Julia Usher

A Grain of Sand in Lambeth

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SOME NOTES ON TAPE AND SCORE OF " A GRAIN OF SAND IN LAMBETH" BY JULIA USHER; first performed June 3rd, 1987 as part of the 1987 Piccadilly Festival , in St James' Church Piccadilly.

The tape

Is a digital recording. At the first performance, nos 9, 11, and 13 of the score had to be omitted due to limitations on available rehearsal time. Also, no 12 is partially cut.

The score

Since the performance I have made some minor alterations to the score; including two passages of rescoring: these will differ from the tape.

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Length

Durations of individual movements are as follows, approximately.

1. Prophecy	3 min 40 sec
2. Memory	1 min 15 sec
3. Prophecy 2	1 min 38 sec
4. Tyger	40 sec
5. Song of Experience 1	3 min
6. Bowlahoola	9 min 17 sec
7. A Memorable Fancy 1	2 min 50 sec
8. Sea of Time and Space	10 min 23 sec
9. Despair	4 min 30 sec
10. Singularity	10 min 15 sec
11. Winter	5 min 15 sec
12. A Memorable Fancy 2	6 min
13. Cathedron	5 min
14. Song of Innocence 1	3 min
15. Song of Innocence 2	1 min 50 sec
16. Song of Jerusalem	4 min

The music thus lasts about 70-75 minutes, but with time between movements and a long pause after number 10, it is closer to 90 minutes.

Alternative Shorter Versions:

Perform Part One only: (Nos 1- 10) - This would hang together but severely curtail the intention. (duration:approx 45 min)

Excerpt-only version: Several possibilities, but perhaps:
5 "Cruelty"
9 "Despair
11"Winter"
14"Mercy, Pity, Peace and Love"
15"The Winged Joy"
10 Singularity

(Total duration about 25 min) -

Several of the longest movements might stand on their own, or grouped in three:

8. "The Sea of Time and Space" (10.23)

11. "Winter" (the Price of Experience) (4.30)

10. " Singularity" (10.15) (Total 25 min)

Finally, Bowlahoola (no 6) includes the Sound Sculptures, and stands quite well on its own.

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Notes on the Sound Sculpture Part

The part for the percussionist had to be composed before the performer could get to know the physical layout of the instruments. It became necessary to adapt the part in rehearsal to overcome inevitable playing difficulties! Therefore the part written in the full score may at times differ slightly from what was finally played.

The Sound Sculptures, created by Derek Shiel are fully available for any future performance .

A Grain of Sand in Lambeth

Julia Usher

Instrumentation :

S·A·T·B· Chorus (minimum 16 voices), some solo passages.

Flute (picc)
Oboe (cor)
Trumpet 1 (+ Natural Trumpet)
Trumpet 2
Horn
Trombone
Tuba

Violin 1
Violin 2
Viola
Cello

Piano

— and SOUND SCULPTURES.

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"A Grain of Sand in Lambeth" is in the nature of a meditation. It is not a dramatic oratorio, despite the pictures of Bowlahoola and Cathedron; nor is it a ritual, like a Mass — although it does have an enfolded and cyclic structure like a mandala or crystal. It would be wholly possible to begin the work in other places, and follow each circle round, with different emphases resulting as the images unfold.

The challenge of Blake's vision, to awaken the imagination, to cleanse the perceptions and to enlarge our vision and purpose has lost none of its urgency. His reactions to the effect of scientific discovery on religion and society were thought mad or visionary, not relevant in his own time. To us, his imagery suddenly becomes not just stirring to the imagination; but unexpectedly accurate in an almost technical sense. Blake's images of Moments, of pulses of Time, of expansion and contraction of Space; of the weaving and enfolding of matter, the gravitational pull of dense matter into vortices — and of the relativity which must affect the observer —

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– these are the common ground of exploration for 20th physicists. In the score I have paralleled Blake's words with those of David Bohm and several other modern scientists.

But Blake always remained closely concerned with the day-to-day struggles of men trying to live together in a society made turbulent by the coming of machines and technology.

The machine, according to Descartes, becomes a model of how the human being functions; and this idea, which has threatened the humanity of our century too is anathema to Blake.

Blake often pictures the Body of God as being made of all the smaller elements and entities in the Universe; that all things share a responsibility for each other.

In no century has this interdependence of all living things; the world-wide effect of the smallest individual action, been so apparent. Not to grasp this interconnection is to know despair and constant loss.

But the responsibility we have for the "one family; blessed forever" remains terrifying.

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Notes on Performance.

Some attention should be given to effective visual layout. The chorus would benefit from slight elevation.

The Natural Trumpet at the beginning should play 'aloft', but visible, ie from gallery, or at least, pulpit.

The Sound Sculptures definitely need to be seen, and ideally, to be separated symmetrically: however this will be determined by the needs of the percussionist changing stands.

The notation is in the main conventional. Where parts are not synchronised: ▽ indicates single entries; ▼ double-handed cues, tutti bar-lines, and resumption of 'in tempo'. Obviously, free metrical sections will not show exact vertical corresspondences in the score.

For the Percussion notation, see schemata overleaf.

The score is untransposed.

* = senza misura

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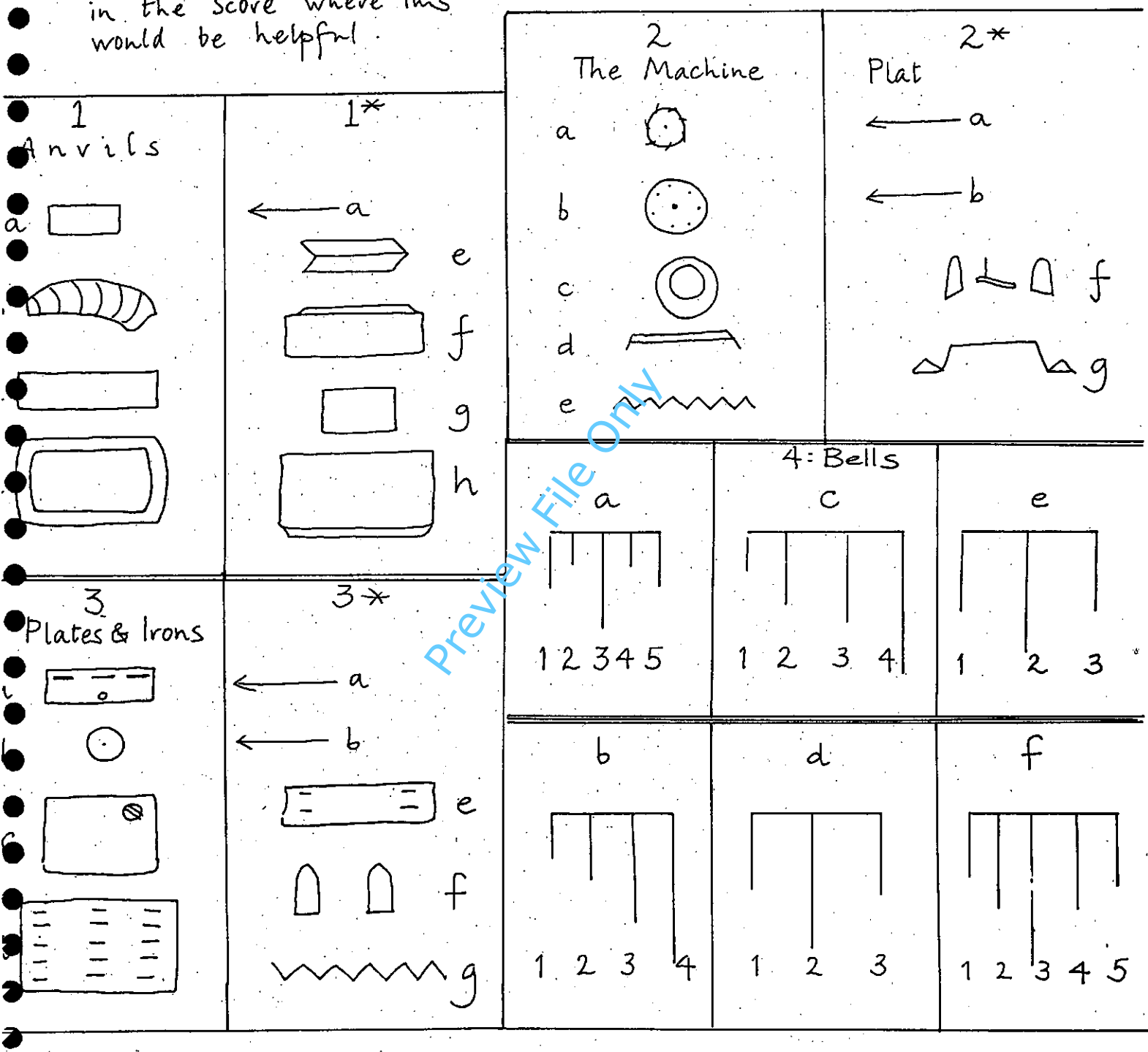
Labelling Schemata for Sculptures.

There are four stands of Sculptures; they can be played from the front, side, or from behind * The symbols also appear in the score where this would be helpful.



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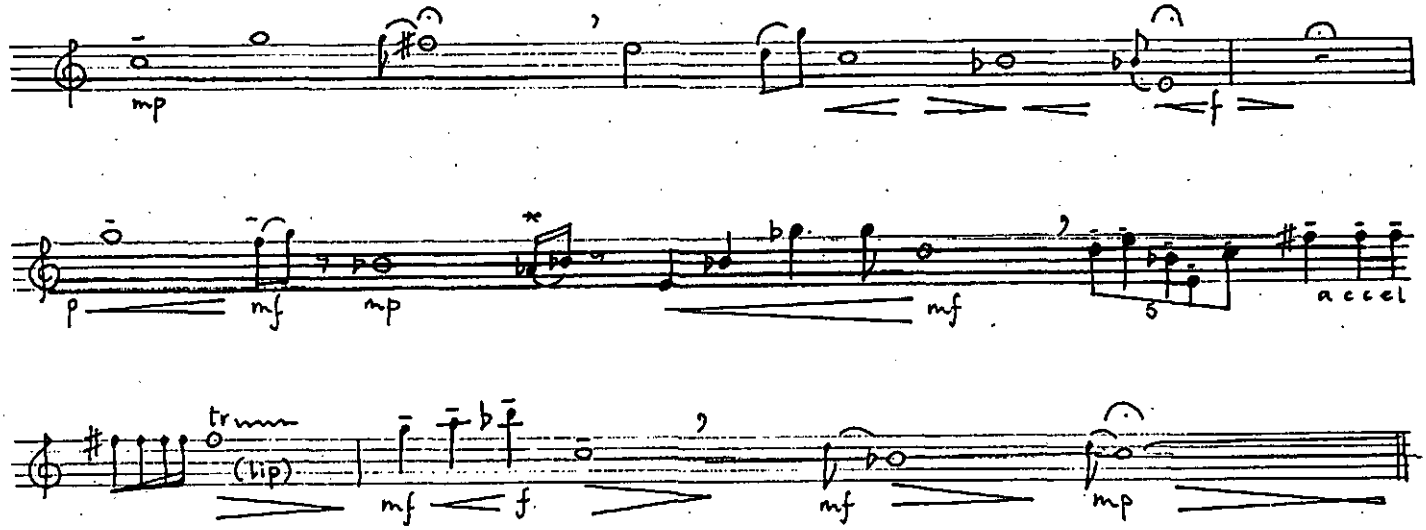
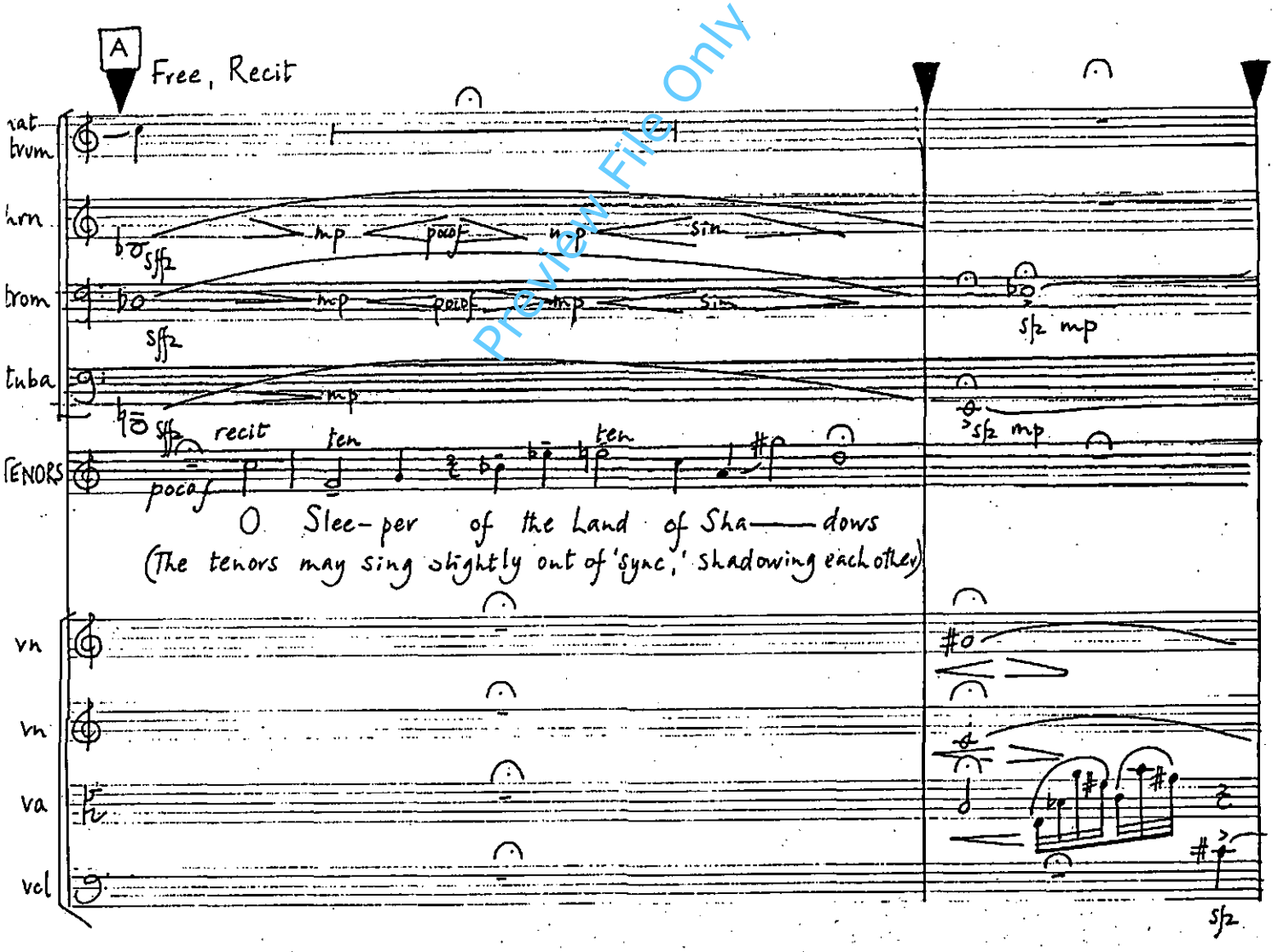
The individual plates should be marked with a sticker + letter (ie a)

The percussionist will need to familiarise himself with the layout, but the labelling is consistent: top down, a – g (or h) each stand, front first, then back* The bells number L to R.

The greatest variety of sticks should be experimented with, ie wood, felt, metal, mallets, wooden spoons, brushes etc. I have usually indicated the kind of sound, ie "wood"

Natural Trumpet, aloft. Very free, calm, but shapely.





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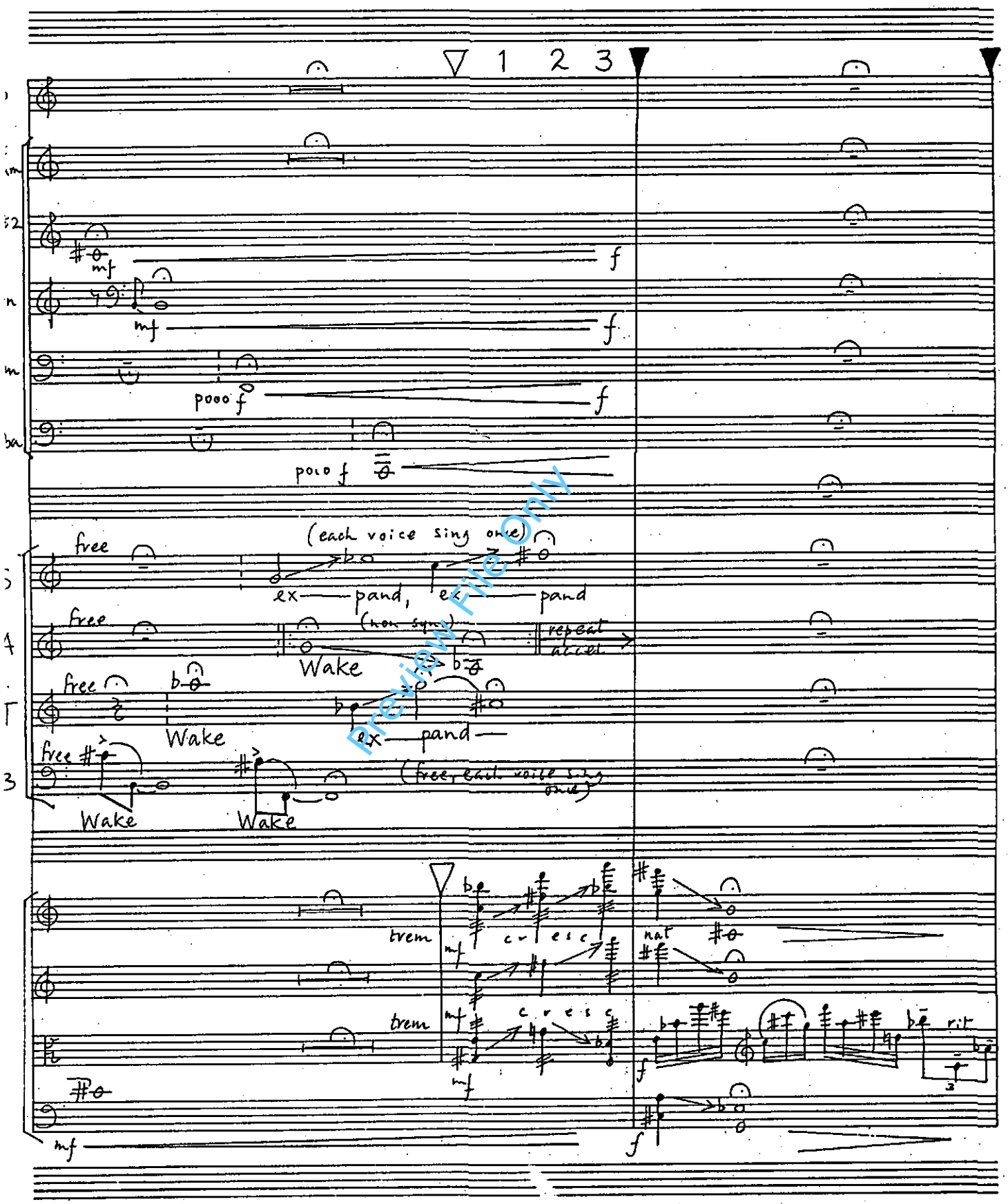

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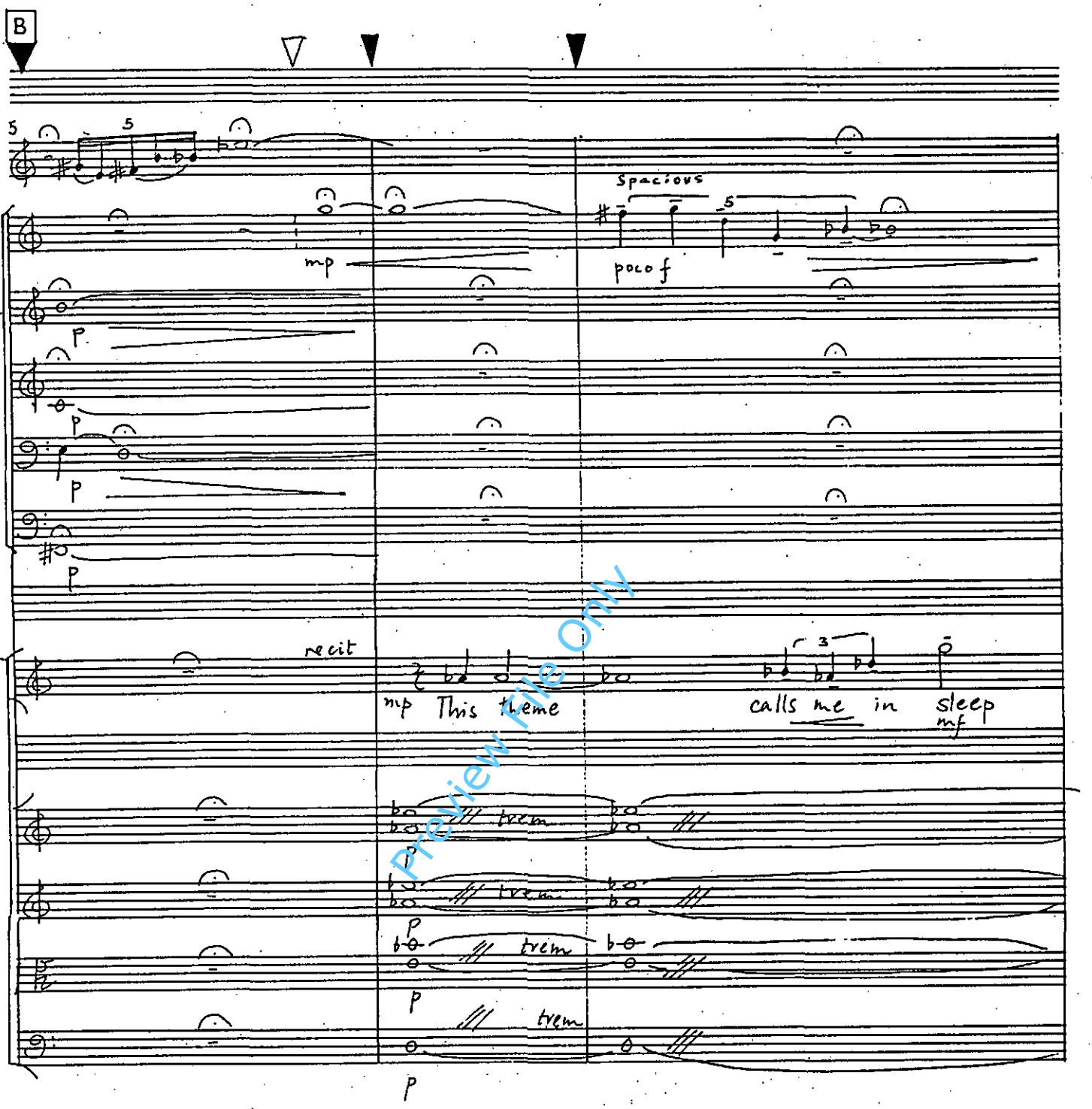

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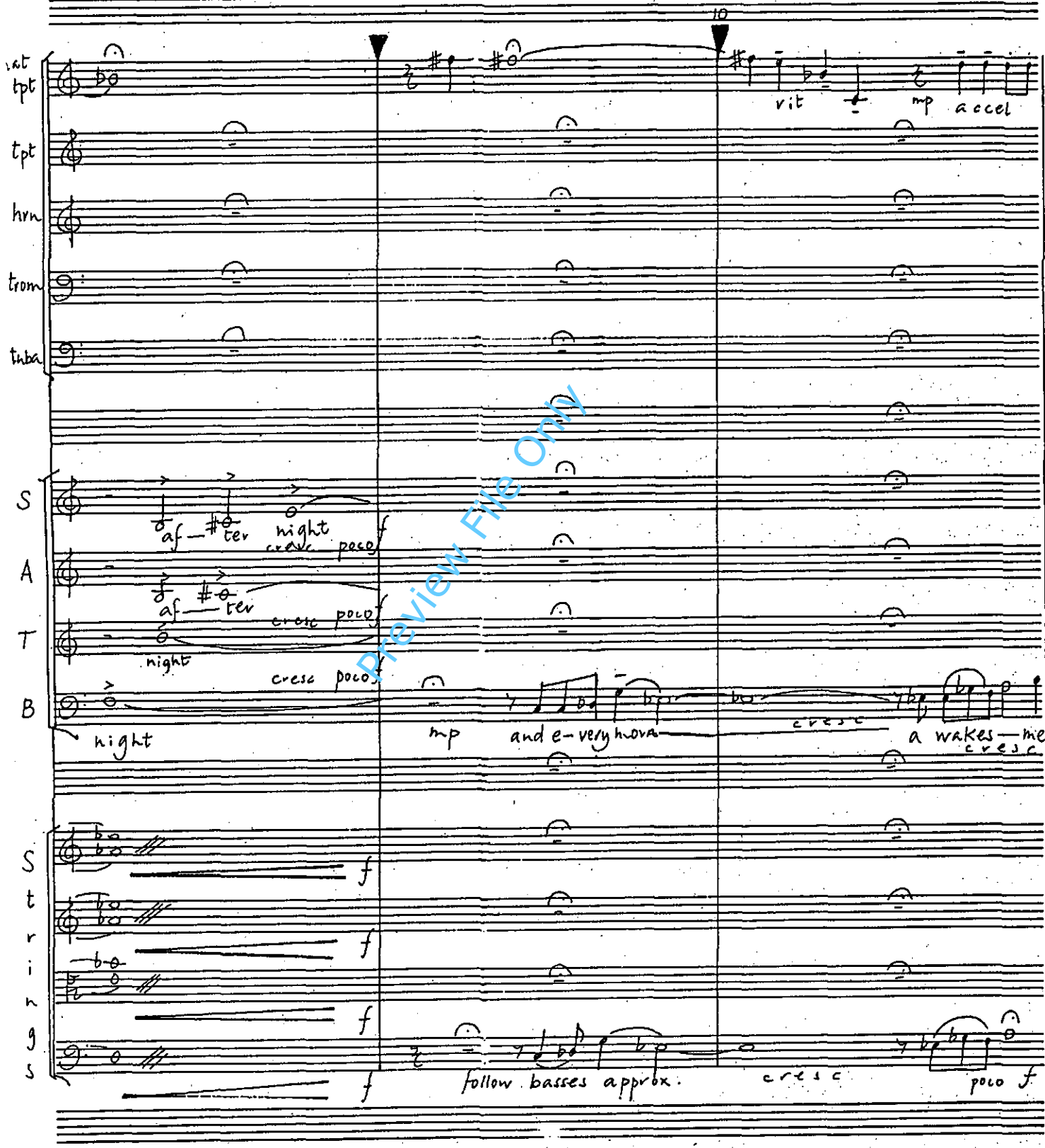

