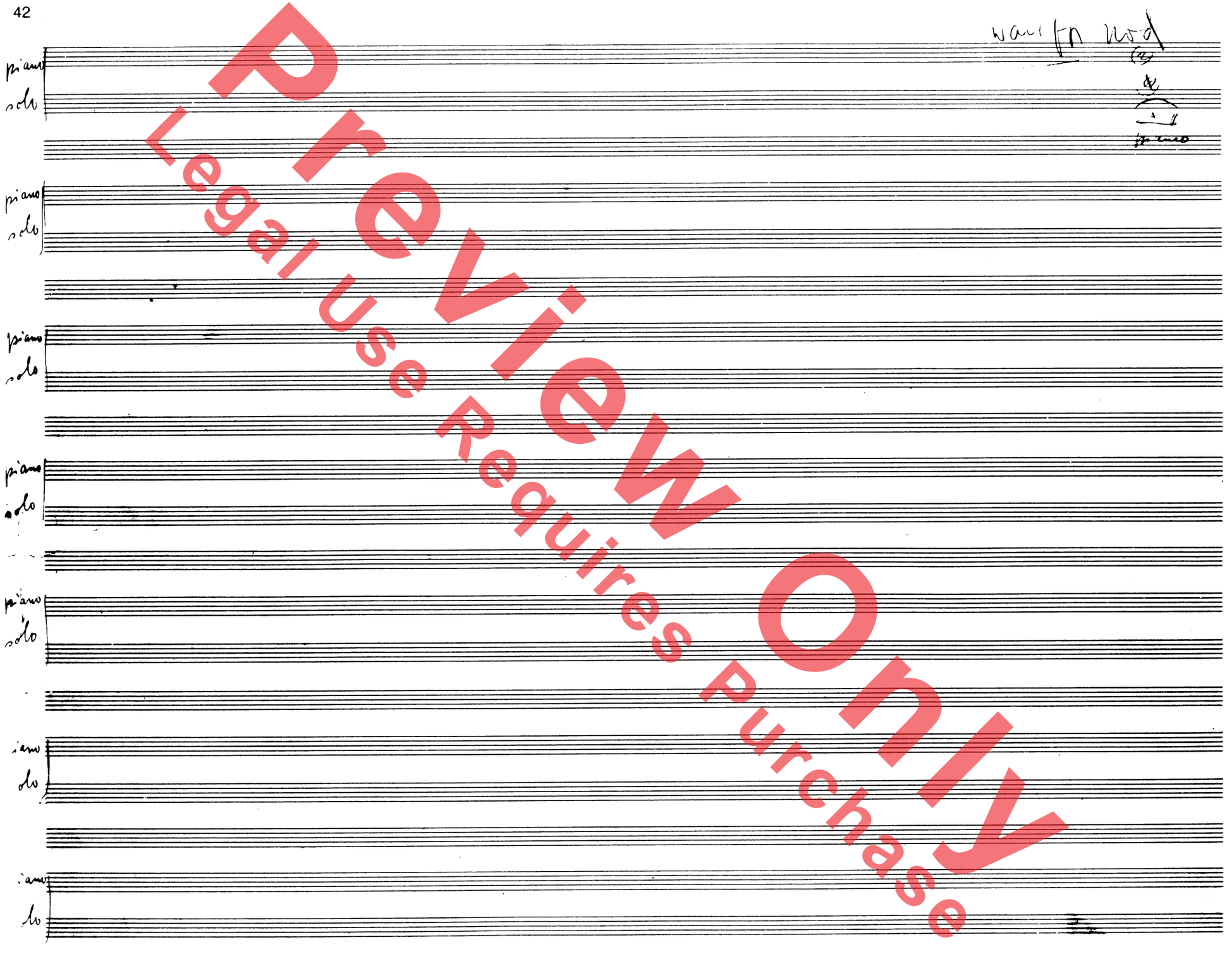

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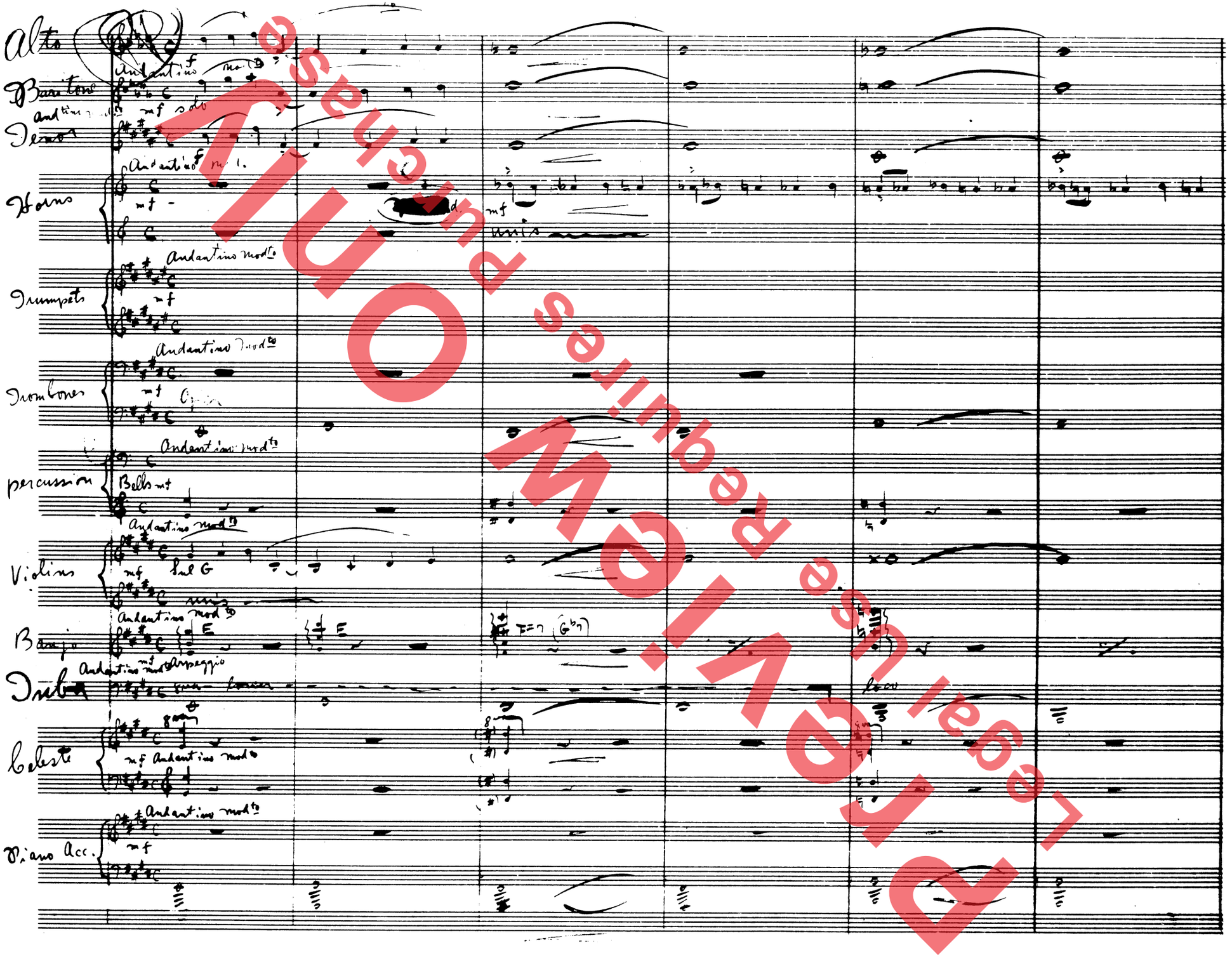

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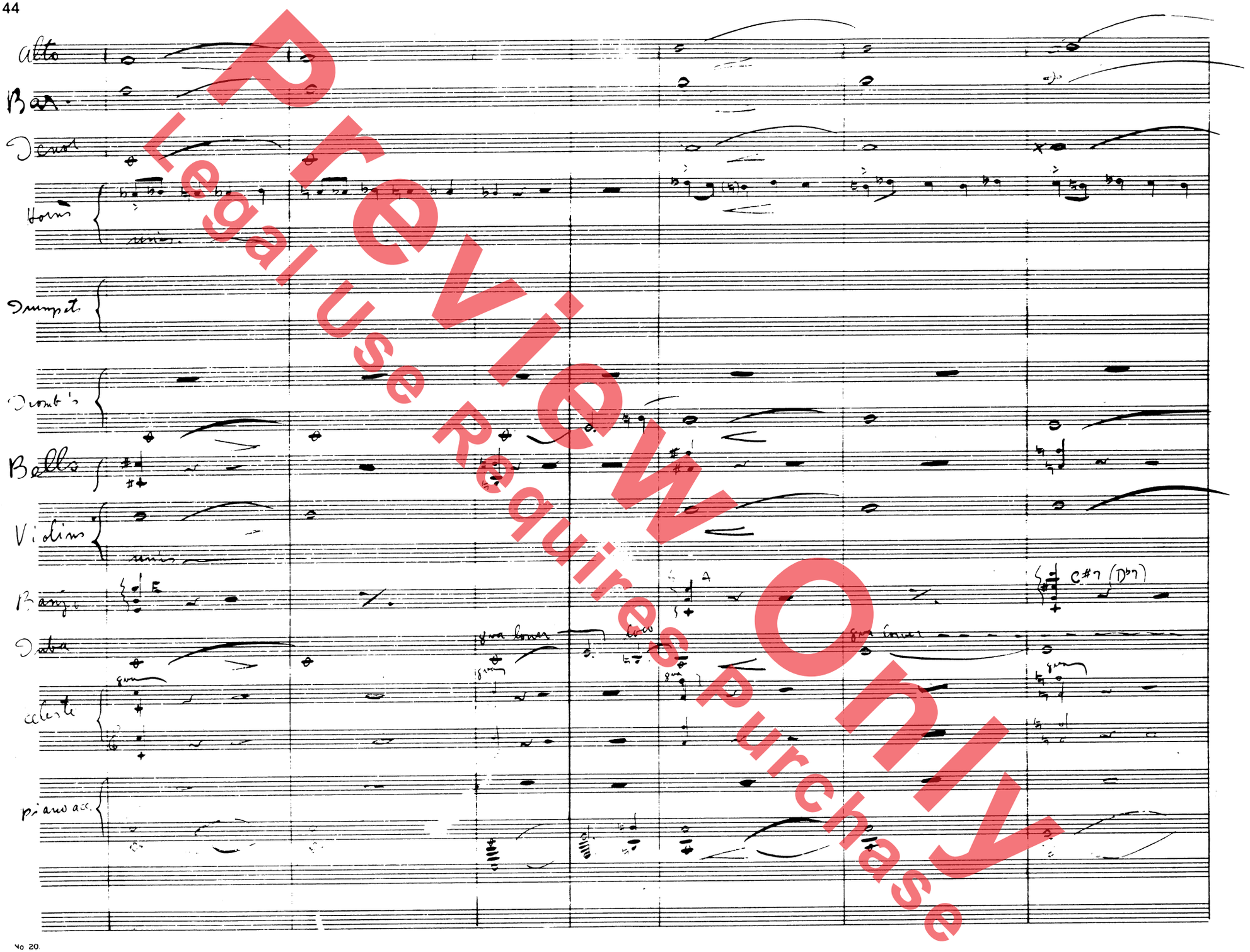

