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FJH STRING ORCHESTRA

Grade 4
Solo: Grade 5

URBAN CONCERTO GROSSO

(FOR ELECTRIC OR ACOUSTIC STRING QUINTET AND STRING ORCHESTRA)

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

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

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FJH is now using a high-speed sorting system for parts.
As a result, all single page parts are collated before multiple page parts.

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

Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning composer, conductor, producer, and performer. He holds a bachelor's degree in music from James Madison University and a master's degree from the University of Miami in Florida. His compositions have been performed worldwide at the state, national and international level. His active schedule of commissions and premieres has incorporated groups ranging from elementary schools to professional ensembles, including the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Miami Symphony Orchestra, University of Miami Wind Ensemble, Boston Brass, and the Dominion Brass Ensemble. In 2012, Mr. Balmages received the prestigious Albert Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association. He is also a 2010 winner of the Harvey G. Phillips Award for Compositional Excellence, presented by the International Tuba-Euphonium Association.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys engagements with numerous all-state and regional honor bands and orchestras along with university and professional groups. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, National Association for Music Educators, American School Band Directors Association, CBDNA, the Kennedy Center, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. He has also served as an Adjunct Professor of Instrumental Conducting and Acting Symphonic Band Director at Towson University in Maryland.

Currently, Mr. Balmages is the Director of Instrumental Publications for The FJH Music Company Inc. in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. He resides in Baltimore with his wife Lisa and their two sons.

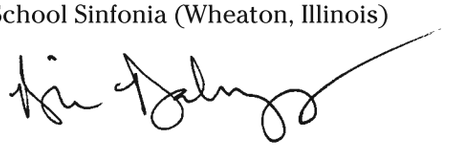
About the Music

As the title suggests, *Urban Concerto Grosso* is a modernized version of the original form that dates back to the Baroque era. Italian composers such as Arcangelo Corelli and Antonio Vivaldi wrote many concerti grossi, which feature a smaller group of soloists (often called the *concertino*) and a larger group (*ripieno*). In addition, this piece follows the typical "fast-slow-fast" format of the Baroque concerto grosso, though this piece incorporates all three into a single movement. The piece is ideal to feature talented students, guest artists and/or faculty.

The opening of the work is highly rhythmic and abstract, exclusively featuring the soloists before they begin exchanging ideas with the orchestra. Elements of funk find their way into the music and seem to come and go at their leisure. The middle of the piece is quite transparent and reflective in nature. As this section builds, elements of heavy metal are introduced through the combined efforts of the soloists and orchestra. While the piece can be performed acoustically, this is a place where electric instruments have a profound impact. The third section begins with the same rhythmic intensity as the opening before introducing a new rhythmic idea that becomes the new focus of the work. As the piece builds, a coda section is introduced and the entire group builds one final time into an intense and somewhat unexpected ending.

The soloists have the option to perform this on electric or acoustic instruments. A Violin 3 part is included for musicians who may have access to a 5-string electric violin (in lieu of an electric viola). The part and range is the same for Violin 3 and Viola (as a 5-string violin has the low C string). For soloists performing on electric instruments, I have included some basic concepts regarding the sounds I hear for the piece. It may be helpful to refer to the demo recording on the FJH Music Company website as I am conducting and worked with the engineer and musicians to achieve the sounds I hear. Of course, feel free to experiment a bit as long as you approximate what the score describes. The opening uses an acoustic / electric combination. It should not be anything over the top (no hard distortion, octave effects, etc.), and delay should be minimized so the rhythmic quality of the opening is clear and crisp. The solo bass part calls for an electric bass guitar sound at measure 92. This should be a clean sound. At measure 111, all soloists should use a heavy distortion / overdrive type of sound (a la heavy metal guitars, etc.). I highly recommend using a distortion pedal so the musicians can switch quickly between effects. This is much more effective for this piece than trying to overdrive an amp. The melodic instruments (Violin 1, 2 and Viola) can experiment with higher reverb and time delay settings. All soloists then return to an acoustic / electric combination for the duration of the piece.

Urban Concerto Grosso was commissioned by the Franklin Middle School Sinfonia (Wheaton, Illinois) and conductor Carrie Provost.



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Duration: 6:40

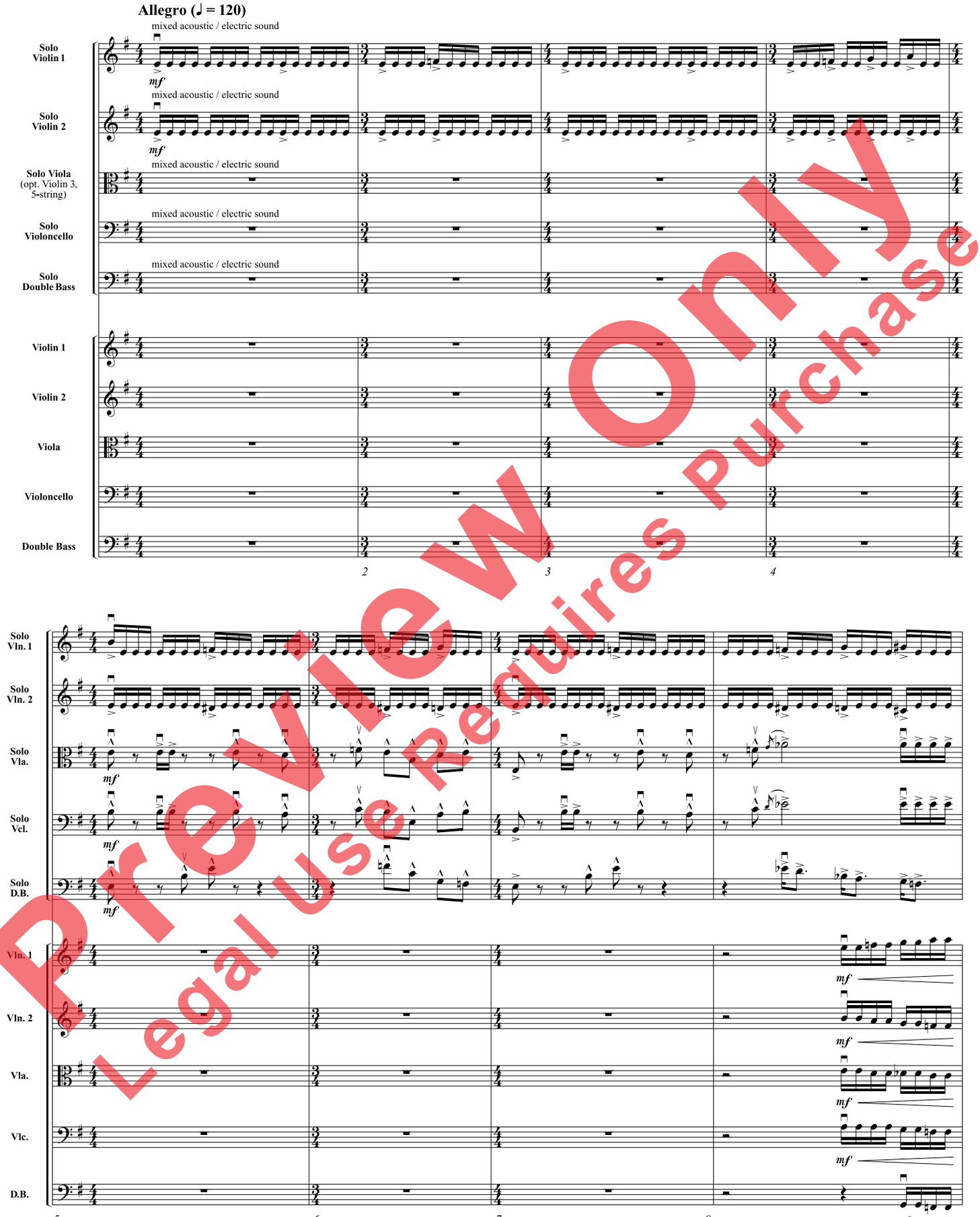
commissioned by the Franklin Middle School Sinfonia
Wheaton, Illinois; Carrie Provost, Conductor

URBAN CONCERTO GROSSO

(for electric or acoustic string quintet and orchestra)

BRIAN BALMAGES
(ASCAP)

Allegro (♩ = 120)



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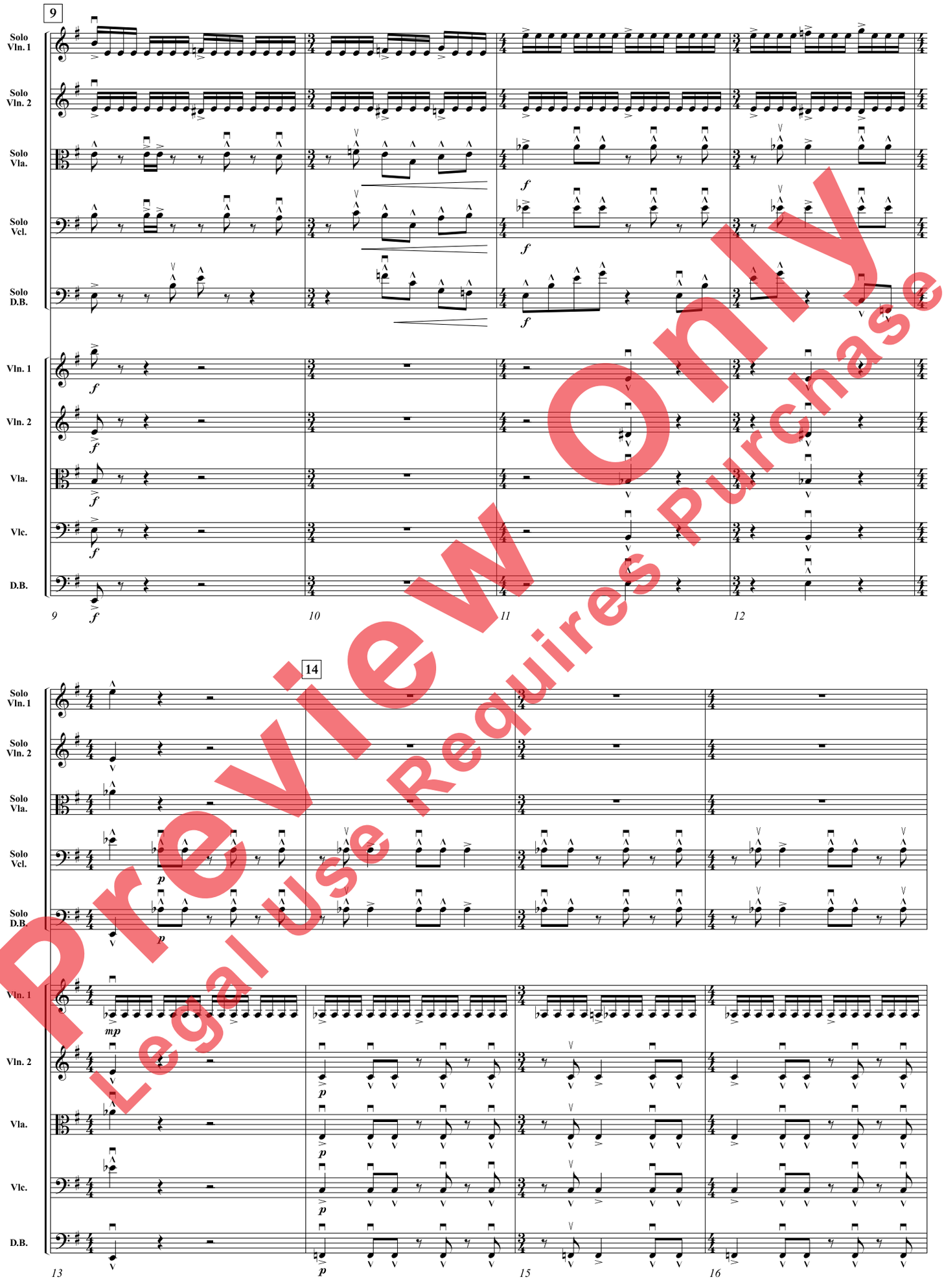

