RI

THE REIMAGINE INITIATIVE

Large ensemble music reimagined for small, adaptable instrumentation

Grade 2.5

ST6517

BLUE RIDGE REEL

for adaptable string ensemble

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

Usage Guidelines

Full Score

Adaptable Parts
(includes part 1, 2, 3, and 4 for each instrument)

Violin

Viola

Violoncello

Double Bass

Accompaniment

Piano / Guitar

Percussion
(optional, but preferred)

Vibraphone

Percussion 1
- Snare Drum

Percussion 2
- Spoons / Castanets
- Tambourine
- Washboard / Guiro

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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.
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About the Series

Originally designed to address the needs of small ensembles with exceptional instrumentation challenges, *The Reimagine Initiative* has grown into a series that not only offers great, functional music for ensembles of all sizes and instrumentation, but also includes a wealth of additional teaching opportunities that extend beyond performance. The following are just some examples of how this series can be used to deepen the musical understanding of students regardless of ability level.

Adaptable Parts

The primary goal of this series is to make sure every single musician has access to all the parts of a composition. Thus, if a piece is reimagined in 3 parts, a bass player is able to practice all 3 parts just like a violinist can. This becomes particularly valuable if students are in sectionals but still want to be able to hear all the elements of a piece. If an ensemble does not have a bass clef voice, directors can assign this part to another player with ease. So even if a director only has a group of violists, they can still perform the music without issue.

Accompaniment

An easy piano part is included to provide additional support. Further, chords are written above the part where appropriate, allowing for a guitar player to play along as well. This part is also available as an mp3 download for students to practice with at home.

Percussion

Optional percussion parts are included but are not necessary. Students have the option of playing along with background tracks (including piano and percussion) or just perform with piano / guitar accompaniment alone.

Teaching Opportunities Far Beyond Performance

This series offers many opportunities to dive deeper into the musical decisions that are made in bringing each piece to life — from composition to orchestration and more. For example, students themselves can make decisions about orchestration during rehearsal. What happens if the basses play part 1 and cellos play part 3? Does it sound good? This will undoubtedly lead to wonderful discussions about orchestration and arranging, with students participating in the orchestration of a piece and discovering new, exciting combinations of instruments that give a piece an entirely new sound. Teachers may also choose to flip their orchestra and have all low voices play part 1 while all high voices play the bass line. These situations make students increasingly aware of the various parts in a piece of music other than their own. Sight reading is yet another benefit, as ensembles can sight read a piece multiple times with members switching parts each time.

Reimagining Opportunities for Musicians

Born out of the need to address small ensembles with exceptional instrumentation challenges, *The Reimagine Initiative* also unlocks a wealth of opportunities for teaching music in both familiar and new ways. We hope you share the excitement for what this series has to offer, and how it can help you reimagine your rehearsals and your curriculum!

Recommended Part Assignments

While there are many options for students to participate in "orchestrating" these works (see above), the following are recommended "standard" part assignments and may be adapted as needed.

Three-Part Works:

Part 1: Violin, Viola, Cello
Part 2: Violin, Viola, Cello
Part 3: Cello, Double Bass

Four-Part Works:

Part 1: Violin, Viola
Part 2: Violin, Viola, Cello
Part 3: Violin, Viola, Cello
Part 4: Cello, Double Bass

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The Composer

Brian Balmages (b. 1975) is an award-winning composer, conductor, producer, and performer. The music he has written for winds, brass, and orchestra has been performed throughout the world with commissions ranging from elementary schools to professional orchestras. World premieres include prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall. His music was also performed as part of the 2013 Presidential Inaugural Prayer Service, which was attended by both President Obama and Vice President Biden. He received his bachelor's degree in music from James Madison University and his master's degree from the University of Miami in Florida. He is a recipient of the prestigious A. Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association and in 2016 was awarded the James Madison University Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Visual and Performing Arts (the first year the award was given). In the same year, he was commissioned by his other alma mater, the University of Miami, to compose music for the inauguration of the institution's 6th president, Dr. Julio Frenk.

As a conductor, Mr. Balmages enjoys regular engagements with all-state and region bands and orchestras, as well as university and professional ensembles throughout the world. Notable guest conducting appearances have included the Midwest Clinic, Western International Band Clinic, College Band Directors Conference, American School Band Directors Association National Conference and others. Additional conducting appearances have included the Kennedy Center and Meyerhoff Symphony Hall as well as engagements in Australia, Canada and Italy. Currently, he is Director of Instrumental Publications for The FJH Music Company and Assistant Director of Bands and Orchestras at Towson University.

About the Music

Blue Ridge Reel was inspired by a visit to Asheville for the National Convention of the American Band Directors Association. I was extremely taken with the fun vibe of the town, located in the mountains of North Carolina. During the trip, I had an opportunity to hear several bluegrass bands, including a great performance during a dinner and special tour of the Biltmore Estate. I love the rich heritage of the music in the mountains of the Eastern United States. Many influences in the region come from the rich cultures of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. This fiddle music eventually played a major role in the development of country and bluegrass music.

The title, *Blue Ridge Reel*, pays homage to the Blue Ridge Mountains. While influenced by the form and style of a traditional Irish reel, the music certainly heads in some contemporary directions as it seeks to mix the modern feel of a city like Asheville with its deeply engrained musical roots. It is also deeply influenced by the untimely passing of Davidson College mathematics professor, Robert Whitton, a music lover and major supporter of local musicians. Shortly after his passing, over 100 friends and family gathered in downtown Davidson to participate in a New Orleans-style march through the city. Thus, this piece ties together the spirit of that New Orleans march with my own personal bluegrass experiences in Asheville.

A number of traditional instruments are called for, especially in the percussion section. A washboard really adds to the authenticity of the piece, though a guiro is a suitable alternative. The piece also calls for spoons. Many instrument stores now sell "musical spoons" that are easy for students to pick up and play quickly (castanets are a suitable replacement if necessary).

- Brian Balmages

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Duration: 2:45

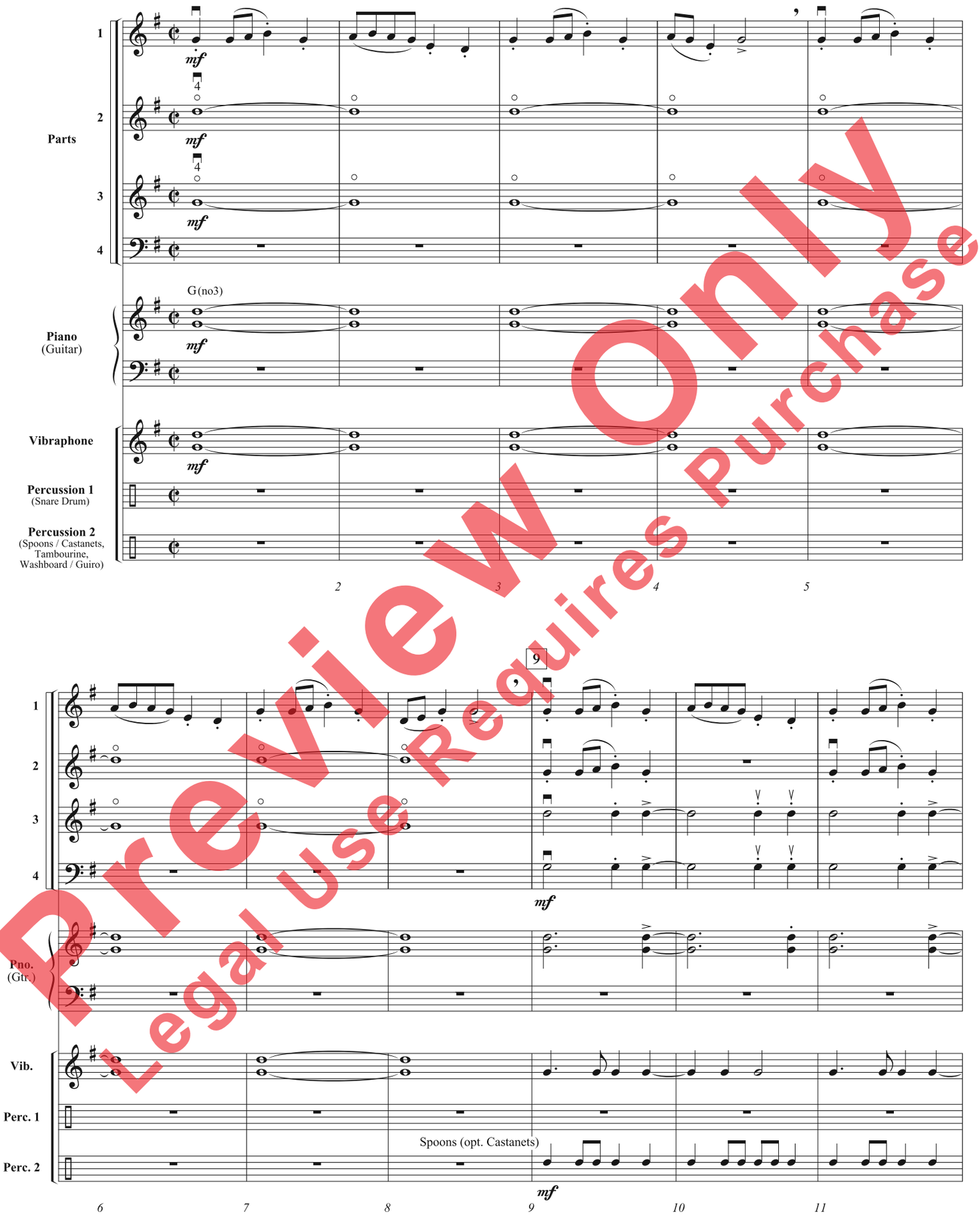
* Parts 1-4 are provided for every instrument

