Perdido

By H. J. Lengsfelder
Ervin Drake and Juan Tizol
Arranged by Duke Ellington

Transcribed by David Berger for Jazz at Lincoln Center

FULL SCORE

This transcription was made especially for *Essentially Ellington* 2000:
the Fifth Annual Jazz at Lincoln Center High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival.

Major support for the *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival is provided by the
Jack and Susan Rudin Educational and Scholarship Fund, Danny Kaye and Sylvia Fine Kaye Foundation, PepsiCo Foundation,
Surdna Foundation, Verve Music Group, National Endowment for the Arts, Ella Fitzgerald Charitable Foundation,
Charles Evans Hughes Memorial Foundation, and Gail & Alfred Engelberg (as of 6/20/01).

Annual High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival

Jazz at Lincoln Center

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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 four or five 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, 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 that 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 because 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 her. 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 a heavy vibrato on harmonized passages and a slight 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 at times. Try to match the speed of vibrato. 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 subtone 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 loudly in the loud part of the instrument and softly 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 1 of a measure would be released on beat 3.

9. Unless they are part of a legato background figure, long notes should be played somewhat ***fp***, accent and 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. <u>This is acoustic music.</u> 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 overamplification, 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. <u>Solos and rhythm section parts with chord changes should be improvised.</u> However, written passages should be learned because they are an important part 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 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 mutes create a wonderful sound (very close tothe human voice), but they also create some intonation problems that must be corrected by the lip only. 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.

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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" 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 just to 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 end together.

17. Brass must be very precise when playing short notes. Notes must be stopped with the tongue, à la Louis Armstrong!

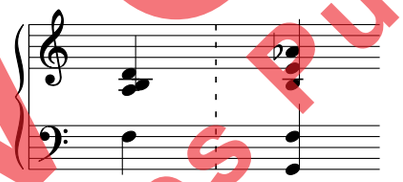
18. Above all, everyone's focus should remain at all times on the swing. As the great bassist Chuck Israels says, "The three most important things in jazz are rhythm, rhythm, and rhythm, in that order." Or as Bubber Miley (Ellington's first star trumpeter) said, "It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that swing."

GLOSSARY

The following are terms that 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 tonic to the sub-dominant and cycle back to the tonic: I V/IV IV $^{\#}$IV° I (second inversion) V/II V/V V I.
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 and a 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 of 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 ♭9 and a 13. 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 — what players play: a tune or series of notes.
HARMONY — chords and voicings.
ORCHESTRATION — instrumentation and tone colors.

— David Berger

Special thanks to Andrew Homzy for editing,
and Randa Kirshbaum and Todd Bashore for engraving.

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Perdido

Instrumentation:

Reed 1 Alto Sax
Reed 2 Alto Sax
Reed 3 Clarinet
Reed 4 Tenor Sax
Reed 5 Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3 (opt. flugelhorn or cornet)

Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Trombone 3 (opt. valve)
Piano
Bass
Drums

Original Recording Information:

Perdido, by H.J. Lengsfelder, Ervin Drake and Juan Tizol, arranged by Duke Ellington (7:37)
Recorded 9/8/59, New York City
Festival Session (Columbia 468402 2)

Johnny Hodges, Russell Procope, Jimmy Hamilton, Paul Gonsalves, and Harry Carney, reeds; Cat Anderson, Willie Cook, Clark Terry, Ray Nance, Shorty Baker, and Andres Ford, trumpets; Britt Woodman and Quentin Jackson, trombones; John Sanders, valve trombone; Duke Ellington, piano; Jimmy Woode, bass; Sam Woodyard, drums.

Rehearsal Notes:

- "Perdido" is one of the simplest and most performed jazz tunes in the canon. This is Ellington's original arrangement from 1942, but transcribed from a 1959 recording featuring an extended solo by Clark Terry on flugelhorn and a faster tempo than the 1942 recording.

- The figures are simple and repetitious throughout—easy to memorize, so that everyone's attention can be directed to the groove. What we are dealing with here is straight-ahead swing. That's it. Nothing more, nothing less. The bass and drums must sustain a steady, propulsive beat with a nice wide pocket. It is everyone else's job to find the pocket and stay in there.

- It may seem odd that Trumpet 2 plays the bridge on the first chorus (C), and then Trumpet 3 plays from E to the end. It would be more logical for Trumpet 3 to play the first bridge as well. The reason is that in 1942 Ray Nance (2nd trumpet), Ben Webster (tenor), and Rex Stewart (3rd trumpet—actually cornet) all played solos. Ray remained in the band and continued to play his part, while the others left. When Clark Terry joined the band in the early '50s, Duke made this piece his feature. Tradition was an important element in the Ellington band both on the stand and off. Once a part was assigned to a player, it never changed hands (unless that member left the organization). However, you may choose to consolidate the trumpet solo into one part.

- I suggest that the soloist stands in front of the band. This helps the audience to hear him or her better and creates some visual interest. The changes are very simple: ii V I (four times), rhythm bridge, ii V I (twice). The tonic chords are two bars in duration. To relieve the monotony of the tonic chords, we frequently use or imply turnarounds. In B♭ concert, a few suggestions are as follows: B♭ G7-9, Dm7 G7-9, B♭ Dm7 G7-9, B♭ Dm7 D♭7, B♭ E♭7 Dm7 D♭°. These can be combined with each other. The soloist may want to delve into more adventurous territory like Dm7 G7 D♭m7 G♭7. I don't recommend this kind of thing for the piano or bass. It deviates too far from the ensemble writing.

- The brass figure at A should be played with energy and joy. I like putting a big accent on the first note and then playing a little softer for the remainder of the figure.

- The saxes should be careful to make the dynamics at I (two bars *f*, two bars *p*). This creates a call and response within the saxophones.

- The chorus from M through P is a special kind of dialogue between Clark Terry and Duke and Sam Woodyard. Clark (playing in double time) is trading ones with the other two. This can be preserved or some other routine can be put in its place.

- At U the Clarinet, Trumpet 1, and Trombones 1 and 2 should play with accents, dynamics, and blues inflection. They are only four horns against the rest of the ensemble, so they must play with enough volume and conviction to overpower the unison saxes and trombone.

- Starting a beat before Y, there is a series of four scronches (4th beat syncopations). It is customary to play scronches with heavy accents. Try it. See if it makes the music come alive.

—David Berger

COMMENTS FROM WYNTON MARSALIS:

This is a good song to teach members of the band how to improvise on a harmonic progression because it is not difficult and features the classic "I Got Rhythm" bridge. This is just a straight swing for the rhythm section. The bass and drums must be balanced and together, sounding good and looking cute, in order for this arrangement to hold our interest. The plunger work at A in the brass can be awkward if not placed in a swinging part of the time. Little scoops like the ones the saxophones have in the third measure of C can be corny if not played with the proper intent. Also, the comping of the piano player is very important in this arrangement, especially the way he or she answers the reeds at K. At U the clarinet is the top voice of a brass voicing; these types of voicings must be isolated and understood in order to sound good. Make sure that the background figures are not too loud underneath the soloist. This piece can be very hard on the trumpet soloists. If you choose to play this, make sure you have a soloist who can play it. Make sure the trumpet soloist knows the harmonic progressions that he or she is playing on. It's not that difficult to learn, but it does require some effort.

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ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

The Jazz at Lincoln Center *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Competition & Festival is one of the most prestigious and unique educational programs available for high school jazz bands in North America. Its goals are to disseminate Duke Ellington compositions to high school jazz bands, encourage the study and performance of Ellington's music, and foster mentoring relationships between students and professional musicians. *Essentially Ellington* was introduced in 1996, has expanded every year, and is now open to every high school jazz band in the United States and Canada. Each year, Jazz at Lincoln Center produces original-arrangement scores of several Ellington works, which are sent along with other educational materials to all eligible bands expressing interest in the program. Bands can submit audition tapes of their performance of these works either for competition or "for comments only." Each band that submits a tape receives numerical and written feedback. From the competing bands, 15 bands are selected as finalists and receive free in-school workshops with J@LC musicians. *Essentially Ellington* culminates in New York City with a multiday festival comprised of master classes, a combo showcase, live competition, and a concert at Avery Fisher Hall featuring the top-placing bands, Artistic Director Wynton Marsalis, and the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

For more information about *Essentially Ellington*, please contact Jazz at Lincoln Center Education Department, 33 W. 60th Street, New York, NY 10023, (212) 258-9800 (phone), (212) 258-9900 (fax), or ee@jazzatlincolncenter.org (e-mail).

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PERDIDO

Med. swing ♩ = 180

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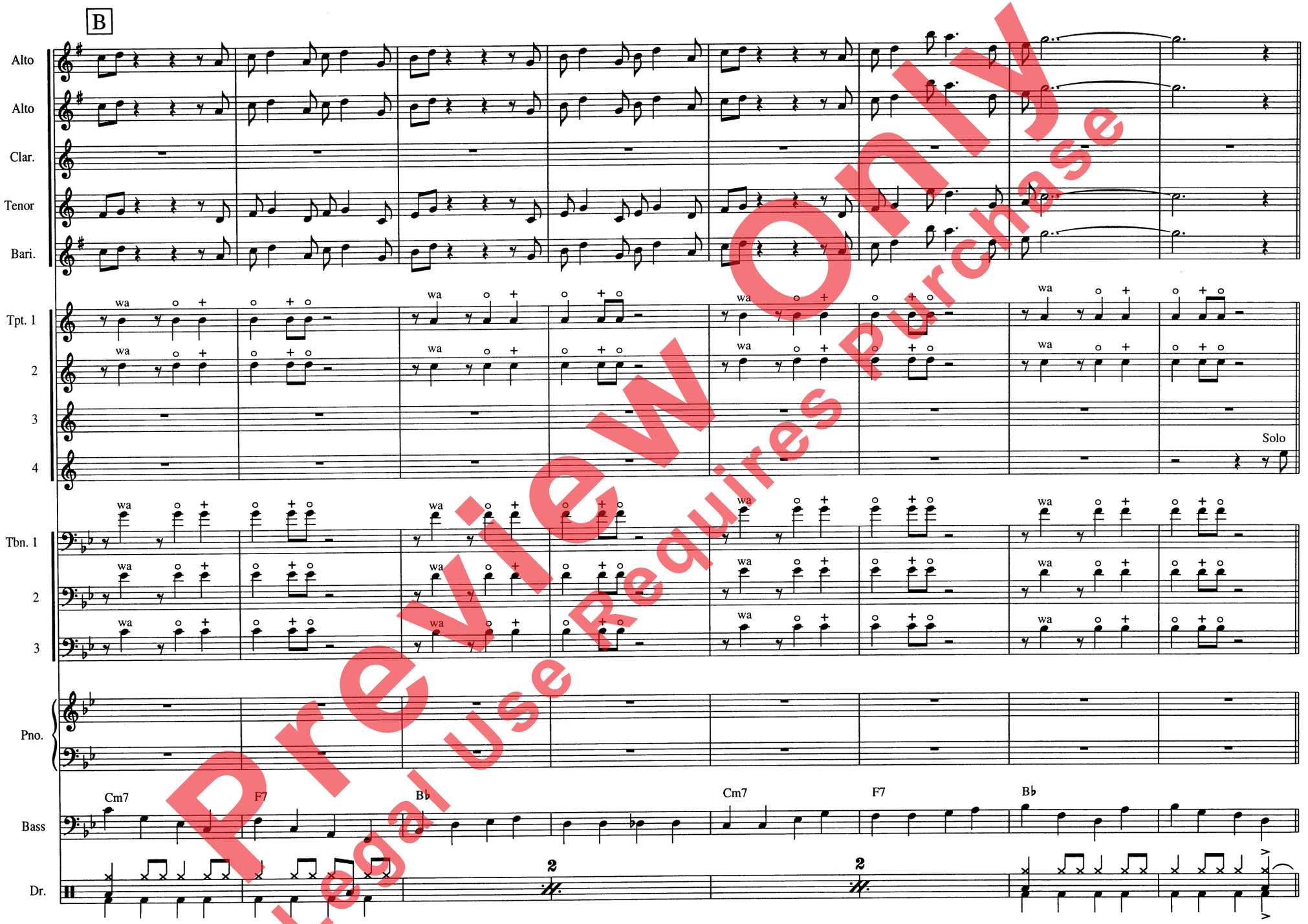

