A Christmas Triptych

Ian David Coleman

1 Full Score

8 Violin 1

8 Violin 2

5 Viola

5 Cello

5 Bass

For Preview Only

Extra Part - P3035361

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Program Notes

I was asked by Park Hill High School in Kansas City North to write a piece for their Christmas concert. I met with the orchestra at PHHS and asked them what Christmas melodies they liked and might want to appear in the piece. I made notes and listened to them perform a couple of the pieces they were working on at the time. Her are the three movements that resulted from this collaboration:

A Christmas Triptych – Songs of Christmas Past

There are four Christmas melodies in this piece, 'The Carol of the Bells', 'The Holly and the Ivy', 'God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen' and 'We Three Kings'. You never hear any one of them in its entirety, rather, each appears juxtaposed against the other in quick succession. There is a joyful feel to the entire piece and a good one to keep the audience guessing. You might even have a competition with the audience to see if anyone can 'find' the four melodies by the end of the piece!

A Christmas Triptych – The Great Expectation

Advent is traditionally a season of reflection and anticipation. In this piece there are two traditional Advent melodies, 'Veni Veni Emmanuel' and the French melody 'Picardy' that is the tune most often used with 'Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent'. One never hears either melody presented in its complete form or alone. Rather, the two melodies weave in and out and around each other being presented in their most complete forms toward the end directly against each other. Right at the end Veni Veni seems to dominate for a moment before fading away and we hear a last statement of the Picardy melody quietly in solo violin.

A Christmas Triptych – Christmastide

In this piece I set two traditional Christmas songs against one another. The title reflects the whole traditional season of Christmas, that is, the twelve days from Christmas Day until January 6. 'Good King Wenceslas' tells of a good deed done on St. Stephen's day – December 26, traditionally known as Boxing Day in England. The other tune used here can be sung to various words including 'Angels we Have Heard on High' and 'Angels from the Realms of Glory' both of which make use of the overlapping music in the chorus to sing the word 'Gloria' in quick succession. The music is joyful, vibrant and energetic throughout.

About the Composer

I grew up in Bristol, England and later studied music composition and music education at Bath Spa University and the University of Exeter before coming to America to study for my Masters and Doctorate degrees at the University of Kansas. I have been fortunate to have my music performed nationally and internationally by a wide range of ensembles. A composer writes music in the hope that others will perform it. I always enjoy the interactions that happen between the creator of the piece and those entrusted with realizing that piece into sound. I actively encourage and seek commissions that allow for this sort of interaction, where the barrier between the music and the composer can be broken down and the ensemble and composer can become co-creators in the piece.

As Chair of the Department of Music at William Jewell College in Liberty, Missouri, I find that I am constantly in contact with students who are exploring great art and who are trying to find out more about how that art can and should be brought to life. I also enjoy being in contact with local high school music directors and appreciate the work they do daily to pass on to the next generation a love for music. I hope my music in some way encourages that love for music to grow.

For Preview Only

Duration: 9:30

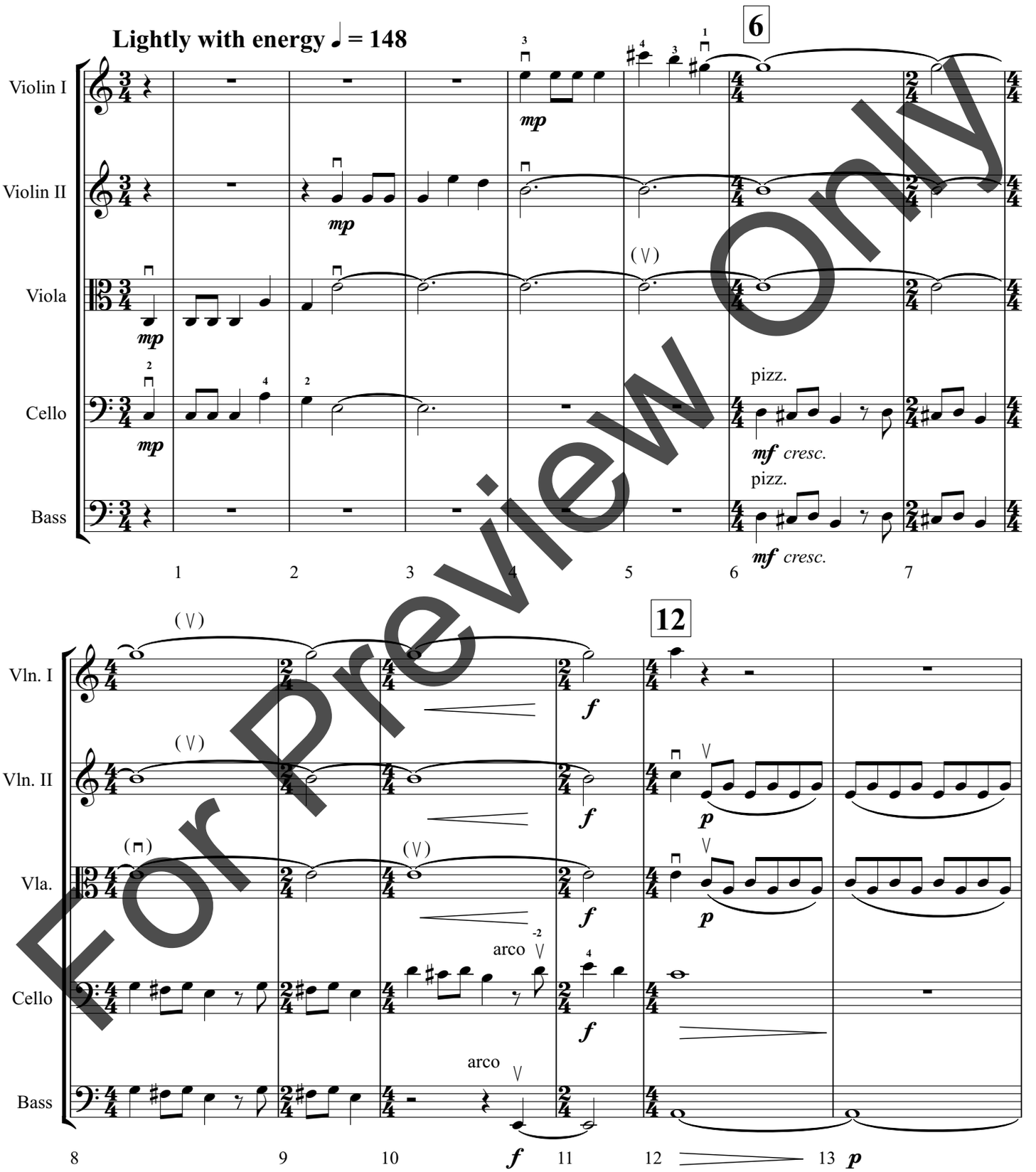
Written for Park Hill High School Orchestra in Kansas City North, under the direction of Stephanie Phalp

A Christmas Triptych

Ian David Coleman

I

Songs of Christmas Past



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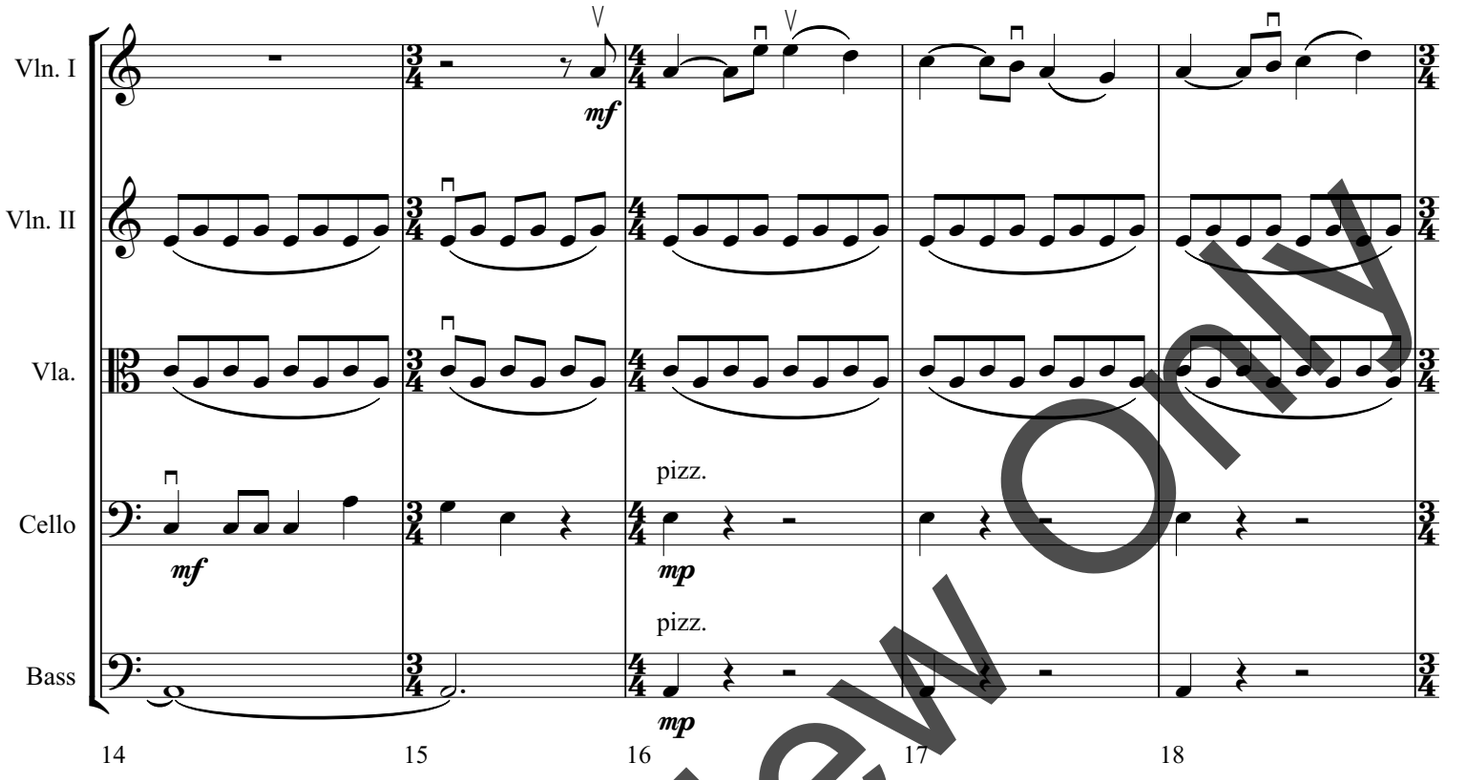

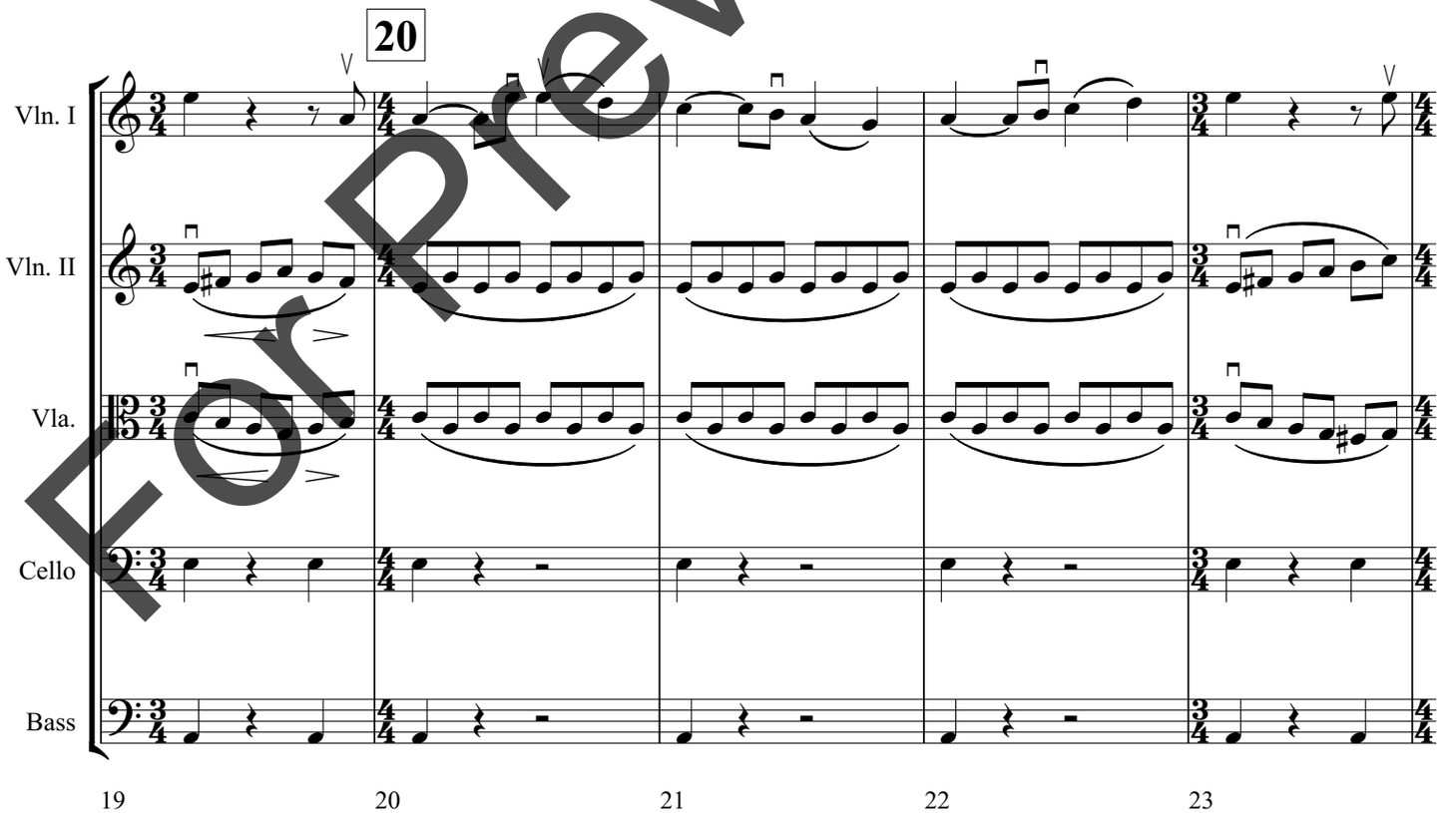

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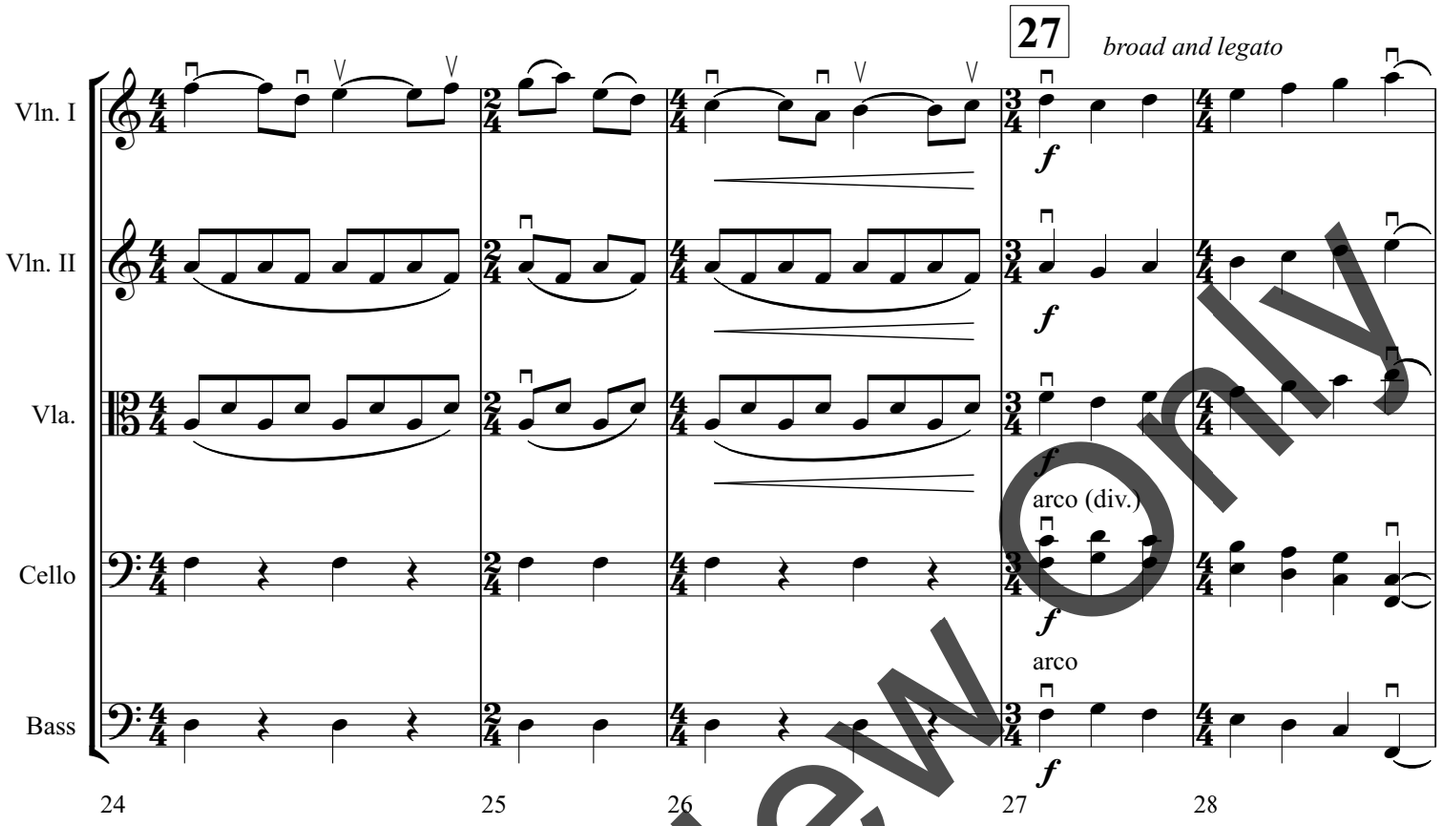

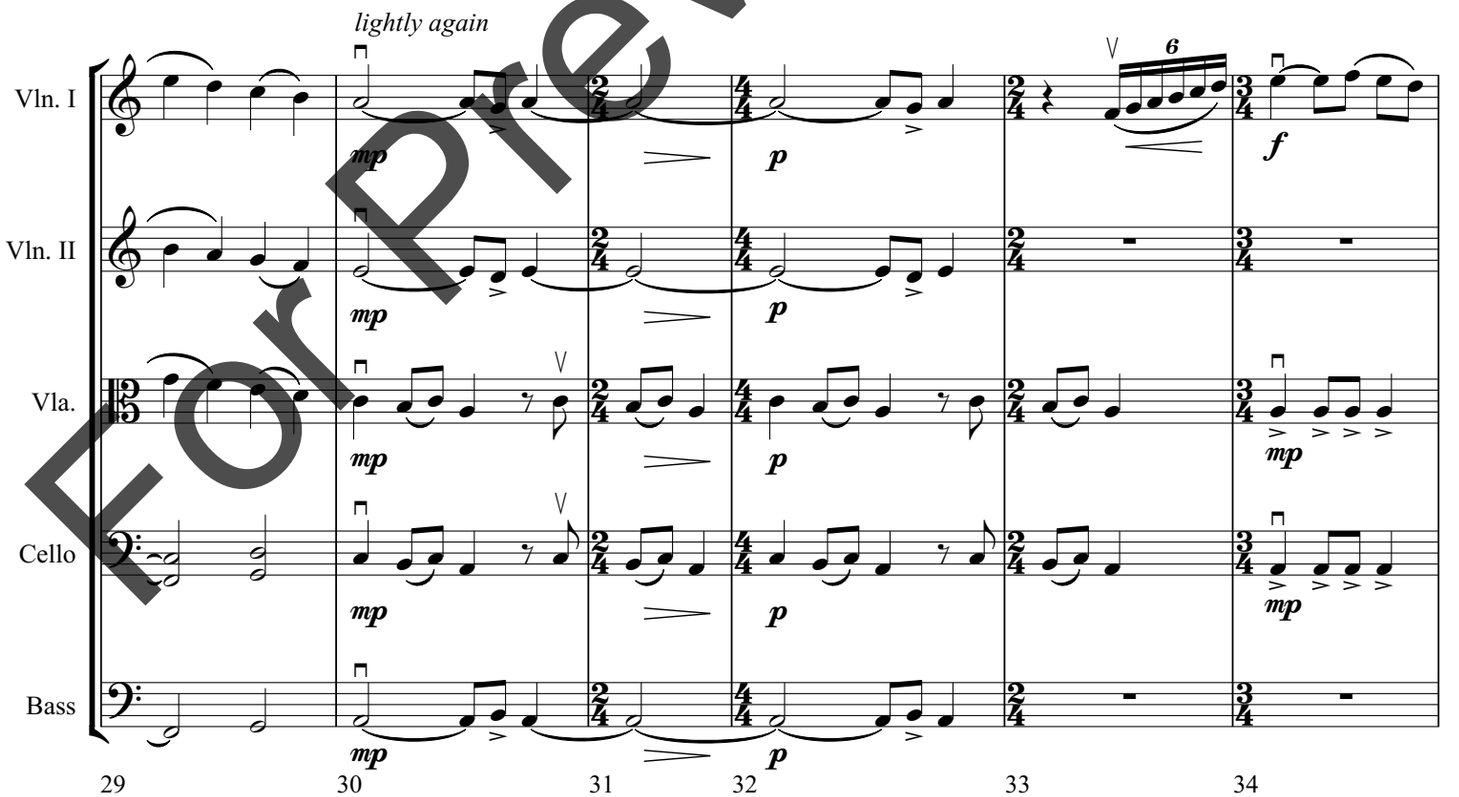

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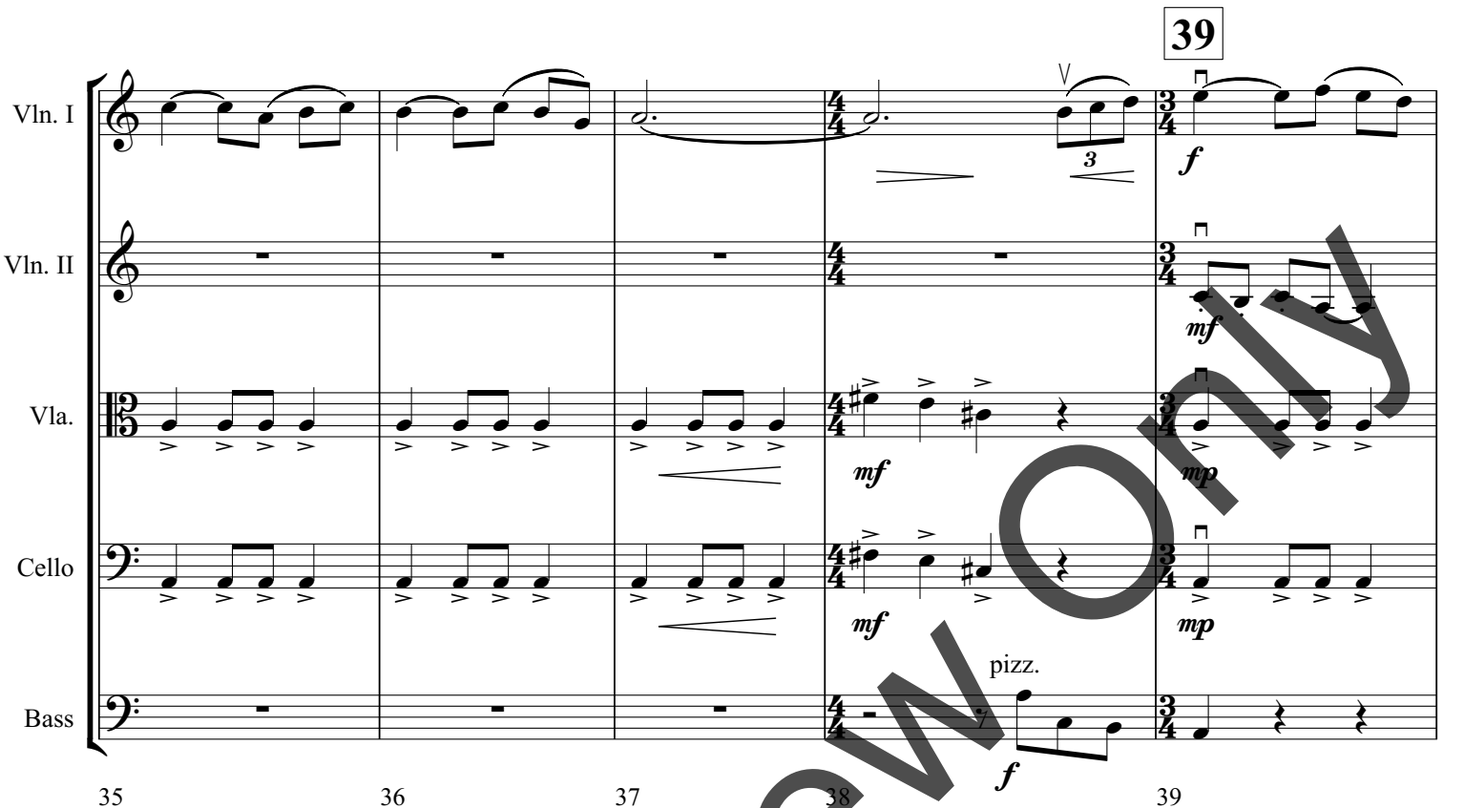

