O Magnum Mysterium

Victoria was one of the great masters of vocal polyphony of the high renaissance. Although Victoria studied in Italy with Palestrina, he returned to his native Spain to work and live. While this music shows that study with Palestrina, it also shows Victoria's own personal style: one of fervor and passion. This motet is one of the timeless masterpieces of choral literature that still speaks with vitality and freshness.

In this edition, the note values have been halved for ease of reading; the pitch has been raised a minor third to improve the range and tessitura for modern choirs. The keyboard reduction is provided for rehearsal, although it would not have been uncommon for the organ to double the voices lightly in performance.

Christopher Johns

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TRANSLATION

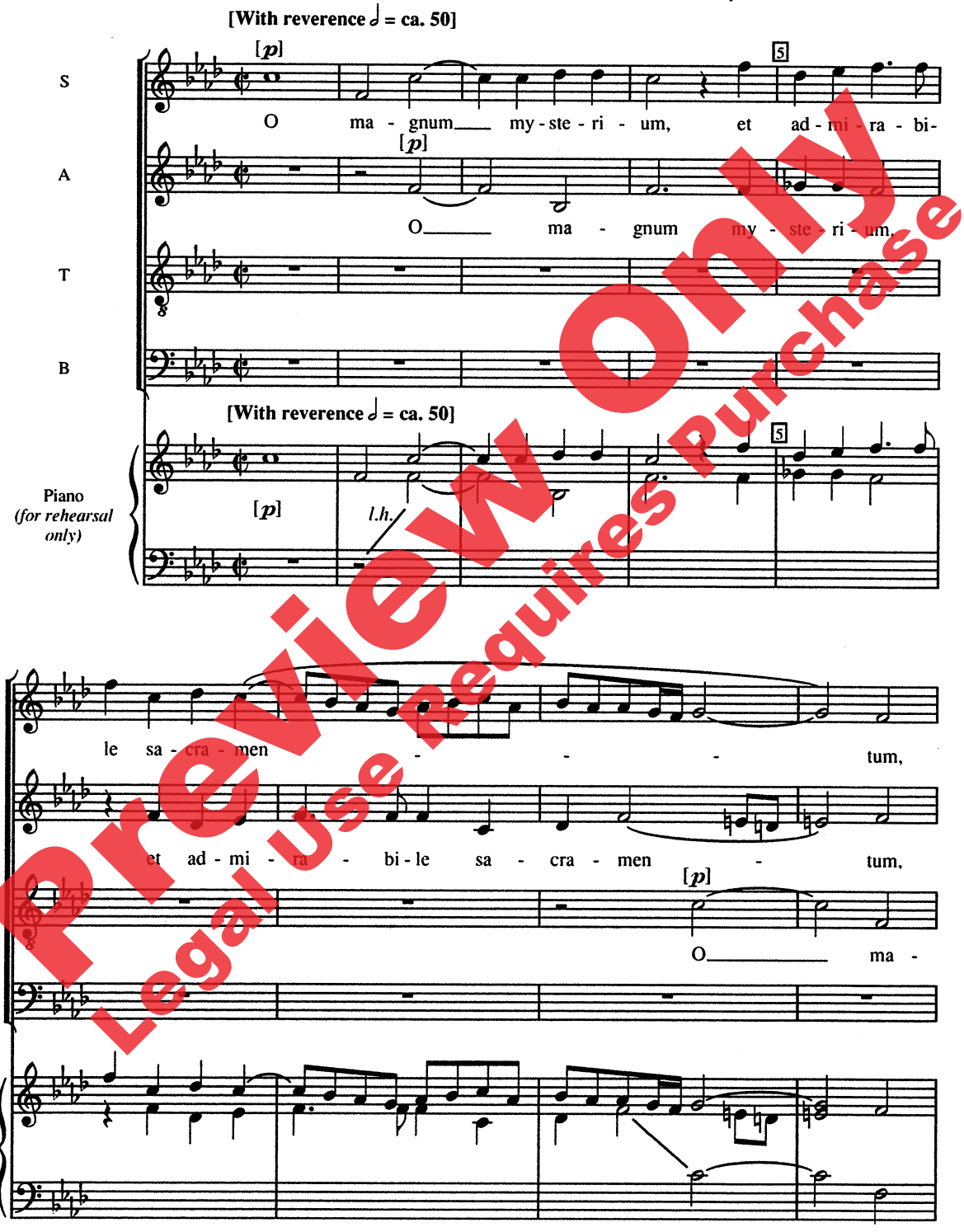
O magnum mysterium,
O great mystery,
et admirabile sacramentum,
and wondrous sacrament,
ut animalia viderent Dominum natum,
that animals should see the Lord born,
jacentum in praesepio!
and lying in a manger!