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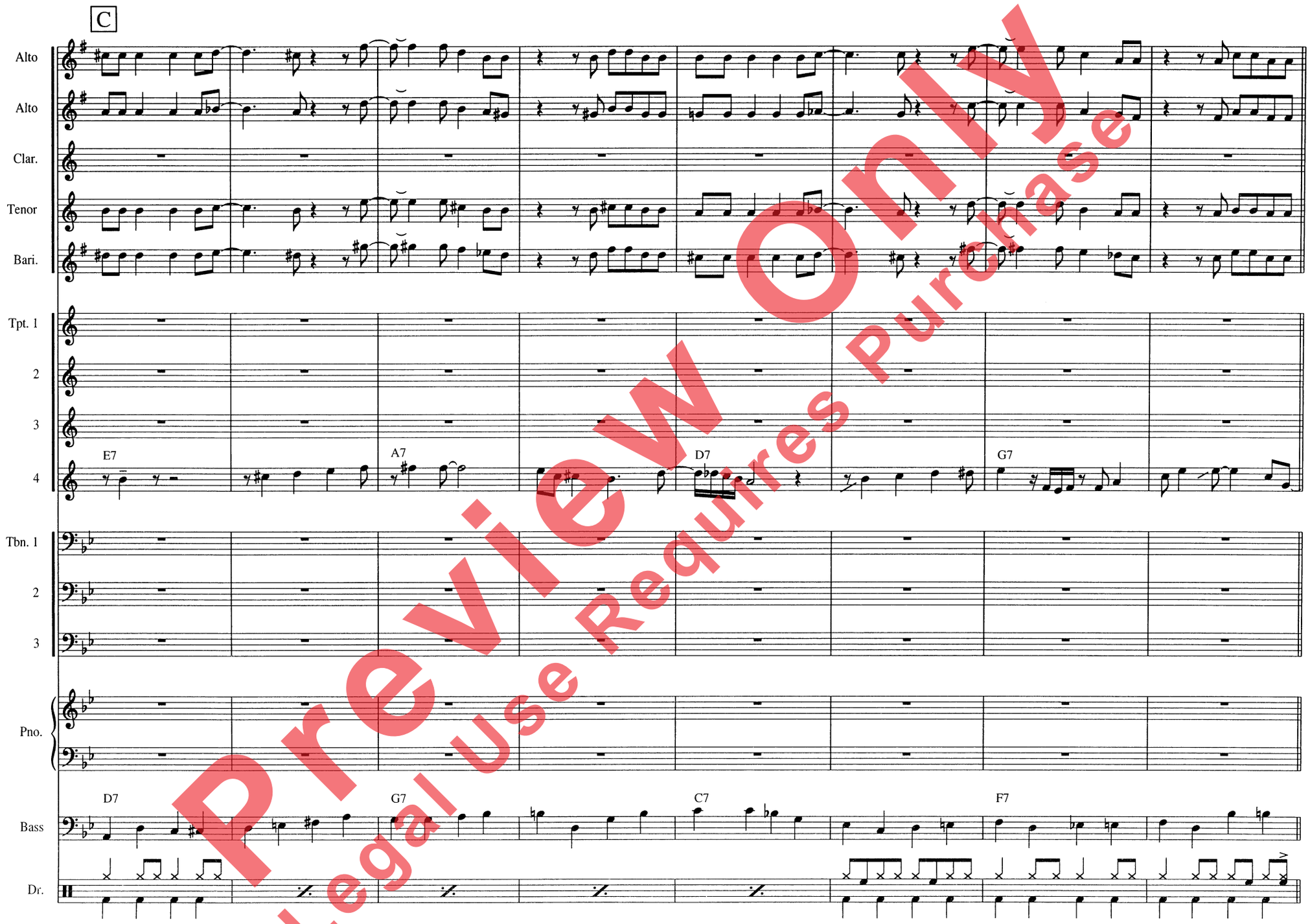

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D

Alto
Alto
Clar.
Tenor
Bari.
Tpt. 1
2
3
4
Tbn. 1
2
3
Pno.
Bass
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Cm7 F7 B♭ Cm7 F7 B♭

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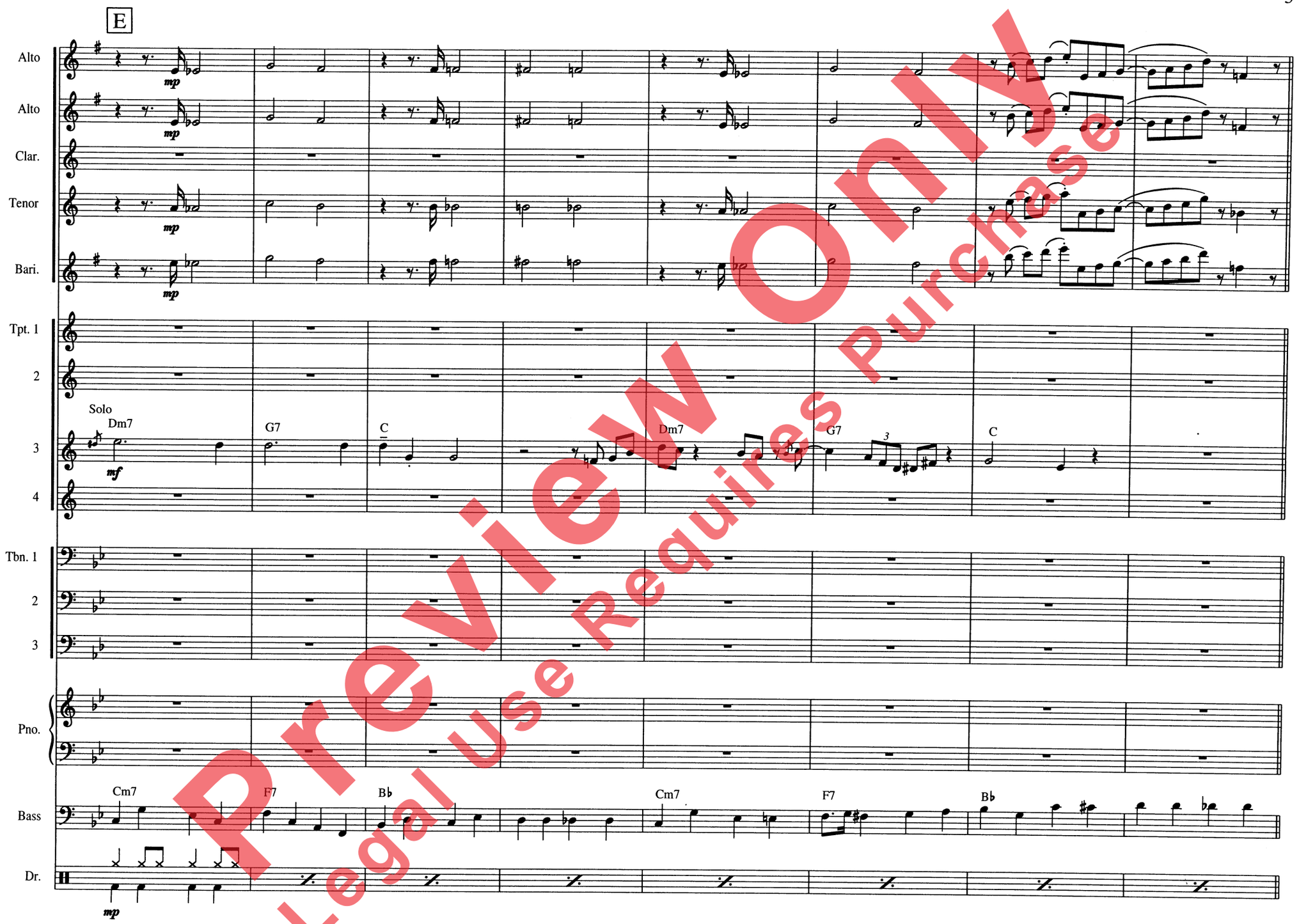

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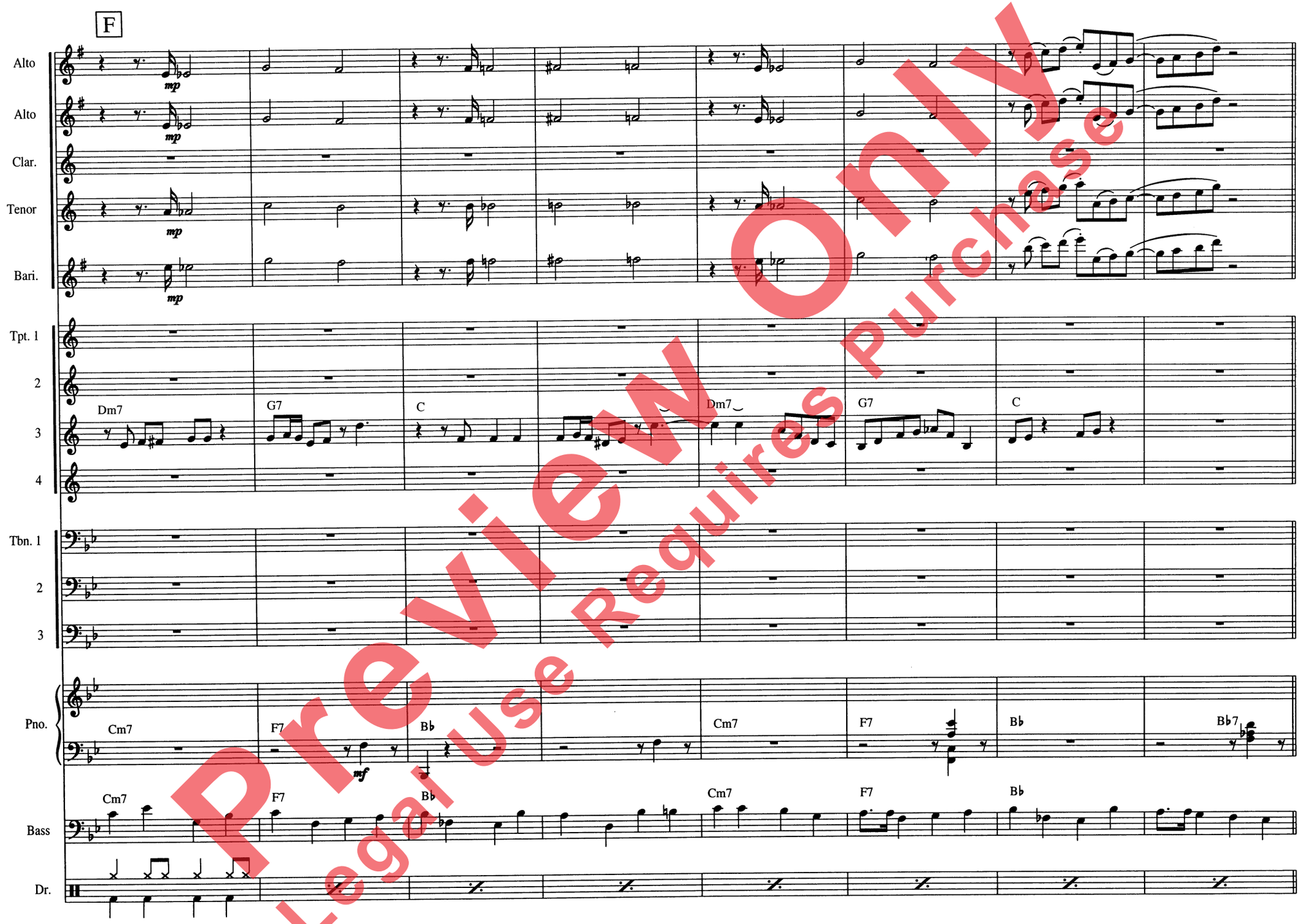