BLUE RIDGE REEL

for adaptable string ensemble

BRIAN BALMAGES
(ASCAP)

With a spirited groove! (♩=108)



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MP3
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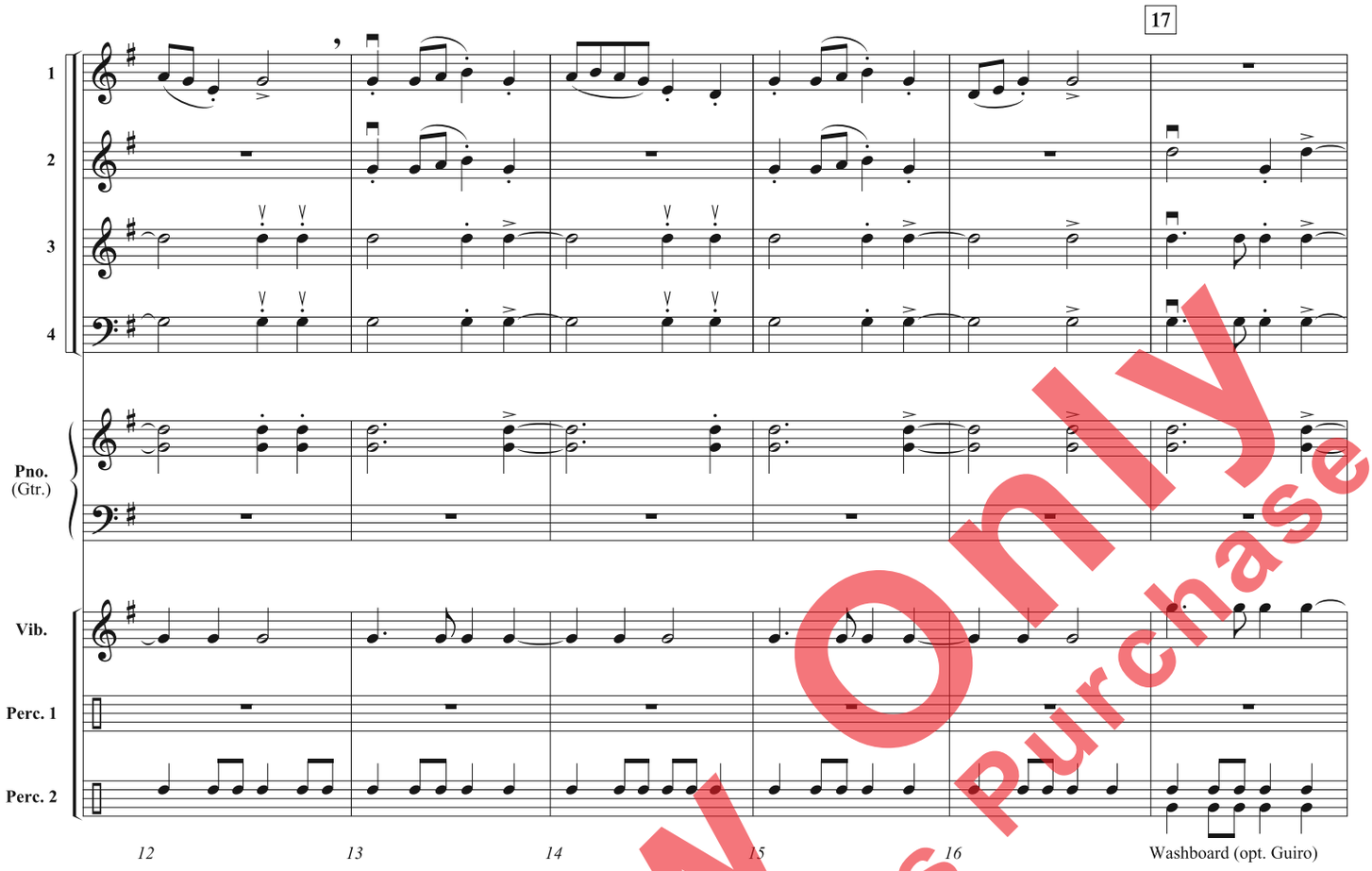

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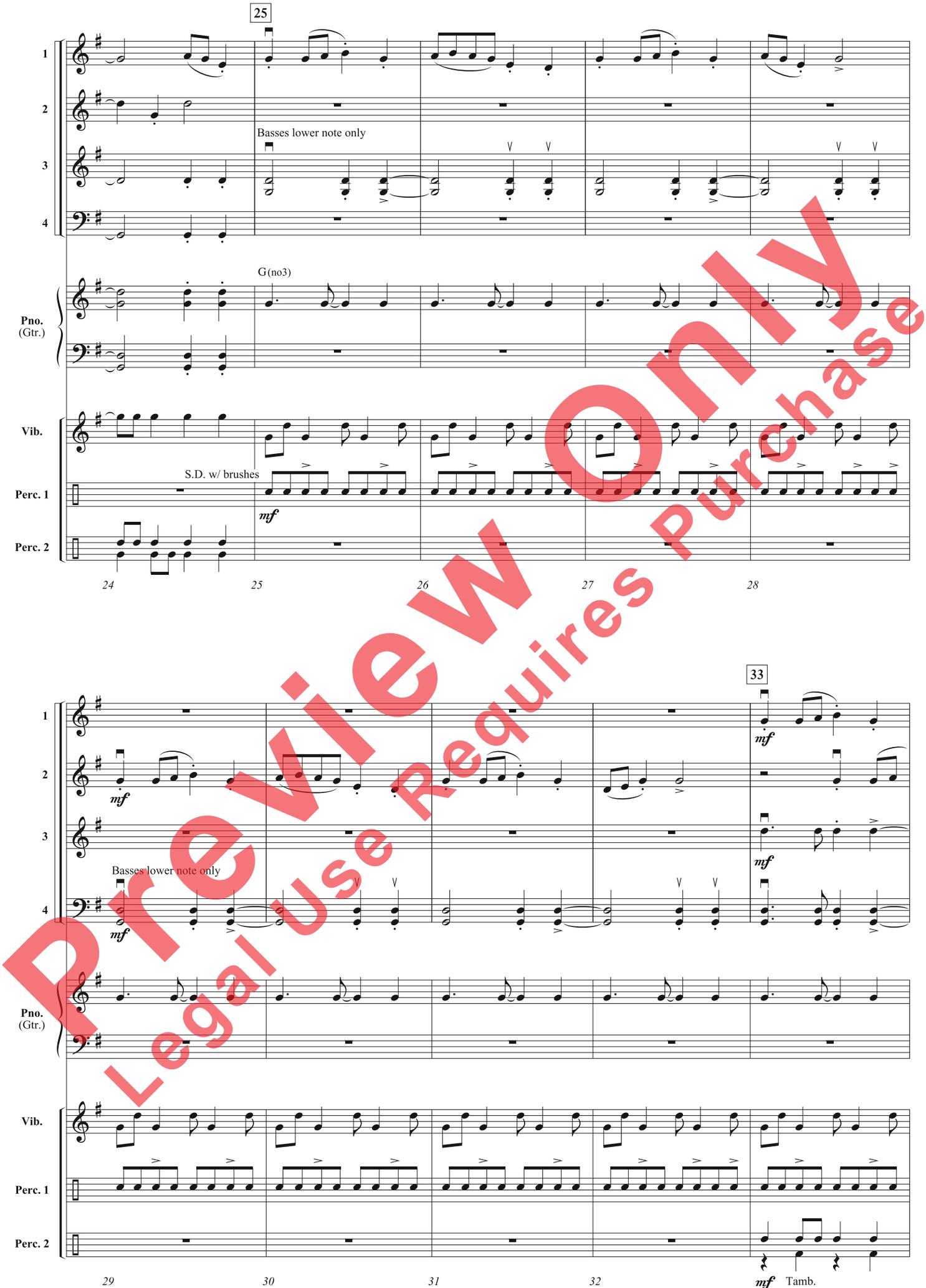