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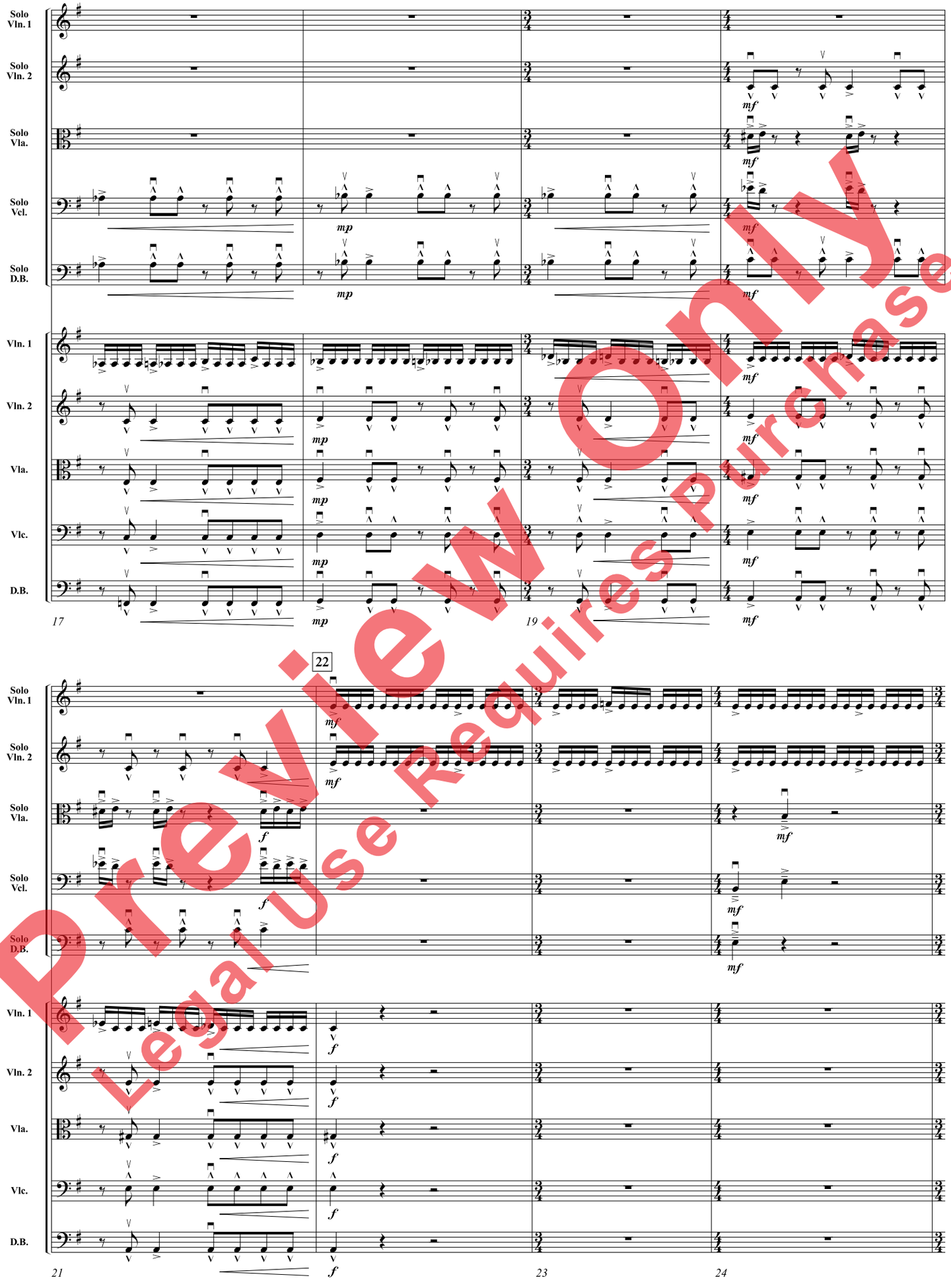

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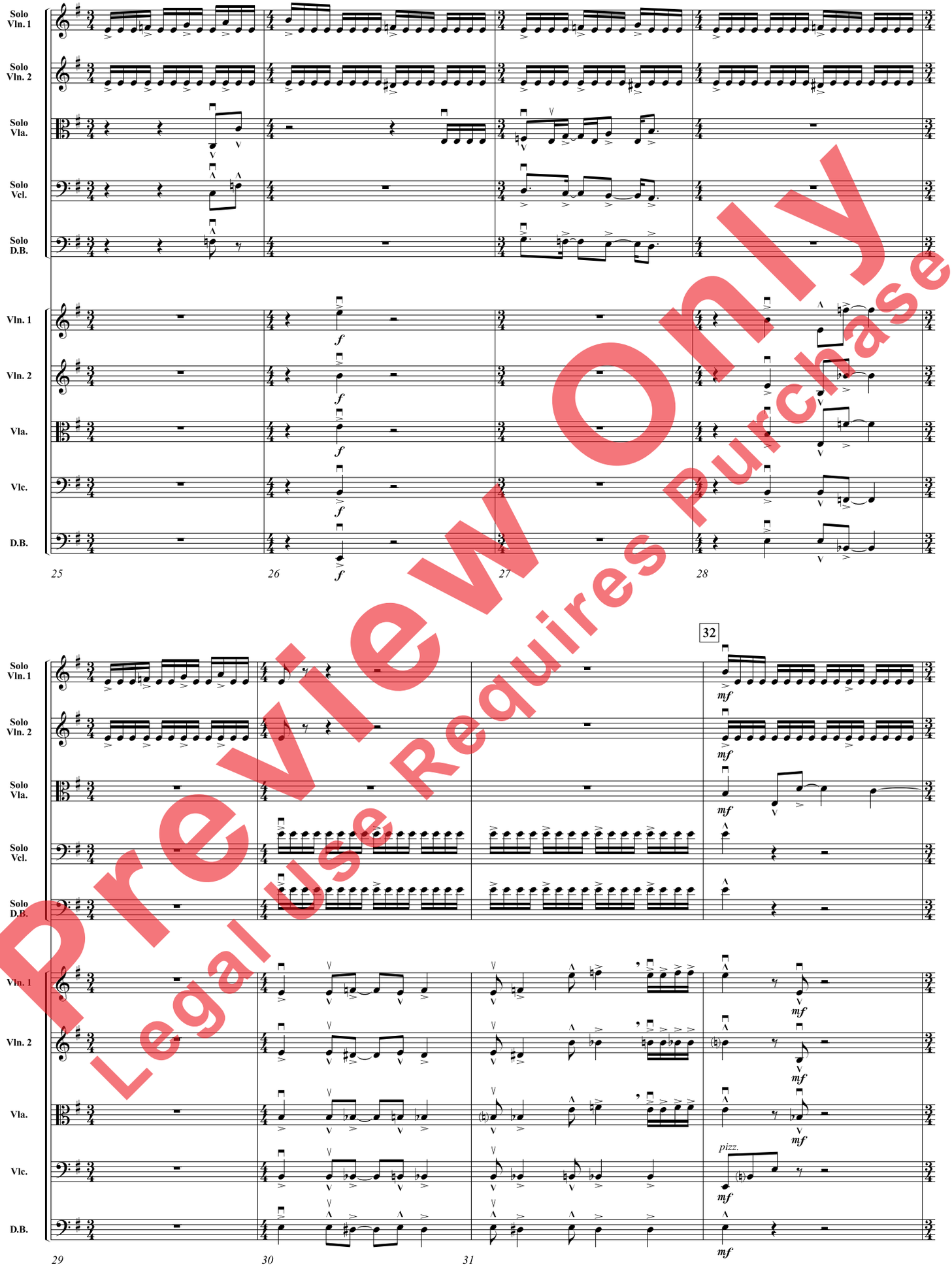

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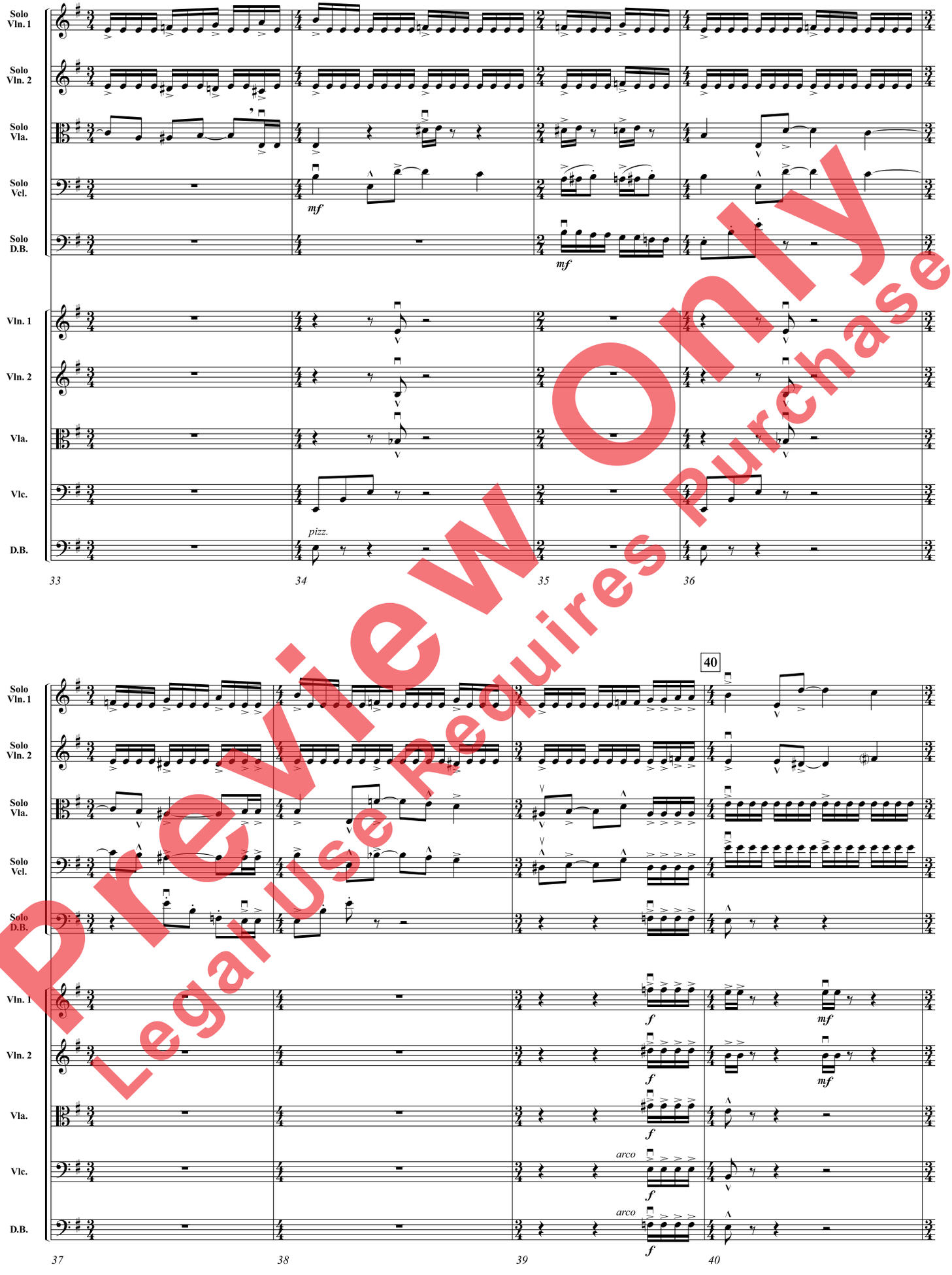

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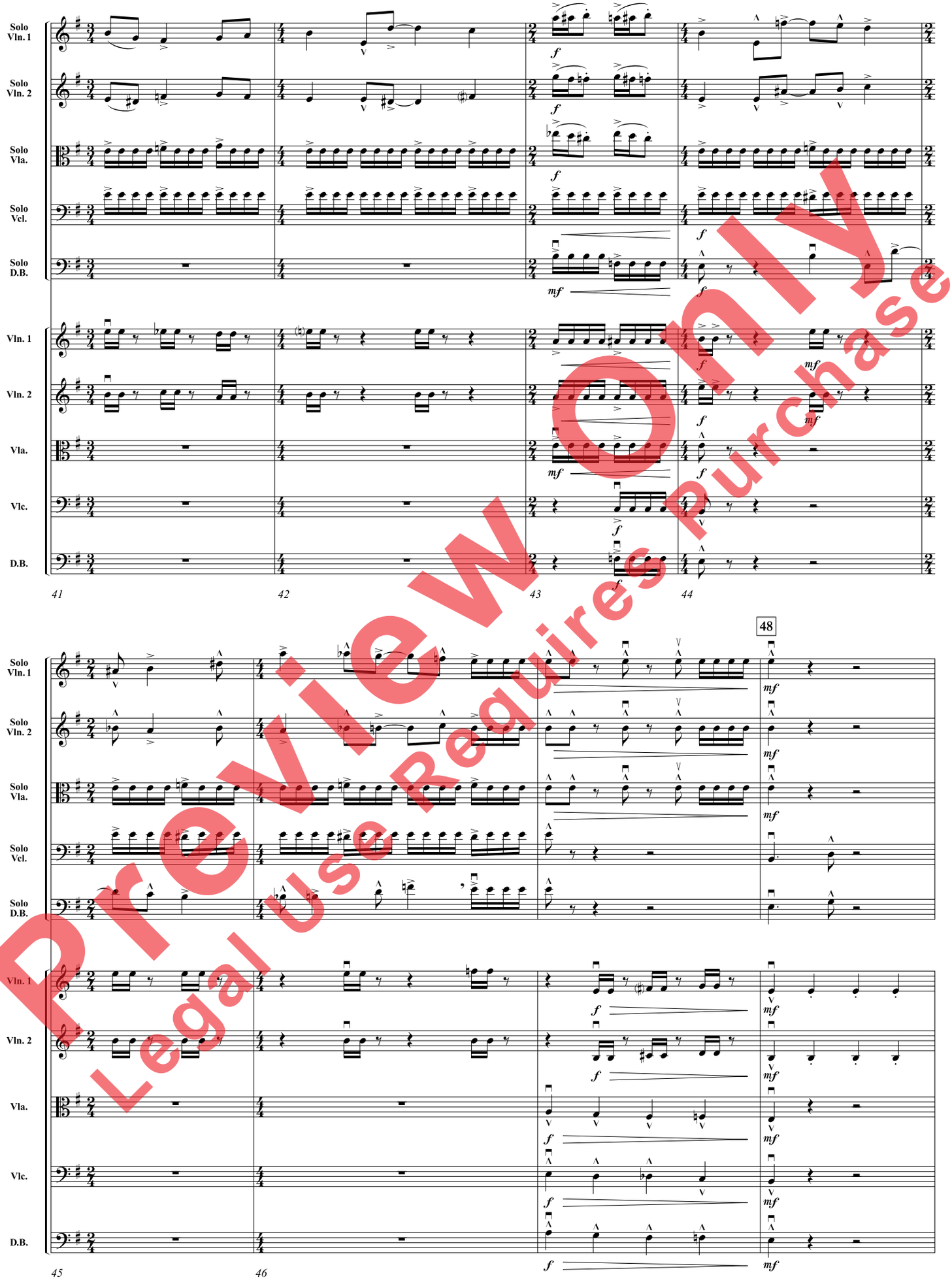

