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FJH STRING ORCHESTRA

Grade 3.5

A MINOR CASE OF THE BIRTHDAY BLUES

Lauren Bernofsky

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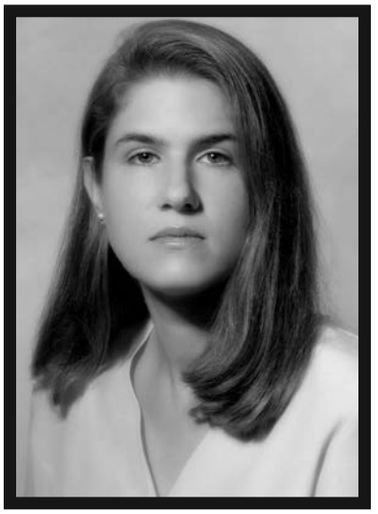
Instrumentation

1 - Conductor's Full Score
8 - Violin 1
8 - Violin 2
5 - Violin 3 (Viola T.C.)
5 - Viola
5 - Violoncello
5 - Double Bass
1 - Percussion
Claves
Maracas

THE F·J·H MUSIC COMPANY INC.
Frank J. Hackinson

2525 Davie Road, Suite 360
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33317-7424
www.fjhmusic.com



The Composer

Hailed by Lukas Foss as “a master composer,” **Lauren Bernofsky** has written over eighty works, including solo, chamber, and choral music, as well as larger-scale works for orchestra, film, and ballet. With performances spanning the world, her music has been described as “fantastic,” “delightful,” “evocative and witty,” “brilliant,” and destined to “become standard repertoire.”

She holds a master’s degree in composition from the New England Conservatory and a doctorate in composition from Boston University, and she has taught as a professor at the Peabody Institute.

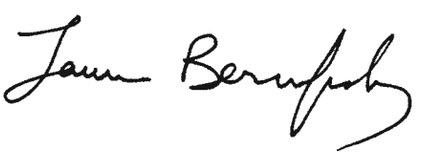
Bernofsky has received numerous grants from institutions including The National Foundation for the Advancement of the Arts, The American Music Center, and The American Composers Forum. She has been honored with a Longfellow Chorus Award of Distinction and an Excellence in Composition Award from the Brass Chamber Music Forum. Her compositions have been commissioned by The Del Mar Trio, The Holyoke Civic Symphony, The Litchfield County Children's Choir, The South Shore Conservatory, Sinfonia Calcania of Boston, and The Harford Ballet.

About the Music

What do you get for someone who doesn't like having a birthday? Jeff Thomas, the father of one of my violin students, suggested a piece of music! He commissioned me to write a musical birthday tribute that my students could play at our upcoming Musicale, to be dedicated to his wife Connie, whose birthday happened to be the day of the Musicale. In this piece, I start out with a version of the traditional birthday song in a minor key, adding sad-sounding effects such as the descending scale and “agonizing” suspensions (for extra flavor.)

The piece builds in emotional duress until it suddenly slams into a new, major section, through what is certainly the weirdest modulation I have ever written. Now we hear the birthday tune with a new twist, a sort of Calypso treatment (and don't forget the claves and maracas!) I added a pompous (and deliberately too-long) coda, and the piece mercifully comes to a close on “and many more....”

Preparing this piece for performance, I found an easy shortcut to teaching the triplet rhythms. Instead of explaining the mathematical ratios behind them (which is of limited interest to, say, a ten-year-old), I instead sang the triplets on the word “bicycle.” For instance, in the passage starting at the pick-up to m. 85, I had my students say, “ride a bicycle, bicycle, bicycle, bicycle, bike.” It worked like a charm!



String Editing: Carrie Lane Gruselle

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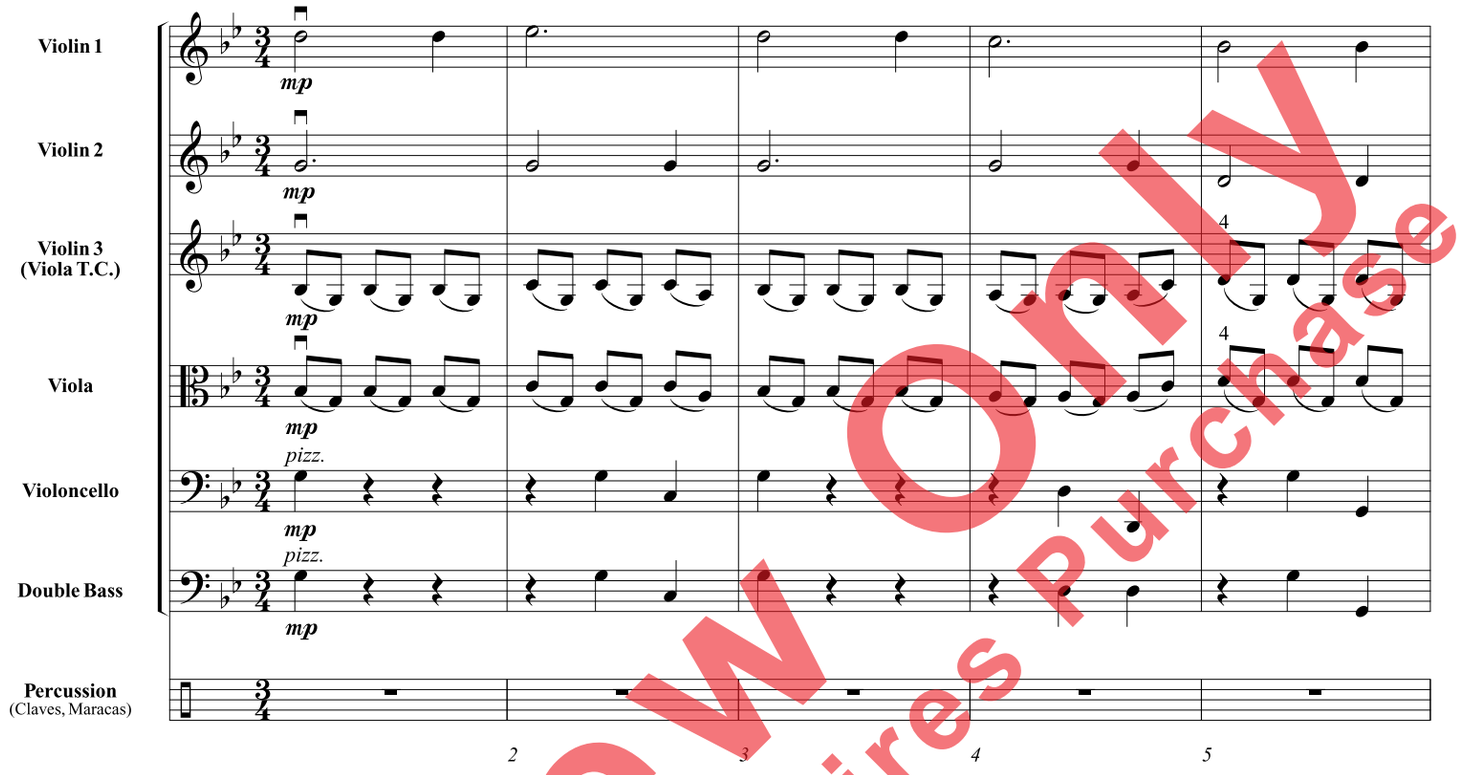
Duration: 2:45