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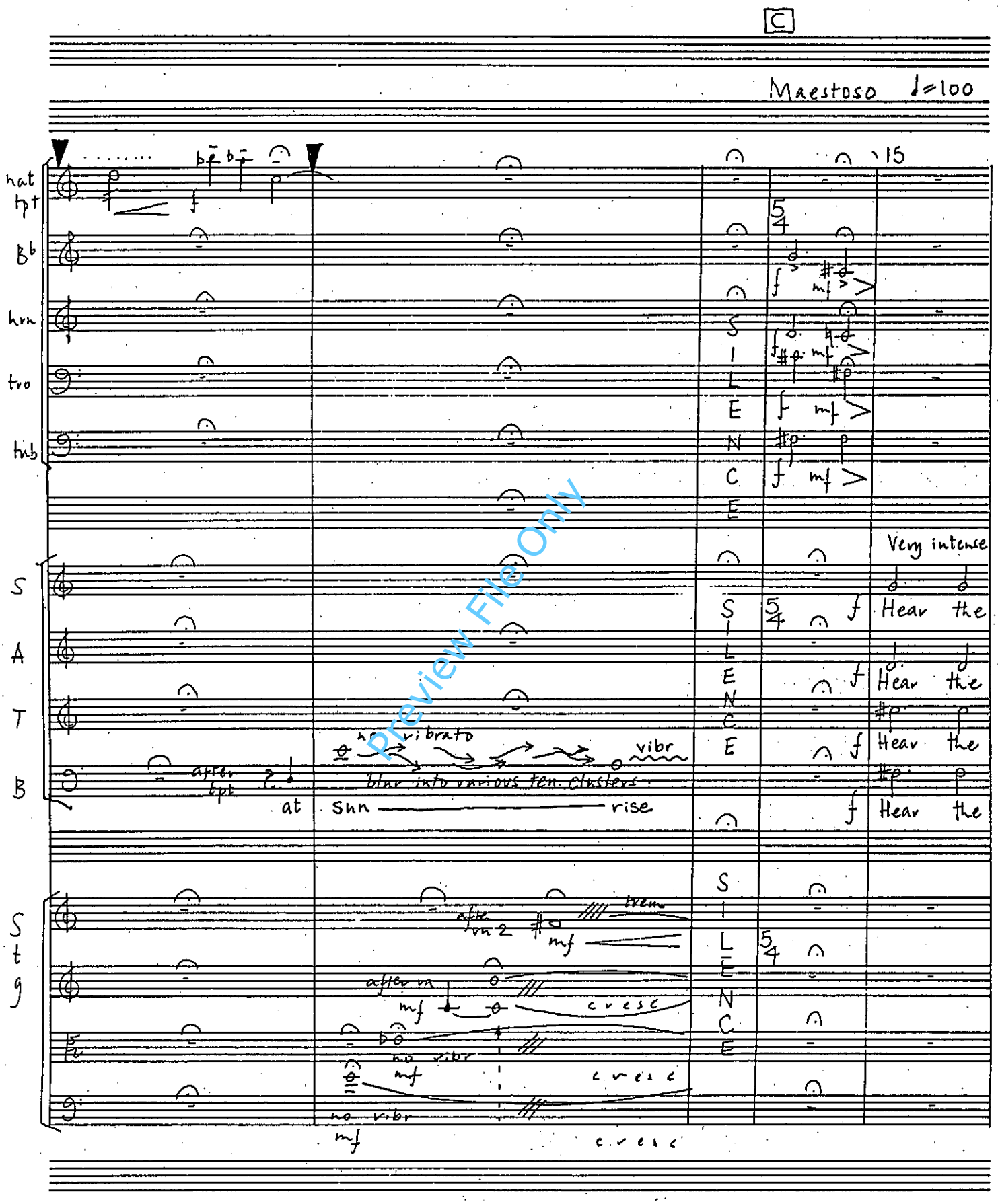
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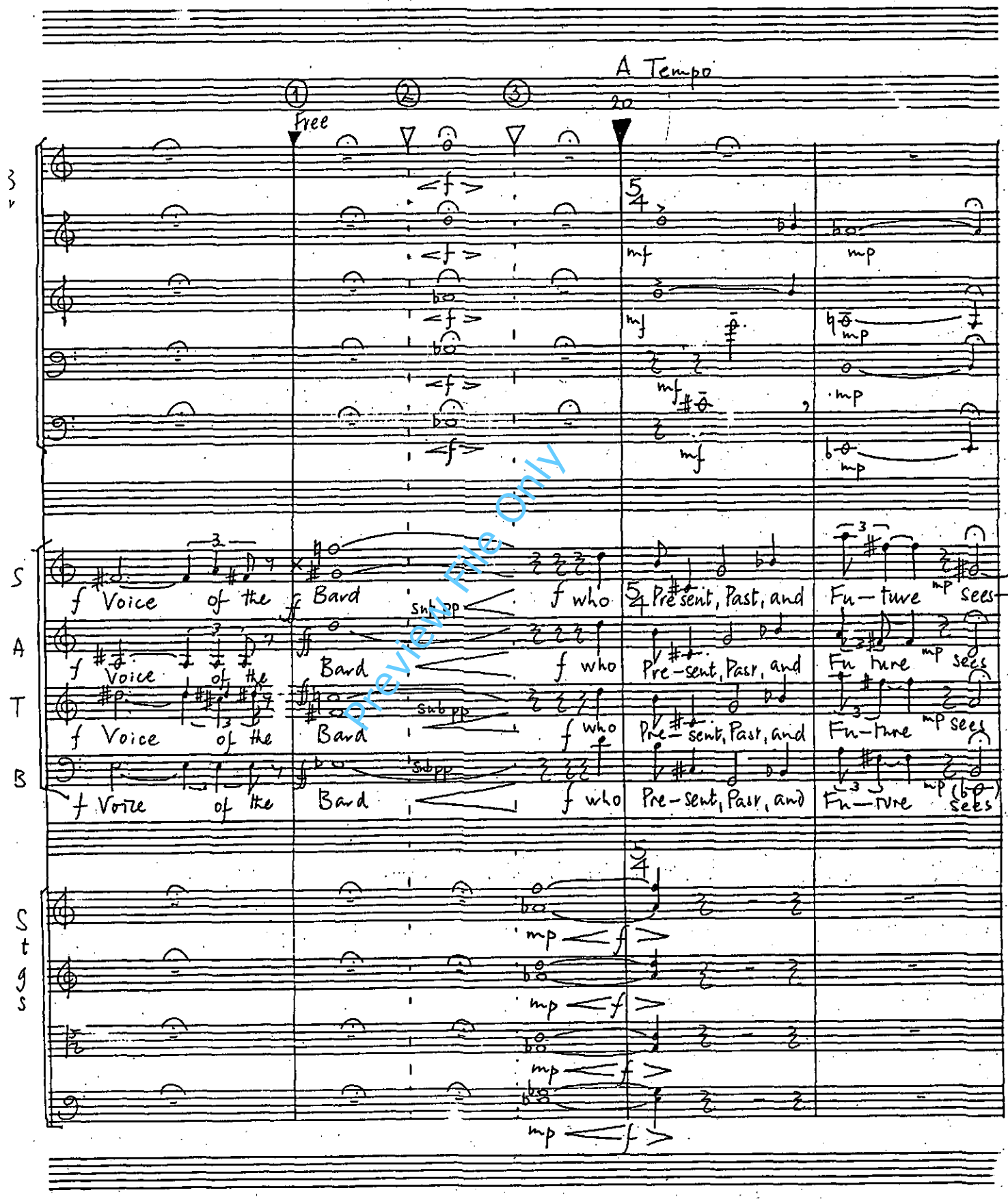

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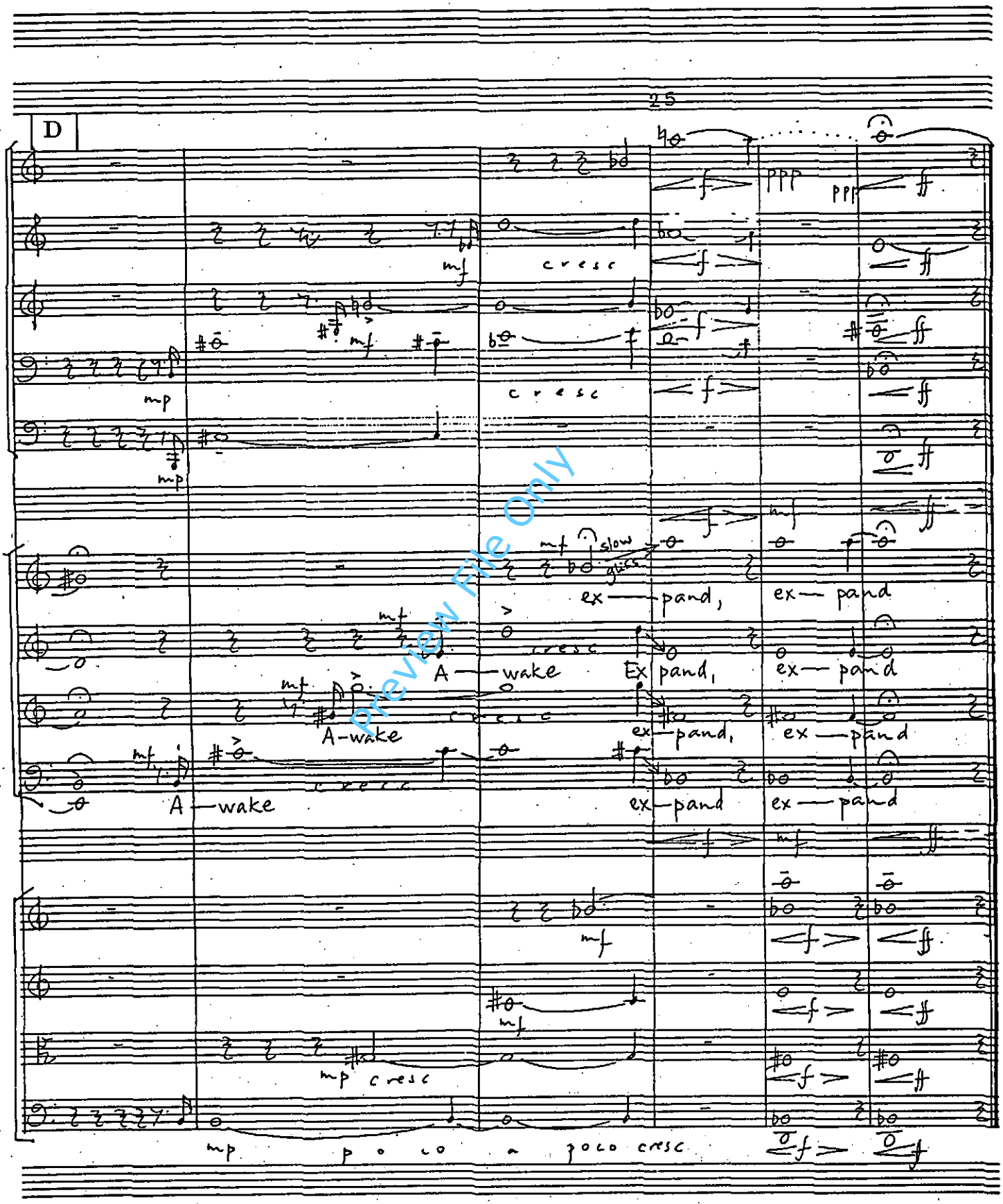

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17

SEGUE

natural trumpet descends

2. MEMORY

"Break this heavy chain
That does freeze my bones around.
Selfish, vain!
Eternal Bane!
That free Love with bondage bound....."

(Preface to the Songs of Experience)

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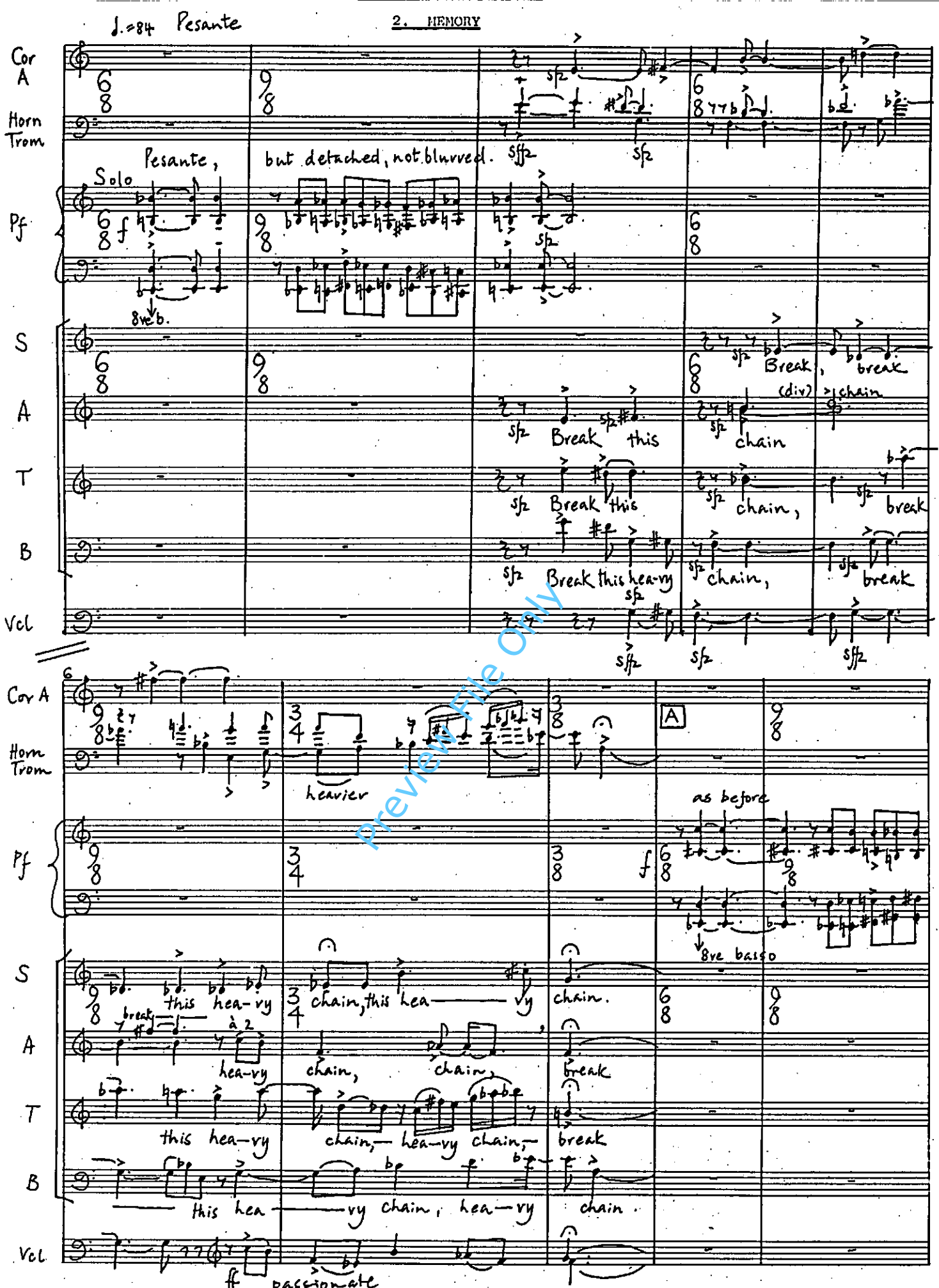
"Memory, being some kind of recording, necessarily has a certain stable quality which cannot transform its structure in any fundamental way, and has only a limited capacity to adapt to new situations.- for example, by forming new combinations of known principles, either through chance or through rules alreday established in memory. Memory is thus necessarily bounded both in scope and in the subtlety of its content

" ...Memory may cease to be so limited when there is fresh perception....."

- David Bohm, Theoretical Physicist,
Birkbeck College, London.
(Enfolding Meaning, 1985)



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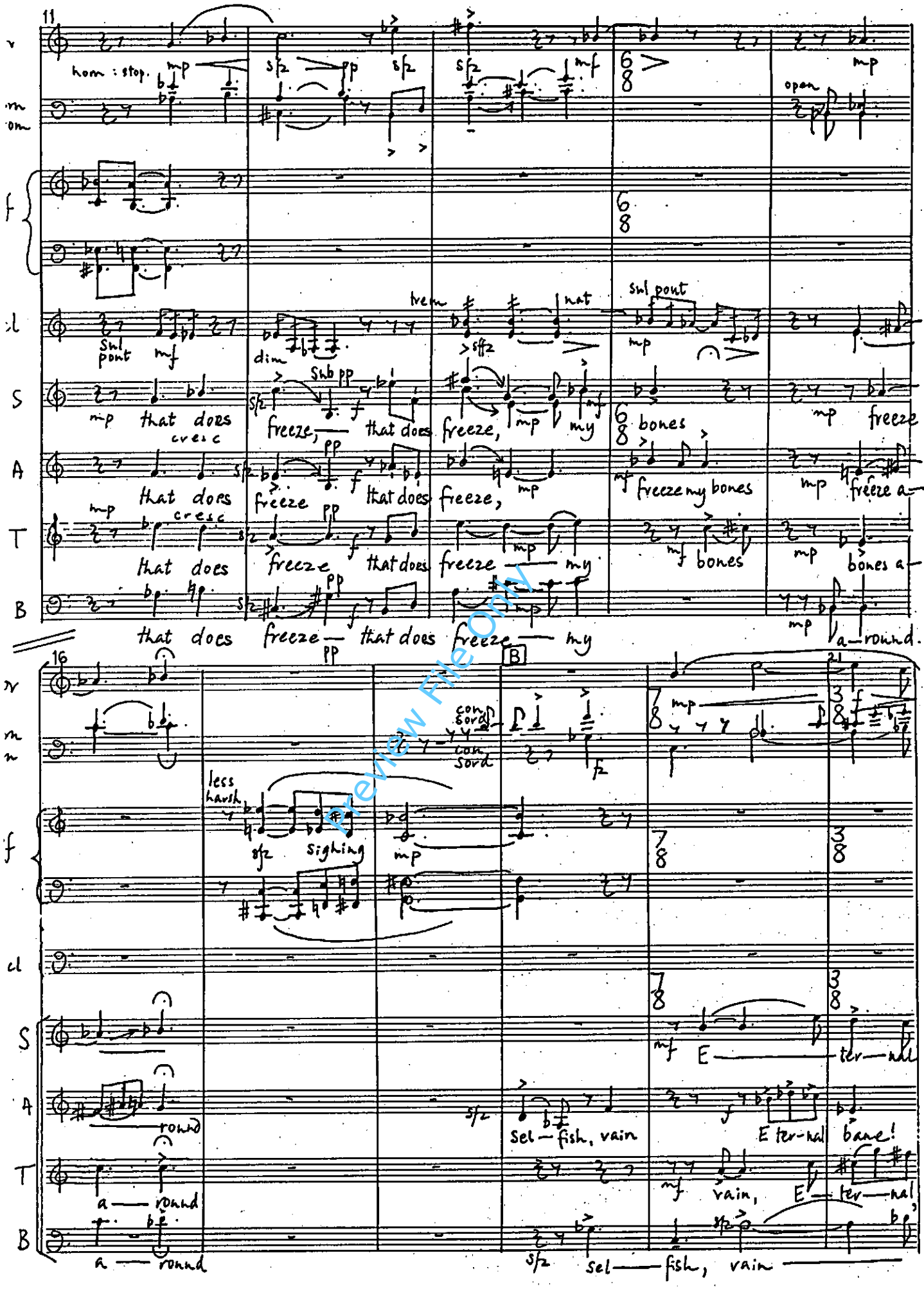
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freeze, that does freeze,
mp
my
6/8 bones
mp freeze
that does
cresc
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mp freeze a—
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mf bones
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that does freeze— that does freeze— my
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mp a—round.
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con sord
mp
fz
less harsh
sfz sighing
mp
21
mp
3/8
7/8
mf E— ter—nal
sfz
sel—fish, vain
f E ter-nal bane!
mf vain, E— ter—nal,
a— round
a— round
sfz sel— fish, vain
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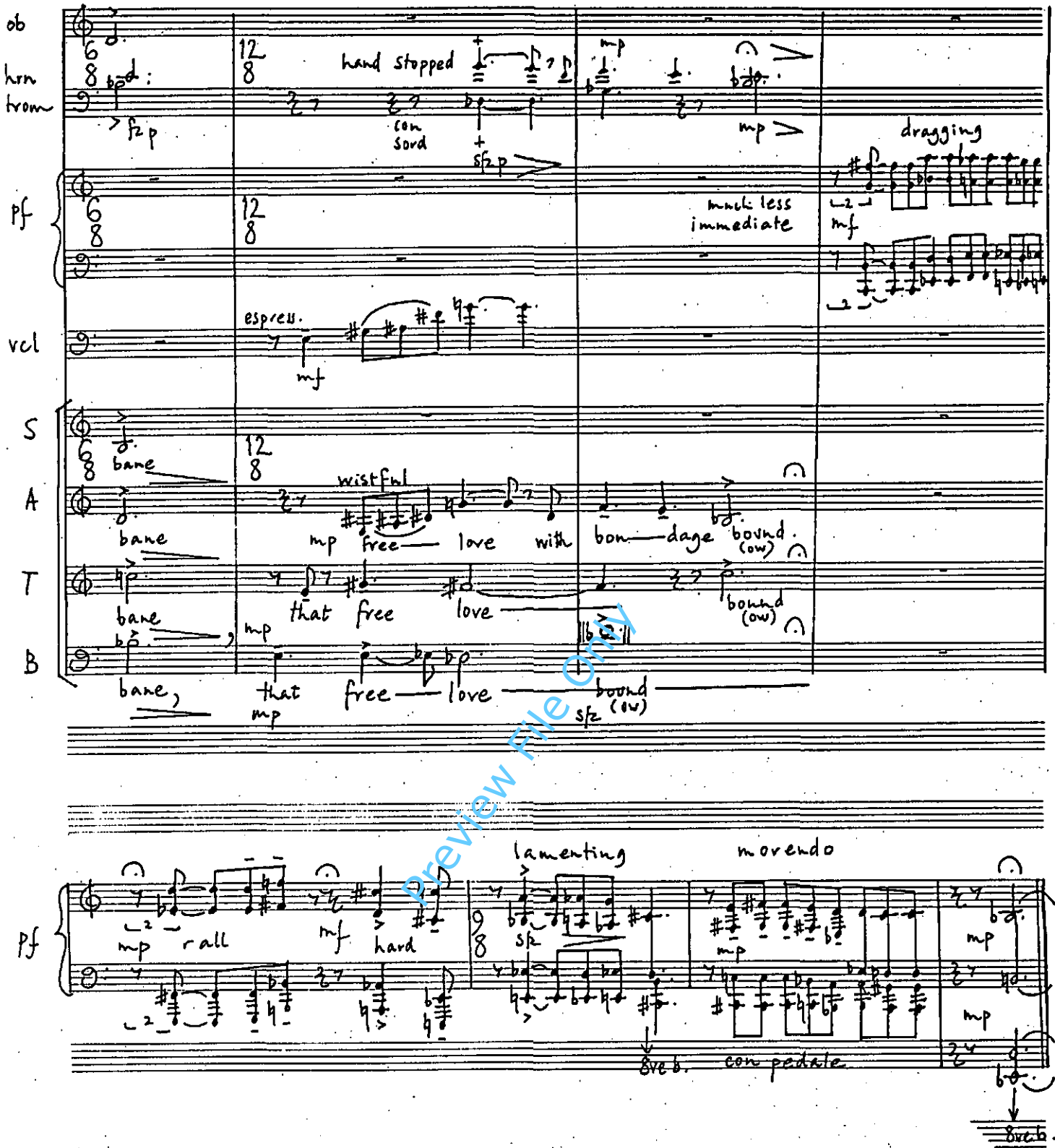

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BRIEF PAUSE

3. P R O P H E C Y 2

" I give you the end or a golden string,
Only wind it into a ball,
It will lead you in at Heaven's gate,
Built in Jerusalem's wall. " (Jerusalem, Preface to Chapter 4)

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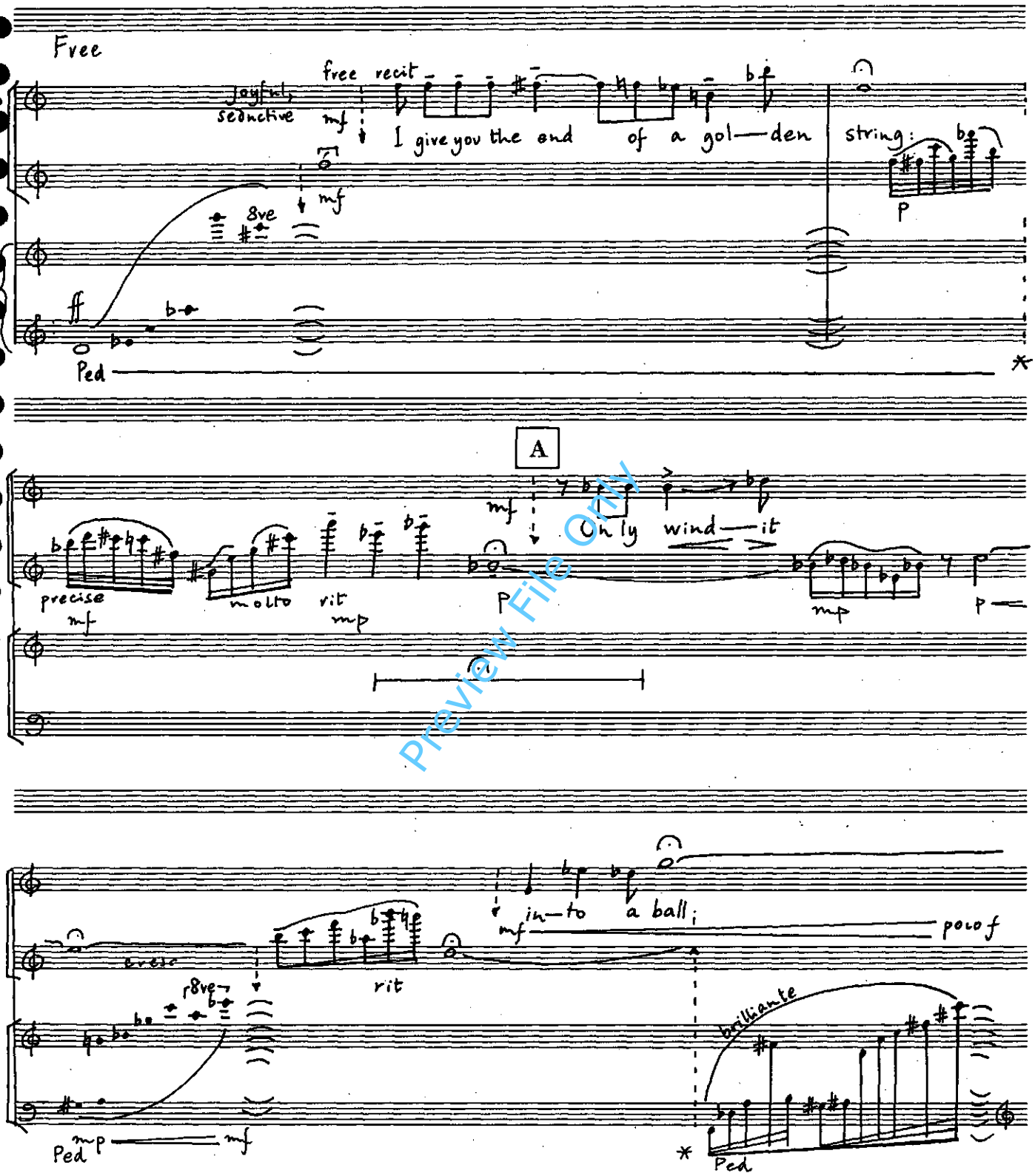
"So time, our concept of time, involves the interweaving
of what is recurrent and what is non-recurrent...."

