WARM-UPS FOR DEVELOPING JAZZ ENSEMBLE

Chris Sharp

Instrumentation

Alto Sax 1
Alto Sax 2
Tenor Sax 1
Tenor Sax 2
Opt. Baritone Sax
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trumpet 3
Opt. Trumpet 4
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Opt. Trombone 3
Opt. Trombone 4
Guitar Chord Guide
Guitar
Piano
Bass
Drum Set
Conductor's Full Score

Alternate Parts
C Flute (Doubles Trumpet 1 8va)
F Horn (Doubles Trombone 1)
Baritone T.C. (Doubles Trombone 1)

Extra Conductor Score: $5.00
Extra Parts: $3.00

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As a result, all single page parts are collated before multiple page parts.

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The Composer

Born in 1959, Chris Sharp is a Florida native raised in Cocoa Beach. He received a Bachelor of Music degree in theory and composition from the University of Florida, where he performed in bands under Frank Wickes and Gary Langford, and studied privately with Richard W. Bowles and Edward Troupin. He earned a Master of Music degree in studio writing and production from the University of Miami, studying with Gary Lindsay, James Progris, Alfred Reed, Ron Miller, and Whit Sidener. Since 1984, Mr. Sharp has served as a staff arranger for Walt Disney World Creative Services, providing music for events ranging from street bands to national television broadcasts. He has also written for Universal Studios (Florida and California); Ringling Brothers Circus; high school and college bands throughout the United States; and several service bands, including the famed USAF Airmen of Note. Active nationwide as a clinician and adjudicator, Mr. Sharp's present focus is on developing material for high school and middle school concert bands, jazz bands, and small ensembles. He currently lives in the Orlando area, where he is a composer, arranger, orchestrator, freelance trombonist, and active music educator.

About the Music

Warm-ups for Developing Jazz Ensemble is a follow-up to *Warm-ups for Beginning Jazz Ensemble.* This edition is aimed at developing advanced middle school and high school ensembles. The ranges and rhythmic content are more in line with pieces falling in the grade 2–3 range. Lessons from these short exercises can be transferred to performances of full-length charts in these styles.

As in the beginning version, there are short passages representing a variety of jazz styles arranged in order of increasing complexity. Each exercise begins within comfortable ranges, and stretches upward and outward through the piece toward the ending. Rhythm section parts are fully realized, but also include chord changes to help educate players, with proper voicings and rhythmic figures appropriate to each style represented. Numerous articulations are also provided to help classically trained musicians transition successfully into the world of jazz music.

Chorale is a whole-note progression that begins with unison octaves, then opens up to 5ths and fully voiced harmony. Its longer note values allow musicians to focus on the role of individual chord tones within complex extended harmonies. It can be beneficial to break down the individual chords into familiar root-3rd-5th structures before gradually adding in the 7ths, 9ths, 11ths, and 13ths, so individuals can learn proper tuning alignment of these less familiar chordal elements. The sparse rhythmic accompaniment on the ride cymbal will also help the director to focus on precise timing and uniformity of articulation technique.

Ballad is a vehicle that offers the opportunity to develop the fluid ensemble phrasing necessary to this style. Musicians should be instructed to think of each phrase as a complete musical thought or idea, and not to break them up by taking breaths indiscriminately in the middle of the phrase. Focus also on timing and method of releases at phrase endings. There are independent rhythmic elements interspersed throughout the winds, allowing individual players to learn the technique of bringing out the moving line and fading back into the ensemble during more static rhythms.

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The harmonic language is comparable to what you would find in a more extended piece in this style. A subdued rock pattern in the drums is introduced at the third phrase.

One of the more challenging jazz styles for young musicians is the slow Count Basie–style swing. *Laid Back* offers the opportunity to focus on the problem areas of this style. There seems to be a natural tendency to rush at this slower tempo, so the operative word here is *relaxed.* The short articulated quarter notes are almost invariably rushed, even at faster tempi. Encouraging players to maintain a mental awareness of the triplet subdivision throughout this piece will help eliminate the tendency to rush, and will also help with the placement of notes falling on the "and" of the beat. Strive for accurate placement of offbeat notes directly on the third of the inflected triplets to maximize the authenticity of this style. Carefully define also the length of the staccato quarter notes, which in this style should be separated but with full eighth-note length. Good recordings are an invaluable tool in the understanding of this style; play for the students as many as you can find.

Swing at a faster tempo is explored in *Killer Bop.* The title is a reference to the Benny Golson standard *Killer Joe.* Our exercise uses a similar rhythm feel. It will be helpful to make sure the rhythm section is functioning tightly together before adding winds. The success of this style is partly dependent upon the offbeat accents—be sure they are observed. As in the previous style, the continual mental awareness of the triplet–eighth-note subdivision is vital. Be sure the drummer is providing strong beats 2 and 4 with the hi-hat. The eighth-note lines in the trumpets and saxes should receive special attention. For an idiomatically appropriate style, they should be smooth and connected, but with emphasis on the offbeat notes. As indicated, accented offbeat notes should be slurred into the downbeat notes, but without cutting short the slurred-into notes. This can be a difficult concept to assimilate; again, seek out quality recordings to help illustrate the technique.

Next, we explore the samba style in *Gimme Samba Dat.* The most important player in this style is the drummer. It may be necessary to work alone with him to develop the independence of hands and feet necessary to properly propel this style. The cohesion of all of the rhythm-section contributions will have to be established before winds can join in the fray. This is a challenging but fun style if successfully rendered. It can do much to increase confidence and accuracy of the time-feel within individual players. The syncopated accompaniment parts in the trombones can be more easily accessed by focusing on the downbeat notes, and allowing the offbeats to fall into place. All players must keep their approach light and airy, or this style will bog down. Don't hesitate to slow down the tempo, so that individuals can understand how their parts rhythmically interact.

Finally, *Get Funky* addresses the funk style, which can be difficult to accurately perform, even for professionals. Without a very strong individual awareness of the sixteenth-note subdivision, this style can easily fall apart. It's necessary to emphasize the 3:1 ratio of dotted-eight–sixteenth-note figures, a figure commonly rushed by inexperienced players. If your musicians are unfamiliar with it, this could be the time to introduce the "1-ee-and-ah, 2-ee-and-ah" technique of sixteenth-note subdivision. The scat syllables "sha-be-doo-BOP" can also help players accurately isolate the last sixteenth note (the "ah" of the beat) in the dotted-eight–sixteenth-note groupings. Pay special attention to the articulations provided; they can help greatly in the proper rendering of this style. Recordings of the Thad Jones–Mel Lewis Band or Tower of Power can provide valuable clues in understanding this style.