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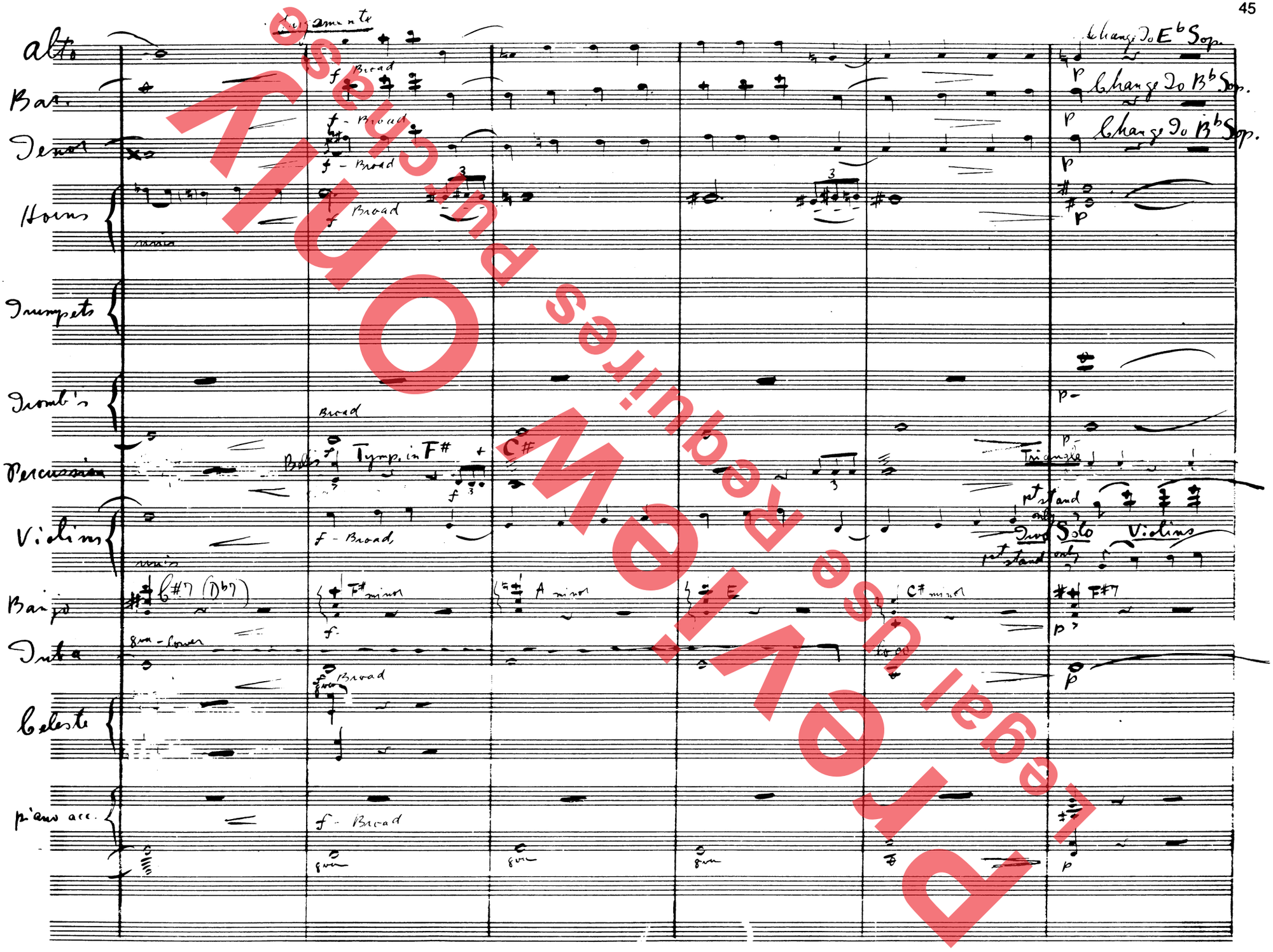

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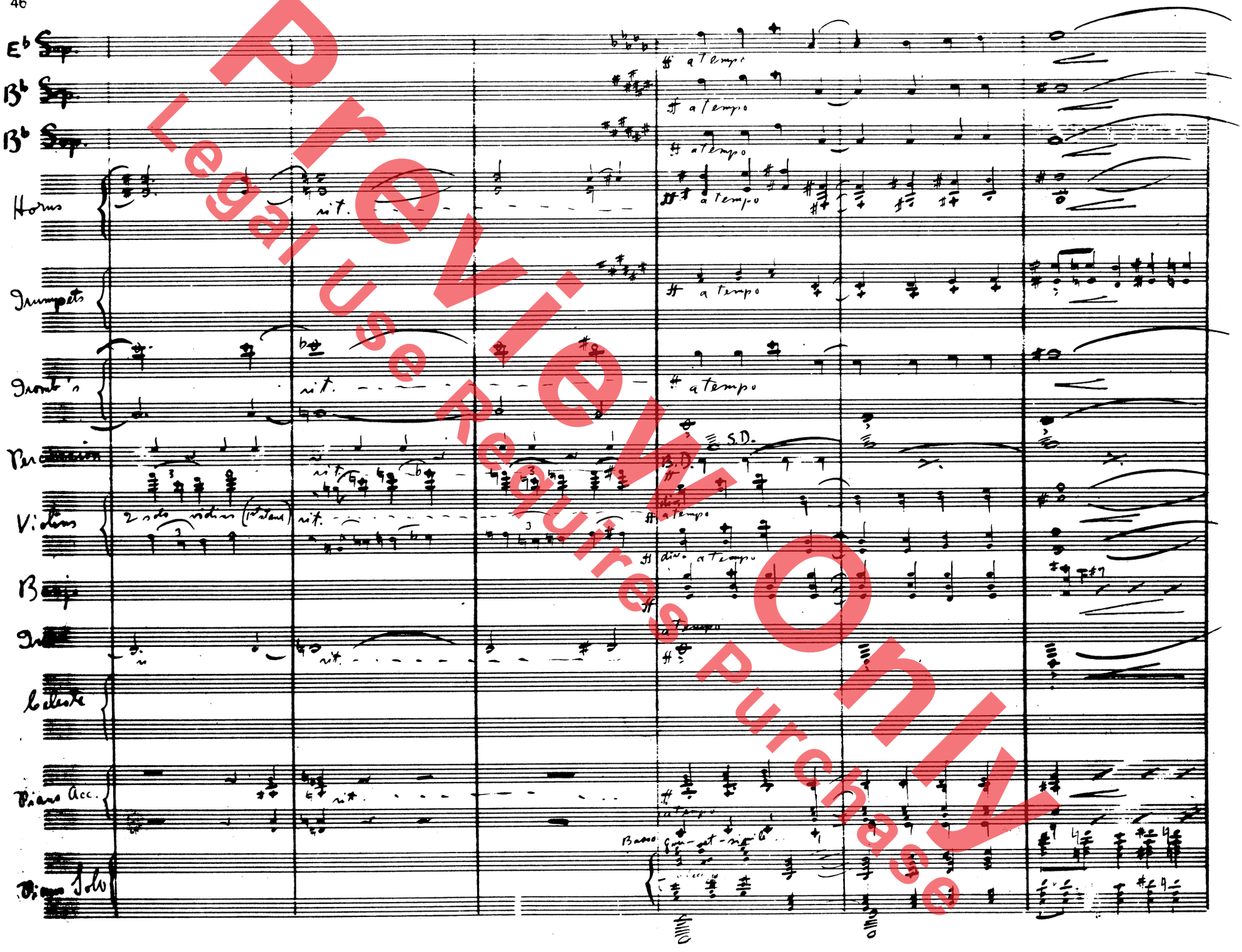

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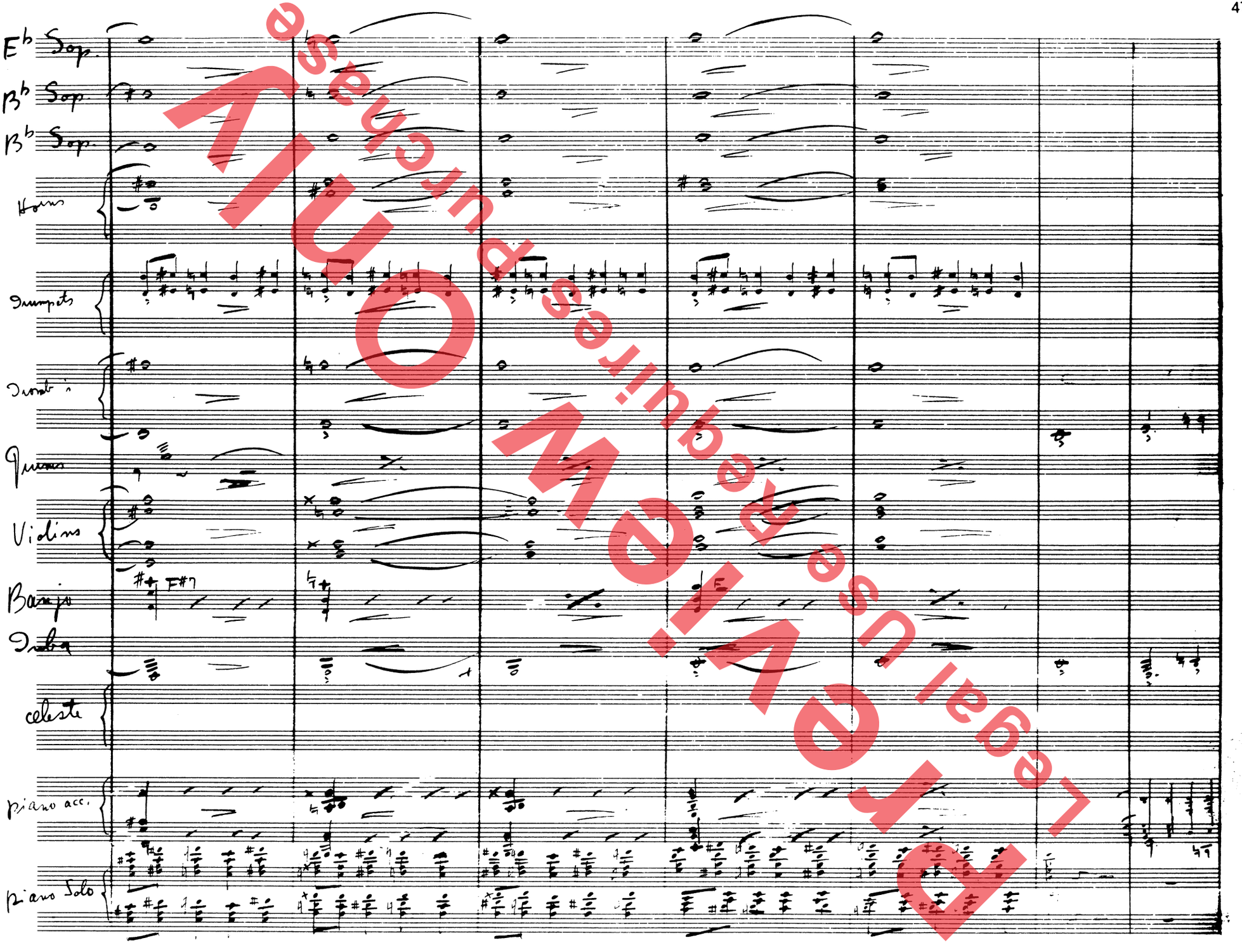

