Eighth Note Publications

Quintessence

Henry Meredith

Quintessence was composed between July and November 1974 as an idiomatic work for brass quintet that explores a variety of twentieth-century compositional techniques. The composer was engaged at the time in doctoral studies and teaching at the University of Northern Colorado, and he presented the first public performance with his Zephyr Brass Quintet on 2 July 1975. The work subsequently appeared in the touring repertoire of the Rocky Mountain Brass Quintet, the New Louisville Brass Quintet, the Chicago Brass Quintet, the Seattle Brass Ensemble, and other groups.

Movement I, Fanfare and March Fantasy, is a light-hearted adaptation of the first movement of Jean-Joseph Mouret's first Suitte de Simphonies for trumpet, violins, oboes, bassoons, bass, and timpani. Originally published in 1729, the main melody, with its prominent trumpet part, became well-known in the 1970s as the theme from the BBC Masterpiece Theatre television series. Pyramid imitation and fragmentation of this fanfare-like theme open the work with many resultant quartal sonorities. A 7/8 section sets up an ostinato in the tuba part which is accompanied by quartal punctuations derived from the theme. This ostinato dissolves the complex meter and the trumpets state the original melody, moving abruptly from B-flat to A and joined bitonally by the trombone and tuba in E-flat. In the multi-metric section that follows [D], the trumpets and horn canonically present Mouret's tune while the trombone and tuba employ related ostinati, creating pandiatonic harmonies. At [E], the first trumpet restates the theme and the ensemble settles on its original march-like character, ending the movement exactly as it began.

The second movement employs mainly pan-triadic techniques with some use of quartal sonorities. The Meditation introduced by the second trumpet is answered by the first, and then by the horn and trombone. At [F], the Chorale tune, carried by the first trumpet, is the "Old Hundredth" (Doxology). Finally, the tuba reiterates the Meditation theme, echoed by the horn as the movement closes.

PREVIEW ONLY

Recited by the horn, the trumpets, and the trombone in turn, the Chant is predominantly in the dorian mode. Picking up the tune, the tuba also picks up the tempo. In the ensuing Alleluja section (starting at [I]), two main themes employ polymeters and changing meters, with bichordal and modal sonorities as a harmonic base. The first theme, a new one presented by the tuba in C major, has a 7/8 metric pulse against C# quartal chords in 7/4 time. The second theme (at [J]) is a transformation of the opening chant melody into a lively 7/8 dance. These two principal ideas recur at [K] and [L], with a reiteration of the initial chant motive and associated punctuations to bring the movement to a joyous conclusion in E major.

Henry Meredith moved to London, Ontario immediately after his doctoral course work and began his long association with the University of Western Ontario Faculty of Music in September 1975. He is a professional trumpeter and hornist, playing with many ensembles internationally, and specializing in historical performances using instruments from his collection currently numbering 2400.

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DURATION: 6:20
DIFFICULTY RATING: Difficult
Brass Quintet

Quintessence

I. FANFARE and MARCH FANTASY

Henry Meredith
(1974)

