ERIS

For Piano Four Hands

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Programme note

The title 'Eris' is an abbreviation of the name Erisychton from Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' . The idea in the piece that made a link to the events of Ovid's parable is the 'antimelody' passage. Six weighty chords form melodies by releasing tones from the chord leaving a single tone sounding.

While contemplating the possibilities of this idea I read Ted Hughes version of Erisychton (from his 'Tales of Ovid) and this idea formed a link to Autolycus's felling of the oak that formed the Sacred Grove of Ceres – an metaphor of mankind's hubris in the face of the world's natural balance.

The form of the piece does have a relation to the general pattern of events in the tale. The first passage- favouring intervals of the fifth, fourth and the tenth- is symbolic of the rich canopy of the sacred oak. The second section is the antimelody passage followed by halting staccato chords with individual tones being held. The last passage is symbolic of Ceres revenge on Erisychton's father by the visitation upon him of insatiable hunger, a hunger of such magnitude that he is driven to consume himself.

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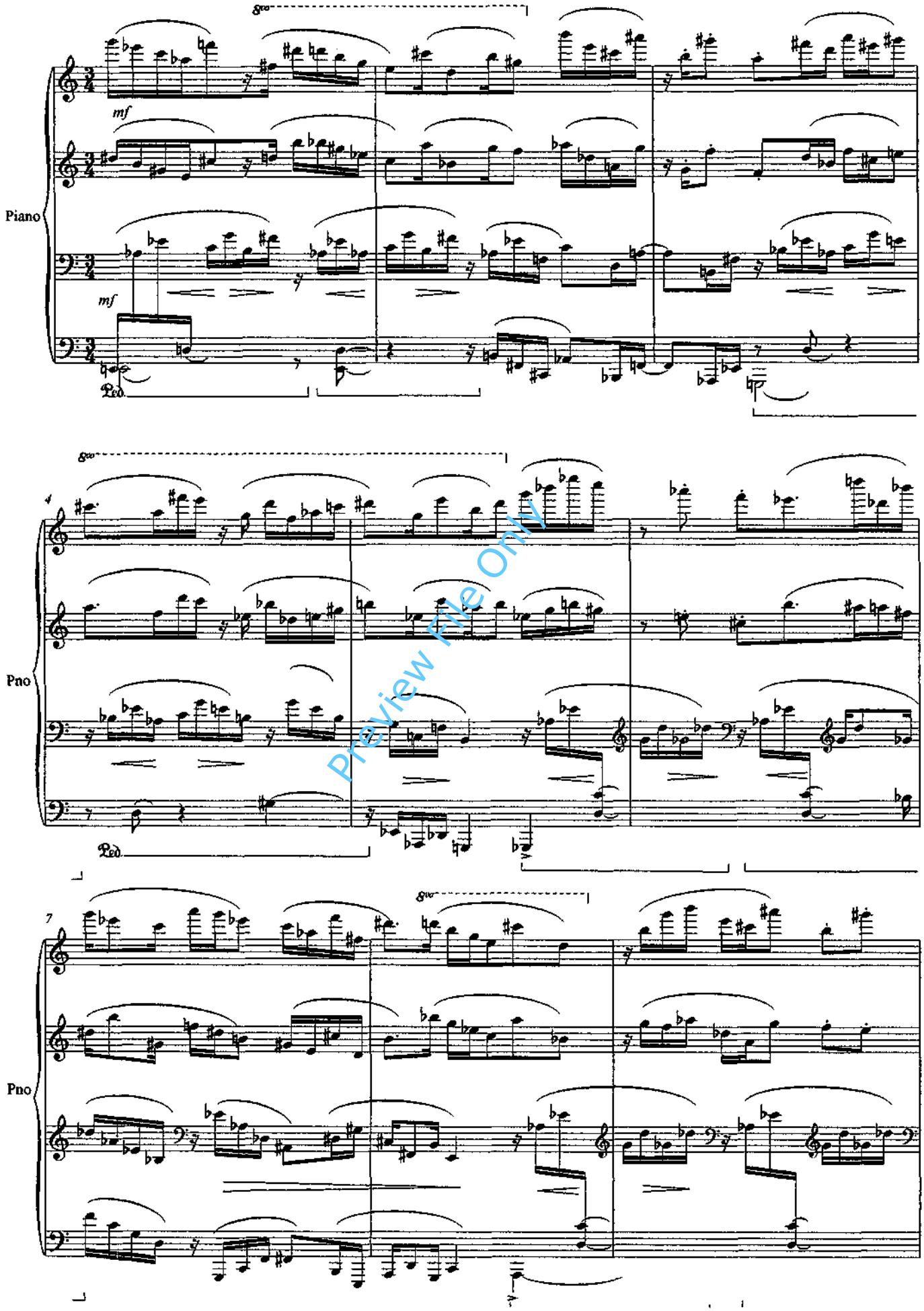
On a technical level the piece is an attempt to devise musical processes that include repetition but in a manner that is not immediately apparent. There is a 6 note melody that is rotated into an extended sequence of pitches that is the main organising factor throughout the piece. This appears in various guises: In the opening passage as bass pedal tones and in the later passages as the top or bottom voice of one of the players. The harmonic content was not systematic apart from instinctual returns to harmonies connected to certain melody tones. The opening passage contains an 'isorhythm' in the top players part – a repeating melody in tenths that has more notes than the rhythmic pattern into which it is placed. The lower part is comprised of fifths,fourths and tenths in descending patterns.

Eris was a joint winner in the Tong- Hasegawa piano dou competition 2002

ERIS

Light and rhythmic ♩ = 90

Paul Robinson



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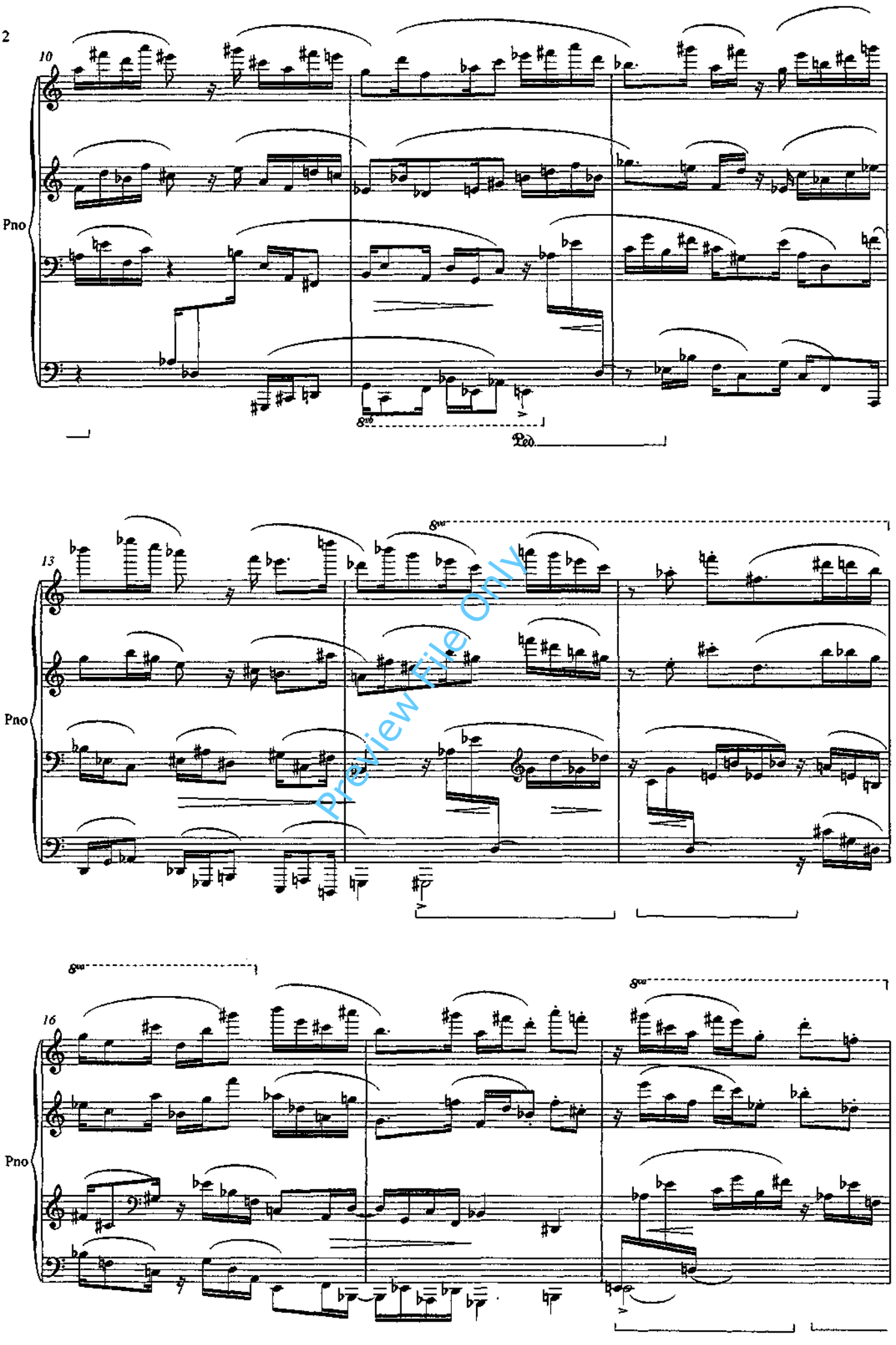

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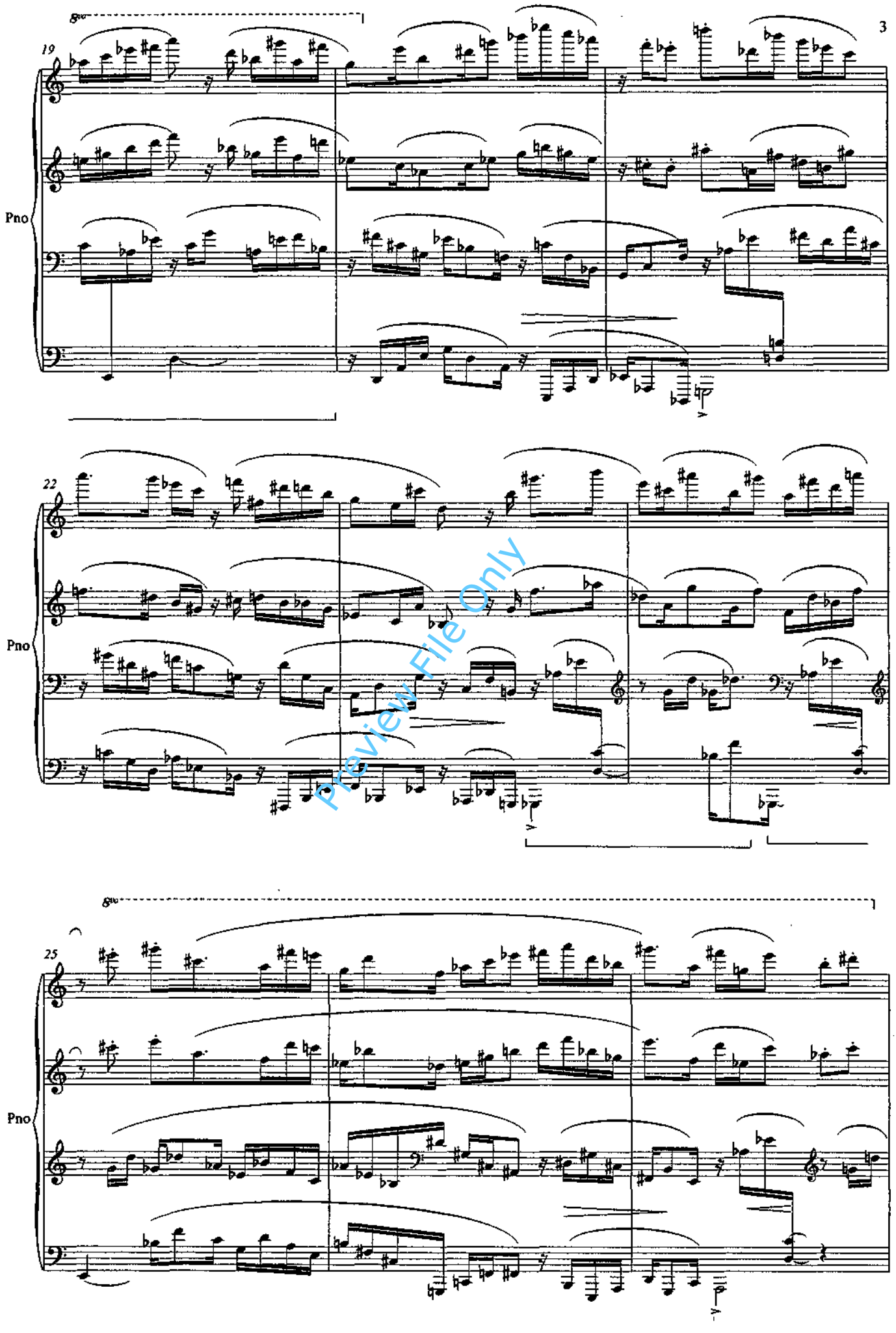

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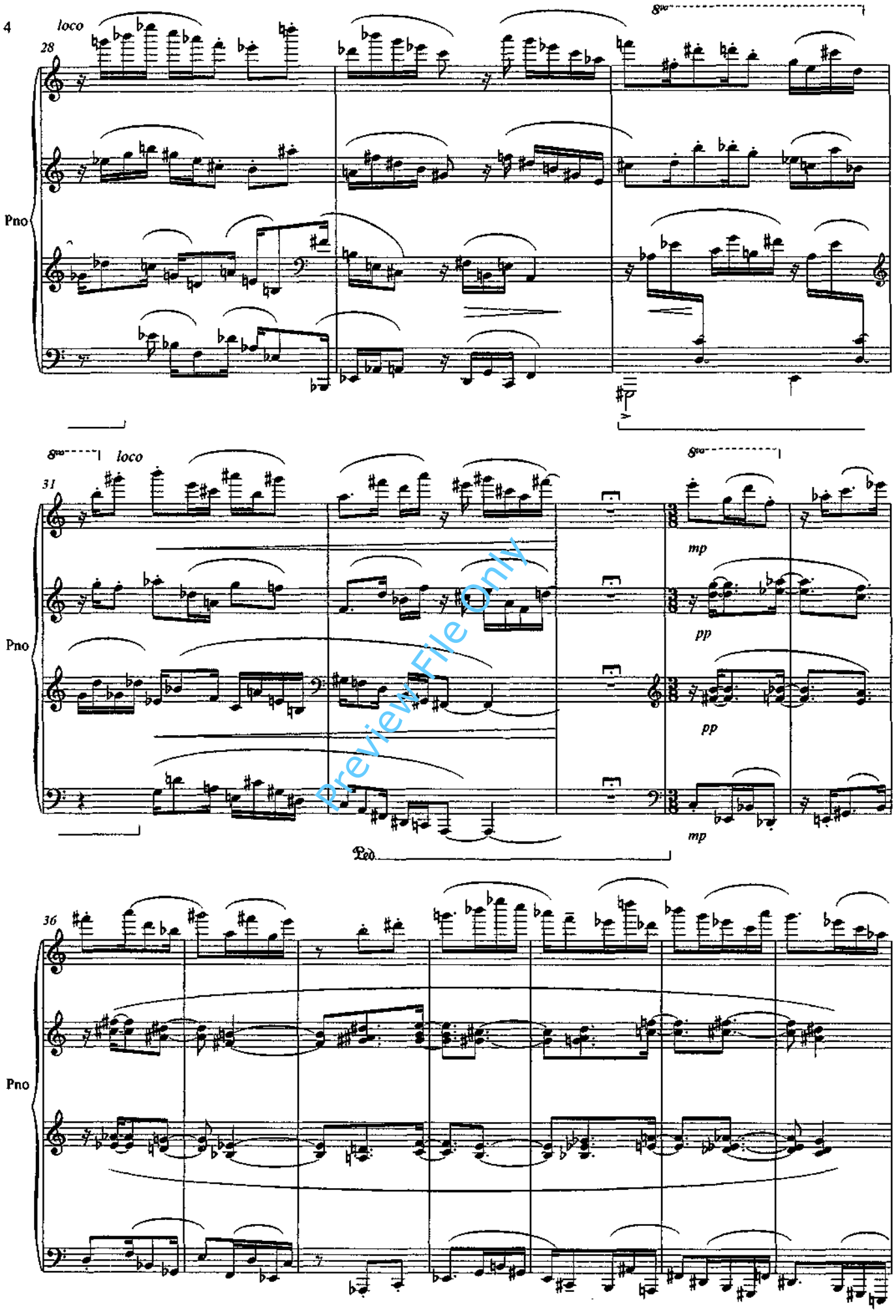

