Jonathan Powell is a composer, pianist and writer on music. Self-taught as a composer, he first performed his works at the Brighton Festival and at Dartington in 1989. Since then, he has received performances and commissions from leading exponents of new music including the London Sinfonietta, the Composers Ensemble, Jane Manning and Valdine Anderson, as well as the pianists Stephen Gutman, Nicolas Hodges and Thomas Adès. His works have been heard at the Aldeburgh, Almeida, Bath, Cheltenham and Huddersfield festivals, the South Bank Centre and the BBC Radio Theatre as well as in continental Europe, Japan, Australia and the US. As a pianist, he is in demand as a recording artist and concert recitalist: recent engagements have taken him to Italy, Finland and the Netherlands, while next year will see him perform across the UK and the US. He has published articles on Scriabin, the Russian Piano School, Ciurlionis, Feinberg, Stanchinsky and Futurism.

Powell began the composition of his Second Quartet in June 2001, but the work was not completed until March 2003, a timespan unusual for a composer who often writes very quickly. The work is Powell's largest to date, and it is likely that the creative challenge presented by the sheer size of this one-movement structure (probably up to half an hour in duration) is partly responsible for the piece's long gestation.

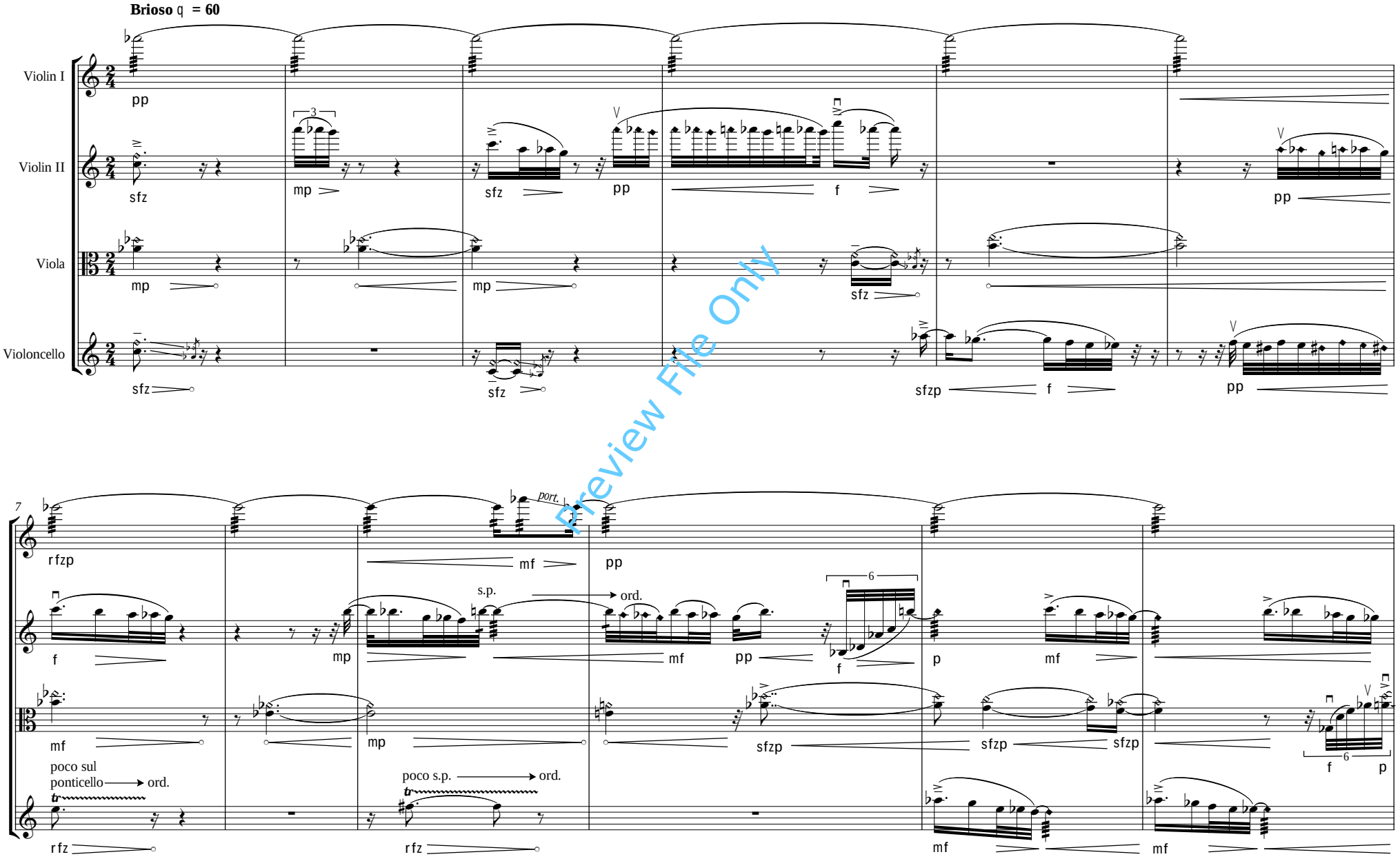
The first large section of the quartet consists of four distinct episodes which build up in intensity: the first of these emerges from two pitches, the second from a series of chords, the third (beginning quietly) from a combination of these, and the fourth (beginning raucously) from rhythmic elaborations. As the music reaches seemingly improbably levels of density, a release of pressure allows melodic elements to gradually predominate in a series of tableaux (starting with a solo on the 'cello); these may be likened to arias, perhaps interspersed with variations or interludes. By three-quarters of the way through the piece, the energy that had characterised the earlier climactic moments has totalled dissipated; in the final moment of repose before rebirth, one pitch remains – a seed from which the processes of the work are regenerated, in a manner relative to, but distinct from earlier procedures. Thus, towards the end, the music comes 'full circle' as it regains earlier energy levels but, instead of continuing around the loop, it veers off into trajectories that are ultimately self-destructive.

Preview File Only

Second String Quartet

Written for the Arditti Quartet
Commissioned by the BBC
Dedicated to Hilary Robinson

JONATHAN POWELL
(2001-03)



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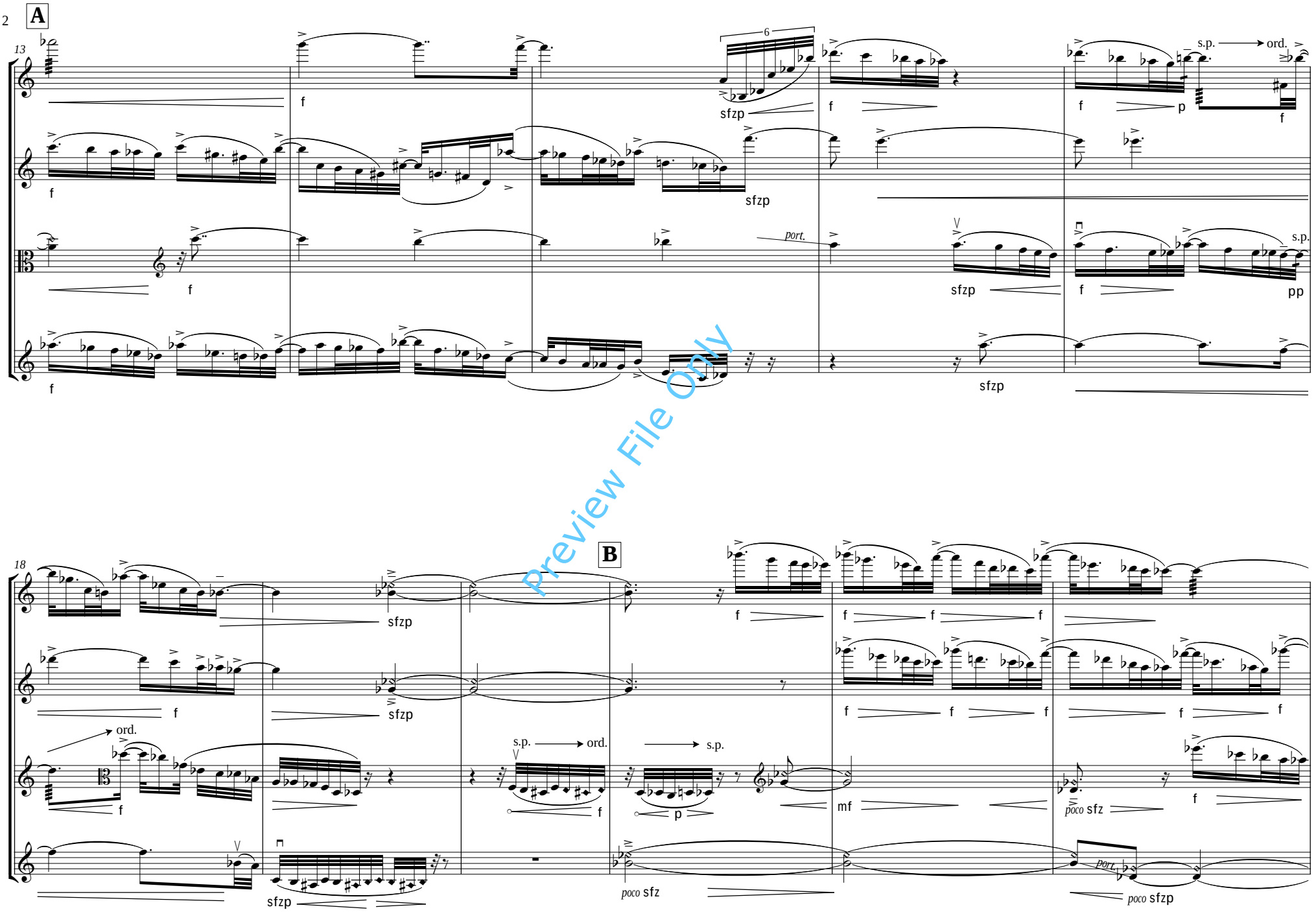

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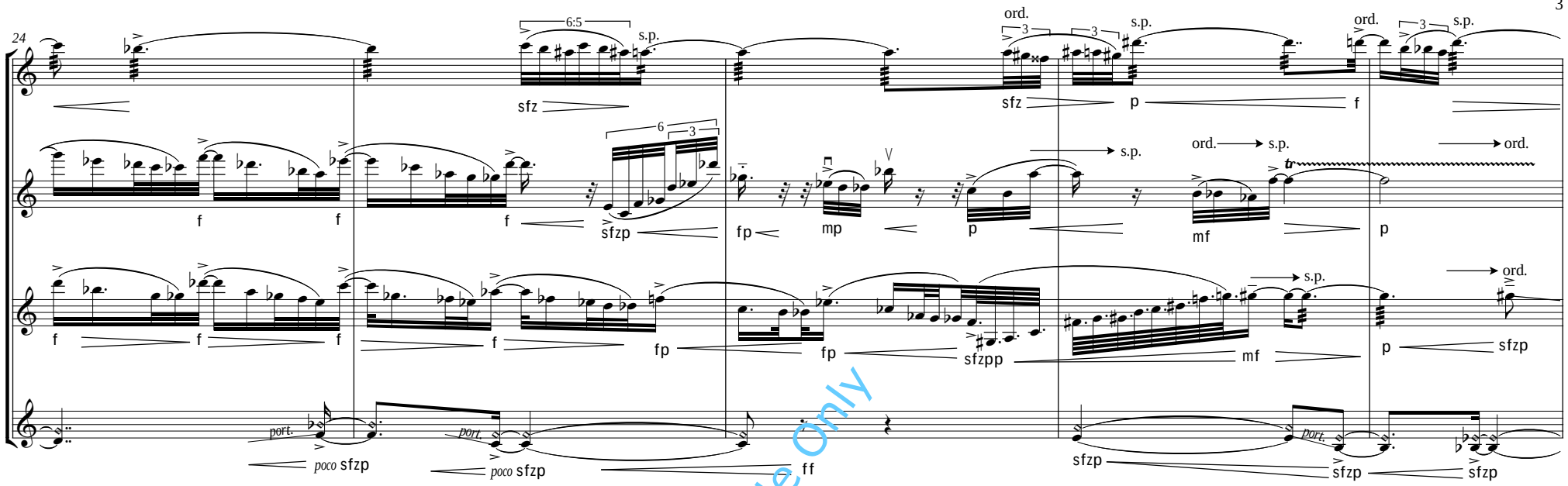

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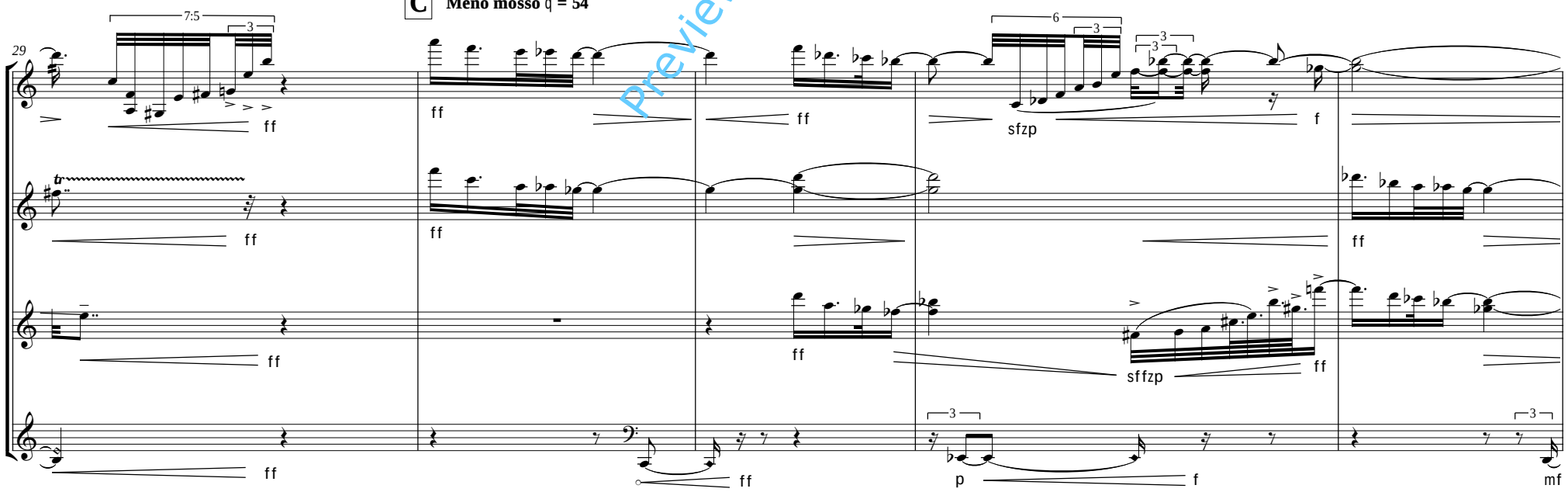

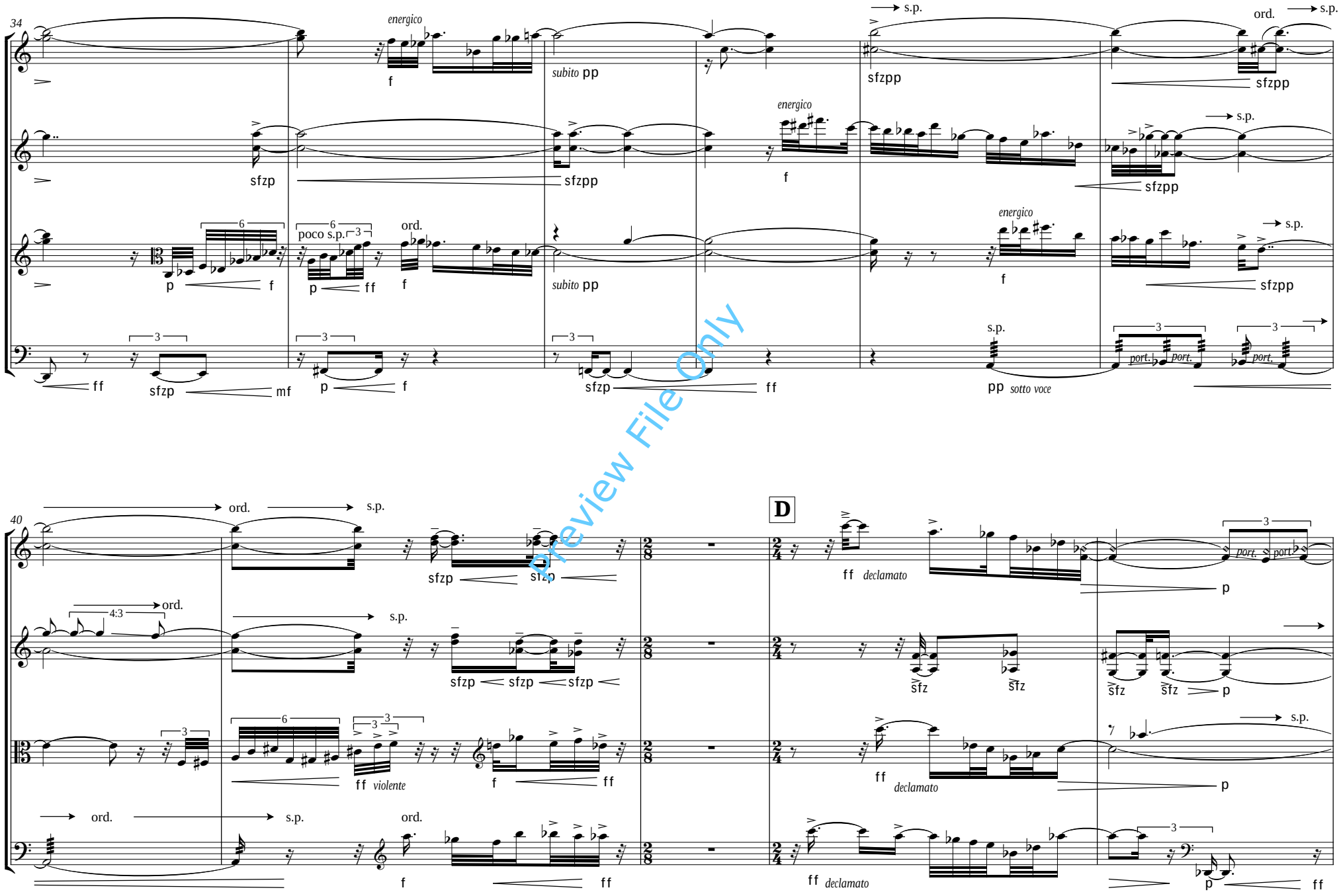

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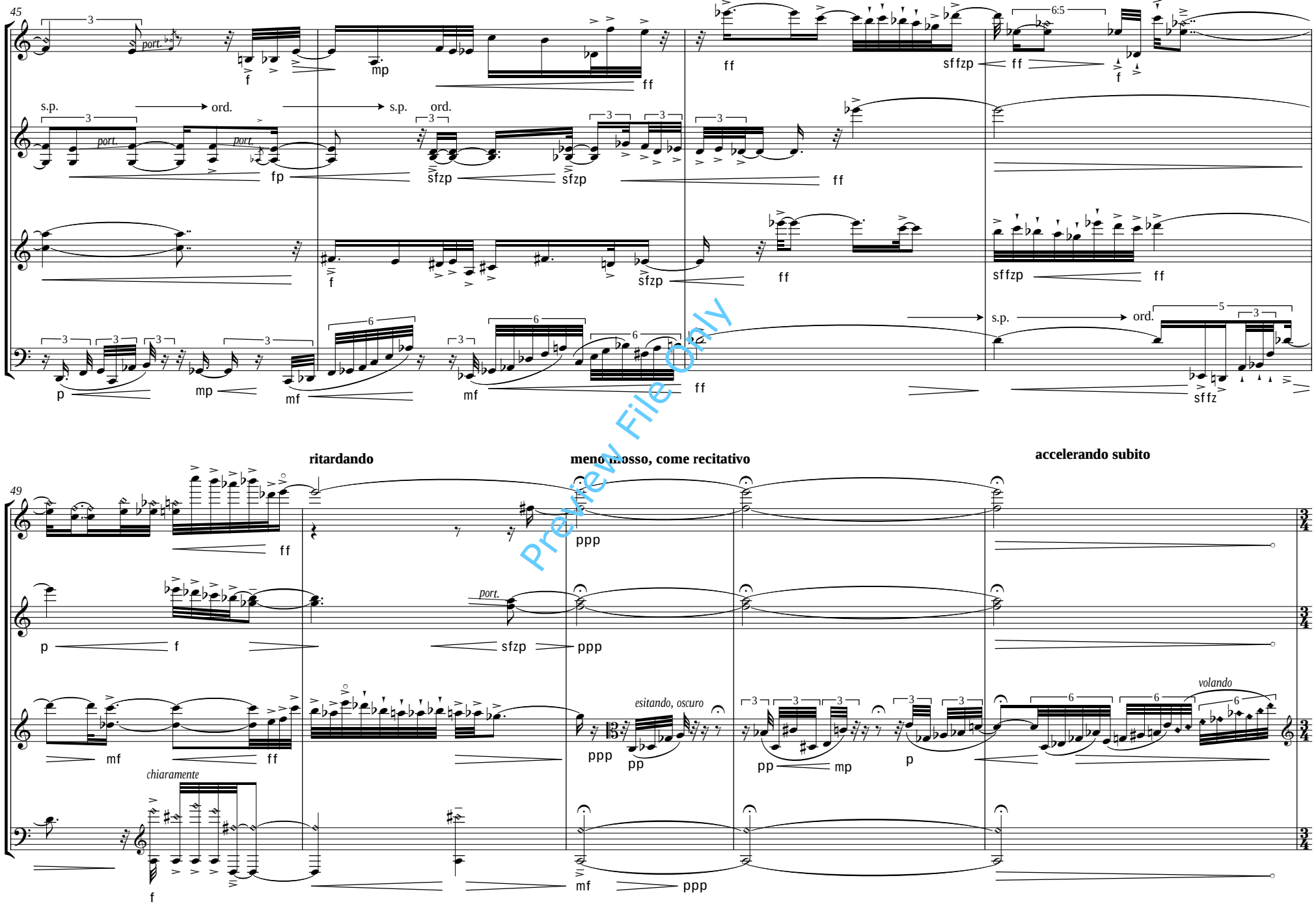
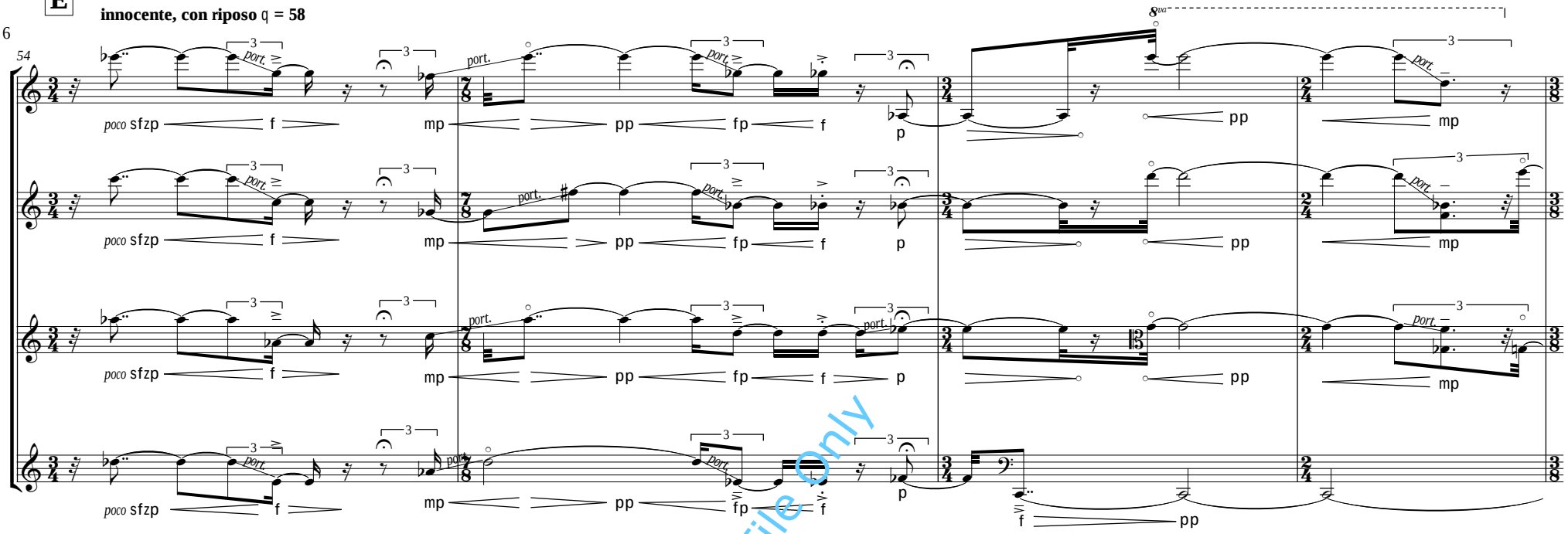


Preview File Only

E

innocente, con riposo ♩ = 58

54

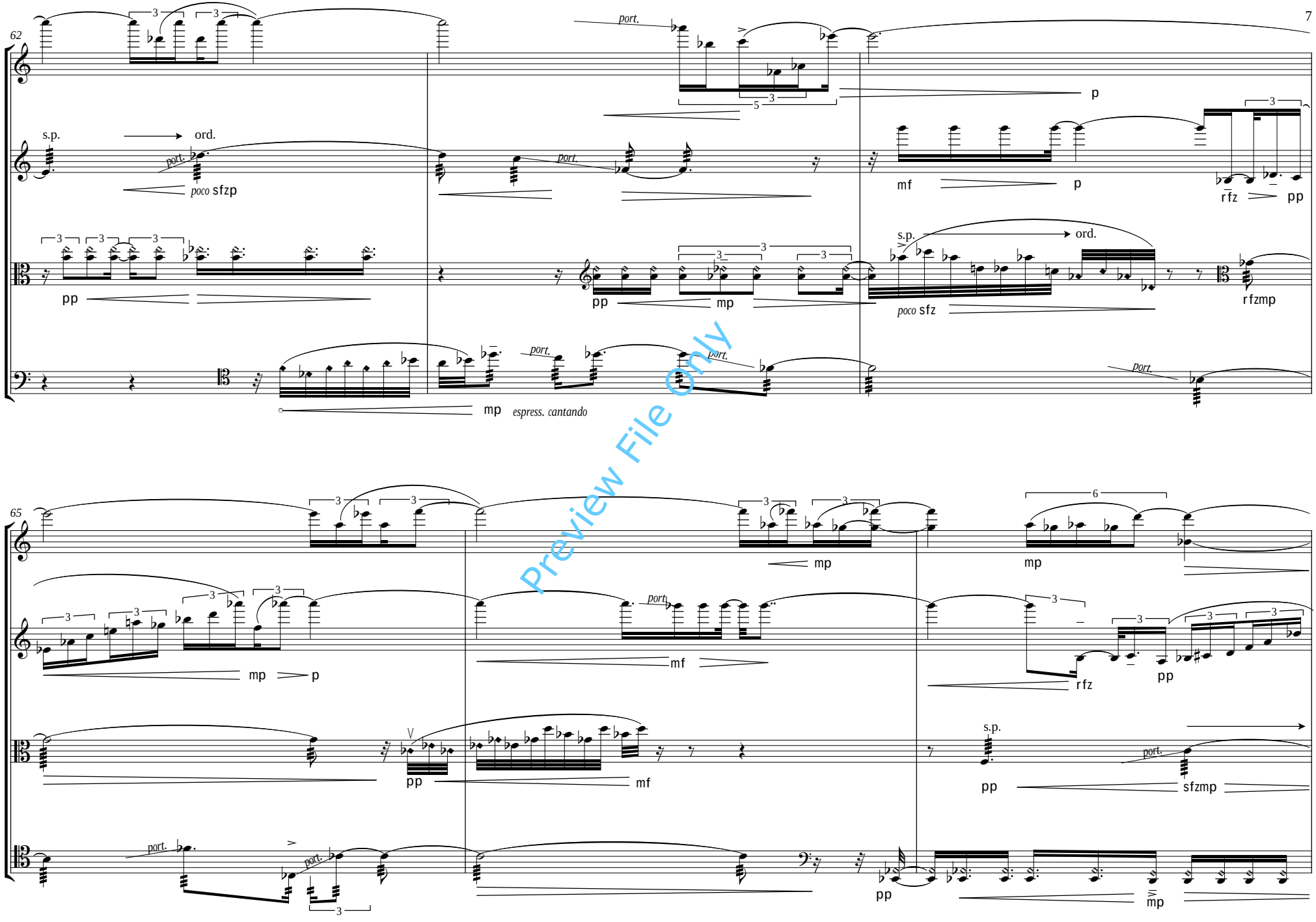


Più vivo: fuggitivo, scorrevole ♩ = 66

F

58

Preview File Only



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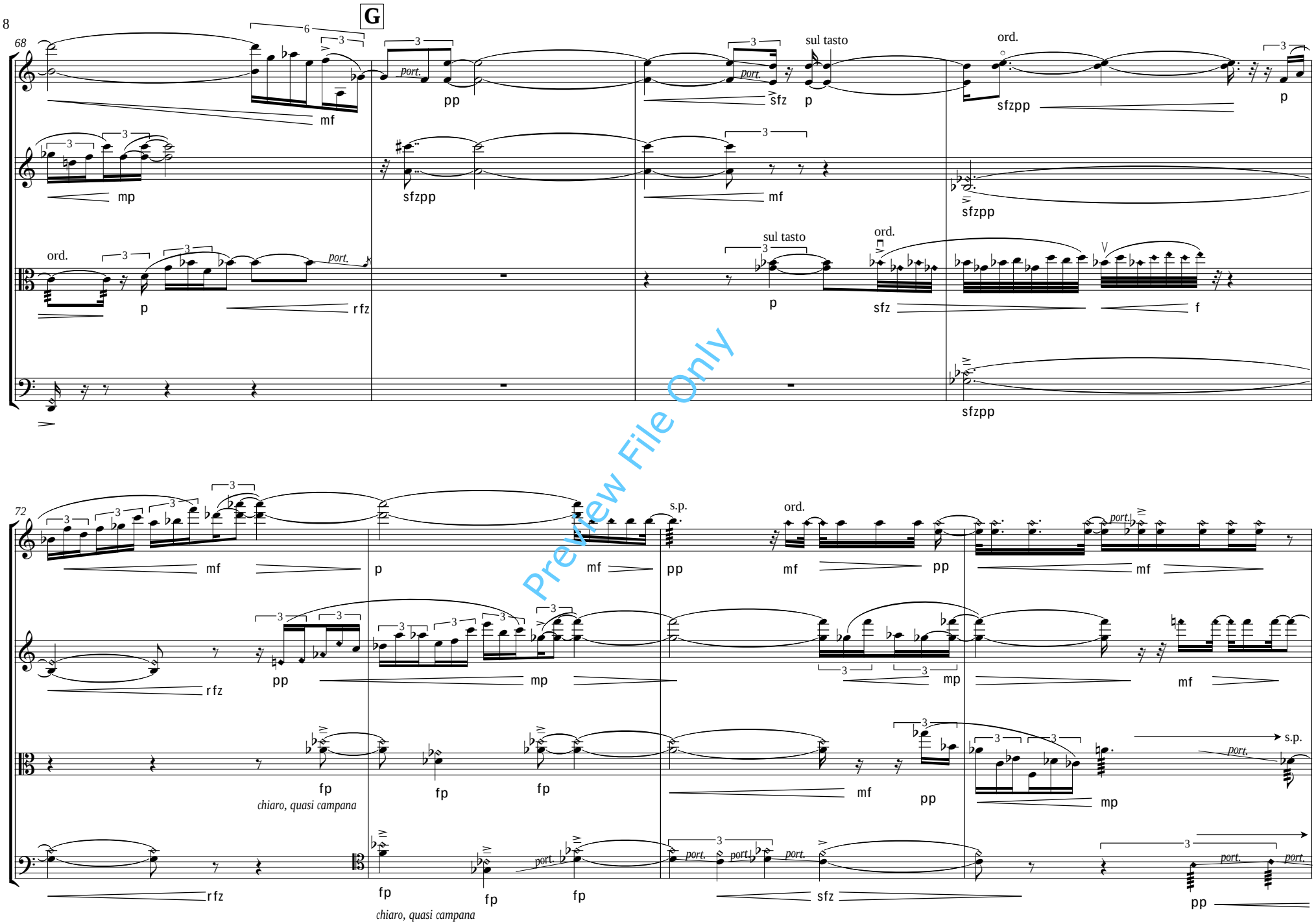

