DANCE OF THE UNIVERSE

for Tenor Solo, Chorus and Orchestra

the words selected from "Orchestra" by

Sir JOHN DAVIES

Preview File Only

the music by

ALAN BULLARD

VOCAL SCORE

COLNE EDITION

4 PONDERS ROAD
FORDHAM
COLCHESTER
ESSEX CO6 3LX

NOTE:
The text of this work is taken from "Orchestra; or a poem of dancing" by the sixteenth century poet Sir John Davies. I have selected less than a quarter of the poem, and have made many re-orderings of the verses and a few omissions within them. Therefore the text printed below is in no way representative of Sir John Davies' poem for which I urge the reader to look elsewhere.
A.B.

- PART ONE -

When Love had shaped this world, this great fair wight,
That all wights else in this wide womb contains,
And had instructed it to dance aright
A thousand measures, with a thousand strains,
Which it should practise with delightful pains,
Until that fatal instant should revolve,
When all to nothing should again resolve;

The comely order and proportion fair
On every side did please his wandering eye;
Till, glancing through the thin transparent air,
A rude disordered rout he did espy
Of men and women, that most spitefully
Did one another throng and crowd so sore,
That his kind eyes in pity, wept therefore.

And swifter than the lightning down he came,
Another shapeless chaos to digest;
He will begin another world to frame,
For Love, till all be well, will never rest.
Then with such words as cannot be expressed
He cuts the troops, that all asunder fling,
And ere they wist he casts them in a ring.

Then did he rarefy the element,
And in the centre of the ring appear;
The beams that from his forehead spreading went
Begot a horror and religious fear
In all the souls that round about him were,
Which in their ears attentiveness procures,
While he, with such like sounds, their minds allures:

If sense hath not yet taught you, learn of me
A comely moderation and discreet,
That your assemblies may well ordered be;
When my uniting power shall make you meet,
With heavenly tunes it shall be tempered sweet,
And be the model of the world's great frame,
And you, earth's children, Dancing shall it name.

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Dancing, bright lady, then began to be,
When the first seeds whereof the world did spring,
The fire, air, earth, and water did agree
By Love's persuasion, nature's mighty king,
To leave their first discorded combating,
And in a dance such measure to observe,
As all the world their motion should preserve.

Since when they still are carried in a round,
And changing come one in another's place;
Yet do they neither mingle nor confound,
But every one doth keep the bounded space
Wherein the dance doth bid it turn or trace.
This wondrous miracle did Love devise,
For dancing is love's proper exercise.

Like this he framed the gods' eternal bower,
And of a shapeless and confused mass,
By his through-piercing and digesting power,
The turning vault of heaven formed was,
Whose starry wheels he hath so made to pass,
As that their movings do a musik frame,
And they themselves still dance unto the same.

Behold the world, how it is whirled round!
And for it is so whirled, is named so;
.....
For your quick eyes in wandering to and fro,
From east to west, or no one thing can glance,
But, if you mark it well, it seems to dance.

.....(Dancing is love's proper exercise).....

First you see fixed in this huge mirror blue
Of trembling lights a number numberless;
Fixed, they are named, but with a name untrue;
For they all move and in a dance express
The great long year that doth contain no less
Than three score hundreds of those years in all,
Which the sun makes with his course natural.

What if to you these sparks disordered seem,
As if by chance they had been scattered there?
The gods a solemn measure do it deem
And see a just proportion everywhere,
And know the points whence first their movings were,
To which first points when all return again,
The axletree of heaven shall break in twain.

Under that spangled sky five wandering flames,
Besides the king of day and queen of night,
Are wheeled around, all in their sundry frames,
And all in sundry measures do delight;
Yet altogether keep no measure right;
For by itself each doth itself advance,
And by itself each doth a galliard dance.
.....
When my uniting power shall make you meet,
With heavenly tunes it shall be tempered sweet,
And be the model of the world's great frame,
And you, earth's children, Dancing shall it name.

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- PART TWO -

For that brave sun, the father of the day,
Doth love this earth, the mother of the night;
And, like a reveller in rich array,
Doth dance his galliard in his leman's sight,
Both back and forth and sideways passing light.
His gallant grace doth so the gods amaze,
That all stand still and at his beauty gaze.

But see the earth when she approacheth near,
How she for joy doth spring and sweetly smile;
But see again her sad and heavy cheer,
When changing places he retires a while;
But those black clouds he shortly will exile,
And make them all before his presence fly,
As mists consumed before his cheerful eye.

Who doth not see the measure of the moon?
Which thirteen times she danceth every year,
And ends her pavan thirteen times as soon
As does her brother, of whose golden hair
She borroweth part, and proudly doth it wear.
Then doth she coyly turn her face aside,
That half her cheek is scarce sometimes descried.

And now behold your tender nurse, the air,
And common neighbour that aye runs around;
How many pictures and impressions fair
Within her empty regions are there found,
Which to your senses dancing do propound?
For what are breath, speech, echoes, music, winds,
But dancings of the air, in sundry kinds?

For, when you breathe, the air in order moves,
Now in, now out, in time and measure true,
And when you speak, so well she dancing loves,
That doubling oft and oft redoubling new
With thousand forms she doth herself endue;
For all the words that from your lips repair
Are nought but tricks and turnings of the air.

Hence is her prattling daughter, Echo, born,
That dances to all voices she can hear.
There is no sound so harsh that she doth scorn,
Nor any time wherein she will forbear
The airy pavement with her feet to wear;
And yet her hearing sense is nothing quick,
For after time she endeth every trick.

And thou, sweet music, dancing's only life,
The ear's sole happiness, the air's best speech,
Lodestone of fellowship, charming rod of strife,
The soft mind's paradise, the sick mind's leech,
With thine own tongue thou trees and stones canst teach,
That when the air doth dance her finest measure,
Then art thou born, the gods' and mens' sweet pleasure.

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- PART THREE -

These various forms of dancing Love did frame,
And besides these, a hundred million mo;
And as he did invent, he taught the same,
With goodly gesture and with comely show,
Now keeping state, now humbly honouring low.
And ever for the persons and the place,
He taught most fit and best according grace.

Since when all ceremonious mysteries,
All sacred orgies and religious rites,
All pomps and triumphs and solemnities,
All funerals, nuptials, and like public sights,
All parliaments of peace, and warlike fights,
All learned arts, and every great affair,
A lively shape of dancing seems to bear.

Dancing, bright lady, then began to be,
When the first seeds whereof the world did spring,
The fire, air, earth, and water, did agree
By Love's persuasion, nature's mighty king,
To leave their first discorded combating,
And in a dance such measure to observe,
As all the world their motion should preserve.

Since when they still are carried in a round,
And changing come one in another's place;
Yet do they neither mingle nor confound,
But every one doth keep the bounded space
Wherein the dance doth bid it turn or trace.
This wondrous miracle did Love devise,
For dancing is love's proper exercise.

Only the earth doth stand forever still:
Her rocks remove not, nor her mountains meet,
.....
Yet, though the earth is ever steadfast seen,
On her broad breast hath dancing ever been.

For those blue veins that through her body spread,
Those sapphire streams which from great hills do spring,
.....
Observe a dance .....
.....(Dancing is love's proper exercise,
Dancing, bright lady, dance) .....
..... in their wild wandering;
And still their dance begets a murmur sweet,
And still the murmur with the dance doth meet.

See how those flowers, that have sweet beauty too,
The only jewels that the earth doth wear,
When the young sun in bravery her doth woo,
As oft as they the whistling wind do hear,
Do wave their tender bodies here and there;
And though their dance no perfect measure is,
Yet oftentimes their music makes them kiss.

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What makes the vine about the elm to dance
 With turnings, windings, and embracements round?
What makes the lodestone to the north advance
 His subtle point, as if from thence he found
 His chief attractive virtue to redound?
  Kind nature first doth cause all things to love;
  Love makes them dance, and in just order move.

But why relate I every singular?
 Since all the world's great fortunes and affairs
Forward and backward ..... whirled are,
 According to the music of the spheres;
 And Change herself her nimble feet upbears
  On a round slippery wheel, that rolleth aye,
  And turns all states with her imperious sway;

Lo! this is Dancing's true nobility,
 Dancing, the child of Music and of Love;
Dancing itself, both love and harmony,
 Where all agree and all in order move;
 Dancing, the art that all arts do approve;
  The fair character of the world's consent,
  The heaven's true figure, and th'earth's ornament.

Learn then to dance, you that are princes born,
 And lawful lords of earthly creatures all;
Imitate them, and thereof take no scorn,
 For this new art to them is natural.
 And imitate the stars celestial;
  For when pale death your vital twist shall sever,
  Your better parts must dance with them forever.

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Commissioned by Colchester Choral Society
(Hon. Music Director: Ian Ray) with funds
provided by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

Orchestration:

2 Flutes
(Flute 2 doubles Piccolo)
2 Oboes
2 Clarinets in B flat
2 Bassoons

2 Horns in F
2 Trumpets in B flat

Timpani - one player
Percussion - two players
(Side Drum, Bass Drum,
Cymbals, Triangle, Gong,
Xylophone, Glockenspiel,
Vibraphone (optional))

Strings

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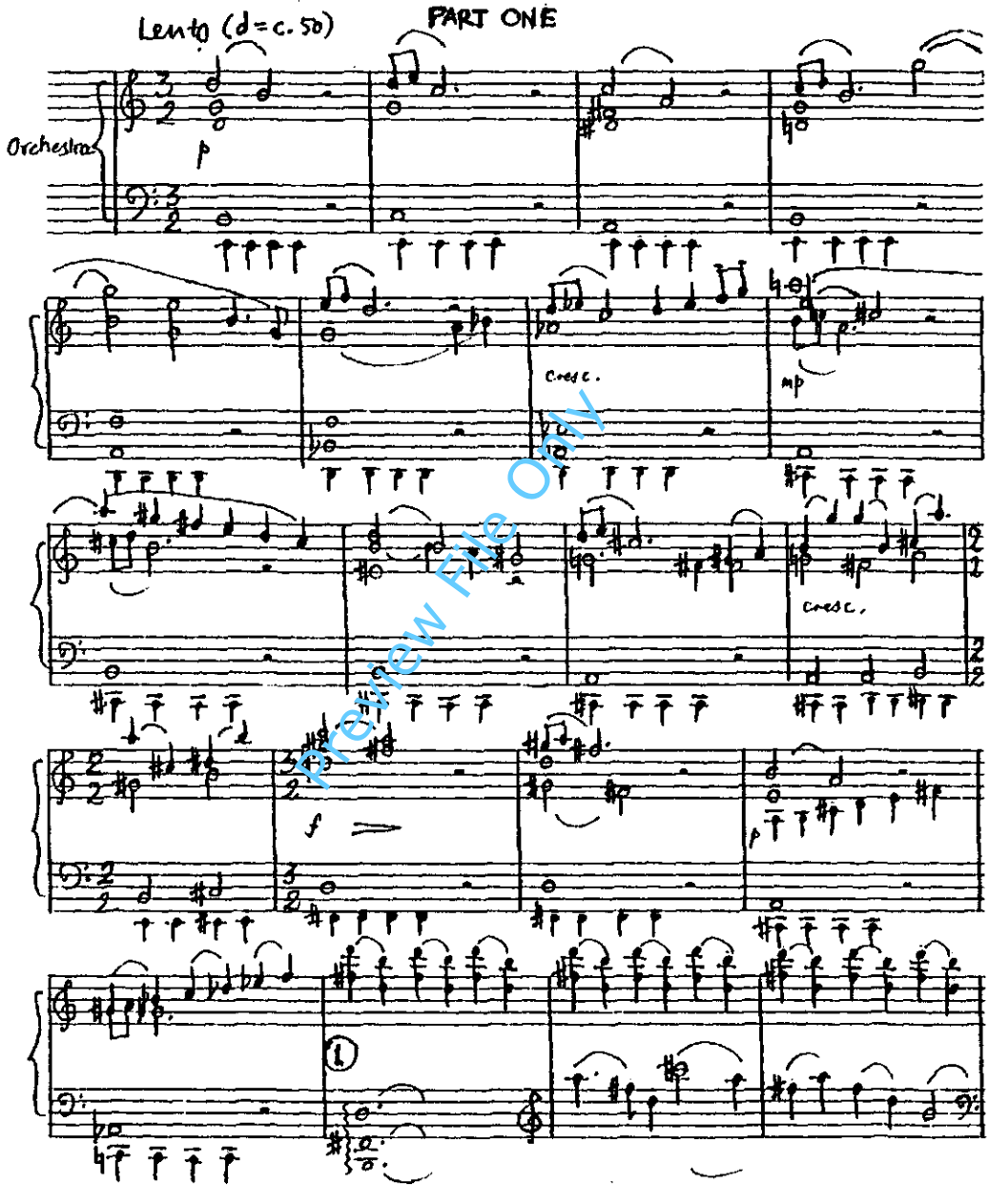
Duration: approximately 47 minutes

Note: in all time changes ♩ = ♩ except where marked.

DANCE OF THE UNIVERSE

words from Sir John Davies' "Orchestra" (1596)

music by Alan Bullard (1979)



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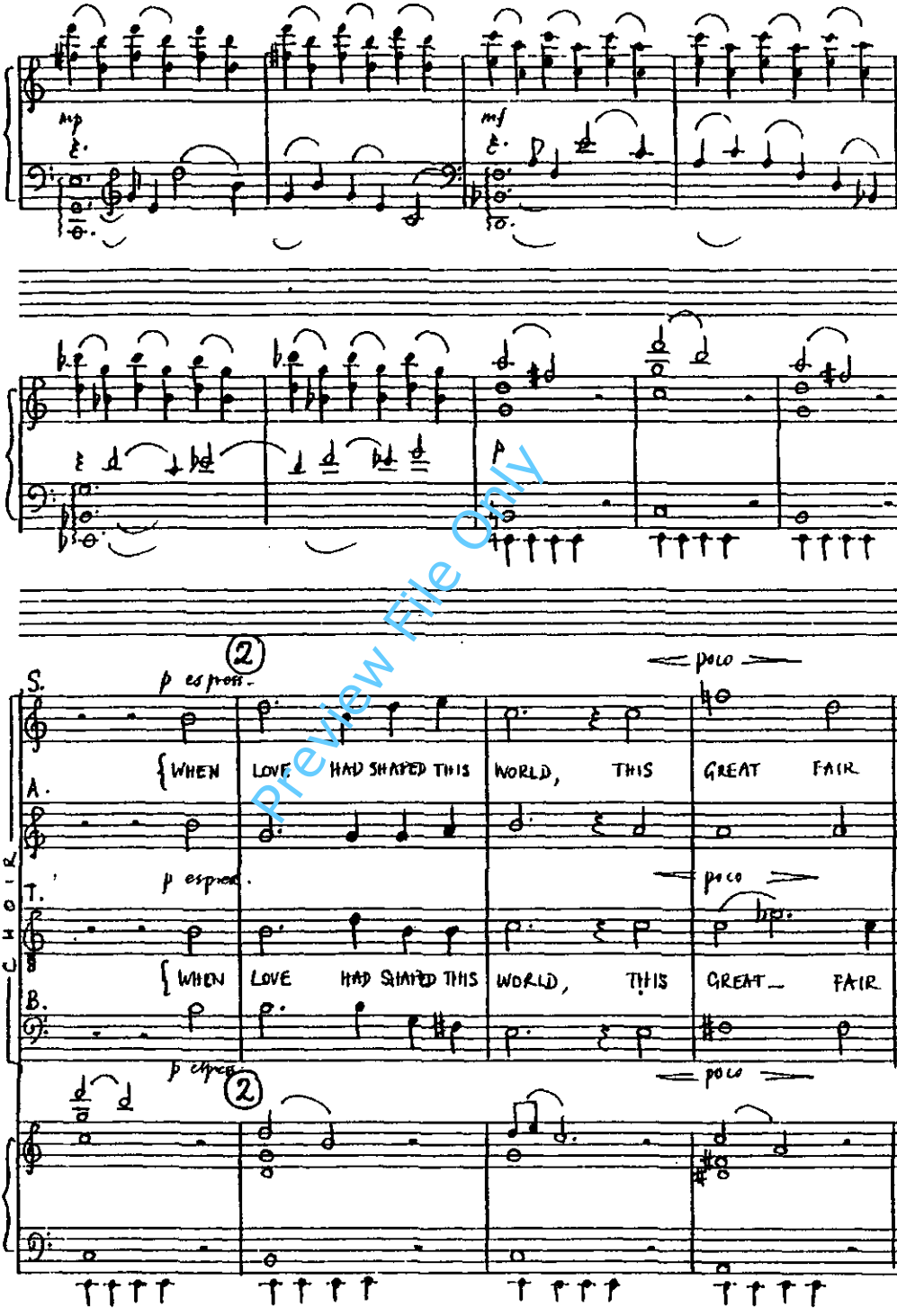

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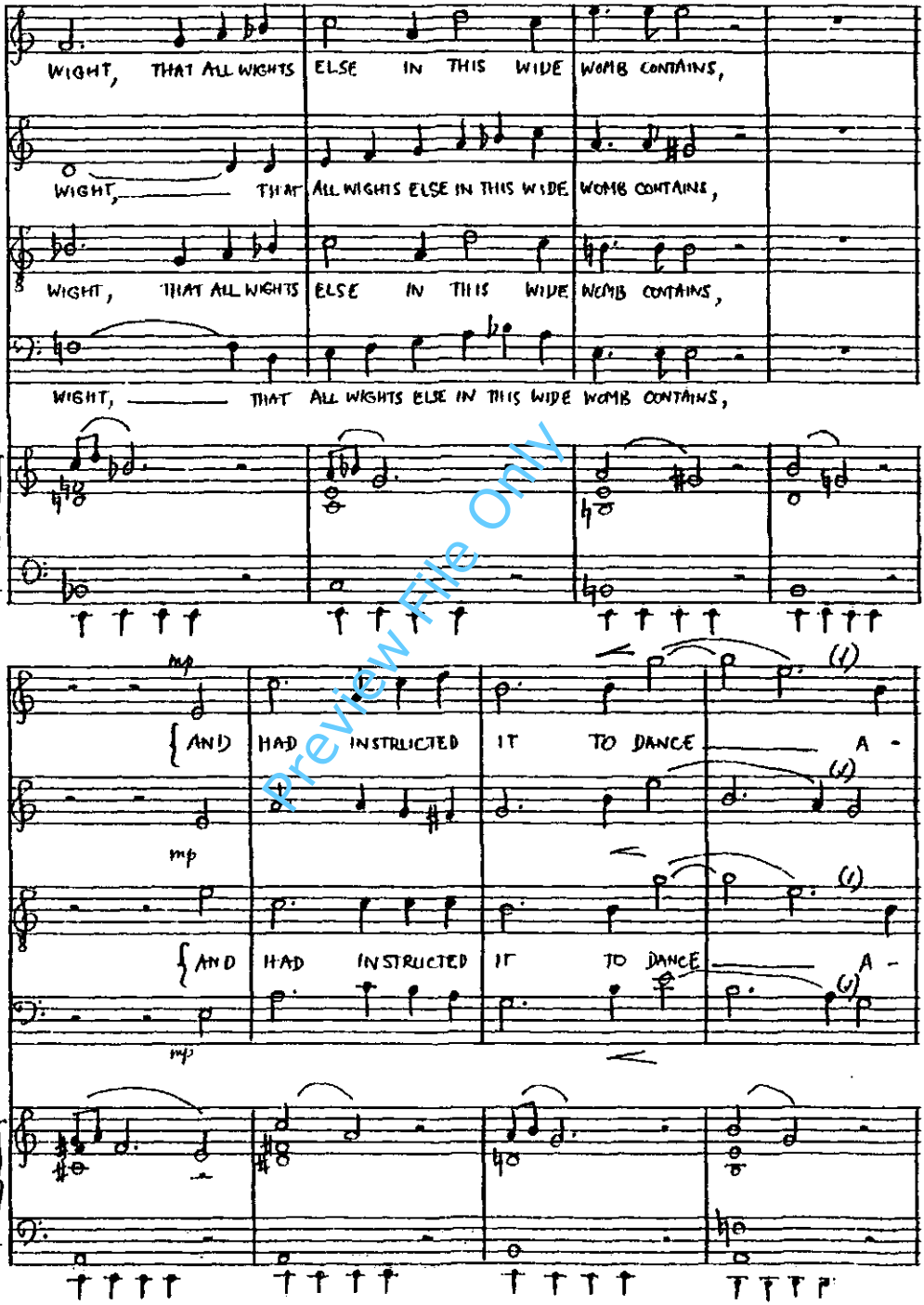

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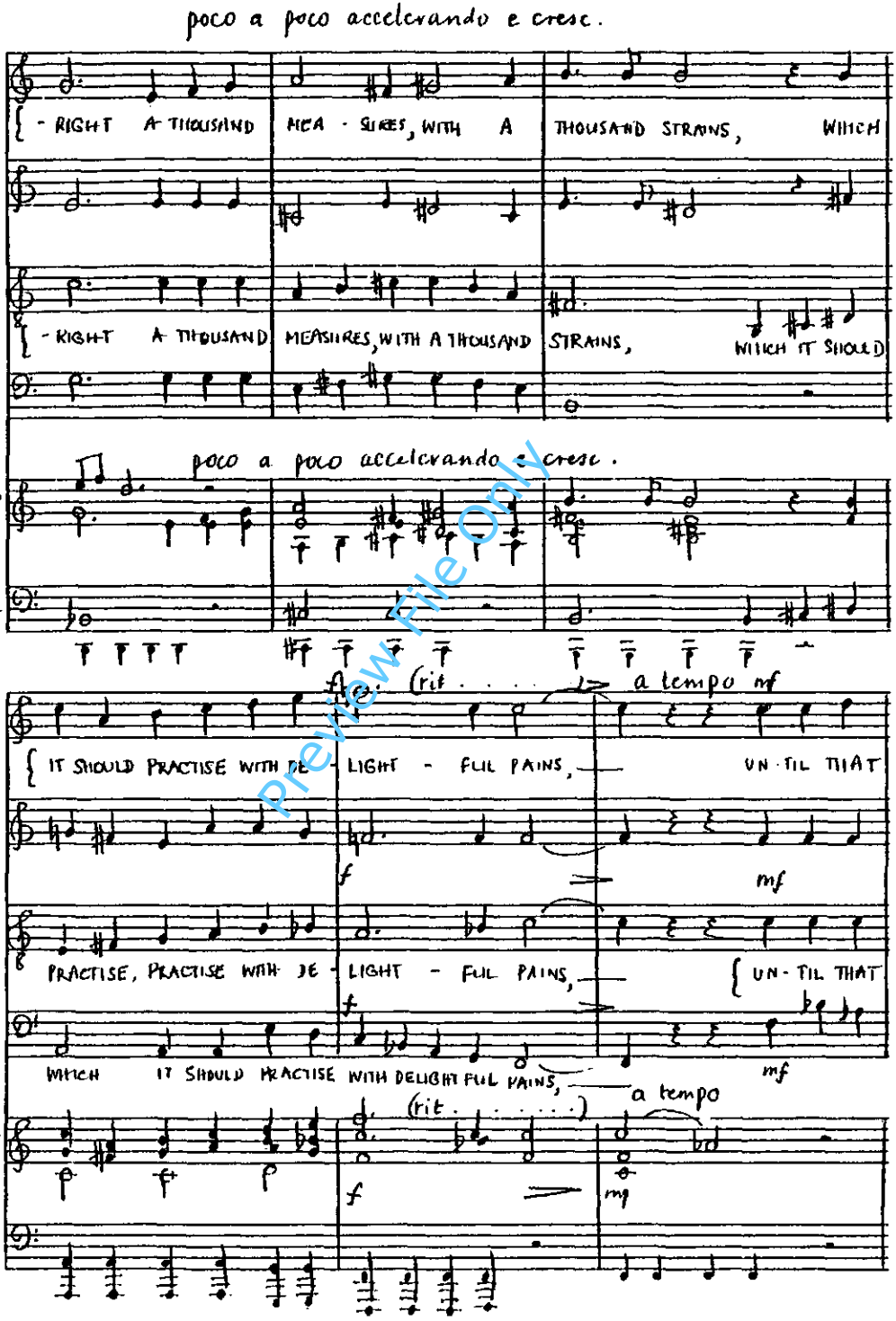

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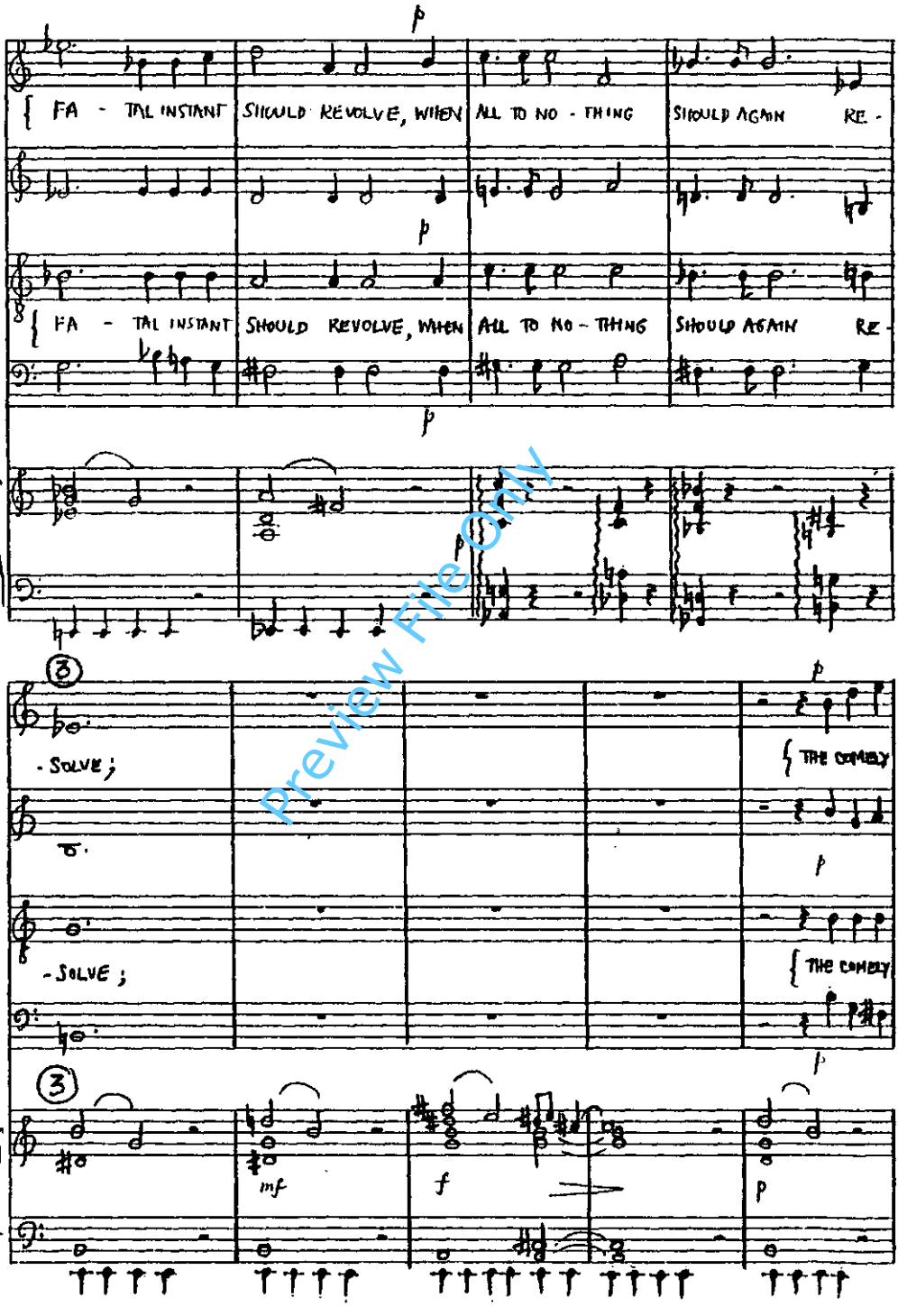

