SO **FJH STRING ORCHESTRA**

Grade 4
ST6549

ALL THE THINGS

Brian Balmages

Instrumentation

1 - Full Score
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 and conductor. His music 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 is a recipient of the prestigious A. Austin Harding Award from the American School Band Directors Association, won the 2020 NBA William D. Revelli Composition Contest with his work *Love and Light*, 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

When Amy Bennett, Assistant Director of Orchestras at Highland High School (Gilbert, Arizona) contacted me to write a surprise piece in honor of their orchestra director's retirement, I absolutely jumped at the opportunity. I had heard Bill Bitter's group first at Midwest many years ago when they performed my *Lyric Metal*. It was one of those performances that I have never forgotten – I was struck by the raw power of the orchestra and how they absolutely "went for it" – just as the piece requires. Bill has been teaching for 41 years – after several trips to Midwest, he decided it was time to retire at the end of the school year, after his final Midwest performance. In that performance, they closed with my *(You Are) Amazing*. And it absolutely was amazing. Throughout the entire concert, I could not get over the amount of joy that I saw on the kids' faces. They were looking at each other with such warmness, looking at everything Bill did with such a sense of love and community, and they all moved together so beautifully. It just felt like one big, warm, beautiful, musical hug.

Before and after the performance, numerous parents from the orchestra boosters approached me to thank me for writing the piece. And literally every single time they started mentioning Bill's retirement, they got teary-eyed and choked up a bit. EVERYONE loves everything about this man. He's an incredible teacher, musician, and human being. You see it in the parents, the kids, his staff, and in the music they play.

Amy insisted on having some gorgeous lyrical moments – Bill's favorite kind of music. He calls those big, full, beautiful moments "Highland Moments." She also wanted it to feel triumphant and heroic, and feel like it was honoring a legend. So basically, she wanted me to capture the joyful things, the beautiful things, the emotional things, the loving things, supportive things… And it finally dawned on me – I had to figure out how to write a piece about ALL the things. And that's what I have attempted to do.

Opening with a gentle chorale, the music portrays the initial sorrow of Bill's final concert. It was really important that I capture that emotion, and let everyone have a moment to process that. As the music continues, it becomes warmer and more comforting – a musical embrace of sorts. What follows is a joyful and playful section. When the group performed at Midwest, they played some fiddle music with a local fiddler – the kids looked like they were having SO MUCH fun. And I wanted them to get the opportunity to have that kind of fun again, but this time without the soloist.

Ultimately, the two ideas are juxtaposed - the joyful and spirited fiddle music and the opening chorale. This really brings everything together, which was exactly what I wanted to do both in the music and also in the community. It is a moment where tears of joy flow freely from everyone in the room as they celebrate a beautiful moment of a master teacher, musician, colleague, and friend.

All the Things is lovingly dedicated to Bill Bitter, Director of the Highland High School Orchestra program. It celebrates his amazing 41-year career and reminds all of us that a single person can have an enormous impact. Many thanks to the Highland High School Orchestra Boosters for their full support of this project, and to Amy Bennett for spearheading the entire initiative.

- Brian Balmages

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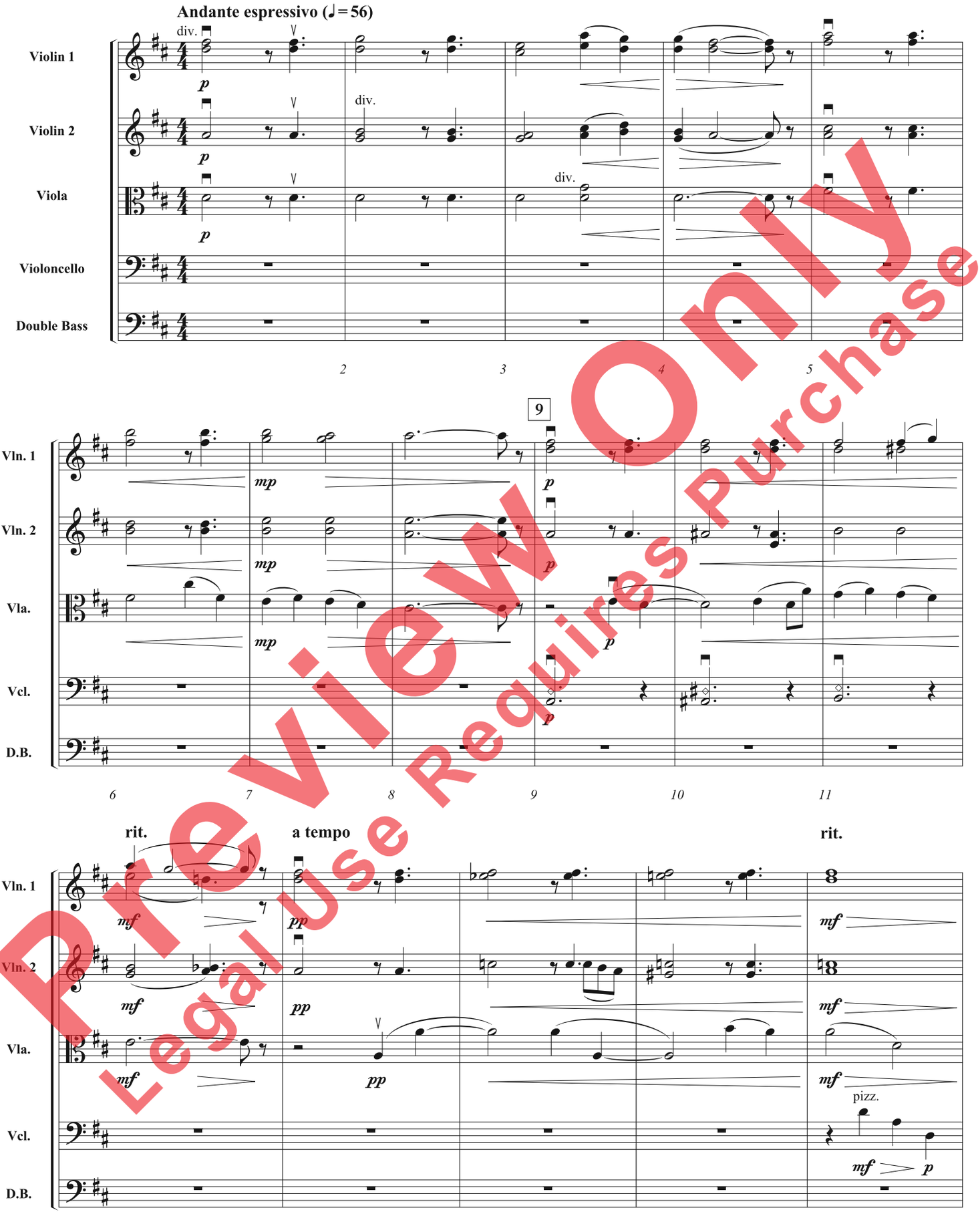
Duration: 5:00

ALL THE THINGS

BRIAN BALMAGES
(ASCAP)