- David Bohm



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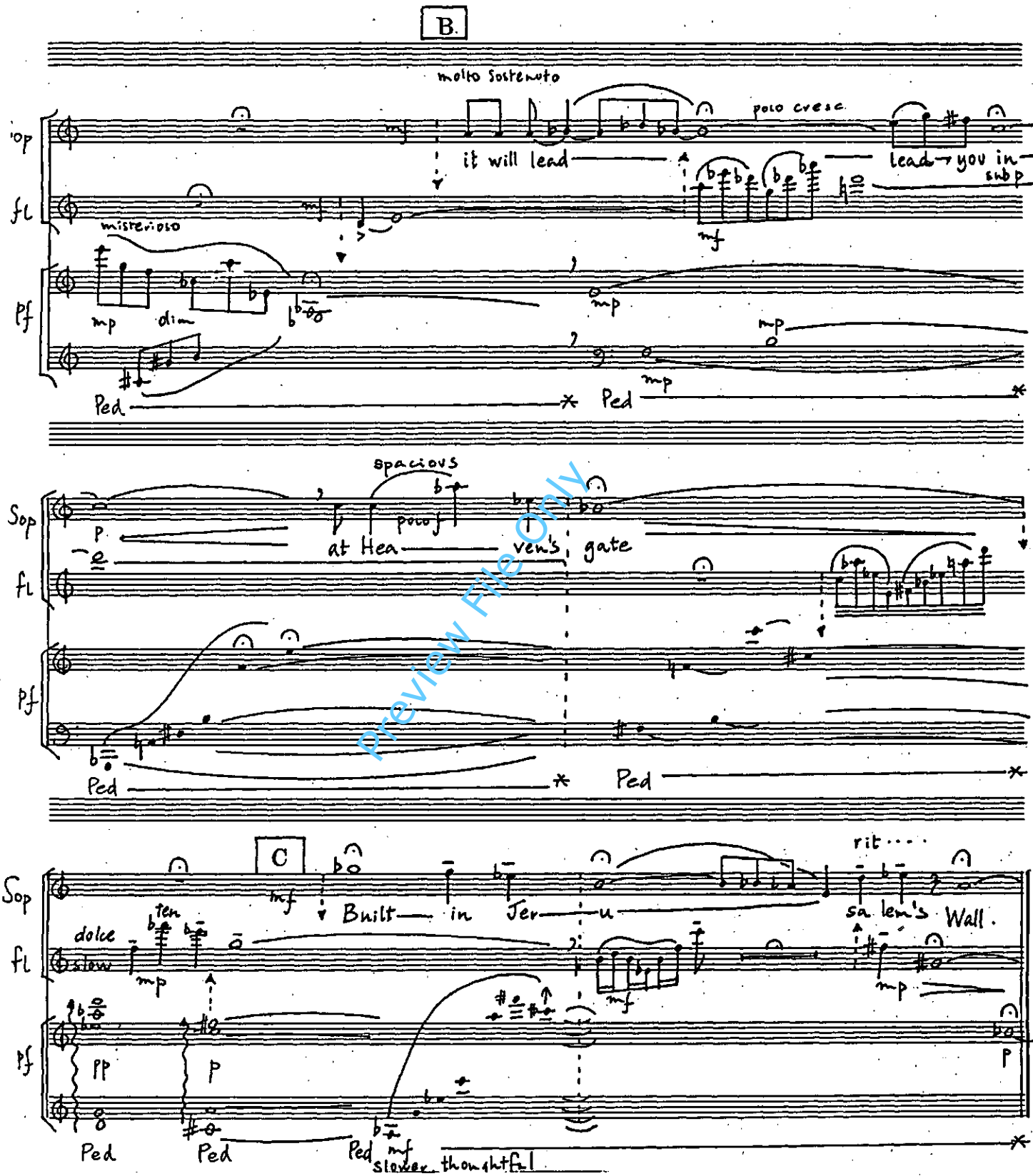

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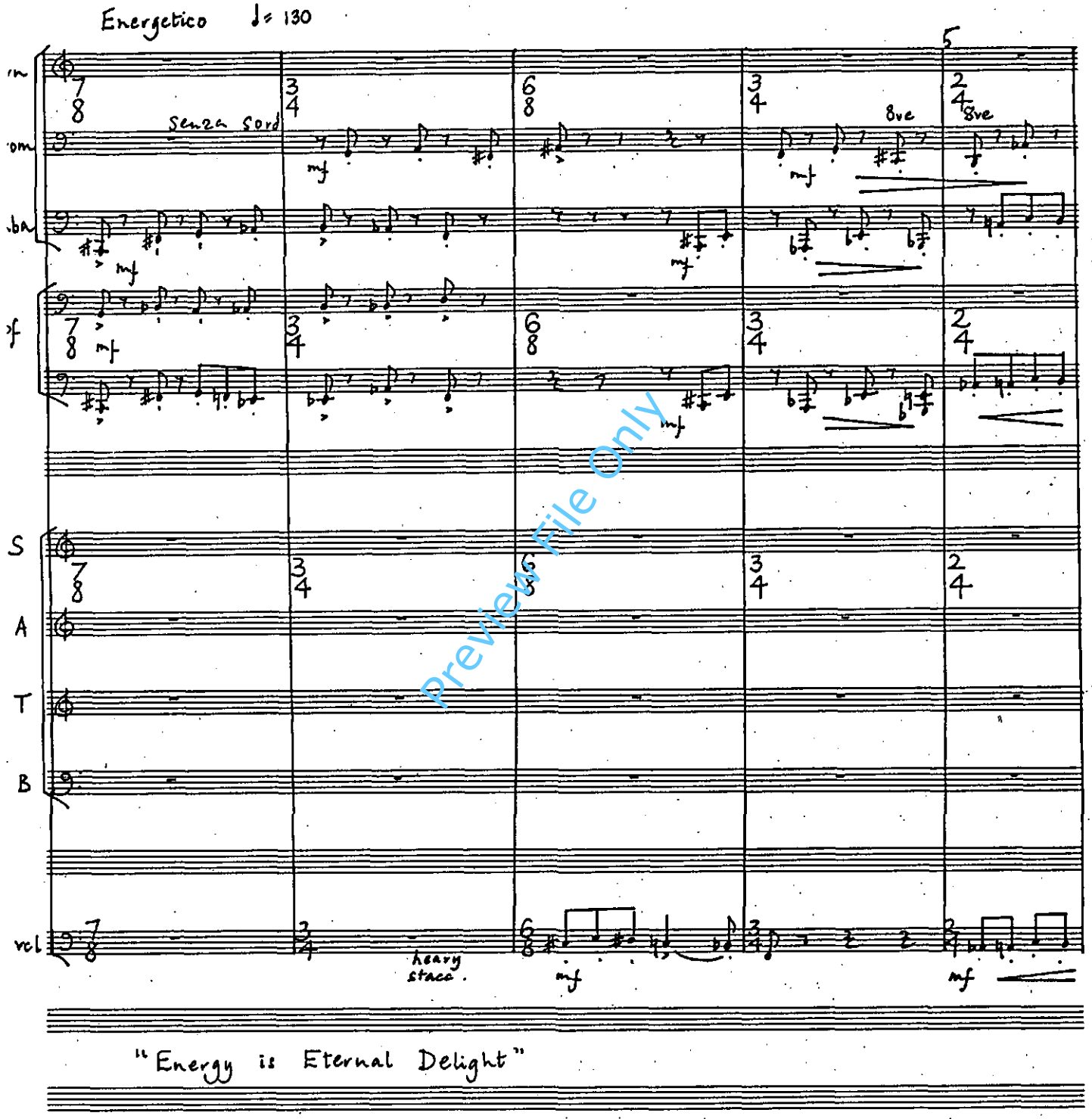

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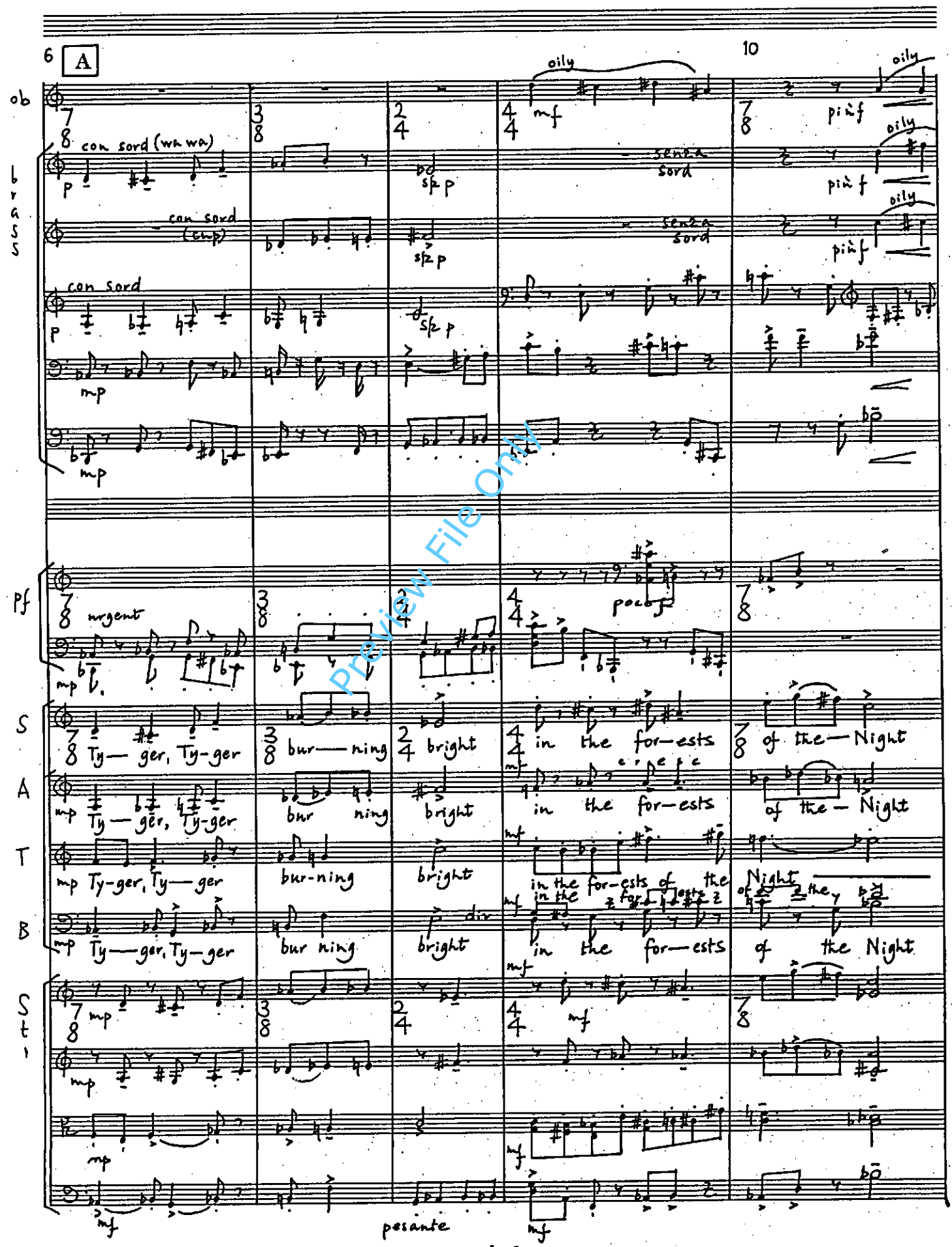
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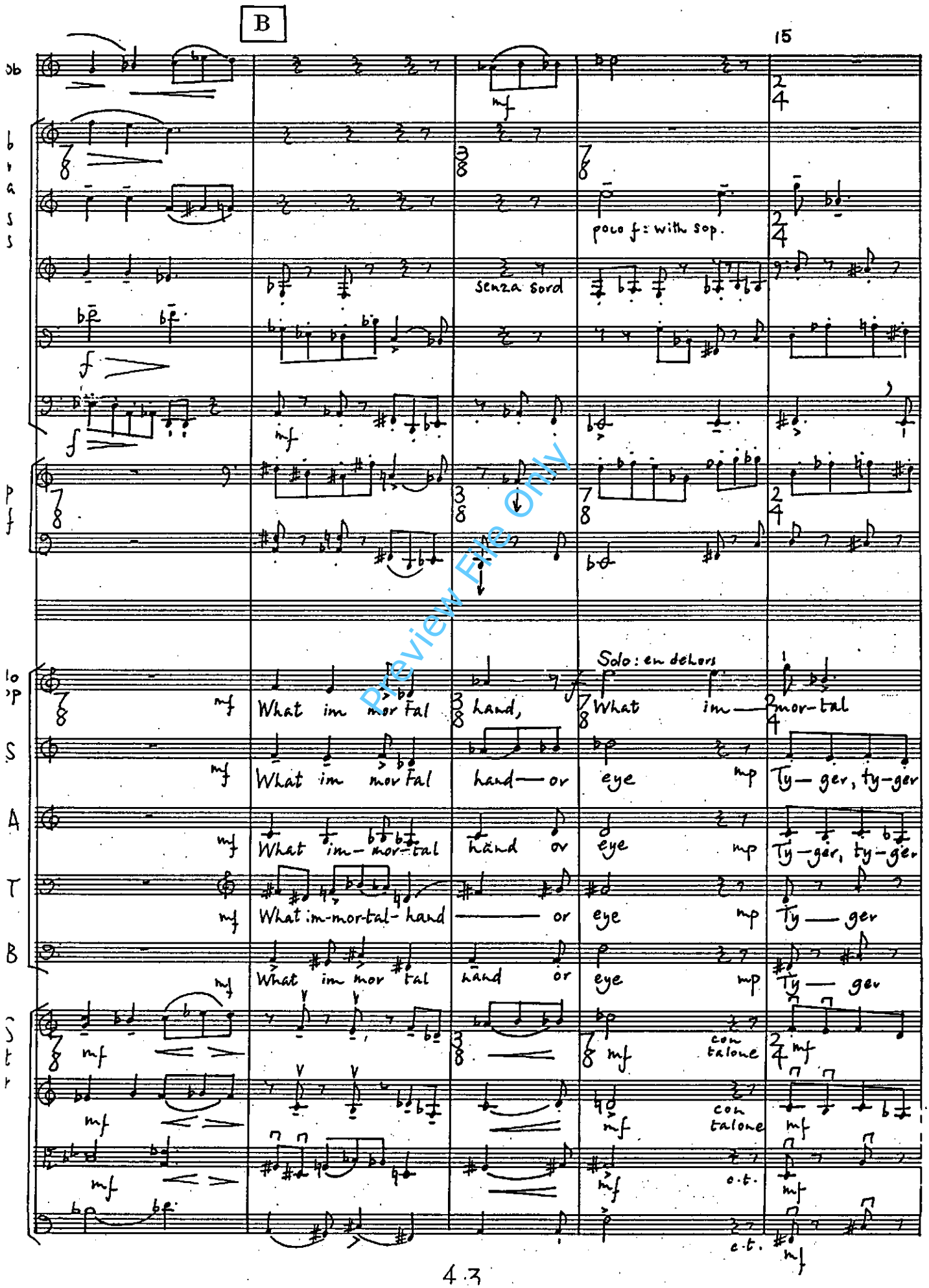

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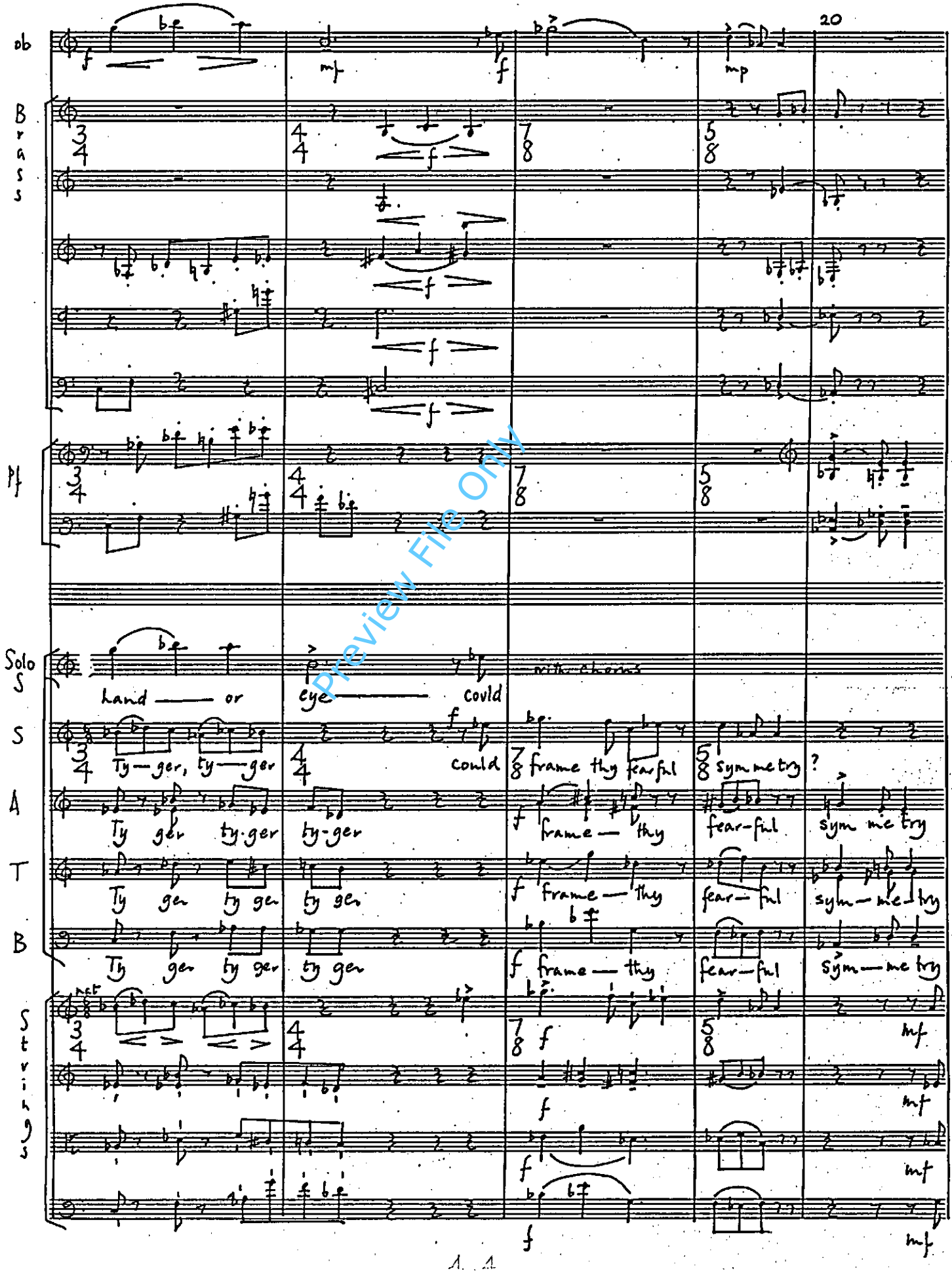
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with chorus
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Ty ger ty ger
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sym me try ?
frame — thy
fear-ful
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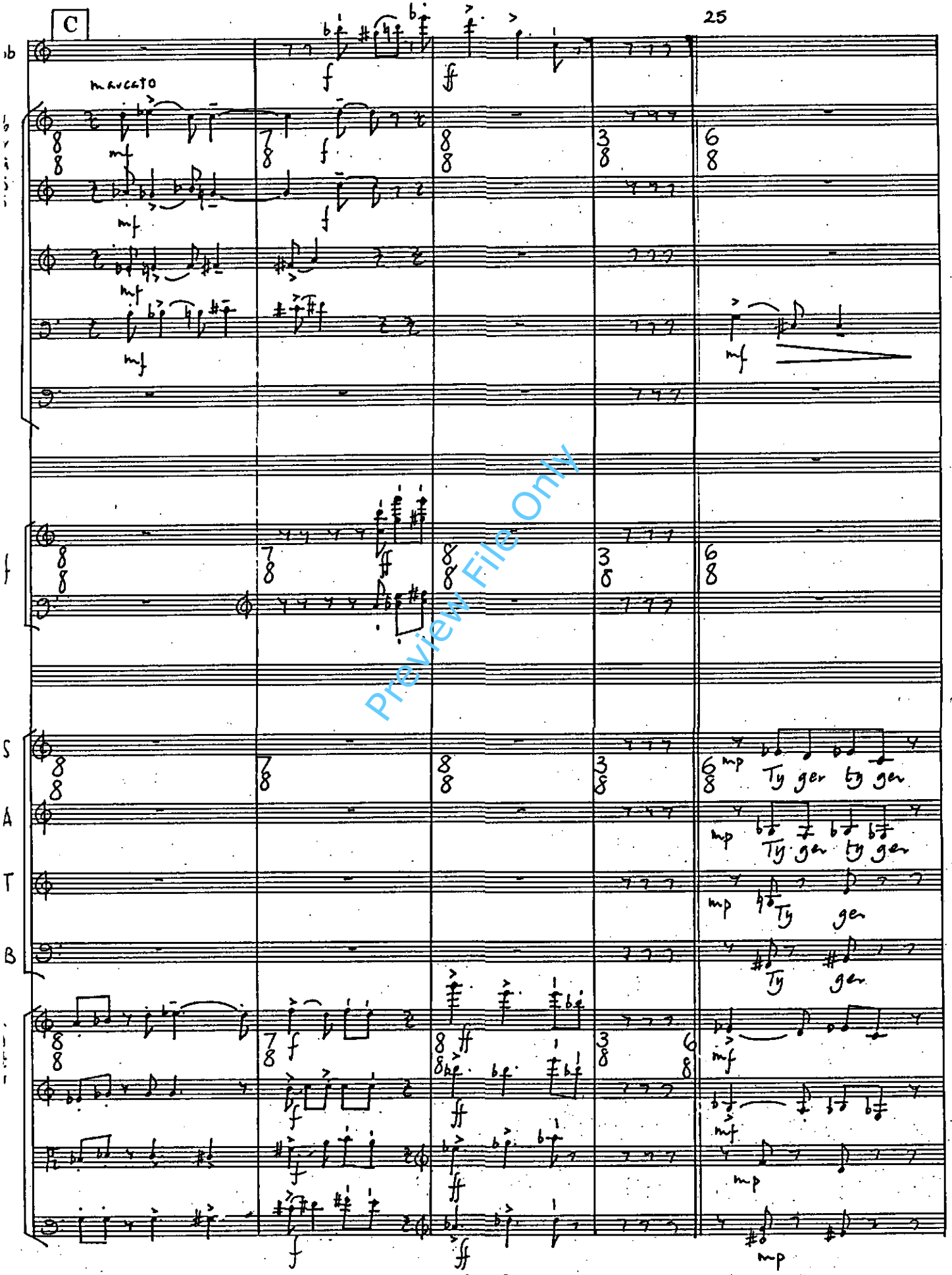

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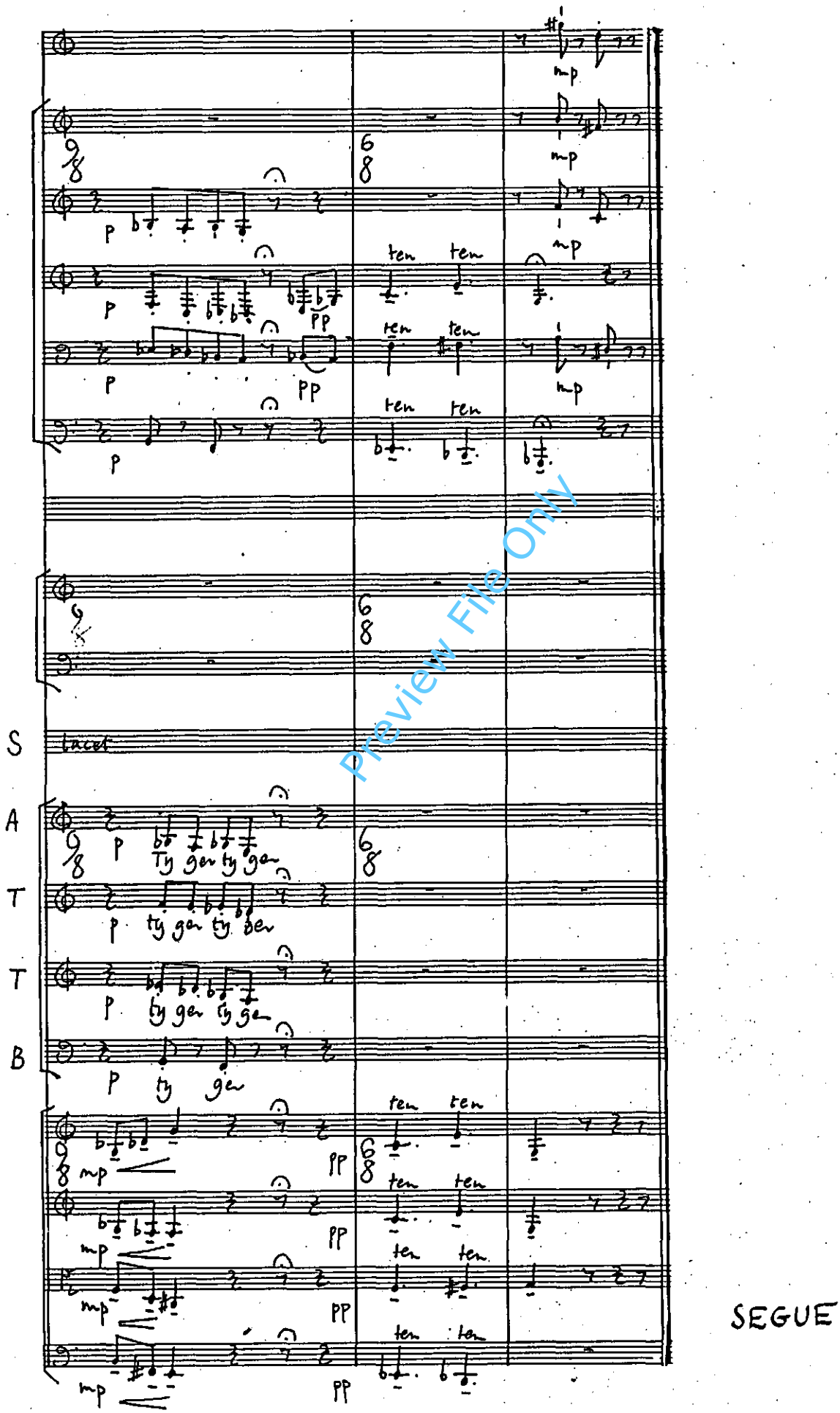

