# Solid Men To The Front

John Philip Sousa

edited by
Frank Byrne

1 Full Score
1 Piccolo (C)
6 Flute
2 Oboe 1,2
2 Bassoon 1,2
1 Eb Clarinet
3 Clarinet 1
3 Clarinet 2
3 Calrinet 3
2 Bass Clarinet
4 Alto Saxophone
2 Tenor Saxophone
1 Baritone Saxophone
3 Cornet 1
3 Cornet 2
2 Cornet (Trumpets) 3,4
2 F Horn 1,2
2 F Horn 3,4
3 Trombone 1,2
3 Trombone 3,4
2 Euphonium T.C.
2 Euphonium B.C.
5 Tuba 1,2
2 Snare Drum
3 Bass Drum, Cymbals, Bells

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# SOLID MEN TO THE FRONT!

## About this Edition

This new edition represents research combining early editions of the march and historically-informed Sousa performance practices. Frank Byrne has examined first editions of the march, performance notes of former Sousa Band members (including Frank Simon - Solo Cornetist 1914-1921; and August Helmecke, Sousa's bass drummer for 22 years), and performance markings in the Sousa Band encore books, now in the U.S. Marine Band library. Byrne also studied historic recordings of this march, including those by the Sousa Band (although most of these were not conducted by Sousa), and those conducted by Frank Simon and other former Sousa Band members.

Few conductors and musicians today are aware that Sousa did not perform his marches as printed. He told his musicians, "Any band can play the marches as printed. We shall play them differently." These performance techniques enhanced the musical contrast in the marches and also gave Sousa's own performances of the marches a unique and exciting character. In an August, 1950, article in *The Etude* entitled "How Sousa Played His Marches," Helmecke wrote, "People have no idea how Sousa wanted his marches played, because the tricks and effects that brought them to such vivid life under the Big Boss' own direction never got marked into the scores...the notes alone can give you but the barest skeleton of what a Sousa march can be."

While these performance changes were never published, interviews and writings of former Sousa Band members, as well as research into the performance parts used by the Sousa Band, provide valuable insight. Every effort has been made to make this edition faithful to the original, and to the intent of the composer. It provides the most historically accurate recreation that may be constructed from the available research.

**A note to the conductor:** In an effort to make this edition usable for both indoor concert settings and outdoor performances, and to provide maximum flexibility to the conductor, the performance changes have been included as annotations to the printed notation in both score and parts. Clarinet parts intended to be played an octave lower in certain strains are notated in both the original and lower octaves. Cornet and trombone notes which Sousa would have omitted, are included in cue size notes. Sousa's performance techniques were designed for indoor concert performance and are most effective when performed using the techniques as documented in this edition. However, by preserving the printed notation in all parts and including the changes as annotations, the conductor has the option of restoring certain "tacet" parts for outdoor performances if this is found to be necessary. Sousa himself employed this option and both the editor and publishers have tried to preserve this flexibility in an edition which is both practical and historically accurate.

## Solid Men To The Front!

Sousa was a great composer but perhaps an even greater patriot. When the United States entered World War I, the 62 year-old Sousa offered his services to the military and was commissioned an officer in the Navy. He served as Music Director of the Great Lakes (Illinois) Naval Training Station and set his own pay at one dollar per month. “Solid Men To The Front” was one of ten marches he composed in 1918 and reflects the vigor and spirit of the American men in uniform. The title first appeared on the manuscript to another Sousa march (“Wisconsin Forward Forever”) but was ultimately used for this march. “Solid Men To The Front” is also one of only six marches Sousa actually conducted on recording with his band. (Background information from *The Works of John Philip Sousa* by Paul Bierley, published by Integrity Press of Westerville, OH.)

## Frank Byrne

Frank Byrne began his career as a music librarian for "The President's Own" United States Marine Band. He served as Chief Music Librarian from 1980 - 1988 and is currently the Administrative Assistant to the Director.

In addition to his official responsibilities with the Marine Band, Byrne is devoted to research on American band history, notably on the marches of John Philip Sousa. He is active as an author and lecturer, and his editions of Sousa marches have been performed and recorded by some of the finest professional bands of our day.

The editor wishes to thank Robert Foster and Don Matthews for their assistance in the preparation of this edition, without whose help it would not have been possible.

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# Solid Men To The Front!

Performance Notes by Frank Byrne

## General:

I recommend a tempo of 118, even as slow as 116 but no faster than 120. Throughout the march, the accented notes are particularly important. Also, the style should reflect "spacing the notes," particularly emphasizing the difference between the short and long notes. The goal should be a clean style with great vigor and clarity. In the soft strains, the horn afterbeats must be heard. Although the horns are often marked *piano* here, they may be encouraged to play out to make the afterbeats heard. I often encourage other sections to listen for the horns and, if the horns can't be heard, to play softer. Percussionists should make every effort to follow exactly the melodic contour of the march, matching note lengths with the melody instruments.

## Introduction:

*Fortissimo*. Watch the accents. Don't lose the two sixteenth notes in the last measure of the intro. Bring them out.

## First Strain:

Begins with quarter note pick-up, dynamic is *mezzo forte*. There are solo cymbal crashes in the first strain which coincide with the accents in the band. Beginning in bar 13, crescendo *poco a poco* to *fortissimo* on the downbeat of measure 18. On the repeat, the pick-ups should be back down to *mezzo forte*, the repeat is played exactly the same.

## Second Strain:

Begins with 4 slurred eighth notes. Dynamic is *piano*, but with a firm texture similar to when the full band is playing. In other words, less sound, not altered sound. Piccolo, E-flat Clarinet, Cornets and Trombones are out the first time. Clarinets are down an octave as marked. The syncopated figures are very important to the character of this strain. The rhythm should "swing." The triplet figures in measures 31-32 must be executed with flair and with no slowing of the tempo. Everyone comes back in *fortissimo* on the 4 slurred eighth notes in the first ending. Clarinets are LOCO and this should be played with great vigor.

## Trio:

Piccolo, E-flat Clarinet, Cornets and trombones are out. Clarinets are down an octave playing *piano* as marked. Trio begins with 3 quarter note pick-ups. Dynamic should immediately be *piano*. Snare Drum, BD, and Cymbals are TACIT here, Bells play the melody. Bells should not roll on long notes, simply outline the melody. The half notes in the melody should be played with space between them. This long strain is punctuated with a 2 bar crescendo in meas. 63-64 to ***mp*** (or almost ***mf***) for 2 bars, then a 2 bar decrescendo back down to *piano* for the rest of the trio.

## Break-Up:

Begins with an eighth and two quarters, the dynamic is immediately a healthy *fortissimo*. To make maximum contrast, cornet, trumpet and trombone players often must be reminded to lift their bells for better projection at *fortissimo* levels. Everyone is back in, clarinets are back at the written octave. This is played as written. There is a solo cymbal crash in measure 100 on the downbeat.

## Last Strain:

Like the Trio, begins with three quarter note pick-ups. Dynamic the first time is *piano*. Piccolo, E-flat Clarinet, Cornets and Trombones are TACET the first time, Clarinets are down an octave as marked. Snare Drum, BD and Cymbals are out and the Bells play the half note figure the FIRST TIME THROUGH ONLY. Stylistically, the last strain should be MARCATO both times, even at a *piano* dynamic. Make sure the melody is heard. Everyone is back in on the repeat to the Break-up Strain, playing *fortissimo*. This builds right up to the last time through. Please resist the urge to slow down the tempo the last time through. Sousa did not do this on his marches. See the BD/CYM part for the big BD/CYM accents in this last strain which are marked ***sffz***. In terms of balance between bass drum and cymbals, bass drum should predominate. Pull out all the stops for this last time.