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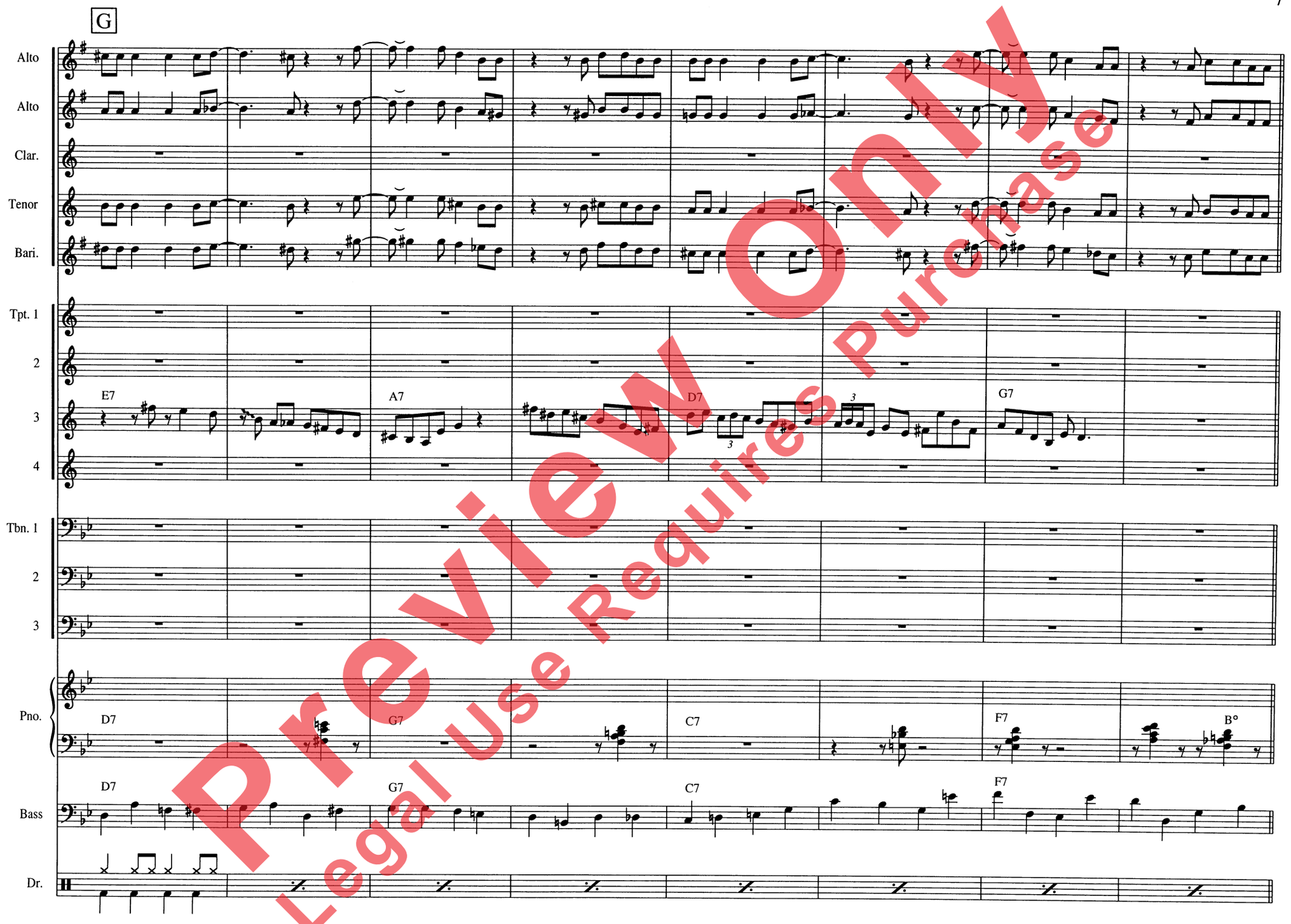

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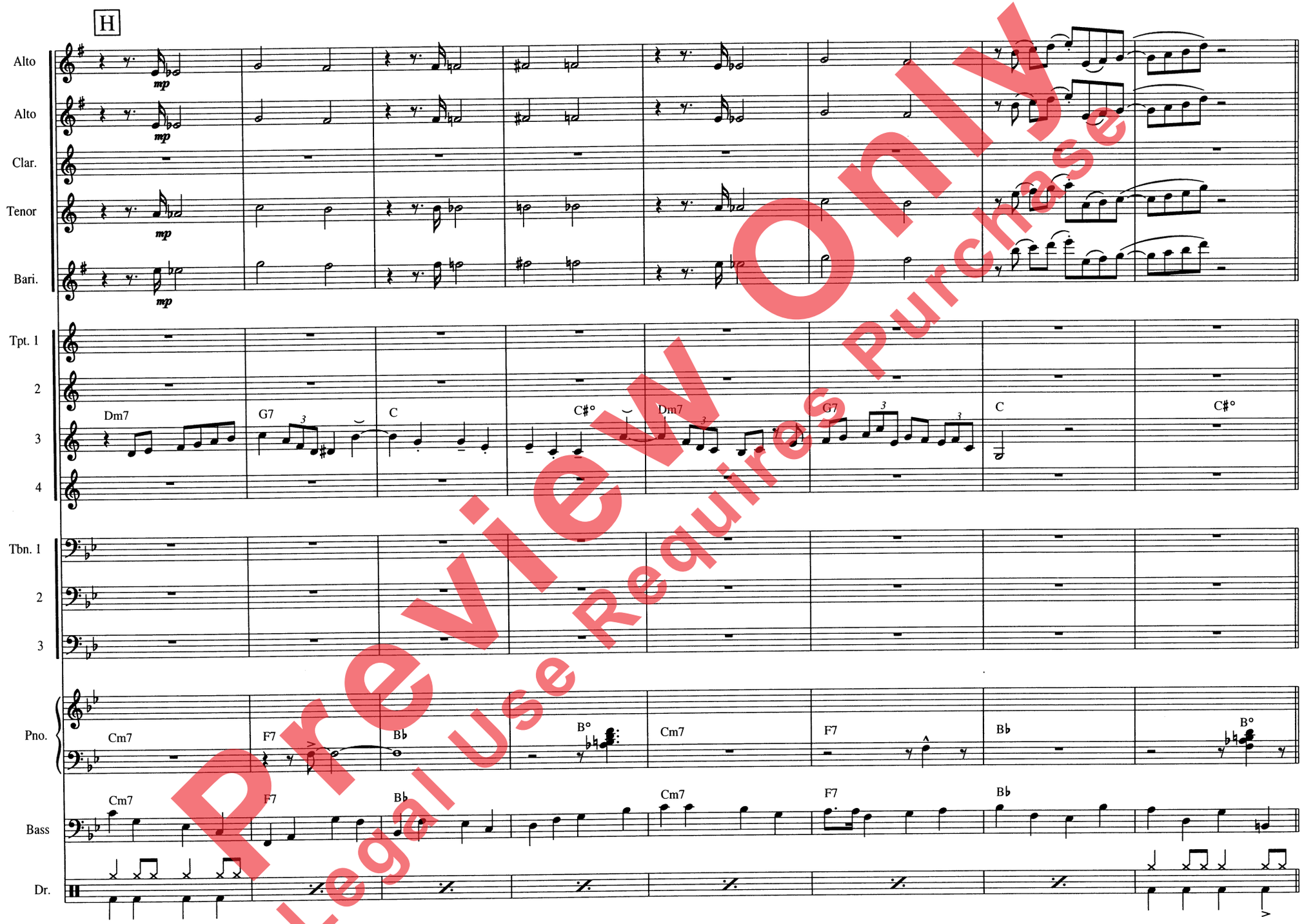

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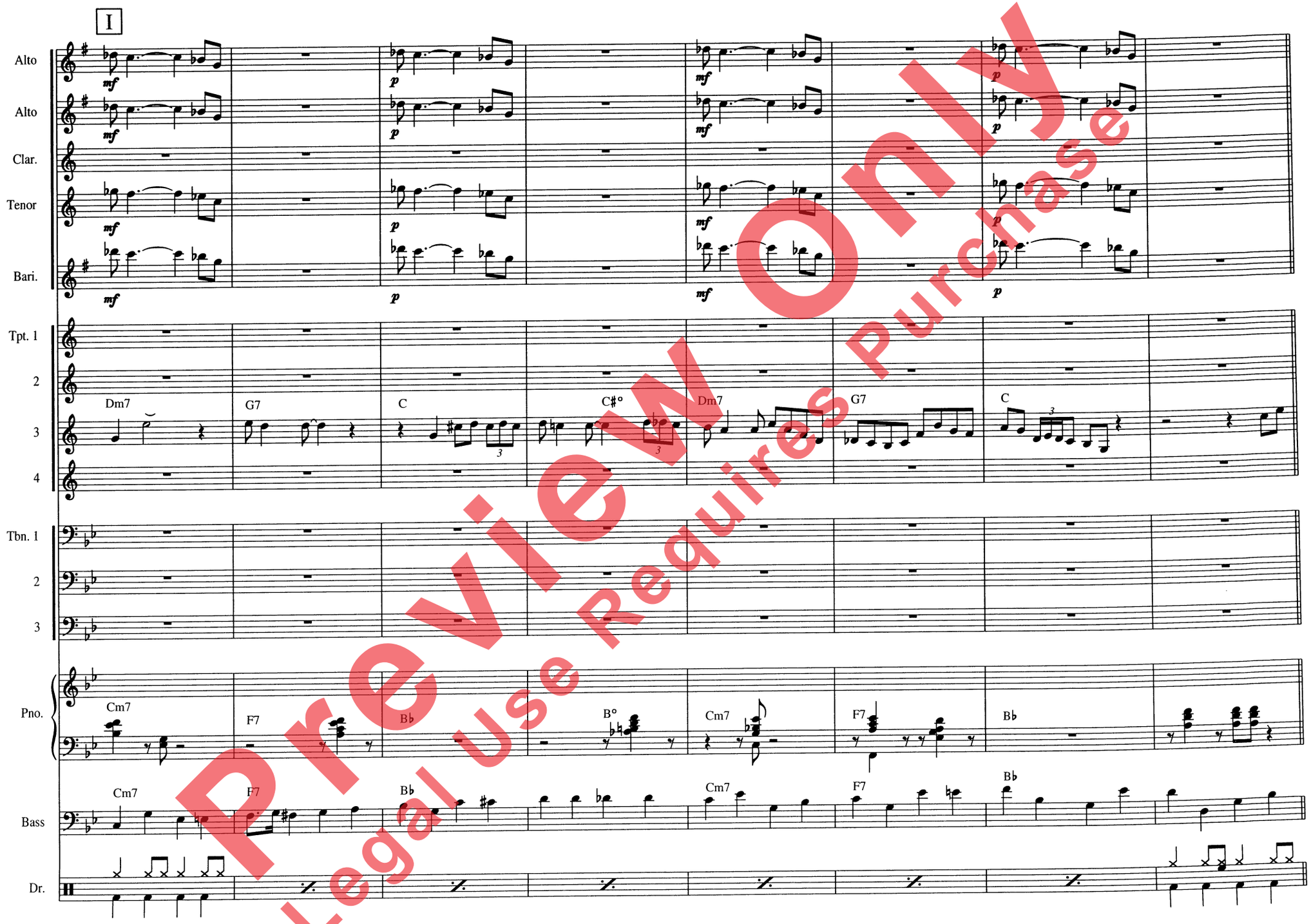

