BARONG

for two pianos and ~~/~~ two percussion

BRITISH MUSIC INFORMATION CENTRE
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JAMES WOOD

BARONG (1985) JAMES WOOD

The Barong-Play (traditional Balinese dance) represents the eternal fight between good and evil. The good spirit is represented by the Barong (a friendly mythological monster) and the evil spirit by the Rangda (supreme witch). The fight is also between the living (Barong) and the dead (Rangda), since tradition maintains that the spirits of the Rangda and her followers inhabit the graveyard.

'Barong' is laid out in eight 'scenes'(preceded by an Introduction) which are divided into three movements, and is based on the Barong-Tjalonarang Play at Batubulan, South East Bali.

Introduction: Entrance of the Barong

I (i) Dance of the Barong
King Nerabangsawa as Barong, with company of Butas and Kalas

(ii) Dance of Ni Karong
Ni Karong and company of Sisias prepare for the arrival of the supreme witch, Dewi Krishna.

(iii) Dance of Dewi Krishna
Dewi Krishna (an old woman leaning on a staff) addresses her followers - Ni Karong and the Sisias make obeisance.

II (i) Trance Dance of the Balian (witch-doctor)
Two attendants of Nerabansawa, Penasar and Kartala discuss why it is that so many deaths have occurred in the village, and decide to consult a witch-doctor. The witch-doctor arrives, sits down with her head over a smoking bowl, and goes into trance. Meanwhile a 'Leyak'(one possessed by an evil spirit) is seen in the background. She is recognised as Ni Karong, at which the company seize her and tear off her mask. She is then tied up to a tree.

(ii) Dance of King Djayasenngara
Djayasenngara (a friend of Nerabangsawa) performs a wild trance-dance, admonishing Ni Karong as she tries to escape. The witch-doctor now tells Nerabagsawa to form a procession to the graveyard and fight Dewi Krishna and defeat the Rangda. Ni Karong is released with a warning.

III(i) Village Procession to the Graveyard
Nerabangsawa, Penasar and Kartala, Djayasenngara and the whole company of Butas and Kalas process to the graveyard.

(ii) Fight between Nerabangsawa (Barong) and Dewi Krishna (Rangda)
Dewi Krishna appears at the entrance to the graveyard and is attacked by Nerabangsawa. As she begins to falter, and in order to increase her magical power, she transforms herself into a boar. Defeated again she transforms herself into a bird - still she is defeated and so she finally transforms herself into the Rangda. The Rangda is too powerful for Nerabangsawa who then transforms himself into the Barong, and eventually defeats the Rangda.

(iii) Triumphal Dance of the Barong, and general Trance-Dance
As the Barong and his followers rejoice over their triumph, Ni Karong (attendant of the defeated Rangda) goes into trance before finally collapsing. At the end of the dance the men turn their Kris' (wooden swords) in on themselves, violently stabbing themselves in a final trance-dance.

Each of the characters in the Play are represented by a certain rhythm (and associated melody): the characters on the side of Barong are associated with the Dhamār-tāla: 5.2.3.4 (North India), and those on the side of Rangda with the Dhruva Trisra: 3.2.3.3 (South India). The various 'guises' (costumes/masks) worn by each character, as well as certain concurrent themes such as trance, transformation (of one being into another), kris, etc. are each represented by a particular instrumental 'colour', as shown in the following table:

Side of Barong	Side of Rangda
Side of Barong (general): Logdrum	Side of Rangda (gen): Sleighbells
Nerabansawa (Barong):Piano/vibraphone	Dewi Krishna:
Butas & Kalas (chorus): Piano/xylo	as human: Thai gongs
Penasar & Kartala (attendants): Low staccato chords; Bass drum/Logdrum	as boar: Low steel drum/piano
	as bird: High steel drum/piano
Balian (witch-doctor): Crotales	as Rangda: Cowbells/piano
Djayasenngara: Piano harmonics (metal triangle laid on piano strings)	Ni Karong: (a) Piano chords with grace-notes
	(b) Scherzando figures
	Sisias (chorus): Rising piano scales

General Themes	
Trance:	Glissando/sliding tones
Grave:	Tam-tam
Kris (wooden sword):	Thundersheet
Leyak:	Claves
Transformation:	Drums (as distinct from Bass Drum alone)
Passive presence:	Trill
Smoking bowl:	Timpani sticks on low piano strings

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Instruments required:

Percussion 1:

Vibraphone (motor off throughout)
Crotales (2 8ves)
Thai Gongs:

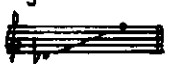
Large wood-block or Log-drum
Low sleighbells
Bamboos
Chinese Wind Gong (smallish, flat chinese tam-tam)
3 chinese cymbals: very high, medium, low.
Bongos
Medium tom-tom (slack)
Large timpani (slack - unpitched)
Brass thundersheet (2)
Acme siren (mouth-operated)
Steel drum

Percussion 2:

Xylophone (4 8ve)

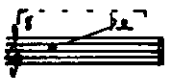
(sounds 1 8ve higher than written)

Cow-bells:



(sounds 2 8ves higher than written)

Very high chinese cymbal
Chinese tam-tam
Large Log-drum
Bongo (or high tom-tom)
Low tom-tom (slack)
Large Bass Drum
High sleighbells
Bamboos
Low sleighbells
Flexatone:



Low claves
Very small brass thundersheet
Metallophone:

(separate vibraphone plates mounted in frame without resonators)

Medium or large timpani.

(Metallophone should be mounted over the timp. head as close to the skin as possible, so that maximum vibrations are picked up by the timp. head).

Bow
Acme siren (mouth operated)

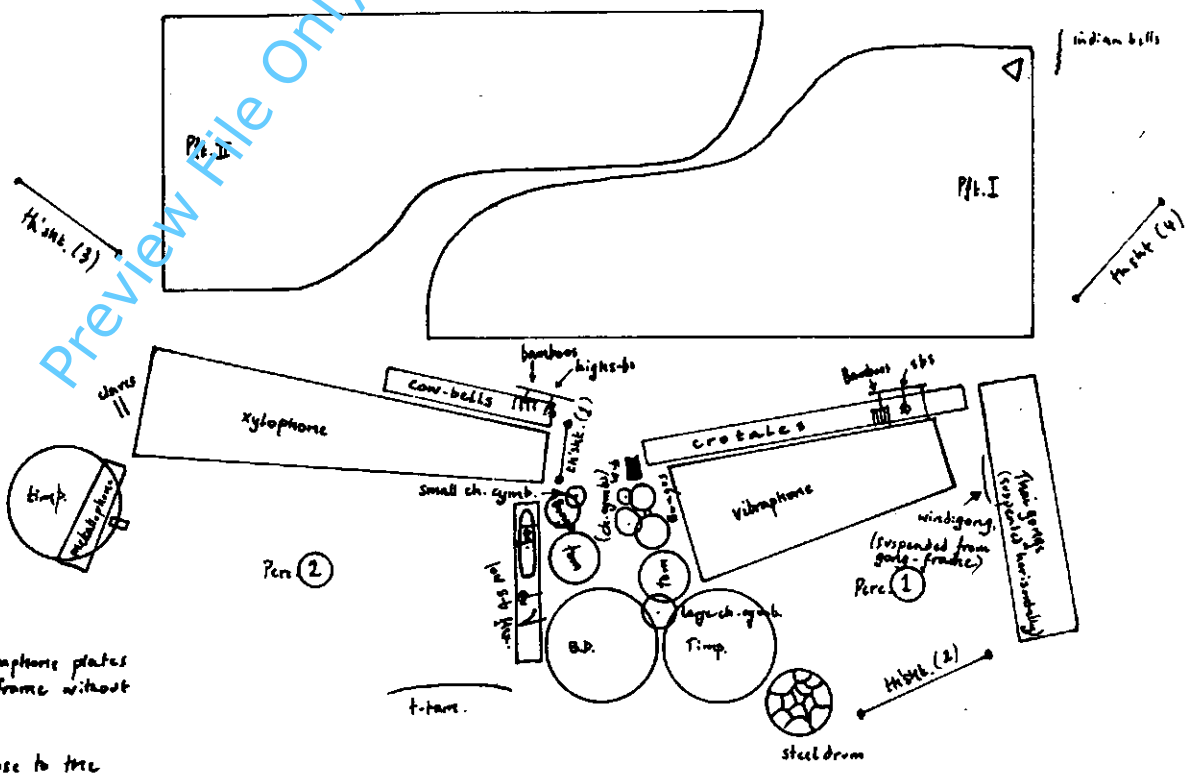
Piano I:

Suspended Indian Bells (very high)
Large triangle
timpani sticks
Brass thundersheet (4)
Acme siren (mouth operated)

Piano II:

Brass Thundersheet (3)
Acme siren (mouth operated)

'Barong' was commissioned by Southern Arts Association for the Regional Contemporary Music Network, with funds provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain. The first seven performances took place in Bedford, Warwick, Keele, Tunbridge Wells, Oxford, Bristol and Brighton in February 1985. The performers were Julian Jacobson and Andrew Ball (pianos), and Simon Limbrick and the composer (percussion).



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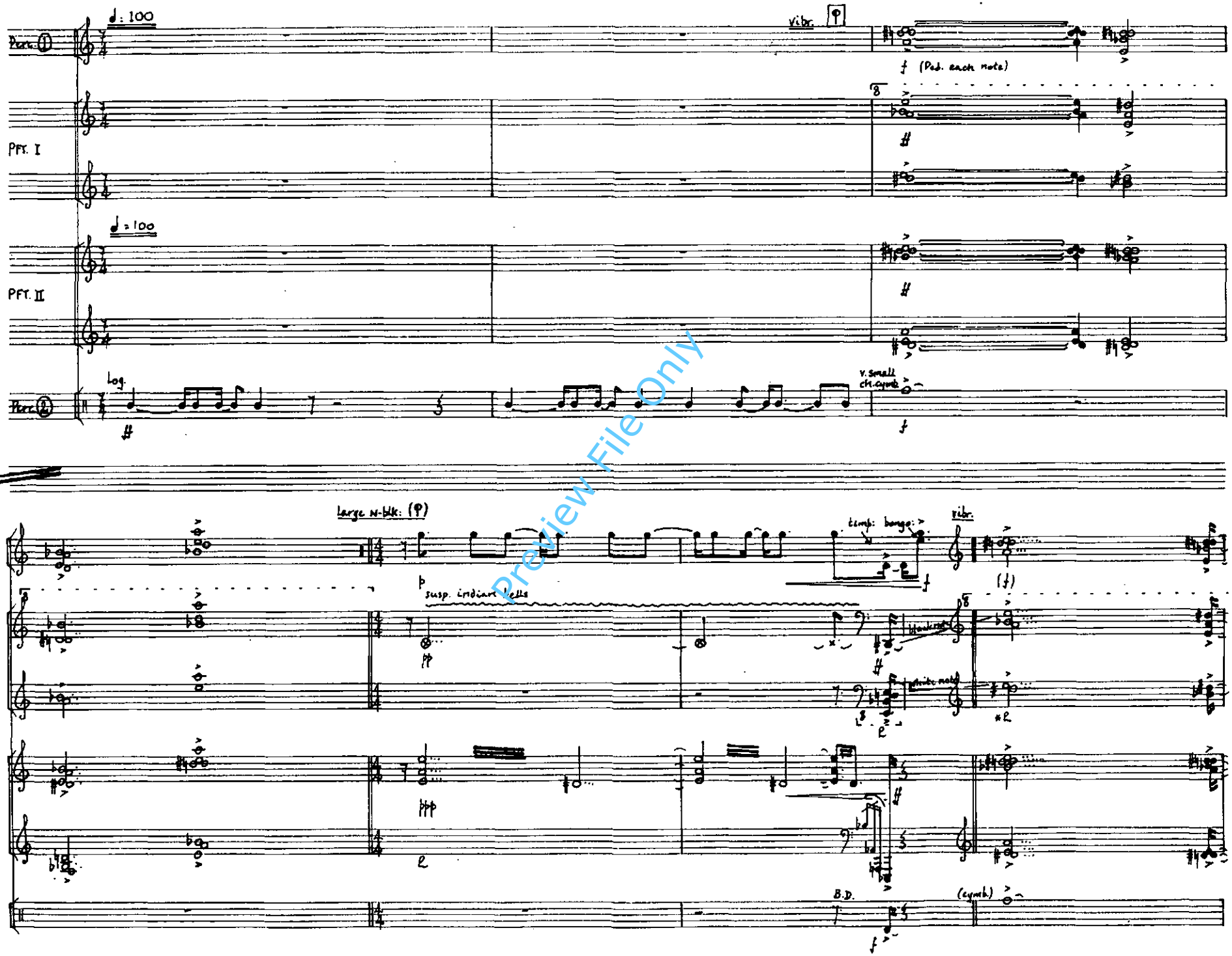
INTRODUCTION : Entrance of the Barong



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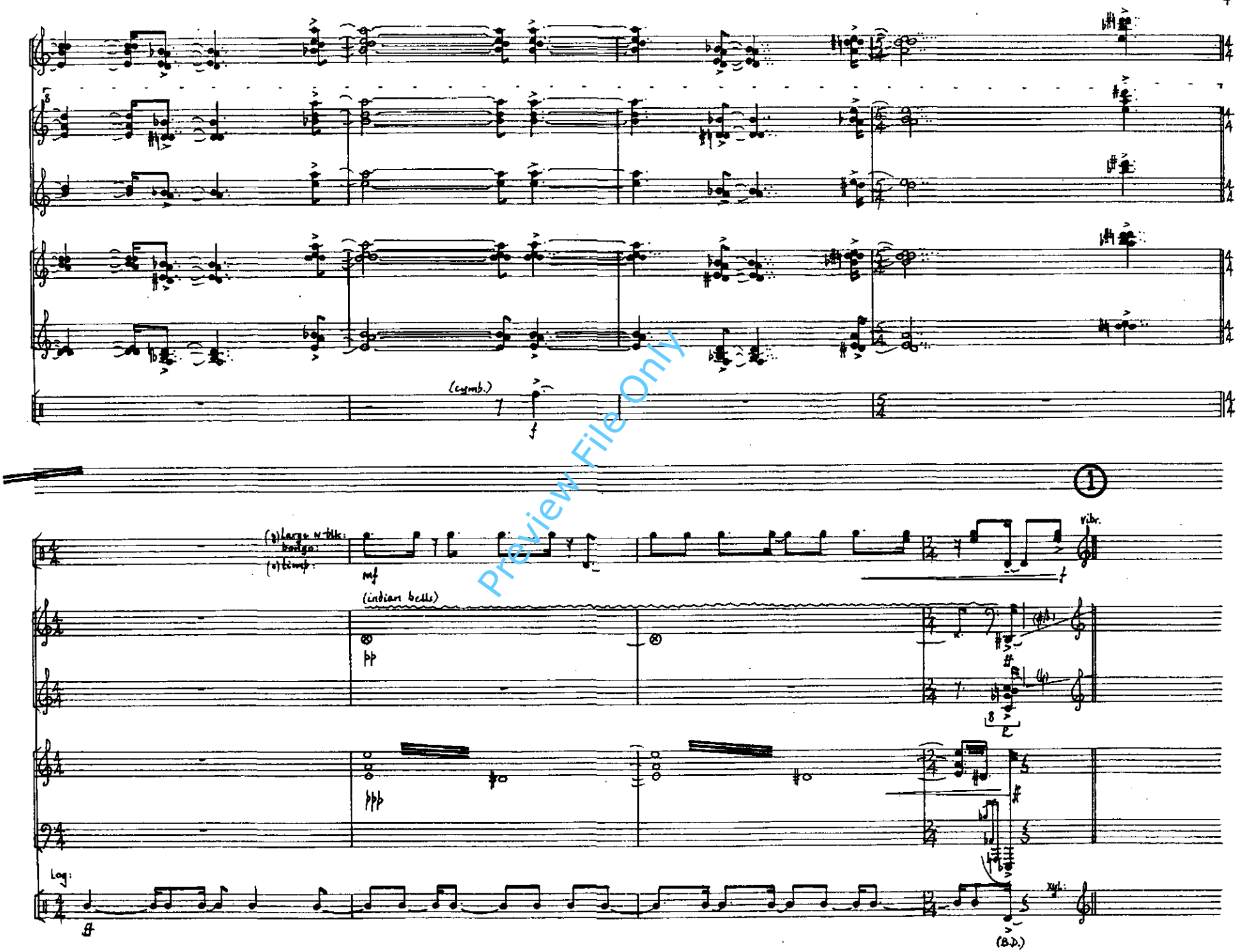