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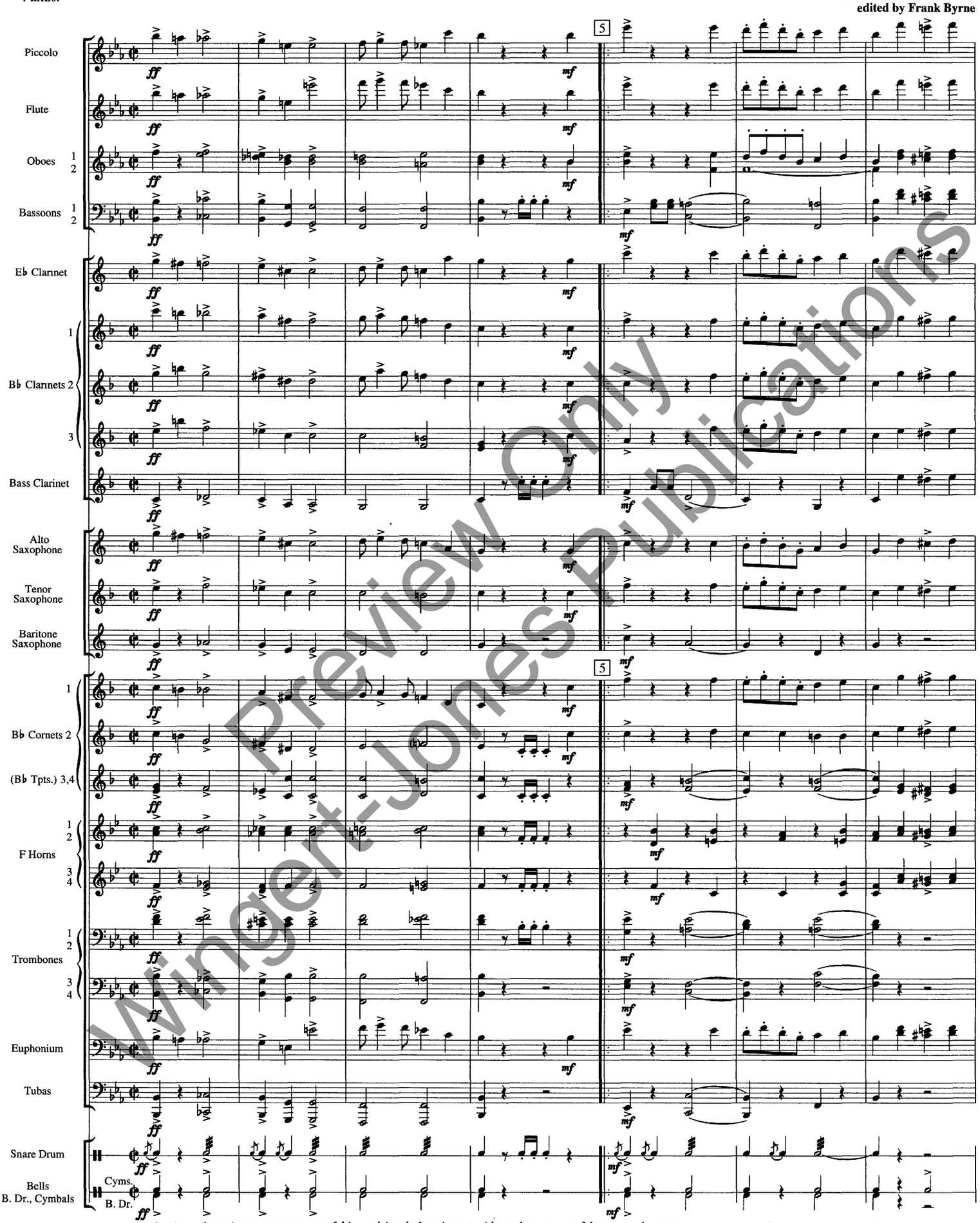
# SOLID MEN TO THE FRONT!
## MARCH

4 mins.

JOHN PHILIP SOUSA
edited by Frank Byrne

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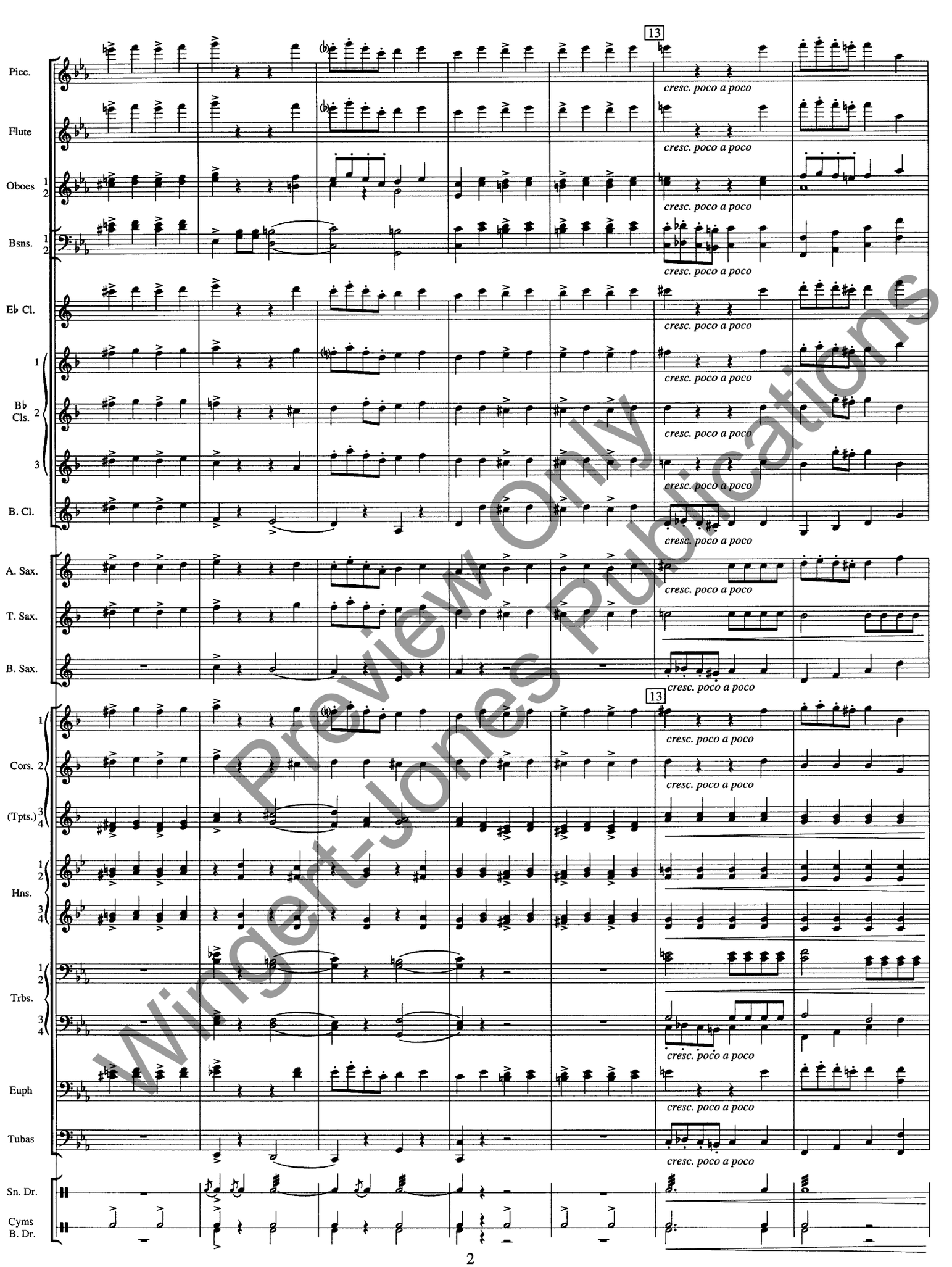


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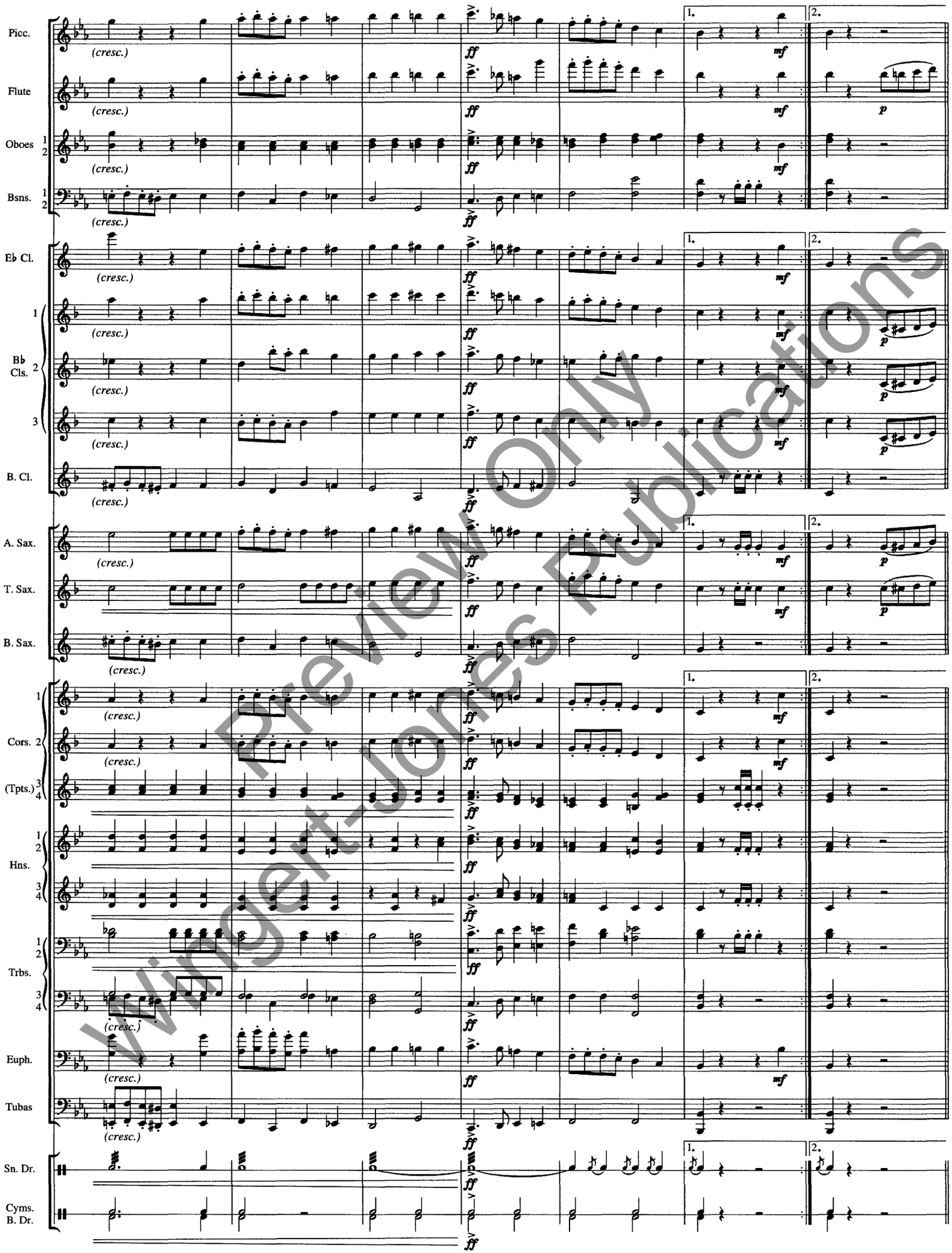


