Stephen Mitton

Juvenoia

A Scherzo for String Quartet

Preview

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Duration: approx. 5:30

Juvenoia: *n.* the fear or hostility directed by an older generation toward a younger one, or toward youth culture in general.

About this Piece:

It seems that every generation exhibits a certain level of fear or skepticism toward the rising one: European youth in the 1800s are reading too much Goethe; the radio is corrupting young people in the early 1900s; hippie culture of the 1960s is tearing apart the moral fabric of society; Millennials have an entitlement complex; Gen-Z spends too much time on TikTok.

Fears like these have been expressed since time immemorial, yet each generation's worries often feel to them like harbingers of the end of days rather than symptoms of the human condition. At a certain age, most people are confronted with the fear of changing times, technologies, and attitudes, and their effects on young people. Interestingly, a term for this phenomenon has only been available since 2011, when sociologist David Finkelhor coined the term "juvenoia" as a portmanteau of *juvenile* and *paranoia*.

This one-movement string quartet is a scherzo representing juvenoia as I see it playing out today—in sardonic humor, Internet memes, and eye-roll emojis accompanied with retorts of "OK, Boomer" in reply. The piece opens with an angsty and dissonant theme which gives way to a raucous melody in D Major, and is followed by wandering, slow-tempo music evoking extreme skepticism. The development of these themes plays out as a kind of caustic banter between the serious and the puerile, much like society's current and past intergenerational conflicts.

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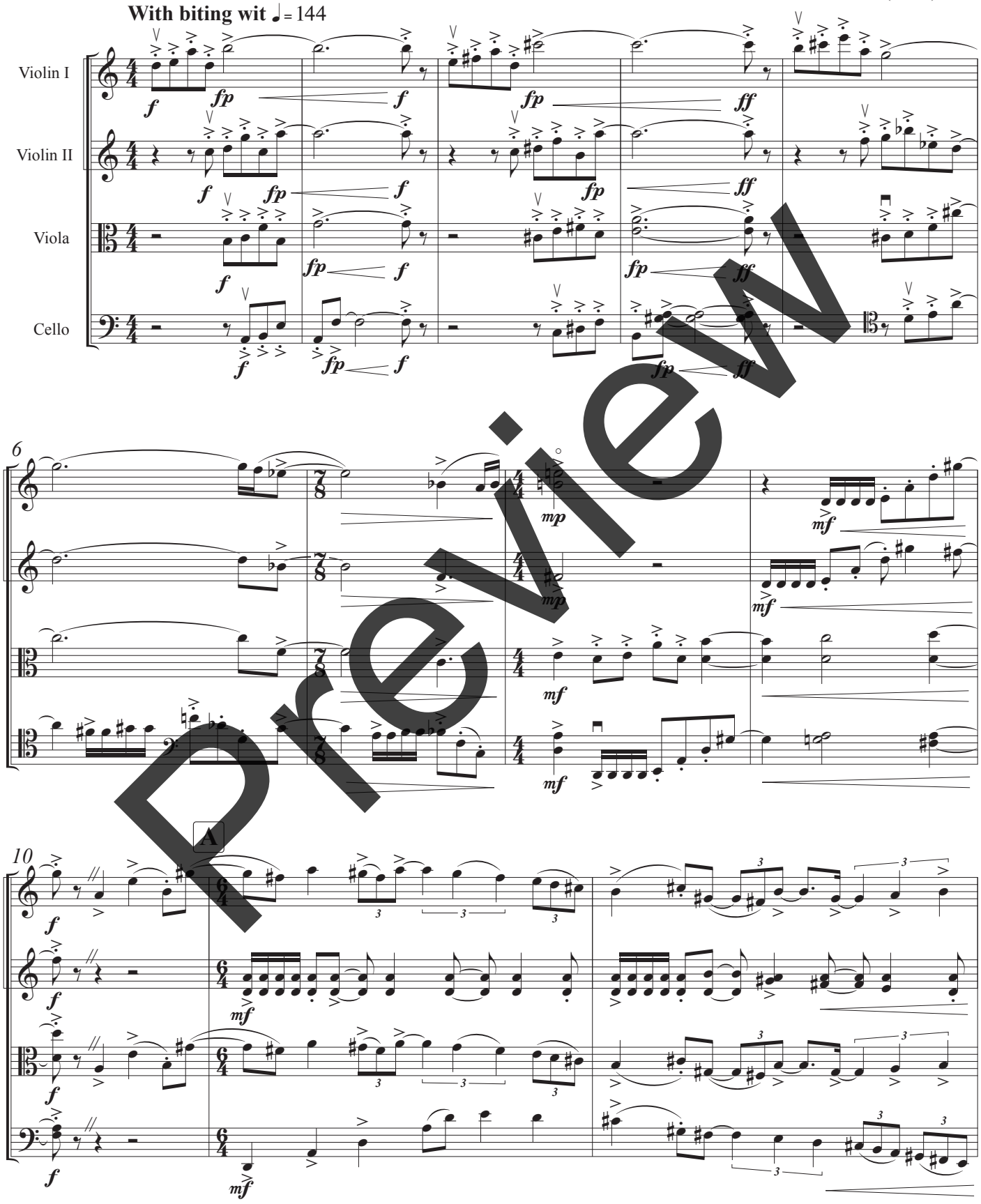
Juvenoia

Stephen Mitton
(2021)