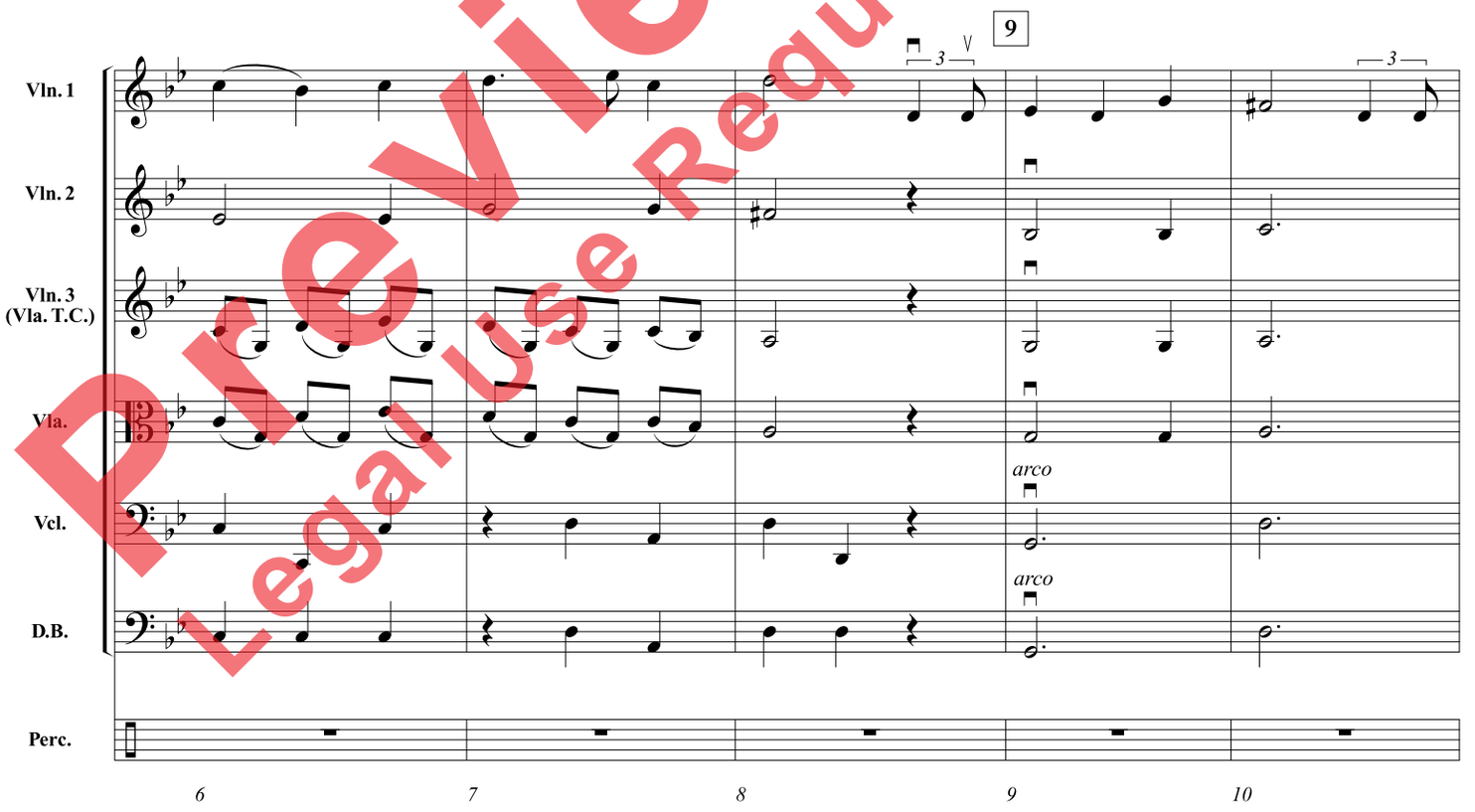
for Connie Kuhlman on the happy occasion
of her occasionally unhappy birthday

A MINOR CASE OF THE BIRTHDAY BLUES

LAUREN BERNOFSKY
(BMI)

Quasi Schleppando (♩ = 80)





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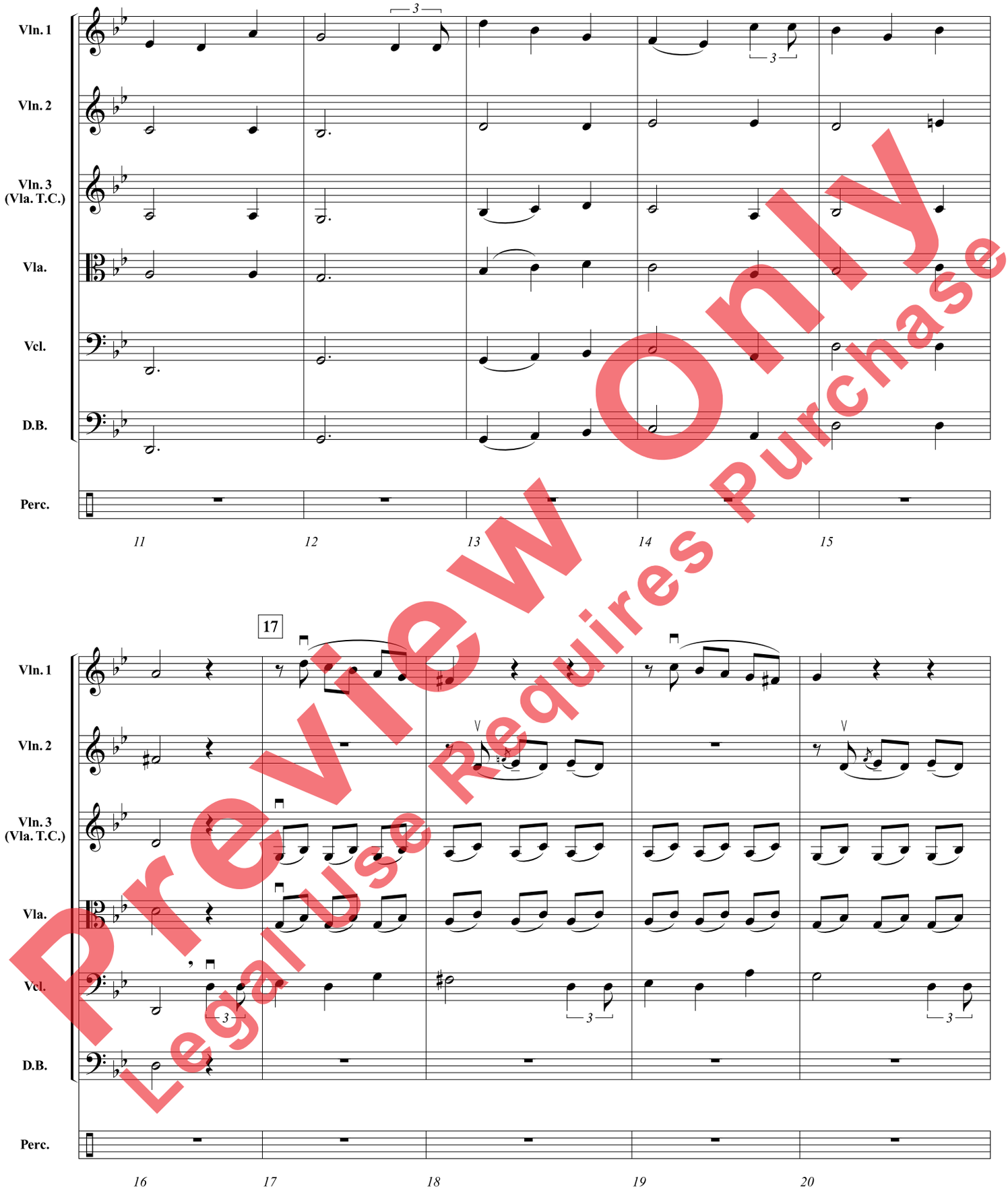