Maestoso ♩= 112

Trumpet 1 in C

Trumpet 2 in C

Horn in F

Trombone

Tuba

6

11 A

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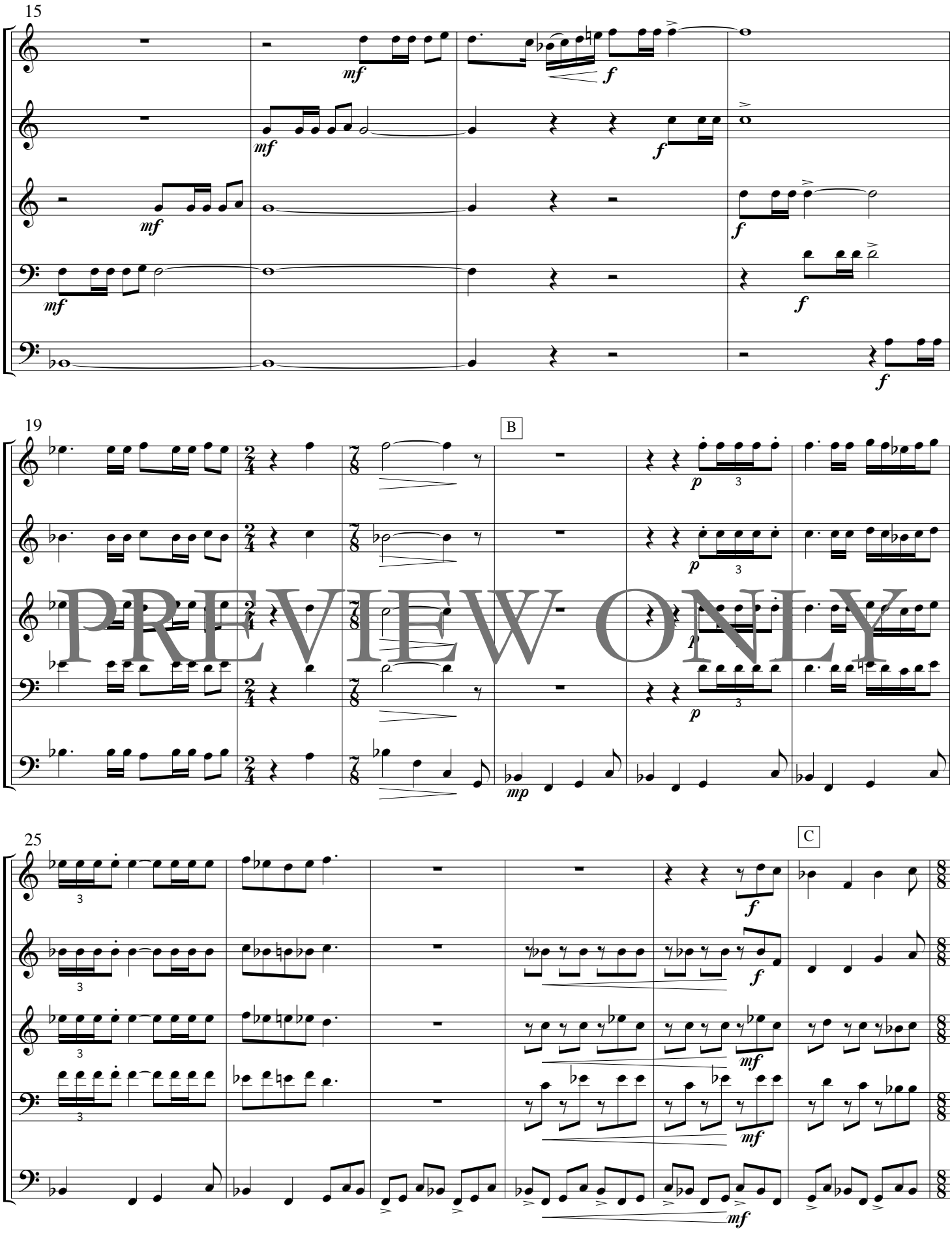

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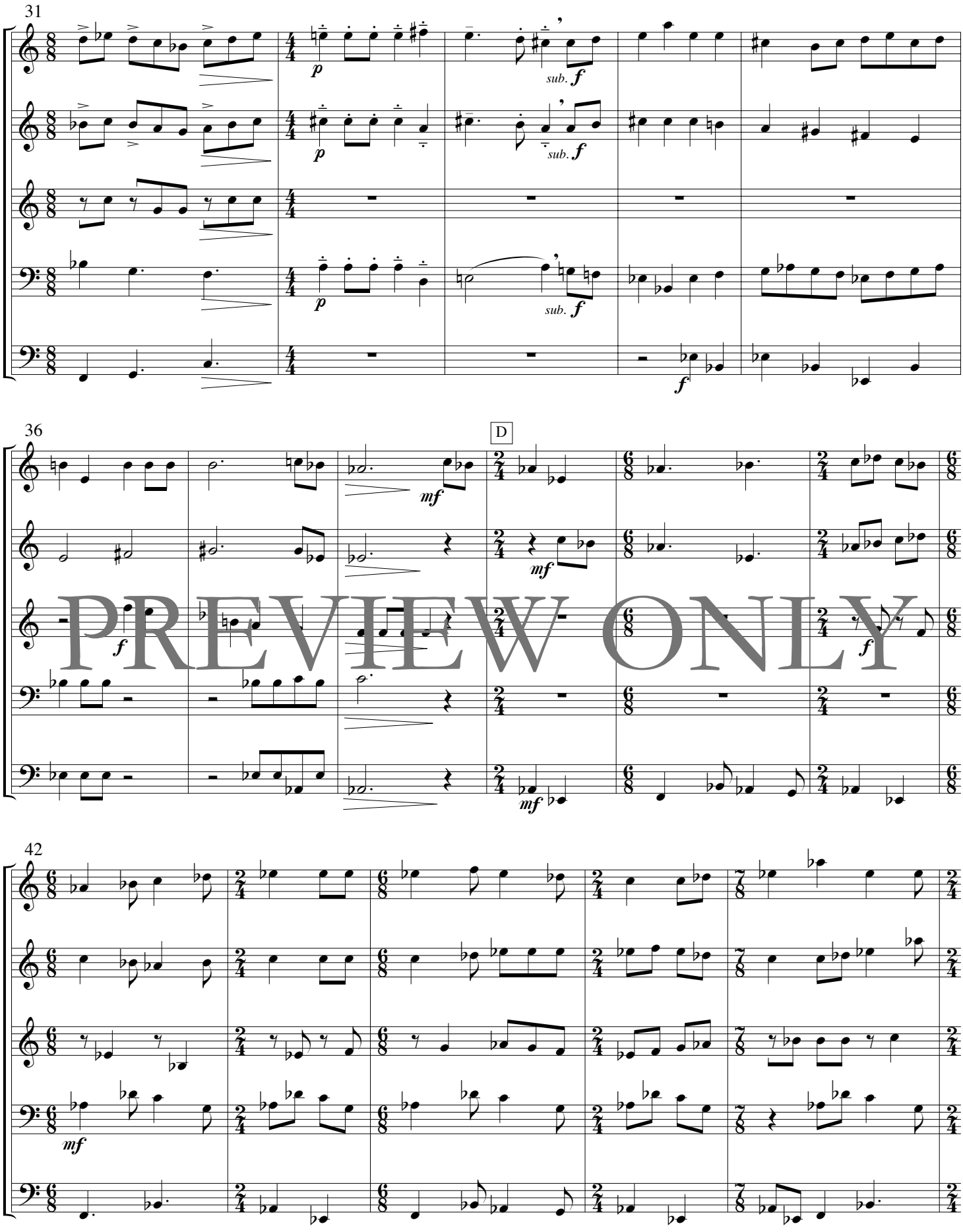

