Os

for Oboe and Vibraphone

(2002 revision)

Preview File Only

Anthony Gilbert

University of York Music Press

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ANTHONY GILBERT

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N.B.: in *Freefalls 1* and *2* synchronisation between the parts is approximate.

Duration: ca. 15' 42"

The University *of York* Music Press

OS **Anthony Gilbert, 1999**

Although the great rose windows of Chartres Cathedral have fascinated me for nearly 50 years, this is only the second piece in which I have been at all able to respond to their complex messages. The first, *Réflexions, Rose Nord*, was written in 1996, and is for Bass Clarinet and Vibraphone. **Os** emerged in 1999, as a response to a much earlier commission from Melinda Maxwell. The title has many meanings. In Ashkenazic Hebrew it means 'sign' or 'warning'; in Latin, 'mouth', and in French, 'bone'. All have a relevance here, as do the shapes of the letters, as you will now see.

The best way to approach the dark West Rose is obviously along the nave on an early afternoon in late autumn, when the sun comes directly through the central Hostia/Moshiach figure and the wonderful dancing symmetry of the concentric rings of circles predominates. But this is a Judgement-day window, and on moving closer, perhaps to stand centrally on the great circular labyrinth on which it seems to be a colossal gloss, the sun and one's focus of attention shift to the bottom of the outer ring, dominated by ***Os inferni***, the monstrous mouth of hell in the left-hand circle. Now, in the detail, the symmetry gives way to a perception of what is clearly a kind of labyrinth in itself. We see 'dry bones' rising from their tombs and reassembling themselves to travel on parallel paths to judgement, thereafter embarking on asymmetrical courses leading either down and round to where trident-bearing demons prod their victims into the infernal maw; or more tortuously upward, passing evangelical beasts and then angels, some with trumpets, leading the final dance into the welcoming arms of Abraham.

This is approximately how it happens in my *Os* too, not necessarily in that order and with no implications of literal representation. Perhaps the strongest link is in the constant rapid circling motion of the writing, in both small and large scale, and in the labyrinthine lines, all modal transformations of serpentine phrases from the *Dies Irae* plainchant. Structurally, too, there is a parallel to the way the eye will jump from one image to another in this vast window. But you, the listener, may form wholly other impressions. The piece lasts 15 minutes.

A.G.

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Commissioned by Melinda Maxwell
with funds provided by The Golsoncott Foundation

for Melinda Maxwell

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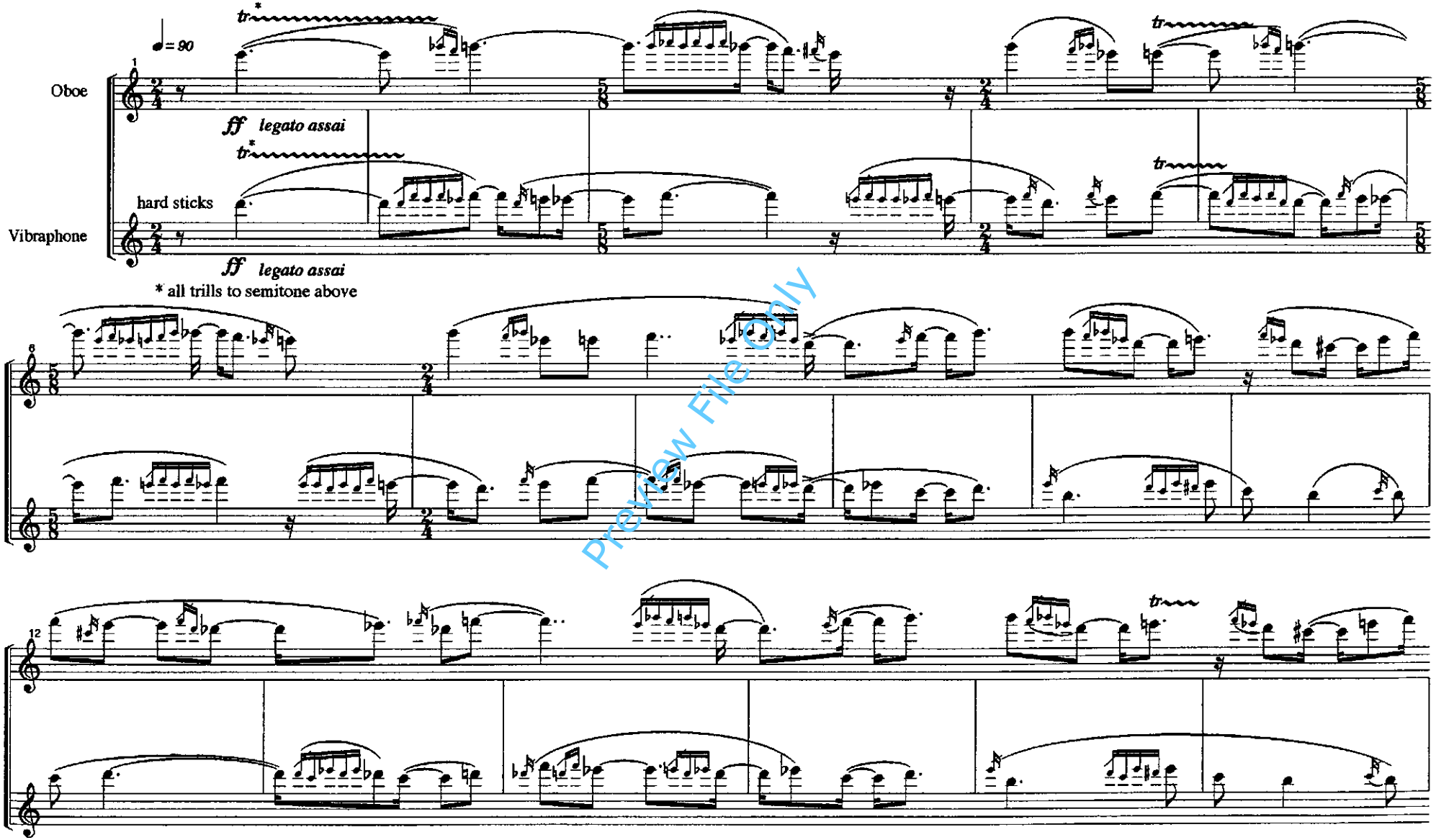
Freefall 1 - ***frenzied***



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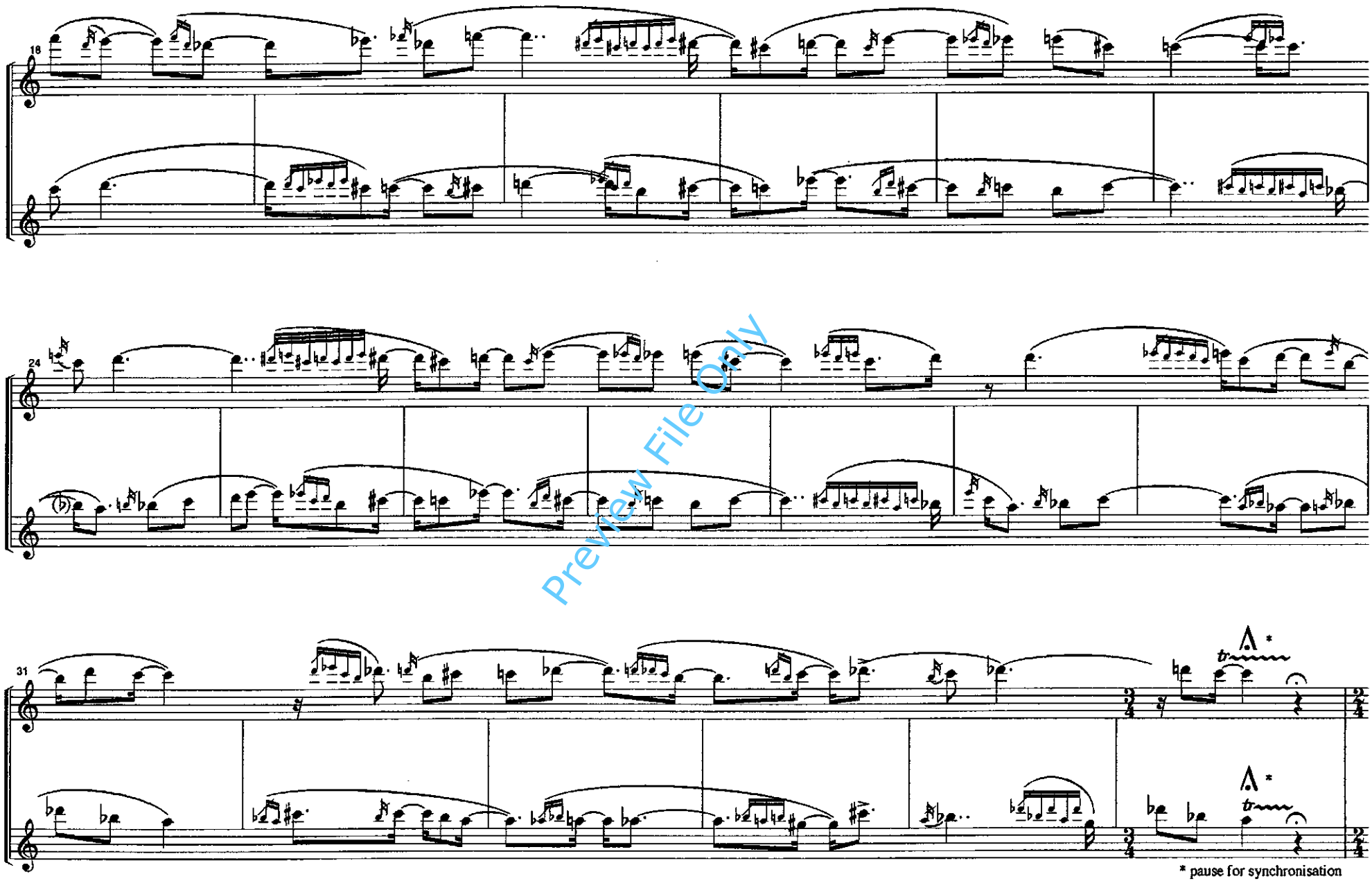