O beata Virgo, cujus viscera meruerunt
O blessed Virgin, whose womb was worthy
potare Dominum Christum. Alleluia!
to bear the Lord Christ. Alleluia!

O MAGNUM MYSTERIUM

SATB, a cappella

By Tomas Luis de Victoria
(1549 - 1611)
Edited by CHRISTOPHER JOHNS



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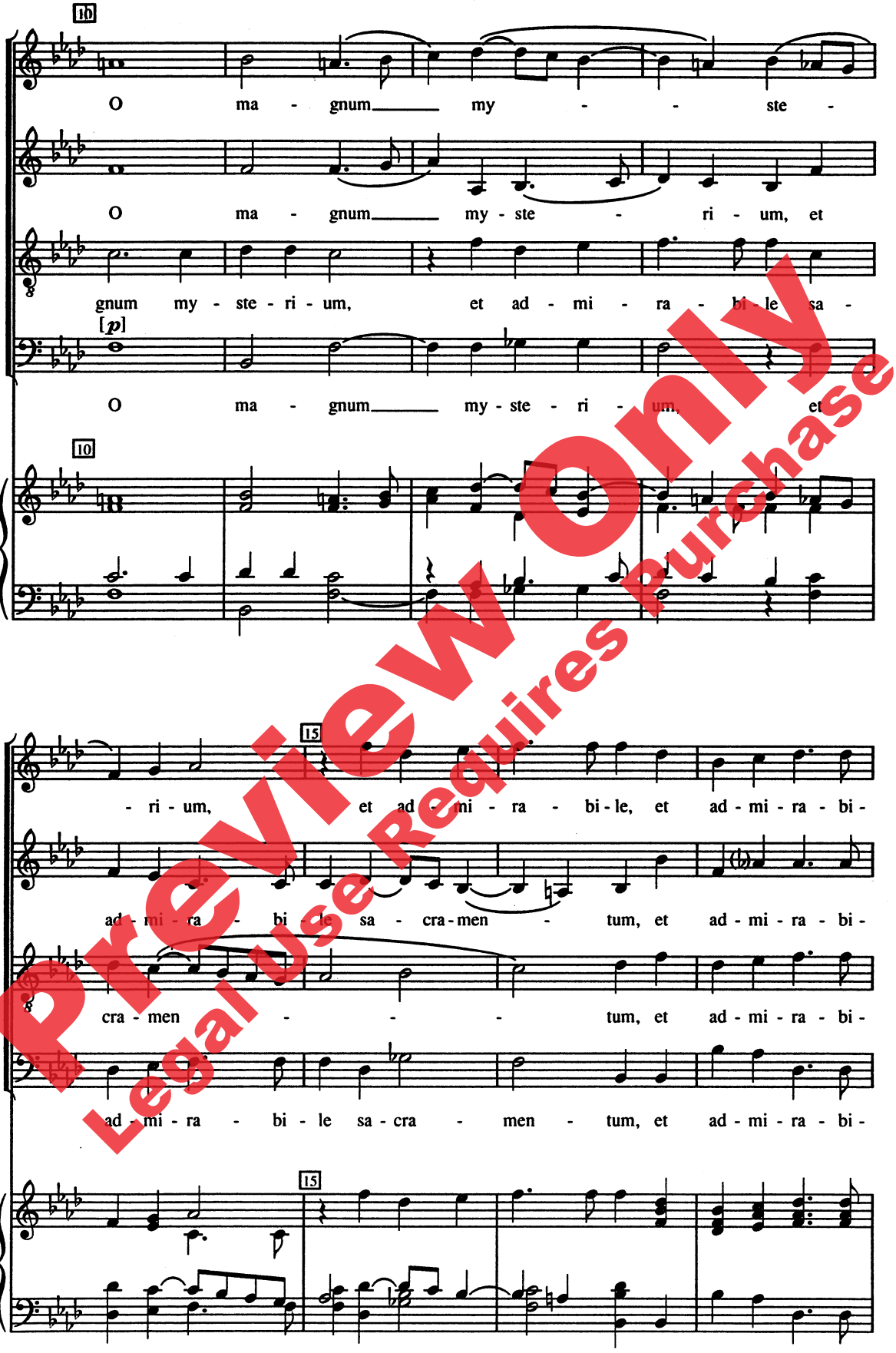