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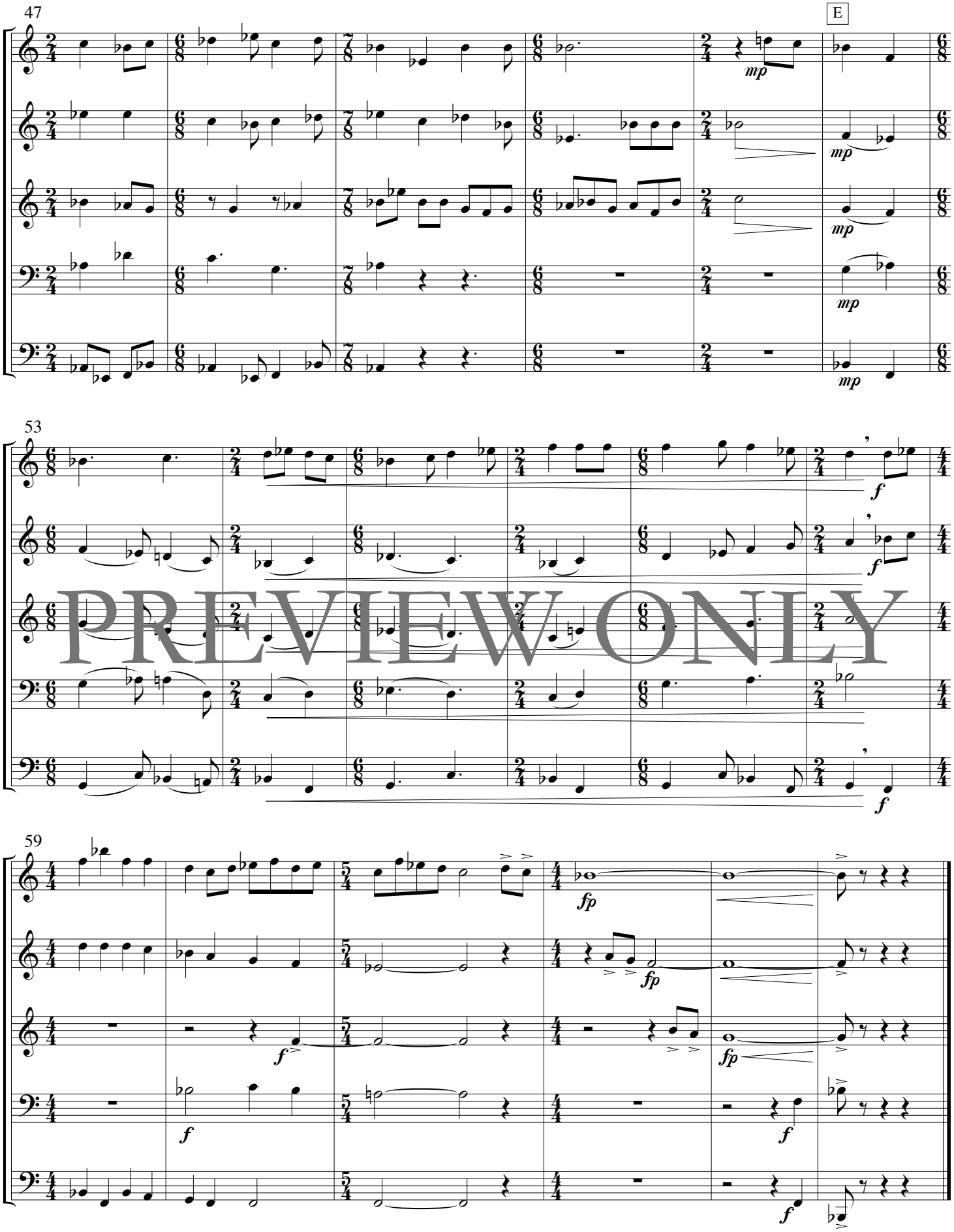