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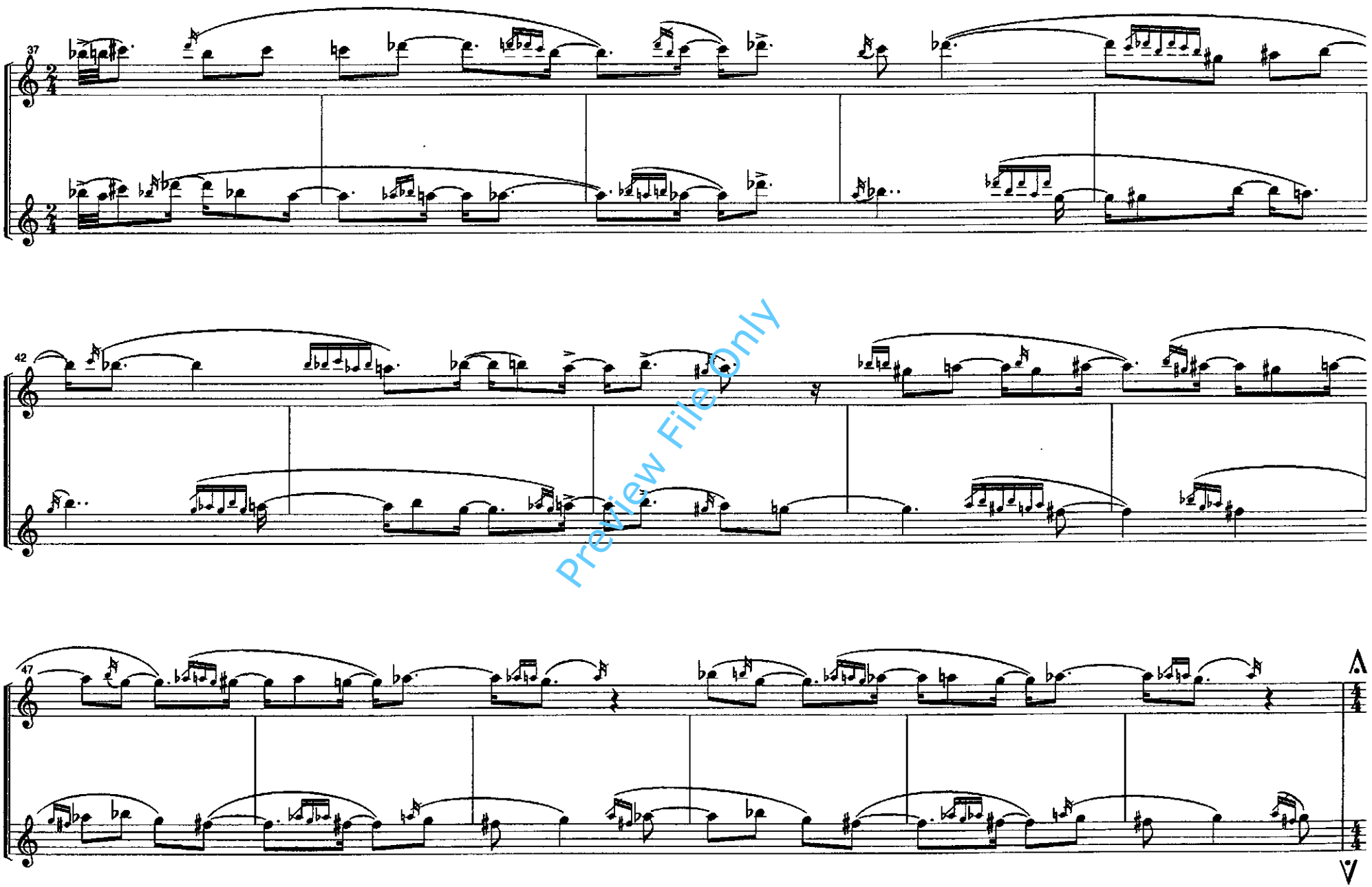

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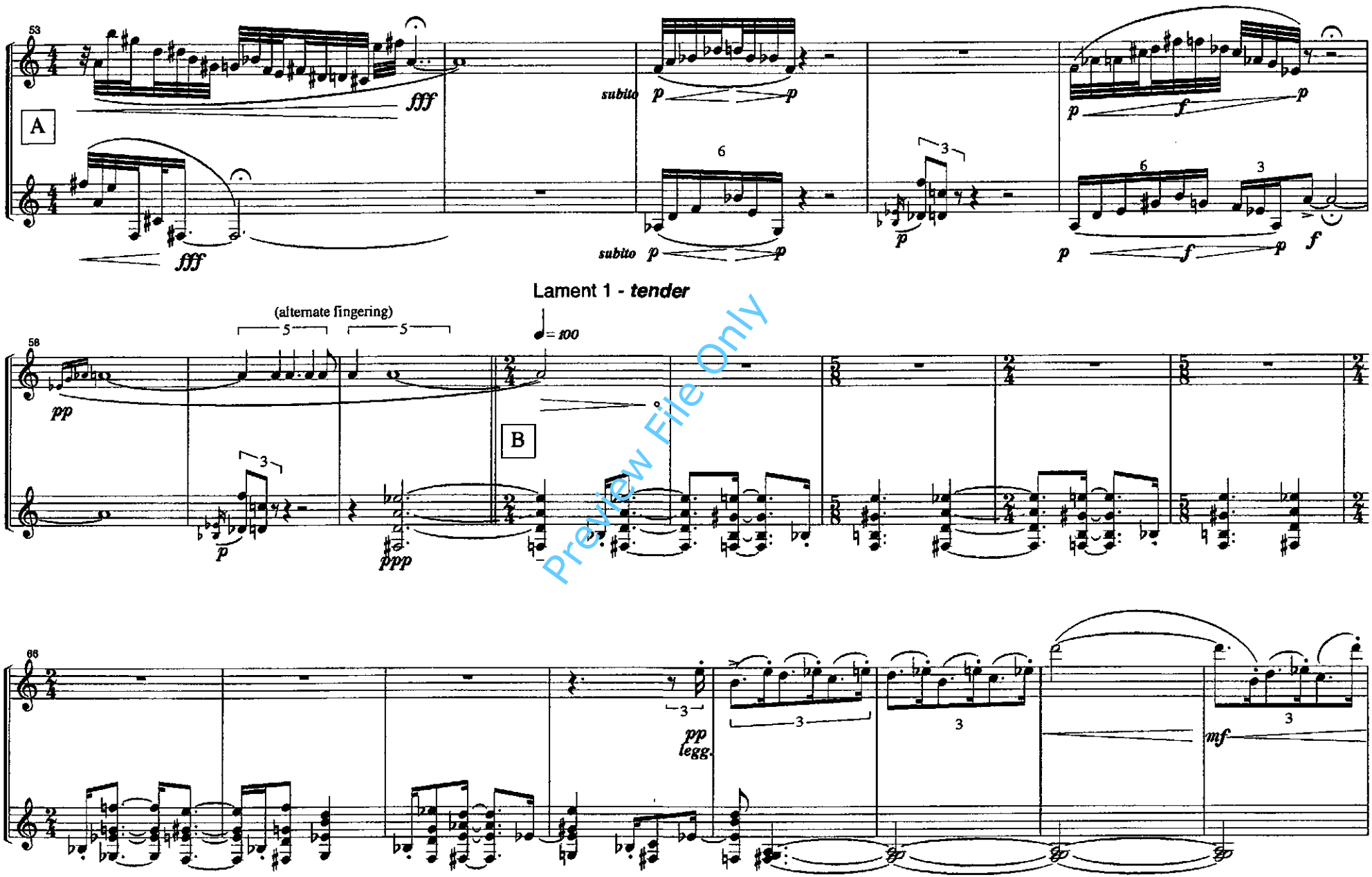

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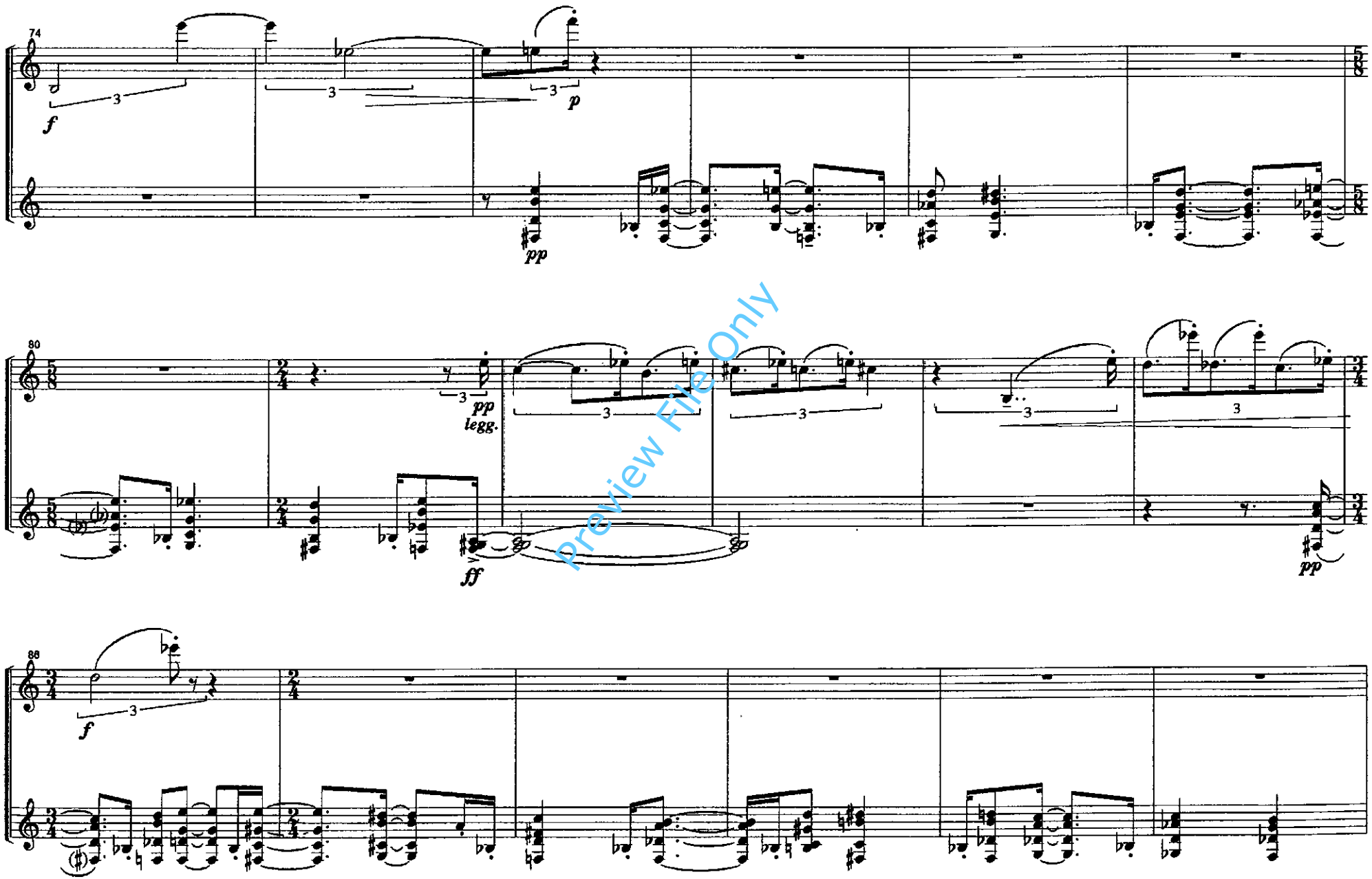

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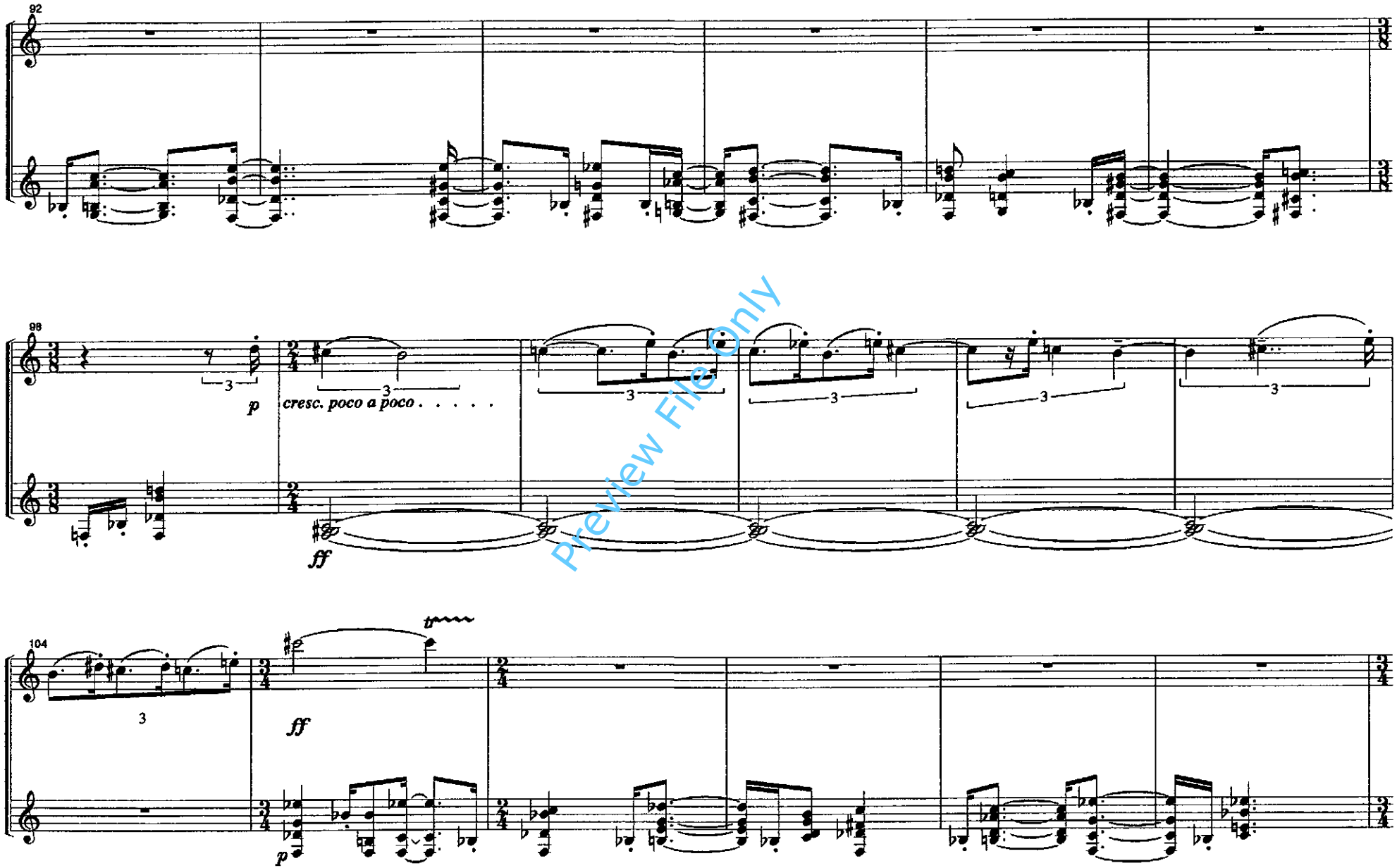