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MP3
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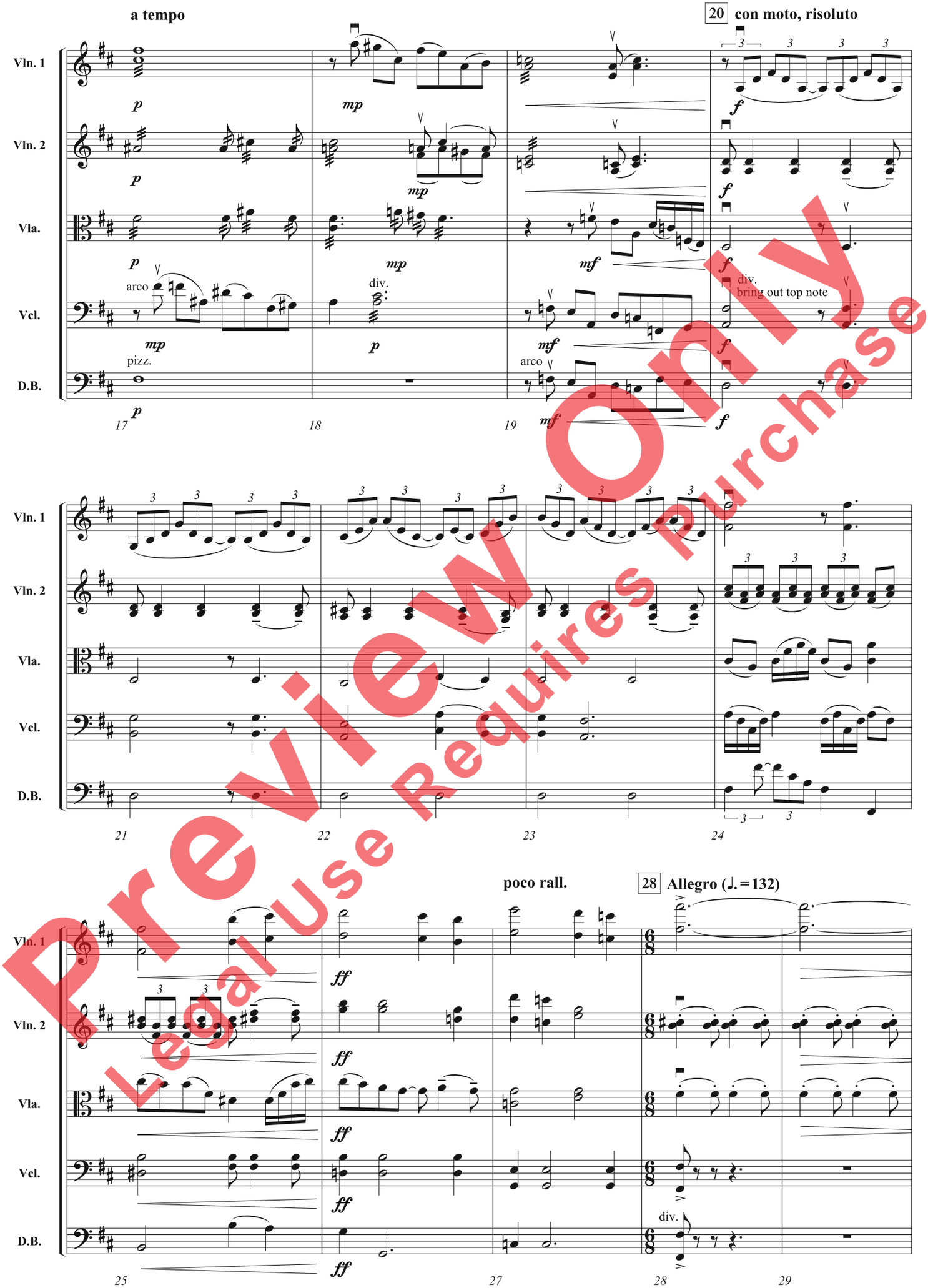

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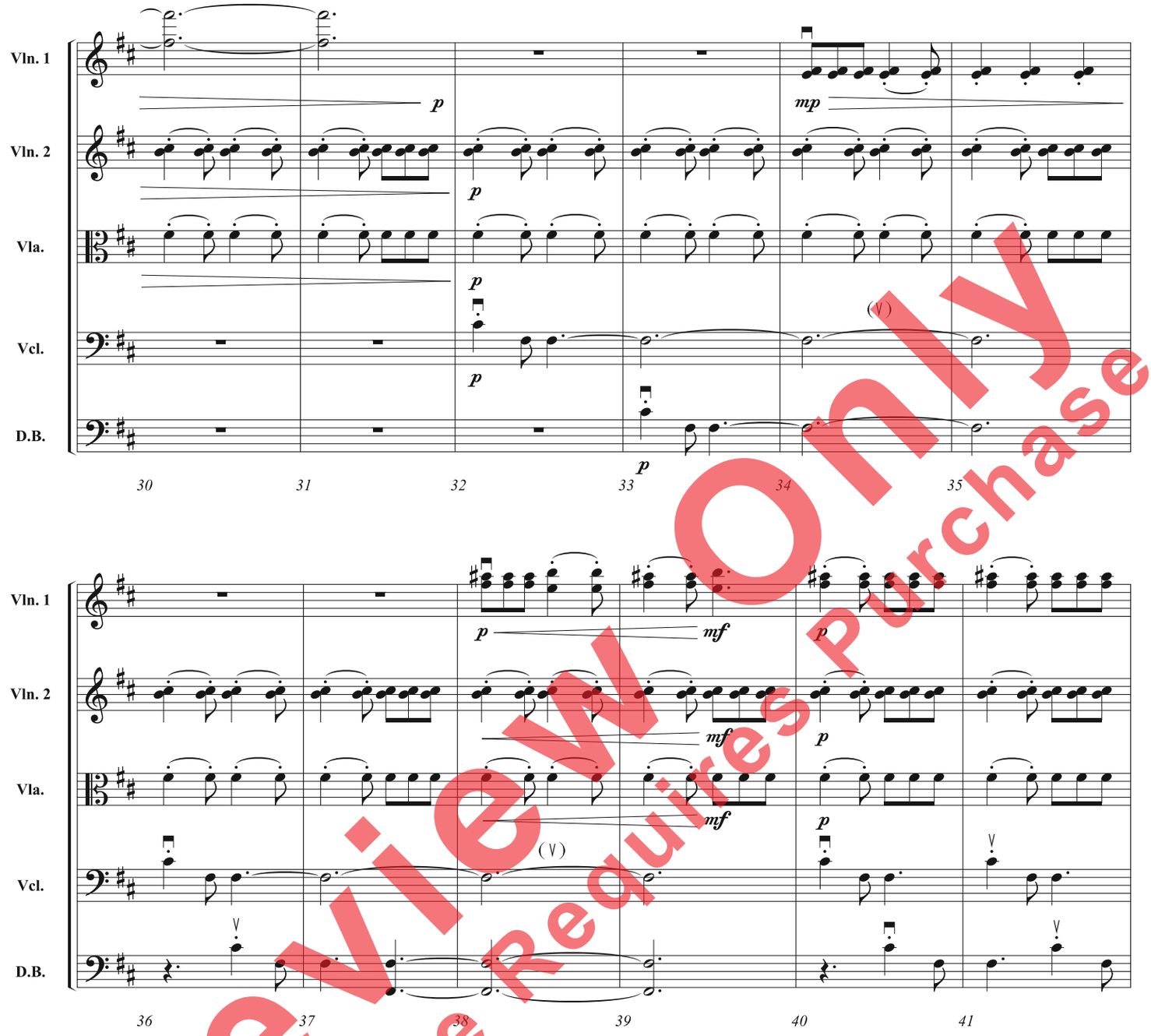