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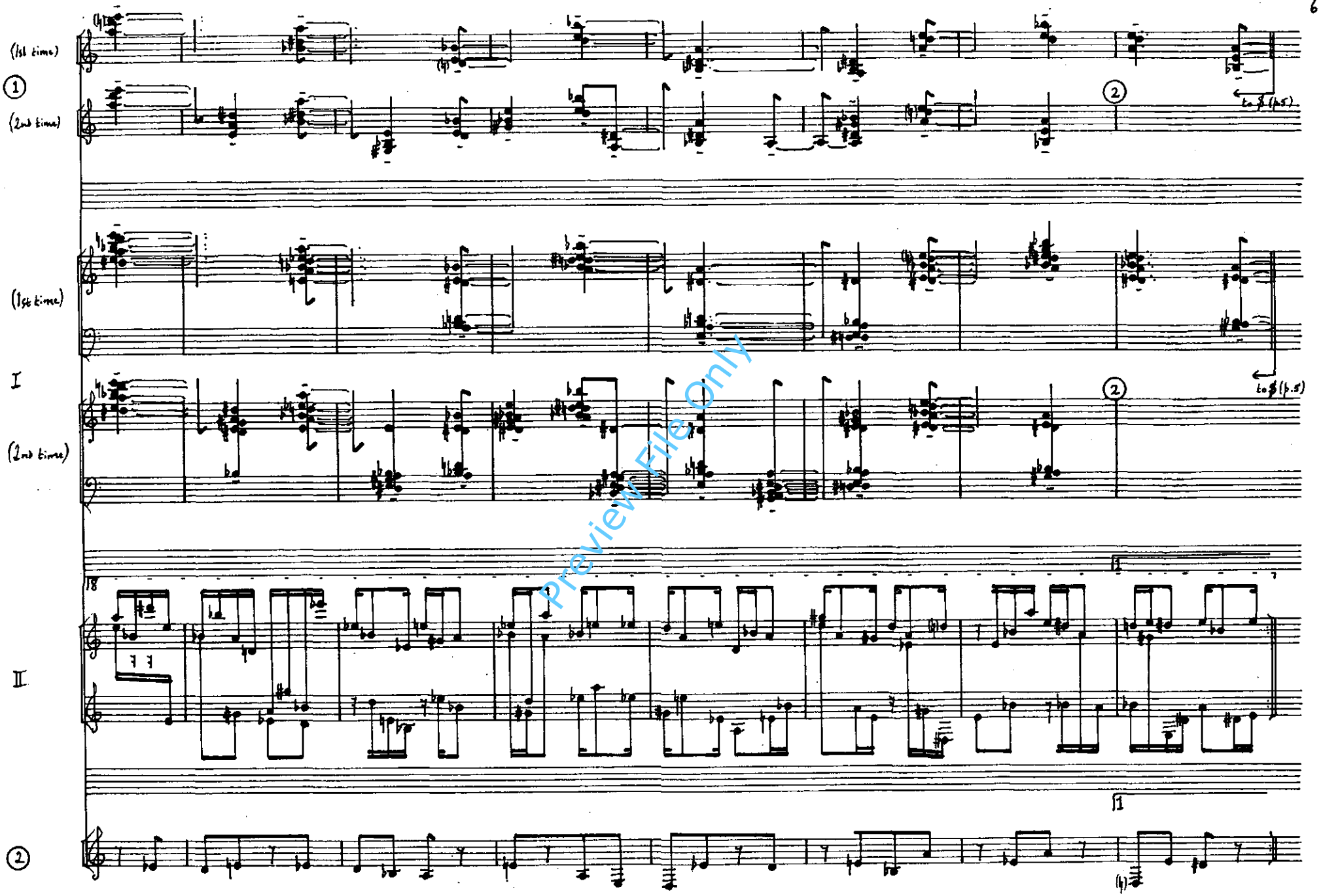

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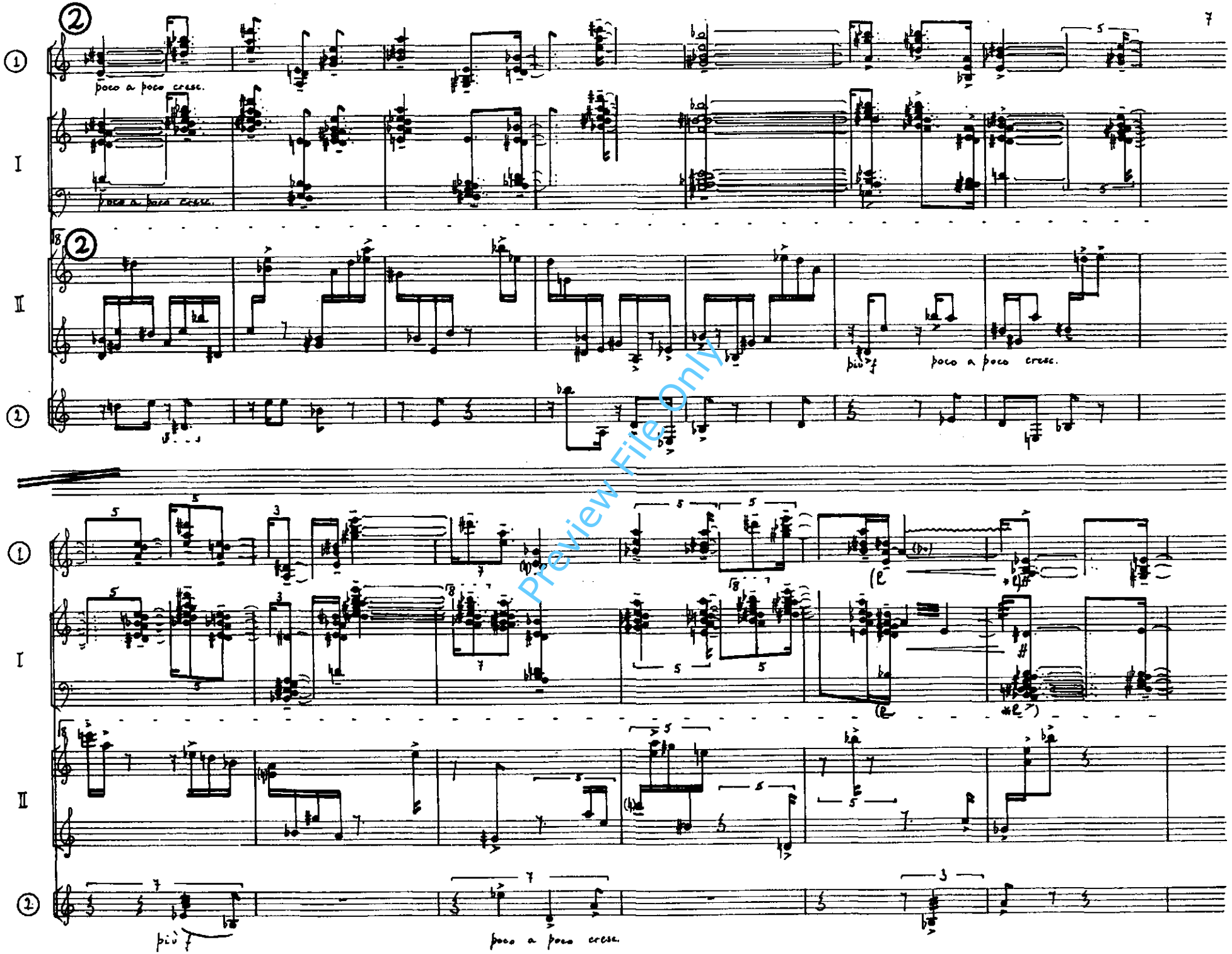

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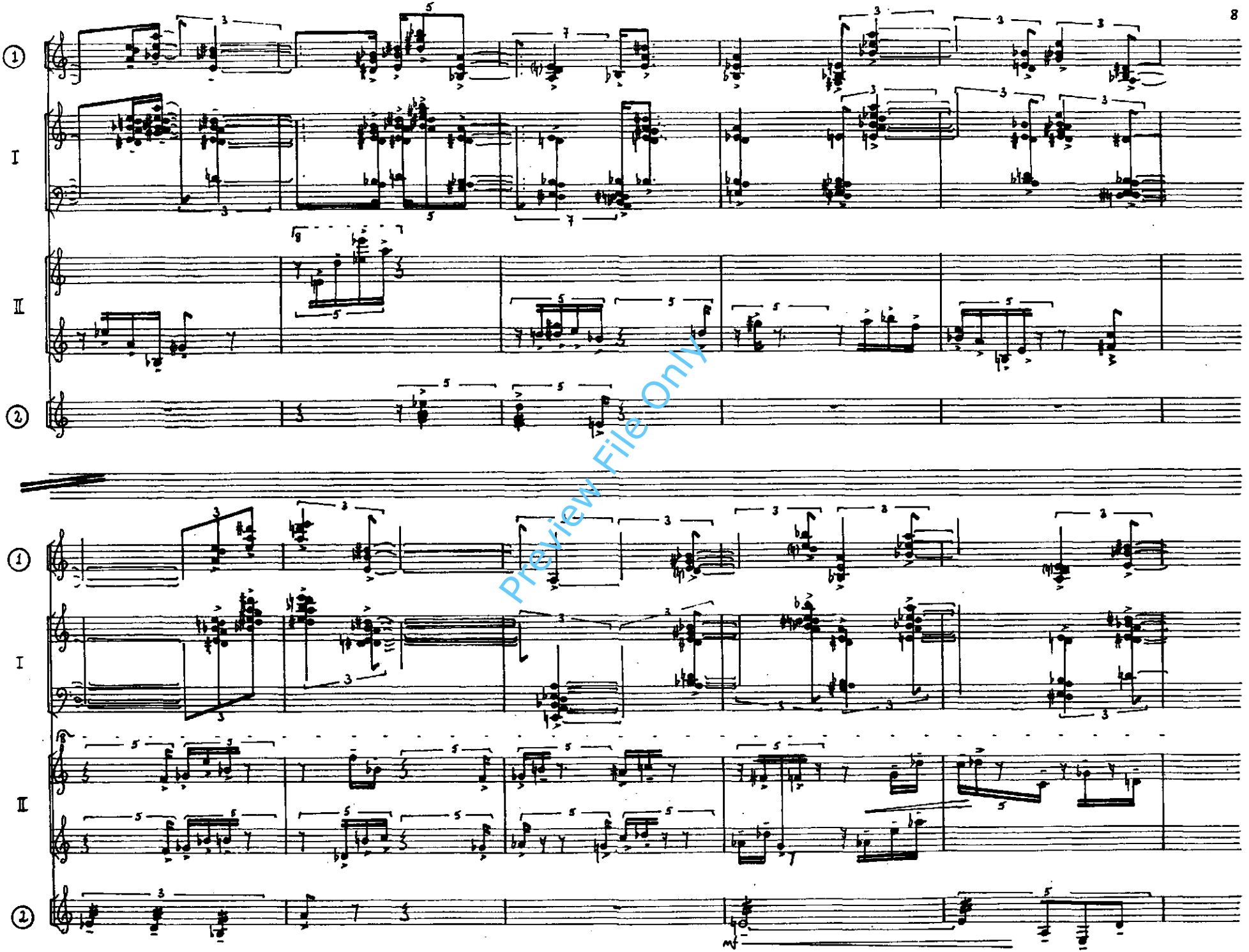

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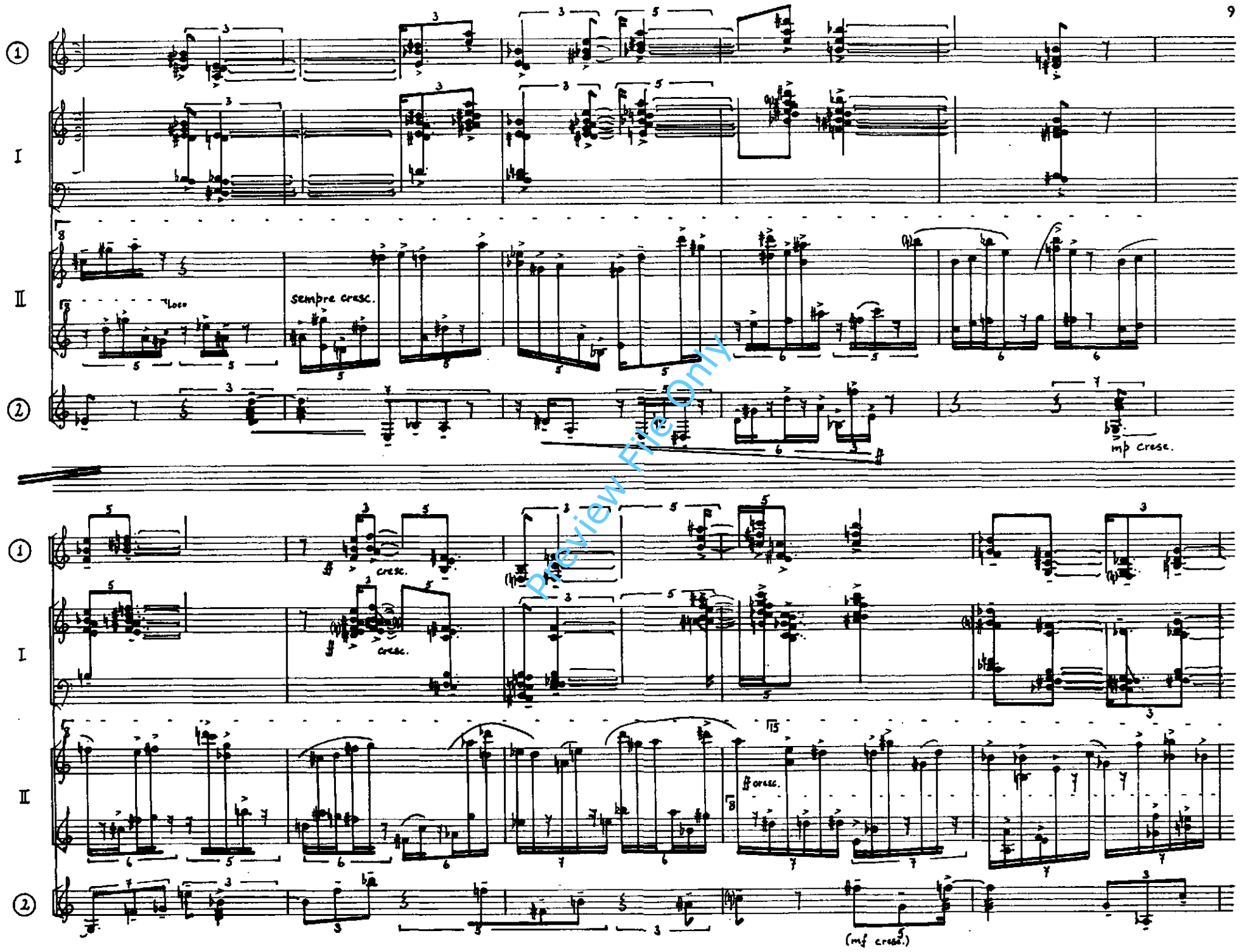

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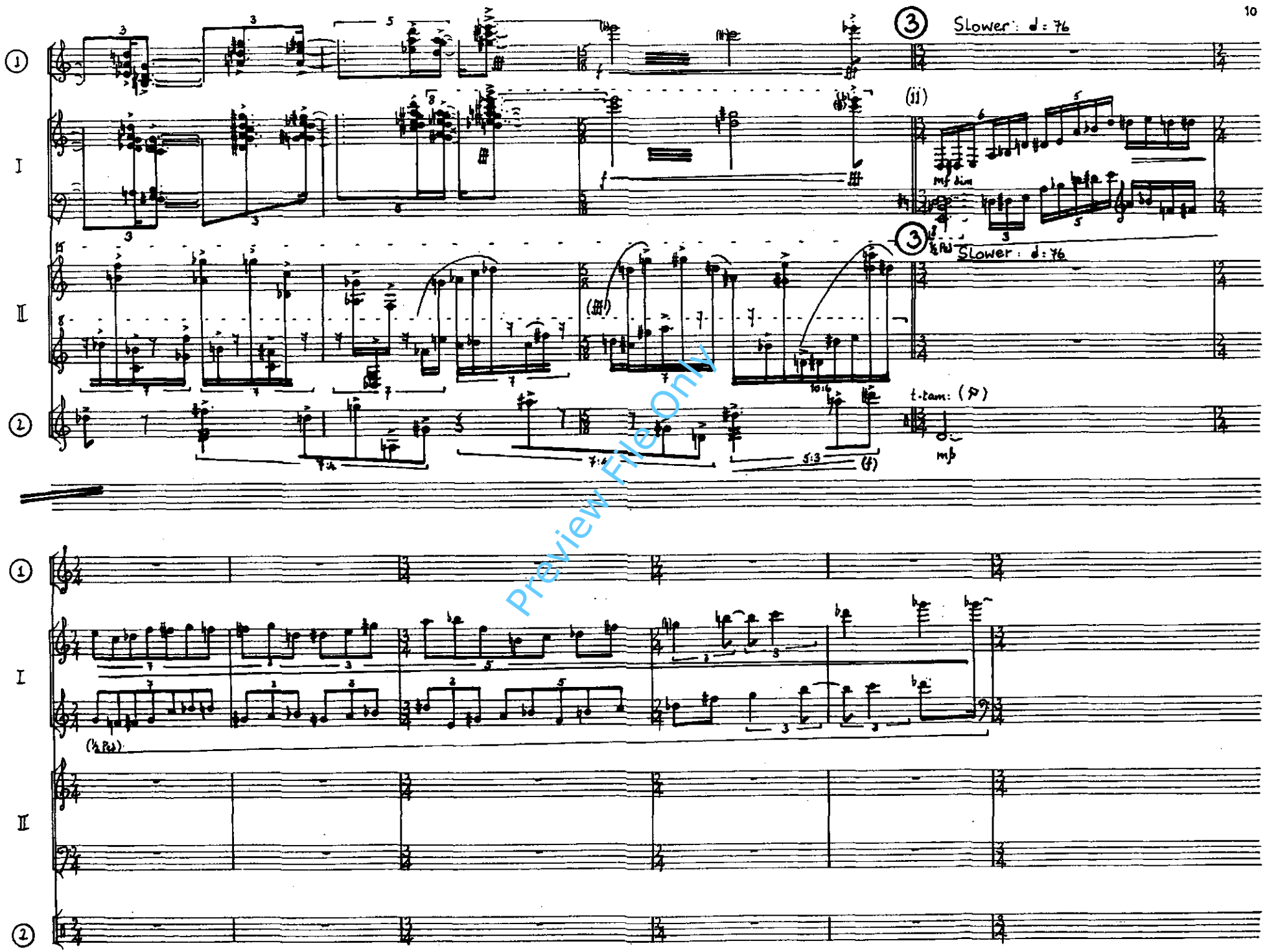