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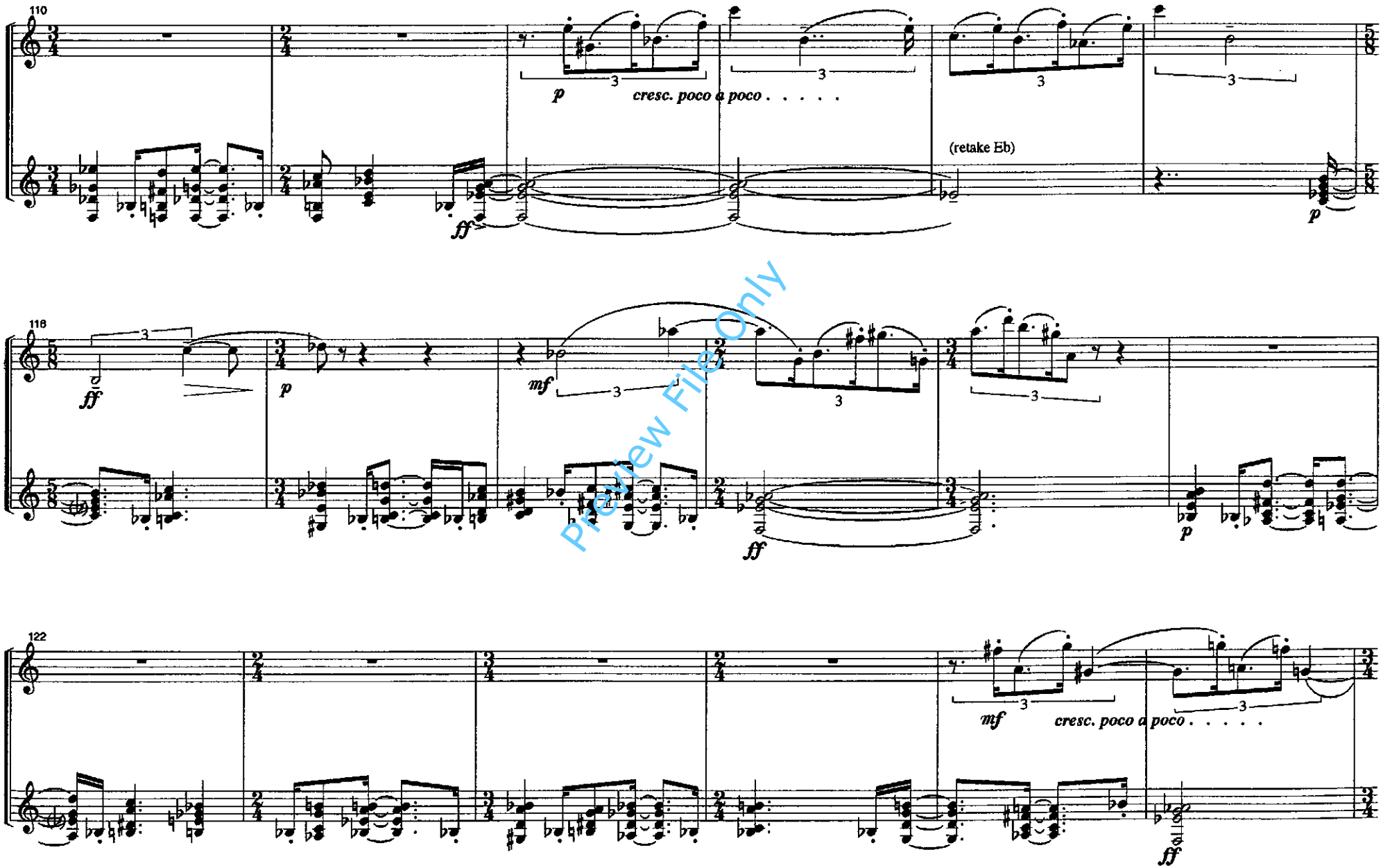

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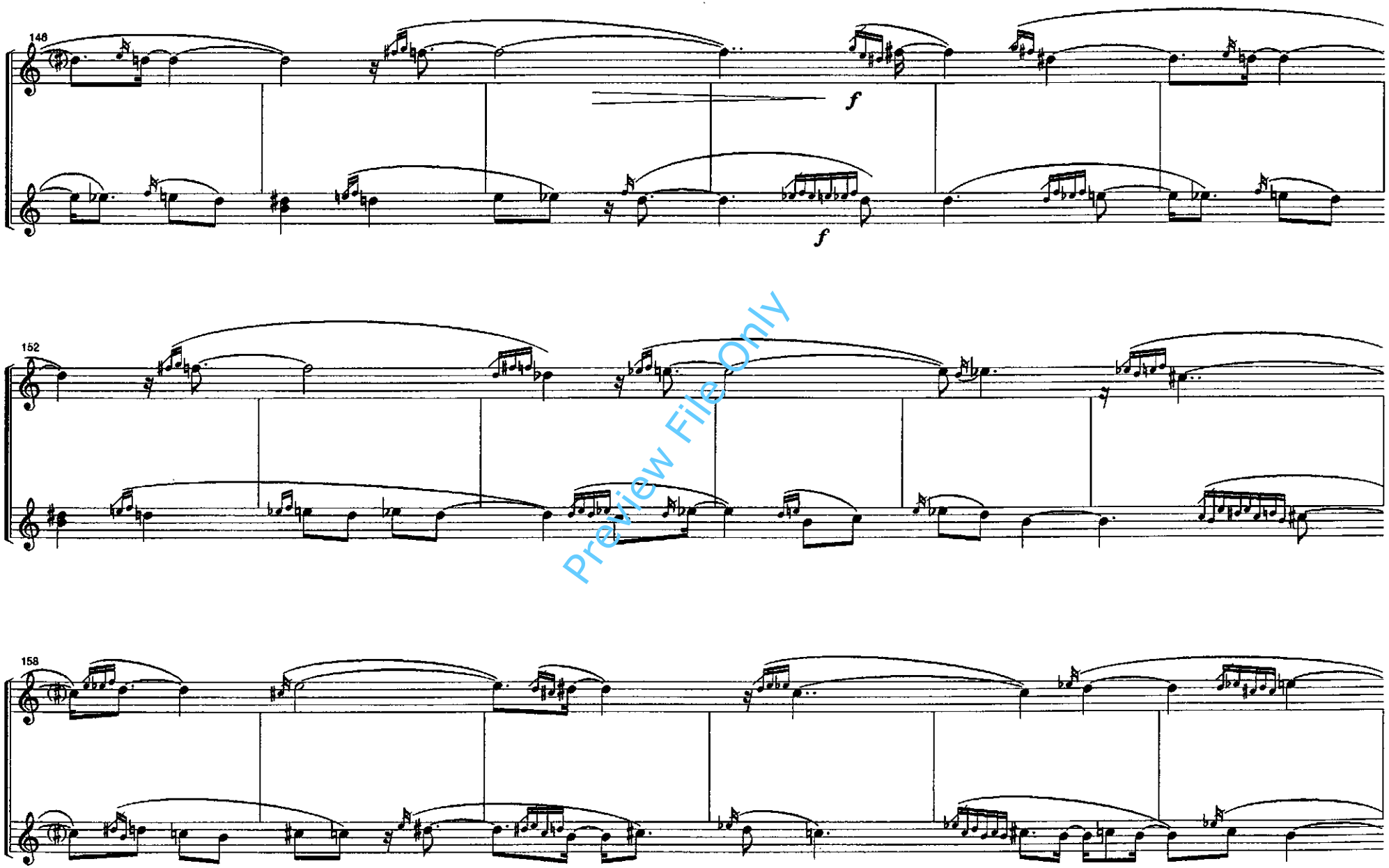

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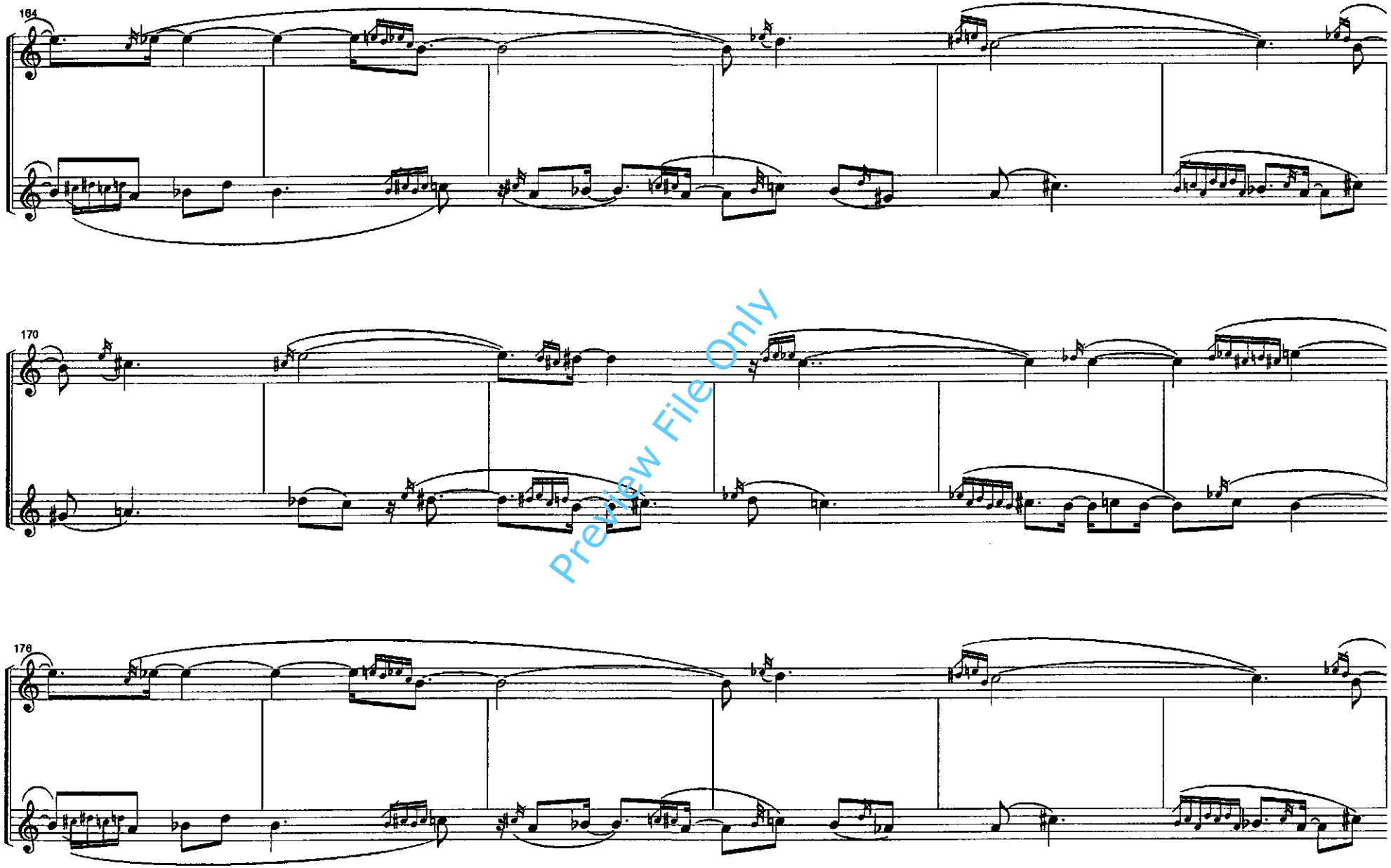