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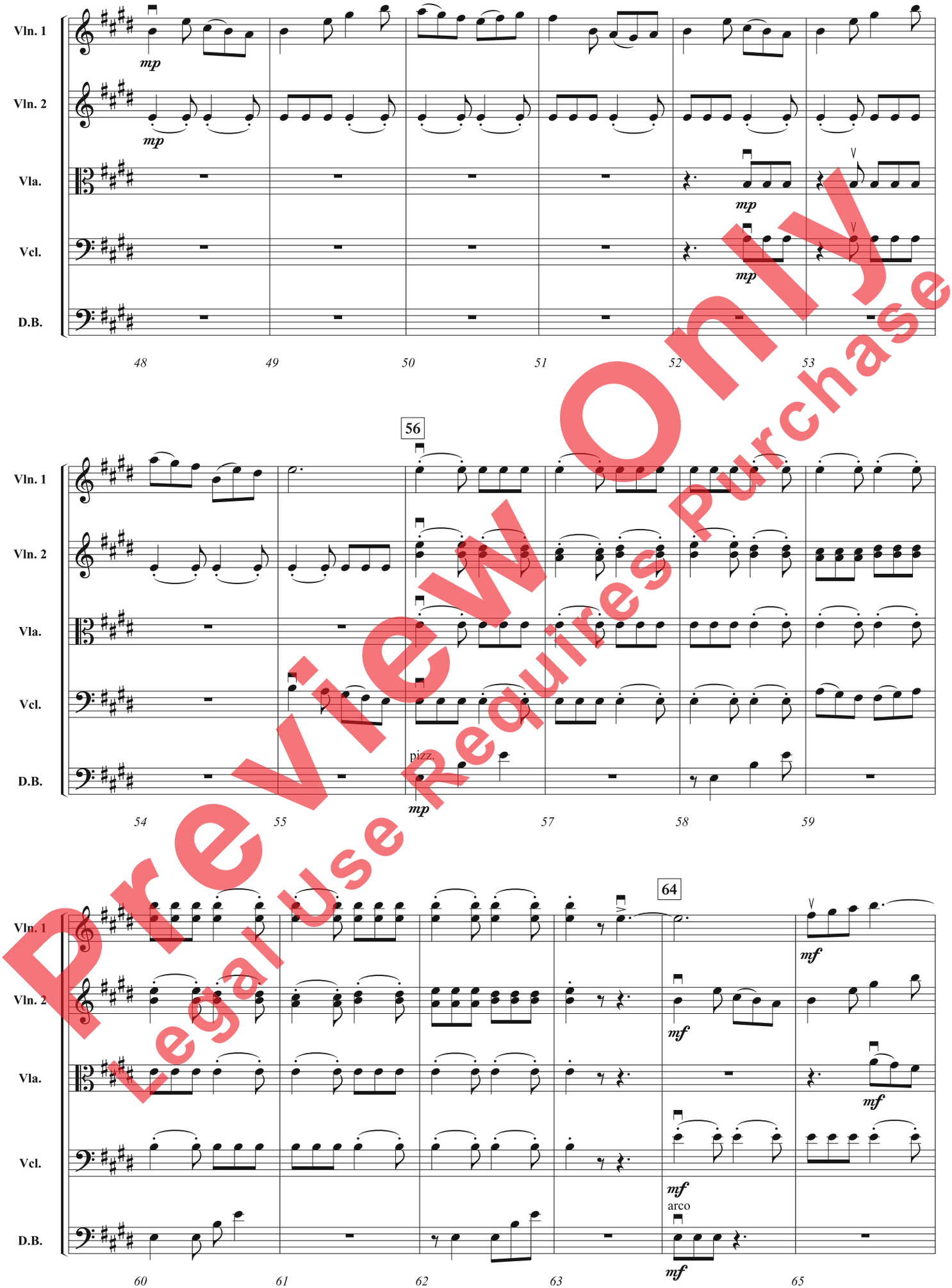

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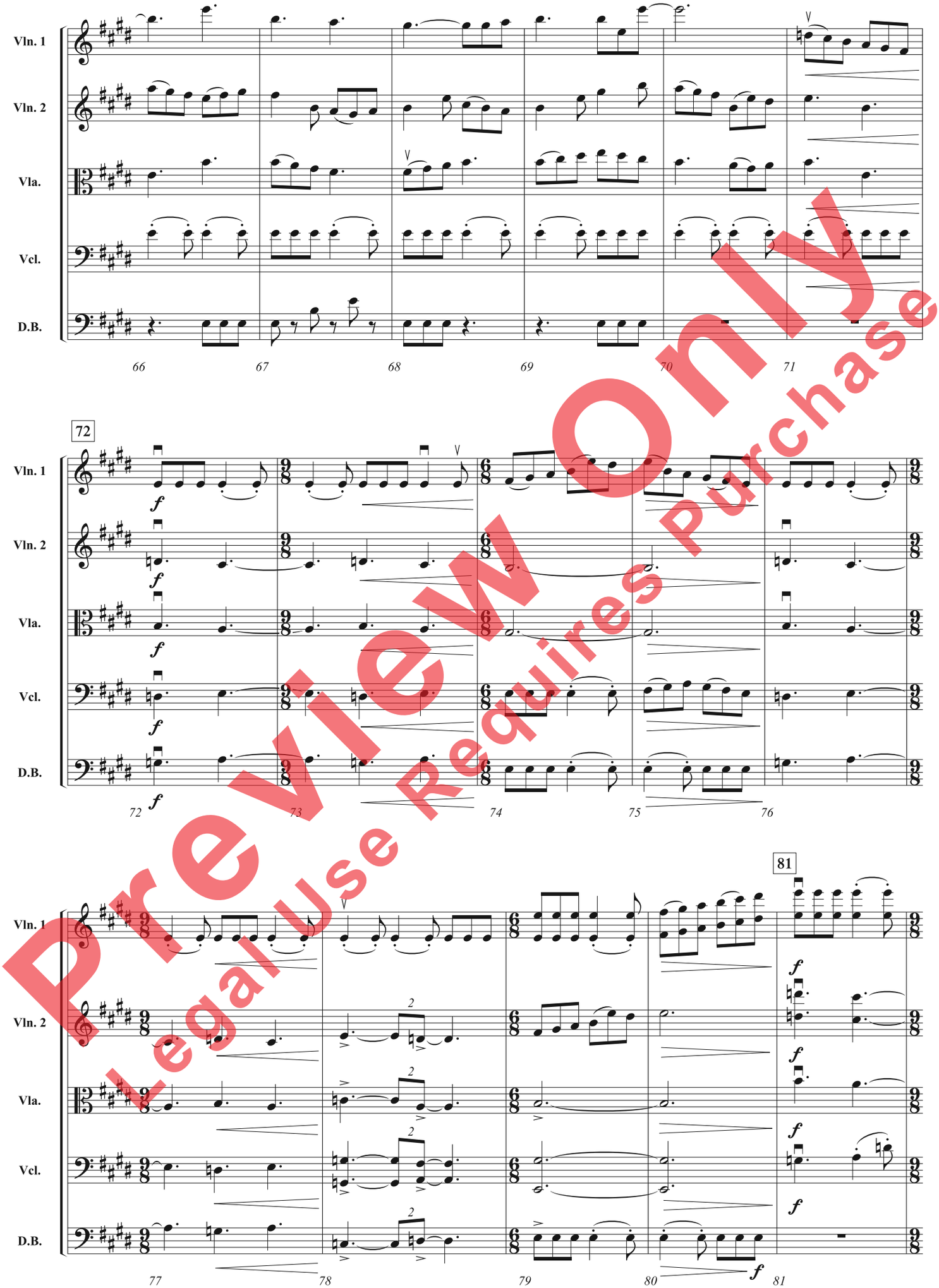