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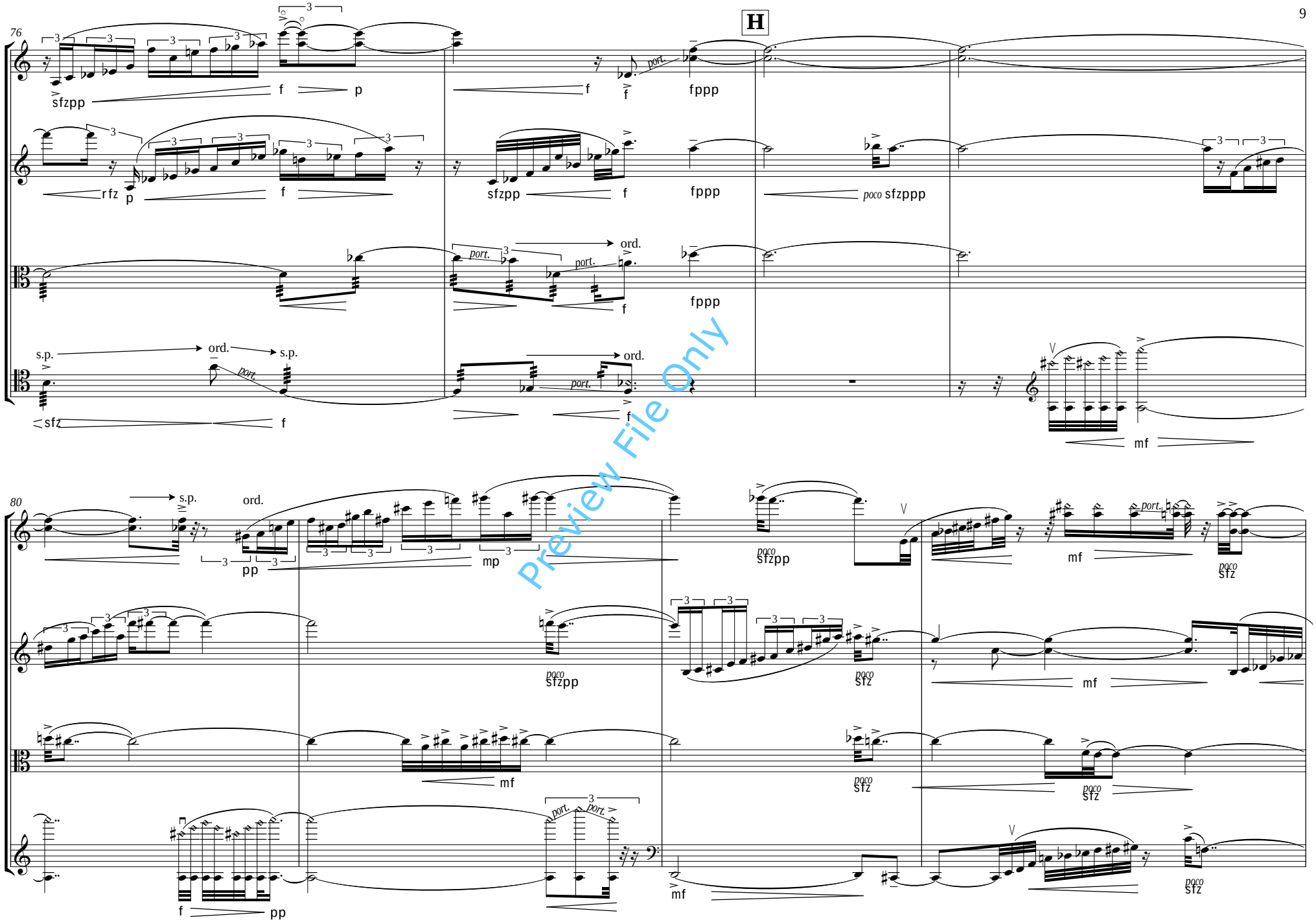
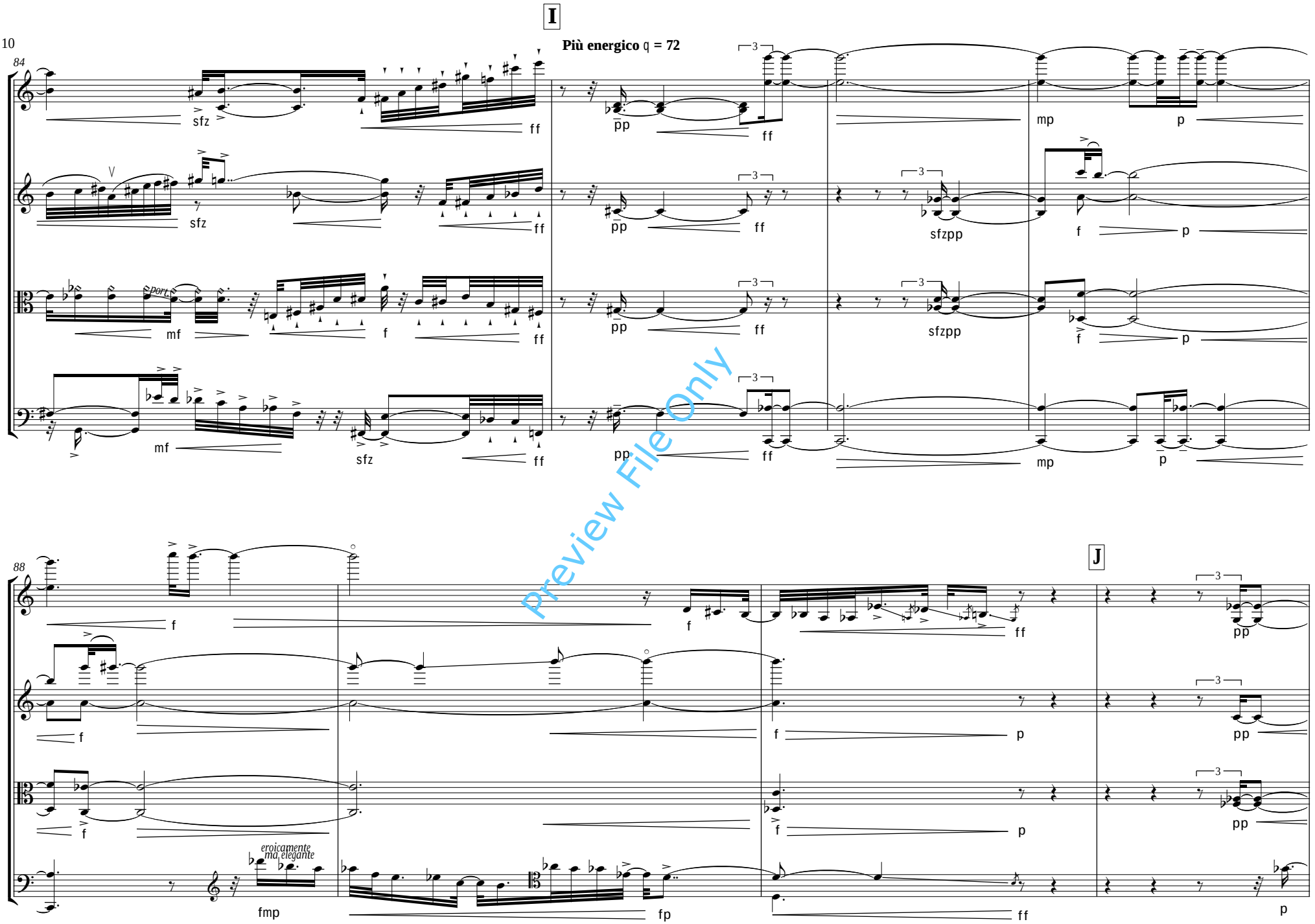

H
76
sfzpp
f
p
rfz
port.
fppp
poco sfzppp
ord.
s.p.
sfz
80
pp
mp
mf
poco sfzpp
poco sfz
Preview File Only



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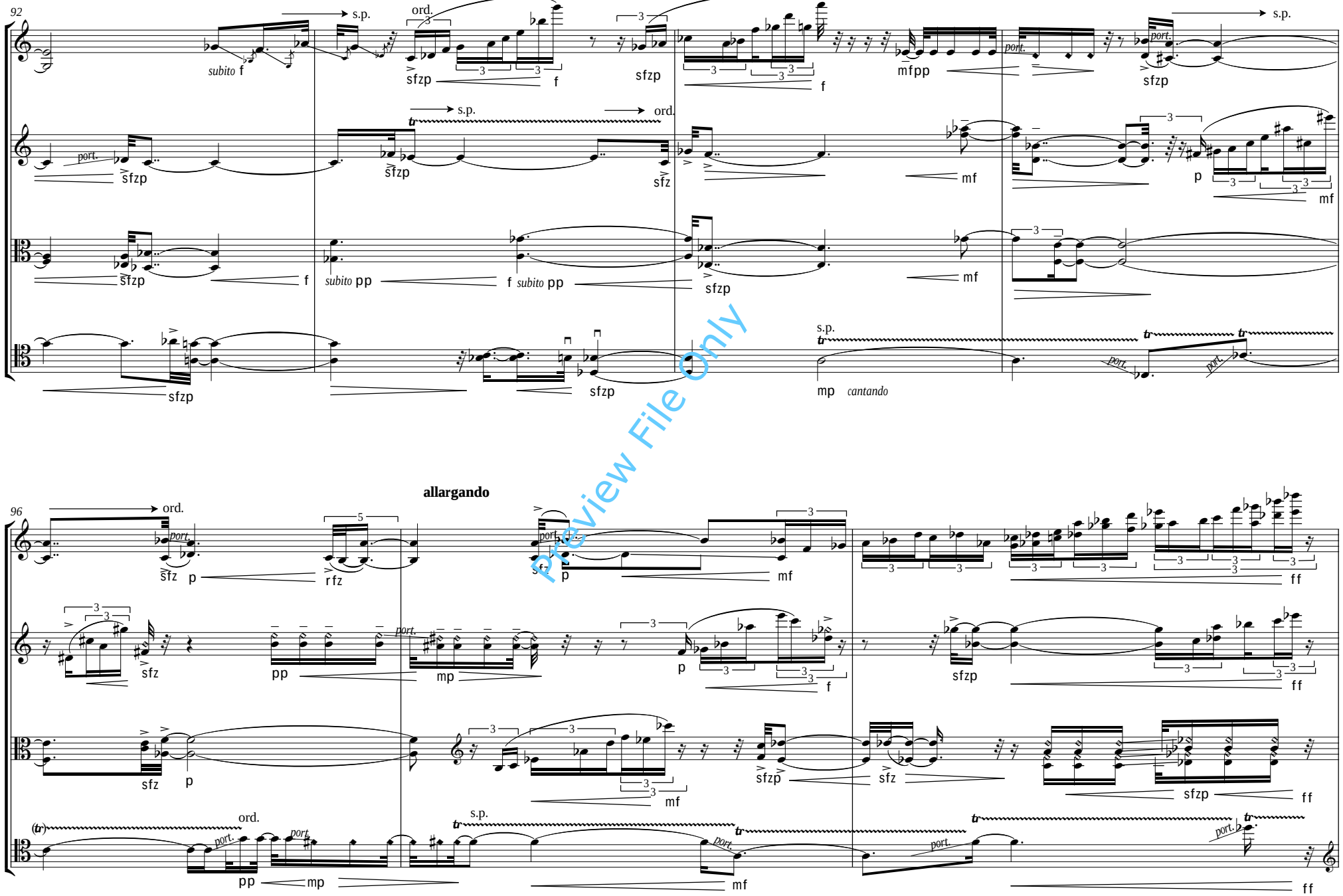
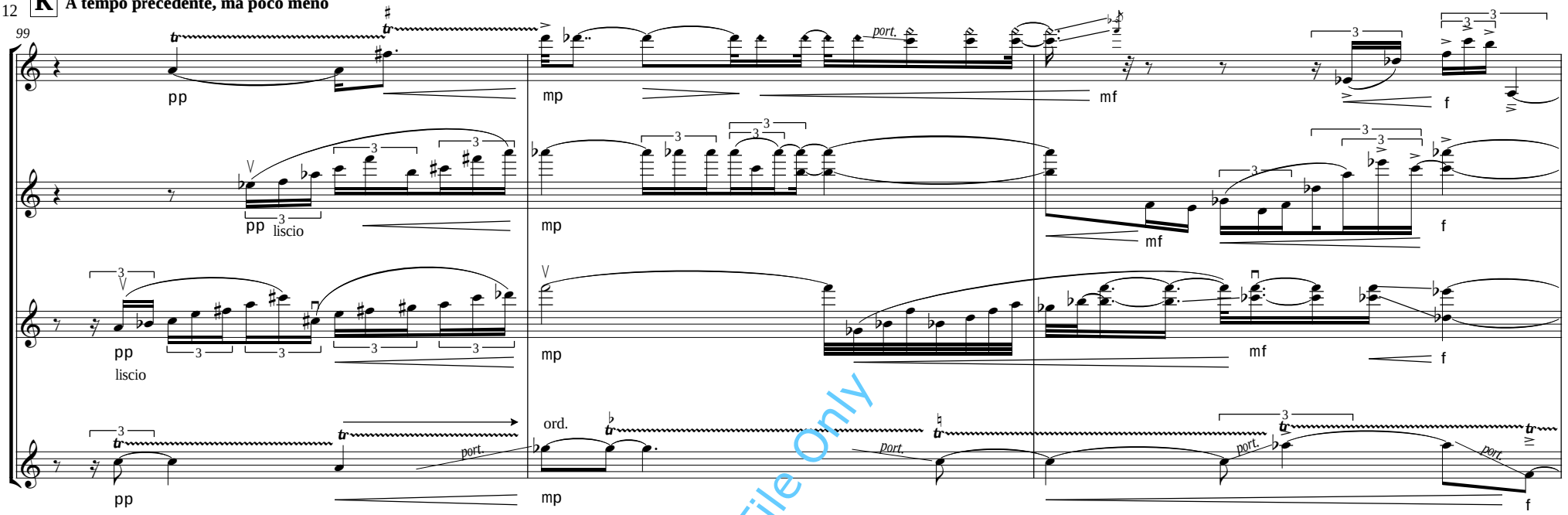


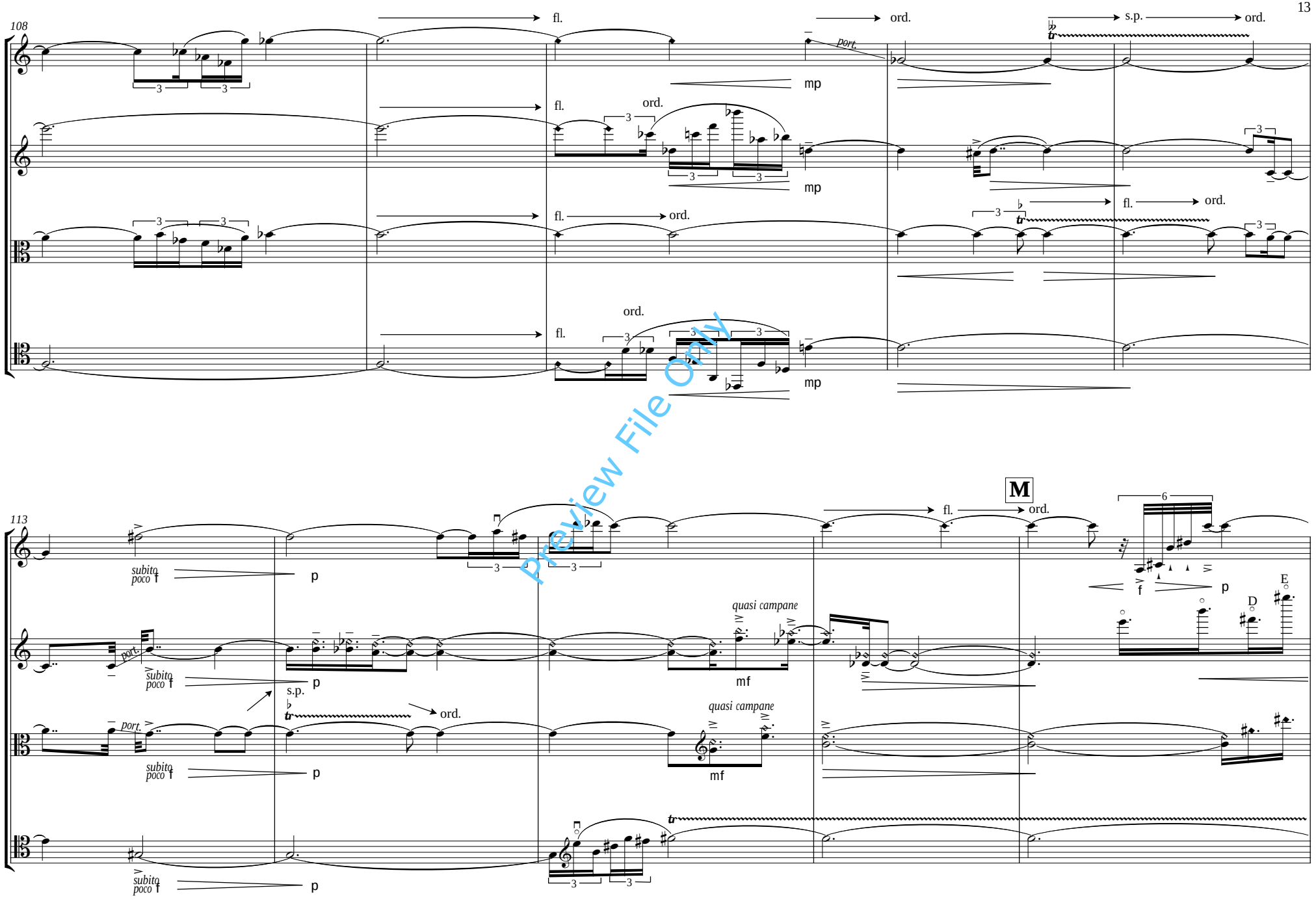
Preview File Only

K **A tempo precedente, ma poco meno**



L **etereale** ♩ = 58

Preview File Only



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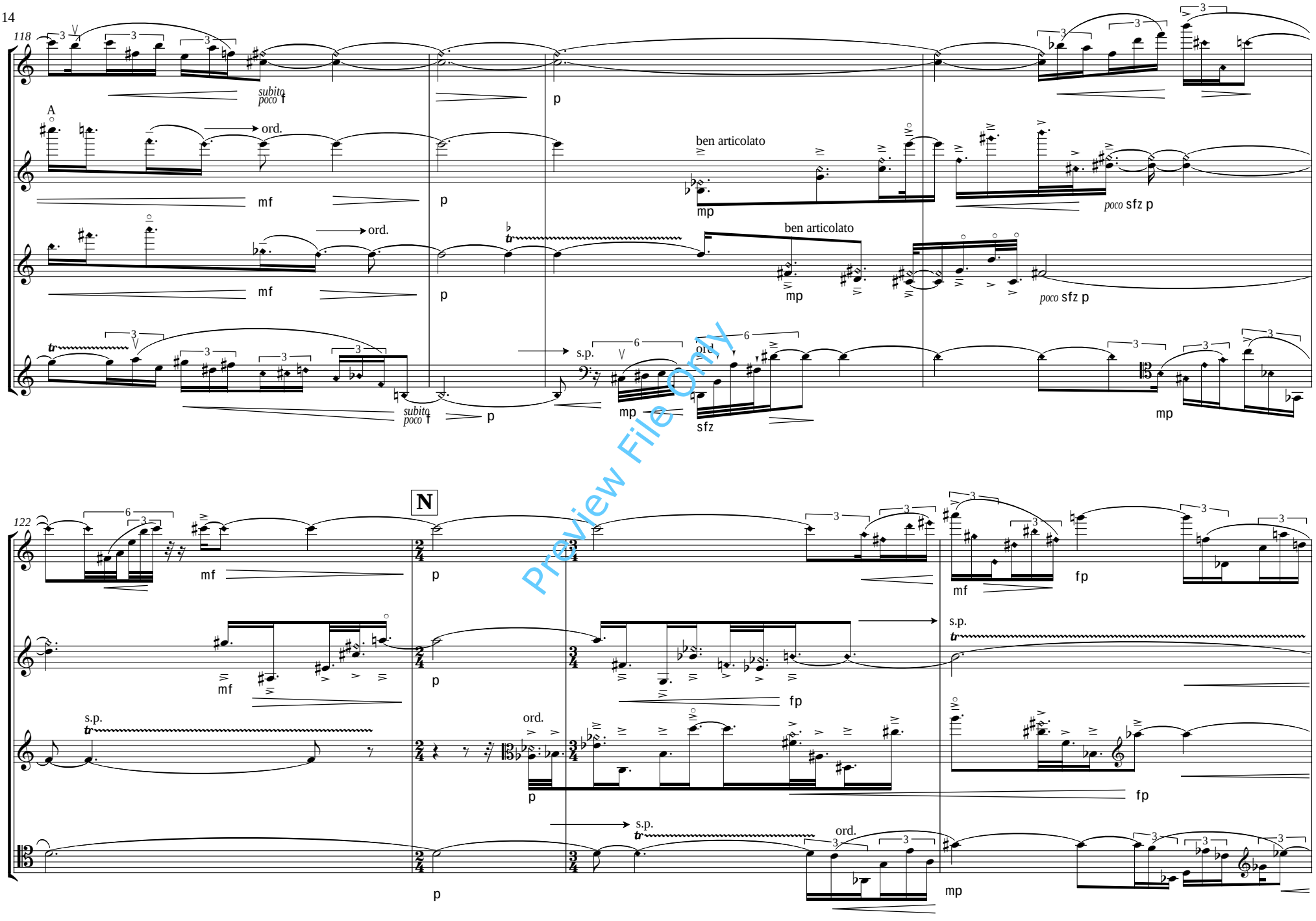

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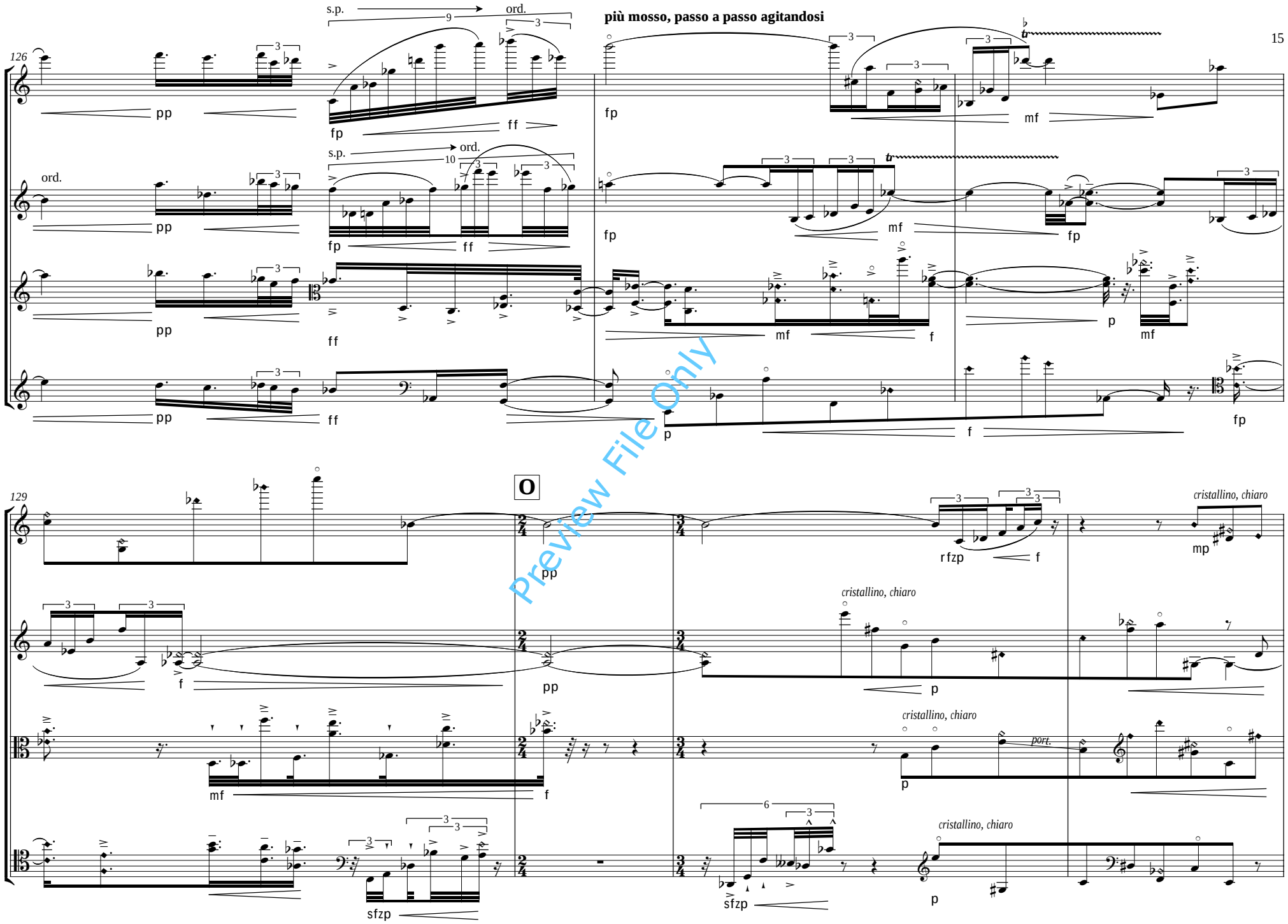