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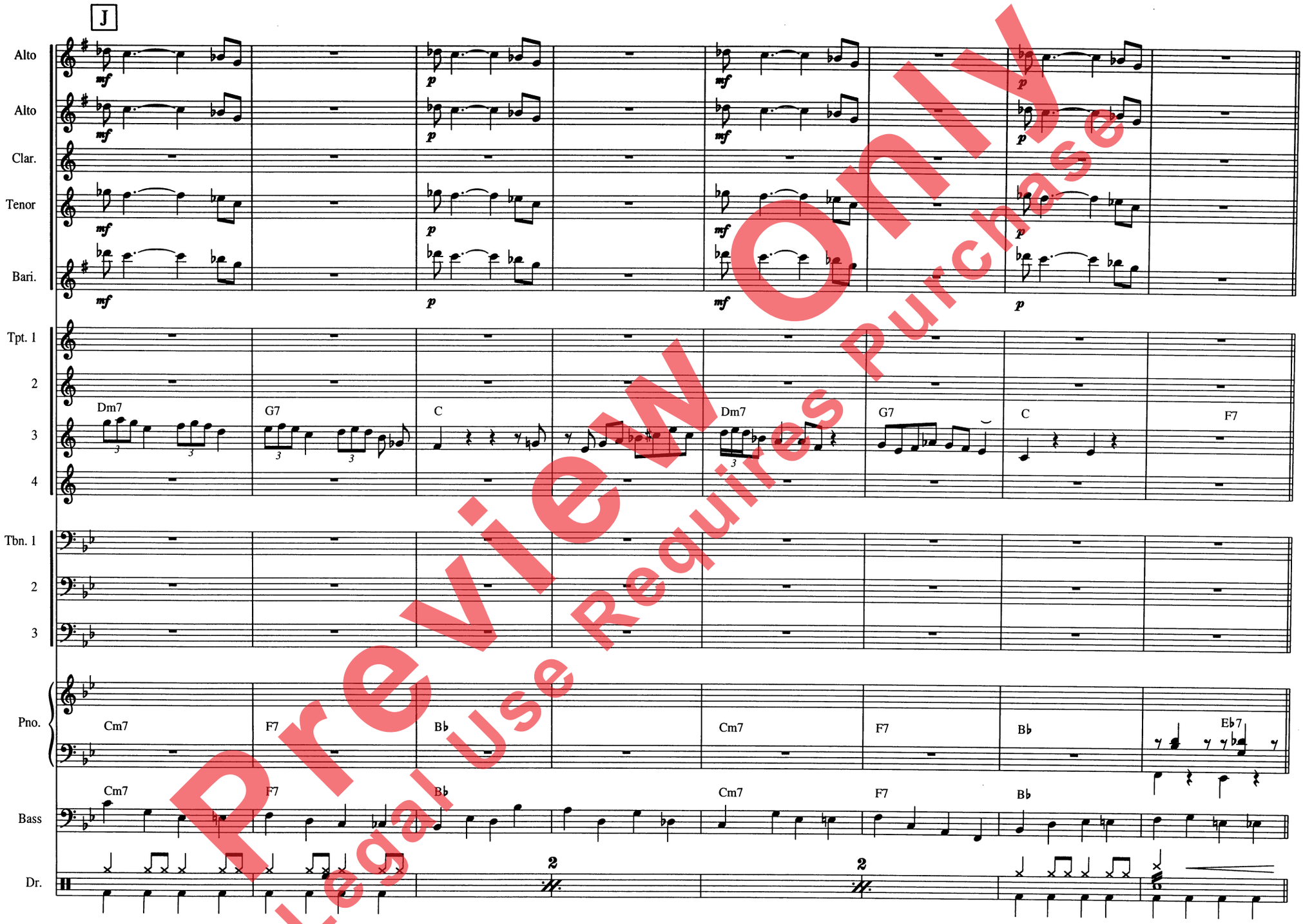

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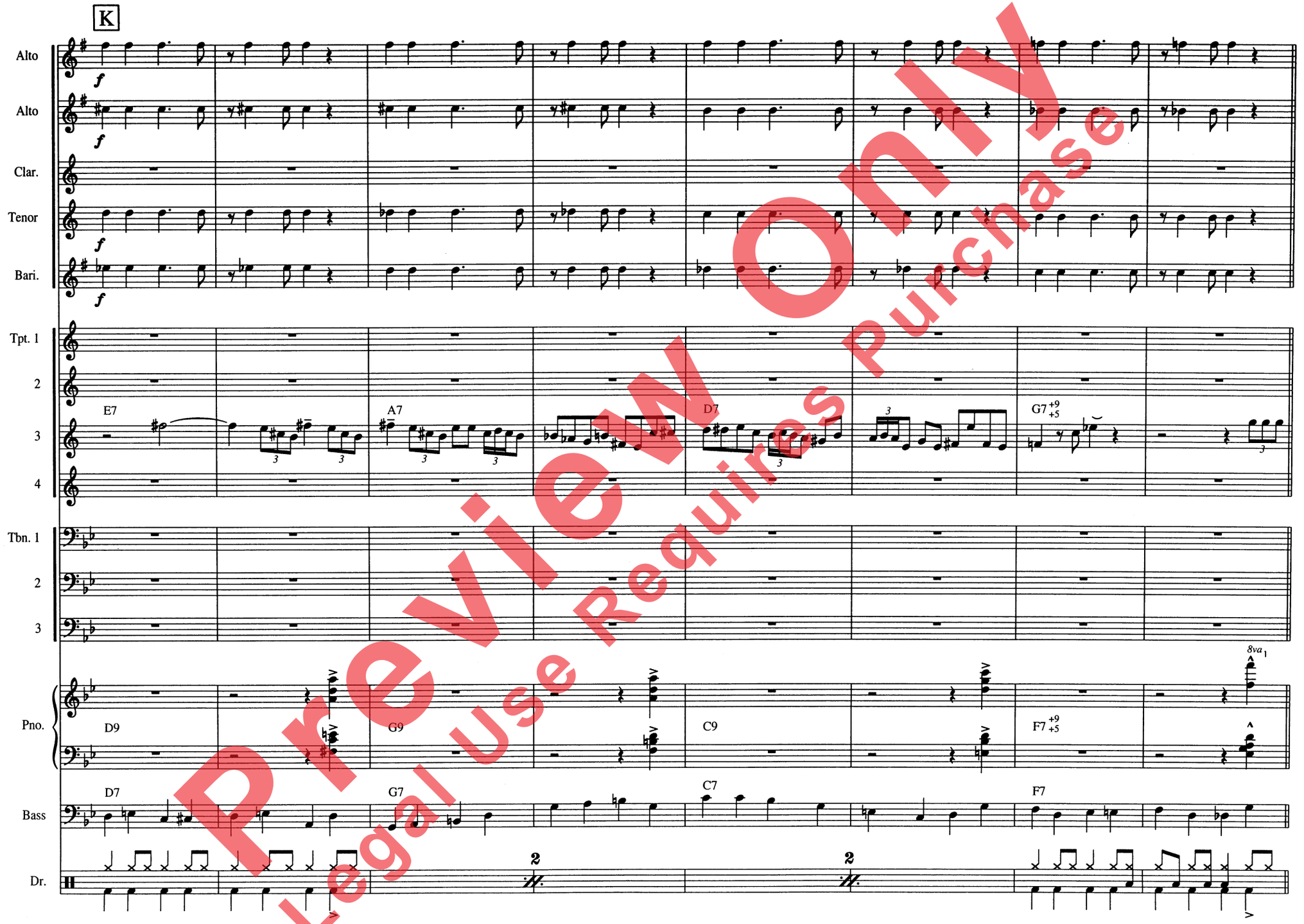

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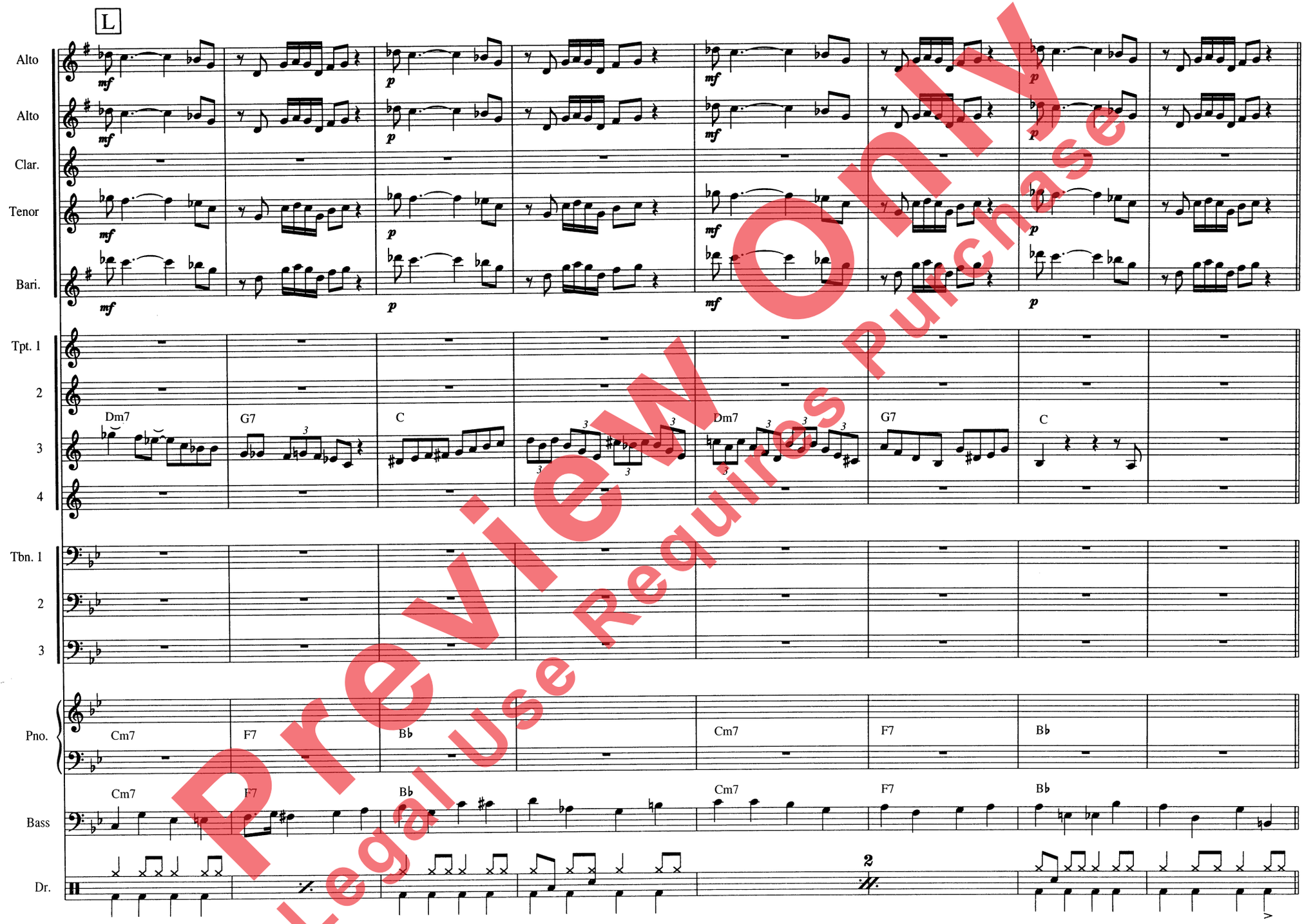