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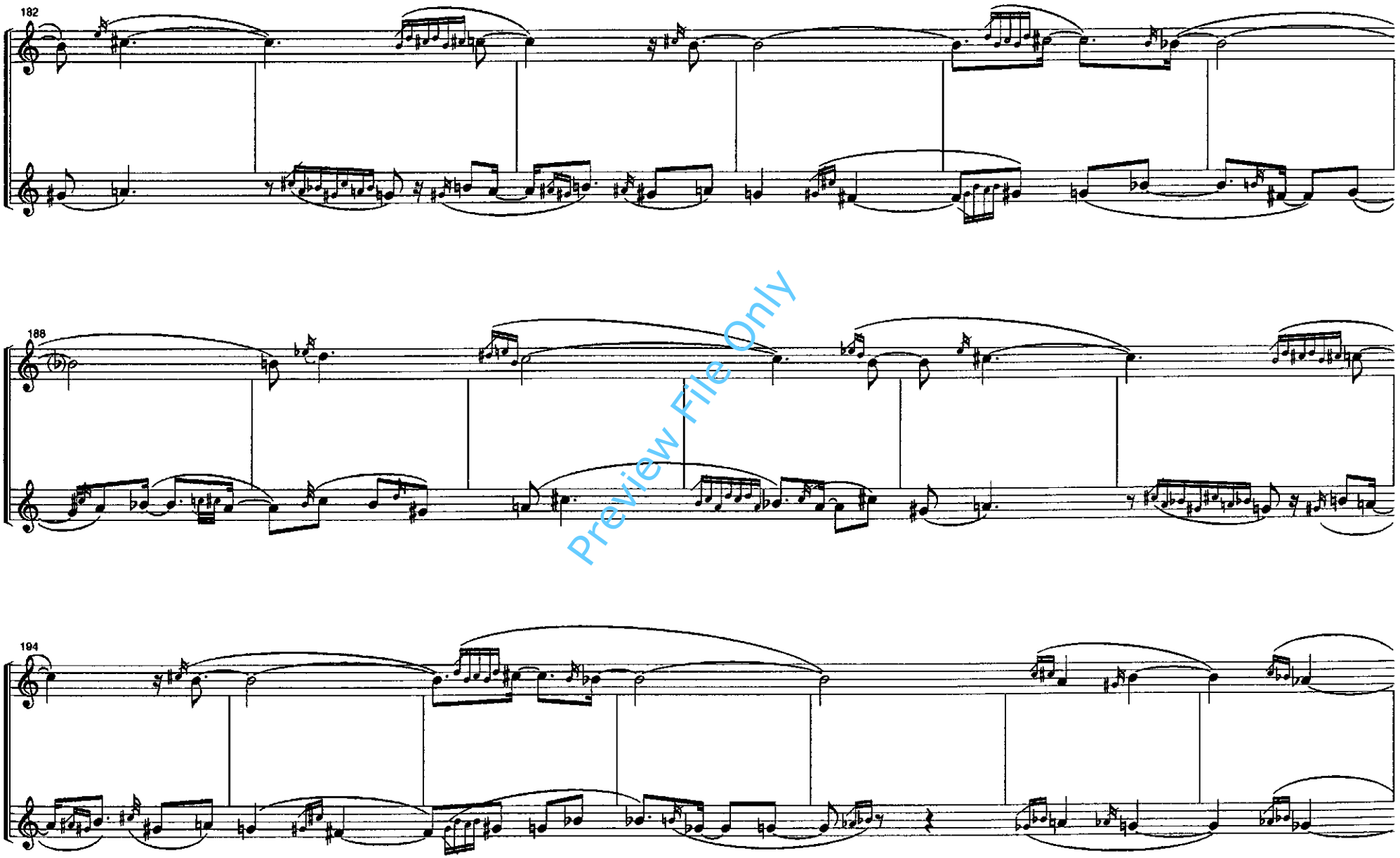

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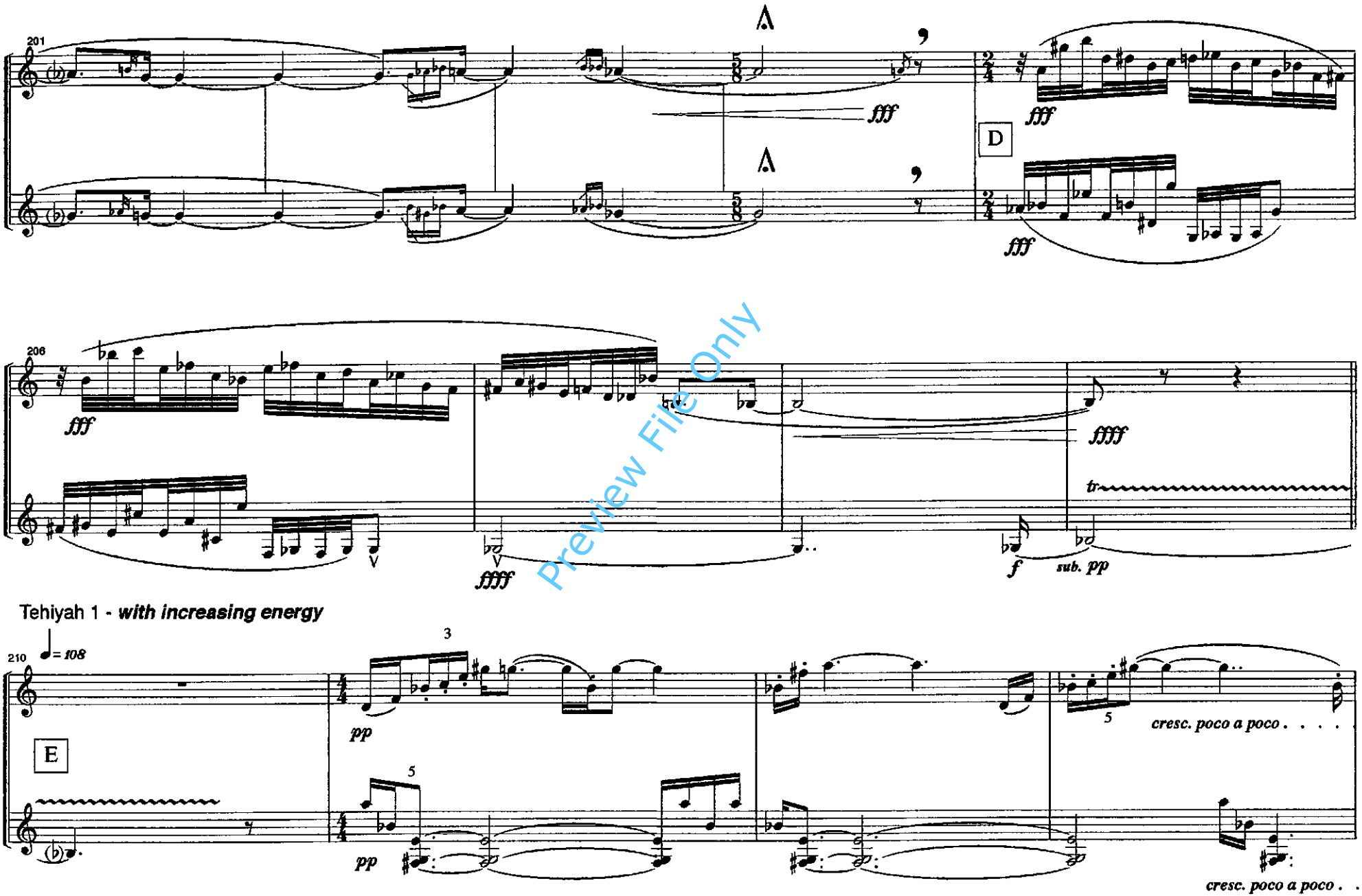

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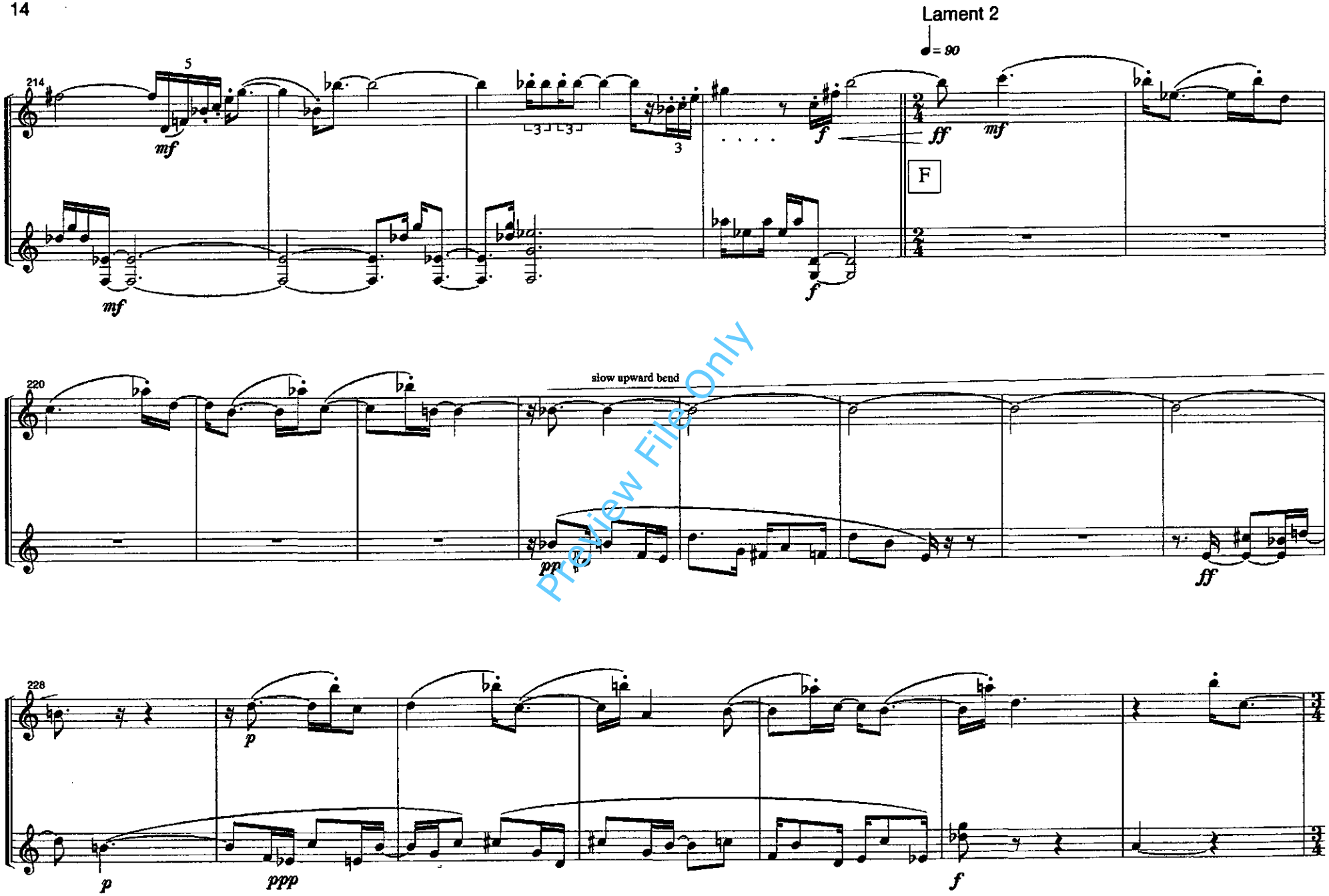