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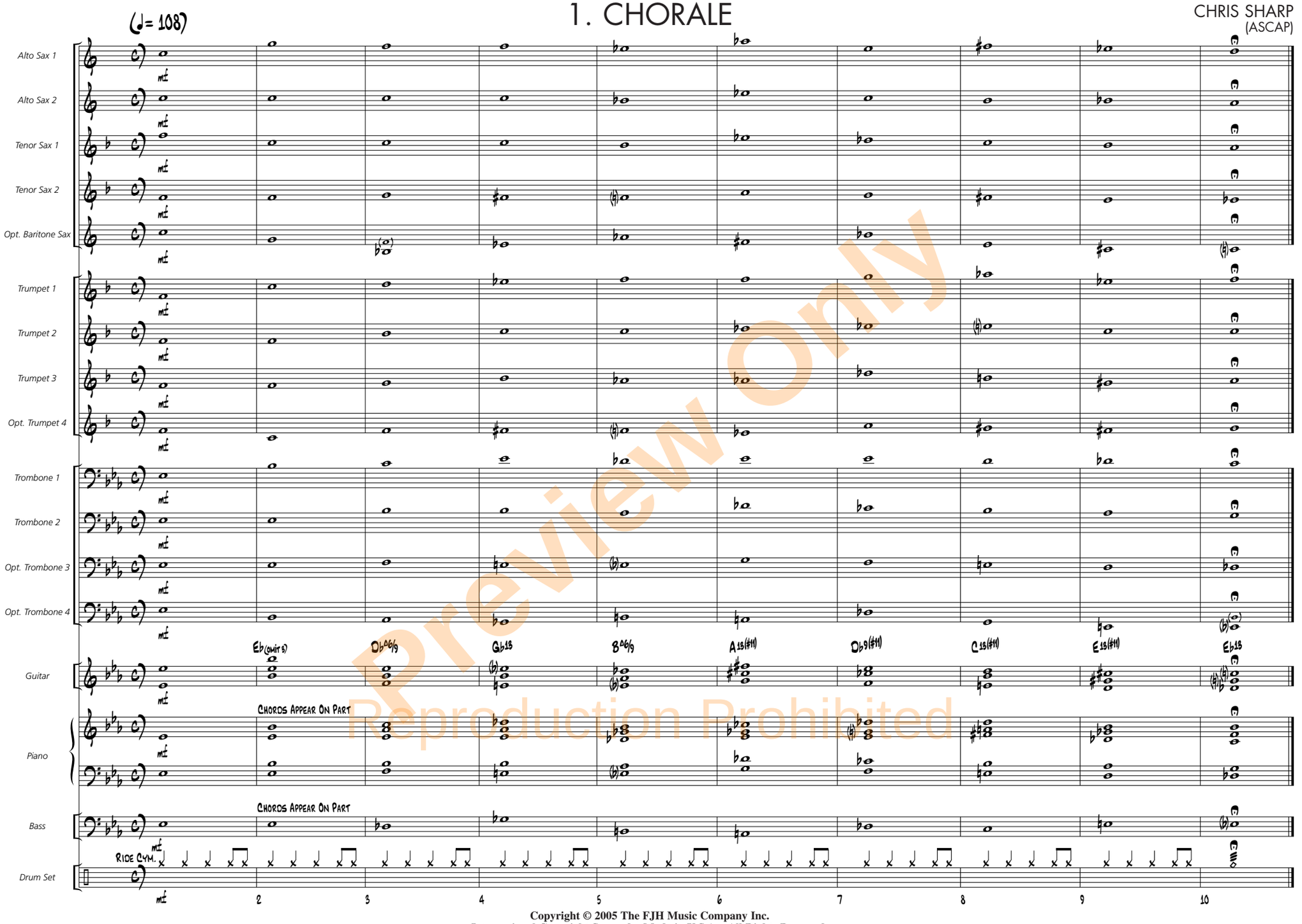
WARM-UPS FOR DEVELOPING JAZZ ENSEMBLE

1. CHORALE

CHRIS SHARP
(ASCAP)



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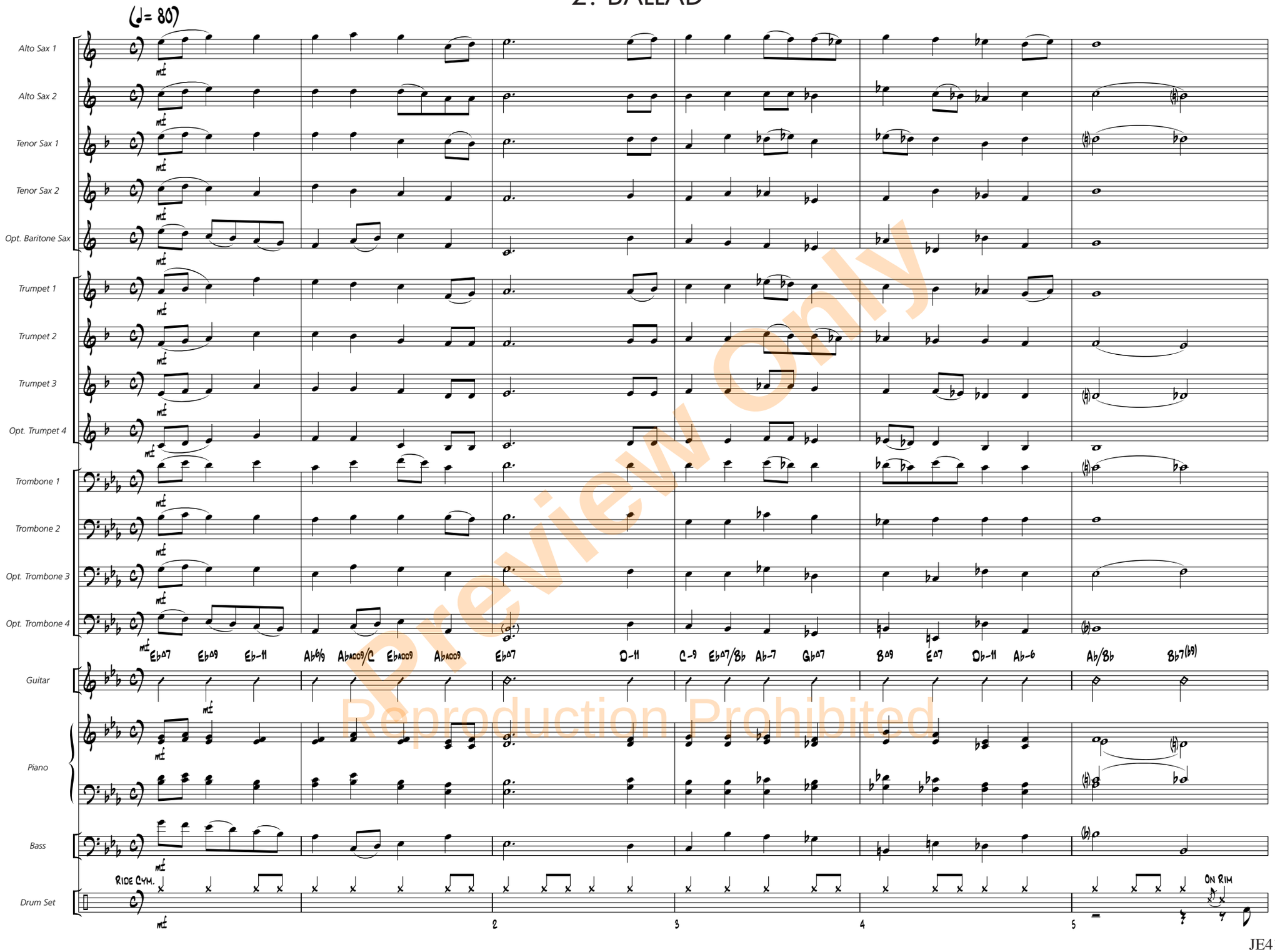

