# Academic Festival Overture, Op. 80

By Johannes Brahms
*Arranged by Louis Bergonzi*

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## INSTRUMENTATION

- 1 Conductor
- 1 1st Flute
- 1 2nd Flute
- 1 1st Oboe
- 1 2nd Oboe
- 1 1st B♭ Clarinet
- 1 2nd B♭ Clarinet
- 1 B♭ Bass Clarinet
- 1 1st Bassoon
- 1 2nd Bassoon
- 2 1st F Horn
- 2 2nd F Horn
- 1 1st B♭ Trumpet
- 1 2nd B♭ Trumpet
- 1 1st Trombone
- 1 2nd Trombone
- 1 Tuba
- 1 Timpani (A-C-D-E)
- 3 Percussion (Crash Cymbals, Bass Drum, Triangle)
- 8 1st Violin
- 8 2nd Violin
- 5 Viola
- 5 Cello
- 5 String Bass

One of Brahms' most performed works, this "very boisterous potpourri of student songs" (J. Brahms) is now playable by strings or strings with any combination of wind/percussion instruments (up to full symphonic instrumentation). Students and audiences will enjoy its tunefulness, Brahms' compositional craft, and the grand ending. If you have just a string orchestra, try to add at least the percussion parts. After all, this piece uses the largest section for which Brahms ever wrote!

Special notation is included to work on consistency of bow lifts, bow placement, and phrasing. The arrangement was written for and rigorously field-tested with the 2015 Illinois Summer Youth Music Program.

## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

All Belwin string parts have been carefully bowed and fingered appropriately by level. The Yellow Very Beginning series includes many bowings as well as reminder fingerings for first-time readers. The Red Beginning series includes frequent bowings to assist younger players. Fingerings for altered pitches are often marked. The Green Intermediate series includes appropriately placed bowings for middle-level students. Fingerings and positions are marked for notes beyond first position. The Blue Concert series includes bowings appropriate for the experienced high school player. Fingerings and position markings are indicated for difficult passages.

Bob Phillips
Belwin/Pop String Editor

**Please note**: Our band and orchestra music is now being collated by an automatic high-speed system. The enclosed parts are now sorted by page count, rather than score order.

Belwin ORCHESTRA
a division of Alfred

## PROGRAM NOTES

In 1880, the University of Breslau offered Brahms an honorary doctorate, hoping that he would write a symphony with which their university would be forever associated. What they perhaps did not know is that Brahms did not hold academic institutions or their music faculties in very high regard. For the occasion, Brahms—who never attended college—wrote what he described as "a very boisterous potpourri [medley] of student songs," most of which were familiar to students, who sang them at evening parties and gatherings in biergärten.

The piece is held together over its original 10-minute time by a consistently held underlying pulse, although some of the songs feel faster or slower than others. The overture ends with a grand rendition of the well-known hymn, "Gaudeamus igitur" ("Therefore, let us be merry"), via mighty brass and percussion, and frenetic string scales among the bursting orchestral forces—the largest employed by Brahms—and the only piece in which he writes for bass drum and cymbals.

Less a piece for a great academic festival, Brahms offered Breslau a piece to provide a sense of festivity to what he probably felt would be a tedious academic assembly, albeit one held in his honor. Imagine the faces of the faculty when the students began to sing along!

*Note: For a version of these program notes that references Brahms' interest in the student uprisings for social reform of the early 19th century and their connection to this piece, as well as a more detailed description of the composition's structure go to louisbergonzi.com.*

## NOTES TO THE CONDUCTOR

For schools with string orchestras, this arrangement's flexible instrumentation is an opportunity to incorporate any number or combination of wind/percussion students to begin expanding your program to include occasionally symphonic orchestra.

1. Let students get excited about the ending of the piece. Of course, you'll help them discover that it is not "that fast" and the string parts are constructed of accessible patterns of fingerings and string crossings.
2. Hold the underlying pulse constant, as this is what Brahms wrote to hold the original 10-minute piece together.
3. There are free supplemental resources at louisbergonzi.com. This includes PDFs of the rollickingly fun hunting call—mm. 108–155, given here to violin 1—written out for advanced viola and horn, as in the original.
4. Conducting patterns follow the meter signatures, except you should consider:
   a. Giving a small "+" at the end of m. 41 to show breves of the $\frac{4}{4}$ that begins in m. 42.
   b. The melody in mm. 60–85 could easily be conducted *alla breve* ( $\frac{2}{2}$ ) to match the long, glorious melody. Again, indicate a slight subdivision (beat 2, m. 85) to set the $\frac{2}{4}$ meter of m. 86.
   c. The last song, "Gaudeamus igitur," should be shown using a 3 pattern.
5. Notes for Timpani and Percussion Part Assignments:
   a. If necessary, instead of re-tuning the timpani, omit the A and E during mm. 1–86. The timpani part is less important there.
   b. Percussion staffing: 1 player—timpani only; 2 players—timpani & triangle/cymbal; 3 players—omit bass drum.
6. Notes for Strings:
   a. In addition to bow direction, the editing is such so that students will play at the correct location on the bow. This is accomplished by careful use of hooked bowings.
   b. A raised comma (') is used to indicate a breath in the phasing, not to show a lift reset of the bow, which is marked with the symbol (φ) (e.g., mm. 46–50). See mm. 18–28 for an example where a musical phrase is visually absent.
   c. If there are no double bassists, the double bass part should be played by a sub group of cellists. A PDF of the bass part with cello fingerings may be found at louisbergonzi.com.

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CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 4:30

By Johannes Brahms
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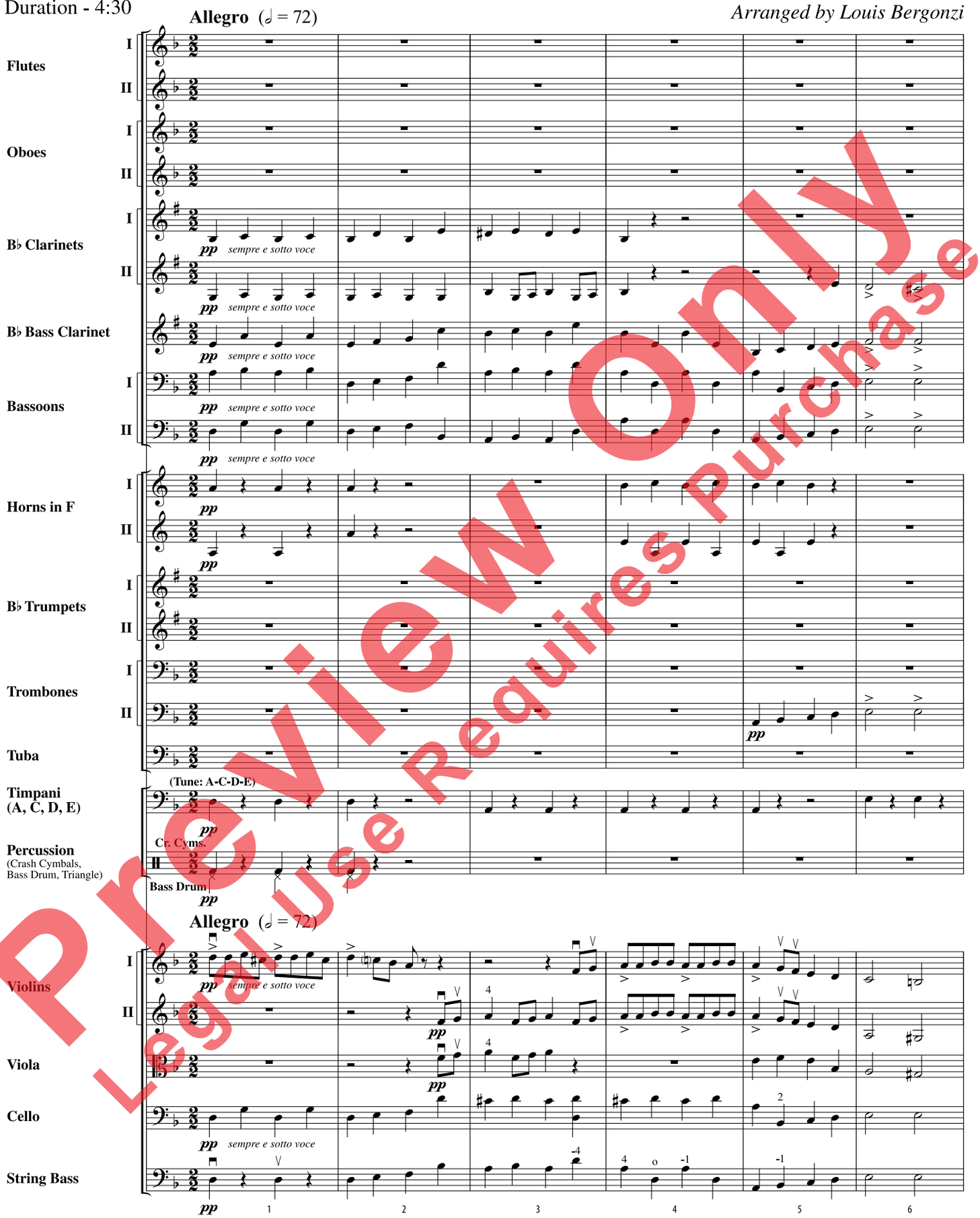


**Symbol:** When you need to move your bow to be in the correct spot for what is coming next you will see this symbol (φ). It means lift your bow to a new spot. Usually you would move back to where you were playing the last note or set of notes you bowed.

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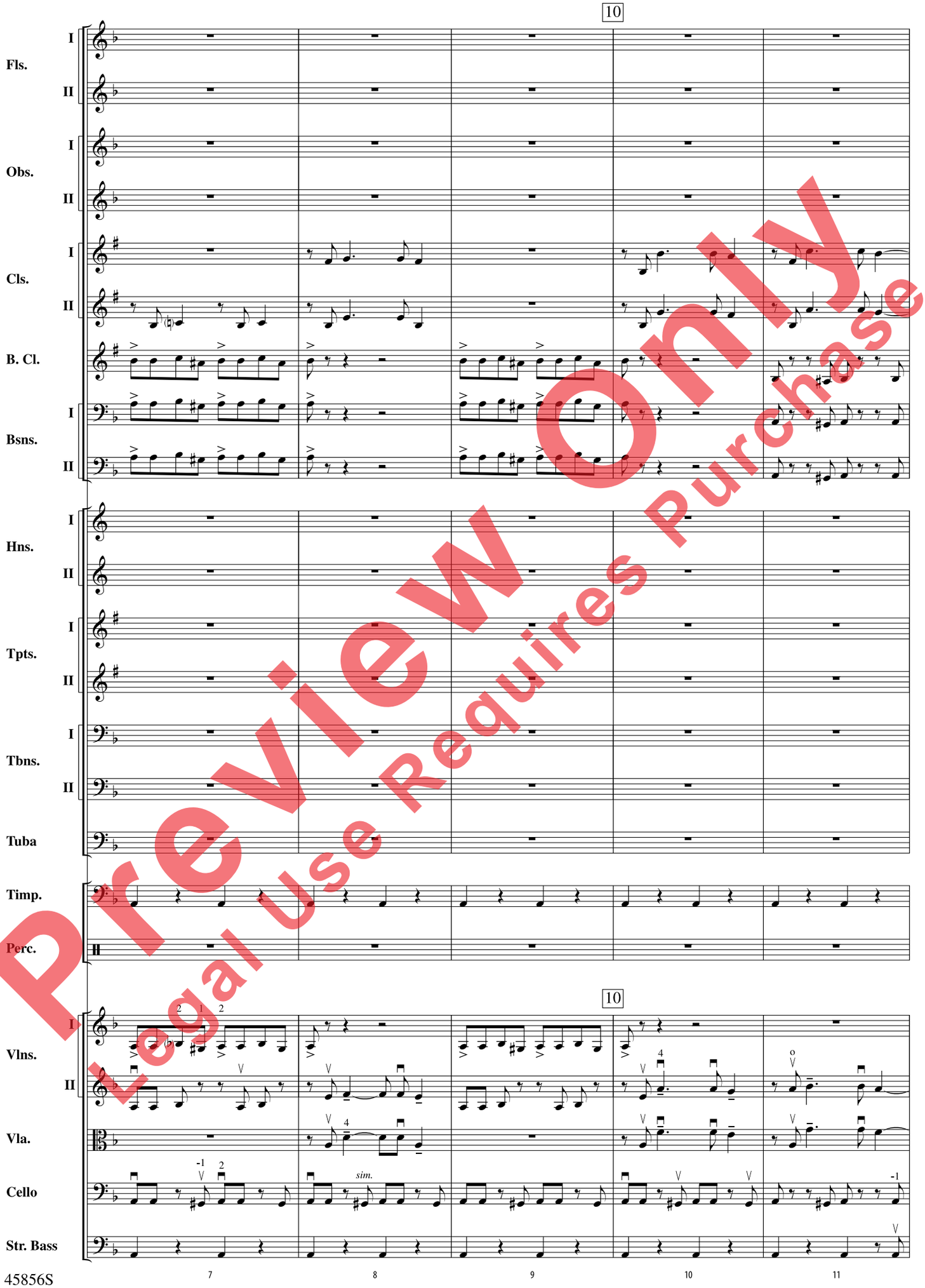


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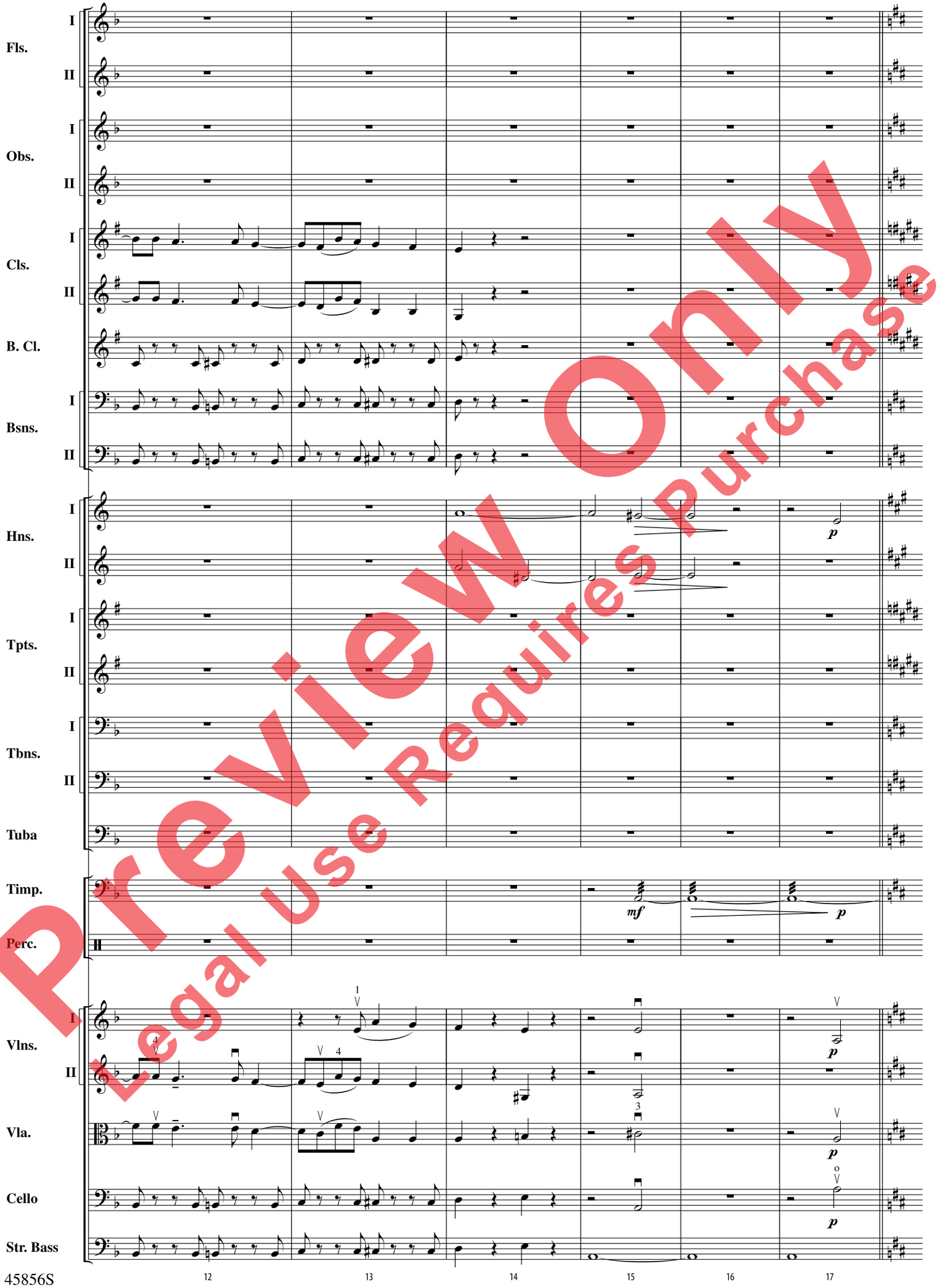