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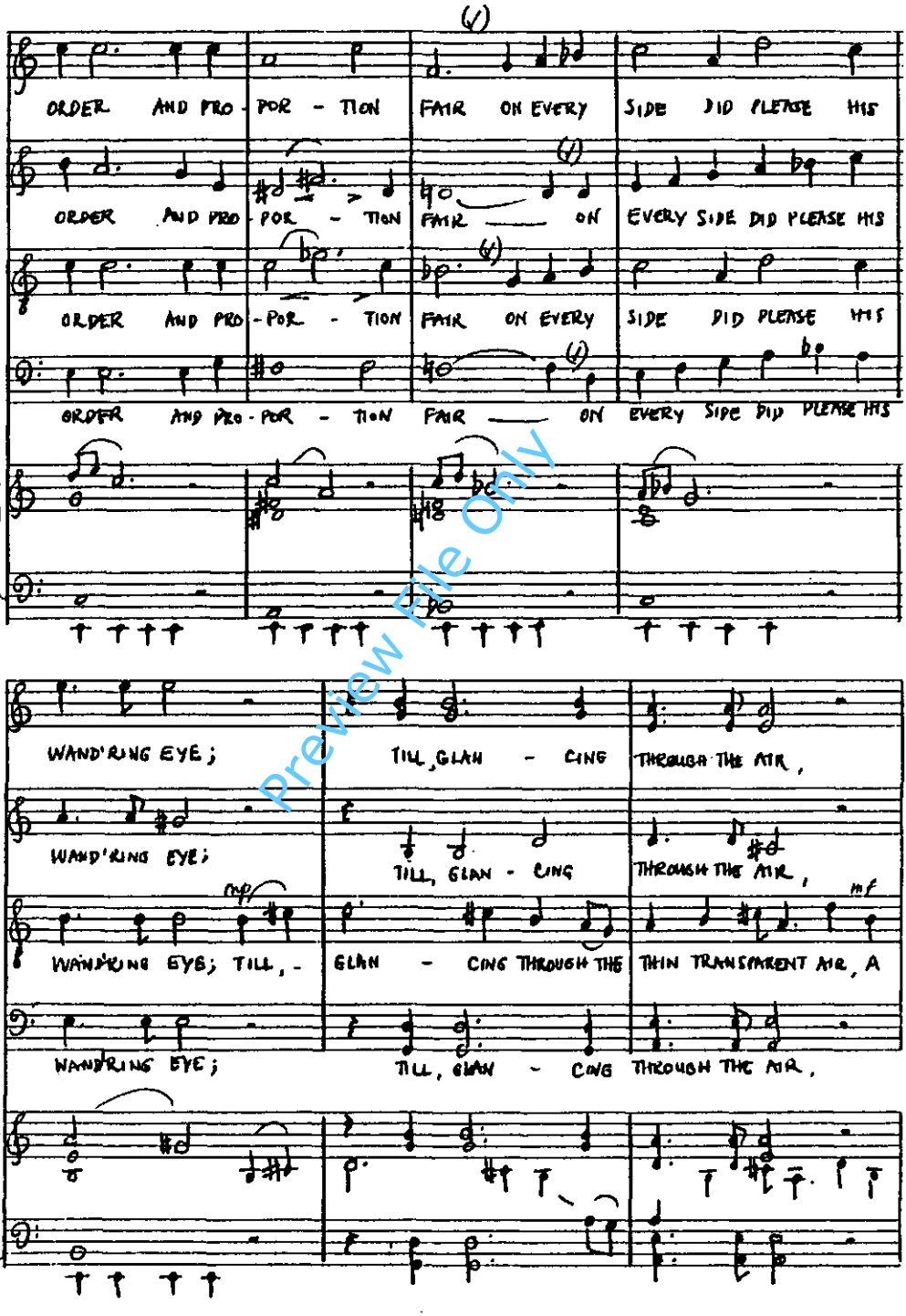
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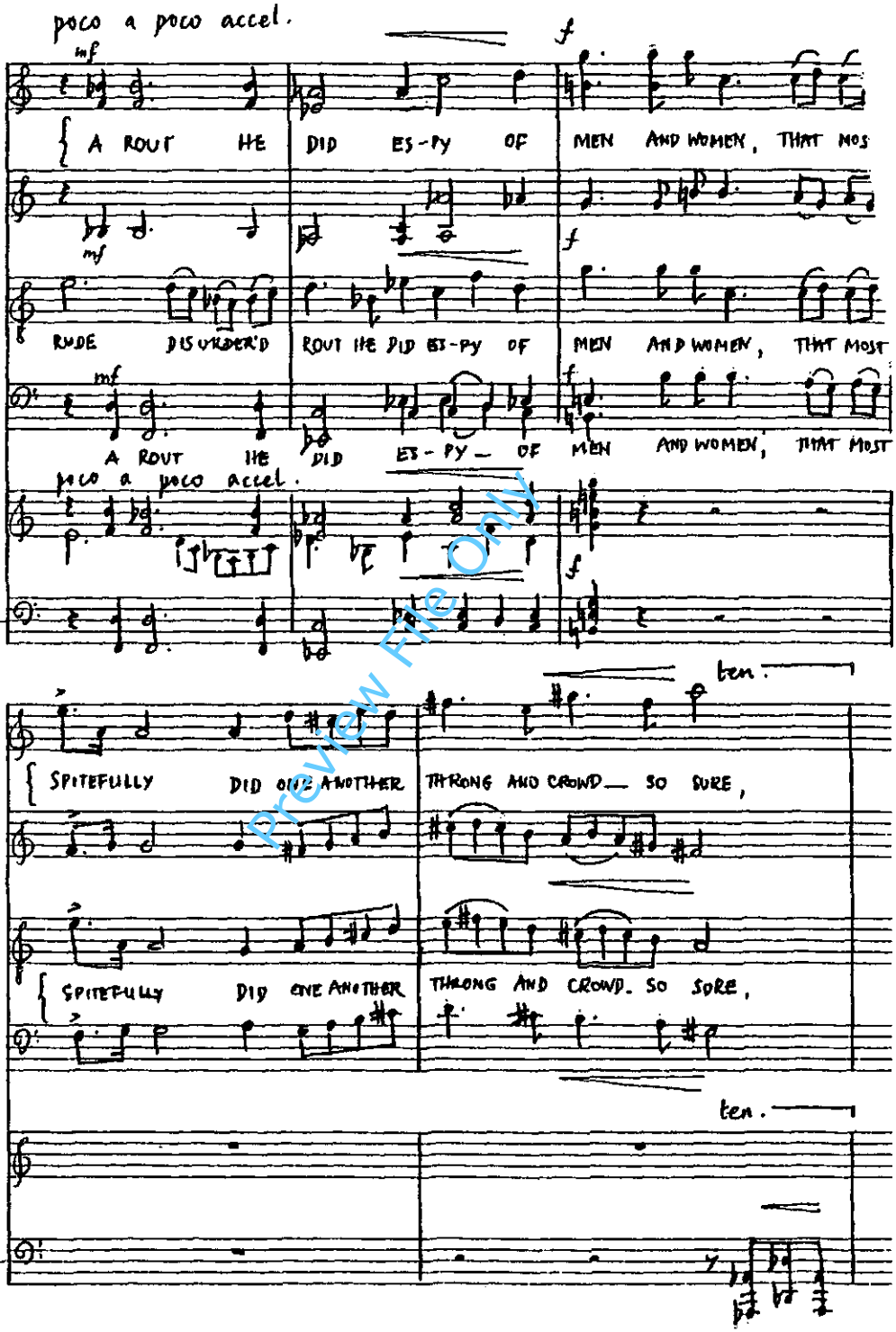

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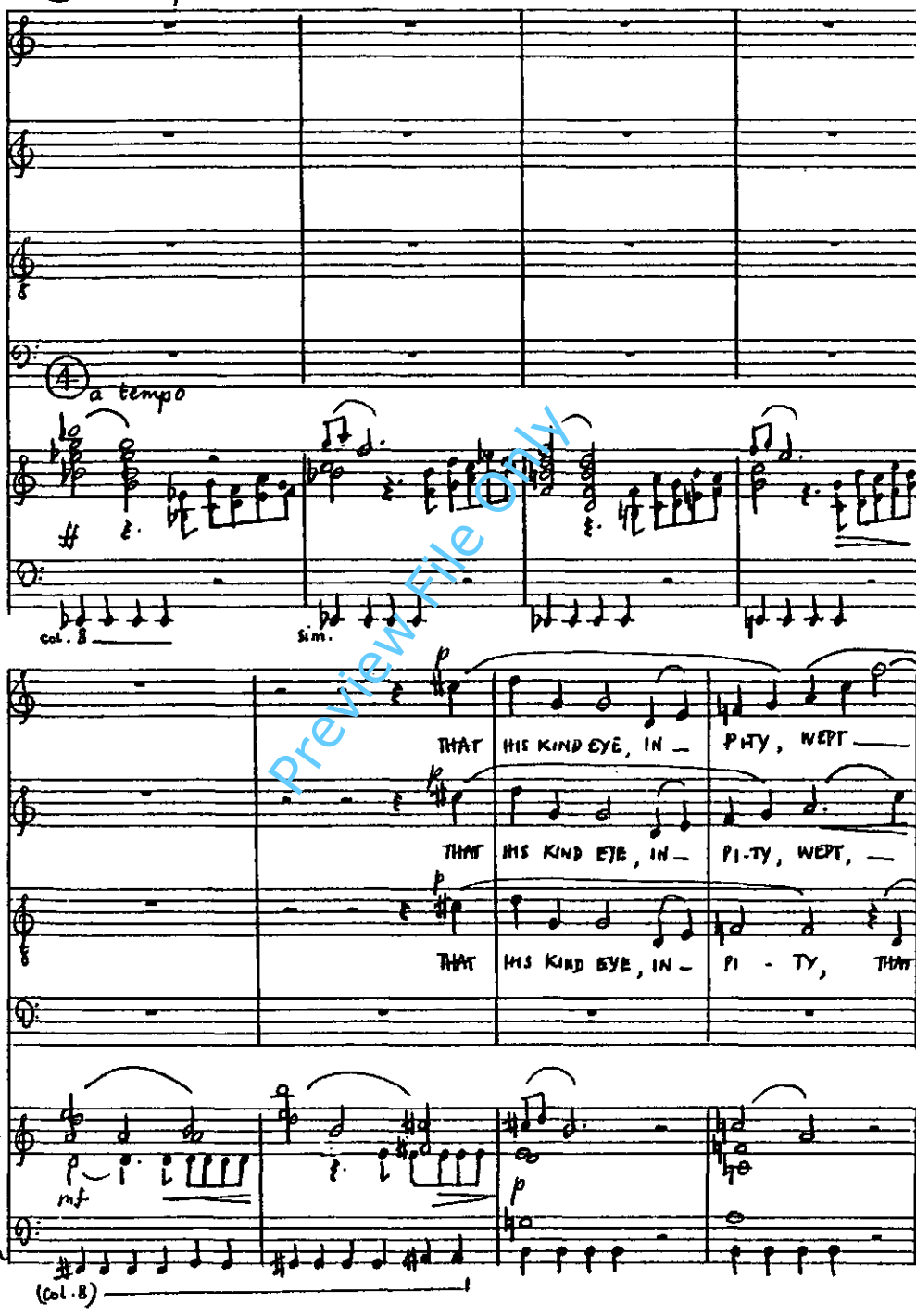

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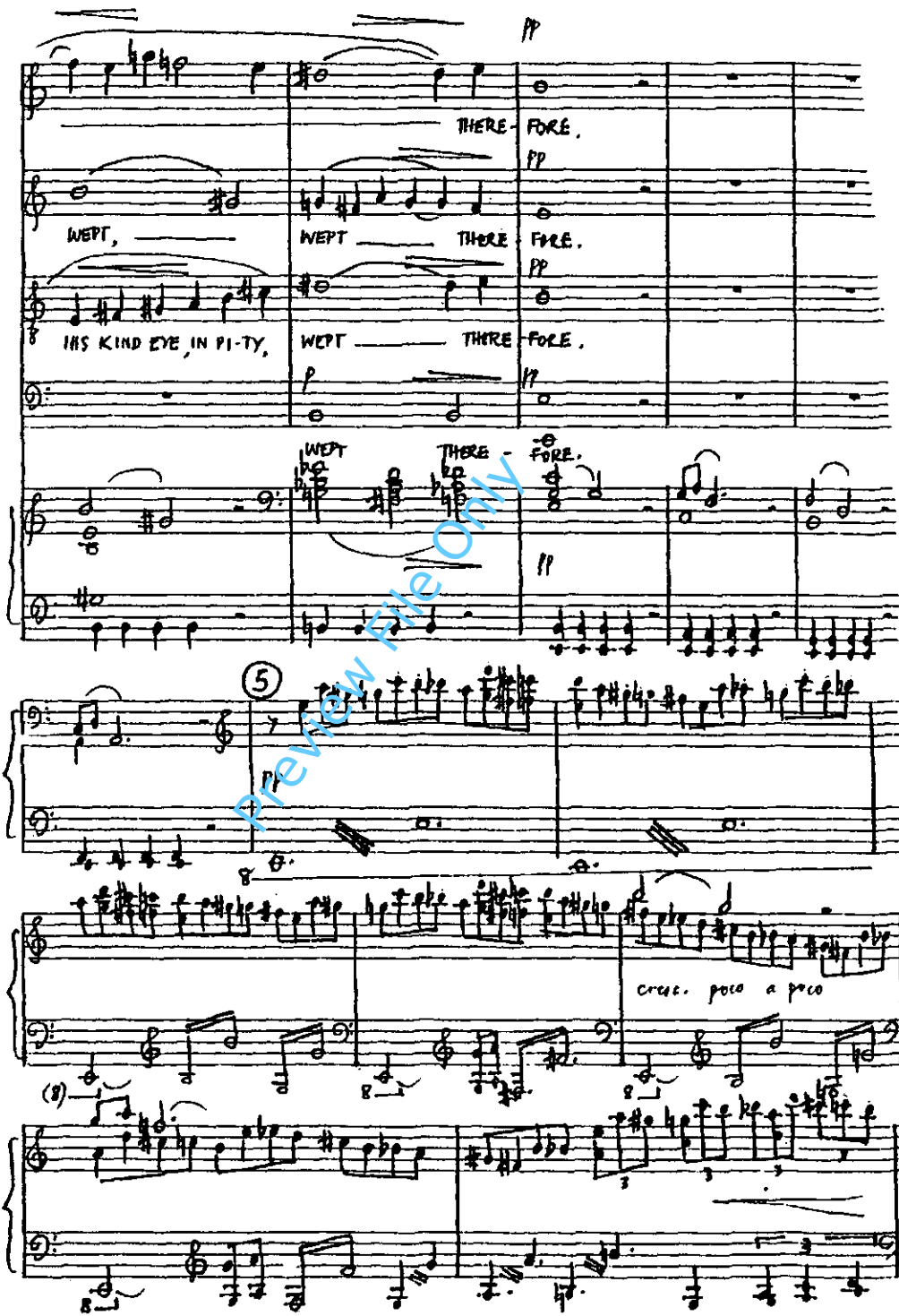

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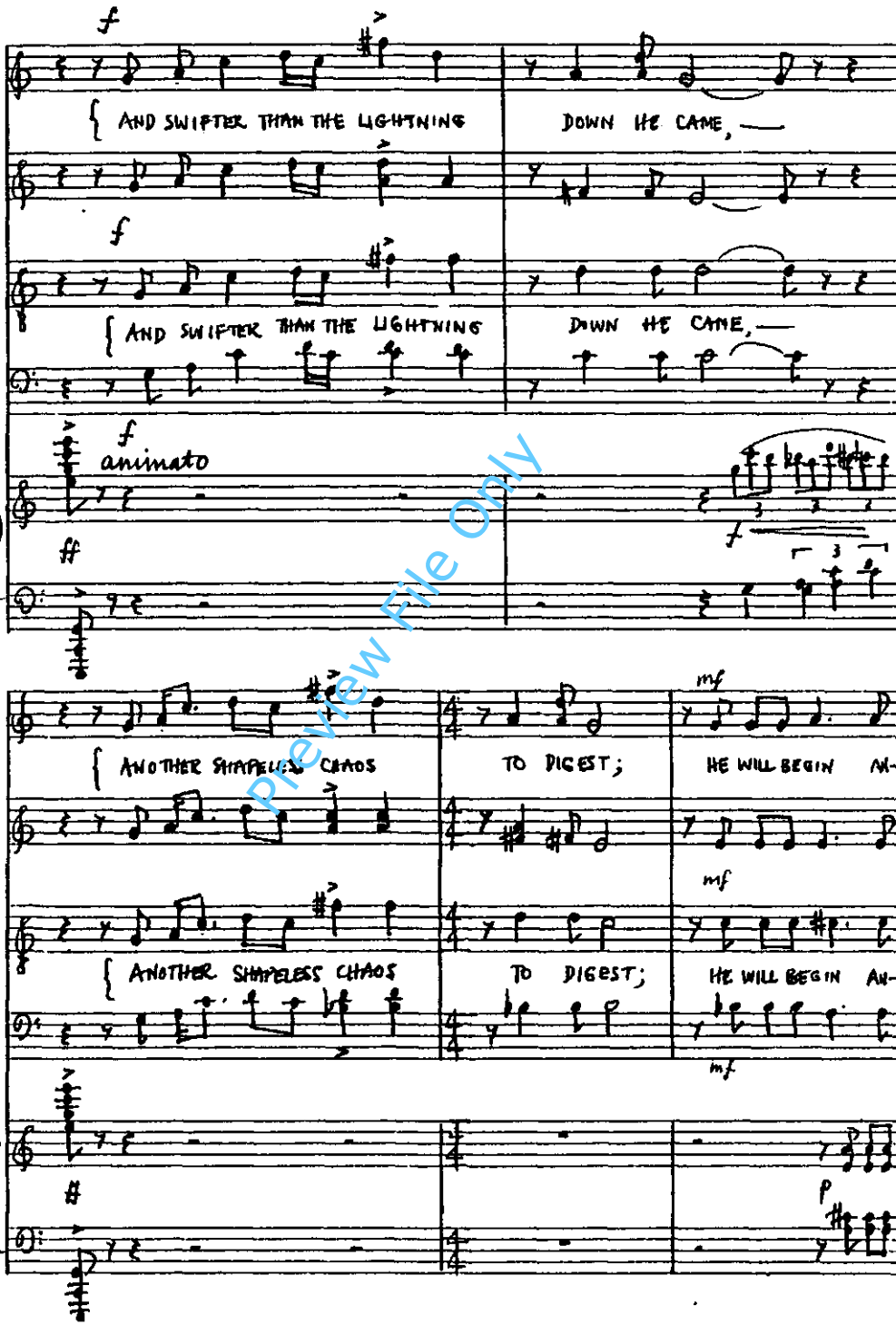

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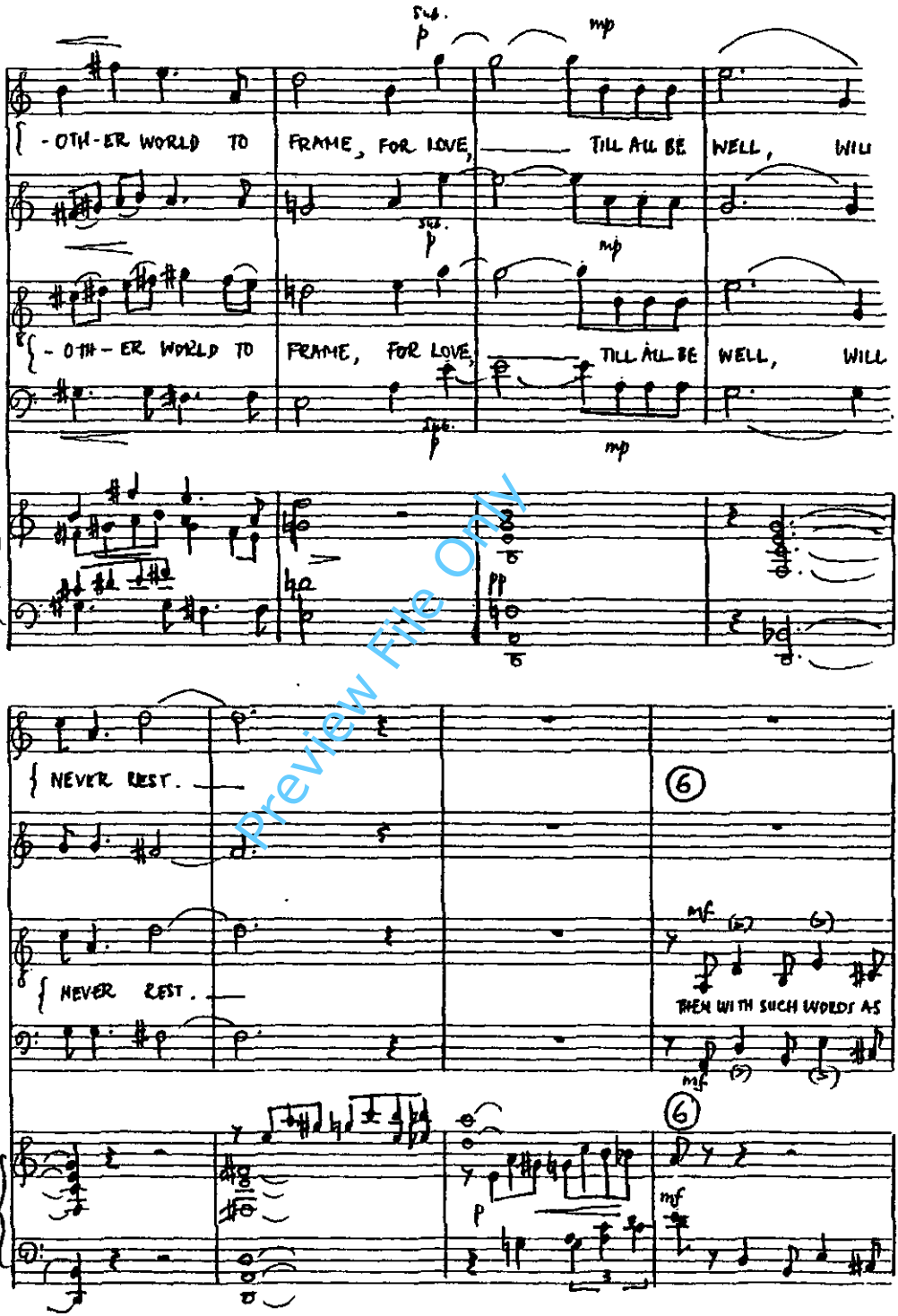

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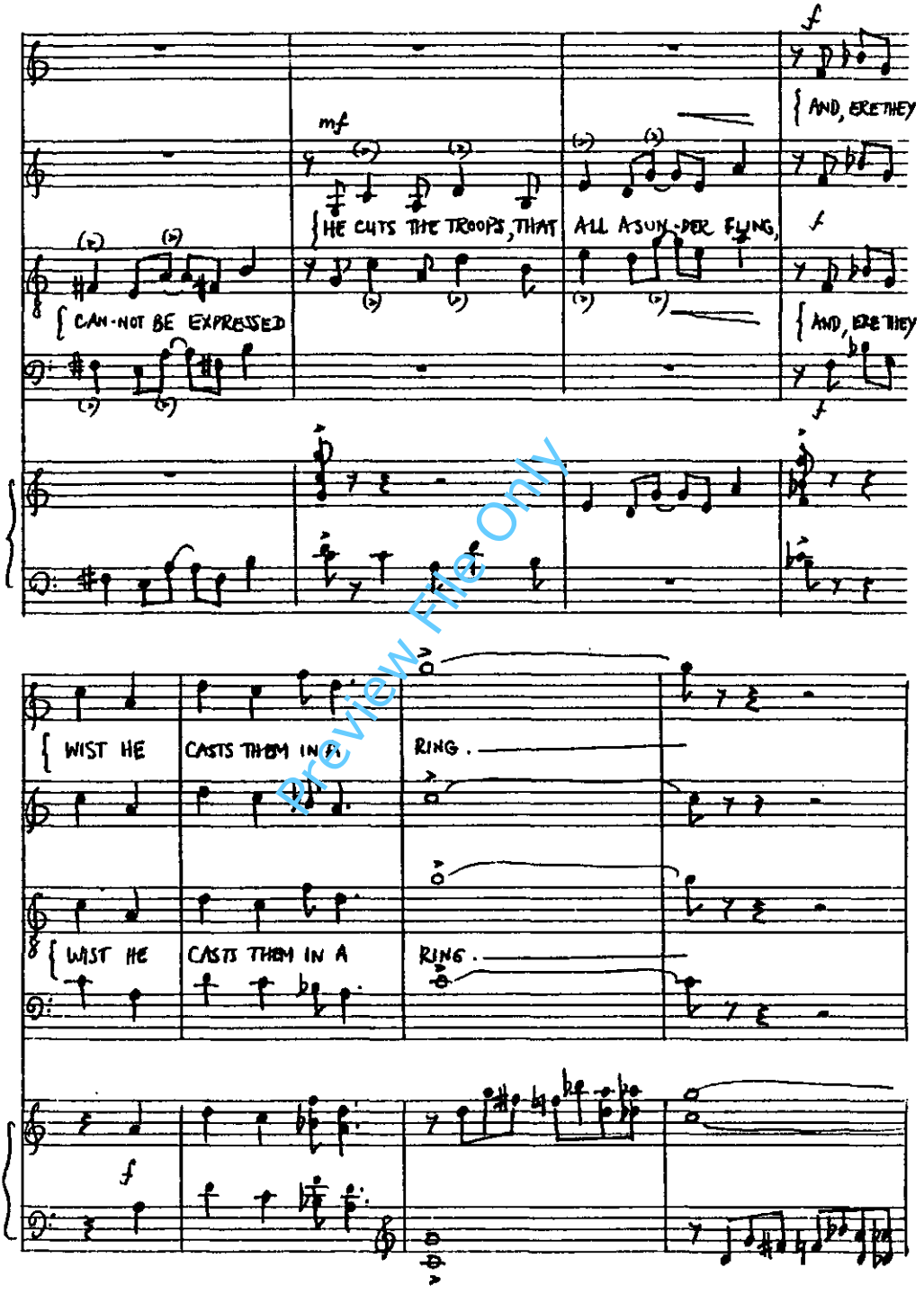