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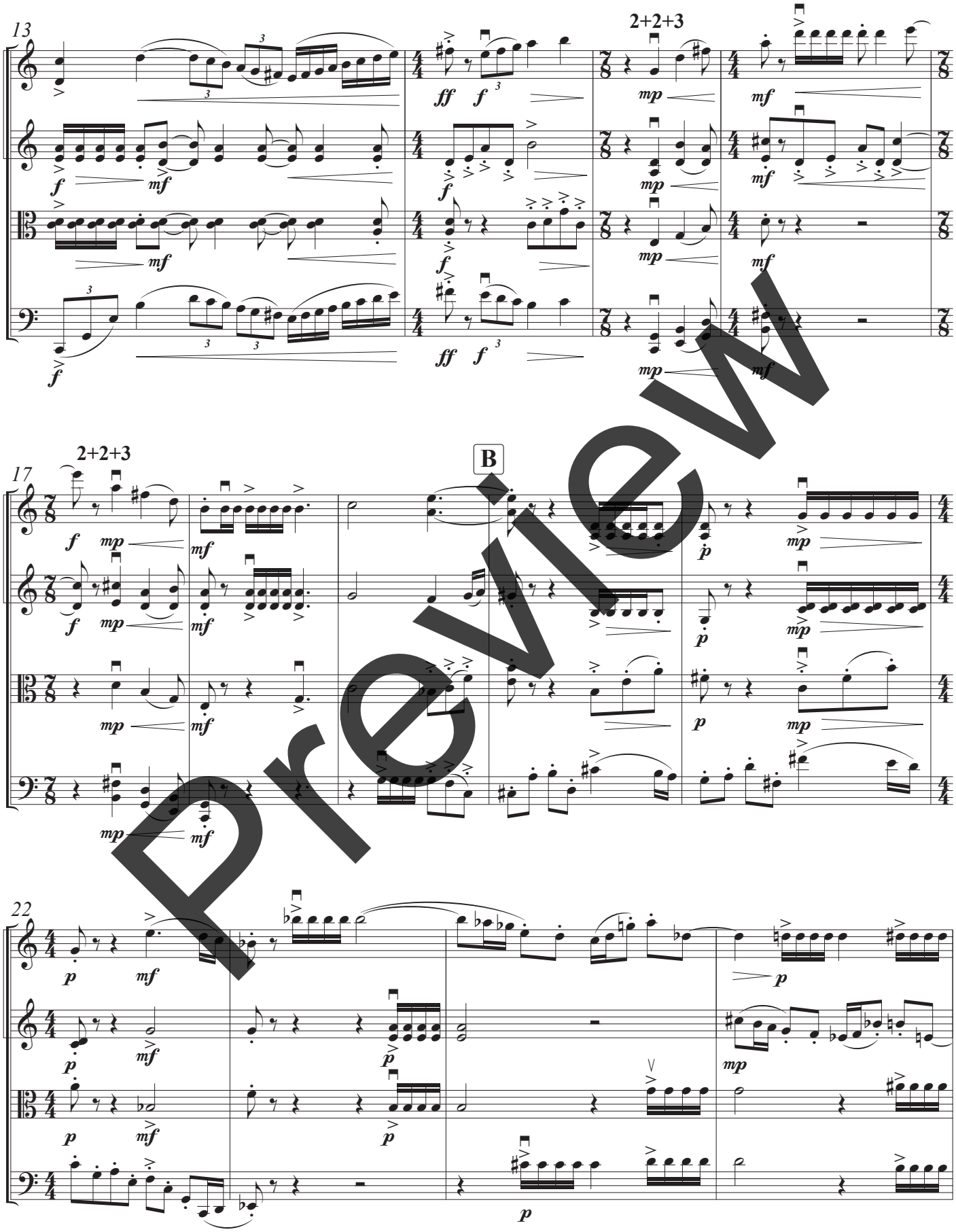

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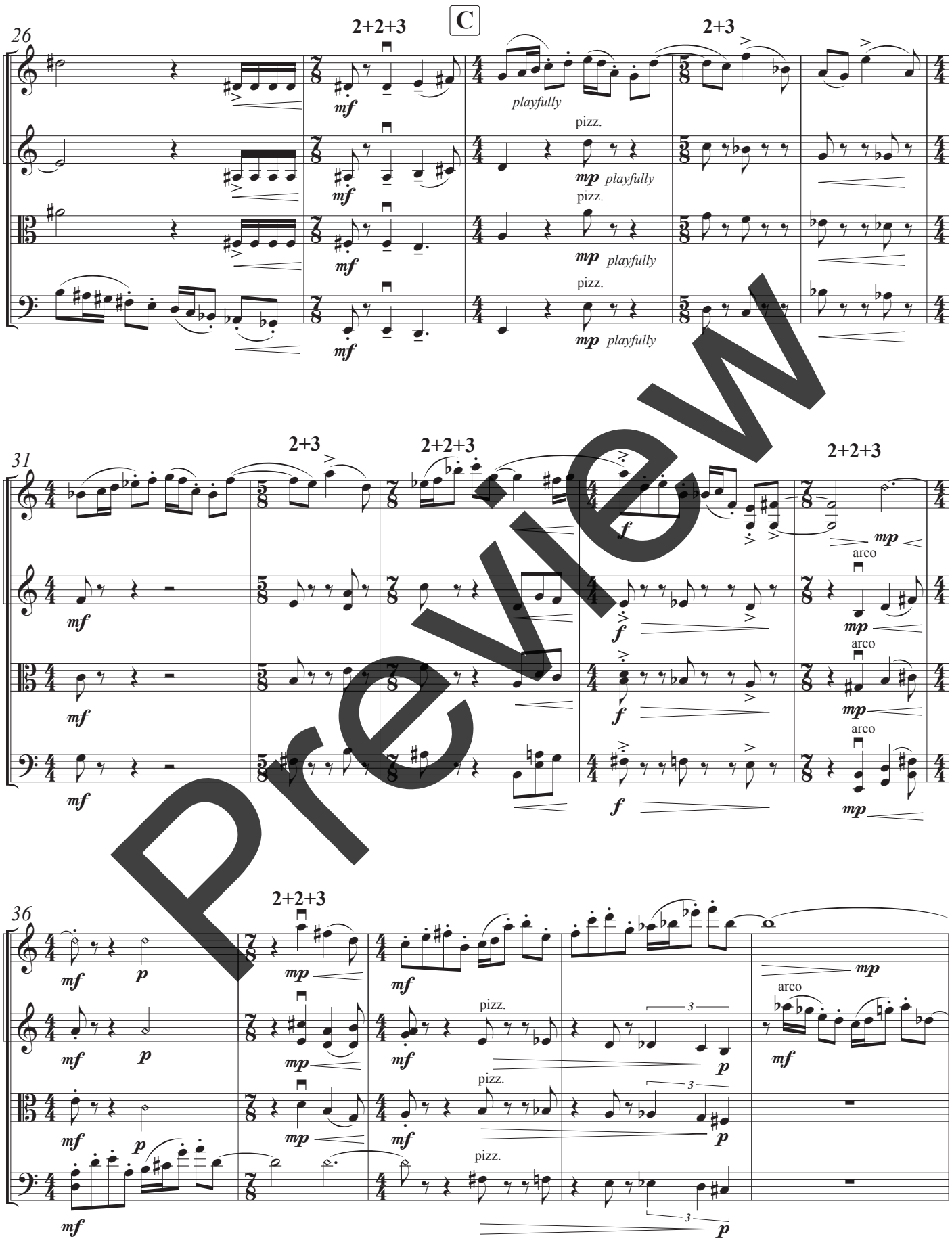