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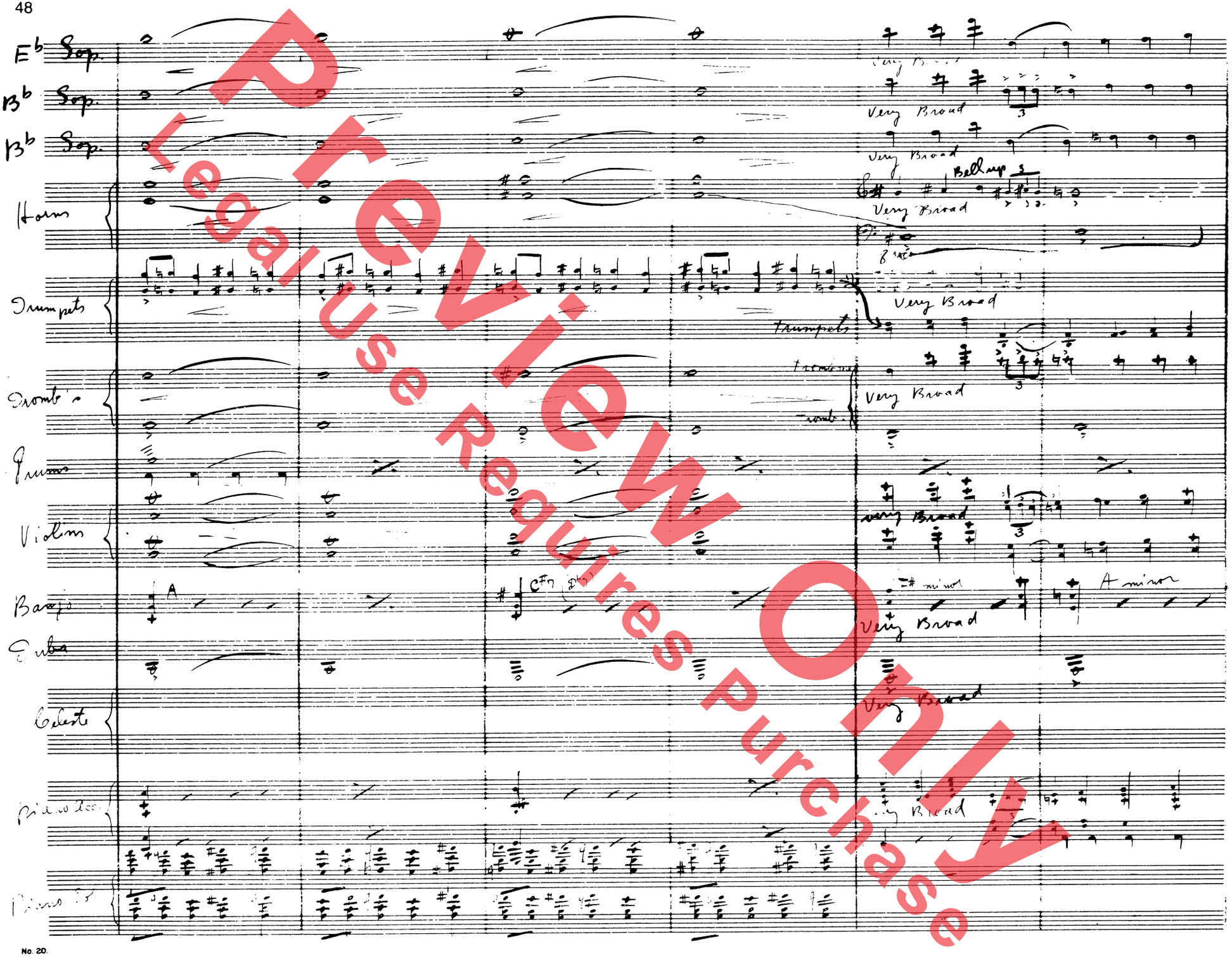

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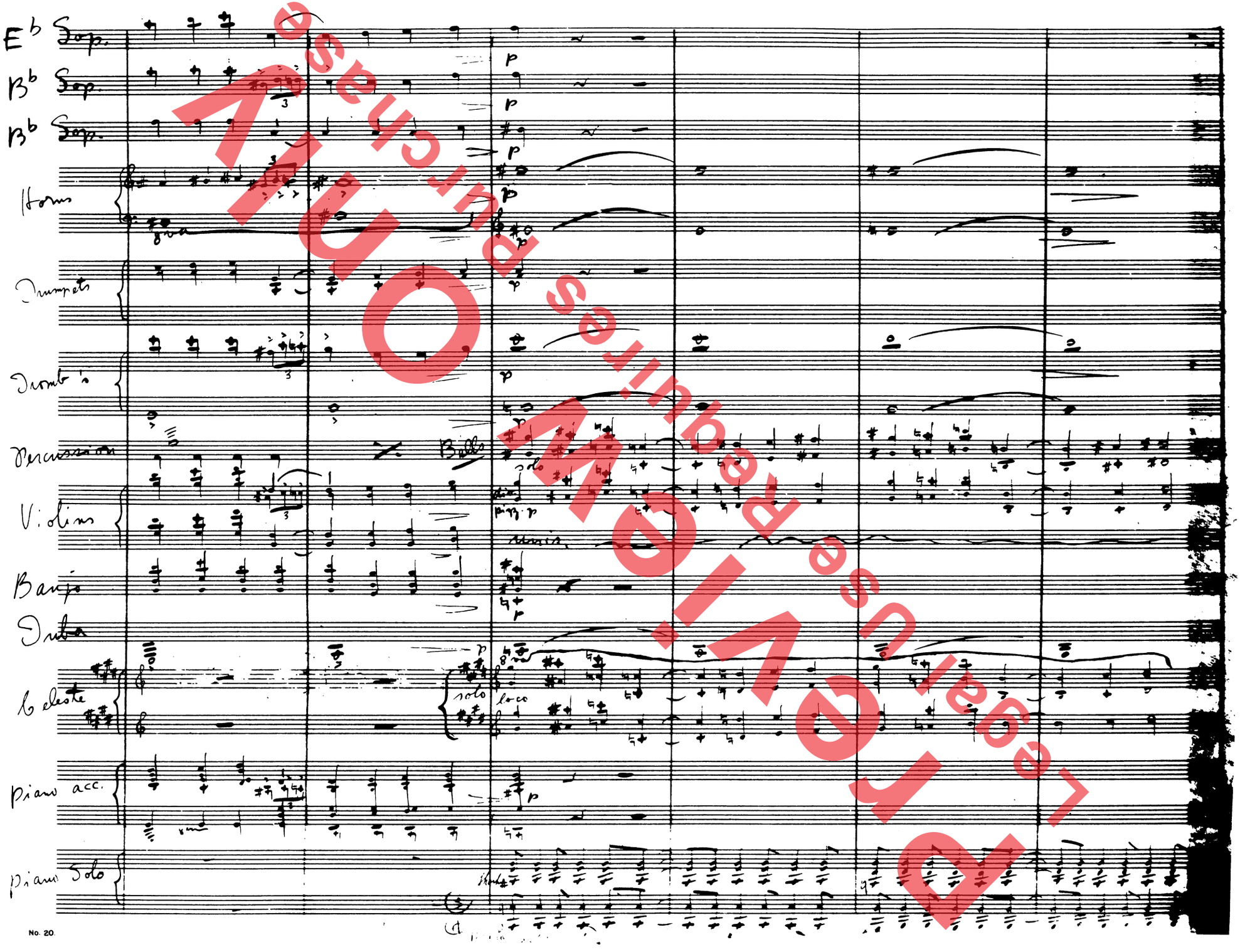

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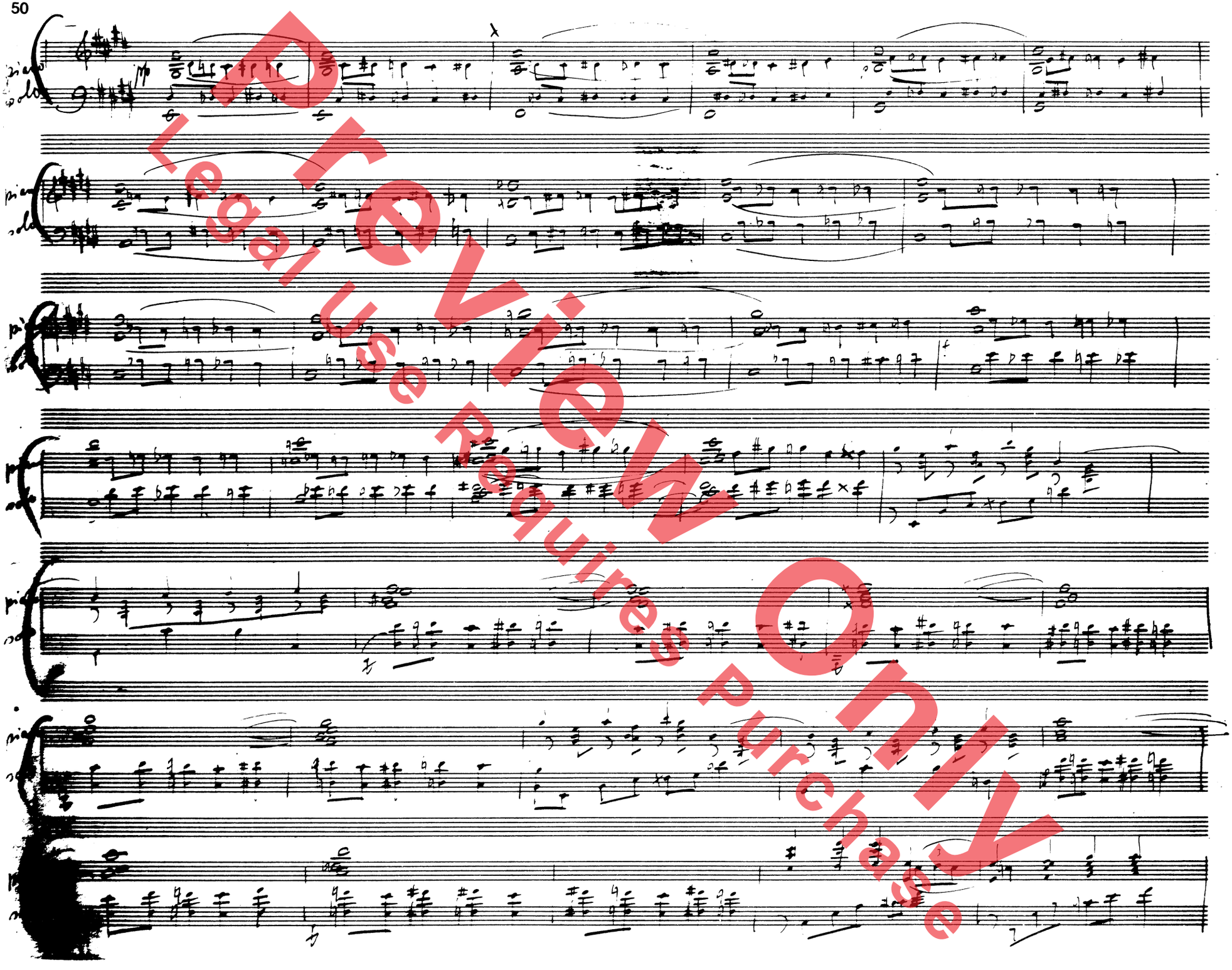