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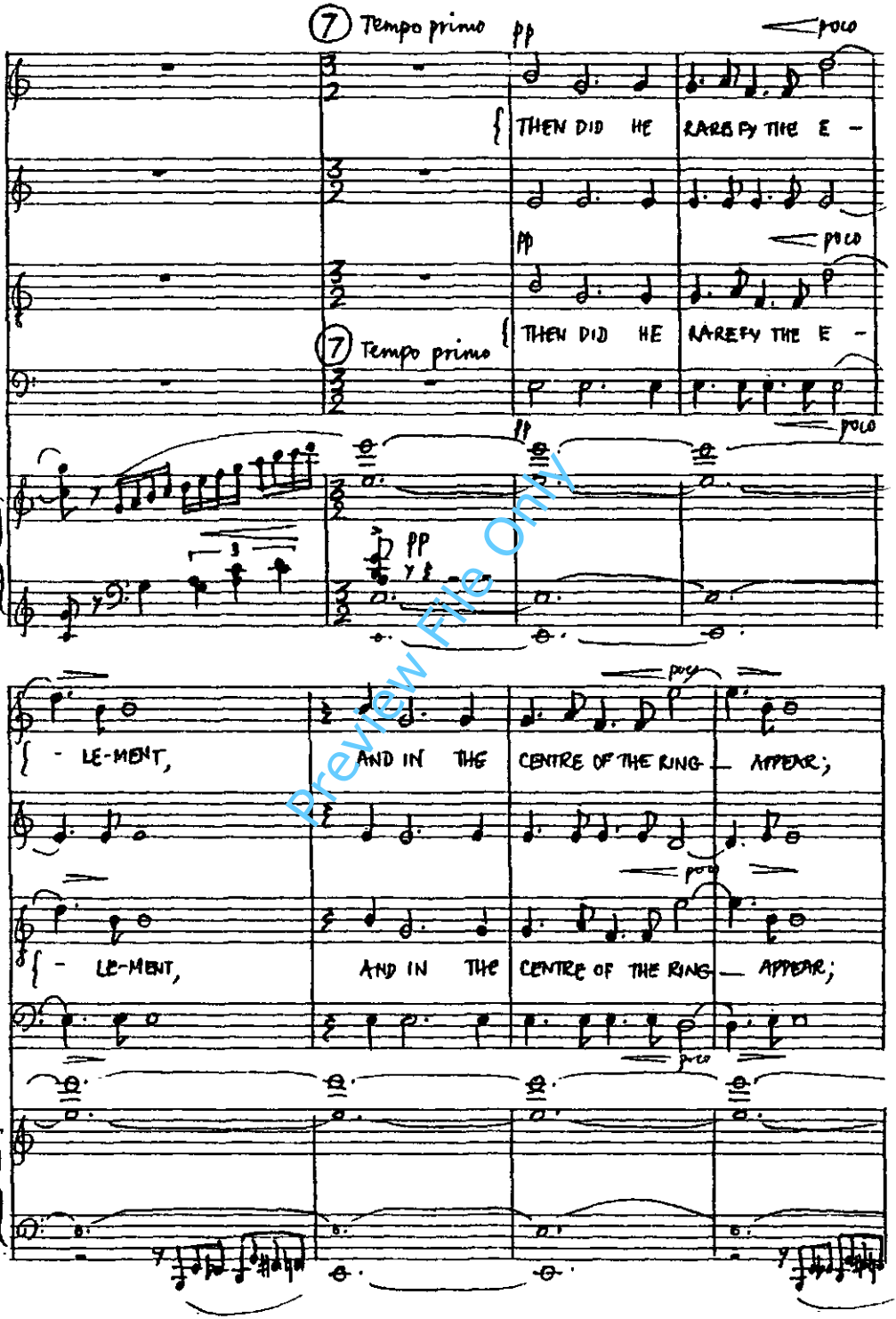

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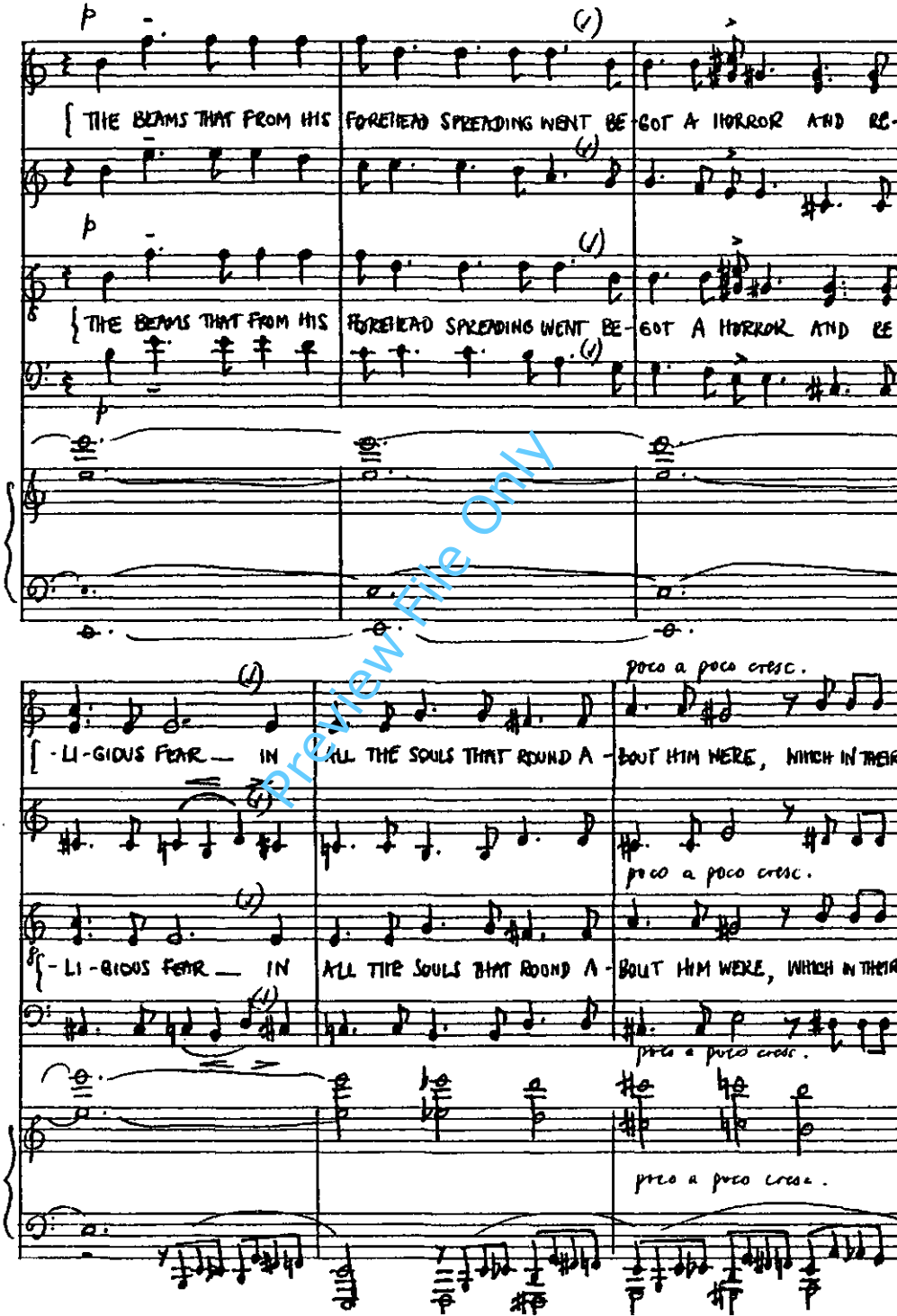

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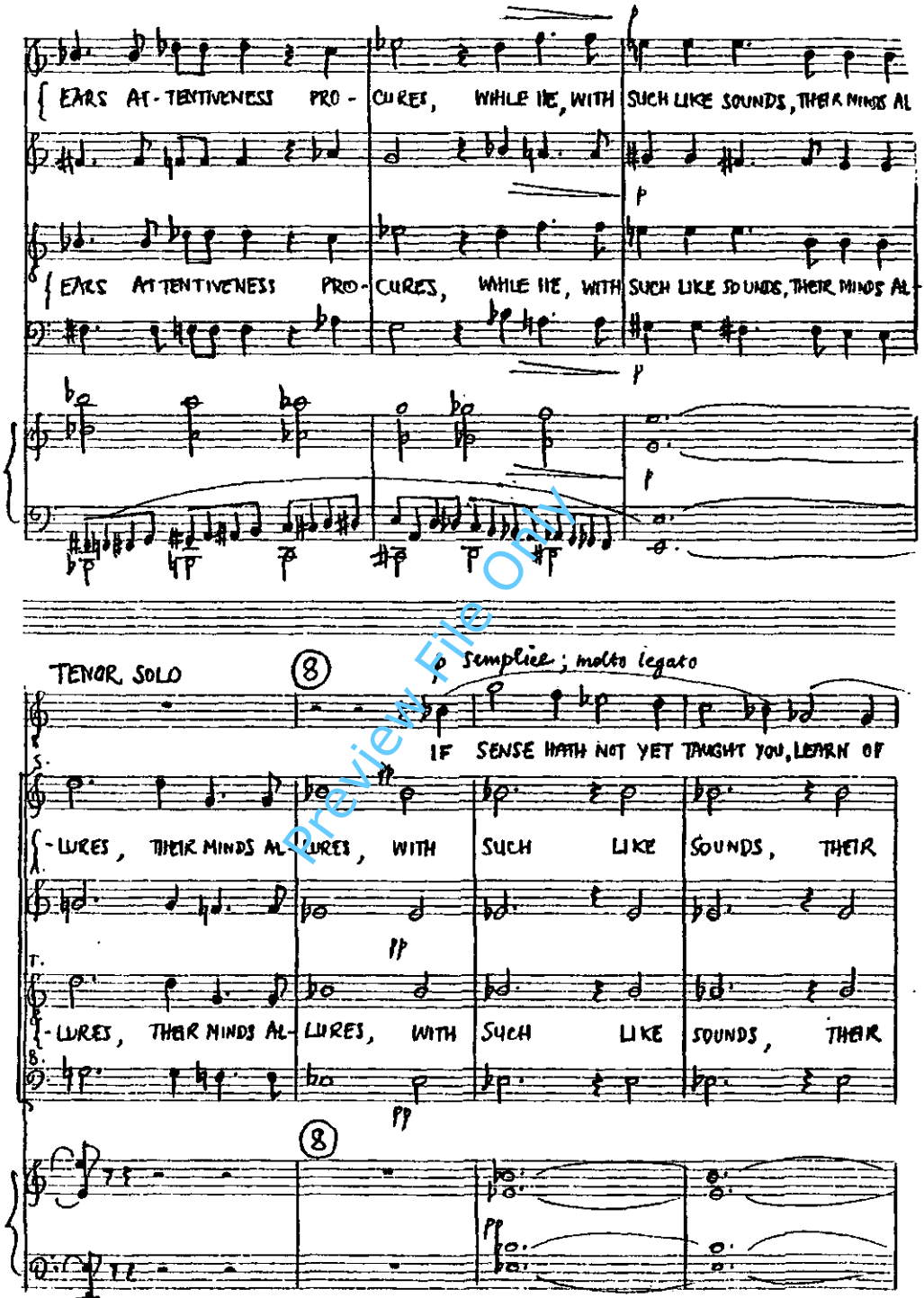

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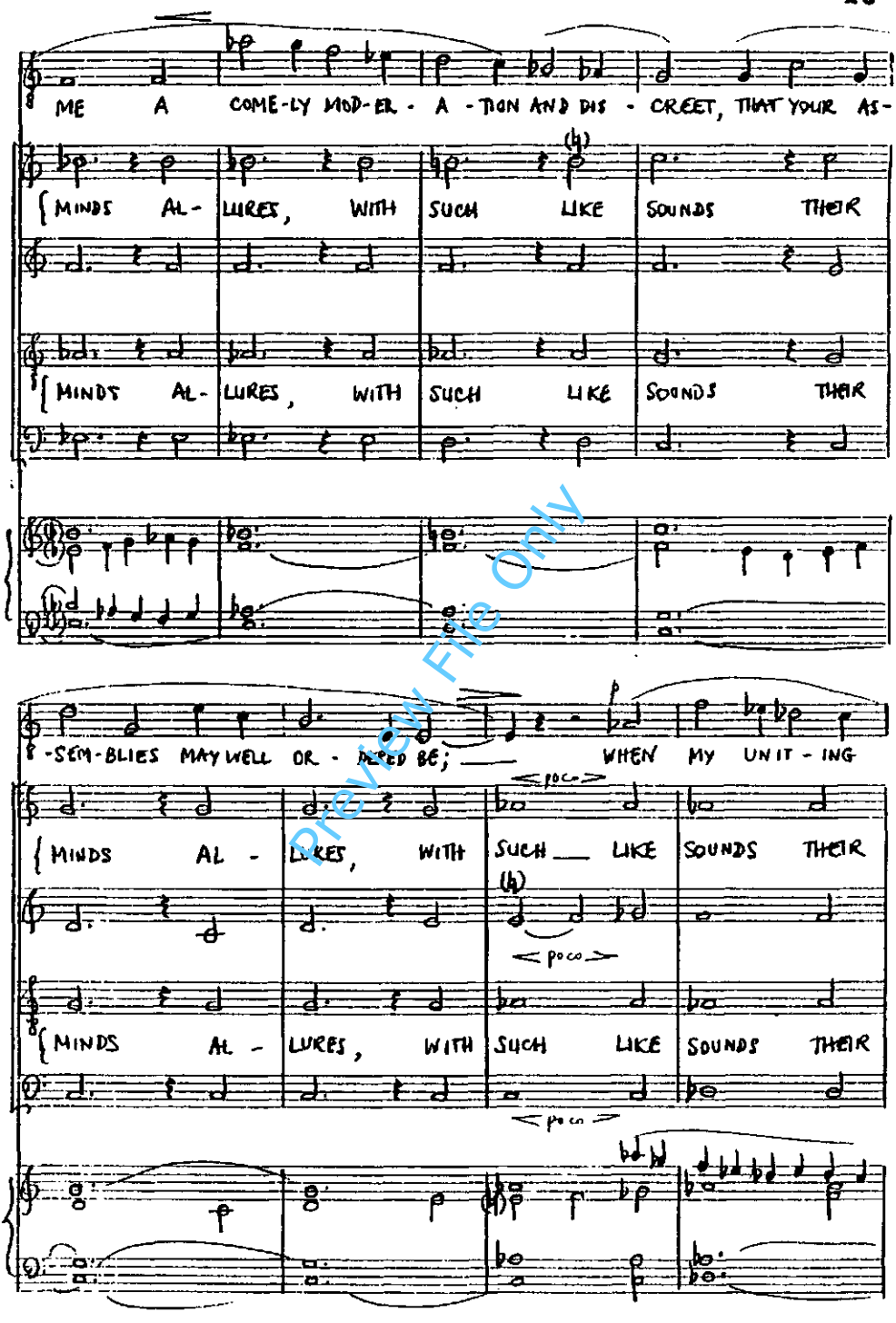

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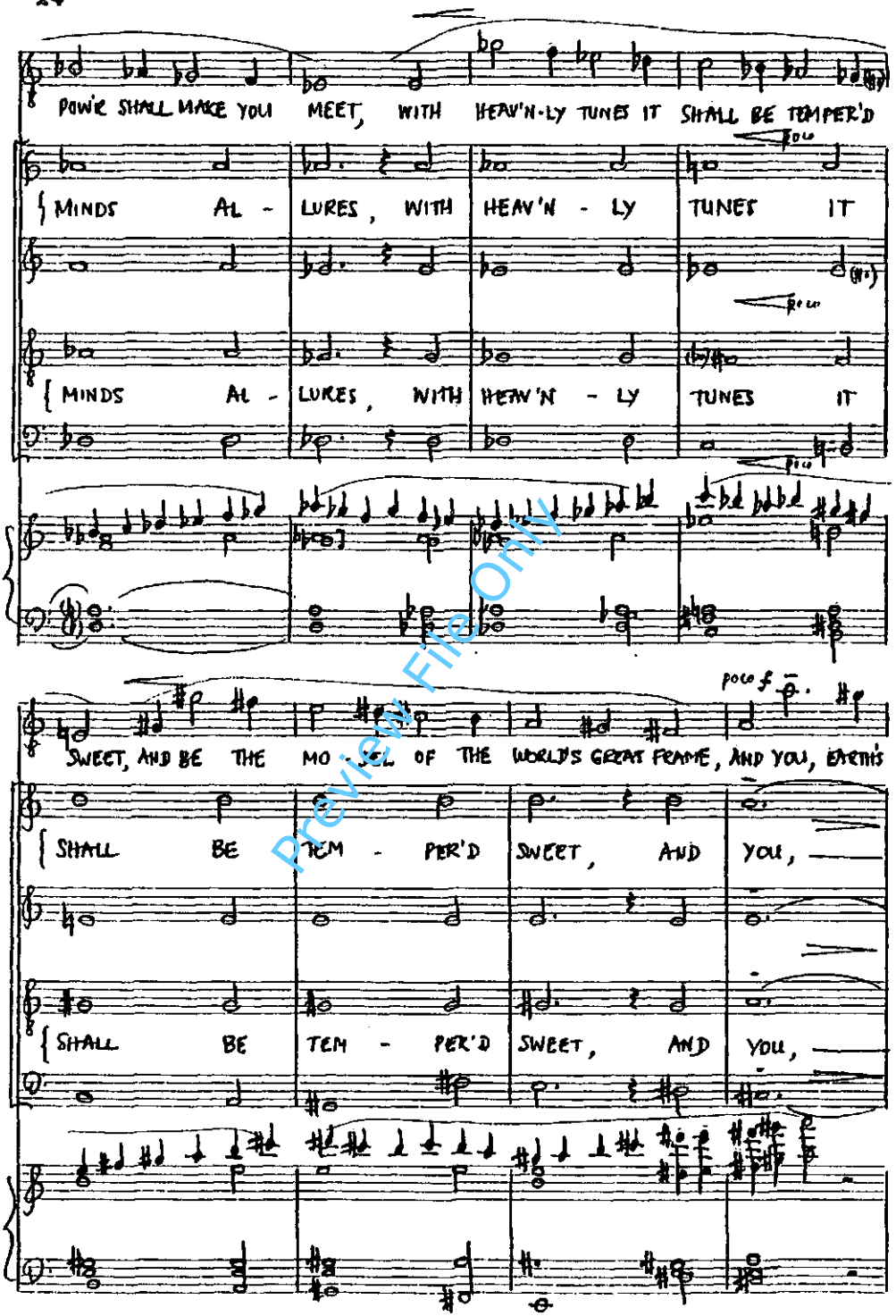

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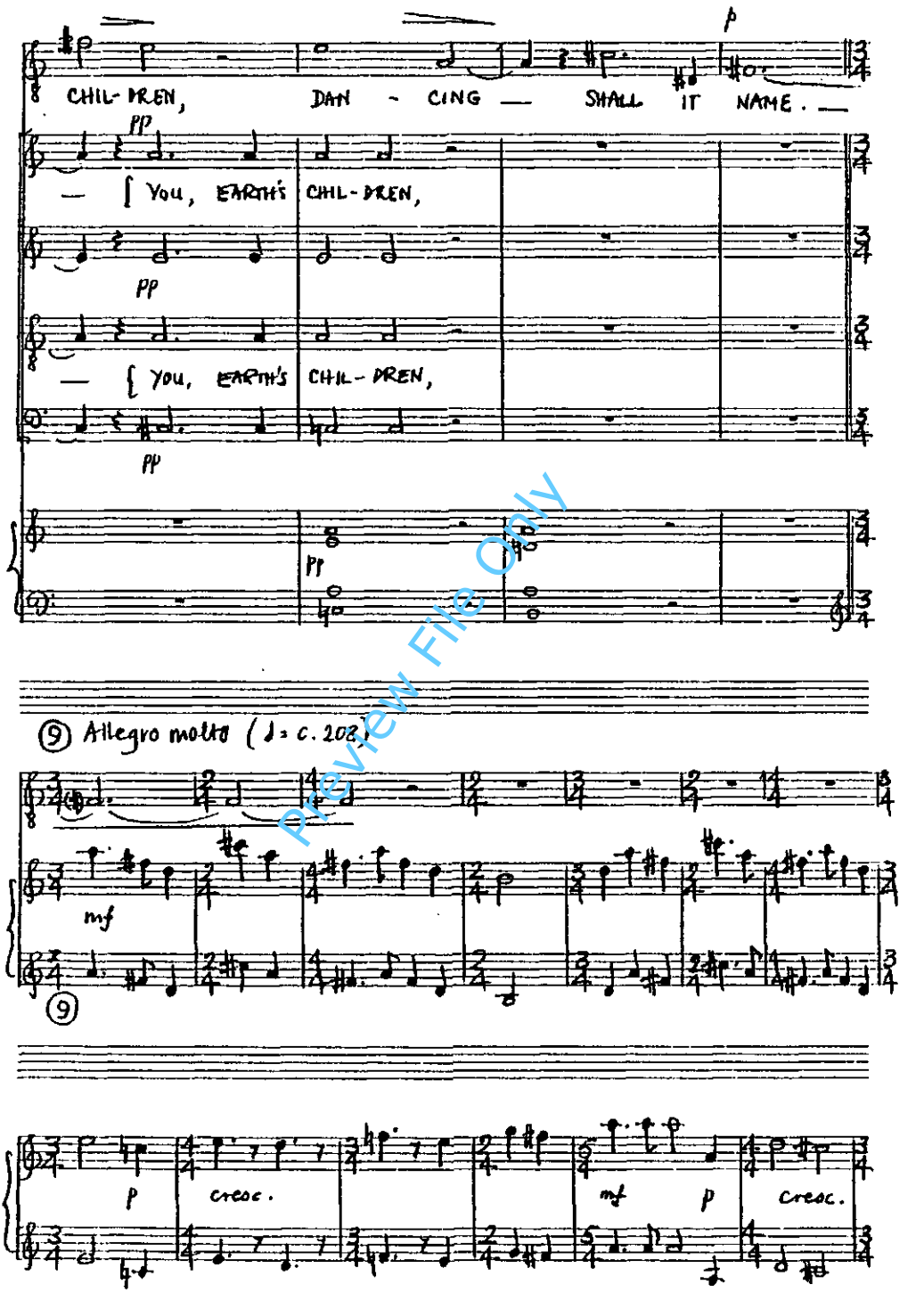

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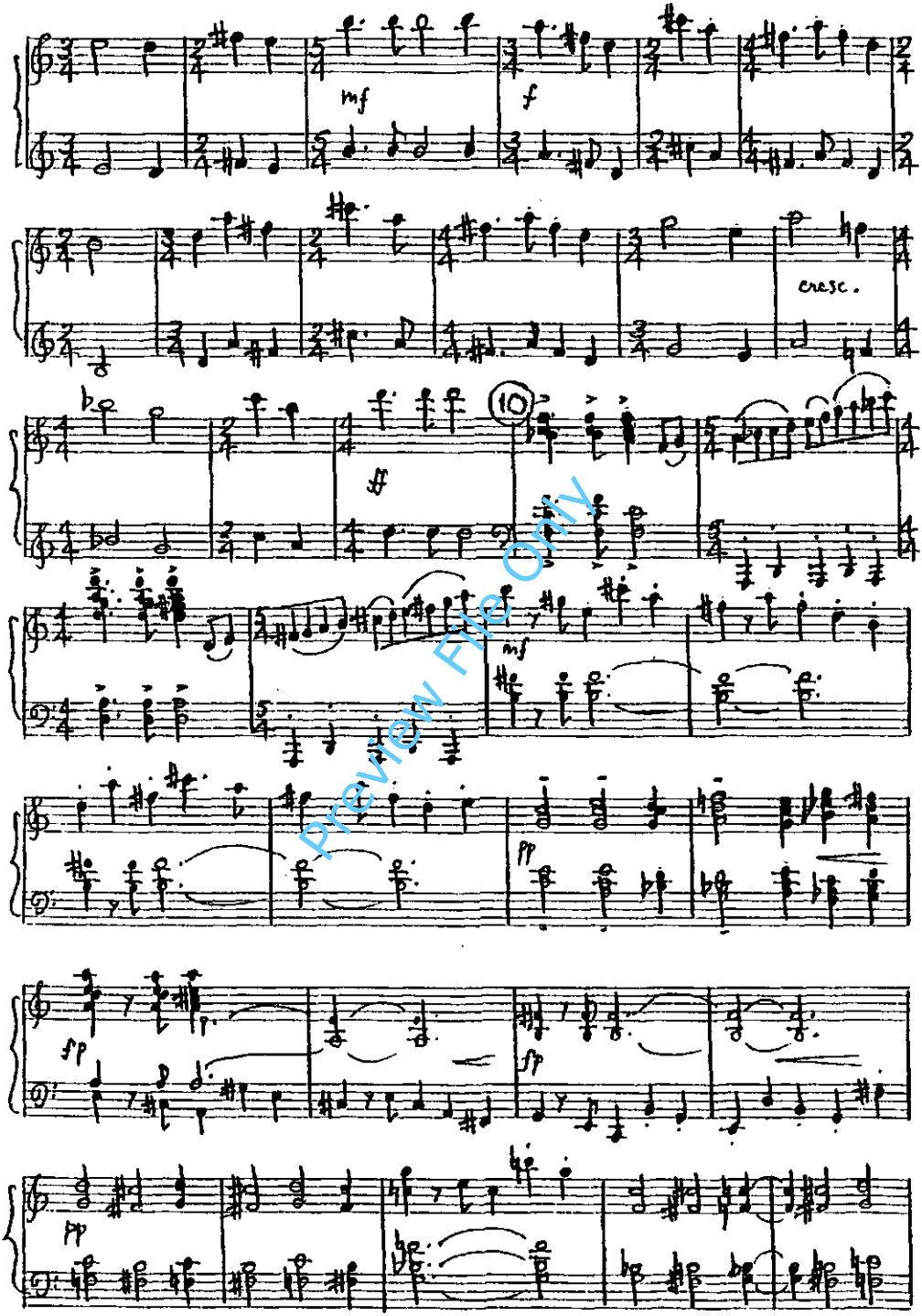

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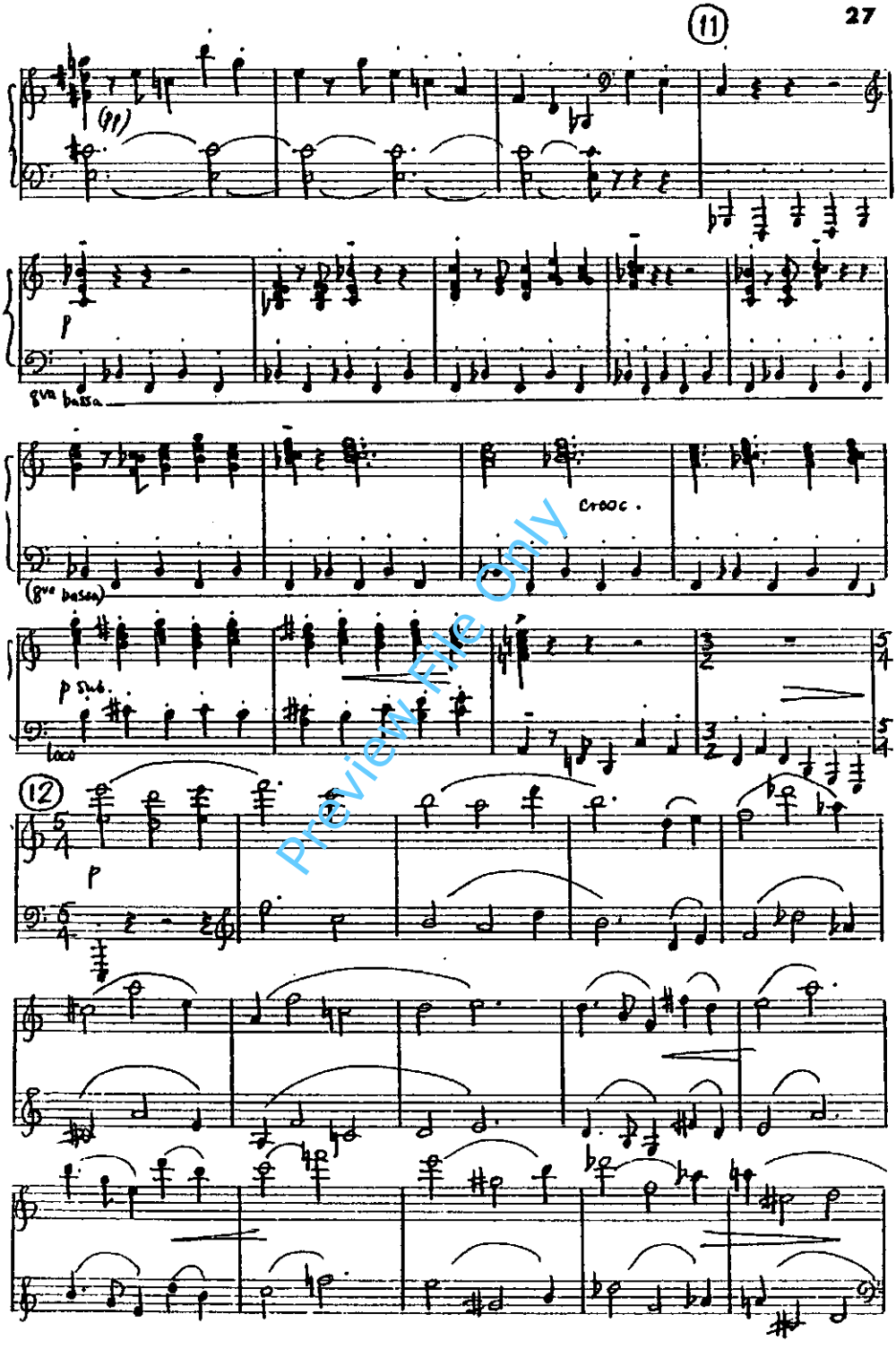