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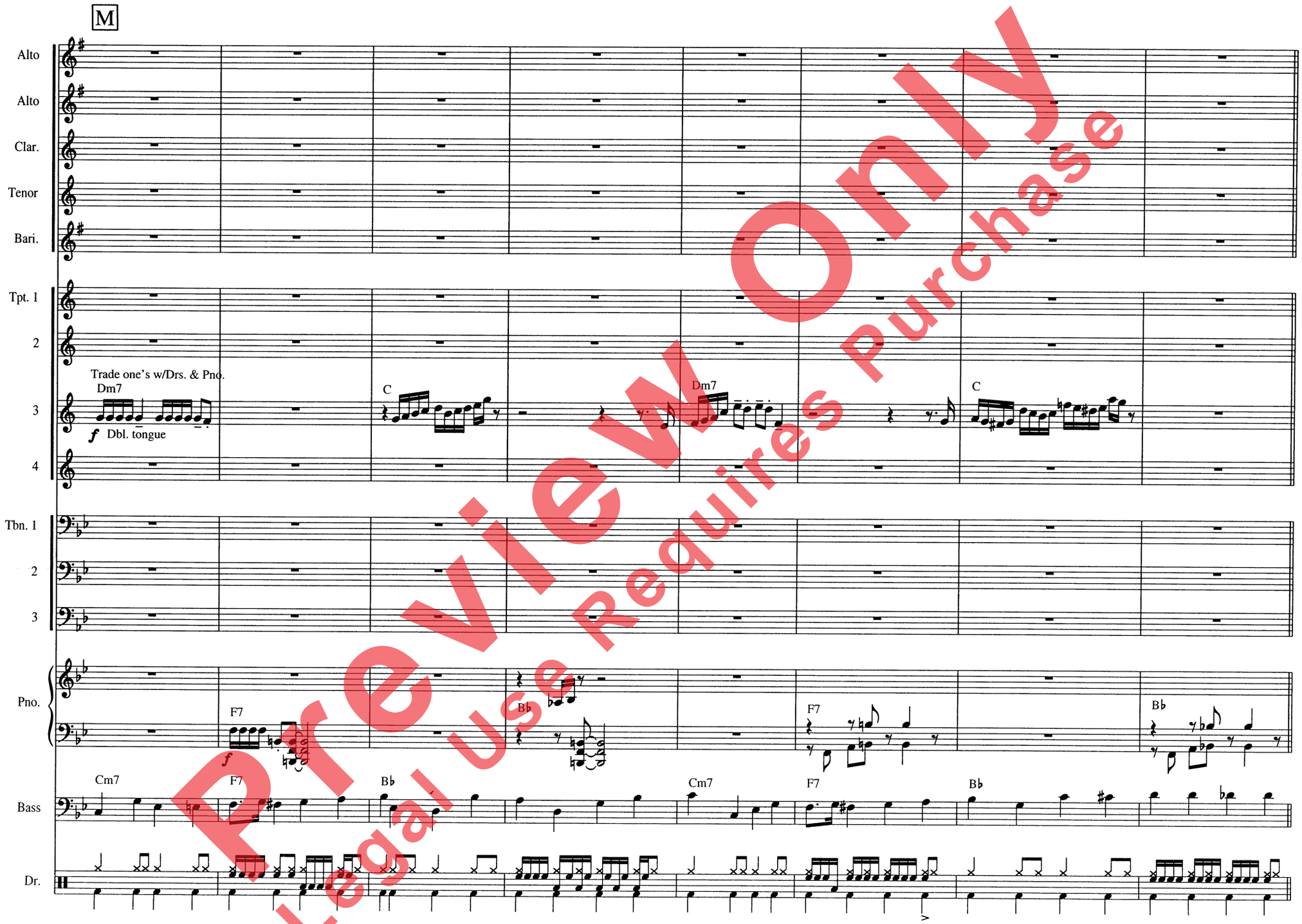

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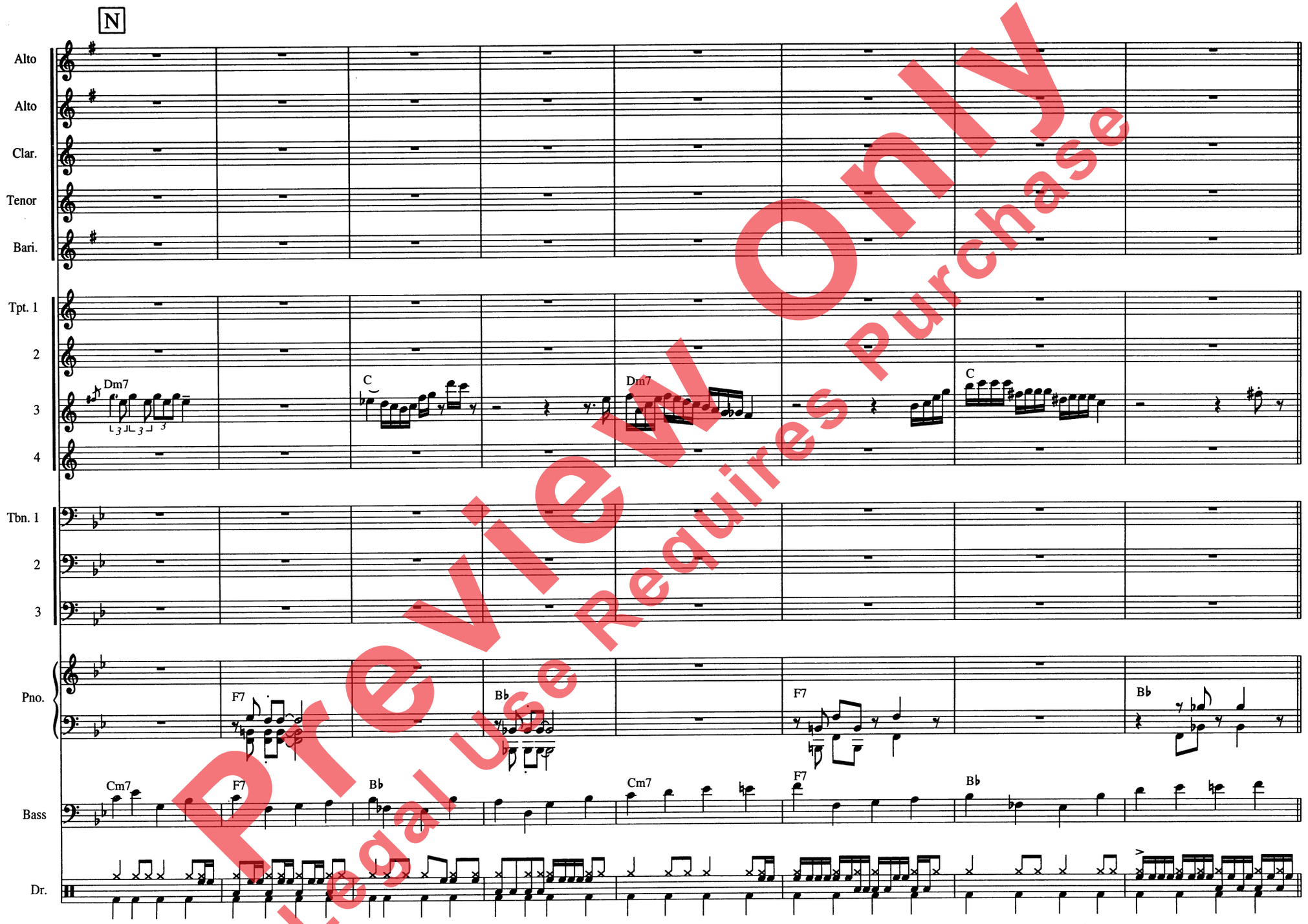

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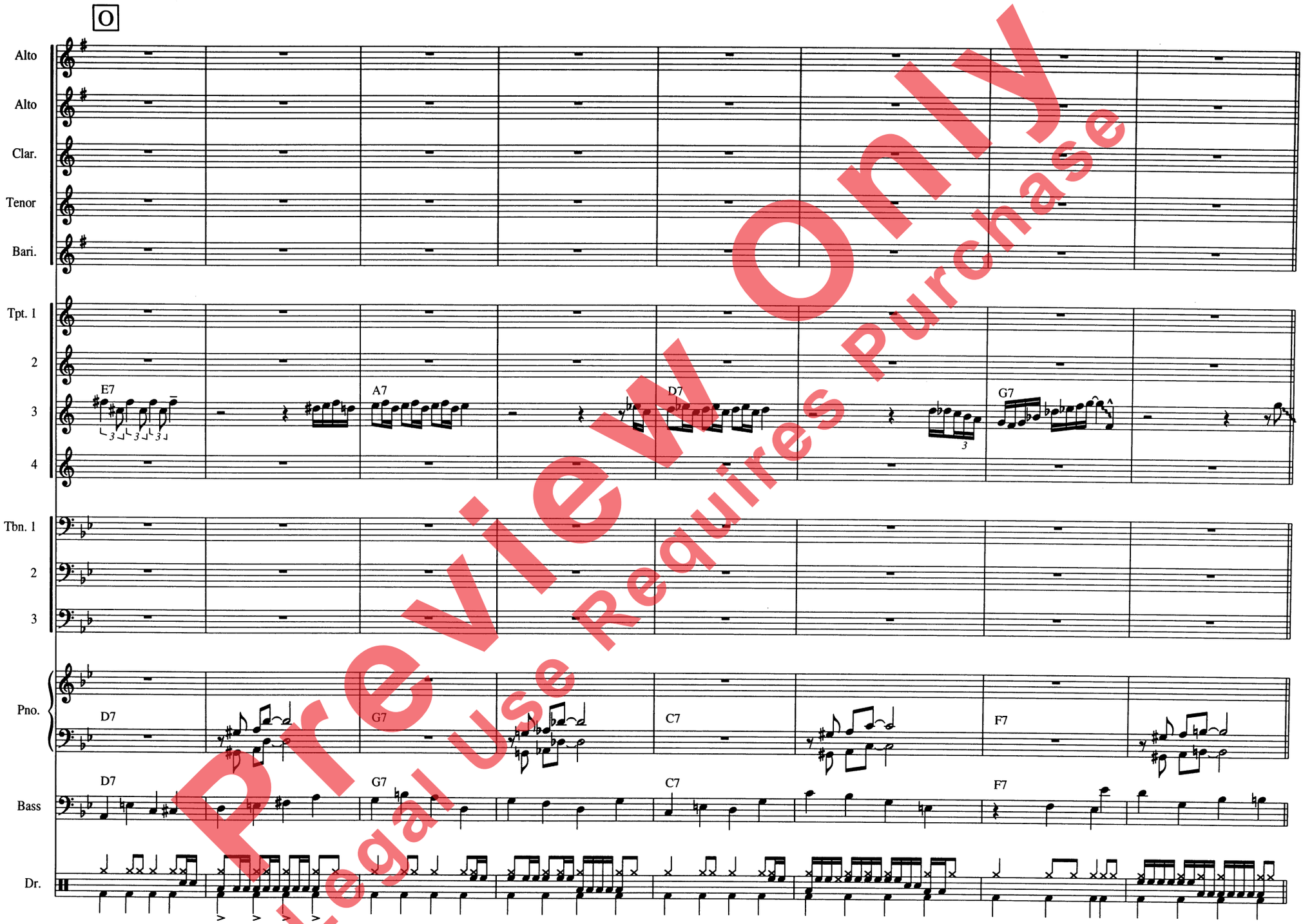

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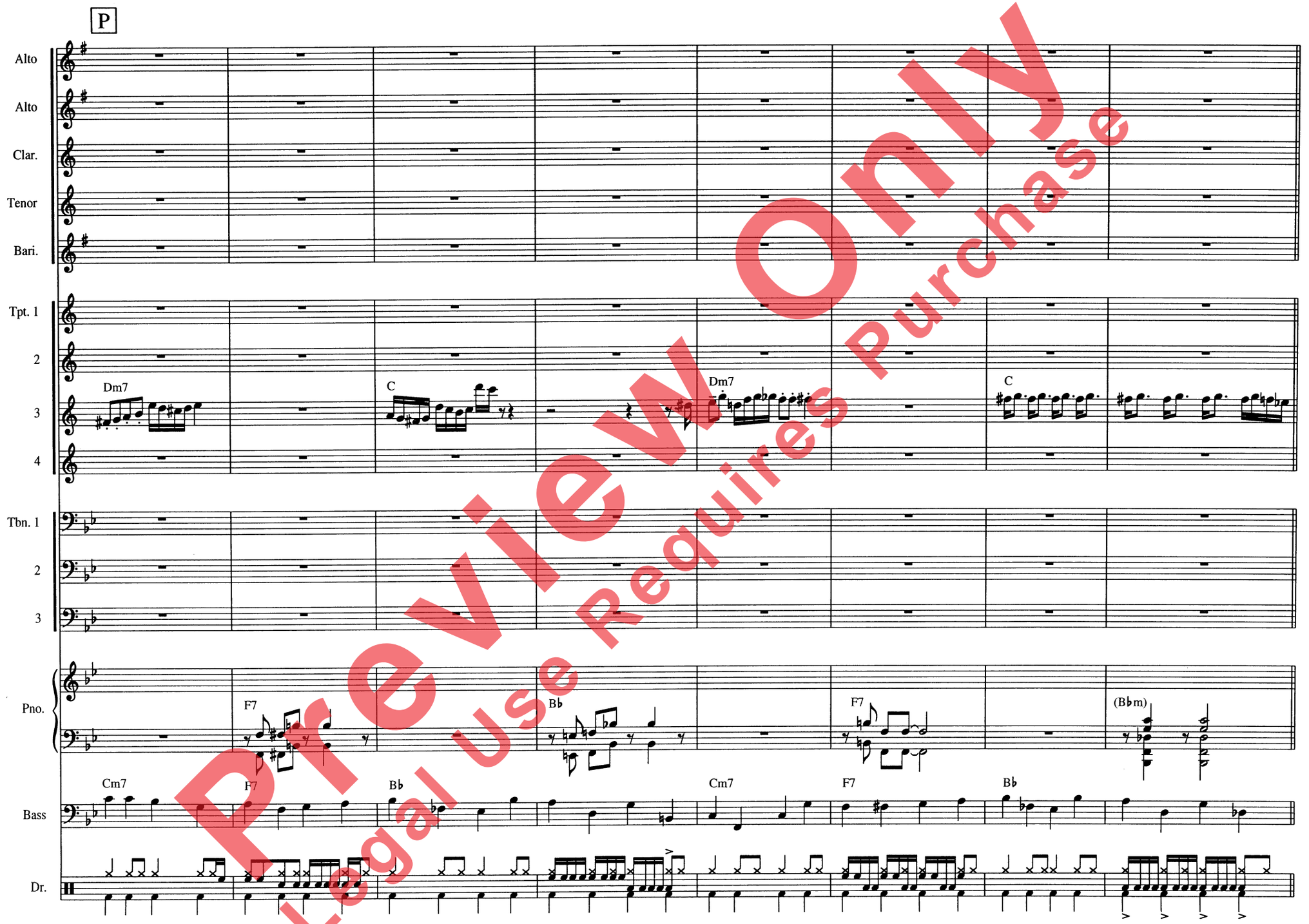