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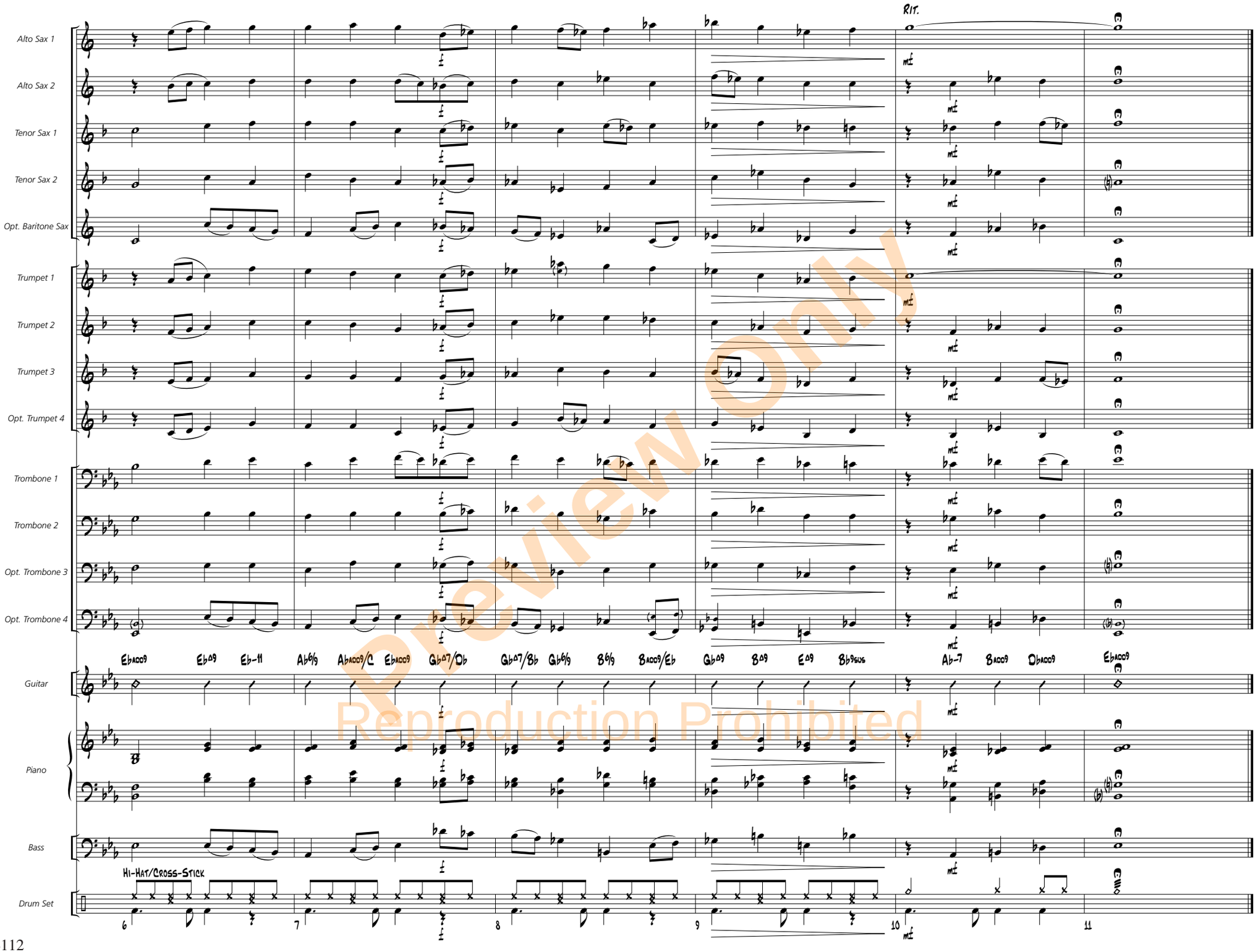

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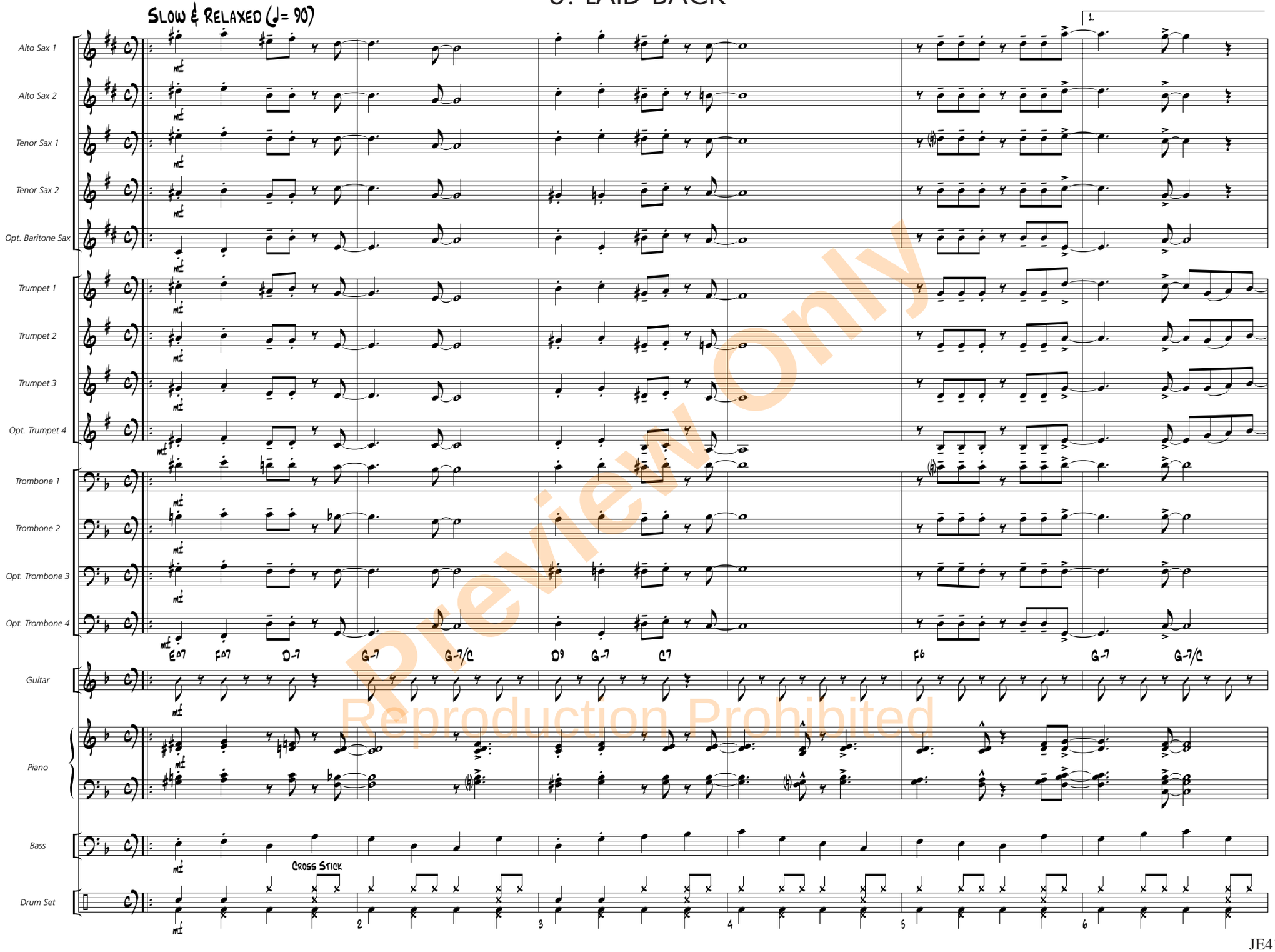
3. LAID BACK



