IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER

Gustav Holst
Arranged by Brendan McBrien

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INSTRUMENTATION

Conductor Score	1
Violin I	8
Violin II	8
Viola	5
Cello	5
String Bass	5

From the composer of *The Planets* comes this beloved Christmas carol. Voted the "best carol" in a 2008 *BBC Music* magazine poll, this lesser-known tune is a touching and beautiful work by one of England's greatest composers. This lush setting features all sections of the orchestra.

Program Notes

Gustav Holst composed his Advent hymn "In the Bleak Midwinter" in 1905 at the request of Ralph Vaughan Williams for inclusion in the *English Hymnal* of 1906. The words were taken from a poem of the same name by the 19th-Century English poet Christina Rossetti. Rossetti wrote this poem in 1871 for a Christmas edition of *Scribner's Monthly*. Holst's tune is known as "Cranham," after a village in Gloucestershire where he lived at the time, and it was there that he wrote the music. The house is now called "Midwinter Cottage" to commemorate that work. Since its creation it has become a cherished Christmas carol, performed and recorded by some of music's greatest artists. In 2008, the *BBC Music* magazine polled the world's 51 leading choir directors and experts to find the top 50 Christmas carols of all time. "In the Bleak Midwinter" came in at number 1, an enormous honor for this little-known holiday gem.

Not having entered the pantheon of carols like "Joy to the World" and "Silent Night," this subtle offering, with its simple and humble character, can be summed up in the final verse of the hymn:

What can I give him, poor as I am?
If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;
If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;
Yet what I can, I give him: give my heart.

The ending of this arrangement quotes "The First Noel" as a way to underscore Rossetti's text and its description of the first Christmas. "The First Noel," also an English carol, coincidentally was published the same year as Rossetti's poem.

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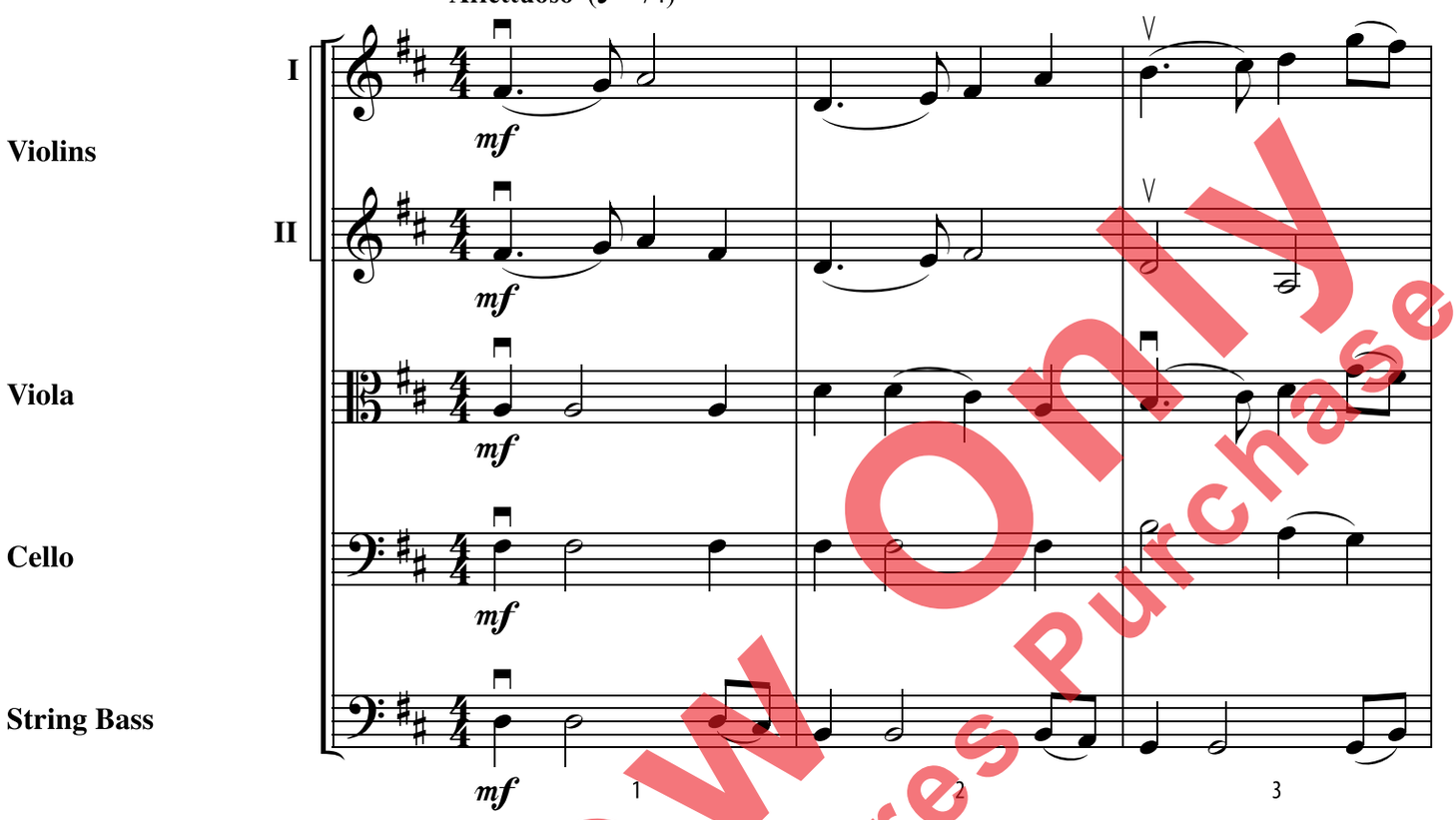
Please note: Our band and orchestra music is now being collated by an automatic high-speed system. The enclosed parts are now sorted by page count, rather than score order.