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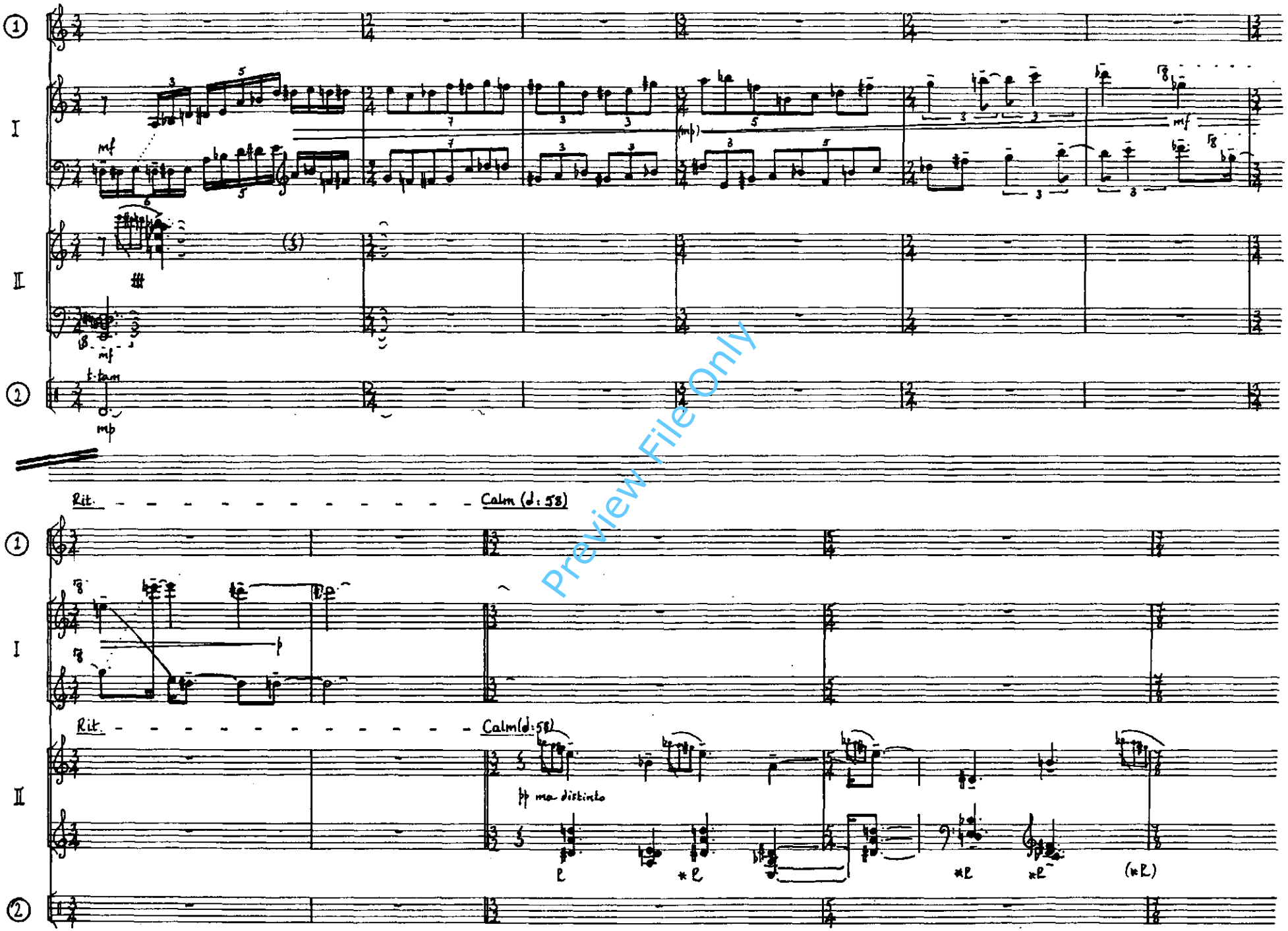

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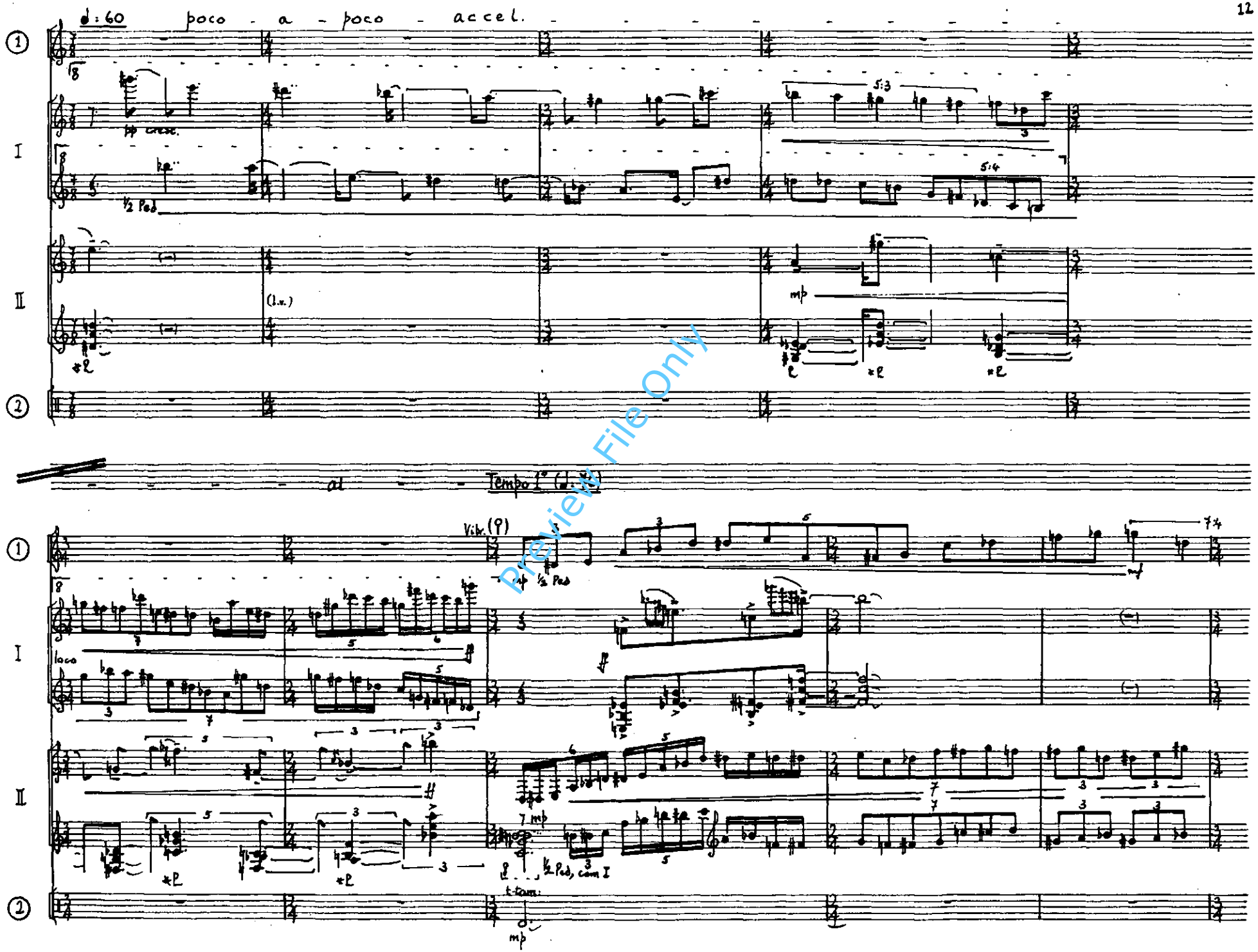

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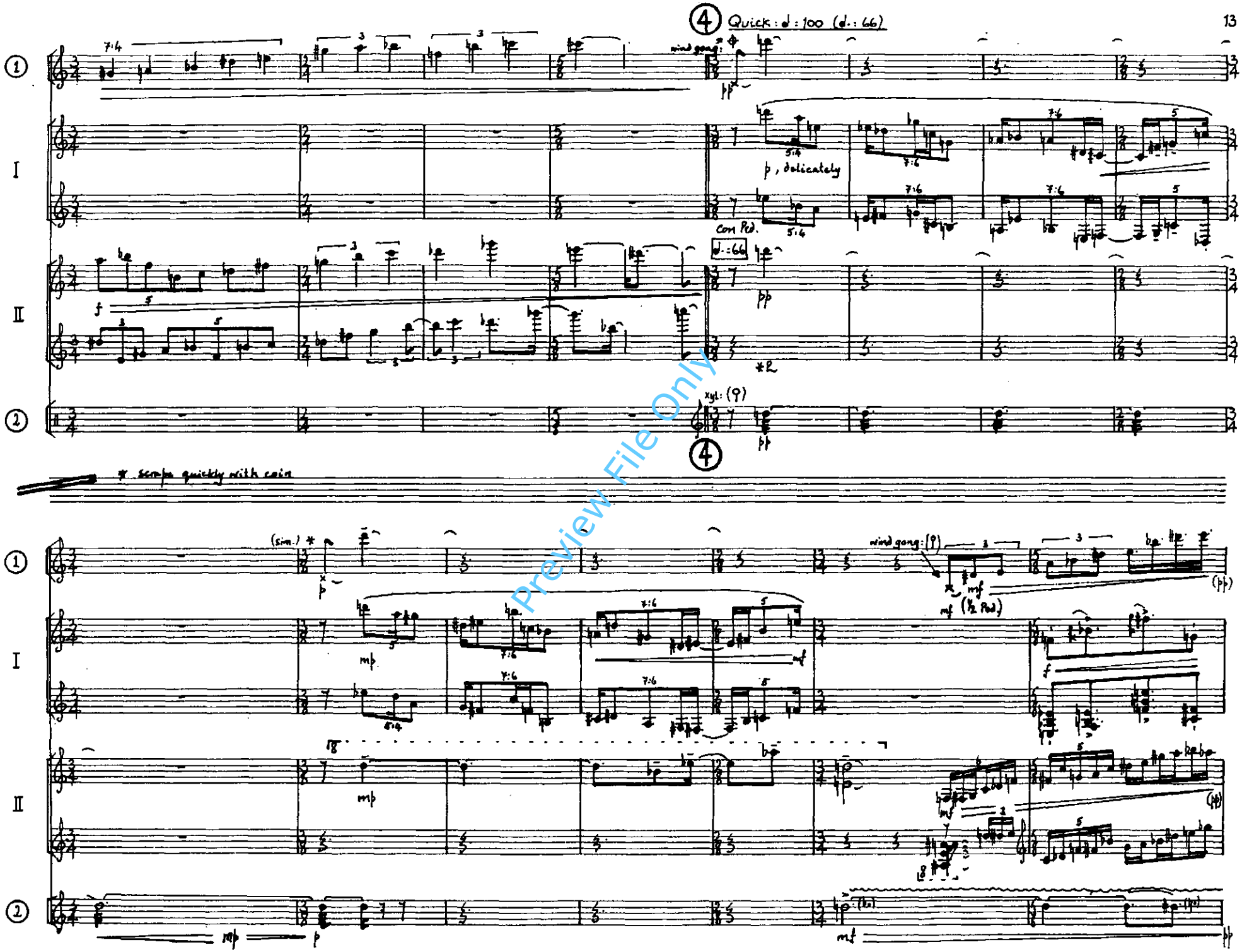

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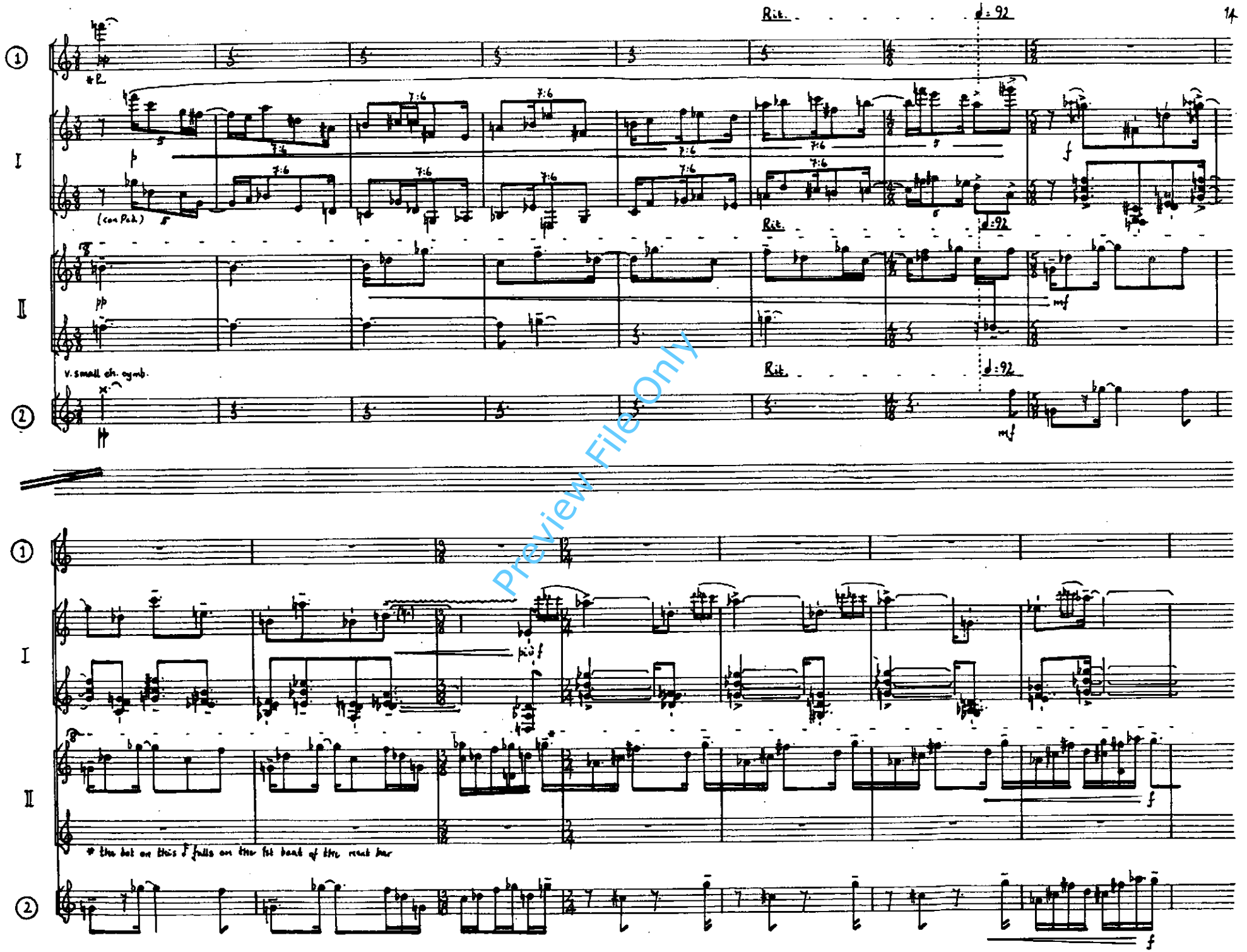

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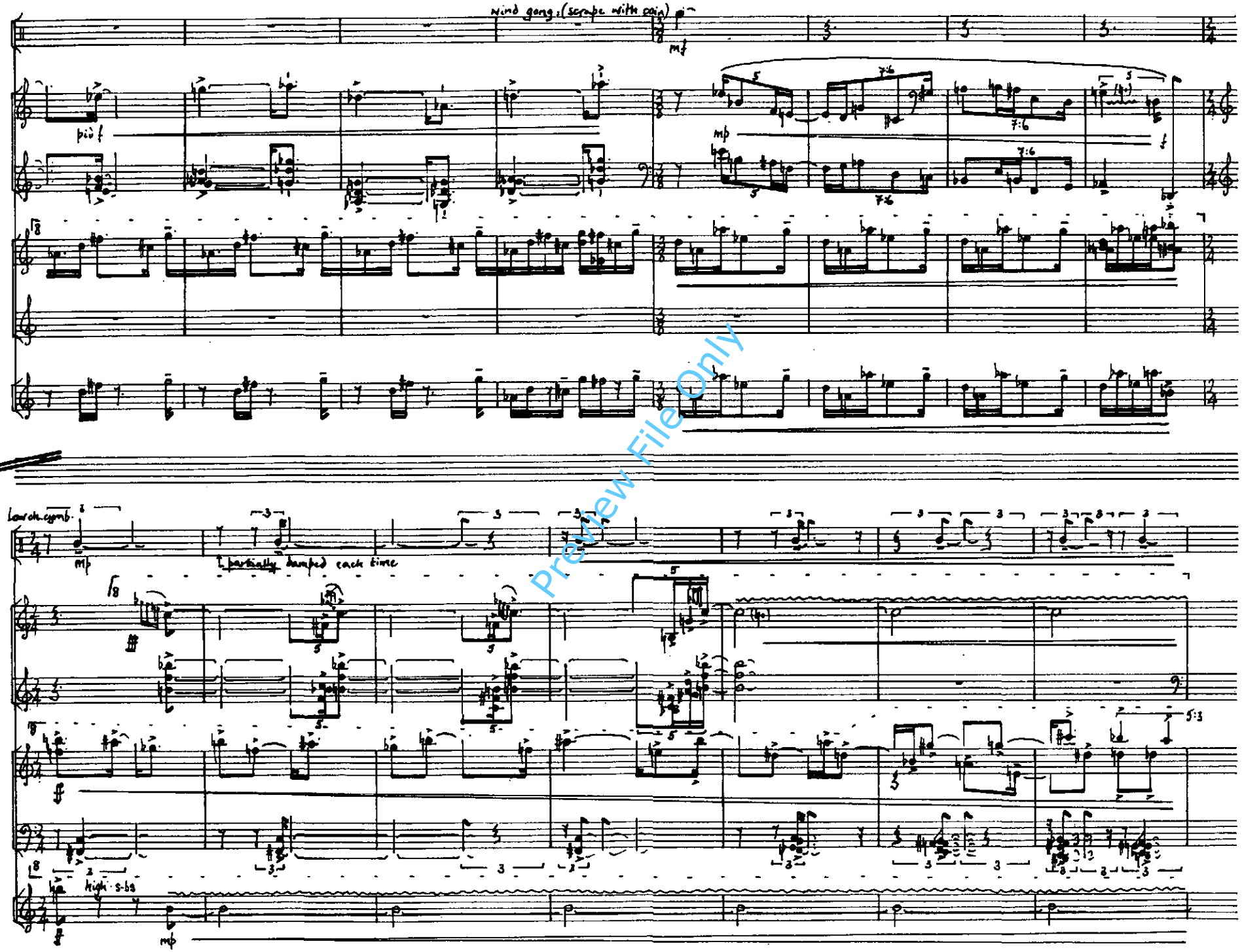