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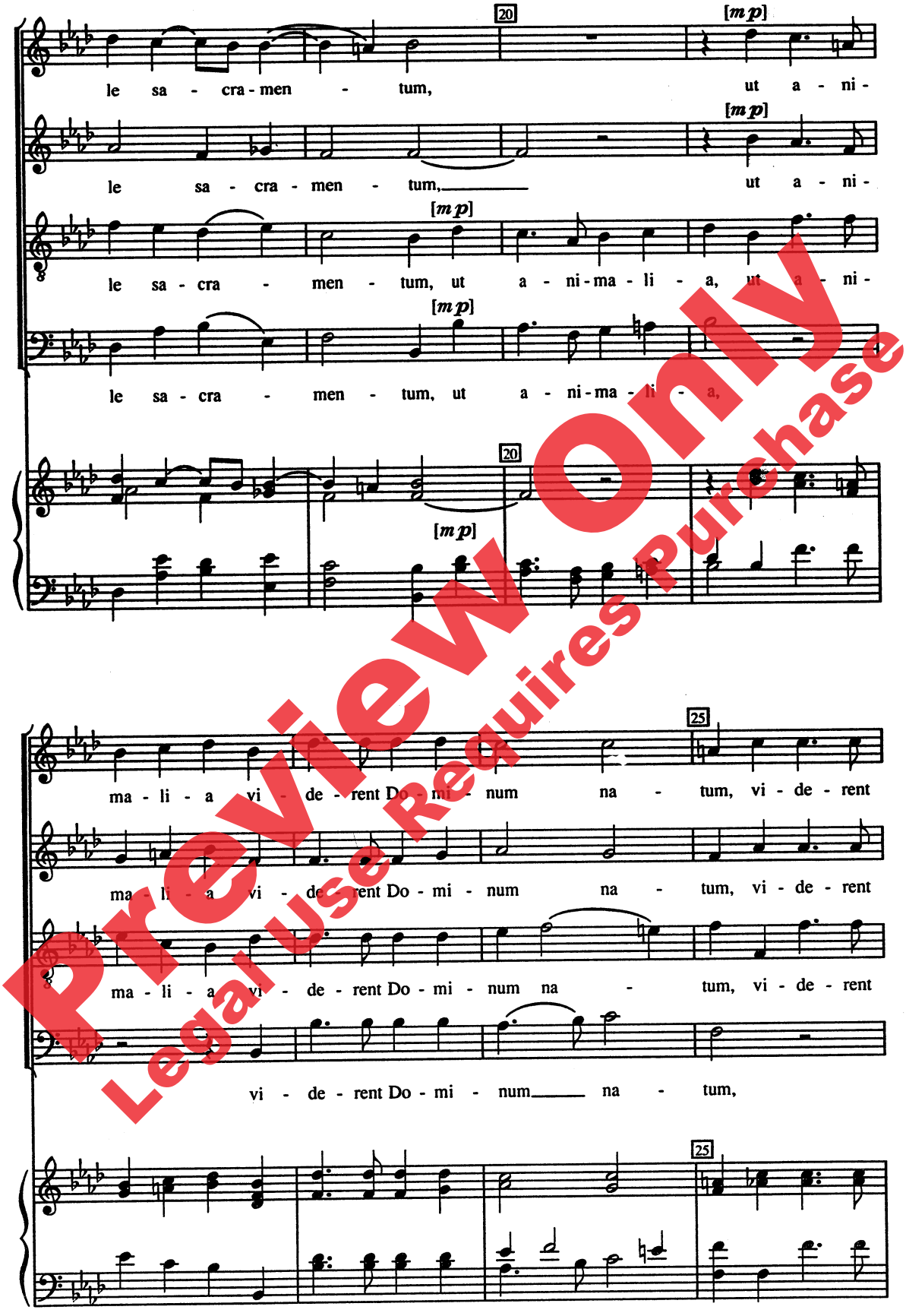