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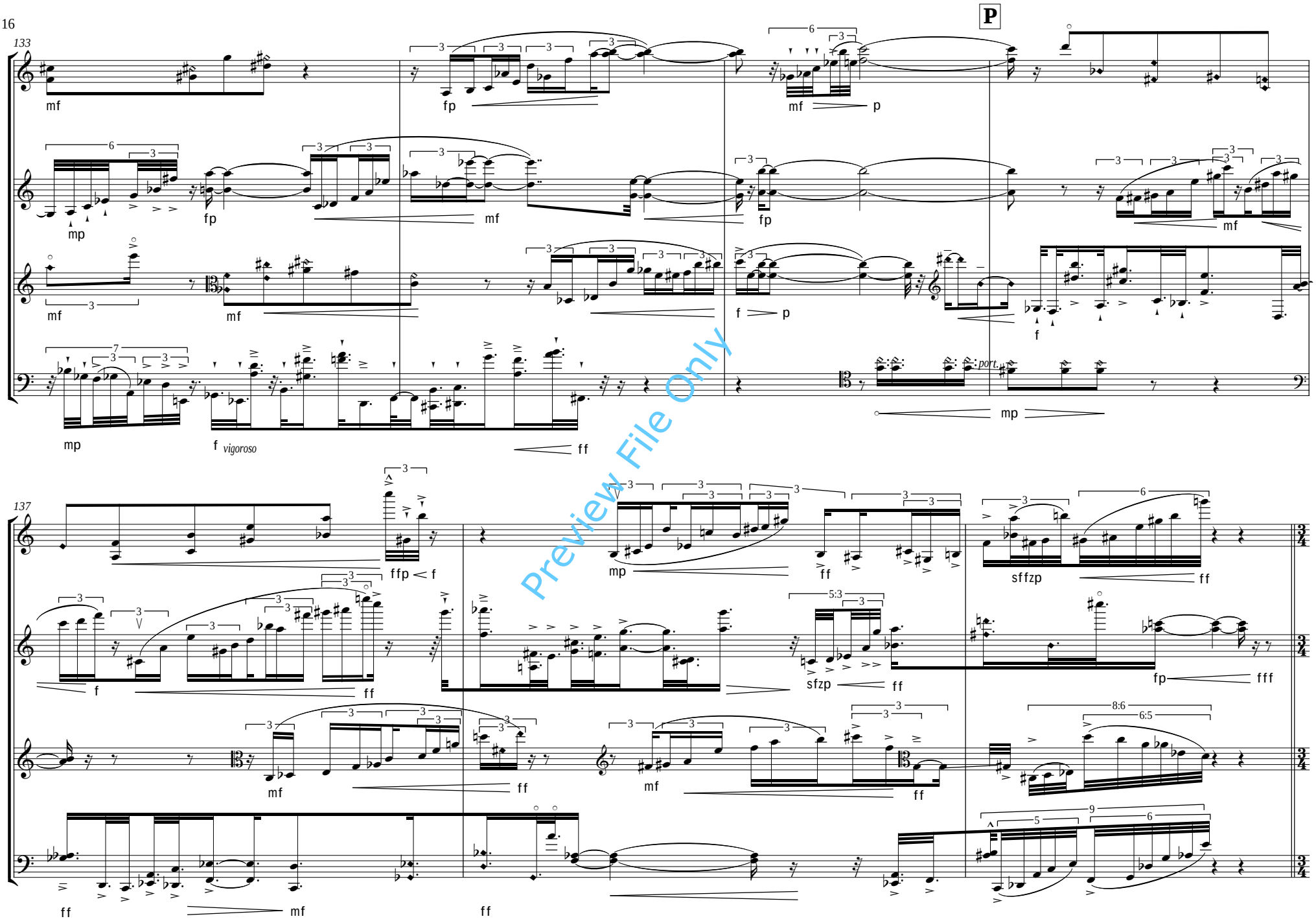
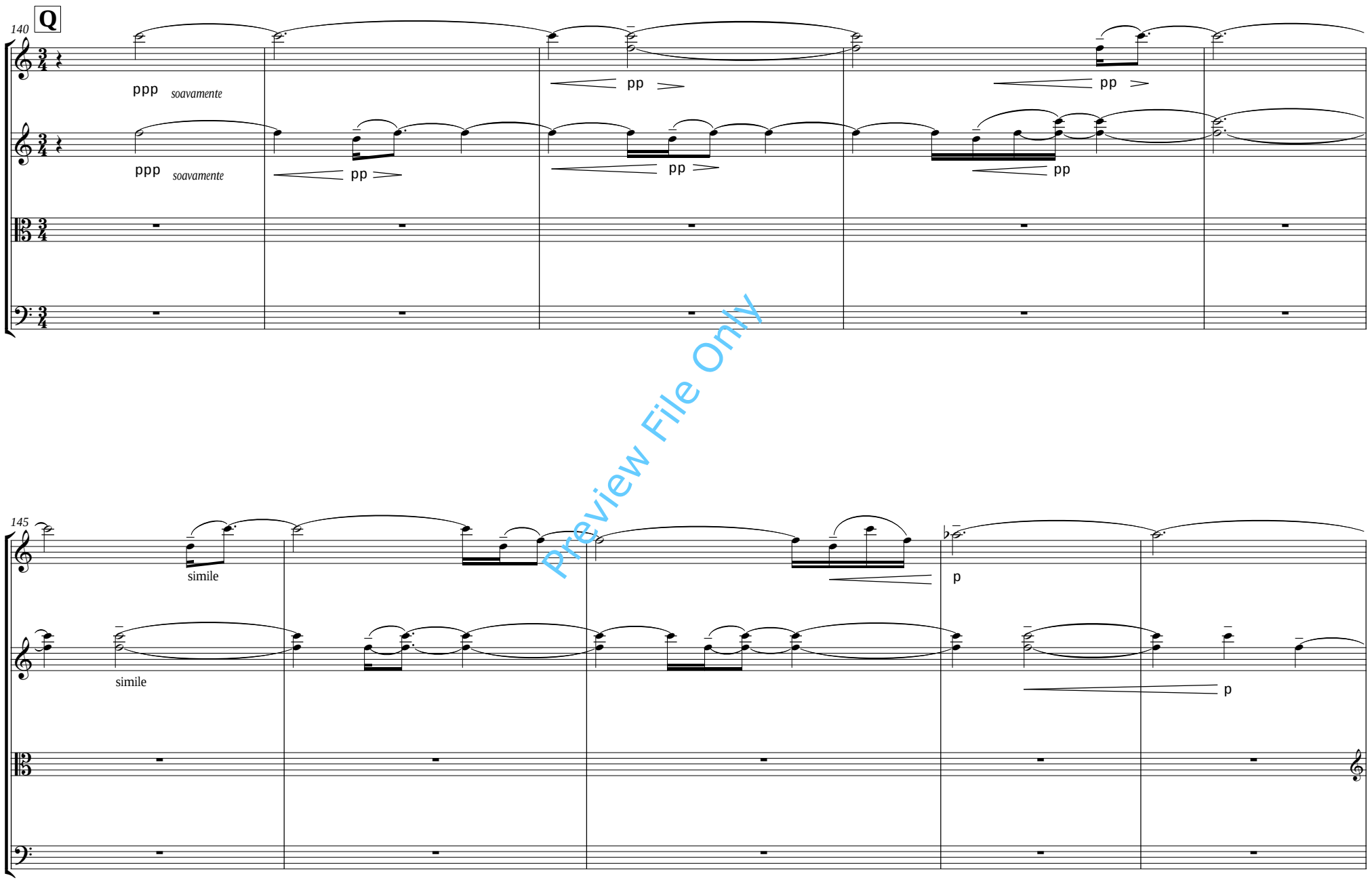


Preview File Only

Moderato commodo ♩ = 72



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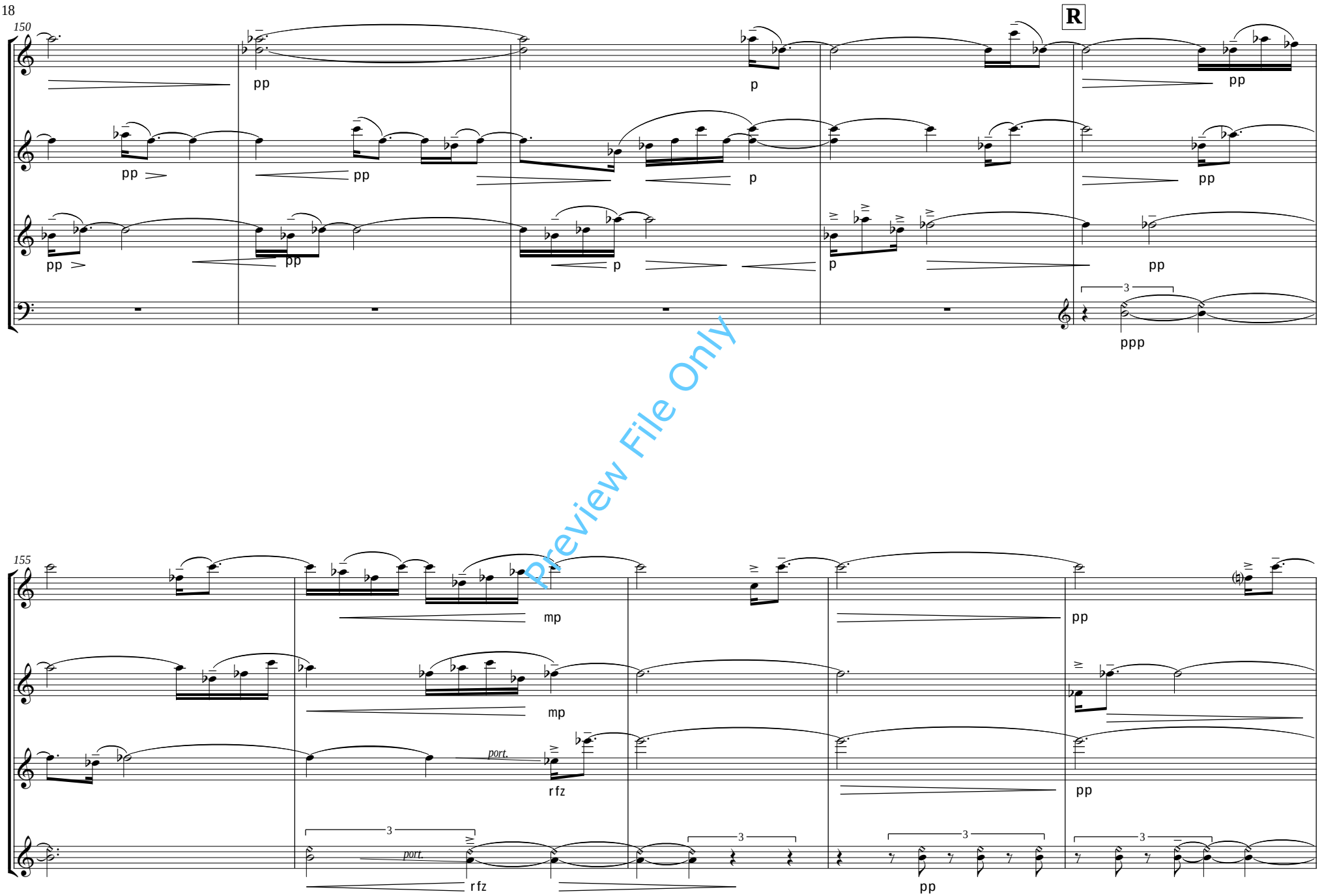


Preview File Only

accelerando

160

declamato ma calmo

p

p

p

p

port.

pp

port.

poco sfz

Preview File Only

S **Più mosso** ♩ **= 84**

166

simile

simile

mp

mp

mp

mp

port.

port.

port.

p

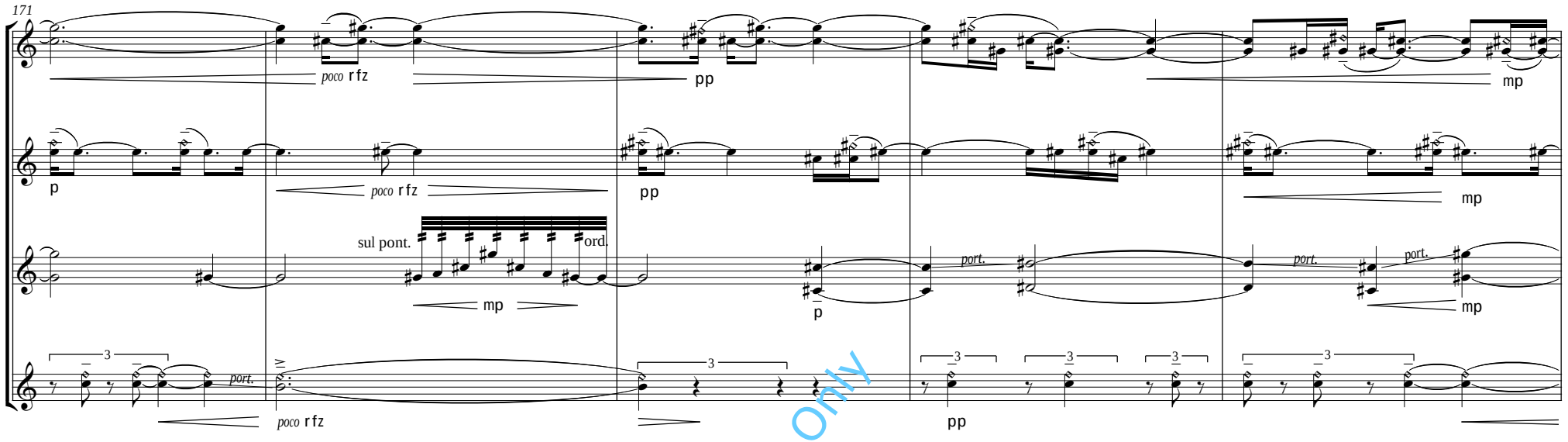
mp

pp

port.

rfz

p



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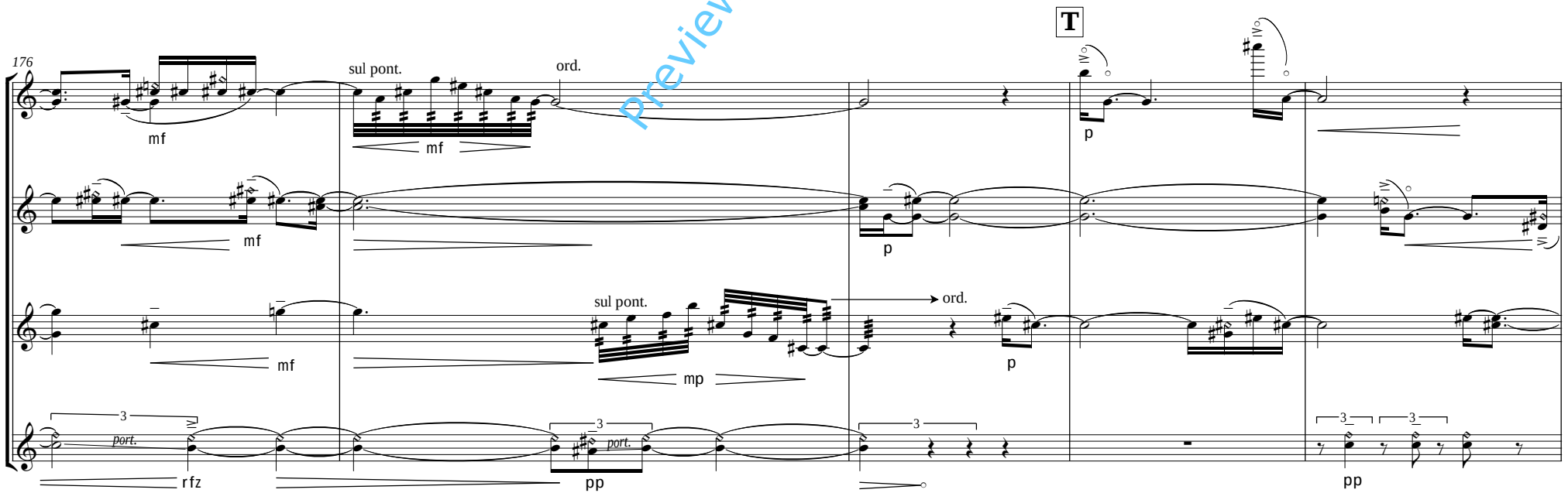
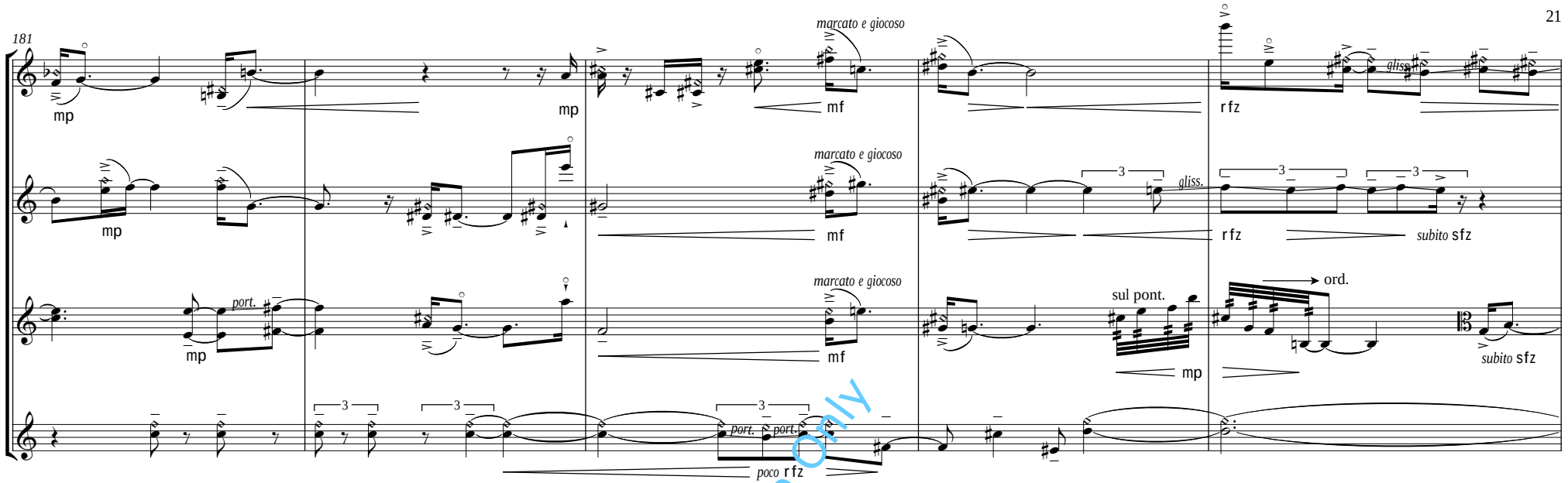
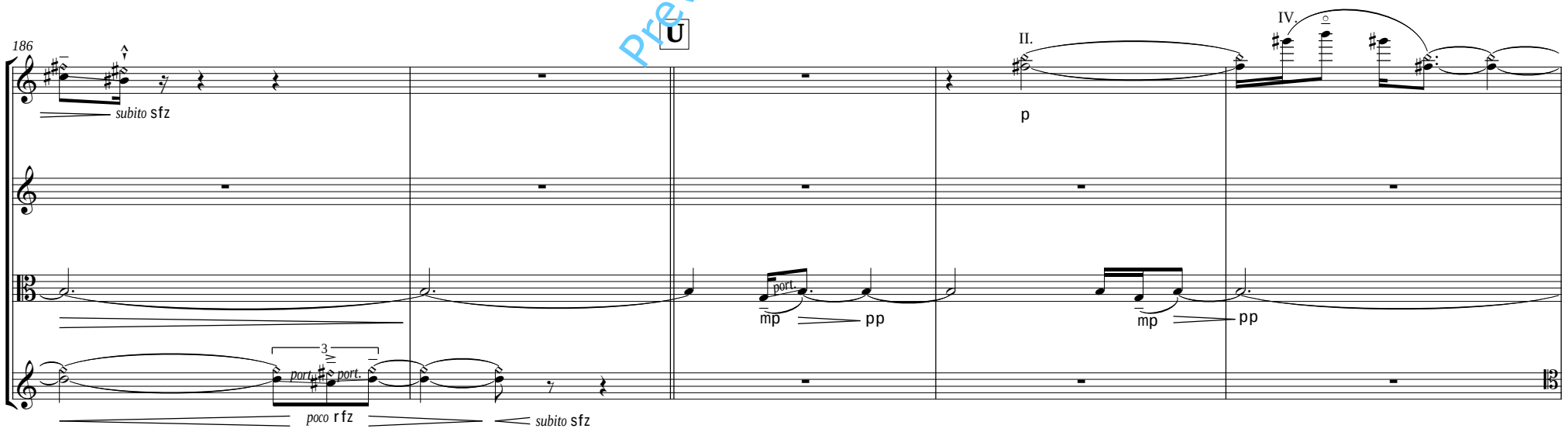
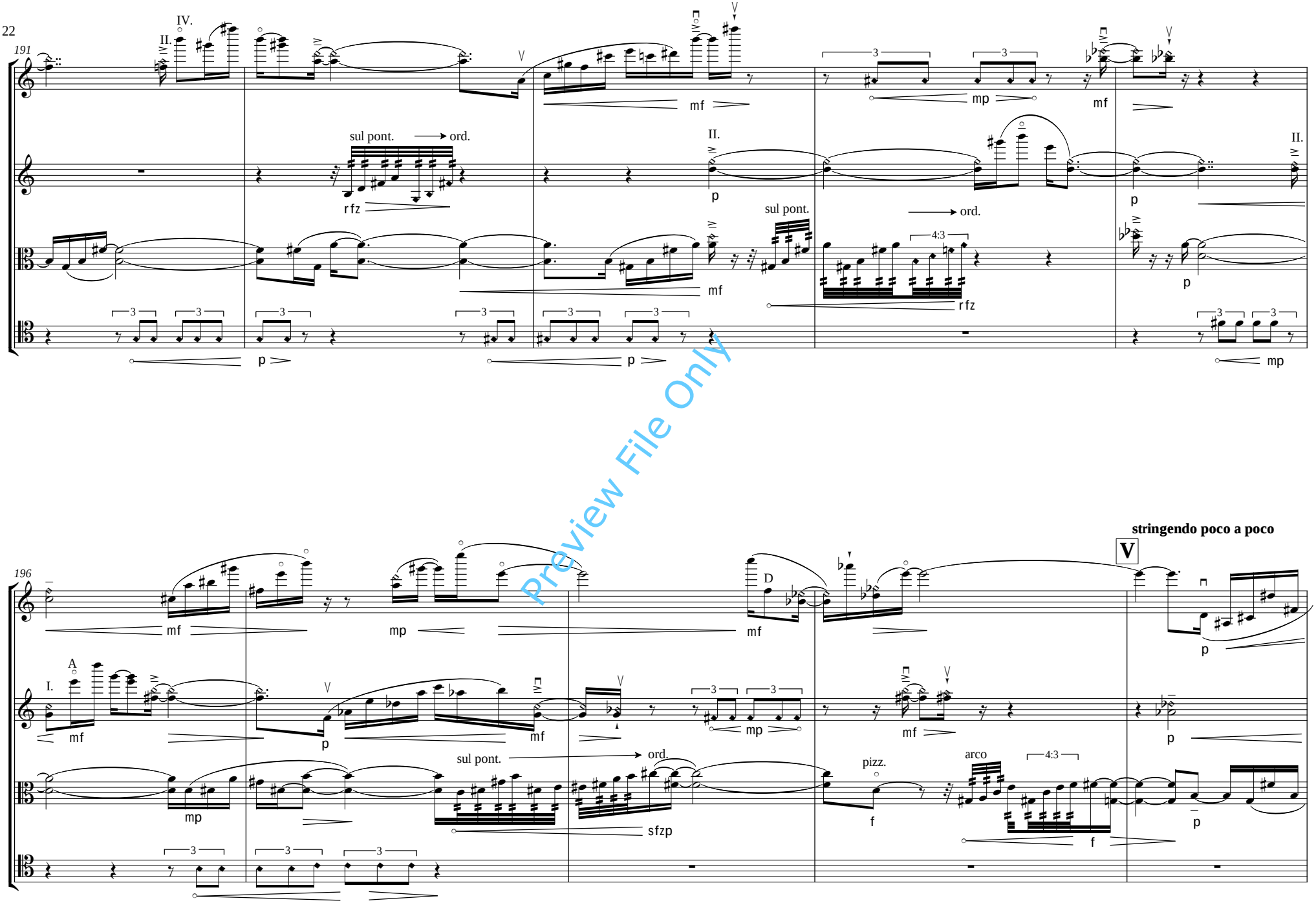




Preview File Only

Concentrando, nervoso ♩ **= 92**





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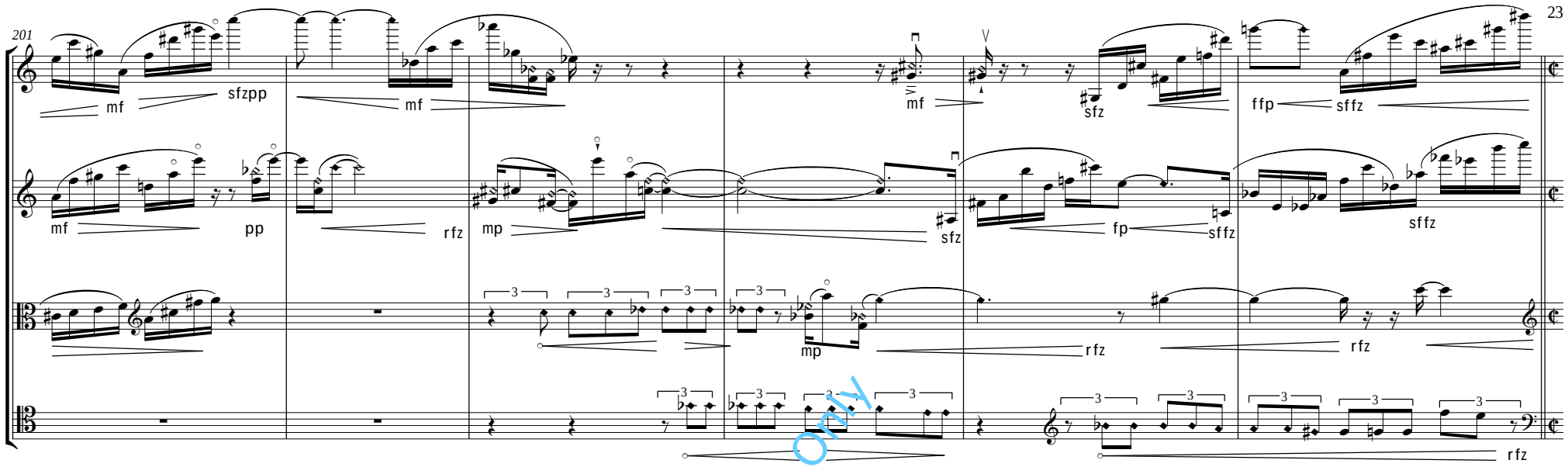
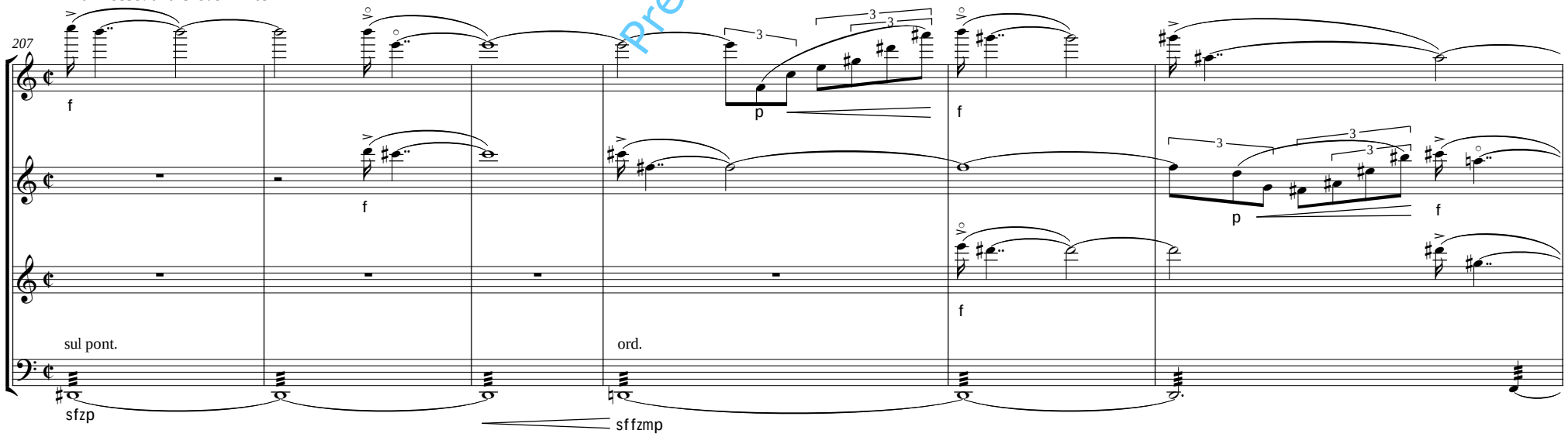
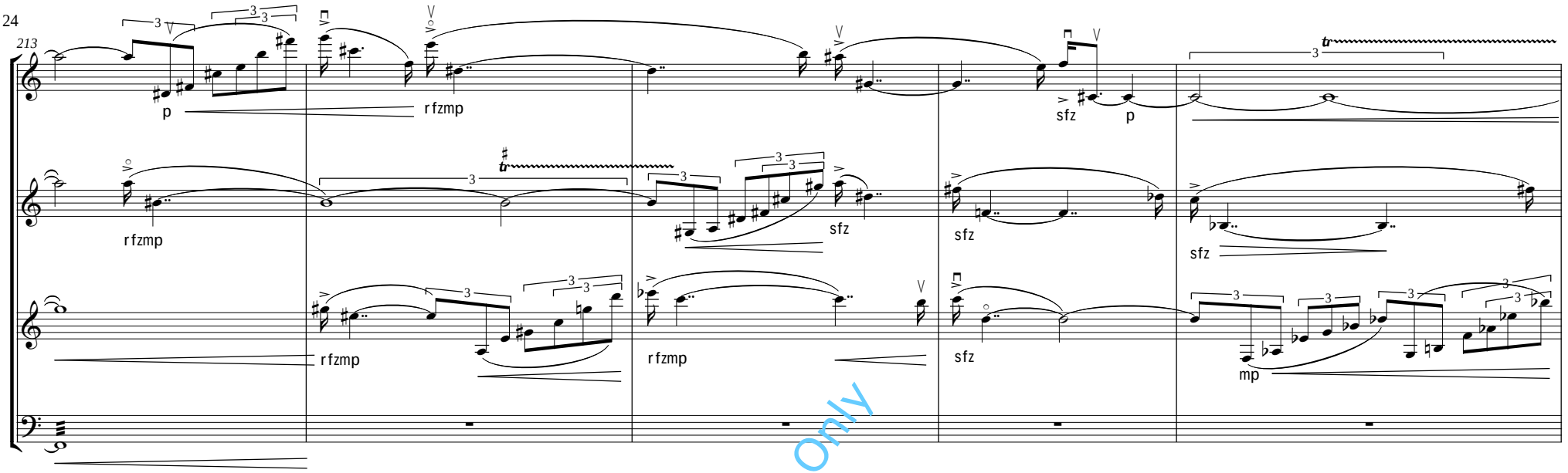