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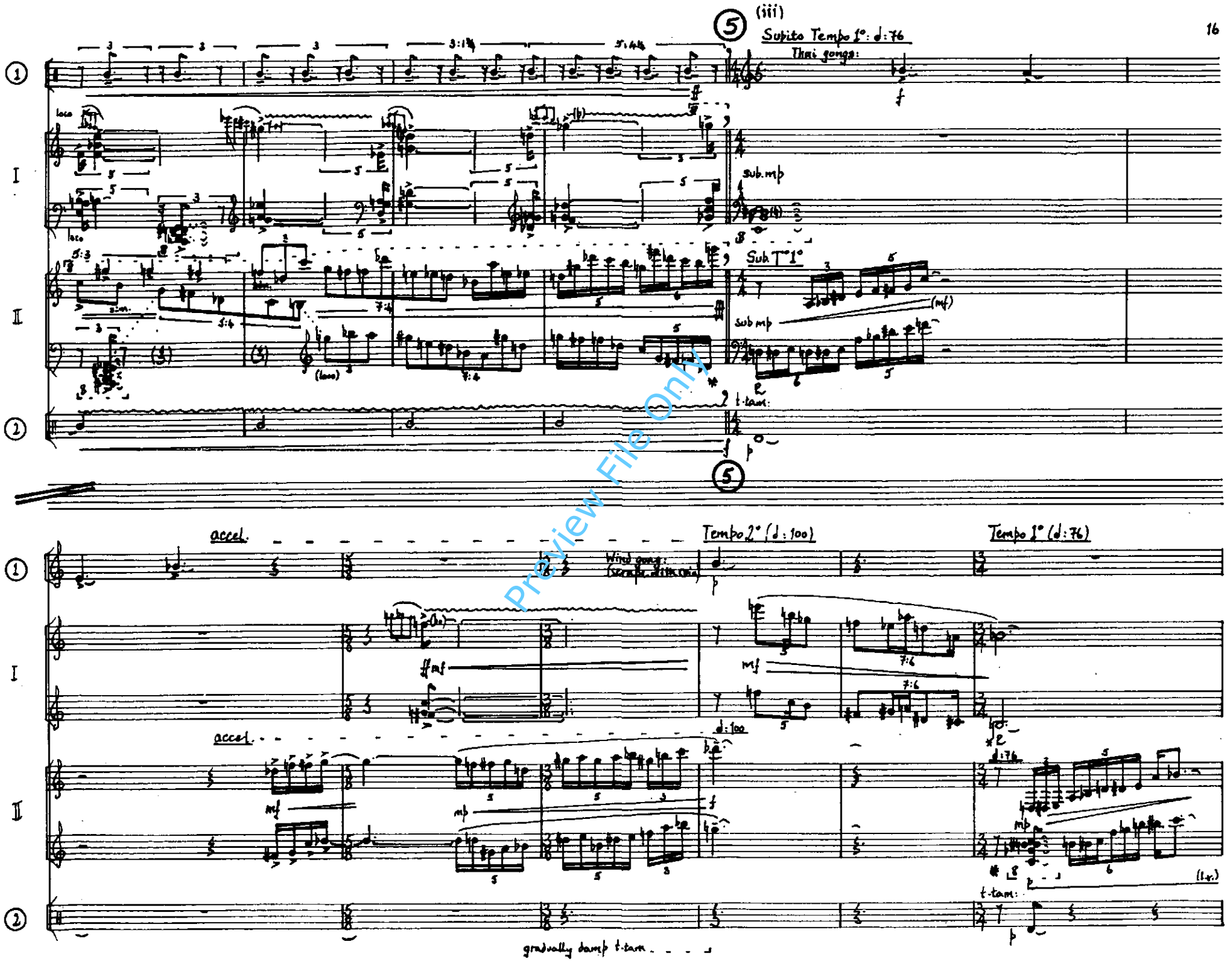

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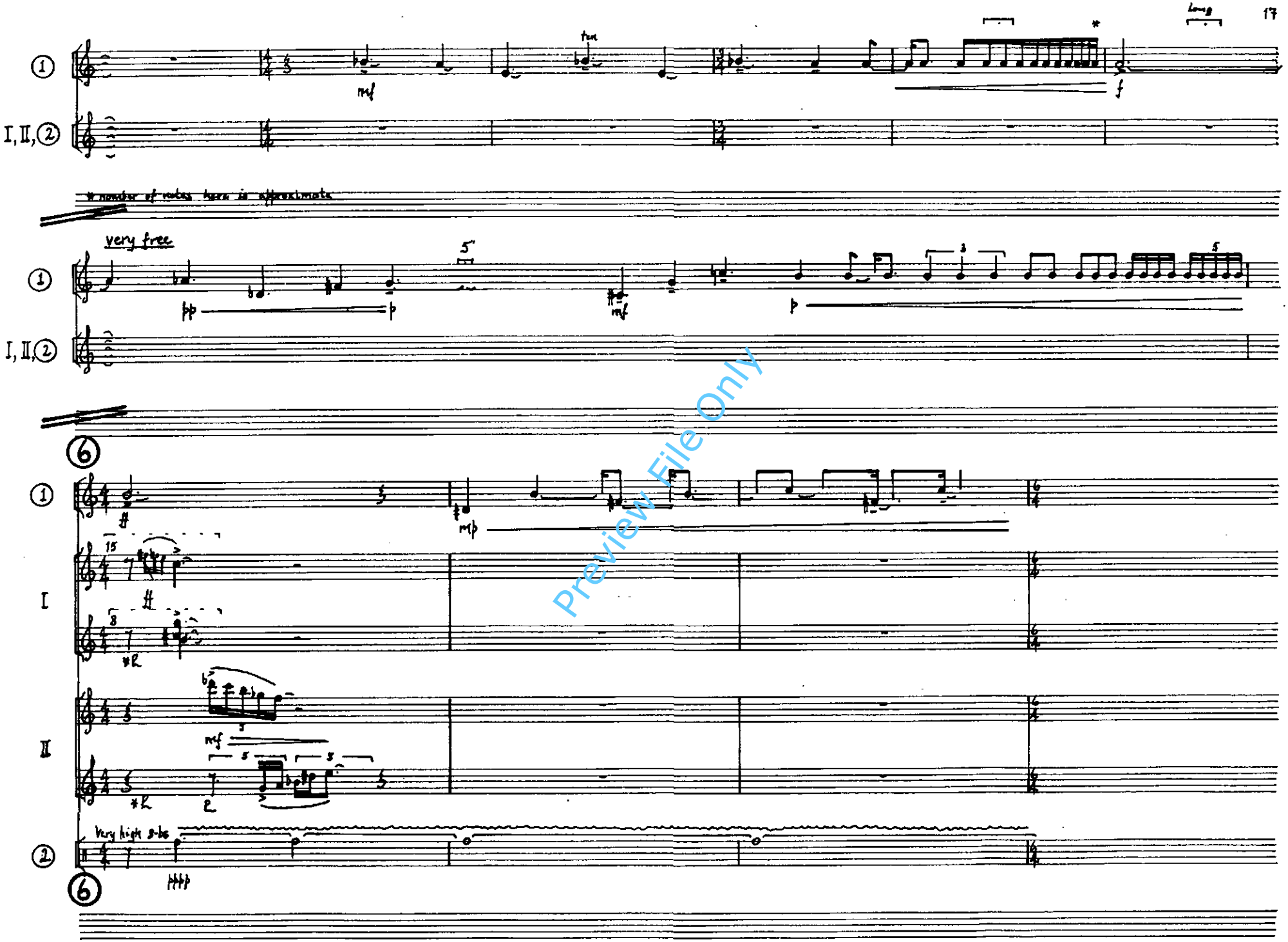

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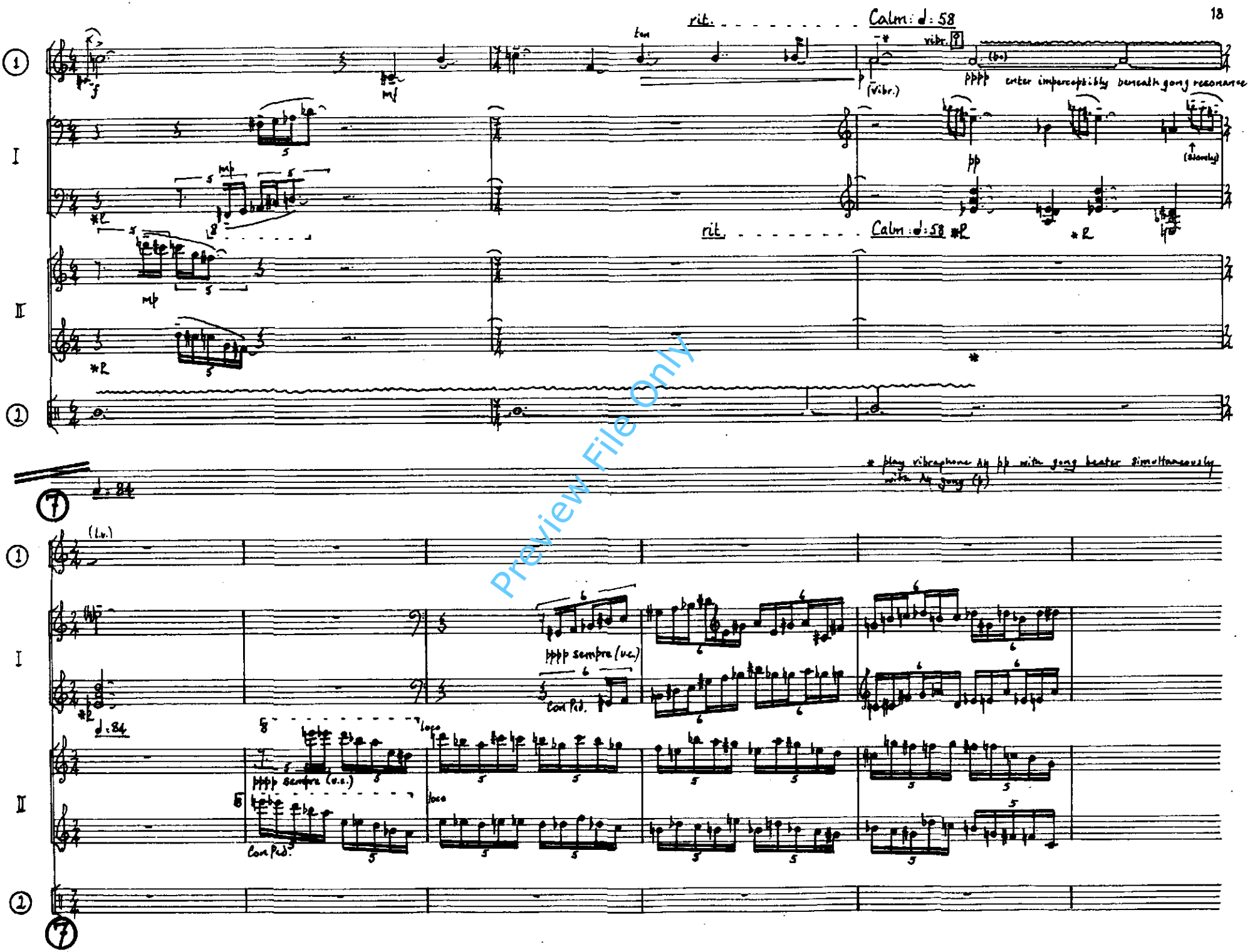
rit.
Calm: ♩: 58
ten
vibr.
(vibr.)
pppp enter imperceptibly beneath gong resonance
(slowly)
rit.
Calm: ♩: 58 *R
* play vibraphone Ab pp with gong beater simultaneously with Ab gong (↓)
(l.v.)
♩: 84
pppp sempre (v.c.)
con Ped.
loco
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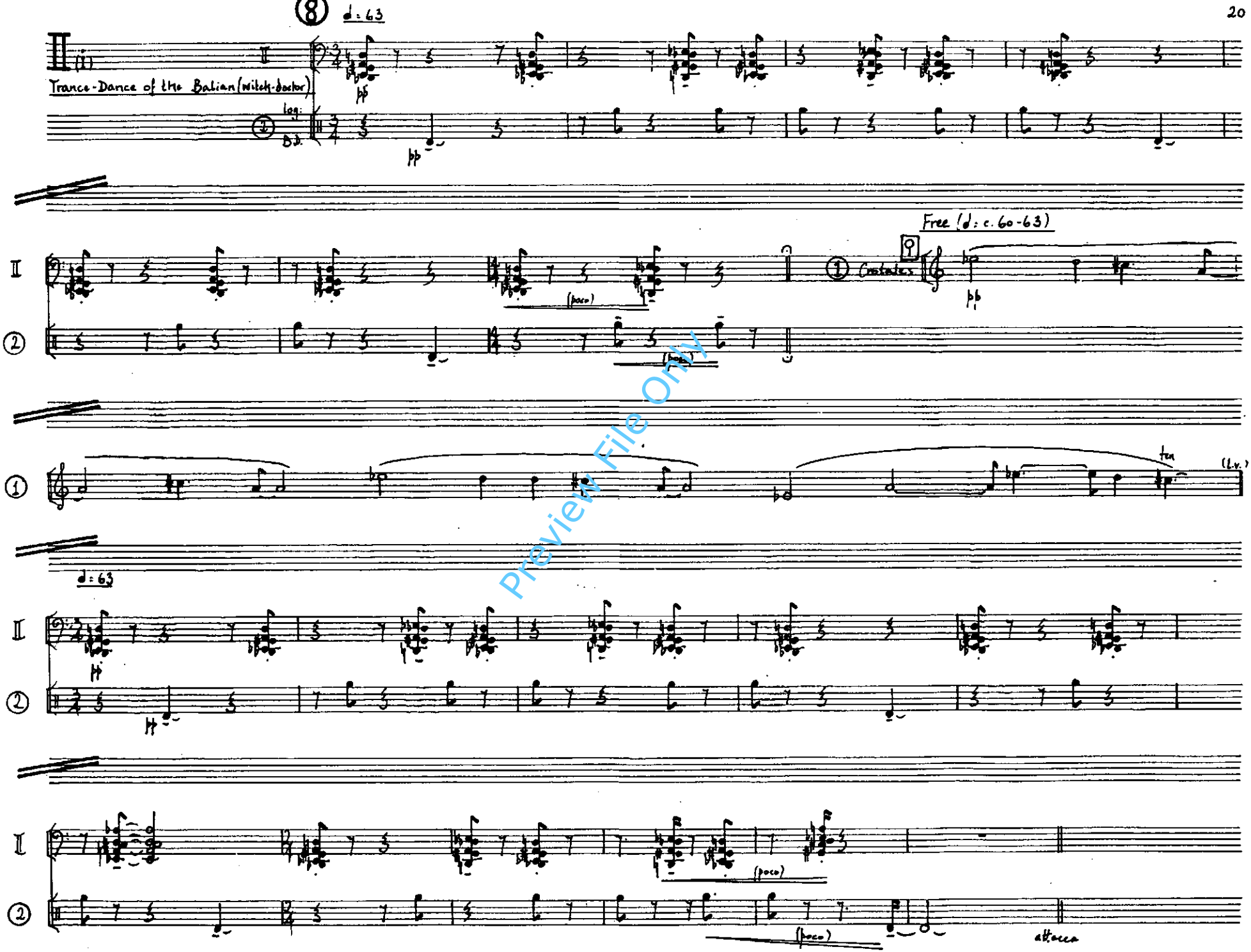

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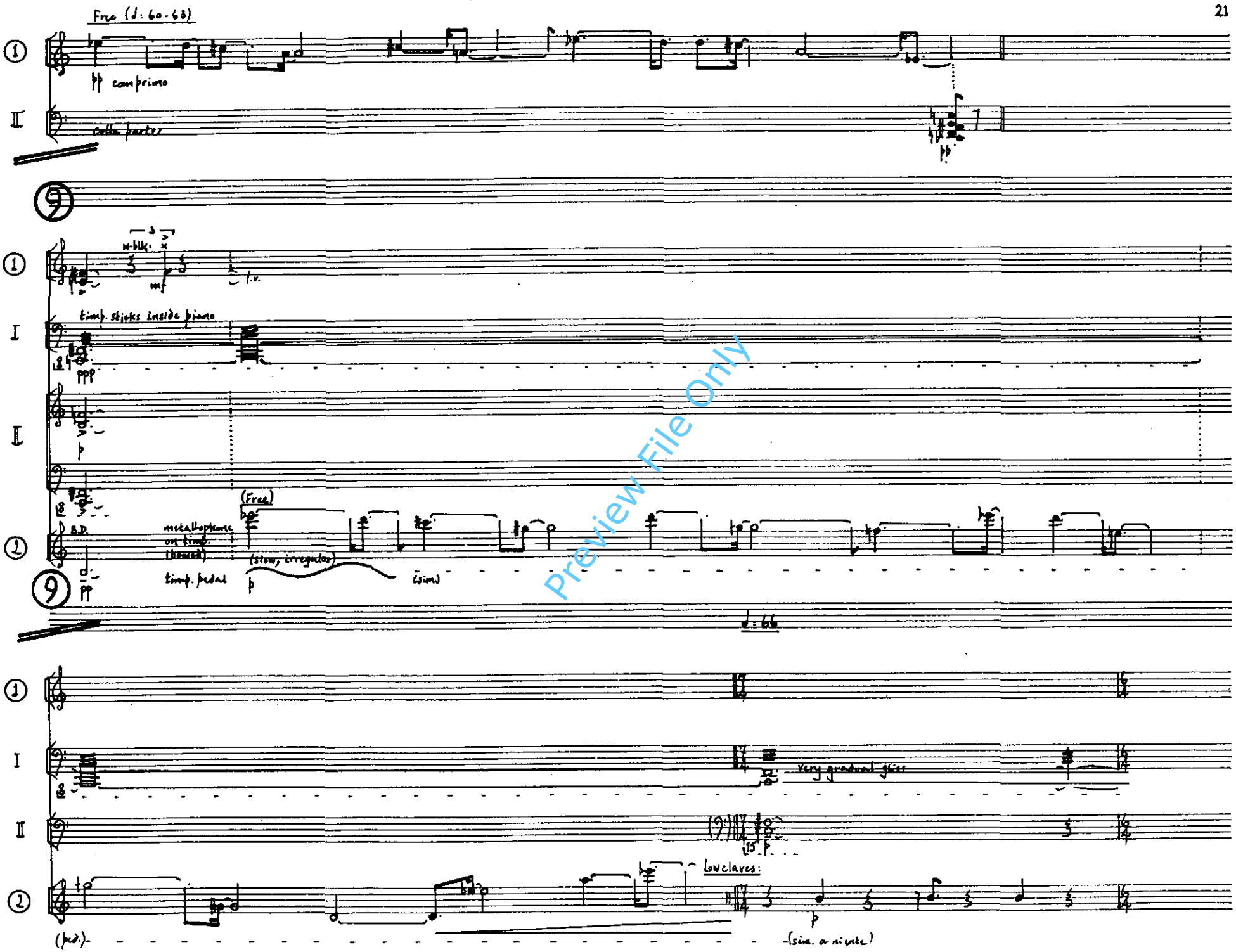