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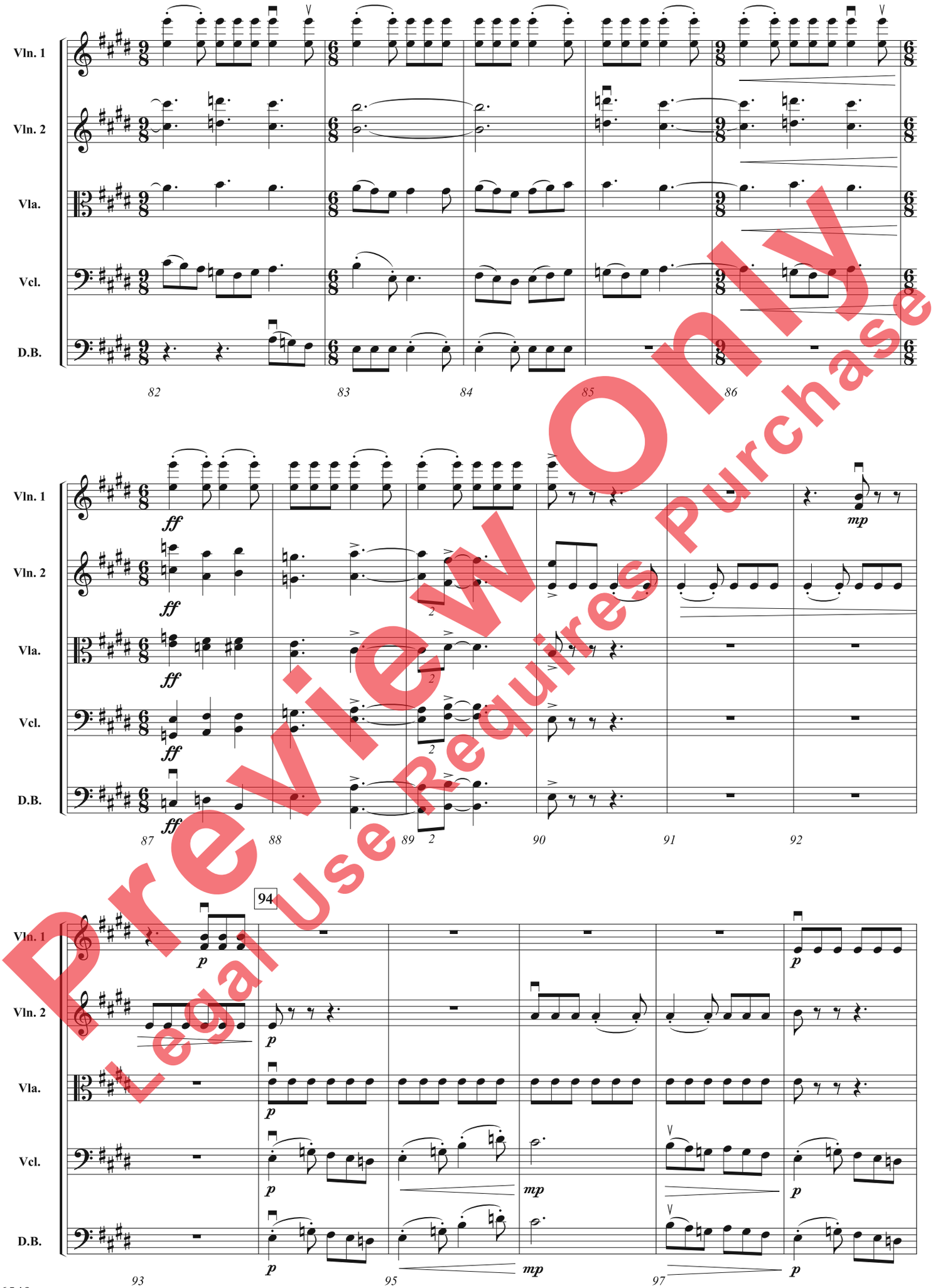

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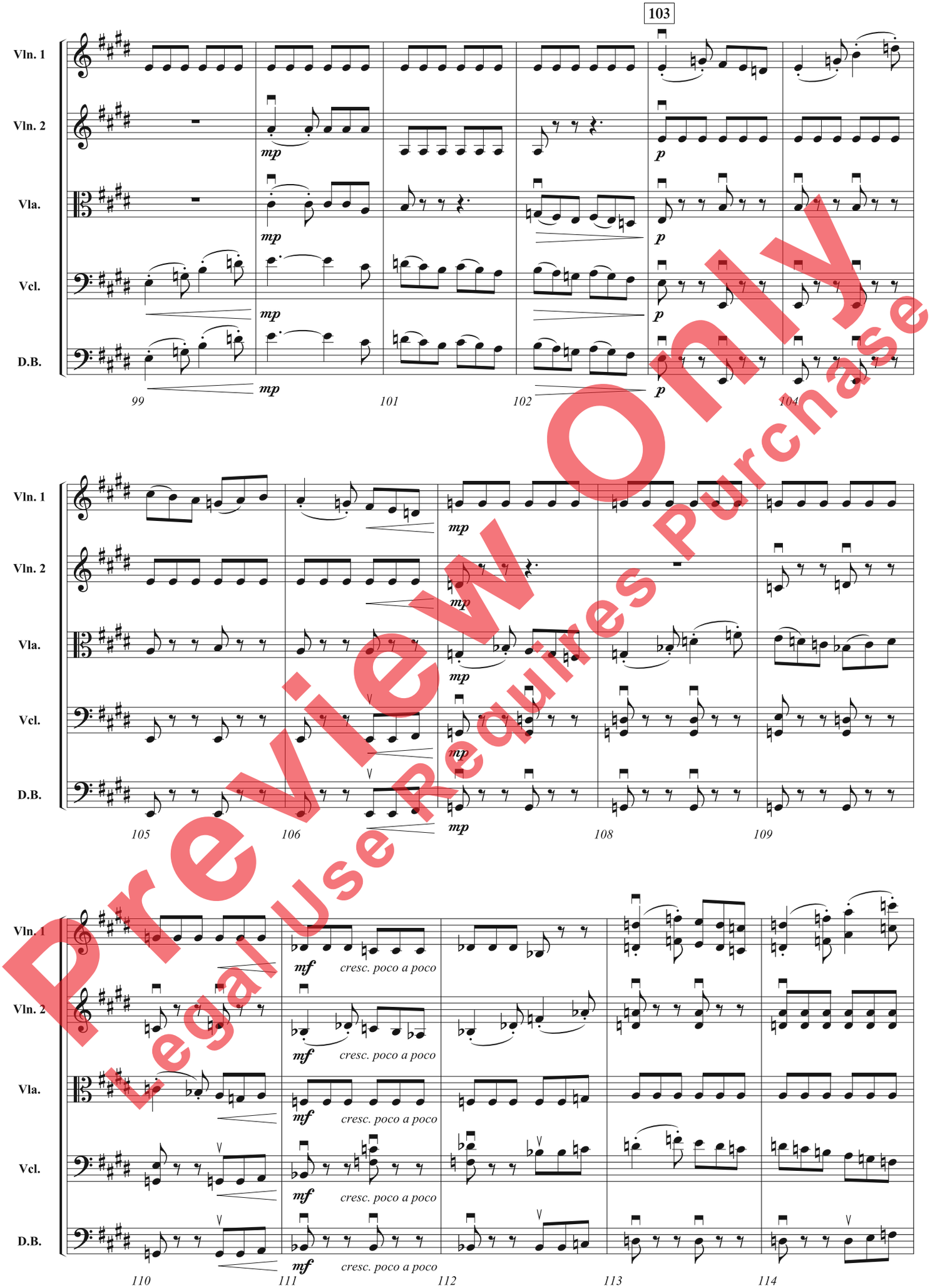