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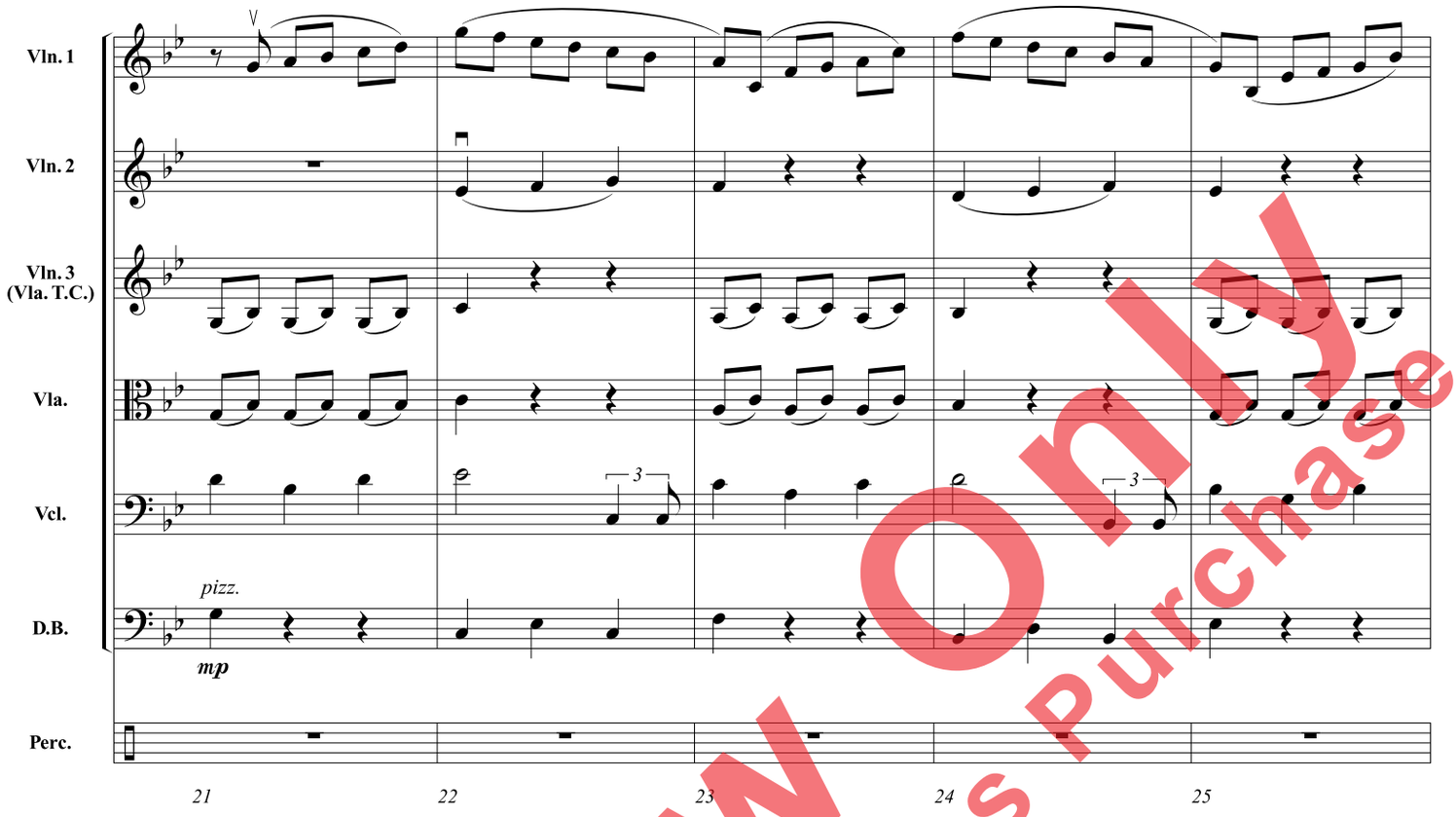