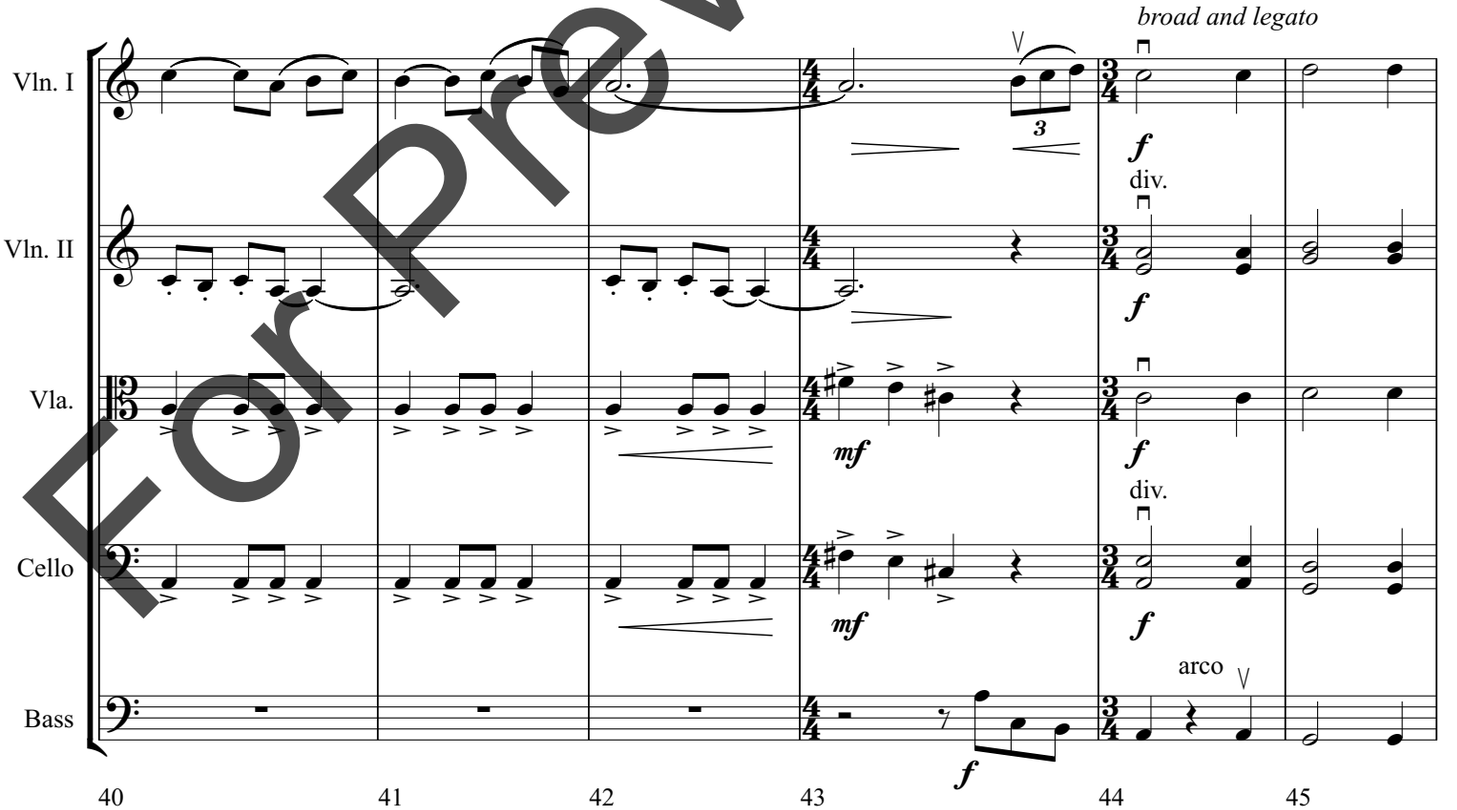

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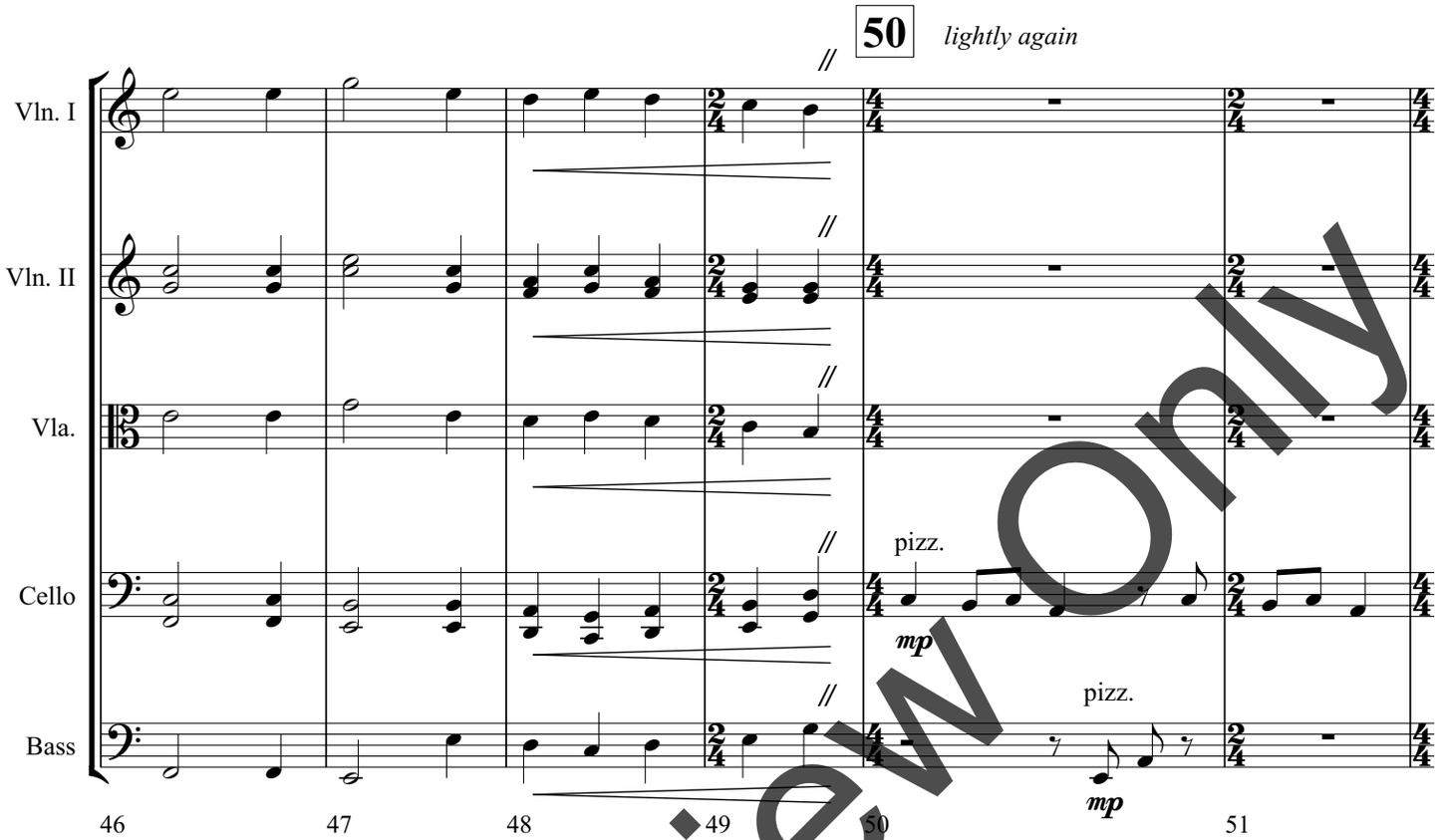

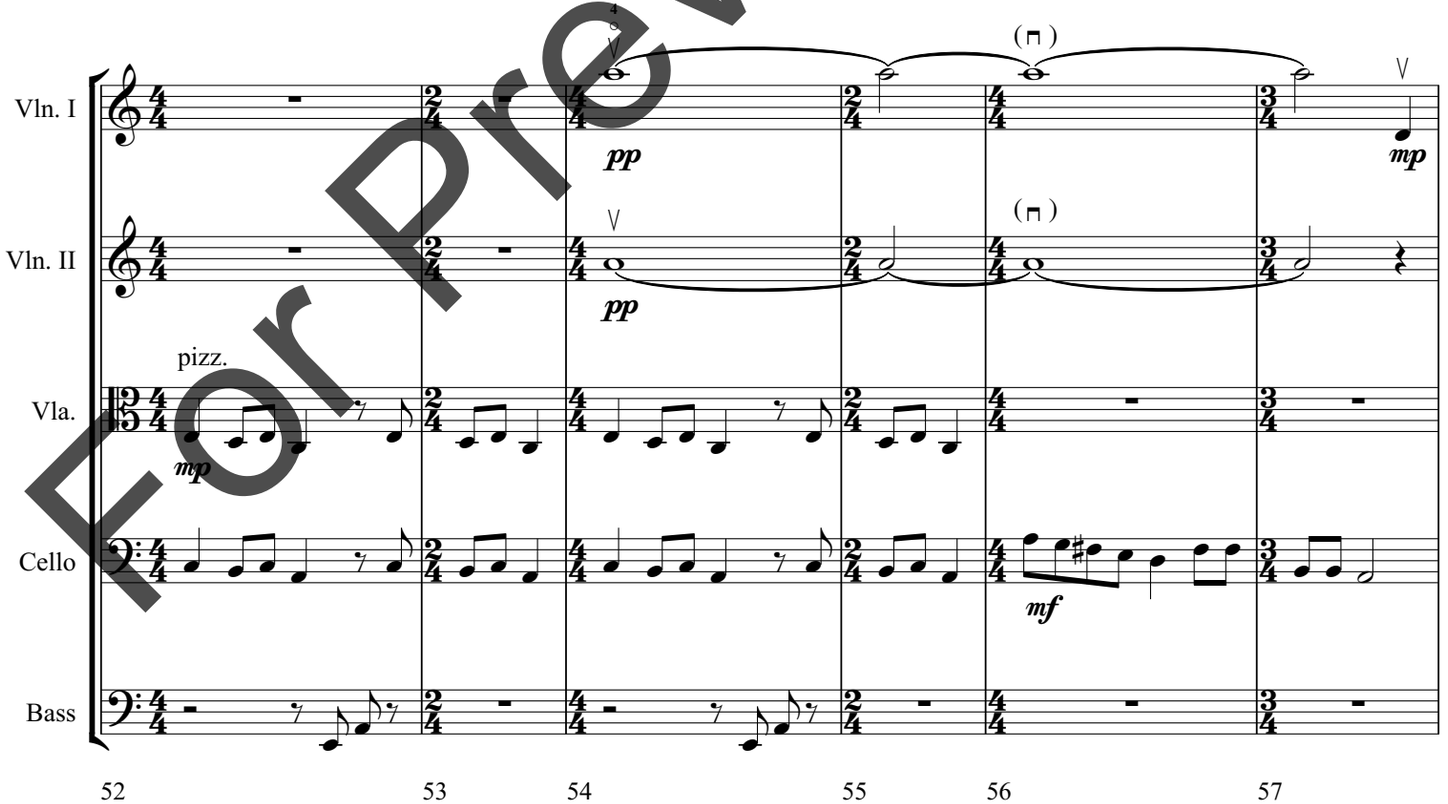

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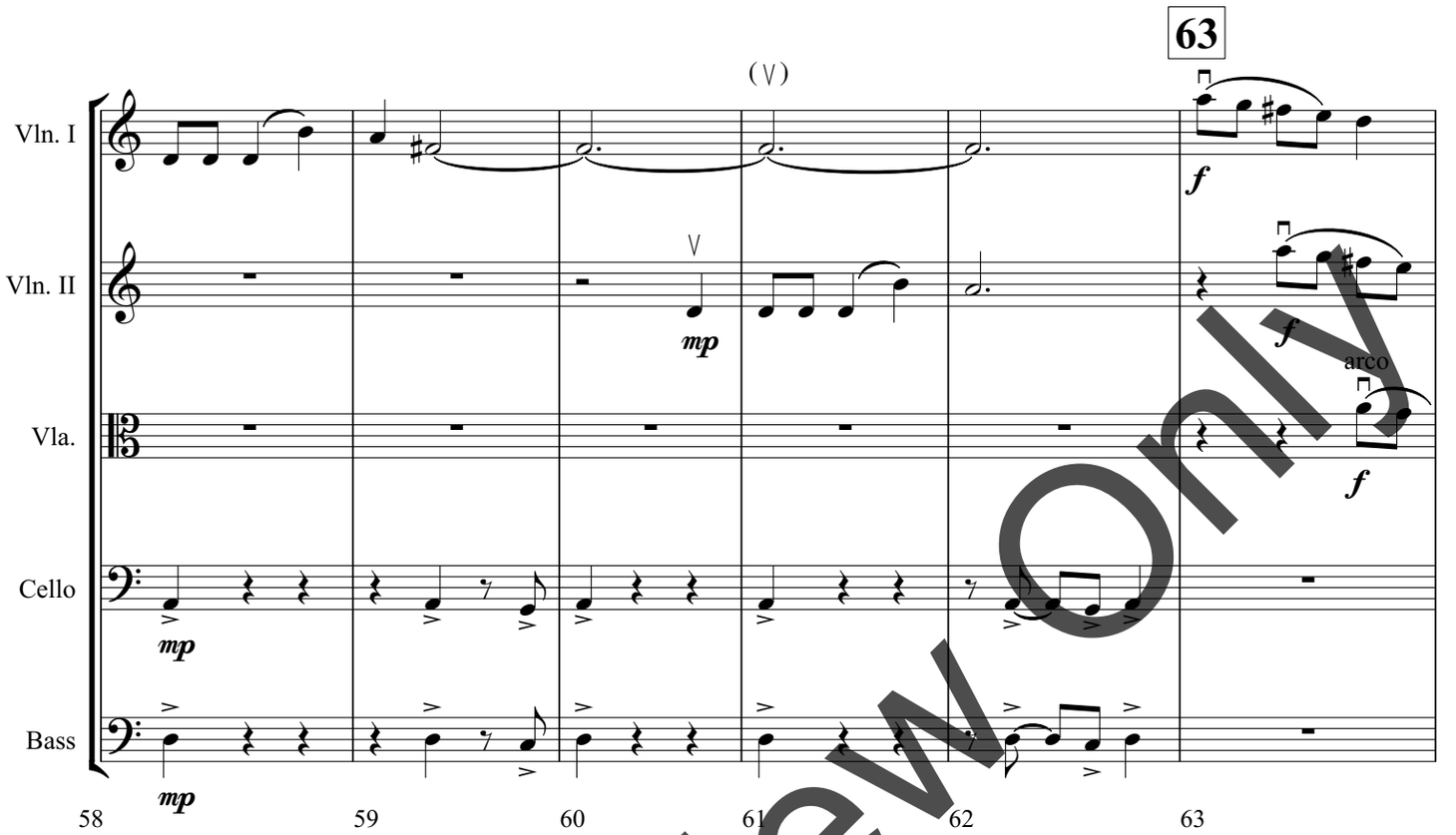

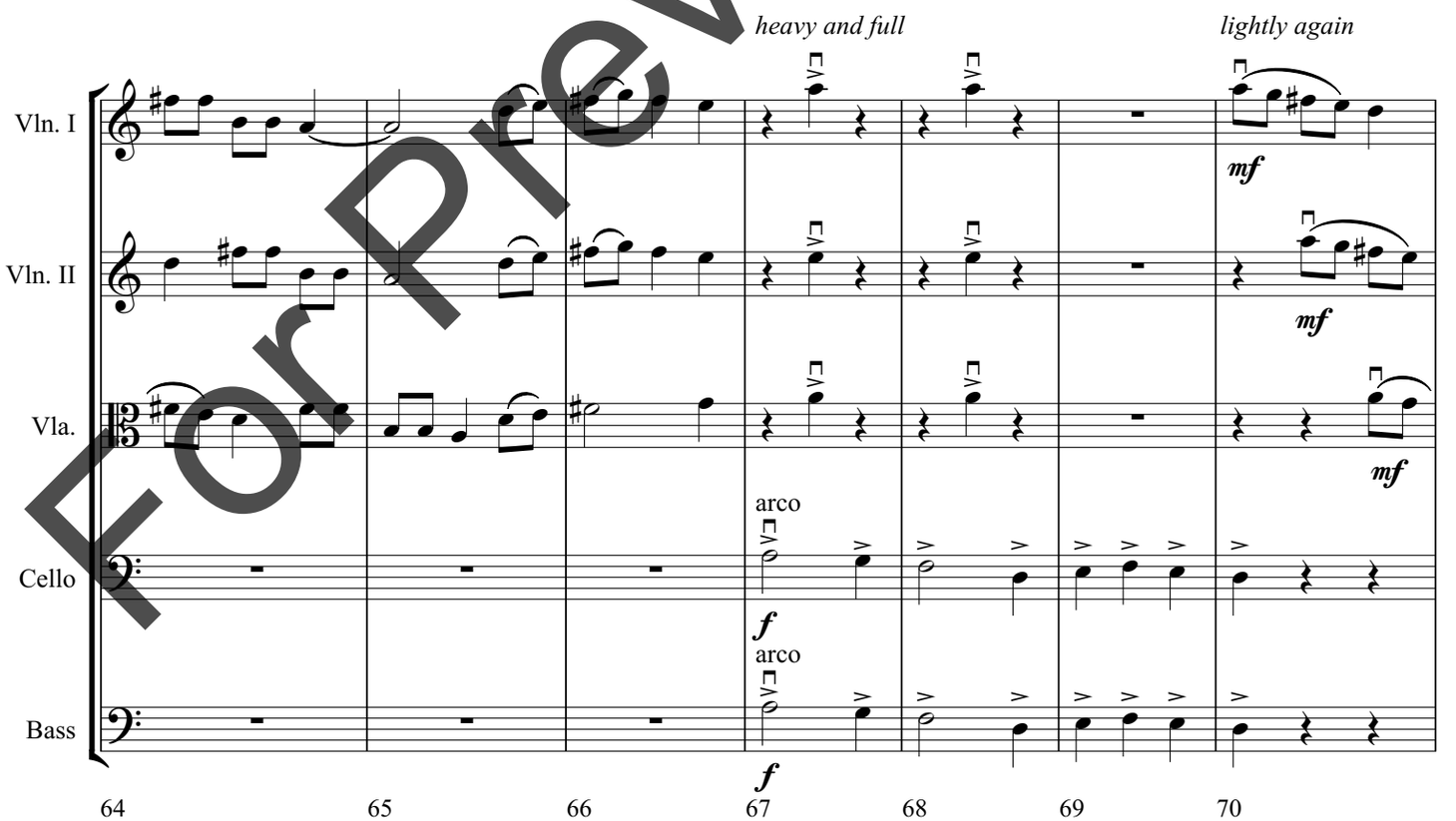

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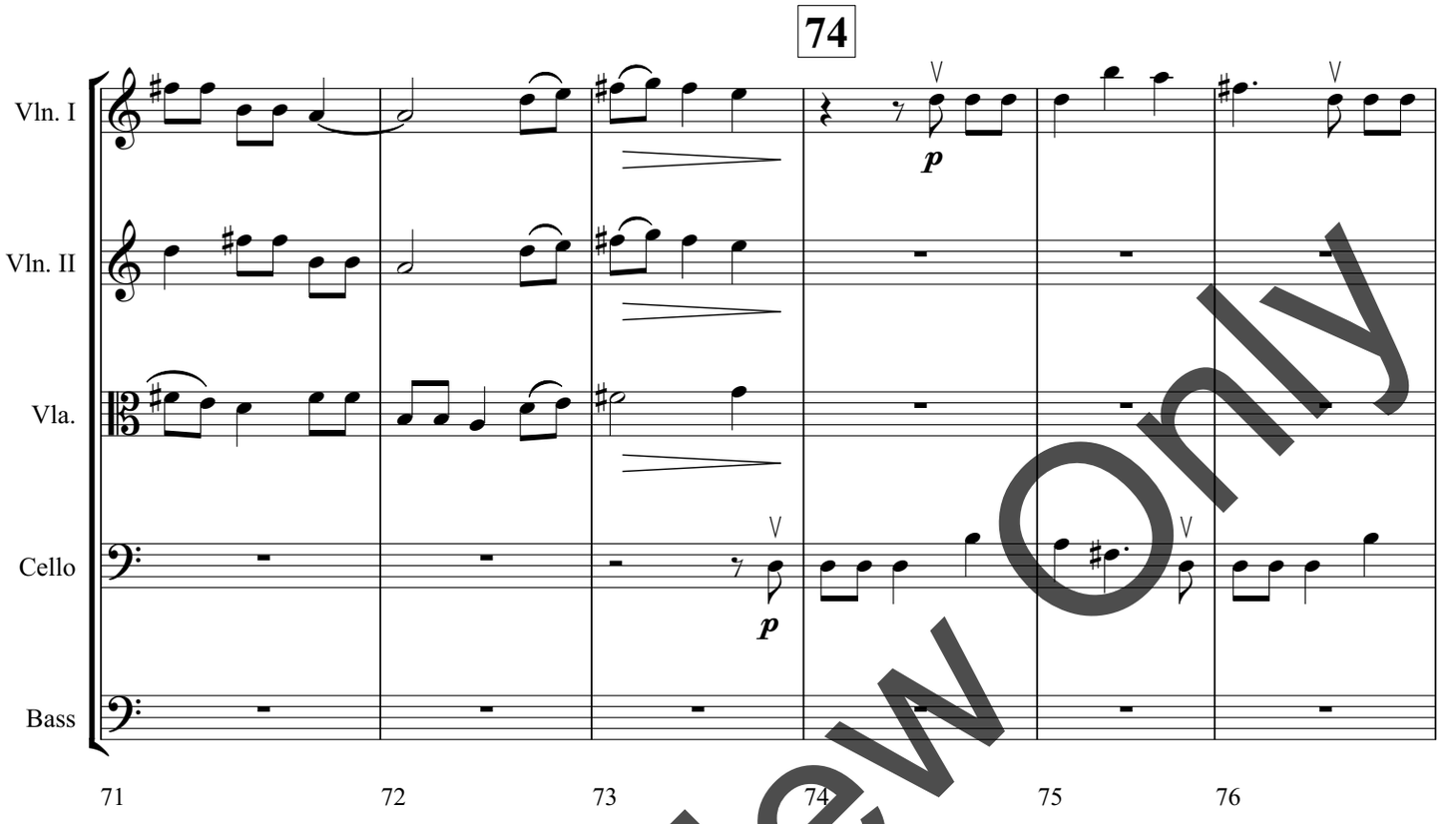