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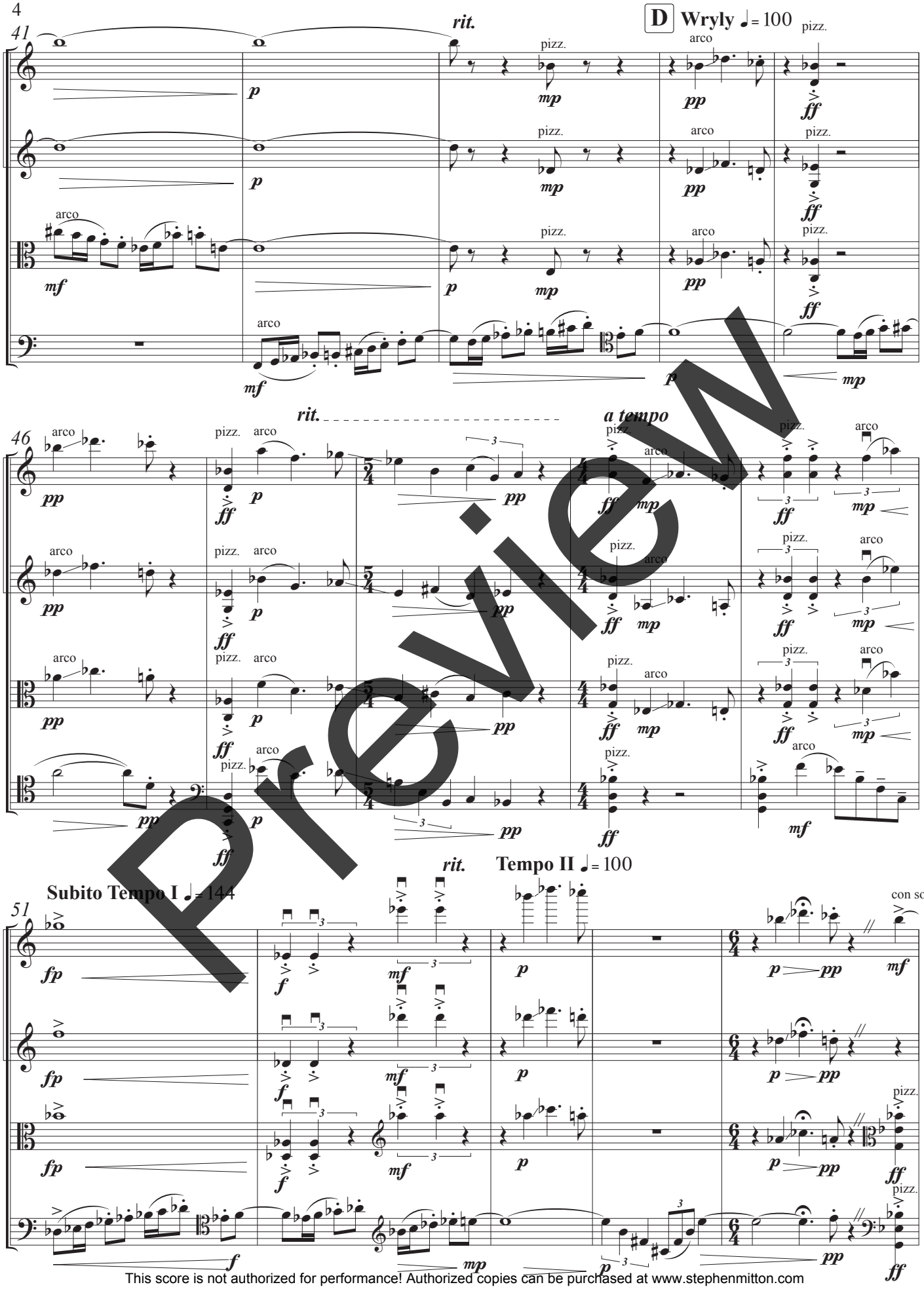

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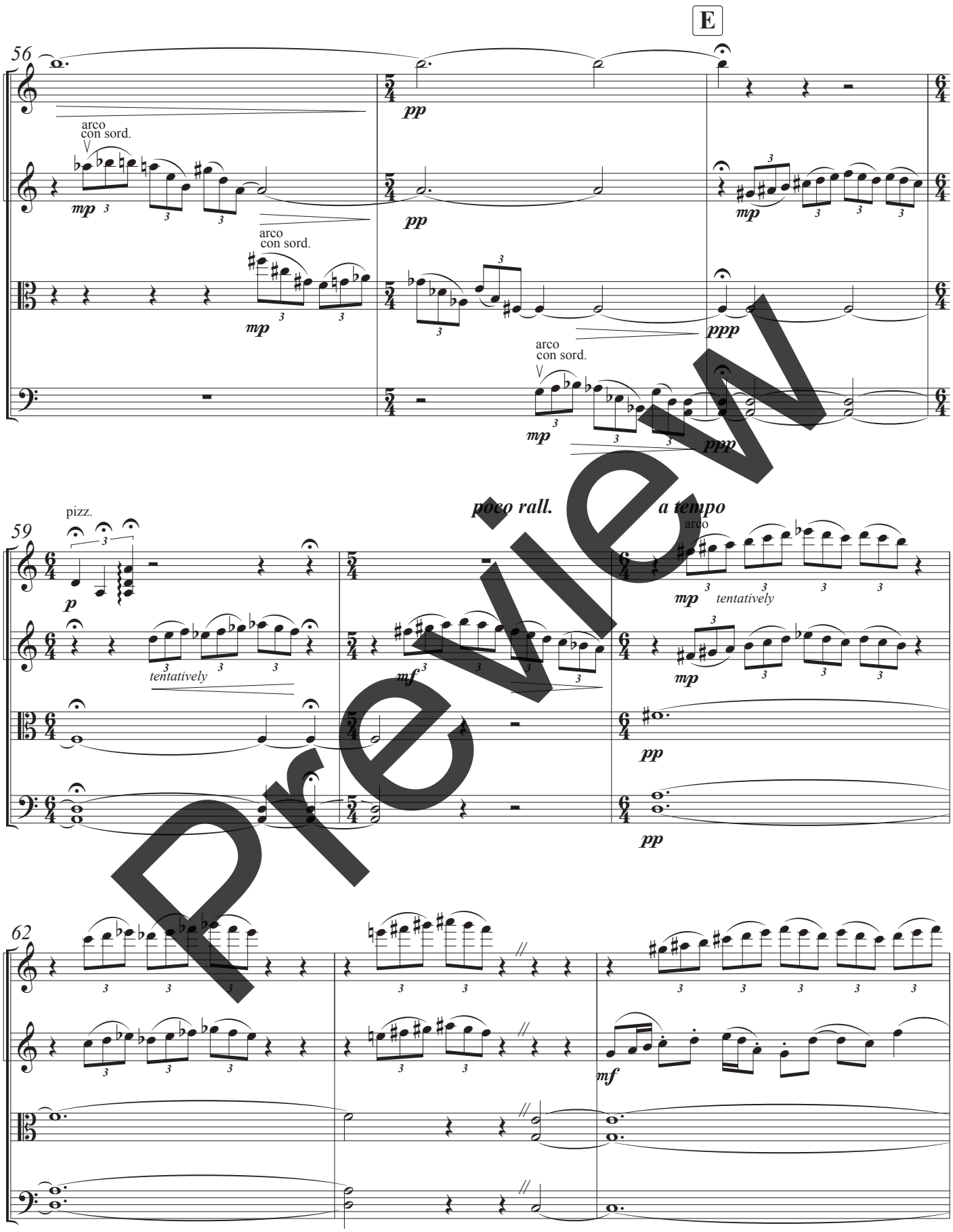