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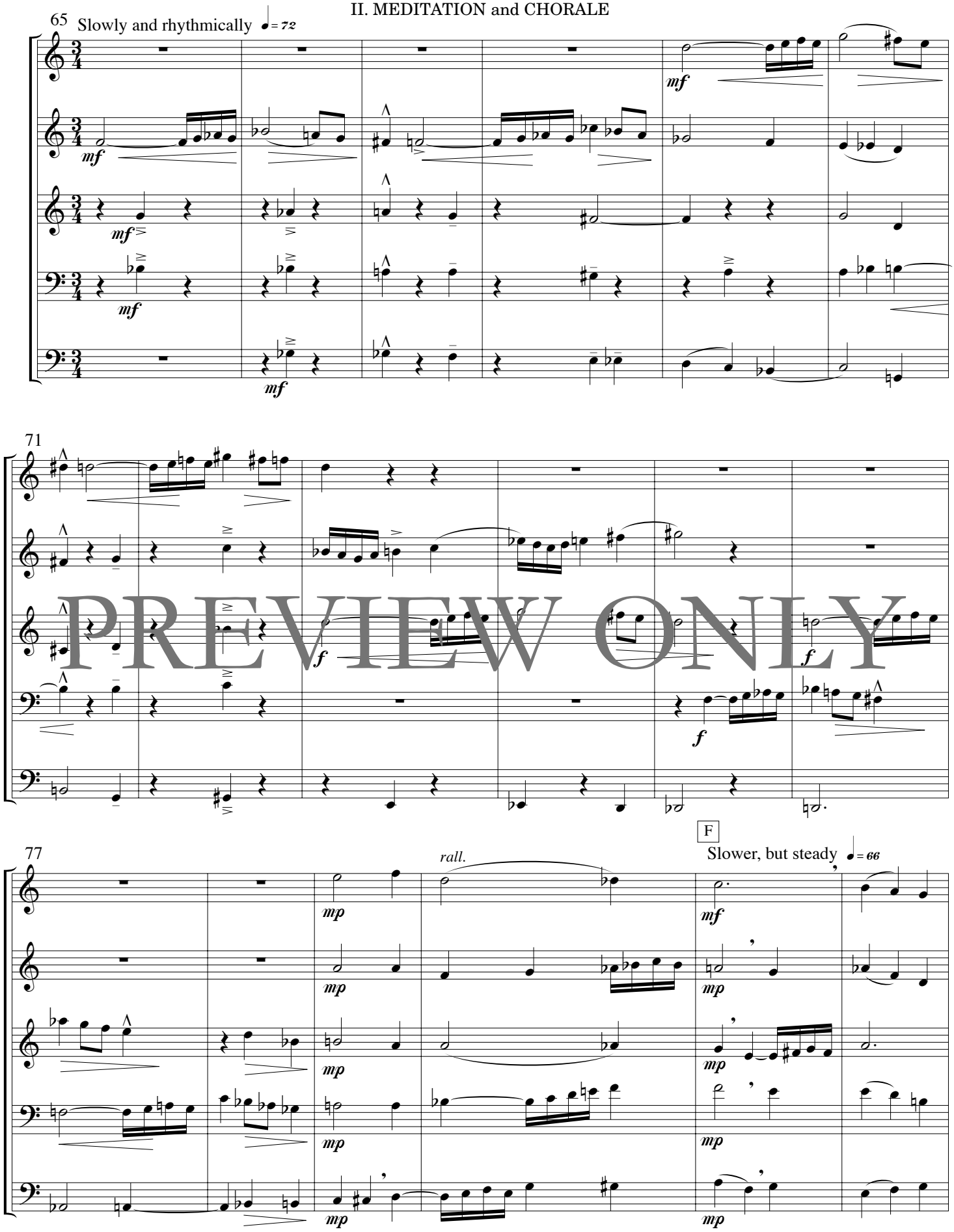