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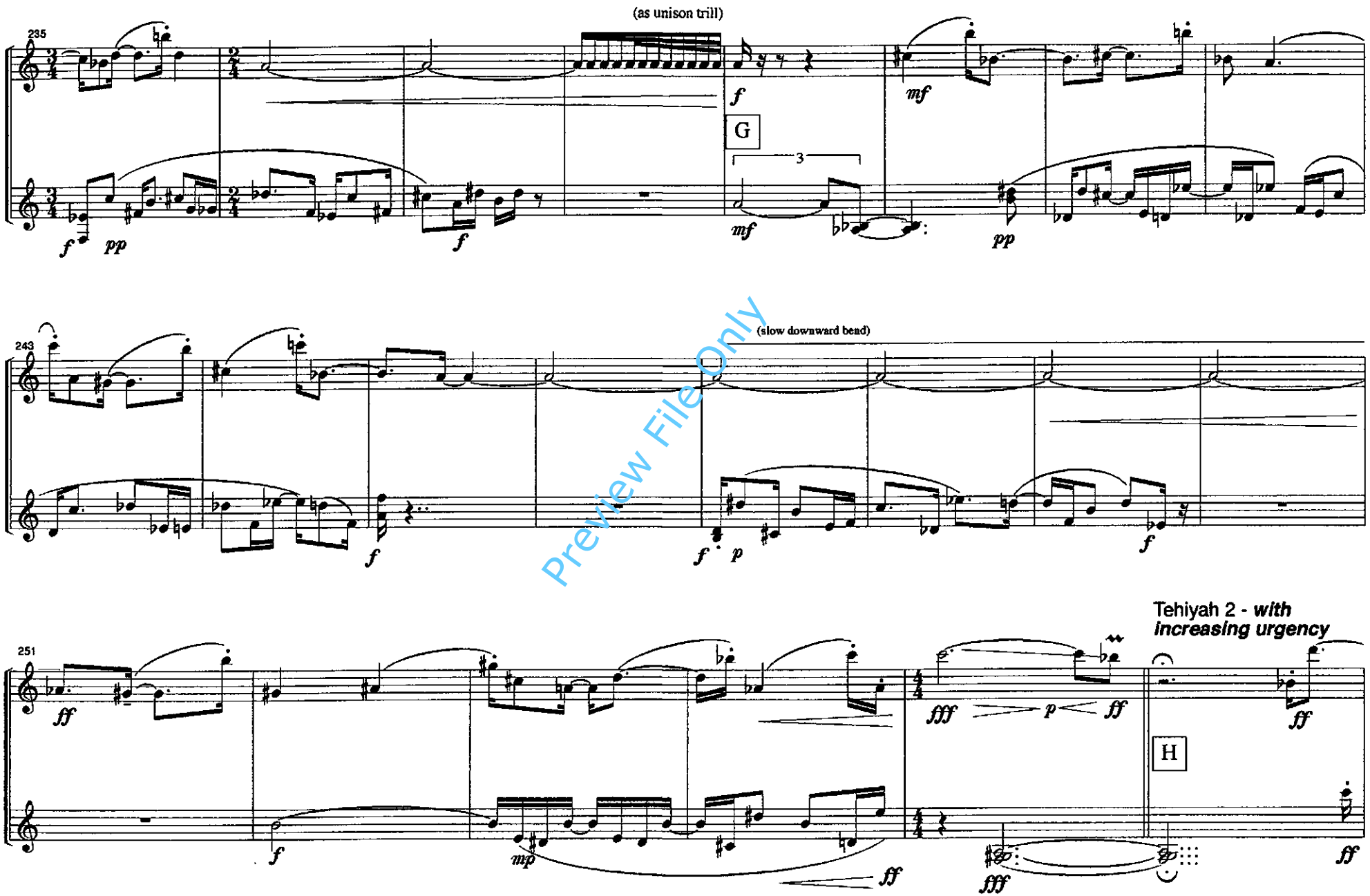

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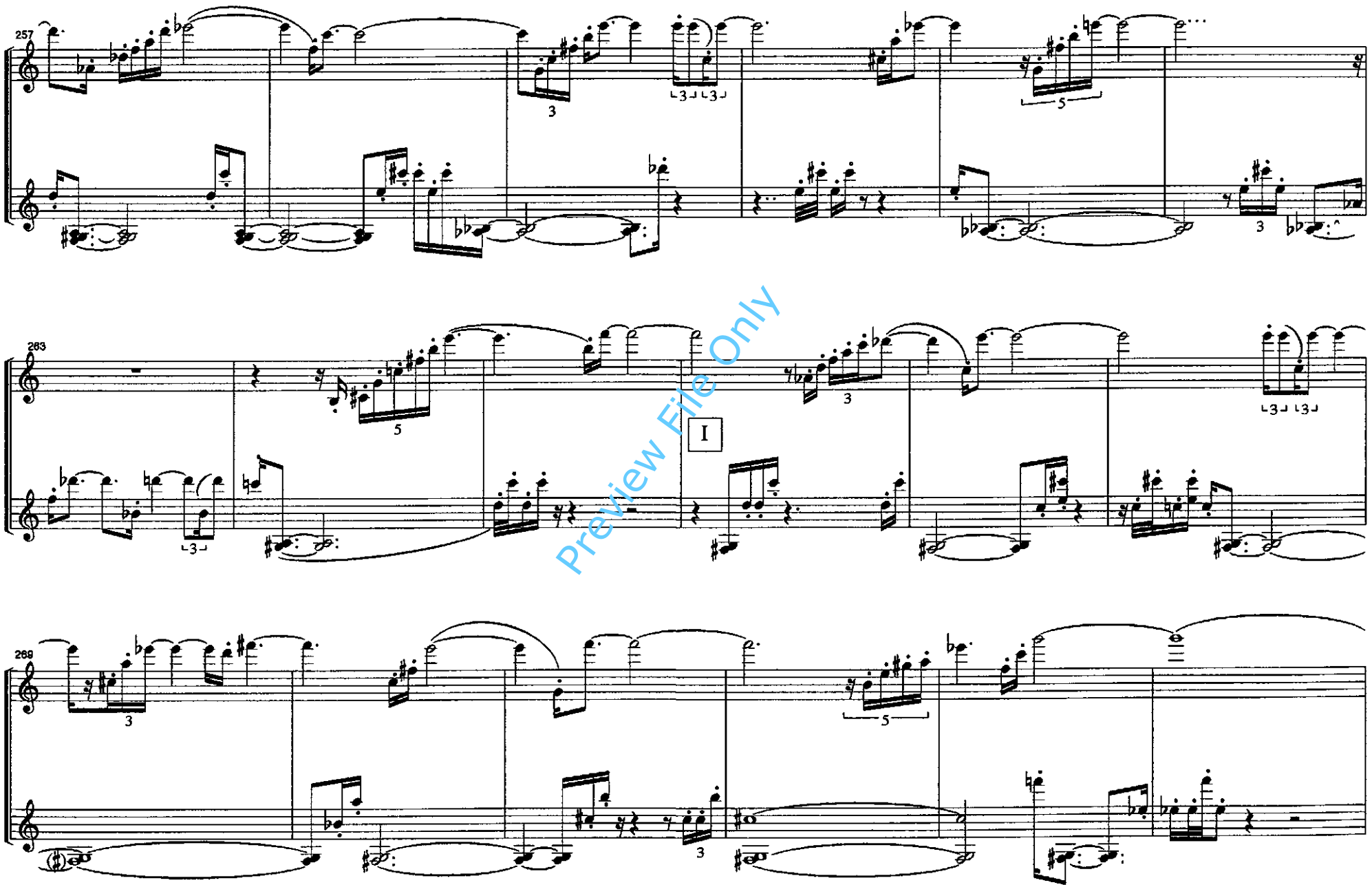

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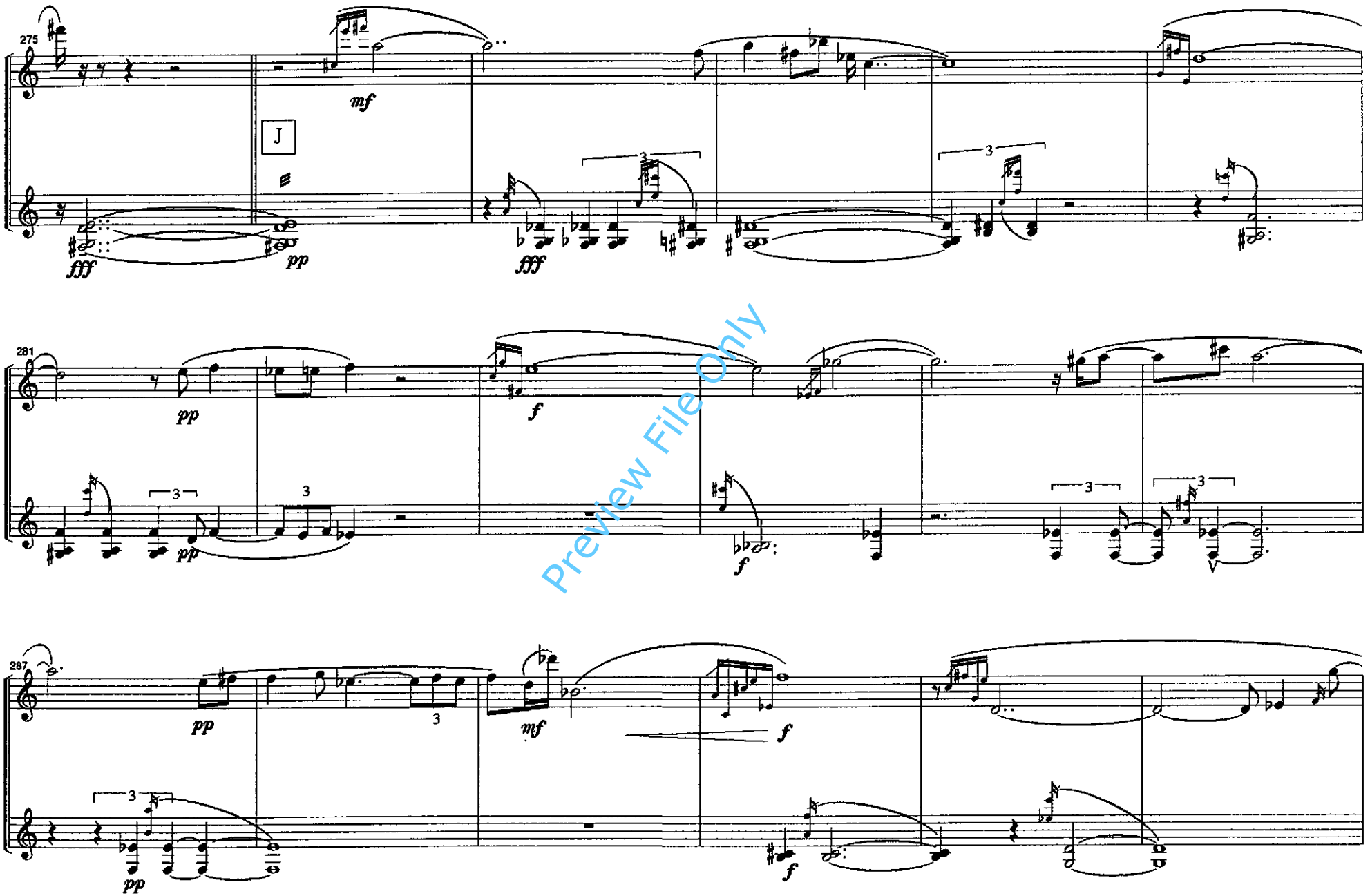
Lament 3 - ***with increasing urgency***