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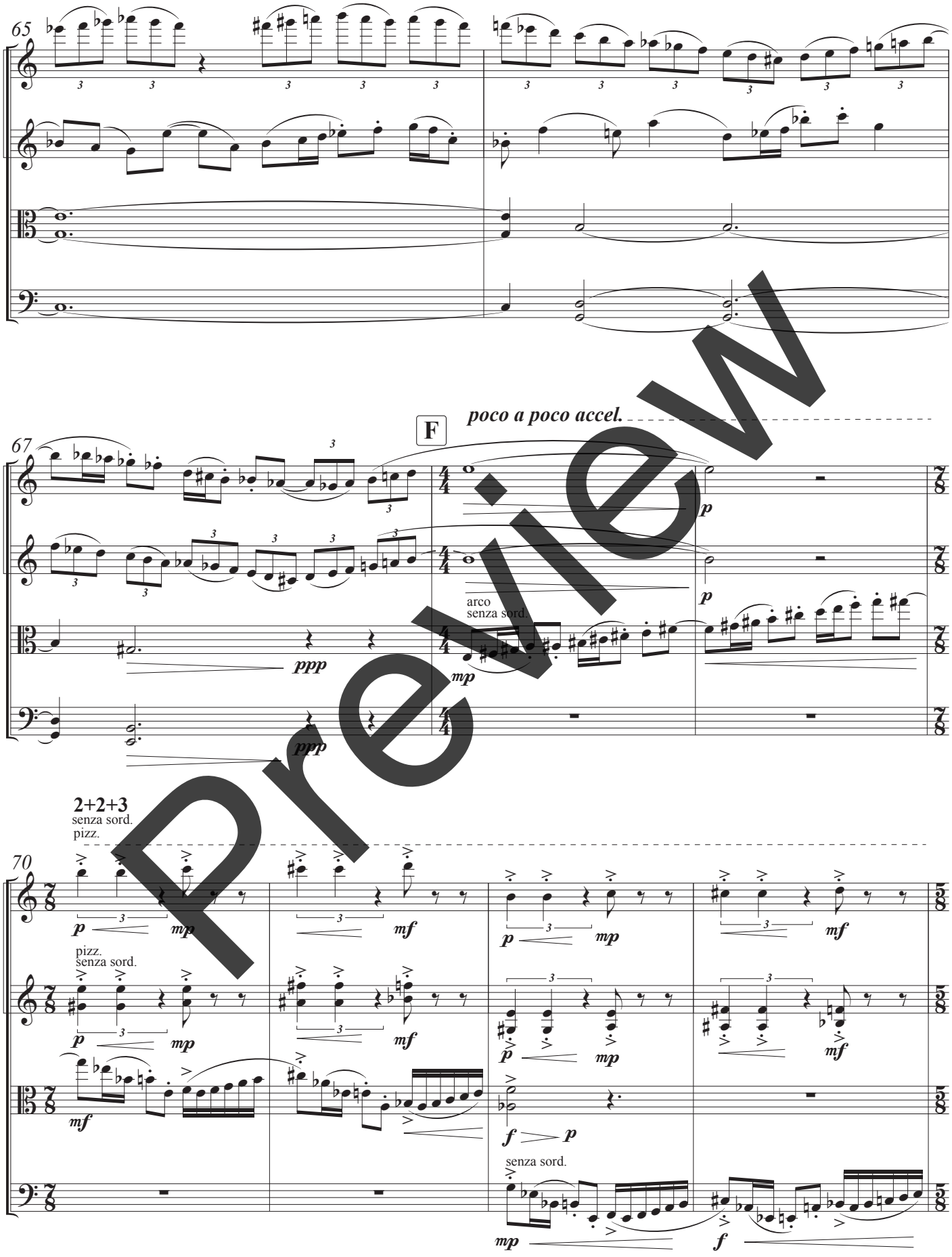