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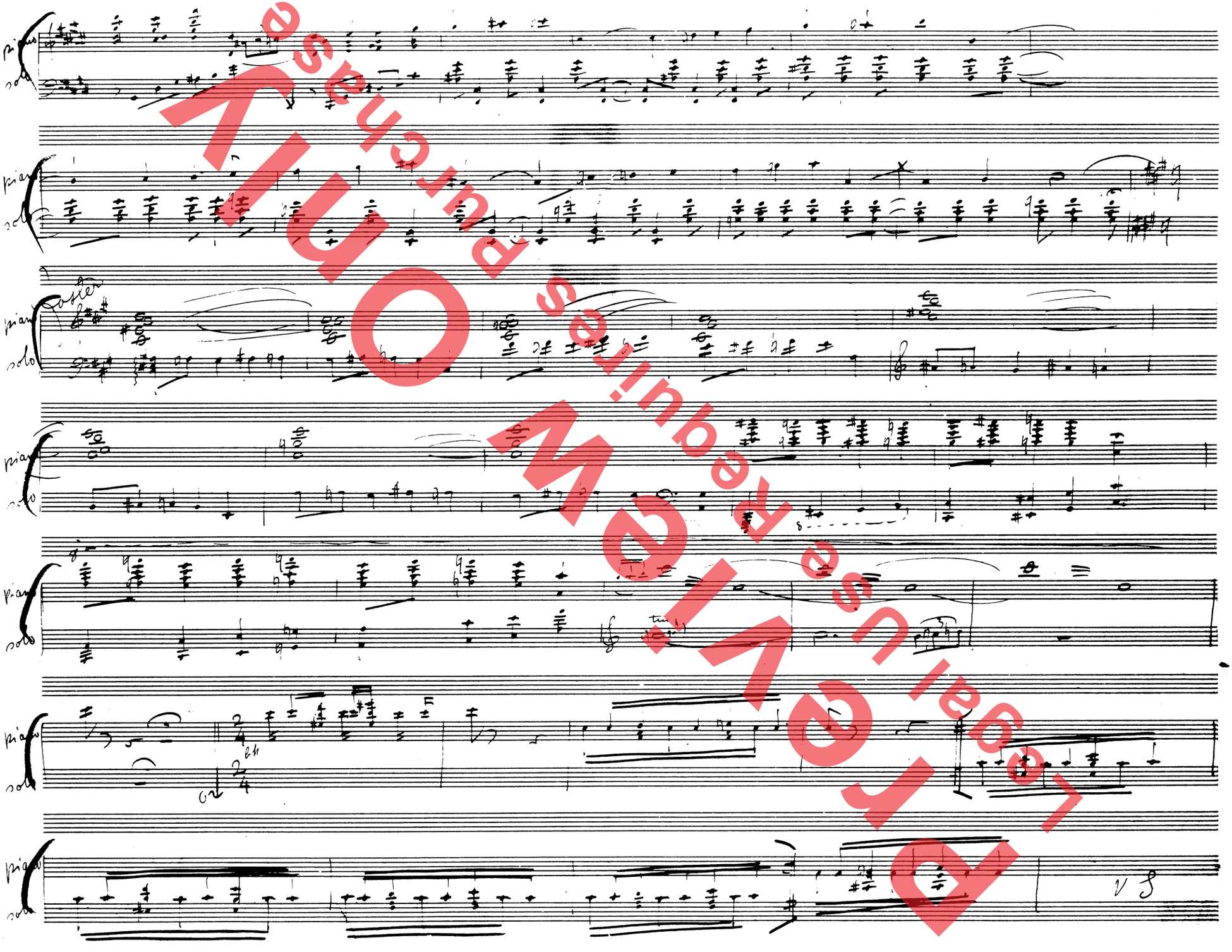

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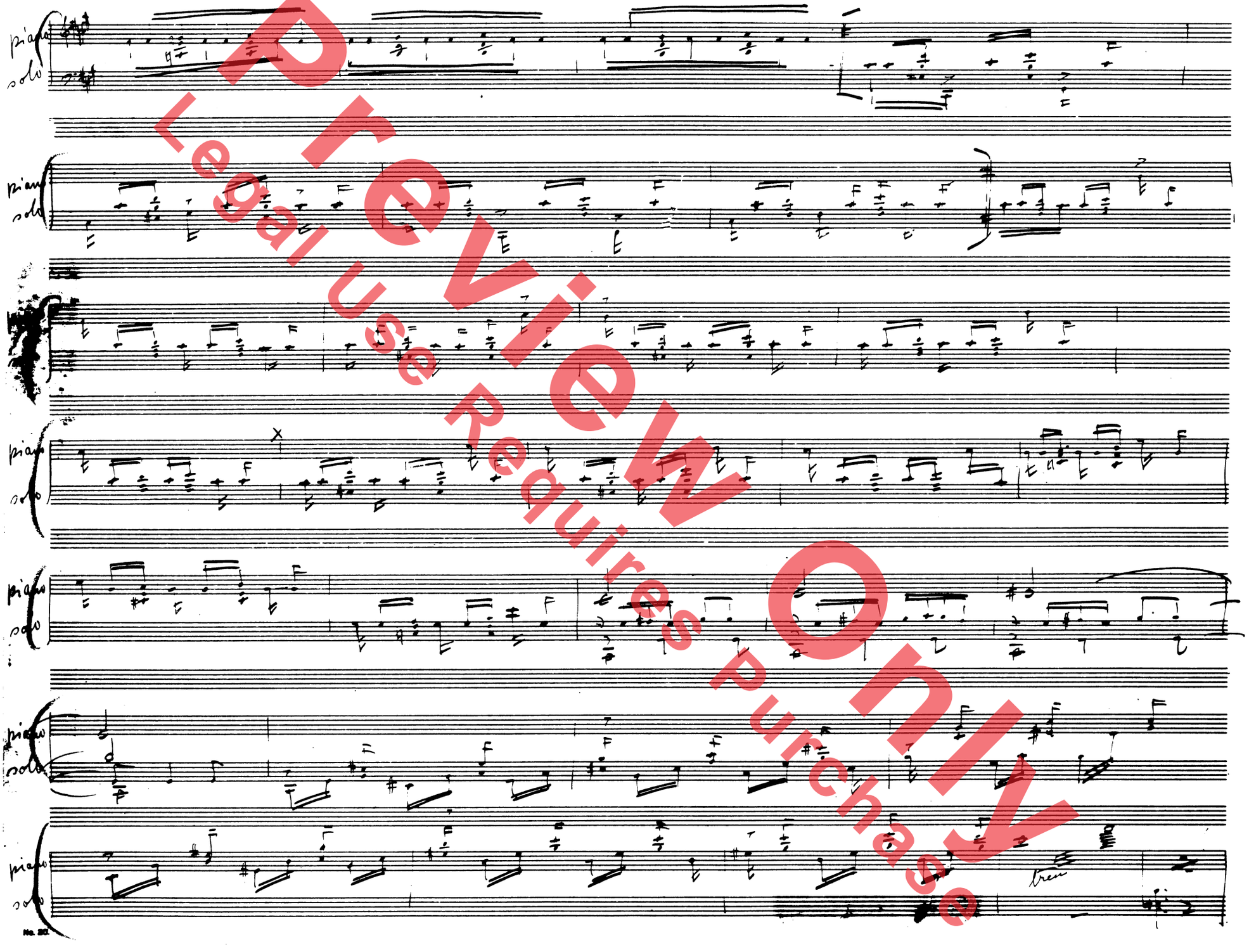

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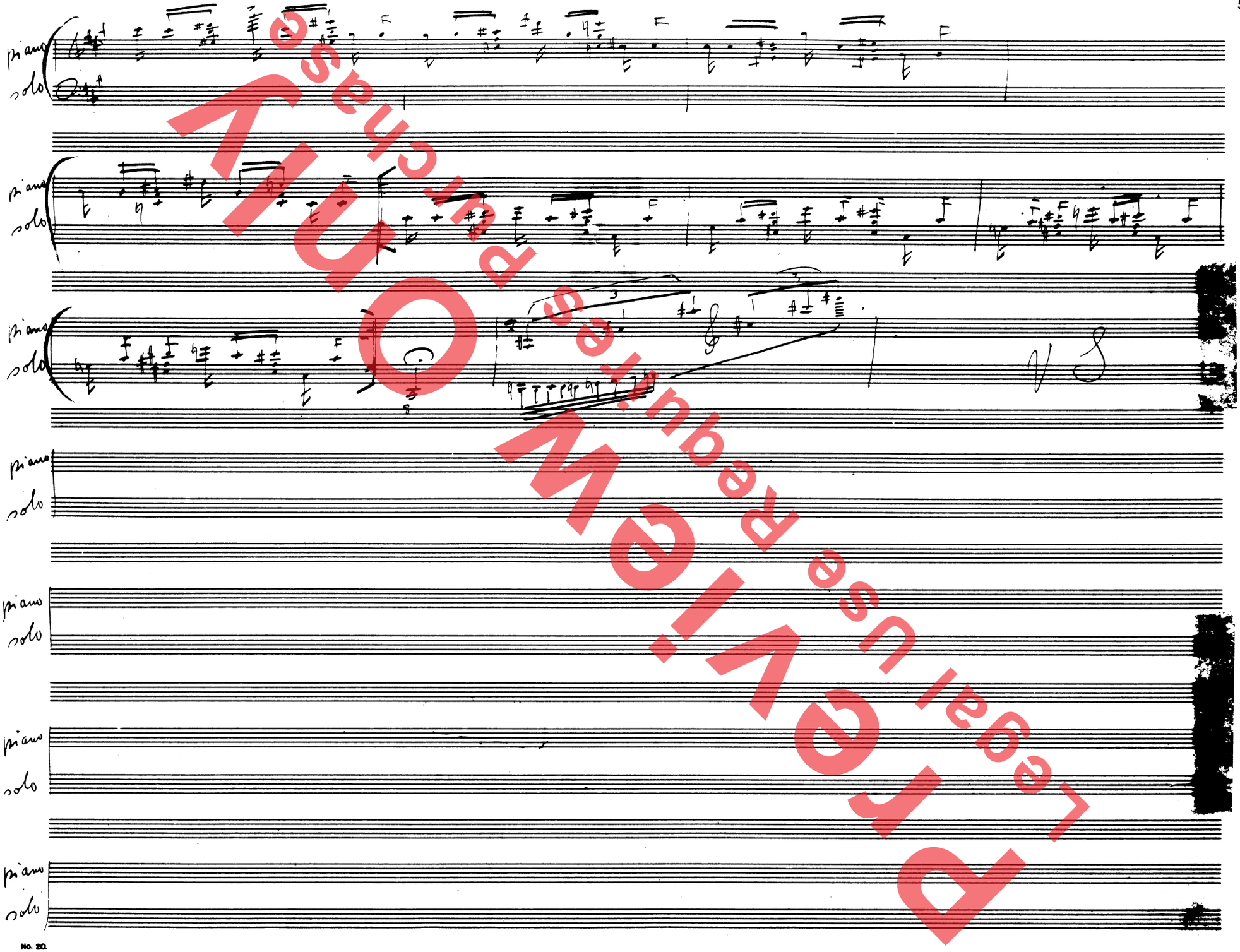