Preview File Only

W

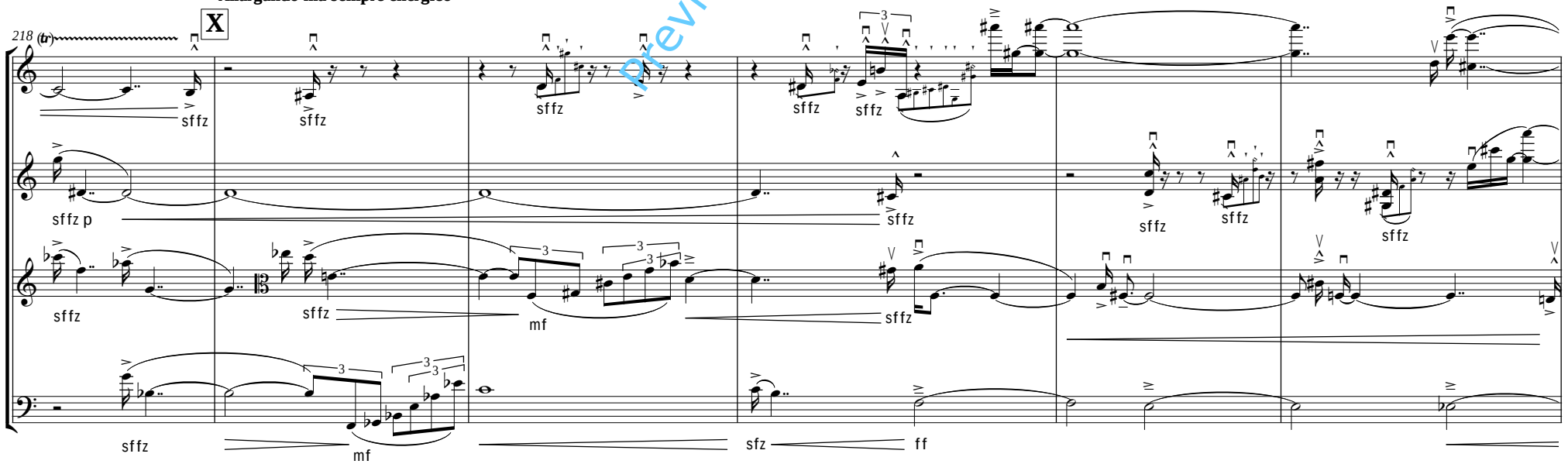
Più mosso: alla breve ♩ = **69**

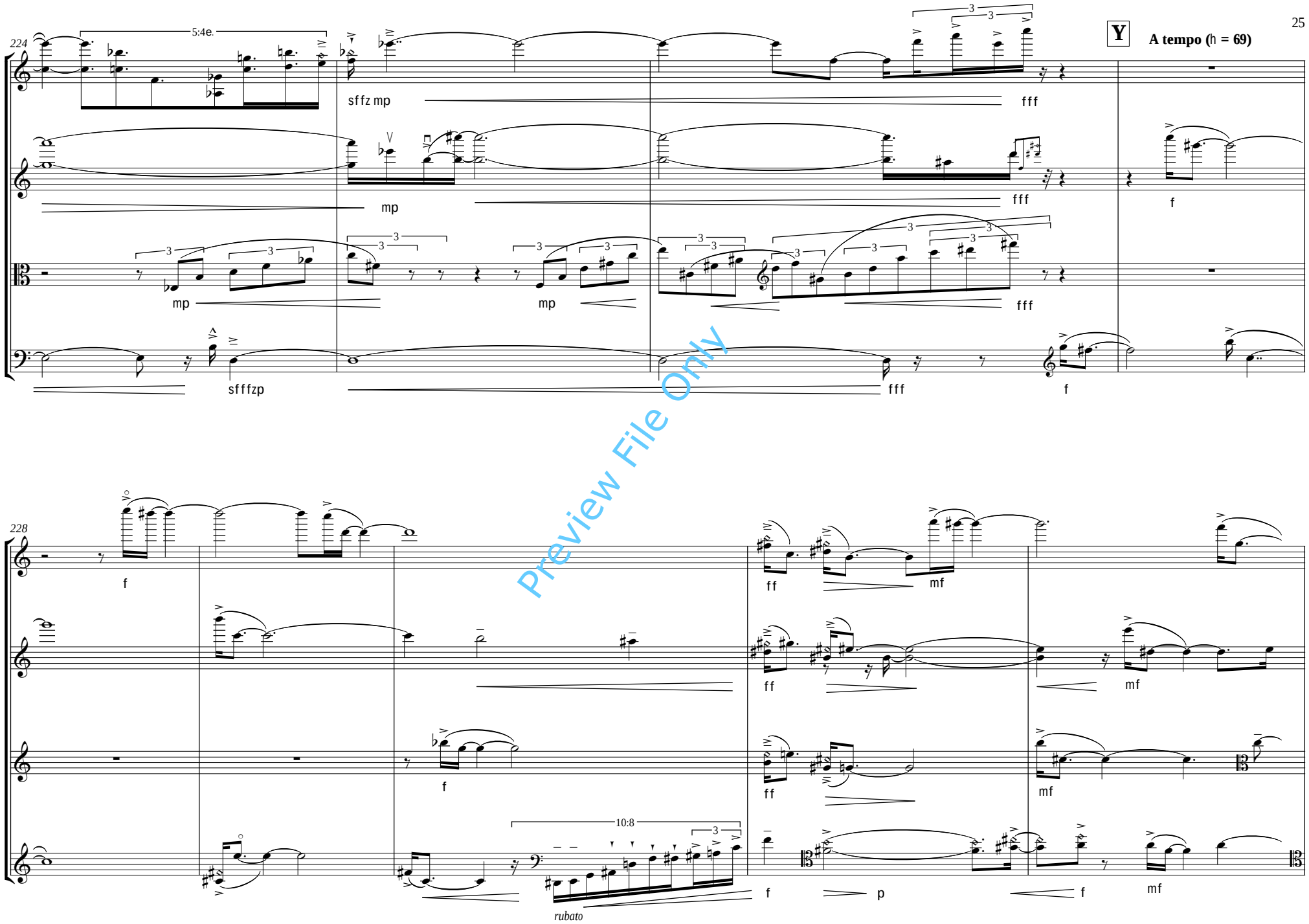




Preview File Only

Allargando ma sempre energico





Preview File Only

Poco allargando

233

10:7

sfzp *rubato*

ff

sffzp

f ff

sffzp

ff

sffzp

Grave, severo e fieramente ♩ = 58

Z

237

rfz

rfz

f *crudo, grattugiante*

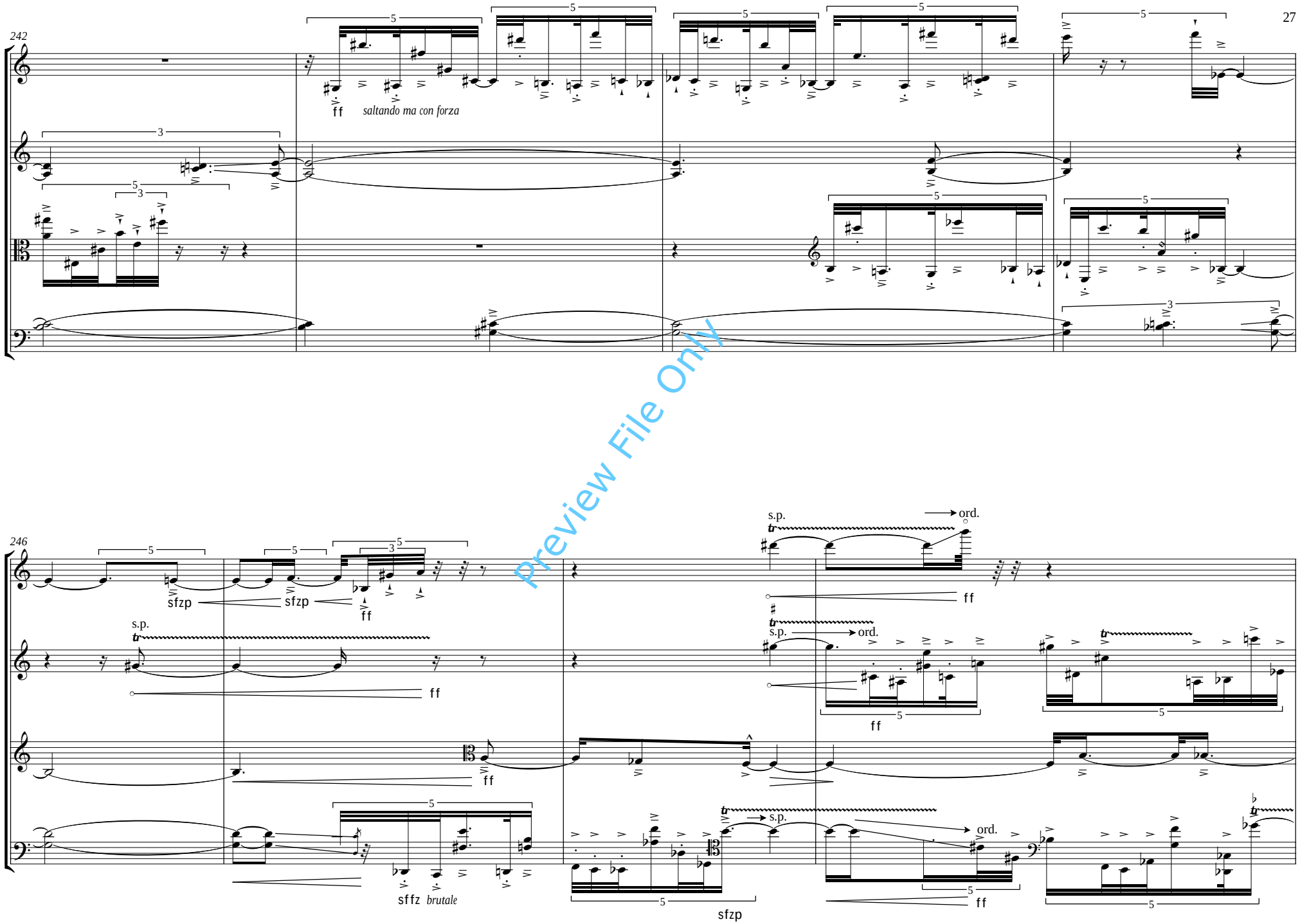
ff *saltando ma con forza*

ff

rfz

f *crudo, grattugiante*

Preview File Only



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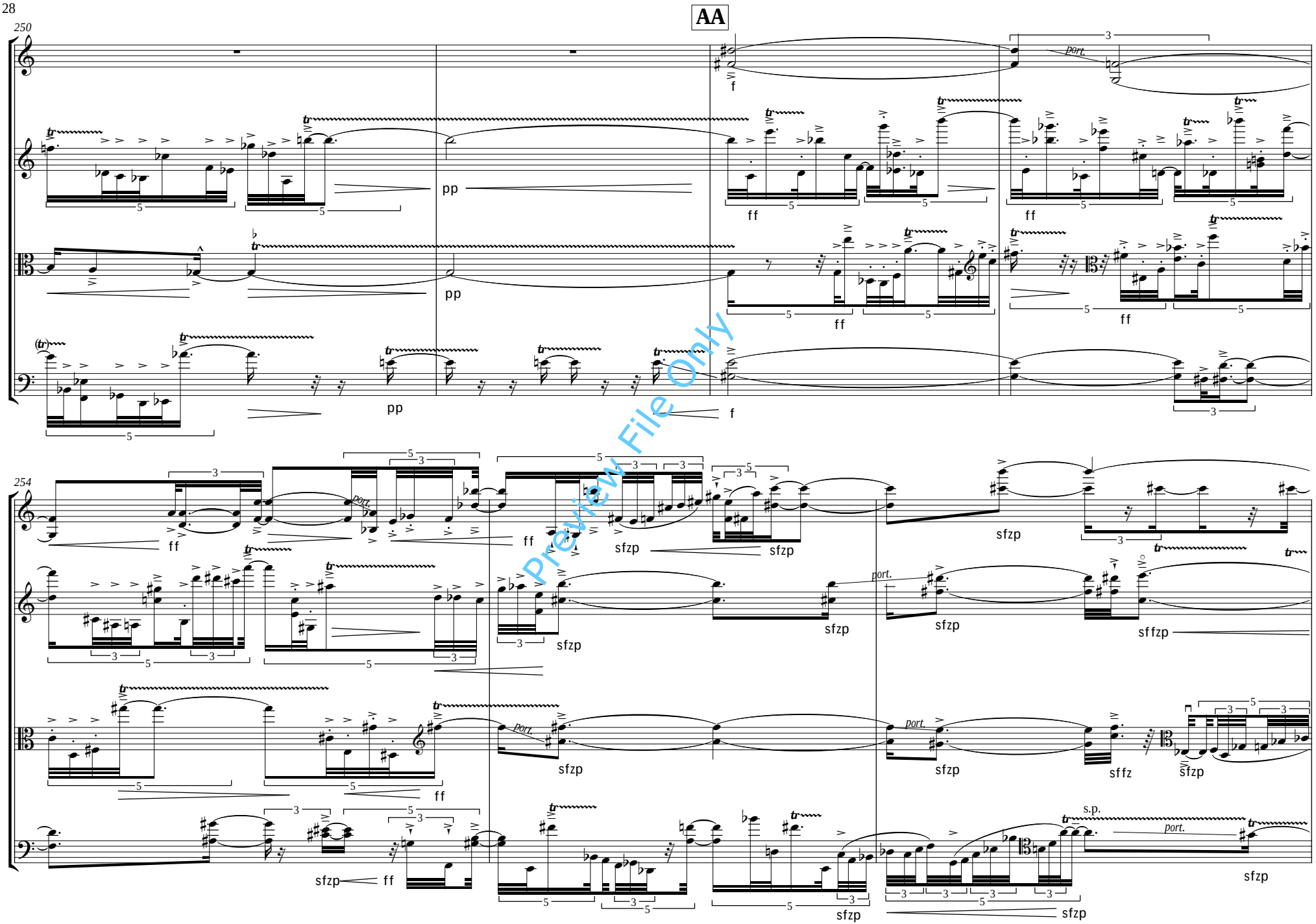

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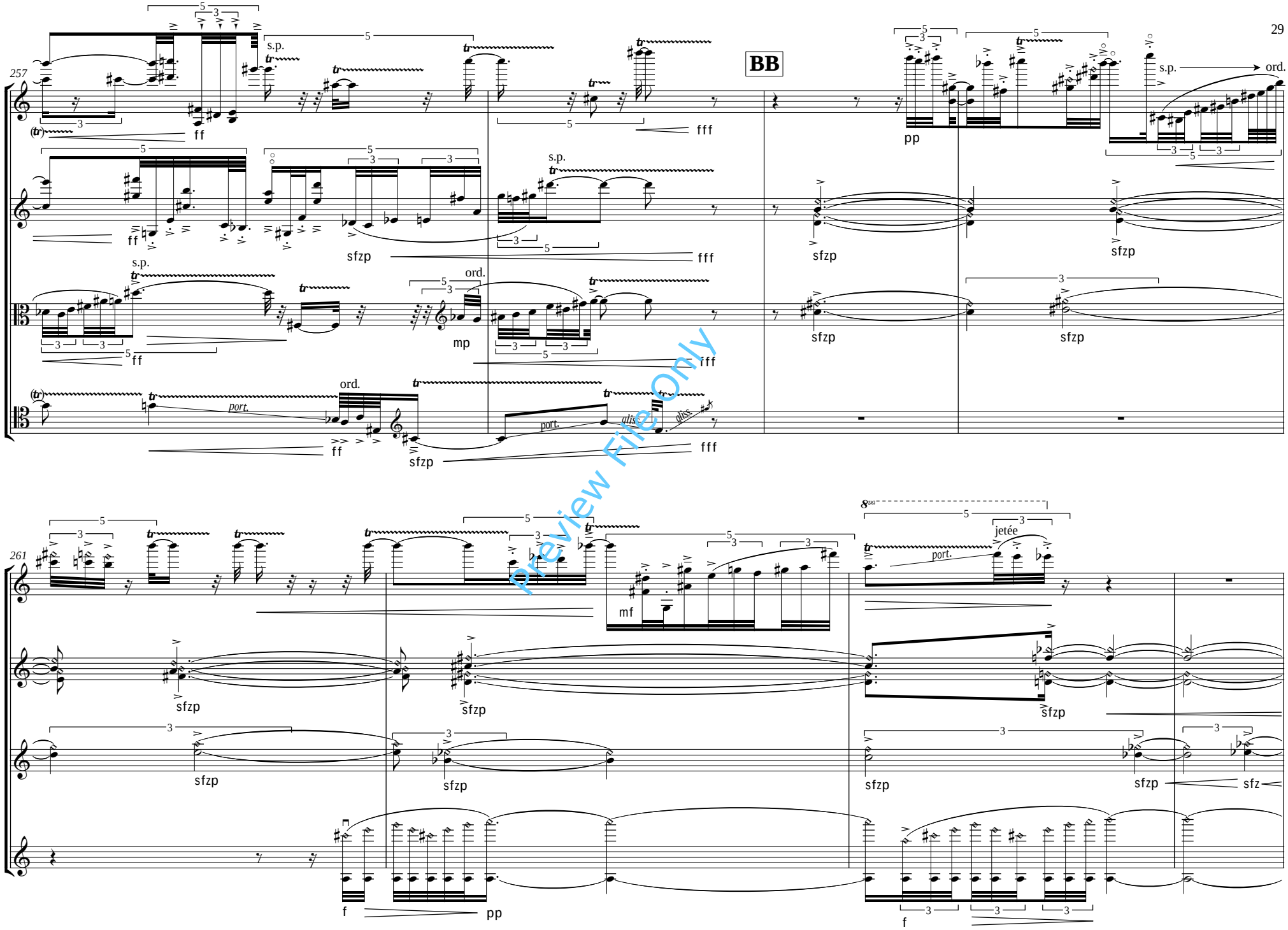

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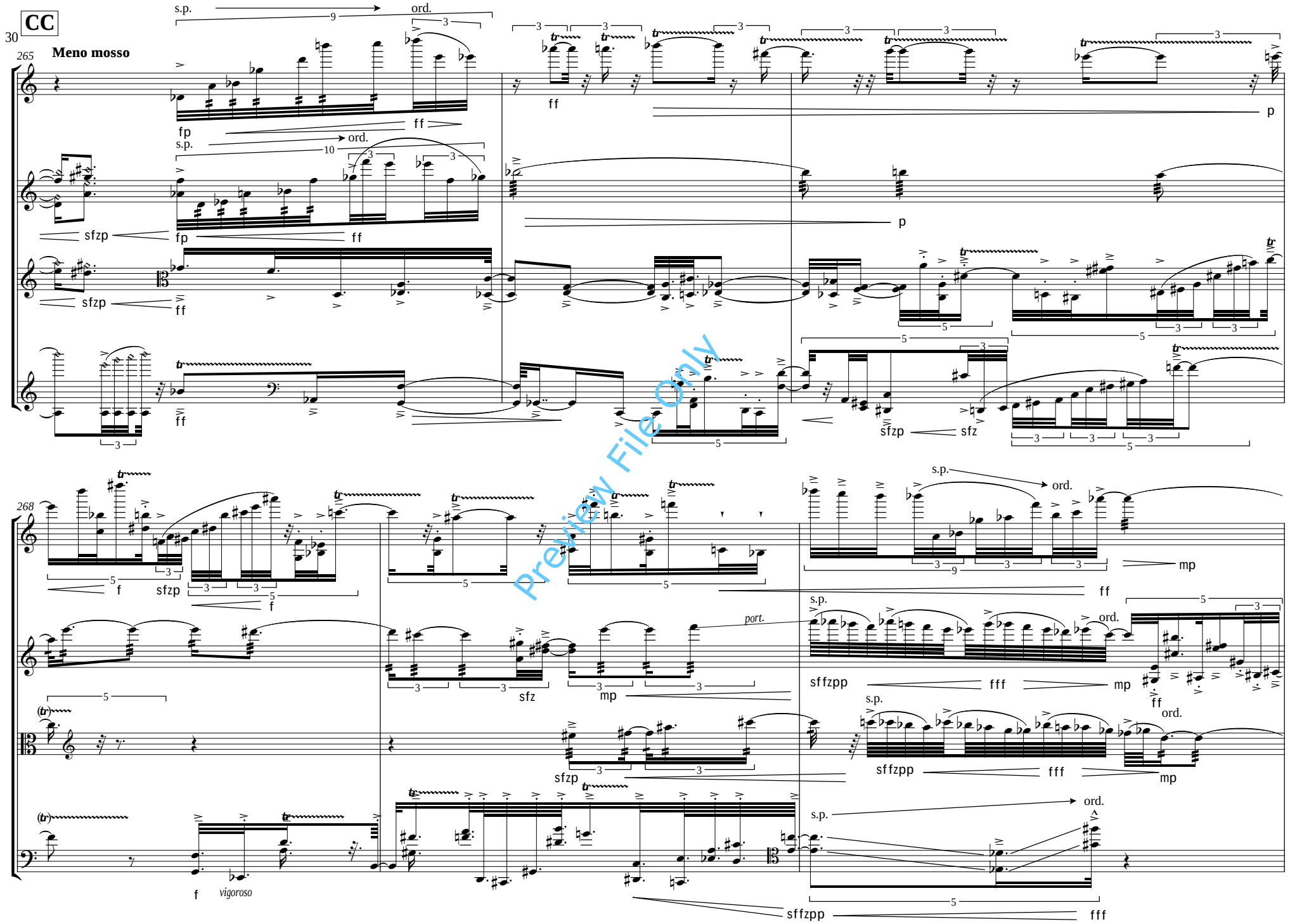
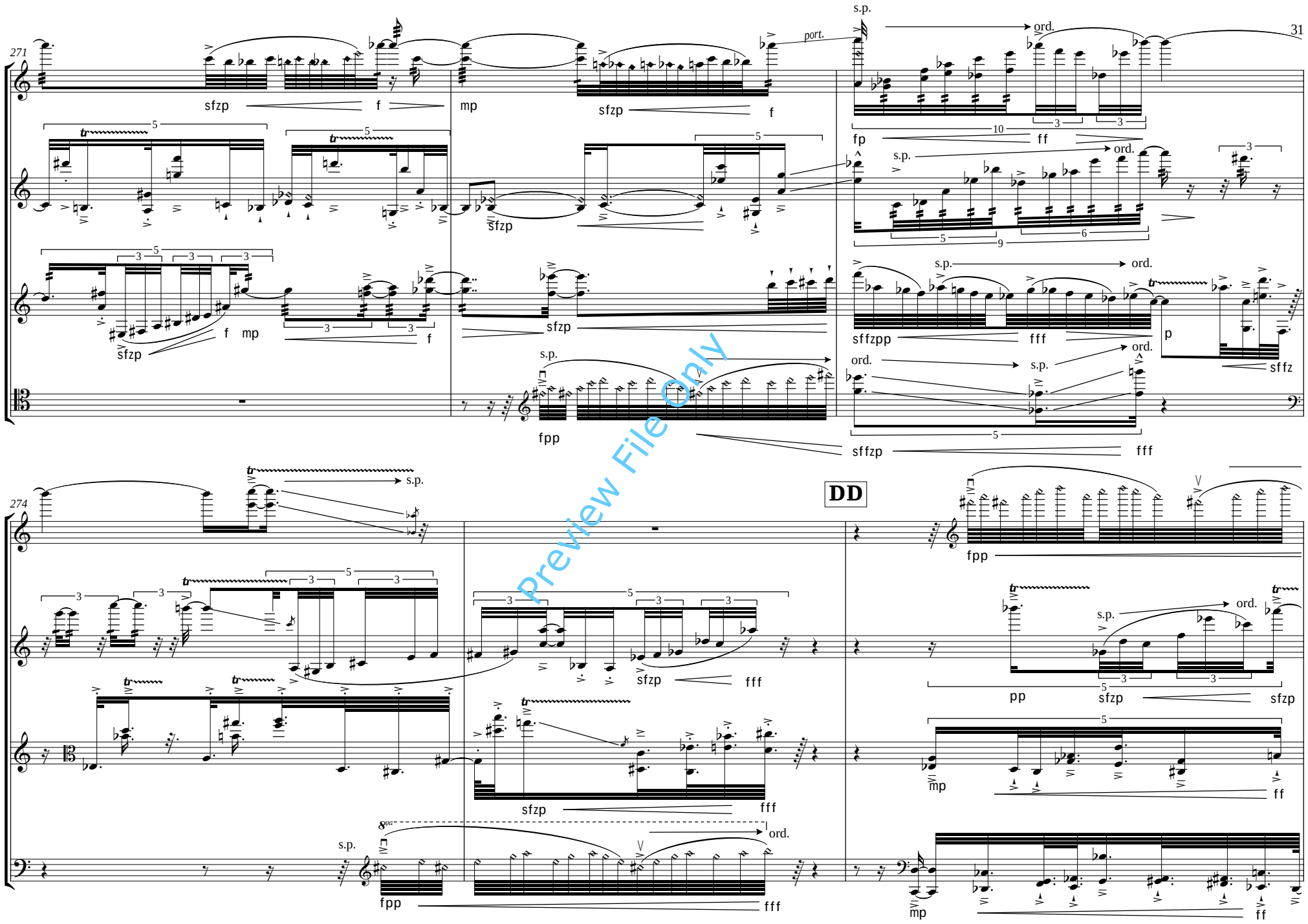

CC
30
265
Meno mosso
s.p.
ord.
fp
ff
sfzp
p
268
f
mp
port.
sfz
sffzpp
fff
vigoroso
Preview File Only



Preview File Only

277

s.p. ord. s.p. ord. s.p.