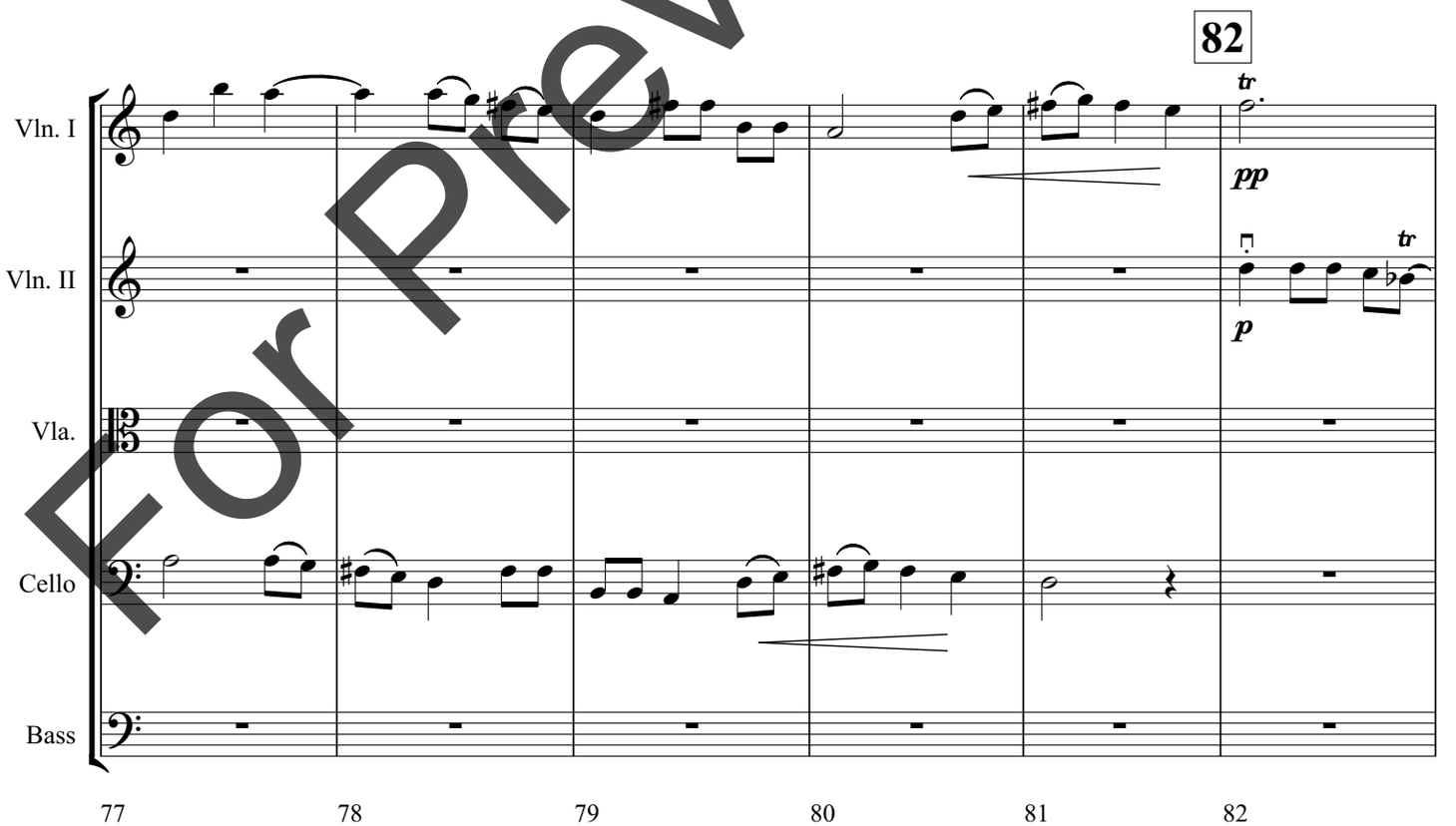

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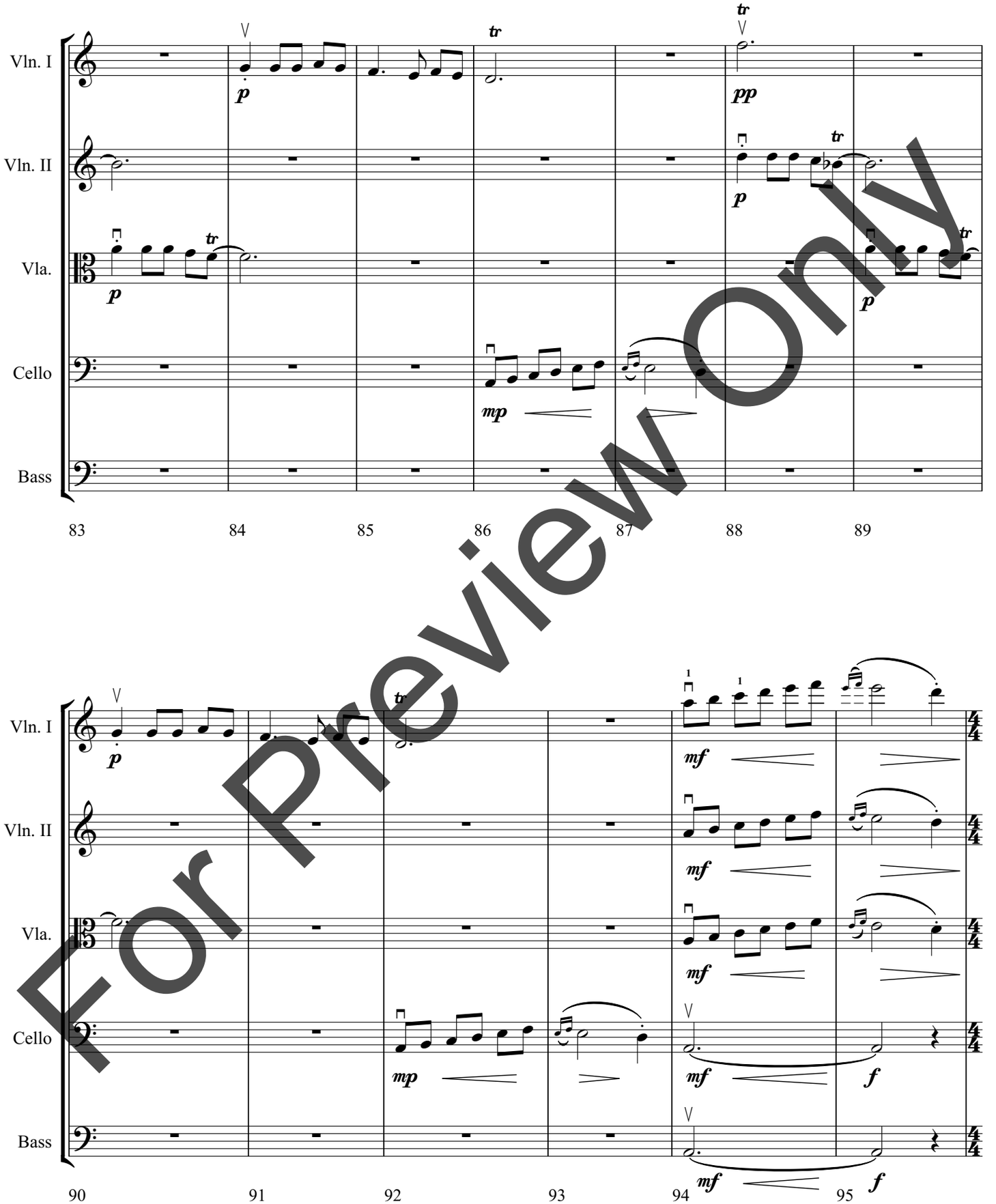

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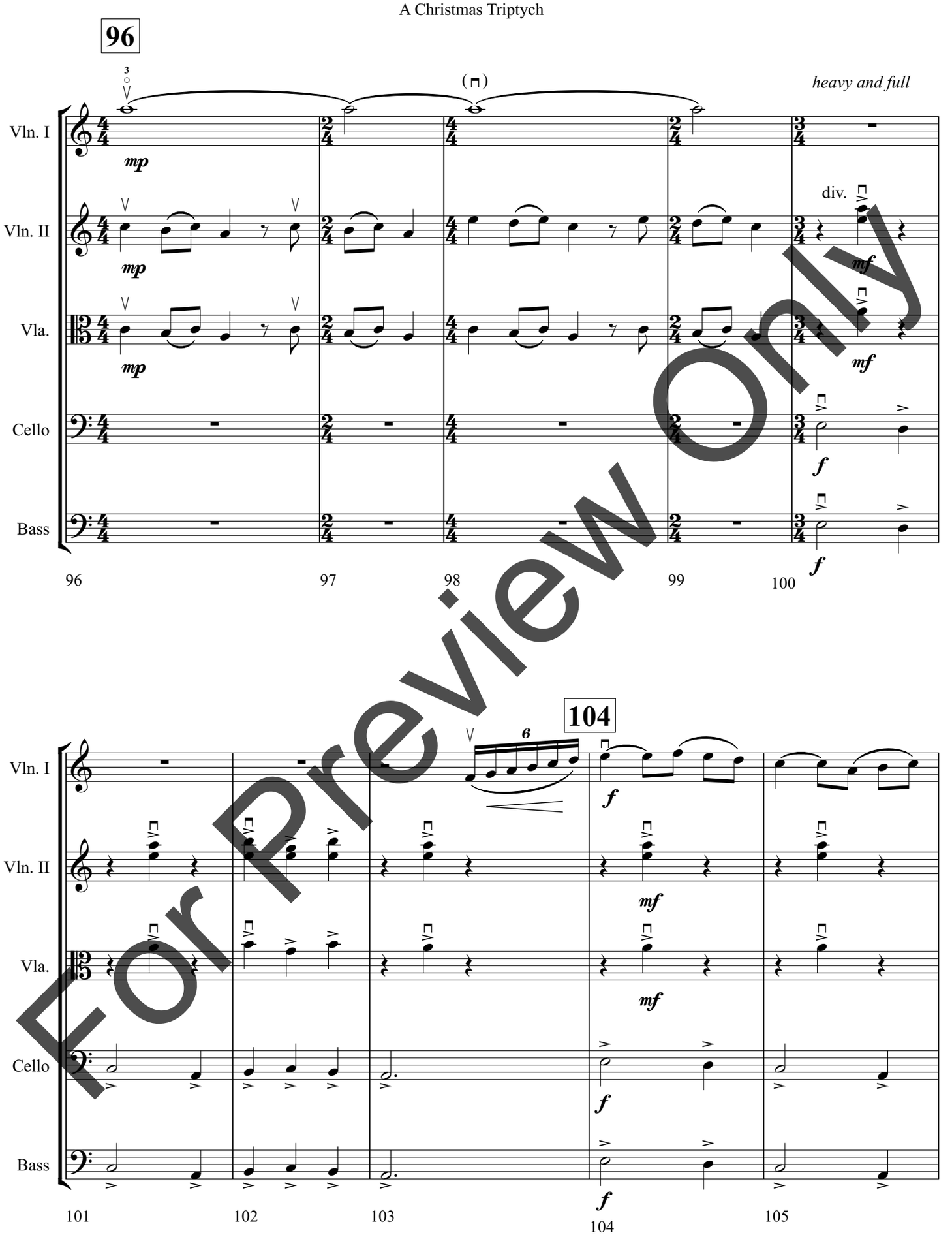

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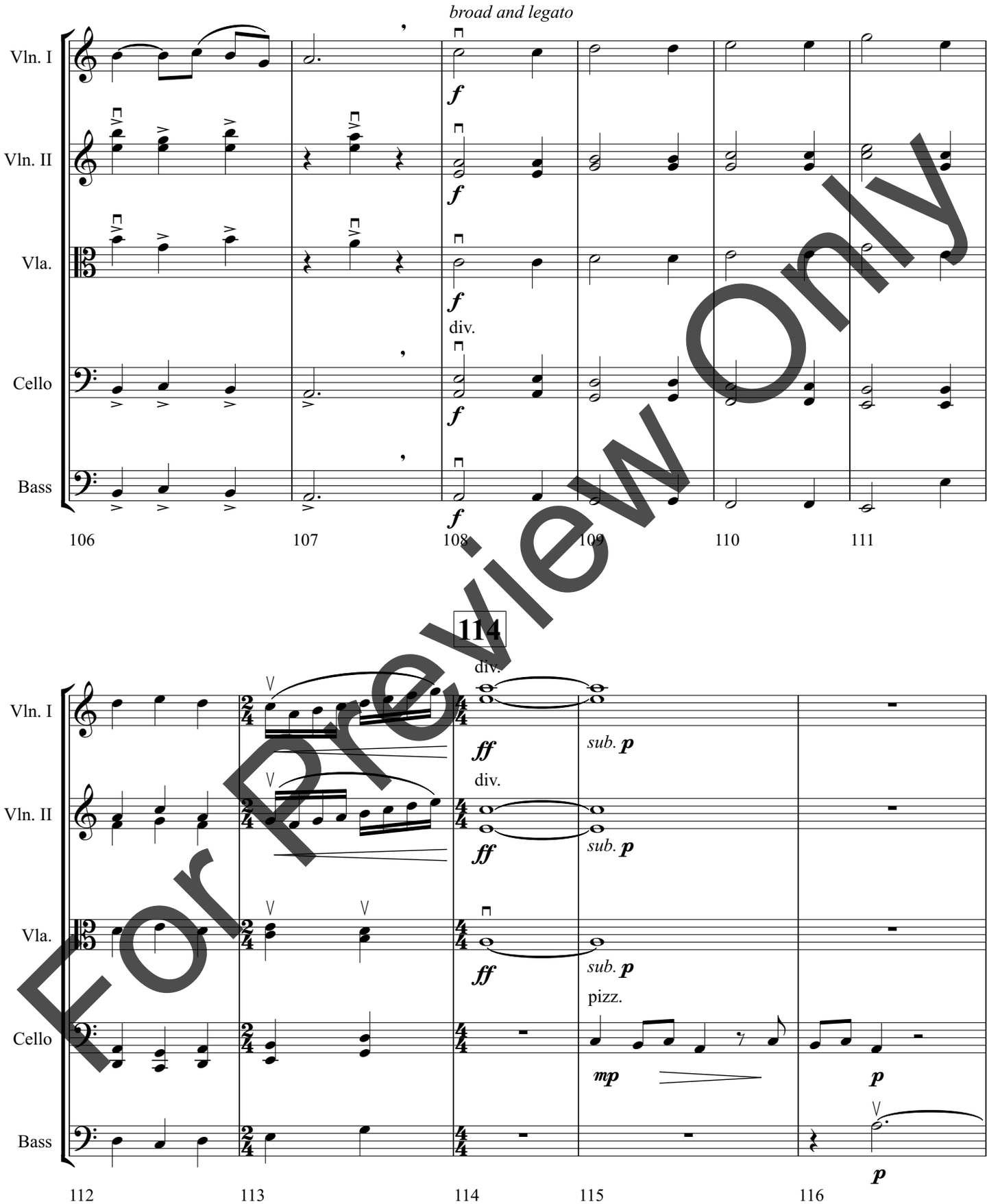

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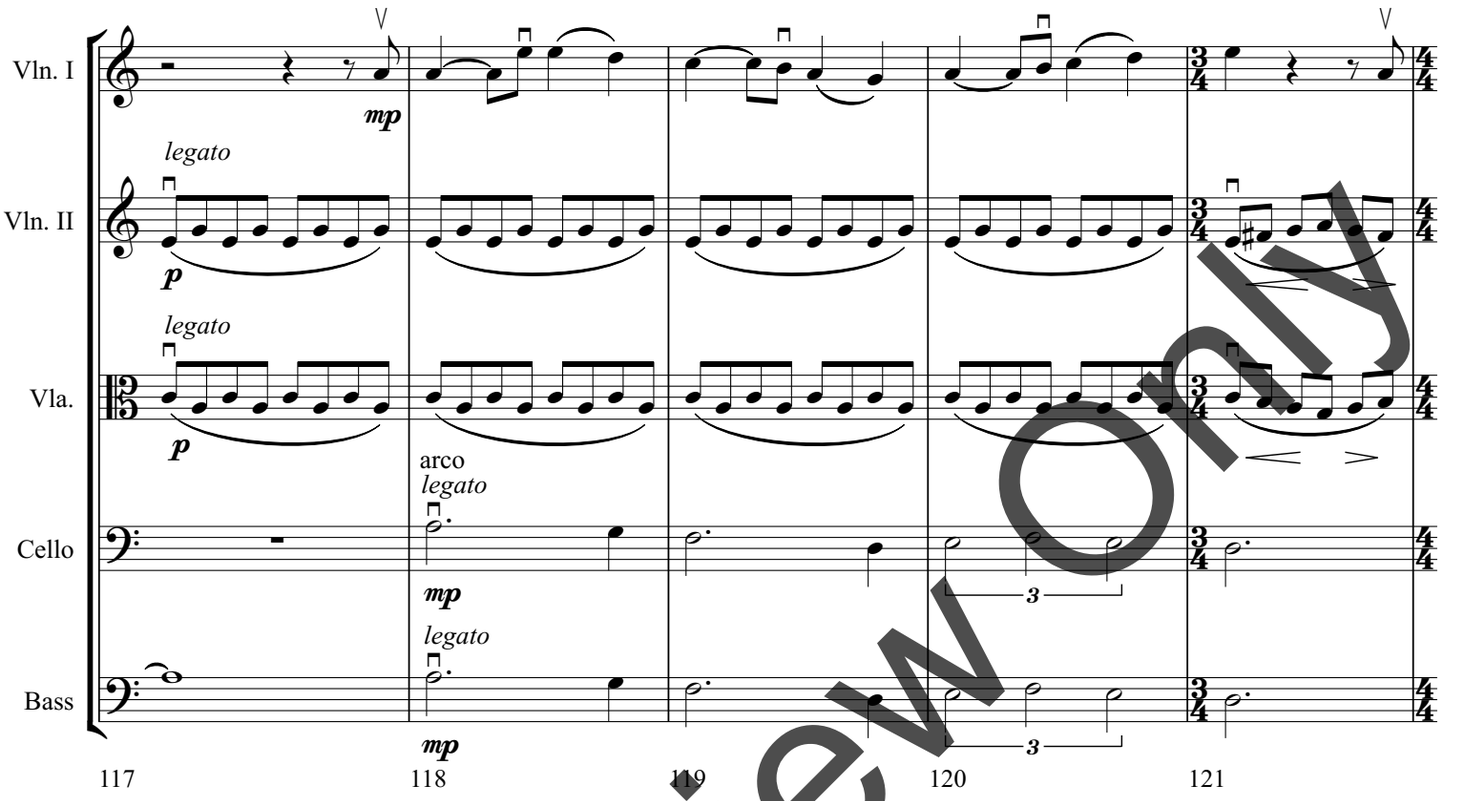

