Symphony for Brass and Percussion

ALFRED REED

INSTRUMENTATION

1 Conductor
1 1st B♭ Trumpet
1 2nd B♭ Trumpet
1 3rd B♭ Trumpet
1 4th B♭ Trumpet
1 1st B♭ Cornet
1 2nd B♭ Cornet
1 1st Horn in F
1 2nd Horn in F
1 3rd Horn in F
1 4th Horn in F
1 1st Trombone
1 2nd Trombone
1 3rd Trombone
1 4th Trombone (Bass)
1 1st Baritone
1 2nd Baritone
1 1st Tuba
1 2nd Tuba
1 Timpani
1 Tom-Toms
5 Percussion
(Snare Drum, Bass Drum, Crash Cymbals, Suspended Cymbal, Woodblock, Bells, Xylophone, Vibraphone, Gong, Chimes)

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ABOUT THE COMPOSER

A native of Manhattan, New York, Alfred Reed (1921–2005) was brought up in a musical family. His formal music education began at age 10. As a trumpet player, he was active as a professional musician at a very early age. He was educated at Baylor University and the Juilliard School of Music where he studied with Vittorio Giannini. His passion for band music grew while he was a member of the 529th Army Air Force Band during the second World War. Following the war, he began composing and arranging for radio, film and television, including NBC and ABC.

Alfred Reed has over 200 published works for band, orchestra, chorus and various chamber groups. Two of his most performed works are *Armenian Dances* and *Russian Christmas Music*, both of which are standard repertoire for concert bands and orchestras.

Following his retirement from the University of Miami, Dr. Reed remained active as a clinician and guest conductor globally.

PROGRAM NOTES

The *Symphony for Brass and Percussion*, originally completed in the summer 1952, received its first performance in December of that year at the College Band Directors National Association convention in Chicago, by member of the Oberlin Symphonic Band under the direction of Donald I. Moore, to whom the work is dedicated. It is the composer's second major work for the Wind-Brass-Percussion ensemble, following the *Russian Christmas Music*, and represents an attempt at exploring the possibilities for utilizing on brass and percussion sonorities in an extended piece.

The music is in three movements. The first opens with a broad introduction in which most of the thematic material of the movement is exposed. The allegro section takes the form of an intensive hard-driven march, but it is in triple rather than the usual duple time. The basic theme, already presented in the introduction, is treated with alternate quartal and tertial harmonies, although it is built mainly in fourths throughout. A quiet, almost chorale-like middle section follows the dying away of this first part, after which the original march-like theme returns and brings the first movement to an ending of great sonority.

(continued on next page)

The second movement, by contrast, is in three-part song form, beginning with a long, lyrical line in baritone, horn and tuba colorings, which is later taken up by the trumpets and trombones. The second part begins as a six-part fugato developing over a long pedal point in the timpani. This reaches a high climax which dies away in preparation for the return of the original theme. This is now heard in tuned percussion colors, finally to be taken up again by the original baritone, horn and tuba grouping, bringing the movement to a quiet close.

The third movement is a rondo built on Latin-American rhythms, with the percussion section augmented by three tom-toms, tuned to low, middle and high pitches. It begins with an undulating rhythmic background over which the tubas state a motive which rises higher and higher in register until it is caught up by full trumpets and trombones. This is developed with rhythmic alterations, then dies away, yielding to the second part, which consists of a long lyrical line in canon between the trumpets, set over an inner pedal point figure in the horns. A basso ostinato is sounded by baritone and tuba in octaves. The horns, first in two and then in four parts, take over this theme in turn, followed by trumpets and trombones returning to the first section and its hard-driving rhythms. A short, broadened version of the first theme forms the coda, bringing the movement, as well as the entire Symphony, to a powerful conclusion.

The music was originally scored for 4 Horns, 4 Trumpets, 4 Trombones, 2 Baritones, 1 Tuba and 5 Percussion players. In this revised edition, the instrumentation has been increased by 2 Cornets and a second Tuba. The version represents the composer's experience with the work during its first 15 years, giving performances under all conditions. The composer considers himself fortunate in having an opportunity to further deal with the problems of blending and balance under varying degrees of acoustical excellence, and with projecting happier solutions to these problems.

NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

This work has been conceived for one player to a part as far as blend and balance are concerned. However, the music can be performed by larger groups, such as the full brass section of a concert band, if care is taken to maintain the relative strengths of sonorities that would then result. For instance, the horn parts, if not doubled, would lack sufficient volume to match that of doubled (or tripled) trumpet, trombone, baritone and tuba parts. The resulting balances would be upset to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the nature of the specific passages involved. And it must rest within the taste and judgment of the conductor to resolve such problems. Of course, the idea of having two players to each part for alternation and relief throughout an extended work such as this is another matter altogether, and can be heartily recommended, especially with younger players.

Obviously, exact tempi and dynamic values must depend on the exact size of the group, and the indicated versions of both of these elements, especially the metronomic markings, must be regarded as approximations only. Then too, the acoustical conditions under which the performance will take place must also be taken into account, so that, even in the most complex passages, all of the elements will be heard clearly by the audience.

It should be noted that the cornets rarely play the same parts as the trumpets. They are the soprano voices of the conical brass family and are designed to support and blend with the horns and baritones rather than with the trumpets and trombones (cylindrical tone color). The conductor is respectfully urged, therefore, to have *real* cornets play these two parts, with the deeper, cup-shaped mouthpieces designed for these instruments, in order to achieve the separation of tone color and blending abilities demanded by the nature of the music they will play.

Attention is also called to the following specific passages in order to insure the thematic elements being heard as clearly as possible.

1. 3rd and 4th trombones and tubas in the last four measures of the first movement: Here the trumpets and percussion must come down in intensity *immediately* after their sforzando attacks and then build again, so that the low brass may be heard.

2. The opening theme of the third movement, which first appears in the deepest register of the tubas in measure 7 and continues for the next four bars: If the tubas cannot project the theme sufficiently without "blurting," they should then play in octaves instead of unison, with the 1st tuba playing an octave higher until the second note in measure 16.

3. In the third movement, the timpani passages, beginning 8 measures after rehearsal number 5, and continuing until 2 measures after rehearsal number 7, must be articulated clearly since they make thematic reference. If necessary, they should be played a little louder than indicated, with an immediate dampening of each group figure of four tones (or more, later on).

Careful attention to rhythmic precision, phrasing and dynamics will result in a brilliant, forceful performance of this exciting score, which demonstrates many of the possibilities inherent in the combination of brass and percussion instruments.

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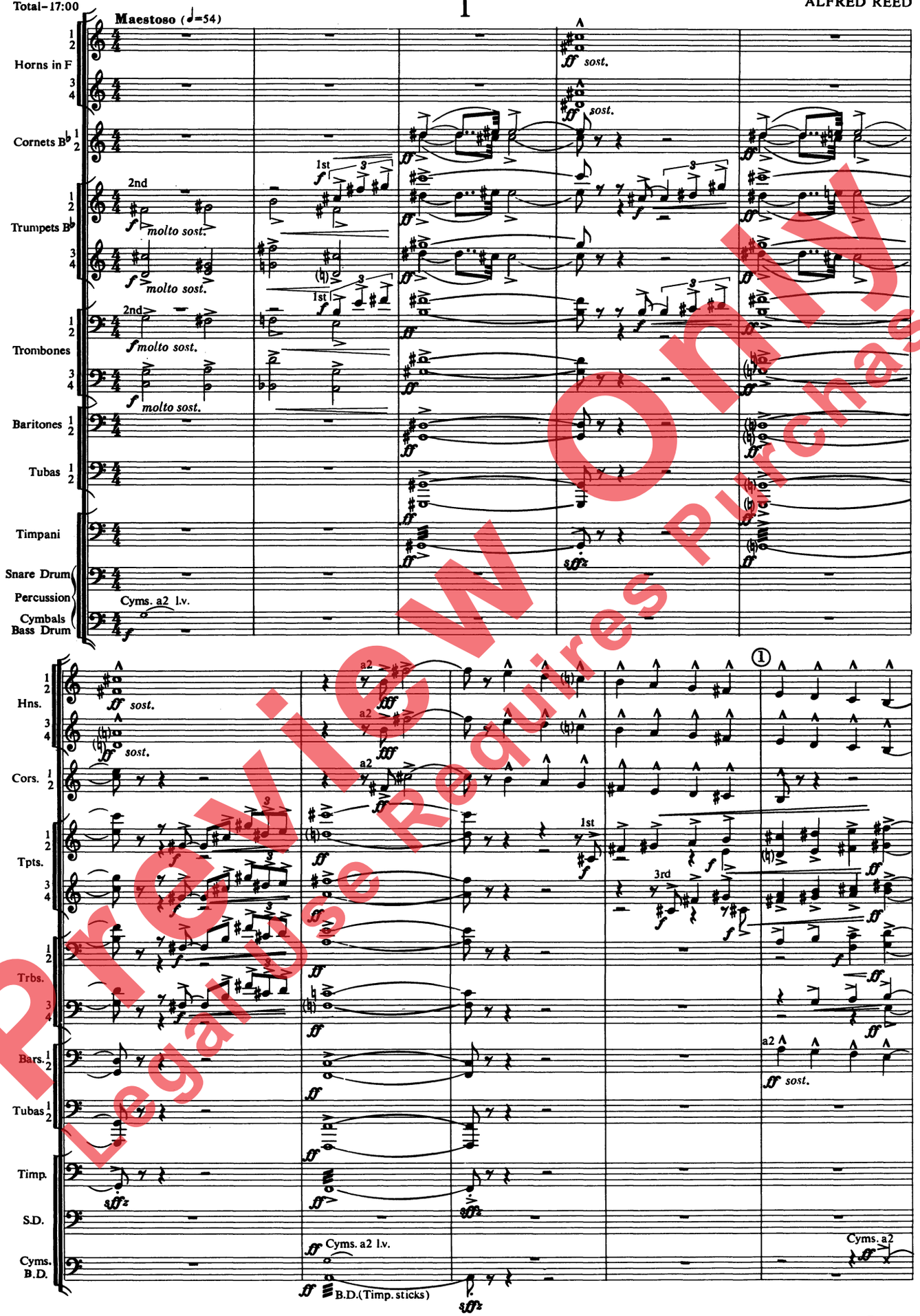
Duration:
I — 7:00
II — 7:00
III — 3:00
Total–17:00

for Donald I. Moore

Symphony for Brass and Percussion

I

ALFRED REED



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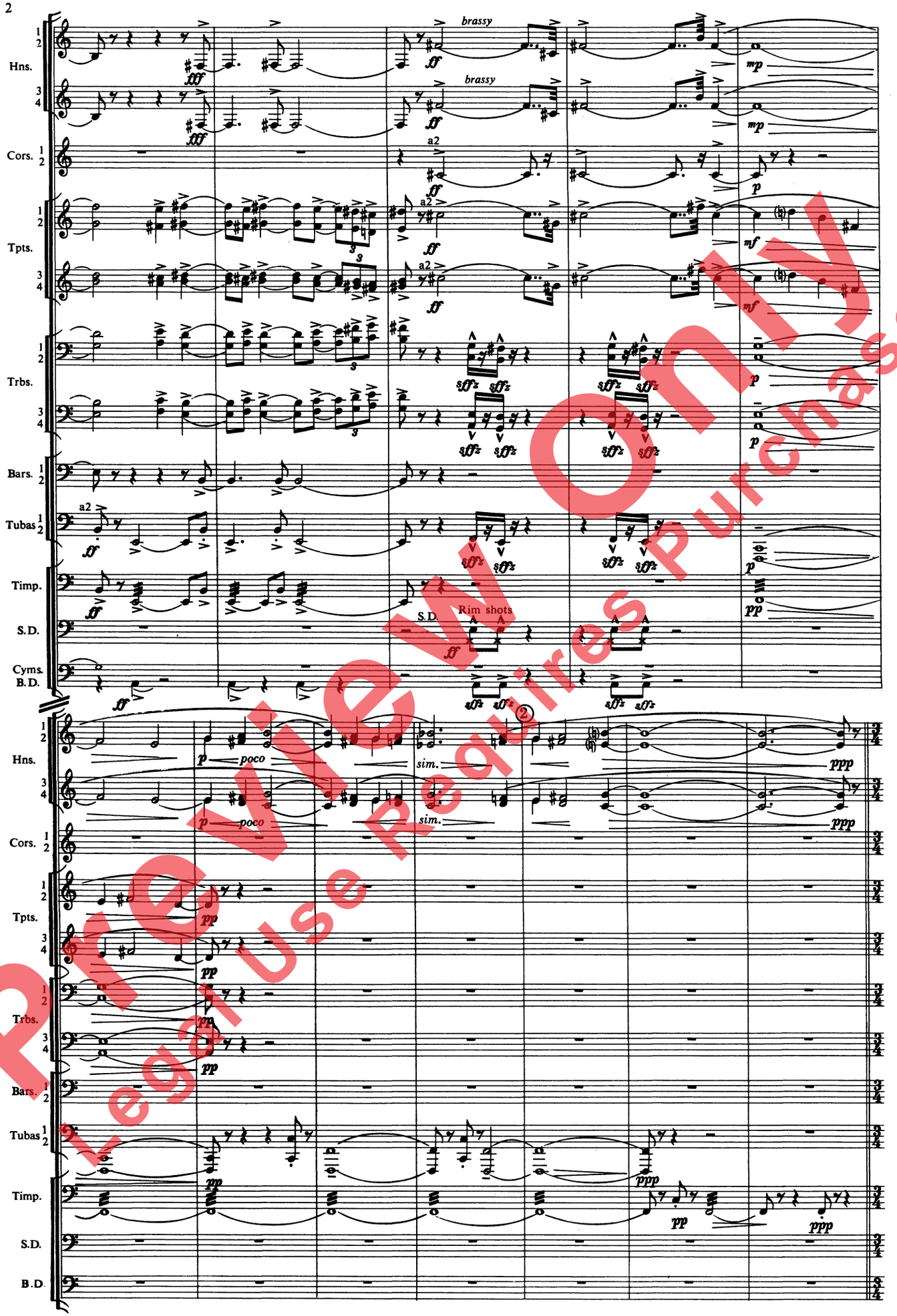

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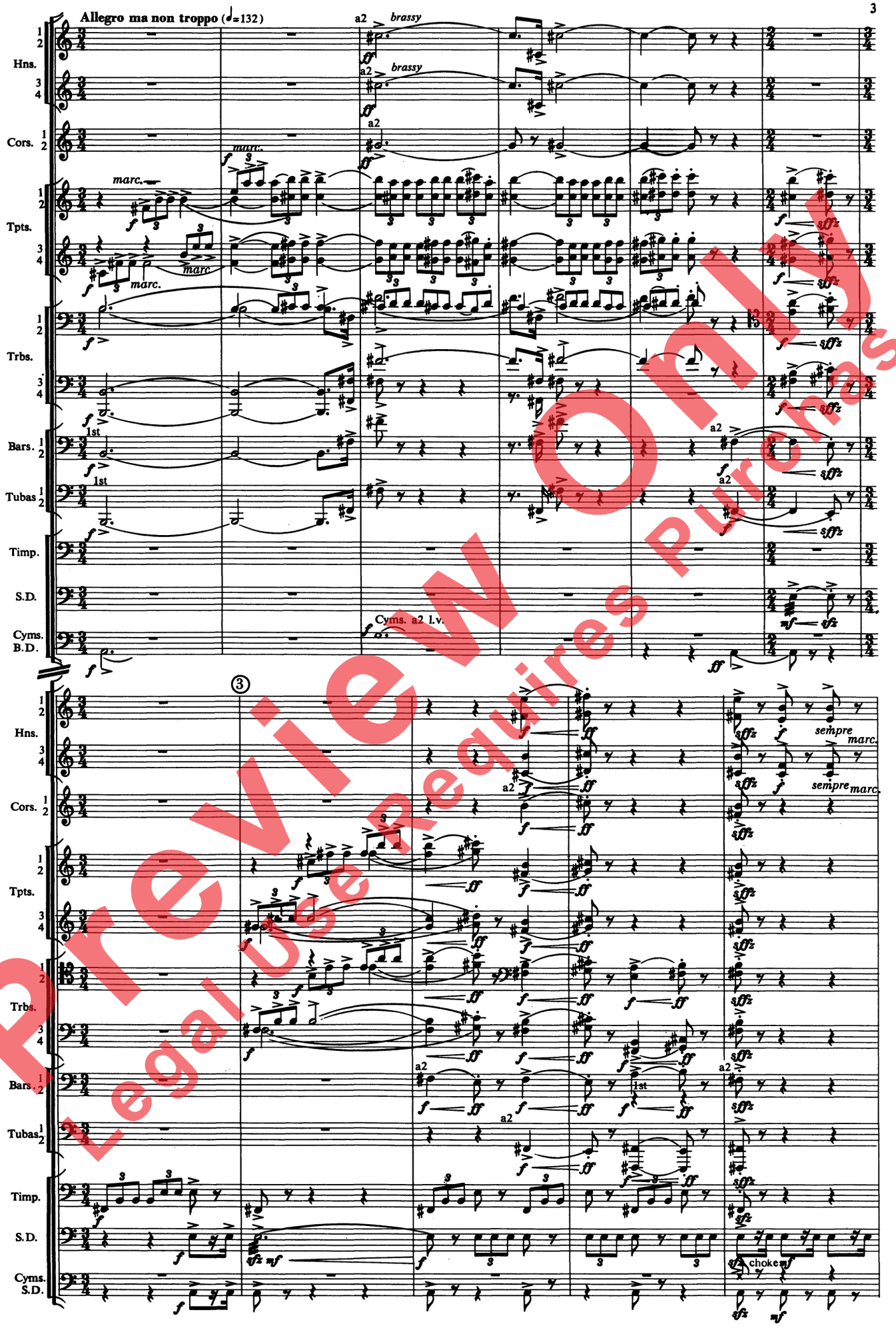

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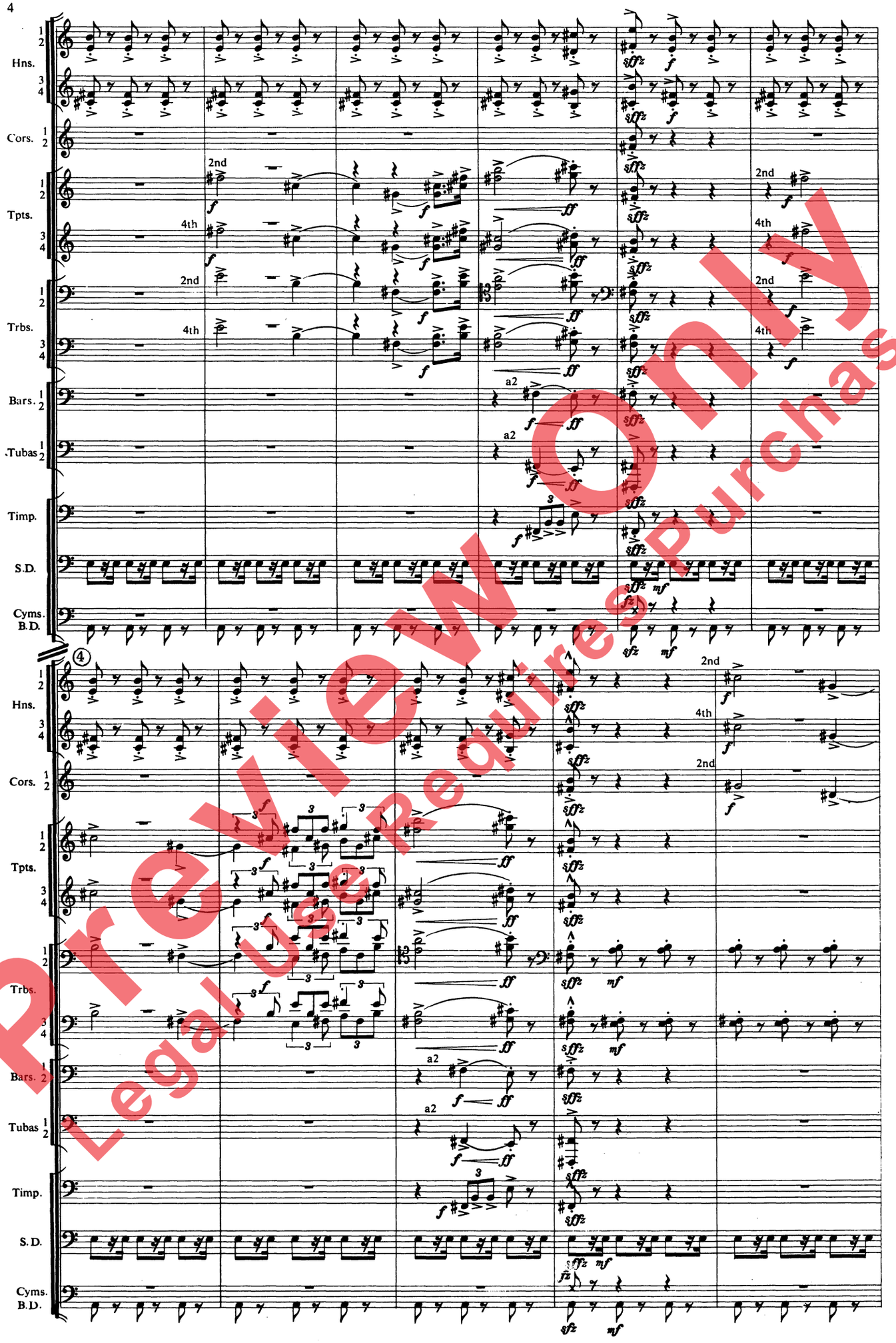