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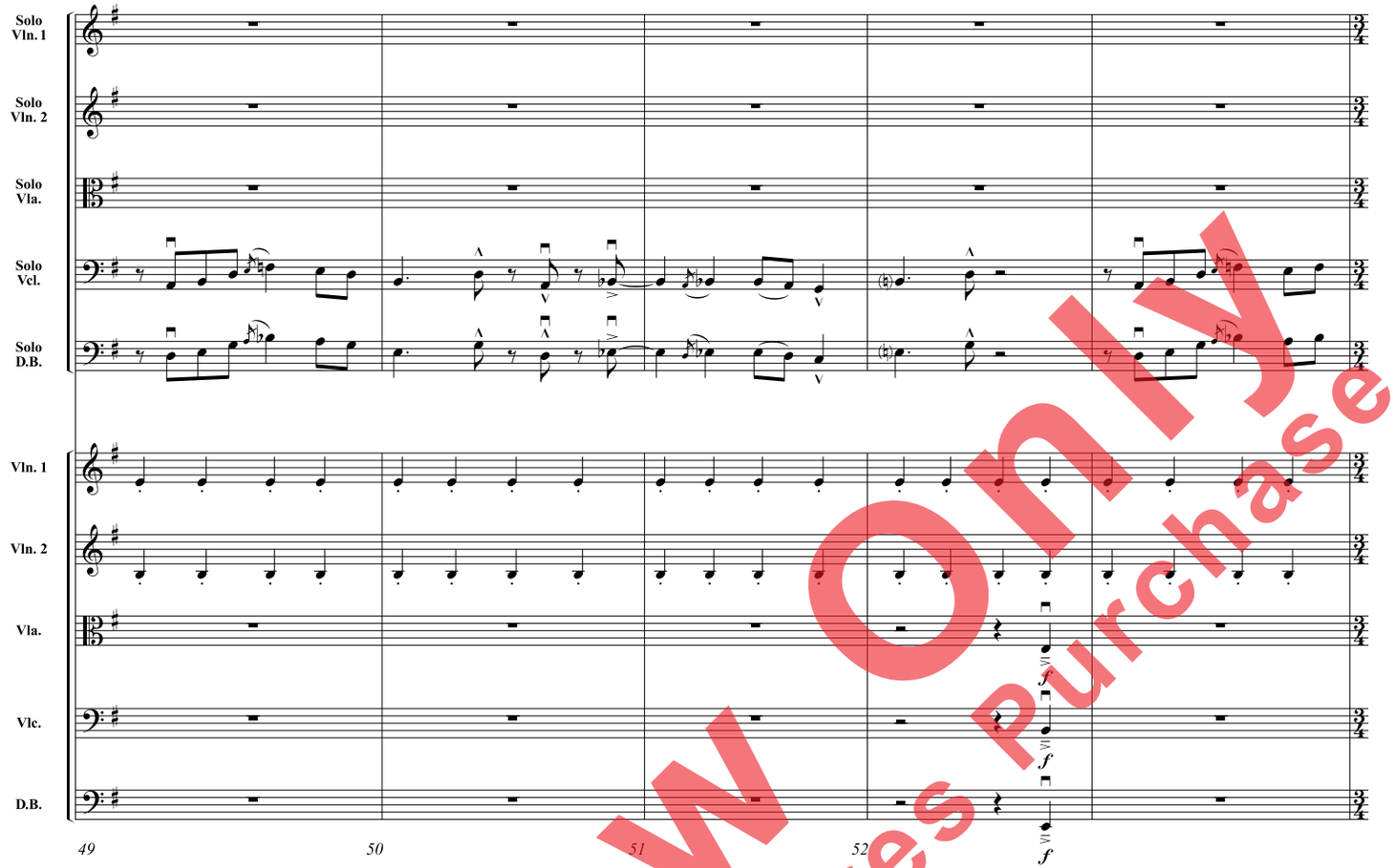

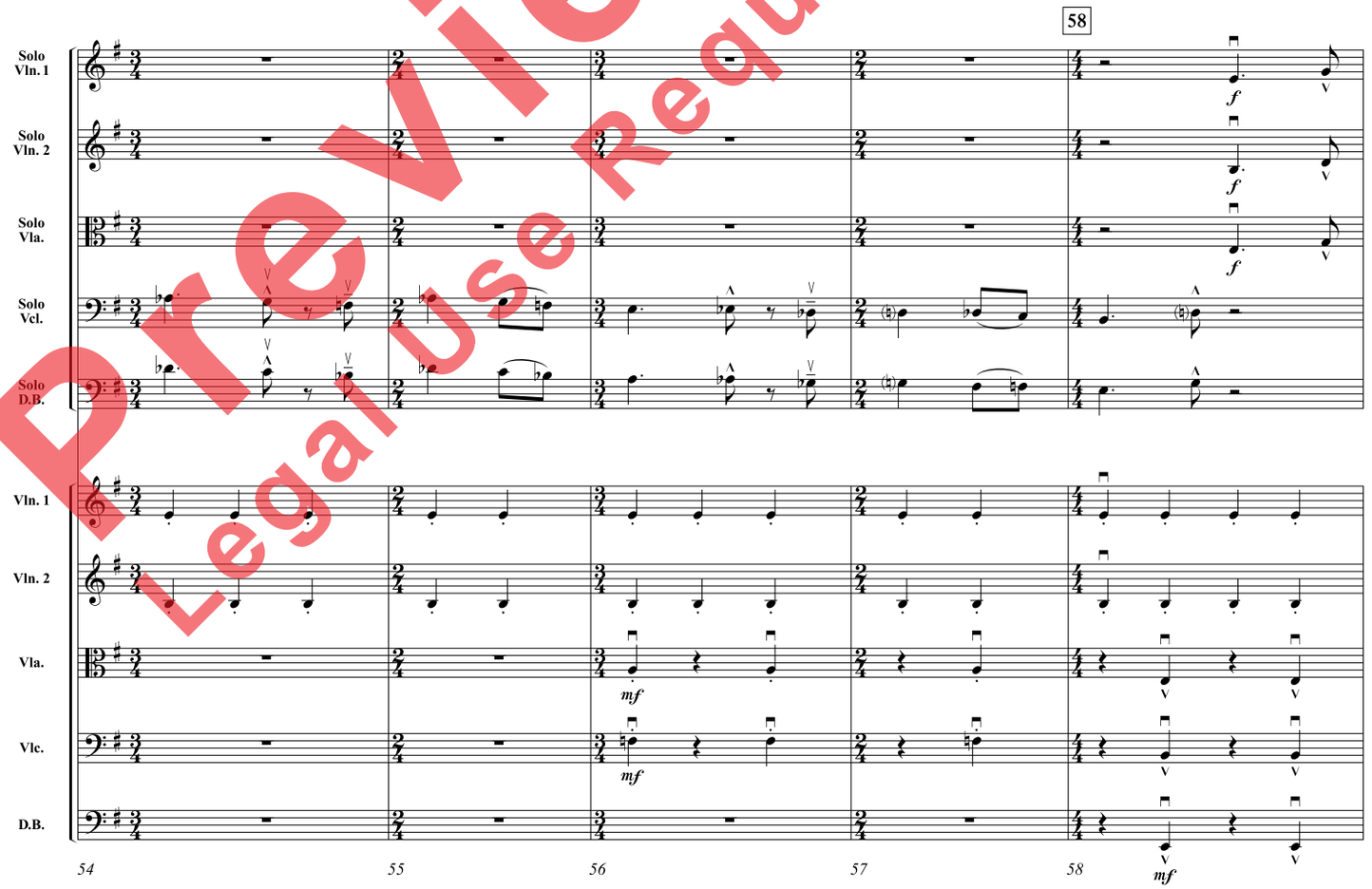

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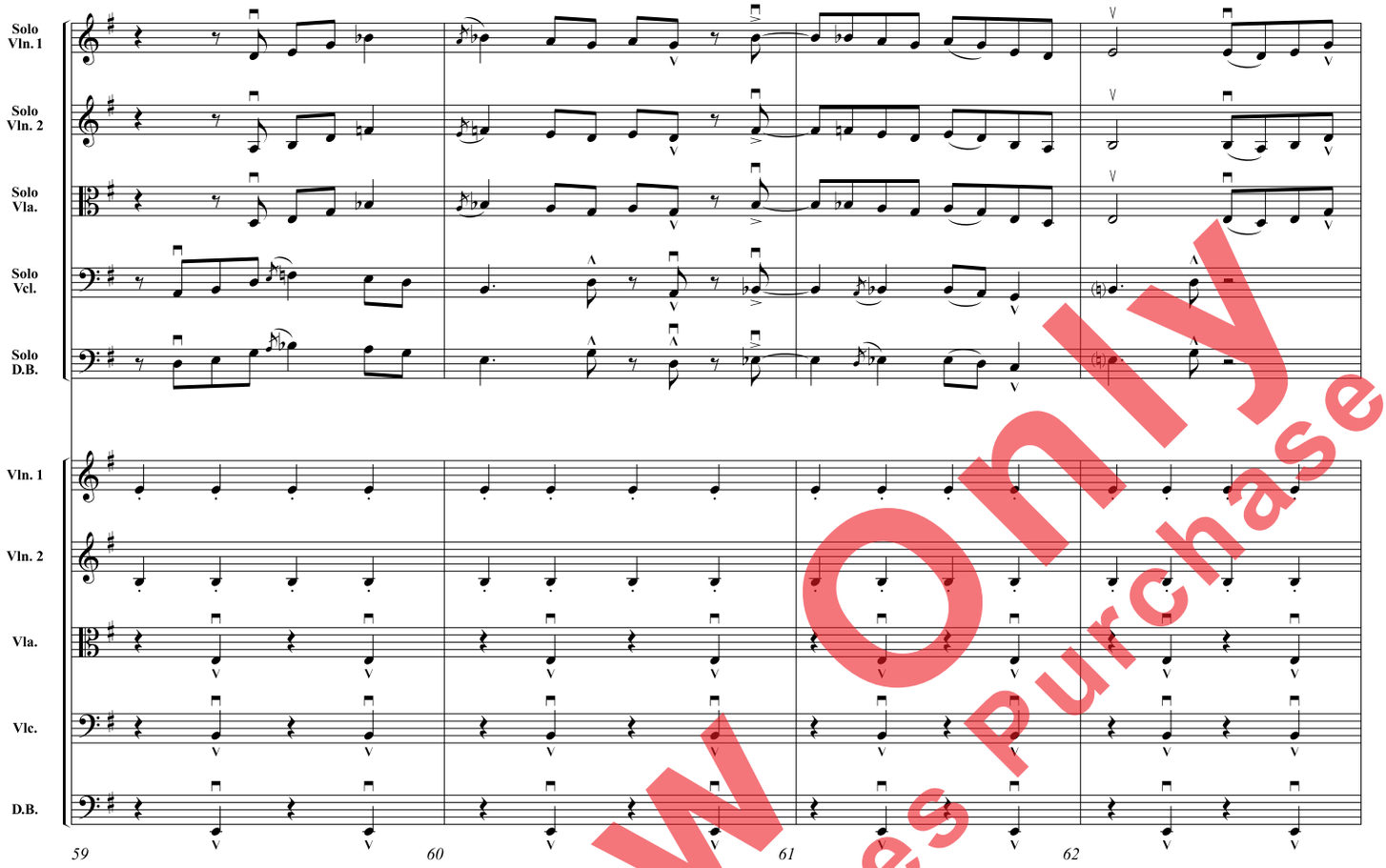