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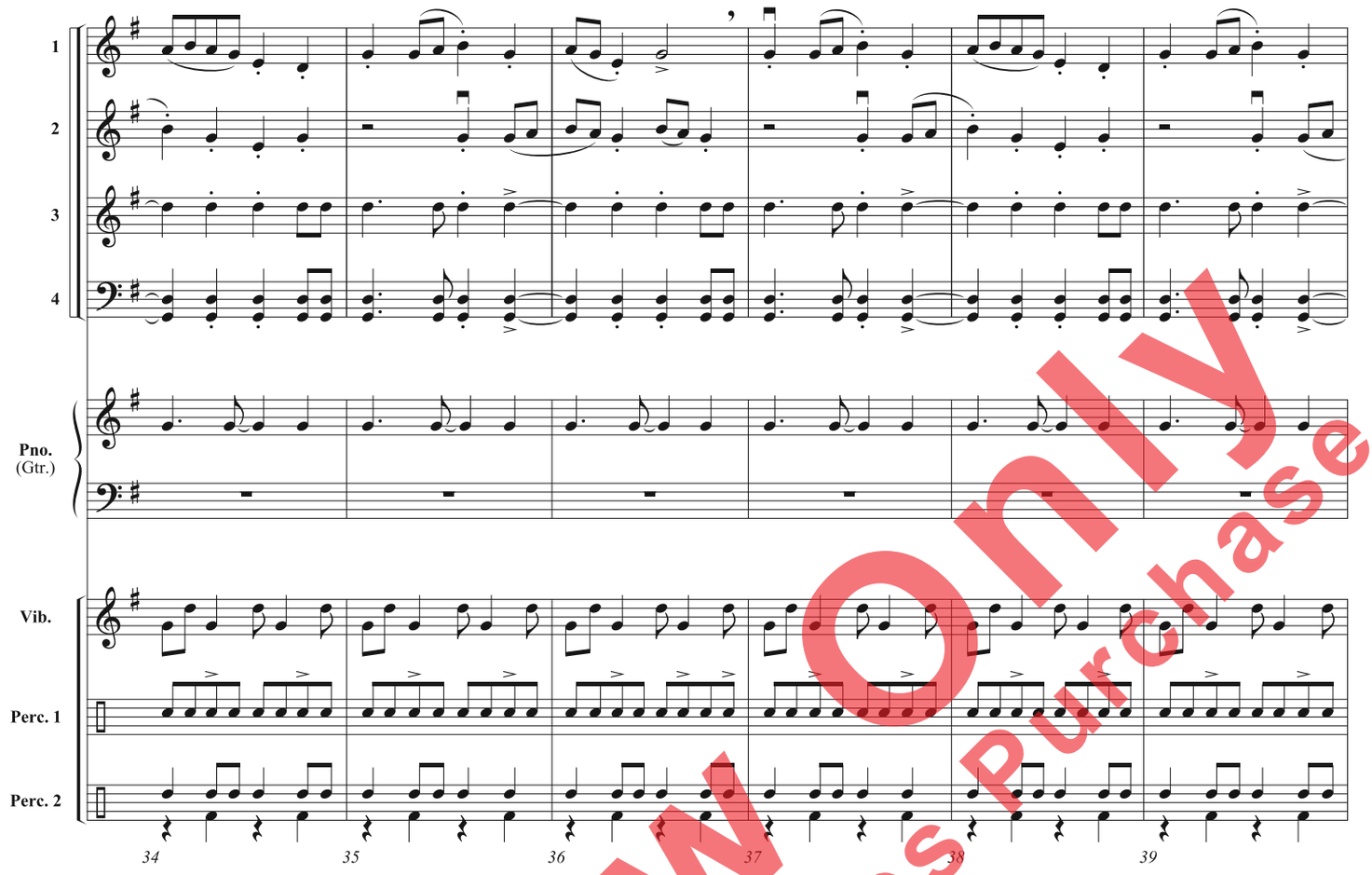