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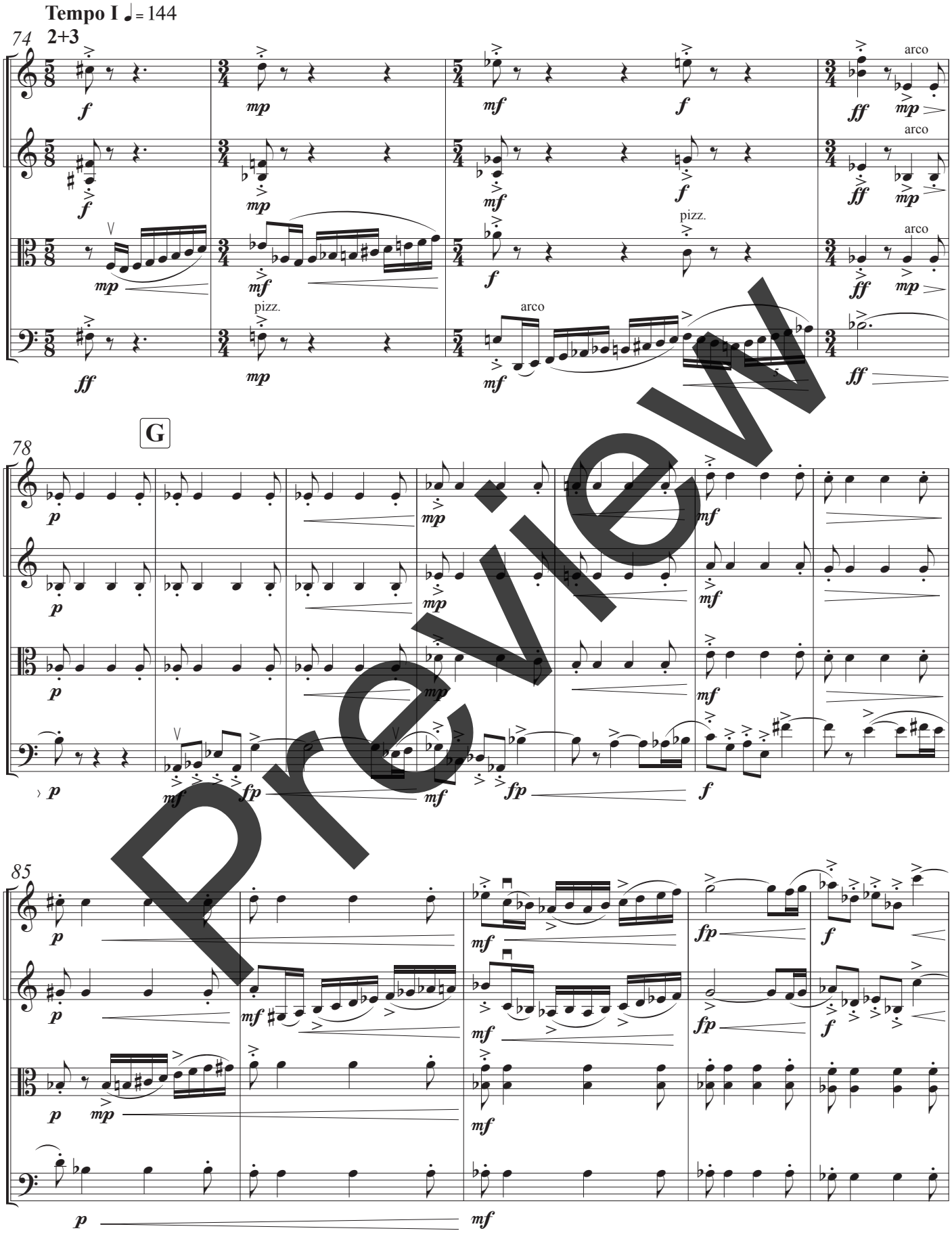

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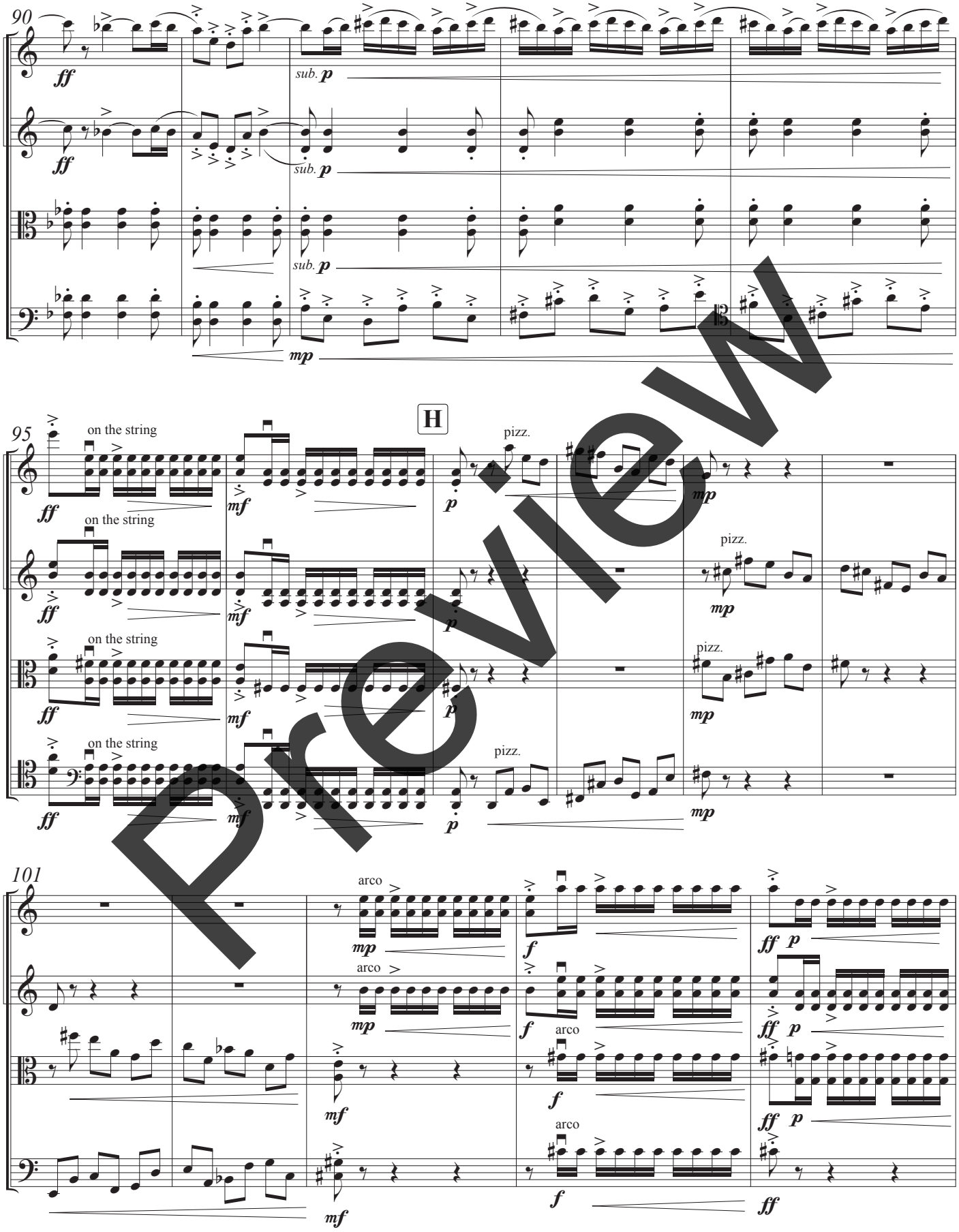