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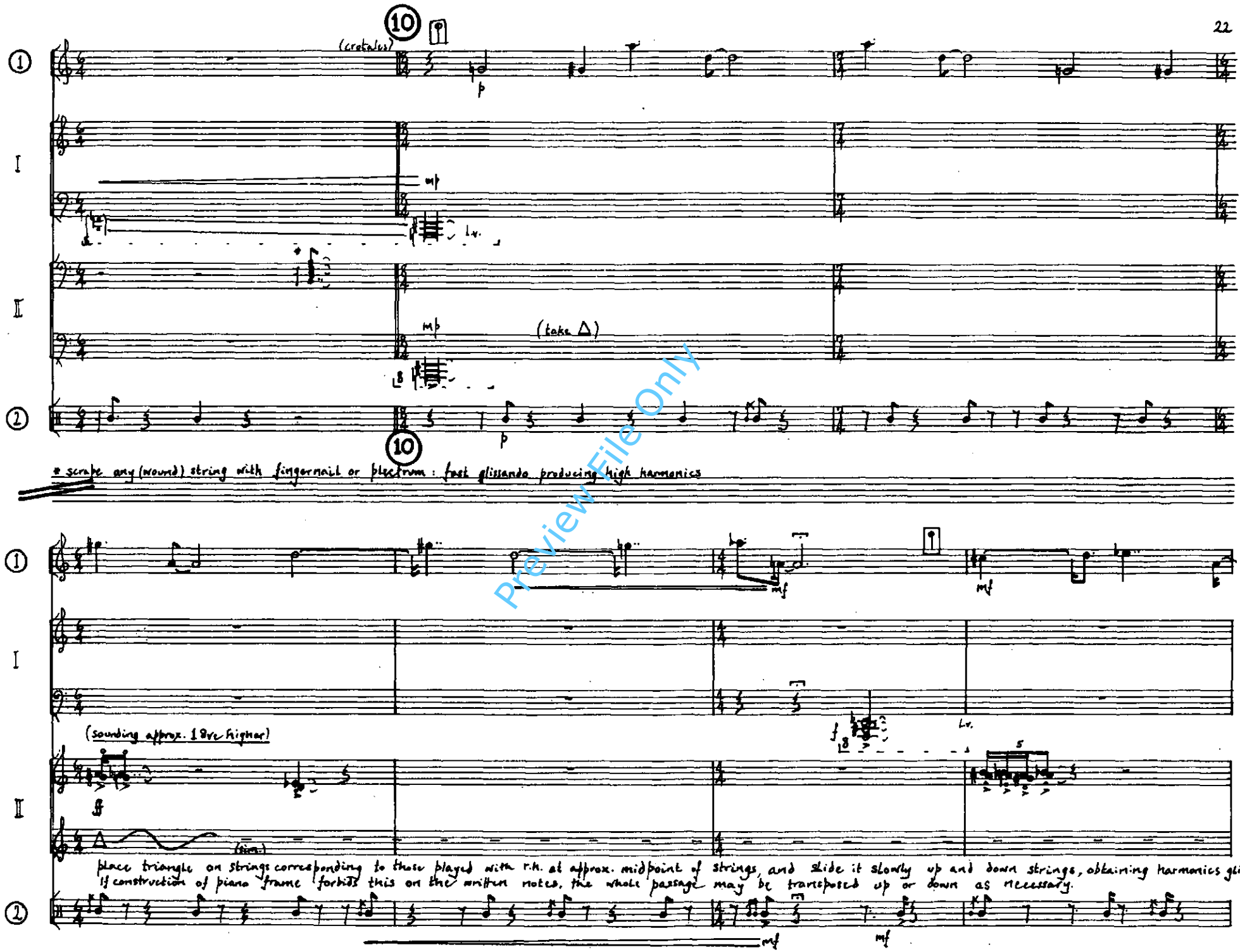

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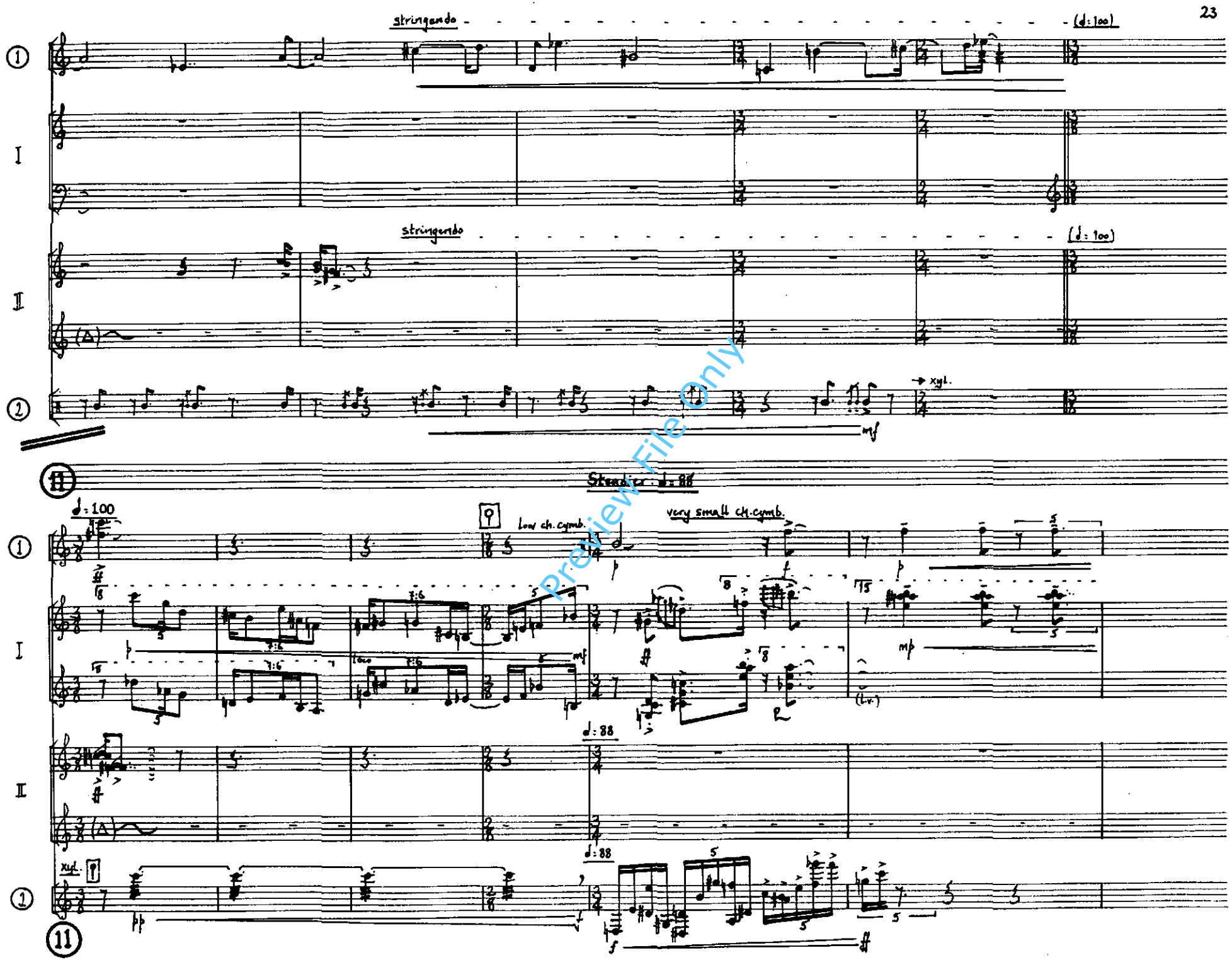

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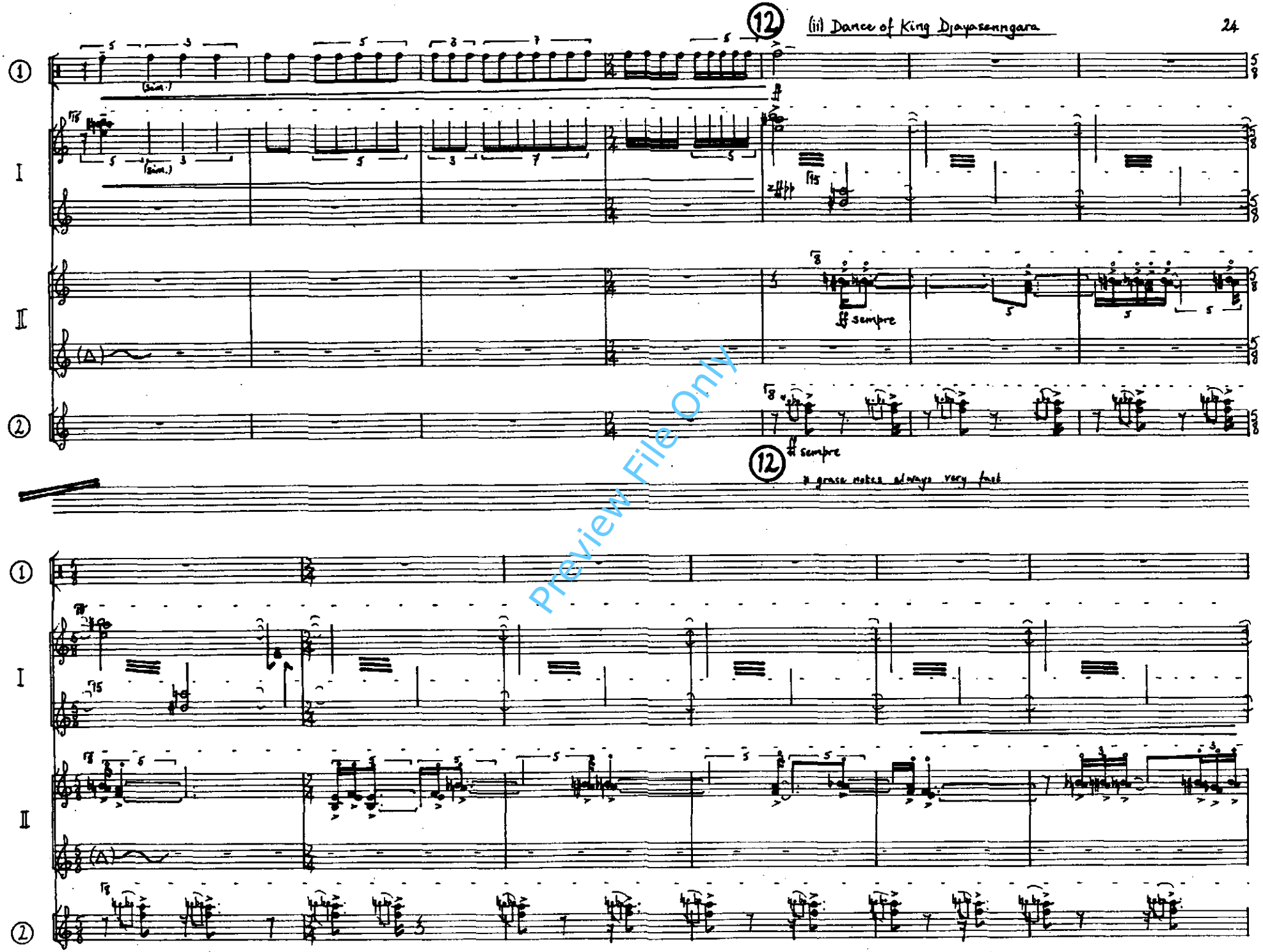

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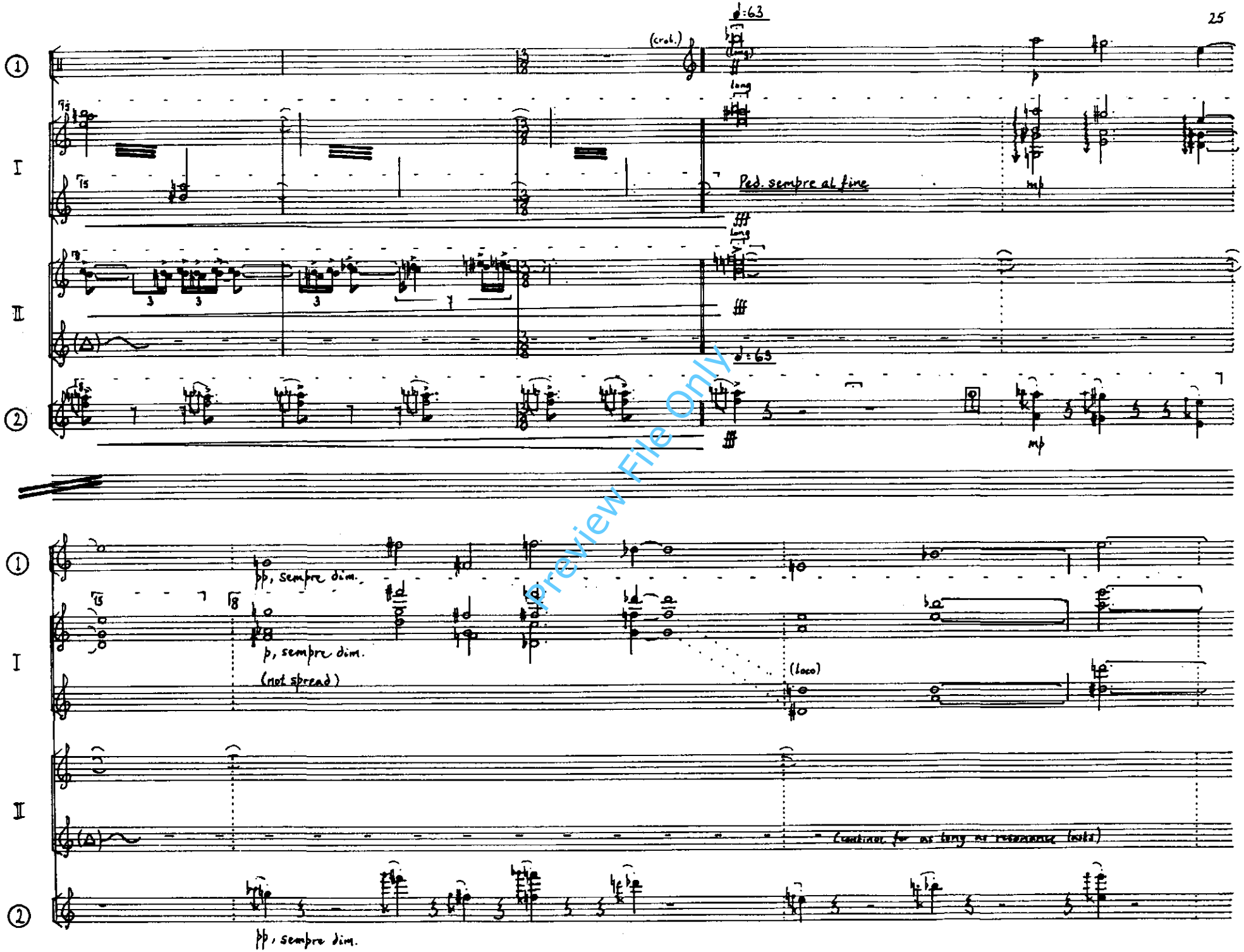

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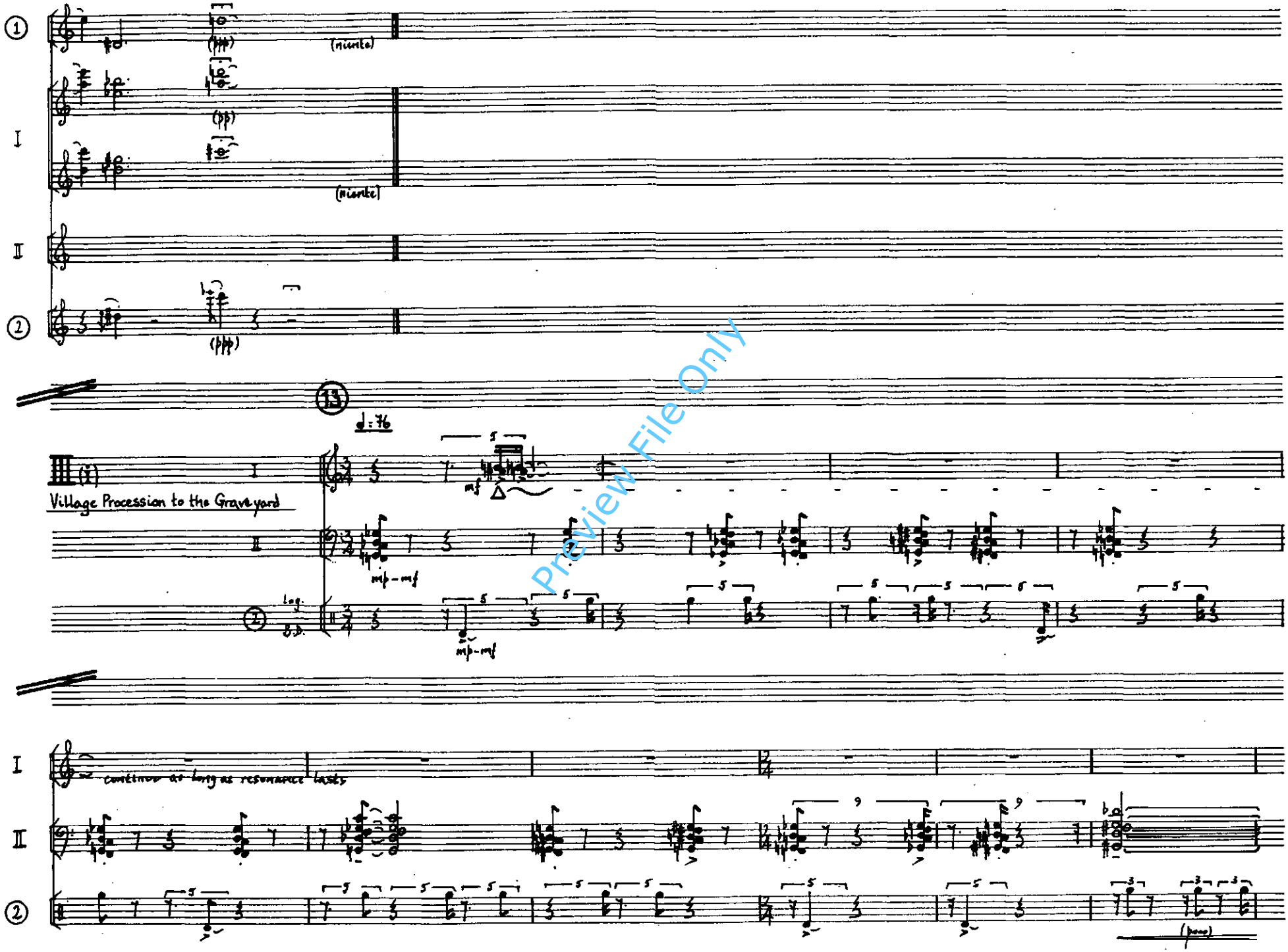