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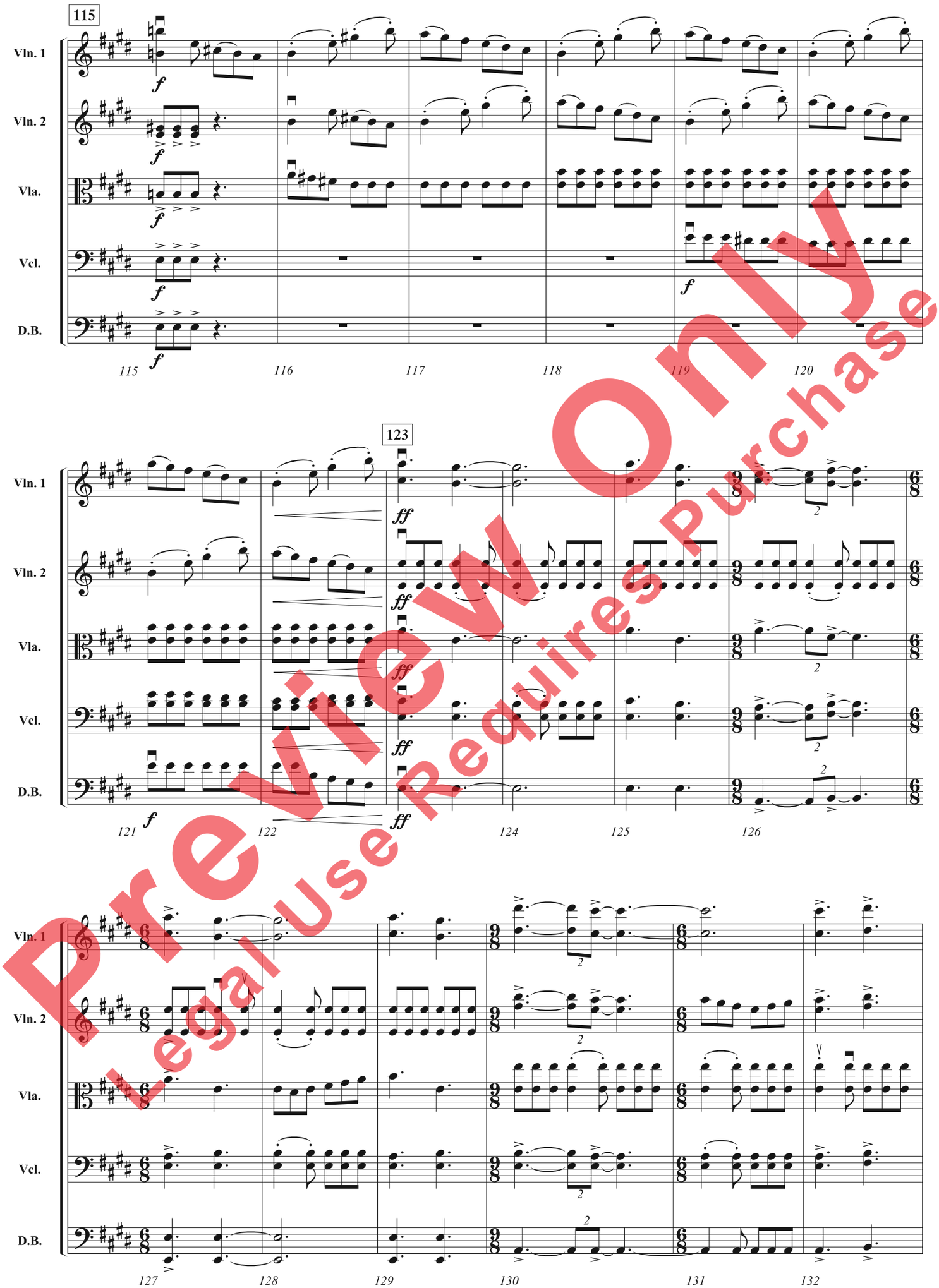