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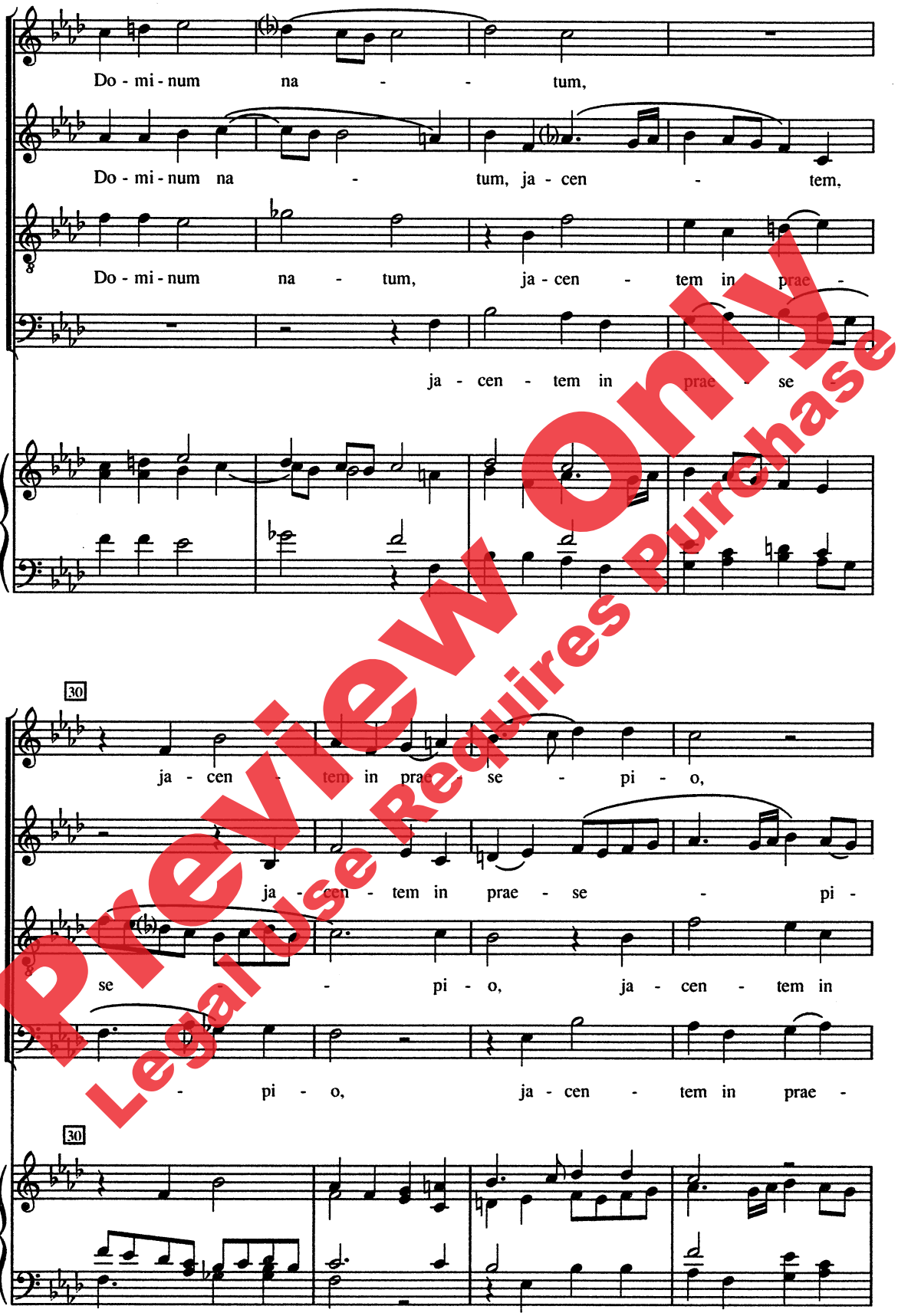