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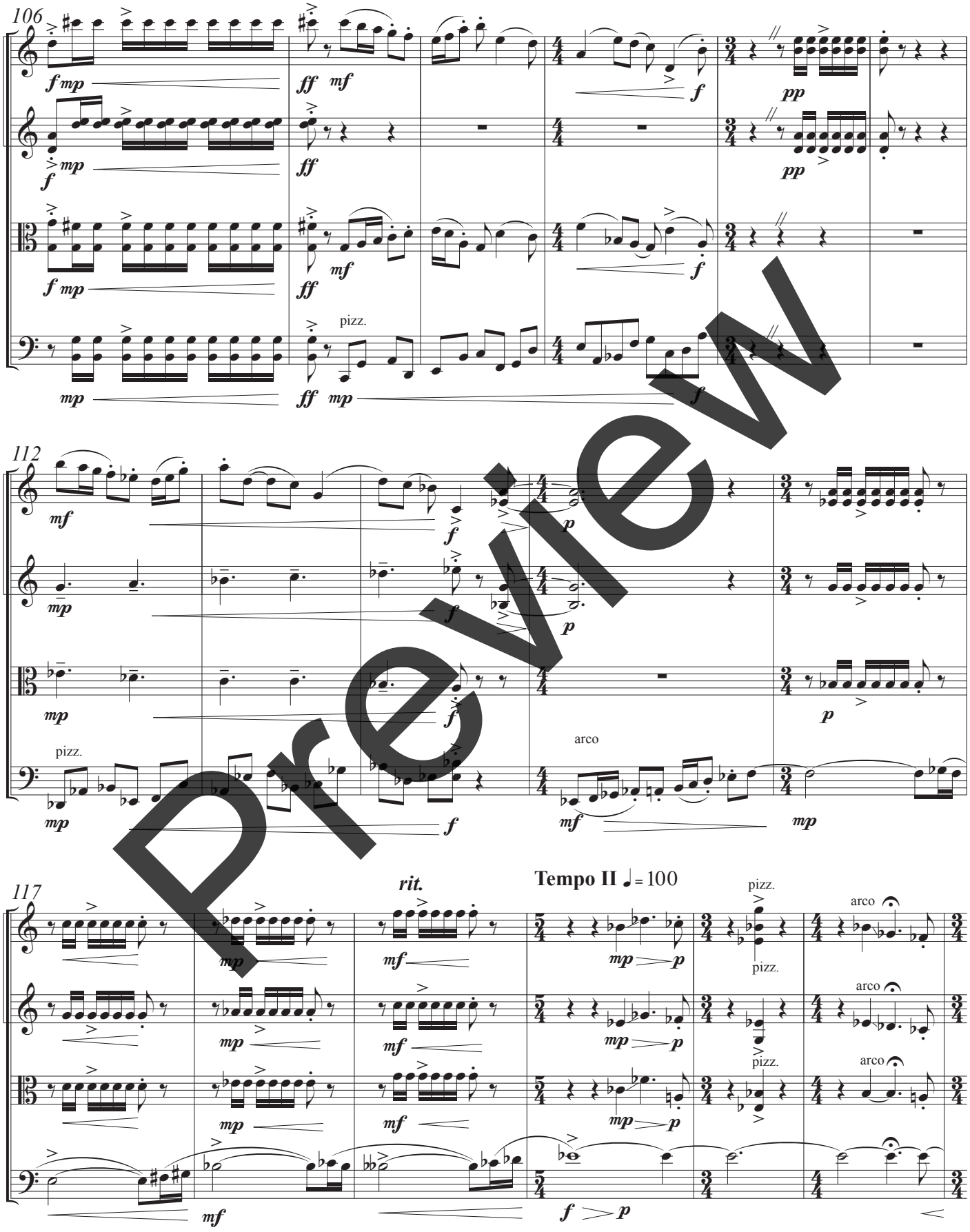

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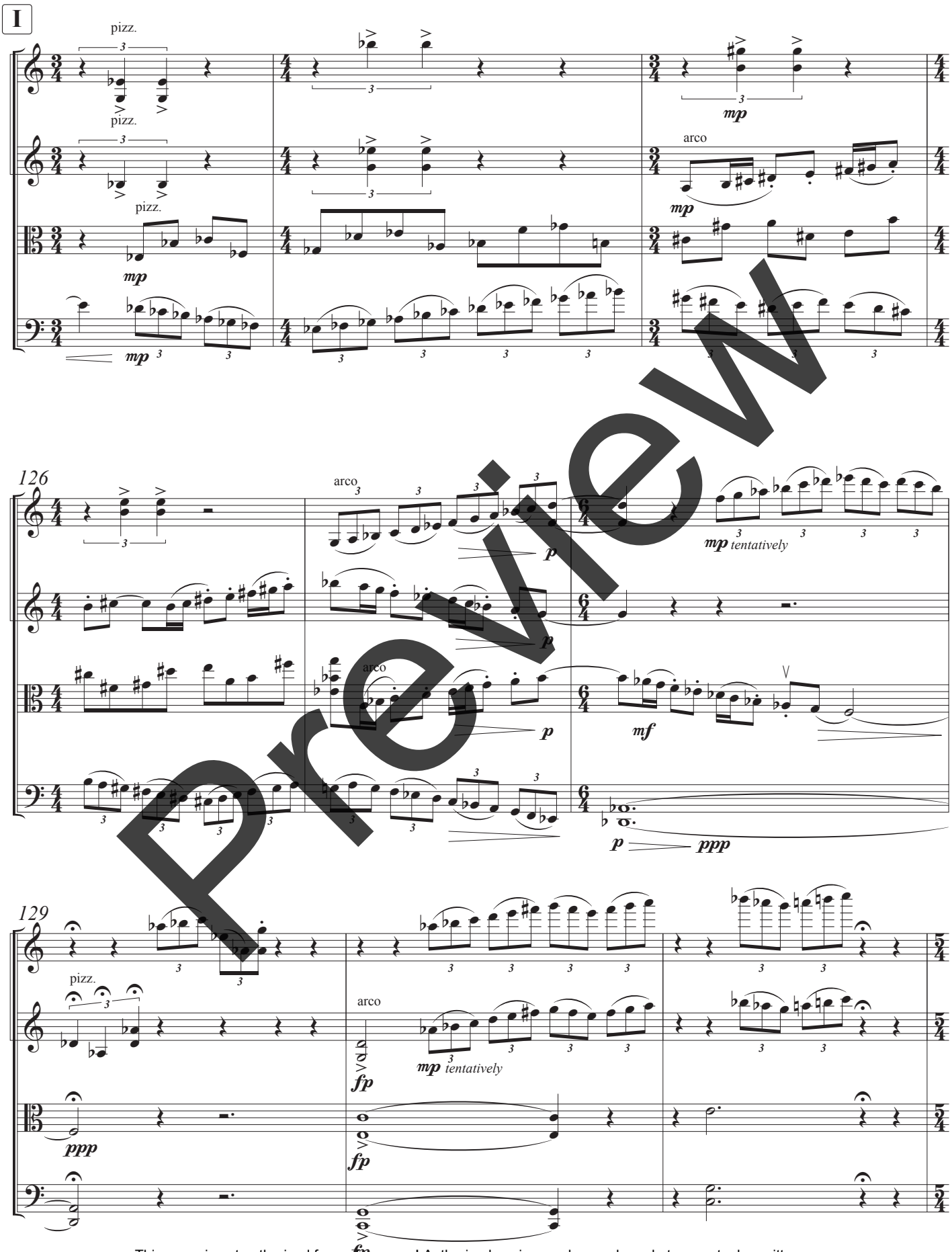