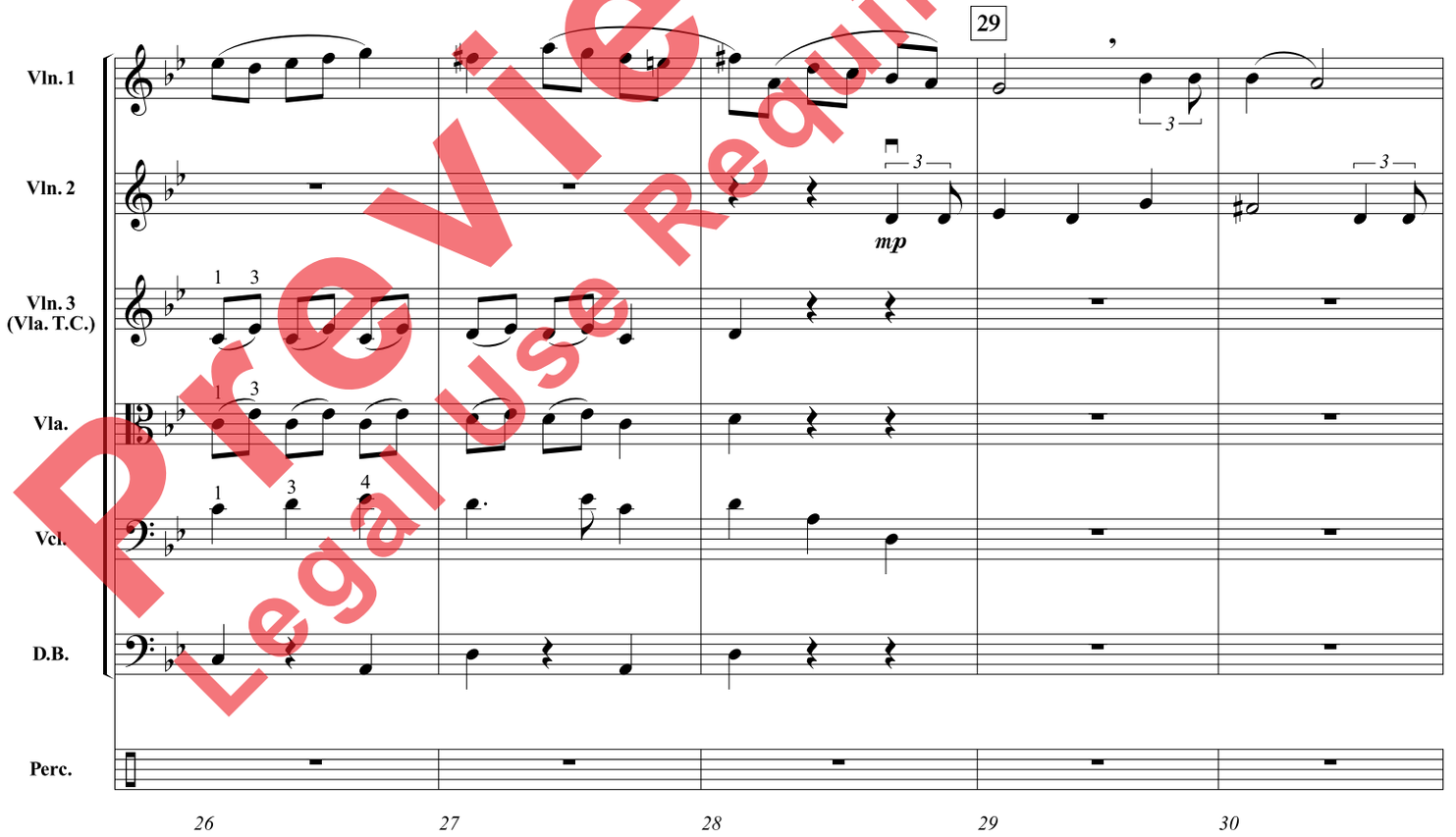

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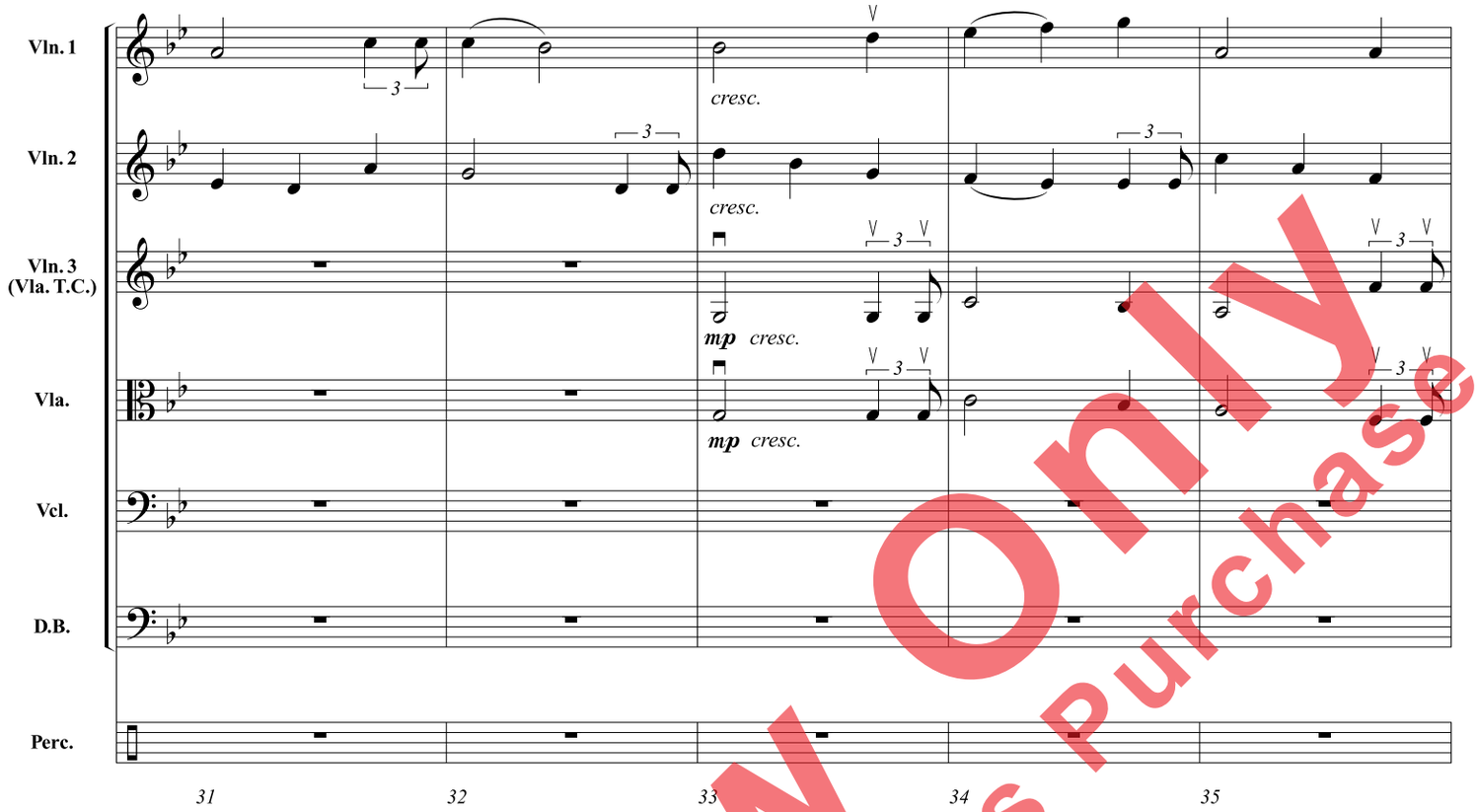