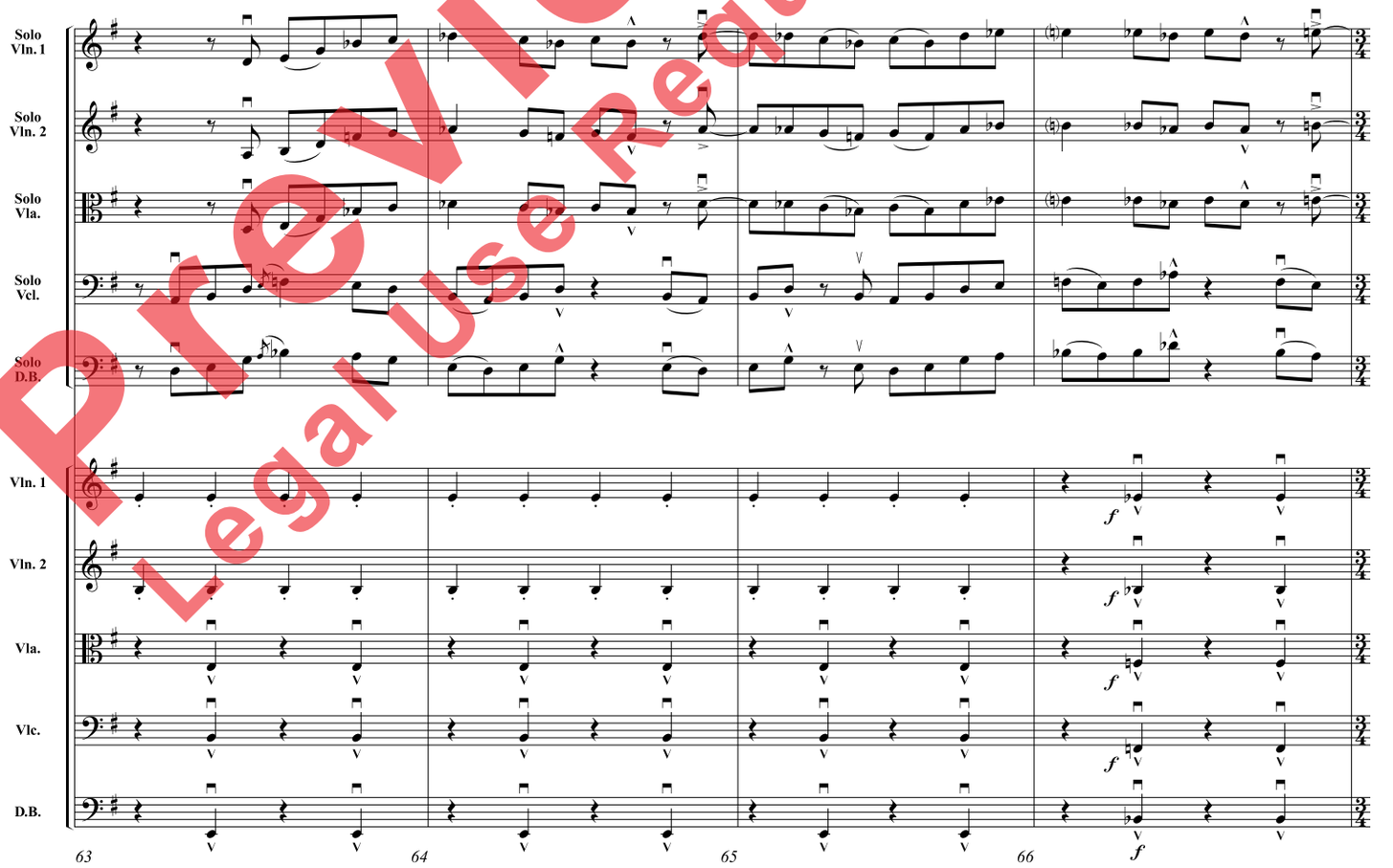

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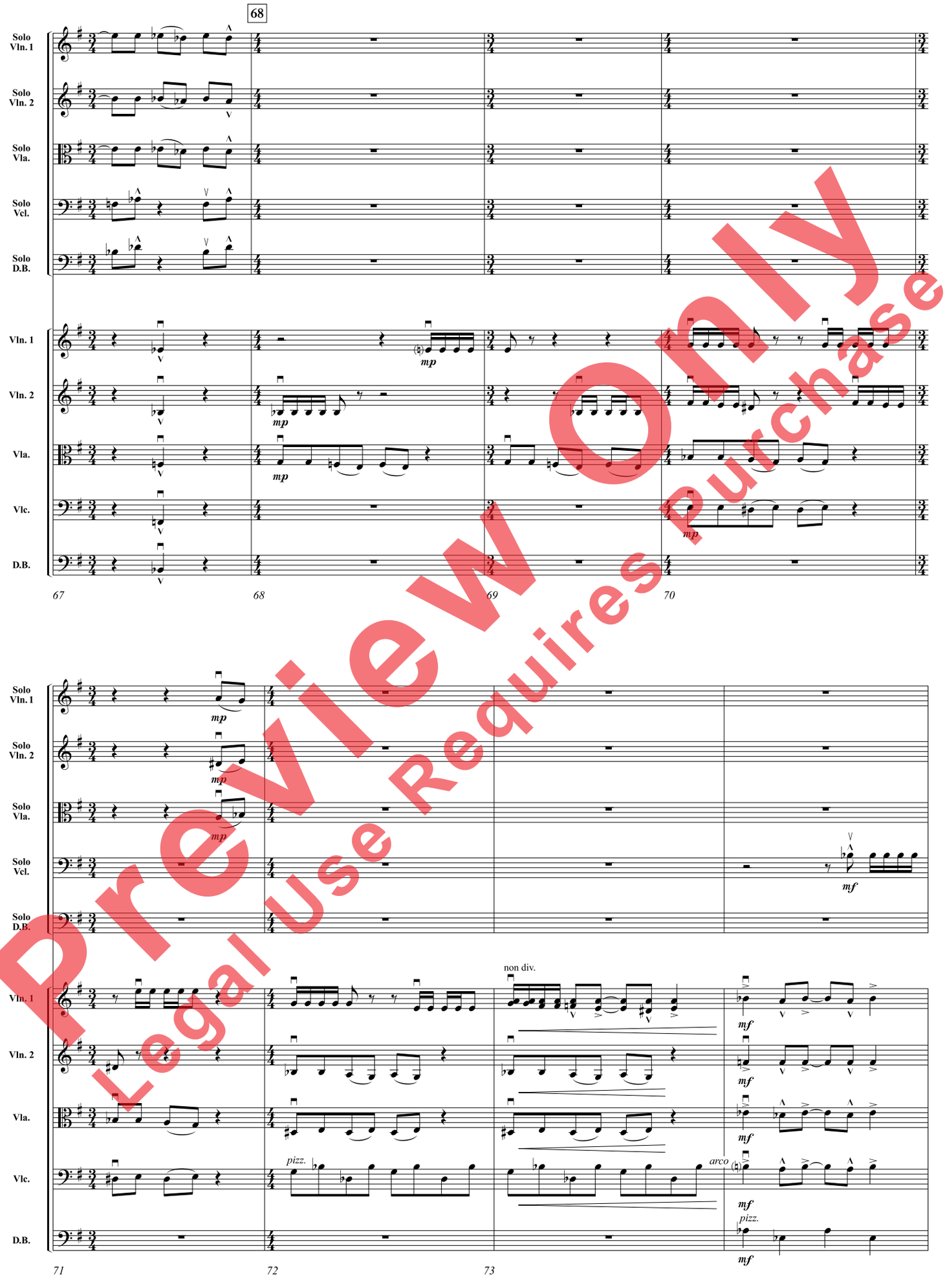

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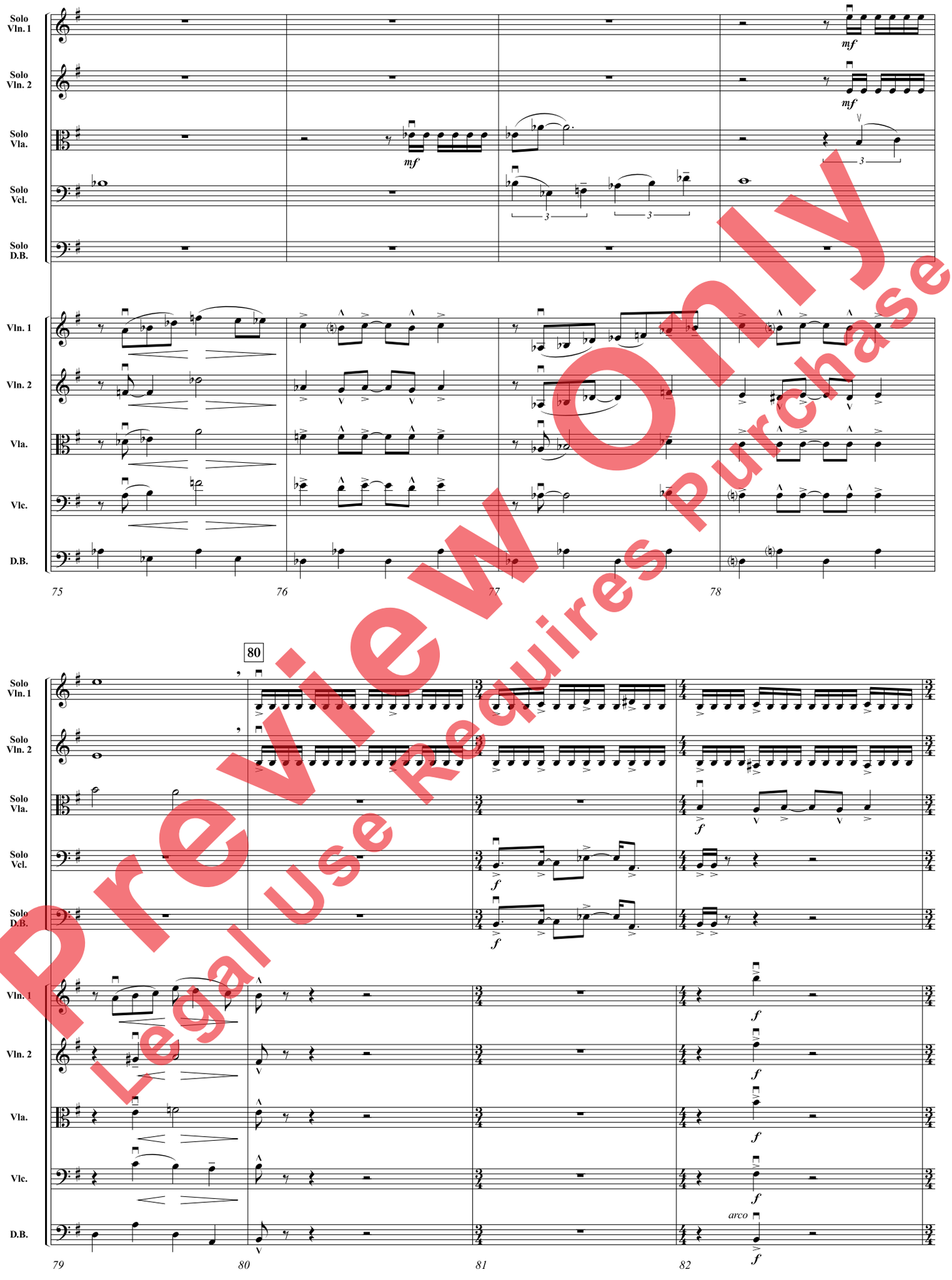

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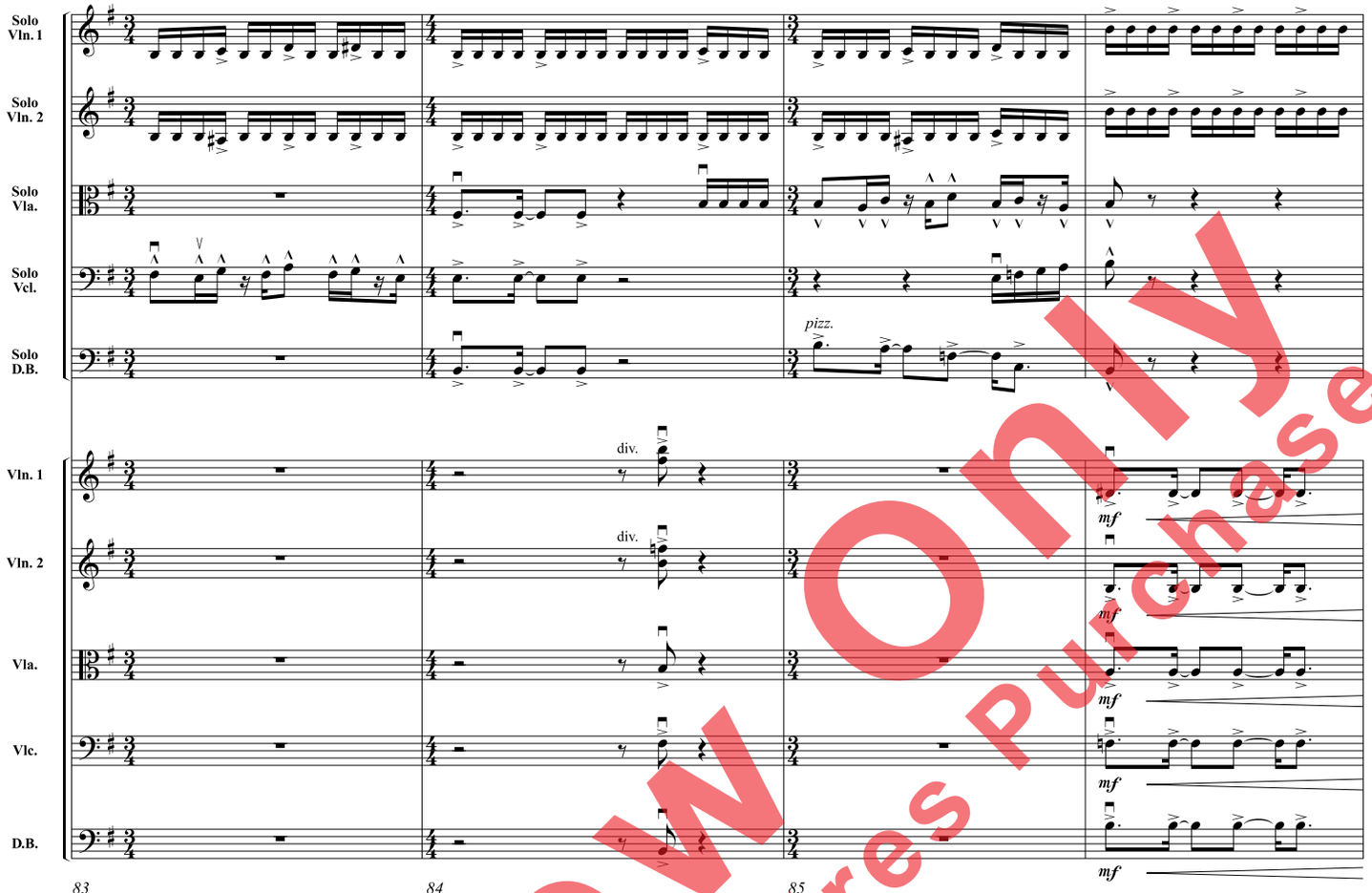