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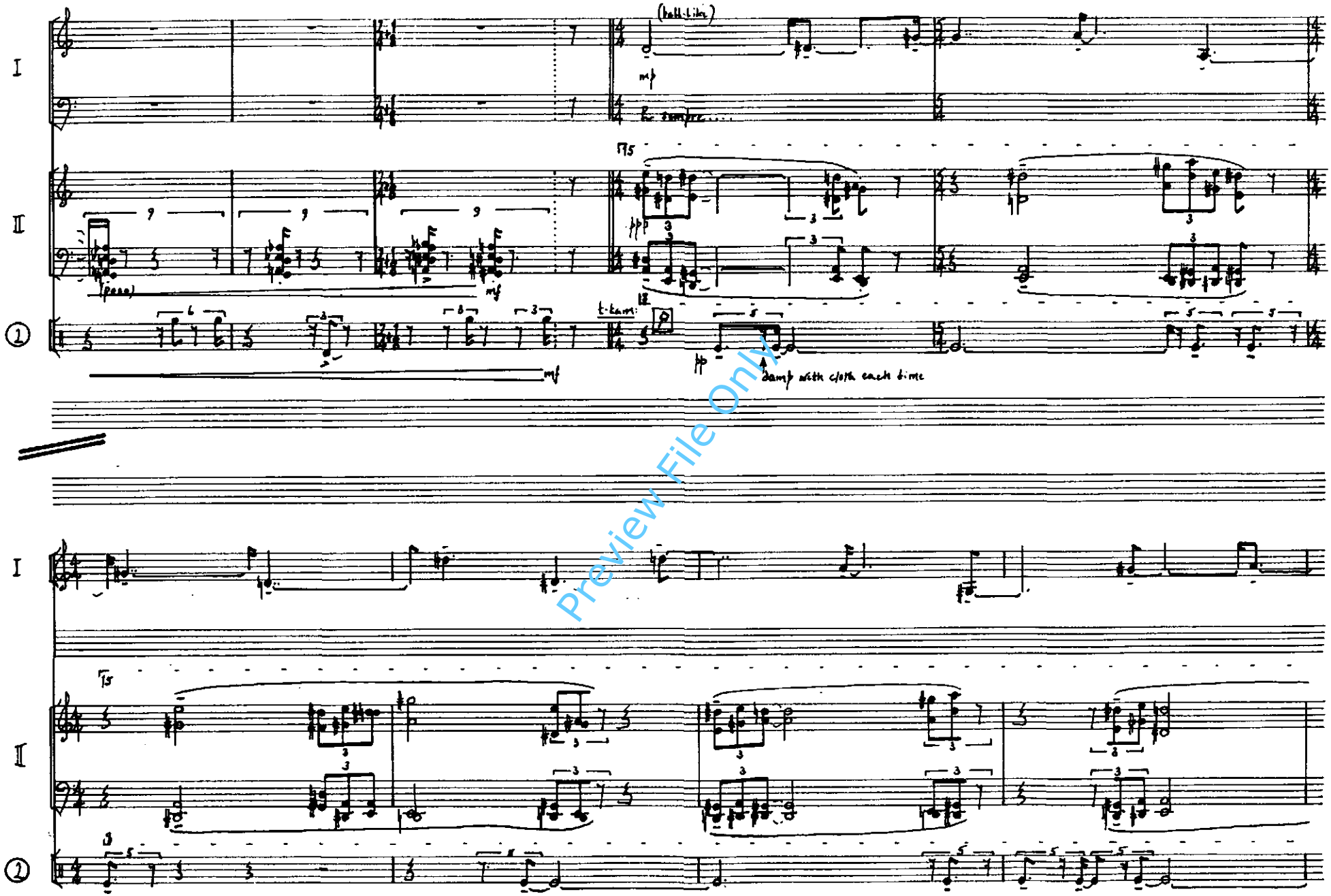

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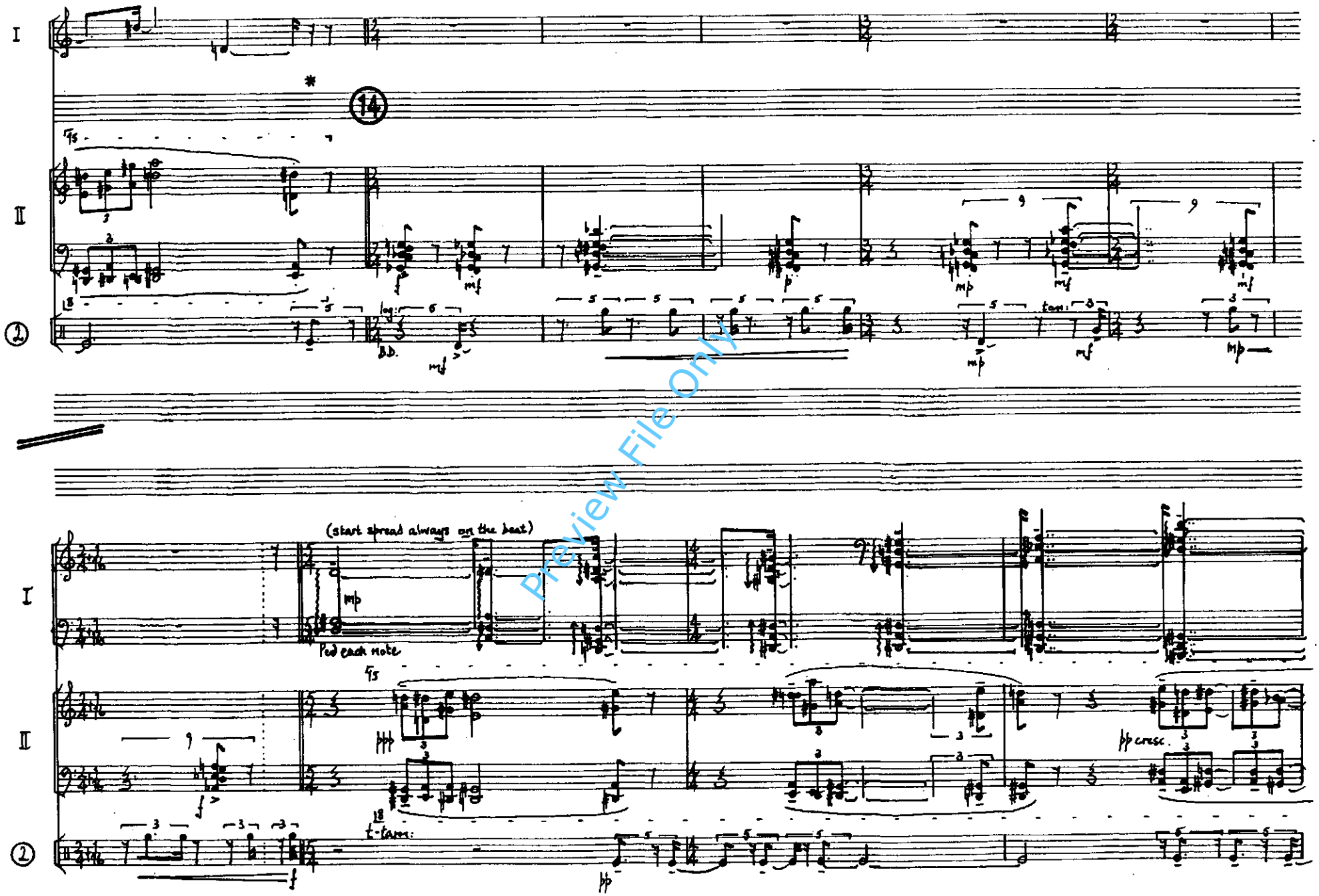

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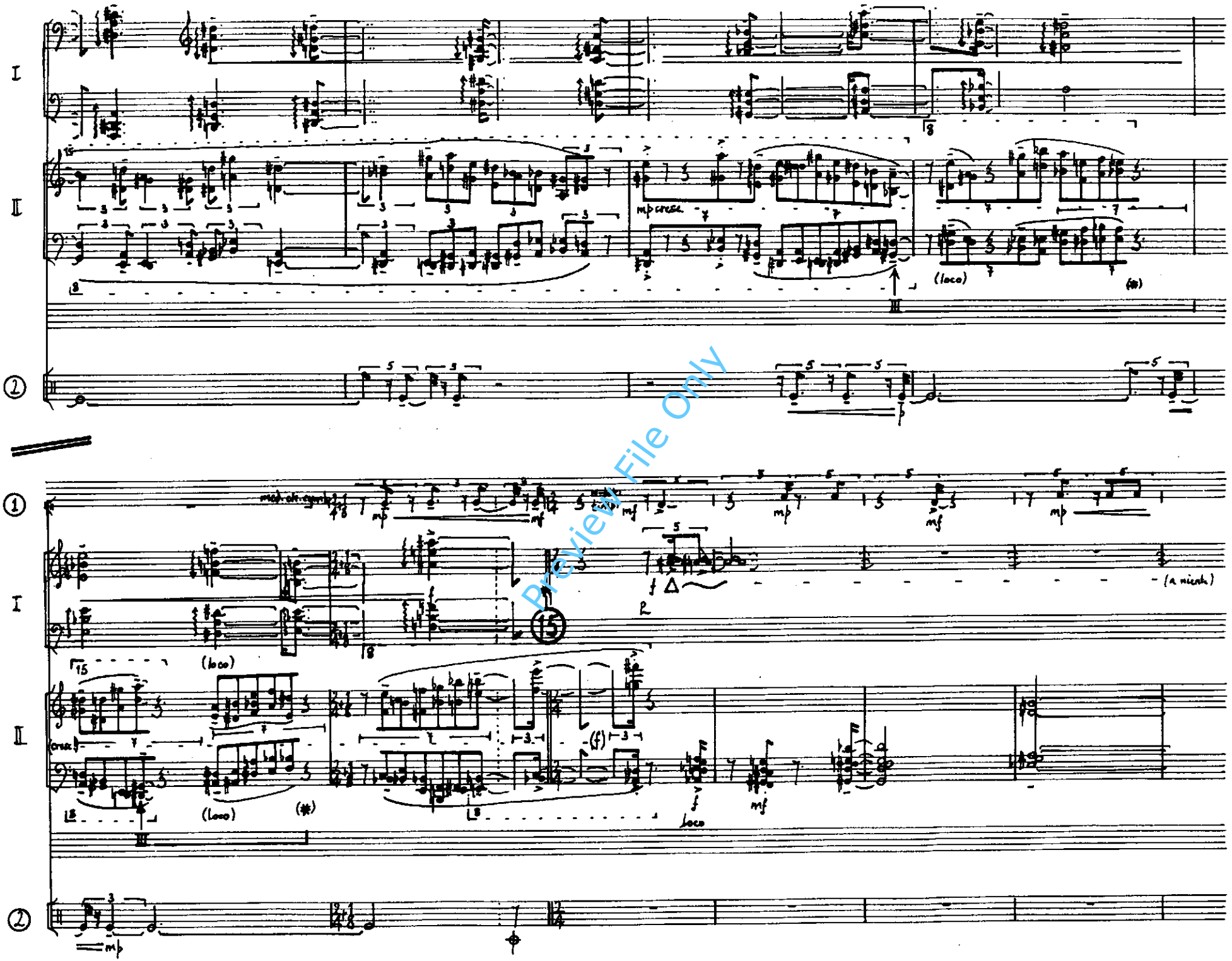

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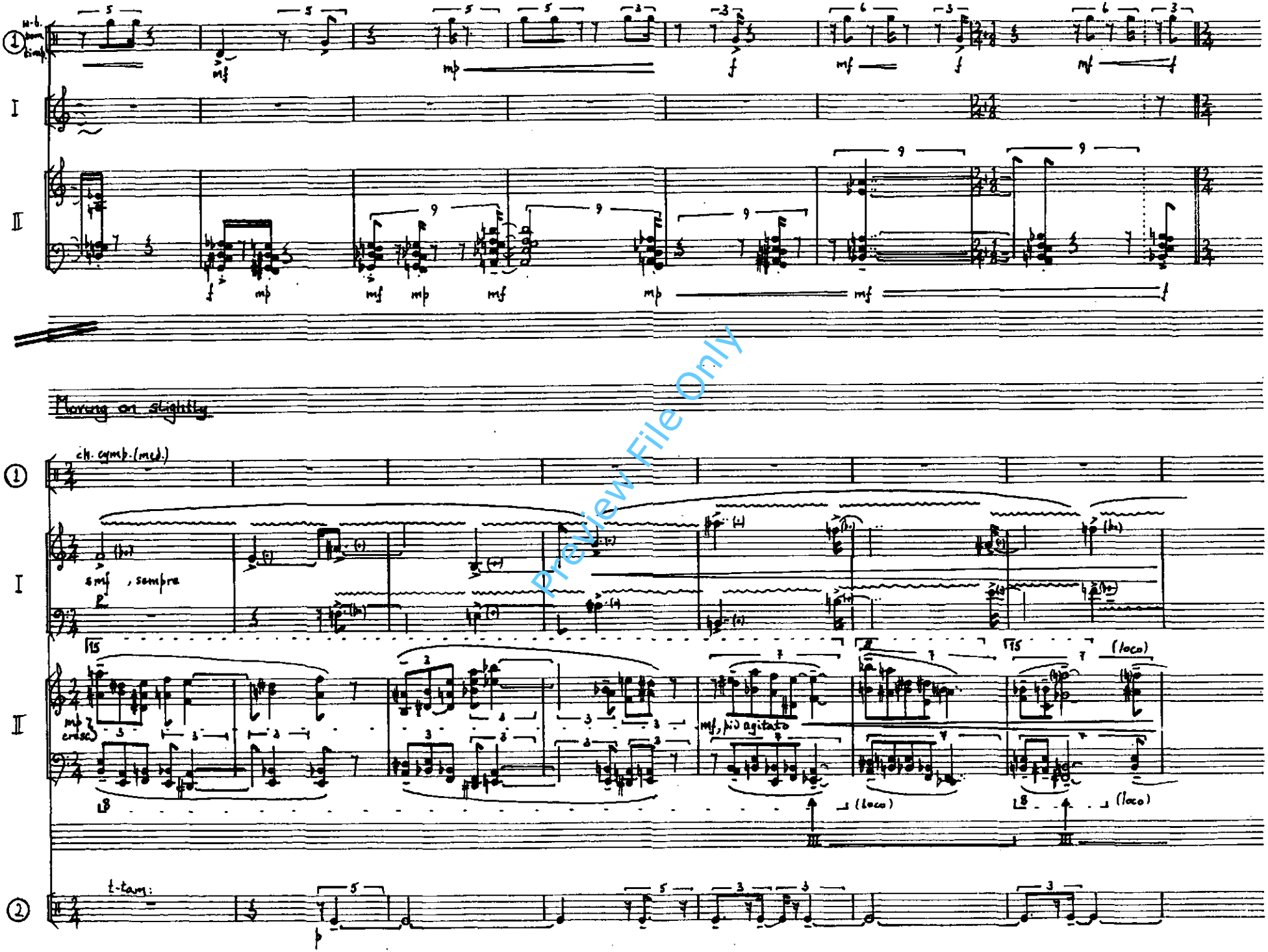