ff sffzp ff sffzpp fff p fff

(tr) (tr) sffzpp fff

s.p. ord. s.p. ord. fff fff

s.p. ord. s.p. ord. ff fff

Preview Files Only

EE **Vivo, luminoso, ma sempre calmandosi** ♩ **= 112 (sempre ritardando)**

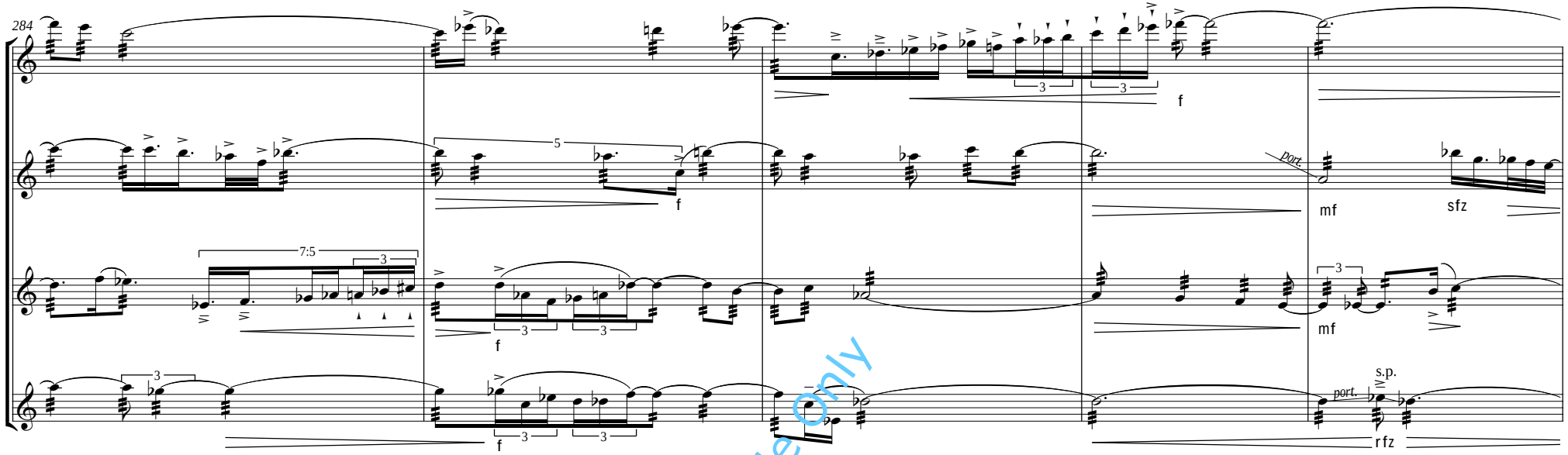
280

(tr) (tr) (fff) sempre accentuato al commincio ff

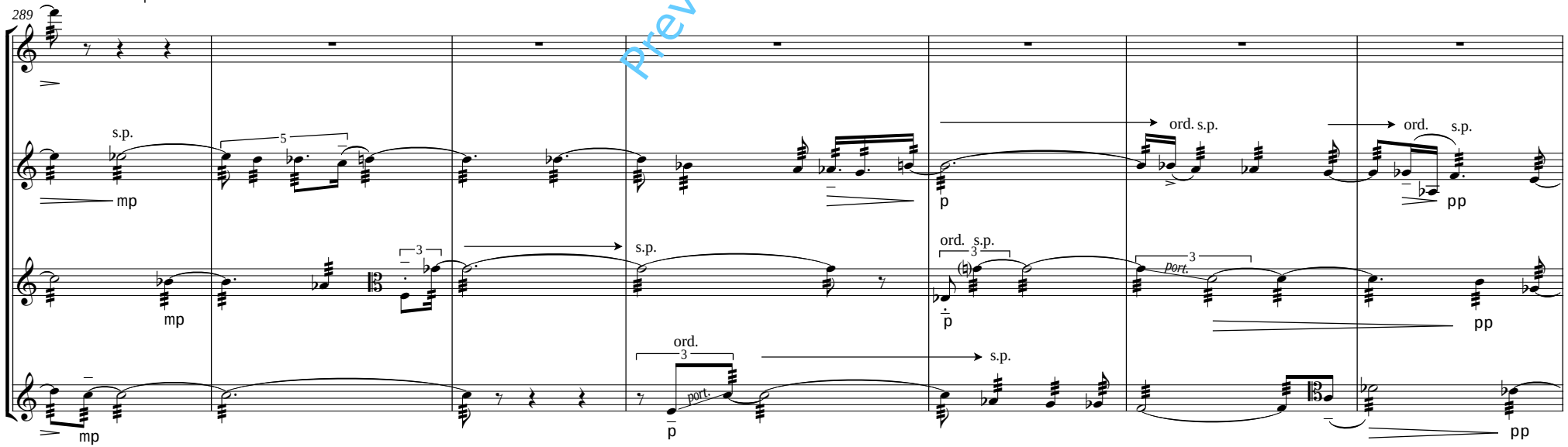
(tr) (fff) sempre accentuato al commincio ff

s.p. ord. (fff) sempre accentuato al commincio ff

(fff) sempre accentuato al commincio ff



meno mosso ♩ **= 84**



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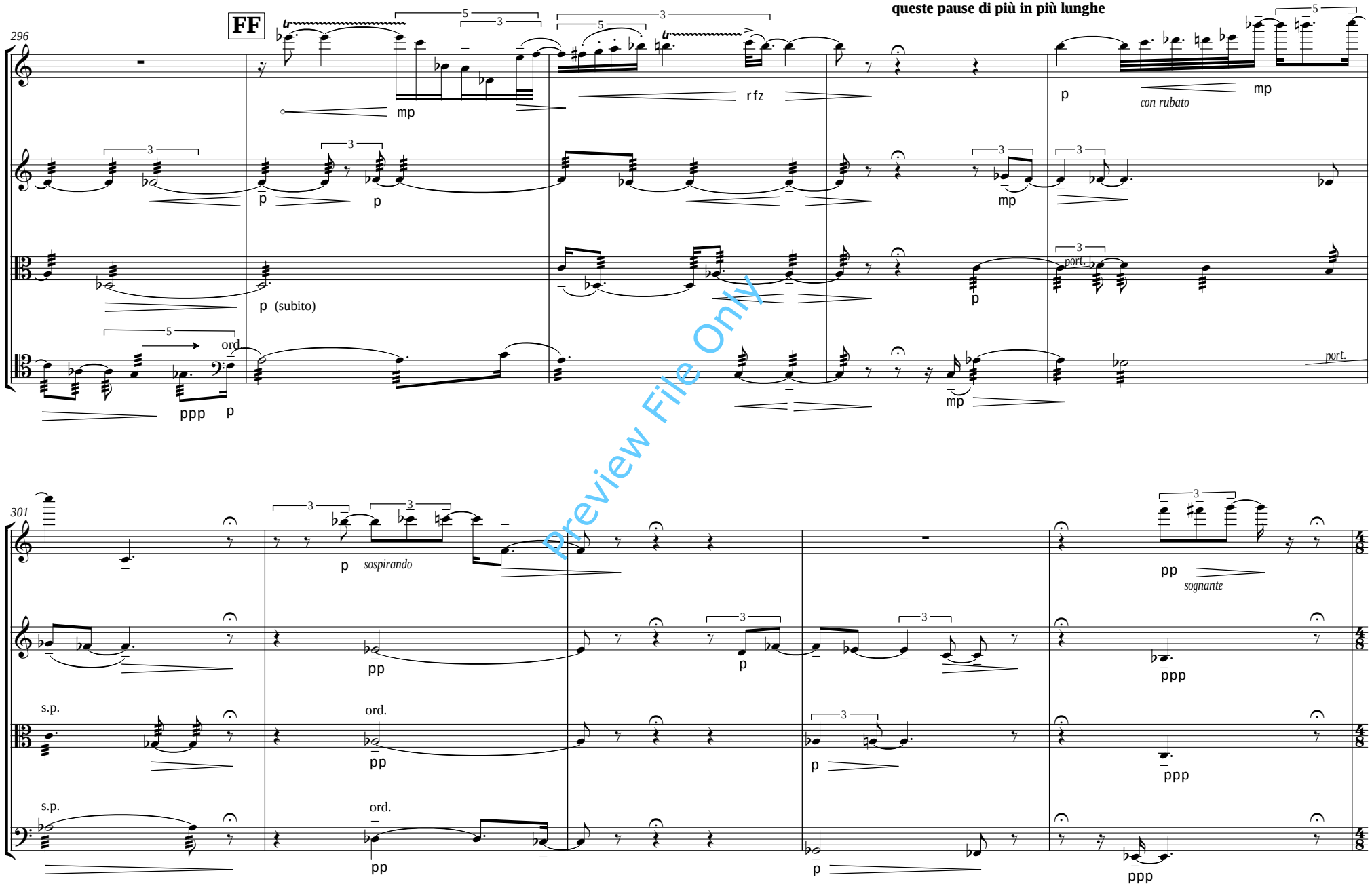
ancora meno mosso ♩ **= 54**

queste pause di più in più lunghe



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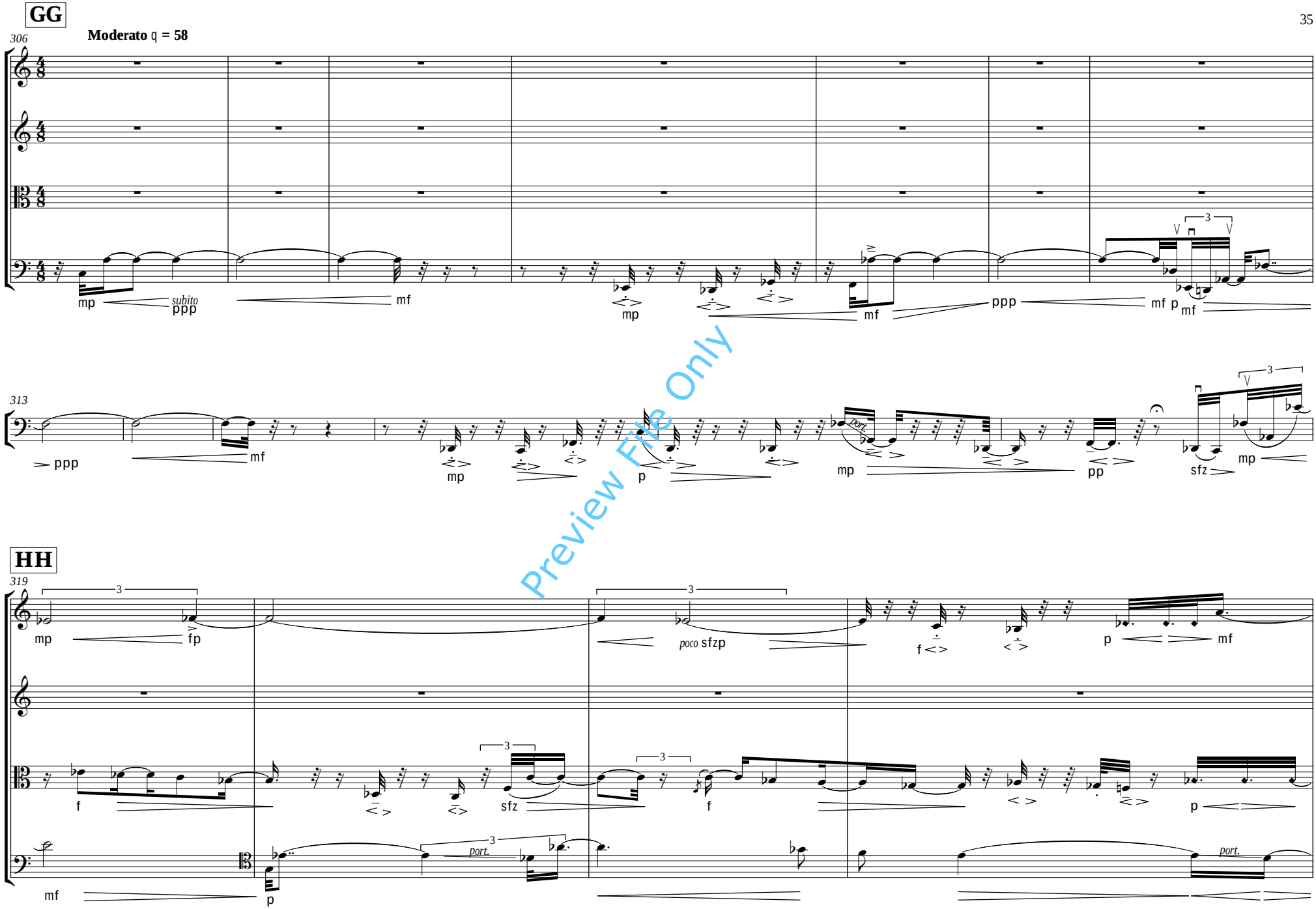

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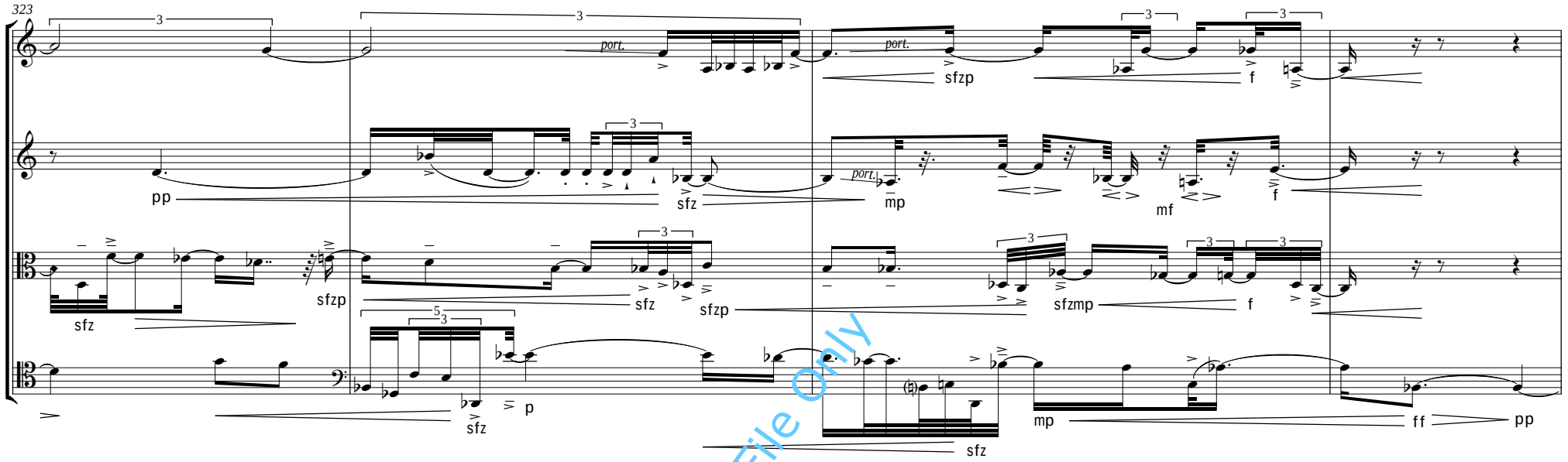

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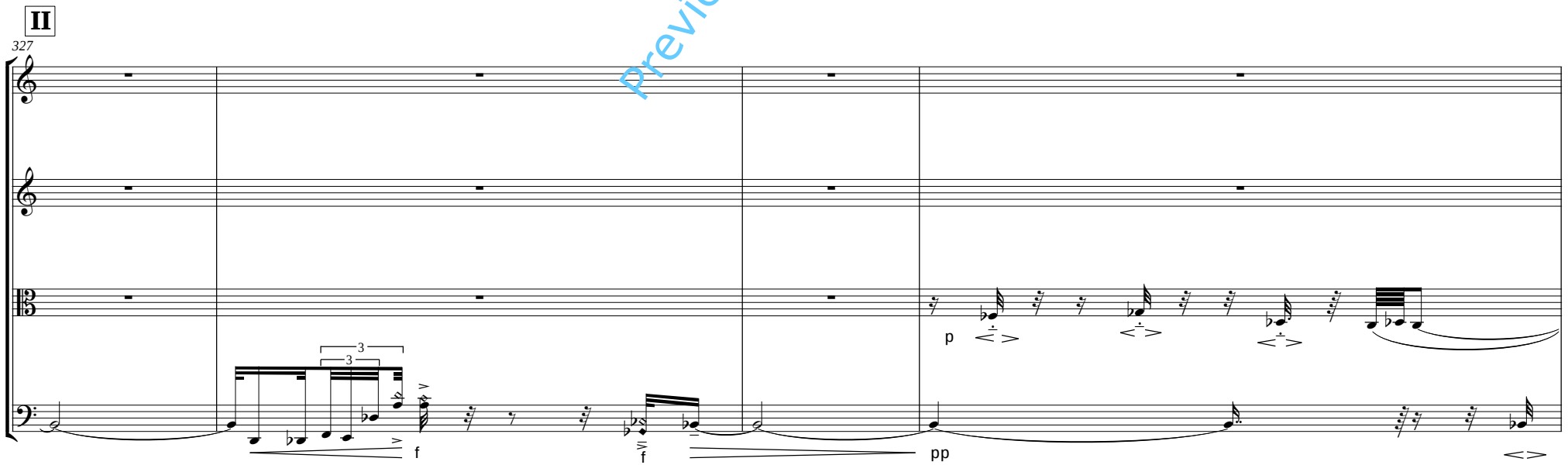

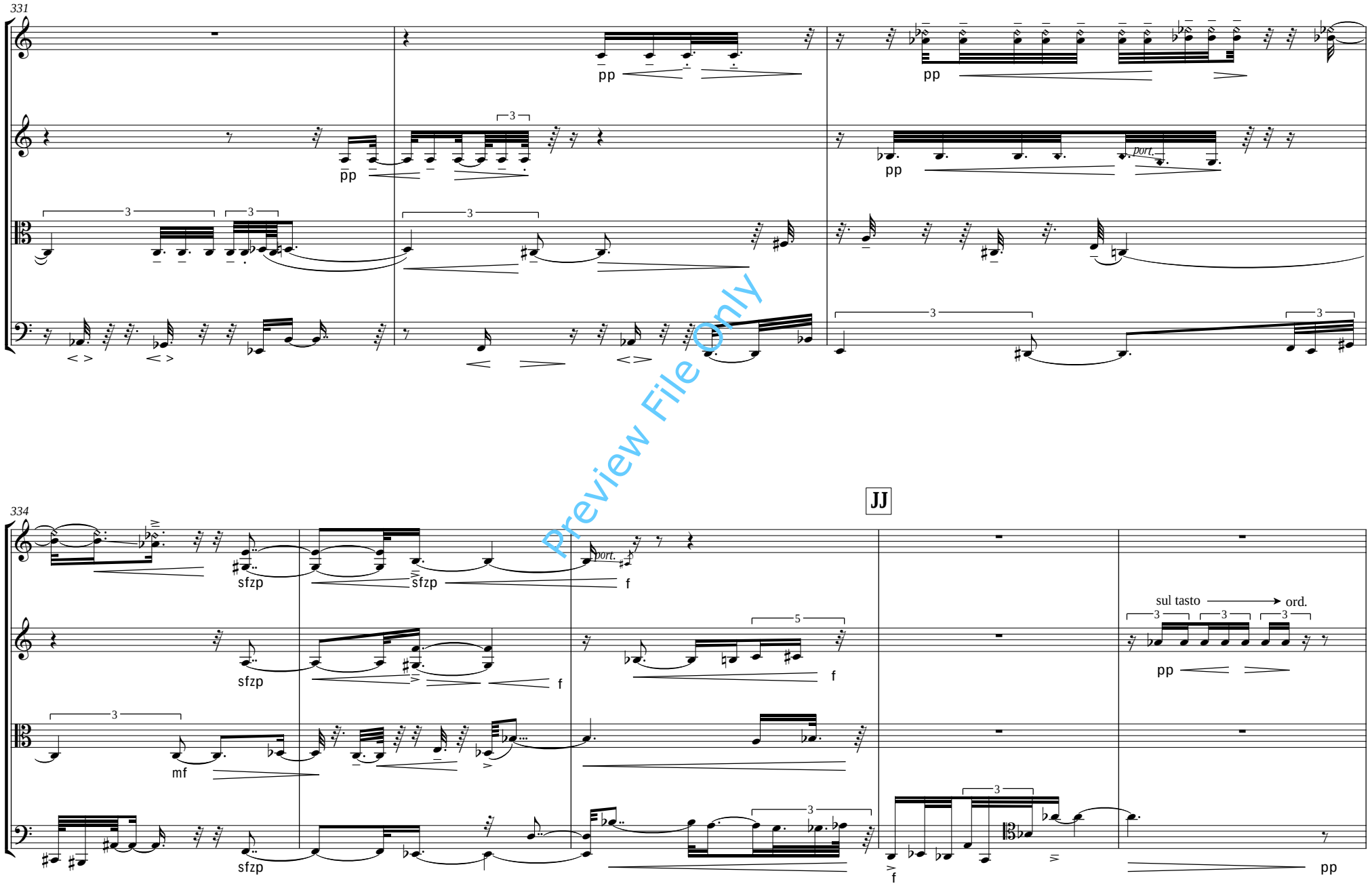

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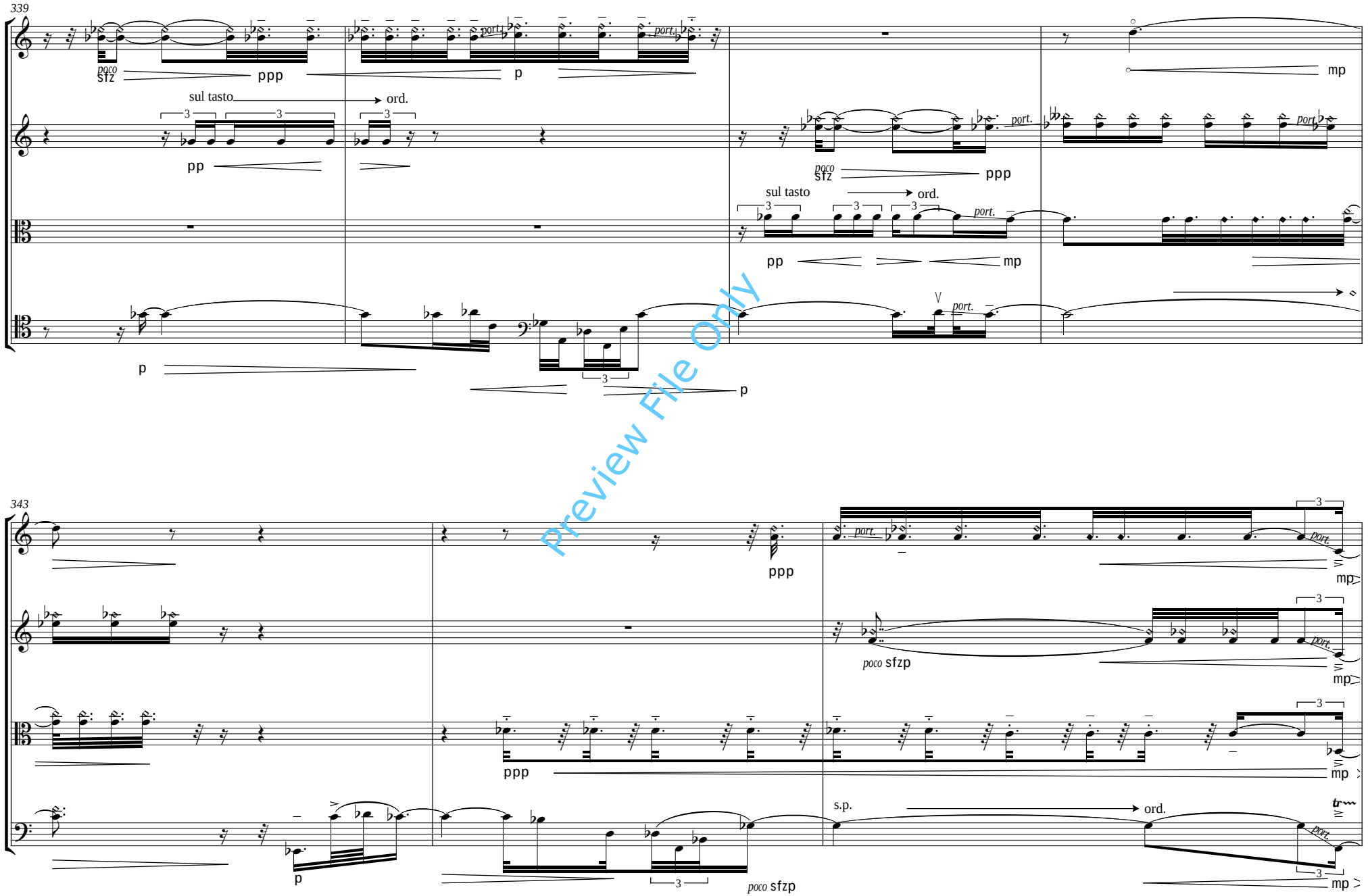


Preview File Only

KK

Lontano, spettrale

346

pp port. mp pp port. fp p *con rubato*

s.p. ord. pp port. mp pp port. fp f pp

mp port. pp fp f s.p. pp port.

(tr) ord. mp pp port. fp pp s.p.

subito più mosso ♩ = **69**

saltando ma con forza

350

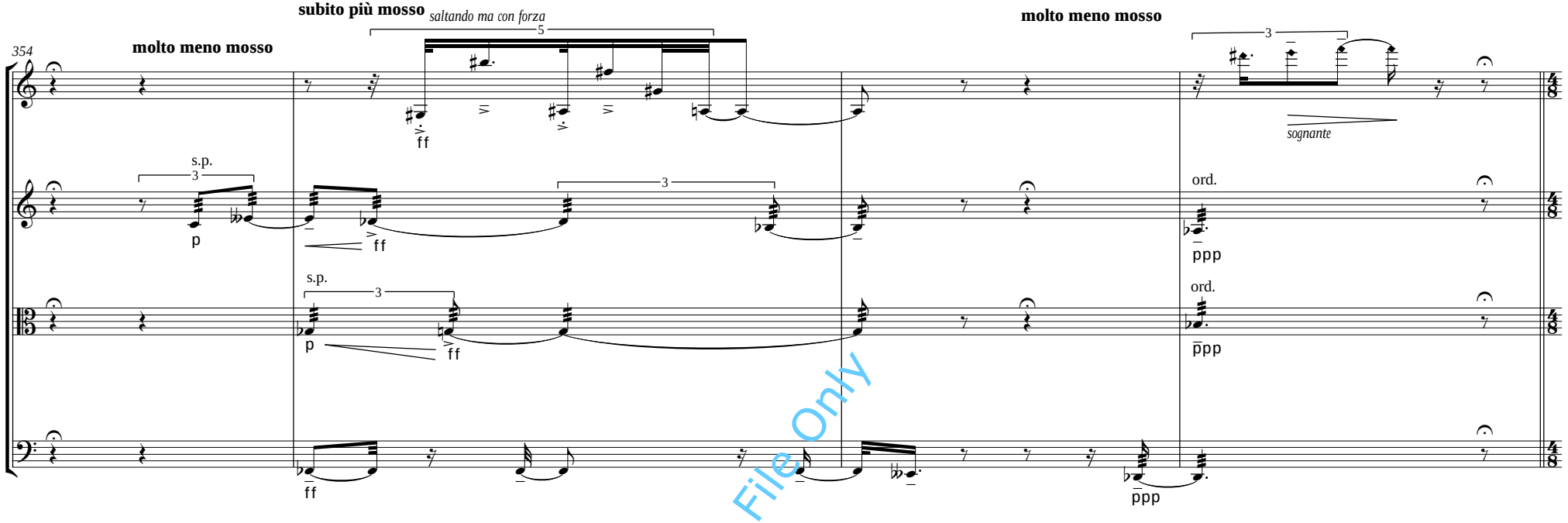
ff *subito*

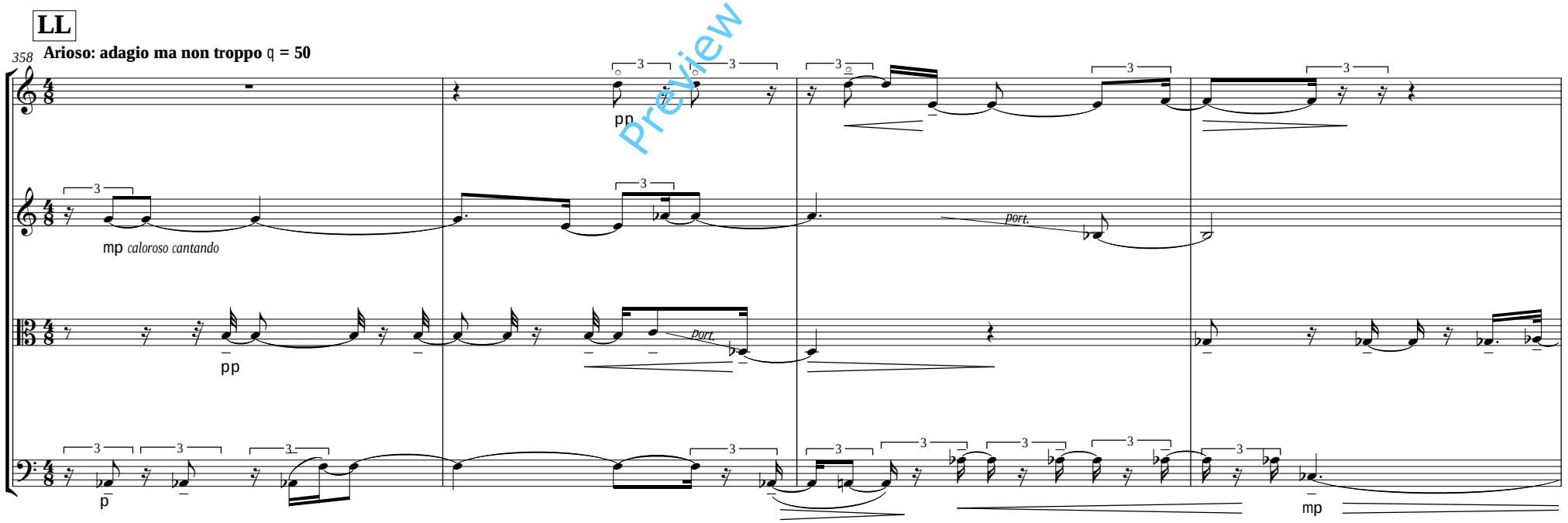
ff *subito*

ord. ff *subito*

port. ord. ff *subito*

Preview File Only





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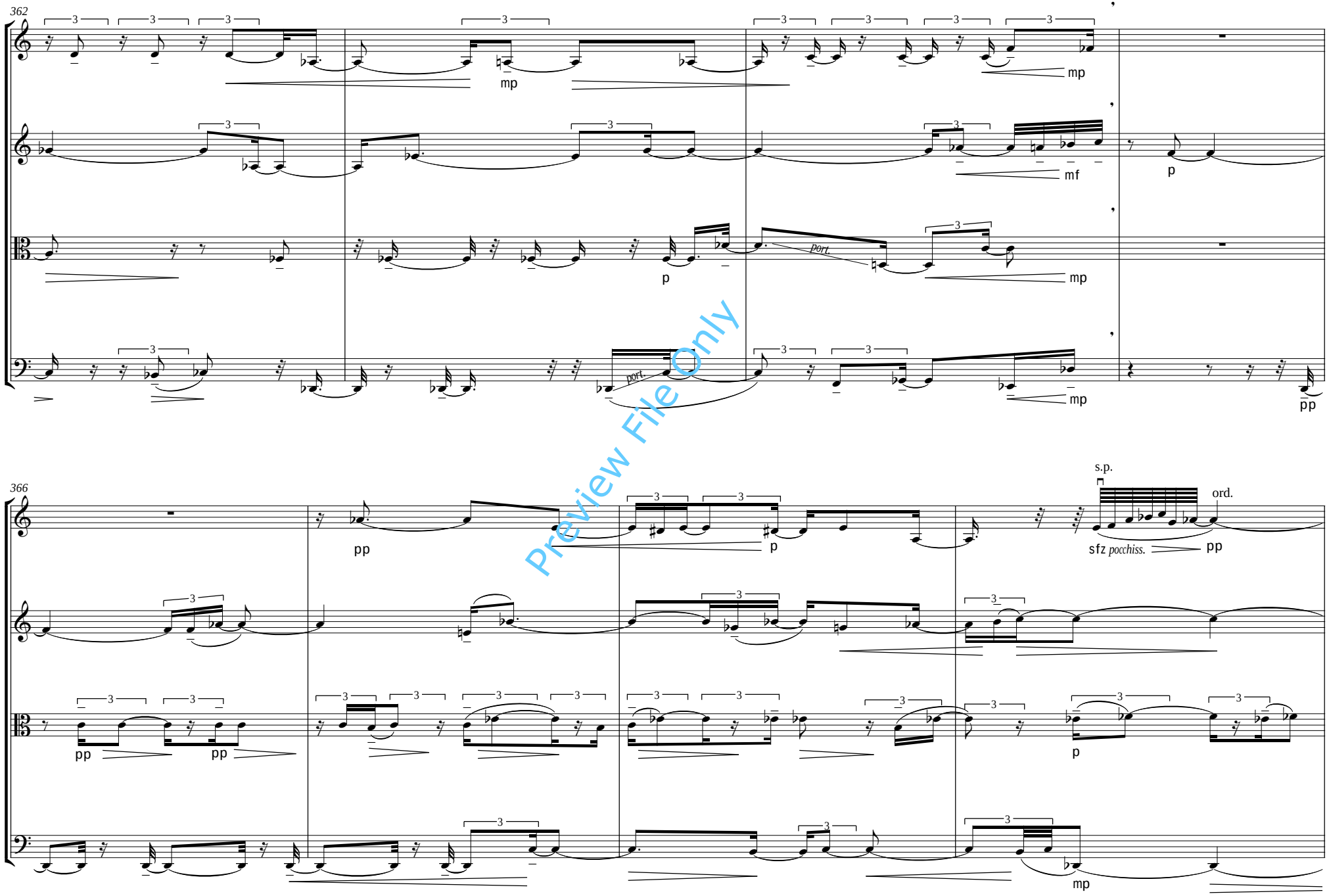