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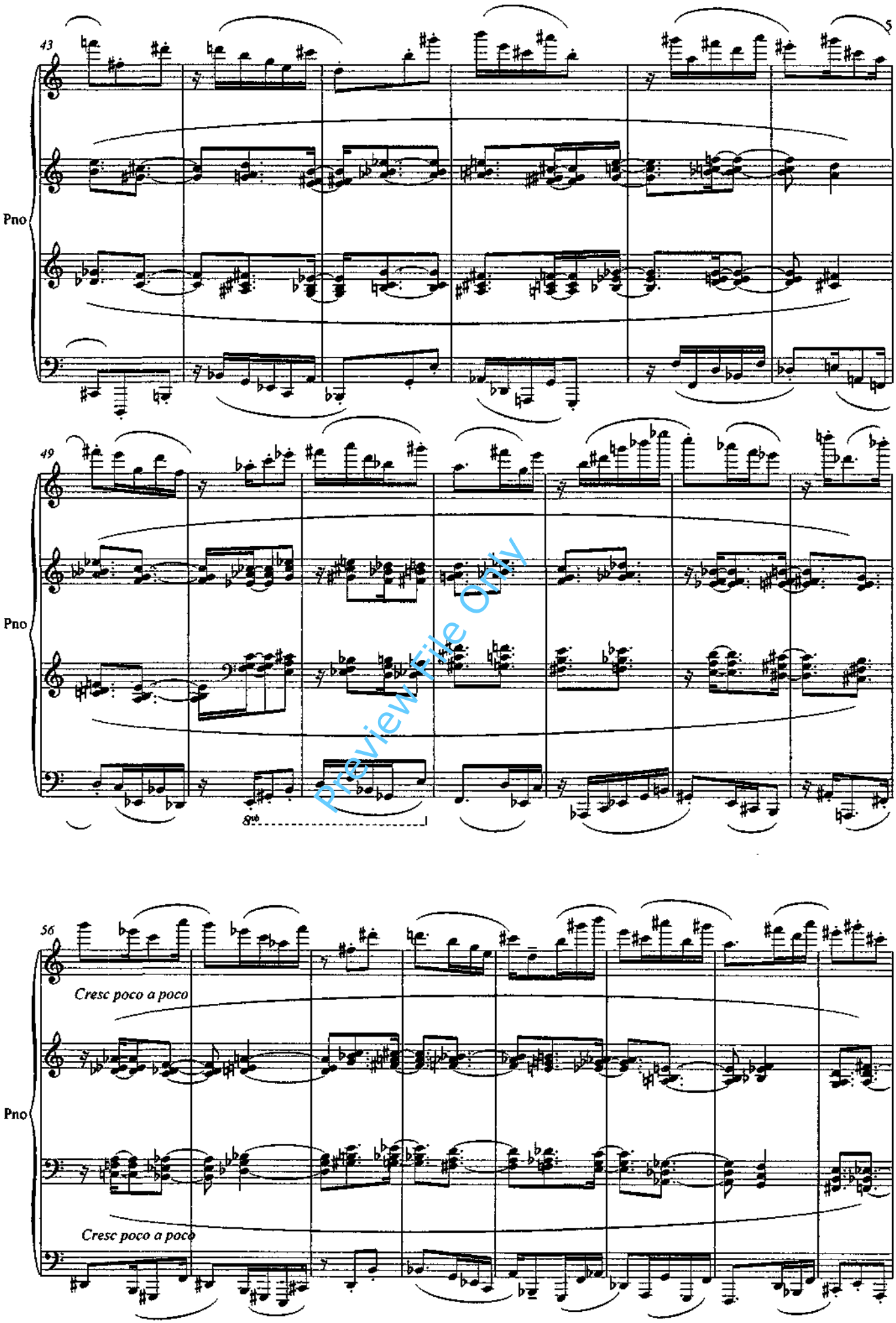

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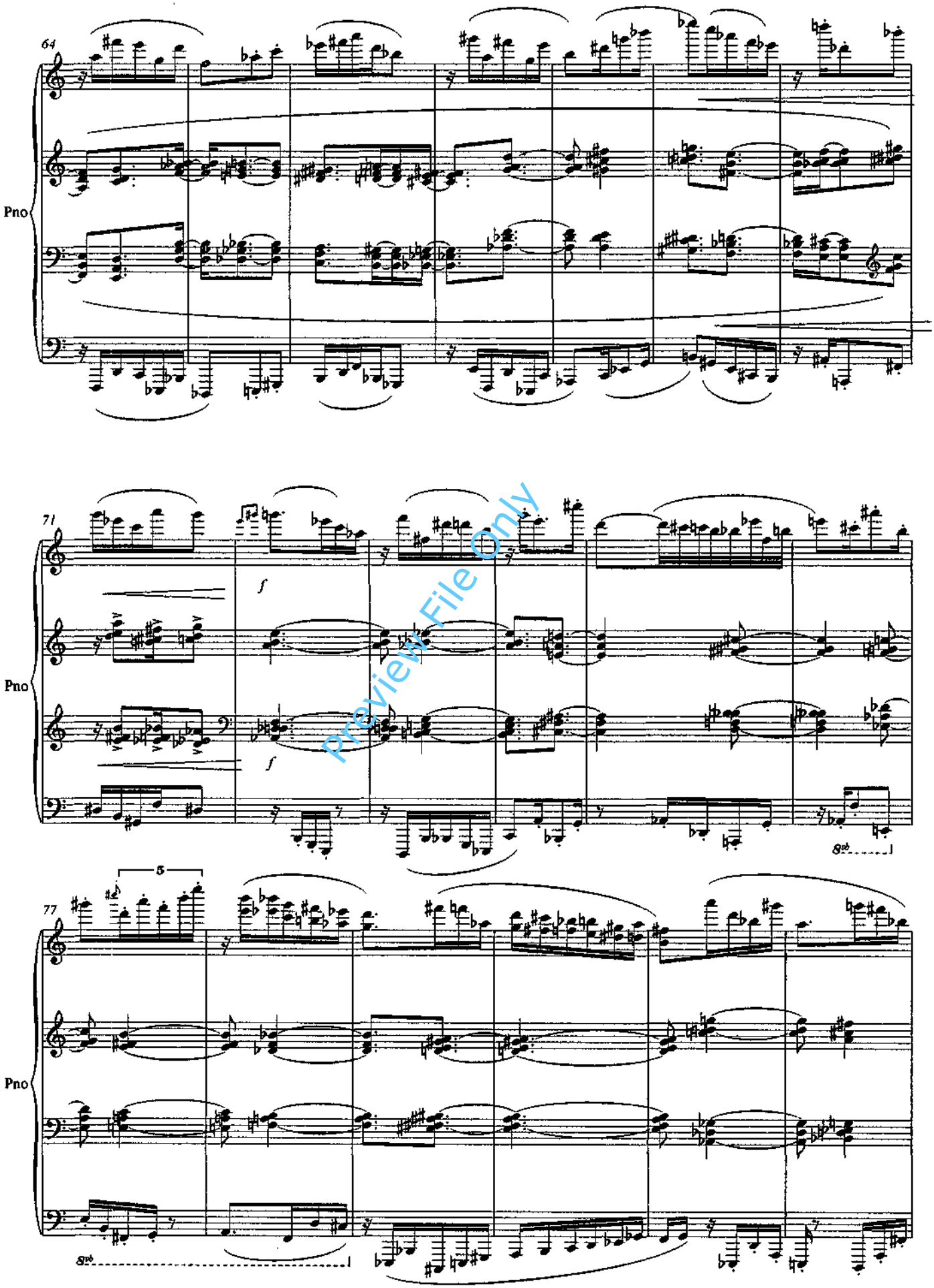

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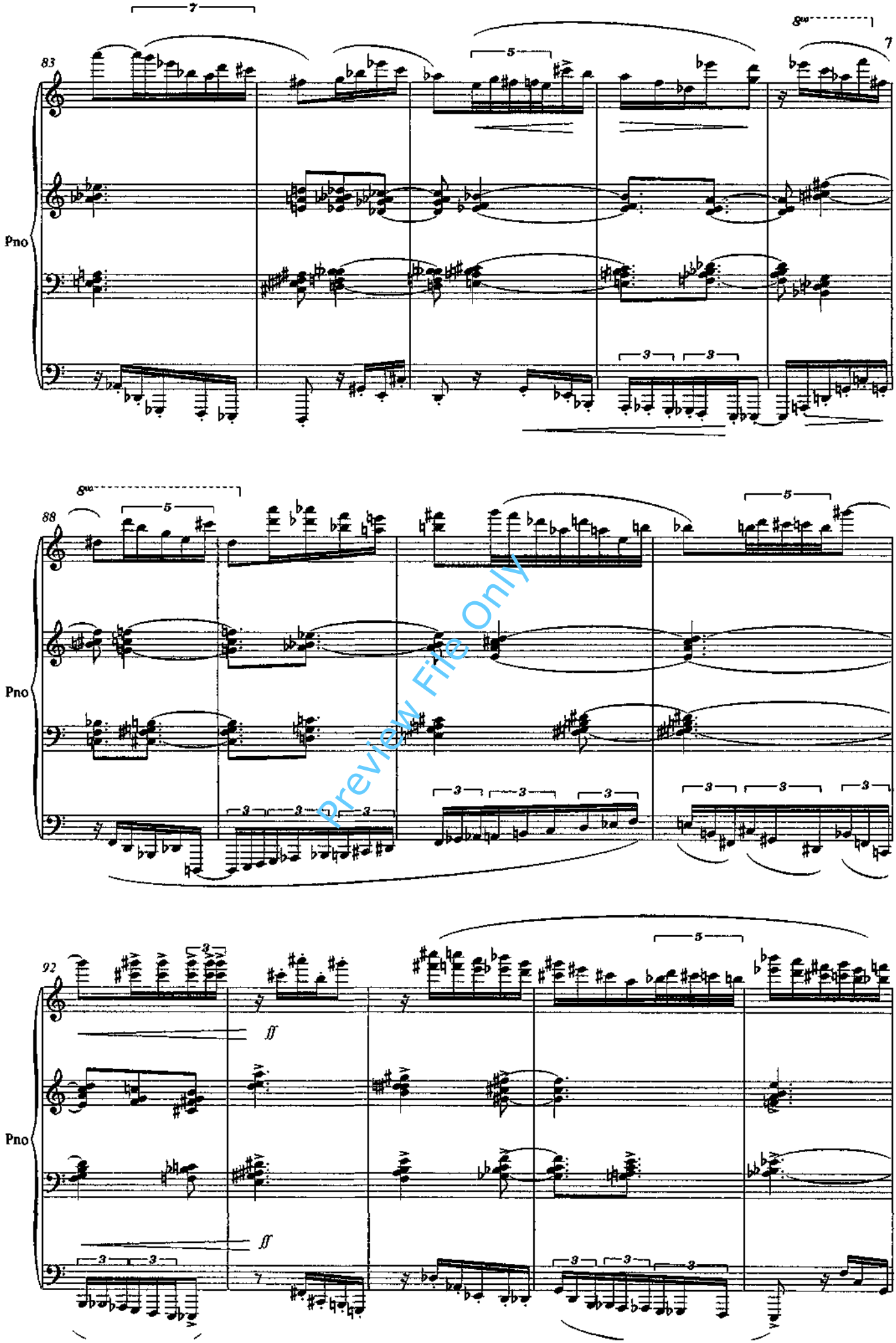

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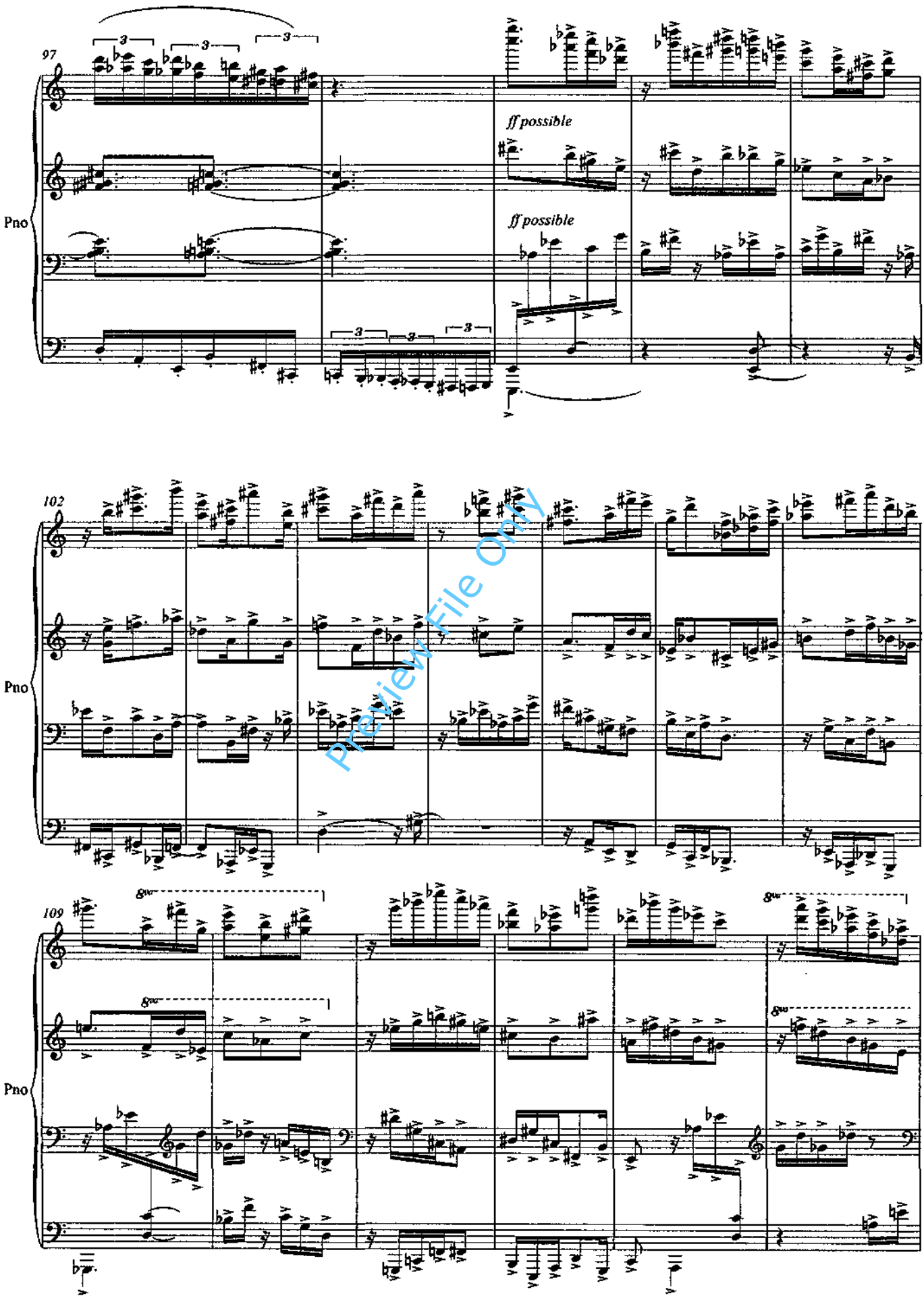