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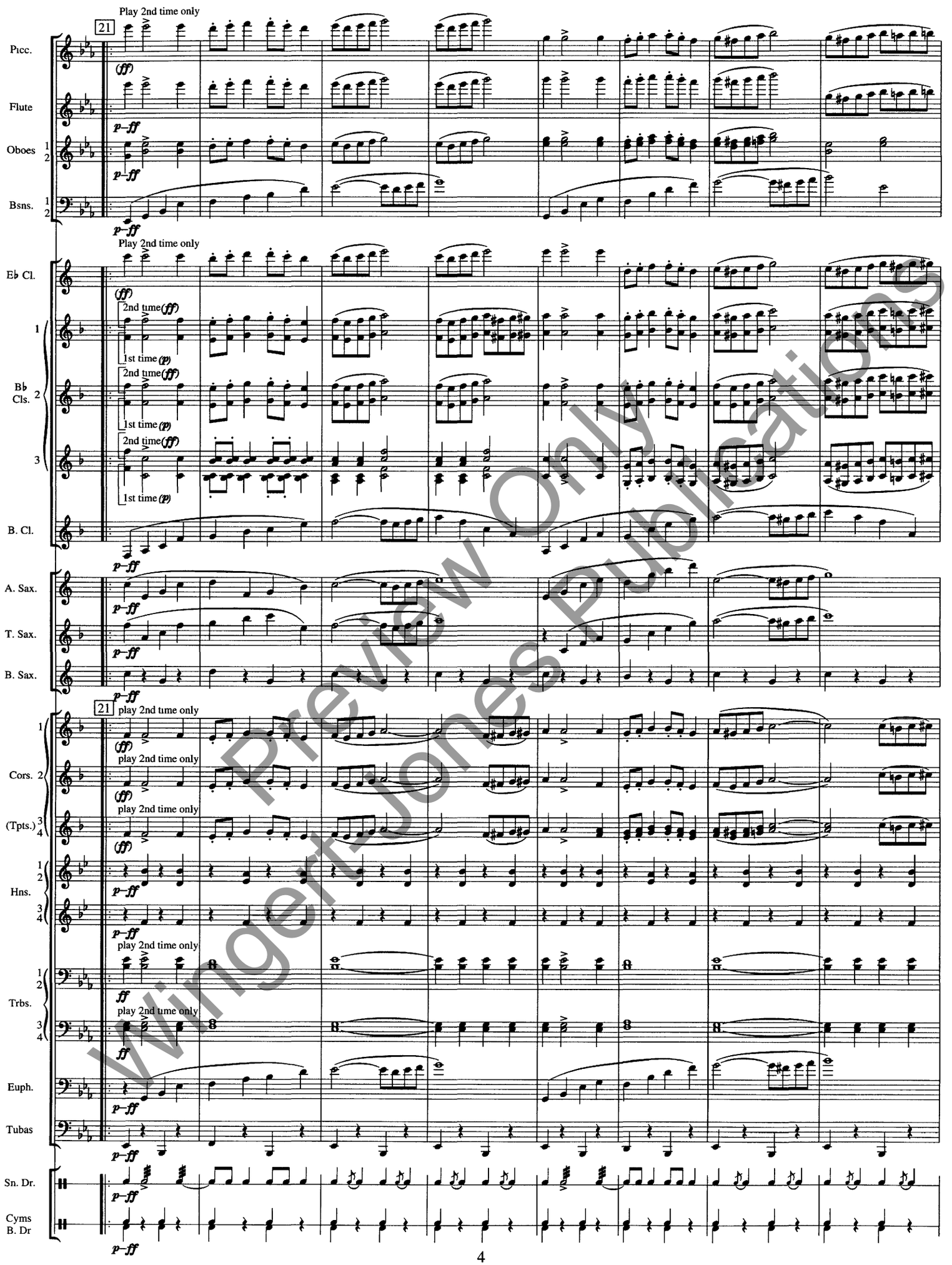


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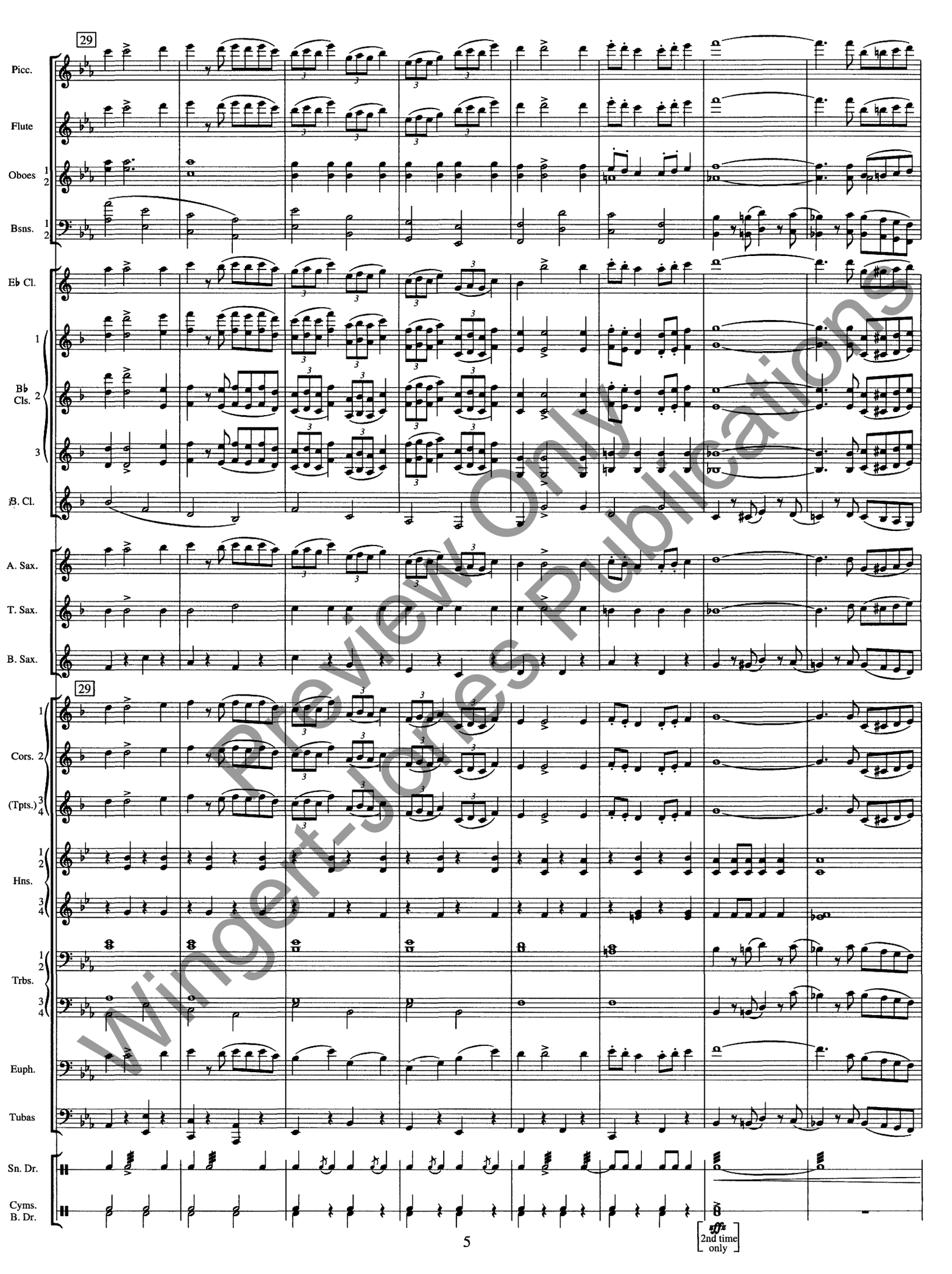