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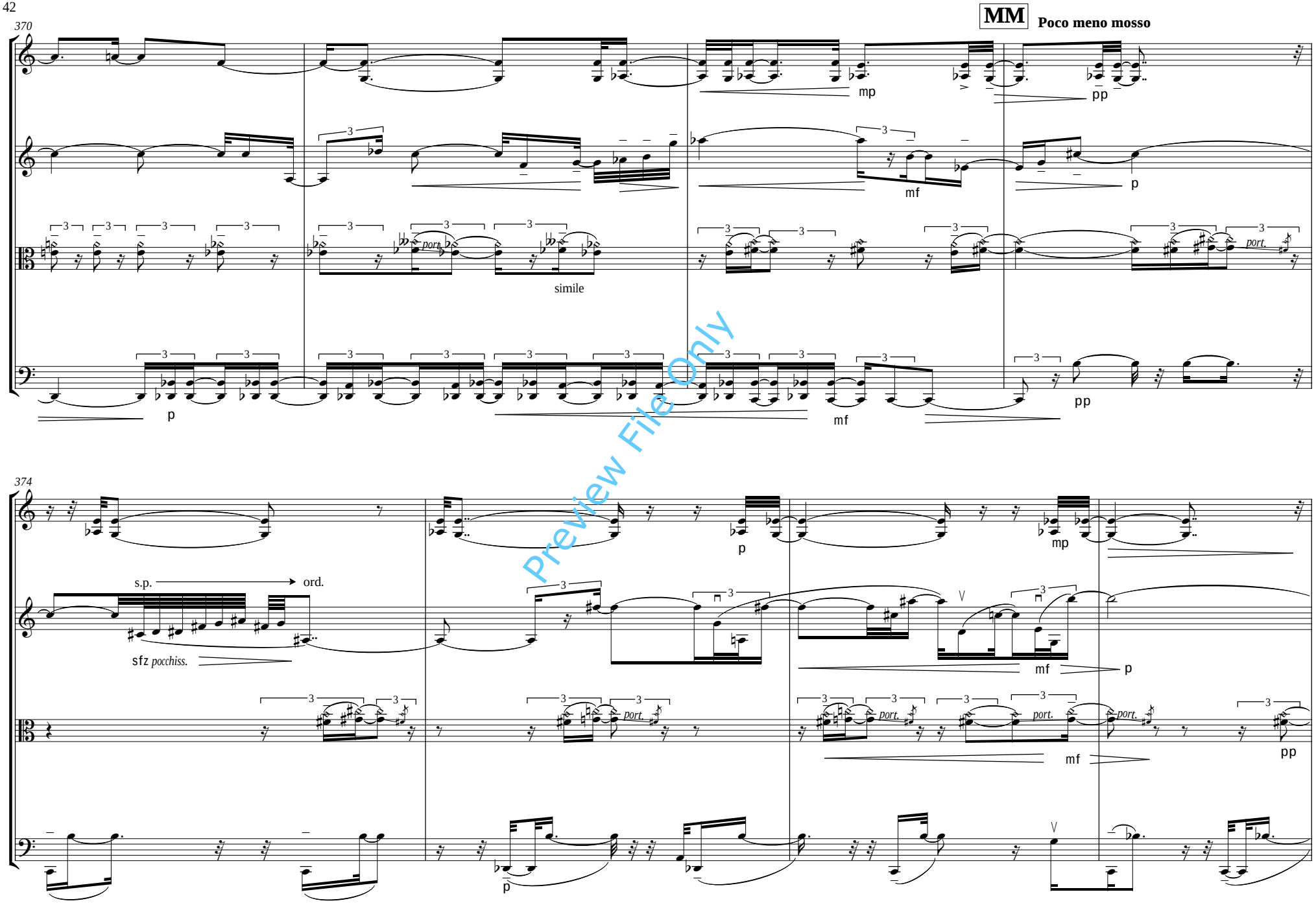

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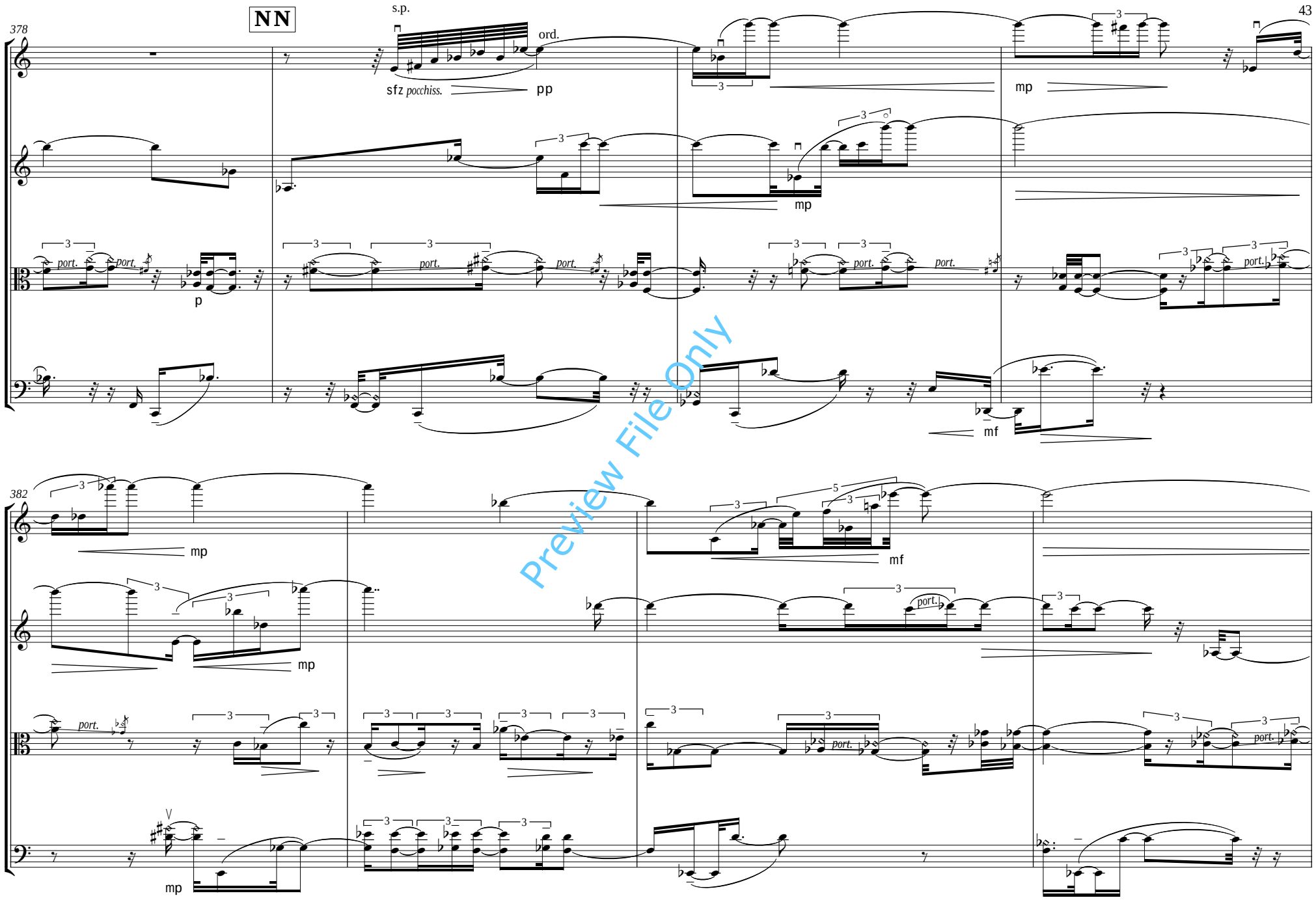

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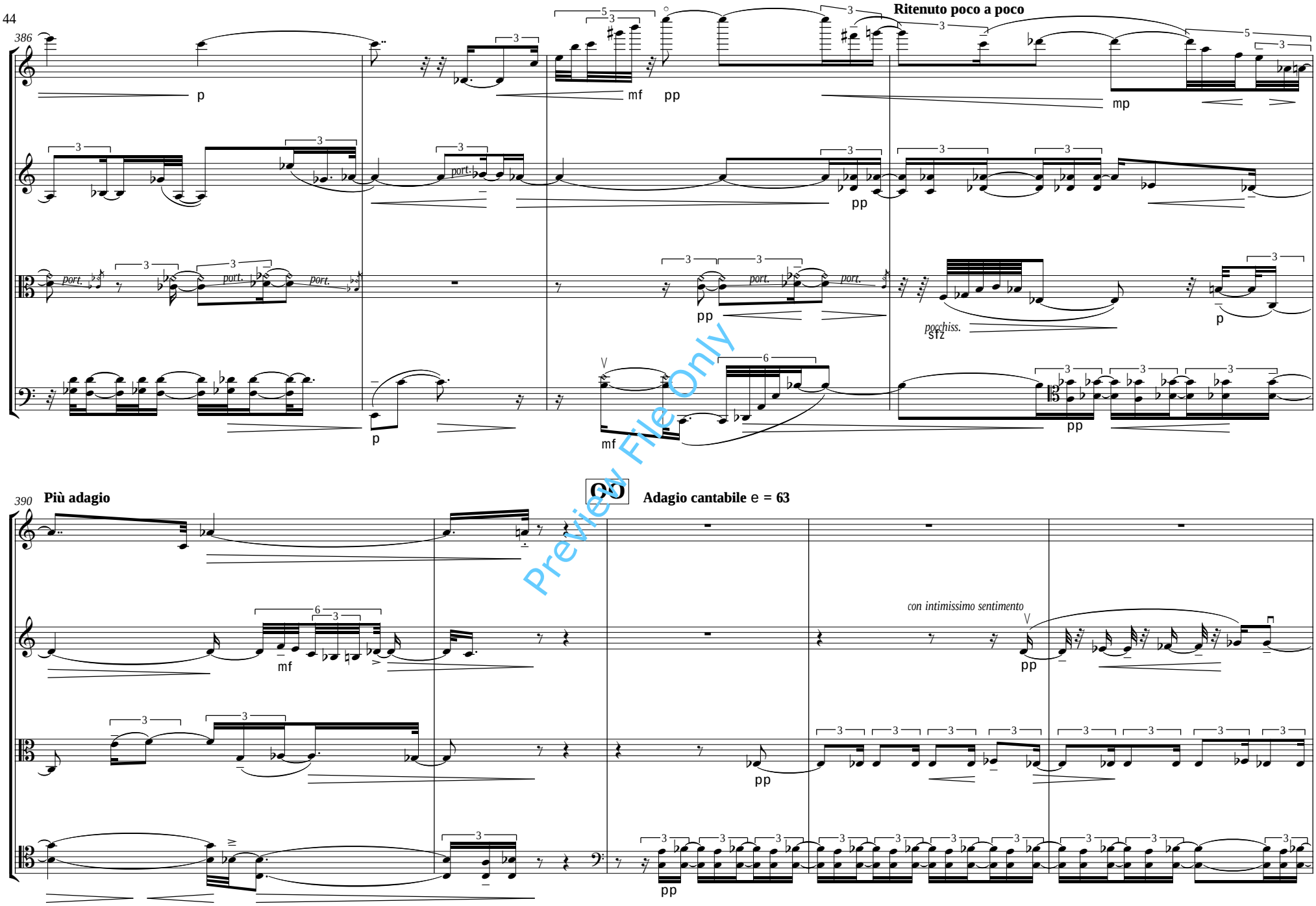

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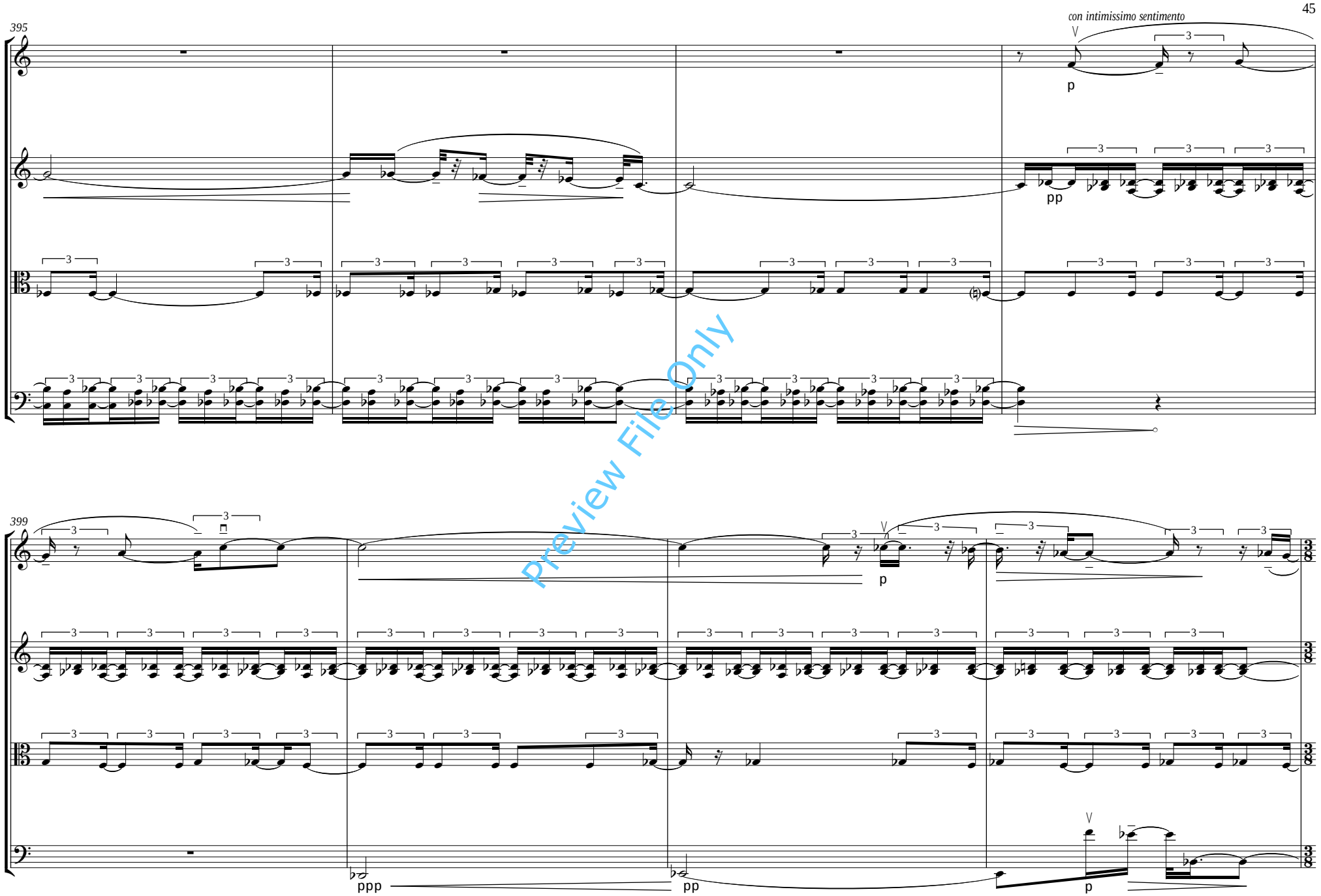

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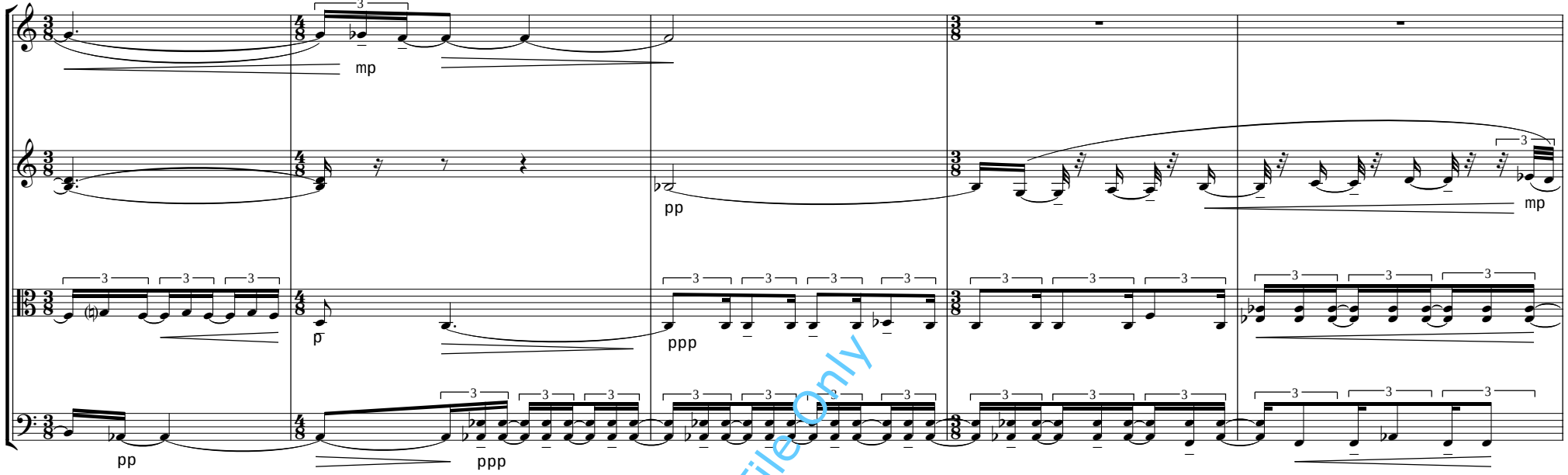
403

Ritenuto

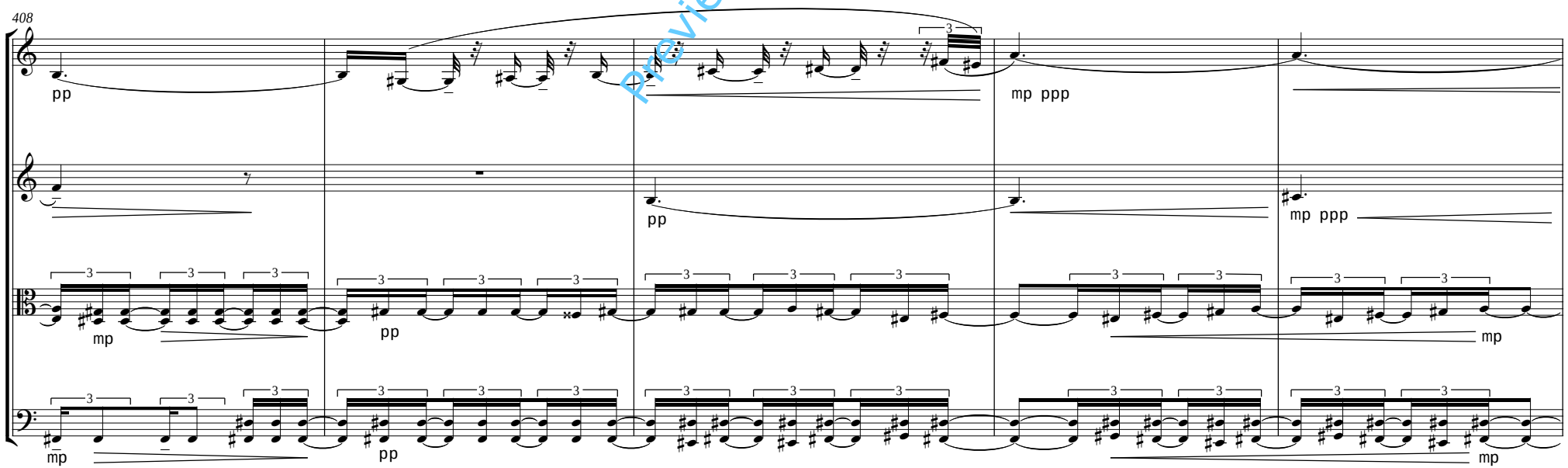
Adagissimo

A tempo

PP



408



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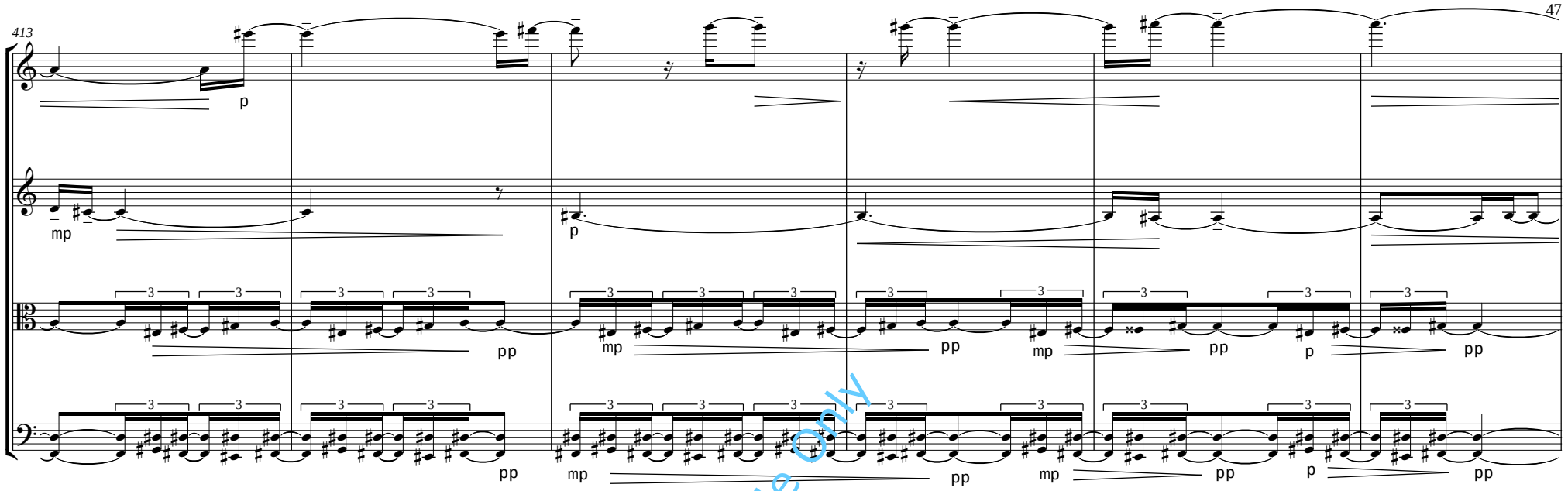
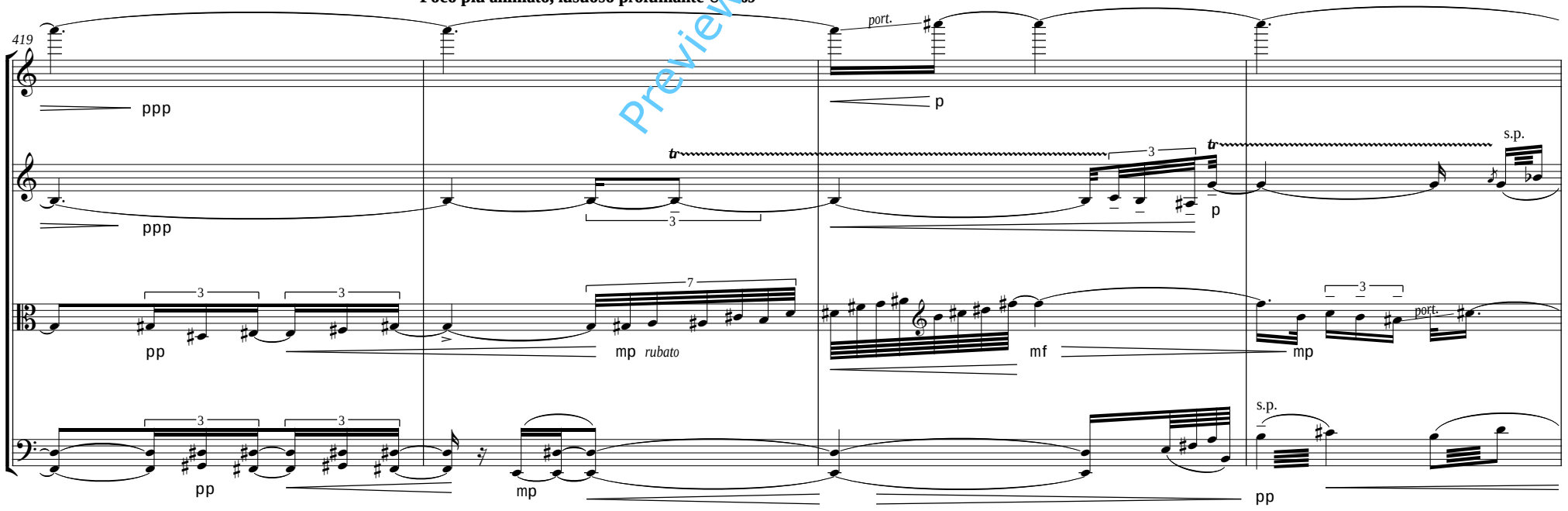


