Notes :

In the Summer of 1948, the American piano duo Gold and Fizdale were part of an American Summer exodus to Europe. After the long War years, it was finally possible for tourists to visit Europe and the American dollar made their stay more than comfortable, inspite of the remaining rations. Many Americans, including writers, composers, musicians and artists made the journey.

When Gold and Fizdale arrived with letters of introduction from Marcelle de Manziarly and Vittorio Rietti, they telephoned Germaine Tailleferre who invited them for lunch the next day. They were introduced to three of *Les Six* (Auric, Poulenc and Tailleferre) and the lunch ended with Auric and Poulenc improvising their own version of Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein's *The Mother of Us All* with Poulenc performing all of the roles to Auric's improvised score in the style of Thompson. The three French composers were charmed by these two Americans and Tailleferre invited them to spend a month at her home in Grasse, where she had two pianos in her living room. She was composing her ballet *Paris-Magie* and her comic opera *Il était un petit navire* at the time. When she finished a number, she would ask "The boyz" (as Poulenc called them) to read through what she had just written. When they left at the end of July, 1948, Tailleferre gave them two-pianos suites of each of these works as a gift and also the two-piano solo version of her 1934 *Concerto Grosso.* These three works ended up in the Gold and Fizdale collection at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. These editions are based on those manuscripts.

Paris-Magie is set in Paris' Flea Market at the Porte de Clignancourt in the north of the City. The scenario was by Lise Delarme, who was part of the French Surrealist movement, In this series of strange events on the rue Biron, a painter draws a rooster on his canvas who flies away, a young widow dances with the head of her late husband fixed to her shoulder, a young girl tries to pick roses who then sprout winds and fly away.. At the end, everything returns to as it was before, as if nothing important happened. Those interested will find the drawings for the sets and costumes on the site of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France.

PREVIEW

To illustrate this fantasy, Tailleferre's score is a series of sequences in the style an 18th century dance suite, but with much more polytonality and dissonance. The critics at the première at the Opéra Comique in late 1948 compared Tailleferre's style to that of Alexandre Tansman. The two-piano version contains even more elements of polytonality and atonality than the orchestral version. The two versions should be seen as independatnt repreentations of the same ideas, but it is clear that the two-piano version can be seen as mrre closely connected to Tailleferre's original inspiration.

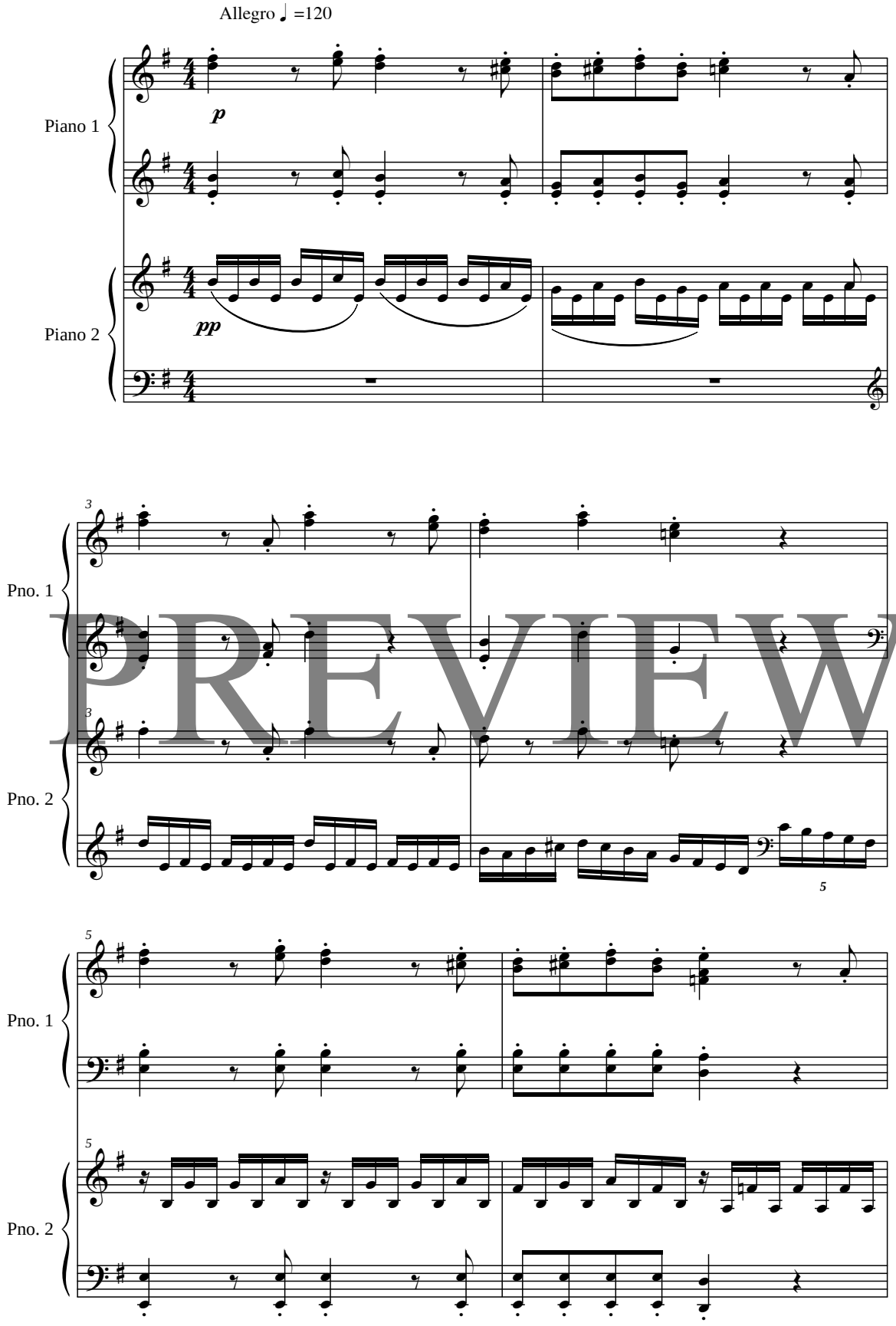
Paul Wehage
Lagny-sur-Marne
October, 2021