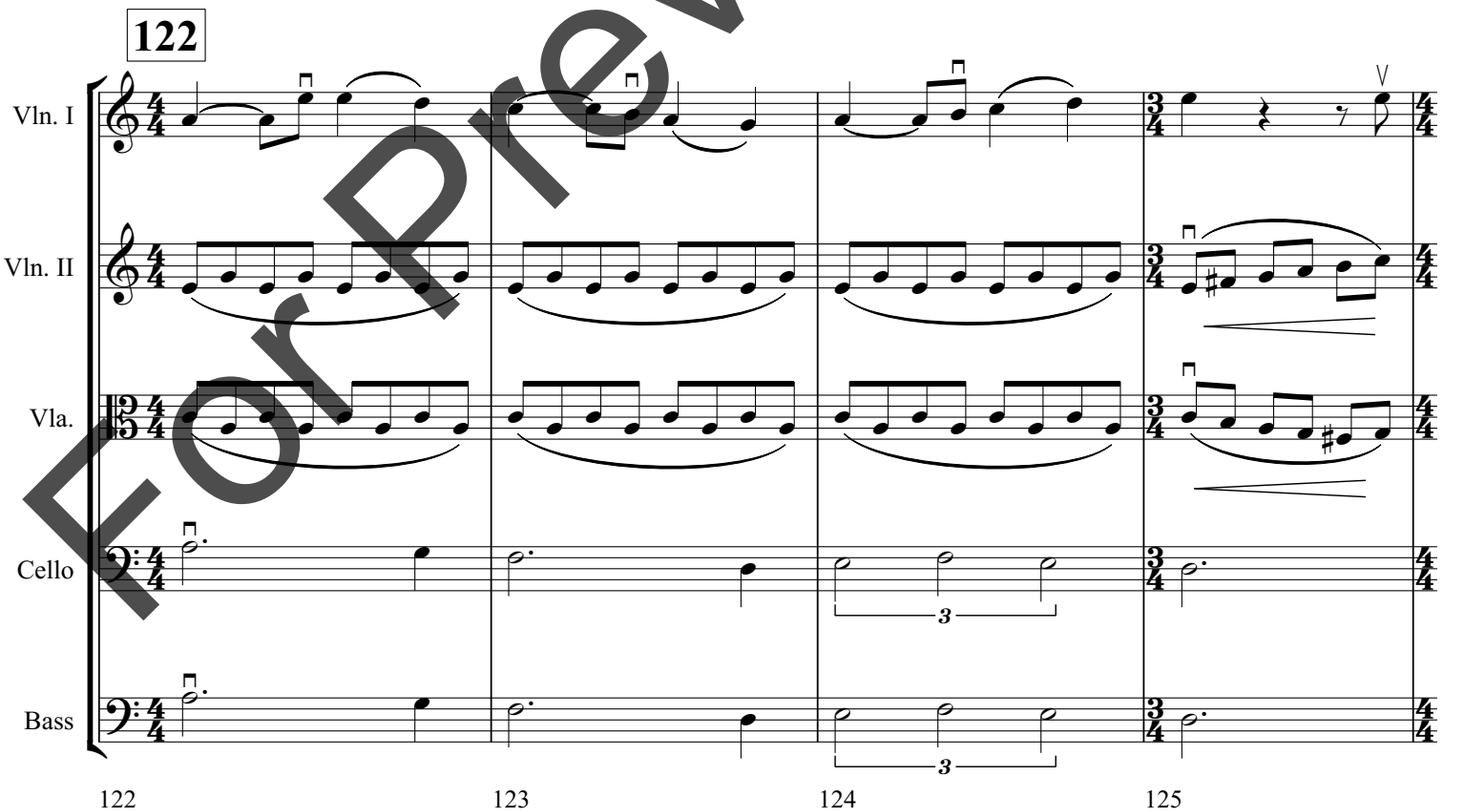

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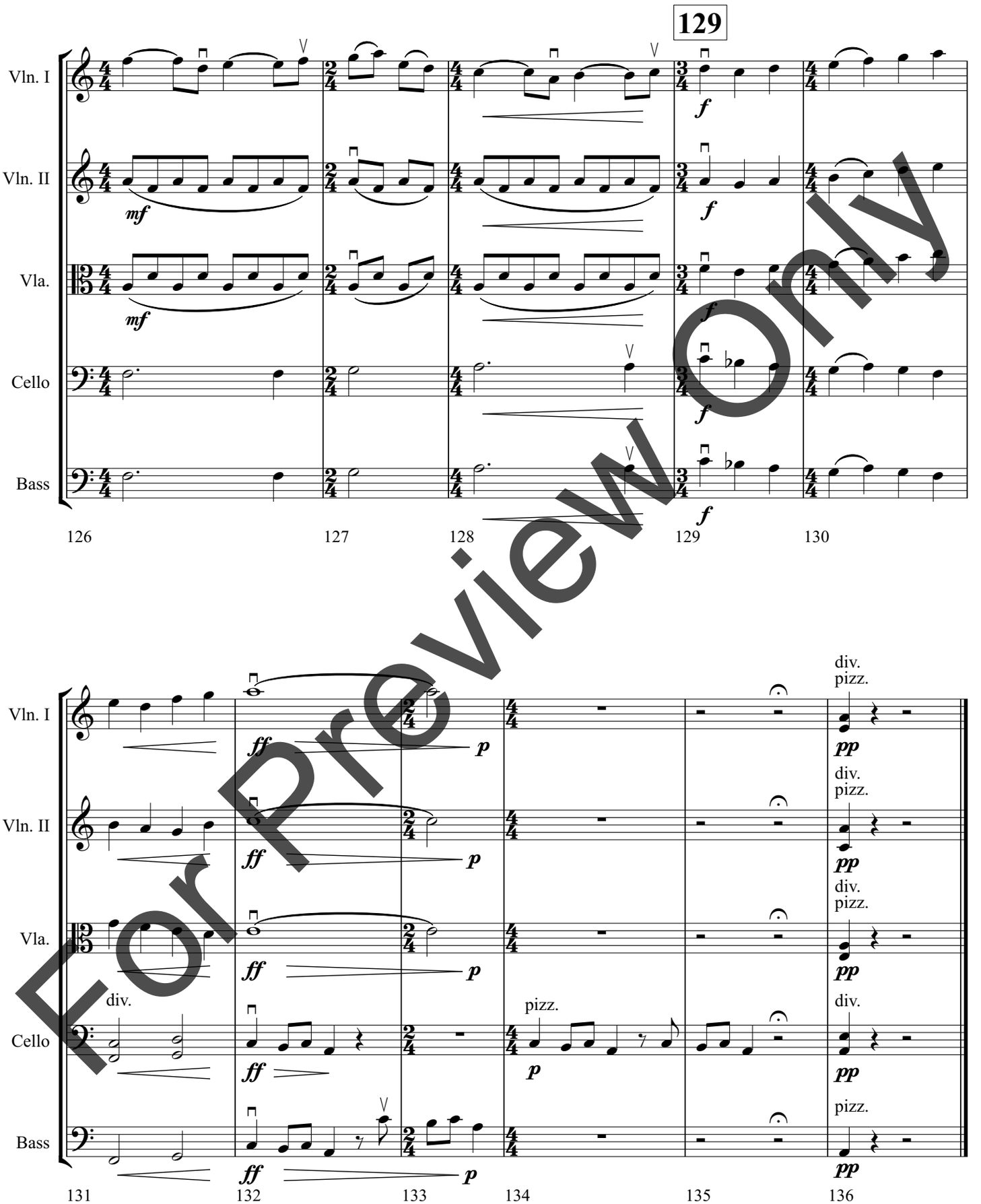

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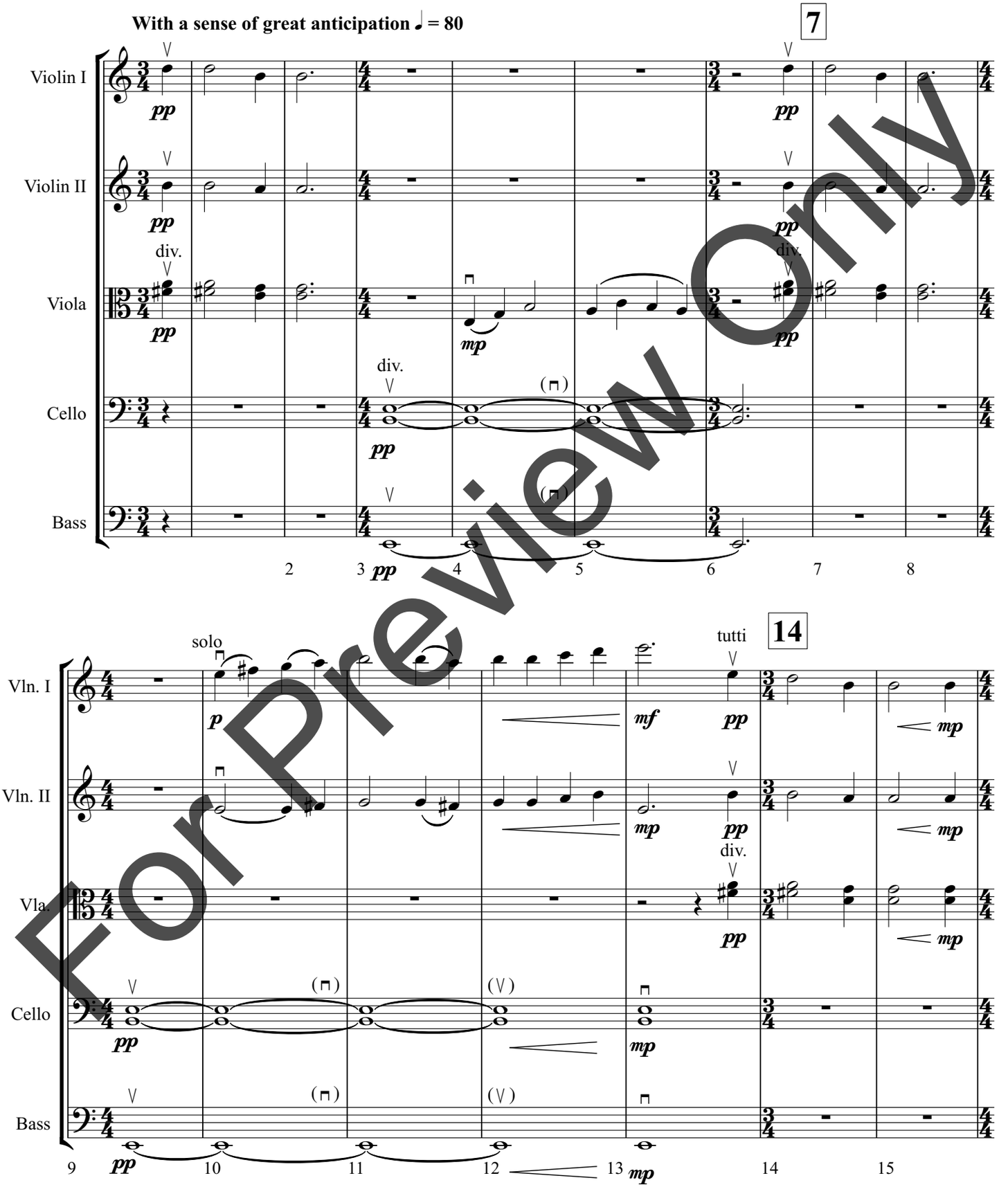
II

The Great Expectation



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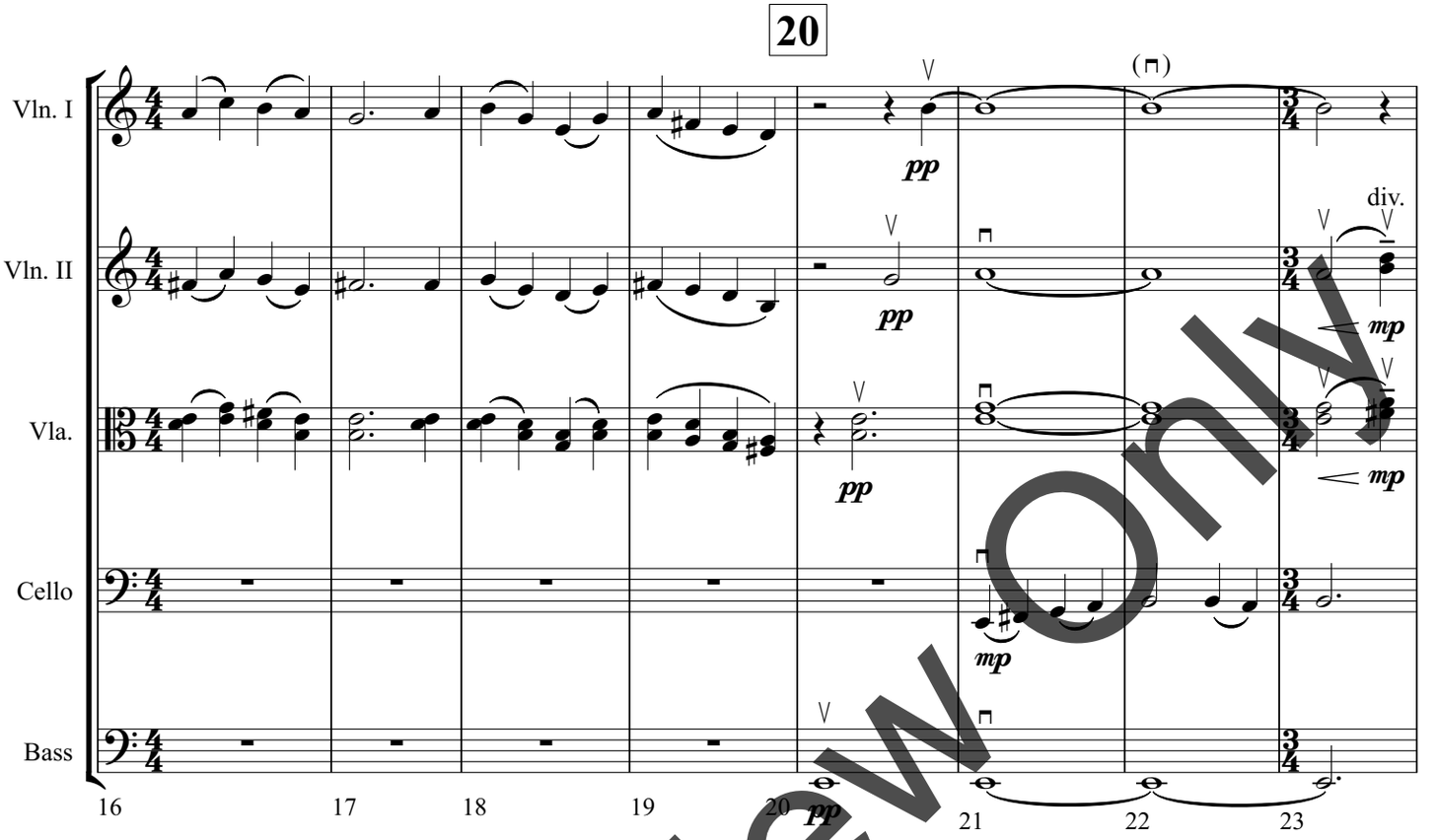

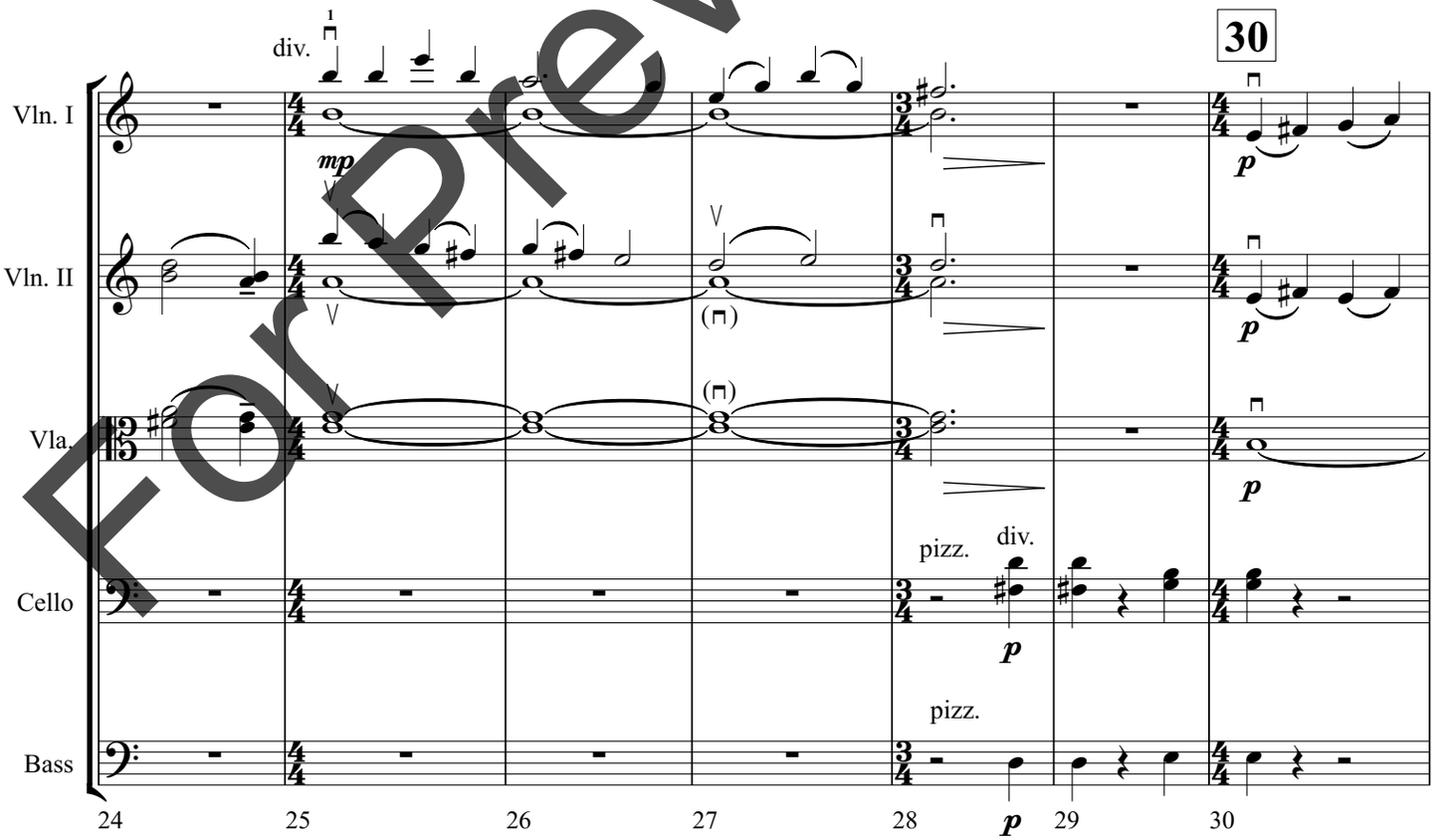

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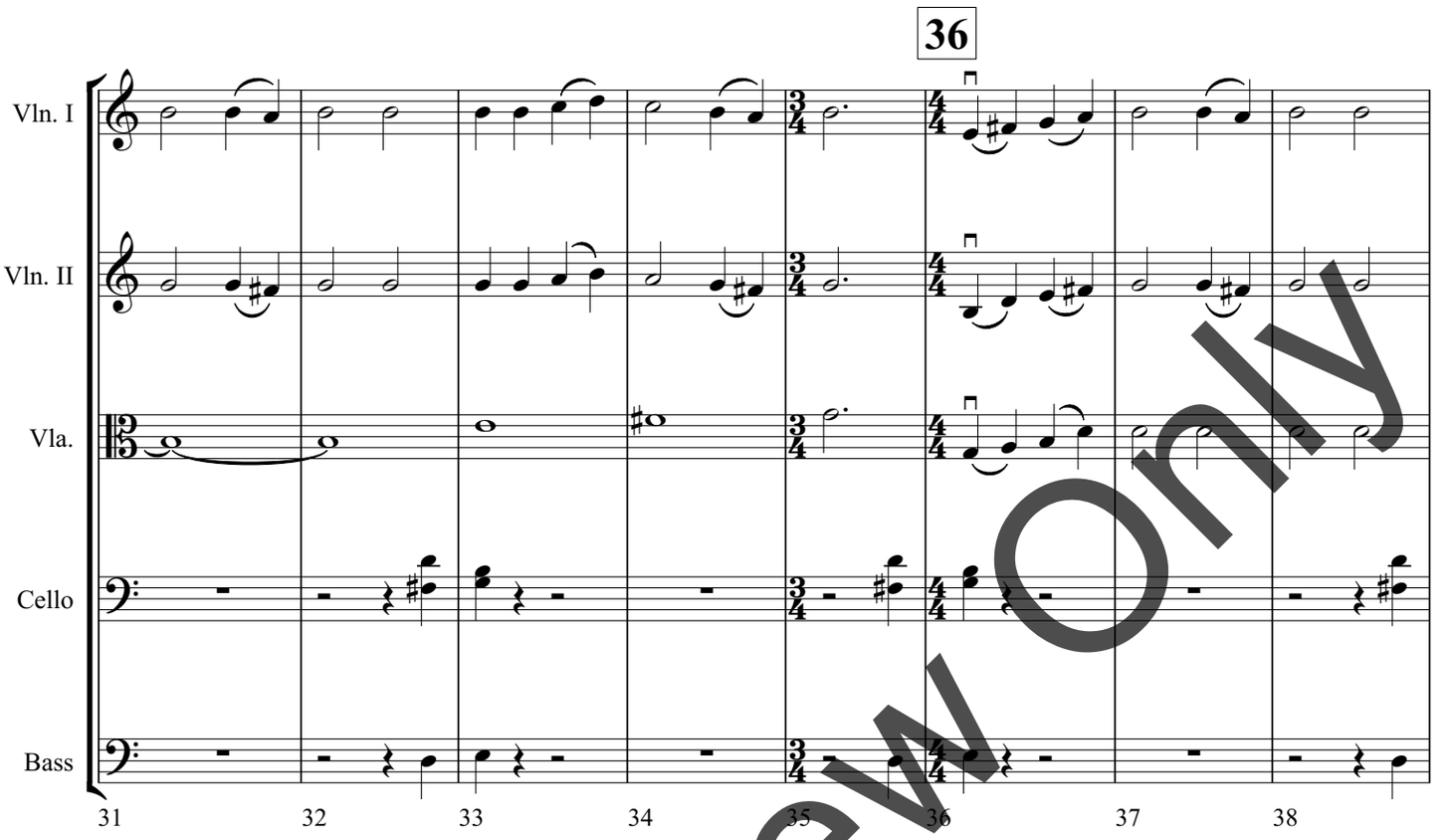