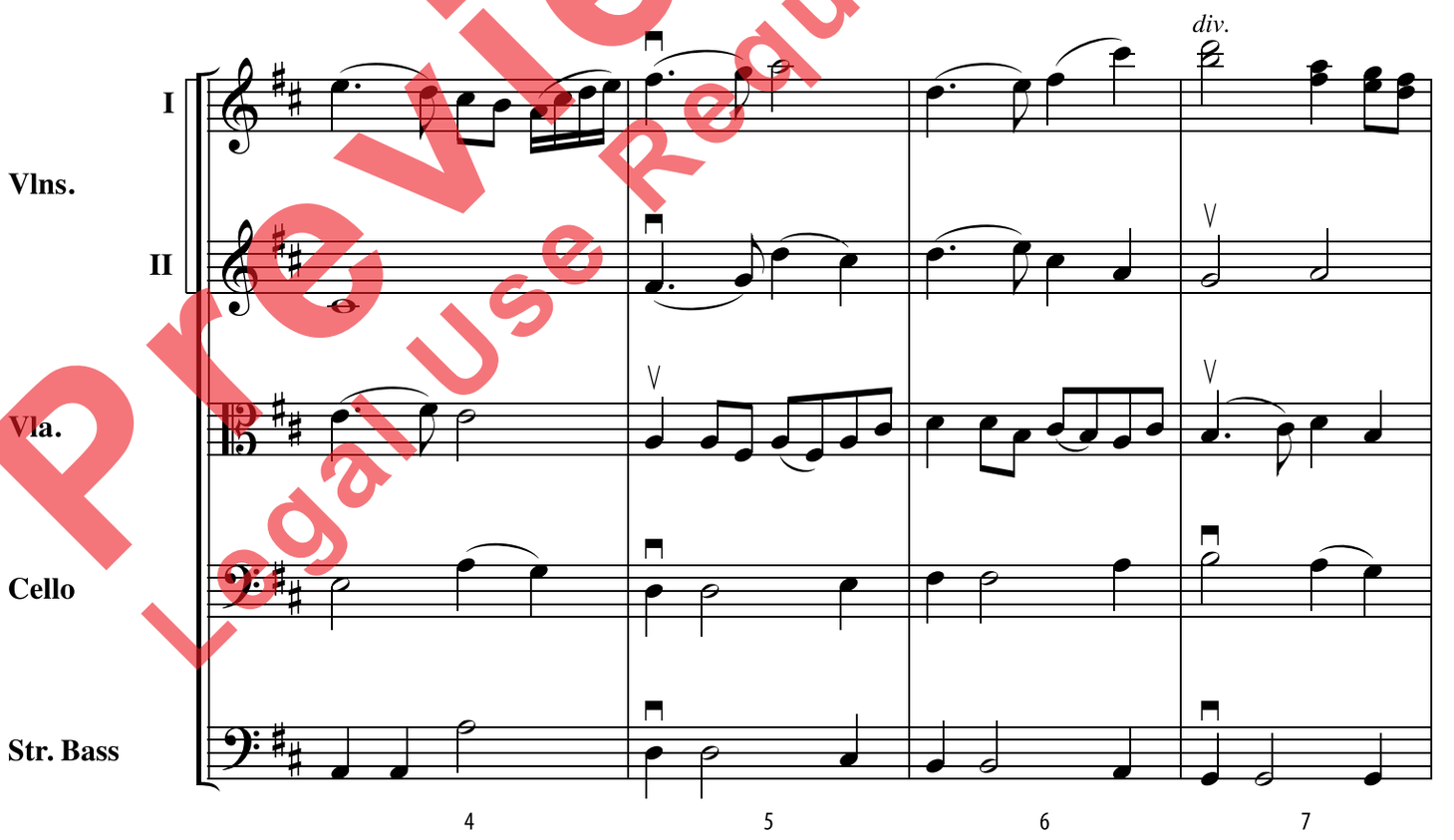
In the Bleak Midwinter

CONDUCTOR SCORE
Duration - 4:00

Gustav Holst
Arranged by Brendan McBrien

Affettuoso (♩ = 74)





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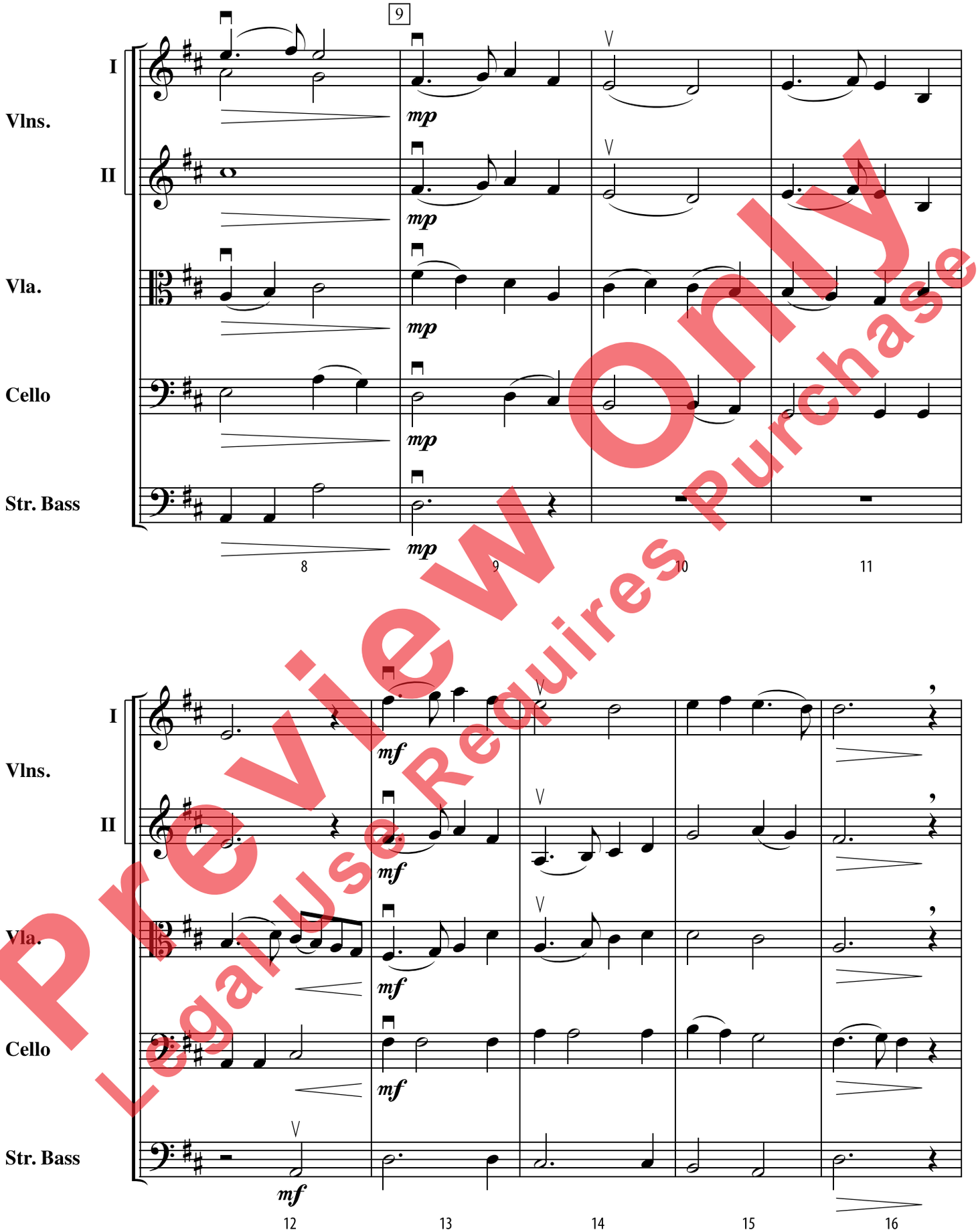