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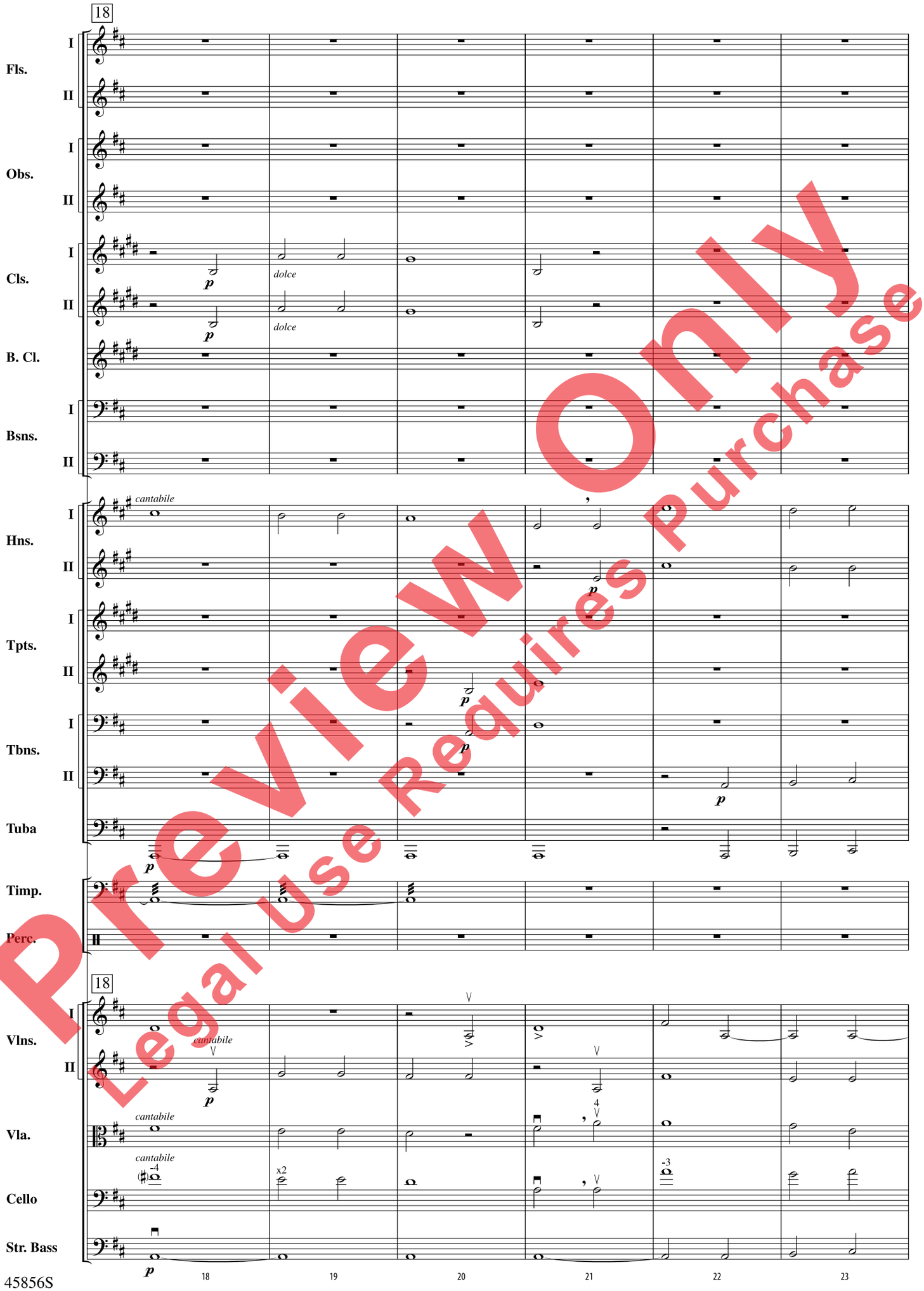


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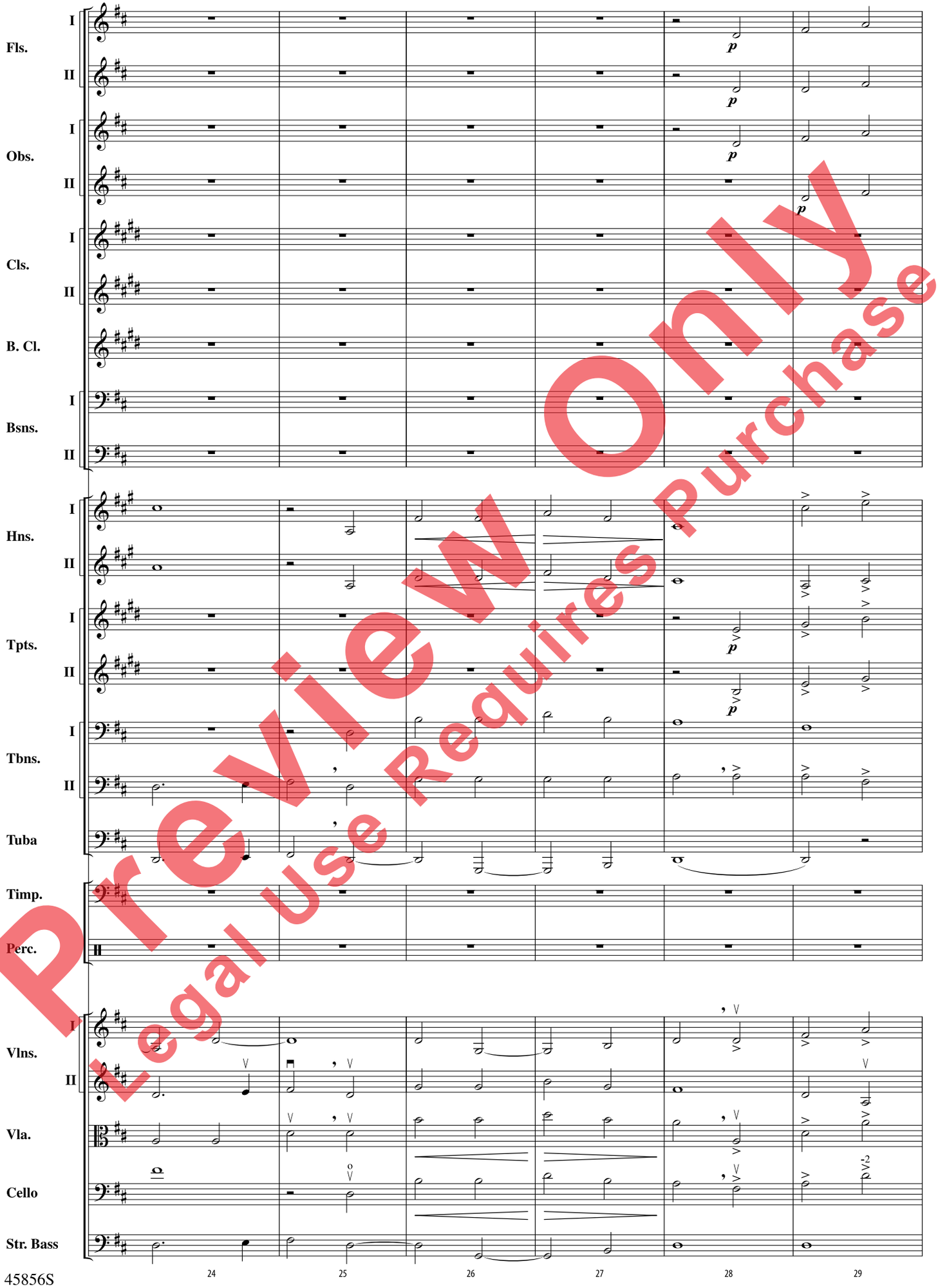


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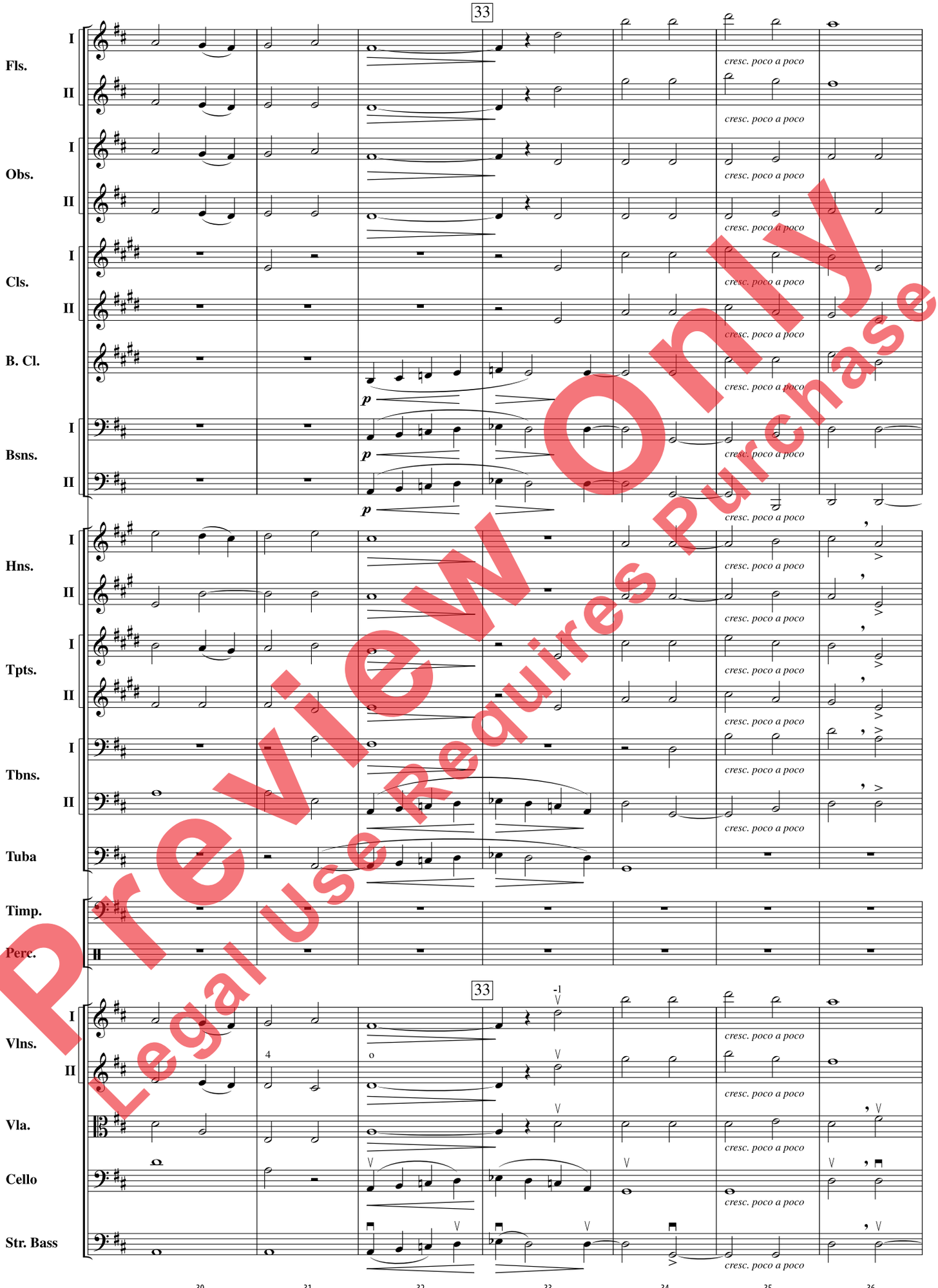


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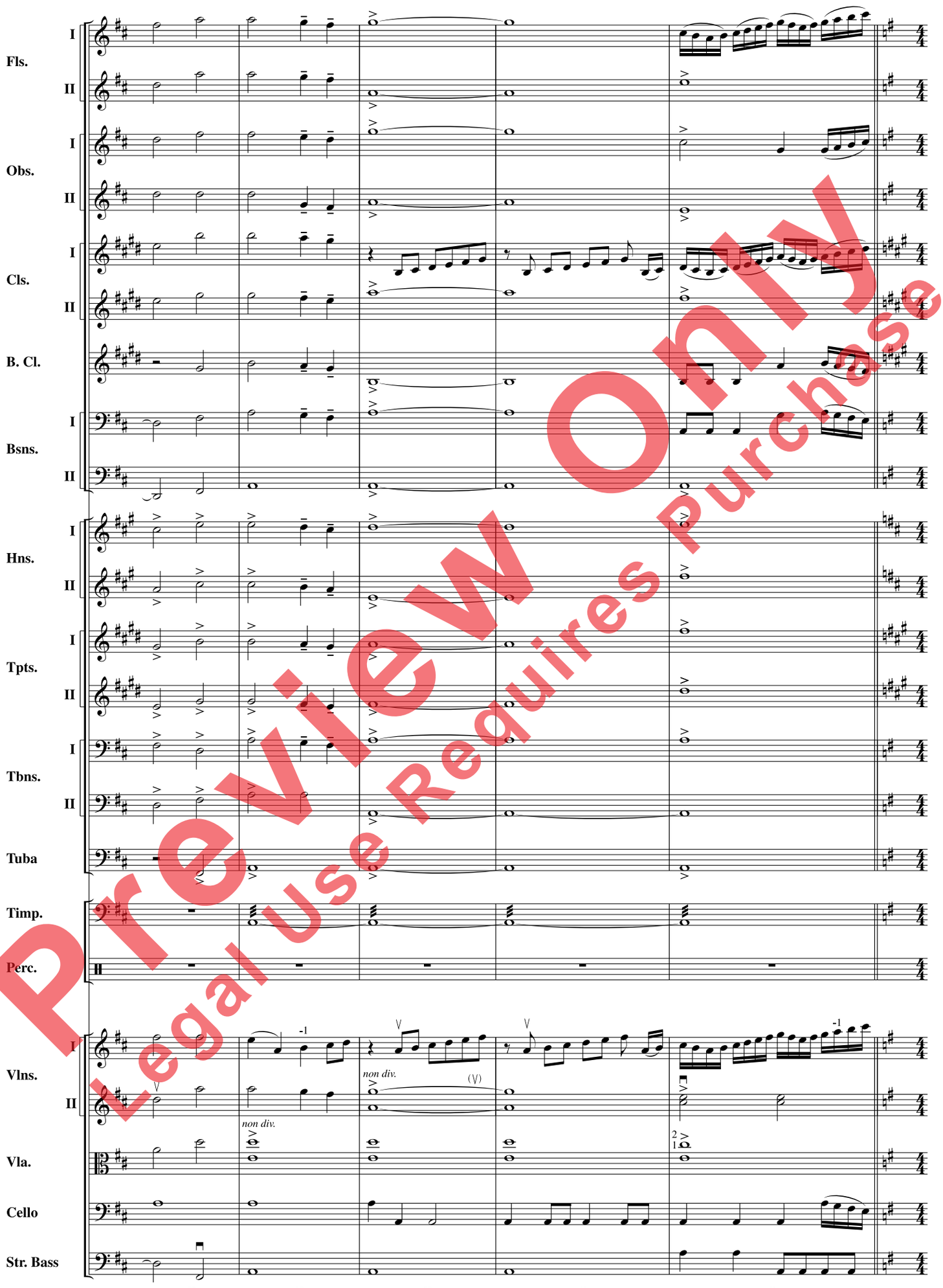


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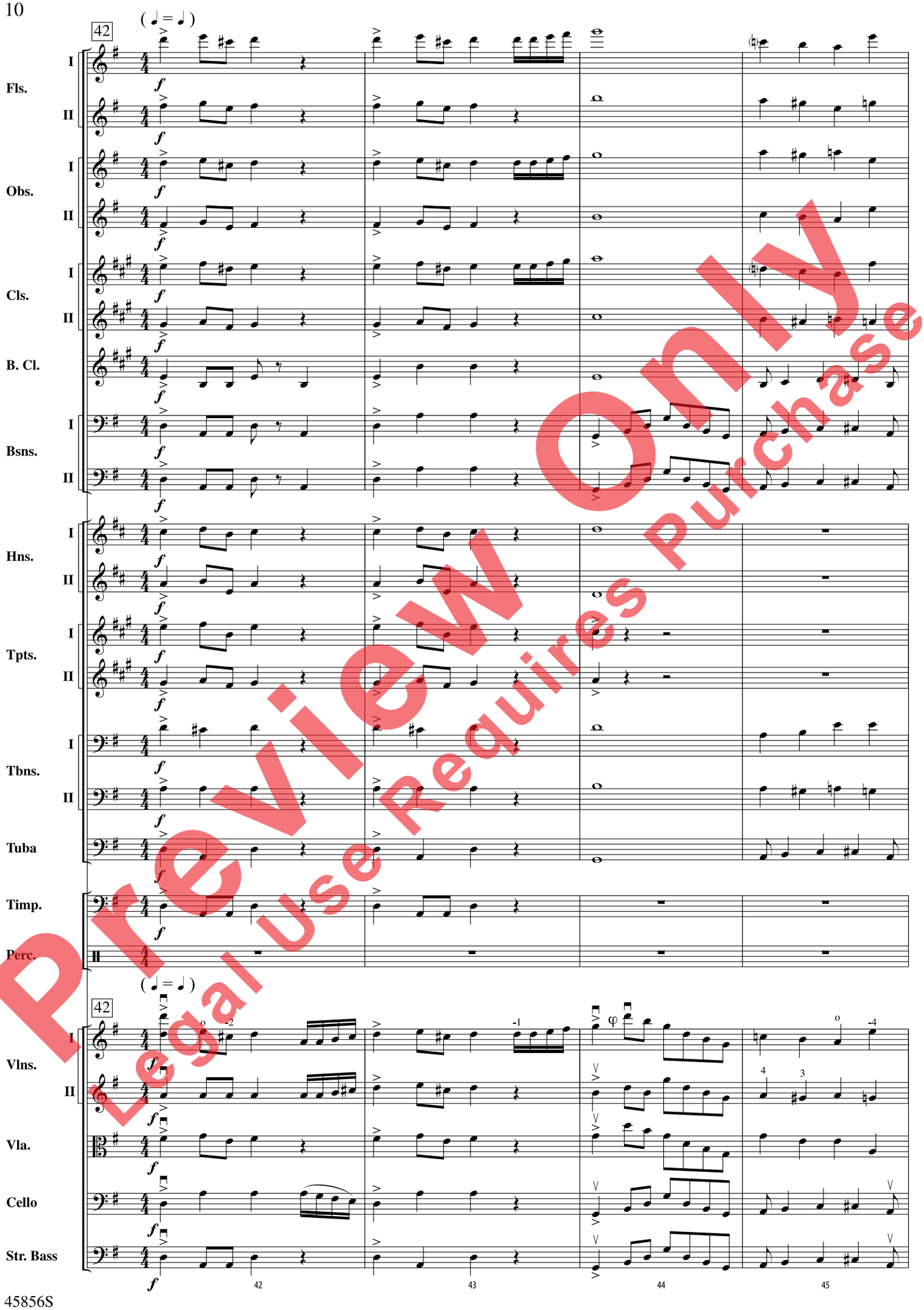