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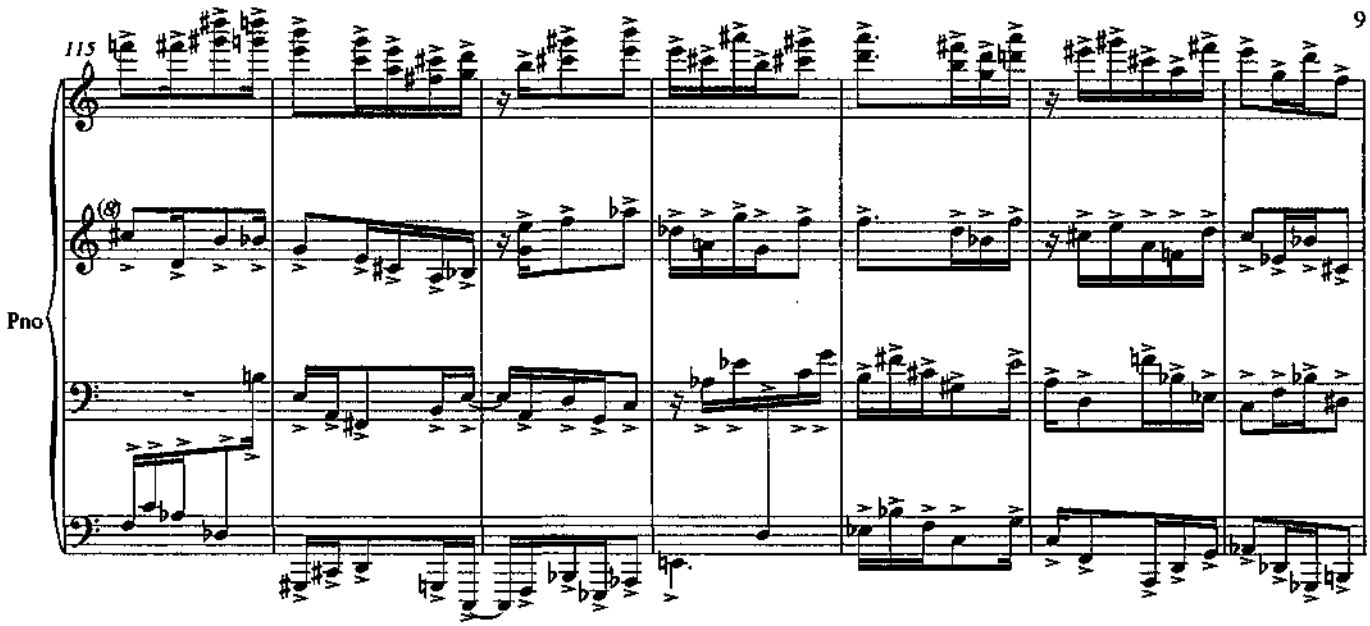

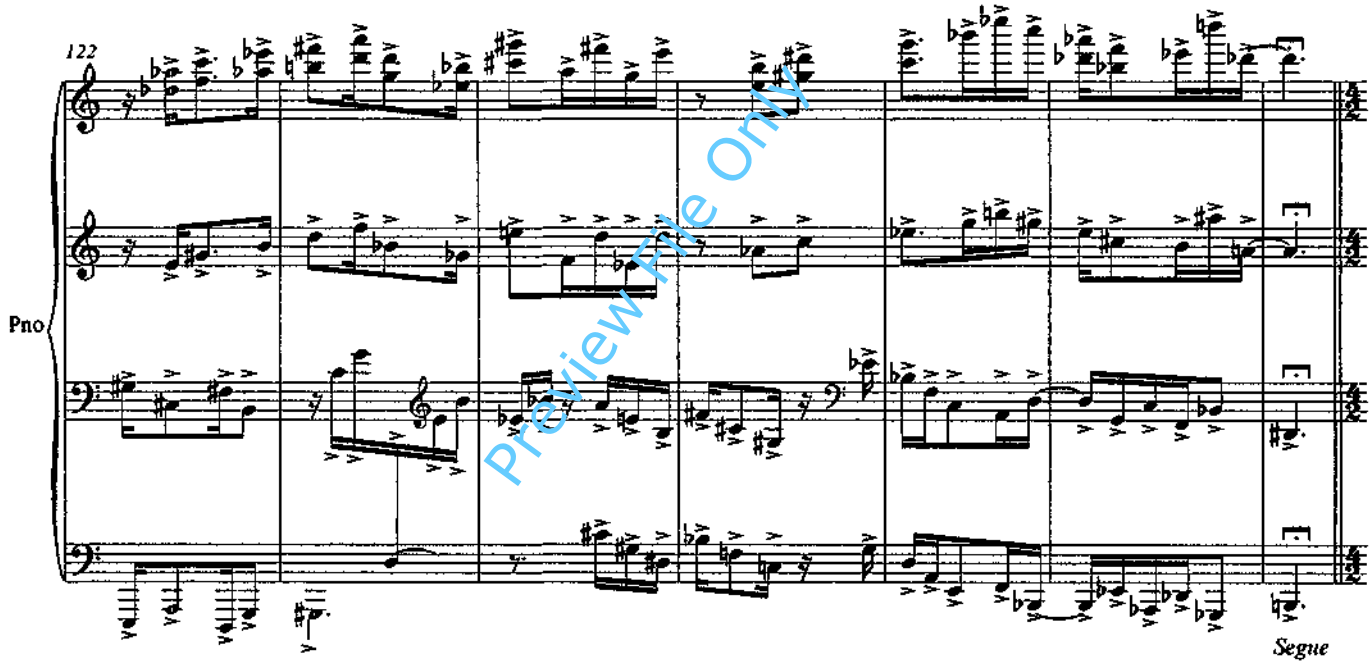

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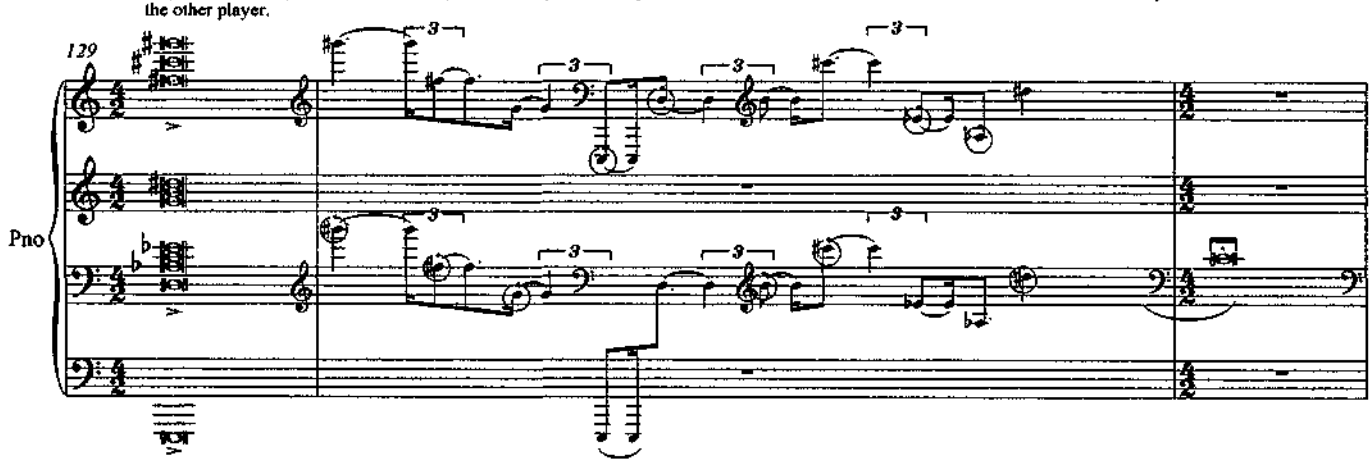
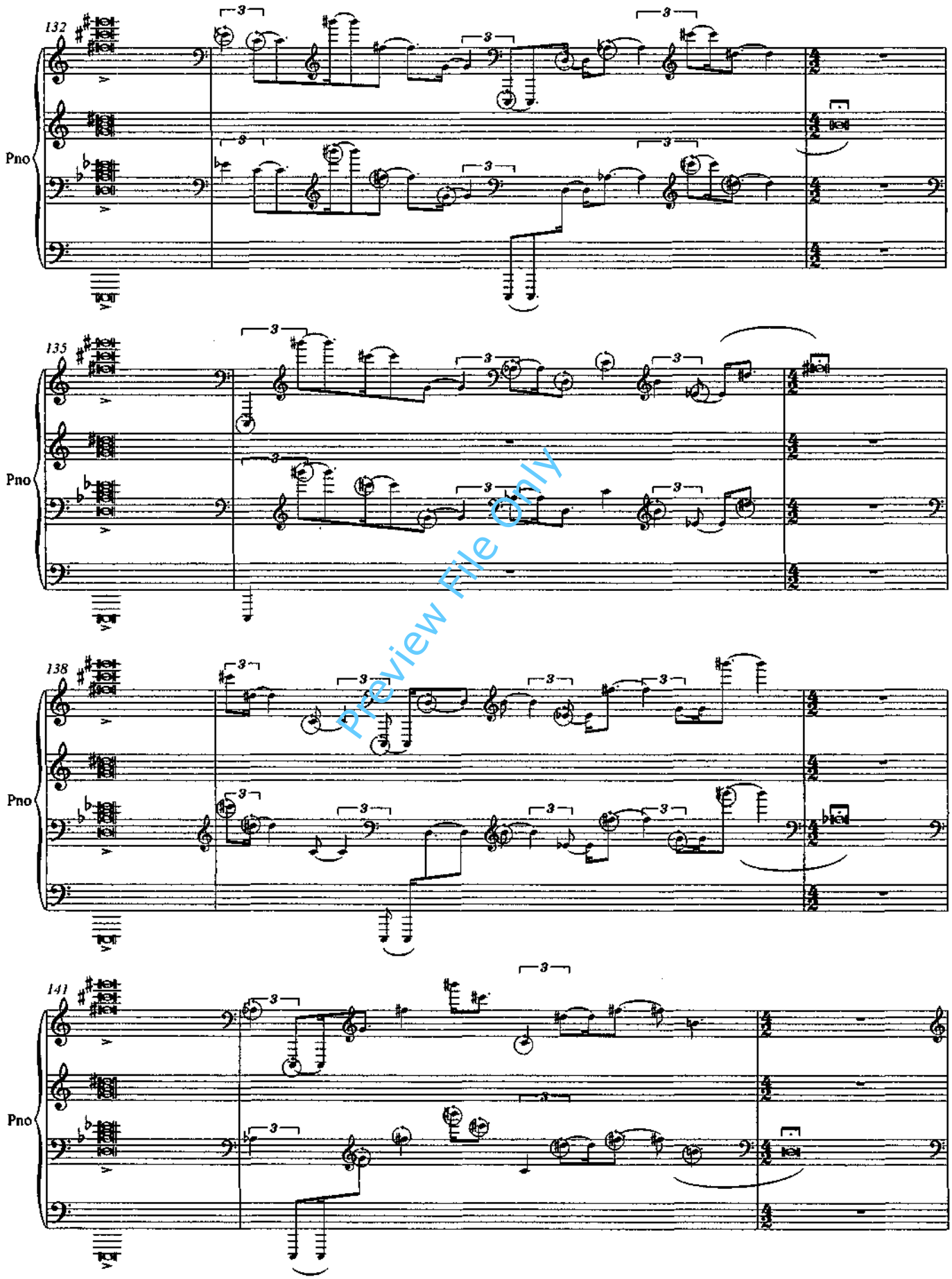
From these chords a set of 'antimelodies' are formed - ie melodies made by releasing tones rather than striking them.
At the end of each melody a single tone remains. The next chord should not be sounded until that tone is completely inaudible.
The speed of the melodies will depend on both the quality of the piano used and the tessitura of the note left sounding
(higher notes decay faster so the melody should be quicker) No pedal should be used. Circles around a note define a note released by
the other player.





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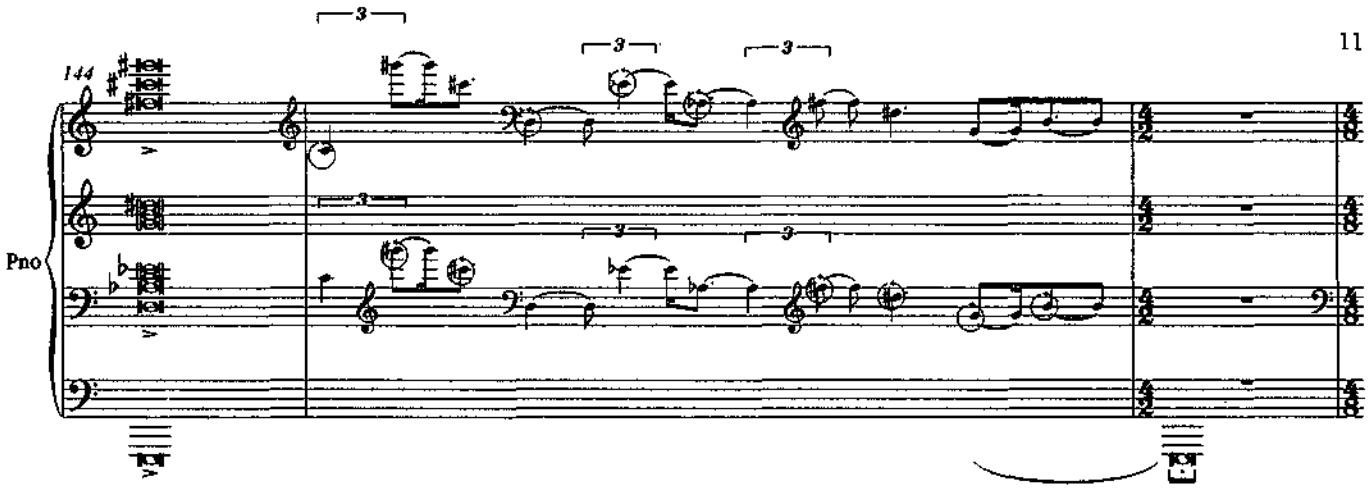

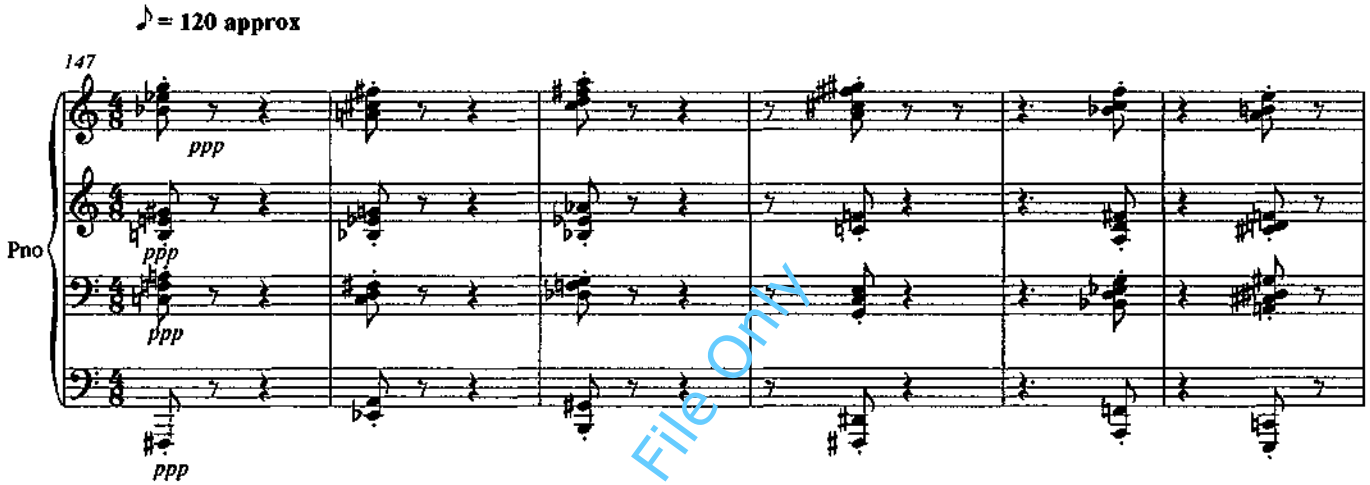

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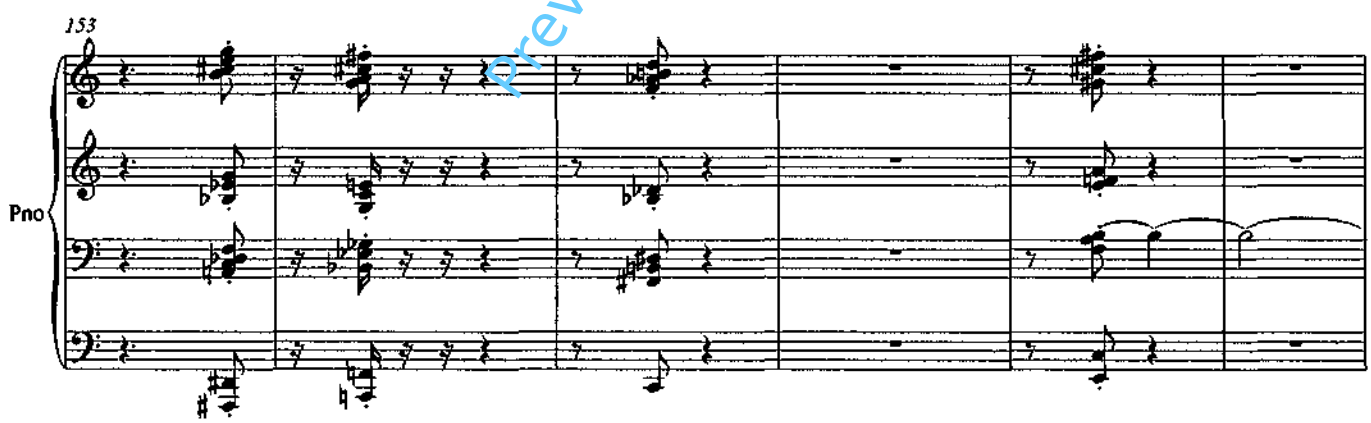