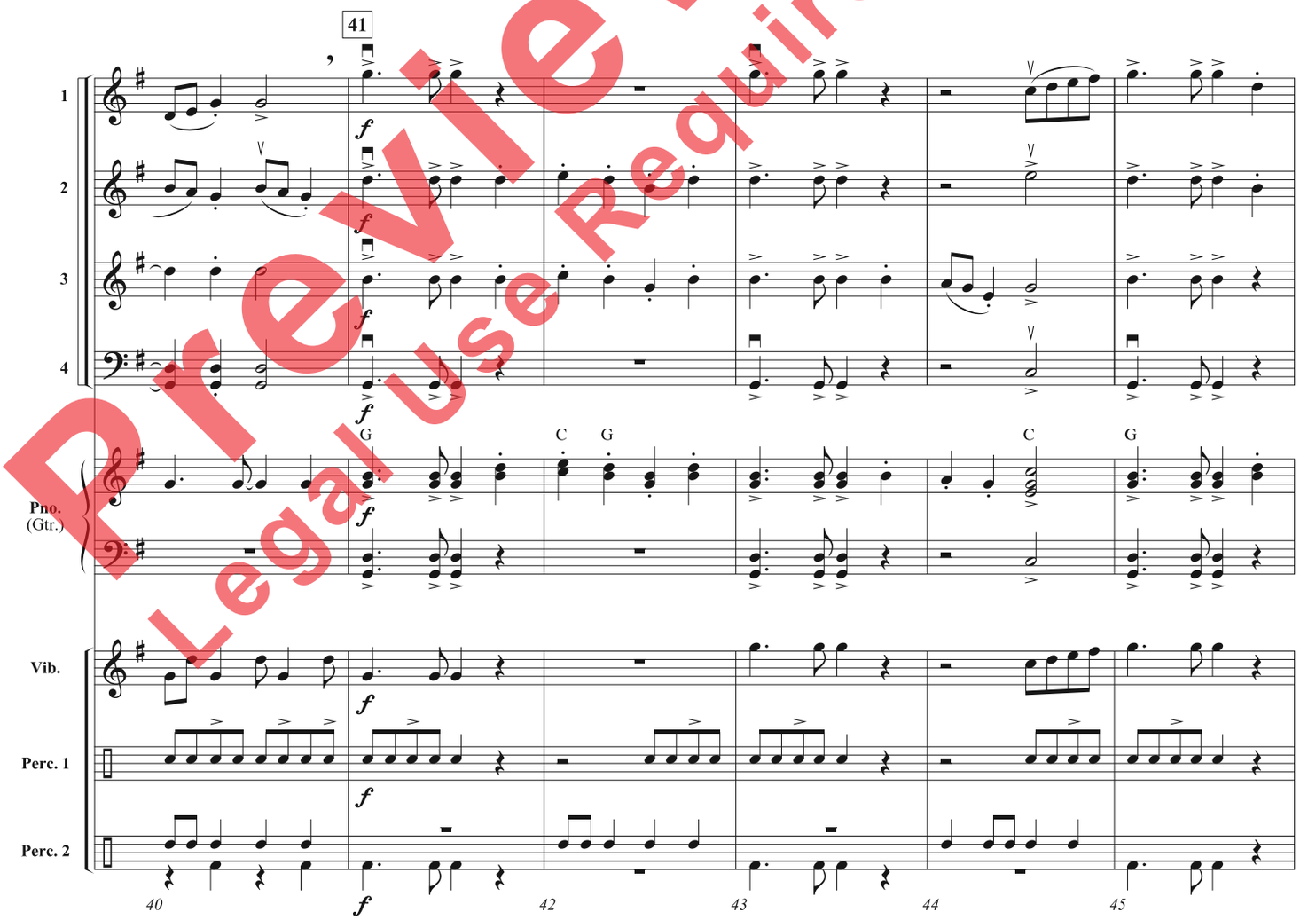

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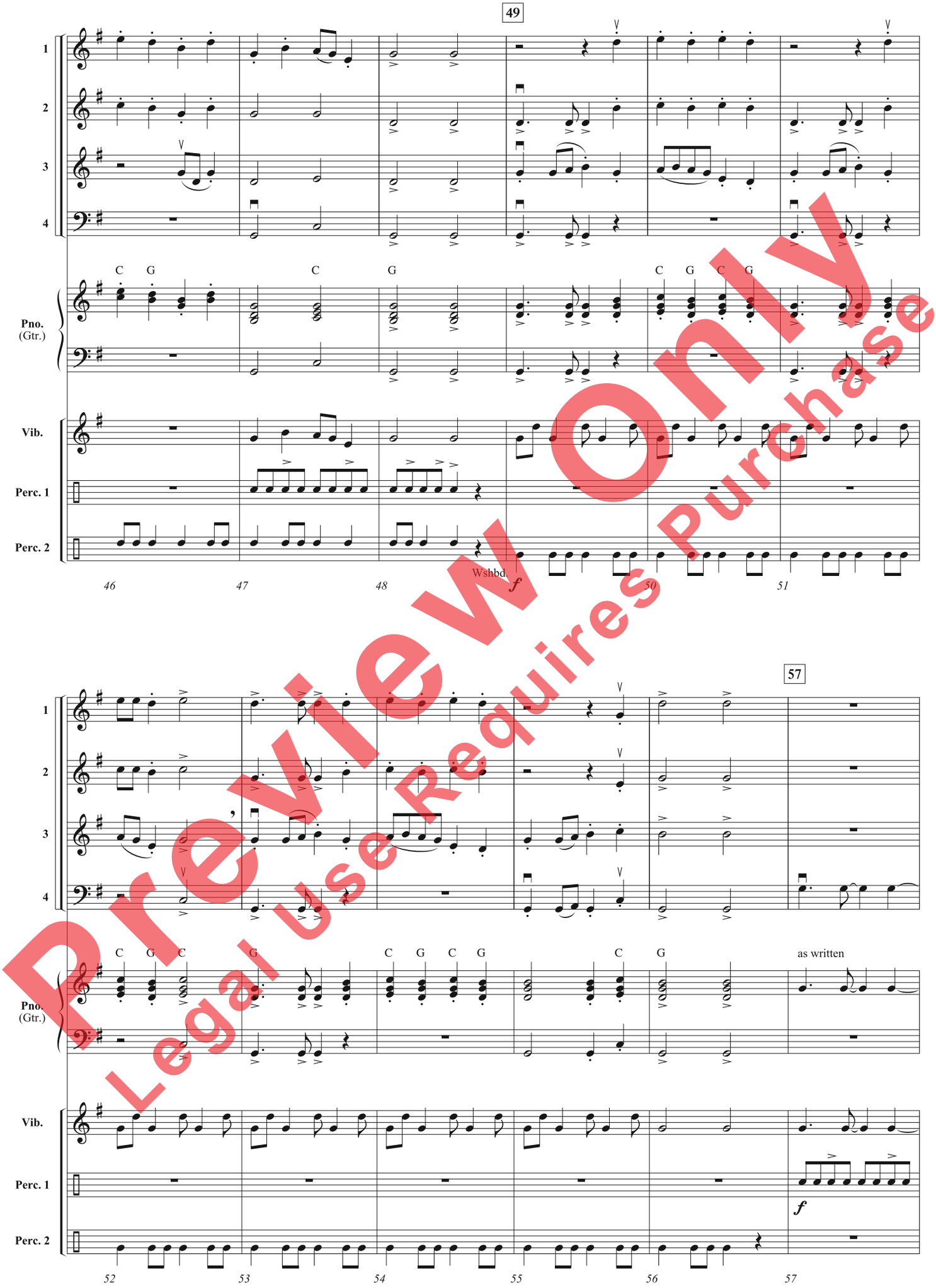

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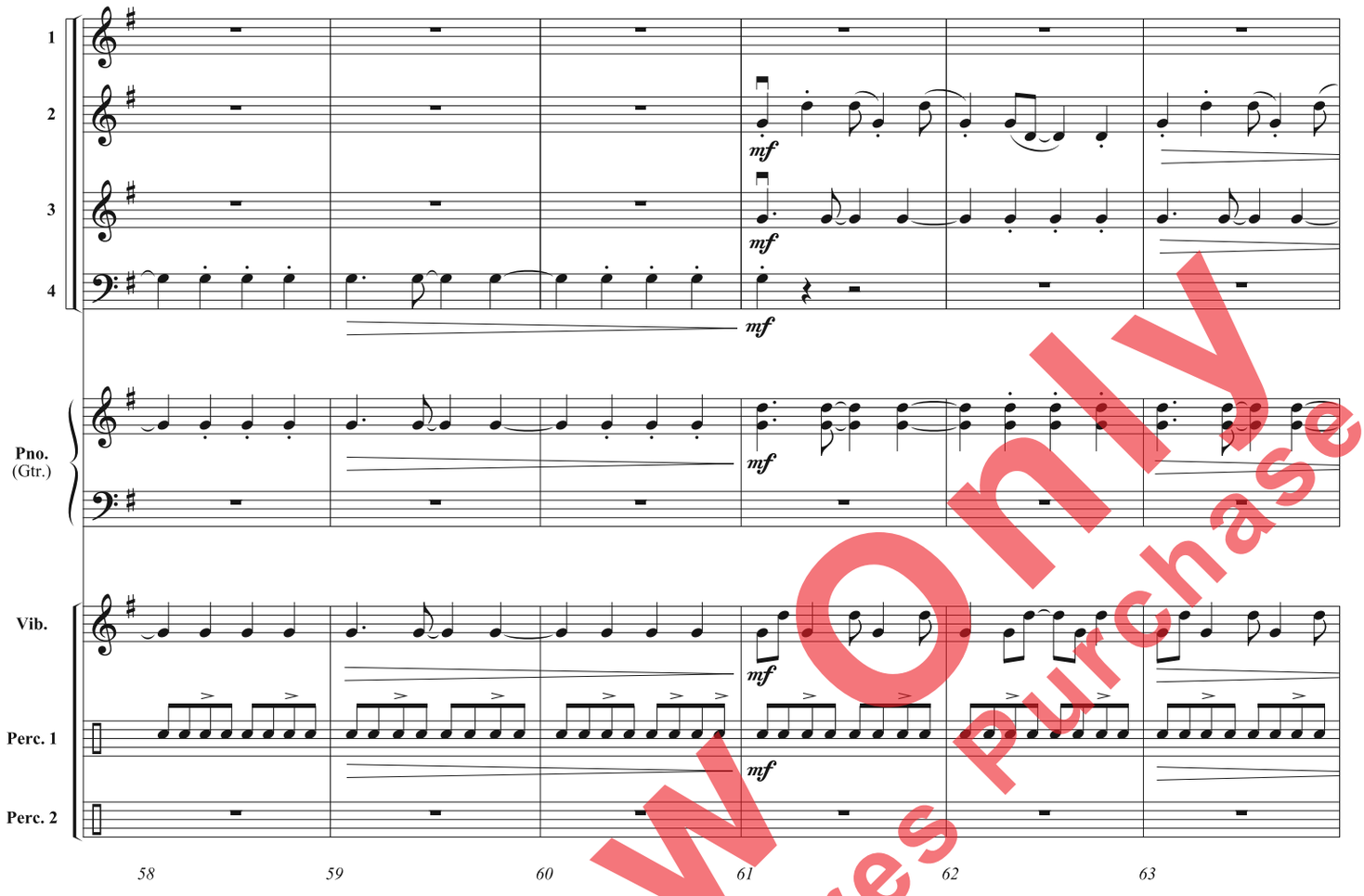