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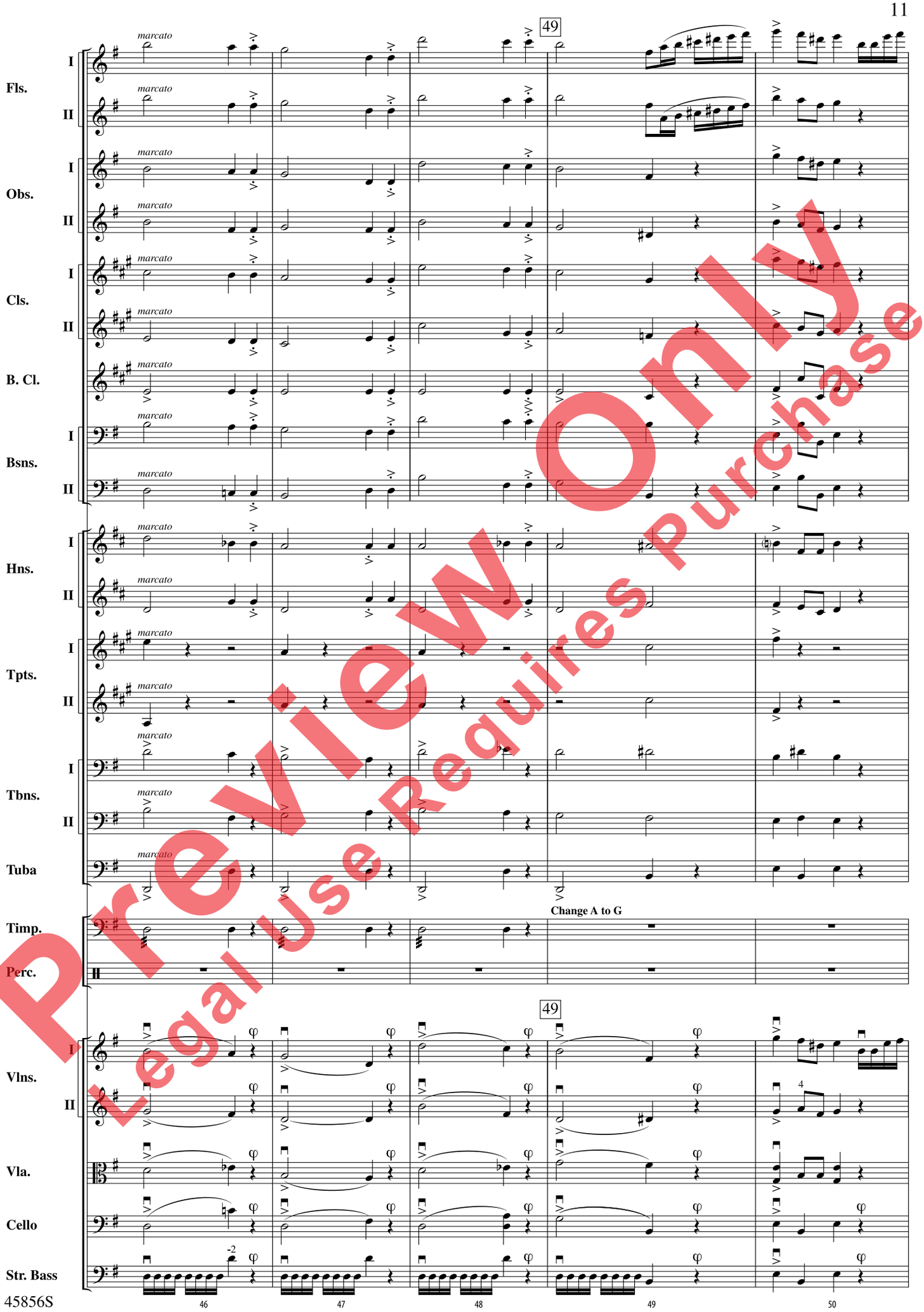


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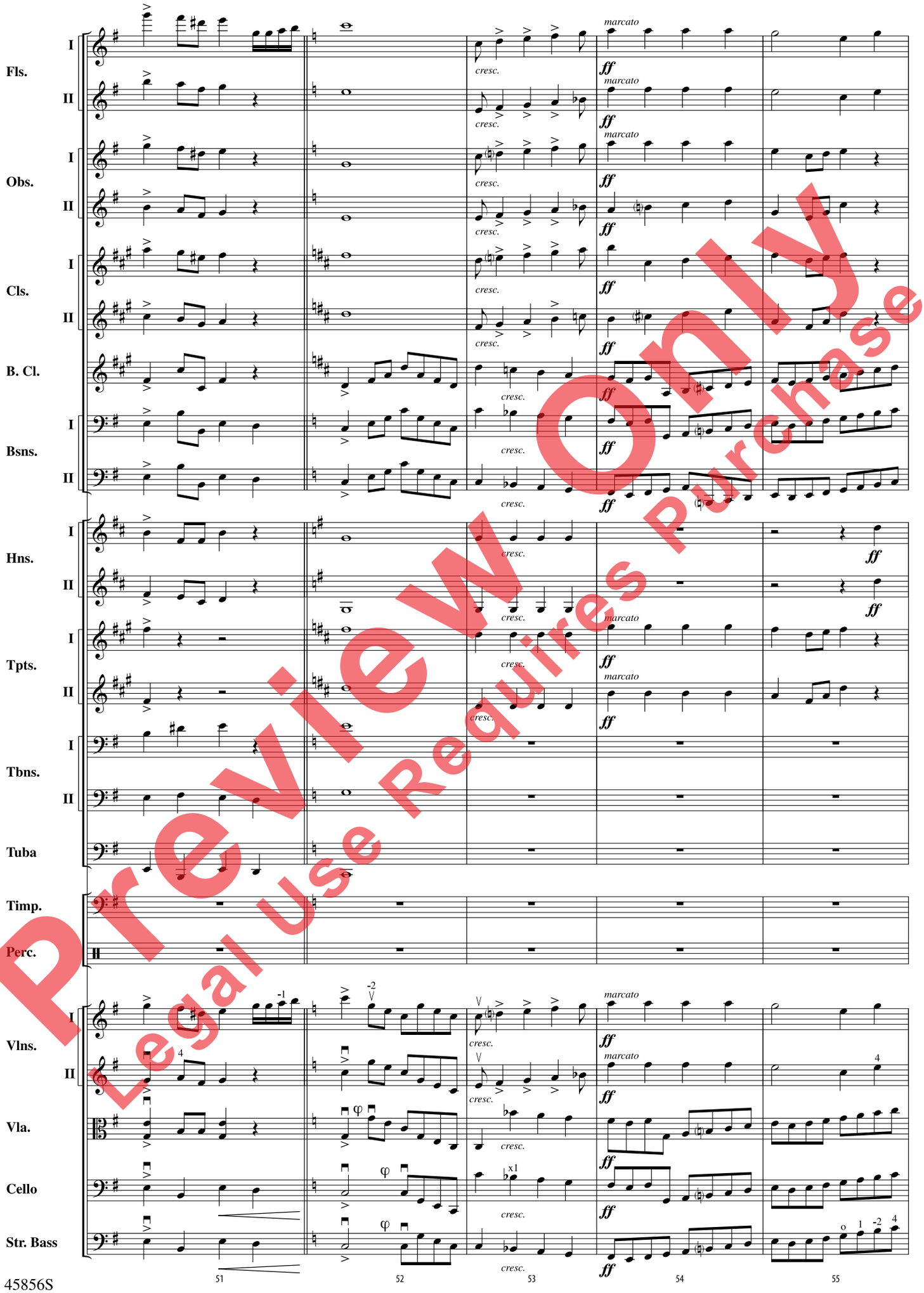


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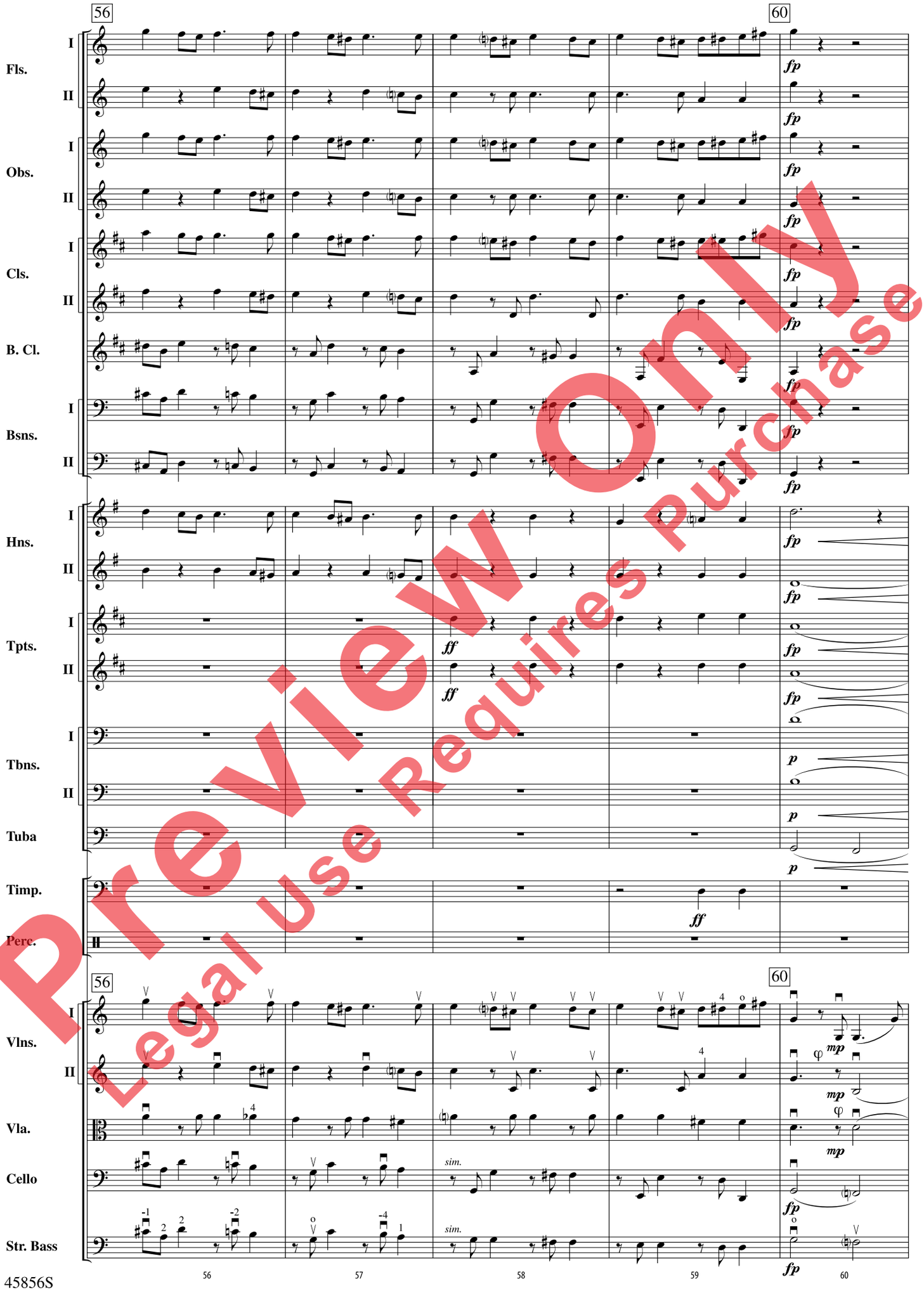


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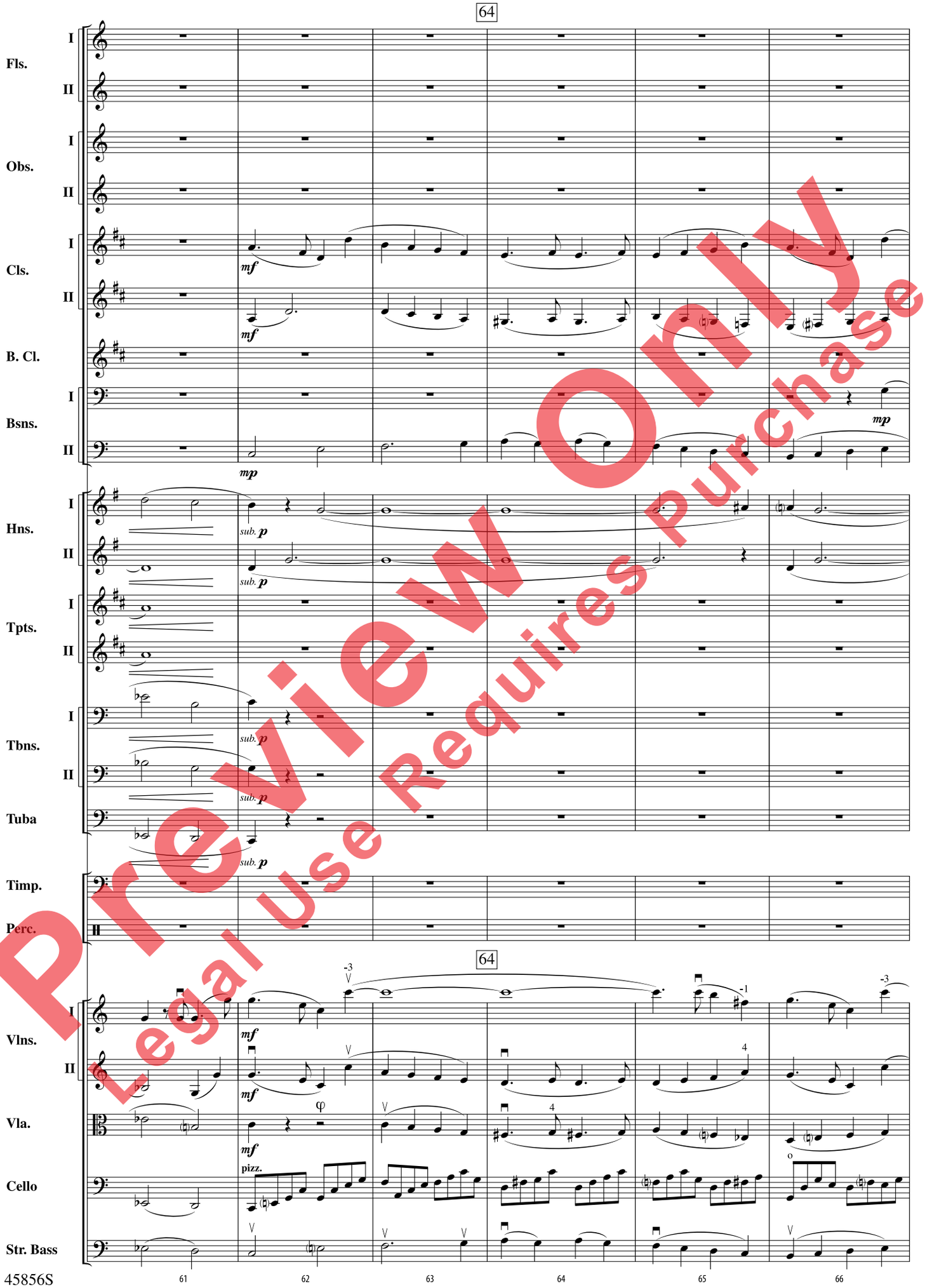