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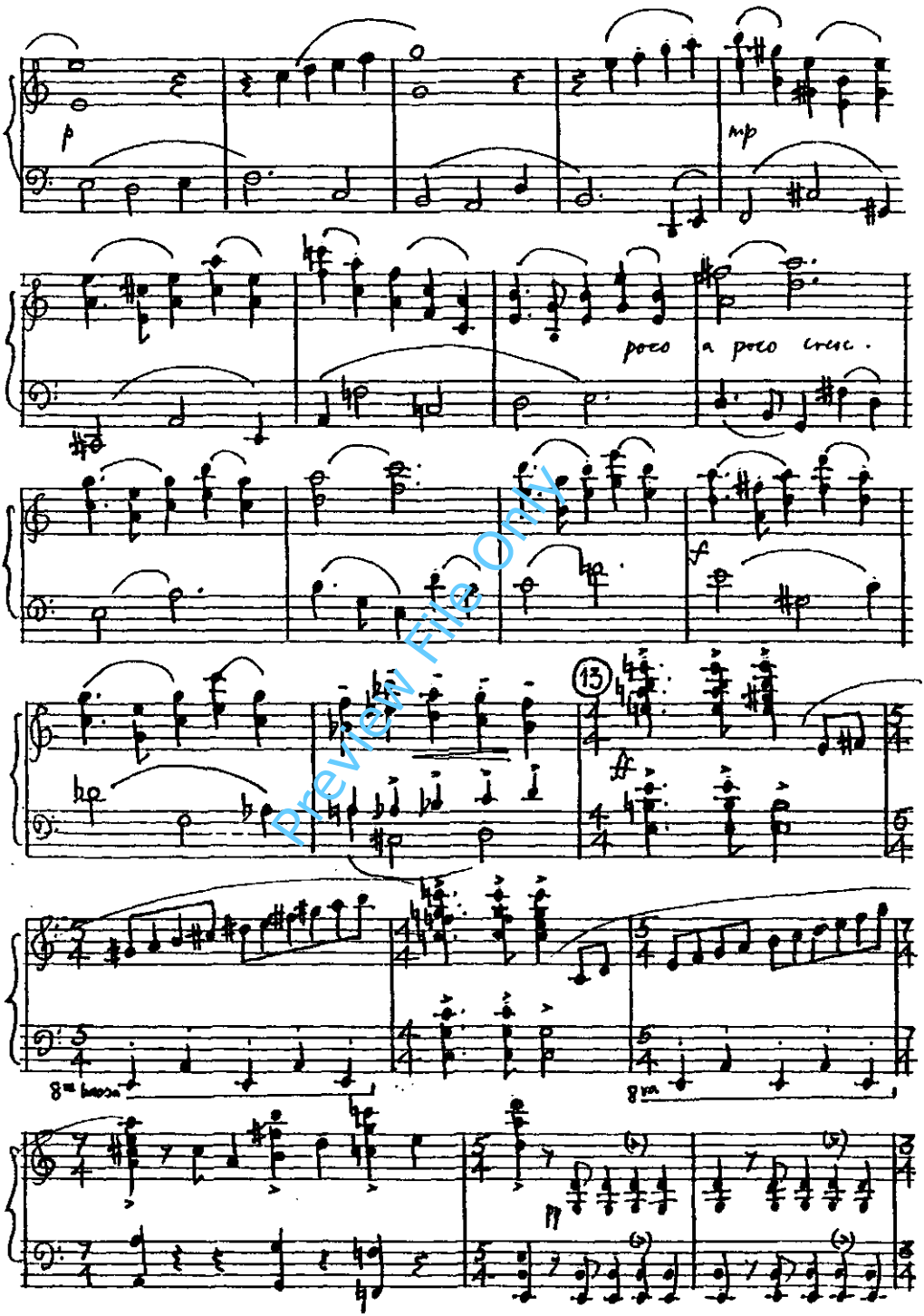

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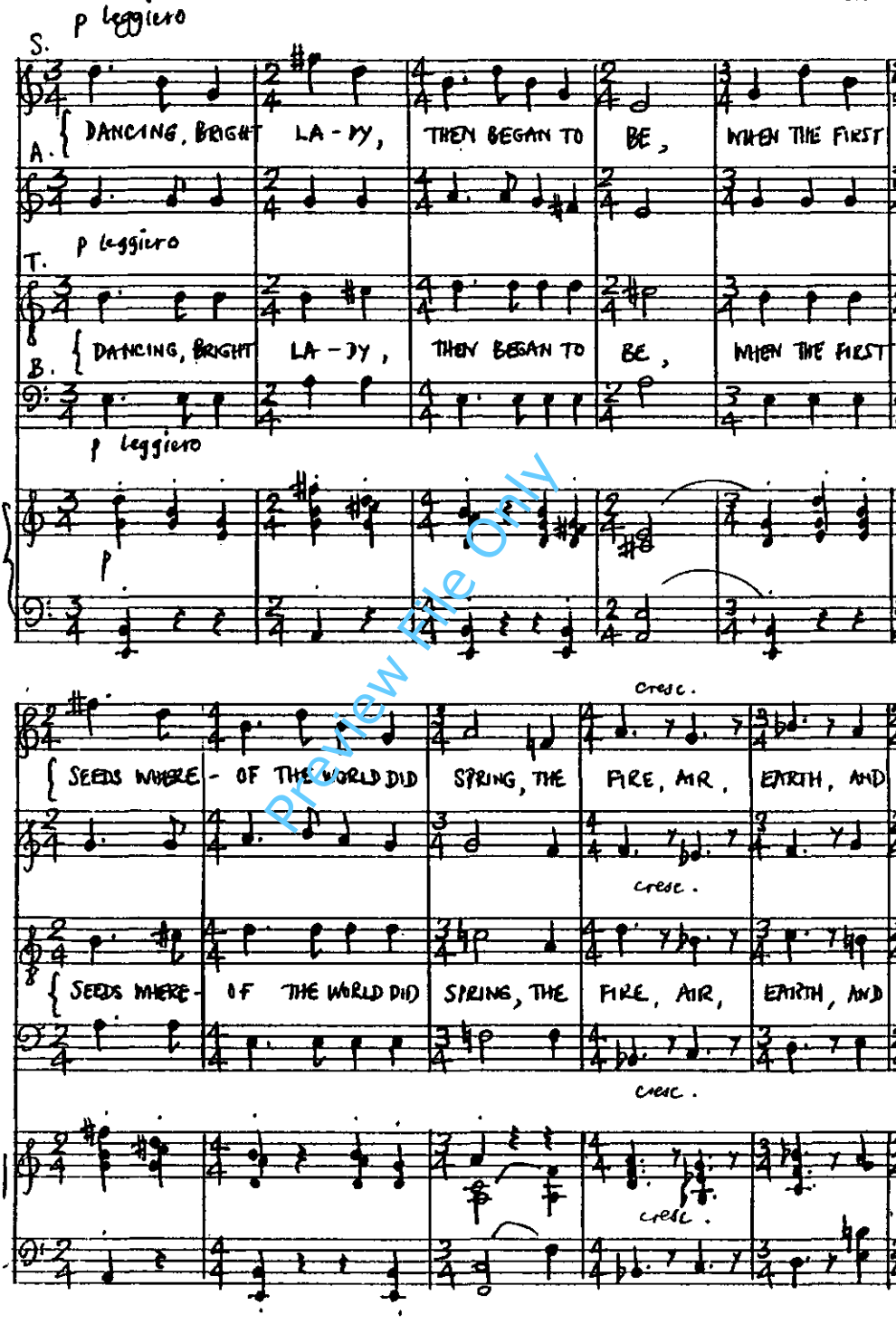

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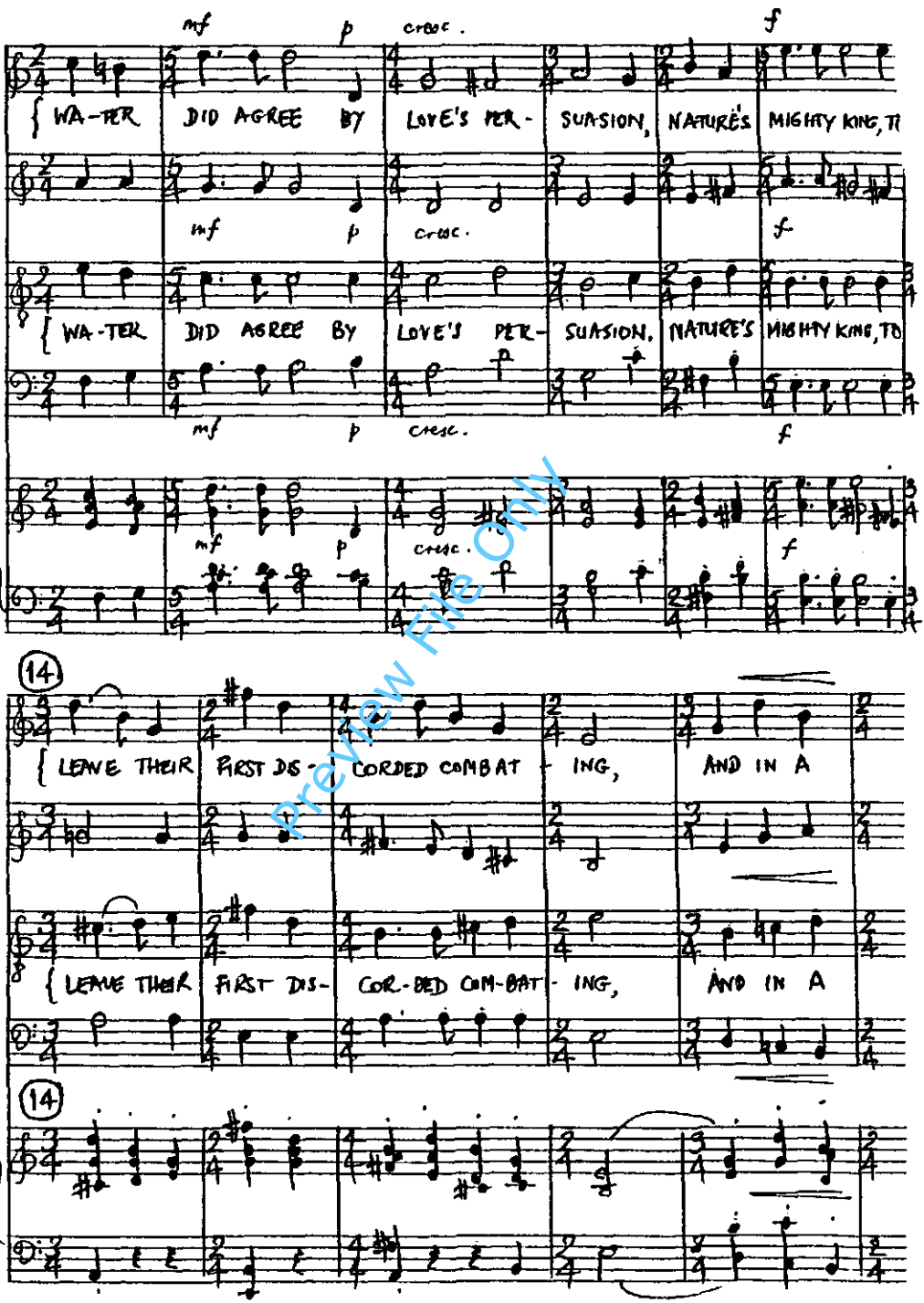

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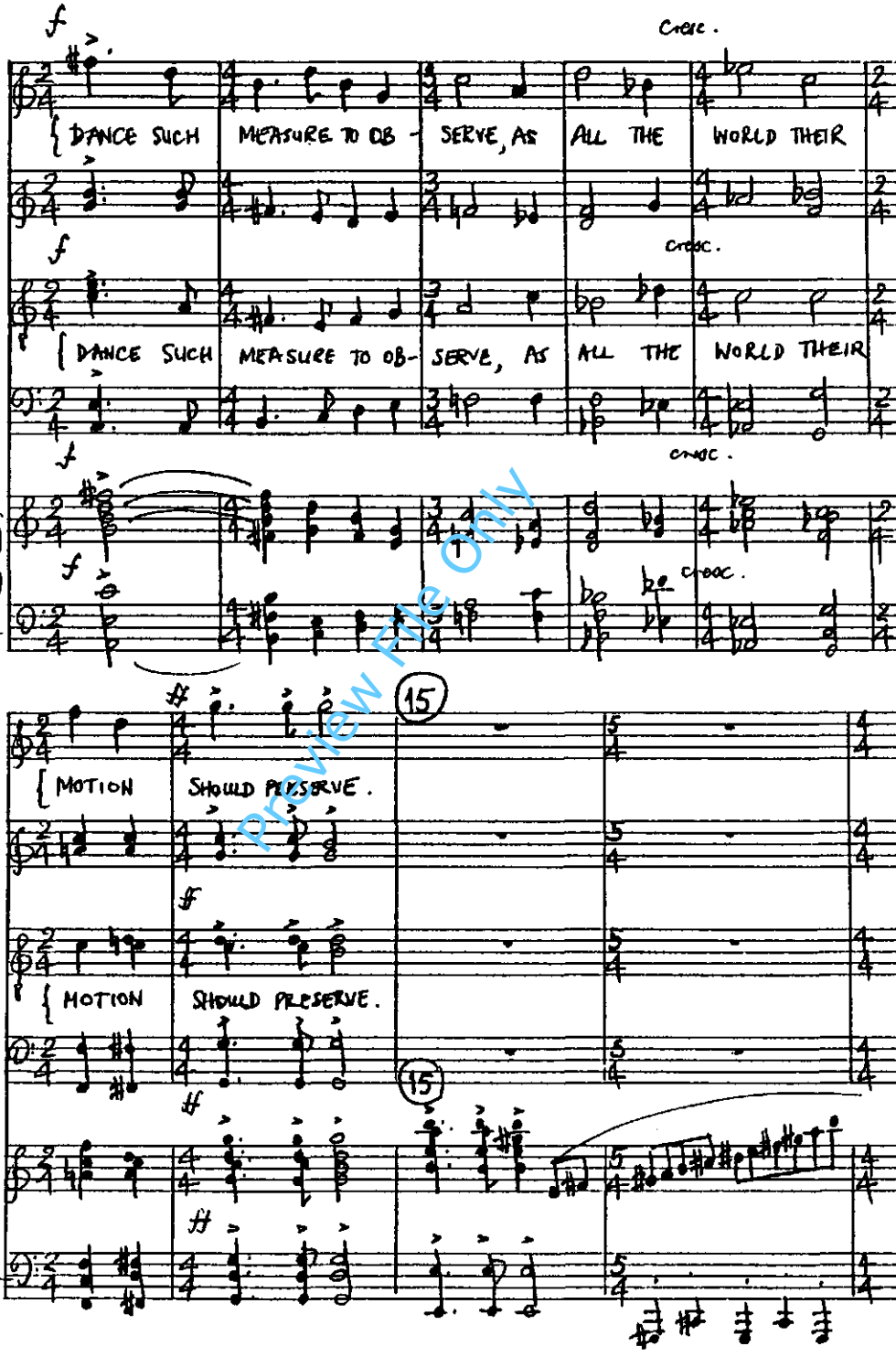

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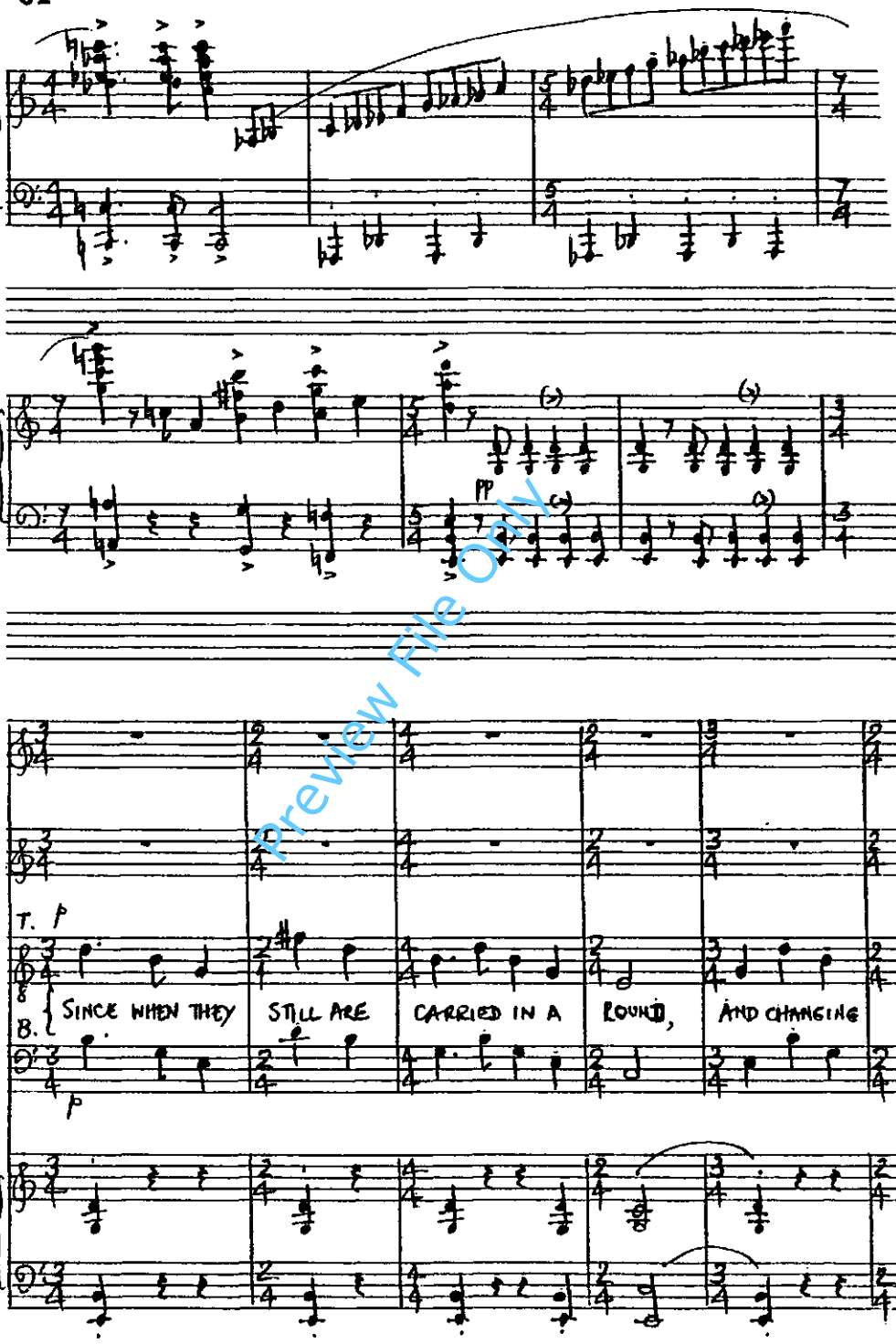

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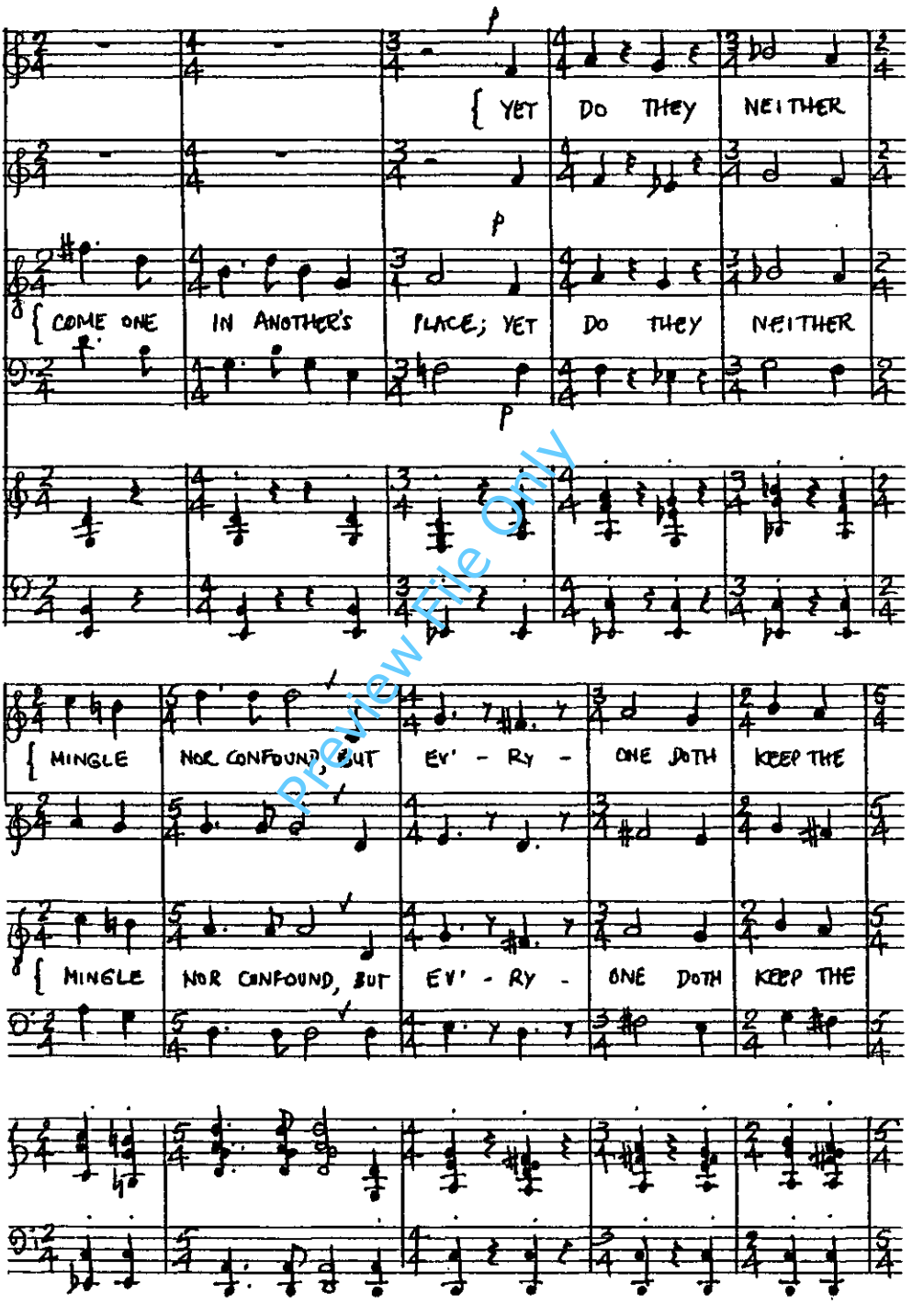

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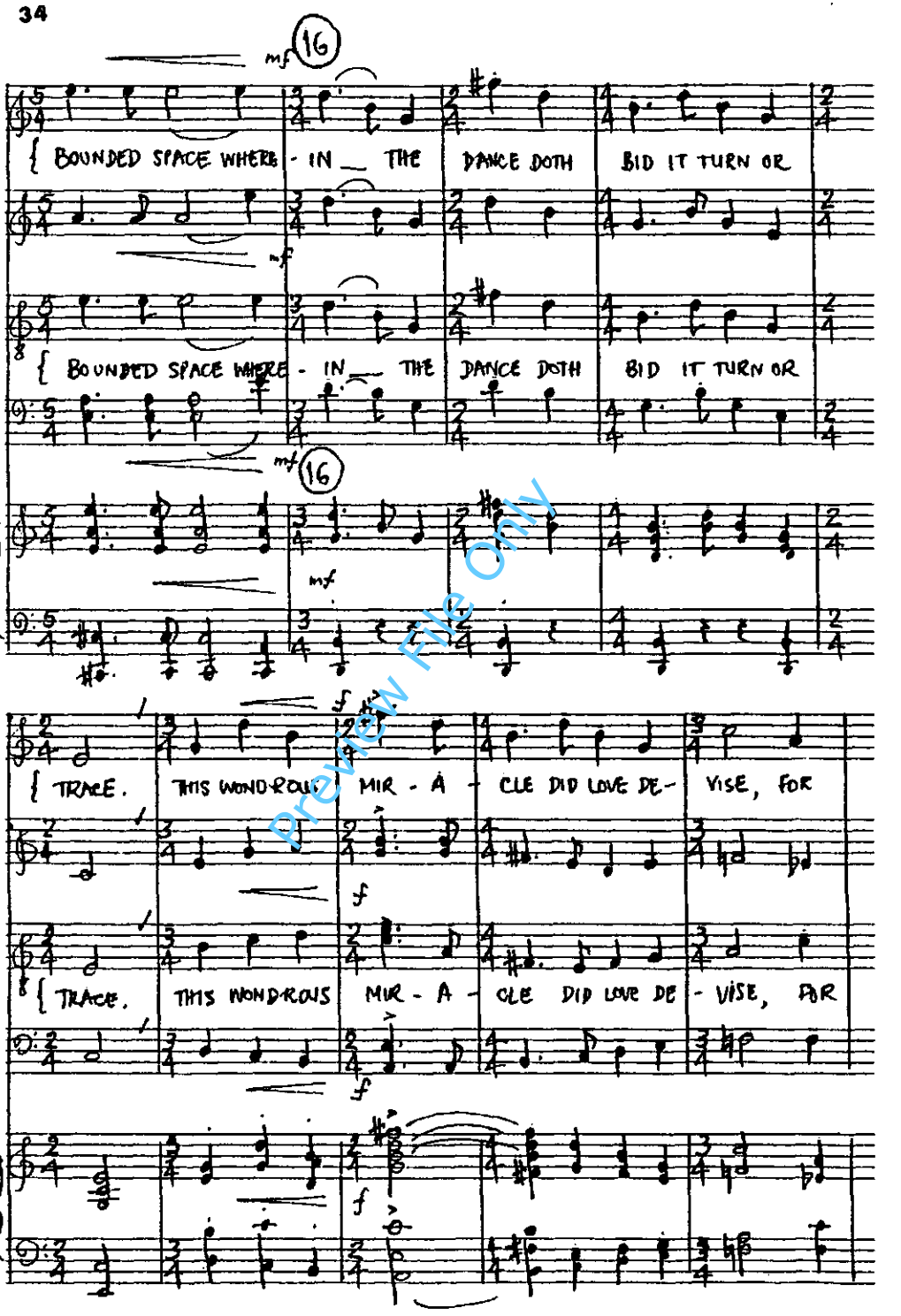