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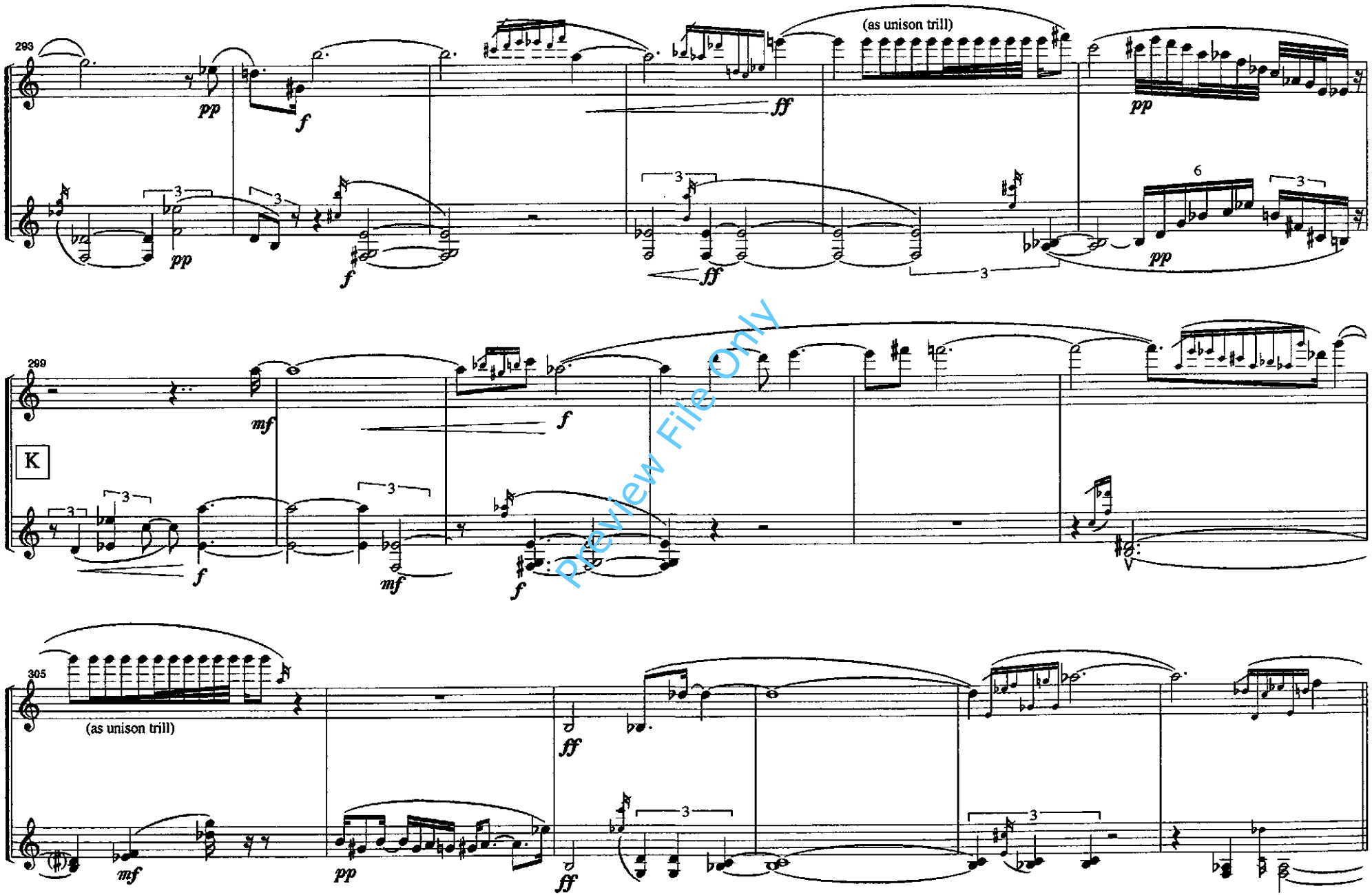

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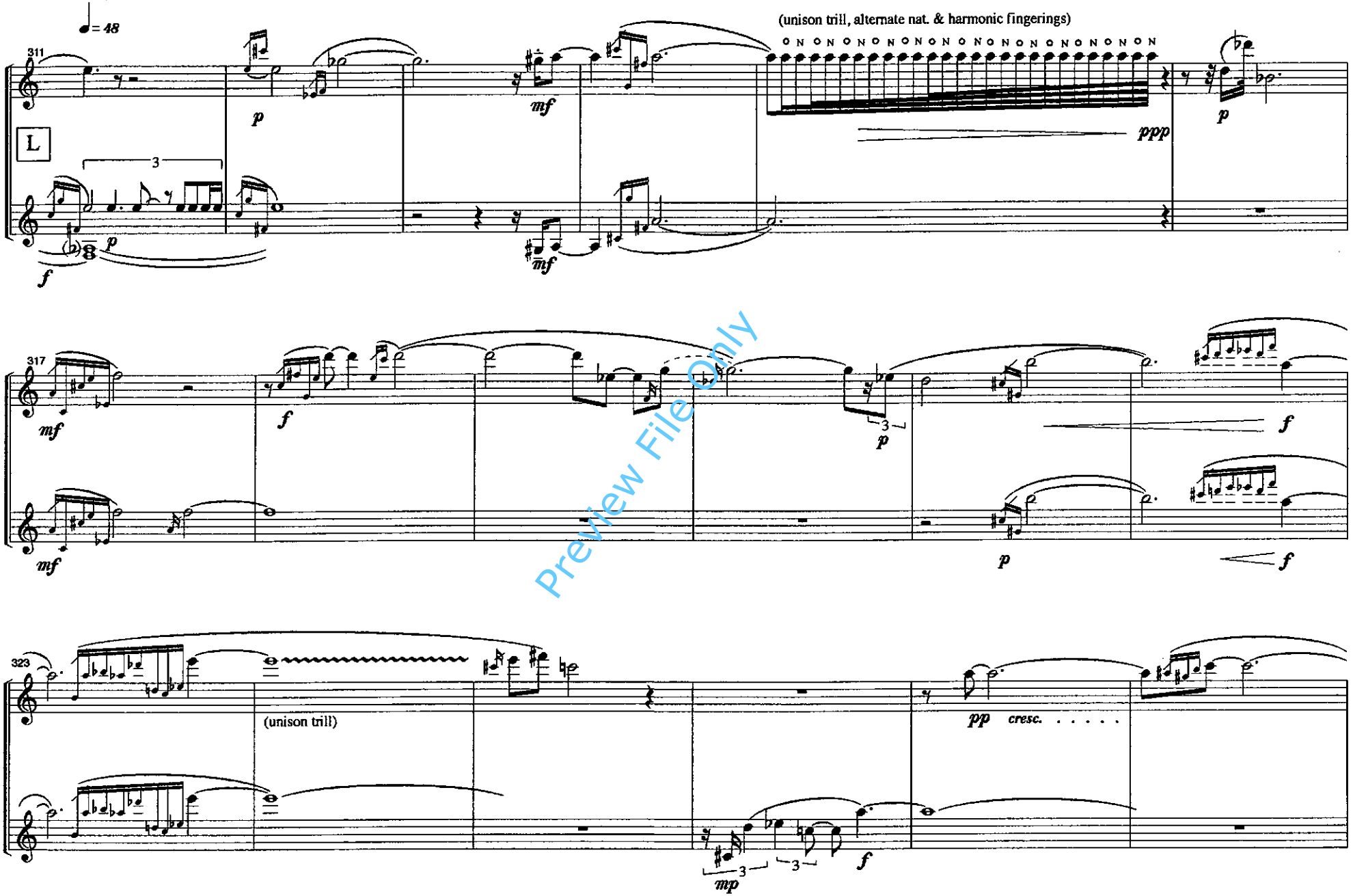
Mishpat - ***trance-like***



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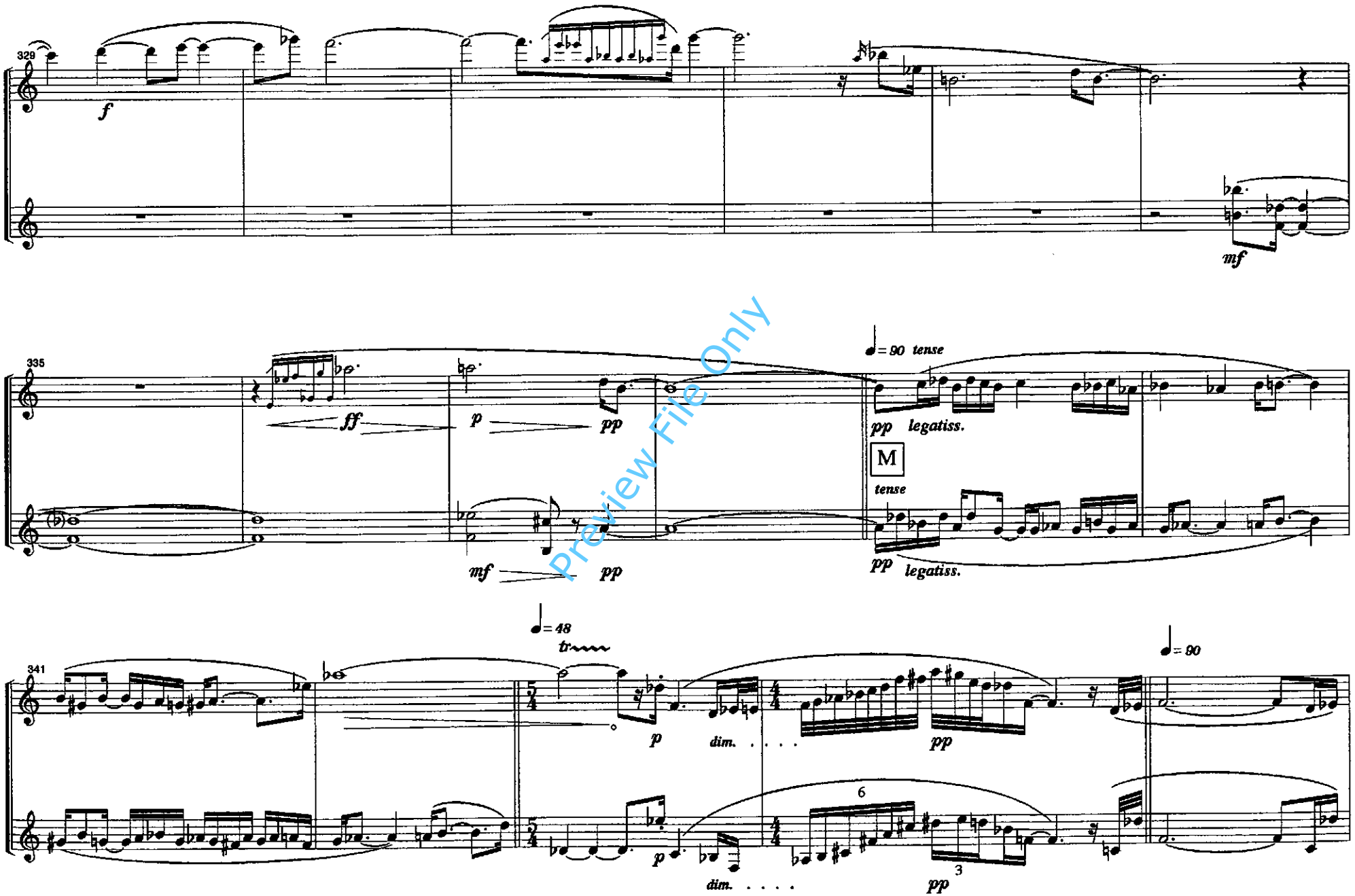