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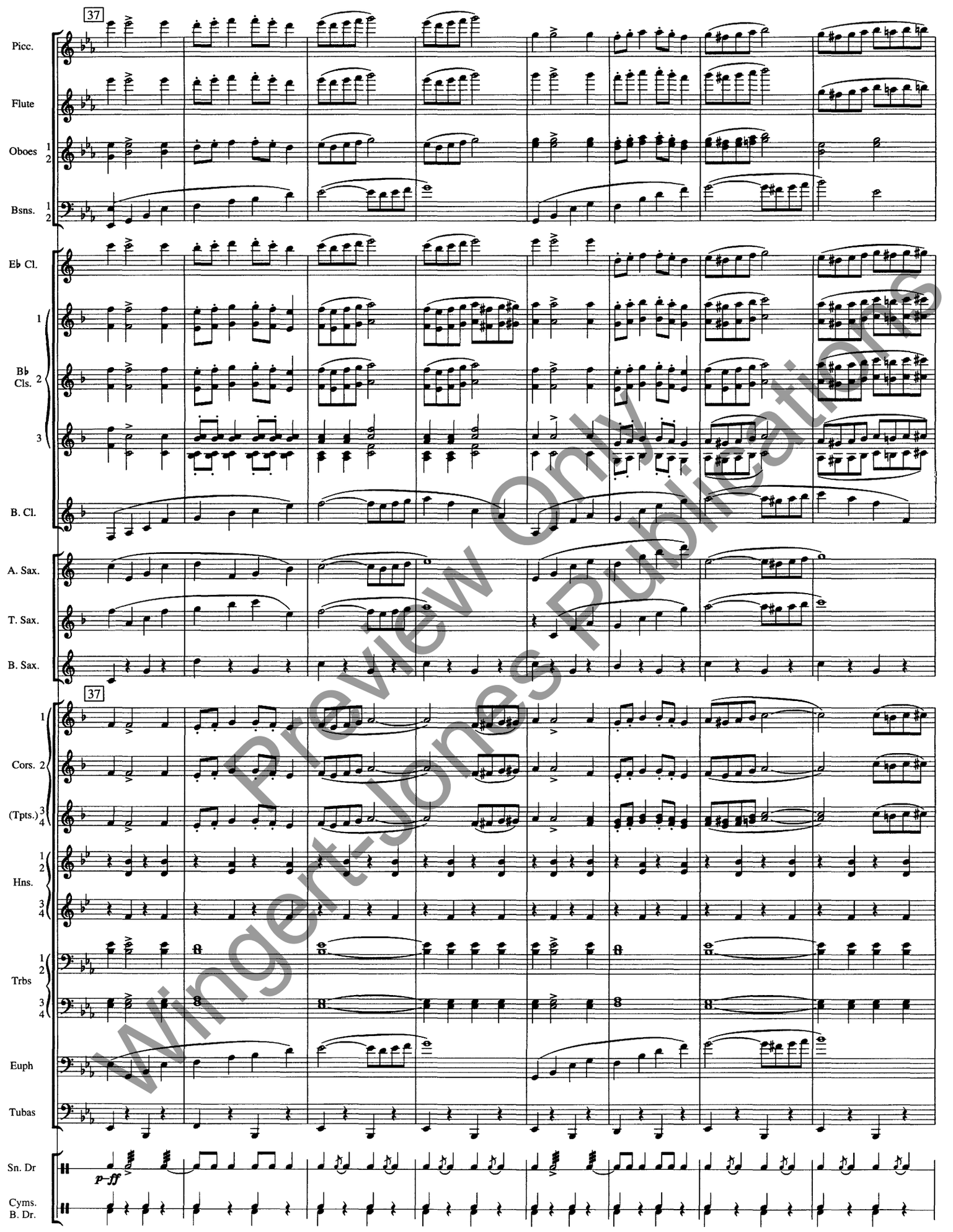


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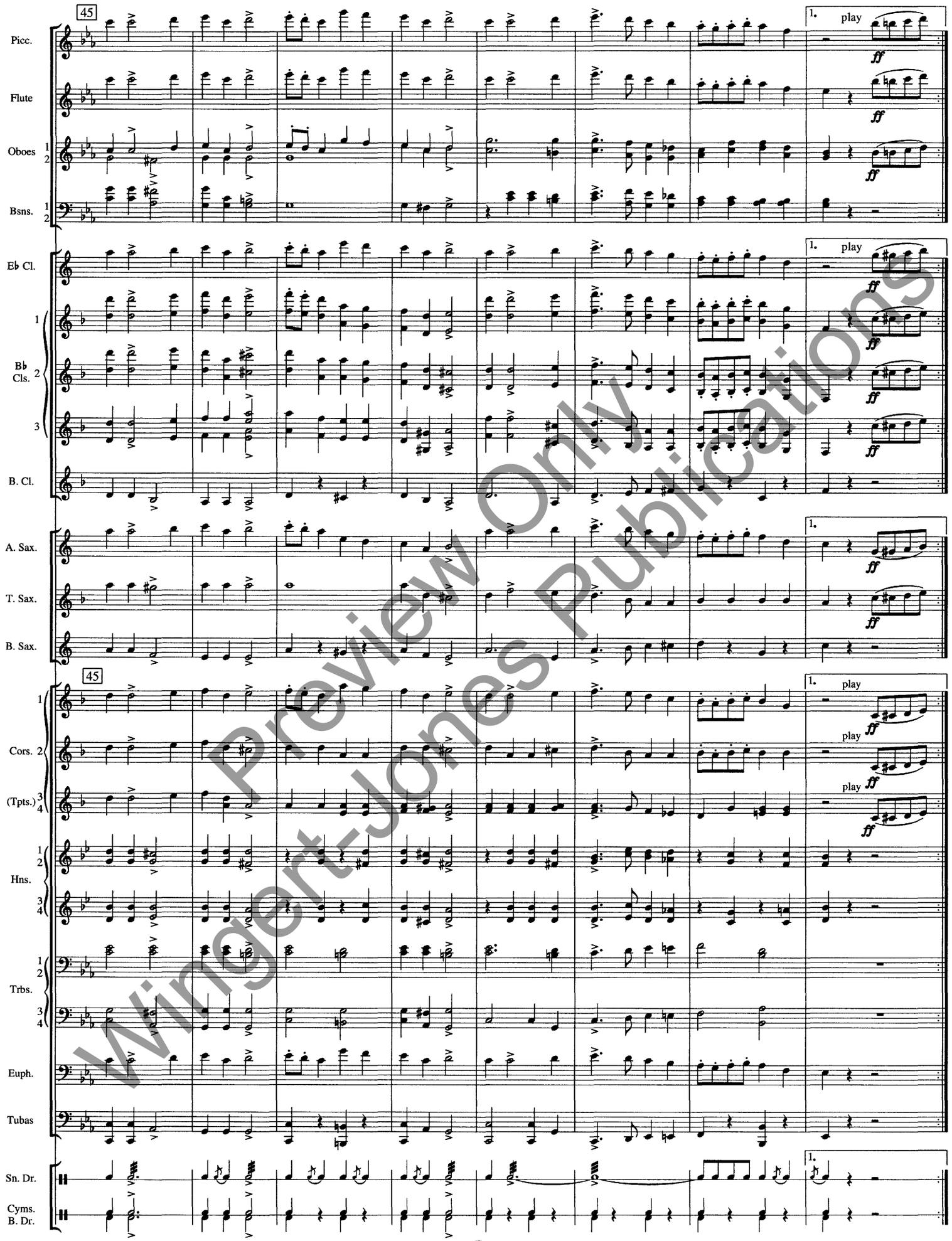