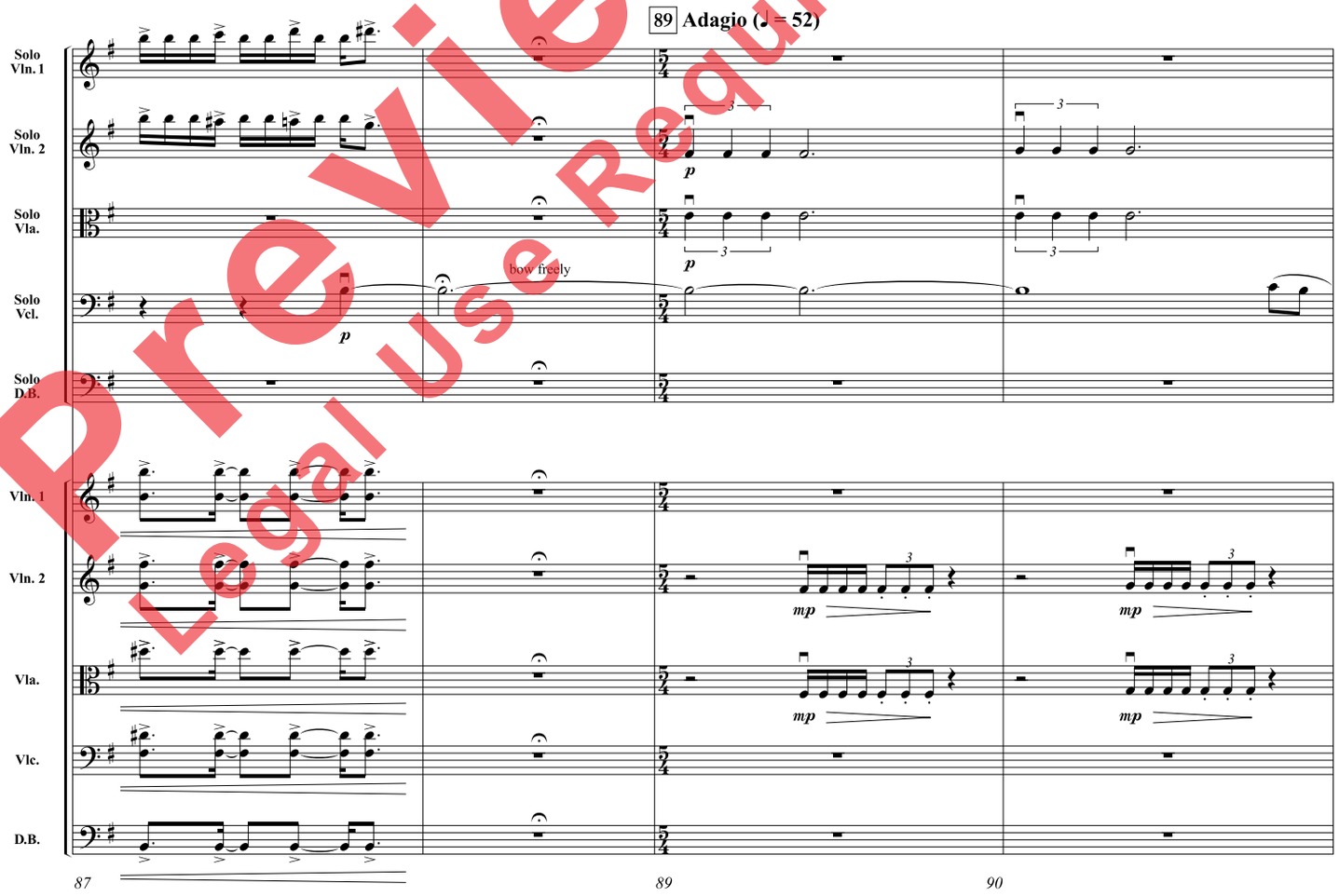

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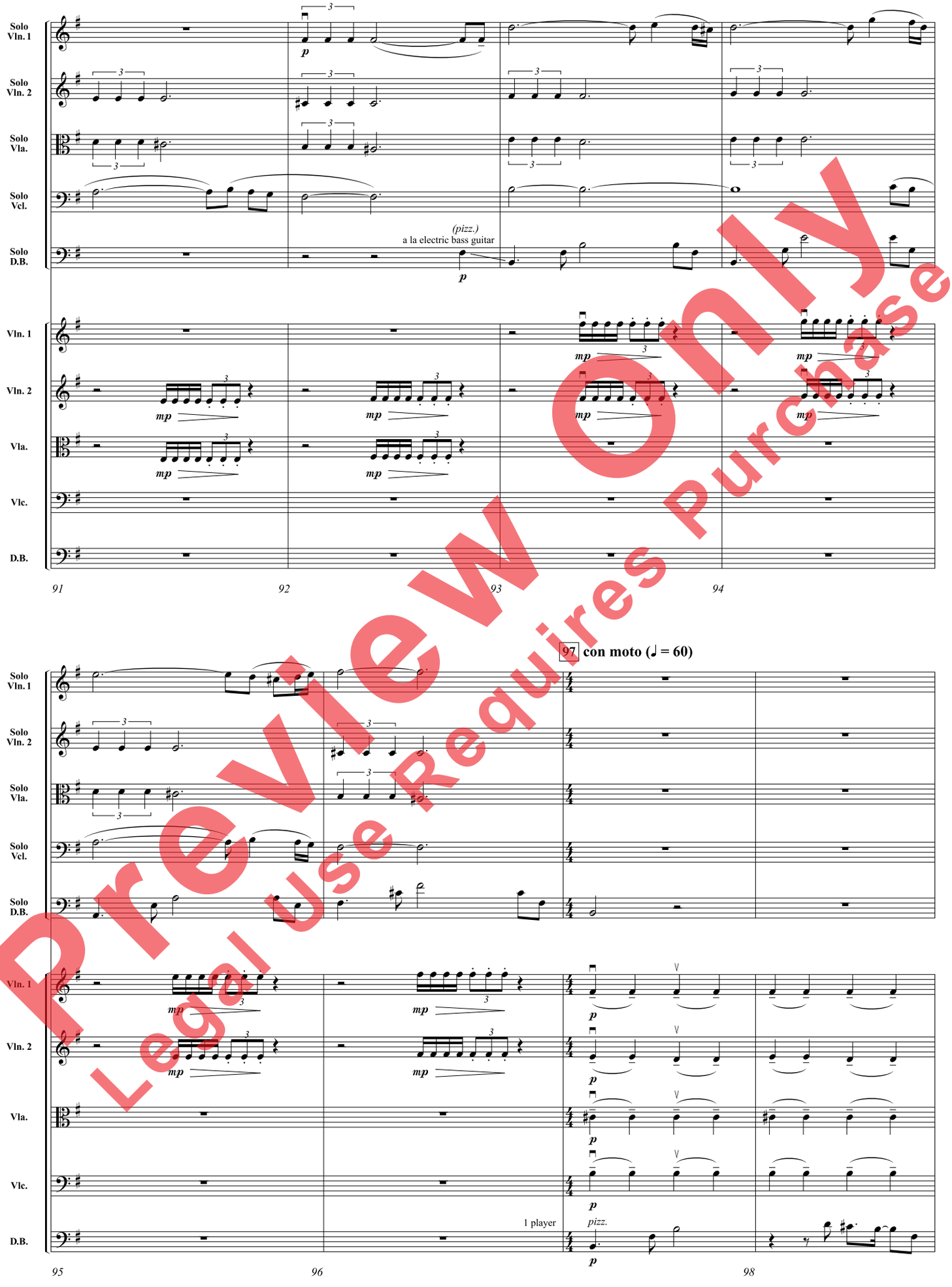

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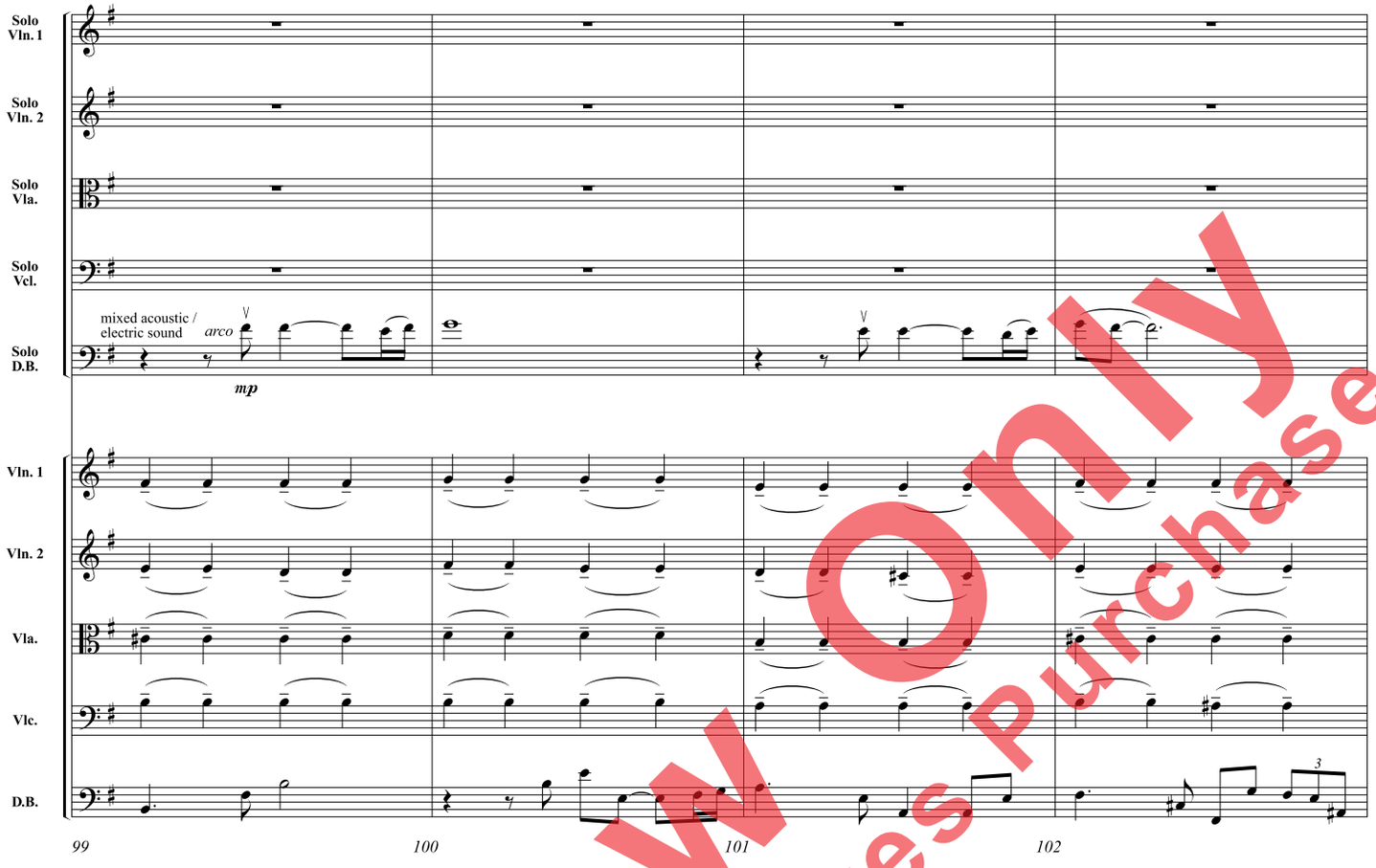