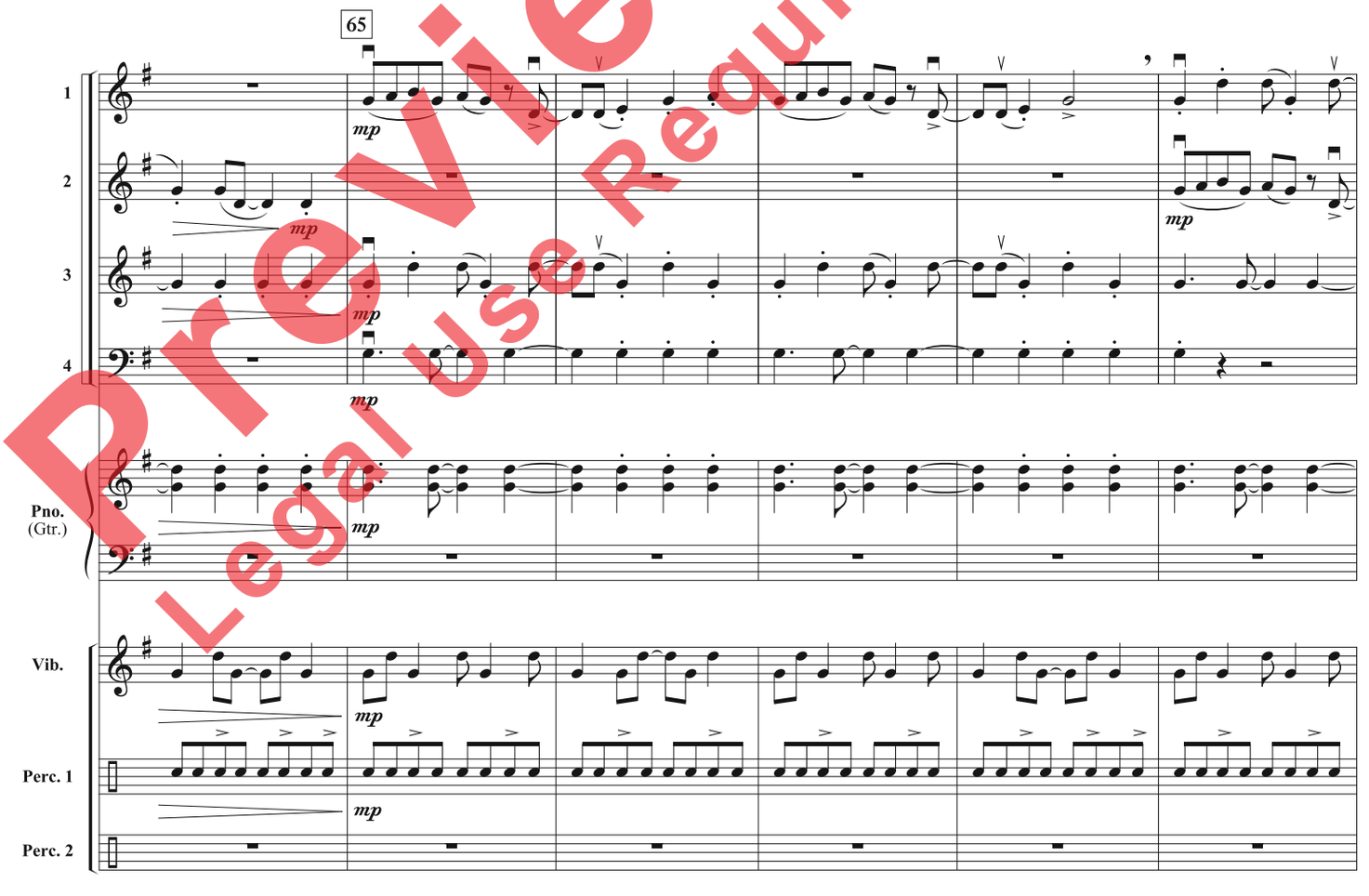

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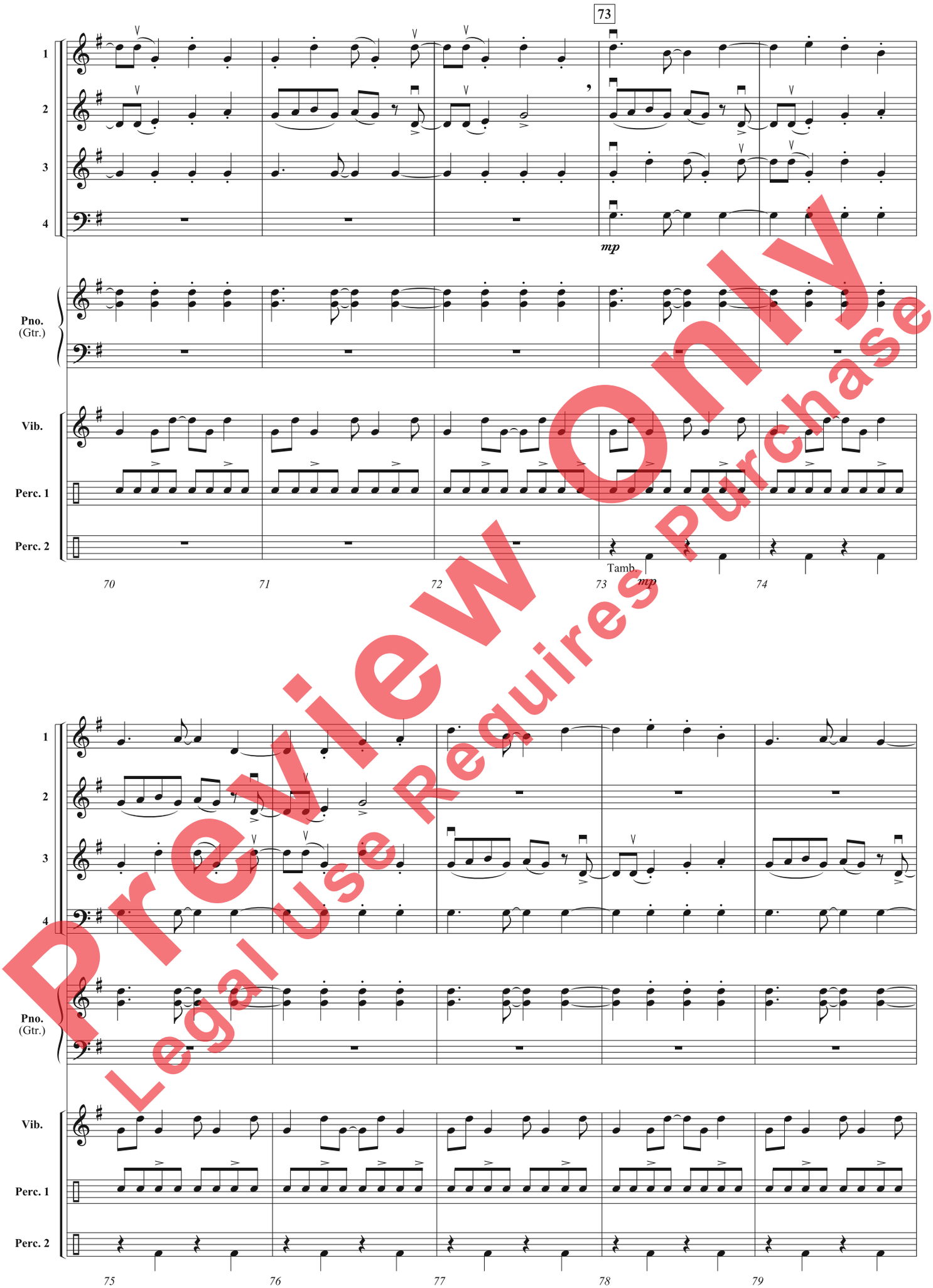