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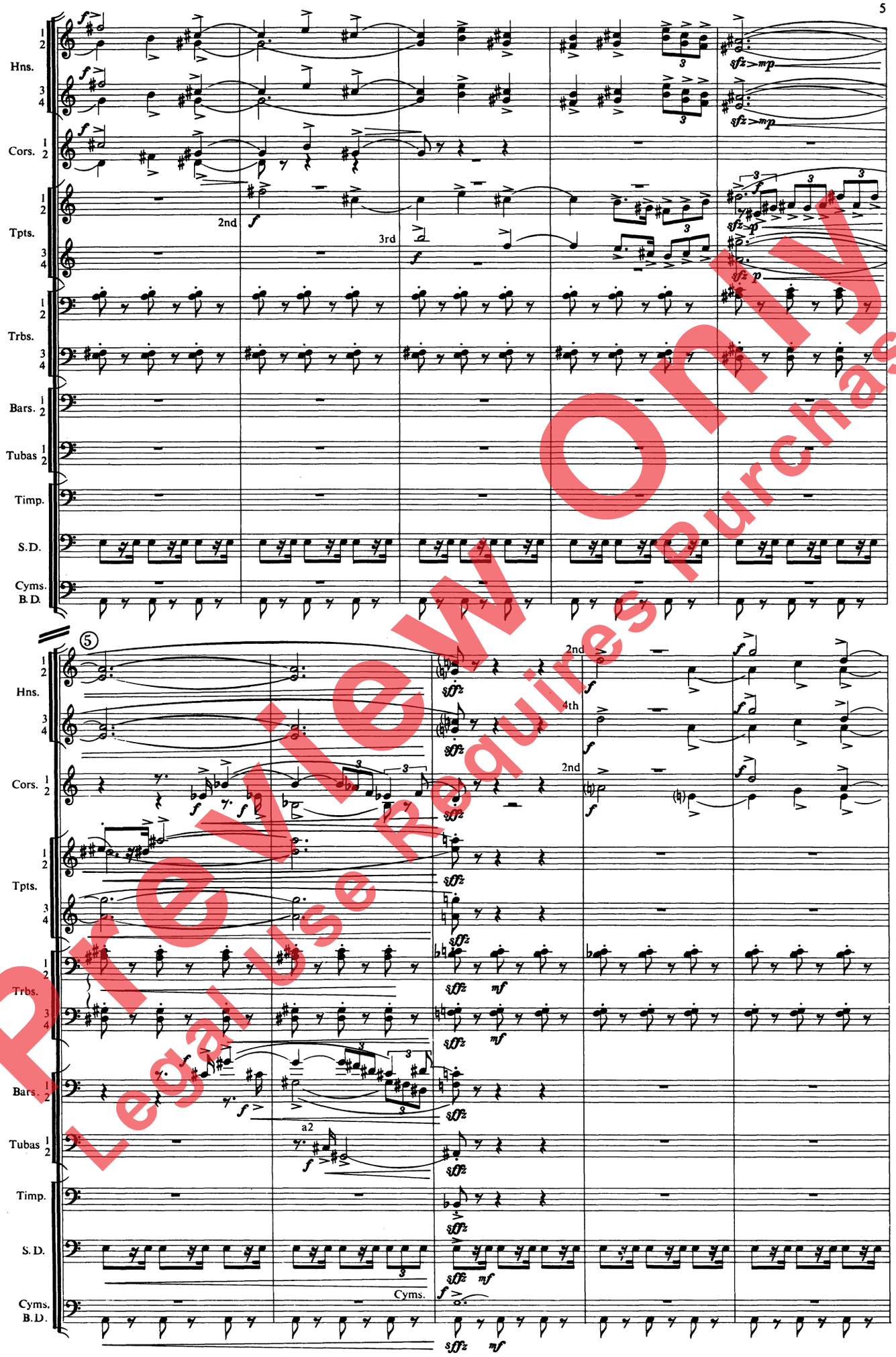

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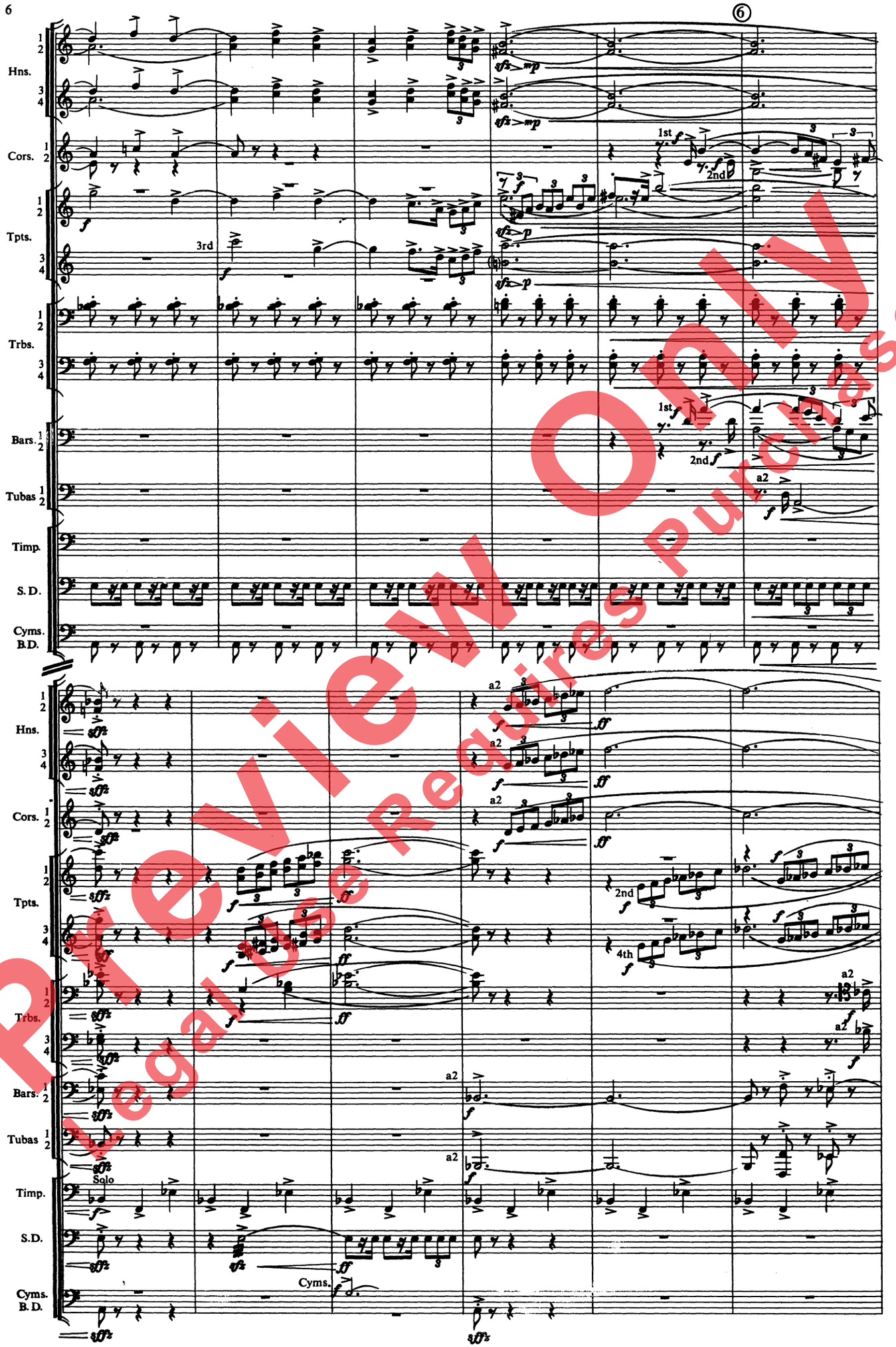

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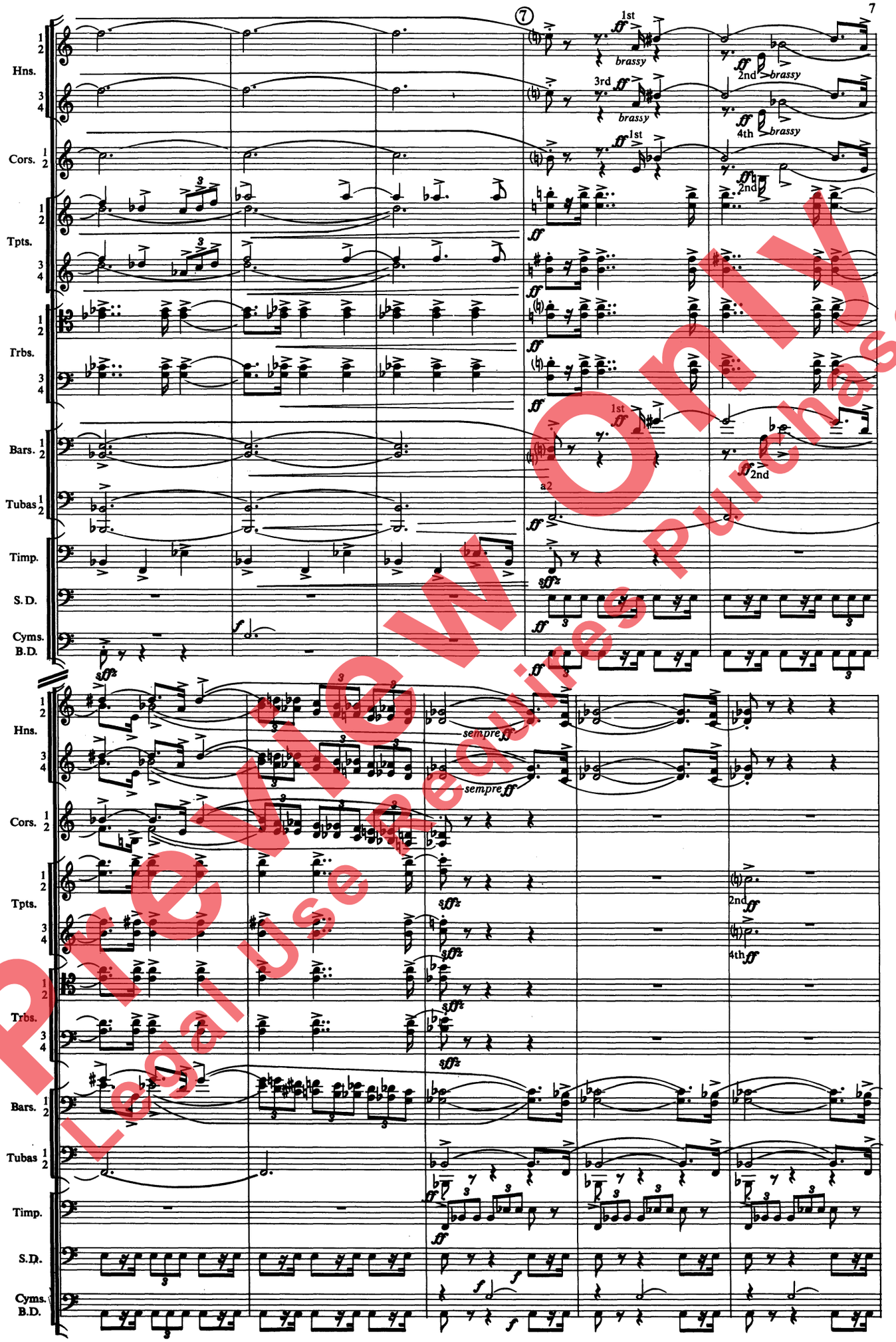

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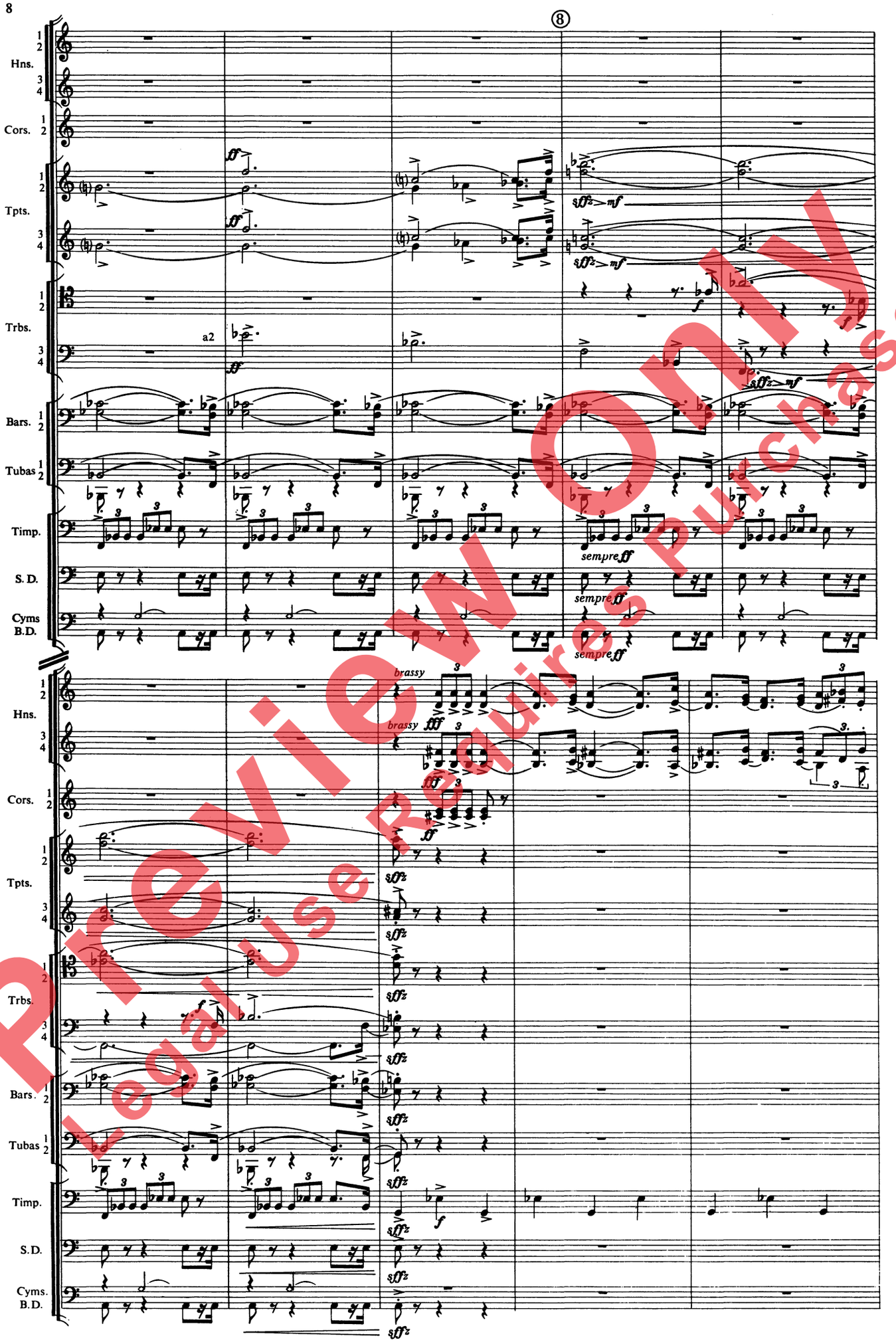

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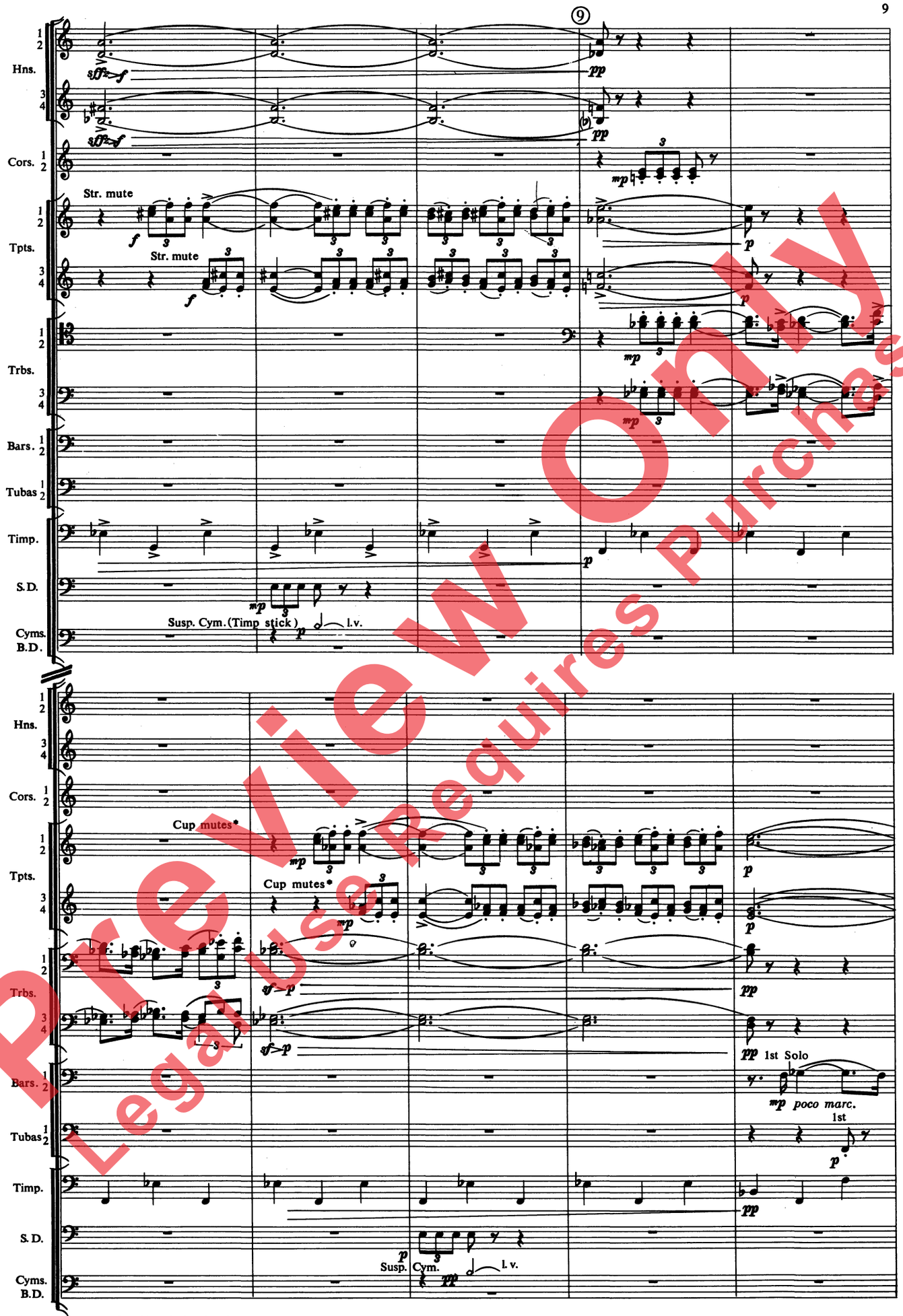