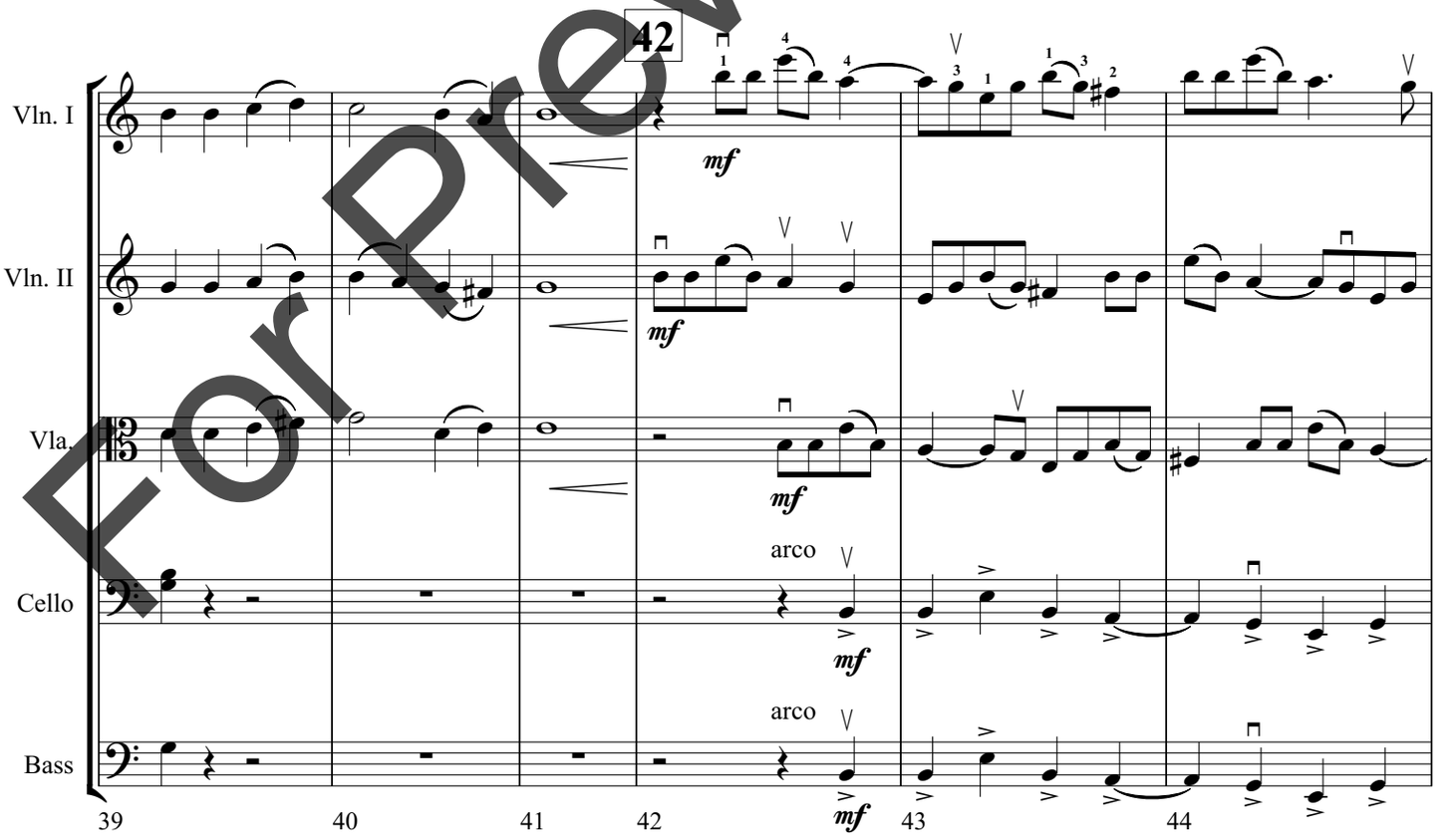

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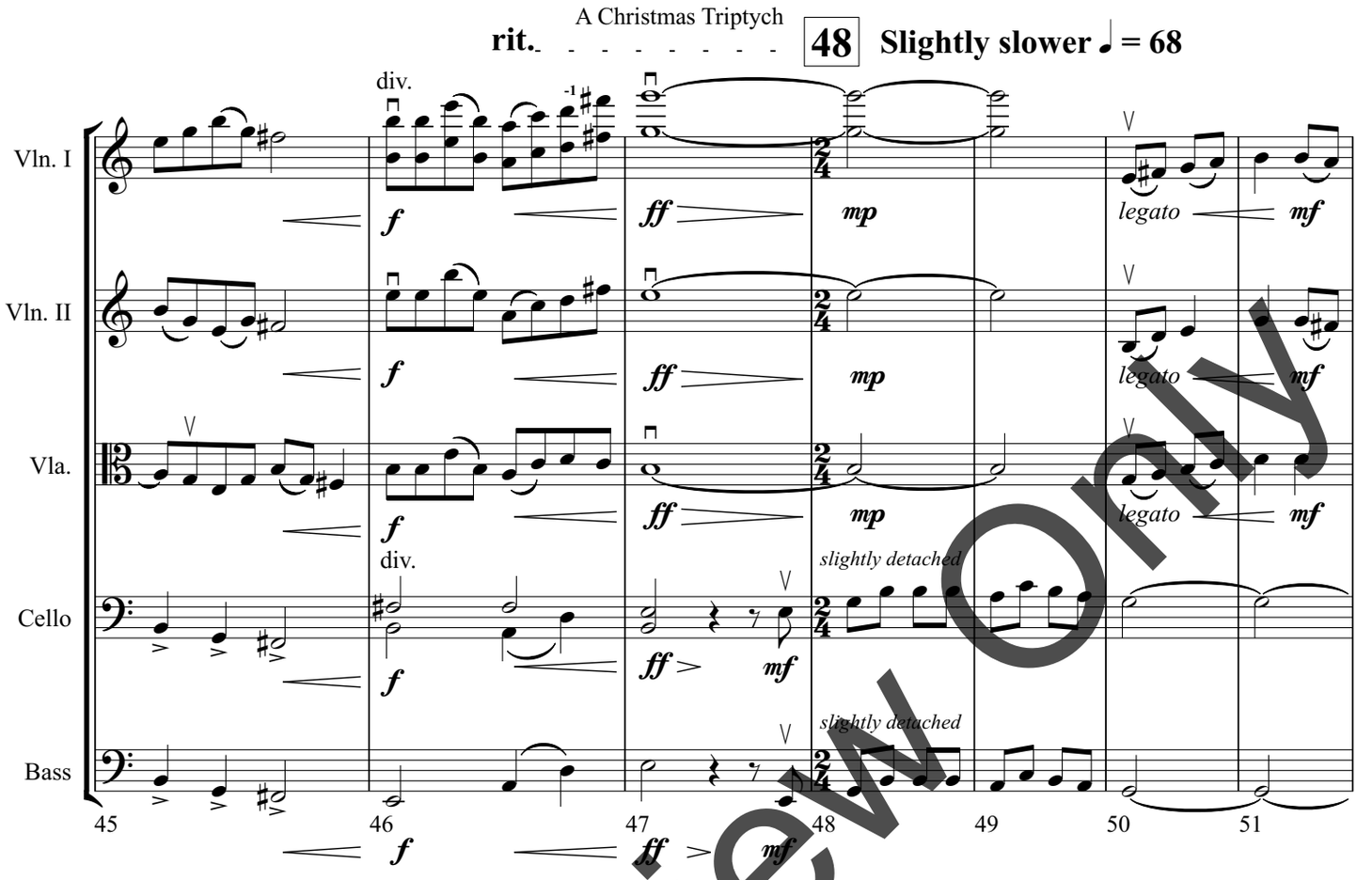

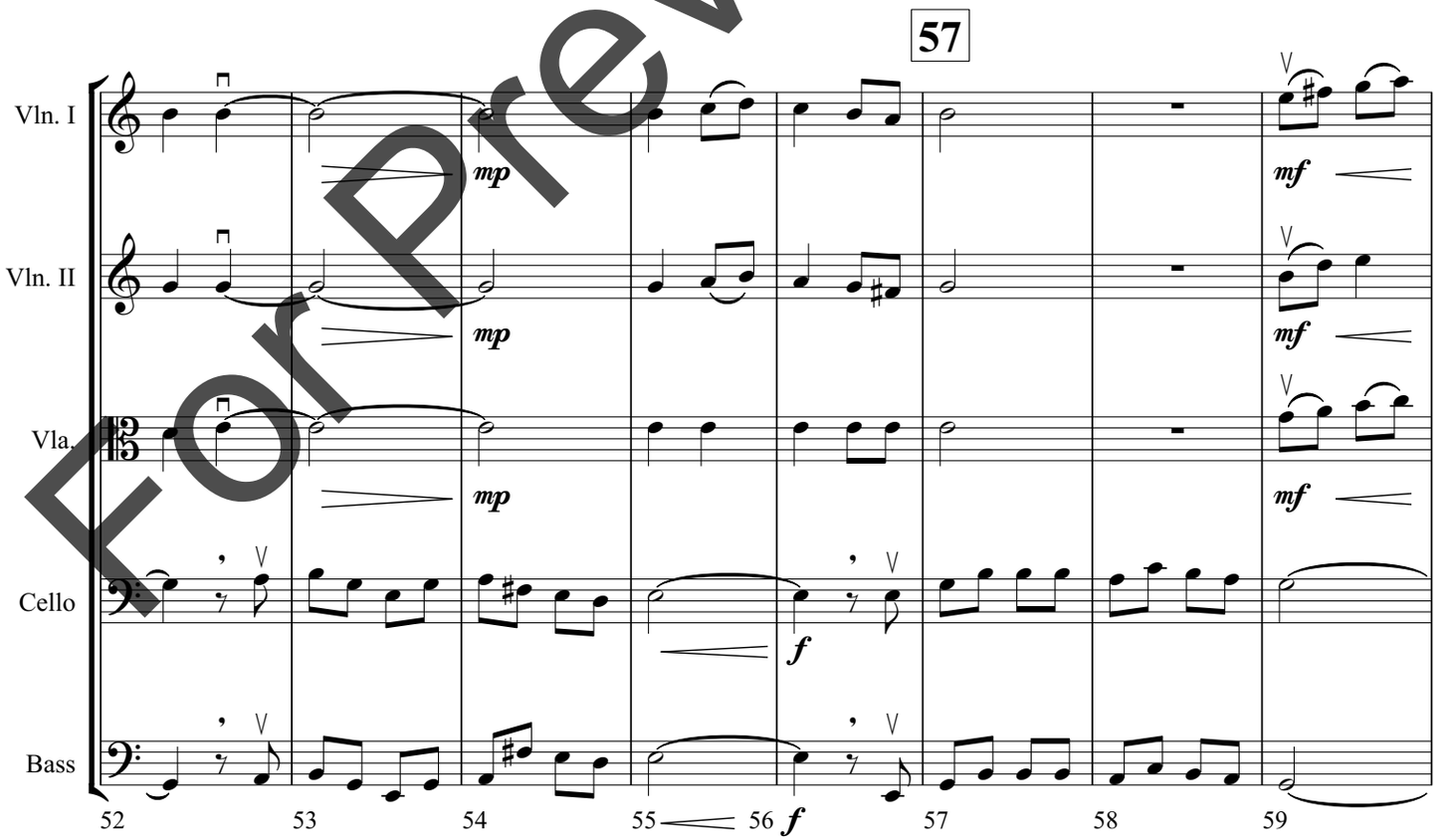

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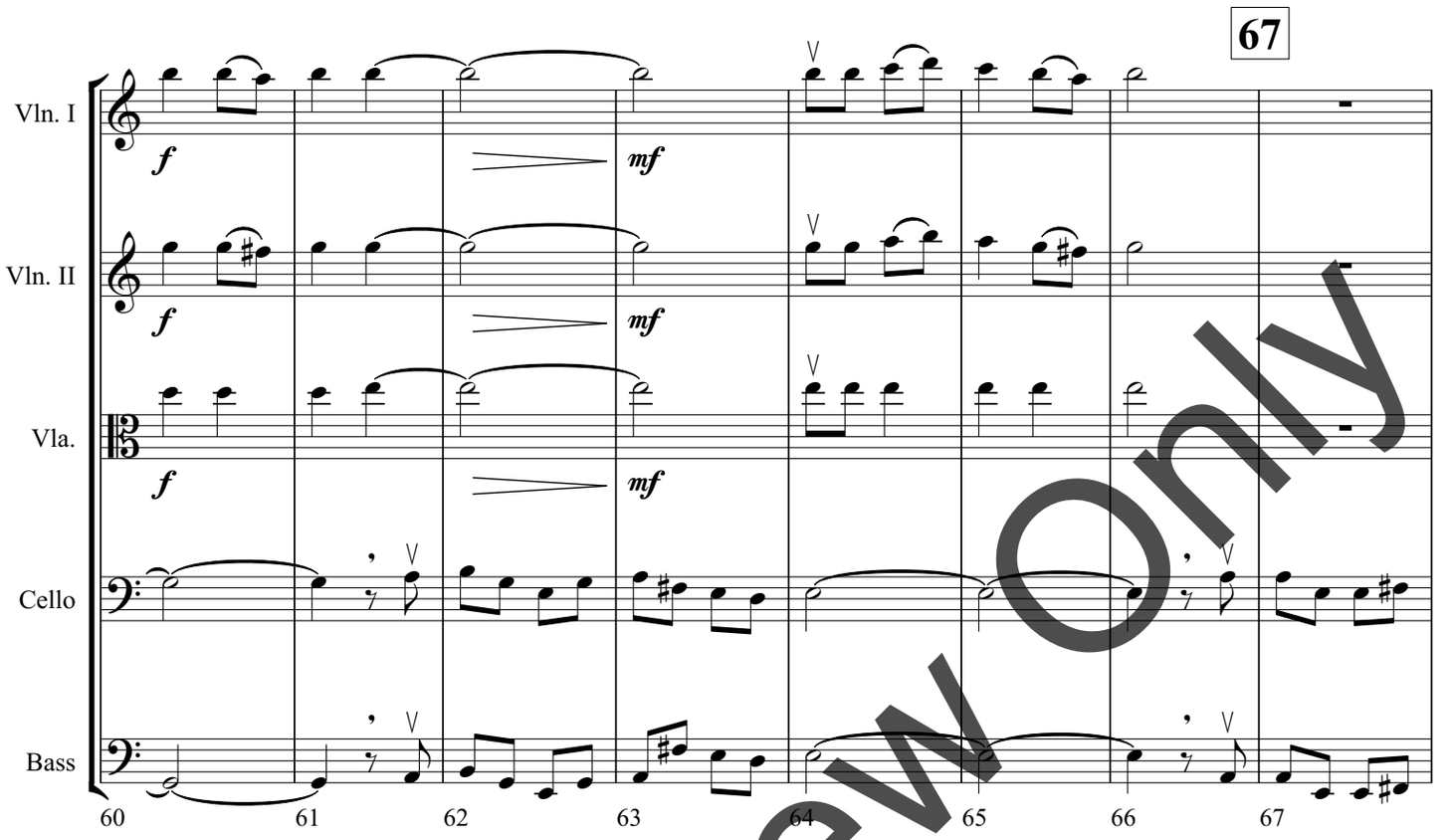

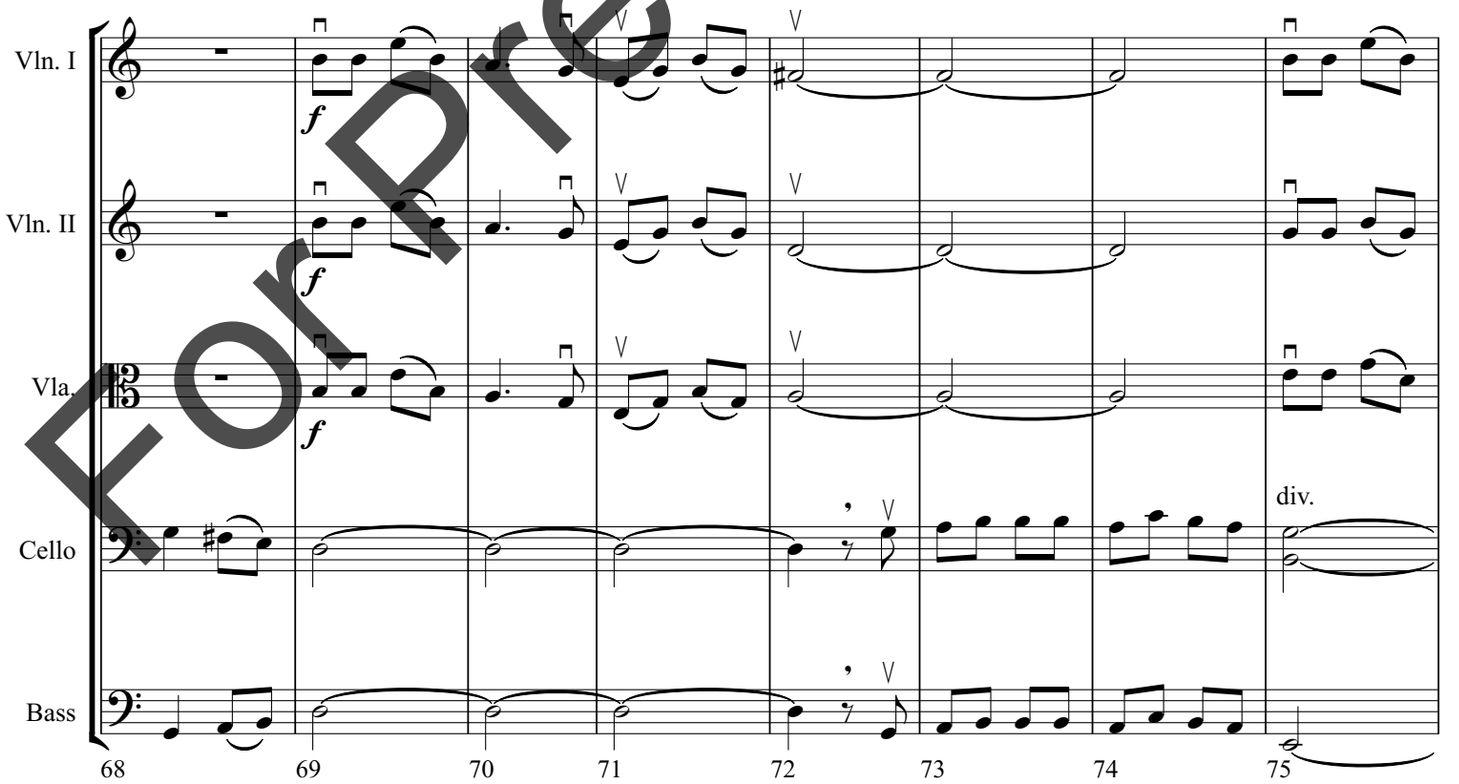

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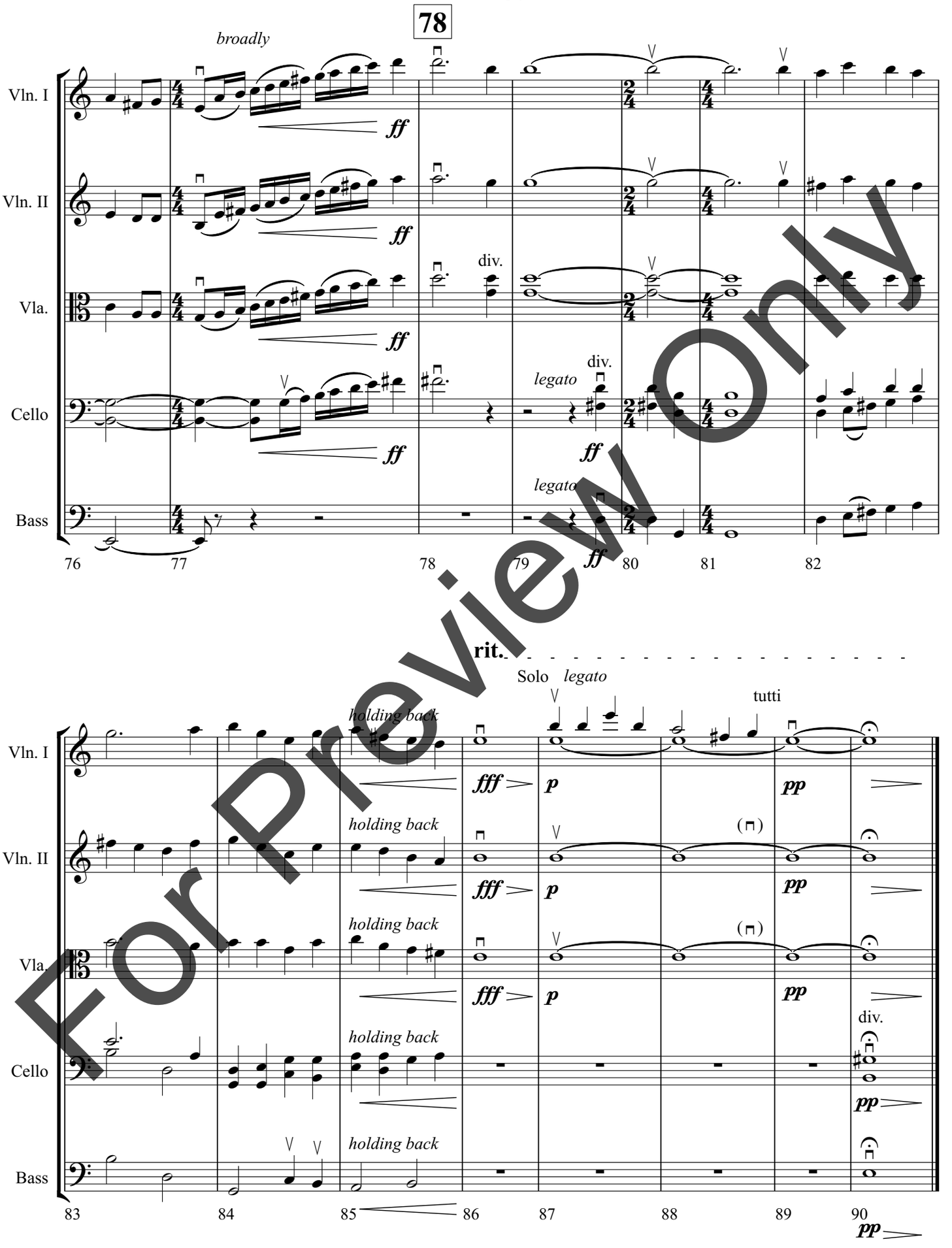