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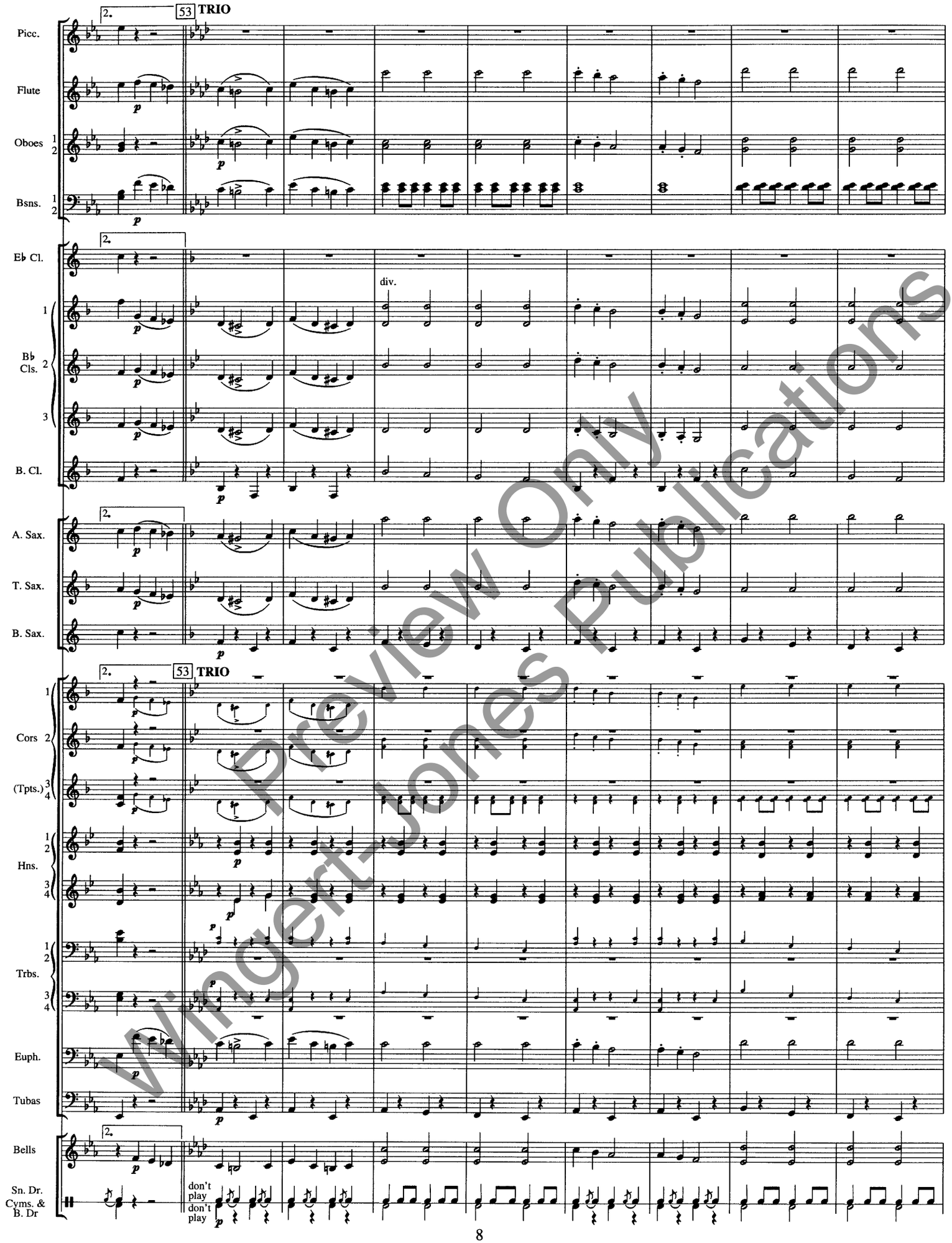


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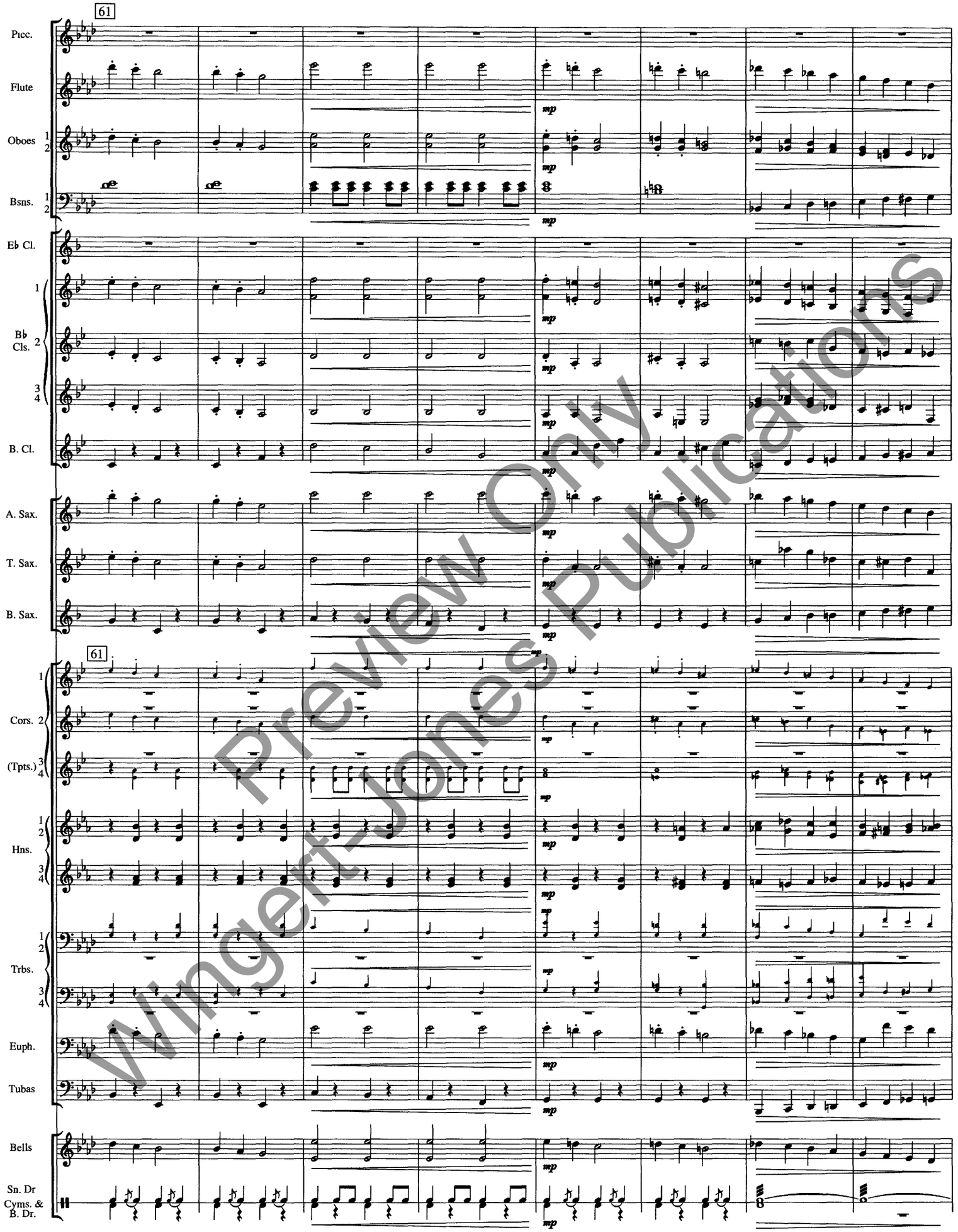


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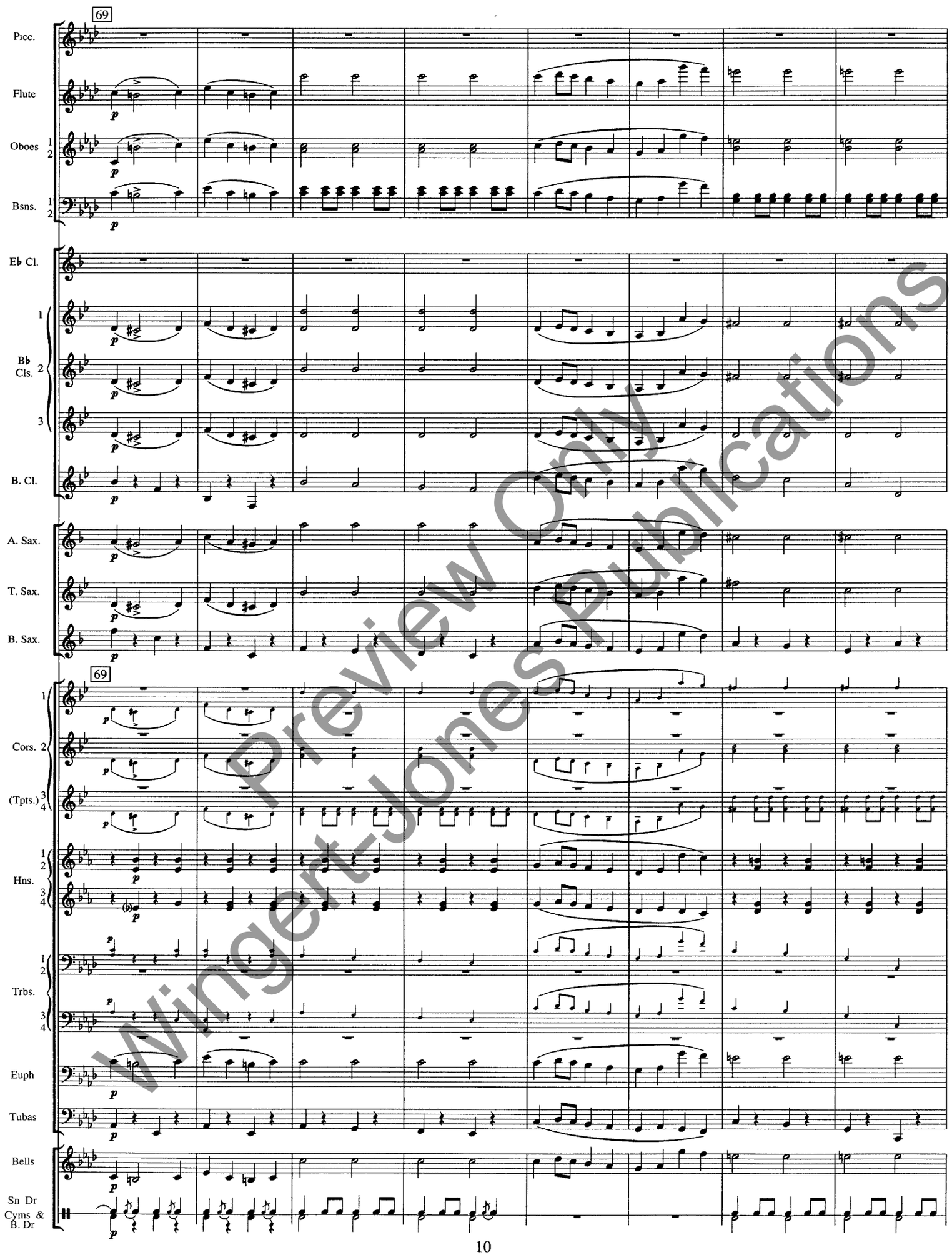