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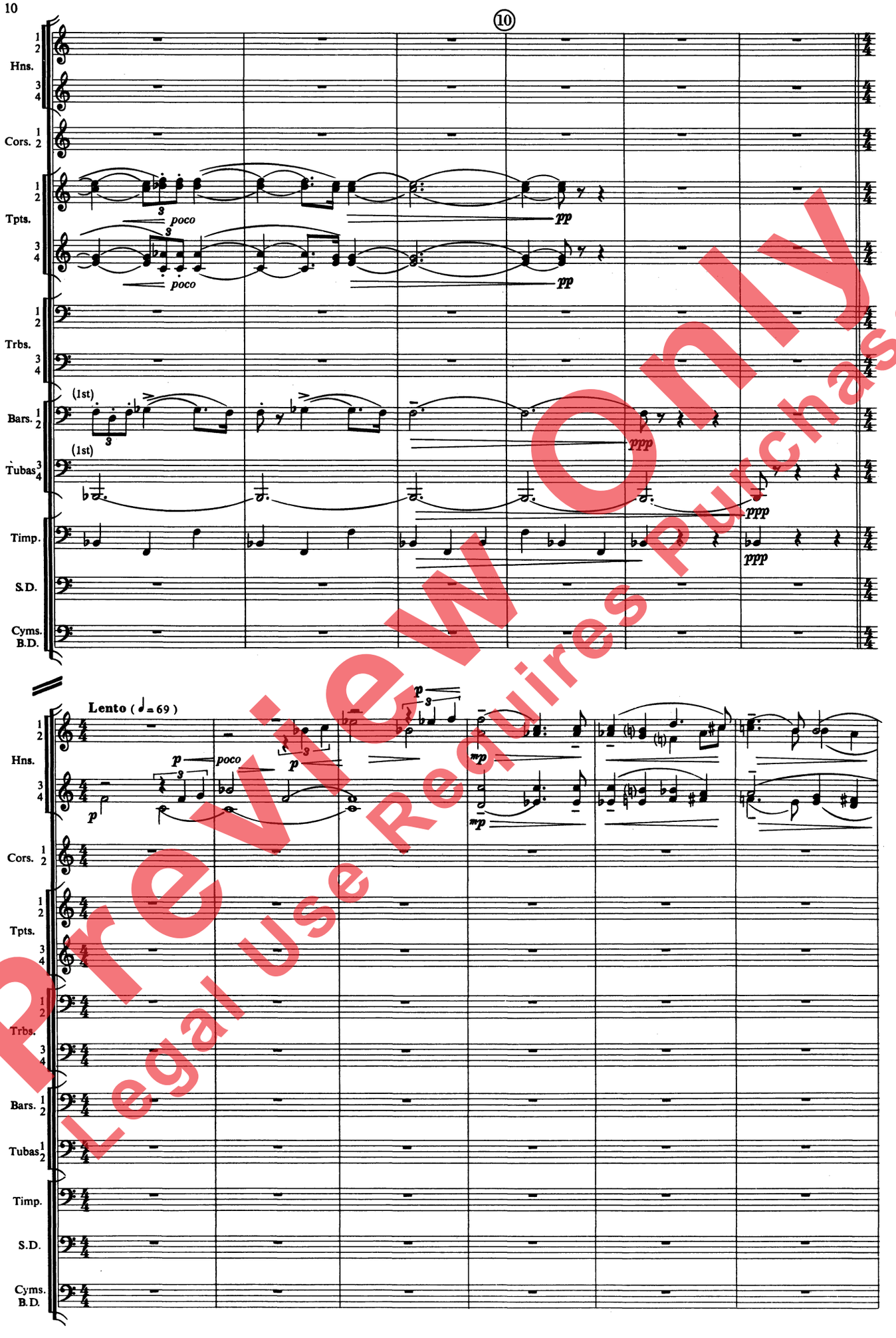
* *If change cannot be affected cleanly, play both times with straight mutes.*



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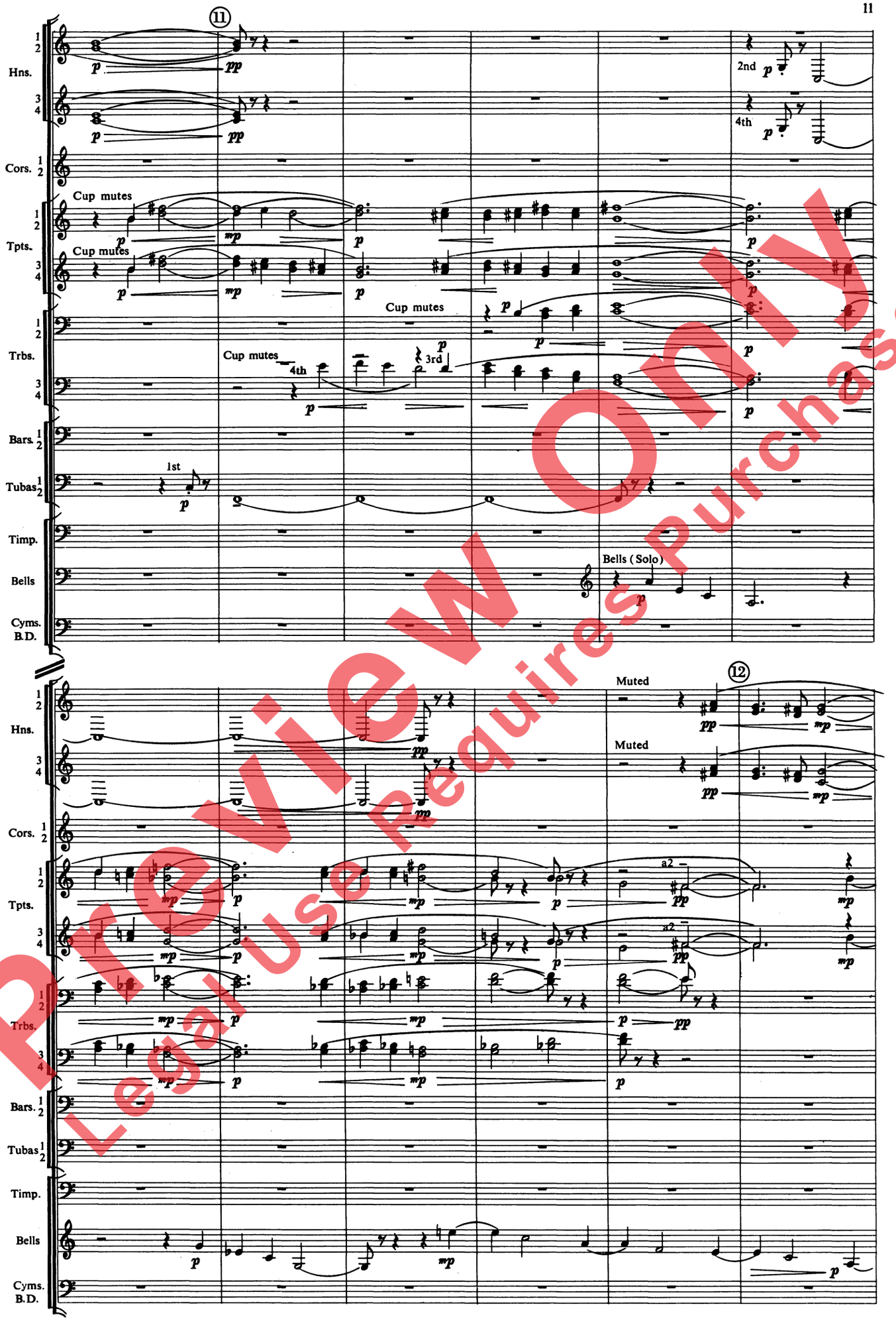

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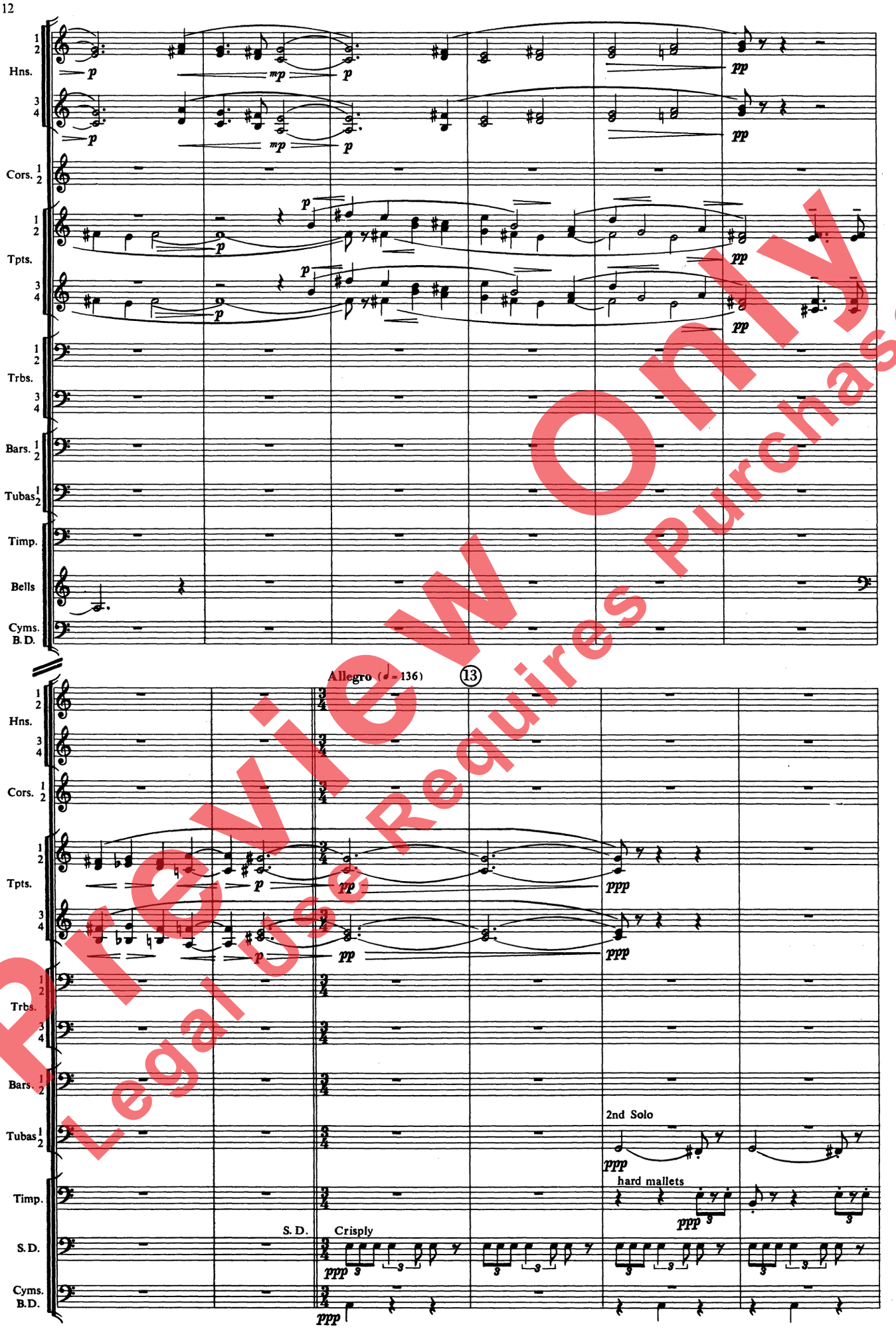

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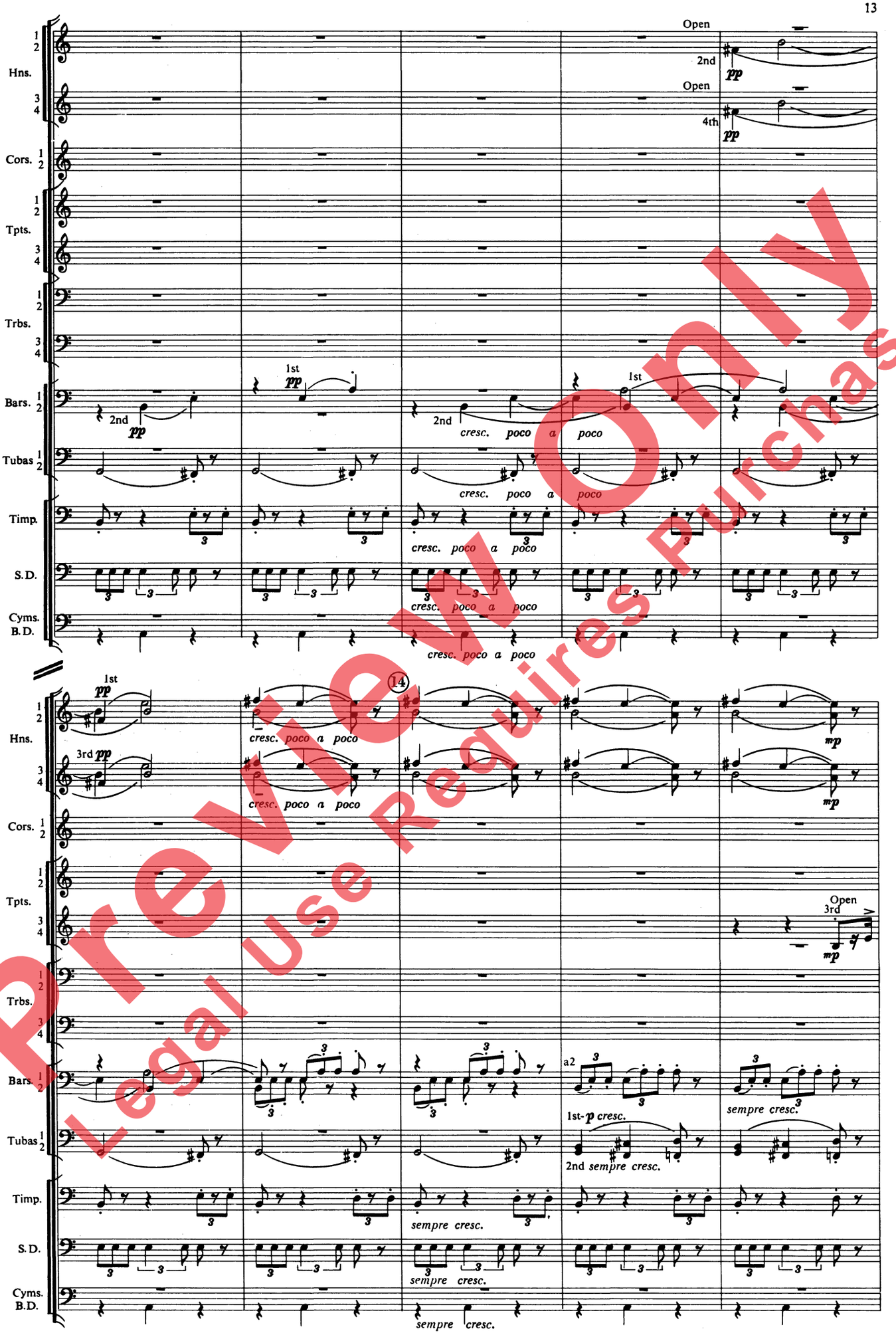

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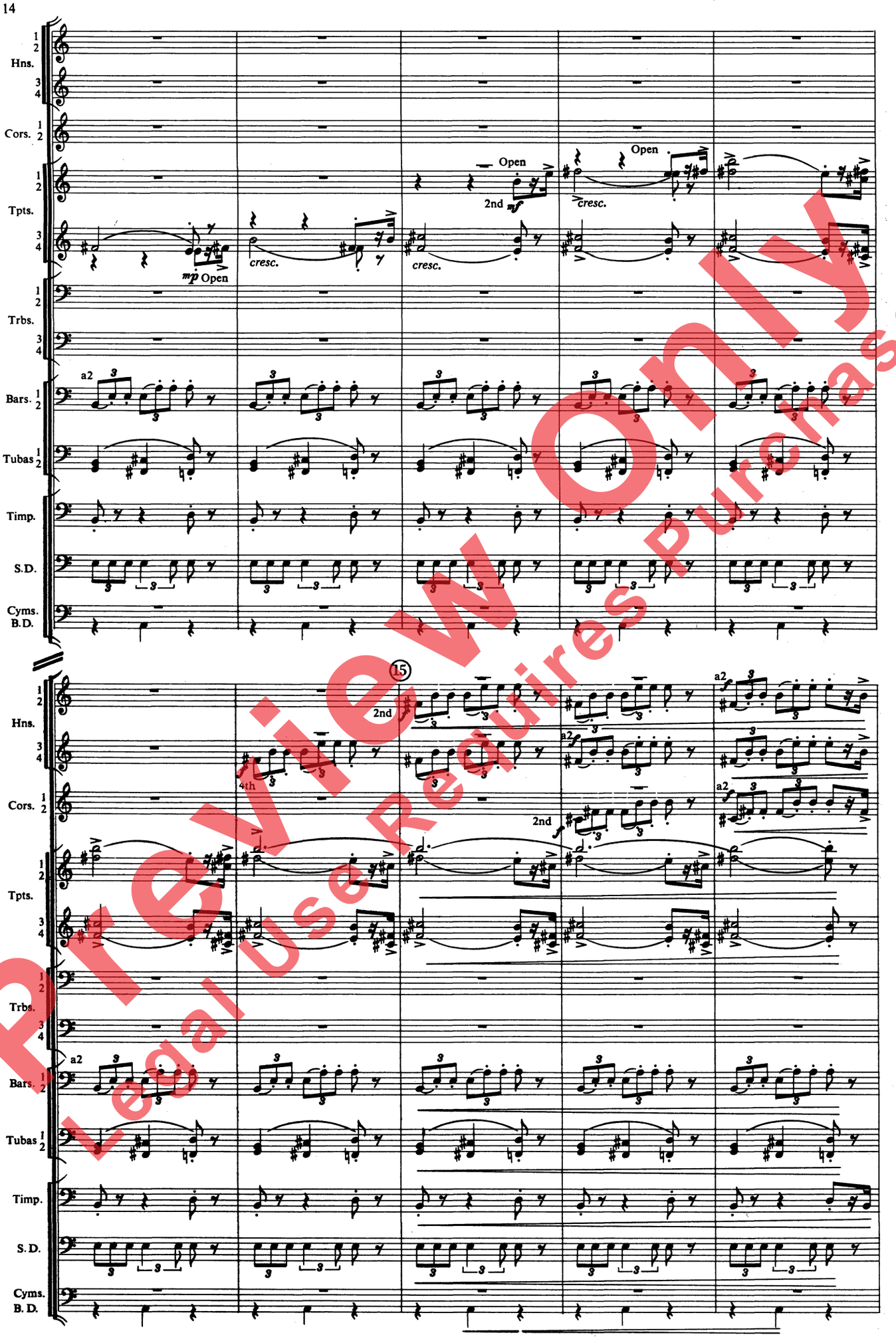

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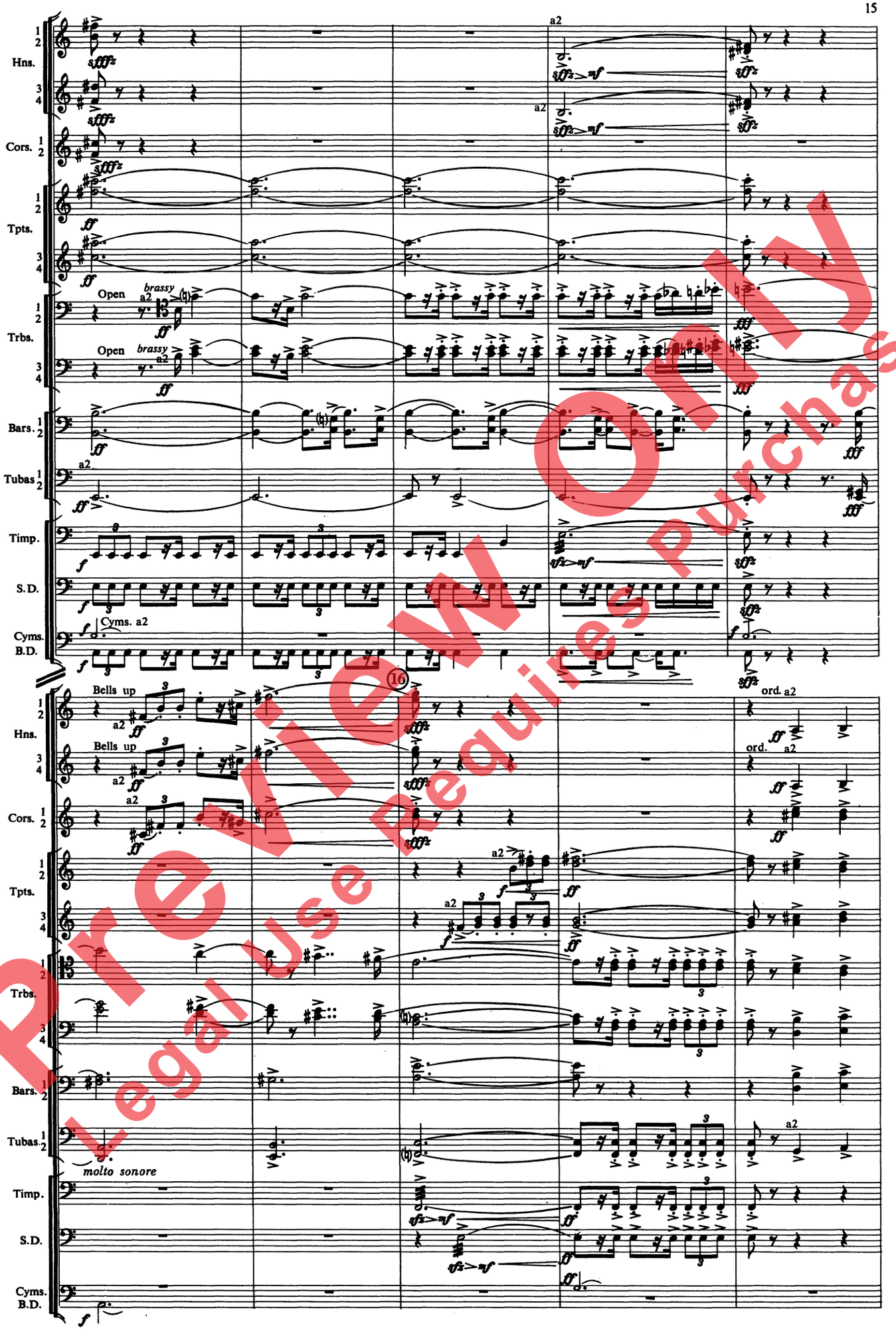