à Arthur Gold et Robert Fizdale

Paris-Magie

ballet pour deux pianos

Germaine Tailleferre



PREVIEW

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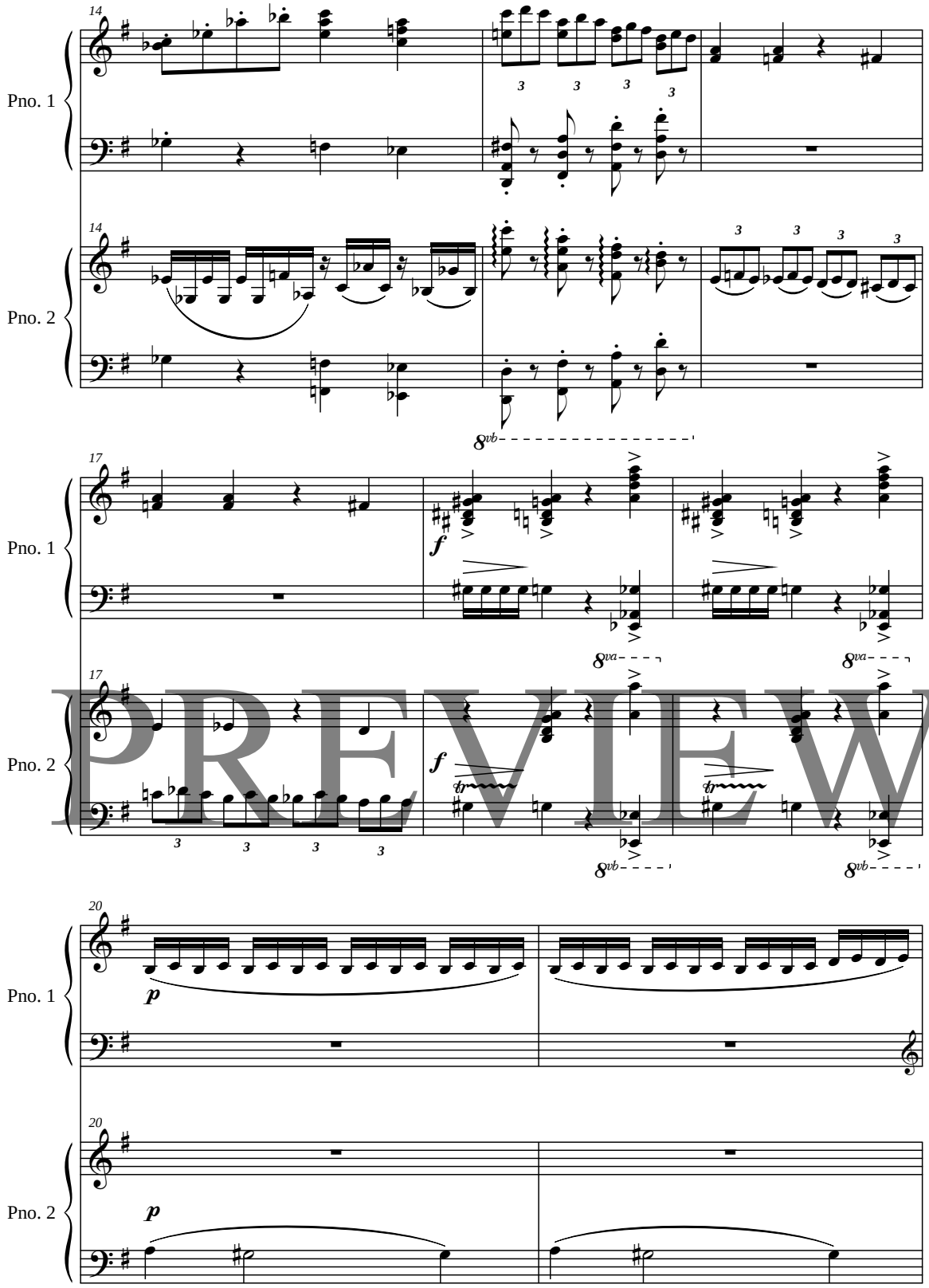
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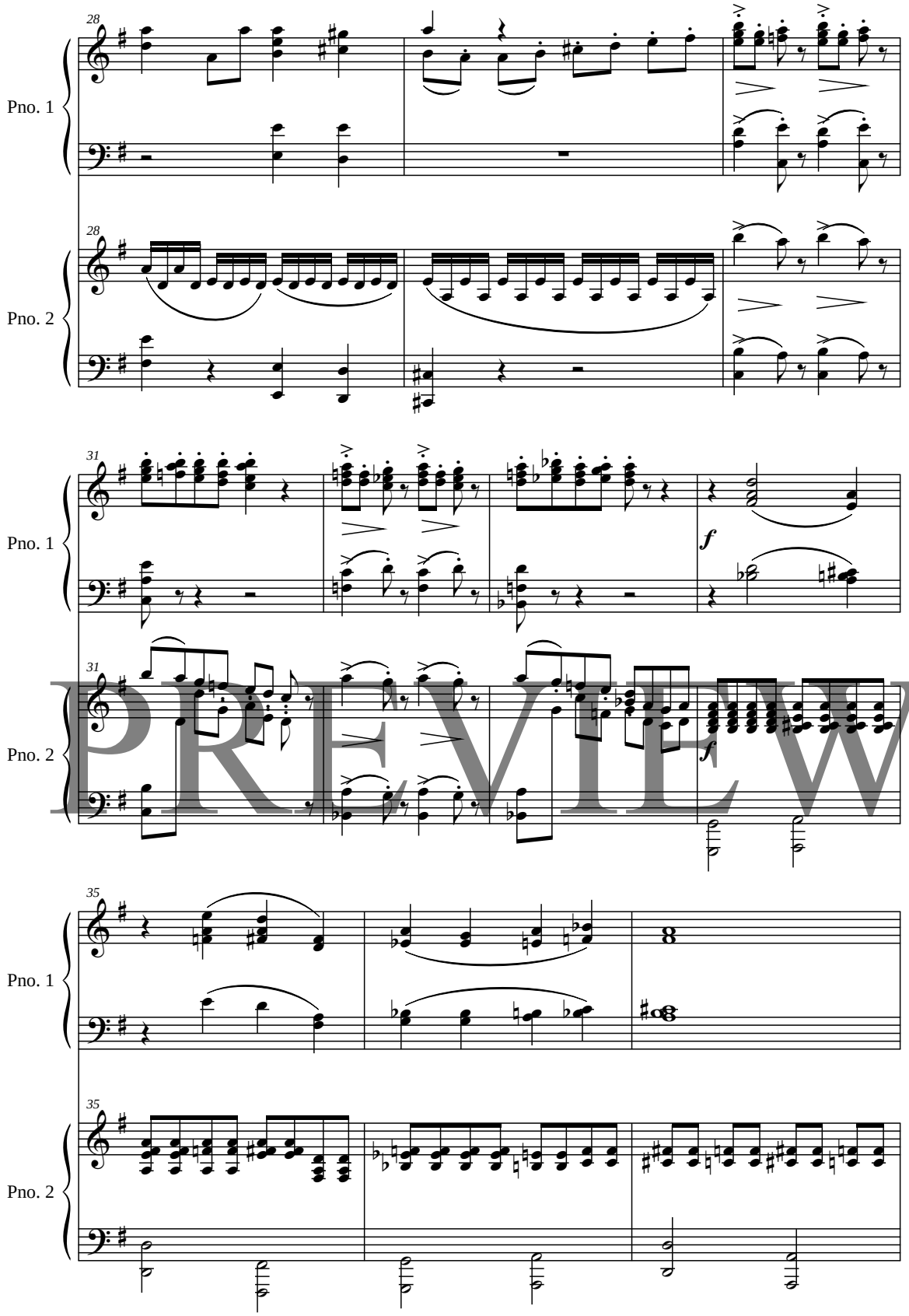