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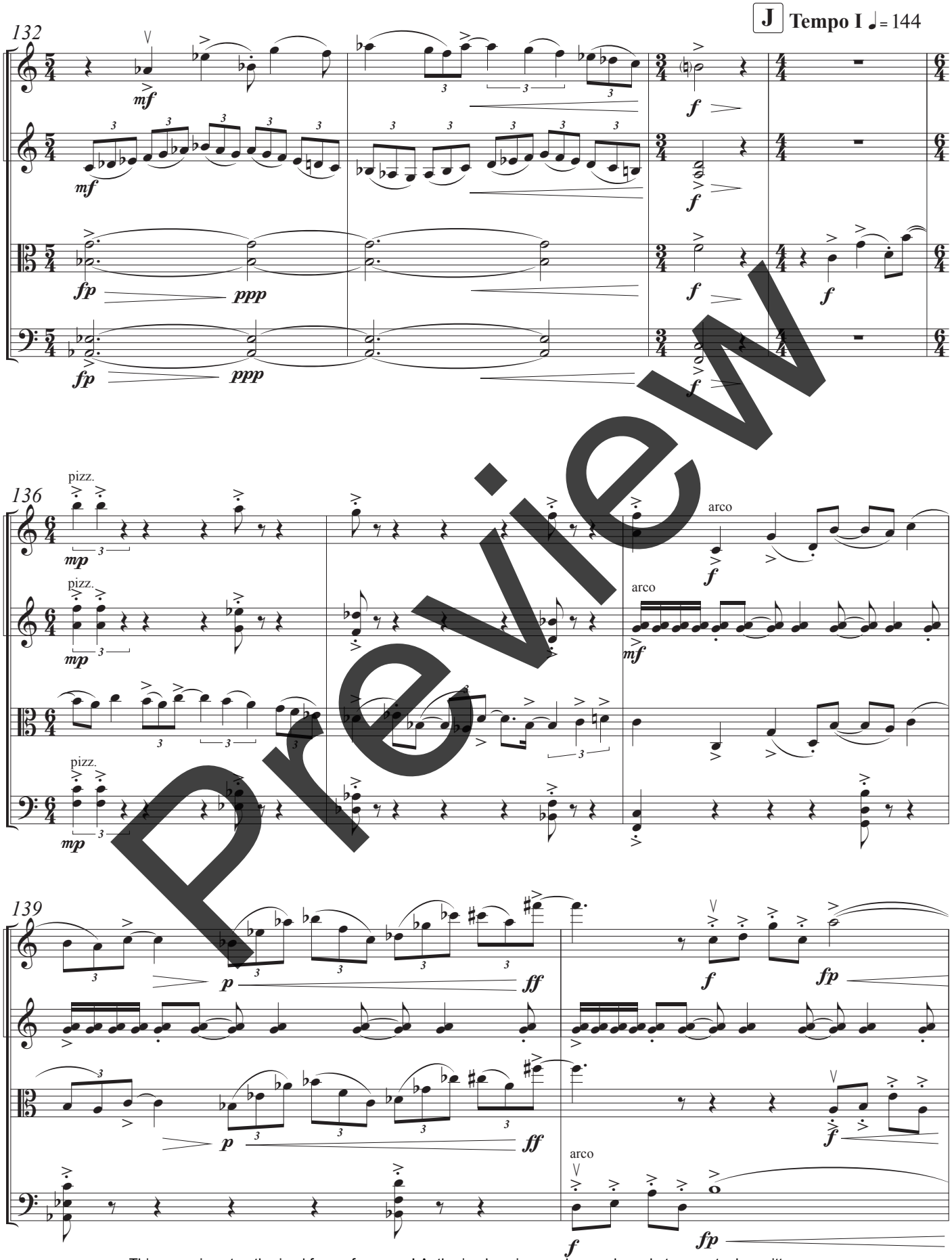