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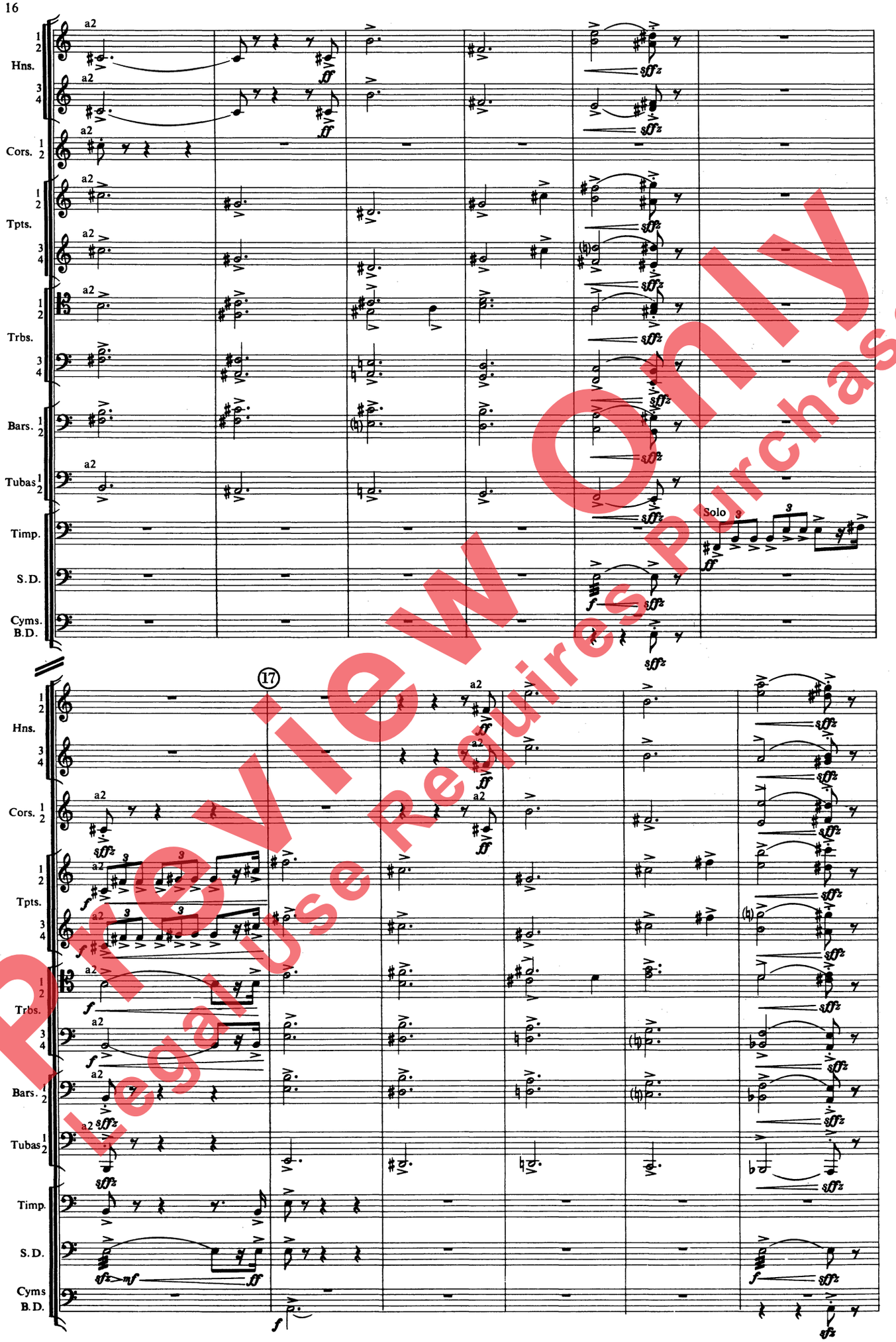

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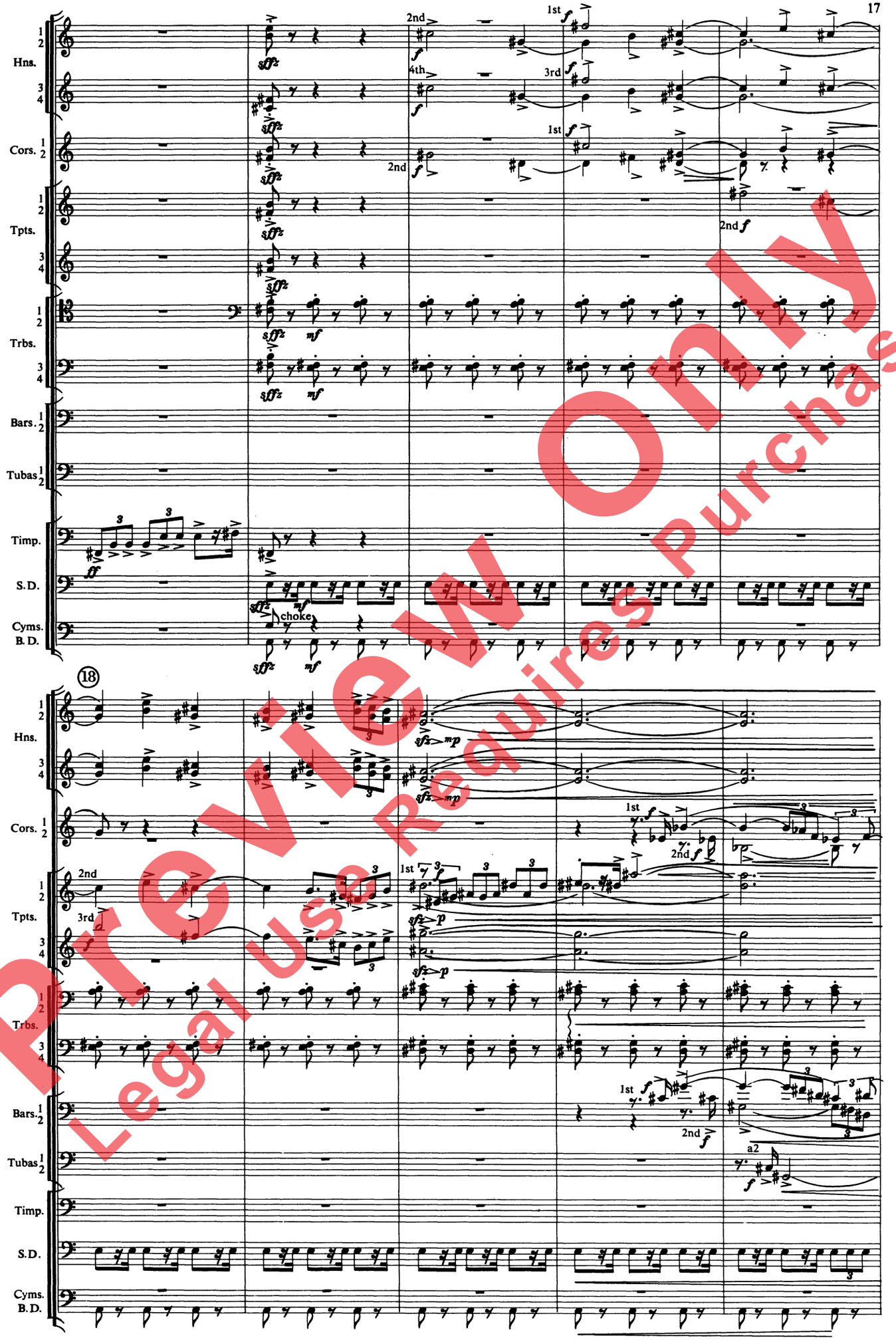

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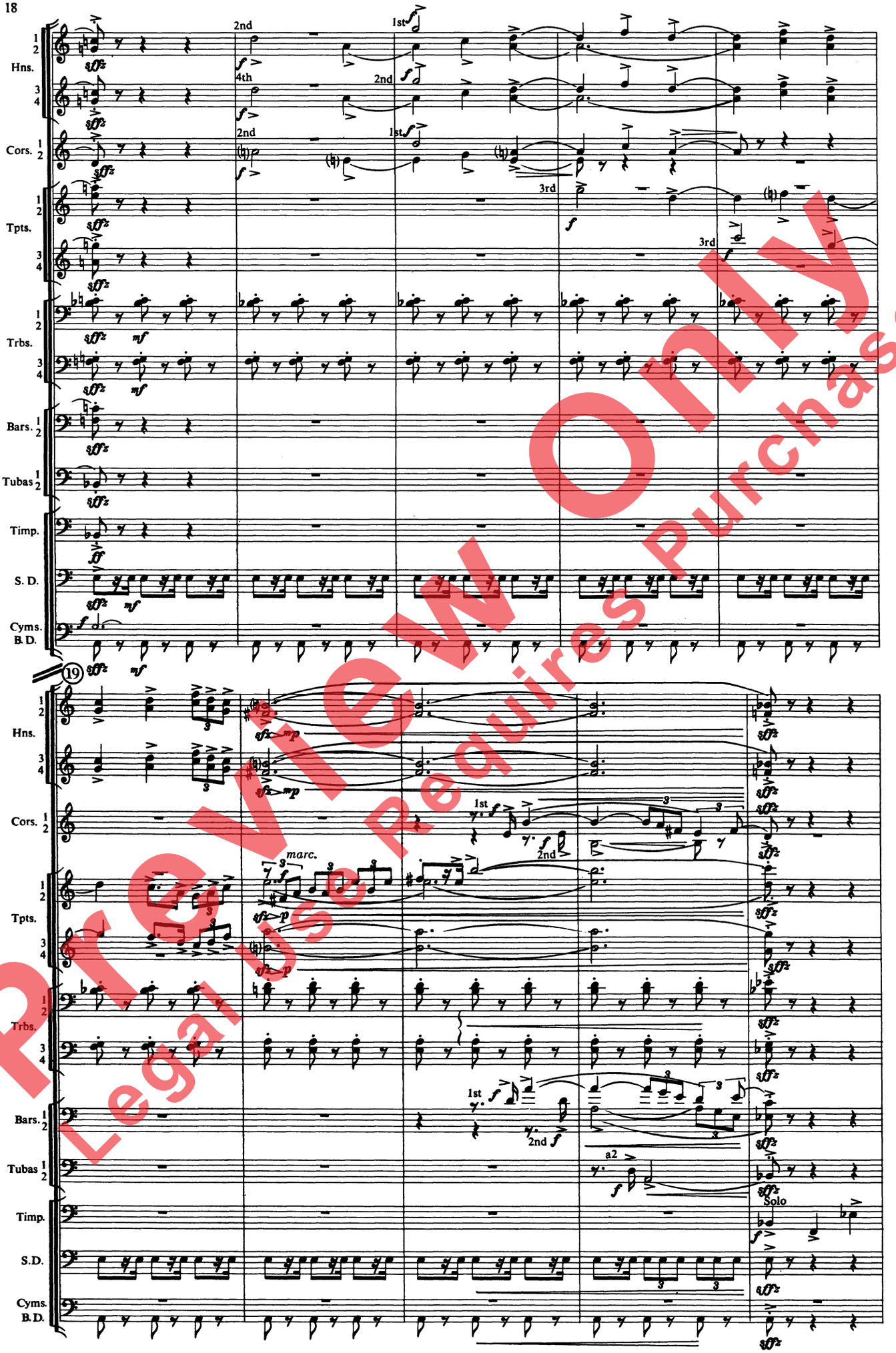

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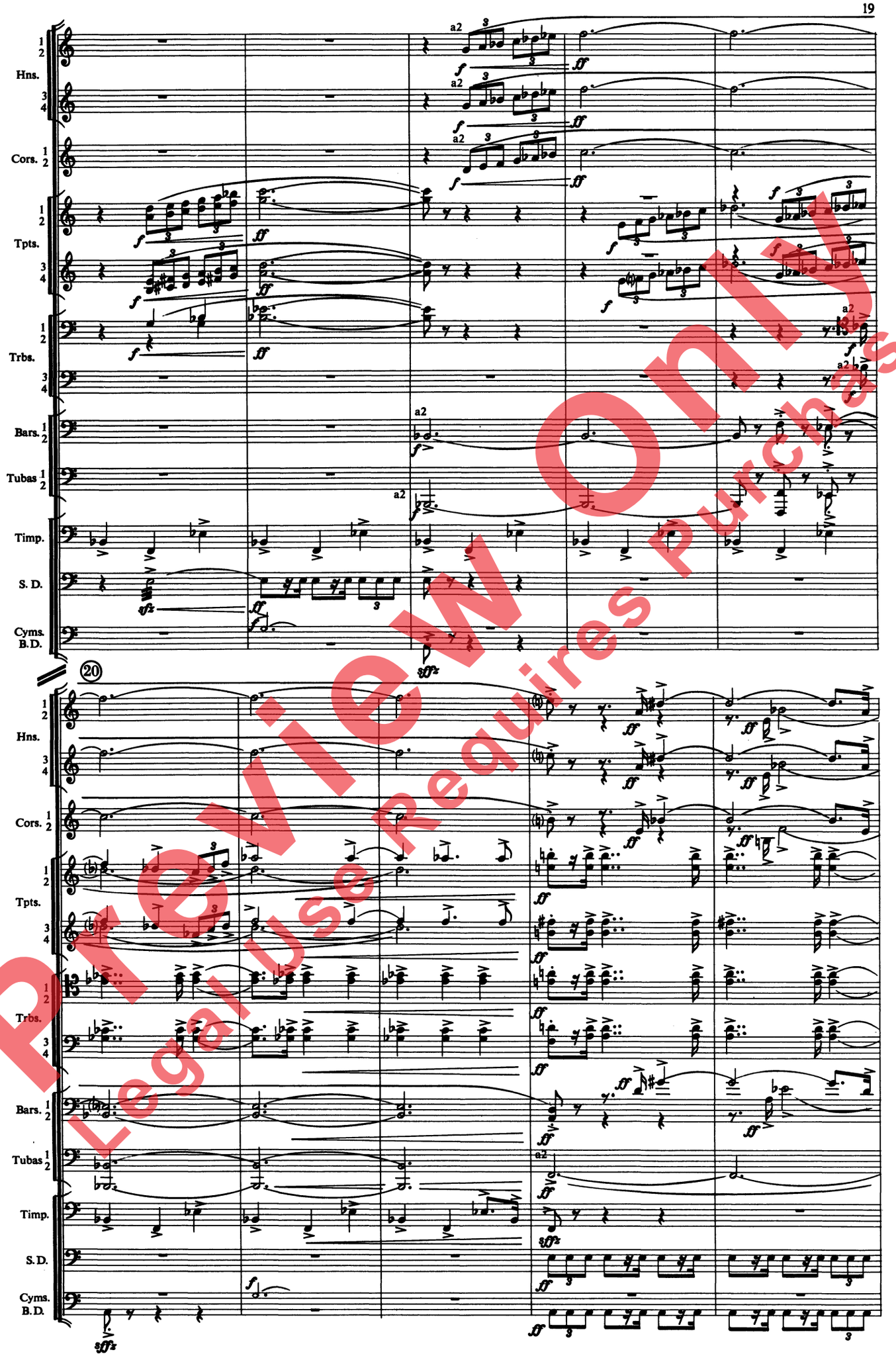

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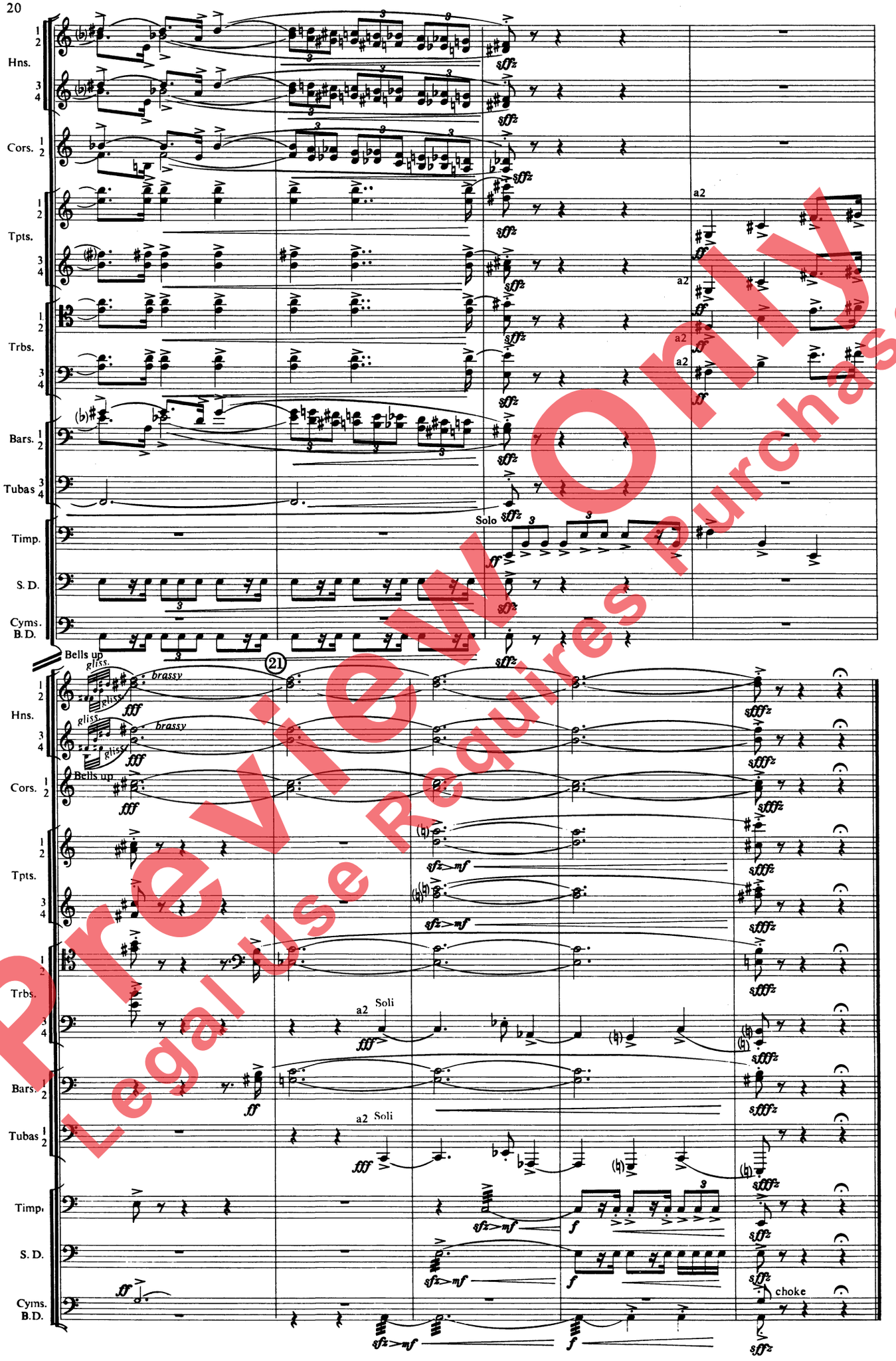

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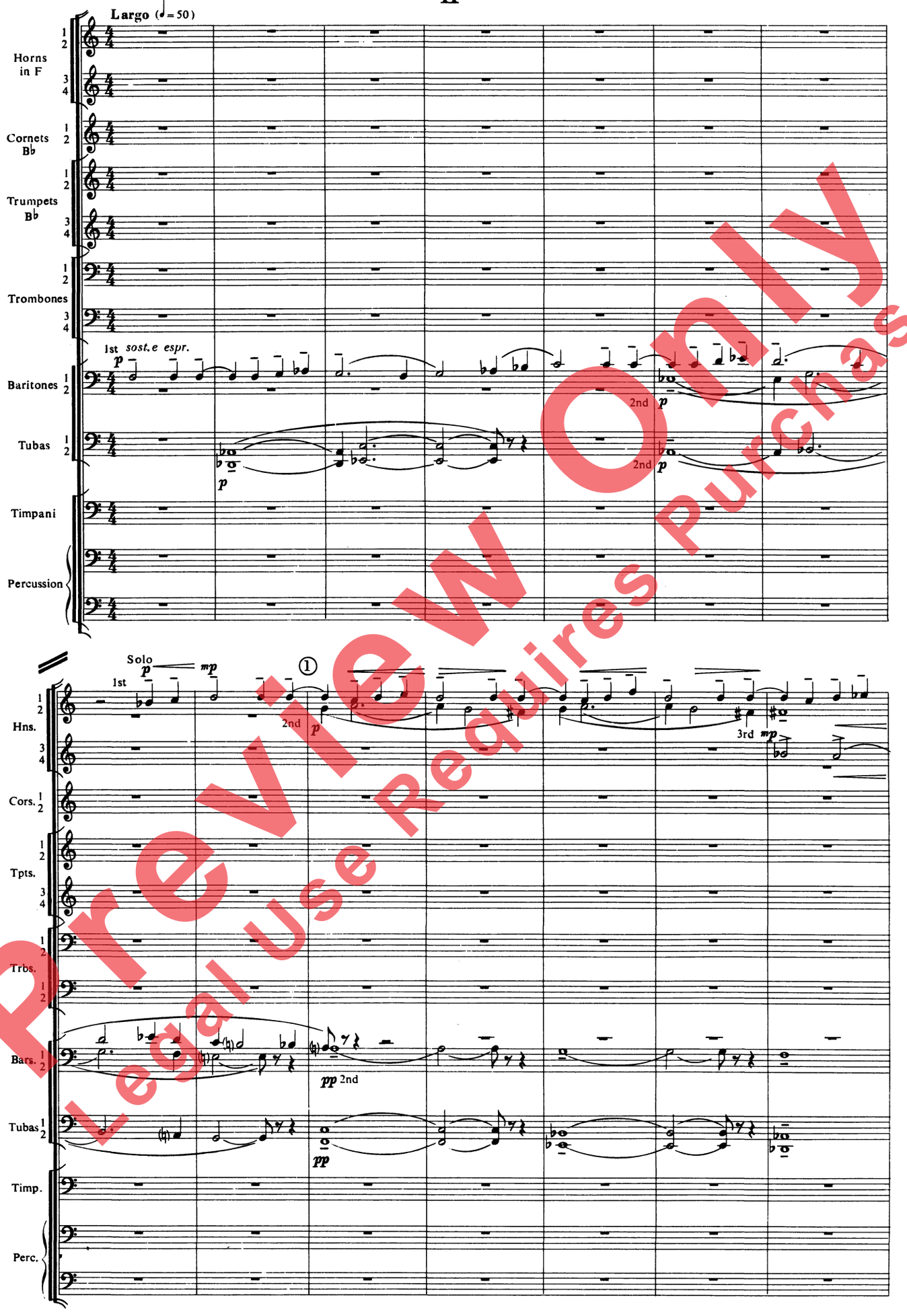