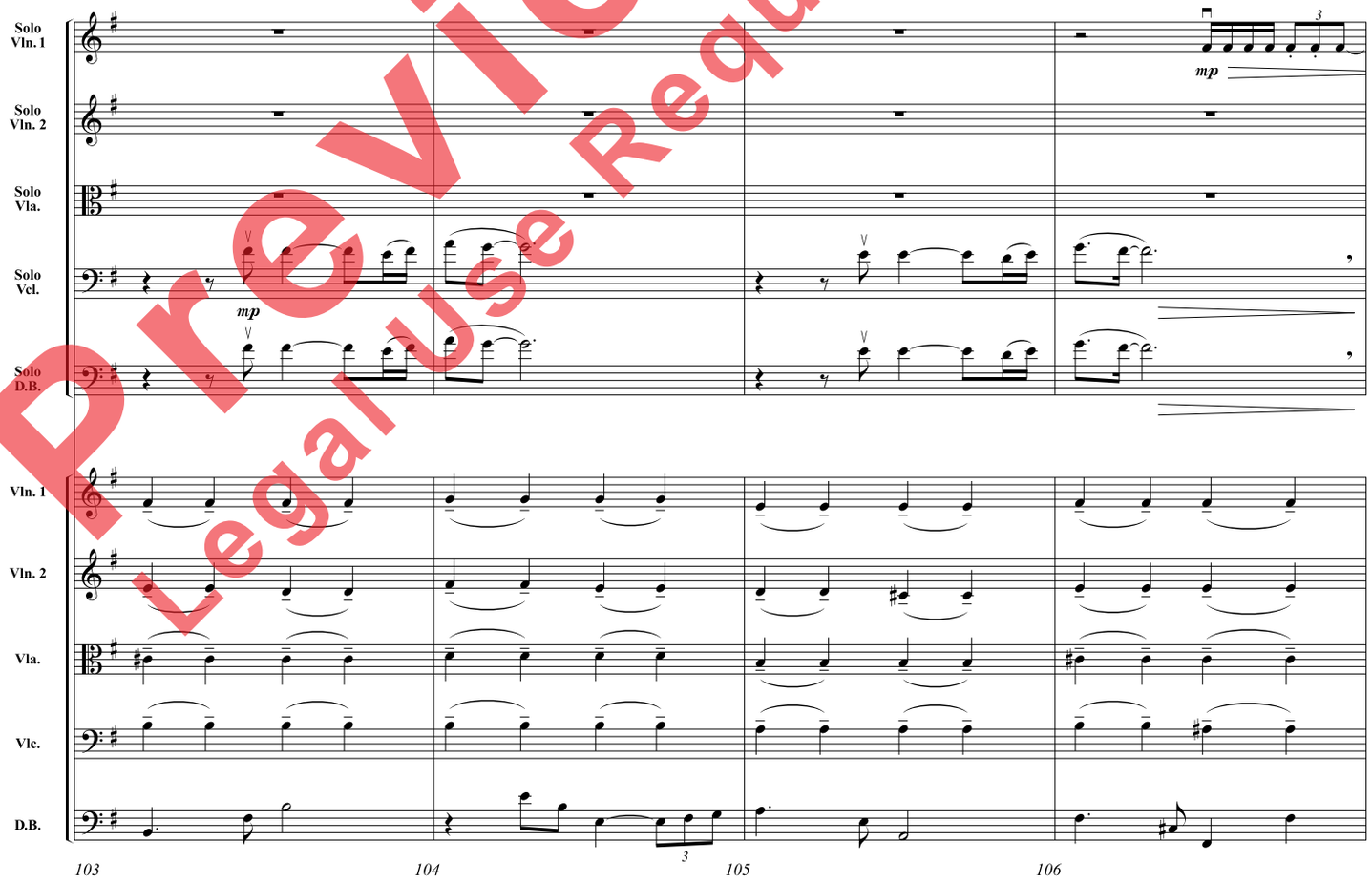

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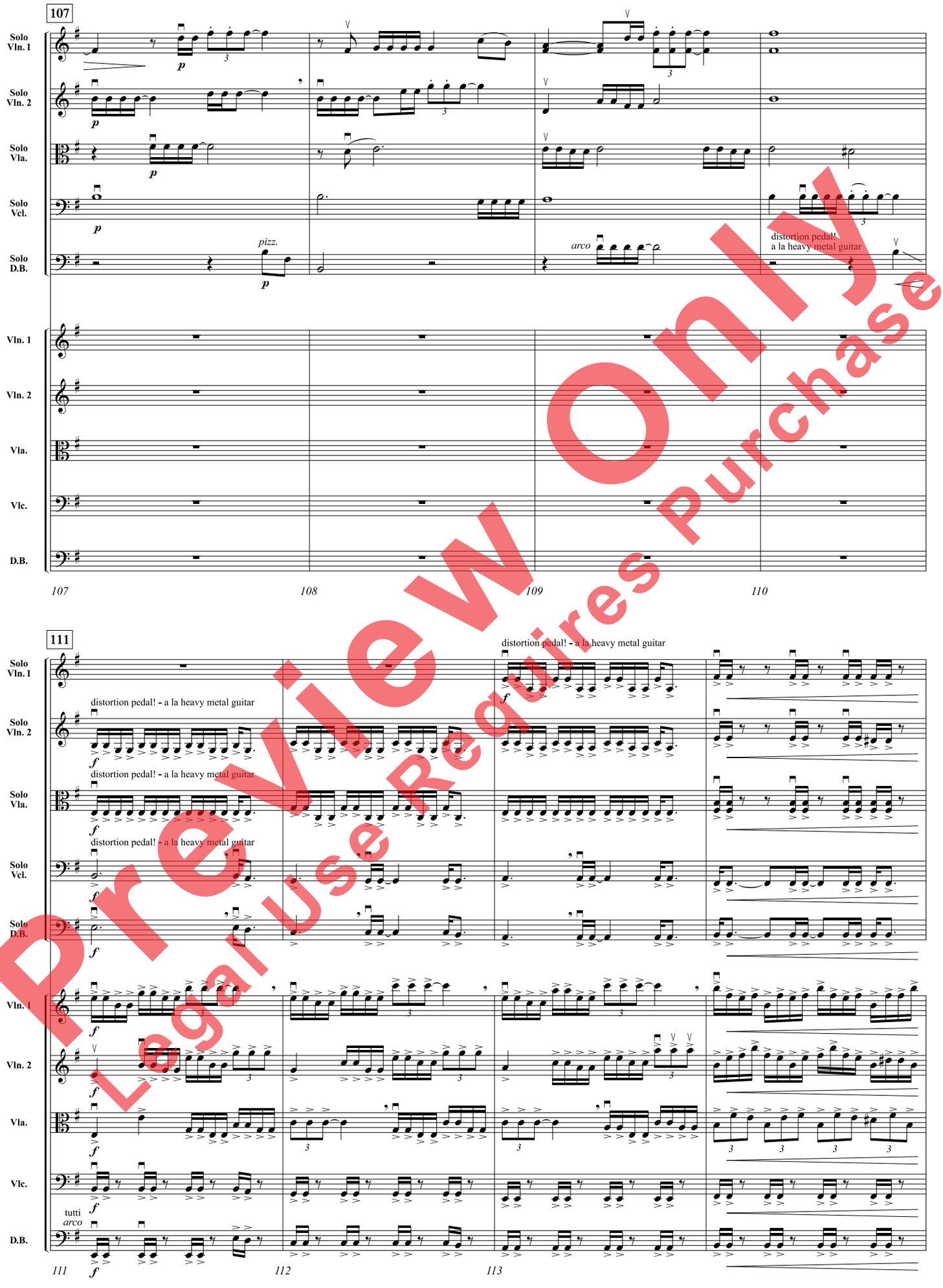

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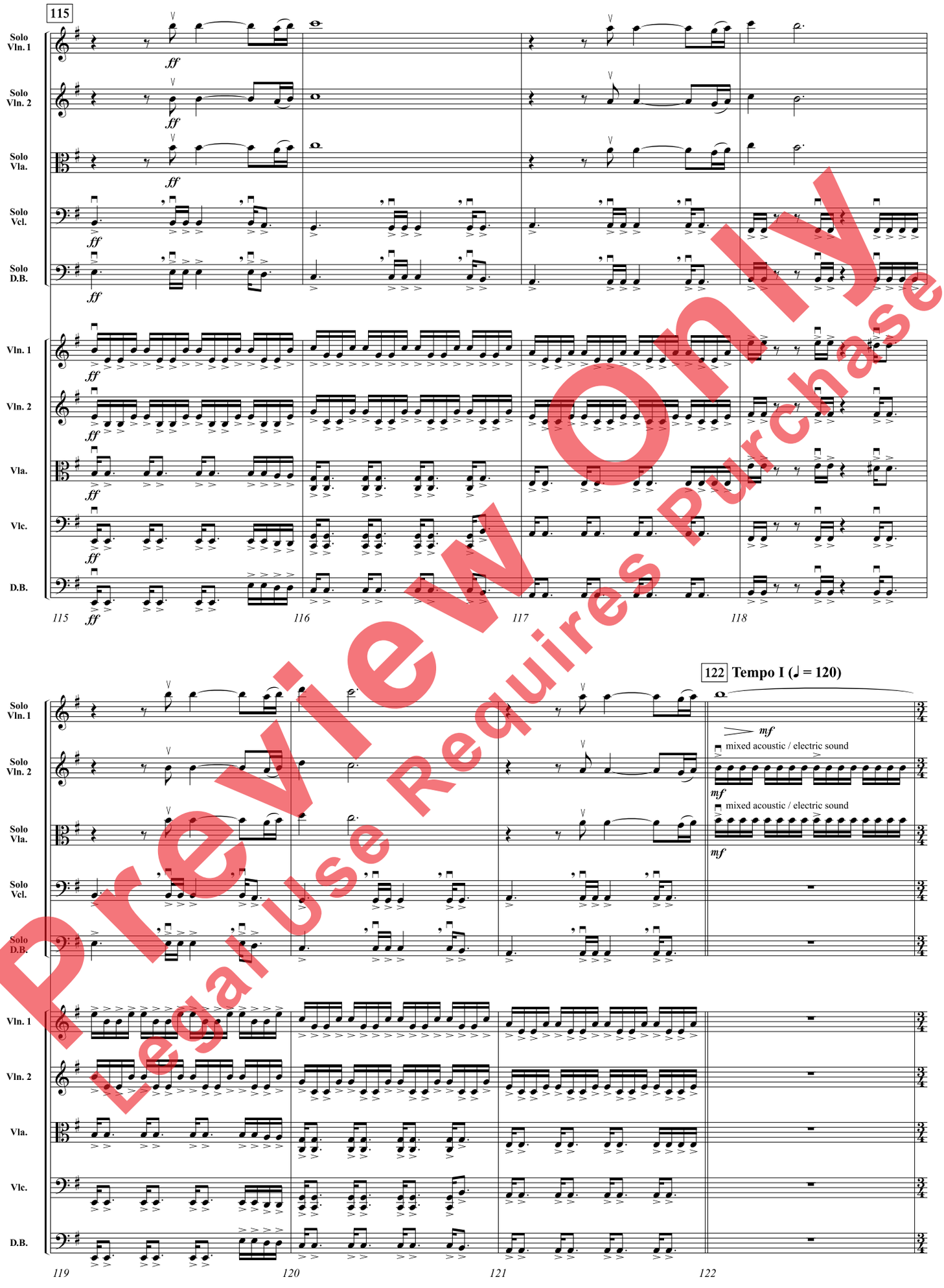

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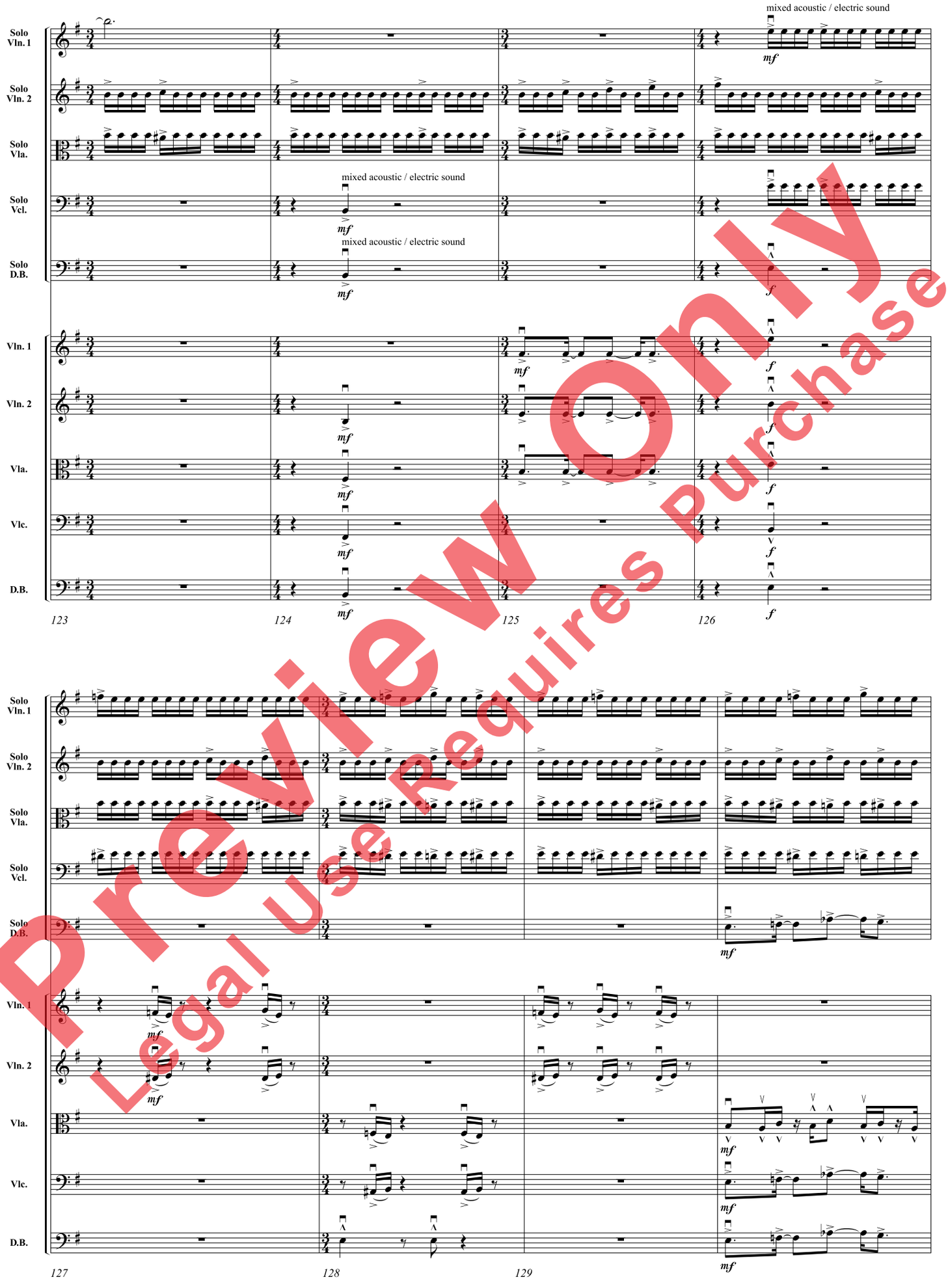