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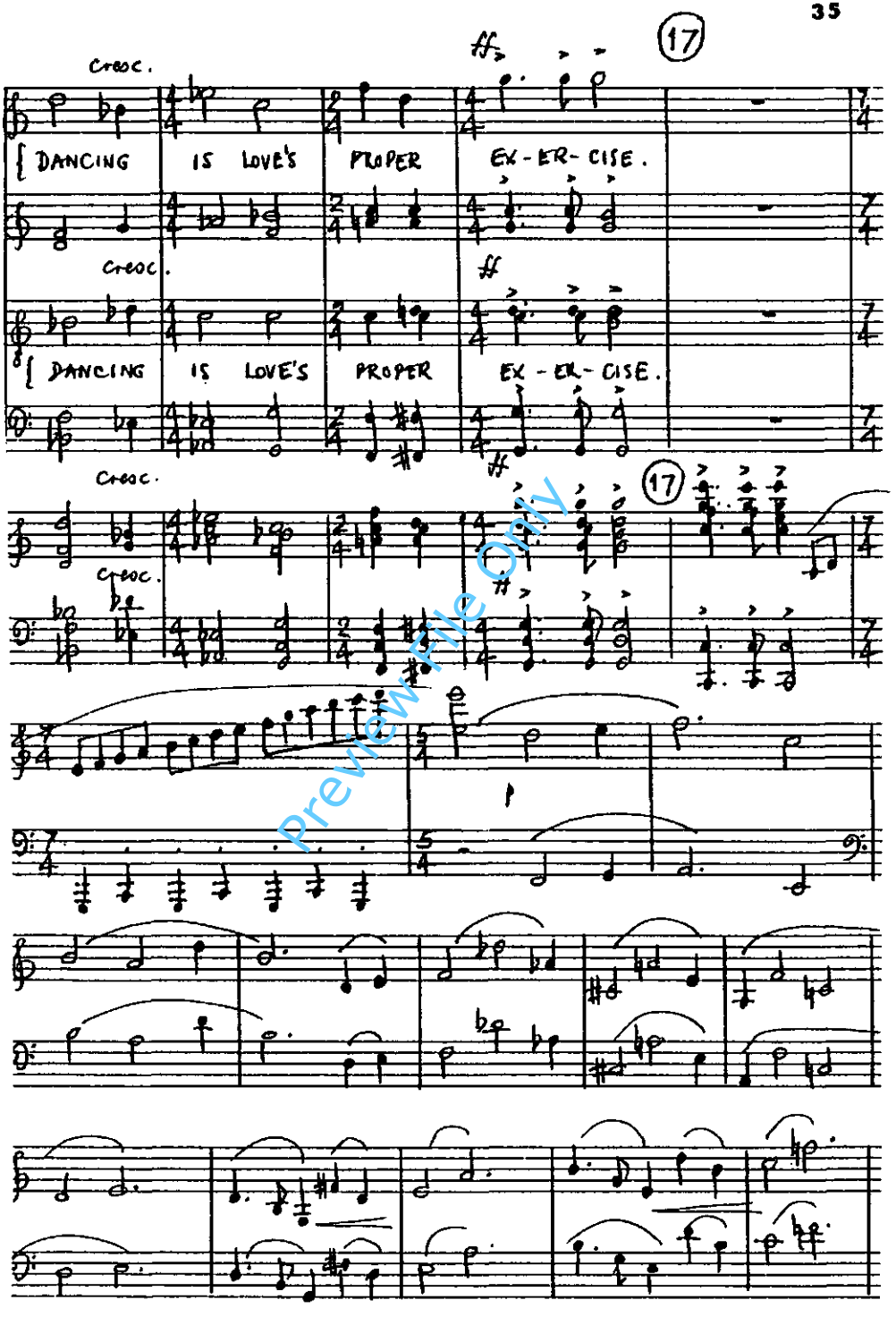

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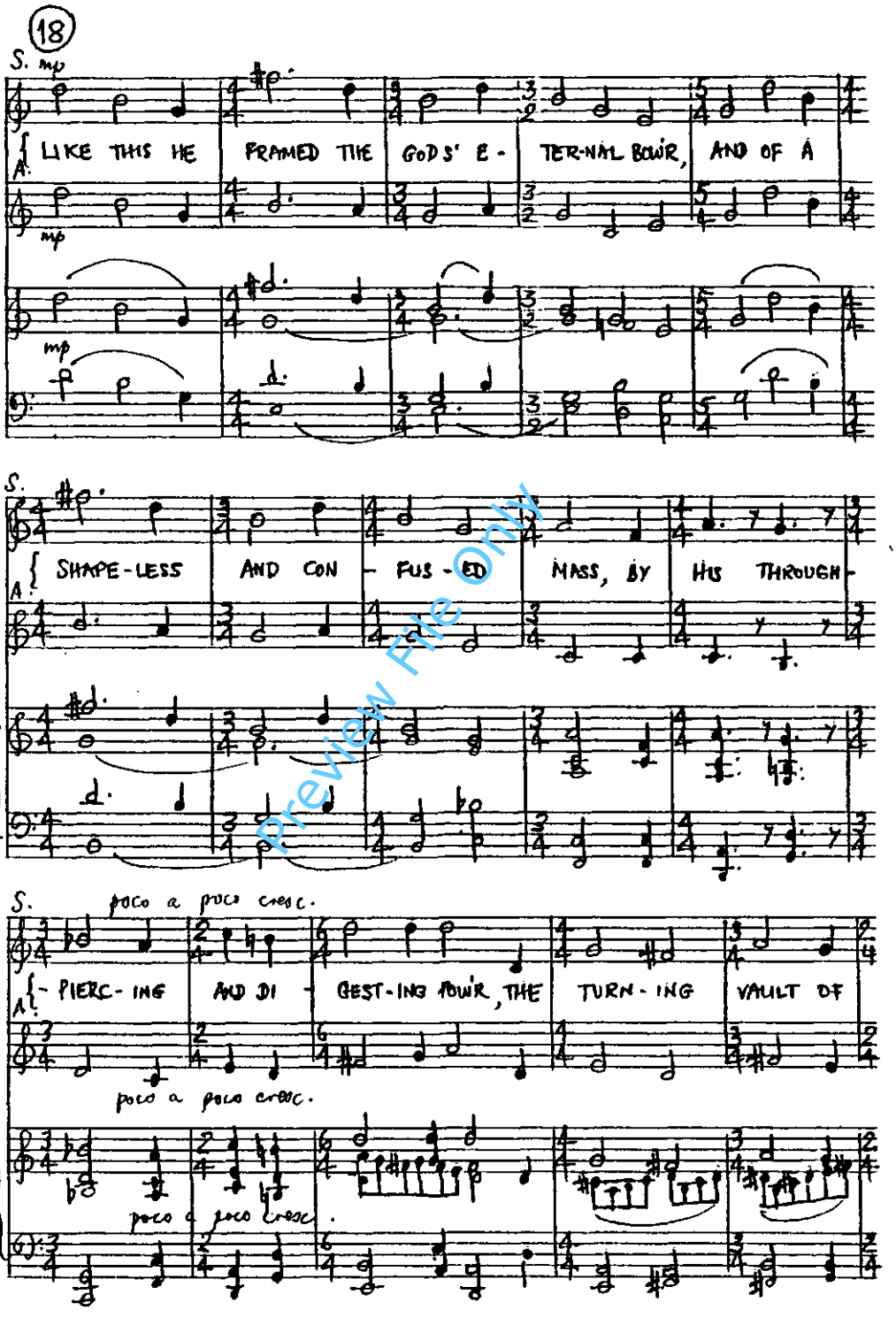

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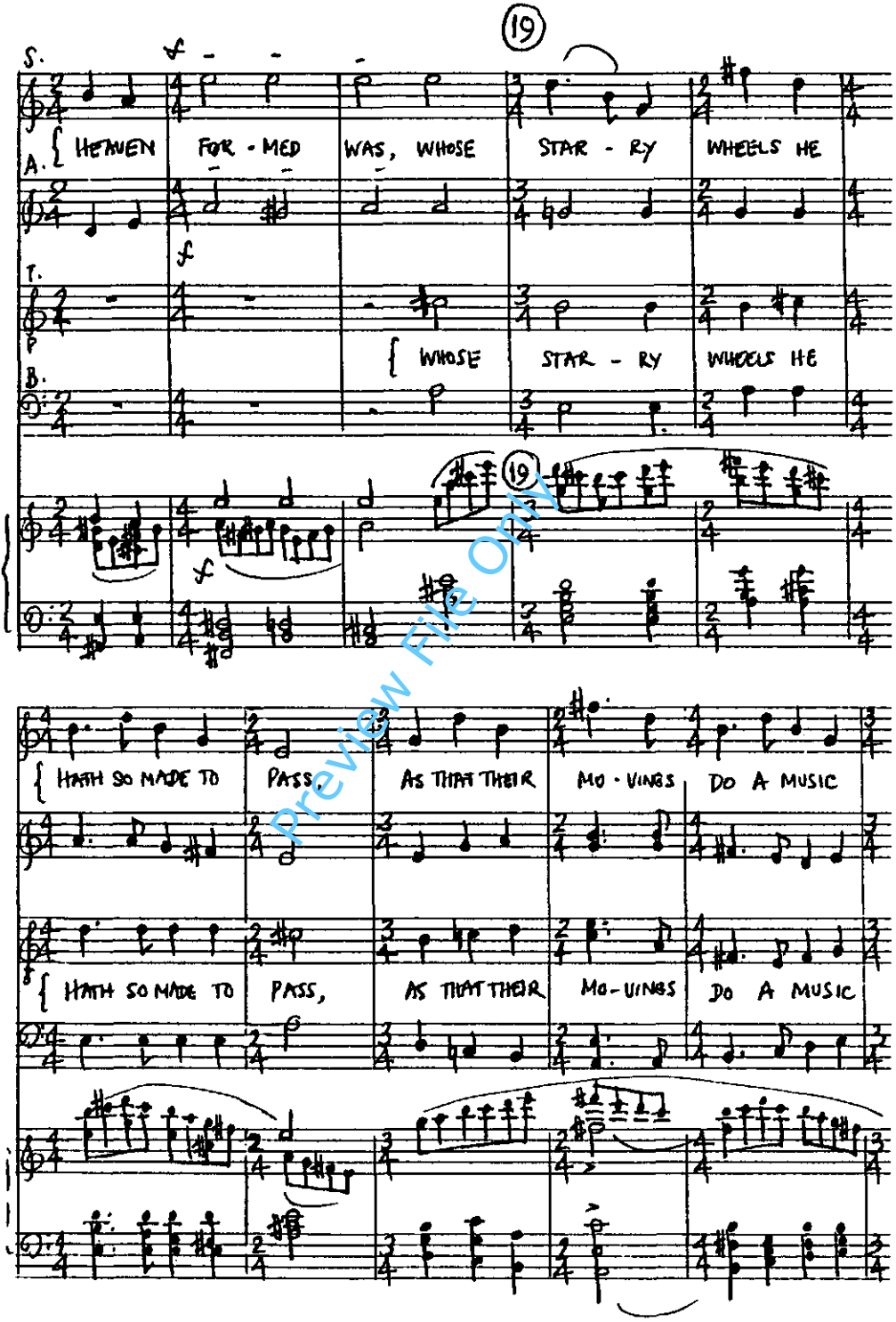

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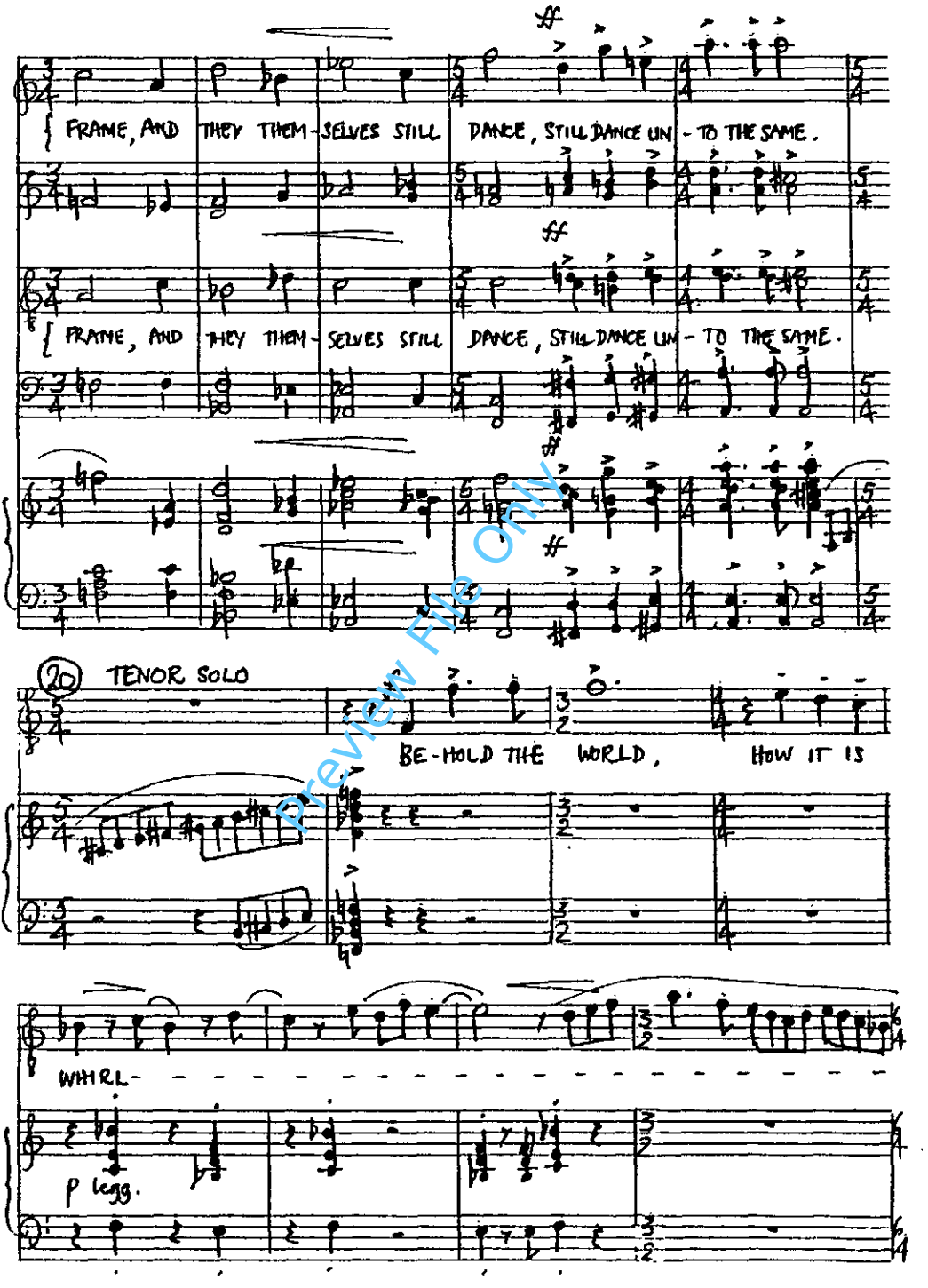

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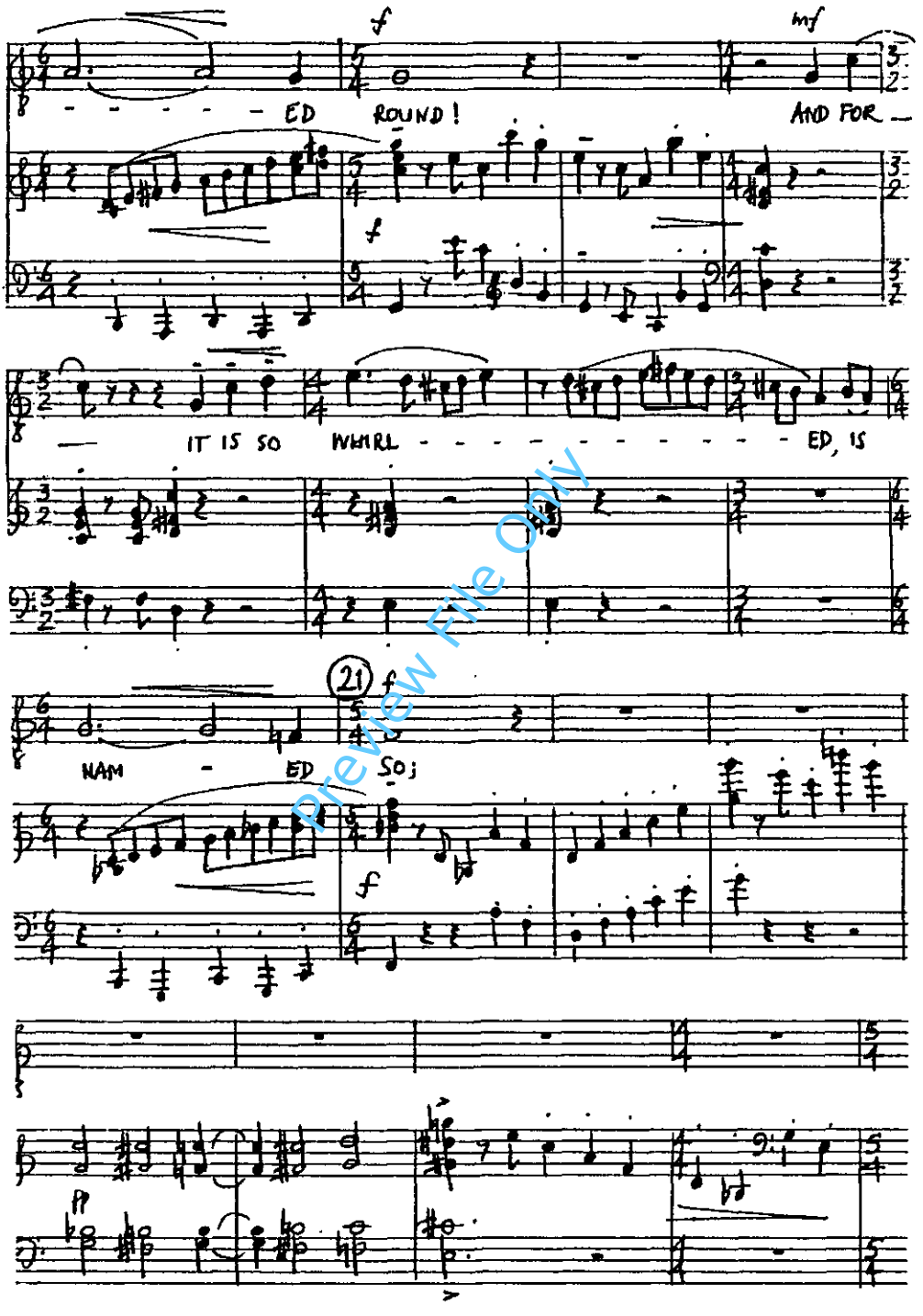

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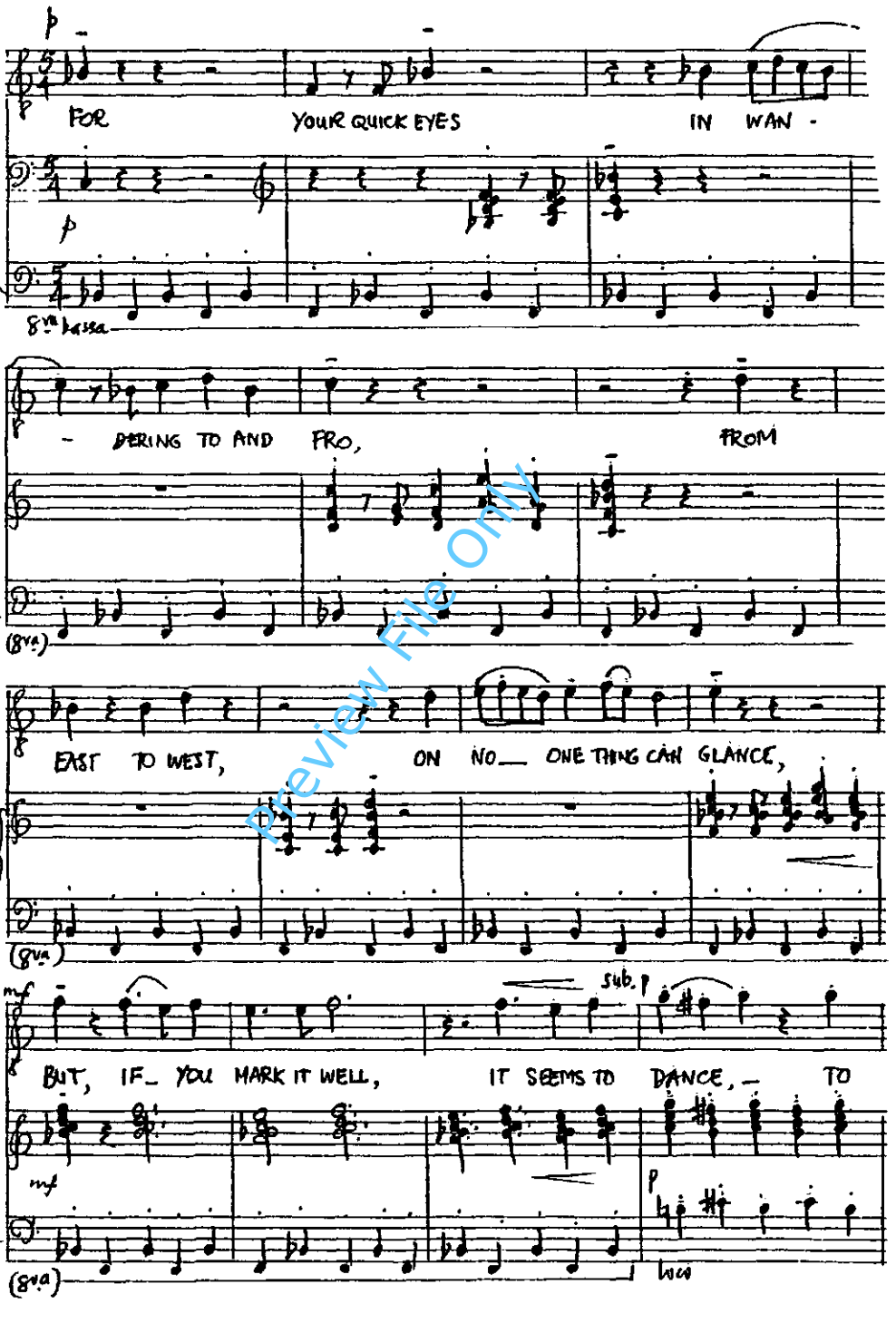

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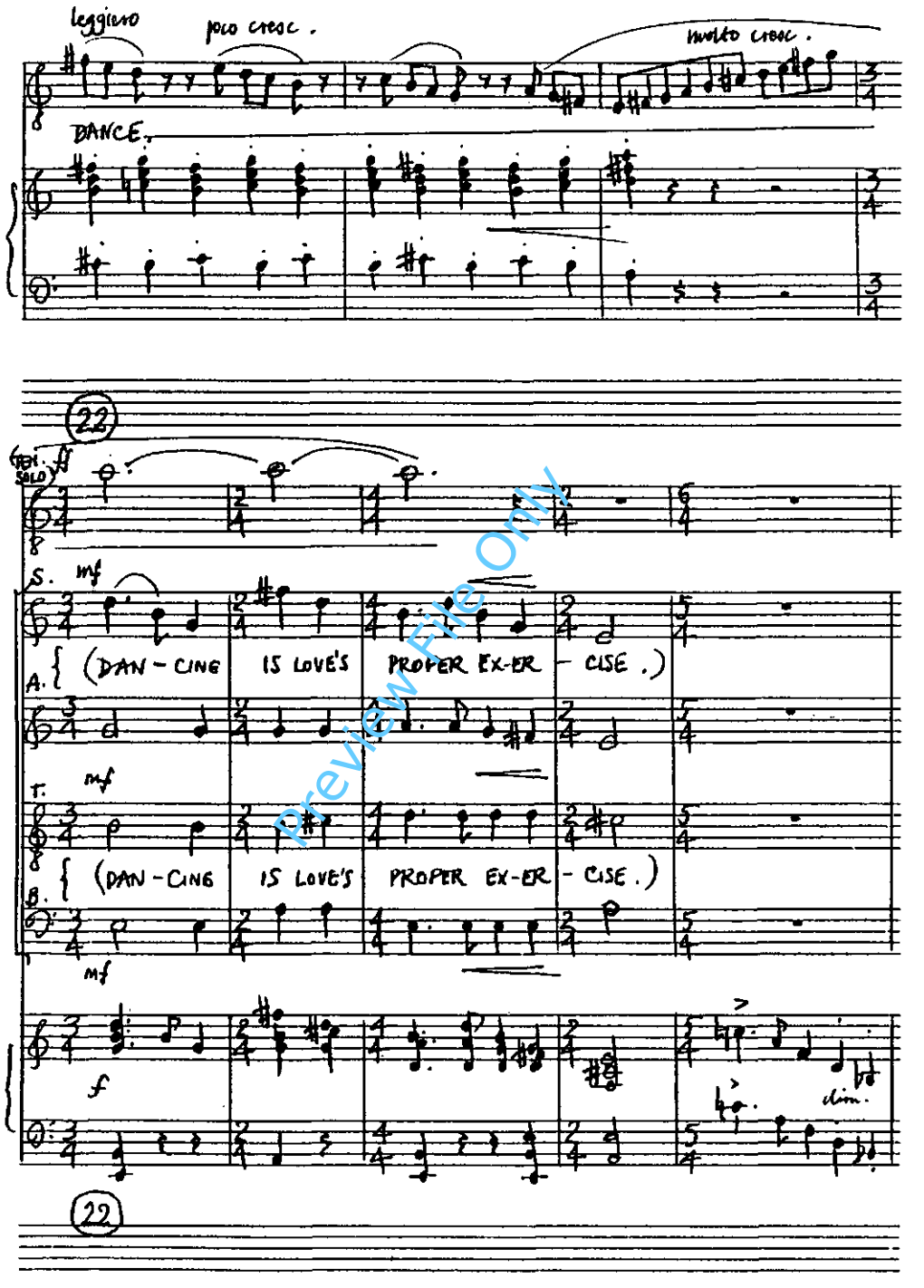

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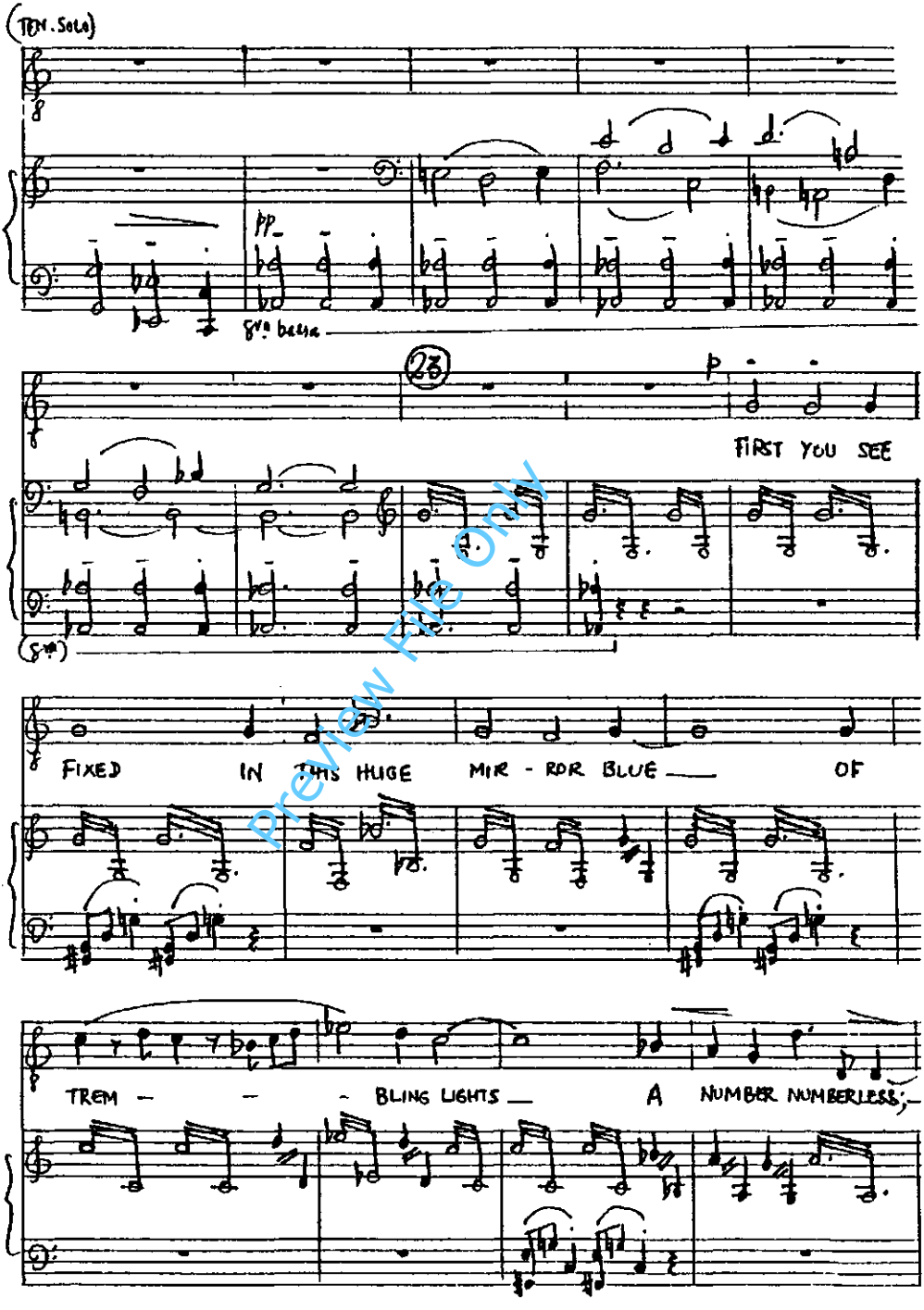