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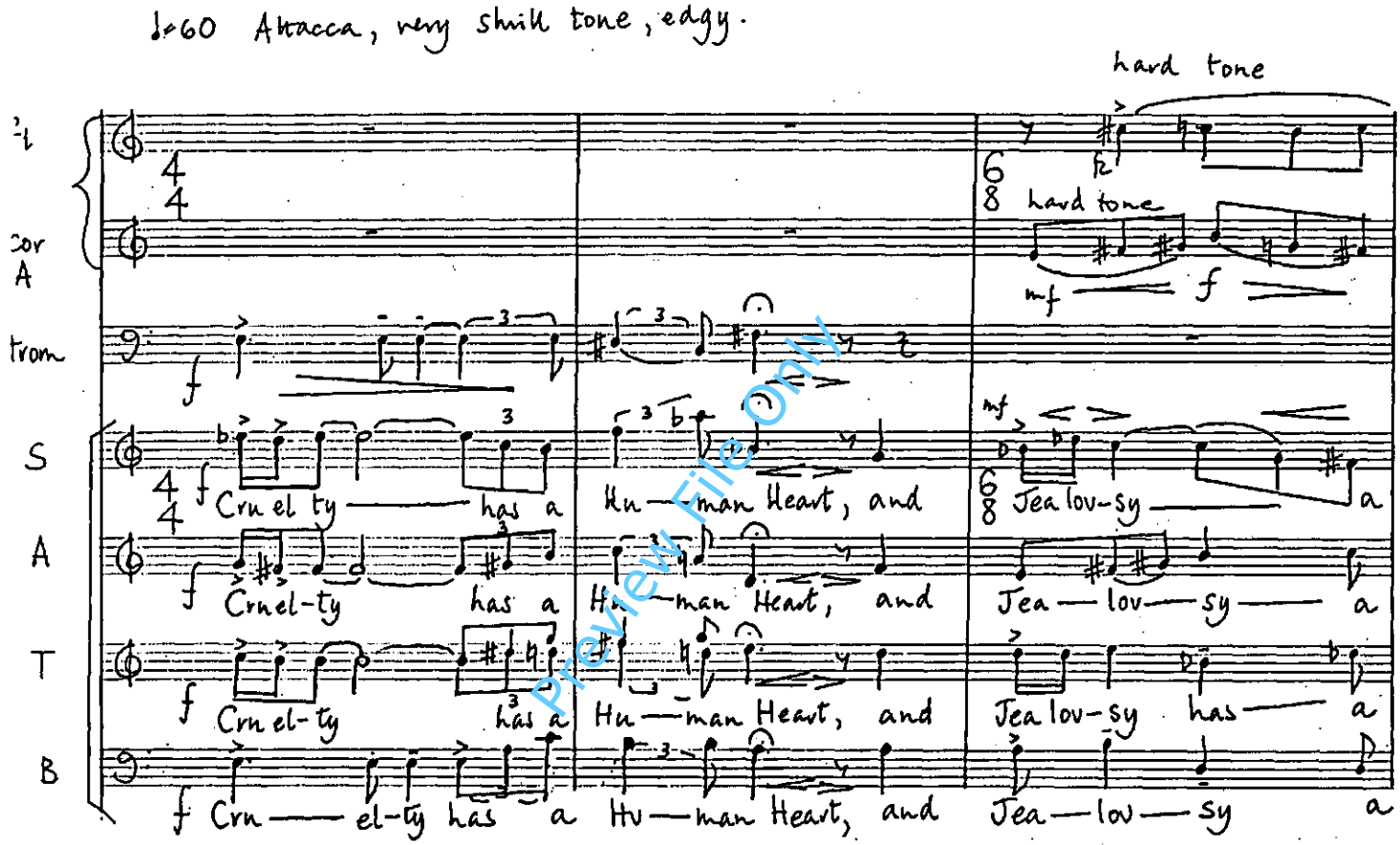
5. SONG OF EXPERIENCE ONE and

TYGER CHAIN TWO



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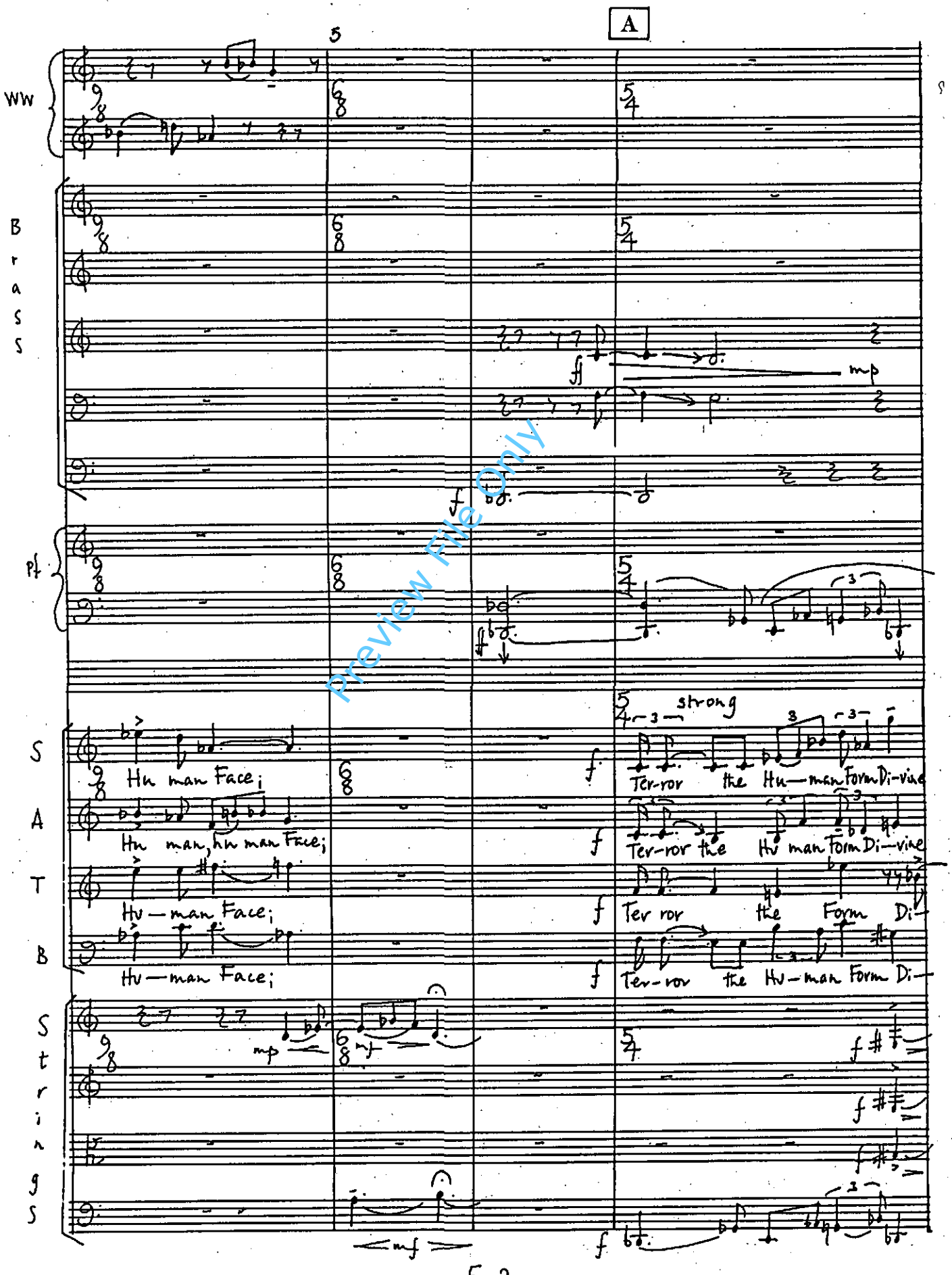
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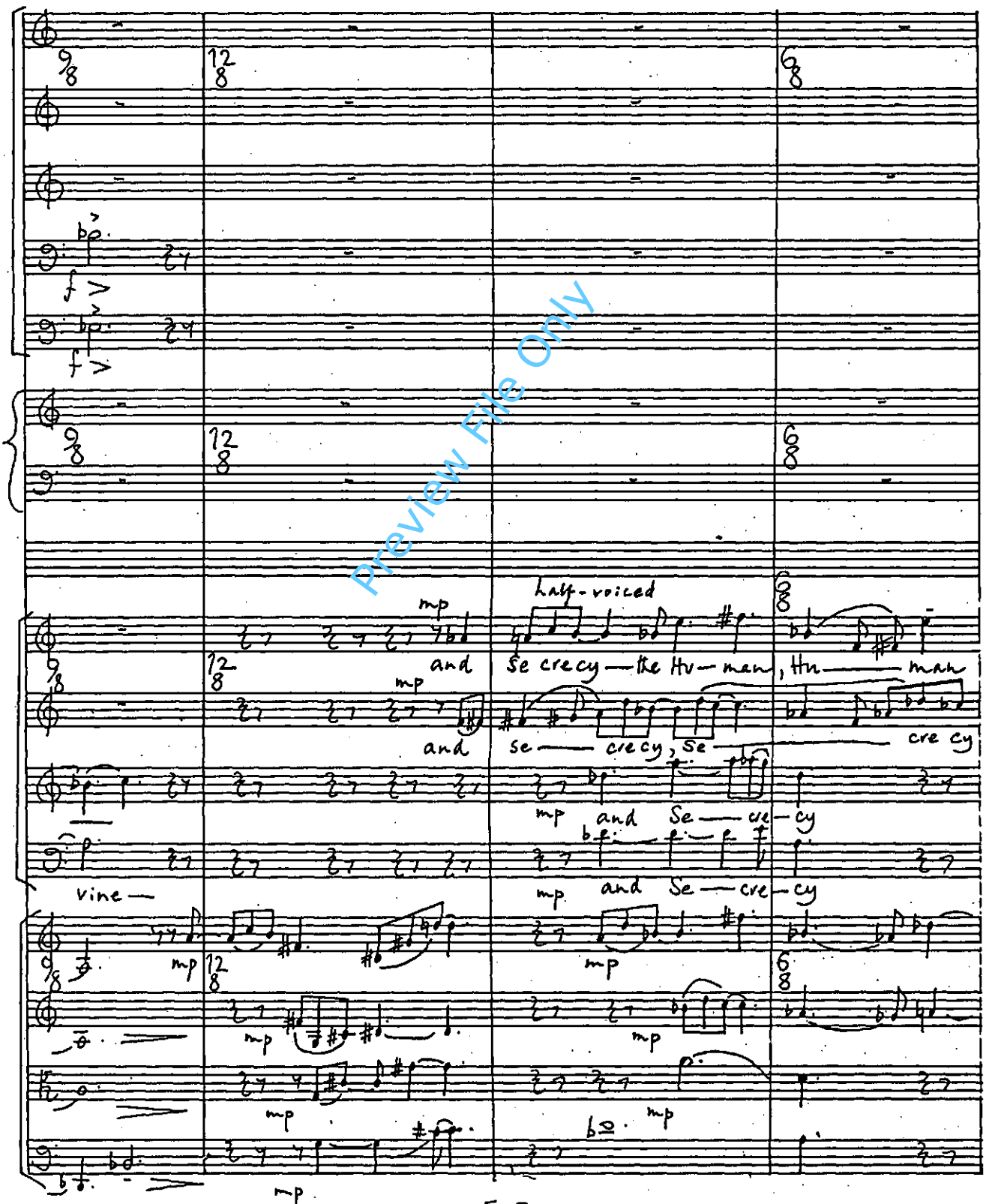

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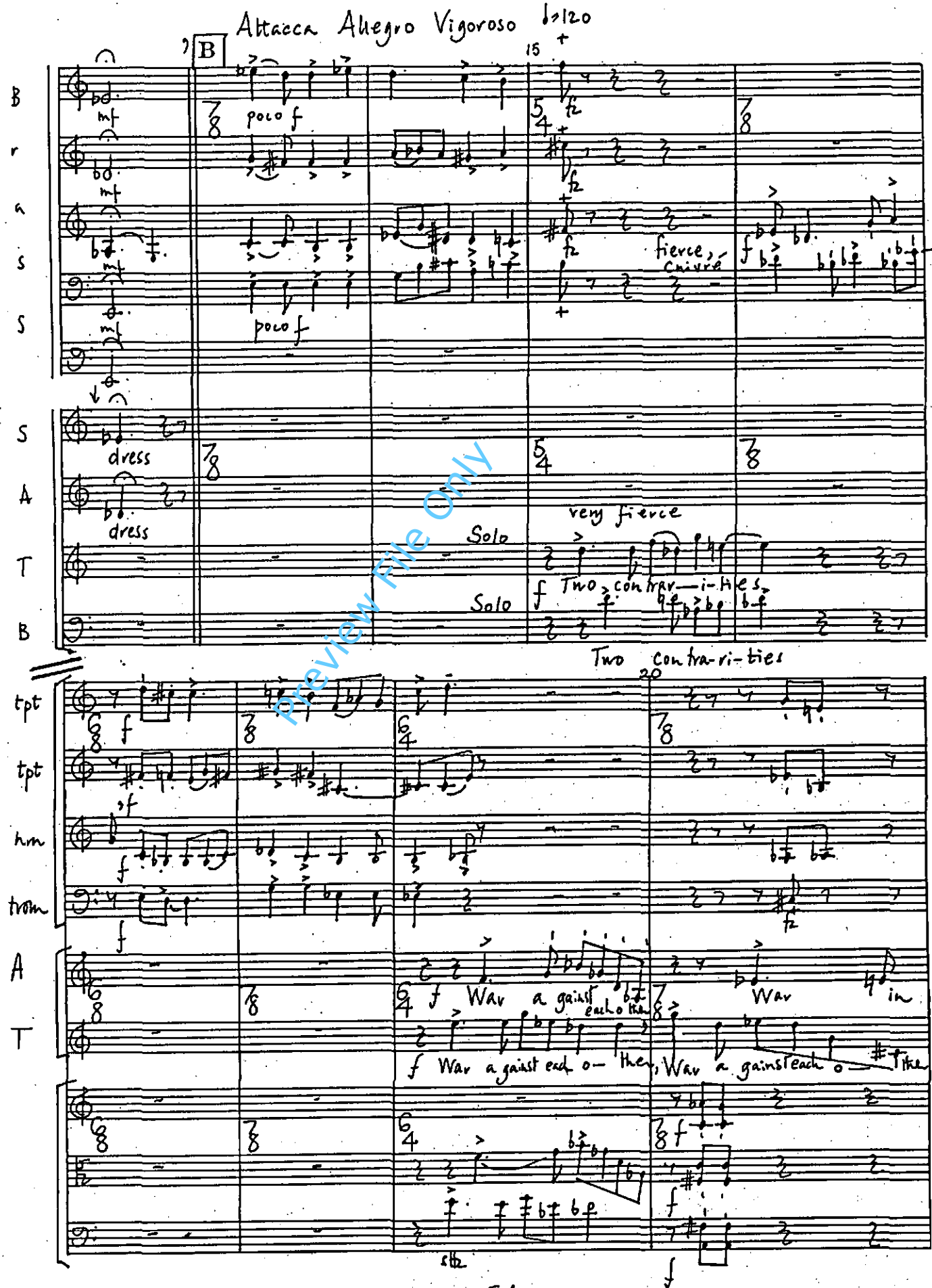

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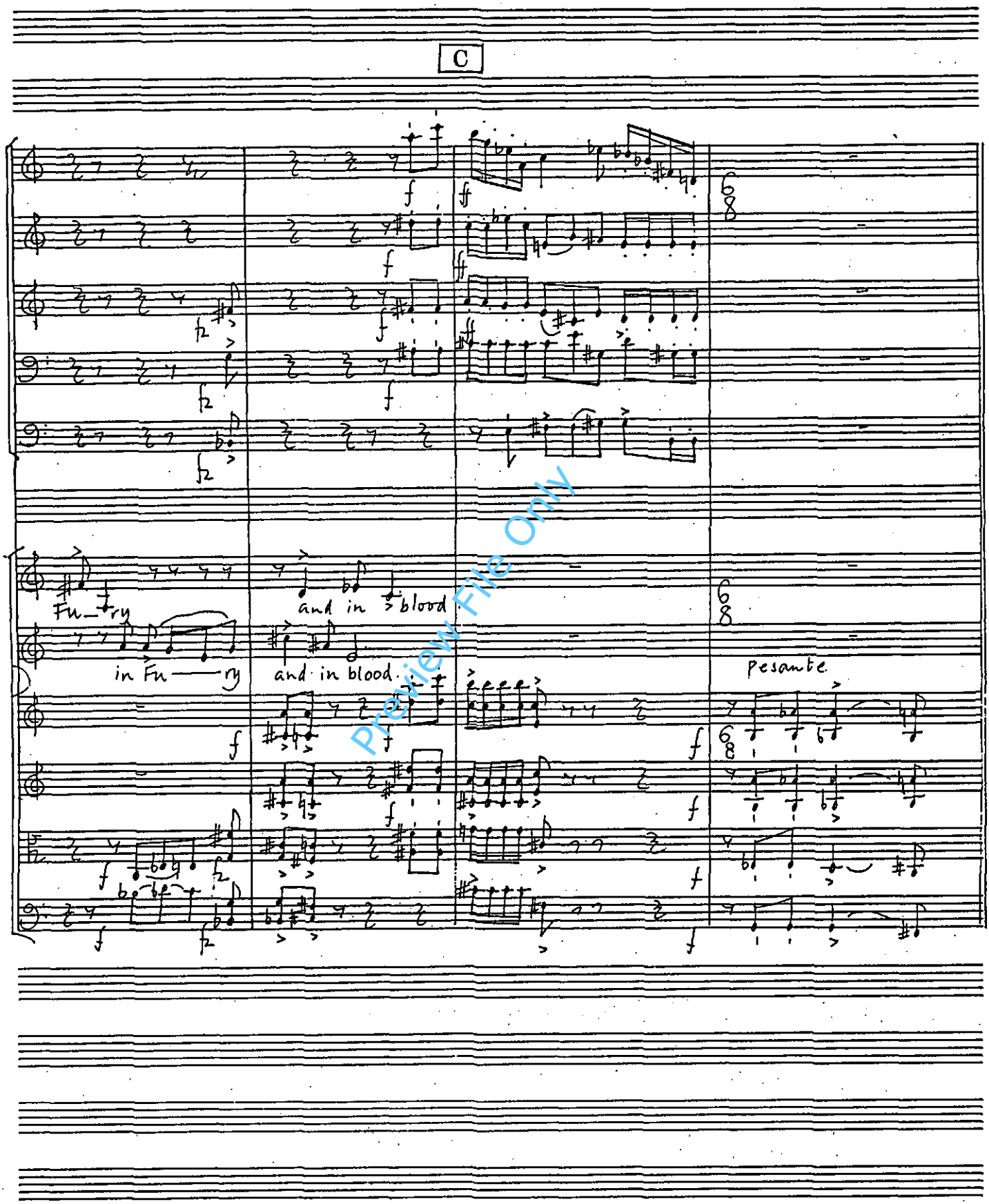

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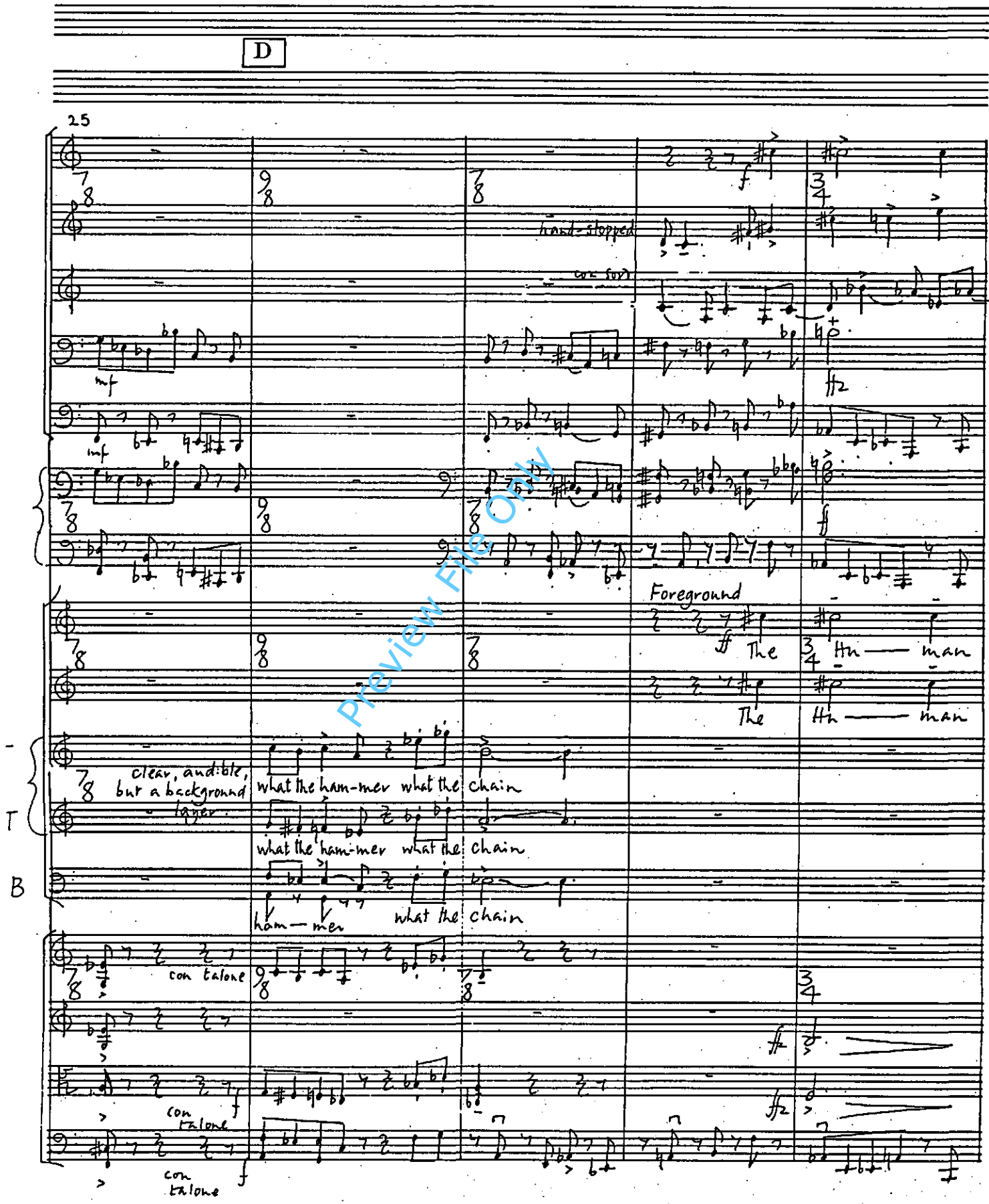

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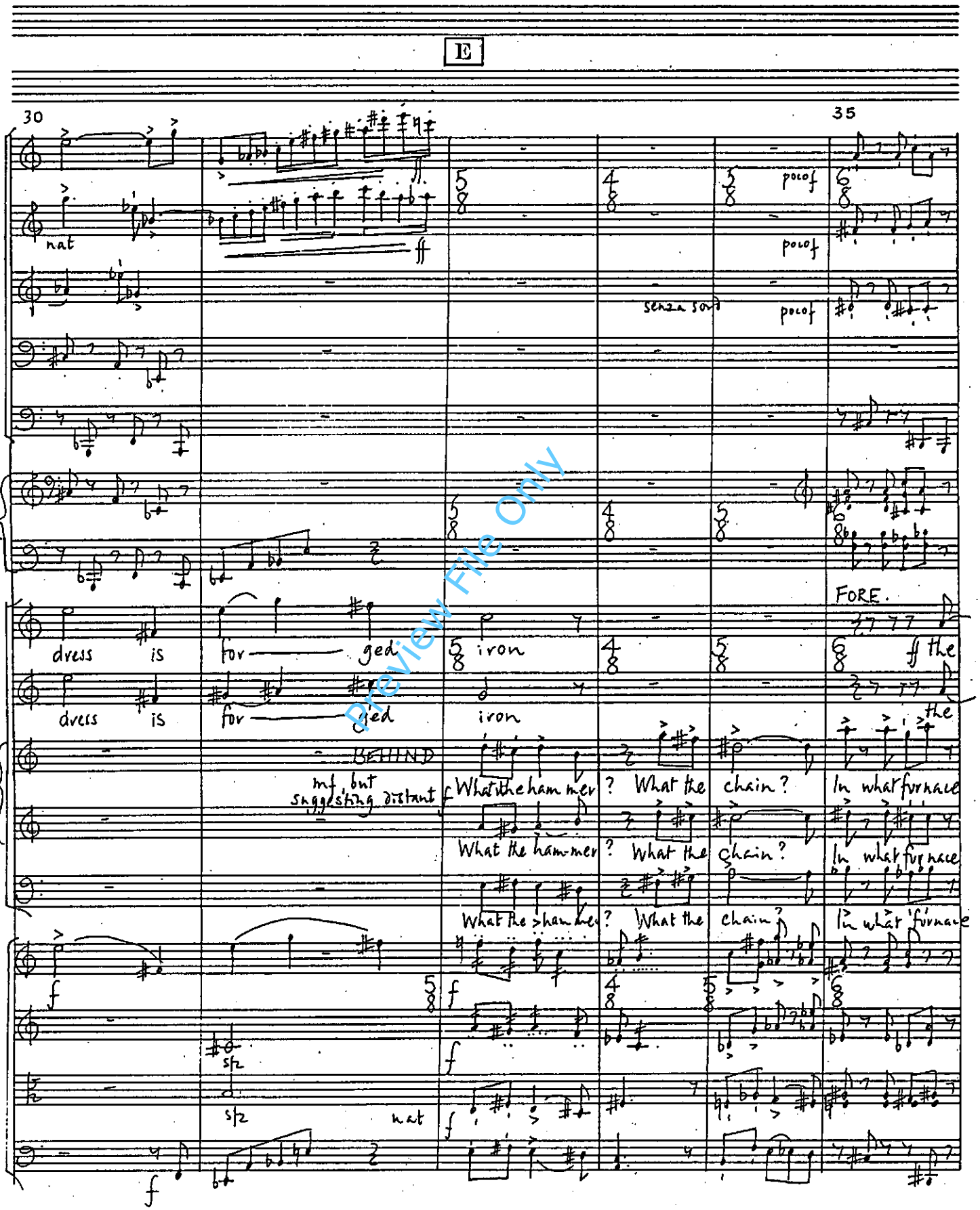
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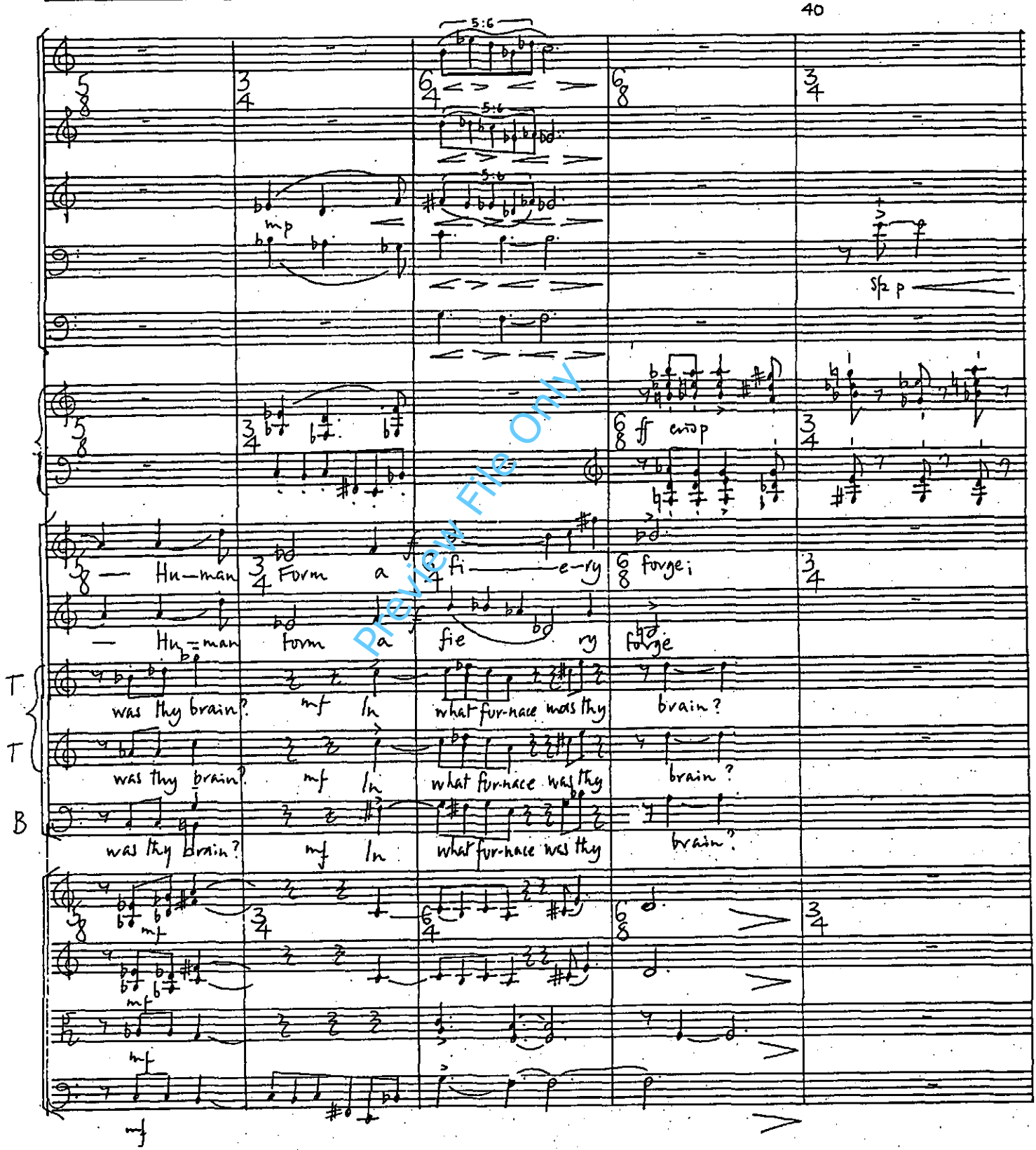