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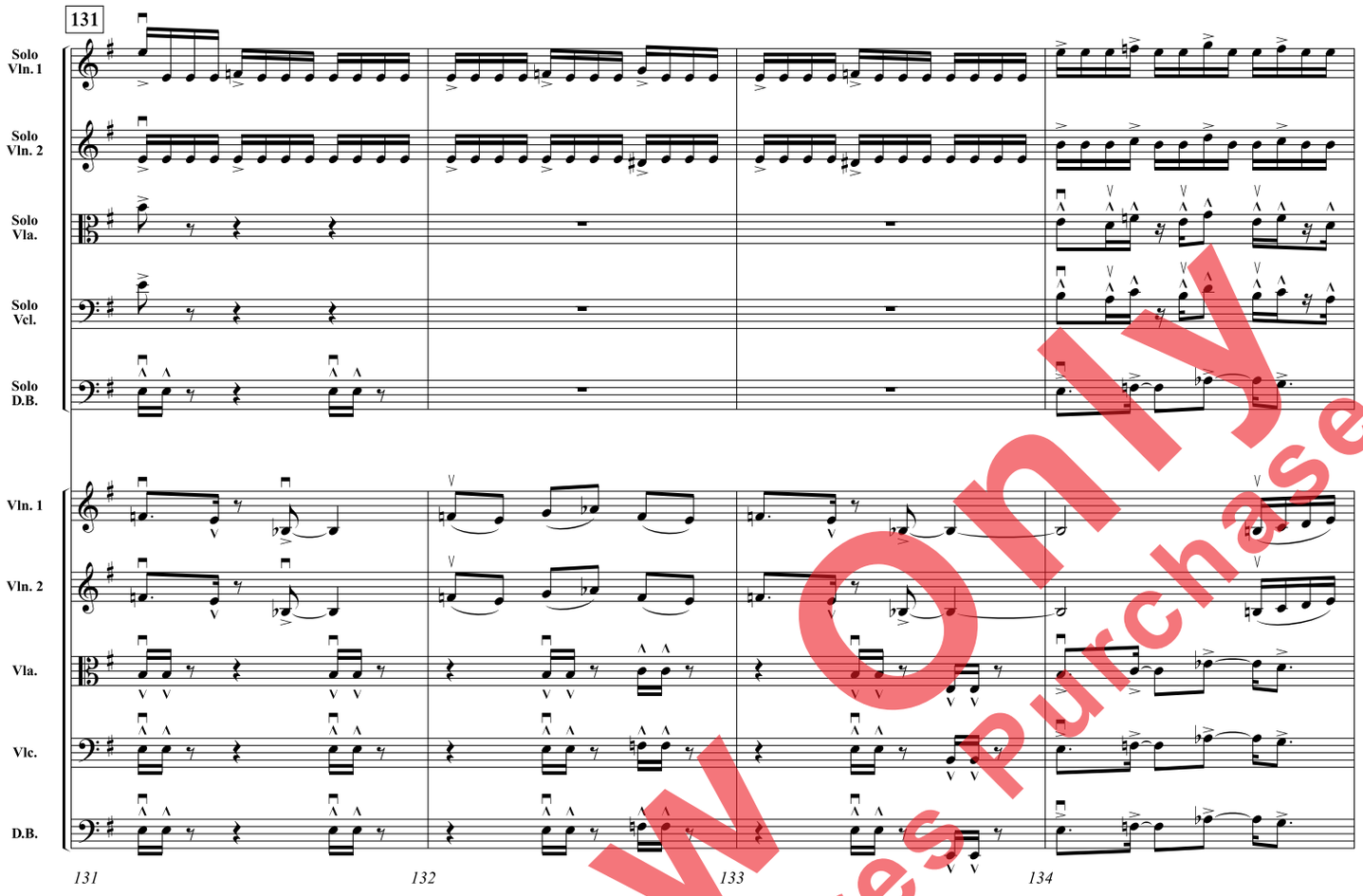

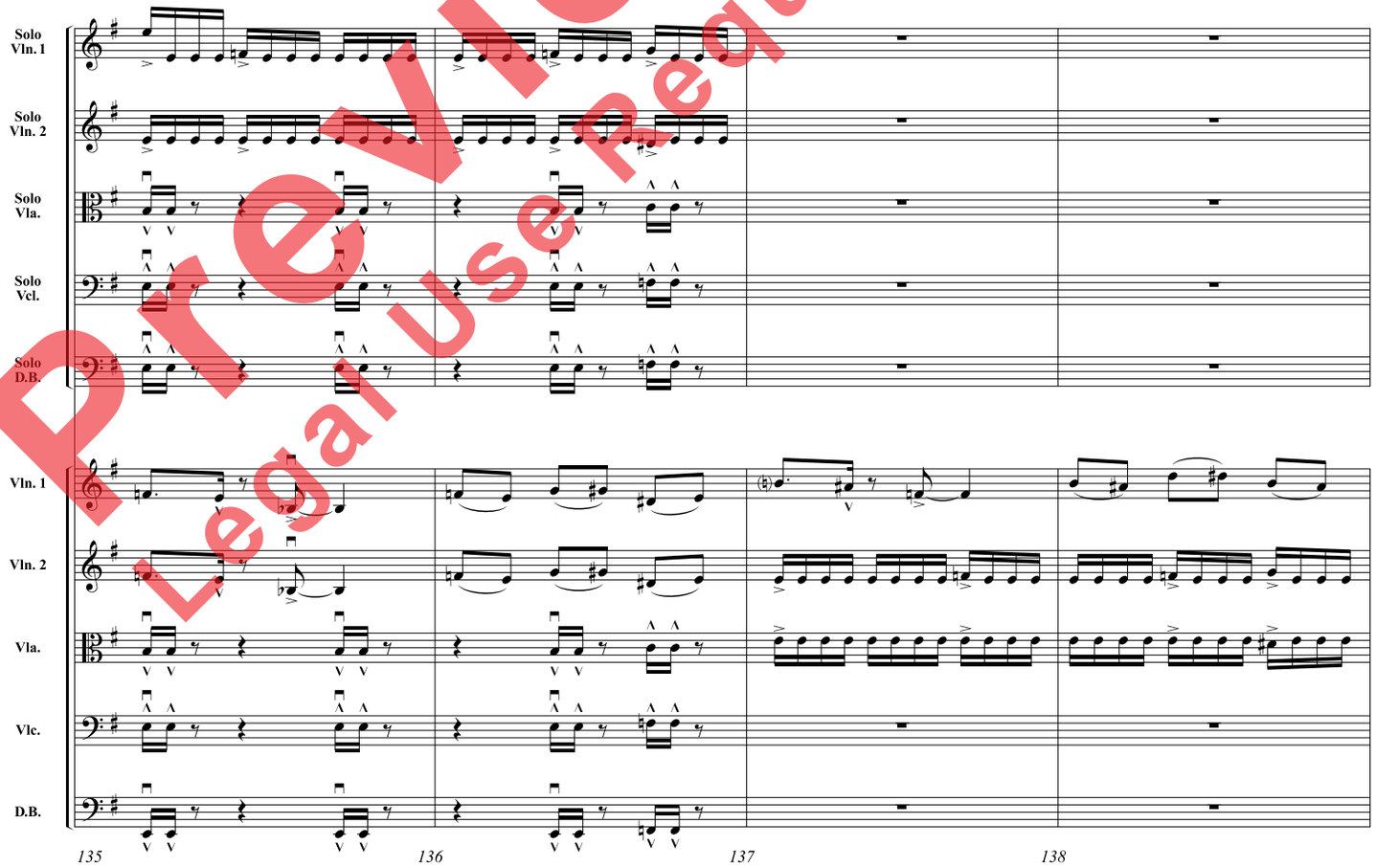

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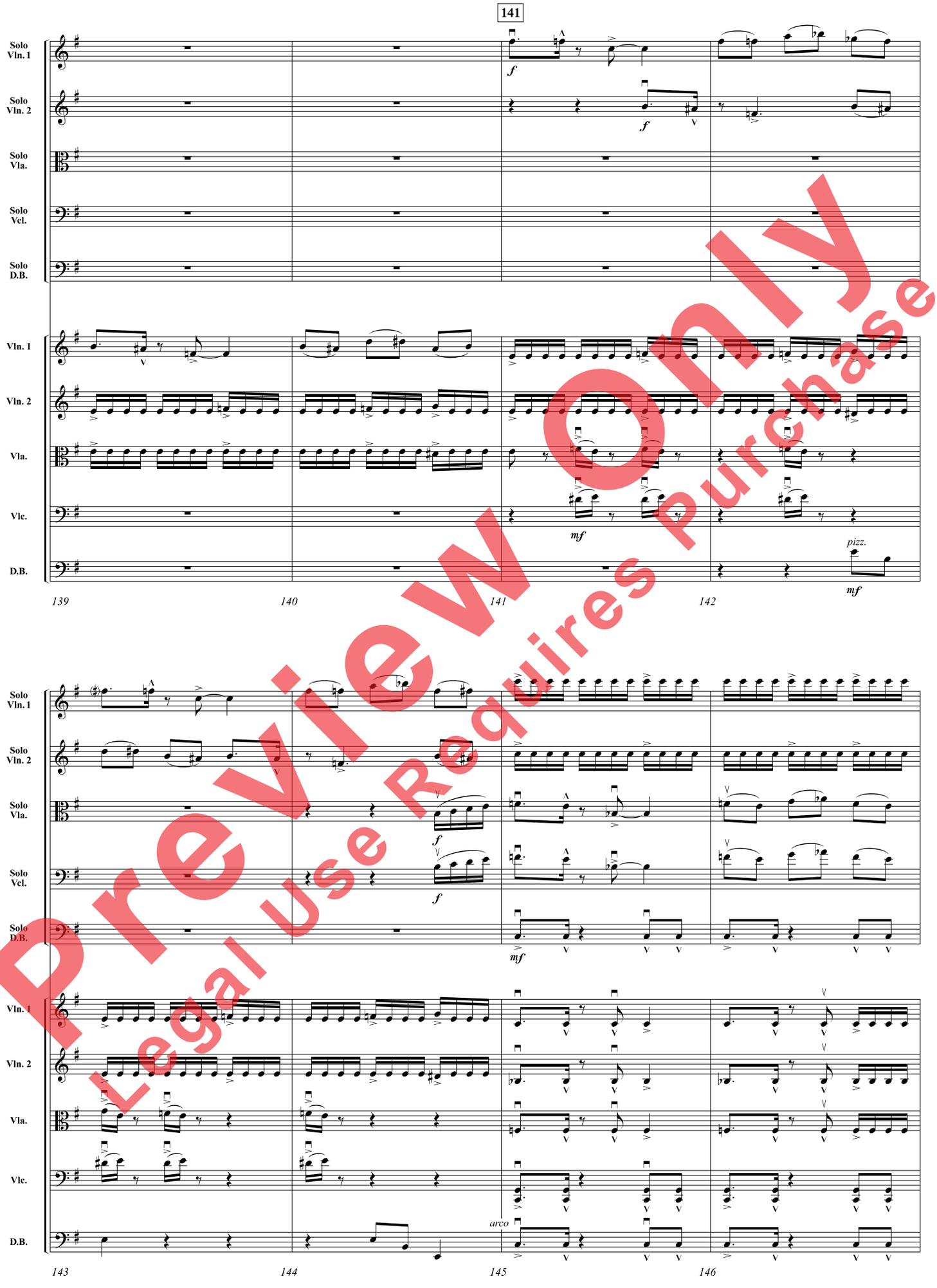