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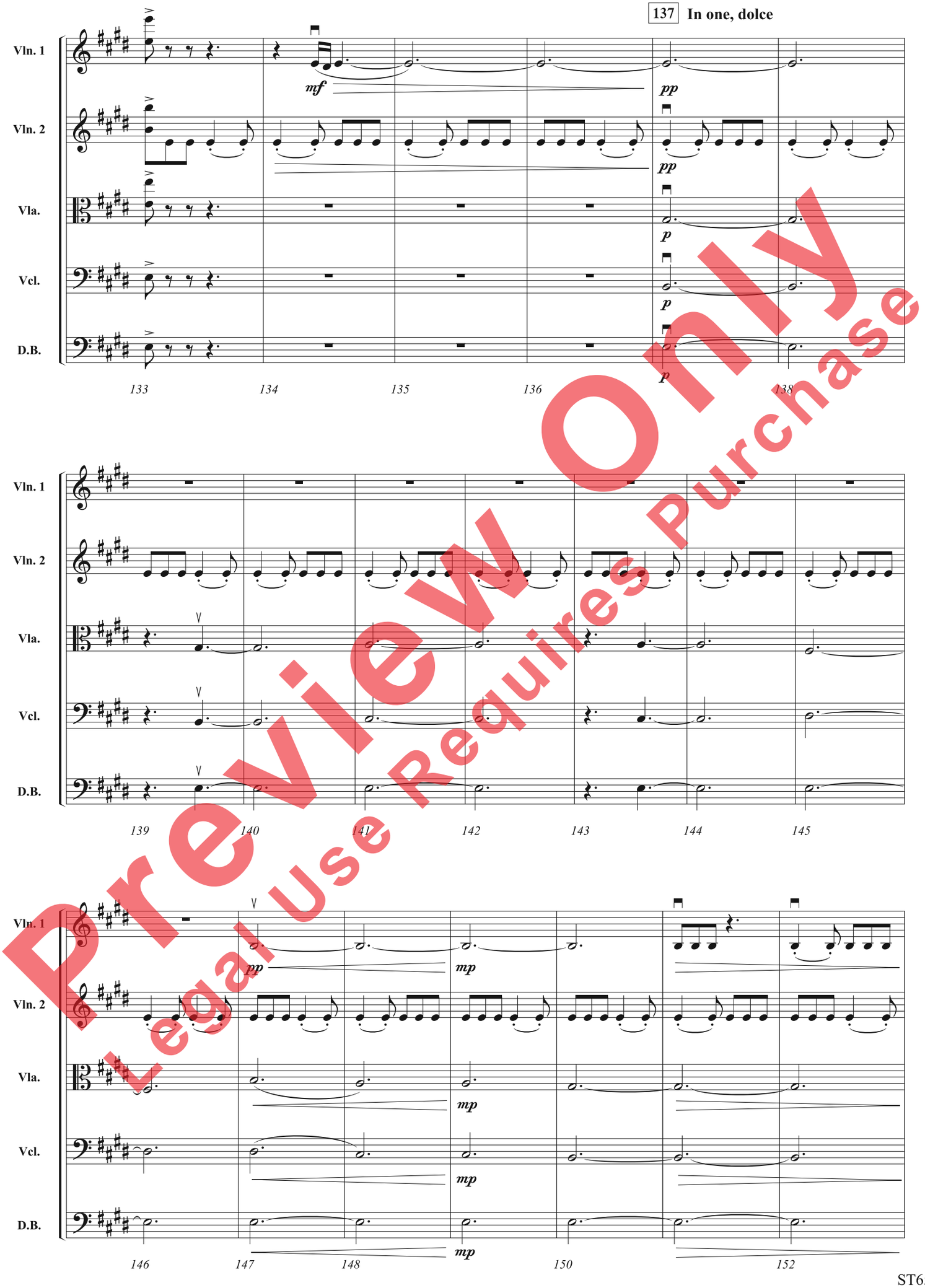

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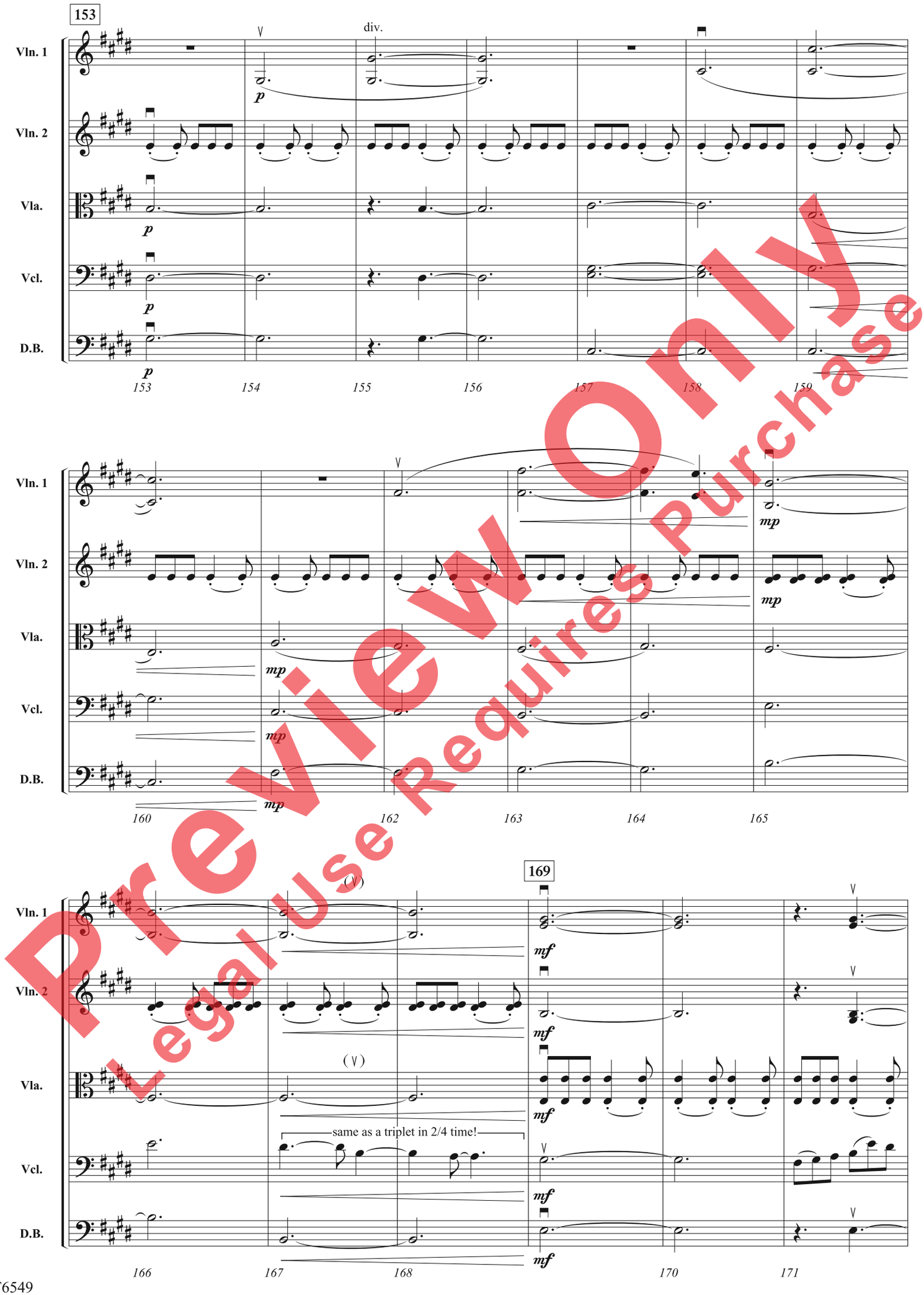