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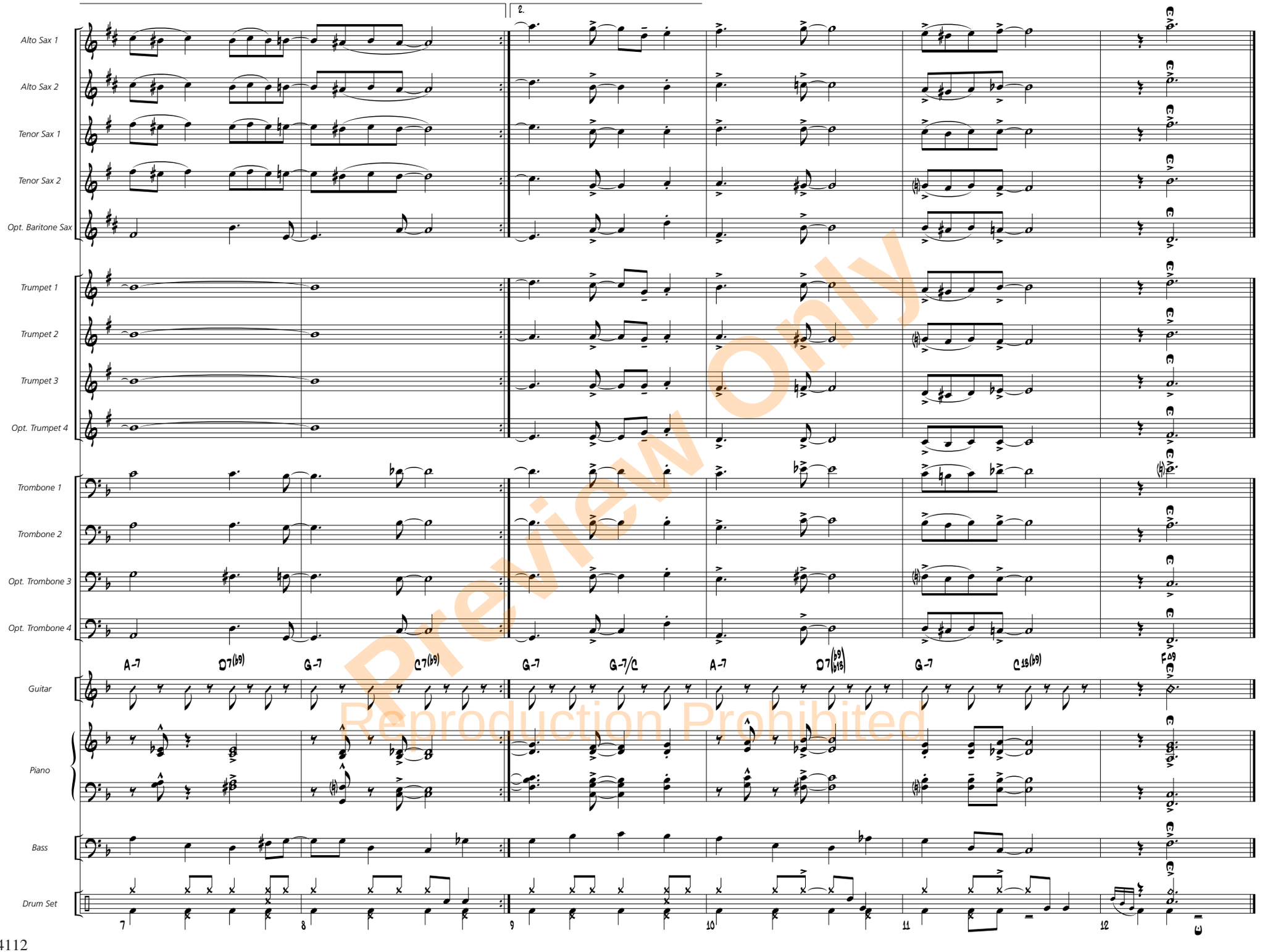

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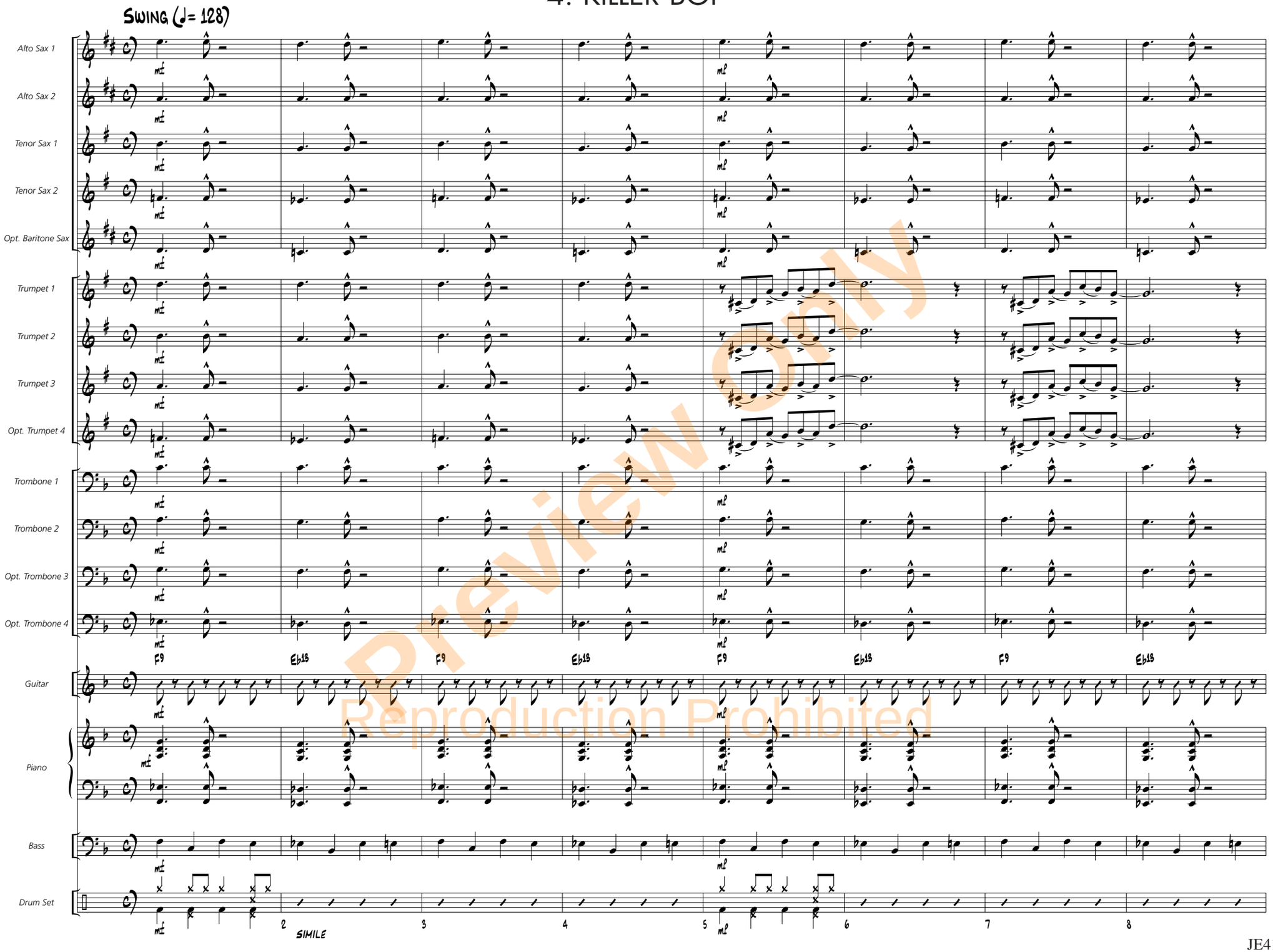
4. KILLER BOP