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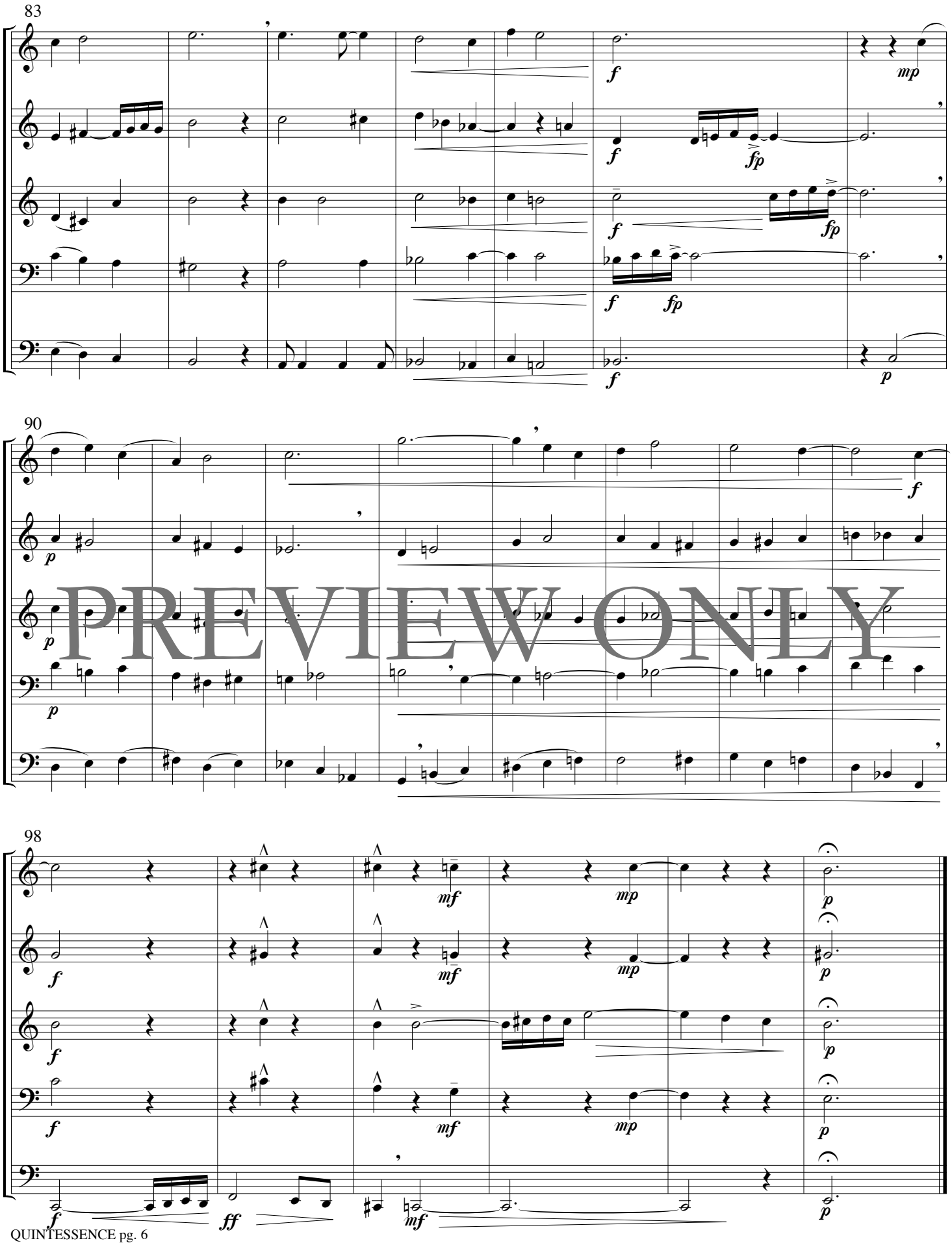
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