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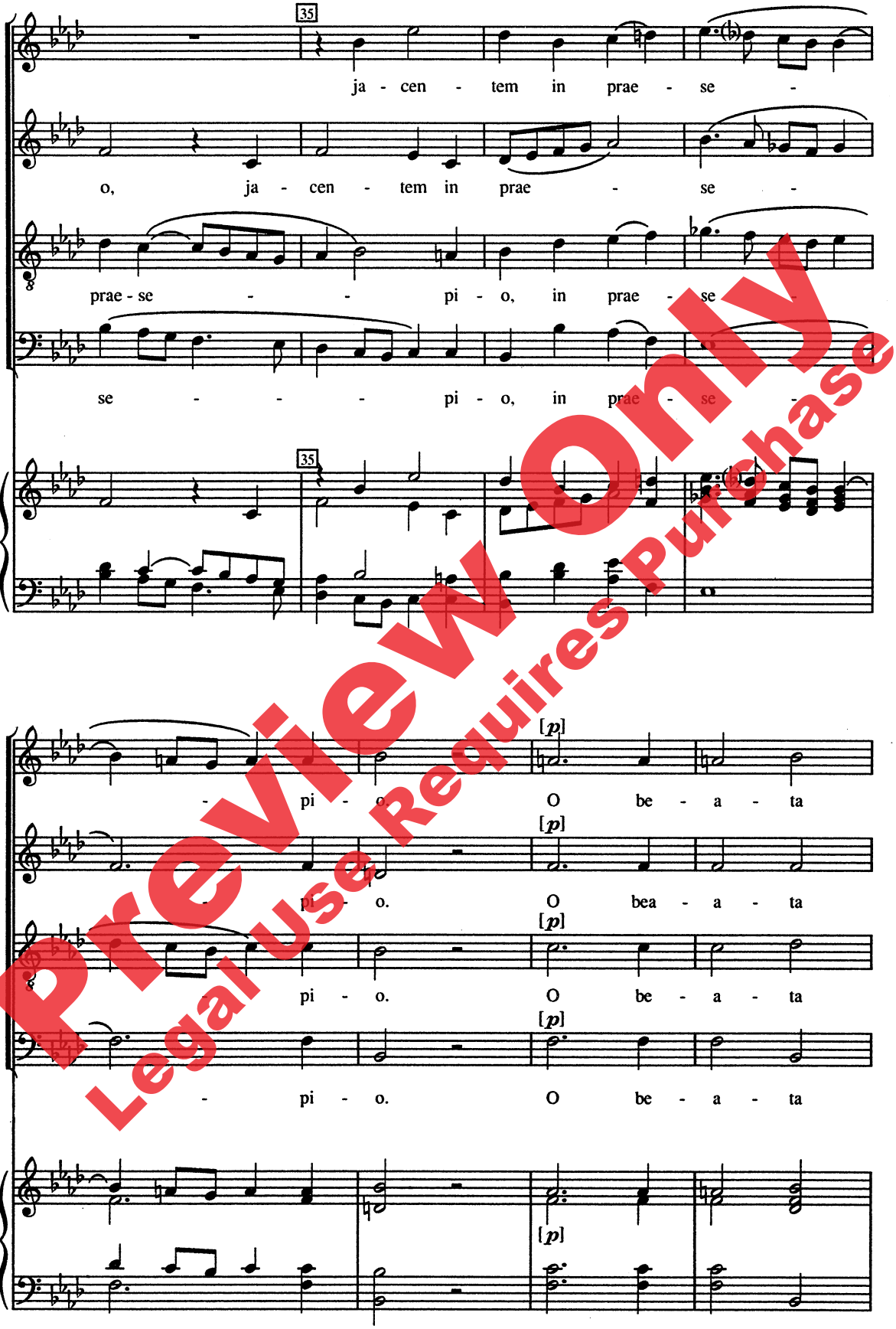

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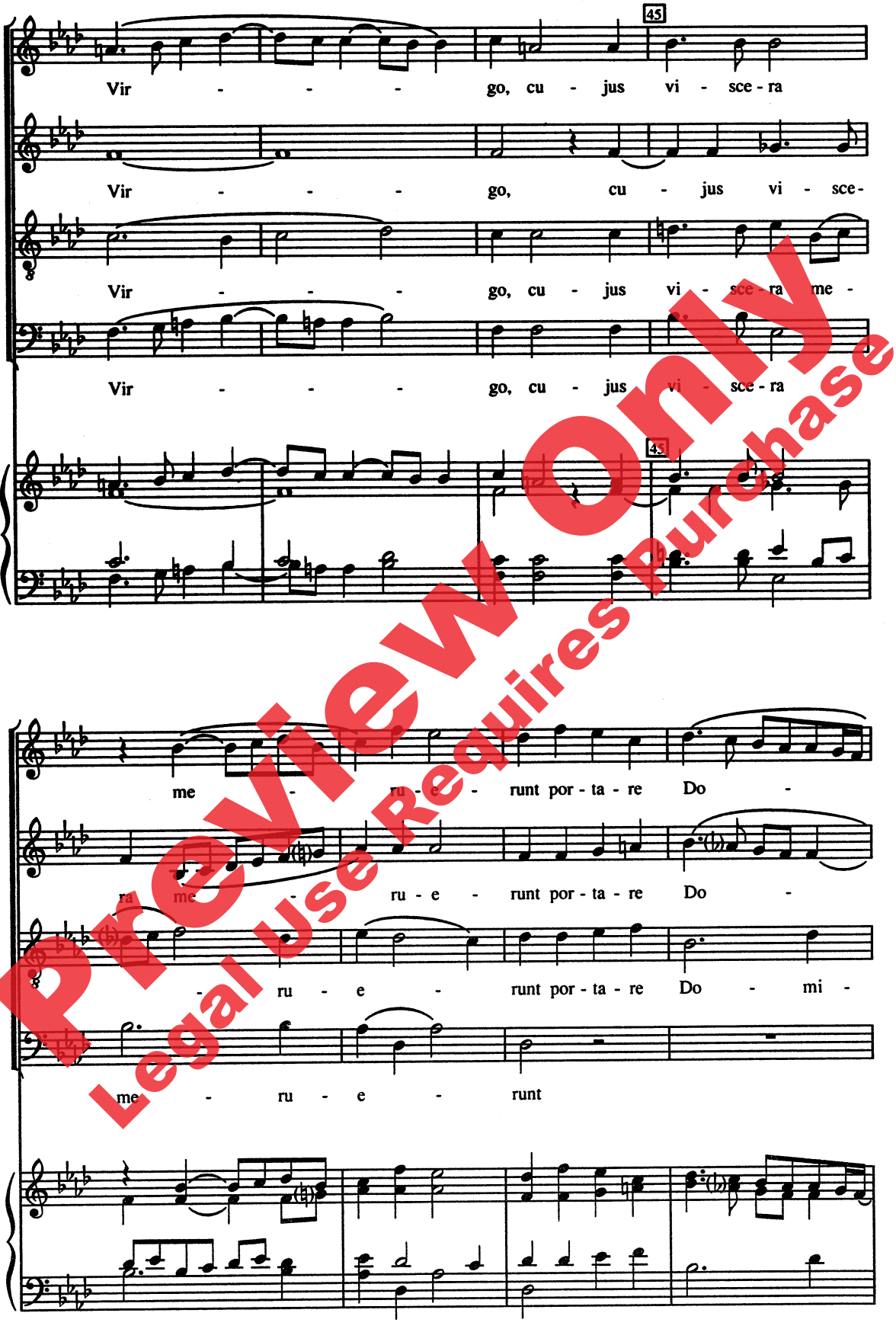