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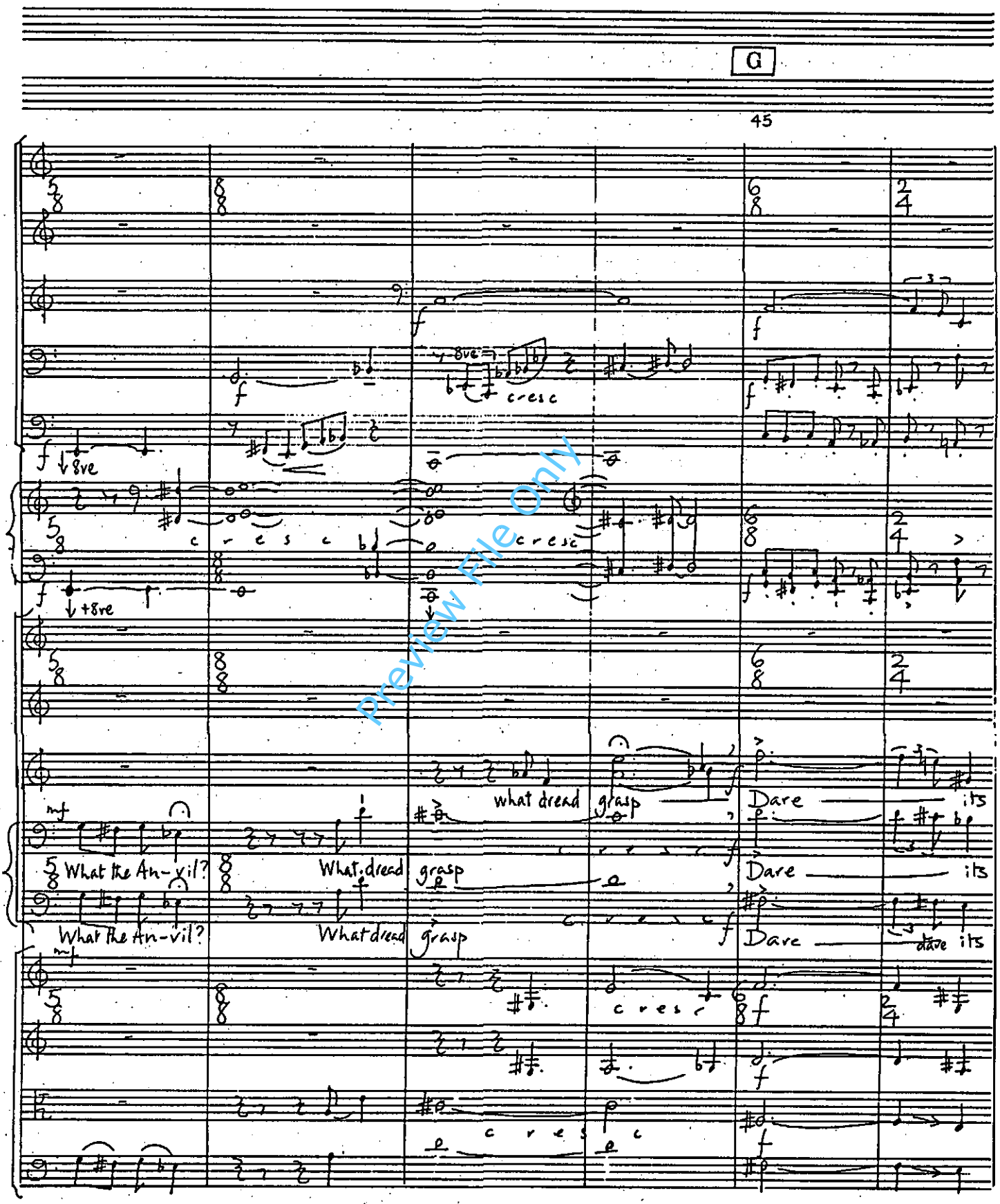

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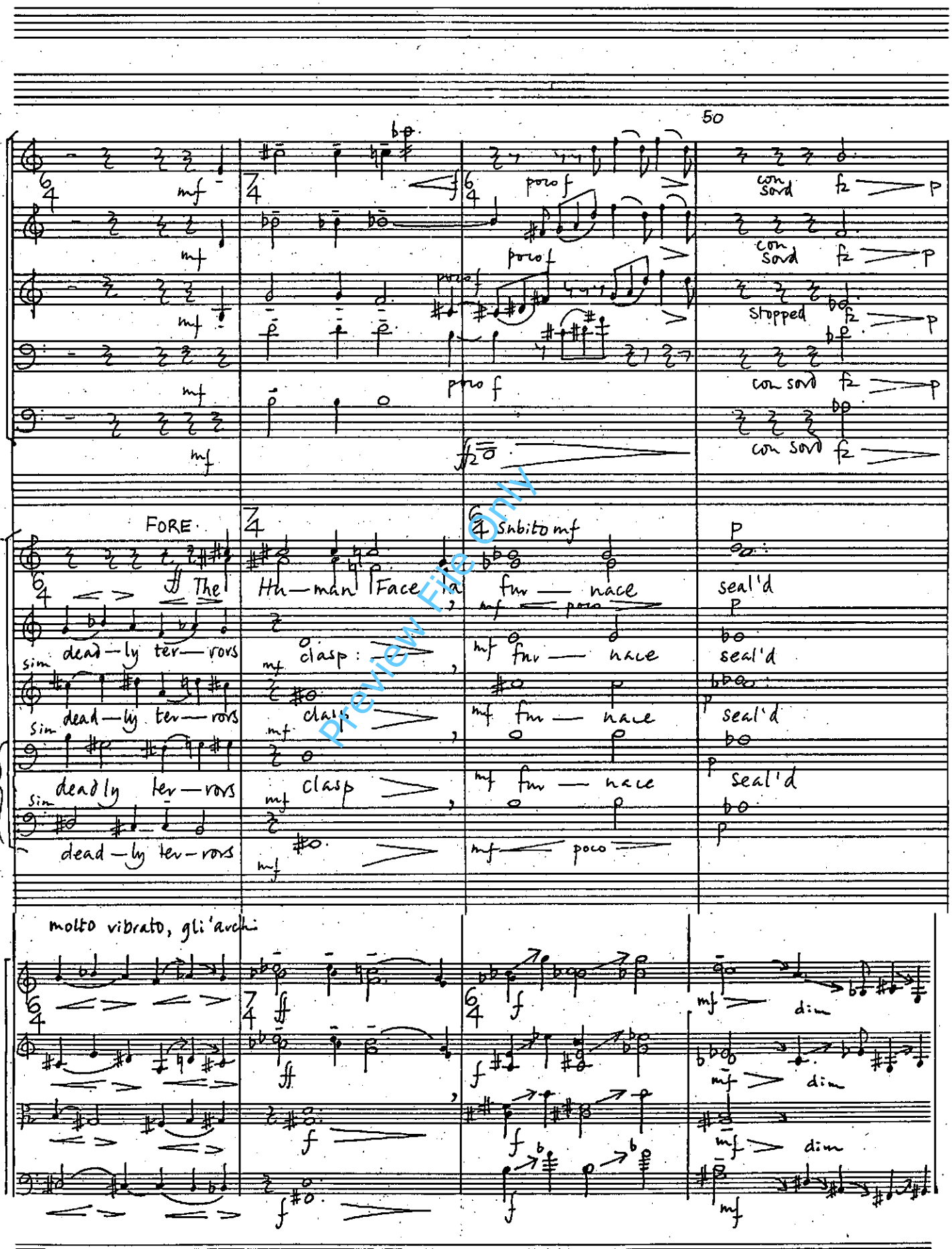

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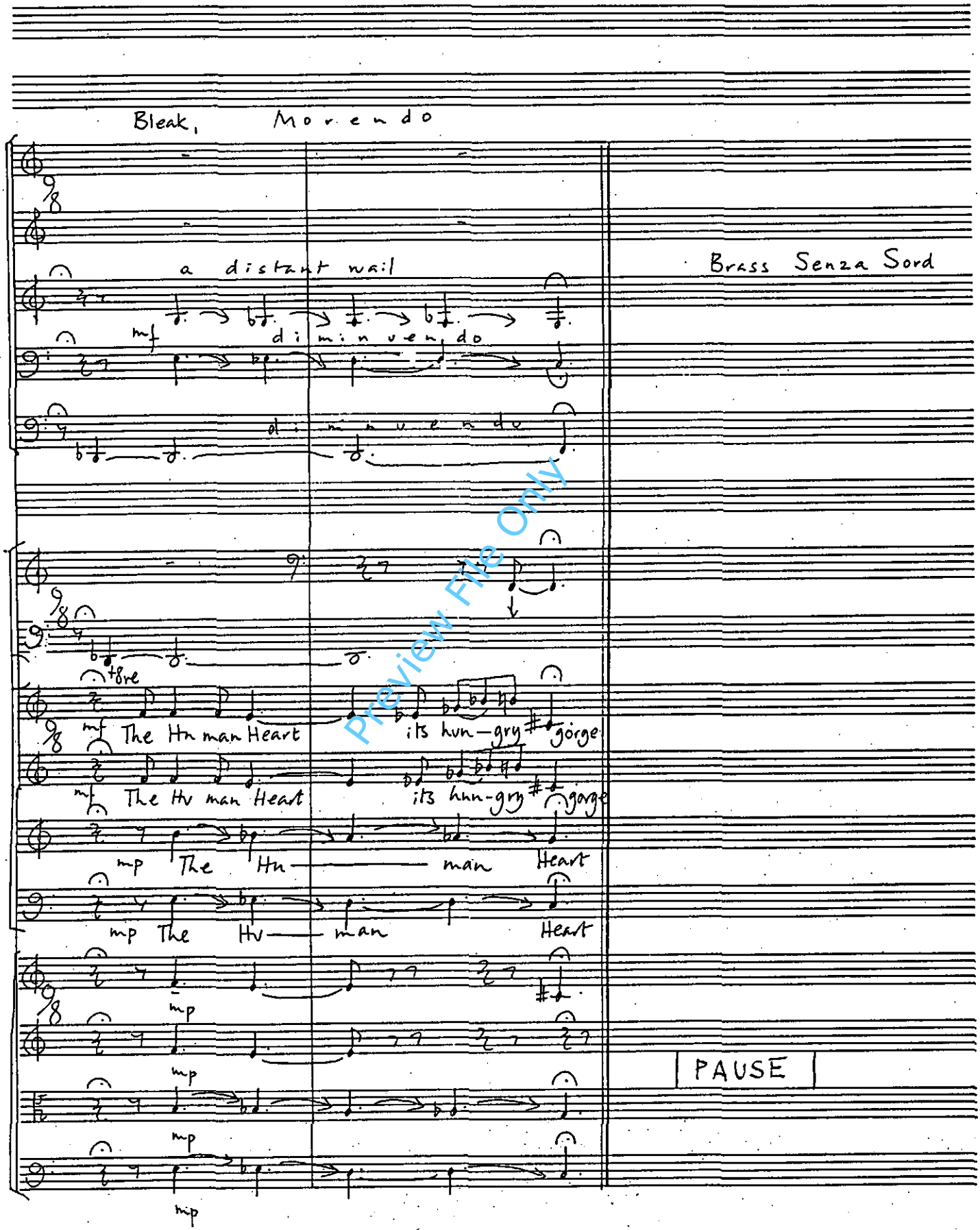

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6. B O W L A H O O L A

"In Bowlahoola Los's Anvils stand & his Furnaces rage;
Thundering the Hammers beat & the Bellows blow loud,
Living,selfmoving, mourning, lamenting& howling incessantly.

..... and softly lilling flutes,
Accordant with the horrid labours, make sweet melody.
The Bellows are the Animal Lungs: the Hammers the Animal Heart:
The Furnaces the Stomach for digestion: terrible their fury.

The hard dentant Hammers are lull'd by the flutes' lula lula,
The bellowing + Furnaces blare by the long sounding clarion.

Los is by mortals nam'd Time.

...in his hand the thundering
Hammer forming under his heavy hand the hours,
The days and years, in chains of iron...
Link'd hour to hour and ay to night and night to day
and year to year,
In periods of pulsative furor...
Loud sounds the hammer of Los.

Time is the Mercy of Eternity...
Eternity is in love with the Productions of Time."

(Milton, Book 1, Chapter 24)

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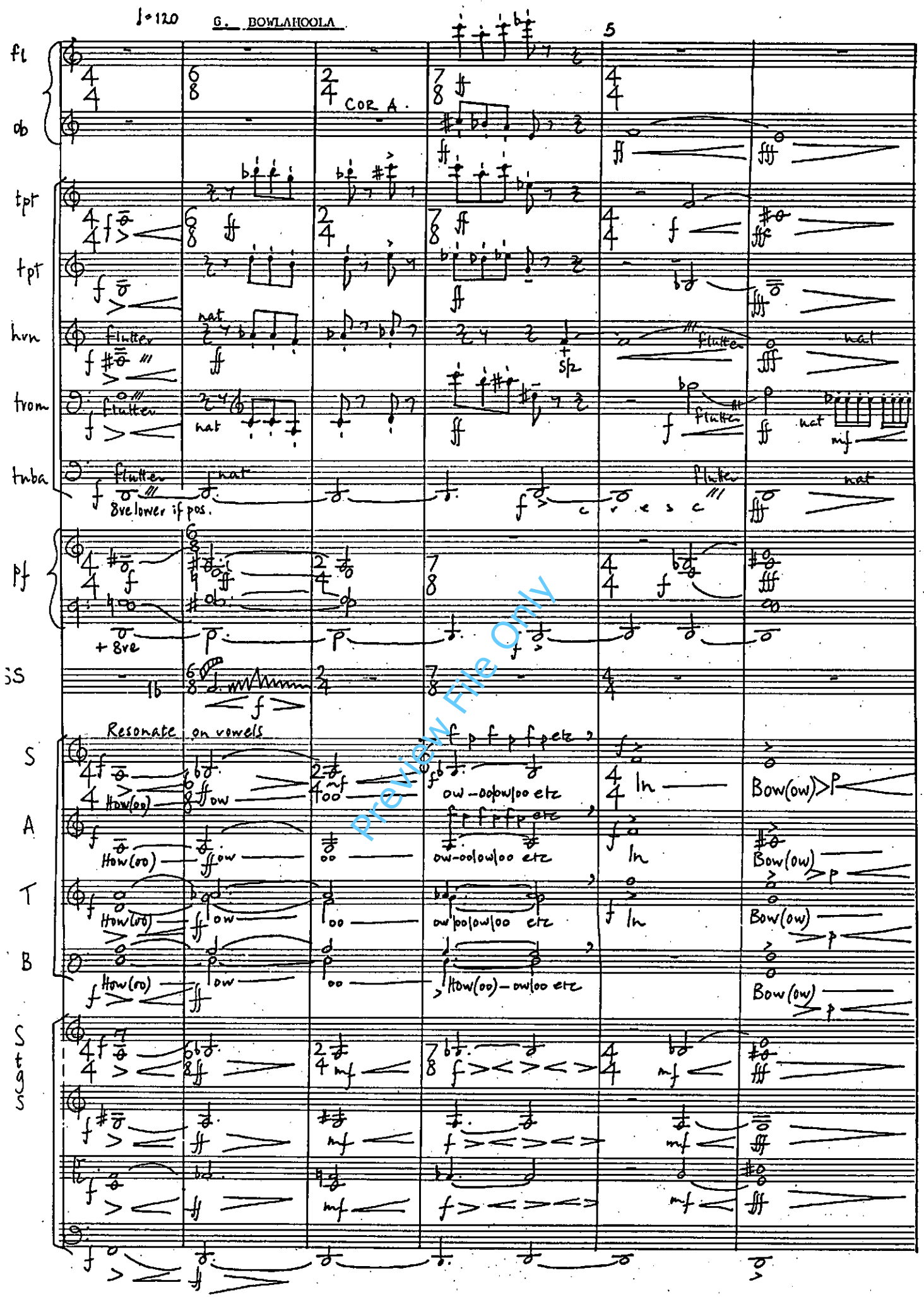
" I wish you to consider, finally that all the functions which I attribute to this machine, such as digestion...nutrition.... respiration, waking and sleeping; the reception of light, sound odours...the impression of ideas in the memory; the inferior movements of all the external members...; I desire, I say, that consider that these functions occur naturally in this machine s by the disposition of its organs, not less than the movements of a clock. " (Rene Descartes)

" When we are sick we become a Newtonian object: a bit- piece stranded in a flowi time. " (Dr Larry Dossey Space, Time and Medicine.)

" Without flowing time there is no loss ....." (ibid)



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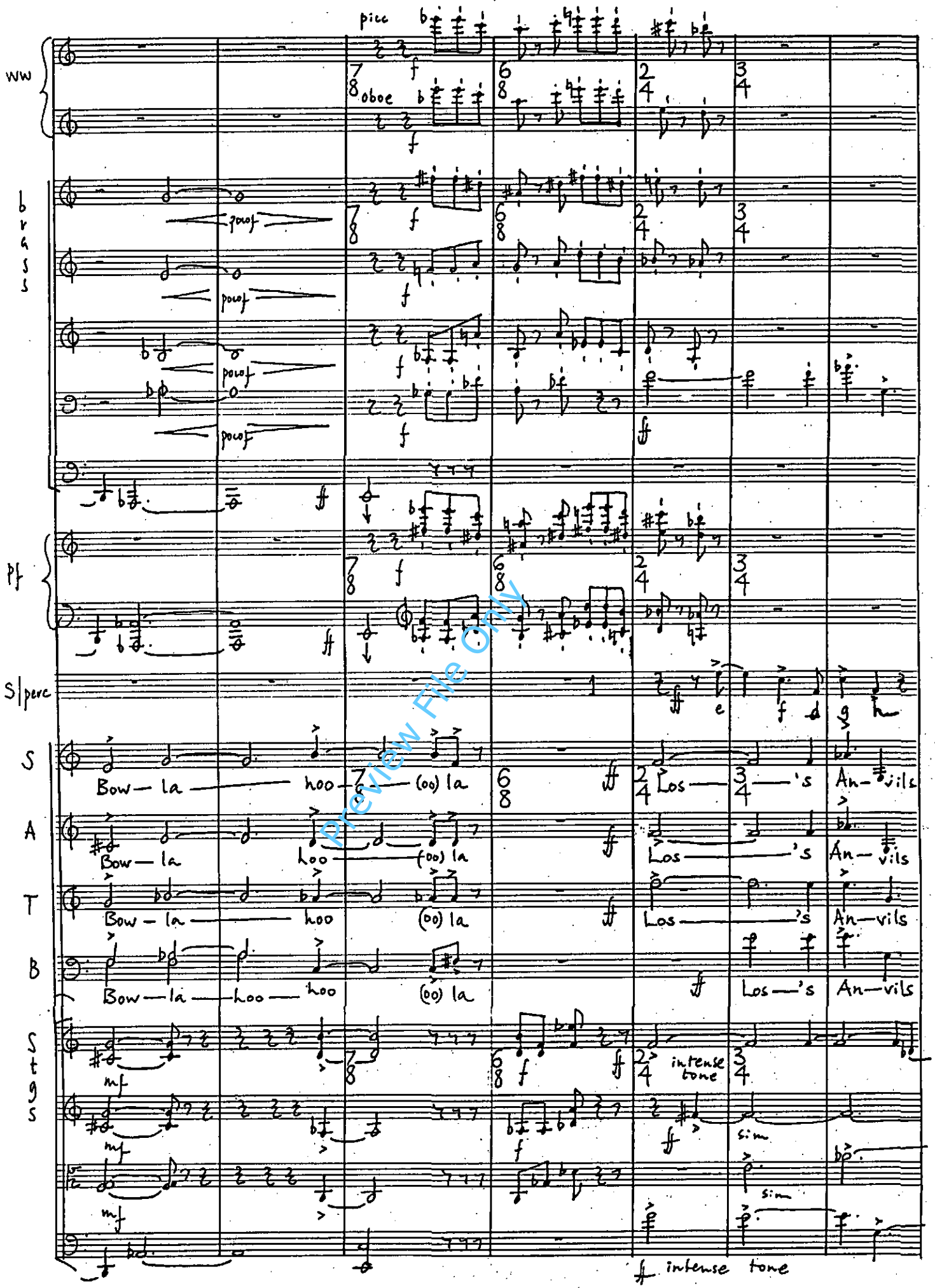

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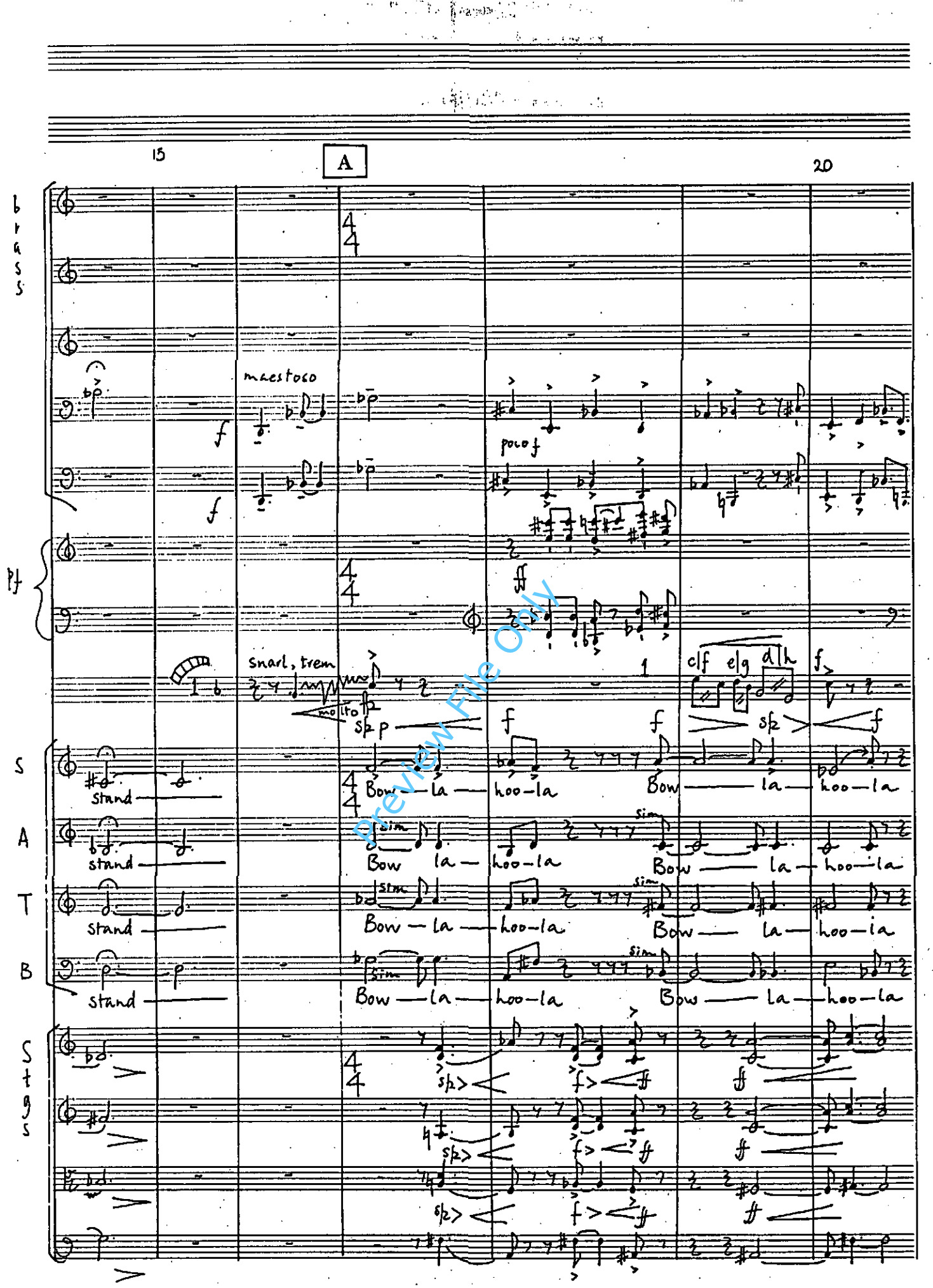