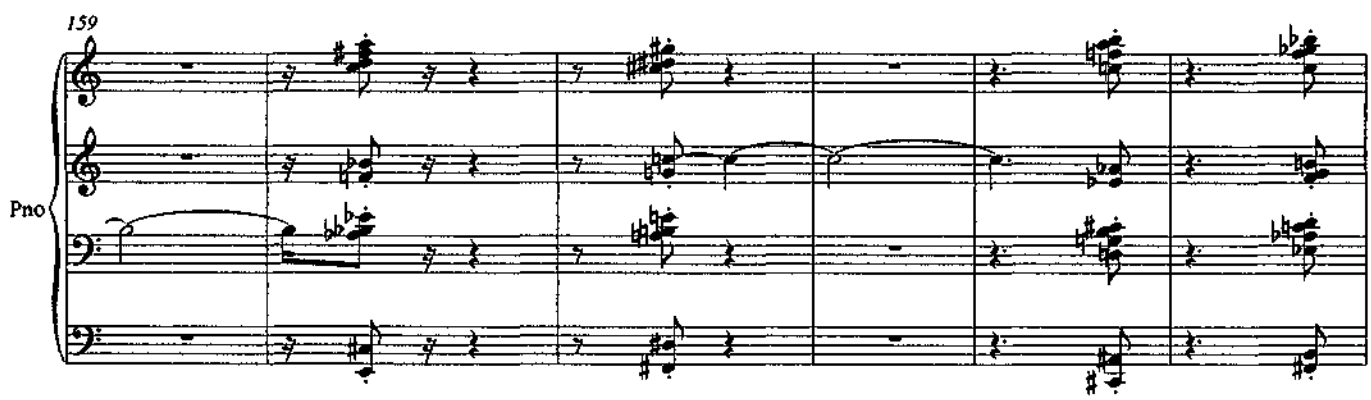

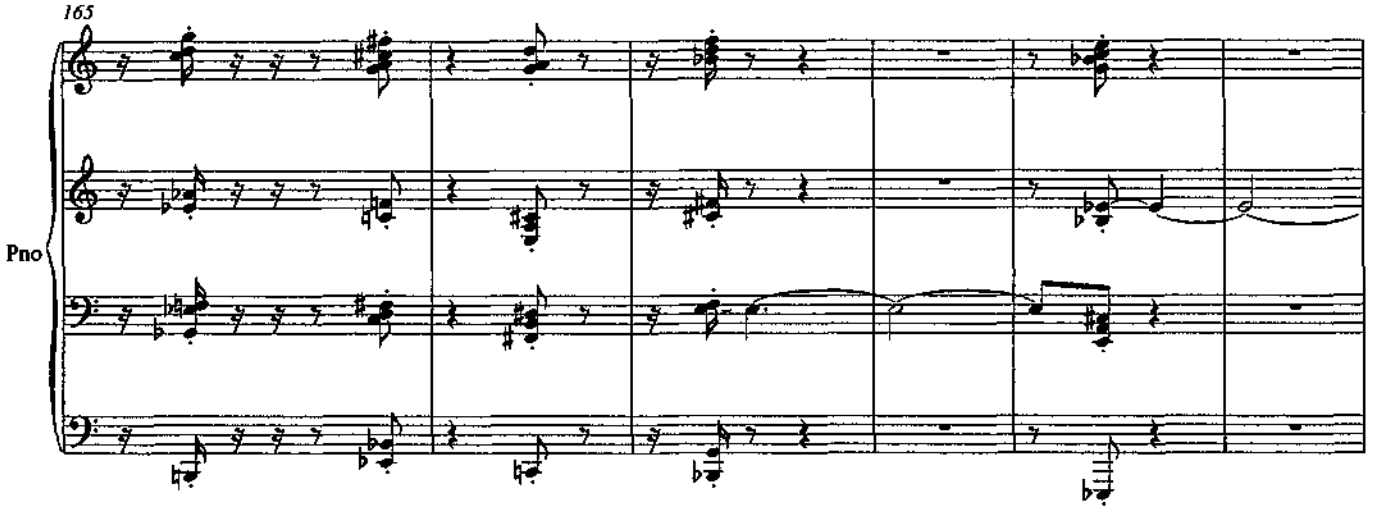

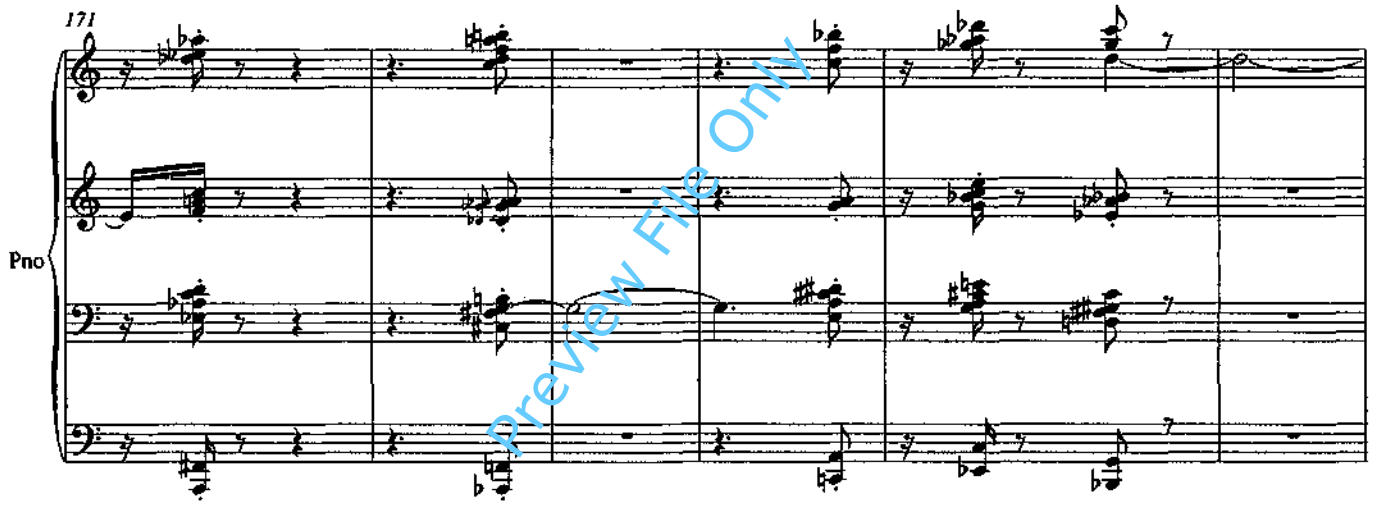

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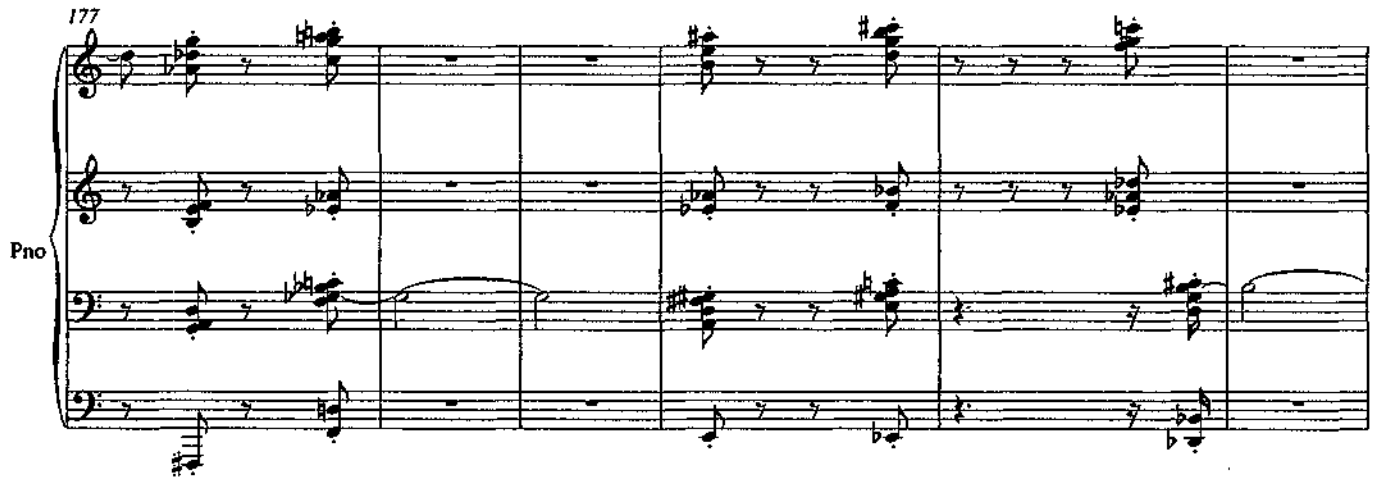

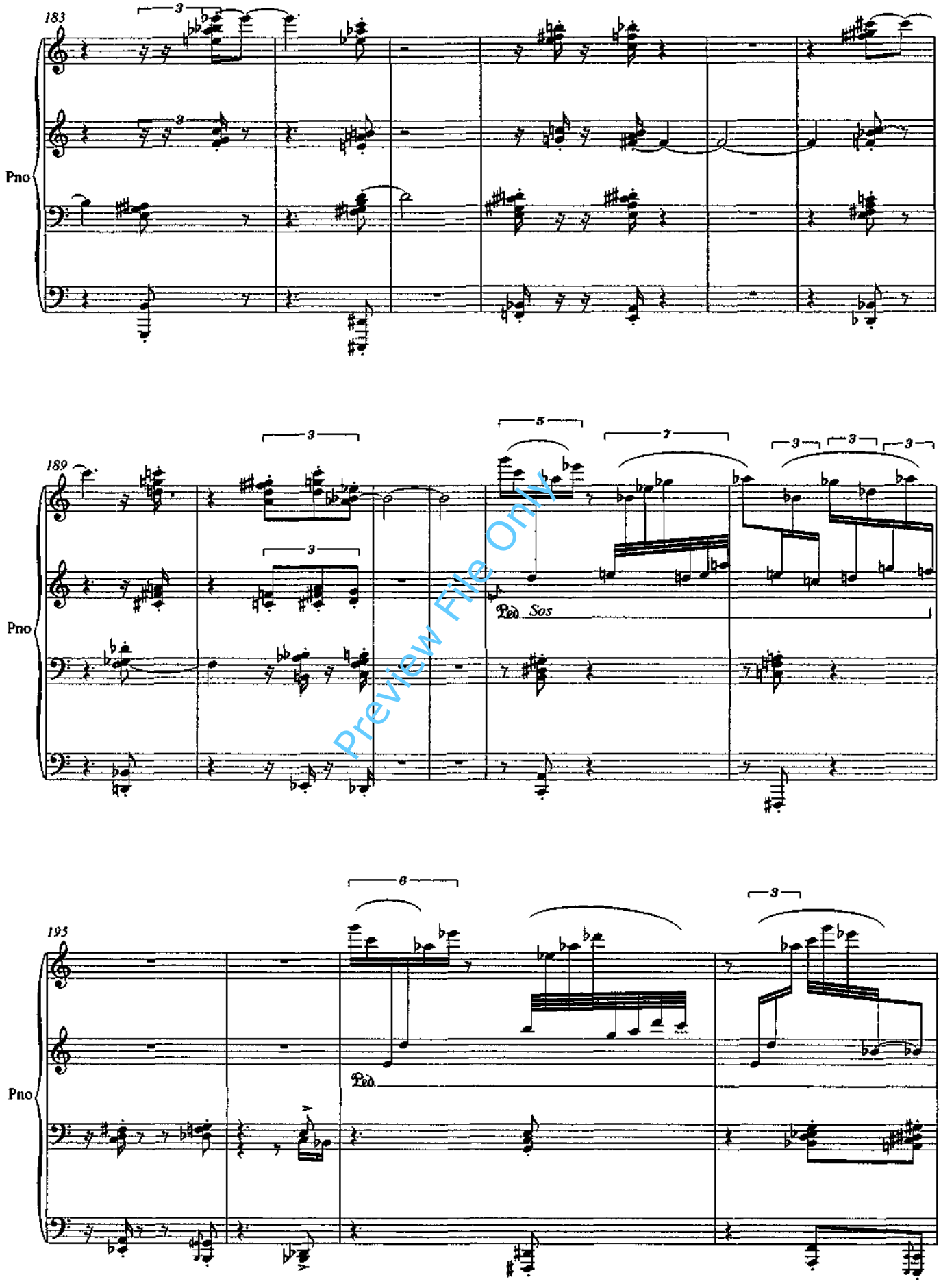

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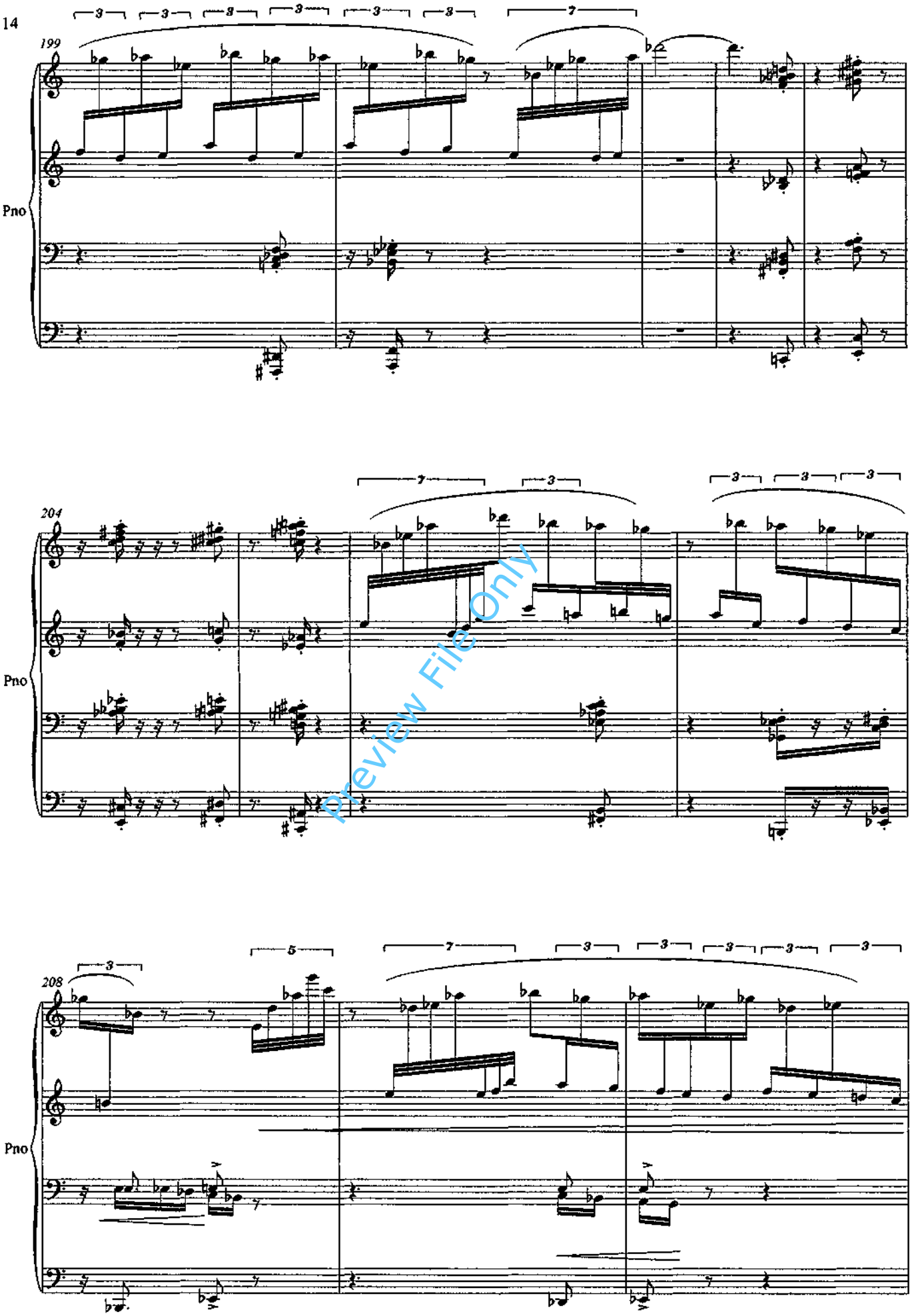