QQ

Poco più animato, lusuoso profumante ♩ = 69



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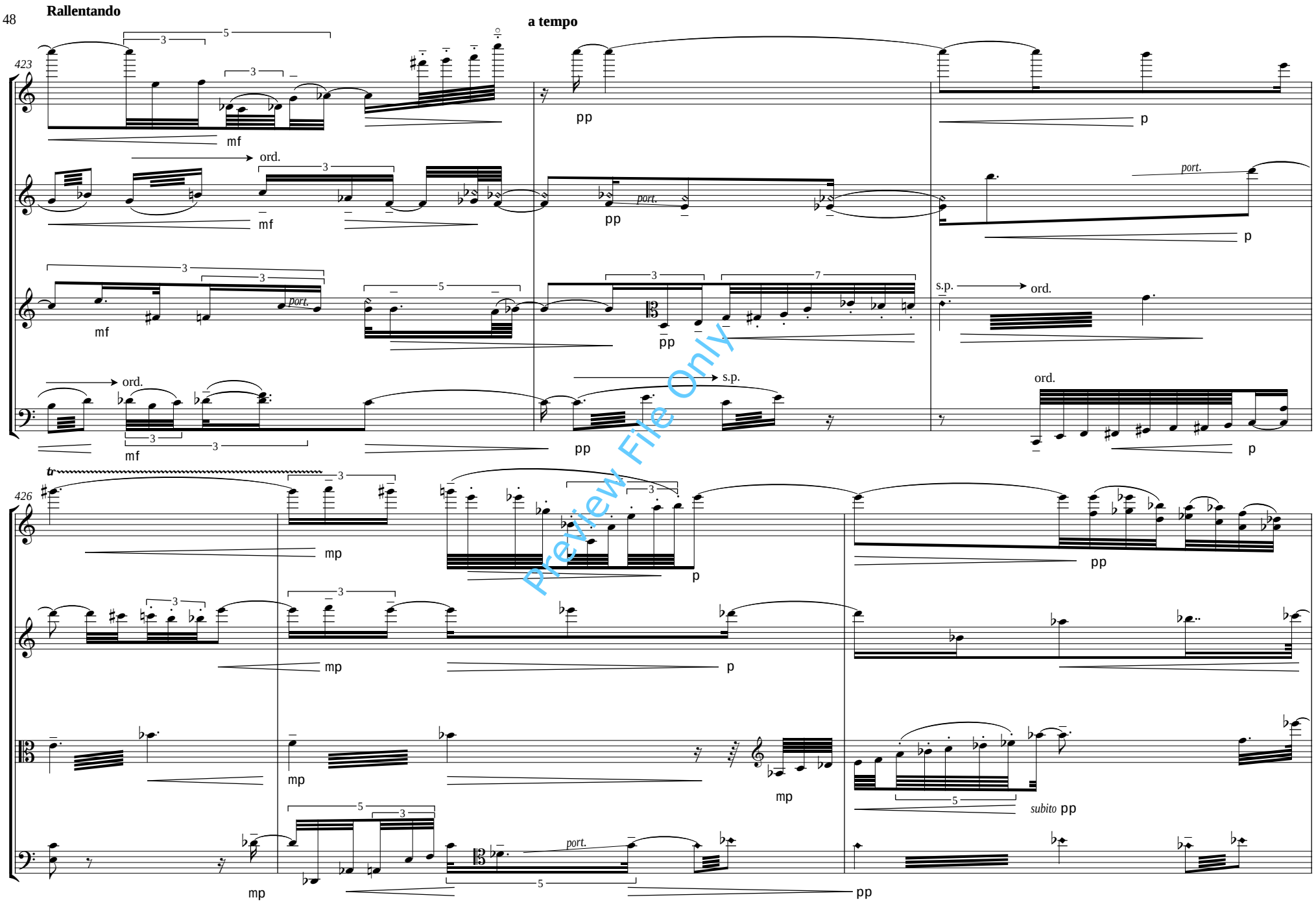

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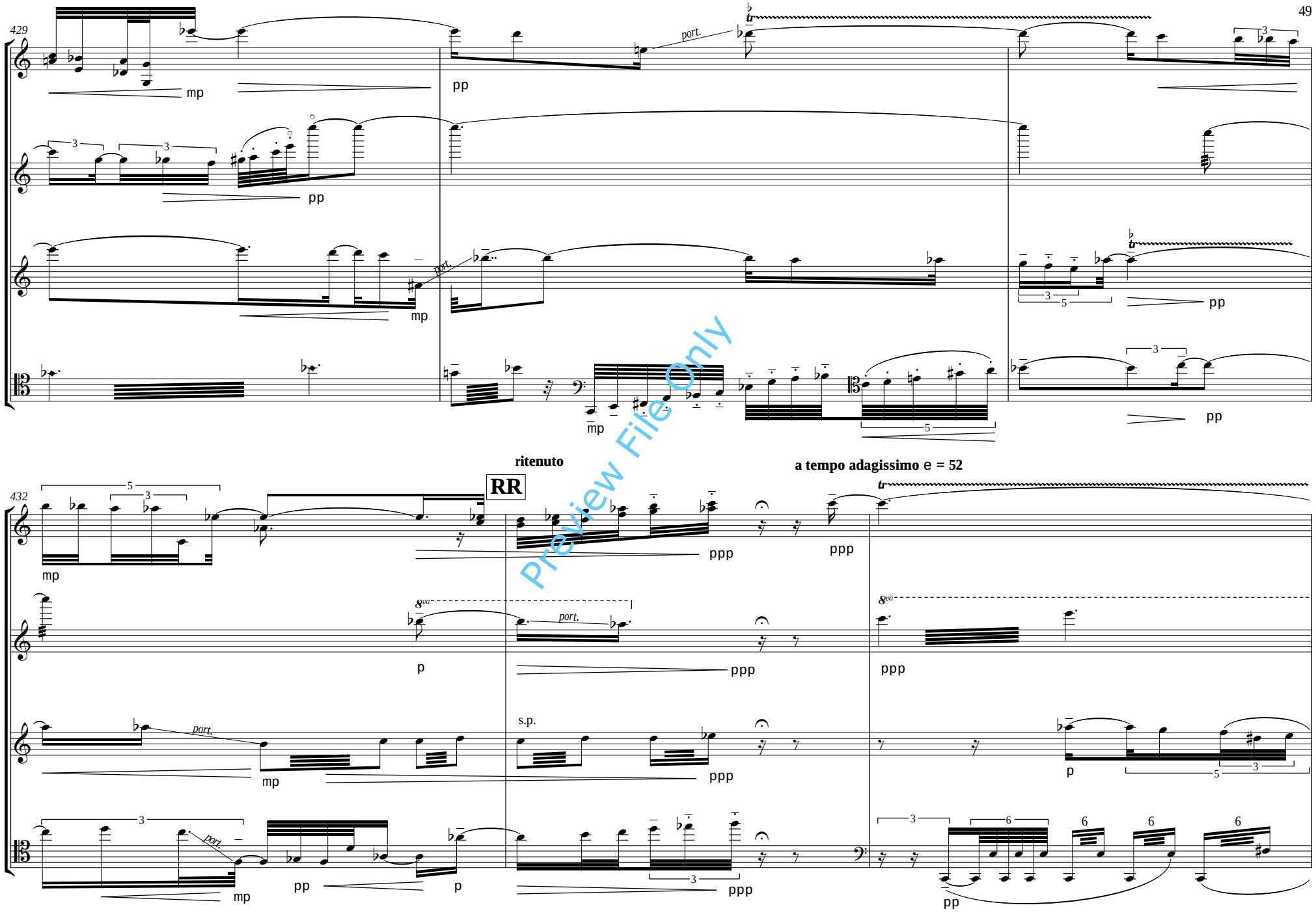

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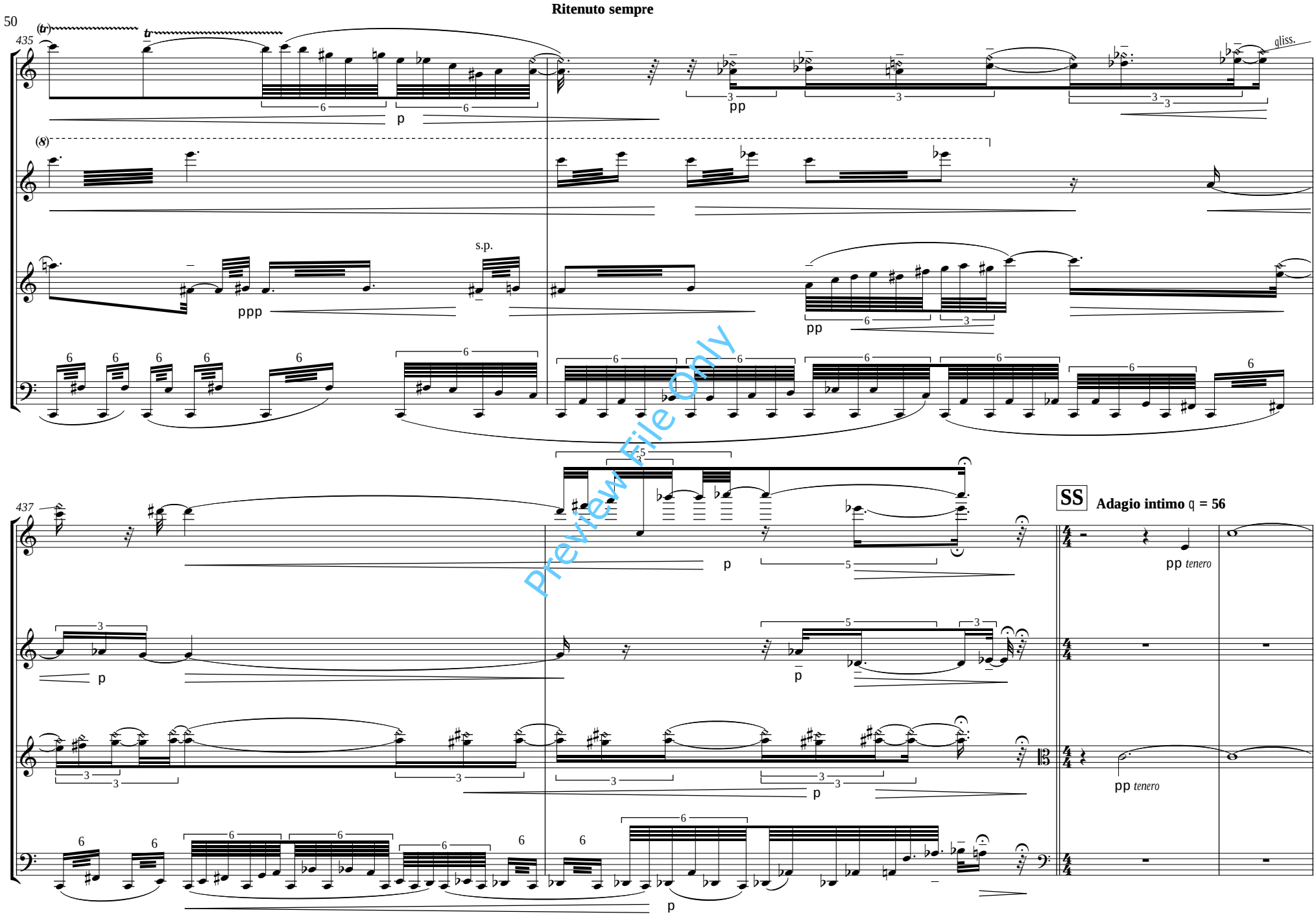

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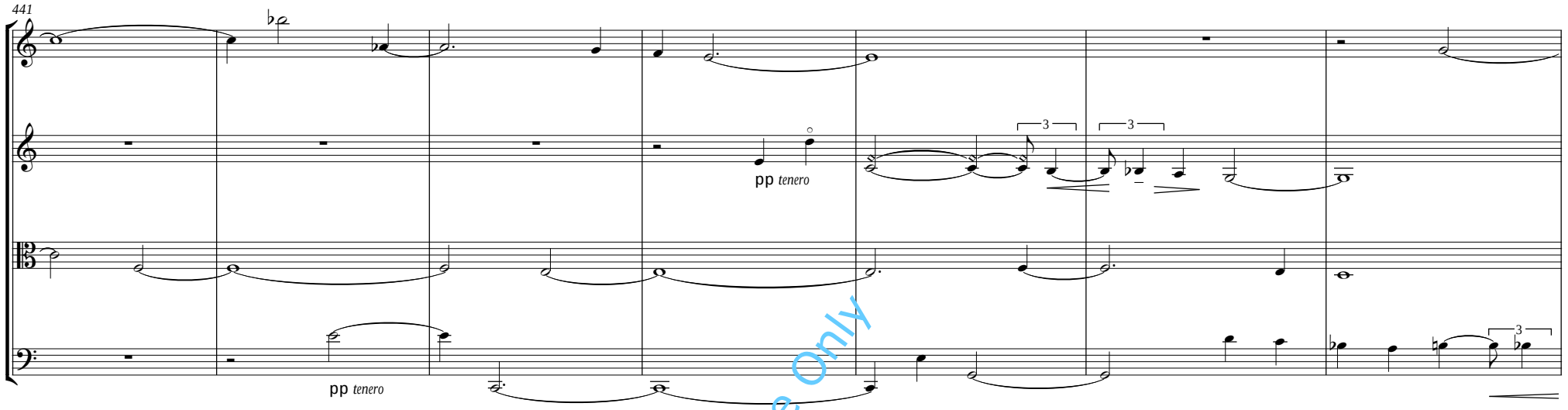

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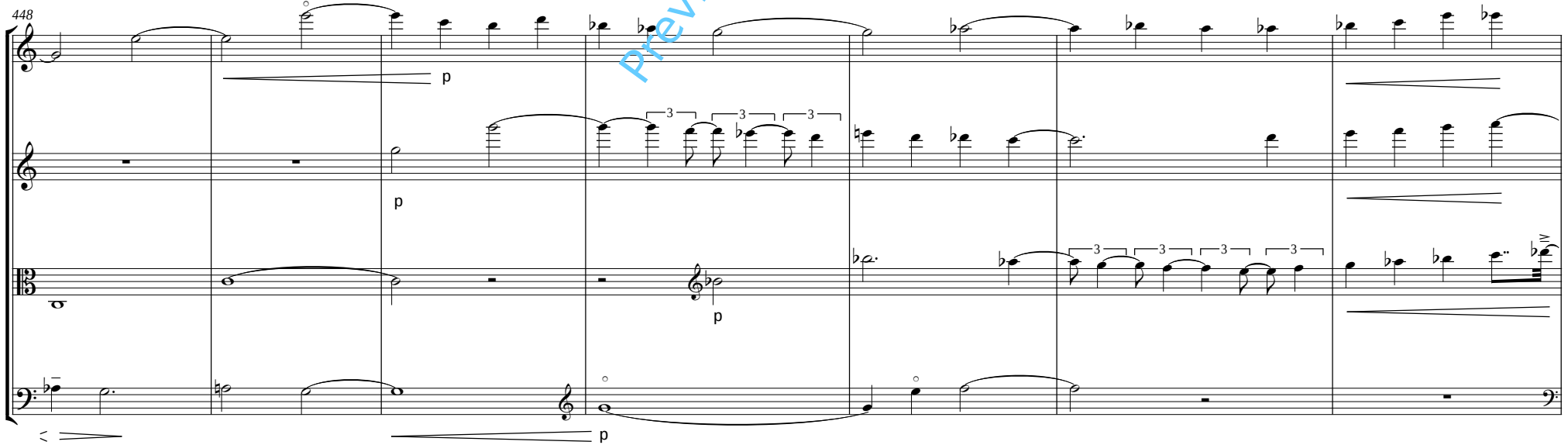
Poco a poco più mosso



TT

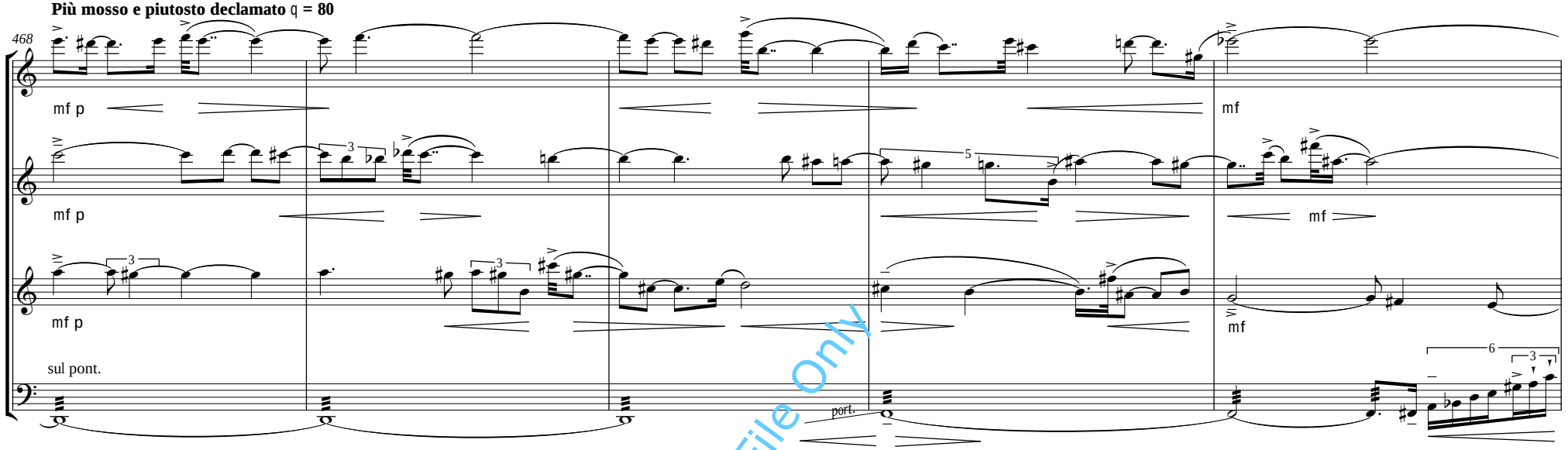
passo a passo più intenso

Andante ♩ = 66 (sempre accel.)

Preview File Only

UU

Più mosso e piutosto declamato ♩ **= 80**

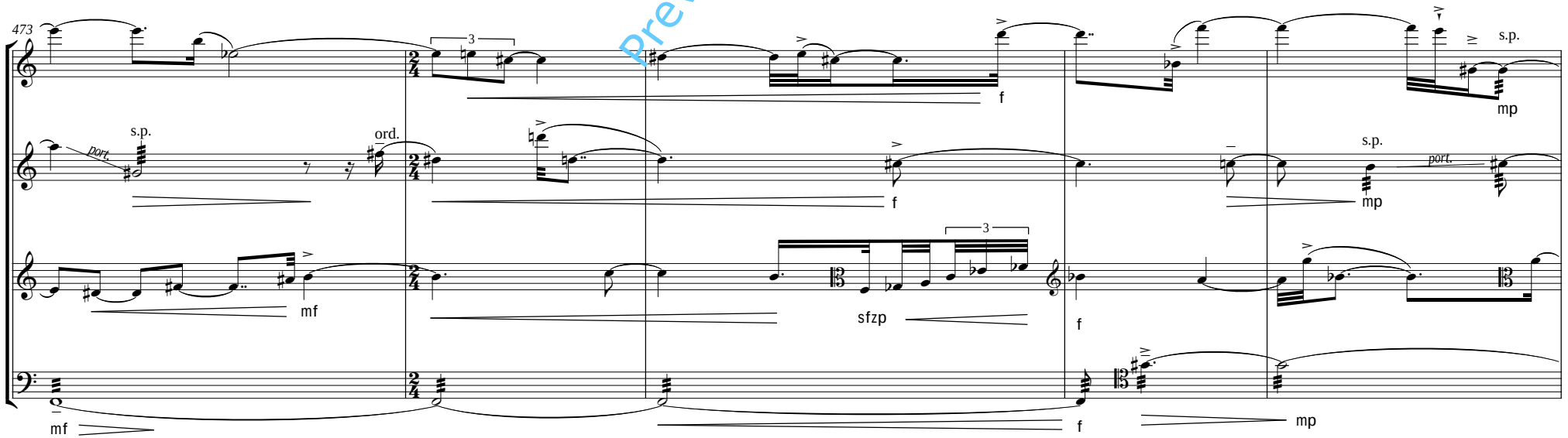


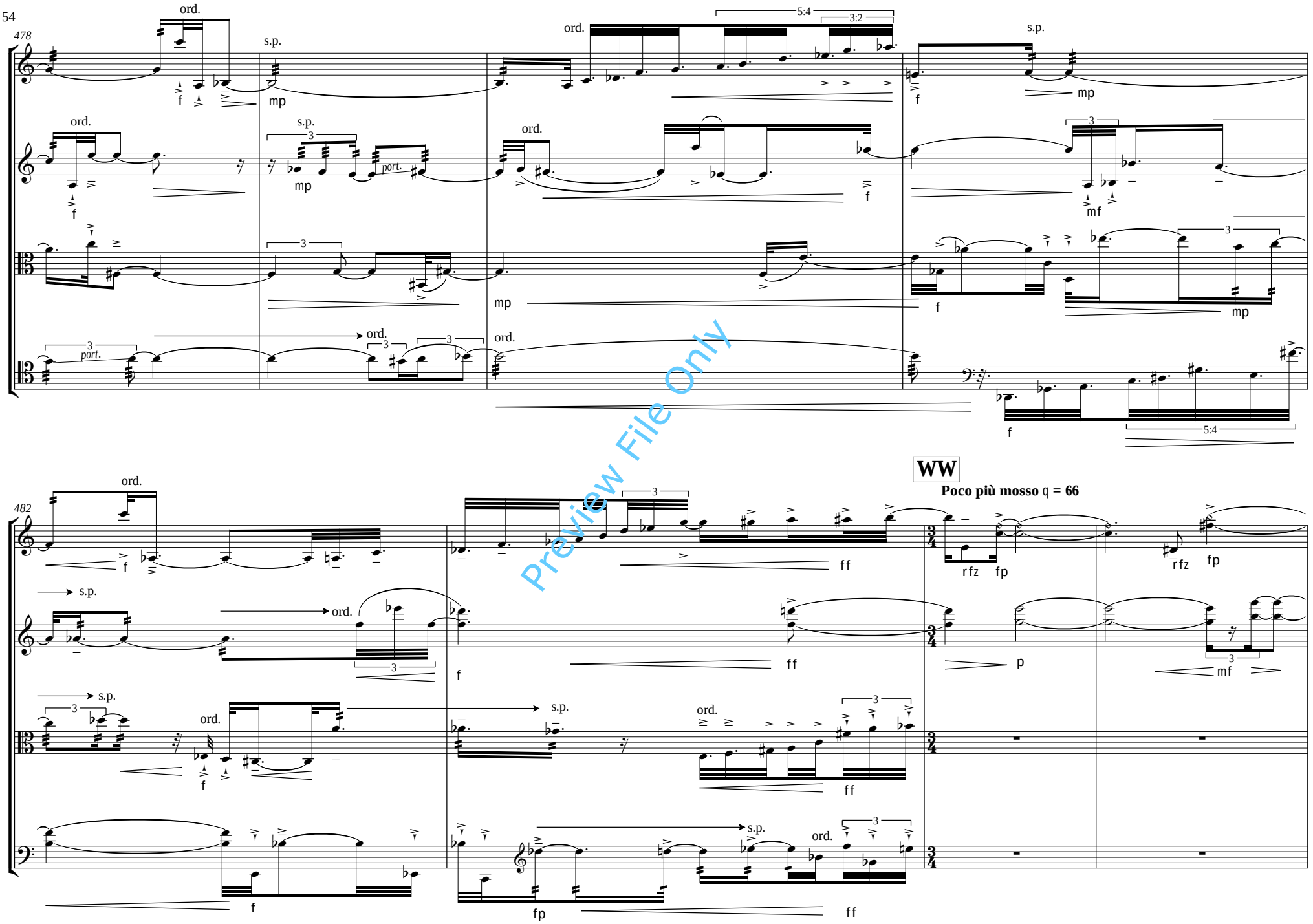
Preview File Only

Allargando

VV

Poco meno mosso ♩ **= 63**





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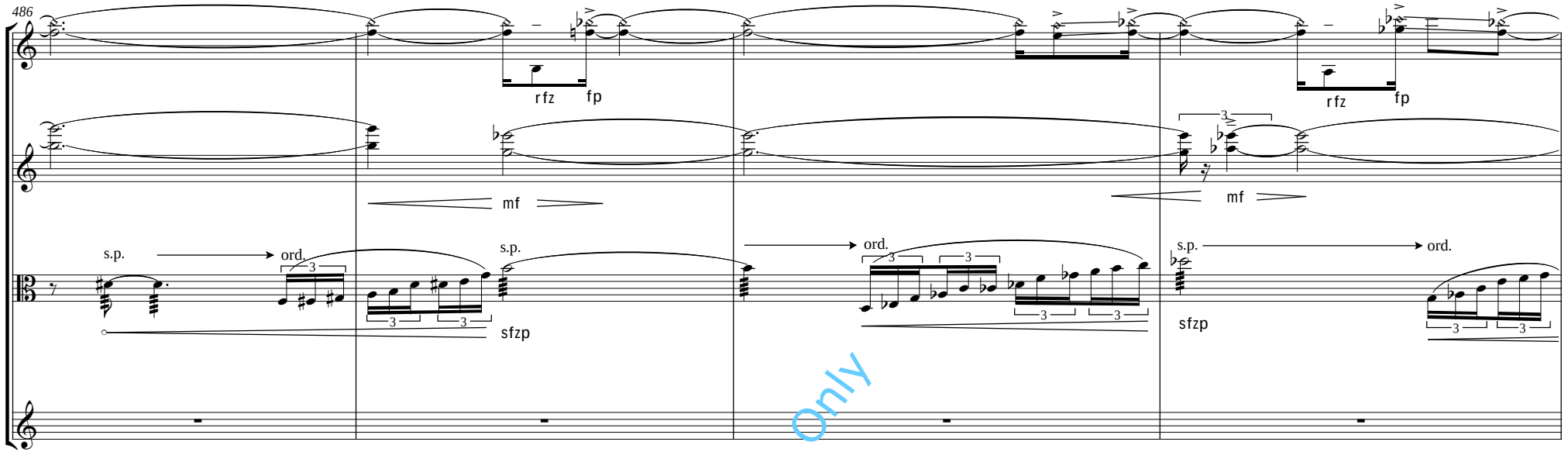