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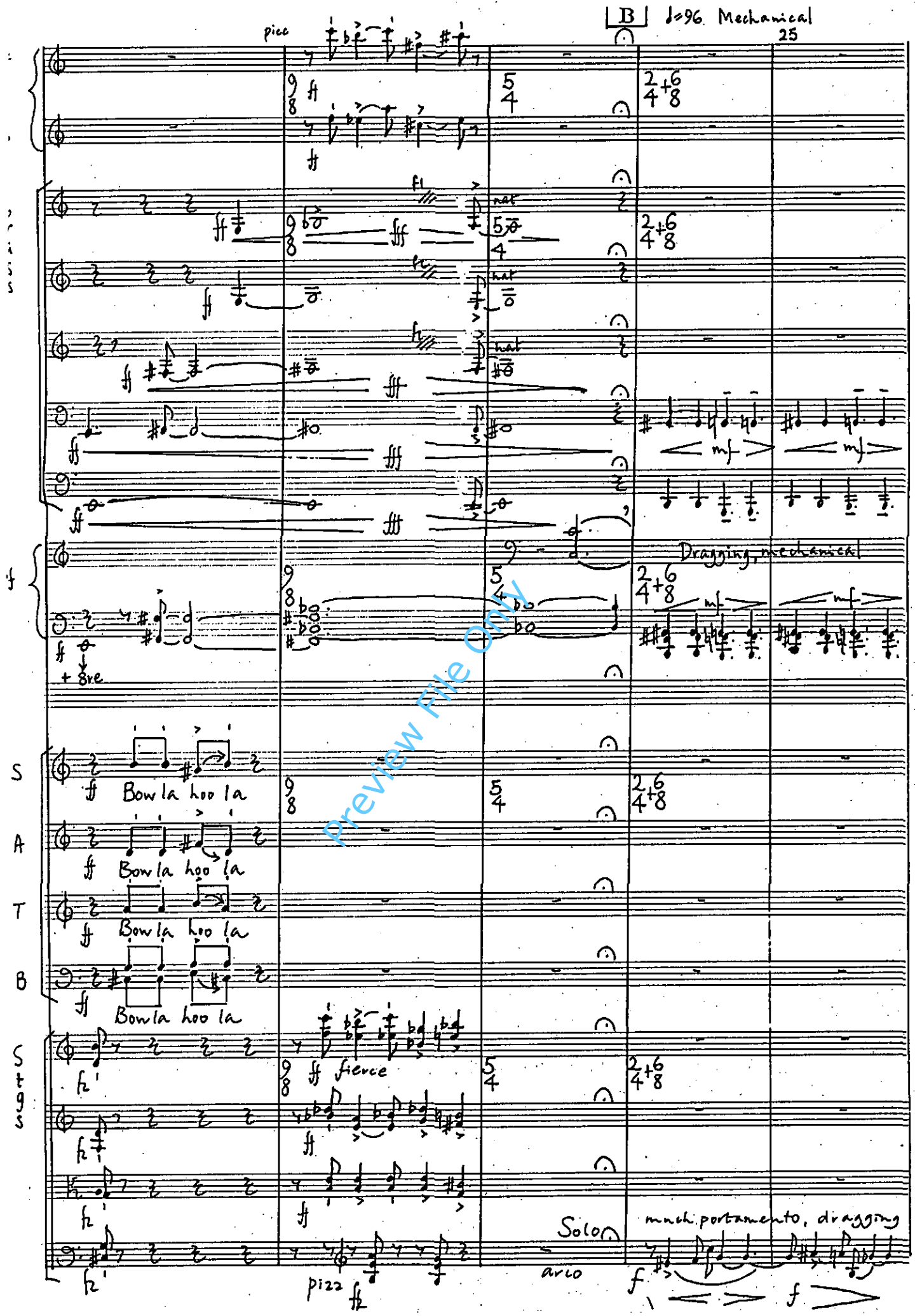

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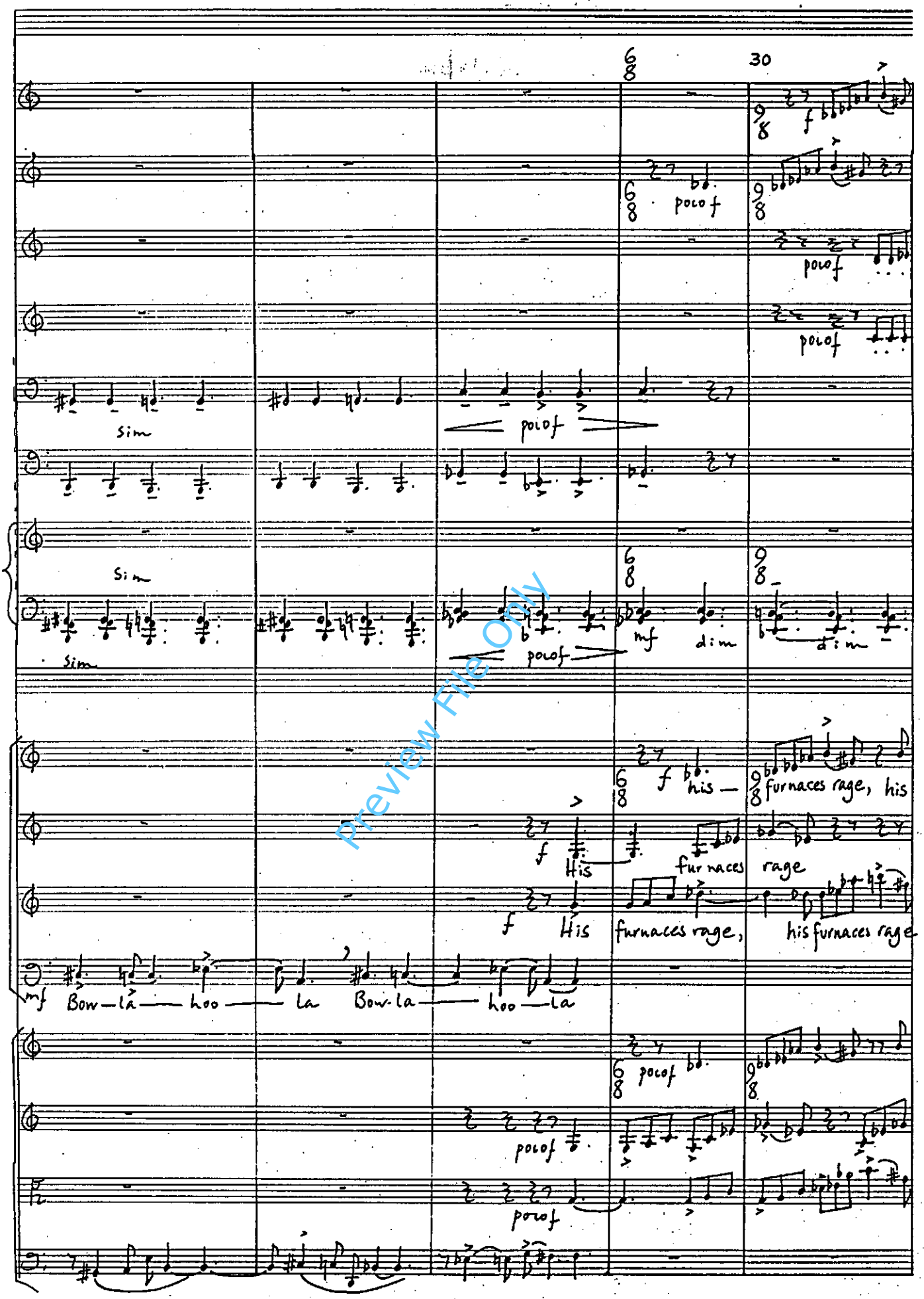

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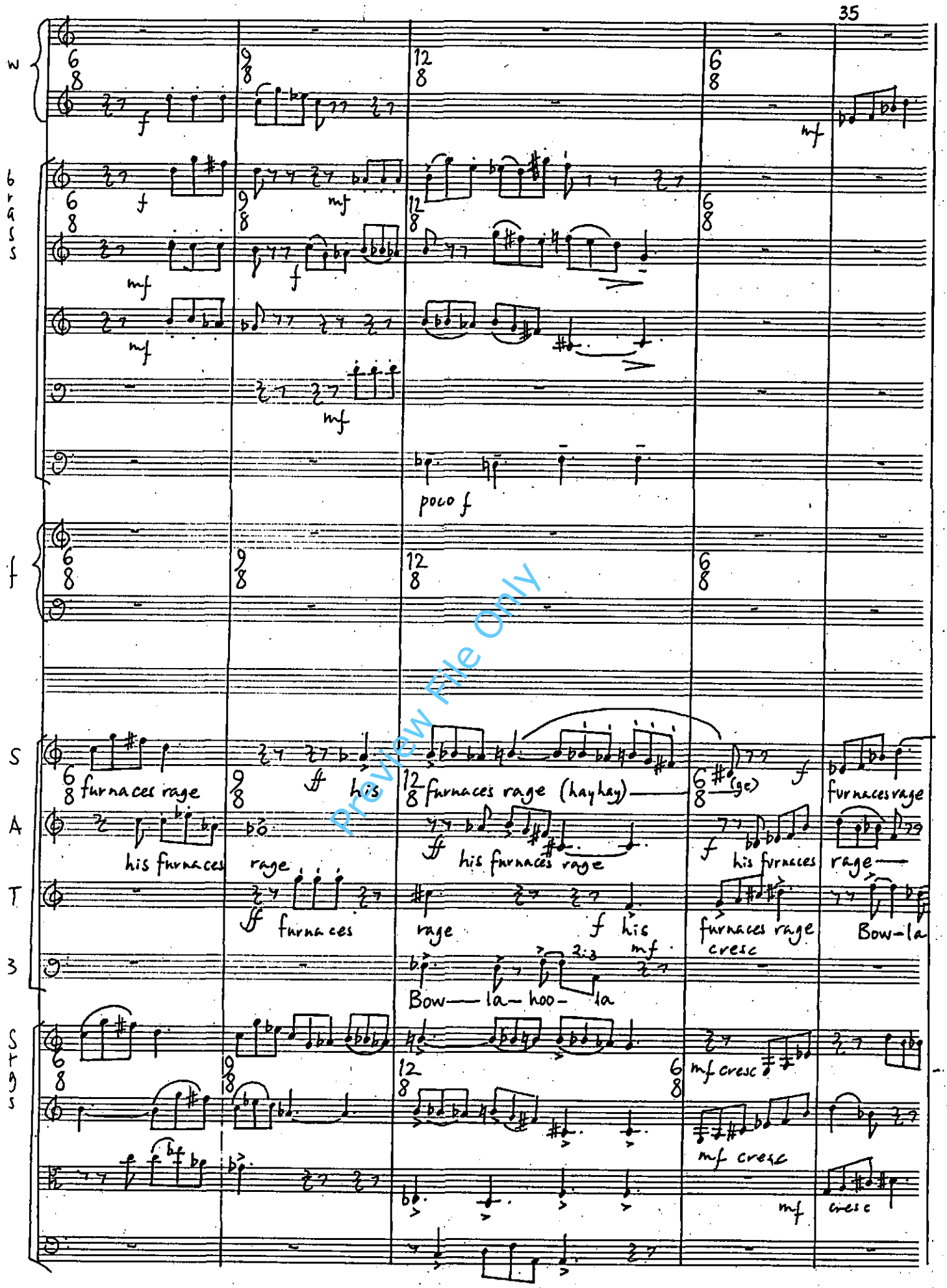

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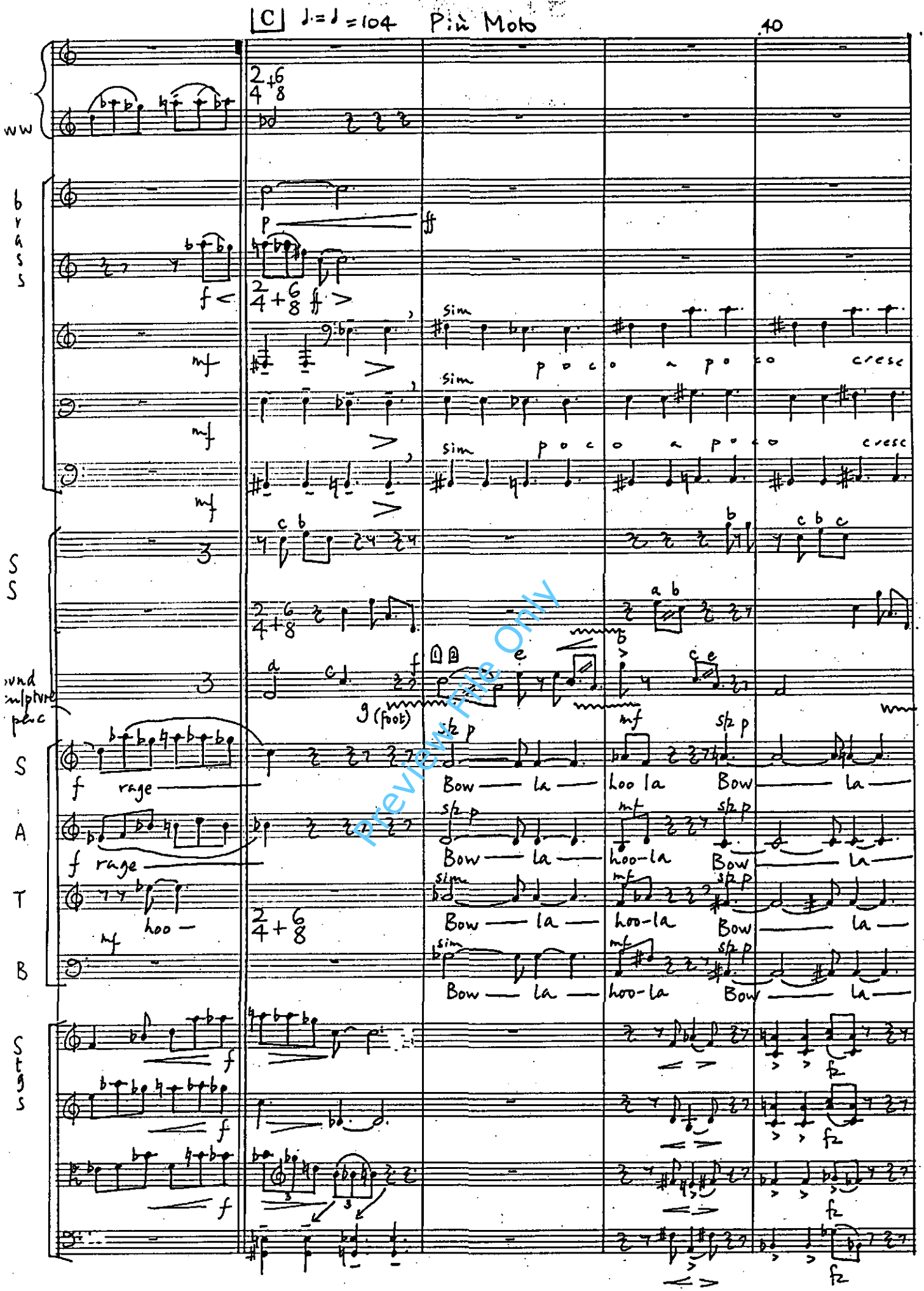
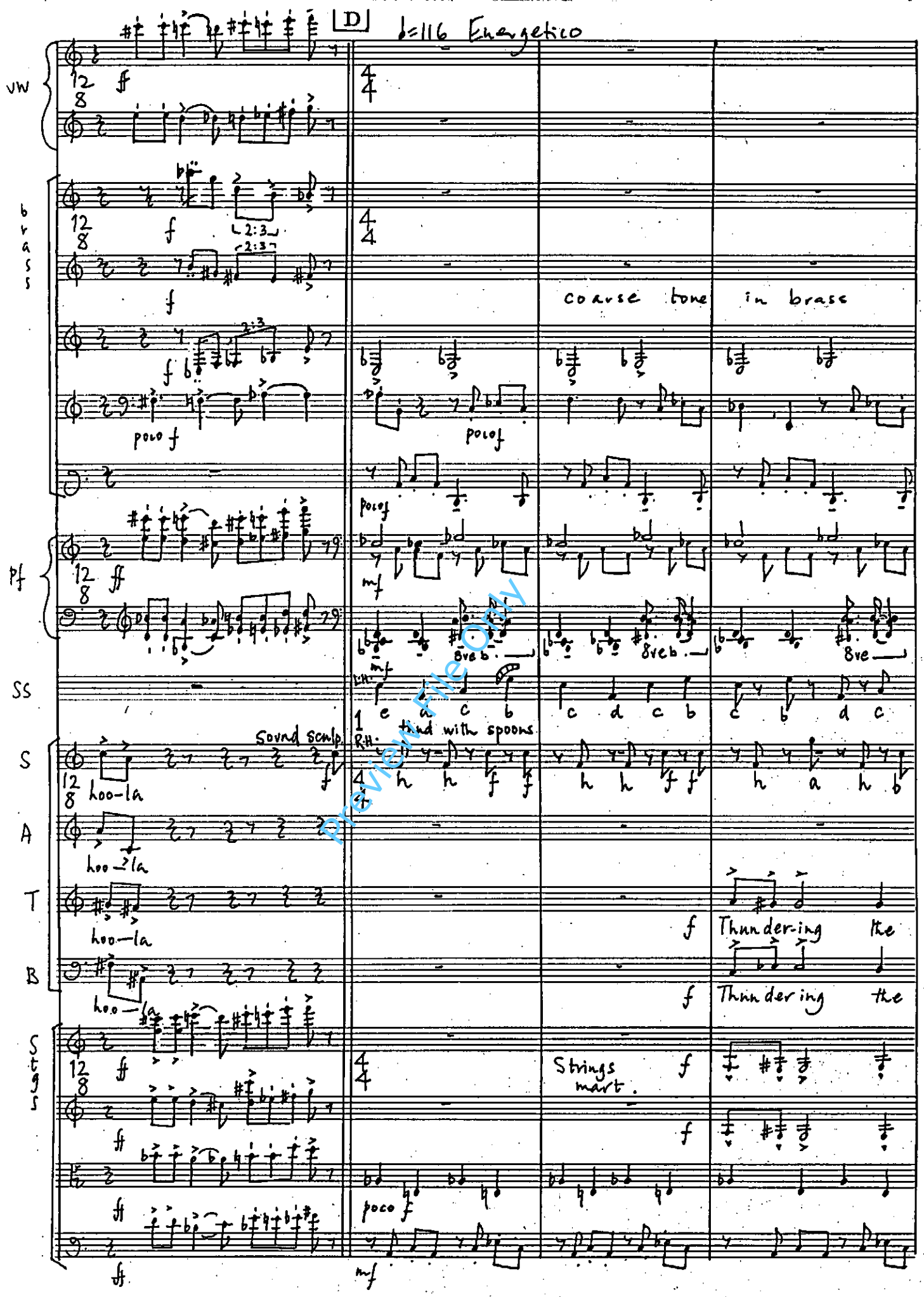


* n.b. va misaligned



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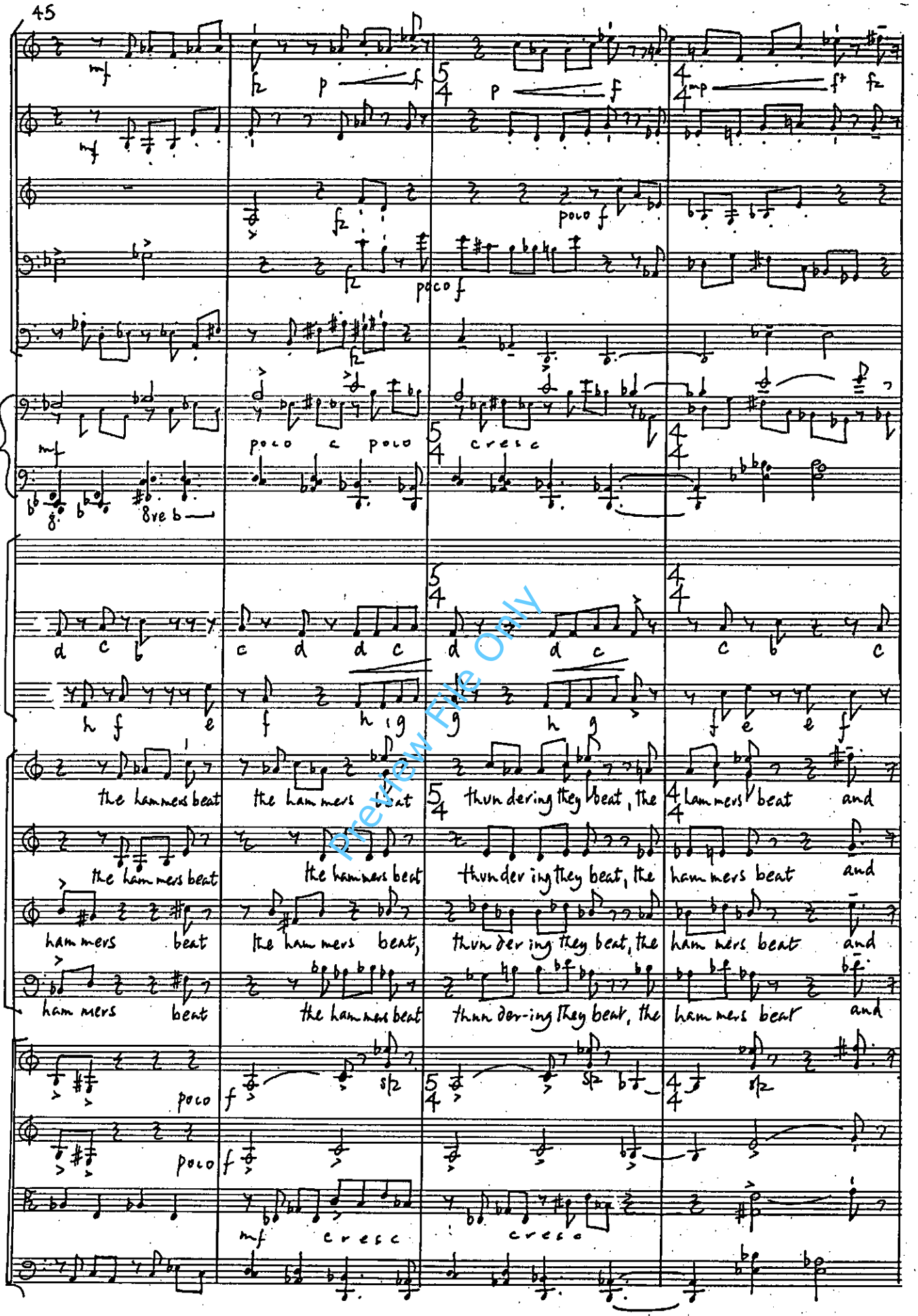

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the hammers beat the hammers beat thundering they beat, the hammers beat and

the hammers beat the hammers beat thundering they beat, the hammers beat and

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hammers beat the hammers beat thundering they beat, the hammers beat and

poco f

poco f

mf cresc

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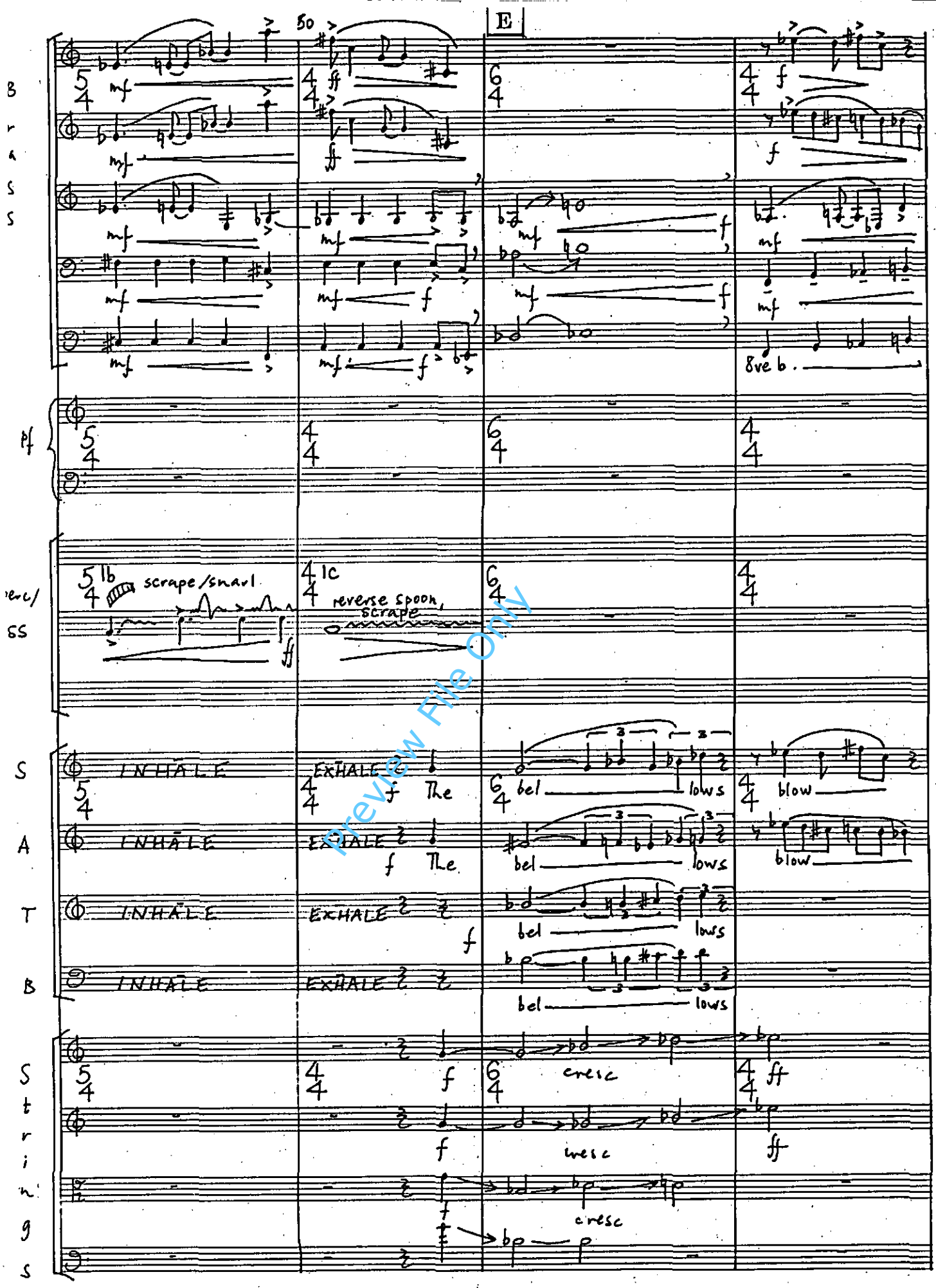