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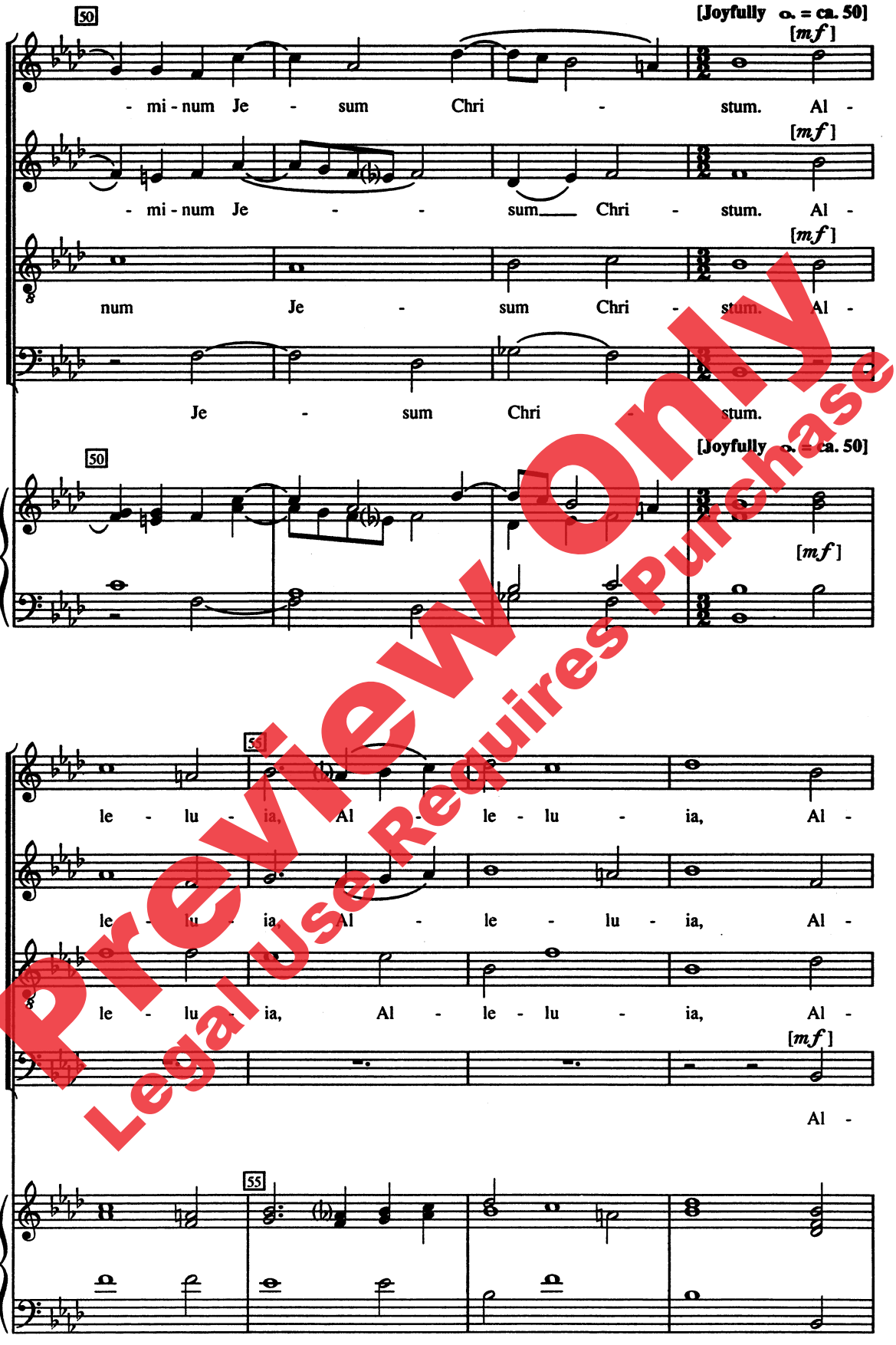