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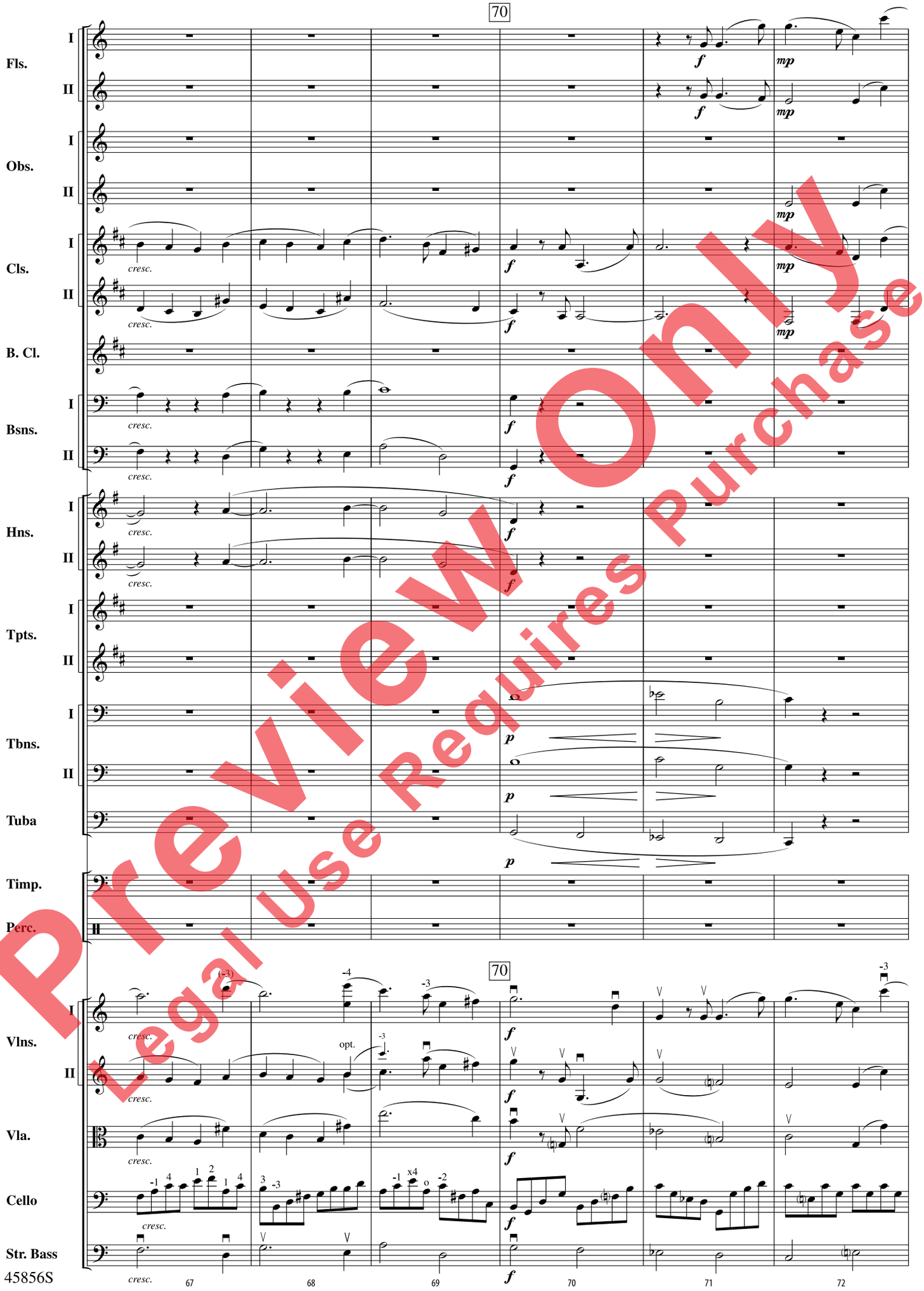


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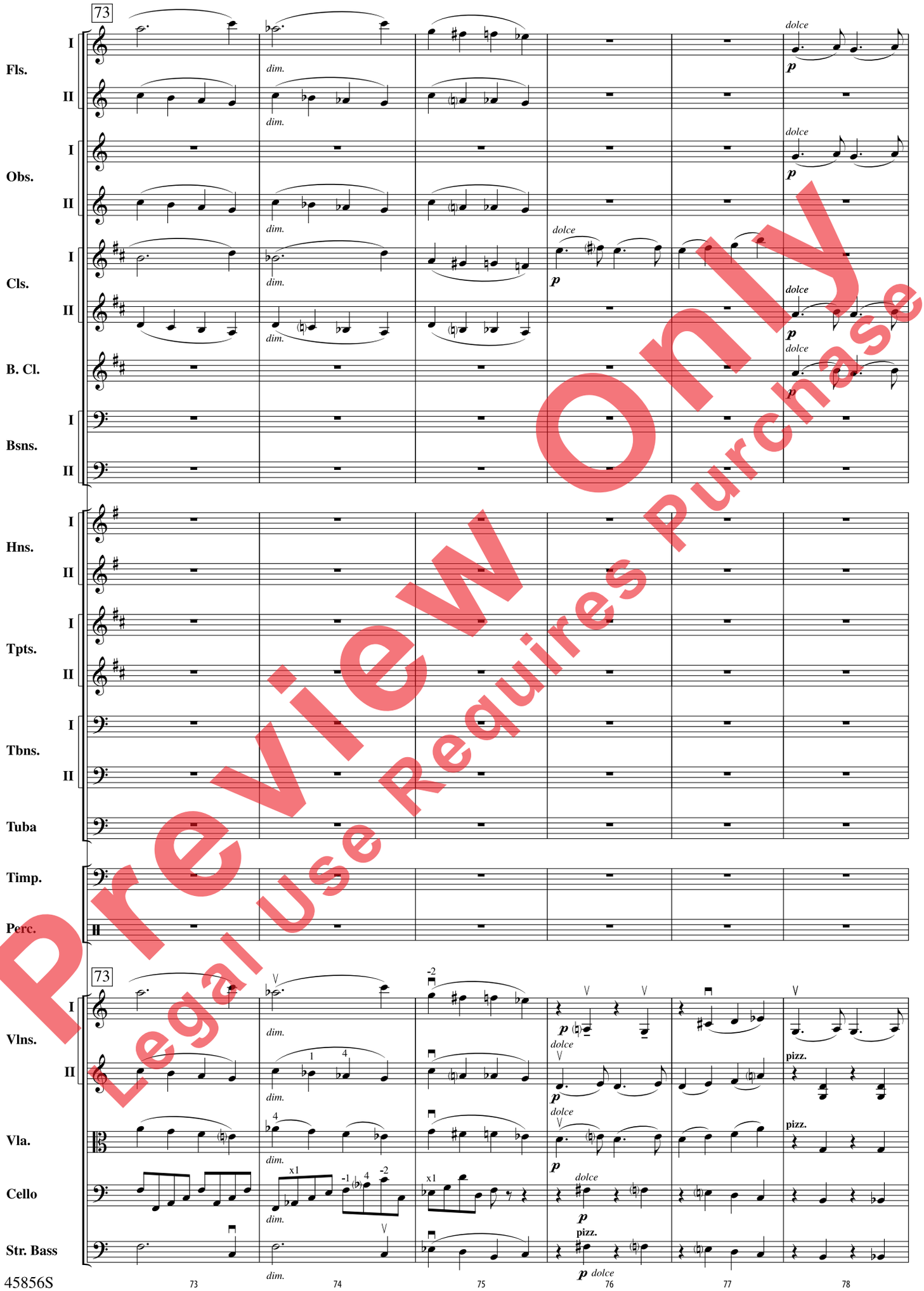


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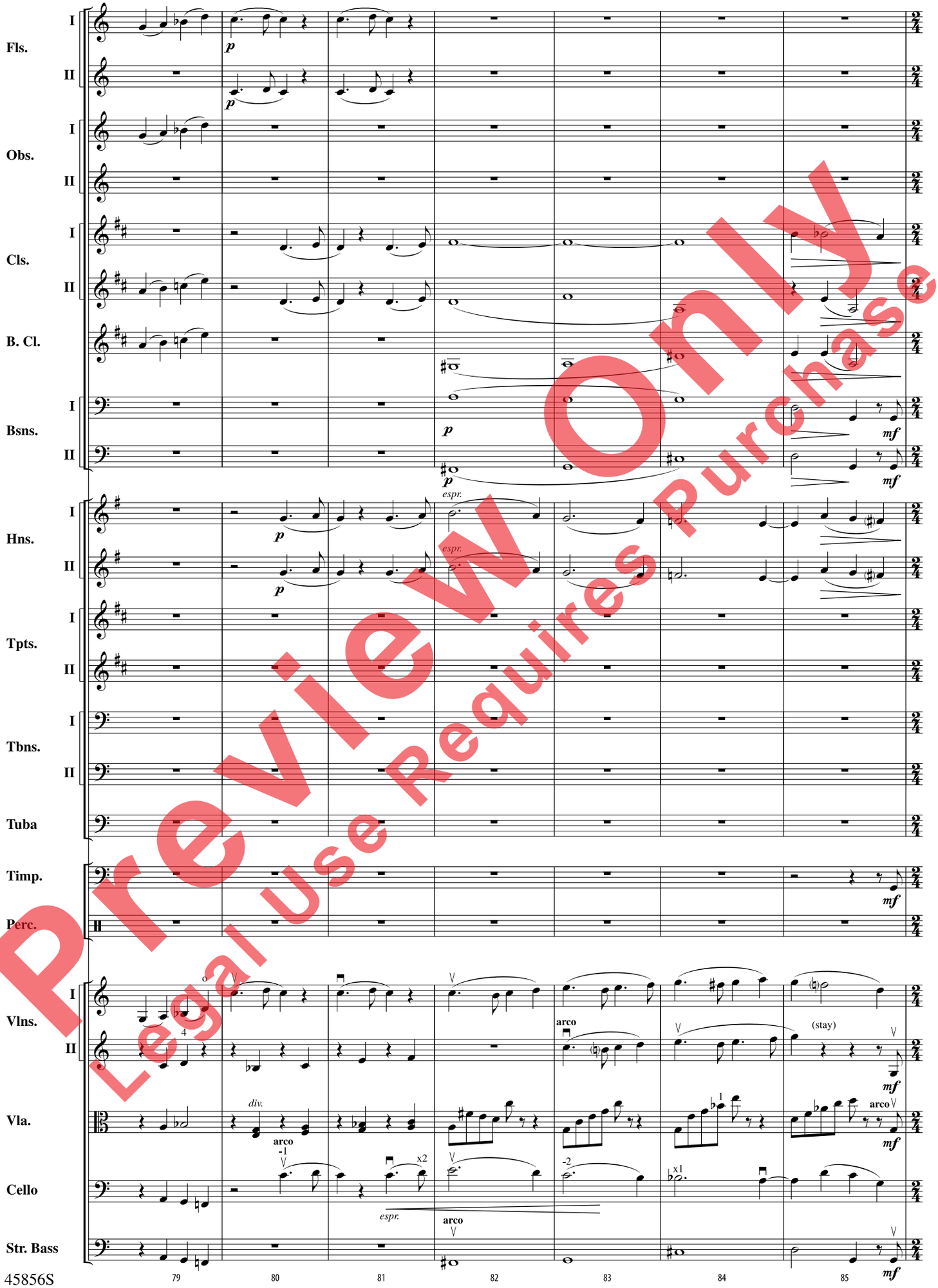


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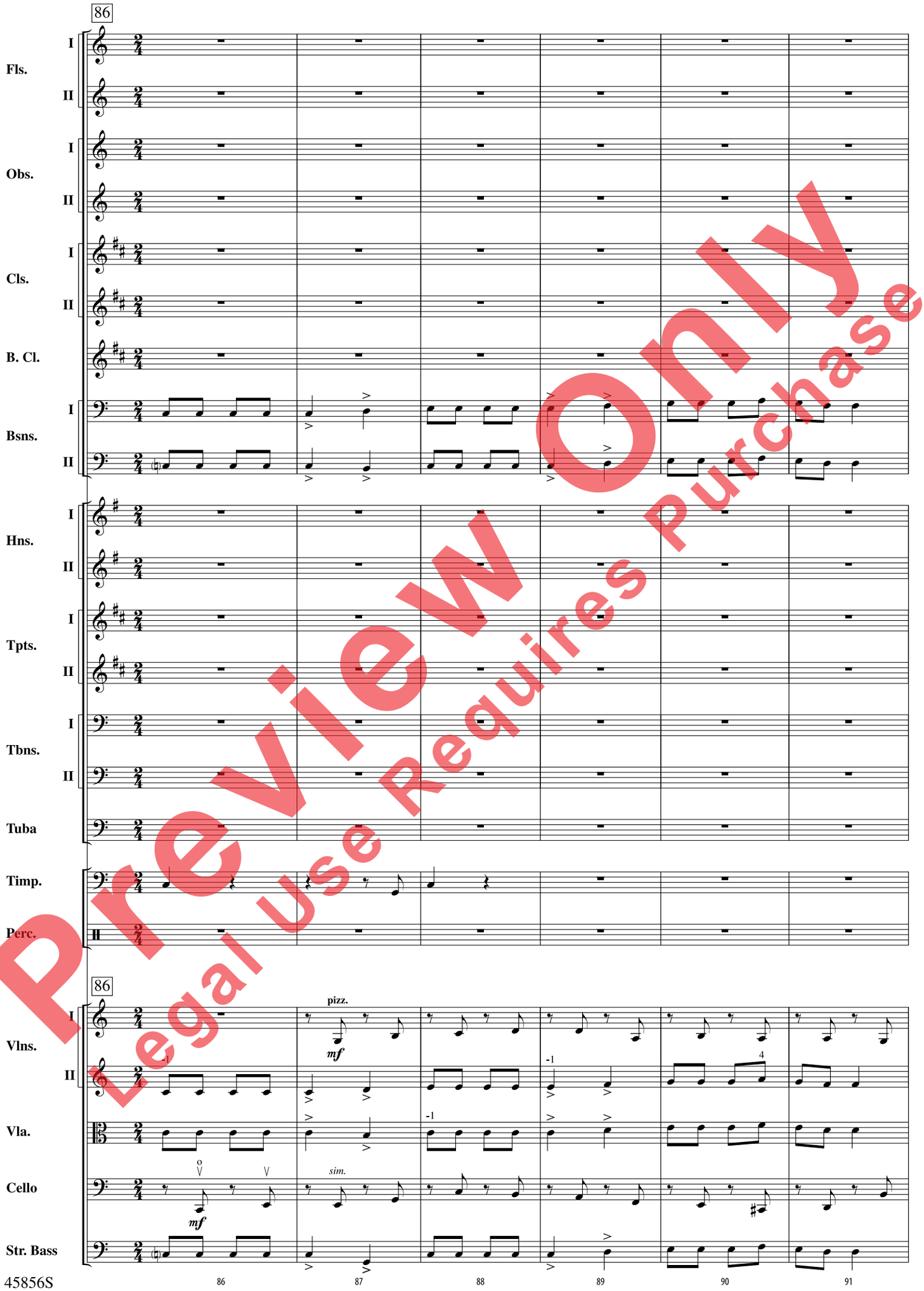


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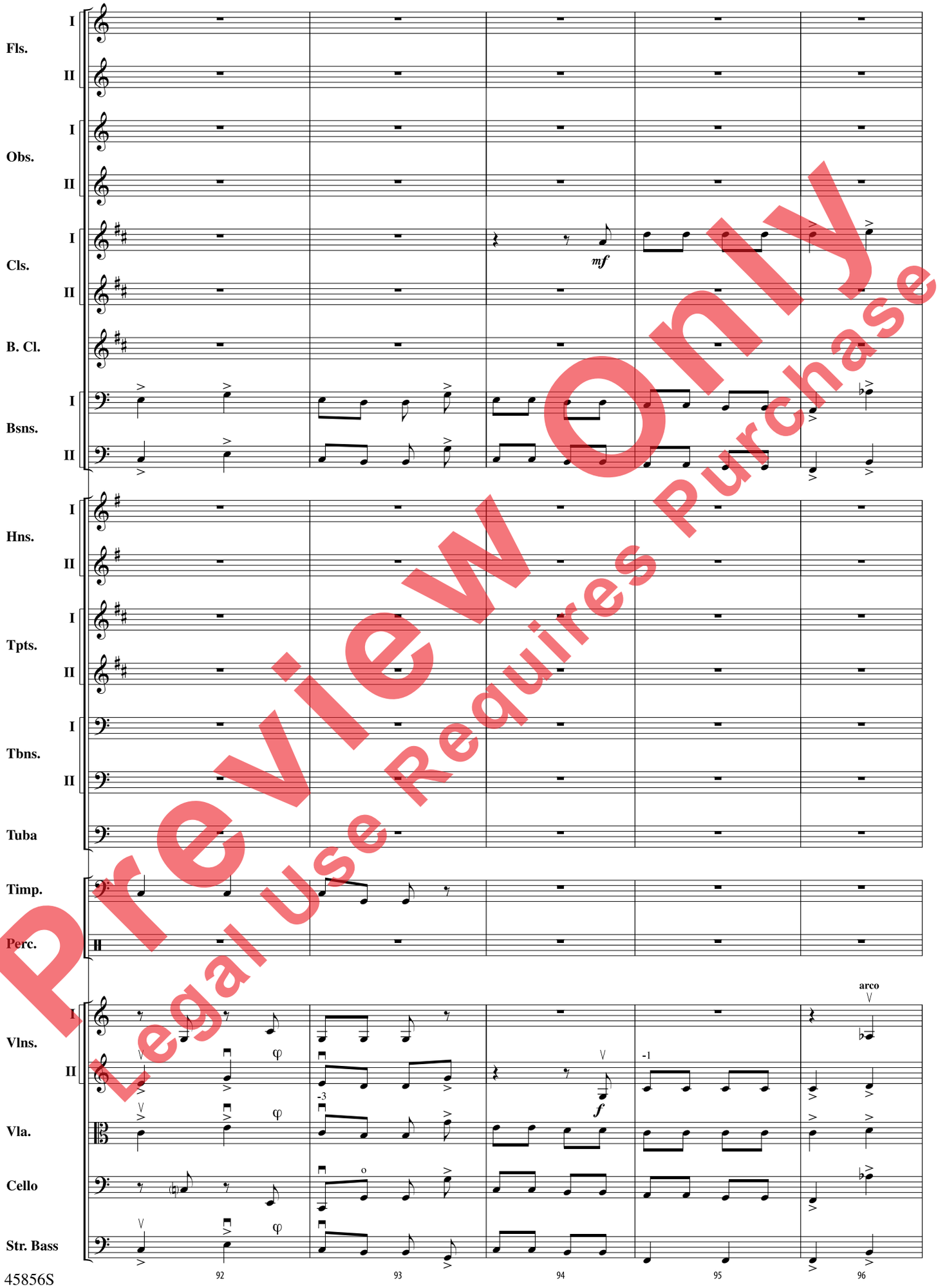