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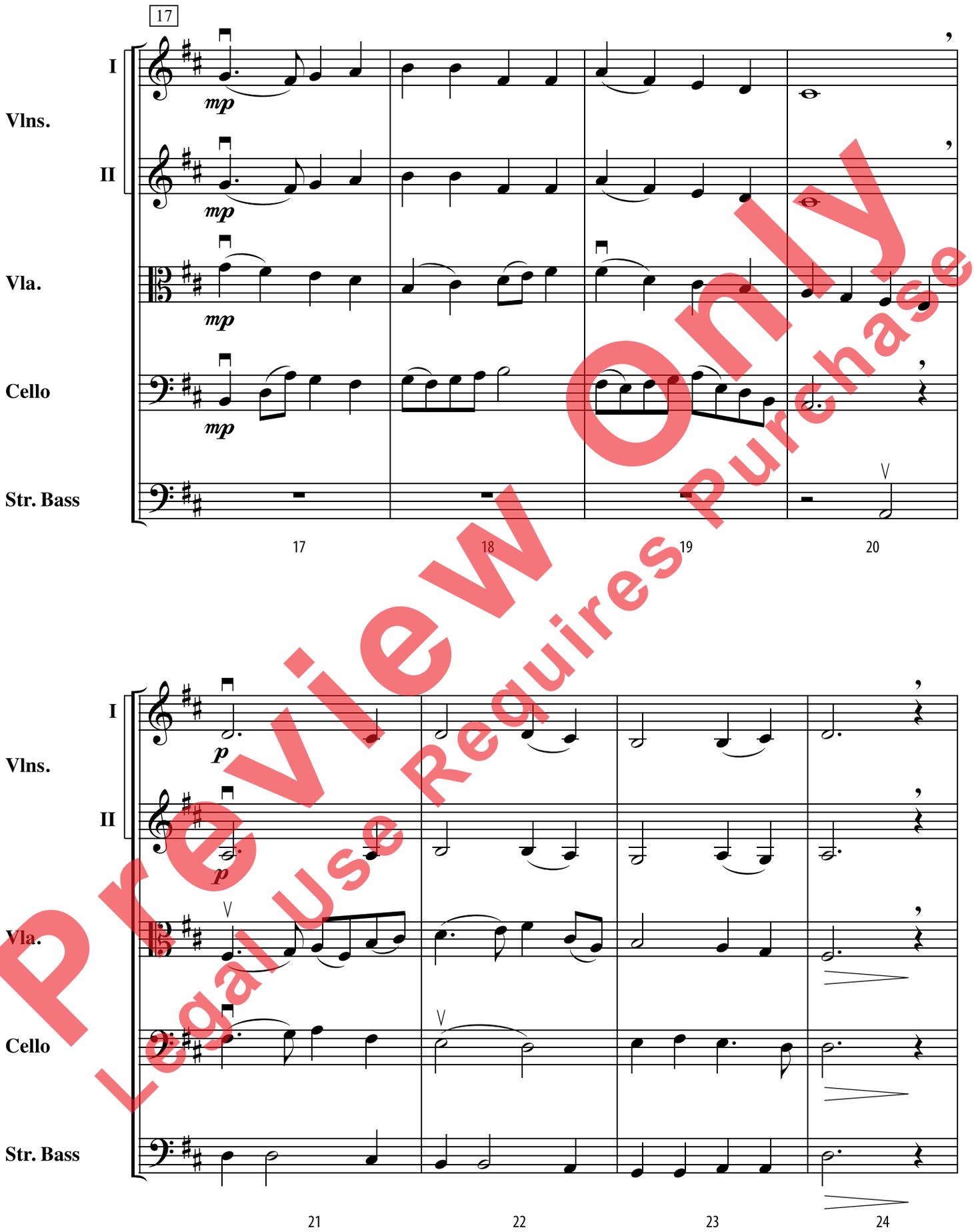

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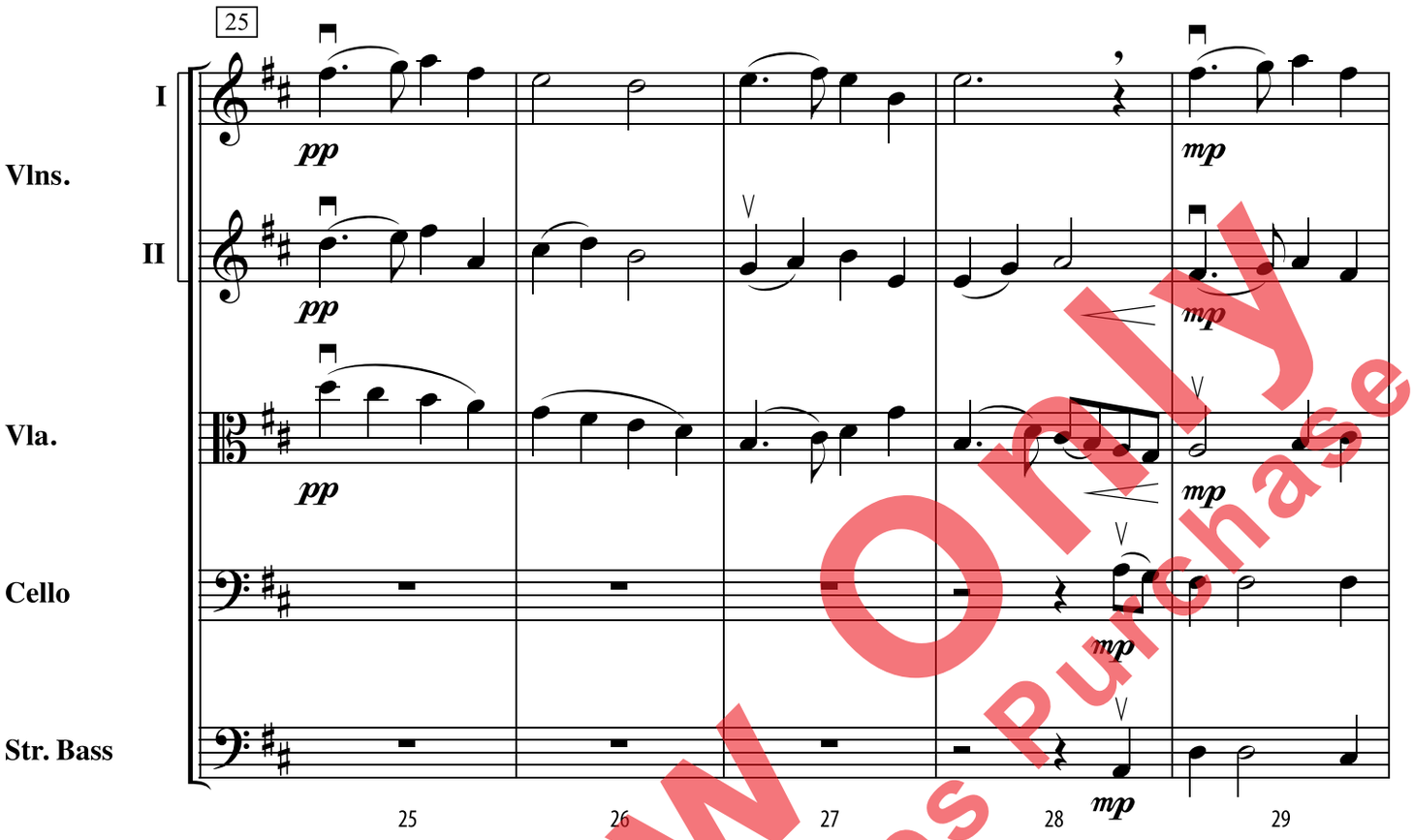