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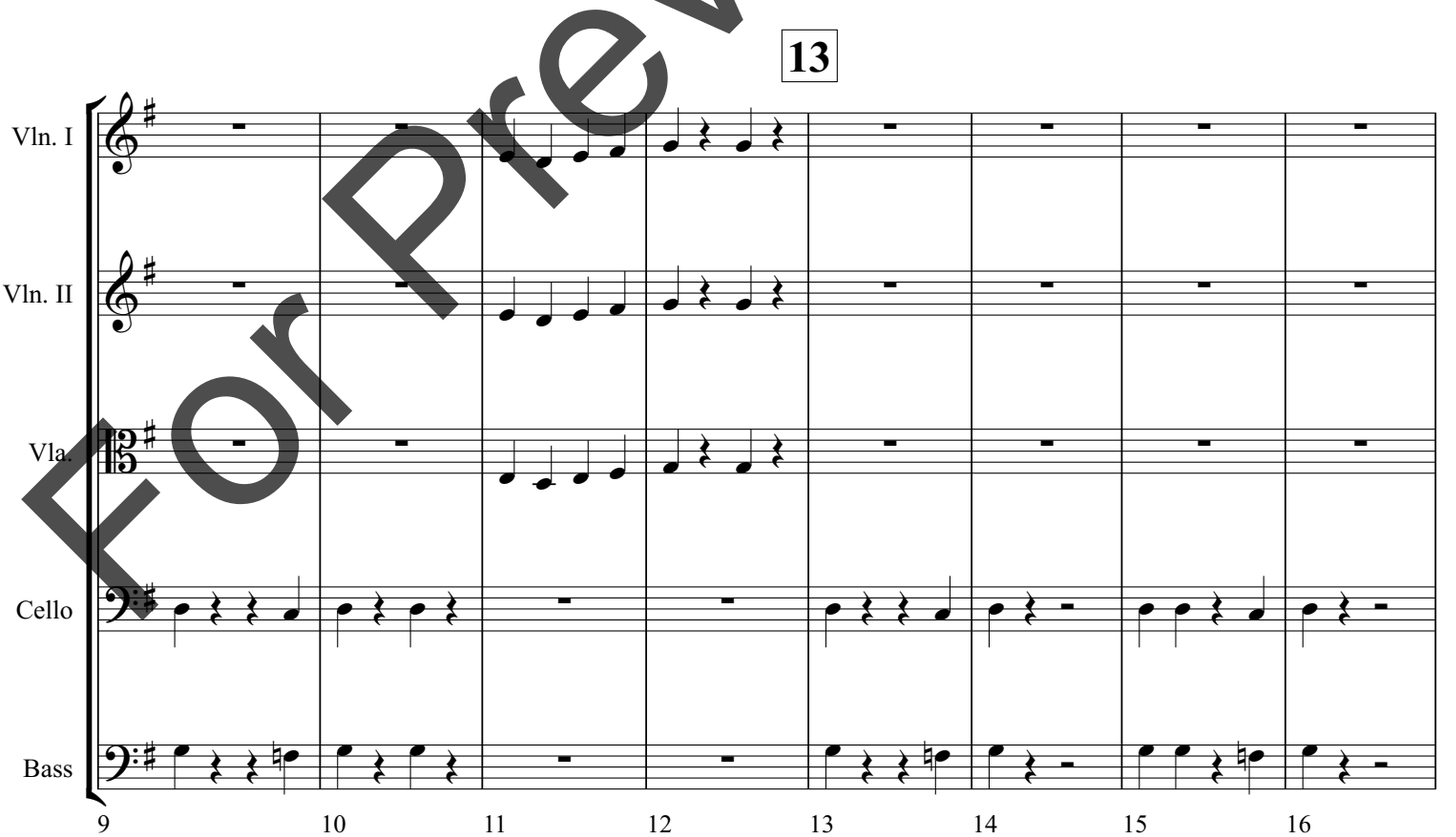
Christmastide



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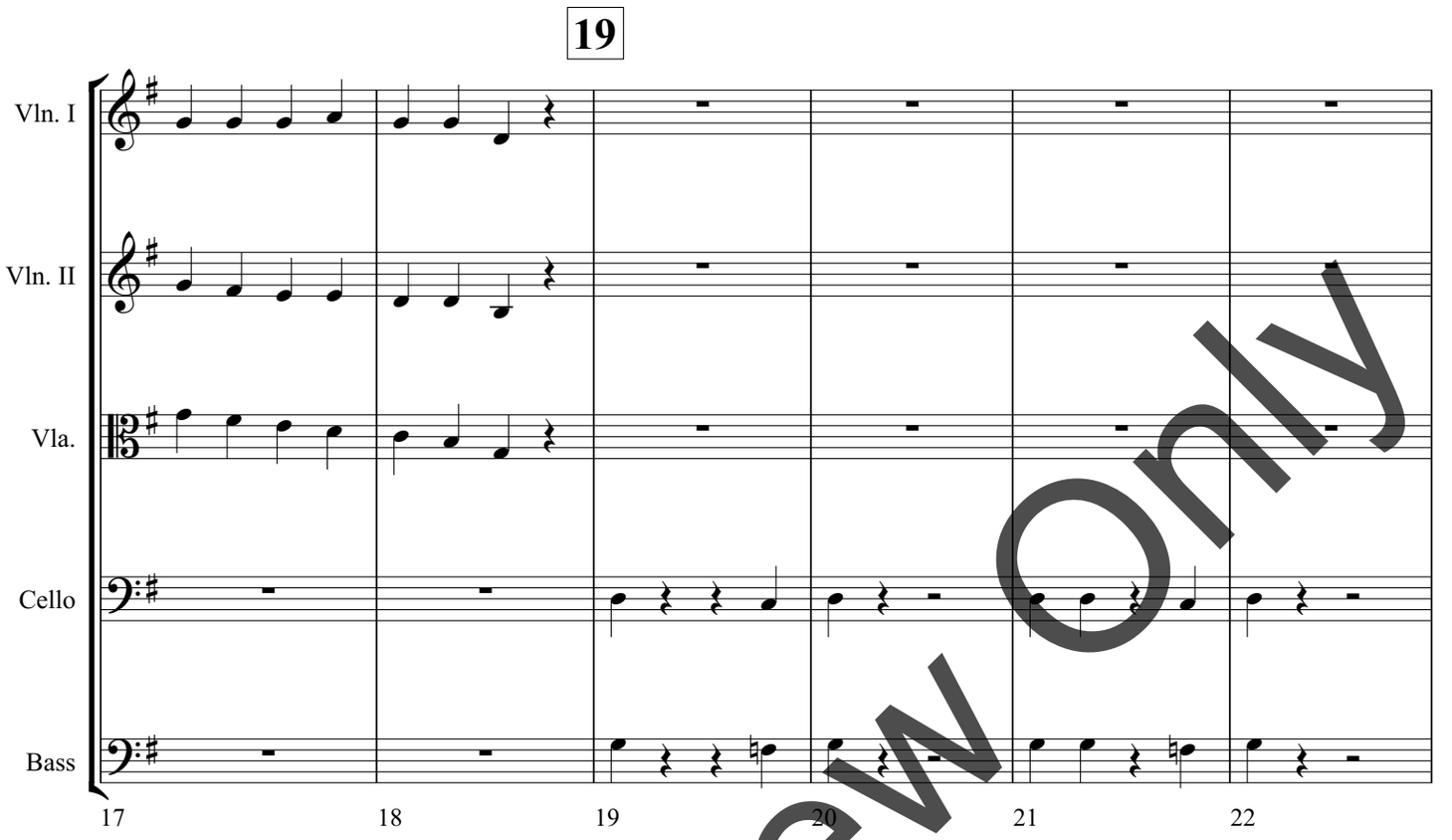

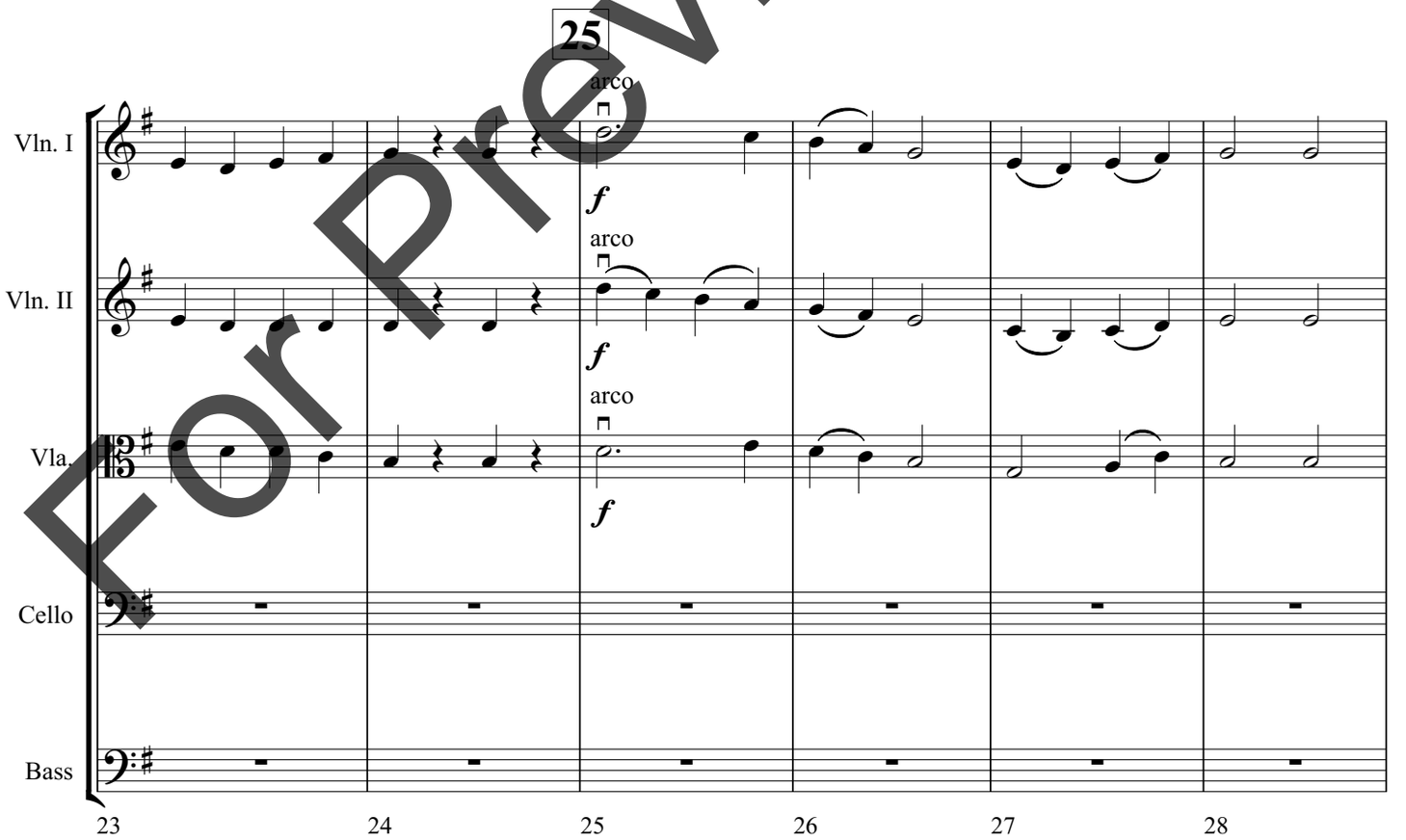

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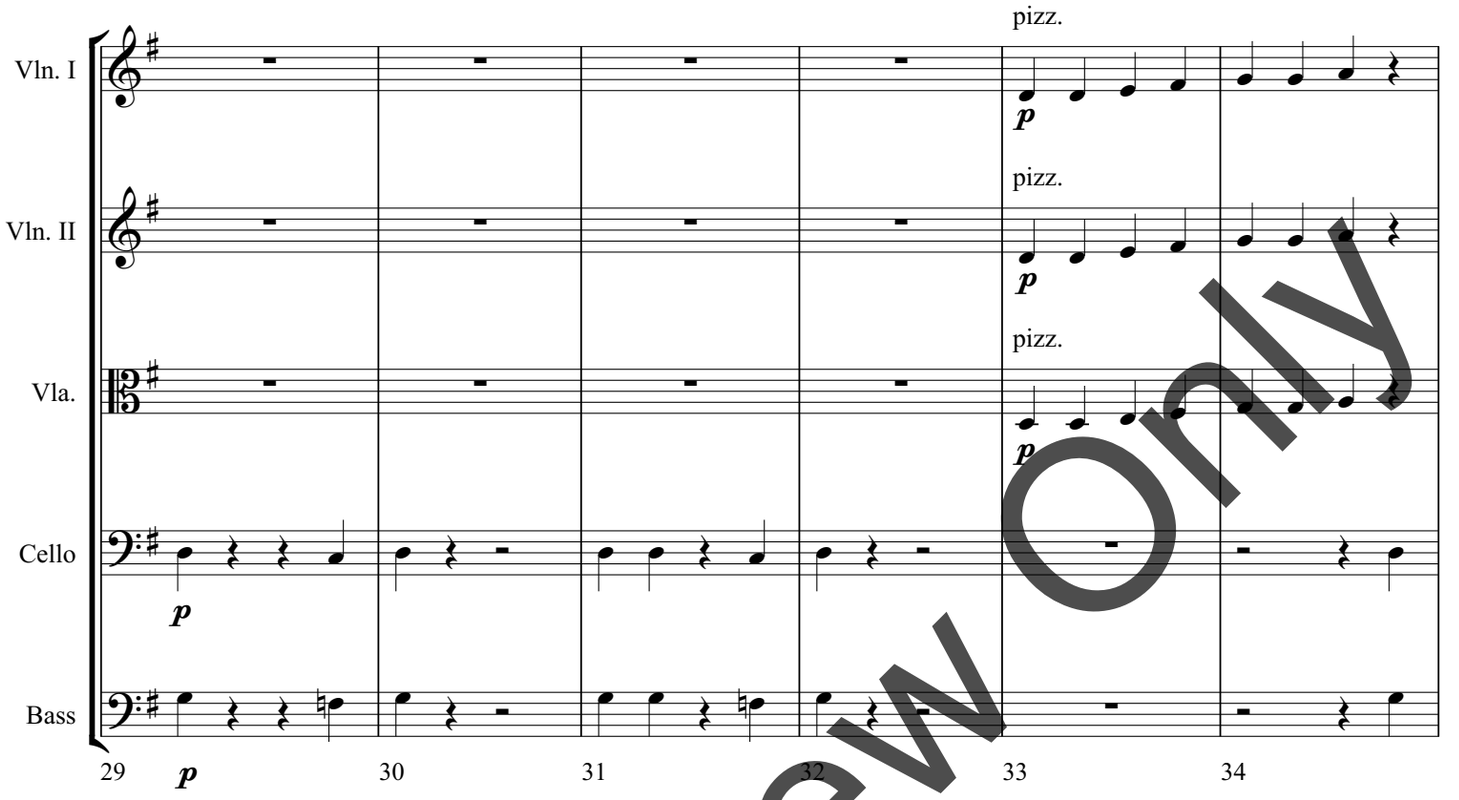

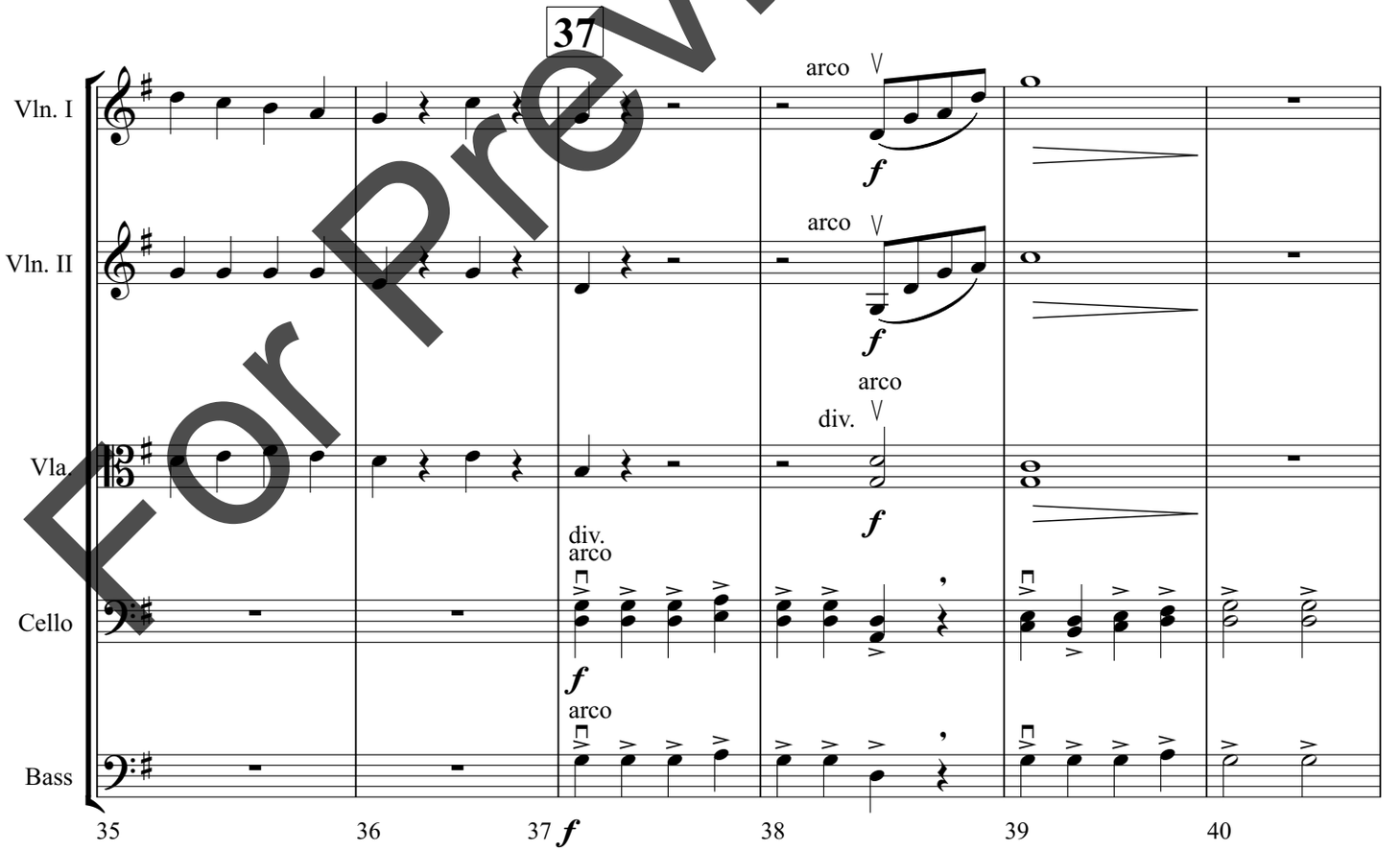

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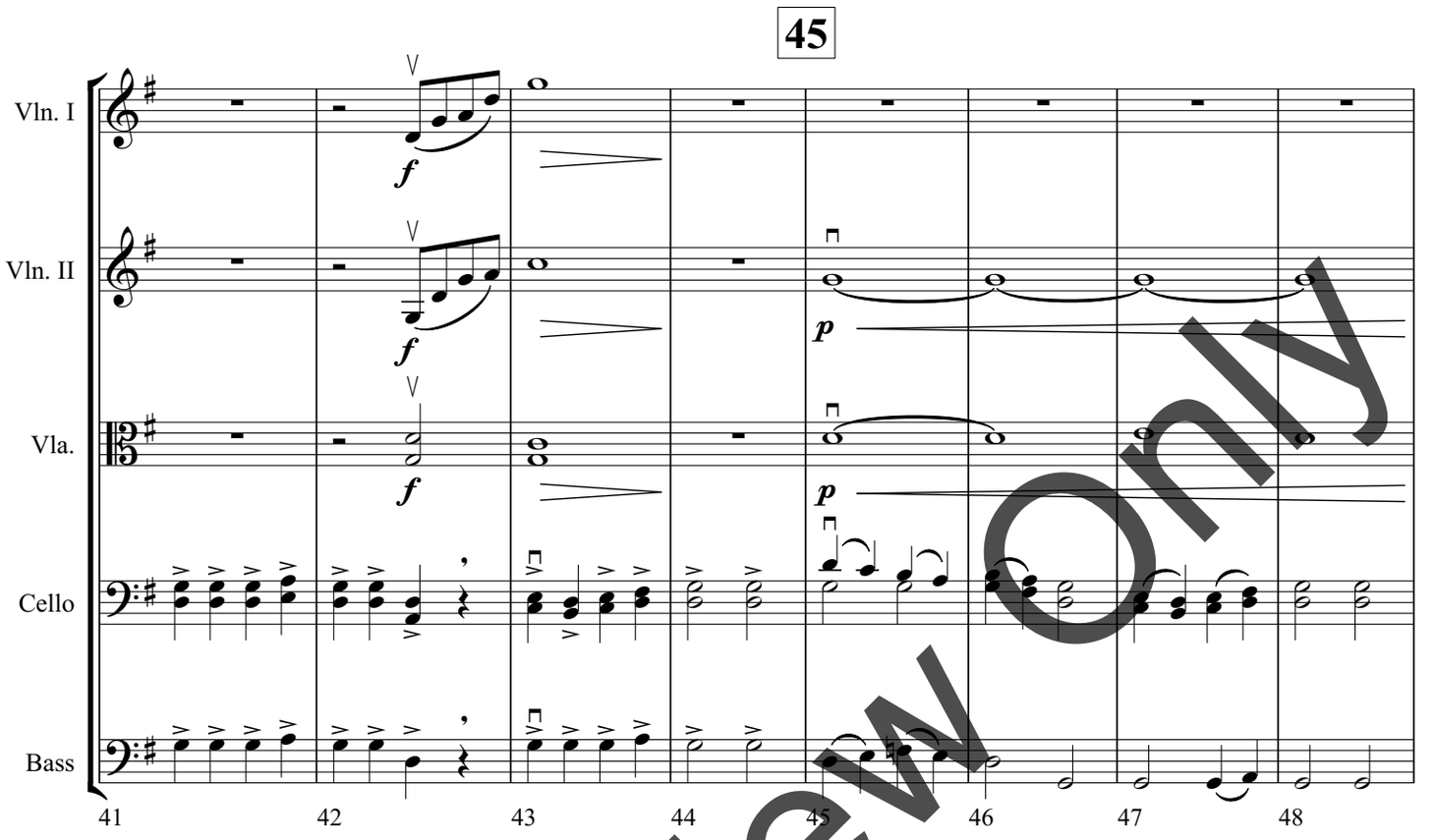