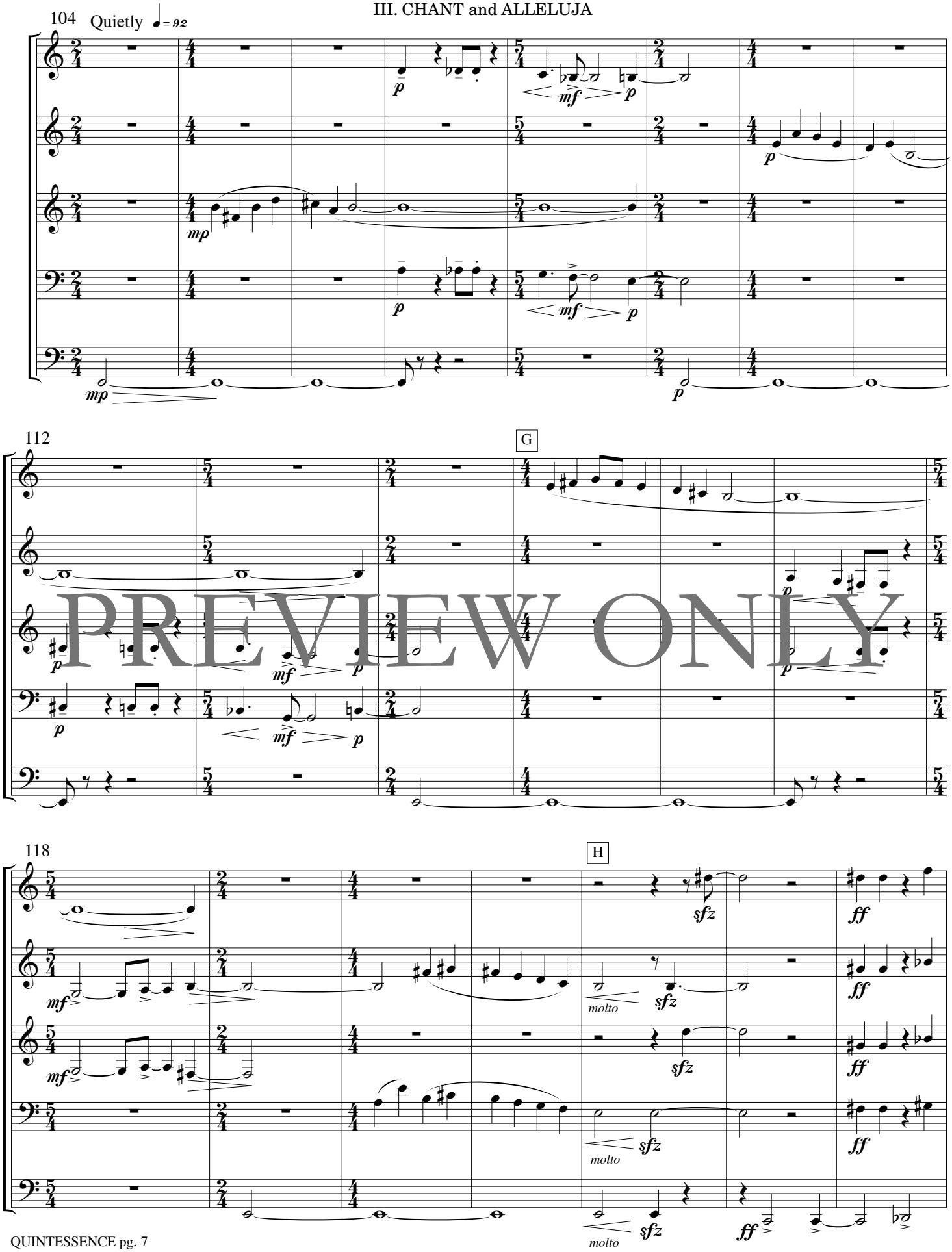
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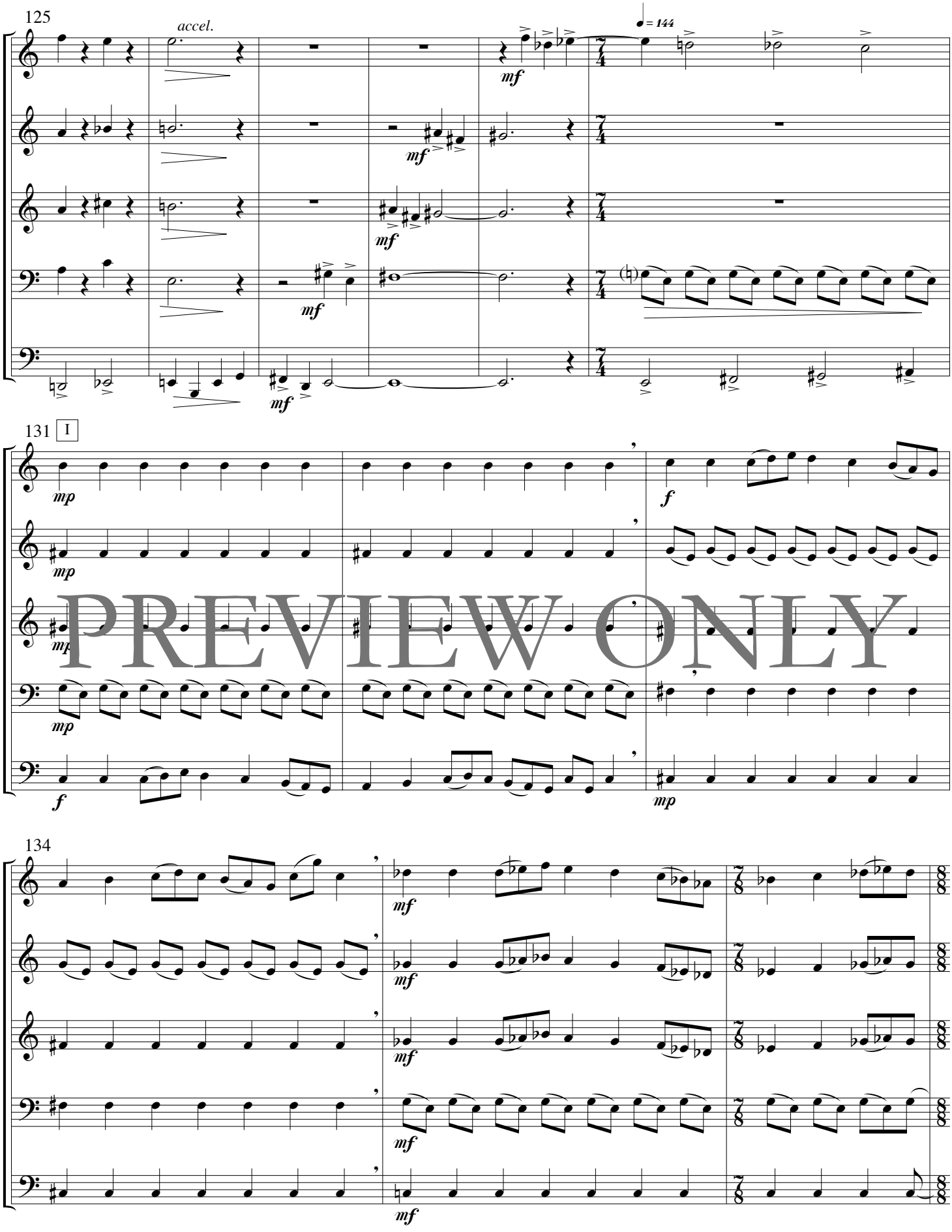