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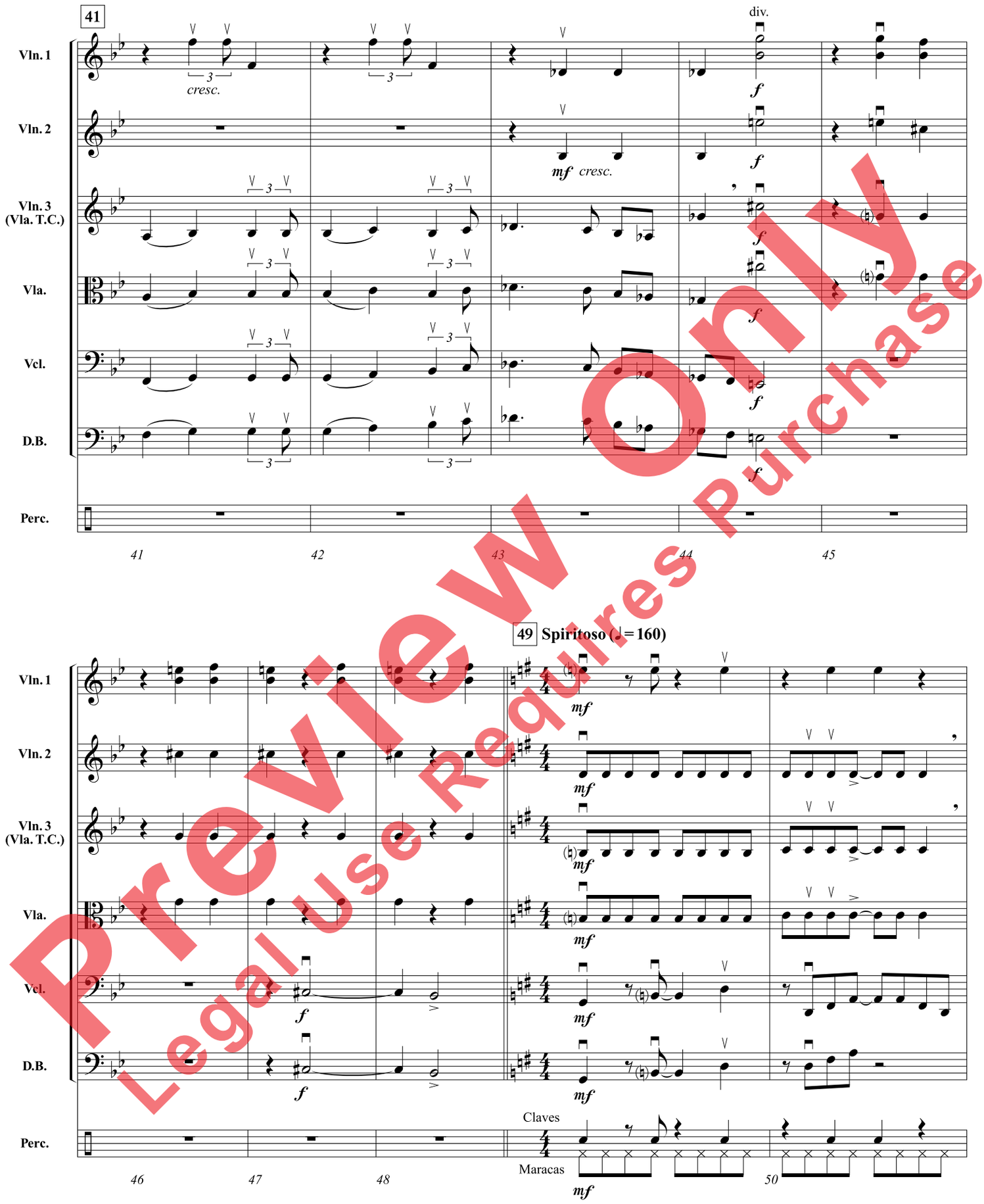

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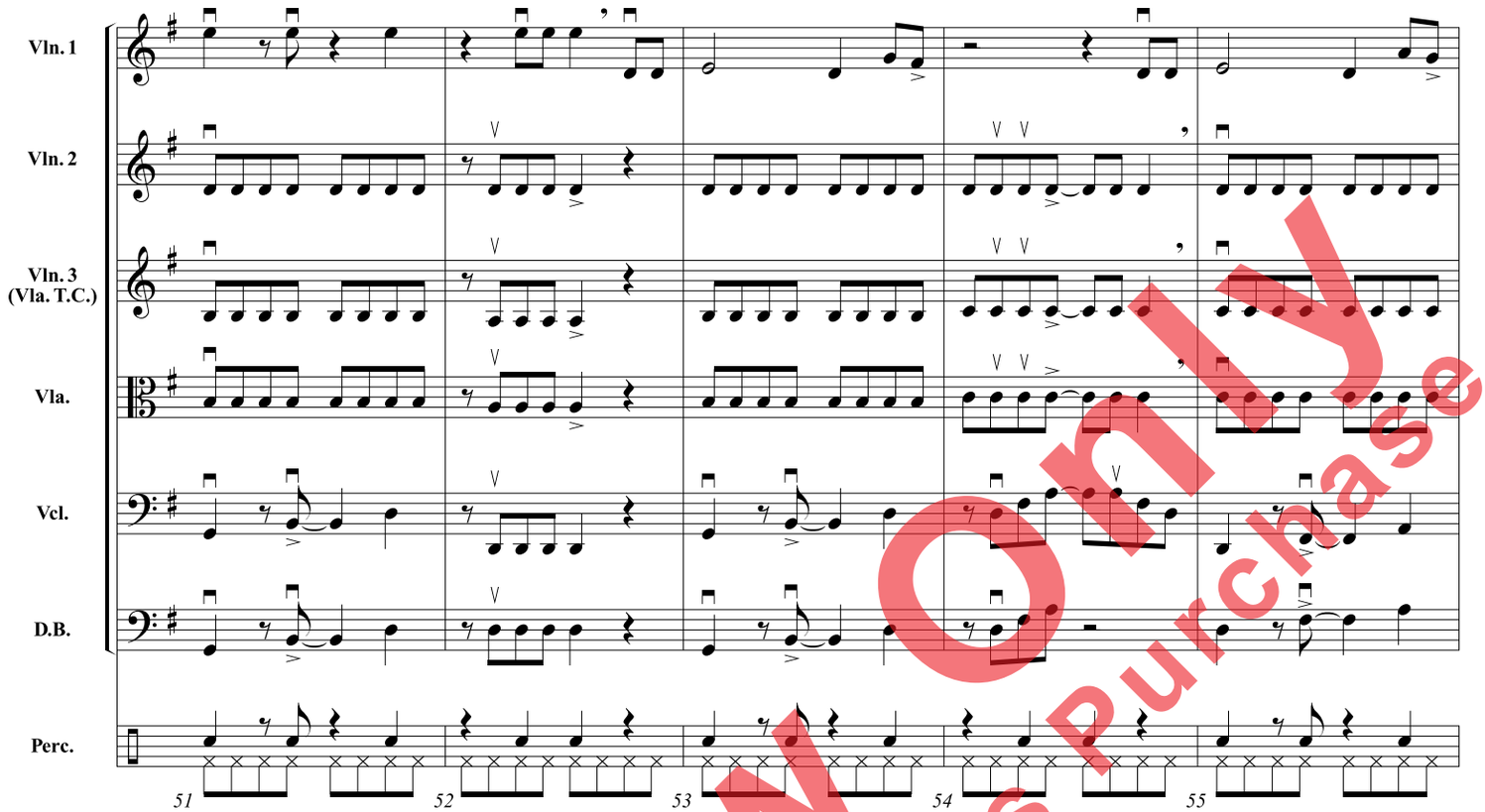