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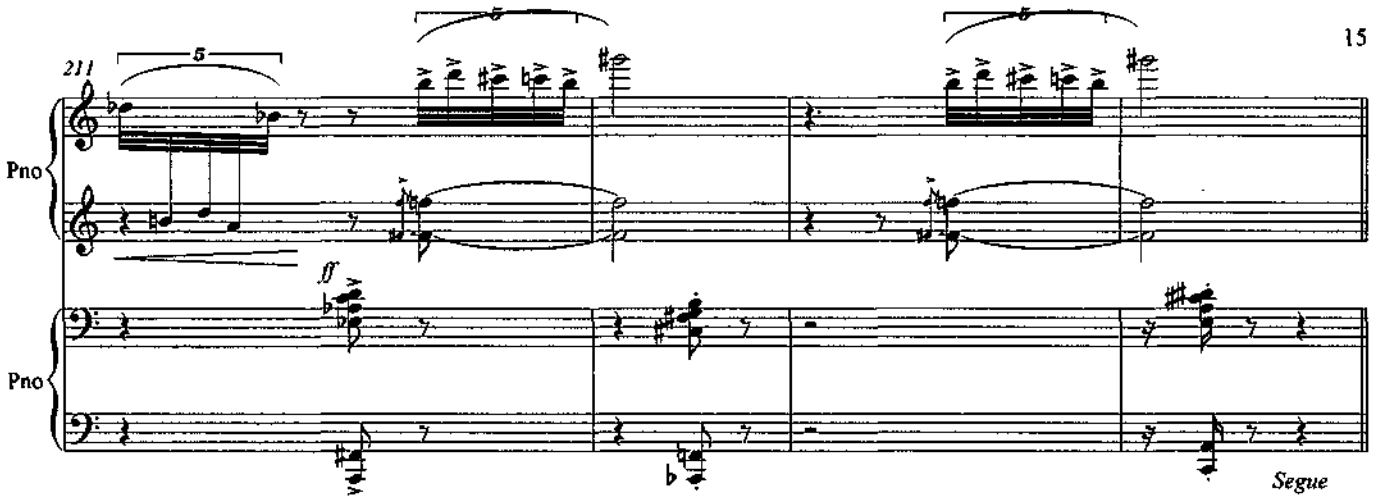
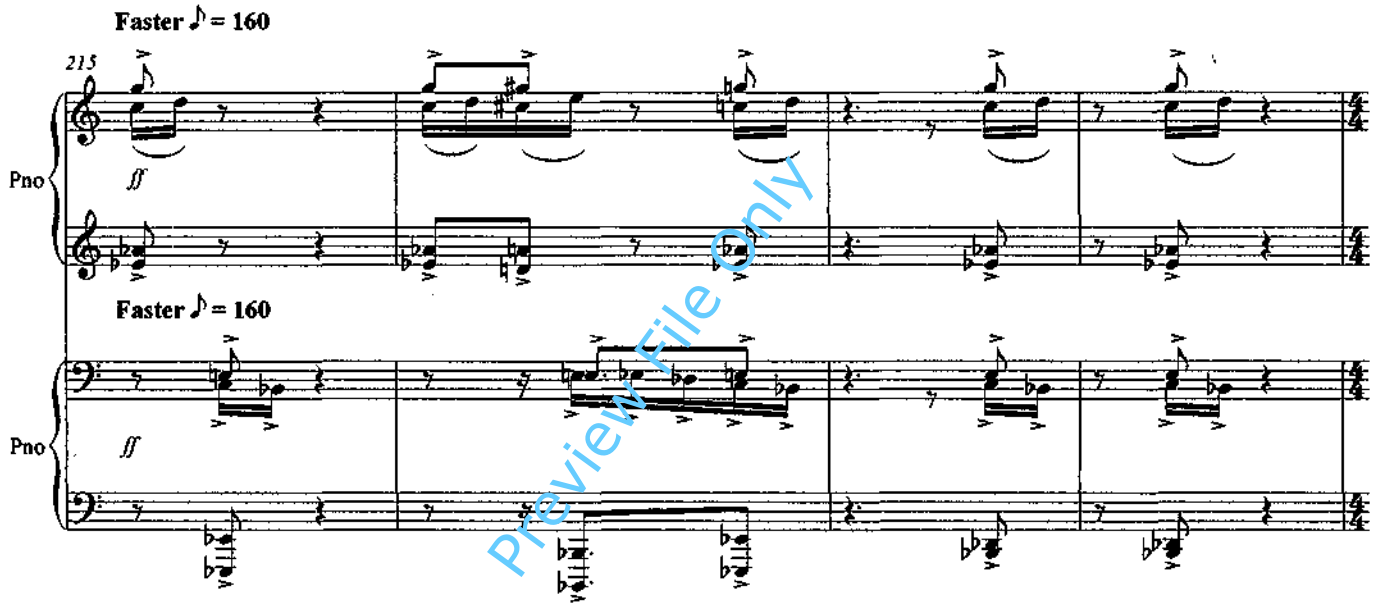


3. The Revenge of Ceres



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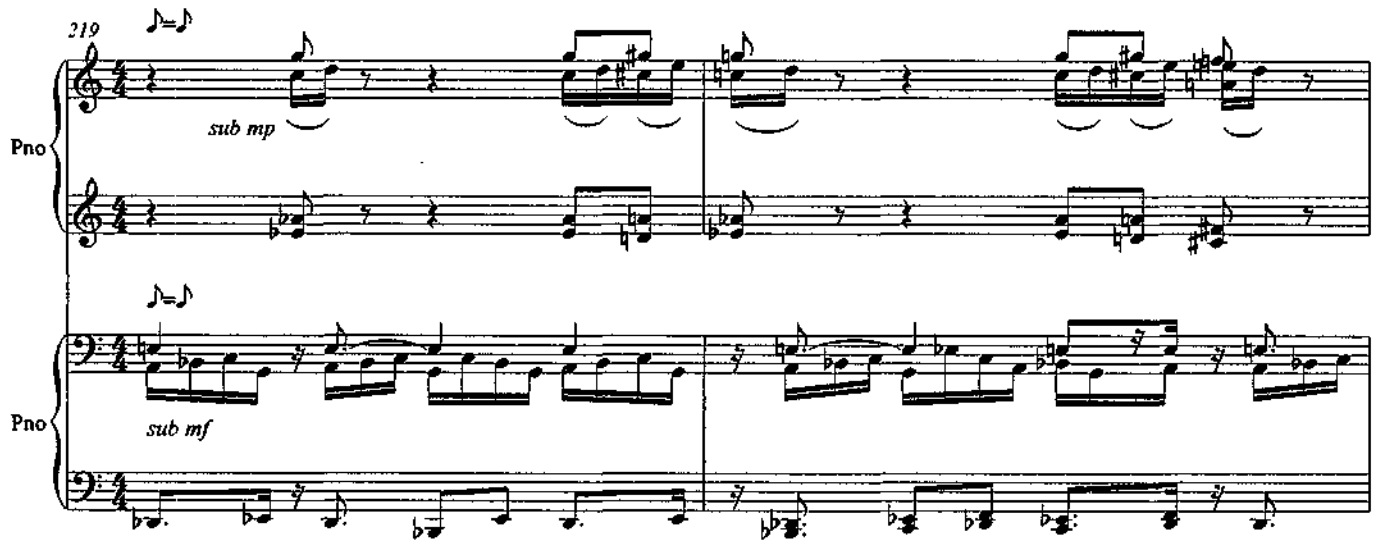

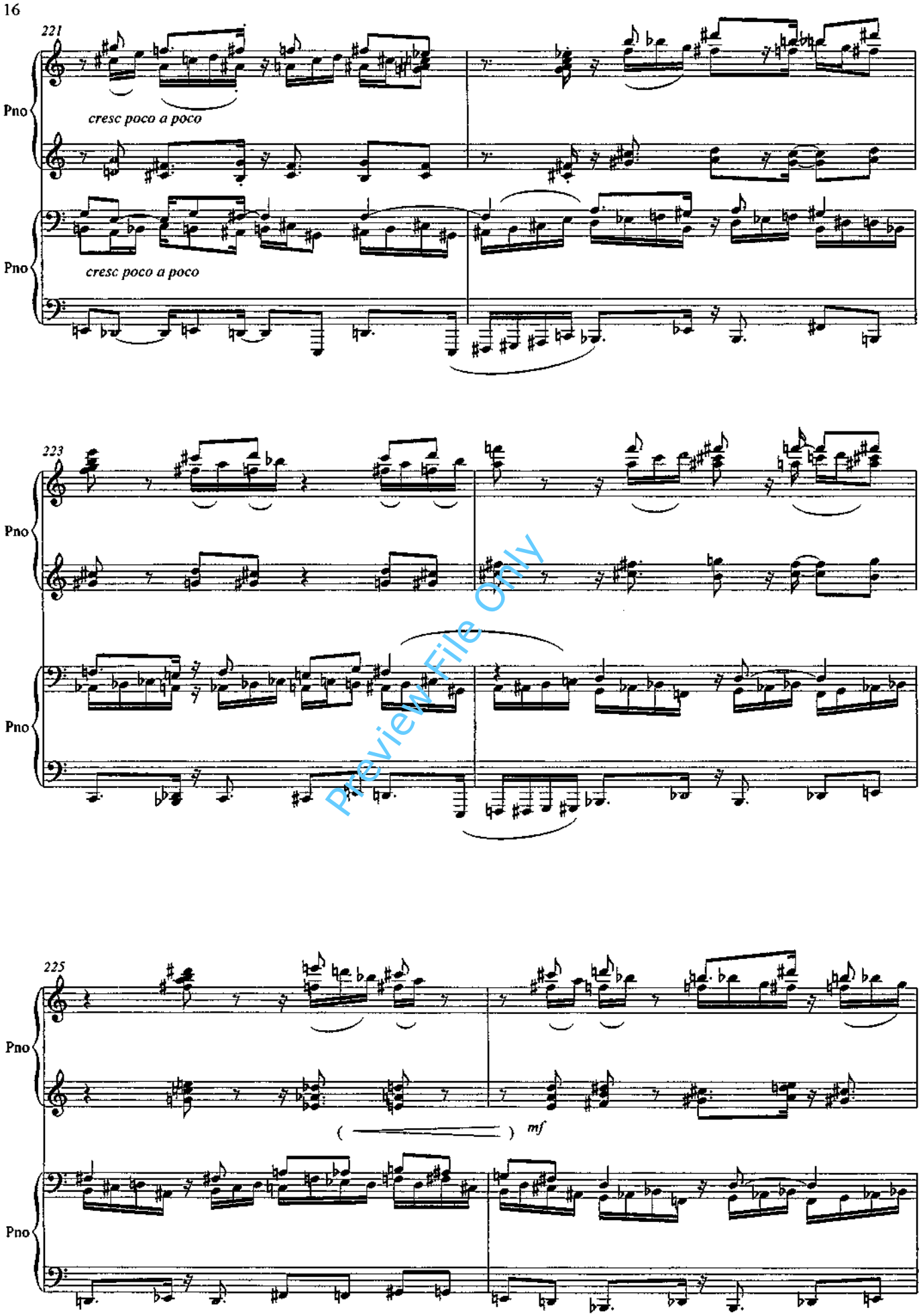

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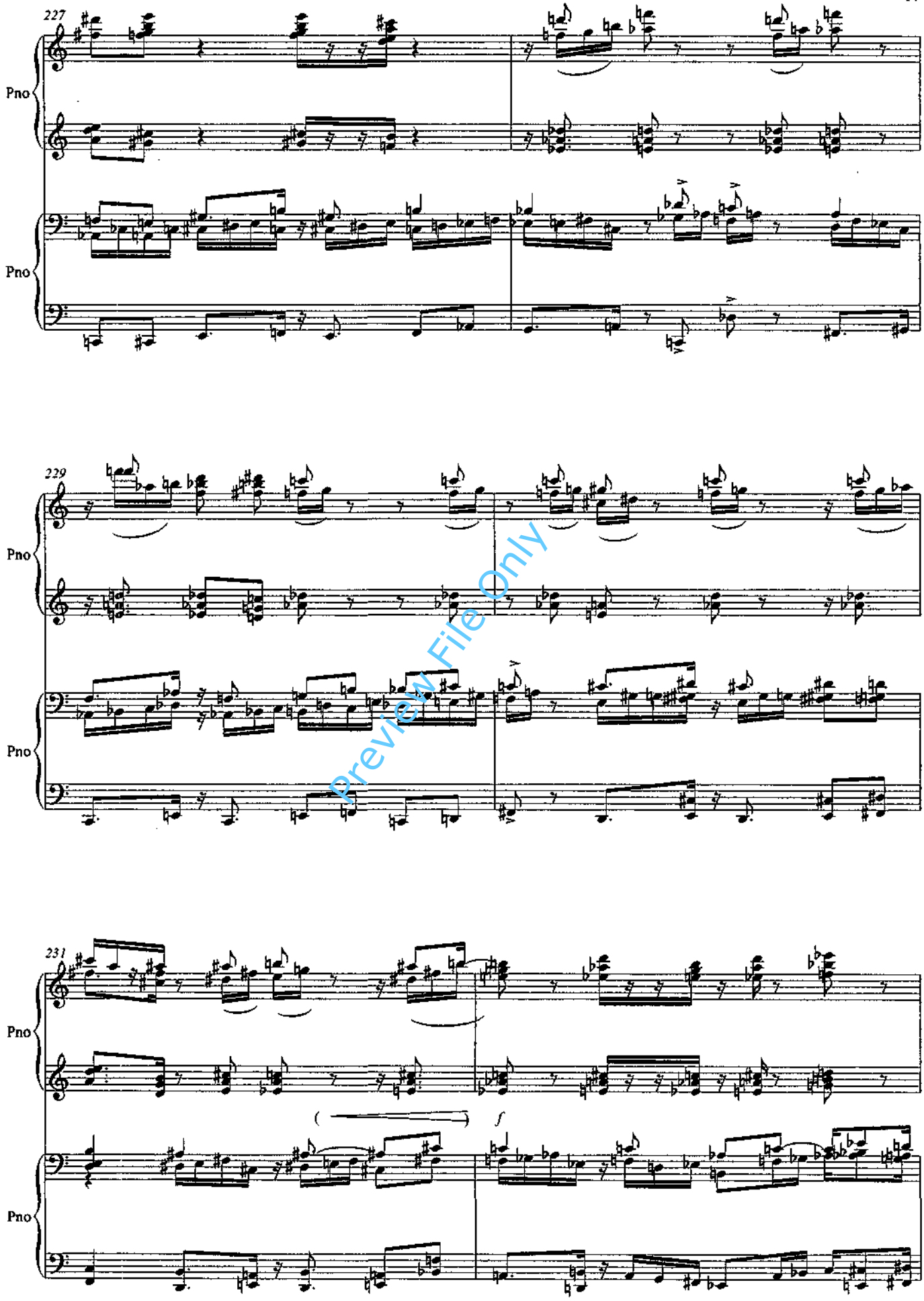