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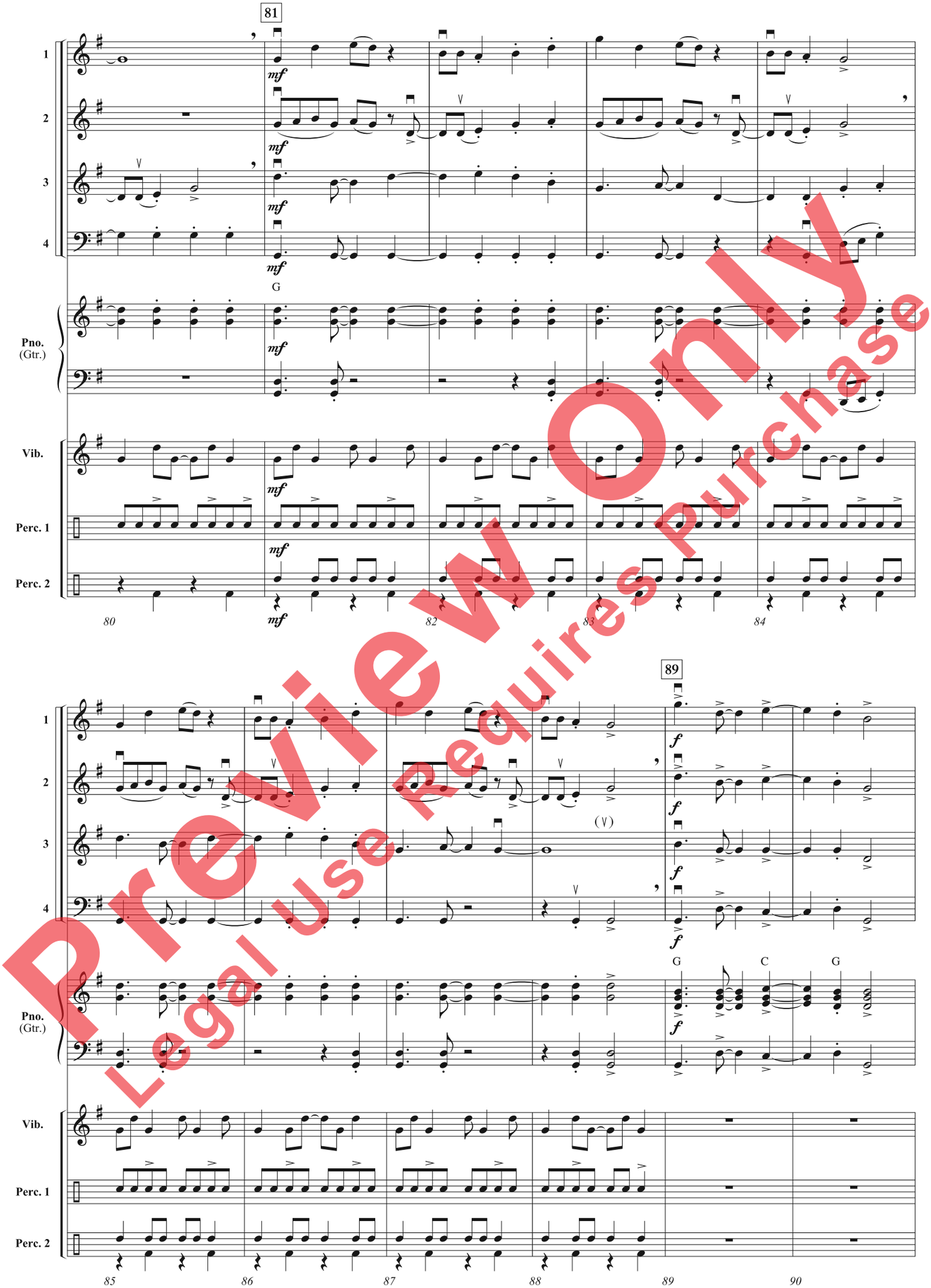

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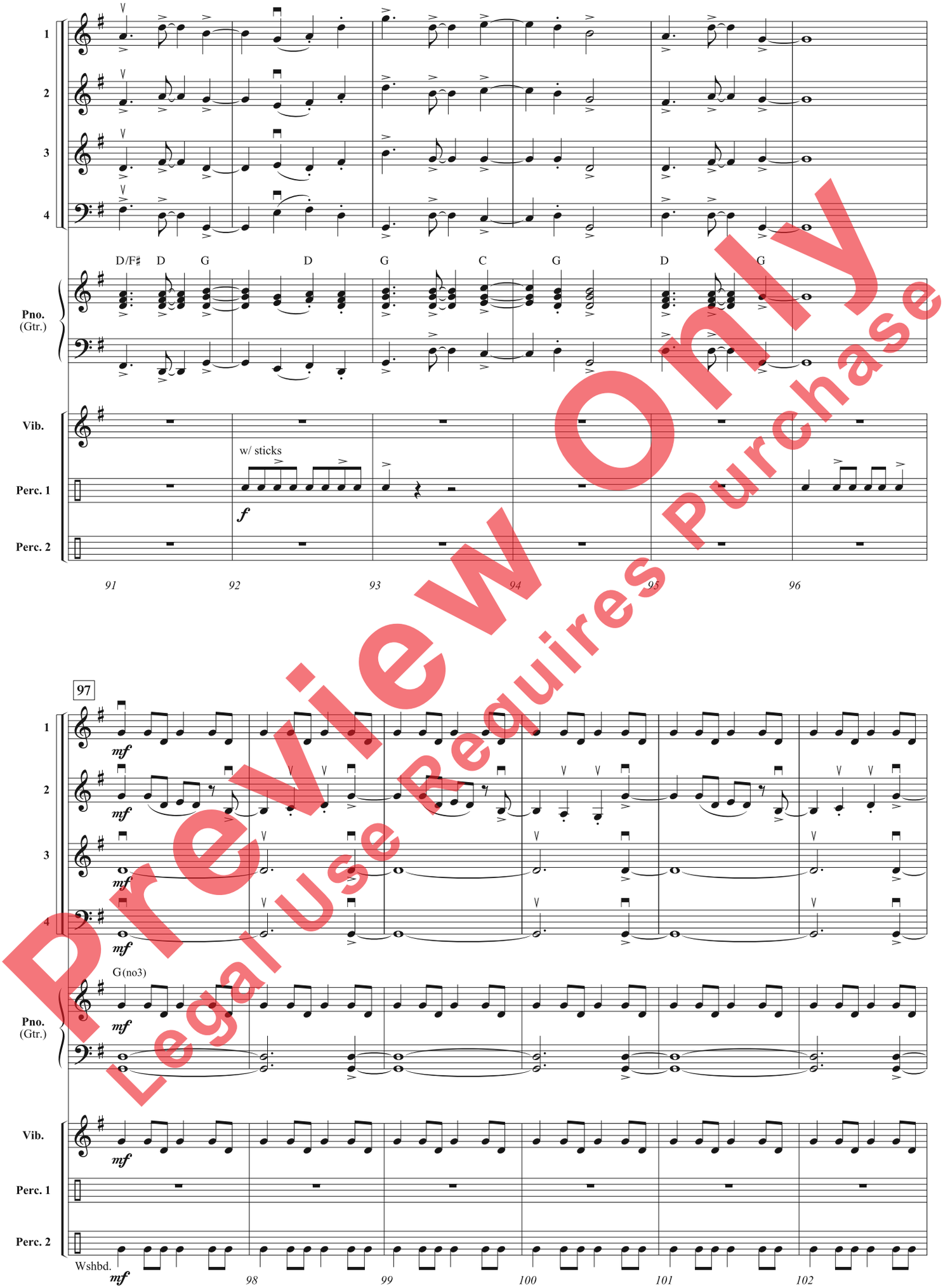

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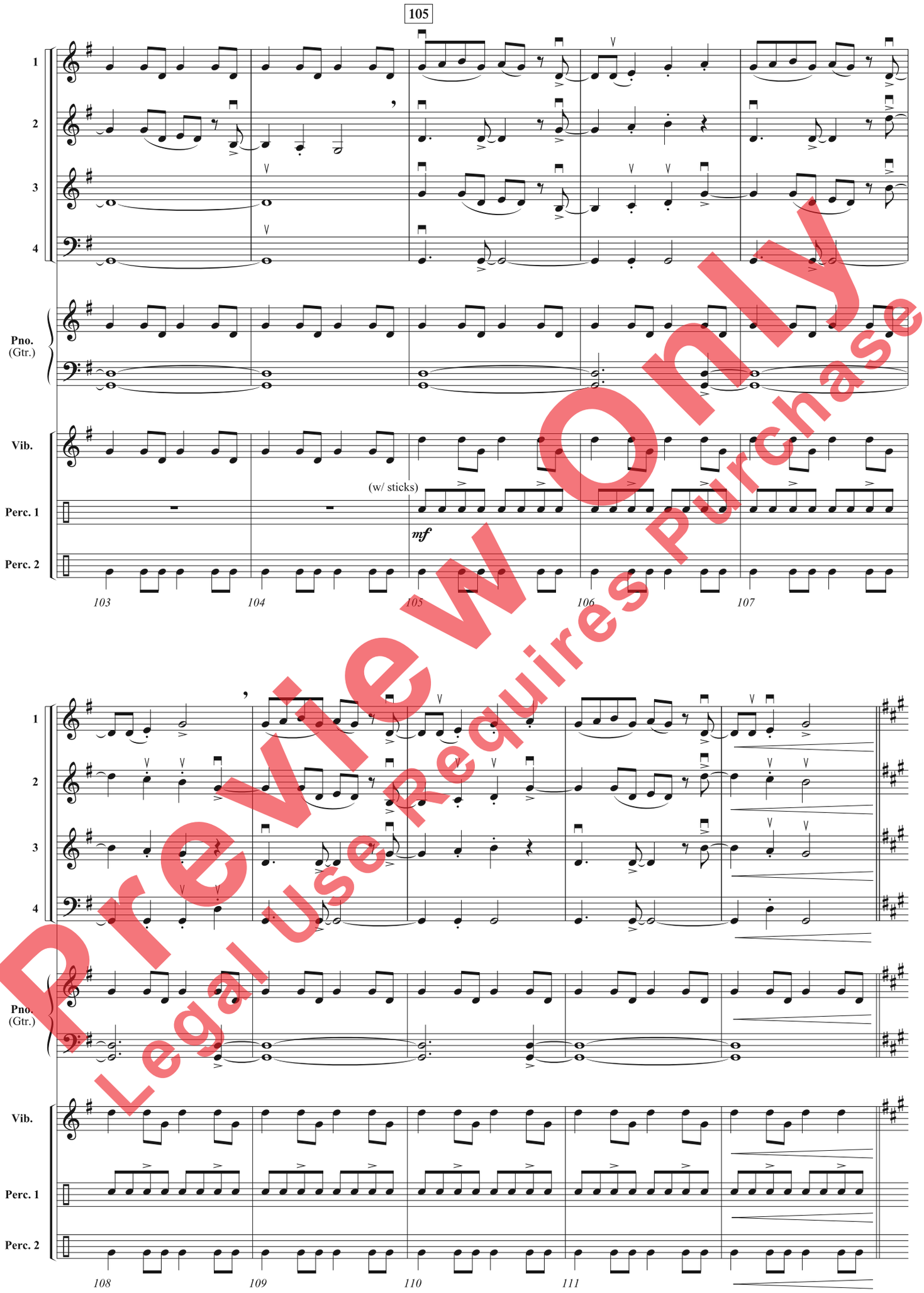