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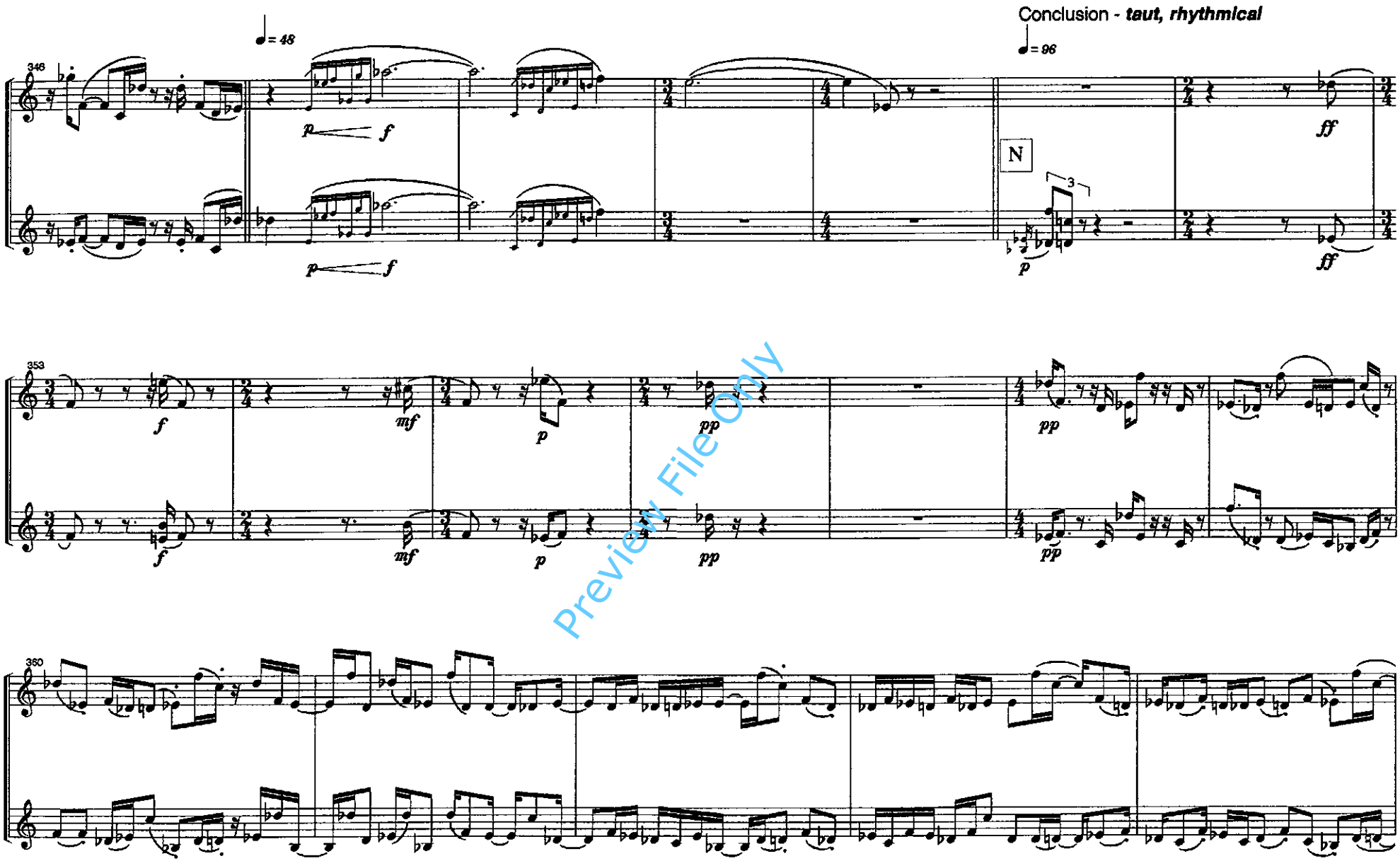

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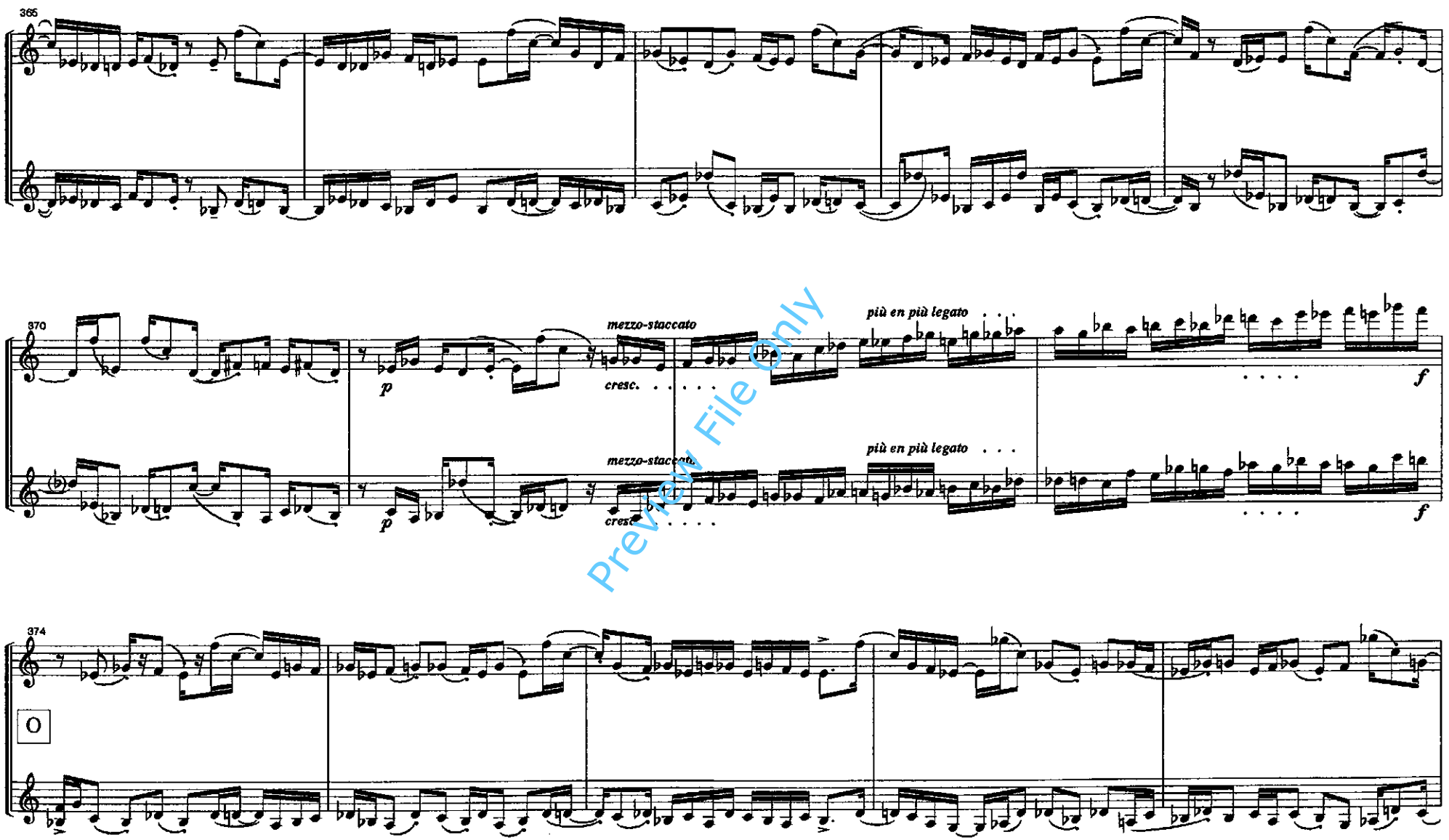

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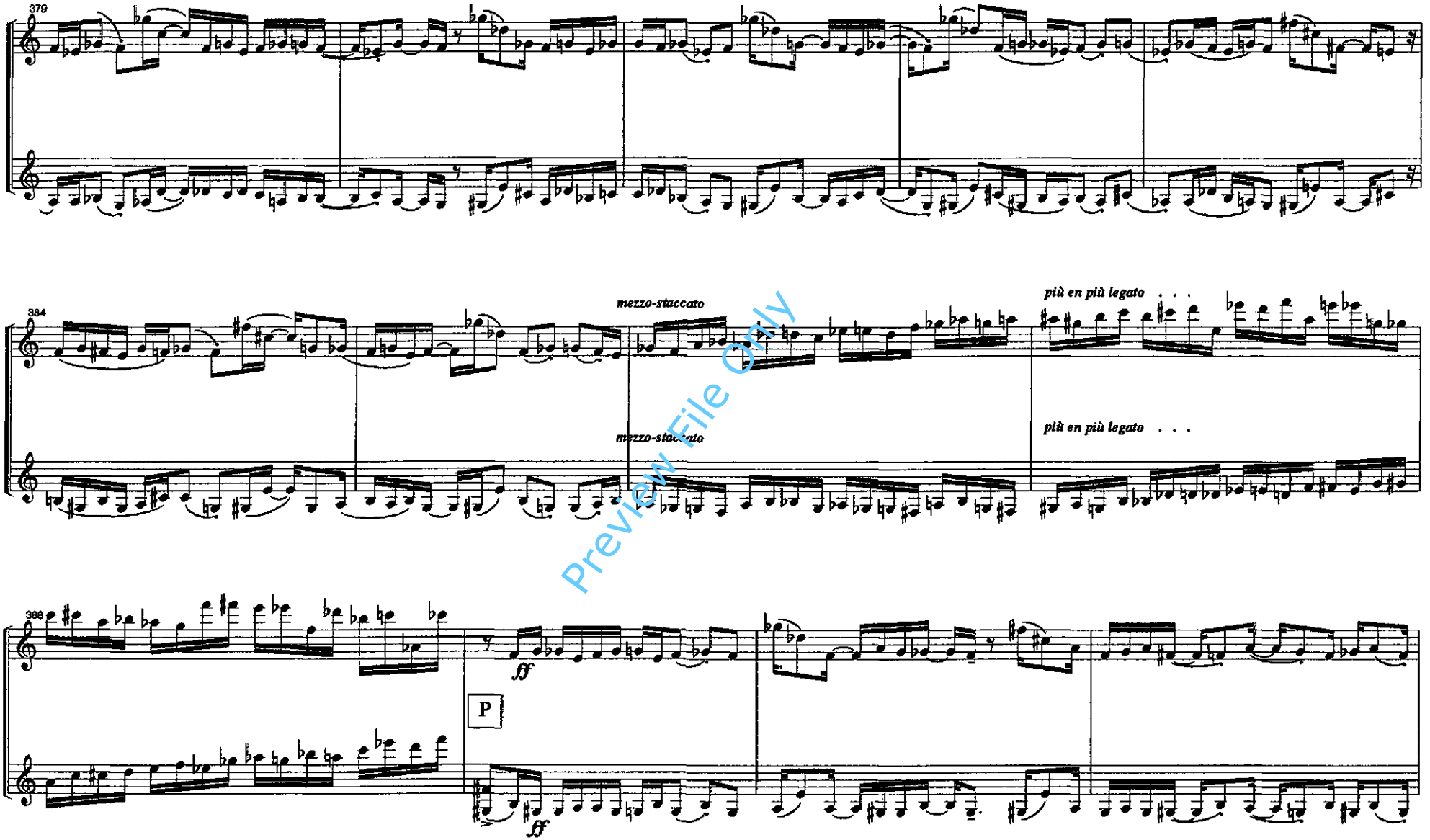