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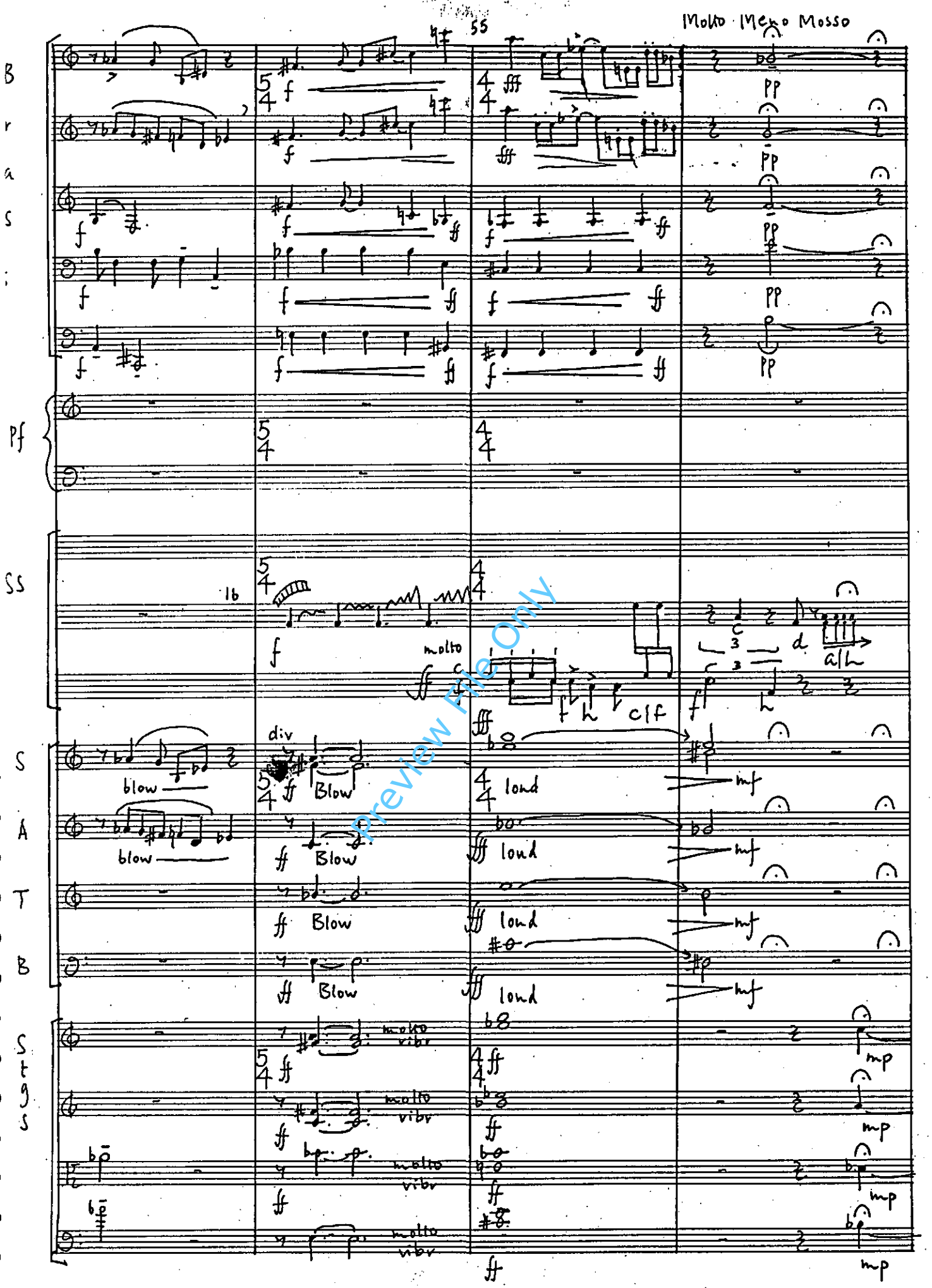

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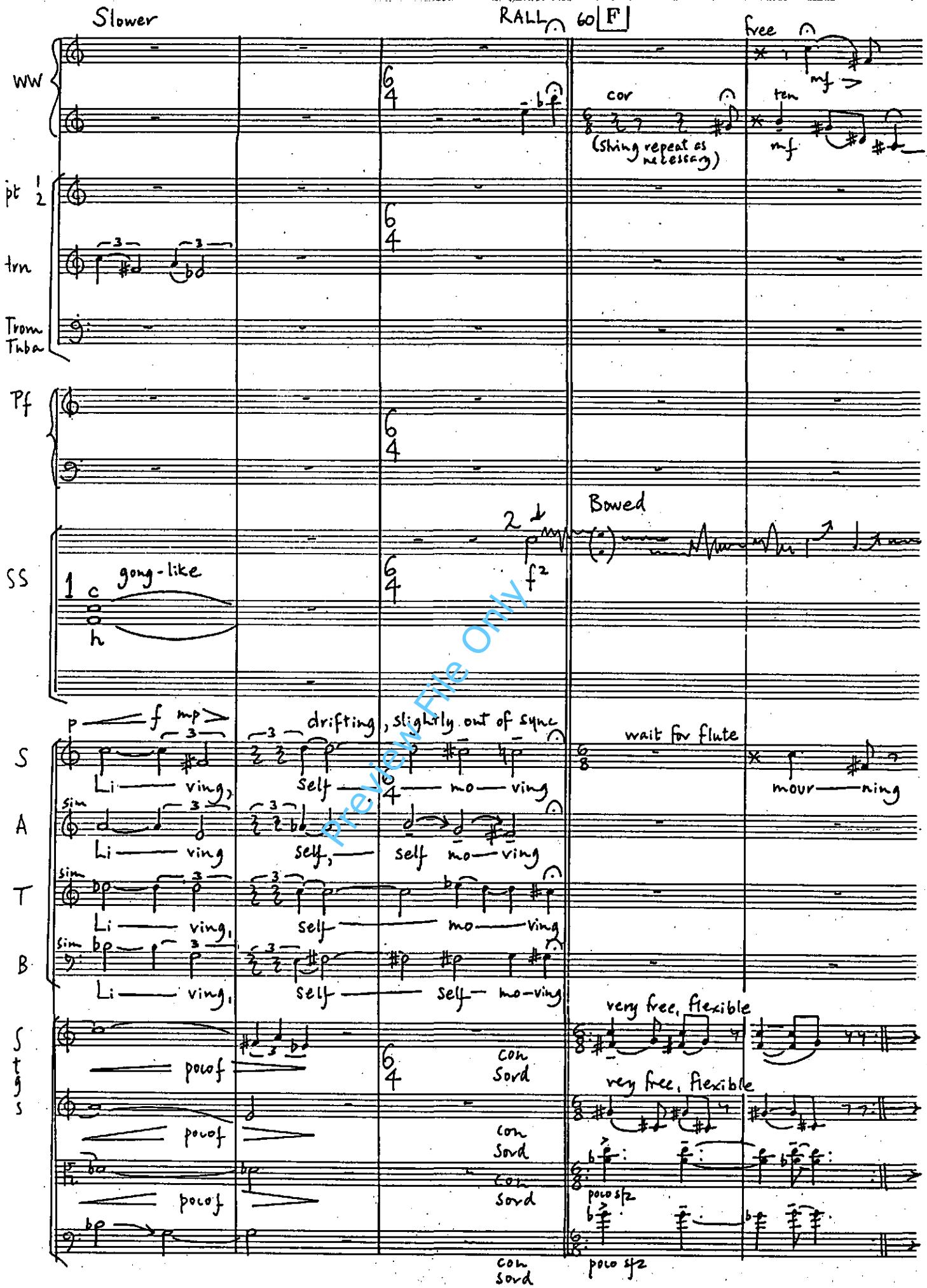

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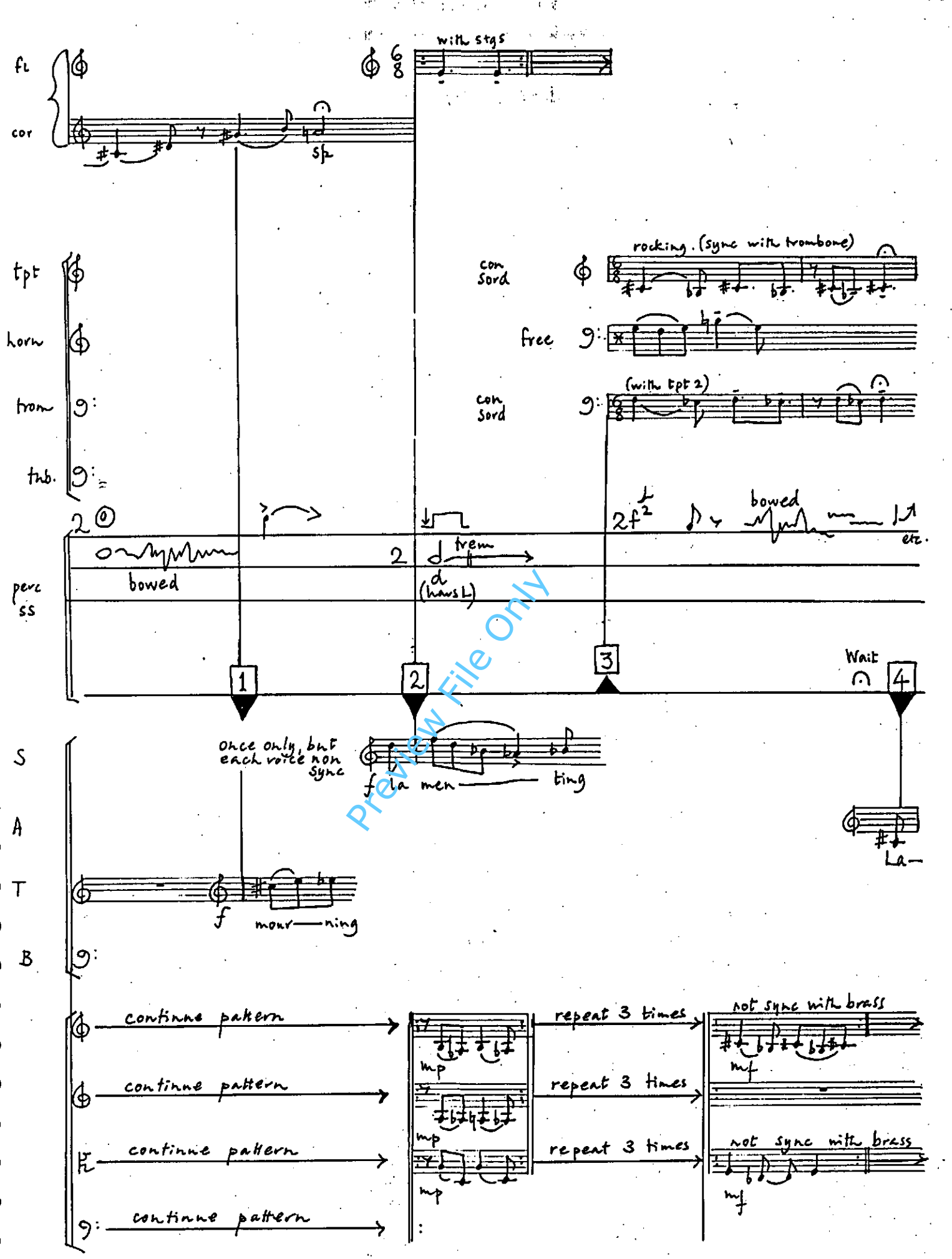

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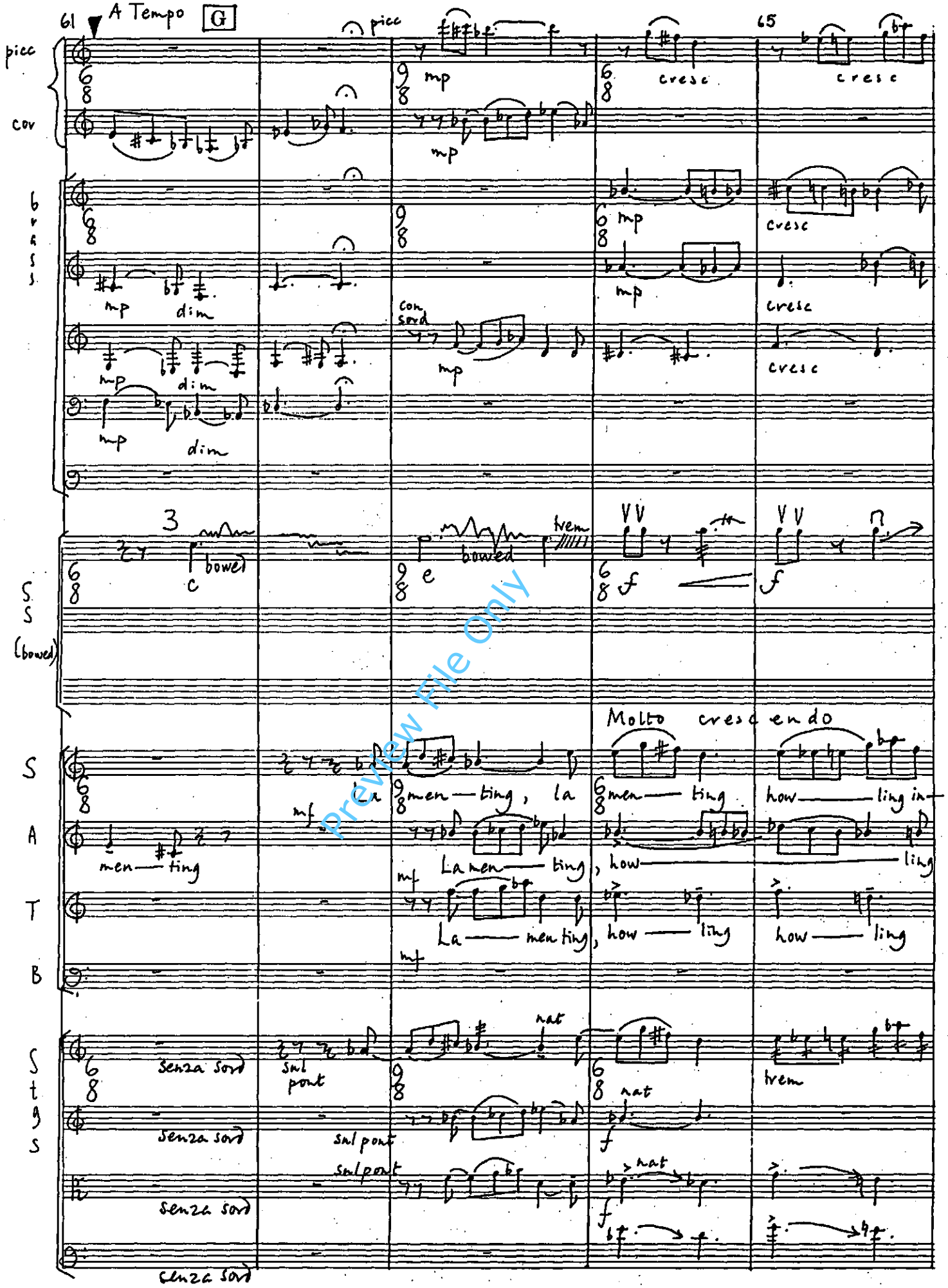

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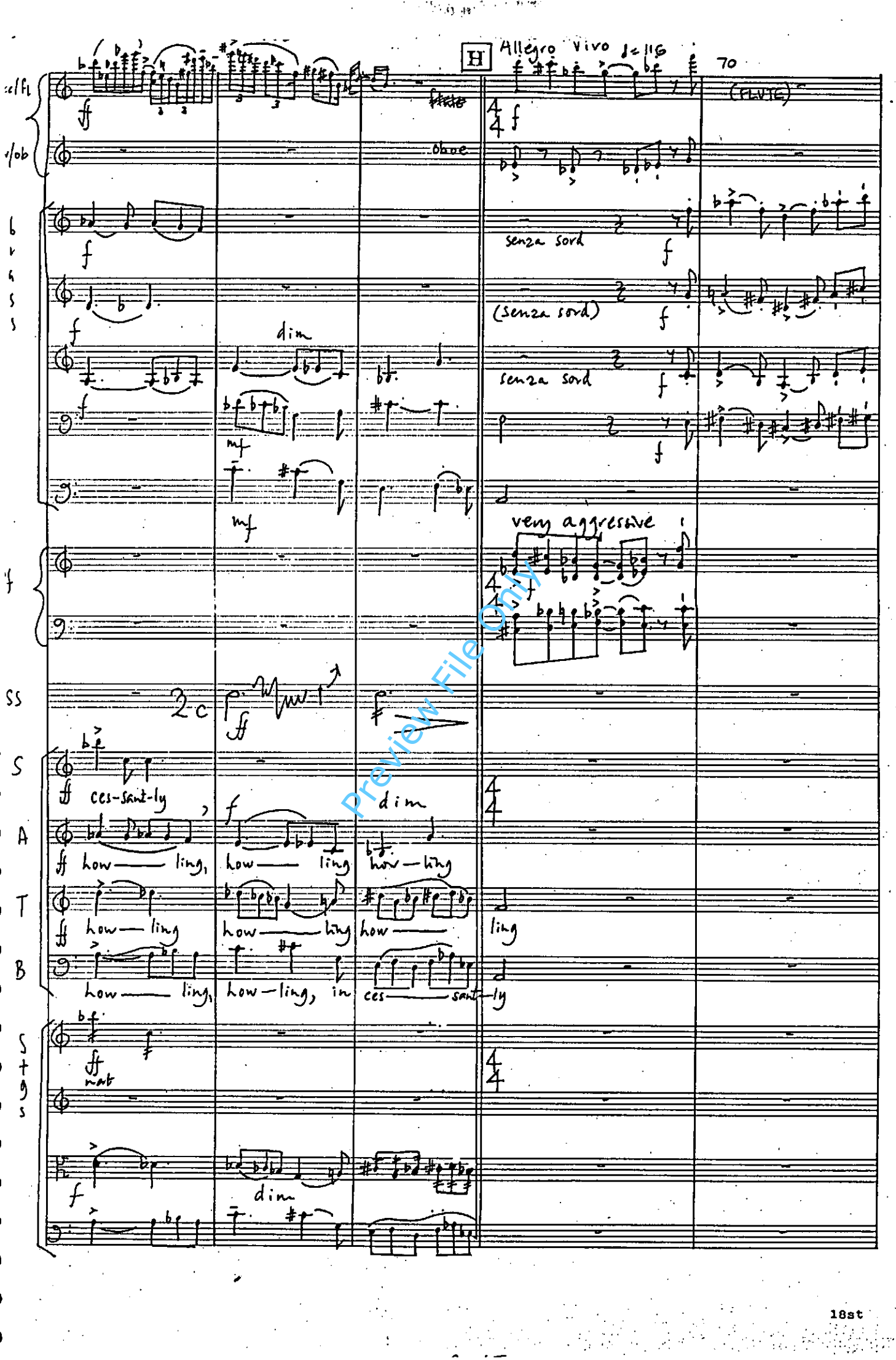

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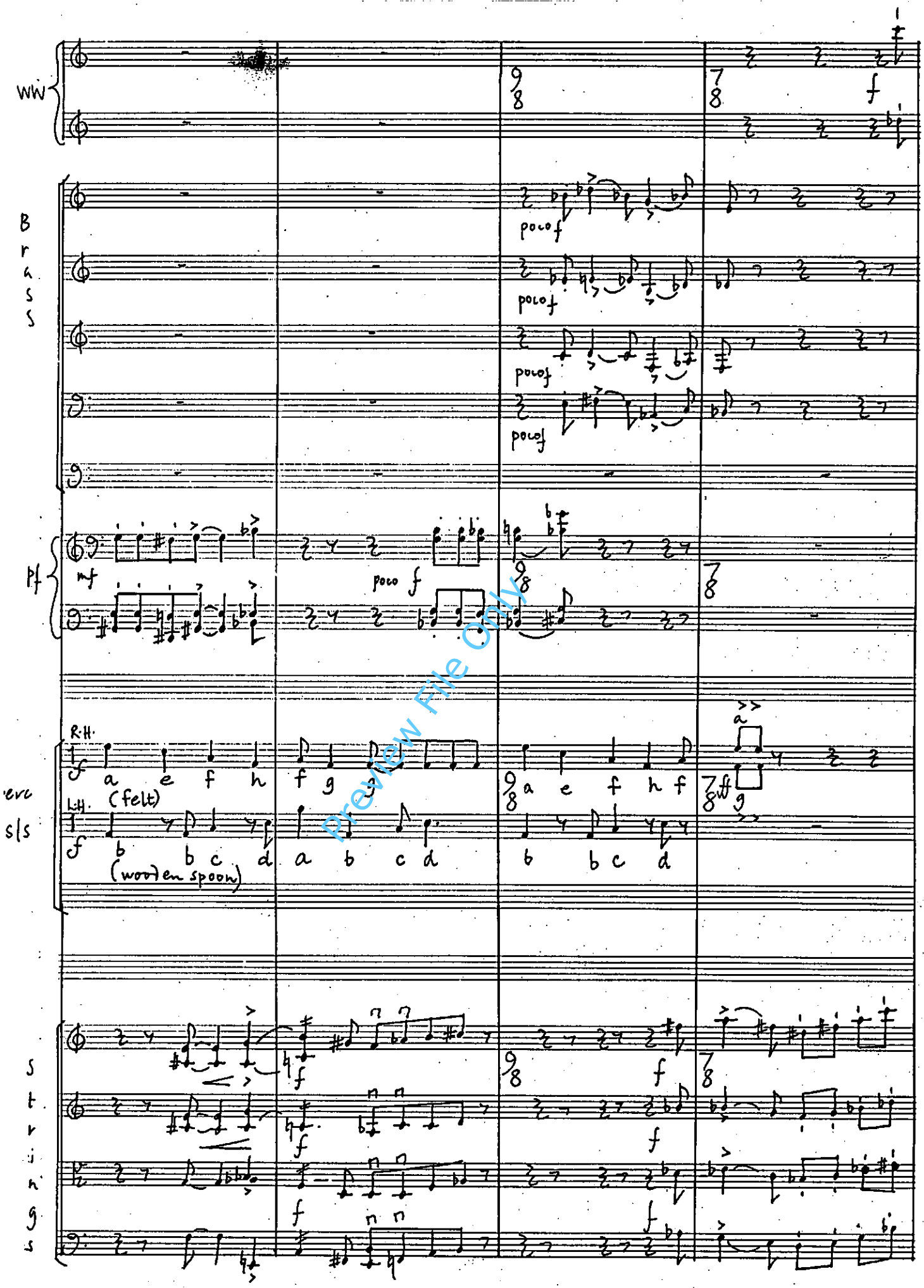

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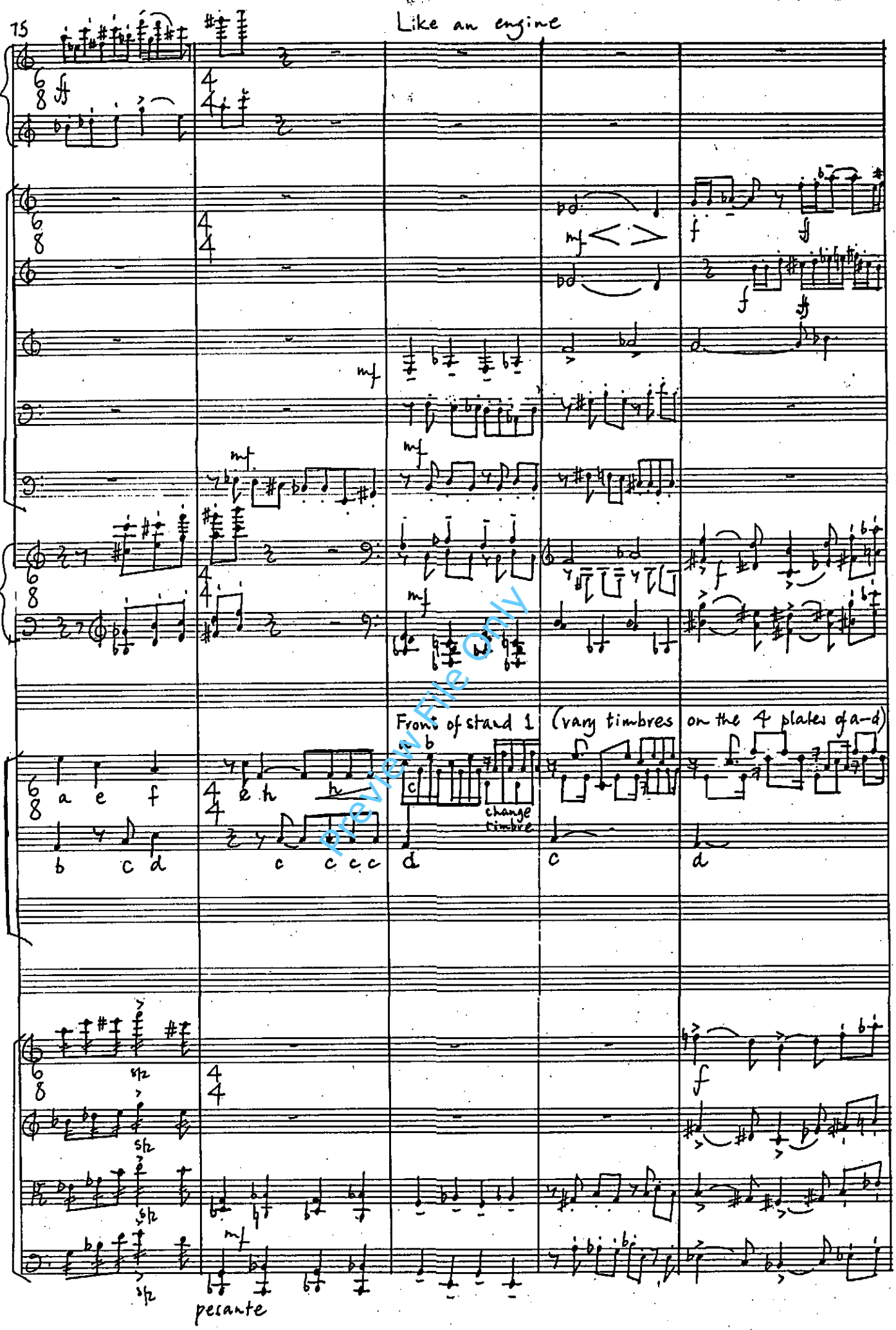