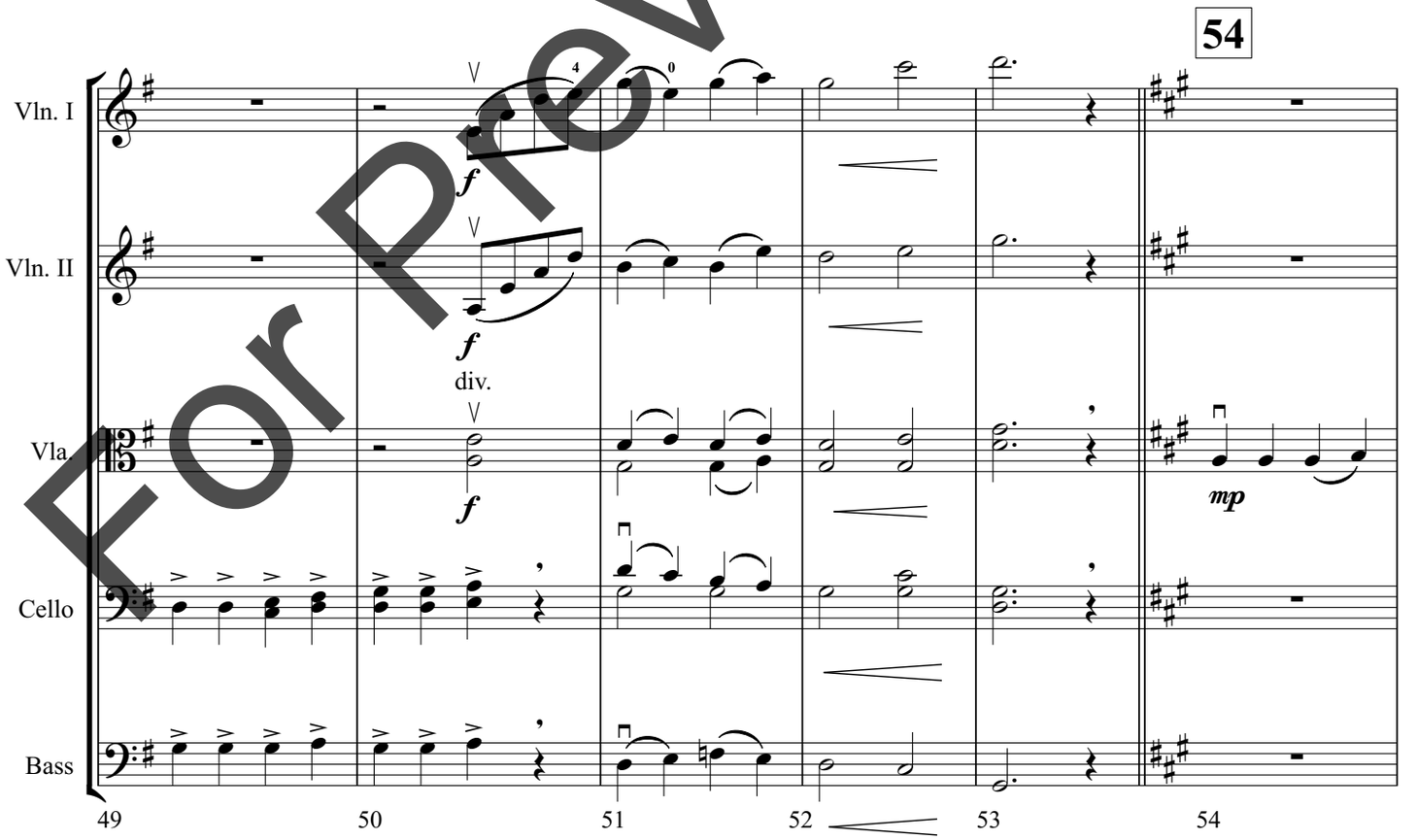

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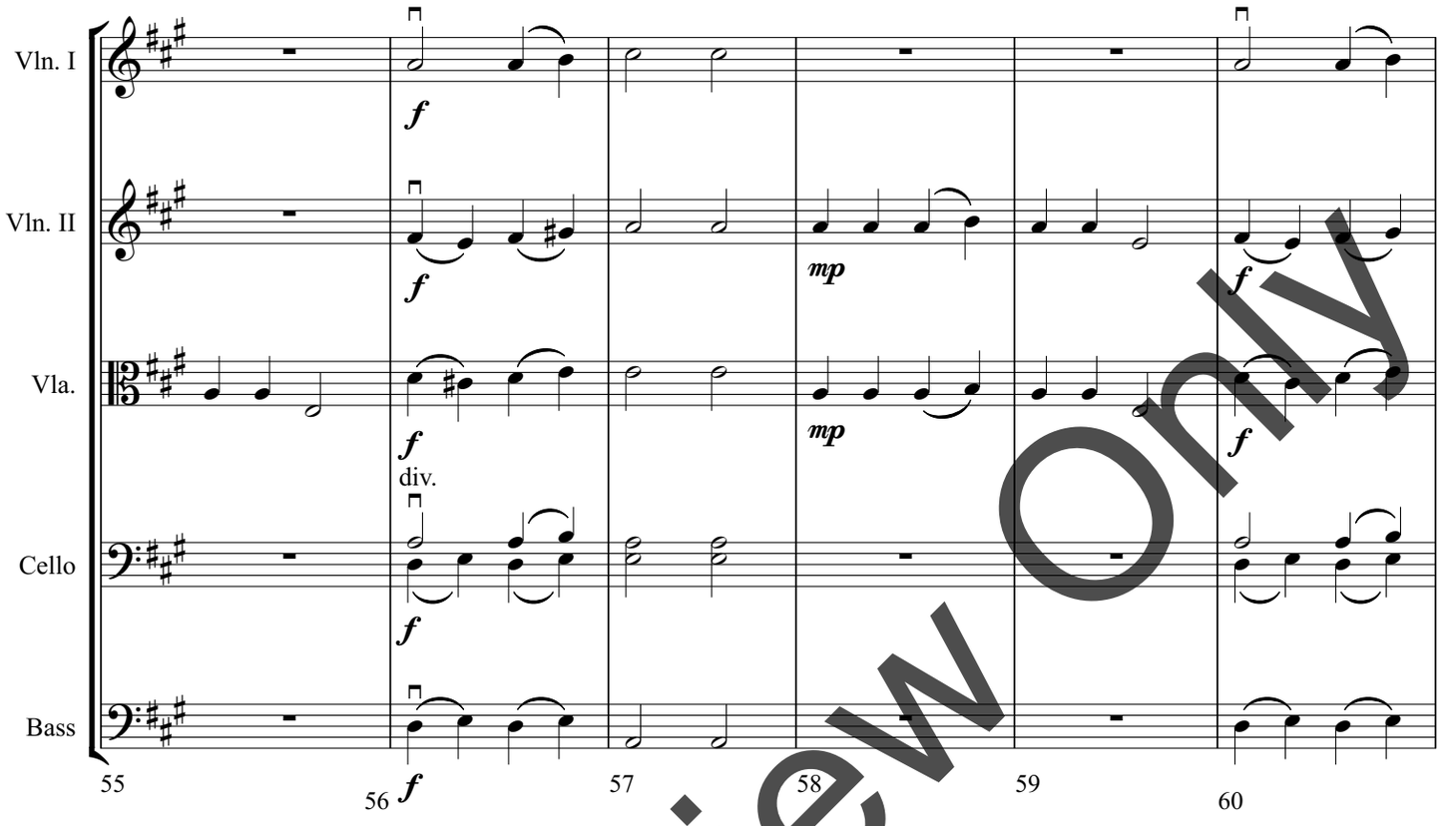

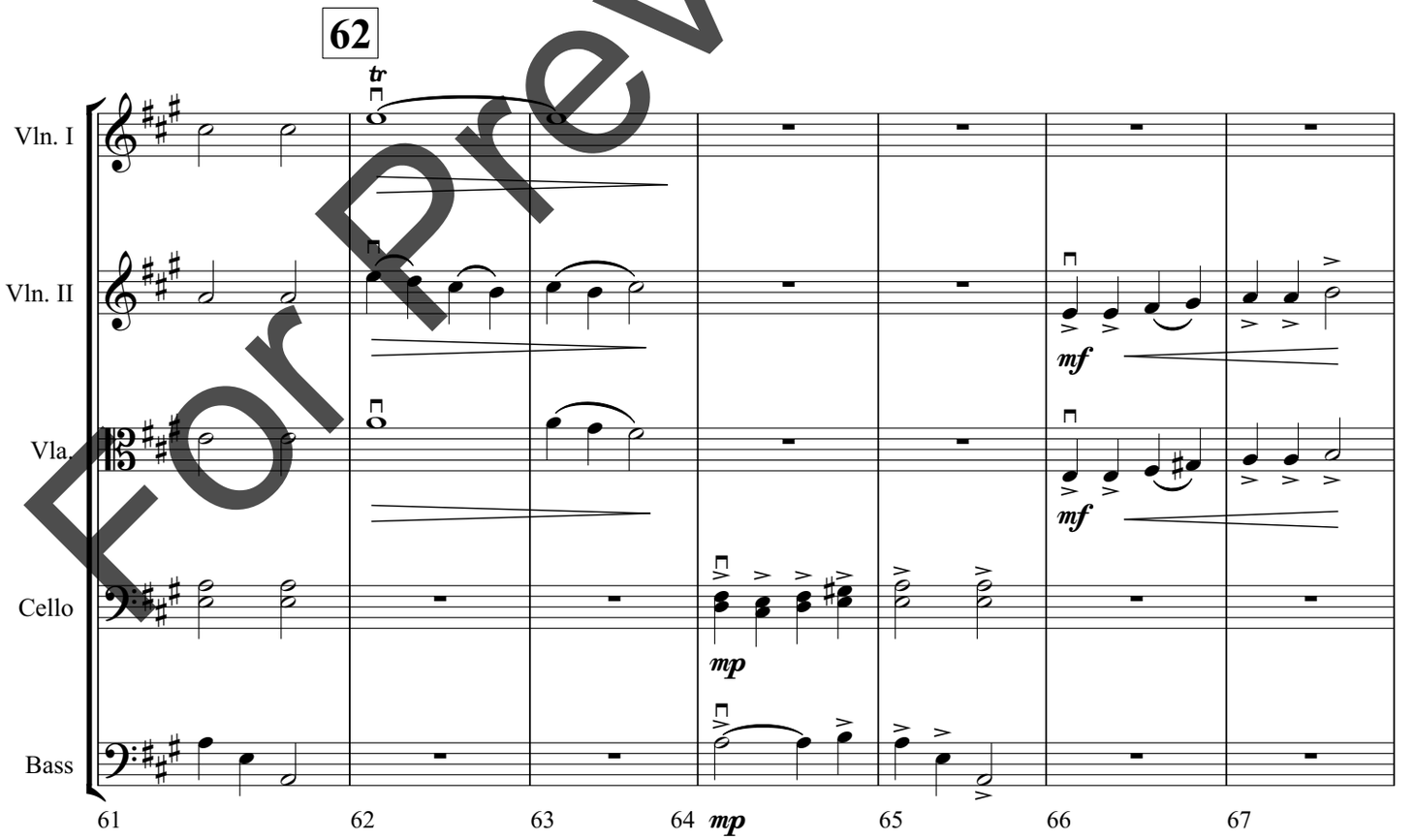

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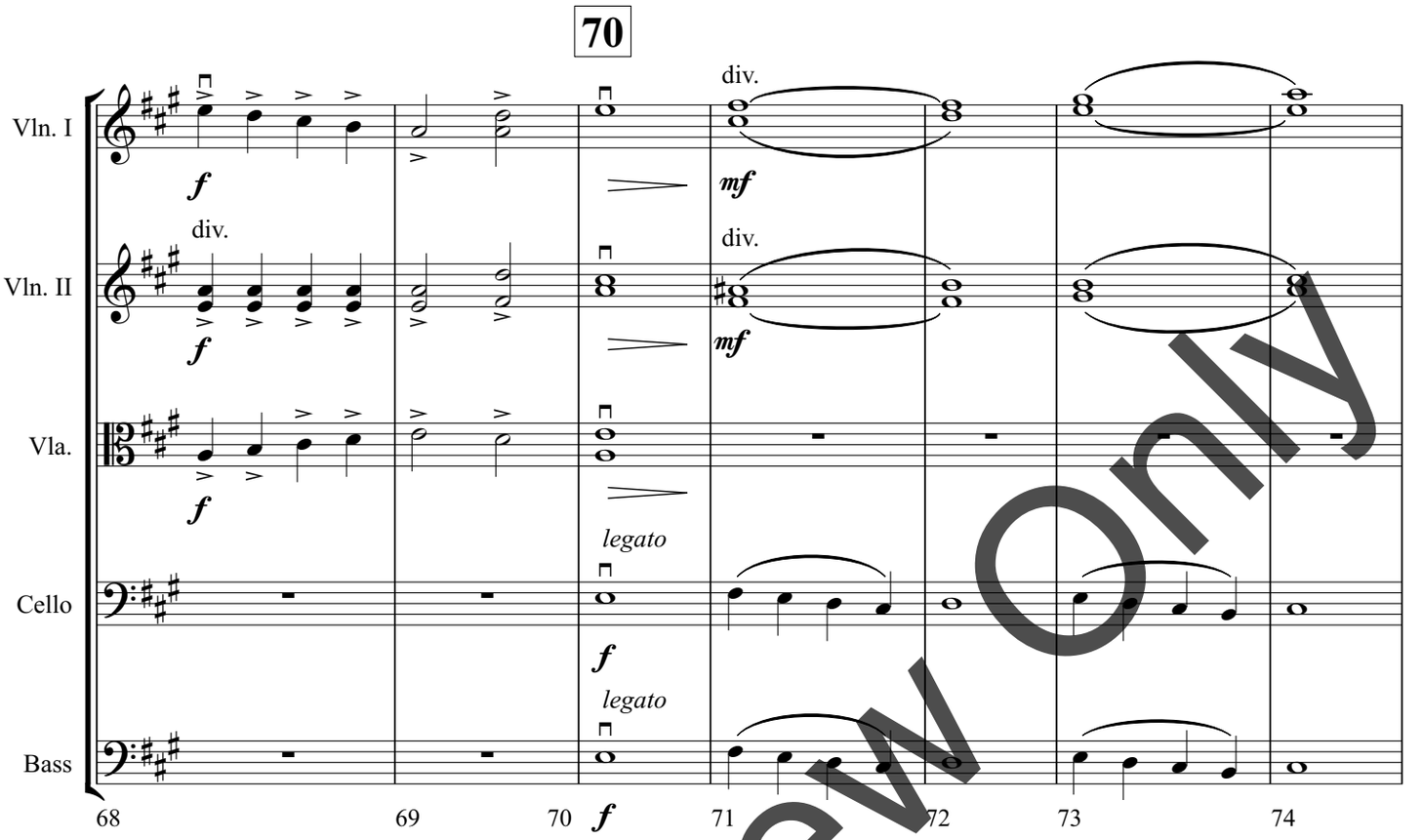

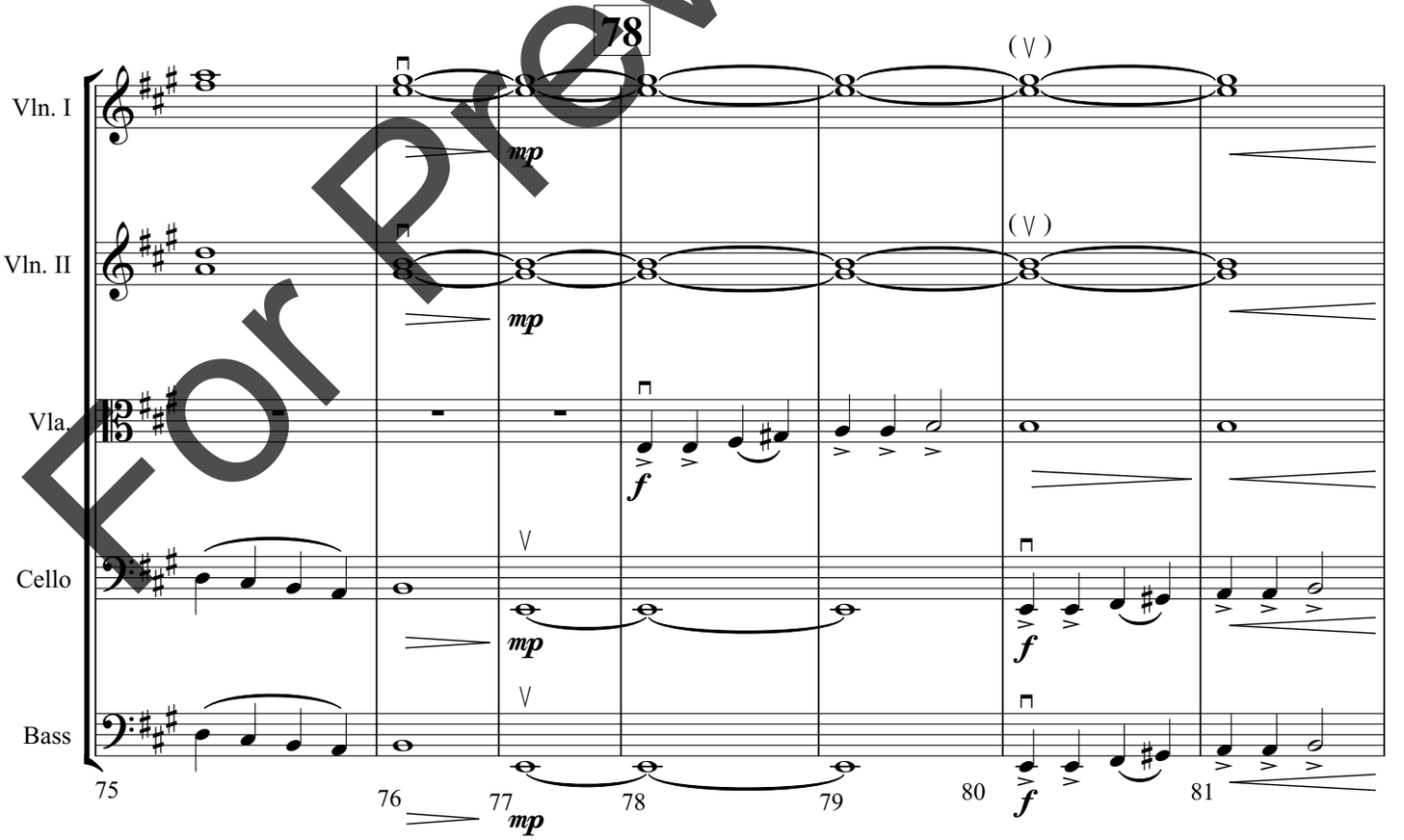

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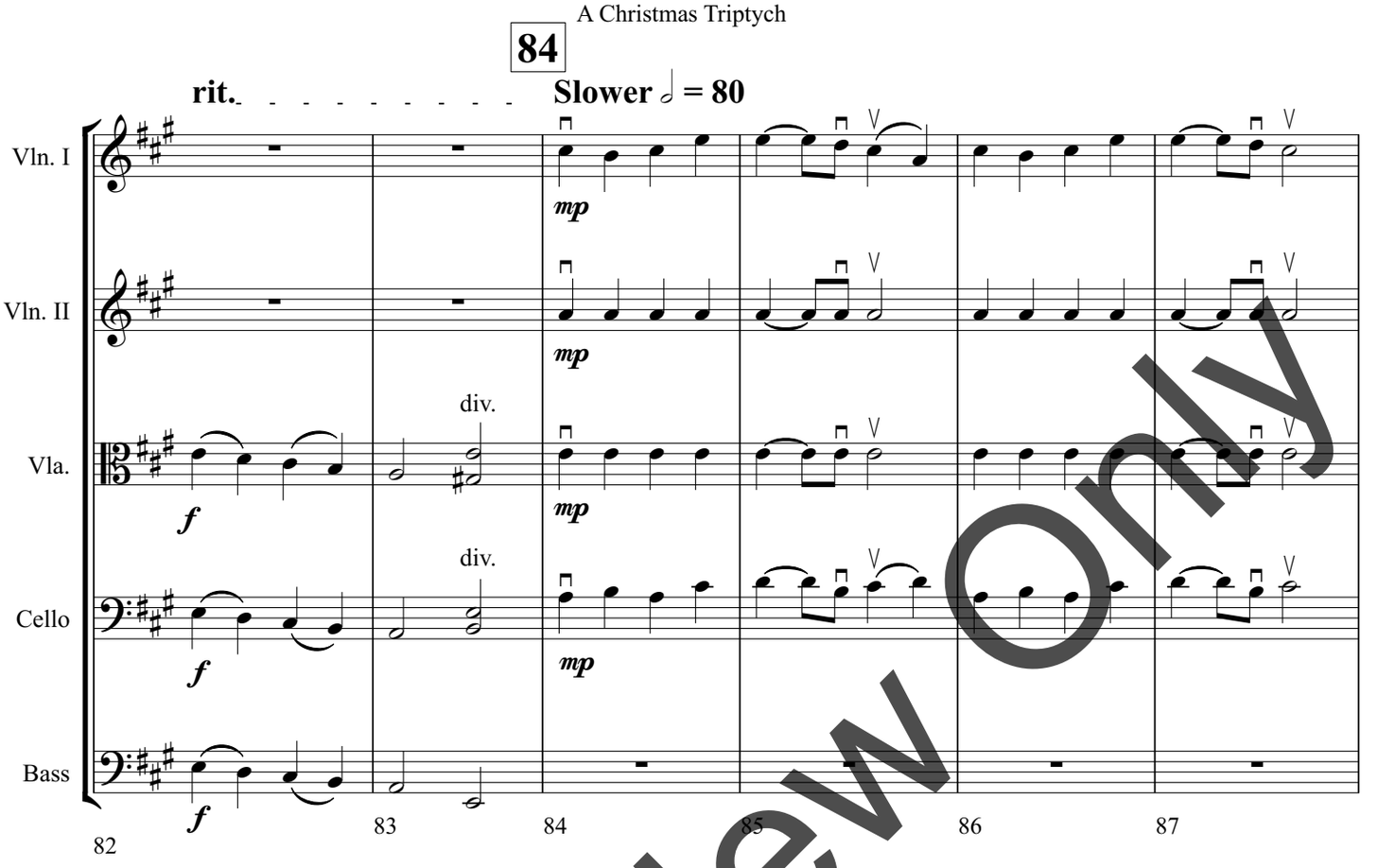