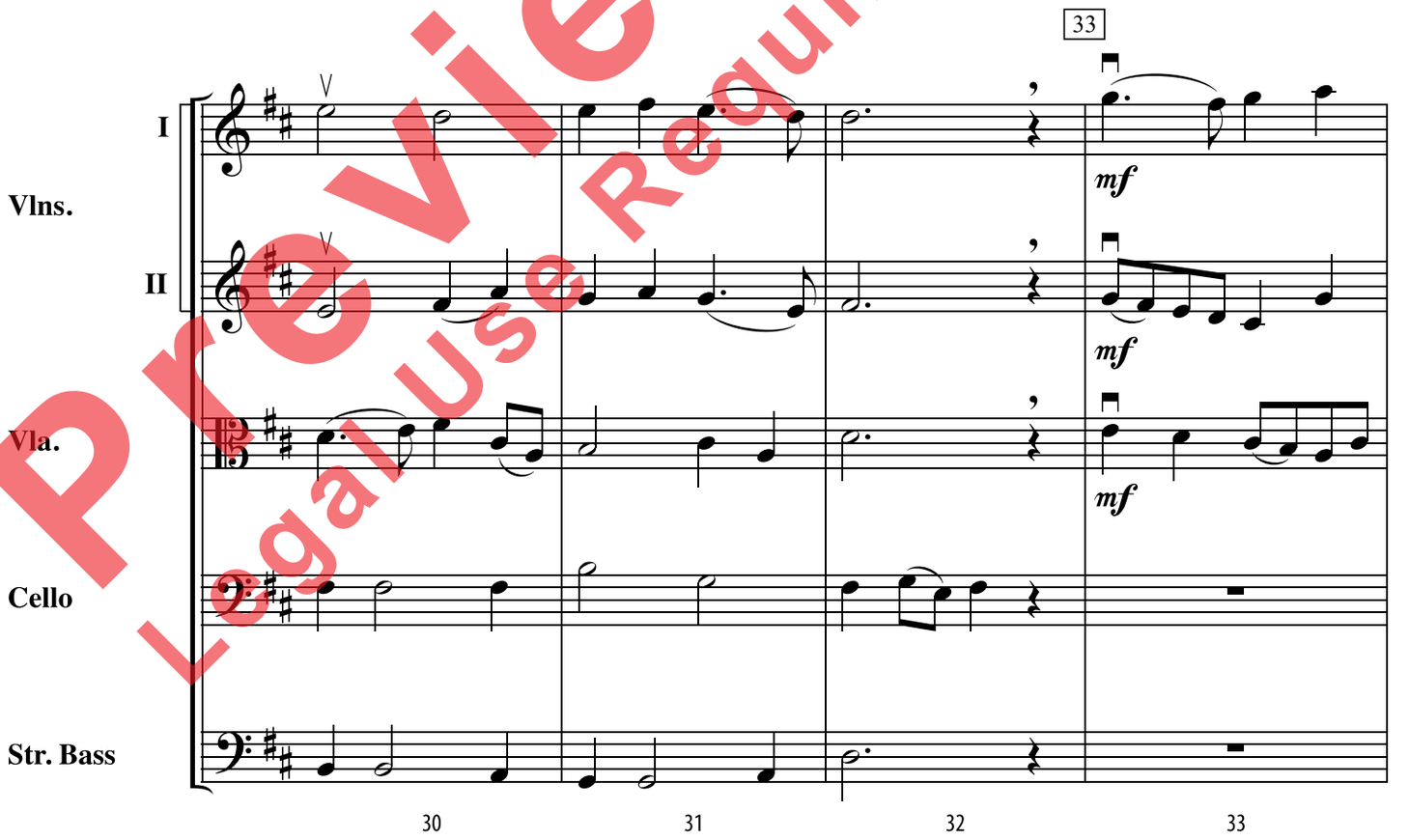

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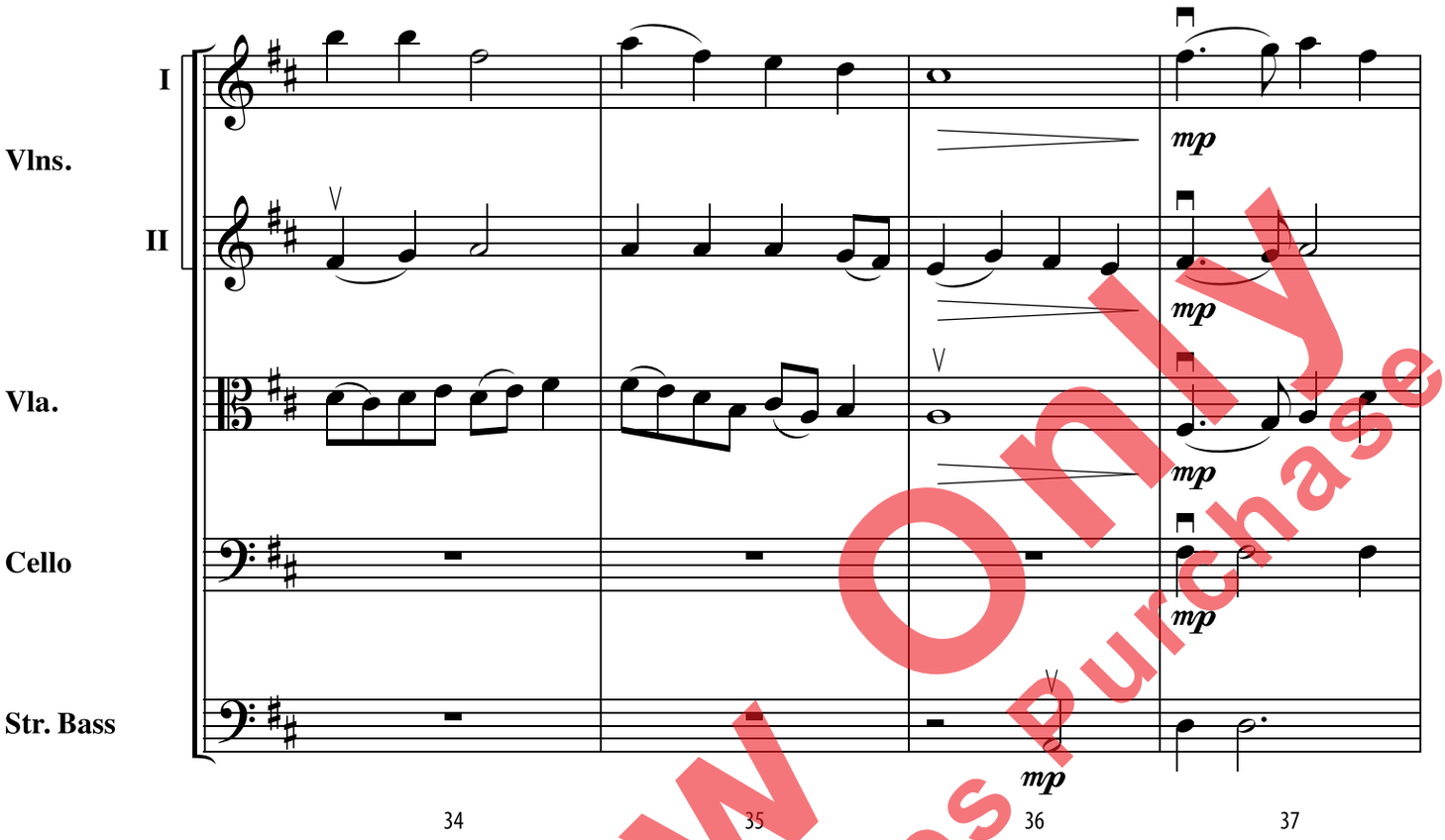