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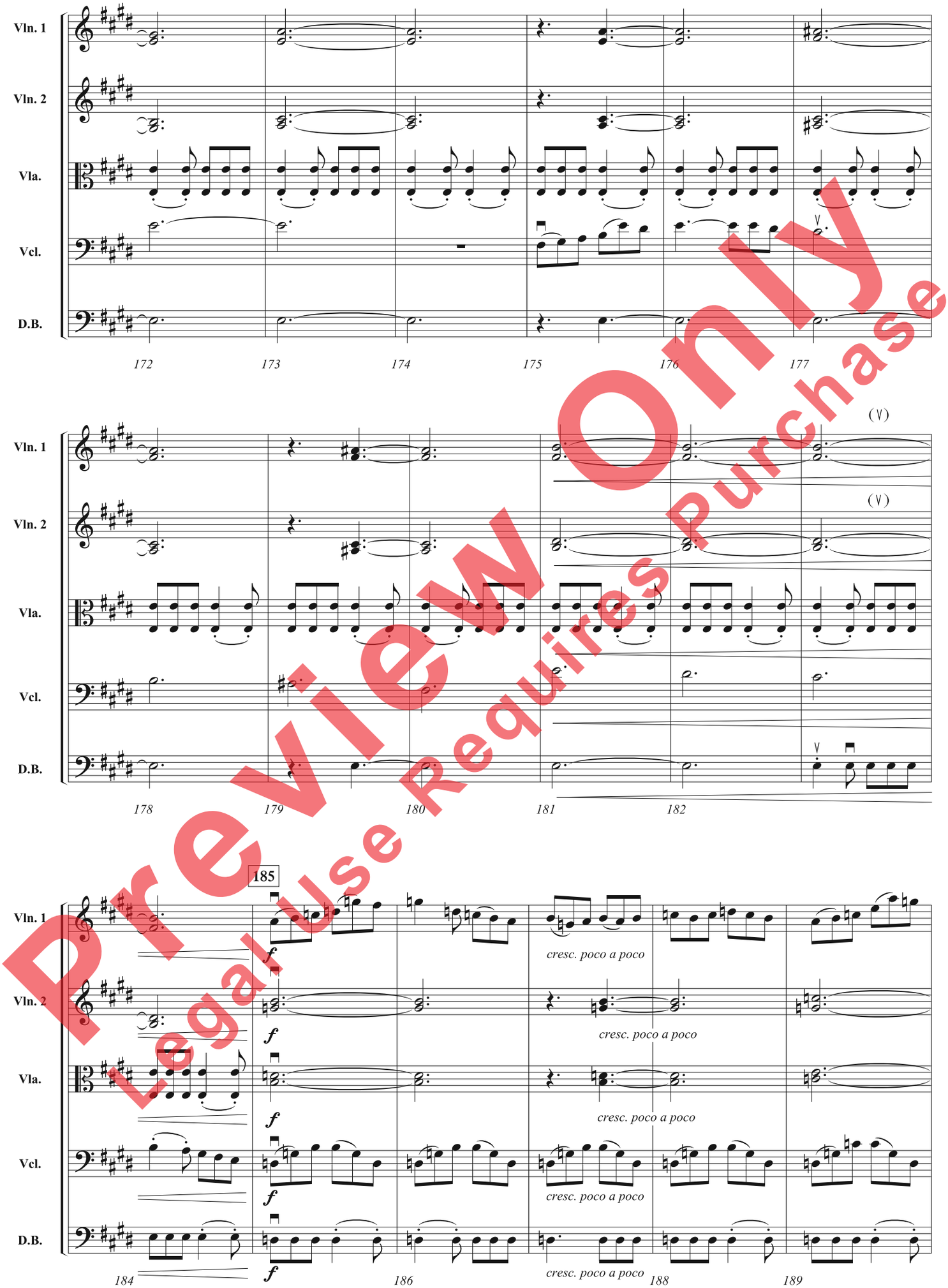

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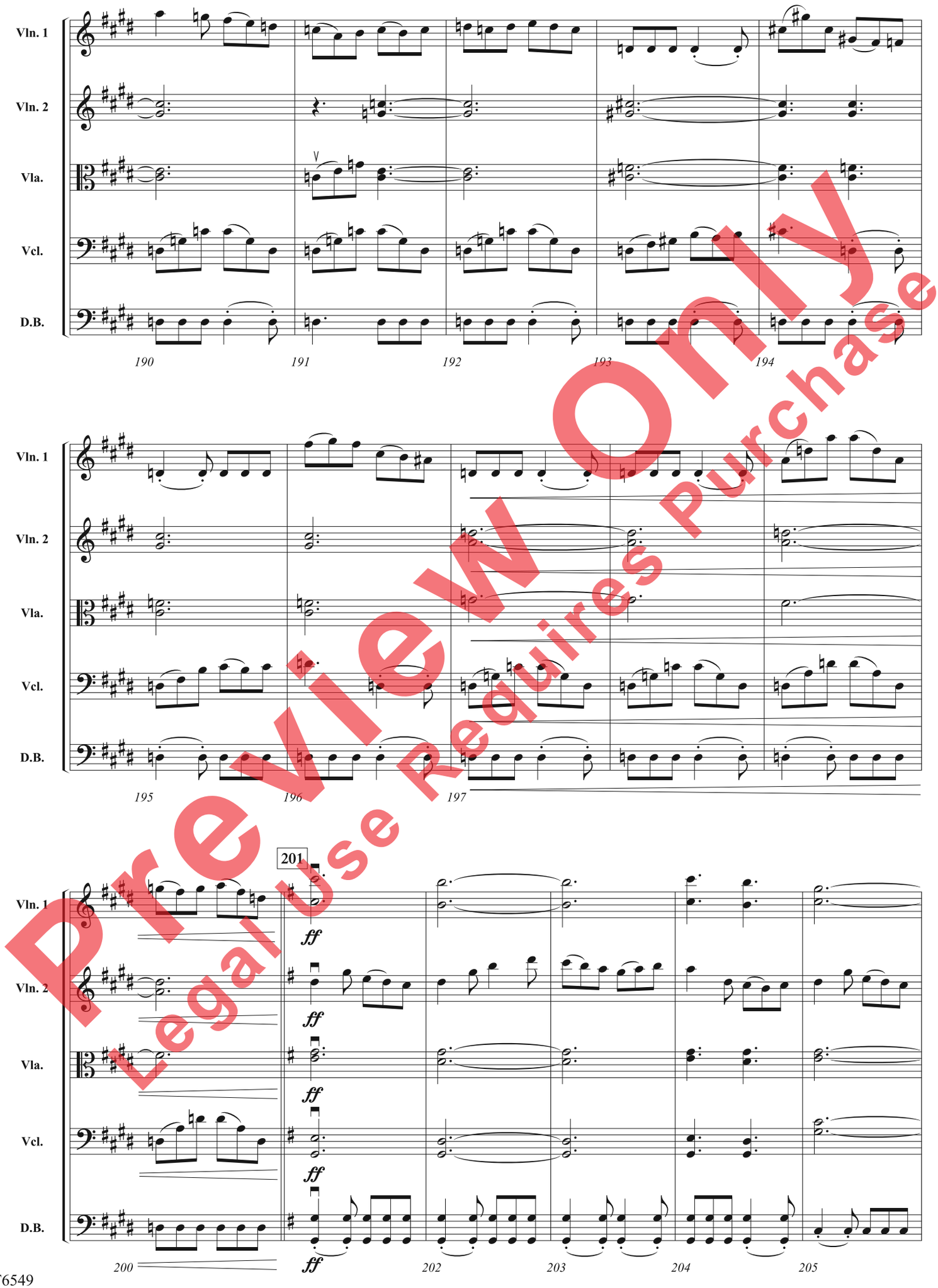