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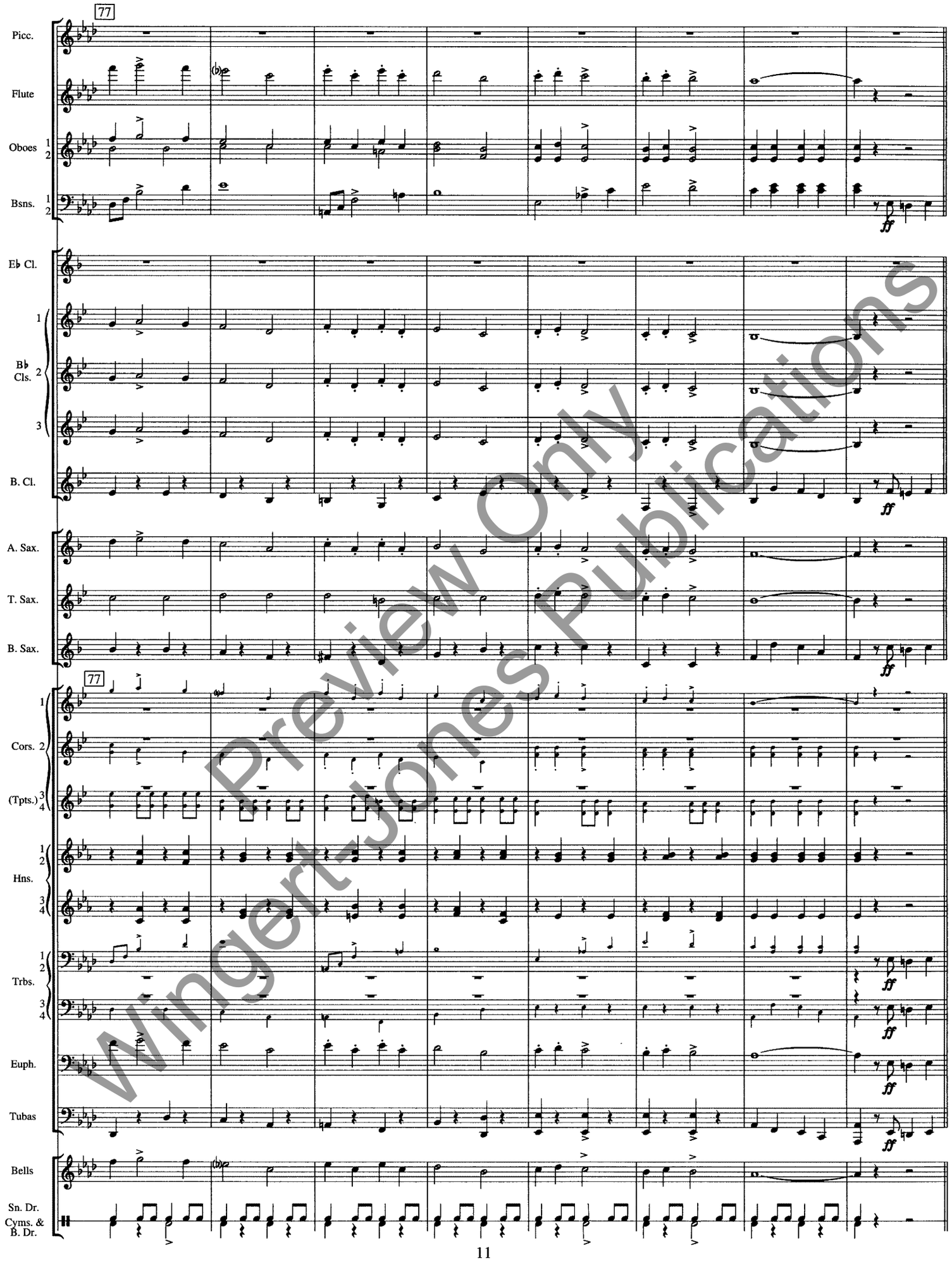


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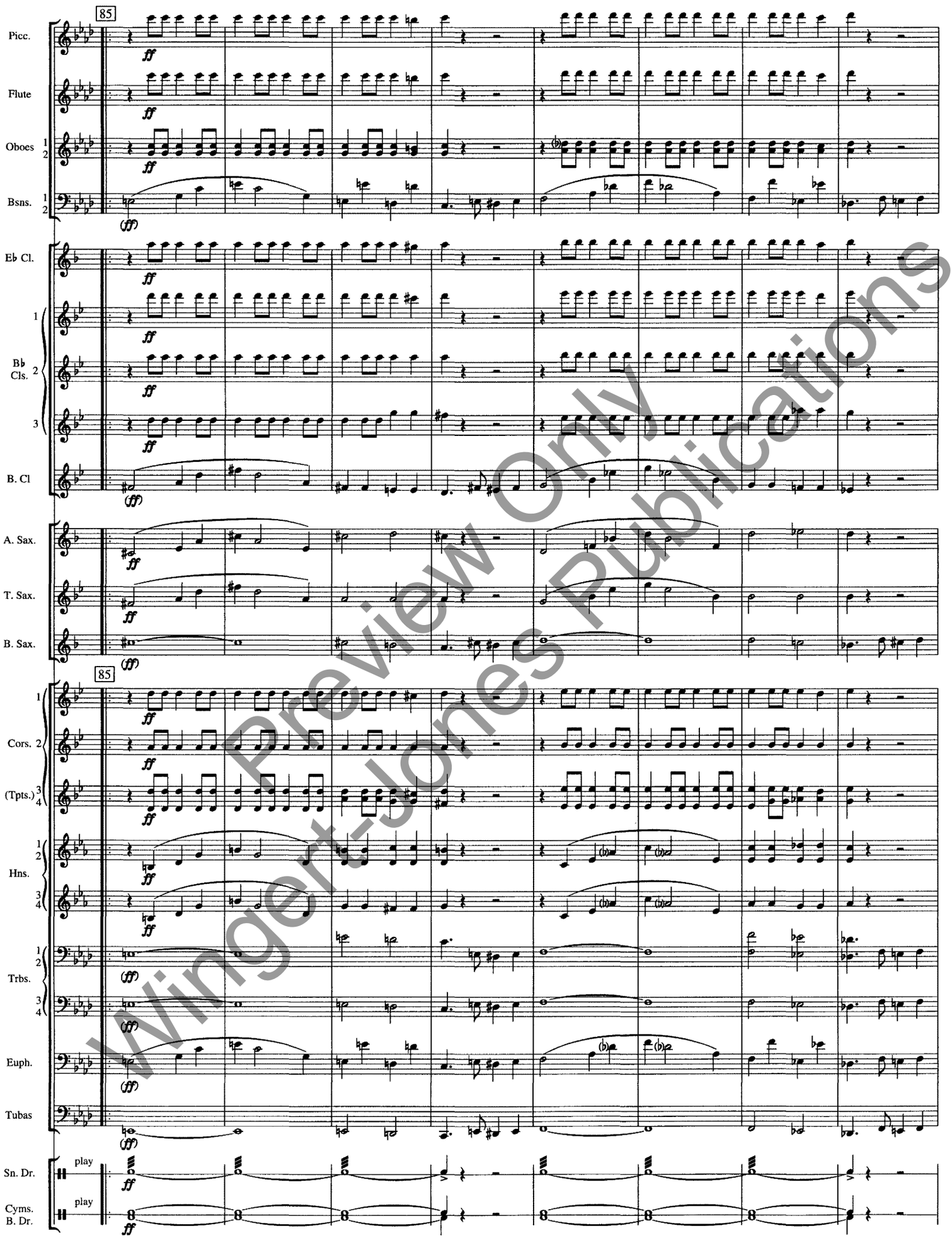