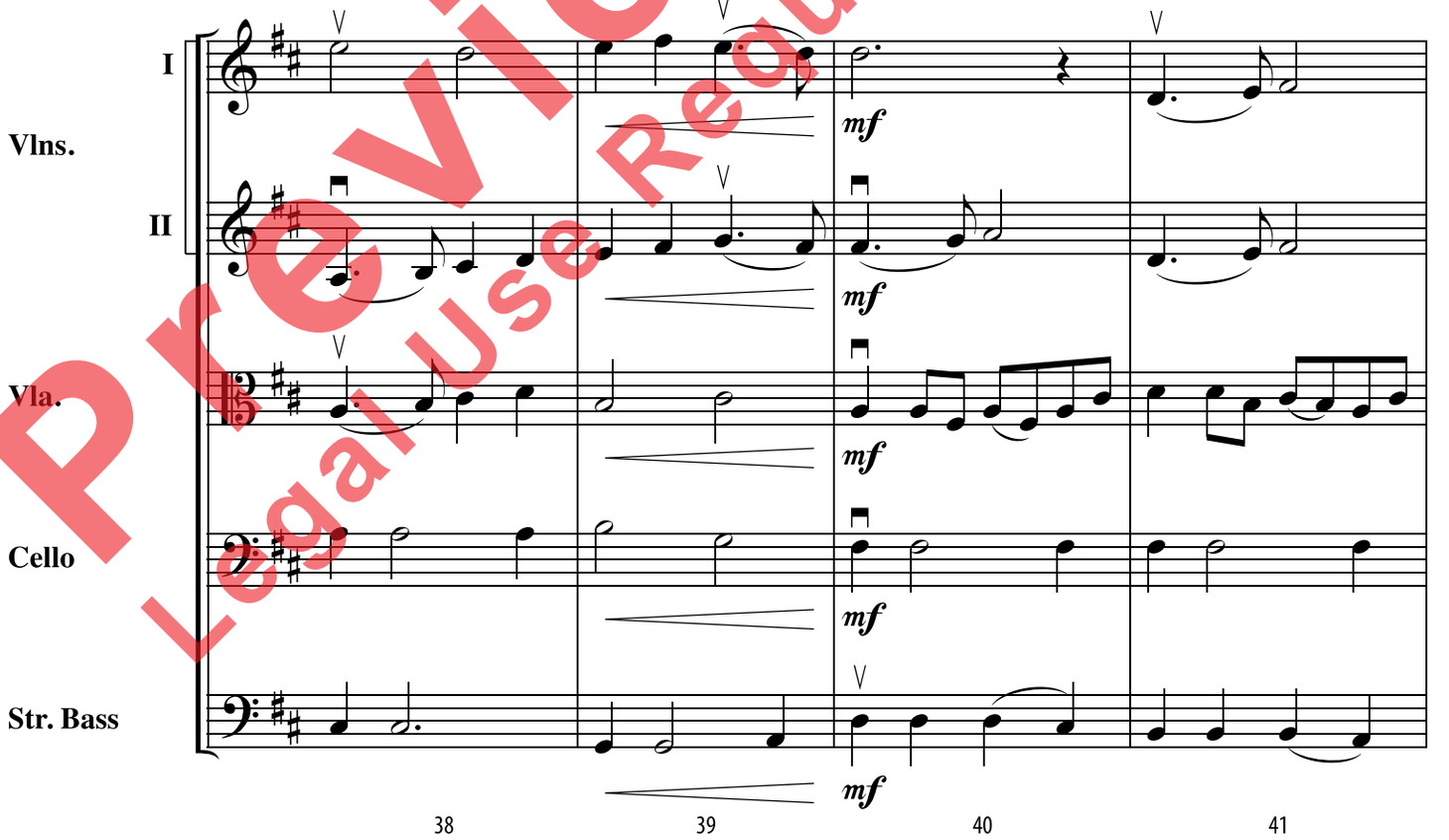

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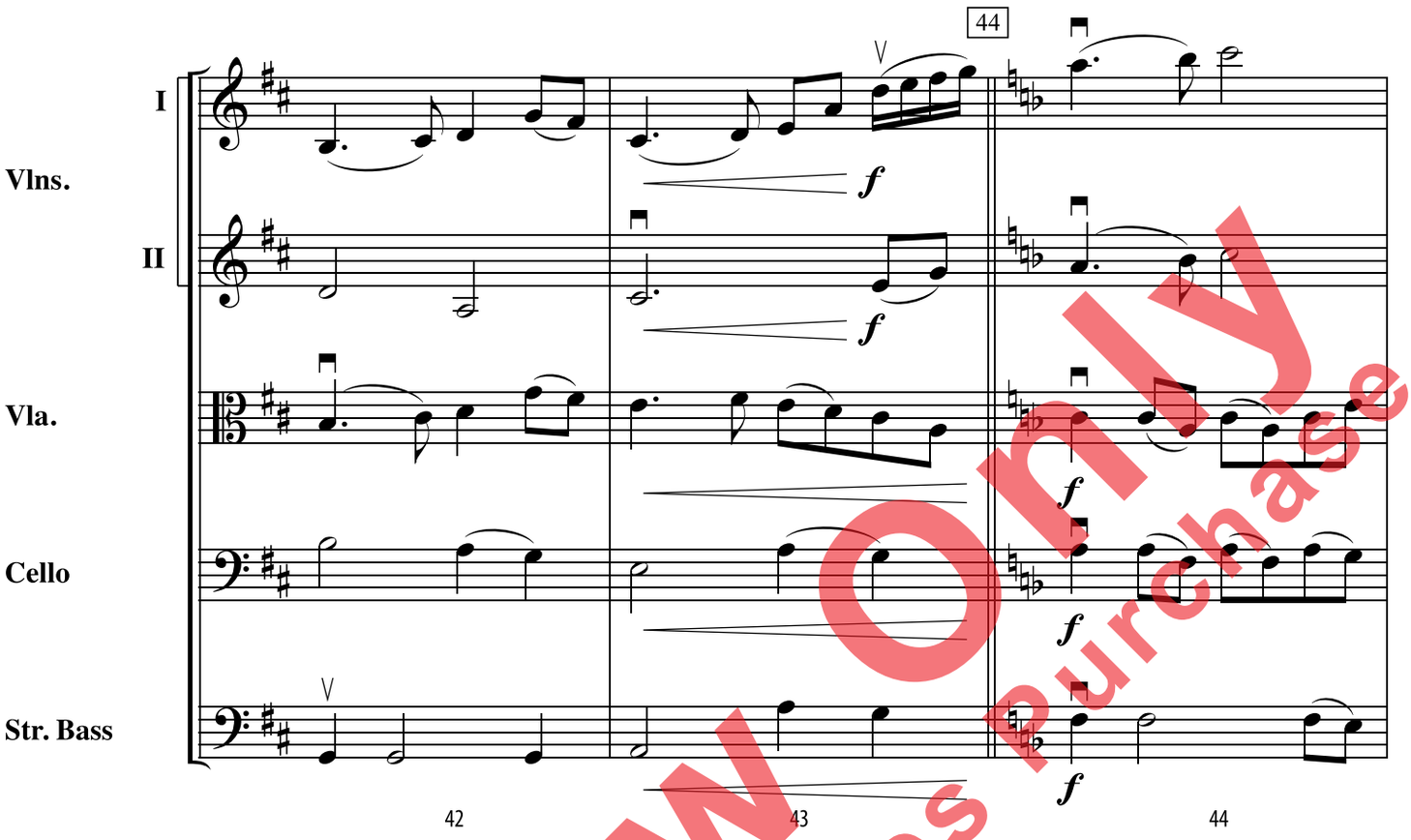