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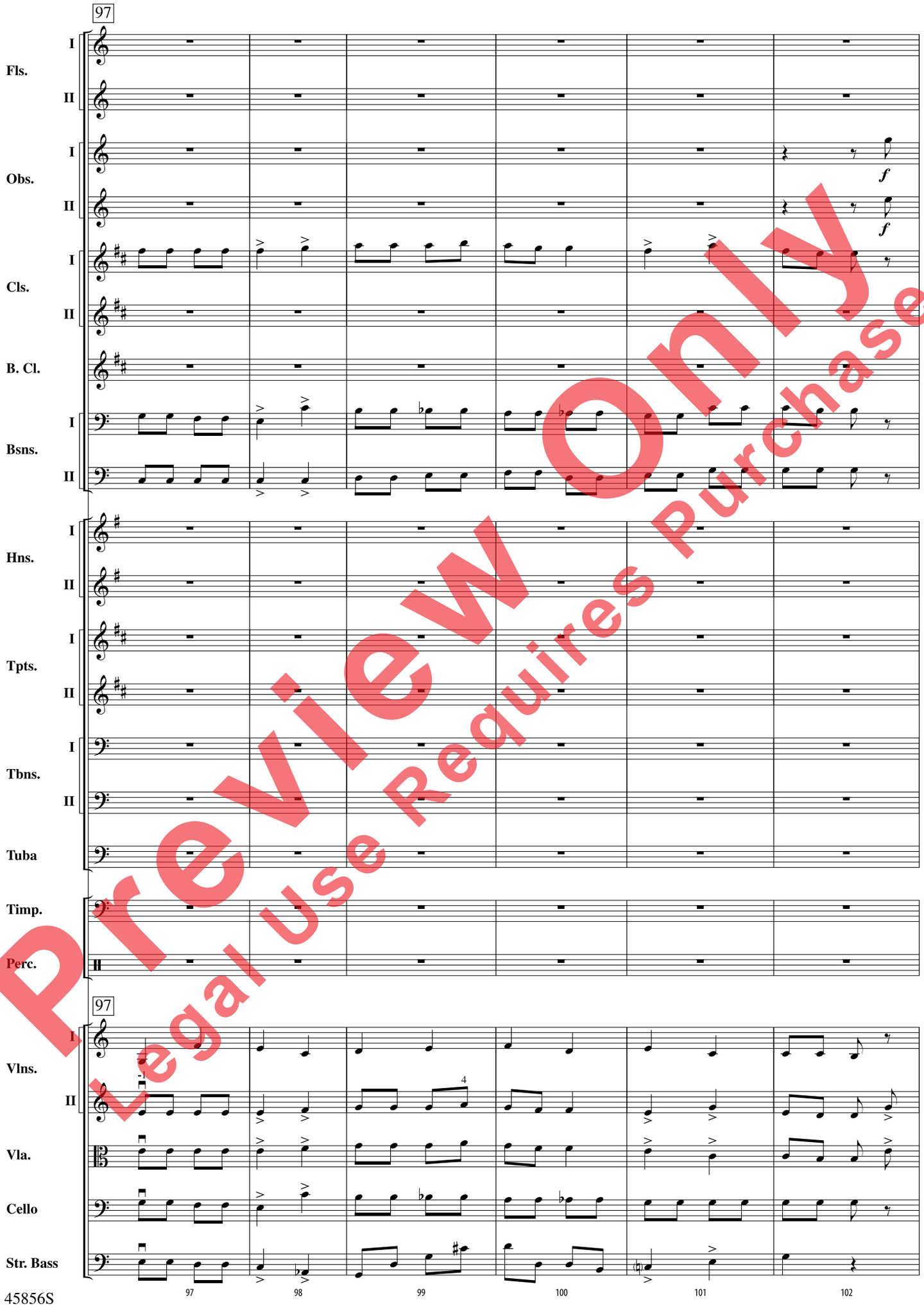


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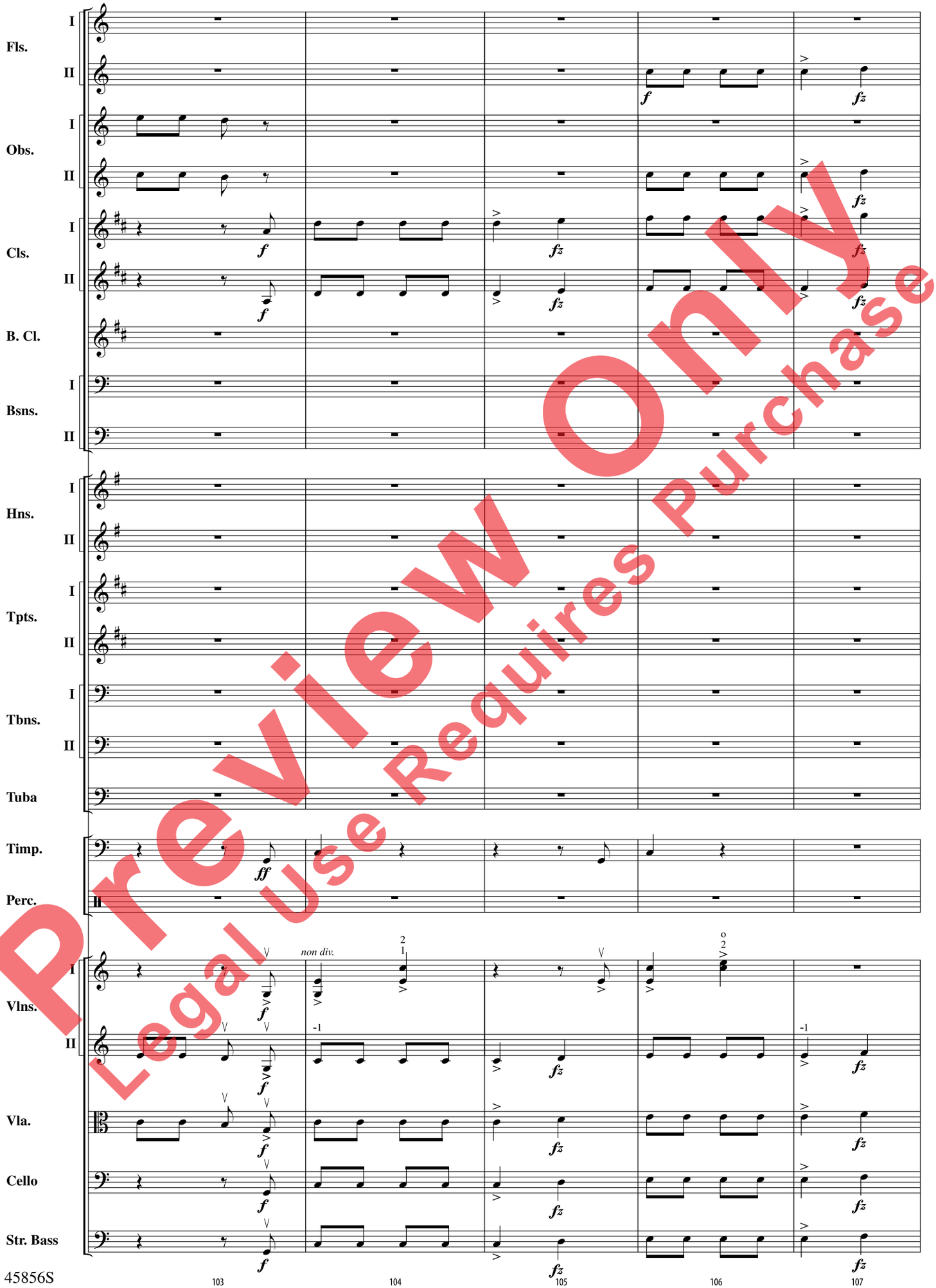


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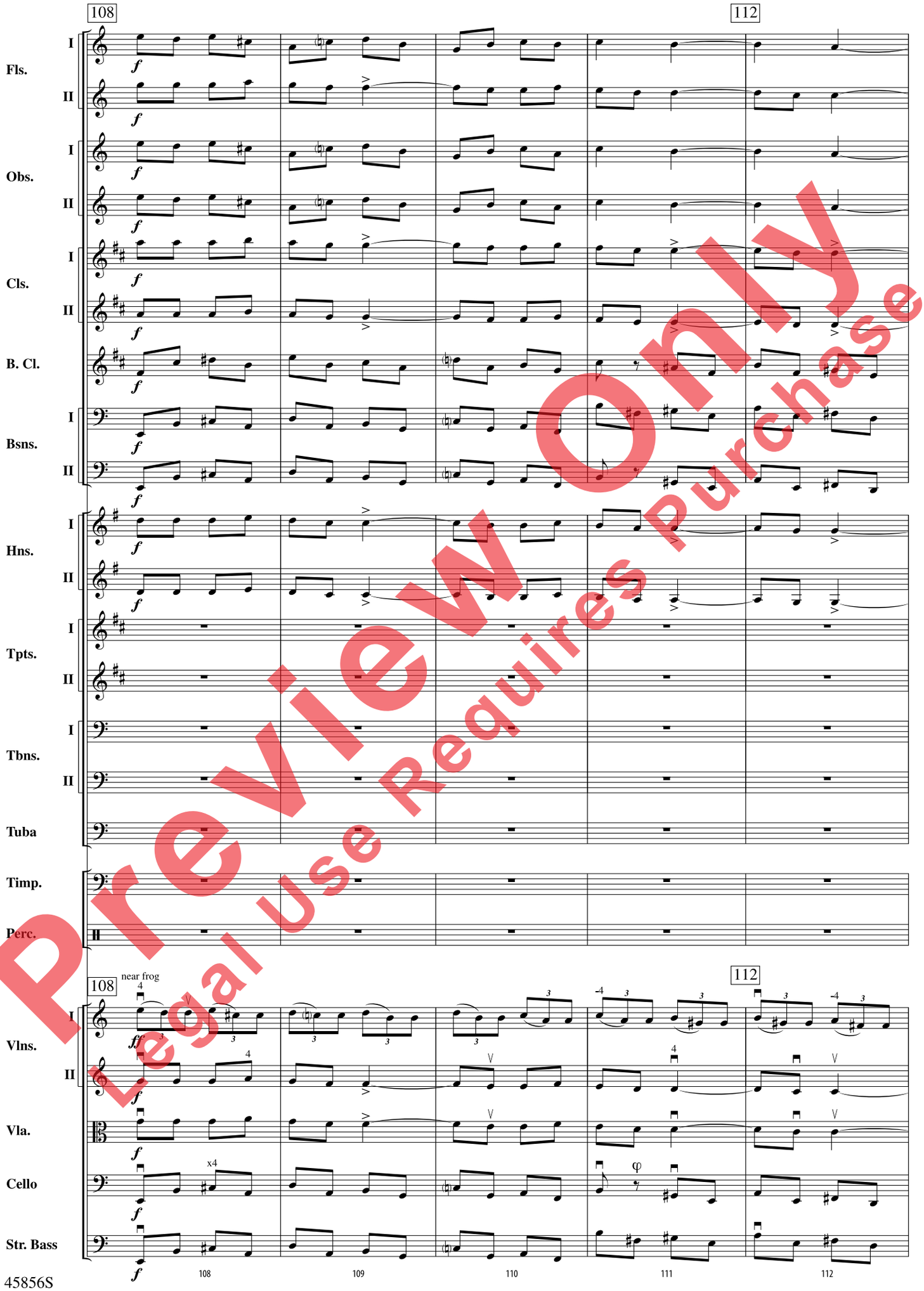


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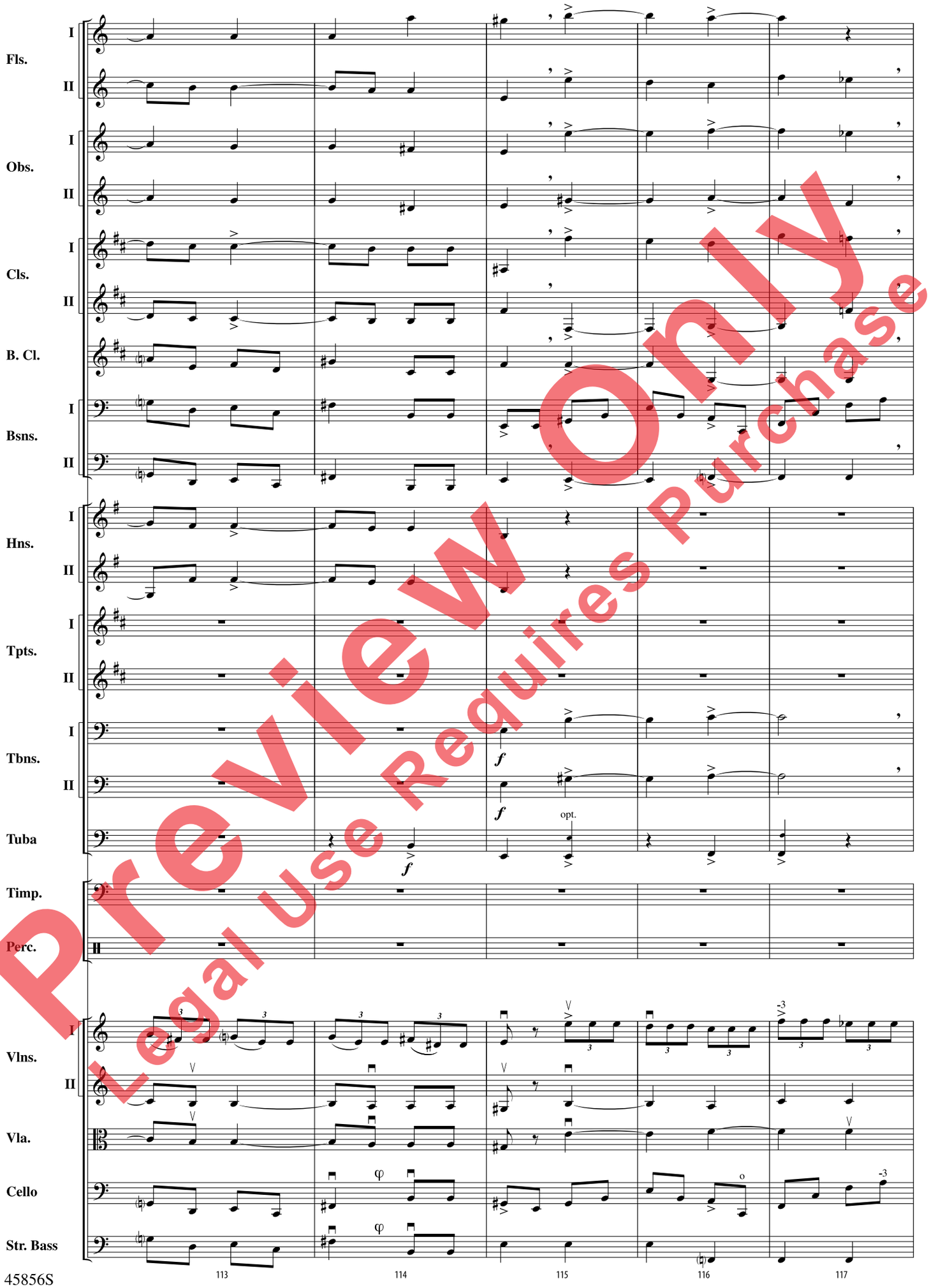