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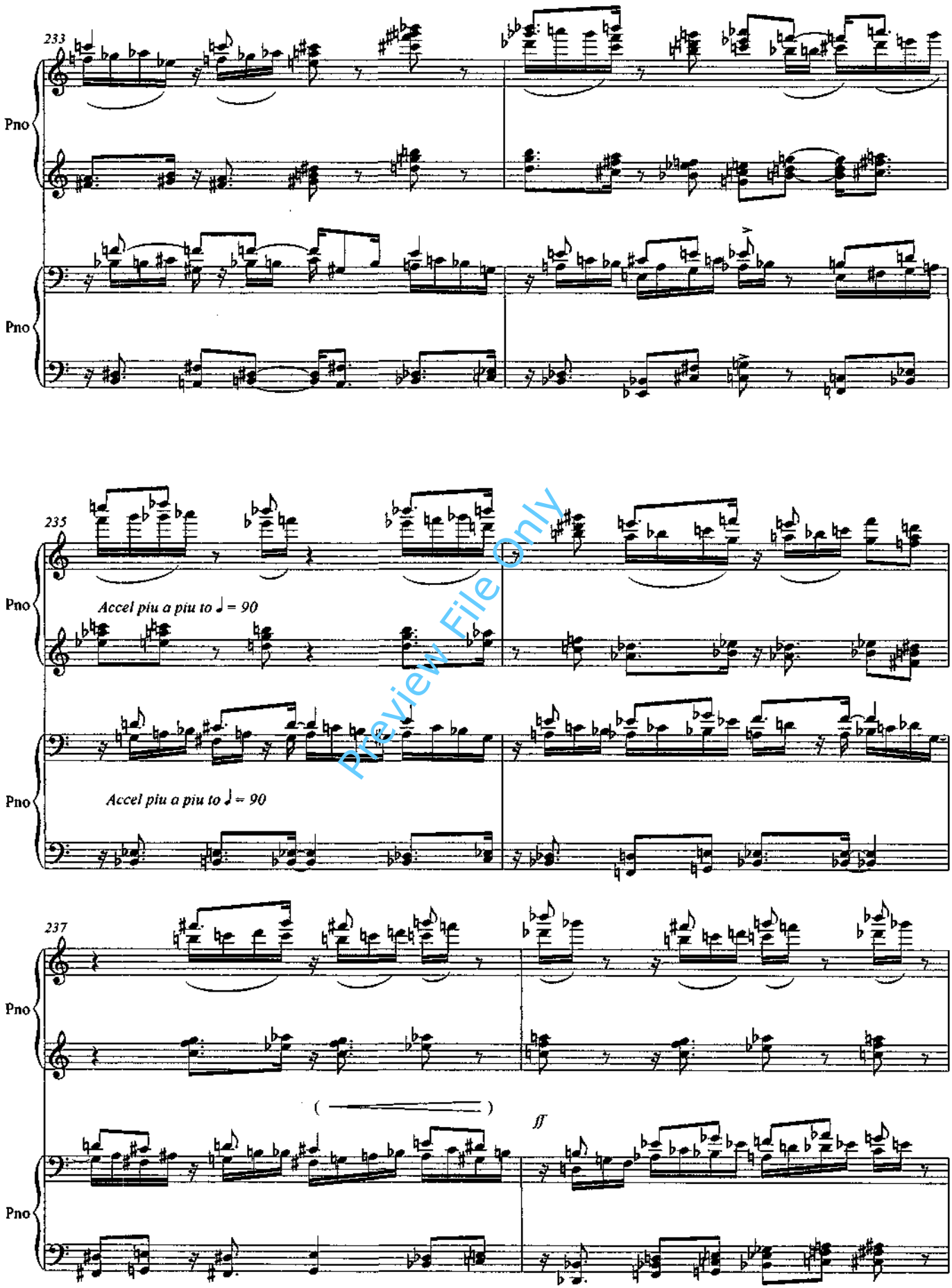

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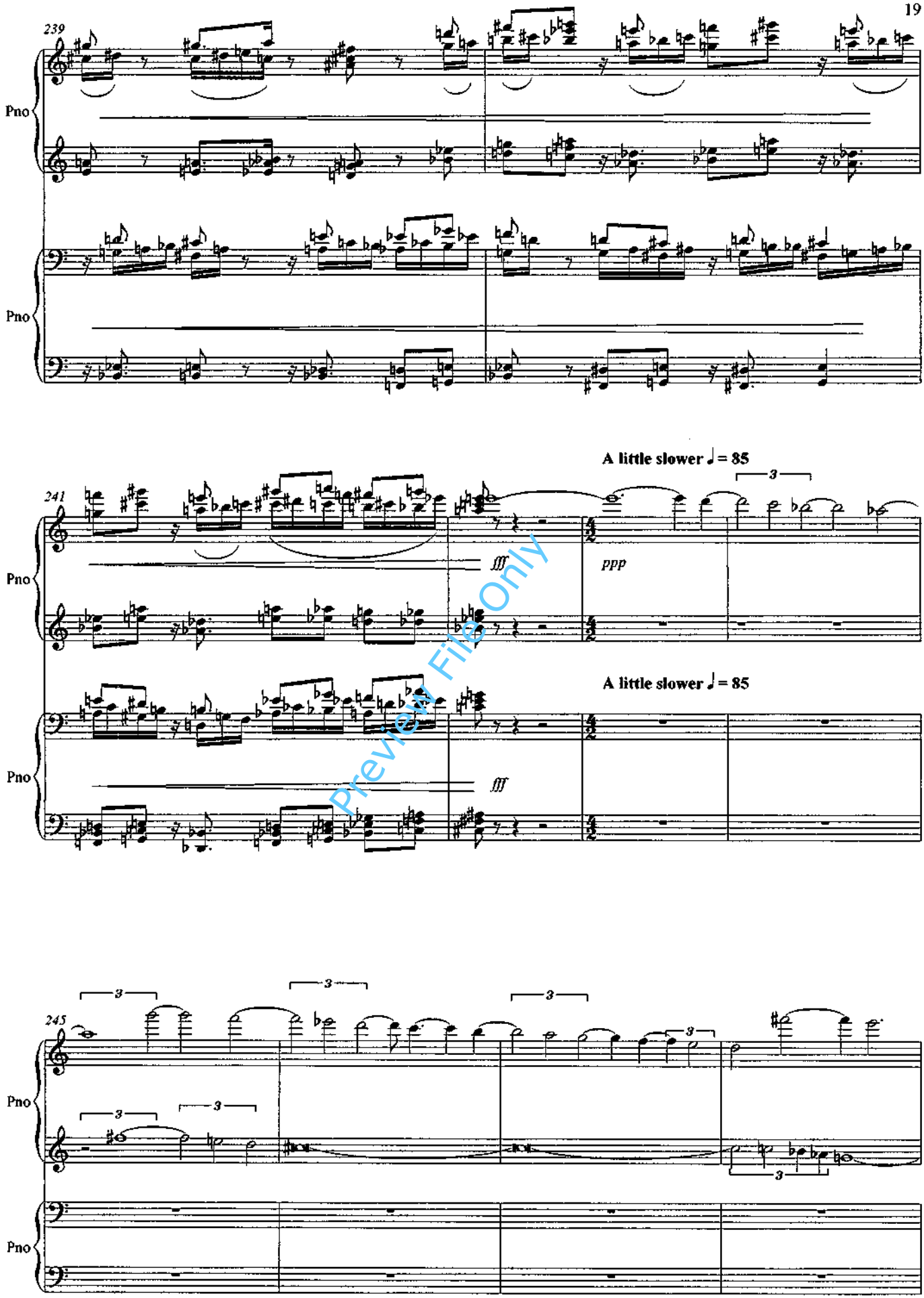

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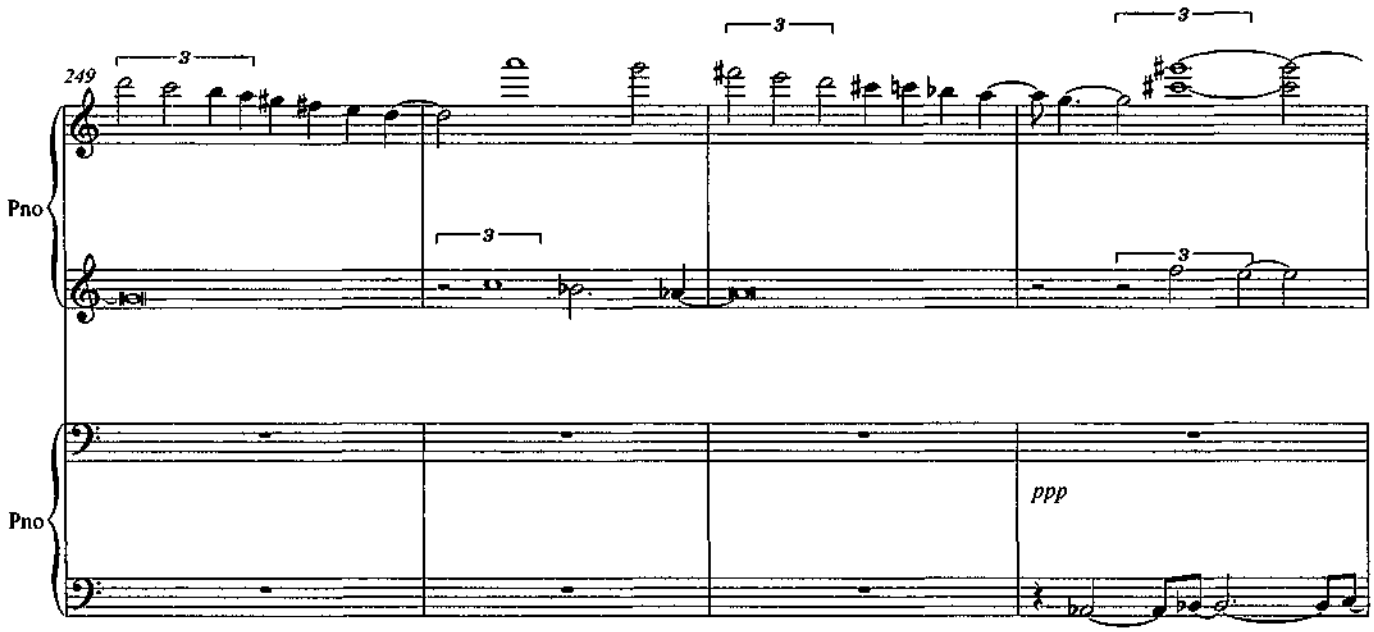

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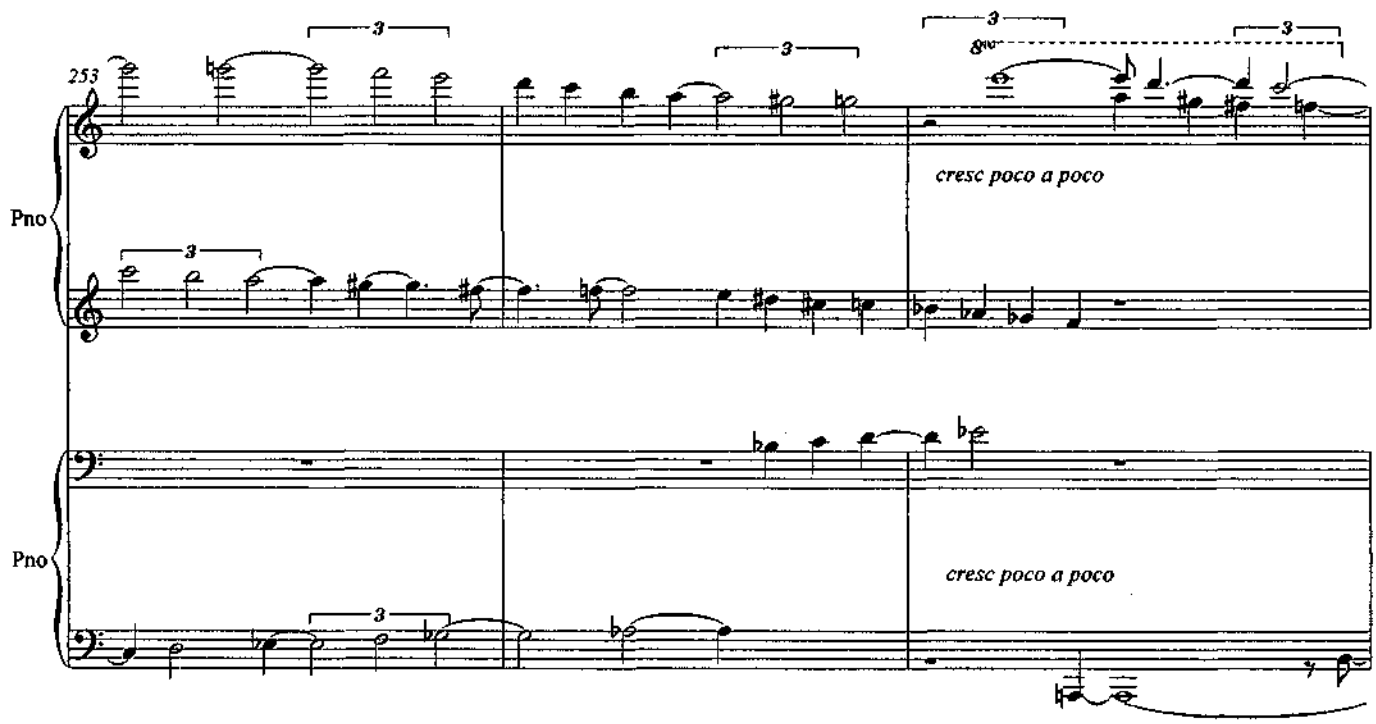