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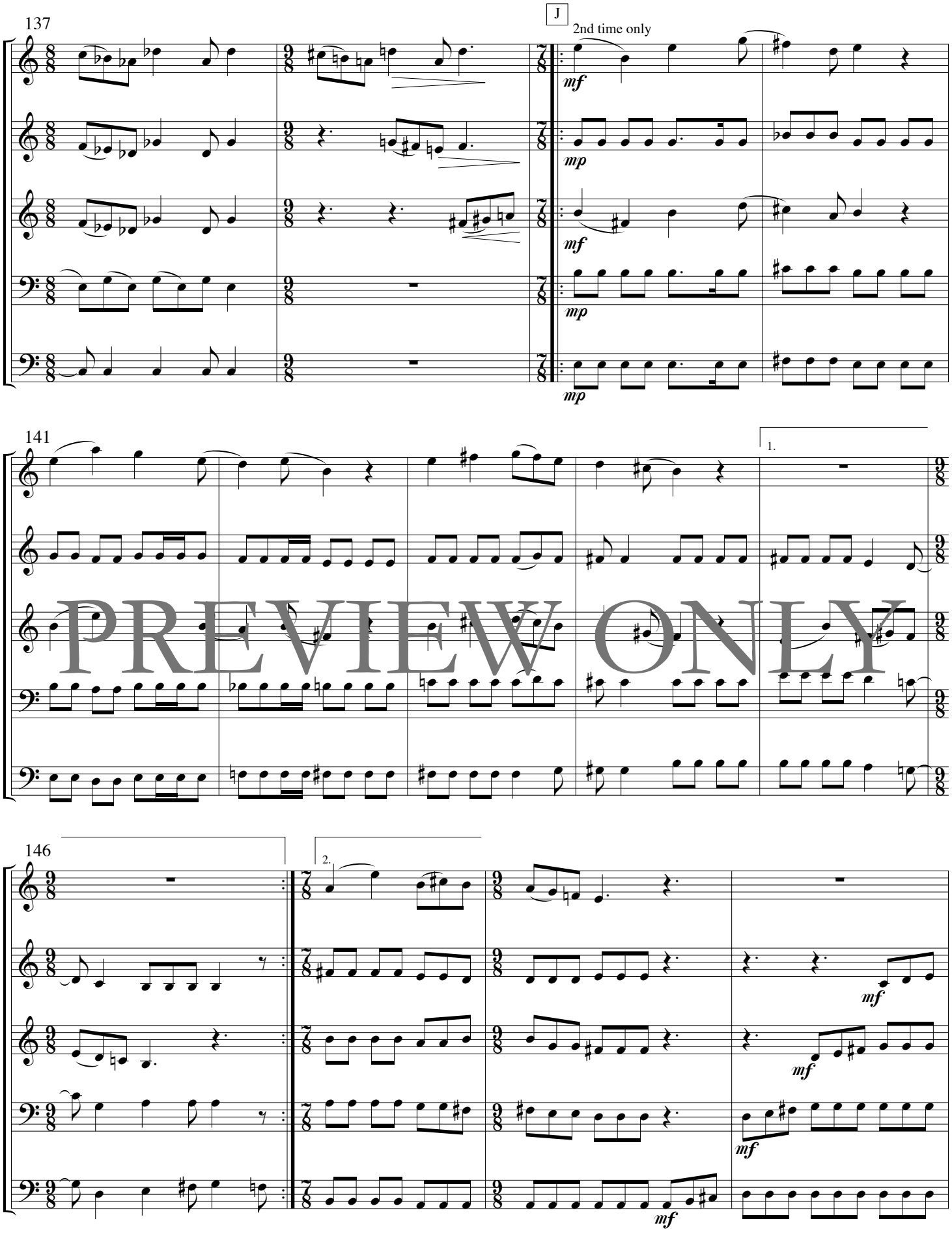