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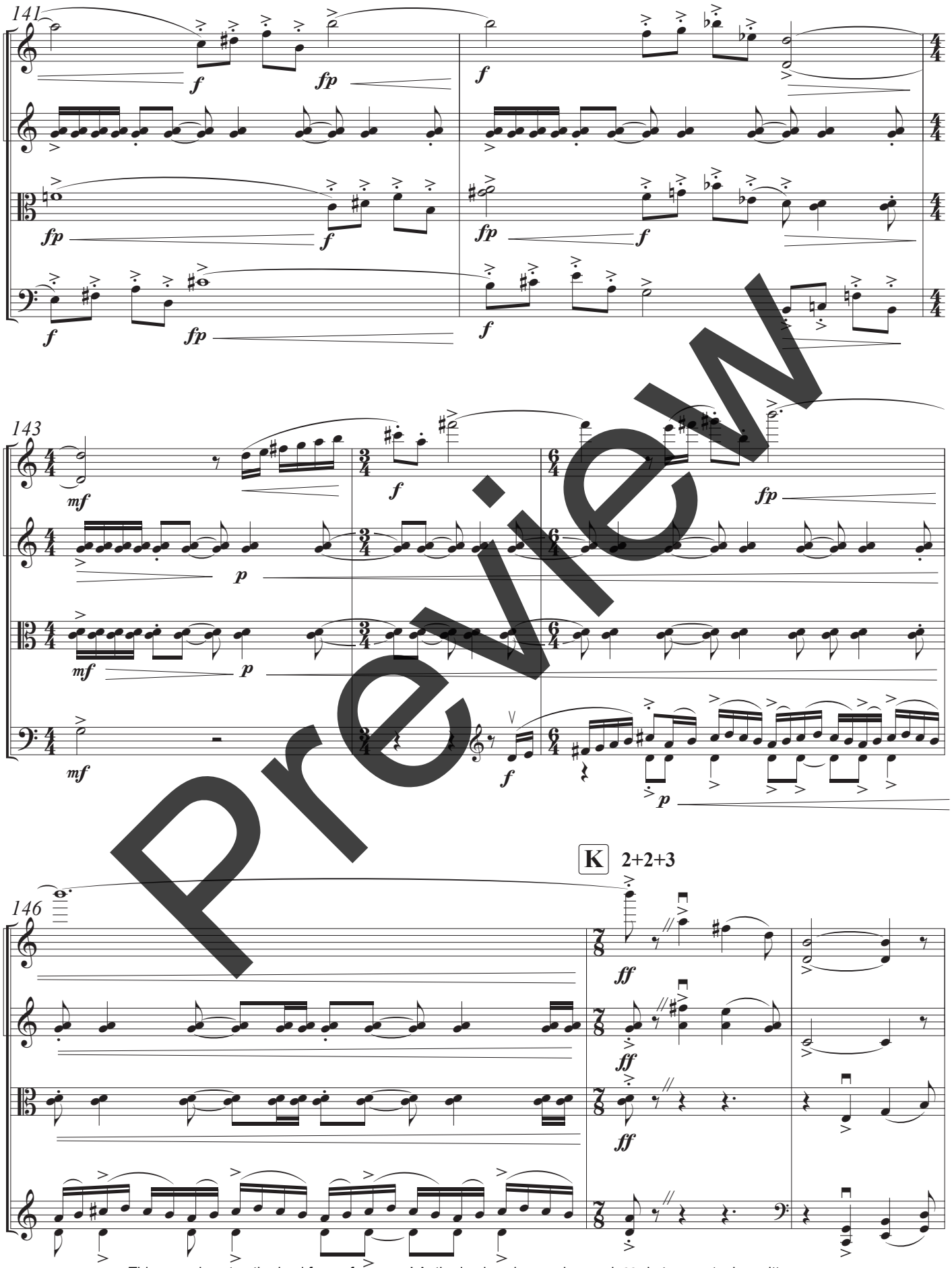

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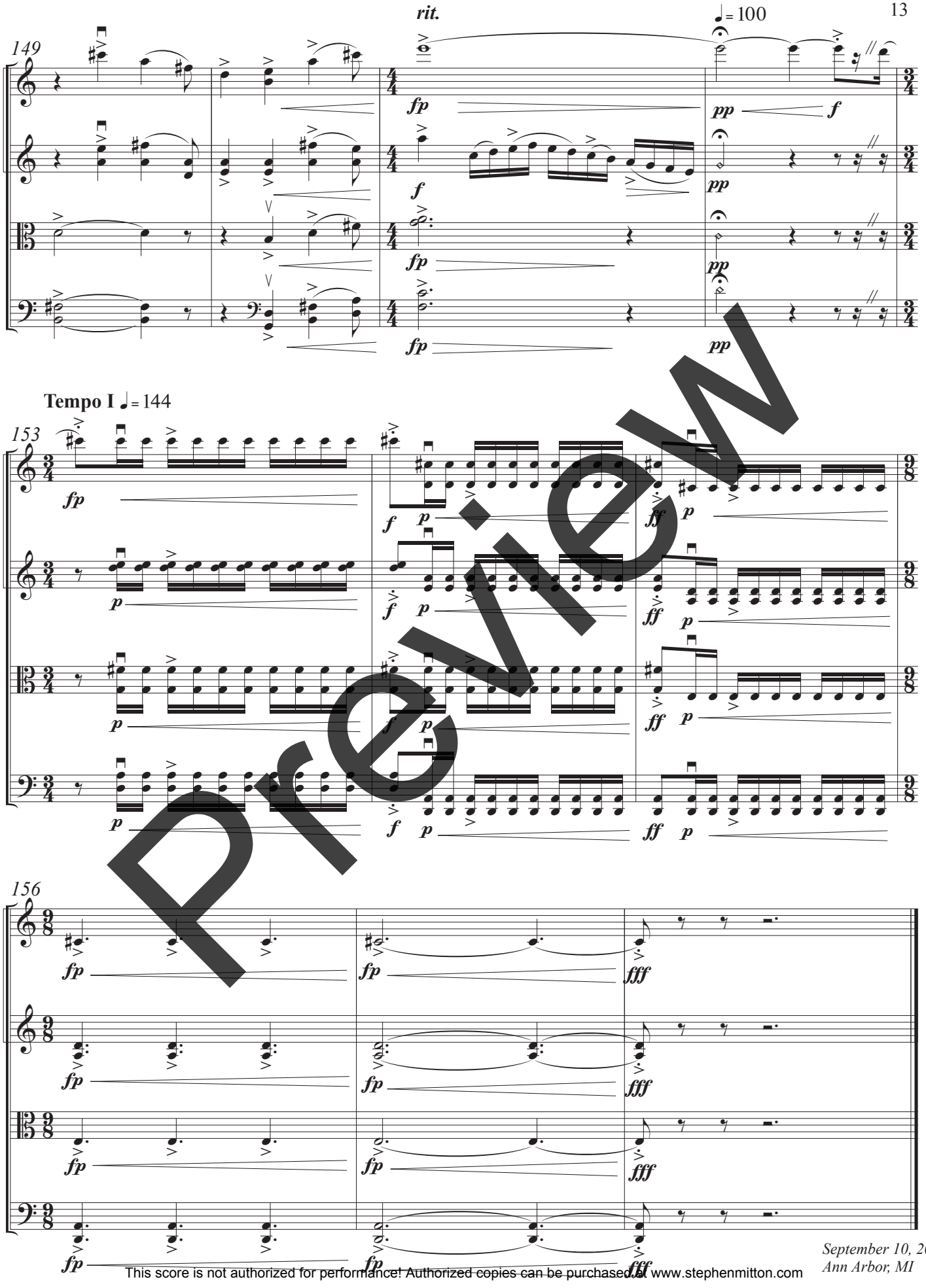

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September 10, 2021
Ann Arbor, MI

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