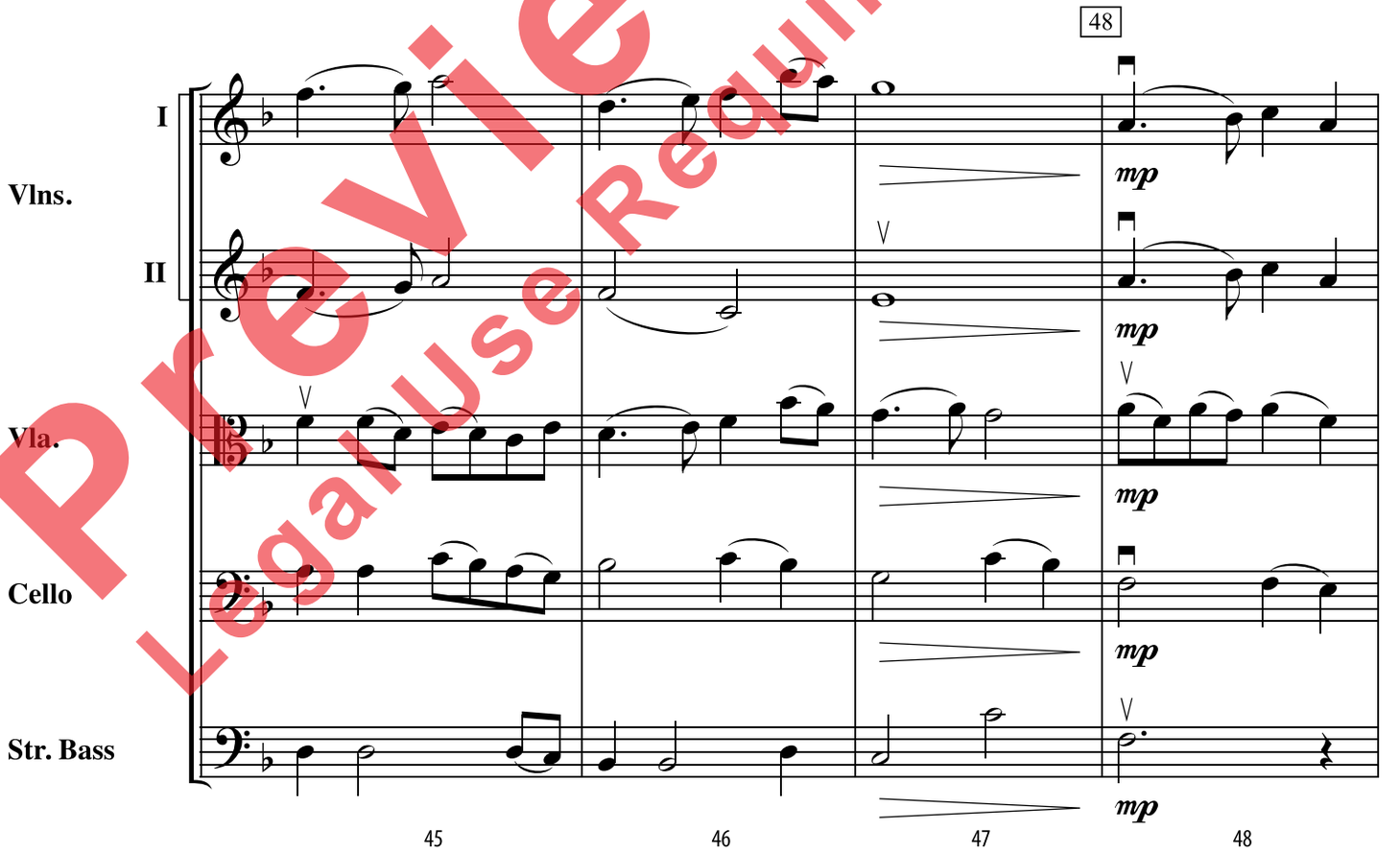

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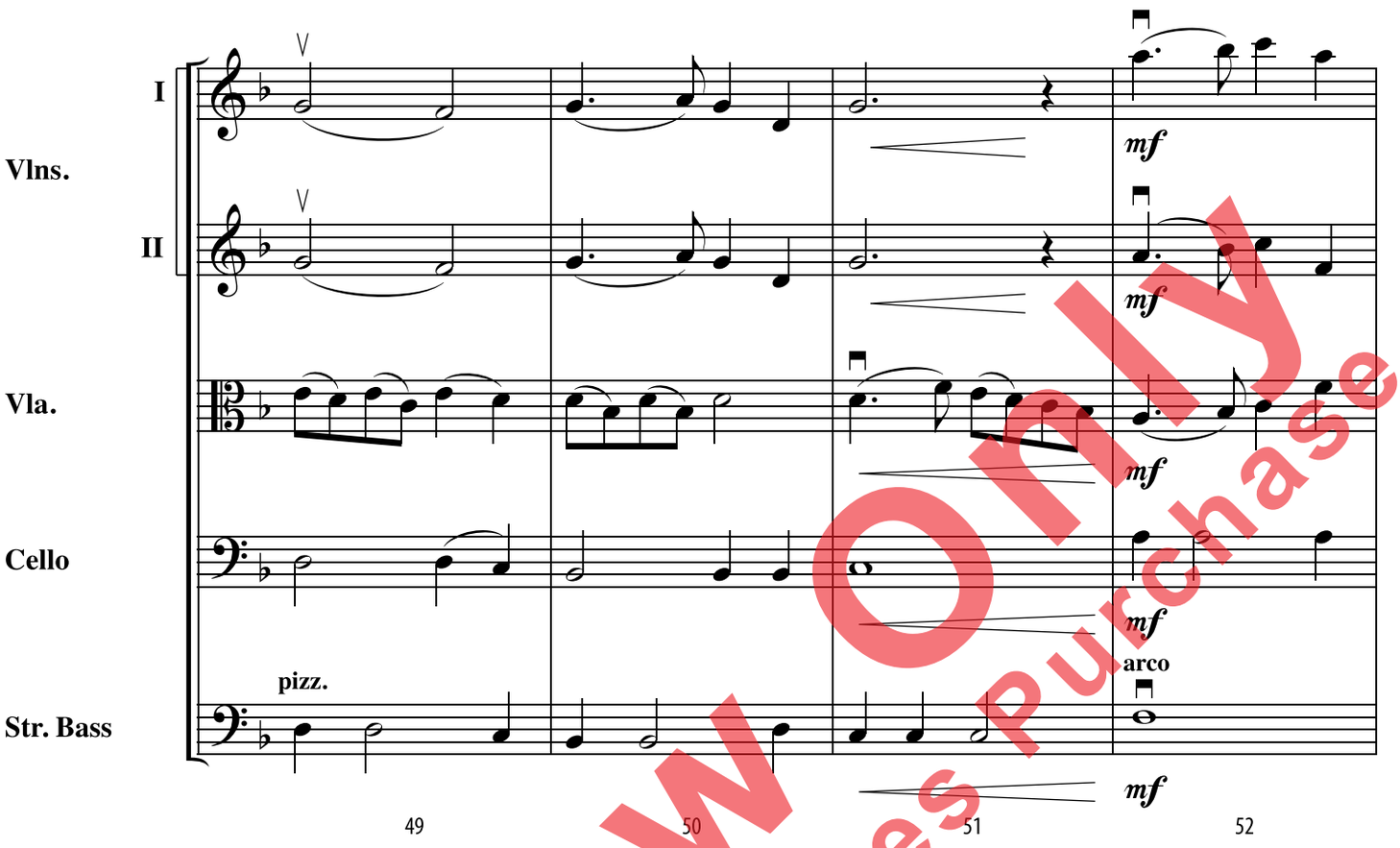