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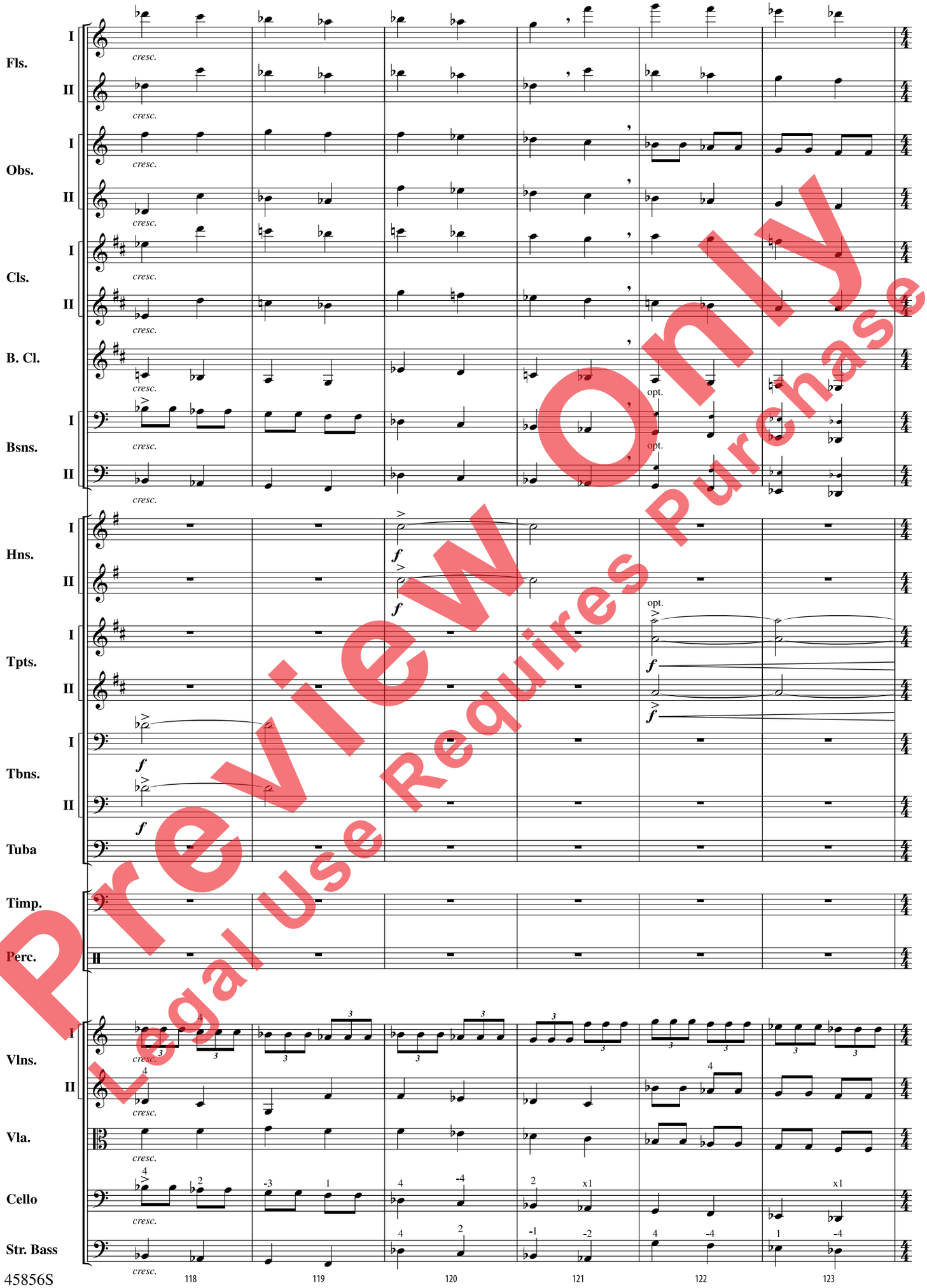


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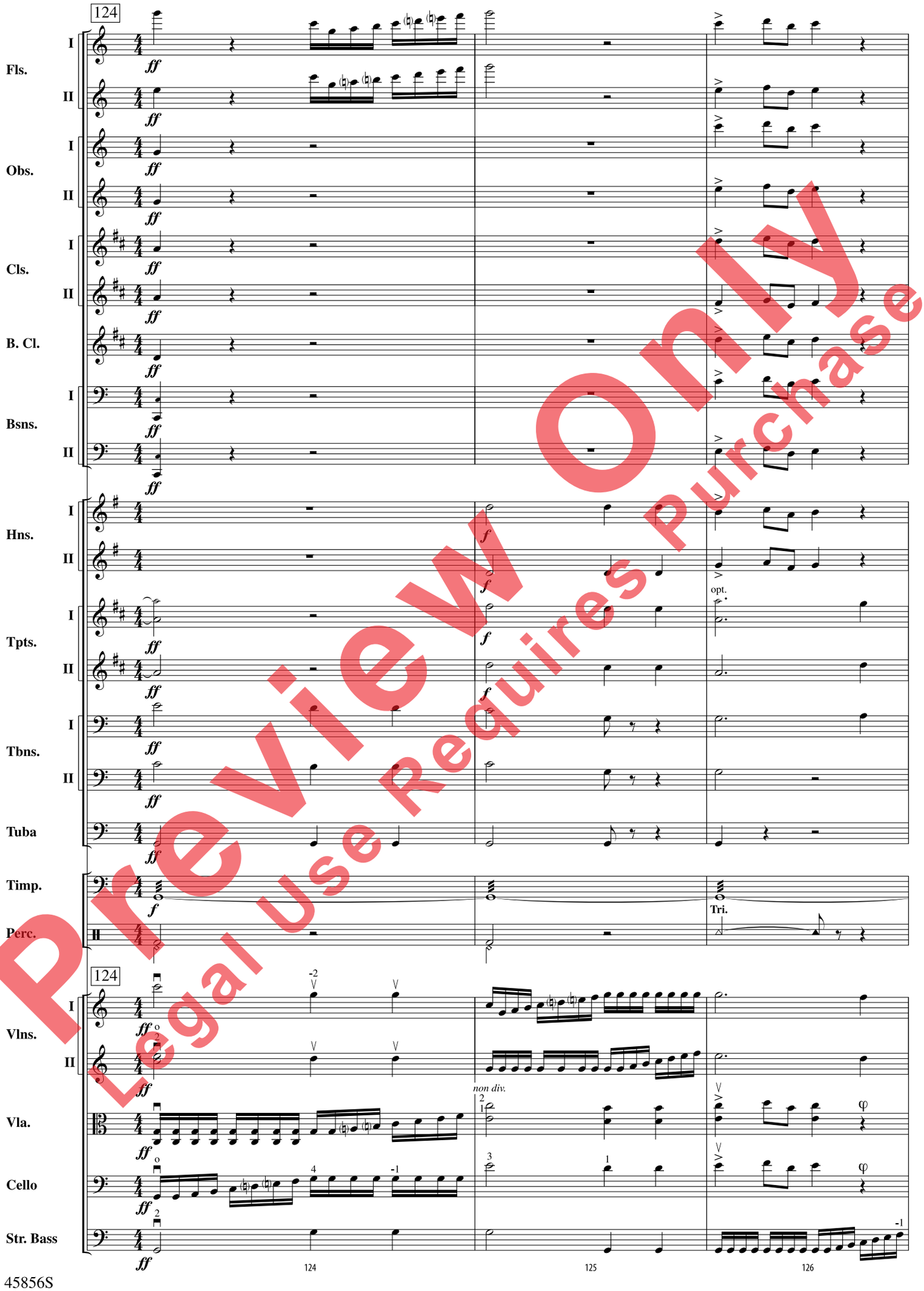


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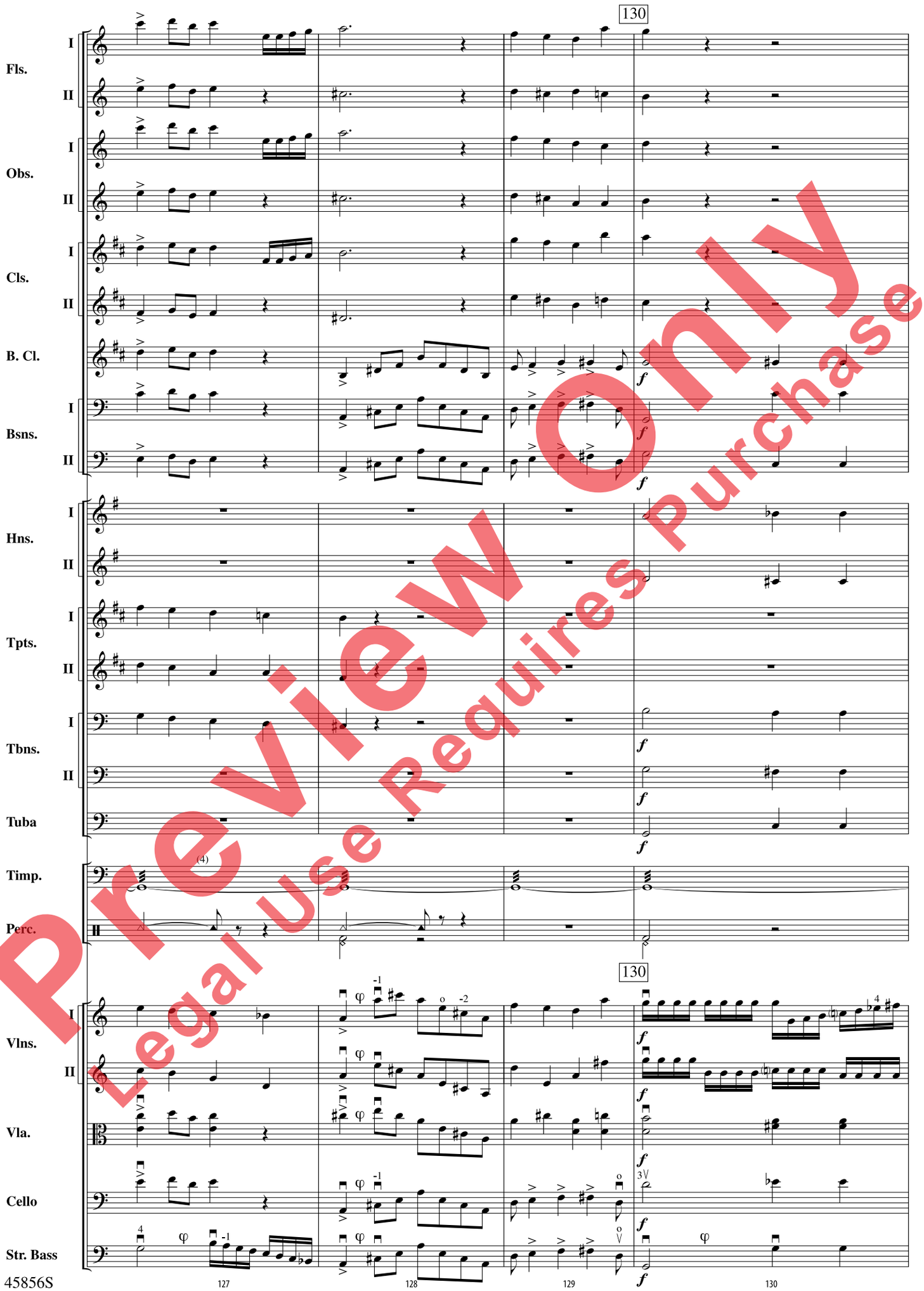


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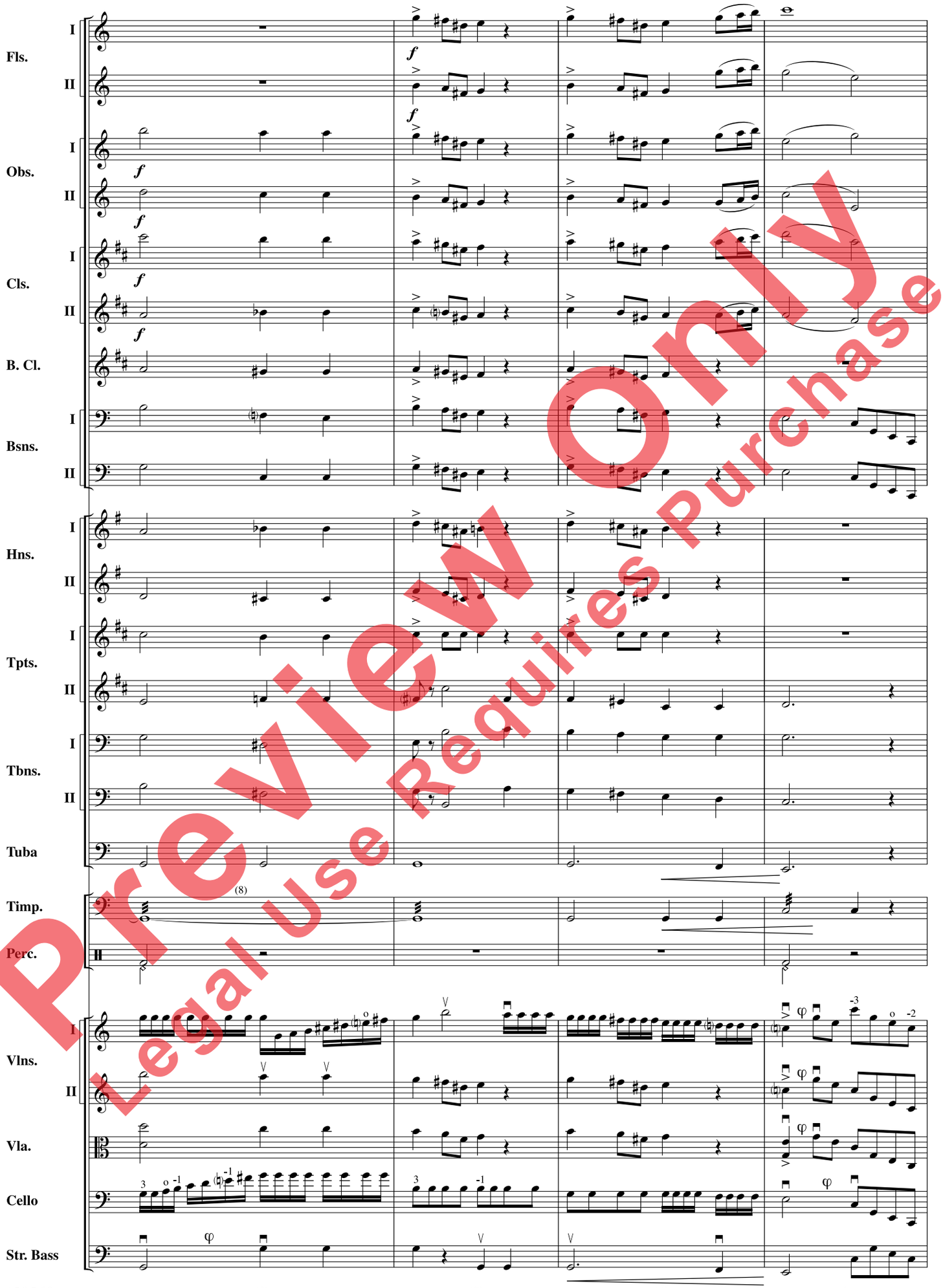


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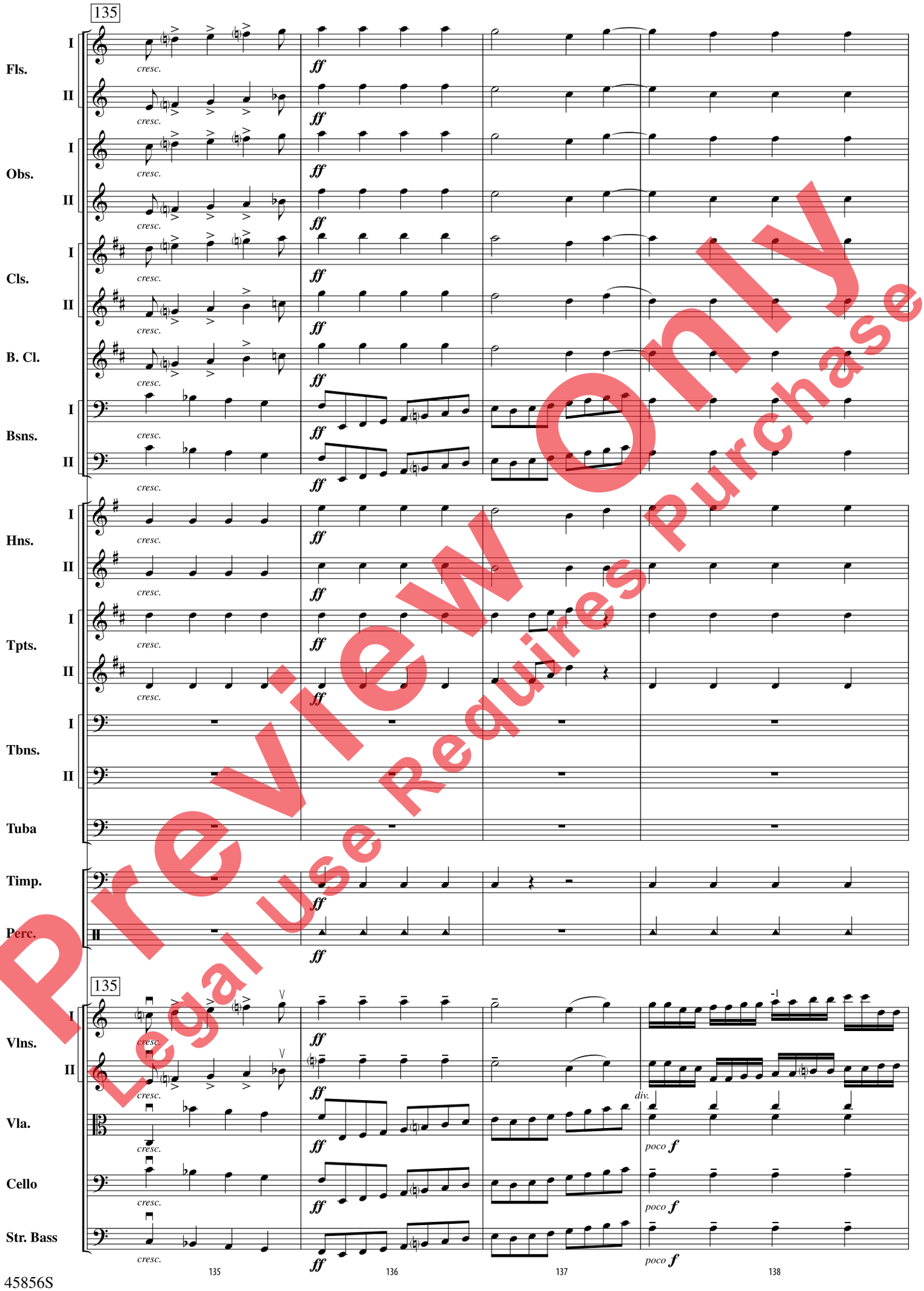