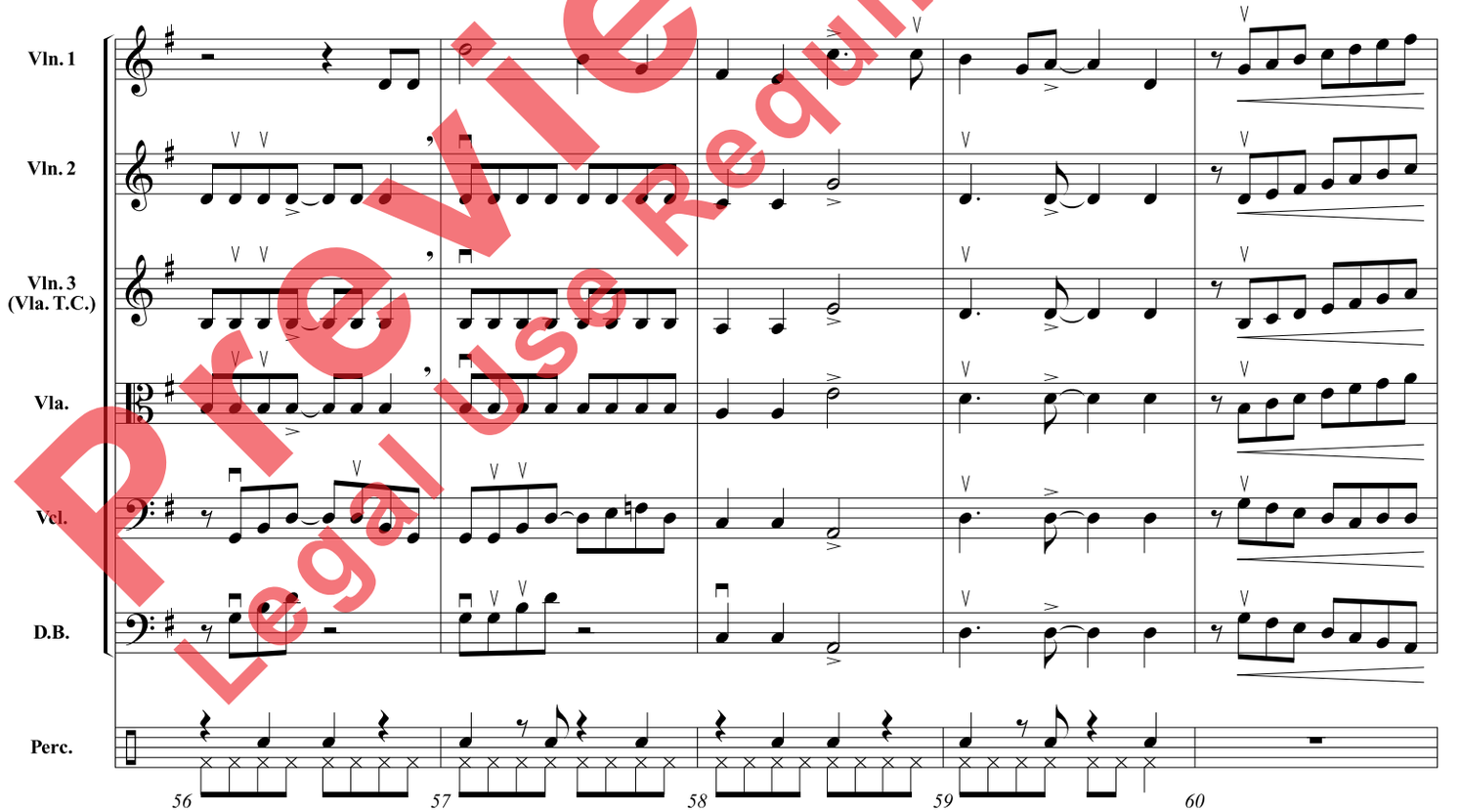

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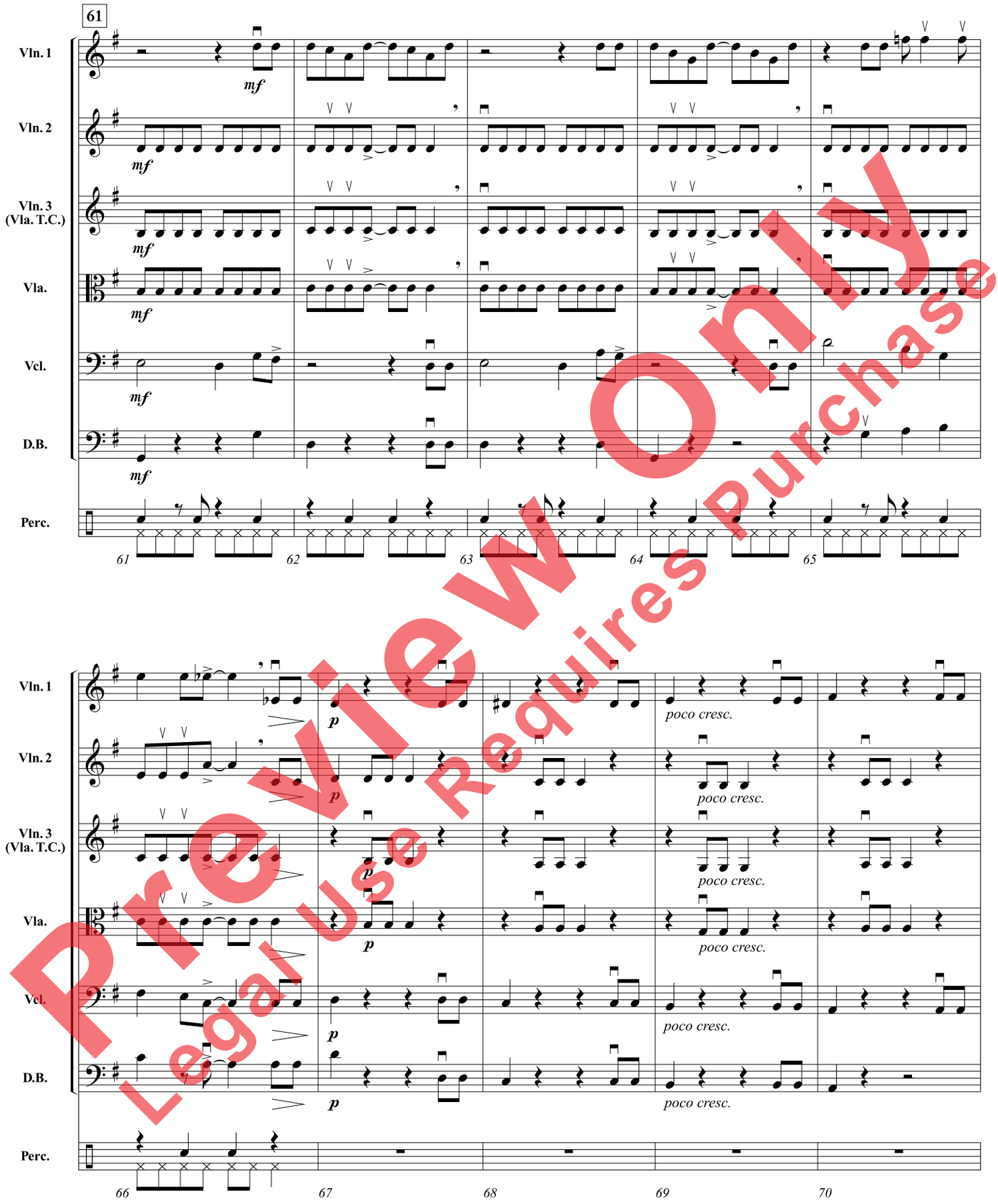