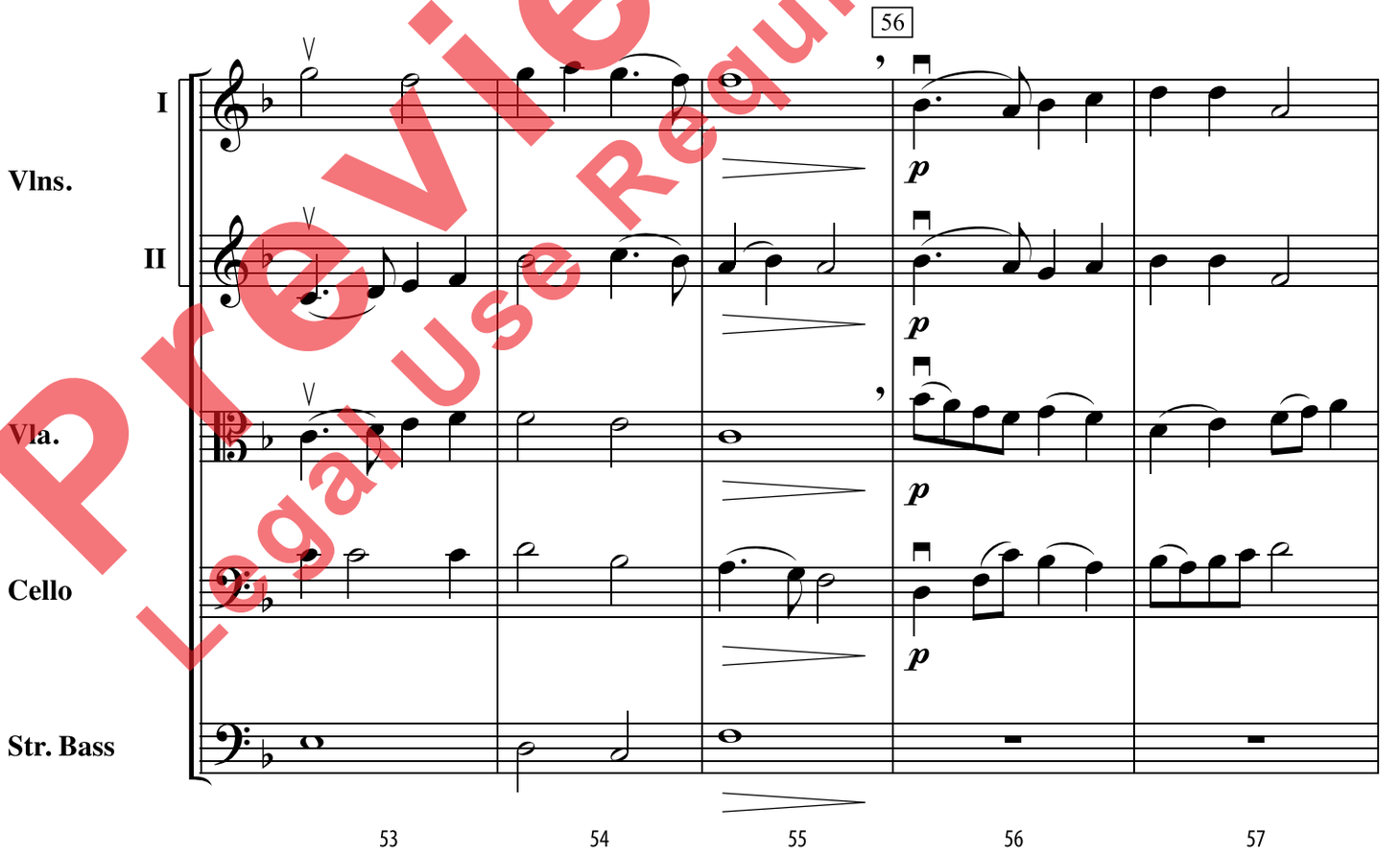

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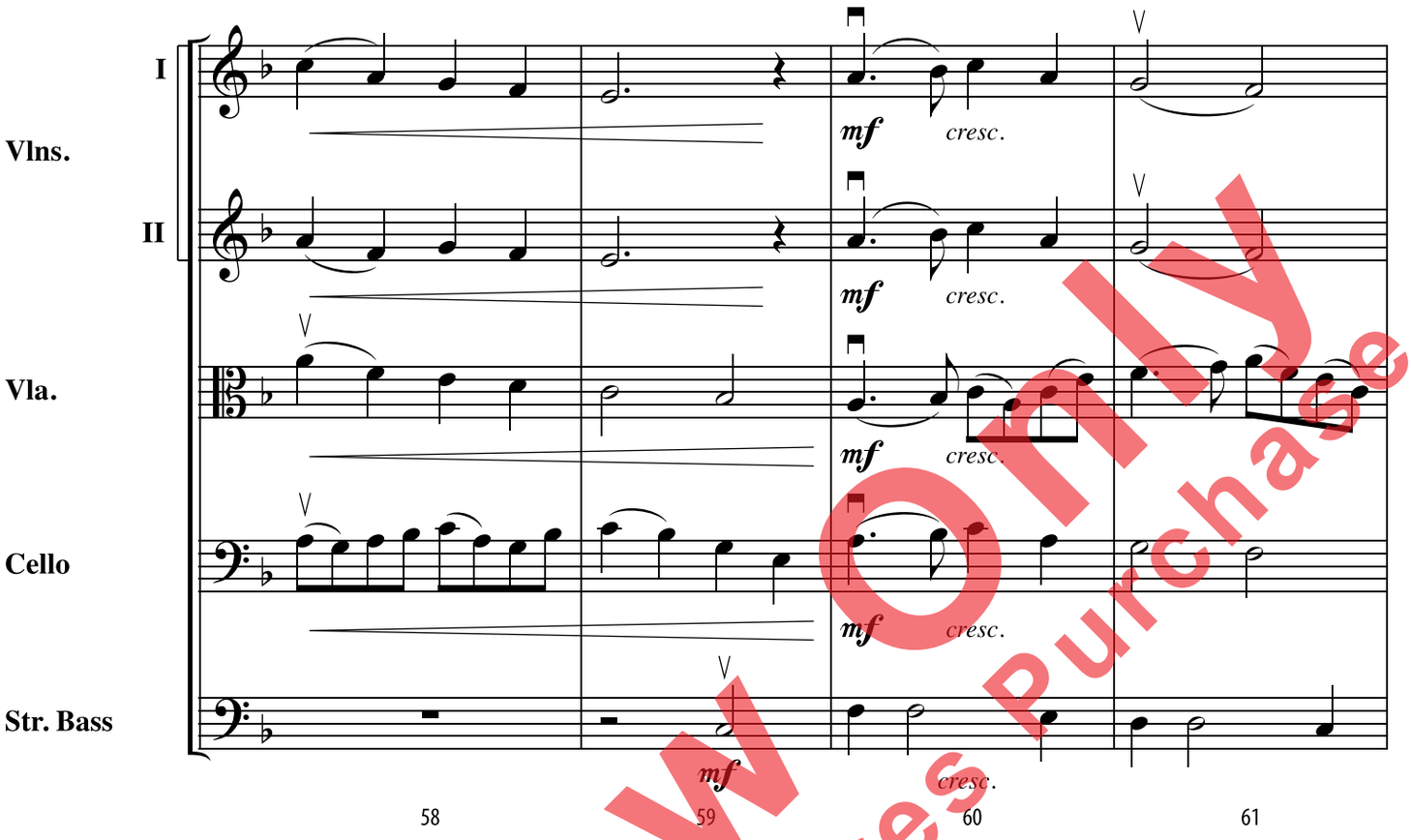