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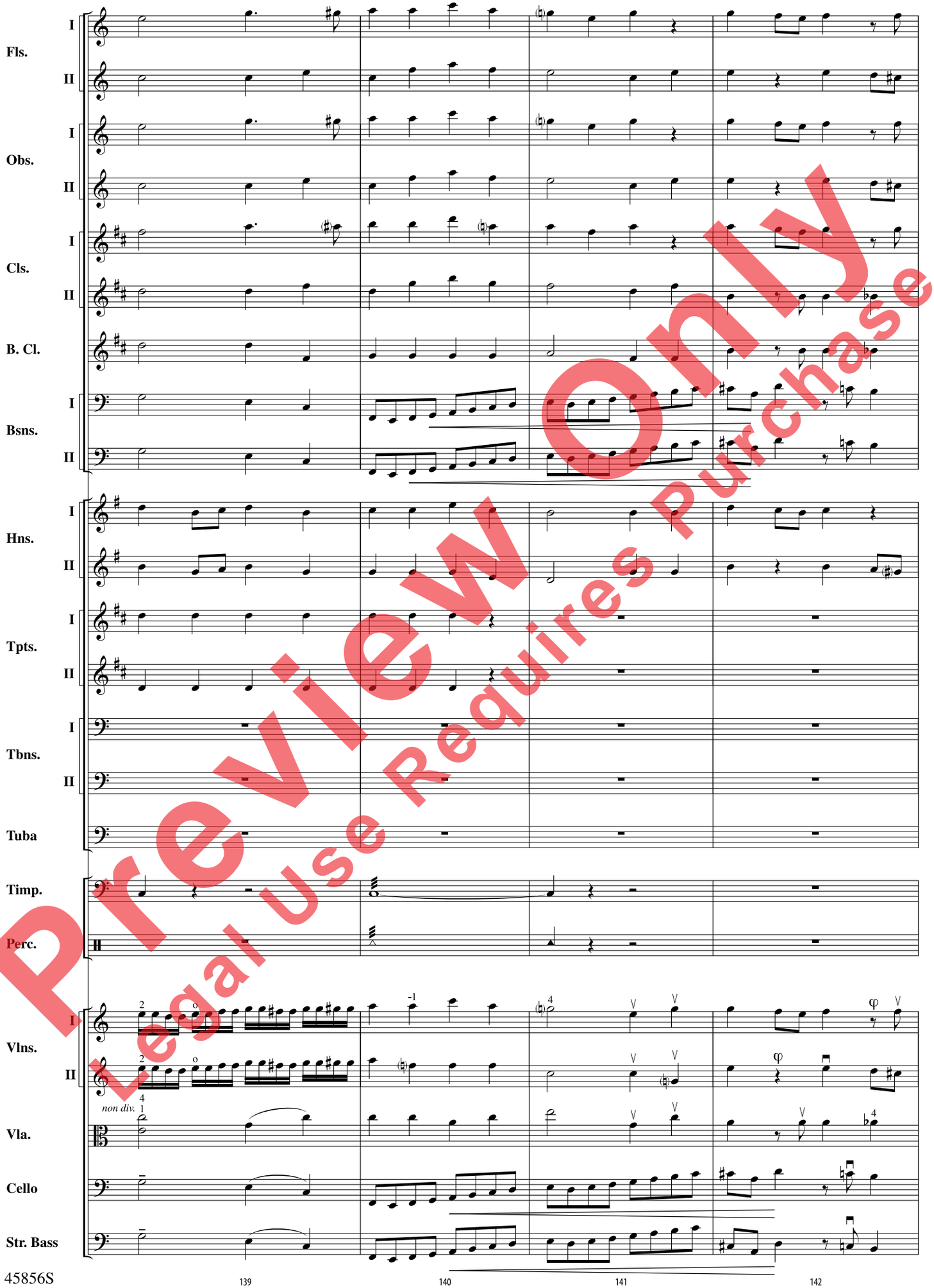


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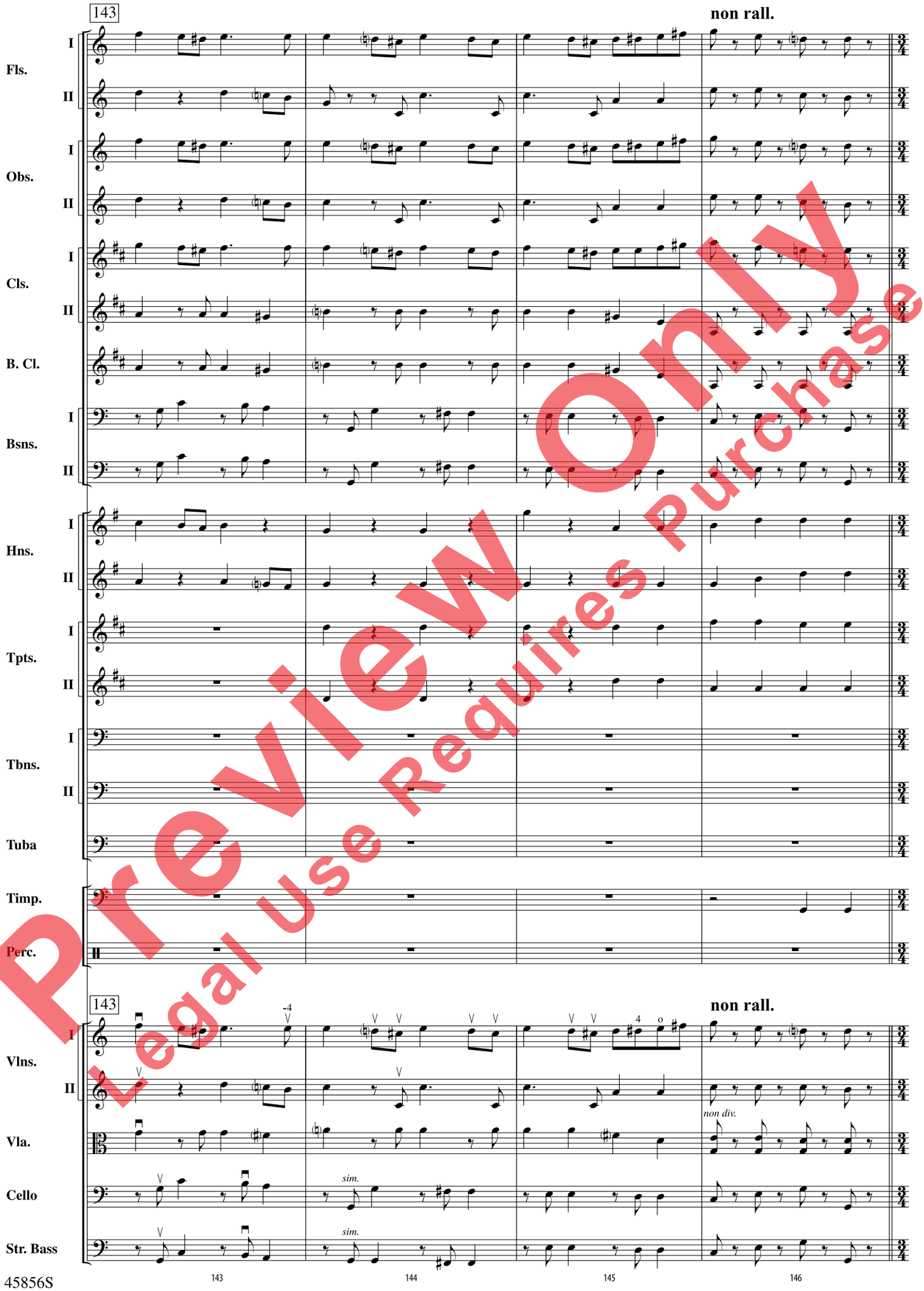


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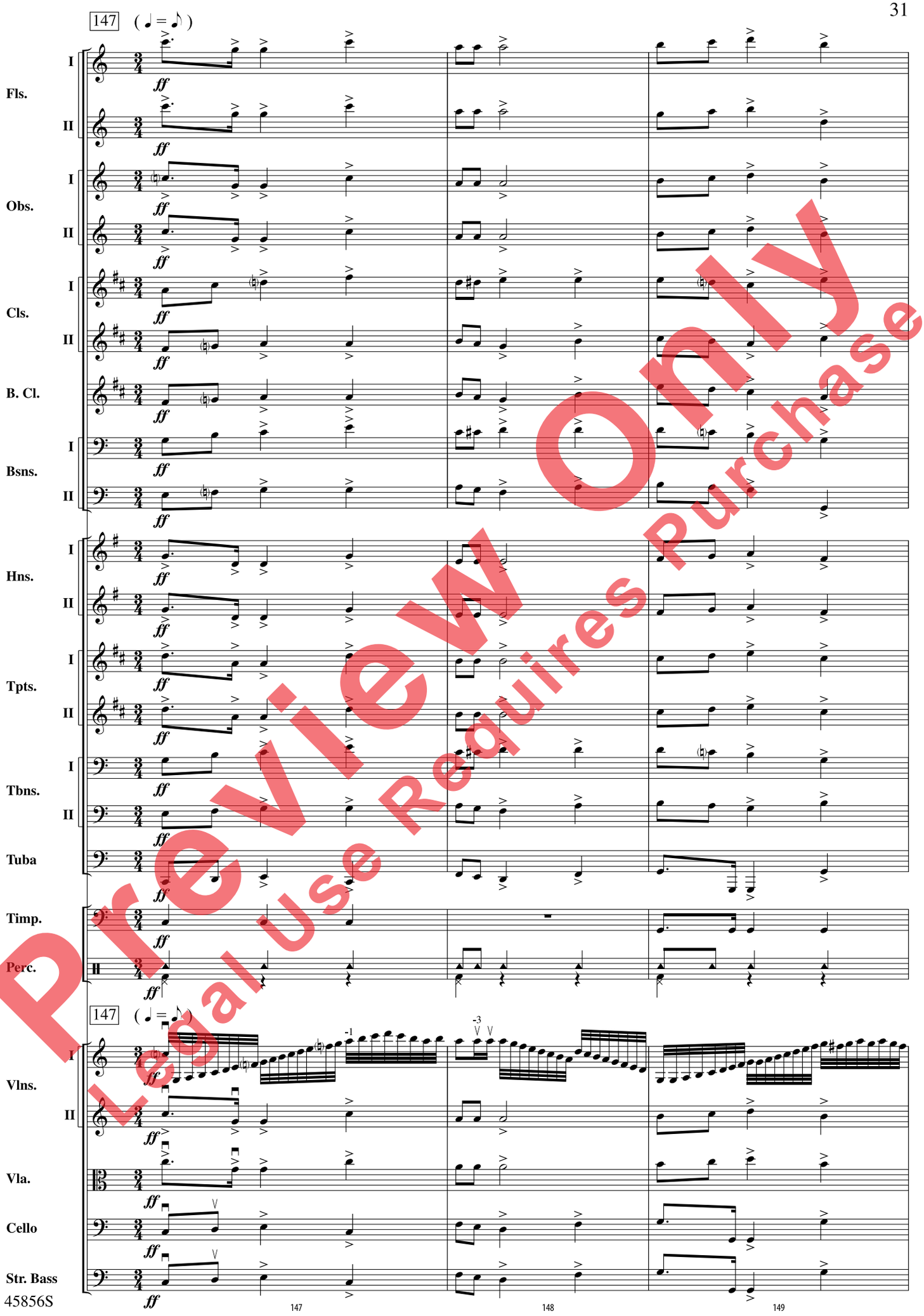


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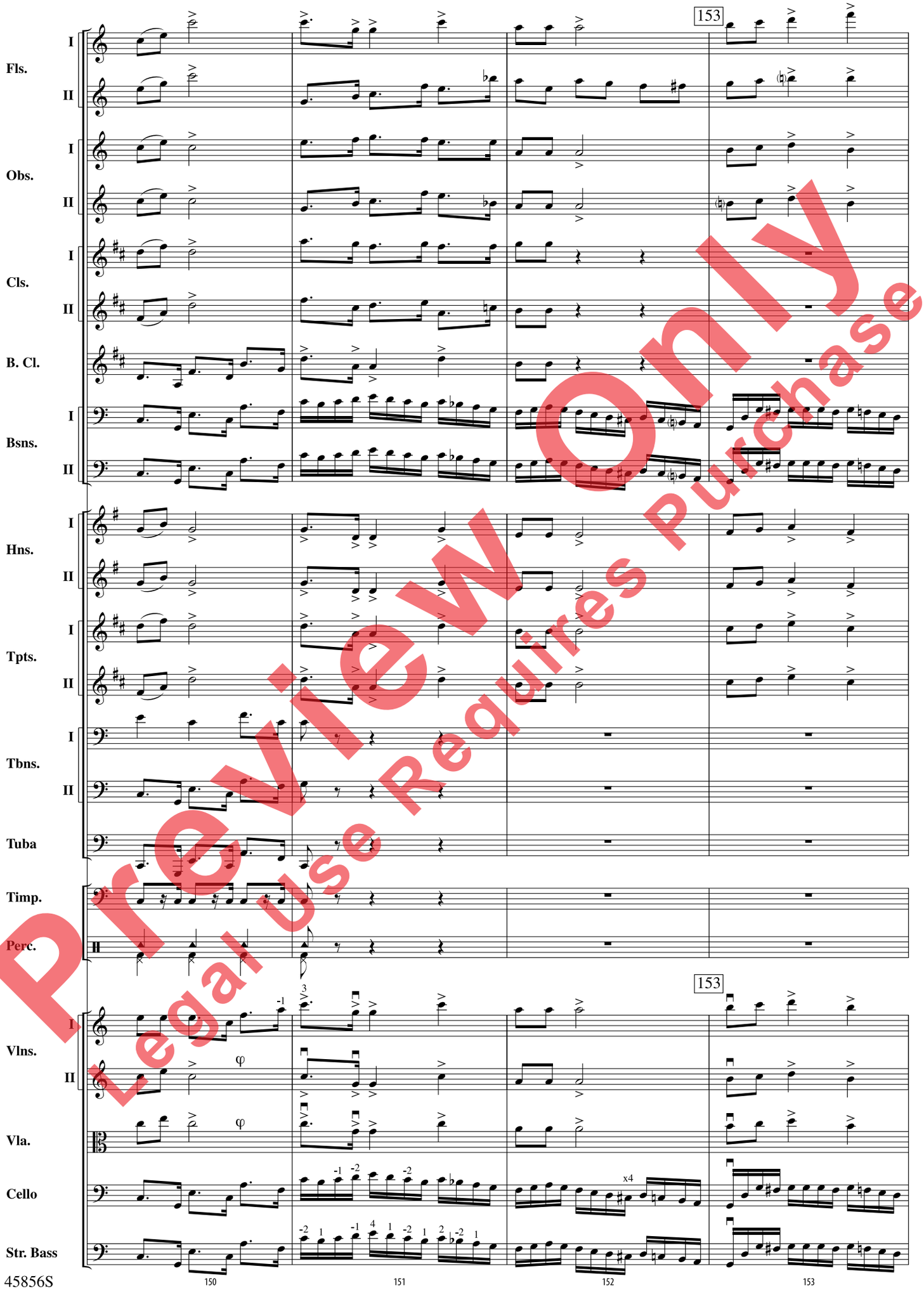