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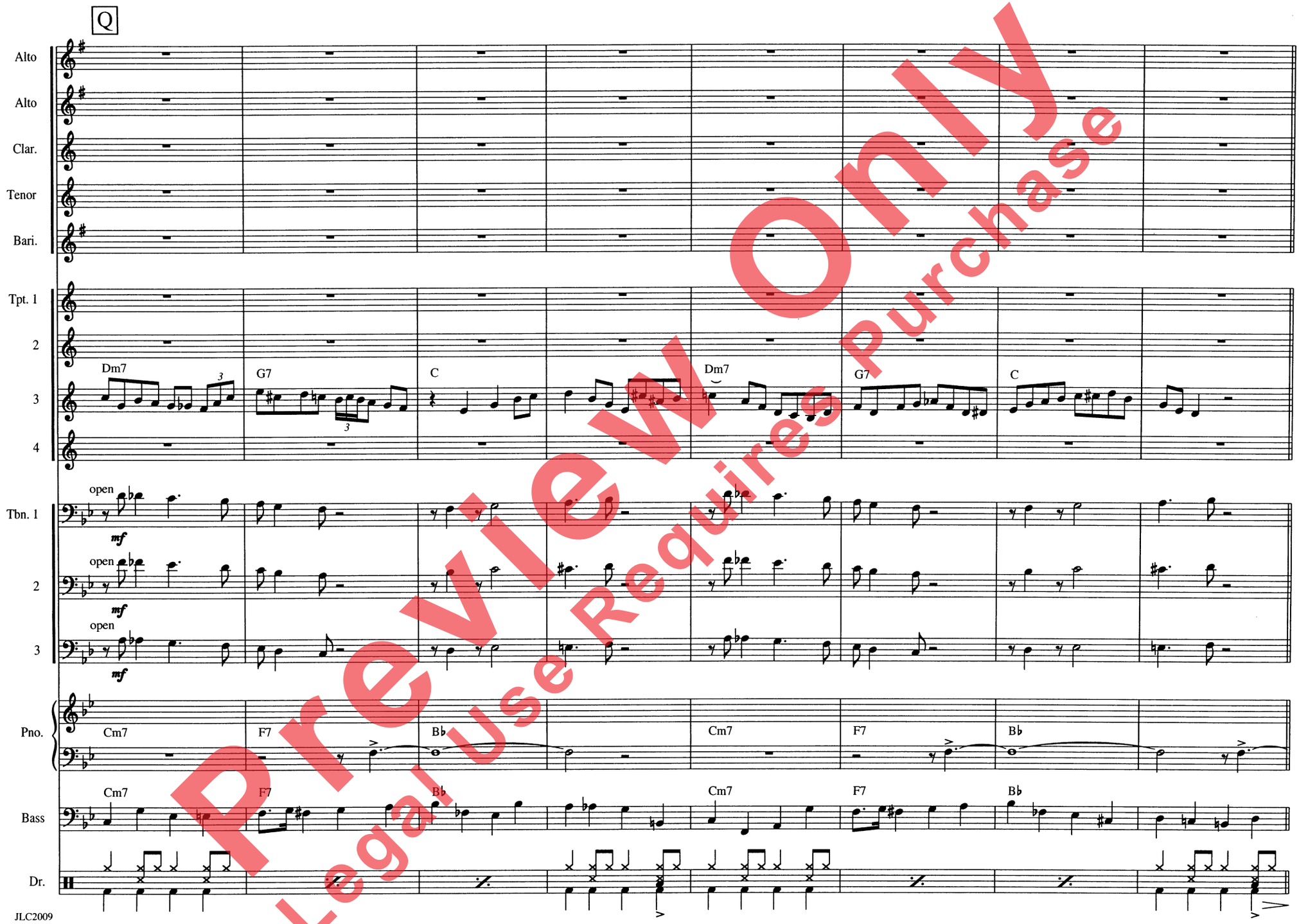

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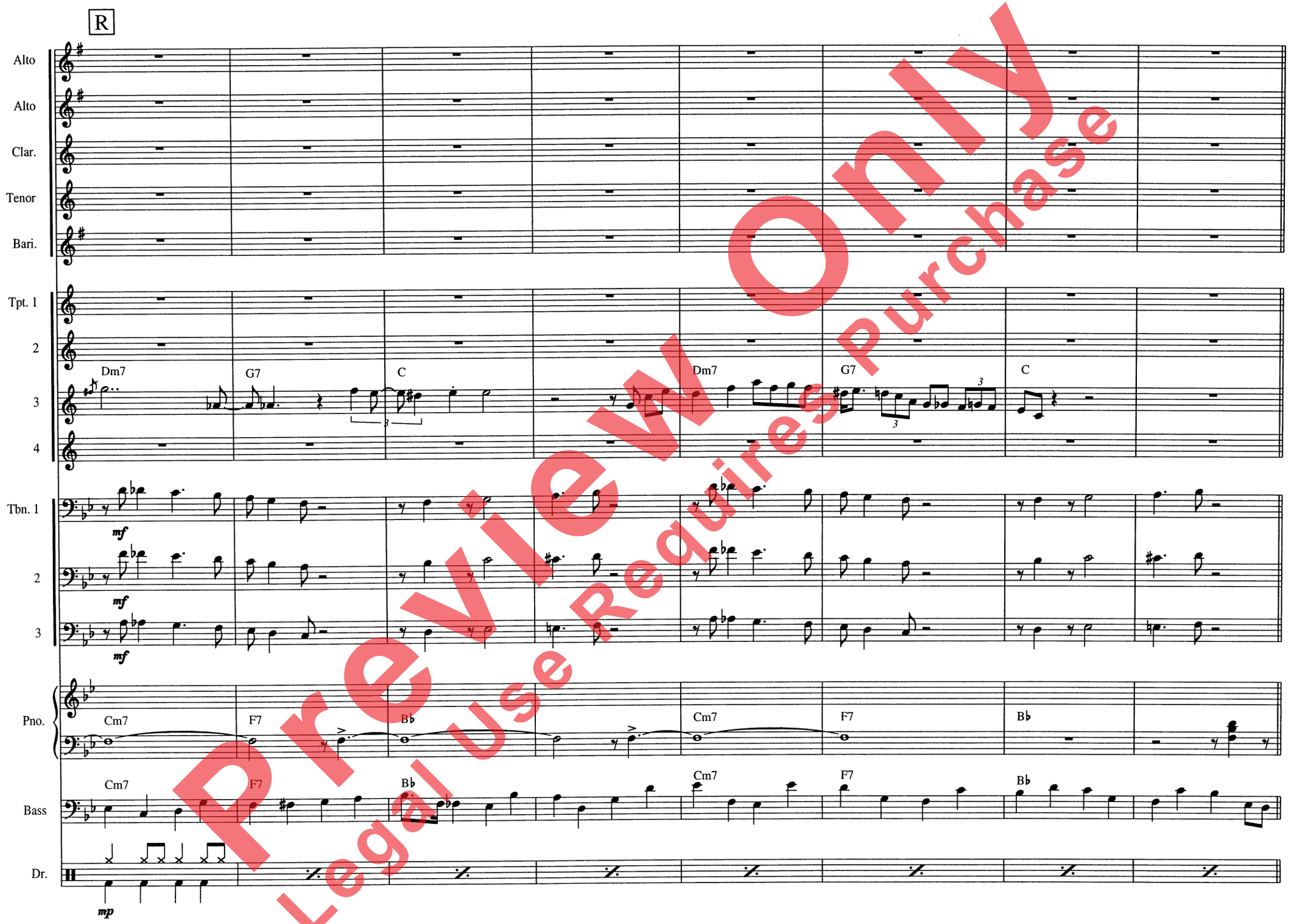

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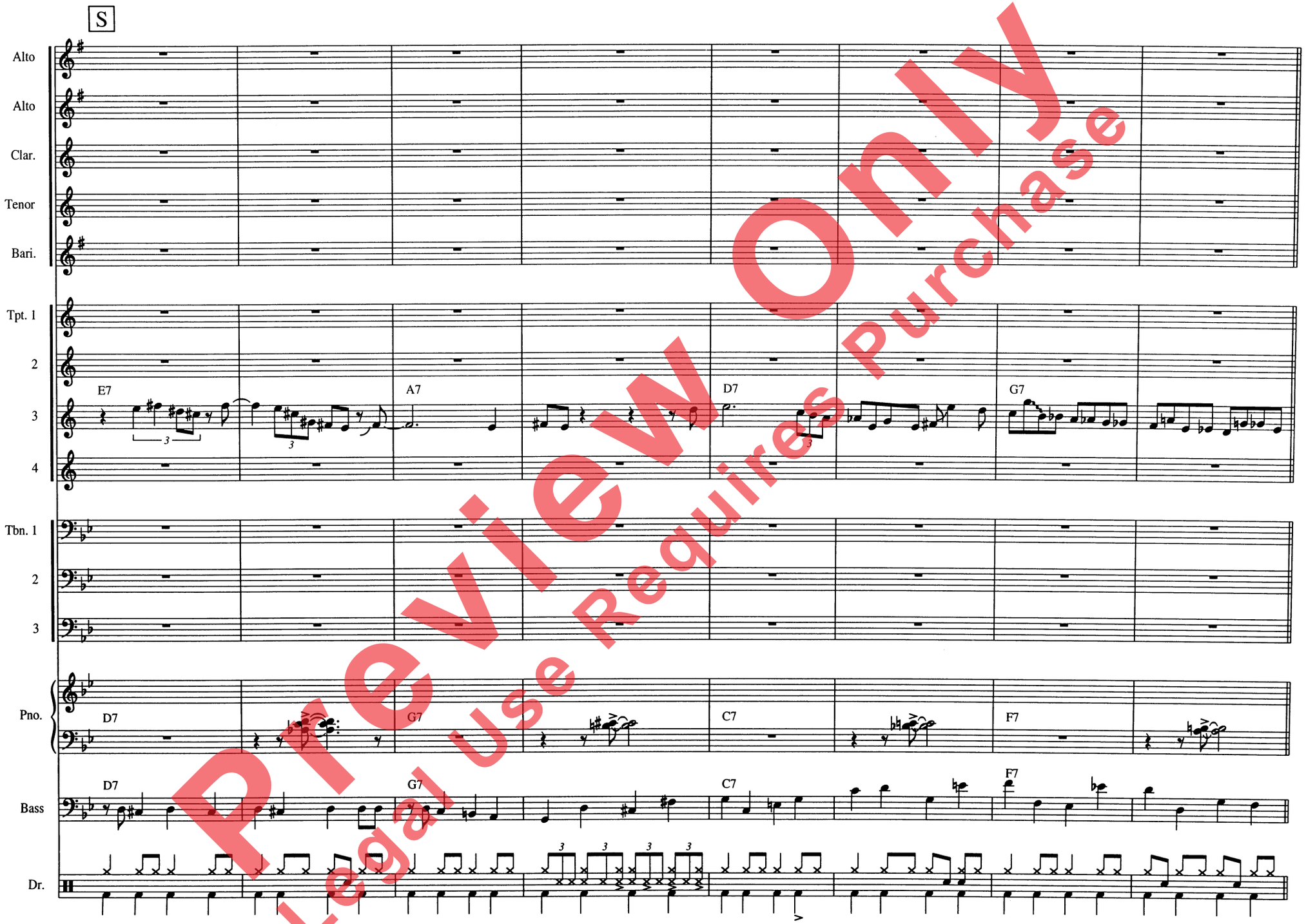