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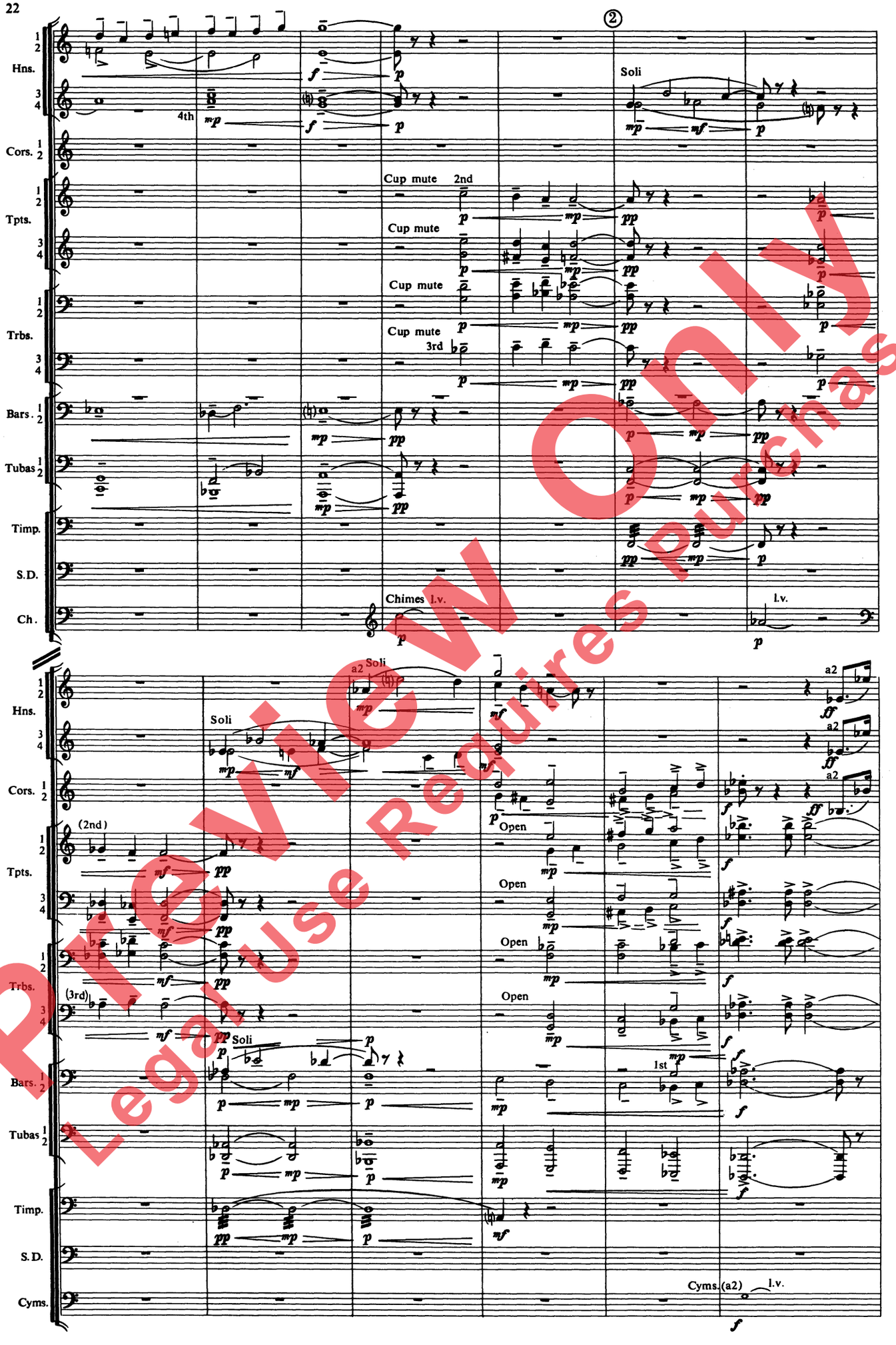

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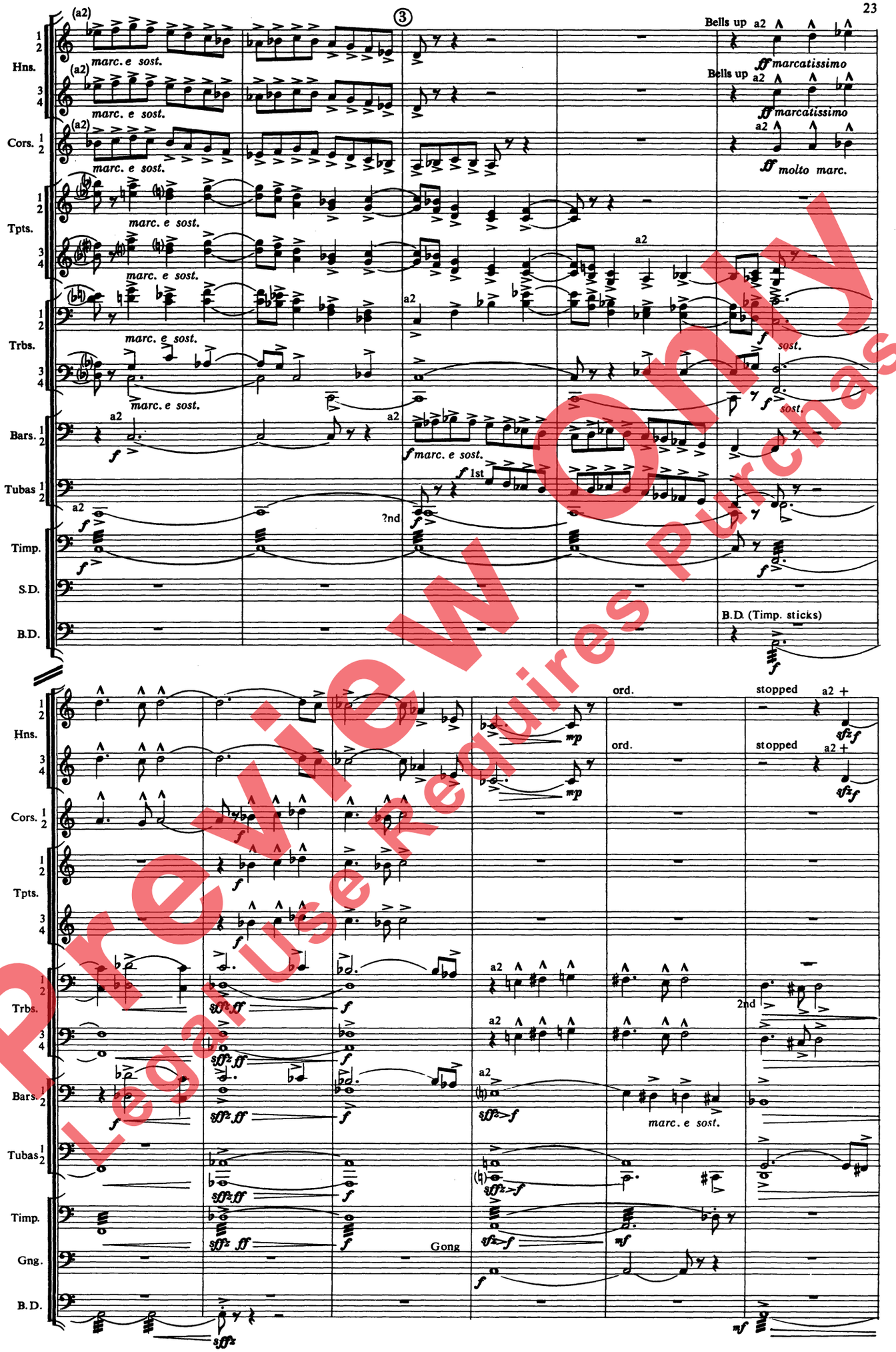

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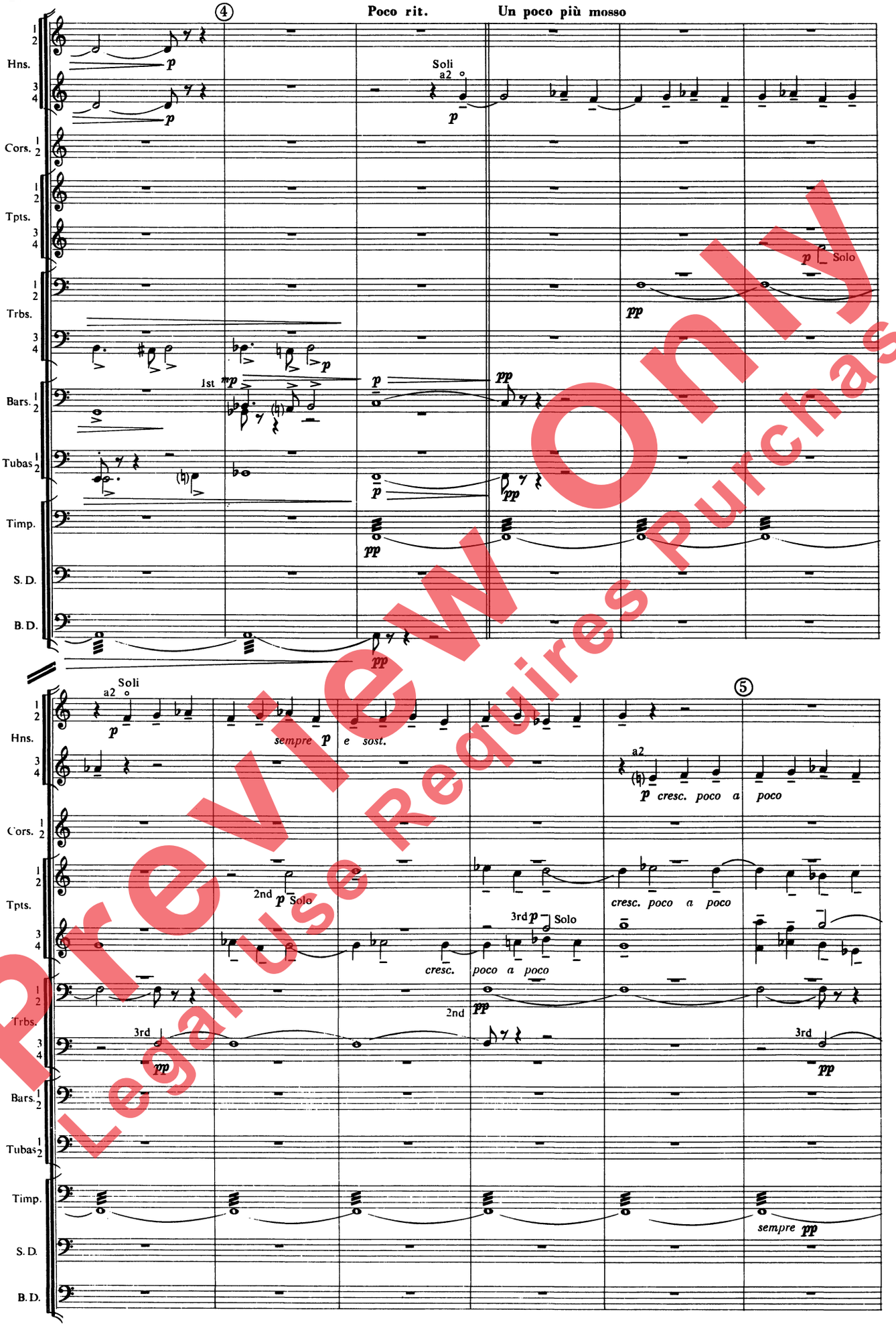

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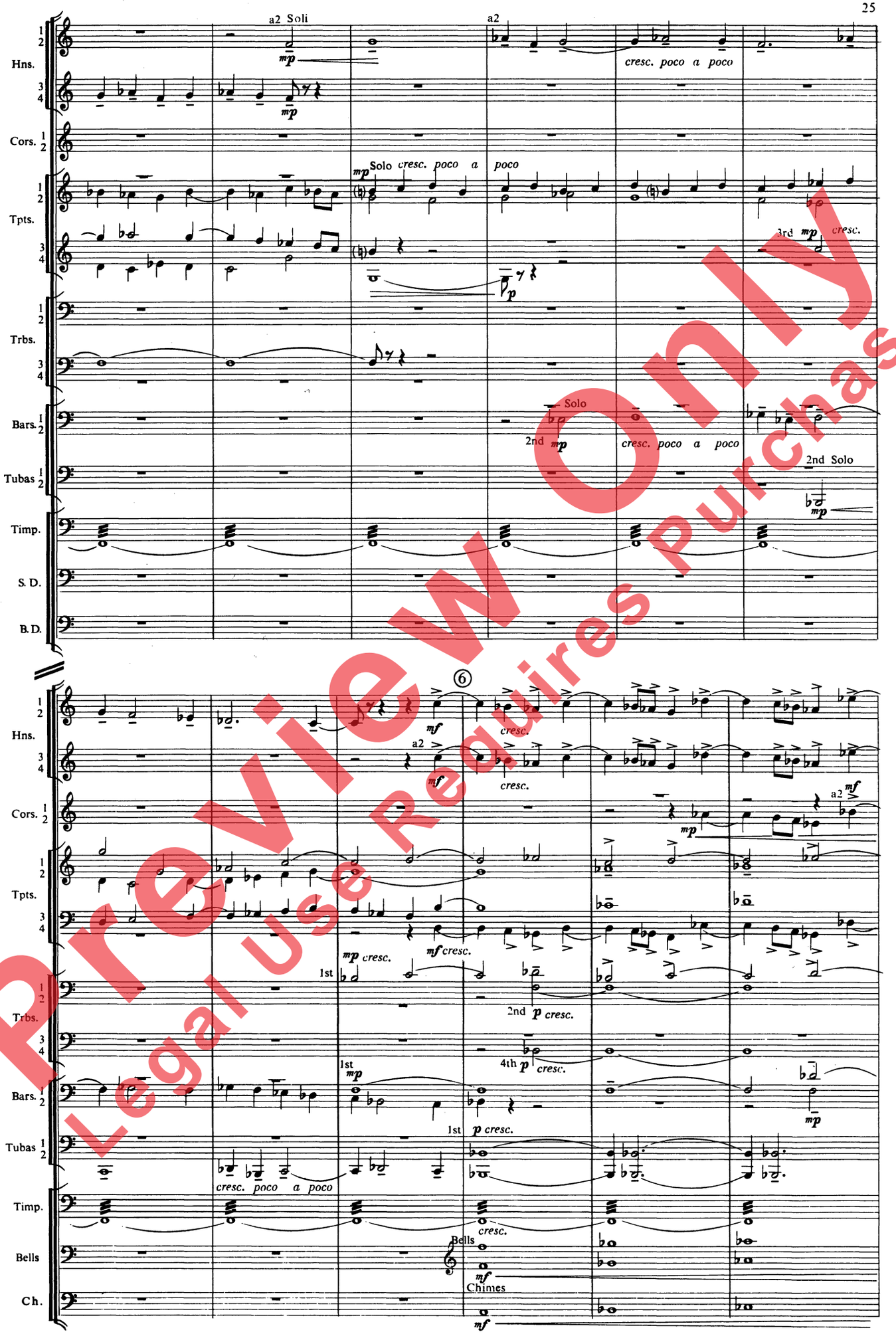

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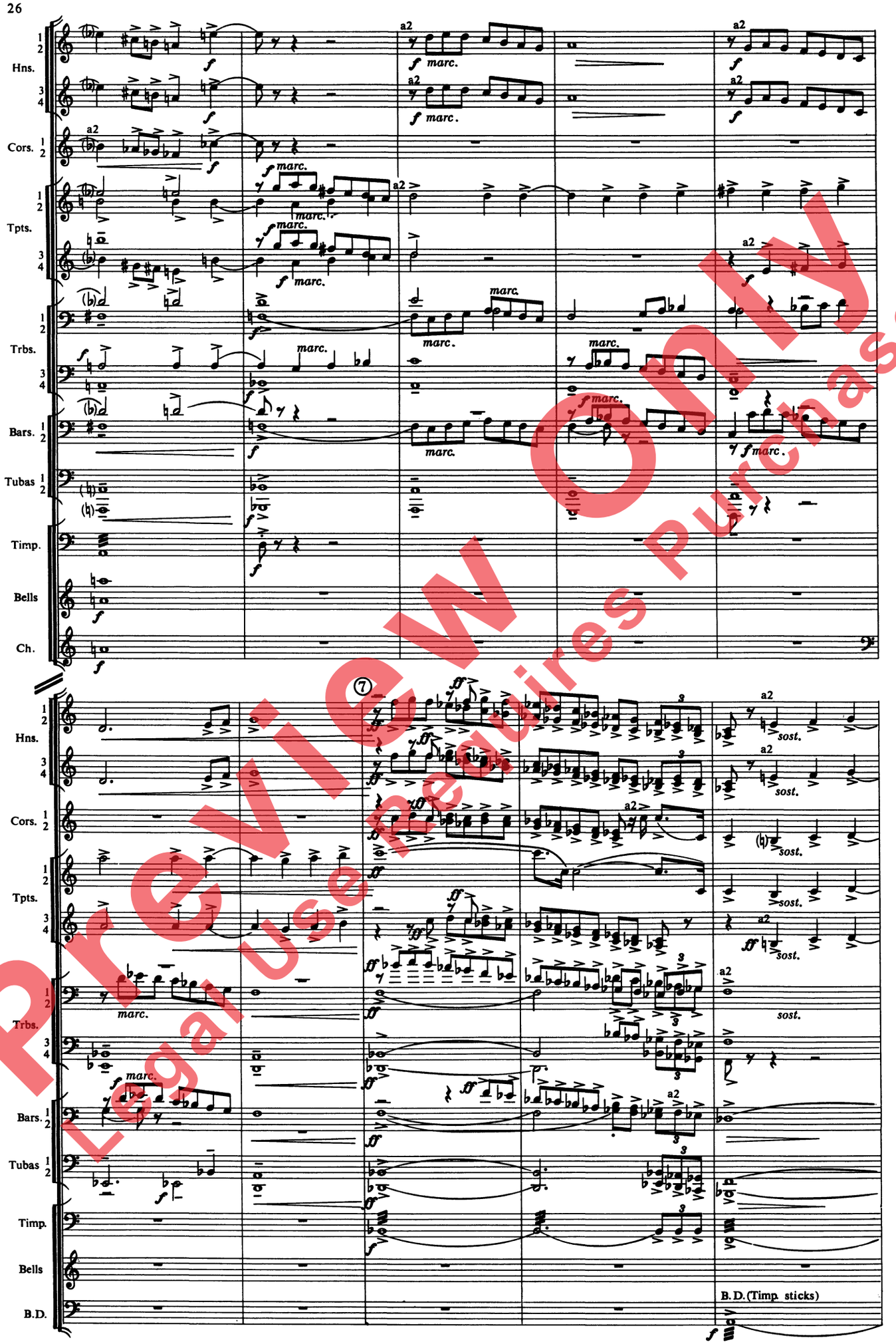