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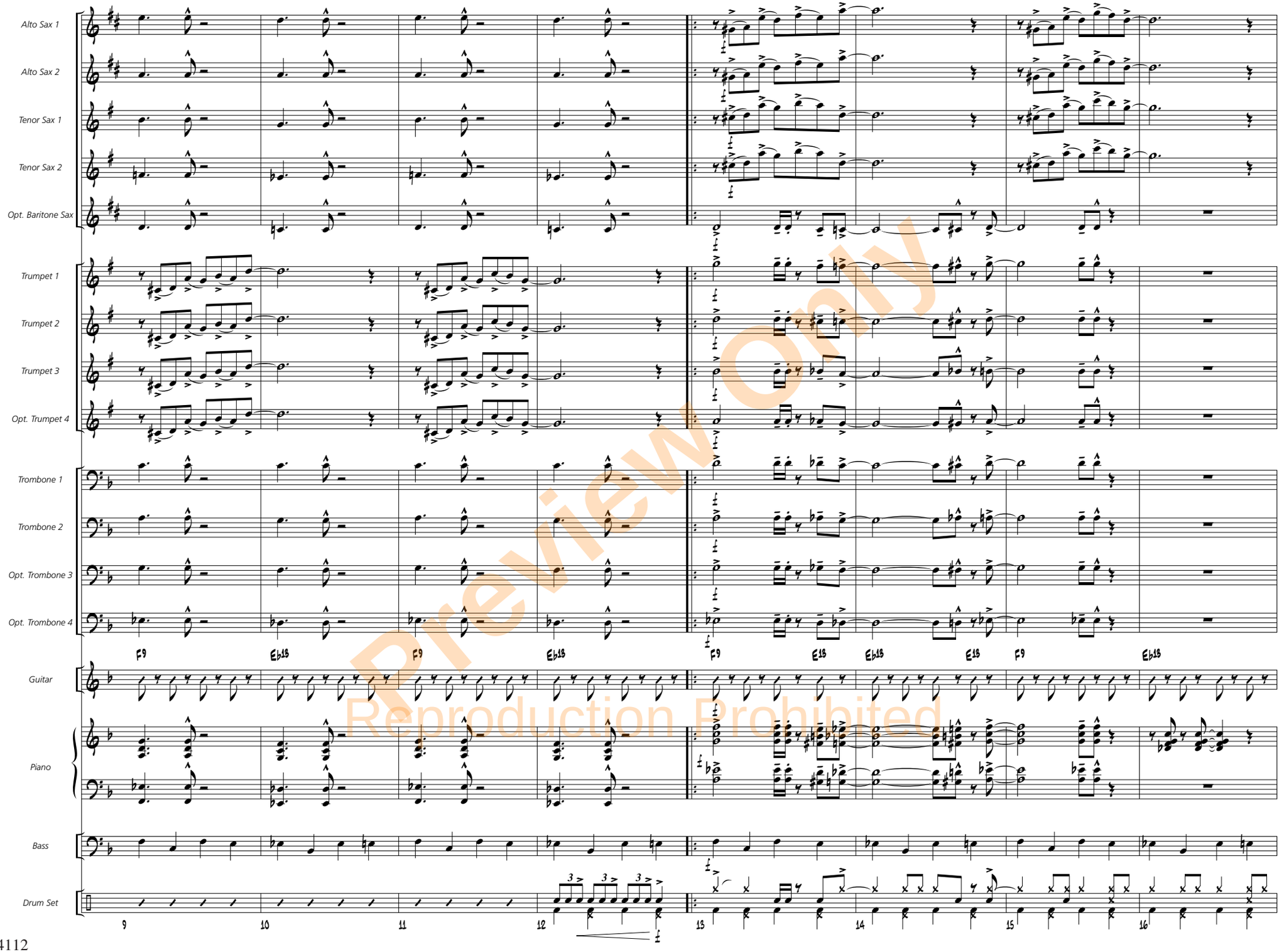