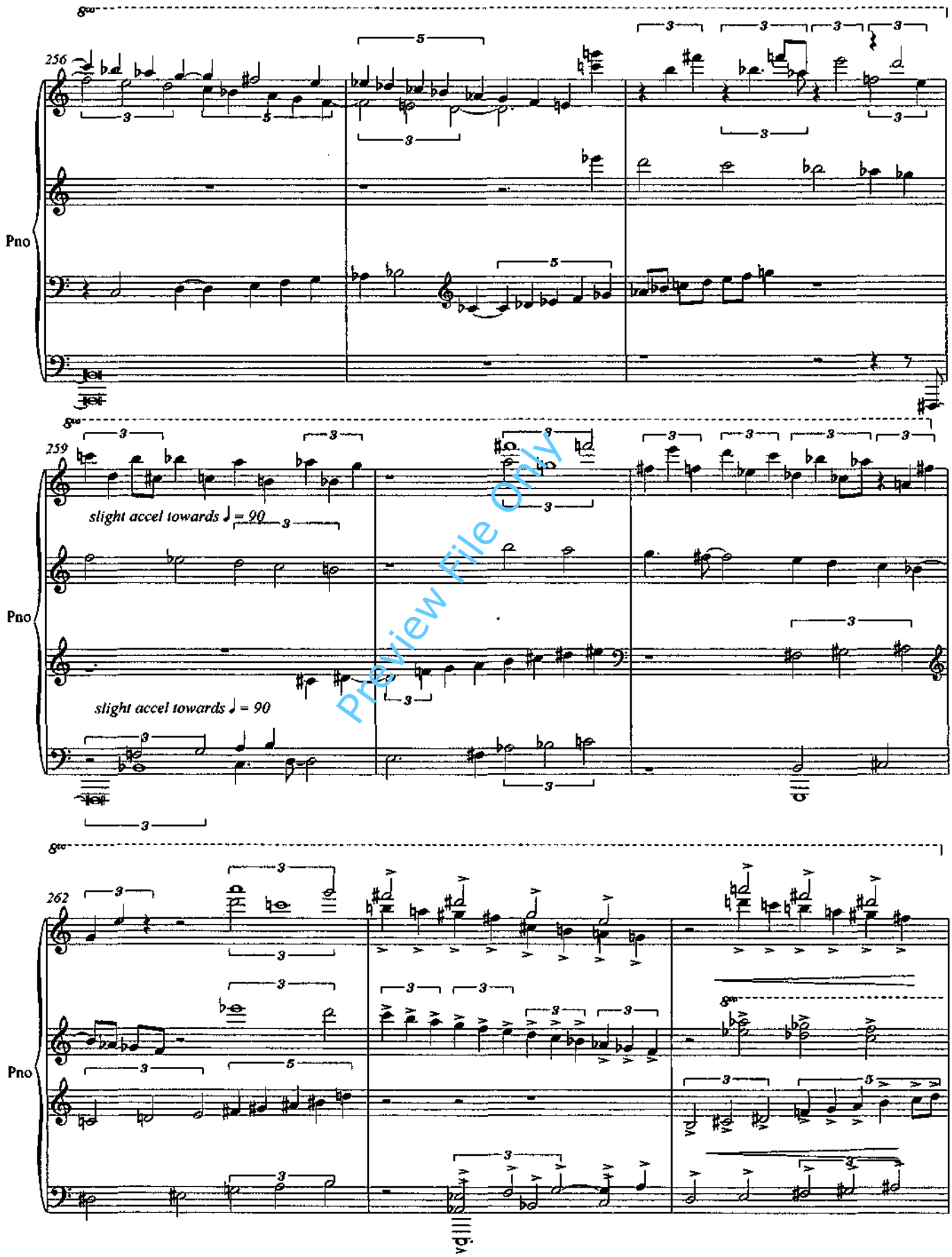

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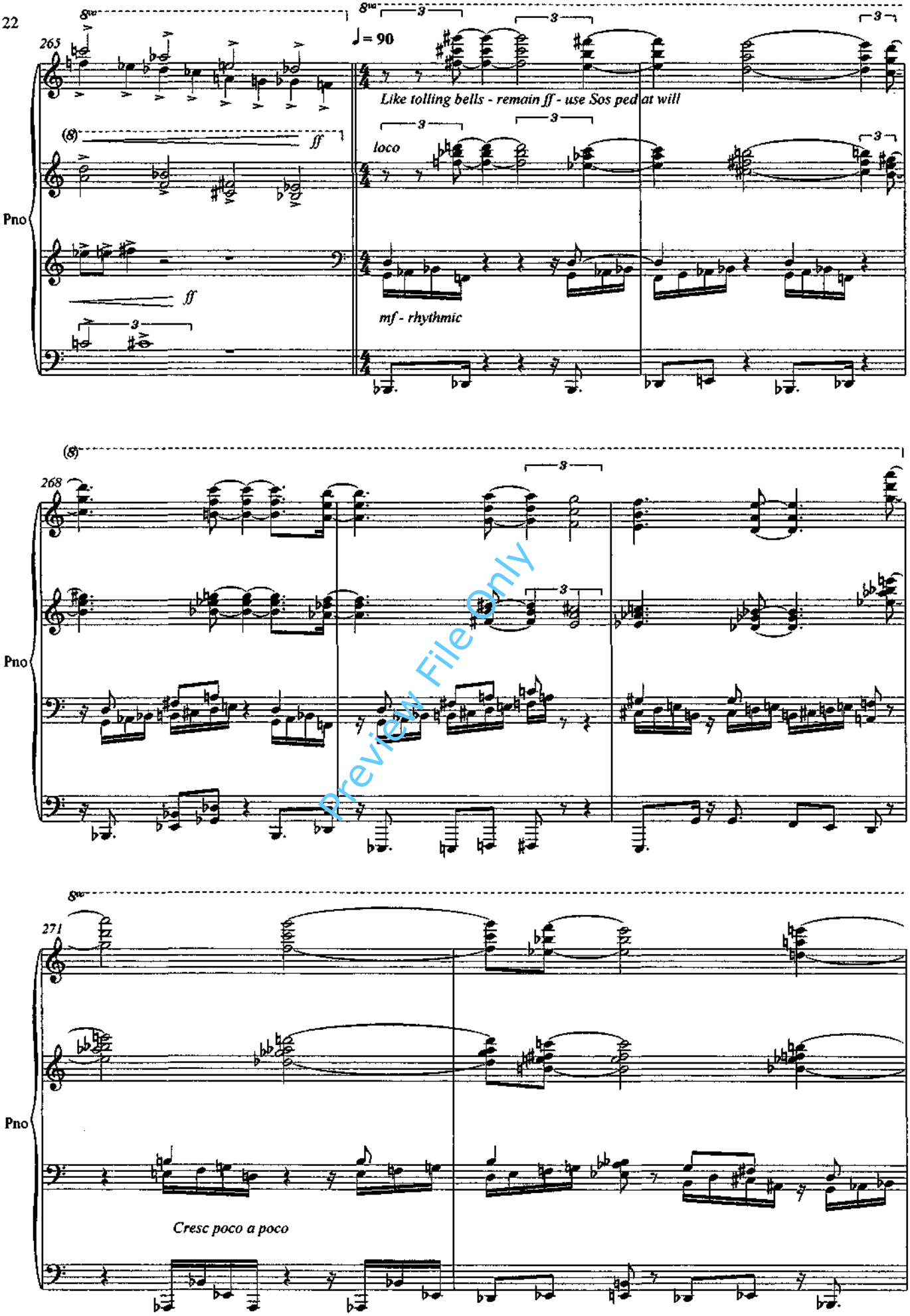

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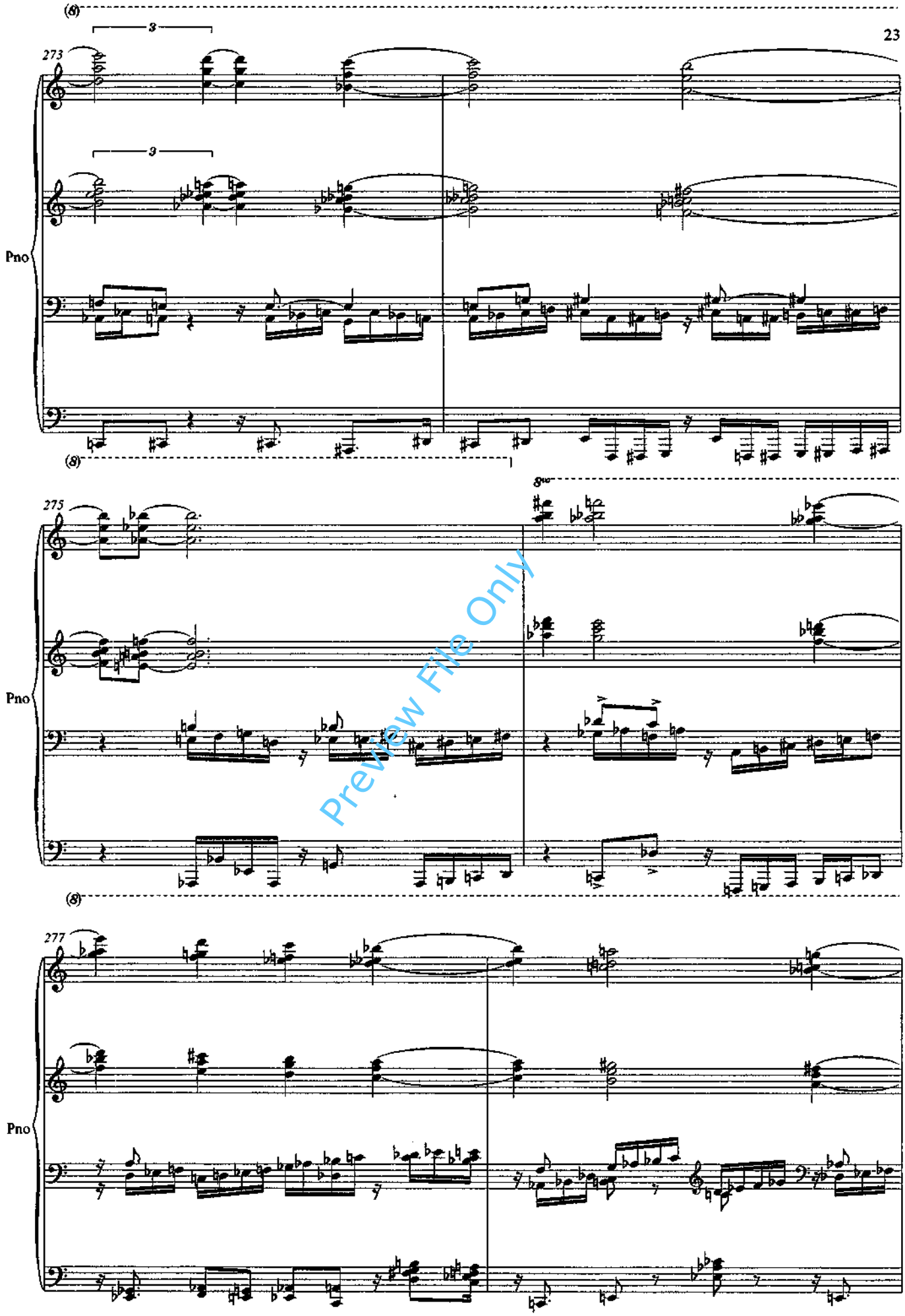

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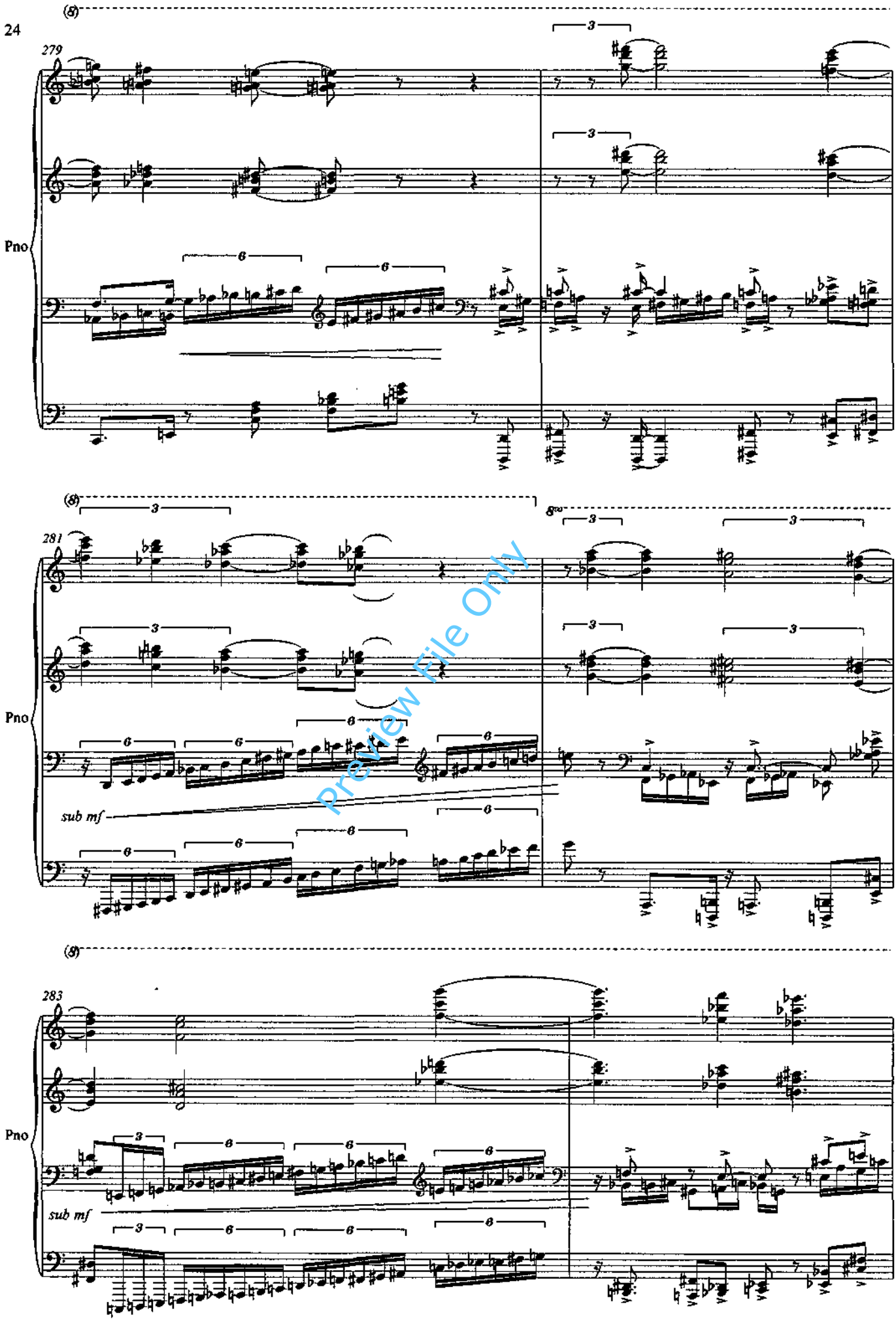

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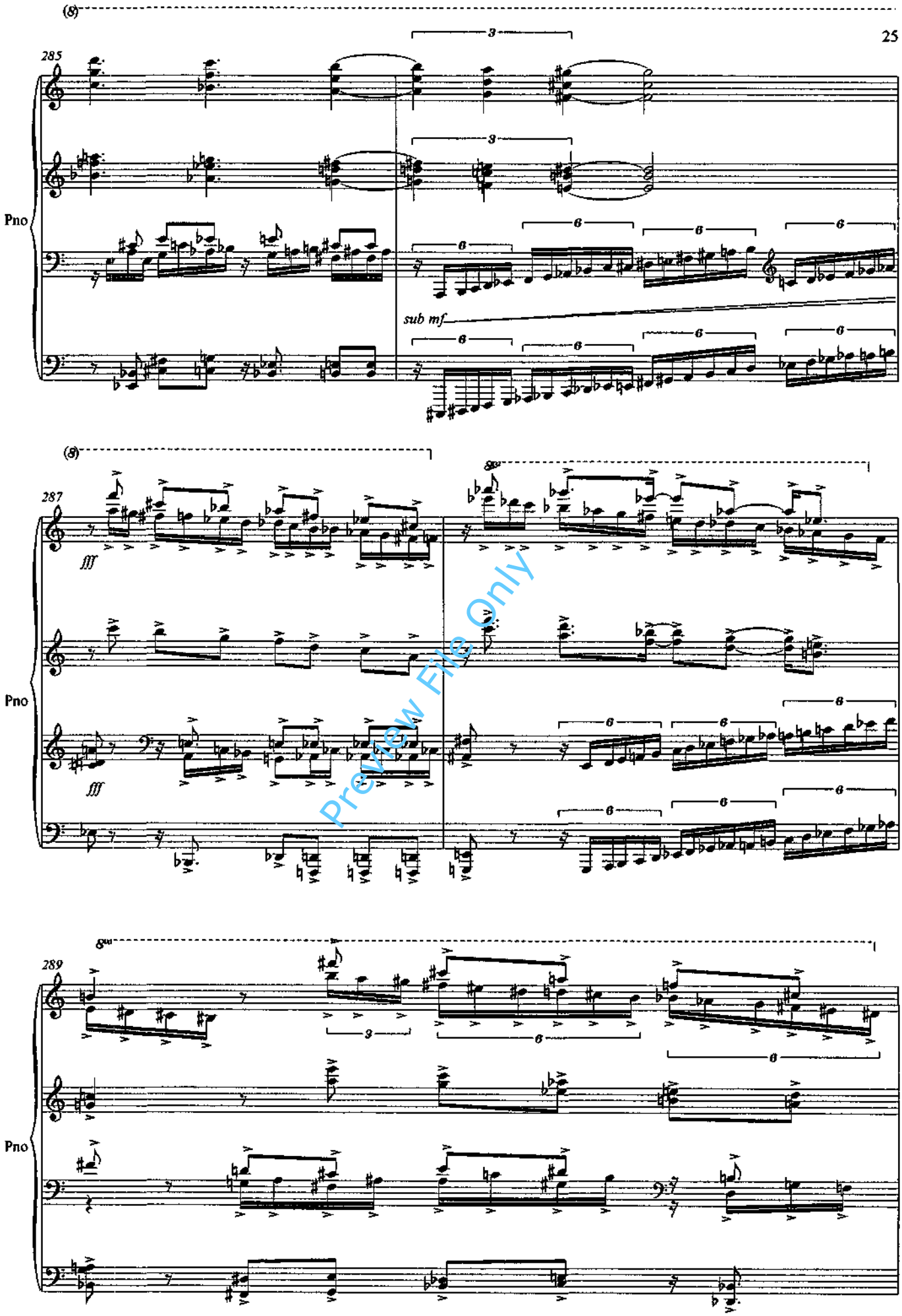