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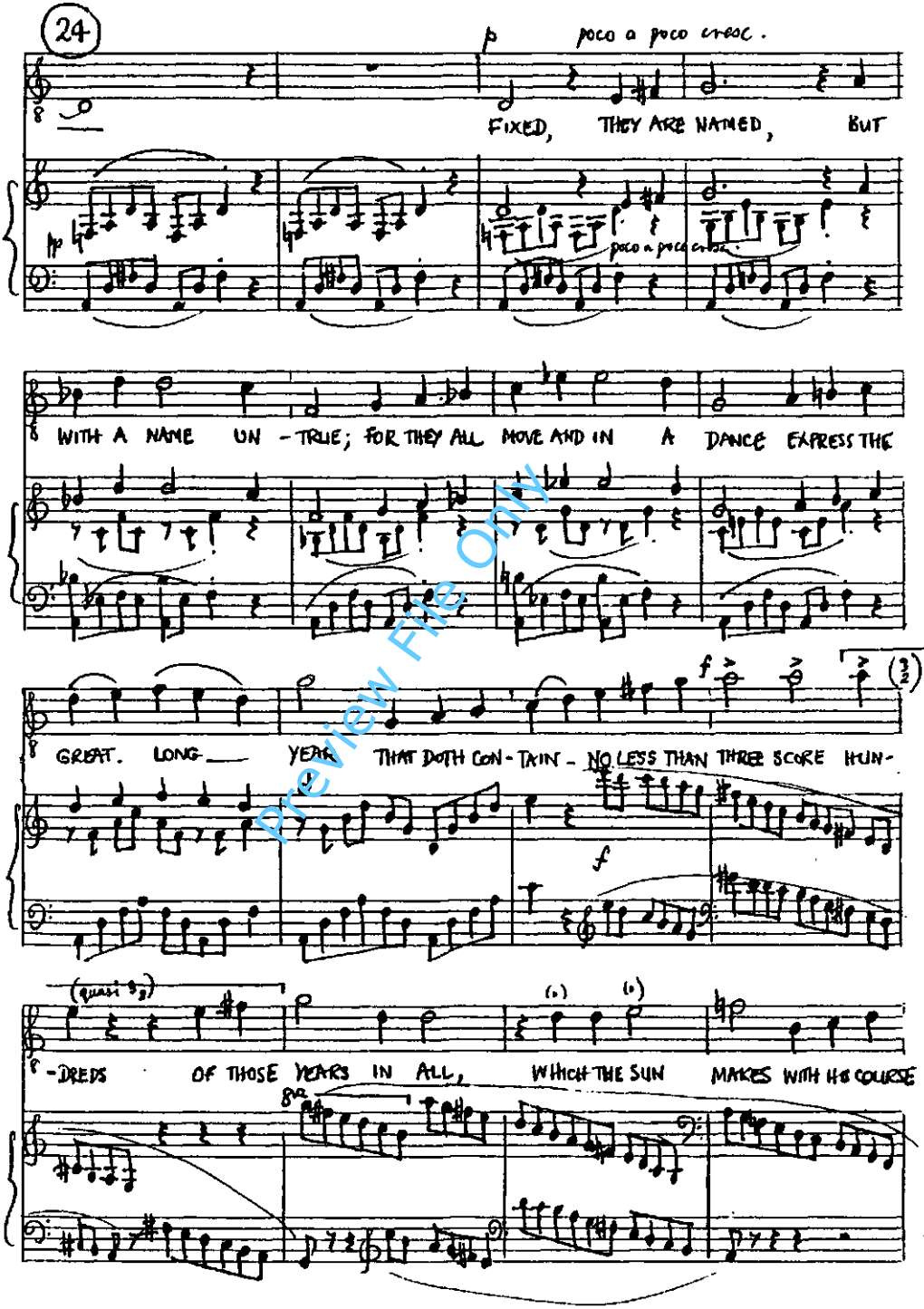

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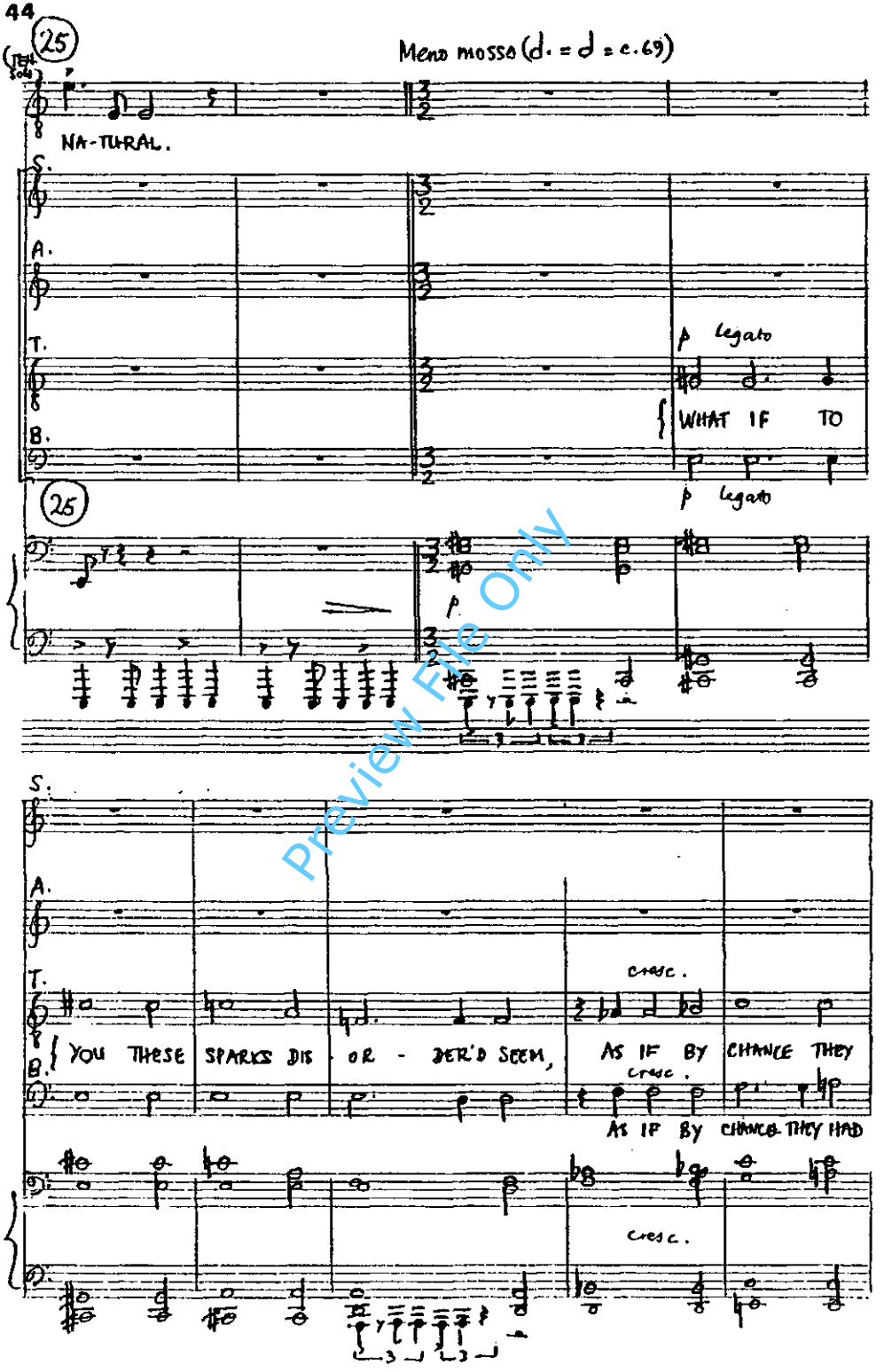

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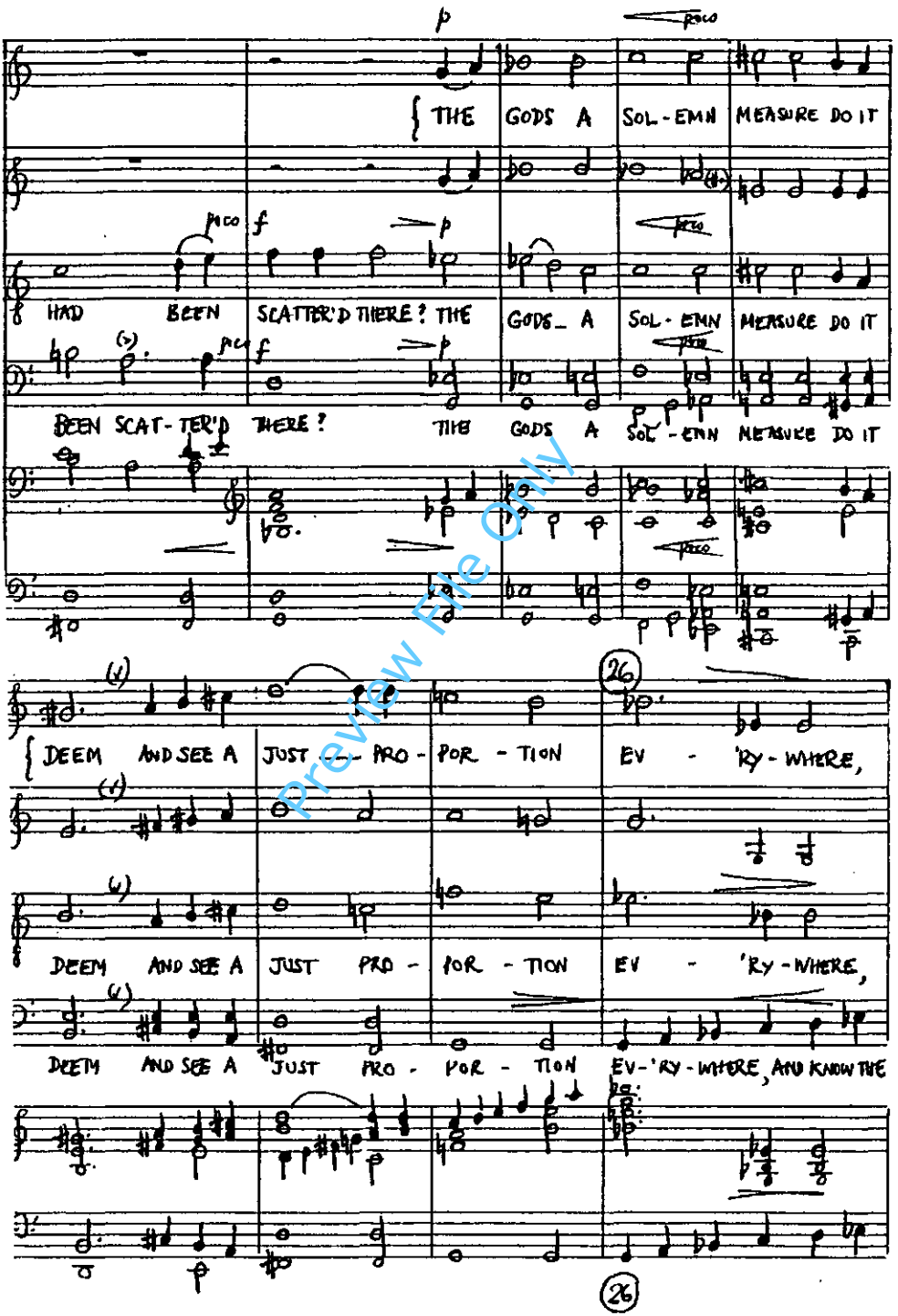

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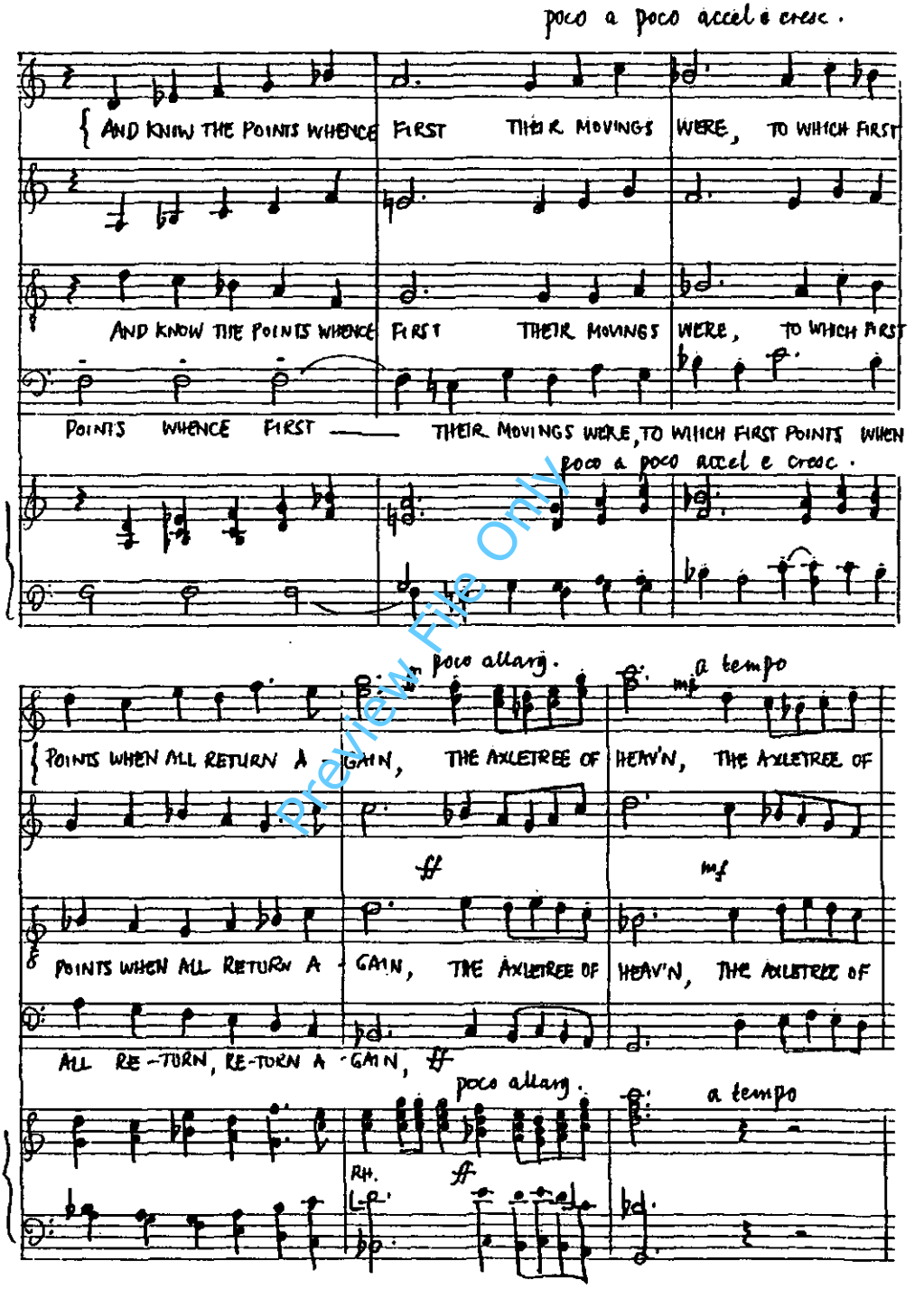

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(27) Più lento (Tempo I)

TEN. SOLO ritenuto

p tranquillo

UNDER THAT SPAN -

S. A. HEAV'N SHALL BREAK, SHALL BREAK IN TWAIN.

T. B. HEAVN SHALL BREAK, SHALL BREAK IN TWAIN.

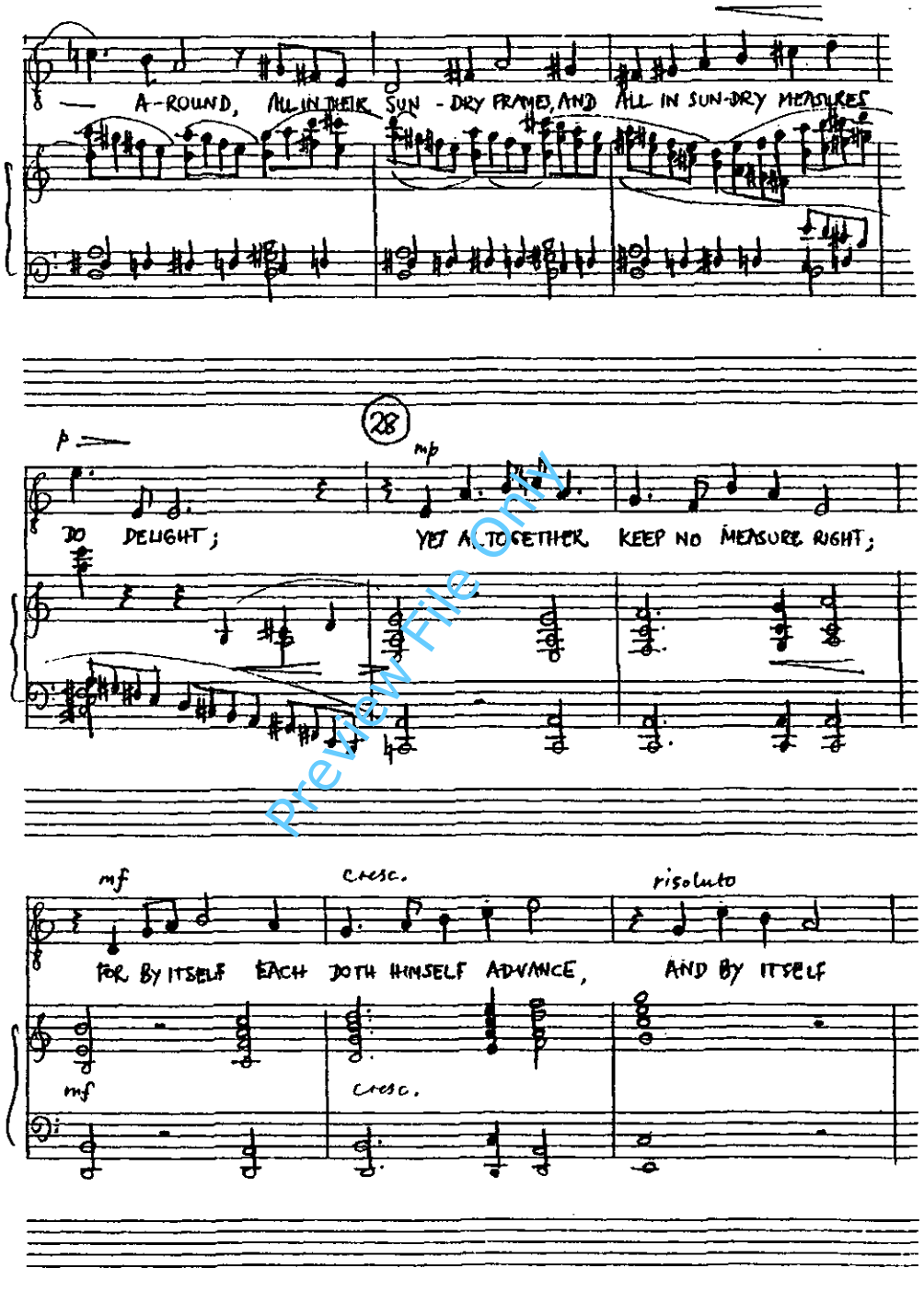
ritenuto

(27) Più Lento (Tempo I)

TEN. SOLO — GLED SKY ELVE MAN - D'RING FLAMES, BE-SIDES THE

KING OF DAY AND QUEEN OF NIGHT, ARE WHEELED

Preview File Only



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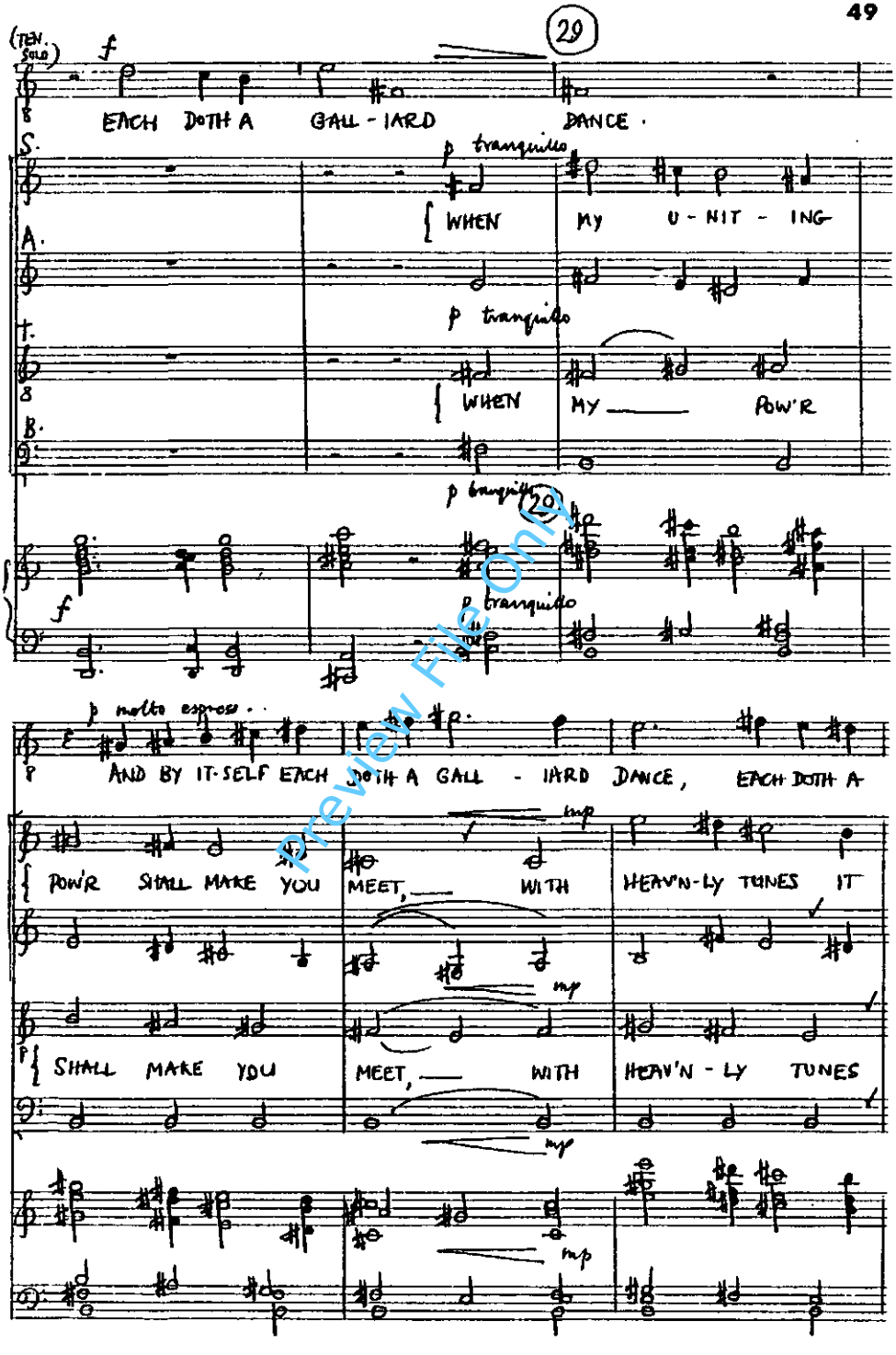

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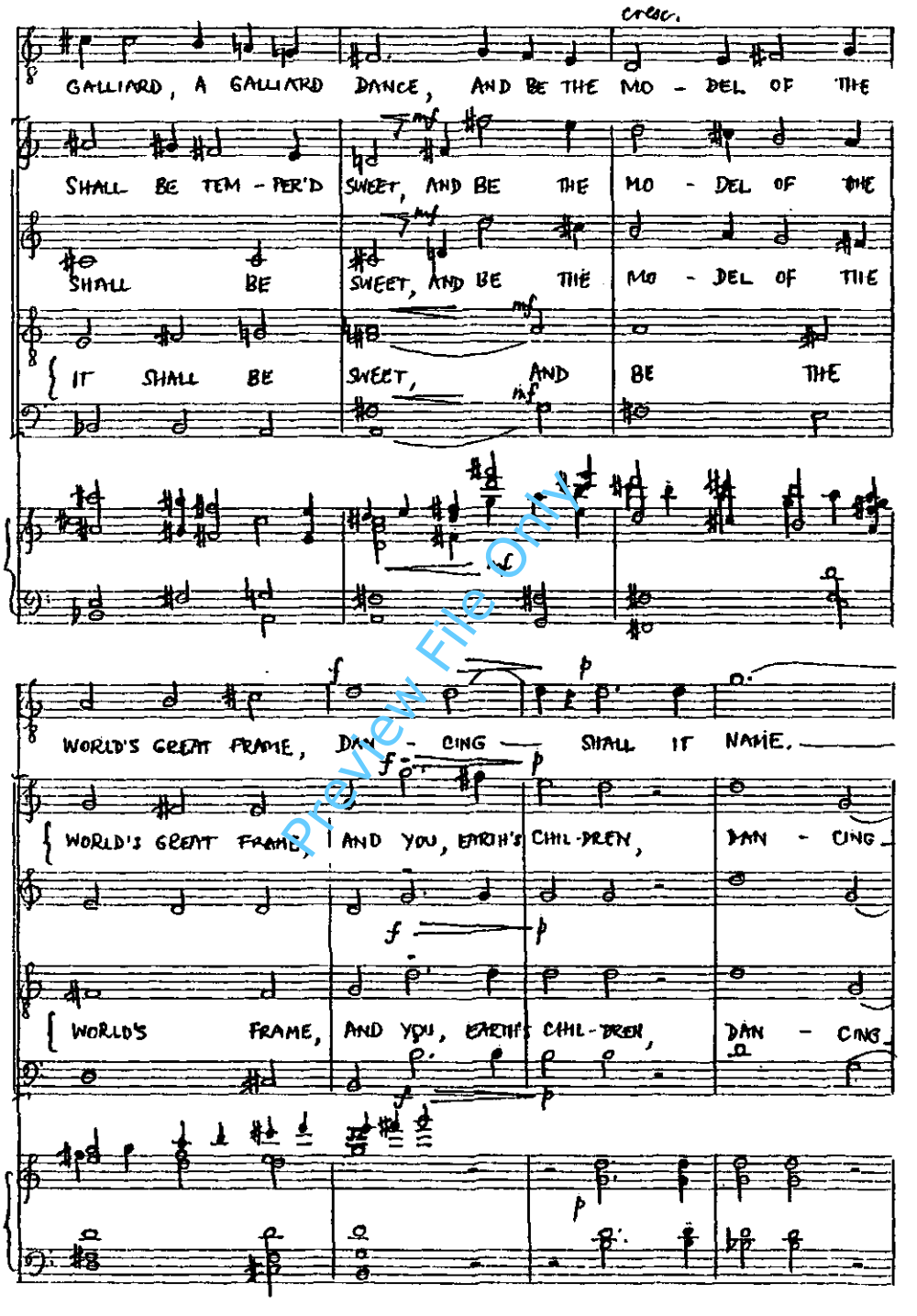