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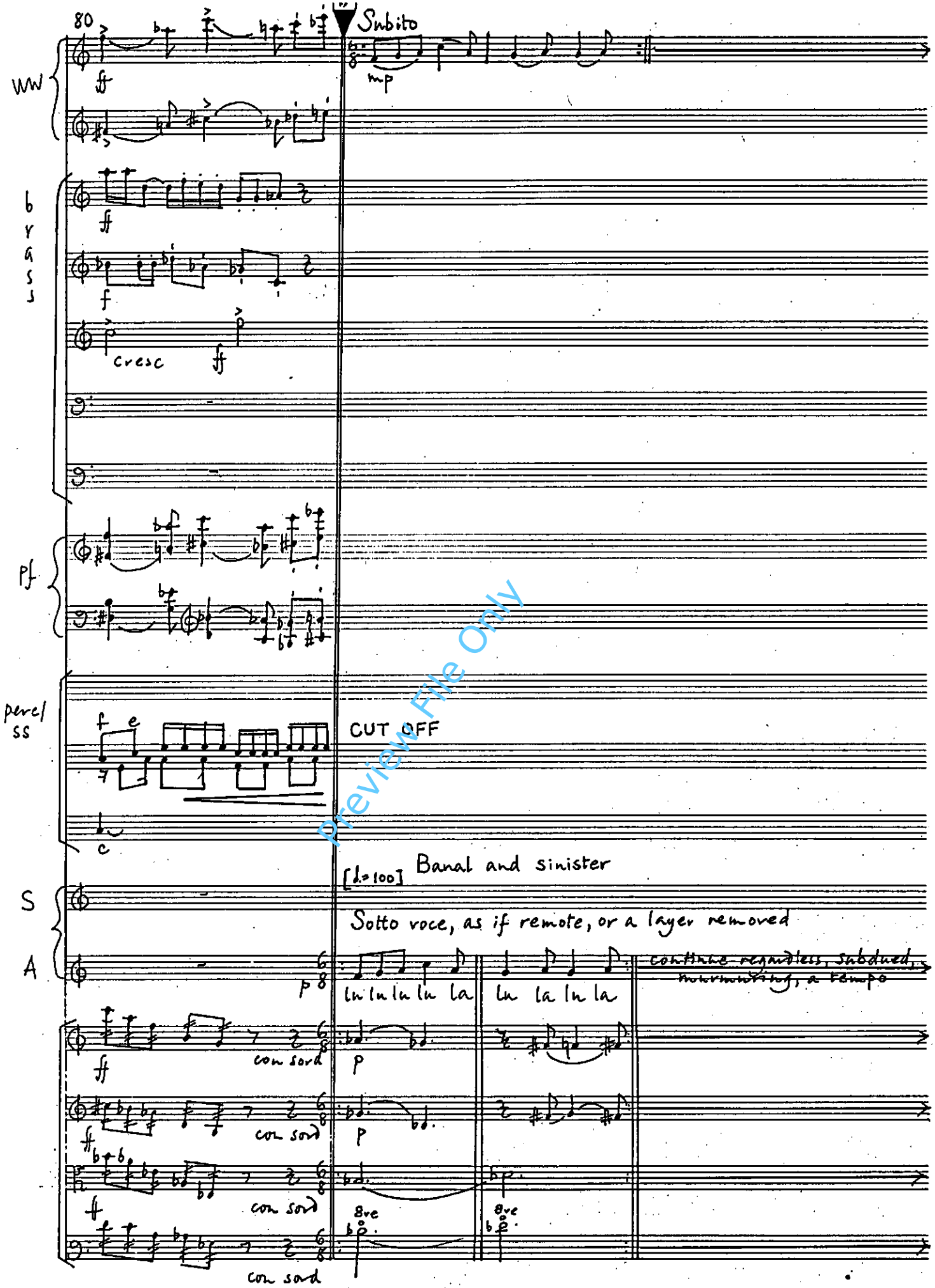

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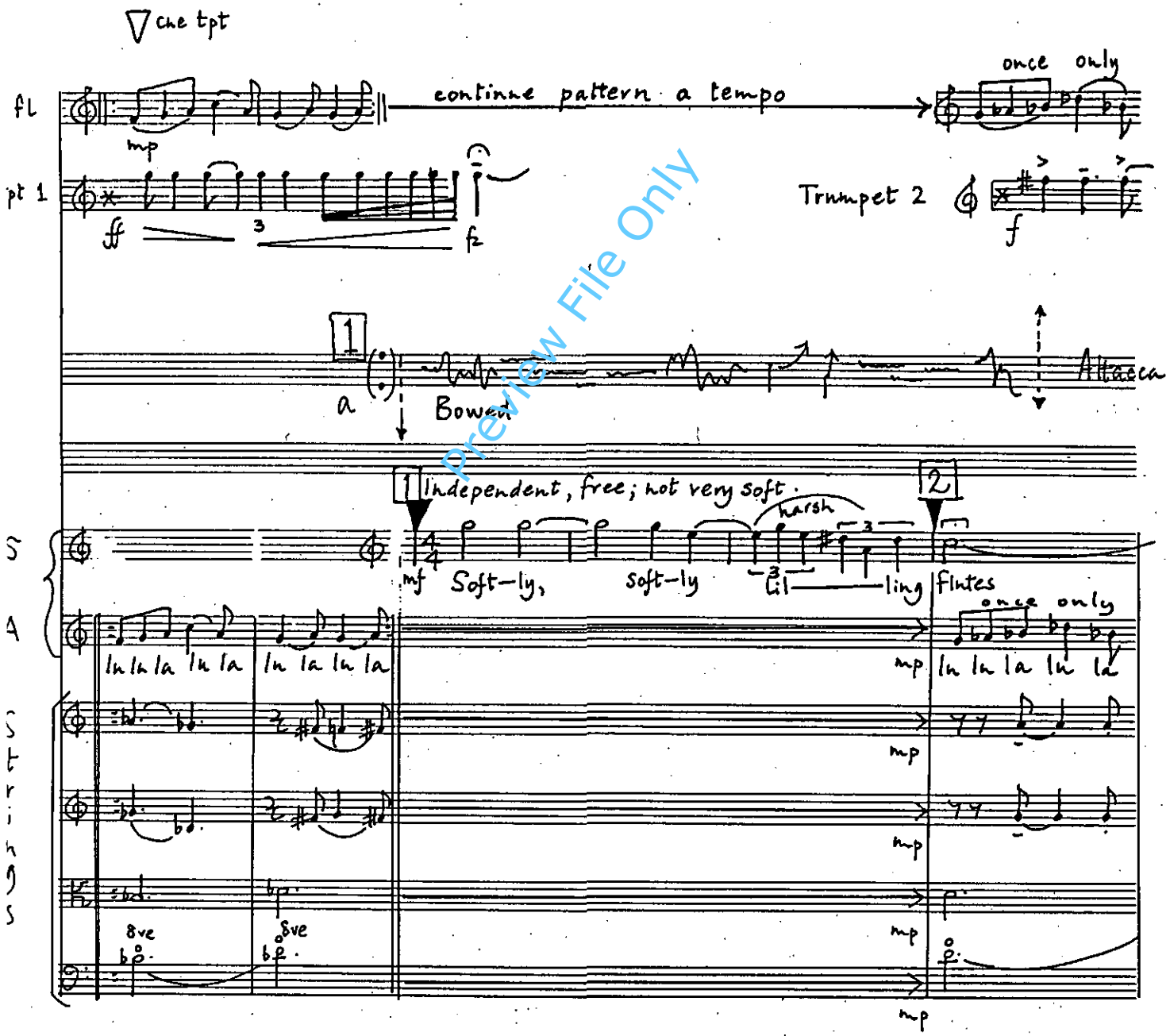
At this cut off, strings and flutes are revealed beneath the texture: so no clean break – perhaps 18st early entries.



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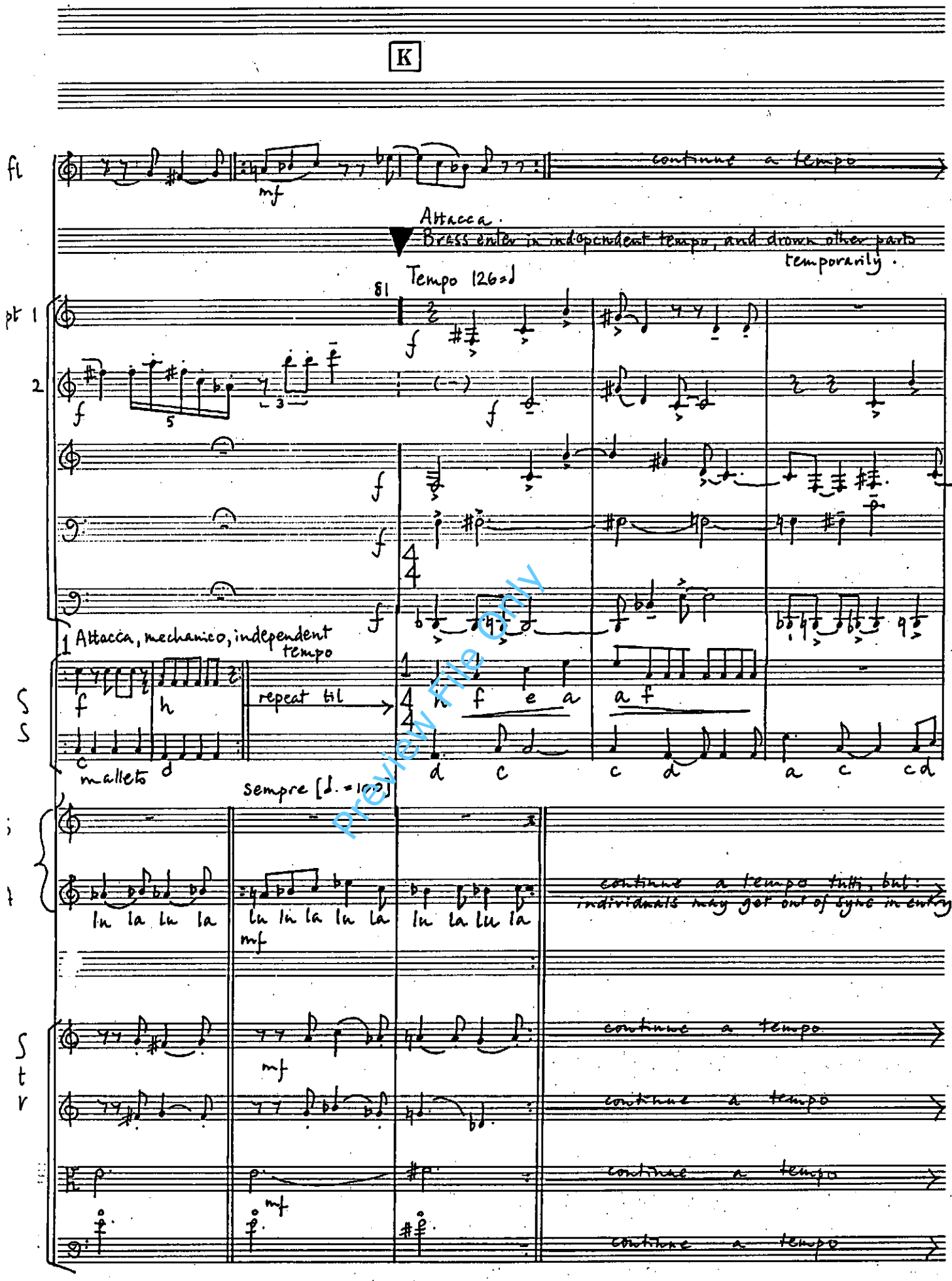
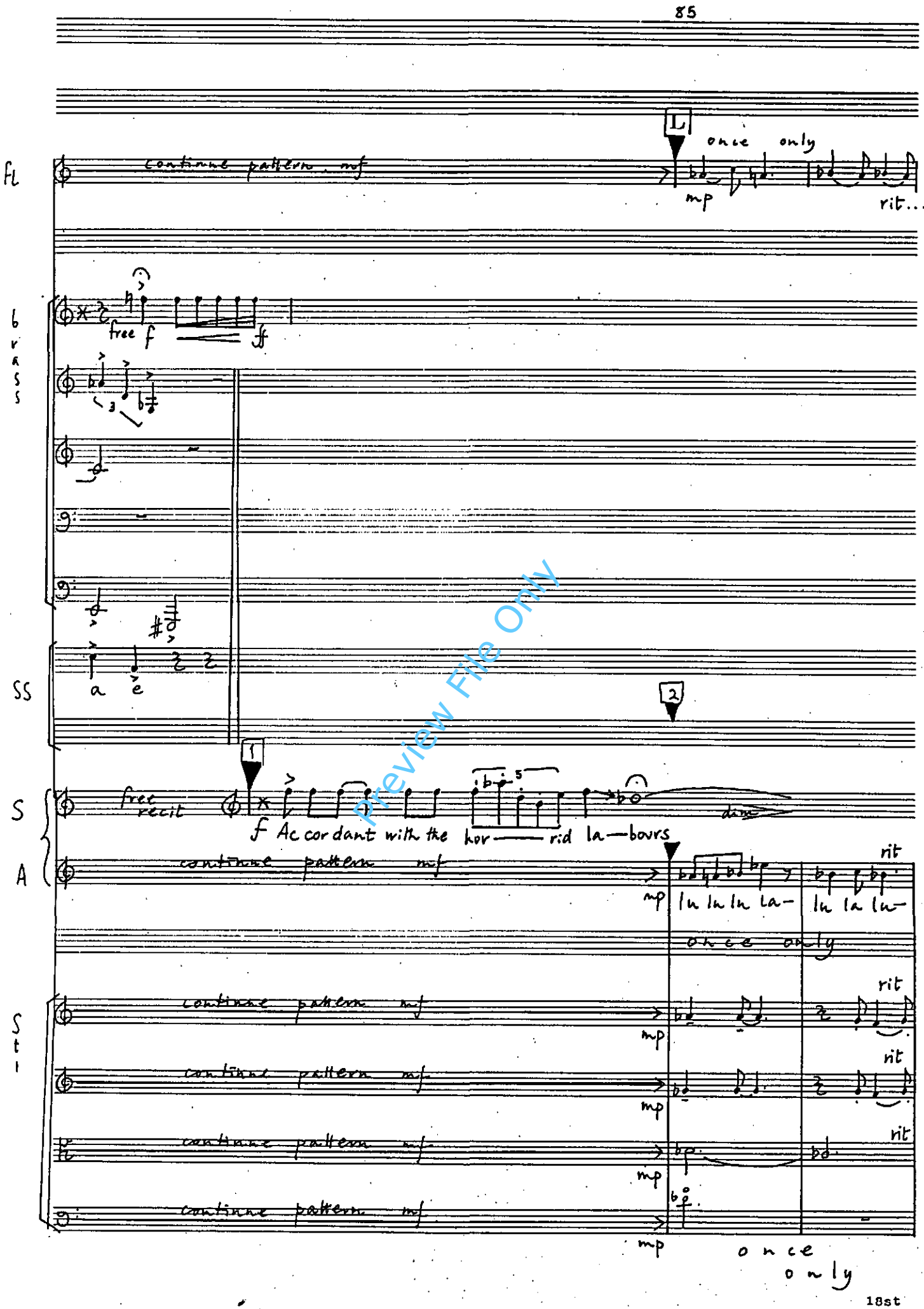

K
fl
mf
continue a tempo
Attacca.
Brass enter in independent tempo, and drown other parts temporarily.
Tempo 126=♩
81
pt 1
2
f
Attacca, mechanico, independent tempo
repeat til
mallets
sempre [♩.=100]
continue a tempo
individuals may get out of sync in entry
Str
mf
Preview File Only



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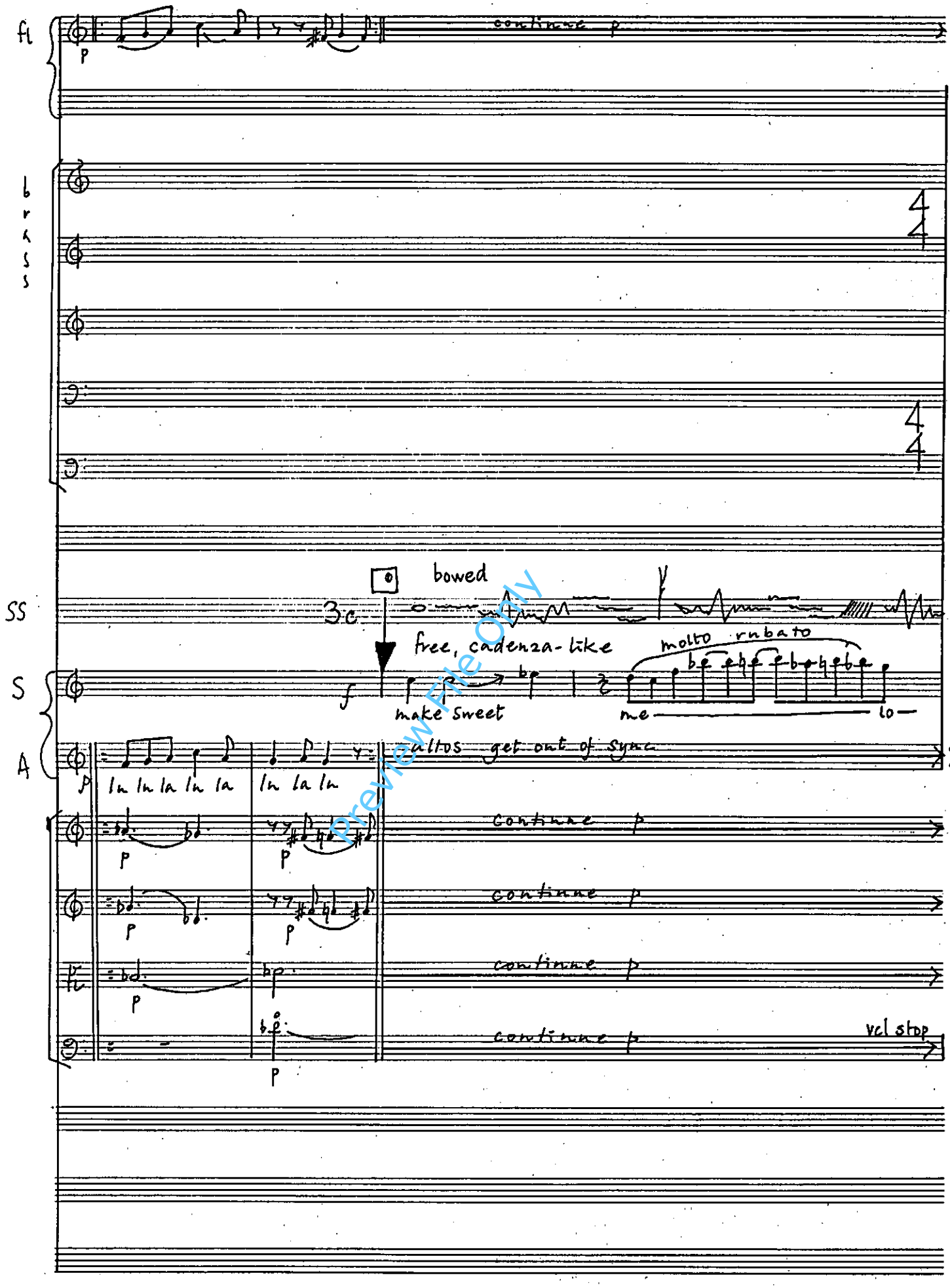

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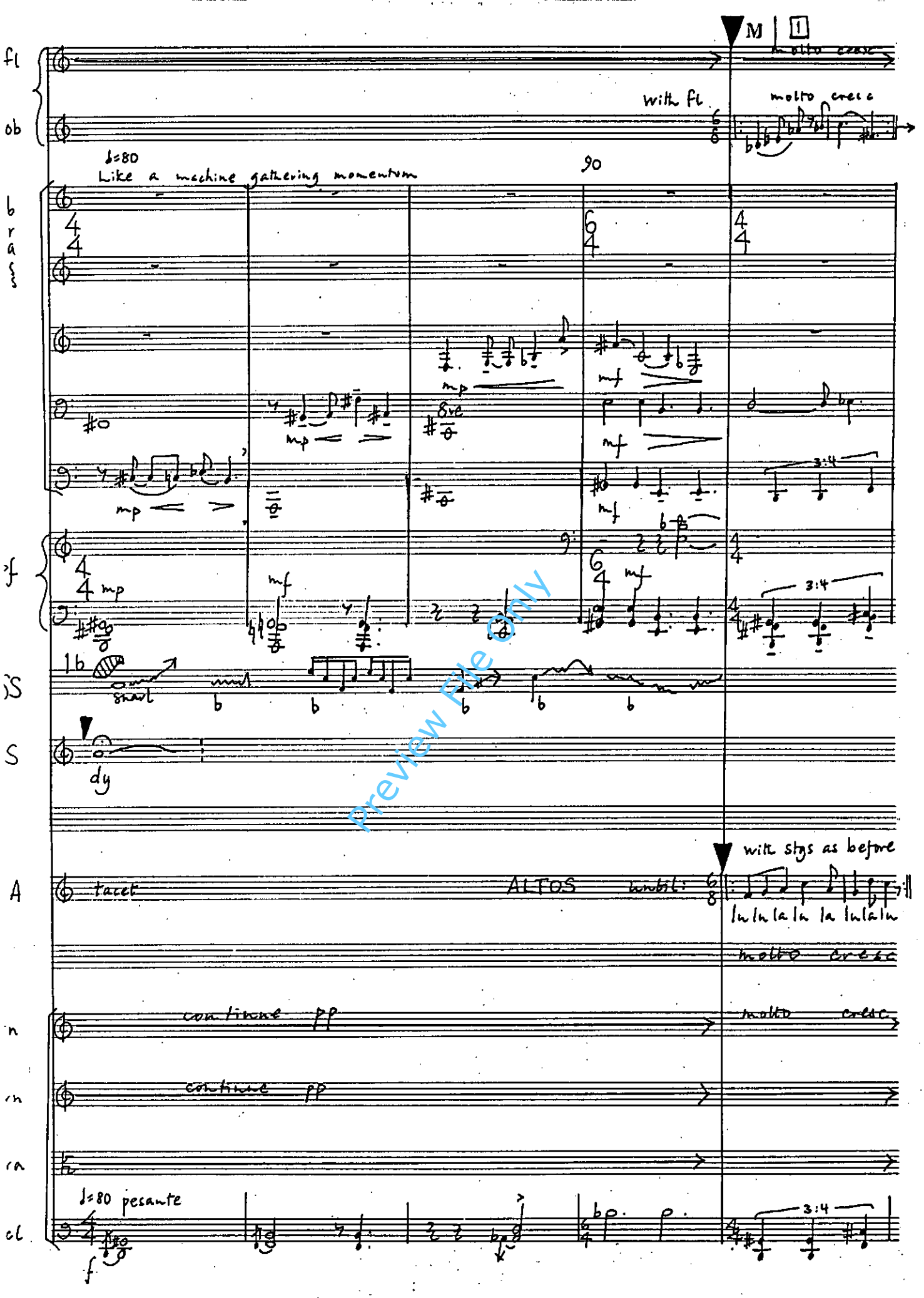

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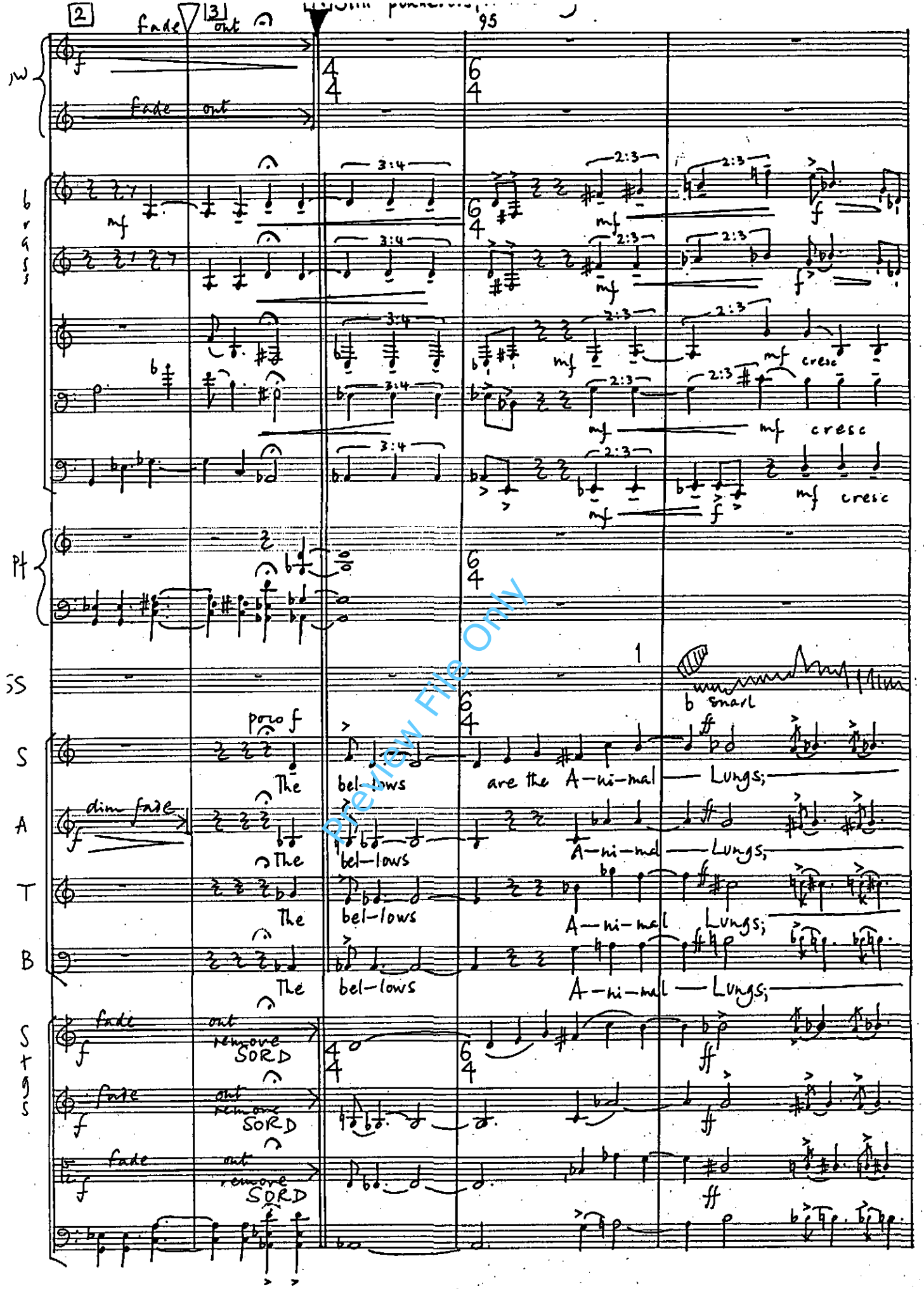

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18st