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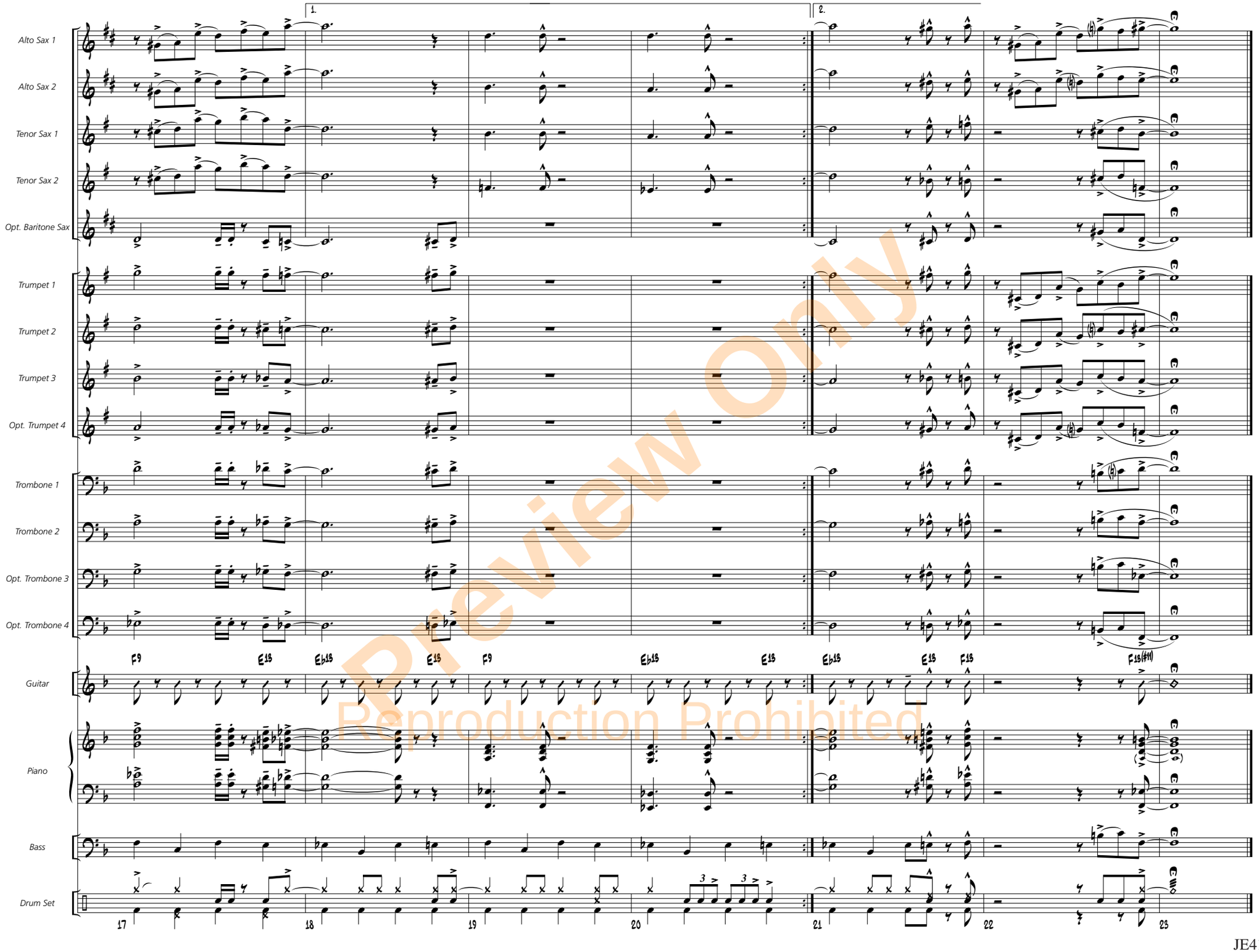

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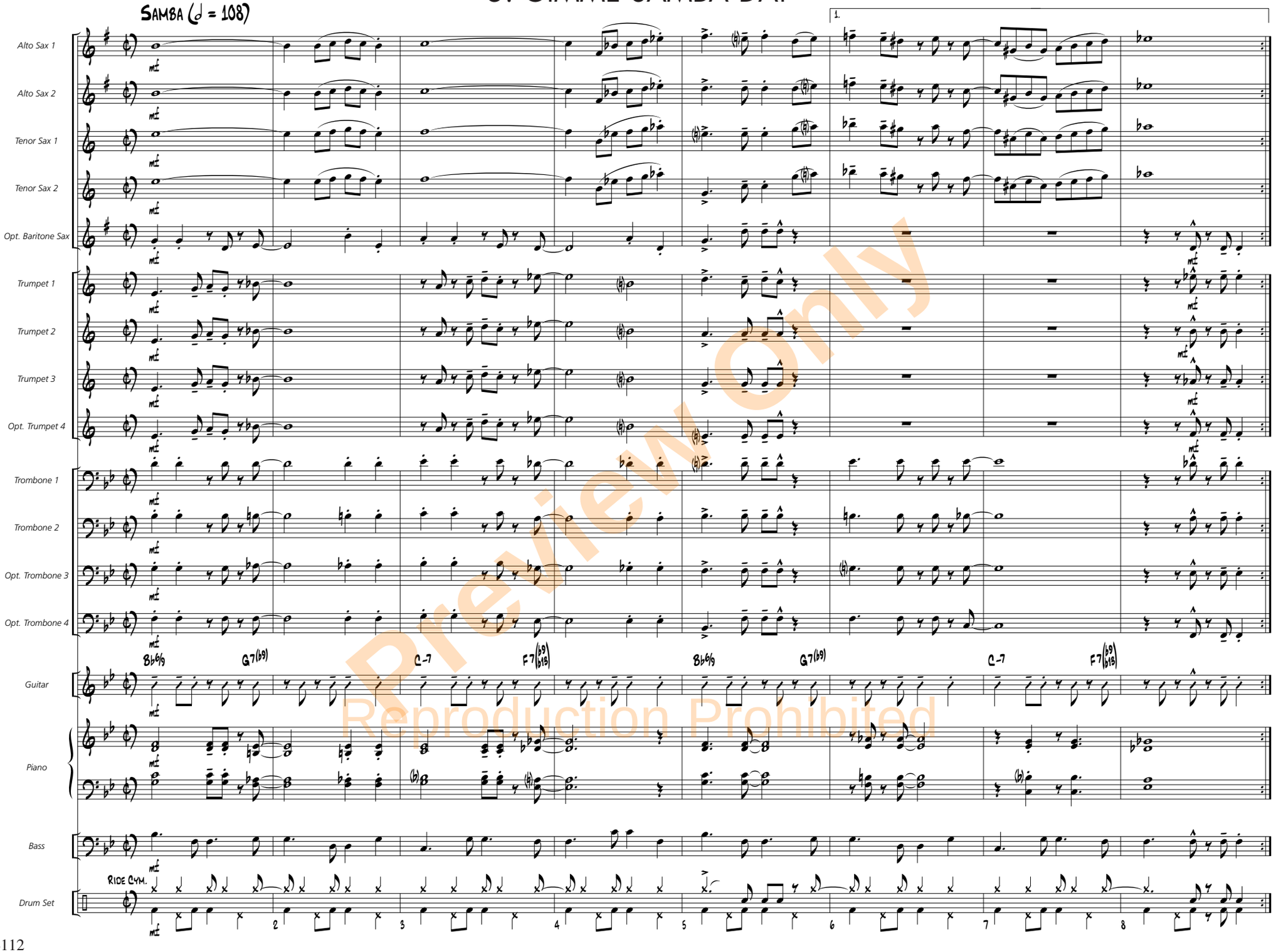
5. GIMME SAMBA DAT