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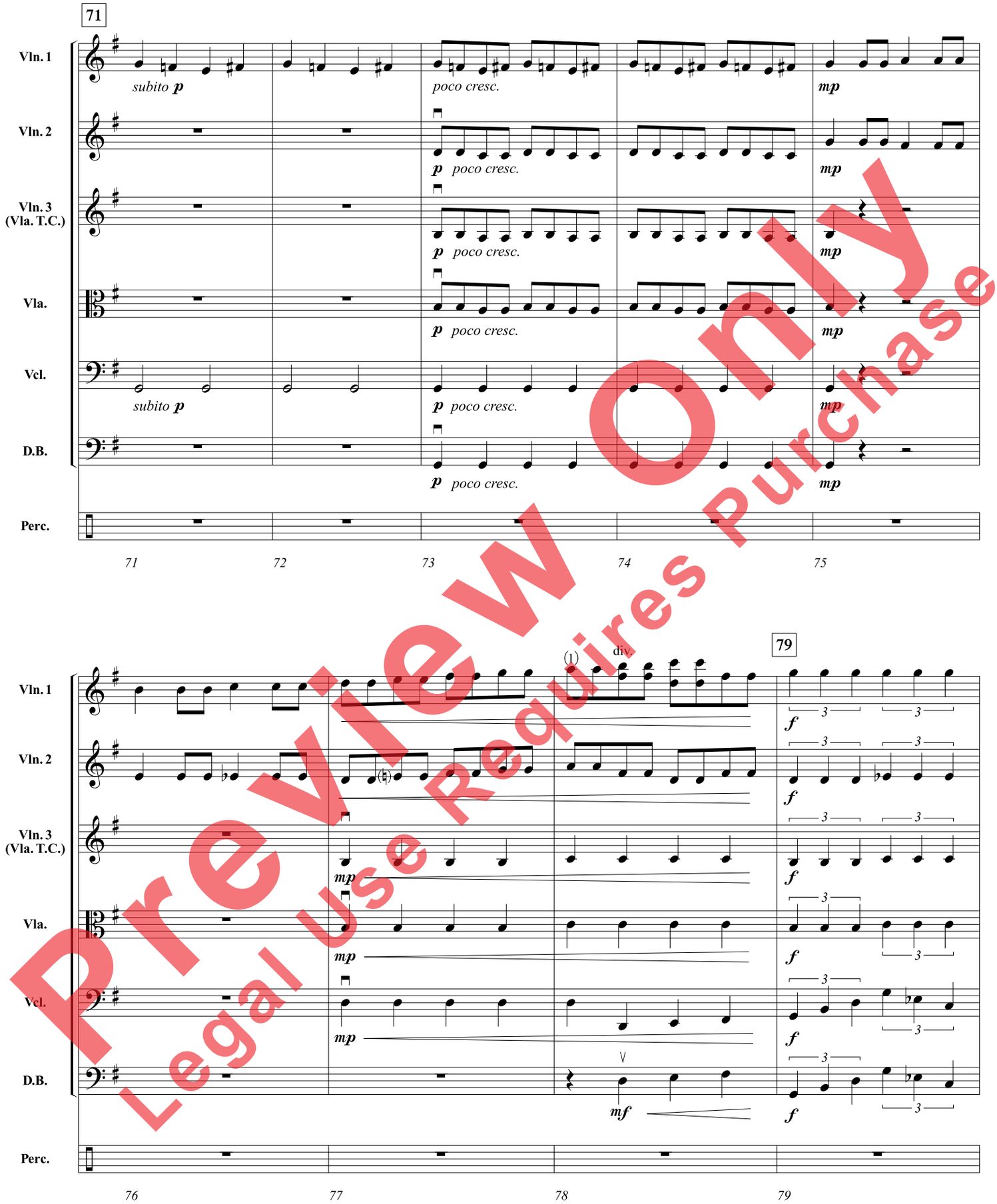