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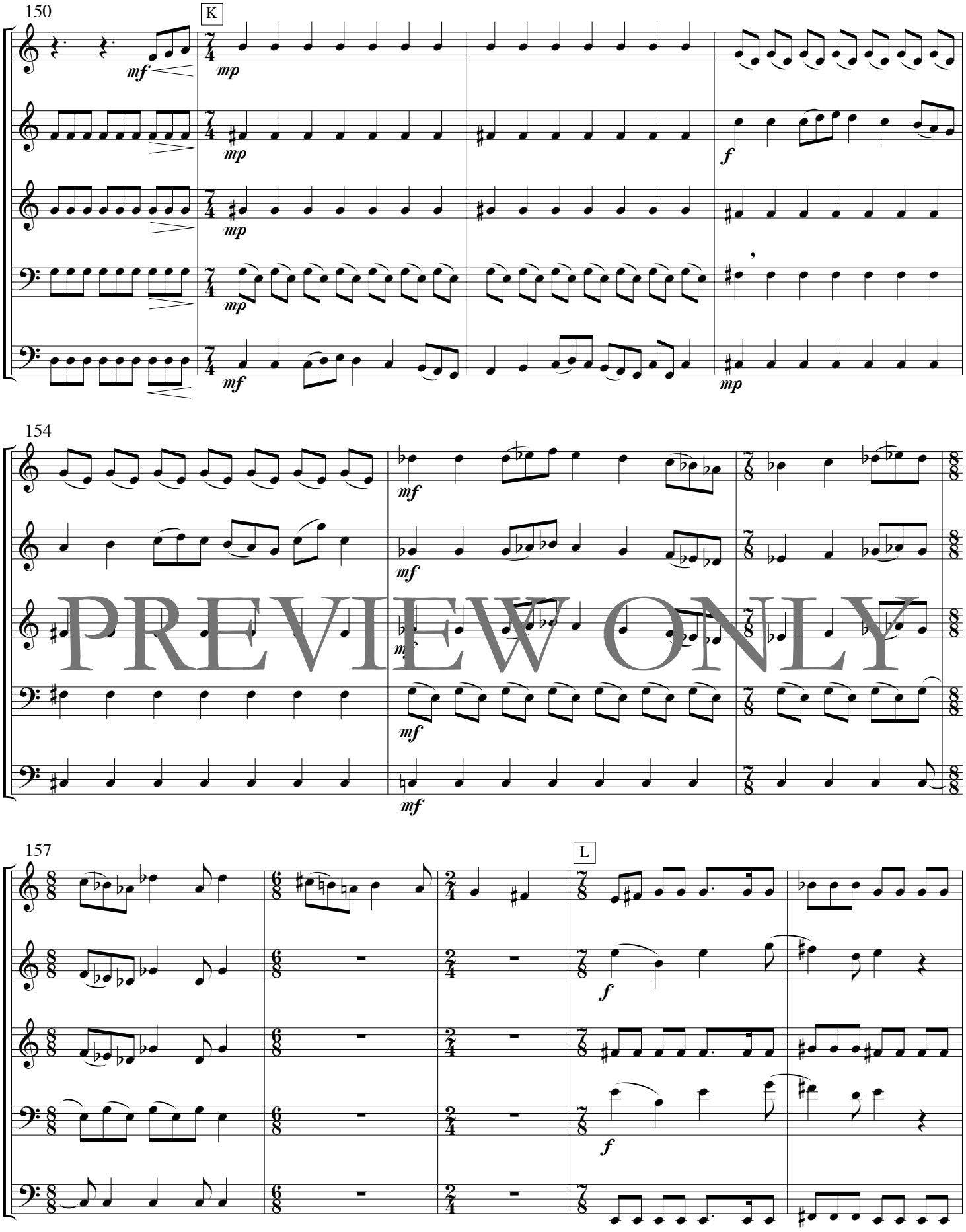

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