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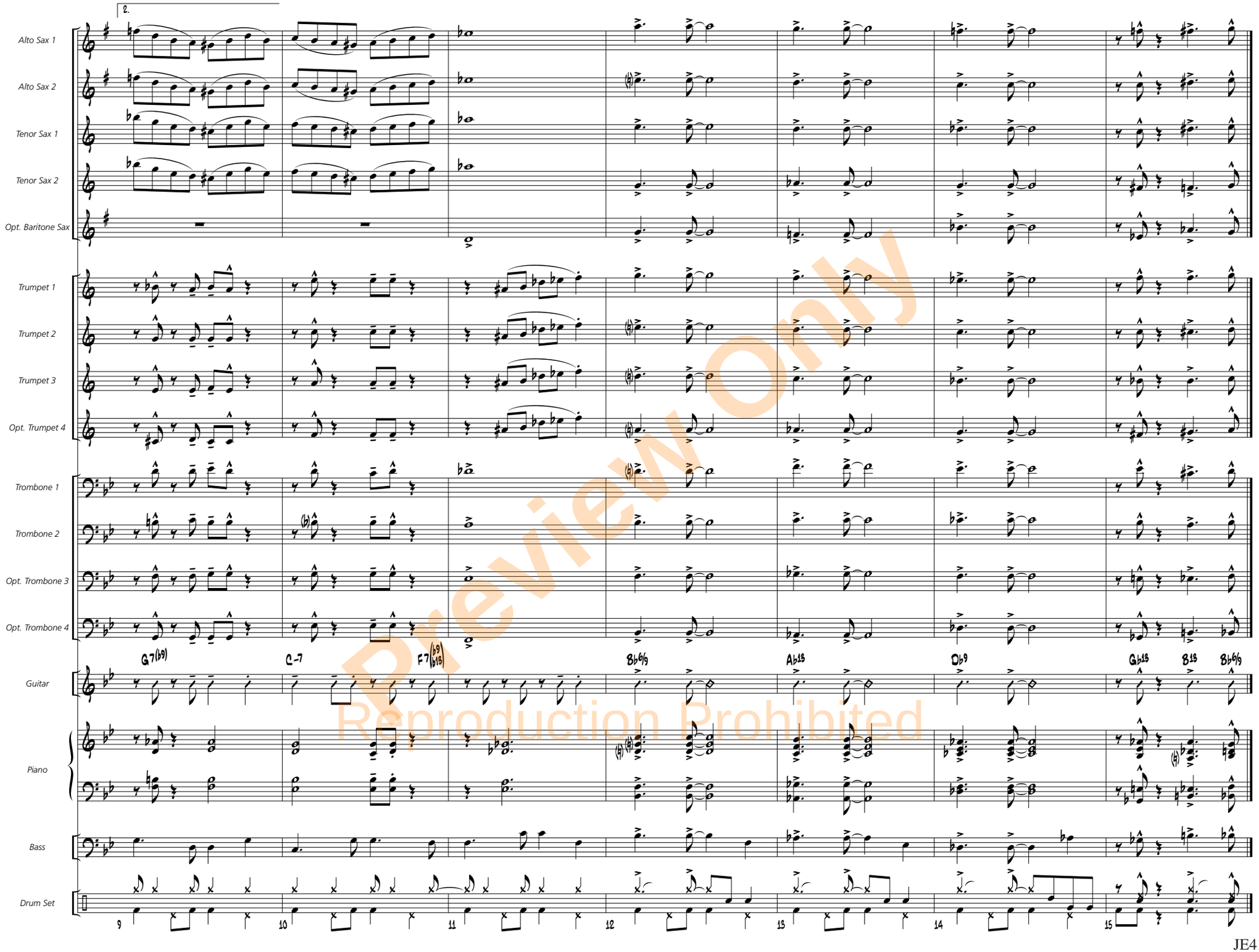

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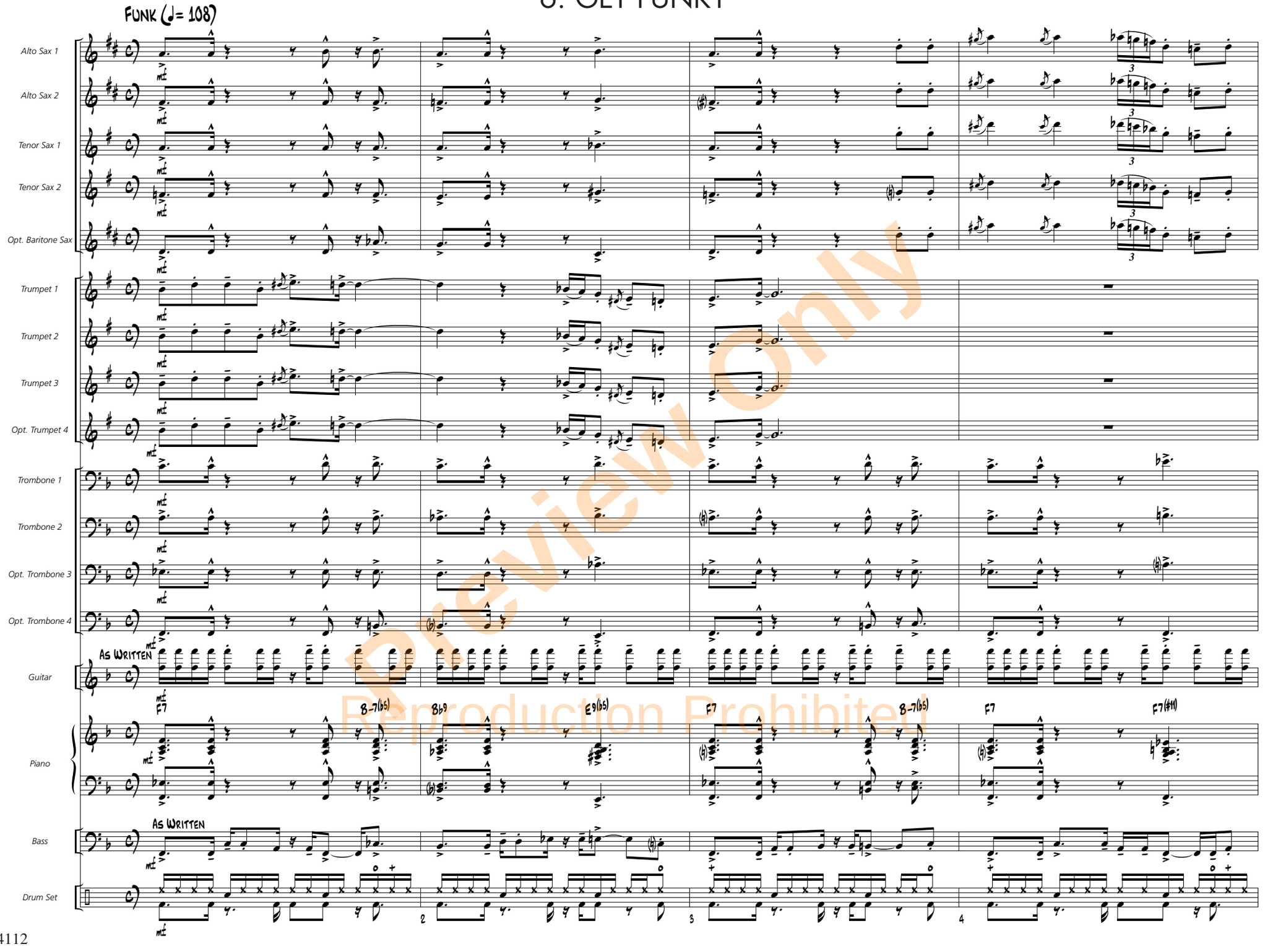
6. GET FUNKY