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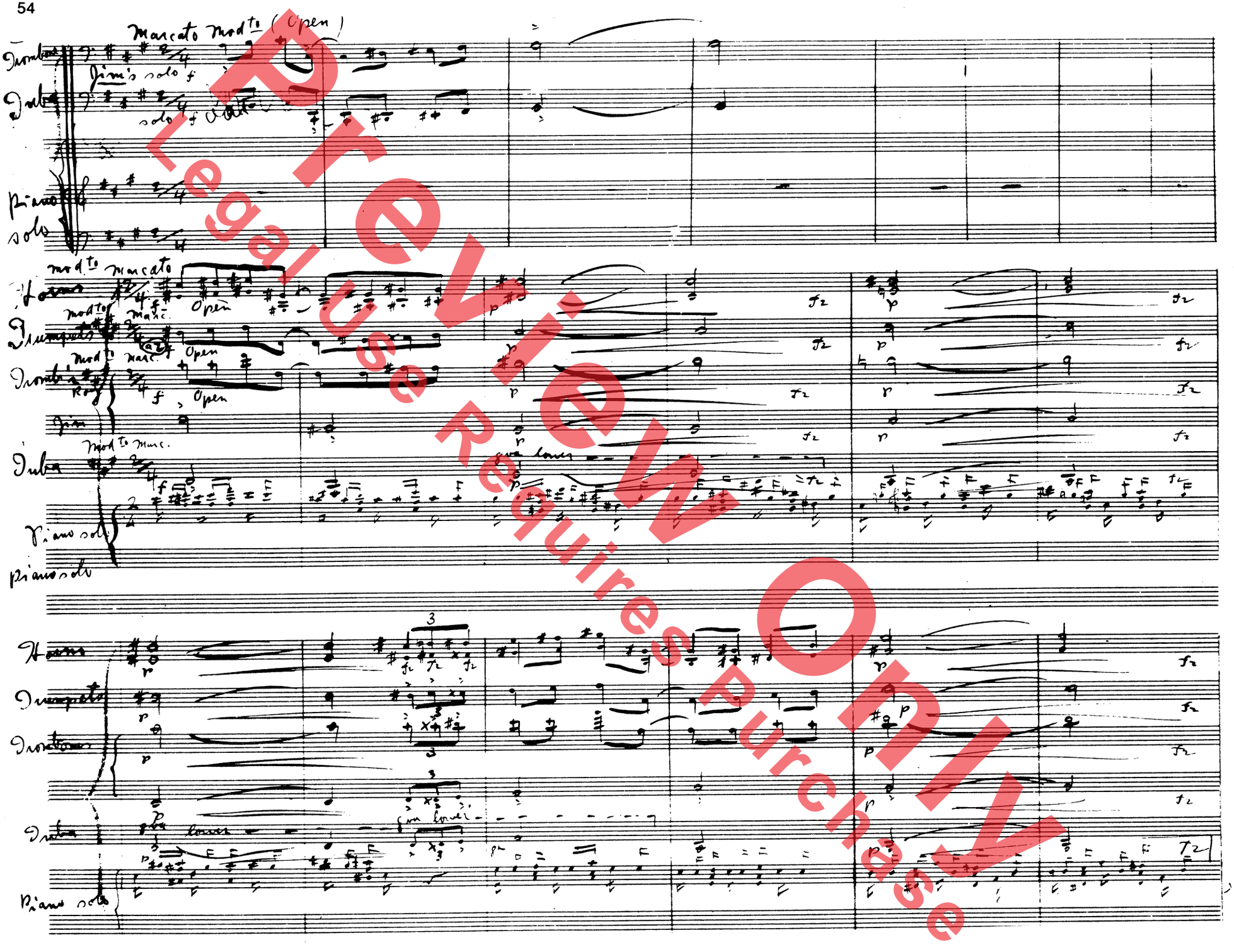

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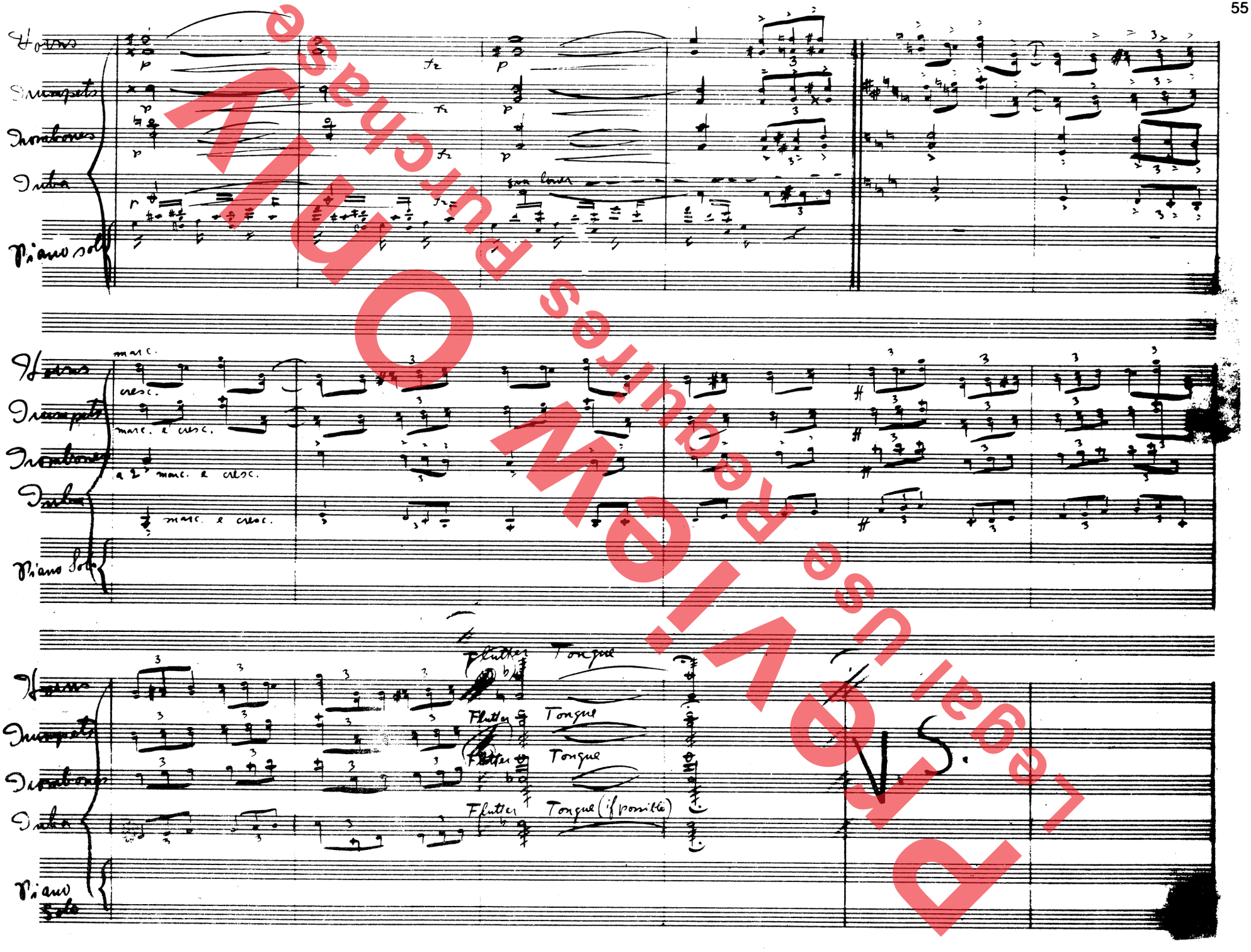