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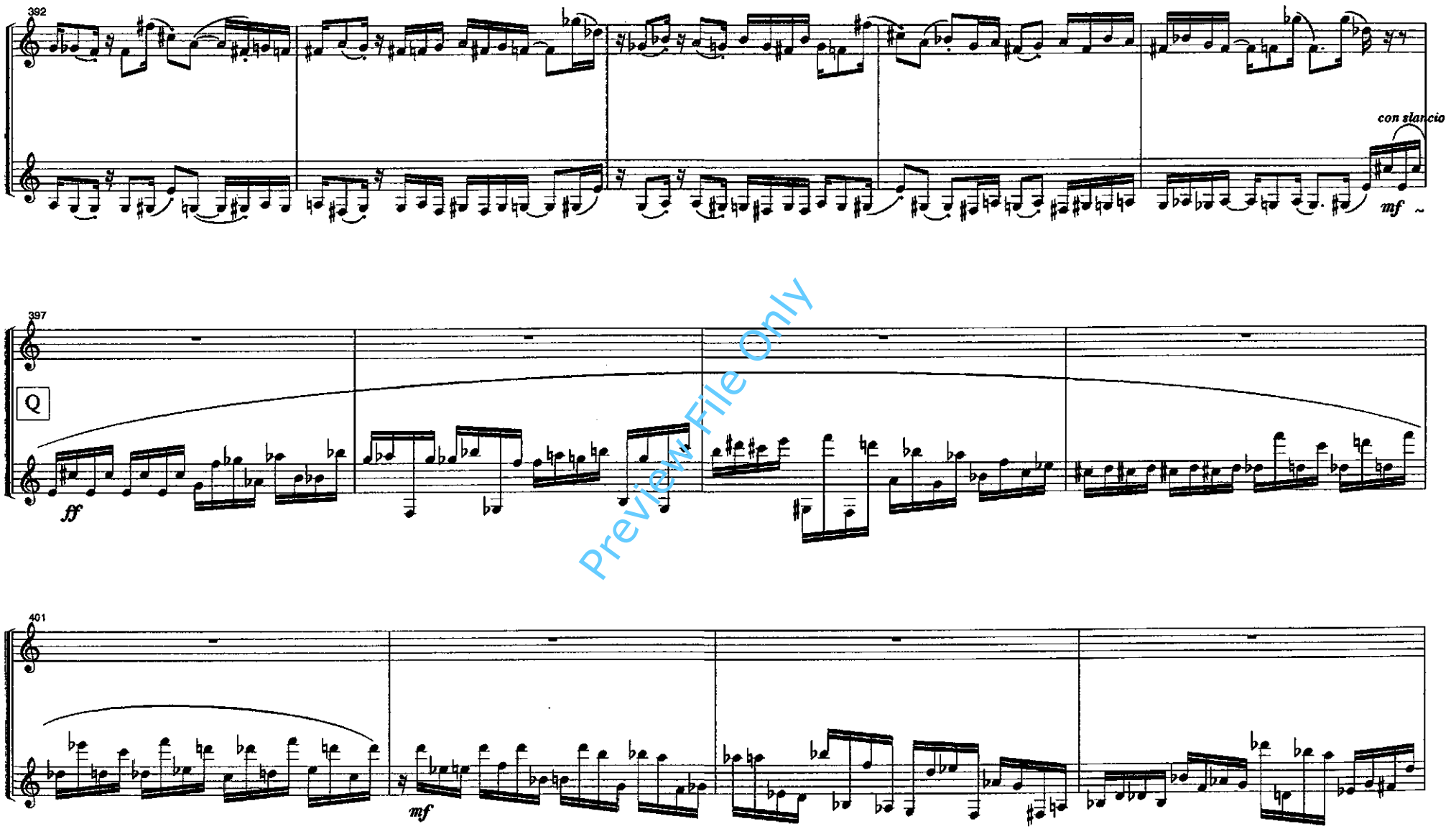

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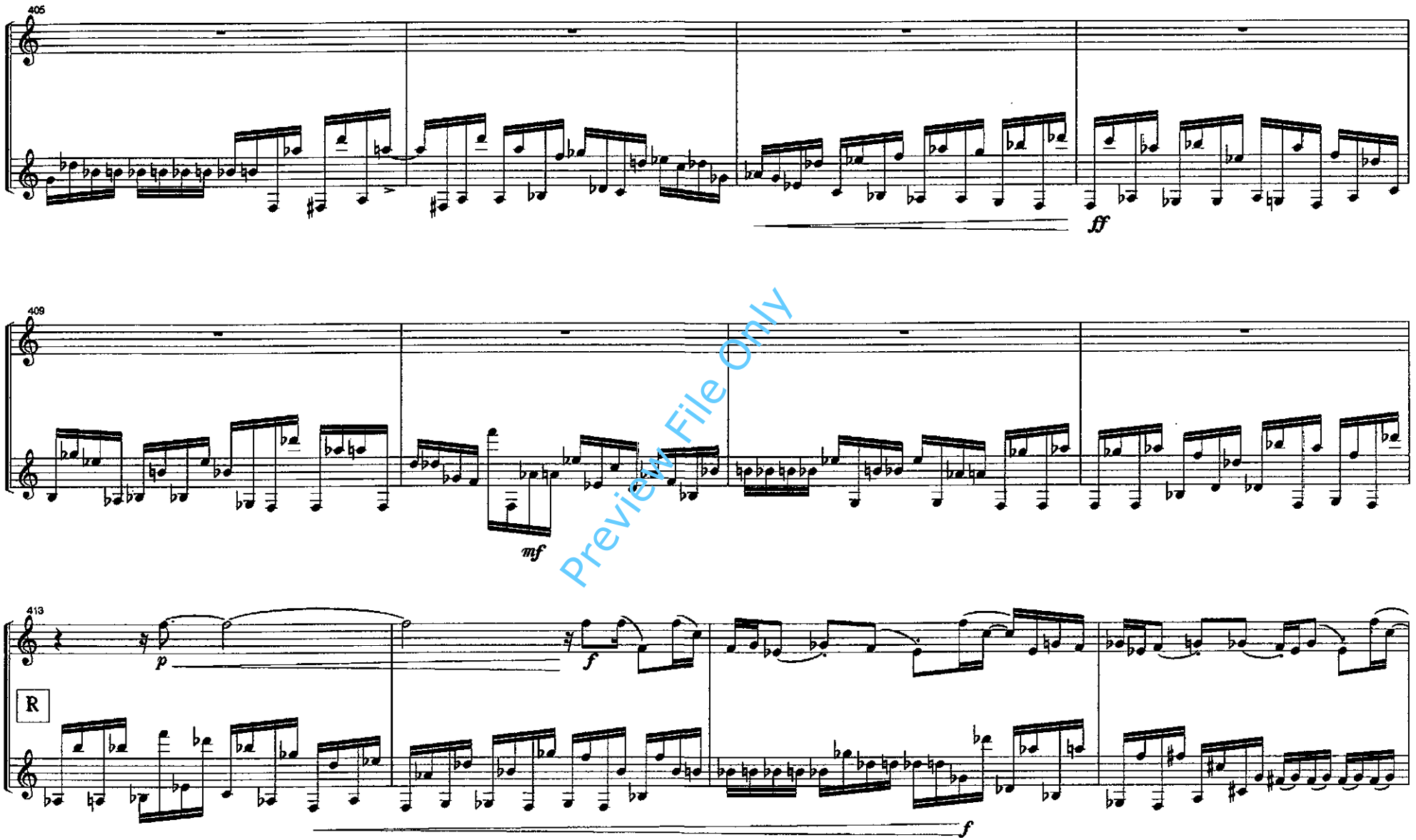

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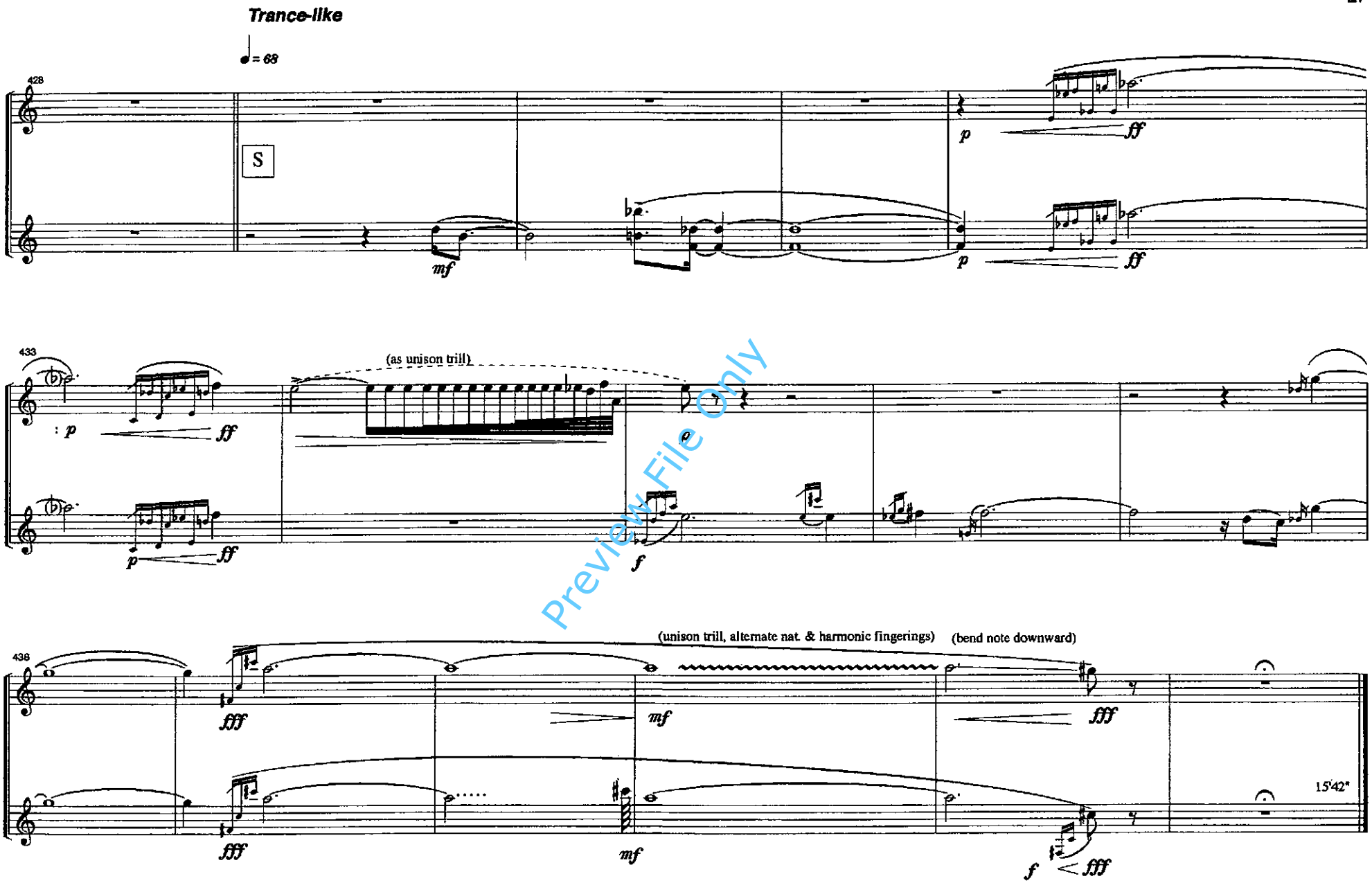

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