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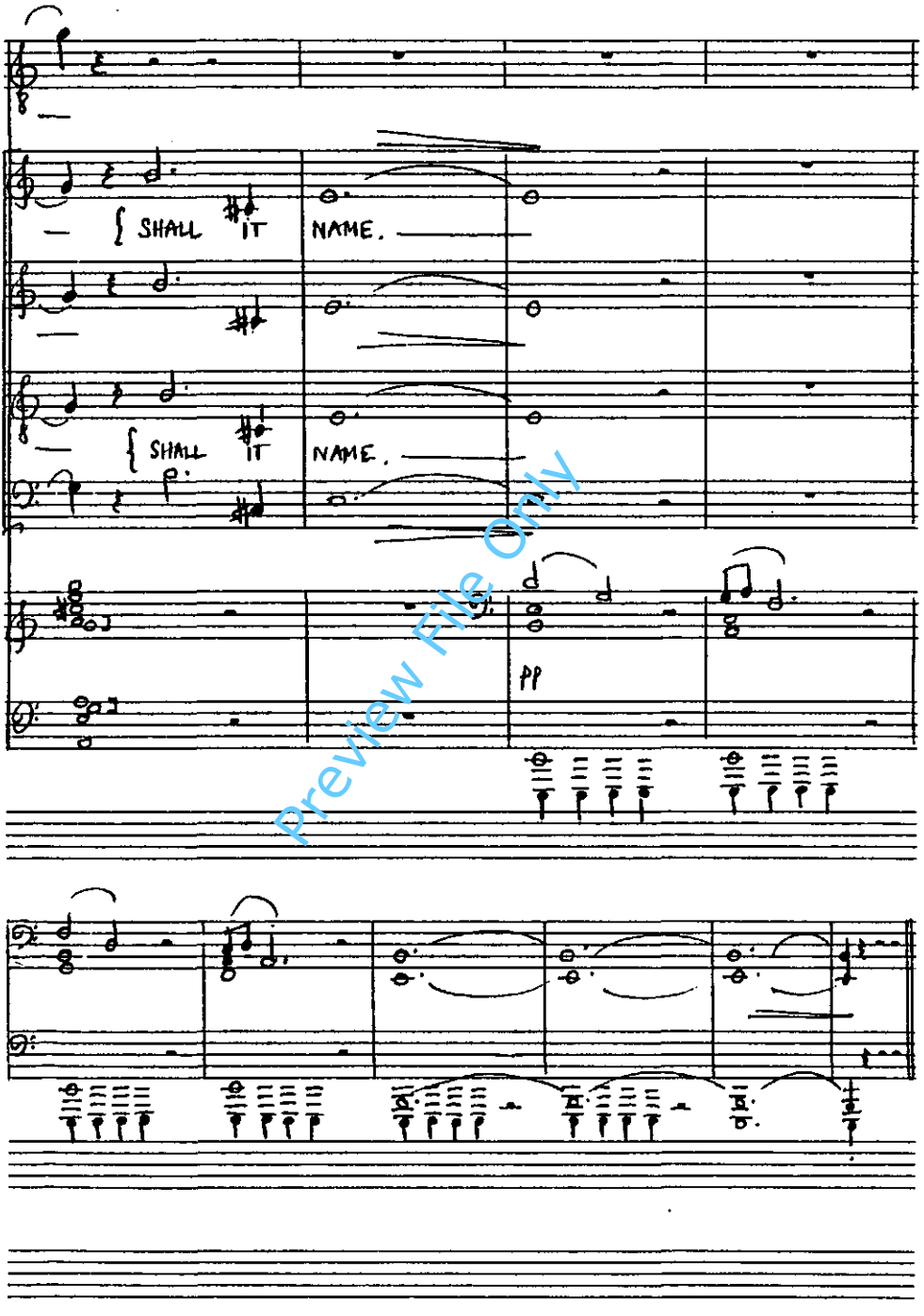

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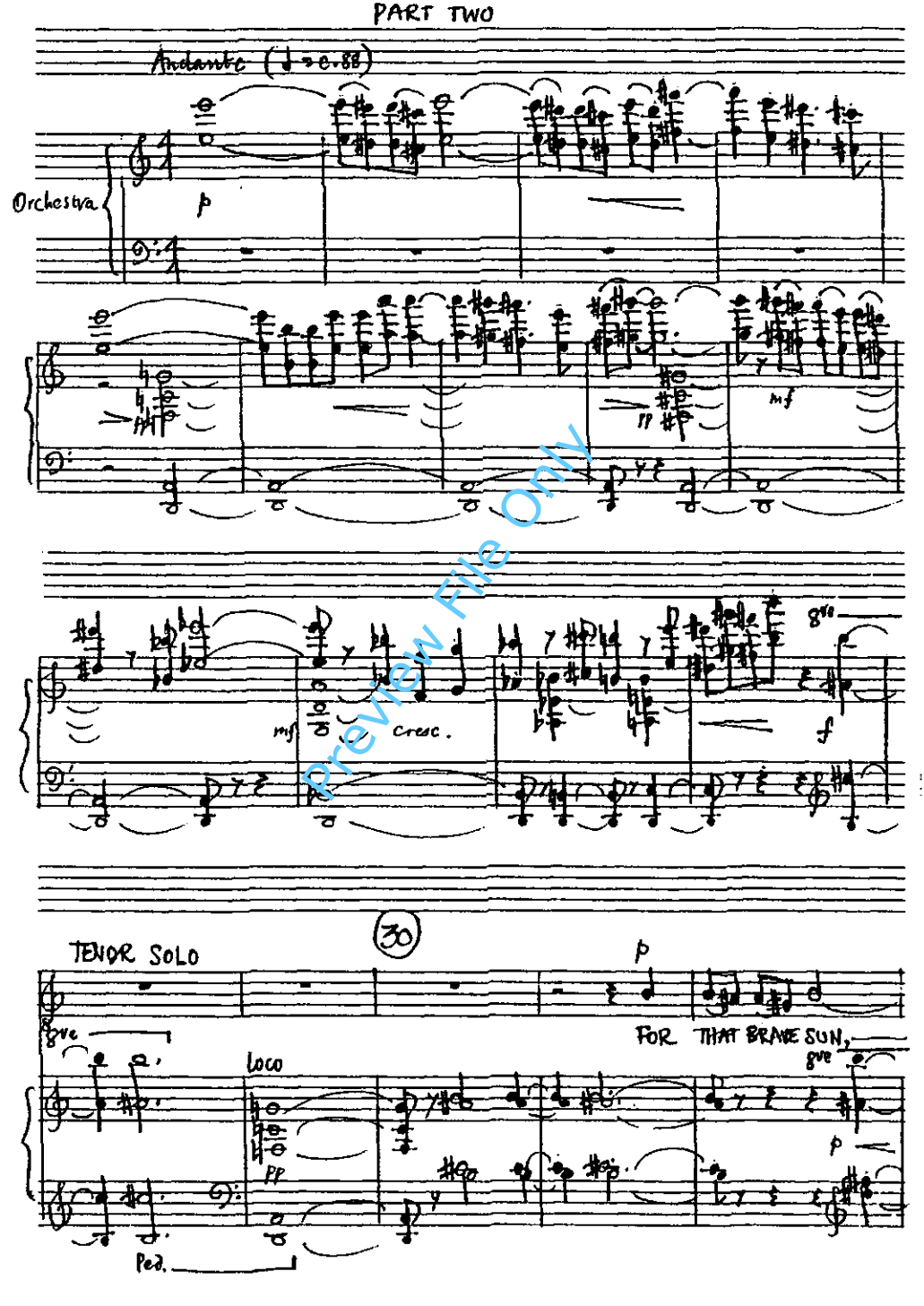

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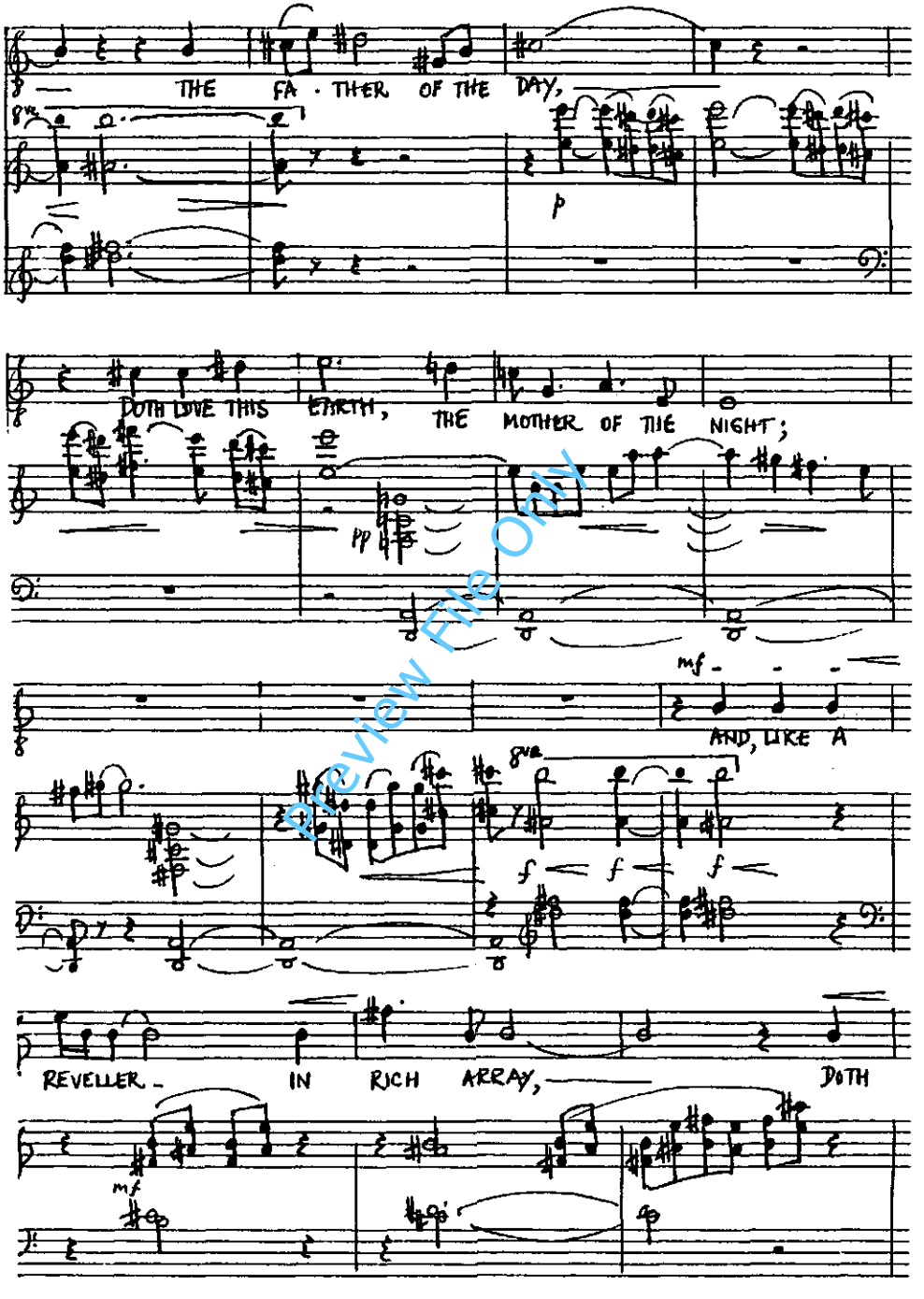

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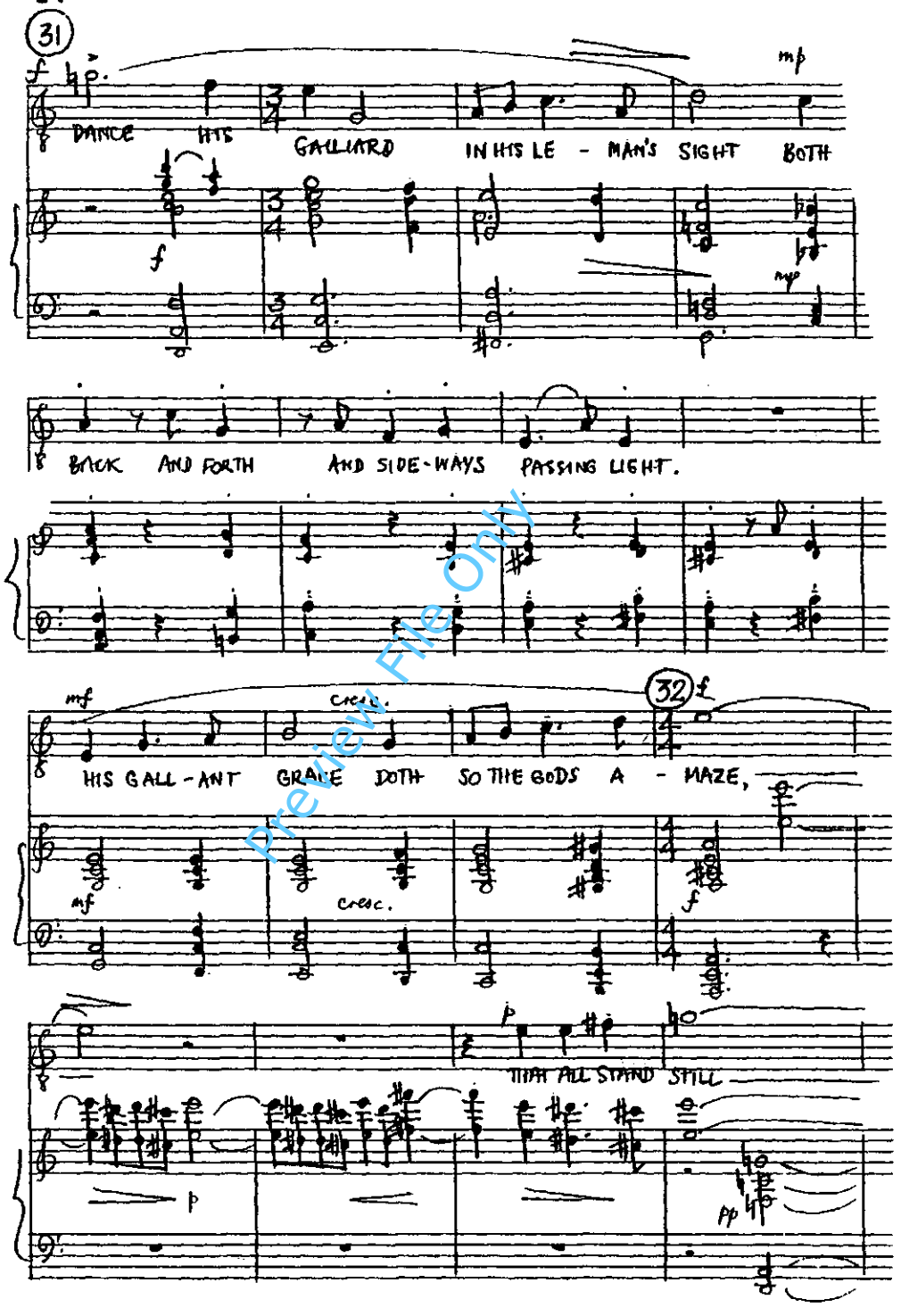

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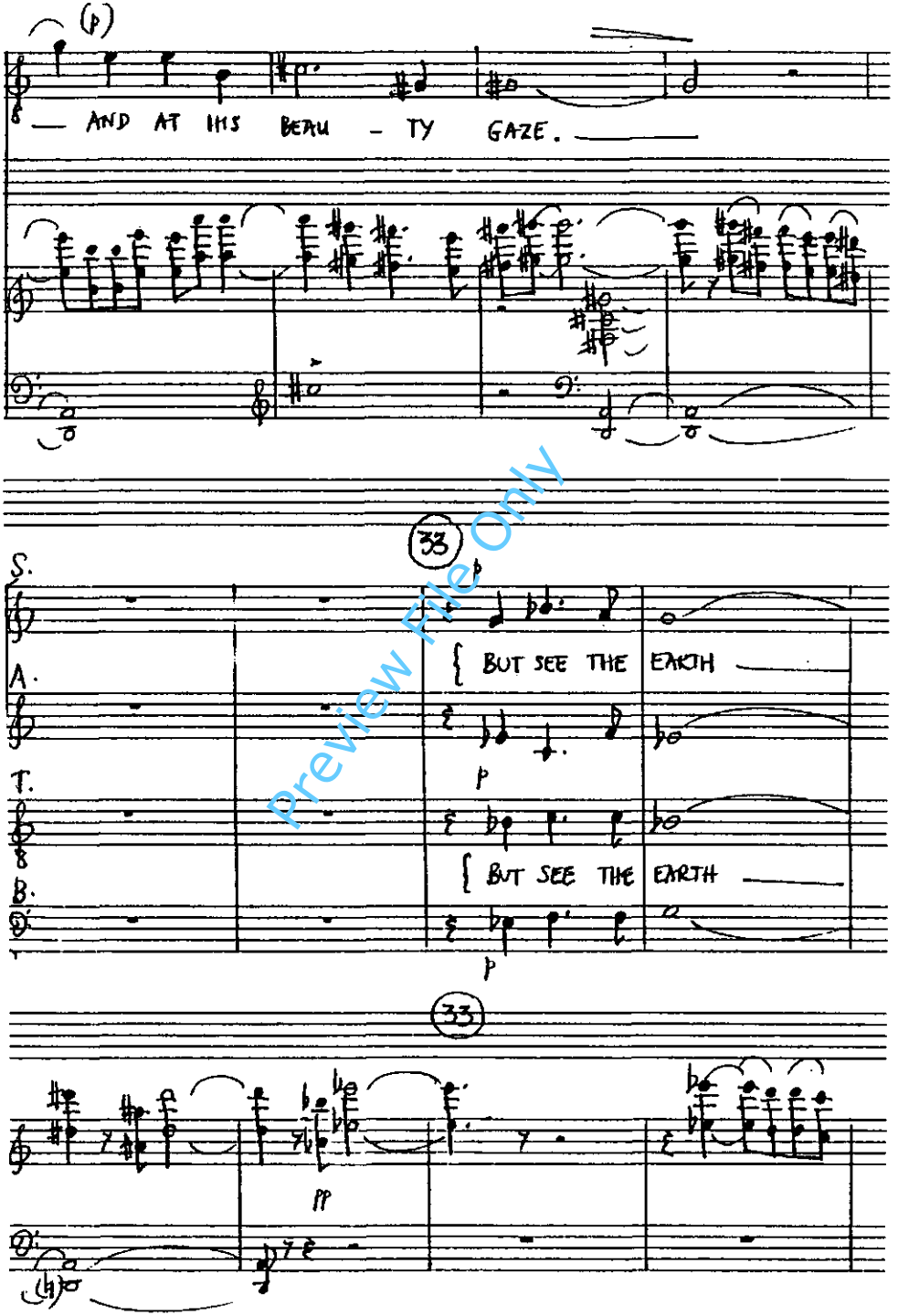

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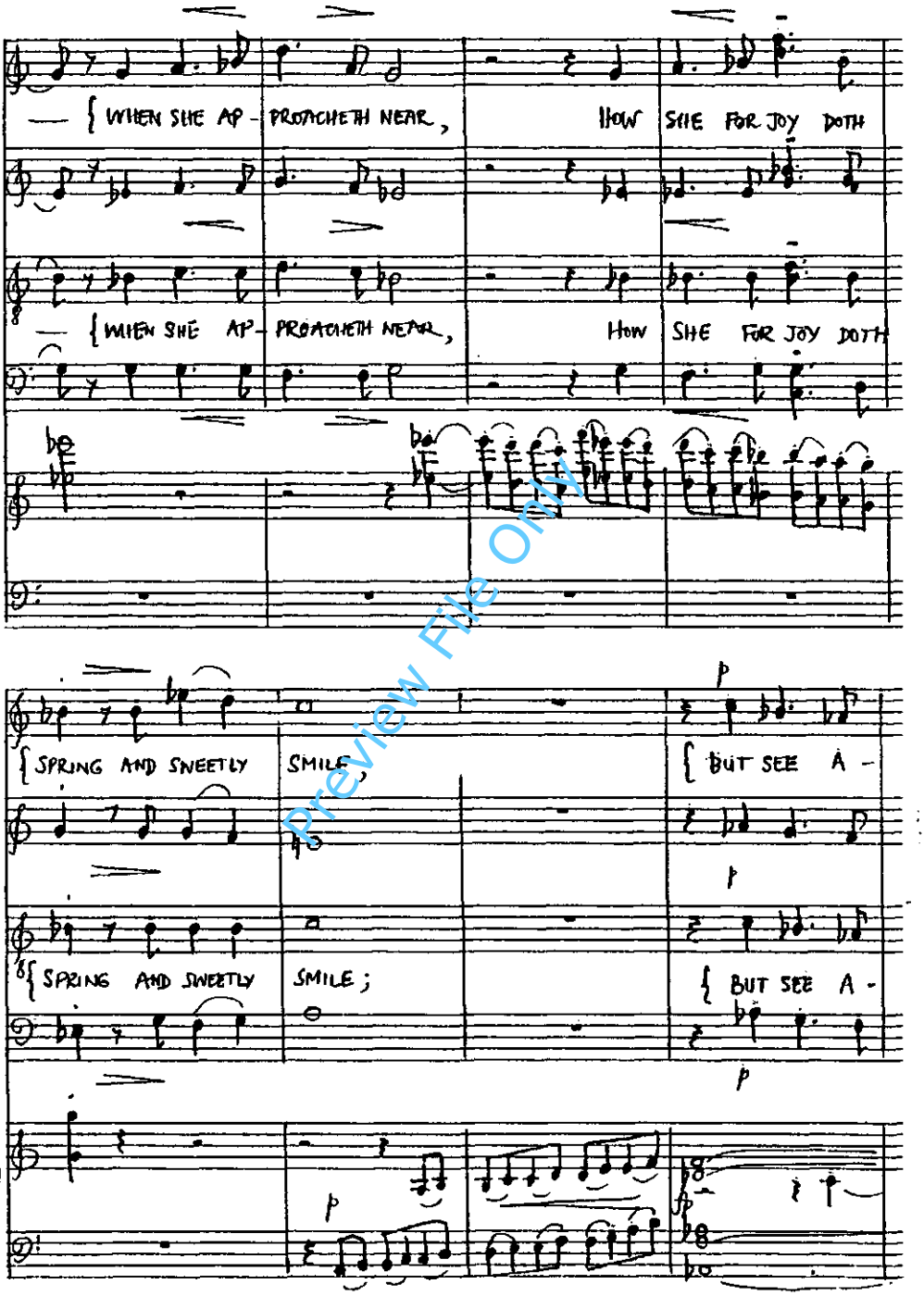

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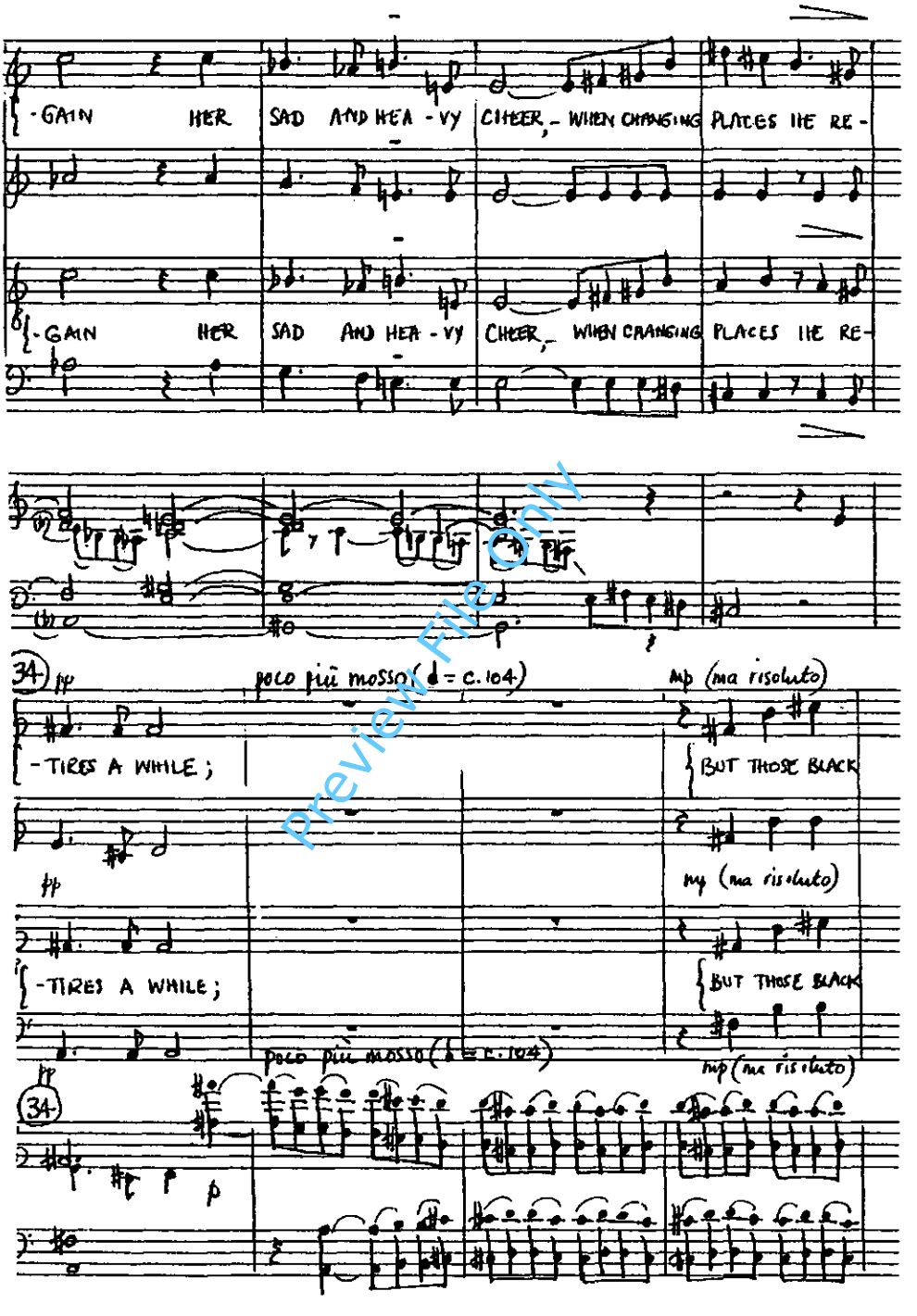

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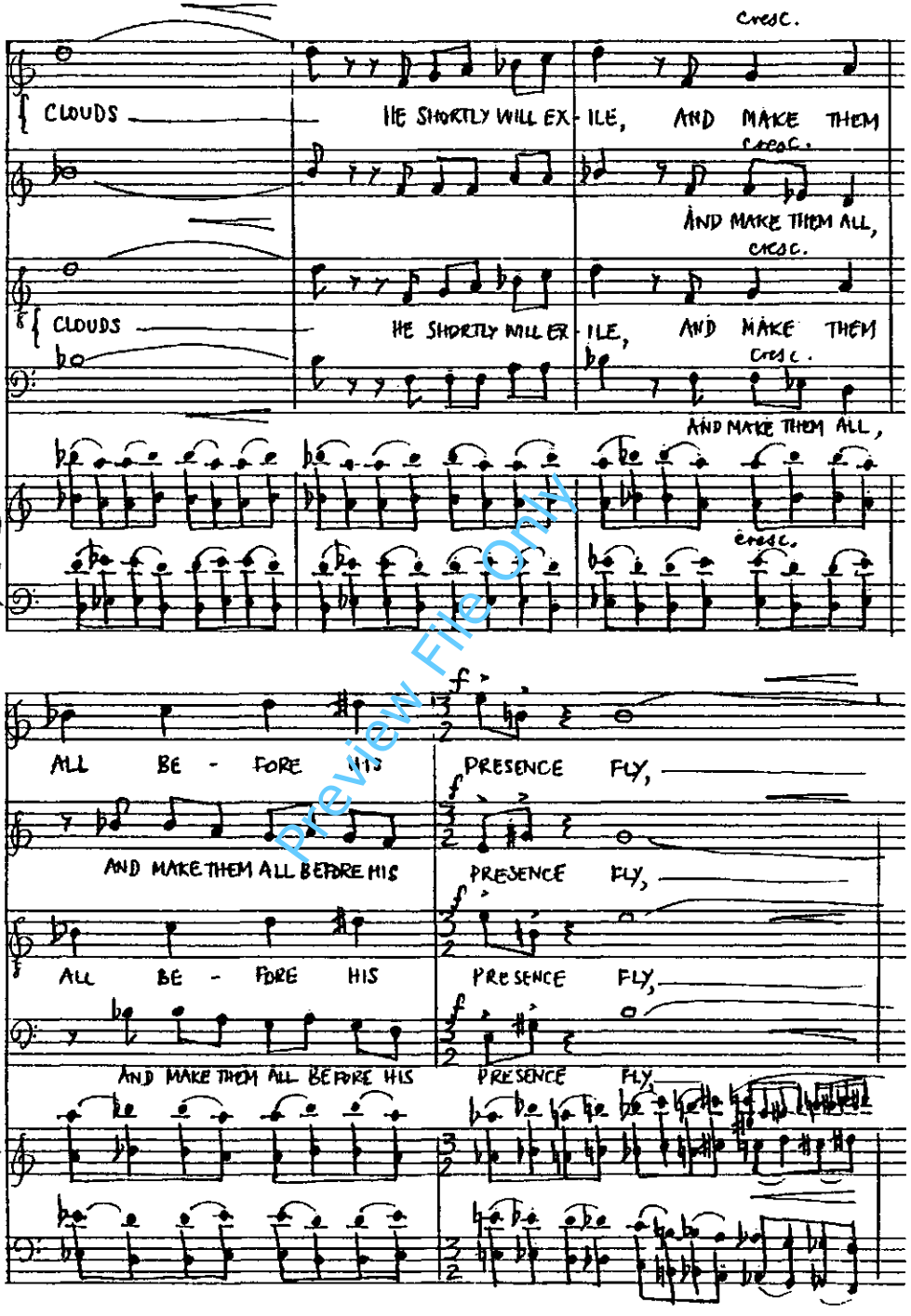