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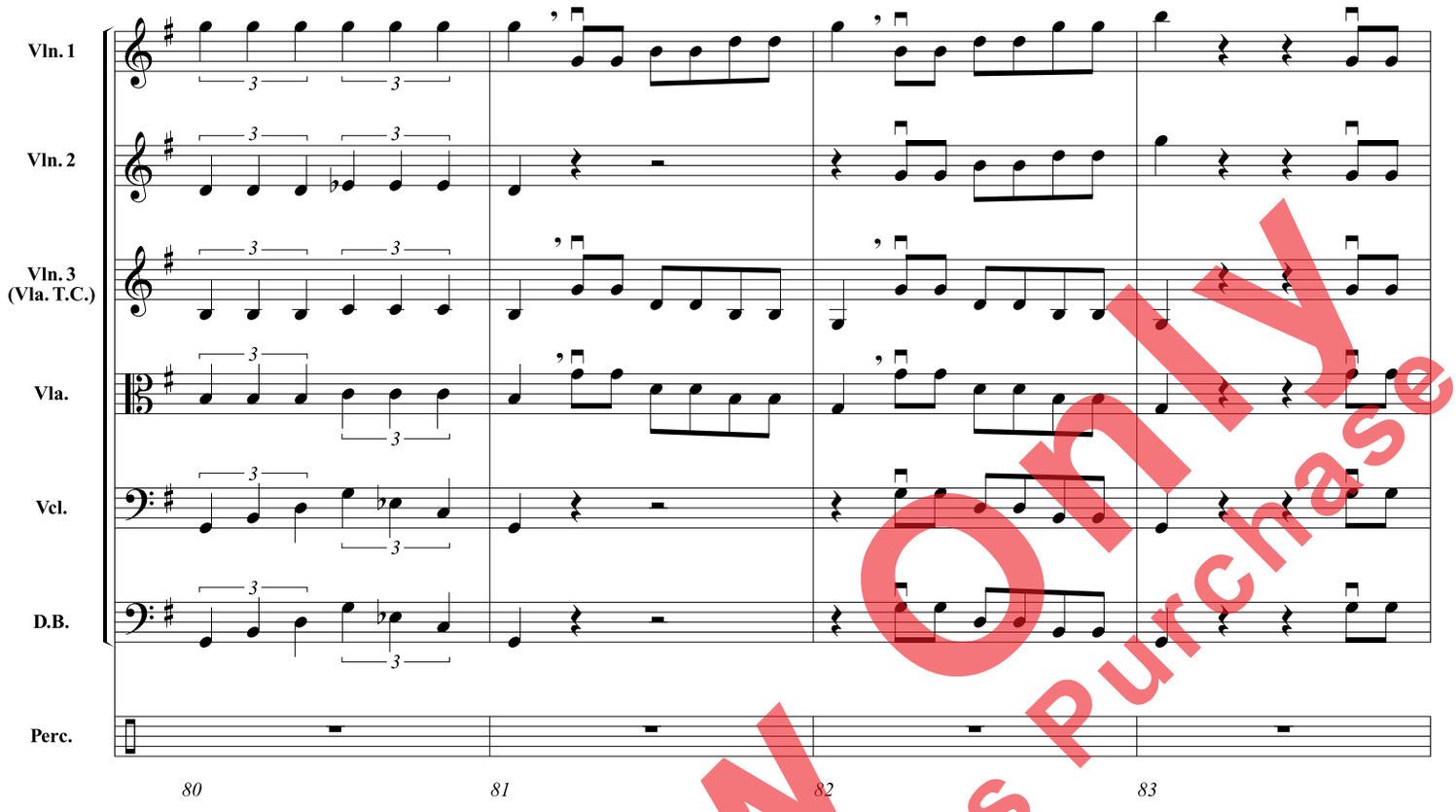

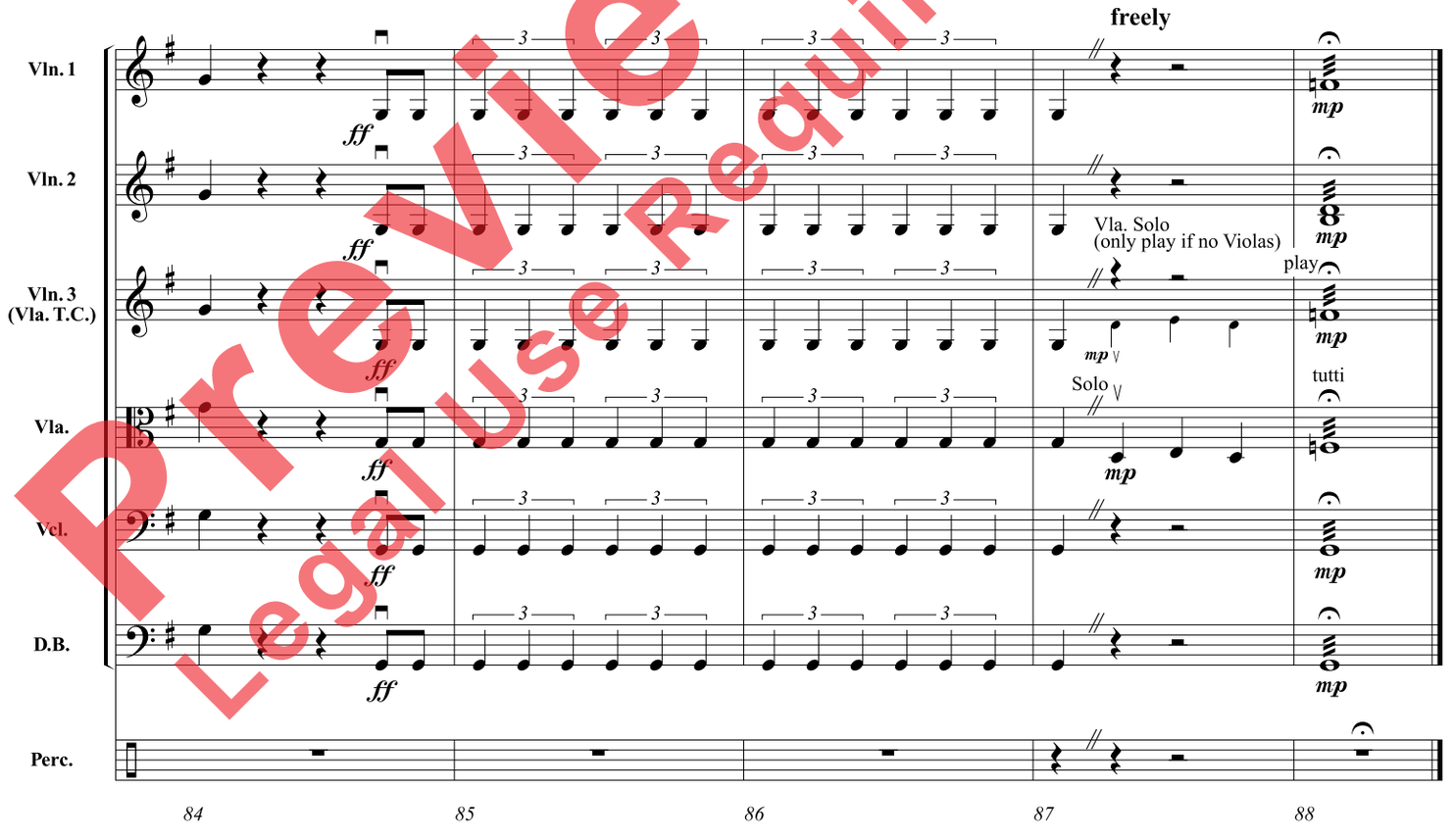

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