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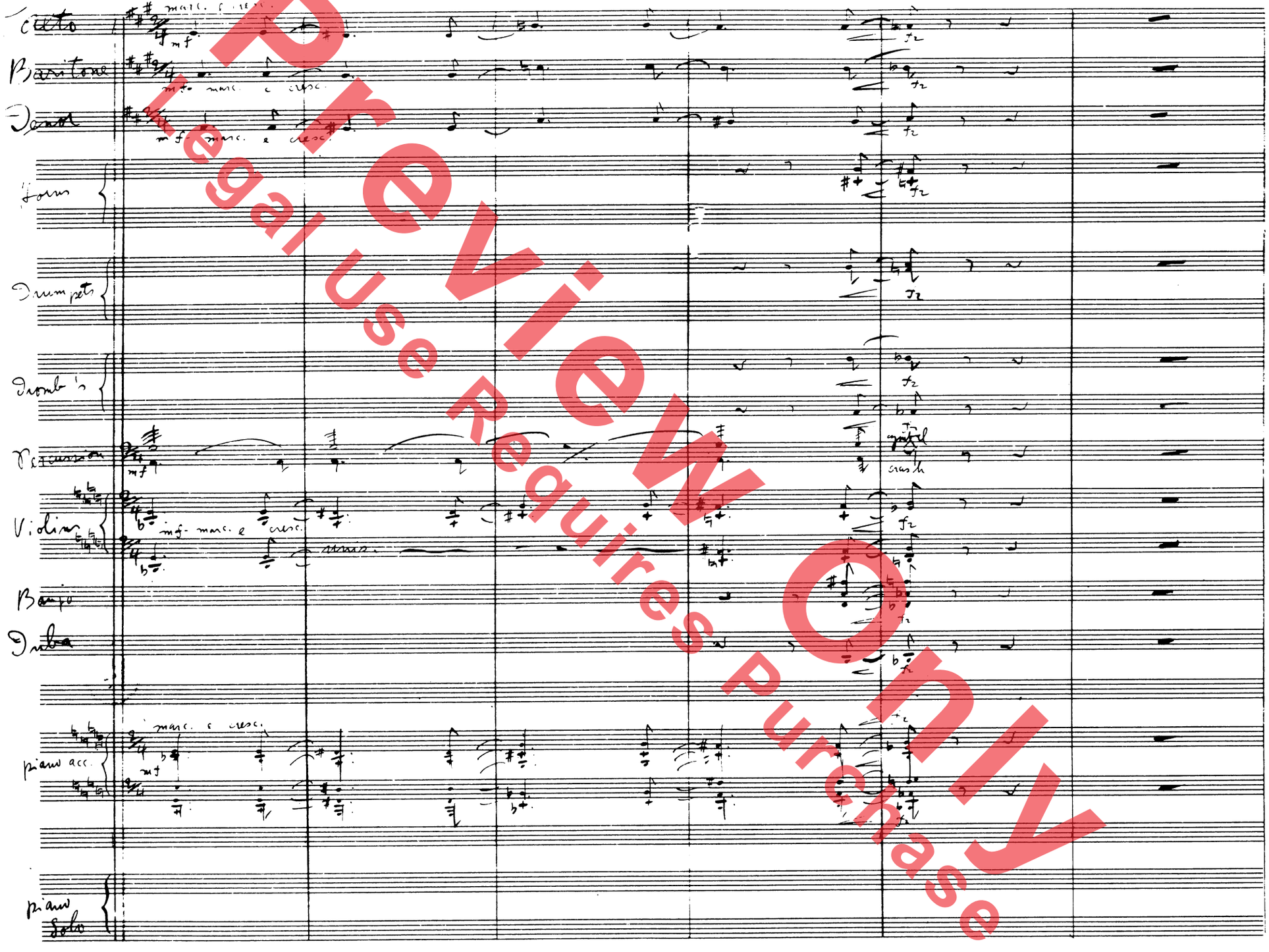

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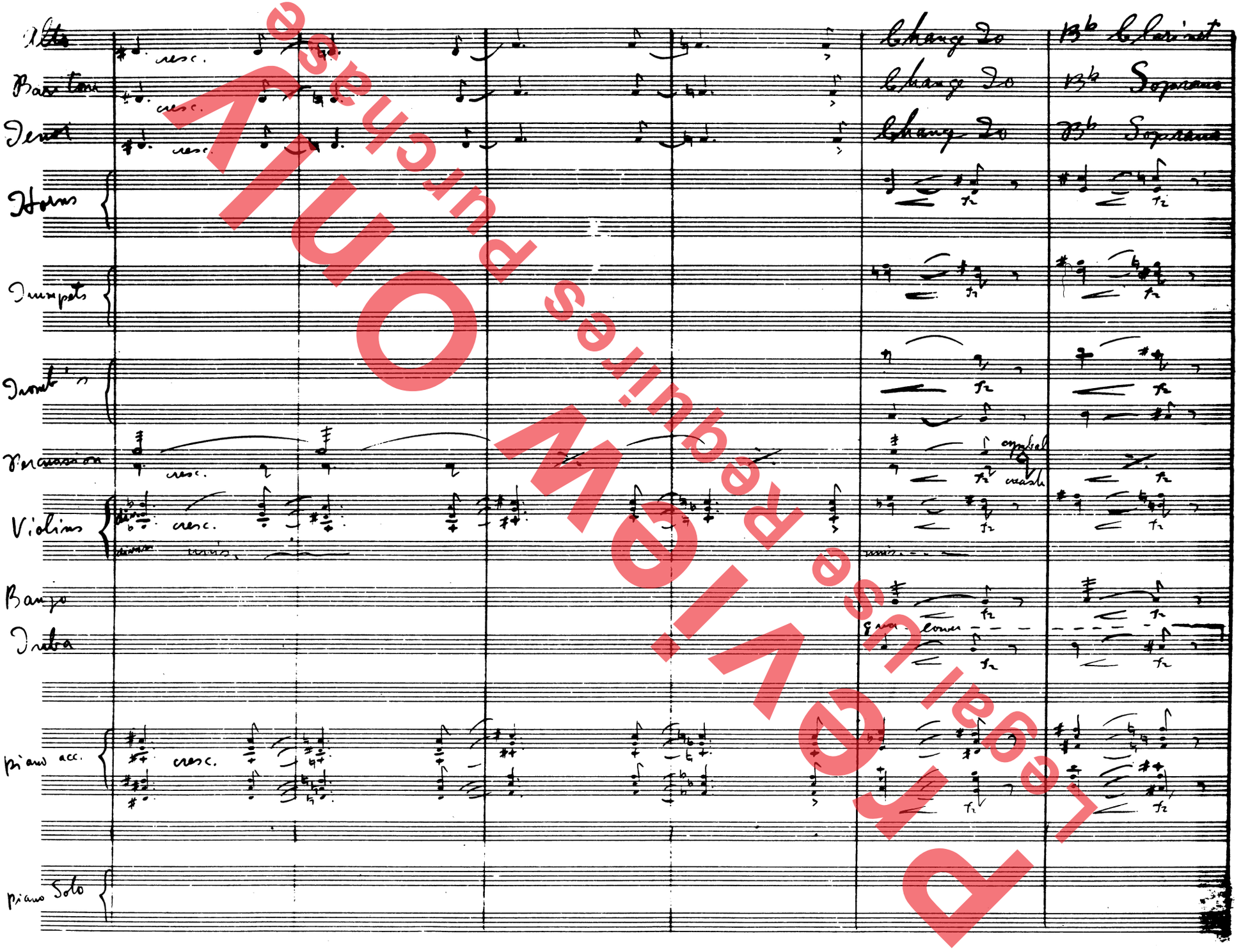

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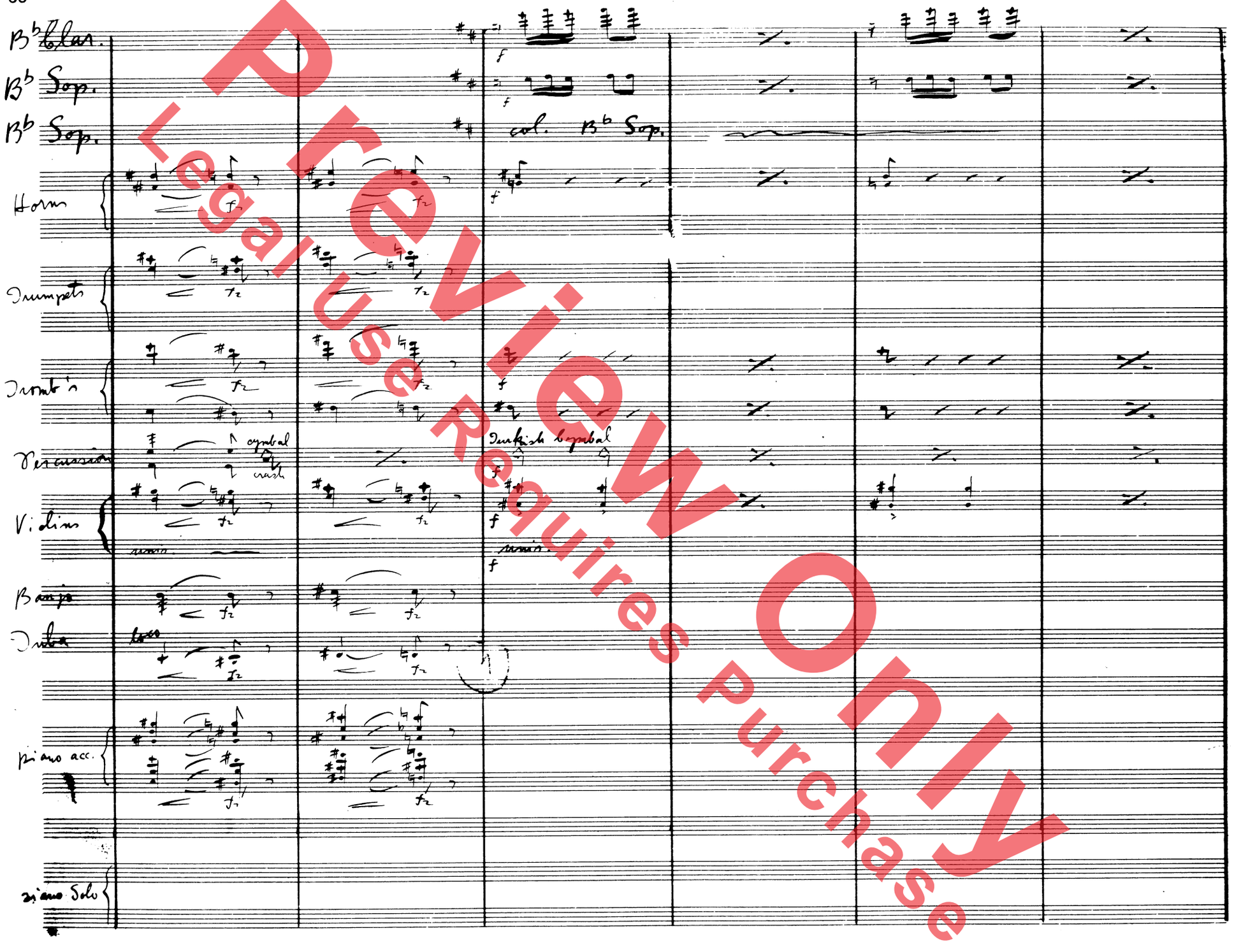