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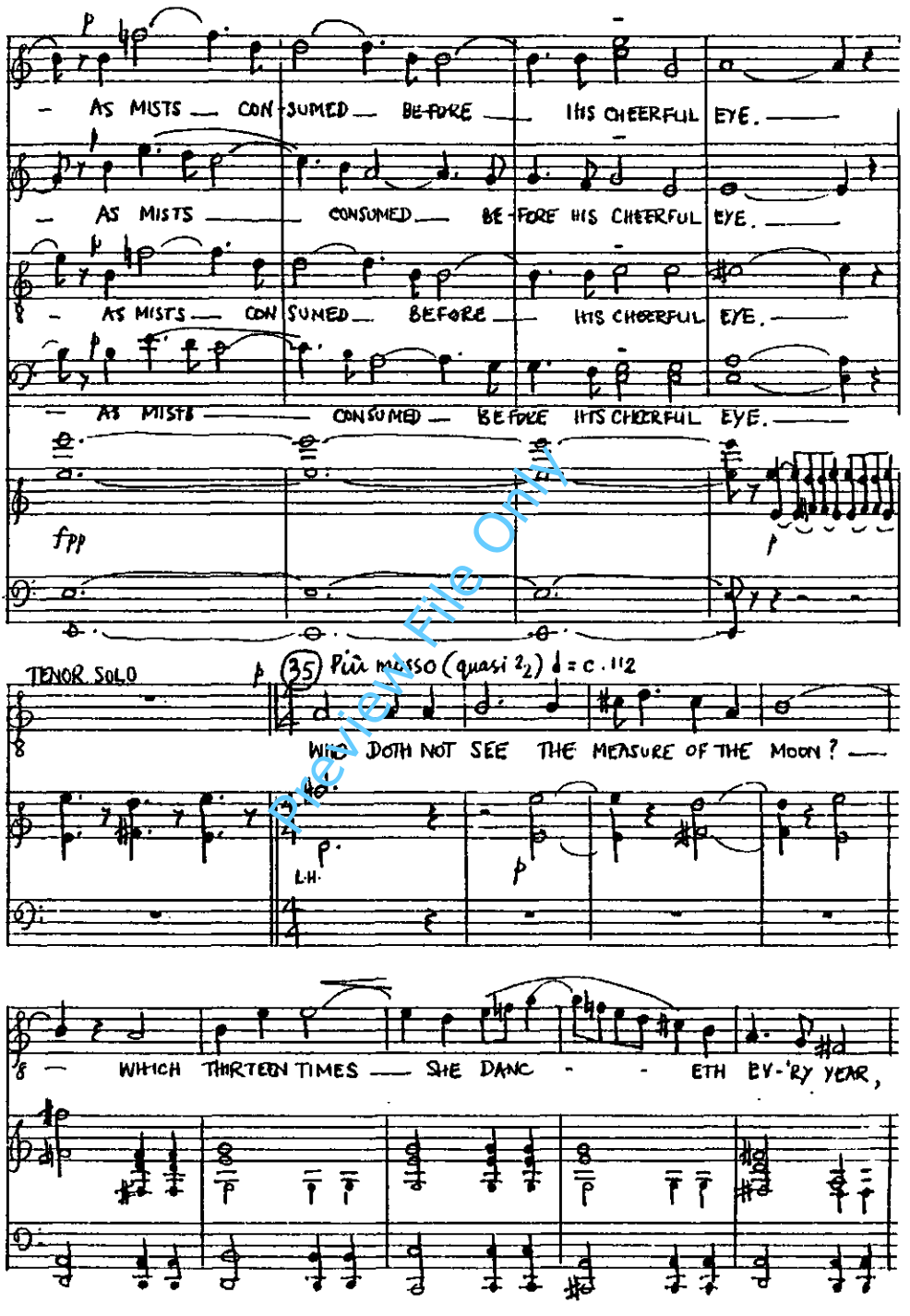

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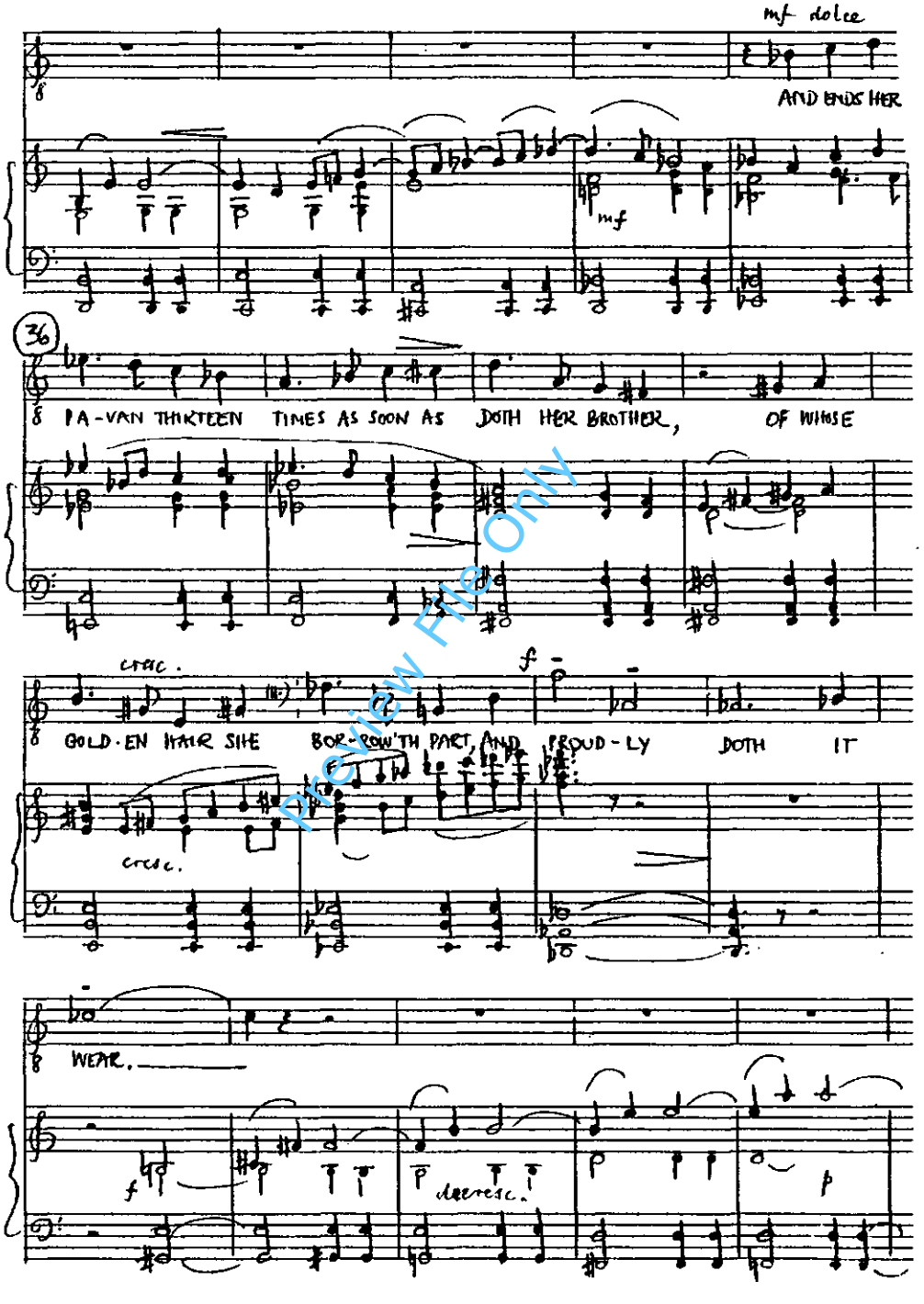

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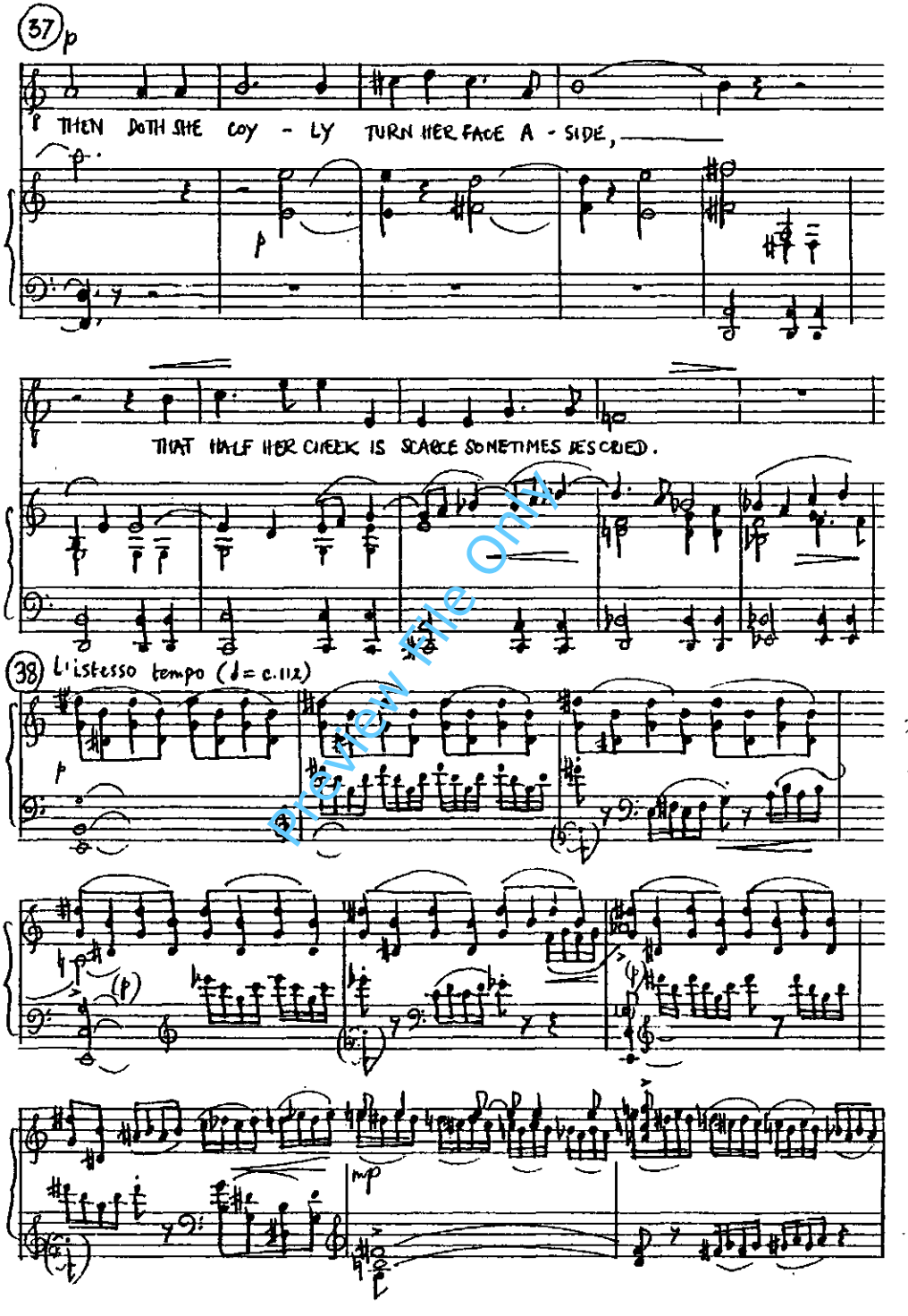

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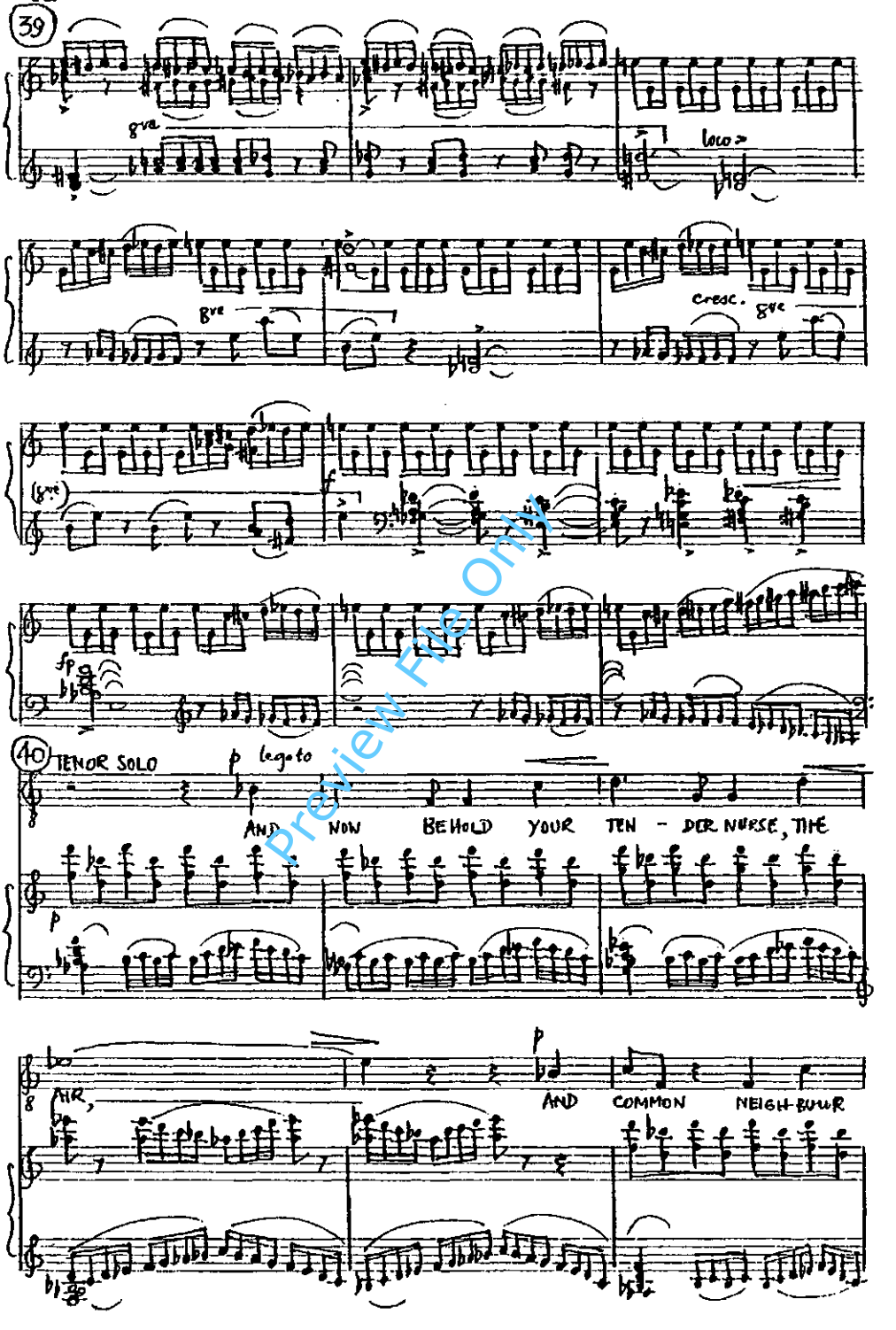

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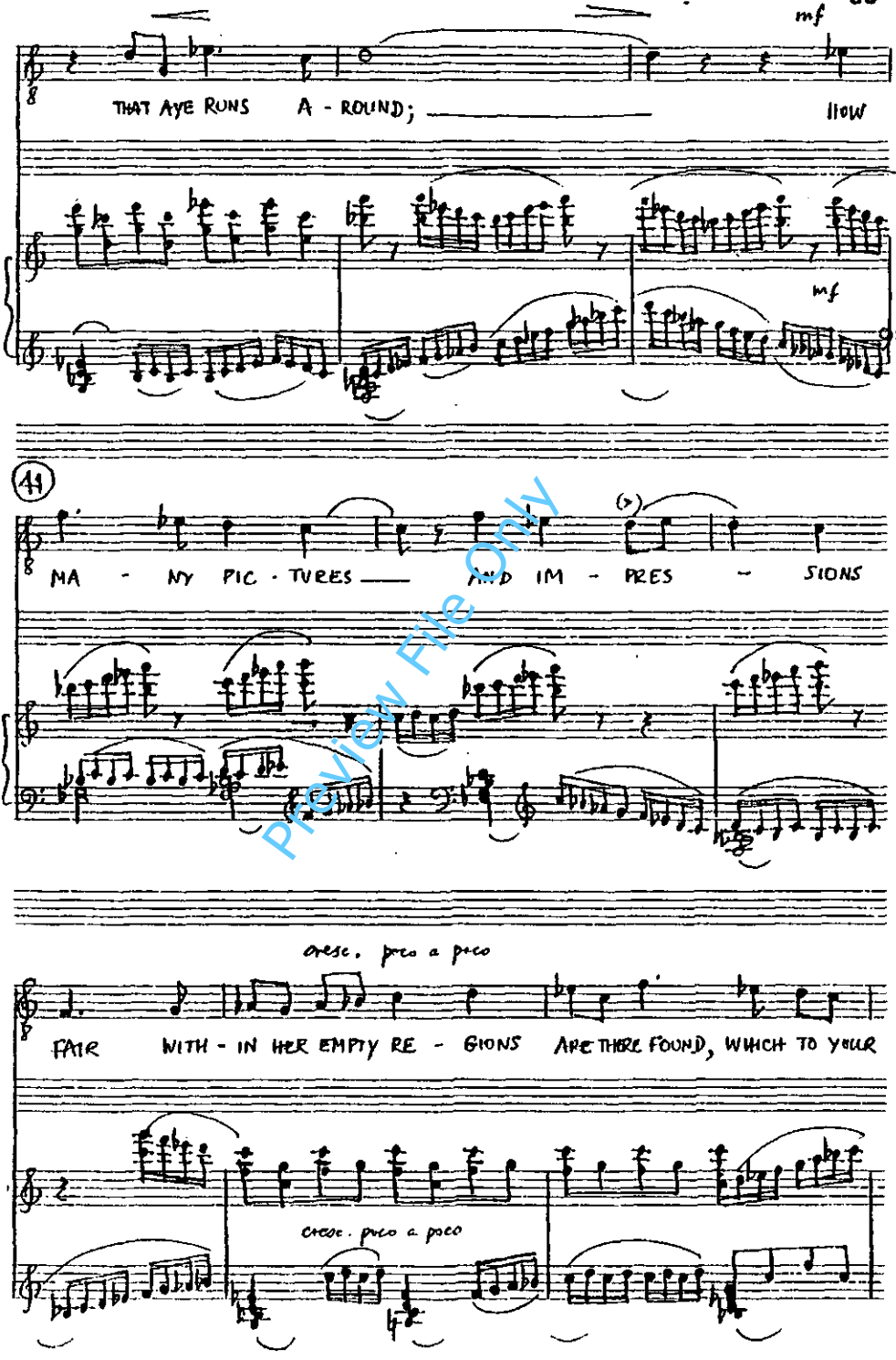

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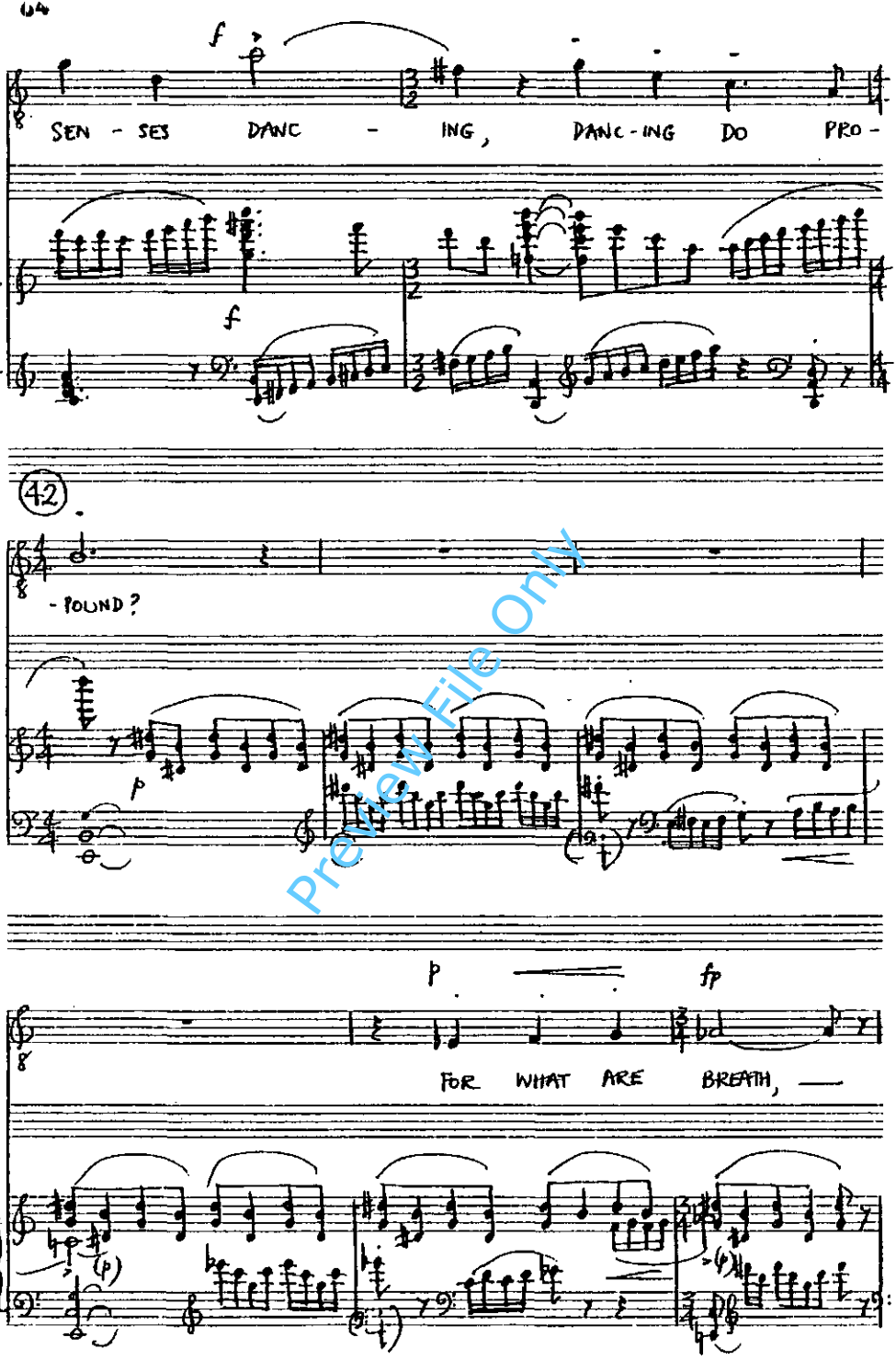

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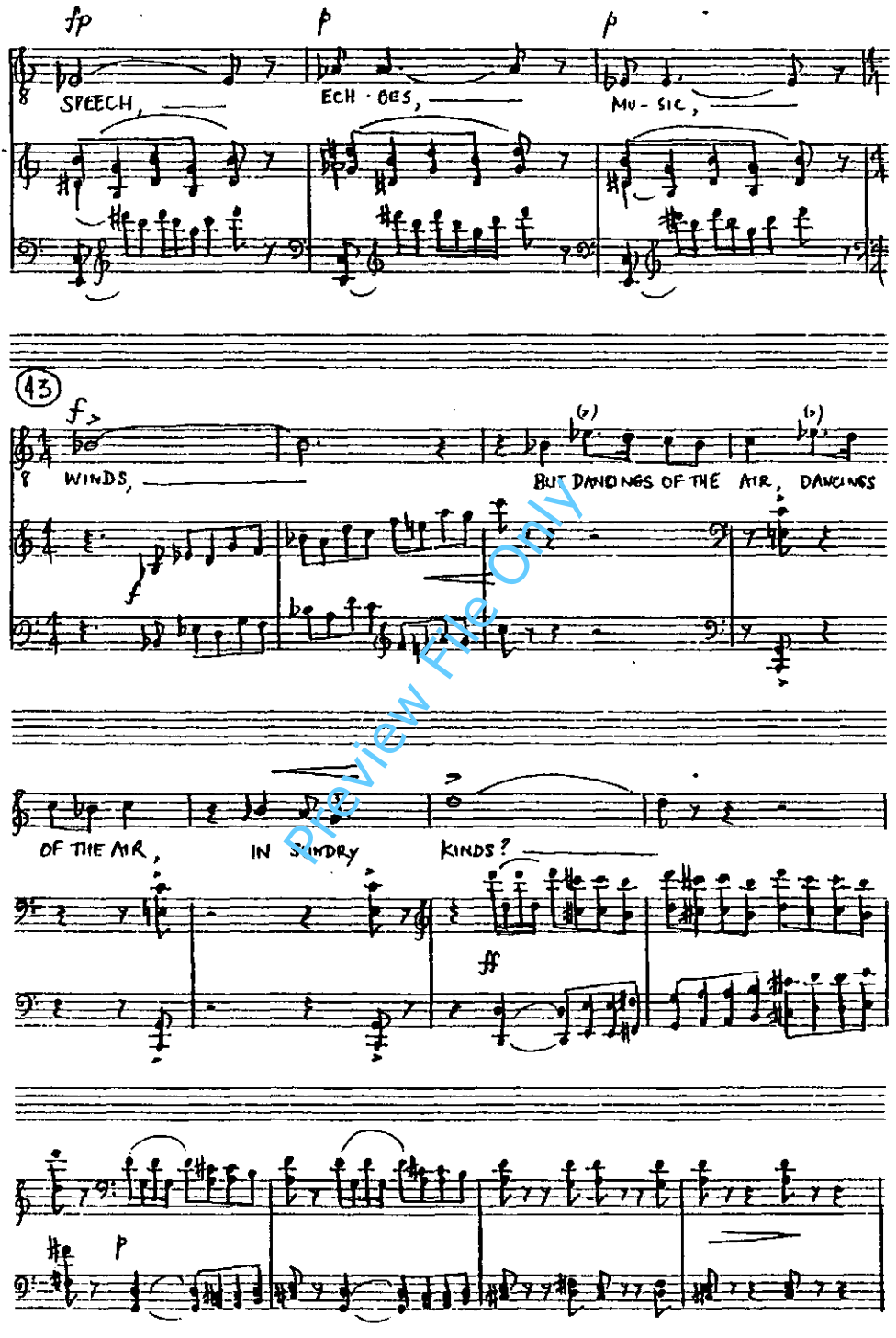

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