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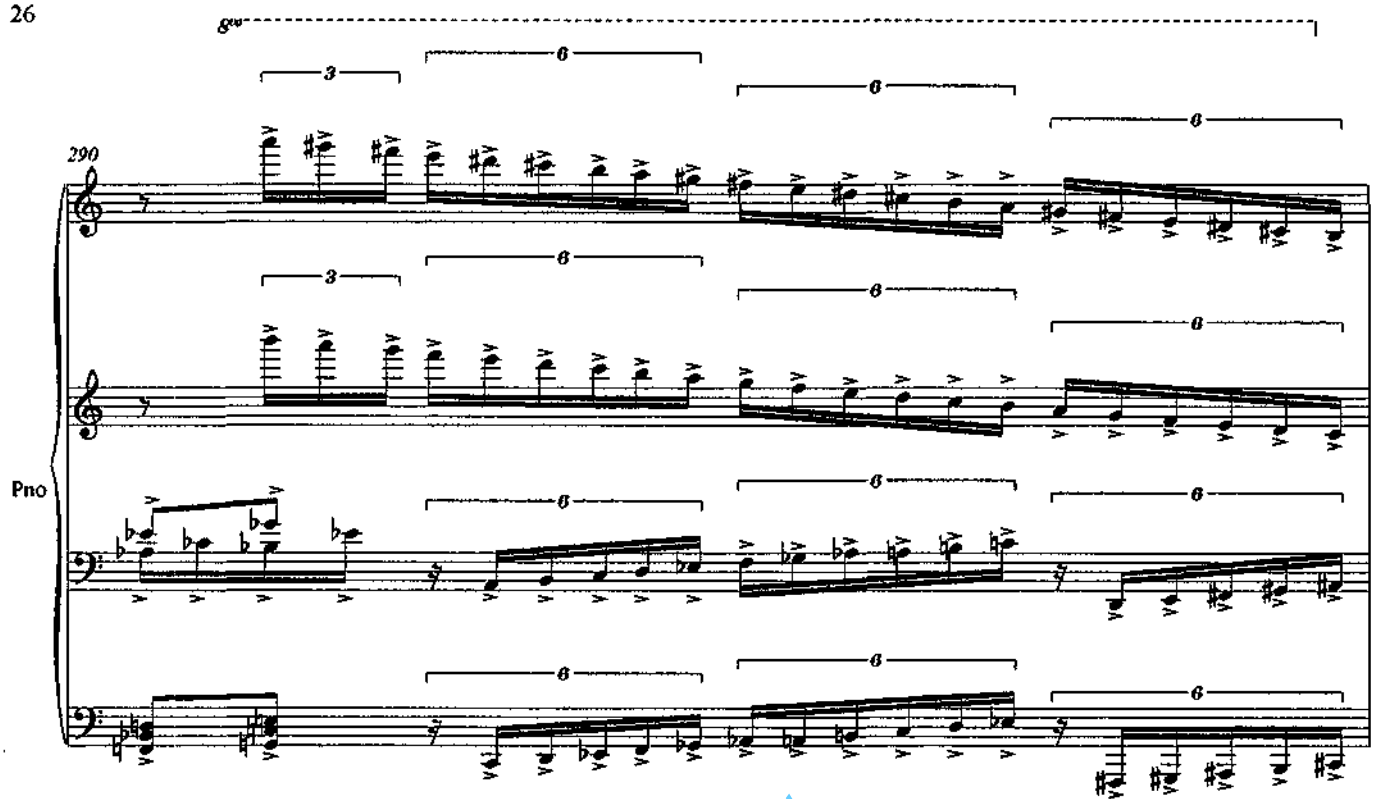

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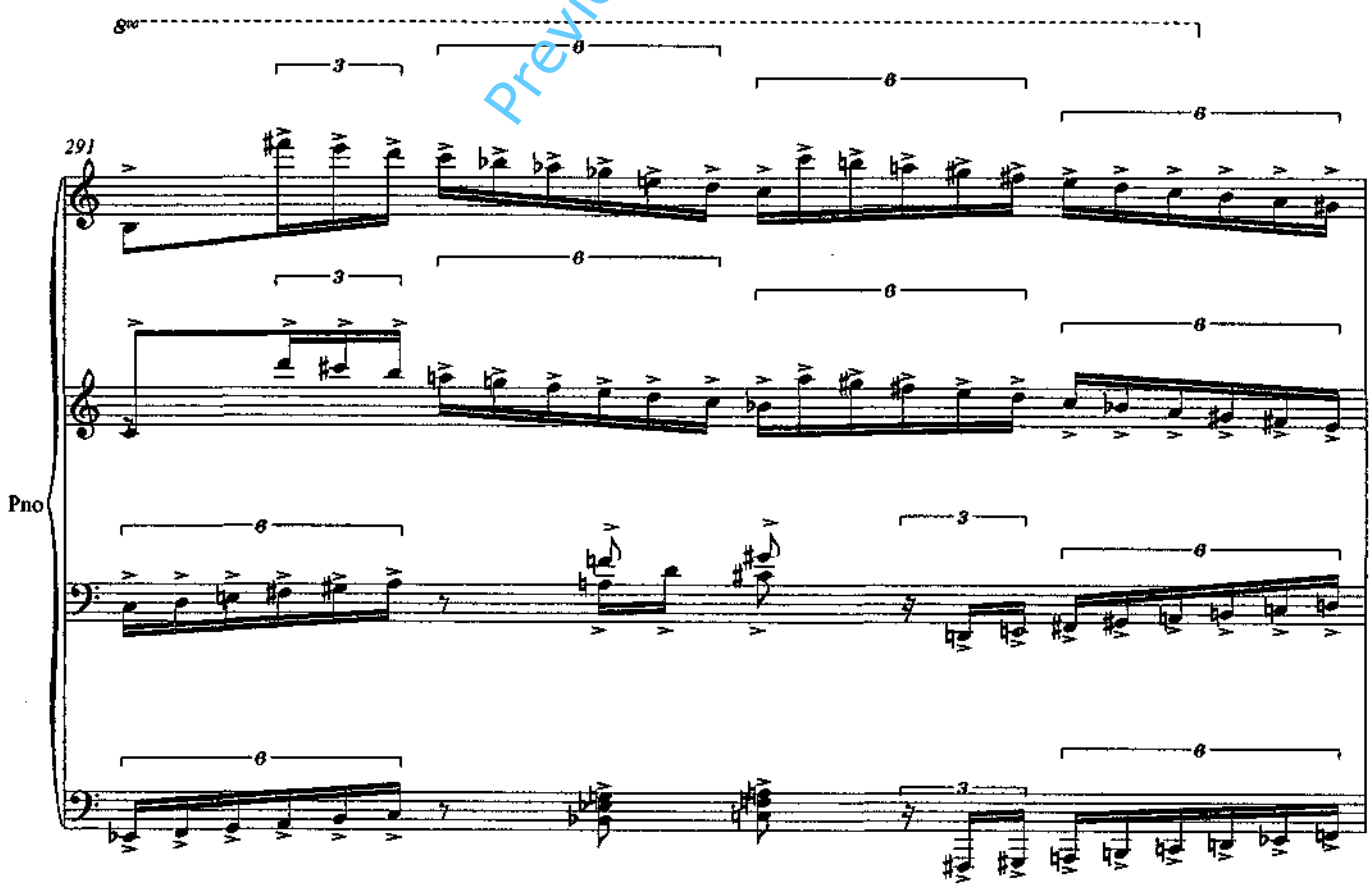

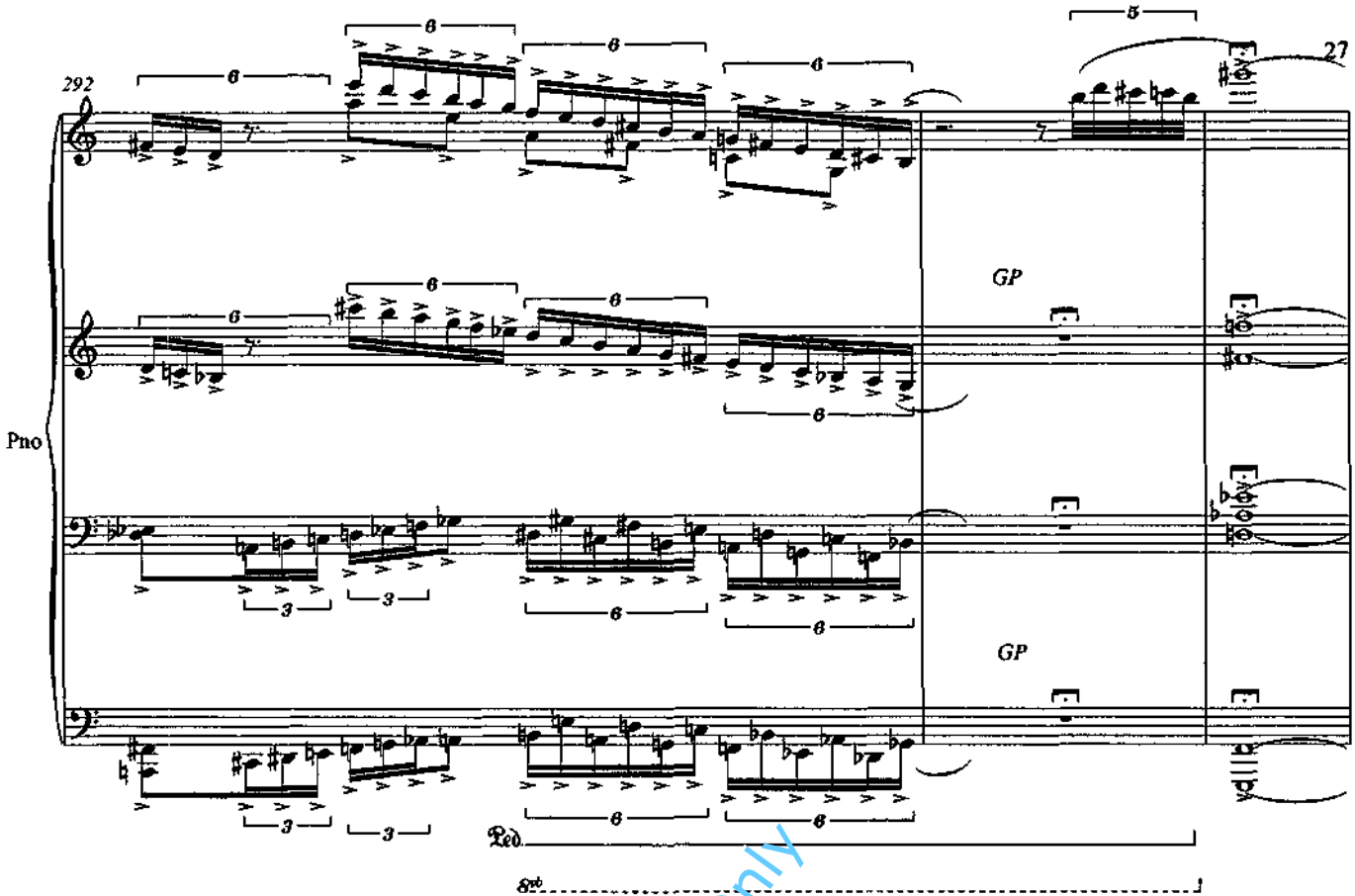
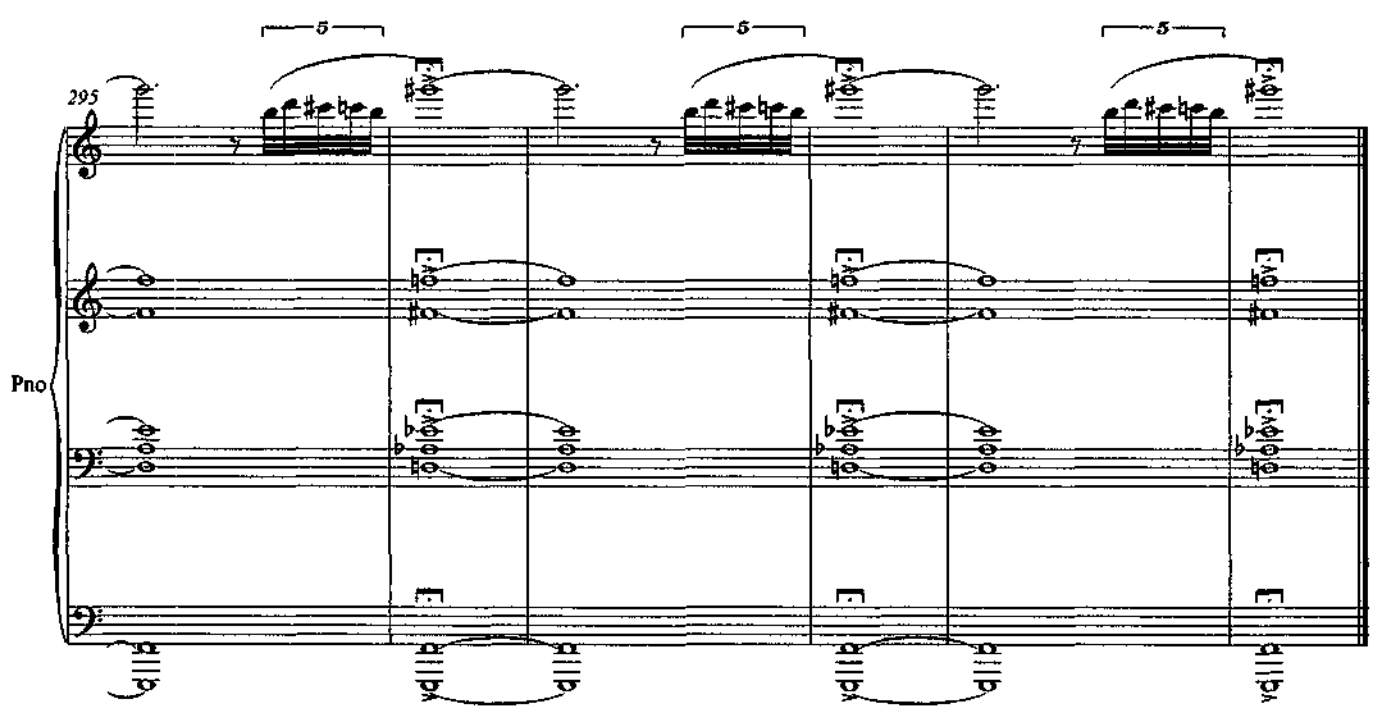
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