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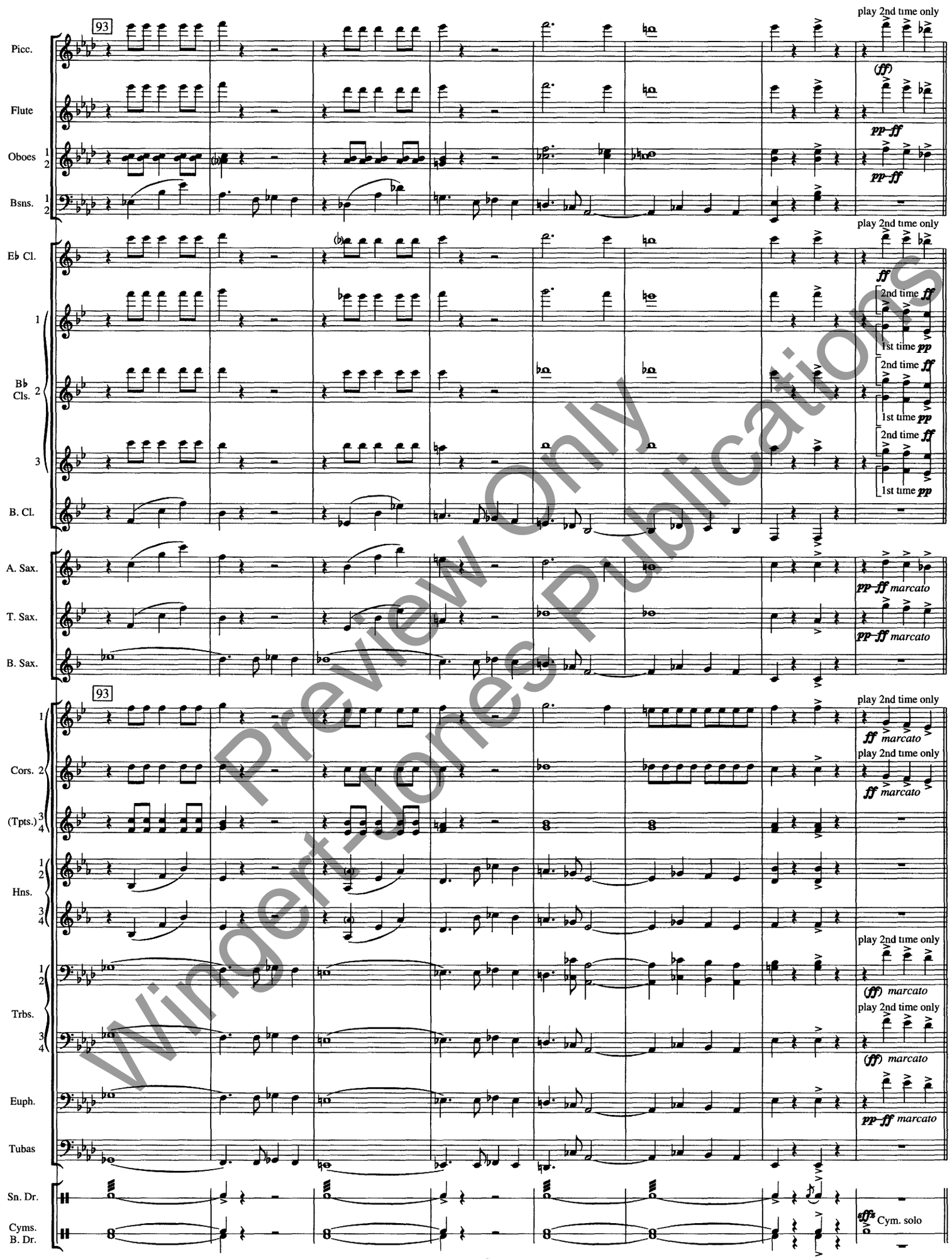


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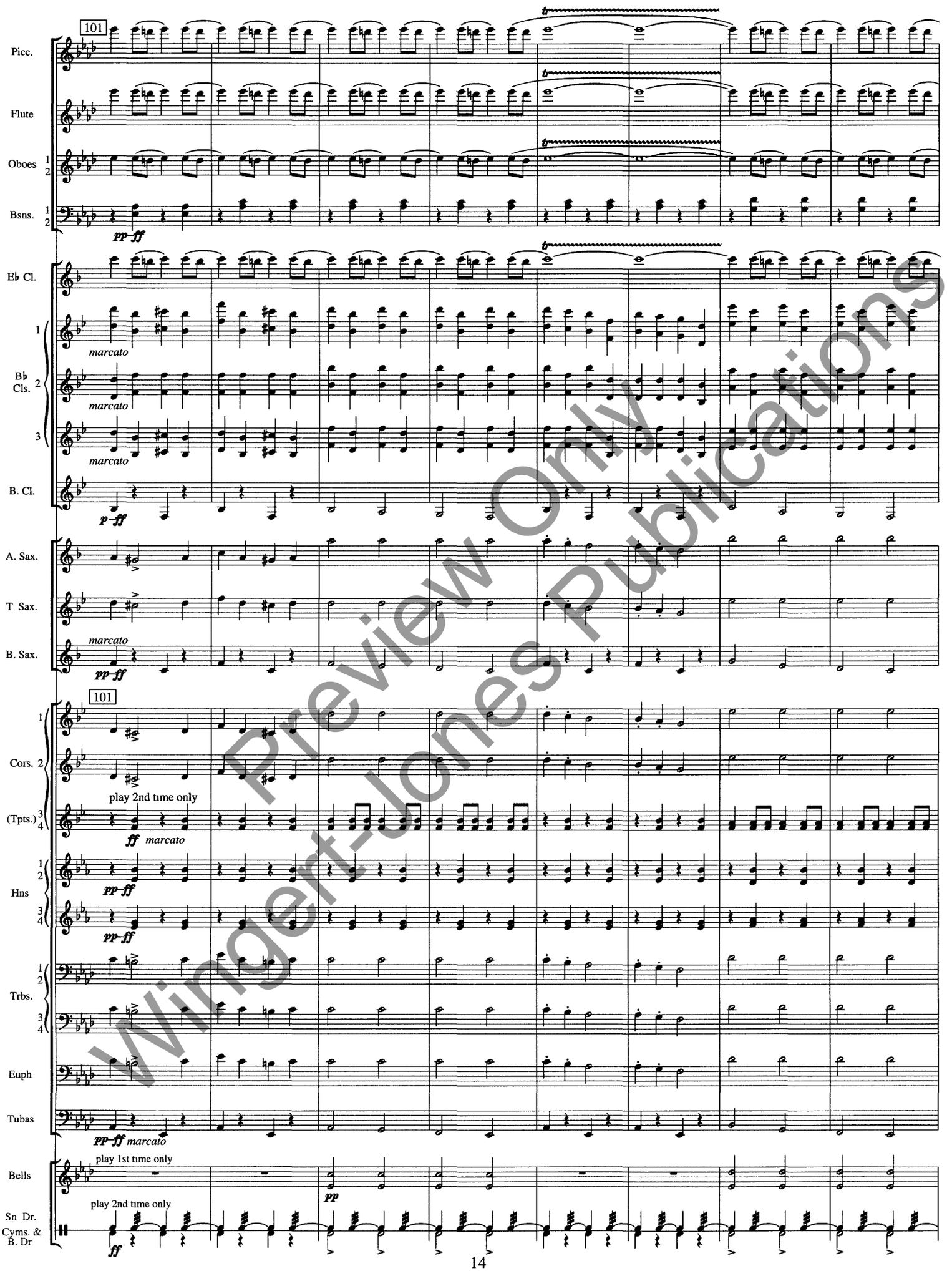


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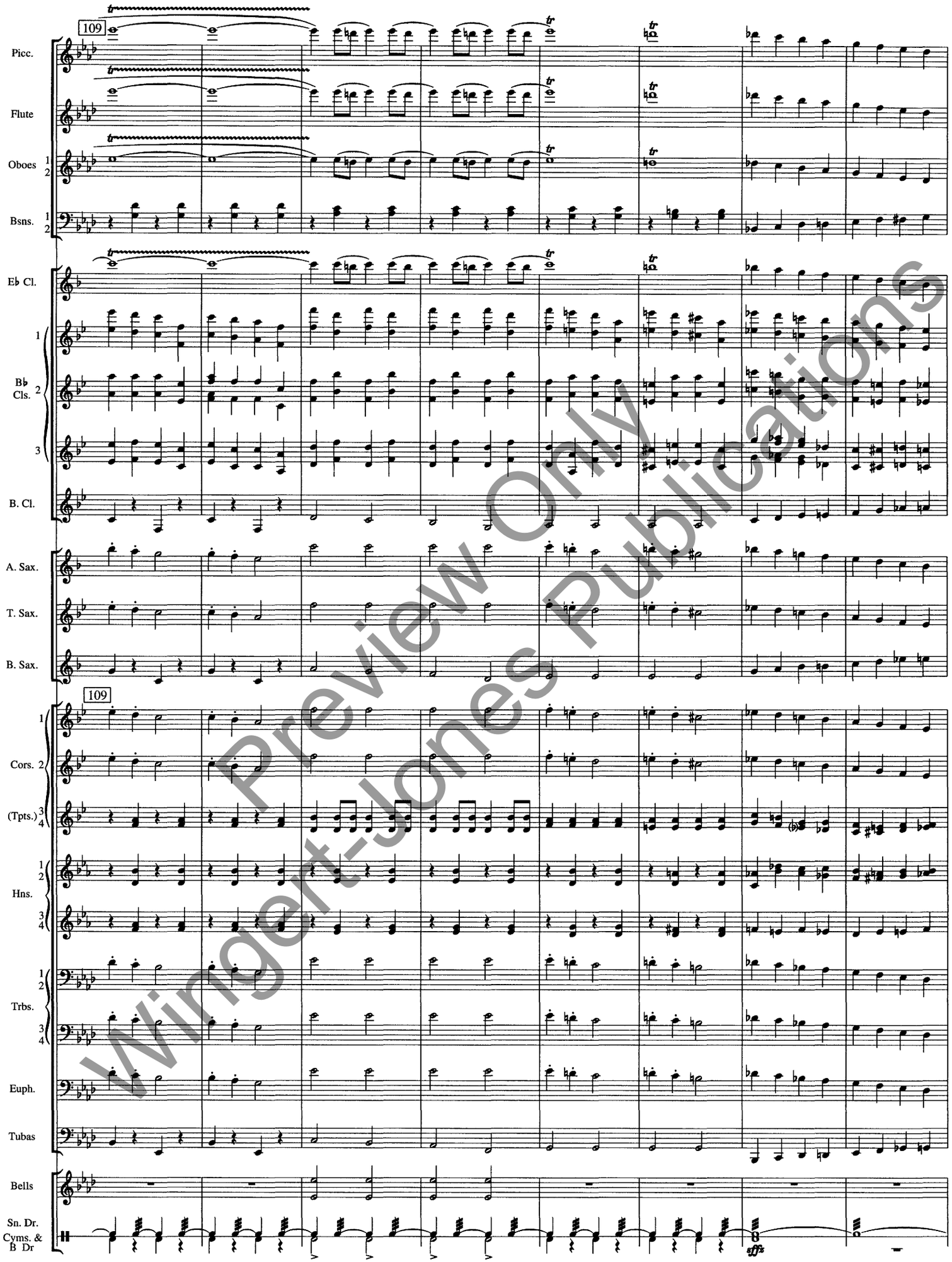