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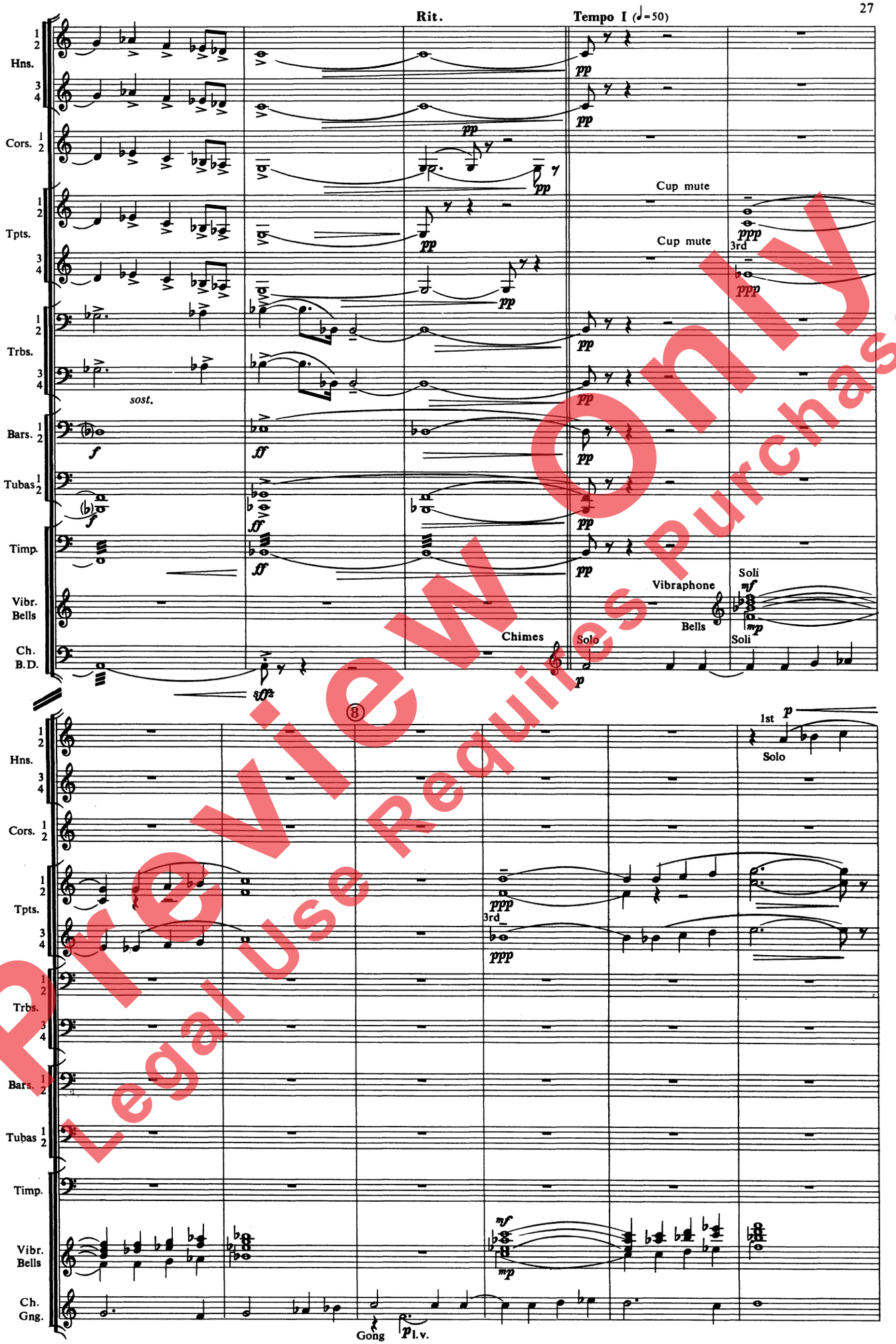

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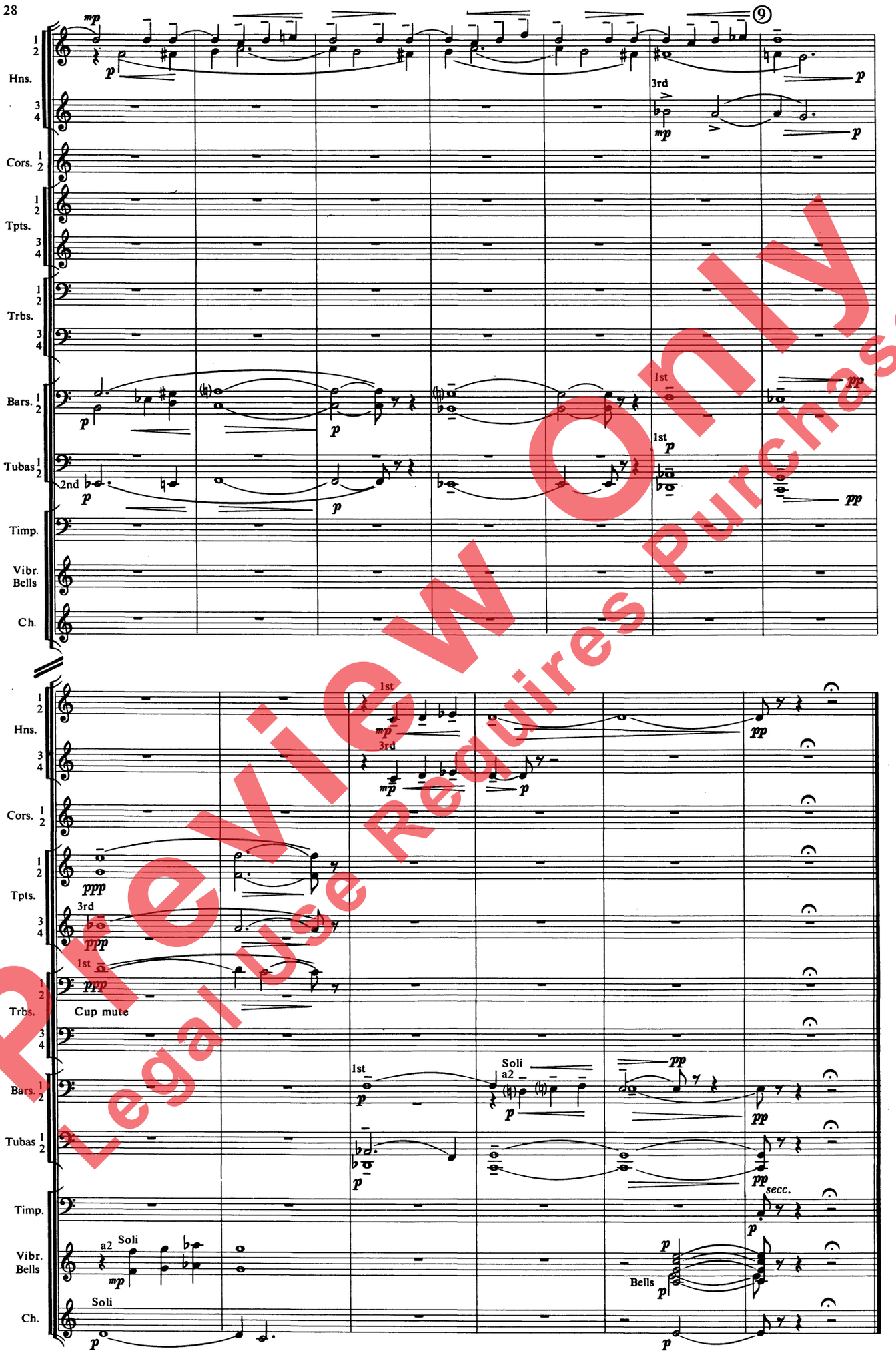

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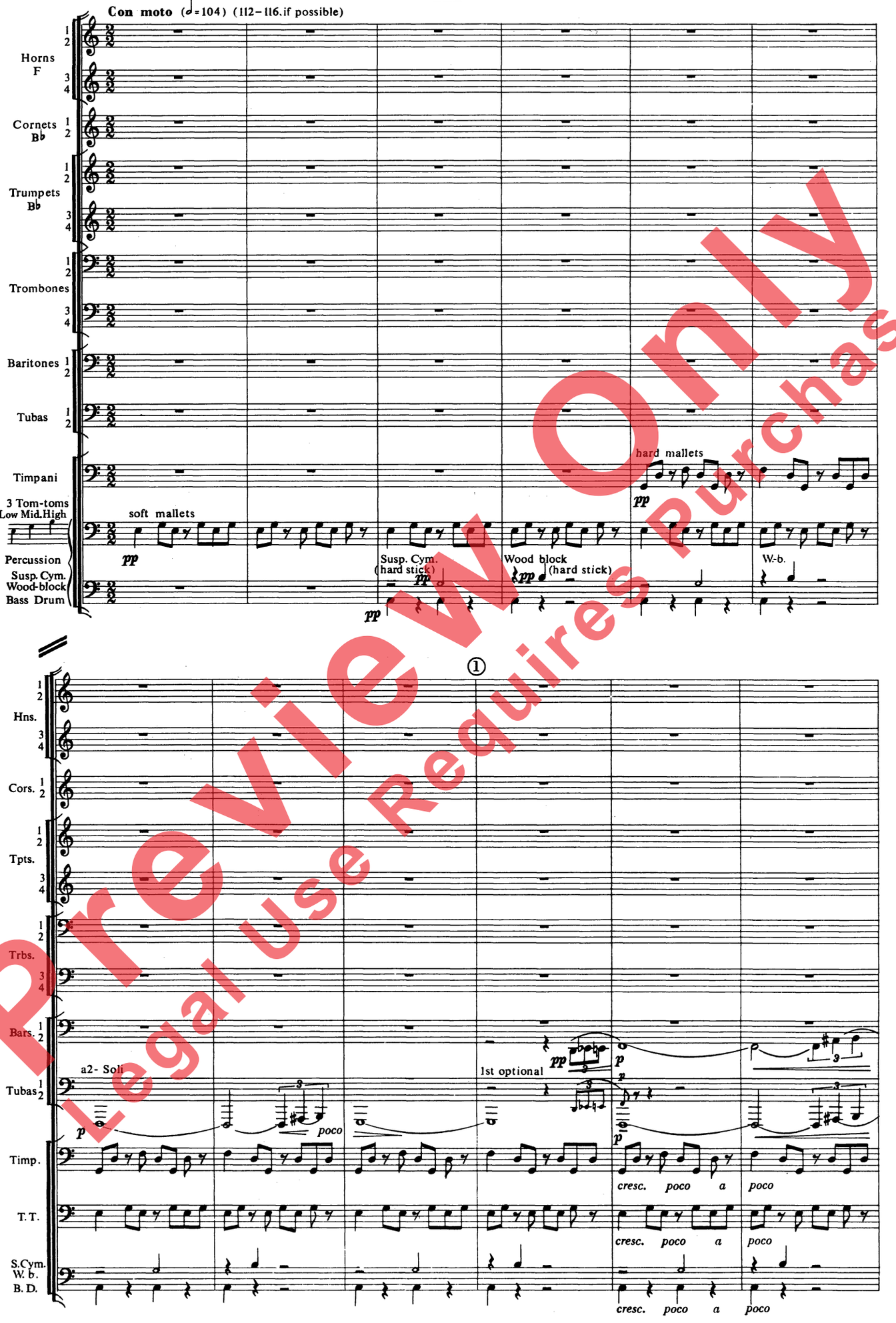

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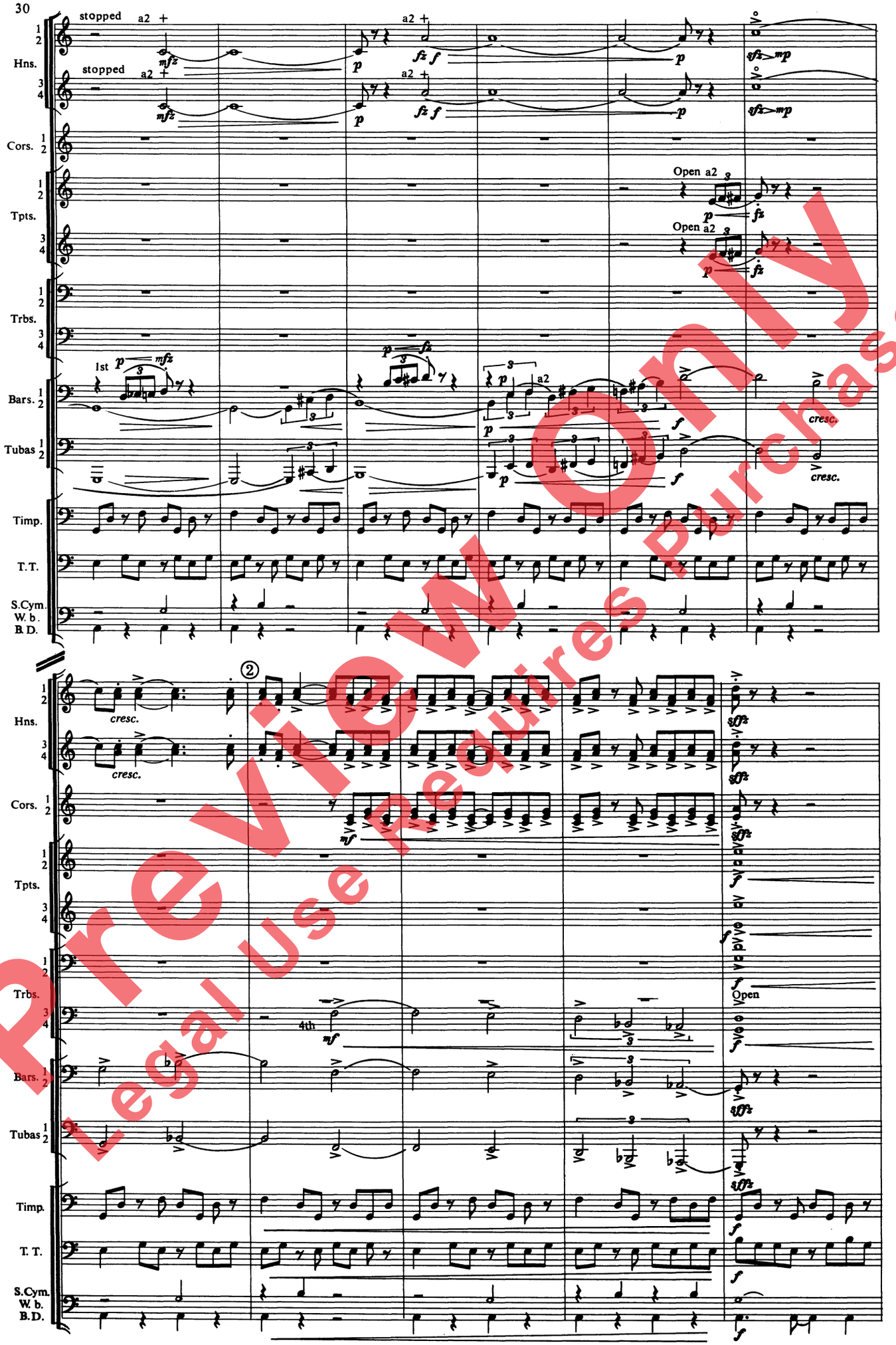

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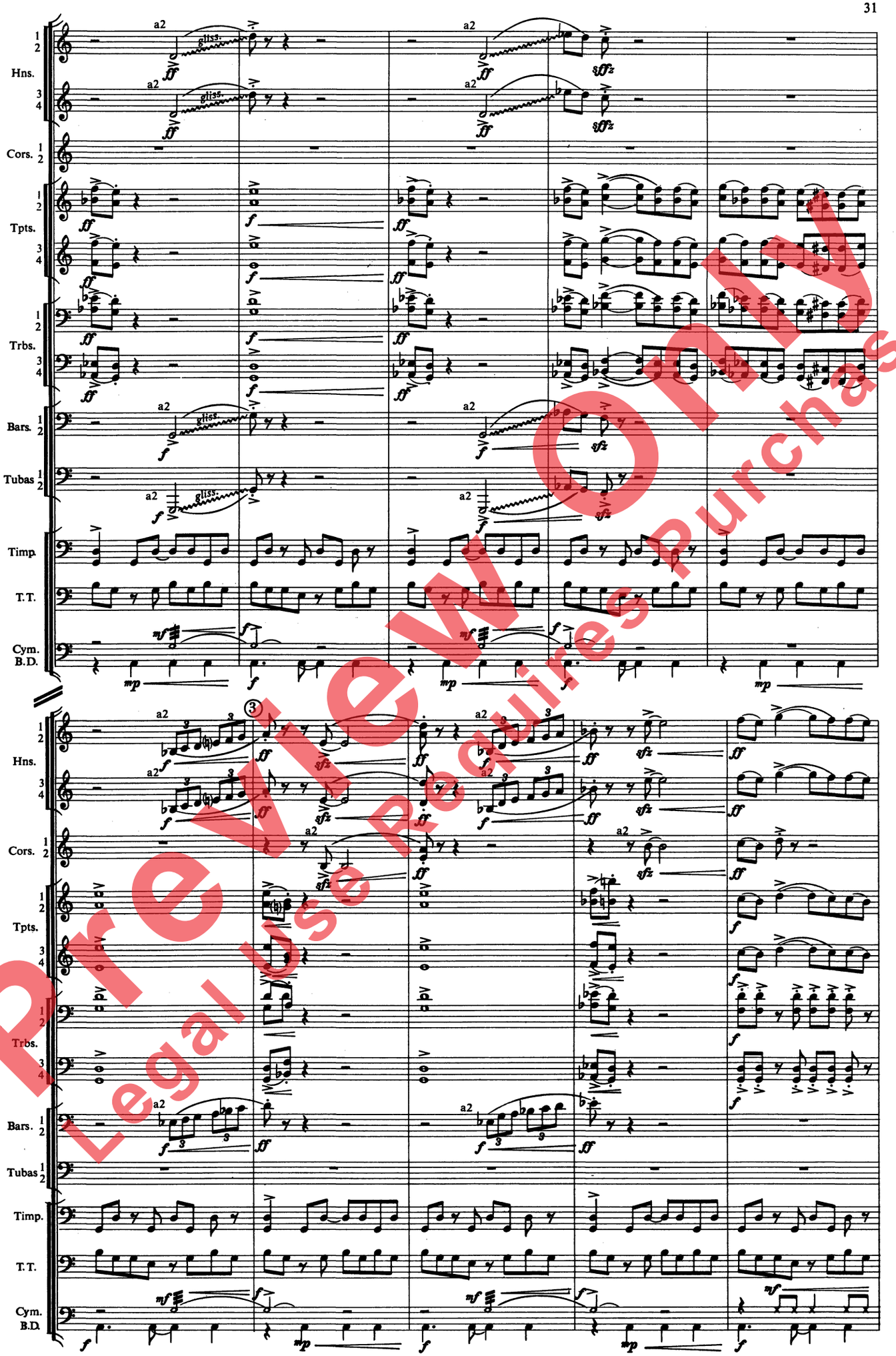

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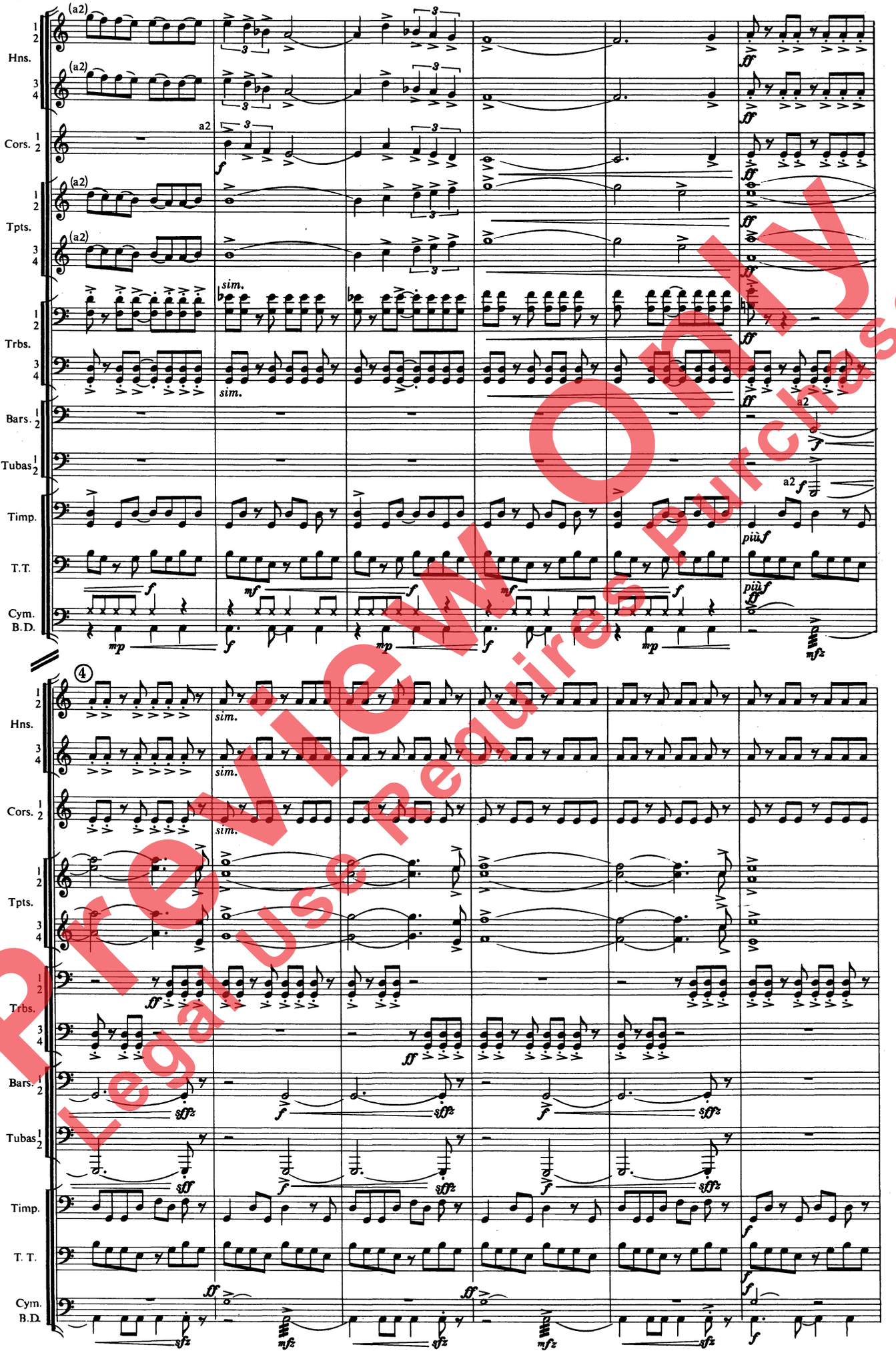