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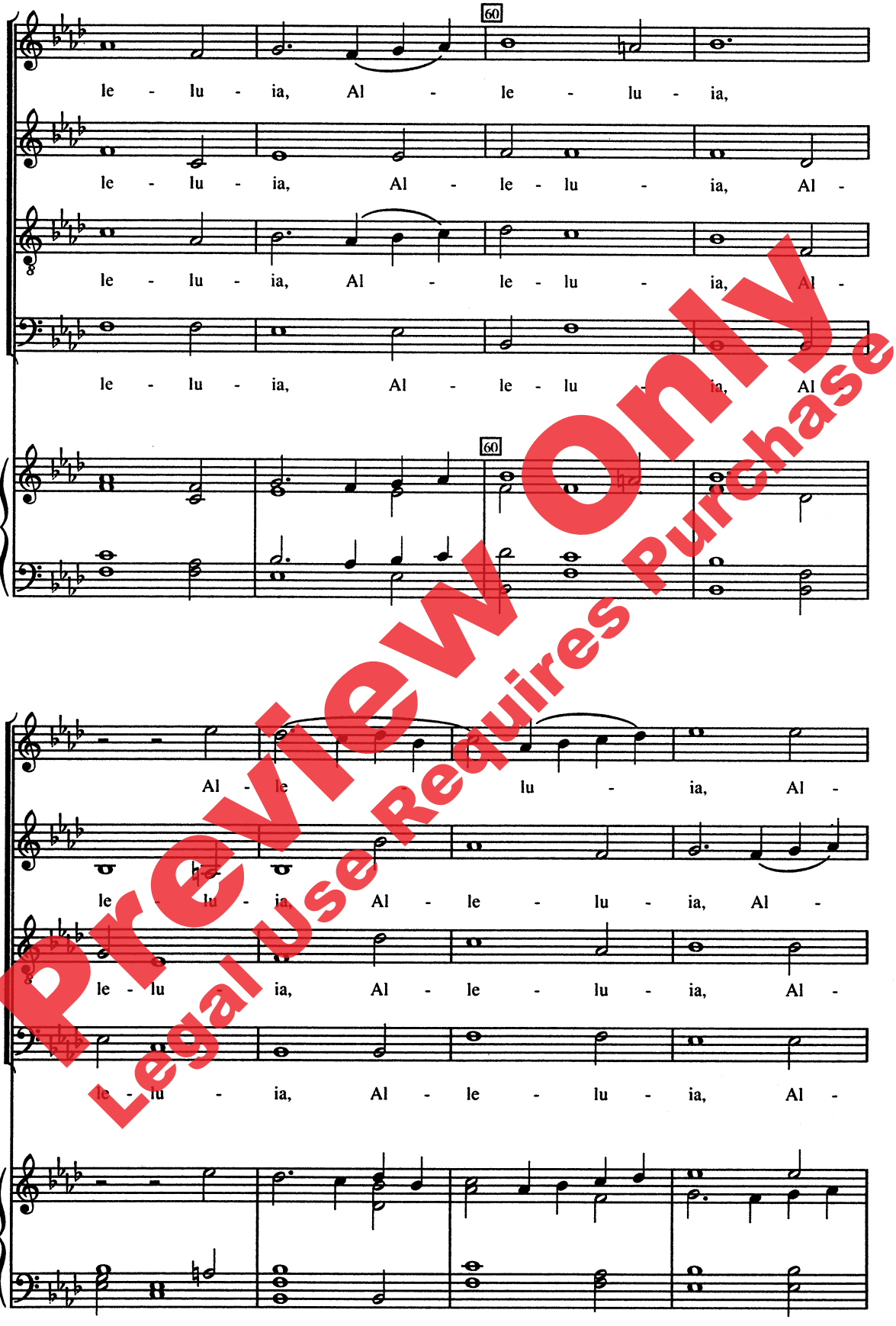