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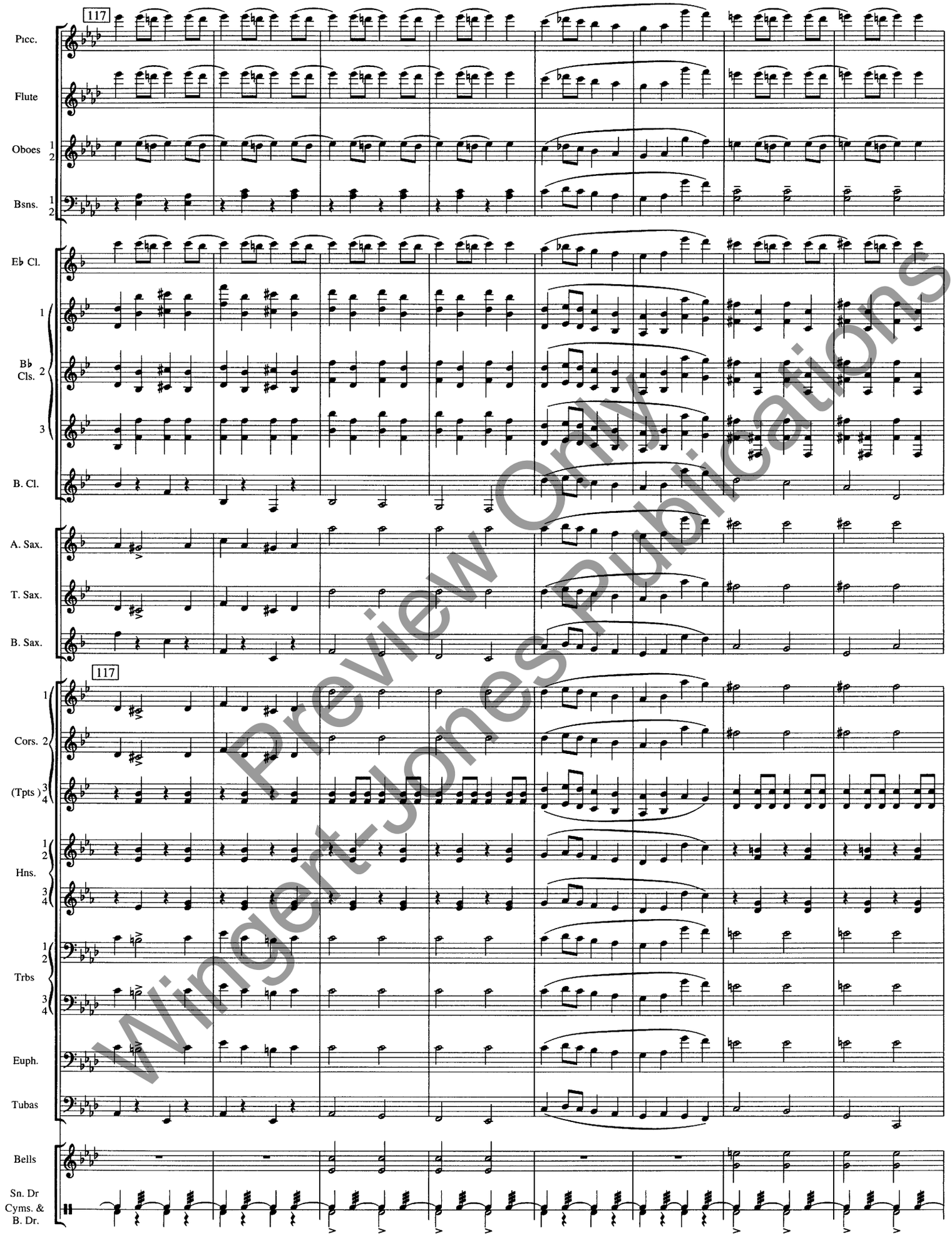


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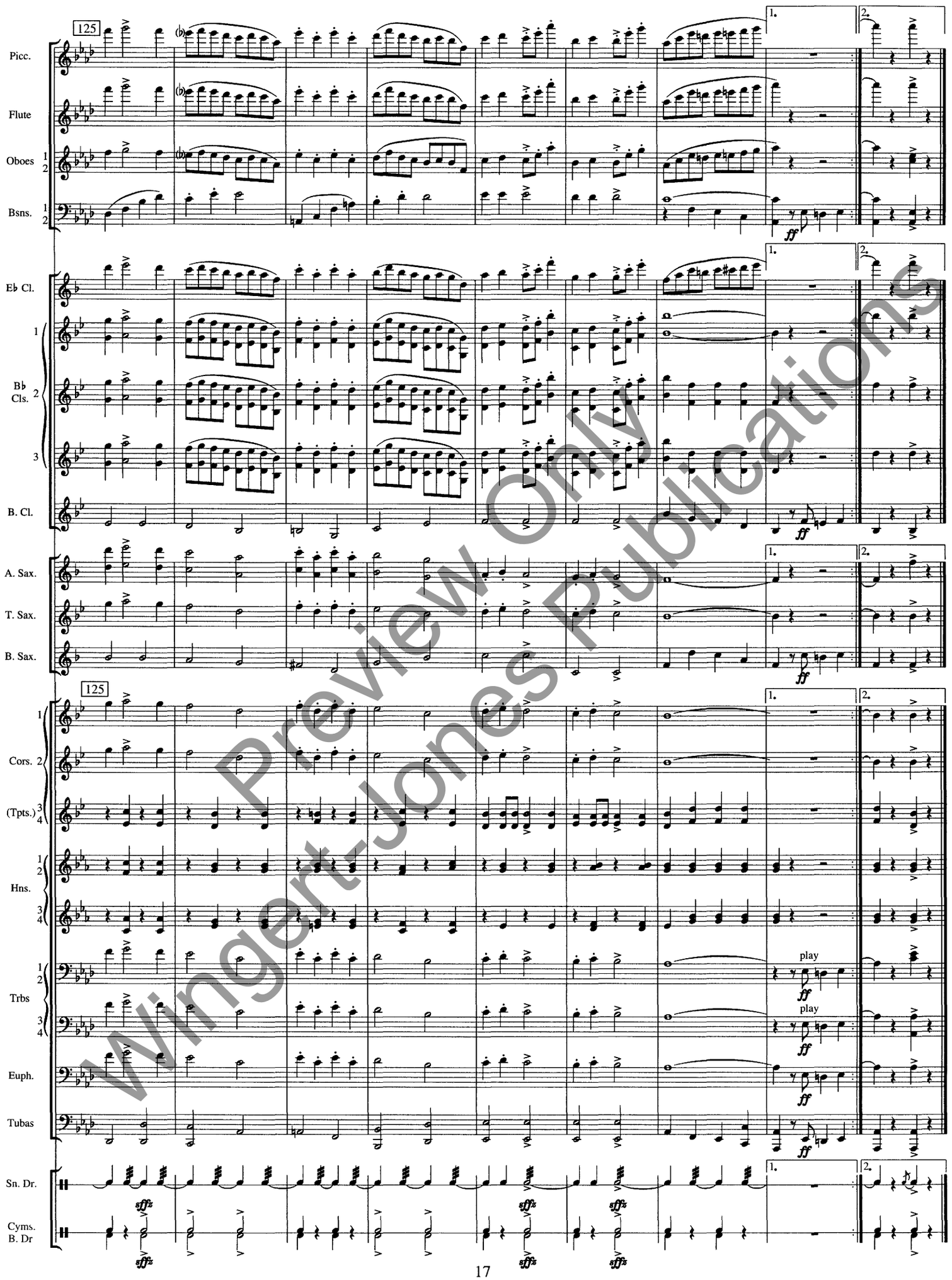


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