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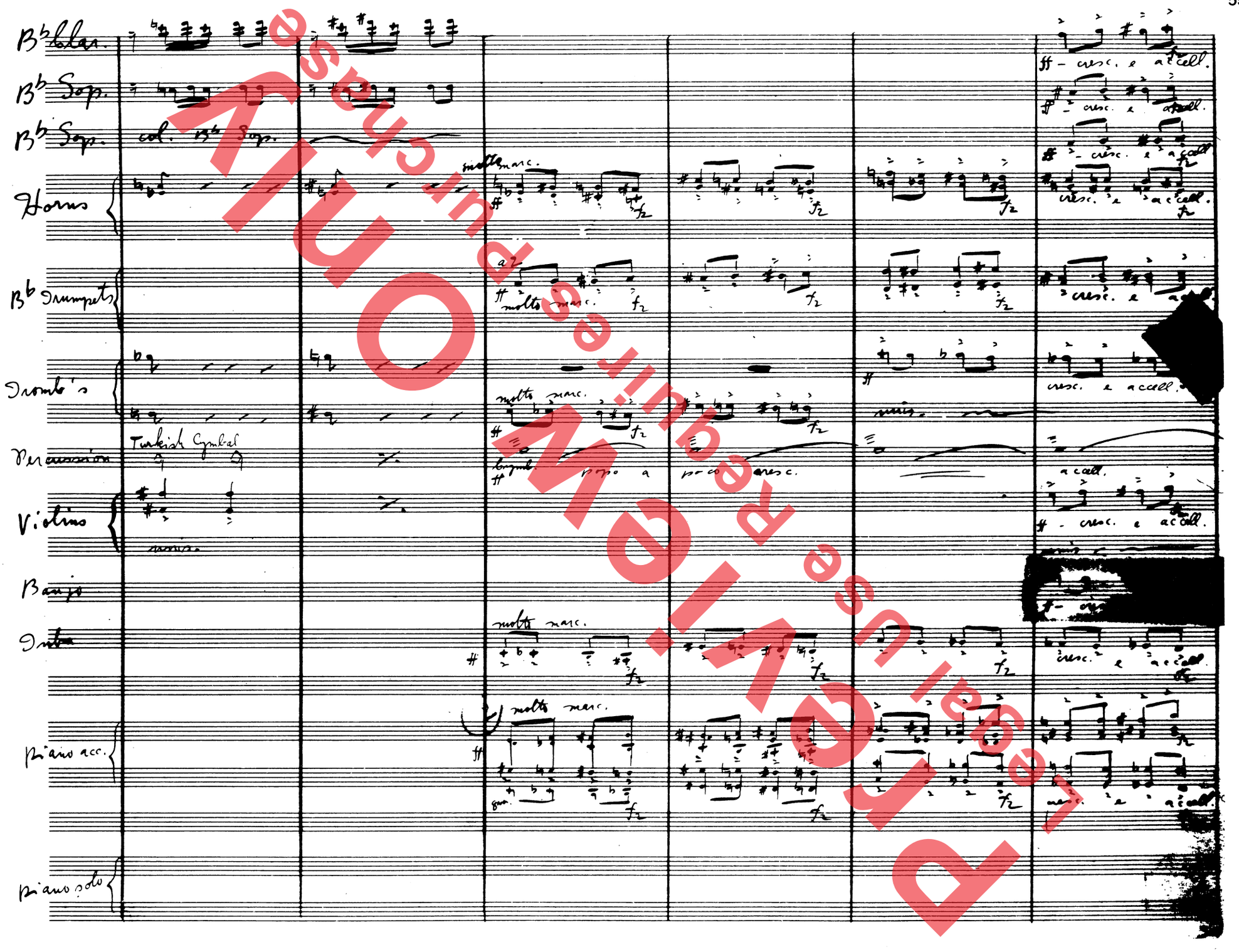

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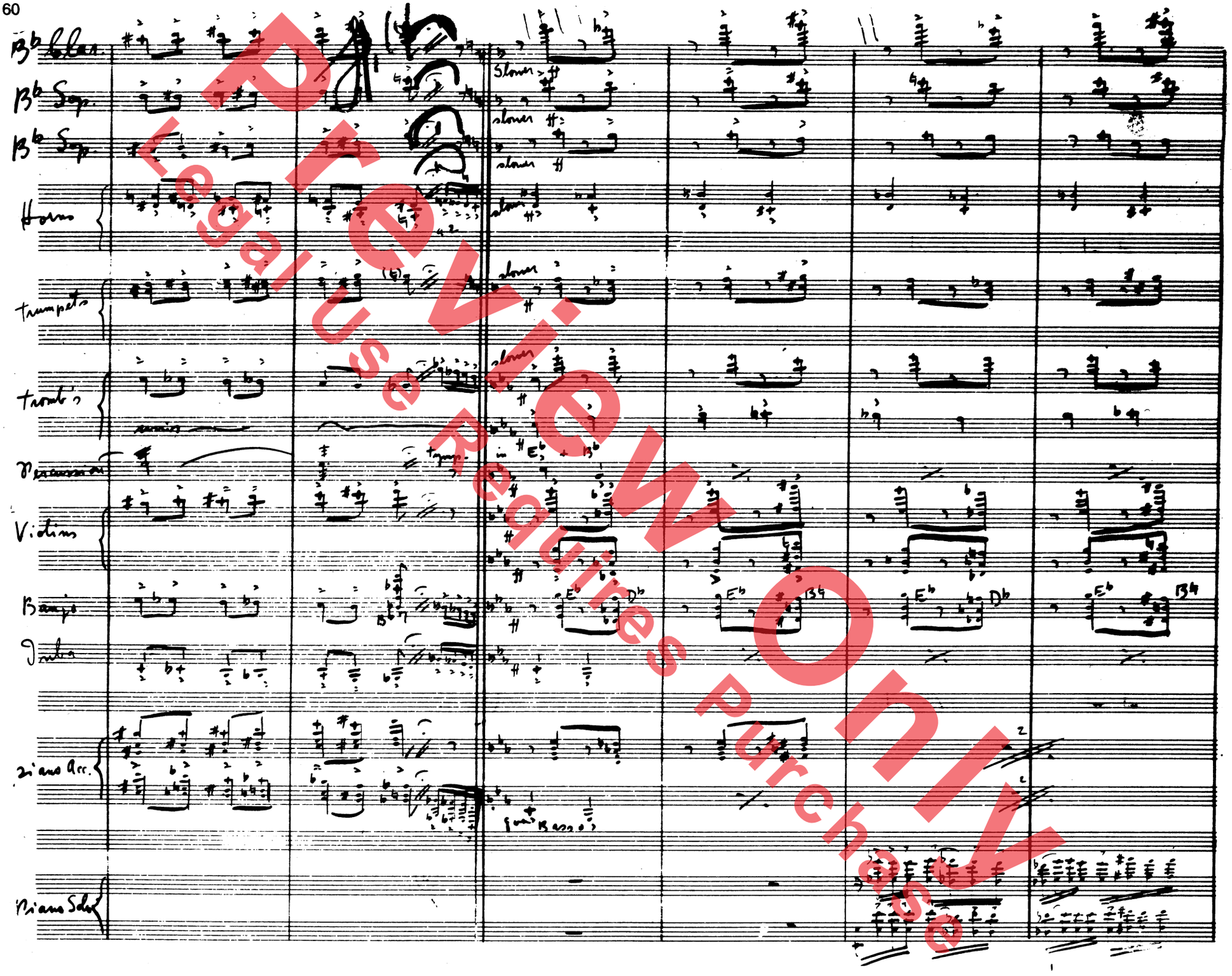

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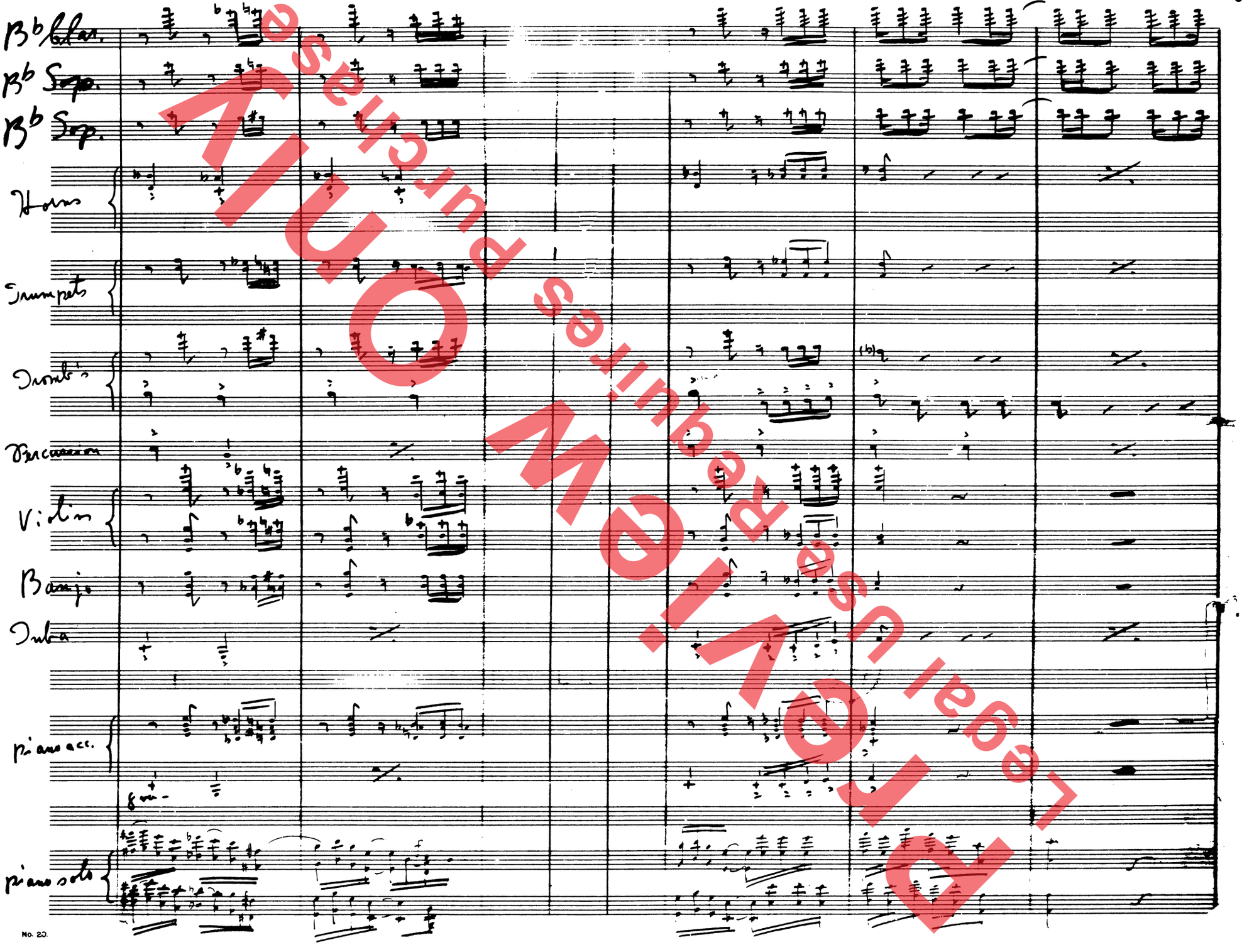