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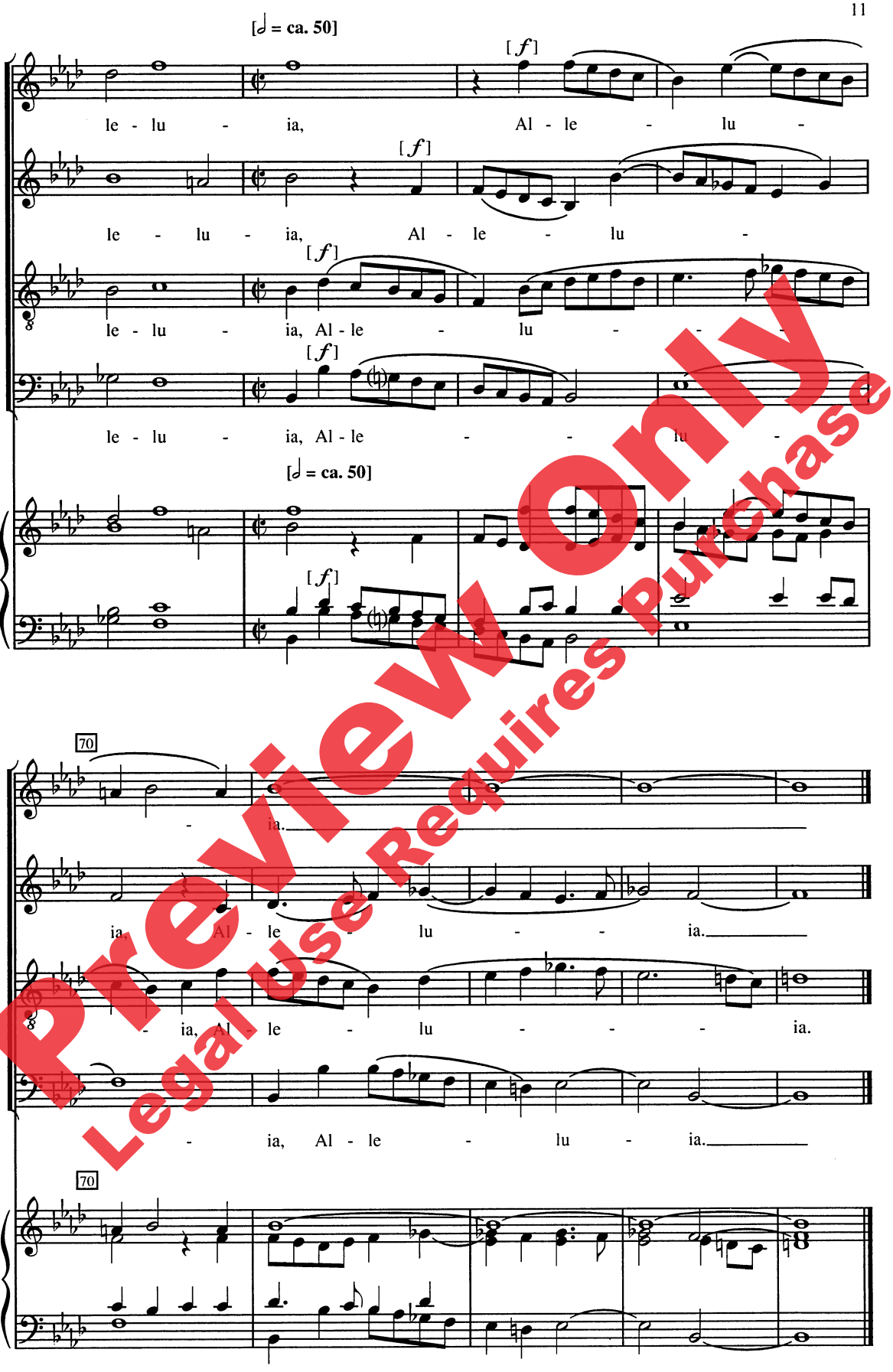

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