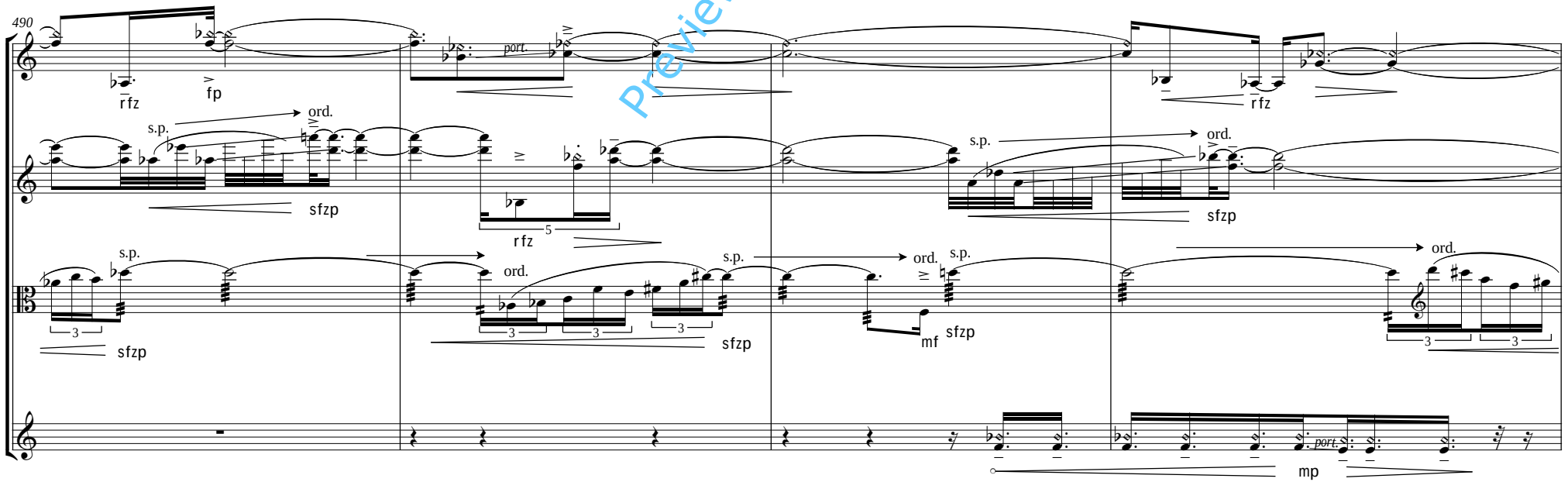

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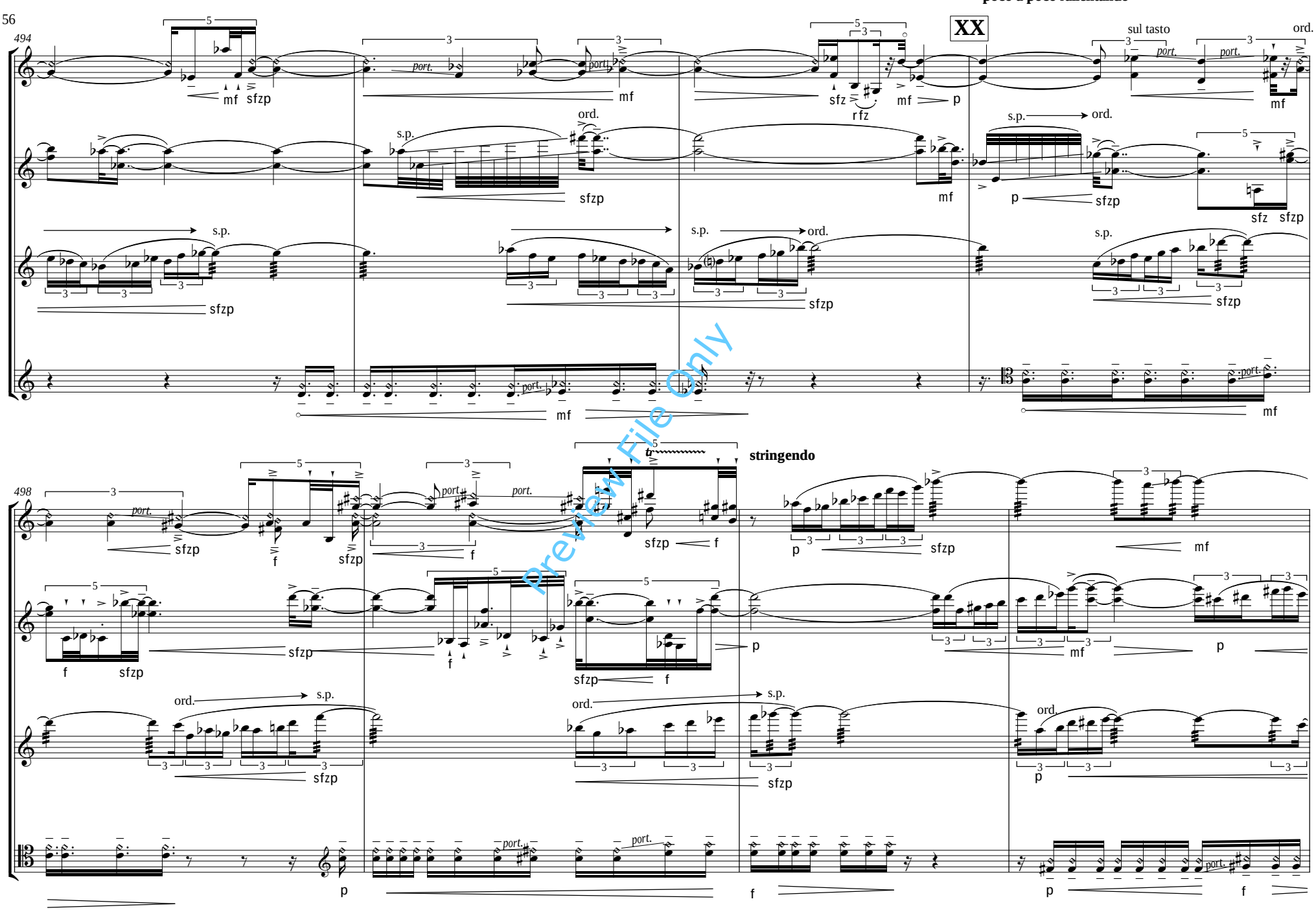
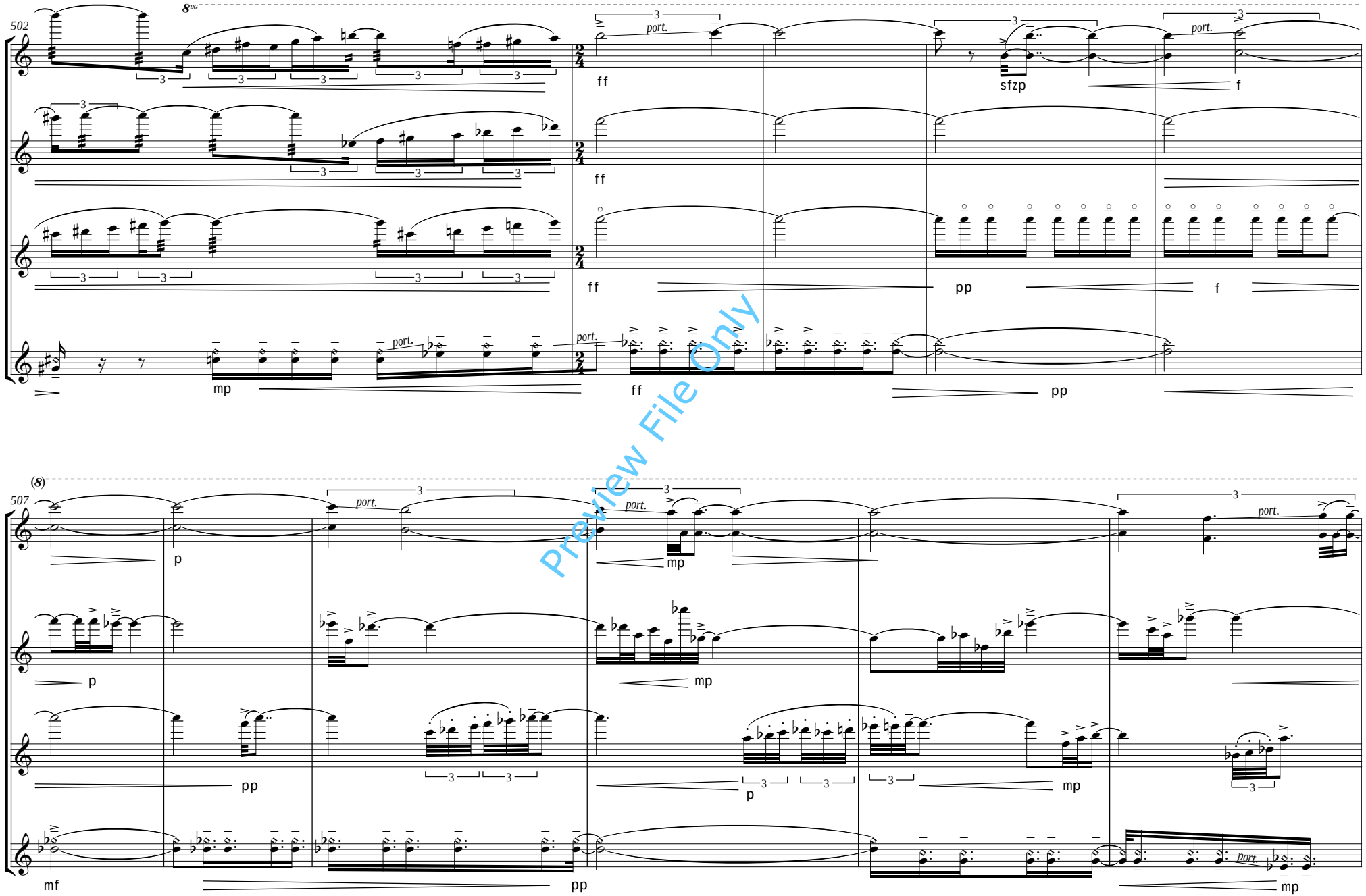


Preview File Only

YY

Più mosso ma ancora commodo



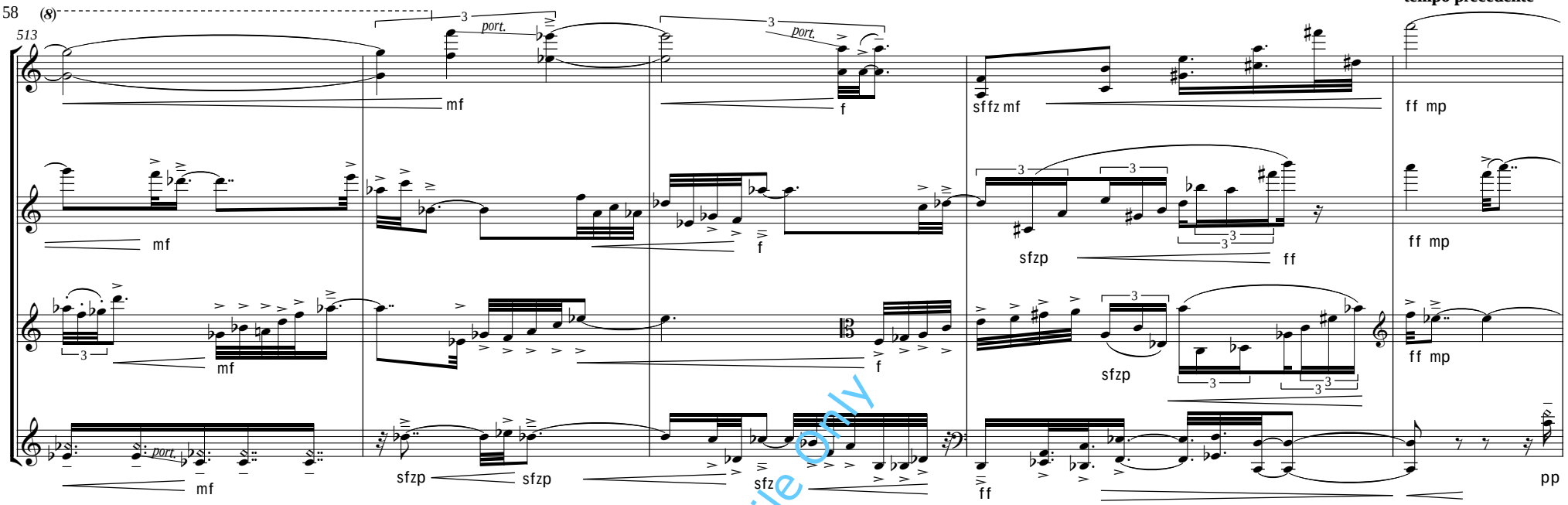
Preview File Only

ZZ

513

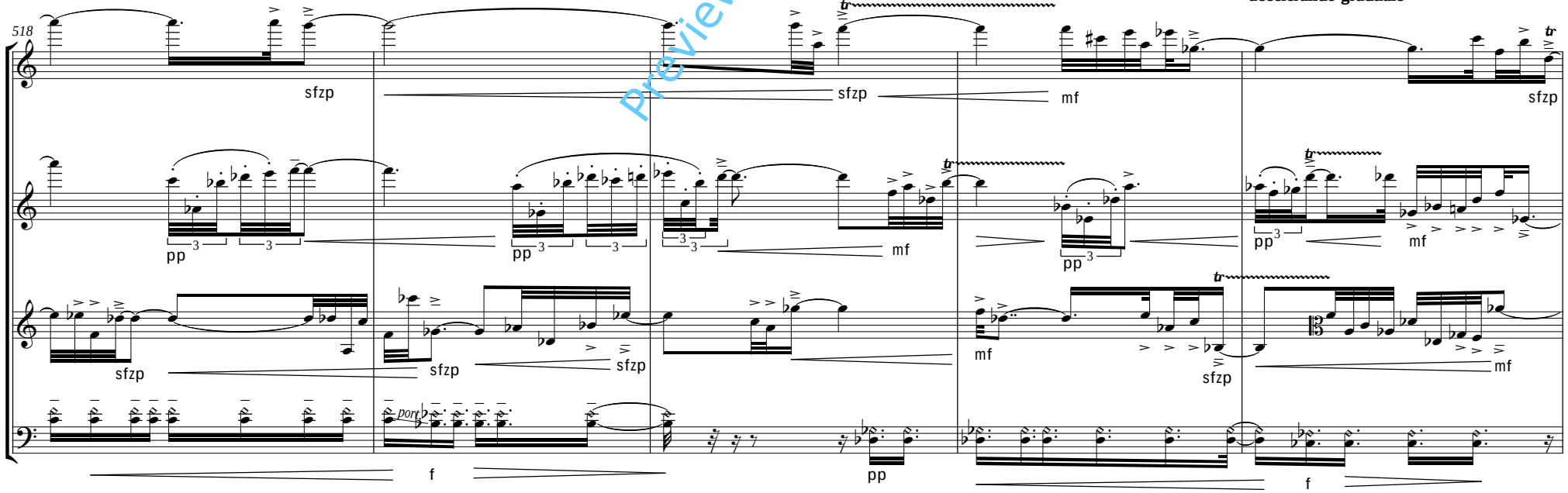
Subito più mosso, agitato

tempo precedente



518

accelerando graduale



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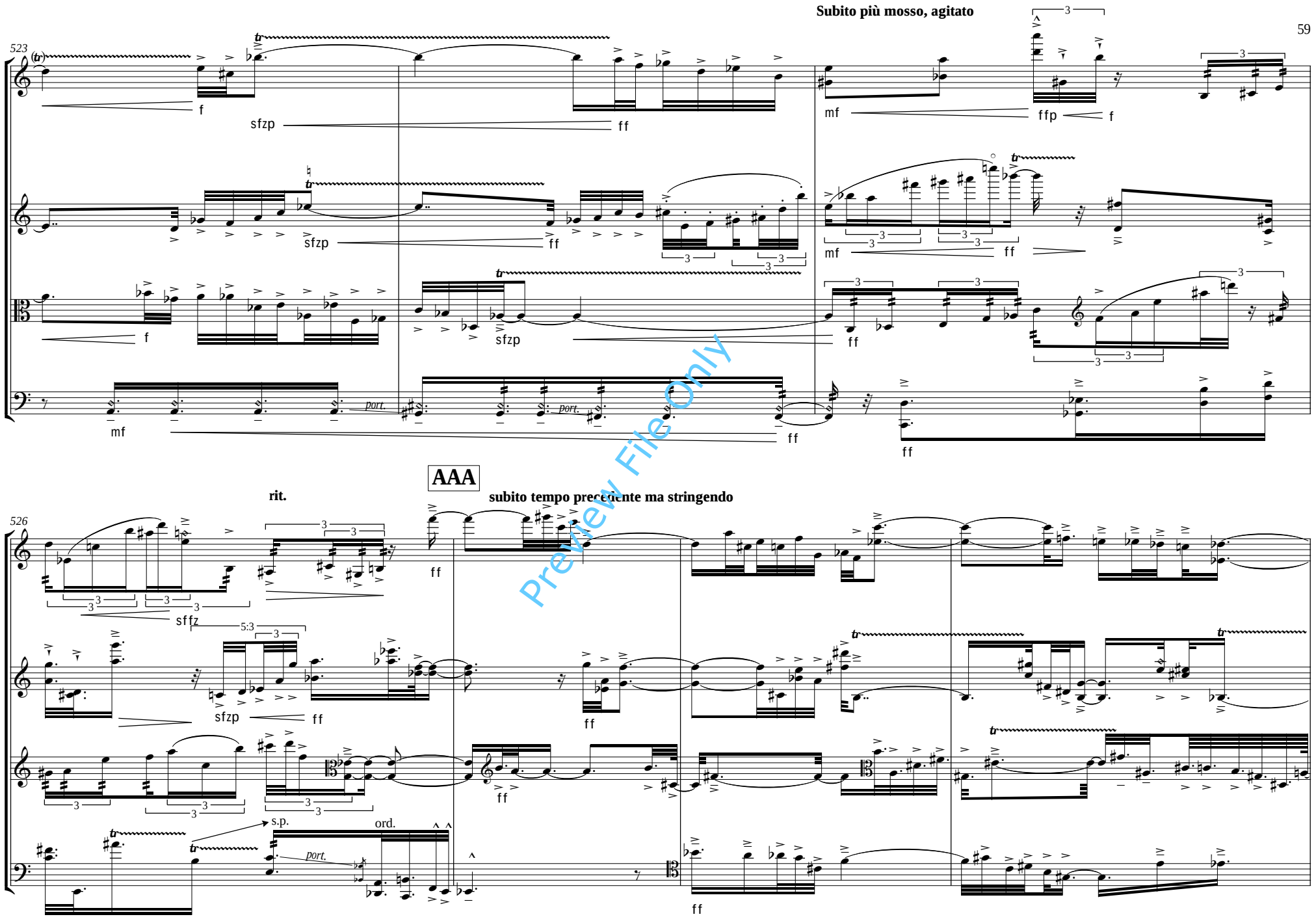

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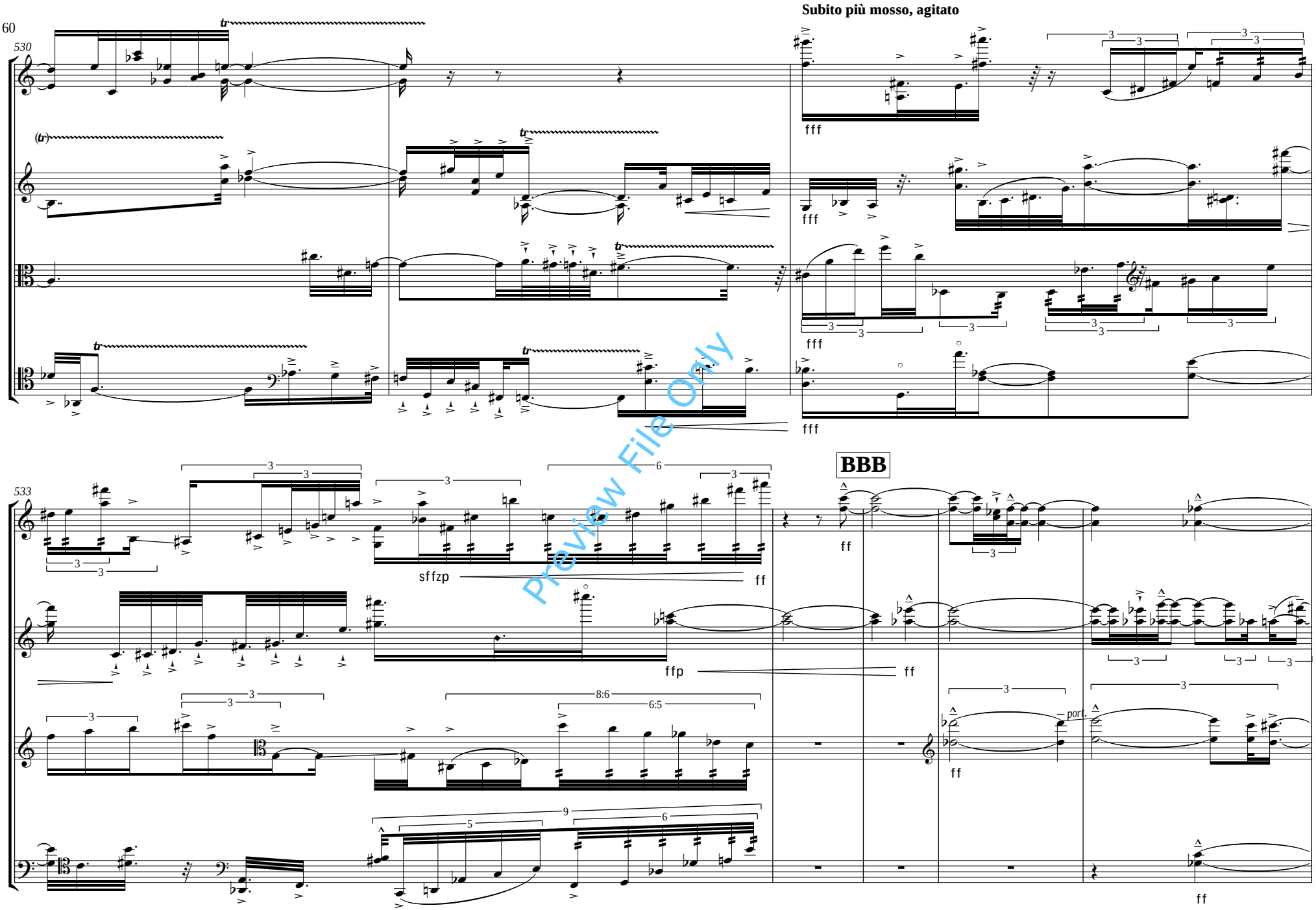

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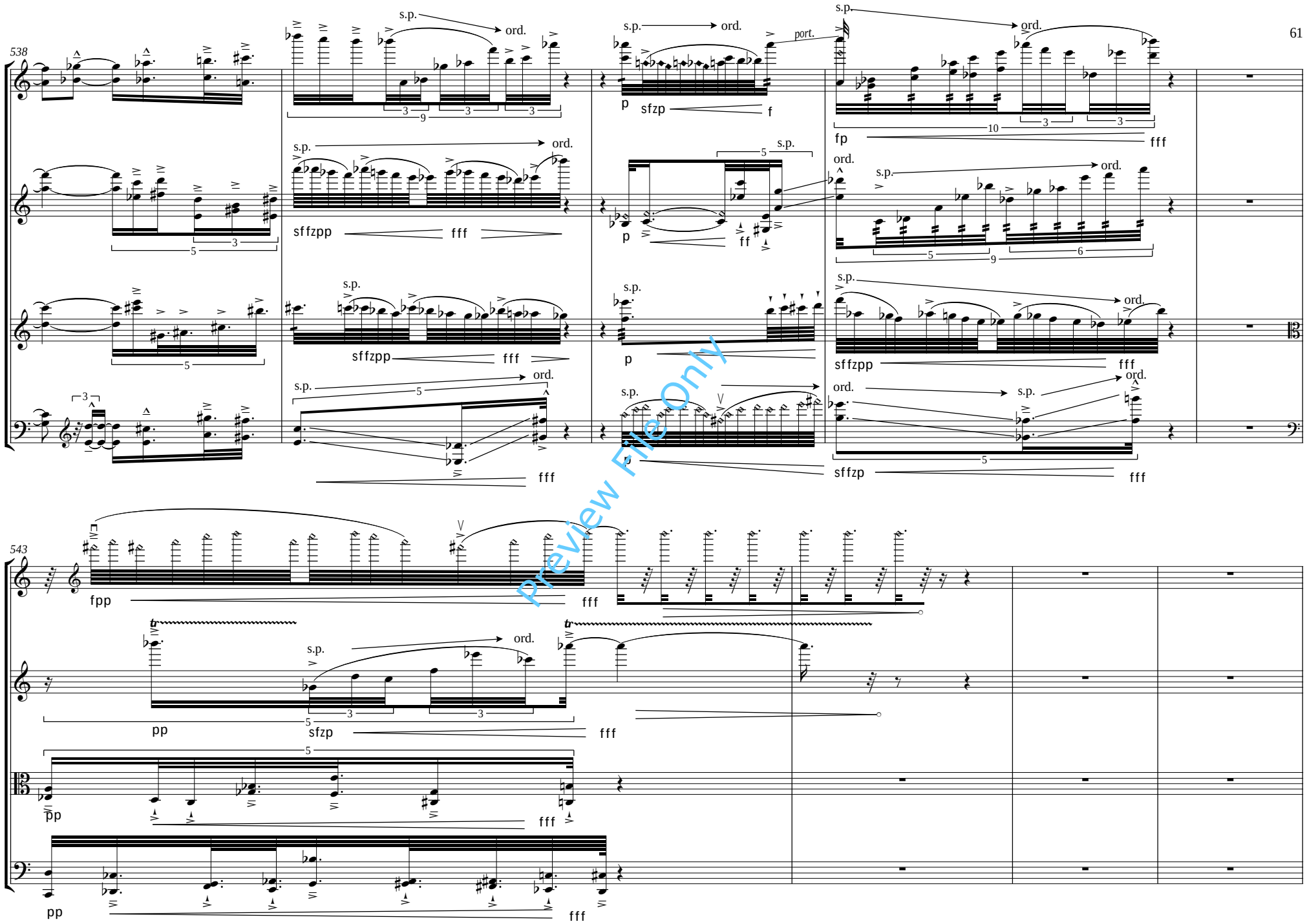

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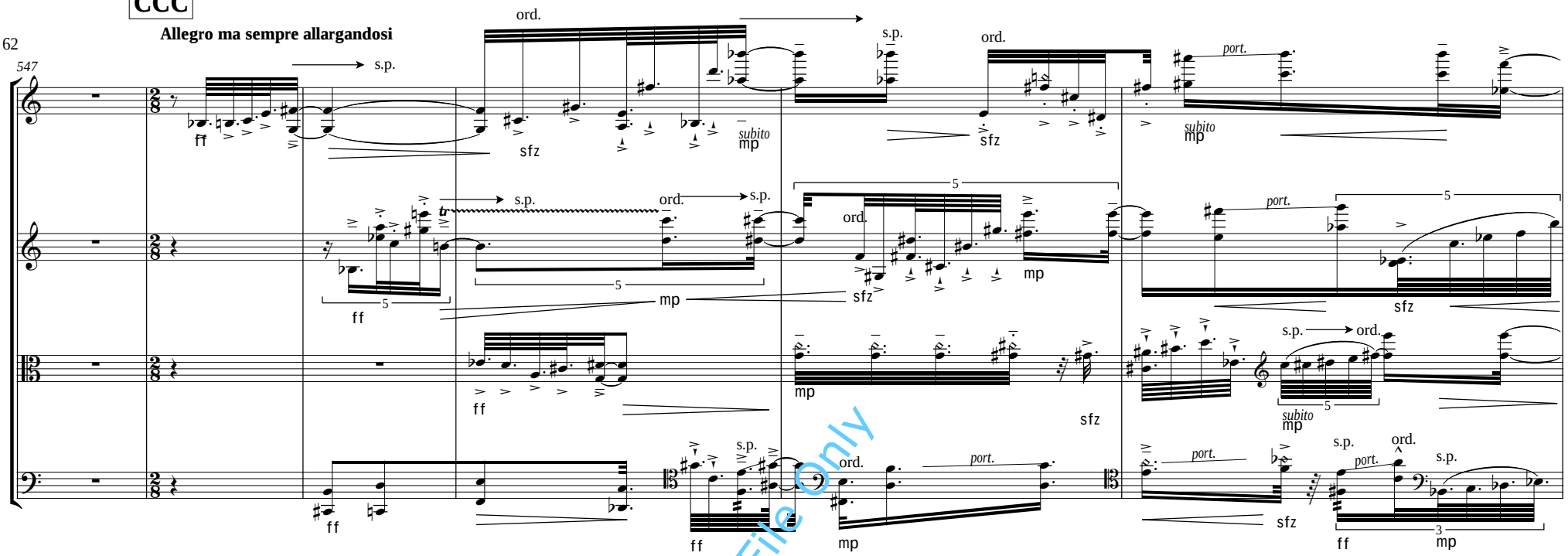
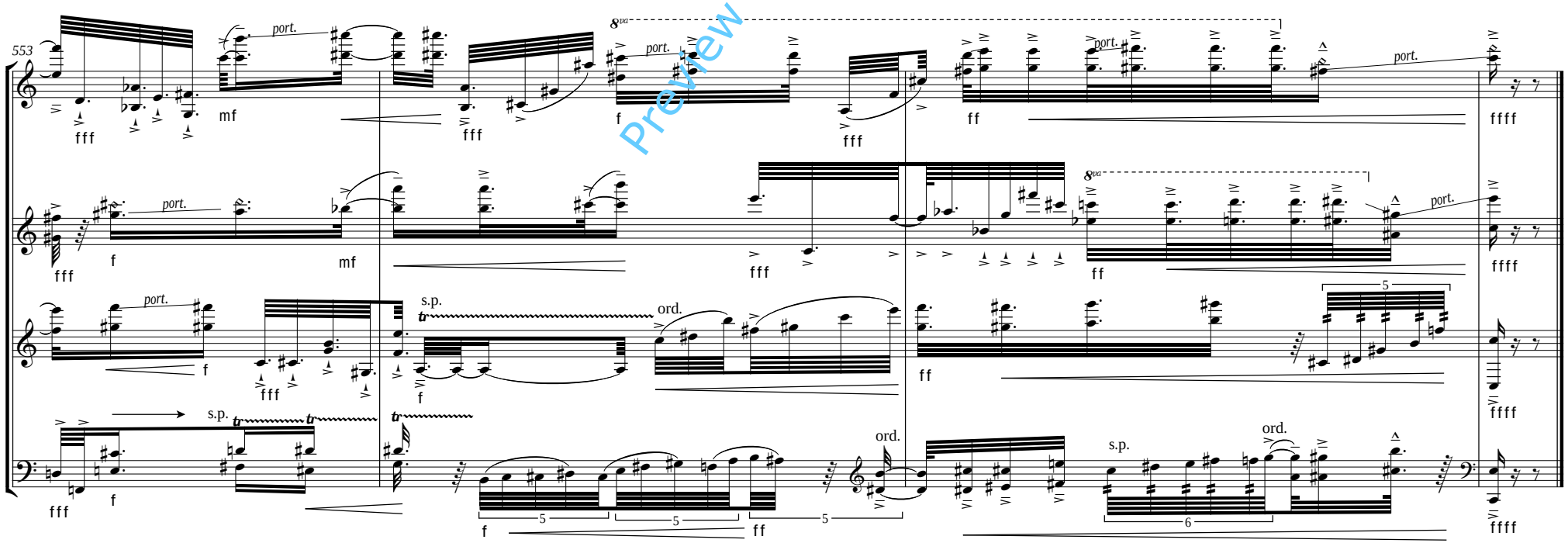
CCC

Allegro ma sempre allargandosi

547



553



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