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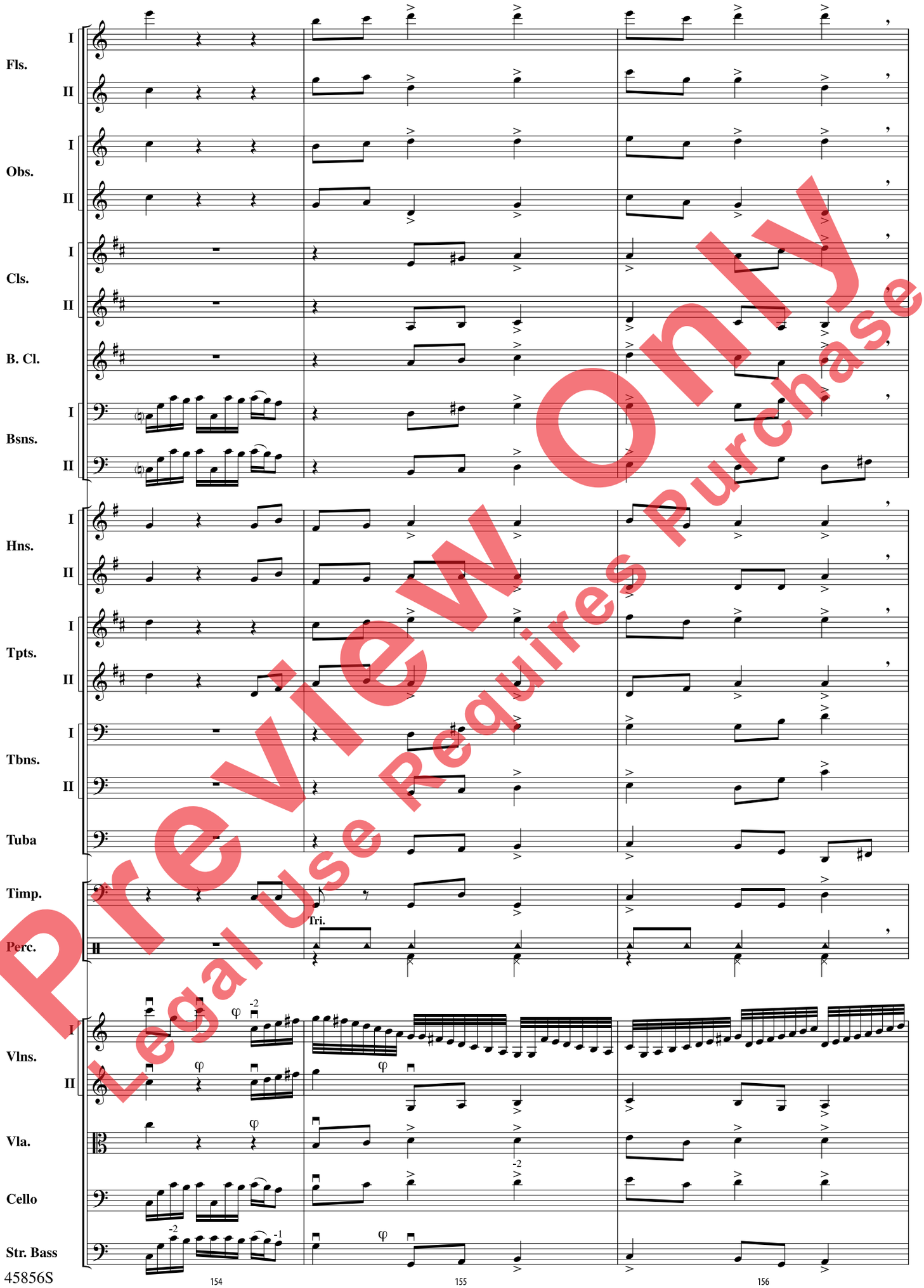


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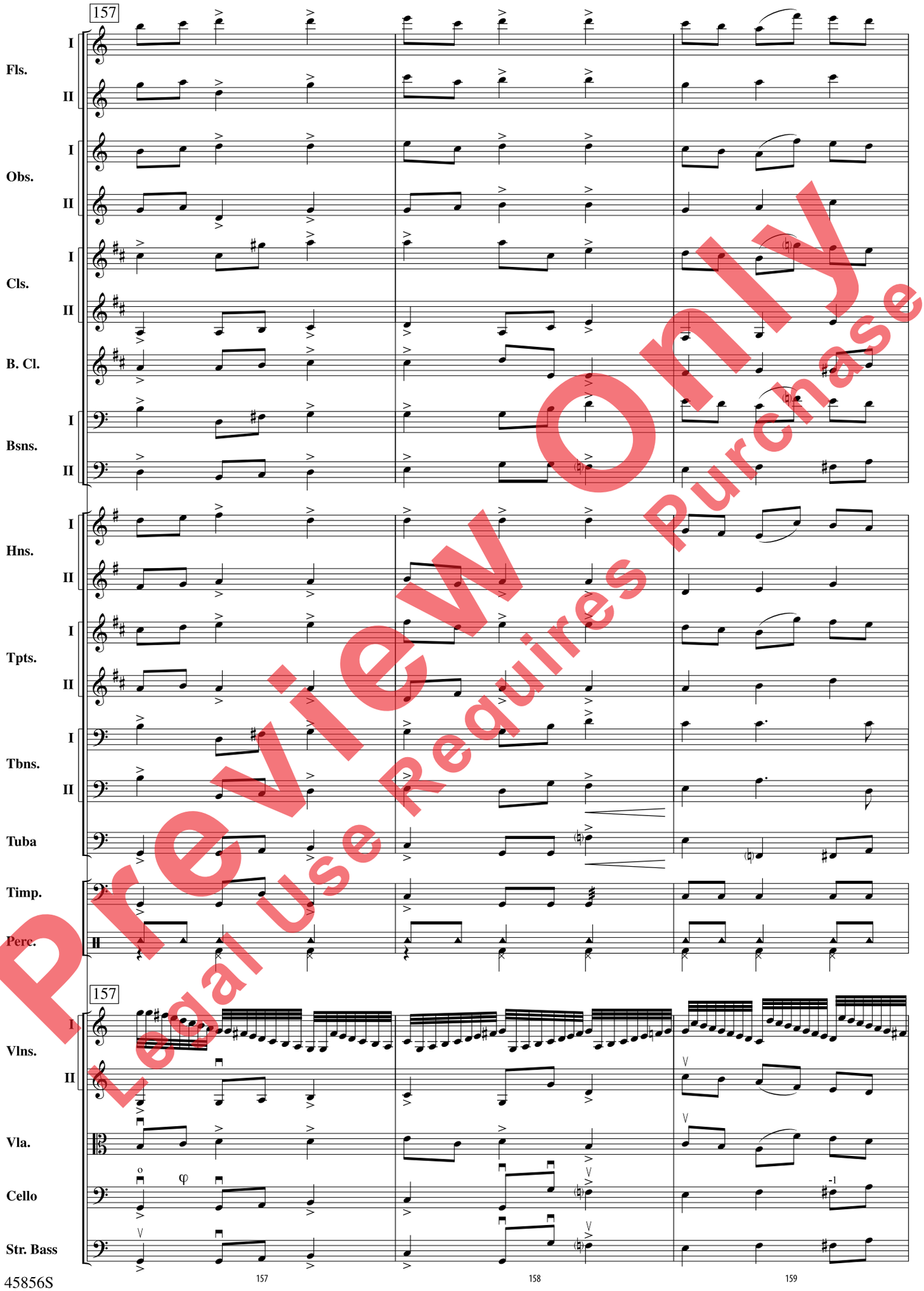


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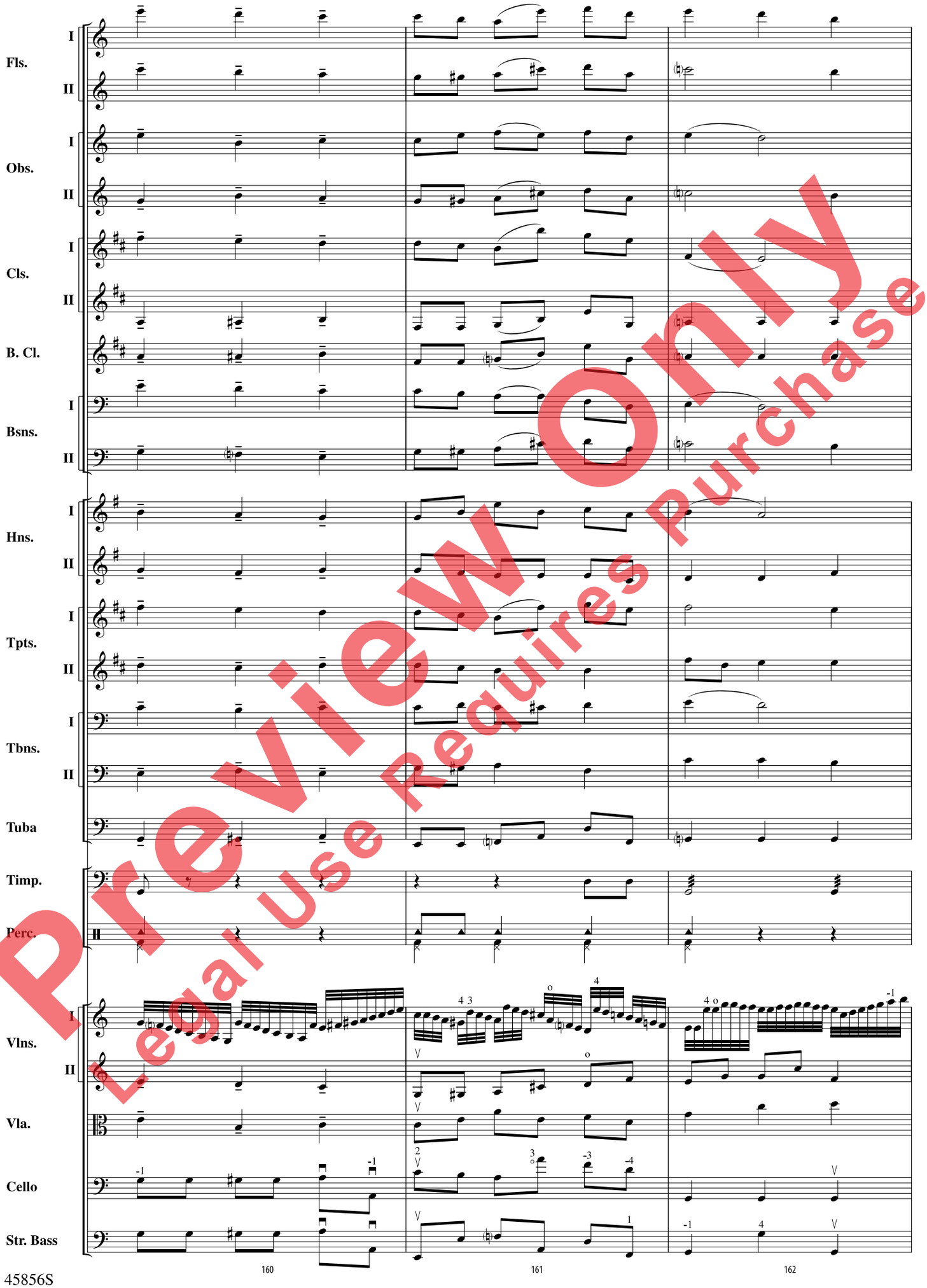


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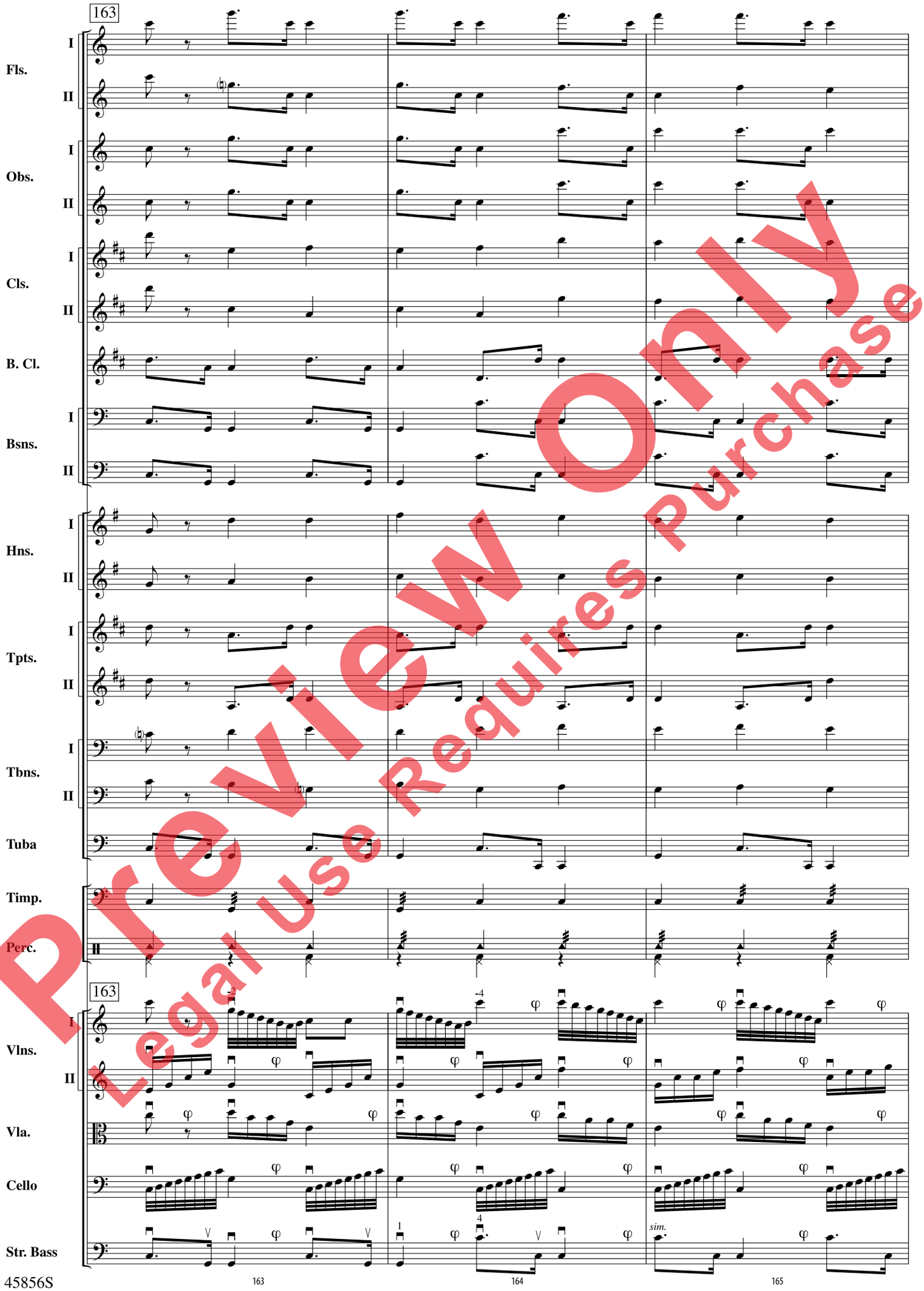


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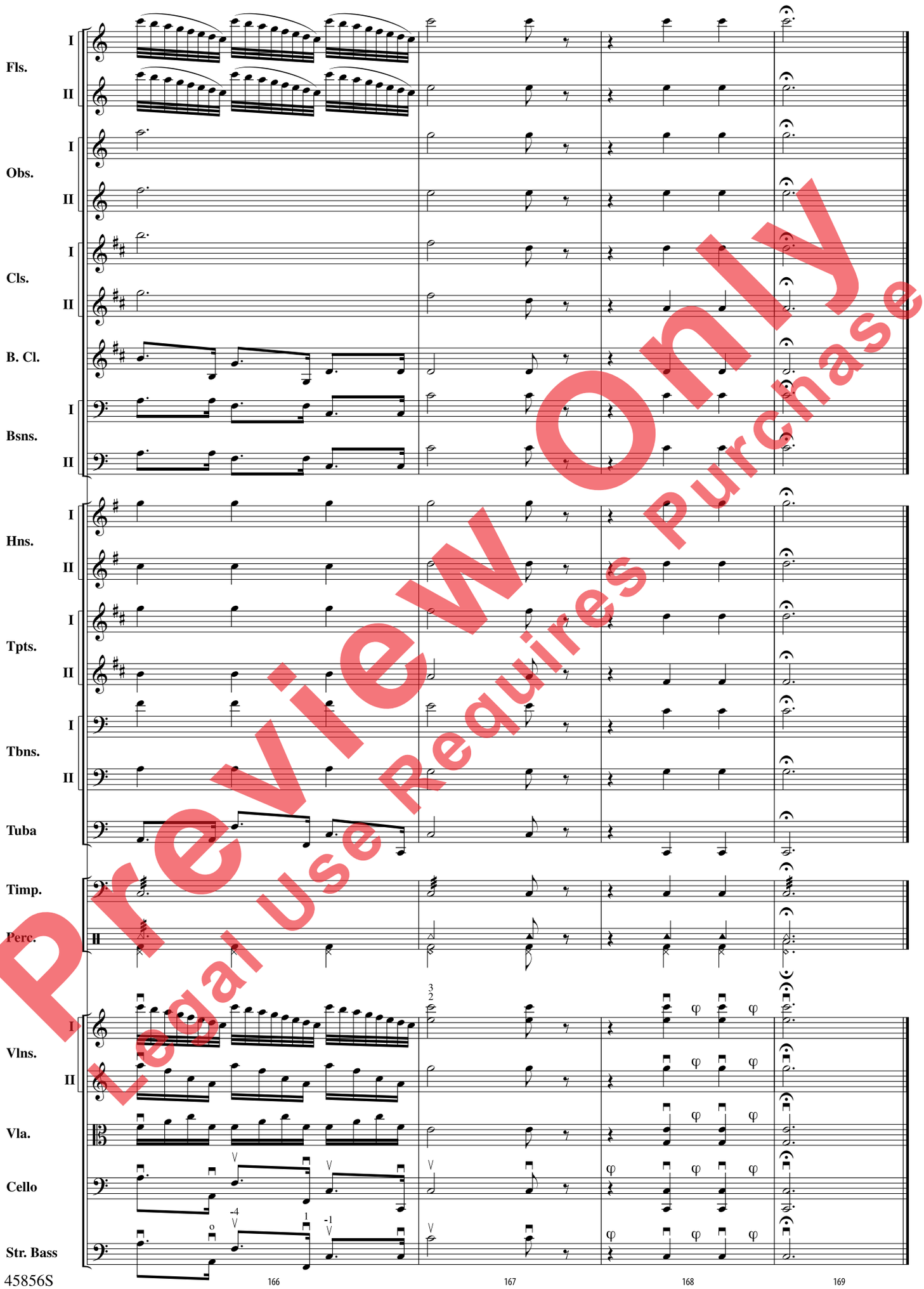


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