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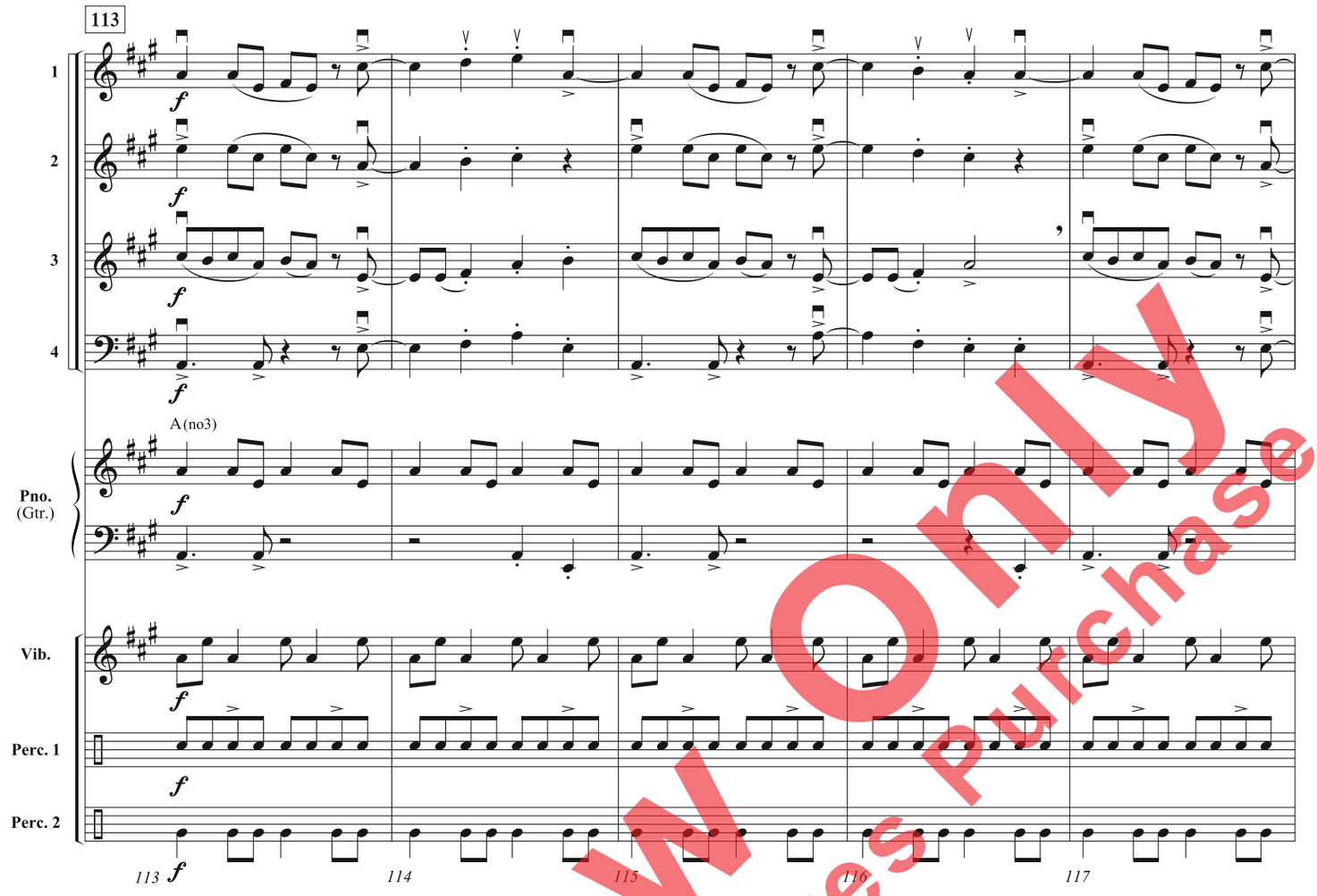