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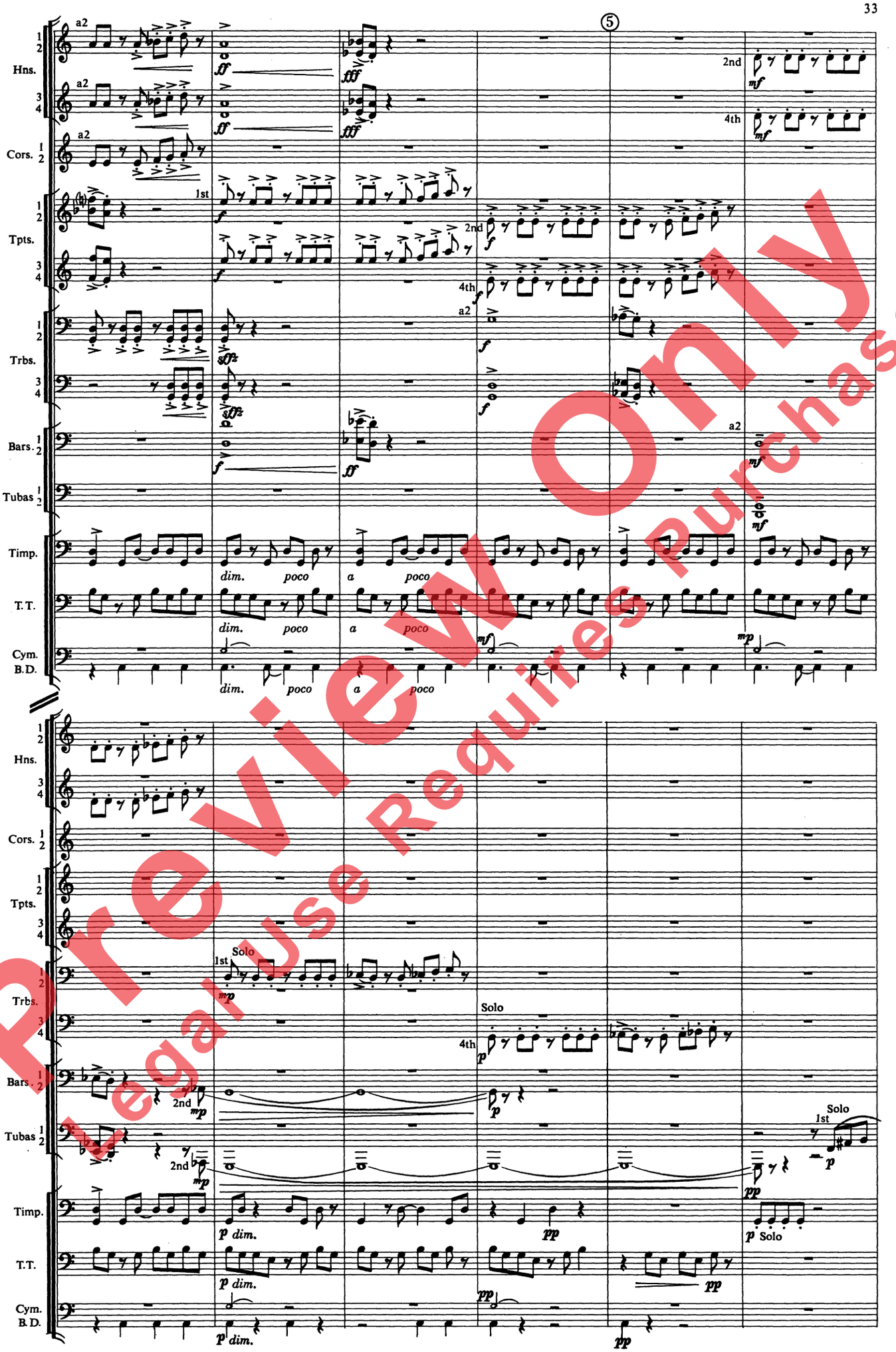

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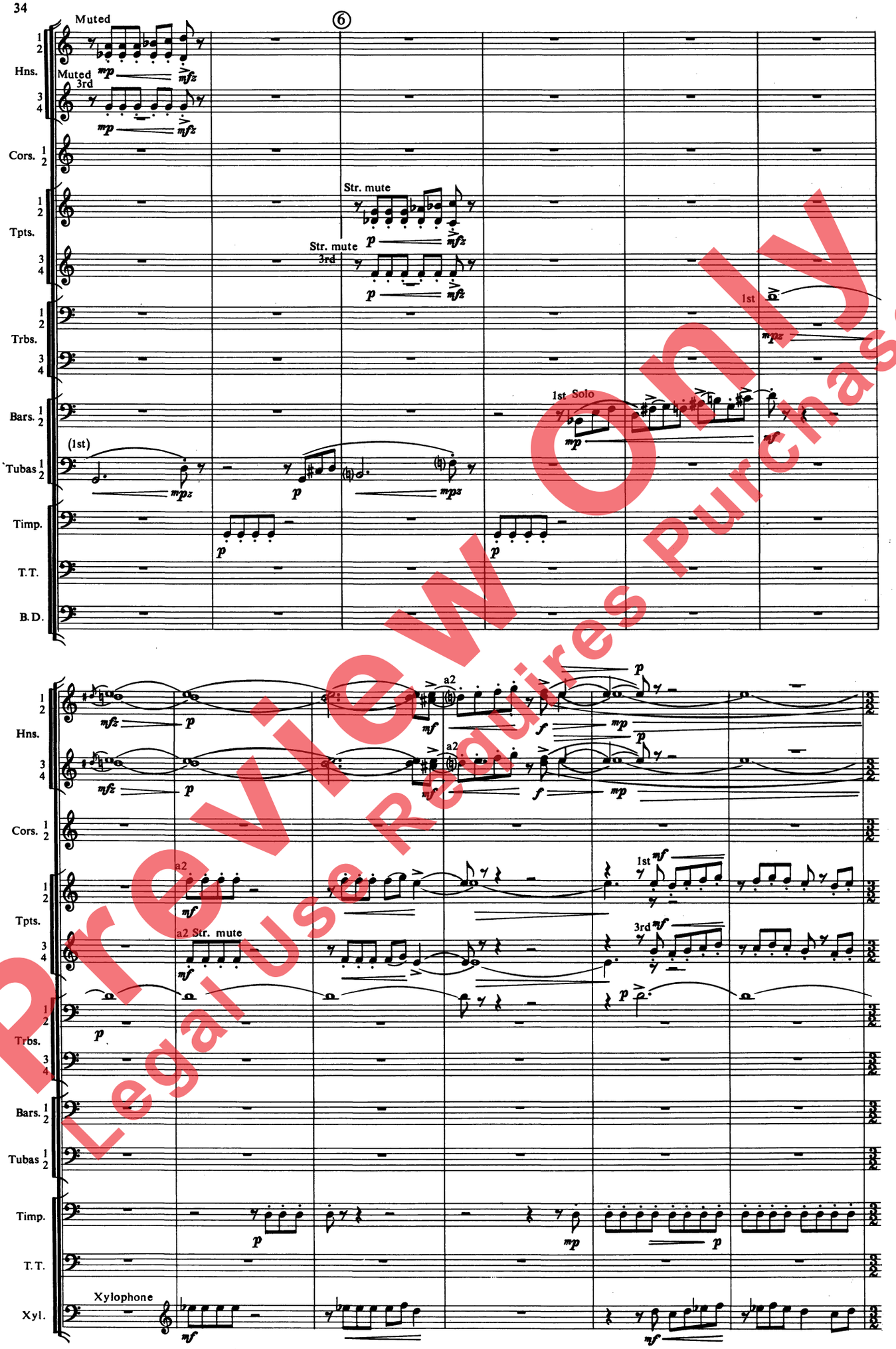

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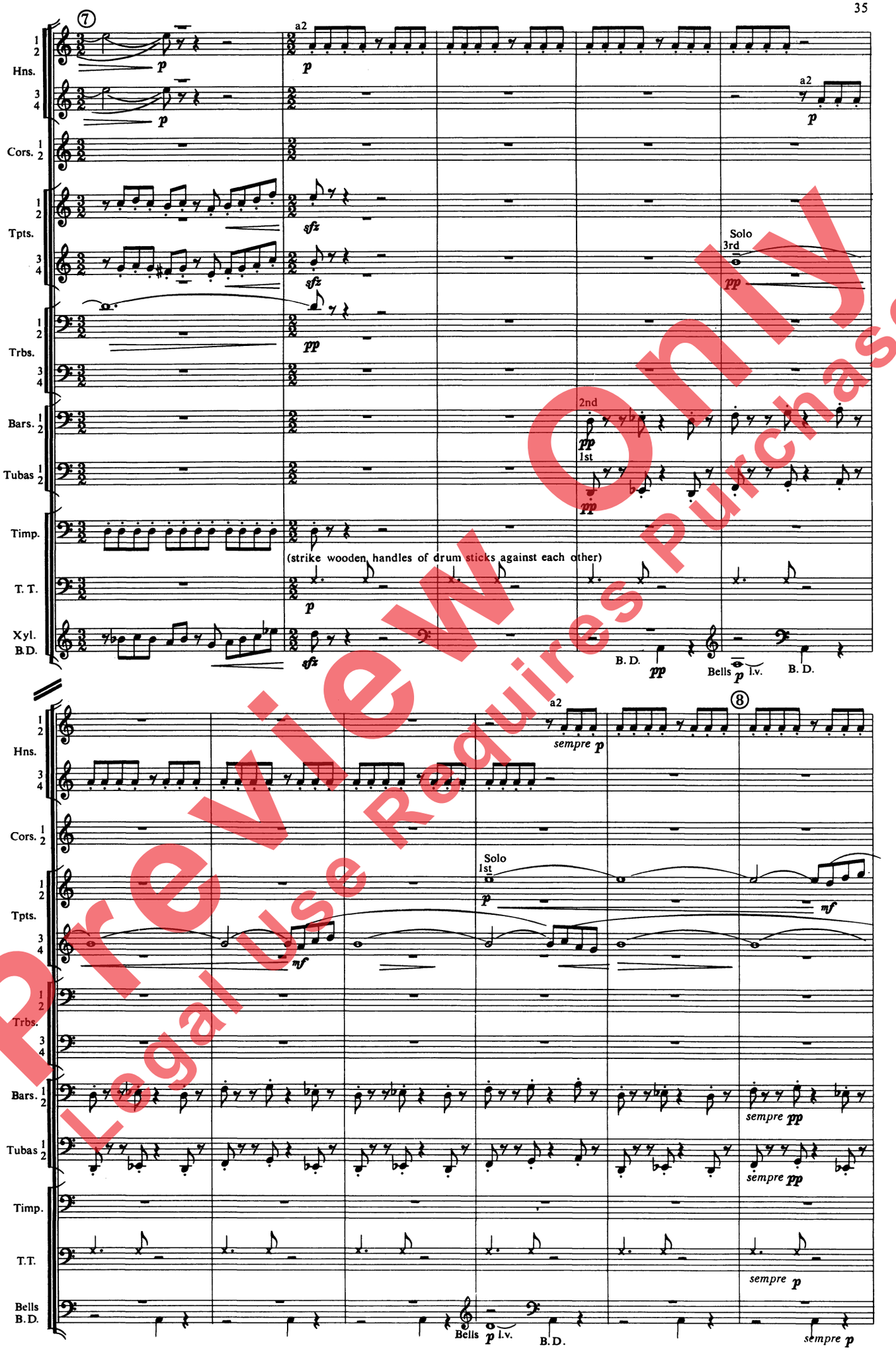

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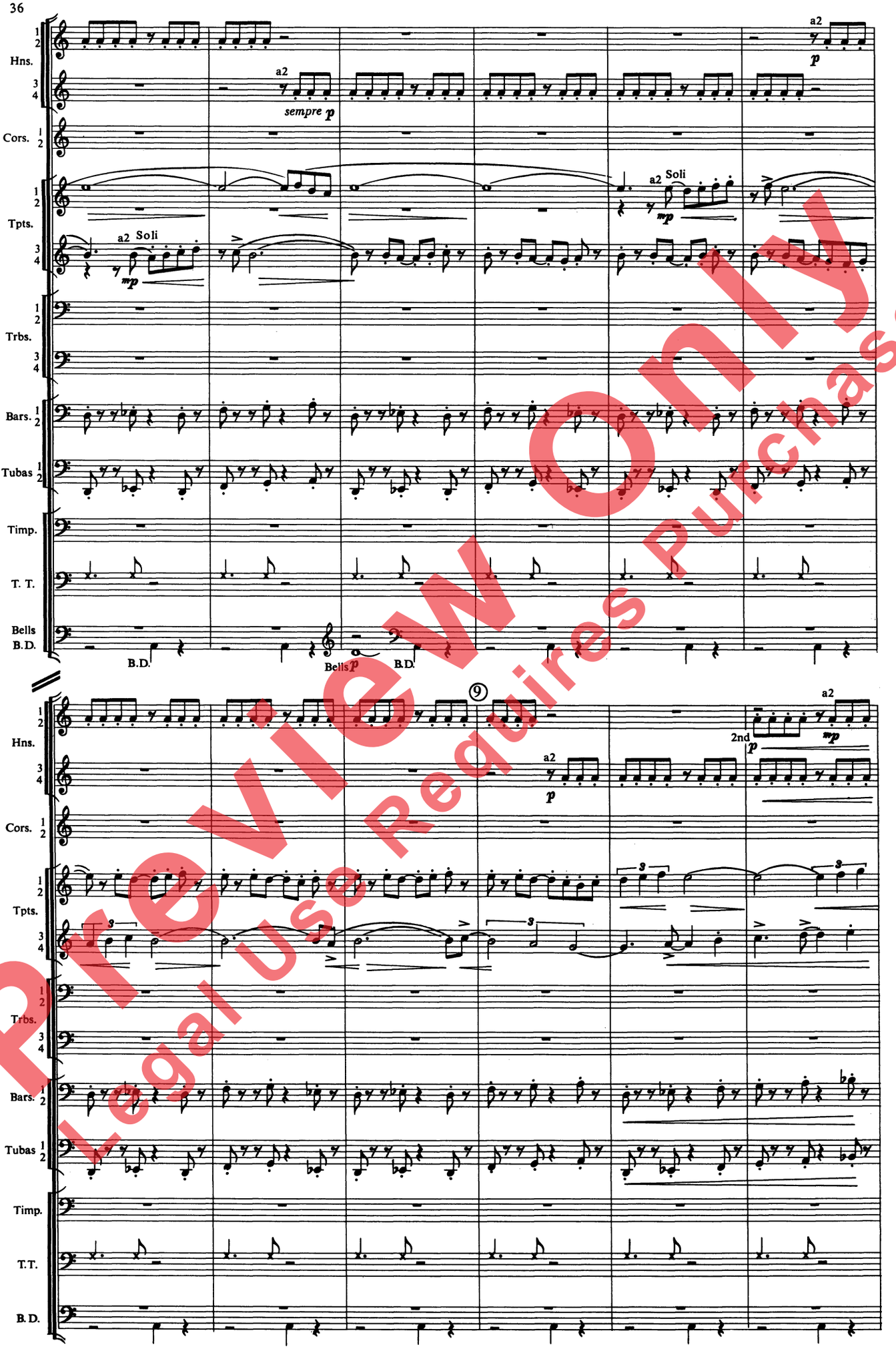

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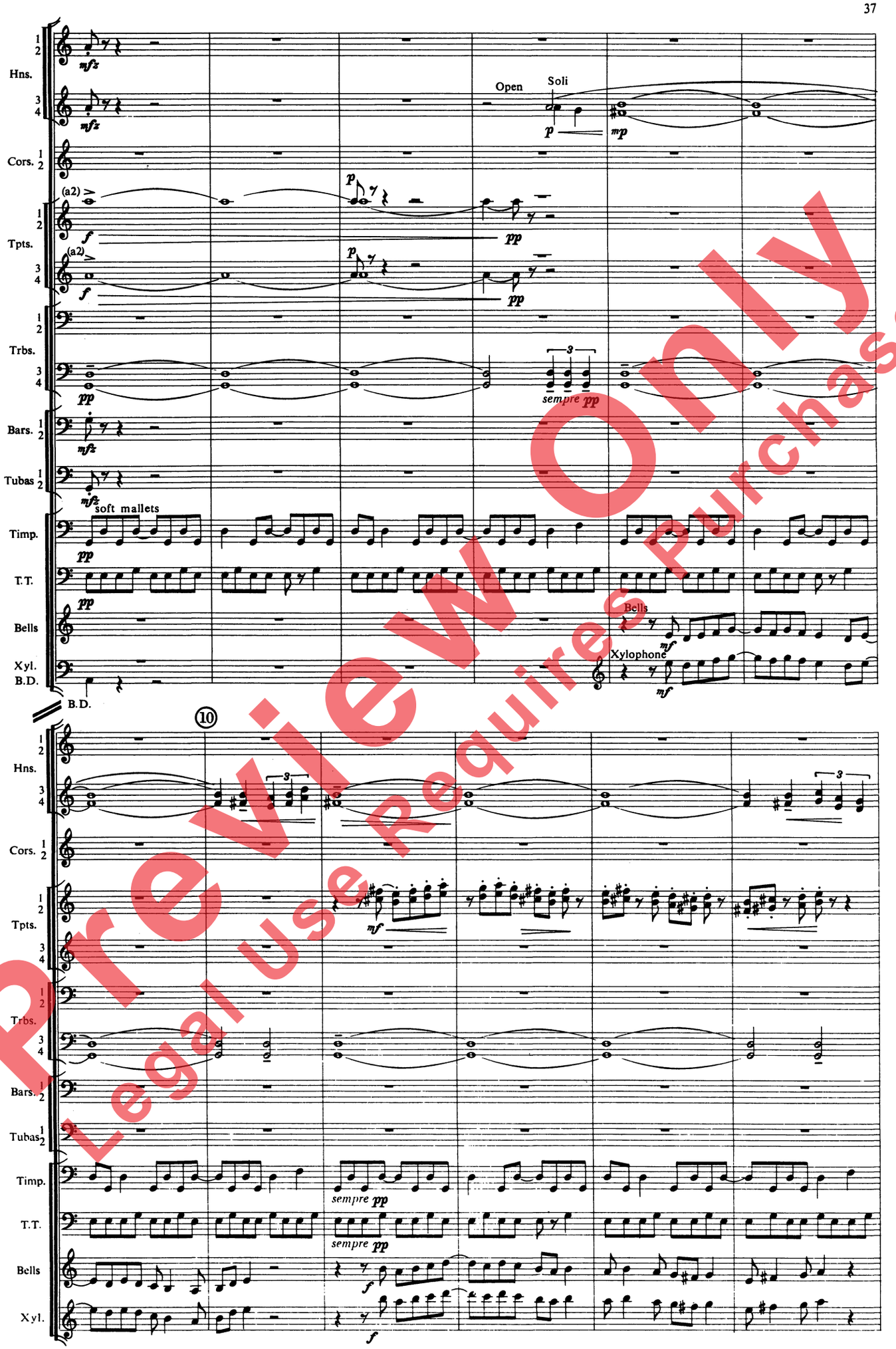