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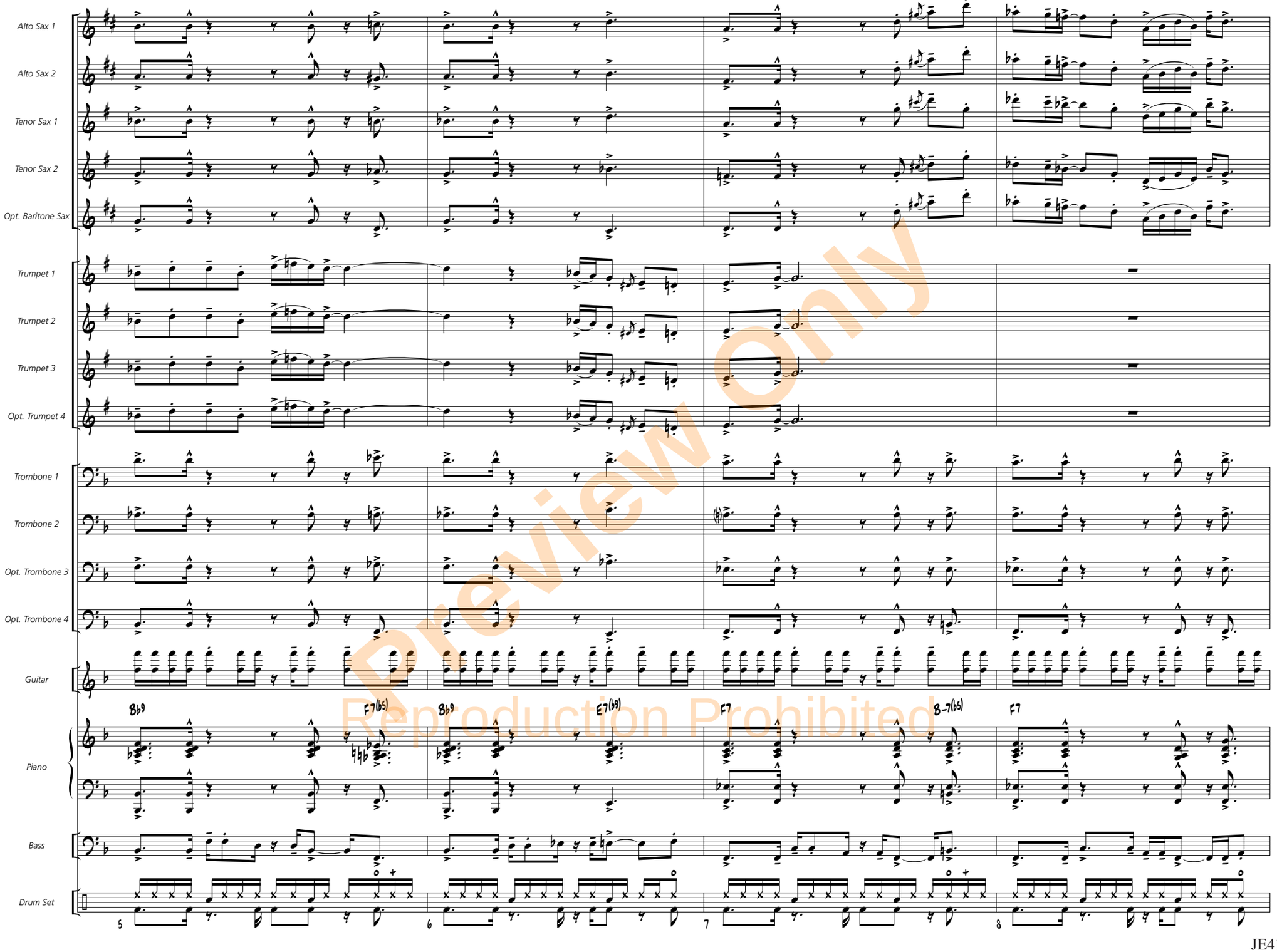

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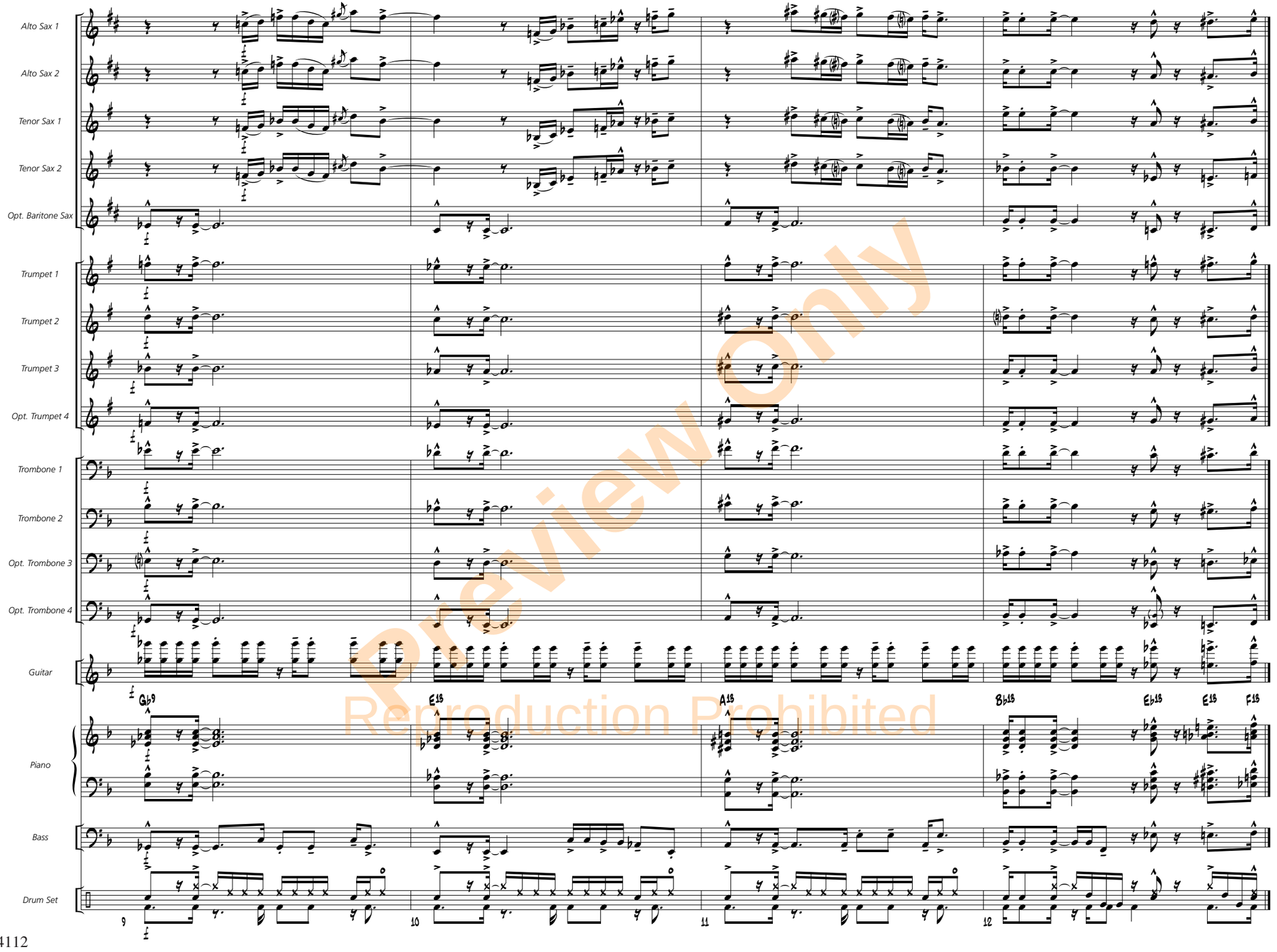

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