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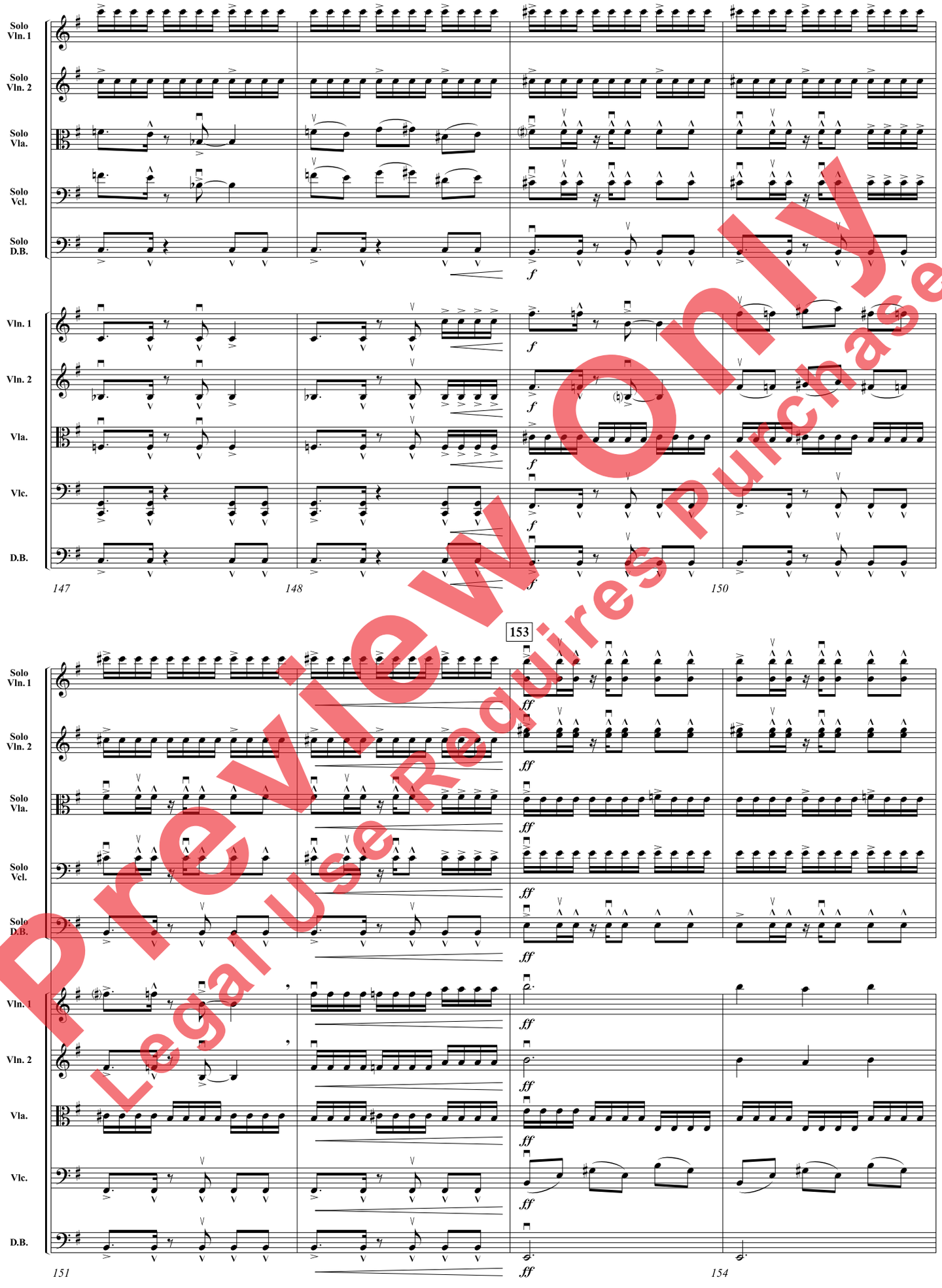

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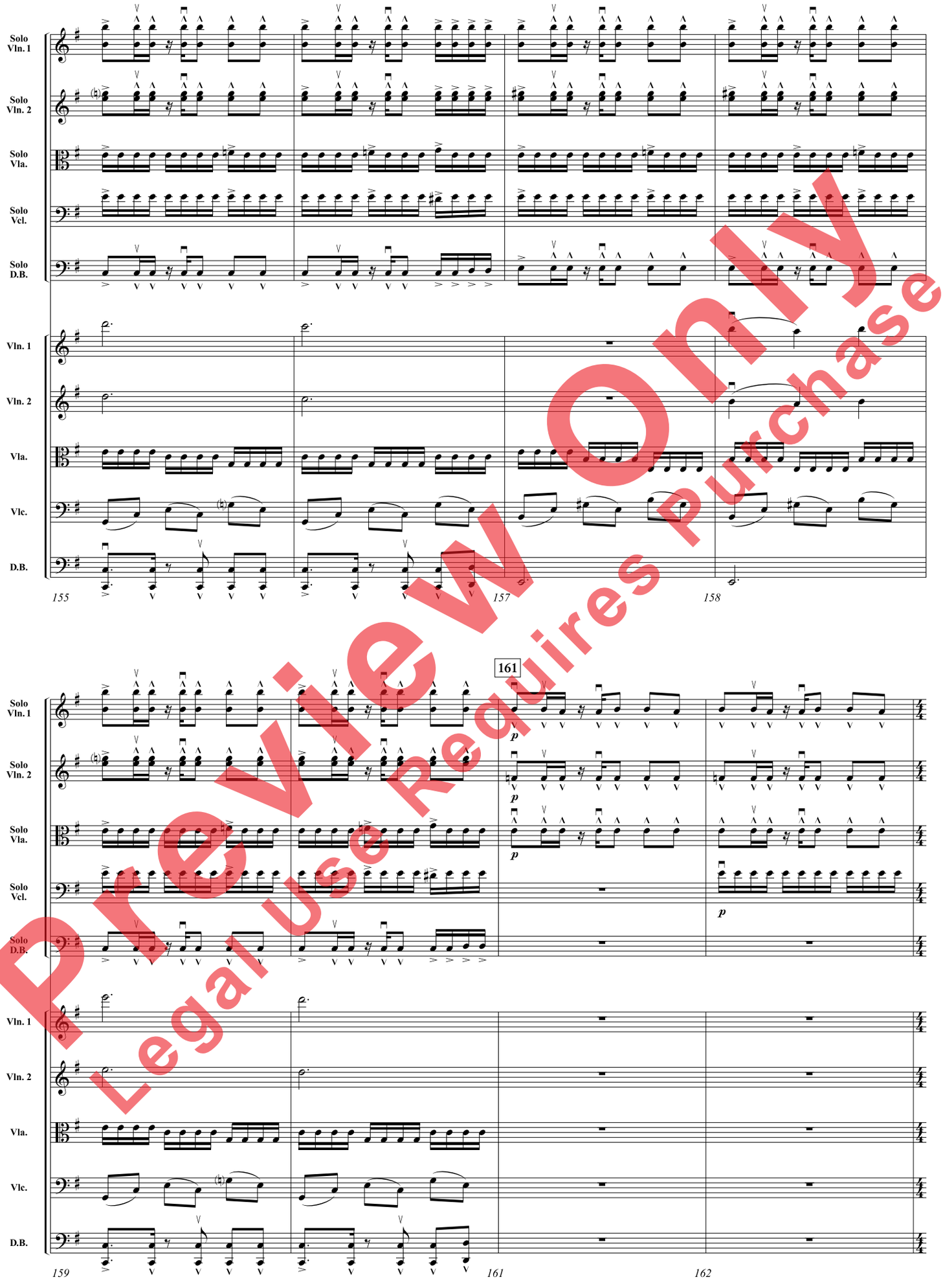

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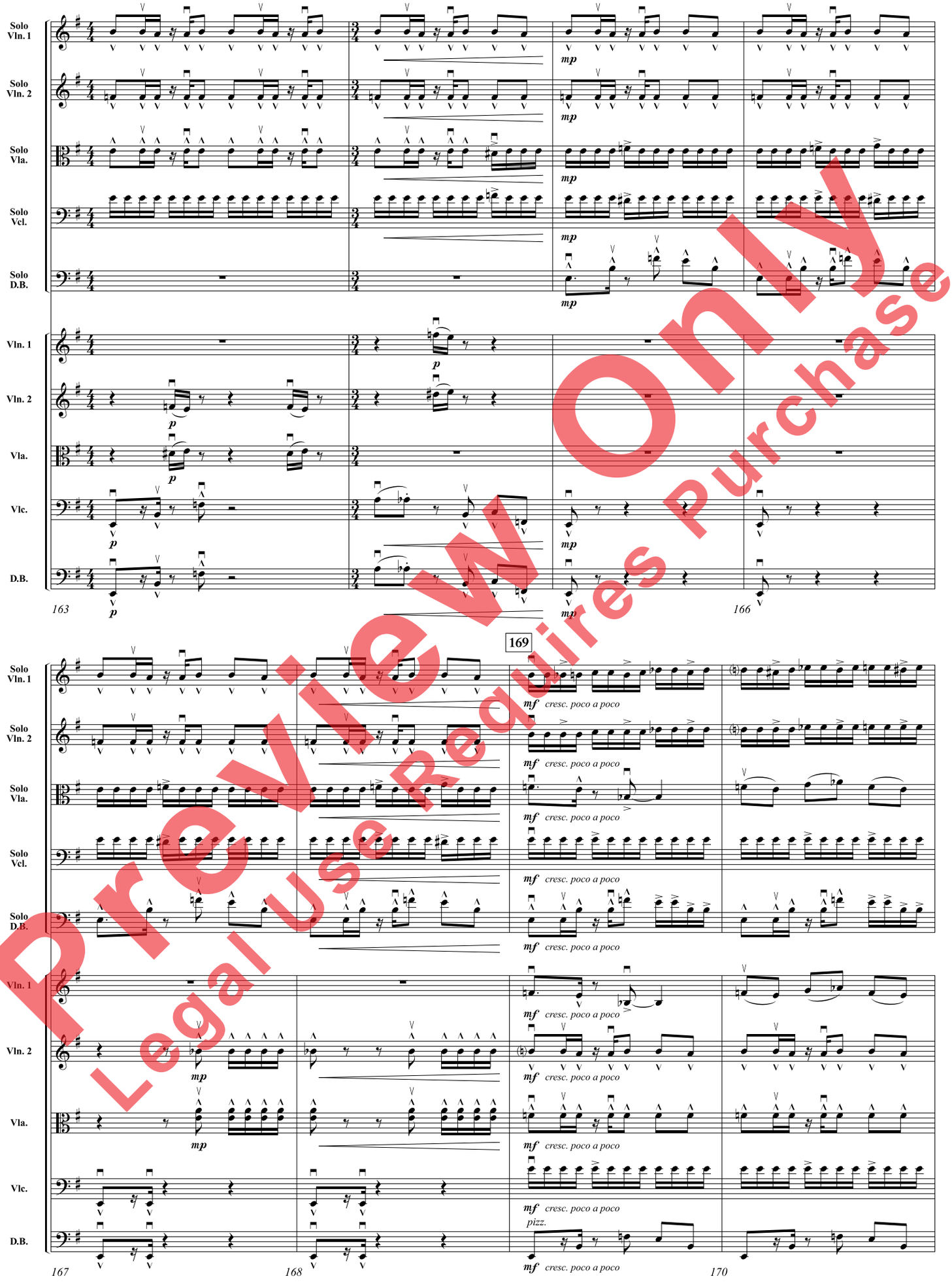

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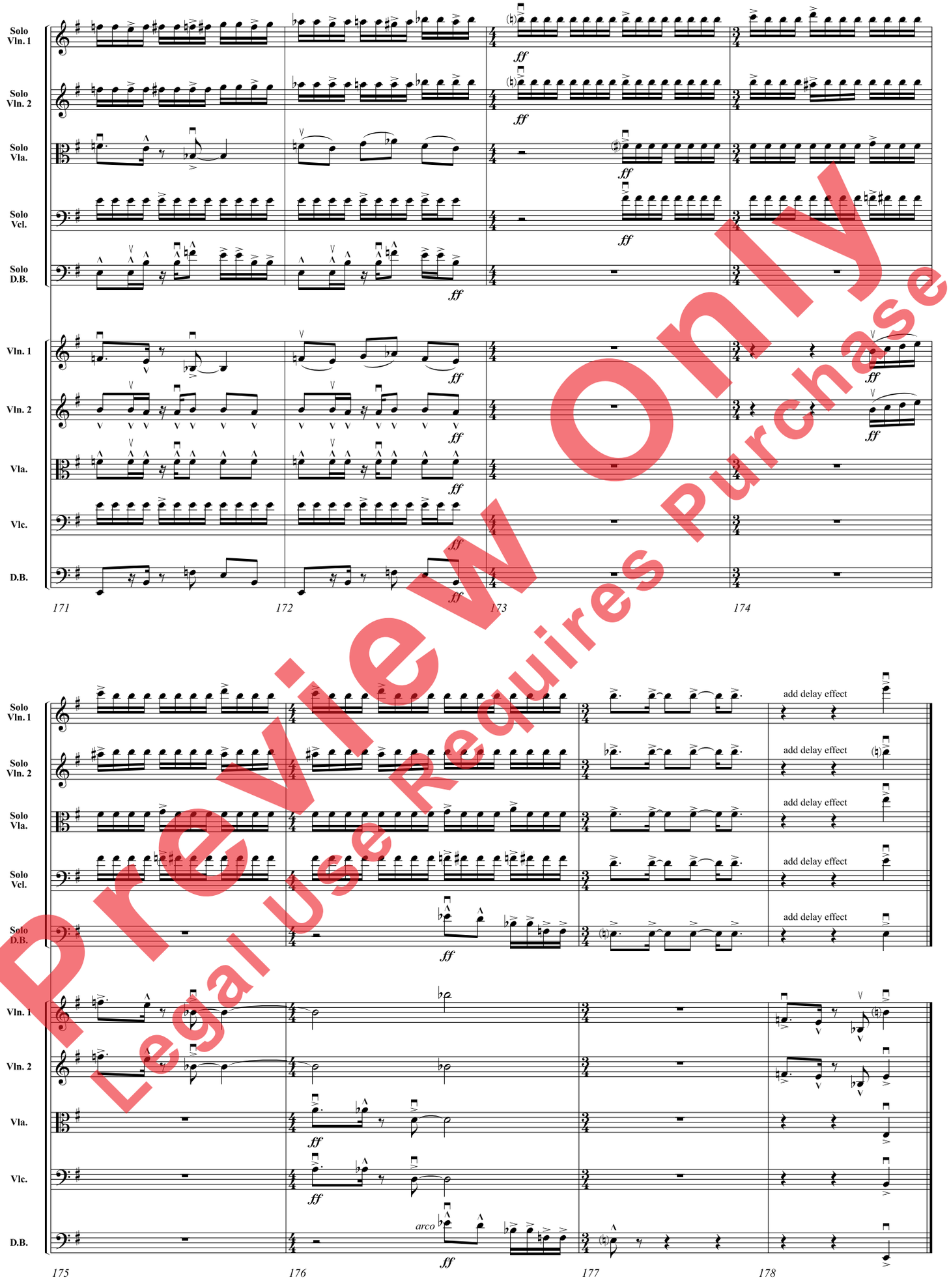

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