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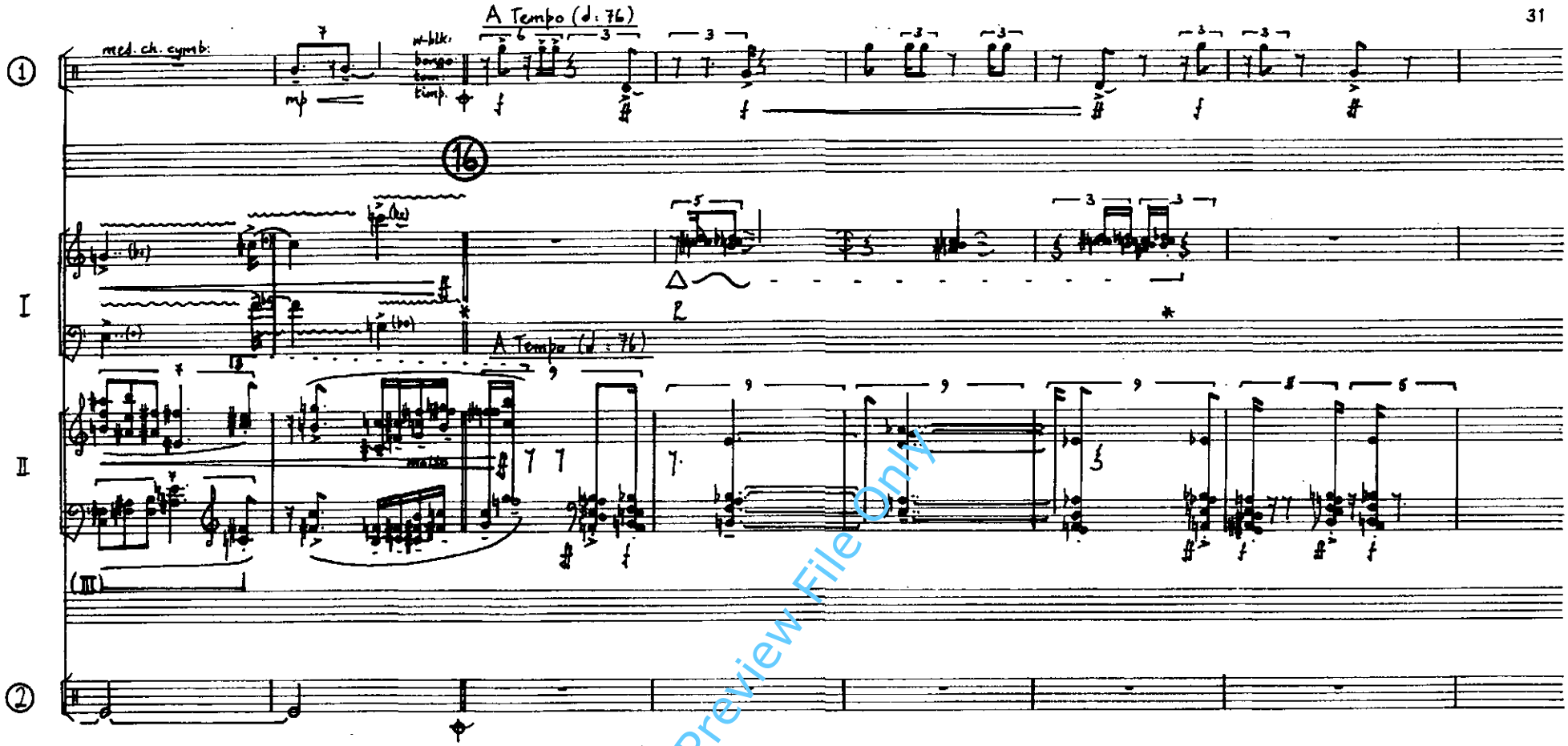

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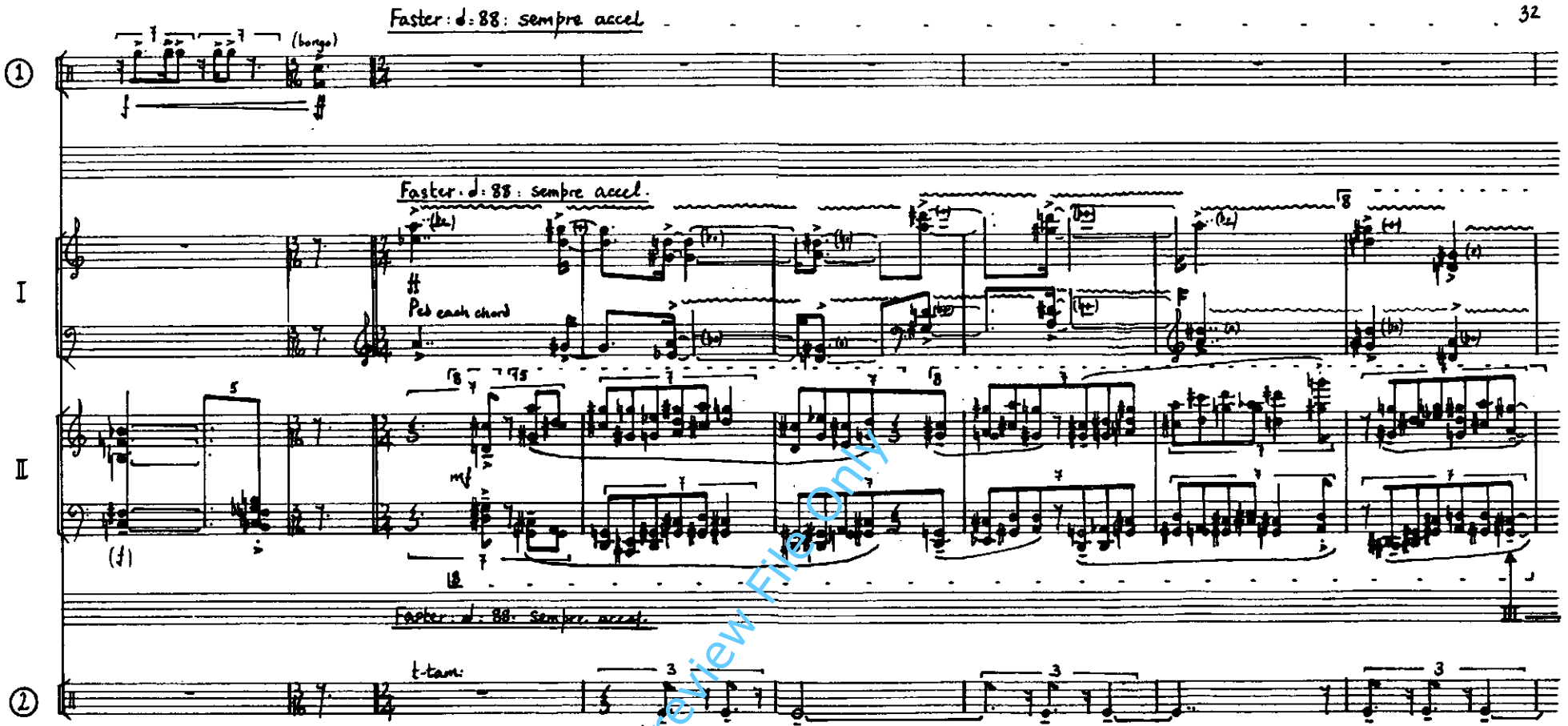

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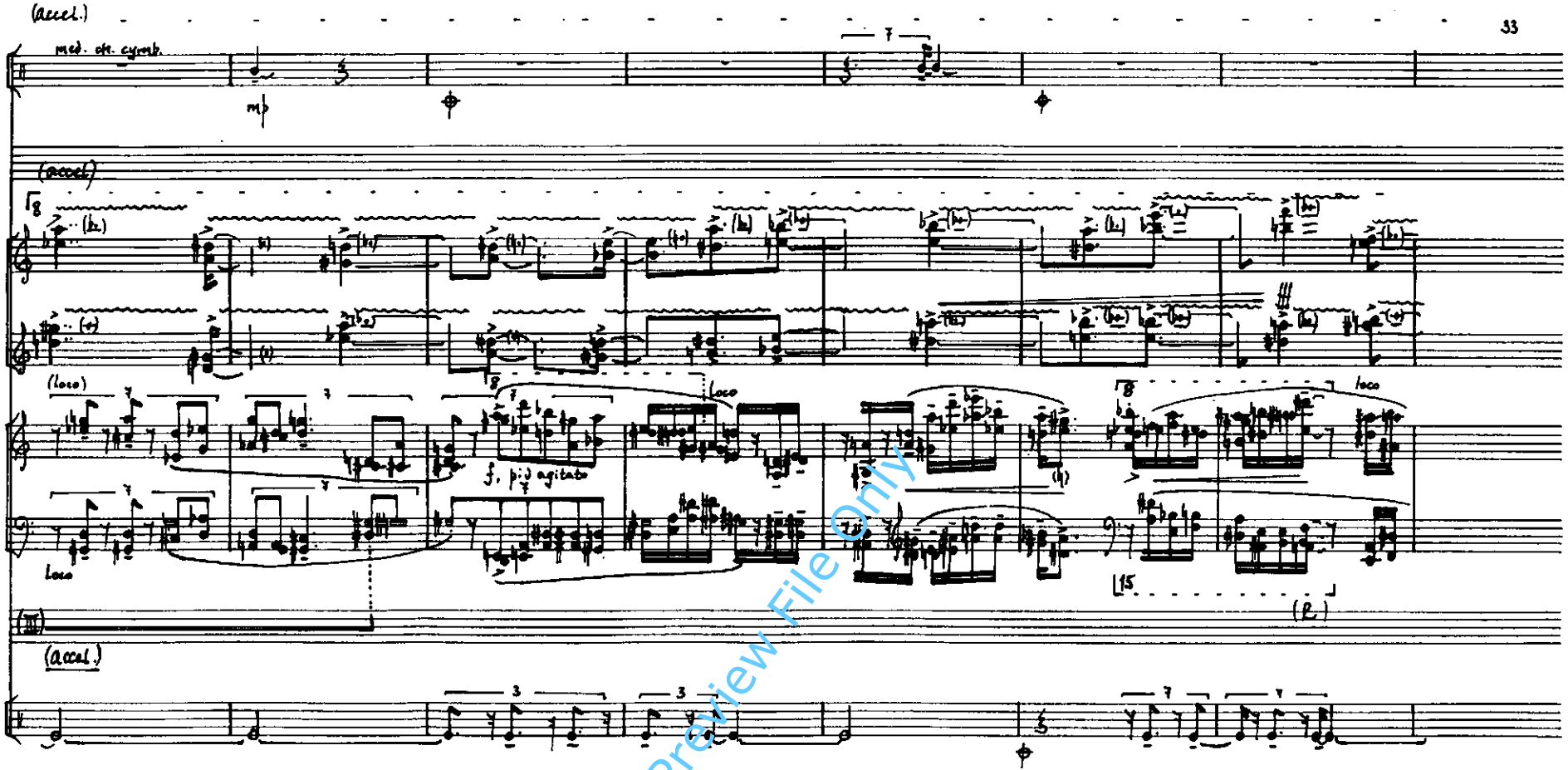

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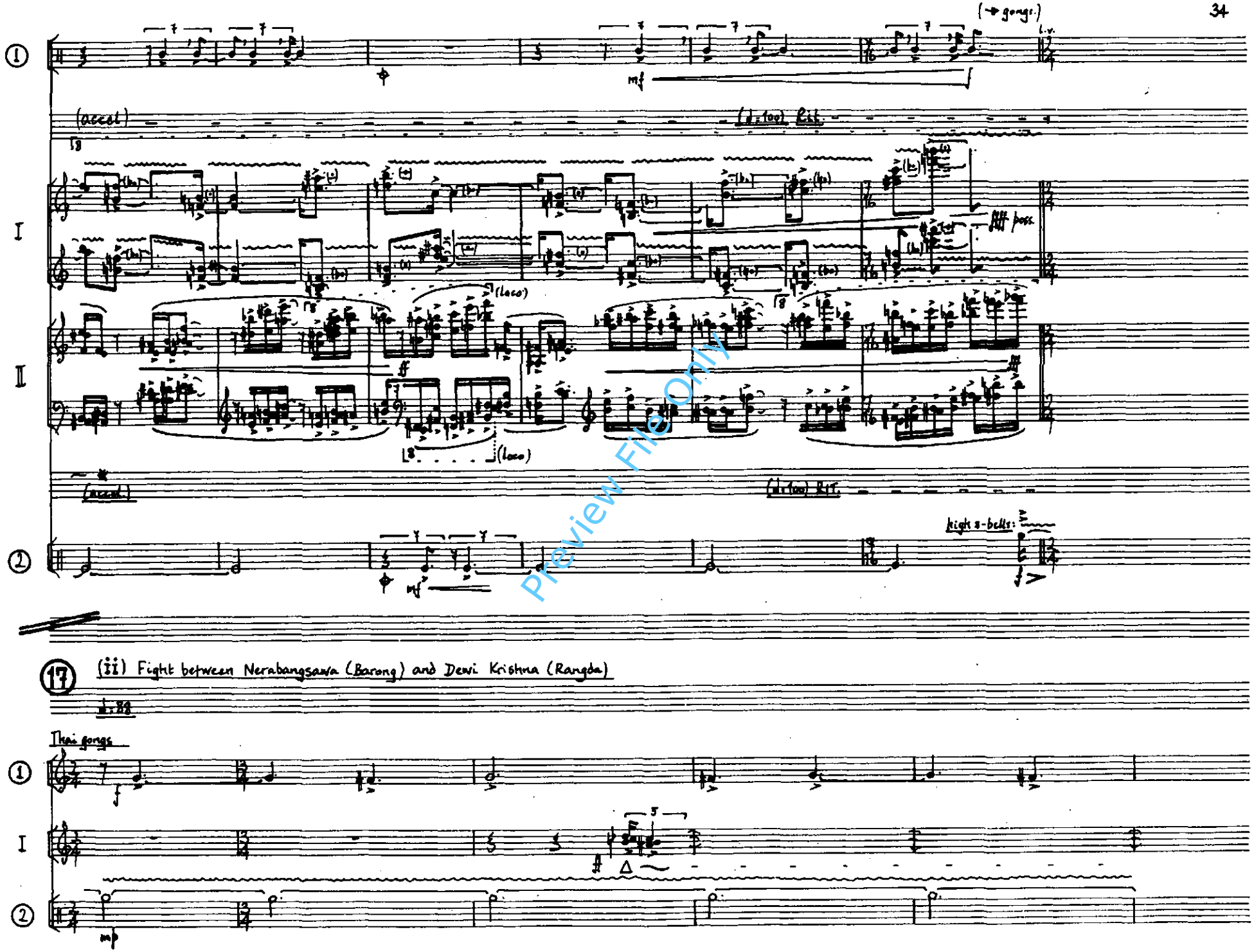

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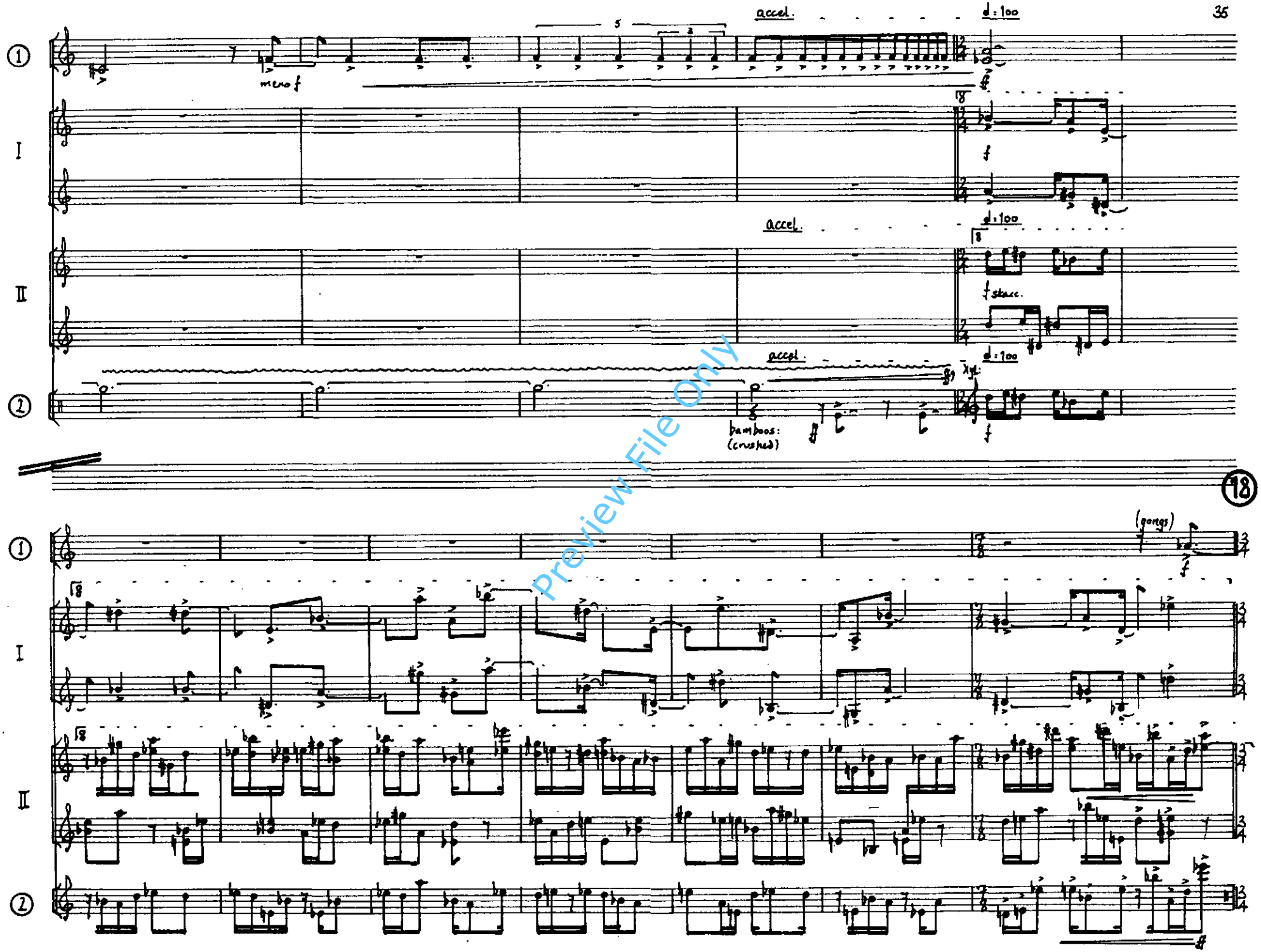