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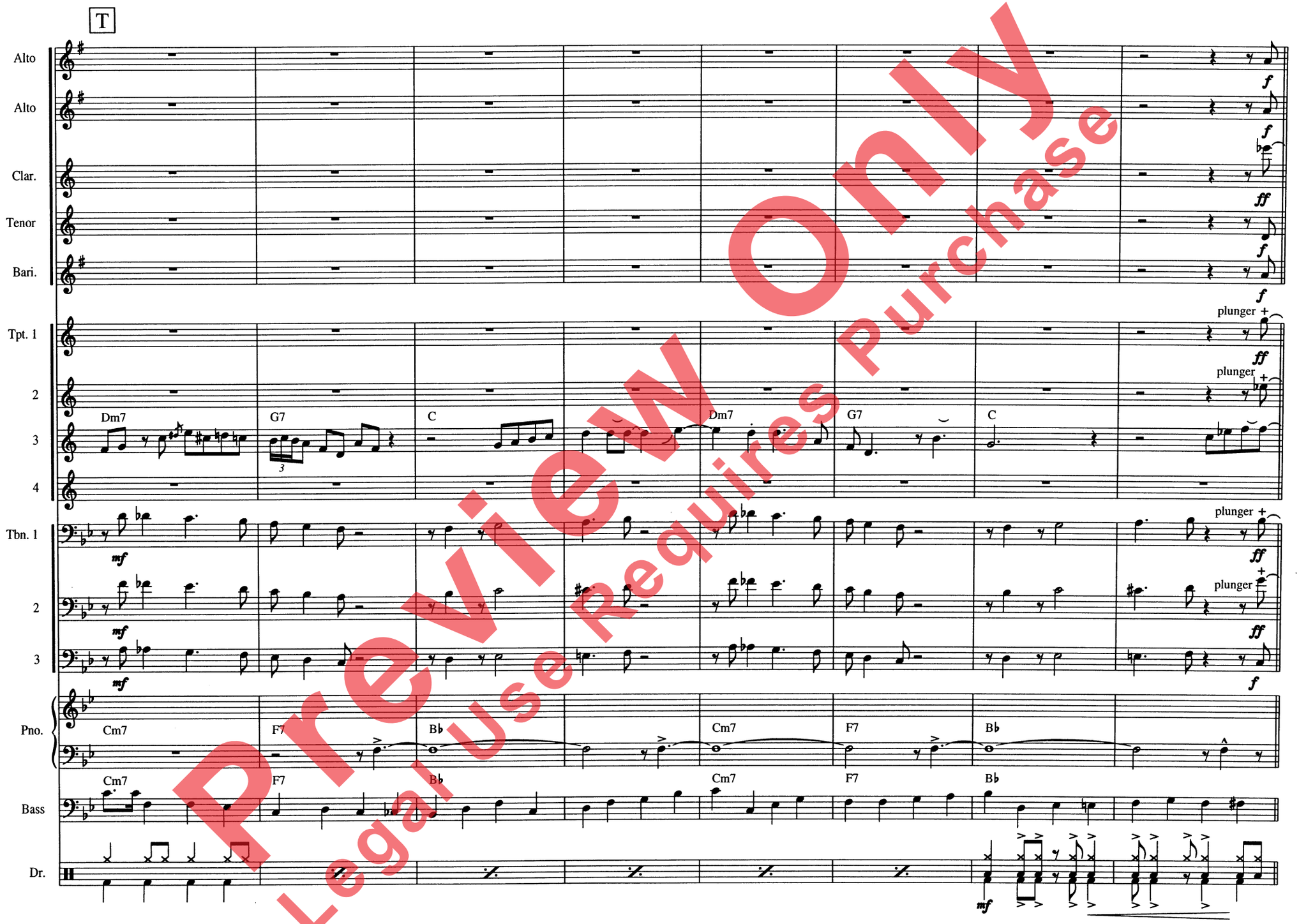

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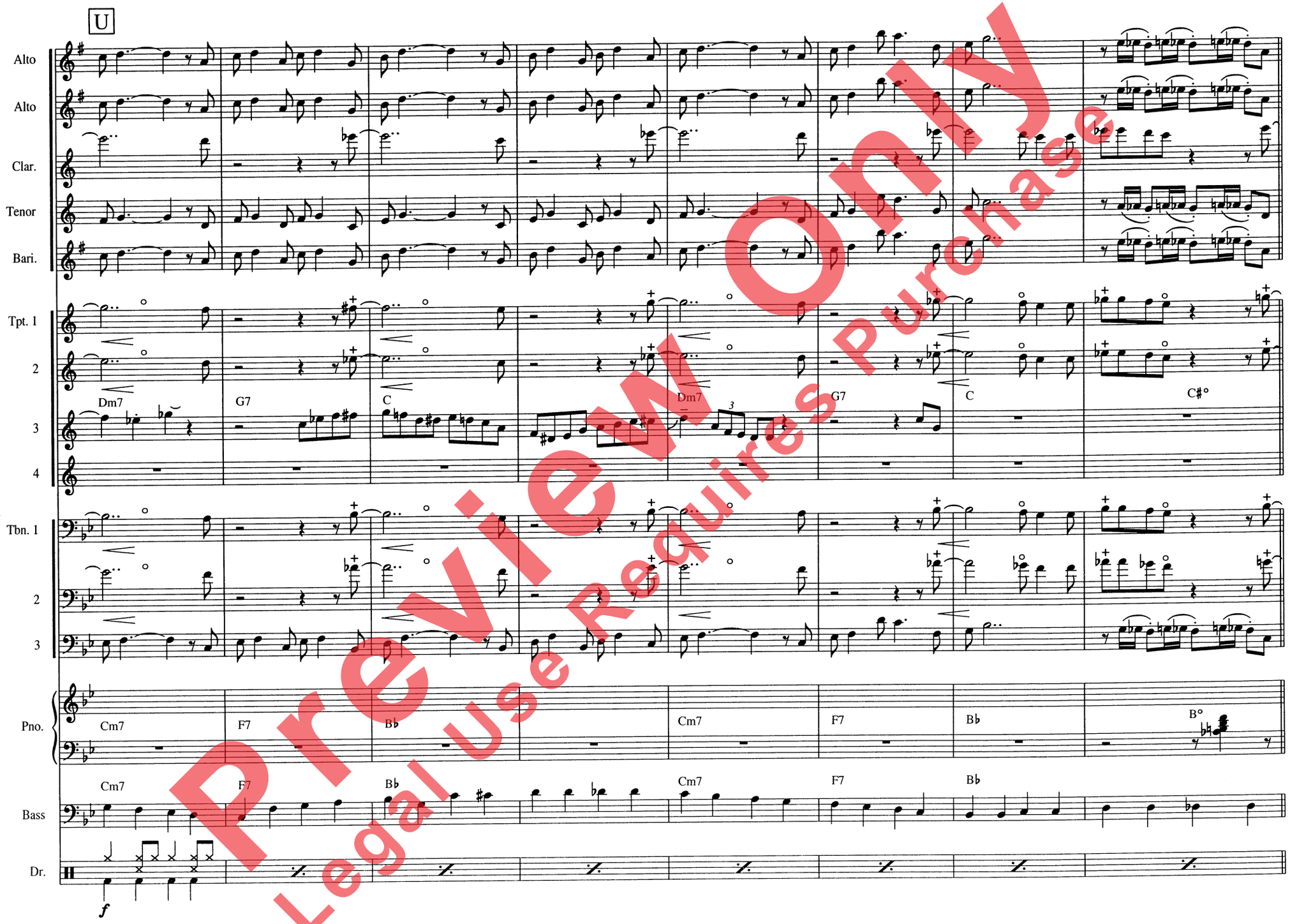

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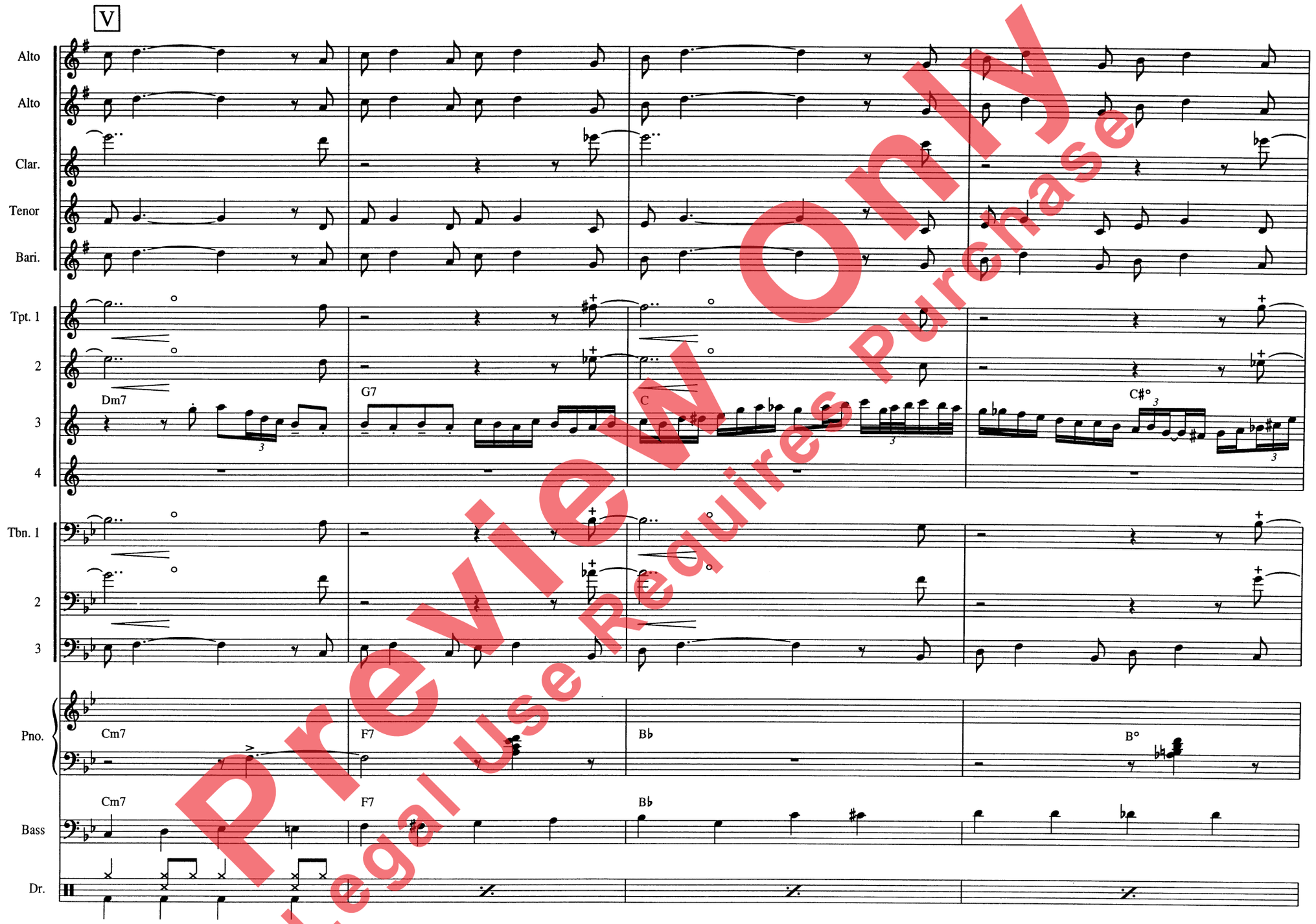