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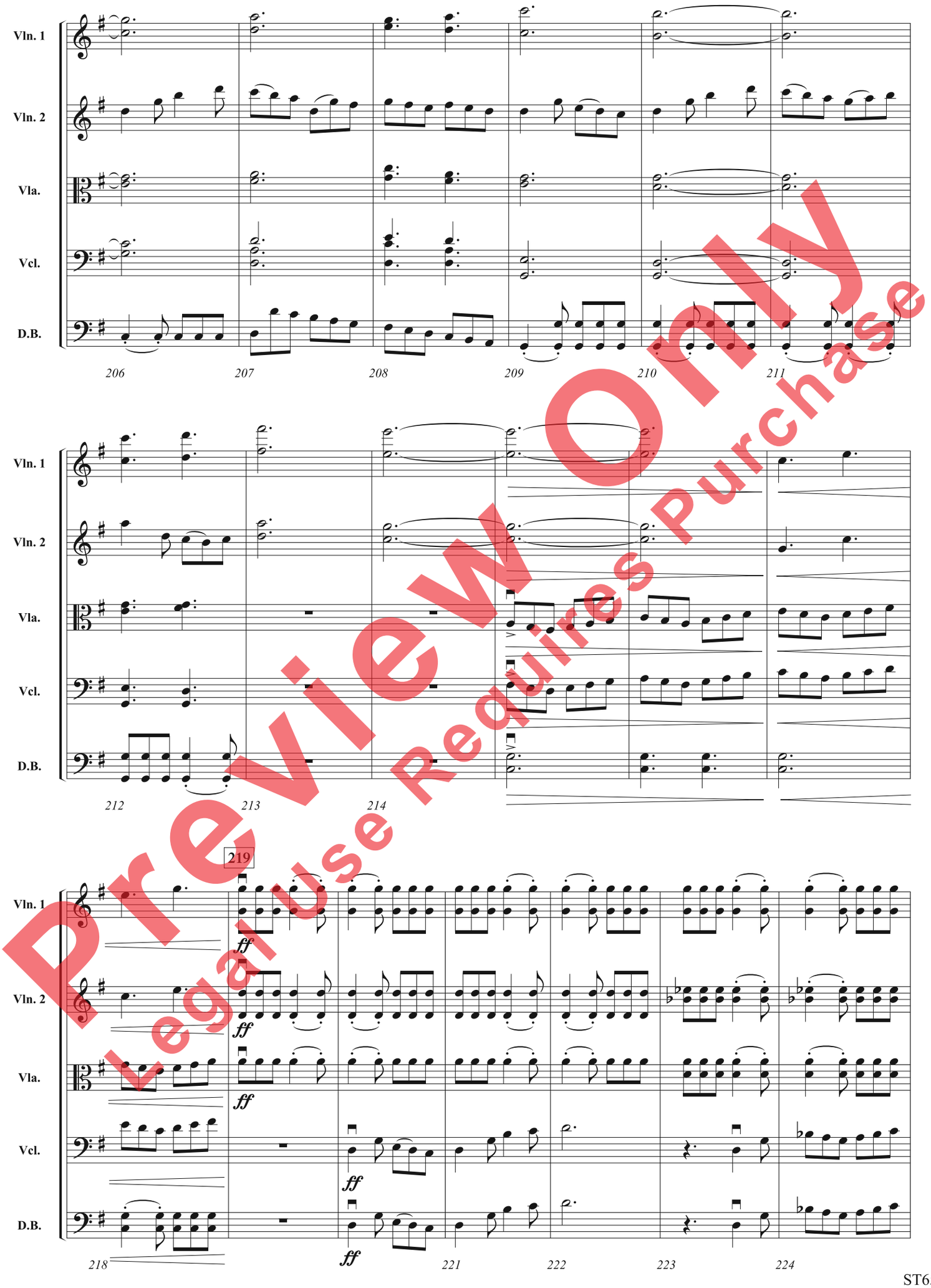

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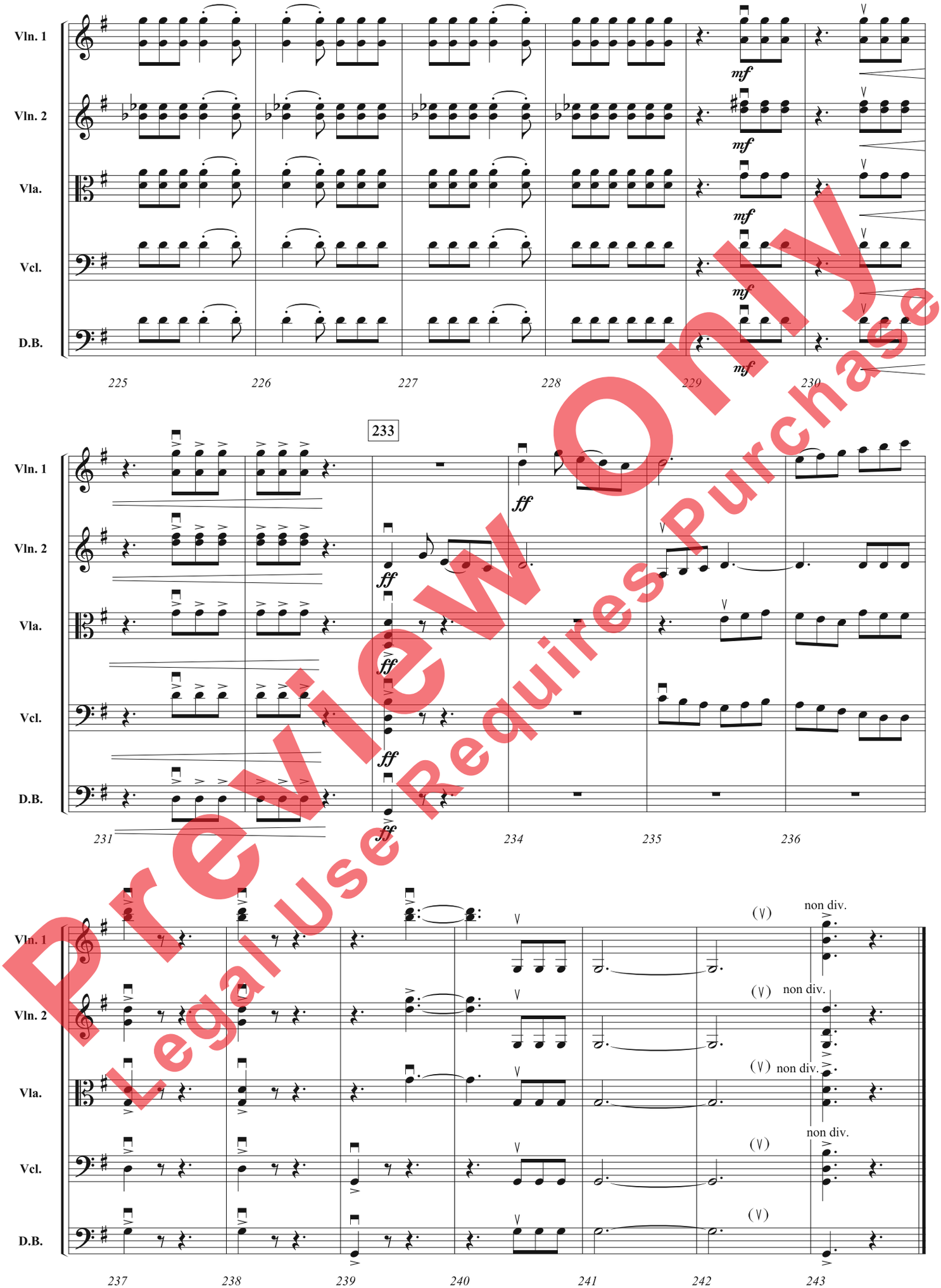

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