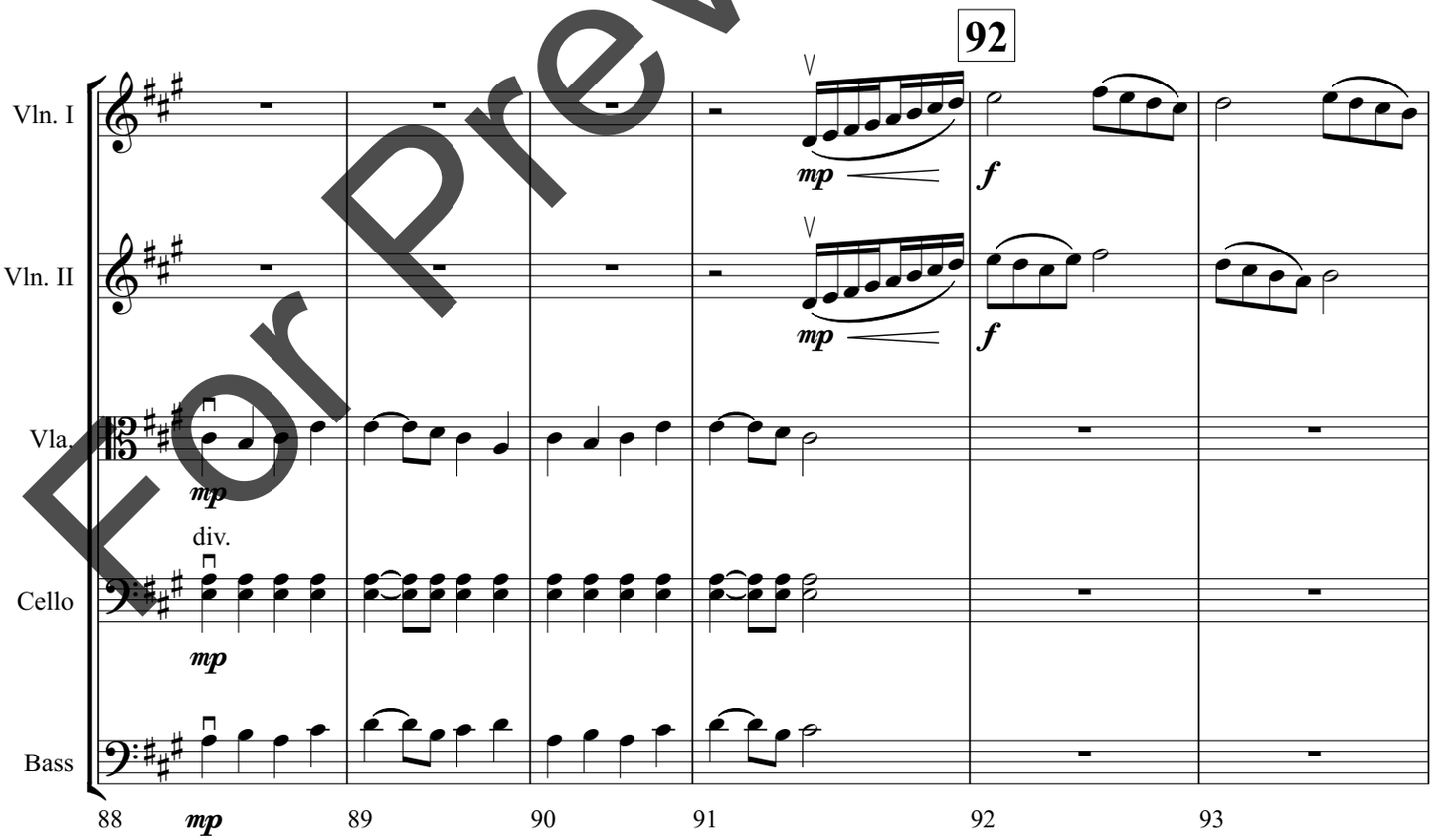

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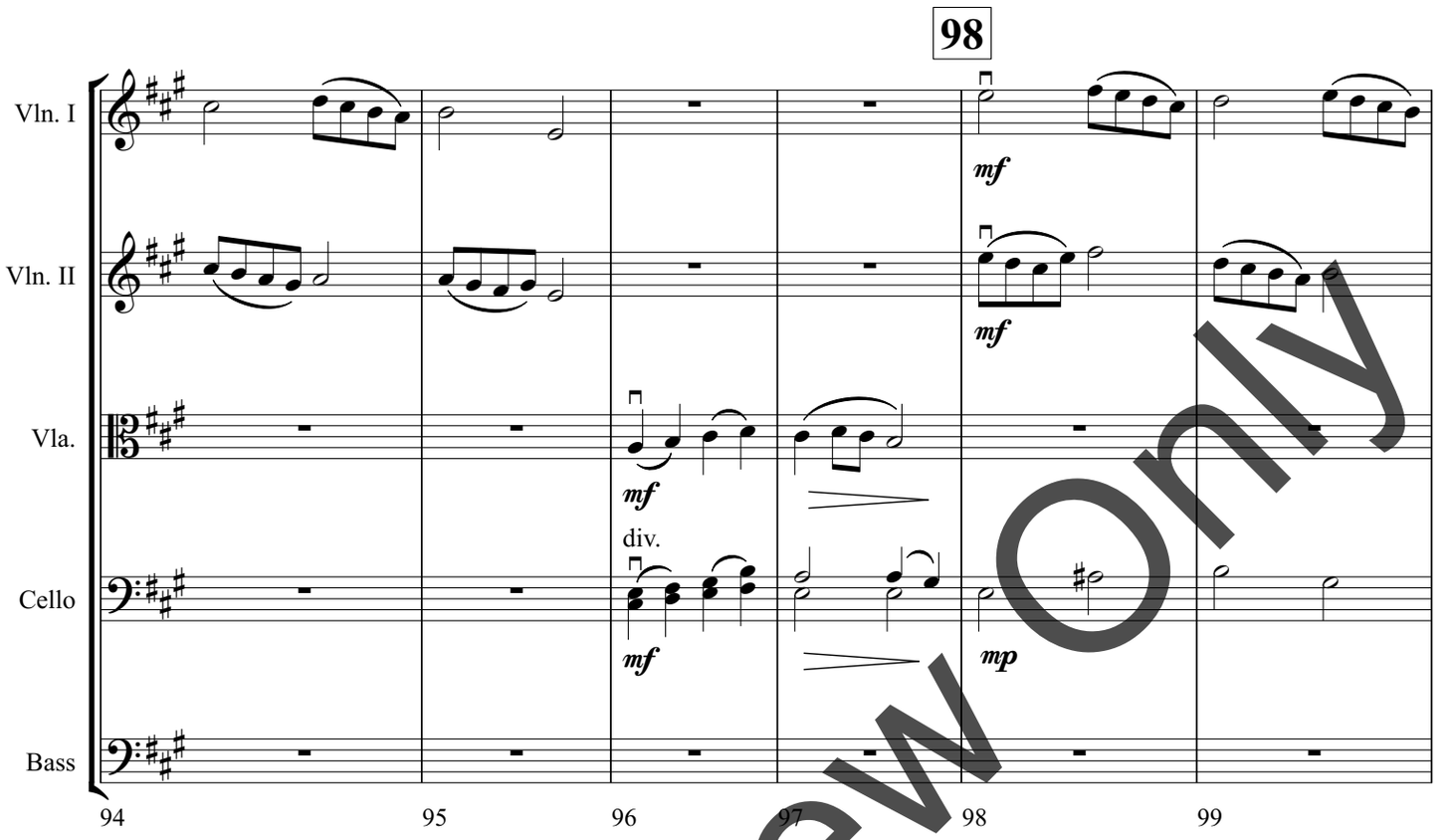

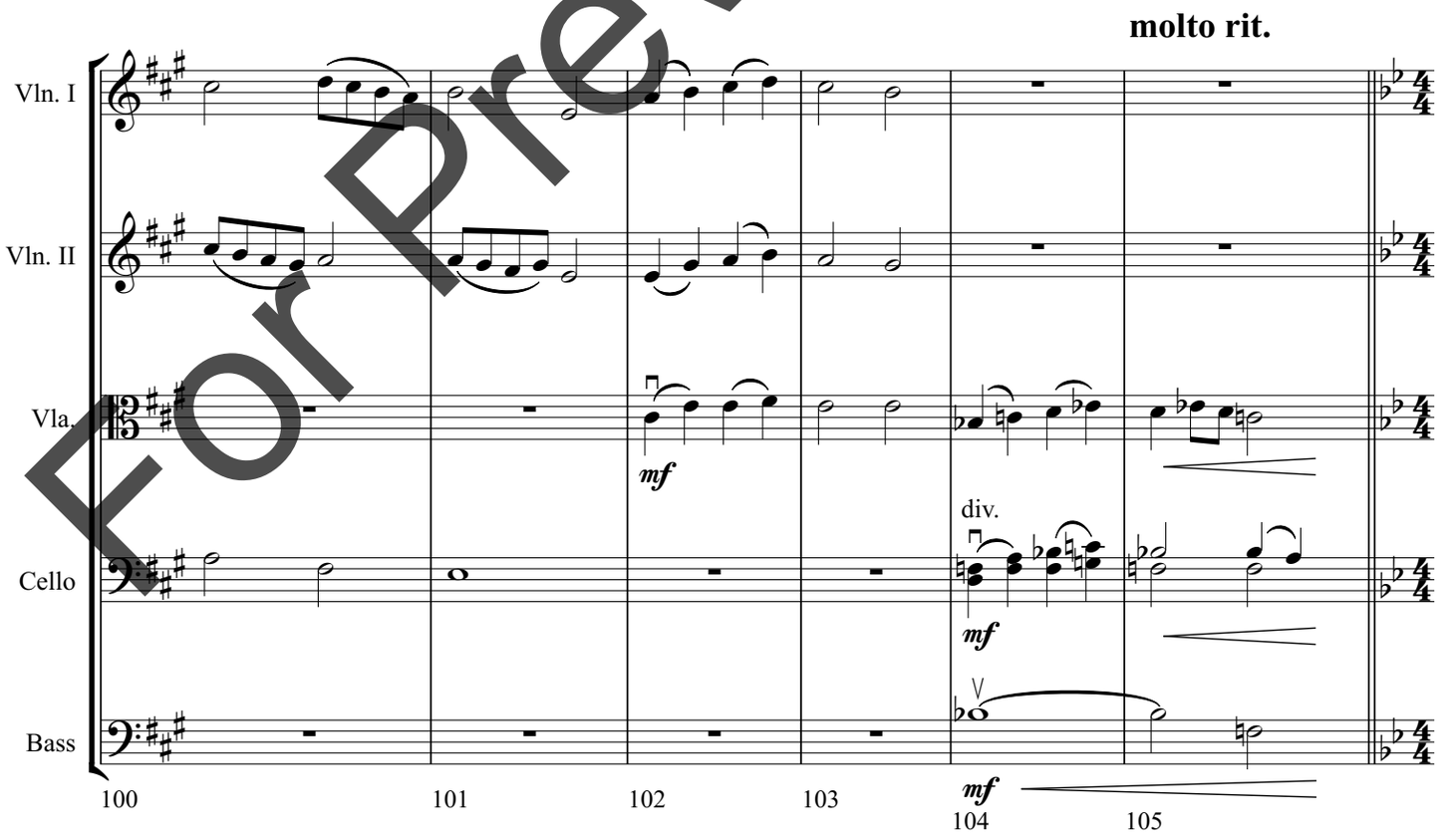

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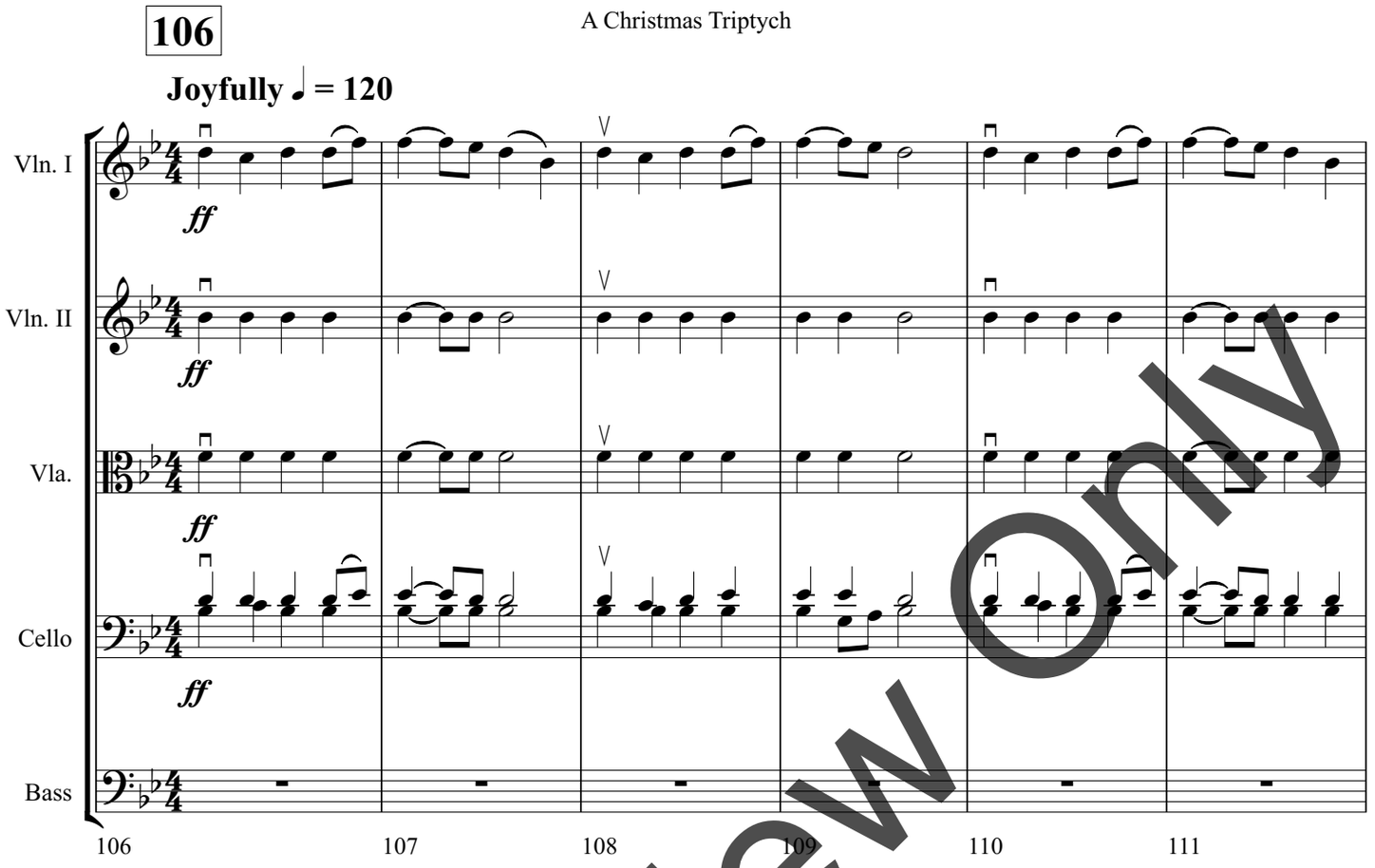

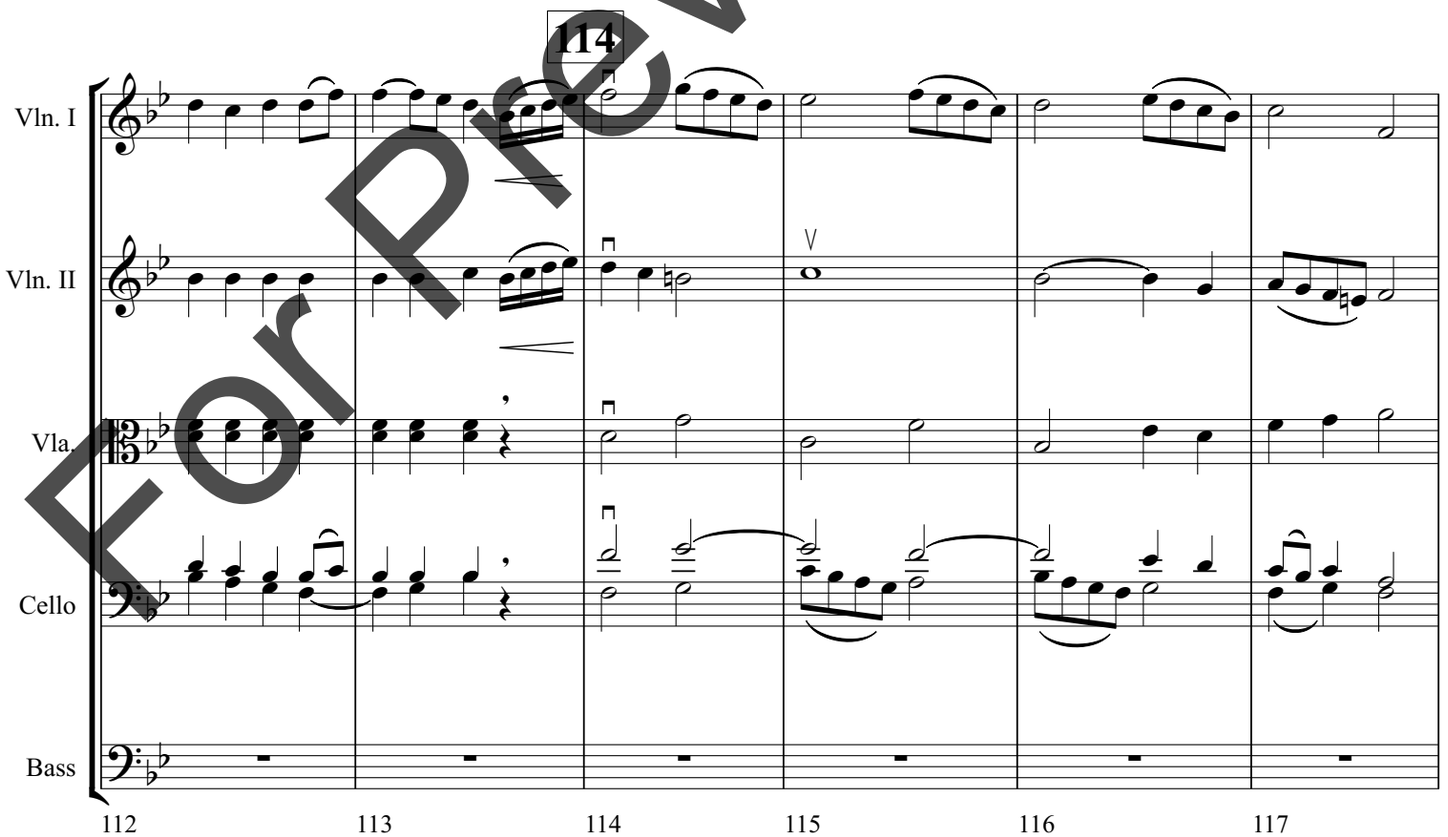

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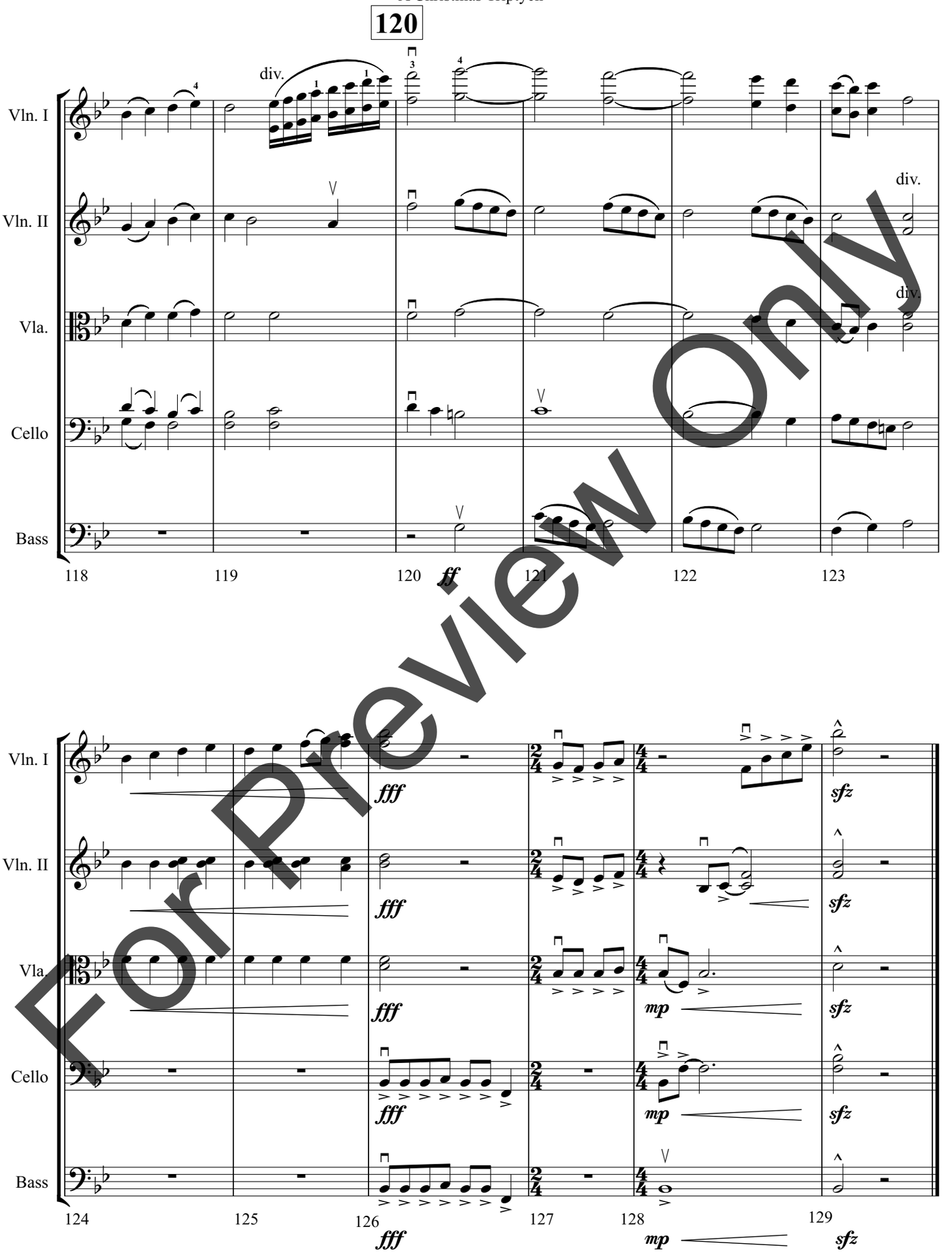

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