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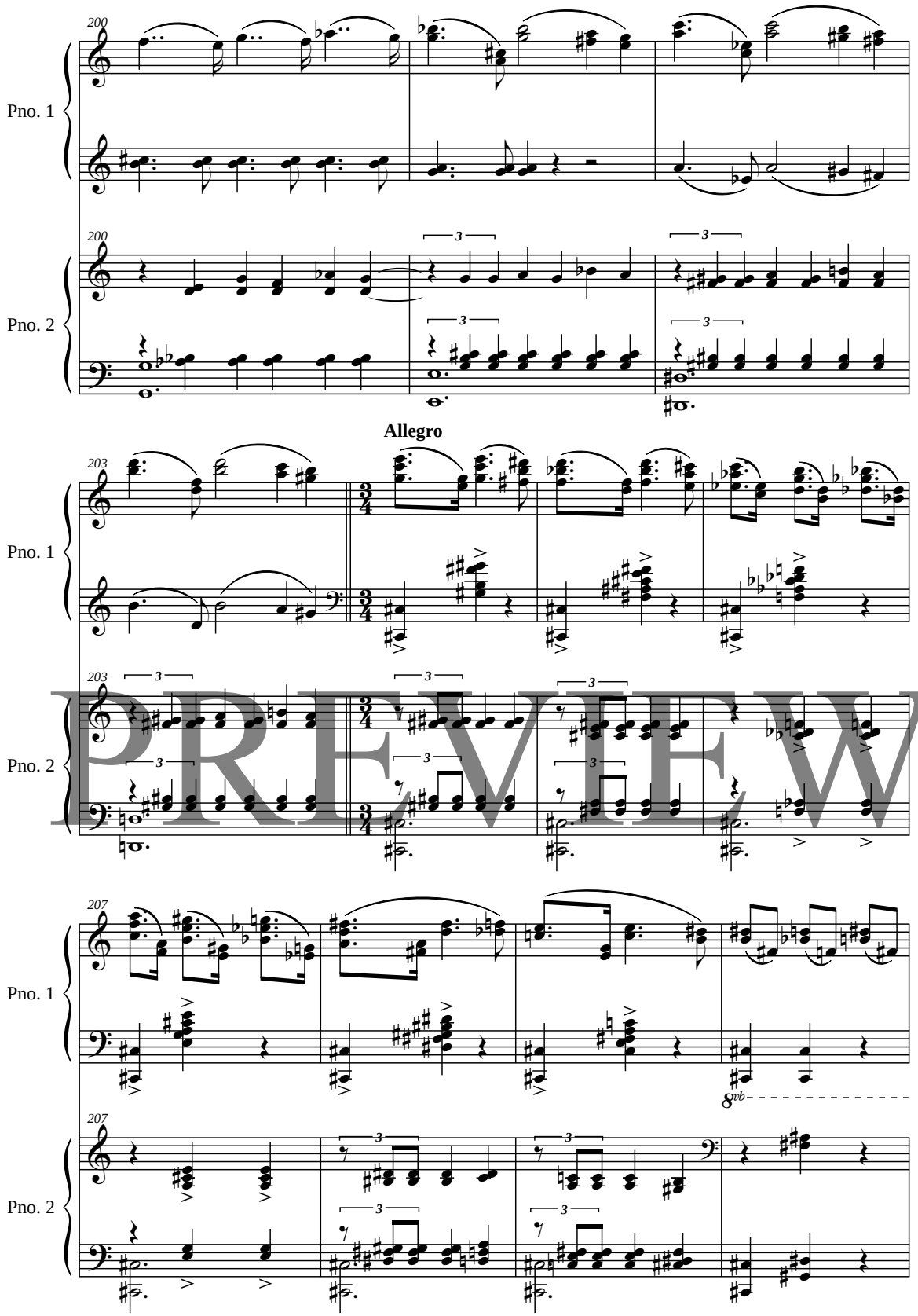
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PREVIEW