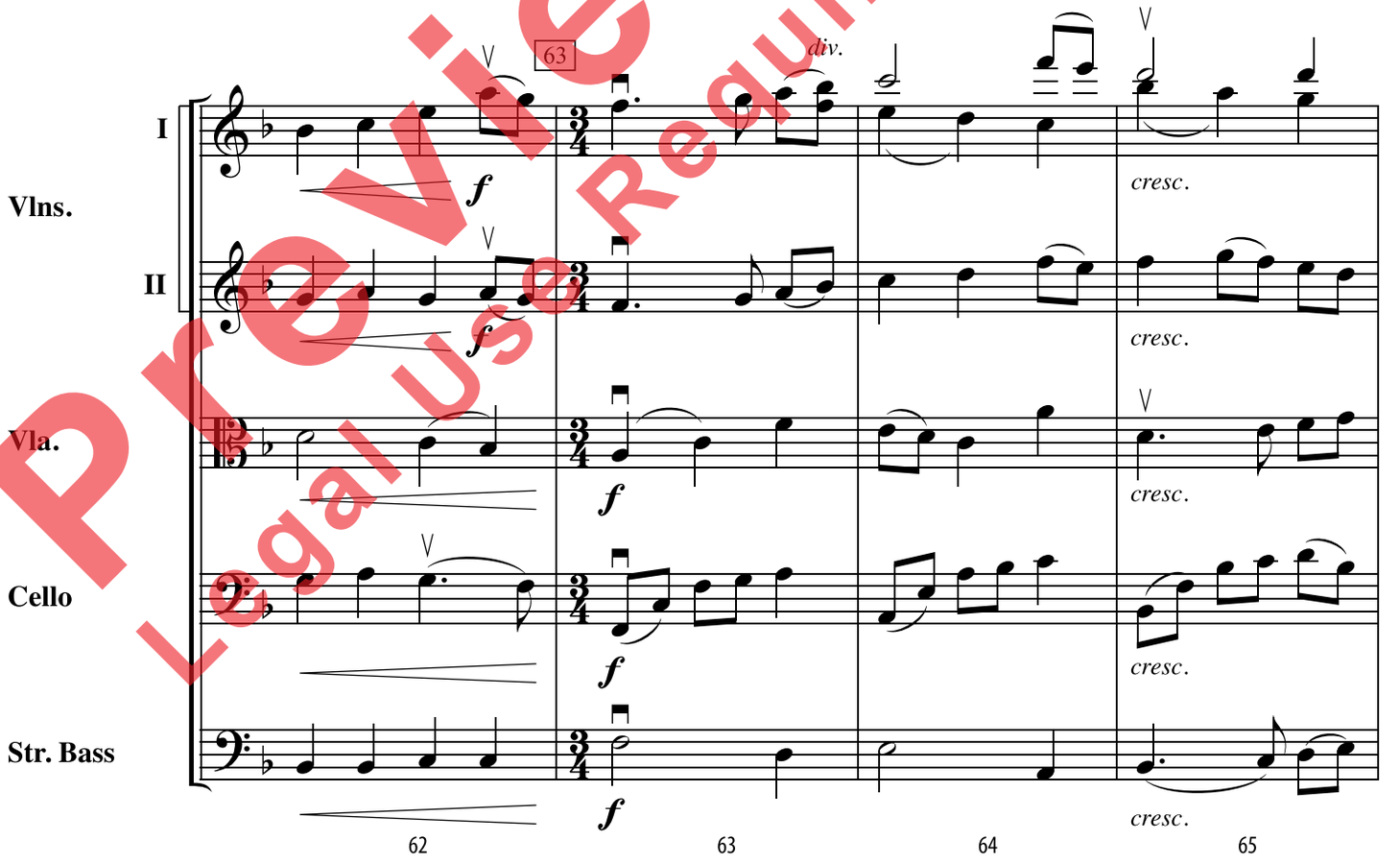

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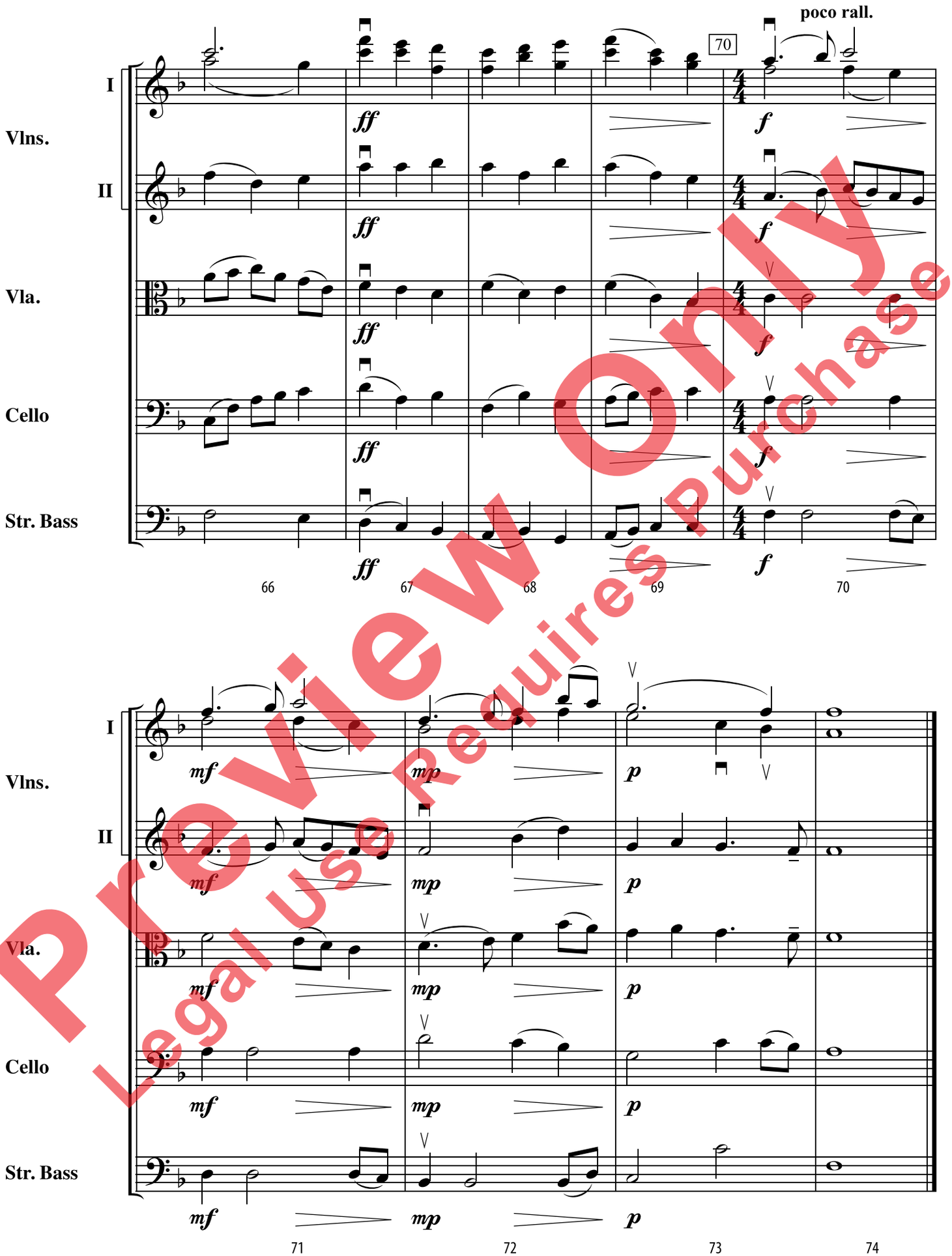

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