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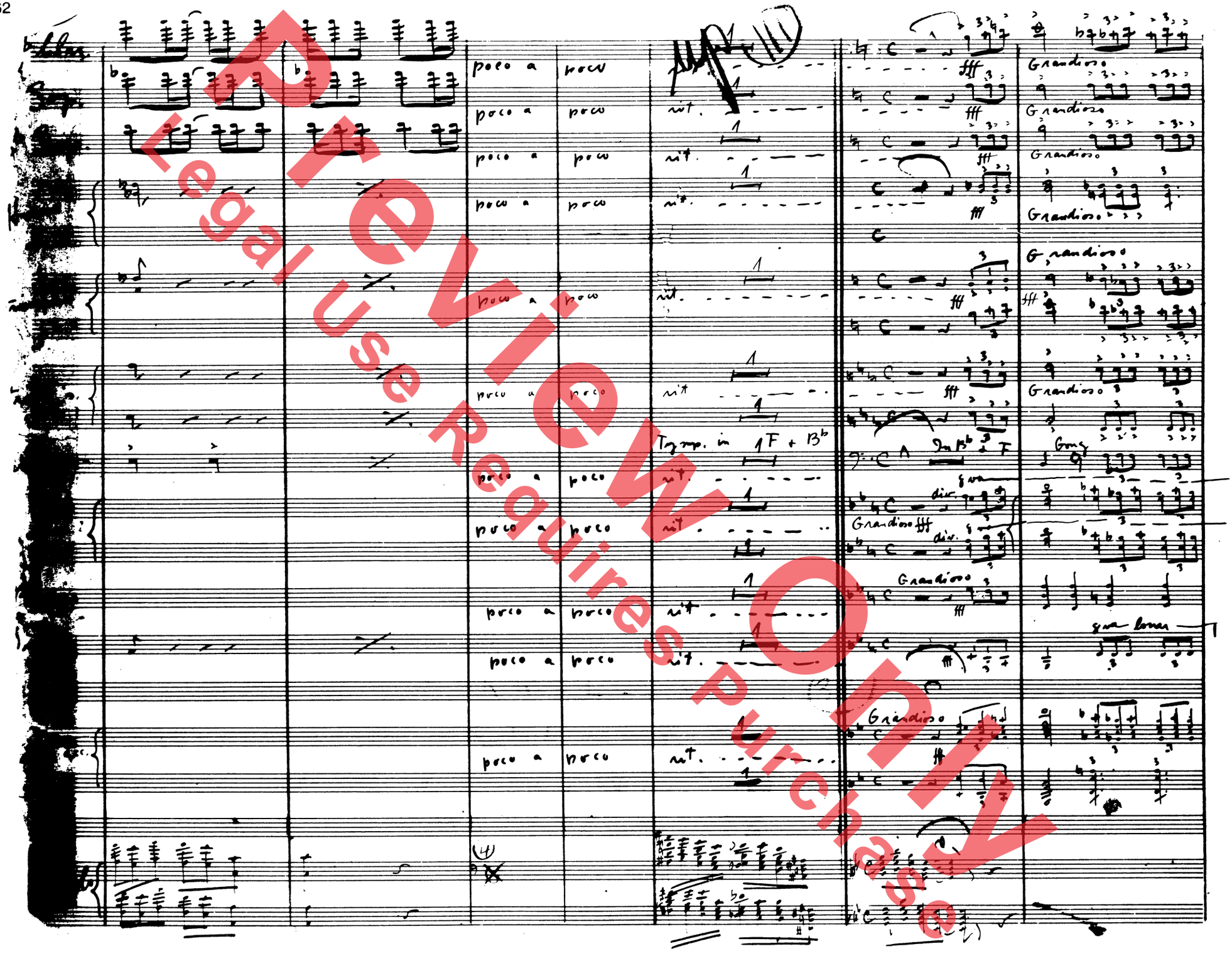

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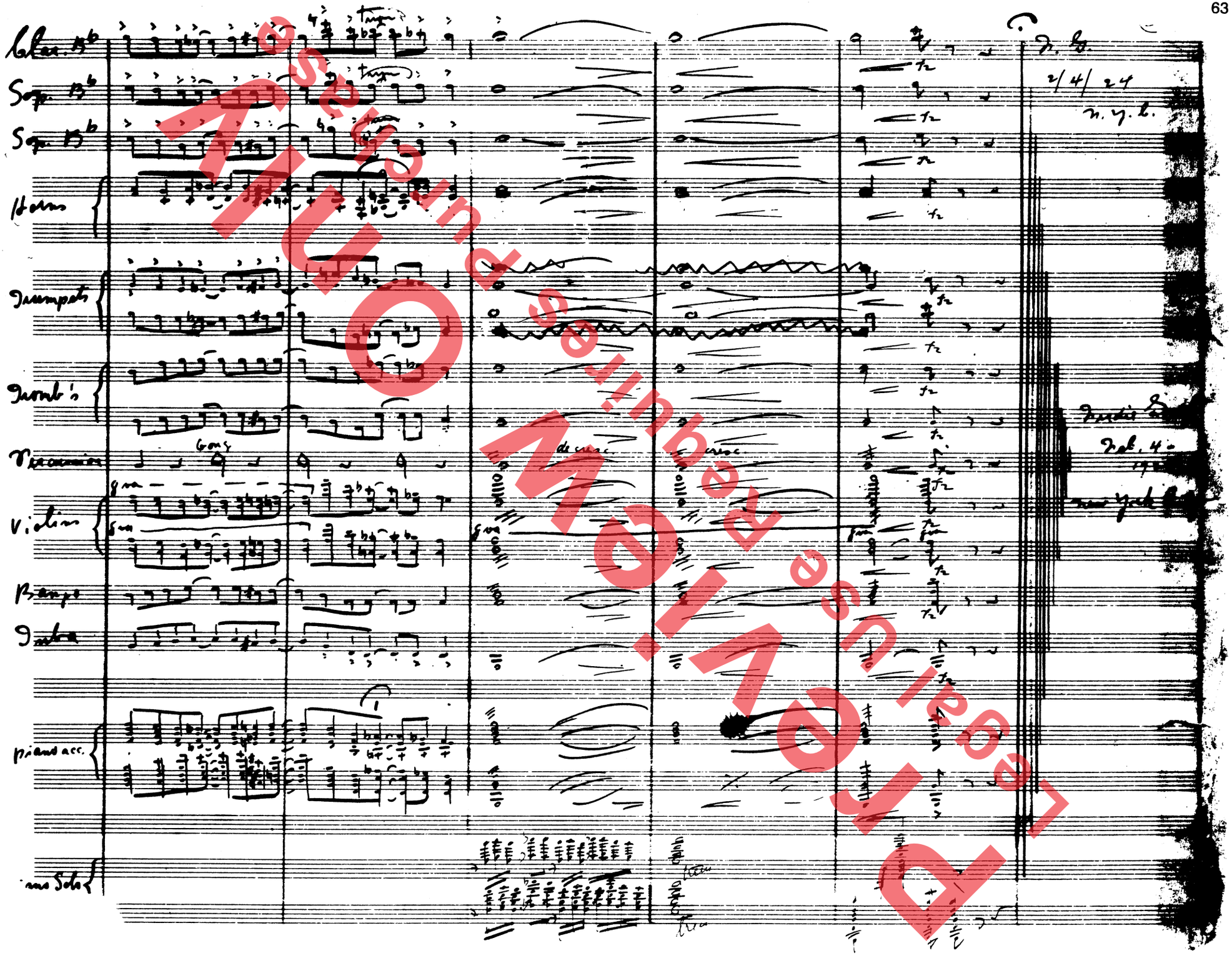

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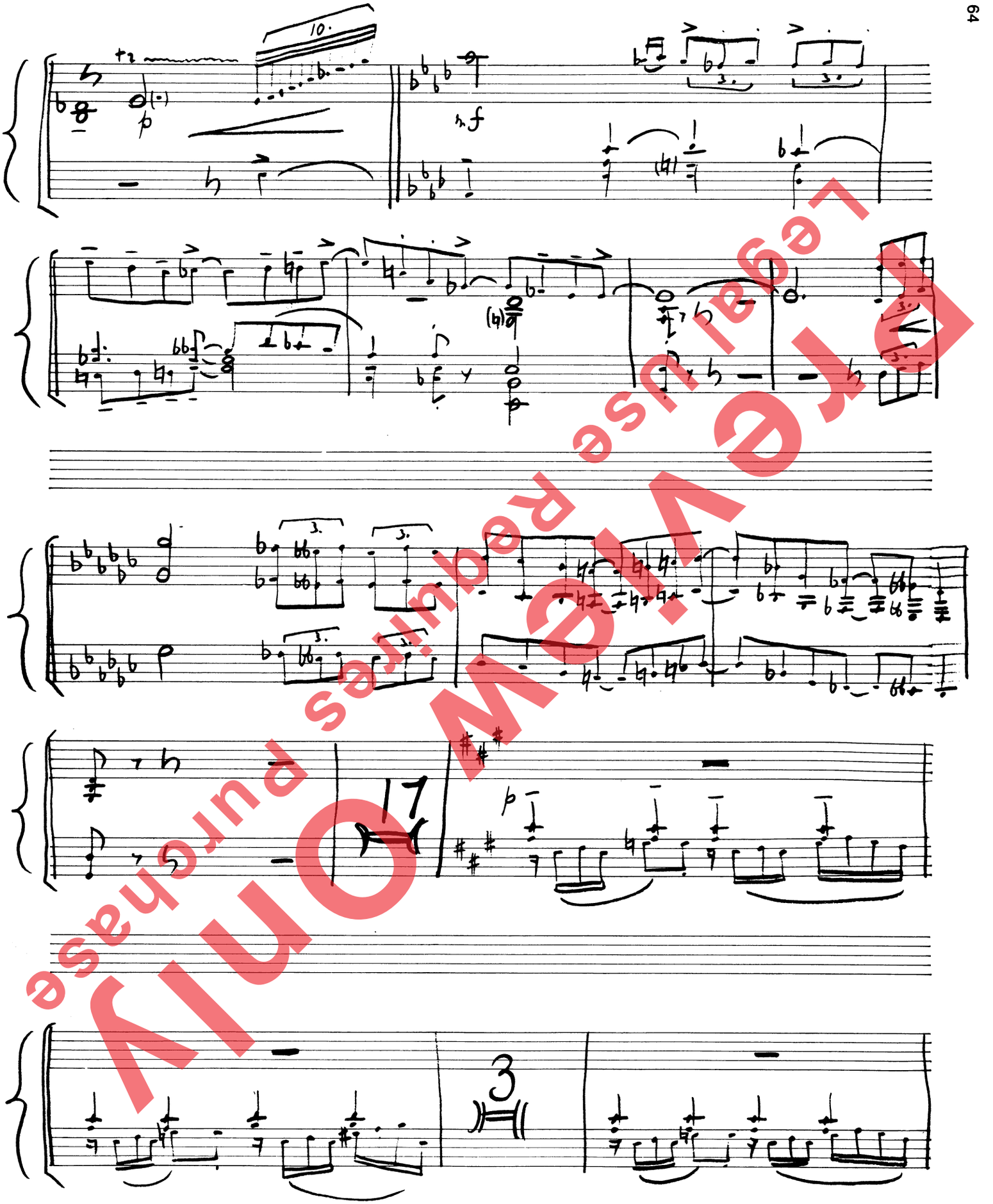

Plate 1: Page 2 of the unfinished Vladimir Dukelsky arrangement of the reduction from 1 bar before 2. Note the key signature change at the modulation to Gb, which Gershwin did not write in his 2-piano manuscript, and is not incorporated in any published version of the *RHAPSODY IN BLUE*. (Also note key signature at the top of the page should be Bb major.)

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