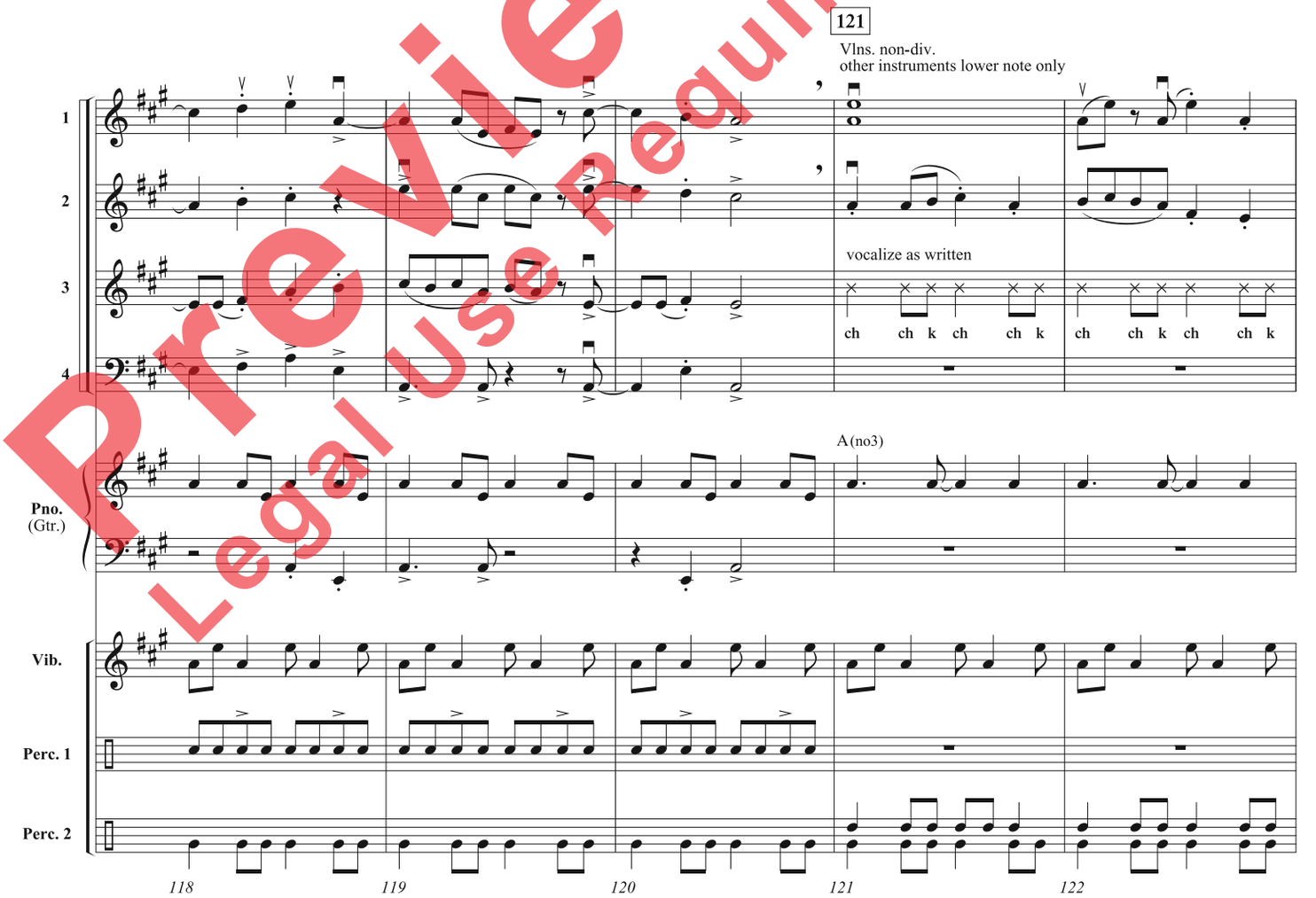

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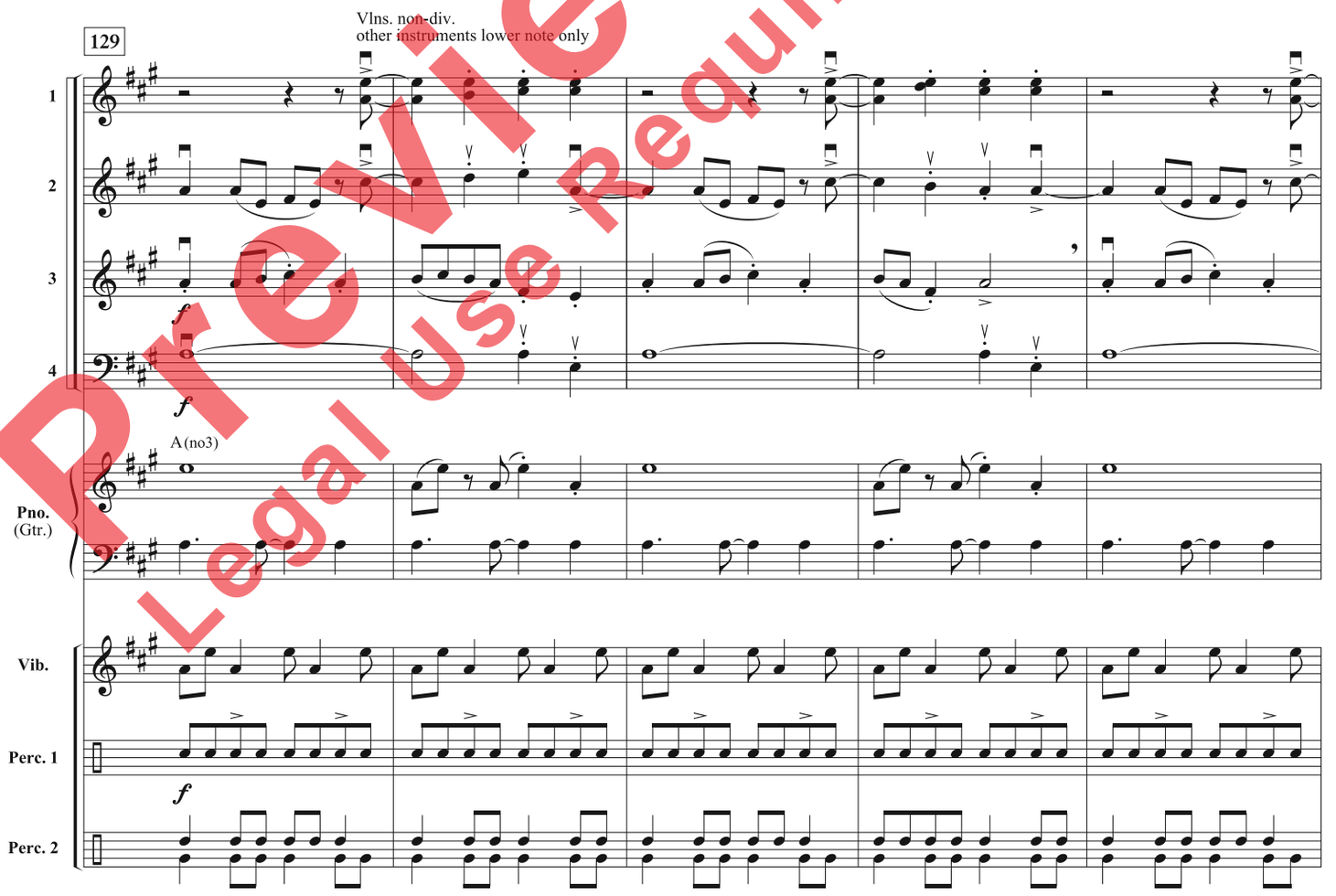

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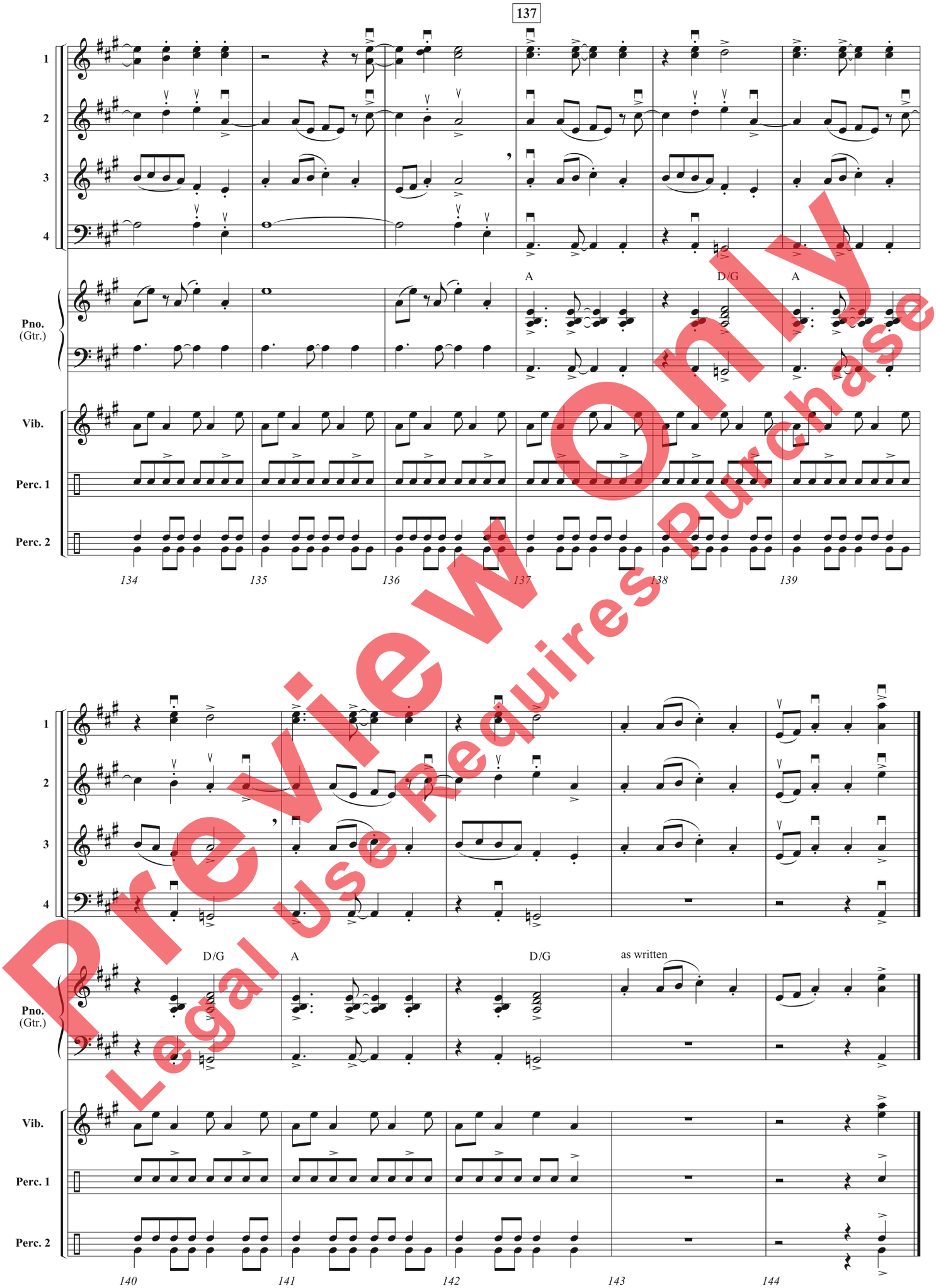

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