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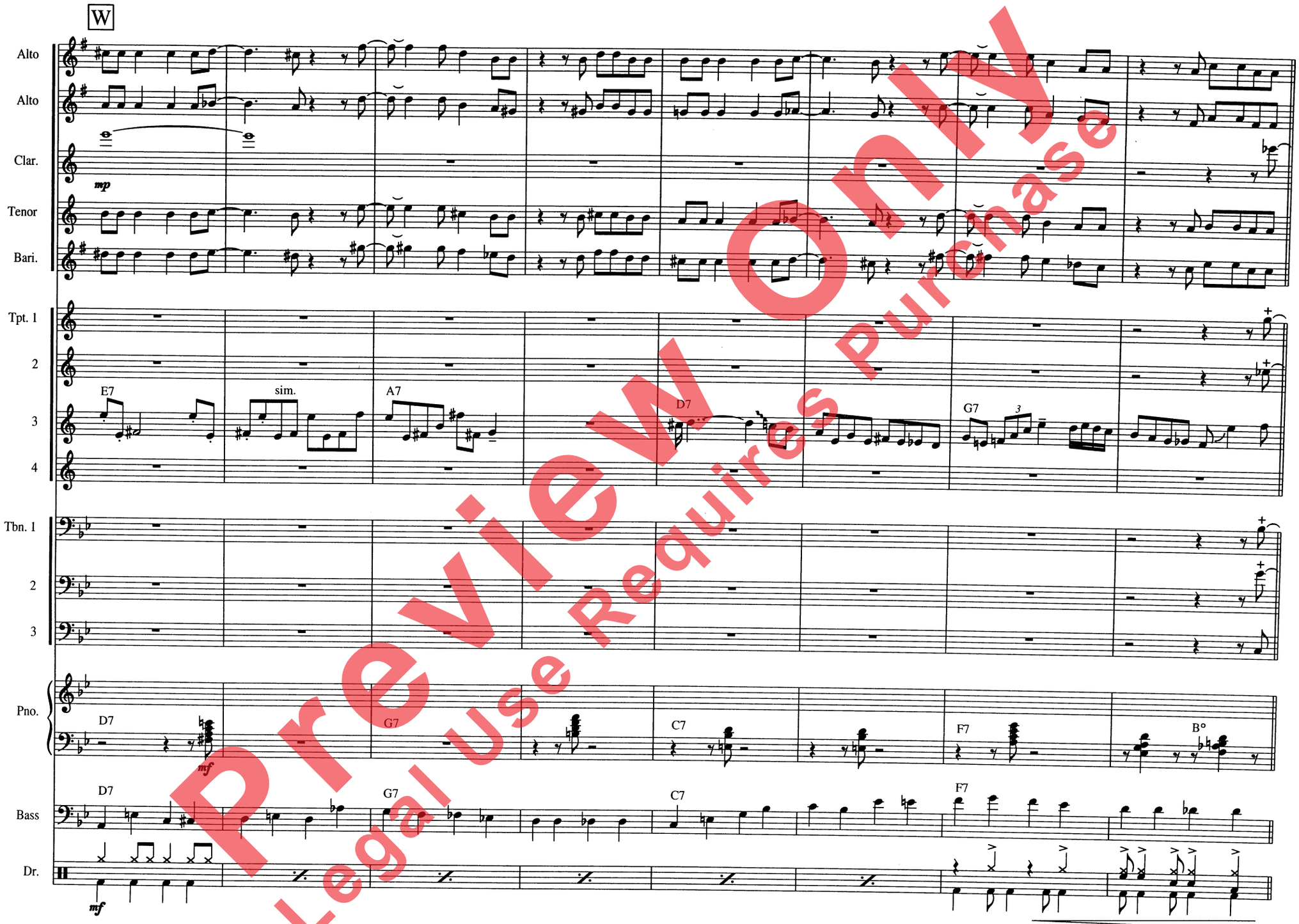

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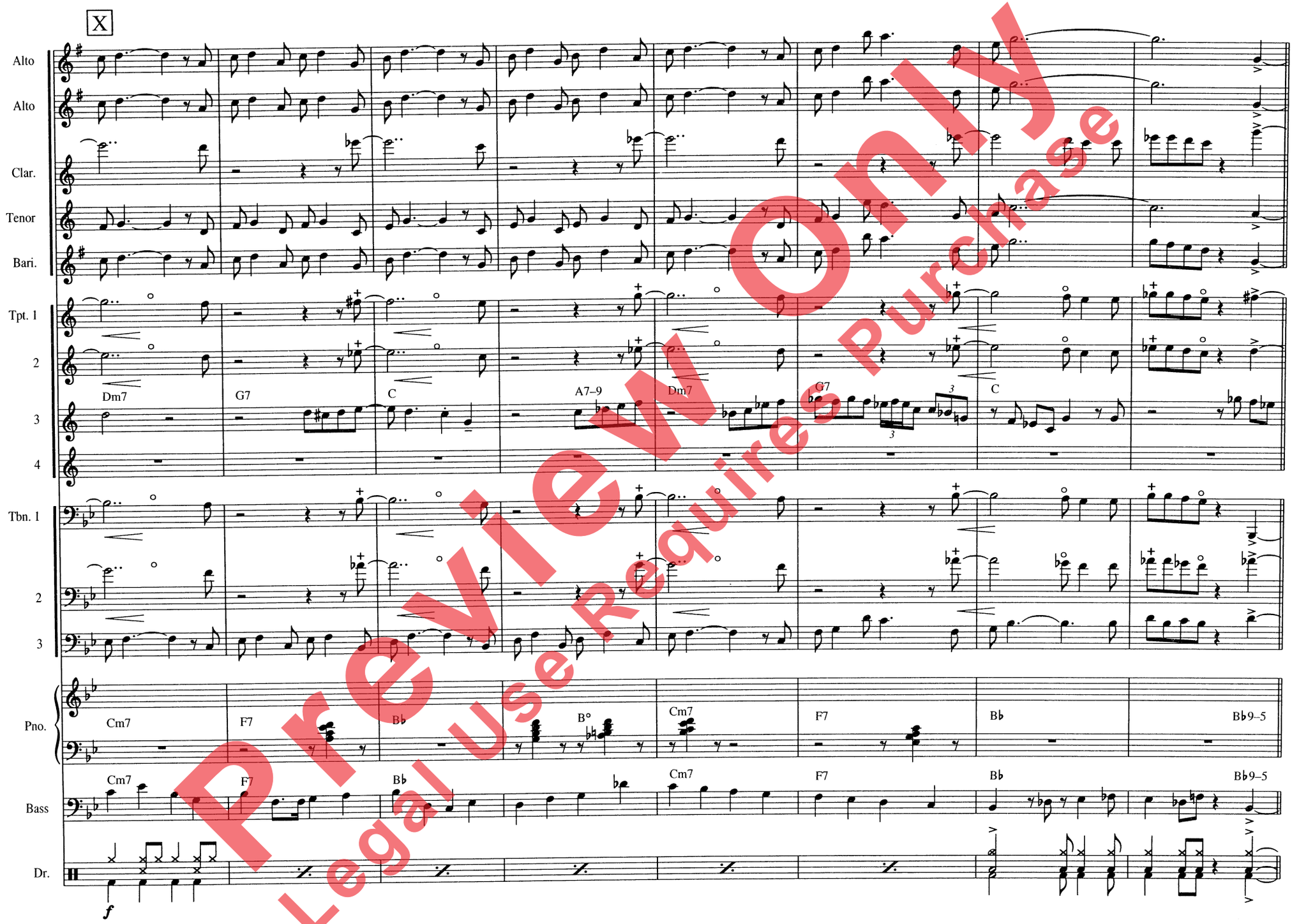

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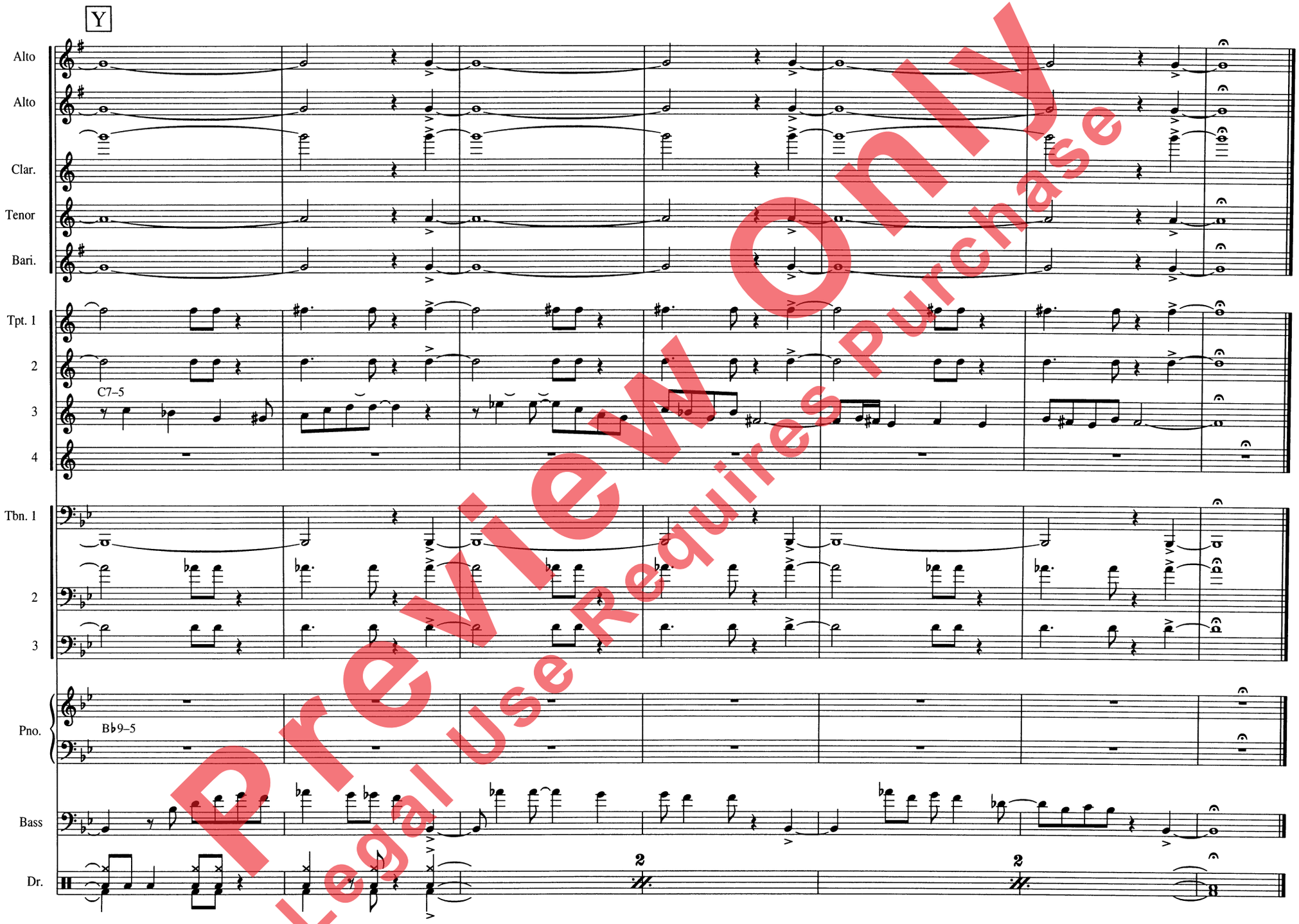

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