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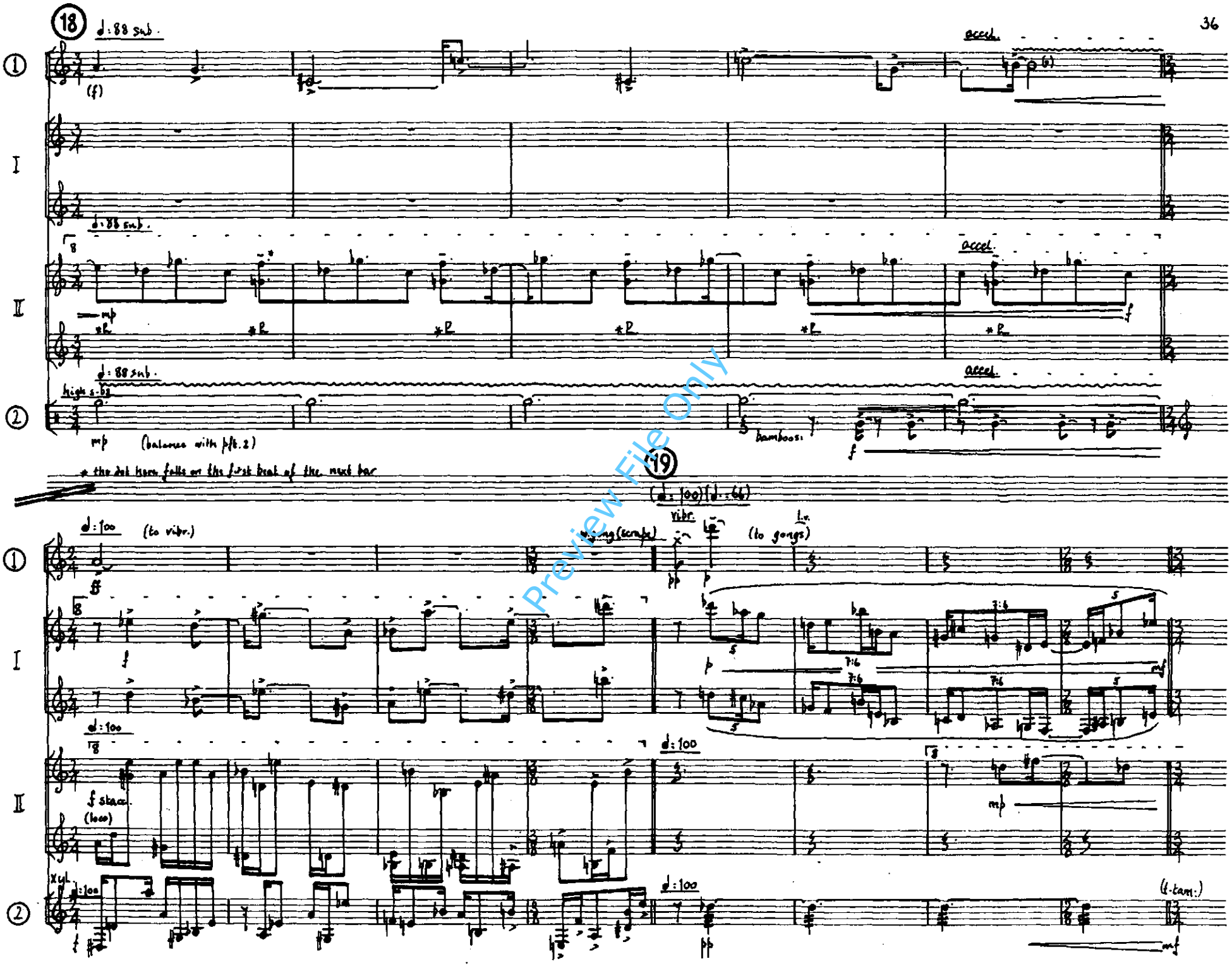

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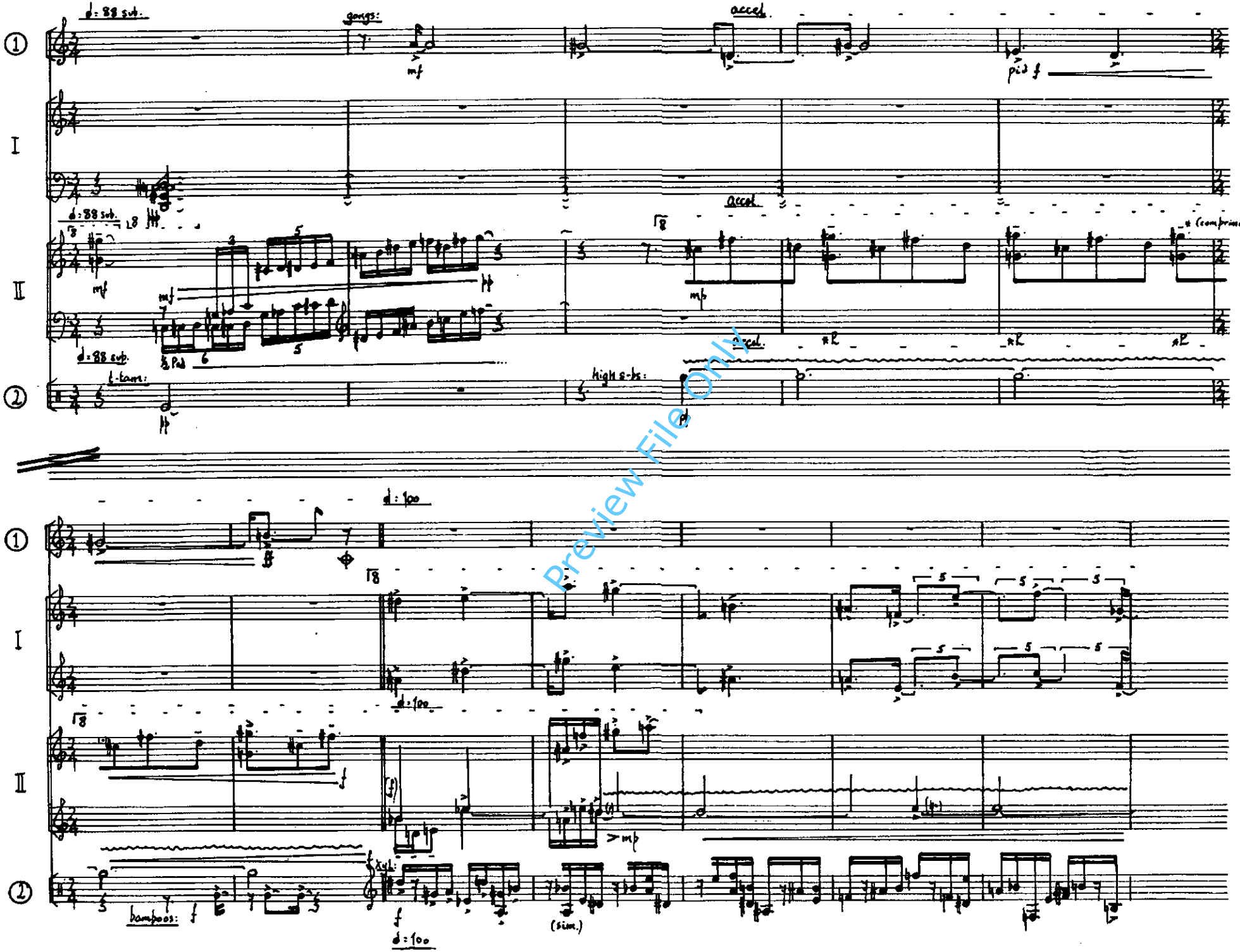

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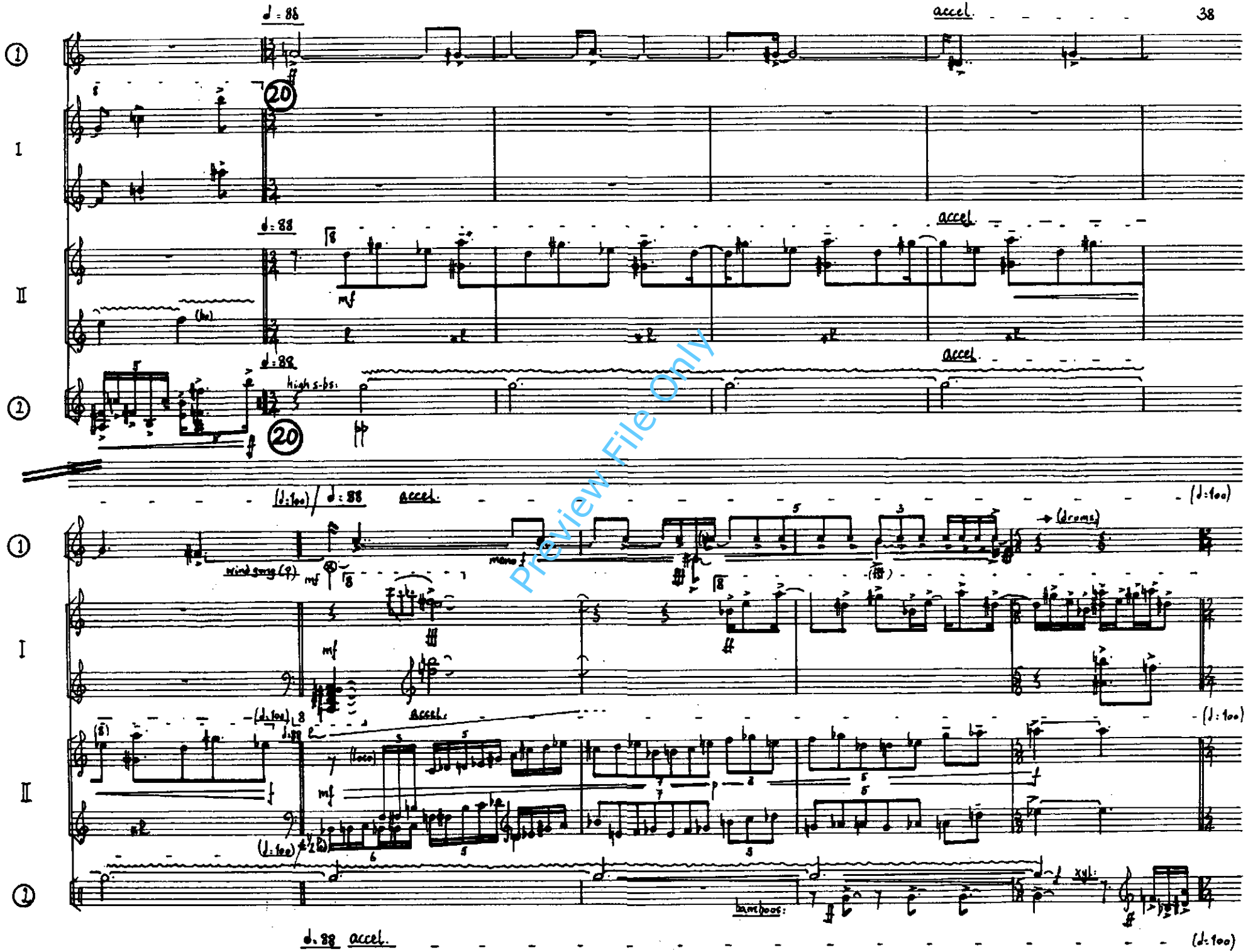

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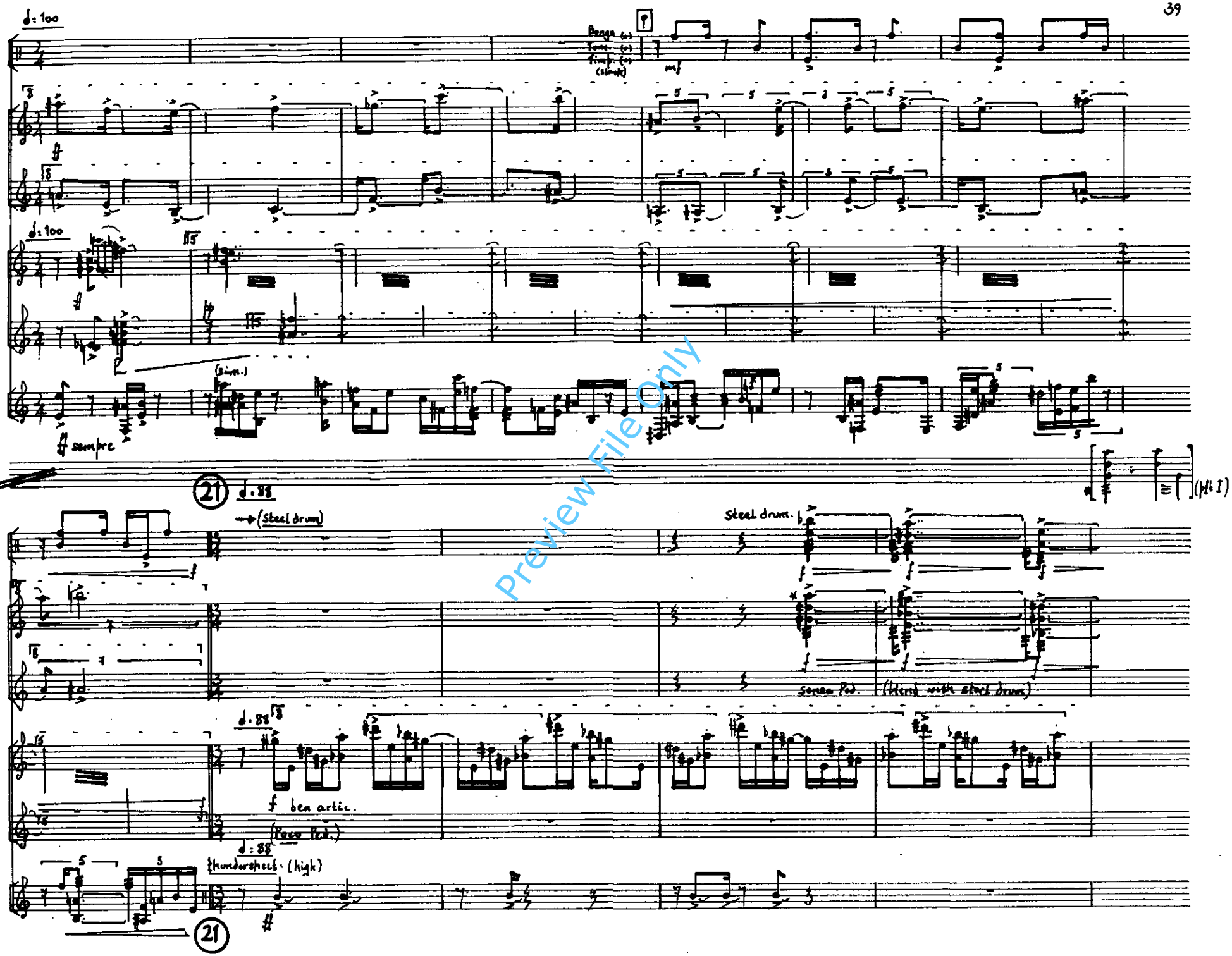

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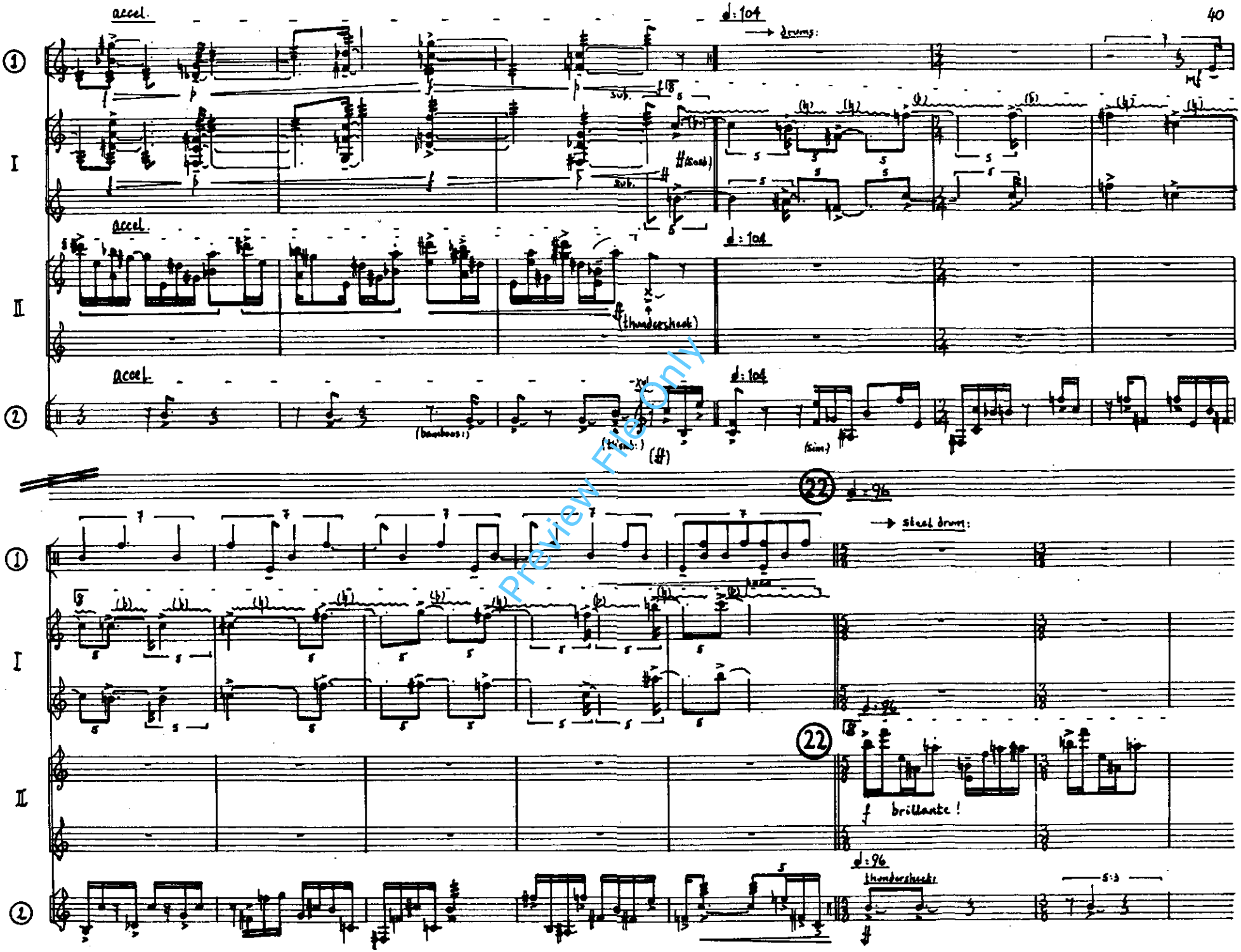

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