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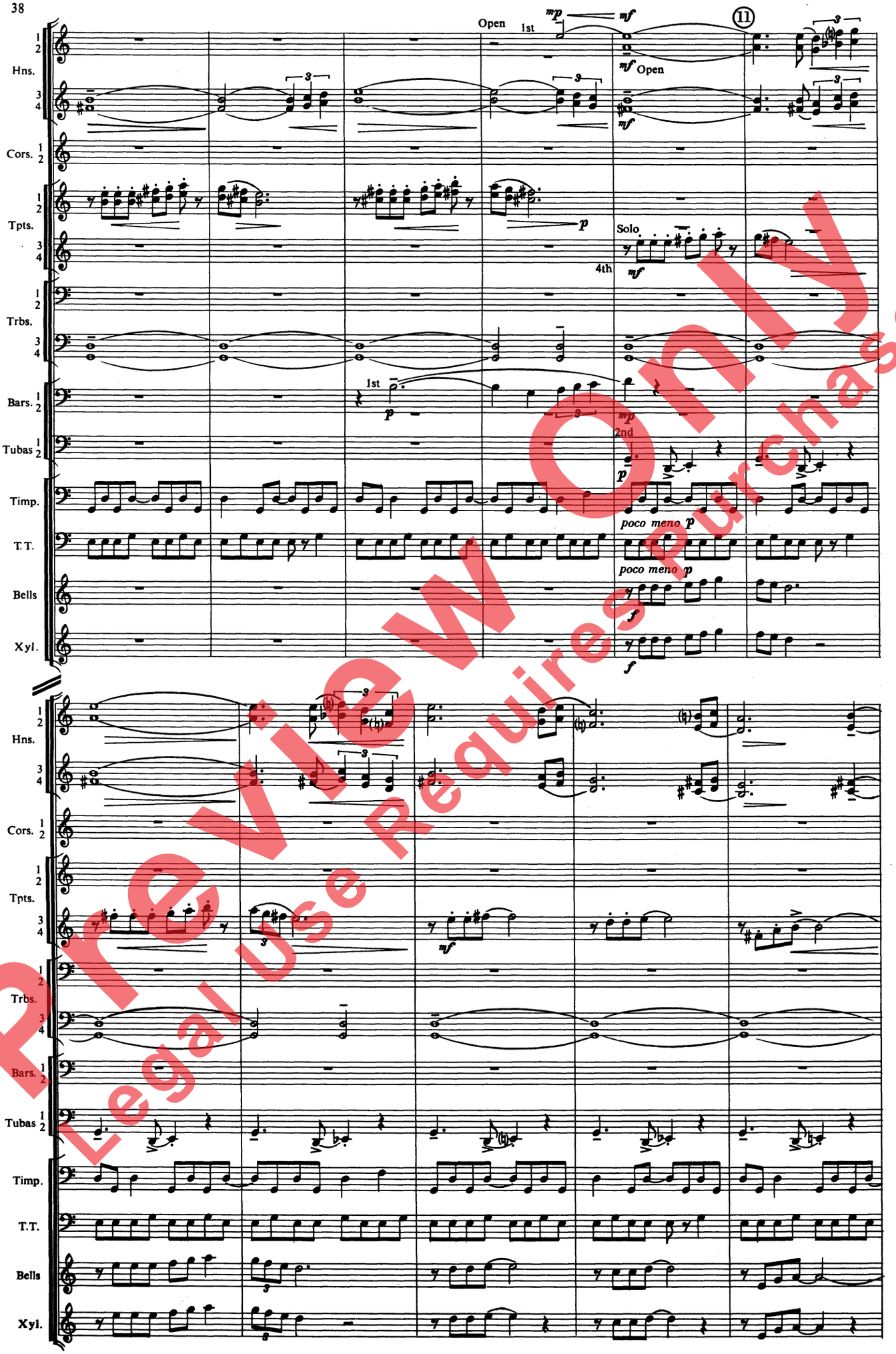

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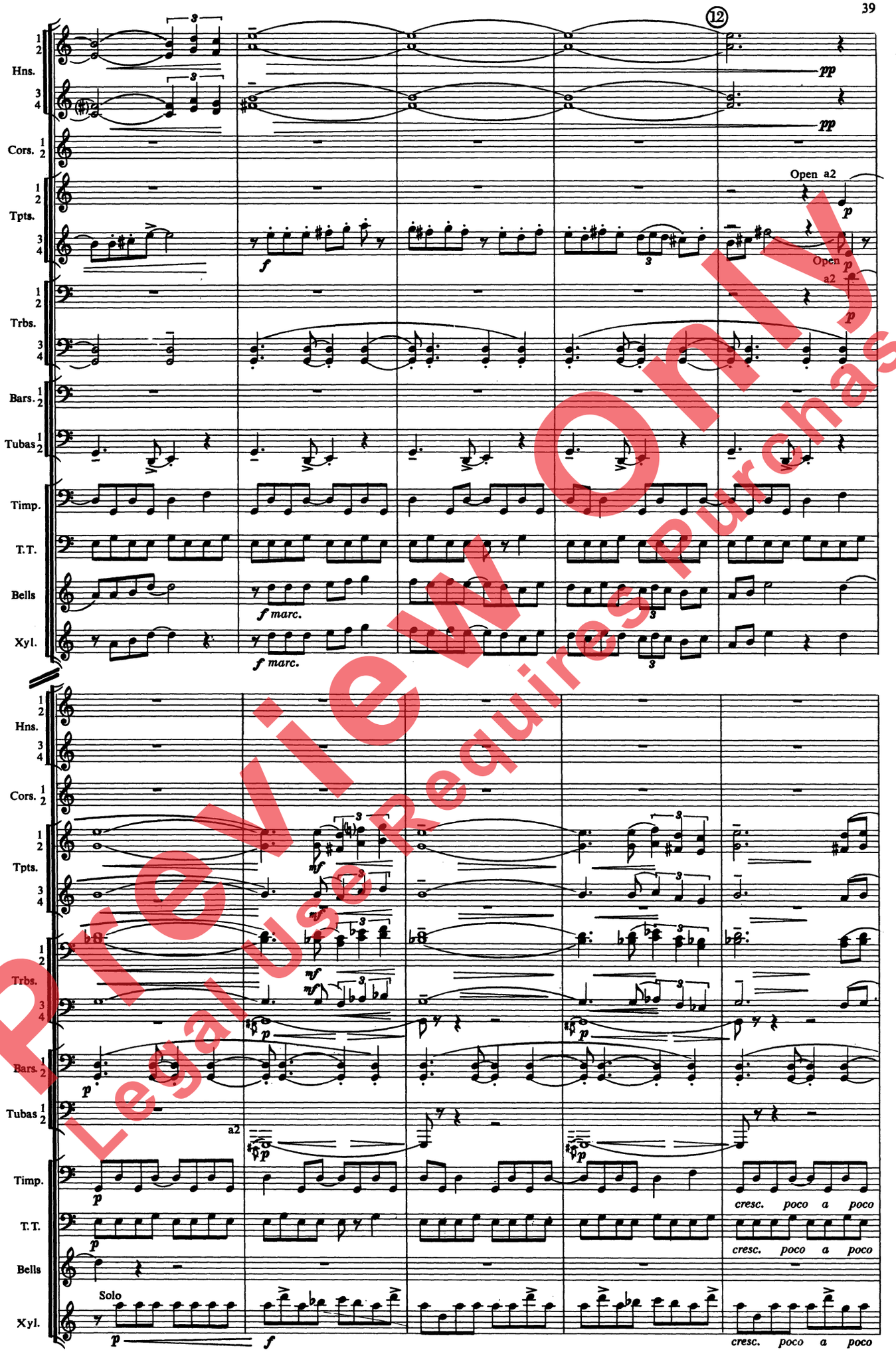

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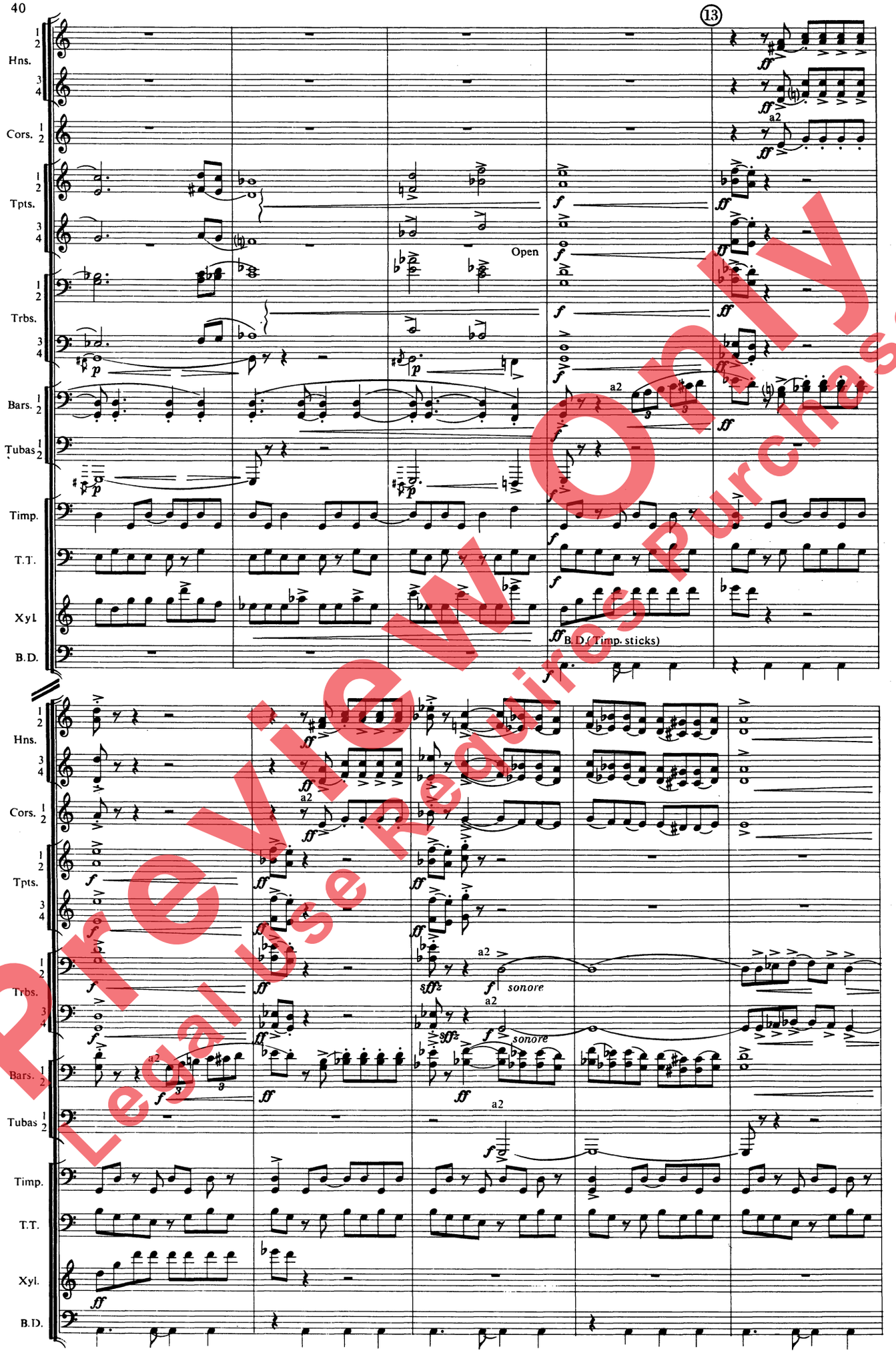

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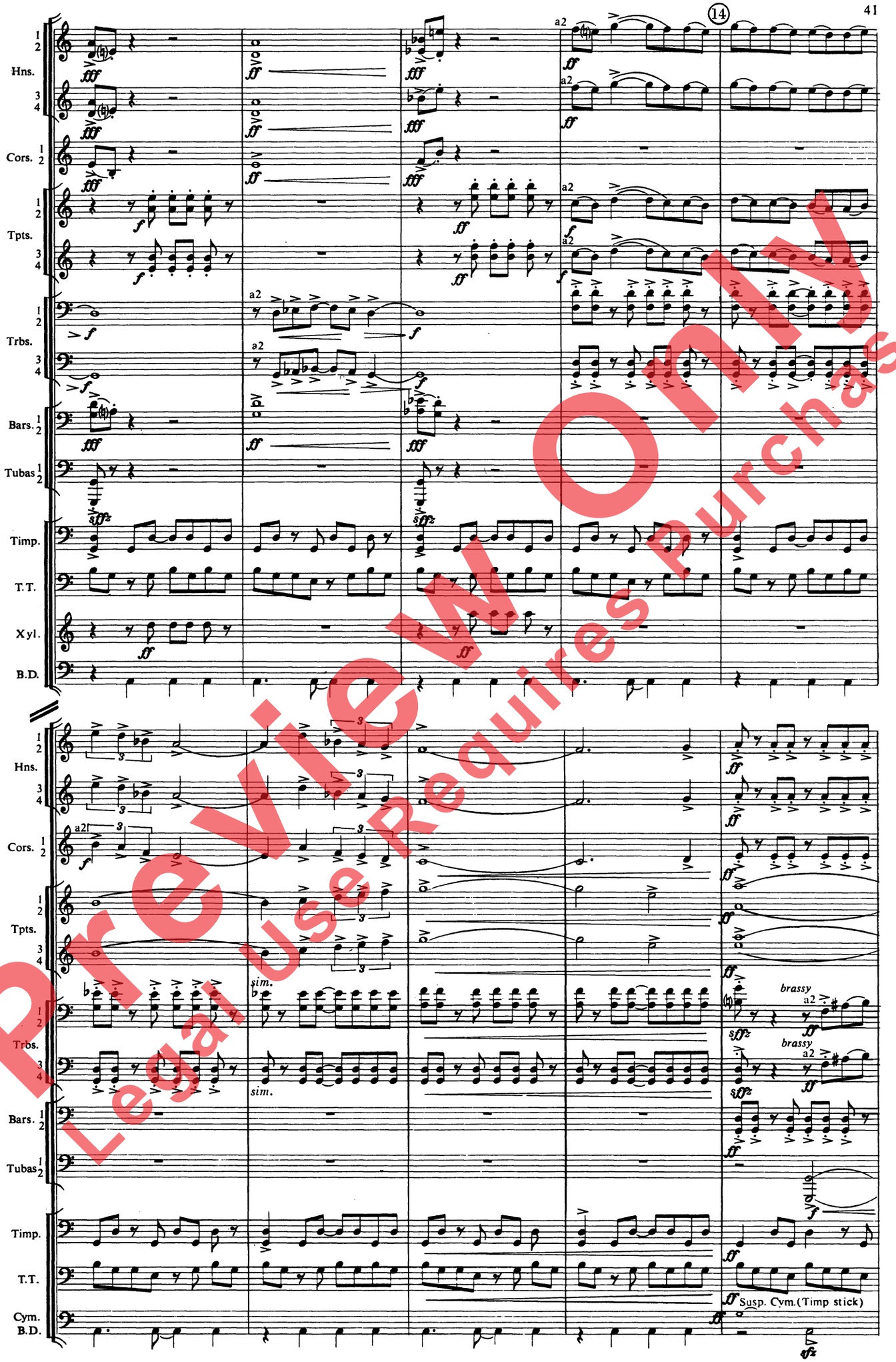

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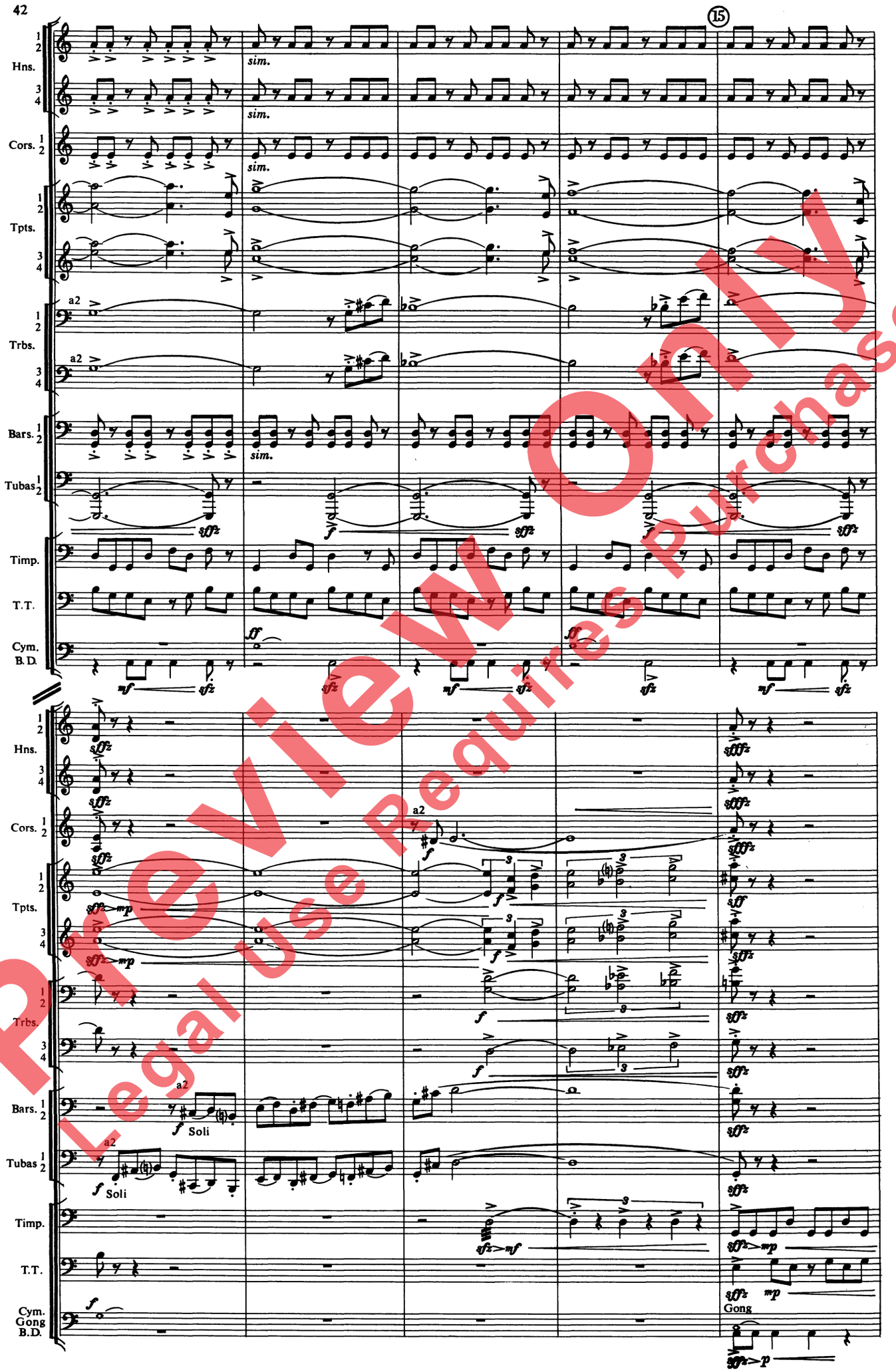

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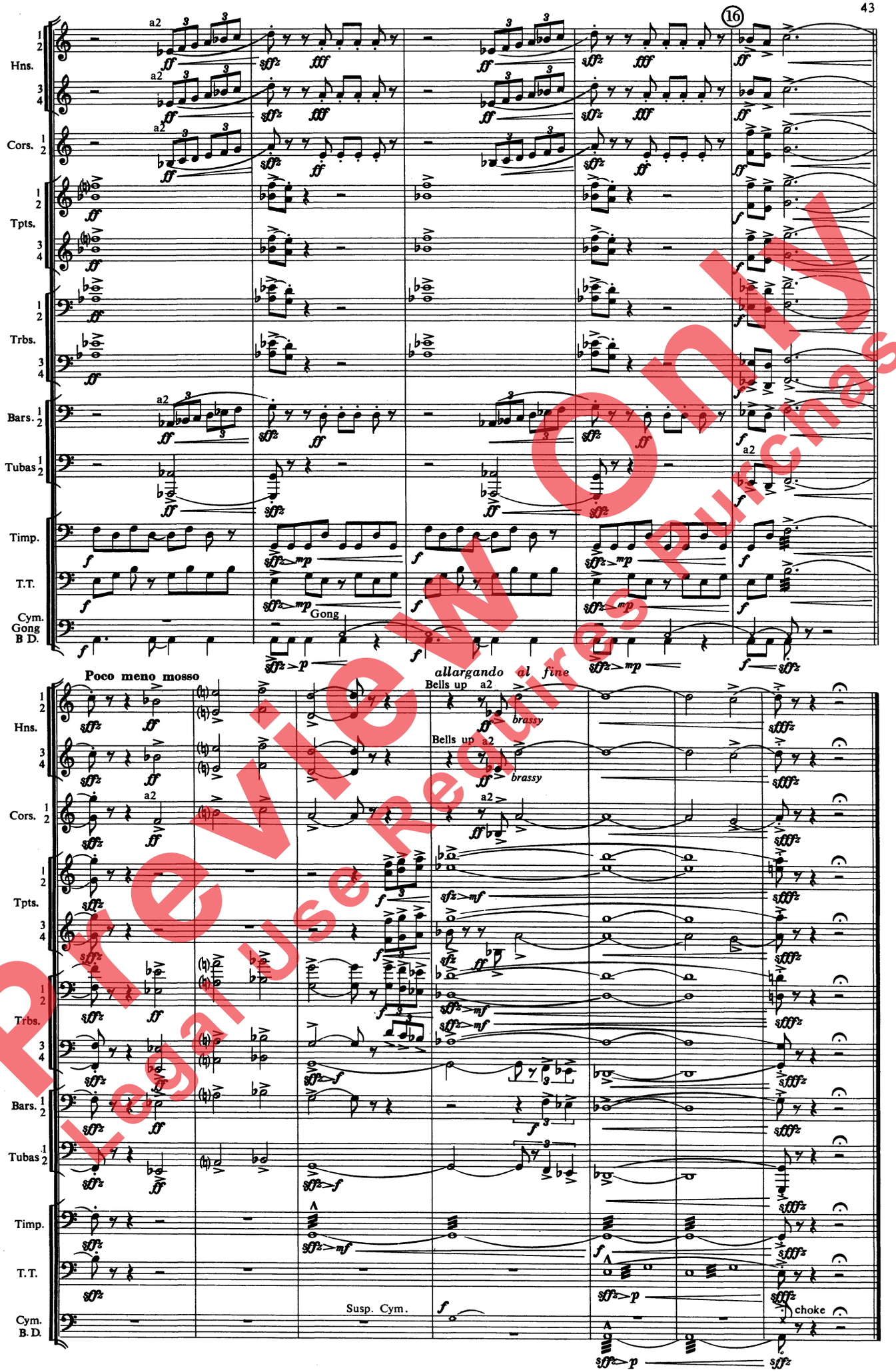

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